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MULTIDIMENSIONAL LIMINAL THRESHOLD OF
THE CITY OF ANKARA: THE NAMAZGÂH HILL

Bilkent University 2024

MULTIDIMENSIONAL LIMINAL THRESHOLD OF THE CITY
OF ANKARA: THE NAMAZGÂH HILL

A Master's Thesis

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Ankara
June 2024

To my mother, *Huri*



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THE NAMAZGÂH HILL

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN HISTORY

THE DEPARTMENT OF
HISTORY
İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY
ANKARA

June 2024

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NAMAZGÂH HILL

By Muhammed Said Dađlı

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as a thesis for the degree of Master of History.

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ABSTRACT

MULTIDIMENSIONAL LIMINAL THRESHOLD OF THE CITY OF ANKARA: THE NAMAZGÂH HILL

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June 2024

Namazgâhs, which can be seen in many Ottoman cities, are open-air places of worship and they stand out as an overly comprehensive and ambivalent concept that can vary in their functions, qualities and quantities. Throughout its history, the Namazgâh and the Namazgâh Hill in Ankara have served different functions: as a gathering place, a place of worship, a cemetery and a gateway to the city. While the origins of this Namazgâh remain a mystery, these various functions became particularly evident during the War of Independence, a critical period that contributed to the establishment of the new Republic. The aim of this thesis is to compile existing sources on the Namazgâh Hill, to determine as much as possible which functions it assumed and under what circumstances, to show that it is a multidimensional liminal space for the city of Ankara, to explain that it not only hosted liminal transformations but also underwent liminal transformations itself, and as a result, to create a comprehensive historical narrative of the site. For this purpose, the

Ottoman and Republic State Archives, paintings, engravings, photographs, newspapers of the period, the memories of people who used to live or have visited Ankara, and ethnographic studies about this city will be used.

Keywords: Namazgâh, Liminality, Liminal Space, Ottoman Cities, Ankara



ÖZET

ANKARA KENTİNİN ÇOK BOYUTLU LİMİNAL EŞİĞİ: NAMAZGÂH TEPE

Dağlı, Muhammed Said

Yüksek Lisans, Tarih Bölümü

Tez Danışmanı: Doç. Dr. Mehmet Kalpaklı

Haziran 2024

Osmanlı şehirlerinden birçoğunda görülebilen ve bazı şehirlerde onlarcası olabilen namazgâhlar, açık hava ibadethaneleri olarak göze çarpmakla birlikte fonksiyonları, nitelikleri ve nicelikleri çeşitlilik gösterebilen kapsamlı bir kavram olarak göze çarparlar. Ankara'daki namazgâh ve onu üzerinde taşıyan Namazgâh Tepe de tarihi boyunca farklı fonksiyonları üstlenmiş, bir toplanma yeri, ibadet alanı, mezarlık ve şehre giriş kapısı olarak işlev görmüştür. Namazgâh'ın kökenleri gizemini korumakla birlikte, yeni Cumhuriyet'in kuruluşuna katkıda bulunan kritik bir dönem olan Kurtuluş Savaşı sırasında bu çeşitli fonksiyonları özellikle belirginleşmiştir. Bu tezin amacı Namazgâh Tepe ile ilgili mevcut kaynakları derlemek, hangi fonksiyonları hangi şartlarda üstlendiğini mümkün olduğunca belirlemek, buranın Ankara kenti için çok boyutlu bir liminal mekân olduğunu göstermek, liminal dönüşümlere ev sahipliği yapmasının yanında kendisinin de liminal dönüşümlere uğradığını açıklamak ve sonuç olarak buranın kapsamlı bir tarih anlatısını oluşturabilmektir. Bunun için Osmanlı ve Cumhuriyet Devlet

Arşivleri, resimler, gravürler, fotoğraflar, dönemin gazeteleri, eskiden Ankara’da yaşamış ya da bulunmuş insanların anıları ve Ankara hakkında yapılmış etnografik çalışmalardan faydalanılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Namazgâh, Liminallik, Liminal Mekân, Osmanlı Şehri, Ankara



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my department head and advisor, Mehmet Kalpaklı, for his expertise, knowledge, experience, and invaluable guidance, not only for this thesis but throughout my graduate education and research. I am deeply grateful for the trust he has placed in me and the patience he has shown. I also want to acknowledge that he has been a role model for me with his works that I have always admired. I feel that I have more to learn from him every day, and I know that I will continue to research with the strength and pride of being his student for life.

I owe an immense debt of gratitude to my esteemed professor, Özer Ergenç, who made it possible for me to undertake this study and directed me to research about Namazgâh with his vast knowledge. Almost everything I know about the social and economic history of the Ottoman Empire, I have learned from him. I am also thankful to him and Nil Tekgül for their support in reading texts written in Ottoman Turkish.

I am incredibly grateful to Bülent Batuman, who made an unimaginable contribution to my research by introducing me to the concept of Liminality and sacrificing his valuable time to help me develop my thesis. Similarly, I thank Suavi Aydın for his support, valuable time, and vast experience in guiding me on how to evaluate and research the Namazgâh.

I am indebted to my professors; Evgeni Radushev, Berke Torunoğlu, Paul Latimer, Kenneth Weisbrode, Luca Zavagno, Serpil Bağcı, Evangelia Balta, Fatma Özden Mercan, Zeynep Seviner, Etienne Charrière and Kudret Emiroğlu for the contributions they have made through the courses I have taken, which have helped me become a better researcher and historian.

I cannot express my appreciation enough to my wife, Ayşenur, who has shown me endless support, understanding, and patience during my academic studies, lifted me up when I fell, and most importantly, has been my joy in life. I will be forever grateful to her.

I am deeply thankful to my father, Fahrettin, and my late mother, Huriye, for always supporting me both materially and spiritually in the pursuit of knowledge, instilling in me the desire and will to research/learn, and teaching me the value of knowledge. I also thank my brother Fatih, who has supported me in all my material and spiritual needs, allowing me to pursue my master's degree, and my siblings Ekrem and Hazalnur, whose friendship I can always rely on.

Finally, I am grateful to my friends Deniz, Beyza, Hakan, Özgür, and Fatma, whose companionship I sought while writing this thesis.

Thank you, all!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Namazgâh Hill (Namazgâh Tepe) was the name of the hillside on the southern border of the Ottoman Ankara, where the city walls once stood and where buildings of both practical and historical importance to Ankara, such as the Ethnography Museum and the Numune Hospital, now stand. And the topographical structure that this hill was named after was called the Namazgâh. Throughout its history, this site was used for various functions: sometimes as a gathering place, as a place of worship, as a funereal place, and other times as a gateway to and from the city... These functions of the Namazgâh, whose origins are not known for certain, were magnified in its last years, and it took its place in the collective memory with the spatial roles it played in the War of Independence that laid the foundation for the establishment of the new Republic. Here, the people of Ankara started their own National Struggle (*Millî Mücadele*), waited to welcome Mustafa Kemal Pasha, who would later become the Commander-in-Chief, saw off the soldiers going to the battlefield, prayed for the success of the army, treated the soldiers returning from the front wounded, and buried the soldiers who were martyred. The Namazgâh, which stood out as a premodern liminal space with these features, lost

its functions very soon after these events, with the establishment of the modern Republic, was replaced by secular buildings and suddenly found itself in the heart of the expanding metropolis, whereas before it was on the periphery. However, coincidentally, it found the opportunity to fulfill one of these premodern functions, that of being a funereal place, for the last time through the Ethnography Museum built on it, carrying the body of President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, upon his passing, for fifteen years.¹ The study of this historical place as a liminal space from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey, thus, has become even more interesting and important due to these historically critical events and phenomena.

Although the story of the Namazgâh in Ankara was transformed into an epic narrative with the War of Independence, its history can understandably be traced back to the emergence of Islam, several centuries ago. Claiming to carry on the legacy of the Abrahamic religions that preceded it, namely Judaism and Christianity, Islam, as opposed to them, has defined the place of worship as any part of the earth (provided it is clean). In other words, masjids and mosques can be built for Muslims to pray, but a Muslim does not necessarily need them. This freedom allowed the followers of Islam to pray even on long journeys away from any town or city. (The fact that Muslims are obliged five times a day to perform a special act of worship called *namaz*² adds to the

¹ After 15 years of temporary residency, Atatürk's body was moved to the Mausoleum built for him. See Koray Özalp, *Atatürk'ün Ankara'sı 1919-1938* (Ankara: Galatya Yayıncılık, 2021), 243-259.

² Due to its subject matter, this thesis will use many non-English words, especially Turkish ones. The 17th version of the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) will be taken into account in the use of these words. In this context, words that are found in the Merriam-Webster dictionary will not be italicized and pluralization will be done as shown in this dictionary (CMOS 17 7.1 and CMOS 17 11.3). For example, the word *namaz* is found in the Merriam-Webster dictionary and its plural form is also *namaz*. Therefore, in this thesis, where the word *namaz* and phrases containing the word *namaz* occur, it will be used without italics and without the plural suffix. Words that do not appear in the Merriam-Webster dictionary will be italicized only the first time they are used if they are frequently used, and italicized every time if they are rarely used. (CMOS 17 11.3) If words that do not appear in that dictionary are used in modern Turkish,

importance of this freedom.) The most practical solution for praying on such journeys was to designate a specific area as a namaz space, clean it, and then be careful to keep it clean. The Islamic Prophet Muhammed preferred this method in his travels, and these places came to be called *musallâ* in Arabic and *namazgâh* in Persian.³ Both words in their respective languages meant “a place of namaz”. (To avoid possible confusion, the words “the Namazgâh” will be used hereafter when speaking specifically about the Namazgâh in Ankara, and the word “namazgâh” will be used as a genus noun when referring to the concept of namazgâh in general.) That is to say, the conceptual history of the Namazgâh, the subject of this study, located on the southern border of Ankara’s city center, dates back to the Islamic Prophet Muhammed, and its name directly translates to a place for namaz.

It is interesting that despite having such an ancient origin and a story with an epic ending, the Namazgâh has escaped the attention of researchers. Although thousands of works have been written about the years of the War of Independence, one of the most obvious reasons why the Namazgâh is usually mentioned in a paragraph or two is perhaps the difficulty of researching and analyzing it. There are two main difficulties that stand out in the first instance. The first is that the concept of namazgâh itself is too comprehensive and lacks a precise definition. The second is that it is almost impossible to access sources, especially from before the War of Independence, that can provide

their spelling will be given according to the dictionary of the Turkish Language Association. Words such as *namazgâh* and *seymen*, which will appear frequently in this thesis and will be conceptualized, will not be italicized and will be pluralized with the suffix -s as in English, e.g. “seymens”. The plural suffixes for words that are rarely used and italicized will be suffixed with the suffix -lar or -ler as in Turkish, e.g. “*yazlık mescidler*”. (CMOS 17 11.3) Names of institutions, organizations, places and people will not be italicized. (CMOS 17 11.4)

³ Nebi Bozkurt, “Namazgâh,” *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 32, (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2006).

important information about the Namazgâh. Despite all these difficulties, its importance in Ankara's civic history and the fact that it can be studied as a multi-layered liminal space should be enough to excite researchers interested in the area.

The aim of this thesis is to compile the available sources on the Namazgâh, to construct a historical narrative of this space using the concepts of liminality and liminal space, and to show that it was a multi-layered liminal threshold of the city. In this introductory chapter, a brief analysis of the existing literature will be provided, followed by a discussion on methodology and theoretical framework. In the second chapter, what and where of the Namazgâh will be discussed based on the evidence and a new and revised portrayal of this site will be presented; and in the third chapter, it will be shown how it was a liminal space, through an analysis based on its revealed functions. In the concluding chapter, the disappearance of the Namazgâh will be explained, this time as a liminal stage that directly concerns itself, and we will conclude the historical narrative of the Namazgâh as a liminal threshold of the city of Ankara, with a brief reminder of all the findings of this research.

1.1 Existing Literature

As we said before, a comprehensive study, based on evidence, about the Namazgâh has not been conducted so far. An extensive number of books and articles have been written about the city of Ankara, especially since it became the capital of the new Republic. Among these works, there are a few that mention the Namazgâh only briefly. However, these mentions are either based on stories passed down orally that need a form of validation or are limited to a few events during the War of Independence.

An analytical review of the transferred information, on the other hand, has not been done yet.

One of the most important works about the Namazgâh based on memories and oral narratives is Şeref Erdoğan's *Ankaram*⁴ (My Ankara). Erdoğan mentions all the other features of the Namazgâh very briefly and exclusively emphasizes its feature as an *er meydanı* (a place in which wrestlers and brave men challenged and squared accounts with each other). Hamit Zübeyir Koşay's *Ankara Budun Bilgisi* (Ankara's Ethnology)⁵ does not dedicate a title to the Namazgâh but it provides significant clues about this place while conveying the other ethnographic features of this city through the stories he heard from the locals of old Ankara. Kemal Bağlum's *Beşbin Yılda Nereden Nereye Ankara* (Ankara from Where to Where in Five Thousand Years)⁶ also conveys significant anecdotes that provide clues about the Namazgâh, similar to the works of Erdoğan and Koşay. *Küçük Asya'nın Bin Yüzü: Ankara* (a Thousand Face of Asia Minor: Ankara)⁷, written by Suavi Aydın, Kudret Emiroğlu, Ömer Türkoğlu, and Ergi Özsoy, is one of the most comprehensive academic studies on the history of Ankara. In this work, the Namazgâh is mentioned, again, based on mostly oral narratives. Abdülkerim Erdoğan's *Unutulan Şehir Ankara* (The Forgotten City Ankara)⁸ and *İstiklal Savaşı'nda Ankara* (Ankara during the War of Independence)⁹ (the latter is co-written by Gökçe

⁴ Şeref Erdoğan, *Ankaram* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1999).

⁵ Hamit Zübeyir Koşay, *Ankara Budun Bilgisi* (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1935).

⁶ Kemal Bağlum, *Beşbin Yılda Nereden Nereye Ankara* (Ankara: [n.p.], 1992).

⁷ Suavi Aydın, Kudret Emiroğlu, Ömer Türkoğlu and Ergi D. Özsoy, *Küçük Asya'nın Bin Yüzü: Ankara* (Ankara: Dost Kitabevi Yayınları, 2005).

⁸ Abdülkerim Erdoğan, *Unutulan Şehir Ankara* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2004).

⁹ Abdülkerim Erdoğan and Gökçe Günel, *İstiklal Savaşında Ankara* (Ankara: Ankara Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2008).

Günel) and Alptekin Müderrisoğlu's *Sakarya*¹⁰ also mention the Namazgâh, especially with compilations of various records of memories during the War of Independence. Those academic studies on Ankara which are based exclusively on written documents like *tahrir* and *sicil* registries, such as Özer Ergenç's *16. Yüzyılda Ankara ve Konya* (16th Century Ankara and Konya)¹¹, Hülya Taş's *17. Yüzyılda Ankara* (17th Century Ankara)¹², and Rifat Özdemir's *19. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Ankara* (Ankara in the Second Half of the 19th Century)¹³, either mention the Namazgâh superficially or do not mention it at all. This thesis will utilize all the records from these sources but with a critical perspective.

While very little of the information about the Namazgâh, especially during the War of Independence, is based on definitive documents such as photographs and newspaper reports, most of it is based on the memories of people who were in Ankara for a period or their friends and relatives. The works of Ali Fuat Cebesoy¹⁴, Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu¹⁵, Yunus Nadi¹⁶, Mehmet Emin Sazak¹⁷, Ali Metin¹⁸ (Transcribed and published by Ziya Oranlı), and Mahir İz¹⁹ are important in this context. Enver Behnan Şapolyo's works²⁰, which can sometimes be considered as history books and sometimes

¹⁰ Alptekin Müderrisoğlu, *Sakarya 1. Cilt* (İstanbul: Yapı ve Kredi Bankası, 1981) and Alptekin Müderrisoğlu, *Sakarya 2. Cilt* (İstanbul: Yapı ve Kredi Bankası, 1982).

¹¹ Özer Ergenç, *XVI. Yüzyılda Ankara ve Konya* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 212).

¹² Hülya Taş, *XVII. Yüzyılda Ankara* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2014).

¹³ Rifat Özdemir, *XIX. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Ankara* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1986).

¹⁴ Ali Fuat Cebesoy, *Millî Mücadele Hâtıraları* (İstanbul: Vatan Neşriyatı, 1953).

¹⁵ Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu, *Anıların İzinde 1. Kitap* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1977) and Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu, *Bir Lise Öğrencisinin Millî Mücadele Anıları* (İstanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1971).

¹⁶ Yunus Nadi, *Birinci Büyük Millet Meclisinin Açılışı ve İsyanlar* (İstanbul: Sel Yayınları, 1955).

¹⁷ Emin Sazak, *Emin Bey'in Defteri* (İstanbul: Bilgeoğuz Yayınları, 2009).

¹⁸ Ali Metin and Ziya Oranlı, *Atatürk'ün Şimdiye Kadar Yayınlanmamış Anıları* (Ankara: Alkan Matbaası, 1967).

¹⁹ Mahir İz, *Yılların İzi* (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2003).

²⁰ Enver Behnan Şapolyo, *Kemâl Atatürk ve Millî Mücadele Tarihi* (İstanbul: Rafet Zaimler Yayınevi, 1958) and Enver Behnan Şapolyo, *Mustafa Kemal Paşa ve Millî Mücadelenin İç Âlemi*

as memoirs, can be utilized in this category as well. In some other memoirs, although the War of Independence or Ankara is mentioned, no insightful information is given about the Namazgâh, for example, the works of Ali Fuat Türkgeldi²¹, Halide Edip Adıvar²², Yakup Kadri²³, Falih Rıfkı Atay²⁴, İlyas Sami Kalkavanoğlu²⁵, Mazhar Müfit Kansu²⁶, Bekir Sami Günsav²⁷, Dr. Cemil Topuzlu²⁸, Rauf Orbay²⁹, Mehmet Arif Bey³⁰ and Ali Çetinkaya³¹.

Putting the Namazgâh in Ankara aside, there are some detailed reference sources about namazgâhs in general. Articles by Nebi Bozkurt³² and Yavuz Tiryaki³³ under the *Encyclopedia of Islam*'s "namazgâh" title can be considered as the framework. Fuat Şancı's article "Yazlık Mescitlere Kavramsal ve Tipolojik Bir Yaklaşım" (A Conceptual and Typological Approach to Summer Masjids)³⁴ and Uğur Tanyeli's article "Musalla, İdgâh, Namazgâh: Tanımsız Bir Mimarî Olgusu" (Musalla, İdgâh, Namazgâh: An

(İstanbul: İnkılab ve Aka Kitabevleri, 1967) and Enver Behnan Şapolyo, *Atatürk ve Seymen Alayı* (Ankara: Ankara Kulübü Yayınları, 1971).

²¹ Ali Fuat Türkgeldi, *Görüp İştiklerim* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1987).

²² Halide Edip Adıvar, *Türkün Ateşle İmtihanı: İstiklâl Savaşı Hatıraları* (İstanbul: Özgür, 2006).

²³ Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Vatan Yolunda* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1986).

²⁴ Falih Rıfkı Atay, *Çankaya* (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet, 1999) and Falih Rıfkı Atay, *Zeytinadağı* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1943).

²⁵ İlyas Sami Kalkavanoğlu, *Millî Mücadele Hatıralarım* (İstanbul: Ekicigil, 1957).

²⁶ Mazhar Müfit Kansu, *Erzurumdan Ölümüne Kadar Atatürk ile Beraber* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1997).

²⁷ Muhittin Ünal, *Miralay Bekir Sami Günsav'ın Kurtuluş Savaşı Anıları* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1994).

²⁸ Cemil Topuzlu, *80 Yıllık Hatıralarım* (İstanbul: ARMA, 1994).

²⁹ Feridun Kandemir, *Hatıraları ve Söylemedikleri ile Rauf Orbay* (İstanbul: Yakın Tarihimiz, 1965).

³⁰ Miralay Mehmet Akif Bey, *Anadolu İnkılabı: Millî Mücadele Anıları, 1919-1923* (İstanbul: Arba, 1987).

³¹ Ali Çetinkaya, *Millî Mücadele Dönemi Hatıraları* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1993).

³² Nebi Bozkurt, "Namazgâh".

³³ Yavuz Tiryaki, "Namazgâh," *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 32, İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2006.

³⁴ Fuat Şancı, "Yazlık Mescitlere Kavramsal ve Tipolojik Bir Yaklaşım," *Adıyaman Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 13, no. 35 (2020).

Undefined Architectural Phenomenon)³⁵ can be cited as examples of articles that examine namazgâhs conceptually. Muhammet Arslan's article "Open Air Prayer Places of Anatolian Seljuk"³⁶ is important as it tries to classify namazgâhs according to their architectural features and functions. In addition to these, the works of Mustafa Özdamar³⁷, Göksel Erdoğan³⁸, Gül Sarıdikmen³⁹, Gülhan Benli⁴⁰, and Selma Gül⁴¹, especially on open-air prayer sites in Istanbul, are known. Regarding the namazgâhs in the remaining parts of Anatolia and the Balkans, works of Hüdavendigâr Akmaydalı⁴², Ünal Taşkın and Arife Gökner Parlak⁴³, Hakkı Acun⁴⁴, Baha Tanman⁴⁵, Mükerrerem Kürüm⁴⁶, Mehmet Sami Bayraktar⁴⁷, Alptekin Yavaş⁴⁸, Alaattin Dikmen⁴⁹, Abdülhamit

³⁵ Uğur Tanyeli, "Musallâ, İdgâh, Namazgâh: Tanımsız Bir Mimarî Olgu," in *Uluslararası Üçüncü Türk Kültürü Kongresi Bildirileri*, (Ankara: 1999).

³⁶ Muhammet Arslan, "Open-air Prayer Places of Anatolian Seljuk," *Journal of Turkish Researches Institute*, no. 68 (2020).

³⁷ Mustafa Özdamar, "Namazgâhlar," *Vakıflar Dergisi*, no. 20, (1988).

³⁸ Göksel Erdoğan, "Topkapı Sarayı'nda Bulunan Mescitler ve Namazgâhlar," *Milli Saraylar Sanat Tarih Mimarlık Dergisi*, no. 20 (2021).

³⁹ Gül Sarıdikmen, "The Namazgah Mosque (The Cavid Aga Mosque) in Bulgurlu from Past to Present," *Journal of Medeniyet Art* 1, no. 1 (2015).

⁴⁰ Gülhan Benli, "The Use of Courtyards and Open Areas in the Ottoman Period in İstanbul," in *Advances in Landscape Architecture*, ed. Murat Özyavuz, (InTech). doi:10.5772/55797

⁴¹ Selma Gül, "Kadıköy Taşköprü Caddesi Mezarlığı (Batı Yönündeki 18. Yüzyıl Mezar Taşlarının Sanat Tarihi Açısından Değerlendirilmesi)" (master's thesis, Marmara University, 2009).

⁴² Hüdavendigâr Akmaydalı, "Mihraplı ve Minberli Namazgâhlarımız," *Vakıflar Dergisi*, no. 23, (1994).

⁴³ Ünal Taşkın and Arife Gökner Parlak, "Cezaevi Olarak Kullanıldığı Yıllarda Musalla (Alaybeyi) Camii," *Journal of History School* 11, no. 35 (2018).

⁴⁴ Hakkı Acun, "Makedonya-Üsküp Fatih Sultan Mehmet (Taş) Köprüsü ve Namazgâhi," in *Balkanlarda Osmanlı Vakıfları ve Eserleri Uluslararası Sempozyumu* (Ankara: Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Yayınları, 2012).

