

Ottoman Painting and Painters during the First World War



Gizem Tongo
St John's College
University of Oxford

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the Ottoman art world during the First World War and explores how the war changed the conditions of art production, its agents, and the art itself between 1914 and 1918, a topic that has remained peripheral to international cultural histories of the First World War and modern art more generally. In modern Turkish history and art history too, the art of the war years has either been overlooked—buried in the images of the Independence War that followed—or distorted for ideological purposes—emphasizing the militaristic and pro-war aspects of wartime artworks and marginalizing or excluding non-Muslim Ottoman artists from the story. This study details the diverse institutions, exhibitions, patrons, collectors, critics, and artists who made up wartime Ottoman art world, as well as the rich variety of visual images produced during the war years, from popular illustrations to easel paintings. During the war, like other belligerent governments, the Ottoman state and semi-official patriotic associations commissioned artists to produce war-related works for internal and international propaganda purposes and, as the war progressed, as a historical record of national endeavour. Whilst some Ottoman artists gained a more popular appeal via the propagandistic wartime mass culture, the current of ethnic Turkism which fed into this posed a major challenge to the empire's well-established cosmopolitan artistic milieu. Above all, this study reconsiders the view that propaganda, jingoism, and militarism entirely dominated the cultural scene between 1914 and 1918, recovering how Ottoman artists' paintings often figured the struggles of soldiers in battle and of civilians on the home front in ways that were, if not openly pacifistic, more complex and ambivalent than later mythmaking allowed. The thesis hopes to make original contributions to the history of modern Ottoman/Turkish art, the social history of the Ottoman home front, and the international cultural and art history of the First World War.

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DEDICATION

To Yan.

ABBREVIATIONS

ARHM: Ankara Resim ve Heykel Müzesi

IRHM: İstanbul Resim ve Heykel Müzesi

ATASE: Genelkurmay Askerî Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt

BOA: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi

CUP: Committee of Union and Progress

IAMA: İstanbul Arkeoloji Müzesi Arşivi

IWM: Imperial War Museum

MAZC: Meclis-i Ayan Zabıt Ceridesi

MMZC: Meclis-i Mebusan Zabıt Ceridesi

TBMM: Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In his memoirs, socialist journalist Zekeriya Sertel recalls an anecdote he heard from his friend, the much-celebrated Turkish painter İbrahim Çallı¹, in which Çallı describes a meeting supposed to have taken place during the First World War between himself and the then Minister of War, Enver Pasha. Enver was at this point one of the leading ‘Three Pashas’ of the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, hereafter the CUP), and had almost single-handedly seized power from a faltering Ottoman government by military coup in January 1913. Enver was a soldier by training, a bold and impetuous hero of war and revolution by inclination, the husband of Sultan Mehmed V Reşad’s niece Naciye Sultan, and without doubt at this time one of the most powerful men in the Ottoman Empire. As Sertel recalls, at the time he met with Çallı, Enver was trying to win the Ottoman intelligentsia over to the Unionist war effort:

Enver Pasha suddenly started to play the role of the intellectuals’ saviour. From the leading established writers and artists of the country, so-called artworks were commissioned and the resulting products handsomely rewarded [...] Meanwhile, the painter Çallı İbrahim had the following adventure [...] Enver Pasha commissioned a painting from him. Çallı carried the picture he had painted to Enver Pasha’s room in the War Ministry. When he unveiled the canvas, Enver Pasha requested that some changes be made in the painting. Çallı stared at him, pulled a jack knife from his pocket and rent the painting from top to bottom. Turning to the Pasha he said: “My Pasha, I am a painter. I paint. I don’t do announcements” and left the room.²

¹ Following the surname law of 1934, eleven years after the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, all Turkish citizens then living adopted surnames in the Western style. To avoid anachronism, this study uses the names of the painters as they appeared in contemporary Ottoman sources, such as Nazmi Ziya and İbrahim Feyhaman, instead of Nazmi Ziya Güran and İbrahim Feyhaman Duran. Some artists, however, acquired last names they had been known by before the law, like İbrahim Çallı, who used an epithet related to his origins (meaning İbrahim of Çal, a town in Denizli). Throughout the thesis he is referred as ‘Çallı İbrahim’.

² Zekeriya Sertel, *Hatırladıklarım* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitapevi, 2001 [1968]), p. 60.

This statement reflects the attitudes of Çallı İbrahim's generation, and the mass of people in Turkey after the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, towards the First World War. For modern Republican Turkey, the decision to enter the war in 1914 was a disastrous one, taken by a flawed wartime CUP regime; any connection with which, whether political or cultural, became for a cause for condemnation. Yet did Çallı İbrahim (or indeed other Ottoman painters) really resist making 'announcements' on the behalf of the state *during the course* of the First World War? Whilst we can only speculate as to whether this episode really took place (Çallı İbrahim was famously talkative), we must remember that, back in 1914, the painter did not yet know how things would turn out after the First World War, neither had he achieved as secure a position in the cultural establishment as he occupied by the time he shared his wartime *bon mot* with Sertel.

Yet hindsight, as the historian Adrian Gregory has emphasized, is one of the curses of writing about the war, and 'carries risks when applied to understanding the thoughts and actions of people in the past'.³ Remembering is always selective, and what Turkey remembers of the First World War is no exception. For memory, as Pierre Nora has pointed out, 'accommodates only those facts that suit it.'⁴ After 1923, the Turkish Republic and the Kemalists determined the memory of the Ottoman past and set the agenda for the study of a 'Turkish' history, which, despite purporting to recover and emphasize an allegedly marginal Anatolian Muslim and Turkish Ottoman identity, has also suffered from a state-centric viewpoint and what one can term, 'the militarisation of memory'. The pervasive myths about Ottoman culture during the First World War are that it was only significant to the extent that it was 'propaganda'

³ Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 1.

⁴ Pierre Nora, 'General Introduction: Between Memory and History', in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past, Vol. 1 Conflicts and Divisions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 3.

for the war effort or for Turkist cultural projects, and that the wartime art world was, if not uniformly then certainly unapologetically, Turkish and Muslim. But the realities of the war years were indeed more contradictory than contemporary cultural observers and the later Republican art historians and historiographers who followed them allowed for. In fact, one of my main objectives in this study is to challenge the assumptions of conventional twentieth-century Turkish art historiography, which has canonised mainly Muslim-Ottoman male painters and only certain art works from the First World War. Such reductions of the artistic diversity of the war years, however, not only iron out the complexities of the Ottoman wartime art world, but also gloss over the complexities of painters' individual responses to the war, both as citizens and as artists.

The 'Turkification' of Memory: Recovering the Diversity of the Ottoman Art World

The history of the Ottoman Empire has been written in Republican times, according to Ronald Grigor Suny, 'almost exclusively from the point of view of the dominant people in the empire, the Turks.'⁵ Such exclusions, however, were already being prepared during the course of the First World War. In August 1915, when Hamdullah Suphi portrayed the war as a period that would 'understand' its emerging artists, he employed a distinct ethnic vocabulary of 'Fine Arts in Turkishness' (*Türklükte Nefis Sanatlar*).⁶ Sixty years later, in 1973, the Turkish painter Nurullah Berk also used an ethnic vocabulary to describe the coming to predominance of Turkist cultural forces during the war:

⁵ Ronald Grigor Suny, *Looking Towards Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 95.

⁶ Hamdullah Suphi, 'Türklükte Nefis Sanatlar: Son Resim Sergisi,' *Türk Yurdu*, 89, 30 Temmuz 1331 [12 August 1915]; This study uses the transliterated collection of the *Türk Yurdu* Magazine. *Türk Yurdu*, Murat Şefkatli ed. Vol. 4 (Ankara: Tütibay Yayınları, 1998), p. 195. All translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

The outbreak of the First World in 1914 made it easy for us to take hold of foreign schools, clubs, and clubhouses. At this time, Galatasaraylılar bought the clubhouse of the Italians' "Societa Operaia" and turned it into a dormitory. It was there that the Ottoman Society of Painters organised their first exhibitions comprised of artworks by *only Turkish painters* in 1914 and 1915.⁷

Nurullah Berk's aggressive attitude towards foreigners and an ethno-nationalist definition of the participants at the exhibitions reflects the prevailing mood of Turkish (art) historians towards the Ottoman past. After the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, new patriotic canons and narratives constructed by Turkish historians and art historians alike excluded the contributions of non-Turkish and non-Muslim Ottomans, many of whom had been considered enemy combatants during the cataclysms leading to the formation of the Republic. Writing in a country which adamantly constructed itself as a counter-model to the Ottoman Empire, the challenge for Republican art historians has been to write about the art of a 'tainted' and 'un-Modern' empire using the ruthlessly homogenising and modernising terminologies and ideologies of the new nation-state. The nation-building formation of the one-party era demanded that the voices of non-Muslim artists who were active during the First World War, or more generally during the Ottoman era, be banished from memory. In this kind of narrative, distortions, marginalizations and exclusions were inevitable. Nor did Turkification only apply retrospectively to the Ottoman era in early Republican times, but remained an active political and cultural process. On 6-7 September 1955, riots against non-Muslims took place, including the pogroms against the Greek population of Istanbul, leading to another massive wave of emigration of many non-Muslims from Turkey. As Zeynep Yasa-Yaman describes, in this repressive environment, the small number of remaining non-Muslim artists 'gradually

⁷ Nurullah Berk, 'Çizgi ve Renk Geleneklerimiz', in Nurullah Berk ve Hüseyin Gezer (eds.) *50 Yılın Türk Resim ve Heykeli* (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1973), p. 22. My emphasis.

disappeared from the stage of art; entirely Turkified, the history of modern art thus took on a sterile, national appearance.’⁸ The political imperative to ‘Turkify’ thus left a visible impact on art history writing, and the rich artistic heritage of non-Muslim Ottoman art has been intentionally excluded and marginalised.

In line with revisionist approaches, my research, firstly, attempts to trouble canonical accounts of nineteenth century and early twentieth century art history which has consigned art making in the non-Western world (i.e. Ottoman Empire) to peripheral status; and, secondly, to oppose the pervasive myth of a ‘singular Ottoman art’, composed of only *Turkish* (and generally male) artists. The fresh critical insights offered by postmodern, feminist, and postcolonial studies have brought novel perspectives on the history of modern Ottoman painting. First, there were the art historical studies, starting in the 1980s, which were interested in how local westernisation programmes affected ‘modern’ late-Ottoman visual culture, including the work of Günsel Renda and Zeynep İnankur.⁹ These studies were the result of both a ‘home-grown’ interest in the Ottoman past, which had been denied by the early-Republican historiography, and of Edward Said’s 1978 ground-breaking book *Orientalism*.¹⁰ Indeed, the conceptualization of a passive and a-historical non-Western modern art, a concept inherited from nineteenth and early-twentieth century art historical studies, has been undergoing the most reconsideration since the 1980s. Secondly, in the last decade, there has been a growing literature on non-Muslim Ottoman artists and the cosmopolitan art world in the late Ottoman Empire. Recent studies on Ottoman Armenian and Greek painters by scholars like Garo Kürkman,

⁸ Zeynep Yasa-Yaman, *Suretin Sireti: Bir Koleksiyonu Ziyaret/ Beyond the Apparent: Visit to a Collection* (Istanbul: Pera Museum, 2011), p. 43.

⁹ Semra Germaner and Zeynep İnankur, *Orientalism and Turkey* (Istanbul: Turkish Cultural Service Foundation 1989).

¹⁰ Edward Said. *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

Mayda Saris, and Vazken Khatchig Davidian and more general studies of late Ottoman Empire visual culture by Wendy Shaw and Mary Roberts have endeavoured to present a much more inclusive story of Ottoman/Turkish modern art than previous ethno-nationalist studies and are examples of the move towards inclusive modern art histories.¹¹ Yet, as Davidian has remarked, ‘the introduction of the voices of other Ottoman artists, such as Greeks, Levantines, Jews etc., into the discourse is still lacking.’¹² In other words, my aim is to challenge the limit of canonical western artistic tradition as well as of official/nationalist Turkish art history writing. Of course, the question is not one about which non-Muslim artist should be added to the canon but about canon formation *per se* and its political determinants.

As we shall see, the Turkish, Muslim and masculine focus of the historiography is hardly representative of the broader Ottoman art world during the war years. In contrast to what is remembered today, many non-Muslim painters did in fact participate in art exhibitions organised in Istanbul in 1916 and 1917, and Muslim and non-Muslim women artists made great gains in terms of women’s art education and artistic recognition. The Ottoman Greek woman artist Eleni Iliadis was just one of several non-Muslims who played a significant public role as an exhibiting artist during the First World War. But at some time after the compulsory population exchange, signed between Turkey and Greece (1923), Iliadis had to leave Istanbul for

¹¹ Garo Kürkman, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Ermeni Ressamlar, 1600-1923/ Armenian Painters of the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1923*, translated by Mary Priscilla (Istanbul: Matüsale, 2004); Mayda Saris, *Armenian Painting: From Beginning to Present* (Istanbul: Agos, 2005); Mayda Saris, *Istanbulu Rum Ressamlar/Greek Painters of Istanbul* (Istanbul: Bir Zamanlar Yayıncılık, 2010); Vazken Khatchig Davidian, ‘Nichanian’s *Provincial Wedding in Moush* and Late Ottoman Art Criticism,’ *Études arméniennes contemporaines*, no. 6, December (2015), pp. 155-225; Vazken Khatchig Davidian, ‘Portrait of an Ottoman Armenian Artist of Constantinople: Rereading Teotig’s Biography of Simon Hagopian,’ *Études arméniennes contemporaines*, no. 4, (2014), pp. 11-54; Wendy Shaw, *Ottoman Painting: Reflections of Western Art from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic* (London: New York, I.B. Tauris, 2011); Mary Roberts, *Istanbul Exchanges: Ottomans, Orientalists, and Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture* (California: University of California Press, 2015).

¹² Davidian, ‘Portrait of an Ottoman Armenian Artist of Constantinople’, p. 14.

Athens, and her history has been silenced over time.¹³ Perhaps most significantly for this study, Turkey's on-going failure to recognize the Armenian genocide of 1915 means that histories of the period including Ottoman Armenian art and artists not only complicate the project of 'Turkification' of Ottoman art, but also challenge the 'past' Turkey prefers to remember from the First World War.¹⁴ Many of the Ottoman Armenian artists who survived the genocide were very significant figures of late-Ottoman art whose contributions are downplayed or forgotten in Turkey today, such as Simon Agopian, a painter of military scenes for the Military Museum who died in 1921. Nevertheless, the historian Edhem Eldem very rightly warns scholars against the moral implications of seeking nostalgia in the cosmopolitan and multi-cultural Ottoman past:

Studies of the presence, life, role or ultimate fate of non-Muslims in the Ottoman past may be described as at base morally "good", for they question and criticize an understanding which is the product of nationalism or outright racism; that said, many such studies, [...] even if they take on a praiseworthy responsibility like recovering persons and communities excised from history, do so within the scope of a sort of nostalgia for a lost paradise, constructing an image of the Ottoman Empire as some powder pink, liberal, accommodating, egalitarian, and permissive sponge, as if the very serious controversies, struggles, and injustices of the past had never happened; such studies, as well as being far from historical realities, serve an understanding which can be characterised as a species of "nationalism by the backdoor".¹⁵

This is precisely what this study aims to refrain from; from what one can call well-intentioned nationalism or anachronistic nostalgia. Not only because, as Samuel Hynes has warned, 'nostalgia is bad history',¹⁶ but also because the nostalgia we would look for in the Ottoman past is far from being an ideal. It is true that compared

¹³ I shall briefly mention Iliadis's story after 1918 in the Conclusion.

¹⁴ As of 21 July 2017, the constitutional committee in the Turkish Parliament passed a bill that criminalised mention of the Armenian genocide. <http://armenianweekly.com/2017/07/24/turkish-parliament-committee-bans-mentioning-of-armenian-genocide-in-parliament/>. Accessed, 30 July 2017.

¹⁵ Edhem Eldem, 'Osmanlı Tarihini Türklerden Kurtarmak', *Cogito*, Sayı 73 (2006), p. 15

¹⁶ Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and the English Culture* (New York: Collier, 1992), p. 5.

to the art world of the early Turkish Republic, the late-Ottoman Empire might be seen as relatively ‘liberal, accommodating, egalitarian’, including numerous non-Muslim artists. However, due to its theocratic rationale, the Ottoman state and its rulers (the sultans and, after the 1913 military coup d’état, the CUP) had an unlimited authority, and artists, like the rest of the population, were vulnerable to the impacts and agendas of a despotic regime. The story of the Ottoman Armenian artist and twice a revolutionary—once in the period of the Hamidian massacres and once again in the 1915 uprising at Van—Panos Terlemezian, whose life was spent between strenuous exiles—even imprisonments and death penalties—and painting, is but one example of how authoritarianism (and resistance to it) complicate the picture. Terlemezian returned to Istanbul after the armistice in 1918 but felt it necessary to leave the empire before 1923, first for America and later for the Republic of Armenia, where he is remembered today as first and foremost an Armenian and Soviet, not an Ottoman Armenian, artist. Above all, any cultural and art history of the Ottoman war experience is also a history of the Ottoman Armenian artists and the cultural implications of the Armenian genocide.

Ottoman Culture in Comparative Context: An Internal *Kulturkampf*?

The other reason for this study is to restore the Ottoman war experience in the social, cultural, and art history of the First World War. In recent years, many excellent recent works have focused on economic, military, political, social, and, cultural history of the Ottoman war experience, including Zafer Toprak’s economic history, Edward J. Erikson’s military history, Mustafa Aksakal’s political history, Mehmet Beşikçi and Yiğit Akın’s social history, Eugene Rogan’s military and political history, Erol Köroğlu’s literary history, and Bahattin Öztuncay, Sinan Kunalalp, and Edhem

Eldem's cultural history.¹⁷ Concerning the Ottoman wartime art world, however, no comprehensive study has been undertaken so far, either in the scholarship mentioned above or in European history, which has recently examined the culture of the First World War, including literature and visual culture, from a global and comparative perspective. In recent years, cultural, art, and social historians have debated the relationship between war, art, modernity, and traditional aesthetics in British, German, and French art.¹⁸ The excellent edited volume *European Culture in the Great War*, published in 1999, for instance, has remarked in their introduction that no scholars from Turkey (or Greece) participated in the volume and had 'therefore been left out'.¹⁹ The problematic historical memory of the First World in Turkey has surely contributed to this exclusion, as did the canonical accounts of modern art history, which have consigned Ottoman art to a peripheral status, if not wholly outside of its scope. Hence, one of the reasons for this study is to fill this void in the scholarship and overall contribute to the history of modern Ottoman/Turkish art, the social history

¹⁷ Zafer Toprak, *İttihad-Terakki ve Cihan Harbi: Savaş Ekonomisi ve Türkiye'de Devletçilik* (Istanbul: Homer, 2003); Edward J. Erikson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (Westport, 2001); Edward J. Erikson, *Ottoman Army Effectiveness in World War I: A Comparative Study* (London; New York, 2007); Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914: The Ottoman Empire and The First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Mehmet Beşikçi, *The Ottoman Mobilization of Manpower in the First World War: Between Voluntarism and Resistance* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012); Yiğit Akın, *The Ottoman Home Front during World War I: Everyday Politics, Society and Culture* (PhD Thesis: Ohio University, 2011); Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East, 1914-1920* (London: Allen Lane, 2015); Erol Köroğlu, *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity: Literature in Turkey During World War I* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007); Erol Köroğlu, 'Propaganda and Culture War: Jihad, Islam, and Nationalism in Turkish Literature during World War I', in Erik J. Zürcher (ed.), *Jihad and Islam in World War I* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2016), pp. 141-142. Bahattin Öztuncay, 'Wilhelm Viktor Krausz: The War Painter in the Ottoman Empire', in Bahattin Öztuncay (ed.), *I. Dünya Savaşı'nda İttifak Cephesinde/ Propaganda and War: The Allied Front During the First World War* (Istanbul: Vehbi Koç Vakfı, 2014), pp. 8-39; Sinan Kuneralp, 'Winning Hearts and Minds During the War', in Öztuncay (ed.), *I. Dünya Savaşı'nda*, pp. 40-67; Edhem Eldem, 'War and Symbols, 1914-1918', in Öztuncay (ed.), *I. Dünya Savaşı'nda*, pp. 68-105.

¹⁸ For a comprehensive historiographical survey of these studies, see, Jay Winter, 'Catastrophe and Culture: Recent Trends in the Historiography of the First World War', *Journal of Modern History*, 64 (1992), pp. 525-532.

¹⁹ Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites (eds.), *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainment and Propaganda, 1914-18* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 6.

of the Ottoman home front, and the international cultural and art history of the First World War.

In most belligerent countries, nationalistic feelings ran high during the course of the conflict, and certain art modes and styles were considered to be tainted by affiliation with enemy culture. The language of war propaganda often depicted the other side as a threat to that country's way of life, whether to German's *Kultur*, or to British way of life of pubs and clubs, or to the Ottomans' legacy of Islam. Early in the war, the famous French art journal *L'Art et les Artistes* published two blank spaces in its review section of foreign artistic movements, announcing that the place of Germany and Austria-Hungary would henceforth be taken by these 'two notable "carvings-out."' ²⁰ William Marchant, owner of a French art Gallery in London, issued an ultimatum to the London Group which insisted that 'no enemy aliens, conscientious objectors, or sympathisers with the enemy were permitted to exhibit' in his gallery. ²¹ Whilst, in France, cubism and Orientalism were seen as 'Germanic', hence a deviation from the 'pure French tradition', ²² in Britain Beethoven was soon replaced by English composers, 'whatever the cost in quality and power.' ²³ The Kaiser's antipathy to impressionism in the fine arts was well-known. For him, impressionist painting was Francophile in style and socialist in content, and painters like Max Liebermann was seen as 'poisoning the soul of the German nation.' ²⁴

²⁰ Anonymous, 'Le mouvement artistique à l'étranger', *L'Art et les Artistes*, Tome XIX (Avril-Septembre 1914), p. 298.

²¹ Quoted in James Fox, *British Art and the First World War, 1914-1924* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 58.

²² Kenneth E. Silver, *Esprit de Corps: The Art of the Parisian Avant-Garde and the First World War, 1914-1925* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 3-27, pp. 174-185.

²³ Jay Winter, 'Popular Culture in Wartime Britain', in Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites (eds.), *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainment, and Propaganda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 345.

²⁴ Bernard von Bulow, *Memoirs of Prince von Bulow, Volume II: From the Morocco Crisis to Resignation, 1903-1909* (Boston, Little Brown & Co., 1930), p. 420. See, also, Marion F. Deshmukh, 'Max Liebermann: Observations on the Politics of Painting in Imperial Germany, 1870-1914', *German Studies Review*, 3 (1980), pp. 171-206.

Though, as Marion F. Deshmukh argued, during and after the First World War, impressionist painters like Liebermann, Lovis Corinth, and Max Slevogt were finally ‘regarded as an integral part of the cultural establishment’,²⁵ certain art styles continued to be damned by association with enemy national culture, whether of German or otherwise.

As the Great Powers weaponized their cultures, the imminent collapse of civilisation became one of the key public anxieties of the First World War. For the British, as Samuel Hynes has noted, an ‘apocalyptic sense of an ending’ was everywhere, especially during the early days of the conflict: civilisation ‘is threatened, is toppling, is mutilated or destroyed; the clock of civilisation has been put back.’²⁶ Both in Britain and France, and later also in the United States, the conflict was often portrayed in racialized rhetoric: the war was being fought against German barbarity and for civilisation. In August 1914, the French philosopher Henri Bergson told in a meeting that ‘the struggle against Germany is the very struggle of civilisation against barbarism.’²⁷ After the destruction of the Belgian City of Louvain, the French pacifist writer Romain Rolland penned a letter to the German Nobel Prize-winning novelist and dramatist Gerhart Hauptmann. There, Rolland wrote that he was ‘not one of those French who consider Germany barbarous’, he recognised ‘the intellectual and moral grandeur’ of the country.²⁸ For Rolland, ‘the political tradition of the kings of Prussia’

²⁵ Marion F. Deshmukh, ‘German Impressionist Painters and World War I’, *Art History*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (March 1981), p. 66.

²⁶ Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and the English Culture* (New York: Collier, 1992), p. 4.

²⁷ Quoted in David Drake, *French Intellectuals and Politics from the Dreyfus Affair to the Occupation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 58.

²⁸ Quoted in Peter Jalevich, ‘German Culture in the Great War’, in Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites (eds.), *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainment and Propaganda, 1914-18* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 44.

were to blame, not the German people. But, he felt the need to ask, ‘Are you the children of Goethe, or of Atilla?’²⁹

There was something fundamentally different in the Ottoman art world. Here the separation of *our* side from *theirs* took a very different course from that of other belligerent countries. The Ottoman Empire saw the mobilisation of national culture in the cause of civilisation that was synonymous with ‘European civilisation’. Though the ruling CUP aimed at nationalising and Turkifying the political, social, and cultural spheres by removing the foreign elements (such as the abrogation of the capitulations), its attitude to the fine arts confirmed the close links of modernisation and European civilisation. The very existence of European modes of artistic production in the Ottoman Empire, whether French Impressionism, symbolism, or academicism, was an integral part of its legitimacy and cultural policy. Though the strict censorship regulations enacted by the state made it impossible to criticise the war, the same regulations did not prevent the Ottoman intelligentsia from engaging with the cultures of the enemy states. In fact, during the course of the war, articles on French, British, and Russian writers were not censored from the Ottoman press. Translations from and articles on Gustave Flaubert, Gustave Le Bon, and Maxim Gorky appeared in contemporary publications many times.³⁰ The British school of painting also enjoyed some attention. In a 1915 article, the late Tevfik Fikret, one of

²⁹ Jalevich, ‘German Culture’, p. 44. In 1916, Romain Rolland added: ‘European civilisation smells of corpses’. Romain Rolland, *Aux peuples assassins* (Paris: Librairie Ollendorff, 1916). Quoted in Edward Ousselin, *The Invention of Europe in French Literature and Film* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 85.

³⁰ Ahmet Hidayet, ‘Madam Bovary’den Bir Parça’, *Servet-i Fünun*, No. 1370, 6 Kanun-i Evvel 1333 [6 December 1917], pp. 294-295. Celal Nuri, ‘Fransızlar ve Gustav Lübon’, *Edebiyat-ı Umumiye Mecmuası*, No. 2, 29 Teşrin-i Evvel 1332 [11 November 1916], pp. 33-35. Ahmed Saki, for instance, published an entire series of translations from Gustave Le Bon between 1916 and 1918 in the journal of *Edebiyat-ı Umumiye Mecmuası*: Ahmed Saki, ‘Gustav Lübon’un Şahsiyeti ve Asarı’, *Edebiyat-ı Umumiye Mecmuası*, No: 4, 12 Teşrin-i Sani 1332 [25 November 1916], pp. 88-91; Ahmed Saki, ‘Gustav Lübon’un Asarından: Tekamül-i Halaik Kavanin-i Ruhîyesi’, *Edebiyat-ı Umumiye Mecmuası*, No: 8, 10 Kanun-i Evvel 1332 [23 December 1916], pp. 155-158; Ahmed Saki, ‘Gustav Lübon’un Asarından: Tekamül-i Halaik Kavanin-i Ruhîyesi’, *Edebiyat-ı Umumiye Mecmuası*, No: 17, 11 Şubat 1332 [24 February 1917], pp. 300-302; İsmail Müştak, ‘Maksim Gorki: Çocukluk Hayatı’, *Sabah*, 27 Teşrin-i Evvel 1333 [27 October 1917], p. 2.

the most celebrated Ottoman poets, for instance, was said to have ‘liked almost all English painters’ and particularly the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.³¹ When the leading French sculptor Auguste Rodin died, the Ottoman intelligentsia expressed its sorrow. Various commemorative articles were dedicated to the artist.³² The art history instructor at the Academy of Fine Arts Vahid published two articles himself, recalling the day he and Rodin spent together in Paris.³³ Even though the war required a patriotic rhetoric, the Ottoman intelligentsia did not refrain from finding such narratives in French-speaking intellectuals. As a rebuke to widows’ frustration at their treatment by the war ministry, for instance, the *Yeni Mecmua* featured a newly published article by the Belgian writer Maurice Maeterlinck on mothers losing their sons to the war and their acceptance: ‘this time mothers do not complain or whine. No meetings at large squares. Neither do they accuse anyone, nor revolt’.³⁴

The First World War brought about a collision over the role of the arts between the older tradition of civic and cosmopolitan sensibilities and the state-sanctioned militaristic propaganda in the Ottoman Empire. This was part of what can be understood as a kind of internal *kulturkampf* over the role of the arts in public life, in which militaristic propaganda and ethnic Turkism were in conflict with more cosmopolitan and non-propagandist cultural sensibilities. Of the two sets of mentality, neither of them won hands down between 1914 and 1918. Undoubtedly, the Ottoman

³¹ The article was written after the death of Tevfik Fikret in August 1915 by Ruşen Eşref, discussing the poet’s love and passion for the fine arts. Tevfik Fikret was also an amateur painter himself. Ruşen Eşref, ‘Tevfik Fikret Ressam: Merhum Fikret’in Hatıratından’, *Donanma Mecmuası*, Issue: 109, 30 September 1915.

³² Anonymous, ‘Sanat Alemi’, *Yeni Mecmua*, No: 23, 13 Kanun-i Evvel 1333 [13 December 1917], p. 444; Köprülüzâde Mehmed Fuad, ‘Edebiyat Musahabeleri: Rodin ve Sanat’, *Yeni Mecmua*, No: 24, 20 Kanun-i Evvel 1333 [20 December 1917], pp. 464.

³³ Vahid, ‘Sinaat’, *Yeni Mecmua*, No: 29, 24 Kanun-i Sani 1918, p. 49; Vahid, ‘Sanatta Hakikat-Perestlik’, *Yeni Mecmua*, No. 33, 21-28 February 1918, p. 129.

³⁴ Maurice Maeterlinck, ‘Harpte Analar’, *Yeni Mecmua*, No: 34, 7 March 1918, p. 145. Maeterlinck’s article had appeared in the introduction of the catalogue prepared for the French painter Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer in 1917. Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer, *Les mères pendant la guerre* (Paris: 1917). The article was also republished in *Les Annales politiques et littéraires; revue universelle*, No: 1801, 30 December 1917.

Empire's entry into the First World War resulted in strict political control over the arts. Censorship, however, did not concern the so-called 'high art' of painting, as much as it did for the printed press or the popular culture. To some extent, visual artists occupied a seemingly unique position within the Ottoman wartime culture: most of them did not join the loud bravado that characterised some Turkist poets' approach to the conflict. Neither were their wartime articles nor the content of their artworks generally celebrations of violence based on aggressive and militaristic heroism, and, hence, were not in tune with the belligerent cultural policy of the CUP government. How deliberate Ottoman painters may have been in their 'aesthetic pacifism'³⁵—a phrase which has mostly been used for the members of the Bloomsbury Group—is, however, open to question. Whilst approaching Ottoman visual artists as a group, we should acknowledge their plurality, including but not limited to their class backgrounds, gender and generation differences, and also political leanings and art styles. What made the position of painters unique in the Ottoman experience was that their cultural milieu pointed to a more diverse and integrated one than that of most authors of poetry and literature. In sharp contrast to many nationalist and propagandistic writers from the era, such as Ziya Gökalp, Hamdullah Suphi, and Mehmed Emin (whose names have remained associated with the war in cultural memory), the intellectual milieu Ottoman painters were part of was much more pluralist and multicultural, including many foreigners, Levantines, and non-Muslims, as well as Muslims. Their transnational connections, mostly to Europe, and self-consciously cosmopolitan education and sensibilities, which did not depend solely on local Ottoman culture, gave them a shared conception of universal value in

³⁵ On humanitarian and aesthetic reaction against the First World War in Britain, see Jonathan Atkins, *A War of Individuals: Bloomsbury Attitudes to the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); Grace Brockington, *Above the Battlefield: Art for Art's Sake and Pacifism in the First World War* (D. Phil Thesis, University of Oxford, 2003).

art and life in general. Focussing on their wartime experiences as a group therefore gives us a better sense of how Ottoman culture was contested, even as militarist agendas dominated and Turkist formations consolidated during the war years. Ottoman painters are thus one of the most promising case studies to challenge the national myths about the First World War, leading us to a more unbiased and multifaceted view of history, in which, as Margaret MacMillan has put it ‘very little is absolutely black or absolutely white.’³⁶

War Painting and the ‘Militarisation of Memory’

This study also intends to avoid the prevailing focus on pro-war cultural policies and productions. Indeed, the majority of cultural history accounts on the Ottoman war experience concerned, like K  ro  lu,   ztuncay, and Kuneralp, with only propaganda efforts, whether at the home front or in the international level. Influenced by the sources written by nationalist elites who already support the war cause (K  ro  lu), or the political elite and the cultural encounters with their Austro-Hungarian, German, and Bulgarian allies (  ztuncay and Kuneralp), these accounts have overlooked what remained outside the propagandistic voices and, thus, their analysis have resulted in a limited and biased narrative about the cultural milieu as well as the public support for the war cause. Propaganda art, however, was not the only kind of art produced in the Ottoman Empire between 1914 and 1918, and this applies not just to the simplistic patriotism of the popular cultural sphere, but also to works of ‘high’ art produced for international as much as for domestic consumption.

One outcome of the disproportionate focus on wartime nationalistic agendas in Turkish art history writing has been the interest in the ‘Exhibition of War Paintings’

³⁶ Margaret MacMillan, *The Uses and Abuses of History* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2008), p. 45.

(1917) and the following Vienna Exhibition (1918). Scholars have noted its importance for ‘Turkish painting’ and for later Republican art policies. Gültekin Elibal saw it as the ‘first step’ towards the state-sponsored cultural programmes that would later be implemented by the young Turkish Republic.³⁷ Sezer Tansuğ defined it as ‘one of the most interesting events in the history of Turkish painting’ that encouraged ‘all artists to buckle down to work with national feelings.’³⁸ In 1997, Ahmet Kamil Gören published a 120-page monograph of the exhibition and introduced the phrase ‘Şişli Studio’ (*Şişli Atölyesi*) into Turkish art history writing, referring to the space set aside for painters to create war-related works with access to military models and materiel.³⁹ For Gören, the Vienna exhibition:

occupies an extremely important place in the history of Turkish painting as the first collective exhibition ever organized abroad and [...] it became the first and most significant driving force in a short time in the process of enabling young artists in the young Turkish Republic founded under the leadership of Ghazi Mustafa Kemal.⁴⁰

Following Gören’s monograph, there has hardly been any study written in the last two decades on or related to visual culture in the late Ottoman Empire which does not make reference to the Vienna exhibition.⁴¹ Indeed, the exhibition is of undeniable significance: it was unprecedented for the Ottoman state to sponsor painting on this scale and was the first time an Ottoman painting exhibition was ever organised in Europe. On the other hand, less well explored are the rationale behind the

³⁷ Gültekin Elibal, *Atatürk ve Resim Heykel* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1973), p. 72.

