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RECONSIDERING HISTORICAL SPACE: ACCESSIBILITY AT THE
MUSEUM OF TURKISH AND ISLAMIC ART

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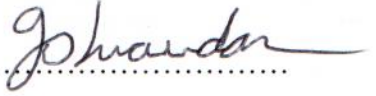
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Reconsidering Historical Space: Accessibility at the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art
Tarihsel bir Mekam Yeniden Düşünmek: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesinde Erişilebilirlik

Ela Bozok

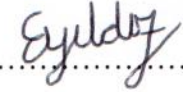
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
ABSTRACT.....	viii
ÖZET	ix
INTRODUCTION	1
1.HISTORY OF IBRAHIM PASHA PALACE AND BIRTH OF TURKISH CULTURAL POLICIES	4
1.1. IBRAHIM PASHA PALACE AND THE HIPPODROME DURING EARLY MODERN ERA	4
1.2. IBRAHIM PASHA PALACE AND THE HIPPODROME DURING NINETEENTH CENTURY.....	6
1.2.1. Declaration of Imperial Edict of Tanzimat and the Birth of Ottoman Heritage Policies	7
1.2.2. Birth of “Ottoman Museum” and Re-entrance of Hippodrome to the Political Scene During Tanzimat Era	8
1.2.3. Hamidian Era, Heritage Policies and the Foundation of Islamic Endowments Museum	11
1.2.4. Preservation of Historical Monuments during the Nineteenth Century: Ibrahim Pasha Palace	14
1.3. BIRTH OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY AND CHANGING CULTURAL POLICIES.....	16
1.3.1. Early Republican Preservation Policies: Struggle for Ibrahim Pasha Palace and Urbanization of Hippodrome.....	16
1.3.2. Early Republican Era Museums and Fate of Islamic Endowments Museum	19

2. DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND MUSEUMS IN TURKEY AFTER WORLD WAR II	22
2.1. POLITICAL CONTEXT AND CULTURAL POLICIES: TURKEY (1950-1970)	22
2.1.1. Museums and Heritage: Turkish Context	24
2.1.2. Museums and Heritage: International Treaties and Institutions	27
2.2. POLITICAL CONTEXT AND CULTURAL POLICIES: TURKEY (1980-PRESENT)	30
2.2.1. Heritage: International Definition.....	30
2.2.2. Museums: International Definition	34
2.2.3. Heritage: Turkey.....	36
2.2.4. Museums: Turkey	39
3. ACCESSIBILITY AT THE MUSEUM OF TURKISH AND ISLAMIC ART	44
3.1. MUSEUM OF TURKISH AND ISLAMIC ART.....	44
3.1.1. First Restoration of Ibrahim Pasha Palace	44
3.1.2. Second Restoration of Ibrahim Pasha Palace	46
3.2. SOCIAL INCLUSION: A DEBATE REGARDING MUSEUM AUDIENCE	48
3.2.1. Target Group: People with Physical Disabilities	48
3.2.1.1. Disability: A Short Introduction	50
3.2.1.2. Disability in the Museums: a short review	52
3.2.1.3. Accessibility at Historic Monuments.....	54
3.3. ACCESSIBLE MUSEUM: AN EXAMINATION	56
3.3.1. Methodology	56
3.3.2. Getting to the Museum	56
3.3.2.1. Public Transportation	57
3.3.2.2. Possible Routes to Sultanahmet region: An Assessment.....	58

3.3.2.3. Website.....	60
3.3.3. Entering the Museum	63
3.3.3.1. Entrance Door	63
3.3.3.2. The Information Desk and Guides	64
3.3.3.3. Restrooms	66
3.3.4. Touring the Museum	68
3.3.4.1. Elevators	68
3.3.4.2. Doors, Corridors, and Emergency Exit	70
3.3.4.3. Recreational Area and Shop	72
3.3.4.4. Exhibition Areas	73
3.3.4.4.1. Islamic Exhibition Rooms	73
3.3.4.4.2. Ottoman Rooms	78
3.4. EVALUATION AND SUGGESTIONS	79
CONCLUSION	86
BIBLIOGRAPHY	89
APPENDIX.....	98

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDRF: Central Directorate of Revolving Funds

DHMS: Directorate of Historic Monuments and Surveying

FARO: 2005 Faro Convention of Value of Cultural Heritage for Society

GDCHM: General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums

ICOM: International Council of Museums

ICOMOS: International Council on Monuments and Sites

IETT: Istanbul Electricity, Tramway and Tunnel General Management

IMM: Istanbul Metropolitan Municipalities

ISMD: Istanbul Site Management Directorate

MoCT: Ministry of Culture and Tourism

MTIA: Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Ticket booth	63
Figure 3.2: Security booth.....	63
Figure 3.3: X-ray passage.....	64
Figure 3.4: Information desk	65
Figure 3.5: Signage.....	65
Figure 3.6: Blocked view	65
Figure 3.7: Accessible restroom.....	67
Figure 3.8: Platform lift to the first floor	69
Figure 3.9: Platform lift to the second floor	69
Figure 3.10: Interior buttons of platform lift to the second floor.....	69
Figure 3.11: Grit tapes indicating direction	70
Figure 3.12: Grit tapes indicating exhibition room threshold	70
Figure 3.13. Staircase to the second floor	71
Figure 3.14: Ramp to the elevated part of the courtyard.....	72
Figure 3.15: Elevated part of courtyard overlooking Sultanahmet Mosque	72
Figure 3.16: Entrance to an exhibition room	74
Figure 3.17: Wooden ramp at the entrance of an exhibition room.....	74
Figure 3.18: Information label.....	75
Figure 3.19: Exhibition display case	76
Figure 3.20: Informative board panels	77
Figure 3.21: Informative panel	78
Figure 3.22: British Museum Website Accessibility Information	82
Figure 3.23: Tower of London Wheelchair Access Map.....	83
Figure 3.24: The only information board explaining the history of the palace.....	84

ABSTRACT

This study has been an exploration of physical accessibility of recently restored Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, a historical space previously known as Ibrahim Pasha Palace. This exploration was done in two interrelated layers of research. First layer is a look into the history of heritage and museum studies in Turkey, investigating it under certain cultural policies and international conventions. The second layer is a look into the development of museum audience under the context of development of citizenship in Turkey. People with physical and sensory disabilities were focused as the target group under this context. These two layers were combined under examination of the people with physical and sensory disabilities as audience in a cultural heritage site that is utilized as a museum: Ibrahim Pasha Palace. This research is based on qualitative methods on site participant observation and in-depth interview. The main argument of this study is that Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art as a state museum and a historic space ensures only a partial physical accessibility to this audience group, prioritizing one section while neglecting other. Furthermore, I argue that this is the outcome of the centralized system that allows no authority in terms decision making to the state museums.

Keywords: Museum Audience, Disability, Cultural Heritage, Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, Physical Accessibility

ÖZET

Bu çalışma tarihte İbrahim Paşa Sarayı olarak bilinen günümüzde yeni restore edilmiş Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi'nin fiziksel erişilebilirliğini incelemektedir. Bu iki katmanlı bir çalışmadır. İlk katman Türkiye'deki müzecilik ve kültürel miras tarihini uluslararası anlaşmalar ve kültür politikaları gözünden incelemeye çalışmıştır. İkinci katman ise vatandaşlık oluşumunun altında Türkiye'de müze izleyicisi olgusunun gelişimine bakmıştır. Fiziksel ve duyuşsal engelliler bu kapsamda odak grup olmuşlardır. Bu incelenen iki katman bu odak grubunun kültürel miras olan bir müze alanında izleyici olarak incelenmesi konusunda birleşmişlerdir.

Bu çalışma yerinde gözlem ve mülakat gibi nitel analiz metotlarına dayanarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın ana argümanı bir devlet müzesi ve tarihi bir yapı olarak Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi'nin bahsi geçen odak grup için kısmen bir erişilebilirlik sağlayabildiğini, odak grup içindeki belli bir kesimi öne çıkartırken, diğer kesimi göz ardı etmiş olduğunu iddia eder. Dahası bu çalışma, bu varılan ana argümanı devlet müzelerinin karar mekanizmalarını başka hiçbir kurumla paylaşmayan bir merkezi yapı tarafından idare edilmesine bağlar.

Anahtar kelimeler: Müze İzleyicisi, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, Kültürel Miras, Engellilik, Fiziksel Erişilebilirlik

INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage is a concept that covers a field that is becoming increasingly complex. From being tangible as “immovable property” to “all material evidence of man and his environment” it has become even more wider in later years by adding intangible “expressions, knowledge and skills” into its definition. (Desvallées & Mairesse, 2009) What is still common today is that heritage is a public good, has a universal character and had to be protected even though it can now allude to an object, to a monument or, to a language.

Museum is the permanent institution that is responsible for acquiring, conserving, searching and exhibiting the cultural heritage. First it was responsible solely with the objects and through the objects it exhibited created an institutional value that is transmitted to the visitor. Today, after certain transformations, it is also responsible for creating a space where personal experience of the visitors becoming more important as the institution is becoming “democratized”.

Museum visitor or audience has also changed throughout the centuries. At the beginning, it was a passive audience to whom museum passed on certain values it deemed important through the objects it exhibited or more so through the order of the exhibition. In time the passive visitor due to certain social, cultural and economic changes has transformed from being a recipient of civilizing mission towards an active participant of the museum space. The audience, like other two concepts, had also widened in definition and become more complex in terms of *who* it covers.

The scope of this study is to look at the first phase of a museum experience, namely physical accessibility, of a specified audience group at an historic monument that is now used as a state museum. The target audience is very specifically defined as persons with physical and sensory disabilities. The cultural heritage monument in

question is Ibrahim Pasha Palace, a sixteenth-century palace located in Sultanahmet region which is being utilized as the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art since 1983.

The aim is to assess the physical accessibility of the premises for people with physical and sensory disabilities in a historic site that has recently been renovated as a museum. Moreover, I aim to see whether the museum can offer this audience group the opportunity to participate in the museum experience.

The main argument of this study is that Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art as a state museum and an historic space ensures only partial physical accessibility to this audience group, prioritizing one segment of the group while neglecting others. Furthermore, I argue that this is the outcome of the centralized state museum system that allows museums no authority in decision making. State museums, unlike private museums, cannot develop their own strategies and remain restricted in terms of adapting new audiences. Another important angle to the argument is the fact that the historical identity of Ibrahim Pasha Palace is neglected as the museum took over its identity.

My research is based on qualitative methods, on-site participant observation and in-depth interview. I conducted two visits in March 2016 and May 2018. On my first visit, I was accompanied by a physically disabled person and made preliminary on-site observations in regard to accessibility. During my second visit, I made use of two questionnaires. One is a ready list presented in a report on people with disabilities and their main issues in Turkey. The other is a questionnaire I have formed myself based on issues presented in different sources regarding physical accessibility and museums.

This study consists of three chapters. In chapter 1, I discuss the importance of the Ibrahim Pasha Palace and its surroundings throughout its history. On the other hand, I also talk about the general Ottoman attitudes regarding cultural heritage

which was a concept then mostly negotiated around the act of preserving, an understanding which extended towards the Early Republican era.

In chapter 2, I discuss the concept and gradual development of cultural heritage and museums in Turkey after World War II under changing cultural policies of the state. I also look at their transformations under the international conventions and internal changes in law. The changing concept of citizen forms another part of this debate. I discuss how the citizen places itself into the cultural sphere with its broader identity. Most importantly I look at the relation of the individual with the state under the cultural heritage context.

In chapter 3, I discuss my main argument. In the first section, I am going back to Ibrahim Pasha Palace. I am looking at its renovations and how it turned into the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art. Under citizen-visitor debate, in section two I am looking at the definition of disability defined in international conventions and how accessibility has become an important part of the heritage discussions in Turkey after 2010. Section three of this chapter constitutes the assessment part. I present my observations during the two visits I made to the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art and assess its physical accessibility. After assessment of various parts of the museum, I make my evaluations of the institution and present my suggestions.

1. HISTORY OF IBRAHIM PASHA PALACE AND TURKISH CULTURAL POLICIES AND HERITAGE

1.1. IBRAHIM PASHA PALACE AND THE HIPPODROME DURING EARLY MODERN ERA

The Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art is currently situated at the palace of Ibrahim Pasha (d.1536), famous grand vizier of Suleiman I (d.1566). The palace is unique in the sense that it is the only remaining stonework palace of a vizier from the sixteenth century and the first “monumental building in the area that initiated the fashion of building vizirial palaces around Hippodrome”. (Kuban, 2010, p.25) The original building was a grand complex which was compromised of four of five courtyards with varying sides and elevation even though unfortunately it has not survived in its entirety today. The palace is considered to be built during the reign of Bayezid II in late fifteenth century and its initial function is still unknown. In 1521, it was repaired and turned into a palace for -then known as Ibrahim Agha- the favourite of Sultan Suleiman and remained as Ibrahim Pasha’s residence until his sudden execution in 1536. (Artan, 2015, p.371)

During this period, the palace witnessed two important events: the wedding of Ibrahim Pasha in 1524 and the circumcision festival for the princes in 1530. (Turan, 2009; Yelçe, 2014) Located on a prime site, at the north-west side of the ancient Hippodrome later known with its Turkish equivalent *Atmeydanı*, the palace was to witness more important events throughout the centuries. After the execution of Ibrahim Pasha, part of it was assigned to new recruits (*acemioğlan*) to imperial palace while other parts were assigned as lodgings for various grand viziers, statesmen and important foreign guests until late seventeenth century. (Atasoy, 1972) Apart from witnessing riots of household troops (*kapıkulu*) and new recruits (*acemioğlan*) as well as executions of several statesmen, from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the late seventeenth century the palace was the foremost venue for the Sultans to watch the festivities happening on the Hippodrome. (Atasoy,

1972; Işın, 2010) During the 1530 circumcision festivities a lodge for the throne of Suleiman I was specifically built at the palace and the most important part of the event, the circumcision of the princes, was performed in the meeting hall (*divanhane*). (Yelçe, 2014) In 1582 circumcision festivities for the son of Murad III, the palace was repaired and new parts were added, most important of these was the repair of *kasr-ı şahnişin*, a wooden balcony for the sultan which can be observed from the contemporary miniatures. (Atasoy, 1972) Thus, Ibrahim Pasha Palace served somewhat as an equivalent of the *kathisma*, the imperial lodge attached to imperial palace of the Byzantine Emperors, where they watched the games and interacted with the public. (Atasoy, 1972)

The Hippodrome itself was an important ceremonial venue which was thought to be built at time of Septimus Severus (193-211) and extended during the reign of Constantine I (306-337). (Müeller-Wiener, 2016) It continued to play a public and ceremonial role through the Byzantine era into the Ottoman period, its importance never ceased completely. In fact, Ibrahim Pasha Palace was not the first palace that was built in the same site. The palace of Antiochus, a Persian eunuch who was the tutor of Theodosius II (408-450) who had a great influence on the Emperor, was built approximately on the same spot around 429. (Greatrex, Bardill, 1996, pp. 193, 194, 197)

It is striking that both palaces were built for the personal friends and favourites of the rulers of their time. After Ibrahim Pasha's demise, the viziers who lived at the palace were also among the most prominent men of their time. In fact, most of the viziers associated with the palace served as grand viziers and they were given imperial princesses as consorts, thus were made *damad* and had a direct link with imperial family. For example, Damad Ibrahim Pasha (d.1601) who was married to Ayse Sultan, a daughter of Murad III (d.1595), resided in the palace. After his death, the palace was given to Yemişçi Hasan Pasha (d.1603), who was immediately appointed grand vizier and married the widow of Damad Ibrahim Pasha. These

examples further prove us the importance of the site and its association with the imperial power. (Atasoy, 1972; Artan, 2015)

In Ottoman chronicles and foreign travelogues, the palace was also known with other names such as *Topal Mehmed Pasha Palace* after the grand vizier who resided in it during the early seventeenth century or *Hippodrome Palace (Atmeydanı Sarayı)* due to its location, though Ibrahim Pasha Palace was continued to appear as the name it was associated with even in the early nineteenth century. For example, Antoine Ignace Melling (d.1831), famous architect and painter who worked for Selim III (d.1808) and his sister Hatice Sultan (d.1822) and lived in Istanbul for 18 years, mentioned the palace with this name in his book *Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople et des rives du Bosphore*. (Atasoy, 1972, p.39) By that time, unfortunately, the palace fell into disarray and ceased functioning as a palace. During the eighteenth century it was used as a *defterhane*, a state office where registers of land titles of various types were kept and thus came to be known as *Defterhane Palace*. Along with this function it was also used alternatingly as a “weaving mill and dyehouse, stables, barracks for the military band, the offices of the imperial registry, a storehouse for the state archives, a military warehouse, an asylum, a prison, and even a menagerie”. (Artan, 2015, p. 373) During the early nineteenth century, the palace seemingly continued to possess some of these functions. Its function constantly changing, the palace faced new problems and new identities in the coming nineteenth and twentieth centuries which themselves witnessed the emergence of a new understanding of heritage and cultural policies.

