

Edirne New Palace excavations (2018-2021)

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Abstract

The palace serves as a legitimacy tool for states that operate under a monarchical system of administration and for the dynasty holding power. It is the residence and administrative location of the highest ruler of the state. Thus, the edifice has the ability to depict the period and civilization it embodies in the most elevated manner. The palace has been a crucial emblem of Ottoman society for 600 years, spanning the inception of the civilization. Although Bursa Bey Palace and Edirne Old Palace, erected in Ottoman capitals, have not withstood the passage of time, Edirne New Palace acted as a blueprint for Istanbul's Topkapı Palace, serving as an efficient residence until the final days of the Ottoman Empire. The palace now stands deserted as a result of the Ottoman-Russian war and subsequent destruction. This study focuses on excavations carried out in 2020 to uncover its heritage, which encompasses Ottoman architecture and art from the II. Murad period to the late 19th century in a diverse manner, and to reintroduce certain components into contemporary Turkish cultural life. The article presents the land applications and data gathered during the excavation period.

1. Introduction

The construction of Edirne's New Palace began during the Second World War, on an island situated between two Tunca River branches outside Edirne. It was initiated by Murad in 1450 - Sultan II. Although left unfinished for a brief period after Murad's death, the palace complex was later extended by Fatih Sultan Mehmet and named Saray-ı Cedid-i Amire. During later periods, particularly under the reigns of Suleiman the Magnificent, II. Sultan Selim, Ahmet I, IV. Mehmet II. Ahmet, III, additional expansions were carried out. With the additional structures and renovations commissioned by sultans such as Suleiman, the Edirne New Palace has achieved a grand size and a wealth of functions. The palace contains 117 rooms, 21 divanhanes, 18 baths, 8 masjids, 17 large doors, 13 wards, 4 cellars, 5 kitchens and 14 pavilions, providing insight into its impressive scale [1]. However, it is necessary to consider this size as the area encompassed by the Ottoman palace complex, consisting of numerous buildings arranged in a specific order. None of the buildings in question are monumental in terms of size compared to European palace architecture, within the context of a single structure. The

scale employed is historically fitting for the architectural style of the region, enabling panoramic view and preventing the user from feeling overwhelmed. The Edirne New Palace retained its significance, even after the capital city relocated to Istanbul. Erected in the third century, it was subject to neglect following Ahmet's reign, ultimately succumbing to destruction in the 1752 earthquake [2]. Explorations were conducted to repair the palace in 1787, 1802-1803, 1807, 1811 and 1827-1828, however, no significant restoration work took place and only a few ruined sections were taken down [1]. After 1805-1806, some parts of the palace were utilized as military storehouses for weaponry and ammunition [3]. Following the Russian occupation of Edirne in 1829, their camp was stationed in the palace.

The Yeni Saray in Edirne was largely destroyed due to the Russian occupation in 1878. The Yeni Saray in Edirne was largely destroyed due to the Russian occupation in 1878. The palace had served as a storage for military equipment and ammunition since the beginning of the 19th century. On January 18, 1878, the palace was set on fire by the order of the Governor of Edirne, Cemil Pasha, and the fire lasted for three days. Badi Ahmet Efendi, a local from Edirne, provided information on Cemil Pasha

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in his book "Riyaz-ı Belde-i Edirne". "In 1294, while serving as Governor in Edirne during the Russian invasion, the Vali set fire to the ammunition stored in the palace at the specific time and day he was to depart for Istanbul, supposedly in a bid to prevent its capture by Russia. This decision endangered the city for several days and caused significant damage to the 540-year-old Palace, a memorial to Fatih Sultan Mehmet Han." [4].

