

**A HEALTH STRUCTURE IN THE LATE OTTOMAN PERIOD: THESSALONİKİ HAMİDİYE (GUREBA/MUNICIPALITY) HOSPITAL****OSMANLI'NIN SON DÖNEMİNDE BİR SAĞLIK YAPISI: SELANİK HAMİDİYE (GUREBA/BELEDİYE) HASTANESİ****Funda NALDAN\*****Abstract****Article Info**

*Thessaloniki was one of the most ethnically, religiously and culturally diverse Ottoman cities. During the Ottoman period, the city's reconstruction movements progressed rapidly and Turkish period works such as mosques, madrasahs, hospitals, government buildings, imaret, inns and baths were built in the city. In the last periods of the Ottoman Empire, especially during the reign of Abdülhamid II, hospitals were built within the scope of reconstruction activities. In this period, gureba hospitals played an important role in improving health services. The first modern hospitals were military hospitals and later civil hospitals and gureba hospitals were built almost everywhere in the Ottoman geography. The "Hamidiye Hospital" built in the early nineteenth century is one of the modern health structures of the period. Thessaloniki Hamidiye Hospital is one of them. Gureba Hospital was renamed as "Hamidiye" in 1903 in honour of the name of Abdülhamid II in 1873. Thessaloniki Hamidiye Hospital reflects the general plan and architectural features of the period and its Neo-Classical style draws attention. The hospital was formerly called Gureba Hospital, later named Hamidiye or Municipal Hospital. The hospital building has survived to the present day and is used as Agios Dimitrios Hospital.*

*In this study, the construction process of the building will be evaluated in the light of the documents taken from the Presidential State Archives, and information about the plan and architecture of the building will be presented by considering the visuals.*

**Keywords:** Ottoman, Balkans, II. Abdulhamid period, hospital, Thessaloniki, health, gureba, pandemic, architecture, Neo Classic.

**Öz**

*Selanik etnik, dini ve kültürel çeşitliliğin olduğu Osmanlı kentlerinden biriydi. Şehrin Osmanlı Dönemi'nde imar hareketleri hızla ilerlemiş ve şehirde cami, medrese, hastane, hükümet yapısı, imaret, han ve hamam gibi Türk dönemi eserleri inşa edilmiştir. Osmanlı Devleti'nin son dönemlerinde özellikle II. Abdülhamid Dönemi'nde imar faaliyetleri kapsamında hastaneler inşa edilmiştir. Bu dönem sağlık hizmetlerinin iyileştirilmesine yönelik gureba hastaneleri önemli rol oynamaktadır. İlk modern hastaneler askeri hastaneler olup daha sonra sivil hastane ve gureba hastaneleri Osmanlı coğrafyasının hemen her yerinde inşa edilmiştir. On dokuzuncu yüzyılın başlarında inşa edilen "Hamidiye Hastanesi" de dönemin modern sağlık yapılarındandır. Selanik Hamidiye Hastanesi de bunlardan biridir. 1873 yılında hizmet vermeye başlayan Gureba Hastanesi'nin ismi 1903 yılında II. Abdülhamid'in adına izafeten "Hamidiye" olarak anılmıştır. Selanik Hamidiye Hastanesi, dönemin genel plan ve mimari özelliklerini yansıtmakta olup Neo-Klasik üslubu dikkat çekmektedir.*

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\* Doç. Dr., Erzincan Binali Yıldırım Üniversitesi, E-mail: fnaldan@gmail.com, **ORCID ID**   
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2722-4269>.

*Hastane, önceden Gureba Hastanesi olarak adlandırılmış, daha sonra Hamidiye veya Belediye Hastanesi olarak anılmıştır. Hastane binası günümüze ulaşmış olup Agios Dimitrios Hastanesi olarak kullanılmaktadır.*

*Bu çalışmada, Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri'nden alınan belgeler ışığında yapının inşaa süreci değerlendirilecek, görseller ele alınarak yapının plan ve mimarisi hakkında bilgiler sunulacaktır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Osmanlı, Balkan, II.Abdülhamid Dönemi, hastane, Selanik, sağlık, gureba, salgın, mimari, Neo-Klasik.

