



## Historical Transformation of Cultural Heritage Conservation Policies in Turkey with Special Reference to Çemberlitaş Hamam (1951-2004)

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### Abstract

Among the traditional Turkish baths built in Istanbul during the Ottoman period, Çemberlitaş Hamam is an important example of cultural heritage in the country and internationally, with its location, scale, architecture and historical context. This study discusses the architectural features of Çemberlitaş Hamam, its historical development until the 1950s, and its physical and functional transformation. Since 1951 and the establishment of the High Council for the Historical Real Estate and Monuments, the change in this cultural heritage has been determined in line with the council's decisions regarding Çemberlitaş Hamam and evaluated in this context. Thus, this article is aimed at revealing the historical transformation of cultural heritage conservation policies in Turkey with a special focus on the Çemberlitaş Hamam.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

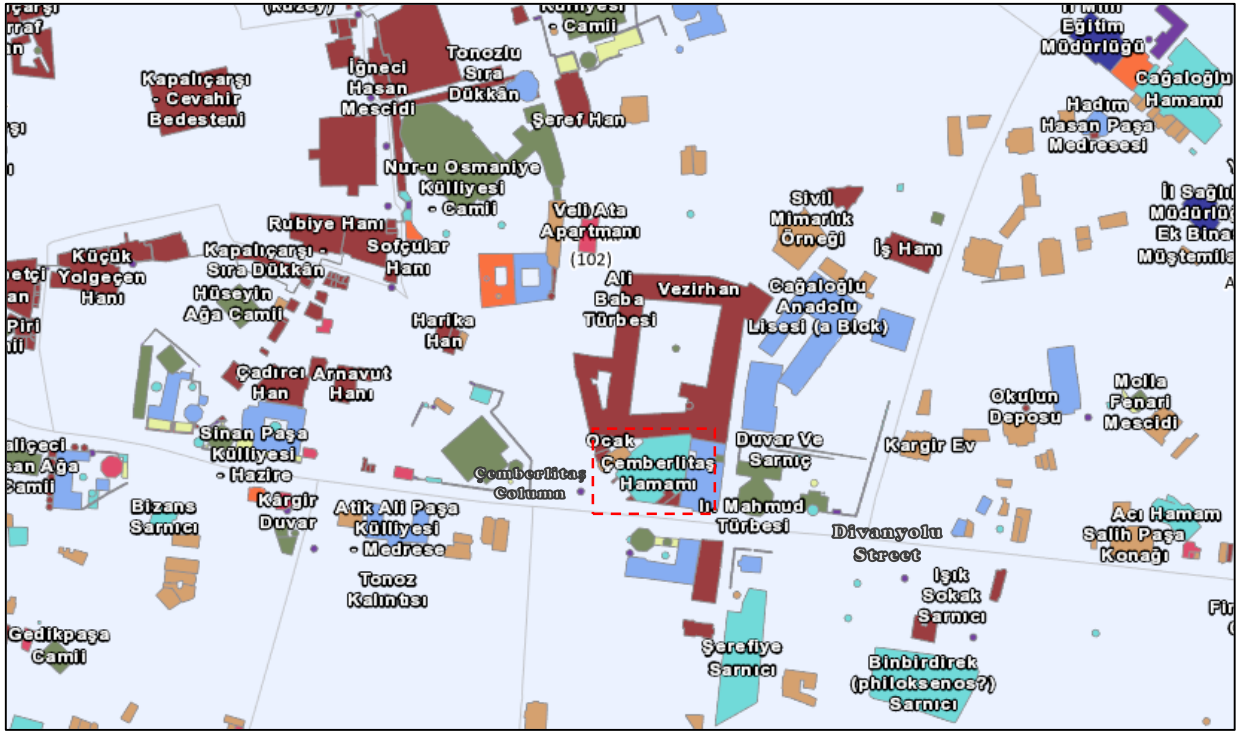
Many traditional Turkish baths were built in the province, which became the capital of the Ottoman Empire with the conquest of Istanbul, for reasons such as the importance given by the Ottoman people to cleanliness, good income and being built as charitable works. In the Republican Period, many public baths lost their functional and economic value due to changes in living habits and the addition of private bathroom spaces in homes. Consequently, many of these buildings were destroyed by urban plans, ruined or used for different purposes, losing their original function. Although Çemberlitaş Hamam has undergone many repairs and alterations since its construction, it is one of the best-preserved examples of Turkish baths that has maintained its spatial integrity and historical identity as it continues its original function. Today, it serves many visitors due to its location in a region where tourism and trade are intense.

While this study contextualizes the historical process of Çemberlitaş Hamam from the Ottoman period to the Republic, the main focus is examining the conservation policies for cultural property in Turkey through the conservation council decisions taken since 1951, with emphasis on Çemberlitaş Hamam. In this context, the evaluations were based on national legislation as well as international principles and regulations, and the council decisions were analyzed in a holistic manner in line with these principles.