After the liberation of Edirne from Russian occupation, Governor Rauf Pasha reportedly gave valuable pieces and tiles from certain unscathed parts of the palace as gifts to foreigners. It is believed that 27 chests of plundered valuables were taken this way. Although Hacı İzzet Pasha was reinstated as Governor of Edirne in 1884 and expressed a desire to restore Edirne New Palace, this wish was ultimately unfulfilled. Subsequent governors saw it fitting to acquire the required construction materials from the remains of the Edirne New Palace for the purpose of building barracks and public structures in Edirne [5]. Presently, only the remnants of Matbah-ı Amire and Kum Kasrı Bath, which underwent recent renovation, as well as the Adalet Pavilion, Bâbüssaâde and Cihannüma Pavilion, have survived from the Edirne New Palace [6] (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Buildings in the New Palace of Edirne, a. Justice Pavilion, b. Kum Kasrı Bath, c. Cihannüma Pavilion, d. Babüssade, e. Matbah-ı Amire

This constitutes Edirne New Palace, II. This cultural heritage encompasses all stages of Ottoman architecture and art from the reign of Murad until the end of the 19th century. Its purpose is to showcase this heritage in a diverse way and restore certain elements of it to bring it into contemporary Turkish cultural life. Pursuant to this overarching objective, the Edirne Museum began excavations at the Edirne New Palace in 1999.

These studies were conducted by Prof. until 2003. The excavation at Matbah-ı Amire was conducted under the scientific guidance of Gönül Cantay. From 2004 to 2007, excavations persisted in Cihannüma Pavilion and Presentation Room. From 2009 to 2015, the Edirne New

Palace excavation was performed by Prof. on behalf of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Trakya University, authorized by the Council of Ministers. Mustafa Özer chaired the excavation. After a two-year hiatus from excavation works, our scientific consultancy restarted the excavations in 2018. By Presidential decision dated 01.06.2020 and numbered 2020/2587, the excavations were granted a 12-month status.

Before commencing fieldwork for the Edirne New Palace Excavation, which had its inaugural season already completed, the aim was to arrange accommodation, housing, work offices, and an excavation warehouse for the team. Accordingly, studies were conducted to achieve these goals. In this context, the Trakya University Sarayı Campus rejuvenated and transformed two former military buildings into a dig house, courtesy of the funding support of Trakya University Rectorate. Furthermore, the facility was fitted out with essential furnishings, encompassing beds, cupboards, and kitchen equipment.

2. Land Application

Excavations took place in three areas: the Presentation Room, the Akağalar Wards, and the Iron Gate. The aim was for these three locations to complement each other and aid in understanding the site map. The goal was to find out where Sur-i Sultani separates the two courtyards (Alay Square and Kum Square) of the palace, following the protocol rules of the Edirne New Palace. This research aimed to create a strong foundation for planning the palace as a whole (Figure 2). Unfortunately, this is not easy to do because the New Palace has been mostly destroyed and restoration is difficult.



Figure 2. Areas where excavation works were carried out. a- Presentation Room b- East and north wall of the Alay Square c- Iron Gate, "Engraved from the map of the New Palace in Edirne made by Avadis Benliyan, an army journeyman"

2.1. The Presentation Room

Room is a mansion with a dominant architectural style, comprising of a single room and adjoining abluion

area. The entrance to the Presentation Room Hall is through Bâbüssaâde, one of the most significant doors of the palace (Figure 3). This chamber is utilized for official visits, ambassadorial receptions, and festive occasions. As it is intended for celebratory purposes, this apartment within the palace boasts meticulously crafted interior design. The sole illustration of the interior engraving is found within C. Our sources of information regarding the building are limited to pre-fire photographs, extensive exploration journals, and documents compiled by Doctor Rifat Osman. These photographs were taken by Edirne Governor Hurşid Pasha back in 1868 (H.1285) and presented to Kargopulo during the palace's restoration. Some of these photographs are available through various individuals and collections (Figure 4). The sole illustration of the interior engraving is found within C. The sole illustration of the interior engraving is found within C. Sayger and A. Desarnod's album [7] (Figure 5).