1.2. IBRAHIM PASHA PALACE AND THE HIPPODROME DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

1.2.1. Declaration of Imperial Edict of Tanzimat and the Birth of Ottoman Heritage Policies

The Tanzimat Era, which lasted until 1876 with an increasing effort of “modernization” according to Western standards, marked also the beginning of the creation of an understanding of heritage and cultural policies through the adaptation of certain trends that already existed in the West. According to Edhem Eldem, this period was defined as the “reactive” phase of historical process of cultural heritage in Turkey which regarded increasingly popular field of archaeology and museology within “the logic of a civilizational mission”. (Eldem, 2015) The “passive phase” which preceded the above-mentioned period roughly corresponded to the period from late eighteenth century to the edict of Tanzimat (1839). This phase was identified by Ottoman officials’ indifference to the increasing archaeological efforts of Europeans to unearth and took away objects of value i.e. antiquities to Europe. These antiquities were regarded as properties of the “Western Civilization” and they had to be “conserved” by Europeans. Meanwhile Ottomans took absolutely no measure to protect or preserve these objects as they did not consider them part of their history or culture. (Eldem, 2015, pp. 70-71)

During the Tanzimat period, as one of modernity’s most powerful cultural tools archaeology became more prominent. (Çelik, 2011) On one side, it was a tool for Europeans to re/define their national identities and create a basis to legitimize “their superior culture” against non-Europeans, a category which Ottomans were part of. On the other hand, Ottomans wanted to keep pace with the modernity defined by Western standards which ultimately excluded them. With increasing efforts to take archaeological ventures under control, they started to appropriate the antiquities as their own in order to put themselves in line with “European Civilization” and avoid

being branded as a “ruinous and declining state” where antiquities were neglected and gradually destroyed.

Thus, emerged the necessity of forming a national museum, an institution which was a major part of civilizing project. The main point is that the Ottomans did not form their own cultural policy or understanding of heritage based on their own unique circumstances thus creating their own context of heritage. Instead they defined their approach to archaeology, or cultural politics, as a reaction to European appropriation of antiquities i.e. within the European context. That is why the museum entered the Ottoman scene as an imported institution with little attempt to appeal to the general public. In fact, it was a political and cultural response of the upper strata of Ottoman social hierarchy who had the essential education to pursue this ideological aim. (Eldem, 2015) This outlook is very important for us to understand the establishment and progress of the understanding of heritage and museum in Turkey.

1.2.2. Birth of the “Ottoman Museum” and Re-entrance of the Hippodrome to the Political Scene during the Tanzimat Era

The first museum in Ottoman lands was founded in 1846 within two rooms of the former Byzantine Church of Hagia Eirene which was then the imperial arsenal. In the building located in the first courtyard of the Imperial Palace, two collections were established simultaneously. The collection of Ancient Arms (*Mecma-i Esliha-i Atika*) “displayed antiquated military spolia to offer a history of Ottoman military glory”. The Collection of Antiquities (*Mecma-i Asar-i Atika*), on the other hand, displayed Hellenistic and Byzantine objects across the empire to substantiate Ottoman Empire’s territorial claims over the lands in which these objects were discovered. (Shaw, 2011) The popularity of the first one led to the formation of another display: Ancient Costumes (*Elbise-i Atika*). While these two, displays of Ancient Arms and Ancient Costumes, formed a “local display” and

proved to be a major tourist attraction, they did not establish any sort of official heritage context for the national audience. (Eldem, 2015)

When we move forward to 1860s, this period began to experience certain developments in terms of heritage protection and exhibition techniques while also witnessing the return of the Hippodrome to the central scene. The general form of the Hippodrome or Atmeydanı did not change much from the time of the construction of Sultanahmet Complex (1609-1620) to the Tanzimat era apart from the certain religious buildings developing around it. The Hippodrome area had, to some extent, lost its former prominence when the imperial family moved from the Topkapı Palace to the newly constructed Dolmabahçe Palace. (Tanman & Çobanoğlu, 2010) Its meaning was always tied to the imperial power and a change in the locus of power effected its importance enormously. With the modernization effort, a particular attention was given to this area. Even before the actual movement of the imperial family to the Dolmabahçe Palace at 1856, Istanbul's "first park" based on Western standards called "Yeni Millet Bahçesi" was created at the northern corner of the Hippodrome in 1854. This was followed by the opening of the Mannequin Museum which was built adjoined to Ibrahim Pasha Palace and intended to show military and civil Ottoman costumes. (Tanman & Çobanoğlu, 2010, p. 55) This was probably built after the popularity of the above-mentioned display of ancient costumes at Hagia Eirene. Same period also witnessed the construction of *Darülfünun*, first university in Ottoman history in the Western sense, by the Fossati Brothers began in 1846 and completed in 1862 and the opening of the School of Industry (*Sanayi Mektebi*) within the complex of Sultanahmet in 1866. (Tanman & Çobanoğlu, 2010, pp. 56, 57)

The most interesting structure of this period was the exhibition venue of the "Public Ottoman Exhibition" (*Sergi-i Umumi-i Osmani*) which was the only example of Ottoman public exhibition that was brought to life. The chosen area in which the temporary building was to be constructed was at Atmeydanı between the obelisk and German fountain which had not yet been built then. (Yazıcı, 2010, p.140) It

was decided after abandoning several other plans concerning other open areas. The Hippodrome venue was apparently considered important enough as it was the most open central venue available with other high functioning buildings around the area. (Yazıcı, 2010)

This temporary building was a clear indication of the modernization effort of Tanzimat government. International exhibitions were a popular trend in Western world and they served as an arena of international cultural interactions and display of power. As a state that wished to be part of the “civilized world”, it was no surprise that the Ottomans too had organized their own exhibition which was to show the manufactured products that hailed all around the empire. (Yazıcı, 2010) Inaugurated on 13 April 1863 by Sultan Abdulaziz (d.1876) himself, which shows the degree of importance given to the project along with its symbolically charged venue, the exhibition displayed more than 10.000 items in 13 different pavilions designed specifically for the items, similar to its counterparts in Europe. (Yazıcı, 2010, p. 128) Most of the items displayed were agricultural products from all over the Empire, while the rest were objects from the Topkapı Palace such as necklaces, belts, swords, and jugs. (Yazıcı, 2010) In line with the exhibition of objects that showed the dynastic power of the Ottomans, the temporary building derived its references especially from early Ottoman architecture which was similar to European examples whose architecture had also historic references. (Yazıcı, 2010) Even though it aimed to focus on a more local than an international audience which set this exhibition apart from the international exhibitions of that period, the general plan they followed while constructing the temporary area, the ethnicity of chosen architects (French and Italian), and the way it was organized were very much in line with the international exhibitions. This shows us the continuing adaptation of the Western standards of exhibition while developing no exhibition style autochthon to Ottomans.

1860s and the following period also witnessed the beginning of the institutionalization of the Ottoman museum and introduction of certain heritage

laws in 1869, 1874, and 1884. The objects displayed at Hagia Eirene had no cataloguing nor inventorying at the beginning which showed a certain disregard for the heritage itself. The museum was renamed as “Imperial Museum” in 1868 and moved to Çinili Köşk (Tiled Pavilion) in 1877. The fifteenth-century kiosk was refurbished for this new function by the new director Philipp Anton Dethier (d.1881) who was appointed in the same year and initiated the process of institutionalization. (Eldem, 2015, p. 75) Dethier was also responsible for the adoption of the new bylaw on antiquities in 1874 to replace the inefficient one of 1869.

1.2.3. Hamidian Era, Heritage Policies and the Foundation of Islamic Endowments Museum

The most eminent figure that continued the process and the “civilizing mission” of the Tanzimat Era was Osman Hamdi Bey (d.1910) who was appointed as the director of the Museum in 1881. As the first Ottoman Muslim director of the museum, Osman Hamdi Bey was the prime example of the understanding of the post Tanzimat period which began with the accession of Abdulhamid II (d.1918) to the throne in 1876.

Deciding that the “Ottoman citizenship” idea which dictated all subjects of the Sultan equal and tried to give various ethnic subjects of the Empire an “upper identity” of Ottoman citizenry did not achieve its purpose of holding the empire together, Abdulhamid II brought forward a more Islamic based ideology to achieve that purpose. (Deringil, 1993) This change in the ideology did not prevent Abdulhamid to use “invented traditions” -as did his predecessors Mahmud II, Abdulmecid I and Abdulaziz I- in order to achieve his modernizing goals. (Deringil, 1993) This shift towards a more Islamic/Turkish identity which would form the basis of the late nineteenth-century Ottoman identity and legitimacy both nationally and globally also effected the understanding of heritage and museums albeit later than certain parts of cultural life. Most importantly, it paved the way of regarding

the Islamic objects within the definition of heritage, instead of only considering them to be “decorative objects of daily use”. Although this was a slow process, it enabled such objects to become part of the collection of Imperial Museum in 1889.

Eldem (2015) suggests that this acknowledgement of Islamic objects as part of the Imperial Museum happened more in an accidental fashion as Ottomans were trying to salvage the Anatolian mosques which were being plundered due to growing European interests on such objects. (p. 79) This explanation fits with the Ottomans being “reactionaries against European actions” as the first three laws on antiquities were formulated as protectionary measures against European excavations and pillaging. The 1884 Law which was drafted by Osman Hamdi and replaced Dethier’s 1874 bylaw was quite protectionist in its tone. 1884 Law “recognized state’s exclusive right over every site and object throughout Ottoman lands and made it illegal to remove the slightest artefact from the country.” (Çelik, 2016, p. 44) This was a visibly drastic change from the previous bylaws which were more moderate in their tone and tried to find a middle way between conflicting interests of Ottoman and European parties. It is striking that Islamic objects were not part of this law and they were included in the protective measure only in the new law which was declared in 1906 again by Osman Hamdi who was still the director of the Imperial Museum. (Eldem, 2015)

Osman Hamdi Bey also executed the movement of the Imperial Museum into a new purpose-built building in the Neoclassical style. The new edifice was initially called “Sarcophagus Museum” after the first Ottoman excavations in Sidon supervised by Osman Hamdi Bey himself present on the site. Wendy Shaw (2007) suggests that Osman Hamdi’s way of displaying the items in this new museum was again based on the same mentality that ruled previous displays: a meta narrative based on territorial identity. (p. 258) This was only strengthened by the inclusion of detailed cataloguing and extensive information on provenance which lacked in the previous displays. Osman Hamdi also tried to use the museum “to express a collective Ottoman identity which include a classical civilization as part of its territorial

heritage” thus linking Ottomans and Western civilization by making it look like the latter one was derived from Ottoman soil. (Shaw, 2007, pp. 258-259) This is in accordance with his identity as a Tanzimat era man with a civilizing mission. Interestingly, he did not have any “civilizing mission” in terms of educating the masses; his target audience were mostly international intellectuals to whom he tried to prove Ottoman Empire’s status in the Western world.

Since the opening of the new Imperial Museum, Islamic collections had their own department separated from the classical antiquities. Islamic collections were moved to Çinili Köşk in 1904 when they were enough space in the new building for the remaining part of the classical antiquities still kept in Çinili Köşk. As becoming objects of display, they have lost their utilitarian qualities of which they were previously defined with and presented for their aesthetic one. (Shaw, 2007) Also by gradually separating the two types of collections, namely Classical and Islamic, obstructed the formation of a grand narrative for the Empire that included both sides of its heritage.

While classical antiquities were gradually downplayed, Islamic collections started to gain importance and were used as part of new identity formation which was becoming increasingly Islamic/Turkic perhaps due to the devastating experience of the Balkan Wars of 1912. Finally, in 1914 the Islamic collections were moved to Islamic Endowments Museum (*Evkaf-i Islamiye Müzesi*) which was established at the public kitchen of Süleymaniye Complex with the attendance of heir apparent Yusuf İzzeddin Efendi (d.1916) and other important officials. (Yücel, 1978, pp. 691-92) This collection was to become part of the collection of the Ibrahim Pasha Palace Museum and the necessity to move the collection to another building had a different process.

1.2.4. Preservation of Historical Monuments during the Nineteenth Century: Ibrahim Pasha Palace

Above I have discussed how new buildings, especially starting with mid nineteenth-century, were built around the Hippodrome and how the area continued to remain significant due to these mostly bureaucratic and culturally meaningful buildings. Preservation of already existing historical Ottoman buildings, including Ibrahim Pasha Palace, was another story. Most vizirial palaces built in the same period with the Ibrahim Pasha Palace were included in the waqf system. An intricate system, waqf system allowed individuals to provide necessary means to preserve their buildings in the coming years after their passing. Artan (2015) defines waqf system as such:

“The land and the structures built on them could be further bequeathed to (and become part of) charitable endowments (waqf), in which case their revenues would be consigned to the restricted benefit of religious or philanthropic institutions. Such donations could be designated to sustain certain persons determined by the bequeather, for instance, the employees of specified religious establishments or descendants of the bequeather. In the latter case, this was a family endowment.” (p.367)

Ibrahim Pasha Palace was one the rare vizirial buildings that was not included in this system, so after the death of Ibrahim Pasha in 1536 it was reverted back to throne as *miri* land. Thus state/sultan could allocate the building to whomever he wished and to whatever purpose necessary. That is why the upkeep of the building whose parts were used for different functions from the eighteenth century onwards was the duty of the state instead of a waqf system which was way more efficient in terms of preservation. Thus, even though surviving in a partial state due its being a stone palace, the edifice fell into decay.

The waqf system was abolished in 1836, not surprisingly at the beginning of the Tanzimat Era. The preservation of the waqf buildings were given to the newly

established Ministry of Pious Foundations which eventually failed to deliver the necessary maintenance to the Ottoman buildings. By late nineteenth century, these buildings were considered “antiquities” on their own. (Altinyıldız, 2007)

In 1912 Law on Preservation of Monuments was drafted and it included the passage “places and works from any period whatsoever be preserved as antiquities” which was an amplified version of the 1906 law which included all historical buildings on archaeological finds were to be preserved. (Altinyıldız, 2007, p.286) Also in 1915, amidst the World War I, the Council for the Preservation of the Monuments (*Asar-ı Atika Encümeni*) was established for the implementation of the 1912 law in Istanbul. This body had a dual function: it was to *preserve* and if deemed dangerous or not historically significant enough, to *demolish*. If the building constituted a danger for its surroundings, it could be pulled down immediately; their decorated parts, on the other hand, were to be preserved. (Altinyıldız, 2007) This paved the way of demolishing any building “deemed dangerous” according to the council regardless of their historical value.

Thus, above-mentioned Islamic Endowments Museum was in fact established to preserve the precious items from the mosques, mausoleums, convents which could be demolished due their decaying state. While the public kitchen of Süleymaniye Complex was chosen to give it a pretext to be preserved. Both the foundation of Islamic Endowments Museum and the introduction of the 1912 law were particularly important for the future of the Ibrahim Pasha Palace and its collection.

1.3. BIRTH OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY AND CHANGING CULTURAL POLICIES

1.3.1. Early Republican Preservation Policies: Struggle for Ibrahim Pasha Palace and Urbanization of the Hippodrome

With the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, a new ideology for the formation of the nation was formulized and started to be implemented after a devastating period of war. The promotion of the Turco-Islamic identity which gained momentum during 1910s had transformed into a secularist ideology intent on keeping the Turkish dimension while leaving out its Islamic components. (Eldem, 2015)

Instead, the republican government devised a new “civilizational model” by focusing on the history of the Turkish nation. Similar to the Western trend of the period, the new intelligentsia of the Republic aimed to create its own history of origins, separating it from its Islamic links while suggesting an origins story based on Central Asia, a region where according to this model all civilizations derived from including the Western one. (Eldem, 2015) Thus, by creating a new model, republican ideology was deliberately opposing to the Western model of civilization while continuing using its tools much like the Ottoman approach during mid to late nineteenth century. Apart from Central Asia, this new history of origins which was called “Turkish Thesis of History” soon came to include Anatolian, Mesopotamian, and Mediterranean civilizations. This new outlook had tremendous effect on understanding of cultural heritage.

Intent on shaping the general public, the new government pushed a rigorous educational programme focusing on this new “history”. In this context, archaeological excavations experienced a boom as they were to substantiate the origins of the nation supposedly proving them to be the “original settlers” of

Anatolia established long before the Greeks and others. (Eldem, 2015, p. 83) In this context, museums and their content became major tools of education for the general public, unlike the Ottoman period where they were just testaments of Ottoman modernity to the international audience.

During the first Turkish History Congress in 1932 Halil Edhem Eldem, former director of Imperial Museum (1910-1931) and younger brother of Osman Hamdi Bey, defined museum as “an essential part of a civilization which constitutes and presents national treasures”. (1932/2010, p.565) They were also “partially responsible for the attraction of the travellers”, whereas preservation of historical buildings which were also considered “a museum of their own” was as important. (Eldem, 1932/2010, p.566)

This definition, which was made during the height of implementation process of the secular/national ideology on cultural sphere, explains how museums and cultural heritage were perceived at that era. First of all, they were still part of the “civilizing mission” intent on educating the general public. This can be further seen by the fact that in 1922, a year before the proclamation of Turkish Republic, a Directorate of Antiquities and Museums (*Asar-ı Atika ve Müzeler Müdürlüğü*) was established under the newly founded Ministry of Education in Ankara.¹

Secondly, with his speech Halil Edhem drew attention to a growing problem of preservation of the historical buildings most of whom were in dilapidated state due to lack of maintenance. Due to financial insufficiencies and government building interest shifting towards the new capital Ankara; many historical buildings in Istanbul, most of which could be considered heritage, were sold to contractors and subsequently destroyed. (Altinyıldız, 2007, p. 290) The aim was to build newer buildings with modern functions as the city was in dire need of urbanization. As the situation became urgent, a commission for the preservation of the monuments

¹ <http://www.kulturvarliklari.gov.tr/TR,43034/tarihce.html>

(*Anıtları Koruma Kurulu*) was formed in 1933 with the order of the Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Along with this commission, an effort was made to prepare a bill for a law of preservation of the monuments to replace the one enacted in 1906; but it was never ratified in the parliament thus never came to life and implemented. (Altinyıldız, 2007, p. 290)

In this context, Ibrahim Pasha Palace was also under the threat of destruction due to its own dilapidated state. It was partially used as a prison and partially used as a storage for the documents of Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Land Registry. Furthermore, in time it came to be surrounded by various minor and relatively newer buildings which prevented the palace to be seen by public eyes. So, it was no surprise that in 1938 members of an architectural committee formed and headed by Muhittin Üstündağ (d.1953), governor of Istanbul at the time, issued a report that suggested the destruction of the palace and construction of a new building under the supervision of the same committee. (Çetintaş, 2011, p.63)

Sedat Çetintaş (d.1965), an architect and also a founding member of commission for the preservation of the monuments, opposed this report and went into a struggle in order to save Ibrahim Pasha Palace which he correctly identified as a palace belonging to sixteenth century by closely examining it. (2011, p.65) In his numerous newspaper articles, starting from June 1938, he defended the preservation of the palace by defining it as an original “Turkish Palace” which was in line with the prevalent ideology of that time. Many of his opponents argued for the destruction of the building claiming that it was not a palace in the first place and the area was designated as a quarter of governmental buildings by Henri Prost (d.1959) in his master plan of Istanbul which was drafted in 1937. (Çetintaş, 2011)

Interestingly, one of the main parts of Prost’s master plan was the conservation of monuments which included not only historical buildings but also complete historical areas of Istanbul. (Akpınar, 2014) Furthermore, Prost had suggested the formation of an Archaeological Park between the Hippodrome and the Marmara

Sea as early as 1934. The designated park was to cover this particular area as it was burned to the ground in 1933. As such, it was suitable for the archaeological excavations and the creation of an archaeological reserve. (Pinon, 2010, pp. 152-53) The focus of his plan, though, was on possible Byzantine remains on the area and not on “Ottoman” buildings. Thus, Çetintaş and many others blamed Prost to be pro-Byzantine in his planning while neglecting the area’s Turkish/Ottoman past except for Sultanahmet Mosque and this part of the master plan was quickly discarded.

