

EXPO 2010



# EXPO SHANGHAI 2010

**BETTER CITY BETTER LIFE**

**TURKEY THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATIONS**

*ANATOLIA THE LAND OF BETTER CITIES BETTER LIVES*

**ISTANBUL: TWO CONTINENTS, ONE CITY**



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PREFACE  
**ANATOLIA, THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATIONS**

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## PREFACE

# ANATOLIA, THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATIONS

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**D**estiny interlaced the earliest history of the Turks with the power and the glory of the Chinese Empire. Inner Asia often witnessed the clashes of Turkic nomads and sedentary Chinese. At the time, China regarded herself as the center of the world and as the most cultured country on earth. In the face of condescension, nomadic communities, including Turks, boasted that the Great Wall of China was built to ward off their raids. Athwart Chinese might, the Turks succeeded in creating a major state which some prominent historians, René Grousset, Luc Kwanten et al., characterized as the first empire of the steppes.

Turks frequently posed a threat to Chinese dominance although, while retaining their autochthonous cultural integrity, they came under numerous Chinese influences. Implied references to Turks appeared in Chinese annals in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and the definite use of their name was recorded as Tukiou or Tu-chueh in the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century when the Köktürk state emerged.

Some of the earliest Turkic poems were preserved in Chinese translation (the originals have never been found). A stanza, perhaps from a Turkic song dating back to the second century B.C., laments the defeat that the Turks suffered at Chinese hands and its aftermath of humiliation and deprivation.

We have lost the Yen-chi-san mountain  
The beauty of our women was wrested from us  
We have abandoned the valleys of Chi-li-yen  
Nowadays our cattle find no pastureland

The Köktürk state, from the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century until about 734, had developed their own “ru-

nic” script probably from 5<sup>th</sup> century onwards. In Inner Asia, Turks were the first people who kept their own historical records. Although numerous inscribed stone fragments have been discovered presumably from the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Orkhon Inscriptions on 3 stelae standing in Outer Mongolia since the early 8<sup>th</sup> century contain data on the episodes of victory and defeat in Chinese-Köktürk battles, Chinese domination of Turks, and their cultural hegemony.

The first of these three stelae, erected in 732 for the Köktürk ruler Kül Tigin, has elaborate inscriptions in Turkish and a fairly long Chinese text on its Western façade. The inscriptions start with Kül Tigin’s account of how Turks had been lured by the Chinese with gold and silver, silk and sweet talk. It also records that the Turks who thus fell under China’s subjugation later regained their sovereignty thanks to effective and enlightened leadership.

Bilge Kağan’s inscription on the second stela, erected probably in 735, provides an account of Köktürk political success and economic prosperity. It explicitly explains, however, that for artistic achievement they still relied on China. The ruler declares that he “obtained artists from the Chinese emperor who was kind enough to send them from his own palace.” They constructed “a splendid temple and decorated the interior as well as the exterior with exquisite pictures and sculpture.”

Like the Chinese annals of the time, Köktürk inscriptions chronicle how China and the Turks were the best of enemies who could also maintain peace and fruitful cultural relations.



After the demise of the Köktürk state, the hub of the Turkic world in Central Asia was the Uighur state which held sway from the latter part of the 8<sup>th</sup> century until the 12<sup>th</sup>. Buddhism was adopted by a large segment of Uighur Turks and Chinese influences were pervasive on Uighur painting and literature for many centuries.

The Chinese and the Turks, although geographically far in later history, shared fascinating affinities. There is sufficient evidence that it was probably the Turkish migration from the environs of China westward that transported the movable press invented most probably by the Chinese.

Turks also brought with them the small-pox vaccination, another Chinese invention, to Anatolia and to Ottoman

Istanbul, where in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, the writer Lady Montagu (the wife of the British consul), whose son was spared from death by that Chinese invention.

A Chinese contribution to Turkish artistic creativity was the wondrous *çintemani*, the lovely 'Chinese clouds' that became a leitmotif of the Ottoman tiles and textiles.

The very word "*çini*" for tiles is derived from China. The Ottomans had a passion for ceramics, chinaware and tile work. The pavilion named "*Çinili Köşk*" (literally 'Tile Kiosk') on the grounds of the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul features what could be characterized as the "greatest collection of Chinese porcelain anywhere on the earth." In addition to amassing such an impressive collection (probably more than 12 thousand

pieces) the Ottomans developed their own industries of tile work and produced a vast number of chinaware that have a place of pride not only in Turkey but also in most of the world's major museums.

The Turkish language has also embraced words and terms that evoke China. These include "*çini mürekkebi*", meaning China ink (same as the English term "India ink"), "*çin gülü*" (same as Japanese rose), "*çin mavisi*" for "China blue."

The Exposition that once again brings together Turkish and Chinese culture is a fine testament to the fructifying interaction that existed between the two nations for at least a millennium and a half.



A TOTAL ESCAPE FROM REALITY:

# SHANGHAI EXPO 2010

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A TOTAL ESCAPE FROM REALITY:

## SHANGHAI EXPO 2010

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There is little doubt that the participants of EXPO 2010 are aware of the absence of any distinction between reality and fantasy on the land that has been constructed for the event. We would certainly not be the first to point out that it is the visual simulations, illusions, reproductions, imitations and fantasies of the various constructed narrations that dominate the space of every world fair; however, the significance of this particular event lies in its chosen theme, "Better City, Better Life," and the highly unusual characteristics of its host city, Shanghai.

The expo site is indeed a constructed land, covering 5.28 square kilometres of what used to be an industrial dump and a swamp area in the old city proper on the south bank of Haungpu River. Besides the inevitable "facelifts" given to the existing buildings surrounding the site, major investments have been made to update the local infrastructure, amenities and public services, turning the whole land development process into a large-scale urban land reclamation project. The existing dam has been extended for an additional 110 kilometres along the river, the two sides of which are now served by underwater vehicular and pedestrian tunnels. Indeed the whole public transportation system has been reorganised, integrating new metro lines with the Maglev, the fastest train in the world that links the airport with the city centre. Potable water, sewerage and drainage systems, fibre-optic communication infrastructure, and security and electric wiring systems have all been integrated into the transportation lines, providing a multi-layered service infrastructure to the site. As expected, the central authority has not limited the transformations to satisfying only the needs of the EXPO, as the effects have been much larger in scale, encompassing both sides of the river, and con-

necting the Bund, Shanghai's historical multi-cultural centre; and Pudong, the new financial and commercial hub. If the term "city" is still to be considered as an appropriate architectural, economic, and socio-cultural term used to identify Shanghai, then it can certainly be described as a city of "fabulous proportions", devoid of space, dimension or time.<sup>1</sup>

Over the last couple of years China has been constructing "a new city" for extreme imaginations. Shanghai, as it is, challenges all the perceptions of reality. Hidden always behind the curtain of mystic fog, the city continuously transforms itself into a potential backdrop for a science-fiction movie. Recalling the metaphor for a living organism in the movie "Brazil," and the multi-layered, polluted, post-humanist metropolis in the movie "The Fifth Element", the new Shanghai is literally humming with the collective sound of the 10-lane highways, excessively layered road exits, thousands of air-condition units cladding the high-rise dwellings, construction machines, cranes, concrete mixers, street vendors, and the footsteps of its 19 million silent inhabitants. The mist, when combined with the air pollution, often renders it impossible to see the sun, which only sometimes hangs in the air like a phantom silver ball, but is unable to give any sense of orientation, not even the East.

It wasn't always this way. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, serenity, scale and orientation were very important qualities in the development of traditional settlements in China. Meticulous planning, based on the geographical directions of east, west, north and south, was crucial for these historical settlements. Rules were laid down in writing, dictating that a capital city should have a square plan, set out in a grid, and that the settlement should be surrounded

by walls containing a certain number of city gates. The locations of the main streets, the market place, and the court and temple were also defined according to the cardinal rules contained prudently within these guides. Today, the only reminders of this can be found in the street addresses; however West 118 offers a non-representational orientation when you are surrounded by thousands of skyscrapers and 100 meter-wide urban platforms, referred to as “streets”. In traditional settlements, such as the historical sites of Beijing, not only were the temples and the houses of the ruling class arranged in a strict grid, but also the streets and houses of the lower classes. Traditional courtyard houses came together in an orthogonal layout to form a “siheyuan”, which in turn connected to each other in a linear pattern of “hutongs” that were simply alleys formed by the outer walls of the houses. The joining of one siheyuan to another forms a hutong, and then the joining of one hutong to another creates the larger settlements in Beijing. The word “hutong” was also used to refer to such “neighbourhoods”. This very articulate three-dimensional matrix covered large areas to form a well-defined settlement pattern. In Shanghai, this architectural pattern transforms into shikumen residences, which are two or three-story houses protected



by high brick walls. Each residence is again connected and arranged in straight alleys, and the whole system of defined neighbourhoods combines to create the grand scale of the traditional city. The contribution of European architecture in Shanghai, and particularly the French neo-classical style, creates a hybrid culture in this physical environment. The scale shifts to four- or five-story buildings without affecting the general pattern of the city. Recent developments, however, aside from the preparations for the World EXPO, do not have any scale or time. The demolition of traditional houses and alleys and the construction of skyscrapers in their place takes place in the blink of an eye, and with such regularity that every time you open your eyes in Shanghai, you see something completely new. In this respect, the temporary existence of the EXPO in Shanghai cannot be conceived as a unique generator of any transformation. There are more than 400 different ways of saying “ephemeral” in Chinese, and an equally large number of ways to produce it in Shanghai, thus the complexity of the temporality inherited in the expo site becomes redundant.

Much research has been carried out focusing on the nature, impact and history of world fairs, and such events have been the subject of much criticism from various corners. As a consequence, the field has grown to involve disciplines as diverse as the economy, sociology, history, cultural geography, art and architecture, among others.<sup>2</sup> While social critics cite Walter Benjamin or Jean Baudrillard when describing the aura and authenticity of objects to discuss the transient and context-bound social contrivances of world fairs;<sup>3</sup> historians such as Sylviane Leprun and Zeynep Çelik focused on the architectur-

al representation of different cultures and their socio-cultural implications, such as “the constant dilemma of uniting two recurring and often conflicting themes, the desire to represent long-held values in traditional forms and the need for modernity”.<sup>4</sup> Political scientists have questioned the contemporary existence of world expos, and have asked, quite rightly so, whether in a period of mass communication it is still appropriate to claim a substantial impact from such events, in which every country aims to mirror itself, although deprived of their “cultivated nationalities”. Others refer to Umberto Eco or Daniel Boorstin to reintroduce the term “hyperreality,” which characterizes the inability of the consciousness to distinguish reality from fantasy. Hyperreality is a means of understanding what is actually “real” in a world, where a multitude of different media can transform radically the original object, event, or even the experience being represented.<sup>5</sup>

Cultural authenticity is no longer a demand, or even an illusion, in Shanghai. The known conflict between the traditional and the modern, and the equidistance “in-between” the two has long gone. The city exists in a mist of total anachrony, and what remains is a magnificent timeless counterfeit within

which everything is real. Shanghai is Tlön, the fictional land depicted in the short story of Borges. In Borges’ story, there is a “massive conspiracy of intellectuals to imagine”, and “thereby create”, a world known as Tlön. The creators of this world hold an extreme form of idealism, which suggests that reality is in the mind, or is a product of their ideas. Reality, for them, is just a mental construct, and the people of this imaginary land live in a world that is understood “not as a concurrence of objects in space, but as a heterogeneous series of

independent acts.”<sup>6</sup> The land is successive and temporal, not spatial, and goes so far as to negate scale, dimension and time. In Tlön the present is indefinite, that the future has no reality other than a present memory. Objects tend to become effaced and lose detail when they are forgotten. “A classic example is the doorway”, says Borges, “which survived so long it was visited by a beggar and disappeared at his death. At times some birds, a horse, have saved the ruins of an amphitheatre.” Therefore, simply imagining things makes them real in Tlön, and much the same can be said of Shanghai. If this metaphorical anecdote is used to explain “the city”, one can imagine how it “betters” itself in the EXPO Site, where visitors are led through an imaginary maze, attempting to verify the reality or unreality of what they see. The site has no scale, dimension or time; the pavilions appear when imagined by the visitors, and disappear in their absence. LED displays, the new material for architecture, cover the surfaces of pavilions, and in a blink of an eye their masses become effaced and lose detail. The images render and re-render the facades over and over again in just a matter of seconds, so that each time you open your eyes you know you will see something new. There is no room or time to take in details, and thus to form memories, at the EXPO site.

In this context, or in better terms in the absence of a context, the Turkey Pavilion seeks authenticity in a nostalgic hyperreality. “When the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia

assumes its full meaning. There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity.”<sup>7</sup> The pavilion is a relatively small building with a very large task and a loaded architectural program; and the *façade* illustrates this complexity and rejects any narrative continuity. With its expressive colours and structural texture it looks very contemporary, but it is actually a direct application of an abstract image found in the wall paintings of an ancient settlement in Anatolia. Çatalhöyük (Forkmound in English), the centre of an advance culture in the Neolithic period (7400–6000 BC), is the main inspiration for the exterior of the pavilion. A depiction of a mural that is frequently cited as the world’s oldest map or plan forms the first layer of the external surface; while the second layer is a fresco depicting hunting scenes of now-extinct animals that was found carved out of the walls of the historical settlement. Çatalhöyük is an outstanding site, not only due to the artistic expressions and its claim of being the world’s oldest permanent settlement, but also for the skills, not to say quality of life, of its inhabitants. At its peak, the settlement was home to almost 10,000 people, who developed techniques in the domestication of animals, agriculture and trade. The social life they built together lasted for more than 1,000 years, and while the houses they built were simple structures, they were organized in such a complex form that the settlement has been called highly advanced for its time. The quality and the variety of materials used in the construction of the houses, the subdivision of the interior spaces, which included a fireplace, were exceptional. These houses were set out in a perfect, homogeneous pattern, providing evidence of social equality, and recent findings have revealed that there was no social distinction based on gender, with both men and women receiving equivalent nutrition, and apparently having a relatively equal status in both life and death. The production of obsidian tools was a major contribution of the inhabitants of Çatalhöyük to the development of future civilizations, which is reflected in the black glazed surface at the entrance to the pavilion to represent the prosperity offered by the obsidian stone. The shiny smooth surface of the stone reflects the hidden secrets of a once lived “better life”. The evolution of the primitive hut into more sophisticated shelters, the advances in building materials and construction techniques, the emergence of the first cult buildings and circular planned shelters, the first examples of domestic goods, furniture and utensils, and the first seemingly planned settlements have all been major sources of inspiration for the interior display. As visitors walk through the memories of Anatolia, each blink of an eye brings to mind something that is very familiar, yet very distant in time. Layers of history are represented in three layers of walls that overlap or departing to frame and re-frame historical narrations. There is no scale, dimension or time depicted on the display walls. To borrow a quote from Baudrillard: “No more subject, focal point, centre or periphery: but pure flexion or circular inflection ... chain reaction, slow implosion and simulacra of spaces where the real-effect again comes into play.”<sup>8</sup>

Turkey is quite rightly represented in the pavilion as the cradle of civilizations, where a number of local kingdoms were cultivated that transformed in time into global powers. Starting with the Eastern Roman Empire, and followed by the Byzantium, Seljuk and finally the Ottoman Empires, the Turkish Republic as it is today is the outcome of this magnificent history. Istanbul is highlighted as the city of three empires, and the aesthetic, intellectual and physical infrastructure of the city is represented by one constant element: water. Aqueducts,

cisterns and fountains not only tame nature, but also beautify the landscape, and these human creations formed the intriguing essence of Turkish Modernity. The legacy of all the above was a series of revolutions that cultivated the land both socially and culturally into a highly egalitarian democracy. It was only at this particular point in its history that scale, dimension and time finally became possible in the country.

The vast population of the host country will be a determining factor in the visitor profile to the pavilion, for which surprisingly familiar objects and links are suggested in the “dis-play”. From the turtle base of the Kök-Tigin monument, representing longevity and the power to predict the future, to the *cintemani* tiles depicting very familiar ornaments in China; from the Caf-tans magnifying the power of emperors, to the black and white pictures of the Republican revolutions, a series of objects are presented that will be all too familiar to the local visitors. The individual elements are displayed “not as a concurrence of objects in space, but as a heterogeneous series of independent acts.”<sup>9</sup> Objects come into existence at the arrival of the visitors, they survive as long as they are visited, and then disappear when there is no one around to understand. At times it may be a child or even an old man that are saving the ruins of an amphitheatre or a hippodrome.

The motivation behind the three-partite division in the display area in the pavilion – “Dreaming of the Past”, “Cultivating the Present” and “Aspiring to the Future” – could be interpreted as a 19<sup>th</sup> century remedy to create a visible past of better cities, and consequently, a visible continuum of better lives to reassure the future, yet this is not the case. As neither Hittites nor Romans still inhabit the cities of Anatolia, the whole display should be interpreted as a reclaiming of the land, a part of the geography, over and over again. As every pavilion in the EXPO can define its land in a similar manner, the whole site becomes a haven of fantasy. Simulacrum exists in the nature of the expo site, “the real itself appears as a large useless body”, to borrow a Baudrillardian term, and there is no desire for “real” in the expo. Hence, Baudrillard’s theory of simulation and media is materialized to declare that “the medium has no message, the medium is the message” in Shanghai.

1 Jean Baudrillard. “The Precision of Simulacra,” *Simulations*, translated from French by P.Foss, P. Patton and P. Beitchman, New York: Semiotext(e), 1983, pg.26.

2 There are even EXPO Museums, one of which was first created as a website in 1998, dedicated to the history, architecture and memorabilia of the world’s fairs.

3 David Phillips. *Exhibiting Authenticity*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997.

4 Zeynep Çelik. *Displaying the Orient: architecture of Islam at nineteenth-century world’s fairs*. Berkeley: Univ. Of California Press, 1992. Sylviane Leprun. *Le Théâtre de colonies*, 1986.

5 Umberto Eco. “A Theory of Expositions,” *Travels in Hyperreality*, translated from Italian by William Weaver, London: Picador, 1987.

6 Jorge Luis Borges. “Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius,” a short story first published in the Argentine journal *Sur*, May 1940.

7 Baudrillard, pg.12.

8 ibid.

9 Borges.



# THE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIAN ZODIAC

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## THE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIAN ZODIAC

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The association of animals with the movements of the sun is a custom that dates back many centuries in many different cultures around the world, for example half of the signs in the classical Greek zodiac are represented by animals, alongside two mythological hybrids.

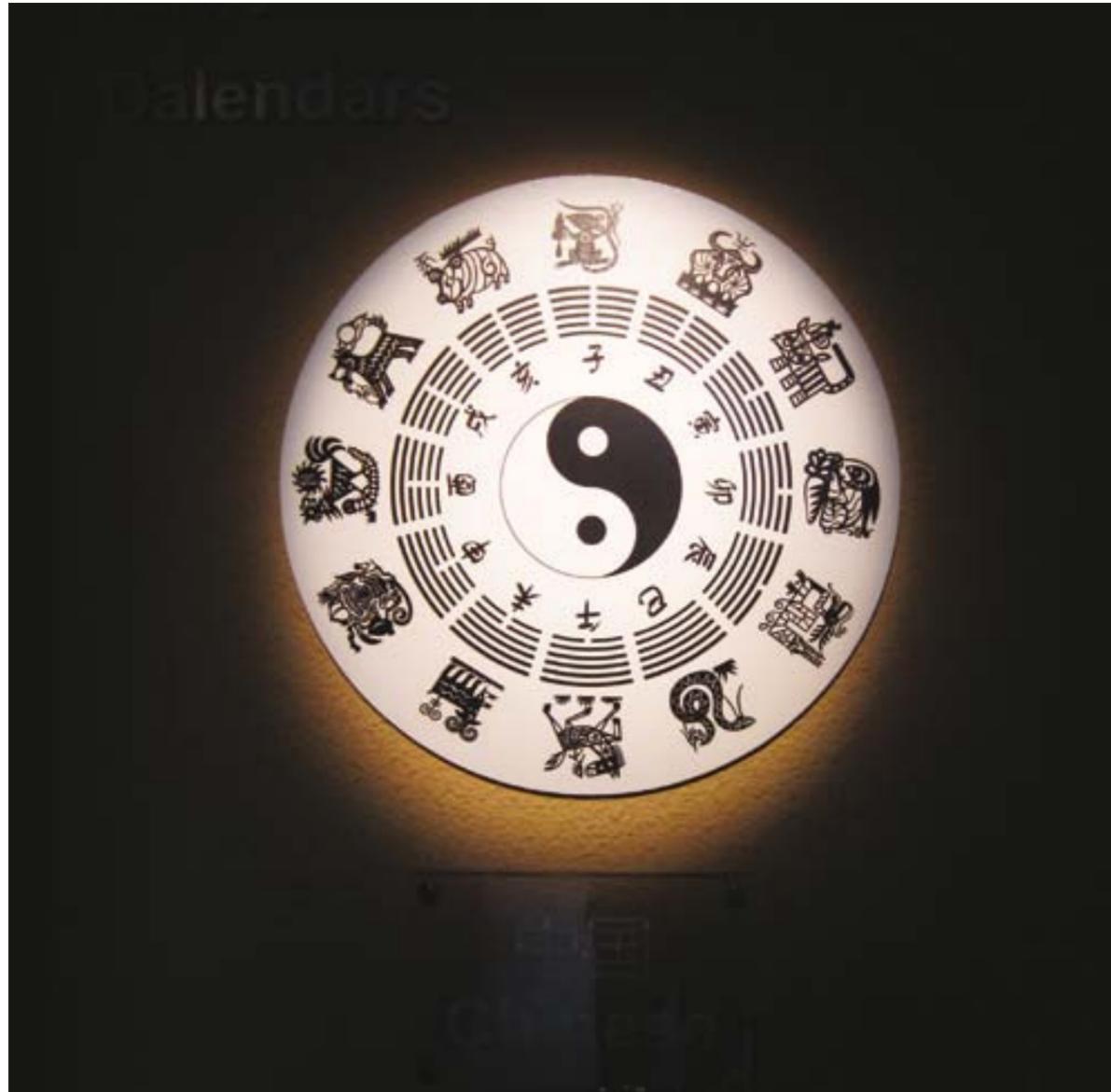
Some of the Eastern examples of zodiac systems, such as those originating in China, Mongolia and the Turkic communities, contain neither human, hybrid or fictional beasts (aside from the dragon), with mythical animals such as the *qilin*, and animals popular in mythology, such as the deer, the wolf and birds of prey all missing as symbols in the calendar. Common symbols generally appear in the same order in all Eastern cultures, but with minor modifications depending on the locality.

These representations all go back to very early times, pre-dating the modern distinctions of the animals being portrayed as we know them today. The "Turkic Calendar of 12 Animal Cycles," and the "the Chinese Zodiac" are two examples which at first sight appear identical, but upon closer inspection reveal subtle differences. The Chinese zodiac and its characteristics and illustrations are widely used in the public domain; while the Turkic calendar is used more privately by the Central Asian communities. In Turkey it has become a matter of historical heritage. In Central Asia the characters are assigned to a specific year rather than to the personal characteristics of people born in that year.

The names of some of the animals depicted in both calendars indicate a difference in gen-

der. In the Chinese calendar, mostly generic terms are used, while in the Turkic calendar, gender-specific names, indicating a female animal, are prevalent. As these cultures were specialised in animal husbandry the female animal was held in higher regard rather than the male. The issue of whether the 10<sup>th</sup> animal in the zodiac is a rooster or hen is one such difference. On the Chinese side it is a rooster, while on the Turkic side it is a hen. According to the Chinese, a rooster is a beautiful animal with a distinctive and imposing song announcing the break of day, whereas in Turkey the rooster would be less likely to be used as a symbol because it is seen as a quarrelsome animal. In Chinese culture, a person born in the Year of the Rooster is described as acute, neat, meticulous, organised, self-assured and alert, which are attributes that are not necessarily associated with a hen. In Turkey the hen is always depicted as the giver of life that is responsible for taking care of its young. This distinction of what is beautiful likely goes back to very early times, as examples of early Turkic zodiacs display these differences.

There may also have been some confusion in the translations into Western tongues; with the names of the second and eighth animals being cases in point. The second animal is referred to as an ox in Western languages, whereas in modern Turkic cultures it is mostly depicted as a cow. In ancient Turkic and Chinese systems, on the other hand, the generic term is used. The eighth sign denotes the "Year of the Ram" in Western languages; but is referred to as the "Year of the Sheep" in Central Asian cultures. The name of the third animal, which incidentally 2010 falls under, is *hu*, or "Tiger," while the Turkic form is *bars*.



In scholarly literature *bars* is often translated as leopard; but among the Turkic languages the distinction between a tiger and a leopard is not denoted through vocabulary, but rather by appearance, whether it is striped (*yolbars*) or not (*bars*). Depending on the region, some cultures, such as the Kazakhs, may refer to the tiger as *bars*.

The intertwined nature of these cultures are in part based upon the similarities in geography and local cultures. The dragon, or *luu* (*long*) in Chinese in the ancient form, is present in almost all cultures; yet even in the 11<sup>th</sup> century Turkic-Arabic dictionary the same word is used for crocodile. Later in history, the term *luu* was sometimes replaced with the term

for crocodile or fish; and this was the case with the Ilkhanids (13–14<sup>th</sup> c.) in Iran, and also in modern Uzbekistan and the Qarachai region of the Caucasus. As the fish, crocodile and the dragon are all believed to be born underwater, it is no wonder that they are often regarded as interchangeable. This fluidity of expression was also to e seen in some ancient wall paintings.

1. rat (*küskü*), ox /cow , tiger (*bars*), hare
2. dragon (*lu*), snake, horse (*yunt*), sheep/ram
3. monkey (*bichin*), rooster/hen, dog (*it*), pig/boar



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Present-day Turkey and China occupy the two distant ends of the Asian continent, yet in the culture and languages of these two countries there are aspects that make one think back and wonder. Expressions relating to pragmatism, such as “Cross the river by feeling the stones” (*mozhi shitou guo he* 摸着石头过河), find a resonance in the Turkish idiom “migration is organised along the way” (*göç yolda düzülür*); while the spirit of plunging into something new with little preparation also finds reflection in the two cultures as “the courage of the ignorant” (*cahil cesareti*) in Turkish, and “the ignorant does not fear” (*wuzhizhe wuwei* 无知者无畏) in Chinese. However it is not only in relation to matters of expediency that such similarities are apparent, as abstract concepts such as the continuity of the family line are expressed in a similar way, both using fire in a symbolic manner. In Turkish the reference is provided by the continuity or “extinguishing” of the family hearth (*ocağını devam ettirmek, ocağı sönmek*), while in Chinese the concept is expressed with reference to burning incense – “continue to burn the incense” (*yanxu xianghuo* 延续香火) or “the incense is broken into pieces” (*duan le xianghuo* 断了香火). Both cases imply that the last son is dead, and as such the family line will not continue. While in English these expressions often require explanation, in Chinese and Turkish they speak for themselves. Both in Chinese and in Turkish the word for “liver” is used as a term of endearment – in Turkish it ends with *-ciğim* “*ciğerciğim*” my liver”, while in Chinese it is “my heart and liver” *wode xinganer* 我的心肝儿. These are just a few examples of common expressions between two countries at opposite ends of the same continent.

With this in mind, there is little wonder that the inscriptions on the Turkic monuments in present-day Mongolia illustrate the close interaction between the Early Turk (552–734) and Tang China (618–905) cultures. While this close interaction was sometimes a result of military encounters, at other times it was for peaceful purposes. The Early Kök-Türk Qaghan says, “I came to an amicable agreement with the Chinese people.” The bilingual representation, carved in both Turkic and Chinese, bears witness to the peaceful atmosphere of the time. Neither inscription is a translation of the other; rather they are complimentary in content. The Chinese inscription provides evidence of the historical context, referring to landmark events of divergence and convergence in the history of the steppe. The Xiongnu of the Han times are regarded as the antecedents of the Early Turks, with the earliest historical contact at the end of the Xia dynasty (1500–1200 BC) being the time when the paths of the Chinese as agriculturalists and the Xiongnu as pastoral nomads diverged. The historical panorama, as exemplified by the Tang emperor Xuanzong, continues with ups and downs in the relationship. At this juncture, on the occasion of the inscription placed in honour of Kul Tegin – the younger brother of the Qaghan – the emphasis is on the friendly nature of the relationship, which had also components of kinship.

The Turkic inscriptions, on the other hand, emphasise local circumstances and the disagreements between the different political groups. Referring to the defeat and the consequent submission to Tang rule in 630 – mentioned only as *passim* in a diplomatic language in the Chinese inscription – the Early



Turk ruler Bilge Qaghan provides an elaborate and emotional picture of the events leading up to the event. He emphasises the location of the sacred mountain Otuken and the significance of social unity and points out dangers of dissonance between the different parties. Giving vivid descriptions of all the battles won by his brother Kul Tegin and himself, he beseeches the groups not to decamp, not to depart and not to disturb the peaceful atmosphere of the country. Using a rhetorical and emotional language, he stresses that the past should be heeded as a lesson for the present, and in this way provides us with an early example of a historiographical trend that would leave its mark in Inner Asia, where the rulers and leaders would write history as witnesses of the events. This approach was far removed from that of the minister Tonyuquq, who depicts the past so that it may be used for the future.

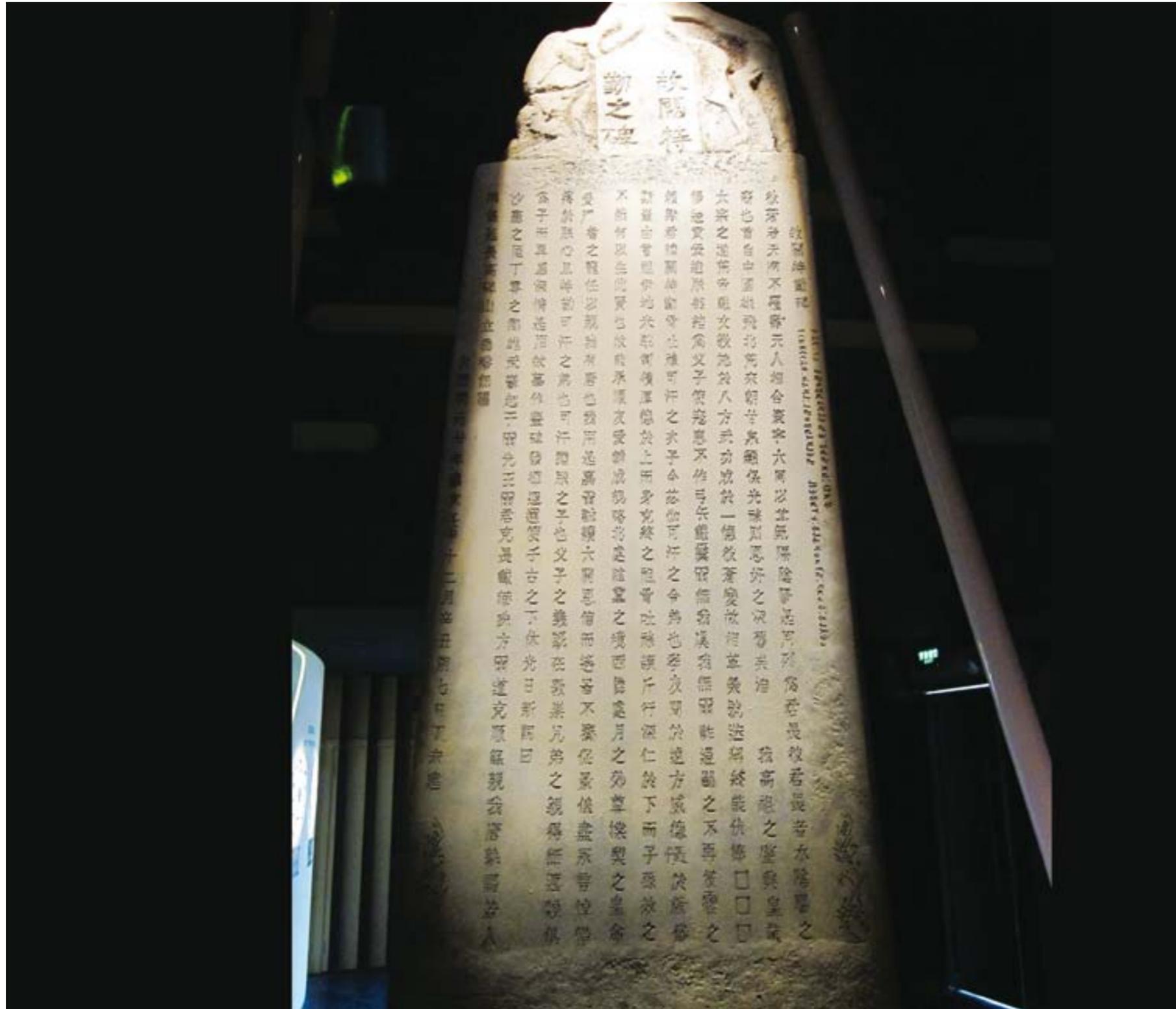
While the Tonyuquq inscription stands apart, the Chinese inscription by emperor Xuanzong and the Turkic inscriptions erected in honour of Kul Tegin and his elder brother Bilge Qaghan, are not only complimentary in terms of content, but also in appearance and style. As Chinese artisans sent by the

Tang emperor were involved in the building of the funerary architecture, as well as the inscriptions, they display Chinese style patterns, featuring a tortoise at its base. These Chinese patterns have been interwoven with the Turkic script, the base, as well as the seal of the Turkic ruling family that tops the stele. Chinese patterns on Turkic stele can also be found in Zhaoling in Xi'an, at the funerary complex of Tang emperor Taizong, where stone statues of subjugated rulers (*balbal*) in the Turkic style can be found. Furthermore, referencing horses as if they were members of the family, known to everybody by name, is another trait that was shared between the two cultures. In the inscriptions, Kul Tegin's battle horses are all mentioned their individual names; and similarly we are also aware of the names of Tang Taizong's six famous horses, both from his poem, and from the relief in the Beilin (碑林) Museum in Xi'an. While some of the horses carry names that are indigenous to the horse culture of the frontier zones, one of them is named Tegin (*tegin*特勤), denoting a prince, as in the case of Kul Tegin, but from a century earlier.