⁴⁵ Baha Tanman, "Turhal'ın Gümüştop (Dazya) Köyündeki Namazgâh," *Journal of Art History*, no. 9-10 (1981).

⁴⁶ Mükerrerem Kürüm, "Aydın'daki Osmanlı Dönemi Namazgâhları Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme," *Journal of Institute of Fine Arts*, no. 18 (2007).

⁴⁷ Mehmet Sami Bayraktar, "Köprülü Mehmed Paşa Prayer Area (Namazgâh) In Vezirköprü and Construction Inscription of Sultan Abdülaziz Prayer Area in Samsun," *Vakıflar Dergisi*, no. 37 (2012).

⁴⁸ Alptekin Yavaş, "Bozcaada Namazgâh Meydanı Çeşmesi ve Cebeci Başı Es-Seyid Abdullah Ağa'nın Vakfiyesi," *Journal of Art History*, no. 18 (2009).

⁴⁹ Alaattin Dikmen, "Friday Mosques in Mountainous Region in Bursa," *Celal Bayar University Journal of Social Sciences*, no. 1 (2014).

Tüfekçioğlu⁵⁰, Tolga Bozkurt⁵¹, Bahriye Gülay Gülyüz⁵², Deniz Demirarslan⁵³ and Turan Gökçe⁵⁴ stand out. However, the impossibility of using these sources to obtain information about the Namazgâh in Ankara through abstraction will be discussed below, so that these sources will not be used to construct the historical narrative of the Namazgâh in Ankara.

1.2 Problems with the Namazgâh

The concept of namazgâh is a bit problematic. Firstly, the concept itself is vastly comprehensive and a bit ambivalent, and there is no clear architectural or topographical definition regarding namazgâhs which can encompass common features and similar functions extensively. For example, there are some namazgâhs that are so small that can only accommodate a couple of people at the same time.⁵⁵ It is an obvious fact that the Namazgâh in Ankara, which is known to host thousands of people at once in certain situations, can have so little resemblance to those little namazgâhs. Some namazgâhs are inside the urban area, and some of them are so far away from urban areas that they are mostly for the use of travelers.⁵⁶ Some namazgâhs, on the other hand, are located at the edge of urban areas, like the Namazgâh in Ankara. It is, again, obvious that they have

⁵⁰ Abdülhamit Tüfekçioğlu, “Gelibolu’da Azebler Namazgâhı ve Yapının Mimarı,” *Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 2 (1998).

⁵¹ Tolga Bozkurt, “The Value of a Lost Inscription About Konya Sultan Square,” *Ankara University Journal of the Faculty of Languages and History-Geography* 59, no. 1 (2019).

⁵² Bahriye Gülay Gülyüz, “Fetret Era (1402-1413) Structures in Rumelia,” *Al-Farabi International Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no. 2 (2020).

⁵³ Deniz Demirarslan, “Outdoor Worship and Location Relationship – Gelibolu Open Air Prayer Places,” *The Journal of Turk & Islam World Social Studies* 4, no. 10 (2017).

⁵⁴ Turan Gökçe, “Sohbetgâh-ı İbâdetgâh: Namazgâhs in the Balkans in View of Evliya Çelebi,” in *International Balkan Annual Conference Vol 2* (2013).

⁵⁵ Yavuz Tiryaki, “Namazgâh”.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

understandably different spatial features and functionalities. This comprehensiveness is the reason why it is impossible to utilize the sources and evidence about other namazgâhs to understand the Namazgâh in Ankara.

Namazgâh's being a comprehensive concept will be proved in detail in the second chapter, yet the problems regarding the study of the Namazgâh in Ankara are not limited to that. There is an observable lack of information about this singular namazgâh. Ankara was not one of the most glamorous cities in the Ottoman Empire, although it maintained its social and administrative importance for a long time due to the fact that it was an important trade center and had cosmopolitan demographics. It served as the capital of Vilayet, as well. It hosted a very important spiritual leader, Hacı Bayram Veli, who was the murshid of Mehmed II's mentor, Akşemseddin. In the first quarter of the 20th century, it first became the headquarters of the War of Independence and then the capital of the young Republic. Therefore, it is safe to say that Ankara has always been an important city, but it has never been a focal point of keen eyes looking for something equivalent to Istanbul's Golden Horn, Edirne's Selimiye Mosque, or İzmir's bustling harbor. Travelers passed by this city, but they spent so less words on it. Even after Ankara became the capital, and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar wrote his famous *Beş Şehir*⁵⁷, he spared the least number of pages for Ankara. In this scarcity, structures that are very important both architecturally and practically or spiritually, such as Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque and Ankara Castle, could find their humble places in these travel books, while the Namazgâh, which can be regarded as a couple of rocks on a hill by the untrained

⁵⁷ Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *Beş Şehir* (İstanbul: Millî Eğitim Basımevi, 1972).

eyes, often overlooked. This results in the limited availability of material resources on this topic.

The city of Ankara had attracted numerous local and foreign travelers throughout its classical and premodern history, but none of them had ever paid attention to the Namazgâh, and none of them had ever talked about it in detail.⁵⁸ It is natural that they would not mention the Namazgâh, which can be seen as a pile of stones when not in use, when there are structures that can be recognized with the naked eye, such as Ankara Castle, Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque, the Temple of Augustus right next to this mosque and the Roman obelisk. In fact, in the paintings and engravings of these travelers looking at Ankara from the southern facade, topographical elements that can be thought to be the Namazgâh stand out. One of the most prominent of these images is Tournefort's engraving, (see Figure 1) and the other is an anonymous oil painting (see Figure 2). However, it is not possible to see a continuity that supports each other. The oil painting from the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, which has come to be known as the Famous Ankara Painting, and Tournefort's engraving contradict⁵⁹ each other in terms of what can be deduced to be the Namazgâh, which makes it difficult to have a convincing historical

⁵⁸ Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Hans Dernschwam, Paul Lucas, Pitton de Tournefort, Richard Pococke, John Macdonald Kinneir, Charles Texier, William Francis Ainsworth, William John Hamilton, Henry John van Lennep, George Perrot, Vital Cuinet, Henry C. Barkley and Lady Dorothy Mills stand out among foreign travelers to Ankara. See DA1. Evliya Çelebi's travels also took him to Ankara and he provided important information about the interior of the city. See Nuran Tezcan, "Evliyâ Çelebi'nin Ankara'sı," in *Evliyâ Çelebi: doğumunun 400. Yılında*, ed. Nuran Tezcan and Semih Tezcan (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2011).

⁵⁹ In the oil painting, the Namazgâh, for example, stands out as a solitary hill in the middle of a plain. However, the topography of the Namazgâh Hill is the first in a series of hills, starting with itself and extending all the way to the Ankara Castle. Before one of these hills ends, another begins. Tournefort's engraving is more in line with the topography of the Namazgâh Hill that can be easily identified today. When viewed from the south, there is an elevation starting towards the east and this elevation continues into the city. This elevation is also home to a large plain, in line with the other narratives of the Namazgâh. Again, in keeping with other narratives of the Namazgâh, scattered stones can be seen here and a Gate (which may be the Namazgâh Gate) can be seen next to it.

reading through them. Thereafter, when it comes to the early 20th century, works that mention Ankara continue to neglect the Namazgâh. Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu, for example, gives a detailed description of Ankara, provides information about the appearance and characteristics of the city, and even describes his school located at the Namazgâh Hill. But he does not include the Namazgâh in his portrayal.⁶⁰ Similarly, Enver Behnan Şapolyo draws a picture of Ankara through words. He mentions the Ankara Castle, Çankırı Gate, Taşhan, Karaoğlan Street, Balıkpazarı (Fish Market), Samanpazarı (Hay Market), Ulus Square, sections of the city, other surrounding hills and even lakes kilometers away, but he does not invite the Namazgâh to this picture.⁶¹ This is because the Namazgâh was not a physically prominent structure, but could only be clearly visible when it was hosting an important event with a crowd on top of it. For this reason, the public information about the existence and features of the Namazgâh in Ankara from the classical period up until World War I is generally limited to rumors and abstractions from other namazgâhs which is, again, problematic for researchers.

Although we have not limited this study to a specific time period, the scarcity of sources from the nineteenth century and earlier naturally confines us to the early twentieth century. However, this does not mean that we will not consider the limited number of sources from before these dates. Therefore, we will not specify any time frame in the title or content of the thesis.

1.3 Methodology and Theoretical Framework

⁶⁰ Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu, *Bir Lise Öğrencisinin Millî Mücadele Anıları*, 29-32.

⁶¹ Enver Behnan Şapolyo, *Mustafa Kemal Paşa ve Millî Mücadelenin İç Âlemi*, 88-90.

The facts that the concept of namazgâh is comprehensive and ambivalent and there is a lack of information about the Namazgâh at hand leave us with few choices. In this dilemma, the only way to create a historical narrative about this Namazgâh would be to find all relevant data, with the meticulousness of an archaeologist, and carefully examine the bits of information word by word, without limiting the study with a time frame or a certain kind of documents. We will utilize all the documents that can be found in state archives and newspapers, photographs and drawings from state and private collections, and memoirs of those who lived in Ankara or at least met with some people who lived in Ankara when the Namazgâh was still there, and all other relevant sources. We will analyze and cross-check all these data together, put them in the framework of liminality, and show how the Namazgâh was a liminal threshold in more than one dimension.

In social life, there have always been ceremonial events that constitute important turning points in the lives of individuals or groups. Examples include a boy entering puberty through circumcision, a group of young men taking up arms against an approaching enemy army and being sent to the battlefield to protect the homeland, or an old man going on a pilgrimage to fulfill one of the requirements of his religion. Arnold Van Gennep, the first architect of this conceptualization, in his work *The Rites of Passage*⁶², argues that these transformative rituals consist of three stages, the first being separation and the third reintegration, based on his research on tribal societies. The second stage, which lies between the separation and reintegration stages, and which seems to belong neither fully to one side nor fully to the other, is the liminal stage. This

⁶² Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960).

liminal stage is a “betwixt and between”⁶³ situation. It is ambiguous, vague, ambivalent, irregular, unstable, shaky. It is neither inside nor outside, neither uninitiated nor finished, neither victorious nor defeated. It is a state of suspense.⁶⁴

The emergence of the concept of liminality, consequently, led to the emergence of the concept of liminal space. Originally defined as places that hosted these rites of passage in tribal societies, liminal space has gained wider usage in recent decades⁶⁵ and examples have been sought in classical, post-classical, premodern, and modern societies. Looking at the history of Ottoman Ankara, places that hosted such ceremonies can be seen, one of which is the Namazgâh. There have been events such as seeing off and welcoming travelers, congregational prayers, and funerals, which make this place a liminal space in multiple contexts and in multiple directions. Furthermore, the Namazgâh itself experienced liminal transformations in various instances. This is why, after rediscovering the Namazgâh in the second chapter, this thesis will look for the characteristics of being a liminal space in its three ritualistic functions: (1) as a place of departure and arrival, (2) as a place of gathering at the threshold and (3) as a funereal place.

⁶³ Victor Turner, who rediscovered the concept of liminality decades later, used this phrase in the title of one of his articles, “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*”. Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (USA: Cornell University Press, 1982).

⁶⁴ Bjørn Thomassen, *Liminality and the Modern: Living Through the In-Between* (Ashgate, 2014), 7.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 1-14.

CHAPTER 2

EXPLORING THE NAMAZGÂH

Exploring the Namazgâh with all its physical and functional features is a difficult task, which we have laid out in detail. But it is equally rewarding to unravel the true nature of such a unique space that has hosted different kinds of events with religious, spiritual, and material meanings. To undertake such a mission requires discussing the concept of namazgâh and showing once and for all why it is too comprehensive and ambivalent. After discussing the ambivalence of the concept itself, this chapter will summarize the existing literature's views on the functions of the Namazgâh in Ankara and propose corrections to create a new explanation and historical portrayal for it. This will allow the next chapter to discuss the liminality of this space based on a more accurate historical narrative.

2.1 Namazgâh as an Ambivalent and Comprehensive Concept

Perhaps the one thing that makes it difficult to do a historical study of namazgâhs is that there is no single clear namazgâh archetype. More precisely, there is no typical architectural or topographical landmark called namazgâh that has certain common characteristics shared by all of its examples. It is not possible to categorize the physical

characteristics and functions of namazgâhs in an uncontroversial way. The only common feature shared by all namazgâhs is that people perform namaz on them. However, this common feature is far away from being distinctive. All mosques, masjids, homes, and even nearly the entire earth itself are permitted to be used as a place of namaz by Islam for Muslims.⁶⁶ There are examples of Muslims praying even in the Christian and Jewish temples. In other words, “the place on which namaz is performed” is far from being a definition. There is no second common feature that will cover all examples of namazgâhs. But, in time, researchers started to use this word exclusively to refer the open-air praying places. With this terminological use, two more common features emerge: they are open-air spaces and they have at least some kind of a border, even if not very precise sometimes. Today, in the studies regarding namazgâhs, this terminological use of the word is generally accepted.

This clarification may be confusing and unnecessary as it is an unshakable fact that the term namazgâh refers to open-air namaz places in the first place. However, aside from the fact that the name “namazgâh” literally means the place of namaz without explicitly referring to any kind of open-air space, there are examples to be considered in which the word “namazgâh” means an indoor masjid. A news report published in *Tanin Newspaper* on January 2nd, 1923 announced that the Directorate of Education had declared that namazgâhs should be established in schools.⁶⁷ How we know that these

⁶⁶ Müfit Efendi’s speech at the Grand National Assembly underlines this fact, by saying that, for Muslims, nearly every place is a masjid. “Malumu alileridir ki – efendiler! – bizde her yer mescittir. Mürur ve ubura mâni olmamak için tarihi ammin gayrı herkesin gelip geçtiği yerlerden maada diğer mahallerde namaz kılmak caizdir, sahihtir.” See T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:1, İçtima:90, Cilt: 22, 355. (24.8.1338) <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d01/c022/tbmm01022090.pdf>.

⁶⁷ “Mekteplerde Namazgâh Tesisi
Bilumum mekâtipte birer namazgâh tesisi Maarif Müdüriyeti tarafından mekâtibe tamimen tebliğ olunmuştur.” See “Mekteplerde Namazgâh Tesisi,” *Tanin*, January 2, 1923.

namazgâhs were not to be open-air namaz places is that *Yenişark Newspaper* published another report revealing that these namazgâhs were something to be built and require at least some kinds of materials. The Directorate of Education asks all schools what materials were needed to establish namazgâhs in their buildings so that students can pray. Responses from these schools come piece by piece and needs are declared. It was decided to provide the necessary materials in this regard.⁶⁸ We can deduce that these namazgâhs were something to be built, unlike the Namazgâh in Ankara, which consisted of a couple of stones found here and there. It was not something built diligently.⁶⁹ While this was the case for the most famous namazgâh in Ankara, to consider that the Education Directorate would spend a lot to build open-air namazgâhs for each and every school is not plausible. Therefore, it is safe to say that the Directorate used the word namazgâh to refer to indoor masjids. In addition, there are mosques that were built on what used to be open-air places of worship and are therefore still referred to as namazgâhs. In the Albanian capital, Tirana, a mosque was recently opened, named Namazgâh Mosque because it was built on the site of a namazgâh.⁷⁰ Similarly, it is

⁶⁸ “Mekteplerde Namazgâh İçin Levâzım Verilecek

Mekteplerde namazgâh tesisiyle talebe ve talebâta eda-i salat ettirilmesi için ne gibi levâzıma ihtiyaç bulunduğu Maarif Müdüriyetinden bilimum mekâtibe sorulmuştu. Mekteplerden peyderpey cevaplar vürud etmekte ve ihtiyâcat beyan edilmekte olup hitamında bu hususa ait nevâkısın ikmalî takarrür etmiştir.” See “Mekteplerde Namazgâh İçin Levâzım Verilecek,” *Yeni Şark*, January 4, 1923.

⁶⁹ In a meeting of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in 1922, Müfit Efendi, a member of parliament, complained about the neglect of Islamic mosques and masjids and the lack of attention paid to them. With his complaint, he revealed a significant fact about the Namazgâh, that it consist of a couple of stones here and there: “Fakat şu teşkilatı İslamiye itibariyle vücuda getirdiğiniz mahalle camilerine, Cuma ve bayram camilerine rica ederim, bugün atfî nazar buyurunuz. Namazgâh denilen Ankara’nın Gureba Hastanesi civarında bir cami minberinin taşlarının parçaları kalmış, bir içtimagahı umumi vardır.” See T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:1, İçtima:90, Cilt: 22, 355. (24.8.1338) <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d01/c022/tbmm01022090.pdf>.

⁷⁰ “Arnavutluk Namazgah Camii milletimizin emanetleriyle yükseliyor,” *Website of Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı*, January 18, 2019. <https://tdv.org/tr-TR/arnavutluk-namazgah-camii-milletimizin-emanetleriyle-yukseliyor/>.

possible to find roofed mosques called namazgâh in historical settlements in Central Asia.⁷¹ This is the reason why it is necessary to underline that historical studies use the word namazgâh in its terminological use and ignore the occasional use of it to refer to indoor masjids and mosques while keeping in mind that each and every use of this word, encountered in historical records, may not refer to open air namaz places.

The problems do not come to an end even if all these confusions were put aside and everyone agreed on the terminological meaning, that is namazgâh refers to an open air place of worship. While namazgâh is sometimes used for a place that people specifically name as such, sometimes the genus name can be used too generously, creating confusion. The best example of this is that in one of the articles of *Anadolu'da Yenigün Newspaper*, the courtyard of the Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque in Ankara, where namaz can be performed, is called “namazgâh”.⁷² As we see here, although there is a particular place in Ankara that people specifically call “the Namazgâh”, an open area in front of a mosque where namaz can be performed can easily be called namazgâh as well.

⁷¹ Mavlyuda Yusupova, “Islamic Architecture of Uzbekistan (Development and Features),” *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 2, no. 2 (2012): 55.

⁷² “Ankara’da Tezahürat

On bin kişilik bir cemaati kübra yeni efradın celbi münasebetiyle Ankara’da büyük tezahürat yapılmış ve on bin kişilik bir cemaati kübra Cuma namazını eda etmiştir.

Ankara, 9 Eylül (Muhabiri mahsusumuzun telgrafnamesidir)

Ordunun takviyesi ve düşmana kat’i darbenin bir an evvel ettirilmesi suretiyle millî gayenin bir an evvel istihsali için hükümetin silah altına davet ettiği 297, 298, 299 numaralı efradın celb ve cem’i münasebetiyle bugün Ankara’da fevkalade tezahürat yapılmıştır. Bütün dükkanlar kapanmış, halk cemmi gafir halinde aralarında yeni toplanan efrad olduğu halde pek heyecanlı ve büyük bir içtima akd etmiştir. Heyecan ve tehalük içinde Hacı Bayram Veli Camii Şerifi namazgâhına toplanan halkın miktarı on bin kişiyi tecavüz etmekte idi. Kahraman ordumuzun muzafferiyeti ve düşmanın ricaate başlaması münasebetiye misakı millînin pek yakın bir zamanda istihsal edileceğine dair çok heyecanlı nutuklar irat edilmiştir. Bادهu on bin kişilik cemaati kübra hâlinde Hacı Bayram Veli Camii Şerifinde açık namazgâhta Cuma namazı eda edilmiş ve bargâhı tealadan ordumuzun nusreti için istimdat olunmuştu. Beliğ duaların kıraatını müteakip yeni toplanan efrad tehalükle ve büyük sevinç içinde şubeye gitmişlerdir. Heyecanı millî son derecesindedir.” See “Ankara’da Tezahürat,” *Anadolu’da Yenigün*, September 11, 1921.

In other words, even in Ankara, when namazgâh is mentioned, it is not a certainty that the famous Namazgâh, which is on the southern outskirts of the city, is referred to.

When all these problems are left behind, namazgâh is accepted in its terminological meaning, and arbitrary uses are ignored, the problems still do not come to an end, and namazgâh does not cease to be too comprehensive. Different examples of namazgâhs can be very different from each other. It can be a large empty and barren area outside the city, as in Ankara, or it can be a small and royal area inside the Topkapı Palace.⁷³ Hatta, Aka Gündüz'ün Hakimiyeti Milliye'de tefrika halinde yayımladığı bir hikayede, namazgâh yaptıkları çayırdaki toplanıp namaz kıldılar gibi bir ifade yer alır. Yani namazgâh kelimesi, geçici olarak namaz kılmak için belirlenmiş alanlara bile denebilir.

In other words, namazgâhs, which are formulated as open spaces of worship with defined borders, take such different shapes in different places,⁷⁴ undertake such different functions, and are even called by such different names that the information we learn from one namazgâh often cannot be abstracted to other namazgâhs.

*Musallâ, yazlık mescid, secdegâh, kiblegâh, mesiregâh, ârâmgâh, teferrücgâh, set, seki, suffe, makam, cebbâne, mastaba, kubbe...*⁷⁵ These are just some of the synonyms of namazgâh. “Namazgâh” and “*musallâ*”, the first in Persian and the second

⁷³ Göksel Erdoğan, “Topkapı Sarayı’nda Bulunan Mescitler ve Namazgâhlar,” *Milli Saraylar Sanat Tarih Mimarlık Dergisi*, no. 20 (2021): 120.

⁷⁴ In fact, in a story written by Aka Gündüz and published in *Yeni Gazete*, it is stated that they gathered and prayed in the meadow where they had designated as a namazgâh. In other words, the word namazgâh can even refer to areas temporarily designated for prayer. Aka Gündüz, “Kurbağacık,” *Yeni Gazete*, August 14, 1919.

⁷⁵ See Fuat Şancı, “Yazlık Mescitlere Kavramsal ve Tipolojik Bir Yaklaşım”. See Muhammet Arslan, “Open-air Prayer Places of Anatolian Seljuk”. See Mustafa Özdamar, “Namazgâhlar,” *Vakıflar Dergisi*, no. 20, (1988). See Nebi Bozkurt, “Namazgâh”. See Yavuz Tiryaki, “Namazgâh”.

in Arabic, mean the place where namaz is performed. Similarly, “*secdegâh*” and “*kiblegâh*” are directly related to the act of praying as well. “*Mesiregâh*” and “*teferrücgâh*”, on the other hand, roughly mean places to go for an outing. In other words, these open-space masjids also stand out as promenades. “*Cebbane*” and “*mastaba*” show the use of these spaces as cemeteries, as they literally mean cemeteries. Although these may be the prominent uses of namazgâhs, their functions were not limited to those mentioned in these names. And it is quite hard to pinpoint which namazgâhs assumed which of the many functions of namazgâhs in general, without singling them out.

A possible solution to that is to reorganize namazgâhs under subcategories, which was tried by Yavuz Tiryaki and Muhammed Arslan. Tiryaki, in the “namazgâh” article of *Encyclopedia of Islam*, examines the namazgâhs in Turkey in four different architectural categories: (1) namazgâhs with mihrab and minbar, (2) namazgâhs with fountains, (3) namazgâhs and mihrab stones built next to a fountain, and (4) namazgâhs with musallâ stones.⁷⁶ Muhammed Arslan, in his article “Open Air Prayer Places of Anatolian Seljuk”, suggests a different taxonomy based on their locations and functions: (1) maidan namazgâhs, (2) caravan/range namazgâhs, and (3) summer namazgâhs.⁷⁷ In the light of the available findings, the Namazgâh in Ankara appears to be a namazgâh with mihrab and minbar (architecturally) and a maidan namazgâh (based on its location and functions). These categorizations are helpful to put similar namazgâhs together and they provide a possibility to study namazgâhs conceptually. However, it is still important to mind the pitfalls. The presence of a mihrab and minbar in the Namazgâh in Ankara

⁷⁶ Yavuz Tiryaki, “Namazgâh”.

