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**EXHIBITING “TURKISHNESS” AT A TIME OF
FLUX IN TURKEY:
AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE STATE**



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PhD Sociology

The University of Edinburgh

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Declaration

This is to certify that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Canan Neşe Karahasan

14 May 2015



Abstract

This thesis investigates the contested processes of displaying “Turkishness” in competing state museums in Turkey at a time when over the last decade secularist-Kemalist state power has been overturned under neo-Islamist Justice and Development Party government. It poses the question: how are the oppositionary - namely secular Republican and Islamic Ottoman - pasts of “Turkishness” remembered, forgotten, and negotiated in Anıtkabir, Atatürk’s mausoleum, and Topkapı Palace Museum, the imperial house at a time of flux in Turkey? Anıtkabir, under the command of the Turkish Armed Forces, the guardian of secularism, and Topkapı Palace, linked to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, an arm of the government, are more than pedagogical warehouses of the state, displaying contending pasts. They are state institutions, endowed with diverse power sources in exhibiting the binaries of “Turkishness” polarised between West-modern-secular and East-backward-Islam.

Through an ethnography of these agencies of the state, this research traces the negotiation processes of exhibiting the competing pasts of “Turkishness”. The focus of this study is twofold. First, it explores how different bureaucratic practices in Anıtkabir and Topkapı Palace museums act as power mechanisms among museum staff and vis-à-vis visitors. Second, it looks at the ensuing representations of “Turkishness”. Competing traditions and national days pertaining to Islamic Ottoman and secular Republican histories are re-invented through museum events, which fall beyond the bureaucracy of exhibition-making. However, formal / informal processes of exhibition-making in both museums reveal that binaries of “Turkishness” are challenged and deliberated through contested exhibitionary practices. In Topkapı Palace Museum, a Westernised-modernised image of imperial life is portrayed, while Anıtkabir simultaneously re-sacralises and humanises Atatürk’s cult. Therefore, this study argues that binaries of “Turkishness” are not irreconcilable; rather they are reversed, negotiated, and transformed in the quest for state power in the everyday practices of these museum bureaucracies.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The subject matter of my PhD research is how different pasts / parts of Turkish history and ‘Turkishness’ are displayed in different state museums at a time of transformation in Turkey with a focus on Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums (Fieldnotes 06 August 2012).

I introduced my research with this sentence during my ethnographic fieldwork (August 2012-June 2013) in Topkapı Palace Museum, house of the Ottoman Empire, and Anıtkabir¹, the monumental tomb and museum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founding father of the modern Republic. In both museums, informants (museum employees) insistently argued that one “cannot find Turkish culture here” (Fieldnotes 17 October 2012), and suggested that I go to some other state museum.² I always told my informants that I did not seek to identify a stable category of “Turkishness”, which could be found in artefacts, concepts, and events in museums. I highlighted that my aim was to investigate the processes through which state museums display the oppositional – namely secular Republican and Islamic Ottoman – pasts, conceived of as “ours”. This study traces “Turkishness” in the negotiation processes of institutionalising these competing pasts, “not as a substance, but institutionalized form, not as collectivity, but as a practical category, not as an entity but as a contingent event” (Brubaker 1996: 7).

My informants were unconvinced by the selection of Topkapı Palace, a Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) affiliated museum, and Anıtkabir, a military museum under the command of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), as field sites. During informal conversations, some asserted that these museums are not comparable due to the different institutions (the MCT and the TAF) they are affiliated with (Fieldnotes 19 September 2012). Others argued that these museums cannot be analysed together,

¹ Note that the thesis addresses Anıtkabir as a museum complex. Anıtkabir includes Atatürk’s mausoleum and the Atatürk and the War of Independence Museum (previously called the Atatürk Museum). Chapter 4 describes in great detail how both the architectural complex and the museum complement each other in the display of “Turkishness” through stories of the National Struggle and Atatürk. For this reason, the thesis uses the term Anıtkabir museum throughout the text.

² The implications of such reactions, for understanding Turkish nationalisms, are discussed in Chapter 6 with reference to the enduring effects of the official Turkish History Thesis (Ersanlı 2002a).

because they refer to completely different pasts (Fieldnotes 28 February 2013). Rather than conceiving these two museums as separate and comparable cases, I bring them together to understand how binaries of “Turkishness”, polarised between West / East, civilisation / culture, modern / backward, secular / Islamic (Ahiska 2010: 11), play-out as they are staged daily at a time of unrest in Turkey.

Some informants looked at me with suspicion, when they heard that I was concerned with these two particular museums. This underscores the timeliness of this research, focusing on a particular time of “symbiotic antagonisms” (Kadioğlu and Keyman 2011) between Kemalism-secularism and Islamism in Turkey. Over the last decade, the TAF’s safeguarding role over secularism and the Kemalist legacy of the state have been undermined by “neo-Islamist” (Keyder 2004) Justice and Development Party (JDP) government. Throughout its single party government, the JDP has been able to reclaim political, economic, and ideological “sources of power” (Mann 1986), previously monopolised by the TAF. This overturning power relationship has been shaped by and has shaped the (re)production of “Turkishness”, reuniting Turkey with its Islamic Ottoman past and carefully repositioning the images of Atatürk and secular Republican history. Anıtkabir, an architectural embodiment of the nation and the secular Republic (Wilson 2009), increasingly became a hotspot where both the people (through anti-government demonstrations) and the TAF re-claimed secularism. Topkapı Palace Museum’s public visibility increased in line with the rising emphasis on the Islamic Ottoman past. It has been manifested through debated popular television series and novels as well as Topkapı Palace Museum’s exhibition receptions marked by, the then Prime Minister, and current president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s opening speeches. Nevertheless, this research departs from the self-fulfilling conclusion that Topkapı Palace Museum works as a reflection of neo-Ottomanist zeal under the current neo-Islamist JDP government, while Anıtkabir is the embodiment of the Kemalist historiography emphasised by the military.

This study considers these museums as parts of the “polymorphous” (Mann 1993: 75) Turkish state and asks: how are the oppositionary - namely secular Republican and Islamic Ottoman - pasts of “Turkishness” remembered, forgotten, and negotiated

at a time of flux in Anıtkabir and Topkapı Palace museums? This question speaks to four points: (1) inter-institutional and intra-institutional power mechanisms enveloping Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums, (2) their decision-making processes and daily functioning, (3) the ensuing (in)visible representations of Ottoman and Republican pasts and (4) Turkey's transformation under the JDP government. Accordingly, I further pose the following questions: How are the competing pasts of "Turkish history" regulated and institutionalised to define "Turkishness"? How do binary oppositions relate to these pasts shift, converge or diverge in the re-invention of 'Turkishness'? What is remembered and what is forgotten (and by whom)? How do power struggles between Islamists and secularists reflect on the debates over how "Turkishness" should be exhibited? How are the binary oppositions of "Turkishness", polarised between the West / the East, civilisation / culture, modern / backward, oppressed / oppressor, and secular /Islamic, negotiated in daily museum practices?

In seeking answers to these questions, I carried out an ethnographic study to approximate a "thick description" (Geertz 1973) of how the state functions daily to display competing pasts of "Turkishness" in these two museums in a changing Turkey. Throughout the fieldwork, I was immersed in two different museum bureaucracies and "stratified hierarchy of structures" (Geertz 1973: 7). Such immersion indicates a constant negotiation for observing and (sometimes) participating in the bureaucracies of Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums, engaging with civil servants of various ranks, and reviewing published material on the relevant state institutions. Thus, this study is different from other ethnographies of the state, which investigate how people relate to and engage with the state in their daily lives (Gupta 1995). Following Mann's "institutional statism" (1993: 88), I keep my focus on power relationships "*within* the state" (Schroeder 2006: 3). I approach Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums not only in terms of the opposing pasts they are exhibiting, but also in terms of the "power sources" (Mann 1986) they draw from their supreme institutions, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) and the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF). Thus, I concentrate solely on the state and how it

represents “Turkishness” by remembering, forgetting, and negotiating Islamic Ottoman and secular Republican pasts.

In this ethnographic study, I investigate the contested processes of displaying “Turkishness” in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums as state institutions endowed with competing powers. Each chapter is informed by a twofold emphasis: the state in its everyday settings and its fragmented representations of “Turkishness”. Chapter 2 proposes a theoretical map to capture this twofold focus beyond binaries (state / society; power over / power through; nationalism from above / nationalism from below; secular / sacred; West / East). With this dynamic and processual theoretical approach, “Turkishness” is placed in quotation marks throughout the thesis to denote that this term is not a given set of characteristics (or binaries), but rather a set of ongoing (contested) processes, practices, and events. Chapter 3 builds on this theoretical map to trace the historical processes through which “Turkishness” and its binaries are crystallised in three periods: early Republican period, the period High Kemalism, and the post-1980 coup d’état period. The first two periods highlight the institutionalisation of secularism and the making of a secular historiography, i.e. official Turkish History Thesis (Ersanlı 2002a). The last post-1980 period constitutes turning points in the (re)formation of a “Turkish-Islamic Synthesis” (Güvenç 1991) as a part of official ideology.

In this contextual framework, Chapter 4 reminds the reader of the peculiarities of Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums as selected field sites by providing their institutional and physical maps. First, the chapter discusses the institutional division of labour between the supreme institutions of these museums, the MCT and the TAF, in terms of their changing “sources of power” (Mann 1983). Second, it looks at Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir’s museumification processes, bureaucratic hierarchies, and exhibitionary practices. Chapter 5 outlines the methodology of this research and the diverse methods of data collection carried out in each museum setting for addressing the research questions. Distinguishing the research from other ethnographic studies of the state, the chapter delineates the contested data collection methods: (1) observation, (2) (semi/un)structured interviews with a total of 39

informants, consisting of museum employees, (retired) civil servants of the MCT and the TAF, museum administrators, non-state agencies, who took place in exhibition-making processes, and (3) documental research.

Chapter 6 addresses the question, “how are the competing pasts of ‘Turkish history’ regulated and institutionalised to define ‘Turkishness’?” The chapter investigates how institutionalisation of neo-Ottomanism and enduring effects of the Kemalist “state tradition” (Heper 1985) are reflected on daily museum practices. Here, I explore how diverse bureaucratic practices and the legal framework of these two museums work as power mechanisms. Chapter 7 captures profound shifts in museum practices of Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir, spaces for inventing the competing traditions pertaining to Islamic Ottoman and secular Republican pasts. This chapter does not simply pinpoint Islamic “invented traditions” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) in Topkapı Palace Museum and secular ones in Anıtkabir. It highlights how competing actors of the state in both museums remember and forget the binaries and contending roots / annual markers of “Turkishness” in diverse ways. These different degrees of memorialisation indicate that binaries are neither stable nor incompatible categories. In Chapter 8, I argue that binaries of “Turkishness” are reversed, negotiated, and transformed in the minute details of exhibition-making in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums. Here, I trace the creation of contending institutional and historical “high cultures” (Gellner 1983), distinguishing ‘ourselves’ and ‘our history’ from others.

I conclude by arguing that “Turkishness” as an “institutionalised form” (Brubaker 1996: 7) is crystallised within the boundaries drawn by Kemalist historiography (official Turkish history and the regulatory schema stemming from the 1980 coup d’état) and in relation to its binaries West / East; secular / Islamic; good / bad; oppressor / oppressed. These binaries are re-invented through and beyond museum bureaucracies, while they are also reconciled and negotiated in daily routines by different stakeholders. The concluding Chapter 9 further elaborates on the empirical, methodological and theoretical contributions of this study beyond the particular settings of Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums. The study captures a particular

time of transformation in Turkey and focuses on two competing state museums representing oppositionary pasts of “Turkishness”. Unlike most ethnographies of the state, which look at how people perceive and interact with the state in daily life, this research focuses on state museums’ daily functioning and their representations of nationness. As the following chapter “Unpacking the State and its Nationalisms in State Museums” will discuss, this study reconciles micro and macro perspectives pertaining to state-power, nationalism, and museums with a focus on negotiation processes beyond binary oppositions.



Chapter 2: Unpacking the State and its Nationalisms in State Museums

I. Introduction

This research investigates the contested processes of representing “Turkishness” in daily practices of state museums at a time when power relations within the state are changing in Turkey. This objective brings up three interrelated theoretical issues, which are unpacked in this chapter. Power relations within the state inform the first strand of theoretical debates. These discussions revolve around how the state and its diverse institutions work daily through bureaucracy’s formal and informal power relations. How does the state in its multi-layered sense make “Turkishness”? How do contending actors within the state negotiate binaries (sacred / secular, West / East, modern / backward, and good / bad nationalisms)? These questions highlight the second strand, which investigates nationalism’s nexus with history, religion, secularism, and the state. This strand works as leverage in understanding how “Turkishness” is reconstructed by remembering / forgetting secular Republican and Islamic Ottoman pasts, inventing their competing national days, and re-imagining notions of “us” and “them”. What is the role of state museums in this process of making “Turkishness”? The last theoretical issue concentrates on museums as a juncture for understanding nationalism, state, and representations of nationness. It addresses the role of museums, as simultaneously secular and sacred institutions, which discipline and yet open spaces for contesting their displays of histories, myths, symbols, and rituals. Therefore, instead of an overarching theoretical framework marked by a key defining concept, the chapter aims to situate this research within a wider terrain of political as well as cultural sociology, unpacking the nexus of the state, nationalism, and museums.

II. Conceptualising and Studying the State and Bureaucracy

Transformations taking place under the Justice and Development Party’s (JDP) single-party government are recorded in an inventory, *Silent Revolution*, published

by the Prime Minister's Undersecretariat of Public Order and Security³ (2013). Listing democratisation and de-militarisation processes, this record, by the virtue of its name, also announces that long-established Kemalist state power embodied in the military is now being overturned. The holders of state power have been reversed under the thirteen-year single party rule of the JDP, the longest single-party rule since 1942. What / who is the (Turkish) state now? How does this shifting power relationship within the state reflect on representing "Turkishness" in state museums? How can we understand Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums as different state institutions? These questions call for revisiting the state in the light of manifold power relations, including the state's institutional mechanisms, and its bureaucracy, which regulate the making of nationness on a daily basis.

a. Power and the State

Theories of the state agree that power is indispensable in conceptualising and studying the state and bureaucracy. Their point of departure is the distinction between "rule over" and "rule through", which they draw from the theoretical distinction between "power over" and "power to". While the first refers to conflict, coercion, and imposition (Lukes 2005 [1974]), "rule through" signifies control by securing consent through social institutions (Althusser 2006 [1971]; Gramsci 2006 [1971]; Mann 1986). As Hearn argues, this distinction provides an "analytical" tool to "distinguish between the sheer capacity of agents to achieve ends, and the social relationships in which some agents can determine the actions of others" (2014: 176). In understanding the state, "rule over" refers to the state's legitimate and illegitimate domination over society, whereas the latter relates to the diffusion of state power in society. Although this distinction is made through the use of different concepts with distinct arguments, all theories concur that the modern state is characterised by combination of these two different forms of power.

Weber's understanding of power as "the driving force of all politics" (1946: 116) reconciles this distinction. He highlights the multiplicity of power relations in understanding the state and identifies three "ideal types" of domination: the

³ Recently, its affiliation has been changed to the Ministry of Interior Affairs.

“traditional authority” of patriarchs, the “charismatic authority” of leaders / sultans / emperors, and the “rational domination” (ibid.: 79) of state rules and bureaucracy. Weber defines the state as the organiser of these three types of domination (ibid.: 82). Accordingly, the state “(successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory” (ibid.: 78). However, for Weber, the modern state is distinguished by the last form of domination, whereby state’s monopoly over physical violence is legitimised “by the virtue of legality” (ibid.: 79). Rational, functional, and effective laws and bureaucracy make the state’s domination accepted and legitimate (Badie and Birnbaum 1983: 20). In this way, the state makes sure that it stands both above and within society through rational–legal domination, i.e. bureaucracy.

Drawing on Weber’s conceptualisation of the state and Marx’s materialism, Michael Mann (1986) presents a structuralist approach to *The Sources of Social Power*. Mann identifies four distinct sources of social power: ideological, economic, military and political (IEMP). Ideological power derives from meanings, norms and aesthetic practices, whereas economic power refers to markets for capital, labour, production and consumption of commodities (Mann 2006: 2). Military power is concerned with defence and aggression (Mann 1986: 22-26). The last sphere Mann identifies is political power, which he equates to state power. Following Weber, Mann argues that “political power is necessarily centralized and territorial” (ibid.: 27); therefore, it exercises central control and coercion in many aspects of social relations and other sources of power such as ideology, economy, and military. These sources of power are different from Bourdieu’s (1986) economic, cultural and social forms of capital, which are “power resources held by individuals” (Mann 2006: 343). Mann is more interested in networks of power relations, organisational structures, and institutional means, which constitute societies as “real networks of people” (ibid.).

Mann defines power in terms of networks and relationships. Power encompasses processes of “both cooperation and conflict with other people and these relations generate societies” (Mann 2013: 1). This definition is based on his earlier distinction between “distributive” and “collective” forms of power. While the first refers to

direct control over society, the second collective aspect of power indicates that power can be enhanced through cooperation of various individuals and groups (Mann 1986: 6). Parallel to this distinction, Mann identifies two forms of state power. “Despotic power” signifies the distributive power of the state over society without the consent of, or negotiation with, civil society. “Infrastructural power” means the “institutional capacity of a central state, despotic or not, to penetrate the society” (Mann 1993: 59). The latter, “infrastructural power”, is a key feature of the modern state and it indicates the crystallisation and penetration of the state in society through bureaucracy and institutions. On the one hand, there is an understanding that a division of labour; and thus, hierarchical bureaucratisation are necessary in order to achieve collective goals of the society (ibid.: 7). Rendering itself necessary, infrastructural power extends the state’s control over society. On the other hand, it also opens a space for the society (both civil society and state officials) to influence different levels of state institutions (Schroeder 2006: 4; Mann 2008: 356). Accordingly, the modern state is never absolute, as it contains possibilities of distributive and collective as well as despotic and infrastructural forms of power.

Mann, thus, brings in a novel emphasis of “political power *within* the state” (Schroeder 2006: 3), making it impossible to speak of the state as a singular entity. Mann claims that the state is “polymorphous” (1993: 75), its effects expanded through bureaucracy. The state “crystallizes” (ibid. 81) through its diverse institutions. With these institutions imbued by different functions, the state claims to work for the collective good in every sphere of life, in norms, values, economy, and politics. Through the infrastructural power of such institutions, the state expands its reach (Mann 1984: 195-197). Mann’s approach, which he labels as “institutional statism” (1993: 88), hints at an institutional analysis of the state. Accordingly, the multiplicity of institutions and intertwined infrastructural power make the state work in complicated ways, creating “higher-level state crystallisations” (ibid.: 54.) in every sphere of life.

However, Mann’s (ibid.: 88) “institutional statism” is different from “new institutionalism” in sociology, which seeks to explain how institutions work and

relate with the people in daily life. The main argument of “new institutionalism” is centred on the purposeful and rational actions of individuals and institutions (Nee 1998:1-2). Mann’s institutional approach is not concerned with choices of rationally oriented individuals within institutions. Instead, it addresses how the state works through networks of power relations within and among state institutions. In other words, he shifts attention to “the particular characteristics of political institutions” (ibid.: 54), while maintaining his Weberian definition of the state as a central, territorial, and authoritative rule-making “*place*” (1984: 187, original emphasis). The state is marked by overlapping and competing institutions carrying out “differentiated” (Mann 1993: 56) functions, such as maintaining internal order, defence / aggression, economic distribution, and communication. Here, the state is both “place and persons” and “centre and territory” (ibid.). It is ruled by elites, while its infrastructural power and differentiated institutions open the way for diverse actors to be involved in mobilising collective power on the state.

Mann’s work is criticised on both methodological and theoretical grounds. Scholars argue that his theoretical framework, drawn by ideal typical understandings of power and the state, does not meet empirical realities outside the European context (Brenner 2006; Goldstone 2006). A second and more elaborate criticism focuses on Mann’s vague definition of “ideological power” (1986: 22), which he identifies as meanings, norms, values, rituals and culture. Owing to his “organizational materialism” (Mann 2006: 347), Mann is more interested in how ideas are organised to realise actions rather than “reconstructing the universes of meaning that shape understanding” (Hearn 2012: 192). In other words, for Mann, ideas do not have any meaning or effect without their “material foundations” (Kiser 2006: 64). Creating a “sacred form of authority” (Mann 1983: 23), ideologies work in the intensification of social cohesion (ibid.: 23-4). Accordingly, “ideological organization” is “sociospatially transcendent” (ibid.: 23) and “immanent” (ibid.: 24). Gorski (2006) argues that Mann’s materialism underestimates the role of ideology vis-à-vis state power. Mann bypasses the ways in which different state institutions may seek political power through ideology, while failing to attend to ‘unorganised’ strategies in creating ideologies.

In response, Mann adds another type of ideological power, i.e. “institutionalised ideologies” (2006: 348), which are essentially conservative. Ideologies in their institutionalised form resemble the anthropological definitions of culture as ideas, rituals, and symbols in daily life. Here, acknowledging that ideological power is prone to change in time and space, his argument addresses the negotiation processes over meaning which conserve the current social order. Nevertheless, he does not abandon his stress on the materiality of ideologies. In *Sources of Social Power*, he provides an all-encompassing definition of ideology as “beliefs”, “hopes” and “fears”, which “fill in the gaps and the uncertainties [...] in our [material] knowledge of the world” (Mann 2014: 1). These flow through formal and informal networks (Mann 2006: 385). Here, he argues that ideological power may have a life of its own only after it is derived from other material and institutionalised sources of power.

The third set of criticisms revolves around Mann’s overemphasis on political / state power vis-à-vis other sources of power. Jacoby underlines that for Mann, autonomy of the state stems from the centrality of political power rather than the monopoly of physical violence (2004: 20), while Migdal maintains that Mann’s overemphasis on state power is restricted to state elites (2001: 115-116). For Migdal, the state does not simply function through the desires and interests of the state elite and it is not an abstract or fixed entity. On the contrary, the state “embodies an on-going dynamic, a changing set of aims, as it engages other social forces” (ibid.: 112). Notably, Migdal puts forward this criticism with reference to Mann’s article “The Autonomous Power of the State” (1984), which was the precursor of his four volume work, *The Sources of Social Power*. In the second volume, published in 1993, Mann de-links state power from state elites. He emphasises that “the ‘power’ of the modern state principally concerns not ‘state elites’, exercising power over society but a tightening state-society relation, caging social relations” (Mann 1993: 61).

As Chapter 3 explores in detail, this study dwells on a political context of changing power relationships within the Turkish state. Through the *Silent Revolution* (Undersecretariat of Public Order and Security 2013), power sources of the

Kemalist-secularist military have been curbed, whereas the “neo-Islamist” (Keyder 2004) JDP government penetrated the cadres of the bureaucracy in state institutions (Toprak et.al. 2009). Following Mann’s (1993) “institutional statism”, Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums are conceived as competing institutions of the state. They are endowed with different power sources, while being tied to similar bureaucratic rules and regulations / laws (See Chapters 4 and 6). The study claims that both museums’ ideological power works alongside other shifting power sources of the contending institutions they are affiliated with.

b. Bureaucracy and Everyday Forms of the State

Instead of Weberian ideal-typical definitions, Migdal defines the state as “a field of power marked by the use and threat of violence and shaped by (1) the *image* of a coherent controlling organisation [...] (2) the actual *practices* of its multiple parts” (emphasis added, 2001: 16). Migdal draws attention to the routine practices of multiple social groupings inside and outside the state and its institutions, which may or may not work for the betterment of a coherent image of the state. Primarily, Migdal’s distinction between image and practice of the state is a reflection of Abram’s (1988) renowned argument that political power does not rest on a unitary conception of the state. Instead, Abrams distinguishes between “state-system” (practices of the state) and “state-idea” to illustrate the discrepancy between the self-representations of the state as a singular entity and its multifarious effects in daily life. For this reason, Abrams holds that the state is, in reality, fragmented and inharmonious (1988: 479). In order to capture such discontinuity, Mitchell suggests that one should dismiss the understanding that the state is a “freestanding entity” (2006: 184) above society. Likewise, Migdal suggests focusing on daily practices in the “trenches” (2001: 117), the lowest ranks, within the everyday routines of the state.

Mann’s (1993) argument on the “infrastructural power” and Migdal’s (2001) reflection on the “trenches” recall Weber’s understanding of bureaucracy, hierarchies, and daily power relations. According to Weber, modernity is informed by rationalisation through bureaucracy, “transforming social action into rationally

organised action” (2006: 62). This transformation legitimises state domination through rationally created laws and regulations. To ensure rationality, bureaucracy is marked by two features. First, bureaucracy is a process of *routinization*. It guarantees that standard and objective procedures are carried out in order to fulfil tasks. In this way, rational-legal administration is applied across all kinds of contexts (Weber 1952: 19) by routinization and management of tasks within state offices and through the resulting standardised documents (files) (Weber 2006: 50). Rationally organised and impartial bureaucracy functions in the same way on a daily basis regardless of the subjects holding the office, leaving little space for error and inconsistency. Even during crises or revolutions, bureaucracy continues to function in the same way.

Second, state bureaucracy is “indifferent” (Herzfeld 1992: 33) and “*impersonal*” (Weber 2006: 51, original emphasis). Appointments to certain tasks and positions are determined on the basis of meritocracy and professionalization rather than through nepotism. Accordingly, bureaucracy is a “vocation” (ibid.) and holding office a “duty” (ibid). Once appointed, the bureaucrat achieves their duty through further training, which necessitates devotion to the office over long periods of time. In this sense, accepting a particular duty requires impersonal and “modern loyalty to the office” (ibid.), rather than loyalty to a person. In return for this “indifference” (Herzfeld 1992), the bureaucrat is provided with a specialised “vocation” that guarantees “tenure for life” (Weber 2006: 53).

Meanwhile, Weber, a realist, shows the dark side of bureaucracy. He argues that once capitalism fully enters into being, bureaucratisation invades every part of society, from politics to the economy. Thus, the modern subject is “forced” (Weber 2001 [1930]: 123) to work with and within bureaucracy. In this context, the rationality and impersonality of bureaucracy are obligatory, stripping the individual of her creativity and freedoms. The individual is squeezed inside the “iron cage” (ibid.) of a de-humanised / de-individualised, mundane, and rigid bureaucracy. Like Weber, Pierre Bourdieu claims that “the bureaucratic thinker is pervaded by the [...] power of seduction” of the state that displays “bureaucracy as a ‘universal group’ endowed with [...] universal interest” (1994: 2). Here, bureaucracy is defined as a

field for the realisation of state's unitary self-representation over its subjects, whereas the bureaucrat is conceived to be invaded by the state.

However, revisiting Weber's elaboration of bureaucracy in the post-Fordist era, Gellner (1987) offers a more malleable term, "rubber cage". Together with the development of flexible production and greater mechanisation, people spend less time at work, and earn more money. They, thus, have more time for leisure. Gellner holds that in this context people are more pragmatic and flexible (1987: 153-162). Therefore, for Gellner, Weber's concept of "iron cage" is too cold, "impersonal" and "technical" to correspond to the "warmth" of real daily lives (ibid.: 164) in bureaucracy. Similarly, Migdal (2001) claims that bureaucracies are endowed with multiple groupings that may or may not work in enhancing the image of the state. At this point, it is useful to recall Mann's concept of infrastructural power, which opens space not only for the distributive power of the state over society but also for collective forms of power. Within the bureaucratic machinery, the bureaucrat reaches and challenges the state from within; thus, state power operates at all levels. From this perspective, the state ceases to be a unitary entity "pervading" bureaucrats as Bourdieu (1994: 4) argues or an absolute power standing above society.

Nevertheless, bureaucracy is dependent on hierarchies inside and outside state offices. Inside, there is a distinct "*office hierarchy*" (Weber 2006: 49, original emphasis) based on specialisation and rational rules. For Weber, position within this hierarchy is based on the technical efficiency, qualification, and skills of the staff. At the same time, Weber distinguishes decision/policy-makers, such as ministers, who may be popularly elected by the people. He underlines that the latter group may pursue charismatic and traditional forms of domination. However, "the trained permanent official is more likely to get his way in the long run than his nominal superior, the cabinet minister, who is not a specialist" (Weber 1952: 25). While permanent officials are hierarchically situated below elected ministers, they are independent owing to their technical knowledge. They are only tied to rational laws and regulations. This relative autonomy gives the bureaucrat a certain "social esteem" (Weber 2006: 53) both inside and outside the office. Following Weber,

Eisendadt notes that bureaucracy tends to “organize itself into a discrete status group” (1963: 168) independent and above society owing to their specialisation. Here, the perceived superiority of bureaucracy leads to an exclusive knowledge production kept secret from the rest of society (Weber 2006: 63-65). The secrecy embedded in bureaucracy reflects upon knowledge-power relationships, later taken up by Foucault (1980). Weber’s argument on attaining educational certificates and degrees as markers of hierarchies hints at Bourdieu’s (1986) subsequent formulation of “cultural capital”.

Weber’s contribution has been criticised on two bases. The first is a methodological criticism, questioning the lack of variation and historicity in Weber’s ideal-typical analysis (Albrow 1970: 61). Here, Weber is critiqued for avoiding contextual analyses and for underestimating the historical and cultural particularities of bureaucracy (Friedrich 1952; Gouldner 1952; Albrow 1970). The second line of criticism is more intricate, as it challenges Weber’s theory from within. It pinpoints the gaps in his discussion on bureaucracy in terms of organisational sociology. Despite his emphasis on the exclusive powers of the bureaucrat, the question of ‘who controls bureaucracy?’ remains underdeveloped in Weber’s analysis (Barnard 1952). Although Weber yields some hints on the popularly elected cabinet minister and his potentially charismatic leadership, he does not address power relations between the two. Selznick (1952) argues that individual bureaucrats develop informal structures, act spontaneously, and form alliances groups within the office.

The “polymorphous” (Mann 1993: 75) state, far from being an abstract concept, is marked by diverse sources of power at the inter-institutional level and the “warmth” (Gellner 1987) of civil servants. At the intra-institutional level, this “warmth” (ibid.) speaks for informal practices and power relations that are meaningful for bureaucrats. In this sense, bureaucrats are not mere avatars of the state. Herzfeld claims that they are “citizens”, who “negotiate with each other” (1992: 5) for maintaining themselves and the institution. Similarly, Bernstein holds that “actual bureaucrats in actual bureaucracies, just like people in all sorts of other settings, constantly make decisions, interact with others, exceed their own control” (2011: 7).

In order to capture this “warmth” within the minute details of the state, Migdal (2001) proposes a “state-in-society approach” which unpacks the conceptual boundaries between state and society. He maintains that state employees, like other people, are influenced by institutional hierarchies among state officials, colleagues in other state or non-state related organisations, personal relations, domestic and foreign “social forces” (Migdal 2001: 116) related with the state. Since state institutions are not as “drab and lifeless” (Bernstein 2011: 7) as they might seem, decision-making processes are not as straightforward as one might think. Here, Migdal highlights the need to take into account a “calculus of pressures” (2001: 116) in the decision-making processes within state institutions.

One should focus on the mundane processes through which the state is elevated as an abstract concept vis-à-vis society (Abrams 1988; Mitchell 2006: 126). A focus on the everydayness and power relationships within state bureaucracies leads to reflections on ethnographic studies of the state. Gupta defines “ethnography of the state” as the “analysis of the everyday practices of local bureaucracies and the discursive construction of the state in public culture” (1995: 376). In other words, Gupta concentrates on both the daily functioning of the state inside bureaucracies and how the state as an abstract concept is perceived in people’s daily lives. Reviewing the scholarly literature on ethnographic studies of the state, Kaplan summarises three overriding key issues (1) the state’s self-representation as a uniform entity, (2) how people in their daily lives react to and relate with the state and its symbols; and (3) how the idea of the state is negotiated and reproduced in daily life (2006: 13).

Drawing on the second key element, Das and Poole (2004) and Hansen and Stepputat (2001) bring together ethnographic accounts on how disciplining and regulatory effects of the state in different regions of the world are experienced by public daily life. Within this strand, Yang (2005) pursues an ethnography of the state to understand the public perceptions of the Taiwanese state through the education system. Similarly, Navaro-Yashin (2002) looks at how Islamists and secularists in Turkey reproduce *Faces of the State* in daily public life. Focusing on the inner functioning of the state, there are studies yielding information on the ‘rational’ and

‘irrational’ workings of state employees. Herzfeld underscores that stereotypical complaints about bureaucracy in terms of inequality, slowness, and corruption are ways to bypass personal failure in state offices (Herzfeld 1992: 4). Here, rational bureaucracy becomes a mask for an individual’s self-interest to maintain her position within the institution (ibid.: 19). Likewise, Navaro-Yashin in her ethnographic study of bureaucracy in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, argues that civil servants do not merely have modern and rational loyalties for their office. They act through the emotions. Their perception of being a civil servant lies in a feeling of “comfort and idleness” (2006: 283).

Within this theoretical framework, the argument that the state is a “polymorphous” (Mann 1993: 75) entity marked by “disunity” (Abrams 1988) is key to the purposes of this research. This study unpacks the perceived unity of state power in the daily functioning of different state institutions. It highlights the ways in which these institutions organise competing sources of power to exhibit “Turkishness”. Embedded in the “iron cage” (Weber 2001 [1930]) and “rubber cage” (Gellner 1987) of bureaucracy, civil servants working in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums experience bureaucracy in distinct ways. They actively negotiate the ways in which the state’s official history is regulated and displayed in state museums (See Chapter 6). In this study, bureaucracy is perceived as a microcosm for everyday power struggles within the state, while the attempt to control this infrastructural power is seen as the struggle *for* the state. Thus, the Turkish state, as a “polymorphous” (Mann 1993) formation, is studied through an ethnography of the state with a particular interest in the everyday bureaucratic practices of state museums.

Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums, thus, stand out as sites, where there is an “explicit search for meaning” over “Turkishness”: “the everyday routine of institutionalized networks and ideologies” (Mann 2006: 348). This study picks up from where Mann left off. It looks at how Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums work in the diffusion of competing ideologies / ideas / rituals / representations. Thus, the emphasis is twofold: (1) organisational mechanisms and (2) the ensuing representations of “Turkishness”. At this point, Gorski’s rules for studying “diffused

ideological power” (2006: 130) are informative. Adding to Mann’s stress on organisational infrastructures of ideologies, Gorski suggests that one should look at inconsistencies within ideologies as well as the discrepancies between what is said and what is done. His suggestion points out the need for an ethnographic approach in studying state institutions without losing sight of the autonomous, centralised, institutionalised, and disciplining practices of the state. The aim of this ethnographic study of the state is to bridge the macro and micro analysis of power.

III. Approaching Nationalism Beyond Binaries

In terms of representations, this thesis looks at museum practices displaying “Turkishness” with reference to its competing histories, namely, secular Republican and Islamic Ottoman pasts. This section, firstly, looks at the node between nationalism, history and the state, investigating how nationness can be conceptualised and studied “from above”/ “from below” / in the minute details of everyday life. Secondly, it unpacks the perceived opposition between religious and secular forms of nationalisms. That is, it examines the binary oppositions of *sacred* / *Eastern* / *backward* / *ethnic* vis-à-vis *secular* / *Western* / *modern* / *civic*. In this sense, this section formulates the theoretical tools to understand “Turkishness” with its binaries in line with the shifting holders of state power.

a. Nationalism – History – the State Nexus

Modernist Approaches

Renan conceptualises the nation as “a spiritual principle” (1882), which lies in the past and is evoked in the present through memories and the will to live together. Remembering heroic narratives and forgetting traumas within the nation-building process holds the nation together by clinging onto shared symbols, memories, and myths. Stories of national heroes make us remember not only glories of the nation, but also narratives of sacrifice and “common sufferings” (ibid.). In this sense, the nation is placed in a strong affinity with history as the legitimiser of the nation. Renan underlines the selective making of national history through a simultaneous process of remembering and forgetting. However, for Renan, the question as to how and by whom this remembering / forgetting is realised remains unanswered.

Placing a different emphasis on the role of the state, modernists' responses lie in their argument that nations are created as a result of the material and political changes brought about by industrialisation and modernisation. They perceive national cultures, symbols, rituals, memories and myths as significant ideological constructs, enabling the creation / invention / imagination of nations as a response to modernity. Gellner argues that new conditions of industrialisation required the widespread acquisition of "literacy" as the universal and "minimal requirement" (1964: 159) for membership in the modern community. Competence in a common language relies on the creation of a "high culture", which primarily underlines a "linguistic / cultural distance" (1983: 60) from the rest of the society. Its consequent standardisation and diffusion is ensured through a fixed education system by the state (ibid.: 135). This new and literate "high culture" (ibid.), essential for the creation of the nation, undermines and yet reinvents and transforms earlier symbols and folk (peasant) culture. Gellner argues that this is "the basic deception and self-deception practiced by nationalism [...] Nationalism usually conquers in the name of putative folk culture" (1983: 57). "It invents nations, where they do not exist" (Gellner 1964: 168) through the imposition of a homogenous high culture rooted in a "fictitious past" (Gellner 1996: 369) marked by folk symbols and myths.

Building on Gellner, Hobsbawm's (1983) starting point is the invented character of nations and nationalisms. He argues that what people come to perceive as natural, (i.e. their national identities, their practices and rituals such as saluting a flag, myths, and symbols) are "invented traditions" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) repeated and routinized as a response to the new situations and needs arising from modernity. By "imposing repetition" (Hobsbawm 1983: 4) from above, these invented traditions become rooted in the lives of ordinary people. Such traditions become so naturalised that they claim to originate from an immemorial past. This, for Hobsbawm, marks the "paradox" (ibid.: 14) of nationalism. While asserting to be rooted in antiquity; nationalism, its practices, and rituals are invented from above as a retort to the novel conditions of modernity. Despite his emphasis on the "imposition" of invented traditions, Hobsbawm criticises Gellner for his top-down approach. Hobsbawm

retains that nations and nationalism are “dual phenomena constructed essentially from above but which cannot be understood unless also analysed from below, that is [...] ordinary people” (ibid.: 10).

Gellner and Hobsbawm emphasise “the fusion of will, culture and polity” (Gellner 1983: 55) as the principle of nationalism, while Anderson defines nations as “cultural artefacts” (2006: 4) “imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (ibid.: 6). For Anderson, Gellner’s (1993) emphasis on “creation” and Hobsbawm’s (1983) stress on “invention” are subsumed under “fabrication and falsity” (Anderson 2006: 6). Anderson’s focus is centred on “imagination”, which perceives nationalism as cultural creativity instead of an ideology masking the truth. Thus, for Anderson, “nationalism has to be understood by aligning it, not with [...] political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems” (ibid.: 12). As a result of cultural changes brought about by print-capitalism and Protestantism⁴, nations are imagined in “homogenous empty time”, “loom[ing] out of an immemorial past” towards a “limitless future” (ibid.: 11-2). Within this “homogenous empty time” (ibid.), members of the nation are imagined to constitute a “deep, horizontal comradeship” (ibid.: 7).

Like Renan, for Anderson this eternal historical field of the nation is imbued by forgetting as much as remembering. Anderson claims that nations imagine themselves as “embedded in secular, serial time, with all of its implications of continuity”, while at the same time “‘forgetting’ the experience of this continuity” (2006: 205). However, this imagination is not a simple imposition from above. Delineating different forms of nationalisms from below⁵, Anderson argues that official nationalisms in the West first emerged as a reaction to popular nationalisms (ibid.: 83-111). In the post-colonial context, it was the Western colonial state, which laid the grounds for post-colonial nationalism. Besides schools and literature, through the use of “census, map and the museum”, the colonial state “created a

⁴ These include spread of vernacular languages, “dissolutions of religious communities, dynastic realms” and messianic time” (Anderson 2006: 24).

⁵ Anderson differentiates three other types of nationalisms: “creole nationalism” (2006.: 47-64), “vernacular nationalism” (ibid.: 67-81) and “long-distance nationalism” (Anderson 1992)

historical depth of field which was easily inherited by the state's postcolonial successor" (ibid.: 185).

All three scholars, Gellner, Hobsbawm and Anderson, are criticised on two premises. Firstly, they point out economic and material changes as the main catalyst for the rise of nationalism. For Gellner the catalyst is industrialisation, for Hobsbawm it is capitalism, and for Anderson it is print-capitalism. Against mono-causal modernist approaches, Zubaida underlines that material transformations such as capitalism and industrialization are not experienced and understood in the same way all around the world; and therefore, nationalism is also experienced differently (1978: 58-59; c.f. Özkırımlı 2010 [2000]: 134). For ethnosymbolists (Armstrong 1982; Smith 1991; Hutchinson 1994), this difference stems from diverse cardinal attachments of common culture, ethnicity and religion which lead to the emergence of nations.

Secondly, since Gellner, Anderson, and Hobsbawm are mostly concerned with economic and material changes, the state and power remain of secondary importance. Breuilly holds that nationalism should be perceived "as a form of politics" (1985: 1), which strives for realising state power. Breuilly's main focus rests on oppositionary political movements seeking to gain state power. Delineating three forms of nationalisms (separatist, reformist and unification), he argues that all nationalisms strive for attaining and preserving state power either from above or from below. Symbols and ceremonies, for Breuilly, are tools in "giving nationalist ideas a definite shape and force" (ibid.: 344) in the quest for state power. Concurring with Breuilly, Tilly argues that nationalism is the claim for popular sovereignty (1994: 133), while Mann (1995) perceives nationalism as a quest for popular politics of representation.

At this point, arguments of Gellner, Hobsbawm and Anderson are valuable in understanding the (re)formation of Turkish nationalisms. Gellner's (1983) discussion of "high cultures" is evident in the formation of "Turkishness". As Mardin (1973) theorised, a "centre" of elites led by Atatürk expanded a codified and homogenised culture through state's standard education system and history-writing. As Anderson (2006) would argue, the official Turkish History Thesis imagines a "homogenous

empty time” starting from pre-Islamic Central Asian roots and migrating towards Anatolia as the homelands of Turks (Ersanlı 2002a; See Chapter 3). With the “quasi-obligatory repetition” (Hobsbawm 1983: 5) of such history in schools and state museums, the Turkish nation was invented by Atatürk’s modernisation project (See e.g. Gür (2001) on reproduction of national identity in the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations in Turkey).

The concepts of imagination, invention, and creation are also constructive in understanding the current transformation of Turkish nationalisms as a response to the structural changes taking place under the Justice and Development Party (JDP) government (See Chapter 3). On the one hand, ceremonies remembering the Ottoman conquest of Istanbul have been “re-invented” with grandiose events in line with JDP’s neo-Ottomanist zeal. On the other hand, Republican national days are still routinely remembered through official ceremonies in Anıtkabir as outlined in its regulations (See Chapter 7).

New Approaches

“New approaches” (Özkırmı (2010 [2000]: 169), i.e. self-styled constructivists, highlight that nations are not once and for all invented as real objects. Samuel conceives “invention of tradition as a process” (2012: 17) rather than a single symbol, mythical figure, or national day. His micro-perspective on history shifts attention to the contested ways in which the past is constructed, thereby surpassing the dichotomy of nationalism from above and nationalism from below. Instead, “new approaches” (Özkırmı (2010 [2000]: 169) show that nationalism is embedded in everyday life, in the “conceptual frameworks and analytical vocabularies [which] are themselves shaped by the discourse of nationalism” (ibid.: 170).

In this line, Brubaker (1996) holds that although modernists put forward the constructed nature of nations and nationalisms, they are trapped within an essentialist and developmentalist approach. Just as primordialists, they treat nations as “real entities” (ibid.: 14), which came into being through invention / imagination. In other words, they take “categories of practice as categories of analysis” (ibid.: 15).

“Reframing nationalism”, Brubaker (1996) tries to circumvent this scholarly reproduction of nationalism and suggests conceiving “nationness” in three forms. Accordingly, he conceptualises “nationness” or “nationhood”, as a “practical category”, an “institutionalised form” and a “contingent event” (ibid.: 7), i.e. “as a political and cultural form institutionalised within and among states” (ibid.: 16). Brubaker calls attention to processes and events that forge nationalism as a “political field” (ibid.: 17). He proposes an “eventful approach” (ibid.: 19) that perceives “nationness” as spontaneously crystallising and morphing.

Against gender-blind modernist approaches, feminist literature highlights the gendered construction of the nation. The central role of gender for nationalism is visible in the understanding of “the nation-as-kinship” (Nilsson and Tétrault 2000: 5). The nation is conceived as a familial relationship, where co-nationals are regarded as sisters, brothers, mothers, and fathers. Nevertheless, for a long time, modernist approaches have evaded the gendered dimension of nationalism. Yuval-Davis (1993; 1997) identifies the ways in which principles of modernisation and nationalism define and are defined through women’s bodies. In nationalist projects, women act as “biological, cultural and political” (Yuval-Davis 1993: 630) reproducers, transmitters of national culture (its values and morals), participants in national struggles, and markers of national differences. Thus, women cross-cut all dimensions of nationalisms with reference to national citizenship, culture, and origin. For instance, while at one point the woman is imagined as the mother of the nation, in another context she is the reflection of the nation that is essentially modern, Western and secular. Yuval-Davis’s concept of “intersectionality” captures this process, which pinpoints that women are “differentially situated” (2007: 562) in diverse contexts.

Besides, new approaches also lay emphasis on routine ways of reproducing nationalism. Departing from macro theories of nation-building processes, Michael Billig’s (1995) *Banal Nationalism* shifts the focus to the reproduction of nationalism. Accordingly, nationalism is defined as an ideology embedded in everyday life and reproduced through constant encounters with the language and symbols of

nationhood. This ideology equips subjects with “common sense” (ibid.: 13) and stereotypical assumptions, about who ‘we’ and ‘they’ are, on the basis of a collective memory on nationhood. These ideas are routinized through daily reproduction of symbols such as the flag, map (as the signifier of homeland), monuments and museums (ibid.: 42). Echoing Renan and Anderson, Billig highlights that routinization, however, entails a simultaneous process of remembering and forgetting different histories of the nation. More than that, it creates a “forgotten reminding” (ibid.: 38) of the nation, which is “daily [...] indicated, or flagged”, rendering nationalism a banal “ideological habit” (ibid.: 6) that takes the notion of the nation for granted.

Billig’s focus on everyday nationalism elevated scholarly attention towards a micro perspective, which is perceived to be from below; and therefore, is marked by contestation. In this line, Fox and Miller-Idris (2008) attend to “material and symbolic struggles” over defining the nation in the sphere of everyday life. Approaching the issue from below, they delineate four different ways in which “everyday nationhood” (ibid.) is produced: (1) talking, (2) choosing, (3) performing, and (4) consuming the nation (ibid.: 537). In other words, nationalism is reproduced on a daily basis as we talk, make decisions, act, and consume through ‘us’ and ‘them’. In a similar vein, Edensor situates the making of nationhood in popular culture, which he defines as fluid and negotiated in the “polydimensional” (2002: 23) space of everyday life. Through sports, festivals and national days, the nation is collectively remembered by performing and staging the nation. Edensor argues that although national days are “invented ceremonies” (ibid.: 72) of the state, state nationalism becomes “decentred” (ibid.: 77) and diffused via television and other communication channels in popular culture. It is through this distribution process of popular culture that national identity becomes contested and negotiated.

Billig, Edensor, and Fox and Miller-Idris do not only accentuate nationalism as a normalised and common sense ideology. They also focus on the daily reproduction and routinization of both “hot and banal nationalism” (Billig 1995: 43) from above by the state’s penetration in everyday lives through “banal reminders” (ibid.: 41).

Flags that we encounter every day in state and public institutions, and hanging from windows of homes have become so normalised that flags “slip from the category of nationalism” (ibid.: 39). National days, however, seem to unsettle daily routines as they are celebrated through great parades and events. By remembering the “founding moments” (Çınar 2005: 32) of the nation, the distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ is strengthened and negotiated through annual ceremonies, ritualised performances (Fox and Miller-Idris 2008: 546; McCrone and McPerson 2009) and spectacular events (Kaldor 2004). In this sense, the very repetition of such instances renders “hot” (Billig 1995: 43) or “ecstatic” (Skey 2009) nationalism routinized, whereby citizens “perform the expected emotion” (Billig 1995: 45).

Despite the merits of attention to the microscopic nationalism, Billig seems to confine his argument to a unitary understanding of nationalism, marked by certain unquestioned assumptions about the nation (e.g. popular sovereignty, unitary and territorially bounded nation) enabling people to talk about the world. However, he is inattentive to “personal nationalism” (Cohen 1996), whereby the same assumptions and symbols of the nation can be utilised by diverse actors in different historical contexts. Furthermore, as Smith (2008) argues, the concept of “everyday nationhood” (Fox and Idris-Miller 2008) fails to situate daily nationalism in its historical context. Accordingly, this approach does not pay attention to power struggles in reproducing the banality of nationalism and it does not specify who ‘the’ people is talking, choosing, consuming and performing ‘the’ nation (ibid.: 537).

This study moves beyond detecting static invented traditions / imaginations / creations. Instead, in line with an “eventful approach” (Brubaker 1996: 19), it pursues a more dynamic approach. From this perspective, this thesis is concerned with the negotiation processes of remembering, forgetting, and inventing / imagining / making “Turkishness”, a “practical category”, “institutionalised form” and “event” (Brubaker 1994; 1996). For this reason, the study uses “Turkishness” instead of a static conception of “Turkish national identity” or “Turkish culture” on the basis of its binaries. That would run the risk of mixing “categories of practice” with “categories of analysis” (Brubaker 1996), thereby reproducing the “symbiotic

antagonisms” (Kadioğlu and Keyman 2011) between Islamist and Kemalist notions of nationalisms in Turkey.

The study looks at how “Turkishness”, with its diverse pasts, is regulated as an “institutionalised form” (See Chapter 6), made as a “practical category” on a daily basis by members of museum staff (See Chapter 8), and re-invented through events and processes (See Chapter 7). These processes do not merely stem from below or from above. Rather, they are marked by multifaceted and heterogeneous power struggles. They are inscribed in “banal nationalism(s)” (Billig 1995) through the routinized usage of symbols and languages evoking the nation. For this reason, the study sheds light on “everyday nationhood” (Fox and Idris-Miller 2008), i.e. the contested ways in which “Turkishness” is performed and elaborated on a daily basis as well as national days in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums.

b. Nationalism and its Binaries

For Billig, routinization of national symbols and ceremonies normalises and therefore erases nationalism in the West, attributing nationalism only to religious, violent and extremist cases. This normalisation forms the underlying assumption differentiating Western and Eastern nationalisms (Kohn 1994 [1945]) as well as civic and particularistic forms of nationalisms (Greenfeld 1994 [1992]) as “good and bad nationalisms” (Spencer and Wollman 1998) respectively. While nationalism in the West (e.g. the United Kingdom, France, the USA) is marked by attachment to rational and civic virtues ‘from below’ on the basis of popular sovereignty, Eastern nationalism (e.g. Germany, Russia) is based on exclusionist and separatist dominant ethnic core (ibid.). These distinctions unavoidably carry normative connotations (Brubaker 1999: 63). Western / civic nationalism is conceived as ‘ours’, i.e. political, rational, non-violent, and good. Conversely, Eastern / ethnic / cultural nationalism is conceptualised negatively as ‘their’ for being sentimental, irrational, separatist, reactionary and violent (Smith 2010: 44; Breuilly 1985: 10; Guibernau 1996: 77). Hall argues that both forms can be exclusionist and violent; thus, he proposes a third term, “civil nationalism”, which translates to multiculturalism or “cultural diversity within a shared commitment to minimal liberal political norms” (2003: 30). As

Özkırımlı highlights, this form of nationalism is still based on a set of “shared values” (2003: 5) of liberalism. Moreover, ethnic and civic nationalisms usually co-exist both in the ‘West’ and the ‘East’. The new nation has to negotiate these two by ‘becoming’ modern and similar to the West and ‘being’ unique in national culture (Bhabha 1990; Chakrabarty 2000; Chatterjee 1993, 2004). More significantly, these terms are far from clear and they refer to intertwined constructions of competing nationalisms. As Billig (1995) argues, taking the binary oppositions of nationalism for granted (state / society; top- down / bottom-up nationalisms; culture / politics, Western / Eastern forms of nationalisms) in studying nationalism reproduces the very ideology it seeks to study.

The West-East dichotomy is also interrelated with the binary oppositionary understandings of the sacred and the secular, informing religious and secular understandings of nationalism. Durkheim defined religion as a socially constructed “unified system of beliefs and practices” (1915: 47), distinguishing the sacred and the profane. The sacred relates to “things set apart and forbidden” (ibid.), while profane refers to mundane things. For Durkheim, this distinction is constructed and maintained through collective rituals and ceremonies. Gephart (1998) claims that since sacredness may be attached to anything, any commemorative ritual and collective memory may become sacred. In other words, the practice of ritualising may set memory / history apart from others and render it sacred. At the same time, the very act of ritual means routinization of that sacred memory, making it a part of the mundane. Therefore, as Evans Pritchard (1965) points out, it is not really possible to apply Durkheim’s distinction in real life, as the sacred and the profane usually overlap.

However, for Asad (2003), it is not sufficient to state that the sacred and secular coincide. Asad focuses on the mythical ways in which ‘the secular’ was historically constituted particularly in a Western framework. Accordingly, the secular represents itself as being emancipatory from the irrationality of religion; however, the same concept governs and represses human subjects through laws and regulations by defining what is sacred / religious and secular / profane. Zubaida favours the concept

“secularisation” instead of “the secular”, because the first is linked with a process of “dis-embedding religion” from politics and public life, while the latter is a categorical concept (2011: 3). Agreeing with Asad on the argument that the secular is essentially a Western phenomenon, Zubaida’s main concern is to move beyond an understanding of Islam that is used as an adjective to describe qualities that are the opposite of secular, Western, and rational.

The secularisation thesis is marked by classical social thinkers of the 19th century, Comte, Durkheim, Weber and Marx. They all argued that religion was bound to fade away in all spheres of life in the face of modernisation and industrialisation (Norris and Inglehart 2004: 3). Weber argued that increase of rationalisation and bureaucratisation would lead to “disenchantment” of the social world, whereby the individual no longer needs “recourse to magical means” (Weber 1946: 139) for she has the rational, calculative and technical means to solve her problems. Similarly, Durkheim (1915) announced the death of religion, together with the changing social structure brought about by modernity.

Concurrently, this disenchantment process is considered to be dialectical, because it is replaced by a form of “civil religion” (Bellah 1967) with the rise of nationalism. In Gellner’s words, “Durkheim thought that in religious worship society adores its own camouflaged image. In a nationalist age, societies worship themselves brazenly and openly, spurning the camouflage” (1983: 55). For Gellner, the new high culture is so important and salient that it is prone to sacralisation, while many other political objects and loyalties are not (Gellner 1994: 72-73). Anderson also perceives nationalism as a form of religion, although he does not see it as a consequent historical stage following religion (2006: 12). Like religion, nationalist imagination “concerns itself with the links between the dead and the yet unborn, the mystery of re-generation” (ibid.: 11) by providing a language of historical continuity stemming from an immemorial past and reaching out to an endless future. Nevertheless, for both Gellner and Anderson, nationalism remains a secular phenomenon with claims to popular sovereignty. From an ethno-symbolist perspective, Smith joins the argument that nationalism is a secular “religion of the people” (2009: 74) in two

senses. First, variably *ethnies* may evolve into nations through the myth of “chosen people” (Smith 1992) imbued by a divine right (e.g. Israel) and its unique characteristics that made it chosen. Second, Smith adds that nationalism is a secular religion of the people whereby the human, her self-determination and popular sovereignty are sacralised through myths, symbols, rituals, and ceremonies (2009: 76-77).

Beyond “national self-idolization”, Bellah coined the term “civil religion” (1967: 1) to denote institutionalised “beliefs, symbols and rituals with respect to sacred things (ibid.: 8) in the USA. Accordingly, “civil religion” is perceived as a “national religious self-understanding” (ibid.: 6) of the nation, which does not replace religion (or nationalism). Against the sweeping application of “civil religion” in different historical and political contexts, Gentile holds that “civil religion” is particular to “democratic and pluralistic societies” (2005: 21). It works as a factor ensuring social and political “cohesion” (ibid.). To understand totalitarianism and fascism, Gentile proposes the term “political religion” to indicate another form of “sacralisation of politics”, which “rejects coexistence with other political ideologies [...] prescribes the obligatory observance of its commandments and participation in its political cult” (ibid.: 30). In this sense, the two concepts, in their relation with nationalisms, echo the theoretical distinction between “nationalism from above” and “nationalism from below”.

Against the analogy of nationalism and religion, Brubaker (2012) argues that they should be conceptualised separately by focusing on how these two intermingle. He maintains that a religious movement cannot be nationalist just because it works through the nation-state, and that nationalism does not simply become religious just because it uses religious symbols, narratives, and traditions. While recognising biases and problems in secularisation theory, he holds that a secular understanding of nationalism is necessary (Brubaker 2012: 16-17). Asad also claims that just because modern nationalism draws on religious elements does not mean that religion forms nationalism. In the same way, religious movements such as “Islamism cannot be reduced to nationalism” (Asad 2003: 200). Instead, he points out the ways in which

followers of religion or nationalists challenge or reproduce ‘the sacred’ and ‘the secular’ for attaining state power.

In short, a “polymorphous” (Mann 1993) understanding of the state moves beyond the distinction of ‘nationalism from above’ / ‘nationalism from below’ and the affiliated binaries of good / bad, Eastern / Western, ethnic / civic, oppressor / oppressed. Following Brubaker (1996), in the Turkish context these binaries retain their significance as objects of analysis rather than conceptual tools. Secular Republican and Islamic Ottoman pasts are remembered and forgotten by diverse actors, evoking contending myths, symbols and narratives of glory as well as “common suffering[s]” (Renan 1882). As Breuilly (1985) would argue, these binaries are overturned and competing Turkish nationalisms are transformed in the quest for state power (See Chapter 3).

This study also moves beyond the debates of “civil religion” (Bellah 1967) and “political religion” (Gentile 1990; 2005). Here, I do not draw the boundaries of religious and secular nationalisms in Turkey either. Following Asad (2003) and Brubaker (2012), I trace the contested ways in which the sacred and the secular are (re)defined in struggles for state power in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums, evoking the contending Turkish nationalisms.

IV. Exhibiting Nationness in Museums

Museums stand at the juncture of binaries between state and society; nationalism from above and nationalism from below; hot and banal nationalism; the sacred and the secular. How can one conceptualise Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums as state institutions and harbingers of competing pasts? What are the mechanisms these museums utilise in displaying “Turkishness”? This section addresses these questions in two parts, investigating the role and apparatuses of museums in exhibiting nationness.

a. Role(s) the of Museum

There are two main approaches concerning roles of the museum: (1) as disciplinary mechanisms of the state in representing the nation (Bennet 1995; Duncan 1995, 2005; Anderson 2006); and (2) as contextually and democratically negotiated inclusive spaces (Clifford 1997; Chakrabarty 2002; Sandell 2007). While the first approach highlights power-knowledge relationships imbued in museums, the second focuses on the performative and ritualistic nature of museums as simultaneously sacred and secular spaces. This latter strand emphasises the importance of visitors and different stakeholders (state institutions, NGOs, market, academicians, media), who influence the displays in museums.

The most prominent figure within the first body of literature, Bennet (1995) offers a genealogy of museums. Echoing Foucault, Bennet argues that the modern museum has to be seen in relation to the *episteme* of the Enlightenment, framed by rationalisation and institutionalisation of scientific knowledge. Like other institutions of the century (the prison, the hospital, etc.), museums were established to rationally classify, organise, and display objects in an evolutionary sequence; and accordingly, to produce rational knowledge about ‘our’ culture vis-à-vis ‘other’ cultures (ibid.: 22). In this sense, museums are “institutionalized rationalization of the past” (Walsh 1992: 2), epitomised by the unique museum artefact (Preziosi 2004: 80).

Within this rationalisation, the nation is displayed as a peculiar entity progressing among a world of nations (Prösler 1996: 34). In Anderson’s (2006) words, the nation is imagined in the “homogenous empty time” of the museum. The museum, in turn, is conceived as an instrument of the state, like the map and the census (ibid.: 173). Anderson argues that by removing objects from their original places and displaying them in rationally classified and linearly organised series, museums present a secularised and linear story of the nation (ibid.: 183; Macdonald 2006a: 82). In this sense, the museum is a house for the “confinement” (Trustram 2014: 67) of objects, which are appreciated as objective proofs and means for making truth claims. Thus, museums form “hierarchies of knowledge” (Henning 2006: 302) between themselves and the people. In this line, scholars underline that museums work as pedagogic tools

of the state in educating its citizenry (Evans 1999; Coombes 2004; Mason 2007). Özyürek (2001) in her elaboration of a temporary exhibit in Turkey, distinguishes museums and temporary exhibitions. Accordingly, temporary exhibits act like newspapers, thematically organise contemporary public debates, whereas museums are relatively stable and encyclopaedic reference points of the state to which the nation can return repeatedly (Özyürek 2001: 188).

Besides this knowledge-power relationship, museums also discipline and produce bodies through their spatial organisations and internal regulations. As Bennet (1995; 2006) illustrates, the visitor is expected to behave in a certain manner inside the museum, i.e. to talk quietly, gaze at the objects from a certain distance, follow the visitor's route, not eat or take photos inside the museum. These behaviours speak to Duncan's (1995) "civilizing rituals" of the nation. The individual visitor, prescribed by a museum map, visits the exhibit in line with the script of the museum and performs the expected behaviour (ibid.: 20). At the end of this ritual, the visitor leaves the museum, having been "enlightened" (ibid.: 27) and transformed into a citizen of "history's most civilised and advanced nation-state" (ibid.). This 'rite of passage' makes museums *sacred* spaces. On the one hand, their architectural façade may resemble Greek temples or spaces of worship (Altieri 1988; Coombes 2004: 233) and their interior organisations evoke sacredness by setting objects apart from their contexts and placing them inside display units. On the other hand, museums display "religious objects" (Paine 2013) in rational, secular, and chronological categories, which render them as objects of art history, rather than objects of worship. In this sense, the museum in its temple-like structure simultaneously sacralises and de-sacralises objects on display, disciplining visitors to perform the "civic ritual" (Duncan 1995: 2).

The second strand of discussions concentrates on visitor-museum interaction. Coined as "new museology" (Vergo 1989), this approach strives to move beyond pedagogical and administrative concerns towards a more contextual and visitor-oriented approach. As MacDonald summarises, "new museology" incorporates three points for the study of museums: (1) the contextual construction of meanings

ascribed to museum objects, (2) commoditisation and entertainment, and (3) visitors' understanding of the museum and its displays (2006b: 2). This 'from below' perspective is fed by the growing scholarly interest in audience-visitor perceptions (Fyfe and Ross 1996; Hooper-Greenhill 1988), interactive museums utilising information technology (Lumley 1988) and commercialising the museum (Pearce 1991; Urry 1990, 1996; McLean 1997; Grunenberg 2002; Dailey 2006; Frey and Meier 2006; Macdonald 2011). Museums are not conceptualised as didactic tools of the state; they are considered as entertainment places where history is commoditised through various in-museum activities and museum gift shops.