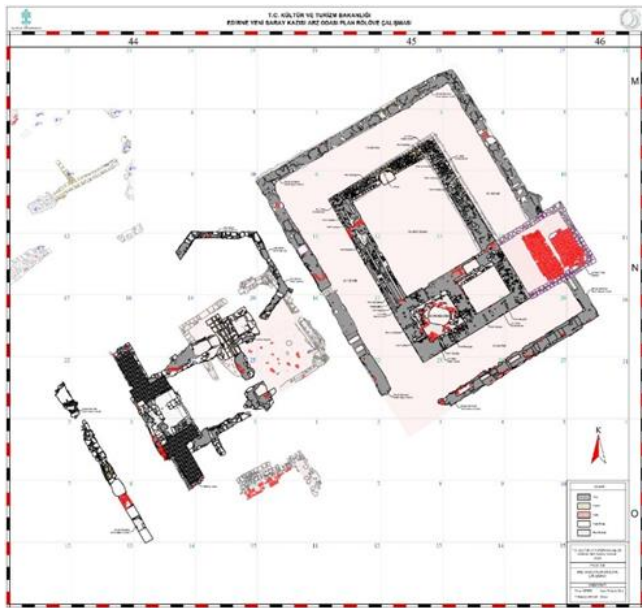


Figure 3. Presentation Room Survey Plan



Figure 4. During the 1868 renovation, view of the Arz Chamber from the Kum Square (by Rifat Osman)

The Bâbüssaâde complex comprises the Presentation Room, a courtyard paved with marble, and four rooms allocated to the Kapı Ağası and the duty gatekeeper. These rooms are situated on either side of a small corridor accessible through a door from the courtyard, all supported by a lead-covered roof. The portico encompassing the Presentation Room on the opposite side of the Bâbüssaâde is upheld by 35 oak columns [1].

Sedat Hakkı Eldem is unequivocal about the construction date of the building, dating back to the period of Fatih Sultan Mehmet, based on the relief arches being in the shape of a full circle [8].



Figure 5. Cihannüma and presentation room engraving. (C. Sayger & A. Desarnod Album)

Additionally, the function of the Presentation Room implies that the building belongs to the first construction phase of the palace since it functioned as military material warehouses and ammunition depots after 1805-1806, notwithstanding any architectural data. In the final years of Sultan Abdülaziz's reign, Governor Hurşid Pasha undertook the renovation of the dilapidated roof and wooden sections. Regrettably, this intervention proved fruitless. Subsequently, after a few years, the palace, including the Alay Square, sustained partial destruction due to the explosion of the stored ammunition, resulting in the complete incineration of the wooden areas. The building's stones were removed, and debris cleared to its current state after it turned into ruins, leaving only its walls standing due to a movement.

Engravings and photos in give general insight into the building's external appearance and Presentation room. The excavation site, determined using various sources is situated in the northwest section of the disaster area extending in a northeast-southwest direction. It belongs to DSI and is located 10 metres away from the Bâbüssaâde Gate. Positioned in the northeast, it is 8 metres south of Cihannüma Pavilion. The 44-M, 44 N, 45 M, and 45 N trench systems, which have 25 trenches each measuring 5x5 metres, were analyzed.

As a result of the excavation in the area, we uncovered the walls that make up the Imperial Throne of the Presentation Room and the portico walls surrounding it. Figure 6 shows the walls uncovered during the excavation (Figure 6). The walls were discovered at the same height, leading us to believe that the land had been leveled and the building was subsequently removed, likely using machinery to shave it down. It is believed that the construction of the structure occurred during the building of the embankment on the south side, overlooking the sand square. The flood level of the Presentation Room was reached at the 37.67 elevation level, in the area descending down to 37.40 elevation level. Furthermore, during the drilling process, excavation of waste and clean water canals that belong to the palace, as part of a broader system were found at the 37.41 water level elevation [9] (Özer and Dündar 2019).