Under these discussions regarding the area and the monuments, in 1939, despite government decision to investigate the Ibrahim Pasha Palace to determine whether the building was in fact a palace, parts of the building including sections around third and fourth courtyards were demolished in order to build a new courthouse. (Ölçer, 2002, p. 24) The commencing of World War II stalled the construction of the new building until 1951 and it was opened in 1955 whereas Ibrahim Pasha Palace was partly saved. Its second courtyard and *divanhane* section where the grand vizier held his meetings, entertained his important guests, and where sultans watched the festivities on the Hippodrome were still intact. The remaining parts of the palace was to be restored to function as a museum and the restorations started in 1965. (Ölçer, 2002)

1.3.2. Early Republican Era Museums and Fate of Islamic Endowments Museum

In 1924, Islamic Endowments Museum ceased to exist as an independent directorate and was put under the Topkapı Palace Museum directorate which itself was newly formed under the General Directorate of Istanbul Museums under the Ministry of Education. (Şahin, Kutluay & Çelen, 2014) Although the museum remained at Süleymaniye, its name was changed into Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art in the same year. The collection grew further with the abolishment of

mystic orders and their lodges in 1925, as the objects belonging to these orders flowed into the museum from all over the country. (Ölçer, 2002, p.18)

As discussed above, the prevalent ideology of the early republican era excluded the Islamic part from the identity formation of the new Republic. Ottoman past was also glorified as long as it remained a past that was distant such as “Ottoman Classical Age” which corresponded to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and posed no monarchist threat to the Republican ideology. (Shaw, 2007) Subsequent centuries, on the other hand, were presented as “centuries of decline” that created a corrupt imperial system that was cleansed by the modern state.

Topkapı Palace Museum which was established in 1924 is a fine example of this understanding. Found in a dilapidated state as it was cast aside by the Ottoman sultans during most of the nineteenth century and was subsequently neglected, the restoration of the palace started only in 1939, the year that has also witnessed the Hippodrome area regaining its former importance. During the restorations between 1939 and 1942, the layered structure and distinctive decoration of the palace which evolved within centuries were ignored and only those belonging to the “classical age” were focused on. Furthermore, some parts of the palace had been “redecorated” at various times using classical age tiles which may not represent what was originally there. (Shaw, 2007, p. 272)

In this context, it was no surprise that the Islamic artefacts were collected not in order to form a consciously designed display but rather to keep them “safe” and the recently renamed Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art was closed to public in 1922 only to be reopened in in 1949. (Şahin et al, 2014, p. 40) Those artefacts belonging to the “glorious classical age” were already in display in Topkapı Museum as a carefully redesigned secularized space serving to the political ideology at that time. They were not regarded as Islamic but more as historical objects that originated from and represented a certain period of the past. Thus, Topkapı Museum represented all the necessary qualities that a museum should have which was listed

by Halil Edhem Eldem in his speech: a “civilizing mission” which in this context was to educate public about their glorious (and distant) past; “keeping of national treasures” that belonged to that particular past; and also, serving as an “attraction to travellers” as a “preserved” historical monument.

While mostly closed to public, the period between 1924-1964 saw the collection of Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art being exchanged among various museums, most important being the Topkapı Palace Museum. In 1964, the Museum regained its independent status and objects in rotation were gradually returned while donations and acquisitions further expanded the collection. This expansion and current situation of the Süleymaniye Mosque imaret in which museum was situated since 1914 brought forward the possibility of moving the museum. (Ölçer, 2002, pp. 18-19) In the end the decision fell on the Ibrahim Pasha Palace which was closer to other significant cultural monuments such as Topkapı Palace, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul Archaeology Museums, and Sultanahmet Mosque. This change in location would enable the considerable Turkish and Islamic arts collection find a place not only in the central cultural hub of Istanbul, but in a very prominent building that represented a power hub and a heritage site like the other monuments listed above.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND MUSEUMS IN TURKEY AFTER WORLD WAR II

2.1. POLITICAL CONTEXT AND CULTURAL POLICIES: TURKEY (1950-1970)

During 1950s, Turkey entered a new political phase with the transition from one-party system into multi-party system, simultaneously witnessing a population rise and a migration wave from rural to urban areas leading into an uneven economic development. (İnce, Öncü & Ada, 2011) The shift from one-party system to multi-party system created a political environment that was prone to instabilities as instead of a dominating ideology of one party rule; various different ideologies found their way into the political arena. This paved the way for representation of many while on the other hand creating political polarization in a country where the system was in its junior years. The emergent Democrat Party, which was founded in 1946 and won the elections of 1950, would dominate the political arena during following decade and continue the grand project of “creating a national identity/culture” by re-introducing the element of Islam into the formula. (Dodd, 2016) The migration wave on the other hand, resulted in “uneven urbanization” which damaged the “ideal of planned urbanization” which was the mark of modernity according to the intellectual urban elites. (Erman, 2016, p. 386) Thus, 1950s brought beginnings of massive industrialization, rapid urbanization, and a relatively more democratic political system. These intertwined political, urban, and economic changes had tremendous effect on cultural policies and heritage.

Ersin Kalaycıoğlu (2016) argues that Republican ideology, which was dominant between 1922-1950, brought forward a certain “cultural project”. (p.226) This project sought to bring out the cultural and intellectual capabilities of the individuals while setting them free from the religious restraints that was imposed on them. Thus this period saw education and culture go hand in hand with major political support in order to create the “ideal citizen” who is to be “modern” and

loyal to the State. With a relatively more relaxed attitude towards religion, the Democrat Party loosened the “cultural project” of early Republican years. Democrat Party decided to maintain, albeit with relatively less importance, three major cultural institutions which were established during the one-party period: Turkish Historical Society (1931), Turkish Language Institute (1932), and Ministry of Education (1924). Whereas other two institutions, People’s Houses (1932) and Village Institutes (1940), that were formed to transmit “national culture” to masses were closed down. (Ada, 2009, p. 97) Maybe it was due to the fact that the latter two had direct impact on transforming the masses into ideal citizens according to the Republican ideology via participatory methods. For example, as cultural hubs, People’s Houses were open to all ages and all types of people. They created “nine activity units including sports, public classes and courses, libraries and publications, fine arts, drama, folklore-literature-languages, social welfare, and museology-exhibitions”. (Katoğlu, 2009, pp. 43-44) Museum itself was apparently taken to the masses who could not access formal museums via museum units. In 1944, 90 of the 405 People’s Houses had history and museum units. (Ünsal, 2009, p. 164)

Thus, while culture was an inseparable part of the “modernizing project” of one-party period, Democrat Party rule put culture into a secondary role. It was now a goal to be attained after achieving certain development goals, mostly in economic terms. (Ünsal, 2009) Thus, the main political focus was given to economic development through industrialization with the help of USA while following a pro-Western foreign policy: joining NATO in 1952. While economic boom continued well enough until mid-1950s, government took no measures to plan and organize the migration wave that started with the industrialization period. This major influx of people from different regions of the country to the major cities resulted in irregular urbanization and social isolation of these newcomers who had limited access to city resources especially in terms of education and culture. Instead of bettering their circumstances, the government continued to regard them as tools of industrialization as cheap labour and did not consider them as “proper citizens”.

(Erman, 2016, p. 380) Thus the Republican ideal of transforming the individuals into model secular citizens failed twice: first by the government's reluctance to continue the cultural policies of the previous period and second by the congregation of a massive amount of people from different social and cultural backgrounds into an insufficient space in a limited amount of time. This created an outcome of alternative cultures i.e. alternative identities thus bringing forward the question of "who is the citizen?" and beginning of redefinition of the "citizenship" itself. Kalaycıoğlu (2016) states that this period marked the re-introduction of *kulturkampf*, the cultural struggle between secular-elites and Conservative-Islamists. (p. 229) This debate on citizenship would continue in the following decades and effect the way cultural sector and its policies were defined.

2.1.1. Museums and Heritage: Turkish Context

In terms of politics, 1960s and 1970s, after the coup d'état, saw the introduction of a more liberal constitution and an increasingly volatile political arena divided between left and right-wing parties constantly engaging in debates; in street level this reflected as outright violence. Import substitution industrialisation policies, which advocated local production of goods instead of foreign imports, were followed from 1963 to 1980s indicating an inwards orientation in terms of economy. (Yılmaz, 2016) According to Orhan Koçak (2001), 1950s and 1960s can be described as a "no-policy" period in terms of cultural policy making. (p. 370) During 1970s we can talk about a policy which was aimed to follow international developments and started to regard tourism as part of the economy. Number of museums were increased in provinces but their target audience was tourists rather than locals and museums did little to engage with their local communities. (Ünsal, 2009) Museums which were defined as "the only modern institution that conveys fundamental reality of the country, past and present, to the ideal community of today, the nation" by Remzi Oğuz Arık in 1947, failed to achieve conveying this reality. (p.5) Museums instead conveyed a narrative about a "distant history" that was detached from the country's politically

divided situation at the time; and that to the tourists and not to locals. Thus, in a way, museums represented what was considered “safe” and “distant” from the actual reality and remained detached from the general public.

In this context, unsurprisingly, museums as a major cultural tool educate citizens according to Republican ideals lost the political support they previously enjoyed. Until 1960s, new museum buildings could not be built due to budgetary restraints; works were stored and exhibited in either storage buildings or in restored buildings. (Ünsal, 2009) Murat Katoğlu (2009) mentions four types of museum structure that can be found during 1960s and 1970s. (p. 50) The first one is the purpose-built museums such as İzmir Archeology Museum (1926) and Ankara Ethnography Museum (1927), which were fewer in number due to budgetary reasons. Second group was archaeological site museums such as Ephesus (1934) and Aphrodisias (1979) which were to become major touristic attractions of Turkey. Third were the monument-museums which were historically and culturally significant monuments turned into museums such as Hagia Sophia (1934). Fourth were the archaeological museums that were opened in restored historic buildings. Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts belonged to this fourth category since its foundation in 1914. It was first opened in the public kitchen of Süleymaniye complex which was the part of an important historic building complex then it was moved to the restored part of the Ibrahim Pasha Palace, another important historic building.

In terms of preservation of historical monuments in Turkey, two important developments could be observed in this period: the establishment of the autonomous High Council of Monuments (Gayrimenkul Eski Eserler ve Anıtlar Yüksek Kurulu) in 1951 and the first heritage legislation of the Republic “1710 Law of Ancient Works of Art” effective of 1973. (Atakuman, 2010)

The High Council of Monuments consisted of experts and academics, indicating a certain will to bring a more professional approach to conservation in an era of rapid urbanization. Major cities were in urgent need of conservation plans due to

increasing population, but lack of resources was an obstacle. Furthermore, the reluctance of the government, whose idea of modernization was equal to reconstructing cities through major projects, in forming plans for preservation made it even harder for the Council to function properly and realize their conservation plans. (Atakuman, 2010) Thus despite the existence of this Council, parts of Ibrahim Pasha Palace were demolished in order to make way for the new Palace of Justice in 1951 while restorations for the remaining parts started only in 1965.

The other important development of the period was the Law of Ancient Works of Art of 1973. Legislation of 1906 which included Turkish-Islamic heritage and Non-Islamic heritage in the definition of ‘historic artefact’ was in motion until the drafting of the new legislation in 1973. (Güçhan & Kurul, 2009, p. 23) The 1973 Law regarding conservation of heritage brought forward the introduction of the “site” (*sit*) into the Turkish jargon, defining the term as:

... those topographical places that need to be preserved and put to good use for their historic, aesthetic, artistic, scientific, ecologic, ethnographic, timeless and legendary significance. (1710 Law of Ancient Works of Art, article 1)

Thus while 1906 Law was about preserving individual monuments and buildings, 1973 law brought a more holistic approach to the heritage conservation. (Güçhan& Kurul, 2009; Katoğlu, 2009) Another important point of this law was the fact that “protection was to be conceived as an activity that started at the planning stage”. (Dinçer, Enlil& Ünsal, 2011, p. 222)

One of the most important developments of this period was the formation of a separate Ministry of Culture in 1971. Although its name and responsibilities changed several times until it became Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2003, the ministry remains the most important actor in terms of cultural policy and heritage in Turkey. In order to understand the general structure and administration of state

museums, of which Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art is a part of, it is important to look at the structure of Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

2.1.2. Museums and Heritage: International Treaties and Institutions

It is not surprising to see that developments in terms of heritage gained momentum in Turkey in parallel to Europe where the concept of heritage and its regulations were re-defined by international regulations during 1960s and 1970s. As a country in alliance with Western powers since the beginning of 1950s, Turkey followed international conventions closely even though not ratifying all of them immediately.

This period witnessed the signing of several international conventions regarding the cultural sphere: 1952 European Convention on Human Rights, 1954 European Cultural Convention, and 1969 London Convention on Protection of Archaeological Heritage all put in effect by Council of Europe of which Turkey was a member state since 1949. Turkey ratified the first two, but not the 1969 one until it was revised in 1990s. In order to understand what cultural heritage means, we can look at Article 5 of the 1954 European Cultural Convention which states:

Each Contracting Party shall regard the objects of European cultural value placed under its control as integral parts of the common cultural heritage of Europe, shall take appropriate measures to safeguard them and shall ensure reasonable access there to.² (European Cultural Convention, article 5)

It enforces the signing members to protect and conserve cultural heritage and more importantly to ensure access to cultural heritage. This definition can be considered vague as it does not define “who” can gain access to cultural heritage or “how” nor does it state “what” constitutes cultural heritage.

² <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168006457e>

The first comprehensive definition of heritage was found in the 1972 UNESCO Convention of Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage. A revision of the 1964 Venice Charter which defined cultural heritage only as historic monuments and historic sites,³ the 1972 Convention made a very important distinction between cultural and natural heritage. Cultural heritage was divided into categories as monuments, groups of buildings, and sites. Article 5 of 1972 Convention gave detailed measures necessary to be taken by the signatory states: to adopt a certain heritage policy; set up services for protection, conservation and presentation with adequate staff; developing scientific methods to research and create operating methods to encounter dangers that threaten the heritage; take the appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures necessary for the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of this heritage; to foster the establishment or development of national or regional centres for training. Each signatory was thus “responsible of protection, conservation, and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage situated on its territory”. (UNESCO Convention of Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, Article 5)

Interestingly, Turkey did not ratify the 1972 Convention until 1983. Thus, it acknowledged neither these definitions of heritage nor these requirements for the protection of the cultural heritage throughout the 1970s. As stated above, the government was more focused on stabilizing its economy and curbing political protests; culture was secondary in terms of importance, nor did they have necessary funding to implement these methods. On the other hand, the 1973 Law which introduced definition of “sites” could be seen as a direct outcome of this Convention, though it failed to address heritage management problems intrinsic to Turkey which were still defined by the outdated and inadequate 1906 Law. (Atakuman, 2010)

³ <https://www.icomos.org/publications/hommedecin.pdf>

Same period also saw the establishment of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in 1964 in line with International Charter on the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (Venice Charter). ICOMOS was a global non-governmental organisation that aimed to “promote the conservation, protection, use and enhancement of monuments, building complexes and sites.” It was comprised of experts from different fields such as archaeology, architecture, history, art history, anthropology, engineering, and town planning. Most importantly it acted as an advisory body to UNESCO World Heritage Committee and reviewed the sites that were nominated.⁴ ICOMOS Turkey National Committee was established in 1974 after the drafting of 1973 Law.

In 1970s, we can talk about a conflicting outlook in terms of heritage and museums in Turkey. Even though Turkey followed international conventions and established certain regulations according to these agreements, it officially did not recognize the main definition of heritage and the necessary precautions to preserve its heritage until 1983. We can say that on one hand Turkey wanted to adapt to international trends but in a *limited* way, by agreeing on less specific agreements such as 1954 Convention or opening an ICOMOS committee in 1974. On the other hand, due to its economic and urban plans, Turkey wanted to continue its major urban reconstruction plans which can conflict with the requirements of 1972 Convention on protecting and conserving the heritage. As an example of the conflicting situation of heritage in Turkey we can point to the 1973 Law. The heavy penalties introduced by law against mistreatment of historic buildings intimidated potential investors and resulted in people restraining from investing in them rather than encouraging the conservation of historic buildings. Instead, these buildings were rented out to newly arrived migrants or used for commercial or manufacturing activities which most likely caused more damage to the buildings. (Dinçer et al, 2011, p. 222)

⁴ <http://www.icomos.org.tr/?Sayfa=Icerik&ayrinti=Icomos&dil=en>

Museums, on the other hand, were in a period of stagnation. Neither implementing a certain civilizing ideology of the previous period nor offering a new one, they became even more detached from the public and were put in a secondary role under the economy and education. A new ministry was formed in 1971 for cultural affairs as education was prioritized and culture fell second to education. This meant that culture was now not seen as part of education or creating the ideal citizen anymore, it was leaning more towards tourism and slowly becoming a venue for economic developments.