Recognising the active interplay between the audience and the museum, "new museums" (Marstine 2006) in democratic states are seen (and encouraged) to be more inclusive and multicultural (Stam 1993). Within this framework, museums are also conceived as "conflicted spaces" (Fyfe 2006: 36) marked by various stakeholders. Clifford uses Pratt's term "contact zone" in understanding museums as "democratically negotiated" and contested spaces (1997: 192). These "contact zones" (ibid) are not totally shaped by audience expectations or by museum authorities alone. Clifford views these zones as potentially liberating spaces. Being open to contact between diverse actors, museums offer "hybrid possibility and political negotiation" (ibid.: 212). Similarly, using Bhabha's (1990) terms, Chakrabarty argues that museums in democracies carry the dual aim of being "pedagogic" and "performative" (2002: 6). Accordingly, the museum, "as a key site for cultural politics" (ibid.: 7), is both an instructive tool to teach and a public space for citizens to critically engage with museums' instructions and representations.

What is at stake is another reflection of top-down and bottom-up approaches. Similar to the state-society distinction, here, the museum is seen as imposing a certain display vis-à-vis the audience, who is expected to either conform to or disturb the given message. This approach bypasses networks of power relations that may also operate within the museum and among visitors. Here, recalling Mann's IEMP model⁶ is informative for the purposes of this study centring on two state museums in

⁶ See page 20.

Turkey. How do museums draw on different sources of power? How does “infrastructural power” (Mann 1993) operate? These questions suggest that neither Topkapı Palace nor Anıtkabir museum are merely pedagogical warehouses of national history. Nor are their visitors able to freely and democratically challenge the museum from below. Both are embodied within regulatory frameworks of the state and the daily power relations of their civil servants (See Chapter 6). Just as the bureaucrat is not an avatar of the state, museum staff consist of real people, making decisions within the “rubber cage” (Gellner 1987) / “iron cage” (Weber 2001 [1930]) of museum bureaucracies. As a result of the multifaceted negotiation processes, the museum becomes a “colossal mirror” (Bataille 1986: 24), reflecting its own fragmented image on a perceived understanding of its visitors. Within this framework, this study concentrates on the intermingling power relations within the museum as well as between the museum and its audience. Unlike approaches ‘from below’ or ‘from above’, this study does not consider museums as coherent institutions. Instead, it directs attention towards power relations and negotiation processes for creating and displaying diverse meanings of nationness in the quest for state power.

b. Museum Mechanisms in Representing Nationness

The multiplicity of power networks do not rule out museum’s ability to discipline the vision and bodies of its visitors, and portraying a certain message. Instead, parallel to these power relations, museums utilise certain mechanisms in exhibiting nationness. As Alpers (1991) holds, the museum arranges both the visibility and invisibility of its collections; and therefore, the past it is representing. In this sense, exhibition halls are like ‘front’ stages of theatres with stage decorations (displays) and their script / scenario inscribed in information boards and narratives of museum guides. Museum offices constitute the “backstage” area, where the scenario of the exhibit, like a theatre exhibit, is prepared (Gurian 1991: 188 c.f. Pieterse 2005). For this reason, Lumley underlines that “museums [...] are like icebergs, because only the tip – the public face – is visible to everyone” (1988: 3).

Macdonald sought to uncover the “behind-the-scenes world” (2002: 5) of a science museum. Her ethnographic study of this museum sheds light on the “impression management” (ibid.: 4) of the museum in its daily functioning and its interaction with visitors. The separation between “front” and “backstage” of the museum relies on Goffman’s (1956) understanding of “performance”, whereby the individual represents herself contextually through a “pre-established pattern of action” (ibid. 8). For Goffman, this practice takes place in the “front” stage of social life, which is marked by “routines” (ibid.: 9) and “established social role(s)” (ibid. 17). Here, the “front” is shaped by the physical setting, appearance and manners of performers in controlling and managing the audience. In the museum context, this “stage-management” (ibid.:8) involves ensuring the re-enactment of a pre-determined exhibit script, which is conveyed to the visitor through a certain display plan, information boards, and museum guides’ narratives.

Instead of exploring the backstage of the museum, Michelle Henning investigates how knowledge is hierarchically organised in “‘front and back regions’ of the museum” through the use of “new media” (2006: 302). While Macdonald (2002) addresses the processes engendering performances inside the museum, Henning highlights knowledge-power relations embedded in such performances between the back and front stages of the museum. A multifaceted understanding of power refuses to take the state-museum / society-visitor distinction for granted. Therefore, this study does not draw distinct lines between the back and front regions; and it does not explore the “behind-the-scenes world” (Macdonald 2002: 5) of Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums to uncover hidden agendas. Instead, it looks at the ways in which various overlapping back and front regions are constructed by different museum staff vis-à-vis visitors, researchers, as well as her own colleagues. Within these settings acting as “cultural accessories of power” (Bennet 1995: 27), the study addresses power networks operating on different levels in state museums. In other words, it treats the “museum as process” (Jeffers 2003) of contestation over meaning; and thus, it traces the “invention of [the competing] traditions as a process” (Samuel 2012: 17) inside Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums.

V. Conclusion

This chapter serves as a theoretical map for the conceptualisation and study of the ways in which Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir, as state museums, reproduce, negotiate, and exhibit “Turkishness” on a daily basis within a context of the transformation of Turkish society and politics. Here, the three theoretical branches (the state, nationalism, and museums) rest on the same motive of going beyond binary oppositions of any kind (state / society; power over / power through; nationalism from above / nationalism from below; secular / sacred; West / East). In this study, these binaries are perceived as “categories of practice” (Brubaker 1996: 15), which work in the reproduction of “symbiotic antagonisms” (Kadıoğlu and Keyman 2011) between Islamists and Kemalists in Turkey, instead of “categories of analysis” (Brubaker 1996: 15). Reconciling macro and micro approaches with a focus on processes, this study highlights theoretical possibilities of studying the state, nationalism and museums beyond binaries.

Museums constitute a juncture point, where forms of remembering, forgetting, and representing the nation are employed by various actors. As the following chapters will discuss, the state is indispensable for understanding museums in Turkey, owing to its “strong state tradition” (Heper 1985). Therefore, state museums in Turkey act as totalising and categorising producers of knowledge. While “new museology’s” emphasis on visitors is significant, in Turkey where the influence of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) and regulations is strong, it is hard to conceive of state museums as democratically negotiated spaces (Clifford 1997; Chakrabarty 2002; Sandell 2007). In addition, neither “museum” nor “audience” are homogenous, abstract and mutually exclusive groups. Like the Turkish state, its museums are also multifaceted, constituted by multiple “front” and “back” regions, organising (access to) knowledge in hierarchal ways by different actors. In this sense, there is no single and invisible “backstage” in Anıtkabir and Topkapı Palace museums. These back stages are highly contingent, marked by structural hierarchies as well as daily power struggles and negotiations among various actors.

In light of Mann's (1993) "institutional statism" and his IEMP model, Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums are primarily identified as different state institutions, representing oppositional pasts. They are institutional hubs of overlapping and competing power sources, which stem from the supreme institutions they are affiliated with. Topkapı Palace Museum enjoys the power of the MCT, as an arm of the JDP government, since 2002. Anıtkabir retains its ideological power centred around Kemalism, while losing its connection with state power in line with the diminishing power of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF). Yet, as the Turkish state is "polymorphous" (Mann 1993: 75), these state institutions are not coherent in themselves; they are marked by power networks. This messy character of state institutions does not render them ineffable. A micro perspective to a study of "infrastructural power" (Mann 1993) reveals how these state museums operate on a daily basis through formal bureaucratic hierarchies and informal power relations among civil servants. Bureaucracy, its power-knowledge relations and associated hierarchies of "social esteem" (Weber 2006: 53) are moulded by 'irrationality', personal relationships, "affects" (Navaro-Yashin 2006), as well as structural hierarchies and regulations. In this way, this thesis suggests bringing inter-institutional and intra-institutional, formal and informal power mechanisms together in the study of the "polymorphous" (Mann 1993) state.

Ethnographic studies of the state provide a close-up perspective to the everyday mechanisms of the state, which reproduce nationalisms on a daily basis. This study delineates not only the organisational infrastructures of ideology, as Mann suggests, but also the representations that it evokes. Within the framework of this study, these representations do not pinpoint a fixed notion of Turkish national identity. Instead, as Brubaker (1996) claims, they involve contested processes, contingent "events", "institutionalised forms", and "practical categories", which constitute "nationness". Through this perspective, one can highlight the negotiated ways in which "high cultures" (Gellner 1983) are standardised / homogenised, national days are "invented" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) and a "horizontal comradeship" is "imagined" (Anderson 2006: 7). This process is imbued by simultaneously remembering and forgetting of shared traumas and glories of the past, its symbols

and myths (Renan 1882), which take the form of both “hot and banal nationalism” (Billig 1995: 43).

From this processual perspective, “Turkishness” is used in quotation marks, to denote its unfinished and dynamic character, negotiated daily in both Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums. Thus, the study does not identify ‘founding’ binaries of “Turkishness”. It traces the reversal of perceived binary oppositions of sacred / secular; East / West; bad / good and their transformations as “categories of practice” (Brubaker 1996: 15). Combined with the emphasis on “everyday nationhood” (Fox and Idris-Miller 2008), this study pays attention to the negotiation processes in which state (official or top-down) nationalism as well as popular nationalism (from below) are both apt to change in line with the daily power relations within the state. In this regard, as the following chapter will illustrate, the established view that the Turkish state and its official nationalism are necessarily Kemalist, whereas more religious forms of Turkish nationalisms stem from below is deconstructed.

Chapter 3: Overturning Binaries, Reversing the Kemalist State Power: Towards “New Turkey”

I. Introduction

This chapter unpacks the historical constitution of the binaries that form “Turkishness” and asks: how have opposing symbols, myths and rituals concerning secularism and Islamism been historically negotiated by different actors of the Turkish state? Nevertheless, this chapter does not offer an exhaustive historical account of Turkish nationalism. Instead, it follows Mann’s (1993) and Brubaker’s (1996) approaches, which trace crystallisations of the state and nationness. It focuses on periods of crises in which symbols of secularism and Islamism (West vs. East; Republic vs. Empire; Atatürk vs. Sultans / Caliphate) are *overturned*, as the holders of state power are *reversed*. The chapter is centred on three key periods: (1) the early Republican era, delineating the “strong state tradition” (Heper 1985); (2) 1930s-1940s, the period of “High Kemalism” in the 1930s and 1940s (Çağaptay 2002), when a ‘coherent’ ideology for Kemalism and the ‘scientific’ basis of “Turkishness” were sought; (3) the post-1980 coup d’état period, consisting of three sub-periods of transforming Turkish Islamisms and secularisms. The chapter highlights the institutional and legal changes which have led to the formation of “new Turkey”, a key phrase repeated by -the former PM- the current president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (*Hürriyet Daily News* 10 August 2014), and later by members of the JDP government. It addresses the transformations of diverse Turkish nationalisms (including official nationalism) and power struggles among and within institutions of the Turkish state.

II. The Early Republican Era: Imprints of the “Strong State” and its Secularisation Project

Mardin (1973) used the term “centre-periphery relations” to explain the imposition of Turkish nationalism by the supposedly culturally superior and homogenous centre on the heterogeneous periphery. Drawing on Gellner, Mardin argues that the 19th century Ottoman Empire witnessed the emergence of a new centre composed of Western-minded and educated bureaucrats (The Committee of Union and Progress

and, later, the Young Turks), who distinguished themselves from the rest of the society (1973: 175). In the face of rising separatist nationalist movements, these bureaucrats first utilised Ottomanism (loyalty for the preservation of the Empire) and pan-Islamism - in constructing Turkish nationalism, while pushing Sultans for Westernising reforms (Yıldız 2001: 76-78). However, in the transition to “direct rule” (Hechter 2000: 62) through centralisation and standardisation, the same centre of bureaucrats dropped their emphases on saving the Empire and Islamic law. As members of the new Republic under Atatürk’s leadership, they shifted their attention to modernisation reforms aiming to eliminate intermediary groups and institutions as remnants of the imperial *ancien regime* (Mardin 1989: 9-10).

Similarly, Heper uses “state tradition” (1985) to denote the historical legacy of the state in Turkey. Following Mardin, Heper claims that the new Republic presented itself as a rupture from and an antidote to the personal, irrational and Islamic rule of the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, it inherited two forms of state traditions from the 19th century Ottoman Empire. The “transient transcendentalism” (Heper 1985: 48) is based on loyalty to the leader, with a belief in the superiority of the state over the society, whilst the “bureaucratic transcendentalism” (ibid.: 67) relies on the idea of an independent bureaucracy as the main mechanism of the state. Their combination was influential in the re-construction of the strong “state tradition” (ibid.) in the Republican Turkey. State tradition in modern Turkey points out the everlasting presence of and a “respect for the state” (Mango 1977: 265). Like Mardin’s (1973) “centre-periphery relations”, Heper’s notion of “state tradition” underlines commitment to the Kemalist state, top-down bureaucratic approach and ‘elitism’ (Gürpınar 2013).

Scholars trace the formation of Turkish nationalism and legacy of top-down modernisation in the *Tanzimat* period of the 19th century. In this period, the Ottoman Empire granted all its subjects equal individual rights in terms of property and security of life to ensure their loyalty in the face of separatist nationalist movements (Mardin 1973; Ahmad 1993; Poulton 1997; Zürcher 2005). However, reforms under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal did not only aim to modernise, but also to form a

new state and a new nation detached from the Empire. A “postimperial context” (Keyman 2011: 30) was in the making, as Mustafa Kemal declared the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1923) and, later, established the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) in Ankara against the will of Sultan Mehmet V. On the one hand, Mehmet signed the Sevres Treaty (1920) agreeing to abandon most of the Ottoman lands. On the other hand, Mustafa Kemal and his followers were deemed as traitors by the Empire for acting against the will of the Sultan and for employing reforms that are in stark contrast with the Empire (Özoğlu 2011: 2-3).

The years between 1920 and 1930 were marked by the imposition of a series of reforms on the order of Mustafa Kemal (Zürcher 2005: 172-173). After the War of Independence, traces of the Ottoman Empire were erased by abolishing the caliphate (1924), religious schools, sects and orders (1925), the Arabic language and Islamic clothing, as well as Sharia (1924). Labelled as irrational, backward and Islamic, these were replaced by the new modern-secular Republic (1923), new state institutions, a rational civil law system adopted from the Swiss Civil Code (1926), centralised and secularised co-education, the adoption of the Latin alphabet (1924) and a Western life-style, reflected in Western clothing, formal equality of men and women, and metric measurement systems (1925) (Mardin 1991: 126; Kandiyoti 1991: 22; Yeğenoğlu 2011: 226-7).

Through these reforms “a limb of the state was torn out of its body” (Mardin 1981: 191) and a new “high culture” (Gellner 1983), marked by a new Western oriented language and way of life, was created. This aimed to sweep the Islamic Ottoman Empire away from all spheres of life (Kalaycıoğlu 2005a: 58). The created rupture was not only detested by the Sultan, but also by the people, who protested against these secularising reforms (Yılmaz 2013a). Two notable events displayed Islamist uprising against the new regime. The 1925 Sheikh Mehmet Said Rebellion in Diyarbakır, a city in South-eastern Anatolia, reacted to the abolishing of the Caliphate in 1924 (Zürcher 2005: 178-80; Üngör 2011: 126). The Menemen Incident in 1930 in İzmir, Western Anatolia, saw Dervish Mehmet, a member of the

Naqshibandi religious order (abolished in 1926) led a rebellion demanding restoration of the Islamic law and the Caliphate (Ahmad 1993: 60; Azak 2010: 22)⁷.

Berkes (1964) conceptualises these reforms as ‘secularisation’, instead of de facto ‘secularism’. While the latter is a political doctrine advocating the separation of religious and worldly practices and institutions (like the French *laïcité*), the first is a process that differentiates values on what is sacred and profane (ibid.: 5-7). For Berkes, in the Turkish case, secularisation process took place between “forces of tradition” propagating religion and “forces of change” (ibid.: 6) towards modernisation. Berkes maintains that negotiation between the two forces resulted in the unification of religion and state rather than their separation. This unification is best visible in the establishment of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (1924), which offers services related to Islam (Quranic translations, education and appointment of preachers), and knowledge production on the enlightened, correct and secular version of Islam that is particularly Sunni (ibid.: 480-481). Accordingly, non-Islamic religions as well as non-Sunni and ‘folkloric Islam’ (e.g. practices pertaining to believing in the power of deceased people buried in shrines) were classified as inappropriate. Scholars argue that the privileged status of Sunni Islam stems from the palace tradition of the Ottoman Empire, where generations of theologians produced knowledge on “high Islam” (Gellner 1997: 243) in the face of different folkloric Islamic practices (Yavuz 2009: 149).

This “*exclusive inclusion* of Islam” (Yeğenoğlu 2011: 228, original emphasis), was realised particularly through women’s bodies. Islam was represented as a threat against women, who were seen as victims of the oppressive Islamic-Ottoman state. In this conception, the Harem of the Empire was conceived as a place where women were caged and forced to convert to Islam as slaves of the Sultan, whereas women in Anatolia were seen to be oppressed and deemed invisible under their *hijabs* due to Sharia (Sirman 2002: 235). Thus, one major aim of the reform was to ‘emancipate’ women, as ‘mothers’ and ‘sisters’ of the Turkish “nation-as-kinship” (Nilsson and Tétrault 2000: 5). Through a “state-sponsored feminism” (Kandiyoti 1991: 42), Early

⁷ See Chapter 8 for a discussion on Anıtkabir’s representations of these events.

Republican reforms endowed women with the rights to vote, to run for public offices and to wear Western clothing, whilst equalising the status of men and women in marriage under the new Civil Code adapted from the Swiss Civil Code.

As Yuval-Davis (2011) would argue, this emancipation entailed the construction of the Turkish nation through modernisation of the women's body, which is "differentially situated". Behind their modern outlook, new Turkish women were expected to retain the moral values of the nation. Drawing on post-colonial literature, Sirman argues that women in Turkey, like Indian women, are endowed with the duty of being the same with and yet different from the West. Accordingly, while being modern in outlook, these emancipated Turkish women, as biological and cultural carriers, are expected to transmit moral values of national culture to future generations (Sirman 2002: 229). Women were to be good mothers, good wives with good manners and morals deriving from Islam, while becoming visible participants of the modern public sphere (Altınay and Bora 2002: 145).

The dilemma of being the same with, yet distinct from, the West (the binary opposition between West / East) was a key feature for Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924), a Durkheimian sociologist, who influenced Mustafa Kemal and his imagination of the new Turkish nation (Özyürek 2006: 14). Mustafa Kemal was preoccupied with Gökalp's ideas, pertaining to the "balance between modernity and tradition, Western materialism and Eastern spirituality as well as Civilization – based on the premises of Enlightenment – and Culture – based on the premises of Romanticism" (Kadioğlu 1996: 183). Gökalp asserted that civilisation is the total sum of the social life of nations at the same developmental level, while culture is the total sum of various aspects of a nation such as religion, language, aesthetics and morality (1959 [1923]: 104). For Gökalp, civilisation could be copied from the West in terms of material and technological developments, whereas culture cannot be imitated as it is based on feelings and emotions related to religion, morality, and aesthetics (ibid.: 108). Thus, according to Gökalp, one is a Turk on the basis of *being* Muslim in terms of morals and culture, and on the will to *becoming* Western in terms of civilisation. Seen in this way, there is no inherent contradiction between civilisation /secularism / Kemalism

/modernism / Westernism and culture / Islam / East, as evident in the construction of the modern yet morally intact Turkish women.

Together with “the will to civilization” (Keyman and Öniş 2007: 300), Islam was translated as the unique cultural element of “Turkishness” (Kadioğlu 1996; Zubaida 1996; Poulton 1997). On the one hand, the formation of the nation witnessed a “Muslimification” (Yeğen 2007: 125) and Turkification of Anatolia through the forced migration and genocide of non-Muslims during World War I (Üngör 2011). On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire and its symbols were rendered as state-defined others for signifying all that belongs to the sphere of Islam. Hence, Islam became both the defining feature and the other of “Turkishness”.

However, proximity to Islam was not the only benchmark for defining “Turkishness”. The 1924 constitution defined “Turkishness” as being “connected to Turkish people in terms of Turkish citizenship regardless of religion and race” (quoted in Yeğen 2004: 58). Yeğen (2004) accentuates the taken for granted usage of “Turkish people” and deconstructs civic Turkish nationalism by pointing out the early Republic’s systematic assimilation and exclusion of Kurdish people in Anatolia. Kadioğlu sums up well by identifying three others of “Turkishness” as defined by the state during this period: (1) Non-Muslims, expelled through population exchanges, forced migration and genocide; (2) Non-Turkish Muslims (for instance Kurds), who were attempted to be assimilated through forced migration and prohibition of their mother tongue, and (3) the Ottoman Empire/ Caliphate from which the new modern and secular Republic detached itself (2008: 36-41). These state-defined “internal others” (Çınar 2005: 36) indicate an ethnicist formation of “Turkishness”, while pointing out the interplay between West / modern /secular and East / backward / Islam.

III. “High-Kemalism” and its Myths of “Turkishness”

Despite the systematic and rapid modernisation and secularisation reforms of the 1920s, Mustafa Kemal did not have a coherent ideology. Instead, he pragmatically utilised various mobilising strategies – including Islamism – in the early stages of the

National Struggle (Berkes 1964: 501; Yavuz 2009: 149; Hanioglu 2012: 34). The 1930s took a significant twist as Mustafa Kemal – the Ghazi (wounded soldier) of the Turkish War of Independence – transformed into Mustafa Kemal Atatürk- the civilian president and “father” of Turks under the new Republic (Türköz 2014). In this period, diverse ideas and practices regarding Atatürk started to take shape into an official *Weltenschaung* led by the newly emerging centre of bureaucrats (Heper 1985: 122). The Republican People’s Party (RPP) constituted the core of this new bureaucratic centre, as the party permeated state institutions and took the leading role in the construction of Kemalism as the official ideology. The contours of Kemalism were inscribed through the six arrows on the RPP’s logo (republicanism, nationalism, statism, populism, *laicite*, and revolution) and were disseminated systematically through state institutions and their bureaucrats (Karpas 1991: 52). These bureaucrats distinguished themselves from the “selfish and corrupt aristocratic bureaucratic culture of the Ottoman *ancien regime*” (Gürpınar 2013: 464). Their “social esteem” (Weber 2006: 53) vis-à-vis the lay people foregrounded themselves as the “guardians of the state” (Heper 1985: 92) and key performers of Kemalism (Yeğen 2001: 59).

The “High Kemalism” (Çağaptay 2002) of the 1930s witnessed the extension of the “strong state” (Heper 1985) into the periphery through social engineering, which engendered a modern knowledge framework on “Turkishness” (Keyman and Öniş 2007: 299). This framework was based on a state-led, theoretical and genealogical approach to substantiate a Turkish history prior and superior to Islam and Ottoman history. To this end, the “Turkish History Thesis” was laid out on the order of Atatürk. It was presented by the Turkish Historical Society in the Turkish History Congress in 1937 (after Atatürk’s death in 1934) and was unanimously embraced as the basis of official historiography (Ersanlı 2002a: 803). According to the thesis, Turks had lived in Central Asia since time immemorial around an inner sea. Because of climate change, they had to leave Central Asia and move in all directions from China to Mesopotamia, the Middle East to Anatolia and Europe, bringing civilisation to the rest of the world (Alıcı 1996: 229). In line with this history thesis, the “Sun-Language Theory”, which was developed during the same period, explained that as

Turks migrated from Central Asia, Turkish language spread around the world, going through metamorphoses in diverse geographies (Tachau 1964: 200; Aytürk 2008).

Imagining the nation with an “immemorial past” in a “homogenous empty time” (Anderson 2006: 11), these theses created a mythical sense of continuity. For Çağaptay (2007), these constitute a significant part in the making of ethnic Turkish nationalism, which drew on the Turkic Central Asian roots, of the 1930s. For Alıcı, they are mythical narratives legitimising the “civic-territorial nation” (1996: 222) based on pre-Islamic Anatolian roots. Through this myth, the state sought to find an answer to the thorny question ‘who is a Turk?’, remembering the distant past in (pre-Islamic) Central Asian and Anatolians roots of the Turkish nation, while forgetting the Empire’s “dark age” (Poulton 1997: 114). Here, the Ottoman Empire could not simply be erased or forgotten. Instead, an official historiography built on the Turkish History Thesis transformed the long history of the Empire as a story of failure, rendering it as an embarrassing yet minor detail in the glorious past of the Turkish nation (Ersanlı 2002a: 805-6). This minor detail became the benchmark against which the new Republic defined itself. While the Ottoman Empire signified oppression, plurality, backwardness, religiosity, corruption and personal rule (the East), the new Turkish Republic referred to liberty, modernity, secularism and the nation-state (the West) (Kadioğlu 1996: 186; Çetin 2004: 351).

The break from the Ottoman Empire was conveyed through Atatürk’s famous *Nutuk* (The Speech), a 36 hours address on the 10th anniversary of the Republic in 1933 (Zürcher 2005: 174-5; Morin and Lee 2010). Atatürk laid down Anatolia as the “national Vatan [homeland]” (Özkan 2012: 76) in line with the National Pact (*Misak-ı Milli*) and the Lausanne Conference in 1932, which drew the boundaries of the new Republic. In his speech, Anatolia is depicted not as a mere geographical land for Central Asian Turks, but more importantly, it is the ultimate site for the heroic struggles of both World War I and the War of Independence (1920-22). Within this narrative, the struggle is narrated as a spontaneous bottom-up movement of Anatolian peasants for national sovereignty against Greek occupation and an Ottoman government, willing to accede to Allied demands. While Greeks became the

ultimate external ‘enemy’ and ‘other’ for the Turkish nation (Millas 2002), the Ottoman sultan and government were defined as the traitor, “bunch of madman” / “moronic and ignorant” (Adak 2003: 516 quoted in Türköz 2014: 56), preparing to surrender Anatolia.

Atatürk’s *Nutuk* became the basis of official history textbooks and a pro-Anatolian stance⁸, a territorial and secularist understanding of the nation (Atabay 2002: 517-529). The latter relies on a conception of Anatolia prior to the Ottoman Empire, going back to the ancient Greek civilisation, Hittites and to the period of the Seljuk Dynasty. Turks were re-imagined as the heirs of Western civilisation and modernisation, as Reformation and Renaissance signify a revitalisation of ancient Greek civilization (Deren 2002: 540). Being organically linked to the West in the distant safe past, Turks were seen as already embodying the principles of Kemalism: secular, egalitarian, democratic, and modern. Within this narrative, the Seljuks were not excluded as a Muslim dynasty (Başan 2002; Halliband 2007). Rather, they were reconciled as having shared ancestors in Central Asia and Anatolia (Alıcı 1996: 223). Furthermore, they were also conceived as true Muslims, the “saviours of the Sunni Islamic world” (Aktürk 2010: 643) from Shiite Arabs, who were perceived as ignorant and backward (Copeaux 2002: 50). Imagining a sense of “horizontal comradeship” (Anderson 2006: 7), the uniqueness of Turks was found in the “uncontaminated traditions of the Anatolian peasantry” (Ahiska 2010: 55), which was reproduced through literature and realistic paintings of the 1930s (Altan 2005). ‘Turkish Anatolian men’ were seen to be inherently talented warriors due to their Central Asian migratory roots and their inheritance in warrior Beylics and Empires in Anatolia (Altınay and Bora 2002: 143). ‘Turkish Anatolian women’ were considered as self-sacrificing mothers and reproducers of Anatolian morals and traditions (Altan-Olcay 2009: 179).

Nevertheless, the Kemalist state never fully identified itself with the Anatolian people or peasants, who were always perceived as “backward” (Mardin 1973: 183). The “pedagogical state” (Kaplan 2006a), under the Republican Peoples Party (RPP)

⁸ In the 1950s, Islamists reformulated this stance by combining it with more conservative elements (Atabay 2002: 518).

in the 1930s, disseminated, repeated and rehearsed “official nationalism: Atatürk nationalism” (Bora 2003: 437) through museums, education, national day celebrations, art, and sculpture. School textbooks have been (and still are) a key means through which official historiography is disseminated (Poulton 1997: 102). This history was materialised through a series of museumification processes, undertaken on the order of Atatürk (Gerçek 1999), extending collection and museum practices already started during the late 19th century Ottoman Empire (Shaw 2003). Despite the imprints of the strong state in every sphere of life in the early Republic and High Kemalism, the new Republic did not define a single national museum. Instead, a “decentralized national narrative” (Shaw 2011: 927) became salient with the consequent formation of different types of museums, such as the Ethnography Museum (Kezer 2000), the Archaeology Museum, the Topkapı Palace Museum⁹, the Konya Mevlana Museum, and the Anatolian Civilisations Museums. Each speaking for different parts of the official historiography, they “are founded on historical rather than artistic or scientific paradigms” (Shaw 2011: 941-2).

The recent history of the Republic, inscribed in *Nutuk*, was disseminated through school textbooks, while being commemorated through invented national days, marked by military ceremonies, students’ poetry recitations and performances in stadiums (Yılmaz 2013a). These rituals became a part of daily lives of elementary school children as they had been made to memorise and recite the *Andımız*, a vow of Turkish children showing their loyalty to the nation, the state, and Atatürk on a daily basis in front of an Atatürk bust in their schools (ibid.: 179):

I am a Turk, hardworking and true. / My principal is to protect
those younger than myself. / To respect those older than myself. /
To love my country and my nation more than myself. / My ideal
is to rise higher and to move forward. O Great Atatürk! / I take an
oath to walk unceasingly, along the path you opened, / Toward
the goal you have shown. May my existence be a gift to the
Turkish existence. / How happy is the one who says ‘I am a Turk’
(quoted in Yılmaz 2013a: 203).

Kemalism was also materialised through the reproduction of Atatürk’s cult, which started to take shape in *Nutuk*, where Atatürk depicted himself as a mythical national

⁹ The following chapter will describe the museumification process of Topkapı Palace Museum.

hero, leading the Turkish War of Independence (Türköz 2014: 56). His cult was materialised in sculptures, monuments and museums. Gür examines public monuments and statues of Atatürk as the “instruments of the state elite-driven project of modernity” (2013: 343). Accordingly, Atatürk monuments erected in the early Republican era instilled the memory of the War of Independence and Atatürk as the “immortal leader”, signifying “a national survival, a national unity under the father’s protection of his children” (ibid.: 353). After Atatürk’s death, the permanence of his “immortality” was guaranteed by the far-reaching attempt to “re-monumentalize Atatürk’s heritage” (ibid.: 369) through monuments as well as through Anıtkabir¹⁰, his monumental tomb (Wilson 2009).

Atatürk was monumentalised on streets, squares, and in state institutions. At the same time, he was reproduced on coins, banknotes, and portraits as a banal symbol of the state. This process reveals a simultaneous sacralisation of Atatürk as the sacred and immortal leader of the nation and the state, and de-sacralisation through making his image a mundane symbol encountered every day and everywhere. During this period, Kemalism became a “civil religion” (Küçükcan 2011) through the reproduction of Atatürk’s cult, while Turkish state acted as a “school of virtue” (Bellah 1978: 198). Through symbols and rituals, the state systematically produced “Homo LASTus”, fulfilling the criteria of being “Laicist, Atatürkist, Sunni Muslim and Turk” (Yılmaz 2013b). This ideal understanding of “Turkishness” is twofold. It relies on the principle of being Muslim, as the Lausanne Treaty exchanged non-Muslims from the territory. At the same time, it confines practicing Islam only within the spaces designated by the state, while sacralising state and the nation publicly through national day rituals before the tomb and statues of Atatürk. In this sense, it is plausible to suggest that Kemalism marks an assertive secularisation process that distinguishes from Islam and also a space that is inextricably linked to the state (İnsel 2001: 21; Navaro-Yashin 2002: 193), where the secular and the sacred collide and compete.

¹⁰ The following chapter will discuss the architectural narrative of Anıtkabir in terms of official Turkish historiography.

Collision of the sacred and the secular speaks for “Kemalist nationalism’s murky waters” (Koçak 2013). It pinpoints Central Asian roots, Anatolian traditions, “will to civilization” (Keyman and Öniş 2007: 300), and the uneasy relationship with Islam (Özkırımlı 2013: 86-93) as assumed denominators of “Turkishness”. Bora (2011) and Koçak (2013) maintain that these founding elements and their rituals, symbols and myths have been employed by different Turkish nationalisms. Bora claims that all different types of Turkish nationalisms are derivatives of official Kemalist nationalism. They are all “exhibitionists” with their “clichéd vocabulary [...] national anthem, the effigy of Atatürk, the flag” (Bora 2011: 64). Even during the multi-party period (1946-1980), a period marked by heightened visibility of Islamic symbols; the symbol of Atatürk and the flag were never questioned, let alone superseded by other symbols. Symbols of Atatürk and the flag were used by all parties, left and right, rendering Kemalism as an all-embracing “belief system” (Hanioğlu 2011: 197). Indeed, for the three military interventions in 1960, 1971 and 1980, these symbols were means to “guard the state” (Öktem 2011: 44-60).

Following Mann, Jacoby (2004) argues that the Turkish state is based on military power, rather than the extensive reach of infrastructural power. Instead, the military has acted as the sole “guardian” (Öktem 2011) of the state and secularism through its interventions of 1960, 1971 and 1980. During this period, bureaucrats were no longer considered as key performers of Kemalism, as they were in the 1930s. Particularly in the post-1945 multi-party period, bureaucrats were trained in diverse contexts and exposed to different political views (Heper 1993: 42). Growing heterogeneity in bureaucracy weakened their indispensable relationship with secularism and Kemalism. Furthermore, “the anti-bureaucratic governments” (ibid.: 62) destabilised their political power. Bozkurt (1980) conducted a survey to attain a sociological profile of bureaucrats in Turkey. His main finding indicates that civil servants did not consider themselves as being distinguished from the rest of the society. On the contrary, civil servants felt closer to the working class than the state, at a time when the state was ruled by the military (Bozkurt 1980: 202-209). However, Heper holds that post-1980 civil servants retained their “bureaucratic elitism” (1993: 63) as experts in state office. In other words, at a time when their guardian role was taken

over by the military, their “social esteem” (Weber 2006: 53) relied on their privileged knowledge-power relationship vis-à-vis others.

Echoing Mann, it is plausible to argue that the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) bypassed state bureaucracy in claiming to be the guardian of secularism. It had privileged military, economic, ideological, and political power sources. After the 1960 coup, the military was able to hold a certain economic freedom through OYAK (the pension fund of the TAF) and Turkish Armed Forces Trust (Akça 2010). Its political and ideological powers were reproduced through its presence in the National Security Council, which would assert monthly views and suggestions for Turkish politics in line with its strict understanding of secularism.

IV. “Turkish Islamism(s)” in the Post-1980 Period

a. Turkish-Islamic Synthesis (1980-1990)

Imbued by different power sources, the military justified the 1980 coup on grounds of the violence between left and right, which were seen to be generated through decline in Islamic and moral values. The military aimed to restore the morality of Turkish youth; and thus, introduced compulsory religion courses in schools, while prohibiting any public expression of Islam beyond the framework drawn by the state (Bora 2011: 73). In this way, the “exclusive inclusion of Islam” (Yeğenoğlu 2011: 228) took another form. In the early Republic, Islam was retained as moral and ethical practices under the control of the state. In the post-1980 period, Sunni Islam, as the most secular / rational form of Islam, was officially integrated into the standardised school curriculum (Şen 2010: 66). Therefore, the 1980 coup d’état brought an unintended twist in the Turkish political culture, which officially merged national culture with Islam under a “Turkish-Islamic Synthesis” (Güvenç 1991).

State-led Islam between 1980 and 1990 does not indicate “unthinking Kemalism” (Atasoy 2009: 94). This period is marked by a mushrooming of monotype Atatürk busts and portraits in every state institution, state office and in public spaces (Tekiner 2010). These instilled Atatürk as a “banal” (Billig 1995) symbol of state authority and secularism in daily life. This Turkish-Islamic synthesis was “a message of civic

commitment to national unity by combining the primacy of the state and Muslim ethos with a notion of *Turkish Islam*” (Atasoy 2009: 94, original emphasis). It rested on nostalgia for the Ottoman past, perceived as the “victorious past of Muslim Turks” (Şen 2010: 62). More importantly, this neo-Ottomanism was brought in by the state in its *State Planning Organization Report on National Culture* (1983) to remember how Kurds and Turks (as Muslims) lived together under the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire (Atasoy 2009: 96). Therefore, in contrast to early Republican underestimation of the Ottoman Empire, in the post-1980 period, there was an attempt on the part of the state to *remember* the Islamic-Ottoman heritage.

However, the Ottoman past was not unambiguously accepted. Instead, it was selectively re-appropriated within the “homogenous empty time” (Anderson 2006: 11) created by the Turkish History Thesis. As Chapter 6 will discuss, through Law No 2863 on the “Conservation of Cultural and Natural Property” (1983), the state integrated the Ottoman past only until the end of the 19th century, which is set as the deadline for preserving cultural heritage in Turkey. The law excludes cultural heritage built / made after this period. In this way, it renders the last 20 years of the Empire’s decadence irrelevant (Güven Öztürk 2009: 247). Consequently, the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis does not mean reversing the Kemalist historiography. More accurately, it is the transformation and reproduction of the Kemalist imagination of “Turkishness”, whose “other” was still an Ottoman Empire that used Islam for politics and corruption, leading to its demise. (Kadioğlu 2008: 36-41).

Hence, Turkish-Islamic Synthesis went hand in hand with Kemalist nationalism as well as other Turkish nationalisms (Koyuncu-Lorasdağı 2011: 146-154). During this period, liberal economic policies under the prime ministry and later presidency of Turgut Özal brought in a new form of “civil nationalism” (Hall 2003: 30) different from the West. “Liberal nationalism” (Bora 2003: 440), unlike its counterparts in the West (See Hall 2003; Kennedy 2013), took pride only in liberal economy and consumption patterns in Turkey, as they were seen to signify the Westernisation-modernisation of Muslim-Turks. This same period also witnessed “Turkist radical nationalism” (Bora 2003: 445), which emerged in the aftermath of World War II and

developed through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. As an essentialist ideology, it embraces anyone with Turkic descent; however, this emphasis shifted towards the argument that Islam is the core element of “Turkishness” in the 1980s (ibid.: 445-6).

b. “Turkish Islamism” and the Welfare Party (1990s)

Şen (2010) identifies the 1990s as the transformation of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis towards “Turkish Islamism” by bringing the emphasis on “Turkishness” to the fore. He argues that Turkish Islamism found its real voice in the “National Outlook” (*Milli Görüş*) ideology, and was materialised through the Islamic Welfare Party (WP), which became influential after the 1994 municipal elections. Its Turkish Islamism is informed by a strong emphasis on the Ottoman past, a newly emerging Islamist bourgeoisie, and a flourishing civil society demanding rights to express and practice Islam as they wish (Şen 2010: 64-70).

Firstly, the WP maintained “a kind of nationalist-imperialist imagination anticipating creating once again the Great Turkey as in Ottoman Times” (Çolak 2006: 596). This neo-Ottomanist zeal found its voice in the “unofficial commemoration of the conquest of Istanbul on 29 May” (Çınar 2005: 32). The first celebration of Istanbul Day took place in 1953 during the first multi-party period. Until 1980, Istanbul Day was modestly commemorated before the tomb of Sultan Mehmet II (The Conqueror) with the participation of representatives from the municipality, the TAF and the office of the governor (Koyuncu 2014: 86). Starting with the WP administration in 1994, 29 May celebrations became grandiose in Istanbul, marked by light shows and public concerts with mass participation and increased media coverage. These events did not merely incorporate the victorious Ottoman past as a “founding moment” (Çınar 2005: 146) in the national history. They also highlighted that Istanbul is the rightful heritage of Muslims, as decreed in a Quranic verse (Koyuncu 2014: 80). Ottoman Empire, as the conqueror and ruler of Istanbul, was represented as the most powerful empire to claim this heritage. In this way, celebrations praise Istanbul as the Islamic alternative capital of the Empire vis-à-vis the capital city of the secular Republic, Ankara (Çınar 2005: 150-8).

Secondly, as White (2002) holds, WP's success was entrenched in the dilemma between populism and the creation of a new bourgeoisie. While the party claimed to represent the poor and the disadvantaged, it also redefined Islamic symbols (such as the *turban*) as new "elite cultural markers" (ibid.: 192). These markers were popularised as commodities with the "trademark of Islam" (Navaro-Yashin 2002: 98) in the liberal economic markets in Turkey during the 1990s. For Islamists, they became the means to assert the public visibility of Islam in every sphere of life (Yeğenoğlu 2011: 231). In this way, Islam as the "unchanging ethos (*öz*)" (Kaplan 2006a: 77) of "Turkishness" was integrated with capitalist consumption patterns in the making of a new and "ever-evolving [Turkish] culture (*Kültür*)" (ibid.).

Meanwhile, in the 1990s, Islam's public visibility and its cultural markers were opposed through a "*phobia of Islam*" (Yeğenoğlu 2011: 230, original emphasis) by Kemalist groups, pursuing a "politics of protection of the secular foundations of the republic" (ibid.: 232). Navaro-Yashin's ethnographic study of the state illustrates the ways in which the 'idea' of the Kemalist state was reproduced in "rituals" and "fantasies" (2002: 117). Within this framework, she conceptualises visits to Anıtkabir, which became publicly visible in the 1990s, as "visits to a saint's tomb" (ibid.: 191). These ritualistic and (mass) visits to Anıtkabir constitute a form of expressing public discontent with the rising visibility of Islam. Navaro-Yashin argues that people claim secularism with "reverence for the personified image of state" (ibid.: 193) beyond routine and official state ceremonies in Anıtkabir. Therefore, she maintains that the study of secularism is inextricable from "the culture of and for the state" (ibid.).

Likewise, Özyürek (2004) highlights that the Islamist peak of the 1990s was countered by ordinary people through a "privatization of [secular] state imagery" in daily life. Ordinary people displayed miniature symbols of the state at home (statues of Atatürk, flags, pictures and calendars of Atatürk) and on their bodies (lapel pins of Turkish flags or Atatürk's faces). Moreover, Özyürek (2006) borrows the term "nostalgia" from Boym (2001) to show that this process is embodied in a feeling of longing for the early Republican period and Atatürk. While nostalgia for the early

Republican era was displayed through private temporary exhibitions and novels, it was also subverted by Islamists in newspapers and through alternative events, offering an alternative and Islamist reading of the same past (Özyürek 2006: 157-167).

Public life in 1990s Turkey can be seen as a site of contesting symbols of Islamism and secularism, competing nostalgias and claims for Islamic Ottoman and secular Republican pasts of Turkey. However, these symbols did not compete on an equal ground. Islamism and neo-Ottomanism were never fully institutionalised given the continuing dominance of the military. In fact, the enduring power of Kemalism was enhanced by the military intervention of February 28th 1997. This became popularly known as ‘the post-modern coup’ due to its indirect intervention in politics, unlike the previous coups. First, the military deployed tanks on the streets of Sincan in Ankara, as a reaction to a local Islamist protest. Second, the National Security Council laid out a list of safety measures, which were expected to be fulfilled by the WP coalition government, to prevent “religious reaction” (*irtica*) (Öktem 2011: 106). These measures included the restructuring of secularism through eight-year compulsory primary school education, which excluded religious *imam hatip* schools, and banned the headscarf in universities (Bacik 2011: 146; Navaro-Yashin 2002: 190). In this political context, the WP government was forced to resign by the military’s direct interference with the mass media. This “overt comeback” (Öktem 2011: 109) of Kemalist state power resulted in the closing down of the WP by the constitutional court for employing *irtica*, the consequent establishment of the Virtue Party, its dissolution and the formation of the Justice and Development Party (JDP) in 2001 (Bacik 2011).

c. Towards “New Turkey”

Political Flux: A “Silent Revolution”

Scholars argue that “the post-modern coup” was a message to Islamist elites to drop their anti-Western stance and to question the public discontent about Islam (Çınar 2005: 175; Bacik 2011). Unlike the Islamist Welfare and Virtue parties, the Justice and Development Party (JDP) turned its face towards the European Union (EU) and

framed its discourse around “conservative democracy” (Justice and Development Party 2012) and human rights. This was conveyed by claims about and nostalgia for an Islamic, tolerant, and multi-ethnic Ottoman past (Onar 2009). Thus, the JDP moved away from earlier forms of Islamism claiming Sharia, towards a “neo-Islamism” (Keyder 2004) that used the language of religious freedom and human rights. In this way, the JDP *conflated* the binary oppositions on which the Turkish Republic was built: secularism vs. Islamism; East and West; backward Empire vs. modern Republic.

Immediately after taking office in the 2002 elections (Justice and Development Party 2002), the JDP passed reform packages and harmonisation laws to fulfil the EU’s Copenhagen Criteria for membership. Through these reforms, a liberal market economy, institutional stability and transparency were to be assured in line with principles of democracy, de-militarisation, rule of law and human rights. Within this scope, the taboos of Kemalist state power were shattered. The National Security Council, a significant political power, formerly dominated by the TAF and responsible for issues related to security and politics, was de-militarised (Keyman and İçduygu 2005: 11; Heper 2005: 220; Parslow 2006: 6). While journalists and columnists considered these changes as the “revolt” (Birand 2009) or “revenge” (*Milliyet* 24 August 2008) of Islamists against the state, some scholars considered it as a sign of democratisation, de-militarisation and even the “denationalization” (Bacik 2011) of politics. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Undersecretariat of Public Order and Security (2013) signposted 2002 as the starting point of a “silent revolution” of institutional and legal changes under the JDP.

This transformation was driven by the formation of an Islamist bourgeoisie driven by an “Islamic Calvinism” (Öktem 2011: 122) based on “religious piety” and “self-discipline with profit maximization” (ibid.: 130). The JDP’s merging of Islam and neo-liberalism, fed the idea that the JDP has been disguising itself behind a curtain of neo-liberalism, democracy and human rights. The JDP was seen to be pursuing the overthrow of secular state institutions and Kemalist principles (ibid.: 127). This view was perpetuated by the presidential elections in 2007, where Abdullah Gül (a former

key player in the National Outlook of the 1990s) was nominated – and later elected – by a Parliament dominated by the JDP. In reaction, Republican Protests were organised in 2007, whereby millions marched to Anıtkabir and to other city squares all around Turkey with flags and placards proclaiming “Turkey belongs to Turks” and “Turkey will remain secular forever” (*The New York Times* 15 April 2007). During the same period, the TAF published an ‘electronic memorandum’ on its concerns about possible Islamist threats and repeated that the military stood as the guardian of secular national identity. It stated that “anyone who is opposed to great leader Atatürk’s understanding ‘How happy is the one who says I am a Turk’ is and will be an enemy of the Turkish Republic”¹¹ (Turkish Armed Forces 2007).¹² This statement once again underscored the supposedly indispensable link between secularism and “Turkishness”.

In 2010, the JDP proposed and promoted a constitutional referendum bringing a series of amendments to the 1982 Constitution that allowed coup leaders to be prosecuted and changed the structure of the Constitutional Court, whose members are now appointed by the parliament and the president. The JDP assured its political power as 57 % of the referendum votes supported this constitutional change. The party continued to consolidate its power with 47% of the votes in the 2012 general elections (Justice and Development Party 2012)¹³, the legacy of the military was increasingly criticised and questioned through de-militarisation reforms as well as through a series of court cases investigating the ‘deep state’ entwined with the armed forces (Ünver 2009). Under the *Ergenekon* trials, many individuals including generals, politicians, journalists and academics were imprisoned for allegedly planning a coup. These trials became more complex with the merging of other court cases for alleged coup plans such as *Balyoz* (Sledgehammer) and *Kafes* (Cage) into *Ergenekon* trials (Ünver 2009; Grigordias and Özer 2010; Gürsoy 2012a).

¹¹ This memorandum was removed from the website of the TAF in 2011 (*Sunday’s Zaman* 29 August 2011).

¹² It is important to note that Atatürk’s famous saying “How happy is the one who says I am a Turk” is considered as a civic understanding of Turkish nationalism, whereby one *becomes* a Turk by announcing it, rather than *being* a Turk by acquiring certain inherent characteristics such as being Muslim or white. In this context, by drawing upon Atatürk, the TAF highlights the secular dimension of Turkish nationalism, rather than the non-ethnic dimension.

¹³ For a discussion on the JDP’s strategies in maintaining electoral power See Keyman and Gumuscu 2014: 33-43.

Additionally, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) established a Parliamentary Research Commission for Coups and Memorandums in 2012 to investigate the last 50 years centred around the 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997 coups and the 2007 electronic memorandum (*Sunday's Zaman* 13 May 2012).

Some convicted in *Ergenekon*, including the Chief of the General Staff, İlker Başbuğ, were given life sentences (*Hürriyet Daily News* 18 March 2013); yet, all were released after Başbuğ's successful application to the Constitutional Court for human rights violations (*Hürriyet Daily News* 12 March 2014). Nevertheless, in terms of state power, these trials and the commission signified the overturning power relationships between the government and the military. Erdoğan proclaimed himself as "public prosecutor" (*Gazete Vatan* 16 July 2008) of the *Ergenekon* trials, while one JDP parliament member stated that it is *now* their turn to "blacklist" (*NTVMSNBC* 21 February 2010) those who blacklisted Islamists in the 1990s. The power of the military was further curbed during 2012 and 2013. The scope of military court was restricted to the military, while Article 35 of the Law on Internal Services of the Turkish Armed Forces, which served as the justification of previous coups, was changed (*Anadolu Agency* 13 July 2013). Meantime, in 2012, the economic power of the military was severely curtailed as the pension fund OYAK was sold to an international bank as a part of the JDP's policies of "mass privatisation" (Öniş 2011).

Given that many major generals were imprisoned for a considerable period and replaced by new ones; it is plausible to argue that under the JDP government the TAF lost much of its military, political as well as economic sources of power. While retaining its ideological power embedded in Kemalism, "the military [now] grants that the government has the last word" (Heper 2005: 227). In this sense, it is important to consider the changing role of the military; from being a political power to cooperating with the government (Gürsoy 2012b: 751).

At a time when the TAF lost its power, bureaucracy re-gained its political power through appointment and promotion of pro-JDP and pro-Islamist cadres. Toprak

et.al.'s (2009) fieldwork findings pinpoint striking incidents all around Turkey. Respondents reported that the JDP excludes particularly Alevis and secularists from being appointed to state institutions in favour of Sunni Muslim and pro-JDP candidates. Many preferred candidates were educated and raised by the Gülen movement (ibid.: 108-125), i.e. a transnational Islamic faith-based movement pursuing "Turkish Muslimhood" (Turam 2007; Koyuncu-Lorasdağı 2011). This movement, which arose in the mid-1990s, sees Islam as a "social capital that can be mobilized for diverse instrumental ends" (Yavuz and Esposito 2003: xxvii). The dominance of Gülenist staff in state office was never officially recognised nor proved until 2013, when corruption investigations revealed allegations of bribery involving ministers, their families and state officials (*The Guardian* 17 December 2013). Erdoğan reacted to these allegations as the "attempted coup" of the "parallel state" (Lowen 2014), by which he refers to bureaucrats and officials raised and supported by the Gülen movement. Identifying and displacing civil servants of this "parallel state" meant the official recognition of appointing pro-Islamist civil servants to state institutions.

Yet, infusing into state bureaucracy is not new for Turkey. Under the RPP, bureaucracy was dominated by Kemalist-secularists. In the following period of multi-party coalitions, the power of state bureaucracy diminished to a great degree vis-à-vis the escalating power of the TAF. Thus, pro-Islamist staffing under the JDP is no surprise. Although Toprak et.al pinpoints the absence of (a Weberian) legal rational authority (2009: 118-119) as the main reason for staffing practices in Turkey, this chapter argues that staffing sheds light on state bureaucracy as an arena for power struggles (See Chapter 2). In other words, "infrastructural power" (Mann 1993: 53) is employed by different state agencies as a means to challenge and maintain state power in the making of "new Turkey".

Competing Neo-Nationalisms, Overturning Binaries

Power struggles within the state reflect upon and are fed by competing neo-nationalisms. They create fractures distinguishing 'we' and 'they' on the basis of a "*kulturkampf*" (Kalaycıoğlu 2012) or "symbiotic antagonism" (Kadioğlu and

Keyman 2011) between secularists and Islamists. Increasingly polarised between these two camps through consecutive elections since 2002, people align themselves in certain categories through binary oppositional symbols and cultural markers, such as Atatürk's image, the Ottoman imperial order, and the veil. Kadioğlu and Keyman regard this polarisation as a "dialectical choreography" (2011: xi) reproducing Islamist and secularist forms of neo-nationalism.

Grigordias and Özer (2010) assert that the Ergenekon trials signalled a shift from the Kemalist nationalism of the 1990s to a Kemalist "neo-nationalism" (*ulusalcılık*) in the 2000s. They argue that this form of nationalism is mainly expressed in the anti-Western stance of the TAF, since Europeanisation, globalisation and democratisation are perceived as threats to national unity and secularism. This "anti-Westernism" (Yılmaz 2011) is combined with "externalization of Islam from Turkish nationalism" and "ethnic exclusionism" (Uslu 2008: 73).

The Kemalist neo-nationalism of the 2000s manifests itself in similar ways to the Kemalist nationalism of the 1990s. Firstly, Anıtkabir still stands as a space for venerating Atatürk, as the key symbol of secularism. The mausoleum was one of the meeting venues during the Republican Protests in 2007 against the election of Abdullah Gül, a former member of the JDP government, as the president. Besides, as Chapter 7 will illustrate, Anıtkabir becomes a demonstration area especially on Republican national days, which are re-invented with the participation of (un)organised masses as well as state's official ceremonies. In this period, commodification and "miniaturization" (Özyürek 2004) of Atatürk took a new form. The image of Atatürk started to be engraved not only on cars, homes or clothing, but through a trend in Atatürk tattoos (Figure 1) (Erim 2012; Özdemir 2013; Türköz 2014: 60-1).



Figure 1: Atatürk's signature is generally tattooed on the back of the arm

Kemalist neo-nationalism is also reproduced and circulated in popular culture through novels, narrating the War of Independence through memories and myths of the war and Atatürk. *Those Crazy Turks* (*Şu Çılgın Türkler*) yields a secular and militaristically strong sense of “Turkishness” (Öktem 2011: 147), and became the best-selling novel in Turkey in 2005. Turgut Özakman, the author, claims that all stories rely on historical ‘facts’ and ‘documents’.¹⁴ Özdalga (2009) criticises this ‘truth claim’, as it relies on the Kemalist official historiography and a purposeful selection of empirical sources. Therefore, she holds that the novel is nothing more than a “polemical pamphlet” (Özdalga 2009) reproducing common sense assumptions of Kemalism, while the historian İlber Ortaylı (the former museum director of Topkapı Palace Museum) maintains that the novel is a “scenario” (*Zaman* 27 October 2005) rather than a historical text.

At the same time, Kemalist neo-nationalism has been denounced as the ‘other’ of the JDP government. More specifically, it is relegated to a ‘bad’ form of nationalism, associated with the nationalism of the Republican Peoples Party (RPP). Blaming the

¹⁴ Note that Turgut Özakman wrote the scenario for the re-organisation of the “Atatürk and the War of Independence Museum”. It is also the key text memorised and performed by museum guides (See Chapters 4 and 6).

RPP, the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) and Kemalist neo-nationalism for failing to come to terms with the Kurdish issue, Erdoğan stated that his government “trampled all kinds of nationalisms” (*Hürriyet Daily News* 27 February 2013) in the “Solution Process”, i.e. negotiations with Abdullah Öcalan, the imprisoned leader of Kurdish movement. Here, *Islam* became the means through which hitherto irreconcilable ethnic differences between Kurds and Turks could be brought together. This was also underlined by Öcalan in his Newroz letter (*Bianet* 21 March 2013). This idea was perpetuated through nostalgia for an Ottoman era, where different ethnic groups co-existed peacefully (Onar 2009: 235-236). The JDP government, “flagging the Ottoman-Islamic past as a source of pluralism” (Onar 2012: 69), re-imagined Turkey as a regional power that can lead the Middle East, while coming to terms with its ethnic minorities, just like the *millet* system during the Ottoman Empire (Maessen 2012: 31-2). In this way, just as the West ‘erases’ nationalism from itself by conceptualising nationalism only in its violent forms (Billig 1995: 6), the JDP government identifies Kemalist neo-nationalism as its other, while normalising its own understanding of Islamist and neo-Ottomanist nationalism.

Since the 1990s, neo-Ottomanist wave has circulated through the commodification of the imperial past such as printed posters or car stickers of *tughras* (sultans’ signatures) (Figure 2), the Ottoman coat of arms, and the green flag with three crescents. In this context, signatures of Atatürk and the sultans became competing symbols that symbolise oppositionary regimes: the secular Republican and Islamic imperial state systems. Furthermore, in the last decade, proliferating interest in Ottoman palace life has been reproduced through novels and television, such as the controversial *Magnificent Century* [*Muhteşem Yüzyıl*], depicting the golden age of the Empire through the life of Sultan Süleyman in Topkapı Palace during the 16th century (Fowler 2011). While evoking a sense of neo-Ottomanism, these cultural products also created a sphere for debating and contesting the Ottoman past. For instance, the most contradictory parts of the *Magnificent Century* were scenes where the Sultan is presented drinking wine, being intimate with women in low cut dresses in the Harem and ordering the murder of his own son. In the face of growing public debates about its historical accuracy, Erdoğan held that the series depicted “a

Süleyman that [he does not] know about” He moved on to suggest that he “alerted the authorities [...] Those who toy with these values should be taught a lesson within the premises of law” (*Hürriyet Daily News* 27 November 2012).



Figure 2: *Tughra* as a car sticker

What makes the neo-Ottomanism of the 2000s different from that of the 1990s is its institutionalisation under the JDP’s state power. This entailed the re-organisation of commemorating the competing pasts of “Turkishness”. Rituals for national days were re-organised through the Regulation on Ceremonies and Celebrations on National and Official Holidays, Local Independence Days, Atatürk Days and Historical Days in 2012. Accordingly, the hosting of Victory Day reception, previously held by the TAF, was taken over by the Presidency. Also, Republic Day, commemorating the foundation of the Republic on October 29th, is specified as the *only* national day and official ceremony organised by the state. Other national days are redefined as Atatürk Days, local independence days, and historical days. The regulation restricted the scope of these other days by stating that there would be no

official ceremonies at Anıtkabir on April 23rd National Sovereignty and Children's Day (commemorating the foundation of Grand National Assembly of Turkey), and on May 19th Youth and Sports Day (commemorating the beginning of the War of Independence by Atatürk). Likewise, the regulation states that no stadium ceremonies, military processions or any other celebration depicting any form of 'enemy' can take place on any historical day. The regulation further specifies that all ceremonies have to take place in pre-designated areas, which prevents any other alternative form of national day celebration. Thus, the monopoly of commemorating and organising national days was removed from the military, while the scope of national days was redefined by removing certain "founding moments" (Çınar 2005: 145). Notably the beginning of the War of Independence and the foundation of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT), and their role in "Turkishness" lost the status of official national day. This re-organisation of national days speaks for the growing "disjuncture between the nation and the state" (McCrone and McPherson 2009: 1), i.e. the disassociation of Kemalist understanding of "Turkishness" from official nationalism under the JDP.

Within the boundaries of this regulatory framework, new invented moments of the Islamic-Ottoman past are inserted into the nation's "homogenous empty time" (Anderson 2006). Under the JDP, celebrations of Istanbul Day continue to be spectacles marked by Turkish flags on public buses and state institutions, Janissary band concerts, and water-light shows. Besides standard official ceremonies, celebrations were "civilianised" (my translation, Koyuncu 2014: 95) and they were turned into festivals through free public concerts and entertainment shows with the mass participation of people and school children. These ceremonies constitute the perfect occasions to perform the superiority of the golden age of Istanbul under Ottoman Empire and Istanbul's significance for Muslims. In recent years, there have been also conferences and museum exhibitions on Sultan Mehmet II and the conquest of Istanbul (See Chapters 7 and 8). These create a space for memorialisation, knowledge-production, and circulation pertaining to the Islamic Ottoman past.

Similarly, “Holy Birth Week”, whereby The Prophet’s birth is celebrated, has become more publicly visible in the last decade through events organised by the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Toprak et.al 2009: 151). Although this week has been officially commemorated since 1989, celebrations began to be centralised from 2002, under the JDP. The Holy Birth Week used to be celebrated in different weeks of April and March in line with the Julian calendar. In 2008, it was translated and fixed at 14-20 April and celebrations became centralized through a Regulation,¹⁵ outlining how these celebrations should take place. Through these regulated celebrations, the ethical and moral basis of “Turkishness” is strengthened with reference to Muhammad’s forgiving and peaceful personality (Koyuncu 2014: 181-5).

Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) claim that the rituals, practices, myths and symbols of the nation are invented as a response to the changing situations and needs of modernity. Therefore, it is significant to remember that competing celebrations and days commemorating the Islamic Ottoman past of “Turkishness” arise within a context of flux in Turkey. At this time of unrest, both Istanbul day and Holy Birth Week become “invented traditions” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). While unsettling daily routines, these events enter into the loop of routine national days celebrations. More importantly, these two particular days compete with two specific Republican days, no longer considered as national days after the new Regulation. Holy Birth Week coincides the April 23rd National Sovereignty and Children’s Day (commemorating the foundation of Grand National Assembly of Turkey)¹⁶. Istanbul Day comes 10 days after the May 19th Youth and Sports Day. Similarly, in 2014, on the same week of the official national Victory Week, commemorating the final victory in the War of Independence (26-30 August), the Seljuk conquest of Anatolia (with the Battle of Manzikert in 1071), marking the “Turkification and Islamicisation” (Hillenbrand 2007: 203) of Anatolia, was commemorated officially by the Turkish Ministry of Youth and Sports (2014). Major cities were adorned by

¹⁵ “Regulation on the Celebration of Holy Birth Week and Week of Mosques and Religious Officials”[Kutlu Doğum Haftası ile Camiler ve Din Görevlileri Haftasını Kutlama Yönetmeliği] 13 February 2010.