## Introduction

Thessaloniki was one of the most important Ottoman cities in Rumelia. The city was a busy and important commercial harbour and housed a significant part of the Turkish presence in Macedonia. On the other hand, Thessaloniki was one of Ottoman cities with ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. During the Ottoman period, the city's reconstruction activities progressed rapidly and Turkish monuments such as mosques, madrasas, hospitals, government buildings, imaret, inns and baths were built in the city. Today it is located in the north-west of the Aegean Sea in the Thessaloniki Region of Greece, it was under Ottoman rule for centuries and became one of the modern Ottoman cities with its architectural reconstruction, especially since the mid-nineteenth century.

In the Classical Period of the Ottoman Empire, health services were provided by health institutions such as healing centres or *darüşşifa*, as well as by artisans and independent physicians (Cantay, 1992, p. 2). We know that there were such institutions in the Anatolian Seljuk Empire before the Ottoman Empire. In the period called Westernisation, changes and developments were experienced in the field of health as in many other fields. It is known that modern hospitals started to be established with the nineteenth century. Military hospitals were built first (Pabuçcu, 2014, p. 86). Later on, civil hospitals started to be established. The first civilian hospitals are considered as the beginning of a new understanding in the Republican Period and are health institutions that provide services with the support of civilian organisations (Özgen, 2020, p. 508). The first civil hospital in our country is Istanbul Bezm-i Alem Valide Sultan. The first civilian hospitals are considered as the beginning of a new understanding in the Republican Period and are health institutions that provide services with the support of civilian organisations (Özgen, 2020, p. 508). The first civilian hospital was the Gureba Hospital (1843/47) (Yıldırım,2014, p. 307). After this hospital, hospitals for *gureba*<sup>1</sup> were opened all over the country. *Gureba* hospitals, one of the important examples of the period, were built to serve the orphans and the poor. Sultan Abdülhamid II's reign reflects the importance given by the sultan to health services. He enacted many legal regulations to protect the health of the people, tried to secure health practices with laws and closely followed the developments in the field of health in the world and ensured that they came to the country as soon as possible (Yıldırım, 2012). Some of the buildings built during this period are called 'Hamidiye' in honour of the sultan's name. Modern public buildings such as Thessaloniki Hamidiye Mosque, Hamidiye Agricultural Ameliyyat School and Numune Farm, Thessaloniki Hamidiye (Mithat Pasha) Mekteb-i Sanayi, sıbyan/ibtidai schools, Rüşdiye school were built in this period. The 'Hamidiye Hospital' built in Thessaloniki in the early nineteenth century is one of the modern health structures of the period. In this period, a modern hospital was built as a necessity due to the increase in epidemic diseases. The hospital building has survived to the present day and is used as Agios Dimitrios Hospital. In this study, the construction process of the Thessaloniki Hamidiye Hospital, which is one of the last modern hospital buildings of the Ottoman period in Thessaloniki, one of the important cities of the Ottoman Period, will be evaluated according to archival documents, its architecture in the light of visual documents and its place in its period.

<sup>1</sup> Needy person.

## 1 . Health Services and Hospitalisation in the Abdülhamid II Period

Modernisation steps in the field of health in the Ottoman Period started during the reign of Selim III, these developments continued during the reign of Mahmud II, and continued to develop rapidly by modernising with Abdülhamid II (Sarı, İzgöer, 2014).

On the other hand, the political issues, epidemics and debts during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, the developments in the field of health in this period is a remarkable situation. Sultan Abdülhamid followed the developments in the field of health as in other fields in the world and attached great importance to the introduction of these innovations to the country (Gültekin, 2022, pp. 307-316).

One of the important steps in the field of health in this period was the discovery of the rabies vaccine by Louis Pasteur in 1885, and a delegation from Istanbul was sent to Paris to receive information about the vaccine. Sultan Abdülhamid II asked for help on how to produce rabies serum and what would be needed in the laboratory for its production, and for this purpose, he prepared a delegation for Pasteur for this important breakthrough, sent a gift with this delegation, and ensured that the delegation received training (Gültekin, 2022, p. 308). After the return of this delegation, the Rabies Institute was established in Istanbul in 1887 by Dr Zoeros Pasha, the head of the delegation. This institute became the third Rabies Institute in the world and the first in the East. Thanks to the rabies serums produced in this institute, deaths caused by rabies started to decrease.

On the other hand, epidemics broke out and Abdülhamid II fought a great struggle against diseases. During this period, a cholera epidemic that resulted in death was observed. Upon this, Abdülhamid II sent Captain Rifat Hüsameddin and Lieutenant Hasan Zühdü Efendi to Europe in 1893 to receive training on this subject. According to the report they submitted, they stated that what was important in Europe in this regard was that water and food were analysed by bacteriological examination. They also suggested the opening of a bacteriological hospital in Istanbul. Some troublesome situations were experienced in this process, and finally in 1894, 'Bacteriological Hospital-i Şahane' was established and studies were carried out here. Diphtheria serum and bovine plague serum were produced at the Bacteriological Hospital, and important breakthroughs were made in the field of health.