## 2. LOCATION AND ARCHITECTURE OF ÇEMBERLİTAŞ HAMAM

Çemberlitaş Hamam is on Vezirhan Street, Molla Fenari Neighborhood, Fatih District, Istanbul Province (Figure 1). The bath, which is close to the square where the Roman Çemberlitaş Column is located, which gives its name to the bath and neighborhood, has a façade on Divanyolu Street, which has been the city's main street in every period [1]. The bath is surrounded by many cultural properties belonging to different periods. This has obscured other parts of the bath from the outside, except for the masses of the dressing room (Figure 2).

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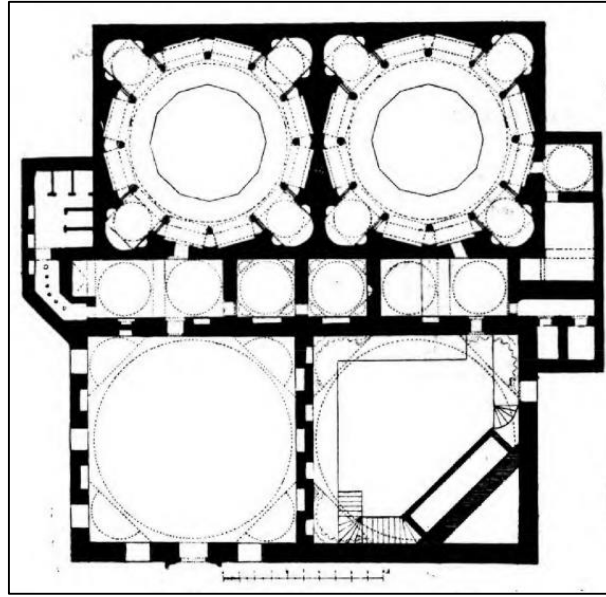


*Figure 1. Çemberlitaş Hamam and its surroundings today [2]*

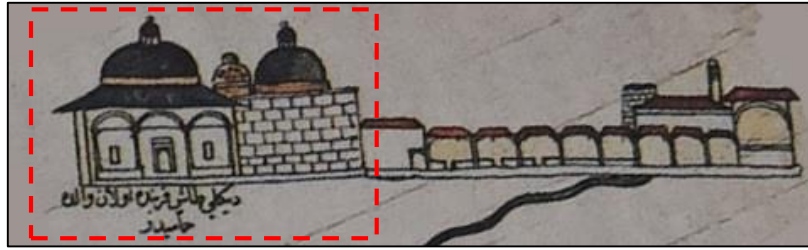


*Figure 2. Çemberlitaş Hamam entrance façade on Vezirhan Street (2021)*

Çemberlitaş Hamam is a double bath built almost symmetrically with men's and women's sections (Figure 3). The entrance to the men's bath is on Vezirhan Street. The seventeenth-century Köprülü Waterways map shows there used to be a portico (revak) along the entrance façade of the men's bath (Figure 4).



**Figure 3.** Çemberlitaş Hamam plan scheme [3]



**Figure 4.** Çemberlitaş Hamam on the Köprülü Waterways map [4]

The square-planned dressing room (soyunmalık), which is entered through a crown door with a flat arched door and an inscription on it, is covered with a dome resting on trumpets. In the center of the dome is a circular skylight covered with a light lantern. The rectangular warm room (ılıkılık) is covered with two domes resting on pendentives. One of the narrow sides of the space leads to the shaving room (usturalık), which is covered with a dome resting on tromps, and the other leads to the latrine (hela) attached to the outside of the bath mass. The hot room (sıcaklık), which Cichocki describes as “the heart of the bath”, has a plan scheme that is not encountered in traditional Turkish baths [5]. The dome in the center of the externally square-planned space is carried by arches resting on twelve columns. Under this dome is a large, heated stone (göbektaşı) in the form of dodecagon. At the corners of the space, four private cells (halvet) are covered with a dome. The spaces between the columns in front of these halvets are covered with triangular pedimented marble walls with couplets carved on them (Figure 5). The creation of a large and spacious temperate space by leaving the upper part of these walls open is an innovation that Mimar Sinan brought to Turkish baths [6]. Except for the column intervals where the transition to this space is provided, bathing benches (seki) and water basins (kurna) are in the intervals.



**Figure 5.** Men's bath sıcaklık (2022)

## 2.1. Architectural Evolution of the Çemberlitaş Hamam

The Çemberlitaş Hamam has undergone a series of architectural transformations since its construction, shaped by urban planning decisions, contemporary functional needs, and changing conservation policies. Following the Hocapaşa Fire of 1865, as part of the area's redevelopment, the widening of Divanyolu Street led to the partial demolition of the women's soyunmalık mass, which was subsequently enclosed with a new façade.

During the Republican era, particularly after the establishment of the High Council for the Historical Real Estate and Monuments in 1951, structural interventions such as the addition of reinforced concrete mezzanine levels, passage openings and a basement floor significantly altered the bath's spatial configuration. After the enactment of Law No. 2863 on the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Properties in 1983, council decisions began to emphasize the preservation of the bath's original function. However, interventions implemented during this period, including reinforced concrete floors and new passage openings, introduced additional layers to the architectural narrative of the hamam. Details of these transformations are discussed in Section 5.