¹⁶ See Emin Çölaşan (2013), a Turkish columnist who criticised that the Holy birth week is an invention to cast shadow over Kemalist Republican day.

posters, marking the 943rd anniversary of the “Malazgirit Victory” on a map of Anatolia with the motto “common history, common target” (Figure 3). This “founding moment” (Çınar 2005) has been commemorated officially since the establishment of the modern Republic. In the early Republican period, the overlapping dates Malazgirit and the final victory of the National Struggle were seen as the repetition of a glorious past (Hillenbrand 2007: 208). This date retained significance in the reproduction of Turkish-Islamic Synthesis and is increasingly de-linked from its secular Republican counter-part, official national Victory Week (ibid.: 218-219).



Figure 3: “1071: Common history, common target”

Moreover, “banal” (Billig 1995) forms of remembering the nation were also disturbed by the JDP, which abolished the obligatory recitation of *Andımız*, the daily oath school children make before Atatürk bust or portraits in their schools. Erdoğan’s justification was clear, and indicative of a new definition of “Turkishness”: “One does not become a Turk by saying ‘I am a Turk’ every morning” (*Hürriyet Daily News* 8 October 2013). How, then, does one become a Turk? How does the state in its de-militarised form under the JDP government define what is national and what is not? Repeating Erdoğan’s motto “one nation, one country, one state, one flag”

(*Hürriyet Daily News* 27 August 2009), the JDP does not radically diverge from previous periods of Kemalist and radical nationalisms, emphasising the unity of the nation and the state.

The JDP holds a Gökalian view in its cultural policy, as stated in its party programme: “Our Party aims at raising the interaction between universal values and the national culture to the highest point, while preserving the basic structure and style in our national culture” (Justice and Development Party 2001). While it relies on the binary opposition between West (civilisation) and East (culture), uniqueness of national culture is not posited in an uncontaminated understanding of Muslim Anatolia vis-à-vis a technologically superior Western civilisation. Instead, the party program and its “2023 Political Vision” prioritise Turkish-Islamic arts and establishing the museum of Ottoman *millets* (Justice and Development Party 2012).

White (2013) highlights the increased reference to the Ottoman past under the JDP government, which reflects Erdoğan’s (2009) emphases on “we are Ottomans’ grandsons”. She argues that “Muslim nationalists” (White 2013: 12) invoke imperial greatness to claim the superiority of Turks as a leading figure in world civilisation. In this sense, they retain Gökali’s distinction between culture (inner Turkish-Islamic moral practices in private life) and civilisation (Western-modern-secular practices in public life); while replacing Western connotations of civilisation with an “invented Ottoman tradition” (ibid.: 48). For White, this replacement has bridged the early Republican gap between culture and civilisation on the common ground of “Turkishness”. This is exemplified in her use of the two terms interchangeably as “Turkish culture/civilization” (ibid.).

White’s discussion reflects on İnşel’s (2013) argument on the JDP’s “neo-nationalism of greatness”. It denotes “images of greatness evoked by the nation’s ‘historical depth’” (İnşel 2013: 187) found in the Ottoman past as a remedy for the failures in recent history, particularly under the effects of the military. İnşel points out that economic growth, independence from IMF debts, and the assertion of leadership in the Middle East have been key elements in the JDP’s formation of a

new “national pride” (ibid.: 193). Unlike the “liberal nationalism” of the 1990s, this “neo-nationalism of greatness” (ibid.: 191) finds voice in becoming a key player in the neo-liberal economic order and in the transformation of the state from the ‘old’ Kemalist Turkey towards the “new Turkey”. Herein, greatness is no longer sought in pre-Islamic Anatolia or in the modern Republican period. As İnsel argues, this new nationalism feeds on “neo-Ottomanism”, “the attempt to restore confidence via an abandonment of the old victimized posture, so that a project of a future of *greatness* may be pursued in its place” (ibid.: 196). This position was enhanced by the Prime Minister Davutoğlu’s novel emphasis on “restoration” of the greatness of the Ottoman Empire vis-à-vis “90 years of damage to the Turkish Republic” (*Hürriyet Daily News* 27 August 2014).

This nostalgia for the Ottoman Empire is also institutionalised through new museums, inducing “fantasies of an imperial past around a glamorously multicultural social structure” (Yılmaz and Uysal 2007: 123). In 2003, Istanbul Municipality established Miniaturk, a vast park containing miniatures of significant historical landmarks of both Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey (Figure 4). The park is divided into compartments such as Istanbul, Anatolia and other Ottoman areas, invoking the Ottoman system of provinces (See Türeli 2006; Öncü 2007; Yılmaz and Uysal 2007). The second museum is the Panorama 1453 Museum- Museum of Conquest, opened in 2009 by the Istanbul Municipality (Figure 5). The museum consists of a dome and its walls are covered with illustrations of Istanbul’s conquest, strengthened by three-dimensional depth and voices of combat (See Hand 2013; Koyuncu 2014). While MiniaTürk provides an imagining the Ottoman Empire ruling over immense geography with a multi-ethnic and multicultural environment, the latter re-enacts the conquest of Istanbul, invoking the superiority and greatness of the Islamic-Ottoman Turkish past.



Figure 4: MiniaTürk (Photo available from <http://www.hayalleme.com/wp-content/uploads/miniaturk4.jpg>)



Figure 5: The Panorama 1453 Museum: Museum of Conquest

Despite this institutionalisation, Özbudun (2012) holds that the JDP does not pursue a coherent cultural policy. Instead, its cultural policies are driven by neo-liberal

instincts to market Turkish culture. Özbudun pinpoints the transformation of the Ministry of Culture into Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) in 2003 (2012: 289). The MCT was reorganised in 2003 and the institution defined its first and foremost mission as “to *promote* Turkish culture to the world” (my translation; Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2010). However, the emphases on promotion as well as the merging of culture and tourism do not render MCT’s power to define “Turkishness” irrelevant. On the contrary, as the following chapter will discuss, the MCT embodies political, economic and ideological sources of power (Mann 1986) as the arm of the JDP government and as the only state institution legally structured to exhibit and promote “Turkishness”.

Nevertheless, the JDP government has not radically changed the post-1980 coup legal framework. As Chapter 6 underscores, regulation of cultural heritage and museums in Turkey still operate within the Kemalist framework of the post-1980 period. The JDP enacted some amendments through “Law No 5226 on Making Changes on the Law on Conservation of Cultural and Natural Property and Various Laws” (2004), which introduced a new- yet doomed to fail – concept. Here, the idea of “national museums” appeared for the first time in the history of the Turkish Republic. The related Regulation on the Foundation and Presidency of National Museums (2005) vaguely classifies museums as having national characteristics on the basis of their geographical position, content and scope. Within this scope, Topkapı Palace, Hagia Sophia and Konya Mevlana museums were designated as three pilot national museums (2007-2012). In our interview, Zülküf Yılmaz the deputy director of the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums explained that these museums were chosen as national museums for being the top three visited museums in Turkey (Interview 19 March 2013). More significantly, all these museums have to be directly affiliated with the MCT. In this way, museums administered by the military, private museums as well as museums tied to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) or municipalities were institutionally excluded from nomination as national museums. This formulation of national museums by the MCT is a manifestation of its “ideological power” (Mann 2006), legally re-organising what is national and what is not.

Despite the strong emphasis on the Islamic Ottoman past and civilisation, “Turkishness” continues to be an imprecise term under the JDP government, though it continues to revolve around the same binary oppositions of Islamism / secularism, and West / East. Yet, under the JDP, these binaries are overturned with a stress on the superiority of the Islamic Ottoman past and Turkish Muslim practices evident in the new competing days and museums. In the JDP’s quest for state power, neo-Ottomanism and Islamism moved much closer to the core of official nationalism. The “neo-nationalism of greatness” (İnsel 2013) is elevated as the new, good, Islamist, and superior form of nationalism vis-à-vis the old, bad, Kemalist-secularist, and pro-coup “neo-nationalism” (*ulusalcılık*). In this “new Turkey”, however, the overturning binaries and changing power relationships within the state do not lend itself to the total abandonment of the symbols of Atatürk and the Turkish flag. During the Gezi Protests in the summer of 2013, the JDP utilised the symbol of Atatürk and the flag and exhibited them in Taksim Square after it had been cleared with tear gas and water cannons. In this way, the neo-Islamist JDP government used the same symbols of the flag in inventing new and competing national days, and the image of Atatürk to re-assert state power when dealing with opposition. As Özkırımlı argues, different nationalisms may use the same symbols in the quest for power struggles (2013: 95).

V. Conclusion

This chapter unpacks the historical formation of “Turkishness” through an “eventful” (Brubaker 1996: 19) approach. It highlights how each binary - secular / Republican / Western / modern (good nationalism) vis-à-vis Islamic / Ottoman / Eastern / backward (bad nationalism) - transforms through power struggles. The early Republican era signifies the creation of a “high culture” (Gellner 1983) that is gendered, Western, modern, and yet at the same time Muslim. The period of High Kemalism indicates the materialisation of this high culture into Kemalist nationalism through imagining the nation in “homogenous empty time” (Anderson 2006: 11) with its roots in pre-Islamic Central Asia and Anatolia, and inventing its national days. These two periods involve the consolidation of the “strong state” (Heper 1985) in the hands of Kemalist civil servants, who later lost their powers vis-à-vis

escalating dominance of the military, as the guardian of the state and secularism, over consequent coups and memorandums.

While state power shifted towards the military, the 1980 coup d'état complicated the Turkish political arena by integrating the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis into the official Kemalist ideology. The 1990s witnesses the shattering of the norm that the Turkish state is essentially Kemalist and secularist. The decade saw rising visibility of Islam not only in the politics of the National Outlook. There was also a growing civil base for Islamism that is materialised in a newly emerging bourgeoisie and Islamic Calvinism, utilising and commodifying Islamic symbols in daily public life. Imbued by a fear for Islam, Kemalist nationalism moved beyond the official discourse. Through commoditisation and “miniaturization” (Özyürek 2004) of Atatürk and the flag, secularist-Kemalist nationalism was claimed by the people, while still being backed up by the military's interventions. The last decade in Turkey marks the institutionalisation of *overturning* Kemalist-secularist state power and *reversing* Kemalist-secularist nationalism as the “bad nationalism” (Spencer and Wollman 1998) of the ‘old’ Turkey. Holding the monopoly over “infrastructural power” (Mann 1993), the JDP government strives for a “new Turkey”, imbued by a language of “greatness” (İnsel 2013) and institutionalised neo-Ottomanism.

Thus, the chapter addresses the simultaneous transformation of two forms of nationalisms, as their mirror images: (1) from Kemalist official nationalism towards neo-nationalism (*ulusalcılık*), and (2) from Turkish Islamism towards a “neo-nationalism of greatness” (İnsel 2013). However, these nationalisms are neither mutually exclusive nor singular (Çınar 2005: 176). They are contested at all times by different stakeholders through symbols, rituals, and national days which are associated with secular Republican and Islamic Ottoman pasts of “Turkishness”. The chapter decouples the essentialized link between Kemalist nationalism and the state, while illuminating the ways in which neo-nationalism of the JDP is institutionalised within the state. Therefore, rather than seeing binaries as “categories of analysis” (Brubaker 1996), the study concentrates on “Turkishness” as processes of

remembering / forgetting, re-inventing and re-imagining competing histories on the basis of binaries at a time of transformation.



Chapter 4: Setting the Field Sites: Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir Museums on Display

I. Introduction

At a time of transformation in Turkey, this study directs its attention to established state museums, carrying the legacy of Kemalist state power and the competing pasts it defined. Rather than seeking reflections of neo-Ottomanism or pro-government staffing in newly founded museum spaces, it seeks to trace the changing faces of the Turkish state and its fragmented representations of “Turkishness” inside Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums, products of the Kemalist state tradition. In this chapter, I place these two state museums, as field sites of this study, on display. First, I outline an institutional framework enveloping Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums. Drawing on Michael Mann’s (1993) “institutional statism”, I point out the supreme institutions they are affiliated with, namely the MCT and the TAF, imbued by different functions and overturning power sources. The second section discusses the particular field sites, both as museums and state institutions. Here, situating them within the wider institutional map, I outline their historical formations and exhibitionary practices. This section underlines historically rooted power relations in institutional and physical maps of the two museums. Thus, this chapter can be considered as a guidebook, taking the reader from the physical, institutional, and historical formations of the two field sites towards the next chapter, explicating the particular methods employed in these two settings.

II. An Institutional Framework for the Competing State Institutions

Prior to my fieldwork, I created a map, delineating the institutional positionality of Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums. The draft I created drew bold lines separating the institutions these museums are affiliated to, while highlighting the overlapping spaces for interaction and relationships between different institutions of the state (Figure 6). While bold lines in the map indicate the institutional positions of the two museums, the dashes highlight related associations and groups Throughout

the fieldwork (August 2012- June 2013), I realised that this map was an unfinished one, drawn and re-drawn in the everyday functioning of both museums.

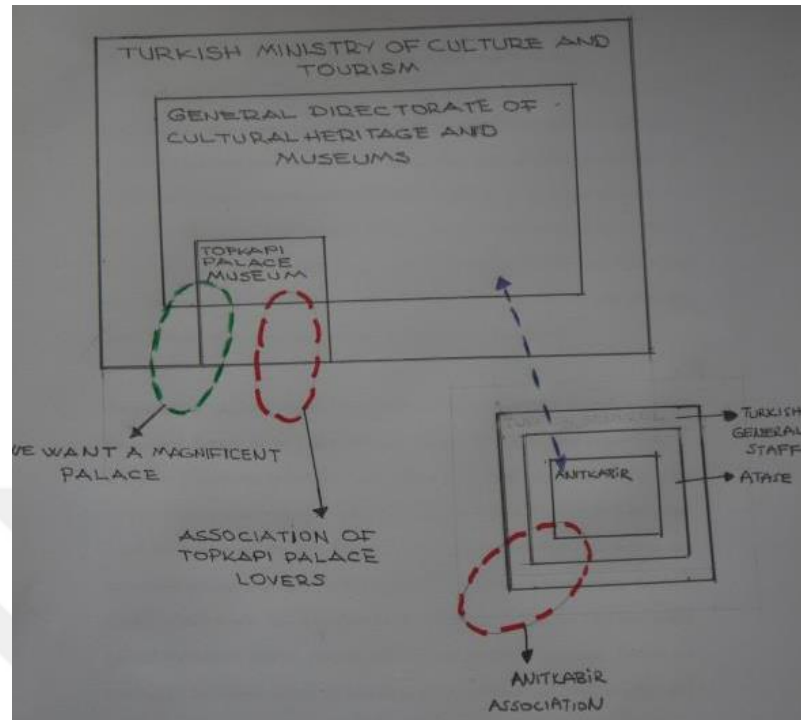


Figure 6: An institutional map for Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums

Under the modern Republic, all Ottoman palaces were transferred to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) in 1924. In due course, the Directorate of National Palaces under the GNAT was established by cabinet decree in 1925 and all late Ottoman palace and kiosks were tied to this directorate.¹⁷ Other newly established museums were tied to the General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums under the Ministry of National Education until the establishment of the Ministry of Culture in 1971. Together with the formation of Ministry of Culture, a new law on antiquities was enacted in 1973, a precedent to Law No 2863 on the “Conservation of Cultural and Natural Property”, decreed in 1983 (Gerçek 1999; Dinçer et.al.2011).

¹⁷ From the very beginning Topkapı Palace Museum was an exception. This will be further elaborated in the following section of this chapter and in Chapter 6.

The current institutional division of labour for the preservation and exhibition of cultural heritage in museums relies on Law No 2863 (1983)¹⁸. Accordingly, all forms of cultural heritage are regulated by the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums and the High Council of Conservation at the MCT. Within this framework, there are five types of state museums classified by the institutions they are tied to (Figure 7):

1. Museums affiliated to the MCT,
2. Military museums affiliated to the TAF,
3. Private / special museums directed by associations or local municipalities and audited by the MCT,
4. Museums directed by the National Palaces under the GNAT,
5. Foundation museums, tied to the Prime Ministry (Baraldi, Shoup and Zan 2013: 737).

The law states that cultural property pertaining to military history, Atatürk and National Struggle should be researched, preserved, and exhibited under the command of the TAF, while no criteria is specified for differentiation among other museums (Law No 2863 Articles 24-25). Within this context, currently Topkapı Palace Museum, like many other major state museums in Turkey, is under the supervision of the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums of the MCT. Anıtkabir, as the mausoleum of Atatürk and the military museum that houses the history of War of Independence and Atatürk's personal belongings, is affiliated with the TAF.

¹⁸ Chapter 6 will address the Law No 2863 in more detail within the scope of regulating the competing pasts of Turkish history in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums.

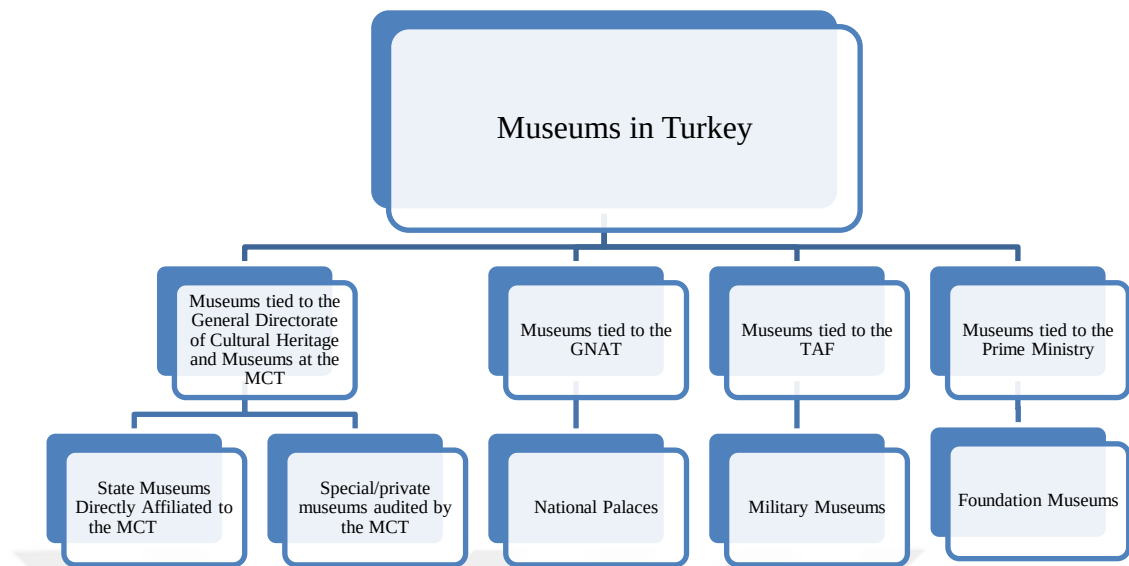


Figure 7: Institutional division of labour for museums in Turkey

In practice, this institutional division of labour is not as equally distributed as it seems in the given schema. Law No 2863 and related regulations for the internal services of different types of museums bind all museums in Turkey to the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums and the Council of Monuments at the MCT in their museumification processes, exhibitionary practices and renovations. Currently, there are 188 state museums directly affiliated, and 206 private museums audited by the MCT, whereas there are 11 national palaces tied to the GNAT and only a few military museums tied to the TAF (General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums 2015). The numerical superiority of private museums, attained over the last decade under the JDP government, does not degrade the significance of the MCT or state museums. On the contrary, as the website of the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums shows (*ibid.*), each private museum is audited by a specific state museum, highlighting the continuing dominance of state museums and the MCT.

The institutional dominance of the MCT is embodied in its historical foundation. Since its establishment, the Ministry has undergone major structural transformations. Until present, it has been merged with and de-linked from the Ministry of Tourism many times. Between 1989-2003, there were two separate ministries, one for culture and the other one for tourism. In 2003, under the JDP, the ministry was re-established as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) with the founding mission: to “study, develop, conserve, re-enact, evaluate, [make everyone] embrace / adopt, introduce, promote” “national, moral, historical and cultural values” and “thereby contribute in the strengthening of national unity” (Law No 4848 on Organisation and Duties of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism: Article 2). On its official website, the MCT defines national culture as “the lifestyle of the Turkish nation” and “the culture of steppes” (my translation, Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2010a). This definition is still informed by the official Turkish History Thesis (Ersanlı 2002a), placing Turkish roots in Central Asia. The website continues to ‘introduce Turkish culture’ through Turkish history beginning with the state of Asian Huns and Göktürks, unfolding through the Turks’ grand migration to (pre-Islamic) Anatolia, the Beylics of Anatolia, the Ottoman Empire and finally the modern Republic (Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2010). In this sense, despite the growing neo-Ottomanist nostalgia of the JDP, the ministry is founded on a post-1980 legal framework (See Chapter 6) and it still bases its understanding of “Turkishness” on the established Kemalist view of Turkish culture and the Turkish History Thesis.

Concurrently, under the JDP, the MCT’s structural formation has been transformed. Financial activities, such as ticket sales and museum shops /cafés, used to be directly carried out by the Central Directorate of Revolving Funds (*DÖSİMM*) (CDRF 2014). Along with the merging of culture and tourism in one ministry, the MCT privatised and outsourced the management of ticket sales, museum shops and cafés in 117 affiliated state museums (including Topkapı Palace Museum) to the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies and Bilkent Cultural Initiative (2014). This wave of privatisation and de-centralisation was made possible by Law No 5225 on Cultural Investments and Enterprises Incentive and Law No 5226 on Conservation of Cultural and Natural Property. The latter was merged with the Law No 2863 in 2004. These

permit and regulate privatisation of renovation and exhibition making processes in state museums with the idea that privatisation is “a viable solution to address significant problems in cultural heritage management” (Pulhan 2009: 142).

While neo-liberal cultural policies (such as increasing commodification of cultural heritage and transformation of museums in entertainment and consumption spaces) and privatising the production of culture are prevalent in many parts of the world (Grunenberg 2002; Frey and Meier 2006; Macdonald 2011), it has different connotations in the Turkish case. By opening the means for privatisation (İnce 2013), state power under the single-party rule of the JDP is further deepened and formed “a centralized de-centralization” (Shoup et.al.2012). The ways in which private actors are involved in the exhibition and marketing of Turkish culture in museums are closely monitored. In this sense, the MCT, as the arm of the JDP government, extends his “infrastructural power” (Mann 1993) to permeate into the commoditisation of cultural heritage. Given the extensive staffing of the JDP in state institutions (Toprak et.al. 2009), its neo-liberal cultural policies (Özbudun 2012), and the MCT’s established duty to preserve and disseminate national culture, it is plausible to suggest that the MCT successfully embodies ideological, political and economic sources of power (Mann 1986).

Despite its diminishing powers, the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) retains its ideological sources of power in military museums and its Department of Military History and Strategic Study (MHSS) (*Askeri Tarih Araştırma ve Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı: ATASE*). The latter audits military museums tied to the TAF and conducts research on Atatürk and military history. The TAF’s claim on Republican history and Atatürk is rooted in Law No 2863 on cultural heritage. The law specifies that artefacts relating to military history, Atatürk and the War of Independence are to be preserved and exhibited by military museums under the TAF. Also, MHSS has a rich archive involving documents, photos and research on Atatürk and Turkish military history. Three themes of this archive are represented through visual and textual documents by the TAF (2014) in its website: the Çanakkale Campaign, the

Menemen Incident, and the Armenian issue¹⁹, all of which reflect the internal others of “Turkishness”: the Ottoman past, Armenians, and Islam (See Chapter 3).

While the Çanakkale Campaign is displayed by archival photographs of the battle zone, highlighting the heroic *Turkish* soldiers (not Ottoman soldiers) (See Chapter 6), the other two themes signify more problematic fragments of Turkish history (See Chapter 8). As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Menemen Incident (1930) (the beheading of a school teacher who tried to suppress a religious uprising) is a major historical trauma commemorated officially every year to remind people of the perceived danger of political Islam (Azak 2010: 38). On the TAF’s website, this event is explained through archival documents, such as police records of the incident. In this way, the heroic Çanakkale Campaign is displayed by visual documents, whereas the Menemen Incident, as a trauma, is represented through textuality.

For the TAF, such “documents’ testifying history cannot be denied” (original translation Karakuş 2005: NA), as stated in the preface of the *Armenian Activities in the Archive Documents*. This was a re-publishing of historical documents behind the so-called “relocations” (ibid.) of Armenians in the 1915-1918. In this eight-volume book, documents “explicitly reveal the circumstances yielding to the taking measures for ‘relocations’, the care in applying the measures, Armenian civic organizations’ carefully planned rebellion and treacherous activities and the massacres committed in the region” (ibid.). The first volume was published in 2005, when public debates over the genocide were resented by nationalists, leading to the assassination of Hrant Dink in 2007 (Öktem 2011: 151). With this book, the TAF reconstructs the official tendency to deny “the G-word” (Cooper and Akçam 2005) by reframing it as “relocations” and measures that had to be taken.

These archival documents act as “transparent source(s) and gatekeeper(s) of truth” (Ahıska 2010: 30), maintaining the ideological power of the TAF over secular Republican history. For the MCT, ideological power relies on its control over

¹⁹ At the time of carrying out this research, the part related to the ‘Armenian issue’ was removed from the TAF’s (2011) website, although still available in state libraries, the MHSS archives and in Anıtkabir library. The avoidance of the ‘Armenian issue’ is further discussed in Chapter 7.

different kinds of museums; and therefore, different kinds of pasts of “Turkishness”. As discussed in the previous chapter, the TAF’s ideological, political and economic sources of power have been scrutinised under the JDP government. By contrast, the MCT enhanced its powers with the foundational and legal duty to represent “Turkishness” and control, regulate, and audit all types of museums along with its central privatisation of museum activities. The following chapter illustrates that the TAF and the MCT control access to Anıtkabir and Topkapı Palace museums consecutively in line with their competing sources of power.

III. Topkapı Palace: A Palace-Museum and a State Institution

Topkapı Palace was built on the order of Mehmet II, right after his conquest of Istanbul (1453), not only as a home for the Sultan and his family but also as the centre of the imperial administration and judiciary. Built on the ruins of the Byzantine Empire, the Palace indicates a break from Christian Constantinople towards Istanbul, the capital of the Islamic Ottoman Empire, accommodating different ethno-religious *millet*s (Seles 2004: 37). The palace witnessed the golden ages of the Empire in the 15th-16th century and was centre of the caliphate until 1924 (Topkapı Palace Museum 2013a) until Atatürk eradicated all institutions of the Empire and turned the palace into a museum. In this sense, the palace signifies sovereignty and the golden ages of the Empire, whereas its museumification signifies the birth of the new Republic. Ankara, capital of the Republic stood vis-à-vis İstanbul, “emblematic of Ottoman decadence, pollution, miscegenation” (Öncü 2007: 236).

Despite its symbolic significance, the palace is not monumental in architectural terms. In fact, many of its buildings are adjacent and rectangular buildings, the highest of all being the Tower of Justice at 42 meters. The palace covers a vast area consisting of four courtyards, each (re)built in different periods (Karahasan 2005: 92). With its cumulative character, the palace architecture represents different historical periods of the Empire and the historical evolution of its institutions. In *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, Necipoğlu (1991) unpacks Topkapı Palace. She argues that,

notwithstanding its seemingly unorganised structure, power relations in the Ottoman Empire were embodied in the architectural discourse of the palace and reproduced through ceremonies. She shows that each courtyard and building in the 15th-16th century Topkapı Palace reproduced the palace hierarchy, the distinction between public and private along with the spatial segregation of women and men (Necipoğlu 1991: xvi).

This complex, a home to the Sultan and the centre of administration and judiciary, retained ceremonial significance even after the sultans moved out. Rituals of visiting the Holy Mantle, among the Holy Relics brought by Yavuz Sultan Selim in the 16th century, Quranic recitation for the Holy Relics, circumcision ceremonies for sons of the sultans and such like continued to take place inside the palace (Shaw 2003: 45). Additionally, new rituals around collecting and exhibiting artefacts began to take shape in the palace. In the early 18th century, foreign visitors of the sultan were shown the armoury collection kept in Hagia Irene and the treasury inside the palace, which were closed to the public (Necipoğlu 1991: 141). Being “set apart and forbidden” (Durkheim 1915: 47), these collections were a means to exhibit greatness (Shaw 2003: 32) and sacredness of imperial power to a selected few.

However, museumification of the Palace under the new Republic created a significant rupture in the collection and display practices. After abolishing the caliphate in 1924, all belongings of the Sultan were transferred to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). Within this context, all palaces and kiosks of the Ottoman Empire, except Topkapı Palace, were classified as “National Palaces”. This exception was created by cabinet decree, enacted on the order of Atatürk. Utkuluer (2014) explains that Topkapı Palace was turned into a museum, instead of a ‘national palace’ due to its historical importance, its collection practices in the 18th century and significance for attracting foreign attention. Although the enduring legacy of museum practices in the palace is important, it does not explain the reasons for its exclusion from being considered as a national palace, which are also treated as museums in Turkey.

Under the modern Republic, the palace was first tied to the Directorate of Ancient Artefacts Museums (*Asar-ı Atika Müzesi*) and further institutionalised first under the Ministry of National Education and then the Ministry of Culture in 1971. The first museum director of Topkapı Palace, Tahsin Öz made discontinuity from the Empire apparent by making an announcement to the museum employees, who had been staff of the palace under the Sultan's orders. Disturbed by gossip and personal problems among the museum staff, Tahsin Öz wanted them to act more 'rationally' to fulfil their given duties in bureaucracy. He warned them: "There is no palace anymore; it belongs to the past. There is the museum now" (my translation, 1991: 18).

Öz (1991) narrates the museumification of the palace, which began with the de-contextualisation of artefacts and transformation of living spaces of the palace into exhibition halls. First, every room of the palace was opened; artefacts inside were registered; and, then, doors were sealed. After, registered artefacts were categorised according to physical qualities: weapons, manuscripts, paintings, embroidery, textiles, miniatures, paintings, porcelains, silverware, clocks, glassware, copper, stone tablets, architectural units, sultan's carriages, treasury, holy relics and tiles. This categorisation was further distinguished on the basis of the artefacts' origins (Öz 1991: 29-38), which "elided original meanings and [...] substitute[d] for them new aesthetic and art historical significances" (McClellan 1994: 14). As in all museums, artefacts were removed from their original environments and re-contextualised according to a certain rationale (Anderson 2006; Macdonald 2006a: 82). In Topkapı Palace Museum, they were re-contextualised in buildings of the palace, which were objectified as exhibition halls instead of architectural units of an Ottoman palace. In this way, "Topkapı Palace Museum glorifies the Ottoman legacy for the modern nation while disassociating it from the modern destruction of the empire" (Shaw 2011: 933).

While the lines separating these collections have been permeable, architectural units have remained as venues for exhibitions (Figure 8). Since its museumification, the first courtyard has been a public space, as it was in the Ottoman period, where people could enter freely (Necipoğlu 1991: 41). This courtyard houses Hagia Irene, a

Byzantine church converted into an Ottoman ammunition store; late Ottoman period buildings, which were used for press, military storage and later used by the TAF and the Ministry of National Education until very recently (*Hürriyet* 10 October 2010). This public realm is delimited by the second gate, *Babüsselam*, leading to the second court yard, open only to the palace staff during the Ottoman Empire. Topkapı Palace Museum inherited this distinction between what is visible / invisible to the public. Since then, this second gate came to signify the starting point of the museum with a ticket booth, museum café and shop as well as a modern security check point, alerting the visitors that this place is primarily a museum. Thus, through this gate the visitor does not only enter the private space of the Empire, but also of the modern Republic that preserves and exhibits the imperial past.

In the second courtyard, Armoury is located in the Outer Treasury, where taxes and war plunders were kept, right next to the Imperial Council and the Tower of Justice. On the other side of the Imperial Council is the Harem, covering an area adjacent to the second and third courtyards. Women of the palace and the Sultan's children used to live in this section. Today, the Harem is exhibited merely as an architectural complex with no artefacts on display. Right across the Imperial Council stands the huge former palace kitchens, where silverware, porcelains and glassware are exhibited.²⁰ The second courtyard ends with the Gate of Felicity, *Babüssade*, which is the entrance to the Sultan's personal dwelling. This gate denotes the caliphate and sultanate. While ceremonies of coronation and salutation took place in front of this gate, behind the gate in the third court yard laid the Privy room of the Sultan and the *Enderun* (Topkapı Palace Museum 2013b). *Enderun* is the palace school for *devshirmes*, non-Muslims forcefully taken from their families and converted to Islam. Having been completely detached from their families at a very young age, these *devshirmes*' loyalty was channelled exclusively to the Sultan and in *Enderun* they were taught imperial bureaucracy, history, religion, law, and administration (Fetvacı 2013: 29). Besides the *Enderun* School, the third courtyard includes the Fatih Kiosk, the treasury ward, dormitory for expeditionary forces (*Seferli Koğuşu*), and the Privy Room of the sultans. This last was used as the personal dwelling of the

²⁰ During my fieldwork, palace kitchens were closed for visitors due to a renovation project. It was re-opened for display in late July 2014.

sultan until Yavuz Sultan Selim's designation of the room for the preservation of the Holy Relics he brought from the Holy Lands. In the *Enderun* courtyard, one can see the Ottoman Portraits collection, Holy Relics and Privy Room, imperial treasury and the sultans' clothes. Among these collections, only the Holy Relics and the Imperial Treasury collections were able to keep their original places, the first in the Privy Room and the second in the Fatih Kiosk. The fourth courtyard has tulip gardens of the palace and kiosks built to commemorate sultans and the conquest of various lands (for example the Mecidiye, Bagdat and Revan kiosks). Like the Harem, this courtyard can be considered as an architectural display with no exhibited artefacts. Today, its significance lies in the re-usage of kiosks inside this courtyard by museum staff and statesmen for meeting purposes, which caused many heated debates (T24 08 June 2011). In this courtyard, there is also a very small mosque, the Sofa Mosque, which is open to visitors who want to pray inside any time during visiting hours and to the museum staff on Friday prayers (See Chapter 7).

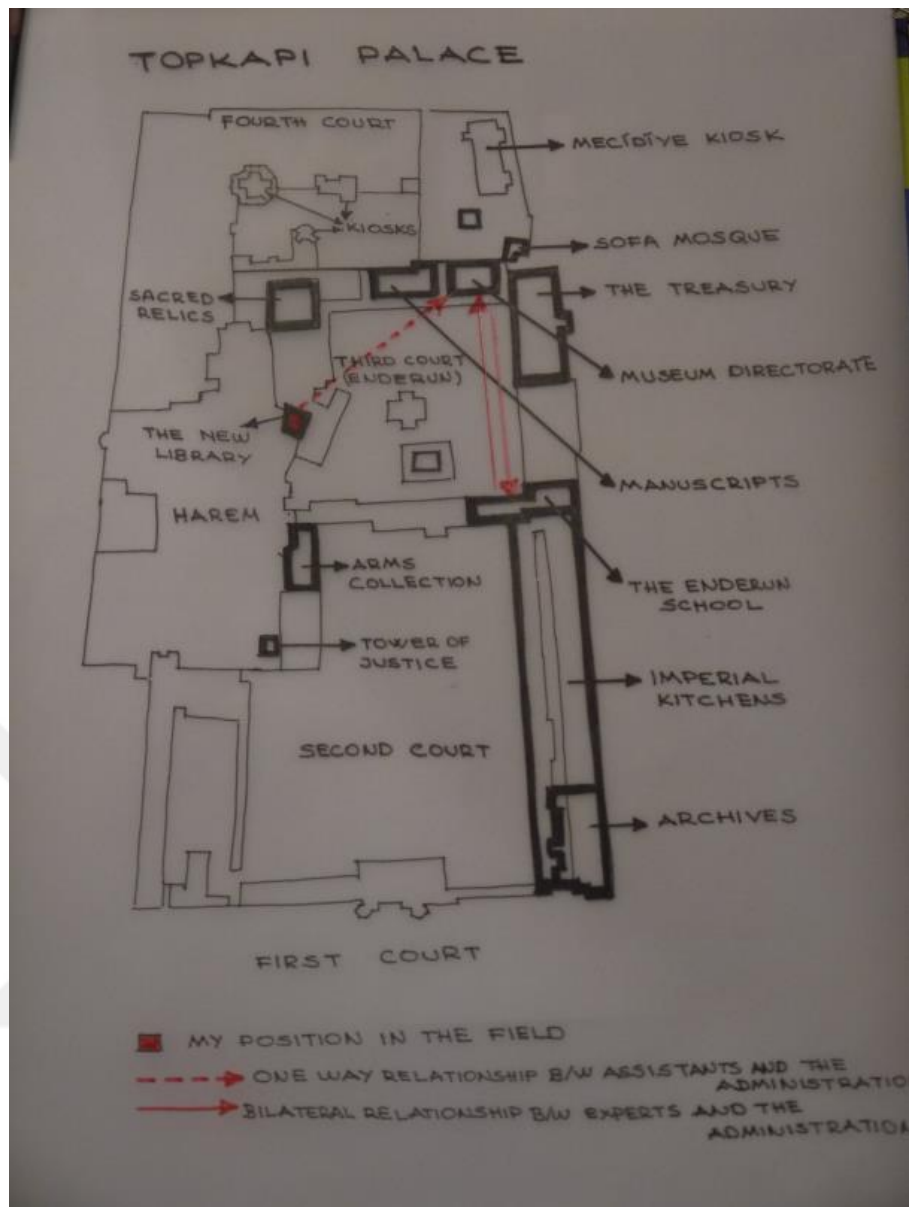


Figure 8: Ground plan of Topkapı Palace Museum

Chronology is a central element in the preparation of exhibitions in Turkey's state museums (See Chapter 6). Topkapı Palace Museum, however, does not provide an overarching and chronological narrative of imperial history. For instance, the unequipped visitor is not offered a narration of Ottoman sultans, the imperial system, or palace life.²¹ Instead, the museum is framed around separate collections, distinguished according to a hierarchy of symbolic importance and popularity. A

²¹ Chapter 7 discusses how this understanding has been changing under the new museum director, Ahmet Haluk Dursun, through "invention of traditions" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983).

non-expert visitor can pinpoint this symbolic hierarchy by simply looking at the long lines of people waiting to see particular collections. The Holy Relics, treasury, and weapons sections are among the most popular exhibits, as the long queues attest (Figure 9). Since the 2000s, these three have been renovated and further emphasised as sections displaying the glory of the Empire, protecting the sacred relics of the Muslim world, and claiming wealth and strength.



Figure 9: A long queue for the Treasury

This hierarchy also reflects the organisational schema of Topkapı Palace Museum as a state institution. Each collection is allocated to a museum expert (mostly art historians and archaeologists), who is accountable for the preservation of all displayed and stored artefacts. They are also responsible for curation of the permanent exhibition and the selection of artefacts in the preparation of temporary exhibitions within and outside the museum. Specialised in a particular palace collection, these experts (also called curators) hold a monopoly over knowledge of and access to specific collections. Although these experts are equal in terms of status as civil servants, they are informally distinguished in line with the collection they are

responsible for and the degree of seniority. Museum experts responsible for the popular sections of the museum tend to be more active and in more interaction with the museum administration. They are more involved in the exhibition making processes due to the frequency their collections are included in exhibitionary practices of the museum.²²

The museum administration, a body of key-decision makers, stands above this hierarchy. Within this structure there are three deputy directors and one museum director. Two deputies are responsible for the internal services of the museum (security, finance, personnel office), the other for the organisation of exhibitions and maintenance of permanent collections. At the top of the organisational schema stands the museum director, whereas at the bottom of the hierarchy is the service personnel (security), mostly outsourced by the MCT, and expert assistants, who are also civil servants in the positions given by the MCT, who have not yet submitted their expertise theses. While experts hold the monopoly of knowledge and access to collections and exhibition making process, expert assistants remain isolated and are allocated with duties such as organising the museum web page, responding to visitor e-mails and carrying out bureaucratic correspondence.

Hierarchy and knowledge-power relations among the museum staff are also visible in the physical distribution of their offices within the palace. In the second courtyard, archives are found behind a huge door of the palace kitchens, usually guarded by security personnel. Once access is granted and doors are opened, an inner garden is found, around which the offices of archive personnel are located. Besides this secluded area, offices are generally grouped in the third courtyard, the *Enderun*. On the right, neighbouring the back side of the *Babüssade* gate, stands the two-storey *Enderun* School. Upstairs is used as office spaces for museum experts and architects and the entrance floor is reserved as a dining hall for museum staff. On the parallel side of the court yard, there is the treasury ward, a two-storey building that accommodates the museum administration and offices of some museum experts along with administrative civil servants. Access to this building is restricted to

²² There are also architects, who are also museum experts, carrying out garden re-organizations and renovation of artefacts and palace buildings.

visitors, yet once entered; one is welcome by a huge Atatürk bust situated next to a palace mirror, denoting the presence of the secular Republic inside the Ottoman palace. On the left corner of the courtyard, right next to the Akağalar Mosque, there is another smaller two-storey building with an inner garden. On the second floor, there is a library of published books, where librarians and expert assistants sit behind desks next to each other. Downstairs is a small kitchen whose door is adjacent to a very small inner garden facing a small building, where other expert assistants are working.²³

The use of the palace buildings as museum offices and meeting rooms denotes the “possession” and “even conquest” (Shaw 2003: 43) of the Ottoman past by the Republic. Besides ownership, this physical distribution is also indicative of intra-institutional hierarchies, complicating the identification of the “back” and “front” (Goffman 1956) stages of the museum. Drawing on Necipoğlu’s study (1991), it is possible to observe power mechanisms in the physical layout of palace buildings, which are allocated to diverse civil servants of different ranks. The administration building, occupying the treasury ward, is a central building in the third courtyard. It is a building that every member of the museum staff, regardless of their ranks, has to visit at least twice each day. At the beginning and end of the working day, they are expected to sign an attendance sheet and collect or leave the keys for their offices, collections, and storage rooms. Moreover, as an administrative body, it is a building that museum experts have to visit frequently due to meetings for exhibition and renovation projects as well as for informal coffee and tea breaks. Also, the administration and experts tend to meet in the dining hall on the ground floor of the *Enderun* School, where museum experts’ offices are located. Thus, as the arrows on Figure 8 show, there is a daily traffic between the museum administration and museum experts’ offices, which are located facing each other. Situated at the left corner of the courtyard, the building where the library personnel together with expert assistants work, seems to be isolated with its own inner garden for coffee breaks and own kitchen for lunches. Being excluded from the exhibition-making processes, these civil servants do not usually visit the administration building, besides going

²³ This physical allocation of offices represents the period during my fieldwork in Topkapı Palace (August 2012- June 2013).

there to sign the attendance book. Cut from the daily routine between the treasury ward and the *Enderun* School, they are also excluded from the ‘training’ in specialising on a particular collection (See Chapter 6).

This physical separation perpetuates informal power relationships among civil servants. During the period of designing my research in 2011, there was a dual-administration system in Topkapı Palace Museum, due to the failed attempt to create “national museums”²⁴. The “Regulation on the Foundation and Presidency of National Museums” (2005) outlines the administrative structure of national museums. Accordingly, there are one museum manager, who is responsible for the bureaucratic administration and one museum director-president appointed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) as public representative of the museum. In line with this duality, informal groupings of the museum staff around Yusuf Benli, the museum manager, and İlber Ortaylı, the museum director, became visible through a scandal. In 2011, Benli was accused of moving a sultan’s throne to his personal lodge inside the museum (*Hürriyet Daily News* 2 June 2011). This situation put Benli and Ortaylı at odds, creating an informal space for polarisation between members of museum staff. Expert assistants and lower ranks of museum bureaucracy, already isolated from decision-making processes gathered under the slogan “**We want a magnificent palace**”²⁵ to support Benli. Experts and deputy directors, some of them affiliated with the **Association of Topkapı Palace Lovers**²⁶, grouped around İlber Ortaylı (Figure 8). Although I started my fieldwork after both Benli and Ortaylı had left, this polarisation was still evident and reproduced through the physical separation between the offices. As Chapter 6 will describe in detail, the two groups were also distinguished by their generation and stance in the “symbiotic antagonisms” (Kadıoğlu and Keyman 2011). The first group consists of a younger generation of lower rank civil servants associating themselves with the MCT vis-à-vis the older

²⁴ The implications of the attempt to form national museums are further discussed in Chapter 6.

²⁵ The platform’s website <http://namuhtesemsaray.wordpress.com/platform/> was removed during the writing-up period of this study (2013-2014).

²⁶ Association of Topkapı Palace Lovers is a non-state organization found to financially support the palace. It worked in the publishing of year books of the museums and preparation of exhibitions, particularly in the 1990s. However, it was inactive until 2014. In 2014, one year after I finalised my fieldwork, the association started to be active with the chairmanship of Ahmet Haluk Dursun, the latest museum director of Topkapı Palace. See <http://topkapidernek.com/> for the website of the association. Therefore, under the new museum directorate, both groups have transformed.

generation of museum experts, who express themselves in Kemalist-secularist lines. Chapter 6 will also highlight the ways in which this polarisation is reproduced and reflected in the daily bureaucratic practices of the museum.

I conducted my fieldwork during a period of post-crisis; however, Topkapı Palace Museum was already in a state of transformation. Since the 1950s, renovation projects gained momentum and new collections became available for visitors until the 1970s (Utkuluer 2014: 70). In 1986 the museum administration began to publish year books, mostly containing articles based on archival research on the Ottoman Empire. After five volumes, the museum stopped publishing its yearly books, i.e. stopped writing its own history. In the 2000s, along with the public visibility and institutionalisation of neo-Ottomanism, Topkapı Palace Museum gained importance. In 2011, the former Minister of Culture and Tourism Ertuğrul made a statement that his ministry will “bring the palace back to its seriousness, grandeur, esteem and beauty during the reign of Kanuni Sultan Süleyman [16th century]” (*Sabah* 14 July 2011).

Along with the aim to revive Topkapı Palace Museum, the institutional silence was broken in 2014 at the time of writing this thesis. The latest year book was published on the order of the new museum director, Ahmet Haluk Dursun. While previous year books were organised around technical articles and notes explaining and listing the renovations that took place, the last year book lists museum events and practices that aim to revitalise “Ottoman Palace traditions” (Dursun 2014a), besides exhibitions and renovations. In this way, an indifference to archives (Ahıska 2010), documenting the museum’s own practices, was replaced by a tendency to list institutional developments. Under the new administration, the museum does not only take pride in the Ottoman history it is representing. As the new museum director highlights, it also takes pride in its own practices as a state institution that “keep[s] palace traditions alive” (Dursun 2014a: 51).

At this point, it is important to note that museum practices take place in cooperation with and under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT).

While architectural renovation projects are carried out together with the Council of Monuments, re-organisation of permanent collections and preparation of temporary exhibitions are executed under the control of the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums at the MCT. Within this context, sometimes the MCT orders the preparation of a temporary exhibition in line with the commemoration of a certain historical figure or event²⁷, or in cooperation with other institutions of the state (such as municipalities, other ministries and museums). Sometimes, the museum administration comes up with a thematic exhibition and requests approval from the MCT²⁸. Once the theme of the exhibition is set (either by the museum administration or by the MCT), museum experts of the relevant collections get together with architects, historians (sometimes outsourced non-state actors), and the museum administration to prepare an exhibition plan, presented to the MCT. Within this process, besides drawing on MCT's powers, Topkapı Palace Museum enjoys economic support from the İstanbul Special Provincial Administration (*İstanbul İl Özel İdaresi*)²⁹, Bilkent Culture Initiative, Association of Turkish Travel Agencies as well as other private bodies in the financing of museum events, exhibitions and renovations.

IV. Anıtkabir as a Complex: A Monument, A Military Museum, A State Institution, and a Space for Demonstrations

Anıtkabir (which literally translates as 'monumental tomb'), the mausoleum of Atatürk, stands on one of the highest hills of Ankara. Visible from almost everywhere in the city, Anıtkabir was designed to be more than a mausoleum. It was as a monument to make one "forget the Ottoman Empire" (Wilson 2009: 227) in the capital of the Republic, Ankara, vis-à-vis Istanbul, the Imperial capital (Öncü 2007). Therefore, the mausoleum was not only thought of a tomb for Atatürk, but also the "monumentalization" (Meeker 1997: 169) of the Turkish nation and its secular past, de-linked from the Islamic Ottoman Empire. This study perceives Anıtkabir as a

²⁷ For example, after UNESCO designated the year 2013 as the Year of Piri Reis (the Ottoman cartographer who drew the first map of the world), the MCT ordered the preparation of an exhibition displaying his maps stored in the archives of the Palace. The exhibition "Piri Reis Maps" took place between 23 January-11 February in Topkapı Palace Museum.

²⁸ "The Imperial Harem: House of the Sultan" (12 June- 15 October 2012) can be considered one of the first examples of museum-led exhibitionary practices (See Chapter 8).

²⁹ İstanbul Special Provincial Administration is a local state institution tied to the governor of İstanbul.

museum complex - with its architecture and collections, just like Topkapı Palace Museum.

Imagined as the embodiment of the Turkish nation, Anıtkabir's construction was delicately planned (Wilson 2009). After Atatürk's death in 1938, his body was moved from Dolmabahçe Palace (in Istanbul), where he passed away, to the Ethnography Museum (in Ankara), where his coffin was preserved and displayed until 1953.³⁰ During these years, an architectural competition took place for the design of Atatürk's mausoleum. First, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey identified the place (Rasattepe - one of the highest hills of Ankara) to construct the mausoleum in line with Atatürk's will (Turkish General Staff 2001; Boran 2012). Second, the characteristics of the mausoleum were pre-determined by the RPP government and these were the main criteria for the evaluation of the competition. Accordingly, the mausoleum was predefined as a place of visitation and a monument to symbolise Atatürk's power and personality; and in this way, the Turkish nation. It was designated to include a museum to commemorate Atatürk with his photos and personal belonging and a hall of honour for visitors to sign the Atatürk memorial book (Turkish General Staff 2001: 7-8).

At the end of a disputed decision-making process, Emin Onat and Orhan Arda were announced as the winners in 1947 (Wilson 2009: 231). Drawing on the early Republican period, their design synthesized symbols of the West and the East with reference to pre-Islamic Anatolia and Central Asia (Bozdoğan 2001: 286). The mausoleum was planned like a Hellenistic temple, portraying a "more 'European' Anatolian legacy" (Glyptis 2008: 364) and framed by a square, with small towers each signifying one aspect of the nation-building project. While the walls next to the mausoleum are inscribed with reliefs resembling Hittite drawings and narrating the War of Independence, ceilings around the square are adorned by figures in the Anatolian Turkish carpets (Turkish General Staff 2001 49-51). Anıtkabir as a whole can be seen as a "three dimensional" (Gür 2001) reflection of the official Turkish

³⁰ See Chapter 8 for competing myths and versions of the story of preserving and burying Atatürk's deceased body in Anıtkabir.

History Thesis, bringing together pre-Islamic Central Asian, Anatolian and European legacies.

One usually enters the complex from the Road of Lions (Figure 10), a long walk that takes the visitor towards the ceremony hall and the mausoleum. Adorned by lion statues along both sides (Figure 11), the road starts with the Independence Tower and the Freedom Tower facing each other. This road, with its Hittite and Anatolian lion figures evokes a sense of the strength and unity of the nation (Turkish General Staff 2001: 44). At the beginning of this road, there are two groups of statues across from each other. On the left, in front of the Liberty Tower, there are three statues of men representing soldier, youth and peasant (Figure 12). On the opposite side, one can find a statue of a group of women (Figure 13). Symbolising our “productive country” (ibid.: 31), they also weep for Atatürk. Thus, from the very beginning, Anıtkabir welcomes its visitor with gendered symbols of the nation, with its strength and unity materialised in the masculine body and its emotive-productive characters in the female body (Sirman 2002).

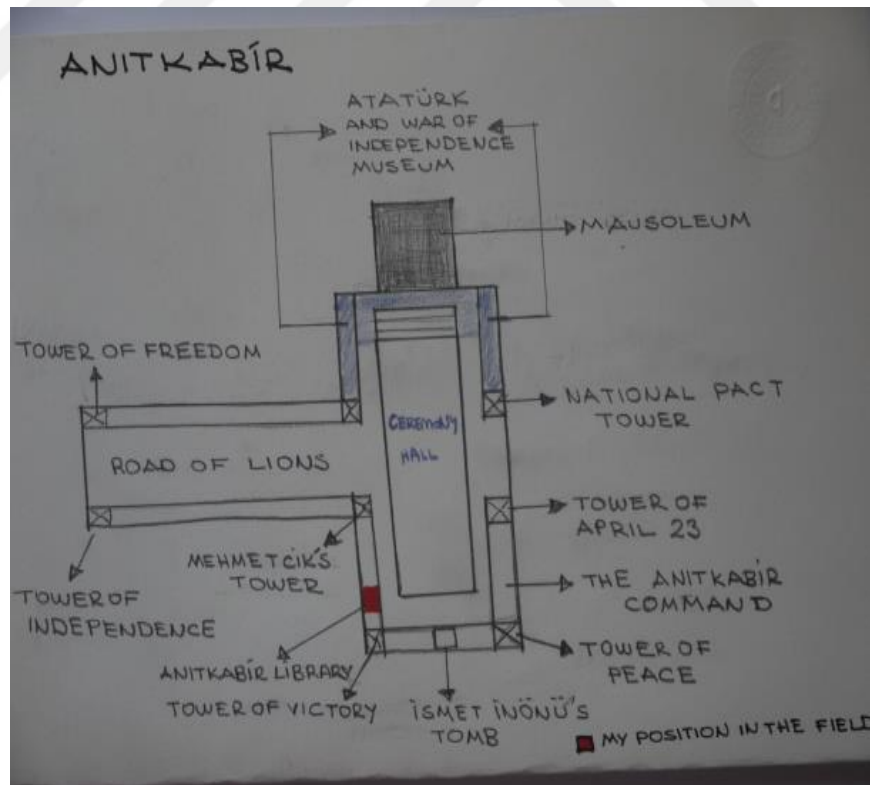


Figure 10: Ground plan of Anıtkabir



Figure 11: The Lion Road



Figure 12: Statues of Turkish Men

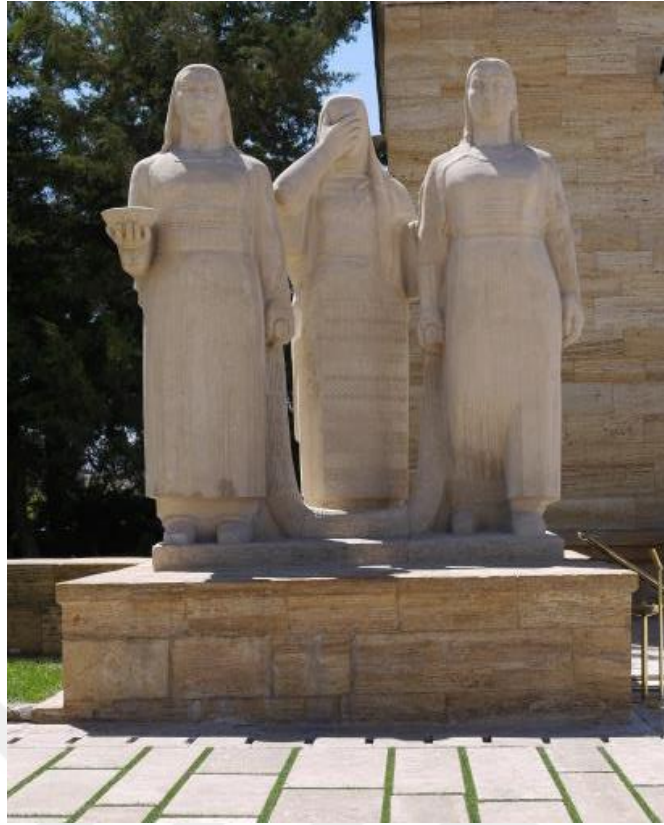


Figure 13: Statues of Turkish Women

As Figure 10 shows, one reaches the Ceremony Hall at the end of the Lion Road. The empty square is decorated by stones placed like the Anatolian Turkish carpet patterns (Turkish General Staff 2001: 54) and there are eight small towers, marking the edges of this square (symbolising the Turkish soldier (*Mehmetçik*), victory, peace, inauguration of the Grand National Assembly, the National Pact, revolution, the republic and defence of rights). Each tower signifies one aspect of the nation-state building process through reliefs and Atatürk's sayings inscribed on the walls. The Anıtkabir Library is situated adjacent to the Tower of the Turkish Soldier. Next to the library, one can find the Tower of Victory where the gun carriage of Atatürk's coffin is displayed. Following the same side, the second president, İsmet İnönü's sarcophagus is situated (facing the mausoleum) (Figure 14). At the other corner, there is the Tower of Peace, where Atatürk's cars are exhibited. The office reserved for the Anıtkabir Command, which administers the entire complex of Anıtkabir, is right next to this tower. The neighbouring tower brings the visitor to a huge flag pole

and stairs leading to the exit of the complex. Bypassing the stairs and continuing along the square of the Ceremony Hall, one reaches the Tower of National Pact where Anıtkabir Museum starts. Inside this tower, right before the entrance, there is the official Atatürk memorial book, in which statesmen sign to commemorate Atatürk.



Figure 14: İsmet İnönü’s sarcophagus facing the mausoleum

Before going inside the museum, I should describe the mausoleum, which stands as the highest structure in the whole architectural complex. One ascends towards the mausoleum through the stairs, marked by a marble stone with the inscription “sovereignty unconditionally belongs to the nation”. On the walls of the mausoleum, Atatürk’s address to youth and his famous speech (*Nutuk*) are inscribed. Therefore, reaching the mausoleum, the visitor is reminded that she is approaching not only the

tomb of Atatürk, but also the personification of the nation in an architectural complex, below which Atatürk's body is buried (Figure 15). Unlike the previous practice of exhibiting Atatürk's coffin in the Ethnography Museum, Anıtkabir's monumental architecture interns Atatürk's body (See Chapter 8). Anıtkabir's physical position on the highest hill of Ankara, its architectural simplicity and its temple like design set Atatürk apart and highlight his omnipresence (Meeker 1997: 171). Within this setting, Atatürk is commemorated as the leading figure of nation and state through official and ritualistic ceremonies³¹. Such rituals start from the Lion Road, continue with placing a wreath and a one-minute silence in front of the mausoleum, and end at the Tower of National Pact, where the Atatürk memorial book is signed. For this reason, Meeker conceives Anıtkabir as a "shrine of Kemalism" (1997: 167), where the cult of Atatürk is represented and venerated as the sacred symbol of nation and state through official state ceremonies and non-official manifestations and visitations in Anıtkabir.



Figure 15: The mausoleum

³¹ In fact, visiting Anıtkabir is an essential "part of the national protocol rules for visiting foreign heads of state" (Türköz 2014: 58).

This sacredness is structurally imposed on the visitor. I was told by a member of the museum staff that the gaps between the stones paving the Lion Road were left large on purpose (Figure 16) so that visitors have to look down to see where they are walking. In this way, they have to “come respectfully before the presence of the father” (Fieldnotes 21 May 2013) with their heads bowed down. This respect is enhanced through a set of strict visitor rules, which are safeguarded by soldiers. According to rules posted at the entrance (Figure 17), visitors are not allowed to carry plastic bags, eat, drink, sit or chant slogans within Anıtkabir, since such practices are regarded as disrespectful to the value of Atatürk (Akçalı 2010: 12). Thus, Anıtkabir, from the very beginning of the Lion Road until the mausoleum, reminds the visitor that this complex is more than a mere tomb. Above all, it is a monument and a space for the “secular religion” (Bozdoğan 2001: 286) of the nation. Designed for the official (and non-official) “rituals for the state” (Navaro-Yashin 2002: 117), it does not simply replace “religious ritual, prayer, and spirituality” as Bozdoğan argues (2001: 286). As Chapter 8 deliberates, it negotiates and redefines the sacred and the secular.



Figure 16: Pavements leading to the mausoleum

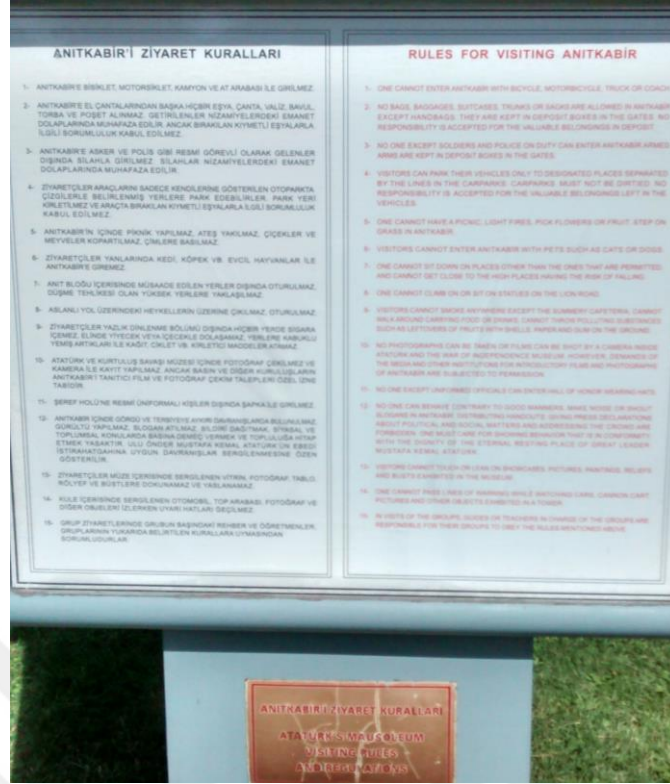


Figure 17: Rules for visiting Anıtkabir

Veneration for Atatürk in Anıtkabir has been contested by different stakeholders. On the one hand, a group of independent artists, calling themselves as “Extrastruggle” has been critical of the cult of Atatürk in line with scholarly discussions of the 1990s, which conceptualised visits to Anıtkabir as “visit to a saint’s tomb” (Navaro-Yashin 2002: 191). Their works of art became publicly visible in an exhibition in Istanbul in 2011. The most controversial exhibited item was a model of Anıtkabir. This miniature Anıtkabir added minarets on the roof of the mausoleum (Figure 18). This disturbed Kemalist newspaper *Aydınlık* and was censured by the curator due to threats of physical attack on the exhibition (*Radikal* 01 July 2011). The addition of the minarets suggested that Anıtkabir, key symbol of secularism in Turkey, is in fact a place of worship, just like a mosque. On the other hand, right wing nationalists were not disturbed by the sacred character of Anıtkabir. On the contrary, they were disturbed by Anıtkabir’s temple-like shape. In a press meeting, a parliament member of the far-right Nationalist Action Party declared that “Anıtkabir looks like a Greek acropolis. We will change this and transform Atatürk’s tomb to Turkish art. The

columns are like Greek columns. We will round the corners of the columns and put a dome on top of it. Also, we will write ‘pray for his soul’ (*ruhuna Fatiha*) on Anıtkabir.” (my translation *Radikal* 22 October 2012). Thus, Anıtkabir can be considered as a contested arena, where the sacred and the secular collide and constitute each other as mirror-images (Asad 2003: 30-2).