Figure 6. General view from the Presentation Room excavations. (by EYSK Archive)

2.1.1. Portico Walls

The wall foundation encircling the Presentation Room and supporting the portico pillars has a thickness of 95 cm. It consists of a mixture of irregular stones and mortar. The strength of the 80 cm wide wall, which rises above the foundation and was built from a combination of mortar and rubble, was enhanced with wooden beams. While carrying out this work, a well-cut stone measuring 75cm x 66cm was discovered on the southwest portico wall. Traces on the northwestern and northeastern walls of the portico exhibited similar stone widths, as the stone found on the southwest wall. This stone was identified as one of the pedestal stones supporting the portico pillars.

The façade walls of the main space, also called the Presentation Room, have a varying thickness of 110 cm to 150 cm and were constructed using uneven stonework. Chipped face stones were used on the cheeks of the wall, which was filled with masonry rubble and brick particles. The wall was then reinforced with wooden beams.

Inside the northwest wall, there is a stone structure measuring 1.19 m x 1.05 m made of old stone. The structure contains a large monolithic stone measuring 15.5 inches, which has been identified as a hearth stone based on information provided on the Presentation room drawings made by Rifat Osman (Figure 7). To the south of the Presentation Room, remnants of a wall have been discovered which separates the chamber where the Imperial Throne is situated from the ablution and toilet areas. The investigation indicates that a significant portion of the wall is still present below the State Hydraulic Works Disaster Set. The internal wall length measures 7.58 metres. Upon examining the main walls of the Presentation Room, which were uncovered during the excavation, it is apparent that the walls above the flood level detected at an elevation of 37.67 have been levelled at 37.89, revealing that the building follows different axes than the flood level. This disparity can be attributed to the building's repairs.

The southwest, northwest, and northeast walls of the resulting Presentation Room, along with the wall unearthed in the southeast section, comprise the Taht-ı Hümayun, the room containing the sultanate throne. According to sources, the throne room has two doors that face the Bâbüssaâde Gate and the Cihannuma Pavilion. The study identified the threshold of the door

overlooking the Cihannuma Pavilion on the northeastern Wall [1]. It measures 155cm. The threshold leading to Bâbüssaâde could not be located, although we anticipated it to align with this broad threshold.

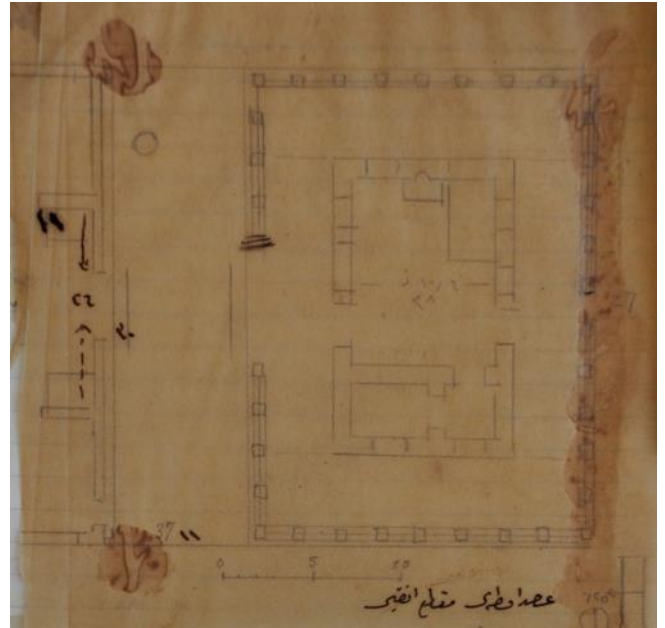


Figure 7. The plan of the Presentation Room in Rifat Osman's book "Edirne New Palace" From the original copy in Edirne Bayezid II Complex.

2.1.2. Water Canals

During the excavations in the area; besides the remains of the walls of the Presentation Room; water canals belonging to the palace were also encountered. There are two different types of canals; waste and clean water canals (Figure 8).



Figure 8. View from the water canals. (by EYSK Archive).