## 3. HISTORY OF ÇEMBERLİTAŞ HAMAM

Çemberlitaş Hamam was built in 1584 by Nurbanu Sultan, the mother of Sultan Murad III, to generate income for the Atik Valide Mosque and Complex in Üsküdar and other charitable organizations [1]. In *Tuhfetü'l Mimarın*, one of the sources that includes information about Mimar Sinan and his buildings, this bath is listed as Valide Sultan Bath in *Dikilitaş* [7]. It is also referred to as Valide-i Atik, Gül, Third Sultan Murad Bath [8].

Çemberlitaş Hamam, which belonged to the Atik Valide Sultan Foundation, was operated from the time it was built until 1708 through a single lease method called "icare-i vahide". In this leasing method, the maintenance and repair of the bath and waterways were determined, and the costs for implementation were covered by the foundation. In 1708, with the double lease method called "icareteyn", some of the bath's remit, which was rented for a long period, were transferred to the tenant who had the right of use, referred to as "mutasarrıf" in the documents. Thus, the mutasarrıf was held responsible for the bath's maintenance and repair [9]. In an archival document from 1880, Hacı Ahmed, Mehmet Cemil Efendi and Ayşe Feride Hanım, the mutasarrıfs of the bath, requested repairs from the foundation treasury because the waterways needed repair. The document stated the repair and renovation of the waterways inside the bath, starting from the entrance door to the ashtray, belonged to the bath trustees and the rest belonged to the foundation [10]. Çemberlitaş Hamam was operated under the icareteyn method for many years and changed hands many times. In a 1899 document, it was stated that a non-Muslim person, who was one of the mutasarrıf of the bath, "katiyen ferağ" (absolutely gave it away) to an Italian citizen [11]. In two documents from 1908, the names of Memnûne and Cenab Hanım were mentioned as bath shareholders [12].

During the Ottoman period, many wooden residential buildings, mosques and madrasahs were around Çemberlitaş, but many fires in the region damaged these structures [13]. In 1865, the area was affected by the Hocapaşa fire (Figure 6), the biggest fire in the history of Istanbul, and was reorganized by the Islahat-ı Turuk Commission, which was established in 1869. With the idea of opening the area around the Çemberlitaş Column, houses and other structures left behind from the fire were demolished, and Divanyolu Street was widened by nineteen meters [14]. With this widening work, the corner of the square-planned women's soyunmalık mass of the Çemberlitaş Hamam and part of its dome were cut off and covered with a façade [1] (Figure 7), reflecting the architectural understanding of that period. It can be seen in the photographs of the period that two shops were added in front of the new façade facing Divanyolu Street (Figure 8). These additions made a recess in the women's bath's soyunmalık space up to the level of the beginning of the trumpet and this recess was organized as a resting area for distinguished visitors, accessed by a wooden staircase [3].





**Figure 6.** The location of Çemberlitaş Hamam in the area affected by the Hocapaşa fire of 1865 [14]



**Figure 7.** Çemberlitaş Hamam women's soyunmalık façade (2021)



**Figure 8.** Women's soyunmalık façade of Çemberlitaş Hamam in 1894 [15]

The Austrian art historian Heinrich Glück conducted research on Turkish art in Istanbul in 1916-17 and examined the Turkish baths there [16]. Glück stated that Çemberlitaş Hamam was used as a military tephirhane (a place for purification of germs with mist) during these years, so passage openings were added between the women's and men's sıcaklık and ılıkılık, and a modern heating system was installed in the women's ılıkılık [3].

Although the expenses of the bath foundation, which was operated under the icareteyn method for many years during the Ottoman Period, were reduced, the transfer of foundation properties to the administration of the General Directorate of Foundations in the Republican Period led to the transition of income-generating cultural assets, especially baths, to private ownership [5]. The bath, which was transferred to private ownership at an unknown date, changed hands several times [17]. In a 1940 document from the Istanbul Archeology Museums General Directorate of Istanbul Archaeology, which lists the privately owned baths registered as Asarı Atika, the name of Çemberlitaş Hamamı is mentioned [18]. It is understood from newspaper advertisements and sources from this period that the bath was used with its original function during these years. A newspaper advertisement dated 11.9.1938 stated that repairs were made to the bathhouse, the boiler was replaced, a bath and shower were added, and it was closed for a month and a half due to these interventions [19]. K. A. Aru, in his 1941 work titled Turkish Baths Etude, stated the women's bath was not in use [20]. In a 1944 newspaper advertisement, it was stated the bath was for sale [21]; in the Istanbul Encyclopedia, it was stated the bath changed hands in the same year and was used as a men's bath, while the women's bath was not used [22].

#### **4. METHOD**

The literature review and archival documents show that Çemberlitaş Hamam maintained its original function during the Ottoman Period, and after a brief change of function in the early 20th century, it returned to its original function in the Republican Period. In this study, archival research was conducted on the Çemberlitaş Hamam file at the Istanbul Regional Council for the Conservation of Cultural Property (KVKBK) No. IV, including council decisions and written and visual documents. In line with these documents, the conservation process for the bath is divided into two groups and the decisions are evaluated in the text with chronological and analytical approaches.