Figure 18: “The Contribution of Eclectic Ottoman Architecture to Internal Peace in Anatolia or as it is commonly known, The Mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal”
(Extrastruggle 2010)

This contested space is completed by the Atatürk and the War of Independence Museum. The museum was first opened in 1961 with the name “Atatürk Museum”, situated in the small rectangular building of the Tower of National Pact. While the first section had the memorial book for Turkish and foreign visiting dignitaries; the second section was a display room for Atatürk’s personal belongings and presents given to him. The last section exhibited his clothing and a wax statue of Atatürk (Yozgatlı and Ulualp 1994: 11). The civilian museum director Oya Eskici noted that

this exhibition was far from elaborate. The display cases were placed horizontally and they created a sense of “labyrinth” (Interview 7 December 2012).

Since 1961, the museum was renovated twice, in 2002 and 2005, under the “Developing Anıtkabir Project” (*Anıtkabir’i Geliştirme Projesi*). These renovations involved more than slight changes. In fact, the Atatürk Museum was re-organised and transformed into the Atatürk and the War of Independence Museum. The opening speech of Hilmi Özkök, the 24th Chief of the General Staff of the TAF in 2002, is informative in contextualising the re-opening of this museum: “We believe that transmitting our national values and their internal dynamics to future generations is an existential responsibility at a time when globalisation is misunderstood, in other words, when it cannot be understood at all” (my translation, Anıtkabir Library 2002). Therefore, for Özkök, the museum’s re-organisation was a means to re-assert “national values” in line with Kemalist neo-nationalist concerns over globalisation, which was perceived to be threatening unity and secularity of the nation (See Chapter 3).

At the same time, this transformation sheds light on the ways in which Anıtkabir is simultaneously re-secularised and re-sacralised. In its original plan, the vast area below the mausoleum (the green area in Figure 19) in Anıtkabir was reserved as tomb rooms for the presidents of Turkey after Atatürk. The idea was dropped in 1981 with the preparation of the Law on State Cemetery to underline the singularity of Atatürk’s presence in Anıtkabir, with the exception of İsmet İnönü, who had been Atatürk’s best friend (Turkish General Staff 2001: 92). This space was left empty, marking the omnipresence of Atatürk in Anıtkabir. With the re-organisation of the museum in 2002, this void space was converted to exhibition halls, institutionalising the de-sacralisation of a tomb-area and re-sacralisation of Atatürk’s singularity. Therefore, in this study, I do not distinguish the mausoleum, as an architectural unit / monumental tomb, and the museum, since the two form a museum complex, completing each other in their narrations of the secular formation of “Turkishness”. Both are considered as parts of Anıtkabir museum.

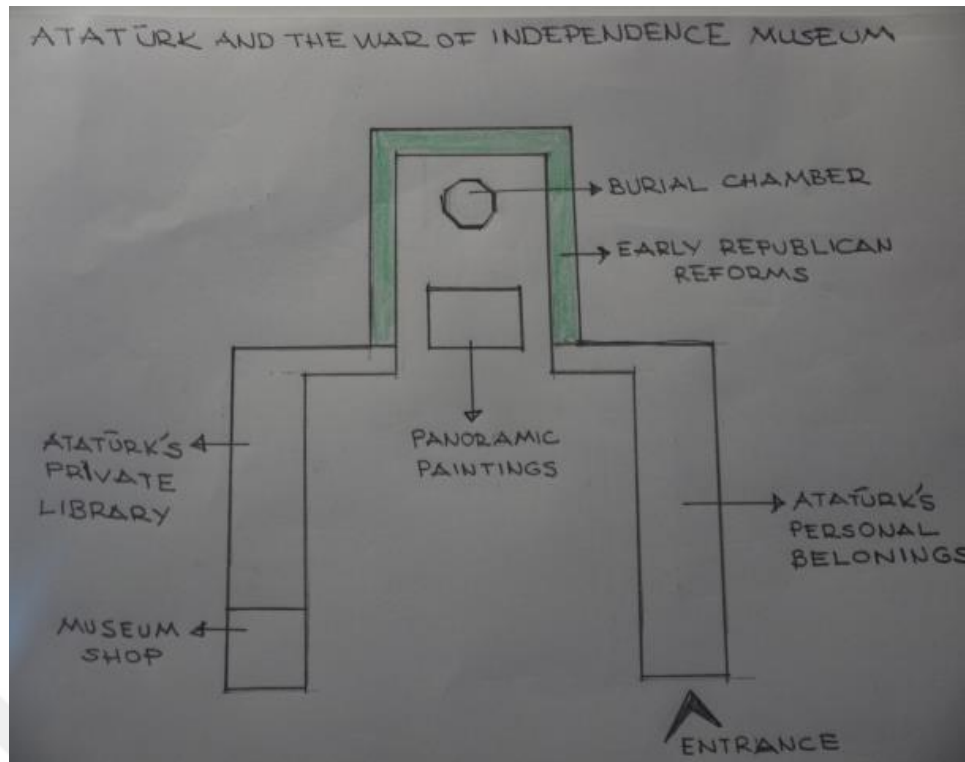


Figure 19: Ground plan of the Atatürk and the War of Independence Museum

Unlike the fragmented narration of Topkapı Palace Museum, Anıtkabir Museum provides a linear narration of the Early Republic on the basis of a museum scenario, (partly) written by Turgut Özakman, author of the aforementioned *Those Crazy Turks*. The interior design of the museum supports this scenario by making it impossible to deviate from the purpose-built visiting route. Red arrows on the floors, fences separating the visiting routes (Figure 20), and museum staff continuously reminding the visitors to follow the route shape visitors' "civic seeing" (Bennet 2006). When the 'correct' path is followed, the museum starts with the story of Atatürk's birth, family, and education with through artefacts such as his identity cards, parents' photos and representations from his childhood and youth. The route, then, takes the visitor to a larger section in where independence wars (the Battles of Çanakkale, Sakarya and the Great Attack) are displayed via three dimensional and panoramic paintings of the battle fields, soldiers, Atatürk and snapshots from daily lives of the people. What is to be understood from each painting and section is given either through a guided tour provided by soldiers working as museum guides, audio-

guides or through the written information next to the paintings. The third section is called the “War of Independence and the Revolutions” and it provides textual and visual information on early Republican reforms (See Chapter 6 and 7). This section also includes Atatürk’s tomb room below the mausoleum and covered by a huge wall with an Atatürk relief (Anıtkabir Command 2005: 125). One can see the tomb room only through the plasma screen standing in front of the door, further “set[ting] apart” (Durkheim 1915: 47) Atatürk’s body (See Chapter 8). The last section is a display of Atatürk’s personal library and a re-animation of his study room, marked by his wax statues. Through this strictly linear exhibit style, the museum makes sure that the visitors receive the same predefined messages in each section.



Figure 20: Red arrows and fences separating the visiting routes

This rigidity does not indicate that Anıtkabir museum is a frozen state institution, relentlessly repeating the same story. It has also been a site for protests and demonstrations. It was one of the venues during the Republican Protests in 2007 against the rising visibility of Islam within the state, particularly against the presidential election of Abdullah Gül. The Regulation on Executing Services in Anıtkabir (1982), forbids chanting slogans, and carrying banners and flags other than the Turkish flag. As Chapter 7 discusses in more detail, Anıtkabir bypasses this rule and allows meetings and protests. Besides, it regularly embraces unorganised and organised demonstrators, repeating the slogan “Turkey will remain secular” particularly on national days. These manifestations are not mere acts of commemorating Atatürk and secular Republican days. For example, on August 26th 2014, commemorating the Victory Week of the War of Independence, an independent group of cultural producers organised a public event called “#weareinanıtkabir” [*#anıtkabirdeyiz*]. On that day, with the permission of the TAF and logistic support of the Anıtkabir Command, 6000 volunteers gathered to form the largest live human-portrait of Atatürk. Displaying Atatürk’s face through the people was not a mere act of remembering. As the cultural producers involved in the project announced, this was an expression of their concern about the country (Karahasan 2015). Anıtkabir’s space was reclaimed as the symbol of secularism against the rising neo-Islamist transformation of the country by the people and by Anıtkabir itself as a state institution. In this sense, such events (on national days) constitute ‘rules of exception’ for Anıtkabir.

Exceptionality also underscores the institutional organisation of Anıtkabir. When the museum opened in 1961, it was managed by the Ministry of National Education, and later by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Wilson 2013: 125). Yet, after the 1980 coup d’état, administration of Anıtkabir was transferred to the Turkish General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) (Law No 2524 1982). Nevertheless, until the re-organisation of the museum in 2002, the museum was directed by a civilian. With the renovation and enlargement of the museum, it is now directed by a triadic system: (1) museum commander, Kasım Mehmet Teke, (2) a civilian museum director, Oya Eskici and (3) the supreme commander of Anıtkabir, Muzaffer Taytak, stands above

all, controlling the entire Anıtkabir complex. Eskici explained that Teke is the “ultimate chief” (Interview 7 December 2012) of the museum. She described her duty as a museum director as the chief of the internal services of the museum.

In line with this hierarchical distinction, the museum commander and the Anıtkabir commander have their own offices (Figure 10). The office of the civilian museum director is situated inside the museum, behind the panoramic paintings and placed alongside the offices of other museum experts, civil servants under the Anıtkabir Command. This separation highlights the physical places of their offices, in Goffman’s (1956) terms, at the “back stage” of the museum. While museum staff and the civilian museum director literally work in the back stage of the museum, the museum commander is in a position to monitor closely the front stage of the museum. Notwithstanding this distinction, all offices are situated within the premises of Anıtkabir inside its original architectural complex. Unlike Topkapı Palace Museum, offices are not ‘conquered’ spaces of a distant past and museum staff do not represent themselves as being polarised. Rather, as one member told me, they all perceive themselves as “the guardians of Atatürk’s eternal resting place” (Fieldnotes 9 October 2012) (See Chapter 6).

The decision-making process for the re-organisation of the museum took place in the higher ranks of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), and cultural producers were outsourced from private agencies as well as from other state institutions. The art supervisor and coordinator of the project was Burhan Bey, who worked at the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) for 35 years at that time. The first section, where Atatürk’s personal belongings are displayed was re-organised by a private architect, who previously renovated the Treasury section in Topkapı Palace Museum. Panoramic paintings in the second section were prepared by a group of artists and painters from Russia and Azerbaijan, who were led by a private Turkish painter. While the third section of the museum was curated by Tamer Bey³², formerly the deputy director of Fine Arts at the MCT and a history school teacher, the last section, Atatürk’s library was prepared by the Anıtkabir librarian. This intermeshed network

³² Burhan Bey and Tamer Bey are both pseudonyms. See Chapter 5 page 156 for an explanation on how I ensured anonymity of (identifiable) informants.

of cultural producers and state institutions reflects on the institutional division of labour as indicated by the Regulation on Executing Services in Anıtkabir (1982), which ties Anıtkabir to the TAF, the Department of Military History and Strategic Study (MHSS) and the MCT (Article 21). The regulation designates that decisions regarding Anıtkabir should be taken by a committee consisting of representatives of the MCT, TAF, Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning, and academicians from state universities (Articles 10 and 29). This network is further complicated by the museum's economy. Anıtkabir is entrance-free and thus, has no ticket revenue. Although the Anıtkabir Association provides income through the museum shop (in the Tower of National Self-Defence), Anıtkabir's real revenue stems from the TAF and special budgets received from the Prime Ministry.³³

V. Conclusion

In a nutshell, both Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir are more than museums. The scholarly literature, referred to throughout this chapter, discusses these museums, mainly as hubs of representations. From this perspective, Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir are symbols of contending pasts, displaying the Islamic Ottoman past and secular Republican official history consecutively, in two symbolically competing cities, Istanbul and Ankara (Bozdoğan 2001: 67). This study understands these museums as more than pedagogical warehouses of frozen pasts and adds that they should also be seen as state institutions, endowed with diverse "sources of power" (Mann 1986) and regulated under certain legal and bureaucratic frameworks.

Anıtkabir, in its direct affiliation with the TAF, and Topkapı Palace, with its relation with the MCT, are competing state museums with exceptional institutional and organisational mappings. In each, power relations are historically embodied in distinct ways. In Topkapı Palace Museum, one could read informal and formal power mechanisms by looking at how physical offices are grouped and placed. In Anıtkabir museum, the invisibility of experts' offices and their inaccessibility are indicators of this distance vis-à-vis other units of the museum and the visitors. These internal formal and informal power relations are historically rooted in their

³³ Note that Anıtkabir in no way accepts external funding opportunities (Fieldnotes 16 October 2012).

institutionalisation as state museums. Topkapı Palace Museum enjoys its historical and institutional exclusion from being a national palace, by drawing on the currently privileged ideological and political sources of the MCT. Likewise, Anıtkabir museum benefits from the TAF's ideological power as a military museum. These museums function through both formal and informal, and inter-institutional and intra-institutional power relationships, negotiating the ways in which competing pasts of "Turkishness" are displayed.

These field sites also create "hierarchies of knowledge" (Henning 2006: 302) between the museum and the people, as well as among members of the museum staff. Like studies of museums that draw on Goffman (Henning 2006; Macdonald 2002), this research addresses museum displays and activities as contested forms of performances and staging. The act of staging is more visible in Anıtkabir museum, where one finds museum guides, narrating the same scenario by repeating the exact same phrases, while in Topkapı Palace Museum it is harder to find a coherent and linear narrative of Ottoman imperial history. In Topkapı Palace, each collection, exhibits artefacts of a certain category (e.g. armoury, clocks, treasury etc.) and it is staged in its own right chronologically (See Chapter 6).

As the following chapter will illustrate, by employing an ethnographic study of the state, this research does not aim to uncover the hidden back stages of Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums. It does not only see these museums as spaces of representations either. Rather, this research unpacks the ways in which the boundaries *within* and *between* their back and front stages are blurred and re-drawn daily in the making of "Turkishness".

Chapter 5: Studying State Museums Ethnographically in a Changing Turkey

I. Introduction

My research questions are informed by the theoretical map bringing micro and macro perspectives on the state, nationalism and museums (See Chapter 2), the context of overturning Kemalist legacy of the state and its nationalism (See Chapter 3) and increasingly polarised significance of Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums. The primary question of this research is: How are the oppositionary - namely secular Republican and Islamic Ottoman - pasts of “Turkishness” remembered, forgotten, and negotiated at a time of flux in Anıtkabir, Atatürk’s mausoleum, and Topkapı Palace Museum, the imperial house? This question requires investigating (1) the regulatory frameworks shaping (2) the daily functioning mechanisms of these different state museums and (3) their contending representations within a context of transformation in Turkey. To explore these areas, the research further poses the following questions: How are the competing pasts of “Turkish history” regulated and institutionalised to define “Turkishness”? How do the binary oppositions related to these pasts shift, converge or diverge in the re-invention of ‘Turkishness’? What is remembered and what is forgotten (and by whom)? How do power struggles between Islamists and secularists reflect on the debates over how “Turkishness” should be exhibited in these two museums? How are the binary oppositions of “Turkishness” polarised between West / East, civilisation / culture, modern / backward, oppressed / oppressor, and secular /Islamic negotiated in daily museum practices?

I carried out a nine-months (August 2012-June 2013) of ethnographic fieldwork in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums to trace the routine and contested museum practices, “contingent [museum] events” (Brubaker 1996: 7), and processes crystallising “Turkishness”. More particularly, I am interested in unpacking power relationships involved in exhibiting and institutionalising “Turkishness” within the state. For this reason, this research dwells on daily museum bureaucracies, disputed (non)exhibitionary museum practices and the resultant representations. As Lukes

highlights, I also “attend to those aspects of power that are least accessible to observation [...] [as] power is at its most effective when least observable” (2005 [1974]: 1). Therefore, the inaccessible spheres of both museums and my (sometimes failed) attempts for (re)negotiating access are reflections of the embodied and shifting power relationships within these museums.

Following the institutional and physical maps of Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums (See Chapter 4), in this chapter I provide a mental map, portraying how these methods are pursued to answer research questions in the two settings. First, the chapter addresses theoretical insights of studying state institutions ethnographically and the empirical challenges of studying state institutions in Turkey. The second section of the chapter outlines diverse methods of accessing the two field sites, collecting different forms of qualitative data, and managing ethical concerns. In the last part, I bring Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums together in describing the process of leaving the field sites, analysing data and re-thinking ethical issues.

II. Ethnography of the State

a. “Bringing State Institutions Back In”

As discussed in Chapter 2, ethnographic studies of the state approach the state in its two senses: “state-system” (practices of the state) and “state-idea” (the perception of the state at the ideational level) (Abrams 1988: 79). In line with this distinction, “ethnography of the state” (Gupta 1995: 376) brings together how states function on a daily basis and how people perceive / construct / experience / reproduce the conception of the state in different spheres of everyday life (Alexander 2002; Navaro-Yashin 2002; Yoltar 2009; Lavanchy 2013). In this study, the emphasis on the “state-idea” (Abrams 1988: 79) is replaced by “nationness” (Brubaker 1994), as institutionalised and contested performances, representations, and events in museums. The state is neither a homogenous nor an abstract unity standing above or in opposition to a coherent unit of the people. Instead, the idea of the state and its conception of nationness are reproduced in everyday life through people’s encounters with local state institutions (Gupta 1995; Aretxaga 2003; Trouillot 2001).

Similarly, ethnographic studies of organisations (researching the organisational processes of social phenomenon such as religion, social groups, social movements, and occupations) (Ybema et.al. 2009) and institutional ethnographies (Smith 2005) focus on discourses and “ruling relations” (Devault 2006: 296) between institutions and subjects. Despite their emphasis on regulations, laws or / and the constitution, these studies oversee how different institutions compete for (state) power among each other and within themselves. These “ruling relations” (ibid.) are dynamic and powers endowed with (state) institutions may change over time, particularly at times of crises and transformation. Drawing on Mann’s “institutional statism” (1993: 88), it is important to situate overlapping and fluctuating sources of power that a particular state institution has at a given moment vis-à-vis other state institutions. This means unpacking the conceptual unity of the state in its routine bureaucracy and recognising power relationships within the state and among its different institutions. In view of this, I look at power relations and networks at two levels: inter-institutional (power relations *among* state institutions) and intra-institutional (power relations *within* state institutions).

By focusing on state museums, this study does not reify ‘the state’ as the sole hegemon in constructing nationness in museums. Instead, Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums are conceived as state institutions affiliated with competing institutions of the state: the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) as the arm of the neo-Islamist government and the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) acting as the guardian of secularism (See Chapter 4). Both museums function through routine bureaucracy and hierarchically organised processes of decision-making and implementation, all of which are negotiated by various state and non-state agencies (Bernstein 2011). This contestation does not merely take place through “iron cage[s]” (Weber 2001 [1930]: 123), confining bureaucrats in rationalised, de-personalised and routinized processes. Bureaucracy may also work as a “rubber cage” (Gellner 1987) through informal relations marked by “affect” (Navaro-Yashin 2006), “corruption” (Gupta 1995), and “indifference” (Herzfeld 1992). Therefore, I address different forms of bureaucracy, pointing out diverse forms of power struggles in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums.

Seen in this way, contestation in museums does not simply take place between the state - as the imposer of a particular ideology, history, or identity - and the people / visitors as groups making diverse claims over representations of the museum. The state museum, like any other museum or state institution, involves actual bureaucrats, who work within networks of formal and informal power relations. As discussed in Chapter 2, informants of this ethnographic fieldwork are not mere avatars of the state, who unproblematically internalise and repeat a coherent official ideology. On the contrary, they actively make and challenge decisions in bureaucracies to display “Turkishness”. Like “ethnography of museum practices” (Clifford 1997; Davison and Klinghardt 1997; Macdonald 2002), this study tackles “political pressures, institutional hierarchies and, [...] personal conflicts” (O’Hanlon 1993: 83 c.f. Clifford 1995: 103). Bringing together “institutional statism” (Mann 1993), institutional ethnographies, ethnographies of the state and museum practices, this research attends to the regulatory frameworks, bureaucratic hierarchies, and institutional power mechanisms that shape daily processes of exhibition-making. While “bring[ing] the state [and its institutions] back in” (Evans 1985), this study “provincialize[s]” (Chakrabarty 2000) the state by unpacking the multifaceted power relations within and among its institutions.

Scholarly literature dwells on the prevailing power-knowledge relationship between museums and visitors (Anderson 2006; Clifford 1997; Becker 1982; Bennet 1995; Luke 2002; Chakrabarty 2002; Thelen 2005) with little emphasis on the institutional power mechanisms and legal context in which museums operate (Gerstenblith 2006). They look at the reproduction of “hierarchies of knowledge” (Henning 2006: 302) between the “front” and “back”, Goffman’s (1956) regions, in different kinds of museums (Macdonald 2002). Bringing together institutional frameworks, museum practices and representations, I look at the dynamic processes of remembering, forgetting and negotiating “Turkishness.” These processes do not merely take place between the back and front stages of museums. Instead, as described in the previous chapter, they are framed by institutional and physical maps within a wider political

context, which influence diverse methods of collecting data on museum practices and representations.

b. Studying State Institutions in Turkey

Like any other institution, Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums do not function in a legal or political vacuum. Civil servants in both Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums, who constitute most of my informants, are bound by the Law on Civil Servants (1965). It outlines the general responsibilities of a civil servant, working in any state institution. Two sets of legal arrangements are significant for the purposes of this study. First, the law dictates a certain identity for civil servants appointed to permanent positions in state institutions. Civil servants are expected to be loyal to the principles of Atatürk, secularism, human rights, Turkish nationalism, and the existence of the Turkish state (Article 6). Until the enactment of “a package of democratic reforms” in 2013 (*The Telegraph* 08 October 2013), civil servants were not permitted to wear headscarves inside their workspaces and within state institutions. Removal of the ban on headscarves in the civil service was conceived as a threat to secularism and the Kemalist state legacy by columnists³⁴; yet, it did not alter the emphasis on the “strong state” (Heper 1985). Civil servants, by this law, are expected to “uphold the interests of the state on all occasions and in particular the independence and territorial integrity of the Turkish Republic” (Barchard 2008 [2002]: 41). Therefore, secondly, civil servants are required to be loyal to the secrecy and confidentiality of their offices. Article 15 clearly states that civil servants are not allowed to give interviews/speeches to media or any other individual external to the institution, without the special permission of their superiors. As the following sections will describe in detail, this caused uneasiness in carrying out interviews in both field sites.

Civil servants in Anıtkabir, like other civil servants affiliated with the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), Ministry of National Security and military museums, are duty-bound to the Law on Civil Servants. Soldiers, working as museum staff in Anıtkabir, have to abide by the militaristic superior-subordinate relationship as dictated by the TAF's

³⁴ See, for example, Yılmaz Özdil (2013) for his piece criticising the removal of the ban on headscarves in public offices.

Internal Services Law. The law also obliges personnel tied to the TAF from engaging in political activities. Article 43 specifies that soldiers and personnel affiliated with TAF cannot be a member of a political party, participate in a political meeting or give any political public announcement/speech. This article became particularly important after the amendments in 2013, de-militarising politics.

Although informants in both museums are tied to such regulations distancing them from expressing and practicing politics, they are not immune to the political fragmentation in Turkey. They work in an environment where “symbiotic antagonisms” (Kadioğlu and Keyman 2011) are reproduced through symbols and practices, marking the binary oppositions pertaining to secularism and Islamism. They also work with pro-government appointed officials and with the fear of being labelled or tagged for belonging to the Gülen movement, supporting the oppositionary Republican People’s Party (RPP), or being Alevi (Toprak et.al. 2009: 119-135). I was able to observe this fear in my formal and informal conversations with informants as well as in their daily interactions among themselves.

In this light, carrying out fieldwork in a state institution in Turkey may be daunting for researchers. Besides prolonged bureaucratic procedures in gaining access, some state institutions carry particular political significance, preventing researchers from carrying out research in state institutions (Navaro-Yashin 2006: 292). For instance, Akçalı (2010) in her article studying the role of Anıtkabir as a national landmark, reports that her request for detailed information on Anıtkabir was responded to by a lieutenant colonel. She was told to apply officially to the Turkish General Staff of TAF. She conceives this response as a form of “caution” taken by the Turkish army “as a result of the heavy denigration that both Atatürk and the Turkish army have recently been subject to, [...], within the context of political polarisation and transformation in the country” (Akçalı 2010: 13). However, before standing back from fieldwork, it is important to distinguish the contemporary political inferences of Anıtkabir from its enduring legal framework. As a military museum, requirements for conducting any research and photo shooting inside Anıtkabir are already designated in Article 69 of the Regulation on Executing Services in Anıtkabir, which

was enacted in 1982. Accordingly, any inquiry for research, including this study, has to pass the approval of the TAF.

Also, different kinds of state museums are subject to different regimes of accession. Until very recently, conducting any research in Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT)-affiliated state museums was bound to the permission of the General Directorate of Monuments and Museums under the MCT. In 2010, in line with the JDP's aim for a rapid and transparent bureaucracy (Undersecretariat of Public Order and Security: 2013: 50), this regulation was changed by the approval of the former Minister of Culture and Tourism, Ertuğrul Günay (Directive for Scientific Research in Museums 2010). One can now directly apply to the museum directorate for scientific research. As the following sections will describe in detail, I applied formally to the TAF for my fieldwork in Anıtkabir and directly to the Museum Directorate for my fieldwork in Topkapı Palace.

III. Conducting Ethnographic Fieldwork in State Museums

I carried out a dual-sited ethnographic fieldwork simultaneously in Anıtkabir and Topkapı Palace museums. Since Anıtkabir, the MCT and the TAF are located in Ankara and Topkapı Palace Museum is in İstanbul, I had to be “there...there and there!” (Hannerz 2003) in order to capture competing national days (See Chapter 6), museum events and exhibitions. This did not only mean frequent travel between Ankara - the capital of the secular Republic and Istanbul - the capital of the Ottoman Empire. In more practical terms, I had to think about the two museums simultaneously; formally apply for research to different authorities; avoid overlapping interview dates, events, and meetings; and manage common ethical problems in different ways in the two different settings.

In both museums, ethnographic research methods, semi-structured interviews and documental research were employed. Observation, recorded in fieldnotes, was important in (1) identifying changing themes, artefacts and organisations, (2) tracing the daily routines of civil servants and, (3) capturing informal power mechanisms. I supported this detailed textual contextualisation of fieldwork with visual documents.

Taking photographs from exhibition halls as well as outer spaces of the museums, I was able to record and remember events and temporary exhibitions visually. To understand exhibitionary practices, semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of museum staff, the MCT and the TAF, museum administrators, and non-state agencies, whose works were outsourced in the exhibition-making processes. A review of published materials (regulations, museum catalogues, websites, and books or articles written by members of the museum staff) relating to both museums was significant in detecting the changing museum practices and representations of “Turkishness”. These documents were also informative in getting acquainted with particular exhibitions for preparing interview questions for museum directors, experts, curators, and architects of a specific collection, and for identifying problems and issues raised by members of the museum staff.

These data sources common in any ethnographic inquiry (Lofland et.al. 2006) are attained through different negotiation processes in different settings. In the following sub-sections, I will outline how legal, practical and ethical issues pertaining to data collection methods played out differently in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums; how issues were tackled and the implications of these for understanding state institutions in Turkey. Research ethics are inscribed in every stage of this rite of passage (Abbott and Sapsford 2006: 293); thus, in each section I will address different ethical dilemmas that arose throughout the fieldwork.

a. Contested Data Collection Methods in Topkapı Palace Museum

From Access to Observation: Shifting Positionality of the Researcher and Negotiating Fieldwork Relations

Negotiating access for Topkapı Palace Museum started with my official application to the museum directorate. I wrote an official letter to the museum, introducing myself as a doctoral student in sociology at the University of Edinburgh and delineating what I intend to do throughout the fieldwork. The official permission letter, which I received as a response from the museum administration of Topkapı Palace, was the template given by the Directive for Scientific Research in Museums (2010). It states that I was allowed to carry out this research under the conditions

identified by the museum directorate. My access to various sources of data (photos, documents, interviews, and observation) had to be negotiated on a daily basis with the three deputy directors, who were the main gatekeepers throughout my fieldwork.

I further realised that the official permission letter only worked as a free entrance ticket to the museum. On my first (official) day in the field, I showed the letter to Ahu Hanım³⁵, the deputy director responsible for the management of the internal services in the museum. I told her that I would like to start my fieldwork and asked her help in arranging interviews with the museum staff. Not looking at my face, she consciously let the letter go from her hand to her desk and said “I do not understand anything from this letter. Write me another letter explaining your research and list some of the interview questions” (Fieldnotes 10 August 2012). As she requested, I brought another letter outlining my research in more detail and some interview questions. She put away the letter without looking at it and told me to start my research in the library (the new library; See Figure 8). Ahu Hanım did not share any information that would help me in identifying interviewees and there was no available organisational schema of the museum. My efforts to explain why I needed interviews were futile, as she was convinced that I could find everything in the library (Fieldnotes 6 August 2012). From the very beginning of my research, I saw how civil servants use their monopoly over certain information in maintaining their powers over the researcher as well as the museum staff (See Chapter 6).

As she suggested, I moved from the administration building to the other corner of the *Enderun* courtyard, where the library is situated (Figure 8). I was immediately welcomed by a glass of tea ordered by Suat, the librarian, who was later to become one of my key informants and friends in the museum. In this small library, besides the two librarians, there were two expert assistants using the library space as an office. As a researcher, also ‘officially’ approved by the museum director, I was granted a desk and I started my research by reviewing published material. The working space allocated to me inside the library provided a legitimate ground for my

³⁵ “Hanım” means Ms. and “Bey” means Mr. in Turkish. They are used to denote the respect relationship. See page 194 for how I use purposefully used (or not use) these titles to describe my relationship with my informants.

presence inside the museum and signified my point of access and position in the field. Sitting behind a desk in the library, I was able to review published material, and record my observations and informal conversations accurately in “mental” and “jotted notes” (Lofland et.al 2006: 109) as events unfolded. Furthermore, the small inner-garden of the library was a meeting place for the lower ranks of museum bureaucracy. Here, I was able to socialize and engage in informal conversations with expert assistants, regular civil servants, service and security personnel, who were physically and institutionally isolated from the museum administration. Gaining almost immediate acceptance in the library, I started my fieldwork ‘from below’ by participating in daily small-talk over coffee and tea to trace routines, informal groupings and power relationships in the museum.

The course of my fieldwork could have been easier and different, if I had not introduced myself as a doctoral student. My mother, Ümran Karahasan, worked in Topkapı Palace Museum during the 1980s-1990s as a renovator architect and she completed her PhD study (1999-2005) on the early-Republican architectural renovations in Topkapı Palace. In fact, she knows the older generation of museum experts, architects and some people of the museum administration. If I had introduced myself as the daughter of Ümran, I would have been able to start interviews directly with museum experts. However, that position would put distance between me and the expert assistants, and lower ranks of bureaucracy, who are at odds with the museum administration and experts, not only due the physical separation, official hierarchy and generation gap but also due to their stance within the “symbiotic antagonisms” (Kadioğlu and Keyman 2011) (See Chapters 3 and 6). As the daughter of a Kemalist-secularist, who has close ties with museum experts, I would have difficulty in gaining the trust of the younger generation. Also, experts and the museum administration might have thought that I was trying to infiltrate through nepotism. With the position of an unknown ‘outsider’, I was able to experience the museum’s relationship with a regular outsider and see how bureaucracy works as a tool of power mechanism in the museum.

There was a turning point, however, where I re-configured my position in the field. For a very long time I tried to convince Ceyda Hanım, the deputy director in charge of exhibitionary practices, to allow me access to annual reports of the museum. Most of the time she said she was busy, but one day she listened my request in her office. Right after politely denying my access, she started criticising my research and methodology. She showed me a book on her desk. I could see that it was my mother's PhD thesis. She told me: "Look, this is what I consider proper research. I know who wrote it". When I said that I was the daughter of the author, she did not hesitate to continue "Why did not you say so before? [...] But of course, you are not going to have access [to annual reports] just because you are Ümran's daughter. If you were the daughter of İbrahim Tatlıses (a popular Turkish arabesque singer), it would not change my decision" (Fieldnotes 04 October 2012). This gave me a hint of how "indifference" (Herzfeld 1992) in bureaucracy is a tool for maintaining power relationships.

After this incident, I started telling all my informants that my mother used to work here in Topkapı Palace Museum. Thus, my position in the field shifted from a "professional stranger" (Agar 1980), denoting a complete outsider, towards a researcher related to the museum. Since this revelation occurred after my informants started to know me as a regular researcher, it worked as cement in the building and maintaining of trust with the museum staff. For the younger generation, this meant that I distanced myself from my mother's networks with the museum administration. For the older generation, I was now someone they 'knew'. For both groups, this distinction signified that I did not pursue any act of nepotism. However, "gaining trust is not a one-time affair, but an ongoing process" (Carey et.al 2001: 332). Throughout the fieldwork, I was squeezed between these two groups. Even when I sat down with one group during a museum event, members of the other group were disturbed (See Chapter 6). In such a polarised environment, I tried to balance the time I spent with each group very carefully without taking sides (Lavanchy 2013: 684; Foster 2006: 77). I reminded them that I was a neutral outsider, not interested in their personal relationships.

It is not only the researcher, who performs such “impression management” (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Berreman 2007). Topkapı Palace as a state institution re-drew the boundaries of its “front” and “back” stages (Goffman 1956). As a ‘researcher’ I was never invited to official internal meetings for exhibition making or discussing administrative matters, although I was informally invited to museum events (exhibition openings, conferences, and concerts) by members of museum staff. Being included and excluded in different settings tightens “hierarchies of knowledge” (Henning 2006: 302) between the museum as a state institution and the ‘outsider’ researcher. Although I was recognized as a researcher, I was still in the position of a student seeking help. The museum’s higher ranks had a privileged position over me, as they held the monopoly of knowledge about the particular collections they are responsible of and their experience on the everyday functioning of the museum. This position was enhanced as they repeatedly delayed or did not show up on the agreed interview dates. Like the aforementioned two deputy directors, experts perpetuated this knowledge-power relationship in every occasion possible, where they criticised my research subject and methodology. Yet, as interviews started to take place, the same informants who positioned themselves above me started to treat me as an unbiased “expert”, “reporter” or “researcher”, who would publicise their problems with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) or the museum administration in the media or abroad (Fieldnotes 24 September -17 October 2012).

As I gained trust and acceptability, I started to go to the museum three or four days a week, including Tuesdays when the museum is closed to visitors. To observe the daily practices and routine tasks of the staff, I went to the museum at 9 am, participated in morning tea gatherings in the inner garden of the library, reviewed catalogues and books, engaged in informal conversations and had lunch with the expert assistants and librarians. Sometimes, I went to the administration building to get permission for photographing of every exhibition³⁶, to conduct interviews with museum experts (on pre-arranged dates), have tea and coffee with experts after our interviews, and leave at 17.00 together with the rest of the staff. Moreover, I spent

³⁶ I was allowed to take photos inside exhibition halls only on Tuesdays, when the museum was closed.

time in the museum complex to observe permanent and temporary exhibitions as well as museum events, and to talk with security personnel working in exhibition halls. Nevertheless, mostly I was in the library, not only because it was a convenient place to write my fieldnotes, but because there was no extra office spaces for me. Experts were mostly out of their offices, on the move between the administration building, their offices and the storage rooms or exhibition halls.

For the lower ranks of bureaucracy, I was as a hard-working student / researcher spending most of her time in the library. As they got used to my presence, they started to introduce me in “familiar terms” (Berreman 2007: 148). One day, as I was helping Suat, the librarian, in categorising unused and damaged books, he started calling me an “apprentice” (*çekirge*) (Fieldnotes 17 September 2012). My new identity as a *çekirge* of the museum was so internalised by the lower ranks that when I did not arrive at 9 am, they would jokingly scold me for being late. In this sense, I was in the position of a learner, though not identified as an outsider; rather seen as someone who shared their daily routine and problems. Still, I was an “observer as participant” without any “established role in the group” (Foster 2006: 73). Since I had been open about my research, my informants knew that they were being observed. My position inside the library worked to “minimize reactivity” (Ibid: 69) of my informants, whereby they could have altered their behaviour or opinions to portray a desired self-representation. However, reading inside the library, my gaze was not always directed to them. At the same time, I spent most of my time “hanging out” with them, which “builds trust, or **rappport**, and trust results in ordinary conversation and ordinary behaviour in your presence” (Bernard 2006: 368, original emphasis).

These “fieldwork identities” (Robben 2007: 63) of insider ‘apprentice’ and outsider ‘reporter’ “exist on a continuum” (Bolak 1996: 109) of knowledge-power relationships and negotiated on a daily basis. In this continuum, my gender was important in my access to different settings.³⁷ For instance, one space for informal gathering of men is the Friday Prayers. The practice of going to Friday prayers was

³⁷ See Gurney 1985; Bolak 1996; Ergun and Erdemir 2010 for a discussion on the role of gender in negotiating insider-outsider roles in ethnographic fieldwork

in fact an identity marker among the museum staff (See Chapter 5). As a woman, I did not attend the prayers, although I was able to compensate for this by listening to narrations of male informants, who regularly attended the Friday prayers. While being excluded from Friday Prayers, as a woman I could easily be involved in the sociabilities of museum experts and the administration, dominated by women civil servants.

From Observing to Asking Questions: Carrying out Unstructured Conversations and Semi-Structured Interviews

To understand the decision-making processes in the preparation of exhibitions (i.e. selection of themes, artefacts, and exhibit design) and museum events, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 27 informants, composed of civil servants (experts, expert assistants, security and service personnel) working in the museum; museum administration (director and deputy directors); experts who previously worked in Topkapı Palace Museum; non-state actors (private curators and architects) who worked in the renovation and exhibition making processes; and the deputy director of Cultural Heritage and Museums at the MCT.

In the initial phases of my fieldwork in Topkapı Palace Museum, I carried out “unstructured interviews” (Bernard 2006: 210) with expert assistants and librarians in a “naturalistic” (ibid.) style, for instance, as we had coffee or tea. These conversations were marked by “procedural reactivity” (Wilson and Sapsford 2006: 120), whereby informants were led by my questions. These were mainly explorative questions about their routine tasks, their relationships with other members and the overall organisational schema of the museum. However, to prevent ethical dilemmas of “covert” (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 53) research, I took notes as we spoke and reminded them that I would use certain information, without using their names, in my study.

These informal and unstructured conversations were important for two reasons. First, through our informal conversations with expert assistants, I got an idea of the museum’s institutional division of labour and identify possible interviewees without

the guidance of the deputy director, Ahu Hanım. In this way, I was able to approach museum experts on my own and organise interview dates. Second, these informal conversations acted as “pilot interviews” (Sampson 2004), where I figured out the kinds of questions and general themes I could pose during the semi-structured interviews. In line with these conversations, I structured interviews in a “flexible format” (ibid.), making it possible for the informant to lead the conversation, while limiting the interview within the pre-determined themes and subjects for research. For civil servants, the length of interviews did not exceed 60-90 minutes, since interviews took place inside the museum during the working or lunch hours. Both the length and the structure were more flexible with non-state actors, whom I could interview outside state offices. Nevertheless, all interviewees were asked questions under two broad themes on the daily functioning of the museum and its representations: (1) their experience working as a civil servant in Topkapı Palace Museum; (2) their ideas about the ways in which the Ottoman past is/should be represented in the museum. These overarching themes functioned as a “check list, a kind of inventory” (Lofland et al. 2006: 105), guiding my semi-structured interviews.

Since I selected my interviewees according to the responsibilities they have (had) for the museum, each was asked questions about her own tasks and experience. Key players of exhibition-making (experts and private architects, curators and museum administrators) were asked to “narrate the story of preparing an exhibition” (from the inception of the idea to the selection of artefacts and concepts, design of display cases and information boards). Experts were asked how specific exhibits or collections (under their curatorship or responsibility) related to “our” history. To capture points of disagreements and discussions in the making of the exhibitions, I asked further questions such as “what did you intend to do and what did you end up doing for the exhibition?”, “what kinds of problems did you face within this process” and, “how would you re-arrange this exhibition if you were given full responsibility with no budget cuts?”. I asked expert assistants, librarians and other civil servants of lower ranks to describe their daily routines in the museum, relationships with their superiors, (if any) positions in exhibition making processes, their ideas on current exhibitions and institutional position of the museum. Former members of Topkapı

Palace Museum were asked questions about how the museum has changed both in terms of what are exhibited and hidden, and how the museum as a state institution functioned during their time. The museum director and deputy directors were asked questions mainly about the mission and vision of the museum, their target audiences, future plans, problems they experience in their routine jobs and their overall experience working in Topkapı Palace Museum. The deputy director at the MCT was asked questions about the institutional relationship of the MCT with Topkapı Palace Museum, and its institutional position among other state museums in Turkey.

The flexible interview format was not welcomed by all informants. Some did not agree to an interview unless I provided them interview questions beforehand, while one insisted on answering my questions in written format. Some of them were also peculiar about having their voices recorded. These problems do not lead to the conclusion that informants fear that they cannot answer questions or they feel intimidated by the uncertain nature of interviews, as it may be the case in other qualitative research (Scheffel 2011: 57-58). Rather there were three factors in play here. First, all informants in the museum are bound to the Law on Civil Servants, prohibiting them to give any (political) statement about the museum. Second, they may have feared being labelled due to their political stances and their position within the polarisation among members of the museum staff. Third, it is important to remember that I started this fieldwork study right after the “throne scandal” (See Chapter 4), which resulted in a long investigation process led by the MCT. One informant, refusing to have his voice recorded in our interview, told me that the tape recorder reminded him of that investigation process, which “flayed [their] skin off” (Fieldnotes 22 October 2012).

Facing such challenges, I explained that I would ensure their anonymity³⁸ and secure the recorded conversation in my private computer and use it only for the purpose of the research. Although I was able to anonymise experts, assistants, and other civil servants, I reminded the museum director and deputy director at the MCT that it would be difficult for me to hide their identity due to their particular administrative

³⁸ See page 156-157 for a detailed discussion on ensuring anonymity of identifiable informants.

positions. Therefore, I ensured their informed consent for using their names in my study. I also reminded all my informants that I am following the British Sociological Association's (BSA) Statement of Ethical Practice and the Research Ethics Framework of the College of Humanities and Social Science, University of Edinburgh as guidelines for "avoidance of social and personal harm" (Abbott and Sapsford 2006: 293) of informants. When I was not permitted to use a voice recorder, I took meticulous notes. In fact, an informant suggested that I transcribe the interview word by word as he spoke (Fieldnotes 19 March 2013), once again signifying textuality that is embedded in the routine state bureaucracy.

Documental Research: Reviewing Published Materials, Recording Visual and Textual Data, and Writing Fieldnotes

As I was trying to arrange interviews, a lower rank civil servant working in the library, Seyfi Bey, criticised my attempt to talk to people. Like deputy directors and other experts, he questioned my research. He commented that I should not base my research on mere "gossip" (Fieldnotes 9 October 2012) attained through interviews and informal conversations. However, I was not really interested in the validity of information given through gossip. Instead, through gossip, I was able to trace informal groupings and power mechanisms that are in work in the daily functioning of both museums.³⁹ More significantly, he was questioning the reliability and the validity of my ethnographic data (Salamone 1979; LeCompte and Goetz 1982). To attain reliability, I tried to "minimize reactivity" (Foster 2006: 69) and contextualise interviews and observations by recording (visual and textual) data in detail in fieldnotes. For meeting threats to internal validity, i.e. misleading/wrong information given by respondents (Schensul et.al. 1999: 279), I used documentary research. I consistently cross-checked the information given by informants from other sources of data (Lofland et.al. 2006: 94; Sangasubana 2009: 572), such as museum catalogues, other informants (Berreman 2007: 155) as well as news media.

To confirm the information given by informants and to trace the changes that the museum went through, I reviewed the following material published since the

³⁹ See Van Vleet 2003; Besnier 2009 for discussions on gossip and ethnography.

museumification of the palace in 1924: photo archives of exhibition halls, museum guides / catalogues / handbooks / websites of Topkapı Palace; proceedings of museum conferences attended by members of museum staff and their articles / theses published in various journals, magazines and books. I recorded these documents systematically. In particular, I looked at and recorded their prefaces (written by the minister and / or the museum director), table of contents, photographs from exhibition halls and excerpts, which I found relevant. These were significant in tracing the changing representations and displays of the museum, while articles, conference proceedings and expert theses reflected the changing/enduring discussions around both the bureaucratic functioning and representations of the museum. Additionally, I reviewed press releases of museum events and exhibits to trace the transformation of the museum as a state institution and its changing representations of the Islamic Ottoman past.

To better grasp the change in representations of the Ottoman past, I wanted to see the shifting themes and titles of temporary exhibitions, renovation projects and museum events over the last twenty years. My aim was to identify reflections of the changing forms of Islamism and neo-Ottomanism in relation to Turkish nationalisms in Topkapı Palace Museum. I wanted to see whether there is a trend or a change in the themes, collections, and histories emphasised by the museum. However, the list I was given by the museum administration was far from complete. As noted, the museum already stopped keeping a record of its own history long ago, when it stopped publishing yearbooks. Therefore, instead, I requested access to annual reports, which are regularly sent to the MCT and would conventionally be considered as a public document, outlining the annual activities of the museum. In one of my endless attempts to access these reports, Ceyda Hanım, the deputy director, first showed me a huge file with the label “annual reports”; then closed the file, put her hand on top of it, and told me that these reports are considered as “internal correspondence” (Fieldnotes 04 October 2012). I subsequently realised that even public reports could easily become “private”, marking the multiple, inconsistent and blurred boundaries between the back and front regions of Topkapı Palace Museum. Similarly, I wanted to have a copy of the latest year book of the museum, published

in 2014 for the first time after 1992. As it was neither sold in bookstores, nor available in libraries at that time, I re-visited the field site to see the yearbook and Ceyda Hanım once again told me to apply formally with a letter. Since I did not have the time to wait, I borrowed the book from a museum employee and recorded the relevant parts. Yet, this incident showed that even when annual reports / activities of the museum were prepared for a wider audience in a year book, they were still kept apart from the public.

Instead of official annual reports or lists of temporary exhibits, I looked at alternative sources of data. I asked museum experts, who have been working in the museum for a long time, to recall the temporary exhibitions that had taken place. To cross-check these hints, I reviewed leading newspapers around the key words and approximate dates they provided. Considering that museum events may not have always been publicized, I asked the museum administration whether I could look at the exhibit and event posters, booklets and fliers, which were kept unarchived in a storage room. I was granted access under the supervision of a museum expert. Digging out this unarchived material, I took photos of every single exhibition poster, flier, and invitation letter available in the room. I was thus able to list all the temporary exhibitions that took place in Topkapı Palace Museum in the last 20 years. At the same time, I shared this list with the museum expert in charge and the museum administration, creating an opportunity for a “collaborative” and “reciprocal” (de Laine 2000: 27) relationship between myself and the museum.

b. Contested Data Collection Methods in Anıtkabir Museum

From Access to Observation: Finding a Position as a Mere Observer in the Field

Several weeks after my official application to the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), I was asked to provide all my interview questions. Indicating that interview questions may change over time, I sent a preliminary list of questions, without which I would not get any clearance. As I was waiting for a reply, I went to Anıtkabir to start initial observations in exhibition halls. On that day, I decided to introduce myself to the museum commander. When I entered the office, members of museum staff were

having a meeting in the museum commander office. I was warmly welcomed and one member greeted me by saying, “so, you are the famous Canan Neşe. We have been working on your questions.” (Fieldnotes 19 September 2012). At that moment, I understood that the TAF already sent my documents to the museum and in fact, they were preparing answers to my interview questions.⁴⁰

As in Topkapı Palace Museum, I was first led to the Anıtkabir Library, situated in the same complex as the museum commander office. However, this time, the study area in the library did not open a space to pursue a ‘bottom-up’ approach for my fieldwork. Unlike Topkapı Palace Museum, the library in Anıtkabir is not a place where members of the museum staff spent their time. There was one librarian and two or three soldiers (dressed in civilian clothes) assisting the librarian. I observed that this space was mainly used for the training of soldiers as museum guides; using computers for short-term internet-access; research / reading and; preparing / handing out Atatürk posters / museum handbooks for primary schools. For me, the Anıtkabir Library was one of the spots where I could spend most of my time for reviewing published material, writing up my field notes (in detail, as in Topkapı Palace Museum), and observing the training of new museum guides. Yet, devoid of the museum staff, the library is physically isolated from the museum complex (See Chapter 4 and Figure 10) and remote from everyday museum practices.

Thus, observing daily routines and informal power mechanisms was not as easy as it was in Topkapı Palace Museum. Offices allocated for museum experts and the civilian museum director are located literally in the “back stage” (Goffman 1956) of the museum, behind the panoramic paintings inside the third section of the museum (See Chapter 4). As a researcher, I could not simply walk into these offices. First, I had to get permission from the museum command, Lieutenant Kasım Mehmet Teke, the main gatekeeper throughout my fieldwork. Only after his permission, was I granted access to go to their offices under the supervision of a soldier. Within this setting, every visit had to have a certain reason and I had to be ‘taken’ to the office.

⁴⁰ The implications of pre-knowledge on interview questions will be discussed in the following sub-section.

Everydayness of the museum was accessible to me only inside the exhibition halls, as much as it is accessible to a regular visitor.

This supervision was not mere guidance provided by the museum administration. Articles 54 and 58 of the Regulation on Executing Services in Anıtkabir (1982) designates that visitors should be closely monitored by soldiers in civilian dress. As a researcher, I experienced this monitoring throughout my fieldwork in Anıtkabir. More than an observer, I was the one being observed. On a regular day in Anıtkabir, when I walked from the library to the museum, I could overhear from walkie-talkies sentences like “the researcher is going inside the museum” (Fieldnotes 20 March 2013). I had to be ‘supervised’ by an expert or a soldier at all times. This supervision meant that what I could (and could not) see and learn was already designated by the museum administration. The power-knowledge relationship that the museum had over me was not reproduced through mere bureaucracy, as was the case in Topkapı Palace Museum. Here, physical controlling over my actions and access to certain areas inside the museum was the key to managing the official impression of Anıtkabir.

Within this highly regulated environment, I remained as a “complete observer” (Junker 1960 quoted in Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 82), trying every day to find myself a position. Anıtkabir is not a place where a visitor could spend her time freely. As a monumental tomb and a museum it does not have too many recreational areas. For this reason, the long hours I spent in Anıtkabir became discernible and were detested by the museum administration. Although the permission letter I received covered nine months (August 2012-June 2013), from the very beginning of my fieldwork, “are not you already finished researching?” was a question I heard on a daily basis. I started to feel real pressure when different members of museum staff told me insistently that the Anıtkabir commander wanted to know the finishing time of my research (Fieldnotes 09 November 2012). This pressure along with being constantly monitored and isolated in the Anıtkabir library made me re-arrange the frequency of my visits to Anıtkabir. I decided to go to Anıtkabir in alternate weeks and on national days.

During these periods, as I was not admitted to any back stage, I spent a considerable amount of time on the front stage of the museum, taking notes and making observations in exhibition halls. Here, I followed routine guided museum tours to capture daily “performance” (Goffman 1956) of the museum by paying particular attention to guide’s posture, tone of voice and their relationship / distance with the audience. I seldom had the chance to talk with soldiers and expert assistants working on duty in exhibition halls. I asked questions about their observations on visitor behaviours, their feelings on working inside a monumental tomb, and their daily tasks and experiences inside the museum. In addition to regular days, I also participated in national day celebrations and commemorative events in Anıtkabir. I traced how secular Republican national days were “re-invented” (See Chapter 7) by the Anıtkabir Command through official ceremonies and temporary exhibitions as well as by ordinary people through their demonstrations in Anıtkabir.

Due to the restricted time and space for fieldwork in Anıtkabir, I was not able to establish “a rhythm, [...] a sense of familiarity” (Scheffel 2011: 63) with the museum staff. For them, I remained as “professional stranger” (Agar 1980), ‘the researcher’ to be (carefully) observed from a distance. One museum expert once asked me whether I would like to write an article on my observations as a researcher in Anıtkabir and have it published in the *Anıtkabir Journal*. Although this could have been an opportunity for collaboration and reciprocity with the museum, I did not want my name to be affiliated either with Anıtkabir (or Topkapı Palace Museum) at a time of great political polarisation in Turkey. I politely refused this offer, saying that I was busy. However, this suggestion indicates that I was also given credibility for having expertise (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 61) as a sociologist and they were curious about the outcome of my fieldwork. On the part of the museum administrators, there was a respectful, but a curious and suspicious stance towards me. It was expressed most clearly by a civil servant, who recurrently told me “I really do not understand what you are trying to find here” (Fieldnotes 19 September 2012, 7 December 2012). As in Topkapı Palace, I was open about my research to avoid any form of misunderstanding or ethical dilemma. On every occasion possible,

I openly stated that I am looking at how Anıtkabir and Topkapı Palace museums function daily to display a certain part of Turkish history and culture. Suspicion may have emerged from my focus on the two museums, as oppositional markers of conflicting pasts (Islamic Ottoman and secular Republican pasts).

At the same time, it is important not to over-read the symbolic significance of these two museums. Rather, one should keep in mind that Anıtkabir is a military museum, based on militaristic hierarchies and regulated by militaristic rules. Within this setting, I was never invited for lunch, coffee / tea breaks or for informal meetings inside or outside Anıtkabir. Informants refrained from engaging in conversation with me outside interviews and unless I posed them specific questions. Outside their inner-circle, I was not identified in “familiar terms” (Berreman 2007: 148), as was the case in Topkapı Palace Museum. Instead, members of the museum staff always addressed me in respect terms calling me “Ms. Neşe” (*Neşe Hanım*) and with the plural-formal “you” (*siz*) in Turkish. This respectful relationship between me as an outsider researcher and the museum staff reproduced the barrier against my access to informal sociabilities of the museum staff.

My identification as “*hanım*” also denotes my gender inside the museum. I conducted my fieldwork as a “female in a male-dominated setting” (Gurney 1985). While museum experts were pre-dominantly female civilians, the majority of museum staff were male soldiers. Within this setting, I was always treated very politely. Yet, there was a certain distance put by the soldiers working in Anıtkabir museum, which became visible in their avoidance in talking to me and to not to spend too much time in the same space with me. If a male researcher conducted this fieldwork, he might have been able to access the sociabilities of soldiers by “embracing commonalities” (Ergun and Erdemir 2010: 24) of being men in Turkey. In this way, he could have observed more closely the daily routines of soldiers in their relationships with members of museum staff as well as with visitors.

From (Semi)Structured Interviews to Asking Questions Beyond the Text

In the absence of proximity to informants in Anıtkabir, interviews constituted a significant data source to attain information about the functioning of the museum and exhibition making processes. As the museum is much smaller than Topkapı Palace Museum, there are a relatively limited number of interviewees, 12 informants composed of two groups: (1) a team of external cultural producers (state and non-state related art-supervisor, artists, architects, and historians), who worked in 2002 and 2005 re-organisations of the museum; and (2) the museum staff (the Anıtkabir museum commander and civilian museum director, museum experts, historians, librarian, civil servants responsible for maintenance and accountancy of Anıtkabir and soldiers, undertaking their military service as guides in Anıtkabir).

With these two groups, I conducted interviews shifting along a continuum from structured interviews to semi-structured ones. The first group of interviews were semi-structured ones and carried out with cultural producers who worked in the Anıtkabir re-organisation projects. Each interviewee was asked “retrospective questions” (Wilson and Sapsford 2006: 108) regarding the specific section, where she worked during the re-organisation of the museum. Interview questions were not fixed; rather they were led by two subjects: (1) the process of inception and realisation of Anıtkabir’s re-organisation and (2) the representations put on display. All were asked to narrate their own story of re-organising Anıtkabir museum. The art-supervisor, Burhan Bey, affiliated with the MCT and later with the TAF, was asked about the inception and realisation of the project. The architect, Çağrı Bey, whose work was outsourced for the re-organisation of the first section in the museum, was asked questions on the following issues: the selection of artefacts, their sequence in display cases, and his relationship with the TAF, the Anıtkabir Command and the museum staff. For the second section of the museum, questions about the production of panoramic paintings were directed to the Turkish lead painter. While narrating his experience in the project, I raised particular questions on how he drafted the paintings and how they turned out in the end. For the third section of the museum, where early Republican reforms were narrated, my interview with the curator-historian was centred on the processes of selection of themes and

artefacts, preparation of texts for information boards, and the challenges he faced throughout the process.

This first group of interviews yielded information about the negotiation processes involved in the re-making of Anıtkabir museum. Some interviewees in this group were retired civil servants who worked in different state institutions, while others were continuing to work as private artists. Detached from the state and from Anıtkabir, interviewees did not feel uncomfortable talking about the problems they faced with different state actors during the project. As I ensured their anonymity and privacy of our interviews with informed consent, all interviews in this group were voice-recorded, the shortest being around 50 minutes. By contrast to this open and flexible form of interviews, the second group of interviews in Anıtkabir was structured. Most interviewees refused to move beyond the questions that I provided during my official application for carrying out this research. These structured interviews mainly centred on questions of the institutional functioning of Anıtkabir, since respondents were not involved in the re-organisation project. In particular, members of the museum administration were asked questions about their experience in everyday management of the museum, Anıtkabir Command's aims and goals, its target audience, and its relationship with the TAF and other state institutions. Questions posed to experts revolved around the preparation of temporary exhibitions (the selection of photographs and archival material, preparation of information boards), their daily tasks and problems in the museum, and their ideas on Anıtkabir museum (how they perceive the museum and how it could have been). Experts working as guides were also asked questions on their observation of visitors and the relationship between visitors and Anıtkabir as a military museum.

Not only were the questions structured, so too answers, which were constructed prior to my fieldwork. Here, answers were precise and textual. When I wanted respondents to elaborate and draw on examples from their experiences, they either repeated their previous answers or paused with a smile on their faces. In this context, I constantly took notes during interviews as the usage of voice recorders was not possible. One respondent agreed for the interview only with the condition that he was going to take

the interview questions with him and bring his answers in written format the following day. Textuality was an important feature throughout all interviews (See Chapter 6) and during my observation of museum guides' performance in Anıtkabir (See Chapter 7). Interviewees gave different answers to my questions, but they repeated certain phrases; such as "Anıtkabir is the apple of Turkey's eye" and "our great leader Atatürk" (See Chapter 6). These are key phrases used in the museum's scenario and the *Anıtkabir* journal. Although they might have internalised the scenario of the museum well, this textuality highlights the "impression management" of the institution and its concern to be "presented in a favourable light" (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 51). Within this setting, I was a part of a Goffmanian (1956) "performance". I asked readily known questions and expected pre-written answers on the basis of the museum's scenario. In this way, both researcher and researched fulfilled their expected roles in the field site. Since these interviews as performances took place in their offices behind the walls of the museum, new "front" stages became apparent inside the "back stage" of the museum (MacCannel 1999 [1976]: 99) in their office spaces. Thus, through adherence to textuality and repetition of certain phrases, the museum established a knowledge-power relationship along with its control over my physical access for observation.

Although limited access and textual interviews were sometimes discouraging, they actually reveal Anıtkabir's institutional character as a military museum. Moreover, I did not simply "content [my]self with an official view" (Berreman 2007: 147) of Anıtkabir. After a certain point, I decided to shift my researcher identity. Without abandoning my expert position, I started to portray an "acceptable incompetence" (Lofland et.al. 2006: 69) to show that I needed to be "taught" (ibid.) how the museum functions. I used the questions which arose in the course of my fieldwork and which could have been posed in semi-structured interviews as excuses to approach museum experts and administrators. Rather than asking all questions at once, I posed my questions one at a time. I would first go to the museum commander with my notebook, get his permission to 'consult' a museum expert; and then, either go to the office of that expert or try to catch her inside exhibition halls to ask my question. Through these unplanned and short encounters, I was (sometimes) able to

move beyond textuality and spend more time with the museum staff. However, this did not mean I worked undercover. I always had a pen and notebook in my hand; and I always took notes as they spoke. I indicated that what they said were valuable for my study, while asking them whether it would be a problem if I used the information they provided in my study.

Documental Research: Reviewing Published Materials, Recording Data under Supervision and Writing Fieldnotes

These informalized conversations also strived to ensure reliability and to “minimize reactivity” (Foster 2006: 69) of informants by asking them unknown questions at unexpected times beyond the scope of their daily performance. As was the case in Topkapı Palace Museum, information I received both during interviews and in these quick encounters was validated with reference to published material on Anıtkabir, including the following: the *Anıtkabir Journal* (published since 2002 by the Anıtkabir Association), museum catalogues and handbooks, website of Anıtkabir, magazines and journals published by the Department of Military History and Strategic Study (MHSS) and the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), theses / articles and conference proceedings written by members of the museum staff. As in Topkapı Palace Museum, I systematically recorded these published material by looking at their prefaces, table of contents, photographs from exhibition halls and significant excerpts. Among these, the *Anıtkabir Journal* is published quarterly by the Anıtkabir Association, established to support Anıtkabir in terms of research and finance (Figure 6). This journal includes news and visuals about events and exhibitions as well as interviews and articles on Atatürk, the early Republican era, national days, and the history of Anıtkabir. In this journal, current events in Turkey are evaluated within the framework of these subject matters. It allowed me to trace how Turkey’s transformation shaped and was shaped by Anıtkabir. Along with this journal, museum catalogues / handbooks were significant in identifying the major changes that Anıtkabir museum and its displays have gone through since 1961, mainly with the 2002 and 2005 re-organisations.

Additionally, the museum administration provided me with three important data sources. Firstly, I was given a list of temporary exhibitions, which have been annually repeated in line with the national days and events. Secondly, the museum administration provided a copy of the museum's scenario, which constituted one of the main sources of data in my fieldwork in Anıtkabir. It can also be considered as a detailed museum guide, providing information from the architectural history and symbolism of Anıtkabir to the particular display units inside the museum. Inside this document, there are individual stories, written by Turgut Özakman (See Chapter 4) on the War of Independence under the sections describing the relevant paintings on display. These stories are further distinguished according to the expected audience. All museum staff are expected to know this text by heart, and museum guides perform it on a daily basis for visitors.

As in Topkapı Palace Museum, internal correspondence and annual reports, which could have offered a retrospective light on the museum, were not accessible. Instead, thirdly, I was allowed to see video tapes, recorded by the Anıtkabir Command, of the opening events and speeches in 2002 and 2005. I was only allowed to watch these on the museum's laptop and under the closer supervision of Hadise Hanım, a civil servant who was told to sit next to me. It is conceivable that the museum did not want the reproduction of these visuals, since it holds the monopoly over this archival material. While I was taking notes and watching the videos, Hadise Hanım continuously questioned me about what I had written down (Fieldnotes 25 April 2013).