³⁸ Sezer Tansuğ, *Çağdaş Türk Sanatı* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitapevi, 1986), p. 152.

³⁹ According to Gören, the name ‘Şişli Atölyesi’ was coined by the Turkish painter Adnan Çoker. Ahmet Kamil Gören, *Türk Resim Sanatında Şişli Atölyesi ve Viyana Sergisi* (İstanbul: Şişli Belediyesi, 1997).

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 161.

⁴¹ Among many examples, see, for instance, Wendy Shaw, *Ottoman Painting: Reflections of Western Art from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic* (London: New York, I.B. Tauris, 2011); Öztuncay (ed.) *I. Dünya Savaşı’nda*; Andrew Yip, *A Portrait of the Nation as a Young Man: The Genesis of Gallipoli Mythologies in Australian and Turkish Art* (PhD Thesis, University of Sydney, 2010); and Nusin Arslan, *Da und fort: die Zentralperspektive: Türkische Malerei konnte Monarchien auslöschen - und türkische Malerinnen? Ein Schauspiel der Welt* (Berlin: Logos Berlin, 2016).

commission, the painters' responses to the studio project, and the reception of the artworks. Moreover, almost without exception, the chief source of reference for these accounts has been the memoirs of Celal Esad.⁴² His narrative has dominated not only professional art history writing but also the popular interpretations of war paintings produced between 1914 and 1918. Celal Esad was certainly one of the most knowledgeable people on cultural life during the war years, yet his closeness to the CUP during the war and his political and hindsight bias during the Republic resulted in a number of simplifications, including reducing the artworks to evidence of 'national mission' and silence over the exclusion of non-Muslim painters from the story of the exhibition.

Since its foundation in 1923, Turkey's attitude to the First World War has been ambivalent: the war in general has either been overlooked as merely the background of the War of Independence that led to the foundation of the Turkish nation-state, or has been despised as a lost CUP cause. Though the Gallipoli campaign of 1915 was only one of the nine fronts the Ottomans fought during the course of the First World War,⁴³ it has been singled out for commemoration and celebration, with the aim of emphasizing the devotion of the ordinary soldiers to the country's salvation and the emerging role of the commander Mustafa Kemal the future founder of the Turkish Republic, and leader of the Republican forces campaign against the occupying Greek army between 1919 and 1922. Thus Gallipoli and the War of

⁴² Celal Esad [Arseven]'s memoirs were published in Turkish newspapers *Yeni İstanbul* with the title of 'Türk Resim Sanatında 70 Yıllık Hayatım' and in *Dünya* with the title of 'Yıldız Sarayından Mütareke'ye Kadar Celal Esad Arseven'in Hatıraları' in 1955 and 1960 respectively. In 1993, the book version was published by İletişim: Celal Esad Arseven, *Sanat ve Siyaset Hatıralarım* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1993).

⁴³ The Ottomans fought on nine different fronts during the course of the First World War—the Caucasus, Hijaz, Sinai-Palestine, Mesopotamia, Gallipoli, Persia, Macedonia, Romania, and Galicia—but aside from the victory at Gallipoli and (the very-short lived one) at Kut al-Amara, they incurred a series of catastrophic defeats. For a general history of Ottoman military engagements in the international context of the First World War, see for example, Edward J. Erickson, *Ottoman Army Effectiveness in World War I: A Comparative Study* (London: Routledge, 2007).

Independence became the foundation stones of Turkish memory of the period. Heroic and militarist narratives of these two victories were the most useful in the revival of the country's political culture, humiliated by defeat in 1918 and later by occupation in 1919.

This retrospective construction has also been rooted in the institutional practices of Turkish art history and museology. Turkish art historians and museums alike often felt compelled to find 'alternative settings' for Ottoman First World War paintings, and thereby incorporated the paintings into a triumphalist and militarist narrative. Today most of the First World War paintings, displayed in various Turkish public museums, are, at worst, anachronistically relabelled as representations of the War of Independence or, at best, referred as Gallipoli paintings.⁴⁴ Even where First World War images are correctly attributed, simplistically patriotic misinterpretations of the pictures, though consistent with the nationalist, statist, and militarised commemorative forms dominant in Turkey, are reductive of what Jay Winter would call the 'multiplicity of meanings of remembrance, and indeed of history.'⁴⁵ It is a key aim of this thesis to pause before these pictures to reconsider how they relate to the wartime conditions in which they were produced and what implications this has for the meanings we have ascribed to them.

By focusing on the Ottoman art world and its diverse agents and institutions, I hope to present a more nuanced picture of wartime visual culture than that presented in accounts that stress only the emerging militarist, ethno-nationalist, and

⁴⁴ Among many examples, Ali Cemal's 1917 painting *At Dobruca (Dobruca'da)*, which in fact depicts the Romanian front, is today labelled in the collection of the Ankara Museum of Painting and Sculpture as *From the War of Independence (Kurtuluş Savaşı'ndan)*, while Namık İsmail's 1917 painting *Take Another (Al Bir Daha)*, which draws on his experience of fighting on the doomed Caucasian front, is exhibited in the Ankara Museum of Painting and Sculpture as *Artillerymen in the War of Independence (Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Topçular)*. In Gören's study, almost without exception, all paintings are erroneously said to be of Gallipoli. Gören, *Türk Resim Sanatında Şişli Atölyesi ve Viyana Sergisi*.

⁴⁵ Jay Winter, 'The Generation of Memory: Reflections on the "Memory Boom" in Contemporary Historical Studies', *Canadian Military History*, Volume: 10, Issue: 3 (2001), p. 66.

propagandistic currents. Ottoman wartime art was not uniformly propagandistic and jingoistic, as later art-historical myth would have it. To an extent hardly repeated even today in Turkish war art, many Ottoman artists chose to figure the First World War as, yes, glorious and heroic, but also in ways that were often darkly ambivalent about its aims and consequences. Indeed, some of the most significant and powerful examples of war paintings in Turkish art were made during the course of the First World War. This study, whilst proposing new readings of these paintings in order to understand and appreciate their layers of meanings, further argues that Turkish art never configured the First World War and its horrors (in the struggles of soldiers on the battlefields or of the civilians on the home front) as ambivalently or as ambiguously again. This ambivalent configuration of war, soldiering, and the home front in First World War art was to be replaced by patriotic representations of heroic and glorious soldiers, stoic civilians, and supremely competent military leaders during and after the War of Independence. The cult of the military hero, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, though similar to the focus on leadership in conventional battle paintings or the cult of Enver in the art of the 1908 revolution or the Italo-Ottoman War (1911-1912), was different in degree, and a key symbol of this change in the imagination of war after 1919. And it is this representation of war which became and remained the dominant visual language in Turkish war art.

Sources and Chapters

This study focuses on the Ottoman art world during the First World War and explores how the war changed the conditions of art production, its agents, and the art itself between 1914 and 1918. In doing so, it seeks to avoid a ‘state-centric’ focus, appropriating the methodologies of social, art, and cultural history, and drawing on a

wide range of sources, both national and international, and in the official and demotic languages of the empire, including archival documents, official histories, government reports, newspaper accounts (from the official, foreign language, and foreign presses), journal articles, diaries, memoirs, exhibition catalogues, and art and exhibition reviews, as well as a rich variety of images ranging from photographs to illustrations, cartoons, postcards, posters, and easel paintings, gathered from various collections, both public and private. It uses contemporary accounts and documents to understand the intentions of the artists, patrons, collectors, and critics as well as of the dynamics within the art institutions and exhibitions. Further, it explores the diverse potential narratives of Ottoman war paintings to reach a deeper and more multi-faceted understanding of these artworks, instead of looking at them merely from the perspective of propaganda and pro-war efforts.

The thesis is structured both chronologically and thematically, beginning with the pre-war period and ending with the defeat of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War, followed by a short discussion of the immediate post-war art world in the Conclusion. The era under scrutiny in this study is characterized by rapid, frequent, and fundamental changes in the agents, patronage, production, and reception of Ottoman art. The chronological approach and the historical analysis derivable from it make these continuities and discontinuities, following Foucault, a ‘working concept’ rather than an ‘external condition’ of this thesis.⁴⁶ As previously stated, it is important to try to view the contemporary mentalities of the war period without post-1919 projections.

Yet, of course, every chronological division, which is to a certain extent arbitrary and artificial, raises conceptual problems. The specific breaks chosen for

⁴⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972 [1969]).

each chapter in this thesis delineate periods with regard to social, cultural, and artistic changes but not so much to political or military ones. Most recently, the historiography of the Ottoman First World War has been integrated into either to the Second Constitutional Period (1908-1918) or to the ‘empires at war’ period (1911-1923).⁴⁷ Whilst the periodization for the former—dramatizing the crucial aspects of the Young Turk period—has more advantages for political history, the latter—emphasizing the continuity of armed struggles between the Italo-Ottoman war and the foundation of the Turkish Republic—for military history. This thesis, however, takes the years between 1914 and 1918 as an autonomous period in itself. The major reason for this is that, from an art historical and cultural historical perspective, the visual culture of the First World War period differs sharply and in significant ways from that of the Balkan Wars and of the Independence War; most especially in the representation of armies and enemies, battlefield and home front and in the styles and methods of the painters.

The following chapter (Chapter II), ‘The Politics and Poetics of Ottoman Painting, 1800-1914’, aims at a general overview of the visual culture of the late-Ottoman Empire before the First World War: the role of European mode of easel painting in Ottoman political and cultural discourse; the long history of professionalization and institutionalisation of the arts (i.e. the painting classes in the military and civilian schools from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, and the foundation of the Academy of Fine Arts in 1883); the new atmosphere of freedom brought by the 1908 Second Constitutional Revolution; the art market and its gender and class dynamics; and the link between artistic expression and the political and

⁴⁷ For the former approach, see for instance, Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks and the Ottoman Nationalities: Armenians, Greeks, Albanians, Jews, and Arabs, 1908-1918* (University of Utah Press, 2014); for the latter, see, Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela (eds.), *Empires at War: 1911-1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

military conflicts. The issues that arise from an inquiry into the pre-war years constitute a helpful historical background for the following chapters where I focus on the political, social, cultural, and aesthetic experience of Ottoman painters with the First World War.

Chapter III, ‘Militarisation and Mobilisation of the Art World, 1914-1915’, focuses on the initial artistic consequences of the war: the end of the artistic relationship between Istanbul and Paris; the enlistment of young Ottoman Muslim artists in the armed forces; the cultural propaganda campaign of the Ottoman state and semi-official patriotic associations; the cultural elite’s discussions on the necessity and/or non-necessity of art; and, the outcomes of the increasingly exclusivist and Turkist policies of the government, particularly the Armenian genocide, for the artistic world. The chapter explores how militarisation and mass mobilisation changed the public culture and the structure of the art world, which in turn transformed the attitude of painters toward Ottoman society and toward their art. It argues that though the cultural initiatives led by the Ottoman government or by semi-official voluntary organisations gave some Ottoman artists a more popular appeal within the emerging mass culture, the propagandistic agenda, nourished mostly by ethnic Turkism, posed a major challenge to the empire’s well-established cosmopolitan artistic milieu.

Chapter IV, ‘Ambivalent Visions: Civic Initiatives and Painting in the Prolonged War, 1916-1917’, looks at the war’s second and third art seasons, winter of 1915-1916 and 1916-1917. It argues that civic-minded and multicultural initiatives, rather than the propagandistic rationale and ethnic Turkist agendas, became a significant factor in shaping artistic life in the second and third years of the war: a new exhibitions regulation was drafted under the auspices of the Academy of Fine Arts; and, a diverse community of non-Muslim and Muslim Ottoman painters

displayed major collections of their artworks to the Istanbul public in June 1916 and 1917. Furthermore, despite France now being an official antagonist of the Ottoman state, it was in those exhibitions that the Impressionist style was introduced effectively to a wider public in Istanbul. Aesthetically, and to a certain extent politically, Ottoman painters managed to remain autonomous and independent from the demands of an official patriotic agenda and in the midst of increasingly exclusivist and Turkist policies. This period also suggests the beginning of a critical change in the visual representation of war by Ottoman artists, as a conventional imagery of sublime heroism and glory began to fragment and be replaced by more ambivalent visions of ordinary soldiers and the modern battlefield.

The focus of Chapter V, “‘Civilisation and Competence’: Displaying Ottoman War Paintings to their Allies, 1917-1918’, is war’s final art year, winter of 1917-1918. Whilst looking at the Istanbul art world and the general agendas of the CUP at modernising and nationalising the cultural institutions, the main focus of the chapter is the commissioning of war-related works by Ottoman artists in the spring of 1917. The chapter introduces new archival material and contemporary art criticism to add to the existing literature on the story of the ‘Exhibition of War Paintings’ (*Harb Resimleri Sergisi*) held in Istanbul (1917) and the ‘Exhibition of Turkish Painters’ (*Ausstellung Türkischer Maler*) held in Vienna (1918). At the heart of the chapter are the war paintings displayed in those exhibitions, and their multi-layered representations of the battle and home fronts. One of the arguments of the chapter is that many of those war paintings are far more being propagandistic; in their depictions of the soldiers and civilians, they are much more ambivalent and ambiguous, and even to a certain extent anti-war, than has generally been interpreted in Turkish art.

The concluding section will look briefly at the immediate afterlives of the

trends identified between 1914 and 1918 during the Armistice Period and the War of Independence. By trying to understand the influence of changing historical and political circumstances on art historical memory, the conclusion further explores the ways Turkish war art changed during and after the War of Independence and how this change related to patriotism and militarism in the new Turkish Republic.

CHAPTER II

THE POLITICS AND POETICS OF OTTOMAN PAINTING, 1800-1914

Writing in the journal of the Ottoman Society of Painters (*Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti*) in June 1911, the celebrated painter and art instructor Hoca Ali Rıza defended the art of painting as almost synonymous with national and individual civilisation:

Painting is an inseparable part of civilisation and the necessary guide that serves its deployment and advancement ... Painting serves the furthering and enlightening of good taste, one of humanity's traits, and the development of the sense of sight [...] As civilisation progresses, the need for painting increases [...] For a schooled person not to exhibit at least some inclination toward painting is, in the civilised world, considered a deficiency akin to illiteracy.¹

Whilst Hoca Ali Rıza's advocacy of painting might seem to downplay other—perhaps equally or more fundamental—aspects of 'civilised' culture, by the mid-nineteenth century the Ottoman cultural elite as a whole, as well as the state, had come to consider Western art forms—including European mode of easel painting—to be inseparable components of civilisation. From the 1840s onwards, the idea of a universal West in the name of science, culture, and art emerged as a model of progress and reform for the Ottomans, and European histories, peoples, geographies, and lifestyles became the most popular (and controversial) subjects of the era.² It was also during that time that the words and expressions like 'civilisation' (*medeniyet*) and 'knowledge and science' (*ulûm ve fînûn*) began to loom large in contemporary writing, almost always as defining conceptual elements of 'a holistic image of

¹ Kaymakam A. Rıza [Hoca Ali Rıza], 'Resma Dair', *Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi*, Issue: 7, 1 Haziran 1327 [14 June 1911]. For further information on the Ottoman Society of Painters, see, Gizem Tongo, *Painting, Artistic Patronage, and Criticism in the Public Sphere: A Study of the Ottoman Society of Painters, 1909-1918* (MA Thesis, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, 2012).

² Cemil Aydın, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 18.

Europe', which had become, for Ottomans contemplating the new world order, both an aspirational ideal and a strategic threat.³

In the Ottoman Empire of the nineteenth and early-twentieth century, the art of painting was often more than just an ornament, a luxury item, a status symbol, or a means to what Pierre Bourdieu called 'distinction'.⁴ The public function of painting as an expression of the empire's cultural vitality and—in conjunction with artistic exchanges with Europe—a propaganda tool, often subordinated its private meanings and had a significant impact on debates about art. Indeed, the Ottoman nineteenth century was a time when, as T.J. Clark has argued of France after 1848, 'art and politics could not escape each other'.⁵ For a multicultural and multi-religious empire where Islam was the dominant belief system under a sultan who was also the Caliph of Islam,⁶ the very existence of the western mode of painting had a 'political sense and intention' in the first place: painting was suspected, feared, patronised, promoted, and even imposed on those grounds. After the early nineteenth century, when public

³ Aydın, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia*, p. 15. For further information on how 'medeniyet' in Ottoman Turkish came to appear more or less synonymous with 'European civilisation' see, Tuncer Baykara, *Osmanlılarda Medeniyet Kavramı* (Istanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat, 2007). See, also, Einar Wigen, 'The Education of Ottoman Man and the Practice of Orderliness', in Helge Jordheim and Margrit Pernau (eds.), *Civilizing Emotions: Concepts in Nineteenth Century Asia and Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 107-125. The early nineteenth-century Ottoman bureaucrat and traveller Mustafa Sami Efendi's *The Essay on Europe* (*Avrupa Risâlesi*), published in 1840, is just one example of how the language of the Ottoman elite brought the words such as civilisation, law, museum, and theatre into popular usage. On Mustafa Sami Efendi, see, Laurent Mignon, *Neither Shiraz nor Paris: Papers on Modern Turkish Literature* (Istanbul: ISIS Press, 2005); particularly his essay, 'Portrait of the Traveller as a Young Man: Mustafa Sami Efendi and His Essay on Europe', pp. 37-49.

⁴ For the French sociologist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu, 'distinction' is an ideological and cultural development in which high art taste functions as a marker of superior social status. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1984 [1979]).

⁵ T. J. Clark has argued that the period following the 1848 Revolution was a time when 'the State, the public and the critics agreed that art had a political sense and intention.' T. J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), p. 9.

⁶ It is not easy to define a clear-cut cultural identity for the Ottoman Empire. It is generally claimed that it was the last Muslim Empire to survive to the age of modernity, or, as Selim Deringil has defined it, the 'only Muslim great power' and the 'only European Muslim power'. Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 1999), p. 1. For a recent discussion on the question of Ottoman cultural identity, see, F. Aslı Ergül, 'The Ottoman Identity: Turkish, Muslim or Rum?', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol: 48, Issue: 4 (July 2012), pp. 629-645.

displays of figurative paintings by reforming sultans such Selim III and Mahmud II encountered Muslim hostility, such images had to be carefully and gradually reintroduced to wider Ottoman publics. Nevertheless, through each successive period of late-Ottoman history—the *Tanzimat* Era (1839-1876); the rule of Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909); and, the Young Turk era (1909-1918)—painting always remained an important component of political and cultural discourse and of the state’s objectives for westernisation and civilisation, and, especially after the 1908 Constitutional Revolution, for the national cause. With such agendas in mind, Ottoman painters did not consider the development of novel artistic forms or technical innovations as significant as their European counterparts. Though they responded in individual ways to artistic influences from academic art to realism, and to art movements in Paris and other European capitals, they tended to express their artistic skills and aesthetic feelings through means already available.

This chapter will explore the development of the Ottoman art world up to the First World War to build up a picture of how its role, institutions, and actors changed over the preceding century. It argues that, up until the outbreak of war, despite the art of painting remaining an elite occupation enjoyed by a limited section of the society, it continued its role at the heart of Ottoman’s state policy of civilisation and westernisation. The long and complex relationship between Ottoman politics and art in the long nineteenth century can be understood as part of broader historical processes: the Ottoman state’s policies of modernisation and westernisation; the professionalization and institutionalisation of the arts; the liberal impact of the 1908 Second Constitutional Revolution on civil society and the art world; the differentiation of patronage with the rise of a cosmopolitan Ottoman ‘bourgeoisie’ with new norms of taste and women’s equality; the connection of the emerging ‘1914

generation' to the art schools and salons of Paris; the debates over the ethno-national composition of Ottoman national culture and the role of a 'national art'; the rising dominance of the army and the Unionist state in cultural life; and the existential shock of the Balkan Wars, which carried overtones of militarism and nationalism into the popular and cultural milieu. One of the key arguments of the chapter is that the story of Ottoman art before 1914, when discourses of Muslim and Turkish ethno-national identity were not yet predominant, points to a more integrated and cosmopolitan art world than later nationalist Turkish art history writing would remember.

The Palace and the Art World: Regulating the Western Mode of Easel Painting

Imperial Portraiture in Public

As of the late-eighteenth century, the Ottomans had come to acknowledge the political and military superiority of the Western world. By a slow and hesitant process, the rapid development and expansion of western power in its political, economic, and scientific dimensions forced the Ottoman world to enter a new and marked process of westernisation and modernisation. Under the reforming sultans Selim III (r.1789-1807) and Mahmud II (r.1808-39), Europe and European methods came to represent the paragon of progress and development. During that time and, more generally in the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire witnessed what Ahmet Ersoy has described as 'a fundamental transformation in reform psychology'.⁷ As Edhem Eldem has pointed out, these transformations were not comparable to previous ones 'in amplitude or speed.'⁸ The period marked a watershed in Ottoman social, cultural, and intellectual life, inaugurating new modern institutions patterned on

⁷ Ahmet Ersoy, *Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary: Reconfiguring the Architectural Past in a Modernizing Empire* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), p. 12.

⁸ Edhem Eldem, 'Istanbul: From Imperial to Peripheralized Capital', in Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman, Bruce Masters (eds.), *The Ottoman City Between East and West: Aleppo, İzmir, and Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 196.

Western models. Sultan Selim III established an entirely novel armed force, the *Nizam-ı Cedid*, with European style training, uniforms and up-to-date weaponry. He also introduced modern military schools with instructors recruited from European countries. His reform initiatives were followed by his nephew Mahmud II who, after the failure of the Janissaries to crush the Greek Revolt of 1821, liquidated this traditional backbone of the Ottoman military in 1826, and thereafter continued to modernise the army, establish modern schools, push through land reform laws, and open up foreign trade.

The reforms under Selim III and Mahmud II were not limited to political or economic matters. Major steps were taken to bring the visual arts in line with the European tradition, and these were considered of tremendous importance in the development of a modern and western empire and culturally conscious rulers. As Mary Roberts has argued, the great shift that occurred in Ottoman painting in this period can be ‘broadly characterized as a move from the workshop tradition of miniature painting to easel painting.’⁹ Sultan Selim III, for instance, commissioned the Ottoman Greek painter Kapıdağlı Konstantin (Konstantinos Kizikinos) to paint numerous portraits of the previous Ottoman sultans, including himself. As Mayda Saris has emphasized, these commissions ‘represented a radical departure from traditional imperial portraiture’ as practised in traditional miniature paintings.¹⁰ An even more radical move was the public display of the imperial portraits, initiated by Mahmud II in the early 1830s. Mahmud II distributed portraits of him wearing the new military uniform to be hung in public schools and buildings.¹¹ The late

⁹ Roberts, *Istanbul Exchanges*, p. 8.

¹⁰ Saris, *Istanbullu Rum Ressamlar*, p. 19.

¹¹ Cengiz Kırılı, *The Struggle over Space: Coffeehouses of Ottoman Istanbul, 1780-1845* (PhD Thesis, SUNY-Binghamton, 2001), p. 271; Philip Mansel, *Dressed to Rule: Royal and Court Costume from Louis XIV to Elizabeth II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 103-104; Shaw, *Ottoman Painting*, pp. 26-27.

nineteenth-century Ottoman court chronicler (*vakanüvis*) Ahmed Lütfi Efendi

described the public installation of Mahmud II's portraits in the Selimiye Barracks:

The imperial portrait was sent to several military and administrative locations. Spectacular parades of pomp and circumstances were undertaken for the official hanging of the picture [...] The sultan himself honoured the seaside barracks to watch the parade. After sacrifices were slaughtered, prayers said, and twenty-one cannons fired... all the soldiers assembled before the picture [...] A few days later the parade of the picture as it was taken to the Sublime Porte was also spectacular.¹²

Sultan Mahmud II's portraits, as Wendy Shaw remarks, 'emphasized the Western cast of his reign both through their medium and by portraying him in the modern clothing.'¹³ Despite the Islamic pomp and circumstance around the distribution of Mahmud's portraits, however, the very act of their public display proved controversial with some of the sultan's Muslim subjects. A contemporary British traveller and writer, Miss Julia Pardoe, who happened to be in Istanbul at the time, noted the contestation among the imperial guards during the 'presentation of [Mahmud's] portrait' at one occasion:

A portion of the imperial guard had murmured openly against so glaring an infringement of their law, which forbids literally the likeness of any human being to be taken; whereas this had, moreover, been carried with great pomp, and saluted after the same fashion as would have been the august personage whom it represented. "We are becoming Giaours—Infidels,"—was the complaint—"The Franks are turning the head of the Sultan, and he will soon be as they are."¹⁴

Probably as a result of Muslim discomfiture and resentment, after Mahmud II, the display of imperial portraiture would be almost entirely limited to the palace circle under the *Tanzimat* sultans, Sultan Abdülmecid (r. 1839-1862) and Sultan Abdülaziz (r. 1862-1876). Yet, whilst the role of painting in Ottoman 'social life' was

¹² Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütfi* (Istanbul: 1290-1328 [1873-1910]); quoted in Shaw, *Ottoman Painting*, p. 27.

¹³ Shaw, *Ottoman Painting*, p. 26.

¹⁴ Miss Julia Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan, and Domestic Manners of the Turks; With A Steam Voyage Up the Danube* (London: Routledge, 1854 [1837]), p. 256.

constrained, its political role as a tool to show the ‘civilised’ face of the Ottoman state would remain relatively constant.

Equal at Home, Equal in the West

If Westernisation was the central issue occupying the minds of the Ottomans during the reigns of Selim III and Mahmud II, the definitive concept for Sultan Abdülmecid and Sultan Abdülaziz was the growth of nationalism following the French Revolution of 1789. The Ottoman Empire, with its multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious social composition, was not so ready to adapt itself to this central revolutionary ideology and political reality of the nineteenth century. In order to adapt the ideological weapon of ‘revolutionary’ change to its own purposes, the Ottoman state initially resorted to the policy of what Benedict Anderson has called ‘official nationalism’¹⁵ or what Charles Tilly called ‘state-led nationalism.’¹⁶ The legal acts of the *Tanzimat* (Regulations) era, during the reign of Sultan Abdülmecid, were simply the declaration of a modern state centred on ‘rule by law’ as the ultimate principle. The aim of the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* (Imperial Edict) in 1839¹⁷ and the *Islahat Fermanı* (The Edict of Reforms)¹⁸ in 1856 was to create a common identity to contain all Ottoman subjects, Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

¹⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 2006 [1983]), p. 83.

¹⁶ Ayşe Gül Altınay uses Charles Tilly’s separation between ‘state-led nationalism’ and the ‘state-seeking nationalism’. Ayşe Gül Altınay, *The Myth of the Military-Nation: Militarism, Gender, and Education in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 20. Cf. Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990-1992* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992).

¹⁷ The *Hatt-ı Hümayun* was a statement of intent on the part of the Ottoman government, promising in effect four basic reforms: (i) the establishment of guarantees for the life, honour and property of the sultan’s subjects; (ii) an orderly system of taxation to replace the system of tax farming; (iii) a system of conscription for the army, and; (iv) equality before the law of all subjects, whatever their religion. Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004 [1993]), p. 51

¹⁸ The 1856 Edict of Reforms was more detailed in setting forth equal treatment for all subjects of the Empire, recognizing the rights of the individual to a just, impartial, and consistent legal system by establishing a precedent for constitutional principles of government. For a comprehensive study of the reforms and edicts, see Roderic Davison, *Nineteenth Century Ottoman Diplomacy and Reforms* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1999).

Another factor in the granting of equal rights to non-Muslim Ottoman subjects may have been the realization of increasing Ottoman economic and military dependence on European powers, especially during the Crimean War (1853-1856), fought between the Ottoman Empire in alliance with France and Britain and against Russia. Nevertheless, the very visible increase in the financial and the legal status of the Empire's non-Muslims and the dependence on the West also gave rise to Muslim dissatisfaction and resentment, especially during the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz. This expressed itself in Muslim mob violence against Christian neighbours or Western consuls in several cities including Aleppo and Damascus in the 1850s and 1860s.¹⁹ On an elite level, it took the form of the Young Ottoman movement, led by Western educated young bureaucrats and writers in the 1860s. The Young Ottomans were critical of the 'secularism' of the *Tanzimat* reformers, yet, as Şerif Mardin has stated, they were equally inspired by the same Western ideas as that group, and reconciled liberal values with traditional, Islamic references.²⁰ Having realised that the Muslim population was dissatisfied, the bureaucratic elite responsible for *Tanzimat* reform came to believe it necessary to promote a form of *Tanzimat* Ottomanism (*Osmanlıcılık*) for social cohesion and stability. Ottomanism was infused by the Young Ottomans with an 'ideological component that was intended to strengthen the relationship of the subjects to the state.'²¹ By the 1860s, the ideology of Ottomanism, which was based on the equality of all Ottoman subjects regardless of ethnic,

¹⁹ Heather Sharkey, *Muslims, Christians and Jews in the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 141.

²⁰ Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962). Especially in the 1860s, there were many clerics in the ranks of the Young Ottomans. See, Şerif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 115. In Europe both the Young Ottomans and Young Turks were labelled 'Young Turks,' though their political ideologies were in fact fairly distinct, with the Young Turks employing more secular, nationalist arguments. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 63.

²¹ Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 24.

religious, and language differences, became the official ideology of Ottoman nationalism. In 1869, the ‘Ottoman Nationality Law’ (*tâbiyet-i osmaniye kanunnamesi*), redefined Ottoman subjects as citizens, and was seen as a milestone in the advancement of late Ottoman national belonging.

Whatever the impact of these procedural changes in everyday interactions between members of the various Ottoman communities, the ideological shift towards symbolic equality was certainly felt in the way the arts were understood during the reigns of Abdülmecid and Abdülaziz. Both sultans enjoyed and advocated European art, architecture, and culture, and appointed talented foreign, non-Muslim, and Muslim artists alike as court painters. Abdülmecid commissioned his portraits from the celebrated Ottoman-Armenian Manas family, many of whose members had received a European education and had been employed in embassies in London, Paris, and Turin.²² Abdülmecid also collaborated with the painters on these official portraits. When the preeminent Scottish artist of the Regency period, David Wilkie, was commissioned to produce an official portrait of the sultan, he later wrote about his experience that Abdülmecid ‘was most particular about the likeness, which, in the course of sitting, I had to alter variously, the Sultan taking sometimes the brush with colours, and indicating the alteration he wished made.’²³ In 1843, an Austrian painter, named Oreker, exhibited his landscape paintings for Abdülmecid and for the palace circle in Çırağan Palace.²⁴

²² Manas family members served as court painters between the eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. See Nurdan Sürbahan, *19. yüzyıl Osmanlı Sarayı'nda Ressam Manas Ailesi* (MA Thesis, Hacettepe Üniversitesi, 2002).

²³ Quoted in Mary Roberts, ‘The Limits of Circumscription’, in Ali Behdad and Luke Gartlan (eds.), *Photography's Orientalism: New Essays on Colonial Representation* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2013), p. 72, fn. 15.

²⁴ For these art exhibitions, see *Pera Ressamları-Pera Sergileri, 1845-1916* (Istanbul: Norgunk Yayıncılık, 2010); Mehmet Üstünipek, *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Çağdaş Türk Sanatı'nda Sergiler, 1850-1950* (Istanbul: Artes Yayınları, 2007).

Like his father Mahmud II and his brother Abdülmecid before him, Sultan Abdülaziz saw modernisation and westernisation as essential components of his legitimacy. High priority was given to the state's image in the West, and fine arts had a fundamental importance to both his self-perception and the perception of the state in the international arena. Upon invitations from the French Emperor Napoleon III and Queen Victoria in England, Abdülaziz visited Paris and London, and also Vienna in 1867, attending various concerts, exhibitions, museums, and cultural events.²⁵ Abdülaziz was the first Ottoman sultan to ever travel to Europe. He was immensely impressed and influenced by the cultural institutions he saw,²⁶ and intensified modernisation and westernisation efforts upon his return. Soon, the English sculptor Charles Fuller was commissioned directly by the sultan to sculpt his bust to be added to the palace collection.²⁷

It was also during the reign of Abdülaziz that the Ottoman past became a central component of imperial identity; history painting was promoted under his guidance and with the collaboration of the Polish painter Stanislaw Chlebowski. Having trained in St Petersburg Academy of Arts and later in Paris with Jean-Léon Gérôme, Chlebowski was invited by Abdülaziz to work as his court painter.²⁸ Between 1865 and 1872, Chlebowski developed richly coloured and theatrical compositions depicting the previous military victories of the empire, for which

²⁵ Abdülaziz's visit to Europe is a well-studied subject in Ottoman history. Among others, see, Taner Timur, 'Sultan Abdülaziz'in Avrupa Seyahati-I', *Tarih ve Toplum*, No: 11 (November 1984), pp. 42-48; Taner Timur, 'Sultan Abdülaziz'in Avrupa Seyahati-II', *Tarih ve Toplum*, No: 12 (December, 1984), pp. 16-25; Nihat Karaer, *Paris, Londra, Viyana: Abdülaziz'in Avrupa Seyahati* (Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi, 2003).

²⁶ Napoleon III himself, for instance, gifted paintings produced by one of his official artists Évremond de Bérard depicting the official event of Abdülaziz's arrival at the port of Toulon. Two of these paintings were mentioned in the catalogue of the Navy Museum prepared in 1917. *Bahriye Müzesi Kataloğu* (İstanbul: Bahriye Matbaası, 1917), pp. 56-57.

²⁷ Today the sculpture is in the collection of the Beylerbeyi Palace, Istanbul.

²⁸ Roberts, *Istanbul Exchanges*, p. 40. I also would like to thank Fatma Coşkuner for informing me about Chlebowski's previous training in the Petersburg Academy of Arts.

Abdülaziz also provided sketches.²⁹ The outcome of this artistic collaboration was a total number of twenty-six works, a large majority of which (around eighteen) portrayed previous Ottoman-Habsburg conflicts. *The Pitched Battle of Mohaç* (1872), for instance, was the depiction of the 1526 Battle of Mohacs in which Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent achieved a decisive victory that resulted in the destruction of the Hungarian Kingdom. With its panoramic sweep and polished academic style, Chlebowski, with the sultan's help, idealised the figures in his battle drama and placed them carefully to produce a hierarchy, from front to back, centre to periphery, where the war takes place in the exalted realm of the sultan, his heroic subjects, and their enemies.



FIGURE 2.1a: Sultan Abdülaziz, sketch for *The Pitched Battle of Mohaç*, c. 1865-72 © National Museum in Kraków. Published in Roberts, *Istanbul Exchanges*, p. 56.



FIGURE 2.1b: Stanislaw Chlebowski, *The Pitched Battle of Mohaç* (c. 1865-1872), oil on canvas, 112 x 175 cm © Istanbul Military Museum.

