

THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF OTTOMAN ARCHAEOLOGY: A *TERRA INCOGNITA* FOR TURKISH ARCHAEOLOGISTS

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Abstract

The history of Ottoman archaeology is yet to be written. The existing scholarship is lacking an exhaustive account on the subject and is in need of a critical outlook to the current discourse. There is ample literature taken into account by Turkish historians on the history of the Ottoman Imperial Museum (*Müze-i Hümayun*) with a particular focus on the period following Osman Hamdi Bey's appointment as director of the museum in 1881. Turkish archaeologists, on the other hand, have remained remote to the early history of archaeology prior to the Republican era due to practical and ideological reasons. As a result, the field has been dominated by historians, whose approaches and areas of interest greatly differ from those of archaeologists. The concentration of historiographical interest on Osman Hamdi Bey and his role in the protection of antiquities lying in the Ottoman territory has overshadowed the merits and contributions of other pioneering figures in the field, most of whom with more in-depth knowledge and substantial technical expertise on archaeology. This paper aims to draw attention to the major issues prevalent in the Turkish historiography of Ottoman archaeology and calls for expanding the sources and areas of study in the field. Writing the disciplinary history of archaeology in Turkey is not an easy task; it requires language skills – the majority of the archival sources are in Ottoman Turkish, familiarity with historical methodology as well as a good understanding of archaeological method and theory. Thus, it is essential to engage archaeologists in the field and integrate different strands of evidence obtained from both literary and archaeological sources in order to produce an accurate narrative of the history of Ottoman archaeology.

Keywords: Ottoman archaeology, historiography, history of Turkish archaeology, Osman Hamdi Bey, the Imperial Museum

Osmanlı Arkeolojisinin Tarihi: Arkeologların Kazmadığı Topraklar

Öz

Osmanlı arkeolojisi tarihi henüz el değmemiş, bakir bir alan olarak durmaktadır. Mevcut çalışmalar konuya dair kapsamlı bir değerlendirmeden yoksun olup, hâlihazırda bu konuda benimsenen söylemlere eleştirel bir

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tarzda yaklaşımı gerekli kılmaktadır. Özellikle Osman Hamdi Bey'in müdürlüğe getirilmiş olduğu 1881 yılı ve sonrasını kapsayan döneme ilişkin Müze-i Hümayun'un tarihçesi hakkında Türkçe dilinde yazılmış geniş bir tarih literatürü bulunmakla birlikte, Türkiye'de arkeoloji alanında yürütülen çalışmalar bugüne dek, gerek pratik zorluklardan gerekse ideolojik sebeplerden ötürü, Cumhuriyet dönemi öncesindeki arkeoloji tarihine mesafeli kalmıştır. Dolayısıyla anılan dönem, doğal olarak arkeoloğlardan oldukça farklı yaklaşım ve ilgi alanlarına sahip olan tarihçilerin yön verdiği bir tarih alanı olagelmıştır. Bu alandaki tarihyazımı ise daha ziyade Osman Hamdi Bey'e ve onun Osmanlı topraklarında yer alan eski eserlerin korunması yönündeki çabalarına eğildiğinden, birçoğu arkeoloji alanında çok daha derin bilgiye ve teknik uzmanlığa sahip olan pek çok öncü isim ne yazık ki gölgede kalmıştır. Bu çalışma, Osmanlı arkeolojisini konu alan Türk tarihyazımında dikkat çeken başlıca sorunları gözler önüne sermeyi amaçlamakta ve alanda kullanılabilir kaynakların ve irdelenebilecek çalışma konularının genişletilmesi yolunda bir adım atmaktadır. Türkiye'de arkeolojinin tarihi alanında anlamlı bir çalışma yürütülebilmesi için, tarih metodolojisine hâkimiyet ve arkeoloji alanına ait yöntem ve kuram bilgisinin yanı sıra, arşiv kaynaklarından yararlanabilmek açısından Osmanlı Türkçesi alanında belirli bir dil becerisine sahip olunması da gerekmektedir.¹ Bu nedenledir ki, Osmanlı arkeoloji tarihine dair isabetli ve güvenilir bir eser ortaya koyabilmek için, arkeoloğların da bu konuya dâhil olması ve hem yazılı hem de arkeolojik kaynaklardan farklı verilerin bir araya getirilmesi elzem görünmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı arkeolojisi, tarih yazımı, Türk arkeoloji tarihi, Osman Hamdi Bey, Müze-i Hümayun

