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**Antiquities Policies and Museology Activities in the Ottoman Empire**

*Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Eski Eser Politikaları ve Müzecilik Faaliyetleri*

**ABSTRACT**

The roots of Turkish Museology are based on the Mecma-ı Asar-ı Atika (Collection of Ancient Artifacts), which forms the foundation of the Istanbul Archaeology Museums. In 1845, during a visit to Yalova, Sultan Abdülmecit decided to transfer Eastern Roman inscriptions to Istanbul after seeing them, leading to the collection of artifacts in Hagia Irene, which had been used as an old weapons depot until then. The museum was organized into two sections: Mecma-i Eslihai Atika and Mecma-i Asar-ı Atika. The former, dating back to earlier periods, laid the groundwork for the Harbiye Military Museum. The Mecma-i Asar-ı Atika collection was curated during the tenure of Grand Vizier Ali Pasha and established as the Ottoman Empire's first museum in 1869 under the name "Müze-i Hümayun" by the Minister of Education Saffet Pasha. Edward Goold, a teacher from Galatasaray High School, was appointed as the museum's first director in the same year. A decree was issued instructing provinces to send historical artifacts to the museum without damaging them, and the Asar-ı Atika Regulations came into effect within the same year. As the number of collected artifacts increased, a search for a new building commenced, leading to the decision to move the museum to the Tiled Kiosk. The museum, relocated to the Tiled Kiosk, became operational in 1880. Following the death of Museum Director Anton Dethier, the search for a new director began. Osman Hamdi Bey, who holds a significant place in Turkish Museology history, was appointed to this position on September 11, 1881. During that period, there was a lack of regulations to prevent individuals from abroad engaging in archaeological excavations and potentially looting archaeological sites. Therefore, the Asar-ı Atika regulations were issued to control and register excavations.

**Keywords:** museology, Asar-ı Atika, relic policies.

**ÖZ**

Türk Müzeciliği'nin kökleri, İstanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri'nin temelini oluşturan Mecma-ı Asar-ı Atika'ya (Eski Eserler Koleksiyonu) dayanmaktadır. 1845 yılında Padişah Abdülmecit'in Yalova ziyareti sırasında Doğu Roma yazıtlarını görmesi ve bunları İstanbul'a nakletme kararı, 1846 yılında Osmanlı Devlet adamı Ahmet Fethi Paşa tarafından, o güne kadar silah deposu olarak kullanılan Aya İrini'de eserlerin toplanmasına yol açtı. Müze, Mecma-i Eslihai Atika ve Mecma-i Asar-ı Atika olmak üzere iki bölümde düzenlenmiş, kuruluşu daha eski dönemlere dayanan Mecma-i Eslihai Atika bölümü, Harbiye Askeri Müzesi'nin temelini oluşturmuştur. Mecma-ı Asar-ı Atika koleksiyonu, Sadrazam Ali Paşa döneminde düzenlenmiş ve 1869 yılında dönemin Maarif Nazırı Saffet Paşa tarafından "Müze-i Hümayun" adıyla Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun ilk müzesi olarak kurulmuştur. Aynı yıl içinde Galatasaray Lisesi öğretmenlerinden Edward Goold, müzenin ilk müze müdürü olarak görevlendirilmiştir. Vilayetlere gönderilen genelge ile çevrelerindeki tarihi eserleri tahrip etmeden müzeye iletmeleri istenmiş; aynı yıl içinde ilk Asar-ı Atika Nizamnamesi yürürlüğe girmiştir. Müzede toplanan eserlerin sayısının artması üzerine yeni bir bina arayışına girilmiş ve müzenin Çinili Köşk'e taşınması kararı alınmıştır. Çinili Köşk'e taşınan müze, 1880 yılında faaliyete geçmiştir. Müzenin Çinili Köşk'e taşınmasının ardından Müze Müdürü Anton Dethier'in ölümü üzerine yeni müdür arayışları başlamış, Türk Müzecilik tarihinde önemli bir yere sahip olan Osman Hamdi Bey, 11 Eylül 1881 tarihinde bu göreve atanmıştır. O dönemde ülke dışından gelip kazı çalışmalarını arkeolojik alanları yağma sayılabilecek şekilde yapan kişileri engelleyecek bir nizamnamenin eksikliği görülmektedir. Bundan dolayı Asar-ı Atika nizamnameleri yayımlanmıştır. Bu nizamnameler ile yapılacak kazılar kayıt ve kontrol altına alınmaya çalışılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Müzecilik, Asar-ı Atika, Eski eser politikaları.

## Introduction

Interest in ancient cultures has played an important role in the transmission of movable or immovable products left by all civilizations that have existed in the world for generations. This interest stems from a combination of spiritual and material accumulations. Archaeological artifacts provide concrete evidence in the historical context and reveal important information about past periods and lifestyles of societies. This process, in which archaeology examines the cultural assets of people, has contributed to the development of our historical consciousness by strengthening our ties with the past. People's innate sense of curiosity has had a significant impact on establishing cultural ties with previous civilizations, understanding their environment and nature, understanding the values created in the past, and determining their future goals (Madran, 1985; Kutlu Dilbaz, 2018; Karaduman, 1955).