2.2. POLITICAL CONTEXT AND CULTURAL POLICIES: TURKEY (1980-PRESENT)

2.2.1. Heritage: International Definition

The 1980s in Western hemisphere can be defined with the rise of right wing parties with a neo-liberal economic agenda as opposed to the Keynesian economic system of previous periods. This was also applicable for Turkey. 1980s opened with the third military coup d'état which was the outcome of violent clashes between different political groups in the streets, deepened economic crisis, and political instability in the parliament. (Dodd, 2016) The result of the coup d'état was suppression of political parties, trade unions, universities, and re-distribution of political power into the newly established political parties. One of the most important results was the formation of a new constitution which was restrictive in terms of personal and political liberties in relation with the previous constitution of 1961. (Dodd, 2016)

The country returned to its multi-party system in 1983 under the watchful eye of the Turkish Military. 1983 elections saw the emergence of the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi) led by Turgut Özal (d.1993), former advisor of right wing four-time prime minister Süleyman Demirel who was banned from political life for 10 years. Motherland Party, a successor of centre-right Justice Party, gradually

introduced free market economy which foresees the prices to be decided by open market with limited state intervention. This system was supported by international financial institutions, namely IMF and World Bank. (Bölükbaşı, 2016) Thus, 1980s political agenda aimed for a citizen who was to be apolitical i.e. not threatening to the existence of the state; and the recently introduced free market economy system was soon to turn this apolitical citizen into a consumer-citizen.

During 1990s this process was accelerated first by the rapid rise of the private sector effecting every sphere of social life such as education and health care. (Ünsal, 2009) Rise of the private sector brought forward different service providers other than the state. This eventually effected cultural institutions and policies. In Turkey, private cultural initiatives started to appear and gained momentum in this period. Foremost examples were the Sadberk Hanım Museum, first private museum in Turkey which was opened in 1980, and the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV), a private foundation that launched the Istanbul Festival, established in 1973. The private initiatives increased during 1990s with the acceleration of the EU integration process and the rise of the private sector actors/Turkish bourgeoisie who sought to gain prestige through sponsoring cultural institutions or forming their own.

Since the beginning of 2000s we can witness the transformative power of globalization, which not only effected economy but also politics, society, and ultimately culture. I believe it is one of the most important factors that designate today's cultural policies and institutions. Globalization altered the consumer-citizen who was born in 1980s and reached his/her puberty in 1990s. It reflected in the "consumer" through the rise of heritage tourism and the private museums which provided leisure and new experience to masses. It reflected in the "citizen" through the rise of the concepts of civil society and civil initiatives in culture through which the apolitical citizen transformed into a conscious decision maker. (Ünsal, 2009, p. 173) In this context, cities emerged as the space in which these debates and experiences unfold. At one hand, globalization pushed cities into global market in

which they started to compete with each other. On the other hand, cities emerged as the site where democratic requests of the more conscious consumer-citizen were formed, debated, and contested.

The democratic requests in this context correspond to a wish for the state to be more transparent and accountable while sharing its decision-making power with local administrators, private sector, non-governmental organizations, and citizens. With the advent of the neo-liberal economic policies, Turkish State developed a Public Administration Reform which accepted the approach of “governance”. It involved the above-mentioned transparency, democratic organization, and more importantly devolution of state powers to local administrations and partnership with private sector and non-governmental organizations. (Ünsal, 2009) “Democratic and civil” requests echoed more in Turkey as it had a strong patrimonial political culture in which the State decided everything and civil society remained undeveloped. (Kalaycıoğlu, 2016) Thus whether this type of governance resulted in a more democratic way of organizing or whether it resulted only in the privatizing certain state functions is an issue of debate.

All the concepts that were discussed above, globalization, localization, governance model, democratization, civil society had distinct effects on the understanding of cultural heritage and museums which went under a major transformation in 2000s.

In terms of heritage, there are three important conventions that were prepared in 2000s that define the changing definition of heritage under recurring trends: 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2005 UNESCO Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and Faro Convention of Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Council of Europe). 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage brought forward a new side of heritage which was previously defined as “cultural” and “natural” in 1972. Meanwhile, the Florence Convention of European Landscapes

in 2000 focused on the idea of “landscape” and how it related to heritage. 2003 UNESCO Convention further introduced the concept of “intangible heritage”:

The “intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. (2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, article 2.1)

Including items such as expressions, practices, and skills for the first time in the definition, the 2003 Convention brings a more humane and holistic approach to cultural heritage. Making specific mention of cultural spaces associated with these items, the definition further stresses the significance of historically or culturally relevant spaces.

Graham Fairclough (2011) argues that heritage was defined more on material/physical terms instead of values/meanings through various conventions of previous decades until the declaration of the Faro Convention of Value of Cultural Heritage for Society in 2005 by the Council of Europe. (p. 34) The previous conventions of Granada (1985) and Valetta (1992) were concerned mostly with “how” heritage was practiced whereas Faro answered the question “why”. 2005 Faro Convention defined cultural heritage as:

a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time. (2005 Faro Convention of Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, article 2)

This definition brought more “human value” side of cultural heritage. Heritage is clearly defined as a concept that is more about personal “expression” and a concept that is “constantly evolving”. We can also call this micro level “actual value” of heritage. Thus, heritage objects started to matter less than what they *mean* to people. (Fairclough, 2011) This opposes the idea of heritage value created by certain institutions like UNESCO’s “outstanding universal value” which reflected

in government law and decisions on heritage and found acceptance as authorized heritage discourse, in other words the official way of talking about heritage. (Smith, 2006) Thus, FARO regards cultural heritage as something that belongs to the everyday realities of people, as values that are re-interpreted constantly rather than remote objects to be gazed and consumed as labelled by certain institutions.

Another important addition to the definition of cultural heritage was the introduction of “heritage communities”:

a heritage community consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations. (2005 Faro Convention of Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, article 2)

Fairclough (2011) further argues that this convention brings heritage beyond the government ratification; it seeks for people to act for themselves and their communities. (p. 35) Thus, this new concept further enhances the “human value” in relation to the cultural heritage and more importantly acknowledges the “public action” which makes public an active participant rather than a passive observer.

2.2.2. Museums: International definition

The change in the understanding of museums continued through the 2000s. The definition of museum presented by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in 2007 is considered to be the globally valid one. ICOM definition of museum reads:

A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment. (Desvallées & Mairesse, 2010, p. 57)

This definition reflects an ultimate break with centuries-old traditions. A very early concept of museums in Europe appeared in fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Italy in the form of princely collections and patronage towards cabinets of curiosities of

eighteenth century. (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992) Museum as an institution as we understand today appeared in the nineteenth century as a “temple of knowledge” presenting a selective and elitist view of history which abided until late twentieth century. This “old” type of museum was responsible for preservation and conservation. In terms of exhibition, it was authoritative as it dictated what is to be exhibited and how according to its own world-view. These museums were unquestioned temples of “civilization and modernity”. (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000) Late twentieth and early twenty-first century post-colonial age brought globalization, rise of civic society, multiculturalism which re-defined the understanding of the museum, more importantly changed the perception of museum-public relations. (Ünsal, 2012) Also in terms of economy, under neo-liberal policies which stopped funding the state museums, they had to justify their existence and prove their economic validity as an income provider for the people. (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p. 11) Furthermore, they were now expected to operate in a more “inclusive” way responding to the needs of an increasingly democratic society. Museums entered into a period of visitor focused understanding which promotes social inclusion and equal accessibility. (Ünsal, 2012) This resulted in changes in definitions of museum and adaptation of new museum practices in terms of exhibition, education, and marketing.

How does Turkey fit into these new definitions of cultural heritage and museum? In order to answer to this question, we have to look at the development of cultural heritage in previous three decades starting from 1980s.

2.2.3. Heritage: Turkey

The first major act of post-coup d'état government was to devise a new law that would re-define heritage and its conservation. In 1983, Law of Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage (2863) was accepted. This is the law that is still in effect even though various amendments were made during 2000s. 1983 also witnessed Turkey ratifying 1972 UNESCO convention thus accepting the international definition of cultural and natural heritage. This was reflected in the 1983 Law as it changed the term “antiquity” (*âsâr-ı âtika*) which was in use since 1906 law into the concepts of “cultural and natural heritage” (*kültür ve tabiat varlıkları*). (Cultural Policy Report, 222; 1983 Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarını Koruma Kanunu)

There are four amendments that were made in 2004 to the Law of 1983 which enabled private sector to be more involved in the cultural field. Budgetary problems observed in 1970s continued to plague the state institutions that were responsible for the preservation and management of cultural heritage sites, museums, and historical monuments. (Pulhan, 2009) Within these amendments, Law 5226 “Conservation for Cultural and Natural Properties” (Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarını Koruma Kanunu ile Çeşitli Kanunlarda Değişiklik Yapılması Hakkında Kanun) of 2004 deserves a closer look within the scope of the study. It brought two new approaches into the cultural heritage sphere in Turkey: the relegation of authority to local government and application of a new model of cultural heritage. (Pulhan, 2009) The second one is about the introduction of the concept of “site management” for archaeological and historical sites.

Site management entered international discourse as a cultural heritage term with the ICOMOS charter of the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage in 1990. It is an ambiguous term with many differing (and sometimes conflicting) meanings. It was used sometimes “as a design for conservation interventions; sometimes as a shorthand for activities that involve public at heritage

sites; sometimes refer to normal administrative routines”. (Shoup & Zan, 2013, p. 170) Various meanings of the concept suggest involvement of participation of different stakeholder groups whose interests may differ. Those stakeholders are professionals such as archaeologists, academicians, architects; government agencies who represent the state and public administration; and public itself may it be local community or tourists. (Pulhan, 2009) The entire process of a site management plan, from the planning to the implementation, is an area of contestation among different interest groups. Thus, looking at Istanbul Site Management plan is a good way to see the degree of involvement of these groups and understand the functioning mechanism of cultural heritage in Turkey.

As UNESCO requires formal management of World Heritage Sites since 1998, the Historic Areas of Istanbul which entered UNESCO World Heritage List in 1985 also required one. (Shoup & Zan, 2013) Historic Areas of Istanbul is formed by four disconnected zones on the historical peninsula of Istanbul. The Sultanahmet area, where Ibrahim Pasha Palace/Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts is located, is in Archaeological Park Zone.⁵ As the state failed to provide many of the historical monuments located in this zone with adequate maintenance, it decided to prepare a site management plan in 2006 under continuing pressure from UNESCO. (Shoup & Zan, 2013, pp. 171-72)

The site management plan of Istanbul is a complex plan with intertwined phases and actors. A closer look of it demonstrates two important points in regard to understanding cultural heritage management in Turkey. Firstly, the importance of public administrators as key stakeholders in cultural heritage management as opposed to “participation of users and inhabitants” i.e. public. (Shoup & Zan, 2013) Shoup and Zan (2013) argue that Istanbul Site Management Plan was not participatory as in the way of including different stakeholders into the decision-making process. Government agencies, as the largest group in the advisory board,

⁵ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/356>

decided on the agenda while limiting the number of cultural heritage experts who represent the academic side of conservation which was overlooked also in research side. (pp. 188-89) The concept of participation, which was emphasized throughout the processes of planning, was turned into a “negotiation between different groups in power, not a forum including the average citizen”. (Shoup & Zan, 2013, p. 191)

Second point, which is related to the first, is how the “relegation of authority to local government bodies” which was stated in 2004 Law actually failed in terms of power sharing. It was, in fact, a system of privatizing/outsourcing certain services in order to increase funding while delegating certain procedural functions to smaller agencies who did not participate in decision making processes. For example, ISMD (Istanbul Site Management Directorate) was responsible body for the preparation of a site management plan. It was founded by IMM (Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality), an important government stakeholder in supervision of cultural heritage. At first glance the presence of ISMD can be regarded as a good example of “relegation of authority” to smaller agencies according to New Public Management. In reality, this agency acted as a weak connection among various stakeholders who had their own interests and budgets as well as responsibility for the implementation of the Site Management Plan. ISMD assumed more secretarial tasks and acted as a “coordinating” body rather than a “managing” entity as the Metropolitan Municipality wished to run things as it saw fit and would not allow itself to be dictated by another agency. (Shoup & Zan, 2013, pp. 187-88) Thus, the real authority remained with the central government agencies.

This debate of Istanbul Site Management Plan suggests that cultural heritage in Turkey is still a long way from “human value based heritage” that was defined in the 2005 FARO convention which is yet to be ratified by Turkey. In an age where diverse stakeholders, especially rising presence of civil society in which different voices from different social groups are started to be heard within various cultural spheres, Turkey with its strong tradition of centralization remains weak in terms of being participatory.

2.2.4. Museums: Turkey

Museums are the institutions in which cultural heritage, tangible and intangible, are made accessible to the public. Centralized system that governs cultural heritage sector also appears in governance of museums. According to Ünsal, state museums act as “cultural assets for which policies are developed and administered, but not as decision makers”. (2009, p. 160)

Turkish state is highly centralized yet fragmented. In the cultural sector, like other state sectors, there are various responsible government agencies with their functions and areas of authority overlapping creating a complex structure of networks. (Baraldi & Zan, 2013, pp. 731-32) Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT) is the main body responsible for cultural affairs in Turkey, including state museums. It was first established in 1973 as Ministry of Culture and merged with Ministry of Tourism in 2003. The ministry had a broad range of responsibilities⁶ and a budget of 3 billion and 997 million Turkish lira (TL) in 2018.⁷

All commercial activities within the MoCT are operated by the Ministry’s Central Directorate of Revolving Funds (Döner Sermaye İşletmesi Merkez Müdürlüğü), known as Dösım which was established in 1979. CDRF directly managed all of the Ministry’s business operations until 2009. Throughout this period insufficient infrastructure and inadequately trained museum workers resulted in low revenues from museum ticket booth and gift shops which was a major problem for the ministry as allocated budget was always limited. Thus, outsourcing model was introduced especially in museums and archaeological sites where CRDF generated its main income. Two outsourcing contracts were introduced: one for the construction and operation of gift shops and cafés (2009) and the other for the

⁶ <http://www.kultur.gov.tr/TR,96130/kurulus-amaci-ve-gorevleri.html>

⁷ <http://basin.kulturturizm.gov.tr/TR,194151/bakan-kurtulmus-bakanligin-2018-yili-butce-sunumunu-yap-.html>

modernization and operation of ticket gates (2010). (Baraldi, Shoup & Zan, 2014, p. 58)

Main body responsible for cultural heritage in the MoCT is General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums (Kültür Varlıkları ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü) which has its own museum directorates. (Baraldi & Zan, 2013, p. 730) The GDCHM's Museum Directorates are responsible for specific geographic areas. They manage museums and ruins, protect listed sites, conduct and monitor excavations; but they have little autonomy, with budgets and working rules dictated by the centre. (Baraldi et al, 2014, p. 56)

GDCHM's main responsibilities in the case of museums relevant to this study are: to make proposals to form museums, directorate of monuments and laboratories of conservation and restoration where necessary; to organize their administration and areas of specialties; to guide and support private museums and supervise them under pre-designated rules. Furthermore, in terms of conservation they were responsible for the contracting and control of specialization, restoration, restitution or the delegation of these responsibilities.⁸

Thus, in this highly-centralized system, state museums in Turkey as the smallest unit in hierarchy of cultural heritage, are not institutions capable of decision making and implementation as they have no authority of their own.

Due to this centralized approach, Dinçer (2011) asserts that state museums in Turkey remained focused on conservation, with little thought given to communication with public or new types of display of material thus they remained cut off from the public. (p. 226) In terms of funding, MoCT turned increasingly towards generating income via privatizing or outsourcing. This new model of

⁸ "Kültür Varlıkları ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü'nün Görevleri," T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, <http://www.kulturvarliklari.gov.tr/TR,43035/kultur-varliklari-ve-muzeler-genel-mudurlugunun-gorevle-.html>.

public-private capital partnership was defended as an important step in the way of democracy. Even though this model led to increase in the level of quality of services provided by museums such as shops and cafes, this did not automatically generate greater social value. (Dinçer et al., 2011, p. 227)

The museum definition by MoCT is as follows:

Museums are spaces that all sorts of objects belonging to the history of civilization are exhibited in a scientific manner, thus enriching the cultural accumulation and appreciation of the public, facilitating studies of researchers, and transmitting insightful historical data to future generations.⁹

Thus, Turkish state museum defined by MoCT did not fit into the definition given by ICOM. They are not in “service of society” as they continue exhibiting in an old fashioned chronological way -defined vaguely as scientific- which did little to communicate with the public. State museums do “acquire, conserve cultural heritage” which is the oldest duty of museums since their beginning. Even this is not pointed out in the definition given by MoCT but mentioned only in its list of duties. Ultimately, cultural heritage here is defined as “historical objects” and intangible cultural heritage is not included in the definition. This is a very restricted and old-fashioned way of defining a museum which as an institution has gone through major transformation towards “democracy”.