Abdülhamid II enacted legal regulations and new laws in this field in order to protect public health. He secured these regulations with laws and ensured that the techniques and discoveries applied outside the country were followed and brought to the country. During the reign of Abdülhamid II (1876-1909), who attached importance to the organisation of health and social services and the advancement of medicine, great strides were made for the institutionalisation and modernisation of health services. During this period, many hospitals were built in the Ottoman geography, especially in Anatolia, the Balkans and the Middle East. Both civilian and military hospitals were built in many provinces in the Ottoman geography. In line with the needs of this period, new hospital buildings were built in addition to the conversion of existing buildings into hospitals and health services continued. Modern hospitals, the first examples of which were seen in the capital, were later built in the provinces. During the reign of Abdülhamid II, health structures were built in almost every city. In parallel with the increase in epidemic diseases, the construction of civil hospitals also began to increase. The first hospital established as a civil hospital in 1847 was Istanbul Bezm-i Alem Foundation Gureba Hospital (Yıldırım, 2013). This hospital was built in the plan type of military hospitals with a central courtyard consisting of corridors surrounding the courtyard and then rooms. Afterwards, gureba hospitals for the poor and orphans continued to be opened in different cities.

These first hospitals were built by converting some existing buildings, just like the other institutions of the period. When we look at the construction processes of the public buildings built in this period, it is seen that they were realised with the initiatives of the mayor or the prominent people of the city and the support of the public. It is known that most of the public buildings in

this period were built with the support of the municipalities with the aid collected from the public (Metin, 2020, p. 958). As a result of the care of the wounded in the wars and the emergence of epidemics, the increase in the need for hospitals in this period is seen among the reasons that accelerated the construction of hospitals.

## 2. Construction Process of Hamidiye Hospital

The first modern Ottoman health institution in Thessaloniki was the Gureba Hospital, opened in 1873. This hospital served until 1882 (BOA. DH. İD. 73/2-3). It is understood that eight hospitals continued to function in Thessaloniki until 1907. These are Gureba Hospital, Military Hospital, Greek Gureba Hospital, Italian Hospital, French Hospital, Hamidiye Municipal Hospital, Jewish Hospital and Russian Hospital (SVS, 1325/1907, p. 538).

Gureba Hospital's relationship with the military was severed and it was moved to its new building (Özbay, 1981, p. 201). On the north of Hamidiye Street, with the initiative of Mayor Hulusi Bey, the construction process of Hamidiye Hospital was initiated by allocating 10,000 liras from the municipal budget in 1902 (SVS. 907 (1325), p. 538). Greek architect Xenofon Paionidis prepared the hospital project in 1916<sup>2</sup>. In fact, the Greek community opposed the construction of the hospital as it was to be located close to the Greek Evangelistria Cemetery and Aya Paulous Church, but the building was completed within a year and started to serve as Hamidiye Hospital in 1903 (SVS. 907 (1325), p. 538). Some archive records indicate that the hospital was opened in 1904 (BOA. DH. İD. 73/2-3). The hospital, known as Gureba Hospital, continued to serve under the name Hamidiye.

It is understood from the archive documents that the analyses and reports requested for Kosovo and Bitola provinces were carried out in this hospital (BOA. TFR. I. SL. 153/15247-8). It is seen that the hospital also provided services for the neighbouring provinces, and it is understood that it was technically and physically adequate. The hospital also served foreigners and the poor could be treated free of charge. It is known that these expenses of the hospital were allocated from the municipality budget (SVS. 907 (1325), p. 538). However, since this budget was not sufficient, the municipality of Thessaloniki requested that some tax be levied on customs imports and exports and on the money to be paid to road construction workers, but the government rejected this request. The municipality then wanted to organise a lottery to raise 2,000 piastres to cover the hospital's expenses. The Şura-yı Devlet authorised the organisation of the lottery in 1906 (BOA. ŞD. 2073/29-6).

Afterwards, due to the increase in hospital expenses and decrease in revenues, some initiatives were taken and lotteries continued to be organised. The presence of well-educated doctors in the hospital increased the success here and good service was provided. Doctors serving here published books in the field of medicine without any help from the state (BOA. BEO 3908/293074-1).