The effort to transfer information, documents and objects to future generations, which is a fundamental characteristic of humanity, has progressed in a continuous change. This unforgettable struggle has led to the emergence of all kinds of written materials, libraries, archives and museums. Museums, where the common cultural assets of civilizations are collected, preserved and exhibited, have existed throughout history as an institutional entity. The main purpose of museums is to exhibit the change in art, culture, science and technical collections over a certain period of time and to transfer them to future generations in the best way possible. The collection products protected in this process have been collected since ancient times and form the basis of today's museology. While collecting food, clothing and defense tools since the transition of people to settled life, collecting valuable objects such as weapons, armor, silk fabrics, gold and jewelry emerged with the improvement of economic and social conditions (Gerçek, 1999; Şahin , 2007; Yaraş, 1994).

The Ottoman Empire has a very important position and value due to its establishment in a region where many civilizations have existed throughout the ages. This is because the Ottoman Empire expanded through conquests, creating a great empire. The lands dominated by the Empire were settled thousands of years ago by various civilizations such as the Hittites, Lydians, Phrygians, Urartians and Byzantines. From its foundation to its collapse, the Ottoman Empire coexisted with the remnants of ancient civilizations. Anatolia has many caravansaries, baths, aqueducts and mosques dating back to the Seljuks, and many of these structures remained in use during the Ottoman period. The Ottoman Empire did not only inherit its own culture. In addition to Anatolia, it also encompassed many rich archaeological sites in regions such as Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, the Balkans and Southeastern Europe (Kazancı, 1998: 16).

The history of museums and the concept of museology date back to antiquity as institutions where cultural assets are collected, preserved and exhibited. Museums can be defined as structures where artistic, cultural, scientific or technical collections are stored and exhibited; they can also be characterized as institutions that collect works of art or natural specimens, study, preserve and exhibit them for the development and education of society. The purpose of museums is to organize natural specimens and works of art, the products of human intelligence and taste, in the line of historical development and to present them to future generations in the best possible way. In other words, it is to present the lifestyle, scientific, technical and artistic understanding of past periods to future generations with examples, to protect the values of ancient artifacts and to present them to future generations (Batur, 1983: 1472).

### 1. Museum Activities in the Ottoman Empire

It is not known when and for what reasons museum activities, in their current sense, began in the Ottoman Empire. Most likely, it may have started under the influence of statesmen who had been educated in Europe and knew Europe well, and it was parallel to the Westernization movements that had been taking place since the Reformation. The reason for the establishment of a museum is said to be that Sultan Abdülmecid saw stones bearing the name of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine during a trip to Yalova and sent them to Istanbul. Turks are known to have respected the signs of other states and rulers throughout their history (Cezar, 1971).

In the Ottoman Empire, the creation of the museum concept dates back to the Tanzimat<sup>1</sup> period. After the Tanzimat period, steps were taken for museum practices in the modern sense. However, all conservation and collection efforts made before that were considered collecting without the concept of museum management.

The Church of Hagia Irene represents an important stage in the formation of distinctive Byzantine architecture. Following the Church of Polyuktos in Saraçhane (524-527), it plays a key role in the maturation of monumental early Byzantine architecture, culminating in the most prominent examples of Hagia Sophia (532-537). It occupies a special place in the city's history as the most important church in the city until the construction of Hagia Sophia, after which it stood out among the other important churches in the city. The building continued to be used under Ottoman rule, acquiring various functions. After the conquest of Istanbul in 1453, it was converted into an armory, and in 1726, its content was expanded and it served as a museum of weapons known as "Darü'l-esliha" by organizing the spoils of war and antique weapons obtained from the conquests. Darü'l-esliha gained the function of a museum during the period when it was used as an old weapons depot. After serving this function for a long time in the courtyard of Topkapı Palace, in 1869 the building was opened as the first imperial museum of Istanbul under the name "Müze-i Hümayun<sup>2</sup>". The period when the building was reorganized as an imperial museum constitutes a dominant pillar of the 19th century (Ar, 2013; Yücel, 1993).

Beginning in 1846, Fethi Ahmed Pasha established two collections of old weapons and artifacts in the Hagia Irene Church. To these collections were added various archaeological pieces from all over the country. In 1868, in the *Revue Archeologique*, A. Dumont described this museum as disorganized and neglected and stated that a Western archaeologist should be invited to organize the artifacts here (Eyice, 1985).

In 1869, on the recommendation of A. Dumont, Edward Goold, a British citizen and a teacher at Galatasaray High School<sup>3</sup>, was appointed as the director of the museum. The Ottoman government had been unable to appoint a director from among its own citizens for the museum, which it called the Müze-i Hümayun. Safvet Pasha, the Minister of Education, was Goold's biggest supporter during his directorship. Safvet Pasha, who was an avid collector, made museum affairs one of the responsibilities of his ministry. During this period, the lack of a modern museum like those in European capitals was frequently emphasized. It was pointed out that "civilized states" had been opening museums for a long time, and it was emphasized that a solution had to be found against the sending of antiquities from Anatolia abroad. Safvet Pasha issued a circular asking the provinces to collect archaeological artifacts, pack them in an organized manner, and send them to Istanbul (Şahin, 2007).

During Mahmud Nedim Pasha's grand viziership, many bureaucrats appointed during the previous government were dismissed. Among those dismissed was Edward Goold, the director of the Müze-i Hümayun. Mahmud Nedim Pasha appointed the Austrian Terenzio to replace Goold, but a change of power took place shortly afterward. Ahmed Vefik Pasha became the Minister of Education and appointed German Philip Anton Dethier as the director of the Müze-i Hümayun (Türkseven, 2010).