## CHINESE TEXT OF KUL TIGIN INSCRIPTION

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## CHINESE TEXT OF KUL TIGIN INSCRIPTION

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It can be concluded from the earliest written texts available that Turkish-Chinese relations date back to the 2250s BC; however as the ancient Chinese were settled in the south and the Turks first lived in the north, it may be assumed that the continuing relations pre-date even this, and may be as old as 5,000 years.

As is the case with every neighbouring civilization, the Turkish and Chinese cultures share a common origin, based on profound historical interrelations and political, economic and cultural interactions. While the Chinese kept meticulous records of these interactions, it is apparent that the ancient Turks were less inclined to record history, however one rare record from the Turkish side offers an insight into their history, being the Bilge Khan, Kul Tigin and Tonyukuk Inscriptions, discovered in Mongolia. The Kultigin and Bilge Khan Inscriptions, which were found in the Orhun Valley, date back to 732 and 735, respectively, and shed light on the depth of the Turkish-Chinese relations at the time. Although they were engraved in Turkish, there are also Chinese texts, however these have been unable to withstand the ravages of time and are largely undecipherable. The Chinese text on the Kul Tigin Inscription, on the other hand, is still legible today, and offers valuable evidence of the Turkish-Chinese relations that had developed since 2210 BC to the 18th century.

Even during the legendary imperial period in China, written documents referring to the northern tribes, who were the ancestors of Turks, were retained. All the beylics, states and empires founded in China established relations with the northern tribes, even at the

very beginning of their reigns; and as is always the case in a neighbourhood, friendships and alliances developed, although sometimes wars and conflicts also occurred. The mutual cultural interactions between the communities resulted in a cross-over of cultural influence, and the values that they exchanged at the time are still maintained today.

At the beginning of 200 BC, while the Han Empire, the greatest dynasty in Chinese history, was being established, the Hun Empire was also making ground in the north. As time passed, close interactions began, and even before the establishment of the state of Gokturk, the ancient Turks had established strong relations with the Western Wei state in the mid 500s. These bilateral connections intensified during the emergence of the Gokturk state, and continued until the migration of the Turkish communities, predominantly into Asia Minor. Since that time Chinese-Turkish relations have continued without interruption until today.

Kul Tigin, the brother of Bilge and the most prominent Gokturk Khan, was born in 684 and died in 731 after demonstrating his bravery and military skills in a number of decisive military victories. Bilge Khan, saddened by the death of his brother, built a monument in his memory, and China, having an amicable relationship with the Turks at that time, sent representatives to the funeral to share in the mourning. It was significant that they also sent their own artists to engrave an inscription on the memorial stone, not only engraving a letter from the Chinese emperor on the monument, but also depictions of Kul Tigin on the walls of the memorial building. Chinese



Emperor Hsuan Tsang, in the inscription, voiced his own perception and understanding of the governance of such a large empire. The emperor's inscription begins by telling of the creation of the universe and earth, and ends focusing on specific elements of humanity. In this text, furthering the legendary power of the empire of China, he incorporated elements of ancient Chinese philosophy, and quoted from books on philosophy and poetry written in the period before the third century

BC. The inscription was a strong indication that the emperor was highly influenced by the philosophical piece entitled "*Sheching*," which was written in line with the teachings of Confucius.

In the 1890s, a scholarly research was initiated to study the various translations of this text, yet at that time there were still large gaps in the ongoing research on the history of the Gokturks, and consequently there were uncertainties both in the transcription and interpretation of the Turkish titles, names of persons and tribes. In the Chinese inscription, the Emperor consciously excluded the heyday of the Gokturks, but touches upon the period between 58-52 BC. He documented the historical Turkish-Chinese friendship, exemplifying the acceptance of Chinese political dominance by the sovereign (San-yu) Ho-han-ye, who was helpless due to the struggles for throne at that time. Here, the intention was to point out the fact that there would be permanent peace between Chinese and Gokturks if the latter were to recognise the political dominance of China.

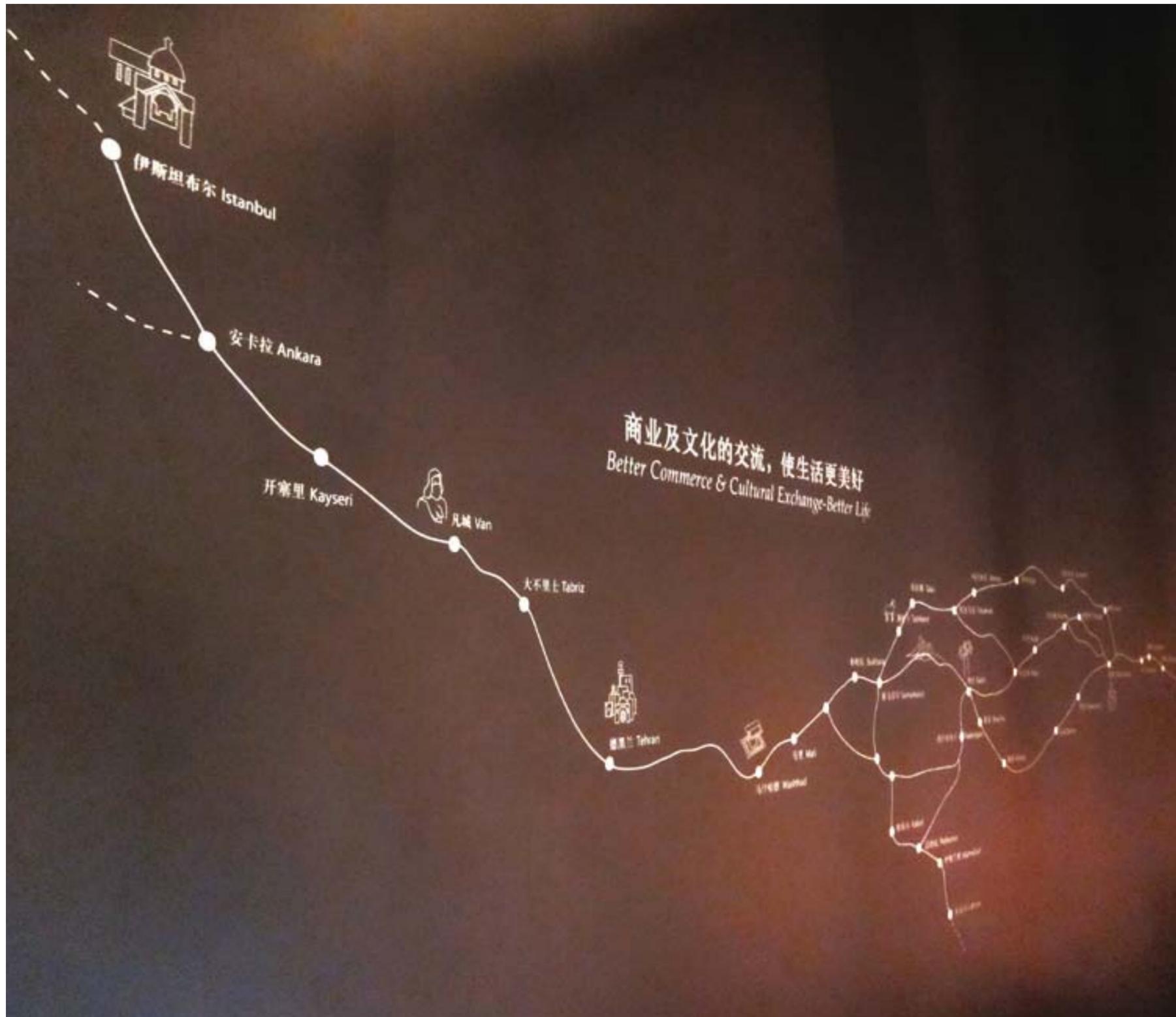
The inscription continues with a narration of the formation and development of the T'ang dynasty, of which Empire Hsuan Tsang was a member. The T'ang dynasty, which was founded in 618, grew rapidly under the reign of emperor T'ai-tsung after he acceded to the throne in 626, and transformed the dynasty into the second largest empire in Asia. As the eastern and western Gokturks were under the control of T'ai-tsung after 630, other city states in Central Asia were forced to recognise the Chinese dominance. This historical process during the interregnum between 630-682 was also mentioned, with Hsuan Tsang once again providing details of the period in accordance with the understanding of the Chinese governance. Since the dynasties founded in China mostly feared attacks against China from the north, the importance of the cessation of such attacks was underlined.

Subsequently, in the concluding section of the text, the respected personality and military victories of Kul Tigin, as well as his privileged position as the brother of Bilge Khan, was emphasised. The deep sorrow felt following his death was clearly expressed; and finally, the significance of Bilge Khan for Central Asia and China was mentioned, clearly stating that the friendship that had been established would continue. The inscription is accepted as a written document confirming the fact that the monument was built in acknowledgment of the friendship and peace in the steppes of far Northern Asia.



## ORIGINS OF THE CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINA AND TURKEY

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# ORIGINS OF THE CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINA AND TURKEY

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Without knowing the topography of the Asian continent it is not possible fully understand the Nomad Road, which crossed the vast steppe stretching from the highlands of Hungary in the West to Manchuria in the East; or the steppe culture of the lands along this route. This "steppe belt", crossing the continent of Eurasia, is bordered by forests to the north, and by mountains, deserts and farmland to the south; and it is in the eastern part of this belt that we must seek the origins of the cultural relations between China and Turkey.

The steppe terrain comprises endless tracts of rolling grassland, which while providing ideal pasture for herds of animals, is unsuitable for farming. The use of the horse as a means of transport became widespread on the steppes in the first millennium BC, providing its inhabitants with the speed and mobility to collect tribute from their neighbours, and being invaluable in their seasonal migrations. Such were the main factors determining the social development of the peoples of the steppe. This nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoral lifestyle was more advantageous than one dependent on seasonal cultivation in the fertile river valleys or hunting in the forests, and what is more, this mobility enabled the Turks and Mongols to retain sole control over the Nomad and Silk Roads across the steppes of Central and Inner Asia for many centuries. Without horses they would have been unable to travel beyond the confines of the steppe

and establish the empires of such cultures as the Xiongnu/Hiong-nou/Hsiung-nu (Huns), Juan-juan/Avar, Kok-Turk (Tou-ki'ou), Oguz clan, Karahanlis, Gaznelis, Seljuks and Ottomans, or the great Mongol Empire of Genghis Khan.

The people of the steppe became outstanding horsemen, and developed a military supremacy that was based upon the expert manoeuvrability of their mounted warriors. Their clothing was designed to facilitate riding, and was in sharp contrast to the long robes and sandals of the settled inhabitants. The relationship between the mounted archers of the steppe and the settled peoples of the more fertile lands was uneasy and often hostile, but nevertheless they relied upon one another, and cultural exchange in many areas was considerable.

It is likely that the Turkish-speaking tribes made their way into the Western regions of Mongolia and Altay from the north; while the Yakuts were forced to migrate from this earliest homeland into the tundra, and the Kirghiz made their way from here to the steppes of Abakan. In 700-750 BC a famous tribe, referred to by the Iranians as Saka and by the Greeks as Scythians, moved from the steppes of Central Asia to the Black Sea to the west, where they displaced the Cimmerians. According to Greek historian Herodotus, the Scythians were displaced by the Isedonians, who in turn were replaced by the Ariyamasps,

and who were later to be overrun by the Huns. In 203 BC the Huns conquered the Yueci of western Kansu, and under Motun's son Ki-ok (174-161 BC) they were routed out of Kansu. This complex series of movements constitute one of the earliest tribal migrations known in history; and it is through these migration lines that the seeds of cultural and economic interactions were laid. The interaction in art and culture between the Xiongnu/Hiung-nu/Hsiung-nu (the Huns) and their successors the K k-Turks, and their neighbours, the Chinese, a settled culture that had continued uninterrupted for 5,000 years, originated here. The Silk Road facilitated the transport of silk, porcelain and other precious merchandise from China by caravan through Central Asia to the harbours of the Eastern Mediterranean, and from there into the heart of the Roman Empire. The Turks provided security and a judicial system along the route, without which this trade could not have prospered.

It should come as no surprise then to find that Topkapi Palace in Istanbul possesses the largest collection of Chinese porcelain and celadon ware in the world. This tableware, used by the Ottoman sultans, would go on to influence the designs and motifs of the celebrated Iznik pottery made in Turkey in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is no coincidence that this pottery, known as " ini", reached its height in popularity during these centuries, when Chinese porcelain was pouring into the Ottoman capital via the Silk Road. We must seek the origins of the knowledge, experience and aesthetic beauty manifested in Iznik ware in the "art of fire" of China.

The Topkapi Palace Library contains albums of large-scale miniature paintings measuring 50 cm x 50 cm known as conk (Hazine 2152, 2153 and 2160) from China. These exquisite Chinese miniatures exerted an enormous influence on the Turkish art of miniature painting. Indeed, if one delves a little deeper into the subject of decorative arts it can be seen that the principal motifs in the famous Turkmen carpets drew influence from Chinese fabrics. In addition, Chinese shadow puppets made their way westwards along the sea route of the Silk Road, first into the southern China Sea, then across the Indian Ocean to Egypt, to become the *Karag z* of Turkish tradition. These dramatic puppets were made out of coloured leather, and were used in silhouette behind a white screen. The art form reached Egypt during the time of the Memlukes in the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> century, and was introduced to Istanbul after the Ottoman army occupied Egypt at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Shadow puppets quickly became a well-loved part of Turkish culture, taking the name of the main character, *Karag z*, which survives to the present day.

Besides the arts, sophisticated city plans and lifestyles in China, its houses, palaces and elegant artefacts have had a great influence in Turkey. After all, gunpowder, paper, the compass

and the art of printing were all Chinese inventions, and as the Turks migrated westwards, they took many elements of Chinese culture with them.

However, the interaction went both ways, and the cultural exchanges between the K k-Turks and their Chinese neighbours in particular are worth mentioning. Adopting the war techniques and cloths developed by the K k-Turks, the Chinese developed their own fighting techniques during the Chang dynasty (1500-1000 BC). The transformation of chariots opened a new era in the military history of China, and the new style of dress and other reforms soon won popular support, and were depicted in many Chinese paintings and bas-reliefs of the time. Centuries later the K k-Turks, known to the Chinese as Tu'kiu, settled in China, bringing with them their own cultural influence, as we have learned from written Chinese sources. The K k-Turk burial ritual, known as yog, is one such rite that was adopted by the Chinese. In the development of Chinese funerary architecture, the Turkish cult of ancestor worship had significant influence. The desire to leave memorials as a sign of respect for those who had conquered new lands or rendered other important services to the state led to the development of monumental tombs, in which the enchanting language of art would be used to pay the debts of the living to the deceased. The tent erected during the funeral ceremonies known as yog-as was evaluated as the first tomb or mausoleum. Hence, two elements of ancient Turkish culture, the origins of which have been lost in the mists of time, were the horse and the tent. Tents, which are shelters that can be quickly assembled and disassembled and are easily transportable, are still used by the Turkic people all across Asia, from Outer China to Anatolia; and most of the mausoleums in Kazakhstan close to the Chinese border take the form of a tent. Burial rites that were introduced to Anatolia from Central Asia by the O uz clans survived into the Ottoman era; and there is evidence that the tent was the earliest Turkish form of mausoleum, and was an architectural form that the Turks carried with them all the way from the Chinese border. This developed into the practice of constructing stone mausoleums in which the form and style of the tent were preserved.

Yet again, the influence was two-sided, as there exist other burial complexes dating from the K k-Turk period that are unlike the traditional concept of the tent tomb. Chinese influences can best be illustrated in the burial complex of K l-Tigin, who died on 27 February, 731 at the age of 47. Some three months later, Bilgi Kagan applied to the Chinese emperor Syuan-tszun for assistance in the construction of a burial complex for his brother, requesting an inscription be carved on a stele bearing an address to his people, and a "bark" (a kind of temple) constructed to provide joy and comfort to the soul of K l-Tigin. This bark was to contain a stone statue of K l-Tigin to immortalise his honourable and heroic character,

to be placed in the sacrificial pit known as the "holy hearth"; while the walls of the bark were to be painted with frescos depicting K l-Tigin's victories. Emperor Syuan-tszun complied with this request, and sent Commander of the Imperial Army Cjan Tsyuy, a high-ranking nobleman, and court official Lyu Syan to Bilge Kagan with an imperial letter expressing his condolences, and bearing the state seal. The emperor ordered the construction of a bark, and charged Chinese artists with the task of painting scenes depicting K l-Tigin's military exploits, as had been requested. A total of six celebrated Chinese artists travelled to the land of the Turks to paint frescos that were so vivid and realistic that the Turks said that they had never seen such beautiful paintings before. K l-Tigin's burial complex is set in a rectangular precinct surrounded by high adobe walls. The precinct measures 67.25 m x 28.85 m, and faces west. The surface of the precinct is covered with a 33 cm layer of adobe; and excavations have revealed tiles of the type used on the roofs of Chinese buildings. This provides evidence that the adobe walls were originally covered with these olive green tiles, which were cylindrical in shape as an imitation of wooden beams. At the foot of the peripheral wall was a ditch measuring 2 m deep and 1.2 m wide. The sole entrance was via a door in the east faade.

The road leading to the entrance was lined on either side by rows of 169 "balbals", which are standing stones representing the enemies killed by K l-Tigin in battle. Inside the entrance stand two statues of rams carved in a naturalistic style from poor quality marble. They are 79 cm long and 74 cm high, and are positioned symmetrically. Statues of both rams and horses were common as grave stones all across the steppe, from Mongolia to Anatolia, in the lands occupied by the Turks.

Some 8 metres beyond the statues on the central axis of the precinct, fragments of a pedestal that was in the form of a tortoise carved from marble have been discovered. There was a hole in the back of the tortoise into which a prong of the 3.75 m high monument of K l-Tigin once slotted. The monument is 1.32 m wide at its base, narrowing to 1.22 m at the top; while the south and north faces are 46 cm wide at the base and 44 cm wide at the top. It is surmounted by a semi-circular crest resembling a five-cornered shield, and on either side of this shield are bas-relief figures of dragons facing one another. On the broad east face of the monument is a 40-line inscription in Turkish, written in K k-Turk runic characters, describing the achievements of K l-Tigin, and on the broad western face is the same inscription in Chinese.

The use of tortoises as pedestals for monuments is a feature confined to members of the royal families of the Asina dynasty. No pedestals of this type were to be found in the burial complex of the great statesman Tonyukuk near the Tola river, since he was not of royal birth. The tortoise symbolises long life, and is believed to keep evil spirits at bay. The narrow road

leading from the entrance down the centre of the precinct is lined with life-size human statues, however almost all are missing their heads due to damage over time and human interaction. This ceremonial route, or Way of Honour, in respect of the deceased leads to the centre of the precinct, where the two lines of statues end, and the structure known as the "bark" stood. The bark rests on a 50 cm high platform built from fired brick measuring 13 m x 13 m. The building itself was 10.25 m square and had a double roof of the type known to the Chinese as a "tortoise roof", one on top of the other, supported by 16 wooden pillars. Fragments that have been unearthed reveal that the plaster on the exterior walls was decorated in a spiral design in the form of ram horns. On the interior walls large frescos were painted depicting some of the heroic deeds of K l-Tigin, with additional decoration coming from dragon masks on the walls, and tiger or panther masks on the wooden doors. In the centre of the floor is the "holy hearth", a square pit measuring 4.4 m x 4.4 m, in which animals were sacrificed. Here, sacrifices were made to the spirits of K l-Tigin and his beloved wife, who are represented as status in marble facing the door into the area. The head of the marble statue of K l-Tigin was discovered just inside the altar, and is one of the most remarkable sculptures ever discovered in Central or Inner Asia. On his headdress is a relief carving of an eagle – a symbol of power – with outstretched wings, which was created in a naturalistic style using outstanding skills. The creation of such a burial complex was entirely reliant on the Chinese artists sent by Emperor Syuan-tszun of China's T'ang dynasty.

This great monument, containing a semi-circular crest carved with symmetrically arranged figures of dragons in relief, contains what is believed to be the first written text in Turkish in the Orhun alphabet. This is the first true Turkish historical document, since up to that time the only written evidence reflecting the existence of a Turkish state and culture were in Chinese. It is the most significant piece of evidence of the Chinese influence on the Turks. This type of stele entered K k-Turk culture and art, and during the westward migrations of the O uz tribes to establish the Seljuk state in the Middle East they carried with them the forms, motifs and themes that they had adopted while living on the lands bordering China. In the Seljuk cemetery at Ahlat, for example, it is possible to see figures of dragons representing the sky on the graves of Turkish people. Similarly, dragon representations have been found on Seljuk kervansarays, and it is astonishing that these motifs have been preserved in Turkish culture over such a long time and distance.

Although today the Turks and Chinese reside at opposite ends of a vast continent, centuries of living in close proximity has left its traces on Turkish culture; and in this respect there are many grounds for mutual understanding between the people of both countries.



# TURKISH - CHINESE RELATIONS IN HISTORY

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# TURKISH - CHINESE RELATIONS IN HISTORY

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It is rather unfortunate that although two countries have been neighbours for centuries and have established very close relations with each other in history, China has always maintained its sense of mystery. Our knowledge of China, which is one of the longest-established cultures on the planet, has always been limited, with documentation of the country's historical developments mainly being based on Western sources, meaning that historical interpretations have been neither impartial nor complete. Contrary to our preconceptions, two cultures have developed with a mutual understanding, social interaction and economical dependency. We extend our gratitude to the Chinese scholars who kept detailed records about the ancient Turks in almost every period that we have passed living together.

According to Chinese records, Turkish-Chinese relations started in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. "Shi Ji," which is the first volume of the "24 History Books," accepted by Chinese scholars as their official source of history, contains very detailed records about the Huns. The translation of these texts into the Turkish language initiated a comparative research process in Turkey at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the Sinology Department was established as one of the first 16 departments of the Faculty of Language, History and Geography to be founded in Ankara when it became the new capital of Turkey. The founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, supported this academic establishment, and promoted further scholarly interactions; and continued linguistic studies have shed light on the previously obscure elements of our social, political and cultural relationships.

Cultural exchanges were followed by an interaction in languages, resulting in common words in both native tongues, some examples of which are as follows:

suo na → zurna → clarion

suan → sogan, sarımsak → onion, garlic

dong (kis) → don (yapmak) → frost

ca → cay → tea

man tou → manti → (a local recipe, similar to) ravioli

In this respect, the term "barbarian" gains significance as a pretext. Chinese people have used various expressions for Turks that can be translated into English as: "the other," "the foreigner," or "not of/from us". The most common of those was the word "Hu". Western scholars however, have preferred to translate this word into their languages as "barbarian," which needless to say altered the whole interpretation. Similar misconceptions and misinterpretations decorate an otherwise unexciting period of history, and what follows are some of the most striking examples in this respect:

## **The Chinese built the Great Wall in fear of Turkish military attacks:**

The construction of a wall on such a grand scale at the time required very strong economic and political power behind it. This power indicates superiority in defence, and thus leads us to believe in the irrelevancy of its existence. Furthermore, it is hard to believe that it was possible to build such a wall without the



blessing of the Huns, as they had a comparable power, and thus would have had the ability to sabotage the construction works.

**Chinese emperors formed intricate plots to control the Turkish rulers, and sent Chinese princesses not only as brides, but also as military agents:**

Based on historical documents we know for a fact that China never sent a real Chinese princess to the Huns as a bride. The girls that were sent were from the palace's harem, and it would be hard to imagine how they could obtain inside information and relate it to China in real time.

**The famous Chinese calendar was based on the ancient Turkish calendar:**

First of all, none of the sacred animals of the ancient Turks, such as the wolf, horse, eagle or deer, is featured in the Chinese calendar; while some of the animals depicted in the Chinese calendar, such as the rat, snake and dragon, were held in revulsion by Turkish people. Moreover, the dragon is a motif that has been accepted as one of the ancestors of the Chinese people. The dragon, which is a combination of many animals, is a symbol that is loaded with meaning, and symbolises various powers to the Chinese citizens.

**The proper name Metehan is very popular among Chinese families today:**

The word Metehan is pronounced as "Mao Dun" in today's Chinese language; and there is no etymological evidence of the existence of such a name in ancient China. This is nothing but a misinterpretation that occurred during translation from French to Turkish.

This interaction was not limited only to linguistics, as it covered also the military, social and cultural fields. There is evidence of an intensive environment of influence between the two societies, especially in the fields of music, art, medicine, sport, cuisine, clothing and architecture. It is important to say here that the influences passing between cultures were not one way, as both cultures were engaged in intensive interactions in the above-mentioned fields. For instance, the architect of Chang An, which was a very important city of China in ancient times, was of Turkish origin; and the architecture of that city influenced other cities, not only in China, but also later in Japan. It would be impossible for two nations with such close relations not to be affected by each other; and they certainly did influence each other, in no small way and on a mutual basis. It is a well-known fact that the ancient Turks preferred the nomadic lifestyle, while the Chinese people preferred to reside in permanent settlements. Both nations, however, did not refrain from adopting habits and lifestyles from their neighbours in order to facilitate their daily lives. Chinese people were affected by Turks especially in the military field, through which they learned to fight against the nomadic tribes living in the northern and north-western regions. The "Ottoman rifle" brought to China in the 16<sup>th</sup> century as a gift by an ambassador was conceived as a symbol of the military relationship between the two countries that has always been maintained. China cherished the Ottoman rifle, and improved it to become one of the major weapons of their armed forces.

As is well documented, major ecological changes in Central Asia forced those residing there to leave their lands and migrate west. As a result of centuries of migration, the ancient Turks spread out to cover a large geographical region that extended from Central Asia to Europe. Although not so popular in Chinese cuisine, yoghurt, cheese and black olives were adopted from their neighbours to enrich their local delicacies. During the long periods of peace in the region, Chinese silk reached the Western world through Central Asia, along what would become known as the "Silk Road," and which would also become a bridge for cultural exchange. The final issue that needs to be emphasised here is that Chinese and Turkish people have always benefited from each others' existence and proximity; and that ours is a friendship that is too powerful to be undermined by misapprehensions.



## THE LONG HISTORY BEHIND THE SINO-TURKISH RELATIONS

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Unfold the world map, you will see, at the heart of the Eastern Hemisphere, a country situated across the border between the Minor Asia and Balkan. It has Black Sea to its North, Aegean Sea to its West, and Mediterranean to its South. The rope bridge across the Bosphorus strait closely connects the Europe and Asia. This country is Turkey. In history, the world-renowned Silk Road was the “main artery” which linked the history and culture of the East and the West. China and Turkey, located respectively at the east and the west end of this “main artery”, have had long and continuous friendship. The Turkish people were referred to as Turkic in China’s historical records, which can be traced back to A.D. 542. According to historical records, as early as in China’s Han Dynasty (202 B.C.-220 A.D.), the ancestors of Turkish people, the Turks, had began their friendly exchanges with the Central Plains. At the time when the Turkic regime was powerful and prosperous, the Turks had a closer contact with the Central Plains. During the contact, however, there were wars as well as harmony between the two peoples. Especially during the peacetime, their political and economic contact was getting closer by means of such important measures as intermarriage and the princesses of two sides marrying to the other’s royal family. For example, Wei’s Changdong princess, Sui’s Huainan princess, and a Turk’s princess were all emissaries of good neighbourliness as well as great representatives of the economic and cultural exchanges between the two nations in their history. Besides that, there were many Turks who became officials in China and made great achievement. For example, during

the peak of the Tang Dynasty (618- 907 A.D.), then Turkish leader was conferred the title of Senior General, Governor by the Tang Emperor and had an official position as high as Defense Minister. After death, he was buried with the dead at Zhao Mausoleum in Qian County of Shaanxi Province. Intermarriage and exchanging officials were not only indications of frequent and extensive contact between Turkic, the ancestor of the Turkish people, and the Central Plains, but also proofs of the establishment of a deep traditional friendship between the two peoples in their history.

In Chinese history, the Turks-founded Ottoman Empire was called “Rum” (called Lu mei Guo in Chinese) in the Song Dynasty (A.D. 960- 1279), and “Roum” (called Lu mi Guo in Chinese) in the Ming Dynasty (A.D. 1368-1644), while the name of “Turkey” was officially adopted in the Qing Dynasty (A.D. 1644-1911). The Silk Road, the earliest international traffic line between China and the West, in the long history not only helped the cultural communication between the Chinese people and Turkish people but also promoted the economic and trade activities between the two countries. Silk and china were the earliest international commercial goods in the world and China was the cradle of silk and the hometown of china. These products were transported to and sold across the Turkey through the Silk Road. Since Chinese silk and china were exquisite and elegant, which were brought all the way from China to Turkey with a lot of difficulties, those that successfully arrived were naturally as invaluable as buttress. Turkish people liked Chinese silk

and china very much, so they regarded them as world treasure and was deeply attracted by their use value. They favorably called china “çini” which means “of China”.

Moreover, according to some historical records, people of the Central Plains started to grow cotton later than the Turkish ancestors, Turks. Therefore, cotton and cotton cloth (called “Bai’die Bu” in Chinese) of Turks were imported to the Central Plains as special products. Also, things such as cotton, damask, silk gauze, satin, and embroidery of Tang dynasty continuously entered the Turkish region. Besides that, ancient Chinese invented the paper-making technique and gun power which significantly promoted the spread of human cultures and the development of military technology. In the Han dynasty, paper and gun power appeared and were used widely in the Turkic region, which proved its rapid spreading. In history, Turkey occupied regions in Europe, Asia and Africa and therefore had a very important geographical position. Chinese products were transported westward to Persia and arrived at the Turkey’s capital, Istanbul. Turkish then would transport them to Western Europe. They would also transport products of the West to the East. African products would be transported to China by the Turkish as well, such as ivory goods. Africans sold products to Turks and Turks then sold them to Chinese. Therefore not only products from Europe and Africa were transported to China by Turks, China’s paper-making technique and gun powder were brought westward through Turkey. These unprecedentedly reinforced the exchanges between the West and the East in the fields of economy, culture, science and technology and played a decisive role in promoting the development of the human society.

In A.D.1453, when Istanbul had become the capital of Ottoman Empire, the Turkish, with an intense feeling of cherishing their long time contact with China, were dedicated to building up an amicable relationship with the latter. For instance, Süleyman I, a famous emperor in the Turkish history, sent diplomatic envoys many times to China during his 44-year reign. In 1544, he sent a 90-person delegation to visit China, where the delegates were received quite a few times by the Chinese emperor and exchanged with him handsome gifts. These Turkish delegates were received as distinguished guests, which reflected a profound friendship between the two nations. Since Turkish Sultans attached great importance to an amicable relation with China, a great number of Turkish merchants came via the ancient Silk Road to do business in China, who got along so well with the Chinese as if they had been in a reunion with relatives and friends. As is written in historical records, during the reign of the Jiajin Emperor in the Ming Dynasty, Turkish delegations were sent as many as five times to China. And the emperor took these delegations as seriously as he could. Giving the decree that these delegates should be received with the warmest hospitality, he even paid personal attention to every matter that would be involved on their way back home, which he ordered to be properly attended to. This is the evidence that the Sino-Turkish relationship was a top priority at that time to the Court. Also, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Abdül Hamit II (1842-1918) had been on the throne

for 25 years, Guangxu Emperor (1871—1908) of the Qing Dynasty sent a specially-made precious handicraft article to the Sultan to express his congratulations. This article made of gold, silver, and coral with the pattern of Guo Ziyi (697—781, a famous strategist in the Tang Dynasty)’s birthday ceremony, is now preserved in Topkapi Palace Museum in the capital city of Turkey, Istanbul. It is now displayed as a symbol of Sino-Turkish friendship.

In the Turkish history, apart from the fact that the royal family and high officials extensively used silk and china, it was also for common Turkish a kind of fashion to drink Chinese tea and a symbol of status and wealth to use Chinese china and silk products. Also in the past, in such big ceremonies as Sultan enthronement, old people’s birthdays, and weddings, Chinese silk and china were never missed. Meanwhile, quite a few Turkish merchants continually traveled via the ancient Silk Road to the Central Plains to trade their native products in this prosperous land of oriental civilization. Rarities such as glass, agates, coral, borax, spices, frankincense, clove, pomegranates, ostriches, zebras, sheep, lions, and rhinoceros horns were all transported from Turkey to China, among which many came from Europe and Africa. Some of these treasures were presented to the emperor of the Central Plains as tributes; others were sold as commodities in the marketplace there.

Additionally, Turkey and China, both as influential countries on the world history arena, not only maintained extensive economic and trade conducts, but also achieved a lot in scientific, technological, and cultural exchanges. As is written in the notable Orhon inscriptions, there had been a lot of Chinese characters in the early Turkish literals. As ancient Turkish had long close relations with many emperors along different dynasties of the central plains, the Turkish language was significantly and imperceptibly influenced by the Chinese language. For instance, such words as *tealeaf*, *china*, *water*, and *clothes* in Chinese were all adopted by Turkish, and their pronunciations bear a striking resemblance to those in Chinese.