The fact remains, however, that some reaction occurred against the usage of images during Abdülaziz's reign. The wall maps of the *Rüşdiye* (adolescence) schools, displayed for teaching purposes, for instance, were in some instances destroyed on the grounds that they were 'drawings.'³⁰ A contributing factor that led to the closure of the *Dar-ül Fünun* (Imperial University) in 1870 may have been a populist misinterpretation of remarks by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani on the advancement

²⁹ For the most recent and comprehensive study on the artistic and diplomatic relationship between Chlebowski and Sultan Abdülaziz, see, Roberts, *Istanbul Exchanges*.

³⁰ Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press: 2002), p. 165.

of arts, crafts, and industry as arrogantly ‘placing the arts on an equal footing with divine inspiration’.³¹ In two years, Sultan Abdülaziz found the solution in the person of the religious scholar Turşucuzade Muhtar Efendi, whom he appointed the *şeyhülislam* (the head of Islam) after he declared the ‘pictures licit.’³²

The rising status of image-makers and the growth of an educated Ottoman elite class at the newly founded modern schools explain why art education became more professionalised in the mid-nineteenth century. By the end of Abdülaziz’s reign, in addition to private art tuition, which became a significant industry especially among foreigners, Levantines, and non-Muslim Ottomans, mostly servicing the pictorial needs of the rulers and the elites (as a family tradition in the case of the Manas family), military and civilian schools also managed to contribute a considerable number of talented painters to the art market.

Painting Classes in the Curriculum: Military Academies and Civilian Schools

Drawing had always been part of the curriculum in military academies in Europe, such as the Royal Military Academy, founded in Britain in 1741 with the aim to produce ‘good officers of Artillery and perfect engineers’.³³ During the Napoleonic Wars, making accurate drawings of unknown and unmapped terrains was valued as a crucial skill for the military in many countries. Given the lack of photographic

³¹ Stephen Vernoit, ‘The Visual Arts in Nineteenth-Century Muslim Thought’, in Behrens-Abouseif and Stephen Vernoit (eds.), *Islamic Art in the 19th Century: Tradition, Innovation, and Eclecticism* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006), p. 24.

³² Irvin Cemil Schick, ‘Some Islamic Determinants of Dress and Personal Appearance in Southwest Asia’, *Khil’a: Journal for Dress and Textiles of the Islamic World*, 3 (2007-2009), p. 42. Osman Şekerci, *İslam’da Resim ve Heykelin Yeri* (Istanbul: Çanakkale Seramik Fabrikaları Kültür ve Araştırma Hizmetleri, 1974), p. 55.

³³ Quoted in Harold E. Raugh, *The Victorians at War, 1815-1914: An Encyclopedia of British Military History* (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 2004), p. 347. Paul Gough, “‘Calculating the Future’: Panoramic Sketching, Reconnaissance Drawing and the Material Trace of War’, in Nicholas J. Saunders and Paul Cornish (eds.), *Contested Objects: Material Memories of the Great War* (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 237-251.

technologies, drawing could be used to record enemy positions and to indicate and determine targets and range of fire.³⁴

In the Ottoman Empire, too, the newly founded military schools such as the Military School of Engineering (*Mühendishane-i Berri-i Hümayun*), founded in 1793 during the reign of Sultan Selim III, and later followed by War Academy (*Harbiye Mektebi*), Naval Academy (*Bahriye*), Military Medical School (*Askeri Tıbbiye*), and the Military Veterinary Surgeon School (*Askeri Baytar*), opened in the early nineteenth century, began including painting classes in their curricula around 1840s.³⁵ The art education in these institutions was included as a part of a wider syllabus. The aim was to train the cadets and future soldiers in naturalistic styles based on printed examples and to educate them in producing topographic layouts and technical drawings for military purposes. Though photography had already been introduced in various countries by the mid-nineteenth century, including in the Ottoman Empire where it was introduced immediately after its invention in 1839,³⁶ military drawing remained a crucial element of the curriculum at military schools. In fact, aerial reconnaissance photography hardly existed for most countries before 1914, and to record landscape as a means of ascertaining potential enemy positions was a necessity in the field. Probably one of the most eminent artists associated with military drawing was Remzi, a lieutenant colonel (*kaymakam*). Born in Istanbul in 1864, Remzi was a

³⁴ Gough, “Calculating the Future”, pp. 237-239.

³⁵ Osman Ergin, *İstanbul Mektepleri ve İlim, Terbiye, ve San'at Müesseseleri Dolayısıyla Türkiye Maarif Tarihi* (Istanbul: OsmanBey Matbaası, 1939-1943). For the most comprehensive work on the curriculum of these military schools, see, Mehmed Esad, *Mirat-ı Mühendishane-i Berr-i Hümayun* (Istanbul: Karabet Matbaası, 1312 [1894/1895]). In Turkish art history writing, it is mostly claimed that the military schools offered painting classes as early as the late eighteenth century, however, as Mehmed Esad's comprehensive work on these military schools shows us, it was only after 1840s that, according to an official report dated 1847/1848, perspective and painting were introduced to the military schools. See, İhsan Terzi, *Mehmed Esad'ın Mir'at-ı Mühendishane-i Berr-i Hümayun ve Mir'at-ı Mekteb-i Harbiye Adlı Eserlerine Göre 19. Yüzyıl Türk Resmi* (PhD Thesis, Gazi Üniversitesi, 1988), pp. 21-23.

³⁶ On photography and the Ottoman Empire, see, Zeynep Çelik, Edhem Eldem, Hande Eagle (eds.), *Camera Ottomana: Photography and Modernity in the Ottoman Empire, 1840-1914* (Istanbul: Koç University Press, 2015).

graduate of the War Academy (*Harbiye Mektebi*) who, like his colleagues, was taught drawing at the Academy as an exploratory and navigation tool. Upon his graduation, he was sent to Yemen and taught military drawing himself at the Military Academy in the city of Sana'a.³⁷ He was a remarkable draughtsman, making significant reconnaissance sketches and panoramic drawings in the area.

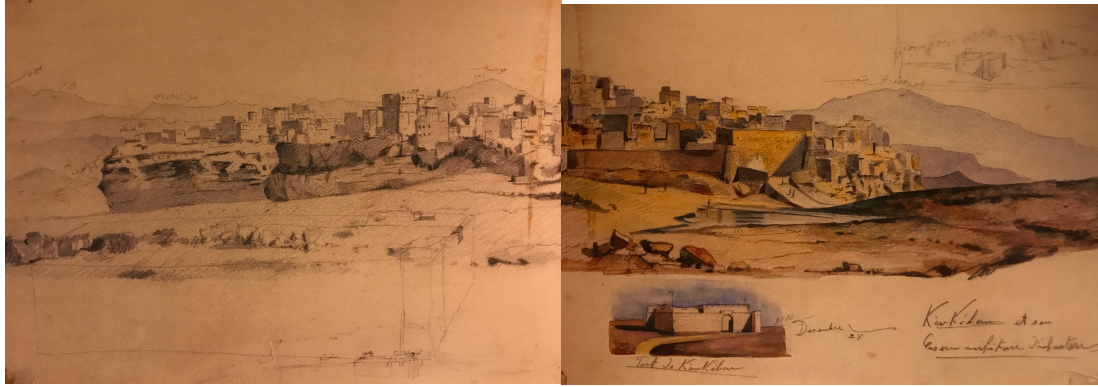


FIGURE 2.2: Remzi, *Sana'a* (late-19th century, early-20th century), watercolour, 53 x 19 cm © Military Museum, Istanbul.

Artistically talented officers and soldiers soon found themselves supported by state patronage; the generation of artists trained in this way were mostly dubbed the ‘pasha painters’ (*paşa ressamı*), after the highest rank in the Ottoman military.³⁸ Indeed, Abdülaziz’s aide-de-camps were two graduates from the military schools who were talented in the art of painting: Ahmed Ali Pasha, also known as Şeker (‘Sugar’) Ahmed Pasha, and Halil Pasha. A graduate of the Military Medical School and War Academy, Şeker Ahmed Pasha had been sent to Paris by the Ottoman state for further

³⁷ Yemen was under Ottoman suzerainty between 1530 and 1630 and later, again, between 1872 and 1918. Caesar E. Farah, *Sultan's Yemen: 19th Century Challenges to Ottoman Rule* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2002).

³⁸ For the earliest studies of these pasha painters, including Ferik İbrahim Pasha (1815–1889), Halil Pasha (1857–1939), Ferik Tevfik Pasha (1819–1866), Hüseyin Zekai Pasha (1860–1919), and Şeker Ahmed Pasha (1841–1907), see Sami Yetik, *Ressamlarımız* (Istanbul: Marifet Basımevi, 1940); Pertev Boyar, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devirlerinde Türk Ressamları, Hayatları ve Eserleri* (Ankara: Jandarma Basımevi, 1948). For a recent study of this generation, see, Turan Erol, ‘Painting in Turkey in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century’ in Günsel Renda et al. (eds.), *A History of Turkish Painting* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988). See also Shaw, *Ottoman Painting*.

education where he was trained in the painting studios of Gustave Boulanger and Jean-Léon Gérôme.³⁹ Upon his return to Istanbul, he taught painting at the School of Industry (*Mekteb-i Sanayi*) and at the same time held a privileged position in the Dolmabahçe Palace, working for Abdülaziz. Through the French dealers Goupil & Cie, Şeker Ahmed Pasha purchased numerous paintings by European painters, especially the orientalist paintings by Gérôme. Though these works were not displayed to the public and kept for the court circle in the palace, Şeker Ahmed Pasha also organised public art exhibitions in Istanbul, such as the 1873 exhibition he organised in the School of Industry in Sultan Ahmed and the 1875 one he held in the University (Darülfunun).⁴⁰ Like Şeker Ahmed, Halil Pasha was also a graduate from the Military School of Engineering (*Mühendishane-i Berri-i Hümayun*). Born into a military family, his father was Ferik Selim Pasha, one of the Muslim Ottomans sent to Europe for military education in the early nineteenth century.⁴¹ Having shown great interest in and talent for painting, and admiring Chlebowski's works for the sultan, he was sent to Paris for art training and enrolled at the École des Beaux-Arts.⁴² Like Şeker Ahmed Pasha, he was trained under Gérôme as an academic painter and furthered his training with another academic artist, Gustave-Claude-Etienne Courtois. Soon he achieved fame for his portraits in various Paris exhibitions, and was awarded a medal during the 1889 International Exhibition in Paris (*Exposition Universelle*). Despite their military background and training, however, neither Şeker Ahmed Pasha

³⁹ Semra Germaner and Zeynep İnankur, *Constantinople and the Orientalists* (Istanbul: Türkiye Bankası, 2002), pp. 117-118.

⁴⁰ In addition to his own works, the 1873 exhibition included works by the young students from some civilian and military schools, as well as more established painters such as the French artist Pierre Desiré Guillemet, who had arrived in Istanbul in the 1860s and remained in the city until his death in 1878. See Cezar, *Sanat'ta Batı'ya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi*, pp. 426-428.

⁴¹ For military education, Ferik Selim Pasha was sent to London in 1835. Muharrem Giray, *Şanlı Harbiye'nin Tarihi* (Istanbul: Hilmi Kitapevi, 1961), p. 8.

⁴² Halil Özyiğit, '1928 Tarihinde Halil Paşa ile Hayatı ve Sanatı Üzerine Yapılan Bir Söyleşi', in Kıymet Giray (ed.), *Sanatsal Göstergeler* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 2013), p. 102.

nor Halil Pasha were commissioned to visit battlefields but rather remained academic painters of landscapes, still-lives, and portraits.

Civil educational institutions founded in the mid-nineteenth century, such as the *Darüşşafaka* and the Imperial Lycée of Galatasaray, also offered painting classes to students.⁴³ The painting classes offered in these institutions, *resm-i hattî* (linear perspective) or *menazir* (perspective), were mostly based on the study of nature and topography.⁴⁴ In Turkish art history writing, the nonfigurative works of those artists, particularly those from the *Darüşşafaka*, which was a pious foundation educating orphans for civilian careers, are referred to as photo-interpreters (*foto yorumcular*)⁴⁵ or ‘primitives’ (*primitifler*).⁴⁶ The Imperial Lycée of Galatasaray, on the other hand, in its emphasis on French education, attracted the sons of the Ottoman elite. The majority of the administration and faculty were of French origin, but also included numerous other foreign and Ottoman Muslim and non-Muslim instructors. In French academic style, students prided themselves on their systematic scientific training in which the Humanities were also treated as an essential branch of learning and the cultivation of individual tastes was encouraged. Students were given the opportunity to study subjects such as physics, economics, natural history, mathematics, as well as

⁴³ On *Darüşşafaka* painters, see, for example, Adnan Çoker, ‘Fotoğraftan Resim ve Darüşşafakalı Ressamlar’, *Yeni Boyut*, vol. 2, no: 9 (January, 1983), pp. 4-12; Turan Erol, ‘19. Yüzyıl Resim Sanatımız ve Ressamlarımız Üzerine Yeni Bilgiler’, *Yeni Boyut*, vol. 2, no: 11 (March, 1983), pp. 8-9.

⁴⁴ *Darüşşafaka* means ‘house of compassion’ from the Arabic *dar ush-shafka*. As this art education was based on copying from models, Turan Erol, for instance, refers to *Darüşşafaka* as establishing another ‘master/apprentice tradition’, quite similar to those of the former miniature art production of the Ottoman court. Turan Erol, ‘Painting in Turkey in Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Century’, in Günsel Renda [et al] eds., *A History of Turkish Painting* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), p. 96.

⁴⁵ Seyfi Başkan, *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Türkiye’de Resim* (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı, 1997), p. 46.

⁴⁶ A Western term, ‘primitifs’ was first used, perhaps unsurprisingly, by a French art historian, René Huyghe, who visited the Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture (*Istanbul Resim Heykel Müzesi*) after its foundation in 1937. See, Nurullah Berk, *Istanbul Resim ve Heykel Müzesi* (Istanbul: Akbank Sanat Kitapları, 1972).

French literature, Latin, Greek, history, ethics, and painting.⁴⁷ A considerable number of the students who became familiar with painting at the Imperial Lycée of Galatasaray would later continue their art education either in the Academy of Fine Arts or in Paris.

An Enlightened Despot? Abdülhamid, Censorship and ‘Artistic Independence’

When Sultan Abdülhamid II ascended the throne in 1876, following Abdülaziz’s death and the rapid dethronement of his ‘mentally unstable’ successor Murad V, the stage was set for a clash between the forces of westernising reform and conservative reaction. Building on the legacy of the *Tanzimat*, the reformers were already drafting a constitution that was to declare that ‘All subjects of the Empire are, without distinction, called whatever religion they profess [...] All Ottomans are equal in the eyes of the law. They have the same rights and duties toward the country without prejudice regarding religion’.⁴⁸ Equality before the law regardless of religion was a significant component of equality, inspired by the European model of modernisation. On one hand, as Edhem Eldem has claimed, modernisation efforts served to ‘oppose the western powers in the international arena’, but also ‘offered to the Ottoman ruling class a vision of political and administrative centralization quite consistent with their own objectives at a national level.’⁴⁹ Indeed, the very same Constitution proclaimed Turkish (*Türkçe*) the official language of the Ottoman state. Hasan Kayalı has seen this move to Turkish from Ottoman Turkish (*lisan-ı Osmani*), which is a hybrid of Turkish, Persian, and Arabic with Turkish grammar, as reflecting ‘the efforts, if not the decisive input, of the Young Ottomans, who advocated and used a simpler Turkish

⁴⁷ *Mekteb-i Sultani’den Galatasaray Lisesi’ne: Ressamlar, 1868-1968/De Mekteb-i Sultani au Lycée de Galatasaray: Peintres, 1868-1968/From Mekteb-i Sultani to Galatasaray Lycee: Painters, 1868-1968* (Istanbul: Pera Museum, 2009), p. 29.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 2, *Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808–1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 177.

⁴⁹ Eldem, ‘Istanbul: From Imperial to Peripheralized Capital’, p. 197.

than the complicated Ottoman.⁵⁰ Whilst criticizing the *Tanzimat* reforms as socially and religiously insensitive, Young Ottomans, dazzled by the British constitutional regime, were nonetheless committed to a modernised Ottoman society and espoused the use of a simplified version of the language to bridge the gap between the elite and the masses. The leading Young Ottoman, and one of the most influential literary and intellectual figures, and the herald of Ottoman constitutionalism, Namık Kemal, once wondered: ‘Why [...] forcing people to check the dictionary eighty times in order to read two pages [should] be considered an expression of talent?’⁵¹ The Ottoman parliament was officially opened in 1877, with elected delegates consisting of seventy-one Muslims, forty-four Christians, and four Jews.⁵² In the same year, Ottomanism was championed by the celebrated intellectual Ahmed Midhat in his *Üss-i İnkilap* (The Basis of Revolution) with the following words:

[The declaration of the Tanzimat] reconfirmed the condition of equality that constitutes the founding basis of the Ottoman state: All classes of people living under the Ottoman flag, regardless of their religious and denominational affiliations and their communal and racial identities, constitute a unified political nation and are equal beneficiaries of the common law.⁵³

During Sultan Abdülhamid II’s reign, however, the Ottoman state faced serious existential threats. The state had already suffered a political and fiscal crisis, forcing the Ottomans to declare bankruptcy in October 1875. But a far greater disaster came when Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire in April 1877, which resulted in a

⁵⁰ Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks*, p. 91.

⁵¹ Namık Kemal, ‘Mukaddime-i Celal’, *Celaleddin Harzemşah* (Istanbul: 1302 [1884-1885]), quoted in Mignon, *Neither Shiraz Nor Paris*, p. 42.

⁵² Sharkey, *Muslims, Christians and Jews in the Modern Middle East*, p. 188.

⁵³ Transcribed and translated by Ahmet Ersoy, ‘The Basis of Reform’ in Balázs Trenczényi and Mihail Kopaček (eds), *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeastern Europe (1775-1945): Texts and Commentaries*, vol. II (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007), pp. 291-296. On reforms and nationalism, see, also Ussama Makdisi, ‘After 1860: Debating Religion, Reform, and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 34, No: 4 (November, 2002), p. 606. See, also, Robert Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period: A Study of the Midhat Constitution and Parliament* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1963).

massive defeat for the Ottomans. Having lost large territories and most of its non-Muslim population in the Balkans, Abdülhamid began to stress the Islamic religion as ‘a new bid for unity against what he saw as an increasingly hostile Christian world’.⁵⁴ After suspending the Ottoman Parliament and constitution, Abdülhamid ruled for over thirty years with absolute authority, making frequent appeals to pan-Islamism as an antidote to the threat of Western imperialisms in Ottoman lands. During his reign, Ottomanism lost favour as an official ideology but found supporters among non-Muslims and the liberal wing of the Young Turks led by Prince Sabahaddin.⁵⁵ Abdülhamid monitored closely any opposition to his absolute rule, taking extreme measures to silence and suppress the slightest signs of challenge to his legitimacy. In particular, the Armenian socialist formations—the Hunchakian Party, founded in Geneva in 1887 and the Dashnaksutyun (Armenian Revolutionary Federation) founded in Tbilisi in 1890 by Russian Armenian activists—were seen as a great threat to his rule.⁵⁶ In 1890, Abdülhamid II formed the notorious *Hamidiye* Light Cavalry Regiments (*Hamidiye Hafif Süvari Alayları*), an irregular unit of loyal Kurdish tribes, which he deployed against the Armenian population in the margins of the empire.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Selim Deringil, ‘Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State: The Reign of Abdülhamid II (1876-1909)’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Issue: 23 (1991), p. 346.

⁵⁵ Prince Sabahaddin was a liberal Young Turk. He opposed to military dominance and wished to reform the Ottoman state by decentralization and regeneration of civil society. As a matter of fact, he would later be condemned to death by the Unionists yet he managed to escape to Paris in 1913. See, Hamit Bozarslan, ‘Le Prince Sabahaddin (1878-1948)’, *Revue Suisse d’Histoire*, 53/3 (2002), pp. 287-301.

⁵⁶ Anahide Ter Minassian, *Nationalism and Socialism in the Armenian Revolutionary Movement, 1887-1912* (Cambridge, Mass.: Zoryan Institute, 1984); Anahide Ter Minassian, ‘The Role of the Armenian Community in the Foundation and Development of the Socialist Movement in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, 1876-1923’, in Mete Tuncay and Erik J. Zürcher (eds.), *Socialism and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1923* (London, New York: British Academic Press, 1994), pp. 109-156.

⁵⁷ For a comprehensive study on *Hamidiye* Light Cavalry Regiments and the relation between the Kurdish tribes and the Ottoman state during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, see Janet Klein, *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011). See, also, Vahakn Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia and Caucasus* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1995), pp. 113-131. See, also, Selim Deringil, “‘The Armenian Question Is Finally Closed’: Mass Conversions of Armenians in Anatolia during the Hamidian Massacres of 1895-1897”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 51, no. 2 (2009), pp. 344-371.

Between 1894 and 1897, there were organized mass killings of Armenians across Anatolia; what became known as the Hamidian massacres. The Sasun massacres in 1894 were a bloody response to an Armenian uprising against unfair taxes, and similar massacres occurred across Ottoman Armenia between 1895 and 1896, reducing the majority of Ottoman Armenians, as Deringil has emphasized, to ‘a state of terror.’⁵⁸

In Turkish historiography, Abdülhamid’s reign has been the subject of great controversy; he has either been regarded as a blood-thirsty tyrant, an absolutist monarch racked by paranoia about conspiracy and ruling with harsh political repression, or celebrated as a reformer, continuing the modernising spirit of the *Tanzimat* with his investment in telegraph lines, railways, highways, and also in education, literacy, and bureaucratic services. Promoting the arts was an essential component of Abdülhamid’s governing system; there was a strong conviction that the arts, through exhibitions and education, could promote cultural vitality and bring the empire to the level of the modern and civilised European world. This particular understanding of art and its relation to the West had important implications for artistic development, and was perhaps best embodied in the proliferation of certain art forms, especially photography, in which Abdülhamid took a keen personal interest. For him, photography was the most influential medium through which the achievements of the empire could be promoted internationally, and he gifted photo albums displaying Ottoman military, industrial and education projects to Britain and the United States. On the occasion of the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition, for instance, fifty-one photography albums were presented to the National Library of the United States, showing the ‘modern’ face of the empire, with images of new school buildings and

⁵⁸ Janet Klein, *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone* (California: Stanford University Press, 2011); Deringil, “The Armenian Question Is Finally Closed”, p. 351.

factories. The albums, as Zeynep Çelik has remarked, ‘attempted to transform the end-of-the-century image of the empire as the “sick man of Europe” in a rejuvenated, dynamic, and modern one.’⁵⁹

Abdülhamid’s reign was also a time of significant changes in the media of cultural production. In the 1890s, the printing industry in the Ottoman Empire, like in many other countries at the time, started to use the halftone photomechanical process. The famous magazine *Servet-i Fünun* (Wealth of Knowledge), founded in 1891, published numerous photographs with this new reprographic technique they called ‘*ototipi*’. According to the official newspaper *Takvim-i Vekayi* (Calendar of Events), Abdülhamid himself decided to donate a big sum of money to *Servet-i Fünun* in 1892 to increase the quality and quantity of the images published in the Magazine.⁶⁰ Though *Servet-i Fünun* initially worked with European printing houses for halftone prints in the early 1890s, Ahmed İhsan, the owner and publisher of *Servet-i Fünun*, together with Theodore Vafiadis, an Ottoman Greek photographer of the period, managed to bring the technique to Istanbul around 1894.⁶¹ The halftone process allowed artworks to be reproduced in mass quantity and made available to a wide audience at low cost. Various illustrated periodicals filled their pages with photographs and reproductions of both Ottoman and Western paintings. Works displayed in contemporary Istanbul exhibitions were also brought to the readers who did not have the chance to visit the exhibits.⁶² The expansion of mass media from the 1880s in the form of popular magazines, newspapers, photography, and postcards,

⁵⁹ Zeynep Çelik, ‘Speaking Back to Orientalist Discourse’, in Lill Beaulieu and Mary Roberst (eds.), *Orientalism’s Interlocutors: Painting, Architecture, Photography* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 31.

⁶⁰ *Takvim-i Vekayi*, 2 January 1892. See, Orhan Koloğlu, *Basınımızda Resim ve Fotoğrafın Başlaması* (Ankara: Engin Yayınları, 1992), p. 34.

⁶¹ Koloğlu, *Basınımızda Resim*, p. 39. See also, Cevat Fehmi Başkut, *Gazetecilik Dersleri* (Istanbul: Sermet Matbaası, 1967), p. 67.

⁶² Among various publications published reproductions of paintings in Istanbul exhibits, see, for example, Celal Esad, ‘Resim Sergisi: Salon’, *Malumat*, 15 May 1902; Celal Esad, ‘Salon’, *Malumat*, 11 June 1903.

also offered a fertile ground for the dissemination of propaganda. Taking the term ‘print capitalism’ from Benedict Anderson, Irvin Cemil Schick refers to this as a ‘late-Ottoman print capitalism’ that ‘opened certain doors for newly emerging ideologies [to] influence society in ways and to an extent that had not previously been possible.’⁶³

Nevertheless, Abdülhamid’s attempts to encourage cultural vitality, which was expected to play a role to improve the prestige of the empire both in the international and domestic levels, were seriously undermined by his strict censorship regulations. His police forces were vigilant against any artwork, particularly publications and plays that would ‘offend’ domestic and international political discourse. When a British-protected actor, for instance, wished to reproduce *The Merchant of Venice*, he was not allowed to do so. Sir Andrew Ryan, serving as one of the dragomans in Istanbul that time, remembered his conversation over the event: ‘the police disclaimed any offensive intention towards Mr. Shakespeare, but they pointed out that all good things were not good for everyone. The objection to the “Merchant of Venice” was that its treatment of Jews might excite bitter feeling among the Sultan’s subjects.’⁶⁴ Abdülhamid also used censorship to limit the influence of his political opponents. By 1901, Abdülhamid had prevented the publication of numerous books by the leading

⁶³ Irvin Cemil Schick, ‘Print Capitalism and Women’s Sexual Agency in the Late Ottoman Empire’, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (2011), p. 196. For nationalism and print capitalism see, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

⁶⁴ St Antony’s College, Middle East Centre Archive, Oxford, GB165-0248, Ryan Box, III/3, DS 43.1.R8: ‘Memories of Twenty-Five Years Service’. The ‘Merchant of Venice’ had actually made its appearance within the empire; but it had been translated around the mid-nineteenth century (before Abdülhamid’s reign) and to Armenian. Shakespeare’s first completely translated play was Aram Dedeian’s 1853 translation of *The Comedy of Errors* which was followed by *The Merchant of Venice* and *Romeo and Juliet*. See, James Etmekjian, ‘Western European and Modern Armenian Literary Relations up to 1915’, *Review of National Literatures: Armenia* 13 (1984), p. 68. It is important to add that the ‘Merchant of Venice’, particularly the Shylock’s monologue, might have been interpreted differently by Ottoman Armenians.

Young Ottomans,⁶⁵ and soon the very mention of their names, particularly that of Namık Kemal, was forbidden.⁶⁶ In an effort to elude the increasing severity of censorship, some intellectuals, especially the writers of the group came to be known as the *Servet-i Fünun*, adopted a rather ‘formalist’ approach to literature and adopted the practice of art for art’s sake. Writers like the poets Tevfik Fikret and Abdülhak Hamit and the novelist Halid Ziya Uşaklıgil distanced themselves from the present and practised a sophisticated style, using ‘obscure Arabic and especially Persian vocabulary for poetic effect’ and in hopes that the high-brow language would confuse the censorship authorities.⁶⁷

Paintings were less problematic than literature for the Hamidian regime; they were not usually or easily mass-produced (unless reproduced in illustrated journals) and viewings were often limited to a narrow elite circle. Yet paintings were also occasionally removed from exhibitions on the basis that they could offend international sensibilities. In 1882, for instance, an art exhibition in Istanbul was visited by Abdülhamid’s police and two works were removed from public view. As the *Constantinople Messenger* announced ‘the lion’ depicted in one of them was ‘the emblem of England, and not of any Oriental State’.⁶⁸ Though the work had been painted well before the political tensions between the Ottoman Empire and the British Empire in Egypt, in 1882, as Mary Roberts argues, ‘matters in Egypt were on a knife’s edge at the time of this exhibition.’⁶⁹

⁶⁵ *Memalik-i Mahrusa-i Şahaneye Duhul ve İntişari Memnu Bulunan Kutub ve Risail-i Muzirranin Esamisini Mübeyyen Cedveldir* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1318 [1900-1901]).

⁶⁶ Mehmet Alkan, ‘Modernization from Empire to Republic and Education in the Process of Nationalism’, in Kemal Karpat (ed.), *Ottoman Past and Today’s Turkey* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), p. 91.

⁶⁷ Shaw and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 2, pp. 254-255.

⁶⁸ *Constantinople Messenger/ Eastern Express*, 25 May 1882, p. 2; quoted in Roberts, *Istanbul Exchanges*, p. 135.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 135.

It was, above all, this sensitivity to international opinion which led Abdülhamid, as a critic of art, to consider himself the final arbiter of the social content of painting in and of his empire, but not of its cosmopolitan styles. He did not, for instance, share the hostility toward foreign influences in painting expressed so forcefully by the German Kaiser. Wilhelm II had an immense distaste for modern art, which he denounced for its ‘degenerate’ and ‘foreign’ (mostly French) influence on German culture,⁷⁰ although his policy of censorship was mostly directed at the artists who insisted upon painting the lower classes, such as Max Liebermann and Käthe Kollwitz.⁷¹ Abdülhamid did share the Kaiser’s strong antipathy towards the representation of the miserable conditions of ordinary people in art, which the Wilhelm went so far as to denounce in a public speech.⁷² Abdülhamid preferred to deliver his critical judgements to artists behind closed doors and via his intermediaries. As Halil Pasha later recalled, when it was reported to the sultan that Halil Pasha had depicted a poor peasant on his donkey and displayed the work in one of the Istanbul shops, Abdülhamid was heard to retort ‘Is it to have them paint our country’s shabbiest blighters that we send [these artists] to Europe? Next time, let him paint a respectable man; let us not show the Europeans our unwholesome sides.’⁷³

Likewise, the Italian painter Fausto Zonaro, having arrived in Istanbul in around

⁷⁰ For Kaiser Wilhelm, ‘German art was to be German and it was to be didactic. Foreign influences were unhealthy, if not degenerate, and should be purged.’ Lamar Cecil, *Wilhelm II: Emperor and Exile, 1900-1941, Vol II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 35.

⁷¹ Liebermann’s paintings were banned from official exhibitions and he himself was denounced as ‘a revolutionary whose degenerate art was poisoning the German soul.’ Cecil, *Wilhelm II*, p. 39. Kollwitz’ gold medal at the 1898 annual Lehrter Bahnhof exhibition for naturalistic prints showing the 1844 Silesian weavers’ strike was vetoed by the Kaiser. Marion F. Deshmukh, ‘Max Liebermann: Observations on the Politics of Painting in Imperial Germany, 1870-1914’, *German Studies Review*, 3 (1980), p. 190.

⁷² In 1901, the Kaiser declared that if art ‘does nothing more than to make misery even more hideous than it already is, then it sins against the German people.’ Christian Gauss (ed.), *The German Emperor as Shown in His Public Utterances* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1915), p. 200 (speech of 18 December 1901); quoted in Cecil, *Wilhelm II: Emperor and Exile*, p. 39.

⁷³ Anonymous, ‘Resim Sergisi Münasebetiyle Ressamlarımız Arasında: Ressam Halil Paşa Hayatını ve Eserlerini Anlatıyor’, *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 4 June 1928. See, Özyiğit, ‘1928 Tarihinde Halil Paşa ile Hayatı ve Sanatı Üzerine Yapılan Bir Söyleşi’, p. 104.

1891, hoping to show the sultan his large oil painting depicting the Imperial Ertuğrul cavalry regiment on the Galata Bridge (*Ertuğrul Alayı Köprüde*), first asked the advice of one of the sultan's ambassadors. Zonaro later recalled that Münir Pasha, on seeing a ragged street seller in the foreground of the picture, told him that 'his highness cannot tolerate poverty and especially cannot bear to think about the existence of people who must go about barefoot. Is there no way to dress this boy up nicely?' Zonaro then altered his composition, removing the barefoot boy, women wearing traditional headscarves, and a passing street dog, replacing them with immaculate crowds in Parisian fashions before he showed the canvas to the sultan.⁷⁴



FIGURE 2.3a: Fausto Zonaro, *Imperial Regiment of the Ertugrul on the Galata Bridge (Ertuğrul Alayı Köprüde)*. Before alterations. Printed in Halil Özyiğit, *1830-1920 Yılları Arasında Süreli Yayınlarda Türk Resim Sanatı Eleştirisi*, p. 148.



FIGURE 2.3b: Fausto Zonaro, *Imperial Regiment of the Ertugrul on the Galata Bridge (Ertuğrul Alayı Köprüde)*, oil on canvas © TBMM Milli Saraylar. After alterations.

Although Abdülhamid's artistic taste in matters of content was a significant impact on the Ottoman art world, the lower classes continued to be painted and displayed to the Istanbul public. In the 1902 exhibition, for instance, the Italian art instructor of the Academy of Fine Arts, Salvatore Valeri, exhibited a painting of an impoverished and barefoot street seller. A key component of such realist paintings' appeal to art buyers was the fact that they were often associated with Orientalist art works and, as Vazken Khatchig Davidian has remarked, 'appealed to the ethnographic

⁷⁴ Cesare Mario Trevigne and Fausto Zonaro, *Abdülhamid'in Hükümdarlığında Yirmi Yıl: Fausto Zonaro'nun Hatıraları ve Eserleri* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi, 2008), p. 145.

sensibilities of Ottoman urban elites and European residents and visitors.⁷⁵ Indeed, Valeri's painting found a new home immediately.⁷⁶



FIGURE 2.4: 1902 Salon exhibition, Istanbul © Istanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler. Valeri's street seller is on the far left.

As a patron, Abdülhamid was keen to follow the established traditions of the palace painting collection in the Topkapı Palace imperial treasury, where the best-represented genre alongside portraits of the Ottoman sultans was battle painting.⁷⁷ In addition to Chlebowski's commissions for Abdülaziz, Abdülhamid's court painter Zonaro was also a noted practitioner, creating depictions of historical events from the Ottoman past. Though Zonaro did not achieve reputation as a war artist, preferring instead more intimate images of oriental life to history painting, when Abdülhamid asked him to paint the Ottoman-Greek War (1897), it was a commission he could hardly refuse. The war had resulted in the Ottoman victory and bolstered

⁷⁵ Vazken Khatchig Davidian, 'Nichanian's *Provincial Wedding in Moush* and Late Ottoman Art Criticism', *Études arméniennes contemporaines*, no. 6, December (2015), p. 189.