The first group starts with decisions taken by the GEEAYK, which was established on 02.07.1951, regarding the hamam. These decisions cover the period until the promulgation of the Historic Artefacts Act No. 1710 dated 25.04.1973, the first conservation law of the Republic. The use of the Ottoman-era law on the conservation of cultural properties, the level of technical staff and financial impossibilities were reflected in the decisions and practices taken in this process [23]. The GEEAYK, which made decisions for the conservation of historical artefacts, did not consider financial resources in this regard since it was a scientific institution. The fact that responsibility for the protection of privately owned cultural assets remained with the property owner led to the obsolescence, dilapidation or destruction of many cultural assets in this situation [24]. The second group begins with the abolition of the Historic Artefacts Act on 21.07.1983 and its replacement by the Law on the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Property No. 2863. The purpose of this law was "...to define movable and immovable cultural and natural property to be protected, regulate proceedings and activities, describe the establishment and duties of the organization that shall set principles and take implementation decisions in this field". With this law, the GEEAYK was abolished, and the powers and duties, such as determination, registration and decision-making regarding cultural and natural properties, were transferred to the Regional Conservation Councils within the framework of the principal decisions of the High Council for Conservation (Regional Conservation Councils were referred to as Conservation Councils between 1987 and 2004) [25]. Council decisions and practices belonging to both groups are discussed comparatively in the context of Çemberlitaş Hamam and evaluations are made in the context of the historical transformation of the approach to the conservation of cultural properties in Turkey.

## 5. EXAMINATION OF ÇEMBERLİTAŞ HAMAM IN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DECISIONS IN THE REPUBLICAN ERA

Çemberlitaş Hammam was registered as a “historic artefact” by GEEAYK decision no. 343 dated January 24, 1955 and no. 654 dated May 18, 1957 [26]. In the decision of the Istanbul Regional Council of Immovable Cultural and Natural Properties No. 4075 dated September 25, 1987, the phrase “a first-degree valuable art structure in terms of Turkish Architectural History” was included and this document was accepted as the decision determining the bath’s registration and conservation group. Çemberlitaş Hamam is within the Historic Peninsula Urban and Historical Conservation Area defined by decision no. 6848 dated July 12, 1995, of the Istanbul Council for the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Property (KTVKK) No. I.

### 5.1. Group 1 Decisions

With a petition sent to GEEAYK in 1965, it was reported that the women’s baths’ soyunmalık had been vandalized to convert it into a shop. After the on-site investigations made from this petition, it was determined the space’s original floor, which was previously used as a warehouse, would be removed and columns, two floors and stairs were added on reinforced concrete foundations. One of these floors was in the form of a mezzanine with a circular space in the middle, the other was arranged on the same level with the shops on Divanyolu Street (Figure 9) and a basement floor was created (Figure 10). With the removal of the walls between the shops and soyunmalık, a connection was established between these spaces. In GEEAYK decision no. 3156 dated June 4, 1966, it was decided that these interventions, which caused the destruction of the space’s original elements in question and permanent change, were not objectionable, but it was decided to stop them and submit their projects to the council. In GEEAYK decisions no. 3578 dated July 30, 1967 and no. 4410 January 12, 1969, it was decided that the reinforced concrete mezzanine added to this space could be used without any partition. Although the decision also stated the interventions in the space were by the project submitted to the council, the additional basement floor was not included. This situation showed that inspections were not carried out sufficiently or the issue was ignored. A newspaper article dated 1968 reported that, with these alterations carried out in the women’s soyunmalık space of Çemberlitaş Hamam, this section started to be used as a restaurant [27].



**Figure 9.** The women’s soyunmalık space mezzanine (1967) and ground floor (1986) [28]



**Figure 10.** The basement floor added to the women’s soyunmalık (1967) [28]

The project, report and photographs prepared by the owners of the men's section, which served as a single bath with its original function, were submitted to GEEAYK in 1968 as part of the restoration request. It was stated the interventions included arrangement of this section's entrance, removal of the dilapidated wooden cabinet (şirvan) in the soyunmalık and its replacement with a three-story building with a basement, renovation of the hela and tıraşlık to meet the requirements of modern life, repair of the dilapidated hypocaust brick piers of the sıcaklık, and renovation of parts of the surface coatings in need of repair. In GEEAYK decision no. 5383 dated 10.5.1970, the restoration proposal project was deemed inappropriate and a measured drawing of the section requiring intervention was requested. In the decision, it was stated that, of the interventions planned to be made, only the structure to be added to the men's soyunmalık was deemed appropriate, provided it did not exceed two storeys, and it was decided to send a new project in this direction. In GEEAYK decision no. 6449 dated May 13, 1972, regarding the restoration project prepared after this decision, the addition in question was deemed appropriate. In the decision, it was decided to preserve the original coatings and elements of the men's bath, complete the deficiencies, add a passage opening between the men's and women's sıcaklık due to the desire to use the women's sıcaklık space, and remove the two-story reinforced concrete annex (Figure 11) added in front of the men's bath entrance without council permission. Photographs from 1969 show the alterations planned for the men's soyunmalık were started before this council decision (Figure 12). In this decision, which does not cover the entire bath, the reinforced concrete construction of the two floors added to the soyunmalık and acceptance of opening a passage to allow the sıcaklıks to be used together was an intervention that damaged the bath structurally. Although it contained more information on preservation and repair than previous decisions, by specifying the surface coatings and architectural elements to be preserved and completed, it did not mention the practical details.