2.1.2.1. Waste Water Canals

They were built of brick and stone masonry and covered with large cap stones. The canal, of which the first cover stone was encountered at level 37.30, was observed to extend in the north-south direction. The fact that the canal is inclined towards the south indicates that it flows into the Tunca River approximately 300 m in this

direction. However, it was possible to follow the canal until below the DSİ disaster embankment. It was observed that it merged with another wastewater canal at 37.35 elevation level, which was identified at 37.53 elevation level and extends in southwest-northwest direction. It was observed that the canal running in southwest-northwest direction was more regular than the canal running in north-south direction. This canal was formed by covering large schist stones as a cover over the brick masonry body wall. The canal extending in southwest-northwest direction merges with the canal extending in north-south direction. This situation suggests that it was built in a later period. In general terms, it is observed that these canals have poor insulation against external factors and have a rough form. Similar ducts were encountered during the excavation and cleaning works in Matbah-ı Amire. The fact that the same sloppy structure was observed here and the remains of wastes were also encountered inside suggests that these canals were built for sewerage purposes.

2.1.2.2. Clean Water Canals

They have a more elaborate structure compared to waste water canals. The joints of terracotta drains laid on a brick floor were sealed with "lökün", a paste produced by mixing lime, olive oil, cotton and egg white. The top of the funnels was covered with a hipped roof made of bricks, and the canals, which were given a triangular form by plastering between the bricks with mortar, became more resistant to external factors. The clean water canal passes over the waste water canal. At the top of the clean water canal, where it gains height as it passes over the waste water canal, it is seen that a limestone with a hole in the centre opens out. It is probable that this hole was made to allow the water to rise to the surface, which indicates the presence of a fountain here.

It is observed that the fresh water canals in the supply room extend in three different directions; north, southeast and west. A precise understanding of the connections of the canals identified in the area requires the completion of excavations in much larger areas. Regardless of the architectural boundaries of the supply room, it is clear that the water system was in relation with the other structures of the palace. However, the careful and patient collection of the findings made so far and those to be made in the following years will provide us with more information about the infrastructure of the palace.

2.2. Alay Square (East Wall)

Alay Square is one of the oldest courtyards within the Edirne New Palace, featuring the surviving ruins of Matbah-ı Amire to the south and Bâbüssaâde to the east. Excavations have previously taken place in the structures and surrounding areas, with the goal of the 2020 studies to establish a wider perspective and continue the previous work. The primary objective was to ascertain the limits of Alay Square and the positions of its related edifices. As part of this overarching aim, the location for the upcoming developments in 2020 was identified

following the remnants of the eastern wall that borders the square and referring to Avadis Benliyan's sketches (Figure 2 - b). Geophysical studies were conducted on the northern wall of Alay Mansion to assist with future planning. Technical term abbreviations were explained upon first use. The text adheres to conventional academic structure, formal register, and clear, objective language.

The sources were used as a basis for the study, which focused on the 5x5 m intersection of the eastern wall that separates Birun and Enderun from the northern wall. The study involved four trenches, each measuring 1.55 m. During the conducted studies, archaeologists uncovered the remnants of a wall running in an east-west direction that coincides with a wall extending from Bâbüssaâde (Figure 9).



Figure 9. Alay square east wall (by EYSK Archive).

The width of the wall, constructed with rubble stone, measures 95 cm. Additionally, three rows of foundation beam gaps, measuring 10x10 cm each, were discovered. Additionally, researchers have identified one of the triangular buttresses that extends parallel to the western wall of the eight-domed dining hall at Matbah-ı Amire, which was previously unearthed. A set of schist stones, the exact characteristics of which are not completely understood, have been found at the upper levels of the wall, resting against the section overlooking Alay Square. This finding suggests that soldiers during the Balkan Wars utilized rubble to fill the soil between walls as a temporary solution. Further data in later stages of the study may shed light on the nature of this finding.

The wall technique and width of the Presentation Room are identical in this area, and the damage to the wall is consistent throughout. The available information implies that the remnants of the deserted palace and its stonework were cleared subsequent to the conflagration, which persisted for three whole days and resulted in the obliteration of the palace.