⁷⁶ The Egyptian prince and aristocrat, Said Halim Pasha was mostly likely the first buyer of this specific painting. Said Halim was a great collector, adorning his waterside mansion in Istanbul with the artworks he bought from various exhibitions and collections. Valeri's 1902 painting can be seen in one of the photographs showing the interior of his mansion. For those photographs, see, Feridun Akozan, *Sait Halim Paşa Yalısı* (İstanbul: Türkiye Kalkınma Bankası, 1991).

⁷⁷ The collection even included a few war paintings portraying Napoleon Bonaparte. See the 1878 notebook of the imperial treasury: Nedret Bayraktar and Selma Delibaş, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi 1294/1878 Tarihli Hazine Defteri* (İstanbul: ISAR, 2010), pp. 89, 181, 182.

Abdülhamid's reputation and Zonaro was clearly expected to celebrate the bravery and heroism of the Ottoman military forces. The outcome of the commission was a propagandistic piece portraying dead Greek soldiers lying on the ground whilst Ottoman soldiers are advancing in front lines, celebrating the values of military order and the glorious endeavour that its patron expected to see. Soon, the work also featured the front cover of the illustrated magazine *Servet-i Fünun*.⁷⁸



FIGURE 2.5: Fausto Zonaro, *Attack (Hücum)*, 1897, oil on canvas, 126 x 200 cm © TBMM Milli Saraylar

But perhaps Abdülhamid's lasting effect on the history of Ottoman art was neither his patronage nor his censorship but his modernising educational policies. As aptly stated by the Istanbul-born Parisian art critic Adolphe Thalasso, the irony was that although Abdülhamid 'did everything in his power to gag and stifle all seeds of a generous thought, and of a liberatory aspiration', under his reign the plastic Arts experienced 'a renaissance, nay, a nascence [...] Abdülhamid was first among the Ottoman sultans who—despite the hadiths which collect the oral precepts of the

⁷⁸ *Servet-i Fünun*, No: 375, 7 Mayıs 1314 [20 May 1898].

Prophet—granted to Turkey its artistic independence.’⁷⁹ Indeed, the establishment of a higher education institution training professional painters was the structural beginning of a modern and western art training and a major step towards the empire’s ‘artistic independence’.

The Academy of Fine Arts, 1883

As opposed to the military academies and civilian schools, where art education was included as a part of a wider syllabus, with the foundation of the Academy of Fine Arts (*Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi*) in 1883, education in fine arts, including painting, sculpture, architecture and engraving, was, for the first time, institutionalized in the Ottoman Empire. Not only did it offer access to a professional artistic career based on merit, but it also encouraged different sections of Ottoman society to participate more equally in art education and later in a professional career. Besides professional art training, pupils were also offered classes in art history, ornamentation, perspective, arithmetic, geometry, history, antiques, and anatomy.⁸⁰ The Academy was modelled after the École des Beaux Arts in Paris, and one of its initial aims was to establish a Grand Prix de Rome, following Louis XIV’s example from the seventeenth century.⁸¹

The director of the Academy, Osman Hamdi Bey, was an archaeologist, museum director, and public figure, and, as Edhem Eldem describes him, an Ottoman *haut bourgeois*: ‘French-educated, he was strongly immersed in French culture, to the point that he generally wrote in French [...] His home was decorated in a typically

⁷⁹ Adolphe Thalasso, ‘Orient’, *L’Art et les Artistes*, Tome IX, Avril-Septembre 1909, pp. 145-6.

⁸⁰ This curriculum is described in an official document dated 1882. Transcribed and published in Mustafa Cezar, *Sanatta Batı’ya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1971), p. 461. Fatma Ürekli, *Sanayi-i Mektebi’nin Kuruluşu ve Türk Eğitim Tarihindeki Yeri* (PhD Thesis, İstanbul University, 1997).

⁸¹ As one contemporary American critic writing for *the Century Magazine* remarked, the aim was to ‘enable the successful competitors to continue their studies at the great art centres of the world.’ John P. Peters, ‘An Art Impetus in Turkey’, *The Century Magazine* (February 1893), p. 550.

western style; he often organized family concerts in which each member of the family participated; he wrote a short vaudeville in the typical French taste of the time.’⁸²

Born in 1842, Osman Hamdi was sent to Paris in 1860 for law education by his father, İbrahim Edhem Pasha, a European-educated Ottoman minister and ambassador who once served as Grand Vizier. Osman Hamdi soon left his law programme and received an art training instead by the French orientalist artists Gustave Boulanger and Jean-Léon Gérôme. Upon his return from Paris, he occupied important bureaucratic positions in the administration including working as an aide to Midhat Pasha in Baghdad, serving as a mayor of the Municipality of Pera, and becoming director of the Imperial Museum in 1881; a position he occupied until his death in 1910. In January 1882, he was appointed director of the new Academy of Fine Arts. As an artist, Osman Hamdi was influenced by his art instructors, Gérôme and Boulanger.⁸³

His realist technique and orientalist subject matter—producing meticulously detailed scenes of Islamic architecture, objects, crafts, and calligraphy—reflected, as Sibel Bozdoğan has argued, ‘a modern ideal that Western-educated Ottoman elites longed for: namely, a society that [was] distinctly (and proudly) oriental/Islamic, and yet modern, rational and refined at the same time.’⁸⁴

⁸² Eldem, ‘(A Quest for) the Bourgeoisie of Istanbul: Identities, Roles and Conflicts’, in Ulrike Freitag and Nora Lafi (eds.), *Urban Governance Under the Ottomans: Between Cosmopolitanism and Conflict* (London; New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 173.

⁸³ For Osman Hamdi, see Cezar, *Sanatta Batı’ya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi*; Mustafa Cezar, *Müzeci ve Ressam Osman Hamdi Bey* (Istanbul: Türk Kültürüne Hizmet Vakfı, 1987). For Osman Hamdi and the Fine Arts Academy, see, Adnan Çoker (ed.), *Osman Hamdi ve Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi* (Istanbul: Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi, 1963). For the most recent study on him, see, Edhem Eldem, *Osman Hamdi Bey Sözlüğü* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2010).

⁸⁴ Sibel Bozdoğan, ‘Art and Architecture in Modern Turkey: The Republican Period’, in Reşat Kasaba (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Turkey: Vol. 4: Turkey in the Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 422.



FIGURE 2.6a: Osman Hamdi, *Two Musicians Girls (İki Müzisyen Kız)*, 1880, oil on canvas, 58 x 39 cm © Pera Museum, Istanbul

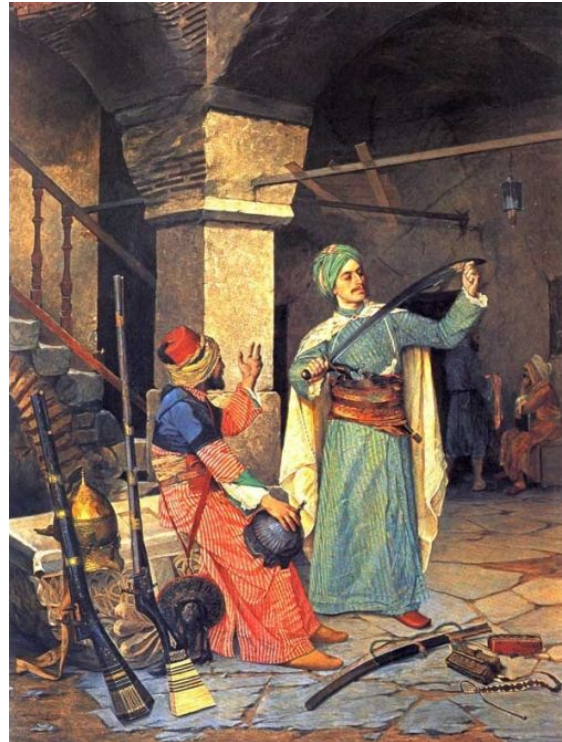


FIGURE 2.6b: Osman Hamdi, *Sharp Sword (Keskin Kılıç)*, 1908, oil on canvas, 185 x 140 cm © Ankara Museum of Painting and Sculpture.

The Academy was cosmopolitan in its outlook, and Osman Hamdi staffed it with European and non-Muslim art instructors, among them Italians like Salvatore Valeri, Fausto Zonaro, Leonardo de Mango, and Philippe Bello, one French-born Polish artist Joseph Warnia-Zarzecki, and a few Ottoman non-Muslims, such as the Ottoman Armenian sculptor Osgan Efendi and the Ottoman Greek art historian Aristoklis Efendi. The first academic work on aesthetics ever published in the Ottoman Empire, ‘Prolegomena to the History of Fine Arts’ (*Fünun-ı Nefise Tarihi Medhali*), was also the work of an Ottoman Armenian named Sakızlı Ohannes Efendi, a compilation of the lectures he delivered at the Academy of Fine Arts and published in 1892.⁸⁵ In the early years of the institution, the majority of the Academy students were non-Muslims. Among the earliest graduates were six students: three Ottoman Armenians (Simon Agopian, Viçen Arslanyan, and Arshag Fetvadjan); two Ottoman Muslims

⁸⁵ Sakızlı Ohannes, *Fünun-ı Nefise Tarihi Medhali* (Istanbul: 1308 [1892]).

(Galip and Şevket Bey), and, most likely a Levantine, Giovanni Della Tolla, who all graduated in 1888 having received their prizes.⁸⁶ The Academy also embarked on a programme of publicity to develop a public appetite for the fine arts and their Ottoman practitioners by hosting annual exhibitions where pupils exhibited the works they produced during studio classes.



FIGURE 2.7: The Academy of Fine Arts (*Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi*), between 1883-1888. Seated from left to right (instructors): Salvatore Valeri, Alexandre Vallaury, Osman Hamdi, Yervant Osgan, and Joseph Warnia-Zarzecki. Directly behind Osman Hamdi stands the Ottoman Armenian painter Simon Agopian. Standing to his right, between Vallaury and Osman Hamdi, is Arshag Fetvadjan, and in the back row with his hand on Agopian's shoulder is most likely Viçen Arslanyan. © Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture Archive. With thanks to Vazken Khatchig Davidian for the information on the Ottoman Armenian students.

The Academy of Fine Arts was an example of the modern merit-based education systems developed during Abdülhamid's reign and a significant part of a wider public education programme, which Ottoman officials saw as a means to increase the identification between students and the empire itself.⁸⁷ The Hamidian period was characterised by a great faith in the power of education to strengthen the Ottoman state. In fact, in an 1891 circular directive from the Ministry of Education to

⁸⁶ *Arevelk*, 18 November 1888; Davidian, 'Portrait of an Ottoman Armenian Artist of Constantinople', p. 31-32.

⁸⁷ Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, p. 168.

all high schools, graduates from these institutions were expected to be ‘ready to serve their state and country unwaveringly.’⁸⁸

However, like the rest of that system, the Academy of Fine Arts produced a generation of Ottomans who would be unwilling to put up with the intellectual and political restrictions that characterised Abdülhamid’s rule. One of the early graduates of the Academy, Arshag Fetvadjian, for instance, refused the Grand Prix de Rome he received from the Academy of Fine Arts and instead chose to receive his art training independently in Rome and later continued his education in Vienna and St. Petersburg.⁸⁹ During his self-imposed exile, he travelled to Ottoman Armenia and Russian Armenia to produce numerous watercolours and sketches of Armenian churches, castles and civic buildings. In 1903, he painted a politicized allegory of the Sasun massacres, *Mother Armenia* (*Մայր Հայաստան*), in which he portrayed a sturdy woman, with a fierce expression, perched on the top of a rocky hill watching out enemies with one hand on her rifle and the other supporting the baby she is nursing. Fetvadjian never returned to Istanbul after he left for Rome in the late 1880s.

⁸⁸ Quoted in Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, p. 96.

⁸⁹ Kürkman, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Ermeni Ressamlar*; Shaw, *Ottoman Painting*, p. 124. On Arshag Fetvadjian see, Levon Chookaszian, *Արշակ Գեղամյանի [Arshag Fetvadjian]* (Yerevan: Printinfo, vol. 1, 2011).



FIGURE 2.8: Arshag Fetvadjan, *Mother Armenia* (*Մայնուկ Հայաստան*), watercolour, 83 x 109 cm © National Gallery of Armenia.

Towards an Autonomous Art World: The Young Turk Revolution, 1908

Abdülhamid's authoritarian reign generated a wide range of oppositional groups, and in 1908 the Young Turks, the main oppositional force against his regime, and its dominant faction, the Committee of Union and Progress, achieved a revolutionary restoration of the Constitution of 1876, leading to the brief Second Constitutional Period (*II Meşrutiyet*) from 1908 to 1918. The opening of the Parliament on 17 December 1908 was greeted by a large, enthusiastic crowd. People were waving flags carrying Ottoman Turkish and French slogans that say fraternity, liberty, equality (*uhuvvet, hürriyet, müsavat*), *Kanun-i Esasi* (fundamental law), homeland, wealth, justice, order (*vatan, servet, adelet, nizam*), and, *liberté, fraternité, and égalité*.⁹⁰ The Revolution unleashed an extraordinary feeling of liberty throughout the country. The market was literally flooded with mass-produced postcards representing graphic and visual celebrations of the events. As Edhem Eldem has argued 'portraits, symbols and

⁹⁰ Palmira Johnson Brummett, *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908-1911* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), p. 89.

words, until then jealously kept under the monopoly of the state and sovereign, were thrown into the public domain for all to use, exploit and interpret freely.’⁹¹



FIGURE 2.9: ‘Proclamation of the Constitution on 24 July 1908’, postcard. İsa Akbaş collection. Published in Edhem Eldem, *Pride and Privilege*, p. 369.

The new attachment to liberty was such that when, a few months later, a major counter-revolution was attempted by Islamic and pro-Abdülhamid groups against the constitutional regime on the night of 12-13 April—an event known as the ‘31st March Incident’ (*Otuzbir Mart Vakası*)—it was successfully suppressed by the Action Army (*Hareket Ordusu*); an ad hoc collection of military units loyal to the constitution. The liberal press was filled with the most optimistic descriptions of the situation. The *Yeni Gazette* (New Newspaper) announced that ‘We hope that to-day, thanks to the patriotism of our brave soldiers, a government free and except from all occult influence has been given to the country’.⁹² Abdülhamid was dethroned and replaced by his brother Mehmed V Reşad on 27 April. The victory against the counter-revolution fostered a belief in a liberal and democratic Ottoman state. Each and every

⁹¹ Edhem Eldem, *Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders, Medals and Decorations* (Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2004), p. 366.

⁹² Quoted in Francis McCullagh, *The Fall of Abd-ul-Hamid* (London: Methuen & Company, 1910), p. 58.

Ottoman was now officially an equal citizen before the law; neither religion nor ethnicity would any longer supersede citizenship.

The revolution also opened up possibilities for a diverse social and intellectual milieu, and there was an infectious atmosphere of enthusiasm in the entire country: a diverse network of civil and civic associations was emerging;⁹³ various newspapers and journals were being founded; a considerable number of women magazines and societies emerged,⁹⁴ and Istanbul was already looking like what Raymond Williams would call a 'transnational' capital of 'an art without frontiers'.⁹⁵ Even as late as 1911, when Adolph Thalasso could expect that 'all the arts in this country are about to undergo a development unknown until today', post-revolutionary optimism and hope for a better future were abundant in the Ottoman art world.⁹⁶

'Appreciating Everyone According to His True Merit.'

In the cultural sphere, the 1908 revolution overthrew the Hamidian atmosphere of paranoia, surveillance, and censorship. Previously banned books returned to the shelves; Namık Kemal's works were among the most popular readings of time. Political exiles under Abdülhamid's regime could finally return, among them the 'intellectuals and revolutionaries' as the Ottoman Armenian feminist writer and activist, Yevpime Avetisian remarked: 'All the intellectuals and revolutionaries who

⁹³ In 1909, *Cemiyetler Kanunu* (Law of Associations) was issued to provide certain guarantees to the formation of associations. 'Cemiyetler Kanunu', 5 Ağustos 1325 [16 August 1909], *Düstur*, Series II, Vol. 1, pp. 604-607; Zafer Toprak, 'Cemiyetler Kanunu', *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Vol: 1 (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1983), p. 205.

⁹⁴ For the most comprehensive study on the topic, see Duygu Köksal and Anastasia Falierou (eds.), *A Social History of Late Ottoman Women: New Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

⁹⁵ Raymond Williams, 'When Was Modernism?' *New Left Review*, No: 175 (May/ June 1989), p. 50.

⁹⁶ Adolphe Thalasso, *L'Art Ottoman: Les Peintres de Turquie* (Paris: Librairie Artistique Internationale, 1911). Reprinted with his other two works: *Les Premiers Salons de Peinture de Constantinople* (Paris, 1906) and *Deri Se'adet ou Stamboul, Porte du Bonheur* (Paris, 1908) with a supplementary English translation. *Osmanlı Sanatı, Türkiye'nin Ressamları ve İlk İstanbul Salonları* (Istanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür A.Ş. Yayınları, 2008), p. 35. Thalasso's *L'Art Ottoman* was dedicated to Prince Abdülmecid Efendi, Sultan Abdülaziz's son and a painter himself, who was a great patron of art and the honorary president of the Ottoman Society of Painters (*Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti*), founded in 1909.

had been sent into exile were gradually returning [...] Those who were leading intellectuals greeted the Armenian intellectuals of Istanbul like real brothers, appreciating everyone according to his true merit.’⁹⁷ The Ottoman Armenian artist Panos Terlemezian, who had been a political exile during the reign of Abdülhamid II, was one of those ‘revolutionaries’.

Born in the Ottoman city of Van in 1865, Terlemezian had been exiled, imprisoned, and even sentenced to death in absentia for his actions as an Ottoman Armenian revolutionary against Abdülhamid’s absolutist regime.⁹⁸ In order to escape the death penalty, Terlemezian fled Van and for two decades lived as a political exile. During that time, he received art training first in St. Petersburg and later at the Académie Julian in Paris under Benjamin-Constant and Jean-Paul Laurens. Unlike his Orientalist French instructors, however, Terlemezian was a committed realist artist with a desire to elevate the lives of ordinary people: ‘I loved to watch the struggle of those sun-burned faces with the earth, to walk next to them as they ploughed their furrows, to listen to them sing their *horovels*, and to bear witness their lives’ he later wrote in his memoirs.⁹⁹ In Paris, Terlemezian established himself as a respected painter, exhibiting his works at the annual Salon exhibitions organized by the *Société*

⁹⁷ Anayis (Yevpimé Avedisian), *Ծնւեալս [My Recollections]* (Paris, 1949). This section together with other few pages from *My Recollections* were translated and published in Agop. J. Hacikyan (eds.), *The Heritage of Armenian Literature: Vol III; From the Eighteenth Century to Modern Times* (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2005), p. 677.

⁹⁸ Having been inspired by the Istanbul-born Armenian educator and intellectual Mkrtych Portukalian and his liberal and progressive ideas, Terlemezian with his other Ottoman Armenian friends from Van, founded the Armenakan Party in 1885. The name of the society *Armenakan* came from the newspaper *Armenia*, Portukalian had established in his exile at Paris in August 1885. For further information on Terlemezian, see, Gizem Tongo, ‘Artist and Revolutionary: Panos Terlemezian as an Ottoman Armenian Painter’, *Études arméniennes contemporaines*, no. 6, December (2015), pp. 111-153. Gerard J. Libaridian defined Portukalian as ‘a pivotal figure in the transition from a middle class liberalism [...] to the armed defence of the interests of the peasantry.’ Gerard J. Libaridian, *The Ideology of Armenian Liberation: The Development of Armenian Political Thought before the Revolutionary Movement (1639-1885)* (PhD Thesis, University of California, 1987), p. 221. Razmik Panossian, *The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), p. 201.

⁹⁹ Meri Kirakosyan, *Փառնոթ Թերլեմեզյանի Կյանքը եւ Ստեղծագործությունը [The Life and œuvre of Panos Terlemezian]* (Erevan: H.H. G.A.A, 2014), p. 23.

des Artistes Français.¹⁰⁰ Yet after 1908, he could not wait much longer to end his exile and decided to move to Istanbul, which he drily referred to as ‘the capital of the sultans’.

In 1910, two years after the Constitutional Revolution (1908), Terlemezian arrived in Istanbul and became one of the most influential artists in the Ottoman art world. He shared an apartment with his old friend, the Ottoman Armenian priest, composer and musicologist, Sghomon Sghomonian, known as Gomidas. They immediately turned the spacious apartment into a studio for private students of painting and music. Terlemezian would later write that:

We met once again in the capital of the sultans [...] Our house became a cultural centre for intellectuals and artists from different nationalities. There were Greek thinkers coming for Gomidas to talk about the birth of Church music, and Turks to chat about starting a conservatory and an opera.¹⁰¹

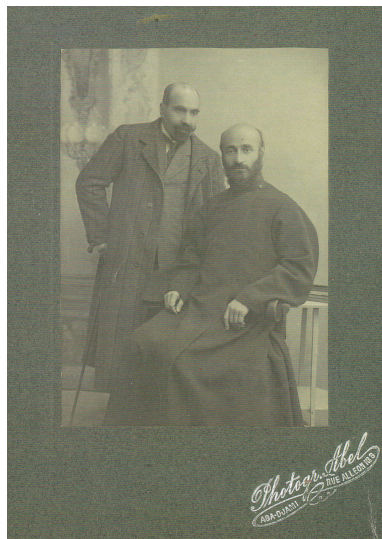


FIGURE 2.10: Panos Terlemezian (standing) with Gomidas (seated), photo taken in Istanbul between 1910-1914. Courtesy of Onnik Jamgocyan.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ *Salon de 1901: explication des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, architecture, gravure et lithographie des artistes vivants exposés au Grand Palais des Beaux-Arts* (Paris: Imprimerie Paul Dupont, 1901), p. 195; *Salon de 1910: Explication de ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, architecture, gravure et lithographie des artistes vivants exposés au Grand Palais des Champs-Élysées* (Paris: Imprimerie Paul Dupont, 1910), p. 514.

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Melissa Bilal and Burcu Yıldız, *Gomidas Vartabed: Mektuplar, Anılar, Müzikolojik Metinler* (Istanbul: Birzaman Yayıncılık, forthcoming).

¹⁰² I would like to thank Onnik Jamgocyan for sharing this photograph with me from his archive.

Terlemezian's paintings were in high demand for exhibitions and sale. His technique was something of a novelty for the Ottoman audience. His free and spontaneous painting technique and particularly the impasto application of colour was different from most contemporary Ottoman painters. In 1911, when he participated at an art exhibition organized at the Pera club of La Società Operaia, critics described his landscapes, portraits, and interior scenes as 'realist, but also [with] their own novel sense of line, and a sincerity [*սխմեղի*] noticeable above all else.'¹⁰³

The year 1913 marked an increasing recognition of Terlemezian's talent by the Ottoman cultural establishment. He finally became an officially-favoured artist, chosen to represent the Ottoman Empire at the prestigious International Munich exhibition.¹⁰⁴ For the exhibition, Terlemezian sent three works—an interior painting of an Armenian church, a portrait of Gomidas titled *An Armenian Priest*, and a landscape of the Bosphorus around ruined Rumeli Hisari fortress—¹⁰⁵ and received a gold medal for his contributions.¹⁰⁶

Terlemezian came to be held in high esteem in Istanbul: he was one of the most in-demand art instructors in the city and seen as an authority in art matters to the extent that Prince Abdülmecid Efendi—the honorary president of the Ottoman Society of Painters, one of the sons of Sultan Abdülaziz and a talented painter of historical scenes—asked for Terlemezian's opinion on his painting. Though Terlemezian's blunt criticism of Abdülmecid's work in progress did not necessarily

¹⁰³ Teotig (Teotig Labdjindjian), *Ամէնեւ Տարեցոյցը* [Everyone's Almanac] (Constantinople: Publishing House), 1912.

¹⁰⁴ Terlemezian's paintings were exhibited along with those of other Istanbul-based artists like Joseph Warnia, the Polish instructor of the Academy of Fine Arts, Jean Vakalapoulos, most likely an Ottoman-Greek artist, and two Muslim-Ottoman painters, Ali Fuad Bey and Şevket Bey. *Illustrierter Katalog der XI. Internationalen Kunstausstellung im Kgl. Glaspalast zu München 1913* (Munich: Pick, 1913).

¹⁰⁵ In the German catalogue, the names of his paintings were: 'Inneres einer armenischen Kirche in Lori', 'Ein armenischer Landpriester' and 'Der Bosphorus bei Rouméli-Hissar', *Illustrierter Katalog*, 1913, p. 183.

¹⁰⁶ *Navasart*, 1914, p. 271. Terlemezian would later write of the exhibition that there were only 'three painters ... One Turk, a Polish instructor from the art school, and me.' Quoted in Bilal and Yıldız, *Gomidas Vertabel*. The German catalogue, however, names five artists from 'Konstantinopel'.

please the Prince, who sulked for days afterwards before discarding the composition, (or the nervous Gomidas, who had accompanied Terlemezian to the Palace), the fact that it was asked for suggests that some in the Ottoman elite were to some extent attempting to live up to the new constitutional ideal that an Ottoman citizen ought to be judged according to his ability, and not his ethnicity, religion, or social background.¹⁰⁷ While, as an Ottoman Armenian, Terlemezian would not be able to benefit from this liberal attitude for much longer, the extension of the nascent principle of equal opportunity to Ottoman women in the years leading up to the First World War would have more lasting effects on Ottoman society; effects that would survive the empire itself.

The New Art Market and Gender Dynamics

The years after the Constitutional Revolution witnessed a considerable increase in the production, exhibition, circulation, sale, and discussion of paintings in the Ottoman Empire. This can be understood as a process of differentiation of patronage in the Ottoman art market that began in the Hamidian era. Indeed, there was a transition in Abdülhamid's reign from the official *Tanzimat* bourgeoisie, with cultural tastes appropriate to their 'higher standing' based on positions at court or high up in the military or bureaucracy, to the nascent professional and cosmopolitan bourgeoisie of the early twentieth century, whose consumption patterns were imported from or modelled on those in the key European capitals of Paris, Vienna and London. Edhem Eldem identifies an emerging 'Ottoman bourgeois' class, characterised not chiefly by their ethnicity but by their westernised (usually Francophile) education and consumption patterns, their 'economic culture' of financial investment, and their

¹⁰⁷ Tongio, 'Artist and Revolutionary: Panos Terlemezian', pp. 133-134.

combined professional and elite sensibilities.¹⁰⁸ This class was located chiefly in the cosmopolitan districts of the European shores of the Bosphorus, such as Galata, Pera and Tarabya, where foreign diplomats and their families would mix with Ottoman non-Muslim merchants and Muslim aristocrats and upper classes from around the empire. As art patrons, members of this class would have seen paintings exhibited in the windows of frame sellers, book merchants, and even pharmacists, as well as at embassy and salon exhibitions held increasingly through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With the lifting of Hamidian restrictions on artistic content, the post-1908 media boom opening up a mass market for images, and the more liberal attitudes towards women's movement and education, it became more possible than ever before to consider supporting oneself as a full-time professional painter.



FIGURE 2.11: A shop front with framed pictures in Galata/Pera, Istanbul, 1900s. Published in K rkman, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ermeni Ressamlar*, p. 75.

¹⁰⁸ See Eldem's 'Istanbul 1903-1918: A Quantitative Analysis of *A Bourgeoisie*', *Boğaziçi Journal. Review of Social, Economic and Administrative Studies*, Vol. 11, No: 1-2 (1997), pp. 53-98. See, also, Eldem, '(A Quest for) the Bourgeoisie of Istanbul', pp. 159-186.

Especially after the establishment of the Academy of Fine Arts in 1883, there had been a considerable growth in the number of professional painters. The income of nineteenth century painters such as Osman Hamdi, Şeker Ahmed Pasha, and Halil Pasha was not only dependent on the sales of their paintings; they came from upper rank Ottoman families, were themselves high level bureaucrats, close to Abdülhamid II himself, and their art itself was also supported by the Sultan.¹⁰⁹ In contrast, the new graduates of the Academy of Fine Arts were part of the new professional middle-class of the early twentieth century; they were from relatively diverse social backgrounds, including from non-elite and provincial families, and often became full-time artists who depended economically on the increasingly differentiated patronage of the art market. As part of the renaissance in civil society affiliations after the revolution, in 1909, an artists' association named 'The Ottoman Society of Painters' (*Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti*) was formed. Its aims included publicizing 'the love of fine arts and progressing the art of painting in the Ottoman State,'¹¹⁰ at least partly in order to develop the new market and sources of art patronage. While Prince Abdülmecid Efendi was elected as its honorary president, the society was mostly directed and staffed by the graduates and students of the Academy of Fine Arts.¹¹¹ From 1911 to

¹⁰⁹ An 1890 official document from Abdülhamid II's private library at the Yıldız Palace, 'The Inventory Notebook (list) of the Artists and Their Paintings Belonging to the Imperial Collection' (*Saray ve Kasr-ı Hümayunlarda Bulunan Resimlerin Cinsini ve Ressamların Esamisini Mübeyyen Defter*), written under the order of the Sultan, shows us that the palace collection included seventeen paintings by Şeker Ahmed Pasha (mostly still lifes) and seven paintings by Osman Hamdi (mostly orientalist paintings). This imperial document has been comprehensively translated and analysed by Zehra Güven Öztürk in her study *Ottoman Imperial Painting Collection through a Document Dating from 1890* (MA Thesis, Koç University, 2008). As Öztürk informs us, the imperial collection, most of which was purchased on the order of Sultan Abdülaziz and Abdülhamid II, consisted of 346 paintings by 104 foreign, Levantine, Muslim and non-Muslim Ottoman painters. Today, the notebook is kept in the Rare Books Library of Istanbul University.

¹¹⁰ 17 Eylül 1325 [30 September 1909]. The Society's official document was first published in Naci Terzi's article, 'Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti'nin Kuruluşu ile İlgili Bir Belge', *Sanat Çevresi* (December, 1979), p. 14.

¹¹¹ The inaugural membership registration notebook of the Ottoman Society of Painters has apparently not survived until today, making it hard to track its initial members.

1914, the Society published the first art journal of the empire, dedicated to the fine arts.

Yet despite the increasing professionalization of painting begun in the Hamidian era, the relation of Ottoman women artists to the art market remained that of the talented and committed ‘amateur’. In the first place, there was the question of training, as the military schools and the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul did not accept women, forcing talented or aspiring women artists to study at home or, in ever increasing numbers, in the studios of private art tutors. Secondly, it was difficult for female artists to win recognition as painters in their own right; despite the fact that Ottoman women had been publicly exhibiting paintings in the empire since at least 1880, when Princess Nazlı had displayed her still lifes at an event organized via the British Embassy,¹¹² the chances of becoming a renowned Ottoman female artist were still relatively rare, though not, perhaps, quite as rare as Linda Nochlin’s ‘Lithuanian jazz pianists’ or ‘Eskimo tennis players.’¹¹³ That said, the opportunities for becoming a commercially successful woman artist from a non-elite background were almost non-existent. Indeed, almost without exception, Ottoman women artists came from upper-middle class backgrounds, and engaged in painting as a refined leisure activity and form of personal development.¹¹⁴ Celile Hanım, for instance, was born into an upper-class family; her father was Enver Celaledin Pasha and her grandfather on her mother's side was Mehmed Ali Pasha, both ministers in the Ottoman cabinet.¹¹⁵

Another prominent painter of the art world, Müfide Hanım, who participated in the

¹¹² Mary Roberts, ‘Nazlı's Photographic Games: Said and Art History in a Contrapuntal Mode’, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 2014, 48, no: 5, p. 471.

¹¹³ Linda Nochlin, *Women, Art and Power and Other Essays* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1989), p. 150.

¹¹⁴ For women painters see, Taha Toros, *İlk Kadın Ressamlarımız* (Istanbul: Akbank, 1988); Berke İnel and Burçak İnel, ‘Discovering the Missing Heroines: The Role of Women Painters in Early Modernist Art in Turkey’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (April, 2002), pp. 205-212; Wendy Shaw, ‘Where did the Women Go? Female Artists from the Ottoman Empire to the Early Years of the Turkish Republic’, *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 23, No: 1 (2011), pp. 13-37.

¹¹⁵ Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu, *Celile Hanım* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2001).

1911 exhibition with Panos Terlemezian, was also born into a wealthy family and had the opportunity to take private art courses from Salvatore Valeri, the Italian art instructor at the Academy of Fine Arts. Adrine Donelian and Shoushan Boshnakian, who took private painting lessons from Terlemezian, were also born to wealthy and well-educated parents. Donelian's father, Hrant Asadur, was a Paris-educated jurist, literary critic, and a member of the Ottoman Constitutional Council; and her mother, Zabel Asatur (also known as Sibyl), was a well-known feminist Armenian poet.¹¹⁶



FIGURE 2.12: Shoushan Boshnakian and Adrine Donelian in the private studio of Terlemezian in Istanbul. Photo undated (most likely taken between 1910-1914). Published in Saris, *Armenian Painting*, p. 151.

The 'elite amateur' character of most Ottoman women's painting did not mean, however, that there was no impetus for greater equality and professionalization of women's art. The dynamic young painter and educationalist Mihri Hanım, the future 'founder' of the Academy of Fine Arts for Women (as we shall see in the next chapter), was also of a privileged social status, but was also of an independent and campaigning cast of mind. Born in Istanbul into a prominent upper-class family, her

¹¹⁶ For Zabel Asatur, see, Victoria Rowe, *The 'New Armenian Woman': Armenian Woman's Writing in the Ottoman Empire, 1880-1915* (PhD Thesis, University of Toronto, 2000).

father was Ahmed Rasim Pasha, once Minister of Health. She took private art classes from the Italian court painter Fausto Zonaro, through whom she met an Italian acrobatic company with which she once absconded to Rome at the age of seventeen.¹¹⁷ Unsatisfied with the shallow bohemian lifestyle in Italy, she later travelled to the artistic centre of Paris, where she met and married Müşfik Selami Bey, then a young student of politics in the Sorbonne, with whom she returned to the empire. A friend of constitutionalist firebrand Tevfik Fikret, Mihri Hanım would often paint in the poet's house. Her portraits of women were strong in character, rendering homage to women's self-agency and feminine qualities, rather than portraying them as decorative and consumable objects (as in, for example, the orientalist paintings of Osman Hamdi).