The history of Ottoman archaeology is a subject that requires a more nuanced explication in modern Turkish historiography. With the exception of a few valuable yet brief discussions,² historians have mainly concentrated on a fairly limited scope of subjects mostly revolving around the history of the Imperial Museum (*Müze-i Hümayun*) and the persona of Osman Hamdi Bey. The literature is meager, for instance, on the Ottoman sultans' attitude towards the antique past³

¹ Bruce G. Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, Cambridge 2009, 551.

² See, for instance, Edhem Eldem, "Theodor Makridi Bey ve 1907 Boğazköy Kazısı [Theodor Makridi Bey and the 1907 Boğazköy Excavation]", *The Discovery of an Anatolian Empire, November 14-15, 2015, İstanbul Museum of Archaeology Library, İstanbul* forthcoming; and Wendy M. K. Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Berkeley 2003.

³ For a concise discussion of the subject, see İsmail G. Paksoy, "Bazı Belgeler Işığında Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kültür Mirası Politikası Üzerine Düşünceler [Ideas on the Cultural Heritage Policies of the Ottoman State in light of some documents]", in *Osman Hamdi Bey ve Dönemi Sempozyumu, 17-18 Aralık 1992*, (ed. Zeynep Rona), İstanbul 1993, Pp. 201-221.

and the history of collecting in the Ottoman world.⁴ It is, thus, essential to examine the history of Ottoman excavations and the evolution of archaeology from antiquarianism into a “scientific” discipline in the Ottoman world at the turn of the century. Likewise, archaeologists’ interest in the subject has remained inadequate chiefly for two reasons: first, the linguistic barrier has kept archaeologists away from examining the early history of their discipline. As a result, they have left the field to historians, whose approaches and areas of interest greatly differ from those of archaeologists. Second, conforming to Republican nationalist historiography, Turkish archaeologists have confined their attention to the Republican era and the Turkish actors of the discipline.⁵ Thus, they commence the history of Turkish archaeology with Osman Hamdi Bey, the so-called father of Turkish archaeology by disregarding the preceding decades, that is, the formative period of archaeology. Moreover, other leading actors of the discipline, who were also employed by the Imperial Museum, have been persistently unnoticed and their contributions overlooked.⁶ This paper aims to draw attention to such *lacunae* in the historiography of Ottoman archaeology by offering a critical examination of the sources and methods of the study of Ottoman archaeology. In the current state of knowledge on late Ottoman archaeological practices, questions certainly outnumber answers. Needless to say, thorough answers to such questions require a more extensive treatment than the scope of this study allows. Nevertheless, taken into account from an archaeological point of view, this study is intended to serve as a point of departure for future research by identifying some of the limitations and problems in the field.

Nomenclature

The term “Ottoman archaeology” is often used in a dual sense:⁷ first, it refers to the archaeology that studies the material culture of the Ottoman period and second, as an anachronistic term, it denotes the archaeological activities undertaken by the Ottoman state and its institutions.⁸ An alternative approach is

⁴ Edhem Eldem and Wendy M. K. Shaw have made important contributions to the field although their focus is on the late Ottoman period. Also see Süleyman Özkan, “Osmanlı Devletinde Eski Eser Koleksiyonculuğu”, *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi* XIX/2 (2004), Pp. 65-86.

⁵ Eldem forthcoming.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ Baram and Carroll (2002, 12) question the difference between an Ottoman period archaeology and Ottoman Archaeology without acknowledging the use of the term to refer to the archaeology undertaken by the Ottoman state. Uzi Baram and Lynda Carroll (eds.), *A Historical Archaeology of the Ottoman Empire: Breaking New Ground*, New York 2002.