Furthermore, the ancient Turkish’s using the twelve Chinese horoscope animals, a typical culture of China’s Central Plains, is also a good evidence of extensive cultural exchanges and mutual influence between the two countries. What’s more, in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Chinese shadow play was introduced to Turkey and remains popular today. Karagöz (Turkish: Black Eyes), the Turkish shadow play, mainly reflects Turkish family life. Most of the play subjects are about promoting the good and penalizing the vicious. Plots of conflict resolutions are schemed according to the classic Islam code of conduct. In such way the audience could gain infinite fun from this small but exquisite shadow play stage. Before the appearance of modern motion picture, shadow play had been one of the most popular recreational activities among Turkish people. All in all, throughout the long course of history, Turkey and China have always been in good relationship in terms of politics, economy, and culture. Such sincere and all-around association has been a glorious example of friendship between world civilizations.



## GOBEKLI TEPE: AN EARLY STONE AGE SANCTUARY

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The prehistoric site at Gobekli Tepe is situated 15 km to the north-east of Sanliurfa in the South-Eastern Region of Turkey. At a height of 800 m, the mound of Gobekli Tepe rests above the Harran plain, which spreads out to the south. The German Archaeological Institute has been carrying out archaeological research studies at the site in cooperation with the Museum of Sanliurfa since 1995.

Gobekli Tepe and its material culture can be traced to the Pre-pottery Neolithic Age of the Near East, dating from between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. The inhabitants of the area did not produce or use ceramic vessels – a typical characteristic of nomad communities – indicating that the people of Gobekli Tepe were still hunter-gatherers, displaying no evidence of animal husbandry. These early inhabitants of the region were not generally known to construct monumental architecture, which would suggest a permanently inhabited place, and as such the architectural remains discovered at the site must be considered as having been used for something more special than just daily life – possibly as some kind of early “holy place”.

The monumental architecture uncovered at Gobekli Tepe consists of megalithic enclosures with diameters of 10 to 30 m, with the most characteristic feature being T-shaped monolithic pillars. In 2009, four monumental enclosures containing 47 pillars were discovered, featuring up to 12 pillars arranged in a circle or oval surrounding a pair of larger central pillars. Some of these pillars are carved with representations of human limbs, providing further evidence that the pillars were more than mere architectural elements. These were



rather sculptures representing stylised humans, the horizontal part being the head and the vertical shaft being the body and legs. In addition, the monoliths are decorated with carvings depicting a wide range of animals, from snakes and scorpions to ducks, cranes and foxes.

Though only partially excavated, it has become increasingly obvious that the findings at Gobekli Tepe will contribute significantly to our understanding of the transition from a subsistence pattern based exclusively upon hunting and foraging to the appearance of agriculture and animal husbandry.



# ANATOLIA BRIDGING TWO CONTINENTS

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# ANATOLIA BRIDGING TWO CONTINENTS

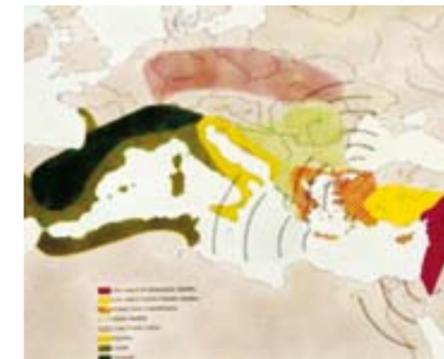
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Turkey has a very exceptional geographical location, stretching between the Caucasus, the Near East, the Mediterranean, the Aegean, the Balkans and the Black Sea, and as such has always been a cultural bridge for the movement of people, commodities and ideas between distinct regions. Besides its role as a bridge between continents, Turkey, and in particular Anatolia, the part in Asia, owing to its wealth of rich and varied natural resources and diverse environmental settings, has been home to numerous civilizations and major empires over the last 10,000 years, all of which left their mark on the country with what they left behind.

Our ancestors dispersed over a period of 1 million years to inhabit almost every part of the Old World; and various cultures have emerged, evolved and disappeared all around the World. In the long and multifarious history of mankind there have been certain episodes that are considered as turning points in the forming of what would become our present day civilization. It is during these times that

revolutionary changes took place in social, cultural and economic structures, as well as in technologies, leading to the emergence of a "new way of life". Turkey can be highlighted as a place where some of the most important turning points in the history of civilization were witnessed, and it is for that reason that Anatolia is so often referred to as the "Cradle of Civilization".

The most consequential change in the history of civilization was the transition from food collecting to food producing, which, due to its significance, was given the name "the Neolithic Revolution". Up until that period, the only means of sustenance had been through hunting and gathering by mobile communities, living in temporary huts or in caves. About 12,000 years ago, communities living in certain parts of the Near East began cultivating cereals and legumes, such as wheat, barley and lentils; and domesticating sheep, goats, cattle and pigs. This change in the subsistence pattern had far reaching consequences, in time bringing changes to every aspect of



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life. By the end of the Neolithic Period, the entire social, economic, cultural and technological setup had been restructured

Farming necessitated the establishment of permanent settlements – villages – bringing with it the new concept of land ownership. The need for durable houses stimulated the development of architecture, with foundations, walls, mud-bricks, roofing, corner bindings, insulation, storage facilities all witnessing their inception in the period. Simple huts became multifunctional homes, incorporating storage areas and food preparation spaces. The consuming of cereal crops necessitated a new way of food procurement and preparation, and new technologies appeared in the form of tools for harvesting, tilling the soil, milling, tree cutting, and for the working of timber. Additionally, clay had to be fired to make pottery vessels for cooking and storage, which in time led to metallurgy.

As such, between 12,000–9,000 years ago, the emergence of sedentary villages led to other revolutionary changes: the procurement of surplus food triggered social stratification, organised trade, craft specialisation, organised labour, as well as the onset of the creation monumental buildings, temples and administrative systems. The start of the Neolithic period not only witnessed the launch of a new way of living, but more significantly new ways in the interaction of man with his natural environment.

Anatolia played an important role in the emergence of this new way of life, being the homeland of the wild ancestors of all cereal crops and domestic animals. Archaeological excavations at sites such as Cayonu and Asikli have revealed finds from the entire time span of this era, making it possible to follow how new subsistence, ways of living, architecture and other technologies developed. The artistic implications of this

new life, as reflected in the region's cult buildings and pristine temples, can best be seen at Gobekli Tepe, Nevali Cori and in the latest stages at Catalhoyuk.

Anatolia played a major role in the dissemination of this new way of life and technologies to Europe. The new socio-economic model, based on farming and sedentary village communities, remained in the area of its origin until about 9,000 years ago; then, after completing its evolutionary stage, this new life began its dispersal to other regions, firstly to western Anatolia and to the Aegean, and then, taking a new shape in Thrace and the Balkans. The region around Istanbul played a key role in the transmission of this new culture, being located at the intersection of a number of cultural routes. Excavations in Yarimburgaz, Fikirtepe and Yenikapi, or Asagi Pinar in Thrace have revealed how the Neolithic way of life, after being

shaped in semi-arid regions, was adapted to the temperate environment of Europe before it reached there. The Neolithic revolution can be said to have also brought about later developments in the process of urbanisation, state formation, complex metallurgy etc., not only in their formation, but also in their dispersal to other regions, mainly to the Aegean and to Europe.



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- 1 Cultural Routes: Dispersal of Neolithic Culture from Anatolia to Europe, 9,000 Years Ago.
- 2 Earliest Temples and Monumental Art: Gobekli Tepe 11,000 Years Ago.
- 3 Symbolism of the New Era: Decorated Cup from Hacilar, 7,500 Years Ago.
- 4 Earliest Temples with Terrazzo Flooring of High Technology: Nevali Cori 10,500 Years Ago.
- 5 New Way of Preparing Food: Pottery Vessels for Cooking, Catalhoyuk, 8,000 Years Ago.
- 6 Clay Female Figure in a Dress, Asagi Pinar, 6,800 Years Ago
- 7 Extensive Use of Pottery Vessels, Asagi Pinar, 7,000 Years Ago
- 8 Storage and Symbolism: Anthropomorphic Storage Vessel from Toptepe, 6,800 Years Ago.



# CATALHOYUK THE FORKMOUND

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Each time I walk onto the 21m high mound at Catalhoyuk in central Turkey I feel a thrill of excitement. Even though I have worked at the site each summer since 1993, I still feel a tingling in my feet as I tread over the ground. After all, the 21 m of soil beneath me is filled with fascinating details about a town that was lived in by 3,000 to 8,000 people some 9,000 years ago. The town extended over a massive 13.5 hectares and was inhabited for almost 2,000 years between 7400 BC and 5500 BC. There are 18 levels of occupation as people abandoned old houses, filled them in, and built new ones on top. The mysteries of Catalhoyuk include its great size and duration as an area of occupation from a very early date – when people started settling down into permanent villages and began domesticating plants and animals.

When the site was first found and excavated by James Mellaart in the late 1950s and early 1960s the world was stunned by his findings. Mellaart was a young scholar who set out to show that the earliest farming villages not only occurred, as had been thought, in the Levant and adjacent areas in the Middle East, but also in Central Anatolia. In each occupation level at Catalhoyuk he excavated up to 30 buildings – about 160

in all, spread over the different occupation levels. The current project that I am directing has excavated or plans to unearth a further 80 buildings. What both Mellaart and my team have found is a site that had been inhabited by people much like us today – the same species, and that they grew their food and hunted animals, and made tools and buildings. Each building was probably lived in by a family of 5 to 10 people, containing a main room for living, craft activities, cooking, eating and sleeping, and side rooms for storage and food preparation. This is all fairly standard for a site of this time period, even if it is particularly large.





However there are some distinctive characteristics of Catalhoyuk, and it was these that so astonished Mellaart's audiences. The buildings in which people lived were tightly packed together, leaving space for few or no streets. Access to houses was across the roofs and down ladders into the interior spaces, which are packed with rich artworks – mural paintings, reliefs and sculptures. In uncovering this site, Mellaart revealed that early farming centres existed outside the Middle East, but also presented to the world a site filled with mysteries and elaborate symbolism, which has become Catalhoyuk's main claim to fame. The wonderful wall art and sculptures discovered at the site show narrative scenes of hunting, and the teasing and baiting of wild animals, such as bulls, wild boar, deer and bears. There are also scenes that deal with death and burial, and indeed in the numerous small houses remains have been found of people buried beneath the floors – 62 people beneath the floor of one house alone! In some cases the heads of the recently deceased were removed, kept and passed down from generation to generation. Figurines found at the site are mainly representations of animals that were used in feasting and social displays, although there are few that depict humans; and finds dating from the latter days of occupation at the site, the latest Neolithic levels, have revealed figurines of women, suggesting their increased symbolic role in the household. Despite excavating for four years between 1961 and 1965, Mellaart only managed to uncover a small part of this huge site, and the excavations which I have directed at the site since 1993 have increased the total amount of the site ex-

posed to only 5%. So I know, as I walk over the mound, that there are literally thousands of unexcavated buildings buried beneath my feet, full of art and symbolism, waiting to be explored, providing insight into how these people lived their lives and thought about the world around them so long ago.

In terms of quality of life, many people assume that early settled towns were unhealthy, dirty, crowded and violent, however Catalhoyuk was meticulously organised, and refuse was very carefully dealt with, placed in special "midden" areas between houses. The houses internally were spotlessly clean, and the skeletal remains suggest a relatively healthy population, with very little sign of violence evident on the excavated skeletons. Overall, Catalhoyuk seems to have been very stable and ordered, which may be why people continued to be attracted to live there for close to 2,000 years. This was achieved without a strong centralised administration, but rather through the incorporation of religious ideas into the fabric of daily life. The inhabitants of Catalhoyuk lived in a world of complex beliefs that entered into every aspect of life, and it was this powerful belief system that sustained the community over many generations.

Recent excavations have focused on opening the site to the public, and there are now permanent shelters over two excavation areas so that visits can be made throughout the year. The site now boasts a Visitor's Centre, a reconstructed Neolithic house and a research centre.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE YENIKAPI EXCAVATIONS SUBWAY PROJECTS: MARMARAY AND METRO

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Istanbul can boast a proud history, being the meeting point of Western and Eastern cultures for centuries, the capital of the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, and the most favoured city of the Turkish Republican period. This long and colourful history has no doubt been a contributing factor in its selection as the European Capital of Culture for 2010.

The city, established on a large area covering seven hills, has maintained its importance in every period of history, however in the 19<sup>th</sup> century it had to face a new threat to its fabric – that of congestion in transportation. This was in part due to the rapid population growth, and hence the expansion of Istanbul, while the city had also become a focal point for travelers from all over the world who sought inspiration in the city's many sites of great historical interest. As a remedy to this problem at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Marmaray and Metro Projects, which will make up the largest railed mass transportation network in Turkey, were proposed. The most extravagant of these is the Marmaray Project, which will connect the railway lines on the Asian and European continents through a tunnel passing under the Bosphorus.

The railway line, which will go underground in the Yedikule district, will continue as an underground line to the new Yenikapi and Sirkeci stations that are to be constructed, and will enter the tunnel under the Bosphorus at Sarayburnu. The tunnel will emerge on the Asian side of the city in Uskudar. This project will provide an uninterrupted transportation route for the city between its western and eastern parts. The Metro (Subway) Project, on the other hand, which will be integrated with the Marmaray Project, will open up the

north-south corridor on the European side of Istanbul. Upon completion of the two projects the problems of transportation in the city will certainly be eased.

After the completion of the Marmaray and Metro Projects, Yenikapi Station will become the most important transit centre on the European Side, while Uskudar Station will have the same function and importance for the Asian Side. Archaeological excavations prior to work on the system were started in 2004 by the Directorate of Istanbul Archaeological Museums due to the historical importance of the station areas in Istanbul's long and chequered history. The excavations have been carried out by teams with different fields of specialty, revealing both movable and immovable cultural assets that have made important contributions to the known history of the city of Istanbul.

Yenikapi was known to have been the site of vegetable and fruit gardens that served Istanbul for centuries, and was known as "Vlangu" in the Ottoman period. Excavations at four different sites, measuring 52,000 m<sup>2</sup> in total area, continued in 2009 after the Port of Theodosius, the largest centre of commercial transportation between the 4<sup>th</sup> and early-7<sup>th</sup> centuries, was uncovered. The Port of Theodosius, which played an important role in the Byzantine economy, had been depicted in old maps, however there was no exact information about its plan, dimensions or exact location.

Byzantium (Byzantium) was established on a point of obligatory passage between Anatolia and the Balkans, as well as the Black and Aegean Seas, which contributed greatly to the development of the city. Polybios, who lived in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC, emphasised the importance of Byzantium as follows: "The Byz-



antines are a people living along the most expedient shores of our world in terms of security and welfare”, meaning that Byzantium occupied a strategic geographical position that nourished the establishment of control over commercial routes. The Port of Theodosius was built by the Emperor Theodosius I (AD 379–395) to meet the requirements of the newly growing capital of the Roman Empire. The port featured a breakwater to the south of a deep natural cove extending in an east–west direction, and it is known from historical resources that the port featured an observation tower. A large area of the port was set aside for silos, which were used to store grain brought by ship from Alexandria, while other structures were filled with alluvial soil and the silo at Alexandria was still the single silo in the city in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

The excavations at the Yenikapi port area have so far revealed a total of 34 shipwrecks, 13 at the Marmaray excavation sites, and 21 at the Metro sites. Most of the wrecks have been found at the eastern end of the Port of Theodosius, close to the port entrance. It is believed that the port filled with silt from the west to east, and that the eastern end had remained in use until all the boats in the port were destroyed as a result of a natural disaster or a very strong southwestern storm that occurred some time between the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The port, which could not withstand the test of time, was filled with the accumulation of alluvial soil carried by the Lykos (Bayrampasa) Creek, meaning that the site is now 1.5 km from the Marmara Sea. Excavations carried out in the western part of Yenikapi have revealed some important information about the history of Istanbul. A dock made out of rectangular stones existed at the western end of the port inside the breakwater, oriented in a north-south direction. Wooden vertical poles forming two lines parallel to each other just in front of the dock are likely to be the remains of a pier that was used as an extension to the dock. Around 25,000 items of interest have so far been found during the excavations, which have provided the archaeologists not only with insight into local history, but also about the trade activities, daily lives and religious beliefs of the period. Earthenware plates bearing the names and origins of ships, anchors made from stone and iron, ropes from sunken vessels and an amphora bearing the description of a ship dated to the 10<sup>th</sup> century are just some of the important finds, in that they provide information about shipbuilding and ship types of their respective periods. Other finds include a scale burden in the form of a bust of Athena, bronze scales and weights, lead inscriptions, bread stamps, crucifixes, crosses, glass bowls bearing Christian symbols, leather sandals and tools made from ivory or bone, all of which reflect the daily life of the time; while Samos amphorae from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> Centuries BC, as well as Thasos and Khios amphorae from the 4<sup>th</sup> Century BC found in the western part offer evidence of the trade activities at the port.

#### Settlement at Yenikapi in the Neolithic Period

Architectural remains and findings providing insight into daily life in the Neolithic Period have been discovered during excavations of the Yenikapi area, 6.3 m below today's sea level under the base filler of the Theodosius Port. These findings date the earliest settlement of the area to around



8,500 years ago. Many earthenware items collected from locations belonging to branch-mesh architecture and the surroundings backdated to the Neolithic Age show close similarities to the “Fikirtepe Culture” Neolithic settlers of the Istanbul region, as well as the Yarimburgaz 4 stage. The Yenikapi settlements dating to in Neolithic times became covered with a thick layer of sea inlay, similar to changes that occurred in the Marmara Sea. The settlement was established probably at its present location which was not far from the Marmara Sea at a period when it was not connected to the salty waters. And, it had buried in the water probably as the result of increase in the height of sea level due to global effects.

#### Tombs at the Neolithic Yenikapi Settlement Area

Remains that provide an understanding of burial habits in the Neolithic have been found during the archaeological excavations at Yenikapi. Tombs containing human bone remains have been found that indicate two types of burial method – burial without cremation, and burial after cremation. Evidence of the first style has been revealed with the uncovering of two burial sites, the first containing the remains of two people, and the second containing at least two people. The second style, in which the bones are buried after cremation, is evidenced by the discovery of seven pieces of urn. This is important from an archaeological point of view, as cremation was previously unknown in the Anatolian Neolithic Age, providing new information on life in the Neolithic age in the region. The sediment under the remains of the ancient Port of Theodosius at Yenikapi, which accumulated over 10,000 years, reflects the environmental changes and the cultural history witnessed by the Marmara Sea. The Yenikapi excavation area is extremely important in terms of the new information it has provided on the geographical history of Marmara Sea in the Holocene Period, and fills many gaps in this respect. The Marmaray excavations have opened a portal, allowing us to look back on 10,000 years of the history of mankind and the local natural environment.

#### USKUDAR

Archaeological excavations in the Uskudar Square, which is the other station in the Marmaray Project, started in 2004 and continued until 2008. Bearing the name Khrysopolis (meaning “gold city”) in ancient times, and then “Scutari” during the Roman era, Uskudar was an important transit point between Europe and Asia long before the Ottoman era. During excavations of Uskudar Square, the remains of the foundations of an arasta (Ottoman bazaar) that was known to exist from other sources, and leather processing shops have been uncovered, as well as the foundations of a structure with an apsis dated to the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, corresponding to the Byzantine period. Additionally, boreholes in the area have brought up findings from the Archaic, Classical Hellenistic and Roman periods at Uskudar.

#### SIRKECI

Sirkeci Station is the third archaeological excavation site in Istanbul related to the Marmaray Project. Excavations of four different points in the station area have been evaluated as an opportunity to study the city's stratigraphy with very concentrated construction activities. Architectural remains from the late Ottoman, Byzantine and Early Byzantine periods, as well as a small number of findings and earthenware material have been found during the shaft excavations for the station building. When the excavations carried out by the Directorate of Istanbul Archaeological Museums within the context of the Marmaray and Metro projects are completed, our knowledge of the historical development of the city (as Byzantium, Constantinople and Istanbul) and its trade activities, social life, maritime activities and topographical properties will have increased several folds.



# BREAKING GROUND: ANATOLIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD ARCHITECTURE

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For a period of over two million years, human beings were mobile hunter gatherers. Throughout this period man lived in simple huts, tents or sometimes caves. Even though some of these dwellings were considerably large and complex, they were all temporary constructions lacking the features of being considered as houses. At about 12,000 years ago, in 10500 BC, significant changes took place in the mode of living, consequently leading to drastic developments in architecture, within a relatively short period of time; it is during this era that first permanent settlements, the sedentary village life begins emerging in Anatolia. The foundations of the present-day Near-Eastern architecture were

laid during this period, including mud-brick walls with stone foundations, corner bindings, structural systems supporting a roof are to be noted. More solid structures of special function, pristine temples, settlements set-up according to a predesigned plan are also among the innovative developments of this period. This new way of life, known as the "Neolithic Revolution", after being fully developed in central Anatolia about 9,000 years ago, began expanding to the west to the borders of Southeastern Europe. However, during this expansion, the stone and mud-brick architecture of Anatolia had been replaced by wood. The emergence of a architectural practice based on wooden posts took place in the



Marmara and Thrace regions; this structural system was then transferred to Europe via the Balkans, and became the continent's principal building style until the Roman era.

#### TRANSFORMATION OF DWELLINGS TO HOUSES

All around the world, in the earlier stages simple buildings are either circular or oval in plan, the walls joining or being tied at the top like a tent, with no clear differentiation between the roof and walls. Both thatch and daub were used as infill materials between and around the branches, and in some cases the outer surfaces were covered with animal skins. These primitive structures created only a single interior space, lacking any functionally separated sub-units, and were at most four meters in width, mostly determined by the dimensions of the branches bundled at the top. In the Neolithic period, developments in agriculture and animal husbandry brought about important changes in the quality of daily life and its social consequences, one major shift being the transformation from temporary dwellings to permanent settlements. This new lifestyle necessitated new functions, such as a separate space for the preparation food and the storage of goods. As a result, huts transformed progressively into permanent structures, and the indoor space became functionally divided to introduce new definitions to the general concept of architectural space. Indispensable among these functional components were new household fixtures such as ovens, hearths, benches and storage pits. Rapidly developing within the same period were new applications that gave the structure durability, permanence and, in a sense, aesthetic appeal, such as the plastering of the walls and ceilings, floor coverings and carpentry, mainly on the roofs. Thus, after around 8500 BC buildings began to take on new functions other than just providing shelter, thereby turning into proper dwellings.

#### TRANSFORMING CIRCULAR HUTS INTO RECTANGULAR BUILDINGS

The circular plan types, however, were not suitable for further division of the main space into smaller functional units. The exterior appearance of these structures was still reminiscent of a tent, and indeed they had very limited spatial qualities. The Neolithic lifestyle, however, required separate functional units and larger spaces, bringing about the evolution of the circular plan into a rectangular form. Such a process of transformation has been particularly evident through the excavations carried out at the Neolithic settlement of *Cayonu*. This should not be perceived as a mere change in plan type, as the buildings also took on new functions, and correspondingly the notion of "space" and settlement layout underwent a profound change. In the buildings with circular plans, no demarcation between the roof and walls was evident; and since the elements bearing the light cover on the top were either upright or slightly pitched, no foundations, corner joints or load-bearing systems were necessary. For the rectangular plan type, however, vertical load-bearing walls were required, and a different type of roof had to be created. The walls now had to carry the load of the roof, and therefore needed to be built thicker and stronger. More importantly, the walls had to

be secured to the ground with a "foundation", while at the corners the walls had to be bound to each other using special corner joints. This transformation, which in a sense laid the foundations for today's architecture, went through around 1,000 years of development through trial and error to create the first examples of contemporary architectural solutions.

#### SETTLEMENT PLANNING:

One of the most surprising facts about the Neolithic cultures of Anatolia has been the implementation of pre-designed layout of settlements. Since the dawn of the Neolithic era the location of dwellings and special buildings, such as workshops and temples, was organised according to a settlement plan that was meticulously applied. Nearly all Neolithic settlements included special buildings, or "cult buildings," located on the fringes of the habitation area. In the evolution of these settlements, the separate deployment of dwellings and special buildings was preserved, without any major change witnessed until the end of the Neolithic era.

#### THE EMERGENCE OF NEW BUILDING ELEMENTS AND MATERIALS

Developments in special structural systems brought about the introduction of new building materials. Perhaps the most important among these was the emergence of moulded mud-bricks made by mixing clay with straw. The development of adobe techniques were again subject to a continuous trial and error processes, where initially bulky mud-bricks and larger molds were used; with the sizes in use today emerging around 8000 BC. Building elements such as stairs, lintels, sills, benches and parapets began to appear in almost the same period.

#### THE EMERGENCE OF TIMBER STRUCTURES AND THEIR TRANSFER TO EUROPE

The Neolithic lifestyle emerged, advanced and completed its evolution in Eastern, South-eastern and Central Anatolia. Mud-brick and stone were used to form buildings suitable for the relatively arid and semi-arid climates of the region. Starting in around 7000 BC, the Neolithic lifestyle expanded into Western Anatolia, Thrace and the Marmara regions, where timber replaced stone and mud-brick in this humid and densely forested region. Shortly afterwards, the load-bearing elements evolved into timber posts. Excavations at *Asagi Pinar* in the *Kirklareli* region have revealed that the building technique based on using wood in constructing buildings had already been fully developed in Thrace by 6200 BC. This construction system, along with the new way of living in sedentary villages, after maturing in Anatolia, was then firstly transmitted to the Balkans and from there to the rest of Europe, eventually constituting the principal building technique in Europe until the dawn of the Roman era. This traditional building method, employing wooden posts reinforced with wattle and daub sustained to be in use up to the present in Thrace, providing a unique chance to understand and to visualise the remains recovered in archaeological excavations. An open-air museum has been established in *Kirklareli* to display and investigate the development of these building types.



## ANATOLIAN CITY STATES FROM THE BRONZE AGE TO ASSYRIAN TRADE COLONIES

In Memoriam  
••• Prof. Dr. Tahsin Özgüç  
1916-2005



## ANATOLIAN CITY STATES FROM THE BRONZE AGE TO ASSYRIAN TRADE COLONIES

Prof. Dr. Tahsin Özgüç

The first quarter of the second millennium, BC is known as a period when large cities were established in the central Anatolia. Most of those cities were also the capitals of the city states governed by powerful kings. In this period which lasted for about 200 years, the native population and their kings had established commercial and cultural relationships with the representatives of higher ancient cultures. They had exchanged correspondences using cuneiform scripts in Assyrian language, and most of the time specially trained clerks and translators were used to enable these communication links. The Anatolian cities that started to develop around the last quarter of the Third Millennium BC had been surrounded by monumental fortification walls, and adorned with poterns, palaces and temples. This period is well represented by *Nesha* which was the capital city of the first Hittite kingdom. *Nesha* was captured and adopted by the first Hittite king, Pithana and his son Anitta who had named the Hittite language of the period *Nesili*.

The brightest period of this age had lasted for at least 100 years at Kültepe between 1945 and 1835, BC. The most important innovation of the period in terms of city planning and architecture had been the establishment of large cities like *Alışar*, *Acemhöyük*, *Karahöyük* and *Boğazköy* on the fertile plains, along the roads or on masses of rock that could facilitate protection. *Nesha*, with a citadel, was the most typical and the largest example of these cities. Compared to the zones of occupation in the Bronze Age on which those cities had been established, they enlarged their dimensions drastically and became very large

settlements. Organised districts, comprised of row houses, streets with clear directions and well defined squares had given the final form to the above mentioned cities. The growth in the scale of these cities was due to the desire of establishing a political solidarity, the competition among the city states and the developments in economy. Expansion and development had been evident not only in city planning and architecture but also in all the fields of culture at large.

As for the construction techniques, timber poles on horizontal planks were placed on the inner and outer surfaces of stone foundations. These were the beams that carried the upper floors and the roof in a well designed structural system. The extensive use of timber and its diligent applications were the major innovations of this period. As there were row-houses, the walls of the adjacent dwellings were either constructed as a single wall or built next to each other as double walls. Due to the functional requirements and site specifications, some of the houses had been enlarged by additional structures to form an example of an early agglutinant structure of this period. The neighborhoods comprised of four to six or six to eight houses had been separated by the streets. The streets running in a north-south direction had been intersected by the streets leading to the citadel. They were of soil-based or stone-laid structures with wastewater channels underneath. The streets which were approximately with two meter wide were constructed to allow the passage of laden carts. The majority of structures were constituted by houses with a plan area of 40 to 80 square meters. However,

there were examples which had reached up to 190 to 198 square meters. The houses usually comprised two floors and the main plan was composed of two orthogonal rooms. There were no cemeteries at the time, and so when a family member died, they were usually buried under the floors of the rooms. The cities at Alişar and Boğazköy were no different to those located at Kültepe. In the following era, this physical formation had been the basis of also the Hittite architecture.

Monumental palaces, on the other hand, have been found at two large centres, Kanesh and Acemhöyük/Purushattum. The palace found in Kanesh surrounded an area of 120 x 110 meters with walls that constituted the fortification walls of the citadel. The palace was established in accordance with the topographical formation of the citadel. Horizontal and cross-sectional timber planks and vertical studs were used in the stone and adobe meshes. Palaces with rooms connected to the city walls were closed to the outside. The palace and the walls had been constructed at the same time. Sometimes the rooms in the palaces were also forming the city gates as found in the gates of Alişar and Boğazköy citadels. Poterns were also significant architectural types developed in this era.

The height of the potern at Kanesh with a fake arch was 2 meters and it was clad with flat stones. This system of potern constituting an integral structure in the protection of the city was used for the first time in Anatolia in that age and later transformed into an architectural monument in the imperial period of Hittites. The rectangular-shaped northern section of the Kanesh palace was fully protected. The 42 rooms and some parts of the halls located on the ground floor were connected to the walls. Some of these linear walls were facing the atrium. In these palaces, the small rooms with stairs prove that there were upper floors to those structures. The rectangular rooms arranged in the form of lines in the palaces featuring flat outer façades had constituted an integral structure that was closed to the outside. A small atrium was located close to the centre of the palace. It has been easier to determine the functions of rooms with reference to the room of throne ornamented with art pieces of ivory and filled with potteries of supplies where bullas had been protected carefully and valuable minerals and stone objects had been stored. The ground floors of the palaces had been used as locations where the storages and the rooms of service and residence were situated and valuable goods were kept. The architectural characteristics were represented with the corridors, smaller interior courts and the porches in the northern side of the palace. There was no inner court at the palaces of *Acemhöyük* and the king's suite was located on the upper floor. The shapes of rooms and the archeological remains reveal their functions. *Bullas* and regular lines of pottery found in situ indicated the location of storage places. There were rooms, among others, used as offices and as residences for the staff working under the chief of the main storages. The kings lived on the upper floors. The palaces at *Kültepe* and *Acemhöyük* were the administrative, economical and the cultural centres. In those cities the palaces were involved in trade activities and the imposing of taxes on foreign merchants. According to the historical documents

including a list of palace staff of 40 people, the highest number of personnel (23) was assigned to the chief of storage. The palace was indeed the locus of power. Excavations at the palace have revealed a letter written to the name of Varshama, the king of Kanesh, which is the earliest example of a written document at the palace. The cylindrical seal prints prove that the commercial and cultural relations kept with North Syrian and Assyrian regions took an important place among the bullas of palaces, besides the imperial cylindrical seal prints that were found.

One of the two palaces belonging to the 8<sup>th</sup> structural level, the first period of this age, is situated in the Kanesh citadel, while the other is located on the southwestern side of the hill. This palace, comprising of three separate buildings constructed side by side inside the citadel, is different to the palaces of later-period: *Kültepe*, *Acemhöyük* representing a homogenous type from a later period. This complex of palaces is an old Anatolian tradition that can be seen in palaces of *Boğazköy*, *Büyükkale* and *Gordion*, as well as the *Topkapı* Palace.

The second type of palace has also different features. It was comprised of a stone-laid court and rooms along both sides of a corridor. The corridor opens to an atrium that was entered from the north where there were no rooms in that direction. The corridor was 47 meters in length and 6 meters in width. A 13 meters section was covered with planks of oak, while the remaining 34 meters was covered with stones. Some of the rooms, opened onto the corridor. There were 14 and 15 protected rooms in the eastern and western wings. The rooms, service areas, kitchens, warehouses full of food containers and smaller staircase rooms that were heated using large fireplaces had been arranged in the form of lines parallel to the corridor. The corridor as appeared to be a separating unit between the two different parts of the large integral structure. The palace has proven to be an example of a new plan. And a further contribution made to the Central Anatolian architectural network.

The earliest temples in Central Anatolia were established on the west side of Kanesh and they are found at the 7<sup>th</sup> level of excavations. These temples comprise of four units, two of which were well protected, and were constructed according to the same plans. The temples, of 580m in length, comprised of two rooms (10 x 3 m) at the northern and southern ends of a large central hall.

No similar structures that may have been precursors to those temples have been found. They are special to *Kültepe*, and resemble an Urartian temple at first sight, but the time between eras does not support any sufficient reasoning to prove the continuity of the Anatolian tradition in this respect. Disagreements between the kings of city states and subsequent wars brought about the destruction of many monumental structures in these cities, resulting in the end of a bright era.