Geir Vestheim, in his article about cultural policy and democracy, offers three typologies for cultural policy models: *the facilitator*, *the patron*, and *the architect*. The *facilitator* indicates a state that leaves culture to the market forces and private charity as exemplified by the USA. The *patron* indicates a state that supports culture like a rich and aristocratic patron for which UK is given as the typical example. The third, *the architect*, which is the most relevant for our study, indicates a state which

⁹ “Somut Kültürel Miras,” T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, <http://www.kulturturizm.gov.tr/TR,134106/somut-kulturel-miras.html>: “[Müzeler, uygarlık tarihine ait her türlü objenin, bilimsel kurallar altında sergilenerek, halkın beğeni ve kültürel birikimini zenginleştiren, araştırmacıların çalışmalarını kolaylaştırıcı ve geliştirici tarihi verilerin gelecek kuşaklara aktarıldığı mekânlardır.”

intervenes in the cultural sector with policy programmes, sustains political and administrative infrastructure, and offers financial support through yearly budgets thus actively backing cultural production, distribution and reception. France is presented as the main example for this type. (Vestheim, 2012, p. 497)

Turkish Republic with its centralized structure and “strong state” tradition where the state acts as the “all-seeing protecting father” of its “children-citizens” fits the third description. Like other sectors of state, cultural sector until late 1980s was entirely dominated by the state thus, from the beginning of the Republic we can talk about a cultural policy prepared solely by the state actors which reflects their interests and “designs” for the public. With the 1950s, we can see the rise of a citizen who has started to be politically active only to be suppressed by the 1980s coup d’état, who was turned into a “consumer-citizen” with the introduction of neo-liberal economic policies. Though post 1980s globally witnessed the rise of civic society who demanded culture to be more inclusive and egalitarian along with a rise in cultural tourism and commodification of the museum due to effects of globalization. Even though several changes were introduced reflecting global transformations, Turkish state, never losing its hold on cultural sector, continued being *the architect* throughout these processes producing its own system, sometimes similar to Europe sometimes not.

In Turkey, it seems that the most efficient global trend that the state adapted into was the neo-liberal policies for funding. Museums first developed a new funding system under New Public Administration system during 1980s; later with ruling party AKP’s greater leniency towards privatization outsourcing and privatizing were added into the financial agenda like other European countries. However, in terms of intervening in the rule of museums the path Turkey took was not similar to European states most of which tilted towards being the *facilitator* state. Turkish state continued to be the strongest decision maker -though from time to time inviting professionals into the negotiation- in terms of conserving and designating cultural heritage policies. In this system, state museums remained non-autonomous

which created an unsuitable environment for cultural democracy which requires a bottom-up policy -in which government provides equal opportunities for citizens to be culturally active on their own- to take root. (Mulcahy, 2010) Thus Turkish state is still the *architect*, now with a neo-liberal mind.

3. ACCESSIBILITY OF MUSEUM OF TURKISH AND ISLAMIC ART

3.1. MUSEUM OF TURKISH AND ISLAMIC ART

MTIA, formerly known as Islamic Endowments Museum between 1914-1924, is a state museum under the authority of MoCT. It is also under the authority of General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums (GDCHM) and Istanbul Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism.¹⁰ It has its own directorate called “Directorate of Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts” which also governs Adam Mickiewicz Museum. The museum is part of the centralized state museum system with no autonomy in terms of decision making and finance. It cannot select its own staff and has no authority to organize events aimed at the community.

3.1.1. First Restoration of Ibrahim Pasha Palace

MTIA was located at the imaret of Süleymaniye Mosque between 1914-1983. Then it was moved to Ibrahim Pasha Palace, an historic monument and a cultural heritage asset, in 1983 after lengthy renovations that initiated in 1965 and progressed slowly due to limited funding and lack of resources. (Ölçer, 2014) The renovations at that time was also under the authority of Istanbul Directorate of Historic Monuments and Surveying (Istanbul Rölöve ve Anıtlar Müdürlüğü) which was responsible for the renovations of the Palace in 2012.¹¹

The move from the imaret of Süleymaniye Complex to Ibrahim Pasha Palace was a painful process that involved many government agencies, international and local cultural actors. As Süleymaniye Complex was in a dismal state during 1970s, it was very important for the imaret to be renovated and the collection to be moved to

¹⁰ <http://www.istanbulkulturturizm.gov.tr/TR,181099/mudurlugumuze-bagli-muzeler.html>

¹¹ <http://www.kulturvarliklari.gov.tr/TR,133602/istanbul-rolove-ve-anitlar-mudurlugunce-tamamlanan-ve-d-.html>

another space. As the imaret became physically dangerous in 1978, the Ministry which mostly ignored the MTIA until then became involved. (Ölçer, 2014, p. 97) Finally in 1978, museum vice-director Nazan Ölçer gave a detailed report to the committee consisting of the Minister undersecretary and other government officials listing the reasons why Ibrahim Pasha Palace should be assigned to MTIA. She explained in her report how the Palace would be suitable for displaying the artefacts, which remained in shadow in the imaret, based on contemporary exhibition practices. Even though her report was initially received with scepticism, it was confirmed that MTIA would be moving to the Palace as soon as its renovation ended. (Ölçer, 2014, p. 98) The renovations could have lasted even longer as the state funding was extremely limited but the need to prepare an exhibition for the Council of Europe which was condemning Turkey due to military intervention in 1980 accelerated the process. Ibrahim Pasha Palace, again due to efforts of Nazan Ölçer and other museum professionals such as Prof. Nurhan Atasoy, was included in the museums in which this major exhibition for Council of Europe were to be displayed. (Ölçer, 2014, p. 100) As the Exhibition was planned for the year 1983, the same year also witnessed the opening of Ibrahim Pasha Palace as the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts.

This process is good example of how during 1970s cultural heritage policy was under state control whose inefficiency in terms of funding and lack of interest led to a process handled by individual efforts and international interventions.

After its opening on 22 May 1983 at Ibrahim Pasha Palace, MTIA was a great success both locally and internationally. It was nominated for the European Council's "Museum of the Year" Award in 1984 and won "Museum of the Year Special Commendation" becoming the first Turkish museum which received an international award. (Ölçer, 2014, p. 101) The Museum also became a space where contemporary exhibition methods were utilized.

3.1.2. Second Restoration of Ibrahim Pasha Palace

MTIA's second restoration started on 30 October 2012 and the museum reopened in 20 December 2014. The project was labelled as "Restoration and Arrangement of Display" (Istanbul Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Restorasyonu ve Teşhir Tanzimi)¹². Thus, it was a project that involved two interrelated processes: restoration of the museum as an historic building and arrangement of the exhibition area. Directorate of Historic Monuments and Surveying (DHMS) was responsible for the restoration process. During the restoration, first of all certain tombs were found and remains were excavated by experts and taken to the Anatolian Civilizations Museum in Ankara. Also, certain levels of the seating area and tunnels of the ancient Hippodrome were brought to light as they were covered during the previous restoration works. (Şahin et al, 2014, p. 55)

Second phase, the arrangement of the exhibition area, was handled by Tasarımhane, a private design agency working in the fields of interior design, museums, exhibitions, events. They were chosen when restoration was at its last stage, after many other projects regarding display arrangements were disapproved.¹³ (İtez, 2015) So "arrangement of display" or the "design of the space" was not included in the planning of the restoration but was considered as a separate "process" which is illuminating in terms of understanding the approach to heritage management in contemporary Turkey. In terms of budget, the MTIA was given 16.4 million TL by the MoCT and the expenditure was compensated by CDRF. (Şahin et al, 2014, p. 65)

The interview by Özüm İtez with Güzin Erkan, the head designer of the project by Tasarımhane, demonstrated the centralized but fragmented structure of the planning

¹² <http://www.kulturvarliklari.gov.tr/TR,133602/istanbul-rolove-ve-anitlar-mudurlugunce-tamamlanan-ve-d-.html>

¹³ <http://www.arkitera.com/soylesi/678/bu-mekanlarin-soz-soyleme-hakki-var-ve-soyledikleriyle-sizi-yonetme-gucu-var>

and implementation of a cultural heritage project. Erkan mentions all the actors involved in the process who had different ideas regarding the exhibition. The actors involved were “experts in the museum” representing the academic experts, “the contractor” representing private sector as the outsource, officials from DHMS and MoCT representing the state. Before approaching to Tasarımhane with the offer, who in this case represent another collaboration with a private professional, the museum picked a team that was disregarded by the contractor. The latter himself found another professional who was disregarded by the government officials in Ankara. In response, the officials in Ankara sent someone who was disliked by the museum experts. This complicated process shows us at least in terms of negotiation of the planning of display, every actor involved in the process had a say and their opinions were taken into an account. Thus, we can talk about a quasi-participatory and fragmented process in terms of actors involved. Though it remains centralized as all actors involved were either related to or assigned by the government. Thus, civic society was again excluded in both processes of the restoration and the arrangement of display.

Recently restored MTIA was chosen as the place for this study for three reasons: firstly, it is a museum that is housed in an historic building which belongs to the tangible cultural heritage of Turkey and located in a UNESCO World Heritage Listed site. Secondly, MTIA itself conserves a highly rich collection including forty-five thousand Islamic and Turkish artefacts which makes it unique and important within other Islamic Museums of world. Thirdly, even though it is a typical example of a Turkish state museum in terms of administration, it is also an assertive example of a “modernized” museum whose exhibitiv planning was handed to professionals who had previous experience in working with cultural heritage. Uniquely situated with a substantial collection, recently renovated MTIA is worthy of an investigation to see whether it represents the twenty-first century museum model in terms of being inclusive and accessible to all.

3.2. SOCIAL INCLUSION: A DEBATE REGARDING MUSEUM AUDIENCE

3.2.1. Target Group: People with Physical Disabilities

During late twentieth century, museums started to become more visitor oriented which was a major change from the previous understanding of a museum. Since its beginning as an institution, museum-visitor relation had an authoritative tone in which Museum was the authority. Museum formed its own understanding of the world which was selective and exclusive. It presented this understanding to the visitor in its own design while expecting the visitor to act in a pre-designed way thus creating a certain order to be followed through which the visitor was “civilized”. Carol Duncan (1995) explained this as museums being “ritual sites”. (p.7). The relationship was not reciprocal, instead it was one directional: the institutional values which were contextualized as “universal” were transferred from the museum to the visitor. In this context, the visitor was a passive individual who was the receiving side, contributing nothing.

With the advent of multiculturalism and civil society with weakening of the idea of strong state, the concept of citizen started to be questioned. Who was this citizen? Was s/he this passive individual whose main duty was to be loyal to the state and be a “citizen” within the limits designed by the state? This was certainly the valid idea at the beginning of twentieth century. This idea was supported by the institutions such as museums, especially in countries with a strong state tradition like Turkey. This civilizing mission of museums existed also in nascent Turkish museums. However, it slowly began to change in parallel with the developments in the Western world in post-1980s period. Ünsal states that two types of cultural participation were developed in this period. The first required “participation” in an institutional context where individual was the cultural consumer whose “attendance” was measured and developed via audience development techniques. These techniques were used to understand *who* the audience is and what his/her

tastes are, and to create strategies for museums to reach more audience groups thus creating a “democratic space including all”. (2012, p. 16)

The second type, on the other hand, was focused on “participation” in terms of citizenship and cultural rights. (Ünsal, 2012, p. 17) The citizen was no longer to be this passive individual but now an active participant to all spheres of social life. Other identities such as minorities who did exist in the society but were previously ignored by the dominant political and social discourse started to be included in the definition of citizen. This brought the idea of social inclusion in cultural sphere as all humans have right to participate to the cultural life.

In terms of international conventions, this was first established by Article 27 as “human right” by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.”

This right was further enhanced by the UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) in Article 5:

All persons have therefore the right to express themselves and to create and disseminate their work in the language of their choice, and particularly in their mother tongue; all persons are entitled to quality education and training that fully respect their cultural identity; and all persons have the right to participate in the cultural life of their choice and conduct their own cultural practices, subject to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The scope of this study is about this second type of participation defined by Ünsal (2012) as “state-based participation” as nation states were the ones who were responsible for creating the “democratic environment” in which every citizen can participate. (p. 17) In line with this definition, museums also were expected to create this socially inclusive and accessible environment.

In terms of general cultural participation, IKSIV's 2017 report demonstrates that participation to cultural life by the general population remains quite limited in Turkey. The highest participation rates are from those in the high-income group, those with university level education, and those within the 18-24 age group. (2017, p. 29) As a limited part of the population participates in cultural activities, the rest of the population could be called "non-participants" or "potential participants". (IKSV, 2017, p. 32)

Though many reasons from economic to social conditions could be given for lack of participation or inability to participate, I would like to focus on a specific group of individuals among these groups that could be called "disadvantageous" in terms "physical accessibility": people with physical and sensory disabilities.

3.2.1.1. Disability: a short introduction

In Turkey, people with disabilities form 12.6 % of the population. (*Engelsiz Türkiye için*, p. 11) Their rights are under the protection of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities issued by the United Nations in 2006. Turkey signed the convention on 30 March 2007. On 28 September 2009, the Convention was ratified and the Protocol signed.

This convention formulates a "rights oriented" approach to disability changing from the previous predominant "charity based" approach regarding disability. The so-called disability rights paradigm challenges the traditional medical model which aimed at fixing "the persons with disabilities." The medical model, by default, viewed disability as an anomaly and the disabled individual as a patient who did not have the capacity to live a full life unless the impairment was remedied medically. (Harpur, 2011) Dismissing the medical model, the social model increasingly focused on the distinction between impairment and disability. This approach blamed not the impairment for rendering a disabled person unable to live a full life but the society and the structured environment. (Kaufmann-Scarborough

& Baker, 2005) The disability rights paradigm advocated by the UN builds on the social model and views disability not “as a medical condition requiring assistance but as an aspect of social diversity.” (Harpur, 2011, p. 5) Thus, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol (2006) describes “disability”:

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, article 1)

The same convention also recognizes the right of people with disabilities to participate and enjoy all cultural spheres:

States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities:

Enjoy access to places for cultural performances or services, such as theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries and tourism services, and, as far as possible, enjoy access to monuments and sites of national cultural importance. (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 30)

On the other hand, in this context it is important to differentiate between “accessibility” and “physical accessibility”. Accessibility as the broader concept can be defined as:

the “ability to access” the functionality, and possible benefit, of some system or entity and is used to describe the degree to which a product such as a device, service, environment is accessible by as many people as possible.¹⁴

Physical accessibility, on the other hand, as the name suggests is a more limited concept which indicates “suitability of the physical environment to a person’s

¹⁴ “Accessibility Information for Persons with Disability,” <https://www.disabled-world.com/disability/accessibility/>

physical condition”. A more complex definition of the concept details it as “a person’s ability to go from one point to another and stroll without the help of others in a natural or in an artificial environment.” (Sungur & Yıldız, 2013, p. 124)

In 2005, Turkey introduced Law (5378) Regarding Persons with Disabilities (Engelliler Hakkında Kanun).¹⁵ The initial definition of people with disabilities in this law changed with the amendment of 2014 making it “rights oriented” as defined by the 2007 UN Convention. (Law Regarding Persons with Disabilities, Article 1) According to this amendment State was responsible for protecting the right of persons with disabilities to participate in all spheres of public life on equal basis with every citizen of the country. The 2005 Law also made it mandatory for all the public institutions, roads, parks, sports centres and most importantly cultural centres to become “accessible” and they were initially given seven years to complete this process. (Provisional Article 2) Later amendments extended the deadline.

Under this definition Turkish State, who ratified both Convention and Protocol and created this comprehensive law on persons with disabilities, has agreed to create suitable environments for people with disabilities to access and enjoy cultural life, including museums and “monuments of cultural importance”. These last two terms define Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art which is both a museum and a historic monument.

3.2.1.2. Disability in the Museums: a short review

Museums in the western hemisphere, especially in Europe and US, started to consider disabled individuals and their museum access during 1970s. (ADA, 2009, p. 1) UNESCO started to publish specifically on museums and disabled people as early as 1981, focusing on the responsibilities of the institution and raising

¹⁵ <https://eyh.aile.gov.tr/mevzuat/ulusal-mevzuat/kanunlar/engelliler-hakkinda-kanun>

public awareness regarding disability. (UNESCO, 1981) But the issue of disability became a significant concern for the museum since the beginning of 1990s. (Walters, 2008) One of the most important legislative changes came with signing of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on 26 July 1990. This act defined disability as:

who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.

This act imposed legal requirements on both the state and private organizations to provide “reasonable accommodation” and is still accepted as a standard valid document in terms of defining disability. It asserts certain criteria and minimum parameters to follow in order to make buildings accessible for all. In this act, museums too had been given their own criteria to follow in order to make themselves accessible.

In parallel with ADA, UK Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was introduced in 1995. It ensured that questions of disability and access would enter the realm of the museum as a public body, as an issue of both compliance and civil rights. (Walters: 29) After certain amendments, Equality Act in UK was signed in 1 October 2010. According to this act, cultural institutions as “service providers” have to observe this law which states all persons with disabilities have the right to enjoy similar rights with every citizen. It also seeks to stop discriminatory acts against people with disabilities in public life. (Yelçe, Burat & Ensari, 2013, p. 21)

As discussions regarding social inclusion and participation gained momentum in 2000s, so did academic works on museums and people with disabilities ranging from visual impairments to people with learning disabilities which were topics that were previously less focused than the people with physical disabilities. (Mesquita, Corneiro, 2016; Rix, Lowe, Heritage Forum, 2010; Poria, Reichel, Brandt, 2013)

As museums were increasingly expected to create a “socially inclusive, democratic and participatory” environment to a broadened understanding of citizenship, people with disabilities and their problems in regards to accessibility became more visible and started to be discussed. Especially with the rising of assistive technologies, the definition of inclusiveness started to change. It was not enough to physically access the buildings, but access to information became more and more important. (Lisney, Bowen, Hearn & Zedda, 2013) In this study, MTIA is analysed under the context of physical accessibility with a certain focus on accessibility on information as it is becoming more important globally.

3.2.1.3. Accessibility at Historic Monuments

Historic monuments create problems of accessibility especially for people with physical and sensory disabilities as the buildings (or sites) are usually not suitable for practical changes that can make a building accessible due to the historic nature of the buildings and the conservation laws that protects them.