⁸ A definition of the field can be found in *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology*, (ed. C. Smith), New York: Springer Science, Business Media: 1. B. Walker, (ed.) 2014. “Ottoman Archaeology: Localizing the Imperial”, Pp. 5642-53, 2. A. Petersen, “Ottoman Empire: Historical Archaeology”, Pp. 5653-5664. Halil İnalçık also uses the term Ottoman archaeology for the archaeology of the empire. A canonical introduction to the field is Baram and Carroll 2002. By

by reconceptualizing the latter within the framework of “Turkish archaeology,” as employed by many Turkish historians, who begin the history of Turkish archaeology with Osman Hamdi Bey, the first director of the museum with a “Turkish” origin.⁹ A more accurate, but clumsy expression would be “archaeology in the late Ottoman period,” which fails to differentiate the practices of the Ottomans from those of the other states. The attempt to tackle the archaeological practices of the Ottomans discretely from their counterparts is essential for scrutinizing the formation and the development of the discipline in Turkey. Therefore, for the sake of convenience and practicality, the present study employs the term “Ottoman archaeology” for the archaeological enterprise of the Ottoman state and the Imperial Museum.

The Historiography of Ottoman Archaeology

The Turkish historiography of the Ottoman Empire is largely dominated by a traditional approach that favors political history by attributing sanctity to textual documents as primary sources, particularly those generated or utilized by the state and its circles. Texts are transcribed, translated, and, in some cases, treated uncritically with no attention to their contexts. Therefore, they remain as primary sources awaiting analyses at a secondary level to contextualize them within a theoretical framework.¹⁰ This approach has become an established convention in Turkish historiography of the late Ottoman Empire downgrading its credibility and validity.

Furthermore, Ottoman history has long suffered from the problematic relationship it has had with the nationalist historiographies in modern Turkey and other successor states of the Ottoman Empire. The tradition of history in Turkey conventionally dictates a Turco-centric approach blended with a Turco-Islamic synthesis, creating a historiographical monopoly that privileges official history with

contrast, many scholars use the term to refer to archaeological practices undertaken by the Ottoman state and its institutions. See Edhem Eldem, “The ‘Prehistory’ of Ottoman Archaeology, 1840-1870”, *Forum Lecture Munich*, Graduate School for East and Southeast European Studies, Munich, October 2, 2015. <http://www.gs-oses.de/video-podcasts.html>, Jens Hanssen, “Imperial Discourses and an Ottoman Excavation in Lebanon”, in *Baalbek: Image and Monument, 1898-1998*, (eds. Hélène S. Sader, Thomas Scheffler, and Angelika Neuwirth, 157-172. Beirut 1998; İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı* [The Longest Century of the Empire]; Renata Holod and Robert G. Ousterhout, *Osman Hamdi Bey & Amerikalılar: Arkeoloji, Diplomasi, Sanat = Osman Hamdi Bey & the Americans: Archaeology, Diplomacy, Art*: [Sergi = Exhibition, 14.10.2011-08.01.2012, Suna ve İnan Kıraç Vakfı Pera Müzesi], İstanbul 2011.

⁹ For instance Hamit Zübeyr Koşay, E. Zarfı Orgun, Sadi Bayram, and Erdoğan Tan, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Çağlarında Türk Kazı Tarihi* [History of Turkish Excavations in the periods of Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic], Ankara 2013; Uğur Cinoğlu, *Türk Arkeolojisinde Theodor Makridi* [Theodore Makridi in Turkish Archaeology], MA thesis, Marmara University, İstanbul 2002. For a critique of this conventional approach, see Eldem 2015.

¹⁰ Edhem Eldem, “Osmanlı Tarihini Türklerden Kurtarmak [Saving the Ottoman History from the Turks]”, *Cogito* 73 (2013), p. 4.

its Turkish and Muslim actors over alternative accounts and non-Turkish/non-Muslim figures.¹¹

This historiographical tradition has several implications for the study of Ottoman archaeology. The nationalistic approach caused an overemphasis on certain figures and a neglect of other prolific individuals, whose equally valuable contributions to Ottoman archaeology are generally overlooked. A case in point is the habit of beginning the standard history of Turkish archaeology with Osman Hamdi Bey, whose life-story has dominated the narrative of the history of Ottoman archaeology. On the other hand, some of the key actors of the discipline in its formative years such as Edward Goold, Anton Dethier, Demosthene Baltazzi, Yervant Osgan, Theodore Macridy and others have been left into oblivion.