## SELJUK ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM IN ANATOLIA

(Published in <http://www.eahn.org/site/en/virtualtour108seljukarchitecture.php>)

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# SELJUK ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM IN ANATOLIA

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This essay provides a guide to the most important Seljuk sites in the city of Konya and offers an overview of Seljuk history and of Seljuk cities in Anatolia.

## HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Seljuk is a generic name given to the Turcoman groups that settled in Anatolia at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The house of Seljuk originated to the north of the Caspian and Aral Seas in the Oghuz confederacy. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century the Seljuks migrated from their ancestral homelands into mainland Persia, where they founded the Iran Seljuk Sultanate, or Great Seljuk Empire. Between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Seljuks gradually migrated to western Asia, and took control of the cities of eastern and central Anatolia, where Seljuk chieftains and army commanders established city-states. Contrary to popular misconceptions, the early Seljuks were not illiterate nomads, but pursued a sedentary life before their migration to Iran and Anatolia. As Richard N. Frye points out, "Turks were town and village dwellers, except in regions where natural conditions imposed a nomadic life on them."\* The members of the Seljuk family accepted Islam in the last decades of the 10<sup>th</sup> century near the city of Jand, and their subsequent progress towards the west attested to their will and ambition to make their mark among the Middle Eastern nations.

The Crusades caused great unrest in the region from the late 11<sup>th</sup> century until the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The fall of Constantinople to the Europeans in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade, and the consequent rupture of Byzantine hegemony, gave impetus to the Seljuk expansion

and the consolidation of power in Central Anatolia after years of strife.

The reigns of Giyasaddin Kaihusrav (1204–11), Izzaddin Kaikavus (1211–19) and Alaaddin Kaykubad I (1220–1237) were periods of prosperity. The cities thrived, and the old Roman highways (the so-called Silk Road) leading to Iran, Central Asia and China were restored and furnished with hundreds of hans (lodges for merchants, caravanserais). Among the highways, the Konya-Aksaray-Kayseri-Sivas-Erzincan route on the east-west axis was the main artery for the flow of resources and services between these cities and neighbouring countries; and the harbours of Trabzon and Sinop in the north, and Antalya and Alanya in the south, were the terminal points of a north-south route intersecting the main artery, providing secure shelter for Muslim and Christian merchants sailing in the Mediterranean and Black Seas.

In the Seljuk administrative system, autonomous local rulers owned and taxed the lands they ruled in the provinces. These administrative units were ruled over by maliks (dynasty-like sultans' progeny), or the military (subashi) and civilian governors (shanna); and the governors of these areas kept their own armed forces and public organisations, and minted local currency. The centre of this shared authority was Konya, from which the Seljuk sultan held sway over the maliks and governors. Alaaddin Kaykubad I (1220–1237) changed this system and established a centralised government that survived until the Mongol domination in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century. After 1235, the Seljuk sultans acted as vassals of the Mongol (later Ilkhanid) rulers.

## ANATOLIAN SELJUK CITIES

A typical Seljuk city included inner and outer walls, reinforced with bastions encircling the city in two layers. There were two types of double-walled citadel formations: In cities like Ankara, the citadel is on top of a hill overlooking the plains around it, with the walls of the outer citadel extending down the slopes of the hill. In the cities at the centre of large agricultural estates, like Konya, the citadel is located on flat plain. In general, while the inner citadel housed a garrison (ahmadaq), palaces, official buildings, mansions of the state officials, the citadel mosque and cisterns, the outer citadel contained the trade centre, the great mosque, educational institutions and other official buildings, such as a council house (divanhana, as in Kayseri). Residential quarters were located both inside and outside the outer citadel.

As the threat from the Crusader and Byzantine armies waned, community buildings were also built in the neighbourhoods outside the outer citadel, while open areas (maydan, sahra) outside the walls were used for communal gatherings and for sporting events. The peripatetic Seljuk rulers favoured a pastoral life, and so pavilions and kiosks in suburban palaces were built in the countryside next to natural and artificial lakes and agricultural estates near the cities.

The Seljuk territories supported lively international exchanges. The Genoese Consulate in Sivas and the Venetian Consulate in Konya promoted intense continental trade activities, facilitated by the highways and hans constructed under the Seljuks. Several cities boasted quarters for the Christian (Greek and Armenian) and Jewish communities. In Kayseri, Latin merchants from Pisa were an active group. Armenians had their own markets (han) called ermenhāna in some cities. It can be understood from the accounts of travellers that no visible barriers like walls existed between groups of different religions and races in the cities.

Seljuk cities were centres of rich and diversified trade, crafts and manufacturing. In urban bazaars, known as suq-i sultani (han), traders and craftsmen were active in their own quarters that were named after their professions, such as grocers or tailors; while special bazaars existed for manufacturers of copper and iron merchandise, and leather manufacturers based their plants next to rivers on the outskirts of the cities. Open markets, such as horse bazaars, were likewise on the fringes, and agricultural products were widely traded in these markets.

Baths (hammam) with separate sections for men and women were usually located next to the great mosques in the trade centres. Institutions of learning (madrasa) were established around the inner citadels to attract students of diverse sects and socio-cultural backgrounds, and were founded to train students in subjects like Islamic law, traditions (hadith) and medicine. Guild organisations (ahī) in cities used dervish lodges (zaviye) for communal gatherings, learning and ritual performances. The great mosque, neighbourhood masjid, Koran schools (dar'ul kurra) and tombs (kumbad) were other buildings that were located in the dense urban fabric of the

Seljuk cities, where monumental buildings were built by charitable trusts and protected with deeds.

The medieval cities of Anatolia, with new public institutions and novel monumental architectures, demonstrate that the Seljuks were long familiar with similar urban settings before their arrival to this land. In every field, the Seljuks synthesised local elements with those brought from Iran and Central Asia and borrowed from neighbouring Islamic lands.

### THE SELJUK CAPITAL: KONYA

Konya is located in the centre of the plateau bearing the same name. Its long history includes periods as a Phrygian, Greek and Roman city. St. Paul visited Konya, which then became one of the foremost Christian centres in Anatolia. Briefly ruled by Arabs in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Konya was captured by the Seljuks in the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century and was made their capital after the fall of Iznik (Nicaea) during the First Crusade. Konya prospered during the reigns of Izzaddin Kaykāvus and Alāaddin Kaykubād in the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century; and in 1221 a new wall, 4 km long, was built around the city, followed by the construction of a number of monumental public buildings.

#### Significant Buildings:

##### Alaaddin Mosque

The Alāaddin Mosque is the Friday (or Great) mosque of Konya, located on top of the so-called Alāaddin Hill, which was an ancient tumulus inhabited in earlier periods. Adjacent to the mosque were the palace quarters of the Seljuk sultans. The mosque was built before 1155 by Sultan Mas'ud and reconstructed in the first quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century by Sultan Izzaddin Kaykāvus and Sultan Alāaddin Kaykubād. The inscriptions on its north façade, added by several Seljuk rulers, render the mosque a symbol of Seljuk royal presence. While the east wing of the interior is in the typical Arabic or Kufic-type hypostyle, the west wing contains an Iranian-type central axis, embracing a mihrab, a maqsura dome and an iwan-like projection to the north (iwan: vaulted room walled on the three sides). As a result, two streams of influence, Arabic (hypostyle) and Iranian (maqsura dome), are combined in the Anatolian mosque. The courtyard to the north contains two polygonal royal tombs (kumbad) built for prominent members of the Seljuk dynasty.

To the north-east of the mosque one can find the remains of the Alāaddin Kiosk, a pavilion built over the only remaining wall of the inner citadel of Konya.

##### Ince Minareli Madrasa

To the north and west of the Alāaddin Hill are the remains of two Seljuk high schools (madrasa). The western one is known as Ince Minareli, after the thin minaret attached to the masjid adjacent to its façade. This was a school of theology (dar'ul hadis) built in 1260–65. The name of its architect is inscribed as "Amel-i Koluk bin Abdullah" (work of Koluk bin Abdullah) inside the two symmetrical rosettes on the portal, which is





a rare example of a designer's name being recorded on an Islamic monument. Behind the portal is a vaulted square vestibule leading to a central domed space. The dome, which contains oculus, rests on fan-pendentives at the corners and the walls of the cubic substructure. Hence, the building is a type known as "enclosed madrasa" in Anatolia (others are "open madrasas" with an unenclosed, arcaded courtyard). The enclosed type of Anatolian Seljuk madrasa is an unprecedented design, found neither in Iran or elsewhere.

Underneath the dome, a square pool is sunk into the floor, giving the impression of an inner courtyard. A monumental iwan fronts this court to the west, and domed square rooms flank the two sides. The student cells open to the court on the north and south sides. The unique portal of the madrasa is one of the most intricately ornamented Seljuk portals in existence. A twofold Koranic inscription band (divine logos) runs along the centre of the portal, interlacing and knotting together above the gate. Along with this, abstract sacred trees (or eagles) inserted in two corner niches above the gate and bands of floral designs framing the portal symbolise the world created by God as a transitory realm in a way specific to Seljuk Anatolia. Today, Ince Minareli Madrasa is a museum of Seljuk sculpture.

#### Karatay Madrasa

Caläladdin Karatay, a vizier of Sultan Izzaddin Kaykävus, founded the Karatay Madrasa (completed 1251–52), which also falls into the enclosed-madrasa group with its main iwan, flanking rooms and student cells. A prominent portal gives way to a square entrance section that was once covered with a dome in the south-eastern corner. The architectural ornament of the portal is rich in cosmological symbolism, which can also be found elsewhere in the building. Inside the madrasa,

the stars in four concentric lines on mosaic tiles of the strikingly beautiful dome create an image of rotating heavens, with the central aperture as the sun or sky gate. Karatay Madrasa is now a museum of Seljuk tiles brought from the suburban Kubädabäd Palace on the shores of Beyşehir, close to Konya.

#### Mawlänâ Convent

Mawlänâ Celäladdin-i Rûmi (1207-73) made a substantial mark on Seljuk arts and letters with his original Sufi philosophy (Tasavvuf) and literary writings, and also founded the Muslim sect called Mowlawîyah. After his death, Mawlänâ was buried in a rose garden outside the city walls of Konya. This simple garden was transformed into a sacred precinct through the construction over several centuries of various sect buildings, such as the Mowlawî Convent (dargâh), the masjid and the whirling hall (samâhana). The tomb of Mawlänâ, with its turquoise-coloured conical cap, is the most remarkable part of the complex. This was originally built in 1274, and restored in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. North of the tomb is a kind of domed vestibule where dervishes gathered before the sema (whirling) ceremony. The samâhana is a large square space covered with a dome and flanked by private lodges for musicians and spectators, while west of this is the domed masjid area. Both the masjid and samâhana were built by Sultan Sulayman the Magnificent in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Dervish cells flank the courtyard of the convent, while the large room on the south-western side, next to the kitchen, was for the sheikh (religious leader) of the convent. Today the convent is a museum where objects from the former sect centre in the complex are exhibited.

#### Sahip Ata Mosque and Convent

Sahip Ata Mosque was founded in 1258 by Sahip Ata, vizier of

Sultan Izzaddin Kaykävus II, and built by the architect Amele Koluk - bin Abdullah. The portal and mihrap of the old mosque and its convent are still intact today. The original mosque, with wooden posts supporting a ceiling made of timber, is of a type known as a "wooden-pillared mosque."

#### Zazadin Han (Saadettin Caravanserai, inn for merchants)

This han can be found on the road to Aksaray, 22 km from Konya. Zazadin Han was built in 1237 by Saadettin, the architect and also vizier (prime minister) of Sultan Alâaddin Kaykubâd. Hans in Iran and Central Asia from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries are single or double-sectioned mud-brick structures with huge iwans at the midpoints around open courtyards. The enclosed section of an Anatolian han is an oblong building with a nave-like central axis and aisle-like corridors running perpendicular to it. The fine masonry of the vaults and walls, as well as the building techniques, are reminiscent of medieval Christian cathedrals in Caucasia and eastern Anatolia, and local influence is apparent. The open courtyard, iwans in many examples, portals, fortress-like appearance, embrasures and undecorated surfaces still suggest Iranian and Central Asian influence.

(Footnote: \*Richard Nelson Frye, "The Turks in Khurasan and Transoxiana at the Time of the Arab Conquest," in *Islamic Iran and Central Asia (7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, London: Variorum Reprints, 1979, p. XIII: 309.)

#### Other Major Seljuk Sites in Central Anatolia

#### Cities featuring extant Seljuk urban topography and buildings:

Niğde, Aksaray, Kayseri, Sivas, Divriği, Tokat, Amasya

#### Great Hans (caravanserai) between these cities:

Horozlu Han Konya, Agzikara Han Aksaray, Sultan Han Aksaray, Sultan Han Kayseri, Karatay Han Kayseri

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## THE SILK ROAD THE ROAD TRADE AND CULTURE LINKING EAST AND WEST

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mon use, defining the trade route that was initiated around 114 BC, and was first used during the period of the Western Han Dynasty in China. After seeing the strained relations between the Huns and the people of Da Yue Zhi, the ruler of the Khans sought to engage in an alliance with Da Yue Zhis. The ruler of the Khans sent a group of representatives, headed by envoy Zhang Qian, to begin negotiations with the Da Yue Zhis in 138 BC, however Zhang Qian was captured by the Huns while passing through their territory. He managed to escape, returning to China 10 years later and submitting his report to the Khans, detailing the Western region and its inhabitants.

He provided the Khans with detailed information about the route and the lifestyles of the people living along it, thus shedding light on a previously unknown part of the world to the Chinese, and resulting in a more concentrated relationship between the Huns and the people of China. As a result of Zhang Qian's report, many Chinese merchants and envoys started expanding their businesses into the heart of Central Asia, carrying with them large quantities of silk on their travels for use as gifts and as a form of currency for trade, silk being a valuable commodity that could easily be converted into money. As the Silk Road became established as a popular trade route, the material began to gain in popularity all over the old world, stretching from China and Central Asia to the Mediterranean region and Europe. This rise in popularity was seen especially among members of the royal families and wealthy classes as an indicator of status. This soft and elegant material, which was woven in eye-catching colours, was particularly popular for use in underwear as it was believed that it warded off pests and parasites. Additionally, warriors would wear clothes made from silk under their armour in the belief that arrows would not penetrate the material, and could be removed easily. As a natural material, silk also prevented sweating and was hypoallergenic.

The starting point of the Silk Road was the city of Chang An in China, and it culminated in Syria. The Romans' love of the material was the reason for their conquering of Syria in 64 BC in a bid to take control of its source.

The Silk Road has always been identified with images of caravans of camels traversing the desert, however the Silk Road comprised two main routes, which became known as the **Silk Land Road** and the **Silk Seaway**. There were also secondary routes, with the Silk Land Road divided into two main branches known as South-western Silk Road and the Desert Silk Road. The Desert Silk Road was further sub-divided into three more routes: the Northern Silk Road, the Central Silk Road and the Southern Silk Road, which intersect at key points along their 7,000 kilometre journey; while another main route took in India, passing through Burma, Si Chuan and Yun Nan. This



route has been of lesser interest to historians, however it was known to have been in use for more than 2,000 years. The silk produced in Si Chuan, known as "Shu Jin," had a brighter surface, and was washed in the "Jin Jiang" river, which means "Golden River" in Chinese. Still famous for silk production, Si Chuan has a tradition of silkworm breeding and silk production that dates back 4,000 years. This road, which underwent repair allowing it to be used as a transportation route between Yun Nan and Burma before the Second World War, connected China to the outside world during the Chinese-Japanese War.

The Silk Road, besides its commercial purpose, has also played an important role in the dissemination of cultures between the East and West. In the period from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC until the 15<sup>th</sup> Century AD the Silk Road connected Asia and Europe, and thus contributed to the merging of many different cultures. Chinese, Indian, Persian, Greek and Central Asian cultures have come together over the centuries and have affected each other with various economic and cultural interactions. Innovations such as silkworm breeding and silk weaving techniques, porcelain and paper production and printing technology, and inventions such as the compass, the umbrella, etc. have been transferred to the West, while ideologies of thought, like Buddhism, Islamism and Christianity (Orthodox), have spread into China.

We hope that the "Silk Road" can continue to be a "Road of Friendship" between our two nations, which while being located a great distance from each other geographically, have long been neighbours to each other in history.



## ISTANBUL: WATER CITY, WATER LIFE<sup>1</sup>

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## ISTANBUL: WATER CITY, WATER LIFE<sup>1</sup>

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The Day the Bosphorus Dries Up” is the title of the second chapter of “The Black Book” by Orhan Pamuk, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2006. The chapter is written in the form of a newspaper article by Celal, a fictional Turkish columnist and one of the three main characters in the book.<sup>2</sup> The article in the novel draws attention to the change in sea level, and imagines what would happen if one day the Bosphorus, the Istanbul Strait, dried up. The former seabed becomes a deep muddy valley in which the journalist dreams of himself obsessively searching for the car of a gangster driven into the sea in his youth. While searching, he comes across many different relics buried in the thick mud, including ships, cans, coins, skeletons and swords from different periods, all of which are intermingled in complex and undifferentiated layers, stratifications and folds. One of the intelligent ideas of the article can be underlined further: the waterfront – the edge of the sea and the city – which forms a different kind of archaeological layering, one in which the remains of the past are collected within a thick stratum that is constantly smoothed by nature and culture, i.e. currents, urban debris and tides. Nevertheless the idea is sourced from its object: Istanbul – the city of the Bosphorus – which is an excellent example of a historical water city, where the layers of 8,000 years of habitation are mixed and coexist both on land and beneath the sea.

The historical distinction of waterfront cities in relation to their geographical milieu was theorised by Ferdinand Braudel, celebrated historian of the Mediterranean: “... the sea is everything that it is said to be: it provides unity, transport, the means of exchange and

intercourse, if the man is prepared to make an effort and pay the price. But it has also been the great divider, the obstacle to overcome”.<sup>3</sup> From a historical perspective, the waterfront city, as an agent of the sea, is the result of all unifying/dividing, connecting/disconnecting or territorialising/deterritorialising milieus, such as the air or the digital space.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, it is the principal geo-historical model for the spaces between global and local networks – the station, the airport or the computer interface.<sup>5</sup> In the contemporary era these spaces of interaction are no longer required to be by the sea, however a better city has to be metaphorically a “water city” – an agent between the global and local, and the understanding of the history of water cities and their spatiality between unified and divided milieus becomes instructive for the sustainability of a better life in the contemporary urban context.

This article looks into the history of Istanbul as an excellent example of a water city, containing anecdotes that highlight the water life that has developed. Istanbul has the proud claim to having been the capital of the three empires – Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman – but it has always been a city of the sea. As much as it was represented as a crowned city – its fortification forming a crown on the head of the antique deity Tyche<sup>6</sup> – the surrounding sea has been interpreted as a garland, a laurel wealth of victory.<sup>7</sup> In fact, as expressed below, the sea has been the link between the rises and falls of the empires in the continuous urban history of Byzantium/Constantinople/Istanbul.<sup>8</sup>

**Lygos/Lycus: Tunnelling through the Sedi-mentary Pool of an Enclosed Harbour**

Within the sedimentary layers of a bay that was the port pool of a Late Roman enclosed harbour in Yenikapi, Istanbul had the opportunity to witness in real life what could only be imagined by Pamuk for his Black Book. The existence of the port, bearing the name of Emperor Theodosius, was known to have existed from earlier written and visual documents; however, the conditions for scientific excavations in Yenikapi were only created with the decision to build an underground railway line between the two sides of the Bosphorus, the Marmaray Project.<sup>9</sup> One of the most extensive urban maritime archaeological ventures in history, Marmaray is continuing with both in-situ and off-site conservation activities; and a museum-station is planned in the port area, where numerous unearthed ships, from the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD to the Ottoman era, will be displayed.

No exhibition, however, can represent the dramatic void of the excavation site, which has revealed centuries of geographical and cultural change in the port's transformation: wooden piles extending as the infill rises; shipwrecks buried after tsunamis, complete with their cargoes; skeletons of humans and horses; and coins, shells and countless pieces of earthenware, from regular amphora to precious glazed plates, which were in some cases intentionally laid on the harbour bed to prevent further infill. The earthenware items found are of particular importance, providing evidence of the sea networks to which Istanbul was linked in different periods. The pieces originating from Central Asia and the Far East show the expansion of these networks in Late Antiquity and Middle Ages.

What was not expected to be revealed in the dried sand of the Yenikapi pool was corroboration of a reference made by Pliny the Elder, who mentioned the existence of a legendary village called Lygos on the site preceding Byzantium.<sup>10</sup> This recalls phonetically Lycus, the name of the spring pouring into the bay where the harbour of Theodosius was founded. Beneath the harbour, the first recorded settlement on the site of Istanbul – the Historical Peninsula – has been excavated, revealing circular mud-covered straw huts and human burial sites dating from the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC, the Neolithic era. The settle-

ment was found 6 m below the present sea level, and dates to after the geographical formation of the Bosphorus in the last Ice Age, but before the final rise of the sea level to its current level.<sup>11</sup> The sea slowly immersed the human settlement, upon which the port pool of Constantinopolis' greatest enclosed harbour would be founded in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The Theodosius harbour would eventually fill with silt from the Lycus stream (Bayrampasa) and from output from the city. The Yenikapi excavations have revealed the natural and cultural tides of the waterfront from over the last 8,000 years, which are important not only for Istanbul, but also for the history of navigation and waterfronts in general. Yenikapi, meaning "new gate" in Turkish, now literally refers to the new gate opening onto the maritime history of Istanbul.

#### "Bosphorus the Great Creator": Currents, Fishes, Ships

Pierre Gilles of Albi, a 16<sup>th</sup> century French scholar who accumulated great knowledge on the history of Istanbul, mapping the city during his travels to the Ottoman capital, had expressed the vitality of the sea for the city with his provocative comparison between the Bosphorus and Byzas, the legendary founder of the maritime colony Byzantium in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC: "... more than its first founder Byzas, it is the Bosphorus that is the well and great creator of this city. Whatever the myths tell of how Byzas is a most good and god-like founder, the city survived without him for centuries. Thanks to its location it could always find a new founder. However, the city could never have existed without the Strait upon which it is located."<sup>12</sup> This geographically determinist description – which is in contrast with Celal's article in Pamuk's book, where the city lives above the dried up Bosphorus – reflects the preface of any significant depiction of Byzantium/Constantinople/Istanbul. It has been stated that during its successive foundations, the founders – Constantine I, Mehmet the Conqueror – could not have been unaware of the fact that what had been formed by nature could be the ruling centre of the world.

Maybe more significant are the times when world geopolitics did not support the city of the Bosphorus as a ruling centre,

and these times were longer than would be expected. In the first 1,000 years of its history the city was a maritime transit terminal between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Around the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD it survived the loss of the East Roman Empire on many fronts as the capital city of a "thalassocracy" – being a state with primarily maritime realms, an empire of the sea. For the 200 years following the invasion of the armies of the Fourth Crusade (1204) it became once more a mere maritime town; while in the period after the 1920s the city lost its title as a capital with the foundation of the Turkish Republic. In other words, between the great foundations are the silent but significant years of being a maritime town, which, in fact, form a major link in the continuation of urban history. Specifically for the pre-modern period it is the long duree patterns of the Bosphorus that are significant: such as the sea currents that bring stocks of fish and ships, and pile them at the mouth of the Golden Horn. Nevertheless, it was because of these long time patterns, Pierre Gilles from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, could communicate with the ancient writers through space. Gilles' main reference was Dionysius of Byzantium, the writer of the "Bosphorus Passages" from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC who was the first person to trace the shoreline of the Strait both ways.

#### New Rome/New Ostia Portus: The fortified waterfront

Roman emperor Constantine established the capital city bearing his name as the New – or Second – Rome on the site of Byzantium. Being a maritime city, Constantinople was founded with the aim of locating the capital and the harbour at the same place. Thus it was at the same time the New – or Second – Ostia Portus, which was the harbour city of Rome at the mouth of the River Tiber. Being a promontory, the site is bordered by the sea on two sides. Ostia Portus within the

New Rome was structured as a series of enclosed harbours by the Marmara Sea, in addition to the twin harbours of ancient Byzantium on the Golden Horn. The waterfront was fortified with a single line of walls, where the enclosed harbours acted as the sea gates.<sup>13</sup>

The East Roman Empire had gradually lost its territories and the Mediterranean by the 7<sup>th</sup> century, leaving Byzantine Constantinopolis, the fortified water city, to be attacked many times from both land and sea. The great enclosed harbours from Late Antiquity went into economic decline and gradually dried up, with maritime activities being moved to the natural harbour, the Golden Horn. The system of a fortified waterfront was tested over 1,000 years, during which the city fell twice: first in 1204, when it was attacked by the soldiers of the Fourth Crusade and taken from the coast of the Golden Horn; and second in 1453, by the Ottomans. When the Ottomans took the city Constantinople had been a capital without an empire for the last 200 years – in some respects not very different from Byzantium. The Ot-

tomans took the city after invading the lands of the former Empire, and after making the city their capital, the city acquired its empire back. As the East Mediterranean became an Ottoman lake and attacks against the city stopped, the Ottoman city expanded out of the fortified boundaries of the Middle Ages. At that time, maritime life flourished, the sea being both a place for the provision of the great capital and a major avenue – a grand canal. A map in the 17<sup>th</sup> century copy of the Piri Reis book perfectly depicts the water city, with three major settlements on three pieces of land surrounded by the sea: Istanbul, Galata and Uskudar.

#### "Let's not get out of the Boat": The Gates of Felicity from the Sea



Istanbul became a water city in the real sense of the term in the Ottoman period when the city became known as *Der Saadet*, the Gate of Felicity. Picturesque representations by Western painters show the Bosphorus defined with waterfront mentions, and a waterway filled with many kinds of sea vessel – indeed there are visual and written resources from Ottoman times that reflect the same situation. The miniatures of the *Surname-i Vehbi* by court painter Levni showing the circumcision ceremonies of the crown princes depict details of the festival that continued around the clock for many weeks.<sup>14</sup> The sea was an important part of all imperial ceremonies: the coming and going of the imperial navy, the arrival of foreign envoys and the boat trips of the sultan and the court from the Topkapi Palace up the Bosphorus. The Head Gardener, who was responsible for the care of the natural sources at the urban periphery of the capital, accompanied the Sultan on these outings as the person navigating the boat. To inform the Sultan of his possessions of the waterfront he held books noting every single structure on its shores, from the south to north and back; and these books are important records of the expansion of the Ottoman capital along the water front.<sup>15</sup> In fact the route of the Head Gardener was the same followed by

the author of the Bosphorus Passages in Antiquity, Dionysius of Byzantium.

Eremya Celebi Komurcuyan followed the same route in his book charting the history of Istanbul in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>16</sup> The book is written as a description of the capital city to a friend, and begins with the saying “Let’s not get out of the boat”. The author keeps his promise, telling relating his idea of the different quarters of the city from the landing stages and quays. This is not just a literary format, but also the reality of a water city, a city which can be completely described without stepping ashore; in other words, Komurcuyan can be said to have mapped the Gates of Felicity from the sea.

A rare quality of the Istanbul waterfront was that, like Venice, it combined everyday life with trade, where the internal networks juxtaposed with the external lines. However, unlike Venice Istanbul transformed as the maritime world changed. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the first stage of modernisation, the Ottoman capital city developed within the confines of the pre-modern metropolis. With the introduction of the new steamers, new palaces, mansions and gardens adorned the waterfront in a Western style. It was not until later, in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century that the negative effects of industrialisation would take their toll.

#### “The Crossed Sea”: Water world of the Industrial Harbour

The natural harbour of Istanbul, the Golden Horn, was blessed with a deep embankment that could accommodate large sea vessels without major human intervention. This quality, celebrated by many authors since the Antiquity Period, ensured continuous use of the historical sea port in the industrial period. According to international statistics on the number of vessels importing goods in the 1880s, Istanbul was ranked second only to Liverpool,<sup>17</sup> however this traffic was due to the city’s status as both a transit port and a centre of consumption. Starting in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, but developing dramatically in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Republican period, the industrialised natural sea port on the Golden Horn reached the limits of sustainability. One of the historical functions of the waterfront, that is industrial production expanded to the whole harbour. Then a different kind of waterworld emerged on the Golden Horn. In black and white photographs from the 1950s to 1980s one can view the space given over to production on the water, especially in

the photographs of Ara Guler, who depicted islands of boats and ships, from primitive yachts to steel structures; cranes, docks, jetties; coffee shops, restaurants and taverns. This world of development destroying nature has been expressed in the literature of Yasar Kemal, in his book that was translated into English as “The Sea-Crossed Fishermen”, but which translates directly from Turkish as “The Crossed Sea”.<sup>18</sup> Not unlike the story of other historical port cities, for a certain period of the modern industrial harbour the sea crossed the city in Istanbul. The Golden Horn filled dramatically with debris and the environmental conditions deteriorated; and when industry could no longer function there, it left, leaving an uncanny void – the *terrain vague*.

#### The Reconciling Sea: The Museum Harbour

In the 1980s the Municipality carried out a radical port cleaning project. Many of the industrial and service facilities were removed to be replaced by waterfront parks. The void left in the old working port of Istanbul on the Golden Horn was quite dramatic when compared with the eternal mobility of the Bosphorus, which still acted as the gateway to the Black Sea. Fortunately, as environmental problems have been partially solved by new infrastructural systems. The void has been filled in a process to revitalise the cultural and industrial heritage into spaces for culture, including modern art centres, conference halls, universities, industrial museums and other service facilities. The historical harbour of the city is emerging as a “museum harbour,” where in the near future it will be possible to visit the cultural facilities from the sea.<sup>19</sup> This is a process of reconciliation between the city and the sea. When finally the two sides of the Bosphorus will be united with a rail tunnel, the maritime history of “the capital of the three empires” will be rediscovered, with its ports, quays, ships and other relics. This will tie in with the revitalised Golden Horn waterfront, which will hopefully form a new kind of a water city and a new kind of a water life.

It is the sea that has provided a better life for Istanbul, and it is because of the sea that Istanbul has become a better city. Being an excellent historical model of a water city, let’s hope that Istanbul is not an exception, but a model for other urban spaces in the future.

(Endnotes)

- 1 The heading of this article is an open interpretation of the EXPO 2010 title Better City and Better Life. “Water city”, in the most general sense, is the definition of a city which exists and functions on the sea and/or rivers. In the 1960s, Life magazine talked about New York being a “water city” that did not experience the waterfront as part of its daily life. Cities like Bangkok and Venice, where there is habitation literally on the water, are true “water cities”. This is the sense that “water city” is used in this article, with an awareness that in the contemporary period “water city” can also refer to an environmentally planned settlement where the sustainability of the water resources are a major concern – like many waterfront cities in Australia. In addition to this, “water city” from “*waterstad*” is a term historically denoting the zones formed out of the dikes in Rotterdam, Holland, and the Expo pavilion of Rotterdam in Shanghai builds on this genuine Dutch concept.

- 2 Orhan Pamuk, *The Black Book* (translated by Güneli Gün) London, Boston: Faber & Faber, 1996, pp.14-18.
- 3 Ferdinand Braudel is the forerunner of the French annales school, which has been influential in Turkish history writing; *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean in the age of Philip II* (translated by Sian Reynolds), London: 1972: 236.
- 4 French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari articulated the sea as the first medium to be adapted to the dependency of the land (literally, territorialisation), as well as the principal medium of confronting it as a space with different qualities than land (deterritorialising). The sea as such is their “maritime model” in the confrontation of different spatialities, which is a condition to be seen in its extreme in contemporary culture. Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, (translated by Brian Massumi) Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987),
- 5 Han Meyer, *City and Port: Urban Planning as a Cultural Venture in London, Barcelona, New York, and Rotterdam: changing relations between public urban space and large-scale infrastructure*, Rotterdam: International Books, 1999, pp. 25-28).
- 6 Spiro Kostof, *The City Assembled: elements of urban form through the history*, London, 1992.)
- 7 Procopius, *Buildings*, 1961, p. 61.
- 8 The major source on the harbours of Istanbul is the book of Wolfgang Müller-Wiener published in German and Turkish; *Die Hafens von Byzantion, Konstantinupolis, Istanbul, Tübingen* : E. Wasmuth, c1994; an another important source is Doğan Kuban, *Istanbul: an urban history, Byzantion, Constantinopolis, İstanbul, The Economic and Social History Foundation of Turkey*, 1996.
- 9 The impact of the Marmaray Project on the sea archaeology is not limited to Yenikapı, such as the traces of the harbour of Byzantion on the Golden Horn, important remains of the port of Chrysopolis/Üsküdar on the Anatolian side; the major publication on these excavations is the catalogue of the exhibition in the Archaeological Museum, 2007, entitled, *Under the Daylight -- 8,000 years of İstanbul: Marmaray, Metro, Sultanahmet Excavations*; the catalogue is in Turkish, *Gün Işığında İstanbul'un 8000 Yılı: Marmaray, Metro, Sultanahmet Kazıları*, İstanbul: Aygaz, 2007.
- 10 Doğan Kuban, *İstanbul: an urban...*, p. 10.
- 11 *Gün Işığında -- İstanbul'un 8000 Yılı*)
- 12 Pierre Gilles book on the Bosphorus is published in Latin; Turkish translation is; *İstanbul Boğazı* (translated by Erendiz Özbayoğlu), İstanbul: Eren, 2000. The quotation is translated from Turkish by the author of this article. For an English interpretation of Gilles book on İstanbul, see; D. Kuban, *İstanbul: an urban...*, pp.
- 13 The Bosphorus outside these strongly fortified boundaries was regarded as an insecure area for settlement; Procopius the 6<sup>th</sup> century historian expressed his doubts about those who built properties on the waterfront outside the city walls.
- 14 Esin Atıl, Levni and the Surname: The Story of an Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Festival, İstanbul: APA, 2000.
- 15 Cahit Kayra; Erol Üyepazarcı, *İkinci Mahmut'un İstanbul'u: Bostancıbaşı Sicilleri*, İstanbul: Büyükşehir, 1992.
- 16 Eremya Çelebi Kömürçüyan, *İstanbul Tarihi* (translated by H. Andreasyan), İstanbul: Kutulmuş, 1952.
- 17 Wolfgang Müller Wiener, *Die Hafens*, 1990.
- 18 Yaşar Kemal, *The Sea-crossed Fishermen* (translated by ) Minerva, 1990.
- 19 The process of museumification of the waterfront has been defined as “The Museum Harbor” by the author in his article in *Abitare International* devoted to İstanbul; see, “Verso il Porto Museo- Towards the Museum Harbor”, *Abitare International*, no 472, May 2007, pp. 136-143.