Two concepts exist in order to create solutions for locations such as Ibrahim Pasha Palace: reasonable accommodation and universal design.

Defined by UN Convention (2006) “reasonable accommodation” signifies:

necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. (Article 2)

According to UN Convention (2006) “universal design” signifies:

Design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. “Universal design” shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed. (Article 2)

In our case, reasonable accommodation is a very important concept. It suggests “necessary and appropriate accommodation” meaning a technical or an architectural solution to an accessibility problem that “does not impose or force undue burden” i.e. not inflict damage on the original structure. Thus, it means creating a solution within the *given limits* of the structure what *will not* change/spoil the very characteristics of structure that makes it a cultural and historical heritage monument in the first place. This ultimately places the cultural significance of the structure before the accessibility of persons with physical and sensory disabilities. This does not indicate the end of the discussion, but rather like opens a door for alternative solutions for people to enjoy the cultural properties of the monument and the items exhibited therein, which can be possible via technological solutions such as digital technologies. Universal design, on the other hand, is a fundamental principle preferring schematic solutions that are useful not only for persons with disabilities but for all participants.

In Turkey after 2010, studies and projects on accessibility gained momentum. Some of the projects were about accessibility to cultural heritage. The Spinal Cord Paralytics Association of Turkey (Türkiye Omurilik Felçlileri Derneği) conducted a project called “Accessible Museums and Palaces” (Engelsiz Müze ve Saraylar) in collaboration with the government.¹⁶ (Yazman, 2012) Their initial focus was Hagia Sophia Museum whose structure was inaccessible due its historic nature. They prepared certain solutions to maintain physical accessibility such as ramps and reorganization of toilets. The project included six other museums located in an historic place. MTIA was one of the museums to be assessed and made accessible in this context. (Erbay, 2017, p. 346)

My aim in the following chapter is to make a preliminary assessment of whether MTIA, after the recent renovations, is physically accessible for people with physical and sensory disabilities.

¹⁶ Derya Yazman, "Engelsiz Müze ve Saraylar Projesi" başlıyor!" Arkitera, 14.08.2012, <http://www.arkitera.com/haber/9568/engelsiz-muze-ve-saray->

3.3. ACCESSIBLE MUSEUM: AN EXAMINATION

3.3.1. Methodology

This study focuses on people with physical and sensory disabilities. The term physical disability applies to persons with short term or long term restricted mobility whereas sensory impairment applies to persons with limited or full sensory (sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste, and spatial awareness) impairments.

My research is based on qualitative methods, on-site participant observation and in-depth interview. I visited MTIA first in 2016 with a physically disabled person and made on-site observation in regard to accessibility. On my second visit in May 2018, I went to MTIA alone to conduct an interview with the head of internal affairs after making an appointment with the museum. I have prepared a questionnaire based on pre-existing surveys assessing accessibility. I have used several different resources for preparing the questions: Engelsiz Türkiye İçin: Yolun Neresindeyiz? Mevcut Durum ve Öneriler (2013), Engelsiz Müze Rehberi by Istanbul Sağlık Müzesi (2014), Manual of Museum Exhibitions (2014).

3.3.2. Getting to the Museum

Before assessing the MTIA, we have to look at ways of arriving at the museum. In theory, a person with physical or sensory disabilities can get to MTIA using both public and private transportation. In practice, though, private transportation is not a viable option since the area was pedestrianized in 2013. Even vehicles with disability licences are not allowed in the square and parking lots are not accessible. Thus, the first step is to look how to arrive by public transportation at Sultanahmet region in which MTIA is located.

3.3.2.2. Possible Routes to Sultanahmet Region: An Assessment

In order to assess the remaining public transportation possibilities, I have conducted on site research by taking two public routes. Both of them are routes from the Anatolian side to Sultanahmet region. During first one, we have used underground train line Marmaray and in the second, ferry and tram.

The first journey was conducted in 2016 with a physically disabled person on a weekday during mid-day hours. The timing was deliberately determined as rush hours are harder to travel.

The route started at the main station of Marmaray, the underground rail line that goes from the Anatolian side directly to the historical peninsula on the European side. We arrived at the Marmaray station Ayrılıkçeşme in Kadıköy with a private car. Other public transportation possibilities are bus lines or with Anatolian metro line M4. With suitable elevators and two accessible ticket barriers for people with physical disabilities, Ayrılıkçeşme Station was also accessible. Marmaray wagon was accessible with a level entrance as well as designated spaces for wheelchairs and people with restricted mobility. We went off at the Vilayet exit of Sirkeci station of Marmaray, the closest point to the Sultanahmet square. This station was also accessible in terms of elevators and ticket barriers. After a short walk, we took the tram (T1) from the Gülhane station. Although accessing the tram was not easy because of the uneven road levels, the relatively steep slope leading to Sultanahmet Square makes it harder to proceed on foot with a wheelchair. Once in the tram, there is no problem and the next stop is Sultanahmet. Uneven street levels and crossing the road at Sultanahmet also created a similar problem but we could get to the square with a little help from passers-by. Sultanahmet Square did not present any problems for the wheelchair.

In my second visit in May 2018, I followed the ferry and tram route from the centre of Kadıköy to Sultahmet square. Ferries are tricky in terms of accessibility as there are two types of ferries: the older ferries which are not accessible, and the accessible newer type. According to research within Engelsiz Turkiye Report (2013) there were thirty-four ferries in use in total. Five of them were new ferries which were accessible in terms entrance ramps, flat surface, disabled toilets. Twenty-six of them were older type of ferries which were not accessible (p. 42) In 2018 number of accessible ferries were increased to eight with four them being the brand new. Same report in 2013 indicates that the website of ferries is not informative enough for the people with disabilities. (p. 4) This fact is still valid today.²⁰

The main problem regarding ferries is the fact that a person with physical disability cannot know which type of ferry is to arrive on which time. S/he has to wait for the appropriate ferry to arrive which can be frustrating as there is no certain order. I travelled around midday and both ferries I have encountered, heading towards Karaköy and Eminönü, were accessible ferries which was totally due to luck.

At Karaköy, reaching the tram line from the ferry station is difficult as it requires passing through the main road which is usually quite busy both with people and car traffic. This requires a companion with person with physical disability. The underground passage that enables the traveller to avoid traffic on the ground does have a lift, though in unusable condition.

The tram stop, though quite unreachable, has an accessible ticket barrier with a ramp and there is a security guard to assist. The carriage of the tram is accessible, but I have not been able to see a designated place for wheelchair users. Karaköy, Eminönü, and Sultanahmet stations were easy to get in and out thus can be considered accessible. On the other hand, although we managed with hardship to

²⁰ <http://www.sehirhatlari.istanbul/tr/bilgiler/engelli-konuklarimiz-333.html>

use the Gülhane station on this line in 2016, the space between the tram carriage and station is wide.

I believe between these two options, even though arrival with both routes is possible for people with physical disabilities, the first route using Marmaray is the best option for someone travelling from the Anatolian side due to uncertainty of ferries. In all cases, having a companion would be the best option.

3.3.2.3. Website

We are living in a world that is continuously digitalized. Internet is one of the most important sources of information that are available today. According to Cihan Çolak (2012) since the beginning of 1990s museums have been using websites that enable them to provide contact with their visitors in a more direct way. (p.266) Through this direct communication museums can assess the needs and demands of their visitors and create audience strategies. Thus, websites are tools that redefine the relations between museum and visitor which was already in transformation as its identity changed into a more active and diverse way. Websites enable the visitor to become more participant as it allows a direct communication route, informing visitor about events and educational possibilities. Furthermore, websites allow visitors to visit the museum virtually, a phenomenon which makes traditional museum space evolve into something truly universal as the museum experience is now accessible to all. How does MTIA fit into the description?

According to the museum official, MTIA's website was recently launched four or six months ago, though he could not give me an exact date. According to the same official, the website was designed by a company belonging to the Koç Group. Thus, similar to the process of rearrangement of display, the job was given to an actor of private sector.

Werner Schweibenz (2004) defines four types of museums based on their websites, which exist in a hierarchical way: the brochure museum, the content museum, the learning museum, the virtual museum. Brochure museum being the most basic one in terms of offering information, the virtual one being the most sophisticated. (p.3) MTIA website fits the definition pertinent to the content museum:

This is a Web site which presents the museum's collections and invites the virtual visitor to explore them online. The content is presented in an object-oriented way and is basically identical with the collection database. It is more useful for experts than for laymen because the content is not didactically enhanced. The goal of this type of museum is to provide a detailed portrayal of the collections of the museum. (Schweibenz, 2004: 3)

In order to point out why MTIA is a content museum we have to look at content management, as one of the four ways of looking at museum website management. (Çolak, 2012) Website content management is based on five criteria: institutional identity, collection, events, contact and accessibility, online services.

The website of MTIA is designed in a simple and modern manner which enables easy navigating within the website. An online visitor can access collections which are presented in a categorized way whereas events and temporary exhibitions are presented together under one tab. In terms of institutional identity which lays under the "museum" tab, we can only find a summary of the history of Ibrahim Pasha Palace and the history of collections. Neither a vision nor a mission statement of the museum is given. This is an important indicator of the non-autonomous nature of the institution. We can assume that its vision and mission are the same with those of MoCT which as the institution in power states its purpose and mission clearly in its own website.²¹

The most relevant criterion of the content assessment for this study involves "the contacts and accessibility". This criterion makes it mandatory for museum websites

²¹ "Misyonomuz Vizyonumuz," <http://www.kultur.gov.tr/TR,133260/misyonomuz-vizyonumuz.html>

to give contact details such the telephone and e-mail address of the museum. In this context, the museum is also responsible for giving information regarding physical accessibility which is to be supported by plans and maps as well as information about public transportation. (Çolak, 2012, p. 269) The accessibility part of the website must give information about museum entrances, lifts and access to galleries, parking for disabled people, and accessible toilets. Apart from such information about physical accessibility, the website should also give information about wheelchair availability, seating availability, and audio guide options.

In MTIA website fax, telephone, e-mail and address information are provided along with a map of the location of the museum; although information about how to get to the museum using public transportation is not available. None of the information items mentioned above regarding physical accessibility of the museum can be found on the website of MTIA.

3.3.3. Entering the Museum

3.3.3.1. Entrance door

The main entrance to the MTIA is through an automatic wide door on flat street level. Before the door, which is wider than 90 cm, there is the ticket booth which has a wide area in front of it with a ramp. The ramp is with a slope lower than % 8.3 and wider than 90 cm. The height of the booth made it accessible for people with wheelchair. (Figure 3.1.)

Figure 3. 1. Ticket Booth



After the ticket booth, the visitor needs to pass through a security booth which has a ramp with a slope lower than % 8.3 and wider than 90 cm in consistency with official regulations. (Design for Accessibility: A Cultural Administrator's Handbook, 2003, p. 65) (Figure 3.2.) The surface of the ramp is solid made of non-slip material. (Yelçe et al, 2013, p. 113)

Figure 3.2. Security Booth



Figure 3.3. X-Ray Passage



The only problematic area is in the booth, a later edition to the museum edifice, as the x-ray passage seems to be narrow but there is space allocated next to it which according to security and museum official allows wheelchair pass. (Figure 3.3.)

3.3.3.2. The Information Desk and Guides

An information desk welcomes the visitor as soon as s/he enters through the main door into MTIA. The height of the desk is longer than 90 cm and it does not have a depth in order for a wheelchair user to get closer to the desk, therefore a wheelchair user will not be able to talk face to face with the official. So, the information desk is not accessible. (Figure 3.4.) The space around the desk is wide

enough for the wheelchair user to move and turn on his/her own. The ground level floor is generally wide enough to go around with a wheelchair.

Figure 3.4. Information Desk



There are signs with both pictogram and characters around the information area which are big enough and written in contrasting colours to make them easier to see. A person with limited vision can see them clearly. (Figure 3.5.) During my visit, the sign leading to the only elevator taking the visitor to the first floor was obstructed from view due to the board of the temporary exhibition. (Figure 3.6.)

Figure 3.5. Signage



Figure 3.6. Blocked view



The museum provides a wheelchair for those with reduced mobility. Although an “official” companion is not provided by the museum for wheelchair users, officials stress that security staff is always “helpful” in terms of assisting elderly people and those with wheelchairs.

The museum does not have an audio guide system. In our first visit in 2016, we have been told that audio guides were in preparation, and interestingly I was given the same answer when I asked two years later. I have been told that the audio guide would feature an individual section for each object that is exhibited in the museum in different languages. The languages were not specified.

The MTIA does not have a guide who knows sign language. The museum does not have a catalogue in braille. Service dogs are not allowed in the building.

3.3.3.3. Restrooms

According to Design for Accessibility, the signage for accessible restrooms:

must have raised characters, braille and pictograms. Signs must be located on the wall at the latch side of the door whenever possible and be hung 60 inches from the center point of the sign to the floor. Signs should indicate whether the restroom is for men, women or unisex and whether the restroom is accessible. (p.79)

MTIA has one accessible unisex toilet. There are pictogram signs that lead the visitor to the toilet. There are neither signs with braille nor tactile paving directing towards the restroom which makes it very hard for a visually impaired person. The door also has a pictogram indicating that it is an accessible toilet but again has no sign in braille. The door does not have a sign with lights or sound that indicates whether the restroom is occupied or not.

The biggest obstacle is the fact that the restroom door is kept locked all the time due to “previous misuse of the restroom”. It was to be observed that the door was locked both in our 2016 and 2018 visits. The person with physical and/or sensory

disability has to find the museum shop lady, who is unofficially responsible for the unlocking of the door as in order to reach the restroom the disabled visitor has to pass through the shop.

The restroom area is narrow due to the structure of the building. The restroom itself is also narrow for a wheelchair user whereas it should have been around 220cmx 220cm. This is a problem as the wheelchair user should be able to put his/her wheelchair next to the toilet stall, but here the space is too narrow and unfitting for a wheelchair. (Figure 3.7.) The person with disability requires a companion.

Figure 3.7. Accessible Restroom



Closet stall itself is 46.6 cm in height which is lower than the ideal height of 47 cm. There are handles and the washbasin that has a clear space underneath it, thus allowing the wheelchair to get close enough. The taps are with sensor which makes it easier for the user.

3.3.4. Touring the Museum

3.3.4.1. Elevators

There are two platform lifts in the museum designed for people with disabilities, although non-disabled visitors also use them. The first lift takes the visitor to the first floor which includes the courtyard, offices, directorate, and a second exhibition area which is currently under renovation. The second lift which is on the other side of the courtyard takes the visitor to the second floor where the main exhibition areas are located.

There is wide space in front of both lifts in all floors in order for wheelchair to move freely. (Figure 3.8.) All of these spaces are wider than the ideal measure of 152x152 cm. Interior space of the lift is also around 110x140 cm as one person with wheelchair and his/her companion can fit in it. (Figure 3.9.) The doors open through a button which has light indicating it is on the floor or not. The button on the outside does not have tactile surface. The door opens automatically and slowly when it arrives. The lift stops on the exact floor level, so a wheelchair user can easily get in. There are no handlings inside the lift. The inside buttons are reachable by the wheelchair user but the constant need of pushing the button as the lift moves makes it very hard for the wheelchair users especially with severe muscle dystrophy like my companion. On the other hand, the push-button system is a requirement in platform lifts, so it would be advisable for a person with severe physical disability to be accompanied on the lift. The interior buttons are wide with tactile surface. They are with different coloured lights for level floors (blue) and alarm (yellow). The numbers are in contrast with the surface. (Figure 3.10.) There is a telephone and an emergency button. The doors have a sensory system that stops the lift if a person move to close to the doors while the lift is in motion. Lifts do not have a sound system that indicates when reaching the floors.

Figure 3.8. Platform lift to the first floor



Figure 3.9. Platform lift to the second floor



Figure 3.10. Interior buttons of the platform lift to the second floor



3.3.4.2. Doors, Corridors, and Emergency Exit

The corridors of the museum are wide enough for people with disabilities to move without problem due to the structure being a palace. The ceilings are also quite high, so they generate no problem in terms of moving. The corridors on the ground floor where the Information area is located do not have any handrails. The corridors on the second floor where exhibition areas are located do not have handrails either. On second floor, there are seats available for people to rest.

On the floors, especially on second level, there are coloured grit tapes on the floor that are used to indicate direction. (Figure 3.11.) These are in bright yellow. There also black grit tapes in front of every gallery room. (Figure 3.12.) These surface materials are very useful for people with visual impairment. These tapes also exist on staircases from the first floor to the second floor.

Figure 3.11. Grit tapes indicating direction



Figure 3.12. Grit tapes indicating exhibition room threshold



All staircases in the museum have handrails. (Figure 3.13.) The exterior portion of the main staircase that links the ground floor to the first-floor courtyard does not have grit tapes. Most doors are automatic and one door that is not automatic remains constantly open.

Figure 3.13. Staircase to the second floor



There are no emergency exits in the museum. I was told that visitors and staff could leave from the main door in case of an emergency. The other option for emergency evacuation is the back door which is located at the far end side of the offices on the first floor. This door is reachable only through a massive old door at the courtyard that opens to office halls. There are no visual signs or sound system that can alert and lead people to the exits, especially towards this back door which is not among the accessible part of the museum.

3.3.4.3. The Recreational Area and Museum Shop

The courtyard that is located on the first floor is the most suitable location for recreational activities. It is a wide flat space with a minor elevation overlooking the Hippodrome. The elevation is accessible with a ramp. (Figure 3.14.) Although the slope of the ramp is suitable for a person using a wheelchair, it is not covered by non-slip material. The slope of the ramp is suitable for a person with wheelchair.