Ottoman archaeologists working on behalf of the Imperial Museum were highly motivated, technically competent, and academically sound members of the archaeological circles of their time.¹² They had serious academic concerns, paid meticulous attention to their work and made solid achievements, which are not yet acknowledged fully in contemporary historiography of archaeology in Turkey. Nor are their contributions to the field recognized although the principles and standards they set at the turn of the century have formed the foundations of the discipline of archaeology in Turkey.¹³

Another common tendency in traditional histories of Ottoman archaeology has been the disregard of certain fields of study that remain outside the scope of conventional framework of Ottoman historiography.¹⁴ Following the text-based methodologies of Ottoman historiography, Turkish scholars dealing with the history of archaeology have largely concentrated on archival texts and their translations. As a result, the legal and bureaucratic nature of the textual material form the basis of their discussions and shape their choice of topics to explore, creating a biased and limited narrative of the history of archaeology. Modern Turkish historiography of Ottoman archaeology principally draws from the large corpus of archival documents reporting on illicit activities, legal texts such as those outlining new regulations, or records of conditions for issuing excavation permits.

¹¹ Halil Berktaş, “Kültür ve Tarih Mirasımıza Bakışta Milliyetçiliği Aşma Zorunluluğu [The Necessity of Overcoming Nationalism in Viewing our Cultural and Historical Heritage]”, in *Osman Hamdi Bey ve Dönemi Sempozyumu, 17-18 Aralık 1992*, (ed. Zeynep Rona), İstanbul 1993, Pp. 240-259; *ibid.*

¹² An examination of the field reports published by Ottoman archaeologists reveal rich evidence about their working principles and achievements. See, for instance, publications by Baltazzi and Macridy listed in the references of this paper.

¹³ I have discussed the merits and achievements of various Ottoman archaeologists in detail in my PhD dissertation. Filiz Tütüncü Çağlar, *From Raqqa with Love: The Raqqa Excavations by the Ottoman Imperial Museum (1905-6 and 1908)*, PhD Diss. University of Victoria, Victoria 2017.

¹⁴ See Eldem (2013) for a critique of such historiographical tendencies and traditions in Ottoman history.

Many studies simply list a chronological inventory of events, legal and bureaucratic changes concerning archaeology and report on various archaeological activities without making any critical analysis or drawing broader socio-political conclusions from them.

The best example for this type of approach is the recent encyclopedic compendium by the Turkish Historical Society (Türk Tarih Kurumu, TTK), entitled *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Çağlarında Türk Kazı Tarihi* [The History of Turkish Excavations in the Periods of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic]. A monumental compilation of six volumes, this study brings together a large number and array of archival documents limited to the Ottoman Archives of the Prime Minister's Office (BOA).¹⁵ The sources include mostly official correspondence regarding the major excavations undertaken in a wide time span from the late Ottoman era until the recent decades. The main shortcoming of the collection is methodological, that is, it neither offers contextual information nor makes any critical assessments of the documents, thus failing to examine the history of archaeology in a systematic manner. Moreover, as its title suggests, the scope of the study has been restricted to merely the excavations, missing out the other means of archaeological practices, pre- and post-excavation activities. The rationale behind the selection of documents and the odd exclusion of other archaeological activities is nebulous. Furthermore, its nationalistic tone weakens its credibility as an objective account of the history of archaeology. In contrast with its monumental size and encyclopedic content, the study has little historiographical value and fails to serve as a reliable historical survey of Turkish archaeology.