After the Greek occupation of Thessaloniki, the Greek government seized the hospital and the name was changed to 'Agios Dimitrios' Hospital (Zygomalas, 2008, p. 250). The hospital continued its activities under Greek administration.

## 3. Architecture of Hamidiye Hospital

The hospital was built on a hill overlooking the city. Upon the closure of the Gureba Hospital, the construction of the new hospital building was started in the north of Hamidiye Street in 1902 with the initiative of Mayor Hulusi Bey by allocating 10.000 liras from the municipal budget (SVS. 907 (1325), p. 538). Greek architect Xenofon Paionidis prepared the hospital project in 1916. The Greek community opposed the construction of the hospital as it was to be located close to the Greek Evangelistria Cemetery and Aya Paulous Church. The land was given to the Ladies Charity Organisation, which completed the project within a year and started to serve as

<sup>2</sup> Xenofon Paionidis Fourka Halkidiki (gohalkidiki.com)

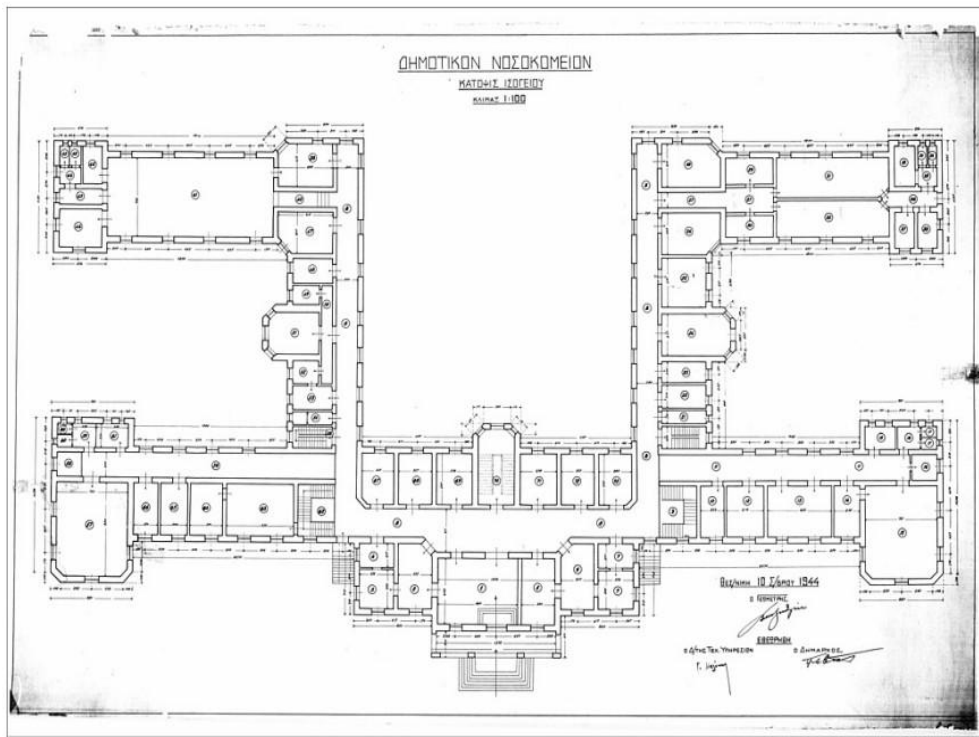
Hamidiye Hospital in 1903 (SVS. 907 (1325), p. 538). However, some documents indicate that the hospital was opened in 1904 (BOA. DH. İD. 73/2-3). In 1929, Eleni Zografou, daughter of the Greek architect Lysandros Kaftantzoglou, left half of her property in this area to the Municipality of Thessaloniki (Michaleas, Tsoucalas, Sgantzios, Androutsos, Karamanou, 2022, p.3).

The hospital is located on 54 acres. The building, which also faces the sea, is located to the north of the Pasha Gardens, which are located within the buildings belonging to the governorship of Thessaloniki and the green land. The front facade of the hospital, which is also the main facade, faces south-west.