**Figure 11.** Reinforced concrete addition in front of the entrance of Çemberlitaş Hamam (1969) [28]



**Figure 12.** Çemberlitaş Hamam men's soyunmalık (1969) [28]

## 5.2. Group 2 Decisions

On November 14, 1986, the owners of Çemberlitaş Hamam submitted their application for the restoration of the men's section, which served its original function, as a touristic center for exhibition, display and sales purposes, and the restoration project prepared for this subject to the Istanbul Regional Council Directorate of Immovable Cultural and Natural Heritage on January 8, 1987. Decision no. 4075 dated September 25, 1987, of the Istanbul Regional Council of Immovable Cultural and Natural Properties stated,



...That the Çemberlitaş Hamam is a work of great historical value, that it is a work of art of the first degree in terms of the history of Turkish architecture with features that are not found in any other baths in the Ottoman Period Turkish bath architecture, apart from all these, the importance of this building in the history of the city has increased since it is located on the main street of the city and in the middle of a region where important works of history and art are concentrated, and that it is not deemed appropriate to allocate such a work to works other than its main function to turn it into an exhibition-exhibition-sales center, in the face of this situation, it was decided that the fact that this valuable work of architecture is located in a touristic area increases the interest in Turkish baths, and that its restoration and use as a bath in accordance with its original function is deemed necessary in terms of the history of Istanbul; however, in this restoration, it was decided that it would be appropriate for the beauty of the work and the city to demolish and organize the shops that mask the work from the outside according to a project<sup>1</sup> [29].

When looking at the bath buildings that were restored in these years with a commercial function, it was seen that they were irreversibly subjected to many interventions. Therefore, with this decision, the architectural integrity, historical value and identity of Çemberlitaş Hamam were preserved and brought to the present day.

On April 25, 1989, the project, which included alterations to partially open the women's bath to use in its original function, was sent to council for approval. In the project, it was stated the other spaces of the women's bath would be used in their original function since the soyunmalık was being used as a shop, and the entrance from the men's bath would lead to the ılıkılık and part of this space would be used as a dressing area. In decision no. 1249 dated August 23, 1989, of the Istanbul KTVKK No. I, it was stated the men's and women's baths should be arranged separately by the traditional Turkish bath layout and it was requested to close the passage opening between the sıcaklık spaces. However, it was stated the entrance to the women's bath could be provided from the back of the men's soyunmalık, which was not by this layout. It was also decided to remove the men's bath third floor changing room and the additions in front of the entrance façade, but they were not implemented. The lack of a measured drawing was ignored in this council decision, taken with the proposed project submitted to council.

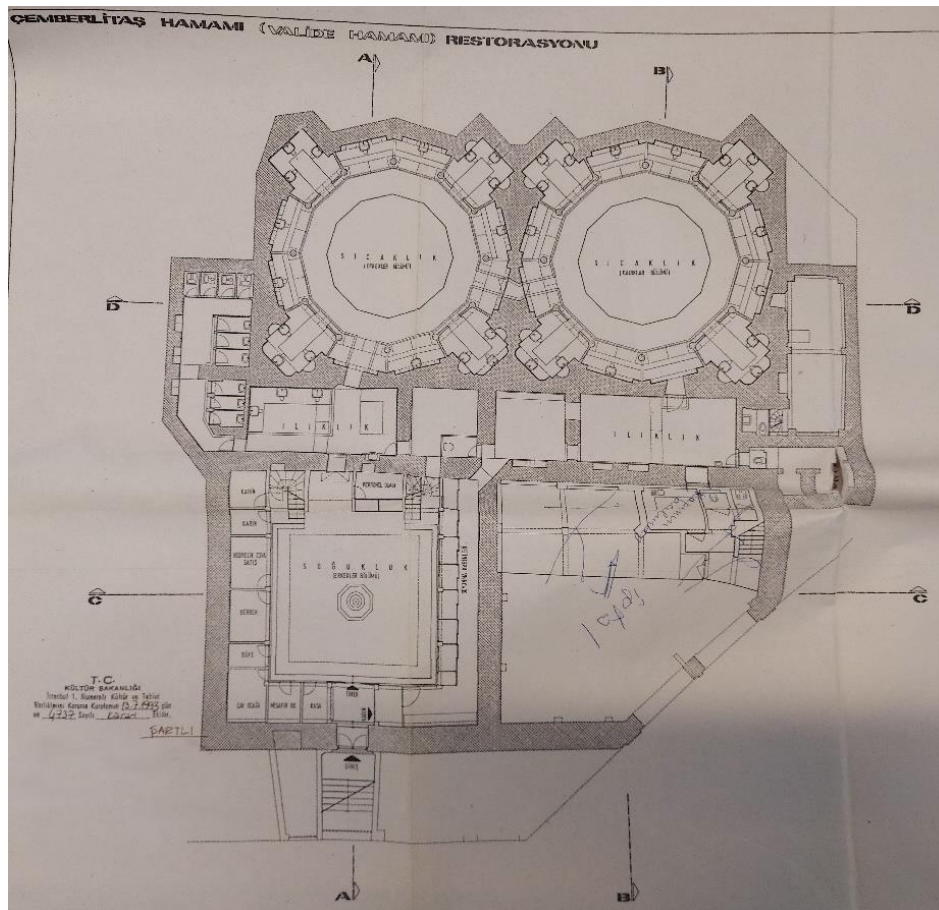
Approximately four years after decision no. 1249, on June 7, 1993, the measured drawing of the bath, which was submitted to council, was accepted with decision no. 4661 dated June 11, 1993, by the Istanbul KTVKK No. I, it was decided to submit the application project of the bath to the council. From the photographs sent with these measured drawings, it is understood the women's section of the bath was opened for use (Figure 13).