A paradigm that has dominated the archaeological discourse in Turkey from the beginning is the concept of “treasures” that the Western archaeologists smuggled out of Turkey since the early discoveries in the nineteenth century.¹⁶ The contention with Western claims on antiquities gradually created a reaction to the ambitious exploitation of antiquities amongst Turkish scholars, who, in response formulated a nationalist discourse. Therefore, the most common theme has, thus far, been the foreign archaeological enterprise within the Ottoman Empire and its impact on the formation of the Imperial Museum and subsequent archaeological discourse. The emphasis on foreign projects overshadows the archaeological practices of the Ottoman state itself, while few publications address issues

¹⁵ No reference is made to the archival material in the İstanbul Archaeological Museum.

¹⁶ For instance, one of the leading Turkish journals of archaeology, *Aktüel Arkeoloji* has covered this theme in a recent issue (September/October 2015) entitled “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Batının Arkeoloji Yağması: Avrupa Müzelerine Eser Toplama Yarışı [The Archeological Plundering of the Western States in the Ottoman Empire: The Rush for Collecting Antiquities for the European Museums]”. The majority of the articles in the volume focus on spoliation practices in the Ottoman Empire.

For a critique of such nationalist approaches prevalent in the historiography of archaeology and Ottoman history in general, see Berktaş, *ibid*; Eldem (2013).

regarding the history of excavations carried out by the Ottomans.¹⁷ As a result, alternative fields of study in the history of Ottoman archaeology that are not directly relevant to official history or covered in the textual documents such as disciplinary developments, intellectual trends, and methodological approaches to the fieldwork have been entirely disregarded.

By contrast, international scholarship on the history of archaeology has focused on theoretical issues overlooking local sources and accounts for viewing Ottoman enterprises through post-colonial debate. The standard picture is more complicated than what appears on the mainstream Western sources. Furthermore, Ottoman archaeological practices are often absent from the standard account of the history of archaeology.¹⁸ The exclusion of Ottomans from the story of archaeology at the turn of the century has generated a biased narrative of this period and its key developments.¹⁹ In this respect, an examination of the history of Ottoman archaeology within the context of social, cultural, and political events of the late Ottoman period is fundamental for revealing the complex network of relationships between leading powers of the time while also adding the local actors into the history of archaeology in its formative years.²⁰

An intriguing drawback is that, unlike Western historiographies of archaeology,²¹ Turkish historiography of Ottoman archaeology in particular has been undertaken by historians, not archaeologists. This is due to the fact that the great majority of the Ottoman archival sources are in Ottoman Turkish, a language that is not conventionally taught in archaeology and art history departments of Turkish universities. Hence, the virtual border set by the language revolution in 1932 obstructs the archaeologists wishing to read Ottoman sources. However, although the study of the early history of archaeology in Turkey is complicated by the language requirement, it is not the major cause of why the Turkish archaeologists are non-existent in the field of historiography. Besides practical difficulties, it is, in fact, ideological factors that render late Ottoman period a *terra incognita* for Turkish archaeologists. While glorifying the archaeological program initiated as part of the early Republican policies in 1930s, archaeologists disregard

¹⁷ The major excavations have been briefly noted by Mustafa Cezar, *Sanatta Batı'ya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi Bey* [The Westernization of Art and Osman Hamdi Bey], İstanbul: Erol Kerim Aksoy Kültür, Eğitim, Spor ve Sağlık Vakfı, 1995. Alev Koçak, *The Ottoman Empire and Archaeological Excavations: Ottoman Policy from 1840-1906, Foreign Archaeologists, and the Formation of the Ottoman Museum*, İstanbul: İsis Press, 2011.

¹⁸ Zainab Bahrani, Zeynep Çelik and Edhem Eldem, *Scramble For the Past: A Story of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, 1753-1914*. İstanbul: SALT, 2011

¹⁹ Eldem forthcoming.

²⁰ Eldem (forthcoming) addresses similar issues in his study on the role and experience of Theodore Macridy in the Boğazköy excavations of 1907.

²¹ Trigger offers a comprehensive discussion on the general historiography of archaeology. Bruce Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, Cambridge 2009, Pp. 549-581.

the formative phase of archaeology as well as its leading actors in the late Ottoman period.