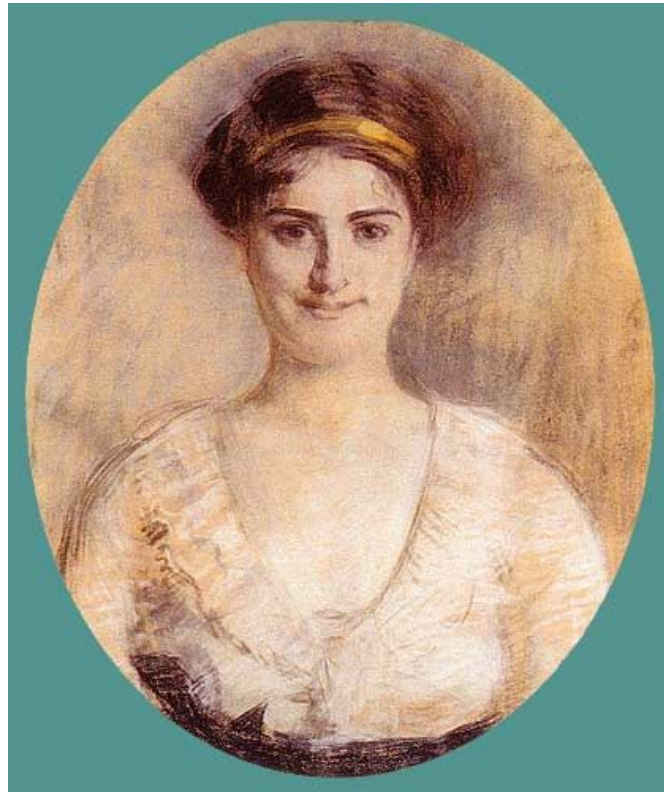


FIGURE 2.13: Mihri Hanım, autoportrait, pastel. 60 x 48 cm © Topkapı Palace.

¹¹⁷ For Mihri Hanım, see, Mahinur Tuna, *İlk Türk Kadın Ressam: Mihri Rasim (Müşfik) Açıba* (Istanbul: Asyayın, 2007); Burcu Pelvanoğlu, 'Painting the Late Ottoman Woman: Portrait(s) of Mihri Müşfik Hanım', in Köksal and Falierou (eds.), *A Social History of Late Ottoman Women*, pp. 155-172.

After the Constitutional Revolution, Mihri Hanım became a key figure in the growing campaign by Ottoman women themselves to broaden their education and employment opportunities. One of the main objectives of the elite Ottoman women was the assertion that they should have, as men did, access to higher education and male-controlled professions. In late October 1913, the publisher of the feminist journal *Kadınlar Dünyası* (Woman's World), Nuriye Ülviye, wrote: 'We have no time to waste. It is our human right to request a university. I don't know why this request is seen as extraordinary. What is really extraordinary is not granting us our rights.'¹¹⁸ On 12 September 1914, the first higher education institution to offer Ottoman women education was officially inaugurated with two faculties: The Faculty of Literature and The Faculty of Sciences.¹¹⁹ On 24 October 1914, five days before the Ottoman Empire entered the war, the institution embarked on its first academic year. It was not until after the war began, however, that Mihri Hanım's own campaign for an institution to educate and professionalize Ottoman women painters would receive official support, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Ottoman Artists in Paris: The '1914 Generation'

The '1914 generation' has been probably one of the most popular subjects among Turkish art historians and has become almost indispensable staple of Turkish modern

¹¹⁸ Anonymous [Nuriye Ülviye], 'Kadınların Tahsil-i Aliye İhtiyacı', *Kadınlar Dünyası*, No: 115, 29 October 1913, p. 2. Nuriye Ülviye was a pioneering Ottoman feminist and a leader of the women's rights movement. In 1913, she founded the Association for the Defence of Women's Rights (Müdafaa-i Hukuk-u Nisvan Cemiyeti). For further discussion on the journal of *Kadınlar Dünyası*, see, Duygu Koç, *Türk Kadın Hareketini Kadınlar Dünyası ve Türk Kadın Yolu Dergileri Üzerinden Okumak* (MA Thesis, Hacettepe University, 2016).

¹¹⁹ The newly established the University of Women (*İnas Darülfununu*) was housed in a large mansion, known as Zeynep Hanım Konağı, which had already been serving as the University (*Darülfunun*) for Ottoman men since 1909. Zeynep Kamil Konağı, named after the owner, was built in the 1860s. Zeynep Kamil was one of the children of Mehmed Ali Pasha, the Ottoman governor in Egypt, who later married to Yusuf Kamil Pasha, a Grand Vizier to Sultan Abdülaziz. Her mansion was donated to serve first as an orphanage in 1903 and later in 1909 as the University (*Darülfunun*). From September 1914, the building housed both the University and the University of Women. For the most comprehensive study on the University of Women, see, Ali Arslan, Mustafa Selçuk, and Mehmet Nam, *Türkiye'nin İlk ve Tek Kız Üniversitesi İnas Darülfünunu, 1914-1919* (Istanbul: İdil Yayıncılık, 2012).

art history writing. These artists have mostly been acknowledged as bringing the belated nineteenth century modern style, Impressionism, into the country on the eve of the First World War, which led them to be called the ‘Impressionists’ along with their other label as ‘the 1914 generation,’ or ‘the Çallı generation.’

The story begins when a group of young Ottoman painters were sent to Paris for art education in around 1910. The artists went to Paris under various auspices. Namık İsmail was sent to Paris by his own father to study agriculture, but his inclination soon led him to the study of fine arts. Born into a well-to-do Muslim family, Namık İsmail was the son of İsmail Zühdi, director of the treasury at the Imperial Arsenal in Istanbul, who, in his youth, had trained in the art of calligraphy. Namık İsmail received a French education at the *Collège Saint-Benoît* and later the Imperial Lycée of Galatasaray in Istanbul. In many ways, he was a typical ‘Ottoman bourgeois’: well educated, well read, cultured, and strongly immersed in French culture. During his two-year residence in France, he attended painting classes at the Académie Julian and later enrolled in the studio of the respected academic artist Fernand Cormon. As a talented art student, Namık İsmail enjoyed the company of his ‘liberal’ art instructor, but he was more of a dilettante than a serious professional painter during his Paris years:

I didn't study agriculture in Paris. Yet I wouldn't be telling the truth if I said I had studied painting. I painted little and saw many of the sights. And after staying there for two years, I came to Istanbul at the beginning of the World War.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ ‘Sanayi-i Nefise Müdürü Namık İsmail Bey’le Mülakat’, *Meşale*, 1 July 1928, pp. 8-10.



FIGURE 2.14: Ottoman painters in Paris, taken sometime in 1913-1914. From left to right: Namık İsmail, Hikmet, Çallı İbrahim, Feyhaman. Courtesy of Adnan Çoker. Published in Gören, *Türk Resim Sanatında Şişli Atölyesi*, p. 40.



FIGURE 2.15a: Çallı İbrahim and İbrahim Feyhaman in a photography studio in Gent, Belgium. Published in Öztuncay, *Hatıra-i Uhuvvet*, pp. 232-233.



FIGURE 2.15b: The reverse side of their photograph as a postcard sent to their artist friend Mehmed Ruhi in Paris. Published in Öztuncay, *Hatıra-i Uhuvvet*, pp. 232-233.

Like Namık İsmail, İbrahim Feyhaman was born in Istanbul into a well-read and intellectual family. His father, Süleyman Hayri Bey, a graduate of the Palace School (*Enderün Mektebi*), was a pious, but religiously tolerant man who was well versed in Arabic and Persian literature, fond of poetry, and frequently composed

verses himself.¹²¹ Losing his father and mother at an early age, Feyhaman was raised by his grandfather and later of Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi, director of the Imperial Lycée of Galatasaray, where he became a student. At the Imperial Lycée of Galatasaray, Feyhaman took art classes from Viçen Arslanyan and Şevket Bey, and showed great talent in painting and Islamic calligraphy (*hüsn-ü hat*). Upon his graduation, Feyhaman remained at the Lycée, where he taught French calligraphy and, sometimes, painting as a substitute lecturer. In Istanbul, Feyhaman discovered a true talent as a portraitist; his subjects were people with whom he was familiar, and he managed to earn a considerable amount of money from his work. Yet going to Paris for art education was his only dream. As an orphan without much economic support, Feyhaman tried in every possible way to realise this dream, attempting unsuccessfully to become a member of the CUP to find connections to potential sponsors.

Eventually, an Egyptian aristocrat and patron of the arts, Abbas Halim Pasha, Said Halim Pasha's brother, agreed to sponsor Feyhaman's art education.¹²² Having consulted a former Académie Julian student, Panos Terlemezian, about the finances that would be necessary, Feyhaman left Istanbul for Paris in 1911 and remained there until 1914.

Born in a little town in the Aegean region, Çallı İbrahim was an ambitious and talented young man from a humble background. At an early age, he came to Istanbul with the dream of becoming a professional painter. Soon he was enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts. Hikmet, on the other hand, came from a well-to-do Istanbul

¹²¹ Feyhaman's father was also a prolific writer and translator, publishing books on Persian grammar, Divan poetry, and translations from Rumi's *Masnavi*. On Süleyman Hayri Bey, see, İbnülemin Mahmut Kemal İnâl, *Son Asır Türk Şairleri, Vol. II* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı Yayınları, [1930] 2000); Abdullah Satoğlu, *Kayseri Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2002), p. 411. For Süleyman Hayri's translations from Rumi's *Masnavi*: Hasibe Maziöğlu, 'Mesnevi'nin Türkçe Manzum Şerhleri', *Bildiler: Mevlana'nın 700. Ölüm Yıldönümü Dolayısıyla Uluslararası Mevlana Semineri, 15-17 Aralık 1973* (Ankara: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1973), pp. 283-384.

¹²² For İbrahim Feyhaman Bey's art training in Paris, see BOA, MF. MKT, 1177/73, 23 Muharrem 1330 [13 January 1912].

family. His father, a major at the Navy Academy, had hoped his son would follow in his footsteps. Hikmet was initially enrolled at the Navy Academy, but later transferred his studies to the Academy of Fine Arts to study painting. Around 1910, both Çallı İbrahim and Hikmet won a prize at the Istanbul Fine Arts Academy's Prix de Rome and were sent to Paris on an art scholarship provided by the Ottoman Ministry of Education, on the agreement that they teach at the Academy of Fine Arts on their return. Hikmet soon resigned from the army.

For young Ottoman art students, the prestigious École des Beaux-Arts in Paris was the very centre of European academic painting, and a refreshingly liberal departure from their Istanbul art education in teaching style and the opportunity to finally work with life models. Indeed, the art education at the Academy of Fine Arts had involved the classic studio-based western-style art classes in painting, but under the directorship of Osman Hamdi, had not used live models for a long time. Early in the twentieth century, a few art students at the Academy had demonstrated against this attitude, and gained, in return for their pains, an opportunity to work with real human models, though these were male oil wrestlers, and were to be allowed to model only semi-naked.¹²³ In 1909, the students took a step further and brought a girl from a gypsy settlement and made her adopt various postures. Their act almost became a scandal. Osman Hamdi called them to his office and yelled at them that they were in a country that could not bear such things. 'I hope' he said 'you will go to Europe soon and paint lots of women, even naked ones.'¹²⁴ Students took their complaint to the

¹²³ See, Ali Sami Boyar's 1945 speech, published in Bedi N. Şehsuvaroğlu, *Ressam Ali Sami Boyar: A Well Known Turkish Painter* (Istanbul: İsmail Akgün Matbaası), p. 72. For the most comprehensive work on the story of live models and the depiction of nudes in Ottoman and Turkish painting, see the exhibition catalogue: *Üryan, Çıplak, Nü: Türk Resminde Bir Modernleşme Öyküsü/ Bare, Naked, Nude: A Story of Modernization in Turkish Painting* (Istanbul: Pera Museum, 2015), particularly Ahu Antmen's article on the subject, pp. 15-66.

¹²⁴ Hikmet Onat, 'Interview', in Nurullah Berk and Hüseyin Gezer, *50 Yılın Türk Resim ve Heykeli* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası, 1973), pp. 17-18.

Ministry of Education and were refused once again. Soon the conservative Islamist journal of the Scientific Islamic Association *Beyanül-Hak* published an article in praise of Osman Hamdi and Ministry of Education's decision: 'We cannot help being dismayed by the fact that devotees of the fine arts, considered a branch of civility, were unable to imagine how ugly is this act which runs counter to our religion, national decorum, and public morality.'¹²⁵

In Paris, Ottoman artists were educated in the Atelier Cormon run by the French academic painter Fernand Cormon,¹²⁶ one of the most popular instructors of the École des Beaux-Arts, preferred previously by Vincent Van Gogh, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and Émile Bernard.¹²⁷ Cormon's 'liberal way of teaching and disdain for the beaten track of the salons attracted many young painters,'¹²⁸ who were not forced to employ their instructor's naturalistic techniques and traditional subject matter. For the young Toulouse-Lautrec, 'whatever you show', Cormon 'warmly approves', wanting 'us to have as much as we can painting outside the studio'.¹²⁹

In contrast to the somewhat constricted Ottoman art scene, Paris also provided the young painters easy access to myriad salons at which they could see the latest works and promote their own. Despite their attraction to Impressionist methods and Realist subject matter, Ottoman painters who would be active during the First World War did not really show interest in esoteric aesthetic styles dominant within the avant-

¹²⁵ 'Müteferrika', *Beyanül-Hak*, 20 March 1909, p. 618.

¹²⁶ As Deniz Artun has pointed out, one important difference between the state-sponsored painters (Çallı İbrahim and Hikmet) and the privately sponsored ones (Namık İsmail and Feyhaman) was the fact that the latter needed to register at the Académie Julian first in order to enter the Atelier Cormon in the École des Beaux-Arts, as they lacked an official letter, which the Ottoman Ministry of Education had provided to Çallı İbrahim and Hikmet. Deniz Artun, *Paris'ten Modernlik Tercümeleri: Académie Julian'da İmparatorluk ve Cumhuriyet Öğrencileri* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2007), pp. 160-161.

¹²⁷ Van Gogh entered Cormon's studio in 1885. See, Melissa A McQuillan, *Van Gogh* (New York, N.Y.: Thames and Hudson, 1989). Peter Harrison, *Vincent Van Gogh* (New York: Sterling Pub. Co., 1996); Dieter Beaujean, *Vincent Van Gogh: Life and Work* (Cologne: Könemann, 2000).

¹²⁸ Victoria Charles, *Vincent van Gogh by Vincent van Gogh* (New York: Parkstone Press International: 2014), p. 181.

¹²⁹ Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec quoted in Ann Galbally, *A Remarkable Friendship: Vincent Van Gogh and John Peter Russell* (Victoria: Miegunyah Press, 2008), pp. 89-90.

garde. Their ‘modernity’ hardly resembled that of the Italian¹³⁰ or the Russian futurists,¹³¹ who called for a new art form that would break with the aesthetic traditions of the past. These young Ottoman artists believed that art should serve as a tool for social reform, and, hence, be comprehensive to and understandable by the people. They were rather committed to depicting popular themes painted in a clear, accessible style. Some combined academic standards of craftsmanship with impressionistic features, but neither of them was iconoclast in their techniques nor attempted to challenge the tastes of the surrounding public. Yet, still, these young painters were members of a generation raised in an intellectual milieu formed by the meritocratic education institutions founded in the late Ottoman Empire, and especially the Academy of Fine Arts. So the bourgeois values of intuition, imagination and individuality were central to their art, responding in clear ways to Ottoman bourgeois tastes and the rising bourgeois patronage of the arts. In their paintings, they sought to represent ordinary people, which, as the art historian Sibel Bozdoğan observes, marked ‘the emergence of modern individual subjectivities,’ as we shall see in the following chapters.¹³²

There was also, of course, the imposing cultural authority of the national and European collections at the Louvre; which prompted many a student missive in the Ottoman Society of Painters journal complaining of the lack of an Ottoman museum

¹³⁰ In the eleventh and final proposition of his 1909 Futurist Manifesto, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti acclaims: ‘We will sing of great crowds excited by work, by pleasure, and by riot; we will sing of the multicoloured, polyphonic tides of revolution in modern capital cities: we will sing of the vibrant nightly fervour of arsenals and shipyards blazing with violent electric moons; factories hung on clouds by the crooked lines of their smoke,’ published in the Paris newspaper *Le Figaro*. Quoted in F.T. Marinetti, *Selected Writings*, ed. and trans. R. W. Flint (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972), p. 42.

¹³¹ The 1912 Russian Manifesto published: ‘The past suffocates us. The Academy and Pushkin are less intelligible than hieroglyphics. Throw Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, etc., overboard from the steamship of modernity. He who does not forget his first love will not recognize his last’. Quoted in Anne Charters and Samuel Charters, *I Love: The Story of Vladimir Mayakovsky and Lili Brik* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1979), p. 29.

¹³² Sibel Bozdoğan, ‘Art and Architecture in Modern Turkey: The Republican Period’ in Reşat Kasaba (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Turkey: Vol. 4: Turkey in the Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 423.

of Fine Arts. After a visit to the rich collection of the Louvre Museum, one of the painters from Paris sent an article to the journal: ‘Poor us [...] I do not know if we will merely remain the flatterers of the civilized countries’:

For our noble nation which holds the practice of education with the need of progress, and which cares about its universities, schools of medicine and schools of law, it is vital to care also about fine arts and not to be destitute of this vital organ [uzv-ı mühim] of civilisation.¹³³

As for an increasing number of their peers back home, for these young artists, painting was expected to play a role both in the service of bringing the Ottomans to the level of European civilisation (an understanding had its origins in the nineteenth century, as we have already seen) and in the service of a national cause by creating an environment that would assist in the formation of a ‘national art’.

‘National Art’ and National Culture

The shift in the class structure and the liberally-minded progressive atmosphere after 1908 also led to new discussions on the relationship between art and society. In Europe, these debates had already shaped the cultural milieu since the nineteenth century. In Germany, for instance, during the Restoration (1815-1848), the promotion of the national artistic life, *Kunstleben*, was actively pursued by leading intellectuals and politicians.¹³⁴ In 1830s Britain, the need to found a national gallery as a concession to social discontent had been widely debated in Parliament.¹³⁵

¹³³ Anonymous, ‘Tefrika-i Mahsusa: Ressam ve Heykeltıraşlara Mahsus Teşrih-i Cesed-i İnsan Yahut Teşrih-i Tasviri’, *Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi*, Issue: 4, 1 Nisan 1327 [14 April 1911].

¹³⁴ John R. Hinde, *Jacob Burckhardt and the Crisis of Modernity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), p. 238.

¹³⁵ Addressing the British parliament in a discussion about the funding of a building for the National Gallery in 1832, for instance, Sir Robert Peel explained the call for a public gallery where the ‘exacerbation of angry and unsocial feelings’ of the poor ‘might be much softened by the effects which the fine arts had ever produced on the minds of men’. Quoted in Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and Education* (Oxford: Routledge, 2007), p. 196.

After 1909, a ‘national art’ was actively promoted by some of the leading artists and intellectuals writing for the Journal of the Ottoman Society of Painters. One of the nationalist intellectuals of the era, Galib Bahtiyar, for instance, published an article in the Society’s journal entitled ‘Study of Fine Arts from the Perspective of the Nation’, in which he criticized the celebrated Orientalist painter Jean-Léon Gérôme, many of whose paintings had been purchased by both Sultan Abdülaziz and Abdülhamid, for ‘not capturing the spirit of the orient,’¹³⁶ merely its material culture. For Bahtiyar:

Art cannot be determined as regional or national only by the peculiarity of a [nation’s] costume [...] some of our painters, for instance, unnecessarily place someone in a turban or a *shalwar* somewhere in a landscape or an interior picture in order for their work to be understood as national art.¹³⁷

Fausto Zonaro, the Italian court painter of Sultan Abdülhamid until 1909, also received his share of Galib Bahtiyar’s *ad hominem* criticism:

Mösyö Zonaro has depicted the magical glitter of Eastern horizons, and maybe he has created good works with regard to art, yet neither of these works has been the work of an Easterner or a *Turk*.¹³⁸

This nativist understanding of painting and its relation to national art was emphasized frequently in the journal. The ethos was strongly patriotic and nationalist; the aim of the cultural elite was to promote civilised values as much as to harness national consciousness through art. Yet there seems to have been a difference between what the nationalist writers and the painters meant by a national art. Particularly important was the difference between mentalities shaped by social, educational, and cultural factors. Many nationalist ‘Turkist’ writers had tenuous or non-existent links with non-

¹³⁶ Galib Bahtiyar, ‘Sanayi-i Nefisenin Milliyet Nokta-i Nazarından Tetkiki’ *Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi*, Issue: 18, 1 Temmuz 1330 [14 July 1914].

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid. My emphasis.

Muslim Ottomans or foreigners or with other languages and cultures, and tended to understand national art in ethnic terms; that is, as Bahtiyar's 'work of an Easterner or a *Türk*'. Though painters differed in background and age, the Academy of Fine Arts, from where many painters graduated, was, among many other things, a cosmopolitan community, and the art market in which they worked as, as already noted, diverse, pluralistic, and cosmopolitan.

Indeed, to dismiss the Ottoman painters' debates on 'national art' as simply xenophobic propaganda against non-Turkish artists would be a mistake. The front cover of the seventeenth issue of the Society's Journal, for instance, featured an Ottoman Armenian painter: the chief painter of the Hereke Factory (*Hereke Fabrika-i Hümayunu*), Tovmas Efendi. The lead article described Tovmas Efendi as an artist working 'with national and harmonious colours and lines.'¹³⁹ Indeed, for most Ottoman painters, the feeling of belonging to the 'Ottoman' cultural identity, or, in contemporary terminology, Ottoman 'national' identity, was neither a matter of race, nor of religion, nor of language. On the contrary, the 'national' character of an artist was more a matter of an ability or willingness to represent 'national' character in his or her art. When Terlemezian, as an Ottoman Armenian artist, represented the empire at the International Munich exhibition of 1913 and received a golden medal for his contributions, it was a proud moment for Ottoman art.

Yet, according to Marc Nichanian, the constitutional Ottoman world was already 'in a moment of crisis' around 1910, when it was becoming apparent that the 'old structure of domination remained as it had been, unchanged despite everything.'¹⁴⁰ In public ceremonies, the CUP leaders did not miss the chance to champion Ottomanism. In 1911, at the opening ceremony of the *Abide-i Hürriyet*

¹³⁹ 'Tovmas Efendi', *Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi*, Issue: 17, 1 Haziran 1330 [14 June 1914].

¹⁴⁰ Marc Nichanian, 'Catastrophic Mourning', in David L. Eng and David Kazanjian (eds.), *Loss: The Politics of Mourning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), p. 106.

(Monument of Freedom), Enver Bey (the future Enver Pasha) remembered the martyrs of the counterrevolution in the inclusive spirit of Ottomanism: ‘Muslims and Christians lay side by side, a token that they, living or dead, were henceforward fellow patriots who would know no distinction of race or creed.’¹⁴¹ On the other hand, as Nichanian has noted, some leaders of the Young Turk movement, like Talat, had ‘already begun to use the term *Ottomanization* in the sense of “Turkification”’.¹⁴² In August 1910, at a secret meeting in Salonika before the meeting of the Young Turk Congress, Talat Pasha uttered the following words:

You know that, according to the terms of the Constitution, the equality of Muslims and ghiaours is assured, but you well understand that this ideal is unrealisable. The Sheriat, our historical past, and the sentiment of hundreds of thousands of Muslims, as well as that of the ghaviours themselves, raises an insurmountable barrier to the establishment of real equality ... There can be no question of equality as long as we have not carried out the Ottomanization of the Empire.¹⁴³

Thus the Muslim nationalist and Turkist interpretations of Ottomanism, and of an appropriately national art, would receive increasing state support as Ottoman citizens increasingly looked to the CUP and its military cadres as a potential saviour of the empire from its multiplying economic, political, and strategic problems.

Power and Prestige: Soldiers on Canvas

In terms of national culture, perhaps the most remarkable post-1908 phenomenon was the increased prestige and popularity of the army across the Ottoman political and social spectrum; no doubt a direct result of the majority of Young Turk and CUP cadres hailing from a military background. According to the reports of the 31st March incident in the newspaper *Mizan* (Balance), the ‘Ottoman soldiers, whose bravery is

¹⁴¹ Quoted in Klaus Kreiser, ‘Public Monuments in Turkey and Egypt, 1840-1916,’ *Muqarnas*, Vol. 14 (1997), p. 113.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹⁴³ Quoted in Nichanian, ‘Catastrophic Mourning’, p. 123, fn. 22.

legendary, displayed yesterday a virtue whereof the like has never before been seen in history'.¹⁴⁴ The Greek journal *Neologas* favoured the army with the following commentary: 'The army has gained the great prize for patriotism, April 13, 1909, ought to be henceforth marked with no less splendour than July 24, 1908. The Army was inspired yesterday by its love for the country and by no other sentiment.'¹⁴⁵ Indeed, from 1909 onwards, Ottoman public life would become increasingly dominated by military values and symbolism. The accession ceremony for the new Sultan Mehmed V. Reşad was conducted at the War Ministry, rather than the Topkapı Palace, a first in Ottoman history since the conquest of Istanbul.¹⁴⁶

One outcome of the new prestige of the military was increased popular interest in the paraphernalia of soldiering and paintings of soldiers. Before the Constitutional Revolution, war art had existed in the official sphere, but it was not made available for public viewing. In December 1908, a museum was opened in the War Academy (*Mekteb-i Harbiye-i Osmaniye Müzesi*),¹⁴⁷ and soon an art exhibition was held displaying various war paintings including the ones made for Sultan Abdulaziz by Chlebowski. The opening was conducted by Reşad before his accession to the Ottoman throne.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ Quoted in McCullagh, *The Fall of Abd-ul-Hamid*, p. 59

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁴⁶ Tahsin Öz, *Hayatım* (Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, 1991), p. 6.

¹⁴⁷ *İkdam*, 15 December 1908; *II. Meşrutiyet'in İlk Yılı: 23 Temmuz 1908-23 Temmuz 1909* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi, 2008), p. 193.

¹⁴⁸ *Mekteb-i Harbiye Sergisi, Servet-i Fünun*, 19 Mart 1325 [1 Nisan 1909].



FIGURE 2.16: Mekteb-i Harbiye Sergisi, *Servet-i Fünun*, 19 Mart 1325 [1 Nisan 1909]

In 1909, the Minister of War Mahmud Şevket Pasha, having inspired by his visits to the military museums in Paris and Berlin, put an official request for the establishment of a modern military museum. Soon various military equipment and war-related art works, previously kept in palaces and arm depots, were transferred to the Ottoman Military Museum (*Müze-i Asker-i Osmani*).¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ The exact date for the opening of the museum varies in secondary sources, though most seem to have agreed that the Ottoman public was able to see the collections by 1910. Cf. Tahir Nejat Eralp, 'Askeri Müze', *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 6 (İstanbul: İletişim, 1985), pp. 1604-1606; Wendy Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), p. 189; Wendy Shaw, 'Museums and Narratives of Display from the Late Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic', *Muqarnas*, Vol. 24, Issue: 1 (2007), pp. 253-280.

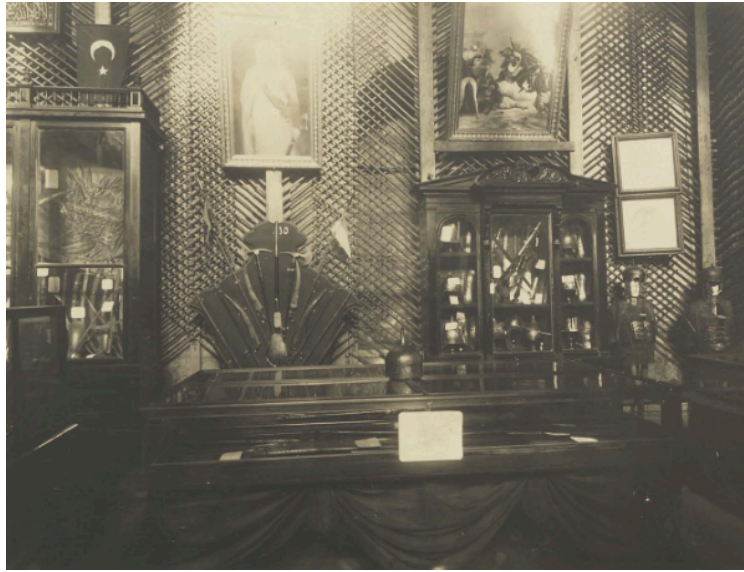


FIGURE 2.17: Ottoman Military Museum (*Müze-i Asker-i Osmani*), photo taken around 1913 © TBMM Halife Abdülmecid Efendi Koleksiyonu.

The museum collection continued to grow through new contributions, including Simon Agopian's almost life size portrait of Sultan Mehmed V. Reşad in his military uniform adorned with medals.



FIGURE 2.18: Photograph. Simon Agopian's painting being carried to the Military Museum, around 1910-1914. Courtesy of Garo Kürkman.

An Ottoman Armenian painter Simon Agopian became a noted practitioner of battle art favoured by the new cultural establishment. He never visited contemporary

battlefronts, but was powerfully impressed and inspired by the war illustrations he saw in European magazines and eventually copied the ones about the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878. It is most likely that Agopian was commissioned to create these images by the director of the Military Museum, Ahmed Muhtar Pasha. Though the Ottomans were defeated in that conflict, Ahmed Muhtar Pasha had earned the title of warrior (*ghazi*) for his command during the campaign, and was even made chief of the general staff at the end of the war in 1878, his fame persisting for decades in military circles. Agopian's images of the war follow the conventional (and by then dated) visual rhetoric of battle art and military pomp: powerful military leaders (Ahmed Muhtar Pasha) on horseback dominate the foreground, enemies are so tiny that they can only be located from their gun smoke, and impassive Ottoman soldiers are arrayed across the terrain of battle in well-equipped and disciplined phalanxes. There is no sense that Agopian was in any way ambivalent about the prosecution of war as anything but a glorious exercise. He was no Ottoman equivalent, for instance, of the Russian war artist Vasilii Vereshchagin, who managed to break the conventions of nineteenth century battle painting with his emphasis on the terrible and sublime spectacle of war, as can be seen in his *Apotheosis of War* (1871), among many other paintings.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ On Vereshchagin, see, Vahan D. Barooshian, *V. V. Vereshchagin: Artist at War* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993). Today, Vereshchagin's *Apotheosis of War* (1871) belongs to the State Tretyakov Gallery.



FIGURE 2.19: Simon Agopian, *Gedikler Battle* (*Gedikler Muharebesi*), 1910, oil on canvas, 164 X 228 cm © Military Museum, Istanbul.

Nevertheless, more modern visual representations of Ottoman military heroism did develop around the cult of Enver Bey, a young major, who was widely declared as the ‘hero of liberty and revolution,’ owing to his important role in the restoration of the constitution in 1908 and in the suppression of the conservative counter-revolution in 1909. Born in 1881 in Istanbul and schooled for an army career, Enver had served as a staff captain in Salonica and became a committed member of the CUP. His prominent role in the 1908 revolution won him a prestigious post in Berlin where he served as military attaché and his fame continued to grow. Enver’s charisma, military bearing, and distinctive waxed Kaiser moustache quickly made him one of the most painted professional soldiers of the era, and his image was reproduced on Istanbul postcards and illustrated magazines. In 1909, Abdülhamid’s court painter Zonaro executed a half-length portrait of the proud young officer in his uniform standing confidently in front of a group of soldiers.



FIGURE 2.20a: Enver Bey, 'Hero of the Revolution', 1908. Postcard © İsa Akbaş. Published in Eldem, *Pride and Privilege*, p. 365.



FIGURE 2.20b: Fausto Zonaro, *Enver Bey*, 1909, oil on canvas, 100 x 75 cm © E. Gocay Collection.

In the same year, at the age of twenty-eight, Enver Bey engaged to Sultan Mehmed V Reşad's niece Naciye Sultan. Now a son-in-law to the Ottoman ruling family, Enver resigned from his post in Berlin in the autumn of 1911 and volunteered for service in Libya during the Italo-Ottoman War (1911-1912), where he fought with distinction, and his charisma was an important factor in winning local tribes to the Ottoman cause. Between 1911 and 1912, he appeared in stirring, patriotic illustrations as a vigorous and handsome Ottoman officer in the midst of heroic actions, such as the ones executed by the Ottoman Armenian artist Stepan Agayan for *Resimli Kitab*.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ A graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul, Stepan Agayan established himself as a distinguished illustrator and worked on various magazines in the early 1910s, including *Resimli Kitab* and the Armenian satirical magazine *Gavroche*. I would like to thank Vazken Khatchig Davidian for drawing my attention to Stepan Agayan's drawings in *Gavroche*. For further information on *Gavroche* and its satirical illustrations, see Anahide Ter Minassian, *Ermeni Kültürü ve Modernleşme: Şehir, Oyun, Mizah, Aile, Dil*, trans. Sosi Dolanoğlu (Istanbul: Aras, 2006), particularly her essay on 'Ermenice Süreli Yayın Gavroş'ta Hiciv Çizimleri, 1908-1920', pp. 67-92.

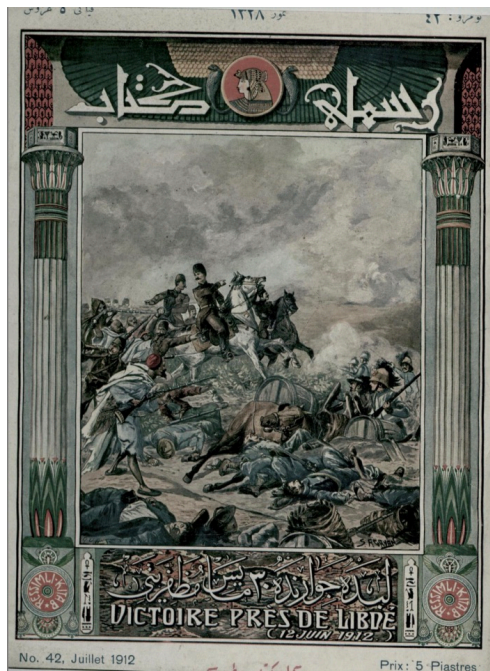


FIGURE 2.21a: Stepan Agayan, *Resimli Kitab*, No: 42, July 1912.



FIGURE 2.21b: Stepan Agayan, *Resimli Kitab*, No: 44, September 1912.

Indeed, Enver's heroism seemed to carry all before it, even in defeat. In January 1913, it was Enver who lead a coup d'état to establish a CUP regime in a doomed attempt to stave off Ottoman defeat in the Balkan Wars (1912-13), and his subsequent bloodless retaking of the historic Ottoman capital of Edirne from retreating Bulgarian forces only added to his legend. Nevertheless, the catastrophic losses of territory and social upheavals of the Balkan wars and the increasing authoritarianism and ethno-nationalism of the CUP regime that followed were heavy blows to Ottoman cultural life, the first casualty of which was the cosmopolitan disposition of the art world.