Figure 3.14. Ramp to the elevated part of the courtyard



Figure 3.15. Elevated part of the courtyard overlooking the Sultanahmet Mosque



This courtyard currently does not offer seating space or food and beverage services. The museum official has told me that the management of the café is open for bidding and they are waiting for the results. Without any seating arrangement and café, the courtyard seems more like an area of passage from the entrance level to exhibition areas on the second floor rather than a designated space for recreation. The elevated portion of the courtyard opens to a magnificent view of Sultanahmet Mosque and Square which is one of the unique characteristics of the museum space. The semi-wall that was put on the edge of this level during restorations, unfortunately blocks this spectacular view for not only wheelchair users but for people who prefer to sit as they rest in the courtyard. (Figure 3.15.)

The shop of the museum is located on the ground floor. Since it is an open place without any doors or slopes, it is accessible for people with physical disabilities.

3.3.4.4. Exhibition Areas

The functioning exhibition areas are on the second floor. The second exhibition area, where the “Turkish” artefacts will be displayed, is at first floor and still under restoration. The museum official has informed me that the MoCT has recently allocated a larger budget for the restoration which accelerated the process. The possible opening date is given in the website as late 2018. As access to the area is restricted to anyone but the workers, it requires further research in terms of accessibility after the opening of the section. The third courtyard of the palace which until recently was used as archival storage for the Istanbul Court of Justice It has been allocated to MTIA after the institution vacated the premises in 2012 and is also under restoration. According to the museum official, it will be used as another exhibition area through which the museum will have to chance to show more of its extensive collection.

3.3.4.4.1. Islamic Exhibition Rooms

Most of the exhibition areas are formed by small to medium sized rooms. If the visitor reaches this floor through the staircase, s/he can follow the floor signs that direct the visitor to the exhibition rooms. The rooms, starting from the staircase, are designed to exhibit the objects chronologically. The problem is there is no direction for the people with wheelchair who can only access the second floor through the lift which is situated on the other side of corridor.

The entrance to the exhibition rooms are supported by wooden ramps. The thresholds to these rooms vary in size; some are easily accessible, others require help from the companion. (Figure 3.16. and Figure 3.17.) A wheelchair user can

access and roam within the rooms quite easily. Due to the original structure of the palace, the doors are not high enough for tall people. This can also pose a problem for people with low vision or full vision loss as they can hit their heads while entering.

Figure 3.16. Entrance to an exhibition room



Figure 3.17. Wooden ramp at the entrance of an exhibition room



To make people with limited vision enjoy the display of sensitive objects, the Smithsonian Guidelines for Accessible Exhibition Design recommends museums to:

position the items to allow the visitor to approach them as closely as possible, light the environment with even light (i.e. do not spotlight the object and provide low-level ambient light in the gallery) provide the highest contrasting background to make objects stand out in the case. (p.12)

In MTIA, light on the objects is 50 lux as it is the maximum required light with sensitive objects on display. The background is simple and dark which make objects stand out. The environment, on the other hand, has low level ambient light which makes it difficult for people with limited vision to adapt themselves. The natural

light at the corridors can be very bright during sunny days making it even harder to adapt to the low light level of the exhibition rooms, for people with low vision adjust slower to changes in light levels than those without visual impairment. (Smithsonian Guidelines for Accessible Exhibition Design, p. 50)

In visual display of information, minimal 18-point font is necessary for people with limited vision. Information should be presented in a clear and simple format. Italics should be not used. There should be a strong contrast between print and background as it helps getting a good resolution that assists in character recognition.

In the MTIA Islamic Rooms, information label for each object is placed at the front of the particular object which is the most accessible version for a person with limited view. The informative text is printed using the sans-serif font, though less than 18-points. The information is presented in white and yellow writing on a grey surface. While yellow and grey are in contrast, the white writing shines under the light. (Figure 3.18.) The information is not easy to read by a person with limited vision firstly due to the type size being too small. Secondly, lack of contrast between grey surface and white letters renders some of the information, in this case Turkish part, unreadable for a person with limited vision.

Figure 3.18. Information label



The height of the exhibition display cases is below 100 cm, making the displayed objects visible for a person with a wheelchair. (Figure 3.19.) Although adhering to accessibility standards (Smithsonian, p. 9), the small type size of informative labels requires a person with an average height of 160 cm to bow down in order to read the information.

Figure 3.19. Exhibition display case



The broader panels which give information about the era those objects belong to are also problematic for a person with limited vision. The small type size and the length of the text make it hard to read. Even though the overall height of the panels is suitable for a person with wheelchair, text design makes it unsuitable for a person with low vision. Also, there is no text in braille available for the information panels. (Figure 3.20.)

3.3.4.4.2. Ottoman Rooms

The Ottoman objects are exhibited in the Council Hall (Divanhane) of the second floor left to the lift. There are two halls which vary in size: *Winter* or *Interior Council Hall* which is smaller with less windows, and *Summer* or *Exterior Council Hall* which is bigger and looks towards the Square. These halls are very high in the ceiling and filled with relatively more light than the other exhibition spaces due to increased number of windows. The museum official informed me that the lower level windows were always kept closed in order to control the level of natural light.

These halls have floor signs at their entrance but there are no floor signs within the halls which makes it harder for people with visual disabilities. The area is quite spacious and there are seats available. The problem regarding type size used in informative labels and panels are also applicable in these rooms. Moreover, some of the information labels are located at the base of the display case, in other words very close to the ground. The location and small type size of these labels make them inaccessible for people with low vision, and more so for people with wheelchair who cannot bow so down.

In terms of exhibition, the exhibited items in general are not numbered. The information provided on the labels are limited to the type of object, name of the artist (if applicable), year, period, and catalogue number. (Figure 3.21.) There is no additional information regarding the objects exhibited. This is a problem of accessibility for all, as people without necessary historical or art historical background, unless they are avid enthusiast of the era, cannot understand the functions of certain items.



Figure 3.21. Informative label

3.4. EVALUATION AND SUGGESTIONS

In the previous sections of this chapter, I tried to present my observations on the physical accessibility of the recently renovated Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts. These observations are based on two visits I have conducted within two years. The venue was selected on the basis that it is a historic monument of great cultural value that went through recent renovation after the enactment of the Law Regarding Persons with Disabilities (5378).

My research focused on people with physical and sensory disabilities. Within sensory disabilities, I have taken people with visual and hearing impairment into account in my research. Other types of disabilities, though they are as important as the ones I have worked with, were not considered in this study as to limit the scope of an otherwise very broad subject.

This research focuses largely on the first phase of accessibility in a space: physical barriers. That is if a disabled visitor can actually *reach* the museum, *tour* around, *enjoy* the artworks and the space, on his/her own. Thus, I looked at the level of accessibility in terms of overcoming the physical barriers of the disabled visitor experience. The second phase can be called “attitudinal barriers” which indicates staff attitudes towards people with disabilities. This phase according to Yaniv Poria, Arie Reichel and Yael Brandt (2009) is an important part of the museum experience for the people with disabilities. (p. 125) Unfortunately this second phase is out of my scope due to limitations on time and resources. It certainly needs to be investigated in the Turkish context in order to better our understanding of disabled visitor experience.

In the physical barrier context, MTIA is a partially accessible museum. For a wheelchair user, it is mostly accessible. The museum entrance is wide, supported with suitable ramps while the ground floor is also spacious. The information desk should be changed into a more accessible desk with lower height and suitable knee

clearance which would enable the wheelchair user to get in contact with the museum attendants on his/her own. The restrooms are indicated with pictogram signs that show universal symbols of accessibility. The major problem of the restroom is the fact that it is kept locked at all times. This makes usage of the restroom based on the availability of the museum shop attendant. The restroom itself is accessible, though its space is narrower than what it should be. The major problem is the space between the toilet stall and the wall being too narrow to allow the disabled person to put his/her wheelchair. Another problem is the lack of an emergency pull. A companion is required in the restroom.

The lifts are accessible but again the push-button system makes it hard for people with severe mobility disabilities like my companion. During our first visit, both lifts were functioning perfectly, and we used them with ease. During my second visit in 2018, the second lift that takes the visitor to the exhibition level was not functioning properly. The museum official told me that it malfunctions quite frequently and once people with wheelchairs could not make it to the exhibition level when this lift suddenly went out of order. The automatic door on the first level seems to be the problem as it opens from the outside but does not close even though the visitor keeps pushing the button inside. During my 2018 visit, I have used it twice, first with the museum official and the door was closed with help of another museum worker. Second time I tried to use it on my own to test it, I could not manage to close the door of the lift. Thus, maintenance of the lifts should be an essential task of the museum management team as it can deprive visitors with mobility impairment from visiting the main exhibition area.

The exhibition areas are also mostly accessible for the wheelchair user as suitable ramps to rooms are provided, while exhibition display cases and information labels are in visible height. The only inaccessible area is the Raqqa Room near the staircase. Visitors need to climb a few steps and it is totally inaccessible for a wheelchair user in this current situation. A small platform lift or a portable ramp can solve the problem.

For people with visual and hearing disabilities, the exhibition areas are more problematic in terms of accessibility. People with partial visual impairments can access the exhibition rooms from the first floor using staircases which are equipped with handles and yellow grit tapes, though the second portion of the staircases from the ground floor are not equipped with tactile surfaces. The lifts are also partially accessible as they have automatic doors which make sound during opening/closing and inside they are equipped with buttons with tactile surface though there are no sound system alerting the arrival to the floor. Lifts are also equipped with glasses with sensors.

In exhibition rooms, the light contrast between the exterior corridor and the rooms is too high for a person with impaired vision. The information labels and the boards are also inaccessible for persons with partial visual impairment as they are not adequate in terms type size and colour contrast. The visitors with visual impairment are not provided either with a braille catalogue or information labels with bigger text. They are also not provided with an audio guide which is a major problem that needs to be solved immediately.

For people with hearing impairment, the exhibition area is also accessible in a limited way. Even though they can reach the rooms, in case of a need the museum cannot provide them with a person who knows sign language. The lack of an induction loop system in the museum can also cause discomfort for a visitor using a hearing device.

The major problem with MTIA is accessibility to information. It starts with the re-designed modern looking website in which information on accessibility is non-existent. I have looked at two different museum websites which I found useful in terms of offering information on accessibility: British Museum and Tower of London.

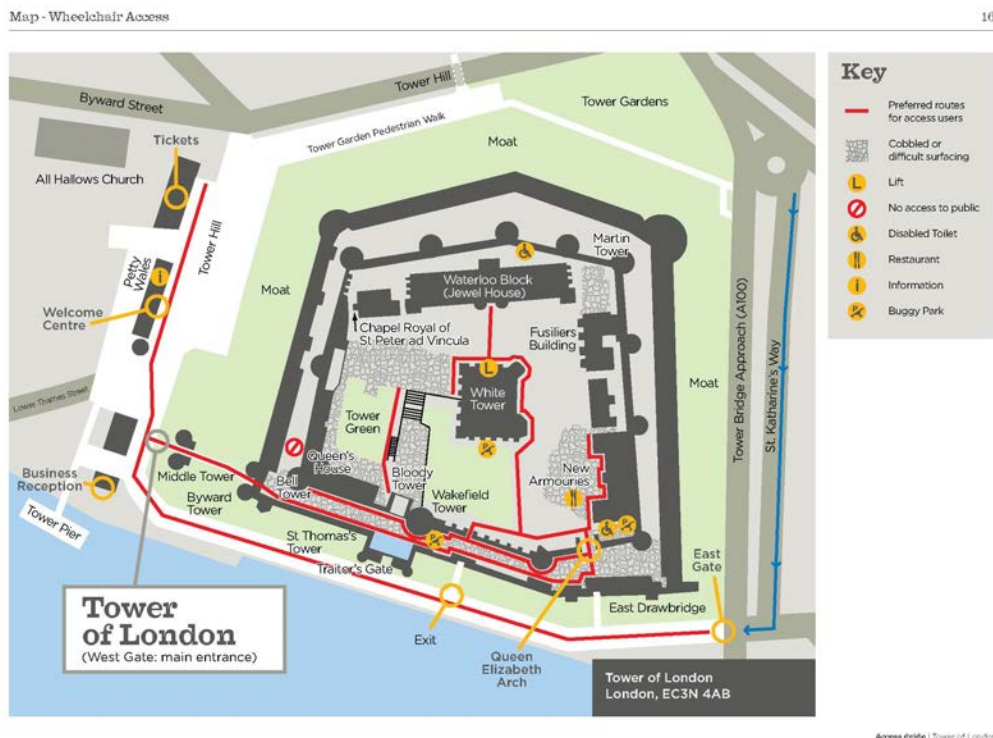
The British Museum website is designed well in terms of offering a comprehensive information on accessibility. They have put all relevant information in terms of services under “visit” tab. When the visitor gets into the “visit” section, s/he can find all information available including “getting here” with detailed information about public and private transportation options and under “floor plans and galleries” information on the accessibility in detail from parking options to assistance dogs. I believe this model could be used also for the MTIA. (Figure 3.22.)

Figure 3.22. British Museum Website Accessibility Information
 (<http://www.britishmuseum.org/visiting/access.aspx>)



The Tower of London website is useful on another level. As this is an historic monument with limited accessibility due to its structure, we can draw parallels with MTIA’s own historic nature. Due to its magnitude in size and changing level of accessibility, a separate “access guide” has been prepared and is updated regularly. The guide offers all information needed on visiting the site, but more importantly it assesses individual sections of the structure, such as the Bloody Tower or Medieval Palace, and provides access rates for each section indicating the level of accessibility with a different colour. Green indicates full access with ramps and displays on one level; orange indicates partial access with some steps, displays on different levels, and uneven surfaces; red indicates very limited access with large numbers of steps, spiral staircases and, small doorways. The guide also features an accessibility map. (Figure 3.23.)

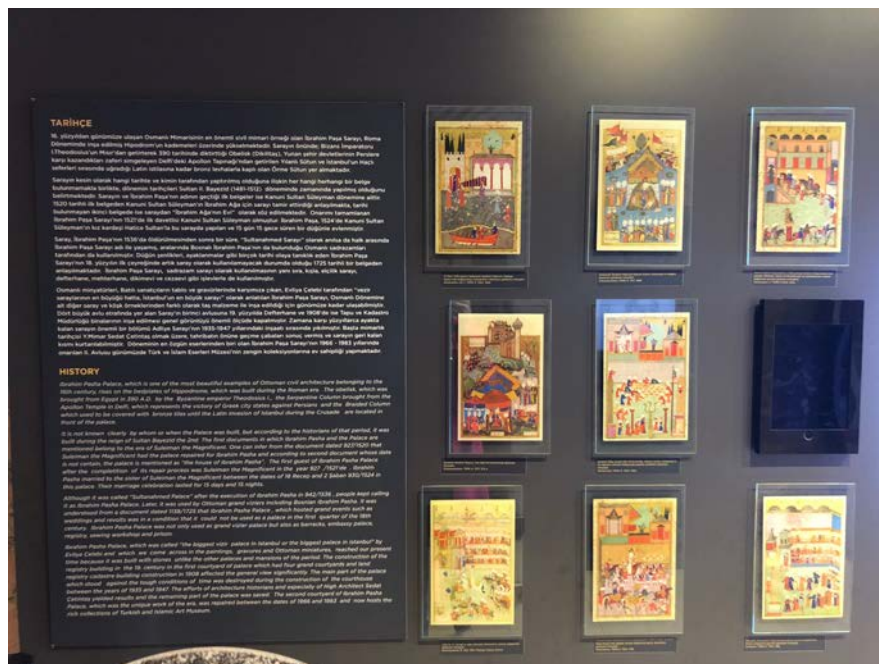
Figure 3.23. Tower of London Wheelchair Access Map
(Access Guide: Visiting the Tower of London, 16)



This type of guide could be prepared not only for MTIA but for the entire Hippodrome area as it is an historic site full of historic buildings similar to the Tower of London. Hippodrome is also a site with various buildings with differing rates of accessibility. Planning a guide similar to this would be harder for the Hippodrome area, but with the participation of various experts, I believe it could be done.

Another problem in terms of information accessibility is the fact that the complex historic part of the building was relatively ignored. As explained in chapter I, Ibrahim Pasha Palace has a long and detailed history linked with the history of the Hippodrome area. In MTIA, there is only one information board explaining the history of the palace. (Figure 3.24.) Even though this is useful in terms of giving a brief history, I believe additional information boards could be added to the rooms, halls, and courtyard explaining their older functions and transformation they went through in time. Especially in halls which were council halls before, giving information on the space can make the objects exhibited in it more meaningful.

Figure 3.24. The only information board explaining the history of the palace



I have also prepared an access audit form in order to be used as a possible starting point for assessing disability in other state museums. (Appendix) This form is an elementary form based on the questions I have prepared for the museum officials. It is also based on other access audit forms used in other resources such as *Engelsiz Türkiye İçin* report. (2013, p. 149) This type of access audit forms are useful in order to clarify the problems of the museum and prepare strategies to resolve them.

In conclusion, I believe MTIA is designed to be accessible for people with physical disabilities while needs of people with visual and hearing impairments are largely ignored. In terms of information accessibility, it provides a very limited experience and certainly requires improvement. I also believe that civil society and more importantly local community should be involved in negotiation processes of restoration and site management planning of culturally relevant places like Ibrahim Pasha Palace, though in the Turkish context we have a long way to go.

CONCLUSION

This study has been an exploration of physical accessibility of Ibrahim Pasha Palace, a recently restored historical space now serving as the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art. This exploration was done in two interrelated layers of research. First layer is a look into the history of heritage and museum studies in Turkey, investigating it under certain cultural policies and international conventions. Under this topic, history of Ibrahim Pasha Palace and Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art are also examined. The second layer is a look into the development of museum audience under the context of development of citizenship in Turkey. People with physical and sensory disabilities were focused as the target group under this context. These two layers were combined under examination of the people with physical and sensory disabilities as audience in a cultural heritage site that is utilized as a museum: Ibrahim Pasha Palace.