The display of artifacts in museums is an extremely important element in terms of showing the power of the state. The Ottoman Empire showed great sensitivity about the artifacts to be exhibited in the museum. The Majlis-i Maarif made examinations on the value of the artifacts in order to decide whether they were suitable for exhibition in the museum. In this process, artifacts

<sup>1</sup> The Tanzimat is the name given to the series of Ottoman reforms promulgated during the reigns of Mahmud's sons Abdülmecid I (ruled 1839–61) and Abdülaziz (1861–76). The best-known of those reforms are the Hatt-ı Şerif of Gülhane ("Noble Edict of the Rose Chamber"; November 3, 1839) and the Hatt-ı Hümayun ("Imperial Edict"; February 18, 1856).

<sup>2</sup> Imperial Museum

<sup>3</sup> By its name at that time: Mekteb-i Sultani.

that were not suitable for exhibition were returned to their owners (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri, 1872).

After it was decided that the Müze-i Hümayun would be established in the Tiled Pavilion, the renovations carried out to transform it into a museum caused great damage to its original state. According to an 1875 archival document, a European architect, Monsieur Monterano, was hired for the renovations, and he was commissioned to prepare four continents of maps and survey books. According to the same document, it was decided to remove the roof because it was not bright enough to see and examine the artifacts inside, to reveal the dome, to remove the interior walls and replace them with marble columns, to build a flamboyant entrance because the existing staircase was not suitable for carrying large sculptures, and to replace the damaged brick flooring on the floor with marble. However, it was stated that the money allocated would not be sufficient for the entire project and that the remaining amount could be provided by selling the coins and surplus antiquities (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri, İ.MMS 53/2348).

In the 1876 document sent to the Bâbîali, in addition to the cost breakdowns of the aforementioned works, there are also items such as the principal's room, the priest, staircase, and glass window belonging to the classroom (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MF.MKT 33/132). In 1878, in the document written for the repair of the pavilion, which was started without a will, the amounts of the journeymen contracted for the work and the wages to be paid to them were mentioned, and it was emphasized that the changes to be made should be in accordance with the original state of the building (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri, MF.MKT 58/72).

## **1.1. Personalities Who Shaped Museology and Antiquities Policies in the Ottoman Period**

### **1.1.1. Sultan Abdulhamid II's View on Museology and Antiquities**

It is clear that perspective played an important role in the development of museology during the reign of Abdülhamid II. Studies on this period have generally emphasized "the protection of antiquities"; however, it is seen that these developments progressed in direct proportion to the political, scientific and cultural changes from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards. The nineteenth century was a period in which great powers sought to maintain their political and economic superiority through "knowledge" as well as military and diplomatic efforts. In this period, libraries, archives and museums played an important role among the places where information was stored, made available and localized. Abdülhamid II's personal interest in museums was most likely acquired during his trip to Europe with his uncle Abdülaziz in 1867, when he had the opportunity to see, visit and study such institutions (Shaw, 2004, 102).

Although this period is characterized by a stagnant cultural policy and a dense bureaucracy, important cultural works and artifacts were produced. At the same time, it can be understood from the names and functioning of the relevant institutions of the period that cultural affairs were carried out under an imperial-royal identity similar to the European examples and that inclusiveness and patronage were emphasized in this context (Rukancı & Anameriç, 2019).

The reign of Abdülhamid II was a period in which the Ottoman Empire tried to reshape its perception policy in the eyes of Western civilization and maintain its international prestige. In this process, there was a need for museological activities in order to correctly understand the ancient civilization of the Ottoman Empire, which ruled over a wide geography, and to keep its socio-cultural prestige at a high level. Museology is an indispensable element in the field of diplomacy as well as preventing irreparable losses in the future in terms of discovering, preserving and exhibiting the cultural heritage (Rukancı & Anameriç, 2019).

During this period, it is clearly seen that archaeological finds, especially Byzantine artifacts from the early Christian era, were part of the diplomatic balance policy. These events were not limited to the reign of Abdülhamid II, but played a decisive role in shaping the legal, social and cultural activities in the field of museology in Türkiye, and in making the Museum-i Humayun one of the leading museums in Europe today (Rukancı & Anameriç, 2019).

### 1.1.2. Ahmet Fethi Pasha

Ahmet Fethi Pasha was born in 1801 (1216), after the death of his father, in the mansion known as Abdullah Pasha Palace, located near the Eyüp pier in Istanbul. Young Ahmed's mother, Saliha Hanım, married him off at a young age to Hacı Bey, the Sanjak Bey of Artvin, and from this marriage a son named Şakir was born. However, Mrs. Saliha did not want to separate Ahmed Fethi from Istanbul and therefore did not go to Artvin. In 1804 (1224), when Ahmed Fethi was eight years old, he enrolled in the Enderun (Öz, 1949).

In 1830 (1246), Ahmet Fethi Pasha was promoted to the rank of kurenalık and after a while he was appointed as çuhadar. In the same year, he was promoted to the rank of Beylerbey of Asakiri Hassaî Şahane and Ferik. Ahmet Fethi Pasha was sent to the Konya army for some investigations and was appointed ambassador to Vienna in early 1834 (1250). He returned to Istanbul after six months, but was sent as ambassador to Vienna again in early 1835 to attend the coronation ceremony of Ferdinand I on the condition of maintaining ties with the Palace (Öz, 1949).