**Figure 13.** A signboard showing the transition to the women's bath (1993) [28]

<sup>1</sup> Author's translation of decision no. 4075, issued on September 25, 1987, by the Istanbul Regional Council of Immovable Cultural and Natural Properties. The document is held in the Istanbul KVKBK No. IV Archive.

On July 1, 1993, in the restoration project submitted to council, the entrance of the women's bath was arranged as specified in decision no. 1249; from the corner of the men's soyunmalık, a passage was given to the women's bath, a part of the ground floor was reserved for women by making arrangements in the men's soyunmalık space, the additional passage between the men's and women's sıcaklık was closed with two doors, and the additions to the entrance façade of the bath were removed except for those with property problems. The additional shops previously located on parcels 180 and 181 in front of the women's soyunmalık were not included in this project (Figure 14). In decision no. 4737 dated July 13, 1993, of the Istanbul KTVKK No. I, the importance of this cultural asset was emphasized; it was stated the bath should be handled and restored as a whole and the project was accepted for use of the women's bath with the aforementioned transition for a temporary period until the women's soyunmalık space was included in the project and integrity was ensured. Today, as stated in this decision, the women's bath is used as a whole, in its original function. However, the addition of an opening to provide access to the women's bath is a negative structural intervention to this cultural asset built in the masonry technique. The fact the restoration project in question includes different transitions from the oldest dated drawing of the baths by Glück (Figure 3) shows there were different interventions in this direction. In addition, the fact the women's bath is still accessed from the men's bath, as accepted in this decision, is contrary to the notion of privacy that guides the design of the traditional Turkish bath.

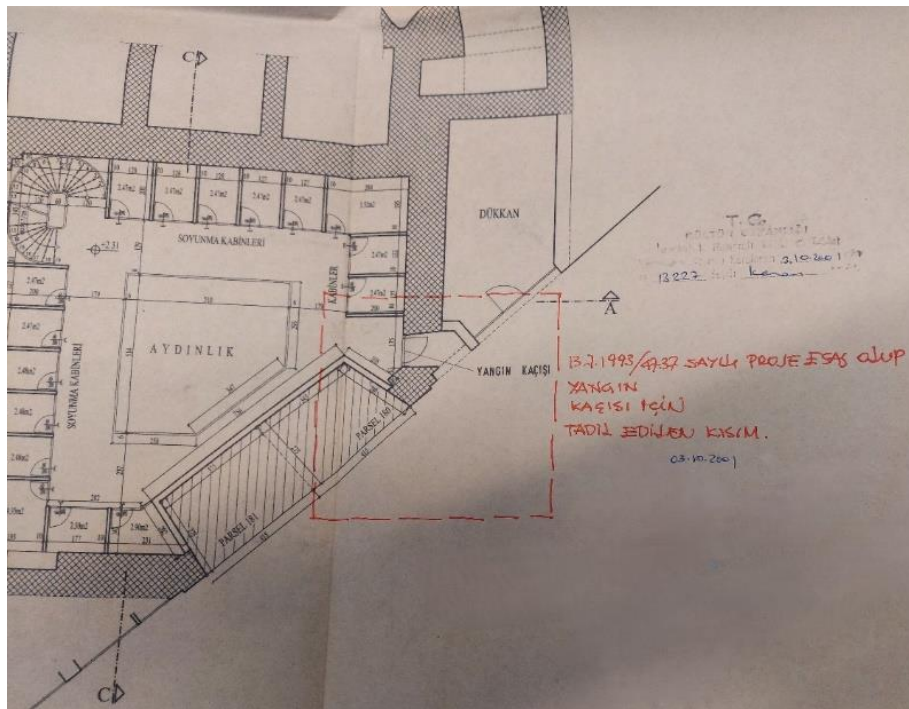


**Figure 14.** Restoration Project Plan for Çemberlitaş Hamam [28]

Following decision no. 4737, the Eminönü District Municipality sent a letter to council requesting the temporary period specified in the decision and whether the women's baths can be used as a shop. In response, in decision no. 5263 of the Istanbul KTVKK No. I dated January 12, 1994, it was decided that the bath can be used in this way for one year from the date of decision no. 4737 by implementing the application according to the bath's approved project; at the end of this period, the space in question would be included in the bath's function and integrity would be ensured.