⁷⁷ Muhammed Arslan, “Open-air Prayer Places of Anatolian Seljuk”.

does not mean that it will share all the other features with other namazgâhs that have mihrabs and minbars. It is, for example, impossible to know for sure that the Namazgâh preserved its initial architectural form and functional features from the beginning to the end of its time. There is no way to know, for example, in which period mihrab and minbar were placed here. We should also consider that the functions of namazgâhs may change over traumatic and sudden social and political disturbances. For example, during the War of Independence, the Namazgâh in Ankara assumed the duty of a *sıhhiye*, a medical center. Other maïdan namazgâhs with mihrabs and minbars didn't have to assume such a duty. To categorize namazgâhs, therefore, does not conclude the ambivalence once and for all.

The mentioned comprehensiveness and ambivalence creates a limitation for the research of this thesis. The Namazgâh in Ankara is a unique place, both among other namazgâhs and in the city of Ankara. If answers to the questions about the Namazgâh cannot be found due to lack of data, it will not be justified to assume that the functions in other similar namazgâhs are undertaken here as well. In other words, it should be taken into consideration that obtaining information about the Namazgâh through abstraction may be misleading and unsupported speculation. Therefore, in this and the following chapters, while trying to discover the Namazgâh in Ankara, the sources that can be found directly about it will be used with minimal speculations.

2.2 Topographical and Functional Properties of the Namazgâh

Although the sources that can be found about the Namazgâh date back to as early as the classical Ottoman period, the majority of documents that make it possible to

obtain information about this place date back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The already limited opportunities to obtain information are not enough to reveal the change and transformation of the Namazgâh over the ages. Therefore, the information about it to be revealed in this subheading will shed light, especially on the last century of the Namazgâh. In order to do this, it is necessary to first start by determining exactly where the place called the Namazgâh exactly was.

2.2.1 Where was the Namazgâh?

First of all, it should be noted that when it comes to the location of the Namazgâh, three different widths can be accepted: (1) the plain on which people prayed, (2) the hill that included the plain, and (3) the entire district that included the hill and its neighbors... The area where people prayed was the plain on the slope of this hill, where the Ethnography Museum and the Museum of Painting and Sculpture are located today. It is possible to verify this on several records. Abdülkerim Erdoğan describes this place as “a flat-topped hill” and “a large square on top of a small hill”.⁷⁸ Şeref Erdoğan, while describing a Friday Namaz performed here, says, “The congregation filled the large plain.”⁷⁹ Crowds of people filling the plain can be seen in photographs taken at this event and similar events thereafter, which will be examined in more detail in the next chapter. Although there are no remains of the minbar stones of the Namazgâh today, these accounts and photographs suggest that people would have prayed on this plain

⁷⁸ Abdülkerim Erdoğan, *Unutulan Şehir Ankara*, 359-360.

⁷⁹ Şeref Erdoğan, *Ankaram*, 51.

where the Ethnography Museum stands today. This plain was the Namazgâh, and the hill containing it was the Namazgâh Hill.

However, the Namazgâh's relationship with its surroundings, especially its functional connection with the cemeteries in its vicinity, necessitates a broader contextualization of this site. Based on the information he learned from the people of Ankara, Hamit Zübeyr Koşay states that the place where the museum is located was used as cemeteries of the rich, the place where the hospital is located was used as cemeteries of the Nogaylar⁸⁰, and the place below the hospital was used as cemeteries of the ordinary people of Ankara.⁸¹ In a map published in the *Küçük Asya'nın Bin Yüzü: Ankara*⁸², it is seen that there was a Jewish cemetery on the outskirts of the Namazgâh, where the Turkish Aeronautical Association (Türk Hava Kurumu) building is located today, and Catholic and Muslim cemeteries to the north of it. We can also see that these cemeteries extend all the way to today's Opera Square. It is reported that the area where the School of Language and History – Geography (DTCF, Dil-Tarih ve Coğrafya Fakültesi) is located today was also a Christian cemetery.⁸³ Şeref Erdoğan directly states that the Namazgâh was a graveyard and that there was a large musallâ stone⁸⁴ in the middle of it.⁸⁵ The examination and analysis of the Namazgâh as a funereal space will be done in the following chapters. At this point of the discussion, it is sufficient to state that

⁸⁰ Nogaylar is a Turkic tribe.

⁸¹ "Müzahane tarafındaki yir zenginlerin; hastahänenin olduđu yir Nugayların mezarlığı idi, hastahänenin altındaki dökler yer Ankaralıların idi." Hamit Zübeyr Koşay, *Ankara Budun Bilgisi*, 187.

⁸² Suavi Aydın et al., Map 46 and 47.

⁸³ Abdülkerim Erdoğan, *Unutulan Şehir Ankara*, 367.

⁸⁴ Musallâ stone is used for funerals.

⁸⁵ Şeref Erdoğan, *Ankaram*, 417.

it would not be correct to examine the Namazgâh by separating it from the surrounding cemeteries.

In addition to these, the Namazgâh was often associated with the Mukaddem District to its immediate north and the Hacettepe District to its immediate east. (In fact, today it is officially considered to be part of the Hacettepe District.) It should also be noted that the city walls that once ran through here had a gate near the Namazgâh, sometimes called the Namazgâh Gate (Namazgâh Kapı).⁸⁶ In 1705, Paul Lucas mentioned this city wall and said that it had 12 gates, seven of which were large and five of which were culverts.⁸⁷ Evliya Çelebi also states that Cenabî Ahmed Gate (Kayseri Gate), Arabapazarı (Namazgâh) Gate, and Doğanbey Gate (İzmir Gate) next to the Hacı Doğan lodge are the most important gates.⁸⁸ So, the Namazgâh Gate was not just any gate, but one of the few most important ones. Just like the issue of cemeteries, the Namazgâh being the entrance and exit gate to the city will be discussed in the context of liminal space. In this discussion, it will be sufficient to accept that the Namazgâh had a strong connection with its vicinity.

Considering all these together, we claim that the spatial existence of the Namazgâh can be considered in three layers. The area enclosed with a solid line in Figure 4, that is, the plain where the Namazgâh is located, approximately determines the

⁸⁶ The fact that Ankara has been subjected to ever-increasing attacks since 1600 must have prompted the city administrators and people to think and take precautions, so the people of the city organized and built a protection wall around the city.⁸⁶ Özer Ergenç has determined from the documents that the construction of this wall started between 1602-1606 and continued for a long time. See KA6 - 6. This wall covered the entire city, starting from Avancıklar in the east, leaving the Cenabi Ahmed Pasha Mosque inside, passing the Karaca Bey Imaret and extending to Hacettepe and from there to the Namazgâh. It turned from the Namazgâh to the Araba Pazarı and reached Hacı Bayram under Tahtakale and from there to Debbağhane. See. Hülya Taş, *XVII. Yüzyılda Ankara*, 106-107.

⁸⁷ Suavi Aydın et al., 172.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

boundaries of this place in its narrowest sense. Today, there are the Ethnography Museum, Painting and Sculpture Museum, and Ankara High School in this area. But when it is necessary to evaluate the Namazgâh as a district, we can limit it with Atatürk Boulevard in the West, Talatpaşa Boulevard in the North, Adnan Saygun Avenue in the East, and Kızılay Street in the South (inside the dashed borders in the Figure 4). But beyond this, the close relationship of the Namazgâh with the places that were once outside the southern walls of the city, that is, the places that can be defined as the Namazgâh's neighbors or outskirts, should not be ignored. We offer a new term to evaluate the Namazgâh with its surroundings, that is the Extended Namazgâh. This new term will refer to the cemeteries that spread from the foothills of this hill to the west and the train station built on these cemeteries, Hacettepe to the east (which is almost inseparable from the Namazgâh Hill), Mukaddem to the north (which was once associated with the Namazgâh) and plain up to where Celal Bayar Boulevard is today to the south.

2.2.2 What was the Namazgâh?

Sources talking about the functions of the Namazgâh mostly repeat each other. One of the most frequently cited sources is Şeref Erdoğan's *Ankaram*. Based on generally accepted information and the narratives of people who used to live in Ankara, Şeref Erdoğan provides the following information: One of the oldest and most famous neighborhoods of Ankara was the Namazgâh. This historical neighborhood, which encompasses the area where the Turkish Hearth and the Ethnography Museum are located today, was then entirely a cemetery, with a large musallâ stone in the middle.

Funeral namaz, rain namaz, and often Friday Namaz were held here; *imams* would give sermons and read khutbahs⁸⁹. This is the reason why it was called the Namazgâh. In addition to these, the Namazgâh was also a place where seymens⁹⁰ would duel.⁹¹

Abdülkerim Erdoğan, quoting Alptekin Müderrisoğlu (he does not specify from which work he quoted), says the following about the Namazgâh: Other Anatolian cities had mosques that could accommodate large congregations, but there was no such mosque in Ankara. Even the Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque, one of the largest mosques in Ankara, was not big enough to accommodate such large crowds. Therefore, the people of Ankara met their collective prayer needs at the Namazgâh. Especially on rainless days, mass prayers would be held and the khutbah would be read here.⁹² *Küçük Asya'nın Bin Yüzü: Ankara*, which was previously mentioned as one of the most comprehensive studies on Ankara, says almost the same things as Şeref Erdoğan, except for the duels, but proposes a very important detail. Apart from Bairam (Eid) and Friday Namaz, the people of Ankara would pray here in times of collective distress, asking for God's help in the face of trouble. In fact, during the War of Independence, when the Greek armies reached

⁸⁹ Khutbah is a specific sermon given during the Friday Namaz.

⁹⁰ Seymen: paramilitary and folkloric regiments and their members, tracing their origins back to ancient Turkic tribes in Central Asia. Often used synonymously with the terms zeybek and efe. Plural: seymens.

⁹¹ “Ankara'nın en eski ve en meşhur semtlerinden biri de Namazgâh'tı. Bugünkü Türk Ocağı ve Etnografya Müzesi'nin bulunduğu sahayı içine alan bu tarihi semt, o zaman tamamen mezarlık olup, ortada büyük bir musallâ taşı vardı. Cenaze namazları, yağmur duası ve ekseriya Cuma namazları da burada kılınır; hoca vaaz verir ve hutbe okurdu. Bundan ötürü bu semte Namazgâh denilirdi. Namazgâh'tan söz açışımız, bu semtin bir özelliğinin de bir er meydanı olmasındandır. Eski Ankara gelenek ve adetlerinden biri de, birbirine muğber olan, iki efe veya delikanlı kozlarını burada paylaşırlardı. Garpta olduğu gibi düello misali iki efe bıçaklarını karşılıklı çekerler, mertçe vuruşurlardı. Buraya her yiğit gitmeye cesaret edemezdi, zira ya ölmek ya da dönmek vardı.” See. Şeref Erdoğan, *Ankaram*, 417.

⁹² “Öteki Anadolu kentlerinde cemaat bir araya gelerek toplu namaz kılacakları büyük camiler olduğu halde, Ankara'nın en büyük camii olan Hacı Bayram-ı Veli camii bile ancak birkaç camii cemaatini alabilecekleri büyüklüktedir. Bu yüzden Ankaralıları toplu namaz kılacakları, hep birlikte dua edebilecekleri yer olarak Namazgâh'ı düzenlemişlerdir. [...] Kalabalık cemaatli cenaze namazları burada kılınır. Yağsız günlerde Cuma namazları, toplu halde burada kılınır, hocalar vaaz verir, hutbe okurlar.” See. Abdülkerim Erdoğan, *Unutulan Şehir Ankara*, 359-360.

Haymana, three consecutive Friday Namaz were held here.⁹³ The important detail here is that the praying in the Namazgâh may sometimes not be arbitrary but depends on reasons, like collective distress. Kemal Bağlum similarly underlines that the people of Ankara performed the Friday Namaz here when they were in trouble.⁹⁴ In the following subheadings, the reasons why this is a correct deduction will be shown.

Apart from prayers, there were other functions underlined in several sources. The Namazgâh is described, for example, as a place where pilgrims and soldiers were sent off. Hülya Taş and Şeref Erdoğan emphasize this function. Recently, even a novel about sending off soldiers from the Namazgâh was written by Mikail Çolak, named *Namazgah Tepe (the Namazgâh Hill)* and published by Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları.⁹⁵ As another function, although rare, some sources report that this place was used as a bairam place.⁹⁶ Erdoğan even claims that this was a dueling ground, as shown earlier. Based on all these, it can be said that the existing literature about the Namazgâh briefly claims the following: The Namazgâh was a place where collective worship such as Friday and Bairam Namaz were performed when the weather conditions allowed since there was no larger mosque or masjid where these could be performed. Alongside this basic thesis, some views were also defended, although they were not mainstream: that this was an *er*

⁹³ “Namazgâh, bugünkü Numune Hastanesi ile Etnoğrafya Müzesi arasında bulunan alandı; taştan bir minber ve musallâ taşı bu açık alanı belirleyen yapıları. Bayram ve Cuma namazları burada kılındığı gibi, Ankaralılar için bir sıkıntı olduğunda bütün şehrin Namazgâh'ta namaz kılarak sıkıntıya karşı niyazda bulunması, bu dertten kurtulmak için başvurulmuş bir yoldu. Kurtuluş Savaşı sırasında Yunanistan orduları Haymana'ya kadar geldiğinde peş peşe üç Cuma namazı Namazgâh'ta kılınmıştı.” See Suavi Aydın et al., 280.

⁹⁴ Kemal Bağlum, *Beşbin Yılda Nereden Nereye Ankara*, 64.

⁹⁵ Mikail Çolak, *Namazgâh Tepe* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2020).

⁹⁶ Abdülkerim Erdoğan, *Unutulan Şehir Ankara*, 365. And Hamit Zübeyr Koşay, *Ankara Budun Bilgisi*, 190-191.

meydanı (place where seymens dueled), that it was a bairam place, that soldiers and pilgrims were sent off here, and so on...

Before discussing the Namazgâh as a liminal space, it is necessary to correct the general view of the Namazgâh, explained above, with the findings of this research. This thesis will (1) propose corrections about the nature of the collective namaz performed here, (2) accept that soldiers and pilgrims were sent off from here but claim that this was not the primary farewell center of Ankara, and (3) accept that it might have hosted some bairams and festivities but claim that this was not the primary location for such festivities.

2.2.2.1 The Namazgâh as a Masjid

So far, no source has been found to prove that people performed Friday and Bairam Namaz here, as long as the weather permitted. Yet, it is possible to find documents showing that this was not the case, that performing Friday and Bairam Namaz in the Namazgâh was not arbitrary, and that people gathered in the Namazgâh with special rituals and invitations, especially in cases of distress.

First of all, it is known that there was a mosque of great spiritual importance in Ankara, the Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque. Even if the evidence were ignored, it would not be difficult to guess that the Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque was used for collective worship such as Friday and Bairam Namaz primarily. Alptekin Müderrisoğlu's arguments quoted above summarize well the idea that would object to this. Müderrisoğlu says that even the Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque, the largest mosque in Ankara, was not large enough to

accommodate crowded congregations. However, there are documents that will prove this objection unfair and refute the idea that the Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque was not preferred because it could not accommodate large crowds. A Ramadan Bairam ceremony is described in the issue of *Hakimiyeti Milliye Newspaper* dated 24 June 1920.⁹⁷ In this news report, it is clear that the Bairam Namaz was performed with a crowded congregation at Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque. The word “*izdiham*” was used here to describe the crowd, which means “extreme crowd” in Turkish. In other words, although there was a huge crowd at the first Bairam Namaz after the establishment of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque was still preferred due to its spiritual values. A little earlier, on Friday that corresponded to the opening of the Grand National Assembly, it can be seen that this mosque was again chosen as the place of namaz.⁹⁸ One of the reasons why April 23 was chosen as the opening day of the Parliament was to coincide with Friday and to benefit from the holy day of Friday, in the

⁹⁷ “Bayram Merasimi

Haziranın on sekizinci Cuma gününe müsadif Ramazan Bayramı’nın birinci günü mutad muayedeysi resmî Ankara’da merasimi mahsusa ile icra edilmiştir.

Sabahleyin erkenden Mustafa Kemal Paşa Hazretleri maiyetlerinde Erkan-ı Harbiye-yi Umumiye Reisi Miralay İsmet Bey ve yaverleri bulunduğu hâlde Hacı Bayram Veli Camii Şerifine muvaselet ederek doğruca mahfili mahsusta ahzı mevki eylemişlerdir. Camide pek büyük bir izdiham vardı. Ahali, mebusan ve Kuvayı Milliye’nin kıymettar kumandanlarından Ethem Bey ve müfrezesi efradı, rüesa ve memurini hükümet hiçbir merasim ve teşrifata tabi olmaksızın diz dize, omuz omuza saflar teşkil eylemişlerdi.

Mustafa Fevzi Paşa’nın en arka saflarda Mehmetçiklerin arasında mütevazıyane edayı salat eylemeleri, bilhassa nazarı dikkati celp ediyordu.

Mustafa Kemal Paşa Hazretleri bayram namazını müteakip camiden çıkarak, avluda bulunan Hacı Bayram Veli türbesini ziyaret ve bazı zevatın tebrikatını kabulden sonra cami kapısında bulunan bir müfreme piyade ve polis efradı tarafından selamlanarak maiyetleri ile beraber otomobile râkib olmuşlardır. Bu sırada askerî bando üç defa selam havası çalmış ve ahali, millî kuvvetler, asker esir halifeleri için “Padişahım çok yaşa!” nidasıyla dua etmişlerdir. [...]” See “Bayram Merasimi,” *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, June 24, 1920.

⁹⁸ “Vatanın istiklâli, hilâfet ve saltanat makamının kurtarılması gibi en mühim ve hayatî vazifeyi ifa edecek olan Büyük Millet Meclisinin küşat gününü Cumaya tesadüf ettirmekle mezkûr günün mebrukiyetinden istifade ve küşattan önce bilumum mebusını kiram hazeratıyla Hacı Bayram Camii Şerifinde Cuma namazı da eda olunarak envarı Kur’an ve salâttan istifade olunacaktır. Badessalât hilyei saadet ve sancakı şerifi hâmilan dairei mahsusaya gidilecektir. Dairei mahsusaya dahil olmadan evvel bir dua okunmasıyla kurbanlar kesilecektir.” See HA4 – 310

first place.⁹⁹ Likewise, an important spiritual center such as Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque was chosen. Yunus Nadi uses strong adjectives to describe the size of the crowd that day. According to Nadi, Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque, which could only fit a thousand or a thousand and a half people, was so full that when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his close circle of advisors arrived, it was nearly impossible to find a place for them to pray. The crowd was so cramped that it was impossible to perform namaz properly.¹⁰⁰ People had even filled the courtyard of Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque and the streets leading to it completely.¹⁰¹ But even though it was known that Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque would not be able to accommodate this crowd, it was still chosen to pray on this important day, not the Namazgâh. It is possible to expand on these examples. In the news report titled “Ankara’da Tezahürat” (Chanting in Ankara) published in *Anadolu’da Yenigün Newspaper* dated September 11, 1921, it is stated that a congregation of more than ten thousand people performed the Friday Namaz in the Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque and its courtyard.¹⁰² In the news titled “Millî Mücadele İçerisinde Üçüncü Bayram” (Third Bairam during the National Struggle) published in *Hakimiyeti Milliye Newspaper* dated June 12, 1921, it is said that the voice could only be transmitted to the congregation by

⁹⁹ Yunus Nadi, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Anıları* (İstanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları, 1978), 310.

¹⁰⁰ Ali Metin, Atatürk’s adjutant, says that some people could not perform namaz at all. See Ali Metin et al., 83.

¹⁰¹ “Daha sabahtan herkes en büyük bir bayramın zevk ve şetaretine iştirak etmek üzere evlerinden dışarıya uğramışlar, kadın erkek, çoluk çocuk, haline göre herkes allı güllü en güzel elbiselerini giyerek Hacı Bayram Cami’i ile Büyük Millet Meclisi içtimagâhı itti haz olunan binaya kadar azami bir kilometre kutrundaki daire dahilinde bulunan bütün arsaları, bazan damlarının tepelerine kadar bütün binaları doldurmak üzere her tarafı istilâya koyulmuşlardı. Yerli yabancı bütün Ankara bu çevre içine sıkışmağa çalışıyor, fakat mümkün olmadığı için taşıyor, taşıyordu. [...] İstiap kabiliyeti (içine sığdırma) nihayet bin, bin beş yüz kişilik olan Hacı Bayram Cami’inde dahi erkenden mevki almağa acele edenler çok olmuştu. Öyle ki Mustafa Kemal Paşa ve arkadaşlarına yer bulmak için bilâhara hayli müşkilât çekilmiş, hayli uğraşılmak mecburiyeti hasıl olmuştu. [...] Hacı Bayram Cami’inin Cuma namazına iştirak edebilenler cami’inin içinde yerlerinden kimildayamıyacak kadar kucak kucağa idiler, kapılardan taşmışlar, mermer avluya dolmuşlar, mezarların üzerine ilişmişler, sokaklarda mevki almışlardı. Bu şartlar içinde usulü dairesinde ibadete imkân yoktu.” See Yunus Nadi, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Anıları*, 313-314.

¹⁰² “Ankara’da Tezahürat,” *Anadolu’da Yenigün*, September 11, 1921.

three muezzins¹⁰³ to show how crowded the congregation was in the Friday Namaz performed on Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque.¹⁰⁴ Considering all these events, it can be clearly seen that the claim that Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque was not enough on crowded days and that is why people prayed in the Namazgâh is not true.

If Friday and Bairam Namaz were not performed in the Namazgâh even on such important days when that much of a crowd would come together, then which namaz were performed here? To answer this question, it is necessary to look at the common characteristics of the namaz and other prayers performed at the Namazgâh. When these examples are examined, it will be seen that the situation of being in distress, which is reminded between the lines of *Küçük Asya'nın Bin Yüzi: Ankara*, comes to the fore. The first meeting held in the Namazgâh during the War of Independence was about the troubles caused by the occupation forces in the city and the public's general discomfort with the occupation.¹⁰⁵ It is understood that the next big the Namazgâh meetings corresponded to the times when the Turkish army was fighting on the front, and the people came together and prayed to God for the success of the army.¹⁰⁶ The fact that three consecutive Friday Namaz were performed at the Namazgâh when the enemy army approached Ankara shows that the occupation stress increased.¹⁰⁷ In addition, it is seen that the Namazgâh was used for funeral namaz of some of the Turkish soldiers who

¹⁰³ The presence of three muezzins here indicates the size of the congregation. Before the development of loudspeaker technology, in such crowded prayers more than one muezzin would be evenly spaced in the congregation, repeating the imam's instructions loudly and carrying them to the congregation at a distance.

¹⁰⁴ "Milli Mücadele İçerisinde Üçüncü Bayram Hacı Bayram Camii Şerifinin havlisinden türbeye kadar taşan cemaat kitesine ancak üçüncü müezzinin gür sadası erişebiliyordu. [...]" "Milli Mücadele İçerisinde Üçüncü Bayram," *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, June 12, 1921.

¹⁰⁵ Erdoğan, 55-56.