Similar to my experience in Topkapı Palace Museum, I was able to write my fieldnotes in the library. As the library was seldom crowded, my presence did not disrupt anyone. This isolated place allowed me to write down my fieldnotes immediately and accurately without the controlling gaze of the museum staff. However, visual recording of fieldwork in Anıtkabir was harder. During my fieldwork, Anıtkabir museum was strict about taking photographs inside exhibition

halls.⁴¹ I was allowed to take photographs only right after or before the museum was closed and under the tight supervision of a museum expert, controlling what I could record or not.

IV. Leaving the Field, Analysing Data and Re-thinking Ethics

I left both field sites in mid-June 2013, not only because I felt that I had achieved “saturation” (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Starting with the May 1st protests in 2013 and the consequent Gezi Protests during the summer of 2013, the gap between secularists and Islamists widened. New fissures based on identity politics became more visible and aligned themselves either in support of or against Gezi. During the course of my fieldwork, I was never asked my political position, despite the unuttered perception that I was the daughter of a family of Kemalists and I did not practice Islam (in public). As people took to the streets, my informants started asking me whether I participated in the protests. During such conversations, it became evident to me that “revealing conflicting political preferences” (Ergun and Erdemir 2010: 24) drew informants away from me. Therefore, in June 2013 I ended my fieldwork in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums, while I retained good relationship with all my informants (Bernard 2006: 383-4).

Since data analysis in ethnographic research is an “iterative process” (Bernard 2006: 492), I started my analysis at the early stages of fieldwork. I wrote initial memos (fieldwork summaries) that brought together theoretical insights, recurring events and concepts, and empirical questions arising from the on-going fieldwork. At this stage of analysis, “symbiotic antagonisms” (Kadioğlu and Keyman 2011) between Kemalists-secularists and Islamists were so over-dominant that I found myself (re)creating “stereotypes” (Herzfeld 1992: 40) on the basis of the “typification” (Rabinow 2007 [1977]: 29) around the binary oppositions of Islamism and secularism. Especially in understanding informal groupings and informal power relations in Topkapı Palace Museum, I recognised that I labelled my informants around the taken-for-granted binary oppositional groups of Kemalist/secularist vis-à-

⁴¹ This policy was changed during the writing-up period of this study (2014).

vis Islamist/pro-JDP. Likewise, I took for granted the categorisations provided by Anıtkabir and Topkapı Palace museums. Instead of looking at the processes that make-up these categorisations, I developed preliminary analysis/hypothesis on the basis of overlapping themes of exhibits/collections/museum events in both museums. Inspired by Rabinow's (ibid.) reflections on his fieldwork, I stopped looking for recurring themes and already visible categories that confirm the taken-for-granted. I began to pay attention to structural elements and the negotiation processes, which reproduced and broke down binaries in the everyday setting of museums.

Hence, I started with "open coding" (Emerson et.al 2011[1995]: 175), which was later integrated with and shaped by a more focused approach. I traced patterns, and ruptures in issues, concepts, and practices arose from the field, while being informed by a multi-layered theoretical framework that draws on Mann's (1993) "institutional statism", Brubaker's (1996) "nationness", and "symbiotic antagonisms" (Kadioğlu and Keyman 2011) feeding Turkish nationalisms. In addition, in line with my understanding of ethnography of the state, data relating to each museum were coded in two (sometimes overlapping) sets of categories pertaining to: (1) the daily functioning of museums according to my own observations and on the basis of informants' narratives (e.g. bureaucracy of exhibition making, formal and informal decision-making processes, museum events, institutional hierarchies and informal power relations) and (2) representations of Republican and Ottoman pasts of "Turkishness" on the basis of museum displays and the narratives of informants. Here, terms used by participants (Atkinson and Hammersley 2007: 163), "observer-identified concepts" (Lofland et.al. 2006), and the institutional names given to exhibition halls or sections were used. Therefore, my data analysis was a "synthesis" (Wilson and Chaddha 2009: 282) of theory and empirical data. Overlapping themes from Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums speak to unity of the state and the enduring legacy of a Kemalist-secularist understanding of Turkish nationalism; while divergences underscore the competing claims and practices of different state institutions.

Although I aimed to unpack the readily given binaries and informant-identified concepts, there was still the danger of labelling informants, given ethical consideration regarding anonymity of identifiable informants. Pseudonyms and position tags such as “expert” or “assistant” are used instead of real names for regular museum employees. Throughout the fieldwork and the thesis, I refer(ed) to lower ranking and young civil servants with their first names to reflect on our close relationship, whereas I call(ed) administrators, experts, and civil servants of the older generation by adding the title, “*Hanım*” (Ms.) and “*Bey*” (Mr.), to denote the respectful distance between myself and these informants. I reminded informants working in identifiable contexts and positions that they may be easily recognised even if their names are changed. In such cases, I used gendered third personal singulars randomly to further hide their identities. However, when informants were no longer affiliated with the museum, they did not mind having their names used for this study. In the case of Anıtkabir, some informants insisted that I use their names. They felt that their names remained invisible in the project.⁴² One informant even told me that his name would be forgotten, if I did not mention it in my thesis. Respecting their requests, I used their names, only when I believed that there would be no “social and personal harm” (Abbott and Sapsford 2006: 293).

I used the true names of directors in both museums and the deputy director at the MCT with their informed consent, as it is not possible to hide their identity given their specific positions in the museum. Following the British Sociological Association’s (BSA) Statement of Ethical Practice and the Research Ethics Framework of the College of Humanities and Social Science, University of Edinburgh as guidelines, I received official permission from the relevant institutions and obtained oral informed consent for interviews. Besides, I consistently reminded all informants that “it can be difficult to disguise their identity without introducing an unacceptably large measure of distortion into the data” (BSA 2002). I further ensured confidentiality and privacy by keeping interview transcriptions on secure (encrypted) cloud computing services (such as Drop Box).

⁴² See Chapter 6 for the institutional exclusion of cultural producers in Anıtkabir.

V. Conclusion

This chapter outlines how theoretical inspirations for studying state institutions, the political context in Turkey and, the particular settings of Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums shape diverse methods utilised to answer my research questions. First, employing Mann's "institutional statism" (1993: 88), I approach Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums with a focus on their diverse sources of power. From this perspective, I bring state institutions back to the ethnographic studies of the state, looking at the daily and fragmented practices of the state and its representations of "Turkishness". My fieldwork experience in both field sites sheds light on the multiple and contested 'back' and 'front' stages of state museums, revealing the manifold power relations within the state. While the library in Topkapı Palace Museum was a place where I could start my fieldwork 'from below', the Anıtkabir library was a space of seclusion from the everyday museum practices. Thus, a library in different settings can accommodate distinct ethnographic experiences for the researcher.

Second, I pursue different methods of data collection, in line with diverse ways of negotiating access and re-formulation of fieldwork identity. In both settings, I had a thorny process of negotiating access for different data sources. My positionality shifted within each museum at different times of fieldwork in line with the different forms of power-knowledge relationships. In Topkapı Palace Museum, bureaucracy was used as a means to block my initial access as a researcher. In Anıtkabir museum, textuality and physical control over my access to different sections of the museum were means to hamper the extent to which I could gain information. In Topkapı Palace Museum, I was able to bypass bureaucracy by pursuing a 'bottom-up' approach, whereas in Anıtkabir I remained as an outsider, supervised closely by the museum administration.

These research methods were easier to employ in Topkapı Palace Museum compared to my experience in Anıtkabir. In Topkapı Palace Museum, I was able to identify informal power mechanisms better. In Anıtkabir, however, a more homogenous representation of the museum was staged, despite my attempts to move beyond the

official “impression management” (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). My shifting positionalities and these divergent ethnographic encounters in the two settings involved considering and managing ethical issues, common to all ethnographic studies, in different ways. These different fieldwork experiences were considered in data analysis, where I employed a synthesis of recurring informant-identified concepts and a multifaceted theoretical framework. As the following chapter will discuss, these ethnographic encounters shed light on the different institutional characteristics of Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums. They are regulated by the overarching post-1980 coup d’état legal framework, yet they function through diverse daily bureaucratic practices.



Chapter 6: Regulating the Competing Pasts of "Turkishness"

I. Introduction

Whenever I tried to understand how exhibitions are prepared in both Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums, I repeatedly encountered short and straightforward responses: "We organised the exhibition in line with the Internal Regulations for Museums" (Interview with Ceyda Hanım 18 February 2013); "as stated in the Law" (Interview with Selma Hanım 03 April 2013), and "on the order of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism [MCT]" (Interview with Sinem Hanım 02 May 2013) and the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) (Interview with Oya Eskici 7 December 2012)⁴³. These common answers pinpoint the "bureaucratic transcendentalism" (Heper 1985: 67), which upholds a predominant framework of laws, regulations, bureaucracy, inter-institutional and intra-institutional hierarchies. Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums are both state institutions subject to the same constitution and laws, which regulate their practices and the competing pasts they are exhibiting. Together, they are parts of the Turkish state as a "unified symbol of an actual disunity" (Abrams 1988: 479). This chapter is set out to unpack this unified legal framework, regulating Islamic Ottoman and secular Republican pasts of "Turkishness" in bureaucratic practices of Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums respectively.

Here, I investigate the question "how are the competing pasts of 'Turkish history' regulated and institutionalised to define 'Turkishness'?" in two main sections. The first section focuses on the enduring influence of the "state tradition" (Heper 1985) and the official Turkish History Thesis (Chapter 3). It develops the institutional framework provided in Chapter 4 and looks at the changing inter-institutional power sources of Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums. The second section attends to the ways in which this relatively stable legal framework works in daily museum bureaucracies. It investigates "bureaucratic encounters and [un]official transactions" (Brubaker 1996: 31), pursued to maintain and to challenge the strong state. It argues

⁴³ Ceyda Hanım is one of the deputy directors, and Selma Hanım and Sinem Hanım are museum experts in Topkapı Palace Museum. Oya Eskici is the civilian museum director in Anıtkabir.

that bureaucracy, as an “iron cage” (Weber 2001 [1930]) or a “rubber cage” (Gellner 1987), acts as a safeguard for the Kemalist historiography, as it was imagined by the 1980 coup d’état (See Chapter 3).

II. Rethinking the “Strong State Tradition” in the (Re)production of “Turkishness”

Despite the current shifting sands of official Turkish nationalism and institutionalisation of “Turkish Islamism” (Şen 2010), reproduction of “Turkishness” is still linked to the Republican “strong state tradition” (Heper 1985). The Turkish state maintains its legitimacy through its “infrastructural power” (Mann 1993) outlined by its functionally differentiated institutions, overarching laws and regulations. In maintaining its “ideological power” (Mann 2006), it organises and regulates the production of “Turkishness” and its competing pasts mainly through Law No 2863 on the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Property enacted in 1983 and related regulations binding Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums.

Law No 2863 stems from Article 63 of the 1982 Constitution, which designates that the Turkish state is responsible for ensuring the protection of all cultural, historical and natural heritages.⁴⁴ As a reflection of the strong state, the law provides an inclusive approach and regulates all cultural heritage regardless of ethnic and / or national origin under the Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums at the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT). As discussed in Chapter 3, the law states that immovable properties built until the end of the 19th century are within the framework of conservation (Article 6). Likewise, it encompasses movable cultural property from all periods of history. However, it specifies that the trade and exchange of coins pertaining to the period between Abdülmecid’s reign until Mehmet IV (the period of Imperial decadence between 1839 and 1922) are not subject to regulation (Article 23). Despite its all-embracing approach to conservation, this law - enacted after the 1980 coup - specifies the end of the 19th century as the

⁴⁴Article 63 states that “The State shall ensure the protection of the historical, cultural and natural assets and wealth, and shall take supportive and promotive measures towards that end” (Constitution of the Republic of Turkey 1982).

‘expiration date’ for conservation. It excludes immovable and movable artefacts built or made in the last 20 years of the Ottoman Empire (Güven Öztürk 2009: 247).

As Renan (1882) would argue, Law No 2863 forgets the fatal decadence of the Empire for the construction of the nation. Creating an exception, the law remembers the past related to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the National Struggle, which coincide with the same period after the end of the 19th century. Accordingly, it defines immovable and movable cultural property related to the formation of the Turkish Republic, Atatürk and the National Struggle as cultural property to be conserved and displayed by the TAF due to “their importance for national history” (Articles 6 and 23). In this sense, the law is a counterpart of the official Turkish History Thesis (Ersanlı 2002a), codifying “Turkishness” as an “institutionalised form” (Brubaker 1996:7) and claiming heritage on all forms of cultural property. More specifically, however, by making Atatürk and the early Republican era as exceptional signifiers of national history and excluding only the final years of the Ottoman Empire, the law manifests hints of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis of the 1980s (See Chapter 3). While enveloping all pasts, including the golden ages of the Ottoman Empire, it particularly breaks away from the Imperial decadence in the 19th century and replaces this period with Atatürk, the National Struggle and the formation of the modern Republic. Thus, the law regulates a “bottomless sack: any number of events can be put inside it” (Chakrabarty 2000: 73), and any “founding moment” (Çınar 2005: 145) can be excluded.

This rupture and the consequent exceptionality ascribed to the early Republican era signal a strict division of labour to collect, preserve, and exhibit cultural property pertaining to the diverse pasts of “Turkishness”. Here, the MCT is the only institution legally defined to preserve and promote Turkish culture along with all forms of cultural heritage (See Chapter 4). However, under the effects of the 1980 coup d’état, Law No 2863 designates the conservation and exhibition of “national history” (defined as the secular history of Atatürk and the National Struggle) to the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), the guardian of secularism. In this way, the law endows the MCT and the TAF with competing ideological sources of power, which

regulate the conservation and exhibition of contending pasts. As discussed in Chapter 4, while Topkapı Palace Museum, under the MCT, is historically and institutionally excluded from being a national palace, Anıtkabir stands as an exception under the command of the TAF as a military museum. From this perspective, Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums do not simply exhibit opposing pasts, but also are tied to contending state institutions.

This legal framework provides a stable “image of a coherent controlling organisation” (Migdal 2001: 16) by offering an all-inclusive understanding of cultural property and history. In other words, it lays out “infrastructural power” (Mann 1993) of the Turkish state. It regulates competing pasts of “Turkishness” through the MCT with its General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums, and the TAF as the guardian of “national history” (Law No 2863 Articles 6 and 23). Despite the TAF’s guardian role over “national history” (ibid.), Law No 2863 excludes the TAF from the control and purchase of the personal belongings of Atatürk and assigns the MCT, Ministry of Defence, and the Supreme Council of Atatürk, Culture, Language and History (Article 24). Thus, as an umbrella institution for the reproduction of “Turkishness”, the MCT’s ideological power overlaps and competes with the TAF.

a. (Un)Making Topkapı Palace a ‘National Museum’

Chapters 3 and 4 underscore how this institutional division of labour was challenged by the 2005 attempt to form ‘national museums’. While the regulation vaguely defined criteria for national museums, its implementation indicated that national museums had to be ‘best-seller’ museums tied to the MCT (See Chapter 3). Within this framework, Anıtkabir was institutionally ineligible as a national museum and Topkapı Palace Museum was among the three first pilot national museums. In other words, the new law overturned the institutional exclusion of Topkapı Palace Museum and institutional exceptionality of Anıtkabir by making an Ottoman palace a national museum and excluding Anıtkabir. In this sense, the new regulation acted as a “bottomless sack” (Chakrabarty 2000: 73), selectively defining what is national and what is not. On the one hand, enacted in 1983, Law No 2863 specifies Atatürk and

the National Struggle as “national history”. On the other hand, the new 2005 regulation institutionally bypasses this national history in favour of the Islamic Ottoman past, which can be found in the three pilot national museums (Topkapı Palace, Hagia Sophia and Konya Mevlana museums).

The implementation of this regulation ceased after the “throne scandal” (See Chapter 4), where Topkapı Palace Museum manager Yusuf Benli was appointed to the Konya Mevlana Museum in Central Anatolia. Shortly thereafter, İlber Ortaylı the museum president, being discontented with both Benli and the MCT, retired from his position (*Hürriyet Daily News* 9 July 2012). On the order of the MCT, Ahmet Haluk Dursun, former president of Hagia Sophia Museum, was transferred to Topkapı Palace Museum as the sole director (*Hürriyet* 17 July 2012). This replacement brought the implementation of national museums to a halt in Turkey. The symbolic significance of Topkapı Palace Museum remains under neo-Ottomanist fervour of the JDP government. However, institutionally speaking, after the failed attempt to transform it into a national museum, Topkapı Palace went back to its ‘normal’ position. Halim Bey, a former staff member of Topkapı Palace Museum and current civil servant in the MCT, narrated his view on the relationship between the MCT and the museum:

Museum administrations are not independent. I mean, right now, Topkapı Palace Museum is equal to the Kars Museum is equal to the Giresun Museum⁴⁵. I am not saying this to degrade [Anatolian museums]. Now, Topkapı Palace Museum is a museum with no status privileges. Both Kars and Topkapı Palace museums are regulated with the same legal arrangement (Interview 08 May 2013).

Also, although Topkapı Palace Museum is the most visited museum (tied to the MCT) in Turkey (See Chapter 8 for visitor numbers), its ticket revenues are gathered under the Central Directorate of Revolving Funds (CDRF), just like other state museums tied to the MCT. These incomes are equally distributed among MCT-affiliated state museums. Therefore, despite its symbolic significance, it occupies the same legal position and functions in line with the same Regulation on Internal Services of Museums (1990).

⁴⁵ Both Kars and Giresun are (relatively) smaller cities of Turkey located in the northeastern part of Anatolia.

Topkapı Palace's privileged position as a 'national museum' was unmade and equalised to other state museums tied to the MCT. However, effects of the dual administration system brought under the national museum regulation were still evident at the intra-institutional level. As mentioned in Chapter 4, civil servants grouped informally around the museum manager, Yusuf Benli, and the director, İlber Ortaylı. However, this polarisation was more than supporting or disapproving of Yusuf Benli for moving the historical throne to his lodge. Throughout my fieldwork I observed that these groups socialised in closed groups through generational, hierarchical and physical segregations. These groupings were formed around similar ranks in museum bureaucracy, polarised between an older generation of museum experts and deputy directors, and lower ranks of bureaucracy, composed of a younger generation of expert assistants. In this way, the effects of this dual administration and the scandal signal the breakdown of the coherent "strong state" embodied in the "established tradition of the civil service" (Heper 1985: 92).

Nevertheless, no one except one young expert assistant, Emre, openly acknowledged this polarisation. During one of many coffee breaks we had, he told me that members of museum staff were divided into two, particularly after the throne incident: "*Yusufçu*" (those who sided with the museum director Yusuf Benli) and "*İlberci*" (those who sided with the museum president İlber Ortaylı) (Fieldnotes 28 September 2012). As Emre also noted, this separation continued after both Benli and Ortaylı had been replaced by the new museum director Ahmet Haluk Dursun. These groups were not formed once and for all. Throughout my fieldwork in Topkapı Palace, I observed that the boundaries between the two groups were re-drawn on a daily basis. They utilised oppositional cultural markers and practices; and they had competing ideas on how the Ottoman past should be exhibited in the Palace.

On the one hand, the younger group, "*Yusufçu*", argued that the throne incident was a slander put on Benli, who they regard a pious man. This group is distinguished by their views on the institutional position of Topkapı Palace Museum and the exhibition of Ottoman heritage. They were mainly discontented with exhibitionary practices and I witnessed that, many times during coffee and tea breaks inside the

inner garden of the library, they discussed novel ways to revitalise Ottoman heritage in Topkapı Palace. However, detached from the exhibitionary practices of the museum, they were mostly speculating.

On a Tuesday afternoon, when the museum is closed for visitors, I watched the making of the television series, *Magnificent Century* [*Muhteşem Yüzyıl*] with the younger group of expert assistants in front of the Gate of Felicity (*Babüssade*). Looking at the actors dressed as the Sultan and his Janissaries, Hale, a young assistant suggested that men dressed in Janissary uniforms should be walking around the museum on regular days (Fieldnotes 02 October 2012). Agreeing with Hale, this young group's underlying idea was to provide visitors with the necessary tools to imagine the 'real' Ottoman palace. For this reason, they liked and aligned with the new museum director, Ahmet Haluk Dursun, who gave interviews on news media stating that he wants to "restore the soul of the palace" (*Today's Zaman* 10 March 2013). In fact, during a similar conversation, Seyfi Bey said that he wished that the new director Dursun would place huge sculptures of the Ottoman sultans in the museum. However, Nalan disagreed saying that "a statue does not suit here [...] It does not fit in with the spirit of this palace. But just because I think this way, I was labelled as bigoted [*bağnaz*]"⁴⁶ (Fieldnotes 17 April 2013).

This group is also distinguished on the basis of their views and practices of Islam. For men, going to Friday prayers is a common marker (Fieldnotes 5 March 2013). For women, the most visible cultural marker is the headscarf, although not everyone in this group used it. One common practice for women civil servants, who wore headscarves, was to use wigs or hats to cover their hair during office hours, due to the ban on the headscarf in public offices during the time of the fieldwork (See Chapter 5). In addition, this group is also distinct in terms of their substantial knowledge on religion and Islam. Sitting behind the desk in the library, I observed many informal conversations between Seyfi, Melih, and Nalan, discussing interpretations of prayers in Quran, and what *haram* / *helal* is (Fieldnotes 17 October

⁴⁶ There is a conventional idea that Sunni Islam is an "aniconic" religion, which prohibits visual representations of God and the Prophet Muhammad, although the Quran does not openly forbid this (Gruber 2015).

2012). They were also eager to share this knowledge with me, as they tried to teach me certain prayers that should be recited at particular times, for instance, of illness, stress, and happiness (Fieldnotes 21 September 2012).

On the other hand, *İlberci*, as defined by Emre, gathered around the higher ranks of bureaucracy, held by the same people for more than five years. This older generation manifests a constant expression of “nostalgia” (Özyürek 2006) for Atatürk inside Topkapı Palace Museum. Some of them wore Atatürk lapel pins and put Atatürk miniatures in their offices. On every occasion possible, they expressed their longing for Atatürk together with their discontent with the public visibility of Islam in the museum bureaucracy. During our conversation after an interview, Ülkü Hanım, a senior expert, commented on my research. She said that she was very pleased to hear that I was also studying Anıtkabir, and she started mourning: “My Atatürk, my Atatürk [...] my heart sinks [when I think about] the kinds of difficulties he had. I really love Atatürk very much [...] Now everywhere is full of *sıkmabaş* [literally translated as “tightly covered head” by Kalaycıoğlu (2005b: 233)]” (Fieldnotes 28 February 2013). During the museum event commemorating May 29th (the conquest of Istanbul), Türkan, another senior expert expressed similar concerns about the visibility of Islam. Right before the event began I was sitting next to an assistant, who just replaced her wig with her headscarf as the office hour was over. Türkan Hanım approached and sat next to me, on the other side, and asked me in the presence of this young assistant: “why are you sitting next to her? I am sitting here because I have to, not because I want to”. Disturbed by the comment, the assistant left politely to make a phone call, while Türkan Hanım continued grumbling that the MCT and the museum are also “invaded by those with almond moustache”⁴⁷ (Fieldnotes 29 May 2013). Both Ülkü and Türkan’s concerns pinpoint their (perceived) position squeezed between the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) and Topkapı Palace museum, which they see as ‘invaded’ by Islamists. In this context, these two groups avoided sitting next to each other in museum events

⁴⁷ In Turkey, moustache is a cultural marker for men, just like the veil, or Atatürk pin, or Turkish flag. There are three conventional types of moustache: nationalist moustache, Islamist almond shaped moustache; leftist moustache (here is a guide to moustache types in Turkey: <http://istanbulstranger.blogspot.com/2013/01/mustache.html>)

(Figure 21); they socialised in their closed groups during lunch and coffee hours; and they tried to interact with each other at a minimum level during office hours⁴⁸.



Figure 21: Visible segregation among museum staff (May 29th 2013)

The two groups are also distinguished by their approach to Topkapı Palace Museum. As described above, *Yusufçus* were more eager to revitalise the palace for its imperial past. However, for *İlbercis*, artefacts and the architectural structure of the palace were seen important due to their art historical value, rather than the Ottoman heritage they evoke. In each interview with museum experts, I asked questions about how

⁴⁸ The implications of this polarisation between *Yusufçu* and *İlberci* in the daily functioning of museum bureaucracy will be discussed in the following section.

they chose artefacts for exhibitions. I was given responses that highlight the significance of “unique” artefacts (in terms of art-historical value) and their “preservation” rather than their re-animation. Begüm Hanım, a museum expert, was very open, when I asked her whether she was planning to change her permanent exhibition: “I cannot risk my unique artefacts just because visitors want to see [more]” (Interview 17 October 2012). For the young assistant Hale, experts’ overemphasis on preservation and resistance to make changes stemmed from a generation gap. As we were having lunch outside the museum together with the library staff, she complained that “the museum has a rooted structure. It is almost impossible to undo this structure. As these people [experts] get older [...] they become more intolerant for alternative ways of thinking” (Fieldnotes 10 January 2013). The dilemma between preservation and exhibition may be visible in all museums (MacCannell 1999[1976]: 8). However, here, *İlberci*’s strong emphasis on preservation is an obstacle against the re-invention of the Ottoman palace through existing permanent exhibitions.

In Topkapı Palace Museum, which was (un)made as a national museum, “*İlberci*” and “*Yusufçu*”, as informant-identified concepts, can easily be replaced by “Kemalist-secularist” and “Islamist” respectively. Yet, at stake are not the names given to distinct groups. Instead, the practices and symbols utilised to draw group boundaries constitute “symbiotic antagonisms”, which “prepare the conditions for each other’s continuous reproduction or downfall” (Kadioğlu and Keyman 2011: xi). Accordingly, the emphasis in delineating two opposing informal groupings is not to identify two mutually exclusive and homogenous groups. There were individuals, who resisted taking any sides and were able to act beyond these binary oppositional groupings. There were also fractures within each group. Therefore, the aim here is to highlight negotiation processes, position takings or the manoeuvring between the two groups, which inform imagining diverse forms of “Turkishness”.

b. Anıtkabir: From Institutional Exceptionality to Institutional Exclusion

As a military museum, exceptionally institutionalised under the command of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), Anıtkabir has a strict structure, marked by a military chain of command. The Regulation on Executing Services in Anıtkabir (1982) states that the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT), Supreme Council of Conservation, Ministry of National Defence and Supreme Council for Atatürk, Culture, Language and History may intervene during the processes of renovation and re-organisation in Anıtkabir (Article 4). However, the command structure of the museum does not leave too much space for deliberation and negotiation. This was expressed by the civilian museum director, Oya Eskici, in our interview where she described her experience of the re-organisation project in 2002. She said “there was a situation that transcended us” (Interview 7 December 2012). She further explained that the project was decided and planned at the higher levels of military command by the Chief of the General Staff of the TAF, the art supervisor and other state agents temporarily appointed from the MCT, and outsourced private artists. Members of the museum staff, including the administration, were excluded from the project.

This transcendence also relates to the institutional re-organisation of Anıtkabir museum in 2002. The Law and Regulation on Executing Services in Anıtkabir (1982) lays out an institutional division of labour. Accordingly, besides the Anıtkabir Command, there is a sub-unit called the Directorate of Anıtkabir Museum, Library and Cultural Events, which used to be administered by a civil servant. With the extension of the museum, a museum command was appointed alongside the civilian director. This dual structure is far from being an administration of equals. In the words of Oya Eskici,

A museum command was appointed after the extension of the museum. The museum director became one of the many chiefs in the museum units. Here, the ultimate chief is the museum command. My task as a museum director is to be the chief of a unit. I am responsible for the management of the internal units in the museum (Interview 7 December 2012)

Her position was degraded under the overarching authority of the new museum command. Therefore, the militaristic exceptionality ascribed to Anıtkabir with the 1980 coup d'état was further militarised in 2002 with the re-organisation of Anıtkabir museum and the appointment of a superior museum command over the civilian museum director.

Within this setting, I did not (or was not able to) observe any informal groupings or any daily power struggles among the museum staff. The strict hierarchy inside the museum and inter-institutional hierarchy between the TAF and Anıtkabir overshadow the interplay of different individual actors, and promote the homogenous self-representation of Anıtkabir. In other words, inter-institutional hierarchy squeezes members of the museum staff in Anıtkabir and they tend to represent themselves not as individual staff members but rather as a homogenous institution. Each individual museum staff member, regardless of rank, becomes the embodiment of the institution. Although this homogenous group consists of civilians and soldiers of different ranks working as historians, guides, librarians, archivists, and service personnel, they are united with their constant use of “we” and an institutional language even in informal conversations.

In this sense, Anıtkabir forms its “choreography” (Kadioğlu and Keyman 2011: xi) not on the basis of its own internal dynamics but rather vis-à-vis outside actors. For instance, the civilian director Oya Eskici (1998) presented a paper in a museology seminar criticising the institutional exclusion of Anıtkabir from controlling the personal belongings of Atatürk. In the paper, she argues that Law No 2863 bypasses the TAF and Anıtkabir museum; and designates that these items can be purchased and sold under the control of the MCT, Supreme Council of Conservation, Ministry of National Defence and Supreme Council for Atatürk, Culture, Language and History (Article 24). In our interview, she said “we hear about auctions selling artefacts related to Atatürk, but we cannot intervene. To be honest, I do not think this [situation] will change, particularly during these days when value judgments [about Atatürk] are changing so much” (Interview 7 December 2012). Her words are informative for understanding both the enduring exclusivity of Anıtkabir, bestowed

by the 1980 coup d'état, and the changing faces of Kemalist nationalism. Although Law No 2863 has always excluded the TAF and Anıtkabir from the control of Atatürk's personal belongings, she believes that today this exclusion has different implications. Disqualified from being a 'national museum', Anıtkabir's institutional exceptionalism conferred by the coup d'état evolved into an institutional exclusion under the JDP government. In line with this transformation, the museum was further militarised, excluded, and homogenised. Thus, Anıtkabir museum has been able to retain its institutional fortresses in representing itself as a strict and consistent institution.

While extending "infrastructural power" (Mann 1993) of the state in regulating museums, the inception of 'national museums' augmented "collective power" (ibid.: 59) of civil servants, working in both museums. This collective power proliferated through the polarisation of *İlberci* and *Yusufçu*, in Topkapı Palace Museum as a visible site of contestation. It could be discerned through homogenisation of the staff in Anıtkabir museum, retreating into self-defence at a time of "changing value judgments" (Interview with Oya Eskici 7 December 2012).

III. Between the "Civil Servant Mentality" and the Anonymous "Servant of the State"

Within the framework of shifting institutional hierarchies, how is the "strong state tradition" (Heper 1985), expressed in adherence to bureaucracy, laws and regulations of the state? How is it reproduced or contested in daily museum practices? How do official and non-official "bureaucratic encounters" (Brubaker 1996: 31) work in the display of Islamic Ottoman and secular Republican pasts in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums respectively? In both museums, bureaucracy was a key phenomenon I had to deal with on a daily basis. It was evident everywhere from requesting a document or arranging an interview to the informal conversation over tea breaks (See Chapter 5). Regulations, routine written correspondences, and a strong unwillingness to go beyond appointed tasks marked everyday museum practices. While such procedures constrained transformation in both museums, bureaucracy was materialised differently, yielding diverse manifestations of an "iron

cage” (Weber 2001 [1930]). In this sense, through formal and informal power mechanisms embedded in museum bureaucracies, institutional hierarchies are maintained; and the established Kemalist understanding of “Turkishness” is re-institutionalised.

a. The “Civil Servant Mentality” in Topkapı Palace Museum

Museum practices in Topkapı Palace are primarily informed by the Regulation on Internal Services of Museums (1990), complemented by the (unsuccessful) regulation for national museums (2005-2012). As Topkapı Palace Museum returned to the previous regulation, it is currently administrated by a body consisting of a museum director and three deputies. In Topkapı Palace Museum, besides the administrative body, there are museum experts, expert assistants, researchers, librarians, restorators, architects, and other service personnel. In this setting, the administrative body makes decisions regarding exhibitions and restorations in the museum on the order of or in collaboration with the MCT. The division of labour inside the museum is further developed by the tradition of bestowing responsibility for each museum collection to one or two museum experts. In line with the regulation, these experts (mostly historians, art historians or archaeologists) are responsible for every single object in their particular collection, from the yearly counting of artefacts, to their restoration and to curating exhibitions. Therefore, the main actors of exhibition-making are composed of the administrative body, experts, and individual private actors⁴⁹, such as sponsors, architects, and cultural management companies outsourced for certain exhibitions.

Considering this institutional division of labour, the aforementioned boundaries between *Yusufçu* (the younger group of expert assistants) and *İlberci* (the older generation of experts) were in no way maintained on equal grounds. The latter group holds the monopoly over a collection inside the museum. During my fieldwork, expert assistants were preparing their expertise thesis to be submitted to the museum

⁴⁹ The effects of these private actors are also regulated through the “centralised de-centralisation” (Shoup et.al.2012) of the JDP government’s privatisation in the cultural sphere. Furthermore, as the following sections will discuss, these agencies are constrained by the patronage relationship, where they have to ‘please’ the customer, i.e. the museum administration and the MCT.

directorate and then to the MCT. However, they were pessimistic about their future careers. Working on his thesis inside the library, Emre told me: “They [experts / museum administration] do not let us near the *zimmel* [the collection entrusted for the responsibility of a museum expert] of a museum collection. *Zimmel* means everything here. If you do not have a *zimmel*, you are basically nothing” (Fieldnotes 24 September 2012). I observed that experts, holding the monopoly of access to a certain collection, refrained from sharing knowledge and training expert assistants. In this sense, already isolated physically and institutionally from exhibitionary practices, expert assistants did not see any prospect in Topkapı Palace Museum. In fact, during the course of my fieldwork, I witnessed that some assistants applied formally for their appointment to the MCT in Ankara.

Despite these fissures, members of the museum staff (regardless of rank and irrespective of being *Yusufçu* or *İlberci*) united in a “self-criticism or cynicism about the state administration” (Navaro-Yashin 2006: 284) and bureaucracy inside the museum. This attitude became apparent every time I explained my research subject: “I am looking at how the museum functions.” The immediate response I received from most of my informants from all ranks centred around comments and rhetorical questions, with ironic smiles on their faces. “Does it function?” (Fieldnotes 18 April 2013); “You came to the wrong museum. It does not function” (Fieldnotes 12 February 2013); and “Your task is tough. Good luck” (Fieldnotes 14 September 2012) were among the common replies given by informants. As Navaro-Yashin observes at Turkish Cypriot bureaucracy, these responses highlight a “peculiar mix of want and apathy as a spectrum of affects” (2006: 292).

Slowness and malfunctioning of bureaucracy inside this state museum was better conceptualised as the “civil servant mentality” [*memuriyet kafası / zihniyeti*] by informants. This concept arose mainly in two situations throughout the fieldwork: (1) in the self-definition of the civil servant and (2) in accusing, blaming, and othering co-workers. The first usage became visible when informants narrated their shared experiences of working under a state institution. For example, Burak Bey, a young expert temporarily appointed from the MCT, refused to take sides between *Yusufçu*

and *İlberci*. He narrated his approach to the informal quarrels among the museum staff: “We are all civil servants. We withdraw money from the same ATM” (Interview 26 January 2013). Here, Burak Bey conceives a shared “social esteem” (Weber 2006: 53) for all civil servants in Topkapı Palace Museum.

This self-definition became discernible where informants complained about being restricted as a civil servant. Mete, another young civil servant, described a situation, where he had to make a decision: “I am just a single *memur*, how should I know?” (Fieldnotes 18 February 2013). Mete’s reaction pinpoints the limits of civil servants’ actions. Their knowledge and practices are framed by the specialised tasks to which they are appointed (Weber 2006: 53). Informants complained that their hands are further tied by the extensive amount of bureaucratic workload. I was told on many occasions that writing correspondence for every single action and the yearly counting of artefacts were among the major tasks that withhold them from specialising or from bringing up a change for the museum. In my interview with Begüm Hanım, a museum expert, I realised that the bureaucratic workload was also an important element in maintaining institutional hierarchies. When I asked her a question about her daily tasks, she first told me her position inside the museum only in a sentence. Then, she went on “[as experts] we are also supposed to publish articles in refereed journals of universities. Please record this, because it is against the law. Despite the regulation, the Ministry of Culture is not pleased with our publications and it sets various barriers against us” (Interview 17 October 2012). Such barriers, she explained, consists of appointing more bureaucratic tasks on museum experts, which does not leave any time for preparing publications, specialisation and self-improvement. Given the informal groupings and the squeezed position of museum experts under the MCT, it becomes evident that bureaucracy is seen as a tool to inhibit the expert. In other words, bureaucracy is essentially a power mechanism, reproducing formal and informal hierarchies.

The catch-all term, “civil servant mentality”, took its shape in defining co-workers and describing the malfunctioning of the museum. This time it is not the structural restrictions imposed on individuals, but rather individual civil servants who are

perceived as the cause of problems in the museum. Accordingly, members of the museum staff blame each other for having the “civil servant mentality”. They accuse each other for not working (well enough), avoiding extra work, prolonging the course of bureaucracy, being narrow-minded and idle. Hale, a young expert assistant with an academic background summarised the concept well in her narration of the difficulties she faced in the museum. Once she requested a document for her research from a unit inside the museum; however, her request was delayed several times:

I think it is about the civil servant mentality [*memur kafası*] [...] In this museum, when it comes to gossip, everything flows in less than a minute. But when I ask something for my research, no one helps me. [...] They can spend the entire day talking about my purple shirt. You know how they like to gossip about everyone. They have nothing else to do here (Fieldnotes 3 December 2012).

The “civil servant mentality”, expressed in gossip and unwillingness to help, does not stem from laziness. Instead, it is interwoven with a power-knowledge relationship. Since experts are given responsibility of one collection of the palace, they also specialise on that collection, holding a monopoly of knowledge. They do not tend to share any information or documents regarding their collections with others, let alone train expert assistants. Likewise, expert assistants and other members of the museum staff are specialised in smaller tasks, which can be carried out by that single person. They are also known for prolonging requests, as visible in Hale’s situation. Hence, every civil servant holds, and *guards*, a certain monopoly over the knowledge on their particular collections or tasks.

Reluctance to share information is experienced on a daily basis by everyone, regardless of rank. This “bureaucratic secrecy” (Weber 2006: 64) is one of the mechanisms reproducing the boundaries between the informal groupings of *Yusuŕçu* and *İlberci* in Topkapı Palace Museum. An expert, who does not even want to sit next to an assistant, does not want to share knowledge with her. This became visible, when I realised that expert assistants, who attained their expertise during the course of my fieldwork, were not allocated to a museum collection. In this sense, the “civil servant mentality” does not only correspond to a Weberian reading of bureaucracy. Neither does it confirm “stereotypical expectations of bureaucratic unfairness that

offsets [...] sense of personal failure” (Herzfeld 1992: 4). On the contrary, it reflects on diversified forms of power-knowledge relationships, embedded in the bureaucratic concealment, (ir)rationaly organising and re-drawing the boundaries between formal and informal hierarchies in the museum.

As a researcher, I also experienced this “bureaucratic secrecy” (Weber 2006: 64), whenever I tried to understand why (and by whom) a decision on an exhibitionary project was made. I was dragged into dead-end answers such the one given by Ceyda Hanım, the deputy director: “We sat down together and made a decision” (Interview 18 February 2013). Whenever I asked further questions such as “what was the driving idea [...]” or “on what basis did you make this decision?”, I was given even shorter answers such as “it was the most appropriate way” (Fieldnotes 06 November 2012). Later, it became evident that these answers were not simply attempts to hide information from me. Rather, appropriateness is ensured in the light of a stable regulative and bureaucratic framework that draws the boundaries of exhibition-making in Topkapı Palace Museum. When I asked “how do administrative changes in the MCT as well as in the museum influence the exhibition making?”, Ceyda Hanım proudly answered:

Look, we are ruled by law, regulation, directives; in other words, the legislation. Persons can change. I might leave [this position]. Someone else might replace me. Some other person might leave. These are not important. In the end, there are law and legislation which we are subject to. We are managed accordingly. There is no personal situation (Interview 18 February 2013).

Ceyda Hanım’s words also shed light on a prevalent “state tradition” (Heper 1985), imbued by “bureaucratic transcendentalism” (ibid.: 67). Here, rules, regulations and bureaucracy constitute a means to resort to the changing power relations within the state; and in this context, neo-Ottomanist and neo-Islamist leaning of the JDP government.⁵⁰

The Regulation on the Internal Services of Museums (1990) outlines the stages of exhibition making. Accordingly, once the decision for an exhibition is made or

⁵⁰ See Chapter 8 for a detailed discussion on how cultural producers negotiate the orders of their superiors with reference to regulations and their specialised knowledge.

approved by the MCT, experts are given certain ‘concepts’ for which they have to select artefacts. At this point, they may bend, challenge and reproduce the given decisions; however, their creativity and the extent to which they can offer something new are further limited by Article 5 of this regulation. The article specifies that exhibitions should be prepared in “chronological order with a scientific approach.”

I was surprised by the extent to which museum staff in Topkapı Palace Museum, particularly experts and expert assistants, (un)consciously internalised this regulation. The idea of chronology is a driving mechanism for the modern museum, which uproots artefacts from their original contexts and categorises them in linear and scientific orders, producing rational and historical knowledge (Bennet 1995; Anderson 2006). In Topkapı Palace Museum, abiding by chronology is the realisation of Law No 2863’s selective re-appropriation of the past, which defined the decline of the Empire against the modern Republic. Regarding permanent exhibits in the museum, one can easily observe that artefacts are chronologically placed in display units, most of them starting from the 12th-13th century and ending with the 18th-19th century. This chronology is more evident in the exhibitions, which have not been re-organised for a long time. For instance, the exhibit “Sultan’s clothes”, which was re-organised in 1990, is a perfect example. It displays different types of palace clothing chronologically without giving any other information (Figure 22).



Figure 22: Sultan's Clothes is organised chronologically without any themes or information texts, other than the date tag.

In more recently renovated and thematically organised collections the emphasis on chronology remains. Whenever I asked how a particular exhibition was re-organised, the immediate and straightforward answer given by experts was “chronological”. Hakkı Bey, a museum expert, started his narration of the re-organisation of the Arms Collection by pointing out the spots where he could not keep up with the chronological order. Like a self-criticism, he said, “you cannot do everything perfect, because everything limits you. We wanted to follow a chronological sequence, but only the things [referring to the massive spears on display which cannot be easily moved] in the entrance restricted us” (Interview 16 January 2013) (Figure 23).



Figure 23: The spears interrupting the chronological display in the Arms Collection

Attaining a chronological display is a benchmark for museum experts in preparing exhibitions. He also highlighted that they chose themes chronologically. “Arms collection starts with the assault weapons. What is that? Archery, bows, and spears [...] and we continued” (ibid.). When sequenced next to each other, themes signify linearly unfolding Ottoman history. However, this linearity ends with little or no emphasis on the late 19th century collections of the museum, especially artefacts that were used after the sultans had relocated from Topkapı Palace to the Dolmabahçe Palace. Although each exhibit has one or two display units, exhibiting early 19th century artefacts, they are mostly gifts, jewellery, clocks, arms, and uniforms. Türkan Hanım noted that they have a rich (yet not exhibited) collection of late 19th century artefacts, such as Qurans, desks, and mirrors, depicting the palace’s daily life. She added that only recently, with the changing museum administration had this collection become more important (Fieldnotes 2 May 2013). In this sense, Topkapı

Palace Museum functions like an “archive”, simultaneously remembering and forgetting nationness in a “chronological and linear history” (Ahıska 2010: 30).

This selective remembrance also informs private cultural producers, who worked in the re-organisation of permanent displays. For example, a private cultural manager, Doğu, highlighted that the renovated exhibitions were “acts of patronage” (Interview 13 May 2013), oriented towards customer satisfaction, the customers being the MCT and the Topkapı Palace Museum administration. When I asked him how he designed the exhibition and what kinds of alternative exhibition styles his team thought of, his answer was:

Entering Topkapı Palace and acting against it[s mentality] is a little bit of fake anarchism. When we went there, we said okay. We are surrendering ourselves to the spirit of this palace. Let’s think how we can do this in its best form within its own context. [...] In any case, it is logical to comply with the mentality of the patronage (ibid.)

He added that he refrained from making radical interventions on visitors’ and administrators’ expectations. He said that both the MCT and the visitors want to see the golden age of the Empire, since “they do not want to witness the period starting from the 18th century, marking the decadence of the Empire” (ibid.). Submitting to the state and meeting ‘customer expectations’, they added specific sections for Mehmet II (the conqueror), Kanuni Sultan Süleyman and Beyazıt in the exhibit to emphasise the golden age of the Empire. Even non-state actors remain powerless and abide by the “civil servant mentality”, reproducing established ideas of the Ottoman past.

In this setting, it seems hard to make any substantive changes in the already existing representations of Ottoman heritage, categorised according to their art historical significance (See Chapter 4). This was also raised in my interview with Begüm Hanım, a relatively young museum expert. I asked how she would change the exhibit of her collection, if she was given the necessary powers. She said that “in order to make an alternative exhibition, it should not be a state museum. There cannot be any alternative exhibition here [...] Nothing changes here” (Interview 17 October 2012). Begüm Hanım’s response underlines the constraining effects of the state and its

bureaucracy. This restraint has a dual implication. On the one hand, it may act as a barrier set on the creativity of the expert-curator. On the other hand, it may be utilised as a mechanism to resist the orders of superiors. Nevertheless, a sense of stateness invades the exhibitionary processes, giving a template for imagining the Ottoman past.

Therefore, the “civil servant mentality” is both a self-definition, indicating restraint under the pressures of bureaucracy and a mechanism through which the status quo of formal and informal bureaucratic hierarchies are maintained. Impersonality and strong adherence to written legislation at the administrative and exhibition-making levels point out the ways in which the museum staff is tied to bureaucracy. As they are confined within the boundaries of regulations, the imprint of the “state tradition” (Heper 1985) is visible in exhibition-making. Their imaginations are occupied by an understanding of (selective) chronology – excluding the last 20 years of the Empire – which is conveyed in the regulation of museums and Law No 2863.

However, this “iron cage” (Weber 2001 [1930]) is not only marked by rationally organised regulations. Routines of bureaucracy are also indicated by contingency, unwillingness to work, constant gossip among co-workers, and refraining from sharing expertise knowledge. These practices, labelled as the “civil servant mentality” by informants, constitute a mechanism through which institutional hierarchies, informal groupings, and a sense of stateness are reproduced. They also speak for Gellner’s (1987) concept of the “rubber cage”, which indicates flexible and informal relationships among bureaucrats. Similar elasticity is found in these (in)formal practices, where civil servants bend the iron bars of bureaucracy for prolonging procedures and maintaining a monopoly over a task or collection. Thus, it is this “rubber cage” (ibid.) of the “civil servant mentality” that resists cold rationality, further specialisation, and change. Through this mentality, experts refrain from sharing information, and expert assistants tend to prolong the course of bureaucracy. In due course, they redraw the boundaries between informal groupings of *Yusufçu* and *İlberci*. Although it is possible to observe similar and ideal-typical “civil servant” behaviour in other state institutions in Turkey, this attitude has

different connotations for displaying the Ottoman past of “Turkishness”. Museum employees utilise bureaucracy for resisting challenges stemming from the other group. Thus, it is the (contested) comfort zone of the “civil servant mentality” that does not attempt to change the established Kemalist vision of the Ottoman Empire.

b. The “Servant of the State” in Anıtkabir

The “civil servant mentality” was absent in Anıtkabir. Contrary to my expectations, from the first day of my fieldwork I was ‘welcomed’ by an institution and bureaucracy, which responded to all of my requests (negatively or positively). The limits of this welcome were drawn by the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), which gave me official permission to conduct this study, and they were realised by the Anıtkabir Command, which responded my daily requests. This convivial approach drops the “civil” from “civil servant mentality”, while holding onto a Weberian iron cage of bureaucracy. As a military museum, there is a militaristic chain of command that rationally organises, routinizes, and homogenises the displays of Atatürk and the National Struggle.

To begin with, this organisation is informed by the Regulation on Military Museums (1984) and Law No 2425 on Executing Services in Anıtkabir (1981). The regulation on military museums is founded on the premise that they should enhance “the sentiments of Union and Cohesion in the Turkish Nation by exhibiting the effectiveness, heroicism and tasks of the army performed in world history” (Article 4). This article confirms military museums’ role in displaying the national (secular Republican) history, as decreed by Law No 2863. At the same time, it delineates the ways in which this national history can be displayed in military museums. Article 25 identifies that exhibits should be prepared in a “didactic” format. As with the chronological displays in Topkapı Palace Museum, providing a “didactic” exhibition is the backbone of exhibitionary practices in Anıtkabir museum.

Indeed, a pedagogical effort is evident in Anıtkabir museum’s re-organisation, which was outsourced from other state institutions and private non-state agencies. Ordering ‘didactic’ exhibits overruled other aesthetic motives. Burhan Bey, the chief organiser

of the re-organisation, described in our interview that the primary motive was to “let visitors know about Atatürk” (Interview 21 February 2013). Towards this goal, the entire museum is designed like a regular Turkish history school textbook. It starts with Atatürk’s parents, continues with his military school experience, develops through heroic depictions during the National Struggle, his stories constituting early Republican reforms and ends with his cult embodied in the tomb room. In this sense, Anıtkabir museum’s re-organisation was driven by the urge to provide a reference point, an “encyclopaedia” (Özyürek 2001), for the nation, which can be understood by anyone at any given time.

The pedagogic approach was apparent in two senses. Firstly, it was reflected on the overall emphasis on historical accuracy, i.e. *realism*, a key phrase used by informants. The second section of the museum displays panoramic paintings of the National Struggle. Although these paintings were produced by a group of 90 different Russian and Azerbaijani artists led by a Turkish lead painter, to the non-artist eye all paintings look alike. In line with Turgut Özakman’s scenario, paintings represent individualised and heroic stories of soldiers and peasants, while depicting Atatürk as the leading commander. Acting as the “visual narration of Turkishness” (Altan 2005: 558), these panoramic paintings in Anıtkabir were prepared with the motive of providing a sense of historical accuracy. Burhan Bey, the art supervisor outsourced from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) narrated that he took Russian and Azerbaijani artists to Çanakkale and Sakarya. He showed these foreign artists the “real spaces” of the National Struggle; examples of original clothing and weapons used during the wars; and provided photos of “typical” Turkish soldiers (*Mehmetçik*) (Interview 21 February 2013).

The emphasis on historical accuracy rendered these paintings as historical proofs of the National Struggle, which sometimes superseded pedagogical concerns. In all guided tours I attended, the guide drew attention to a particular painting titled “The atrocity [*mezalim*] in Anatolia” (Figure 24). The painting depicts a blunt representation of violence, expressed in an image of a harassed woman and blood. A subtext informs the visitors that it was Greeks who burned villages in Anatolia

during the occupation of the motherland. The interesting element of this particular painting was highlighted in each tour with almost the same sentences:

This painting depicts the atrocity during occupation. We did not order this painting. It was re-drawn in accordance with the three different paintings drawn by an Italian artist who witnessed the occupation (Figure 25). This painting is an integration of those three paintings. This is a reality (Fieldnotes 23 January 2013).

Therefore, a painting drawn by a foreign artist acts as an objective witness to and a guardian of historical accuracy of the shared pain (Renan 1882) during the National Struggle.



Figure 24: Painting titled “The Massacres Perpetrated in Anatolia during the Invasion Years”



Figure 25: The painting provided as a claim for historical accuracy

Here, there are stark similarities with Soviet realism that highlights the “social role of art [...] and content over form” (Altan 2005: 556). The artist remained unknown, while a realistic and didactic style is pursued at the expense of individual aesthetic concerns. They too were ordered as replicable paintings, marked by the imprint of historical accuracy rather than the individual artist’s signature (Clark 1997; Bown 1998: 18). Similarly, no signature is found in the paintings inside Anıtkabir museum, drawn and painted on the order of the TAF. This anonymity is broken in two instances, while the emphasis on realism is still evident. During a guided tour Fatma Hanım, a historian, showed me the single painting with a signature underneath. This gigantic painting, which illustrates Atatürk in his uniforms and on horseback, carries the main stylistic characteristics of the panoramic paintings inside the second section (Figure 26). It is marked by the signature of Sergey Prisekin, the Russian artist who coordinated the production of these panoramic paintings in Russia. Fatma Hanım showed his signature and commented: “His name is there, because the painting is his gift to Anıtkabir. Others are team works. Their names are not there, because they [paintings] were drawn for money” (Fieldnotes 23 January 2013).



Figure 26: The Atatürk painting by Sergey Prisekin

Later, in May 2013, I realised that a new painting with a signature was placed on display in the entrance hall of the second section of the museum, right before the panoramic paintings (Figure 27). It is a gift to Anıtkabir museum given by a Turkish artist named Sadık Kınıkoğlu. The painting displays “Mustafa Kemal and his aide Muzafer Kılıç, talk[ing] to the villagers carrying provisions to the Gölbaşı front before the Sakarya Pitch Battle, on March 6, 1921 in Ankara”, as the original English label next to the painting says. Next to the painting, another small label includes a photo together with the caption: “The painting was inspired by this photograph” (Figure 28). Looking at the photo and the painting, it is possible to see a direct replication of the photograph. In fact, the biography of the artist, placed right next to the painting, underlines that “he took the Turkish cultural values in his *hyperrealist*

paintings to transfer to next generations as a goal” (original English text; emphasis added) (Fieldnotes 20 May 2013). Those realist paintings, which were drawn on the order of the TAF, were rendered anonymous, whereas gifts were marked by the signature of the artists, their talents and the individual “hyperrealistic” style of the artist. As Fatma Hanım indicated, overall invisibility of the artist stemmed from the art patronage involved in the re-organisation of the museum.



Figure 27: Painting drawn by the “hyperrealist” Sadık Kınıkoğlu



Figure 28: A historical proof for the hyperrealist painting

Anonymity is also evident for other cultural producers, who took part in the re-organisation (art supervisor, art coordinator, architect, other curators and sculptors). Their names were not visible in any part of the museum; they were unknown even to most of the museum staff. Burhan Bey, one of the leading cultural producers in the project, told me that after finishing the project, the Turkish Armed Forces asked him if he wants his name seen somewhere in the museum. His response was “No, I do not want. This museum belongs to the nation” (Interview 21 February 2013). However Erkin Bey, a private cultural producer not related with the state, expressed his dislike of this anonymity on every possible occasion. One question I asked him triggered his sadness: “What kinds of feedback and comment did you receive after the opening of the exhibition in 2002?” His answer was telling:

If you see your name written on a piece of art, that’s a very different feeling. I tell everywhere that I did that place [Anıtkabir museum]. Many of my friends, who know me, go there and tell me that they did not see my name. That, of course, makes me very sad. [...] I did not get any comments. It was like, as if I was lost. I disappeared. There was something on newspapers published right after the opening. Thank God, my name was there in one or two newspapers. Otherwise, if I tell anyone I did this, I cannot prove it.

I mean, if I want to say that I contributed to this project, there is nothing else besides those newspaper scraps [...] They treat you like a contractor or something. [...] Let's say something will be done in the museum. They call you as the contractor. Do this! Bring that! [...] But art is not there. (Interview with Erkin Bey 23 April 2013)

In other words, the cultural producer is conceived as an invisible “contractor” to realise the expectations of the purchaser. This realisation results in the reproduction of the established Kemalist historiography. This was manifest in my interview with the architect, Çağrı Bey. He renovated and re-organised the first section of Anıtkabir museum, where Atatürk's personal belongings are displayed. I asked him how he selected and arranged the display of artefacts. He replied:

“That is complete logic. What does an Atatürk museum start with? It starts with his birth certificate. Who are the parents? Zübeyde Hanım and Ali Rıza Efendi. Okay. So, that was my point of departure. Then, what are his hobbies? He collected weapons, walking sticks. He collected swords. I moved on” (Interview 6 March 2013).

Through submission to a realistic and didactic “logic”, these anonymous cultural producers worked in the reproduction of an official and text-book narration of Atatürk's life.

Realism takes another form in the third section of the museum, where early Republican reforms and events are displayed through long informative texts, historical documents, and photographs collected from the archives of the Department of Military History and Strategic Study (MHSS) (Figure 29). In this section, there are vaulted exhibition rooms and in each room a subject relating to the early Republican era is explained.⁵¹ The curator of this section is Tamer Bey, a former high school history teacher, who was later appointed to the Ministry of National Education and

⁵¹ These subject titles are: Turkish Commanders in the War of Independence; Mudros Armistice, Occupation of the Country; National Forces; Congresses; Inauguration of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Uprisings; National Struggle in Çukurova, Antep, Maraş, Urfa and Thrace; Turkish Navy; Grand Victories; Mudanya Armistice and Lausanne Treaty; Political Revolutions; Reforms in Education, Language and History; Rearrangement of Social Life; Fine Arts, Press and Community Centres; National Security; Agriculture, Forestry, Industry and Commerce; Finance, Health, Sports and Tourism; Public Works and Transportation; Domestic and Foreign Political Events (1923-1938).

then to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. He noted that the third section was designed especially for school children so that they could take notes and prepare their “homework”. When I asked how he chose and allocated subject headings in each room, his answer clearly indicated the didactic approach in this exhibition: “We teach these subject titles in school in this sequence. These titles are the main titles under the history of Turkish Republic in text books” (Interview 23 May 2013). Indeed, in that particular section, I observed many times that school children took notes and their teachers asked them to read informative texts and document. Therefore, this archival section is a reflection of the MHSS’s “ideological power” (Mann 2006) to re-institutionalise the Kemalist historiography in Anıtkabir’s pedagogical exhibits.



Figure 29: One of the vaulted halls, titled “Congresses”

This section, with its long informative texts and over-abundance of archival documents, mirrors the second effect of the pedagogic drive, i.e. *textuality*. Textuality is visible both in exhibition halls and in daily routines of the museum staff. From the first day of my fieldwork in Anıtkabir, I encountered a loop of phrases, utilised by each informant on any given occasion, from the daily guided

tours to the informal conversations among the museum staff. Described in Chapter 4, “Anıtkabir is the apple of Turkey’s eyes”, “our great leader Atatürk”, and “Atatürk is now watching us through his symbolic gaze in Anıtkabir” were among such phrases used as adjectives to describe their routine tasks. For example, in one of the rare cases where I made small-talk with a civil servant called Devrim, I told him that I appreciate how hard they work. He took a sip from his tea, and told me very casually: “It is an honour to be able to work in Anıtkabir, the apple of Turkey’s eyes, the eternal resting place of our great leader Atatürk” (Fieldnotes 8 November 2012). In fact, these phrases were utilised in an ordinary way to speak about themselves, Anıtkabir, and Atatürk. In that sense, they also illustrate the banal reverence for Atatürk, pinpointing the mundane and simultaneous process of sacralisation and secularisation in Anıtkabir (See Chapter 8).

At the same time, guided tours were the perfect occasions to observe staged “performances” (Goffman 1956) of this textuality. During my fieldwork, I observed different soldiers and civilian museum staff providing guided tours at different times. Regardless of the person narrating, I heard the same story being told over and over again, without a section changing, being missed or added. Later I learned that all museum staff (from the museum director to the service personnel) are given a text, a “scenario” as museum experts called it, written by Turgut Özakman- the author of *Those Crazy Turks* (Fieldnotes 18 March 2013). This text is a narration on Anıtkabir’s architectural construction, symbolic meanings of each inscription and statue, description of artefacts, and heroic stories around panoramic paintings of the National Struggle and early Republican reforms. While everyone is expected to know the text, the real performance is carried out by soldiers. In the Anıtkabir Library, where I spent most of my time, I witnessed the training of soldiers as museum guides and how they memorised the text (Fieldnotes 19 September 2012). A junior civil servant, Fahriye Hanım, told me that museum staff (regardless of rank) are also given another text answering, “Frequently Asked Questions”, so that everyone in the museum gives a coherent and “true” version of Atatürk and the War of Independence (Fieldnotes 21 May 2013).

The double effect of this pedagogic drive, realism and textuality, creates replicable narrations and depictions of Atatürk, the National Struggle and the early Republican era. In this process, while subcontracted cultural producers remain invisible and anonymous for producing mirrors of ‘historical realities’, the museum staff is conceived as replicable actors staging a scenario. Within this setting, informants expressed their position as “serving” the state, despite their sadness for being invisible. In my interview with Fatma Hanım, the historian civil servant, I asked her about the training of museum guides, who are undertaking their compulsory military service in Anıtkabir. She explained that “there is a particular text. They study this text. They do not have a hard time learning it. After 2-3 weeks of adaptation period, they get used to it. In this way, they serve the country in the best way” (Interview 23 January 2013). Regardless of being a soldier or a civilian, most of the museum staff expressed that they “served” in Anıtkabir museum, rather than worked. This was particularly highlighted by Tamer Bey, one of the state-related curators. The day after our interview, he called me just to underline that he was “not paid any money. [He] worked as a state servant” (Fieldnotes 23 May 2013).

For this reason, members of museum staff and cultural producers involved in the re-making of Anıtkabir museum are not mere civil servants or private artists. Instead, they are “servants” of the state, invisible and anonymous, replicable and replaceable for the museum. They reproduced realist and textual displays of Atatürk and the National Struggle to meet the pedagogic urge of Anıtkabir as a military museum. In this way, they staged the established ideas on Atatürk that are taught in history text books and / or that are ‘logical’, i.e. the kind of “common sense ideas” about the secular Republic “‘we’ are assumed to possess” (Billig 1995: 13). These routine practices constitute Anıtkabir’s “iron cage” (Weber 2001 [1930]), a protective shield of Kemalist historiography and the cult of Atatürk at a time when Anıtkabir is not even considered as a ‘national museum’.

IV. Conclusion

This chapter explores the regulation, institutionalisation, and bureaucratisation of oppositional pasts of “Turkishness” in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums at two

levels. Firstly, it looks at the enduring and changing inter-institutional hierarchies. Re-thinking the Kemalist state tradition, I argue that Anıtkabir's institutional exceptionality, inscribed by the 1980 coup d'état, was reversed under the JDP government. Through a vague conceptualisation and institutionalisation of national museums, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) challenged the Turkish Armed Forces' (TAF) monopoly over national history, which was defined as secular Republican history by Law No 2863. Moreover, the new regulation re-imagined "Turkishness" as an "institutionalised form" (Brubaker 1996: 7) by re-integrating the Islamic Ottoman past as a part of the 'national', and institutionally excluding military museums as harbingers of secular Republican history. Topkapı Palace Museum stripped off from its institutional exclusion, now experienced by Anıtkabir museum. The inception of 'national museums' can be considered as an attempt to institutionalise neo-Ottomanism, marking a "neo-nationalism of greatness" (İnsel 2013).