Major Limitations and Alternative Methodologies

The history of Ottoman archaeology can benefit from new methodologies that would open new lines of inquiry and allow for new questions to be explored. The historiographer of archaeology in Turkey is required to examine both internal and external sources critically in order to offer a balanced interpretation. The internal sources are primary accounts written by local historians since the late Ottoman period. The external sources taken into account by the contemporaneous European actors, generally offer a biased view of Ottoman archaeology reflecting the political dynamics of the time and the ongoing rivalries over the antiquities.²² The Ottomans have been presented typically as vandals lacking the sophistication to appreciate and protect the antiquities lying in their territories. For instance, in one of his articles, Salomon Reinach blames the Ottomans ruthlessly for being only concerned with either selling or destroying antiquities. He also complains about intellectuals, who perceived the importance of archaeology, but are in the way of the Western interest in science and collecting as all they can achieve is confiscating and storing the antiquities in their museums with no audience.²³ Reinach was not alone in his dislike and critique of the Ottoman presence in the archaeological scene. Many Western sources from this period and early twentieth century display a similar disapproval of the Ottomans' activities in the field reflecting the political rivalry between the states.

The Turkish scholarship on the history of Ottoman archaeology developed as a response to the abovementioned Western narrative reacting with a nationalist discourse that has numerous shortcomings. An objective account of the history of the discipline, thus, requires the examination of primary sources, the majority of which are located in the archives of the İstanbul Archaeological Museum. However, despite their potential, these archives have been much less exploited because of the difficulties posed by their being uninventoried and undigitized thus far. Additionally, there are other alternative sources, which could potentially contribute to the study of archaeology in the Ottoman world, including the publications of the Ottoman archaeologists themselves or the archaeological findings from the excavations they undertook.

²² Eldem forthcoming.

²³ Salomon Reinach, "Le vandalisme moderne en Orient", *Revue des Deux Mondes* 156/239 (1883), Pp. 132-166, Cited in Frédéric Hitzel, "Osman Hamdi Bey et les Débuts de l'Archéologie Ottomane", *Turcica* 42 (2010), Pp. 167-190 and Edhem Eldem, "From Blissful Indifference to Anguished Concern: Ottoman Perceptions of Antiquities, 1799-1869", in *Scramble for the Past: A Story of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, 1753-1914*, (eds. Zainab Bahrani, Zeynep Çelik and Edhem Eldem), İstanbul 2011, p. 326.

As a result of the paucity of attention in archaeology in public circles in the late Ottoman period, the museum became the foremost institution where archaeology found adequate representation. Therefore, the dominant theme of the history of archaeology has been the foundation of the Imperial Museum, with a particular focus on the period under the directorship of Osman Hamdi. Presenting museology as the only visible aspect of archaeology in the Ottoman world, this approach views archaeology merely as a tool for enriching the museum holdings. This view of archaeology that developed in the late Ottoman times has been the main paradigm in archaeological historiography. An immediate effect of such a shallow outlook is its disregard for the study of archaeology for its own sake as well as some other relevant themes such as the sociological and methodological dimensions of archaeological practice.

Archaeology has been represented in Turkish historiography as an independent scientific discipline much later in the early Republican era of the 1930s, when the state and its newly founded institutions promoted archaeological research extensively. The concentration of historiographical interest in modern scholarship has been on these two themes; that is the foundation of museology by Osman Hamdi and the so-called golden years of Turkish archaeology. This disproportionate emphasis created a neglect of the history of archaeology to be treated as an independent discipline. Therefore, other promising subjects such as its historical and methodological development and its place within the history of the world archaeology are yet to be explored.

The general consensus amongst Turkish historians of archaeology is that the Ottomans did not have a clear mission to study their own past and archaeology obtained a socio-political character only in the Republican period.²⁴ Ensuing the abovementioned tradition, mainstream historians generally acknowledge that the Ottomans imported and practiced archaeology as part of their “process of modernization” with the aim to acquire antiquities for the museums.²⁵ For instance, one of the few archaeologists interested in the history of archaeology in Turkey, Mehmet Özdoğan simply ignores the archaeological practices taking place in late Ottoman period and reduces the role of Ottomans in the history of archaeology to simply a group of legislative improvements: “The most significant contribution made by the Ottomans to archaeology prohibiting the export of antiquities which at that time might be considered as revolutionary.”²⁶

²⁴ Mehmet Özdoğan, “Ideology and Archaeology in Turkey”, in *Archaeology Under Fire: Nationalism, Politics and Heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East*, (ed. Lynn Meskell), London and New York 2002, p. 111; Tuğba Tanyeri-Erdemir, “Archaeology as a Source of National Pride in the Early Years of the Turkish Republic”, *Journal of Field Archaeology* 31 (2006), p. 382.