# CHINESE TREASURES IN ISTANBUL TOPKAPI PALACE

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## CHINESE TREASURES IN ISTANBUL TOPKAPI PALACE

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Chinese treasures in Topkapı Palace, residence of the Ottoman Sultans, were built up as a result of commercial relations between China and Turkey.

The Topkapı Palace collection of Chinese porcelains consists of more than ten thousand objects encompassing a broad period of Chinese history from the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) to the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. The Topkapı Palace Chinese porcelain collection provides a nearly complete sequence of examples of the wares

that were manufactured for more than six centuries in China for exports.

This is the world's biggest and best-preserved collection of Chinese porcelains and also the only major historical collection to be found in the outside of China.

Because of their elegance and refinement, Chinese porcelains were extremely popular not only at the Imperial Court and in its circles, but also in the homes of the wealthy Turks.





## THE PLACE OF CHINESE PORCELAINS IN THE OTTOMAN DAILY LIFE

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## THE PLACE OF CHINESE PORCELAINS IN THE OTTOMAN DAILY LIFE

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The first Chinese porcelains to enter the Ottoman Palace were either war prizes or gifts. Early in the 16th century, porcelains began making their appearance in the empire as Chinese goods brought by merchants. Because of their enormous value and prestige, Chinese porcelains were destined only for the tables of the imperial court and its highest ranking members. Galland, writing in the 18th century, noted:

*It is thought that the sultan possesses a set of tableware that is fashioned from this earth and is worth eight thousand piasters. Not long ago, the grand vizier acquired and tried out a set of these worth three hundred piasters. There is no grandee who does not regard it as a matter of self-respect to own at least a few of these dishes.<sup>1</sup>*

Poring through Ottoman-period archives one comes across much information about Chinese porcelains. The archives have a distinctive terminology that the Ottomans employed for Chinese porcelains. Celadons for example were referred to as *mertebani* and, on rare occasions, *nerdübani*; other porcelains were called *fağfur* or *fağfuri*. *Mertebani* is derived from "Martaban", a seaport town in Burma; *fağfur* was a term that referred to the Chinese emperor. These terms were used in conjunction with others that denoted specific types. *Hatayi* for example is related to the English word "Cathay", the old name for northern China. Words like *zeytuni* (olive-green), *alaca* (variegated), *beyaz* (white), *sarı* (yellow) referred to colors. The Arab traveler Ibn Battuta, who visited Birgi in western Anatolia in 1331, mentions porcelains in use at a banquet at which he was a sultan's guest.<sup>2</sup> This suggests that porcelains had already entered Anatolia as early as the 14th century. Aşıkpaşazade, a 15th century Ottoman historian, tells us that the first person to introduce Chinese porcelains to the Ottoman court was İvaz Pasha, a vizier to

Sultan Mehmed I (1413-1421), who recruited potters from western Persia.<sup>3</sup> References to Chinese porcelains are scanty in early-period Ottoman documents of the 14th and 15th centuries but there is increasing mention of them in the 16th century and later. One document in the Topkapı Palace archives dated to 1514 is a list of porcelains brought back as war prizes by Selim I after his victory at the Battle of Çaldıran. The Ottoman court's stock of Chinese porcelains was almost certainly further enriched by plunder taken during Selim's conquest of Damascus and Cairo. The earliest known reference to Chinese porcelains in the Topkapı archives appears in a Treasury inventory register dated to 1496. The existence of porcelains at the Ottoman court before the construction of the Topkapı Palace is shown by a reference to sherbet being served in *fağfuri* bowls at a circumcision feast held for princes in Edirne in 1457.<sup>4</sup> Other documents from the early 16th century contain a few references to Chinese porcelains.<sup>5</sup>

According to 16th century *muhallefat* registers (inventories of the properties of deceased Ottoman subjects and dismissed officials whose title passed to the Treasury), a total of 400 porcelain vessels, of which five were celadons, were sequestered by the court. This is clear evidence of Chinese porcelains being used outside the palace. From the early 17th century onward, there is increasing documentary evidence of these porcelains being used outside the palace. According to the *muhallefat* registers from that century, 3,177 porcelain and 468 celadon vessels were sequestered; in the 18th century the numbers were 15,677 and 889 respectively. (In the 19th century on the other hand only five porcelains entered the Treasury in this way-partly because tastes had shifted in favor of porcelain wares of European origin but principally because the whole *muhallefat* system was abolished in 1839.) Other

evidence of widespread use of Chinese porcelains among the Ottomans is to be found in miniature-illustrated books as well as in the journals and accounts of European ambassadors and travelers. Chinese porcelains at the palace were under the responsibility of the Treasury, which maintained detailed records that tell us where in the palace the vessels were stored. The most important place was the Enderun treasury. The objects kept here were released by the treasurer into the custody of others to be given as gifts or to be used, sold, repaired, and so on. In Topkapı treasury register, the objects listed are accompanied by annotations such as “Gift for the Khan of the Tatars”; “Given to Princess Fatma for her trousseau”, and “Witnessed that it was surrendered to the pantry steward.” Another archive document contains a list of items, including many Chinese porcelains, transferred from the Enderun treasury to the Harem treasury between 1623 and 1632. Beneath this treasury is a vault in which porcelains are known to have been stored. The “Swordbearer’s Treasury” was where the porcelains and also the gold and silver vessels used by the sultan himself were stored. Unused and surplus items were turned over to the Enderun treasury. There is also a reference to a treasury where large numbers of Chinese porcelains were stored prior to being released from the palace. Sequestered porcelains were taken into the palace by the Treasury of the Imperial Gate, where they were vetted for inclusion in the main treasury or else earmarked for sale.

The officer known as *kilerbaşı*, was the head of the palace pantry and ranked third among the palace staff. In addition to the palace pantry, he was also in charge of the Enderun kitchens and those of the Second Courtyard, of all the members of the Pantrymen’s corps, and of all kitchen personnel employed in the outermost section of the palace. He oversaw the preparation of the sultan’s meals and supervised their service. His other duties included preparing the palace’s preserves, syrups, sherbets, and pastes; safeguarding its pickles and spices; and tasting the sultan’s food before it was served. One part of the barracks of the Pantrymen’s corps was where the gold, silver, and porcelain vessels with which the sultan’s table was set were stored.<sup>6</sup> There were large numbers of porcelains on hand in the Harem, the kitchens, and the pantries. A china storeroom in the kitchens suffered from a fire that broke out in 1574 and a large number of porcelains were lost.<sup>7</sup> A kitchen officer known as *serçini* (“head of the china”) was responsible not only for the sultan’s private kitchen but also for the sultan’s porcelain tableware and for the tableware used at banquets for foreign envoys. The presence of Chinese porcelains in the vaults and cabinets of the Harem is attested to by references in various Treasury and sequestration registers. One 18th century entry refers to 530 porcelain vessels being released from the quarters of Beşir Agha, a Harem eunuch. Another archive document mentions ten *fağfur* bowls among the items released from the Cabinet of the Sacred Cities for use in a banquet.<sup>8</sup>

#### HOW WERE THE PORCELAINS USED?

The more than ten thousand objects in the Topkapı collection are the best evidence of how widespread use of Chinese porcelains was in the Ottoman palace. Porcelains were the wares that the Ottoman sultans preferred to eat off. Thevenot quotes a court page who reported that the sultan’s food was served to him on “dishes fashioned from Chinese earth which are more precious even than porcelain for they are proof against poisoning.”<sup>9</sup> Thevenot is speaking of celadons of course. Concerning them, Galland also has this to say:

*I saw a bowl fashioned from a sort of green earth that comes from India. The Turks—and especially their leaders—attach much*

*value to such wares and are willing to pay very high prices for them because of their attribute of breaking when touched by poison. The bowl I saw rang like a coin when tapped even though it was quite thick and heavy. Its value was assessed at thirty piasters. The earth is called “martaban”. The sultan’s brothers, who live in perpetual fear of being poisoned, will eat from nothing but these vessels.*<sup>10</sup>

If anyone ever tested one of these horrendously-priced celadons by actually putting something poisonous in it, we have no record of the attempt—or its results. In the event, as the two examples cited show, the belief in this power of celadons was widespread and that was what encouraged their use in the first place. Although a fashion for gold and silver tableware was introduced at court during the reign of Bayezid II (1481-1512),<sup>11</sup> by the reign of Murad III (1574-1595), porcelain regained its popularity. According to D’ohsson, all sultans from Süleyman I onward ate from nothing but porcelain and adds that “green Chinese porcelains” were used at formal banquets.<sup>12</sup> Bobovi, a Pole engaged in the service of the Ottoman court at the Topkapı Palace in the 17th century, describes the eating habits of the sultans in some detail. According to him, the sultans did not eat from gold or silver dishes because under religious law, such vessels were forbidden to men though women could and did use them. Food was instead served on celadons.<sup>13</sup> Baudier reported that no golden vessels whatsoever were used during Ramadan and that instead food was served in “extremely precious and rare vessels of a hard, yellow porcelain.”<sup>14</sup> As it happens there is a small group of yellow Chinese porcelains in the Topkapı Palace collection and perhaps they were used because of their perceived resemblance to gold. In contemporary accounts we come across many references to Chinese porcelains presented as gifts to sultans on occasions such as accessions, births, and weddings. Chinese porcelains might even be given as “get-well” gifts when a reigning sultan took sick. Sheikulislam Minkarizade Yahya Efendi sent such a gift, in the form of a yellow *fağfur* rosewater flask containing rosewater over which prayers had been recited, to Mehmed IV (1648-1689) when that sultan was laid up.<sup>15</sup> The gift-giving was a two-way street. When Nişancı Emin Pasha was elevated to grand vizier in 1768, the sultan dispatched a number of gifts to the pasha’s mansion that included “ten Chinese porcelain dishes of candied fruit carried on six trays.”<sup>16</sup>

Mention has already been made of Chinese porcelains being used at banquets given at the Imperial Council Hall and for receptions of foreign envoys. This use was a common occurrence. In the Law of Mehmed II, the first comprehensive codification of Ottoman imperial law, there are provisions laying down the rules to which grand viziers must adhere when they preside over meetings of the Imperial Council and also spelling out the protocol to be followed by council members at the banquets given on the four days a week when the council met. The detailed rules even dictated which members were to be seated where and how the huge trays that served as tables were to be set out. On the days of the year when the palace corpsmen were paid their salaries, a magnificent ceremony was held at the Topkapı Palace to which foreign ambassadors were invited as a way of showing off the power and might of the Ottoman Empire. A miniature in the Cracow National Museum signed by Pierre Paul Sevin and dated 1679 shows porcelains being used in a banquet attended by Jan Grinski, the Polish ambassador, in 1677. At a banquet given at the Sadabad palace for the Persian ambassador and his entourage in 1741, a huge menu was served in “pans of silver and gold and dishes of porcelain and celadon.”<sup>17</sup> A device often employed by the Ottoman state to convince both its own subjects and foreign emissaries of the empire’s wealth

and power was court-staged feasts and festivals that lasted for days or sometimes even weeks. Such events are important because of what they tell us about the economic, social, and cultural life of the period in which they took place. A review of the sources identifies fifty-five instances of such celebrations given on the occasion of births, circumcisions, or weddings.<sup>18</sup> Called *sur* in Turkish, a word that means “procession”, these festivals were frequently documented by a book called a *surname*.<sup>19</sup> Two miniature-illustrated manuscript accounts of such festivals in the Topkapı Palace library are our most important sources of information about the names, details, and visual attributes of Chinese porcelains and their use among the Ottomans.

The first of these *surnames* is an account of a circumcision feast that was held in 1582 for Prince Mehmed, a son of Murad III, and lasted for fifty-two days and nights.<sup>20</sup> The book contains 427 miniatures, in many of which are depicted metal, ceramic, and porcelain vessels. The most frequently recurring forms are dishes, jars, pans, cups, trays, bowls, and pots. In the scene (51a) showing the parade of the halvah-makers for example one of the figures wields a long-handled spoon as he prepares the sweetmeat in what is probably a copper pot. In his description of this festival, the historian Selaniki tells us that hearths and field kitchens were set up before a state-owned bakery on the southern side of the festival-ground (the site of the ancient Hippodrome) and that the kitchens were equipped with 1,500 great cauldrons and trays. Selaniki adds that white, green, olive-green, polychrome, and light blue Chinese porcelains and Iznik-made pans and dishes were released from the imperial kitchens and crockery warehouses for use during banquets and that 237 Iznik pans, 204 Iznik dishes, and 100 Iznik bowls were purchased off the local market in the belief that the wares released by the Treasury would not suffice.<sup>21</sup>

The second miniature-illustrated manuscript is known as *Surname-i Vehbi* (A.3593) and is an account of the circumcision-feast held in 1720 for four sons of Ahmed III. This festival lasted fifteen days and nights and the book contains 137 miniatures by the court painter, Levni. Some of the illustrations are banquet scenes and in all of these we see four huge trays that served as tables for the diners, who are shown eating or being served from covered metal dishes, bowls, and pans; from blue-and-white bowls and dishes; and from jewel-encrusted porcelain vessels. Other objects set on the tables or being held by servants include incense-burners, rosewater flasks, pitchers, spoons, cups, and silver ewer and basin sets. A document dated to July 1720 is a complete list of the garments, fabrics, weapons, and supplies that were provided by the court and purchased from outside. The master of the procession and his assistants also scoured the empire for the supplies they needed, which included ten thousand large wooden trays to be used as dining tables, one thousand smaller trays for distributing sweets, ten thousand pitchers of sherbet, one thousand ducks, eight thousand hens, two thousand turkeys, three thousand roosters, two thousand pigeons, fifteen thousand oil lamps, and ten thousand oil dishes to be suspended on cables and lit at night to provide illumination for the proceedings.<sup>22</sup> Porcelains are frequently mentioned in the *Surname-i Vehbi* as gift items. In the Topkapı Palace archives there is a document that is an itemized list of the gifts that were presented on the first day (September 18) of the 1720 festival. Among the gifts presented by Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha to Sultan Ahmed for example was:

*A Chinese porcelain bowl decorated with gems, as beautiful and delicate as a sip of water, whose interior reflected the gleam of red rubies giving it the color of garnet dissolved in*

*water while its individually-set diamonds as dazzling as the sun had the look of bubbles on a watery surface.*

Among the gifts presented by the “great scholars” to the sultan were “a matchless bowl and dish of antique yellow Chinese porcelain”; in addition, “a table-set of ten medium-sized Chinese porcelain dishes was surrendered to those who carry the porcelain tableware in the sultan’s kitchen.” In the Topkapı Palace library there is another version of *Surname-i Vehbi* that is thought to have been prepared for the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha. It contains 140 miniatures by an artist of the Levni school and its banquet scenes adhere in general to those of the Levni illustrations. Also in the library is an album of paintings by Levni. One of them shows a servant to Sultan Osman holding a bowl and dish of what looks like Chinese porcelain.

Ottoman envoys sent abroad were sometimes issued porcelains from the Treasury that were to be used during their missions. In the archives is a document from 1772 in which it is stated that Osman Pasha was given “two china bowls for stewed fruit bowls eleven celadon dishes”. Such items had to be returned to the Treasury when the mission was over.

#### OTTOMAN FOOD AND EATING HABITS AND THEIR IMPACT ON PORCELAIN TYPES

All of the food intended for the sultan himself was prepared in a separate kitchen that was located by a door connecting the Enderun and the Harem. Everyone else ate food prepared in the huge kitchens located along the right-hand side of the Second Courtyard. The quantities and variety of food emerging from these kitchens is astounding. Although there are no menus or other records indicating exactly what was cooked here, detailed accounts of the supplies taken into the kitchens were kept from the reign of Mehmed II onward and these, together with references in contemporary sources make it possible to piece together what people ate and how it must have been prepared.<sup>23</sup> They also tell us that materials of the highest quality—live animals, fresh fruits and vegetables, and spices—were procured from all over the empire and from places that were famous for being the source of a particularly fine product. While the food prepared at the Topkapı kitchens shows close affinities with Seljuk cooking traditions; it is also an intriguing blend of a cuisine such as would have been found in the wealthiest homes skillfully adapted to serve huge crowds by employing the techniques used in the privately-endowed public kitchens that supplied free food to the needy. Mutton and lamb were consumed in great quantities. Chicken appeared frequently on the table; goose and pigeon less often. Meat was roasted, grilled, or boiled. Soups and pilafs were invariable elements of any meal. The most frequently used vegetables were zucchini, eggplants, cabbages, leeks, spinach, chard, and lettuce. Broad-leafed parsley was eaten as a vegetable and was also used in cooking. Seafood does not seem to have been consumed much but the accounts do contain references to purchases of fish, roes, oysters, and shrimp. Large quantities of yogurt, milk, and cheese were taken into the kitchens along with various nuts, chickpeas, millet, bulgur and rice.

Contemporary accounts of feasts held on the occasion of holidays, circumcisions, and weddings also provide information about what was eaten. Descriptions of the long and hugely expensive festival held for the circumcision of Murad III’s son in 1582 for example contain numerous references to food.<sup>24</sup> Five hundred cooks had to be employed in the kitchens

to turn out the food for the noon and evening banquets held each day. Concerning these banquets, Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali refers to roast duck and goose and a host of sweets but is maddeningly parsimonious with names and details. He does tell us that “nine courses were prepared for the lower class and twelve for the upper along with sweets beyond numbering”. He also speaks of “sweets, halvah, sherbets, different kinds of bread, and rosewater” being fought over in the melee that invariably broke out during the public feasts.<sup>25</sup> From the expense account for the circumcision-feast held in 1539 for Süleyman I’s two sons, Cihangir and Bayezid, we know that 53 kinds of dessert were served at 20 tables at the end of the meal.<sup>26</sup>

After a wedding celebration at the Topkapı Palace the sultan’s Halberdier guardsmen would serve the guests sherbet and incense. From the reign of Süleyman I until 1826, it was the custom for the sultan to have baklava distributed to all the military garrisons in the city on the 15th day of Ramadan. After performing the Bairam prayer on the first day after the month of fasting was over, banquets were held for the sultan in the Enderun, for the viziers at the Tower of Justice, and for the janissaries in the Second Courtyard. In the month of Muharram each year, the Topkapı kitchens produced vast quantities of the pudding called *aşure* that was distributed to all the palace’s denizens.<sup>27</sup> Every year the chief physician oversaw the preparation of a sweet, spicy confection called *nevruzziye* that was distributed on the day of the vernal equinox (*nevruz*) to the sultan, the members of his family, the grand vizier, and other members of court.<sup>28</sup> After the Dolmabahçe Palace became the sultans’ official residence early in the 19th century, it became the practice for them to make a formal visit to the Chamber of the Sacred Mantle in the Topkapı Palace on the fifteenth day of Ramadan and for them to break their fast there. The most prominent item on the menu on such occasions was a dish of eggs and onions and a cook who did a particularly good job of fixing it could hope to be selected by his sovereign to become the palace’s new pantry-master. In keeping with Ottoman-Islamic medical practice, diet was an important method of restoring and maintaining health. This had an impact on Ottoman cuisine in general and shows up in the palace books of account: chicken, chard, zucchini, sour grapes, lettuce, and spinach were regularly purchased for the palace infirmary. A book of expenditures from 1473 shows that five aspers’ worth of spinach was purchased every day for the palace’s sick.<sup>29</sup>

Specific sections of the kitchens were set aside in which the more ordinary occupants of the Topkapı Palace their meals. A document in the palace archives gives a list of the fare to be fed to these personnel in each of the four seasons. The items on the list, which is thought to date to the 16th century, are intended to be filling rather than ostentatious and include dishes such as a pudding of boiled wheat; a thick soup made with flour, butter, and sugar; noodles; and a meat-stuffed pasta. Some kind of soup was served in every season. Quite a few of these dishes were prepared with *kavurma-meat* that is first cooked in a small amount of water that boils away, leaving behind the rendered fat in which the meat is allowed to fry and brown.<sup>30</sup>

According to the records, there were two mealtimes at the Topkapı Palace: the first was at midmorning and the second at evening before it grew dark. Meals were taken sitting cross-legged or kneeling on the ground or floor from tables in the form of large trays set on low supports. Hands were washed before and after eating over a basin into which water was poured from a ewer and then dried on towels. A cloth called *makrama* served as a napkin. Each diner might have one

of his own but it was common, especially at lower-ranking tables, for there to be a long *makrama* encircling the tray and each diner used the section in front of him. There were no individual place settings: instead, a large bowl or dish containing each course was placed one by one in the center of the tray and everyone around the table ate from that. The only eating utensils were spoons, which were used for liquids or near-liquids and were of different shapes and sizes according to what was being eaten. Everything else was plucked from the common dish using the three fingers and the thumb of your right hand. Water was not drunk with meals so there were no pitchers of water or glasses or cups to drink it from on the table. At the end of a meal, a sherbet or the cold juice of a stewed fruit (often with a piece or two of fruit in it) did service as a beverage. Meals were generally finished off with a cup of Turkish coffee followed by rosewater and incense. Looking now at the forms of the Chinese porcelains that make up the Topkapı collection in light of the food and eating habits discussed above, one can make reasonably accurate guesses about how most of these wares must have been used and why they were acquired by the palace. The ewers and basins for example could have been used to perform ritual ablutions before prayer but it’s equally likely that they were held by servants as diners washed their hands before and after a meal. The large dishes and bowls were intended to contain a single course that would be set in the middle of a low circular table around which at least three or four people were sitting cross-legged or kneeling on the ground or floor. These wares, which were specifically produced for Islamic countries where the custom of several people eating from a common dish prevailed, are broad and shallow so that people could easily extract their food from them. They would have been used to serve meat and vegetable stews, pilafs, fruit, and halvah. The smaller bowls were probably used for soup, stewed fruit, yogurt, sherbet, and so on. The rosewater flask and incense burner sets were almost certainly intended to satisfy a distinctly Ottoman taste for these fragrant substances. According to Thevenot:

*Turks will offer their visitors a cup of coffee first, followed by sherbet and then rosewater... It is believed that the proffering of these three things is a mark of great courtesy.*<sup>31</sup>

The large numbers of coffee cups, rosewater flasks, and incense burners in the Topkapı porcelain collections and in other collections as well attest to the widespread consumption of those three things. Interestingly, there is no specific incense burner form in Chinese porcelains: instead, jars, vases, and other forms were converted into burners by Ottoman craftsmen with the addition of perforated metal lids and other accessories. The variety of sizes and forms observed in the porcelain cups suggests that they were not all used for coffee. On the basis of some archive documents we know that one group of forms resembling a small bowl without a handle was used for sherbet.

In the Topkapı collection there is a blue-and-white dish in which the Arabic phrase for “chicken kebab” has been inscribed in ink on the underside. Another dish is inscribed with the word *narenciye*, which means “orange” or “citrus fruit”.<sup>32</sup> These are rare instances of vessels being specifically labeled to indicate their functions. Some of the pages of a 16th or 17th century manuscript in the Sadberk Hanım Museum library contain recipes for making various foods, sweets, pickles, and wine. In the recipes for pickled zucchini, turnips, and mint, the author recommends that the pickles be put up in “a martabani”.<sup>33</sup> The form to which the author refers must be that of the celadon jars in the Topkapı collection. Celadons, being well fired and glazed, would naturally have been preferred for the storage

of foods like pickles and jams that were not consumed all at once and had to be kept for a long time. Still other documents in the palace archives contain references to porcelains doing service as “spring-water bowls and dishes”, “rosewater ewers”, “coffee ewers”, “tea ewers”, “sherbet cups”, “fruit bowls”, “rose jam dishes”, “lamb dishes”, and “yogurt bowls”. There are a few forms in the Topkapı porcelain collection whose functions are a bit of a mystery. A good case in point is the bottle of the type called *kendi*. Vessels of this form, which is of Indian origin, were produced frequently in China but exactly what use the Ottomans put them to is unclear. As for the garden seats, a distinctly Chinese form, the Ottomans must have been perplexed by them. A celadon garden seat in the Topkapı collection appears to have gone unused. In the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art on the other hand, a blue-and-white porcelain garden seat was transformed into an incense burner with the addition of metal fittings.

#### EXAMPLES OF MODIFICATION AND REPAIR

The practice of encrusting porcelains with gems is unique to Ottoman art. Such objects were intended solely for the use of the sovereign and most likely would not have been let out of the palace. The great majority of jeweled porcelains in the Topkapı collection date from between 1550 and 1650, when this art was at its peak. The earliest known reference to jeweled porcelains in the archives appears in a register that covers the years 1534-1536. In the Topkapı collection there are 273 pieces that have been given this treatment. Most of the jeweled porcelains are small-sized objects that are easy to carry and safeguard. The mounts for the stones used for this decoration were fashioned from small gold or gilded silver plaques that were set into shallow depressions hollowed into the surface of the object being worked on. These mounts were then set with precious or semiprecious stones. The most popular were rubies and emeralds but turquoise, rock crystal, and agate or even pearls and coral were used. The designs are mostly floral branches, geometric patterns, and decorative medallions. Shallow grooves cut into the surface between the mounts were filled with gold wire or gold leaf to create a compositional effect. Because of the inlaying technique that was used however, quite a few of these porcelains’ gems have unfortunately fallen off and been lost.

Within the group of jeweled porcelains, the technique was applied most successfully to objects that were plain white. Gems were also added to blue-and-white and polychrome wares albeit with markedly less success because these objects already had decorative patterns of their own. Sometimes however the artisan took an existing pattern as the basis for his work: a blue-and-white Chinese porcelain writing-set is a good example. When handled well, the results of the artisan’s work could be impressive indeed as Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha’s gift of a “Chinese porcelain bowl decorated with gems, as beautiful and delicate as a sip of water” that we mentioned above shows.<sup>34</sup> Objects with metal fittings that have been added make up an important group in the Topkapı Palace collection. These fittings, which are generally fashioned from gold, silver, gilded silver, tombac, or brass, were added for a number of reasons. In the 16th and 17th centuries the additions were generally made in order to repair fractures or to alter a vessel’s function. In the 18th century however there is an increasingly greater use of metal fixtures for purely decorative purposes. Parts of vessels such as rims, necks, and spouts that were prone to breaking were often repaired by patching them over with decorative plates of precious metal. Sometimes alien Chinese bowl, bottle, and vase forms were transformed into Ottoman-appealing incense burners, ewers, candy-dishes, and flasks with the addition of

metal parts. In archive documents we come across the terms *meksur* (fractured) and *şikest* (injured) applied to porcelains. These and other references make it clear that damaged porcelains were not just tossed into the rubbish but continued to be used, though of course they were less valuable. Indeed in the Topkapı Palace library there is even a list of set prices for damaged porcelains. For example if a sound cup was worth 42 aspers, then the same cup with a single crack was worth 14 and if there were two cracks, the price dropped to 10. An archive document from the reign of Selim III (1789-1807) shows that if porcelains released from the Treasury on loan suffered damage, an official memorandum to this effect was drawn up and signed when the items were returned. According to this particular document “three bowls, one desert dish, and one cup” were broken. According to the 17th century traveler and geographer Evliya Celebi, there were in Istanbul in his day twenty-five craftsmen skilled in repairing damaged porcelains and there were ten workshops that engaged in the business of mending broken pieces.<sup>35</sup> In the Topkapı collection there are quite a few examples of porcelains that have been mended by drilling small holes on either side of a fracture and then lacing them together with copper wire.

#### CHINESE PORCELAINS IN USE OUTSIDE THE PALACE

In the main, porcelains were used outside the palace in pretty much the same ways as we have seen so far. In the homes of the wealthy and powerful, porcelains served as the tokens of wealth and power. The most important documents indicating the extent of porcelain use outside the palace are unquestionably the *muhallefat* registers. The objects referred to are all but identical to the ones in use in the palace. Considered as a whole, these registers imply that more than 20,000 porcelain articles were sequestered by the court over the centuries when the *muhallefat* system was in effect. That figure may seem surprising but it should be kept in mind that it includes many objects that were sold with the proceeds going into the Treasury; furthermore, there was also a supply of objects that remained outside the palace, moving through court circles. One important reason why porcelains were released from the palace was their inclusion in the trousseaus of the sultans’ daughters. Trousseau registers contain frequent references to porcelains along with other items. The procession in which the items of the bridal trousseau were carried to the bride’s new home was, in the course of time, transformed into a splendid parade and a ceremony in which the leading members of court took part. Among the trousseau registers in the archives are those of the princesses Saliha, Ayşe, and Zeynep from 1728. Among the articles given to the princesses were porcelain bowls, cups, dishes, and incense burners. A book dealing with Ottoman customs, ceremonies, terms, and social life by a 19th century author named Abdülaziz Bey tells us:

*When the daughters of the great are dispatched to another household as brides there to be married, included in their trousseaus are thirty precious celadon and porcelain dishes to be used for such foods as lamb and savory pastries and in which to serve puddings and other sweets at table.*<sup>36</sup>

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who came to Istanbul in 1716 as the wife of the British ambassador, describes a banquet given in honor of Lady Hafize, a favorite of Prince Mustafa, that makes it clear that the objects in use in mansions suffered nothing by comparison with those of the palace:

Sherbet was served in vessels of Chinese porcelain but the lids and the saucers of the cups were of pure gold. After the meal, cloths resembling the elegant napkins that we could but scarcely bring ourselves to use then were brought in along with water in a golden basin with which we washed our hands. After this, coffee was served in porcelain cups set in holders of gold.

37

Suraiya Faroqhi, writing about Ottoman culture and everyday life, tells us that ordinary coffee cups were made from Kutahya pottery while the rich used cups of Chinese porcelain.<sup>38</sup>

Abdülaziz Bey cites this quatrain as an example of those recited by the drummers who wake people up before daybreak during Ramadan:

*Tesbihimin ucu mercan*      *The head of my prayer-beads is coral*

*Yetişmedi nice bir can*      *So many souls have not survived*

*Efendim kahve içiyor*      *My master is drinking his coffee*

*Elinde fağfuri fincan.*      *Holding a porcelain cup.*

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## THE CHINESE PORCELAINS IN TOPKAPI SARAYI

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Topkapi Sarayi houses one of the finest and largest collections of Chinese ceramics in the world – in fact, the only comprehensive historical collection of Chinese porcelain outside China. It begins with the period of Mongol domination throughout Asia, which predates the foundation of the Ottoman Empire, and ends with the demise of imperial China, which roughly coincides with the waning of Ottoman power. Its more than 10,000 ceramic vessels thus comprise wares from three Chinese dynasties: the Yuan (1279–1368), the Ming (1368–1644) and the Qing (1644–1911). These vessels were not necessarily made for Turkey in particular, but for the Near and Middle Eastern region in general, and similar items can also be found in Iran, Syria and other Arab countries but in lesser significant quantities. Only one other historic collection is comparable, although it is less than a 10th of its size, being the collection donated in 1611 by the Safavid Shah Abbas I (r. 1587–1629) to the dynasty's ancestral shrine at Ardabil in Iran, which is today preserved in the National Museum of Iran, Tehran.

The Topkapi Sarayi collection is therefore of unique importance, representing 600 years of China's ceramic production, dating from about 1300 to 1900. Its importance had been recognised already at the beginning of the 20th century, when the German scholar Ernst Zimmermann published a first selection of items. In 1935–6, Topkapi Sarayi participated in a ground-breaking international exhibition of Chinese art at the Royal Academy of Arts in London, where some of its Chinese ceramics were shown for the first and so far only time,

side-by-side with ceramics from the imperial palace in Beijing. At that time the general knowledge of Chinese ceramics was, however, still rudimentary. The earliest blue-and-white from the Yuan dynasty, for example, had been seen only rarely, and was not yet recognised for what it is. The outstanding quality of the unique group of Yuan porcelains in Topkapi Sarayi was first recognised by John Alexander Pope, who published a monograph about it in 1952. Thereafter, Japanese scholars presented further selections from the collection in two illustrated accounts. The catalogue raisonné of the complete collection was begun in the late 1970s and was published in London in 1986.

Small selections of the collection have since been shown in international exhibitions, for example in Japan 1990 and 1995, in South Korea in 2007, and in Sweden in 2008. A historic visit to Topkapi Sarayi by a number of major Chinese scholars specialised in the field of Chinese ceramics also resulted in a commemorative publication. Today, the collection forms a cornerstone of research into Chinese export porcelain, and provides one of the main points of reference for the finest wares of the imperial kilns of the early Ming dynasty.