Nevertheless, this transformation - by no means - indicates the disappearance of the strong Kemalist "state tradition" (Heper 1985) in exhibiting "Turkishness". Museums and cultural heritage in Turkey are still bound by the post-1980 legal framework. Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums are both regulated by frameworks that institutionalise *forgetting* of the imperial decadence and *remembering* of the secular Republican past. The imperial past is embraced through its art historical value displayed chronologically in Topkapı Palace Museum, while the secular Republican past is displayed with pedagogical concerns, expressed in realism and textuality in Anıtkabir museum. Here, both chronological and didactic exhibition styles affirm the established Kemalist historiography, disregarding the decline of the Empire (as the 'other' of the modern Republic) (See Chapter 3).

Secondly, this chapter explores how this strong state and its changing faces are experienced in daily museum bureaucracies. As "infrastructural power" (Mann 1993) of the strong state branch out, different power mechanisms within the state are brought to light (Schroeder 2006: 4). Civil servants' "collective power" (Mann 1993: 59) flourishes in diverse ways in the two museums. The picture obtained as a

conclusion indicates two forms of bureaucracy. These are marked by the “civil servant mentality” in Topkapı Palace Museum and the anonymous “servant of the state” in Anıtkabir museum. In Topkapı Palace Museum the “civil servant mentality”, as labelled by informants, is utilised as an instrument that perpetuates (in)formal institutional hierarchies and power-knowledge relationships between polarised groups of *Yusufçu* and *İlberci*. It is expressed through the mundane attitude of gossiping, putting off requests, avoiding (extra) work, and resisting change and sharing knowledge. This ‘warmer’ form of bureaucracy is still realised through the means of the “icy” (Gellner 1987: 164) “iron cage” (Weber 2001 [1930]). Refusing to move beyond given tasks and regulations inhibits any display beyond the established Kemalist understanding of the Ottoman past in Topkapı Palace. Strict textuality and didactic concerns constitute the bars of Anıtkabir’s “iron cage” (ibid.), which retains an institutional homogeneity. At a time when it is structurally omitted from being a national museum, informants in Anıtkabir identify themselves as anonymous and dispensable “servants of the state”, relentlessly staging a ‘scenario’ on secular Republican history.

I argue that bureaucracy in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums works as a mechanism to maintain and challenge power relations within the state. In the face of changing inter-institutional hierarchies, Topkapı Palace Museum is a contested site, while Anıtkabir increasingly withdraws itself behind a shield of homogenous institutional representation. In Topkapı Palace Museum, this contestation is pursued through the “rubber cage” (Gellner 1987) of bureaucracy and Anıtkabir museum retains its integrity with strong adherence to its “iron cage” (Weber 2001 [1930]). The mundane “civil servant mentality” (in Topkapı Palace Museum) and the “servant of the state” (in Anıtkabir) result in the reproduction of a common sense understanding of “Turkishness” as institutionalised by the post-1980 legal framework. However, as the next chapter will investigate, the competing pasts of “Turkishness” are re-invented beyond the mundane bureaucracies of both museums.

Chapter 7: (Re)Inventing the Competing Traditions

I. Introduction

“Turkishness” is re-institutionalised, as its competing pasts are displayed chronologically and didactically in the exhibition rooms of Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums. The “civil servant [of the state] mentality” works as impediments against radical change in the two museums. However, I was able to capture snapshots of inventing traditions outside exhibitionary practices in Topkapı Palace Museum and in routine guided tours in Anıtkabir museum. These formations were possible through “formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to [opposing] past[s], if only by imposing repetition” (Hobsbawm 1983: 4). Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums introduce and routinize spectacles (exhibition openings, conferences, national day celebrations, renovation of permanent sections, and guided tours), re-inventing the competing traditions related to Ottoman and Republican pasts. They reflect both “banal” (Billig 1995) and “ecstatic” (Skey 2006) / “spectacle” (Kaldor 2004: 176) forms of Turkish nationalisms. Since these events sometimes fall outside the regulatory frameworks of exhibition-making, different stakeholders can directly intervene; and hence, reverse the binaries of “Turkishness”. At this point, the chapter refrains from short-cut explanations ascribing Islamic “invented traditions” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) to Topkapı Palace Museum and secular ones to Anıtkabir. Instead, it asks: “How do binaries shift, converge or diverge in the re-invention of ‘Turkishness’?” In doing so, it examines “what is remembered and forgotten (and by whom) in both museums?”

The chapter is organised in two sections in line with the key features of the official Turkish History Thesis (Ersanlı 2002a; See Chapter 3): (1) Central Asian and Anatolian roots of “Turkishness”, and (2) the binaries of culture / civilisation; Islam / secularism. The first section unpacks how Central Asian and Anatolian roots are re-appropriated by different state actors, while the second section looks at the overturning binaries of culture and civilisation as well as Islam and secularism. In this chapter, I highlight the selective forms of remembering and forgetting these roots and binaries in the re-invention of competing traditions pertaining to “Turkishness”

II. Reviving Different Roots of “Turkishness”

Throughout my fieldwork, whenever I introduced my research topic, informants looked at me in bewilderment and suspicion, trying to understand how “Turkishness” could be related to Topkapı Palace or Anıtkabir museum. An informant in Topkapı Palace Museum told me that “Turkish culture is in Anatolia” (Fieldnotes 17 October 2012). Another in Anıtkabir insisted that I study the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations (a museum which displays archaeological and ethnographic artefacts mainly from Anatolia) instead (Fieldnotes 19 September 2012). While informants’ primary reference for “Turkishness” was Anatolia, they also immediately linked Anatolia to Central Asian Turkic roots. Turam, in her ethnographic study of the Gülen movement, argues that Islamic nationalism “cooperates” (2007: 13) with the secular state in drawing on the Central Asian roots of “Turkishness”. As the Kemalist-secularist legacy is increasingly disassociated from the Turkish state, this “cooperation” (ibid.) also highlights the careful remembering and forgetting of different pasts. From this perspective, in both museums, my informants’ reactions speak to the selective appropriation of different roots of “Turkishness”, namely Central Asia and Anatolia.

a. Longing for Anatolia and Re-animating Central Asia in Topkapı Palace Museum

As described in Chapter 4, Topkapı Palace Museum does not have an overarching narrative enabling visitors to imagine a geo-political map of the Ottoman Empire. It also does not offer a lineage of Sultans for visitors to have a sense of Ottoman heritage. Within the vague boundaries of museum’s narrative, there are various claims over different roots of “Turkishness”, which are (re)linked to the Ottoman past.

On the part of the older generation of museum experts, for those who are *İlbercis*⁵², there is an implicit nostalgia for *remembering* the distant past in Anatolia. When I

⁵² *İlbercis*, as an informant-identified concept, refers to the older generation of museum experts and deputy directors, who distinguish themselves from the MCT and expert assistants on the basis of a

asked experts about their previous experiences and earlier exhibitions they worked in, all of them referred to the same temporary exhibition: “Anatolian Civilisations: Seljuk-Ottoman” (Figure 30). The exhibition took place in 1983 as a part of the European Commission’s 15th European Art Exhibition. It was followed by other temporary exhibitions on Anatolia, such as “Art of Glass in Anatolia” (1988) and “Women in Anatolia throughout the Ages” (1994) (Figure 31) in Topkapı Palace Museum.

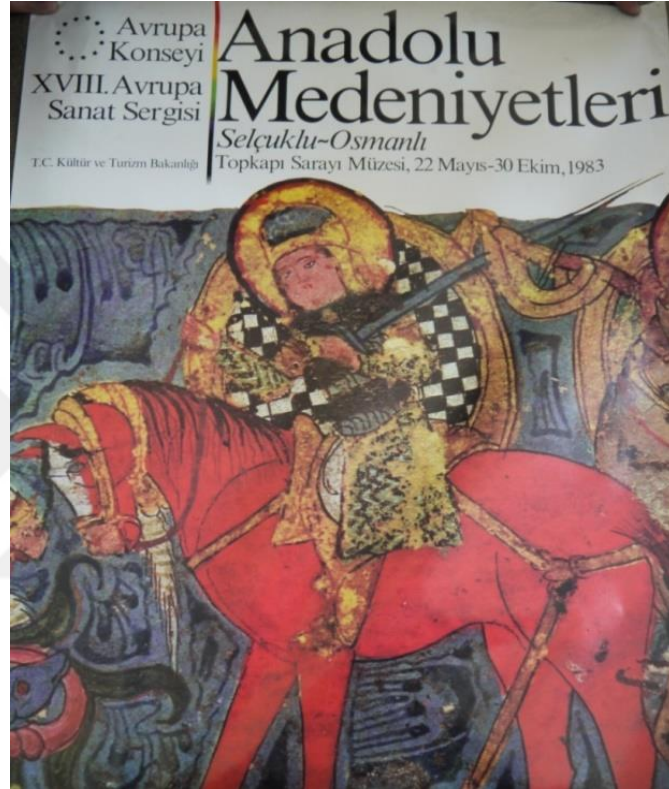


Figure 30: Exhibition poster for “Anatolian Civilizations: Seljuk-Ottoman” (1983)

generation gap, institutional hierarchies, physical segregation, and their nostalgia for Atatürk (See Chapter 6).

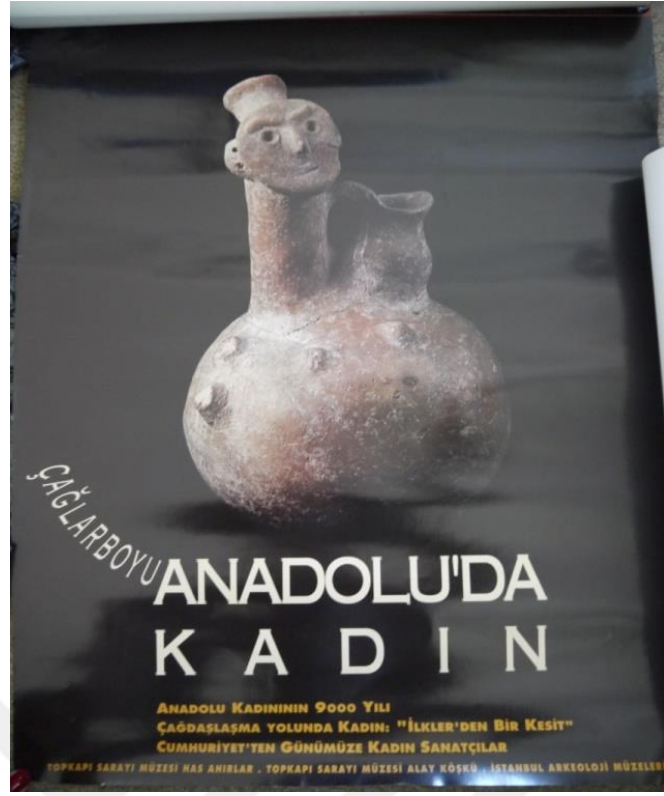


Figure 31: Exhibition poster for “Women in Anatolia throughout the Ages”

Some informants, who mentioned these exhibitions, were not even working in the museum when the exhibitions took place. In fact, only a few informants talked about the contents of these exhibitions. While the first display, “Anatolian Civilisations”, refers to Muslim Anatolia, the latter goes back to pre-Islamic Anatolia. Together, these exhibits reflect the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis (See Chapter 3) of the 1980 coup d’état period, i.e. the state-sponsored re-integration of Islam into “Turkishness”. It enhances the understanding that Anatolia is ‘the cradle of civilisations’, situating the Seljuk and Ottomans as only among the many great civilisations, which existed in Anatolia (Deren 2002).

My informants did not distinguish between pre-Islamic and Islamic Anatolian pasts. Instead, their narrations revealed a longing for the lost period, when Topkapı Palace Museum was also a location for remembering the Anatolian past of “Turkishness”. Ülkü Hanım, the expert who had been working in the museum for more than 30 years, said:

“This exhibition [Anatolian Civilisations: Seljuk and Ottoman] was prepared on the order of Kenan Evren [the retired military chief who led the 1980 coup d’état and later became the 7th president of Turkey in 1982]. I really despise him personally, he took away the lives of many young people, yet he actually did something good with this exhibition. The exhibition took place in 1983. He spent lots of money and provided all the opportunities [for the museum staff ...] The exhibition [Women in Anatolia Throughout the Ages] and its reception were also splendid. They exhibited everything from the Kingdom of Commagene in Ağrı to Byzantine. In the reception they placed tables adorned with tulles and classical music was played live. You know, they were serving wine at receptions in those days. They even gave replicas of Anatolian goddesses filled with Anatolian wine. But now is it even possible?” (Interview 28 February 2013).

Firstly, Ülkü Hanım recalls the practices of remembering and displaying an image of Anatolia that encompasses world civilisations. Moreover, her vivid description of the exhibition reception is a reflection of the change that the museum has undergone in the last 30 years. For example, in line with public discontent over serving alcohol in Topkapı Palace (*Radikal* 12 July 2009), alcohol was banned in museum receptions, museum cafes and the museum restaurant by the Tobacco and Alcohol Market Regulatory Authority in 2010 (Article 6). In a context like Turkey, where social practices such as drinking alcohol is associated with secularism-Kemalism (White 2013: 120), banning alcohol reversed ‘secular’ practices for the museum staff. Therefore, Ülkü Hanım’s narration is an expression of her “nostalgia for the modern” (Özyürek 2006). This nostalgia was re-enacted in experts’ repeated narrations of their memories from earlier Anatolian exhibitions in the museum and in their daily – yet sometimes unnoticed – wearing of Atatürk lapel pins.

Secondly, for experts, Anatolia signifies an essential reference point for conceiving the Ottoman past in Topkapı Palace Museum. Although these experts, as historians and art historians, are well aware of the fact that the Empire’s boundaries exceeded Anatolia, their imagination of the Empire in relation to “Turkishness” is delimited by the political boundaries of the modern Turkish Republic in Anatolia. A young expert, Kerem Bey was convinced that “[one] cannot find Turkish or Ottoman culture here. The treasury section consists of stuff coming from abroad. Sacred relics are not even

ours. Most of the weapons in the Arms Collection were gifts or acquired during wars, conquests. We have only sultans' robes" (Fieldnotes 12 February 2013). By equating the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire with the Turkish Republic, the imperial character of the Ottoman past is sidestepped. Therefore, besides its significance for being a symbol of secularism, Anatolia also refers to the territorial imagination of the sovereign nation (Anderson 2006: 6-7).

Looking chronologically at the temporary exhibitions in Topkapı Palace Museum, it is possible to trace that the emphasis on Anatolia was dropped radically after 1998. With the new museum director Ahmet Haluk Dursun's administration, emphasis on Anatolia was replaced by invented Ottoman traditions, which are represented as primordially linked to Central Asia. When I asked Dursun about his most urgent project for the museum, he stated that one of his primary aims was to "re-animate the traditional Turkish palace garden" (Interview 4 December 2012). Elucidating this garden project, he was very excited and he thought every detail in advance:

As the visitor walks from the first courtyard to the fourth, she will pass through an area full of 100.000 hyacinths. In some areas, there will be only tulip flowers. We chose two main colours [for the flowers]: purple and red. You know, purple and blue are colours of Turkishness. The word "turquoise" in Central Asia stems from this. Red symbolises power and the red carpet stems from this symbol (ibid.).

Through the colours of flowers, power (symbolised in red), and "Turkishness" of the Empire, embedded in Central Asia (symbolised in purple and blue), were to be presented (Figure 32). Despite this delicate planning, visitors were not presented any explanation regarding the type or the meaning of these flowers, when the project was realised at the end of March 2013 (Figures 33-34). Instead, the project was announced through Topkapı Palace Museum's website, emphasizing that "there are not just artefacts, but also the beauty of gardens of Turkish culture exhibited in Topkapı Palace Museum" (original English text; Topkapı Palace Museum 2013c). This practice of reviving the palace garden through plantation of flowers symbolising ethnic "Turkishness" was repeated the following year in 2014 around the same season.



Figure 32: Purple hyacinths and red tulip flowers in the first courtyard of the palace



Figure 33: Turquoise and purple hyacinths in the fourth courtyard



Figure 34: Turquoise hyacinths in the fourth courtyard

Central Asian roots were both implicitly planted in the palace garden and re-animated before the audience. One such re-animation took place on April 17th, 2013, with the title “Palace Festivals at Enderun Courtyard: Horse, Arrow and Hawk: From Steppes to the Palace” (Topkapı Palace 2013d) (Figures 35-37). Horses were brought and there were men dressed in Cavalrymen uniforms, practicing archery on horseback in the fourth courtyard. The real show started with the opening speeches of the museum director, Haluk Dursun, and – the special guest – Mustafa İsen, who was then the secretary-general of Presidency of the Turkish Republic (Fieldnotes 17 April 2013). Dursun explained in his opening speech that the event was going to be a re-enactment of the palace tradition, whereby the Sultan would watch his soldiers practicing archery on horseback in this courtyard. He added;

This tradition is taking place *for the first time after 200 years* [...] Through such events, we want Topkapı Palace to be a living, hosting, and serving museum. We do not want people to leave the museum after having seen only the treasury. Instead, we want them to appreciate and perceive its space. We want them to see the works of these *cultural potential and civilisation*, which stem from the *steppes* and spread over to Vienna. One of these is horses and the culture of horses (my translation and emphases; Dursun 2013a).

As the following section will discuss in more detail, in all museum events, Dursun utilised the phrase “for the first time after 200 years” (ibid.). His emphasis signifies a double move. First, by claiming to revive the palace and its traditions, it reverses the museumification of the palace (See Chapter 4) under the modern Turkish Republic. More significantly, second, it re-asserts an ethnic continuity by describing this tradition as originated in the “steppes” of Central Asia and spread over Vienna. In this way, reconciliation of the West / East binary is not realised through an imagined homeland of Muslim Anatolia, but rather an imagination of the Empire that originated in Central Asia and ruled over Europe. By stretching roots of the Ottoman Empire back to Central Asia, the emphasis on “Anatolia” is de-essentialized as one of the many geographies Turks lived.



Figure 35: “Palace Festivals at Enderun Courtyard: Horse, Arrow and Hawk: From Steppes to the Palace”



Figure 36



Figure 37

The event took place almost unannounced. Fliers of the event were prepared by expert assistants only on the morning of the event. Most museum experts did not even know about the event, although state officials were already invited as guests for this spectacle. In fact, museum experts observed the moment of re-inventing an Ottoman tradition, like I did, from a distance. The following year in 2014, this “palace tradition” was repeated with prior publicity. It was further formalised and institutionalised as an “invented tradition” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) of “Turkishness”, this time with the imprint of the Turkish flag (Figure 38). Thus, with its primordial roots in Central Asia, the Ottoman past is re-invented as a part of the official Turkish history thesis on an institutional level, overshadowing experts’ nostalgia for Anatolia.



Figure 38: Palace Festivals were repeated in 2014 with the imprint of the Turkish flag (Dursun 2014b)

b. Performing “Turkishness” of Anatolia in Anıtkabir

As described in Chapter 4, Anıtkabir is one of the “state-led architectural expressions of the nation” (Delanty and Jones 2002: 454 quoted in Akçalı 2010: 4). Its Central Asian and Anatolian roots are inscribed on Anıtkabir’s architectural plan, walls and sculptures (Wilson 2009: 230; Akçalı 2010: 8). The renovated Anıtkabir museum

extended its scope from exhibiting the personal belongings of Atatürk to contribute to this historical narrative (Wilson 2013: 124) through the three dimensional “re-animation” (Anıtkabir Command 2005: 43) of the War of Independence.

This re-animated war takes place on the imagined land of Anatolia whose boundaries were designated by the National Pact (*Misak-ı Milli*), a declaration that Anatolia is the natural homeland inhabited by a majority of Muslim Turks (Zürcher 2005: 138) and was realised by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1924 (ibid.: 160). This imagination, which also shapes experts’ perception of the Ottoman Empire in Topkapı Palace Museum, is visualised through the frequent usage of the Anatolian map inside Anıtkabir museum. The two large maps of Anatolia facing the Çanakkale Panorama strike the visitor. The first one is a political map, which depicts the Serves Treaty and shows how Anatolia was shared by the Allied Forces (Figure 39). The second geographical map depicts natural boundaries of Turkey (Figure 40). Together, they exhibit the ‘before and ‘after’ of the modern Turkish Republic. They remind the visitors of both the “trauma”⁵³ of the nation, when the Empire surrendered the homeland to the enemy, and the heroic victory after the National Struggle, which endowed the nation with its natural physical and political boundaries. In other words, inside the museum, they are replicable and recognisable “map(s)-as-logo(s)” (Anderson 2006: 175), signifying the binary oppositions between the old-traitor-Islamic Ottoman Empire and the new-heroic-secular modern Turkish Republic (See Chapter 3).

⁵³ The collective trauma created by the Sevres Treaty is conceptualised as the “Sevres Syndrome” in the scholarly literature on Turkish nation-building process (See Volkan and Itzkowitz 1994 for the psychiatric approach defining the secularist perception of Sevres Treaty as a “chosen trauma”; See Guida 2008 for Islamist and secularist representations of the Sevres Syndrome in the mass media).



Figure 39: Political Map of Anatolia as designated by the Treaty of Serves



Figure 40: Geographical map of Anatolia after the Lausanne Treaty

The imagination of Anatolia is also performed on a daily basis through Anıtkabir's free guided tours. On a random day, this performance starts with the first section of the museum, where guides narrate the common sense story of Atatürk's life, as told in school textbooks, with reference to display cases. However, every time I participated in a guided tour, I could sense that the real performance starts in the

second section and ends in front of the tomb room of Atatürk⁵⁴. In this second section, three significant wars of the National Struggle are displayed through three dimensional panoramas, sounds of war, paintings, and busts. Museum guides narrate the stories interwoven in these representations.

This narration is a real “performance” in the Goffmanian sense. “Stage-management” (Goffman 1956: 18) is well attained through strict textuality in line with a fixed scenario, written by Turgut Özakman (See Chapter 4). The ‘front’ stage of the museum is composed of three-dimensional war depictions, sounds of war and marches. On this stage, the guide leads visitors with the narration on Atatürk and the War of Independence. The museum commander, Kasım Mehmet Teke, explained that they train soldiers in terms of “posture, diction, eye contact, interaction and communication. The guide needs to speak fluently” (Interview 24 January 2013). The performance is also marked by personification of the narrator through his usage of certain accents and tone of voice. Furthermore, the guide keeps his performance intact by limiting the audience group to around 10 visitors, ensuring control over the audience (Goffman 1956: 135-45). At this point, I examine how the physical stage (panoramic paintings and sounds of war as decorations), the scenario and the narration of museum guides work in “performing the nation” (Fox and Miller-Idris, 2008: 538).

Unlike official Turkish history text books on the National Struggle, the enactment in Anıtkabir begins with the Çanakkale Campaign (1914-1915) (Wilson 2013: 124). The official history based on Atatürk’s *Nutuk* regards 19 May 1919 as inception of the National Struggle, when Mustafa Kemal inaugurated a war independent from the Ottoman Empire (Morin and Lee 2010: 491). In fact, this day is still celebrated as the “Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day”. Nevertheless, the Çanakkale Campaign has also been indispensable for official historiography, as it is seen to indicate Mustafa Kemal’s leadership and the heroic success of Turkish soldiers against Allied Forces (Ziino 2012: 142). As a matter of fact, March 18th is remembered annually as the “Commemoration of the Çanakkale Battles and

⁵⁴ The performance in front of Atatürk’s tomb room will be elaborated in the following chapter.

Martyrs”. In Anıtkabir museum, while there is no visual representation of Mustafa Kemal’s inauguration of the War of Independence on 19 May 1919, the narration of the Independence War stretches back to the Çanakkale Campaign. Fatma Hanım, during our guided tour, noted in parenthesis interrupting her performance: “Some of our visitors ask why the museum starts with Çanakkale and not with May 19th. We started with Çanakkale, because the spirit of the Independence War was first seen in Çanakkale [by] Mustafa Kemal” (Interview 23 January 2013).

Furthermore, the Çanakkale Campaign as a “founding moment” (Çınar 2005: 145) of the National Struggle in Anatolia reconceptualised subjects of the war as the Anatolian Turkish soldiers and not as members of the Ottoman army. In this narration, the Ottoman Empire is equated to the “Istanbul government” (my translation Anıtkabir Command NA: 16), while “the spiritual principle” (Renan 1882) of “Turkishness” is found in Anatolia. This became more evident, when I realised that informants and museum guides used “Anatolian” and “Turkish” interchangeably.

This conception is formalised through myths, indispensable in (re)constructing the nation (Smith 1989 [1994], 2009; Hobsbawm 1983; Gellner 2006 [1983]). In Anıtkabir, such myths are essentially gendered constructions of “Turkishness”, where men are heroes battling on the front line and women are self-sacrificing mothers. The first narrated myth is the story of Corporal Seyit (*Seyit Onbaşı*), who participated in the Çanakkale Campaign. Pointing towards the snapshot in the panorama (Figure 41), the guide starts his narration:

His name is inscribed in Turkish history with his bravery in the Çanakkale Campaign. During the Naval War on March 18th, there was only one standing cannon in the bastion and its crane lifting shells was broken. With a great strength, Corporal Seyit carried 275 kg shells to the tip of the barrel four times. Thanks to his bravery, the ship Ocean was damaged severely (my translation; Anıtkabir Command NA: 16).

This anecdote expresses an image of a Turkish soldier who is so mythically strong, brave and masculine that he is able to carry shells on his back and attack a ship from the land.



Figure 41: Corporal Seyit depicted in the panoramic painting

Masculinity is one of the characteristics that Erkin Bey (the art coordinator / leading Turkish artist, who drew the initial sketches for the paintings inside the museum) wanted to convey in his sketches. In our interview, I asked him about the problems he faced during the production of paintings by Russian artists. He explained that he was not satisfied with the first drafts sent by Russians. He said “typecasting is very important [...] [In the first drafts], figures were red faced, unlike Turkish men” (Interview 23 April 2013). Later, while showing me his sketches, he pointed out how he tried to draw Turkish soldiers with edgy face contours and slightly slanting eyes in order to indicate Central Asian origin of Turks (Figure 42). Also disappointed with the first draft, Burhan Bey told me that he sent photos of Turkish soldiers, who were undertaking their compulsory military service in Anıtkabir at that time. He explained that since these soldiers come from different parts of Anatolia, their photos would give Russian artists a sense of “Turkishness” (Interview 21 February 2013). Thus, myths of bravery and strength are attached to the Central Asian and Anatolian roots of “Turkishness”, expressed in the paintings with white male faces with edgy contours.



Figure 42: The sketch of the scene depicting Corporal Seyit (Courtesy of Aydın Erkmen)

However, the emphasis on Anatolia surpasses Central Asian roots. Anıtkabir's depictions and narrations of the National Struggle highlight the features of Anatolian men and women. One day, in front of an audience of school children, the guide stepped out of the scenario:

In the middle of the war, when all hopes were lost, he [Corporal Seyit] carried those shells that you see on the wall. You know that they are really heavy. His strength and courage helped us in fighting the enemies. When he was asked to carry those shells after the war to have his photo taken with the shells, he was not able to carry them. And he explained 'At that time, Allah helped me' (Fieldnotes 29 August 2012).

In this way, the guide further mythologised the story by ascribing the strength of a *Turkish* soldier as an Allah-given quality, rather than masculinity. Relating bravery and strength to Islam does not run counter to the overall narrative of the museum. It also points to the established assumption that 99 % of Anatolia is composed of Muslim-Turks (Haynes 2010: 312).

This assumption is justified through a simultaneous forgetting of “Muslimification” (Yeğen 2007: 125) and “Turkification” (Bali 2002) and remembering particularly the Greek occupation of Anatolia after World War I. Throughout the second and third sections of the museum, there are depictions and photos pertaining to an alleged “Greek atrocity”. Besides the painting, “The Massacres Perpetrated in Anatolia during the Invasion Years” (Figure 24), there are also archival photos exposing the alleged ‘atrocity’ and ‘massacre’ of Turks by Greeks (Figure 42). Anıtkabir, as a museum concerned with pedagogical purposes, exhibits such disturbing and blunt depiction of violence to “maintain national memory” (Wilson 2013: 113) of shared suffering.

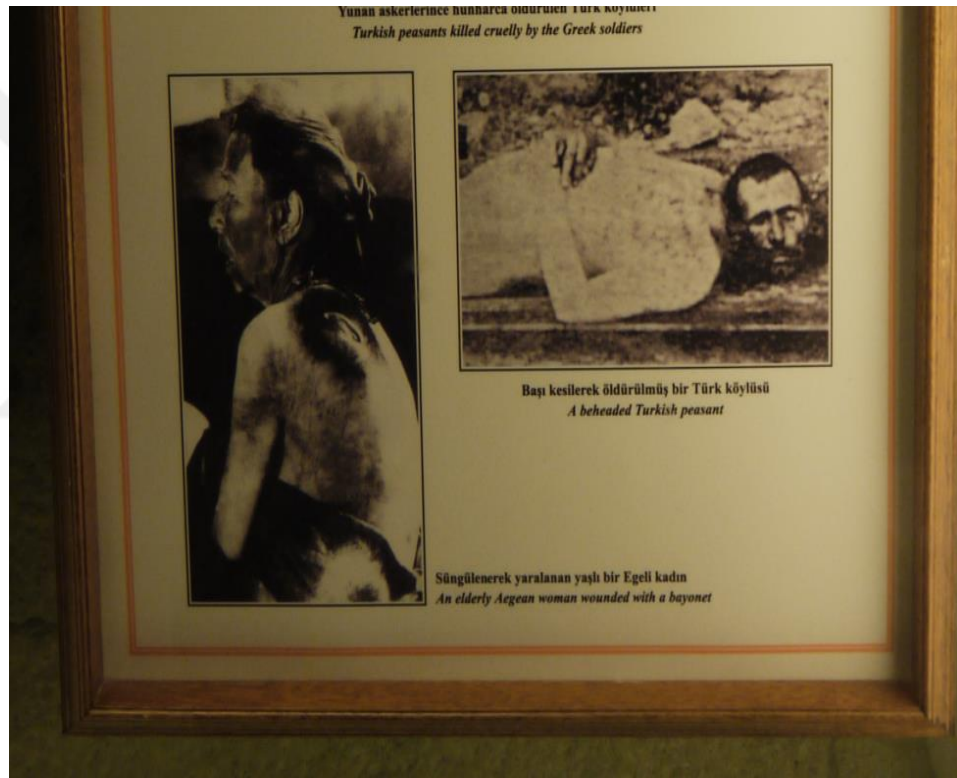


Figure 43: Photos displayed as evidence for the alleged Greek atrocity in the third section of Anıtkabir Museum

In this way, Anıtkabir reproduces the Kemalist historiography representing Greeks as the utmost external enemy (Millas 2002) at a time when there is no visible tension between Greece and Turkey. This selective remembrance of violence goes hand in

hand with a purposeful forgetting of the violence created during the nation building process. At the time of renovating the museum (2002-2005), the “Armenian issue” was at stake and discussed publicly through conferences (See Chapter 3). In the meantime, the Turkish General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) published a book of 8 volumes, *Armenian Activities in the Archive Documents 1914-1918*, including archival photos and documents supporting the allegation that Armenians burnt down Turkish villages and mosques (See Chapter 4). I tried to understand why there is no mention of the “Armenian issue” in the museum, when the TAF claims to readily have so many historical proofs rebutting the allegations for genocide. Some informants repeated the conventional argument that the “issue” took place in 1915; and is related with the Ottoman Empire (Cooper and Akçam 2005: 81). Thus, it has no room in the museum (Fieldnotes 16 October 2012). However, both the Çanakkale Campaign, a “founding moment” (Çınar 2005) of the Turkish National Struggle and the “Armenian issue” took place in 1915. Tamer Bey, the historian who worked in the project, replied to the same question:

In the beginning, we thought of exhibiting the history about the bad deeds of Armenians during the War of Independence [...] There were those who said ‘let’s open a section here as a response [to the allegations about the Armenian genocide]’. One section for Greek and one section for Armenian atrocity. It was going to be much larger. This idea was discussed a lot and this much [meaning photos and depictions on ‘Greek atrocity’ only] was agreed upon. We could have conveyed more but they said ‘let us not remember wars and let us pursue a peaceful way’. It was thought ‘let us follow the middle path instead of scratching the wounds’ (Interview 23 May 2013).

By choosing not to “scratch wounds”, the museum chose not to come to terms with the genocide; and hence, continued to reproduce a Kemalist historiography that forgets its non-Muslim population and their forced migration and annihilation from Anatolia. In other words, it re-affirms the common sense idea that Anatolia is naturally composed of Muslim-Turkish people (Haynes 2010).

The second stop point of the guide made this point clear. In this snapshot of the Çanakkale Campaign, there are three soldiers under a shelter: one is wounded and lying down, while the other two are praying (Figure 44). Here, the guide directly

quotes from Mustafa Kemal's memories on the Çanakkale Campaign, while pointing out the painting:

He knows that he is going to die in three minutes and he does not show the slightest sign of hesitation. [...] Those who know how to read are getting ready to go to heaven with the Quran in their hands. Those who do not know it recite the kalmia shahadah and the call for prayer [...] This is an appreciable example that shows the spiritual strength of Turkish soldiers which cannot be found in any soldier on the world (Anıtkabir Command NA: 18).

According to this narrative, the Turkish soldier owes his bravery to his “spiritual strength” (ibid.), which he essentially derives from being a Muslim.



Figure 44: A scene from the Çanakkale Battlefields

Such mythical narratives exhibiting “Turkishness” in Anıtkabir are gendered. While self-sacrifice is displayed on the front line of the battleground for men, other mythical narratives reveal, Anatolian women participated ‘behind the scenes’ of the war. One of these narratives is performed in front of the painting below, “Selfless contributions made by Turkish women in the National Struggle” (Figure 45).



Figure 45: “Selfless contributions made by Turkish women in the National Struggle”

The guide performs with a slow and sad tone of voice and narrates that this painting is the ‘true’ story of a Turkish woman, *Şerife Bacı* [Sister Şerife], who was found dead carrying her baby and bullets on her back to support the army. At the end of the narration, the guide quotes Atatürk’s saying that “no women of any nationality in the world can say that I worked harder than the Anatolian women” (my translation; Anıtkabir Command NA: 20) and adds that “Anatolian women never refrained from sacrificing themselves or their relatives for their homeland, as evident in the story of Şerife Bacı” (ibid.: 21). Here, the Anatolian-Turkish woman sacrifices herself and contributes to the war as a mother of her baby and the sister of the nation. The image of “nation-as-kinship” (Nilsson and Tétrault 2000: 5) and the idea of self-sacrifice become apparent in other snapshots from the National Struggle throughout the guide’s narrative. In all the paintings, Turkish woman is depicted in her traditional clothing against a rural background, re-emphasising the folk-peasant culture of the nation embedded in Anatolia (Atabay 2002: 518).

Fatma Hanım in a personal guided tour continued her narration beyond this scenario: “What is more, Atatürk does not forget Turkish women. He entitled them the right to suffrage in 1934 [...] Look, we got our constitution from Switzerland. They gave their women the right to suffrage in 1971; it was entitled to us in 1934” (Interview 23 January 2013). Here, as Yuval-Davis (2011) points out, the woman body is contextually situated. She is depicted both as a self-sacrificing mother-sister of the nation and a modern subject of the nation under the state-led feminism (Kandiyoti 1991: 42). In this sense, the Anatolian Turkish woman is a source of pride for holding Western political rights even before Europeans and being self-sacrificing co-nationals.

In Anıtkabir museum, one cannot escape the feeling that a high school text book is read out loud with reference to text book illustrations. In this staging, there is no dilemma between the Anatolian and Central Asian roots of “Turkishness”, although there is an apparent privilege given to Anatolia as the natural emblem of the modern Turkish Republic. Qualities of “Turkishness” are re-invented through a repeated narration of Muslim Anatolia, composed of self-sacrificing mothers and mythically strong men. In this naturalised understanding of Turkish and Muslim Anatolia, the museum forgets a part of its violent past. It replaces the Armenian “g-word” (Cooper and Akçam 2005) with the Çanakkale Campaign, as the “founding moment” (Çınar 2005), and Greece as the ultimate enemy (Millas 2002) of the nation. This selective remembering and forgetting is repeated on a daily basis through museum guides’ “dramaturgical loyalty” and “discipline” (Goffman 1956: 135-6); thereby, reproducing the Kemalist historiography on a daily basis.

Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums operate within the same “homogenous empty time” (Anderson 2006: 11), institutionalised by Law No 2863 (See Chapter 6). However, they draw on different – yet not necessarily opposing – (Central Asian and Anatolian) roots of “Turkishness” in the re-invention of competing pasts. Outside exhibitionary practices in Topkapı Palace Museum, the Ottoman past is re-invented as a part of “Turkishness”, by re-linking it to Turkish Central Asian roots. This is not a direct re-appropriation of the official Turkish History Thesis (Ersanlı 2002a). Here,

greatness of the Empire is found in Central Asian traditions, rather than in Anatolia. In Anıtkabir museum, Anatolia as the original homeland of Turks is re-invented by “performing the nation” (Fox and Miller-Idris 2008: 537). Through panoramic paintings and the scenario of the museum, heterogeneous populations during the break-down of the Ottoman Empire are reframed as Muslim Anatolian-Turkish men and women. Their self-sacrifice and strength constitute a source of pride and “spiritual principle” (Renan 1882) of “Turkishness”. Nevertheless, Central Asian and (Muslim) Anatolian roots are still embodied within the Kemalist official narrative, inherited from pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism of the 19th century Ottoman Empire (Mardin 1973; Heper 1985; Yıldız 2001: 76-78). Central Asian and Anatolian roots are differentially revived by Topkapı Palace Museum and Anıtkabir. While in Topkapı Palace Museum ethnic roots of the Ottoman past is found in Central Asian Turks, an image of “Laicist, Atatürkist, Sunni Muslim and Turk” (Yılmaz 2013b) is linked to Anatolia by Anıtkabir Museum.

III. Re-inventing the Competing Traditions and National Days in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir Museums

In Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums, Central Asian and Anatolian roots are re-appropriated in different ways as they are linked to the overturning binaries of “Turkishness”. One such binary is ‘culture’ and ‘civilisation’. As discussed in Chapter 3, drawing on Gökalp, the Kemalist imagination of “Turkishness” relies on the reconciliation between culture, found in the essential qualities of the nation (i.e. folkloric Anatolian traditions, religion, morality, and aesthetics), and civilisation, attained through material and technological developments (i.e. industrialisation, Westernisation, and modernisation) (Gökalp 1959 [1923]: 104). Through his modernisation and secularisation project, Atatürk set civilisation as a Western benchmark to be attained by future generations. While creating a “limitless future” (Anderson 2006: 12) for the nation, this meant an irreconcilable lag between “Turkishness” and the West, due to the essential and unchanging notion of ‘culture’ (Ahiska 2010: 18).

General Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu's (the 23rd Commander of the Turkish Armed Forces) written opening statement for Anıtkabir museum highlighted the enduring duality between civilisation and culture:

This museum, as a sign of the Turkish Nation's token appreciation to her history, will be highly functional in passing on detailed information of this unique struggle to future generations. It is with this museum that the powerful lights of civilisation Atatürk lit years ago will continue to illuminate the whole world even more brightly (original text; 22 August 2002).

Anıtkabir museum, which exhibits the Atatürk-led nation-state building process, is posited as a lens through which 'civilisation' can be imagined. Five years later, at the re-opening of the Holy Relics Department in Topkapı Palace Museum, Prime Minister Erdoğan used the same concept and reversed its meaning in his speech:

We are the children of a civilisation that does not deny her heritage [...] The illuminating, relieving scent and richness of Prophet Muhammad resides here. The Door of Kaaba, the locks of its castle are here. It is wrong to see and present this history as a 'dead history'. This is not simply a museum; this is the house of a very robust civilisation (my translation; *Hürriyet* 28 December 2007).

In Anıtkabir, "civilisation" is conceptualised within the boundaries of a Kemalist narrative that sets the West as an enlightening target, while in Topkapı Palace the same concept is relocated in the "illuminating" role of Islam and Ottoman imperial heritage on the Holy Lands beyond Anatolia and the West. White (2013) observes this re-conceptualisation of "civilisation" in the JDP's political discourse. She argues that by replacing Western connotations of "civilisation" with that of "invented Ottoman traditions" (2013: 48), the JDP government reconciled the binary opposition between culture and civilisation. However, such reconciliation in the two museums is far from smooth. In Topkapı Palace Museum, it takes place through the re-invention of competing traditions and alternative national days revived "for the first time after 200 years" (Dursun2013a). In Anıtkabir museum, this reconciliation is averted through the repetitive memorialisation of secular Republican national days.

a. “For the First Time After 200 Years” in Topkapı Palace Museum

Chapter 6 investigated the dilemma between perceiving Topkapı Palace as a museum consisting of artefacts with art historical value and as a palace marked by certain imperial traditions and a specific architectural structure. This dilemma is superseded outside exhibitionary practices that display artefacts in chronological orders. Along with the rising neo-Ottomanism over the last twenty years, there were two major projects which aimed to restore the 16th century Ottoman Palace. One concerns the origins and continuity of the Ottoman tradition of Quranic recitation in Topkapı Palace. Halim Bey a former staff member of Topkapı Palace Museum and currently a civil servant in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT), claimed that the 1980 coup d'état restricted the recitation of Quran to visiting hours. Only with the 1997 renovation of the Holy Relics Department that the practice of reciting the Quran for 24 hours was brought back on the order of Süleyman Demirel, then the president of Turkey (Interview 08 May 2013). The second practice is the “*Sur-i Sultani*” (Topkapı City Walls) project. The project aimed to restore the original space of Topkapı Palace within the city walls. Buildings in this area, which were given to the TAF and the Ministry of National Education in 1924, were handed back to the MCT for exhibition and storage (*Hürriyet* 10 October 2010). In this way, the space was demilitarised to restore the imperial palace. These two practices were precursors of Topkapı Palace Museum's transformation from exhibiting chronological displays to re-inventing imperial traditions.

With the appointment of the new museum director Ahmet Haluk Dursun in August 2012, Topkapı Palace Museum took a new turn. As a self-defined cultural historian, Dursun aspired to “keep palace traditions alive” (2014: 51). Unlike museum experts from classical art history, archaeology and history backgrounds, Dursun was informed by the cultural turn towards ‘new museology’ (See Chapter 2), highlighting the contextual constructions of museum artefacts. It is also important to note that he was directly appointed as the museum director by the MCT and later in 2014 he was appointed as the undersecretary at the MCT (*Radikal* 04 July 2014). Since his appointment as the director, events reviving and commemorating imperial palace

traditions started to take place in the museum. Even international visiting / temporary exhibitions in Topkapı Palace Museum started to become publicly visible and related to the Ottoman Palace. For instance, opening event of the visiting temporary exhibit, “Treasures of China” (Figure 46) (20 November 2012), displaying the famous terracotta soldier statues, was marked by a long Janissary band show. In his opening speech after the show, Dursun said, “this is a first. Tonight we are welcoming the strong Chinese terracotta soldiers with our strong Janissary with the idea that ‘the Ottoman band needs to guide Chinese imperial soldiers’” (my translation; Dursun 20 November 2012). The museum holds Janissary shows every Wednesday in the second courtyard. However, opening a Chinese exhibition with the Ottoman Janissary band is a symbolic expression of imperial power, which is welcoming, guiding, and housing Chinese imperial soldiers in the palace. It is a manifestation of greatness of the Empire and its leading geopolitical role, i.e. “neo-nationalism of greatness” (İnsel 2013).



Figure 46: Janissary band show in the opening event for the visiting exhibit “Treasures of China”

In addition to this spectacle of greatness, Dursun initiated a series of events, claiming to “re-animate palace traditions” (Interview 4 December 2012). The first of these events was the “Baklava Day”, where baklava was distributed to all museum employees in Ramadan (Figure 47). The press release about the event was circulated to news agencies. It highlights that the tradition of distributing baklava to palace residents and workers was a “symbol of Ottoman imperial rule” in Topkapı Palace Museum, represented as the peak of “our culture and civilisation” (my translation; Anadolu Ajansı 22 August 2012).



Figure 47: Baklava Day in Topkapı Palace Museum (2013e)

This event was followed by the Enderun courses, where the museum director Dursun gives history classes to graduate students within the palace. As described in Chapter 4, Enderun is the name given for the educational space for forcefully displaced non-Muslims during the Ottoman Empire. Today, invading the imperial past, the Enderun courtyard houses major exhibition halls and museum offices, and Dursun conveys his classes in the ‘real’ spaces of the *Enderun*. The educational tradition of the palace is re-invented, while forgetting the forceful conversion of non-Muslims to Islam.

Moreover, Dursun initiated a series of commemorative events, concerts, and temporary exhibitions in the museum: a celebration of Sultan Selim’s birthday with a

small concert playing sultan's and *devshirmes*' compositions (25 December 2012); the commemoration of Sultan Beyazıt's death (19 December 2012) with Quranic recitation; a special event for the *Miraj*⁵⁵ (4 September 2013); the aforementioned "Palace Festivals" and "Time of Hyacinths". In 2014, the following year, all of these were repeated and new events such as the "Muharram tradition" (*Zaman* 30 November 2013), where *ashure*⁵⁶ was distributed to palace staff during Ramadan, were re-enacted.

This unprecedented increase in museum events and their escalating public visibility revolved around certain key words: "re-animating palace traditions", "for the first time after 200 years"; "our culture and civilisation". These became visible to me first in my interview with Ahmet Haluk Dursun; and later, in his opening speeches, press releases and web site announcements of these events⁵⁷. In our interview, when I asked Dursun about his future projects for Topkapı Palace, his immediate response was to "re-animate palace traditions" (Interview 4 December 2012). In his own words, it is important "not to forget that this museum is primarily a palace" (ibid.). He wanted to make visitors recall that Topkapı Palace, museumified under the modern Republic, was once a palace, i.e. a "lived space" (Dursun 2012) with its gardens and architectural structures where Ottoman traditions used to take place. In each and every event as well as in our interview, he highlighted - in synonymous sentences - that Topkapı Palace Museum is not merely a collection of artefacts, but rather an "architectural reflection of our culture and civilisation" (Interview 4 December 2012).

Dursun's understanding of 'the palace before the museum' speaks for his goal to re-invent Ottoman traditions inside the palace. It indicates an attempt to undo the rupture created after Sultan Abdülmecid left the Palace and during the consequent

⁵⁵ *Miraj* refers to the day when Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven and this day is commemorated as a holy day in Islam.

⁵⁶ *Ashure* is a dessert cooked during Ramadan, the fasting period for Muslims

⁵⁷ Later, while I was writing my thesis, these events and these keywords started to be represented as belonging to the new Minister of Culture and Tourism, Ömer Çelik, who replaced Ertuğrul Günay in January 2013. Haluk Dursun's name became almost invisible and even the events which were organised well before Ömer Çelik's appointment are reframed as Çelik's own ideas and plans (See *Sabah* 4 August 2013).

museumification of the palace, particularly under the modern Republic. Dursun pinpoints this rupture in every instance possible. In the opening speech of the “Palace Festivals”, Dursun (2013a) stressed that “this tradition is taking place for the first time after 200 years”. Likewise, practices such as Baklava Day and the *Miraj* were represented as occurring “after 200 years” in press releases, newspapers, and the website of the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums of the MCT (2013a). There was also another event reviving Ottoman traditions after 200 years in the palace; however, this was unannounced to the public and only reserved for the museum staff. In March 2013, the Sofa Mosque, which is normally open for visitors and prayer, began to be used for Friday Prayers by the museum staff on the order of Dursun.⁵⁸ Every Friday, (male) museum staff got together in the Sofa Mosque for Friday prayers led by the *İmam* (preacher), and after the prayer, they were served Turkish delight (Figures 48-49). As a woman researcher, I was never able to attend and listen to Friday sermons in the palace. I was surprised, when Mete (a young expert assistant) told me that the imam repeated Dursun’s phrase and said “praying inside the palace *after 200 years for the first time* is very meaningful” (Fieldnotes 5 March 2013).

⁵⁸ A few months later, Friday Prayers in the Sofa Moque was opened for regular visitors as well (*Sabah* 22 August 2013).



Figure 48: Turkish delight was served at the exit of the Sofa Mosque after the Friday Prayer (Courtesy of Tuğba Tanyeri Erdemir)



Figure 49: The Sofa Mosque

This frequently used phrase “for the first time after 200 years” signifies the reversal of Topkapı Palace. In fact, Haluk Dursun emphasised that for him, “Topkapı Palace comes first, and then the museum” (Interview 4 December 2012). On the first event Dursun organised, the *Baklava* day, he addressed the museum staff and said that their primary aim should be “to serve the palace” (Topkapı Palace Museum 2013e). Here, Tahsin Öz’s (the first museum director) statement on abolishing the palace (See Chapter 4) is reversed, as the museum staff is called upon to serve the palace rather than the museum. With the principle ‘palace before the museum’, Ottoman traditions are re-invented as a part of “our culture and civilisation” (ibid.; Topkapı Palace Museum 2012a, 2012b). Indeed, in 2015, Dursun announced that he had “changed the constitution of the palace” (*Yeni Şafak* 21 January 2015), referring to the shift from displaying “objects” (ibid.) to displaying the Ottoman palace life and traditions. In this way, contrary to museum experts’ emphasis on the uniqueness and conservation of artefacts (See Chapter 6), Dursun is more interested in the “civilisation that the palace represents” (ibid.).

In “Palace Festivals”, “our culture and civilisation” are linked to Central Asian roots of “Turkishness”, while in other events they are tied to the Ottoman imperial history. At this point, Gökalp’s (1959 [1923]) distinction between culture and civilisation (See Chapter 3) fades away in two senses. First, as White (2013) observes, Western connotations of civilisation are substituted with that of imperial characteristics. Second, re-linking these imperial characteristics with ethnic Turkic Central Asian roots, as the root of all civilisations, a perceived gap between the East and the West is bridged. Turkish culture, with its Islamic Ottoman heritage and distant ethnic roots in Central Asia, is brought to the same level with other world civilisations. Therefore, the recurrent use of “our culture and civilisation” is an expression of a “neo-nationalism of greatness” (İnsel 2013). “Turkishness” is no longer seen in its “old victimized posture” (ibid.). It is seen as a source of pride that draws on its Ottoman and “geo-cultural” (Ibid: 195) heritage. Re-inventing this glorious past, it no longer needs to “catch up with the West[ern]” (Kasaba 1997: 25) civilisations. “Turkishness” with its Ottoman past re-linked to Central Asia embodies both culture and civilisation.

One of the ways in which this imperial greatness is remembered is the commemoration of May 29th, Conquest of Istanbul by the Ottomans in 1453. As discussed in Chapter 3, Istanbul Day has been commemorated since the 1980s (Çınar 2005: 142) in line with the Turkish-Islamic synthesis of the period. However, in Topkapı Palace Museum, for the first time, this day was remembered through a temporary exhibition titled “Sultan Mehmet II, the Conqueror of Istanbul” and an all-day conference titled “Fatih and the Conquest throughout the Ages”. These events were organised within the framework of the 560th anniversary of the conquest of Istanbul in cooperation with the MCT and the Fatih Sultan Mehmet University.

On the day of the event, May 29th 2013, I was startled the very moment I entered the museum. The entrance gate, the Gate of Salutation (*Babüsselam*), and the museum administration building were adorned with huge Turkish flags (Figures 50 and 51). As I was walking from the second courtyard to the third, I could hear the Janissary band and when I arrived to the *Gate of Felicity*, I saw the small band of Janissary performing live (Figure 52). The museum director and his assistants were also around; and apparently, they were waiting to welcome their special guests for the conference. After welcoming guests and speakers at the Gate of Felicity, Dursun’s assistants led them to the conference room. Despite the heavy Ottoman language used throughout the conference⁵⁹, one of the concepts brought up by all presenters was “civilisation”. All presenters stressed that the conquest of Istanbul was foreseen by Prophet Muhammad, who claimed that taking Istanbul from Christians was the rightful duty of Muslims. Sultan Mehmet II fulfilled this duty and made Ottomans the rightful heirs to Islamic civilisation (Koyuncu 2014: 80). Presenters argued that Islamic Ottoman civilisation in Istanbul flourished on the ruins of the Byzantine Empire. The presentation, “Istanbul before the Conquest”, showed slides of Byzantine artefacts and ruins in Istanbul “before” and “after” the conquest. It yielded an idea of the Ottoman Empire that conquers and yet tolerates and preserves other cultures (Fieldnotes 29 May 2013). While highlighting the pan-Islamic significance of Istanbul, presenters conveyed a multi-cultural and tolerant image of the Ottoman Empire (Onar 2012: 69). Remembering this day as a part of “our culture and

⁵⁹ See Chapter 8 for a discussion on the extensive use of Ottoman language in Topkapı Palace Museum.

civilisation” claims inheritance on the “chosen people” (Smith 1992) of Ottomans, presented as strong enough to conquer Constantinople and tolerant enough to preserve its heritage.



Figure 50: Turkish flag at the Gate of Salutation (the entrance to the museum) on May 29th 2013



Figure 51: Turkish flag on the entrance of the administrative building



Figure 52: Live performance of the Janissary band at the Gate of Felicity

The conference continued at Fatih Sultan Mehmet University, and commemoration of Istanbul Day continued in Topkapı Palace Museum with the opening reception of the temporary exhibition “Sultan Mehmet II, the Conqueror of Istanbul”. Before the opening, sultans’ compositions were played live in the third courtyard, in front of Sultan Ahmed III’s library. In his opening speech, Dursun (2013b) emphasised the main goal of this exhibition: “to offer benedictions for the Sultan” who conquered Istanbul. However, when Ceyda Hanım, the deputy director was called upon for a short speech, she explained that the main focus of this exhibition was rather to display the personal belongings of Sultan Mehmet II. She listed the items on display and refrained from linking the exhibition to the memorialisation of Istanbul Day (Fieldnotes 29 May 2013). Thus, the fractures among the staff polarised between *İlberci* and *Yusufçu* (See Chapter 6) become visible at the point of exhibition-making (See Chapter 8). Ceyda Hanım reminded the audience that the event was an exhibit of artefacts belonging to an important sultan, while Dursun in cooperation with the MCT and Fatih Sultan Mehmet University, organised a spectacle to commemorate

the conquest and the conqueror through an all-day event evoking a sense of “our culture and civilization”.

After the opening speeches, guests were lead to the exhibition hall, the Treasury Ward, a small room reached through the Holy Relics Department in the third courtyard. As we walked towards the Holy Relics Department, I could smell roses and heard the preacher reciting the Quran. Some staff were talking among each other and saying that the entire exhibition hall had been cleaned with rose water. We passed through the room where the imam recites the Quran, and finally reached the small room, reserved for temporary exhibitions. Inside the exhibition hall, commemorative effects of re-inventing Istanbul Day faded away, as there were eleven artefacts chronologically displayed (Figure 53).⁶⁰



Figure 53: From the exhibition “Sultan Mehmet II, the Conqueror of Istanbul”

In Topkapı Palace Museum, re-animating Ottoman traditions “for the first time after 200 years” pinpoints the reversal of the rupture created by the modern Republic. Within a context of transformation (See Chapter 3), binaries of culture / civilisation

⁶⁰ The following chapter will dwell on this particular exhibition in exploring the negotiation processes involved in displaying sultans.

and the East / the West are brought together in Topkapı Palace Museum. Sharing the immemorial Turkic origins in Central Asia, Ottoman history is re-invented as a part of “our culture and civilisation”. “Turkishness”, in this sense, inherits imperialism, Islamism and greatness of Ottomans. In line with this, Topkapı Palace Museum has also become a hotspot for re-inventing competing national days and historical figures. The all-day event commemorating the Conquest of Istanbul, the temporary exhibition on Sultan Mehmet II and events to commemorate other sultans are manifestations of a newly forming and neo-Ottomanist “spectacle nationalism” (Kaldor 2009: 167). After my fieldwork “palace festivals”, “time of hyacinths”, and May 29th were repeated and a new alternative national event was added: the “Holy Birth Week”, commemorating the birth of Prophet Muhammad (See Chapter 3). The museum organised a temporary exhibition, called “*Aşk-ı Nebi*” (Love for the Prophet), where Prophet Muhammad’s relics were displayed. These purposefully “mediated” (ibid.) practices are signposts of “founding moments” (Çınar 2005). While their inception disturbs the daily functioning of the museum, they also become routinized as they are repeated annually with the “banal” signifier of the Turkish flag.

b. Re-inventing a Loop of National Days in Anıtkabir

Dedicated to its textuality and realism (See Chapter 6), Anıtkabir museum functions as a Kemalist “encyclopaedia” (Özyürek 2001: 188) staged on a daily basis and negotiated on national days. With the new Regulation on Ceremonies and Celebrations on National and Official Holidays, Local Independence Days, Atatürk Days and Historical Days in 2012, only Republican Day (29 October), as the single legally defined national day, and Victory Day (30 August) are commemorated with official state ceremonies in Anıtkabir (See Chapter 3). These state ceremonies are still bound to the Regulation on Executing Services for Anıtkabir (1982). The “rite of passage” (Van Gennep 1960 cited in Duncan 2005) starts at the beginning of the Lion Road (Figures 10-11) with the president walking to the mausoleum accompanied by ceremonial soldiers (Figure 54). Placing the wreath on the mausoleum of Atatürk is followed by a one-minute silence and the signing of the Anıtkabir memorial book to express gratitude for that particular national day (Also

see Wilson 2013: 132). In this sense, Anıtkabir retains its hold on to its encyclopaedic narration and to the Republican “invented traditions” (Hobsbawm 1983) of official national days.



Figure 54: Soldiers carrying the wreath to the mausoleum in an official visit to Anıtkabir

While the scope of national days is now delimited, Anıtkabir continues to commemorate Republican national days by preparing temporary exhibitions.⁶¹ The museum command, Kasım Mehmet Teke, provided me with a list of these temporary exhibitions held and repeated with the same title every year (Interview 24 January 2013). These exhibits are marked by Anıtkabir’s overall didactic concerns. Photos, newspapers, maps, archival documents, and informative texts are placed on (school-like) black boards in the vaulted hall (third section) of the museum (Figure 55). They display written and visual archival material narrating the historical exclusivity of that particular national day and Atatürk’s role on that event. Thus, Anıtkabir fills the gap created by the new regulation by insisting on the enduring significance of secular Republican national days. Repeating the same themes in temporary exhibitions,

⁶¹ During my fieldwork in Anıtkabir, there were also other temporary exhibitions, which were not prepared by the museum staff, but hosted by the museum such as stamp exhibitions on Atatürk and the photo exhibition “Military Hearth: World of Turkish Troops” prepared by the Anadolu Agency (23 April 2013).

Anıtkabir provides a simultaneous remembering and forgetting of national days. On the one hand, Anıtkabir normalises the “annual markers” (McCrone and McPherson 2009: 213) of the nation. On the other hand, this routinization unsettles the new regulation, which designates only one ‘national day’ (Republican Day)⁶² to be officially commemorated by the state in Anıtkabir.



Figure 55: “Atatürk and Children” (15-28 April 2013), was prepared within the context of National Sovereignty and Children’s Day (commemorating the inauguration of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey on 23 April 1920)

With the new regulation, the state withdrew its presence from Anıtkabir, as it officially commemorates only Republican and Victory days here. Besides temporary exhibitions, this gap is also filled by visitors, who flock into Anıtkabir on (unofficial) Republican national days, re-asserting the Kemalist foundations of “Turkishness”. As Wilson (2013: 125) observes, strict regulations in Anıtkabir control the actions of its visitors, forbidding them to chant slogans, carry banners or distribute fliers (Executing Services in Anıtkabir 1982). On a regular day, visitors are not allowed to carry plastic bags, drink or eat besides designated areas (Akçalı 2010: 12; Wilson

⁶² Victory Day is also commemorated in Anıtkabir; however, it is not considered as a “national day”.

2013: 125). However, national days in Anıtkabir constitute exceptionality for rules and regulations.

Throughout my fieldwork, every national day in Anıtkabir was like people's anti-government demonstrations. For instance, on Republican Day October 29th 2012, people gathered in Tandoğan in Ankara to walk to Anıtkabir. This protest was a reaction to the changes in regulations concerning the celebration of national days. For the first time in Turkish history, people going to Anıtkabir were stopped by police armed with water cannons and tear gas (*Radikal* 29 October 2012). After this incident, on the following national day, commemorating Atatürk's death on October 10th 2012, people again flocked to the mausoleum. This time there was no police intervention and Anıtkabir was over-crowded despite heavy rain. As I spent time around the mausoleum that day, I observed that people did not simply visit the mausoleum and leave. Instead, they stayed and re-claimed Anıtkabir as the symbol of secularism with the slogans: "Turkey is secular and it will remain secular!" and "We are the soldiers of Mustafa Kemal!" (my translation) (Figure 56).



Figure 56: Chanting slogans on the commemoration of Atatürk's Death (10 October 2012)

Likewise, May 19th 2013 (Youth and Sports Day, commemorating the inauguration of the War of Independence by Atatürk) also witnessed anti-government protests in Anıtkabir. This time, it was more organised and marked by the appearance of NGOs such as Atatürkist Thought Association and Turkey Youth Union. Turkish flags were waved and a huge banner “Turkish nation stands for the Turkish Republic” (Figure 57) was displayed. This was a reaction to the polemical implementation of removing the abbreviation of “T.C.”, which stands for the “Turkish Republic”, from state institutions’ names, such as universities, hospitals and state-owned banks (*Radikal* 9 April 2013). On May 19th 2013, people in Anıtkabir re-asserted their hold on the secular Republic, symbolised by the “T.C.” against the state’s transformation under the JDP government. In Anıtkabir national days “are not defined by their content, so much as by their custom and usage” (McCrone 2009: 33).



Figure 57: Anıtkabir on Youth and Sports Day (19 May 2013)

These visitors were not only there to protest. They also formed long queues at the entrance to see the displays inside the museum (Figure 58). On national days Anıtkabir becomes so crowded that it becomes almost impossible for visitors to see

displays properly. Despite the effort and labour put into the preparation of temporary exhibitions, most visitors did not pay attention to these long didactic exhibitions. Rather they just passed by the blackboards as they walked to the next section through the vaulted section. In this sense, visitors complete a ritual of re-asserting Kemalism on a national day by first visiting the mausoleum, admitting themselves in the presence of Atatürk, chanting slogans, and then visiting the museum.



Figure 58: Entrance of Anıtkabir museum on Youth and Sports Day 19 May 2013
(Commemorating Atatürk's inception of the Turkish National Struggle in Samsun on
May 19th 1919)

Such visitor practices on national days speak to the symbolic significance and role of Anıtkabir in a changing Turkey. When I asked about the mission of Anıtkabir museum, Oya Eskici (the civilian museum director) replied as follows:

Anıtkabir's mission shifts a lot. Political change, particularly over the last 20 years, reflects on here immediately. People come here to complain. They come when they are happy too. Institutions which are damaged, institutions which are content come here [...] This has always been the case in our culture. There is not only

museology here [...] Here lies the value of Atatürk.” (Interview 7 December 2012).