²⁵ Özdoğan, “Ideology and Archaeology in Turkey”, p. 114; Remzi Oğuz Arık, *Türk Müzeciliğine Bir Bakış [A Look at Turkish Museology]*, İstanbul 1953.

²⁶ Özdoğan, “Ideology and Archaeology in Turkey”, p. 115.

Partly due to the belief that Ottoman archaeology lacked a systematic research strategy, scholars have concentrated on the question of why and how archaeology started, rather than how it was practiced or how it developed over time. Imported from Europe, archaeology certainly bore a strong European influence with an emphasis on Greco-Roman antiquities. The Turkish-Islamic heritage was not considered worth studying or even preserving until the last decades of the nineteenth century. However, it is misleading to claim that archaeological research in the Ottoman Empire was merely inspired by aesthetic concerns and did not have any academic or political aspirations. Given the small number and limited extent of the studies on the historiography of archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, one should avoid sweeping generalizations at least for the present.

Conclusion

While opening up new lines of inquiry for the study of Ottoman archaeology, the present paper emphasizes the necessity to reconsider the historiographical sources and methodologies, which is not an easy but an essential task for several reasons: 1) An investigation of the foundations and development of the discipline of archaeology would enable a better understanding of its current state and future directions in modern Turkey; 2) Establishing the role and place of Ottoman archaeologists within the context of early history of archaeology will allow revealing their contributions to the formation of the discipline in Turkey; 3) The study of early history of archaeology in the Ottoman context has an important potential for informing us about the changing attitudes in Turkey to the archaeological recovery of the past. An analysis of the nationalist and colonialist discourses dominating the historiography of Ottoman archaeology would enable us to comprehend the relationship between archaeology and politics both in the past and at present. In order to offer a better-informed analysis as well as an accurate account of Ottoman archaeology, which has long suffered from the ideological rivalries between the Orientalist interpretations and the nationalist historiographies, it is necessary to incorporate different strands of evidence from various textual sources as well as archaeological material.

The fact that the study of Ottoman archaeology can tap into a remarkable range and number of primary sources could perhaps encourage archaeologists to step into the field. An alternative to documents written in Ottoman Turkish can be the large corpus of literary sources taken into account in Western languages by local and foreign archaeologists working in the Ottoman Empire. These include personal records and letters, published and unpublished field reports of Ottoman archaeologists,²⁷ and the publications of the museum itself, such as the museum catalogues prepared by Dumont (1868), Goold (1871), Reinach (1882), and Joubin

²⁷ See, for instance, publications by Baltazzi and Macridy.

(1893). In this regard, the archives of the İstanbul Archaeological Museums yet remain as an untapped resource with its large collection of photographs and written documents in Ottoman Turkish and French. The collection is in the process of being inventoried and digitized at present as part of the ongoing restoration in the museum. In the near future, it will be integrated with the online database of the BOA giving researchers digital access to its collections, which would undoubtedly make a positive impact on future studies. The absence of textual records can be compensated by using archaeological material retrieved in early excavations as a primary source of information on the field techniques and collection strategies of the Ottoman archaeologists.²⁸ Considering the large number of excavations commissioned by the museum, future investigations in the field would certainly be promising and more likely to offer new outlooks on this neglected field of study.

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²⁸ I have used this methodology in my doctoral research, which has proven to be efficient for the Ottoman excavations carried out at Raqqa by Theodore Macridy and Haydar Bey since it has been possible to correlate the physical data with textual evidence. See Tütüncü Çağlar, *ibid*. It is possible to apply this methodology to other excavations carried out by the Imperial Museum.

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