Pasha left his ambassadorial post towards the end of 1856 (1252) and upon his return, he was appointed to the titles of Vizier and Müşirlik and sent to Moscow to represent the government in major military exercises. At the beginning of 1837 (1253- Rebiulahir), he was appointed as the Ambassador to Paris, together with Aydın Province. After staying in Aydın for about a month, he returned to Istanbul, leaving a deputy in his place. Before he was assigned to attend the coronation ceremony of Queen Victoria of England, he traveled to London and from there he was appointed Ambassador to Paris. After leaving this post, he returned to Istanbul after the accession of Abdulmecid to the throne in 1839 (1255) and was appointed as a member of the Council of State. In 1839 (1255- Zilkade), he married Mahmud II's daughter, Atiye Sultan (Öz, 1949).

Ahmet Fethi Pasha was particularly instrumental in the organization and development of the Tophane factories and the establishment of iron smelters around Baruthane. He was also the founder of the Porcelain Factory stamped (Eseri Istanbul), which we keep today in our museums with love. Ahmet Fethi Pasha was instrumental in the establishment or development of factories for the materials needed by the country, and at the same time, he established a factory using porcelain to replace the lost art of tile, in accordance with the requirements of the time. These porcelain pieces stamped (Eseri İstanbul) reflect Pasha's taste and energy in a very successful way (Öz, 1949).

Because he valued works of art, he appreciated that all works of art and history should not be destroyed, should not be taken out, and should eventually be collected and exhibited in a place for everyone to see, as in the West, and laid the foundation of the Turkish museum.

The Military Museum was originally called Müze-i Askeri and is now referred to as the Military Museum. This section was easily created as the old weapons depot contained a variety of weapons from different periods and nationalities. However, due to the unsuitability of the Saint Irène building for exhibitions and its poor maintenance and dampness, many weapons and even pieces from the earliest periods were damaged in storage or their meaning became unclear (Öz, 1949).

### 1.1.3. Osman Hamdi Bey

Osman Hamdi was born in Istanbul in 1842. His father was Edhem Pasha, one of the rare statesmen of the time who had studied in Europe. Edhem Pasha combined broad knowledge with an honest character. During the reigns of Sultan Abdülmecid, Abdülâziz and Abdülhamid Abdülhamid, he progressed step by step in his military and then civil service career, rising to the rank of vizier and serving in many ministerial positions. He also represented Türkiye as an ambassador in Berlin and Vienna and was eventually appointed to the highest office as grand vizier (Tataroğlu, 2018).

Edhem Pasha attached importance to the upbringing of his sons in western culture and sent them to France, Germany or Austria. He made great efforts to ensure that they learned foreign languages and received higher education in these countries. He sent his eldest son, Osman Hamdi to Paris in 1857 to study law. Hamdi Bey attended law classes at the University of Paris for twelve



years. However, since he had an artistic nature, he started to attend painting classes at the Fine Arts School in addition to his legal education (Tataroğlu, 2018).

Starting in 1852, a collection of antiquities began to be assembled in the old Hagia Sophia Church, which was then used as an armory. As this collection showed the potential to become a museum over time, a British, then an Austrian and then a German director was appointed. However, these foreign directors, who were generally understood to be knowledgeable, were, as one German writer put it, "more interested in enriching the museums in their home countries than in making Istanbul an important art center".

In 1875, during Suphi Pasha's term as Minister of Education, although the collections were moved from Topkapı Palace to the Tiled Pavilion and the museum was named "Müze-i Hümayun", it was essentially nothing more than a pile of antiquities. It was in this state that Osman Hamdi Bey found the museum. Osman Hamdi Bey immediately realized that this situation opened up a whole new field of work for him, and that it was possible to do serious work in this field. He began to deal with archaeology and museology with great enthusiasm and zeal, even neglecting the art of painting. On the one hand, he made efforts to organize the collections in a scientific order, on the other hand, he brought in foreign archaeologists to edit catalogs and get their opinions on archaeological issues. In a letter he wrote to S. Reinach, one of the famous French archaeologists working in Istanbul during this period, he expressed great gratitude by saying, "While you were in Istanbul, perhaps without realizing it, you were the first to begin shaping me [in the field of archaeology]" (Keleş, 2003).

Osman Hamdi Bey was appointed as the Director of the Sanayi-i Nefise School on January 1, 1882. A few years before the opening of the Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi, of which Osman Hamdi Bey was the founder and first director, there had been an attempt to establish a school in Istanbul to teach painting and architecture. Since the reign of Selim III, architects and engineers had been imported from Europe, and architecture was considered a profession in greater need than painting. However, this need could not be met through constant efforts to bring experts from Europe or to find people to study architecture in Europe. This situation, combined with the close interest shown by some high-ranking officials in the art of painting, led to the idea of opening a school to train architects and painters (Cezar, 1995, p.450).

The first attempt to establish an academy began in 1877 with the great efforts of Münif Pasha, the Minister of Education (Cezar, 1995, p.453). In addition, according to a document dated 1880 obtained from the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archive, it was planned to establish a school under the patronage of the sultan and the regulations of this school were prepared by the chief architect of the state, Serkis Bey (Cezar, 1995, pp.454-455). Following these two initiatives, Osman Hamdi Bey, while working on excavations and museums, founded the "Sanayi-i Nefise Mekteb-i Âlisi" in 1883, which is considered to be the foundation of today's Mimar Sinan University, and selected the faculty members to teach at this school.