¹⁰⁶ Examples and analysis will be provided in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁷ Aydın et al., 280.

returned wounded from the front and then passed away.¹⁰⁸ As a result, it can be said that the Namazgâh was not a place where Friday and Bairam Namaz were mostly performed, weather permitting, but rather a place where people came together to perform prayers in times of distress and asked for help from Allah.

Before moving on to the next topic, it would be useful to briefly touch on the issue of rain namaz and funeral namaz. If the research is deepened, more definitive information can be given about where rain namaz were performed in Ankara. However, considering that rain namaz were made in open areas and that lack of rain was a stressful situation and that rain namaz was actually a request for help from Allah, it can be said that the speculation that these namaz were performed in the Namazgâh is plausible. Regarding funeral namaz, it is known that the area around the Namazgâh was a cemetery, so it is probable that funeral namaz was often performed here, and it is certain that some of the funerals of martyrs were performed here during the War of Independence. But it should not be forgotten that there were many cemeteries in Ankara, both inside and outside the city, and funeral namaz could be performed in many different mosques and masjids. For example, Yunus Nadi talks about a funeral ceremony in Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque.¹⁰⁹ In other words, although it is true that funeral namaz were sometimes performed at the Namazgâh, there is no clear information about how often this was the case.

2.2.2.2 Farewells and Welcomes in the Namazgâh

¹⁰⁸ Abdülkerim Erdoğan, *Unutulan Şehir Ankara*, 361.

¹⁰⁹ Yunus Nadi, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Anıları*, 386.

Another issue that is sometimes mentioned when talking about the functions of the Namazgâh is that this was a place where soldiers and pilgrims were bid farewell. A much more detailed study can be done on the existence of such a function in the classical and premodern periods. However, for now, there is no definitive information on this issue for those periods. If it is needed to speculate about sending off pilgrims and soldiers, it can be said that the Namazgâh was a suitable area for this. During the period when the city had walls, the Namazgâh Gate was one of the important gates to the south of the city. It is known that even when the city walls were removed, the city did not develop in the south direction until the Republican period. In other words, this place stood out as the southernmost point of the city for centuries. Especially considering that the pilgrims would be moving towards the south, it would not be surprising if they were sent off from this direction. In addition, it is known that pilgrims and soldiers were sent off with ceremonies, prayers, and even animal sacrifices. As a place of worship and prayer, the Namazgâh was a very suitable place for this. So, at first glance, it seems reasonable that it was a send-off point for soldiers and pilgrims.

However, there is data to support and contradict this view at the same time. The concept of the Extended Namazgâh, the need to think of the Namazgâh together with its surroundings, was introduced in the previous subheadings and becomes important in this discussion. First of all, the name of the neighborhood just north of the Namazgâh was Mukaddem District, and the name of the neighborhood just east of it was Hacettepe District. The names of these neighborhoods are quite striking. The word “*mukaddem*” means “precedent”. The word *mukaddime*, a derivative of this word, refers to the beginning. In other words, Mukaddem District can be seen as the beginning of the city.

In addition, it can be deduced from Özer Ergenç's works that the name of Hacettepe District comes from Hacı Tepesi District.¹¹⁰ Hacı Tepesi can be translated into English as Pilgrims' Hill. The names of these neighborhoods reinforce the idea that the Extended Namazgâh was the entrance and exit area of the city and that it was the place to send off pilgrims.

There is a written record indicating that the Namazgâh was a soldiers' send-off point, yet it is in the early 20th century. In the news titled "Yeni Gazilerimiz"¹¹¹ (Our New Veterans) in the issue of *Hakimiyeti Milliye Newspaper* dated September 9, 1921, a soldiers' farewell ceremony is described in detail. Since this document will be analyzed in the next chapter, it is sufficient for now to know that the ceremony took place in the Namazgâh, it had a detailed schedule, and this news article was a call for the people of Ankara to attend the ceremony. This stands out as data that supports our previous speculations. It strengthens the idea that soldiers may have been sent off from the Namazgâh before.

Despite all these, other findings show that the Namazgâh may not have been the first choice for sending off soldiers and pilgrims. We see that Akköprü (White Bridge), as another landmark representing the entrance and exit on the west side of the city, also undertakes this function. Alptekin Müderrisoğlu, in his work describing the Sakarya Battles, points to Akköprü as the place where soldiers were sent off to the front and veterans returning from the front were welcomed.¹¹² Şeref Erdoğan tells how the soldiers returning from the Balkan War were welcomed in Akköprü with tears in their

¹¹⁰ Özer Ergenç, *XVI. Yüzyılda Ankara ve Konya*, 30.

¹¹¹ "Yeni Gazilerimiz," *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, September 9, 1921.

¹¹² Alptekin Müderrisoğlu, *Sakarya I. Cilt*, 230-231.

eyes.¹¹³ Abdülkerim Erdoğan goes back even further and explains that the soldiers who went to the 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War and returned were sent off and welcomed in Akköprü. Based on the *Ankara Vilayet Newspaper*, the book *Küçük Asya'nın Bin Yüzi: Ankara* reports that fifteen thousand people attended the welcoming ceremony held in Akköprü for a battalion that returned to Ankara on September 4, 1886.¹¹⁴ In his work, *Ankara Budun Bilgisi*, Koşay names the lament of grandmother Kezban for her sons who went to military service, as Akköprü Lament.¹¹⁵ Elsewhere, Koşay states that, according to what he learned from old Ankara residents, valuable and rich people were welcomed further west in Sincan Village, while the poor were welcomed in Akköprü.¹¹⁶ Thus, although it is true that there were cases in which farewell ceremonies took place at the Namazgâh, it is also true that the primary location for farewells and welcomes was Akköprü.

Akköprü's name is mentioned in sending off pilgrims as well as sending off soldiers. Since pilgrim farewells are less crowded and more ordinary events, information on this subject is a lot more limited. But in Koşay's work, sending off a pilgrim is described in detail. Since, again, this detail will be included in the following chapters, for now, it is enough to know that the pilgrim candidate first stops by the Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque with a crowd accompanying him, and then they go together to Akköprü, where he leaves the crowd at there and continues on his way.¹¹⁷ However, it should be taken into account that people's preferences for pilgrimage routes may have changed at

¹¹³ Erdoğan, 34-35.

¹¹⁴ Aydın et al., 286.

¹¹⁵ Koşay, 43.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 131.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 188-189.

different times due to economic and security reasons. It is known that the pilgrimage caravan route starting from Istanbul in the eighteenth century had stops in Eskişehir to the west of Ankara, Akşehir to the south-west and Konya to the south.¹¹⁸ The fact that Hijaz is located to the south of Ankara helps us to conclude that it is more meaningful to move towards the south, i.e. towards Konya, to meet the caravan. It would be a meaningful inference that someone travelling from Ankara to join the caravan in Eskişehir would be seen off at Akköprü in the west, while someone travelling from Ankara to join the caravan in Konya would be seen off at the Namazgâh in the south. The singular example cited by Koşay may be the story of a pilgrim candidate travelling westwards due to the various circumstances of the time. A more detailed study on the pilgrimage routes of the people of Ankara is needed to reach more definite conclusions on this subject. With this little information and a little bit of speculation, it will be accepted that the Namazgâh was a send-off point for pilgrims, just like for the soldiers.¹¹⁹

2.2.2.3 Other Functions of the Namazgâh

One of the two most repeated functions of the Namazgâh was to perform prayers here, and the other was to hold farewell/welcoming ceremonies for soldiers and pilgrims. But apart from these, there were other proposed functions of the Namazgâh:

¹¹⁸ Latif Armağan, “XVIII. Yüzyılda Hac Yolu Güzergâhı ve Menziller (=Menâzilü'l-Hacc),” in *the Journal of Ottoman Studies*, no. 20 (2000): 73-118.

¹¹⁹ The Namazgâh and the site on which it is located may have been a place through which Christian pilgrims passed and even saw off. One of the identified pilgrimage routes passes through Ankara and continues southwards through Gölbaşı. See Fatma Şengül, “Orta Anadolu’da Bizans Dönemi Hıristiyan Hac Yolları,” in *Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 7 (2022): 11-29.

the Namazgâh could be a gathering place, a game field, a festival place, and even a courtroom. It is essential to reveal these and critically analyze them.

First of all, it should be noted that there is a general acceptance that wrestling events took place in the Namazgâh. Koşay gives details: The *dellals*¹²⁰ give notice in advance that the wrestlers will wrestle after the namaz on Friday so that people gather here. Government officials attend, as well. They spread a carpet in front of the mihrab and the oiled *pehlivanlar*¹²¹ wrestle here. Police forces ensure security. The money collected from people and the money given by the government are collected and distributed to the winning *pehlivan*.¹²² According to this information provided by Koşay, we see that the *pehlivan* wrestlings held in the Namazgâh were organized as official organizations within a certain discipline and order. What Şeref Erdoğan says is largely parallel to what Koşay says. Erdoğan argues that these wrestling matches were held under the auspices of the Governor himself. He mentions that the excitement was increased by constantly playing drums and zurna while the game was going on.¹²³

Şeref Erdoğan, in addition to *pehlivan* wrestling events, mentions duels between seymens. Erdoğan, while explaining the traditions and customs of old Ankara, says that two seymens who harbored deep animosity towards each other confronted at the Namazgâh, drew their knives, and fought like a duel in the Western cultures. He adds that these fights must result in the death of one party.¹²⁴ This event is not an event that we can find examples of in other works or confirm with official or unofficial documents.

¹²⁰ A person who shouts loudly in crowded places to announce something or an event to the public.

¹²¹ “*Pehlivan*” refers to wrestlers.

¹²² Ibid, 191 and 197-198.

¹²³ Erdoğan, 190-191.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 417-424.

Erdođdu bases this on a story he heard from his father. According to this story, a young man named Ali, who is strong for his age, challenges one of Ankara’s most famous seymens, Ahmet Ađa, to a duel because he cannot receive the respect he thinks he deserves. The words indicating that he wants to duel are “I would like to meet you and go to the Namazgâh”. The term “going to the Namazgâh” means a call for a duel, according to this story. Ali and Ahmet Ađa come to the Namazgâh, but Ahmet Ađa, who thinks that this brave young man will be of great benefit to the society and that his death will be a waste, rejects the duel and makes peace, saying “I will not stab a lamb that will become a ram.” Although this story strengthens the idea that this place was a place for wrestlers to show off their power, it needs confirmation. Therefore, we will accept that the Namazgâh may have hosted *pehlivan* wrestling events, but will leave the issue of whether it was a duel area or not to future studies.

As for the discussion of whether the Namazgâh was a place for bairams and festivities, there are counterintuitive findings that suggest this place might have hosted events related to Christian and old Iranian festivals, like Easter and Nauruz¹²⁵, rather than the most eminent Muslim bairams like Ramadan Bairam and Corban Bairam (Eid al-Adha). In rare cases, Bairam Namaz may have been performed here. (In previous subheadings, it was shown that the main preferred place for Bairam Namaz was Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque.) After these namaz, people may have celebrated each other’s bairam here. However, it is not possible to find sufficient evidence regarding this, and there is no convincing data as to whether this place was used as a holiday festival area. Nevertheless, in Koşay’s work, the events that took place in the Namazgâh on the days

¹²⁵ A Persian holiday celebrated on the days corresponding to the vernal equinox.

of Nauruz and Easter are described. Nauruz days almost coincide with Christian Easter days. People of Ankara, according to Koşay, say that in those days they used to gather at the Namazgâh, sit on stones, eat food, light fires, and jump over them.¹²⁶ As for Islamic holidays, it seems that their festivities took place mostly in the Hamamönü Square and Tahtakale.¹²⁷

It is possible to find accounts of young people playing games in the Namazgâh and its surroundings, apart from these bairams and festival days. While explaining how young men used to catcall beautiful girls, Koşay gives the following example: “While playing ball at the Namazgâh, a boy catcalled a woman he had his eye on”.¹²⁸ Of course, in this context, what is important is not that he catcalled a young girl, but that he was playing ball at the Namazgâh. Similarly, Mahir İz, who moved to Ankara when he was a child due to his father’s work, says that they used to play a game called “*mayna*” on the plains at the foot of the Namazgâh.¹²⁹ Again, of course, it is not possible to determine with certainty how often similar events and games took place in the Namazgâh. However, based on oral narratives, it can be claimed that the Namazgâh was a place where people used to play games and come together on some feast days. But with the available data, it would not be correct to define this place as a festival area.

2.3 Redefining the Namazgâh

¹²⁶ Koşay, 190-191 and 203.

¹²⁷ Kemal Bağlum, 67. Aydın et al., 281-282. Koşay, 192.

¹²⁸ Koşay, 64.

¹²⁹ Mahir İz, *Yılların İzi*, 50.

All these discussions and the information that has emerged offer us the opportunity to create a new, rectified and detailed explanation of the Namazgâh. We know how it ended, even if we have no information about its beginning. We are largely certain where it corresponds geographically and topographically. While we know that it can undertake many different functions for a wide variety of needs of people and society, it is not possible to determine with certainty all the functions it may have undertaken so far. To a large extent, we can also determine which other areas or buildings of the city share the functions we know the Namazgâh has assumed. With all this in mind, this thesis offers the following paragraph as the historical explanation and portrayal of the Namazgâh.

The Namazgâh was a multipurpose, open-air prayer space located on the southern border of Ottoman Ankara, which disappeared in the first quarter of the 20th century, in the area bordered by today's Atatürk Boulevard, Talatpaşa Boulevard, Adnan Saygun Avenue and Kızılay Street, where people of Ankara used to come together, pray and ask for help from Allah, especially in times of stress, and a place where they used to perform funeral namaz and bury their dead. Since it was an open-air space on the threshold of the city, it used to undertake different functions as needed, such as being a farewell and welcome location and being the area for wrestling events. However, none of the functions undertaken by the Namazgâh were specific to itself. The Namazgâh, which does not stand out as the first choice in almost any field, was, on the other hand, the only place that undertook all of these at the same time.

CHAPTER 3

EXPERIENCING THE LIMINALITY

In the previous chapter, we explained what should be understood by the Namazgâh and what its functions were and were not. Upon this explanation, we presented a new and rectified explanation for it. In this chapter, we will discuss the Namazgâh as a liminal space, based on this new portrayal. However, to argue that it was a liminal space requires first and foremost a discussion of what should be understood by the term “liminal space”. If we take the ethnographer and folklorist Arnold Van Gennep’s research on rites of passage in small-scale societies in the early twentieth century as a starting point and think of liminality in its narrowest sense, it might not be possible to find a rite of passage in the classical sense at the Namazgâh. On the other hand, if we take the literature which has become widely accepted almost a century after Van Gennep that considers almost all thresholds, literal or figurative, as a liminal space, the Namazgâh can be indisputably considered as one, because the Namazgâh was once a physical gate, and turned into an abstract gate with the disappearance of the city’s outer walls. But we will neither accept liminality in its narrow usage as it was a century ago and restrict all the possibilities nor will it rely on the simplicity of “every passage is a liminal space”. By evaluating the characteristics of the liminal stage of the rite of

passage, we will establish what to look for in the events and phenomena that took place at the Namazgâh.

First of all, it is important to remember that rites of passage are basically rituals. Genep's work was based on traditional ceremonies such as funerals, weddings, births, circumcisions and New Year's celebrations, in which a transition from one state to another occurs, a state begins, or a state ceases.¹³⁰ Although transformations that are not very ceremonial and not built on specific rituals can sometimes be considered rites of passage, it is necessary to limit this to exceptional examples and not to diminish the representational power of the concept of liminality. Therefore, in the events and phenomena to be analyzed at the Namazgâh, this thesis will look for ritualistic and ceremonial elements. For example, it will not be the subject of this thesis for a person to leave the city through the Namazgâh Gate on his own, without any concern for the rest of the community. Furthermore, a transformative effect such as moving from one state to another, initiating or terminating a situation or event should also be sought. For example, the children arbitrarily playing ball at the Namazgâh, mentioned in the previous chapter, should not be considered as a subject of liminality unless a specifically transformative or initiative effect is shown.

The liminal stage, the second stage of the three-stage rite of passage, expresses a state of being "betwixt and between". The first academic who used this phrase for liminality was Victor Turner, who rediscovered the concept of liminality years later, with his book *The Forest of Symbols*.¹³¹ Turner took the concept of liminality out of its

¹³⁰ Arnold van Genep, *The Rites of Passage*.

¹³¹ Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (USA: Cornell University Press, 1982), 93.

narrow meaning and started to examine it in tribal and non-tribal societies and reinterpreted transitional situations together with people's reactions. One of the things Turner particularly emphasized in the context of liminality was ambiguity, which was also mentioned by Van Gennep. Turner chose to express this with the phrase *betwixt and between*, which means neither this nor that.¹³² This phrase expresses a temporary ambiguity, where established roles and rules disappear and roles and rules specific to that ceremony begin to apply. The liminal stage should especially possess this ambiguity. Therefore, the third and final component to look for, in the events and phenomena that took place in the *Namazgâh*, is the disappearance of established roles, the leaving behind of the familiar, the situation in which the new situation has not yet started, i.e. the state of being in an ambiguous and vaguely situation, namely, the *betwixt and betweenness*.

In summary, the phenomena and events that took place at the *Namazgâh* will be shown to be ceremonial, transformational/initiating, and *betwixt and between*. However, this thesis does not claim that these elements can be found in all the functions of the *Namazgâh*. It has already been argued that the *Namazgâh* can have a wide range of unrelated uses. It has even been shown that it can be reorganized and used according to the needs of the moment, outside of its established functions. In order to claim that the *Namazgâh* was a liminal space, it is not necessary that all the events that took place here had these three elements. This thesis will evaluate the three most common uses of the *Namazgâh*, namely (1) as an entrance and exit area of the city of Ankara, (2) as a meeting place for the people of Ankara and the surrounding towns for special events, and (3) as a *sıhhiye* (medical center) and funereal place.

¹³² Ibid.

3.1 The Namazgâh as a Place of Departure and Arrival

Two phenomena and one event on departure and arrival will be analyzed and the liminality of the Namazgâh will be discussed through these. In the previous chapter, we show that one of the two phenomena, namely the pilgrim farewells, is a speculation in need of evidence. Therefore, pilgrim send-offs will be briefly mentioned and the soldier send-offs, for which there are definitive sources, will be discussed in a little more detail. Once these two phenomena have been established, the Extended Namazgâh will be analyzed for one of the largest and most ritualistic welcoming events the Namazgâh has ever experienced: the arrival of Mustafa Kemal in Ankara, in late December 1919. After presenting the data on each of these phenomena and one event, the rituals, transformations/initiations and betwixt and betweenness in these will be discussed and the claim that the Namazgâh was a liminal space as a point of departure and arrival will be reiterated.

3.1.1 Liminality in Farewells for Pilgrims

While it is a speculation that pilgrim journeys may have sometimes started from the Namazgâh, even if this is taken as a fact, how this may have been done needs further speculation. Hamit Zübeyr Koşay, who wrote the book *Ankara Budun Bilgisi* (Ankara's Ethnology) by compiling the records of what he learned from the locals of this city, describes a pilgrim farewell with details. In this account, the rituals of bidding farewell to the pilgrim begin at the pilgrim's house and end at Akköprü, an old bridge nearly a

kilometer away from the city to the west. One cannot help but assume that a pilgrim send-off that might have ended in the Namazgâh would have been undertaken in a similar manner. It cannot be said that a ritual that ends at the Namazgâh, instead of Akköprü, should have been different, apart from the endpoint. Therefore, this thesis will look for elements of liminality based on the details of Koşay's pilgrim farewell records and remembering the typical causes and consequences of a pilgrimage.

The following details of seeing off a pilgrim are entirely based on Hamit Zübeyr Koşay's records, which will be followed by our analysis in the next paragraph. According to Koşay¹³³, the process of seeing off the pilgrim begins one week before the date of departure, when the pilgrim informs the sheikh that he is going on a pilgrimage and asks to be farewelled. The right day for the pilgrimage is Thursday and the preparations begin on Wednesday. On Thursday, the sheikh¹³⁴ arrives at the pilgrim's house with his followers. As he arrives, the murids¹³⁵ shout and dhikr¹³⁶ with bells and *dömbeks*¹³⁷. They also carry a *sancak* (banner). When they arrive in front of the house, a person appointed by the pilgrim sacrifices a corban¹³⁸. The corban is slaughtered on the threshold of the pilgrim's house and the blood of it flows on the threshold. The murids of the sheikh quickly pick up the corban and take it to the tekke¹³⁹. Here the sacrificial meat is cooked. Meanwhile, at home, the pilgrim first looks in the mirror and then steps on it.

¹³³ Koşay, 188-189.

¹³⁴ Leader of a sufi order. Koşay does not specify what order did this sheikh belong.

¹³⁵ Followers of sufi orders.

¹³⁶ Dhikr or zikr means "the ritual formula of a Sufi brotherhood recited devotionally in praise of Allah and as a means of attaining ecstatic experience". "Dhikr." Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dhikr>. Accessed 11 May. 2024.

¹³⁷ Kind of a hand-held percussion instrument.

¹³⁸ Corban is the animal to be sacrificed.

¹³⁹ The lodge or the monastery of the sufi order.

People pour a jug of water¹⁴⁰ to ward off the evil eye and then break the jug. When the pilgrim leaves the house, they put him on a horse, put a shawl around his neck, dress him in a yellow fur coat and wrap a silk turban around his head. Then, the journey begins with the convoy. At the front of the convoy is the sheikh. Behind him come the dervishes, reciting loud dhikr, stabbing themselves with skewers and stamping horseshoes on their backs.¹⁴¹ The pilgrim candidate follows behind them. During this journey, the candidate gives alms and tips to people from time to time. The women who are the household members of the pilgrim candidate follow behind, weeping. They stop and pray at the tombs seen on the way. They visit the Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque and tomb as well. They move together until they reach the edge of the city. The point where the pilgrim candidate leaves the city and those who see him off is this threshold. The pilgrim candidate gets off his horse here. He greets and kisses those who come to greet him. They give their *helallik* (mutual forgiveness).¹⁴² The dervishes continue their music and dhikr. After this, the pilgrim gets back on his horse and leaves the city.

The analysis of this record by Koşay, provides the best explanation of how the beginning of a pilgrimage was full of rituals and symbols. According to this, when a

¹⁴⁰ There is a belief that pouring water behind the person going on a journey will protect them from trouble. For an example, see Ayhan Karakaş, “Çukurova Yöresi Geçiş Törenlerinde Su Odaklı Uygulamalar Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme,” *HUMANITAS – Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 2, no. 3 (2014): 117.

¹⁴¹ The miracles described here indicate that these dervishes belonged to the Rufai’s Dervish Order. On Rufaiism, see Mustafa Tahralı, “Rifâiyye,” *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 35, (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2008). However, it must be remembered that a convoy may include dervishes belonging to more than one order. This will be seen in Mustafa Kemal’s arrival in Ankara. Therefore, although the characteristics here indicate Rufaiism, this does not mean that all the dervishes in the convoy were Rufai dervishes.