Turkish state inherited a centralized cultural heritage approach which was formed during late nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire. This approach evolved into a more conscious cultural policy during the Early Republican era which survived through 1980s absorbing and losing certain elements. This approach envisioned an interventionist state that controlled every process of cultural heritage management, from acquiring towards exhibiting to the public. In this context, the museums as the institutions that were responsible for caring and exhibiting the cultural heritage, which was defined as tangible until very recently, were also reflecting the cultural policy of the state. In state museums, the visitor was perceived as a passive individual who was to be civilized rather than an active participant. This context began to change during 1980s, bringing new elements to social discourse such as civil society, globalism, and multiculturalism. These concepts started to transform the idea of a citizen and his/her relationship with the state. Thus museum-visitor relations also started to change as museums were the area of contestation where this relation was constantly practiced and reinterpreted. State museums faced with the reality of a changing world and a need to adapt was born. Museums were expected

to loosen their authoritative tone and become a democratic space where cultural heritage was now interpreted not only as tangible but also intangible. They were now expected to embrace a democratic, open to all cultural policy that aimed participation of every segment of the population.

In this context of participant-citizen, I looked into a specific section of population that is considered “disadvantaged”, namely persons with disabilities, and looked into their participation into the museums. I have further specified the disability group first into people with mobility impairment and second into people with vision and hearing impairment under category of people with sensory disabilities. I have made a preliminary research on the physical accessibility of Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art and tried to determine whether this recently renovated cultural heritage monument was now viable as an accessible museum under international criteria for accessibility.

Despite certain changes in approaches to cultural heritage and museums internationally, state institutions responsible for cultural affairs in Turkey did not change their centralized approach which ultimately excluded museums’ own management in decision making process. This resulted in Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art remaining as a state museum still directed under this centralized policy which only adapted a more neo-liberal approach in terms managing the museum resources. Even though neo-liberal solutions are applied in certain cases, these are not under the control of the museums but of the MoCT. In her MA thesis about marketing strategies for state museums focusing specifically on MTIA, Sebla Şahin similarly states (2010) that the problem of centralized approach regarding state museums results in MTIA being unable to develop and apply its own marketing strategies. (p. 105)

In a recently published IKSIV report regarding participatory attitudes towards culture, Simto Alev, a physically disabled blogger who is sharing his experiences in accessibility within the cultural sphere of Istanbul on his online blog, states that

while there are many pragmatic solutions even to the seemingly inaccessible buildings, in Turkey the problem lies with the application part of these solutions. (2018, p.43-44) He also adds another very important point that is also relevant for the museum establishments: the lack of institutional vision in terms of developing strategies and applying them. The system is still based on individual efforts and interpersonal relations between the individual and the officials. The lack of professional and institutional approaches is still a major problem that should be tackled both in state and private cultural institutions. (IKSV, 2018, p. 45) It is a similar conclusion arrived in this study and a dire problem that needs to be solved in a systematic way.

Thus, despite having good intentions and being open to visitors in terms of helping them, myself included, MTIA's accessibility in terms of people with disability is questionable. Partially accessible in the physical sense and information-wise offering very limited accessibility, MTIA example demonstrates the need for a change in this centralized approach into being more participatory; a fundamental change is required within the system as opposed to the formalistic one we have today.

With this elementary study in terms of scope and research methods, I hope more elaborate research on the topic of persons with disabilities as museum audience and experience, which is an understudied topic in Turkey, will be conducted in future.

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APPENDIX:
ACCESS AUDIT FORM FOR MTIA (IN TURKISH)

Müze Çevresi	Evet	Hayır	Yorum
Müzenin yer aldığı çevre nasıl topografyaya sahip? Eğim fazla mı? Binaya tekerlekli Sandalye ile erişim mümkün mü?	x		Eğim fazla değil, erişim kolay.
Müzeye yaklaşırken kullanılan yürüyüş ve hareket yüzeyleri uygun vasıflara sahip mi? Pürüz, engel, kaygan yüzeyler mevcut mu?	x		Engel ya da pürüz yok.
Müzeye ulaşmakta kullanılan güzergâh, kaldırımlar ve yollar görme engelliler için kolayca izlenecek durumda mı?	x		Engel ya da eğim yok.
Görme engelliler için yönlendirici elemanlar mevcut mu? (hissedilebilir yüzey, düzgün kaldırım kenarı)		x	Hissedilebilir yüzey bazı yerlerde mevcut iken bazı yerlerde yoktur. O nedenle erişim güçleşiyor.
Kaldırım yükseklikleri ve rampaları standartlara uygun mu?	x		Kaldırım yükseklikleri ve rampalar uygundur.
Müzenin otoparkı var mı? Otoparkta engelliler için ayrı bir bölüm mevcut mu?		x	Müzenin kendine ait otoparkı yok. Yakında İspark var. Toplu gelişlerde İspark kullanılıyor. İspark'da engelliler için ayrı bir bölüm var mı bilinmiyor.
Müze bireysel araç ile ulaşım için elverişli mi?		x	Hayır değil. Yakın zamanda yayalaştırılmış Sultanahmet bölgesinde yer aldığından toplu taşıma ile ulaşmak en iyi çözüm.

Müzenin giriři tekerlekli sandalyeye uygun mu? Rampa mevcut mu? Ayrı engelli giriři var mı?	x		Uygun. Eğim az, giriřte rampa var, eğimi ve çapı standartlara uygun, kaymaz yüzeye sahip. Tek sorun güvenlik kısmında tekerlekli sandalye geçiř yeri dar. Ayrı engelli giriři yok.
Bilet satın alma giriřte mi? Giriřte ise tekerlekli sandalye için uygun mu?	x		Giriřten önce, kendi rampası var, eğimi ve çapı uygun. Rampa kaymaz yüzeye sahip. Satın alma kısmının yükseklięi tekerlekli sandalye için uygundur.
Müzenin giriřinde görme engelliler için yönlendirici elemanlar mevcut mu?		x	Yönlendirici elemanlar mevcut deęil, hissedilebilir yüzey yok ya da herhangi bir braille alfabeli iřaret mevcut deęil.
Giriř kapısı nasıl? Sandalye için uygun mu? Görme engelliler için uygun mu?	x		Giriř kapısının boyutu tekerlekli sandalye için uygun, otomatik kapı mevcut.

Müze - Giriş	Evet	Hayır	Yorum
Bu bölüm tekerlekli sandalye için uygun mu?	x		Tekerlekli sandalyenin hareketi için yeterli alan mevcut.
Bu bölümde görme engelliler için işaretler var mı?		x	Mevcut değil.
Danışma masası var mı? Var ise yüksekliği standartlara uygun mu?		x	Danışma masası var, yüksekliği standartların üzerinde ve sandalye için derinliği yok. Bu nedenle tekerlekli sandalye için erişilebilir değil.
Müze girişinde standartlara uygun yol gösterici işaretler mevcut mu?	x		Uluslararası işaretler mevcut, işaretler siyah fona beyaz font ile yazılmış ve büyük oldukları için kısıtlı görme engeli olan biri için erişilebilir konumdadır.
Müze tarafından tekerlekli sandalye sağlanıyor mu?	x		Müzedede bir adet tekerlekli sandalye mevcut. Müzenin deposunda bulunmaktadır.
Müzedede refakatçi veriliyor mu?		x	Resmi refakatçi hizmeti yok. Müze görevlileri yardımcı olmaya çalışıyor.
Müzedede duyma engelliler için işaret dili bilen rehber var mı?		x	Müzedede genel olarak rehber mevcut değil. İşaret dili bilen rehber mevcut değil.
Müzedede sesli rehber (audio-guide) mevcut mu?		x	Müzedede sesli rehber (audio-guide) mevcut değil. Yapım aşamasında olduğu ve farklı dillerden oluşacağı söylendi. Tarih belli değil.
Müzedede braille katalog var mı?		x	Müzedede Braille katalog mevcut değil. Yapılmasına dair bir çalışma da şimdilik mevcut değil.
Müze içinde rehber köpek hizmeti var mı?		x	Müzedede Rehber köpek hizmeti yok. Olmasına dair bir çalışma da şimdilik mevcut değil.
Müzedede acil çıkış var mıdır? Varsa erişilebilir midir?		x	Müzedede acil çıkış kapısı bulunmamaktadır. Acil çıkış kapısı olarak önerilen "arka çıkış" kapısına herhangi bir yönlendirme yoktur ve erişilebilir değildir.

Müze – Tuvalet	Evet	Hayır	Yorum
Müzedede engelli tuvaleti mevcut mu?	x		Müzedede bir adet unisex engelli tuvaleti mevcut.
Tuvalet mevcut ise standartlara uygun mu? Tekerlekli sandalye ile erişim mümkün mü?	x		Tuvalete tekerlekli sandalye ile erişim mümkün. Tuvaletin içindeki alan biraz dar, yardımcı lazım. En büyük problem kapı kilitli tutuluyor.
Tuvalet içinde klozet, lavabo standartlara uygun mu? Acil durum düğmesi mevcut mu?	x		Klozet standartların çok az aşağısında, lavabo tekerlekli sandalye için son derece uygun. Acil durum düğmesi yok.
Tuvalet görme engelliler için erişilebilir mi? Kapıda ve güzergahta işaretler mevcut mu? (Braille alfabesinde işaretler, hissedilebilir yüzey)		x	Tuvalete giden güzergahta hissedilebilir yüzey mevcut değil. Kapıda braille işaret mevcut değil. Görme engelliler için erişilebilir değil

Müze - Asansör	Evet	Hayır	Yorum
Müzedede engellilere uygun asansör mevcut mu?	x		Binada iki adet platform asansör bulunmaktadır. Kullanımı herkese açıktır.
Asansörlerin dışı ve için tekerlekli sandalye için uygun mu? Ölçüleri standartlara uyuyor mu?	x		Asansörün dış alanı tekerlekli sandalye için uygundur. İç alanı da standartlar dahilinde uygundur. Bas-git düğme ile çalıştığından fiziksel engelli bireyin yanına bir yardımcı önerilir.
Asansör görme engelliler için erişilebilir mi?		x	Asansörün dışında görme engellileri asansöre yönlendiren bir işaret mevcut değildir. Asansörün dışındaki düğmede hissedilebilir yüzey bulunmamaktadır. Asansörün içindeki düğmelerde hissedilebilir yüzey mevcut. Düğmeler renkli ışıklı ve numaralar yüzey ile kontrast. Tutacak mevcut değil. Bu nedenle tam/ kısıtlı görme engelli biri için yarı ulaşılabilir.
Asansör içinde acil durum düğmesi, telefon, sensörlü yüzey mevcut mu?	x		Asansör için telefon, acil durum düğmesi ve kapılarda sensörlü yüzey mevcut. Asansör içinde ses sistemi mevcut değil.

Müze - Dinlenme Alanı - Mağaza	Evet	Hayır	Yorum
Müze mağazası tekerlekli sandalye ile erişime uygun mu?	x		Uygundur. Mağaza giriş kattadır ve girişinde kapı ya da eğim yoktur.
Müze mağazası görme engelliler için erişime uygun mu?		x	Uygun değildir. Mağazaya yönlendiren renkli bantlar ya da hissedilebilir yüzey bulunmamaktadır. Mağaza içinde de bulunmamaktadır. Mağazayı gösteren işaretler mevcuttur. Braille ile işaret mevcut değildir.
Müze dinlenme alanı tekerlekli sandalye için erişilebilir midir?	x		Erişilebilir durumdadır. Giriş kattan asansör ile çıkılabilir. Asansör tekerlekli sandalyeye uygundur. Dinlenme alanı avlu biçimindedir ve iki bölüme oluşur. Daha yüksekte kalan ikinci bölüme geçiş için rampa mevcuttur. Rampa yüzeyi kaymaz semin değildir.
Müze dinlenme alanı görme engelliler için erişilebilir midir?	x		Erişilebilir durumdadır. Giriş kattan asansör ile çıkabilir. Asansör içi görme engelliler için uygundur. Merdiven ile de çıkabilir, ilk merdivenlerde bant ve tutacak mevcuttur. İkinci merdivenlerde renkli bant yoktur, tutacak mevcuttur. Dinlenme alanına renkli bant yapılması gerekmektedir.

Müze - Sergi Alanı – İslami Eserler Bölümü	Evet	Hayır	Yorum
Sergi alanına giriş tekerlekli sandalyeye uygun mu? Kapı mevcut mu? Rampa var mı?	x		Uygun. Sergi alanına girişler de kapı yok, giriş dar ancak erişilebilir, tekerlekli sandalye için rampa mevcut. Girişin tavanı alçak.
Sergi alanı dışındaki koridorlar tekerlekli sandalyeliler için erişilebilir mi?	x		Tekerlekli sandalyeliler için koridorlar da uygun. Tek problem kronolojik olarak düzenlenmiş sergi alanının başlangıcı asansör ile ters tarafta ve o odaya yönlendiren hiçbir bilgi tabelası mevcut değil. Koridorlar da dinlenme için oturma yerleri mevcut.
Sergi alanı dışındaki kapılar tekerlekli sandalyeliler için uygun mu?	x		Uygun. Kapıların biri hariç hepsi otomatik kapı. Otomatik olmayan kapı da sandalye ile erişilebilir bir alanda değil, engelli birey o kısmı asansör ile geçiyor.
Sergi alanı dışındaki kapılar görme engelliler için uygun mu?	x		Uygun. Kapıların biri hariç hepsi otomatik. Otomatik olmayan kapı da sürekli açık tutuluyor. Bu nedenle görme engelliler için erişilebilir.
Sergi alanına giden merdivenler görme engelliler için uygun mu?	x		Uygun. İç merdivenlerde renkli bantlar ve tutacak mevcut. İç merdivenlere giden koridorlarda da renkli bantlar mevcut. Sadece dış avluya çıkan dış merdivende renkli bantlar mevcut değil. Tutacak var.
Sergi alanına giriş görme engelliler için uygun mu? Yönlendirici elemanlar mevcut mu?	x		Uygun. Sergi alanına giden koridor boyunca hissedilebilir yüzey olarak renkli bantlar mevcut. Bantlar kapı girişlerinde de mevcut. Girişin tavanı alçak olduğu buna dikkat çeken bir işaret lazım.

Sergi alanında ya da dışındaki koridorlarda duyma engelliler için indüksiyon döngü sistemi (induction loop system) mevcut mu?		x	Mevcut değil. Yapılmasına dair bir çalışma da şimdilik yok.
Sergi düzenlenmesinde ışık standartlarına göre mi? Objelerin yerleştirilmesi standartlara uygun mu?		x	Işık hassas tarih objeler uygun, ancak iç bölümde kontrast çok fazla. Kısıtlı görme engelliler için sorun oluşturabilir. Objelerin yerleştirildiği bölümler tekerlekli sandalyeliler için uygun yükseklikte.
Sergi düzenlenmesinde bilgilendirme panoları standartlarına göre mi? Panolarda braille seçeneği var mı?		x	Objeye önündeki küçük panoların yerleştirildiği yer doğru ancak panoların fontu çok küçük ve renkler ışıkta parladığı için yazıların okunması zor. Küçük fonttan dolayı tekerlekli sandalye, hem de yazı tipinden dolayı kısıtlı görme engelliler için zor. Küçük panolar camekan içinde kaldıklarından braille seçeneği yok. Büyük bilgilendirme panolarında da yazı fontu çok küçük, kısıtlı görme engelli birey için okuması güç. Dışarıda durmalarına rağmen Braille seçeneği yok.

Müze - Sergi Alanı - Osmanlı Bölümü	Evet	Hayır	Yorum
Sergi alanına giriş tekerlekli sandalyeye uygun mu? Kapı mevcut mu? Rampa var mı?	x		Kapı yok, rampa gerektiren bir giriş yok. Erişilebilir.
Sergi alanına giriş görme engelliler için uygun mu? Yönlendirici elemanlar mevcut mu?	x		Girişe kadar renkli bantlar mevcut, giriş erişilebilir. Sergi alanının içinde renkli bantlar bulunmamakta, bu da görme engelli bireyin sergi alanı içinde dolaşmasını kısıtlamaktadır.
Sergi düzenlenmesinde ışık standartlara göre mi? Objelerin yerleştirilmesi standartlara uygun mu?	x		Bu odalarda büyük pencerelerden dolayı daha doğal ışık mevcut olduğundan kontrast azalmakta ve objeleri kısıtlı görme engelliler için daha uygun hale getirmektedir. Objelerin boyu uygun yüksekliktedir.
Sergi düzenlenmesinde bilgilendirme panoları standartlara göre mi? Panolarda braille seçeneği var mı?		x	Bilgi panolarından diğer sergi alanındaki problemler mevcuttur. Braille seçeneği yoktur.

Müze - Websitesi	Evet	Hayır	Yorum
Müzenin websitesinde engelliler ile ilgili bilgilendirici bölüm mevcut mu?		x	Websitesi yeni düzenlenmesine rağmen engelliler için ayrı bir bölüm mevcut değil.
Müzenin websitesinden engellilerin müzeye nasıl ulaşabileceklerini gösteren bir harita mevcut mu?		x	Websitesinde bir harita mevcut. Engelliler için güzergah ya da toplu taşıma öneren bir bölüm mevcut değil.
Müzenin websitesinde fiziksel engelliler için sunulan hizmetleri belirtilmiş mi? (tekerlekli sandalye, asansör gibi)		x	Websitesinde bu bilgilerin hiçbiri mevcut değil.
Müzenin websitesinde duyma ve görme engelliler ile ilgili hizmetler belirtilmiş mi? (audioguide, işaret dili bilen rehber, rehber köpek, braille katalog)		x	Websitesinde bu bilgilerin hiçbiri mevcut değil.
Müze websitesinde kısıtlı görme engelliler için büyük yazı fontu seçeneği mevcut mu?		x	Mevcut değil.
Müzenin websitesinde sanal tur yapılabiliyor mu?		x	Websitesinde sanal tur imkanı yoktur.