After decision no. 5263, the owner of the bath sent a letter to council stating it was not possible to include the women's soyunmalık in the original bath function due to financial reasons at the time and parcels 180 and 181 within this space were under different ownership. As a result of this application, in decision no. 5326 dated February 2, 1994, of Istanbul KTVKK No. I, it was decided the bath could be used for three years from the date of the license to be granted by the municipality by the project approved in decision no. 4737, and after this date, the women's soyunmalık should be included in the bathhouse as a whole, considering the historical and architectural value of the bathhouse.

On January 13, 1999, the preliminary project for the inclusion of the women's soyunmalık in the original function was submitted to council. Parcels 180 and 181 on the Divanyolu Street façade of this space were not included in the project due to their different ownership. In decision no. 12065 dated July 26, 2000, of Istanbul KTVKK No. I, it was decided the arrangements for the sıcaklıks in the restoration project approved by council decision no. 4737 would be valid as they were and the project for alteration of the soyunmalıks would be appropriate. Following this decision, since the Fire Brigade Directorate stated a fire escape should be determined by regulations, a revision project was prepared and an exit from the women's baths to Divanyolu Street was added. This project was approved by decision no. 13227 of the İstanbul KTVKK No. I dated 3.10.2001, subject to council decisions no. 4737 and no. 12065 (Figure 15).



**Figure 15.** Revision project showing a fire escape [28]

In line with decision no. 12065, the men's soyunmalık was rearranged and the transition to the women's bath was provided with a short passage (Figure 16), while the opening added to the corner of the men's soyunmalık in line with decision no. 4737 was closed. The reinforced concrete gallery floor with circular cavities was removed from the women's soyunmalık and a two-story reinforced concrete gallery floor similar to the men's soyunmalık was added, the floor level was rearranged, the floor was covered with marble, and an ornamental pool was added in the middle of the space (Figure 17). In Glück's plan (Figure 3), the original benches and wooden şirvan in this space [3] were not included in the restoration project and implementation. The transition from this space to the ılıklik was achieved by reopening the original passage that was previously closed. In the restoration project attached to decision no. 4737 (Figure 14) and in the photographs from 1993 (Figure 18), it was seen there are original latrines in the men's bath. Despite GEEAYK decision no. 6449 dated 1972, stipulating preservation of the originality of the existing latrines and that decisions no. 12065 and no. 13227 did not include any regulation on this section, the latrines were renovated and shower sections were added.





**Figure 16.** Transition from the men's soyunmalık to the women's bath (2021)



**Figure 17.** Women's soyunmalık space (2022)



**Figure 18.** The original latrines of the men's hamam, which do not exist today (1993) [28]

The two shops (located on parcels 180 and 181) added to the women's soyunmalık of Çemberlitaş Hamam in the 19th century were removed in the 1960s because the space was to be used for commercial purposes. After being used in this way for many years, these shops were added again with the project



attached to decision no. 13227. A lawsuit was filed against the Ministry of Culture in 2003 for the annulment of this decision. Decision no. 14848 dated 16.4.2003 of the Istanbul KTVKK No. I upheld the validity of decision no. 13227 and the project because these parcels were registered independently at the Eminönü Land Registry Directorate, and there was visual evidence of their existence at the beginning of the 20th century. However, the implementation of this decision was contrary to the purpose of restoring and preserving the bathhouse as a whole, as stated in decision no. 4737 of 1993. Furthermore, this decision showed the restrictive effects of ownership problems on the conservation of cultural assets.

Decision no. 14379 of KTVKK Istanbul No. I dated 4.11.2002 regarding the signboard requested to be placed at the entrance of Çemberlitaş Hamam also covers this hamam and surrounding buildings. For the issue to be taken into consideration, it was decided to remove the additions that harmed the characteristics and quality of this cultural property in the buildings around the bath and to submit a proposal for a uniform signboard and the sketch showing the places where they will be placed to council.

## 6. DISCUSSION

The period between 1951 and 1983, when Group 1 decisions on Çemberlitaş Hamam were taken, began with registration of this cultural property as a “historic artefact in need of preservation” by GEEAYK in 1955 and 1957. In the decision taken in 1966 concerning unauthorized alterations carried out during the 1960s for the commercial use of the women’s soyunmalık space, it was concluded that the addition of a reinforced concrete mezzanine floor did not pose any objection and it was decided the corresponding alteration project would be submitted. The submitted project was approved by decisions in 1967 and 1969. Although the original floor was removed and a basement floor was added, as well as alterations made to other spaces of this section, these interventions were not included in the project and the decisions in question. This situation showed that changes were made outside the scope of the interventions specified in the documents. The absence of any deterrent penalty for those who carried out such interventions, which destroy original elements and cause permanent damage, paved the way for indiscriminate interventions in Çemberlitaş Hamam and other cultural properties, damaging the historical value of cultural assets and shortening their lifespan.