¹⁴² It is still an ongoing tradition for people going on a pilgrimage to ask for *helallik*. Asking for *helallik* is basically asking for forgiveness from people for a kind of sin called *kul hakkını çiğnemek* (violating other people’s rights), which is caused by people’s failure to fulfill their responsibilities towards other people and is highly shunned by Muslims. Asking for forgiveness is usually reciprocal and is expressed in the reciprocal verb “*helalleşmek*”. Regarding the *kul hakkı* and *helalleşmek*, see Mustafa Çağrıncı, “Kul Hakkı,” *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 26, (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2002).

would-be pilgrim embarks on a pilgrimage, it is a matter that concerns not only himself but the whole community. The carrying of the banner, which will be seen frequently in the events to be analyzed later, shows that this is an important and more than ordinary ritual. The details of the sacrifice, especially the pouring of the blood of the corban on the doorstep of the pilgrim's house, have symbolic meanings. Sacrificing a corban was seen, in Islamic societies, as a deed that would protect people from troubles.¹⁴³ In this example, the slaughtering of the sacrifice and especially the pouring of its blood on the threshold of the house can be said to be a symbolic act of worship for the safe return of the pilgrim to his home. There may also be symbolic meanings for the pilgrim candidate to look in the mirror and step on it, which was specifically told by Koşay in his record, but we couldn't find any data on what this might have meant. Another ritual practiced to ward off the evil eye and calamities is the pouring of water from a jug and breaking the jug. Similarly, giving alms is also associated with warding off trouble.¹⁴⁴

The fact that all these symbols and rituals are specifically related to accidents and calamities, and that the pilgrim candidate asks for forgiveness from people before leaving, is directly related to the fact that he is embarking on a journey that will last for months and is full of dangers. As soon as the pilgrim candidate says goodbye to people at the threshold of the city and leaves, he has left his safe home behind. The only thing

¹⁴³ Abdullah Kahraman, "Kurban İbadetinin Hikmeti," in *I. Uluslararası İslam Kültür ve Medeniyeti Sempozyumu: Kurban*, ed. Ahmet Ekşi, Abdurrahman Bulut, Ahmet Emin Dağ and Ahmet Faruk Göksün (İstanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 2022), 192./ Vejdi Bilgin, "Sosyolojik Açıdan Kurban: Bir İbadetin Dönüşümü," in *I. Uluslararası İslam Kültür ve Medeniyeti Sempozyumu: Kurban*, ed. Ahmet Ekşi, Abdurrahman Bulut, Ahmet Emin Dağ and Ahmet Faruk Göksün (İstanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 2022), 198. / Karakaş, Ahmet Canan. "Kurban Paylaşma ve Maneviyat İlişkisi." In *I. Uluslararası İslam Kültür ve Medeniyeti Sempozyumu: Kurban*, edited by Ahmet Ekşi, Abdurrahman Bulut, Ahmet Emin Dağ and Ahmet Faruk Göksün, 212-222. İstanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 2022.

¹⁴⁴ Giving alms is also believed to be a deed that will ward off trouble. A hadith is narrated that alms repels trouble and prolongs life. See Çetin Kaska, "Forty Hadith in Persian Verse with an Unknown Poet," *Journal of Ottoman Literature Studies*, no.29 (2022): 796.

he leaves behind in the city is not his safety. He has also left behind all the adjectives that define him in society: being a husband, being a son, being a father. In addition to these, the titles that define his economic activities will also be left behind. If he is a barber, he will leave his barbering, if he is a tailor, he will leave his tailoring in the city of Ankara and take on his new title, that of a pilgrim candidate. He will temporarily leave all these attributes that define him, and when he completes his journey and returns, he will regain these attributes. But in addition to these, he will also acquire a new title that he will wear forever: *Hacı*. This title, which is given to people who complete at least one pilgrimage, will not only be an epithet but will redefine all his relationships. In Islam, it is believed that the pilgrimage erases sins.¹⁴⁵ For this reason, especially the elderly make a special effort not to acquire new sins as the older sins have been erased, some even give up trading for fear of *haram* involvement in the business, and try not to lie or commit unlawful acts. Therefore, as a “Hacı” they come to be seen as a trustworthy person. All these are examples of transformations and transitions experienced by pilgrims during and after the pilgrimage.

The place where all these transformations are most intensely experienced, and the suspense point of the journey is the point of departure at the threshold of the city. Here the person is now referred to as a “pilgrim candidate”. He has not yet become a *hacı*, but he has shown his will for the pilgrimage and is respected for it. He has left his family ties and responsibilities behind, but he has not yet physically separated from them. He is no longer in the city, but he has not yet completely left his safe space. In

¹⁴⁵ Salim Ögüt, “Hacı,” *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 14, (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1996).

other words, not quite like this nor quite like that. The pilgrim candidate is here betwixt and between.

In sum, the pilgrim farewell is a liminal situation where established roles start to disappear and new attributes are acquired. If the Namazgâh or the Extended Namazgâh has hosted pilgrim farewells, like Akköprü, it is reasonable to consider it as a liminal space, because it has all of the three elements sought intensively. Yet again, whether it hosted this kind of farewells or not is a matter of speculation.

3.1.2 Liminality in Farewells for Soldiers

Military send-offs are similar to pilgrim send-offs in terms of liminality, but this time it is possible to create a historical narrative based on evidence rather than speculation. The previously mentioned *Hakimiyeti Milliye* news report dated September 9, 1921 and titled “Yeni Gazilerimiz” (Our New Veterans) can be analyzed in a little more detail here.¹⁴⁶ This report explains that the war is continuing in favor of the Turkish

¹⁴⁶ “Bugün Namazgâhta İcra Olunacak Nusret Duasından Sonra Parlak Bir Alayla Şubelerine Gideceklerdir

Kahraman ordumuz on beş günlük emsalsiz cidali ile kat kat fazla bir düşmanı azim telefata durdurmaya muvaffak oldu. Şimdi ise kendisine taarruz ederek önüne katmak üzere bulunuyor. Bu sevinçli günlerde ise hükümetimiz yeni sınıfları silah altına davet etti. İnşallah yeni gazilerimize bu melun Türk düşmanını takip ve aman dilenmek vazifesi nasip olacaktır.

Bunun için, bugün Namazgâh'ta bütün halkı ile nusret duası okunacak ve Cuma namazı cemaati kebir ile eda edilecektir. Bu muazzam günde bütün dindaşlarımızın arzı vücut edeceği şüphesizdir. Bu mühim içtima için atideki program kararlaştırılmıştır:

- 1- Merasime miktarı kâfi polis, jandarma, inzibat memurları iştirak edeceklerdir.
- 2- Askeri musika takımı merasimde hazır bulunacaktır.
- 3- Belediye Muavinliği tarafından davul, zurna temin edilecektir.
- 4- Her mevki bu vatan evladının teşyî için miktarı kâfi atlı bulundurulmasını temin edecektir.
- 5- Keza her mevki mıntıkası dahilinde bulunan sancakı şerifleri içtima mahalli olan namazgâha ihtiramâtı mahsusa ile getirecektir.
- 6- Celp ve cemi bildirilen efradın heyeti ihtiyariyeleriyle birlikte namazgâhta Cuma namazını eda ve duada hazır bulunacaklardır.
- 7- Müdafaayı Hukuk ve Belediye riyasetlerine yapılacak merasime iştirakleri için tebligat ifa kılınmıştır.

nation, that new soldiers will join the army, and that the people will gather at the Namazgâh to bid farewell to these soldiers who will join the army. Unlike the pilgrimage farewell, the ceremonies here are not organized by sheikhs and dervishes, but directly by the officials of the city. It is stated that police and gendarmerie officers will be present to ensure the event is safe and peaceful. In the pilgrimage farewell, dervishes were reportedly playing music with percussion instruments and chanting loudly; here, a military music team is reportedly taking part in the ceremony. It is also stated in a separate article that drums and zurnas¹⁴⁷ will be provided by the municipality. Again, as in the pilgrim farewell, one of the symbols of this event is seen as bringing a banner. Each region is expected to bring its own banner with special dignity. This ceremony is crowned with prayers such as Friday Namaz and victory prayers. To summarize, the soldier farewell phenomenon is carried out in a ceremonious manner.

The transformation that takes place during the military farewell ceremony is actually quite obvious. A young man who had been a shopkeeper, a cook, or a teacher until the previous day is conscripted to fight the enemy armies that are gradually approaching Ankara, and perhaps become a martyr. He leaves his safe space of his city and his family and joins a new chain of command. His journey has three main possibilities, all three of which point to a profound transformation. A soldier can run away from the front and become a deserter. In this case, he is not accepted by the public

8- Bütün merkez vilayet seknesinin bu vazifeyi vataniyeye koşan gazilerin nusret duasında hazır bulunmak üzere namazgahta içtimaları lüzumu vesaiti münasibe ile ahaliye tebliğ edilmiştir.”

“Yeni Gazilerimiz,” *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, September 9, 1921.

¹⁴⁷ Zurna is “a traditional Middle Eastern shawm.” See. “Zurna.” Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/zurna>. Accessed 28 May. 2024.

and becomes a bandit.¹⁴⁸ The second possibility is to be martyred fighting for his homeland and religion, which religiously is one of the highest honors a Muslim can earn. The third possibility is to return as a veteran and reintegrate into society. Although he used to be accepted as a child who hadn't even grown a mustache yet, he will now be respected as a veteran who fought for his homeland regardless of his age. In other words, taking up arms for war and going to the front, with or without the possibility of returning, is an act that transforms the individual and society's attitude towards him forever.

Again, the place where these transformations are most intense is at the threshold of the city, the point where the soldier separates from society. Here the roles are not yet fully established. Those who have been recruited have put on their uniforms, maybe even picked up their rifles, but they have not yet started to fight. The cold face of war may have begun to come alive in their eyes, but the possibility of being martyred by a stray bullet has not yet arisen. They will be leaving their families and their cities, but for the time being the people of the city and their families are moving with them. In other words, the prospective soldiers have started to break away from their old social roles and statuses, they have started to take on their new roles, but this change has not yet been fully realized. They are betwixt and between.

3.1.3 Liminality in Mustafa Kemal's Arrival in Ankara

¹⁴⁸ A good example of deserters becoming bandits is found in Velidedeoğlu's memoirs. See Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu, *Bir Lise Öğrencisinin Milli Mücadele Anıları*, 25-29.

Greetings and farewells may not always be around a specific phenomenon. The greetings and farewells of singular people in singular events can also be considered within the scope of liminality. The most epic example of this in Ankara's recent history is Mustafa Kemal's arrival in the city just before the War of Independence, in late December 1919. This was an event that gathered almost all the elements of liminality in itself. It was not just an event that took place at the Namazgâh, but an event that began within the city center of Ankara, encompassing the Namazgâh and extending across the region that this study calls the Extended Namazgâh, and even further south to Dikmen and Gölbaşı. What is important here for the ethnographic knowledge of this city is not how Mustafa Kemal came to Ankara, but how the people of Ankara welcomed him. In this section, this welcome itself will be analyzed and discussed through Enver Behnan Şapolyo's accounts.

The following details of Mustafa Kemal's arrival are based on Şapolyo's accounts, which will be followed by our analysis in the following paragraphs. According to Şapolyo¹⁴⁹, the people of Ankara learned Mustafa Kemal's intention to come to Ankara (which was scheduled for Saturday, December 29), and they erected a banner at the Namazgâh the day before his arrival to invite people for Friday Namaz to both pray for the liberation of the homeland and to inform people about Mustafa Kemal's arrival. When Saturday came, they went down to the south of the city to meet Mustafa Kemal Pasha, some going as far as Dikmen and Gölbaşı, others coming to the Namazgâh and the Station Line at the threshold of the city to wait for him. Mustafa Kemal and his companions stopped for each group that greeted them, greeted their greeters, and moved

¹⁴⁹ Şapolyo, *Kemâl Atatürk ve Millî Mücadele Tarihi*, 357-377.

to the next group, until they reached the outskirts of the Namazgâh, the threshold of the city of Ankara. Instead of entering the city from here, they turned their direction towards the Ankara Train Station to the west, greeted those who greeted them there, gave a powerful warning to the occupation forces located at the Station,¹⁵⁰ turned their direction into the city once more and came directly in front of Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque. Afterward, they went to the Government House and Mustafa Kemal rested there. He, again, met with the people gathered in front of the Government House and spoke to them, then went to the room reserved for him in the Vilayet Mansion and, thus, the welcoming ceremony came to an end.

But the most important event that was not mentioned in the previous paragraph was the creation of a seymen procession (seymen *alayı*). Seymen processions were ethnically and religiously ceremonious events with very strict traditions. According to Şapolyo¹⁵¹, the procession was formed on Red Days (*Kızılca Gün*). Red Days refers to days of national importance such as times of national catastrophe, the collapse of a state and the establishment of another state. On the day Mustafa Kemal was to arrive in Ankara, a seymen procession was formed. Seymens from surrounding villages and towns came to Ankara and resided in inns. A banner was hoisted in front of Sarı Ahmed's Coffeeshouse, also known as *Efeler Kahvehanesi*, located near Ulucanlar District. Seymens gathered here and moved to Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque with the banner, sacrificed a corban in front of Hacı Bayram's tomb gate, accompanied by prayers, and then the procession was officially begun and set off. At the front were

¹⁵⁰ See also Ali Metin and Ziya Oranlı, *Atatürk'ün Şimdiye Kadar Yayınlanmamış Anıları* (Ankara: Alkan Matbaası, 1967), 50.

¹⁵¹ Şapolyo, *Ibid.*, 360-377.

drummers and zurna players. Their ceremonial attire made them look like shamans, and the drummers played their drums along with various *zeybek*-like¹⁵² dances. Behind them, a robust and physically strong seymen carried the banner of the Seymen Regiment. The two seymens next to him were marching with their machetes held aloft. Between the drummers and the banner bearers, two strong and powerful seymens with bushy beards were marching with their axes on their shoulders. Behind these people at the front of the procession, other seymens were marching, shouting loudly, and sometimes playing *zeybek*, with machetes in their hands. Behind these seymens on foot were the seymens on horseback. Behind them marched dervishes belonging to various orders. Rukai dervishes performed miracles such as touching a heated iron to their tongues and inserting skewers into their bodies. Following the dervishes were the craftsmen's guilds belonging to various professions. Each of these guilds carried a banner representing themselves. Behind them, the teachers and students of schools marched with banners representing their respective institutions. This procession went as far as the south of the city, where they dispersed and began to wait for Mustafa Kemal in various places along the southern line. Those waiting at the threshold of the city were divided into two groups, one group waited at the Namazgâh Hill and the other at the Station Line.

The welcome of Mustafa Kemal and the Green Army, who was believed to redeem the independence of the nation, in Ankara was not carried out with ordinary fervor, but with a systematic ceremony, a ceremony based on traditions. Şapolyo describes how sensitive the rules of this ceremony were by quoting his dialogue with

¹⁵² We have already mentioned that one of the synonyms of the word seymen is zeybek. Zeybek is more like the western Anatolian equivalent of seymen. There may be some confusion here, because the traditional dance that they play is also called zeybek. The zeybek mentioned in this paragraph refers to the dance.

one of Ankara's famous seymens, Yağcıoğlu Fehmi Efe.¹⁵³ According to him, the seymen procession has strong religious characteristics. For example, there must be a sacrifice of corban. The seymen procession cannot move without this sacrifice. Fehmi Efe gives an example of a certain Halit Efe. During Halit Efe's leadership, one procession marched without the sacrifice. Feeling that one of the customs is missing, Halit Efe asks if the sacrifice has been slaughtered. When he receives a negative answer, he says that the seymen procession must have a sacrifice, and since none has been made, he sees himself as the sacrifice for this procession. He then falls to the ground and dies immediately. Fehmi Efe says that this is why they adhere to the customs of their ancestors and that the seymen procession must act according to these strict rules. In short, the creation of the seymen procession was a very ceremonious event and the customs of this ceremony seemed to be fatally important.

Mustafa Kemal's arrival in Ankara and the way the seymen procession welcomed him signaled a very serious transformation, and this transformation was as much about society as it was about Mustafa Kemal himself. The motto "the seymen procession is formed on red days", and the fact that the arrival of Mustafa Kemal and his Green Army in Ankara was referred to as a red day directly indicates this transformation. In fact, in the eyes of the seymens of Ankara, that day was the time when a state collapsed, and a new state was founded. Their prophecy and determination would prove correct, and the foundation of the new Turkish State would be laid in Ankara. Mustafa Kemal, on the

¹⁵³ "Seymen alayında dinî merasim vardır ve muhakkak kurban kesilir. Kurban kesilmeden seymen kalkmaz. Bir zamanlar Ankara'da Halit Efe adında birisi zamanında seymen düzülür, fakat kurban kesilmeden alay yürüyüşe geçer. Adetlerden birisi eksik olduğunu gören Halit Efe kurban kesilmedi mi? diye sorar. Hayır cevabını alınca, o halde Seymenlerin kurbanı benim! diyerek yere düşüp derhal ölür... Bu sebeple biz ata törelerine çok riayet ederiz, onu aynen yapmaya çalışırız." Şapolyo, *Ibid.*, 363.

other hand, would stop being a dismissed Ottoman Pasha who traveled around Anatolia trying to convince the people to join the National Struggle, and would become both the commander of a regular army and the political leader of the new state. In other words, Mustafa Kemal's arrival in Ankara meant a transformation for Mustafa Kemal, for the people of Ankara and for the whole nation.

The situation of this commander arriving in Ankara, at the threshold of the city, greeting the people, integrating with the city, was a situation in which the roles were ambiguous. On the one hand, he was now the leader and the decision-maker, but he had no say in the course of the ceremony. There were two striking examples of this. The first is what Şapolyo quoted from an interview with Mustafa Kemal:

They took me from Yenışehir towards the Station. At that time, the British commander, who occupied Ankara, was sitting in the Station. They organized the ceremony in this way to show them the fury of the nation!...¹⁵⁴

Mustafa Kemal, who would henceforth be the primary decision-maker, had no say in the flow of the ceremony that day. A second example occurred when they visited the Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque and Tomb. It was a spiritually and culturally important place for the people of Ankara and was often visited for such ceremonies and events, as can be seen in the various events mentioned in this thesis. However, Mustafa Kemal did not understand why they had come here and asked the Governor and was told that it was just a visit.¹⁵⁵ This example shows that he had no detailed knowledge of the progression of

¹⁵⁴ "Beni Yenışehir'in bulunduğu yerden İstasyon'a doğru götürdüler. O zamanlar Ankara'yı işgal eden İngiliz kumandanı, İstasyon'da oturuyormuş. Onlara milletin galeyânını göstermek için merasim tertibatını bu şekilde yapmışlar!.." Şapolyo, *Ibid*, 372.

¹⁵⁵ "Mustafa Kemal, Hacı Bayram Veli türbesine girdi; yanında bulunan Yahya Galib'e:

- Burada ne yapacağız?..

Yahya Galib:

- Maksud yalnız bir ziyarettir, o kadar!.." *Ibid.*, 375.

the ceremony, he didn't even know why they were visiting some of the places they were passing by. That is to say, Mustafa Kemal arrived in Ankara, was welcomed as a liberator commander, and then his leadership as a military and political leader was accepted and handed over in the welcoming ceremony. During this event, on the other hand, Mustafa Kemal's role became ambiguous, he simultaneously played the roles of a leader and a guest, in other words, he was in a state of betwixt and between.

When Mustafa Kemal arrived in Ankara, half of the people waited at the Namazgâh Hill and the other half at the Station Line, located inside the Extended Namazgâh. Another group went further south and welcomed him in Dikmen. It should be noted, however, that the welcoming and farewell ceremonies of the people of Ankara are not always events that take place directly at the Namazgâh, but sometimes (as in the case of the pilgrim farewell) a series of events that begin within the city and extend to its threshold. In other words, the landmarks that form the threshold of the city, such as the Namazgâh, the Station and Akköprü, are the meeting and parting places of these larger ceremonies. Transformation is most intense here. Roles become more and more ambiguous here. Nothing is exactly like this nor exactly like that. With this characteristic, the Namazgâh can be identified as one of the places that host the liminal stage of the passage, especially during ceremonious welcoming and farewell events.

Ankara's Namazgâh Gate may have hosted hundreds of thousands of such non-ceremonial crossings. This study limited its subject matter to ceremonial crossings. As for the speculation that pilgrim farewells are made from here, liminality was examined, albeit on a probabilistic basis. As another phenomenon, the liminality of soldiers' farewells was examined through a newspaper article showing a definite example. As a

result of the examination of all these phenomena and events, the three elements that we seek for liminality were intensely identified. At the entrance and exit of the city, people were experiencing a transformation through ceremonial events and at this very threshold they were experiencing the state of being neither inside nor outside, both inside and outside. So, as one of the entry and exit points of Ankara, the Namazgâh was a liminal threshold between the inner city and the outside.

3.2 The Namazgâh as a Gathering Place

In addition to being a threshold for entering and exiting the city, it is also important as a meeting place for those inside and those outside the city. In this section, we will show and analyze this gathering function of the Namazgâh, but this time, instead of a transformation or transition, we will see insiders and outsiders meeting on a common ground to discuss important issues, to pray against stressful situations and to initiate actions.

3.2.1 Mehmed Pasha's Trial

A good example of meetings of the insiders and outsiders, and one of the possible reasons for such a meeting, is in the sultan's edict about Dervish Mehmed Pasha, the only official written source on the Namazgâh in the pre-modern period that we could find. The mentioned document is a Sultan's edict to a certain Mevlâna Ali, dated back to 1121's Shawwal (m. 1709).¹⁵⁶ The edict starts with a summary of what

¹⁵⁶ BOA, A. {DVNSMHM.d.00116 150/1212 (H-20-10-1121) reads: "*Trabzon muvakkıtı Mevlâna Ali zide fazlihuya hüküm ki, bundan akdem Ankara Sancağı'nda vâki bazı kaza ahalisi tarafından hâlâ ber vechi arpalık livayı mezbura mutasarrıf olan Derviş Mehmet Paşa'dan Divanı*

happened before between Dervish Mehmed Pasha, the governor of Ankara Sanjak¹⁵⁷, and his plaintiffs from Kökler Village. When plaintiffs had complained against the Pasha, he was in the countryside for an important task. That's why Mehmed Pasha was summoned with an affidavit so that the hearing could be held. Pasha came to the place known as the Kafir Spring, which is 15 minutes away from the city. Here, he made peace with the people of Kökler Village and their *subaşıları* (chiefs), and he was acquitted, the disagreement between them was ended, and the census was declared.

However, some of the *âyan* (prominent people of the city), who were not initially involved in the case, sent news to cazas (other towns in the sanjak) through callers saying, “Let those who complain about Dervish Mehmet Pasha come” for the trials to be continued. People gathered in the town (Ankara) with *cemmi kesir*¹⁵⁸ to testify against Pasha, and those who could not come appointed vakils (representatives) to replace them.