2.3. Iron Door

The third point where the works were carried out was at Demirkapı, which opens to the Fatih Bridge, which provides access from the Kum Square to the Hasbahçe (Figure 2 - c). Demirkapı is located on the wall extending from the east of the Matbah-ı Amire parallel to the Tunca River and defining the eastern border of the Sand Square. A 19th century photograph of the gate, which is on the same axis as the entrance façade of the Cihannüma Pavilion, shows that the wall above the gate makes a curve and that there is a lead-covered, three-faceted

transom on the side facing the Sand Square. It is reported by Rifat Osman that there was also a fan-shaped sayeban on the Hasbahçe side. The triangular buttresses on the eastern wall of the Alay Square can also be identified in the photograph (Figure 10).

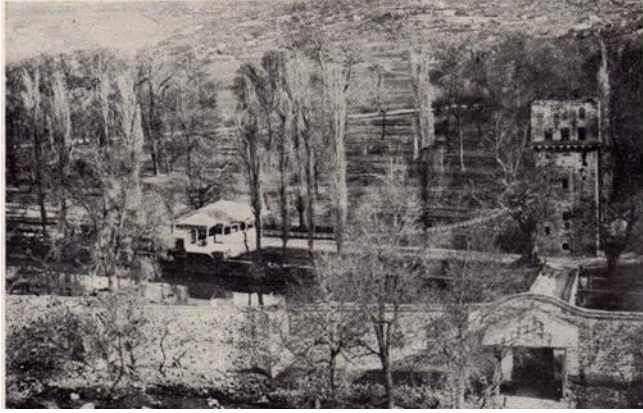


Figure 10. Iron Gate, Justice Pavilion and Iftariye Pavilion (by Rifat Osman)

In the first days of the works, the asphalt that was built to provide the connection between the stadium where Kirkpınar wrestling was held and Yeni İmaret Neighbourhood was dismantled. Then, at a point very close to the surface, the largely destroyed traces of Demirkapı were reached. However, no reliable plan of the remains of the gate, which was exposed to vehicular traffic for many years and pressurised during the asphaltting works, could be reached. On the other hand, one of the triangular buttresses, which can also be identified in the photograph, could be identified. In addition, the direction of the wall (Sur-i Sultani) on which the gate was placed, extending in the north-south direction parallel to the Tunca River and forming the eastern border of both Alay Square and Kum Square, could be identified (Figure 11).



Figure 11. General view of Demirkapı and Sur-i Sultani excavation site. (by EYSK Archive)

3. Conservation Applications

3.1. In-situ Conservation (Architectural)

In situ conservation studies were carried out on the architectural findings obtained in three different excavation areas where the excavations of Edirne Yeni Saray were carried out. The main purpose of these works

is to protect the architectural findings unearthed in these areas against deterioration that may occur due to external factors such as seasonal conditions, human destruction and flooding. The applications carried out within this framework were carried out with a conservative approach and it was planned to provide temporary protection before a possible comprehensive repair activity.

Within the scope of the applications, firstly, dry cleaning was carried out with the help of soft-tipped brushes and small dental tools, and the dry deposit and soil layer were removed from the surface of the find. After the architectural finds group was documented, it was covered with geotextile. Then it was covered with a high soluble lime mortar prepared with three parts of aggregate (river sand, stone dust, marble dust and some firebrick dust) and one part of lime (calcium hydroxide). The mortar was about 10 cm thick and applied in herringbone form to prevent water retention on the surface (Figure 12).