The hospital building has a rectangular plan that develops horizontally (Drawing 1). It has two storeys on the sides and three storeys in the central axis (Photo 1). A 'U' shaped scheme was formed with the spaces on the side wings and the extension in the centre. The 'U' shaped plan consists of corridors surrounding the courtyard in the centre in a 'U' shape and the rooms behind these corridors. The two large blocks on the side wings consist of ground and first floors, and the central area is raised one more floor in addition to the two floors including the main entrance, emphasising this facade. The ground floor plan repeats the first floor plan. The floors are separated from each other by semicircular mouldings. The mouldings extend horizontally along the façade. The windows are arranged in vertical rectangular shapes on the façade and emphasised with keystones. The ground floor windows are larger than the first floor windows. The section with the main entrance is emphasised by being gradually carried outwards. The entrance opening is in the form of a portico carried by four legs and the upper floor is arranged as a balcony. The door opening in the middle of the facade of the central block provides access to the entrance hall and from there to the corridor. In the direction of the entrance façade, the side wings are carried forward and the corner blocks here are emphasised by chamfering (Photo 2). Typical features of the period are seen in the building where symmetrical facade arrangement is applied. Opposite the entrance hall and to the south of the part where the central corridor meets the side corridors, there are stairs where the transition between floors is provided. In the main building of the hospital, there are departments such as polyclinic, pharmacy, bathroom, laboratory, kitchen, laundry. On the second floor, there are places such as operating theatres and doctors' rooms.

The building has a very simple but at the same time very active facade arrangement. While there are no ornamentation motifs on the facades, elements such as the entrance facade being accessed by stairs, having a portico, window jambs and keystones are the applications that give mobility to the facade (Photo 3-4). Stone material was used in the masonry building. It reflects the Ottoman Neo-Classical style with its main façade projecting outwards and porticoed entrance.

In 1936, the hospital was destroyed by a major fire (Michaleas, Tsoucalas, Sgantzios, Androutsos, Karamanou, 2022, p. 6). During World War II the hospital building was used as a warehouse by the Greek army. In 1949 it was bombed by the battleship *Adrias* and many parts were destroyed (Michaleas, Tsoucalas, Sgantzios, Androutsos, Karamanou, 2022, p. 6). In 1971, the hospital became the property of the state and was officially renamed St Dimitrios in honour of the name of St Dimitrios. Today the hospital is managed by the Administrative Council. In the 1990s, a number of additions and new departments were built. Today, the building with many departments continues to function. It is understood that it has come with changes from the period it was built until today.



**Drawing 1.** Hospital plan (Michaleas and others, 2022, p. 5)



**Image 1.** Hospital general, front facade (Michaleas and others, 2022, p. 3)



**Image 2.** Hospital view from south-wes **Image 3.** View from the main entrance of the hospital



**Image 4.** View from the main entrance **Image 5.** View from the entrance



**Image 6.** View from the east facade of the hospital **Image 7.** General façade view

#### 4. Evaluation and Conclusion

Gureba (strangers) Hospitals were civil hospitals that started to be built in the last century of the Ottoman Empire and were part of the modernization of Ottoman health services. At the end of the eighteenth century, during the reign of Selim III, the first examples of hospitals in the modern sense were built as military hospitals. Later, due to wars and epidemics, there was a need for the construction of hospitals and efforts were initiated in every city. Since the nineteenth century, hospitals have been one of the important public institutions in the field of health in the Ottoman geography. It is certain that Sultan Abdulhamid II attached great importance to the field of health, made numerous investments by closely following modern developments and contributed to this field.

Thessaloniki Hamidiye Hospital is one of the architecturally remarkable hospital examples. The building was constructed with donations collected from the public under the leadership of the mayor and prominent names of the city. We know that this method was applied especially in the last periods of the Ottoman Empire.

Gureba hospitals can be grouped as pavilion-type and block-type buildings with the most general architectural definition. In the last period of the Ottoman Empire, and especially during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, the construction of hospitals increased in parallel with the increasing construction activities, and the construction of block-type hospitals was preferred in this period (Metin, 2024). These hospitals have different plans and façade features, and their dimensions, number of floors, and façade layouts may vary according to need and location. For this reason, it would be wrong to speak of a single type of plan. It was built as two storeys on the ground floor, consisting of a hospital and additional buildings located in a large garden. Considering the storey status of this period, hospitals were generally built with two or three storeys. With its ‘U’ shaped plan, the plan type applied in military hospitals of the period is repeated here. The need for the number of beds must have required it to be designed in a large size. The hospital building, which surrounds the garden in a ‘U’ shape, draws attention with its plan design consisting of corridors and rooms. This plan type was applied in buildings such as İstanbul Gümüşsuyu Hospital (1847-50) (Özbay, 1981, p. 411), Tırnova Military Hospital (1847-56) (İlban, 2015, p. 65), İstanbul French Lape Hospital (1858) (Tonbul, Forta, 2009, p. 99), Erzincan Kurutilek Military Hospital<sup>3</sup>, Trabzon Gureba Hospital (1883) (Yüksel, 1991, pp. 211-213, Atasoy, 2022, pp. 110-112), İzmir Hamidiye Military Hospital (1891) (Özbay, 1981, p. 2, Atasoy, 2022, p. 182), Edirne Demirtaş Hospital (1888-91) (Atasoy, 2022, pp. 162-163), Bosnia and Herzegovina Taşlıca Military Hospital (Babuçoğlu, Özdil, Karakuş, 2013, pp. 212-213) and we know that it was also applied in public buildings.