Hümayunuma teşekkî olundukta mahallinde ahvalleri şer ile görüleb icrayı hak olunmak üzere Dergâhı Muallam kapucu başlarından Ahmed dame mecdihu mübaşeretiyle sâdır olan emri şerifim mucibince Medineyi Ankara'ya gelindikte paşayı mümaileyh bazı kapusuz levendat taifesinin def'i mazarratları için taşrada bulunmağla mürafaayı şer' için tarafı şer'den mürasele irsal olundukta paşayı mümaileyh şer'i şerife ve emri münife itaat ve inkiyad ve şehre rub saat karîb Kâfir Pınarı dimekle maruf mevziye nüzul ve livayı mezburda asıl davacıları olan Kökler Zeameti karyelerinin subaşıları ve re'ayalarıyla sulh ve ibra ve kat'ı niza ve tahriri şer' olunduktan sonra ashabi arzdan nefsi şehrden ve ahaliyi kazanın a'yanından olub kaziyyede medhali olmayan bazı kimesneler paşayı mümaileyhden davası olanlar gelsün deyu kaza ve kaza münâdiler nidâ ettirip ve davaya gelmeyenler taraflarından ademler tayin idüb bazılarını şartlayub ve bazılarını nezre kestürüb ve cemmi kesir ile nefsi Ankara'ya gelüb lakin fesat olmak ihtimalinden paşayı mümaileyh mezburların cemiyetlerinde esnasında nefsi şehre varmayub haricinde vaki Namazgâh nâm mahalde meks ve beher kazadan onar adem ve tarafı şer'den naib gelüb benimle veyahut vekilim ile mürafaayı şer' olsun deyu haberler göndermeğle mezkurlar asla ıska eylemeyüb ve paşayı mümaileyh bizimle mürafaadan eba ve imtina eyledi deyu hevasına tâbi naibden bir tarikle ilâm olunmağla sen ki Mevlanayı mümaileyhsin hususı mezbur için bil-fiil Rumeli kadıaskeri olan Mevlana Mustafa ademallahü teala tarafından mevla tayin olunmuşsundur imdi mahalline varub Mevlanayı müşarünileyhin ilamı mucibince mübaşir tayin olunan [] zide kadrihu marifetiyle paşayı mümaileyh ile kendüsünden hukuk iddia eden hasımlarının ahvallerine tamam hak üzere şer'le istima' ve icrayı hak ve sıhhati üzere deri devlet medarımına arz ve ilam ettiresin deyu yazılmıştır fi evası şevval 121”

¹⁵⁷ Sanjak is a subdivision of a vilayet.

¹⁵⁸ The term “cemmi kesir” is used for people who had the “authority of negotiation” between the official authorities and the community in the Ottoman classical period, either openly or secretly, and who were seen in front of the public with this authority. Sometimes it refers to the whole society. See Özer Ergenç, *Osmanlı Tarihi Yazıları: Şehir, Toplum, Devlet* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2012), 442-453.

Yet, since Pasha was worried about the possibility of quarrels and conflict, he did not enter the city; he waited with his *cemiyet* (community) in a place called the Namazgâh outside the town. He sent news saying, “Ten people and a *naib* (representative of a district) should come from each district to hold a trial with me or my *vakil*.” However, complainants took this as an evasion making excuses. They received an official document from a *naib*, saying that “Pasha refused to attend the hearing.”

To settle this issue, Mevlâna Ali was appointed to go to Ankara, see the case between Dervish Mehmet Pasha and those who complained about him, hand over the right to the right and inform the Sultan about the latest situation.

We see that Dervish Mehmed Pasha suggests the meeting to be held at the Namazgâh outside the city and that he and his community camped there. Dervish Mehmed Pasha, coming from outside Ankara, arrives at the Namazgâh at the threshold of the city, but does not want to enter the city. This document shows that the meeting did not take place in the first stage, and that an official was appointed to deal with the matter. It is not known whether such a meeting took place here afterward or not. But Dervish Mehmed Pasha’s decision to meet at the Namazgâh clearly shows that he saw the Namazgâh as a place where those insiders and outsiders of the city could meet at a common location.

This document was particularly important in showing that the Namazgâh could have been a meeting place for those inside and outside the city, located at the threshold. The fact that it is unknown whether this meeting took place, and if so, how it took place, makes it impossible to explore elements of liminality in this case. For this reason, we will content ourselves with saying that this document is an example of the Namazgâh’s

multifunctionality, and since there are documents and even photographs of gatherings during the years of the National Struggle, elements of liminality will be sought in these later gatherings.

3.2.2 The Jihad Khutbah

The most important meeting at the Namazgâh just before the War of Independence was the Jihad Khutbah, which lit the spark of the National Struggle in Ankara. Before the Jihad Khutbah, in the days when the occupation movements were accelerating, the discomfort and stress of the people of Ankara pushed them to take action. On May 29, 1919, two weeks after the occupation of Izmir by Greek forces began, the people of Ankara organized a “Rally to Protest the Greeks” in the city.¹⁵⁹ The people of Ankara also showed their reaction against the Istanbul Government and the Imperial Palace. In September of that year, Governor Muhittin Pasha, who tried to implement the policies of the Istanbul Government supporting the British occupation in Ankara, did not receive any support from the people of Ankara, and the representatives of these people, who contacted the government leader Damat Ferit Pasha to complain about the governor, declared that they did not want this governor, and when they did not get the response they expected, they declared their de facto autonomy, saying “the people of Ankara do not recognize a grand vizier like you or your sultan”.¹⁶⁰ They arrested Governor Muhittin Pasha, they prevented the newly appointed governor by the Istanbul government from entering the city with the threat of arrest, they elected their

¹⁵⁹ Erdoğan, *Unutulan Şehir Ankara*, 363.

¹⁶⁰ Erdoğan, 49-51.

own governor, and they gave Yahya Galip Bey, whom they chose as governor, the title of “*Hakan*”, which was traditionally given to the rulers of Turkic states, to show their insubordination against the Istanbul Government and the Palace.¹⁶¹

By October of the same year, a gathering was organized at the Namazgâh, not only for the residents of the city, but also for people from the surrounding villages and towns. This gathering, which took place on Friday, October 5, was secretly announced to the public in advance. And it was said that banners would be hoisted on either side of the place where the khutbah would be delivered at the Namazgâh, to mark the importance and ceremonial nature of this gathering.¹⁶² Abdülkerim Erdoğan, in his book *Unutulan Şehir Ankara* (the Forgotten City Ankara), notes that the crowd that filled the plain of the Namazgâh on October 5 consisted of young and old people from the city center and surrounding villages.¹⁶³ In the photographs taken during that sermon, it can be seen that a group of people, which could be considered quite crowded for the Ankara of that day, listened to the sermon given by Beynamlı Hacı Mustafa Efendi. In these photographs, it can also be seen that a banner was hoisted on either side of the stones on which Beynamlı Hacı Mustafa Efendi delivered his khutbah.

This gathering went down in history as the meeting that convinced the people of Ankara to unite and fight for the National Struggle. In his fiery khutbah, Beynamlı Hacı Mustafa Efendi said that the only way to salvation was to unite and take up arms, kissed the banner, and invited people to jihad.¹⁶⁴ With the participation of the people who

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 53.

¹⁶² Ibid., 55

¹⁶³ Erdoğan, Ibid., 363

¹⁶⁴ Erdoğan, *Unutulan Şehir Ankara*. 364.

responded to this invitation, the Ankara National Regiment was established, with Mufti Bökrekçizade Rifat Efendi as the Regiment's *Sancaktar* (Banner Bearer), Hacı Atıf Efendi as the Regiment's Mufti and Hafız Mehmet Efendi, the orator of Hacı Bayram Mosque, as the Regiment's Imam. The regiment expanded with the participation of around four hundred young men from the gendarmerie cadets and reached a considerable number with the participation of three thousand prisoners released from penitentiaries.¹⁶⁵ This meeting at the Namazgâh resulted in the people's formal and de facto acceptance to enter a total war.

3.2.3 Gatherings During the War of Independence

After that meeting, which lit the spark of the National Struggle in Ankara, the people of Ankara met at the Namazgâh for other Friday Ceremonies¹⁶⁶, especially when the intensity of the war increased, and people from the city and surrounding villages and towns met here, on the periphery of the city, and prayed for the victory of the army. Newspaper reports on these gatherings are readily available. On August 27, 1921, while the Battle of Sakarya was in full swing, Hakimiyeti Milliye Newspaper published a news article titled "Namazgâh'ın Asırdide ve Yeşil Mihrabı Önündeki İçtima" (The Gathering in front of the Old and Green Mihrab of the Namazgâh). This news article mentions that the people gathered at the Namazgâh the previous day prayed for the victory of the

¹⁶⁵ Aydın et al., 347.

¹⁶⁶ The reason for distinguishing between the concept of Friday Namaz and Friday Ceremony in this study is to avoid any possible confusion of meaning. The Friday Ceremony should be understood as the entire event, from the beginning to the end, including the namaz, the khutbah, and all the social interactions before and after.

army.¹⁶⁷ In this report, we learn that people were called to the Namazgâh by announcers in advance, that thousands of people came, that they dhikr loudly, that they performed the Friday Namaz and listened to the khutbah.¹⁶⁸ What is also interesting in this text is that the gathering almost turned into a political meeting¹⁶⁹, i.e. some important people came to the front of the congregation and made speeches, and the congregation interacted with chanting, crying, dhikr and prayers.¹⁷⁰ The gathering even took on an international aspect when the ambassador of Afghanistan made a speech and announced that he would donate money to be spent on the relatives of the martyrs.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ “Ankara’nın dindar, fedakâr halkı dün Cuma namazını güneş altında eda ile ordumuzun fevz ve nusretine dua eyledi. Kardeş Afganistan’ın muhterem sefiri tarafından irat edilen meviza – Sultan Ahmet Han Hazretleri mecruhlarımıza ve şüheda yavrularına sarf edilmek üzere iki bin lira teberru ettiler. – Halkımız bu içtimadan gözyaşlarını silerek ayrıldı.” More in the footnotes that follow. Namazgâh’ın Asırdide ve Yeşil Mihrabı Önündeki İçtima,” *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, August 27, 1921.

¹⁶⁸ “Dün şehir içerisinde dolaşan dellallar ve davullar Ankara’nın dindar ve fedakâr halkını şehir haricindeki Namazgâh’a ordumuzun Nusret ve satveti için duaya davet ediyordu. Bugün binlerce mümin Cuma namazını asırdide namazgâh’ın yeşil taşları üzerinde eda eylediler bol otların üzerine dindarane ve mutiane diz çöken mümininin güneş ve gök kubbe altında kemali huşu ile ibadetleri pek ulvi bir manzara teşkil ediyor tekbir ve tehlil sadaları Ankara afakında pek tatlı akisler husule getiriyordu. Müezzinler tarafından çift ezanlar ve Namazgâh’ın taştan minberinde hutbe okunduktan sonra Cuma namazı itmam edildi.” More in the footnotes that follow. “Namazgâh’ın Asırdide ve Yeşil Mihrabı Önündeki İçtima,” *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, August 27, 1921.

¹⁶⁹ We can say that Friday Namaz already have a political and social identity. In a parliamentary speech, Seyit Bey, a member of parliament from Izmir, explains that Friday Namaz is a political act of worship and that is why the namazgâhs in cities were created. “Cuma namazı siyasi bir ibarettir. Bayram namazı da öyledir. Onun içindir ki büyük şehirlerde ve kasabalarda kılınır. Köylerde kılınmaz. Bizim meshebimizde, yani mesheb-i hanefide köylerde Cuma namazı sahih olmaz. Mutlak şehirde olacak. Çarşı ve pazarı olan kasabalarda kılınacak ve mümkün oldukça bir yerde, bir camide kılınacak. Onun içindir ki evvelleri şehir içinde veya şehir kenarında sureti mahsusada ihzar edilmiş meydanlarda kılınırdı, o yerlere namazgâh denir. Hâlâ bazı şehirlerde namazgâh denilen yerler vardır.” T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi. Devre:2, İçtima: 1, Cilt: 7. (3.3.1340)

<https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d02/c007/ehttbmm02007002.pdf>.

¹⁷⁰ “Namazı müteakip Balıkesir Mebusu Vehbi Bey mimber önündeki mermer müezzin mahfiline çıkarak atideki mevizayı irat etti: [...] Vehbi Bey’in mevizasından sonra Ankara Mebusu Hacı Mustafa Efendi, düşmanın hücum ettiği ordunun, İslam’ın yegâne ordusu olduğunu, ordunun muvaffakiyeti bütün Müslümanların ve dinin muvaffakiyeti bulunduğunu beyandan sonra pek müesser bir dua kıraat ettiler, cemaat bu esnada kendini zapt edemeyerek hüngür hüngür ağlıyor ve tekbir sesleri her tarafı inletiyordu. [...] Sonra Tunalı Hilmi Bey “Orduya” şiirini inşad etti ve alkışlandı.” More in the footnote that follows. Namazgâh’ın Asırdide ve Yeşil Mihrabı Önündeki İçtima,” *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, August 27, 1921.

¹⁷¹ “Bu tezahürattan pek ziyade mütehassis olan kardeş Afgan Devleti Müstakileyi İslamiyesi Sefiri Sultan Ahmet Han Hazretleri kürsüye gelerek Lisani Farisi ile atideki hitabede bulundular. Nutuk o esnada parça parça cemaati müslimine sefaret müsteşarı tarafından Türkçeye tercüme edildi. [...] Sefir hazretleri nutuklarını bitirdikten sonra 1000 lirası mecruhlarımıza, 1000 lirası şüheda evladına sarfedilmek

After the decisive victory in the Battle of Sakarya, another news article titled “Namazgâh’ta” (At the Namazgâh) was published in the *Hakimiyeti Milliye Newspaper* dated September 17, 1921. In this article, it is seen that the people gathered at the Namazgâh were both thankful for the victory and asking for God’s help for the upcoming battles of the war that had not yet been completed.¹⁷² This example has similar elements to the previous example. Here, too, various prayers were recited, some verses from the Qur’an were repeated, especially the *secde* (prostration) verses¹⁷³, and the congregation prostrated collectively. Again, speeches are made, the participation of the Afghan Ambassador is emphasized, and this time Tunalı Hilmi Bey recites a poem titled “Müslüman Birliğine Davet (Invitation to Muslim Unity). That is to say, international cooperation was emphasized in this meeting as well. About a year later, when the Turkish Army’s definitive victory was realized, people again gathered at the Namazgâh for thanksgiving and prayers. The article titled “Namazgâh’ta Cemaat-i Kübera ile Dua” (Prayer with a Great Congregation in the Namazgâh) published in the September 9, 1922 issue of *Hakimiyeti Milliye Newspaper* describes this gathering.¹⁷⁴

üzere Hilali Ahmer’e iki bin lira teberru ederek hamiyeti islamiyelerini izhar eylemişlerdir.” Namazgâh’ın Asırdide ve Yeşil Mihrabı Önündeki İçtima,” *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, August 27, 1921.

¹⁷² “Sakarya zaferini tesit ve yeni muvaffakiyetlere nailiyet tazarruatı için bu cuma günü binlerce Müslüman Cuma namazını Namazgâh’ta eda etti. Cuma namazından evvel Kuranı azimüşşan tilavet edildi, ve şehrimizin ulema ve meşayihinden mürekkep bir heyeti muhtereme tarafından Selaten Tüncina duası tilavet edildi. Namazdan sonra secde ayetleri okunarak defaatle cemaati müslimin secdeyi şükranına kapandı ve hitamında Büyük Millet Meclisi Mescidi Şerifi İmamı Asitaneli Hacı Hafız Sabri Efendi tarafından pek belîğ bir surette fetih ve nusret duası tilavet edildi. Şeriyye Vekili Hasan Fehmi Efendi Hazretleriyle mebusandan birçok zevat ve Afgan sefiri Sultan Ahmed Han ve müsteşar Mehmed Gülhan Hazeratı ve vali İhsan Bey ve Bolu’dan gelen on bir kişilik heyet ve zevatı saire de Namazgâh’ta bulunuyorlardı. [...] Bolu mebusu Tunalı Hilmi Bey kürsüye gelerek Müslüman Birliğine Davet namındaki şiirini Afgan Sefaret Müsteşarına tevdi ile beraber şiirini inşad etti. [...] Cemaati Müslimin ordumuzun muvaffakiyetinden dolayı şükranlar ve dualar ederek dağıldı. Dün Ankara pek kutsi ve vatanperverane bir gün daha yaşadı.” “Namazgâh’ta,” *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, September 17, 1921.

¹⁷³ Some specific verses in the Qur’an, when recited, compel the reciter and the listeners to *secde*. To *secde* means to prostrate.

¹⁷⁴ “Dün Cuma olmak münasebetiyle, Ankara ahalişi muzaffer olduğumuz zaferin şükranını cemaati kübera hâlinde Hâliki Kâinat’a ref’ için namazı bütün halkın iştirakiyle Namazgâh’ta eda ettiler.

We see similar elements in this example. On that day, the announcers announced that Friday prayers would be held at the Namazgâh, banners were erected near the mihrab and the minbar, the Friday Namaz was performed, verses of *secde* were recited and collective *secde* was performed. In addition, music was played on percussion instruments, dhikr was shouted and sacrifices were made in gratitude for the victory.

The Namazgâh hosted these and many other gatherings during the War of Independence. These gatherings were usually held on Fridays corresponding to the heightened intensity of the war and the times of victory. Fridays were holy days in which the people were already religiously obliged to gather for Friday ceremonies. These gatherings were an occasion for people to pray, strengthen their unity, collect aid for the army and express their gratitude to Allah. However, the discussion of the liminality of these events is not as straightforward as the discussion of liminality in the welcome and farewell ceremonies described in the previous section. While elements of ceremonial qualities and being in a state of betwixt and between can still be easily seen, it can be said that transformation or transition has been replaced by taking action and strengthening unity.

3.2.4 Liminality in the Gatherings

Daha sabahtan salatı cumanın Namazgâh'ta edileceği menadiler tarafından vasıtasıyla şehrin her tarafında [...] tebliğ olunmuş ve dükkanlar kapanmıştı. Vaktinden evvel ahali fevç fevç Namazgâh'a toplanmaya ve nim bulutlu semanın altında kemali huşuğla namaz vaktinin hululüne [...] bulundular.

Namazgâh'ın tarihî ve âsardide, taş mimber ve mihrabına camii şeriflerden [...] getirilmiş sancaklar ve bir al bayrağımız rekedilmişti. [...] Cuma namazının edasından sonra secde ayetleri okunarak her bir ayyette ayrı ayrı hazirun [secde] ve şükranı kapandı. [...] Sonra [...] Ankara Müdafayı Hukuk Cemiyeti ve belediyesi tarafından getirilen [...] kurban kesildi. Dervişan kudümler ve halileler çalarak ayrıldılar, halk da küme küme dağılıp gitti. Bu suretle Ankara zevk-i ruhânî bahşeden mesut ve mübarek anlar yaşamış oldu." "Namazgâh'ta Cemaat-i Kübera ile Dua," *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, September 9, 1922.

The Friday Namaz itself, which Muslim men are required to attend every week, is itself a ceremonious event, as the name says. In addition to these ceremonies, in which various prayers are recited and namaz are performed collectively in a certain way and the imam reads a khutbah and speaks to the people, talking about whatever the important event of the time is and giving advice and warnings to the people, some extra ceremonial images and symbols can be seen in the Friday ceremonies held at the Namazgâh during the War of Independence. This ceremonialism is evidenced by the hoisting of two banners at the Namazgâh on October 5, 1919, when the Jihad Khutbah was delivered, the kissing of the banner by Beynamlı Hacı Mustafa Efendi who delivered the khutbah, the loud collective recitation of specific dhikrs in subsequent gatherings, the recitation of *secde* verses and the collective prostration of the congregation, the slaughtering of sacrifices, and the playing of *kudümler* and *halileler*¹⁷⁵ by the dervishes.

In these four examples, chosen from the beginning, middle and end of the heated days of the war, different emotions were experienced intensely according to the course of the war and actions were taken in accordance with these situations. In the first example, known as the Jihad Khutbah, the people launched their own local National Struggle. When the intensity of the war increased, the issue of donations was brought to the agenda and even the Afghan Ambassador explained the donations they were making there as an example. After the war ended in victory, they offered prayers of gratitude and sacrifices to show their appreciation to Allah. One of the main purposes of all these gatherings was to raise the collective emotions of the people to strengthen unity and solidarity. In fact, this unity and solidarity was not limited to the people of Ankara but

¹⁷⁵ *Kudüm* and *halile* are percussion instruments often used by sufi orders. The plural of *kudüm* is *kudümler*, and the plural of *halile* is *halileler*.

also gained an international character through the Afghan Ambassador who attended the gatherings. The poem titled “Invitation to Muslim Unity” recited by Tunalı Hilmi Bey proves this.

The Namazgâh was seen as both part of the city and outside of it and was itself in a state of betwixt and between. Those coming from inside the city and those coming from the surrounding villages and towns met here; for outsiders, it was a question of getting closer to the city, for insiders it was a question of moving away from the city. What was common to both groups was that they broke away from the traditional characteristics of Friday Namaz and ceremonies, they prayed in a different place from where, in a slightly different way from the way they had always prayed on Fridays. On the one hand, these gatherings were religious gatherings, but on the other hand, they bore the traces of a political rally with speeches by prominent members of society; on the one hand, prayers were performed in the traditional way, and on the other hand, important decisions were taken collectively, like a city council. They were not like an ordinary Friday ceremony at the Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque, nor were they like a political rally in Taşhan Square that aimed to send a message to the international community. It was neither exactly like this nor exactly like that. It was a little bit like this and a little bit like that.

Although not as straightforward as the welcome and farewell ceremonies described in the previous section, the gatherings at the threshold also carry elements of liminality and reinforce the thesis that the Namazgâh was a multi-dimensional liminal space for the people of Ankara. In short, the Namazgâh was a gathering place at the

liminal threshold where people established links between each other and between them and the divine.

3.3 The Namazgâh as a Funereal Place

The Namazgâh was shown to be a threshold for people, separating the inside and the outside of the city. In addition, the Namazgâh was a meeting place at a threshold, and in the examples discussed, it was also a space of communication between humans and their god. In this section, the fact that the Namazgâh is also a threshold between the material world and the metaphysical world will be demonstrated through the fact that it was also a funereal place. Ceremoniality, transition, betwixt and betweenness will also be clearly demonstrated here. In order to do this, we need to start by analyzing how funerals in general are seen as a liminality.

Scholars who are the inventors of the concepts of liminality and rite of passage often cite funerals as one of the most obvious examples. Arnold Van Gennep, for example, devotes an entire chapter to funeral ceremonies.¹⁷⁶ He describes in detail the liminality experienced by those who migrate from the world of the living to the world of the dead and the ceremonies around it. On the other hand, Turner underlines that these ceremonies are a rite of passage not only for the deceased but also for those left behind.¹⁷⁷ For the deceased, if they have an afterlife belief, the funeral ceremony signifies a transformation from the physical world to the afterlife, and if not, from existence to non-existence; for some of those left behind, the funeral ceremony can

¹⁷⁶ Arnold van Gennep, 146-165.

¹⁷⁷ Victor Turner, 8-9.

mean being orphaned or widowed. This recreates both their personal lives and their status in society. In addition, there may be other changes, such as the selection of a successor if the person has a job, the division of inheritance if they own property, and the payment of debts if they have any. In other words, as Arnold Van Gennep and Victor Turner pointed out at the very beginning, and as academic studies have frequently pointed out since then, funeral ceremonies are one of the most prominent rites of passage for both the deceased and the living, and the places where these ceremonies are organized are one of the most obvious liminal spaces.

When it comes to the funeral ceremonies held at the Namazgâh, and when it is necessary to rely on the memoirs describing the funeral ceremonies that took place here rather than the funeral prayers as a phenomenon, the fact that this place almost turned into a martyrdom during the years of the National Struggle will come to the fore, and therefore, the sources of the National Struggle are to be utilized. However, in order to show that this is not limited to soldiers' funerals, the popular story of Fikriye Hanım's death and burial will also be discussed.