Realizing that it was not possible to preserve antiquities and create a solid museum without an interest and love for works of art, Hamdi Bey established a "Sanayi-i Nefise School" and was appointed as the director of this school at the same time. The new building built near the Çinili Köşk was completed in 1882 and the opening ceremony of the new school was held on March 3, 1883. His efforts in this regard are evident from the following lines he wrote to S. Reinach in 1882: "If I do not write to you often, it is because of the school we are building and my efforts to organize the fine arts service. If you add the official work, you will realize that there is not much time left for me. I return home exhausted in the evenings, and for two months I have not even been able to write to my father in Vienna."

In 1884, the "Asar-ı Atika Regulation" was published, which recognized antiquities as state property and prohibited their export to foreign countries. This regulation caused widespread discontent among European archaeologists and collectors and was even compared to the "Draconian" laws. Although not completely prevented by palace interventions, it ensured that at least some of the antiquities remained in the country and entered the Istanbul Museum (2010).

While the Istanbul Museum had the character of a small provincial museum, Hamdi Bey conducted excavations in various places between 1883 and 1895 in order to enrich this museum. During these excavations, Hamdi Bey's luck helped him find many important artifacts, and most of these artifacts were transferred to Istanbul, contributing to the enrichment and quality of the museum. It was also during this period that the name of a Turkish archaeologist was heard in European and American archaeological circles. Hamdi Bey gratefully remembered the two German scholars who helped him in excavations, Carl Humann and Alexander Conze, who had gained fame with their excavations in Pergamon, and stated as follows: "I learned how to excavate from Humann." "Conze rejoiced at every success I reported to him as if it were his own; he expressed this verbally and in writing many times and always encouraged me to take new initiatives" (Kurulođlu, 2010).

## 2. 19th Century Antiquities Policies in the Ottoman Empire

The Westernization efforts that began during the reign of Sultan Mahmud II were the main factor in the changes seen in many areas. Students who were sent to get to know Western culture closely had a different consciousness when they returned to their countries. When intellectuals saw that their cultural heritage was being transferred to foreign countries, they prioritized the protection of ancient artifacts. The archaeological pieces collected in Hagia Irene with the efforts of Ahmet Fethi Pasha are considered to be the first step taken in the field of museology in the Ottoman Empire. In this way, the accumulation and preservation of ancient artifacts emerge as an indicator of the understanding of conservation. In 1869, the Ottoman Empire took the first legal measure by enacting the Regulation of Âsâr-ı Atıka in order to limit the excavation activities carried out by European states on the territory of the empire and to exhibit the artifacts found in museums (Akçura, 1972).

The term "Âsâr-ı Atıka" is a combination of two words of Arabic origin, "âsâr" and "atıka". The word "âsâr" is a noun of Arabic origin and means "traces, signs". "Atıka" is an adjective of Arabic origin and means "old". In this context, it would not be wrong to explain the dictionary meaning of the term broadly as "old artifacts and traces" (Develliođlu, 2000).

The term Âsâr-ı Atıka emphasizes some value features of the object or place that need to be preserved. This term refers to aesthetic values and the phenomenon of beauty. Therefore, the first important characteristic of the object or place to be preserved is that it be beautiful, even a work of art. However, when the other meaning of the word âsâr is also taken into consideration, it is possible to think that the characteristic of belonging to the past comes to the fore beyond aesthetic concerns. The characteristic of belonging to the past, of being old, points to the importance of the object or place to be preserved in relation to the historical process. In this context, the information that the object to be preserved provides about certain periods of history, important historical events that it represents or is a part of, comes to mind. The origins of this understanding and the origin of the term can be traced back to the concerns of the Ottoman Empire to protect its archaeological heritage. The Ottoman Empire was concerned about the smuggling of archaeological finds from its territory to Europe and tried to protect these artifacts. Therefore, in the process of the term's formation in a society lacking historical knowledge, it seems natural that a term that defines what needs to be preserved should be influenced by a characteristic of antiquity that refers to historical knowledge (Önge, 2018).

Although the issue of Asar-ı Atıka emerged as a new topic in the Ottoman historical literature, the first comprehensive studies in this field belong to the legal historian Ahmet Mumcu. Especially in his 1969 article, he revealed that the first Asar-ı Atıka Regulation, which was known as 1874 until then, was actually issued in 1869 and opened the door to new research on this subject. Mumcu addressed the question of why the state needed such a regulation, arguing for the need to protect personal property. He also addressed the views of Edhem Eldem, who sees the first steps of Ottoman archaeology as part of the state's efforts to re-establish its control mechanism as the power of the central government diminished. According to Edhem Eldem, one of the reasons for the relatively late regulation of asar-ı atıka compared to European countries was

the underdevelopment of plastic arts in the Ottoman Empire under the influence of Islam. The fact that Islam prohibited the sculpture of objects other than trees, flowers and other inanimate beings caused the Ottoman Empire to lag behind its contemporaries in this field. From another point of view, according to Edhem Eldem, one of the reasons why the first regulations on Ottoman archaeology were made at a late date was the insensitivity of the Tanzimat intellectuals to this issue. In the process of Westernization that came with the Tanzimat reforms, archaeology became a necessary element for these intellectuals (Mumcu, 1969; Eldem, 2015).