For example, İstanbul Davutpaşa Barracks (1831-32) (Gül, 2014, p. 6), Sinop Prison (1892) (Kolay, 2021, pp. 80-85), İstanbul Fatih Municipality (1913) (Kolay, 2018, pp. 234-252), Sivas Teacher Training School (1913) (Bulut, 2019, p. 76), Çankırı Ilgaz Government House (end of 19th century) (Topçubaşı, Eyüpgiller, 2010, p. 118) are just some of them. The Neo-Classical style applied in public buildings in the nineteenth century is also seen in hospital buildings. This building reflects the characteristics of Neoclassical style and shows this style in terms of plan and façade design. It is seen that the facade of the building has not been intervened too much and has survived to the present day in its original form. However, some additions were made to the interior. The building is covered with a hipped roof. Since functionality is prioritised in terms of ornamentation, it is a simple and plain arrangement and it is seen that the movement is in the entrance part and windows. The arches and jambs of the windows are generally protruding. The arch keystones of the windows are emphasised by overflowing.

It is seen that the entrance blocks, which are carried forward within the framework of a balanced and symmetrical façade understanding, were designed in the hospital buildings of the

<sup>3</sup> İstanbul Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, Ftg. No: 91121/17.



period in the form of a portico section with three or four columns, which were generally accessed by stairs, positioned forward of the entrance opening on the ground floor and a balcony on the second floor. The building is quite simple and symmetrically arranged from the façade. There are many window openings on the facades. In the buildings of this period, in order to emphasise the front façade, the part where the main door is located is carried forward and the staircase and portico arrangement are included. Similar examples of this application are Trabzon Gureba Hospital (Atasoy, 2022, p. 722), Erzurum Gureba Hospital, Istanbul Bezmi Alem Valide Sultan Foundation Gureba Hospital (Yıldırım, 2013). These entrances, which are also frequently seen in public buildings, Mersin Government House (Umar, Can, 2019, p. 534), Kastamonu Taşköprü Government Office (Topçubaşı, Eyüpgiller, 2010, p. 113), Giresun Government House (Toptaş, 2016, p. 426), Safranbolu Government Office (Toptaş, 2016, p. 426), Erzincan Government House (Naldan, 2022, p. 35), Erzincan Document and Map Cellar Building (Naldan, 2022, p. 30) are some of them.

By using mouldings along the facade of the building, the floor intervals are made clear and the facades are given mobility. It is seen that symmetry is dominant in the interior. Opening of the rooms to corridors, placing a staircase in the middle of the corridor, the rooms being in a row are some of them.

The plan types used in the construction of hospitals are generally in the form of type project plans.

As a result; in parallel with the medical developments in Europe, important steps were taken in this direction and hospital buildings continued to be built. The fact that the building is located in a large garden and that there are many window openings for light and ventilation are among the general features of this period. It is known that the ‘U’ planned buildings are free from ornamentation due to the fact that they were built for functionality. Hospitals, which were built according to the stylistic characteristics of the period and prioritised functionality, are among our important cultural assets reflecting the health life of the Ottoman period. Some of the hospitals belonging to this period continue to function and some of them have been demolished or kept empty.

### **Ethical Statement/*Etik Beyan***

The study titled “A Health Structure In The Late Ottoman Period: Thessaloniki Hamidiye (Gureba/Municipality) Hospital” has been conducted in compliance with scientific, ethical, and citation principles. No alterations have been made to the collected data, and this work has not been submitted for evaluation to any other academic publication platform. This study does not require an ethics committee approval. The article has been prepared in accordance with the ethical guidelines of Anasay Journal, which are based on the principles established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) for authors, reviewers, and editors.

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