The Balkan Wars and Propaganda in Ottoman Art

The influence of the Balkan Wars on the intellectual milieu and visual culture was immense, as the 'cosmopolitan' ideology of Ottomanism very much lost ground to an aggressive reassertion of Muslim identity. A key factor in this turn was the fact that, as Richard Hall has remarked, the Balkan Wars was the first time in the twentieth

century that ‘opposing military forces targeted civilians.’¹⁵² The advancing armies of the Balkan League systematically forced hundreds of thousands of Balkan Muslims to flee their ancestral homes to Istanbul and Anatolia, and refugee narratives of burned villages, butchered civilians fuelled humiliation and anger among the population of the remaining Ottoman lands. When civilian populations became targets of warfare, atrocity propaganda was used effectively by both sides. Whilst some European publications were full of news accusing the Ottoman army for violent acts of brutality, Turcophile intellectuals such as Pierre Loti and Claude Farrere raised their voices in defence of the Ottomans. Loti himself published a highly propagandistic piece in Paris in 1913, attempting to show evidence for the Balkan armies’ atrocities committed against Ottoman Muslim populations.¹⁵³ Regarded as a ‘friend of the Turks’, Loti was highly praised for his support in contemporary Ottoman publications.¹⁵⁴

The Balkan conflict was the first time that the educated Ottoman elite responded to a war with civic activism. Journalists, writers, poets, and artists rushed to support the government and its war effort, creating a patriotic culture expressed in an explosion of illustrated pamphlets. Thousands of propaganda leaflets were distributed free to the public, both in the imperial capital and in the periphery. The propaganda focused chiefly on Muslim nationalist feeling, and pamphlets were mostly ‘directed at Muslims and Turks’, with titles such as *To Muslims and Turks* (*Müslümanlar ve Türklere*), *Road to Salvation for Muslims* (*Müslümanlara Mahsus*

¹⁵² Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912-1913: Prelude to the First World War* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 136.

¹⁵³ Pierre Loti, *La Turquie agonisante* (Paris: Callman Levy, 1913).

¹⁵⁴ The Ottoman magazine *Şehbal* almost dedicated an entire issue to Loti and published letters written by many Ottoman intellectuals praising him. See, Orhan Koloğlu, *Büyük Dost Pierre Loti’ye Mektuplar* (Ankara: Pierre Loti Dostları Derneği, 2001).

Kurtulmak Yolu), and *For Muslims (Müslümanlara Mahsus)*.¹⁵⁵ At the same time, the contemporary press employed fully the rhetoric of racial hate against Bulgarians who were seen as ‘monsters’ and condemned for their ‘barbarity and savagery’.¹⁵⁶ Stories of torture, rape, infanticide, and forced conversion to Christianity became a common theme. Propaganda books published between 1912 and 1913, including *Sorrows of Islam: Bulgarian Savageries (Âlâm-ı İslam: Bulgar Vahşetleri)*, *Sorrows of Islam: Rumelia Atrocities and Bulgarian Savageries (Âlâm-ı İslam: Rumeli Mezalimi ve Bulgar Vahşetleri)*, and *The Red Black Book: The Disasters of 1328 (Kırmızı Siyah Kitab: 1328 Fecayi’i)*,¹⁵⁷ all instilled a virulent political rhetoric of revenge among the Ottoman public.¹⁵⁸ One of the least inflammatory images from *The Red Black Book*, which were filled with photographs and illustrations of massacre and atrocity against Muslim civilians, reproduced the following image by the *l’Illustration* correspondent Georges Scott, depicting Christian Bulgarian soldiers inside the Sultan Selim Mosque at Edirne.

¹⁵⁵ Y. Doğan Çetinkaya, ‘Atrocity Propaganda and the Nationalization of the Masses in the Ottoman Empire during the Balkan Wars (1912-13)’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 46 (2014), p. 764.

¹⁵⁶ ‘Rumeli Muhacirin-i İslamiye Cemiyeti’nden’, *Tanin*, 6 October 1912, p. 3; quoted in Çetinkaya, ‘Atrocity Propaganda’, p. 766.

¹⁵⁷ Cengiz Yolcu, *Depiction of the Enemy: Ottoman Propaganda Books in the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913* (MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2014). See, also, Cengiz Yolcu, *Defeat on the Battlefield, Defense in Press: Ottoman Propaganda in the Balkan Wars* (Istanbul: Libra, 2017).

¹⁵⁸ See, also, Haluk Harun Duman, *Balkanlara Veda: Basın ve Edebiyatta Balkan Savaşı (1912-1913)* (Istanbul: Duyap Yayınları, 2005).



FIGURE 2.22: Georges Scott, *Dans les Balkans, 1912-1913: récits et visions de guerre* (Paris: 1913). Reprinted in Ahmed Cevad, *Kırmızı-Siyah Kitap: 1328 Fecayî'i* (Istanbul: 1329) 'A monument to our ancestors' zeal, under the feet of the barbarians: Bulgarians in the honourable Sultan Selim Mosque at Edirne' ('Ecdâdımızın âsâr-ı himmeti, barbarların ayakları altında: Edirne'de Sultân Selîm Camî'-i Şerîfi içinde Bulgarlar')

Perhaps inspired by the stark and grisly images in such books, an Ottoman school textbook from 1913 described the Balkan conflict in typically hyperbolic terms:

Much innocent Muslim and Turkish blood was shed during this period. Women and children, indiscriminately, were cut up and butchered. Villages were burnt and razed. Now, in Rumeli, under every rock and beneath the soil lie thousands of dismembered bodies, with eyes gouged out and stomachs slit.¹⁵⁹

Strong feelings of vengeful hatred were also articulated in the lyrics of popular songs:

¹⁵⁹ Tuncer Baykara, 'Birinci Dünya Savaşı'na Girişin Psikolojik Sebepleri', in *Bildiriler: Dördüncü Askeri Tarih Semineri* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1989), pp. 362-363; quoted in Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914*, pp. 14-15.

Oh innocent Turkish children
Inscribe this date into your hearts
In 1328 [1912]/ Turkish honour was hurt
Oh revenge, ah revenge!
Let me tell you all!
What happened in Rumelia
Dirty hands of Bulgarians
Stabbed mothers with bayonets
Oh revenge, ah revenge!¹⁶⁰

During the Balkan Wars, more than at any previous time, political anxieties fed into the current of Ottoman painting and illustration. Some Ottoman artists, including Ali Sami, Hayri Hayreddin, and Halid, painted atrocities to prove the wickedness of the Bulgarians. All coming from military education background, their images attempted to evoke hatred and rage against the Bulgarian enemy, who is presented as murderer without mercy, even towards a pregnant woman or her baby. Their compositions and captions make a strong distinction between morally culpable Bulgarians and ‘innocent’ Ottoman Muslims in order to demonstrate enemy barbarity. The outrage and focus on the atrocities of war in these images differ sharply from the visual language of military prowess and order in the battle paintings of Chlebowsky, Zonaro, and Agopian.

¹⁶⁰ For the lyrics, see, Mustafa Rona, *20. Yüzyıl Türk Musikisi: Bestekarları ve Besteleri Güftelerile* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1970), p. 93; quoted in Akın, *The Ottoman Home Front during World War I*, p. 191.



FIGURE 2.23a: Hayri Hayreddin depicts a massacre of unarmed civilians. Published in Ahmed Cevad, *Kırmızı-Siyah Kitap: 1328 Fecayi'i* (Istanbul: 1329).



FIGURE 2.23b: Georges Scott depicts the taunting of a hungry crowd with bread in Adrianople. Published in *Alam-ı İslâm, Rumeli Mezalimi ve Bulgar Vahşetleri* (Istanbul: 1329). And *Kırmızı-Siyah Kitap: 1328 Fecayi'i* (Istanbul: 1329)



FIGURE 2.24a: Ali Sami. 'Here! Your son is born!' ('İşte! Bir Oğlun Dünyaya Geldi'), *Şehbal*, No. 85, 1 Teşrin-i Sani 1329 [14 November 1913], p. 1



FIGURE 2.24b: Halid's depiction of atrocities during the Balkan Wars. Published in *Alam-ı İslâm, Rumeli Mezalimi ve Bulgar Vahşetleri* (Istanbul: 1329).

The atrocity propaganda images produced by Ottoman artists were also a response to the centuries-old Christian/European imagination and depiction of brutal

and ‘terrible’ Turks. These visual manifestations were widespread in popular culture; numerous postcards, magazine illustrations, and political cartoons represented Turks as the embodiment of barbarism, ignorance, and lust; pillaging, destroying and raping Christian communities in Greece and the Balkans.¹⁶¹ For instance, in 1877, the British liberal politician and a scholar of modern history at the University of Oxford Edward Augustus Freeman published *The Turks in Europe*. Freeman concluded a lengthy disquisition on what is ‘the’ Turk and what he had done to Europe:

We have seen what the Turk in Europe is, what he has done in Europe, and what must be done with him. He came in as an alien and barbarian, encamped on the soil of Europe [...] His rule [...] has been the rule of cruelty, faithlessness, and brutal lust; it has not been government, but organized brigandage. His rule cannot be reformed. While all other nations get better and better, the Turk gets worse and worse.¹⁶²

As such, the images featured in Ottoman popular culture during the Balkan Wars not only served to bemoan the atrocities visited upon Ottoman Muslims, but also to reverse the image of Turks as being ‘alien and barbarian’, projecting the same barbarism onto the Bulgarian enemy.

Neither were patriotic reactions to the Balkan Wars confined to popular or print culture. In 1912, Prince Abdülmecid Efendi started a large oil-on-canvas painting, which was (and remained) as his most political work. Dealing with the Balkan Wars in allegorical terms, Abdülmecid Efendi portrayed himself with two children sitting around a table, where the map, pointed out by the boy (Abdülmecid’s son Ömer Faruk), was given a symbolic meaning as his finger sets still on Balkan countries; attached to the painting was also a short verse penned by the Prince himself: ‘forget who caused your personal misfortune, but do not forgive the affront to the motherland.’ Eventually titled *The Lesson in History* (*La leçon d’histoire*)—a

¹⁶¹ See, Roni Margulies, *Terrible Turk: Batı’nın Gördüğü ‘Türk’* (Istanbul: Everest, 2016).

¹⁶² Edward A. Freeman, *The Turks in Europe* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1877), pp. 97-98.

title Pierre Loti chose for the Prince over letter exchanges—the painting managed to make its way to the prestigious 1914 Salon of the *Société des Artistes Français* in Paris. In order to influence the exhibition committee, Loti was able to exert the power of his friend, the newly appointed president of France, Raymond Poincaré over the ‘formidable jury’, and Prince Abdülmecid Efendi’s political painting was exhibited at the Grand Palais of Champs-Élysées in the spring of 1914.¹⁶³



FIGURE 2.25: Prince Abdülmecid Efendi, *The Lesson in History* (*La leçon d'histoire*), 1912, oil on canvas, 164 X 120 cm © Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi

The CUP seizure of power in January 1913, ostensibly in response to the Porte’s handling of the Balkan disasters, marked the beginning of the five-year ‘dictatorial triumvirate’ of Enver, Talat, and Cemal Pashas until the end of the First World War. The devastating psychological effect of the loss of almost all Ottoman territories in the Balkans at the end of the Balkan Wars and the confused political situation gave ethno-nationalist and anti-non Muslim elements within the CUP an

¹⁶³ The letters exchanged between Prince Abdülmecid Efendi and Pierre Loti in early 1914 shed light on this story. For Pierre Loti’s letter to Abdülmecid Efendi, regarding this specific exhibition, see Anonymous, ‘Abdülmecid Efendi’ye Mektuplar’, *Hayat Tarih Mecmuası* No: 10 (Kasım 1965), pp. 10-15; for Abdülmecid’s letter to Pierre Loti, see, Koloğlu, *Büyük Dost Pierre Loti’ye Mektuplar*, p. 22. For the reproduction of Prince Abdülmecid Efendi’s work in the French catalogue see, *1914 Société des artistes français: Catalogue illustré du salon, peinture et sculpture* (Paris, 1914), p. 180.

opportunity to execute a deep and radical Turkification policy.¹⁶⁴ Turkish nationalism was adopted as the committee's official ideology at its 1913 conference, which was swiftly followed by the 1914 'National Economy' (*iktisadiye-i milliye*) programme that forced hundred thousands of non-Muslim traders and businessmen to leave the empire.¹⁶⁵ The clash of perceptions, beliefs, and values regarding civilisation, modernisation, Ottomanism, and nationalism, was now transmuted from the domain of intellectual debate to real political policy, determining the future of the empire and the art world between 1914 and 1918.

Concluding Remarks

In the cultural sphere, the authoritarian CUP regime shattered the hopes of many Ottoman liberals, raised so high by the atmosphere of freedom from Hamidian restrictions after 1908, and severely restricted cultural initiatives that did not immediately further the aims of the CUP state. Between the 1913 coup and 1914, social and cultural organisations were severely restricted, and many were dissolved. The press encountered new restrictions, and there was a dramatic drop in the number of periodicals from around three hundred in 1909 to tens by the end of 1914.¹⁶⁶ On the eve of the First World War, Ottoman artists found themselves at the threshold of major changes: for some, as one nationalist writer wrote in 1915, the patriotic and nationalistic turn in visual culture meant that 'the era which will understand them

¹⁶⁴ Toprak, 'Cihan Harbi'nin Provası Balkan Harbi', pp. 44-51.

¹⁶⁵ '1913 (1329) Kongresinde Kabul Edilen Siyasal Program' in Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler: İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi*, Vol. 1 (İstanbul: İletişim, 2015 [1952]), pp. 140-145. For the most comprehensive study on the 'national economy' programme, see Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de 'Milli İktisat', 1908-1918* (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1982).

¹⁶⁶ Orhan Koloğlu, *Aydınlarımızın Bunalım Yılı 1918: Zafer-i Nihai'den Tam Teslimiyete* (İstanbul: Boyut, 2000), p. 59. According to Orhan Koloğlu, between 1908 and 1909 and in Istanbul only, three hundred and fifty three newspapers and journals were published. In 1910, the number of the newspapers and journals was three hundred ten, in 1911 one hundred and twenty four, in 1912 forty-five, in 1913 ninety-two, and in early 1914, seventy-five. Orhan Koloğlu, 'Osmanlı Basını: İçeriği ve Rejimi', *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Vol: 1 (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1983), p. 90. See, also, Orhan Koloğlu, 'The Printing Press and Journalism in the Ottoman State', *Boğaziçi Journal: Review of Social, Economic and Administrative Studies*, Vol. 18, No: 1-2 (2004), pp. 27-33.

[had] arrived'¹⁶⁷; but for others, the first months and years of the war would mean an end to the dream of acceptance by the Parisian art world, exclusion from an increasingly patriotic and nationalistic Ottoman art market, and, for many non-Muslim artists and Ottoman Armenian artists in particular, deportation, exile, and even death. And yet, as these tragedies unfolded across the wartime Ottoman social landscape, many of the deeper cultural processes of professionalization and institutionalization of the arts and the drive for women's equality, already becoming manifest in the nineteenth century in the Hamidian educational reforms, would realize their fuller potential as a result of the projection of an authoritarian, modernising state agenda into the Ottoman civil and cultural spheres.

¹⁶⁷ Hamdullah Suphi, 'Türklükte Nefis Sanatlar: Son Resim Sergisi,' *Türk Yurdu*, 89, 30 Temmuz 1331 [12 August 1915] in Şefkatlı (ed), *Türk Yurdu* Vol. 4, p. 195.

CHAPTER III

MILITARISATION AND MOBILISATION OF THE ART WORLD, 1914-1915

On the eve of the First World War, many saw the Ottoman Empire as the ‘sick man of Europe’, wracked by political torments, torn apart by nationalist struggles, strategic losses, and sinking under its own weight due to the long period of defeats and catastrophes it experienced at the turn of the century. Having lost large territories and populations in both the Italo-Ottoman War (1911-1912) and the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), and with insufficient infrastructure and meagre resources, many within the ailing empire felt that it was in no way prepared to fight another major war which would pit it against the Great Powers of Britain, France, and, once again, Russia. Others saw the advent of what one might call the ‘state of war’ as an opportunity to realize political ambitions and far-reaching social reforms; if the right policies were found, the Ottoman world might be transformed into a culturally homogenous and modern sovereign state with powerful allies. Having largely eliminated its leading rivals for power, the CUP was in complete control of the political situation. Since the 30 January 1913 military coup d’état, the state had been governed by a ‘dictatorial triumvirate’ of Enver, Talat and Cemal Pashas. With such authority to hand, how could its bold and radical actions fail to win for the country a more ‘modern’ and ‘independent’ future?

The outbreak of the war created both new prologues and epilogues for the Ottoman art world. The CUP’s cultural policy—modernisation and nationalisation—remained at the heart of the state’s wartime policies, and the war also greatly increased state intervention in cultural life. In February 1915, the war correspondent

for the Associated Press of America George Abel Schreiner had an audience with Said Halim Pasha, who explained the reasons why the Ottoman Empire went to war in following terms:

The assertion made by the Entente press and governments that we went to war for the purpose of helping the Germans is absurd [...] It is quite true that the Entente governments offered us a guarantee that for thirty years the integrity of the Ottoman Empire would be respected [...] A protected Turkey means a dependent Turkey. We believe that we ought to be independent—more independent than we have been in the past [...] The Young Turks have been in power since the revolution. We have been running the state for five years now. That is not long. I wish that the world would be reasonable enough to see that we cannot make over the empire in five years. That will take decades [...] All we need is time and the recognition on the part of others that we are really doing our best to make a modern state of the Ottoman Empire.¹

Though, the authoritarian regime was controlled by the military and under Enver, Talat and Cemal Pashas, and to a certain extent, under the Grand Vizier Said Halim Pasha, its policies received solid support from civilian groups in and outside the government bureaucracy.² Regarding this taste for modernization in the state, some cultural commentators believed that the war would be good for the arts. Writing for the *Türk Yurdu* (Turkish Hearth) magazine, a mouthpiece of Turkist ideas,³ the critic Hamdullah Suphi dreamed of a categorical break with the past and heralded an era of universal recognition for Ottoman painting:

We are obliged to say that today and tomorrow, we are, and will be, proud of these dignified artists. The era which will understand them has arrived. Today, may [these artists] be sure that the neglect that has

¹ George Abel Schreiner, *From Berlin to Bagdad: Behind the Scenes in the Near East* (New York:

² Dankwart A. Rustow, 'The Politics of the Near East', in Gabriel A. Almond and James S. Coleman (eds.), *The Politics of the Developing Areas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 439.

³ On the Turkish Hearth, see Füsün Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Geçişte Türk Milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları 1912–1931* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1997).

surrounded them thus far will cede place to universal tribute and affection.⁴

But was war good for the Ottoman art world? Was Ottoman painting able to, as Hamdullah Suphi asked rhetorically in the same article, ‘realise the hopes placed in it?’ This chapter will focus on the immediate effect of the war on Ottoman visual culture, as well as the political, practical, and social difficulties it precipitated for Ottoman painters. It will address three major issues that characterized the art world in the first year of the war: the mobilisation of Ottoman Muslim artists as soldiers and as propagandists for the war cause; the dialectic between national development and repression evident in state policies towards foreign, women and non-Muslim artists and aesthetic debate on the home front; and, the drive to represent the Ottoman Empire as a ‘civilised’ belligerent to its enemies and its allies alike in Ottoman cultural policy.

Ottoman Painters Mobilised

Adieu, Paris...

In the summer before the outbreak of the First World War, several young Muslim Ottoman artists, among them talents like Namık İsmail, Çallı İbrahim, Hikmet, and Feyhaman, were continuing their long-awaited art training at the prestigious École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Soon, however, the July Crisis prompted the other European powers to cascade onto a war footing. On 2 August, the day after the British government seized two dreadnoughts ordered by the Ottomans, the Grand Vizier Said Halim Pasha signed a secret treaty with the German ambassador in Istanbul, Baron

⁴ Hamdullah Suphi, ‘Türklükte Nefis Sanatlar: Son Resim Sergisi’, *Türk Yurdu* No: 89, 30 Temmuz 1331 [12 August 1915] in *Türk Yurdu*, Murat Şefkatli ed. Vol. 4 (Ankara: Tütibay Yayınları, 1998), p. 195.

von Wangenheim.⁵ On the eve of signing the secret treaty with Germany, the Minister of War Enver Pasha called for a general mobilisation, conscripting all eligible men aged from 20 to 45 for military service.⁶ After the defeats experienced in the Balkan Wars, the Ottoman state required the mobilisation of the entire Ottoman population for the protection of the empire. In May 1914, president of the chamber of deputies proclaimed the moment as ‘the moment of awakening’ (*hareket-i intibahiye*);⁷ a process that saw the empire engaging ‘in a final, life-or-death struggle’.⁸ In August 1914, twenty-four-year-old Namık İsmail had had no choice but to return to the empire to serve as a reserve officer for the Ottoman army; had he not reported to the military within the required time, the Military Penal Law required severe punishments, including the death penalty.⁹ As Hikmet would later recall, some of the young artists now found themselves undertaking a troublesome journey to Russia by boat, in the hope that they would eventually reach Istanbul.¹⁰ Novelist Halid Ziya also had to leave Paris behind that summer, as the political situation deteriorated, and the

⁵ Ernest Jackh, *The Rising Crescent: Turkey Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (New York: Farar and Rinehar Inc. 1944), pp. 16-17. Though Said Halim Pasha signed the alliance treaty, most cabinet ministers including himself opposed the immediate entry to the war. See, Ulrich Trumpener, *Germany and the Ottoman Empire, 1914-1918* (New York: Caravan Books, 1989), p. 45.

⁶ Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans*, p. 41.

⁷ ‘Meclis-i Mebusan Reisinin Nutku’, *Tanin*, 20 May 1914; quoted in Aksakal, *Ottoman Road to War in 1914*, p. 19.

⁸ Aksakal, *Ottoman Road to War*, p. 19.

⁹ According to the Military Penal Law (Askeri Ceza Kanunname-i Hümayunu), if eligible men who, without a valid excuse (*mazaret-i sahihe*), did not show up at recruitment offices within ten days of receiving the order were subject to death penalty. ‘Askeri Ceza Kanunu’na Müzeyyel Kanun-u Muvakkat’, *Düstur*, İkinci Tertip, Vol. 6, 14 Ramazan 1332 [6 August 1914], pp. 981-982; Akın, *Ottoman Home Front during World War I*, pp. 23-43. Nicholas Z. Ajay Jr., *Mount Lebanon and the Wilayah of Beirut, 1914-1918: The War Years* (PhD Thesis, Georgetown University, 1972), p. 157; The category of reserve officer was only open to graduates of higher education and of religious schools (*medreses*). ‘İhtiyat Zabiti Kanunu’, *İkdam*, 27 Temmuz 1330 [9 August 1914]. See also Beşikçi, *Ottoman Mobilization*, pp. 150-156.

¹⁰ Okşan Atasoy’s interview with Hikmet Onat in 1976; cited in Gül İrepoğlu, *Feyhaman* (Istanbul: Tifdruk Matbaacılık Sanayii, 1986), p. 33.

Ottoman embassy advised its citizens to return home.¹¹ For the next three months, the Ottoman Empire maintained an armed neutrality, unwilling to enter an expensive and already enormously destructive Europe-wide war. But when the German warships the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, already renamed *Yavuz* and *Midilli* in a public relations coup for the CUP government, bombarded several Russian Black Sea ports on 29 October 1914 under the German admiral Wilhelm Souchon in Ottoman uniform, it marked the beginning of a yet another war for the Ottomans. For the Francophiles of the art world, this also meant the end of easy passage to France for the foreseeable future. When Halid Ziya finally reached home after a difficult journey via Italy by train and boat, he found himself repeatedly lamenting the loss: ‘Oh! But what might have been, had we stayed out of this war!’¹²

To Ottoman painters and the Ottoman intelligentsia more broadly, the conflict raised a cultural dilemma. It was agonising suddenly fighting the French. Their attitude to what Jay Winter has called a *Kulturkampf* over the arts was ambivalent.¹³ The declaration of war in Europe in August, whilst the Ottoman Empire remained neutral, generated apprehensive fear in cultural circles. One illustrator artist for the daily *Tasvir-i Efkar*, most likely Ali Cemal, drew a sketch depicting an angel of death in a military helmet, menacing traditional agriculture, international trade, and modern industry. The civilian population, women and men alike, and the symbols of technological development, including a lone plane, are all about to be destroyed by the ominous skeleton, which descends on ‘civilisation’ with his scythe framed by

¹¹ Halid Ziya Uşaklıgil, *Saray ve Ötesi: Anılar* (Istanbul: Özgür, 2012 [2003]); particularly the section on the First World War, p. 685.

¹² Uşaklıgil, *Saray ve Ötesi*, p. 703.

¹³ Jay Winter, ‘Popular Culture in Wartime Britain’, in Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites (eds.), *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainment, and Propaganda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 345.

crossed cannons. The caption reflects the artist's trepidation, to say the least: 'The most terrifying event in human history; the lives that will be lost, the fruits of prosperity and civilisation that will be destroyed in the general war that must, by now, be considered to have definitely commenced.'¹⁴



FIGURE 3.1: General State of War has broken out in Europe ('*Avrupa Harb-i Umumisi Başladı*'), *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 24 Temmuz 1330 [6 August 1914].

For the Ottoman cultural elite, the Paris that had been the glittering epicentre of a 'civilisation' and art they had all ardently admired (Chapter II) was now threatened with destruction by its German enemy. Soon the same newspaper featured another illustration, depicting the destruction of Paris by German zeppelins.

¹⁴ 'Avrupa harb-i umumisi başladı; Almanya, Rusya ve Fransa'ya ilan-ı harb ediyor—İngiltere ve Belçika, Almanya'ya ilan-ı harb ediyor—Avusturya, Sırbistan ve Karadağ ile harbe devam ediyor; Tarih-i alemin en dehşetaver vakası; Artık suret-i katiyyede başlamış addedilmesi lazım gelen harb-i umumide telef olup gidecek canlar, mahv olacak asar-ı umran ve medeniyet'. *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 24 Temmuz 1330 [6 August 1914], p. 1.

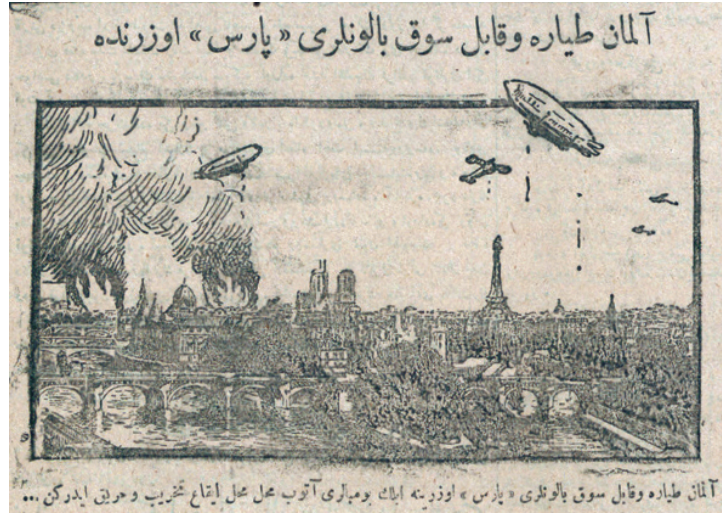


FIGURE 3.2: German planes and zeppelins above Paris (*Alman tayyare ve kabil-i sevk balonları 'Paris' üzerinde*), *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 25 Ağustos 1330 [7 September 1914]

Generalisations about the Ottoman public's attitude towards the war are perhaps not easy to make, but Ottoman painters' attachment to Paris was more than a romantic one. As we saw in Chapter II, the Academy of Fine Arts, from where most of Ottoman artists graduated, had been modelled after the École des Beaux Arts in Paris, and the Academy's Grand Prix de Rome was established so that talented art students could continue their education in Paris. Furthermore, the artistic relationship between Istanbul and Paris was long-established, developing throughout the course of the nineteenth century. Participation in Paris Salon exhibitions was seen as an indicator of a successful art career for Ottoman artists. The war, however, would not only mark the end of the famous Salon exhibitions at the Grand Palais of the Champs-Élysées, but the very building itself soon began to serve as a military hospital. News of this and the threat of destruction in Paris must have come as a shock to many Ottoman artists.

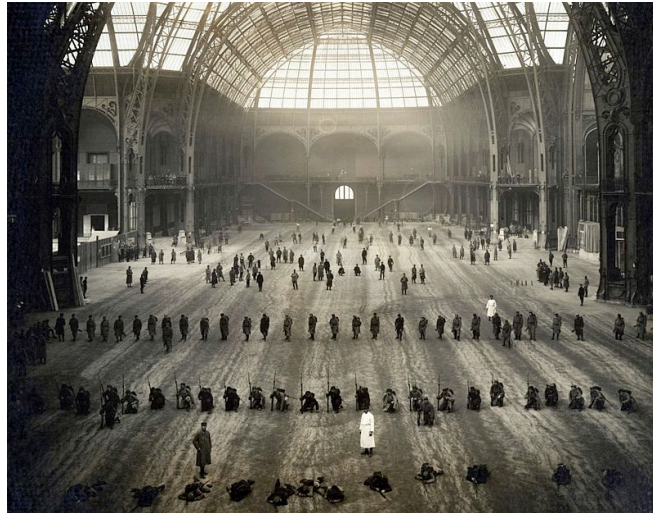


FIGURE 3.3: The Grand Palais serving as a military hospital during the First World War: ‘The Great Nave: Wounded Soldiers Performing Arms Drill at the End of Their Medical Treatment’ (*La Grande Nef / Le maniement des armes des blessés en fin de traitement*) © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

For the Ottoman Francophile intelligentsia and the young artists recalled from Paris, the war meant artistic rupture and a lost opportunity to study and create in the centre of European civilisation. Yet for artists better integrated with the new patriotic and militaristic agenda of the Ottoman state, the war would provide the opportunity to develop a new visual language to popularize the conflict.

Visual Propaganda: The CUP State and Ottoman Civil Society as Patrons

In the lead up to war, the ruling CUP and the patriotic associations used mass visual media, such as newspaper illustrations, posters, and postcards, to produce propaganda and mobilise the masses. The Ottoman state held visual culture to be particularly valuable for communicating and propagandizing its war aims with immediacy and bypassing of the low Ottoman literacy rate, probably around 10 per cent in 1914.¹⁵

¹⁵ There seems to be no precise data concerning literacy rates during the late Ottoman period. Yet due to the rise of privately founded schools and a state-sponsored educational system, by the end of the nineteenth century, the literacy rate among Muslims had increased from between 2-3 to 15 per cent. Demographic changes as a result of the Balkan Wars in 1912-1913 likely reduced this. Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 167-8.

Ottoman painters had different motives to join the patriotic culture, benefiting from new public space for war-related works, which made their art available to a wide audience outside conventional art institutions. As the distance between the mass media and the art world became less apparent, artists like Hüseyin Hüsnü, Mehmed Ruhi, Ali Cemal, and İsmail Hakkı could produce and sell their work as part of the new propagation of patriotic culture.

Propaganda was essential on the home front not only as a means of mobilisation but also as a technique of social control. When the Ottoman Empire entered the war, not all people were convinced of its wisdom or remained committed to its cause. Many were shocked and confused, and even reacted with political protest. In December 1914, women in the eastern city of Erzurum gathered on the streets to protest the war. The American newspaper *New-York Tribune* wrote of the event with the following terms: ‘at Erzerum, women threw stones and rioted for several hours, and threatened by guards rent their garments and paraded the streets in a state of almost nudity, thus compelling the guards to retire in obedience to Islamic law. They forced the Vali to send a telegram to Constantinople protesting against the war.’¹⁶ Protests against wartime conditions did continue throughout the war. With the increase in food prices and the visibility of wounded soldiers in Istanbul, a large group, numbering thousands, ‘pillaged the principal shops and hotels’ in May 1915. The headline of the *New-York Tribune* announced it as ‘Anti-German Riots in Constantinople’.¹⁷ These protests received no coverage in the Ottoman press due to the strict censorship regulations.

¹⁶ ‘Turkish Women Denounce War’, *New-York Tribune*, 14 December 1914, p. 2.

¹⁷ ‘Anti-German Riots in Constantinople’, *New-York Tribune*, 13 May 1915, p. 1.

For the ruling CUP, as Talat Pasha later wrote in his memoirs, to create ‘national feeling and have this feeling take root in the national soul’ was a ‘right and legitimate’ goal in the First World War.¹⁸ The Ottoman state was so concerned about building up an efficient propaganda campaign that it imposed restrictions on the press and centralised propaganda apparatus for most of the war. As such visual propaganda was mostly top-down, centralised under either government control or under semi-official patriotic associations. This was very different to a country like Britain where, as Jay Winter has emphasized, propaganda was dominated ‘from below’ in the existence of a ‘strong and diverse’ civil society.¹⁹ Between 1914 and 1918, many advertisements were placed in the Ottoman press to encourage the production of images and text that could be used for propaganda purposes, from competitions to compose soldiers’ songs which would ‘excite and greet the national feeling,’²⁰ to the invitations of intellectuals to the battlefield in order to ‘immortalize the heroic campaign.’²¹ One major aim was to encourage engagement with patriotic public culture by artists, who were frequently accused during the war years of ‘remaining silent about historical events’ since the Italo-Ottoman War.²²

Yet civil society did not wither away by any means in the Ottoman Empire between 1914 and 1918; it rather continued to mobilise the public culture vis-à-vis semi-official patriotic associations, which moulded ‘the dispositions of the “political

¹⁸ Talat Paşa, *Hatıralarım ve Müdafaa* (Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, [1921] 2006), p. 42.

¹⁹ Jay Winter, ‘Popular Culture in Wartime Britain’, in Roshwald and Stites (eds.), *European Culture in the Great War*, p. 330.

²⁰ ‘Asker Şarkıları’, *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 2 Haziran 1330 [15 June 1914], p. 3; Ömer Çakır, *Türk Şiirinde Çanakkale Muharebeleri* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2004), p. 38.

²¹ *İkdam*, 11 July 1915, p. 1.

²² Anonymous, ‘Harb Edebiyatı’, *Tanin*, 1 Ağustos 1332 [14 August 1916], p. 1; Çakır, *Türk Şiirinde Çanakkale Muharebeleri*, p. 39. Such criticism directed to artists neither started nor ended in 1916. Examples can be found from various articles to provide an overview of contemporary dissatisfaction with Ottoman artists attitude towards the war cause, and I would argue that, by 1917, this becomes almost an journalistic cliché.

public sphere”²³ along with the ideological premises of the Ottoman state and its war cause. Such a view counters Jürgen Habermas’ model of the circulation of power, which is based on a dichotomy of civil society versus the authoritarian state.²⁴ Indeed, Ottoman civil society never openly opposed the central state, let alone during the war years. But its existence and strength was demonstrated, as Nadir Özbek has put it, not through opposition to authoritarianism but by ‘a dynamic political sphere.’²⁵ This was composed of the Ottoman press and the semi-official patriotic associations, and, with the support of the state, sought to mobilize Ottoman public feeling for the war cause.