### **2.1. I. Regulation on Asar-ı Atika (1869)**

In the nineteenth century, Europeans directed the field of archaeology to Anatolian lands, which led to an increase in smuggling incidents in various parts of the Ottoman Empire. The situation is clearly understood from the excavation licenses granted to foreigners and the letters submitted to the Ministry of Education in order to prevent looting in Anatolia. In 1863, in a letter written by Monsieur Dalarke, the Railway Director, to the grand viziership regarding the artifacts unearthed during the construction of the railway, it was suggested that a museum be opened near the railway to ensure the preservation of the antiquities. This proposal was approved by the grand viziership and it was decided to send the valuable artifacts to Istanbul. These events show that the idea of a museum was slowly becoming established in the Ottoman Empire. (Karaduman H. , 2023).

In order to put an end to the looting of antiquities on its territory, the Ottoman Empire decided to demand permission from those who excavated antiquities, as was the case in Europe. However, these people would not be able to transport their artifacts abroad, and could only sell them domestically. On the other hand, it was concluded that the budget allocated for the opening of the museum was insufficient, and it was a reasonable decision to increase this amount. It was also emphasized that a board should be established to make the regulation functional. In the end, both the organization of the museum and the permissions to be obtained for excavations were placed under the responsibility of the Directorate of Education (Yücel E. , 1999)

Considered the first antiquities law of the Ottoman Empire, the 1869 Regulation provides a framework that reflects the concerns about the export of antiquities on the territory of the country. This regulation was instrumental in the emergence of the concept of private property. The removal of the Ottoman cultural riches abroad necessitated a legal solution to this situation. In this context, the 1869 Regulation, which had legal sanctions, considered the protection of antiquities as the most important issue. Those who cause the destruction of antiquities and those who do not take due care in this regard will face criminal sanctions. Efforts were made to establish a system based on private ownership throughout the country. In order to prevent illegal excavations, excavations were subject to licenses, and the purchase priorities of antiquities obtained from excavations were regulated and brought under state control. These steps reflect the Ottoman aim of protecting its cultural heritage and show that legal measures were taken to prevent smuggling (Koşay, Ongun, Bayram, & Tan, 2013; Çal, 1997).

### **2.2. II. Regulation on Asar-ı Atika (1874)**

Over time, the Ottoman Empire realized that antiquities were being used as a means of political superiority. In this process, the Ottoman Empire took important steps in the competition over antiquities in order to demonstrate its existence. One of the most important of these steps was the regulation issued for the protection of antiquities. Noting that the awareness of antiquities gained importance during this period, the regulations were strengthened with additions and included attempts to close the gaps. Following this incident, Dethier, who was in charge of the legal proceedings for the return of the antiquities smuggled from Troy to Greece by the German archaeologist Henrich Schliemann, prepared and put into effect the Regulation on Asâr-ı Atika in 1874. This regulation included innovations regarding the recovery of antiquities and excavations. The Regulation defined the term "asar-ı atika" and included works of art made with spiritual values belonging to ancient civilizations. It divided coins and movable and immovable objects into two categories, and stated that undiscovered artifacts belonged to the state. It included articles regulating the sharing of artifacts found by researchers who obtained excavation permits. The



Regulation also linked excavation and treasure digging to the Ministry of Education, regulated the approval of excavation sites, and ruled on whether the value of artifacts that did not belong to the state would be enforced. It also included articles on the procedures for the excavation and research of ancient artifacts. In this framework, it can be seen that legal measures were taken to extract and control antiquities in order to protect the Ottoman cultural heritage. The 1874 Ordinance includes penal articles that address issues such as illegal excavations, destruction and the export of antiquities abroad. The purpose of these penalty articles is to stop illegal excavation activities and to create a deterrent effect in this field. The relevant articles are as follows:

**Illegal Excavations and Confiscation:** When an illegal excavator is caught, all antiquities found are confiscated by the state. In addition, the person can be prosecuted with a fine of one hundred gold pieces to five gold pieces or imprisonment of three days to one week.

**Delivery Time and Criminal Sanctions:** All artifacts must be handed over to the authorities within ten days of discovery. Those who fail to comply with this deadline are penalized with an additional monetary penalty equal to one fourth of the state's share.

**Damage to immovable works:** Persons who damage immovable works may be fined or imprisoned from one month to one year in accordance with Article 130 of the Criminal Code.

**Confiscation at Customs** Antiquities seized unregistered at customs are confiscated. In this article, it is emphasized that while the purchase and sale of antiquities within the country is allowed, their export abroad is under control.

**Auctions and Income Distribution:** For the first time, the Regulation includes an article on auctions. A five percent tax on auction revenues is collected and transferred to the museum fund. The implementation of these articles has suffered some setbacks, and foreign archaeologists and treasure seekers continue to smuggle antiquities abroad. Factors such as lack of local staff, lack of supervision and lack of effective interventions were effective in these problems (Serbestoğlu & Açık, 2013).