For this reason, in Anıtkabir, a military museum so strictly regulated, banners, NGO flags and slogans are allowed on Republican national days, creating a rule of exception. These protests are re-invented as a part of “our culture” to hold onto “the value of Atatürk”, particularly at this time of political change.

Although the state’s presence in Anıtkabir on secular Republican national days diminished, Anıtkabir retains “ideological power” (Mann 1993) through its truth claims, expressed in realist paintings (See Chapter 6). In the absence of official “ritualized practices” (Hobsbawm 1983: 3) for commemorating national days, people visit Anıtkabir, holding onto secular Republican Turkey. People flowing into Anıtkabir chanting with their banners and Turkish flags on national days bend the “iron cage” (Weber 2001 [1930]) of Anıtkabir’s regulations, using the space for the re-invention of “our culture”. While continuing imposed repetition of performances of the secular Republican past ‘from above’, Anıtkabir re-invents national days through the incorporation of Kemalist discontent ‘from below’.

IV. Conclusion

Hobsbawm argues that invented traditions are “responses to novel situations, which take the form of reference to old situations or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition” (1983: 2). As a retort to the current unrest in Turkey, secular Republican and Islamic Ottoman pasts are re-invented as parts of “Turkishness” in Anıtkabir and Topkapı Palace museums. In Topkapı Palace Museum, “annual markers” (McCrone and McPherson 2009: 213) such as Istanbul Day, historical figures and palace traditions (distributing baklava and *ashure*, Quranic recitations, and *Enderun* courses), are re-invented as essential parts of “our culture and civilisation”. All these practices, it is emphasised, are occurring “for the first time after 200 years”, reversing the break created by the decline of the Empire and the consequent formation of the modern Turkish Republic. Through spectacles such as archery on horseback and palace gardening, the museum re-links the Ottoman past with its Turkic roots in Central Asia and re-asserts greatness. Here,

Anatolia becomes just one of the many vast lands Ottomans ruled over from the Middle East to Europe. On the part of museum experts, Anatolia is a nostalgic signifier, indicating a lost past when Topkapı Palace Museum used to embrace secularism. In Anıtkabir museum, the image of Anatolia is performed on a daily basis through museum guides' narrations of mythical stories on Anatolian men and women. Anıtkabir selectively revives the image of Anatolia by remembering the 'Greek atrocity' as shared suffering, and the Çanakkale Campaign as the inception of the National Struggle, while forgetting the Armenian "G-word" (Cooper and Akçam 2005). Inscribed in the same official Turkish History Thesis, Central Asian and Anatolian roots are re-appropriated by competing actors in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums. Therefore, this chapter accentuates the different degrees of remembering and forgetting competing pasts of "Turkishness".

This selective remembrance becomes more evident in the re-invention of competing national days in both museums. In Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul Day was re-invented through an all-day spectacle starting with welcoming Janissaries, a conference on the conquest, live concert of sultans' compositions, and an exhibition opening. Marked by the imprint of the Turkish flag, the event claimed inheritance on the Islamic Ottoman past. In Anıtkabir Museum, secular Republican days are re-invented through the insistent repetition of temporary exhibitions. At the same time, national days constitute the rules of exception for Anıtkabir, allowing its visitors to raise their discontents and re-invent "our culture" of loyalty to Kemalist principles.

Çınar argues that "secularists and Islamists use similar strategies to implement their nationalist ideologies when they designated a particular founding moment" (2005: 141). In Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums, the competing traditions are not invented on a clean slate; instead, "banal signifiers" (Billig 1995) such as the Turkish flag are used for "novel purposes" (Hobsbawm 1983: 6). Both museums operate within the "homogenous empty time" imagined by the official Turkish History Thesis, as tweaked under the Turkish-Islamic synthesis. In making the "new Turkey", mirror images of the same binaries of West / East; culture / civilisation are

re-invented in the common “bottomless sack” (Chakrabarty 2000: 73) of “Turkishness”. Diverse pasts are selectively remembered in different degrees.

The re-invention of competing traditions is made possible through spectacles. In Topkapı Palace Museum, Dursun (the new museum director) moves beyond the contested sphere of the museum bureaucracy and its resistant “civil servant mentality” (See Chapter 6) outside exhibitionary practices. Anıtkabir re-invents secular Republican (unofficial) national days by both reproducing and bending its “iron cage” (Weber 2001 [1930]). While relaxing regulations to include visitors’ demonstrations for reclaiming secularism, Anıtkabir continues its didactic temporary exhibits on national days. Spectacles for Topkapı Palace Museum are means to directly manifest the “ideological power” (Mann 1993) of the museum director and the MCT, while for Anıtkabir museum, they open an exceptional space for re-connecting with its visitors.

However, this does not suggest that Topkapı Palace Museum unambiguously re-invents Islamic Ottoman traditions, whereas Anıtkabir reproduces secular-Western ones. Neither Topkapı Palace Museum nor Anıtkabir displays a coherent meta-historical and encyclopaedic narrative ‘from above’ as representatives of the Turkish state. Likewise, these museums are not simply democratically negotiated spaces from below (Clifford 1997; Chakrabarty 2002). As the following chapter will illustrate, the bold expressions of competing traditions are negotiated through “bureaucratic encounters and [un]official transactions” (Brubaker 1996: 31): This leads to crystallisations of “Turkishness” (ibid.) in the minute details of decision-making processes.

Chapter 8: The Making of “Turkishness”

I. Introduction

Raphael Samuel suggests viewing the “invention of tradition as a process rather than an event” (2012:17). From this perspective, this research does not seek to identify events, artefacts and exhibitions in their relation to fixed binaries of “Turkishness” such as West / East; secular / Islamic; good / bad; oppressed / oppressor. Rather, this chapter’s aim is to trace the making of “Turkishness” through the creation of competing “high culture[s]” associated with these binaries. Unlike Gellner’s (1983) universalistic and standardised notion of “high culture”, these processes distinguish and elevate particularistic understandings of ‘ourselves’ and ‘our history’. At this point, the chapter asks: How are binary oppositions negotiated in the making of “Turkishness”? Amidst changing power relationships within the state, how is “Turkishness” institutionally crystallised in defining “us” and “others”?

Here, I investigate the contested *processes* in which ‘ourselves’ and ‘our history’ are displayed in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums. The first section illuminates how both museums perceive and interact with their visitors as ‘others’/ ‘us’. I argue that state museums act as mirrors of the state, reflecting its *fragmented* images and “ideological power” (Mann 2006) onto a perceived image of visitors. The second section discusses how these institutional mind-sets play out in re-enacting “our history”. How are competing stories of national glory and trauma displayed / hidden? An Islamic Ottoman past shifts from an image of the oppressor to a signifier of greatness for “Turkishness” through Westernised sultans and high palace culture in Topkapı Palace Museum. In Anıtkabir, secular Republican history is deployed to remember ‘the people’s’ emancipation from the oppression and failures of internal and external others under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as a ‘real’ historical figure. Therefore, in this chapter, I highlight the crystallisations (Brubaker 1996: 19) of “Turkishness” through competing “high culture(s)” (Gellner 1983), transforming binary oppositions.

II. State Museums as Mirrors: Displaying Competing Pasts to Whom?

Although one cannot talk about a democratic bottom-up approach (Clifford 1997; Chakrabarty 2002) in state museums in Turkey (See Chapters 3 and 6), a perceived visitor image shapes the ways in which exhibitions and museum events are organised (Macdonald 2002: 158-162). Visitors' perceived identities - their age groups, gender, ethnicity, educational level and class - are key factors in the preparation of information boards, and the selection of themes and artefacts (Miles 1986; Seagram et.al. 1993; Hooper-Greenhill 2006). Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums act as "colossal mirror(s)" (Bataille and Michelson 1986: 24), displaying artefacts to imagined visitors through invented and institutionalised ideas about "ourselves" and "others".

Despite the chronological and pedagogical tendencies of Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums (See Chapter 6), administrators of both museums define visitors in ambiguous ways. A recent quantitative study on state museums in Istanbul shows that there is a disregard of audience research on the part of museum administrators (Sanıvar and Akmeahmet 2011). Its authors argue that this disregard stems from the "low annual attendance" (ibid.: 123), which inhibits museums' communication with their visitors. In contrast, the deputy director in Topkapı Palace Museum, Ceyda Hanım told me that the museum "cannot have [a target audience / visitor]" (Interview 18 February 2013), because it is the most visited museum in Turkey. Likewise, in my interview with Anıtkabir's museum commander, Kasım Mehmet Teke said that their "target audience is everyone" (Interview 24 January 2013). In this context, administrators of both museums emphasised the high annual visitor numbers (Table 1)

Table 1: Visitor numbers (2012-14)

	Topkapı Palace Museum (Dursun 2014a)⁶³	Anıtkabir Museum (TAF 2015)
2012	3,334,925	3,351,604
2013	3,397,963	5,073,259
2014	N/A	5,347,722

Sources: Dursun 2014a; TAF 2015

Anıtkabir’s increasing visitor numbers (vis-à-vis Topkapı Palace Museum) may be related with Kemalist opposition expressed on national days (See Chapter 7). However, these numbers have different meanings for the museum staff. Topkapı Palace Museum, which has an entrance fee, is perceived to be “feeding” (Interview with Emre 01 October 2012) other MCT-affiliated state museums, thanks to the revenues it brings to the state (Bakbaşı 2010: 30). For this reason, museum administrators, director and experts in Topkapı Palace take pride in the fact that Topkapı is the most visited Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT)-affiliated museum in Turkey. Anıtkabir, however, has free entry and attracts more visitors than Topkapı Palace Museum each year. For members of museum staff in Anıtkabir, this number indicates “love for Atatürk” (Interview with Fatma Hanım 23 January 2013) and the secular Republic. Despite these different meanings, both museums homogenise and “translate” (Chakrabarty 2000) different groups of visitors into the language of numbers. In this way, both museums speak to an “imagined audience” (Macdonald 2002: 96). My fieldwork findings indicate that this vague and abstract understanding of visitors is differentiated; made more concrete; and contested by different museum staff in the everydayness of Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums.

⁶³ Visitor numbers are available from the Topkapı Palace Year Book (2013: 9) and (slightly) different from the ones announced in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism website (General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums 2013b).

a. Defining Visitors as “Others” in Topkapı Palace Museum

In Topkapı Palace Museum there is no meta-narrative of Ottoman imperial history. Instead, fragments of imperial collections are displayed in chronological order with an emphasis on their art historical qualities (See Chapters 4 and 6). Within this setting, it is hard to pinpoint what constitutes the “others” of imperial history or Topkapı Palace. However, for museum staff, an image of “the others” was apparent. When asked about “target audiences” or “visitor profiles”, whether in interviews or during our informal conversations, staff (regardless of rank) complained about visitors. This common ground derives from the shared “social esteem” (Weber 2006: 51) of civil servants in Topkapı Palace Museum vis-à-vis others, who do not have the same educational assets and access to knowledge of Ottoman history.

In spite of the dominant visibility of foreign visitors in Topkapı Palace Museum⁶⁴, throughout my fieldwork staff members did not define target audiences as foreign. Instead, they homogenised visitors in numbers as a unitary group of ‘ignorants’. In their everyday routines, they disaggregated this abstract category in terms of ethnicity. Despite the relatively small number of Turkish visitors, museum staff complained about Turkish visitors the most. Their negativity towards Turkish visitors was generally expressed, when pointing out those visitors, who tried to take photographs inside exhibition halls and / or when indicating the crowd inside the museum. On a Wednesday, when the museum is most crowded (Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi 2014)⁶⁵, I was trying to reach a court yard with other museum staff. Struggling to pass through the crowd of visitors, a member of the museum staff complained to me:

95 % of all the Turkish visitors are shallow people [...] Some are so shallow, they even bring their lunch, *dolma* and meatballs. And they have a picnic in the museum garden. I mean they do not know how to behave properly. They do not know what they are seeing. They do not read the information, they do not pay attention [...]

⁶⁴ It should be noted that there is no available data regarding foreign and national visitor numbers of MCT-affiliated state museums. In 2007 pricing regimes for national and foreign visitors are made equal and since then the MCT stopped keeping a separate record for foreign visitors to museums (Sezer 2010: 57).

⁶⁵ On the official website of Topkapı Palace Museum, under “visitor information”, it is advised not to bring school groups because Wednesdays are the most crowded days.

Most of them are ignorant [...] They just wander around without knowing (Fieldnotes 12 September 2012).

Turkish visitors are defined by museum staff as too “ignorant” (ibid.), “illiterate” (Fieldnotes 06 September 2012), and “unconscious and never qualified” (Interview with Türkan Hanım 3 December 2012) to understand the exhibits in the museum. İlber Ortaylı, the former museum director (2005-2012), addressed a Turkish audience composed of museum staff and scholars at a conference on the Harem in Topkapı Palace Museum. Ignoring the conference subject, he began by replying to a common criticism he received during his administration:

Things are difficult with Turks [...] They ask where the restrooms are in the palace. They are expecting you to place restrooms in every courtyard of the palace. Did not they get toilet training from their parents? Mothers always tell their children to get the thing done before leaving home [...] Can you imagine the number of visitors coming to the palace? Can you imagine what would happen to the palace, if the historical building absorbed more than a litre of urine every day? (Fieldnotes 09 October 2012)

From this perspective, Turkish visitors are regarded as ignorant and inappropriate for the “civilising rituals” (Duncan 2006) of the museum. They are expected to obey visitor rules (no photographs, no food, not touching the artefacts, and following the prescribed route), while learning the museum’s representations. Visiting a museum is a rite of passage for the individual, whose body and gaze are controlled and shaped (ibid.; Bennet 2006). The general behaviour of Turkish visitors, such as expecting restrooms in historic court yards and eating lunch within the museum space, is considered inappropriate for such “civilising rituals” (Duncan 2006).

Museum staff’s opinions evidenced an even more extreme resentment towards Arab visitors. One expert stated that Arabs “invade” the museum (Interview with Türkan Hanım 3 December 2012). Likewise, a security guard serving his shift in the Holy Relics Department told me that “the worst are Arabs. [...] They are ignorant. They know how important and valuable these stuff are. [Yet,] they still want to touch them. They want to take photographs” (Fieldnotes 6 September 2009). From experts through to security personnel, staff members agree that Arab visitors constitute a symbol of backwardness. This is interesting, considering the current transformation

in Turkey where the JDP takes pride in having a leading position in the Arab world. This overriding “neo-nationalism of greatness” (İnsel 2013: 191) retains the early Republican othering of Arabs as symbols of ignorance and backwardness (Copeaux 2002: 50), while reproducing a pioneering role vis-à-vis Arabs. This perception of Arabs reconciles the fissure of the “symbiotic antagonism” (Kadioğlu and Keyman 2013) between Islamism and secularism.

An image of ignorance is the common ground on which members of museum staff fit all visitors. Western visitors are also included in this category, in spite of the established Kemalist view that the West is analogous with all that is modern and developed. For instance, when asked about the target audience in renovating the Holy Relics exhibit, Burak Bey, who worked on the project, said: “The group I cared about the most was *ecnebiler* [non-Muslims]. Those who do not know. Those who do not know the Kaaba [...] Read and learn what Kaaba is, why the prophets are here in this section” (Interview 26 January 2013). While non-Muslim audiences, especially Europeans, are not expected to know the history of Islam, they are also seen as uninformed about showing respect. Nalan, an expert assistant, did not approve of Western tourists resting on the grass in the museum garden close to the Holy Relics (Fieldnotes 02 October 2012). Similarly Emre, also an expert assistant, noted that he received many e-mail complaints from Muslim visitors, stating that they were disturbed by Western tourists’ clothing (mini-skirts or shorts) inside the museum (Interview 01 October 2012).

Hence, regardless of nationality, religion or ethnicity, visitors are abstracted to numbers and to a devalued category of illiterate and unfit others. When I posed the question about target visitors, Ahmet Haluk Dursun, the new museum director, answered that he was more interested in the “curious and permanent visitor”, just like a “customer” (Interview 4 December 2012). His emphasis on the “visitor as active consumer” (Macdonald 2002: 162) speaks to the wider commodification of museums around the world (Pearce 1991; Urry 1990, 1996; McLean 1997; Grunenberg 2002; Frey and Meier 2006; Macdonald 2011). In Topkapı Palace, however, Dursun’s definition of a good visitor as interested and permanent customer also addresses a

pedagogical desire to reach and create an audience which is essentially educated. In fact, in our interview, Dursun added that he does not advise students to visit Topkapı Palace Museum before they have reached high school (Interview 4 December 2012).

This exclusive approach to visitors became more visible in *Palace Talks* and *Enderun Courses*, a set of lectures and history courses given to re-invent the third courtyard of the palace (See Chapter 7). Museum experts noted that similar conferences took place previously, but were open only to museum staff. With Dursun's administration such courses have been opened to anyone interested in Ottoman history. In this way, while the *Enderun* is re-invented in its original space (See Chapter 7), previously staff-limited events were extended to include different groups of audiences, and they were institutionalised under the name "Topkapı-Enderun University" (Dursun 2014c).

This widening basis for participating in museum events does not readily give way for an egalitarian approach. Audiences for such events are still identified on the basis of their education levels. This became evident in our interview, when Dursun elaborated on the *Enderun Courses* within his future plans. Referring to my educational background he said: "One may say that I have a PhD degree from Edinburgh, but I also participated in the *Enderun* courses" (Interview 4 December 2012). At the same time, having a degree may not be enough for full participation in such events. The conference organised for the commemoration of Sultan Mehmet II on May 29th 2013 is a significant example. While the subject matter was easy to follow thanks to the Power Point presentations, the language utilised by presenters was heavy and loaded with Ottoman Turkish words, an idiom removed from the daily and official language through the reforms of the Early Republican and High Kemalist periods (Tachau 1964; Aytürk 2008; Synder 2009). Similarly, press releases and blogs written by the new museum director featured a literary style, full of Ottoman terms unfamiliar to a general audience. I had difficulty in following the discussions during these conferences and reading Dursun's articles (Fieldnotes 29 May 2013; Also see Chapter 7). Unlike the 'pure' official Turkish language dictated by the Turkish

Language Association, Topkapı Palace Museum, as a state institution drawing on MCT's powers, spoke in a language that distinguished its visitors.

There were also even more exclusive museum events, where only certain MCT bureaucrats, journalists and experts were invited. The commemoration of Sultan Selim III's birthday was one such event and I was not invited, like other expert assistants or regular visitors. Being excluded from such special museum events, regular and unspecialised visitors are provided with a chronological display of artefacts, as dictated by the museum's regulations (See Chapter 6).

In short, Topkapı Palace Museum legitimises its position through visitor numbers and sees its visitors as an abstract category of the ignorant, ill prepared for the "civilising rituals" (Duncan 2006) of the museum. In minute details of the museum's functioning, this perceived ignorance is further distinguished on the basis of ethnicity and educational backgrounds. By way of defining visitors as ignorant / illiterate / backward vis-à-vis themselves, museum staff (regardless of their bureaucratic rank) reproduce the deeply rooted, elitist, and Kemalist "state tradition" (Heper 1985) of imagining the nation in terms of the binary between modernity and backwardness (Kadioğlu 1996; Keyman and İçduygu 2005; Gür 2013). Gellner (1983) argues that modernity is marked by the formation of a universalistic high culture, which equips the individual with necessary and standardised tools to pursue "context-free communication" (Gellner 1996: 368). However, Topkapı Palace Museum works in the creation of an institutional and particularistic high culture of its own. Through museum practices, it creates a "cultural / linguistic distance" (Gellner 1983: 60) from the audience through utilisation of Ottoman language and exclusion of its visitors. In this way, it also feeds into the legal framework dictating a chronological and didactic approach in the museum, and power-knowledge relationships embedded in the "civil servant mentality" (See Chapter 6).

b. Defining Visitors as "Everyone" in Anıtkabir

While both museums take pride in numbers, the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) further distinguishes the number of Anıtkabir's visitors in categories of "national" and

“foreign” visitors. In line with the outnumbering visitors to Anıtkabir (See Table 1; Turkish Armed Forces 2015), the museum staff used homogenising concepts such as “the public”, “the people”, and “everyone” (Interview with Kasım Mehmet Teke 24 January 2013) in defining the target audiences or visitor profiles. In Topkapı Palace Museum the elusiveness of defining audiences lays in the great number of visitors. In Anıtkabir it is defined more in terms of being open and free to everyone. Here, visitors are not distinguished by their ability to purchase a museum ticket; nor are they defined in terms of their educational levels.

According to the museum commander, Kasım Mehmet Teke, museum staff are not in an elevated position vis-à-vis visitors, despite the fact that visitors are perceived either as indolent or poorly educated. He continued: “We have to respond to our visitors. The visitor is always right [...] Our personnel has to be at a level to communicate with visitors” (ibid.). For the museum commander, the guidance provided by soldier-guides is significant in bringing service to the people, because he also explained that “our people do not make an effort to read” (ibid.). While sharing Topkapı Palace Museum’s view that Turkish visitors are unfit to understand or uninterested in information texts, Anıtkabir conceives them as a target group to reach and educate. At the same time, the visitor is placed in an elevated position vis-à-vis the museum. Although Anıtkabir has no commercial interest (except the small museum shop), members of museum staff are accountable to and serve the visitors, just as they “serve the state” (See Chapter 6).

However, this egalitarian approach to visitors was not the underlying motive of the 2002 and 2005 re-organisations of Anıtkabir museum (ibid.). Tamer Bey, the historian curator, highlighted the didactic concerns in arranging the third section of the museum on early Republican reforms. He said:

Who visits this museum? It is the people, young and old alike, who visit the museum. It [Anıtkabir museum] was designed as a museum that appeals to and teaches the people, young and old alike. For this reason, most of the exhibition is dominated by visual materials with few texts. We designed the museum at the level of the simplest primary school graduate, primary school student to speak to everyone (Interview 23 May 2013).

Likewise Erkin Bey, a private artist who worked in the project, noted that his team sought to address “the young generation, particularly children at school age” (Interview 23 April 2013). This pedagogic motive (See Chapter 6) goes hand in hand with Anıtkabir’s representations of its visitors in the quarterly *Anıtkabir* journal. Published since 2000, the journal has a section “Caught on Camera” [*Objektife Takılanlar*], where visitor photographs in Anıtkabir are displayed (Figure 59). In each issue, this section includes photographs of primary school children (Figure 60), visiting the mausoleum, either in their school uniforms, in folkloric dresses or with Turkish flags in their hands.



Figure 59: “Caught on Camera” (*Anıtkabir* July 2001: 6)



Figure 60: “Caught on Camera” (*Anıtkabir* December 2010: 37)

This emphasis on children suggests that Anıtkabir approaches its visitors at the primary school level; and hence, justifies its didactic tone and the strict organisation of the visiting-route. The museum is organised like a three-dimensional version of a school textbook, informing “everyone” about Atatürk’s personal life, the Independence War, and early Republican reforms. There is an assumption that visitors of all ages, classes, and ethnicities, need to be taught - just like primary school children - not only about secular Republican history, but also about proper behaviour inside the museum. Strict regulations for visiting the mausoleum and the museum, and close policing of these rules (See Chapters 4 and 6) shape ‘good’ visitors. Besides arrows on the floors and the fences separating visiting routes (Figure 20), one significant regulation was the prohibition of photography. Members of staff, taking shifts inside the exhibition halls, were strict in applying this ban.

The Anıtkabir Command’s office (situated between the Tower of April 23rd and the Tower of Peace) is closed to visitors, as indicated by a “Staff Only” notice. On a regular day, when I was having a short conversation with a member staff in front of this office, a visitor tried to enter and take photographs of the office. Stopping our conversation, the staff member asked the visitor “why do you need to do that?” When the visitor replied “it is very original”, the staff member responded “there is

nothing inside”. After the visitor left, he turned back to me, shook his head in a disapproving way, and said: “You know this is the difference between a Turk and a foreigner. A foreigner would not do this. They see the sign” (Fieldnotes 09 October 2012). With this incident it became more evident that Anıtkabir addresses a primarily Turkish audience that needs to be taught the secular history of the Republic as well as proper behaviour in the museum.

There are also unwritten codes for visitors in Anıtkabir, which are negotiated by different actors. As I observed during my fieldwork, some visitors pray with their palms facing upward in front of Atatürk’s mausoleum. There are no written regulations prohibiting prayer in Anıtkabir, a space which symbolises secularism and embodies Atatürk’s tomb. This practice was also represented in the *Anıtkabir* journal under the section “Caught on Camera” (Figure 61). In fact, as one staff member told me, praying for Atatürk is seen as visitors’ expression of “love” for Atatürk (Fieldnotes 8 December 2012).

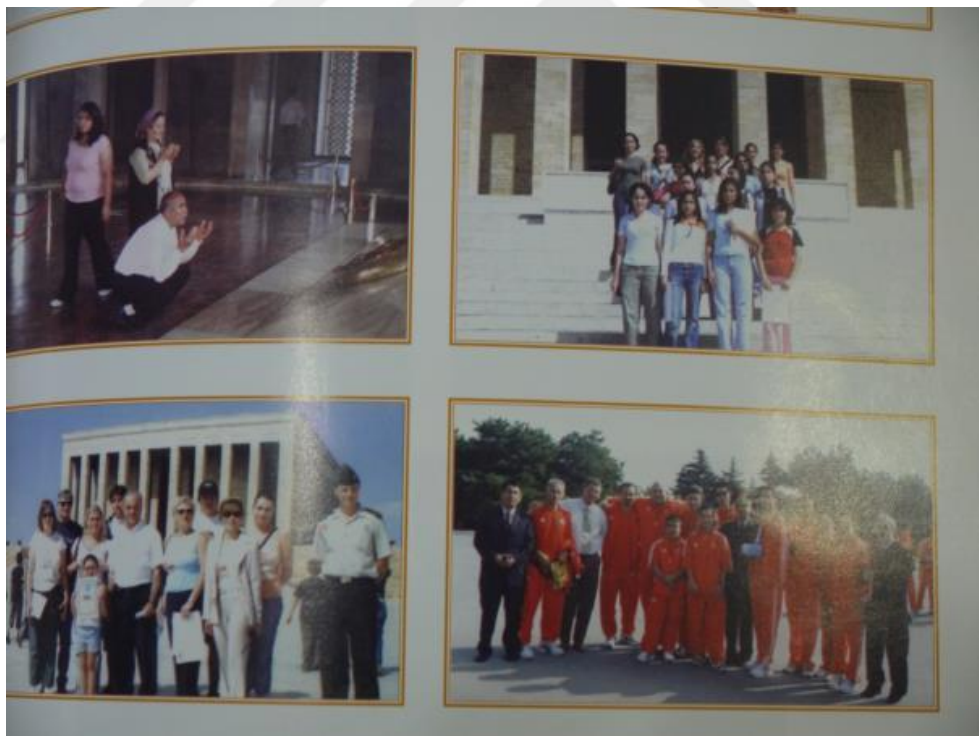


Figure 61: A man and a woman praying in the mausoleum (*Anıtkabir* 2004: 31).

While praying for Atatürk inside the mausoleum is not considered inappropriate, performing the *namaz* is not allowed. In our interview, one of the leading cultural producers Burhan Bey narrated an incident. During the re-organisation of Anıtkabir Museum in 2002, he witnessed that a male visitor stood on the steps of the mausoleum, faced Atatürk's monumental tomb, and started to perform the *namaz* prayer. Burhan Bey continued:

He says '*Allahu Ekber*'! [...] When I saw him, I first said what is wrong with him performing the prayer on Atatürk's stairs. But, then, I said 500 people step on this floor. This floor is dirty. Second, I said this man is not a Muslim, because he is not facing the Kaaba [...] He is a fake Muslim [...] The moment he finished his prayer, soldiers took him away (Interview 21 February 2013).

Praying for Atatürk is considered appropriate and it is even represented in the *Anıtkabir* journal. Yet, performing the *namaz* is unacceptable within Anıtkabir on the grounds that it should be practiced in line with Sunni practices of facing the Kaaba on a clean area either within the walls of a house or a mosque. Therefore, the image of a *proper* Turkish visitor is fed on the Kemalist idea of Islam, which is kept invisible (Yılmaz 2013b; Şen 2010).

At the time of writing (2013-2014), some of the regulations in Anıtkabir were relaxed. For instance, photography is now allowed starting from the second section, where panoramic paintings are displayed. On my last visit to Anıtkabir on 21 August 2014, I saw that this alteration changed visitors' experiences in the museum, particularly in the third section's displays. Designed for school children, it used to be a section where visitors read or looked at sculptures, documents, and photographs on Early Republican modernisation reforms (See Chapter 6). As seen in the photograph below (Figure 62), with the relaxation of rules, the same pedagogic vaulted halls and their sculptures turned into a space of entertainment for visitors. Moving beyond strict regulations on national days (See Chapter 7) and now on a daily basis inside the museum, Anıtkabir is increasingly reaching out to "everyone" for the "generalized diffusion of a school-mediated" (Gellner 1983: 48) narrative.



Figure 62: A visitor posing ‘surrender’ in front of the sculpture that represents the National Forces (*Kuva-yı Milliye*) in the War of Independence

In line with the emphasis on “new museology”, prioritising audiences (Vergo 1989; Stam 1993; Hooper-Greenhill 2006), there is a visible trend towards a more inclusive approach in both Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums. In Topkapı Palace Museum, this is reflected through the *Enderun* courses and museum events open to the public, while in Anıtkabir accountability and “serving” visitors are the primary motives of the institution. While both museums legitimise their positions with reference to visitor numbers, these abstract numbers break down in the everydayness of museums. Topkapı Palace Museum perceives its visitors as “others”, whose ignorance varies in line with their ethnicity and vis-à-vis its civil servants as a group

enjoying “elevated social esteem” (Weber 2006 [1968]: 51). It distinguishes Turkish, Arab and Western visitors, all of whom are perceived as ignorant “others”. “Serving the state” (See Chapter 6) and “the people”, Anıtkabir Museum defines its visitors as “everyone” with the supposition that they are primarily Turkish and (secular) Muslim. Irrespective of educational background, all visitors are addressed at the primary school level, i.e. as subjects to be taught about Atatürk, Early Republican history and the required manners to become proper visitors. In this sense, regardless of the flux in Turkey, both museums still draw on different aspects of 1930s Kemalist nationalism (Çağaptay 2007) and Gökalp’s (1959 [1923]) conception of “Turkishness” in defining and establishing relationships with their visitors.

Retaining Kemalist elitism (Gürpınar 2013), Topkapı Palace Museum sidesteps the uneducated visitor and scales their ignorance according to their ethnicity (Turkish, Arab, and Westerner). It prioritises “curious” and educated visitors, towards forming “a[n exclusive] literate codified culture” (Gellner 1996: 368) distinguished by Ottoman terminology. In contrast, Anıtkabir brings the institution and its staff members closer to “the people” by relaxing its regulations and depicting a standardised narrative. However as a military museum, it adopts a didactic role in policing visitor behaviour. Paternalistic and didactic institutional mind-sets in both museums feed into one another, reproducing the strong “state tradition” (Heper 1985) to act above and for ‘the people’ (See Chapter 6).

III. Re-enacting Fragments of History

Diverse visitor perceptions shape the ways in which binary oppositional fragments of ‘our history’ are exhibited. As noted, Topkapı Palace Museum does not offer a meta-narrative of the Ottoman imperial history (See Chapters 4 and 6). However, since 2002, Ottoman history started to be exhibited through major thematic re-organisations of collections - Treasury, Holy Relics, Arms, Clocks - alongside a proliferation of museum events (temporary exhibitions, conferences, concerts) commemorating sultans. Likewise, with its re-organisations of 2002 and 2005, Anıtkabir transformed from a monumental tomb and Atatürk museum into a museum complex (See Chapter 4). In this new form, it embodies Atatürk’s mausoleum and a

museum narrating Atatürk through his personal belongings as well as the re-enactment of the Turkish Independence War and Early Republican reforms. These re-organisation projects may be considered as reflections of world-wide museum practices (Frey and Meier 2006). In line with the sweeping “new museology” (Vergo 1989; Stam 1993; Hooper-Greenhill 2006) approach, these re-organisations in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums are marked by the utilisation of new technologies and interactive exhibition styles. Yet, they took place at a time of political polarisation in Turkey between neo-Ottomanism and neo-Kemalism. Against this background, it is important to understand the contested *processes* in which this approach is utilised to display Ottoman and early Republican legacies to “imagined audience[s]” (Macdonald 2002: 96).

a. Towards Exhibiting a High Palace Culture

Replacing and Re-linking “Turkish” with “Ottoman”

Starting with the 2000s, there have been three important changes in Topkapı Palace Museum. The first is the changing categorisation of artefacts’ origins. My review of guide books for Treasury, Arms, Holy Relics, and Clocks indicated that prior the 2000s artefacts were labelled as Iranian, Iraqi, European, and Turkish. During my fieldwork I observed that experts used the words “Turkish” and “Ottoman” interchangeably in their daily usage (Fieldnotes 25 August 2012). Likewise, in line with the renovation projects of the 2000s, new guidebooks, written by museum experts, replaced the term “Turkish” with that of “Ottoman”. This is most discernible in the Arms Collection. Until its major re-organisation in 2011, the artefacts on display and their representation in museum guides relied on a categorisation of weapons in terms of their origins. In the latest display and the most recent book on the Arms collection (Ayhan 2011), artefacts are primarily categorised according to their types (assault weapons, defensive weapons, ceremonial weapons). In each category, they are displayed chronologically (as dictated by the regulation) and they are further tagged according to their origins. However, as in other collections, artefacts previously labelled as “Turkish swords” (Tezcan 1983; Aydın 2007), for instance, are now labelled as “Ottoman swords” (Ayhan 2011: 60).

The significant shift in the museum is the re-introduction of “Ottoman” and its re-association with “Turkish”. In prefaces (written by the museum director and the Minister of Culture and Tourism) of the latest guidebooks and in my interviews or daily conversations, “Turkish” and “Ottoman” were used interchangeably. Here, Ottoman history is not merely re-integrated into the official Turkish history by selectively re-appropriating the imagined Turkic Central Asian roots (See Chapter 7). Just like the reconciliation and re-invention of culture and civilisation as binaries in agreement (White 2013: 48), “Turkish” and “Ottoman” are brought together at the same level. In the 1930s, “Ottoman identity was contracted and transformed into an ethnic territorial identity” (Ersanlı 2002b: 337) under a homogenous conception of “Turkishness”. Re-linking “Turkish” with “Ottoman” unsettles that Kemalist historiography. More interestingly, this shift is pursued by museum experts, who aligned themselves as *İlberci* along secularist practices (See Chapter 6). This shift, then, indicates a reversal of previous representations of Ottoman history and the inclusion of the Ottoman Empire within Turkish history. It also signifies that groups polarised along “symbiotic antagonisms” (Kadioğlu and Keyman 2010) are not static, reproducing stable and mutually exclusive signifiers. Instead they contest, negotiate, and meet on a common ground to prepare exhibitions.

Negotiating Greatness

Secondly, the Ottoman past, which had remained invisible as a meta-narrative inside the museum, was inserted through the re-organisation of the Arms Collection in 2011. This re-organisation was by all accounts a process of contestation from the choice of displayed artefacts to the preparation of visual techniques and the opening ceremony of the exhibit. What is represented (and how), and what is not, were deliberated by different actors, negotiating the “greatness” of imperial history.

All cultural producers involved in the project (experts, the museum administration, and a private cultural management company) departed from the same starting point, as they shared similar perceptions of visitors. Instead of the previous style, which placed artefacts chronologically in display units (Figure 63), the 2011 re-organisation aimed at providing a thematic display (Figure 64). While still placing and labelling

objects chronologically, thematic display highlights different types of weapons in the collection. Through video installations and animations (Kült-art 2012) placed within display units, the exhibit portrays stories of how these weapons were crafted during the Ottoman Empire. The re-organised Arms Collection brings in elements of “new museology” (Vergo 1989) by re-contextualising weapons and armoury in their historical settings. Still, the exhibit retains an elitist perception of the audience. In our interview, Hakkı Bey (the museum expert and a curator) described the story of re-organising this collection: “Our people do not read, but visuals always work. I mean, you can write how a sword is made for pages, but [here] we are explaining it with a visual that lasts only for a minute” (Interview 16 January 2013). The re-organisation, thus, aimed for “our people”, who are seen as too illiterate or lazy to read the information provided by the museum.



Figure 63: Arms Collection before the 2011 re-organisation (Courtesy of Hasan Fırat Diker)



Figure 64: Arms Collection after the 2011 re-organisation

Composed of a relatively young group, cultural producers sought to move beyond the technical details of Ottoman weapons. They wanted to re-animate Ottoman imperial history with an audio-visual device. The expert Hakkı Bey described:

We planned a helmet. A replica helmet was going to be made. There were going to be two eyeholes. [...] For example, we thought of two different helmets: one for Turkish visitors and the other for foreigners. When you put the helmet on, you were going to see the crusades attacking you [...] Similarly, when a foreigner wears it, she was going to see the Ottoman army with its sword attacking with the voices of *Allah Allah*. (Interview 16 January 2013)

Likewise, the architect Burak Bey told me that he wanted to construct a replica of Sultan Mehmet II, and to narrate the story of Istanbul's conquest with projections on walls (Interview 26 January 2013). However, these cultural producers did not simply seek to tell a story of success. They wanted to display war-damaged helmets and armoury with blood stains to show the visitors that the imperial past was also violent even within its golden ages. Deputy Directors and other experts were unconvinced by this project, which moved beyond the artefacts in the Arms collection. Interestingly,

deputy directors argued that the museum is a palace, rather than a military museum, although they generally emphasise Topkapı Palace as primarily a museum (See Chapter 6). On the day when Burak Bey was going to present his project to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) in Ankara, deputy directors failed to attend the meeting. The minister cancelled the meeting, as the project had to be first approved by the museum administration (Interview 26 January 2013). The deputy directors thus effectively blocked the plans.

As a result, in the words of the private curator Doğu, experts learned to “make concessions” and “convince people” (Interview 13 May 2013). In their second (and successful) attempt, instead of re-animating specific events in Ottoman history, they re-enacted the imperial army. They animated and projected miniatures to display the rite of passage of the Ottoman army (Figure 65). Likewise, they placed a huge Piri Reis map and re-animated seven Ottoman victories. The map is marked by seven rectangular shaped screens, which chronologically display miniature animations of the wars that took place on those territories (Figure 66). These do not pinpoint “enemies” or “others”. In fact, they do not even name the combatants. Instead, only the geography of the war is given: Battle of Kosova, conquest of Istanbul, Battle of Ridaniye, Battle of Mohacs, Battle of Preveza, Battle of Cyprus, and the Battle of Bagdat. In this map Istanbul is one of the many other victories of imperial rule. Moreover, instead of displaying a sultan sculpture, they reserved a small section for Sultan Mehmet II, where his sword is displayed along with the projection of his signature. Unlike the first plan, this second version does not claim greatness over a single sultan or a founding event. Through a pre-modern map without distinct political boundaries (Anderson 2006: 172), it works in the imagination of imperial greatness, ruling “over” three continents, not merely ruling “through” political units.



Figure 65: Ottoman army miniatures projected on the wall



Figure 66: Piri Reis Map, re-animating seven Ottoman victories

In this way, cultural producers were able to “convince” (ibid.) both the museum administration, who did not want the exhibition style to supersede the artefacts, and the MCT, who were pleased with the success story of the Ottoman Empire. In our interview, Burak Bey underlined that a high ranking bureaucrat at the MCT audited the exhibition immediately before the opening ceremony. He wanted Burak Bey to add an Ottoman flag, referring to the 19th century Ottoman coat of arms (Figure 67). The architect described his response:

There is no Ottoman flag. The flag dates back to 150 years ago. There is no such thing as flag before that. It is something related to the nation-state. He [the high ranking bureaucrat from the MCT] said there was something with cannons and guns. I said it was the coat of arms during the Abdülhamid period [19th century]. It is not a flag (Interview 26 January 2013).

The bureaucrat’s intervention failed as Burak Bey was able to persuade him that the Abdülhamid period (the 19th century) was not included in the overall exhibition and the next best thing that could be displayed for a flag was the three crescent pennant (Figure 68), flown during wars. However, since three crescents also symbolise the Nationalist Movement Party (Figure 69), the bureaucrat withdrew his request completely. Thus, the MCT failed in a direct attempt to re-invent and institutionalise the Ottoman coat of arms, which is a strong symbol reflecting neo-Ottomanism today (See Chapter 3).



Figure 67: Ottoman coat of arms (wikicommons)



Figure 68: Ottoman flags carried by Janissaries (Photograph available from <http://www.mehterantakimi.com/mehter-takimi-resim-galerisi.html>)



MİLLİYETÇİ HAREKET PARTİSİ

Figure 69: Logo of the Nationalist Movement Party (N/A)

Westernising Sultans, Modernising the Palace: A High Palace Culture

“Greatness” was not only sought through the exhibition of military history. The third change in the museum was the visible attempt to represent fragments of Ottoman history, highlighting a close affinity between Ottoman sultans and the West. In 2008, the museum started to organise temporary exhibits and events that commemorated sultans. Such events introduced sultans through a display of their personal

belongings and a narration of their personal characteristics. Sultan Selim III was commemorated on his 200th death anniversary in 2008 and on his birthday in 2013; Beyazıt II was commemorated on the 500th anniversary of his death with an exhibition, while Sultan Mehmet II was remembered through conferences and museum exhibits on the 560th anniversary of Istanbul's conquest in 2013. All these commemorative events challenged a Kemalist official historiography that blamed Ottoman sultans for corruption and "imperial ambitions" (Onar 2009: 230). Instead, they highlighted sultans' leading roles in developing the Empire in their close relationships with the West.

The first of these exhibits was "Reformer, Poet and Musician: Sultan Selim Han III" (Figure 70), commemorating anniversary of his death. Selim III reigned between 1789 and 1807. Therefore, through this exhibit the late 18th and early 19th centuries of Ottoman Empire were displayed, a period largely ignored by Kemalist historiography (See Chapters 3 and 6). Second, this period is historically distinguished from the "fatal decline" (Ersanlı 2002c: 154) of the Empire. In the exhibition booklet, Selim III is represented as a "leader of the Ottoman Empire reform movement that continued until the early 20th century" (original text in English; Topkapı Palace Museum 2008). The text describes him establishing a new and modern Ottoman army, called the *Nizam-ı Cedid* (New Order), and taking "serious steps towards modernisation" by "invit[ing] experts in technical areas from the West" (ibid.). He is also represented as a poet and artist, heavily influenced by baroque and rococo styles, and also as one of "the greatest musicians of the Eastern world" (ibid.). Thus, by portraying Selim III, an imperial modernisation process is depicted.

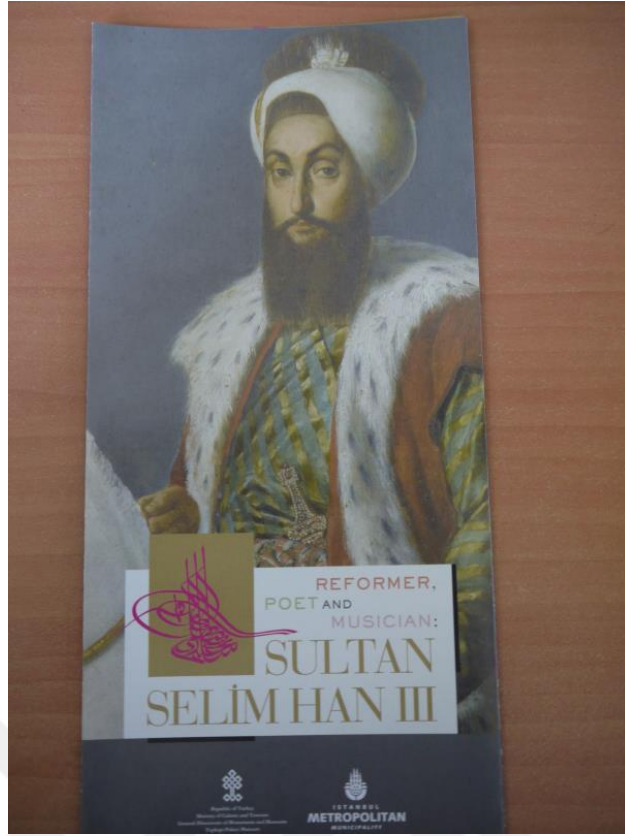


Figure 70: Exhibition Handbook for “Reformer, Poet and Musician: Sultan Selim Han III”

Selim III is portrayed as the leader of a modernisation process akin with Gökalp’s attempt to balance Western modernisation in material and technical spheres, while retaining the moral and essential core in Eastern culture (Kadıoğlu 1996: 183). Westernising Selim III and modernising the 19th century, the Kemalist official *Turkish* historiography’s assertion that the modern Turkish Republic constitutes a break from the Ottoman Empire (Ersanlı 2002c; Keyman and İçduygu 2005; Taşpınar 2005) is refuted. Instead of a period of decay, the 19th century is remembered as a period of modernisation. In other words, it is re-integrated into the “homogenous empty time” (Anderson 2006: 11) of Kemalist official historiography. This also means that the 19th century is conceivable, only when it is translated in the binary oppositional language of the modernist Kemalist paradigm.

In Topkapı Palace Museum, remembering the forgotten is not confined to the 19th century. It was also the driving motive of the exhibit “Sultan Bayezıd II on the 500th Anniversary of his Death” (19 December 2012 - 28 January 2013). Ahmet Haluk Dursun (2012a)⁶⁶, the museum director, highlights that Bayezıd II was forgotten, as his fame faded between his predecessor Mehmet II, conqueror of Istanbul, and his successor Sultan Selim. He states that the exhibit paid “a belated justice” (ibid.) to Bayezıd II. This preface introduces the sultan as the re-constructor of Istanbul, after its conquest by his father. Dursun emphasises how Beyazıt converted the key churches of Istanbul into mosques and “completed the big conquest movement” (ibid.: 11). Here, Sultan Bayezıt II is remembered with reference to the “founding moment” (Çınar 2005: 145) of the conquest of Istanbul.

Beyazıt looms behind Sultan Mehmet II, who was commemorated by Topkapı Palace Museum on the 560th anniversary of Istanbul’s conquest on 29 May 2013 (See Chapter 7). However, the exhibition prepared for this occasion highlighted Mehmet II as an Ottoman leader rather than as the conqueror of Istanbul. The handbook of the exhibit, “The Conqueror of Istanbul: Sultan Mehmet Han II”, (Figure 71) introduces the sultan’s personal characteristics and key achievements. Istanbul’s reconstruction and Mehmet’s code of law (*Fatih Kanunnamesi*) as the first written legal code for the Empire are elaborated. In terms of personal characteristics, Mehmet II is represented as a “sultan of Renaissance” (Topkapı Palace Museum and Fatih Sultan Mehmet University 2013)⁶⁷, who brought together the “traditions of the conquered Christian West and Muslim East” (ibid.). The handbook further explains that Mehmet II brought “esteemed scientists” from the East and the West and collected books from the Arab world as well as Europe. Like Selim III, Mehmet II is represented as the forbearer of *modernisation*, well before the establishment of the Republic. As Meeker argues:

Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) (d.1938) and Mehmet the Conqueror (d.1481) had indeed charted a similar course at a distance of almost five hundred years. The accomplishments of both involved a series of prescriptions that could be said to constitute a project of

⁶⁶ Note that the available handbook is in Turkish. Therefore, the quotations are my translation.

⁶⁷ Note that I was able to access only the Turkish handbook; therefore, the quotations are my translations.

modernity, conceived in response to challenges from abroad (2001: xviii).

From this perspective, Ottoman history is re-integrated and translated into ‘our history’ with reference to the same benchmark Atatürk had in mind when establishing the Republic: the West.

One artefact on display is highlighted in the handbook: a notebook containing the sultan’s signature, scribbles of portraits, texts written in (Ottoman) Turkish and Greek. The handbook suggests that this notebook represents the “cultural diversity” (Topkapı Palace Museum and Fatih Sultan Mehmet University 2013) of the sultan. The handbook further states that Mehmet II “ended the medieval era” by “turning his face to both east and west”; and thus, he made the Ottoman state the “Third Rome”, a “world empire” (ibid.). The former museum director İlber Ortaylı (2010) used the same concept, “Third Rome”, to state that Ottoman Empire is the heir to the two Roman Empires that flourished in Istanbul before the conquest. Instead of representing the Muslim conquest of Christian Constantinople, the Ottoman Empire is imagined as a successor of Western civilisations.

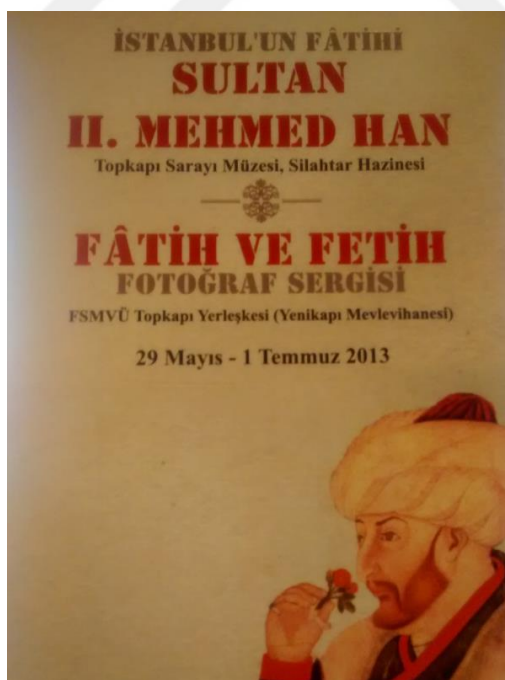


Figure 71: Handbook for the exhibit “The Conqueror of Istanbul: Sultan Mehmet II”

It is important to remember that exhibitions and their handbooks are prepared by museum experts, grouped along secularist lines as *İlberci*, and by the approval of the museum directorate and the MCT (See Chapter 6). Ülkü Hanım, a senior museum expert, shared her side of the story in the planning phase of this exhibit:

The concept is the main figure *Fatih* [The Conqueror]. To emphasise his intellectual personality. Personally, I really like Fatih. He was a secularist person. I like him not because he conquered Istanbul, but because he was secularist. Fatih is the first sultan, who ordered his own portrait⁶⁸ [...] That's why I like Fatih very much (Interview 28 February 2013).

A museum expert admires Mehmet II for his Western and secularist practices such as having his portrait made within an artistic context dominated by miniatures. In the exhibit, like Selim III, Mehmet II is represented as a Western oriented leader, reconciling the West and the East. Outside the chronologically designed exhibition hall, however, Mehmet II is commemorated through spectacles (Quranic recitations, conferences and events alike) re-inventing Istanbul Day (See Chapter 7). He is emphasised as the conqueror prophesied by Muhammad (Koyuncu 2014: 80). Through the temporary exhibition, the same figure is reflected as an “intellectual” (Interview with Ülkü Hanım 28 February 2013) bringing together West and East. Echoing the premises of official Turkish historiography, different cultural producers reconcile an understanding of “greatness” in an image of westernising sultans.

The emphasis on “greatness” through Westernisation / modernisation feeds into museum's institutional and particularistic “high culture” (Gellner 1983), distinguishing visitors in line with their education levels. There is also an apparent effort in elevating a (high) palace culture vis-à-vis Turkish (folk) culture. Begüm Hanım, like other experts, tried to convince me to carry out my fieldwork in another museum, where Anatolian culture and history are displayed. She told me that “Anatolian artefacts are second class artefacts. In the palace artefacts were crafted by European craftsmen; they are totally different from daily lives of the people” (Interview 17 October 2012). In this way, Begüm Hanım made a clear distinction

⁶⁸ Mehmet II was the first Ottoman sultan to have his portrait made. He invited Gentile Bellini, an Italian painter, to Istanbul (Necipoğlu 2010: 264).

between Anatolia as a lower form of “folk culture” vis-à-vis the “high [imperial palace] culture” (Gellner 1964: 163), which she associates with the West.

‘Palace culture’ was one of the defining themes of the temporary exhibit “The Imperial Harem: House of the Sultan” in 2012 (Figure 72). It was the first temporary exhibition, prepared on the initiative of the museum administration - under İlber Ortaylı’s directorate - and museum experts, without the MCT’s interference (Interview with Ülkü Hanım 28 February 2013). Ceyda Hanım, the deputy director, said that the Harem exhibition was a “necessity” (Interview 18 February 2013). This stemmed from growing public debates around the popular television series *Magnificent Century* depicting Sultan Süleyman’s personal life and the Harem (See Chapter 3). In this context, another expert highlighted in our interview, there was a need to “correct the lacking, biased and wrong information on the Harem” (Interview with Gül Hanım 9 October 2012).



Figure 72: “The Imperial Harem: House of the Sultan”

The exhibition conveyed the idea that the Harem was primarily a “school” (Interview with Ceyda Hanım 18 February 2013), just like the *Enderun*. Ülkü Hanım, an expert,

also mentioned the exhibit in our interview and told me that the “harem [is] a house. Yet, not any house. There is music; there is entertainment; there is education. We displayed the leading figures in the harem, but we showed [primarily] the hierarchy” (Interview 28 February 2013). Prepared in line with these ideas, the exhibition started with the architecture of the Harem, its relation with hierarchy inside the Harem, and continued with education of women, and their daily life. Under each theme, artefacts were displayed in chronological order, giving a sense of how the harem and its structural hierarchy changed throughout history (Figure 73).



Figure 73: “The Imperial Harem: House of the Sultan”

Emphasising education and structural hierarchies, experts wanted to defy the “Western” and “imagined” (Interview with Gül Hanım 9 October 2012) perspective on the Harem. An expert underlined that “women in the Harem were not simply sleeping around. Every woman was trained according to her specific talents and abilities. The Harem was a school. We wanted to convey this idea” (ibid.). In a similar way, Ülkü Hanım argued that “most women in the Harem were not [sleeping] with the sultan. Sultans were together with only a single woman, in the Western sense” (Interview 28 February 2013). Women of the Harem were made morally

intact – they did not “sleep around” – and sultans were represented as pursuing “Western” monogamous relationships. In this way, the Harem becomes another space for reconciling different claims over Ottoman history. The Harem, as a part of the high palace culture, is linked to the West both as an educational and familial institution. Westernising the image of the Harem, museum experts confronted public debates around the television series. At the same time, they (unintentionally) also disrupted the Kemalist conception that the Harem was a prison for converting women into Muslim slaves of the sultan (Sirman 2002: 235).

At stake there are two different forms of “high culture[s]” constructed by different actors in the museum: the high culture of the *museum* and the high culture of the *palace*. The first is pursued through an elitist perception of visitors, expressed in the exclusive use of Ottoman Turkish idioms and special knowledge of Ottoman history. The latter refers to an imagination of high palace culture through westernising sultans and palace life. These different notions of “high culture(s)” indicate contested and reconciled ways through which different state actors relate to the Ottoman past in the neo-Ottomanist present.

b. Re-imagining “Turkishness” as “horizontal comradeship”

Remembering “Difficulties” in the War of Independence

The 2002 re-organisation in Anıtkabir mirrored an inclusive perception of visitors as “everyone”. A senior museum expert, Fatma Hanım, elucidated that “when the museum gets larger, its mission also changes [and extends to] conveying history to the people” (Interview 23 January 2013). The museum evolved from being a collection of Atatürk’s personal belongings to a museum that brings together and teaches about the Independence War and the Early Republican period *through* Atatürk (See Chapter 4). In explaining the motives of this project, there were two main phrases repeated by informants: to show visitors the “difficulties” (Interview with Oya Eskici 7 December 2012; Interview with Tamer Bey 23 May 2013) faced during the War of Independence and “to teach” / “introduce” (Interview 21 February 2013) Atatürk.

As a response to my question “what does the renovated Anıtkabir aim to convey to its visitors?”, the museum director responded that “in this new form, the museum became more meaningful”. In her opinion, the museum tells the visitor that “Atatürk did not succeed [in the War of Independence] on his own. Many difficulties were overcome with the help of the people” (Interview with Oya Eskici 7 December 2012). Likewise, the historian-curator, who organised the vaulted section on Early Republican reforms told me that they “wanted people to leave having learned the difficulties which had to be overcome by the people during the establishment of the Republic” (Interview with Erkin Bey 23 May 2013).

The second section of the museum (the panoramic paintings) is constructed around stories of such “difficulties”, overcome through *self-sacrifice* and *loss*. These stories were written by Turgut Özakman, echoing his renowned novel *Those Crazy Turks* on the Turkish War of Independence (See Chapter 4). Unlike the victorious and glorious representation of the Ottoman history in Topkapı Palace Museum, in Anıtkabir Özakman’s scenario evokes failure, betrayal and violence created by internal and external enemies of the nation. It also shows that these difficulties were handled through the leadership of Atatürk and with the mass participation of the nation. In this way, Anıtkabir brings the Independence War closer to “the people” with an emphasis on their “selfless contributions” (Anıtkabir Command 2005: 99). Here, Özdalga’s (2009) critique of *Those Crazy Turks* is informative. Like the novel, the museum’s stories are constructed around abstract individual figures with no personal or cultural background. Dialogues forming the stories portray a sequence of events in the war and to convey certain messages (Özdalga 2009: 65).

There are many paintings, where such individualised and abstract stories with an underlining message of “sacrifice” are performed by the museum guides. Two examples are useful in understanding “having suffered together” (Renan 1882). The first painting is called “Implementation of Tekalif-i Milliye (National Obligations)” (Figure 74). Tekalif-i Milliye was enacted in 1921 before the Battle of Sakarya and obliged citizens to give a proportion of their belongings to the Turkish army. In this painting, as its Turkish label suggests, “sacrifices made by the Turkish nation [...] in

a village of Central Anatolia in line with the orders of Tekalif-i Milliye issued by [...] Mustafa Kemal Pasha [...] are depicted” (my translation)⁶⁹. In front of this painting, the guide narrates that “people participated in these orders voluntarily and they fought in poverty” (Fieldnotes 23 January 2013). Thus, this painting works as a legitimising tool for the harsh measures taken during the Independence War.



Figure 74: “Implementation of Tekalif-i Milliye (National Obligations)”

The exhibit continues to show that people were ready to sacrifice their lives for the nation. The second painting “Daily Life in the Trenches in the Middle of the War in Çanakkale” (Figure 75) (Anıtkabir Command 2005: 103) highlights the notion of “sacrifice” through the individualised story of Hennaed Mehmet (*Kıvalı Mehmet*). Kıvalı Mehmet is depicted sitting together with other soldiers. Among those sitting in the middle of the painting, he is the only one without a hat and he has brown-red hair. Mehmet is illiterate and the soldier in front of him writes a letter for him. According to the scenario and the performance of the guides, Mehmet writes to his mother, saying that his commander ridicules him for having hennaed hair. The

⁶⁹ Note that in the original English version of this label, “*fedakarlık*”, which literally means “sacrifice”, is translated as “contribution” and “millet”, which means “nation”, is translated as “the people”. Since the aim is to focus on what Anıtkabir conveys to Turkish visitors, I will not dwell upon the differences between translations and the original text.

mother replies: “Son, tell your commander that we use henna on three things: on our sacrificial lambs to sacrifice for Allah, on our brides to sacrifice them for their families, and on our soldiers to sacrifice them for the country”. The narration ends with “Kıvalı Mehmet [dying] before receiving his mother’s reply” (Anıtkabir Command N/A: 25).



Figure 75: “Hennaed Mehmet”

As a citizen of the Turkish Republic brought up by the official Turkish history, this was the first time I heard that henna was used by soldiers as a symbol for sacrifice. Therefore, I was surprised when I saw that this tradition was re-invented in the photographic exhibit “Military Hearth: World of Turkish Troops” (23-29 April 2013), prepared by the Anadolu Agency⁷⁰ and hosted in Anıtkabir. The exhibit displays photos of daily life in military camps. There was a photograph of Turkish soldiers, putting their hennaed hands up in the air. In my interview with the curator of this exhibit, Fatih Bey, I asked why he chose to display this particular photograph. He told me that normally henna is not a common practice among soldiers. However,

⁷⁰ Founded in 1920, Anadolu Agency is the official media agency in Turkey (Anadolu Agency N/A).

he added, “the exhibit is a means to display the humane character” (Interview 22 May 2013) of the Turkish Army and soldiers, who – by applying henna - show that they are ready to sacrifice their lives for the country. The exhibition evokes an idea of self-sacrifice for the nation. More significantly, at a time when the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) is losing its political and ideological sources of power (See Chapters 3 and 4), it brings the institution closer to the people by presenting snapshots from its everydayness and “*humane character*”.



Figure 76: Hennaed Turkish Soldiers in the photo exhibit “Military Hearth: World of Turkish Troops” (23-29 April 2013)

In line with this, for Anıtkabir, remembering “common suffering is greater than happiness” (Renan 1882). Instead of remembering a golden age, at stake is the re-imagination of “Turkishness” as a “horizontal comradeship” (Anderson 2006: 7). Regardless of actual differences and inequalities, the scenario re-imagines “Turkishness” horizontally through the creation of abstract fictional figures in “homogenous empty time” (ibid.: 11). It emphasises mass participation and self-

sacrifice of the ordinary people in the Independence War, while forgetting / sidestepping the harsh regulations of the period. Attention is diverted towards an imagination of “others” as the actual cause of this shared suffering. Irrespective of its pedagogical concerns, Anıtkabir presents snapshots of violence and blood in paintings in the second section and in photos in the third section (See Chapter 7). Describing the Greek occupation of İzmir, the occupation of Istanbul, and the Treaty of Sevres (See Chapter 7), Özakman’s scenario reconstructs “enemies of yesterday” which are still “the enemies of today” (Özdalga 2009: 66). As in the novel, there are four visible enemies of the emerging *Turkey*: Greeks, Ottomans, Islamists, and Kurds, who ally themselves with the imperial powers.

The third section, curated by former history school teacher Tamer Bey, demonstrates these enemies with historical evidence, rather than with fictional stories. Here, three defining movements against the secular Republic are shown through documents and photographs, acting as historical proofs. The first is “Mudros (Mondros) Armistice, Occupation of the Country” (Figure 77). The Mudros Armistice was signed by the Ottomans in 1918 and it is represented as the end of the Empire and the beginning of the War of Independence. In this section soldier-guides narrate that “Mudros is a document for unconditional submission, rather than an armistice. According to this treaty, the Ottoman State was de facto vanishing from history. You can see the articles in this agreement in the display case” (Fieldnotes 20 May 2013; Anıtkabir Command N/A: 26). Continuing with Mustafa Kemal’s comments on the treaty, the guide quotes him “The Ottoman Government [...] not only allowed, but also promised that it will help the enemies in their occupation of the country” (ibid.). Thus, the Ottoman Empire is delegitimised and depicted as a traitor, collaborating with *Turkey*’s enemies (Özdalga 2009: 67).



Figure 77: The Mudros Armistice (On the right side are the articles of the agreement, while on the right top there are the photos of Ottoman statesmen who signed the agreement. Below on the right is the telegram of Atatürk, condemning the agreement.)