Two most significant patriotic associations during the war years were the Navy League (*Donanma-yı Osmani Muavenet-i Milliye Cemiyeti*) and the National Defence League (*Müdafaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti*). Both were founded in the pre-war years and used their political bonds with the ruling CUP to act as gatekeepers of cultural mobilisation and artistic production between 1914 and 1918. While membership of the Navy League, founded in 1909, was open to anyone, regardless of ethnic or religious identity, political inclinations were considered a significant factor, requiring, as Mehmet Beşikçi has put it, potential members to demonstrate ‘approval of the CUP’s nationalist perspective in general and its naval armament policies in particular.’²⁶ Before the outbreak of the war, the Navy League had collected donations

²³ Nadir Özbek, ‘Defining the Public Sphere during the Late Ottoman Empire: War, Mass Mobilization and the Young Turk Regime (1908-1918)’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 5 (September 2007), p. 795. Nadir Özbek, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Sosyal Devlet: Siyaset, İktidar ve Meşrutiyyet, 1876-1914* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002).

²⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1974).

²⁵ Özbek, ‘Defining the Public Sphere during the Late Ottoman Empire’, p. 807.

²⁶ Beşikçi, *Ottoman Mobilization*, p. 45. Indeed, the Ottoman Greek Dr. Petraki Papadopoulos was one of the founders of the Navy League.

from the public and organised social events to raise funds for the Ottoman navy.²⁷ In March 1910, the League began publishing its monthly-illustrated journal, *Donanma Mecmuası*;²⁸ by June that year, the number of its members reached 36,000 only within Istanbul.²⁹ From 1911 onwards, the main aim of the League was to raise money to the building of the two dreadnoughts, the *Reşadiye* and the *Sultan Osman*, ordered to the Armstrong-Vickers Company in the British Empire. The National Defence League, founded in 1913 and active until 1919, played an active role not only in recruiting volunteers for the armed forces but also in mobilising visual culture for the war cause.³⁰

When, in early August 1914, the *Reşadiye* and *Sultan Osman* were confiscated by the British without return of payment, the Navy League proclaimed in its journal that it ‘caused extreme grief and sadness for our association.’³¹ The confiscation shocked the donors, but it also provided the CUP and the Navy League with a golden opportunity to exploit it as war propaganda.³² The greatest beneficiary of the artistic support by the Navy League was undoubtedly the illustrator Hüseyin Hüsnü. His fame was initially due to his 1914 illustration, depicting the two German dreadnoughts

²⁷ For the Ottoman Navy League, see Mehmet Beşikçi, ‘The Organized Mobilization of Popular Sentiments: The Ottoman Navy League, 1909-1919’ (MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 1999). See, also, Selahittin Özçelik, *Donanma-yı Osmani Muavenet-i Milliye Cemiyeti* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2000).

²⁸ For the Navy Journal and its visual propaganda during the First World War, see, Süleyman Emre Sunu, *The Great War and the Visual Mobilization of the Ottoman Public Sphere: The Case of ‘Donanma’ Journal* (MA Thesis, Sabancı University, 2007).

²⁹ Özçelik, *Donanma Cemiyeti*, p. 134.

³⁰ For the National Defence League, see, Nazım H. Polat, *Müdafaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1991).

³¹ ‘Muhterem Millete’, *Donanma*, no. 55, 28 Temmuz 1339 [10 August 1914], p. 98; quoted in Beşikçi, *Ottoman Mobilization*, p. 49.

³² Hew Strachan, *The First World War* (London: Pocket Books, 2006), p. 105.

welcomed by the Ottomans. The illustrations remained as the cover of the journal *Donanma Mecmuası* for a long time during the course of the war.³³

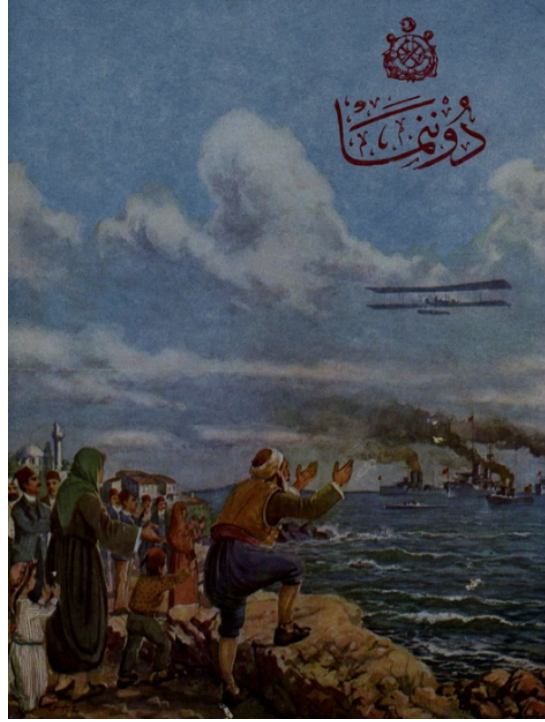


FIGURE 3.4: Hüseyin Hüsnü's illustration, front cover of the *Donanma Mecmuası* No. 59, 1 Eylül 1330 [14 September 1914].

Born in Istanbul in 1880, Hüseyin Hüsnü was a graduate of the Heybeliada Navy College (*Heybeliada Bahriye Mektebi*). After graduation from the College in 1900 as a lieutenant (*üstegmen muadili*), he continued his education at the Academy of Fine Arts. Also the first cousin of Kazım Karabekir, a staff officer who later became the Chief of Intelligence at the Office of the General Staff during the First World War, Hüseyin Hüsnü involved in the establishment of the Military Museum

³³ Starting from the fifty-ninth issue, Hüseyin Hüsnü's drawings were featured on the cover page of the *Donanma Mecmuası* around forty-five times. For the first appearance of his work: *Donanma Mecmuası*, No. 59, 1 Eylül 1330 [14 September 1914].

and worked as a painter in the Naval Museum and later at the Printing Office of the Navy (*Deniz Matbaası*).³⁴ His secure position in the military cultural establishment led to his early involvement with the emerging commercial patriotic culture, supporting the Ottoman state's war aims with depictions of common people welcoming the German dreadnoughts or, as in the watercolour below, of ordinary Ottoman soldiers as stylised heroic characters, pointing their guns at the outnumbered enemy.



FIGURE 3.5: Hüseyin Hüsnü, *Donanma Mecmuası*, Issue: 122, 17 Kanun-i Evvel 1331 [30 December 1915]

Just before general mobilisation was declared, official posters were commissioned by artists so as to announce the recruitment. With the declaration of

³⁴ Hüseyin Hüsnü wrote his memoirs in the Arabic-based Ottoman alphabet, though he was writing much later after the adoption of the Latin alphabet in 1928. The original text, today, belongs to the collection of the Navy Museum. In 2005, his memoirs appeared in Latin alphabet. Müge Kılıçkaya (ed.), *Bahriye Ressamı Hüsnü Tengüz'ün Hatıraları: Sanat Hayatım* (Istanbul: Deniz Basımevi Müdürlüğü, 2005). For a short introduction about Hüseyin Hüsnü's life, see, also, Nüzhet İslimyeli, *Asker Ressamlar ve Ekoller* (Ankara: Doğu Matbaası, 1965), p. 81. *Osmanlı Donanmasının Seyir Defteri: Gemiler, Efsaneler, Denizciler/The Logbook of the Ottoman Navy: Ships, Legends, Sailors* (Istanbul: Pera Museum, 2009), p. 225.

general mobilisation on 2 August 1914, these were pasted up on walls of mosques, government buildings, schools, and coffee houses across the empire.³⁵ War posters, textual or pictorial, were seen instrumental in consolidating ties of solidarity between the state and its citizens. The posters were not signed and the artist(s) remained anonymous.



FIGURE 3.6a: Mobilisation poster, 1914. Courtesy of Haluk Oral. Published in Oral, *Arıburnu* 1915, p. 4.



FIGURE 3.6b: Ottomans looking at a mobilisation poster hung on a building. *Donanma Mecmuası*, No: 56, 3 Ağustos 1330 [17 August 1914] p. 125.

One of the posters was blood red, with Sultan Mehmed Reshad's *tughra* on the very top and with simple images of a cannon, gun, sword, and two green Islamic flags. The words, running along the bottom, read: 'Mobilisation is in effect. Soldiers to Arms' ('*Seferbelik Var. Asker Olanlar Silah Altına*'). Another features a close-up

³⁵ Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 220; Akın, *Ottoman Home Front during World War I*, p. 21; Yiğit Akın, 'Seferberlik: Building up the Ottoman Home Front', in Hans-Lukas Kieser, Kerem Öktem, Maurus Reinkowski (eds.), *World War I and the End of the Ottomans: From Balkan Wars to the Armenian Genocide* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), pp. 56-72.

of a soldier with a trumpet in his left hand and the red Ottoman flag on his right, proclaiming the same message. The scenery in the background is peaceful, almost bucolic: on the left, horses graze in the fields; on the right, in their uniforms, are soldiers occupied around their tents; behind, is the sea in the distance, with battleships floating like pleasure boats upon the blue waters. The enemy is nowhere to be seen, but the bright landscape invites the viewer into a pastoral scene, as if war was nothing but a countryside adventure.

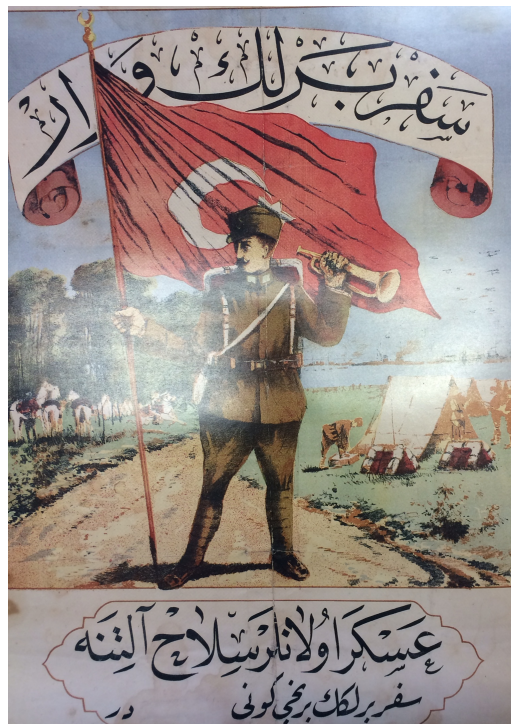


FIGURE 3.7: Mobilisation Poster. Courtesy of Haluk Oral. Published in Oral, *Arıburnu* 1915, p. 4

On the eve of the First World War, the Ottoman state's political and military strategy was dominated by, as Mustafa Aksakal has put it, a 'modernizing ideology', which, meant 'the establishment of a sovereign, economically and politically

independent state that enjoyed full membership in the international state system.³⁶ On 9 September 1914, the CUP government abrogated the capitulations, declaring the economic independence from the European powers. The day was declared a national holiday and the news provoked widespread public celebrations in various cities. The celebrations also received wide coverage in the media.



FIGURE 3.8a: Public celebrations for the abolishment of capitulations, *Servet-i Fünun*, No. 1215, 4 Eylül 1330 [17 September 1914], p. 288.

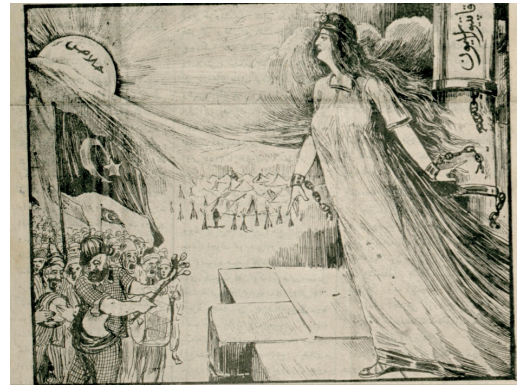


FIGURE 3.8b: Illustration celebrating the abolishment of capitulations. *Karagöz*, no.660, 30 Ağustos 1330 [12 September 1914], p. 1

From the Ottoman entry into the war in October, a strongly patriotic culture prevailed in public in the first year of the war; the state and the nationalist opinion makers aimed to mobilise the Ottoman public to believe in fighting a ‘just and holy war.’³⁷ On 14 November 1914, Sultan Mehmed V. Reşad proclaimed a Jihad (holy war), followed by a *fatwa* (religious decree) from the *Şeyhülislam*, the highest religious authority, and then a proclamation by the sultan and the War Minister Enver Pasha to the Ottoman army. The idea was to make the Muslim population to believe

³⁶ Aksakal, *Ottoman Road to War in 1914*, p. 4.

³⁷ Among various contemporary articles, see for example, S. M. Tevfik, ‘Harb-i Umumi ve İslam Alemi’, *Sebilü’r-Reşad*, No. 309, 20 Ağustos 1330 [2 September 1914], pp. 393-395; Ağaoğlu Ahmed, ‘Türkiye’nin ve İslam Aleminin Kurtuluşu,’ *Harb Mecmuası*, No: 1, Teşrin-i Sani 1331 [December 1915], pp. 7-9. Akın, *Ottoman Home Front during World War I*, p. 192; Beşikçi, *Ottoman Mobilization*, pp. 90-99.

that both the Islamic state, i.e., the Ottoman Empire, and Muslims in general ‘had come under unprovoked attack from Russia, France, and Britain’.³⁸ The declaration of Jihad provoked a certain section of the population to gather in front of the Fatih Mosque, where the fatwa had been read, as well as in front of the German and Austrian embassies, along with a procession in Istanbul streets.³⁹ Soon pamphlets were published, describing ‘military service and joining the war as a binding religious duty (*farz-ı ayn*).’⁴⁰

The National Defence League’s commissions during this period included Mehmed Ruhi’s remarkable postcard series.⁴¹ Born in Istanbul, Mehmed Ruhi was enrolled at the Navy Academy and graduated as a marine engineer in 1908. Meanwhile, he also received an art education at the Academy of Fine Arts and around 1909, was sent to Paris with the Ministry of Education scholarship to study at the École des Beaux-Arts. Having been promoted to the rank of lieutenant, he resigned from the army in 1909. Mehmed Ruhi was a versatile image-maker and a fine figurative artist. He was capable of both subtle effects of representational accuracy, created with aesthetic and creative insight, and a simplistic style free from mannerism. Different from most other Ottoman painters at this time, he lacked a signature style; his hallmark was a kind of a flexible versatility that fit well with the simple artistic forms of the war’s public culture. His postcards evoke something of a festive atmosphere around mobilisation, during which local officials were encouraged to

³⁸ Erik J. Zürcher, ‘Introduction’, in Erik J. Zürcher (ed.), *Jihad and Islam in World War I: Studies on the Ottoman Jihad on the Centenary of Snouck Hurgronje’s ‘Holy War Made in Germany’* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2016), p. 14.

³⁹ Gottfried Hagen, ‘German Heralds of Holy War: Orientalists and Applied Oriental Studies’, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol: 24, No: 2 (2004), p. 145.

⁴⁰ Beşikçi, *Ottoman Mobilization*, p. 74.

⁴¹ Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu, *Ressam Mehmet Ruhi Bey’in ‘Seferberlik Kartpostalları’* (Istanbul: Parsan Makina, 2009). I would like to thank Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu for sharing with me this special edition.

organize public displays to literally ‘drum up’ draft enthusiasm among an often war-wary Ottoman populous.⁴² The postcards eschew a threatening level of figurative mimesis, and individual faces are hardly distinguishable from each other in the convivial gatherings. Seemingly ignoring the fact that non-Muslims were also mobilised, the postcards foreground symbols of Islamic tradition, including the Istanbul skyline, mosques, minarets, ablutions, bazaars, drumming Bekçi Babas, and men wearing colourful rural costumes, Fezzes, and headdresses. In this figuring of war as an almost seasonal event, there appear only occasional reminders of its modern aspect, such as the odd soldier in full uniform, perhaps a mounted cavalry captain, perhaps a private shouldering a rifle among the enthusiastic crowd, or nonchalantly pushing a bicycle.



FIGURE 3.9a: Mehmed Ruhi, *Recruitment Postcard*, late 1914. Courtesy of Esin Arel Tunalıgil

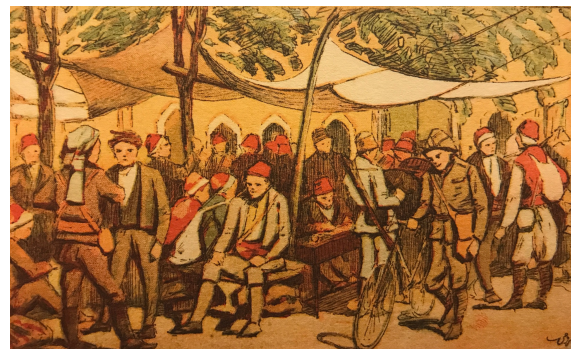


FIGURE 3.9b: Mehmed Ruhi, *Recruitment Postcard*, late 1914. Courtesy of Esin Arel Tunalıgil

In the first year of the war, illustrated journals flooded the media space with propaganda images depicting heroic Ottomans, powerful Germans, and weak enemies. This was not the high art of easel painting displayed at art exhibitions and seen by a limited number of elite patrons, but it had a popular appeal and was

⁴² Rogan, *Fall of the Ottomans*, p. 55-56.

designed for a mass audience. Russia was pictured especially negatively in the popular media; hardly surprising considering the twelve wars the Ottoman Empire had fought against the Russian Empire since the seventeenth century.⁴³ On the eve of the war, it was Russia that ‘inspired the greatest fear’ among the Ottoman population, as Mary Mills Patrick, the American missionary and educator who was president of the Women’s College in Istanbul back then, remembered: ‘Many a time have I been in a caïque [small fishing boat] on the Bosphorus when the boatman would point a tragic finger toward the Black Sea and whisper with bated breath, “Someday the Russian wolf will come down and devour us.”’⁴⁴ It is significant, then, that Russia was portrayed in the satirical *Karagöz* as a tamed bear, not a wolf, and as powerless and in the mercy of the sturdy Wilhelm II.



FIGURE 3.10a: *Karagöz*, No. 685, 29 Teşrin-i Evvel 1330 [11 November 1914], p. 1. *Karagöz*—Hey ho, my ally, look at that! Do you see the lions? That seems enough for now. If I open my fez a little more, how many more will come, how many! German —Danke schön! Danke schön Herr Karagöz!⁴⁵

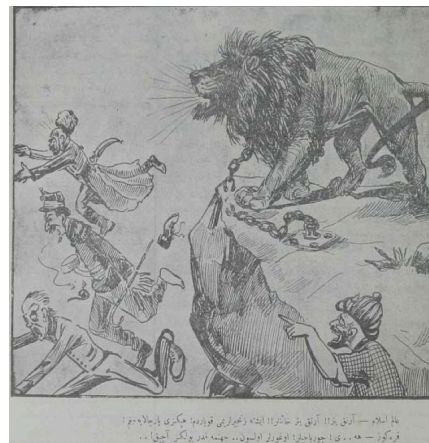


FIGURE 3.10b: *Karagöz*, No. 687, 3 Teşrin-i Sani 1330 [16 November 1914], p. 1. *The Islamic World* [as a Lion]—Enough now! Enough of your treachery! Look, I have burst my chains! I will tear you all to pieces! *Karagöz*—Ha! Stuck-up Christians! Good riddance... The way to hell is open for you!⁴⁶

⁴³ Dilek Kaya Mutlu, ‘The Russian Monument as Ayastefanos (San Stefano): Between Defeat and Revenge, Remembering and Forgetting’, *Middle Eastern Studies* 43 (2007), p. 76.

⁴⁴ Mary Mills Patrick, *Under Five Sultans* (London, Williams and Norgate, Ltd., 1930), p. 275.

⁴⁵ ‘*Karagöz*—Hey dostum he..y!! Gördün mü arslanları? Şimdilik bu kadarı kafi. Fesimi biraz açarsam, daha neler çıkar, neler çıkar!.../ Alman—Dankeşön! Dankeşön her Karagöz!’



FIGURE 3.10c: *Karagöz*, No. 709, 24 Kanun-i Evvel 1330 [6 January 1915], p. 4. Karagöz—Oh my, Hacivad, look at that! How sure-footed the great Kaiser is. Hacivad—And above all look at the simpering bear over there, like a mindless statue. He knows the man’s thrashings so well that he can’t even move a hair. Karagöz—How he’s lost courage! Now that heroic acrobat opposite is considering the somersault he’s about to perform.⁴⁷



FIGURE 3.10d: *Karagöz*, No. 728, 7 Şubat 1330 [20 February 1915], p. 4. Von der German—Now my mind’s made up. I shall save the world from your barbarity. Karagöz—Go on, my hero, one thrust more, and this savage monster will bite the dust. Meanwhile, I’ll try to rescue the sacred soil his filthy foot has trampled.⁴⁸

In fact, on the same day *Şeyhülislam* read his *fatwa* at the Fatih Mosque, which was celebrated by various demonstrations in Istanbul, an angry crowd marched towards the Russian monument at San Stefano (present-day Yeşilköy), erected in 1898 to commemorate Russian victory in the 1877-1878 Russia-Ottoman War, which they first occupied and then destroyed. The following day, the daily *Tasvir-i Efkar* described the monument as a ‘dagger in the heart of Islam’, while the *Tanin* named it

⁴⁶ ‘Alem-i islam—Artık yeter! Artık yeter hainler! İşte zincilerimi kopardım! Hepinizi parçalayacağım!/ Karagöz—He..y! Çorbacılar! Uğurlar olsun... Cehenneme kadar yolunuz açık...!’

⁴⁷ ‘Karagöz—Aman Hacivad, görüyor musun? Koca kayser ayağını nasıl sağlam basıyor/ Hacivad—Hele şu karşıdaki belahet heykeli gibi sırttan ayıya bak! Dayaktan adam akıllı bilmiş de tüyünü bile kıpırdatamıyor’/ Karagöz—Haddine mi düşmüş! O şimdi karşıındaki kahraman canbazın kendisine attıracağı pareneyi düşünüyor’.

⁴⁸ ‘Fön der Alman—Ey artık azm ettim. Dünyayı senin vahşetinden kurtaracağım/ Karagöz—haydi kahramanım bir hamle daha, bu vahşi canavarın büsbütün işini bitir. Ben de mülevves ayağını çiğnediği mukaddes toprağı bir an evvel kurtarmak için çalışıyorum’.

as a ‘monument to cruelty and evil’ and saw its destruction as a ‘national revenge’.⁴⁹

The Russian monument was not the only structure destroyed that day, and various places owned by British, French and Russian citizens were also attacked, including the popular Tokatlıyan hotel and music hall owned by an Armenian of Russian nationality.⁵⁰

Yet whilst Ottoman illustrators’ patriotic contributions corresponded well to the interests of the state and its war cause, they did not really engage in evoking hatred and rage against the figure of the enemy soldier in their work. Indeed, on 21 December 1914, the *Donanma Mecmuası* had to reproduce an 1884 oil painting by the well-known Russian war painter Vasily Vereshchagin as a ‘proof’ for the ‘atrocities committed by the ruthless, savage, and treacherous English in India.’⁵¹

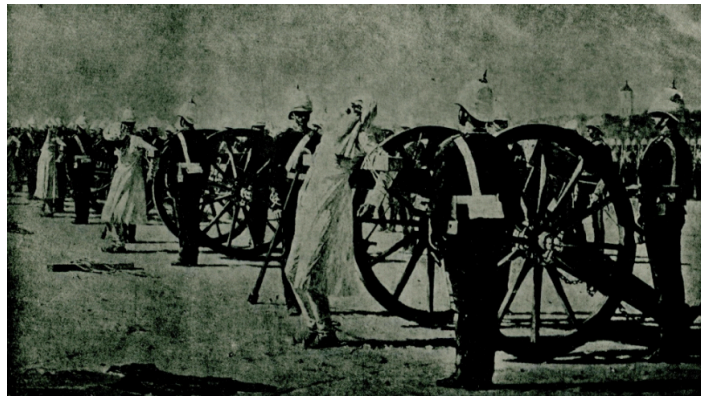


FIGURE 3.11: Vasily Vereshchagin, *English Suppression of an Indian Rebellion* (1884), republished without the name of the artist in *Donanma Mecmuası*, No: 73, 8 Kanun-i evvel 1330 [21 December 1914], front page.⁵²

⁴⁹ ‘Kal-i Esasi Resmi’, *Tanin*, 15 November 1914, p.6; ‘Rus Abide-i Melanetinin Hedmi’, *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 15 November 1914, p. 3. Quoted in Mutlu, ‘The Russian Monument as Ayastefanos’, p. 79.

⁵⁰ Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1918), pp. 169-170. Kazım Karabekir, *Birinci Cihan Harbine Nasıl Girdik?* (Istanbul: Emre, 1994), p. 395. Aleksandr Jevakof, ‘Çanakkale’nin İstanbul’dan Görünüşü’, in Stefanos Yerasimos (ed.), *Istanbul 1914-1923*, translated by Cüneyt Akalın (Istanbul: İletişim, 1996), p. 76.

⁵¹ *Donanma Mecmuası*, No: 73, 8 Kanun-i evvel 1330 [21 December 1914], front page, unnumbered. Vereshchagin’s work was also reproduced as a postcard by the Ottoman Navy League.

⁵² Today the whereabouts of this specific painting by Vereshchagin is unknown. See, Vahan D. Barooshian, *V. V. Vereshchagin: Artist at War* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), p. 101.

When on 19 February 1915, a strong Anglo-French fleet, including the British battleship HMS Queen Elizabeth, bombarded Ottoman artillery along the coast, ‘it caused a panic’ in Istanbul, as Mary Mills Patrick recalled the day:

“What if the English and French should take the city?” Rumor had it that old Mehmed V was holding himself in readiness to cross the Bosphorus at any moment, to take the train from the station on the Asiatic side to Konia. It was said that money, jewels, and other valuables had already been sent from the palace to the station, and that the women of the royal household had packed their trunks. Some of the treasures of the art museum were forwarded to Konia, to be stored in a mosque.⁵³

What Mary Mills Patrick called a ‘rumour’ however was a real fear. In fact, the security of the imperial collections at the Topkapı Palace became a serious concern during the First World War; the most significant pieces of the treasury collection were sent to Konya as a precaution against the threat of invasion.⁵⁴ Yet on 18 March 1915, the Ottomans managed to resist an attack from Anglo-French Fleet at the Dardanelles, destroying a third of the enemy ships with mines and artillery fire in just one day. After painful Ottoman defeats in the Italo-Ottoman War (1911-1912) and the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), this naval victory—though primarily a defensive one—quickly became a focus of national pride, though the Istanbul population took some time to overcome its dread and understand the full import.⁵⁵ The victory not only saved the imperial capital from a possible invasion but also gave the Ottomans some hope that even victory was possible. In late April 1915, there was ‘Jubilation in Constantinople’ for the one-month anniversary of the Dardanelles: ‘The streets [were]

⁵³ Patrick, *Under Five Sultans*, p. 274.

⁵⁴ Süleyman Kani İrtəm, *Meşrutiyetten Mütarekeye Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun Çöküş Yılları 1909-1918* (Istanbul: Temel Yayınları, 2004), pp. 618-619. Nilay Özlü, *Transformation of the Topkapı Palace (1808-1824): From Saray-ı Cedide-i Amire to the Topkapı Palace Museum* (PhD Thesis, Boğazici University, forthcoming). I would like to thank Nilay Özlü for sharing her thesis with me.

⁵⁵ Rogan, *Fall of the Ottomans*, p. 140.

filled with dense crowds. Turks congratulated one another on how quickly the enemy had been hunted down [...] In the evening hours the town was richly illuminated [and] the Palace, following yesterday's anniversary reception, [was] especially brilliant'.⁵⁶ Within a fortnight of the event, the National Defence League had the idea of building a Dardanelles (Çanakkale) Panorama Museum in the outer garden of Topkapı Palace, though the project never got beyond the planning stage.⁵⁷ The Ottoman media represented the victory as a seminal event; the campaign became a symbol of national pride and honour and effective propaganda for the CUP. An anonymous article in the daily *Sabah* wrote that 'the victory at the Dardanelles (Çanakkale) washed away the stain upon the brow of the nation from the Balkan Wars.'⁵⁸ Luxurious hand-woven silk rugs depicting naval maps of the Dardanelles were produced by the Syrian Women's Benevolent Society for the celebration of military victory, each dedicated to one Ottoman leader, including Sultan Mehmed V. Reşad, Enver Pasha, and Talat Pasha.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ *Berliner Tageblatt*, 29 April 1915. Quoted in John F. Williams, *Anzacs, The Media and the Great War* (Sydney: University of New South Wales, 1999), p. 73.

⁵⁷ See Fatma Ürekli, *Osmanlı'nın Çanakkale 1915 Panorama Tarih Müzesi Projesi* (İstanbul: Çamlıca, 2012).

⁵⁸ Anonymous, 'Temizlenen Leke', *Sabah*, 23 Mayıs 1331 [5 June 1915]; Çakır, *Türk Şiirinde Çanakkale*, p. 34.

⁵⁹ Today the rug dedicated to Sultan Mehmed V. Reşad is in the collection of the Dolmabahçe Palace, whilst the one dedicated to Talat Pasha is kept at the Military Museum. Ayşe Fazlıoğlu, 'Dolmabahçe Sarayında Çanakkale Haritalı Bir Halı ve Çanakkale Savaşı'nın Türk Sanatına Etkileri', *Çanakkale Araştırmaları Türk Yılı*, No: 3 (2005), pp. 58-91.



FIGURE 3.12: Gift presented in gratitude by the Syrian Women's Benevolent Society to His Excellency Enver Pasha, Vice Commander-in-Chief and Minister of War [in the] year 1334 (*Baş Kumandan Vekili ve Harbiyye Nâzırı Devletlü Enver Paşa Hazretlerine Sûriyye Nisvan Umûr-ı Hayriyye Cemiyeti'nin hediye-i şükrânesidir sene 1334*) © Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

In November, the National Defence League presented one of Tahsin's naval paintings depicting the Dardanelles to the Sultan.⁶⁰ The battle became the subject of special issues in the popular *Donanma Mecmuası* and the progressive nationalist *Yeni Mecmua* (*New Journal*), and continued to appear in official and semi-official propaganda until the very end of the war.⁶¹ Perhaps the most dramatic paintings of the battle were those by the celebrated maritime painter İsmail Hakkı, commissioned by the National Defence League and mass produced as postcards.⁶² As a graduate of the Naval Academy, İsmail Hakkı was appointed to the Naval Construction Office (*Bahriye İnşaat Dairesi*) and sent to Hamburg to work on an Ottoman Torpedo boat in

⁶⁰ BOA, DH.KMS. 35/27, 28 Teşrin-i Evvel, 1331[10 November 1915].

⁶¹ See Mustafa Selçuk, 'Birinci Dünya Savaşı Sürecinde Harbiye Nezareti'nin "Çanakkale Kahramanlığını Yaşatma" Amaçlı Faaliyetleri', *Avrasya İncelemeri Dergisi* I/2 (2012): 195-242; Köroğlu, *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity*.

⁶² Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu, 'Çanakkale Savaşı'nın Ressamı Bahriyeli İsmail Hakkı Bey', *Taç*, No: 8 (Fall 2016-Winter 2017).

the late nineteenth century. Having returned to Istanbul after the Constitutional Revolution, with the outbreak of the war, he started working as a war artist for the German illustrated journal, *Illustrierte Zeitung*. Ismail Hakki's paintings of the campaign became so famous that the Ottoman Parliament had his works displayed on the walls as of 28 September 1915.⁶³ His *Drowning of the HMS Goliath by the Heroic Muavenet-i Milliye* has strikingly modern elements, with the Ottoman torpedo boat's beams of light and the jets of smoke from the stricken Goliath slicing across the composition, foregrounding the technological aspects of a battle seemingly fought between advanced machines, without a sailor in sight.



FIGURE 3.13: Ismail Hakki, *The Drowning of the HMS Goliath by the Heroic Muavenet-i Milliye* (*Kahraman Muavenet-i Milliye'nin Goliath Zırhlısını gark edişi*). Courtesy of Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu.

The war also provided a market for magazines illustrated by artists. The *Harb Mecmuası* (War Magazine), published from November 1915 onwards, became an effective space for visually representing the war. Even more than the contemporary

⁶³ MMZC, 3rd Term, Assembly Year 1, Vol. 1, 15 Eylül 1331 [28 September 1915]: *Meclis-i Mebusan Zabıt Cerideleri* (Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 1991), p. 483.

press, the *Harb Mecmuası* brought updated battlefront photographs, illustrations and drawings under the public gaze.⁶⁴ In addition to the substantial use of photographs, the magazine printed many illustrations and drawings of the battlefronts; ordinary soldier heroes, sinking enemy boats, and gigantic Ottoman fleets. Photography was used frequently in the magazine, but the dramatic and exaggerated effects that could be achieved with drawings and illustrations were often preferred by the editors in some cases.

Ali Cemal was one painter lucky enough to receive a commission to work as a regular illustrator of the *Harb Mecmuası*. Born in Beirut, Ali Cemal had moved to Istanbul with his family and registered at the Naval Academy. Upon his graduation with the rank of First Lieutenant, he enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts. During the war, Ali Cemal worked primarily as an illustrator, producing sketches intended for the news media (both for the *Harb Mecmuası* and the daily *Tasvir-i Efkâr*). His images were characteristic of works by non-combatant artists, deliberately patriotic though with more self-conscious attention to military modernity than Mehmed Ruhi. The cover for the July 1915 *Tasvir-i Efkâr* celebrates the potency of Ottoman gunnery, so effective in the Dardanelles victory, the masculine pose of the central figure, with his two-handed grasp of the upturned rifle, mirrored in the sleek power of the huge high-calibre shells that are scattered around him, seemingly extra to requirements. Ali Cemal's sketch for the 1918 cover for the *Harb Mecmuası* below shows the triple alliance side-by-side, personified by three stern soldiers in the respective national uniforms striding determinedly into battle, rifles with fixed bayonets thrust forward,

⁶⁴ As Erol Köroğlu points out, one of the main goals of the *Harb Mecmuası* was certainly to 'serve the purpose of raising the spirits both of the soldiers at the front and of the civilians on the home front.' Köroğlu, *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity*, p. 80.

with the Ottoman soldier the central figure. The painting is framed by an etching (of anonymous authorship), which combines symbols of Ottoman military tradition, such as lances, battle standards, and a miniature cavalry charge, with images of technological warfare on land, sea, and in the air, including a fully equipped infantryman and sailor, rifles with fixed bayonets, a steam-powered dreadnought, a shell exploding into shrapnel overhead, and even a monoplane.