### **2.3. III. Regulation on Asar-ı Atika**

The new regulation, drafted in 1884 through the efforts of Osman Hamdi Bey and his team, introduced a more effective regulation for the protection of antiquities and the prevention of smuggling. This regulation emphasized a national understanding of archaeology for the protection of the Ottoman cultural heritage. In the new regulation, the definition of antiquities was elaborated in more detail. All tangible products left by the ancient nations living on Ottoman territory were considered as antiquities. This definition aims to evaluate cultural heritage from a broad perspective. The regulation, which also contains information on the disposition of antiquities, emphasizes that the state retains the right to use them. The Ordinance prohibits the unauthorized demolition and removal of antiquities on property belonging to communities or individuals. Actions that harm the existing condition of the monuments were also restricted. With these regulations, steps were taken to protect the Ottoman cultural heritage. The Ordinance introduced a detailed procedure for granting permission to researchers to work on antiquities. Researchers had to comply with certain conditions in order to obtain permission. These criteria included the absence of damage to cultural property in the area of research, the permission of the property owner, and the payment of an appropriate surety bond. The regulations on the transfer and use of antiquities also elaborated on the rules set out in the 1874 Regulation in more detail.

It was emphasized that the artifacts brought in at the customs should be registered and that official permission should be obtained from the Ministry of Education for their transportation within the country. In addition, the principle that all artifacts for which official permission was obtained were to be kept in the name of the museum was adopted. The Regulation contains various penal provisions and stipulates fines or imprisonment for those who cause the destruction of antiquities. In addition, criminal sanctions were also imposed on those who found the artifacts by chance and did not inform the state. In conclusion, the 1884 Regulation, drafted under the leadership of Osman Hamdi Bey, represents an important step towards the protection of Ottoman cultural

heritage. By establishing a more effective and detailed legislation on the protection, research and use of antiquities, this regulation strengthened the Ottoman Empire's aim to protect its cultural riches. Konya, Bursa and Jerusalem were the first provincial museums to be located in areas with high archaeological activity. After the Müze-i Hümayun established in Istanbul, the first antiquities museum in Anatolia was opened in Konya. On August 7, 1899, Ferit Pasha of Avlonyalı issued a circular with the decision to establish an excellent building in Konya under the Müze-i Hümayun. Ferit Pasha made detailed studies especially on antiquities and demanded that the movable artifacts brought from the surrounding provinces be moved to the museum building, while the immovable artifacts be preserved on site and explained. As a result of these efforts, an official opening ceremony was held in Konya on December 10, 1899 and with the efforts led by Ferit Pasha, the transfer of antiquities to the museum building began. Since then, an inventory of up to seventy pieces has been established. Bursa Museum, the second museum in the Ottoman provinces, was opened on September 1, 1904 with the participation of Azmi Bey, Director of Education, and Halil Bey, the deputy director of the Museum-i Humayun.

This museum exhibited Greco-Roman, Islamic, ancient Anatolian and Mesopotamian artifacts and housed five hundred artifacts. Conceived in 1914 but never realized due to the First World War, the Jerusalem Museum is also noteworthy. With these initiatives, the collection of artifacts from the territories of the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul, as well as the establishment of regional museums, can be considered as important steps in the creation of a national identity. These museums not only preserved the Ottoman cultural heritage but also strengthened a national consciousness by emphasizing regional richness (Özdoğan, 2006; Nazir, 2010; Aytekin, 1997).

#### **2.4. IV Regulation on Asar-ı Atika (1906)**

The 1906 Regulation draws attention as a regulation consisting of six chapters and expanding the 1884 Regulation. The first three articles of the Regulation deal with the administration of the museum. All matters related to antiquities are managed by the General Directorate of Museums. This directorate is managed by a commission composed of the most suitable personnel selected from among the guards of the Müze-i Hümayun in Istanbul. The responsibility for the treatment of artifacts outside the capital lies with the Ministry of Education, and the Directorates of Education act as local museums and report the results of their activities to the General Directorate of Museums. The decisions taken by the Directorate General of Museums require the approval of the Ministry of Education. The Regulation explains the Ottoman definition of antiquities in detail; according to this definition, the artifacts existing in Ottoman territory are considered to be works of art that reflect all the spiritual values of art, literature, science, science, religion and art of various tribes. When we look at the content of the artifacts, we see that every detail, from walls to small stones, glass fragments and broken wood, is considered an antiquity. An important point that distinguishes this regulation from others is that all movable and immovable antiquities belong to the Ottoman State. With regard to the preservation of immovable antiquities, there are extended provisions on taking the necessary measures for the protection of architectural values. The state monopoly on antiquities means that there is no right to establish private museums. Furthermore, issues related to collecting are not included in the regulation. It is stated that private collectors were mostly non-Muslims, that they were in a position to provide antiquities to Europeans, and that the interest of the Turkish population in this field was not widespread. With the 1906 Regulation, Turkish-Islamic artifacts were taken under protection within the scope of the regulation. This scope includes imaret, kumbet, tekke and imaret as works of the Islamic period, which were added at the end of the article. However, with this article, the question of ownership of foundation works arose and a law enacted in 1921 determined that foundation law applies to all works. In order to identify and protect the locations of antiquities, the regulation offered various incentives to those who notified the museum. The notification period for immovable artifacts was set at fifteen days, and it was emphasized that the notifiers had to protect these artifacts for six weeks. If the land where the antiquities are located is incorporated into the state, only the value of the land will be sold and the antiquities will not be valued separately. In the case of movable artifacts, the notification period is set at one week, and those who comply with this

deadline will be rewarded by the state with money worth half the value of the artifact. Those who damage or destroy the structural integrity of immovable monuments will be punished by imprisonment from one month to one year, in addition to compensation and fines, in accordance with Article 138 of the Criminal Code. Persons who are aware of the existence of immovable antiquities but fail to notify the authorities will be fined from one hundred piasters to one thousand piasters. In the case of movable antiquities, persons who fail to notify the authorities within the specified period will not be eligible for the reward and will be penalized at the same rate. Furthermore, those who carry out unauthorized drilling, research and excavation activities may be imprisoned from three months to one year, and the museum will have the authority to confiscate movable antiquities. Those who engage in unauthorized trade in antiquities may be fined from one hundred piasters to one thousand piasters or imprisoned from six days to six months. Cash fines would be deposited in the General Directorate of Museums' cashier's office. Furthermore, the Courts of Justice will hear cases arising from offenses committed under the Regulation, (Akozan, 1997;Çal, 2005; Shaw, 1997; Özkan, 1999).