The second affair is displayed under the section “Domestic and Foreign Political Events”: The Sheikh Mehmet Said Rebellion in Diyarbakır, south-eastern Anatolia, which erupted in 1925 after the abolition of the Caliphate (Figure 78). The information board in the display case represents the event as being triggered by the allegation that “religion is being lost!” against the secularising reforms of the Early Republic. Furthermore, the scenario performed by the guides underlines that the rebellion followed “incitements” (Anıtkabir Command N/A: 26) from the British, who wanted to “disturb the stability of the country” (information board). In this way, three “others” of “Turkishness” are represented in a single figure: Sheik Sait, who is

Kurdish, Islamist and allied with the external British enemy. Having presented internal and external enemies, the information moves on to justify the dominance created by the “Independence Courts”. Here, the rebellion is represented as an example legitimising the dominance over Kurdish populations and Islam, as their perceived backwardness and illiteracy are seen to pose a threat to the system (Zürcher 1997: 178-80; Azak 2010: 23; Üngör 2011: 126).



Figure 78: Representation of the Sheikh Sait Rebellion

The third significant event is the Menemen incident (Figure 79). In 1930 in İzmir, a city on the Western coast of Anatolia, Dervish Mehmet, a member of the Naqshibandi religious order (outlawed by the Republic in 1926), fuelled a rebellion demanding restoration of the Islamic order and the Caliphate. The local teacher and officer Kubilay, who was sent to stop the uprisings, was captured and publicly beheaded. This incident “proved to be traumatic for the [new] regime [since] it occurred not in a backward region of Anatolia but in one of its most advanced

provinces” (Ahmad 1993: 60). The Said Rebellion could be displayed as a result of south-eastern provincial backwardness. However, this incident was a clear manifestation of wide-spread Islamic dissent against the secular Republic. For this reason, the information board suggests: “investigations revealed that the incident did not have a regional characteristic and [...] [it] was a reactionary (*irticai*) and political movement” (original translation). This incident was remembered as a trauma, while its location in İzmir is represented as an exceptional, individual, and reactionary movement. In this way, the backward and corrupt Ottoman Empire, Islamist reactions, and rebellious Kurds are institutionalised as the internal enemies of “Turkishness” in Anıtkabir.



Figure 79: The Menemen Incident: The first photograph shows Kubilay (the local teacher-officer). The second depicts judges in the trials, while the last is a photograph of men convicted with the crime.

Anıtkabir brings both the museum and the history it is representing closer to the people by remembering “common sufferings” (Renan 1882) caused by shared

enemies. This form of representation is far from new. Since the 1930s “in all the Social Studies textbooks, being a Turk is contextualised first and foremost in relation to the War of Independence” (Çayır 2009: 47). However, within a context where the TAF is losing its grip on political and ideological power, Anıtkabir could have portrayed snapshots of victory and glory as a form of “nostalgia for the modern” (Özyürek 2006) Republic. It could have displayed “our history” as a story of success, as it is the case in Topkapı Palace Museum. Instead, Anıtkabir works to re-imagine “Turkishness” as a “horizontal comradeship” (Anderson 2006: 7), taking pride in self-sacrifice and its suppression of the Islamist movements.

Humanising Atatürk

Bringing forward an emphasis on shared suffering and self-sacrifice, Anıtkabir highlights that Atatürk did not succeed alone in the War of Independence. Thus, it brings the cult of Atatürk closer to the people. The leading art director Burhan Bey made it clear that one of his motives in initiating the Anıtkabir re-organisation project was to “let visitors get to know Atatürk.” He continued: “Others said [...] they already know Atatürk’. I told them, ‘no they do not know the *real* Atatürk. Let us make Atatürk live here’” (Interview 21 February 2013). He wanted to display Atatürk as a ‘real person’, at a time when his cult of personality - and therefore, Anıtkabir as “the shrine of Kemalism” (Meeker 1997: 157) or a “saint’s tomb” (Navaro-Yashin 2002: 191) - are under severe criticism (See Chapter 4). Through Anıtkabir’s 2002 and 2005 re-organisations and daily museum practices, Atatürk’s image turned into ‘someone like us’. This shift has been visible in popular culture since the 1990s. Coloured photographs of Atatürk drinking, swimming or playing with children have been commoditised in calendars and posters (Özyürek 2006: 93-125). However, for the first time, this human image of Atatürk is institutionalised in a state museum in Turkey. His cult of personality is *humanised* by emphasising his familial background / lifestyle and displaying his physical and material existence in Anıtkabir.

Anıtkabir is architecturally designed as a sacred space for remembering Atatürk, and this sacredness is imposed on visitors through a set of strict visiting rules (See

Chapter 4). However, throughout my fieldwork, I observed visitors escaping the rigidity of the site, further blurring its sacredness and profaneness. For instance, one might see that visitors are praying in front of the mausoleum or İsmet İnönü's tomb (Figure 80). As Türköz (2014) also notes, one may also encounter newly-weds in gowns and suits, or boys dressed in their traditional circumcision outfit (Figure 81) visiting the mausoleum, just like a visit to a saint's tomb.



Figure 80: Men praying in front of İsmet İnönü's tomb, facing the mausoleum



Figure 81: A boy dressed in circumcision ceremony outfit in Anıtkabir

While such visits are not prohibited, they are reframed by the *Anıtkabir* journal with the title “They Shared Their Happiness with the Father (Ata)” [*Mutluluklarını Ata ile Paylaştılar*] in each issue (Figure 82). In this way, visiting Anıtkabir and Atatürk is reframed and secularised with an imagined familial link formed between Atatürk as the father and the nation as his children (Özyürek 2006: 67; Türköz 2014). Hence Atatürk is not only an object of veneration, but a (lost) father figure with whom happiness could be shared.

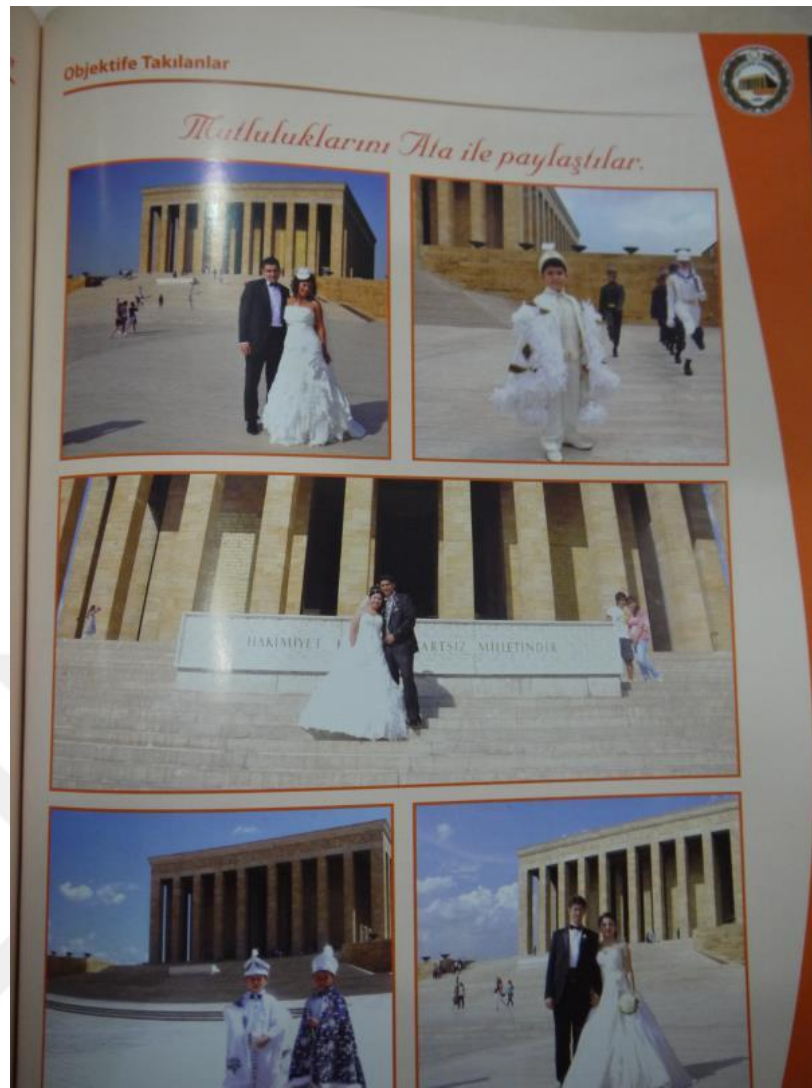


Figure 82: Newly-weds and circumcision boys in Anıtkabir (*Anıtkabir* September 2010: 41)

This imagined familial link assumes shared ancestry, common culture, history, language, and religion (Smith 2009: 36). For this reason, Atatürk's place of origin has been controversial in the construction of "Turkishness". The official story tells us that "Atatürk was born in Thessaloniki, his mother is Zübeyde and his father is Ali Rıza Efendi". The 2002 re-organisation re-told this story. The first display (Figure 83) case contained photographs of his parents and his identity cards. For the architect who re-organised this section starting with his parents' photographs "was a matter of logic" (Interview with Çağrı Bey 6 March 2013). However this "logic", fed by the official historiography (See Chapter 6), was increasingly questioned as competing

stories about Atatürk's origin and family began to appear in news media. In press accounts, some claimed that Atatürk was adopted and he was actually born in Malatya, Central Anatolia (*Radikal* 20 August 2012). Others argued that he was not even Turkish (*Radikal* 28 October 2012).

As these debates continued, one day a visitor rushed into the museum library, where I was reviewing journals. She was furious and asked to speak to an expert on Atatürk. She had read the reports on Atatürk and asked anxiously: "What if he is not from Thessaloniki and his parents are not Zübeyde Hanım and Ali Rıza Efendi?" (Fieldnotes 24 April 2013). She was furious because taken-for-granted 'facts' that everyone is taught in schools were challenged. Experts tried to calm her down by stating the reports were false and that the museum possessed the real historical evidence. A few weeks after this incident, the first display case in the museum was changed. Previously, this contained photographs of Atatürk's parents and two identity cards, one issued before the establishment of the Republic as Mustafa Kemal and the other issued after the establishment of the Republic as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Figure 83). With the alteration (Figure 84), the two identity cards were moved to the second display case and the first display case was re-organised to display the photographs of all family members, including Atatürk and his step-sister.



Figure 83:

The previous display case (Anıtkabir and the War of Independence Museum N/A)



Figure 84:

The renewed display case

Oya Eskici, the museum director, told me: “It was necessary to show that Atatürk had a proper family like any of us” (Fieldnotes 20 May 2013). Later while I was writing my thesis, the Anıtkabir Command published *Atatürk ve Çocuk* (2014) [Atatürk and Children]. The book opens with the chapter “Atatürk was a Child too” (*Atatürk de Bir Çocuktü*). This chapter starts by re-stating Atatürk’s parents’ names and their family trees. The book reports that Atatürk’s father, Ali Rıza Efendi, was from a Central Anatolian village and his mother, Zübeyda Hanım, was the daughter of a migrant family from Turkmenistan (Anıtkabir Komutanlığı 2014: 9). Against the allegations, the museum re-affirmed that Atatürk, “like any of us”, had a family and they were Turks, who migrated from Central Asia. Thereby, it restated the official Turkish History Thesis (Ersanlı 2002a; See Chapter 3) in the guise of the human Atatürk himself.

The first section of the museum illustrates that Atatürk was both Turkic in origins and already Western. In this section, his personal belongings such as walking sticks, sports equipment, tuxedos, suits, toiletries, and drinking sets pinpoint a perceived secular-Western lifestyle. These displayed items are contextualised by photographs, where Atatürk is shown wearing swimming suits and in the company of women, and by wax statues dressed in tuxedos (Figure 85). From this perspective, Atatürk was one of ‘us’, yet also exceptionally beyond ‘us’, standing as an exemplary modern man.



Figure 85: A snapshot from the first section of Anıtkabir museum, displaying Atatürk’s clothing

The second section of the museum makes this explicit through the re-animation of scenes from the War of Independence in panoramic paintings. Here, Atatürk is situated *among* soldiers or the people, yet always sitting / standing *above* them. Erkin Bey the Turkish artist, who sketched the paintings in the second section, highlighted this when he talked about the production process. He sketched the painting, where

Atatürk is sitting down with the people before the Battle of Sakarya (Figure 86). Before he sent his sketch to the commissioned Russian artists, he was approached by a Turkish commander from the Military History and Strategic Study (MHSS): “[He] told me that [...] a commander would never sit on the ground, there has to be something below [...] And he added ‘you have to place commanders always above. No one shall be sitting in a higher position than the commander’” (Interview 23 April 2013). Sitting above the people, he also looks towards the future and directly at the visitor. His direct gaze becomes more visible as one passes in between the two portraits of Atatürk (Figure 87). Here, the soldier-guide says “if you look carefully, you will see that Atatürk the soldier and Atatürk the president follows you with his body and eyes as you walk” (Fieldnotes 23 January 2013).



Figure 86: Mustafa Kemal sitting above the people

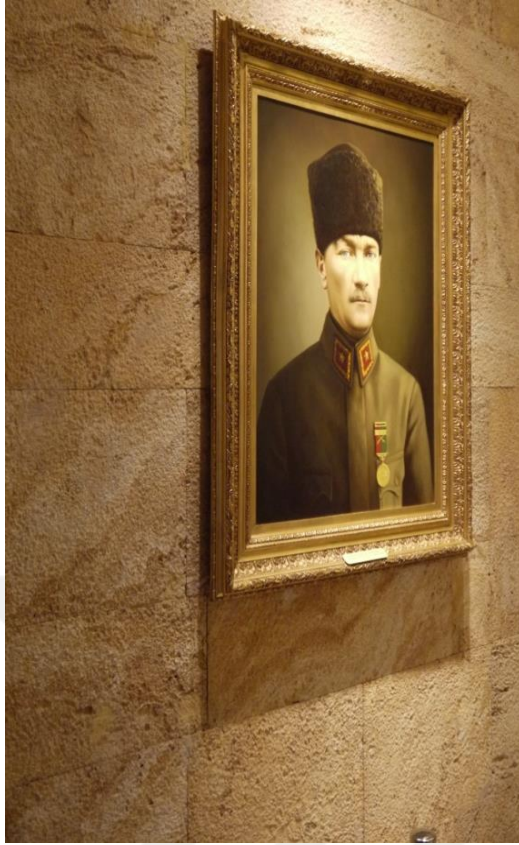


Figure 87: The mythical gaze of Atatürk

This mythical gaze is materialised through three wax statues. One is situated in the first section, a standing Atatürk in his tuxedo (Figure 85). Another is in the last section, displaying Atatürk at his desk (Figure 89). According to a museum employee's description, the second figure proved controversial since Atatürk's expression looked "angry and authoritative" (Fieldnotes 23 January 2013). It was re-crafted by the same artist and replaced by a new one, in which Atatürk's face and posture are more "neutral" and "humane" (ibid.).

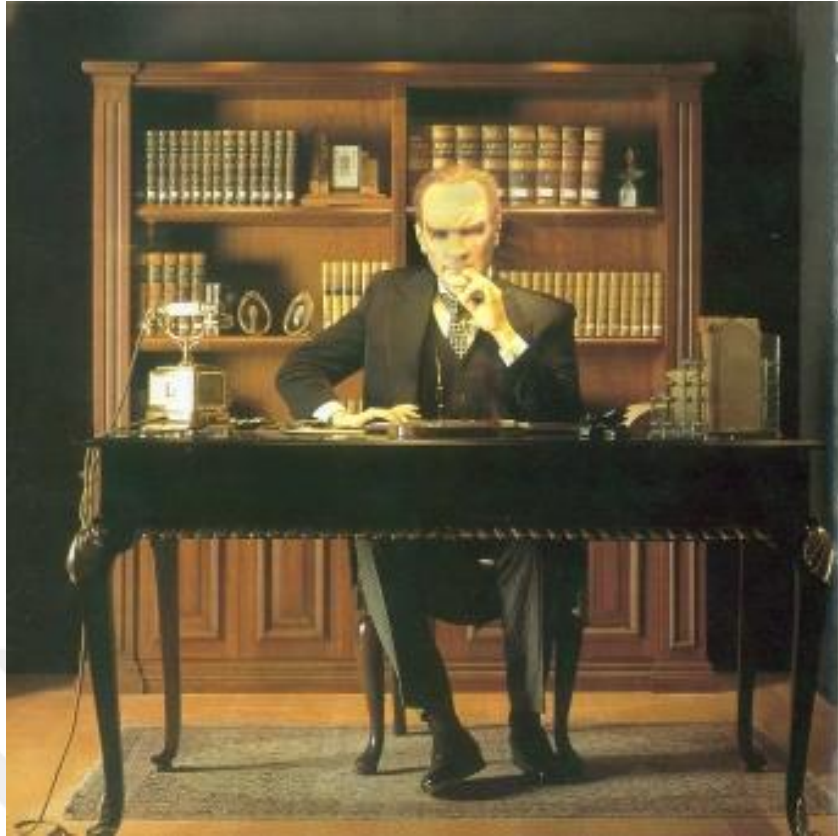


Figure 88: Previous display of Atatürk's wax statue in 2005 (The Atatürk and War of Independence Museum N/A)



Figure 89: The current display of Atatürk's wax statue

After my fieldwork, a third wax statue was placed at the exit door by the entrance of the museum shop (Figure 90). It is a standing figure, which is not placed in a display case. On my last visit to Anıtkabir, I saw visitors lining up to have their photographs taken or to take ‘selfies’ with the statue (Fieldnotes 21 August 2014). Anıtkabir museum encouraged this, posting a sign next to the statue: “You may take photographs with Atatürk” (Figure 91). With small changes in the museum, Atatürk is re-imagined as inheriting the “immemorial past” (Anderson 2006: 11) of Turks in Central Asia through his parents and “sliding into a limitless future” (ibid.: 12) through his eternal gaze directed towards the West and his nation. At the same time, he is re-imagined sitting among the people as ‘someone like us’, who was once a child and had a family. Imagined as someone among us, he is re-animated as a physical reality through his wax statues with which visitors can interact.



Figure 90: The third wax statue of Atatürk in Anıtkabir museum

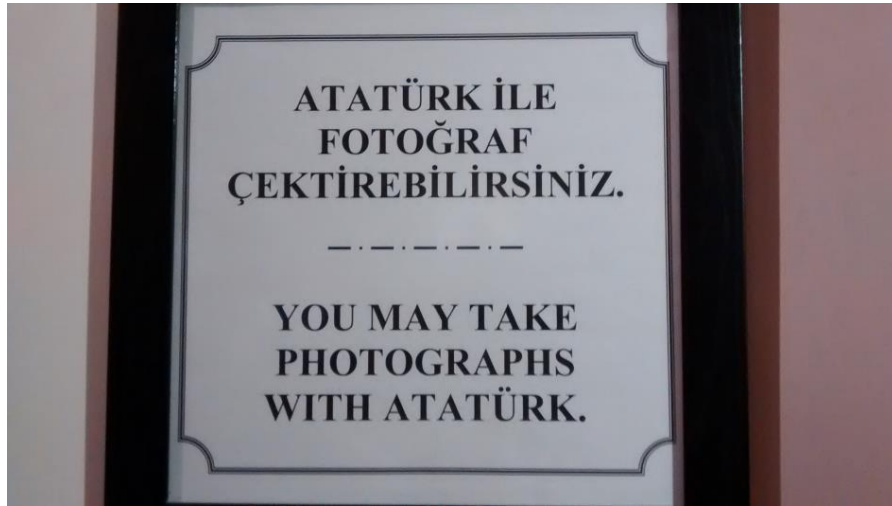


Figure 91: “You may take photographs with Atatürk”

Atatürk was made real not only through a display of his personal belongings, paintings or wax statues. For the first time, on November 10th 2013, (the anniversary of his death) Anıtkabir displayed two new items (for only two days). Plaster casts of his face and his hand, moulded minutes after his death, were placed in a display case in front of the tomb room (Figure 92). The senior expert told me that “now people are ready to see the plaster” (Fieldnotes 11 November 2012). For him, it is at this time of flux that the “real” Atatürk could be displayed. However, I observed that most visitors were disturbed by these casts. They not only commemorated his death, but also reminded the visitors that Atatürk was a real person who was born, who lived and died. In fact, one visitor retreated from the display unit saying “this is way too real” (Fieldnotes 11 November 2012).



Figure 92: Plaster cast of hand, and death mask of Atatürk (courtesy of a museum employee)

Besides museum practices undoing Atatürk's cult, the museum's re-organisation aimed to emphasise that "visiting Anıtkabir is not a tomb visit" (Interview with Burhan Bey 21 February 2013). To ensure this, both the interior architectural design and the narration of the museum were changed. With the 2002 re-organisation, the vaulted section, originally designed as tombs for Turkish presidents (See Chapter 4), was integrated into the museum. With the renovation, Atatürk's tomb room was covered by a huge relief, depicting Atatürk looking directly at the visitor and towards Ankara Castle through the window (Figure 93). In front of the room, a television screen carries live images of the tomb room from various angles. While secularising Anıtkabir, Atatürk is once again "set apart" (Durkheim 1915: 47) behind the relief and "forbidden" (ibid.) to look at, except through the medium of the television screen.



Figure 93: Atatürk's tomb room

Here, humanising Atatürk entails a simultaneous process of secularisation and sacralisation. This double movement is inscribed in daily performances of soldier-guides, narrating Atatürk's death and burial. The guide gives information on Atatürk's funeral and how his body was transferred to Anıtkabir:

His body was preserved with a particular medicine until the construction of the mausoleum was finished on the 15th anniversary of his death [...] When his body was brought here, it was washed and buried in the soil of our homeland according to Islamic principles, his face looking towards the Qibla. May his soul be blessed. Amen. (Fieldnotes 24 April 2013).

One day as I was sitting in front of the relief, Fahriye Hanım - a junior civil servant – approached to me. She initiated an informal conversation, creating a rare occasion beyond “textuality” (See Chapter 6). Even before I asked any questions, she informed me about Atatürk's tomb room and commented: “This relief had to be put here as a door to prevent people from tying cloths. This is a real tomb, not an idol. We do not have idolatry in our faith [...] In our faith you cannot put anything between the believer and Allah” (Fieldnotes 21 May 2013). By covering his tomb with a relief, visitors are prevented from practicing traditions that might be associated with visiting a saint's tomb. Thus, state-sponsored secularist

understanding of Islam is re-asserted as the single (and *correct*) form of “our faith”, as accepted by the 1980 coup (Şen 2010: 66).

However, at the same time, Atatürk’s body is further mystified by being set apart behind a huge door. This simultaneous move of sacralisation and de-sacralisation is more than a reformulation of “civil religion” “beliefs, symbols and rituals with respect to sacred things [...] institutionalized” (Bellah 1967: 8). Likewise, it does not reflect upon the formation of a “political religion”, rejecting “coexistence with other political ideologies and movements, [...] the autonomy of the individual” (Gentile 2005: 30). Anıtkabir seeks to reconcile the two forces in its quest for ideological power by relaxing its rules and aiming towards a more inclusive approach. In accordance with Anıtkabir’s visitor perceptions, the museum conveys itself and the Early Republic closer to the people, while bringing the cult of Atatürk down to earth as a “real” character in history. Through the image of a *human* Atatürk, Anıtkabir on a daily basis reminds its visitor of the *ideal* Turk, who is not a cult figure but an ordinary father, not practicing folkloric religious practice but ‘appropriate’ Islam, and yet living not a religious, but a secular life.

IV. Conclusion

This chapter discusses the ways in which “Turkishness” as an “institutionalised form” (Brubaker 1996: 7) is crystallised through Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums’ perceptions of their visitors and their re-enactment of competing fragments of history. At a time when holders of state power have been reversed by neo-Islamist Justice and Development Party (JDP) government, it dwells on overturning and reconciling the binaries of modern / backward; oppressed /oppressor; West / East; and secular / sacred. Transforming these binaries, Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums construct competing “high culture(s)” (Gellner 1983), expressed in the imagination of “ourselves” and “our history”, in relation to both the presents and pasts they represent.

Topkapı Palace Museum imagines “ourselves” through an institutional high culture that conceives its visitors as “ignorant”. Contrary to Gellner’s understanding, the

museum's "high culture" is not universalistic or standardised. It is distinguished by the particularistic use of Ottoman language and exclusive museum practices that take pride in a glorious imperial history. Topkapı Palace Museum's institutional mind-set reproduces a distance between unspecialised and ignorant visitor vis-à-vis esteemed civil servants. At a time when the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) is losing its hold on ideological sources of power, Anıtkabir aims to bridge the gap between itself as a military museum and its visitors. Moving towards a more egalitarian approach, Anıtkabir perceives visitors as "everyone", and yet keeps a safe distance to ensure their monitoring. Anıtkabir museum becomes one of the means through which Kemalist "school-transmitted culture" (Gellner 1983: 35), and official text-book historiography could be disseminated to "everyone" despite the flux in Turkey.

Museums' institutional "high culture(s)" reflect on the ways in which they relate to the competing pasts they are exhibiting. For Topkapı Palace Museum, greatness of the Ottoman past relies not on the success story of an Islamic Empire. Instead, greatness is woven around a display of Ottoman sultans, who were *already modern*, and a high palace culture that was essentially *Western*. Westernising sultans and palace life created a common ground for museum experts, museum director, the MCT, and the expert assistants. In this way, this emphasis took the monopoly of modernisation and Westernisation away from Atatürk and his modern secular Republic.

Anıtkabir re-imagines "Turkishness" as a "horizontal comradeship" (Anderson 2006: 7) on the basis of "common sufferings" (Renan 1882) during the Independence War. Through the narration of abstract individuals' stories, Anıtkabir imagines another form of greatness, different from the one in Topkapı Palace Museum. It takes pride in a story of emancipation, "selfless contribution", and mass participation. Anıtkabir's narrative "involves the stress of folk [and] folklore" (Gellner 1964: 162), creating an image of Anıtkabir that is closer to its visitors. While bridging the gap between the visitors and the War of Independence, Anıtkabir also brings Atatürk down to earth, deconstructing his cult. At this time of unrest, when 'facts' about

Atatürk are being challenged, Atatürk is re-imagined ‘as one of us,’ as a real person, Turkish, secular, Western, and a true Sunni Muslim.

The making of “Turkishness” by competing actors of the state entails “choreography” (Kadioğlu and Keyman 2011: xi) between binaries of West/East, secular/sacred, modern/backward, and oppressed/oppressor. These binaries do not merely overlap or coincide. Likewise, they are not only overturned, but also reconciled and transformed in the quest for power. Topkapı Palace Museum shifts an image of the corrupt Islamic Ottoman Empire and hails an image of *already modern* sultans and palace life. In Anıtkabir, the secular Republican past and the National Struggle are displayed as popular movements led not by a symbolic and distant cult, but by the *human* Atatürk as a religiously traditional yet secular figure. Therefore, within the political polarisation of Turkey, these museums do not merely reproduce Islamist or secularist versions of Turkish history. Instead, they reconcile, negotiate, and thereby transform the binaries that reproduce this polarisation.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

I. Revisiting the Research Aim, Scope and Questions

At a time when the Kemalist-secularist legacy has been dislocated from state power under neo-Islamist Justice and Development Party (JDP) government, this study posed its question: “How are the oppositionary – namely secular Republican and Islamic Ottoman – pasts of ‘Turkishness’ remembered, forgotten, and negotiated in daily museum practices of Anıtkabir, Atatürk’s mausoleum, and Topkapı Palace Museum, the imperial house?” The two museums are selected as field sites both for representing the oppositionary pasts and for being affiliated with competing institutions of the state. Anıtkabir is under the command of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), whose ‘guardian’ role over secularism diminished along with its degrading ideological, political, and economic powers. Topkapı Palace enjoys the Ministry of Culture and Tourism’s (MCT) powers. It draws on the MCT’s monopoly over “ideological power” (Mann 2006) and its increasing political power due to the staffing of pro-JDP employees. Through an ethnography of these competing agencies of the state, the research traced the *processes* of selectively re-appropriating and displaying the oppositionary pasts.

Both the research question and the selection of these museums are informed by the contemporary transformation in Turkey. I look at a particular time of overturning power relations within the state. Diminishing “power sources” (Mann 1986) of the TAF have been re-appropriated by the neo-Islamist JDP government. The JDP was able to de-militarise politics and ideology, while appointing their own supporters in the permanent cadres of bureaucracy. In this context, secularist-Kemalist nationalism is increasingly undermined (and transformed) with the growing institutionalisation of a “neo-nationalism of greatness” (İnsel 2013), i.e. a blend of neo-Ottomanism asserting imperial greatness of the Ottoman past, and Islamism highlighting moral foundations of the nation. What happens to the binary oppositionary pasts and competing state museums at this particular time of change in Turkey? What is remembered / forgotten? How are the binary oppositions of secular-modern-Western Republic vis-à-vis Islamic-backward-Ottoman Empire challenged and negotiated in

the everyday settings of these museums? As these secondary research questions also highlight, the research aimed to portray the contested exhibition of “Turkishness”, i.e. processes of remembering, forgetting, and inventing nationness.

In the face of fluctuating power relations in Turkey, there are three interwoven areas of investigation underlying this research: (1) how museums, as state institutions, function on a daily basis, (2) what they represent / fail to represent, and (3) negotiation and decision-making processes leading to their exhibitions. First, I outline legal and institutional frameworks and their transformation, which inform Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums’ competing “sources of power” (Mann 1986) (Chapter 4). I look at how the (relatively stable) Kemalist “state tradition” (Heper 1985), expressed in inter-institutional and intra-institutional power mechanisms, reflects on bureaucracies of the two museums (Chapter 6). Second, I unpack the re-invention of Islamic Ottoman and secular Republican pasts beyond the disputed zone of museum bureaucracies (Chapter 7). I underline how the two museums remember and forget the competing pasts in different degrees. Third, moving beyond assigning Islamic-Eastern-imperial representations to Topkapı Palace Museum and secular-Western-national ones to Anıtkabir Museum, I trace the processes of making “Turkishness” (Chapter 8). I explore how the two museums construct institutional and historical “high cultures” (Gellner 1983) by negotiating the binaries of “Turkishness”. Therefore, I argue that “Turkishness” as an “institutionalised form” (Brubaker 1996: 7) is crystallised, as its binaries and opposing pasts are reversed, deliberated (remembered / forgotten), and transformed in the quest for power in the everyday practices of museum bureaucracies.

Having reviewed the aims, scope, and questions, I now move on to provide a summary of key findings. I will then outline the empirical, theoretical, and methodological contributions of this study, which will be followed by a discussion of this study’s limitations and prospects for further research.

II. Key Findings and Main Arguments

I advance three main arguments. In each substantive chapter, I address my research questions and the triadic structure of the thesis on the *regulation, invention, and making* of “Turkishness” in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums. Each argument builds on one another for discussing the main research question on the negotiation processes of displaying “Turkishness” in a changing Turkey.

a. Bureaucratising the Competing Pasts of “Turkishness”

Drawing on Mann’s “institutional statism” (1993: 88), Chapter 6 unpacks the cohesive legal framework, regulating secular Republican and Islamic Ottoman pasts. It explores the enduring effects and diverse reflections of the Kemalist “state tradition” (Heper 1985) on preparing exhibitions in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums. In terms of the (relatively stable) regulative framework, both museums continue to work within the boundaries of the Kemalist historiography of the post-1980 coup, which excluded the last 20 years of the Empire to remember the formation of the modern Republic. Museum regulations oblige MCT-affiliated museums (like Topkapı Palace Museum) to prepare exhibitions chronologically. Military museums under the command of the TAF (like Anıtkabir Museum) are endowed with the duty to prepare didactic exhibits of “national history”, i.e. the War of Independence and Atatürk, as defined by the Law No 2863 (1983).

The (unsuccessful) Regulation on the Foundation and Presidency of National Museums (2005) re-imagined what is national and what is not. This entailed two instances of overturning power relationships: one in terms of inter-institutional power mechanisms and the other one in terms of the pasts that Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir are representing. First, the MCT re-asserted its “ideological power” (Mann 2006) to organise and make national history, as the regulation excluded museums outside the MCT from becoming national museums. The regulation on national museums unsettled the TAF’s monopoly over “national history”. Topkapı Palace Museum’s historical and institutional exclusion from being a national palace turned into an institutional exceptionality as a national museum. Anıtkabir’s exceptionality retreated to institutional exclusion as a military museum. Second, through this

regulation, an Islamic Ottoman past is re-inserted into the official history and elevated as the defining past of national history. Since any other state museum outside the MCT was unqualified to be a national museum, the secular Republican past and Anıtkabir were bypassed in the re-imagination and institutionalisation of nationness.

As the “infrastructural power” (Mann 1993: 59) to regulate national history developed, the “collective power” (ibid.) of civil servants became more manifest in two different forms of bureaucracy. In Topkapı Palace Museum, civil servants were polarised in two groups. On the one hand, the older group of museum experts, who expressed secularist concerns and nostalgia for Atatürk, held the monopoly over the museum’s collections and prepared displays chronologically according to art historical value of artefacts. On the other hand, excluded from exhibitionary practices, a younger group of assistants and lower ranks in bureaucracy were distinguished by their aspiration to re-animate the Ottoman past in Topkapı Palace Museum beyond exhibition halls. Here, both groups utilised the “civil servant mentality” - i.e. reluctance to work or move beyond given tasks or regulations, gossiping, delaying bureaucratic processes, and ensuring “bureaucratic secrecy” (Weber 2006 [1968]: 64) - in the maintenance of (in)formal power relations within the museum. In Anıtkabir, there were no visible spaces for moving beyond already existing rules, institutional hierarchies, and the militaristic chain of command. Its management was further militarised and its constructed institutional homogeneity was perpetuated by cultural producers (civil servants, private actors, and soldiers), who identified themselves as anonymous “servants of the state”.

These different “bureaucratic encounters” (Brubaker 1996: 31) are mechanisms for negotiating Kemalist historiography. In Topkapı Palace Museum, through the “civil servant mentality”, the older generation of museum experts resisted radical change. They insisted on chronological displays (usually bypassing or undermining the late 19th century) of artefacts marked by their art historical value, rather than the Ottoman past they evoke. In the face of institutionalisation of neo-Ottomanism and rising criticisms against secularism and Kemalism in Turkey, Anıtkabir closes upon itself

to retain its homogeneity as a military museum. Here, “servants of the state” do not diverge from the didactic, textual, and realist “three-dimensional stories” (Gür 2001) of the secular Republic to retain the homogeneity of the institution. I argue that either by endorsing the “iron cage” (Weber 2001 [1930]) or bending it into a “rubber cage” (Gellner 1987), bureaucracy in both museums works in reproducing and challenging established power relations. Thereby, it safeguards the Kemalist imagination of “Turkishness” that replaced the decadence of the Empire with the formation of the modern Republic.

b. (Re)inventing the Competing Traditions: Degrees of Remembrance and Commemoration

Neither Topkapı Palace nor Anıtkabir museum is a static and abstract state institution. Chapter 7 underlines that as a response to the current institutionalisation of neo-Ottomanism and overshadowing of Kemalism, two museums “invented [oppositionary] traditions” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) with reference to secular Republican and Islamic Ottoman pasts. Topkapı Palace Museum’s Director moved beyond the clogged zone of the “civil servant mentality” in museum practices that fall outside the long and contested bureaucracies of exhibition-making. Through one-day spectacles (concerts, conferences, shows, national days, and commemorative events) in Topkapı Palace Museum, roots, traditions and “founding moments” (Çınar 2005: 145) of the Ottoman Empire were revived. Anıtkabir fortified its homogeneity by “performing the nation” (Fox and Miller-Idris 2008: 538) on a daily basis through staged narratives of the nation and commemorative ceremonies on national days.

What is remembered and forgotten? How do binaries of these oppositionary pasts shift within this process of remembering and forgetting? First, I focus on different degrees of remembering and reviving diverse – although not necessarily oppositional – origins of “Turkishness”, i.e. Central Asia and Anatolia. The Ottoman past is re-linked with the Central Asian roots of “Turkishness” through events such as horseback archery and palace gardening in Topkapı Palace Museum. Here, the image of Anatolia retreats, since greatness is not sought in the Muslim Anatolian past (e.g. with the Seljuks). For the older generation museum experts, Anatolia is a source of

secularist nostalgia. It is reminiscent of the period (the 1980s) when Topkapı Palace Museum held exhibitions to remember the Anatolian past with exhibition receptions featuring alcohol and classical music. In Anıtkabir, Anatolia as the ‘natural’ homeland for Turks is re-invented through images of the War of Independence. It is remembered to forget (Renan 1882) the taboos of the nation. The Çanakkale Campaign (1915) is remembered as the inception of the War of Independence and alleged Greek atrocities in Anatolia are bluntly displayed to forget the Armenian “g-word” (Cooper and Akçam 2005). While not excluding or forgetting those Central Asian roots, “Turkishness” is performed – in the Goffmanian sense – through mythical, individualised, and gendered narrations of ‘Anatolian men and women’ in guided tours.

Both museums work within the boundaries of the same established official Turkish History Thesis that imagines the roots of “Turkishness” in Central Asia and Anatolia (Chapter 3). However, Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums re-appropriate these roots differently with reference to binaries of “Turkishness”, such as Gökalp’s (1959 [1923]) distinction of culture and civilisation. In Anıtkabir, civilisation is used in its established Western sense, which claims to be a pedagogical medium through which the nation can imagine its future. Here, culture is found in the narrations of self-sacrificing and heroic Anatolian men and women, who fought the National Struggle. This gap between culture and civilisation is bridged in Topkapı Palace Museum through invented palace traditions represented as parts of “our culture and civilization” (Topkapı Palace Museum 2012a). Civilisation, in this sense, is no longer sought in an imagined boundless future, where the nation would finally “catch up with the West” (Kasaba 1997: 25). Instead, it is found in the greatness and “geo-cultural” (İnsel 2013: 195) position of the Islamic imperial past that is re-attached to its Central Asian Turkic roots.

Second, these origins are further associated with the binaries of “Turkishness” through “invented traditions” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) and national days. Islamic Ottoman days are re-invented in Topkapı Palace Museum through spectacles such as the commemoration of Istanbul Day, memorialising sultans’ deaths and

birthdays, and “palace traditions” (Dursun 2014a), marking the commemoration of religious days (e.g. Baklava Day, Muharram Day, *Miraj*). The re-invention of such “founding moments” (Çınar 2005: 32) is significant for two reasons. First, it denotes the reversal of Topkapı Palace’s museumification with the decline of the Empire and the formation of the modern Republic. The museum director’s repetition of the phrases such as “for the first time after 200 years” (Dursun 2013b) and ‘palace before the museum’ echo the MCT’s aim to revive the golden age of the Empire in the palace (*Sabah* 14 July 2011). Second, these spectacles also work in remembering and institutionalising Islamic Ottoman “annual markers” (McCrone and McPherson 2009: 213). Concurrently, secular Republican days continue to be commemorated with official ceremonies and temporary exhibits in Anıtkabir. As the visibility of the state faded away with the new regulation on national days, Anıtkabir became a spot for the unofficial commemoration / celebration / demonstrations. Indeed, national days constitute a rule of exceptionality for Anıtkabir. On national days, Anıtkabir, a military museum strictly regulated and policed, allows its visitors to raise their voices, wave their flags and banners as an expression of discontent with the neo-Islamist government in the presence of Atatürk.

Thus, I argue that traditions pertaining to Ottoman and Republican pasts are re-invented through different degrees of remembering the competing roots and (national) days with the same banal signifier of the Turkish flag and within the scope of the same official Turkish History Thesis (Ersanlı 2002a). In Topkapı Palace Museum, they take place beyond the contested sphere of bureaucracy through museum events, while in Anıtkabir they find voice in the everyday performances of museum guides and the exceptional space created for demonstrations on national days.

c. The Making of “Turkishness”: Reversing, Deliberating and Transforming Binaries

The argument on different degrees of remembrance indicates that Republican and Ottoman pasts are not attached to static packages of binary oppositions of West / East; secular / Islamic; good / bad. Neither Topkapı Palace nor Anıtkabir

unproblematically reproduces this set of oppositions in exhibiting “Turkishness”. Rather they reverse, negotiate and transform these binaries in the construction of contending “high culture(s)” (Gellner 1983) through which understandings of ‘ourselves’ and ‘our history’ are upheld vis-à-vis others. How are these binaries negotiated in the making of “Turkishness”? How is “Turkishness” institutionally crystallised in defining ‘ourselves’ and ‘our history’? Chapter 8 traces these processes in the minute details of museum practices. The formation of competing high cultures are manifested in (1) institutional mind-sets defining ‘us’ and ‘others’ through their perception of visitors; and, accordingly, (2) negotiation processes involved in exhibition-making by reversing, deliberating, and transforming binaries.

While there is a shared tendency to homogenise visitors as *numbers*, Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums approach their visitors in different ways. Topkapı Palace Museum perceives its visitors as ignorant “others”, scaling their ignorance in accordance with their ethnicity. The museum formulates an institutional high culture; however, not through standardised and universalistic languages as Gellner (1983) suggested. This high culture is marked by exclusive museum events distinguished by required education level and utilisation of Ottoman Turkish idioms that cannot be easily understood by everyone. Anıtkabir, however, conceives its visitors as “everyone” with a more inclusive approach. While keeping its distance for maintaining control and pedagogical purposes, Anıtkabir increasingly draws itself closer to people by relaxing some of its rules on national days as well as on regular visits to the museum. I discuss that the MCT-affiliated Topkapı Palace Museum enjoys its institutional exceptionality, while moving towards a more elitist approach. Within this context whereby Anıtkabir’s powers are diminishing in line with the TAF, Anıtkabir moves away from its previous elitist stance (Wilson 2013: 125). It increasingly holds onto its visitors with a more egalitarian approach marked by the idea of “serving” not only the state, but also the people.

In line with their institutional mind-sets and “imagined audiences” (Macdonald 2002: 96), Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums exhibit ‘our’ histories. Besides spectacles invoking imperial greatness, a high palace culture is displayed in the

exhibition halls of Topkapı Palace Museum. Discarding ideas about re-animating loss and violence in imperial wars, a Westernised image of sultans and palace life and a victorious conception of Ottoman Empire constitute an agreed ground for experts, outsourced private and state-related actors, and the MCT. As a result of negotiation processes, a “neo-nationalism of greatness” (İnsel 2013) is institutionalised with reference to the geo-political power of the Empire, and also its close affinity with the West. Notably, this is the same benchmark Atatürk imagined for constructing the “high culture” (Gellner 1983) of “Turkishness”. In a background where Kemalism is criticised more than ever, the Republican past could also have been exhibited as a story of success and victory. Instead, in Anıtkabir, “Turkishness” is re-imagined as a “horizontal comradeship” (Anderson 2006: 7). While visitors are invited to remember the “common suffering” (Renan 1882) and shared enemies of the nation, the cult of Atatürk is transformed into ‘someone like us’.

Westernised Islamic sultans and the secularised cult of Atatürk bring us to the main argument of the thesis. “Turkishness” as an “institutionalised form” (Brubaker 1996) is crystallised by drawing on the Kemalist historiography and its binaries: West / East; secular / Islamic; good / bad; oppressor / oppressed. However, changing faces of state power and official nationalism are not only about the dance between these binaries. Binaries and the related pasts are reversed, negotiated and transformed by contending state agencies, endowed with diverse power sources, in everyday museum practices. I argue that the Islamic Ottoman past evoked by the “neo-nationalism of greatness” (İnsel 2013) and secular Republican past emphasised by Kemalist nationalism are neither irreconcilable nor static. Neither Kemalist nationalism nor neo-Islamist nationalism of the JDP is inherently associated with state power. Instead, they are deliberated and transformed in the everyday power struggles of museum bureaucracies.

III. Beyond Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir

These findings and key arguments contribute to the existing scholarly literature and reflect on the wider empirical, theoretical and methodological discussions beyond Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums. The research speaks to profound shifts in

power relations within the state, particularly between the military and the government, and the faces of official nationalism drifting between Kemalist and neo-Ottomanist nationalisms. The findings of the research illuminate theoretical discussions of the state as a polymorphous concept, bureaucracy as essentially a power mechanism, nationness as a negotiated process of remembering / forgetting / displaying, and museums as contested spheres from within. The ways in which these findings are attained provides methodological insights – largely uncovered in the literature – on carrying out an ethnographic study of the state, contested data collection methods and ethical questions arising inside state institutions.

a. Empirical Contributions for the Turkish case

This research captures snapshots from a particular time of transformation and addresses gaps in the empirical literature on state, nationalism and museums in Turkey. It stresses shifts in the “ideological power” (Mann 2006) of the Turkish state. First, it discusses the implications of (the failed attempt of) institutionalising national museums in Turkey, a first in the history of the modern Republic. It draws attention to the consequent changing power relations among and within different state museums, a largely neglected point in the scholarly literature on state museums in Turkey. Second, the study is an original ethnographic account, shedding light on daily bureaucratic practices of museums as state institutions. It contributes to the literature, investigating the “behind-the-scenes” (Macdonald 2002) of museums (Clifford 1997; Davison and Klinghardt 1997). More importantly, it addresses scholarly lacunae on the everydayness of state bureaucracy (Navaro-Yashin 2006: 292) in Turkey. It highlights reflections of political polarisation in Turkey on informal power relationships among civil servants and diverse experiences of bureaucracy. Third, in line with the intricate power mechanisms in daily museum practices, the research argues that ‘imposing’ neo-Ottomanism or Kemalism as parts of official nationalism on a perceived group of people is not a straightforward process. As evident in the informal grouping between museum experts and their assistants in Topkapı Palace Museum, civil servants take positions through bureaucracy in negotiating “Turkishness”. These different (in)formal power mechanisms within the state are informative in defying the established understanding

in the scholarly literature, which equates Kemalism-secularism with state power and situates Islamism outside the state (See Chapter 3).

Fourth, this research is a contribution to the literature on Turkish nationalism. It sheds light on to the *state's* representations of *both* Republican and Ottoman pasts of “Turkishness”. In the scholarly literature, studies investigate reproduction of secularism and Islamism / secular Republican and Islamic Ottoman pasts in daily public life (Navaro-Yashin 2002; Özyürek 2006; Ahiska 2010; Yeğenoğlu 2011). This research adds a perspective *from within the state*. It explores how the state – in its disunity – negotiates, transforms and envelops these competing pasts in two particular state museums, Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums, which are studied together ethnographically for the first time.

Fifth, it holds that distinctions between the West and the East, civilisation and culture, modern and backward are not stable. They are reversed, negotiated and conflated in re-imagining pasts. For this reason, the “neo-nationalism of greatness” (İnsel 2013) is not only an expression for claiming inheritance on the Islamic, tolerant, multicultural past (Atasoy 2009: 96), and the imperial geo-political position (Onar 2009: 235). As in the case of Topkapı Palace Museum, this “neo-nationalism of greatness” (İnsel 2013) or neo-Ottomanism may draw on other elements, such as modernity, the West, and civilisation. The greatness of the Islamic Ottoman Empire may also be articulated through the bridged gap with the West. Similarly, given its drift away from state power, Kemalist-secularist nationalism, formerly manifested through the *cult* of Atatürk, may be reproduced through the commoditised *human* images of Atatürk (Özyürek 2006: 119). This research pinpoints the institutionalisation of these (transformed) oppositionary pasts within the state. “Turkishness”, in this sense, is far from a static term. It is an “institutionalised form” (Brubaker 1996: 7), crystallised through processes and “contingent event(s)” (ibid.) of decision making in daily state bureaucracies.

b. Theoretical Contributions Beyond Turkey

This research does not confine itself to a single concept or a unified theoretical framework to investigate shifting representations of nationness in state museums. There are three building blocks of this study, which inform and are informed by a theoretical insight beyond binary oppositions within a context of polarisation in Turkey. First, I look at power and the state at both inter-institutional and intra-institutional levels. Echoing Mann's (1993) "institutional statism", this research looks at the competing sources of power among different state institutions at a given time. Following Schroeder's (2006) interpretation of Mann, I further explore the ways in which political power works within the state and in the "trenches" (Migdal 2001: 117) of routine bureaucracy. Building on the empirical findings of this research, I argue that bureaucracy as an "iron cage" (Weber 2001 [1930]) and / or "rubber cage" (Gellner 1964) works through (ir)rational, "affective" (Navaro-Yashin 2006) and (un)organised ways, such as gossiping, not moving beyond given tasks or regulations and delaying requests. Here, Weber's "bureaucratic secrecy" (2006 [1968]: 64) is informative in understanding power-knowledge relationships between the civil servant and the people as well as among civil servants themselves. Bureaucracy is essentially a power mechanism within and among different state institutions. Highlighting power relationships within the state, this research unpacks the conceptual unity of the state and adds to the existing literature by combining the micro and macro perspectives on the state and power.

The second theoretical branch is nationalism. Here, moving beyond binaries becomes even more important, as nationalism is constructed / imagined / invented on the basis of binaries. Taking these binaries for granted as "categories of analysis" (Brubaker 1996: 15) results in the reproduction of nationalism itself. Following Brubaker, I unpack these binaries as dynamically changing "categories of practice" (ibid.) and see how they are utilised, negotiated, and transformed by different actors. For example, secularism and Islamism do not merely coincide or reverse in the making of nationness. Rather they are brought together and differentiated in diverse power relationships.

The research pursued an “eventful approach” (Brubaker 1996: 19) to nationalism and nationness. Instead of pointing fingers at abstract categories or artefacts related to nationness, the research maps out decision-making processes and unfolding events through which ‘us’ and ‘them’ are defined. Nationness is neither singular nor is it invented / imagined / created once and for all. It is crystallised and fragmented, as binaries are revolved and transformed in the quest for state power. This processual perspective expands on Hobsbawm and Ranger’s (1983) “invention of tradition” and provides a dynamic analysis. It also advances a mid-range perspective on nationalism, which considers both “hot” and “banal” (Billig 1995) nationalisms. In this thesis, I depict the ways in which “spectacle nationalisms” (Kaldor 2009: 167), (e.g. national days) also become routinized, ritualised and normalised, as they are institutionalised and repeated every year. Seen in this way, nationalisms are not simply imposed from a single centre or from above by an abstract conception of the state.

Museums constitute the third building block. This research acknowledges the significance of “new museology” (Vergo 1989; Stam 1993; Hooper-Greenhill 2006) for incorporating visitors in the study of museums and contextual analysis of museum displays. Accordingly, museums are inherently contested spaces. This research further adds that this contestation does not necessarily stem from visitors or the state in a unilinear way. Museums are neither democratically mediated spaces (Clifford 1997; Chakrabarty 2002; Sandell 2007) from below nor pedagogic tools of the state in imposing / imagining a coherent sense of national history (Bennet 1995; Duncan 1995, 2005; Anderson 2006). Like the state, museums are contested and negotiated institutions from within.

Rejecting clear distinctions between state-society and museum-visitors, this research pinpoints power relations within and among different state museums in exhibiting nationness. First, one should pay attention to legislative frameworks regulating pasts and cultural heritage. Such legislation may endow museums with certain power sources in Mann’s (1986) terms, while compelling cultural producers to work and prepare exhibitions within a regulatory schema. Second, scholarly literature on

museums use Goffman's (1956) discussion of "performance" through the creation of "front" and "back" regions in social life (Macdonald 2002). This distinction is formed vis-à-vis visitors and is maintained through the creation of "hierarchies of knowledge" (Henning 2006: 302) between visitors and museums. Building on my ethnographic fieldwork, this research adds that museums simultaneously (re)create and dismantle a multiplicity of back and front stages inside the museum through knowledge-power relationships vis-à-vis visitors, as well as among members of the museum staff. For this reason, museum's representations are not straightforward; they are deliberated in routine museum bureaucracies. State museums, in particular, act as looking glasses of the polymorphous state, reflecting snapshots of themselves on an "imagined audience" (Macdonald 2002: 96).

c. Methodological Insights

This study is a contribution for ethnographic studies of the state. It departs from conventional ethnography of the state, which focuses on people's perception of the state in daily public life and their daily engagement with the state at the local level (Abrams 1988: 79). Holding a multifaceted understanding of the state, this study directs its focus on the state by tracing power relations within state (museums') bureaucracies and their representations of nationness. I traced formal and informal bureaucratic mechanisms of preparing exhibitions, engaged in / observed daily sociabilities of the museum staff, carried out (semi)structured interviews with private cultural producers and the museum staff, and reviewed published – though often 'private' – materials.

These required me to get involved in bureaucratic power relationships, which created various problems in negotiating my access for different data sources, i.e. arranging interviews, accessing official documents and participating in (in)formal meetings. Although exhausting, these problems are great instances to illustrate (1) the ways in which different state institutions engage with a regular researcher in Turkey, (2) the possible ways through which a researcher can(not) find her way out by seeking alternative sources of data when access to a certain source is officially denied, and (3) the ethical dilemmas of studying (state) institutions.

My experience of negotiating access in Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums is informative in understanding different forms of bureaucracy in MCT-related and TAF-affiliated museums in Turkey. While the boundaries of this ethnographic research was largely shaped by the Law on Civil Service (1965), throughout the fieldwork the two museums (re)created multiple ‘front’ and ‘back’ stages in their offices and even in our informal conversations over coffee-tea breaks. In Anıtkabir, this was mainly expressed in the strict textuality of informants at all times and the continuous policing of my actions inside the museum. In Topkapı Palace Museum, the museum’s back stage was strictly drawn on my requests for information such as annual reports, a list of exhibitions, and arranging interviews. These practices gave me hints about the institutional characters of the two museums: Topkapı Palace Museum as a site (more) open to contestation and Anıtkabir Museum as a more homogenously represented institution.

Along with the two museums’ “impression management” (Macdonald 2002: 4) strategies, I changed my positionality from an outsider researcher to ‘someone they knew’ in Topkapı Palace, while remaining a complete stranger in Anıtkabir. Still, I had to negotiate retrieving different sources of data on a daily basis. When I was officially denied access, I tried to find alternative data sources. For example, in Topkapı Palace Museum first I requested annual reports to trace the changing museum practices over the last twenty years. When annual reports were reconceptualised as ‘private’ by the deputy directors, I requested a list of temporary exhibition titles. When I realised that the list given to me was far from accurate and complete, I combined a review of news media, retrospective oral accounts given by senior museum experts, and unarchived material such as exhibition handbooks, posters, and invitation letters. In Anıtkabir, a strictly policed military museum, I extended beyond informants’ overwhelming textuality by creating unexpected encounters. Rather than asking all of my questions at once in a formal interview, I posed my questions one by one, whenever I ran into my informants or went to their offices, and every time I informed them that I might use their answers in my thesis.

Besides the common problem of informed consent in ethnographic fieldwork, this research underlined a significant gap in the scholarly literature on ethics of ethnographic studies of the state. It shares common ethical concerns (BSA 2002), such as ensuring informed consent (Hammersley and Atkinson 2006: 210) and protecting informants from “social and personal harm” (Abbott and Sapsford 2006: 293). Most informants in this study are identifiable, since they occupy particular positions in the two museums in question. In this case, using pseudonyms may not be enough, since the position of that particular informant has to be (mostly) given to contextualise the data. Therefore, I additionally reminded informants that they may be recognised. When necessary, I did not mention their particular positions or even their pseudonyms throughout the thesis. However, there were cases where some informants insisted that I used their names, since they believed that their names were going to be forgotten and they were going to remain invisible in the future. At that point, I used their names only, where I believed they would not be affected socially and personally.

IV. New Questions

This research provides an in-depth sight into the daily functioning of two different state museums in Turkey at a particular time of transformation. Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums are competing institutions of the state representing the competing pasts of “Turkishness”. However, these two museums are neither entirely representatives of the intricate power struggles still ongoing within the state itself, nor do their representations constitute “Turkishness” as a whole. For this reason, the findings of this research do not yield sweeping generalisation, but they shed light on new research questions.

First, this research argues that just like “Turkishness”, the Turkish state is an unfinished and dynamic process. Power struggles within the state continue not merely between Kemalist-secularist vis-a-vis Islamists, but also within each camp. If I had carried out this fieldwork during the Gezi period and the following disintegration between the Gülen movement and the JDP government, I would see different stakeholders and overturning power mechanisms within museum

bureaucracies. At the same time, in terms of inter-institutional power mechanisms, power sources of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) and the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) are always apt to change. As TAF's guardian role over Kemalism and secularism diminished, "instances of hostile relations between the military and the AKP [JDP] [are] turning into cooperative, if not friendly ones" (Heper 2005: 215). Therefore, it is interesting to follow up the changing role of Anıtkabir in line with the increasingly "cooperative" (ibid.) relationship between the TAF and the JDP government.

Second, findings of this research raise questions about museum economies (Pearce 1991; Frey and Meier 2013), especially considering the JDP's neo-liberal agenda and its incentives for the incorporation of the private sector in cultural production processes (İnce 2013; Baraldi et.al. 2013; Shoup et.al. 2012; Özbudun 2012). Along with the privatisation of ticket sales and museum shops of MCT-affiliated state museums, there are now other private agents such as the Bilkent Cultural Initiative (See Chapter 4). This initiative funds the preparation of temporary exhibitions in Topkapı Palace Museum and its private artists produce standardised replicas and commodities related to those exhibits. In my fieldwork in Anıtkabir, the museum economy remained invisible to me, other than the small museum shop, ran by the Anıtkabir Association. In Anıtkabir's museum shop there is a private production / consumption of Atatürk commodities (miniature busts, colour books, ties, watches, and calendars), his republished books and the Anıtkabir journal. Here, one may ask: How do such private actors cooperate / negotiate / challenge state museums' bureaucracies of exhibition making? To what extent do private funders influence exhibition making? How does the process of creating replicas for museum shops take place? Which artefacts are commoditised and which are not / cannot be commoditised? These questions may bring up the intricate power relations embedded in the "patronage" / "contract" system, which was also raised by my informants in both museums (See Chapter 8).

In both Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums, museum directors highlighted that visitors are like "customers". This research discussed the implications of this

perception in terms of the museum's visitor perception and exhibition preparation. Here, other questions arise related to museum economy: How do state museums (particularly MCT-affiliated ones) form relationships with visitors in line with the "new ideology: service" (İnsel 2013: 89)? To what extent do state museums address customer satisfaction? How do cultural producers in museums negotiate expectations of their superiors and the visitors?

This brings us to the third set of new research questions. This research focuses only on the side of the state particularly to highlight the contested decision-making and negotiation processes of exhibiting nationness within state museums. How are the products of this contested process, i.e. representations / exhibits, perceived by visitors? Combining the findings of this research with this question would give a more holistic perspective, shedding light on what each museum strives to convey and how different groups of visitors perceive, interact with, and challenge such representations.

V. Concluding Remarks

Apart from raising new horizons for research, this study provides a perspective from within the state on crystallisations of "Turkishness" in a context of overturning power relations in Turkey. On the way towards the "new Turkey", it highlights shifting grounds of institutional mechanisms *between* and *within* Topkapı Palace and Anıtkabir museums, competing institutions of the state imbued by different power sources. It illustrates the ways in which bureaucracy works as an (in)formal power mechanism used in the preparation of exhibitions of Republican and Ottoman pasts by reversing, reproducing, reconciling and transforming binary oppositions of Islamic / secular ; culture / civilisation; West / East and modern / backward. It shows the changing faces of official nationalism, which distinguishes, reconciles, and transforms Kemalist legacy with neo-Islamist and neo-Ottomanist imprints. At a time of polarisation in Turkey, where one is distinguished in relation to one of the oppositional camps of secularist-Kemalist vis-à-vis Islamists, I hope that this thesis opens the way for thinking beyond the binaries of "Turkishness" and to see the (Turkish) state more clearly in its fragmented form.

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List of Informants

Informants who have not been anonymised (See Chapter 5, pg. 141)

Name	Position	Date of Interview
Zülküf Yılmaz	Deputy at the the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums (2007-present)	19 March 2013
Ahmet Haluk Dursun	Topkapı Palace Museum's Director (2012-2014)	4 December 2012
Kasım Mehmet Teke	Anıtkabir's Museum Commander (2011-present)	24 January 2013
Oya Eskici	Anıtkabir's Civilian Museum Director (1994-2003; 2011-present)	7 December 2012

Informants who have been anonymised

Semi-structured interviews in Topkapı Palace Museum

Pseudonym	Position	Date of Interview
Suat	Library (2008-present)	28 September 2012
Nalan	Library (2006-present)	01 October 2012
Mete	Expert assistant (2008-present worked in renovation projects in Topkapı Palace Museum)	01 October 2012
Emre	Expert assistant (2009-present)	01 October 2012
Gül Hanım	Expert	09 October 2012
Begüm Hanım	Expert (1997-present)	17 October 2012
Melih	Former expert assistant, later appointed to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2012-present)	17 October 2012
Türkan Hanım	Expert (1982-2015)	03 December 2012
Hakkı Bey	Expert (2005-present)	16 January 2013
Burak Bey	Former Expert at the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (worked in renovation projects in Topkapı Palace Museum) (2004-2011)	26 January 2013
Kenan Bey	Expert (2000-present)	12 February 2013
Ceyda Hanım	Deputy director (1989-present)	18 February 2013

Ülkü Hanım	Expert (1980-2015)	28 February 2013
Çağrı Bey	A private cultural producer (worked in a renovation project in Topkapı Palace Museum)	06 March 2013
Selma Hanım	Expert (2002- present)	03 April 2013
Irmak Hanım	Expert (2000-present)	03 April 2013
Sinem Hanım	Expert (1997-present)	02 May 2013
Halim Bey	Former staff member and current civil servant at the MCT	08 May 2013
Doğu	Private cultural manager	13 May 2013
Uğur	Private cultural manager	13 May 2013

Unstructured interviews in Topkapı Palace Museum

Pseudonym	Position	Date of Interview
Ahu Hanım	Deputy Director	10 August 2012
Seyfi Bey	Lower rank civil servant	9 October 2012
Hale	Expert (2012-present)	3 December 2012
Kerem Bey	Expert (N/A)	12 February 2013
Pınar Hanım	A former member staff	18 April 2013

(Semi)structured interviews in Anıtkabir Museum

Pseudonym	Position	Date of Interview
Devrim Bey	Library (2003-present)	30 October 2012
Fatih Bey	Private curator	22 May 2013
Burhan Bey	Art supervisor (1970-2002)	21 February 2013
Erkin Bey	Private artist (worked in the 2002 re-organisation)	23 April 2013
Tamer Bey	Private historian-curator (worked in the 2002 re-organisation)	23 May 2013
Fatma Hanım	Expert (N/A)	23 January 2013
Kemal Bey	Expert (N/A)	23 January 2013
Çağrı Bey	Private cultural producer (worked in a renovation project in Anıtkabir) (N/A)	06 March 2013

Unstructured Interviews in Anıtkabir Museum

Pseudonym	Position	Date of Interview
Hadise Hanım	Civil servant (N/A)	25 April 2013
Fahriye Hanım	Junior civil servant (N/A)	21 May 2013