What is unique about this assembly of Chinese ceramics – besides its enormous quantity – is its remarkably wide range of different vessel types, styles and designs. This breadth is due largely to the Ottoman method of acquisition. The largest part of the collection was not acquired through direct trade or official exchanges, but rather entered the Topkapi Sarayi collection indirectly, via the private col-

lections of Ottoman officials. The system of muhalledat, which gave the sultan the right to appropriate items belonging to his subjects upon their death, assured the assemblage of the widest possible range of wares. The collection was therefore not hampered by the limitations of personal taste – like most royal collections – nor by the restricted availability of objects at any one place; instead it represents the full repertoire of Chinese ceramics available throughout the vast geographic region of the Ottoman Empire. It thus provides a virtually complete overview of what was sent from China to the Western part of Asia in the period concerned, and this region received the best that was available to buy. Exported from China were basically two types of ware, both made in south-eastern China in manufacturing with easy access to the international ports: celadon wares with soft-green glazes from Longquan in the Zhejiang province; and white porcelains, either monochrome glazed or painted in blue or in a combination of colours, from Jingdezhen in the Jiangxi province.

#### Celadon Wares

The more than 1,350 celadon wares in Topkapi Sarayi were nearly all made in the 14th and 15th centuries in and around Longquan county in Zhejiang, where hundreds of kilns of gigantic dimensions supplied a world-wide demand. Longquan celadons have a light grey to white body that turns brick-red when fired, and a semi-translucent yellowish or bluish-green glaze, that was applied in several layers. They can equally be designated as stoneware or as porcelain, since they are made of the porcelain raw material, but are fired at slightly lower temperatures (1,280° C or less, as against 1,300° C or more), and are coarser and usually darker in their body material than fine white porcelains. They are, however, just as hard, dense and resistant as porcelain, and therefore are equally pleasant, practical and hygienic to use.

These were not the only reasons why celadon wares were popular in Turkey and throughout the Near and Middle East. The ware had also acquired a magic reputation, with a common belief that celadon could detect the presence of poison in any food placed upon it. Historical records tell us that celadon breaks or sweats when it comes into contact with a deadly concoction. The origins of this belief have not yet been discovered, nor has it been possible to find any basis behind it; it nevertheless persisted, and one can find the story still being related seriously even today.

Among the earliest pieces in Topkapi Sarayi are a couple of bowls carved with lotus petals on the outside, which are known as “lotus bowls”. Such bowls were very popular throughout Asia and were made over a long period of time. The Istanbul examples are small in size and have the bluish tinge to the glaze that was highly coveted as a characteristic of the preceding Song dynasty (960–1279), but is otherwise rarely seen on celadons in this collection; nonetheless they probably still date from the late 13th century.

Most of the other celadon wares in the collection are much larger in size and more yellowish or olive-green in tone. In

the Near and Middle East size was manifestly of greater importance than the exact shade of the glaze. Large dishes and bowls, which make up the greatest number of celadons in the Topkapi Sarayi collection, were made for eating and entertaining habits quite different from those characteristic of China. In China, the table was set with a large assortment of small cups, bowls and plates; while communal meals in Turkey, Persia, Syria and their neighbouring countries required huge bowls and dishes that were piled high with food. For serving, metal covers were locally manufactured to match the Chinese ceramics. The growing demand in numbers due to the expanding export trade and the concurrent request for increased sizes necessitated the construction of larger kilns. To create the bluish-green glazes preferred in the Song, the atmosphere in the kiln needed to be precisely monitored; but the larger the kiln, the more difficult it was to control the firing. For this reason, Chinese potters concentrated their efforts on the successful firing of large vessels without cracks or warping, rather than aiming for a particular glaze tone, as they had done before.

Other than this, shapes and designs were not specially geared for foreign customers. Large Chinese wine storage jars, temple vases or barrel-shaped garden seats were in the Ottoman context most likely not used in the way originally intended; Chinese wine ewers, for example, would in Turkey probably have served as water jugs for washing hands during meals. Celadon decoration consists mostly of carved or moulded floral designs and some abstract patterns. Chinese designs – even abstract geometric patterns – tend to be based on the freely drawn strokes of the Chinese brush, and are not following the dictate of pen, ruler and compass, and therefore do not have the geometric clarity or precision of Turkish or Persian ornamentation.

For a short time in the late 14th and early 15th century Longquan celadons echoed the contemporary production of blue-and-white porcelain at the imperial Jingdezhen kilns of the Jiangxi province, where elaborate painterly designs had been developed, directly inspired by Chinese ink painting. During the late Hongwu (1368–98), Yongle (1403–24) and early Xuande (1426–35) reigns, China’s imperial house appears to have fully controlled the production and distribution of high-quality ceramics. This is the period in which Chinese potters created arguably the finest and most imaginative ceramics ever, artefacts which remain among the most admired today. Many of these pieces, made under supervision of the imperial court, ended up in Istanbul, and Topkapi Sarayi preserved the largest collection of these imperial Longquan wares in the world.

Before the Istanbul collection of celadons was fully published, the study of Longquan ceramics concentrated on the wares of the Song dynasty. Today, the high quality of the kilns’ later production is unquestioned and has become a topic of interest also for Chinese researchers. The styles of the Yuan period, with their large, bold and well-conceived shapes and swiftly sketched, dashing designs, are remarkably strong and more adventurous in concept than those of their predecessors.

The imperial wares of the Ming are among the kilns’ most elegant products on account of their exacting craftsmanship and exquisite engraving. Even if the non-imperial wares of the Ming no longer display the same degree of quality and finesse, they have nevertheless remained popular throughout Asia until modern times. In fact, a recent publication of the National Palace Museum, Taiwan, has documented the remarkable similarity of the Ming dynasty Longquan celadon wares – not only imperial but also non-imperial – preserved there from the imperial Chinese collection with those kept in Topkapi Sarayi.

#### Blue-and-white porcelains

When we think of Chinese ceramics today, it is perhaps the blue-and-white porcelains that first come to mind. Yet in China, it took nearly a century after they were first developed for such wares to be fully accepted at court. The south-Chinese kilns of Jingdezhen in the Jiangxi province, just south of the Yangzi River, had been making plain white porcelains for centuries before they started painting their wares in cobalt blue. Chinese porcelain was admired the world over for its bright, clean, smooth and sparkling surface, and for its hardness, durability and density. No other country was able to supply any comparable product at the time. In its plain white form, however, the porcelain did not appeal to Near or Middle Eastern tastes. In western Asia, ceramics had long been painted in bright colours, including cobalt blue; but the ceramics thus decorated were earthenware, which were fired at much lower temperatures and were therefore relatively soft, permeable and breakable. It is possible that Persian traders were responsible for introducing cobalt to Chinese kilns in an attempt to combine the best of both worlds: fine Chinese porcelain and attractive Persian colours. The cobalt-laden pigment first used on Jingdezhen porcelain in the Yuan dynasty probably came from Persian ores.

From the moment of its inception in the early 14th century, Chinese blue-and-white porcelain became one of the most sought-after commodities in the world. The striking large blue-and-white dishes, bowls, vases and jars of this period in the Topkapi Sarayi collection painted in a deep cobalt-blue are among the finest pieces produced in China during this period; but their bold and colourful appearance was new and thus alien to the Chinese tastes of the day, which still preferred the austere simplicity of Song dynasty monochrome stoneware. China’s craftsmen, too, had to adjust and to invent a completely new form of decoration for this new ware; the rich variety of motifs and the assured style they so quickly displayed are remarkable. Although they borrowed certain elements and adopted the dense horror-vacui manner of decoration from the Middle East, they did not copy any existing designs, but developed their own distinctive style – a style that was to influence potters all over Asia.

The Yuan dynasty, when the Mongols ruled over China, was an international period when many foreigners lived and worked in China, even as government officials. South-Chinese cities had large Muslim communities, and the Jingdezhen workshops are known to have occasionally been under the control

of Muslim supervisors. The geometric designs of much Yuan blue-and-white could therefore easily have been inspired directly by Near or Middle Eastern patterns, perhaps transmitted through Quran illuminations. Vessels painted with purely Chinese motifs – south-Chinese garden scenes, dragons, auspicious combinations of plants such as bamboo, prunus and pine (the so-called “Three Friends of Winter”) – were equally composed in an un-Chinese manner, with the motifs densely clustered in panels and bands and combined with decorative borders that leave no part of the vessel surface blank.

Yuan blue-and-white was made for only a short period of time from the 1320s to the 1360s. It was exported throughout Asia and reached as far west as the East coast of Africa. The only important collections preserved today are those in Topkapi Sarayi and those in the National Museum of Iran, Tehran, from the Ardabil Shrine. Syria yielded many individual pieces, as well as sherds from excavation sites, but no coherent group; major sherd finds have also been made in Delhi, India, and in the Red Sea. Yuan blue-and-white was also exported to Southeast Asia, but there the majority was of a different style, with many smaller and more sketchily painted vessels. Even though China’s traditional connoisseurs did not quickly warm to the new blue-and-white ceramic style, it nevertheless had a market in China, too.

The most famous pieces of Yuan blue-and-white are two vases from the Sir Percival David Collection in the British Museum, London, which were made for a temple near Jingdezhen and are inscribed with a date equivalent to 1351. In their overall quality and style they closely match the Yuan blue-and-white wares in Topkapi Sarayi, where all their decorative elements appear similarly on vessels of different shape. The same commercial manufacturing on the outskirts of Jingdezhen, at Hutian or Luomaqiao, made wares both for Chinese and foreign customers. The imperial kilns in the centre of Jingdezhen also began to make blue-and-white porcelain in the Yuan dynasty, but here



production appears to have been insignificant in quantity and more modest in quality.

With the beginning of the Ming dynasty, a new chapter began for Jingdezhen's porcelain industry as all production of blue-and-white porcelain became centralised. The fine wares we know from this period were all made by kilns under official control at Zhushan, the imperial manufactory in the centre of Jingdezhen. At the same time, commercial kilns appear to have ceased to produce anything significant for some time. With this change in the kilns' organisation blue-and-white porcelain adopted a new style. The vessels became more uniform in overall appearance, both in terms of material and decoration. With stricter supervision of the production process it became possible to manufacture virtually identical pieces. Yet Jingdezhen's output at first appears to have been reduced in number. The founder of the Ming, the Hongwu Emperor, effected a radical reversal of Mongol policies, strictly controlling and thus discouraging international trade. Hongwu blue-and-white tends to be of a more regular, sedate style and is painted in a much paler blue – probably due to the use of local cobalt, as the imported variety was no longer easily available. The Hongwu period was, however, the prelude to the most fruitful era for the production of Chinese blue-and-white: the Yongle reign.

In the Yongle period, the Jingdezhen artisans' craftsmanship reached a high point, and their inspiration flourished. Like porcelains from the Hongwu reign, Yongle porcelains were made by the Jingdezhen imperial kilns under official control. They are magnificently potted (dishes can be up to 64 cm in diameter) and include some of the most imaginative and masterfully painted designs ever devised for Chinese blue-and-white. The most splendid items show classic motifs of Chinese ink painting such as "bird-and-flower" compositions, garden scenes and misty mountainous landscape views. Even more formal styles of decoration, such as the dragon and phoenix designs that symbolise the emperor and empress, are superbly rendered. Yet it seems that the court at that time was still more interested in monochrome white than in blue-and-white wares. In spite of their distinctly Chinese decoration – or perhaps because of their exotic attraction – these exquisite blue-and-white porcelains were largely exported and are today mainly preserved in Istanbul and Tehran. They appear to have been made for official exchange or tribute trade, or to be given away as official gifts. The gigantic maritime expeditions led by the eunuch Zheng He (1371–1435) may have been the main, if not only, channel for the distribution of Chinese porcelains at that time. Outside the Istanbul and Tehran collections, even in the palace museums of Taipei and Beijing, which hold the best part of

the former imperial Chinese collection, this type of Yongle porcelain – among the grandest of all Chinese wares – is only scarcely represented.

Paradoxically, the contrary appears to be true for Chinese porcelains made in the shapes of Syrian or Persian metalwork or glass. Although a few such pieces came to Istanbul and Tehran, the bulk appears to have entered the palace collection in Beijing. It has been suggested that such pieces were made for the use of Muslim eunuchs at court, but this has yet to be confirmed.

A distinct imperial taste for blue-and-white porcelain developed in the Chinese court only in the Xuande period, about 100 years after the wares had first been conceived. Once this taste was awakened, however, the court completely monopolised the output of the imperial kilns. Their products changed again in style, becoming more intimate in scale and more delicate in execution, and were inscribed with the imperial reign mark. Such pieces were no longer available abroad, or even within China, outside the palace.

Yet demand for blue-and-white continued. Kilns on the periphery of Jingdezhen, which had made the best blue-and-white during the Yuan dynasty, were ready to fill the gap and step up their production once more. At least from the "interregnum" period onwards (1436–64, comprising the three short and politically unstable reigns of Zhengtong, Jingtai and Tianshun) and throughout the reigns of Chenghua (1465–87), Hongzhi (1488–1505) and Zhengde (1506–21) two parallel lines of production were turned out by Jingdezhen kilns: one reserved for the court and the other for anyone else who could afford it. During

this period the two wares displayed a clear difference in quality: the non-official production is not necessarily flawless in material, nor precise in its potting and painting, yet it shows more freedom and individuality, and its designs are less repetitive since they did not have to follow a strict formula. The pieces tend to be sturdily potted and densely covered with painted decoration – largely floral but also depicting animals, birds and fish, as well as abstract patterns. There are also some imaginative touches, for example freely painted sketches added to the base of dishes, and there are unusual shapes whose purpose is still unclear.

At the beginning of the 16th century, some pieces were again being made especially for Muslim customers. This time we find not only Middle Eastern forms reproduced in porcelain, but even Arabic inscriptions, applied as part of the decoration. The porcelain painters were almost certainly Chinese. Being unfamiliar with Arabic script; the inscriptions are therefore not always easy to decipher, but usually consist of verses from the Quran. Some of these porcelains reached the Near



and Middle East, and four such pieces of the Zhengde period are preserved in Topkapi Sarayi, two of them inscribed with the imperial reign mark which indicates production in the imperial kilns. A large proportion, however, remained in China, and many examples from the imperial collection are now preserved in Beijing and Taipei.

Towards the end of the Ming period there was a tendency towards convergence between the official and non-official production of blue-and-white porcelains: as the strict quality control and the secrecy surrounding the imperial production decreased, the quality of non-imperial porcelains increased. Reign marks written in a lesser calligraphy or a non-official form can be found on some wares that have quite patently been made for export, and examples from the Jiajing (1522–66) and Wanli (1573–1620) reigns can be found in the Topkapi Sarayi collection. At the same time, unmarked pieces may contain designs – such as five-clawed dragons – previously reserved for imperial use. Even genuine imperial pieces must have become available on the free market from time to time.

From the late Ming dynasty onwards, Europe became a more and more important market for Chinese porcelain. In the 16th century, special porcelains were being commissioned by the Portuguese, in the 17th century by the Dutch, and thereafter by the British and other Western nations. Turkey, being situated en route to these markets, received its share also of these wares that had been intended for clients further west. Among the earliest and rarest pieces with European designs are porcelains with Portuguese inscriptions, emblems, names and dates, one example of which can be found in the Istanbul collection, inscribed with the name of a Portuguese governor of Malacca, Pedro da Faria, and dated 1541.

In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, all countries that could be reached by sea were inundated with a type of Chinese export porcelain that has become known as "Kraak". This term, derived from the Dutch word for the ships that transported Chinese porcelain to Europe, "carracks", is generally used to refer to thinly potted blue-and-white porcelains whose surface is subdivided into numerous segments, borders and panels that are densely filled with designs. This partitioning of the available space into smaller units helped to create lavish ornamentation on a large scale. Decoration could be applied in a kind of production line by a series of specialised painters rather than requiring the craftsmanship of a single artist, and thus made possible an enormous output.

In the late Ming dynasty the demand was indeed such that another south-eastern kiln centre, the Zhangzhou in Fujian province, stepped in to boost the supply. The wares made there are known by the name of their main shipping port, Shantou, in the Guangdong province, or rather by an earlier transcription of the name, where it is spelled "Swatow". Swatow wares were modelled on Jingdezhen porcelains and look superficially similar, but are cruder in manufacture and sketchier in their painting. They employ a more greyish porcelain and a somewhat duller cobalt blue, and are fired standing on coarse sand which tends to adhere to their bases.

During the Qing dynasty, blue-and-white export porcelain was made in increasing quantities but decreasing quality. Having been an expensive luxury in the Yuan and early Ming periods, it had become affordable tableware in the late Ming; while in the Qing its allure had been overtaken by polychrome wares. Among its substantial holdings the Topkapi Sarayi collection contains also some imperial wares made for the Qing court, as well as vessels especially designed for export to the Near or Middle East.

#### Polychrome and Monochrome Porcelains

The first porcelain made at Jingdezhen was monochrome white, white wares appearing to have been the favourites of the Mongol emperors during the Yuan dynasty. At that time, the potters had already begun to use colour. The best pigments are those that can withstand the high temperatures necessary for firing porcelain and can be fired on at the same time as the porcelain itself. They can either be applied under the glaze for painted decoration, or mixed into the glaze for monochrome colour; in either case they are permanent. The palette of such high-fired colours is, however, very limited: iron brown was probably not deemed attractive enough and was rarely employed; copper red was difficult to control in the firing, which also limited its use; only cobalt blue was used successfully in great quantities. More variation is provided by "enamels," which are applied onto the fully glazed and fired, blank porcelain vessel and affixed in a second firing at a lower temperature. Since they are not secured by glaze, however, they are prone to scratching and abrasion. Various enamel colours were already in use at Jingdezhen in the 14th century, but only in the later 15th century were they utilised more regularly.

From the Yuan dynasty, only about a dozen pieces are preserved with a cobalt-blue glaze and applied designs reserved in white. One of the largest and most ambitious in its decoration is a dish in Topkapi Sarayi, which is unique in its detailed design. In the early Ming period, colour (other than underglaze cobalt-blue painting) was still rare on Chinese porcelains. In the Yongle period a superb variation of white porcelain was devised that alas did not withstand the test of time in all their splendour: pieces decorated in gold. They were painted with an adhesive substance to which gold leaf was applied, with designs similar to those used for blue-and-white. The gold has long vanished, but a "ghost" of the erstwhile decoration still remains in form of traces of the glue.

Proper polychrome wares painted in red, green and yellow over the glaze, sometimes in combination with underglaze cobalt blue, were exported as early as the mid-Ming period, but not in large numbers. In the late Ming, pieces painted in polychrome enamels or covered with polychrome or monochrome glazes offered a great variety of colour schemes. Cobalt blue, iron brown and red, green, yellow, turquoise and aubergine enamels were used at Jingdezhen in different combinations or on their own, often together with gold, the most popular style being known as wucai ("five colours"). Such coloured decoration was also copied by the Swatow kilns.

One small group of monochrome wares from the mid- to late-Ming period in the Istanbul collection deserves particular mention. A few white and yellow-glazed bowls and dishes of the most exquisite quality are inscribed with the imperial reign marks of the Hongzhi, Zhengde and Jiajing Emperors. The marks are written in official calligraphy and have the official format, which was not used on non-imperial wares, and the “imperial yellow,” furthermore, was a colour reserved for the use of the court. Such vessels were not available on the market, and were either officially bestowed or secretly sold. Unfortunately, at the present time we have no indication of their history. Similar pieces from the Ardabil Shrine, the ancestral shrine of the Safavid dynasty, are preserved in Iran: one such bowl is incised with the name of the Indian Shah Jahangir (r. 1605-27); and a fragment of a yellow bowl was even excavated from a convent in Coimbra, Portugal, that had been built with royal patronage and was abandoned in 1677. Only at the end of the Ming, when the Chinese emperors were weak and uninterested in the imperial kilns, could yellow be used more freely, and thus started to make an appearance on non-official wares. In these, however, the yellow glaze is often applied directly to the fired but unglazed body, and is therefore less sparkling. Genuine “imperial yellow” was applied over the transparent porcelain glaze, which makes the resulting colour much more brilliant.

If polychrome wares were still the exception during the Ming dynasty, they became the rule under the Qing emperors, and different colour schemes successively passed in and out of fashion. The most popular palette during the Kangxi period (1662–1722) was a simplified version of the Ming wucai palette, with underglaze blue omitted and sometimes replaced by small touches of a new overglaze-blue enamel, a colour scheme that in the West became known by the French term “famille verte”. Different tones of green are combined with red, yellow, aubergine, blue, black and gold, all applied over the glaze. It was used on its own, or for the decoration of panels reserved on a blue ground. The cobalt blue used for this style was blown onto the porcelain surface through a tube covered with gauze, which created a sprinkled effect known as “powder blue”. Related to the famille verte in date and style are pieces decorated in red and gold only, which were popular export porcelains. A Japanese colour combination developed by the Arita kilns, using underglaze blue and overglaze red and gold, was also copied in China, becoming known by the name of the main port from which Arita wares were shipped, Imari.

At the very end of the Kangxi period, additional enamel colours were introduced to China by European Jesuits working for the court at Beijing, and were quickly adopted also by the Jingdezhen manufactories in southern China. Most important for transforming the appearance of Chinese porcelain were a rose-pink, which added a softer, more feminine touch to the colour scheme; and an opaque white, which could be mixed with other colours to create more pastel tones. This enlarged immensely the available range of enamel tones, and the new colour combination became known as the “famille rose”. This

palette remained the preferred porcelain style throughout the 18th century, that is, during the reigns of the Yongzheng (1723-35) and Qianlong (1736-95) Emperors. Although it was mainly used on its own, combinations with blue or coffee-brown glazes were also produced.

Several sets made for the Middle Eastern market do not follow these Chinese colour schemes so strictly. One of the most unusual is a service peculiar to Topkapi Sarayı, which appears to have been made especially for the Ottoman court. It consists of a series of dishes, covered bowls, cups and tureens that are decorated with crescent moons and stars in gold on a night-blue ground. Other decorative elements include reserved panels of Arabic writing and bands of Arabic script in blue enamel and gold, Chinese flower motifs in gold and floral borders in red, green and gold.

#### **Ottoman Jewels, Metal Fixtures, Repairs and Markings**

Some porcelains in the Topkapi Sarayı collection were apparently too plain for Ottoman tastes in their original form. Over 250 pieces in the collection today were embellished with emeralds and rubies set in flower-shaped gold or gilt-metal mounts. Most of the inlay work was done in the late 16th and early 17th centuries on roughly contemporary porcelains with little or no decoration. The same kind of encrustation with jewels was also practiced on other artefacts made of gold, jade or rock crystal. This treatment suggests that porcelain was ranked equal to precious materials such as these.

In addition to bejewelling, Chinese porcelains were also embellished with gold and other metal fixtures. Most of these had a practical use: some served as stoppers or covers; others adapted a vessel for use not originally intended; still others were applied to rescue a broken piece.

Many pieces are marked with drilled dots or other signs. As these also occur on wares from the Ardabil Shrine, it is possible that they were added elsewhere, before arriving in Turkey. Some pieces are inscribed on the base in ink with simple markings for identification; while some plain white dishes and bowls from the 18th century are decorated with Arabic inscriptions that are finely engraved in decorative formations into the glaze.

All these Ottoman adaptations of Chinese porcelains are testimony to the fact that these wares were held in high regard and treated with great care, indelibly marked by their proud owners, deemed worthy of encrustation with valuable stones and adornment with precious metals, and far too valuable to be discarded when broken. The pieces in Topkapi Sarayı were assembled over many centuries, during which objects both entered and left the Ottoman palace. That over 10,000 pieces of this historic collection are still kept together today is of major importance for the study of Chinese ceramics, since the collection provides a unique and invaluable body of reference material for the dating and distribution of Chinese ceramics of the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties.



## THE INFLUENCE OF CHINESE PORCELAIN ON OTTOMAN ART

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Chinese porcelain exerted a pervasive effect on Ottoman art from at least the beginning of the fifteenth century. The influence was felt most obviously on pottery and tiles but also to a certain extent on other forms of Turkish art such as textiles, metalwork, inlaid woodwork, and the minor arts. But here one is less certain that the Chinese motifs are derived from the decoration on porcelain: they may rather have been transmitted through Chinese silk or even simply at second hand through designers working for the court studios (*nakkashane*) such as the famous *Shahkulu*, whose drawings show a strong taste for *chinoiserie* in which dragons and phoenixes swirl amongst serrated leaves, peonies, and lotuses. *Shahkulu* was one of the artists and craftsmen brought by Sultan Selim I from Tabriz in 1514 and he became head of the *nakkashane*. Tabriz played a leading role in supplying potters and craftsmen who not only worked in Turkey but also in Central Asia, Syria, and Palestine. Nor was it only Chinese blue and white porcelain which influenced Turkish designs for, as we shall see, celadon also played a part. As there are over ten thousand pieces of blue and white and a thousand more pieces of celadon at the *Topkapı* Palace, it is clear from whence came many of the designs. The palace collection was a kind of encyclopedia that was to be mined for ideas.

But Chinese motifs were around long before the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and the establishment of Istanbul as the final capital of the Ottoman Empire. It should be remembered that Bursa became the first capital in the early fourteenth century at almost the

precise moment that blue and white porcelain was developed at Jingdezhen in China. And more important, Bursa was at the end of the long caravan routes from China through Central Asia to the west—the ancient Silk Road—which would have also passed through Tabriz. It is therefore not unexpected to find Chinese influences in the carved stone ornament and glazed tiles of Bursa’s mosques. In the *Yeşil Cami* (Green Mosque, 1419-21) and the *Yeşil Türbe* (Green Tomb, 1421) the geometric patterns and the calligraphic panels are in the reigning international Islamic style that is to be found all the way from Bursa to Samarkand. But threading through the designs are elements which must surely be Chinese in origin. Similarly, in the Murad II mosque at Edirne, border tiles have thick and thin blue outlines, a typical feature of early blue and white Chinese porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1378) such as the dish. These are in vivid contrast to the panels of austere blue and white hexagons which they frame. The same floral patterns creep into the tiled spandrels and stalactites of the arches supporting the vault of the sultan’s loge, and lotuses and chrysanthemums accent the panels of the great tiled *mihrab*.

The tiles in the Green Mosque and Green Tomb in Bursa are in two techniques: either cut plain glazed tiles forming a mosaic or others with enamel-like decoration in the technique known as “*cuerva seca*”. In the latter, a very Persian (and Central Asian) technique, the individual colours are laid on a plain tile and separated by an outline (*cuerva seca*, literally “dry cord”) which prevents the colours from mixing with each other when the tile is

fired. It is no accident that this very eastern technique should turn up at Bursa, for the tiles themselves are signed and from the inscriptions on the *mihrab* we learn that they were “the work Masters of Tabriz”. Even the plain dark green or turquoise hexagons that line the wall have gold leaf designs of flowers surrounding a central flower, strongly reminiscent of the designs of early fifteenth-century blue and white Chinese dishes, of which examples exist in the *Topkapı* Palace collection. And the carved marble spandrels of the grand entrance to the mosque are peppered with spiked, lobed leaves which are synonymous with fourth-century blue and white. In the Green Tomb the extraordinary *mihrab* has a central design of hanging lamp, vase, and twin candlesticks against a luxuriant carpet of peonies, lotuses, and other flowers floating on a dense blue ground, the whole composition framed by an arch of cloud-collar design, this time with emphatic blue and turquoise outlines. On the elaborate catafalque of Mehmed I in the Green Mosque, the base carries a frieze of molded tiles of similar arched design, each one filled with a symmetrical spray of a large peony on a single vertical stem with a smaller flower above. One is reminded of a certain category of early fifteenth-century blue and white, where jars have similar friezes of floral arches. Indeed a famous painting in an Istanbul album depicts a wedding procession in a desert landscape with a cart full of blue and white of just this type. The painting has been ascribed to the early fifteenth century and was probably executed in Samarkand or Tabriz. Of course all of these elements may have been absorbed by the Tabrizi potters before they ever left their native city for there is increasing evidence for the export of Chinese blue and white overland during the Yuan and Ming dynasties as well as by the more traditional maritime routes. For instance, finds of *Yuan* blue-and-white at the Mongol capital Dadu (Beijing) have been supplemented by further evidence from the garrison city at Kharakhoto in the Gobi desert, destroyed by the Chinese in 1380, and at Karakorum and elsewhere in Mongolia. Further west, *Yuan* blue-and-white has been excavated at *Almalik* (Huo Cheng), the capital of the Chaghatai khanate, along with Persian inlaid metalwork and Islamic coins of the mid-14th century. During the period of Mongol supremacy the trail of Chinese porcelain can be traced across Central Asia as far as the Mediterranean to Turkey and even into Eastern Europe. In Syria, quantities of *Yuan* blue-and-white and celadon have been discovered; and more recently from excavations on the citadel in Aleppo, found side by side with their local Islamic imitations.

This leads to the question of exactly when blue and white porcelain entered the Ottoman Empire. If the evidence from Bursa is somewhat ambivalent, the establishment of a second capital at Edirne in the early fifteenth century provides us with the answer. This is to be found in the mosque of Murad II at Edirne. An inscription above the door gives the date of its foundation, 1435/6, and it was originally a *zaviye*, a part of a *Mevlevi* dervish complex. The building is T-shaped and its outstanding feature is its tiled interior. There is a great *mihrab*, dedicated to Murad II, and flanking it and on the side walls are hundreds of hexagonal tiles painted in blue and white and interspersed

with turquoise triangles. Above the frieze is a cresting of molded palmettes and it is these palmettes which present the first problem when it comes to the date of the tiles, for one can still see behind them the remains of at least two series of wall-paintings which must antedate their placing in the mosque. Another difficulty is the *mihrab*, which looks rather too large for the interior and the implication of this is that the tiles may well have been moved to their present location at a later date. On the other hand the date of their manufacture is still limited to the reign of Murad II (1421-44, 1446-51) by virtue of their dedication to him in the *mihrab* inscription. Furthermore the *mihrab* tiles are linked to the hexagonal tiles by one extraordinary innovation.

The *mihrab* follows closely the design of those in the Green Mosque and Green Tomb in Bursa and there is little reason to doubt that it is also the work of the expatriate band of potters from Tabriz, done after they had finished the two previous buildings. It is also executed in molded polychrome *cuerva seca*, except for two areas. Some of the framing tiles on the right side are in under-glaze blue and are clearly experimental. And the stalactite tiles of the *mihrab* niche are entirely executed in under-glaze cobalt blue and turquoise, as are the hexagonal tiles along the walls. Here it is the designs which are the clue. They are largely floral, with lotuses and carnations on slightly spiraling stems, and more particularly an abundance of spiked, lobed leaves which are almost the hallmark of Yuan porcelain. These curious leaves which appear to have no counterpart in nature presuppose the existence of examples of actual Yuan porcelain at Edirne, a couple of decades before the capture of Constantinople by Mehmed II in 1453. This is not surprising, for the Ottomans revelled in their country palaces at Edirne amongst the wooded glades on the banks of the Tunca river, which flows at the foot of the hill on which the Murad II mosque was erected. Nor even after the creation of their new capital at Istanbul did they entirely renounce the old one at Edirne, returning for long spells to hunt and amuse themselves, just as Bursa never lost its sanctity as the burial-place of the first rulers and their progeny.

The hexagonal tiles take the argument one step further, for besides occasionally including the spiked, lobed leaf as a subsidiary motif; they are in the main clearly based on early fifteenth century Chinese blue and white designs, particularly those dishes with a single flower at the centre surrounded by a wreath of other flowers on spiraling stems. Just as in the *mihrab* the artist-designers mingled Yuan and early Ming designs with abandon. They were not, after all, art historians and there was no reason for them to distinguish between the two dynasties. What is fascinating is the fact that among the hundreds of different designs, no two appear to be exactly alike. The effect is like being caught in a snow-storm and armed with a magnifying glass.

The hexagonal shape was well adapted to the circular designs and the combination of a central flower surrounded by six more flowers fitted perfectly. Unlike the Chinese prototypes,

the flowers on the tiles are all of one type, although these vary from tile to tile. What is also intriguing is that the potters never lost their sense of geometry and many of the tiles incorporate geometric designs in the more strictly Islamic canon. There is a strong sense of symmetry in the designs, as if the artists were unhappy with the informality of the Chinese patterns and wanted to tidy them up.

At the same time there are individual tiles which are completely original. One is painted with a cypress tree with three branches entangled with swirling trails of leaves. The cypress motif is probably based on a similar Chinese motif of plantains. The feathery trails of leaves derive from water-weeds, or even the tails of phoenixes. Another tile has lotuses with carefully shaded petals, with double outlines. These flowers are strongly reminiscent of the floral patterns on fifteenth century Vietnamese dishes, which are themselves interpretations of Chinese blue and white designs. There is a famous Vietnamese vase in the *Topkapı* Palace collection which is signed and dated 1450. There are also two other Vietnamese pieces, a *kendi* (spouted drinking vessel) and a broken bottle in the same collection, but of slightly later date. More important is a dish in the Sadberk Hanım Museum at Büyükdere in Istanbul, which has a heavily shaded peony at the centre, and lotuses with double outlines in the cavetto. More Vietnamese pieces have been found as far afield as Syria, East Africa, and at Julfar in Oman on the Persian Gulf, so along with Chinese porcelain they appear to have had a wide appeal.

Finally mention should be made of another Yuan feature which was copied on the Edirne tiles. This was the contrast of blue and white panels with others where the design is reserved in white on a blue ground. Also, in the *mihrab* they copied the frames of thick and thin outlines, so common in the lotus-panels of Yuan porcelain. The border tiles which frame the hexagonal tiles are a further extension of the designs on the *cuerva seca* border tiles at Bursa.