Figure 12. In-situ conservation practices (by EYSK Archive)

3.2. Small Find Conservation

As a result of the excavations; coins, terracotta nozzles, glazed and unglazed ceramics, tiles, metal objects such as nails, horseshoes, bullets, cannonballs, hooks, door hinge parts, rifle parts, keys, clamps, empty casings, bullets, pendants, taps, bullets, terracotta funnels and tile fragments were found. These finds were cleaned in the excavation house and classified. For each find, find slips were prepared for each find, including the area worked, the type of find, its function and importance, and placed in labelled crates and protected in the excavation warehouse. The finds were divided into two groups as inventory and study artefacts. Inventory artefacts are indicated with "1" and study artefacts are indicated with "2". Inventoried artefacts are preceded by the site, year, a numerical expression indicating whether they are inventoried or studied, and an abbreviation indicating the type of artefact (e.g., Ak.20/02/PT/01). For the convenience of the excavation house storage

system, a QR code system was introduced. In this system, the general information of the artefacts in the vault (find location, find type, find name, find dates) was transferred to the QR code via the computer. The barcodes were printed out and hung on the board. If these barcodes are scanned by downloading any QR Code programme from a mobile phone, the information about the type of finds in the vault will be accessed (Figure 13).



Figure 13. QR code system used in artefact storage.

During the restoration and conservation works of the metal artefacts, they were firstly documented with photographs and then mechanically cleaned. With the help of small hand tools such as soft-tipped brushes, scalpels, cotton, bamboo sticks, active and passive corrosion layers on the metal surface were removed from the metal surface and the patina was preserved. The mechanically cleaned bronze finds were kept in a 3% solution of BTA (Benzotriazole) in Ethanol for 45 minutes to stabilize them against corrosion. Then they were purified in Ethanol-Distilled water solution. The surface of the mechanically and chemically cleaned metal artefacts was coated with Paraloid B72 prepared at 3% in Acetone with the help of a brush and the conservation works were finalized and stored under appropriate conditions.

Within the scope of the conservation and repair works of the ceramic artefacts, firstly, mechanical cleaning was carried out with the help of soft-tipped brushes, small dental tools and bamboo sticks, and the dry deposit and soil layer were removed from the artefact surface. After the cleaning was completed, wet cleaning was carried out on the entire artefact surface with 50% ethanol-pure water solution and hydrophilic cotton wool. After the conservation works were completed, the artefact was stored under appropriate conditions.

4. Conclusion

The year 2020, when the Edirne New Palace excavations, which we started in 2018 under the supervision of the Museum, turned into a presidential determined excavation, mainly consisted of the preparation of the physical, technical and expert infrastructure necessary for a more systematic and efficient excavation and conservation in the coming years within the boundaries of the study. In this context, the available data regarding the boundaries of the Edirne New Palace area were evaluated and efforts were made to eliminate the deficiencies identified. The surveys of

the structures of the palace, which were prepared in the previous periods of the excavation and reflected in the reports, were updated.



Figure 14. Examples of conserved coins (by EYSK Archive).

In this period, the excavation works were carried out in accordance with the method determined for the excavation works of the palace consisting of a series of courtyards, with the main purpose of determining the boundaries of the courtyards. In addition to archive and source research on the New Palace of Edirne, excavations were carried out on the Arz Chamber, Demirkapı and the eastern wall of the Alay Square. Architectural and small finds were unearthed during the excavations. With the architectural findings, our views on the characteristics of the buildings have started to gain clarity and the small finds have given clues about the changing functions of these buildings over time. This year's excavations have provided important information about the infrastructure (clean water, waste water system) of the New Palace of Edirne, especially thanks to the infrastructure systems (funnels, canals, etc.) uncovered. After the architectural findings were documented with drawings and photographs, temporary conservation measures were taken until major conservation and restoration works were carried out in the following years. Small finds were cleaned, sorted and recorded in the excavation house and documented with drawings and photographs.

It was observed that both the architectural and small finds identified in the studied areas have common aspects in all three areas in terms of their characteristics. The most numerous finds in all trenches are military materials. Especially cannonballs, weapon parts and

empty casings are among the most prominent finds. The second most common finds in terms of density are terracotta artefacts.

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Author contributions

Yavuz Güner: Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Field study, Writing-Original draft preparation
Gülay Apa Kurtişoğlu Data curation, Field study Visualization, Investigation, Writing-Reviewing and Editing.

Conflicts of interest

There is no conflict of interest between the authors.

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