3.3.1 Examples of Funerals in the Namazgâh

It has already been mentioned in previous chapters that the Namazgâh and the Extended Namazgâh area, which refers to the Namazgâh and its surroundings, have been used as a cemetery since at least the Romans. However, during the War of Independence, the Gureba Hospital on the Namazgâh Hill, like many other hospitals in and around Ankara, was overflowing with wounded veterans, and the soldiers who died during their treatment there were buried in the Namazgâh, which corresponds to the last years when

this area was used as a cemetery and magnifies the funereal characteristics of this area. Enver Behnan Şapolyo reports that not only hospitals but also schools, hotels and households were used to house wounded veterans, especially during the Battle of Sakarya.¹⁷⁸ Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu, who was a student at Ankara High School (Ankara Sultanisi) at the time, recounts that the Gureba Hospital, later renamed Numune Hospital, was overflowing with the wounded, and when this and other large and small health centers in the vicinity were not enough, a part of their school, located in the Namazgâh, was converted into an infirmary.¹⁷⁹ In fact, for this reason, students, including Velidedeoğlu, had to end their academic year early in the year 1920.¹⁸⁰ In other words, at that time, Gureba Hospital was not the only place where the wounded were housed, but the Namazgâh, which was home to one of the two most important hospitals in Ankara and where even the Ankara High School was used as a hospital, stood out as a significant *sıhhiye* (medical center) in Ankara. In fact, with the hospitals opened later, especially on the southern and eastern slopes of the Namazgâh, the name of this neighborhood would become literally Sıhhiye.

The testimonies that this place was used as a medical center can be increased. Abdülkerim Erdoğan tells that those who were wounded during the Balkan Wars came to Ankara by train, were taken from Station to Gureba Hospital to be treated, those who were treated returned to the front for the Çanakkale War, and those who were martyred during treatment were buried in the Namazgâh.¹⁸¹ Interestingly, as if this need had been

¹⁷⁸ Şapolyo, *Mustafa Kemal Paşa ve Millî Mücadelenin İç Âlemi*, 162.

¹⁷⁹ Velidedeoğlu, *Anıların İzinde 1. Kitap*, 92.

¹⁸⁰ Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu, *Bir Lise Öğrencisinin Millî Mücadele Anıları* (İstanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1971), 13.

¹⁸¹ Erdoğan, *Unutulan Şehir Ankara*, 361.

known beforehand, just before the Balkan Wars, it was decided to build a road between Station and the Namazgâh, and an auction was announced to be held in June 1911. The announcement of this auction can be seen in the *Senin Newspaper* dated June 15, 1911.¹⁸² The road mentioned in this announcement physically strengthened the connection between the Namazgâh and the Station within the Extended Namazgâh and became a way for the wounded returning to Ankara by train from the Balkan Wars to be transported to the Gureba Hospital in the Namazgâh. According to Abdülkerim Erdoğan, from that time onwards, the Namazgâh became a kind of martyrdom because of the soldiers who were martyred during their treatment at the Gureba Hospital.¹⁸³

Alptekin Müderrisoğlu gives a somewhat poetic account of the Namazgâh as a medical facility and cemetery. Müderrisoğlu tells us that funeral prayers for martyrs were frequently held at the Namazgâh, that the soil was constantly waving like a sea because of the martyrs buried there, and that these waves had been receding for four hundred years since the siege of Vienna and had now reached Ankara.¹⁸⁴ With this poetic narrative, Müderrisoğlu uses an emotional reading of history to portray the Namazgâh's

¹⁸² “Turuk ve Muabere İdaresinden / Esame-i Vilayet: Ankara Vilayeti / Nev’-i İnşaat: Ankara kazası civarından geçen Namazgâh İstasyon tariki inşaatı / Bedel-i Keşf: 25438 / Hitam-ı Münakasa: 15 Haziran / Askı Müddeti: 28 Haziran

Balada esamisi muharrer yolların inşaat ve tamiratı hizalarında gösterilen meblağ ile münakasaya vaz olunmuş olmağla talip olanların şerait-i ihale ve inşaiyeyi öğrenmek ve tenzilât-ı icra eylemek üzere mahallerinde nafia komisyonuna ve darsaadette Nafia ve Ticaret Nezaretinde komisyonu mahsusuna müracaat eylemeleri...” “Turuk ve Muabere İdaresinden,” *Senin Gazetesi*, June 28, 1911.

¹⁸³ Erdoğan, *Unutulan Şehir Ankara*, 365.

¹⁸⁴ “Günlerdir, Namazgâh’ta günde birkaç kez cenaze namazı kılınıyor, ardından musallâ taşlarına sıralı cenazeler toprağa veriliyordu. Bunlar, Sakarya boylarında yaralanarak Ankara Hastahanesi getirilen ve orada ölen savaşçılardı.

Namazgâh’ın toprakları, altında bir cisim kımıldıyormuş gibi, boyuna dalga dalga kabarıyordu son günlerde. O cismin ilk geçtiği yerlerdeki tümsekler yassılaşımağa başlarken, yeni ulaştığı yerler lokma öğüten bir avurd gibi şişkin duruyordu. Bunlar arasında yeni kazılmış çukurlar vardı. Bunlar da kanlı kefenleriyle birazdan gelecek nasiplerini bekliyordu.

Bu mezarlar, dört yüz yıldır Viyana kapılarından geriye doğru Türklerin kabarttığı şehitler denizinin son dalgalarıydı. Toprağın altından yukarı doğru yükselen bu dalgalar, dört yüz yıldır gerileye gerileye Ankara mezarlarına gelip dayanmıştı.” Alptekin Müderrisoğlu, *Sakarya 2. Cilt*, 213.

frequent hosting of martyrs' funerals as the end of a four-hundred-year-old story.

Abdülkerim Erdoğan adopts a similar emotional narrative. He, for example, compares the color of blood on the shirts of martyred soldiers with the redness of the sunset.¹⁸⁵

This in fact exemplifies how the transformation of the Namazgâh into a Martyr's Cemetery can have an emotional impact on social memory.

Memories of the Namazgâh as a martyrdom, poetic accounts by authors such as Müderrisoğlu and Erdoğan, and later books about Ankara do not provide material evidence that it was used as a cemetery. It is photographs that fulfill this need for evidence. In his book *Ankara in the War of Independence*, Abdülkerim Erdoğan presents three different photographs, from different collections, of martyr funerals at the Namazgâh. The first of these photographs, Figure 14, shows privates in their military uniforms burying their fallen comrades, surrounded by a large crowd. This crowd strengthens the idea that more than one body was buried in that ceremony. The second photo, Figure 15, is more close-up than the first, so it does not show the size of the crowd. Here, however, the presence of soldiers in military uniforms is more clearly discernible. In the third photograph, Figure 16, a burial process is barely visible in the back left, while a coffin with a Turkish flag is clearly visible in the center-left. This flag indicates that the body belongs to a martyr.¹⁸⁶ In the crowd, military personnel and civilians are seen together. In all three photographs, the empty and arid area seen in the

¹⁸⁵ “Namazgâh’ın düzlüğünde ve civarında kanlı gömleklerin ‘al rengi’ akşamın gurubuyla yarışıyor sanki. Şhitlerin kucağına alan Namazgâh’ın toprak rengi de değişiyor yavaş yavaş. [...] Yazılacak çok şey vardır Namazgâh bir lisana gelse.” Erdoğan, *Unutulan Şehir Ankara*, 366.

¹⁸⁶ To this day, the Turkish flag is only placed on the coffin at the funerals of former presidents and martyrs. See the Turkish Flag Law. “Türk Bayrağı Kanunu (no. 2893)”, *Resmî Gazete*, 18171 (September 24, 1983).

background shows the outer plain of the city, which had not yet been opened to settlement, and which became the center of the city in the Republican era.

Before examining the liminality of the Namazgâh as a funereal place, it is necessary to give an example other than the news of martyrs, but it is not possible to come across such an example in the sources. Martyrs' funerals can be proved based on memories and photographs that were available at the time, albeit very limited. However, when it comes to the funerals of ordinary people, it is very difficult to find sources for them. In Yunus Nadi's memoirs, he describes a funeral prayer held at Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque.¹⁸⁷ In the second chapter of this study, it was already mentioned that Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque may have been more pioneering in these functions. Nevertheless, when one wants to find an example of the Namazgâh, it is possible to mention the story of Fikriye Hanım, even if it is a somewhat weak anecdote. Fikriye Hanım was a young woman in love with Mustafa Kemal Pasha. However, when she fell ill and went abroad for treatment, she was heartbroken as she received the news that Mustafa Kemal had married Latife Hanım. She returned to Turkey, attempted suicide in her grief, and was treated by Dr. Ömer Vasfî Aybar at Gureba Hospital, but died suddenly due to high fever at a time when it was thought that her treatment was going well.¹⁸⁸ In his book *Atatürk'ün Ankara'sı 1919-1938*, Dr. Koray Özalp, based on Atatürk's adjutant, Ali Metin, claims that Fikriye Hanım's body was buried in the Namazgâh.¹⁸⁹ However, this story has recently become more complicated. In his article titled "My aunt did not

¹⁸⁷ Yunus Nadi, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Anıları*, 386.

¹⁸⁸ Koray Özalp, 54.

¹⁸⁹ "Şimdiki Etnografya müzesinin bulunduğu bu tepe [Namazgâh Tepe] ve yamaçları Türk mezarlığı idi. Fikriye hanımın mezarı oradadır." Ali Metin and Ziya Oranlı, *Atatürk'ün Şimdiye Kadar Yayınlanmamış Anıları* (Ankara: Alkan Matbaası, 1967), 91.

commit suicide, they shot her in the back”¹⁹⁰ in *Milliyet* on February 28, 2010, Can Dündar reported that he had met with Fikriye Hanım’s nephew Abbas Hayri Özdiñer, who claimed that the death was not a suicide but a murder and that the burial place of his aunt was unknown. It is this claim that makes the fact that Fikriye Hanım was buried in the Namazgâh a weak anecdote. The purpose of this thesis is not to reveal what happened to Fikriye Hanım. The possibility that she was not buried at the Namazgâh does not refute the thesis that the Namazgâh could also have been seen and used as a civilian cemetery. The story of someone who died while being treated at Gureba Hospital and was buried in the cemetery at Namazgâh is enough to show that this was possible at the time.

3.3.2 Liminality in the Funerals

The liminality of the Namazgâh as a funereal place can be analyzed on two different levels. The first is that it is a liminal space in terms of hosting the transition of people from the material world to the spiritual world. The second is the liminal stage that it itself directly experienced during the years of the National Struggle. For the first one, all three elements predetermined beforehand will be analyzed. However, since the second is not a daily event, but a process spread over years, it will not be possible to look for a ceremoniality in its classical sense.

¹⁹⁰ Can Dündar, “‘Halam intihar etmedi, sirtından vurdular’,” *Milliyet Online*, published February 28, 2010, <https://www.milliyet.com.tr/yazarlar/can-dundar/halam-intihar-etmedi-sirtindan-vurdular-1204802>.

The studies in the literature on the liminality of the ceremonies performed upon the death of a person have already been explained at the beginning of this subheading. Here, the discussion of ceremoniality can be completed by making some additions about the funeral rites of Islam and the funerals of martyrs. In Islam, the bodies of the deceased are carefully washed and buried after a special namaz, accompanied by prayers and without a coffin (a coffin is used only to carry the body of the deceased), wrapped in a white, stitchless cloth called a *kefen* (shroud).¹⁹¹ It is believed that here their bodies and souls will live a grave life (*kabir hayati*) until the Day of Judgment.¹⁹² (The life in the grave itself could be the subject of another study on liminality). Islam attributes a very special value to martyrs. It does not accept them as dead. Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 154 says: “Never say that those martyred in the cause of Allah are dead—in fact, they are alive! But you do not perceive it.”¹⁹³ Their bodies are not washed. Instead of shrouds, they are buried in the bloody clothes they wore in battle.¹⁹⁴ These are symbolic indicators that martyrs are not actually considered dead. There is no plausible reason or record that the ceremonies for the martyrs buried during the years of the National Struggle were performed contrary to these rules.

The transition and betwixt and betweenness in funerals and burials is also very direct. The person has completed his earthly existence and has started to wait for the afterlife. His spouse, friends, relatives and other townspeople are obliged by religious

¹⁹¹ Mehmet Keskin, “Kefen,” *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 25, (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2022).

¹⁹² Süleyman Toprak, “Kabir,” *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 24, (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2001).

¹⁹³ Qur’an, 2:154. <https://quran.com/al-baqarah/154>

¹⁹⁴ Fahrettin Atar, “Şehid,” *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 28, (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2010).

and social rules to prepare him for this final journey and to offer their prayers. The time between the life of this world and the life of the grave, i.e. the washing of the body, the prayers, the prayers and the burial, is an in-between state in which the person is neither fully in the life of this world nor fully in the life of the grave. His responsibilities and powers in this world have disappeared, but his interrogation in the life of the grave has not yet begun.¹⁹⁵ He is not right here, nor is he right there.

The liminality experienced by the Namazgâh itself contains different elements. The Namazgâh, which was shown in the previous sections that it could be used as a court of law in times of need, was transformed into a medical facility during the years of the National Struggle. To put it more accurately, the Namazgâh, which had already been functioning as a small medical center for some time, was instantly transformed into a larger medical center that transformed itself and its surroundings. Established roles disappeared and new and temporary roles were assumed. The best example of this was the Ankara Sultanisi located on the Namazgâh Hill. Originally designed and used as a school, the building was temporarily converted into a hospital. The classrooms were used as infirmary rooms. Students were relieved of their responsibilities and had to leave school early. Similarly, a temporary operating room was built next to the existing hospital.¹⁹⁶ The Namazgâh, a place that people used to visit occasionally, was overflowing with people who lived and died in those days. The land that used to be known as a cemetery was now also known as a martyrdom. This change, in which the established began to disappear, the boundaries of predetermined functions were blurred,

¹⁹⁵ Süleyman Toprak, *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ Abdülkerim Erdoğan and Gökçe Günel, *İstiklal Savaşında Ankara*, 268.

and the boundaries of some functions expanded, gave the Namazgâh a much more sacred and deeper meaning in the eyes of the society than its traditional meanings.



CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

At the end of all these discussions, we can say that Namazgâh was a liminal space where people entered and departed the city, met at the threshold, and were seen off to their final resting place until the end of time. It hosted liminal events in at least three different dimensions (entry-exit, meeting at the threshold and becoming a funereal space), regarding at least three different kinds of subjects, sometimes individuals (as in the case of Mustafa Kemal), sometimes for groups (as in the case of the farewell of a group of soldiers), and sometimes an entire city (as in the case of Ankara as the main headquarters and later the capital of the state). In addition to these, as the Namazgâh underwent a sudden and unpredictable transformation starting from the years of the War of Independence, it would itself become the subject of liminality. After the transformation it experienced with the war, with modernization and with Atatürk's revolutions, it experienced a brand-new liminal transition.

After all, modernization and revolutions are times when the old order is delegitimized and a new order is established,¹⁹⁷ and within this transformation, liminality is intensely experienced. Old identities give way to new identities and the roles of people, phenomena and institutions begin to change.¹⁹⁸ In those years of change, roles, rules and identities become uncertain and ambiguous, thus betwixt and between. These processes took place in the modernization of Europe with the separation of the secular from the sacred.¹⁹⁹ A similar situation can be seen in Turkey's modernization and Atatürk's revolutions after the War of Independence. Along with a new identity of citizenship, new institutions, new roles, a new capital city comes to the fore: Ankara. Located at the intersection of the old city and the new modern capital city, the Namazgâh stood out as one of the most striking examples of this transformation, as it left the sacred and embraced the secular.

Revolutions require new interpretations of established structures.²⁰⁰ At the end of the War of Independence, during the construction of a new secular state with Atatürk's revolutions, one of the places that was subjected to a new interpretation was the Namazgâh, which would host two of the most important examples of early republican architecture. Two years after the end of the war and the proclamation of the Republic, the idea of building a National Library here was first considered,²⁰¹ but for some reason,

¹⁹⁷ Bjørn Thomassen, *Liminality and the Modern: Living Through the In-Between* (Ashgate, 2014), 209.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 117.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 131.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 209.

²⁰¹ We can see from the newspapers of the period that in 1925, a tender was called for the construction of a National Library on the Namazgâh land. "İstanbul Vilayeti Maarif Müdüriyetinden." *Akşam*, October 27, 1925. "İstanbul Vilayeti Maarif Müdüriyetinden." *Millet*, October 27, 1925. "İstanbul Vilayeti Maarif Müdüriyetinden." *Son Saat*, October 27, 1925.

this idea was abandoned, and the site was set aside for the construction of a museum.²⁰² The Gureba Hospital was modernized and became the Numune Hospital, and in the following years more hospitals were established here and the east and south of the Namazgâh became a *sihhiye* (medical center). The west and southwest sides of the Namazgâh were soon filled with buildings belonging to educational institutions, the Radio Building (Radyo Binası) and the Turkish Aeronautical Association (Türk Hava Kurumu).²⁰³ This space, where soldiers were sent off to the front, prayers were offered, sacrifices were offered, and funerals of martyrs were held just a few years before that, began to bear the symbols of the health, education and cultural breakthroughs of a modernizing and secularizing Ankara. One of the most outstanding instances of this was the performance of the first Turkish opera in the Turkish Hearth Building in the Namazgâh. Özsoy Opera, written by Münir Hayri Egeli upon Atatürk's special request, was performed here in 1934, during the visit of the Shah of Iran, Pahlavi.²⁰⁴ In other words, the Namazgâh, once a multifunctional and sacred empty hill, was re-interpreted as the new face of the new Turkey with modern buildings and modern functions.

We have already mentioned that the Namazgâh, which underwent this transformation with Atatürk's revolutions, once again experienced one of its pre-modern

²⁰² "Gureba Hastanesi civarında Namazgâh namıyla maruf olup müze binasına tahkik olunan mahal ile kabristan muhafazası için evvelce çekilmiş olan duvardan meskûr sahaya müsadif kısmın bila-bedel müzeye terkine dair tezkire Evkaf Müdüriyeti Umumiyesine tevdi edilmiştir." BCA. Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü. 139/996/11 (1926).

²⁰³ In addition to these, we can also see that surrounding lands were opened for development for private enterprise. In a 1926 announcement published in *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, we can see an advertisement for the lease of a plot of land that could be used for various purposes such as a movie theater or a garage. It is also stated here that the Namazgâh is one of the most select neighborhoods of Ankara. "Şehrimizin en mutena mevkiinde; Namazgâh'ta Evkaf Müdüriyeti karşısında etrafı duvarla muhat sinema, garaj vesaireye elverişli vâsi' arsa kiraya verilecektir. Taliplerin At Pazarı'nda Ser Attarzade biraderlere müracaatları." "Kiralık Arsa," *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, August 13, 1926.

²⁰⁴ Koray Özalp, *Atatürk'ün Ankara'sı 1919-1938*, 184-185. See also Atatürk's photos in that building, Figure 17 and 18.

functions, that of a funereal space, by carrying Atatürk's body for fifteen years, this time with modern ceremonies (i.e. not with *kudüm*, *halile* or dervish dhikrs, but with a military band). With the burial of Atatürk's body in the Mausoleum in 1953, the Namazgâh also came to an end, functionally, melting into the city and disappearing.

Sıhhiye Bridge, just south of the Namazgâh, is where the new city (unofficially) begins. The Opera Square, which is reached by coming from here and passing through the foothills of the Namazgâh, is the point where the old city begins. The road between these two points, in other words, the foothills of the Namazgâh, continues to exist as an invisible bridge between the old city and the new city. But there is no longer a place, landmark or monument officially called the Namazgâh.²⁰⁵ It is not called the Namazgâh, the Namazgâh Hill or the Namazgâh District anymore, it is considered part of the Hacettepe District. In other words, it continues to be a liminal passage, yet, without a name.

²⁰⁵ The Namazgâh has started to come to the attention again in recent years. In 2021, the chairman of the Victory Party (Zafer Partisi), one of Turkey's nationalist parties, drew attention to the neglect of the Namazgâh Hill, home to martyrs. (See "200'e Yakın Şehidin Yattığı Namazgâh Tepe'de Skandal Görüntü," *Sözcü Online*. Published October 28, 2021. <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/200e-yakin-sehidin-yattigi-namazgah-tepede-skandal-goruntu-wp6734464>.) In late 2023, on the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey, İlber Ortaylı, in his book *Cumhuriyet'in Doğuşu: Kurtuluş ve Kuruluş Yılları* (Birth of the Republic: Years of Independence and Foundation), expressed his discontent that the Namazgâh did not receive the necessary attention and that parking lots were built on top of it. (See İlber Ortaylı, *Cumhuriyet'in Doğuşu: Kurtuluş ve Kuruluş Yılları* (İstanbul: Kronik Kitap, 2023) 185.) A few months before the publication of this book, the Ankara Municipality announced that a monument would be built at the Namazgâh Hill. (See "Namazgâh Tepesi'ne Anıt Bentderesi'ne Yeşil Alan," *Hürriyet Online*. Published August 17, 2023. <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yerel-haberler/ankara/namazgah-tepesine-anit-bentredesine-yesil-alan-42316519>.) At the time of writing this thesis, no such monument has yet been erected at the Namazgâh Hill.

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FIGURES

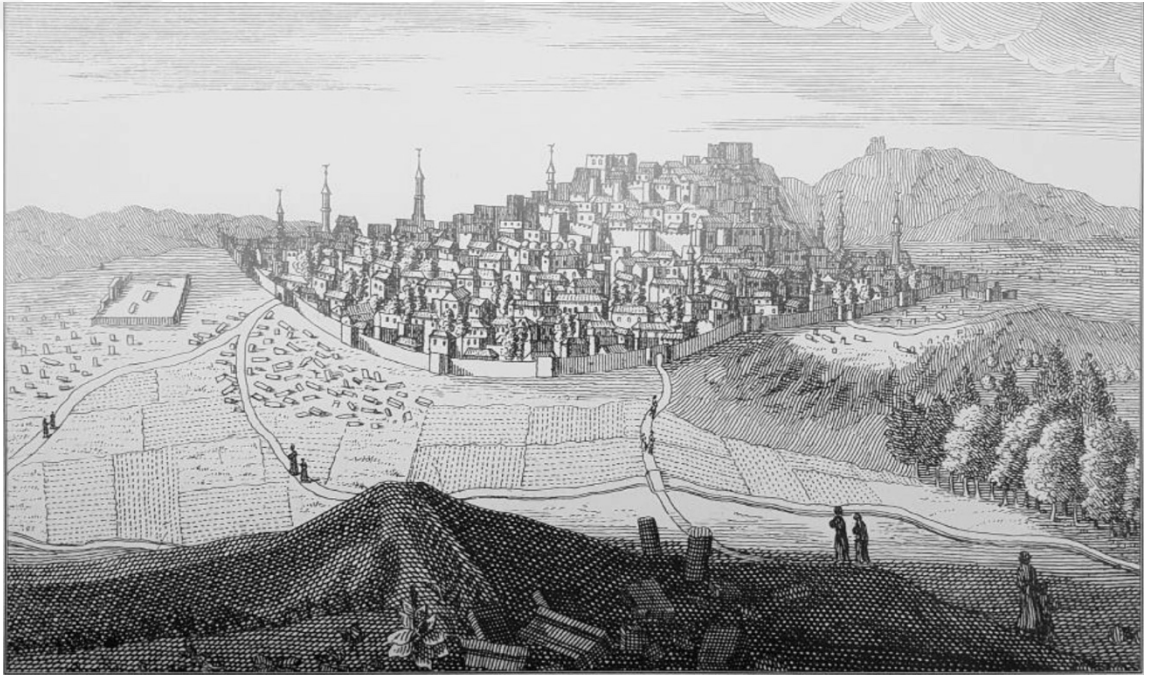


Figure 1: Tournefort's Engraving of Ankara.

Suavi Aydın, Kudret Emirođlu, Ömer Türkođlu and Ergi D. Özsoy, *Küçük Asya'nın Bin Yüzü: Ankara* (Ankara: Dost Kitabevi Yayınları, 2005), 173.