It has been suggested that the Edirne tiles may even have been brought from the Muradiye mosque at Bursa. This is an intriguing idea but it is more likely that they were made on the spot. It would have been an arduous undertaking to pack and transport the *mihrab* and hexagonal tiles such a distance. There is also the fact of what would appear to be the last work of this band of Tabrizi potters, which are two lunette panels in the courtyard of the Üç Şerefeli Mosque (1438-48) in Bursa. They are similar to those in the mosque, and also bear inscriptions dedicating them to Sultan Murad II. Although they are finely designed, they are imperfect in the sense that the potters accidentally forgot to colour parts of the continuous border. The two panels also repeat the blue and white/white on blue syndrome. The Chinese element is limited to the peony and lotus borders which frame the calligraphic panels. It would be tempting to think that after these tiles, the potters moved to Iznik where the band became the nucleus for the emerging ceramic industry there. But there is no connection, as technically the ware of early Iznik pottery is of quite different composition and the gap is too long-almost thirty years-between the Edirne tiles and the beginning of Iznik.

The creation of Istanbul as the final Ottoman capital, and Mehmed II's construction of the *Topkapı* Palace as the tangible evidence of Ottoman supremacy led to an explosion in all the arts, largely controlled by the *nakkashane*. This was fed by the recruitment of artists and artisans from all over the empire, not only from the east but also from the Balkans. Chinoiserie was one of the many elements blended into the Ottoman style and it was obviously in ceramics that its impact was most forceful. It is generally agreed that the Iznik industry got going around 1480, using a superior hard white frit ware incorporating locally mined white clay. Situated on the north shore of the lake of the same name, Iznik had been an important centre in Byzantine times and was strategically placed on the westward bound caravan routes across Anatolia. It already had a pottery industry, producing lead-glaze red earthenware, which itself shows evidence of the influence of Chinese patterns, not only of early blue and white but also of Yuan celadon.

The earliest phase of under-glaze painted Iznik pottery is decorated in a dark cobalt blue. The designs are tightly controlled and whilst they show the direct influence of Chinese blue and white they are never slavish copies but rather interpretations following the general concept of the originals. This can be exemplified by a comparison between a Chinese dish in the *Topkapı* Palace and an Iznik dish, now in the Louvre. Whilst the Iznik blue and white dish repeats the layout of concentric decorative rings separated by white bands, the radiating lotus panels are transformed into an Arabic inscription with accentuated *alif*-like strokes to echo the radial element. The central design with its quadripartite division is now transformed into a pattern of interlacing arabesques based on Balkan silverware. The exuberant Chinese peonies become tightly bunched little flowers. The inscription, incidentally, is quite illegible.

So is the inscription on a blue and white Iznik candlestick of approximately the same date. And whilst the dish is painted with white designs on a blue ground, the candlestick has on its shoulder a wreath of blue-and-white flowers, again far removed from the peonies which inspired them. On the foot there is a band of symmetrical S-shaped cloud-scrolls, again a refinement of the Yuan motif. Exactly the same type of cloud scroll was found on an early Iznik bowl (1480) from Aleppo.

By the early sixteenth century, the cobalt blue has a lighter, clearer tone and this phase is marked by a series of five hanging lamps, all of which came from the tomb of Bayezid II (1512). The drawing is still tightly controlled, very much in the style of a manuscript illuminator, and whilst the chinoiserie elements are still there-cloud-scrolls and debased floral designs-the Balkan and Islamic influences are also present. The whole concept is an amalgam of different sources. Technically, the blue and white is extremely accomplished and all the problems of painting in shades of cobalt blue to a rigorous design masterfully solved. What happens during the next decade or so is quite fascinating, for the cobalt blue is now paired with a brilliant turquoise and the designs themselves take off, as if the potters had at last broken free from the controlling hand of the *nakkashane*. The overall designs are more freely painted and much more suitable to the forms on which they

are applied. Whilst the Chinese element is still there, the feeling is that the potters were taking a good, hard look on their own at the porcelain and extracting what they thought would work. This is most evident in the blue and turquoise dishes and footed bowls made at the end of the first quarter of the sixteenth century.

At the same time there was a novel development in the capital itself that had nothing to do with Iznik and was even more closely associated with the Topkapı Palace. This was the production of tiles for the decoration of the facade of the *Sünnet Odası* (Circumcision Chamber) in the fourth court of Topkapı Palace. We owe our knowledge of this enterprise to the archival researches of Professor Gulru Necipoğlu, who discovered that these tiles were the work of an independent band of potters, the kilns possibly even located within the palace grounds itself and the designs certainly once more carefully controlled by the *nakkāshane*. If at first glance the overall design of the facade seems somewhat arbitrary, a further inspection will show that the tile panels are carefully placed with respect to the doorway and windows of the original structure. The dissonant note is in fact the insertion of a much later sixteenth-century polychrome panel of flowering cherry-trees into the otherwise coherent plan and the extension of the tiled facade to the left with later-and re-used earlier tiles-probably also at the same time.

Also on the *Sünnet Odası* are blue-and-turquoise hexagonal tiles, a severe interpretation of the fifteenth-century Chinese patterns; unlike the Edirne ones, here the circling of six flowers is extended to an outer ring of twelve. There are cloud-scroll panels which have taken this single Chinese motif and transformed it into a kind of wallpaper. And there are four enormous blue and turquoise tile panels, over a metre high, which are surely amongst the greatest ceramic masterpieces of all time. The Chinese inspiration of peonies, lotuses, and other flowers is clear; so are the cloud-scroll patterns in the spandrels, the emphatic blue and white frames, and the pheasants and qilin-like animals. What is unexpected is the mastery of the design, the integration of these disparate motifs, and the sheer novelty. Here the only answer can be the hand of Shahkulu, the head of the *nakkāshane*, and not just in the production of the design but in its execution as well.

What was happening at Iznik at the same time? There are a number of dishes which can be easily linked to the Chinese originals, even to actual pieces in the Topkapı Palace. How did the potters get access to them? Were they allowed to visit the royal kitchens in Istanbul? Or did they have other sources, maybe actual examples of Chinese blue and white at Iznik itself? Chinese porcelain must have been available in the bazaar. However, no Chinese fragments have so far turned up in excavations at Iznik although a single sherd of celadon has been found.

The most popular Chinese design seems to have been the bunches of grapes motif, found on early fifteenth century blue and white porcelain and copied at Iznik both in blue and tur-

quoise and later in polychrome. The floral sprays in the cavetto become much more stylized and the breaking-wave pattern on the rim is closer to the Yuan type rather than the early Ming. The Yuan dishes with a lion bounding in a landscape were also copied at Iznik-in one example a quite faithful replica of the original -and there is a later sixteenth century polychrome version, once in the Lagonikos collection. Dishes with an elaborate spray of tulips and other Turkish flowers springing from a leafy tuft are also interpretations, at several removes, of the Chinese early fifteenth century dishes with a bouquet, often tied with a ribbon. The most famous of these, like the hanging lamp in the British Museum, were almost certainly the work of a single potter, Musli, who was active in the 1550s. He also transformed the cloud-scroll motif into something much more symmetrical and executed various imaginative renderings of the breaking-wave rim design. The symmetrical olive-green cloud-scroll on this dish is almost Musli's trademark, and with some imagination could conceivably be read as a highly stylized rendering of his name: MSLI.

Of the same period and muted colour-scheme are the hexagonal tiles which line the walls of the *Yeni Kaplıca Hamamı* or the Turkish bath, at Bursa. The radial designs again stem from Chinese dishes of the type already mentioned at Edirne and a few tiles are painted with flowering prunus sprays, one of the "The Three Friends of Winter"-pine, prunus, and bamboo. Nor was celadon without its influence. A unique blue and turquoise dish in the Metropolitan Museum in New York is painted with an interpretation of the molded diaper pattern found on Chinese celadon and an extraordinarily three-dimensional rendering of the carved cavetto of a celadon dish. The molded floral plaques found at the centre of Yuan celadon bowls turn up as a decorative rosette on Iznik polychrome dishes. A blue and turquoise jar in the British Museum can only derive from two lotus-petal bowls, one as it were upside down on top of its twin. Sherds of Iznik bowls copying the Chinese early fifteenth-century lotus-bowl type have been found during excavations in Istanbul itself early in the 20th century. They replicate not only the radiating painted petals on the exterior but also the floral designs inside.

With the reign of Selim II and the emergence of the fully-fledged polychrome Iznik style with vivid red in relief, blue and turquoise, and viridian green, the Chinese influence has been completely absorbed into a new idiom. This is best seen in a masterly series of dishes and other vessels and also in the superb tiles which line the interior of the mosque of Rustem Pasha (1560). On a tile panel under the mosque portico with a flowering prunus, pomegranates, peonies, and carnations may well have their origins in the repertoire of Chinese flowers, but they are painted side by side with tulips and hybrid concoctions which are distinctly Turkish. One Chinese feature is a craggy outcrop at the base of the panel, where the flowers weave in and out of crevices in the volcanic-like rocks. Like all Turkish designs of Chinese inspiration, the Chinese motifs only serve as a springboard for an entirely original adaptation of the Far Eastern motifs.



What of the other decorative arts? The famous albums in the Topkapı Sarayı library already referred to contain dozens of paintings in chinoiserie style and whilst these may have affected artists of the standing of Shahkulu, they do not appear to have deeply affected the emerging Ottoman pictorial style. Like their counterparts further east, the great illuminated Qurans and other religious texts pick up Chinese floral motifs and cloud-scrolls and weave them into the elaborate borders and chapter headings. One example which appears to be explicitly derived from a Chinese source is a musical treatise written in Edirne. One page has a roundel which can only have been inspired by a Chinese dish and another layout which is quite close to that on a Yuan vase in the Topkapı Sarayı collection. There are two pages composed by the great calligrapher Ahmed Karahisari in the mid-sixteenth century which have unique interpretations of the *Bismillah* where two of them are rotated squares of stylized *kufic* calligraphy which look remarkably like Chinese square seals. The same rotated squares can also be seen on a talismanic shirt in the Topkapı Sarayı.

The Chinese cloud-scroll was particularly well suited for inclusion in Ottoman designs because of its resemblance to an arabesque and its easy transformation into a decorative motif. It can be seen on inlaid Ottoman furniture, such as the throne of Murad IV (1623-40), and especially on fine metalwork, such as the hilt of a steel *sabre* (*kiliç*) inlaid with gold. An even finer example is on the pommel of a sword inlaid in gold and silver, the blade decorated itself with relief panels of a dragon fighting a phoenix amongst lotuses and peonies in high relief. Now in Saudi Arabia, this sword came from the workshops of Bayezid II (1500-10). From the same workshop is another sword of

even finer design dedicated to Suleyman I and dated 1526/7. It also incorporates phoenixes, dragons, and cloud-scrolls.

Situated at the opposite ends of Asia, the two great empires of China and Turkey were hardly in direct contact with each other; nevertheless they were effectively by sea and through Central Asia by trade. The cultural link was even stronger, for the Turkic tribes who migrated to the west came from an area contiguous to China itself. Whilst the Chinese were supremely introspective and apart from one exceptional period at the beginning of the fifteenth century when they organized a series of seven exploratory maritime expeditions to the west-they had little interest in the emerging Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, the Ottoman Turks were fascinated by the luxury of Chinese silk and porcelain and they were highly susceptible to the designs they bore. That Chinese designs should be assimilated and transformed into an important element of Ottoman art is hardly surprising. But what is truly astonishing is what the Turks did with the raw material, as is the vigor and originality with which they effected the transformation.

This article has been updated since it first appeared in 2001. The missing illustrations of pottery specifically mentioned in the text can be found in the following publications, which also have useful bibliographies: *Blue and White: Chinese Porcelain and Its Impact on the Western World*, University of Chicago, 1985 *Iznik Pottery*, British Museum Press, (2nd ed.) 2006 *Blue and White: Chinese Porcelain Around the World*, British Museum Press, (2nd ed.) 2009 *Blavitt/Blue and White: Porcelain from Topkapı Palace Museum, Medelhavsmuseet, Stockholm*, 2008



# THE STORY OF IZNIK CERAMIC TILES AND THEIR REVIVAL

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## THE STORY OF IZNIK CERAMIC TILES AND THEIR REVIVAL

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The ceramic tiles produced in Iznik (historic Nicaea) during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries represent the cultural and artistic zenith of the Ottoman Empire; and examples of these tiles still grace the walls of many mosques and palaces around the world, and adorn the collections of many museums in many different countries. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons the technical knowledge necessary for the creation of these tiles was lost to mankind in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

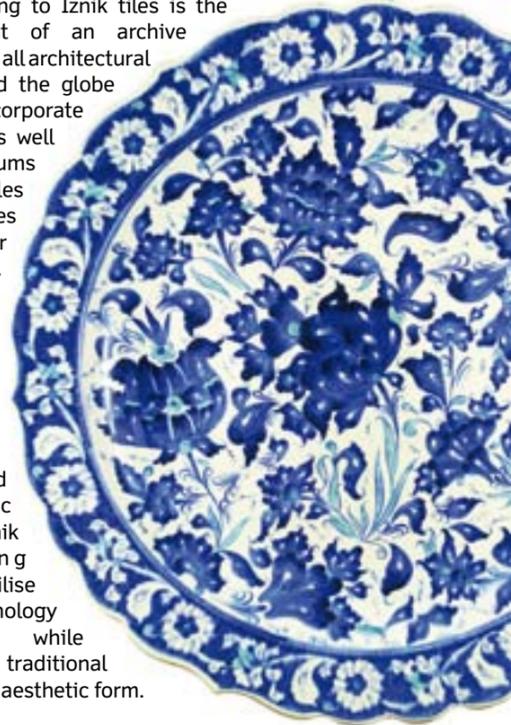
The Iznik Training and Education Foundation was established in Istanbul in 1993 with the aim of publicising the culture and artistic assets of Iznik and its surrounding communities, activating the current potentials of the area, consolidating both existing and new information obtained regarding the traditional art of the Iznik tile, and passing this knowledge on to current and future generations through training and education. Some 400 years after the knowledge had been lost, and after many years of research and countless experiments in an ongoing programme launched in 1995, Iznik tiles are again being reproduced using rediscovered traditional methods.

The Foundation comprises three units: the Iznik Training and Education Foundation in Istanbul, the Iznik Ceramic Research Centre in Iznik, and the Iznik Tiles and Ceramic Corporation in Istanbul and Iznik, which work in collaboration to duplicate the classical method of Iznik tile production. The Iznik Tiles and Ceramic Corporation, using the methods

rediscovered by the Research Centre, can now produce architectural tiles that are equal in quality to those produced in Iznik during the 16<sup>th</sup> century using raw materials from Iznik and its surrounding areas, fired in both traditional and electric resistance kilns.

Yet another endeavour of the Iznik Training and Education Foundation and the Research Centre relating to Iznik tiles is the establishment of an archive documenting all architectural works around the globe that incorporate Iznik tiles, as well as museums with samples of Iznik tiles in their collections. Just as 16<sup>th</sup> century Iznik Ceramic Arts constituted the zenith of this art form in world ceramic history, Iznik tile-making today can utilise current technology systems while preserving traditional qualities and aesthetic form.

As Iznik tiles had not been produced for 400 years, no documentation was available on the technologies used in the process.





The tiles that remain provide evidence of extremely difficult production methods that, when carried out successfully, feature an extra-white undercoating, a very hard glaze and under-glaze decorations. The colours (metal oxides) used in the tiles, especially coral red, are complex mixtures that are very difficult to produce and apply, and many researchers around the world have worked long and hard to duplicate the process. Because the clay, undercoating and glaze contain 85% quartz, the tiles are documented in ceramic literature as being very difficult to produce; made even more difficult by the fact that the composition of these materials at temperatures exceeding 900° C is distributed across a wide thermal spectrum. The ceramic tiles contain a network of pores that act to protect the tiles against the effects of extreme temperatures at both ends of the scale by allowing the tiles both to expand and contract (and to breathe) with the walls to which they are affixed. In terms of form and design, the ceramics have been used both as an architectural element and as functional objects.

The colours used in the tiles resemble the shades of semi-precious gems: for instance, coral red, malachite, turquoise

green and the dark blue of lapis lazuli. These are set down on a white undercoating that is achieved exclusively from the use of traditional raw materials, requiring no additives. The light matte quality of the glaze is non-glaring to the eye and has a low light reflection quality.

The designs used on the quartz wall tiles and utensils, being both allegorical and symbolic, also reflect the flora and fauna of the region; while the geometrical designs used in the placement of the tiles are cosmological in concept, reflecting the relationship between man, the sky and the universe. The inscriptions and calligraphy, rather than praising or describing any individual, express Islamic thought and philosophy. The ceramic designs harmonise with the architecture of the structure they grace and are exquisitely beautiful, but they are essentially modest in appearance and are never over-decorative. Being quartz-based, the tiles are radiation and static electricity absorbent, and can be used in surroundings where electromagnetic waves are present. Since 1994, the archive has produced an annual calendar illustrating the tile compositions of different monumental buildings.

## CREATING A NATION STATE FROM A FRAGMENTED EMPIRE

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# CREATING A NATION STATE FROM A FRAGMENTED EMPIRE

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One of the most interesting results of World War I was the fragmentation of empires that had been standing since the pre-industrial ages, the Ottoman Empire being one such case. The resistance shown by the Turkish people drastically changed the course of the intended fragmentation of the state by the victors of the war through peace agreements. After winning the National War of Independence, Turkey made the Western Powers sign the Treaty of Lausanne, which went beyond just being a document defining the national borders of Turkey, as it also declared to the whole world that a new nation state was on the verge of foundation.

The proclamation of the Republic of Turkey by the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) on October 29, 1923 staked a new claim on the territory, and a 600-hundred year empire officially ended with the foundation of the Republic, marking a turning point in the political life of Turkey. It was attempted to create a modern state from a pre-industrial empire and an independent public out of what had been subjects of the empire. However Mustafa Kemal and his colleagues, who were attempting to orchestrate this turnaround, had grown up in late 1880s in an atmosphere characterised by shy Ottoman modernity, and had matured their vision of the world over many years of wars in the 1912-1922 period. The creation of a modern nation state in 1923 was a brave and difficult goal, as the population, which numbered fewer than 13 million, was beset by serious health problems, and many of the educated citizens had lost their lives during the wars. There was no entrepreneur class in the society. Production, and in turn national income and the speed of capital accumulation were at quite low levels; while the input of foreign capital into Turkey was low in a knock-on effect of the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne.

World conjuncture was also a hindrance in the first years of the Republic. Turkey went through

two economic depressions even before the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Republic: The Great Depression that began in 1929, and the global downturn that resulted from World War II a decade later. Under these harsh conditions, Turkey adopted a challenging modernisation strategy, and continued to take decisive steps towards the creation of a nation state. Unlike today, in the 1920s there was no comprehensive conceptual framework on how to create a nation state. The strategic decisions implemented discreetly by the founders of the new Republic can be classified into four groups:

- 1) Modernisation of education,
- 2) A settlement strategy serving for territorial unity,
- 3) Industrialisation strategy,
- 4) Establishment of an ideological framework that grounded national existence.

## Modernisation of Education

Since the circles that had founded the Republic developed their radical modernist trends in public schools, they gave priority to the modernisation of education in the implementation of their modernity projects. Education would create the citizens of a nation state on one hand, and would ensure the provision of these citizens with the knowledge and skills required by life in a modern society on the other.

The most radical step taken by Turkey to achieve these general objectives in the early years was to implement "the principal of educational unity". The establishment of a secular and nationalist society was the most dominant dimension of this principle, and accordingly education excluded religion and foreign education units. This approach fell in line with the common understanding that had been adopted, suggesting that the "citizens of a nation state should be homogenous". The second im-

portant step taken in the field of education was “alphabet reform”. The Arabic alphabet was replaced by the Latin alphabet with the aim of easing literacy, in this way opening literacy to all of society, rather than limiting it to a small privileged group.

Thanks to the pedagogic developments recorded in the latter years of the Ottoman Empire and the effects of the German education approaches developed at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, vocational training and personal education gained in importance in the Republican pedagogy. Education in Turkey was intended to follow a pragmatic line, and in this regard different attitudes were to be adopted in the approaches to education implemented in the rural and urban parts of the country. The generalisation of primary education gained importance in the rural parts of the country, and many innovative implementations were made to this end. In the urban areas, on the other hand, educational concerns took precedence over quality concerns. From this aspect, French high school education was taken as the basis. Some 10 years after foundation of the Republic, a radical reform was undertaken to create a Humboldt-type university organisation. It was in this period that Hitler came into power in Germany, and Hebrew-origin and social democrat academicians were dismissed from their universities. These developments cleared the way for a successful reform of the university system in Turkey, and the migration of large number of highly qualified academicians to Turkey invigorated Turkish academic life

#### **A Strategy Establishing Internal Unity of the Country**

The second dimension of Turkey’s goal of creating a nation state was to ensure the internal unity of the settlement system of the country. The most important step taken to achieve this goal was to declare Ankara as the capital of the Republic. This revolutionary decision to declare Ankara as the capital rather than Istanbul, which had served as the capital of three Empires, and as such had the highest level of integration with the West, was astounding. Ankara served as the decision-making centre, where it was decided to establish a modern nation state on one hand, and was to be the first model of the modern cities where the modern life stipulated by the new Republic was going to be realized on the other. Ankara was to act as a model for other Turkish cities that were planned to undergo a path of modernization in the new nation.

The second component of the strategy adopted to ensure the internal unity of the settlement system was to implement a railway program to ensure the unity of the internal market. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, foreign companies began to be contracted to construct railways in Anatolia. However, these railways were organised according to a tree diagram, connecting the agricultural hinterland to port cities, in this way opening the concerned hinterland to the influences of the colonial powers playing an active role in the construction of the railway. Such a railway system, rather than uniting the internal market, in fact fractured it. The creation of a nation state firstly requires the integration of its internal market, and to achieve this, the Republic started to implement a decisive railway programme. It doubled length of the nation’s railway lines with a programme that carried the slogan “One more inch of railway”. More importantly, the railway network was changed from tree diagram into an Ankara-centred network.

Community centres were opened in all settlements to introduce modern life to all points of the country’s settlement system, and the cultural dimension of the radical modernity project was planned to be realised in this way. All of the scientific,

cultural and artistic elements of the radical modernity project were expected to be disseminated around the entire country from these focal points.

#### **Industrialisation Attempts**

The third dimension of the modern nation state project to be discussed here is industrialisation. When this project was initiated, industrialisation seemed to be a distant goal; however, it was also deemed a prerequisite for modernisation, and as such almost developed into a passion. It would be erroneous to suggest that modernisation was the sole motive behind the industrialisation attempts of the Republic. Similar to what was observed in many countries between the two world wars, Turkey was concerned with the establishment of a national defence economy. Turkey’s industrialization began with military industry institutions, after which plans were made to ensure import substitution with the aim of achieving a satisfactory level of domestic production of basic consumption goods. Entrepreneurship duties were undertaken by the state, since there was neither capital accumulation nor an entrepreneur class to realise bring about industrialisation. The factories that emerged out of the industrialisation programme of the state were located in small cities served by railway lines. In this way, different components of the modernisation project were able to complement each other, ensuring unity.

#### **An Ideological Framework Grounding the Existence of the Nation**

The fourth dimension of the modern nation state project to be discussed here was ideological development. Mustafa Kemal, the founder of the Republic, was very attentive in terms of ideologies, being against the suspension of ideologies, and preferring to follow a pragmatic path. It can be suggested that the founder of a nation state requires two types of ideology: The first is an instrumental tool to be used in the modernisation and development of the new state; while the second is an ideological framework which grounds the existence of the nation state, enabling the establishment of an eternal historical course, and which relates national identity to the geography of the country. While Mustafa Kemal was pragmatic towards the first type of instrumental ideology, he played an active role in the formulation of the second type of ideology which grounds the existence of the nation state. During his life, Mustafa Kemal acted as a guardian of both ideologies, prevented managers from creating their own field of power.

#### **Concluding Remarks**

In the first years of the Republican programme to create a modern nation state, Turkey was governed by a single-party government. In an environment in which a social engineering project was being implemented, the existence of a single-party government created the illusion of social consensus on the project; The best indicator of the final success of any radical nation state creation project is whether the project turns from a social engineering project into a democracy project or not.

Some 23 years after foundation of the Republic, the single-party regime was replaced by multi-party regime, and thus an important step was taken in the success of the project. The structure of the single-party government that embodied different ideologies facilitated this transition of course; and with this transition, the modernity project of the Republic has continued on its way, gaining popularity at every turn.



# THE EARLY REPUBLICAN URBANISM: SEARCHING FOR A NEW PUBLIC SPHERE

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## THE EARLY REPUBLICAN URBANISM: SEARCHING FOR A NEW PUBLIC SPHERE

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The overall transformation of Turkish society, as well as the construction of Ankara as the new capital city, for many, can be considered as one of the most successful examples of a universally defined modernization project.<sup>1</sup> And, one may then draw a specific conceptual frame for the Turkish case: perhaps quite unique in its ultimately secular and yet Islamic context of perpetual transformation, the modern Republic of Turkey has witnessed exhaustive challenges reproduced by its underlying conflictual positions; and in parallel to that, the new capital city of modern Turkey has been both the object and the instrument of such positions. Even though all these positions constitute broad generalizations, we believe that one can find ample information about the profound complexities that underlie modern Turkey's attitudes in its creation of national identities as explicitly reflected in its urbanism. In part, Ankara must be considered as a pure representation of Turkey's modernization: first, it was to promote republican bourgeois identities; and second, it also helped the development of an original Turkish nation-state or the traditional canons in further social and cultural constructions. The formation of a particular republican ethos since the 1920s, therefore, should constitute the locus of any perspective in order to understand the intellectual currents inherent in Turkey's contemporary urbanism.

Ankara's spatial attributes, in this very context, encapsulates a powerful story for understanding the political history of Turkish society. Moreover, it formulates an intriguing nar-

ration for the city's everlasting urbanization, locating them as the sites of constant contestation, explicit or not, of such deeply structured politics on discrete identities. Ankara is a capital of contesting memories; and, for this very reason, it is also the very capital of real-and-imagined, material-and-metaphorical constructions: According to the founding fathers, Ankara was certainly a representation of 'power', and its urbanization was the most evident apparatus of its possession. There, the idea of *urbanite* was believed mainly to provide a cultural sphere for constructing a new collective ethos, indicating a continual tendency away from the political influences of the old regime. Within the canons of "classical Modernist paradigm", the Republican Revolution was officially introduced in 1923 to separate Ankara from the existing world of traditional display, and the ruling cadre was so powerful in this intricate play that, by carefully ordering artifacts, events, and even annotating the codes of conduct, the new capital in its first decades was turned easily into a massive 'construction site'. The 1923 Revolution was an organized project and, accordingly, the new capital city had to be re-planned carefully to be able to displace its original spatiality.<sup>2</sup> Despite the Ottomans' worldly presence and authority, it was also very

important for the state that the city should yield a new iconography in separate political and spatial contexts.<sup>3</sup> Recognizing the fact that modern architecture in urban landscapes were one of the most significant components of creating new memories, the demands

then captured a dramatic shift by which the pre-republican Ankara gradually came to a partial end. By the new urbanism by which the presentation of an official spatial perspective was easily detached from that of the old, the New Town, then decisively represented Turkish Modernism, marking the first twenty years of the republic and of the city's early urban planning efforts. In the early years of the republican period a distinctive image and service were given to Turkey's new cultural and spatial faculties.<sup>4</sup> Named after the founders of modern Turkey, or some 19th-century themes such as 'republic' or 'national sovereignty', and particularly designed as the home of the non-clerical, non-patriarchal secular society, the new urban programs and their spaces were believed to represent the civic character of a Turkish Enlightenment as well as Turkey's new architecture. Attached to these new environments, on the other hand, commemorative ceremonies such as secular celebrations, festivities, and anniversaries were also dramatic reenactments of citizen participation in building a nation-state. As they may have been the very first forms of collective practices, the commemorative ceremonies, very secular in nature, were imperative mainly to create the most-wanted public spheres, and also to use fully the new civic environments for the material localization of the invented images of modern Turkey. The deliberate construction of civic centers, town squares, boulevards, and the invention of commemorative ceremonies, in short, were two interlocked domains of an urbanism, and they were drawn primarily from the republican allegiance to civic, secular state and its spatial representations.

The trilogy of nation-state, Turkish modernity, and public space then became a major intellectual theme amid Turkey's ruling technocrats, and the new urban practices together with their ceremonies were in fact quite effective in supporting their positions. Along with its specific function for the republican cadre, if Ankara was the administrative center of bourgeois reforms, the new urbanization was certainly its spatial manifestation. For the emerging New Town on the other hand, both the process and the end product truly represented the republicans' visions on the way to mobilizing modernist planning concepts for additional urban-development strategies. For the republicans, the new urbanism could provide an inclusive perspective similar to those of European examples and a model for future developments, if possible, in the entire country.<sup>5</sup> Building the *Yenişehir*, the New Town, planned within European standards, was then an important component of Ankara's overall urban scheme, and the new beautification projects were an essential part of it. The first Western mimics were already paving the way and the New Town with its close environs was given the role of a prestigious urban landmark for the emerging bourgeoisie. *Yenişehir* best exemplified the state's most wanted urban environments. However, building social and political projects together needed a larger schema of urban operation, and consequently some of the earliest examples were soon demolished to give way to a much more

powerful urban structure. Unlike the Old Town, the theme was now the civic qualities of bourgeois nationalism, and the idea of 'home' rather than 'the War of Independence' was the primary issue to represent the Turkish nation's not-quite-known public domains. For the republican cadre, becoming and being seen as civic was of importance and the invited designers, in this respect, had to follow the new nation-state's requirements. As a result, the end product was both architecturally and politically very powerful: the new developments in this new urban context instantly empowered the Turkish nation's desires and the spatial premises. *Yenişehir* soon became a significant sign of contemporary life, and a main recreational promenade for the emerging national bourgeoisie who also required unusual urban practices, spatial typologies, and Western-style services:<sup>6</sup> the monuments as well as the surrounding parks that emphasized the government district, were now symbolic *loci* not only for Western urban life but also for the Turkish state's new bureaucracy, as exemplified through the administrative quarter, the ministries, as well as the nearby state residences; and with the surrounding park in Western style it became a focal point for the bourgeoisie's leisurely activities and organized nationalist celebrations.

Within this framework, we suggest that the capital city of Ankara has provided significant modes of space production. Thus, the domicile of Republican Revolution since the 1920s can now be regarded as the nexus of all spatial policies. By drawing upon such competing values, the new capital city of the early Republic can be regarded as more of a symbolic enterprise: a social metaphor in order to contribute to the Turkish nation's newly needed reforms. From an interdisciplinary perspective, it is believed that at the center of these reforms is the legacy of the Modernity Project itself and the European character of the new Republic with its both social and spatial emancipatory premises.<sup>6</sup> In other words, in the saga of Turkish Modernization, the dominant perception of space and associated cultural codes have surfaced as modern as a result both of specific policies and of the state's social constructions. Embracing and internalizing all the cultural dimensions of the European Enlightenment, Modernity was there regarded as a total project to support Turkey's fabrications in all means. In this specific framework, the social structure had to be reconstructed around the well-formulated and protected institutions and shared notions, values, and ideals that were believed to constitute the necessary instruments for social change. Along similar lines, and inherent to an exclusive Revolution, there could be a political orientation for the legitimization of the new social and cultural codes only through the introduction of elements of an emancipatory spatial transformation, either in a material sense or simply in terms of public perception. As the images of this period clearly depict, constructing a new identity as well as making an official perception through the forces of spatial transformation were the constituent elements of the state policies and perspectives.<sup>7</sup> The eminent power of Western urbanism here

played a pivotal role: for the republican cadre, contemporary urban and architectural qualities and their social engineering were of significance, as surely were the subsequent spatial reorganizations. Along with the planning of the new capital, the construction of new buildings and the cultivation of the vast open landscape further signified the material transformation of Turkish society for the revolutionary purposes of progress and change. In short, such a massive transformation was a powerful metaphor in the process of making the new identity more visible and legitimate; and the emphasis on urbanism and European spatiality was certainly an indispensable part of it; and modernization was a recurring theme through which the sole images of modern Ankara were coupled with liberation, emancipation, and freedom. As a result, what could be considered as old, traditional, or stagnant was then abandoned and excluded from the Republican imaginations: for the state cadre as well as the new bourgeoisie, the emerging nation's memory was finally a *tabula rasa*.<sup>8</sup>

- 1 S. Bozdoğan, R. Kasaba, 1997 *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (University of Washington Press, Seattle and London); G. Tankut, 1992 *Bir Başkent'in İman* (Anahtar Kitaplar Yayınevi, Ankara); Sargın, G A, 2004 "Displaced Memories, or the Architecture of Forgetting and Remembrance," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol: 22, No: 5, pp. 659-80.
- 2 Ankara was a small town of 20 000 people, with poor urban qualities. Being too far from Istanbul, and having no industry, agricultural significance, administrative power, and even municipal

organization, the town in fact lost all its primacy by the 19th century as a result of substantial economic transformations in the Anatolian peninsula. The great fire of 1915 also destroyed two thirds of its housing stock, devastating the remaining economy.