In 1968, the project prepared in line with the restoration requests of the owners of the baths for the men’s section was sent to the High Council, and the decision taken in 1970 requested the preparation of a measured drawing of this section. With this decision, many permanent interventions planned to be made in this part of the bath were not accepted, showing council’s sensitivity for protection of the bath. However, it was decided the new project would be prepared on the condition that the structure to be added to the soyunmalık instead of the şirvan would not exceed two floors and would be submitted to the High Council. When the project prepared in line with this decision was accepted with the decision taken in 1972, the two-story addition, which still exists today, was built with a reinforced concrete system and a passage opening was added between the women’s and men’s sıcaklıks. In contrast to these interventions, which structurally damaged the bath to meet functional needs, the rest of the decision focused on preservation of the original elements and balance was achieved to preserve the bath’s historical value. While these developments indicate progress in national conservation policy, they fall short of international regulations such as the Venice Charter (1964) [4], which emphasizes the principles of minimal intervention, authenticity, and reversibility in the conservation of cultural heritage.

The first decision belonging to the second group, which covers the decisions of the conservation council on Çemberlitaş Hamam from the adoption of Law No. 2863 in 1983 until 2004, determined the bath’s registration and conservation group. This decision, which was taken in 1987 after the restoration project for the conversion of the men’s section used as a bath into a bazaar function was submitted to the regional council, emphasized the importance of the bath in terms of historical, architectural and urban history; it was stated that its restoration was necessary to maintain its use as a bath and aimed to increase public interest in this value. In this restoration, it was stated the additions around the bath should be removed for the aesthetic value of the city and this cultural asset. This decision, which constitutes a significant document for the conservation of the hamam, aligns with several fundamental principles outlined in international conservation charters. The emphasis on maintaining the original function is in line with

Article 4 of the Carta del Restauro (1931), the removal of surrounding additions is in line with Article 6 of the Venice Charter (1964), and the aim of raising social awareness is parallel to the principle of local participation in the Amsterdam Declaration (1975) [4].

In 1989, the project for the use of the women's bath with its original function except for the soyunmalık was submitted to council and in the decision taken in the same year, the principles about the functioning and usage methods of the bath were determined and it was decided to remove the additions on the entrance façade. Although the project was not officially approved, the interventions specified in the decision were implemented; separate spaces were created for male and female users, a passage was provided from the men's soyunmalık space to the women's bath, and this section was opened for use. In 1993, the measured drawing of Çemberlitaş Hamam was submitted to council and the restoration project was sent after council's decision was accepted; arrangements were made according to the decision taken in 1989. The decision was taken in 1993 to temporarily use the bath as specified in the project, provided the women's soyunmalık was included in the original function and integrity was ensured. In 1999, the alteration project was submitted to council. With the council decision taken in 2000, the arrangements for the soyunmalık spaces in this project were found to be appropriate. With this decision, reinforced concrete floors were added to the women's soyunmalık and no change was made in the layout where the passage to both sections was provided from a single place. With the addition of shops in the women's soyunmalık space, the integrity objective stipulated in the decision of 1993 could not be realized. It was understood that the interventions were not limited to the decisions taken, such as removal of the original latrines, which were emphasized to be preserved in a decision in the first period. The fact the decisions for implementation were taken without a restitution project and details were not included has damaged the cultural property's historical identity.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The first period between 1951 and 1983 revealed that the conservation process for Çemberlitaş Hamam was insufficient in terms of a sustainable and holistic conservation approach, document-based decision-making and control mechanisms. Although council decisions taken during this period occasionally expressed principles to protect the building's historical identity and architectural features, the interventions reflected in practice often contradicted these principles. The fact that practices that harm the originality of the building, such as removal of the original flooring in the women's soyunmalık and the addition of a basement floor, were not sufficiently covered in council decisions showed the interventions were not inspected or recorded in detail. Furthermore, the lack of sanctions for such interventions encouraged violation of conservation principles, threatening the historical identity of not only Çemberlitaş Hamam but also other cultural assets.

The second period, which began after the 1983 enactment of Law No. 2863 on the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Properties, showed a more institutionalized and systematic approach was adopted in the conservation processes for Çemberlitaş Hamam. The decisions taken in this period provided a framework in which the building's historical, architectural and urban identity values were emphasized and restoration proposals were evaluated to ensure continuity of the original function. In particular, the decisions taken to remove the annexes around the bath and include the women's section in the functional integrity reveal the existence of an approach to preserve the building's original function and identity. However, some interventions implemented in this period without project approval, the lack of detailed restitution studies and the weakness of a holistic restoration approach in implementation decisions indicated the conservation process was not functioning at an ideal level. Nevertheless, it can be said that a more conscious conservation approach was adopted compared to the first period and this process was an important transformation phase in the conservation of cultural properties.

Çemberlitaş Hamam needs to develop solutions for interventions that are contrary to the architecture, traditions and functioning of the traditional Turkish bath, such as the entrance for men and women from a single location and the presence of additions contrary to its original architecture. In addition, to not repeat mistakes made in the past, the cultural property should be kept under constant supervision by the relevant institutions.

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