### **Conclusion**

Interest in ancient cultures has played a key role in the transmission of tangible and intangible artifacts left by civilizations around the world. This interest stems from a combination of spiritual and material accumulation. Archaeological artifacts serve as tangible evidence that offers important insights into the lifestyles of past societies. Driven by people's innate sense of curiosity, archaeology has contributed to the development of historical consciousness by strengthening our ties with the past.

The effort to transfer information, documents and objects to future generations has led to the emergence of various written materials, libraries, archives and museums. Museums have existed throughout history as institutional entities, serving as places where common cultural assets are stored, preserved and exhibited. The main purpose of museums is to exhibit the evolution of art, culture, science and technology over a period of time and to effectively communicate these changes to future generations.

The practice of collecting cultural objects evolved from the accumulation of basic needs during the transition to sedentary life to the collection of valuable objects such as weapons, armor, silk, gold and jewelry as economic and social conditions improved. The preservation of collected objects has formed the basis of contemporary museology.

Located in a rich historical area bearing the traces of various civilizations, the Ottoman Empire is of great importance due to its vast conquests. The Empire's territory was settled thousands of years ago by various civilizations such as the Hittites, Lydians, Phrygians, Urartians and Byzantines. The Ottoman Empire co-existed with the remnants of ancient civilizations. Anatolia has many caravansaries, baths, aqueducts and mosques dating back to the Seljuks, and many of these structures continued to be used during the Ottoman period. The Ottoman Empire not only inherited its own culture, but also had rich archaeological sites in regions such as Anatolia, Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, the Balkans and Southeast Europe.

The history of museums and the concept of museology date back to antiquity as institutions where cultural assets are collected, preserved and exhibited. Museums can be defined as structures where art, culture, scientific or technical collections are stored and exhibited; they can also be characterized as institutions that study, preserve and exhibit natural specimens and works of art. The main purpose of museums is to present examples of human intelligence and aesthetic creations to future generations by organizing them in the line of historical development. In other words, it is to transmit the lifestyle, scientific understanding and artistic expression of past eras to future generations and to fight for and present the values of ancient artifacts.

Among the Turks, the tradition of displaying old and valuable objects of artistic value dates back to the Seljuk period in the 13th century. The Seljuk rulers may have created one of the earliest museum-like initiatives in Turkish history by enclosing the central hill of Konya with

fortifications. By displaying decorated stones from various periods on the outer surfaces of the castle walls, they created a kind of museum to showcase their buildings.

It is unclear when and for what reasons modern museum activities began in the Ottoman Empire. The influence of statesmen educated in Europe, together with the parallel Westernization movements since the Reform period, may have played a role in the start of museum activities. The establishment of the museum concept in the Ottoman Empire can be traced back to the Tanzimat period. After the Tanzimat period, steps were taken towards modern museum practices. However, all conservation and collection efforts prior to this period were considered as mere collecting without the concept of museum management.

This illustrates the rich historical background of museum-like initiatives among Turks, from the Seljuk period to the establishment of modern museum practices in the Ottoman Empire.

In the modern sense, museum activities were especially in the form of exhibitions of various weapons. These weapons were exhibited in the Hagia Irene museum. Later, the Müze-i Hümayun was established due to the inadequacy of this place. Later, the tiled pavilion was transformed into a museum.

Turkish Museology has its roots in the Mecma-ı Asar-ı Atika, which forms the basis of the Istanbul Archaeological Museums. After Sultan Abdülmecit ordered the transfer of Eastern Roman inscriptions to Istanbul during his visit to Yalova in 1845, Ottoman statesman Ahmet Fethi Pasha began collecting the artifacts in Hagia Irene. The Mecma-ı Asar-ı Atika collection was organized during the reign of Grand Vizier Ali Pasha and the first museum of the Ottoman Empire was established in 1869 under the name Müze-i Hümayun.

In 1881, with the appointment of Osman Hamdi Bey as director of the museum, the museum was moved to the Tiled Pavilion, followed by the construction of a new building designed by architect Alexandre Vallaury. Opened in 1891, this building is the first building designed as a museum building in Türkiye. After Osman Hamdi Bey's death, his brother Halil Edhem was appointed director of the museum, and in 1914 the Evkaf-ı İslamiye Museum was opened for Turkish and Islamic artifacts.

Turkish museology continued to develop during the Republican period. In 1937, the Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture was established by order of Atatürk, and in 1944 the "General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums" was established. The Ankara Archaeology Museum, opened in Ankara in 1923, was renamed the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in 1967. In addition, the Ankara Ethnography Museum, the construction of which began in 1925, was opened to visitors in 1930.

In the first years of the Republic, new museums were opened in various provinces of Anatolia and museum activities were expanded throughout Türkiye.

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