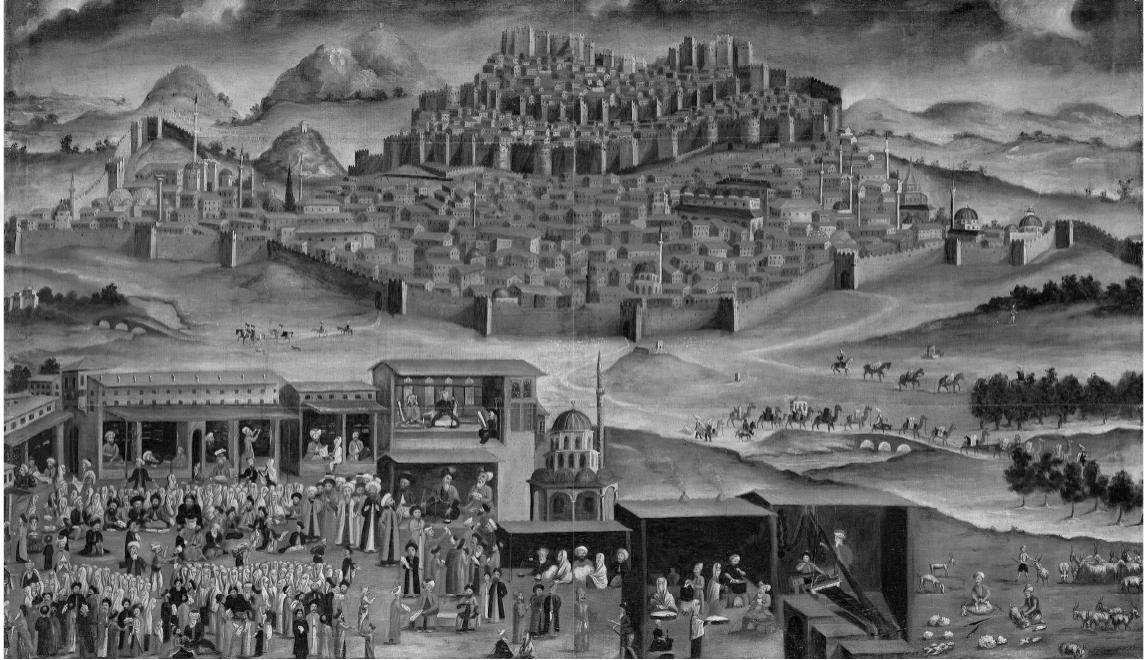


Figure 2: the View of Ankara Painting.

Gezicht op Ankara (View of Ankara), Anonymous, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Inv. No: SK-A-2055

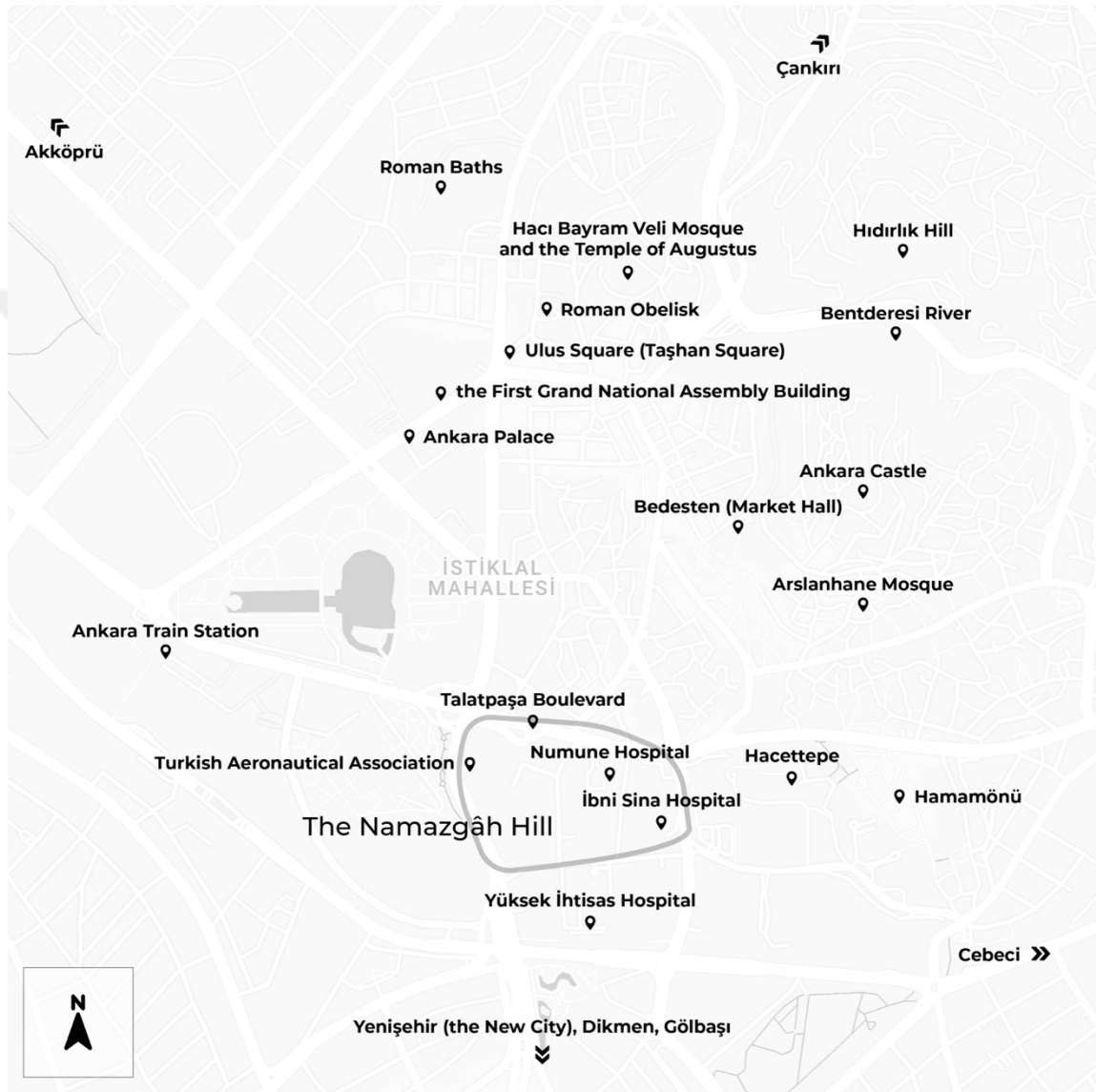


Figure 3: Map of the Namazgâh, in relation with other landmarks. This map is prepared by us, using Google Maps's plain view, to show the location of the Namazgâh relative to other important landmarks of the city of Ankara.



Figure 4: Map of the Namazgâh, including current buildings and landmarks in and near. This map is prepared by us, using Google Maps' plain view, to show the location of the Namazgâh with the modern buildings currently located in this area.



Figure 5: The crowd marching from Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque to the Parliament after the Friday Namaz on April 23, 1920.

Abdülkerim Erdoğan and Gökçe Günel, *İstiklal Savaşında Ankara* (Ankara: Ankara Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2008), 156.

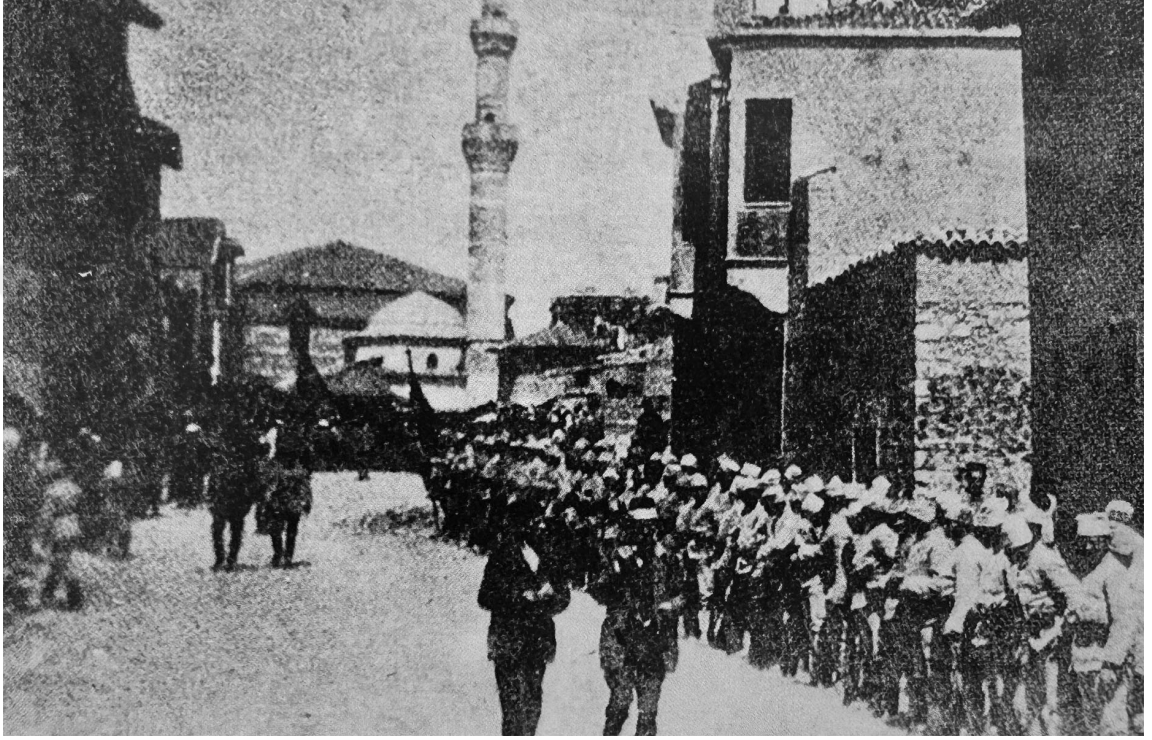


Figure 6: People waiting for the crowd marching from Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque to the Parliament after the Friday Namaz on April 23, 1920.

Erdoğan et al., 157.



Figure 7: The crowd in front of the Parliament on April 23, 1920.

Erdoğan et al., 159.

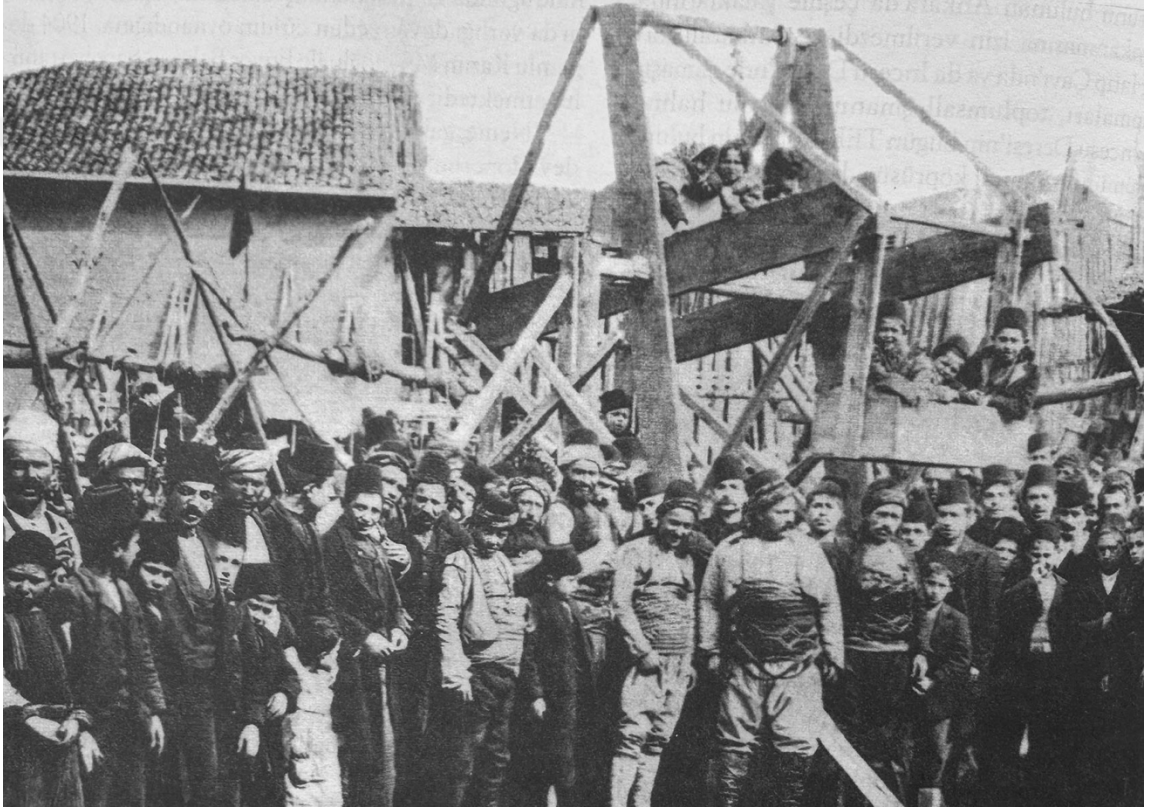


Figure 8: Bairam Festivities in Hamamönü.

Aydın et al., 282.



Figure 9: Bairam Festivities in Hamamönü.

Hamit Zübeyr Koşay, *Ankara Budun Bilgisi* (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1935), 192.

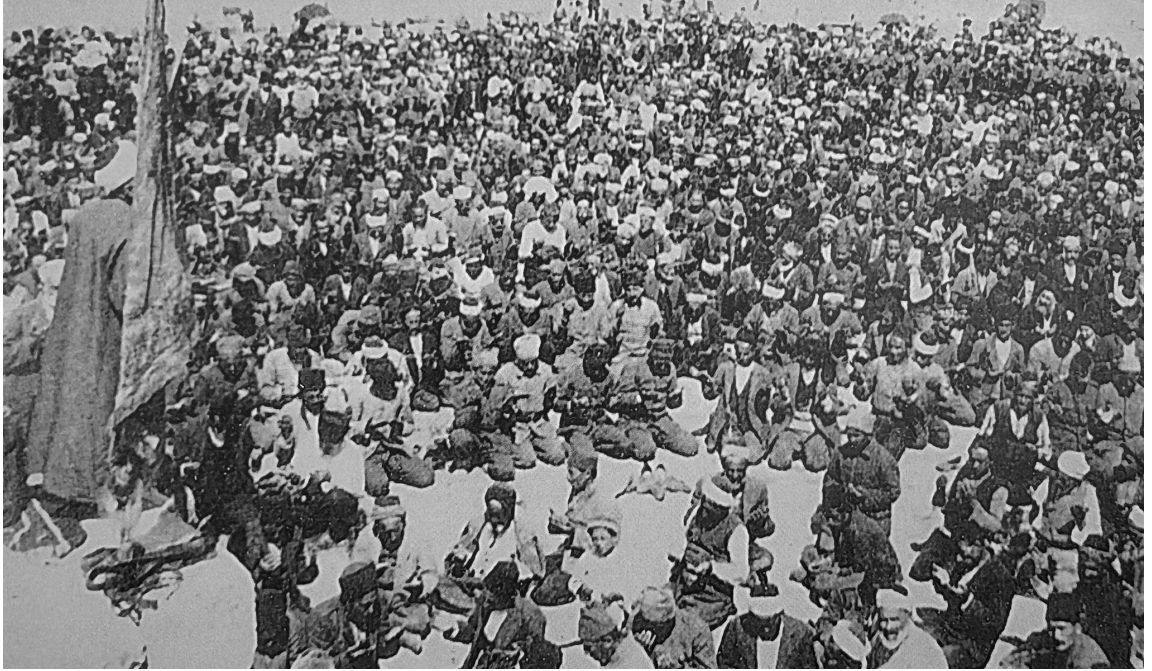


Figure 10: Beynamlı Hacı Mustafa Efendi delivers the famous Jihad Khutbah.

Erdoğan et al., 98.



Figure 11: People listen to Mustafa Efendi's khutbah.

Erdoğan et al., 99.

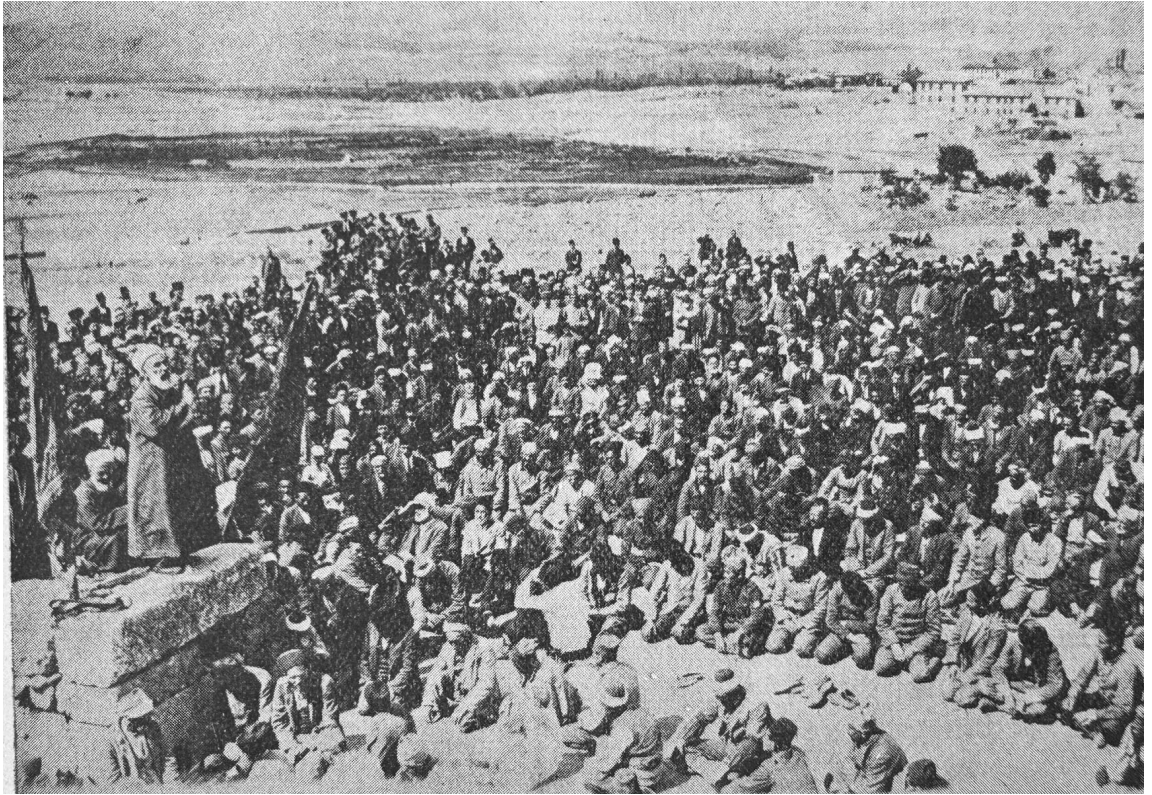


Figure 12: Beynamlı Hacı Mustafa Efendi delivers the famous Jihad Khutbah.

Koşay, 193.



Figure 13: People listen to Mustafa Efendi's khutbah.
Abdülkerim Erdoğan, *Unutulan Şehir Ankara* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2004), 369.



Figure 14: Martyr Burial in the Namazgâh.

Erdoğan et al., 195.



Figure 15: Martyr Burial in the Namazgâh.

Erdoğan et al., 214.



Figure 16: Martyr Burial in the Namazgâh.

Erdoğan et al., 295.



Figure 17: Atatürk in the Turkish Hearth Building.

Koray Özalp, *Atatürk'ün Ankara'sı 1919-1938* (Ankara: Galatya Yayıncılık, 2021), 131.

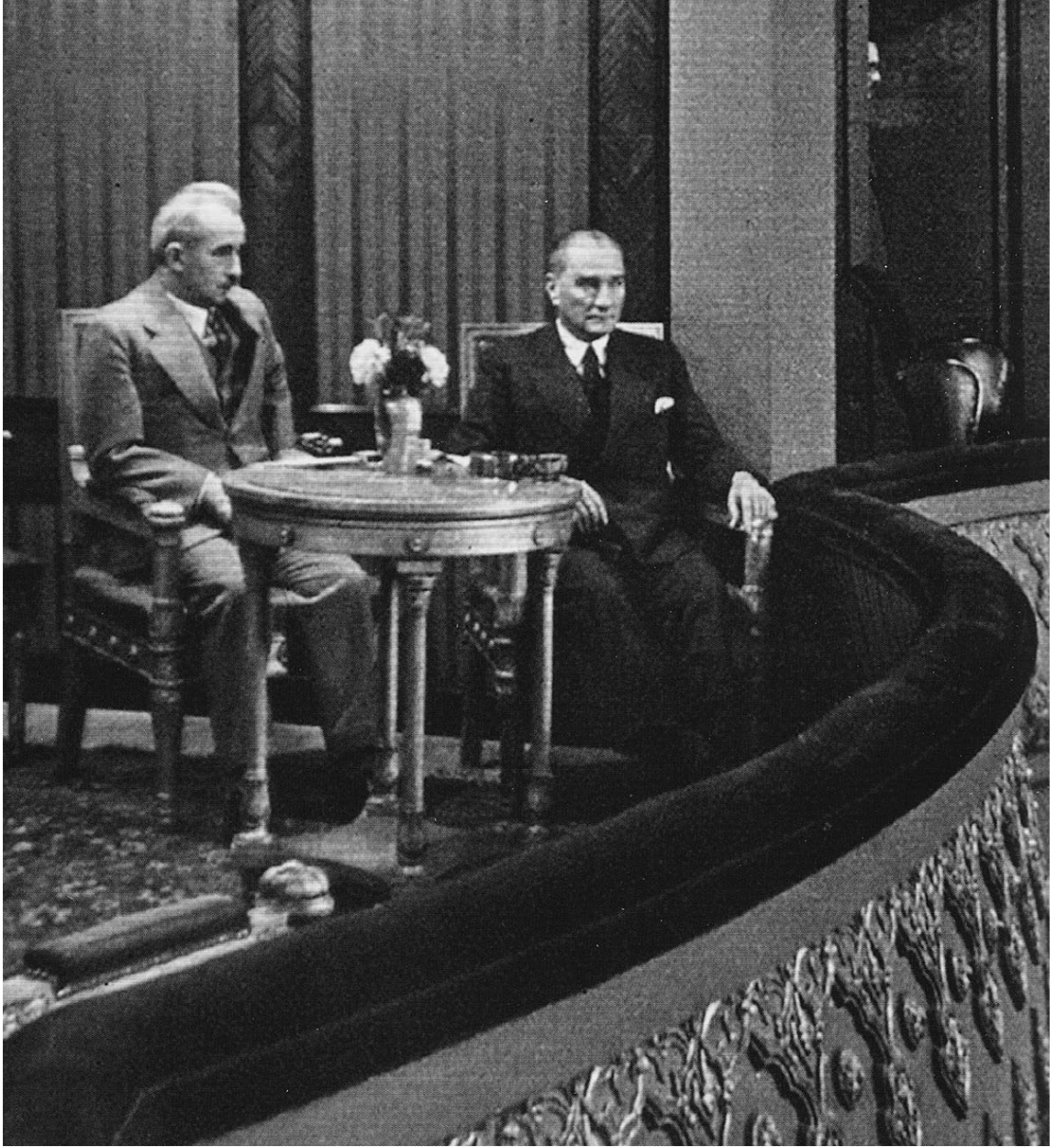


Figure 18: Atatürk and İnönü in the Turkish Hearth Building.

Koray Özalp, 132.