- 3 The choice of Ankara was certainly political and helped to initiate the War of Independence, 1919-23, and enable the elite to erase any remnants of the old regime. It was also believed that an exemplary town could generate a model for Anatolia; a new set of social norms could develop a modern life; and the city itself could symbolize the power of the republican revolution. İ. Tekeli, 1994 "Ankara'nın Başkentlik Kararının Ülkesel Mekan Organizasyonu ve Toplumsal Yapıya Etkileri Bakımından Genel Bir Değerlendirilmesi" *Ankara Ankara* Ed E. Batur (YKY, İstanbul) pp. 143-158.
- 4 A. Cengizkan, 2002 "Ankara 1924-25, Lörcher Planı: Bir Başkent Tasarlamak ve Sonrası" *Arredamento Mimarlık* (Boyut Yayıncılık, İstanbul) pp 116-132; A. Cengizkan, 2002 *Modernin Saati* (Boyut Yayın Grubu and Mimarlar Derneği 1927, İstanbul)
- 5 B. Batuman, 2002 "Mekan Kimlik ve Sosyal Çatışma: Cumhuriyet'in Kamusal Mekanı Olarak Kızılay", *Başkent Üzerine Mekan-Politik Tezler: Ankara'nın Kamusal Yüzleri*, Ed Sargın G A (İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul) pp: 41-76.
- 6 İ. Tekeli, 2001 *Modernite Aşılırken Kent Planlaması* (İmge Kitabevi, Ankara).
- 7 S. Bozdoğan, 2001 *Modernism and Nation Building, Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (University of Washington Press, Seattle and London).
- 8 G.A. Sargın, 2002 *Ankara'nın Kamusal Yüzleri: Başkent Üzerine Mekan-Politik Tezler* Ed G. A. Sargın (İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul).





## THE ART OF EBRU

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## THE ART OF EBURU

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**E**bru, which is generally referred to today as decorative paper art, is one of the oldest Turkish crafts, although its actual origins are unknown. Ebru as an art form dates back many centuries, presenting a beauty that is full of love. It can be described as painting on water – substances are added to water to increase its viscosity, after which patterns can be formed on its surface which are then transferred to the paper. The results of this process are unique, with each sheet of paper bearing a completely different design. Those who have traced the history of Ebru claim that the many hued examples we know of today were born in Turkistan in Central Asia, a place that was the centre of many cultures in the past. Since the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards Ebru has been known as Turkish Paper in Europe, however the art of Ebru can now be found all over the world. The origin of the word is accepted to be “*ebre*” in Cagatay, a Central Asian language, meaning marbled or mottled. The art came to be known as “*ebri*,” meaning “cloud-like” in Iran, and “*abru*,” meaning “surface of water,” again in Farsi. Reaching its peak in the Ottoman times, the art of “*ebru*” (marbling) continues to exist today. In fact the patterns on the marbled paper do remind one of clouds. Due to its marble like veins the French call ebru “*papier marbre*” and the English “marbled paper.” Arabs, on the other hand, call it “*varaku'l-mucezza*,” meaning mottled paper. Today in Iran it is called “*ebru bad*” (cloud and wind).

The ancient Turks started to make paper in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and with their mystic personalities they became very advanced in the art

of paper decoration. Ebru paper, especially that bearing fine designs, was first used for important official papers of the state, such as treaties and records of important events, as it prohibited alteration to the document. The same logic can be found in the use of complicated designs on banknotes, cheque books, deeds and bonds in use today. In addition, the edges of commercial registers have been decorated using Ebrus in order to prevent the removal of pages. Ebru holds an important place in the history of Islamic art, being used alongside calligraphy as well as for published works. Its mystic nature, which may be referred to as “the search for religious beauty,” has led to its use in many *tekkes* as a reflection of Sufi thinking.

The art of ebru must have had a few centuries of history behind it to have become such advanced. Indeed, recent findings reveal that the art dates back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. When “*Tertib-i Risale-i Ebrî*” was written (in 1608), European travelers discovered ebru and published their own short recipes. George Sandys writes in Latin “Istanbul facts” in the upper corner of the engraving on the cover of his Journals of the journey he embarks on in 1610 (first publication in 1615). On page 72, he says the following about Turks: “They decorate their papers in an odd way. These papers are died in a variety of patterns and dots. They do the trick of dipping the paper in water.” These lines are regarded as the first sources of information in England about the art of ebru. In his book titled “*Sylva Sylvarum: Or a Natural History in Ten Centuries*” first published in 1627 Francis Bacon writes: “Turks have a

pretty art of decorating paper we are unacquainted with. They take colorful oil paint and spill it on water in marble forms, they then add a subtle color to water, take a piece of paper of a certain thickness and soak it in the water, the paper takes on the paint and becomes marbled.” The Athanasius Kircher text published in Rome in 1646 (Ars Magna Lucis et unibrae, Rome-Pars II. Fal. 814/ 15) and the Evelin book of 1662 (Register Book of the Royal Society - British Museum Sloane 243 Bl. 96/98.) give recipes of ebru-making that are almost identical to the traditional technique still in use in Turkey. Evelin talks in length about tragacanth and natural colors. Sir Thomas Herbert gives a definition of the ebru paper in his work entitled “Journey to Persia” (1627-1629).

Bu sanaSözcüğün aslının Orta Asya dillerinden Çağatayca’daki ebre (hare gibi, damarlı) kelimesinden geldiği kabul edilir. Bu sanat İran’a geldiğinde, “bulut gibi”, “bulutumsu” anlamlarına gelen ebrî, ya da yine Farsça bir kelime olan abru “su yüzü” sözcüğü ile anıldı. Osmanlı’da zirvelere ulaşan sanat, günümüzde ebru olarak varlığını sürdürmektedir. Ebrulu kâğıttaki desenler gerçekten de yer yer bulutu andırır. Fransızlar bu desenlerin mermere benzeyen damarlarından ötürü ebru ‘ya papier marbre, İngilizler de marbled paper adını verirler. Araplar ise ebru yerine, damarlı kağıt anlamına gelen varakü’l-mücezza sözcüğünü kullanırlar. Bu gün İran da bu sanatın adı ebru bad (bulut ve rüzgar) olarak isimlendirilmektedir. .

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The form of art that is called ebru in Anatolia was very common in the Ottoman and Seljuk times. Sözcüğün aslının Orta Asya dillerinden Çağatayca’daki ebre (hare gibi, damarlı) kelimesinden geldiği kabul edilir. Bu sanat İran’a geldiğinde, “bulut gibi”, “bulutumsu” anlamlarına gelen ebrî, ya da yine Farsça bir kelime olan abru “su yüzü” sözcüğü ile anıldı. Osmanlı’da zirvelere ulaşan sanat, günümüzde ebru olarak varlığını sürdürmektedir. Ebrulu kâğıttaki desenler gerçekten de yer yer bulutu andırır. Fransızlar bu desenlerin mermere benzeyen damarlarından ötürü ebru ‘ya papier marbre, İngilizler de marbled paper adını verirler. Araplar ise ebru yerine, damarlı kağıt anlamına gelen varakü’l-mücezza sözcüğünü kullanırlar. Bu gün İran da bu sanatın adı ebru bad (bulut ve rüzgar) olarak isimlendirilmektedir. .

Necmeddin Okyay (1883 - 1976), one of the prominent masters of ebru in the late Ottoman times was a man of many skills

like his Master Edhem Efendi (such as archery, ink-making,

Antik çağlardan beri beğeni gören ebruli desenlerin en eski örneği, Mısır da, M.Ö. 1365 tarihli cam şişelerde rastlanmıştır. Taraklı ve gel-git ebrularını andıran desenler ve bu şişelerin yapım teknikleri daha sonraları Finikeliler tarafından diğer Akdeniz ülkelerine yayılmıştır.

Kağıt sanatı olarak bahsedilen Ebru sanatının ilk önce nerede ortaya çıktığı kesin olarak belli olmamakla birlikte, ebru tarihçileri ilk kez Çin’de, Türkistan’da ya da Hindistan’da yapıldığını ileri sürerler. Japonların sumi adını verdikleri, is mürekkebinden yaptıkları ve suminagashi adını verdikleri bir ebrulama yöntemleri vardır. Ancak bu tek renkli bir ebrudur. Bugün bildiğimiz çok renkli ebruları yapanlar Orta Asya’dan çıkmıştır. Türkler, keçe yapımını birkaç bin yıldır biliyorlardı. Aynı yöntemi dut ağacının kabuklarını ‘kakat’ adı verilen, balyoz benzeri bir alet ile döverek elyaf elde etmişler ve keçe yapar gibi iki kumaş arasında sıkıştırıp kağıt yapımını gerçekleştirmişlerdir. Başka bir rivayete göre Türkler, 751 yılında yapılan Talas savaşında Arap kumandan Ziyad bin Salih tarafından esir alınan Çin’li mahkûmlardan kâğıt yapımını öğrendiler. 8. yüzyılda Semerkant da birçok kâğıt üreticisi vardı. Türkler kâğıt yapımının yanı sıra kağıt süsleme sanatlarını da oldukça geliştirdiler. Kullanılan amaçlara ve kişilere göre gümüş veya altın varaklı, çeşitli bitki ve çiçek yapraklarını kullanarak dekoratif kâğıtlar üretiler. Elimizde o günlerden kalan, bilimsel veri olarak kabul edebileceğimiz bir eser ne yazık ki bulunmamaktadır. Ancak, Ebru sanatının muhtemelen o yıllarda başladığı kabul edilmektedir. XI. Yüzyıldan kalan ilk ebru bulguları oldukça gelişmiş bir teknik ile yapıldığından, bu tekniğin birkaç yüzyılda bu hale gelebileceği varsayımı, yukarıdaki teoriyi destekleyen bir veri olarak kabul edilmektedir. Daha sonraki yüzyıllarda bazı İran kaynakları, ebrulu kâğıtları Hindistan’da yaşayan Mir Muhammed Tahir adlı bir İranlı sanatçının yaptığını ve ebrularını Hindistan’dan İran’a gönderilmesiyle ülkede ebru sanatının yaygınlaştığını belirtmişlerdir. Yine İran kaynaklarına göre ebru sanatı, İran’dan Türklerle birlikte Anadolu’ya geçmiştir. XVI. yüzyılın sonlarında Türkiye’ye gelen tüccarlar, diplomatlar ve seyyahlar bu sanatı Avrupa’ya taşımışlar ve adına “Türk Kâğıdı” demişlerdir. İtalya, Almanya, Fransa, İspanya ve İngiltere’de yaygın olarak kullanılmıştır.

Batıdaki ilk ebru bilgileri (Türk Kağıdı)

Geoge Sandys, “A Relation of a Journey begun An.Dom 1610” ( 1610 Yılında Başlayan Bir Seyahatin Getirdikleri) adlı kitabının (ilk baskısı 1615 yılında yapıldı.) kapak gravürünün üst köşesinde “veritas Constantina” (İstanbul gerçekleri) yazmaktadır. Aynı kitabın 72. sayfasında Türklerden şöyle söz etmektedir. “Kağıtlarını garip şekillerde süslüyorlar. Bu kağıtlar renkli desen ve beneklerle boyanıyor Bunu suyun içine batırma şeklinde bir hile ile yapıyorlar”.. Bu bilgiler İngiltere de ebru sanatı ile ilgili ilk bilgi olarak kabul edilmektedir. calligraphy, bookbinding, and rose growing) and went by the epithet Hezârfen (ambidextrous). He was the first to apply floral designs on marbled paper. He started teaching

the art of ebru in Medresetu’l Hattâtin (School of Calligraphy) in1916 and continued to teach until 1948 at the Academy of Fine Arts. The life and works of the deceased master were rich enough to fill volumes. Teaching of calligraphy was later taken by his sons Sami (1910 - 1933) and Sacit (1915 - 1998) and his nephew Mustafa Düzgünman (1920 - 1990). Sheikh Aziz Efendi (1871 - 1934), another student of Edhem Efendi’s, was an amateur ebru artist. The most well-known master of calligraphy, Sâmî Efendi (1838 - 1912), was a friend of Hezarfen Edhem Efendi’s. He was taught ebru by the Hezarfen, however did not practice it as a profession. Edhem Efendi’s father, Sheikh Sadık Efendi (....- 1846) is the first link of a chain of information tying ebru to our day. The ebru master, whose art can be tracked down to our day, was Mehmet Efendi with the epithet Shebek. His name is uttered with a prayer to God to rest his soul in the oldest document about the making and recipes of ebru “Tertib-i Risale-i Ebrî,” according to Ugur Demirci’s book on the art. The examples in this pamphlet, written in 1017 according to the Moslem calendar (1608 AD), and the art pieces of the time seem very advanced.

Ebru results from the simultaneous processing of delicate balances; and the rules of purity and application must be strictly observed. The viscosity of the water and the relationship between the water and the paint, the paint and the tensioning agent (gall), and the quantity of gall in the paint are all very important. Paint, which should not be too thick, is spattered or placed on the surface of water using a paint brush. Concentric, superimposed drops are applied by holding the brush above the water and tapping it lightly to form a pattern called *battal*, which is the starting point for almost all other patterns. If you use a thin pencil or pointed instrument to develop this basic pattern, you can create parallel lines, from which a gel-git (tides, back and forth) is developed. You can then take a comb-like instrument to go over this design in a horizontal direction, thus creating the *taraklı* (combed) design. If the *gel-git* is crossed diagonally again, then you produce the *sal* (shawl) pattern. *Taraklı* Ebru can be made in both *gel-git* or *sal* designs. When a convoluted line is taken from the outer circumference towards the centre, a *bülbül yuvası* (nightingale’s nest) design is formed. Small colourful dots can be sprinkled on the gel-git or the sal designs to create another pattern. By applying larger dots (which can be done by using a greater amount of gall), you can obtain the “porphyry marble” design, which is the closest to real marble. It may take some time to establish such a delicate balance, but once everything is ready the creation of Ebru is both quick and easy. The painstaking process required to create Ebru, which produces instant results once completed, makes it very therapeutic.





# THE ART OF TURKISH CALLIGRAPHY

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## THE ART OF TURKISH CALLIGRAPHY

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Calligraphy is a characteristic Islamic art-form, practiced in Arabic script that developed from the Nabatean script. The fact that a simple way of recording language has evolved such a powerful aesthetic expression surely has to be regarded as one of the miracles of Islam. As a result of the proliferation of the Muslim faith, a great many different peoples practiced the art of calligraphy.

The dynastic rulers of the Islamic world, with their capitals as cultural centers in such diverse locations as Damascus, Baghdad, Cordoba, Cairo, Konya, Samarkand, Herat, and Tabriz, were always attracted by the art of calligraphy and accordingly patronized its practitioners. During the Ottoman period, calligraphy reached the zenith of its aesthetic power in Istanbul, and as a result "Turkish Calligraphy" evolved its own distinct character.

The "Six Styles" of calligraphy, *thulth*, *naskh*, *muhaqqaq*, *rayhani*, *tawqi'*, and *riqa'*, came to prominence in the thirteenth century. The conquest of Istanbul in 1453 ensured that this exceptional city would soon develop into the cultural and artistic center of the Muslim World, a position of excellence that has been secured up to this day in the field of calligraphy. It would be fair to say that the Six Styles were reinvented several times under Ottoman rule, reaching new levels of perfection roughly once every hundred and fifty years.

Among the Six Styles, *naskh* became specialized in the writing of books and especially the copying of the Holy Qur'an, while *thulth* and

*naskh* became the preeminent vehicles for the practice of calligraphic art. In the nineteenth century, two different stylistic schools of *naskh* script were established. *Muhaqqaq* and *rayhani* were gradually abandoned by the end of the seventeenth century. The place of *tawqi'* was taken over by a new Ottoman script, *diwani* and *jali* (bold) *diwani*. The script of *riqa'* was gradually limited to the writing of calligraphers' certificates.

Next to the Six Styles, Ottomans were especially fond of a script invented in Persia called *nasta'liq*, which Ottomans named *ta'liq*. The Ottomans practiced calligraphy over a period of nearly five hundred years, attaining the highest levels of expertise in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and developing a particular style.

The bold versions of *thulth* and *ta'liq* were fundamentally reformed during the nineteenth century, thereby opening the way to the creation of highly original compositions. The calligraphic form called *tughra* evolved as the official imperial cipher. It too was radically altered and beautified in the nineteenth century. Bold *thulth* and *ta'liq* scripts were used for monumental inscriptions on public (religious and administrative) and private buildings, as well as in decorative panels.

Manuscripts surviving from the Ottoman period take the form of books, such as copies of religious texts and collections of poetry, of albums that bring together individual calligraphic pieces, often with ornamented



margins, of single pieces in one or more scripts, and of large panels. In particular, a genre invented in the late seventeenth century contains a verbal description of the Prophet Muhammad in a well-defined composition. This genre remains popular to this day.

The tools and materials used by calligraphers constitute primary examples of the applied arts in the Ottoman dominions. Calligraphers plied their art on hand-crafted paper which, after being dyed in various colors, was sealed and polished. Pens were made of special reeds, dried and treated; large monumental script was written with pens carved of wood. Though calligraphers mostly used black ink produced from soot and gum arabic pounded in a mortar, other inks were also available, notably pure gold ink produced from gold leaf crushed in gelatin, red ink made of cochineal, yellow ink made of sulfur, and white ink made of lead. Other instruments used by calligraphers included pen-boxes of rectangular or cylindrical form, made of metal, ivory, and other materials. Such boxes often included an inkwell. Penknives and special tools to hold the pen while carving and clipping the nib were used to prepare the reed pens. The production of these tools was undertaken by guilds of artisans.

Calligraphy was taught in the Ottoman educational institutions and at the Imperial Palace, but the best way to learn the art of writing was to attend individual tutorials at a master calligrapher's house. These lessons were given without any form of material remuneration but rather as a blessing. Calligraphic instruction was based upon the observance of a strict discipline, according to a master-apprentice system. It was a process that continued from generation to generation. Pupils were able to complete their instruction only after years of practice, and received a written license. The art and practice of calligraphy was a closed world, able to withstand the Western influences that had taken other Ottoman arts under its sway. Thus, Turkish calligraphy has preserved its independence into the twenty-first century.



## EBRU: THE ART OF PAPER MARBLING

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## EBRU: THE ART OF PAPER MARBLING

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Among the Islamic decorative arts, ebru, or paper marbling, is a most attractive technique. Although we are not certain about its origins, it is known that similar techniques also using emulsions were practised in China (*liu sha chien*) and Japan (*suminagashi*) between the eighth and the twelfth centuries and beyond. The art then appeared in Turkestan at a later date under the Chaghatay Turkish name of *ebre* (dress). At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the art spread from Turkestan into Iran via the Silk Road. There, it was called *abri*, a Persian word meaning "cloudy". Indeed, the patterns in marbling, which resemble masses of clouds, justify this word, which was also used in the Ottoman Empire. During the nineteenth century, however, it was changed to ebru, meaning "eyebrow" in Persian, due to the difficulty of its pronunciation. This name is erroneous but not unsuitable since marbled paper contains patterns resembling an eyebrow.

It is reported that the art of ebru spread from India to Iran and then to Istanbul. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, it was brought home from Istanbul by returning European travelers, where it became known as "marbled paper" or "Turkish art paper". It was first used and produced in Germany, then in France and Italy. Gradually marbled paper was introduced to England and the United States and the production in each country reflected different tastes. Various materials used in its production also account for the minor differ-

ences in marbled paper.

Ebru is made by floating finely ground dyes on an emulsion, and its success depends on certain conditions. The dyes employed are natural, obtained from colored minerals and soil which are insoluble and contain no oil. These are pounded and finely ground on a stone slab, in a watery medium, by a small convex pestle. Some other dyes, like Lahore indigo, are also used in marbling.

The ebru trough is rectangular in shape and 6 cm deep, preferably made of galvanized metal. Its dimensions should be the same as the sheet of paper that will be used.

*Gum tragacanth* is exuded from the *astragalus tragacanthus* plant and comes in cream-colored irregular plaques or strips. These are dissolved in water to be strained through a cloth bag. The liquid is then added to the water in the trough so that the viscosity reaches the desired level and the dyes do not sink to the bottom. Approximately 600 marbled papers can be obtained from an emulsion-filled trough. In the West, artists use *carrageenan*, extracted from seaweed.

Ox gall, which contains active surface bile acids, is added to each dye so that they will spread over the surface of the liquid without mixing with each other. Different amounts of gall are used to control the colors' interactions. As ebru is produced, colors added

later must contain more gall, so that they migrate on the surface of the liquid to the spaces between the lighter areas, pushing aside the other colors as they move.

A special brush is prepared by winding horsehair loosely and cylindrically around a thin and smooth stick. The brush is used to sprinkle dyes evenly over the surface of the liquid in the trough; the colors are thus dispersed like masses of clouds. Each newly added color spreads over the surface by pushing its way among the others, depending on the amount of gall it contains. Patterns can be created by using spikes or combs. The comb is a strip of wood which is pierced with nails at regular intervals. Thin wire spikes or needles are used to make patterns and thick wire spikes are used to drop dyes on the liquid.

To apply marbling to paper the artist slowly slides the paper from the right or left side of the trough and lays it over the surface of the liquid, where it remains for fifteen seconds. Thus the designs transfer to the paper with all their beauty. Then the craftsman holds up the two corners of the paper and draws it towards himself over the lip of the trough. The ebru is then spread over long wooden laths to dry in the shade. To some degree, the patterns form themselves free from the will of the artist. For this reason, the art of marbling has been considered as a vivid example of the manifestation of God's absolute will and man's individual will. The sprinkling of dyes was likened to the individual will, whereas the pattern of unpredictable shapes, which were formed over the surface of the trough, were likened to the divine will.

"Hatched ebru" is produced by spreading the dyes over the surface of the liquid first. The wire spike is then moved over the liquid in sharp and straight lines, leaving horizontal and vertical zigzags. If the movements of the spike are irregular, a Paisley pattern is obtained, while spiral movements of the spike from the periphery to the centre result in the so-called "nightingale's nest" pattern. A "combed pattern" is produced by drawing the wooden comb across the length of the trough. More attractive patterns can be produced by the application of comb-marbling on a surface where hatching has been applied. A sprinkled pattern is produced when insoluble dyes of dark colors are dropped upon the surface of one of the above

types of marbling. If the same procedure is followed with the use of naphtha, small spaces will open up on the surface of the marbling. As the liquid in the trough gets dirty after many uses, the dyes that are spread on the surface break up into specks that resemble particles of sand. "Light marbling" is produced when the above-mentioned techniques are used with lighter colors, and is used especially as a background for works of calligraphy. In this case the paper is polished.

A corolla pattern is produced by placing a few drops of strong colors over a light background with the wire spike, adding different drops of color if desired, to form concentric circles. Then, passion-flower, heart and star patterns are produced with the vertical and horizontal movements of the spike within these concentric circles. Likewise, attempts were made to produce floral patterns on marbled paper, with designs representing tulips, carnations, pansies, poppies, rosebuds, chrysanthemums, daisies, and hyacinths.

The designs that are produced on the surface of the liquid can be applied to a single sheet of paper only, that is to say, they are mono-prints. No two marbled papers are exactly alike. In this respect, each marbled paper is a unique work of art. Another style of marbling involves calligraphy: To produce this work, writing is first applied with a solution of gum arabic and left to dry. Then the paper is placed upon the liquid in the trough. The marbled patterns do not stick to the gummed parts and thus remain visible. In old manuscripts, the backgrounds for the text and the margins were sometimes of different colors. The script would be written in the center on a white field, and the borders would be marbled. Figurative pictorial marbling is known to have been produced by such stencil and resist techniques in the city of Bijapur in India in the seventeenth century.

Throughout the history of marbling, there has been little information about the artists who practiced this art. Today, an increasing number of artists are engaged in the technique. They also apply marbling on textile, glass and faience. In addition to abstract designs, they also create figurative paintings. Since it is difficult to find the old dyes, synthetic dyes are now used.



## ARTS OF THE WORD: CALLIGRAPHY AND COLOURED PAPER, HAT AND EBRU

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## ARTS OF THE WORD: CALLIGRAPHY AND COLOURED PAPER, HAT AND EBRU

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In Islam, writing is valued as the most important art form, since it is used to transcribe God's message. As a result, Arabic calligraphy, which was developed in several styles after the recording of the Koran, has become one of the richest art forms in Islamic culture since the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Turks began to use this form of writing with their conversion to Islam in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and became its foremost innovators under the Ottoman State. Ruling over Islamic lands for around seven centuries, they developed Arabic calligraphy through the work of many famous calligraphers employed by the Ottoman court, and with the support and personal involvement of the Ottoman Sultans.

The coloured paper known as Ebru is related to the arts of the word and the arts of the book as a background for writing, as decorative frame and as binding paper for books. Although it is claimed to be an Islamic invention, which also relates to Islamic philosophy by way of its constantly changing configurations, it has also been used by Venetian bookbinders and was developed in rich variations by Venetian craftsmen, and this influence must have been facilitated by the commercial relations between Istanbul and Venice.

### Calligraphy in the Ottoman World

For Islam, the word, as a donation of God to humans, is absolute, while images are illusions and are not to be trusted. The commandments at the beginning of the Koran directing the people to read and write, and the fact that the Koran was sent directly to the Prophet

and dictated by him, render writing to be an almost sacred art. The Arabic alphabet, which has its roots in the writings of the Nabatian people who lived in the lands of what is now Syria and Jordan, was first developed as an angular style known as Kufi. Although it was first used by Arabs, and is therefore known as Arabic calligraphy, after being adopted by all the Islamic people it has come to be known as Islamic calligraphy.

In the 9<sup>th</sup> century, six different variations of the Kufi style were developed under different names, such as *Reyhani*, *Sulus*, *Muhakkak*, etc., all of which differed in terms of the proportions of the vertical and horizontal strokes, as well as their rhythm and circularity. Since the Arabic alphabet contains only consonants, different dots are used to indicate vowels giving the calligraphy a dynamic and decorative quality.

Ottoman calligraphers of Bursa, the first capital, dating to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, took influence from the famous Turkish scribe Yakut-i Musta'simi (1221–1298), who worked for the last Abbasid caliph, however Sheik Hamdullah (1433–1520), who was born in Amasya (Asia Minor), was to create a new brilliant era for calligraphy as he worked under the Ottoman sultans Conqueror Mehmet II, Beyazit II and Selim. Sheik Hamdullah was especially encouraged by Beyazit II, who softened the rather harsh geometric style of Yakut-i Musta'simi, rendering it rhythmic and more pleasing to the eye. Many of his works, including as the Koran he wrote for Beyazit II are to-

day contained in the Topkapi Palace Library; while he was also the writer of the inscription of the Beyazit II Mosque. Ahmet Karahisari (1469–1556), who was born in Afyon Karahisar and was a contemporary of Hamdullah, became especially famous because of the many works he executed for Suleiman the Magnificent. The inscriptions both in the interior and in the portico of the Suleimaniye Mosque in Istanbul, are formatted on beautiful Iznik tiles decorated with flowers. A later Istanbul artist by the name of Hafiz Osman (1641–1698) further developed the calligraphy of this early period, giving it an elegance and fluidity which made it the generally adopted style after the 18<sup>th</sup> century in all Islamic lands.

Besides the six different styles that were developed from the Kufi script in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, another important school of calligraphy was developed by Iranian calligraphers known as Nasta'lik. Some Ottoman calligraphers drew upon its influence until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the artistic styles of Iran began to lose interest for the Ottomans. The bold form of Nasta'lik, a style which seems to have been inspired by the flight of swallows, was perfected by Ottoman calligraphers. The work of the great Nasta'lik artist of Iran known as Imad (d.1615) was equalled in perfection by the Ottoman calligraphers. Consequently, the Ottoman calligraphers who used this style were often called Imad-i Rum (Imad of Anatolia).

The Ottomans also created several significant calligraphic styles, the most important being the one known as Divani, which was developed as a form of writing for use on the official documents, minutes and declarations of the Ottoman Parliament, called the Divan, presided over by the Sultan, or later by the Grand Vizier. As documents from before the time of the Conqueror have been lost, the information available on the Divani style is limited to the post-15<sup>th</sup> century period. The style was developed to its utmost perfection in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. To avoid any later clandestine changes to official documents, the Divani style was quite complex and difficult to decipher. Certain letters were written so fast that they seemed incomplete or broken, and were indeed referred to as "Broken Divani". There was also a style called "Celi Divani" which meant "large Divani," which was written with a bolder pen, and to avoid any later additions of letters or words the letters were written very close to each other, and often above each other. Another style, known as Rik'a, was also first invented in the court workshops, and was later developed in the practice of the writers of Bab'i Ali, known as the Sublime Porte, the Office of the Sultan. This form of writing was suited for quotidian use and was designed to be written fast. One of the better-known practitioners of this style was Mehmet Izzet Efendi (1841–1903). Over the years, these styles were adopted from the Ottomans by other Islamic nations, and are still in use today.

It is clear that the Ottomans were practical and inventive people who devised different writing styles for different needs. Writing was a sacred and highly respected art form which was also practiced by the Sultans. The Topkapi Museum archives

contain many valuable pieces of calligraphy by Sultan Murad III, Sultan Murad IV, Sultan Mustafa II, Sultan Mahmut II, and especially Sultan Abdulmecid and Sultan Abdulaziz. These sultans took lessons from the best-known calligraphers, and often honoured them with precious gifts and gold.

Although everyone who went to school or to a medrese (religious college) learned to read and write Arabic script, learning how to become a calligrapher was a totally different matter that required arduous practice. One usually worked with a master calligrapher, at first helping him prepare his tools and paper. Learning traditional arts depended on imitation and on learning by heart. In the case of calligraphy, "mesk" which literally means physical strain, was the basis of the practice. The novice had to write the same word repeatedly until the hand began to move almost by reflex. One had to be able to control the pen and its trace to an invisible measure. In a culture where representational images were not always welcome, writing became important both for its content, legibility and its beautiful form.

Many famous calligraphers created images with their letters by grouping them into almost representational forms. The Great Mosque of Bursa has many such works hung on its interior walls that resemble faces. This figurative representation was known as "suret," which meant copy, and it was quite customary to produce images of mosques, of the human face and body, of birds, fish, vessels, etc.

#### Coloured Paper: Ebru

The word Ebru, meaning coloured paper, comes from the Arabic word for cloud. Considering that many Ebru papers feature irregular patterns that seem to be in constant flux, it is possible that Ebru was intended to mean "paper with clouds". However, experts offer different interpretations, one of them being that it means face water (ab-ru), since it is made by the laying the paper face down in a coloured liquid. It is not known exactly when Ebru paper was invented, but it is believed that it first appeared in Iran, and was developed in Istanbul. It was also used in France and Italy, where it was known as "Turkish marble paper".

According to master Ebru makers the art is closely related to the love of beauty, which is the guiding principle for Islamic artists. In Islam, the role of art and of the artist is to make people aware of the beauty of the world as a reflection of God, and thereby to render people in admiration of God.

An important fact that relates Ebru to Islamic philosophy is that the forms of Ebru seem to be moving all the time, as though they cannot be fixed or seen as static. Many Islamic artists favour the constant play between reality and illusion, and the art of Ebru seems to display such incertitude of vision.

Ebru is produced by placing the paper face down on a large bowl of liquid onto which different dyes have been applied. The liquid is first prepared with the addition of certain oils that

prohibit the mixing of colours; while the dyes are prepared with certain mixtures to stop them from dissolving into the liquid. Before the paper is laid down, the Ebru Master creates patterns in the dyes using a thin brush. As soon as he obtains the desired effect he lays the paper onto the liquid for a few minutes, allowing it to absorb the pattern. A well prepared bowl of liquid can be used for dozens of applications of different colours to create different Ebrus.

Ebru may take the form of marble patterns, zigzags, waves or circular repetitions, and some Ebru artists were known to add images of their favourite Ottoman flowers, such as the tulip and the carnation, to the paper to form what is known as "Floral Ebru".

Ebru was an important and valued paper for Ottoman book binding. It could be used on the inside of the jacket or around the frames of texts or miniatures. Ebru paper was also used as a base for important documents to ensure that the writing could not be changed, as any attempt to erase or add to the text would immediately distort the original Ebru pattern.

Today, these traditional arts live on in Turkey as rare specimens of the past. Although Ebru these days is chiefly carried

out as an artistic hobby, the great age of Ebru makers is gone. Ebru is taught in Fine Arts departments as a traditional art. Having adopted the Latin alphabet in 1923, calligraphy is no longer used for communications in Turkey, and is only executed as an art form. However, many private collections, among them the Sabanci Museum in Istanbul, vie to have rare examples in their displays, as connoisseurs increasingly appreciate these two arts as being among Turkey's most valuable artistic heritages.

Sources: Prof. Dr. Uğur Derman, *Osmanlı Türkleri'nde Hat Sanatı* (Osmanlı Ansiklopedisi, Ankara 1999) Vol.11 p.17-26; Prof. Dr. Muhittin Serin, *Osmanlılarda Hat Sanatının Gelişmesi ve Bunun Nedenleri* (Osmanlı Ansiklopedisi 1999), Vol.11, p.26-36; Prof. Dr. Ali Alparslan, *Osmanlı Döneminde Hat Sanatı* (Osmanlı Ansiklopedisi 1999), Vol. 11, p. 35-43; Yrd. Doç. Abdülhamid Tüfekçioğlu, *Hattat Osmanlı Padişahları* (Osmanlı Ansiklopedisi 1999), Vol. 11, 43-52; Prof. Dr. Uğur Derman, *Osmanlılarda Renk Cümbüşü: Ebruculuk* (Osmanlı Ansiklopedisi 1999) Vol.11, p. 189-193; Hikmet Barutçugil, *Ebru Sanatımız* (Osmanlı Ansiklopedisi 1999) Vol. 11, p. 193-199

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