FIGURE 3.14a: Ali Cemal, *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 4 Temmuz 1331 [17 July 1915], p.1

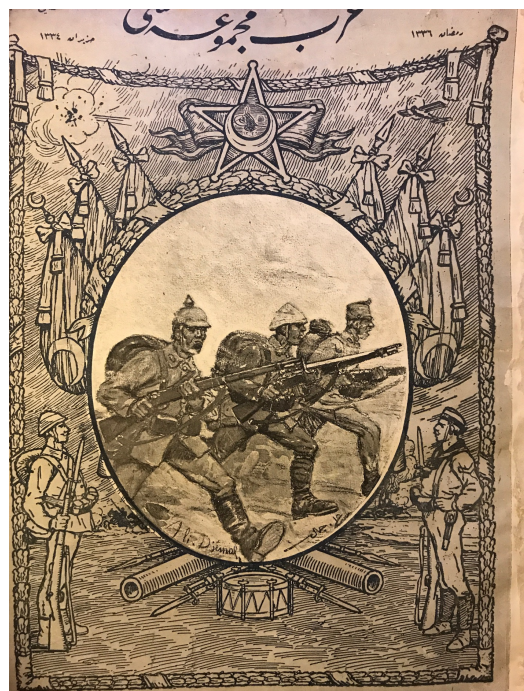


FIGURE 3.14b: Ali Cemal, *Harb Mecmuası*, No. 27, Haziran 1334 [June 1918], p.1

Yet while Ottoman painters with military backgrounds were searching for a heroic visual language with which to popularize the war and mobilise the population, others were actively serving as soldiers; an experience that would lead them to represent the war, in words, drawings and paintings, in much more ambivalent terms.

Painters as Soldiers: Fighting at the Fronts

At the outbreak of war, the Ottoman state had not yet developed a scheme for authorizing Ottoman artists to visit the warfront; neither did it plan to purchase war-related paintings for public display, at least until the spring of 1917 (see Chapter V). Though there was no organized programme for employing painters, talented professional soldiers, like Mehmed Ali Laga, fulfilled the task of recording the war on the Gallipoli front as a ‘painter of the fortified area’ (*Mevki-i Müstahkem Ressamı*), a function he also performed during the Balkan Wars.⁶⁵ The sketch below is characteristic of his haunting focus on depopulated and abandoned structures during the war, recording the ruins of Seddülbahir Fort, the first fortification destroyed by British and French Naval bombardment of the Dardanelles when its magazine was hit during a short engagement on 3 November 1914.⁶⁶



FIGURE 3.15: Mehmed Ali Laga, Seddülbahir Fortress, 1915. Published in Topallı, ‘Mehmet Ali Laga: Çanakkale Mevki-i Müstahkem Ressamlığına Tayin Edildim,’ p. 50.

Arif Hikmet, previously a twenty-six-year-old architecture student at the Academy of Fine Arts, was drafted into the army, first as a private soldier and later as

⁶⁵ Elvan Topallı, ‘Yeni Bilgiler Işığında Ressam Mehmet Ali Laga’, *Uludağ Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Issue: 14 (2008), pp. 45-70; Elvan Topallı, ‘Mehmet Ali Laga: Çanakkale Mevki-i Müstahkem Ressamlığına Tayin Edildim’, *Çanakkale 1915*, Issue: 4 (2009), pp. 46-52.

⁶⁶ Rogan, *Fall of the Ottomans*, p. 75.

a reserve officer. Due to his architectural training, he was required to serve, mistakenly, as a ‘compulsory mining engineer’,⁶⁷ then commanded a unit in the skiing battalion,⁶⁸ and later designed the building of the Committee of Union and Progress Club in the city. Having already volunteered in the Balkan Wars and survived capital punishment at a port city in Albania by pure chance,⁶⁹ Arif Hikmet was, to say the least, less enthusiastic about joining the war this time, but had no option. The art-student-turned-soldier began to keep a diary in which he meticulously recorded his experiences and feelings during his journey from Istanbul to the Erzurum front.⁷⁰ On 29 January 1915, he recorded that:

We spent the first night of the journey at the War Ministry. As there was no place to sleep, they stuffed us all into the mosque. We lay on the floor on the prayer mats. Yet sleep was impossible due to the incursions of fleas, bed bugs, and cockroaches. In the morning, bunched together and banded about by armed guards like cutthroats on our way to gaol [...] we crossed over to Haydarpaşa by ferry.⁷¹

At the Haydarpaşa train station, Arif Hikmet was saluted by a crowd and a band playing military marches: ‘But a hundred years of Moscow’s woe/ Have pierced a hole in our nation’s chest/ March! March! Onward mates!/ Draw swords, [and] pass the Caucasus!’⁷² When his friend Cevat turned to him and complained that: ‘We entered the war without preparation, finance or sense. May God curse those who brought this about,’ Arif Hikmet replied with the military march in mind: ‘Enough of

⁶⁷ Hasan Kuruyazıcı (ed.), *Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Bir Mimar: Arif Hikmet Koyunoğlu; Anılar, Yazılar, Mektuplar, Belgeler* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008). pp.158-163.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 169.

⁶⁹ He was most likely saved by the bombardment of the Albanian coast by the Ottoman cruiser Hamidiye in March 1913.

⁷⁰ For Arif Hikmet’s diary notes he took during his journey from Istanbul to the Erzurum front in 1915, see, particularly the section starting with ‘I. Dünya Savaşı’na Gidiş’, Ibid., pp. 123-150. For Koyunoğlu’s memoirs on the First World War, pp. 150-193.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 123.

⁷² ‘Yüz sene var ki, Moskof’un derdi/Yurdumuzun bağrını deldi/Marş! Marş! Haydi Arkadaş!/Kılıcını çek, Kafkasları aş!’ Ibid., p. 123.

that nonsense, Cevat. If the government chaps hear you, they'll hang you, and how will you pass the Caucasus then?'⁷³ Arif Hikmet's private diary entries, however, also revealed another, less glamorous, face of war: insufficient military preparation, daily miseries of soldiers and civilians, and ever-present disease and death. Writing on a cold night in a poor Anatolian town, on his way to Erzurum, he noted in his diary on 28 February 1915:

I will never forget what we suffered today and tonight, the terrible state we are in. This place is not even a town: just a little hunch of misery with five or six mud houses and an inn. With difficulty, we were able to find some barley bread, and spread our blankets on the ground to sleep. We passed the night half-awake, uncomfortable, and cold. On our way to war, we have witnessed such poverty and affliction, I wonder what state our soldiers at the front can be in? This poor nation, without roads, money, means of transportation, and in every primitive condition, by what brilliance was it dragged into war? Even so massive a catastrophe as the Balkan War made no impression on the brainless buggers above us. What else to say? We are deliberately heading off a cliff. Off to kick the bucket.⁷⁴



FIGURE 3.16a: Arif Hikmet in Erzurum, around 1915. Published in *Arif Hikmet Koyunoğlu: Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Bir Mimar*, p. 124



FIGURE 3.16b: Arif Hikmet in a Cossack coat, January 1916. Published in *Arif Hikmet Koyunoğlu: Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Bir Mimar*, p. 168.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 128.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 146.

Unlike many men in his company, Arif Hikmet survived the war, but, he witnessed his fellow soldiers dying not only from the daily depredations of the enemy but also from the chronic under-equipment of the troops. One striking detail is how routine it became on the Caucasian front to see people lose body parts due to frostbite. On a very cold day, when the temperature fell as low as minus forty, Arif Hikmet had one of his soldier friends take his picture inside a military coat which he had taken from a dead Cossack soldier. He memorialized the precious find in his diary:

A Cossack cavalry detachment attacked. After a violent assault, they withdrew leaving many casualties behind. We were gathering the wounded around us. From a Cossack officer who had been killed along with his horse, I took a fur-lined military coat and kalpak and put them on. I also took his dagger. Then I had the poor wretch buried there by our soldiers. I had lost my own coat. If this coat had not come to my rescue, I would have frozen in the minus 40-degree cold. I gave the camera that I always carried with me to Corporal Sadettin from Erzurum and had him take my picture in this getup.⁷⁵

As a graduate with a higher education, Namık İsmail was recruited as a reserve officer to serve on the Caucasian front and remained there for almost two years.⁷⁶ During Enver Pasha's impetuous and ill-planned attempt to outflank Russian forces in the Sarıkamış campaign of December 1914, the Third Army lost over 80,000 men, mostly due to under-preparation and cold weather. In the miserable and unsanitary conditions that followed the defeat, an outbreak of typhus devastated civilians and soldiers alike, leading to the loss of twice as many Ottoman lives as the

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 168.

⁷⁶ In a photograph dating from 23 April 1915, we see Namık İsmail posing in his military uniform. The photograph was taken in Hasankale (Erzurum) and sent home to his mother in Istanbul. See İ. Safa Günay, *Büyük Türk Sanatkarı: Namık İsmail'in Hayatı ve Eserleri* (Istanbul: M. Babok Basımevi, 1937).

campaign itself.⁷⁷ Sometime in early 1916, most likely before or around the fall of Erzurum to Russian imperial forces in February, Namık İsmail contracted the disease that would become his unlikely saviour:

When I was on the Erzurum front, I caught typhus. This disease, which I watched kill many of my friends, saved my life; for six months I came to Istanbul for a change of climate. They took me to the General Headquarters and I stayed there.⁷⁸

In every sense, the Erzurum front was a disaster for the Ottomans, and was traumatic for anyone who experienced it, including Namık İsmail. Nevertheless, being invalided to Istanbul for treatment meant that he survived a defeat that could otherwise have ended his life. On 16 February 1916, the city fell to the Russians. In infantry only, the Third Army lost over ten thousand men wounded or were killed. Another ten thousand Ottoman soldiers were taken prisoner.⁷⁹ By April 1916, the Russian Caucasus army was deep inside Anatolia, and the morale of Ottoman generals and troops was hard-hit. Despite his stoic understatement of his illness, the typhus took a serious and lasting toll on Namık İsmail's health, as is suggested by his drawn appearance in a self-portrait, painted shortly after his recovery.

⁷⁷ Rogan, *Fall of the Ottomans*, p. 160.

⁷⁸ 'Sanayi-i Nefise Müdürü Namık İsmail Bey'le Mülakat', *Meşale*, 1 July 1928, p. 8.

⁷⁹ Rogan, *Fall of the Ottomans*, p. 256. See, also, Edward J. Erikson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2001), p. 127.



FIGURE 3.17a: Namık İsmail's photo to his mother, taken in Hasankale, Erzurum, 1915. Published in Günay, *Büyük Türk Sanatkarı: Namık İsmail'in Hayatı ve Eserleri*, unnumbered.



FIGURE 3.17b: Namık İsmail, *Self-portrait*, 1917. Published in Rona, *Namık İsmail*, front cover.

Later in the war, Namık İsmail would draw on his experiences of fighting and falling ill at the front to produce some of the most striking and ambivalent images produced by an Ottoman painter of the conflict. Due to official censorship over the scale of Ottoman defeat on the Caucasian front, however, his references to it were often oblique, as we shall see in Chapter V. Nevertheless, as Namık İsmail and other painters would acknowledge in their wartime work, some of the most significant events and experiences of the war were not those at the battlefield, but of Ottoman civilians, grappling with the economic and social effects of the war on the home front.

Painters on the Home Front

Not all Ottoman Muslim artists were required to fight at the front or attempted to do so, but being a civilian artist in Istanbul and the wider empire during wartime brought

its own novelties and hardships. The Academy of Fine Arts provided a shelter and a living for Muslim Ottoman artists without military backgrounds or commissions, and, due to the CUP's concessions towards a modern education policy, women artists were now able to receive art training. Nevertheless, with the increasingly harsh economic and press restrictions on the home front, and the increasing crackdown on foreigners and non-Muslims in the first year of the war, many painters found their artistic lives limited, disrupted, and, in the case of many Ottoman Armenian artists, utterly destroyed.

Two Academies of Fine Arts: New Restrictions, New Openings

Çallı İbrahim and Hikmet avoided conscription, the Ministry of Education's scholarship scheme requiring that they should be employed by the Academy of Fine Arts upon their return from Paris.⁸⁰ These positions most likely exempted the artists from the draft, and both remained in Istanbul and employed at the Academy for the duration of the war. Nevertheless, the Academy to which Çallı İbrahim and Hikmet returned was not the same place they had left. The material conditions for instructors had become alarming, as the budget share allocated to education, financed by the Ministry of Education, had been reduced to 0.5 percent of total spending,⁸¹ and, due to the restrictions on imports, art materials were increasingly difficult to attain.⁸² The familiar cosmopolitan composition of the Academy of Fine Arts was also affected by state policies and civil pressures against foreigners and non-Muslim citizens during

⁸⁰ For the rule regarding Ottoman art students' education in Europe and their employment agreement with the Academy, see, 'Avrupa'da Bulunan Talebe Hakkı'nda', *Tanin*, 8 April 1911.

⁸¹ Nuri Güçtekin, 'Çanakkale Savaşı'nın İstanbul'daki Eğitim Kurumlarına Etkisi', *1453 İstanbul Kültür ve Sanat Dergisi*, No: 21 (2015), p. 64. See, also, Nuri Güçtekin, *Eğitimli Neslin I. Dünya Savaşı ile İmtihanı* (Istanbul: İskenderiye Yayınları, 2015).

⁸² Erol Köroğlu writes about the material conditions during the First World War in his chapter 'Material Conditions of War Propaganda and Their Want in the Ottoman Empire' in *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity*, pp. 1-23.

the first year of the war. On 8 March and 15 March 1915, two provisional laws were passed to restrict the legal status of the foreigners residing in the Ottoman Empire and placed the entire authority under the Ottoman state.⁸³ As non-Allied foreigners, the Academy's Italian instructors, including Çallı İbrahim and Hikmet's instructors Leonardo de Mango and 'head painting instructor' Salvatore Valeri, were subject to security concerns. Despite having contributed to the artistic life of the city by exhibiting and teaching painting to Ottoman art students since the foundation of the institution in 1883, both were forced to retire in 1915.⁸⁴ In addition, conscription meant that a good many of the students at higher-education institutions had already been called to the front. The academic year at the Academy of Fine Arts was supposed to start on 14 October, but many could not turn up and newspapers had to put registration advertisements again and again.⁸⁵ The institution lost many talented art students at the apogees of their potential; soon they were in uniforms. By August 1918, there were perhaps only 'five to ten' students at work in the studios and classrooms.⁸⁶ The damage to other higher-education institutions was also severe. At the Ottoman University (*Darülfünun*), the proportion of students conscripted was as high as 90 percent. Halid Ziya, by then teaching literature and aesthetics at the

⁸³ 'Memalik-i Osmaniyye'de Bulunan Ecnebilerin Hukuk ve Vezaifi Hakkında Kanun-ı Muvakkat', 23 Şubat 1331 [8 March 1915], *Düstur* II/7, p. 458; 'Ecnebilerin Memalik-i Osmaniyye'de Seyahat ve İkametleri Hakkında Kanun-ı Muvakkat', 2 Mart 1331 [15 March 1915], *Düstur* II/7, p. 484-486. For an elaborate discussion on these laws and the foreign population of Istanbul during the war years, see, Deniz Dölek Sever, *War and Imperial Capital: Public Order, Crime and Punishment in Istanbul, 1914-1918* (PhD Thesis, Middle Technical University, 2015), pp. 166-174.

⁸⁴ On Salvatore Valeri and his Istanbul years, see, Alev Kahraman, *Ressam Salvatore Valeri ve Sanatı* (MA Thesis, Hacettepe University, 2005). On Leonardo de Mango, see, Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu and İlona Baytar (eds.), *Leonardo de Mango, 1843-1930: dalla Puglia a Istanbul* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi, 2005). It is important to note that the retirement date for Valeri and de Mango is not clear, though an archival document suggests that foreign instructors of the Academy of Fine Arts, such as Joseph Warnia, seems to have already retired by September 1915. BOA, MF.MKT. 1212/31, 3 Eylül 1331 [16 September 1915]. Finally, another possible date for Valeri's and de Mango's retirement might be May, as Italy entered the war on the side of the Entente Powers in May 1915.

⁸⁵ Ürekli, *Sanayi-i Mektebi'nin Kuruluşu ve Türk Eğitim Tarihindeki Yeri*, pp. 253-254.

⁸⁶ 'Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi'nde', *İkdam*, 13 August 1918, p. 2.

University, remembered the wartime classes as being ‘almost empty’.⁸⁷ Some institutions were even forced to shut its doors; education was halted between 1915 and 1918 at the School of Administration (*Mekteb-i Mülkiye*).⁸⁸ Yet, as higher and art education for males was in serious wartime decline, women’s education in the empire, and their social role more generally, was undergoing an energetic redefinition.

As in other belligerent countries, the First World War very much changed the model of womanhood in the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁹ It hastened the entry of women into the labour market, professional life, and public space, leading to their greater access to and visibility in social and cultural spheres.⁹⁰ Contemporary Ottoman journalists themselves also saw the war as a turning point for women’s place in Ottoman society. Necmeddin Sadık proclaimed that the war had changed everything: ‘until now, it was not really possible for women to participate in life’; for him the entrance of ‘Turkish

⁸⁷ Halid Ziya, *Saray ve Ötesi*, p. 723.

⁸⁸ ‘Mekteb-i Mülkiye’, in İlhan Tekeli [et.al] eds., *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi, Vol. V* (Istanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı and Tarih Vakfı, 1993-1994), p. 374.

⁸⁹ For a general discussion on how gender roles changed during the war years, see, Susan R. Grayzel, *Women’s Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Ute Daniel, *The War from Within: German Working-Class Women in the First World War* (Providence: Berghahn Books: 1997); Francesca Lagorio, ‘Italian Widows of the First World War’, in Frans Coetzee and Marilyn Shevin-Coetzee, *Authority, Identity, and the Social History of the Great War* (Providence: Berghahn Books: 1995). On Ottoman and early Turkish Republic women, see, Şefika Kurnaz, *Cumhuriyet Öncesinde Türk Kadını (1839-1923)* (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1992); Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1994); Leyla Kaplan, *Cemiyetlerde ve Siyasal Teşkilatlarda Türk Kadını, 1908-1960* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 1998); Fatma Müge Göçek, ‘From Empire to Nation: Images of Women and War in Ottoman Political Cartoons, 1908-1923’ in Billie Melman (ed.), *Borderlines, Genders and Identities in War and Peace 1870-1930* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

⁹⁰ Two of these organisations were the Red Crescent Society, already established in 1877, and the Women’s Association for the Assistance of Soldiers’ Families (*Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti*), founded in December 1914. Among the wartime activities of the Women’s Association for the Assistance of Soldiers’ Families was to organise social and cultural events to raise donations for soldiers’ families: ‘Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti Faaliyeti’, *Tanin*, 21 January 1915. In 1916, the Society for the Employment of Muslim Women (*Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi*) was founded with the aim of providing job opportunities for women. Yavuz Selim Karakışla, *Women, Work and War in the Ottoman Empire: Society for the Employment of Ottoman Muslim Women 1916-1923* (Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archive and Research Centre, 2005).

women' to social life was 'the most prominent of womanhood history in Turkey.'⁹¹

An anonymous writer expressed similar sentiments: 'If the World War had not taken place, women no doubt would need to wait much longer to acquire the rights they have gained.'⁹² The Ottoman feminist writer, Halide Edib would also later recall the changing status of women in the war with the following terms:

The pressure of the Great War urged women forward to many an indispensable service and sacrifice. Turkey's manhood was on the frontiers [...] From end to end the only producers were women [...] The needs of the army, its food and clothing, were supplied entirely by women [...] Without the activity and the enormous service of women, Turkey would have collapsed internally during the Great War.⁹³

The rapid withdrawal of men to the armed forces not only helped Ottoman women to 'participate in life' more than ever before, but also helped them come into much more frequent contact with state officials and the cultural establishment. One of the major outcomes of this new relation between the state and women was the creation of a more liberal atmosphere that allowed Ottoman women to have access to higher education and leading institutional positions. The epoch-making opening of the University of Women (*İnas Darülfünunu*) in October 1914 was soon followed by the decision to create an Academy of Fine Arts for Women (*İnas Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi*). The motive force behind the establishment of the Academy was the 28-year old woman painter Mihri Hanım. Sometime in 1914, Mihri Hanım presented the idea of founding an Academy of Fine Arts for Women to the Minister of Education Ahmed Şükrü Bey, a prominent member of the CUP, who was not insensible to the idea.⁹⁴ In

⁹¹ Necmeddin Sadık, 'Türk Kadınları ve Harp', *Sabah*, 11 June 1917, p. 3.

⁹² Anonymous, 'Feminizm Aleminde', *Yeni Mecmua*, Issue: 33, 21-28 February 1918, p. 138.

⁹³ Halide Edib, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey* (Maktaba Jamia Millia Islamia: Delhi, 1935), p. 217.

⁹⁴ Shaw, *Ottoman Painting*, p. 139.

her talk to the Ministry, Mihri Hanım raised her concerns over the inequality between women and men:

To the Rt. Hon. Minister. Along with constitutionalism have come liberty, equality, justice, and brotherhood to our country, and yet of all these blessings it is only men who may avail themselves; women remain in their place and have advanced not even one step further. I wonder whence then this liberty? [...] Today, equality and justice are discussed in every quarter. Yet where is the Fine Arts School for Women? All that has been done has been done for men!⁹⁵

This appeal and the CUP's general wartime drive for the modernisation of the empire in all areas induced Ahmed Şükrü Bey to push for radical educational reforms and to support the formation of an Academy of Fine Arts for Women in October 1914. In October 1915, Mihri Hanım was appointed its first head teacher, though she was replaced rather swiftly the next month by Ömer Adil, and continued on as vice-director instead. Under her guidance, the Academy offered painting, sculpture, and art history classes covering Islamic, Greek, Roman, Renaissance, and modern European art.⁹⁶ Quite surprisingly, during those times, many European countries did not give the opportunity to female students to be trained in art academies. For instance, women were finally accepted at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich as late as in 1920.⁹⁷ The Academy of Fine Arts for Women was so popular that the number of registered

⁹⁵ Quoted without reference in Malik Aksel, *İstanbul'un Ortası* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayını, 1977) p. 104.

⁹⁶ Art history classes in the Academy started with Assyrian, Persian and Phoenician art followed by ancient Greek, Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine art as well as Islamic art including Seljuk and Ottoman art. Almost half of the curriculum was dedicated to European art that included the history of Renaissance art from the thirteenth century Italy to Dutch, French, Spanish art in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In their final year, students were taught modern German, British, Spanish, Russian and French art. See, Fatma Ürekli, 'Güzel Sanatlar Eğitiminde Osmanlı Hanımlarına Açılan Bir Pencere: İnas Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi,' *Tarih ve Toplum*, Vol. 36, Issue: 231 (March 2003), pp. 50-60.

⁹⁷ Robin Lenman, 'A Community in Transition: Painters in Munich, 1886-1924', *Central European History*, Vol. 15, No.1 (1982): 3-33.

students in August 1918 reached hundred and ninety.⁹⁸ Not only was the art training in the Academy more prestigious and affordable than private instruction, but it also provided valuable artistic and professional contacts. With the establishment of the Academy of Fine Arts for Women, Ottoman women artists could participate and exist artistically in better terms at the cultural milieu.



FIGURE 3.18: The Academy of Fine Arts for Women, undated. Taha Toros archive.

Aesthetic Debate and Wartime Press Restrictions

Despite these progressive developments, the war also constricted aesthetic thought and discussion in the art journals. In terms of free press and freedom of speech, Ottoman public opinion was in danger of being stifled between 1914 and 1918. Strict censorship was imposed on the media.⁹⁹ Any critical view of the war was seen as posing a great threat by the Ottoman state; the CUP devoted intensive amount of time

⁹⁸ ‘Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi’nde’, *İkdam*, 13 August 1918, p. 2.

⁹⁹ *Sansür Talimâtname* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Askeriye, [1330] 1914). Beşikçi, *Ottoman Mobilization*, p. 55. For the censorship regulation of the entertainment world, see Çiğdem Oğuz, ‘Milli Mesele ve Maddi Gereksinim Arasında: Birinci Dünya Savaşı’nda Eğlence Yerlerini Düzenleme Çabaları’, *Toplumsal Tarih*, No: 267 (Mart 2016), pp. 86-90.

and energy to the media, making sure that their war cause was not criticized by any section of the population in the public domain. The intellectual journal *İctihad* (Interpretation), founded by Abdullah Cevdet, was immediately shut down in 1914 after its views against the war and the CUP's collaboration with Germany.¹⁰⁰ Among the Arabs who were subject to capital punishment by Cemal Pasha, there were a considerable number of journalists and writers.¹⁰¹ The Ottoman state had initially planned to have even stricter censorship regulations, taking it as far as allowing the publication of a single newspaper that would be the *Tanin*, mouthpiece of the ruling CUP.¹⁰² Kazım Karabekir, who at the time was Chief of Intelligence at the Office of the General Staff, very much opposed the idea on the grounds that it would 'destroy the credibility both of *Tanin* and of the constitutional system and would be in conflict with the principle of "armed neutrality"'.¹⁰³ Though the CUP eventually allowed the publication of other newspapers, all were regulated throughout the war years. Indeed, as early as in mid-September 1914, a censorship regime was fully implemented. The only news regarding the events of the on-going conflict in Europe 'emphasized German and Austro-Hungarian battle successes and defeats suffered by the armies of the Triple Entente.'¹⁰⁴ Mary Mills Patrick remembered the 'strict control of the press' as being 'in a cage':

¹⁰⁰ Koloğlu, *Aydınlarımızın Bunalım Yılı 1918*, p. 35.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, p. 35. In fact, as Talha Çiçek puts it, Cemal Pasha imposed capital punishment on all the accused people 'without heeding the warning of the president of the martial court'. M. Talha Çiçek, *War and State Formation in Syria: Cemal Pasha's Governorate during World War I, 1914-1918* (London; New York, Routledge, 2016), p. 49.

¹⁰² Köroğlu, *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity*, p. 13.

¹⁰³ Kazım Karabekir, *Birinci Cihan Harbine Nasıl Girdik*, vol. 2 (Istanbul: Emre, 1994 [1937]), 166-170. Köroğlu, *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity*, p. 13.

¹⁰⁴ Stanford J. Shaw, *The Ottoman Empire in World War I*, Volume 1: Prelude to War (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2006), p. 181.

After war was declared there was strict control of the press. As events progressed, there were men of power in Europe, participants in the great struggle, or in the United States, historical observers, who could view matters in the large. This was not the case with us in Turkey. We were shut, as it were, in a cage and could estimate the progress of the war only from within.¹⁰⁵

The Ottoman public was mostly informed through the Ottoman official news agency (*Osmanlı Milli Telgraf Ajansı*), which adorned its pages with exaggerated news about the Ottomans and the Central Powers' military victories, acting, most of the time, as the only source of information about the on-going conflict in remote areas.¹⁰⁶

After the winter of 1914, the conflict began to dominate the pages of Ottoman newspapers and magazines, and arts articles and exhibition reviews were among those that were cut to make room for it: *Servet-i Fünun* (Wealth of Knowledge), a popular and influential journal known for its contributions to literature and art, started to fill its pages with war news. This was also intensified by the cancellation of some very significant cultural publications: *Şehbal* (Wing Feather), which had appeared twice a month since 1909, published its last issue in July 1914; *Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi* (Journal of the Ottoman Society of Painters), the first Ottoman journal dedicated to the fine arts since 1911, ceased publication, again in July 1914, at its eighteenth issue. And when in March 1915, the Ottoman Armenian writer and publisher Teotig (Theodoros Labdjinjian) was imprisoned and later exiled, his *Everyone's Almanac* (*Ամէլնուհի Տարեցոյցը*), published annually since 1907 and dedicated to Armenian social, cultural, and artistic life, came to an end.

¹⁰⁵ Patrick, *Under Five Sultans*, p. 272.

¹⁰⁶ The Ottoman official news agency (*Osmanlı Milli Telgraf Ajansı*) produced bulletins informing the public about the fronts. As Yiğit Akın points out, these bulletins were 'prepared by the army headquarters, printed locally, and sold for a low price. They were also affixed to walls and windows of governmental buildings, coffeehouses, and the local clubs of the ruling party. In the remote corners of the empire, these bulletins were the only available source of information about the war, at least for the reading and listening public.' Akın, *Ottoman Home Front during World War I*, pp. 184-185.

State control of cultural production, propaganda-driven semi-official patriotic associations, and strict censorship regulations made independent cultural production difficult, but not impossible. In private diaries and notebooks, independent cultural activity and critical thought continued. After the declaration of Jihad, Tevfik Fikret penned a 153-line poem he titled ‘Holy War’ (*‘Harb-i Mukaddes’*):

Alas! The fire of war hasn’t burnt out yet
We are ruined day by day because of war’s suffering
It is better to die at once with the zeal of victory
Actually all earth moulded with human blood [...]
O, these nonsense writers talking about the guarding religion
As if the blood [that spilt] in Balkan [Wars] were insufficient
Now encourage the people with hell
Telling Allah’s and his prophet’s order
Encourage the millions to the war with *Kuran* and the prophet’s sayings,
Turn everybody into bloody earth.¹⁰⁷

This trenchant criticism of the war, one of Tevfik Fikret’s very last works, would not be published during the war; whether due to his ill health or to censorship is unknown. With the flow of information thus tightly controlled and voices of public criticism directly silenced or indirectly chilled, the CUP state was able to pursue its warfront and home front policies with impunity; even when they took the form of violent Muslimization of the empire’s population.

Surviving Genocide: Ottoman Armenian Painters and 1915

The most significant incidents of the process of Muslimization and Turkification of Ottoman public and social life are the series of purges, mass deportations, and massacres which came to be known collectively as the Armenian genocide. During

¹⁰⁷ Tevfik Fikret, *Bütün Şiirleri*, İsmail Parlatır and Nurullah Çetin (eds.) (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 2001), pp. 669-670; quoted in Erol Köroğlu, ‘Propaganda and Culture War: Jihad, Islam, and Nationalism in Turkish Literature during World War I’ in Zürcher (ed.), *Jihad and Islam in World War I*, pp. 141-142.

these convulsions, some Ottoman Armenian artists perished in unknown locations, while others managed to survive; some by quietude, some by painting, and some by open revolt. As an Ottoman Armenian revolutionary against the absolutist regime of Sultan Abdulhamid II, Panos Terlemezian's had been a life in political exile. After a long absence from his birthplace, Terlemezian arrived in the eastern city of Van in the summer of 1914. His aim was to 'create new works of art', as he later noted in his memoirs: 'after becoming a painter, I wanted very much to see my beloved Vaspurakan [Van] and to create new works of art about its unrivalled beauty.'¹⁰⁸

Before Turkey joined the war, I rushed to the Island of Aghtamar in order to paint. I have to say that I was filled with pleasure and fervent hope about the tremendous beauty of these places, and that I would be able to win something for Armenian art.¹⁰⁹

He later described his feelings when he saw his birthplace in the summer of 1914 after long years of absence in emotional terms:

My soul was trembling gently with an inexplicable feeling when I saw my longed-for fatherland; I was unable to speak or breathe. The extraordinary beauty of the surrounding area and the proximity of the places where I lived in my childhood and youth further intensified the deep and ever-smoldering anguish that was enclosed in my heart.¹¹⁰

Yet Terlemezian was to find himself back in exile sooner than he could have foreseen.

During the three months when the Ottoman Empire was still ostensibly neutral, Terlemezian stayed on Aghtamar Island. Soon, however, things began to change for the Armenian population in Van. Since the outbreak of war, Ottoman Armenians had become the focus of intensifying Unionist suspicions due to some open support for

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Kirakosyan, *Փառնու թերթիկներից Նյու Յորքում և Մեկնադարձությունը*, p. 29. Armenians referred to the province of Van as Vaspurakan.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Kirakosyan, *Փառնու թերթիկներից*, p. 30.

¹¹⁰ Quoted in Ibid., p. 29.

the Triple Entente cause and the hopes of Armenian nationalists that the protection of the Great Powers, and particularly Russia, would enable the creation of two autonomous Armenian provinces in Anatolia. With the disaster on the Erzurum front, large defections of Armenian men to the Russian Army, and the open anticipation of the Armenians of Istanbul of Allied victory at Gallipoli, mistrust grew into plans to displace the entire Ottoman Armenian population, first from the precarious Ottoman capital and borderlands, and ultimately from Anatolia as a whole. In March 1915, Cevdet Pasha, then the governor of Van and a fervent Unionist and the brother-in-law of Enver Pasha, ordered the gendarmes to search Armenian villages for hidden arms and arrest anyone suspected of carrying weapons against the Ottoman army. Upon the murder of the two Armenian leaders, Arshak Vramian (a member of the Ottoman parliament) and Nikoghayos Mikaelian (also known as Ishkhan), the Armenians of Van began to prepare under Aram Manukian to ‘resist immanent massacre.’¹¹¹ The initial armed uprising lasted for a period of less than a month from April 19 to May 17, 1915.¹¹² A week after the uprising began, the Ottoman Armenian composer and Terlemezian’s friend Gomidas was arrested along with 270 other Armenian political and intellectual leaders purged from Istanbul on 24 April 1915. While most of these intellectuals were subsequently killed in the interior,¹¹³ Gomidas himself was later rescued through the intervention of influential friends, though not before suffering a psychological trauma widely believed to have robbed him of his mental health.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Rogan, *Fall of the Ottomans*, p. 169.

¹¹² There are a number of studies on the uprising in Van. See, for example, Richard Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); particularly the section ‘Deliverance and Evacuation of Van’, pp. 55-57.

¹¹³ Uğur Ümit Üngör and Mehmet Polatel, *Confiscation and Destruction: The Young Turk Seizure of Armenian Property* (London: Continuum, 2011), p. 65.

¹¹⁴ Historians still do not know who really influenced or forced Talat Pasha, then the Minister of Interior, to sign a coded telegraph on May 7, 1915 in which some Armenians, including Gomidas, were

After 24 April, the Ottoman government turned its attention to a concerted campaign against the Anatolian Armenians. In Van itself, Terlemezian rose to become one of the best-known military leaders of the uprising. As reported by Mr. Y. K. Rushdouni, the most able leaders of the resistance were ‘Armenag Yegarian, with his cool and able leadership; Aram, with his constant presence and advice; P. Terlemezian, with his great heart; Krikor of Bulgaria with his indefatigable industry and inventive genius.’¹¹⁵ Terlemezian would later write of the uprising:

In the most violent days of clashes, villagers were digging trenches and labouring day and night. I could see that some villagers were fighting at the frontlines, tiny children aged four and five were crawling on the ground and removing the enemy shells and bringing them to us.¹¹⁶

Terlemezian most likely left Van just after 31 July 1915 alongside the approximately 100,000 other Armenians who withdrew alongside Russian forces in what came to be known as the Great Retreat.¹¹⁷ This was the last time he saw his ‘beloved Vaspurakan’. Terlemezian lost many of his art works in the fire and turmoil. One of the works he could save was a remarkable painting from 1915 and named *Sipan Mountain from Ktuts Island* (*Սիփանի Սարքի Կտուց Կղզուց*); a perfect landscape in which none of the ‘fragments’ of the on-going war appear. In his memoirs later, Terlemezian wrote about the current condition of the Aghtamar Island in 1914 as ‘lamentable’

notified that they were allowed to return to Istanbul. According to rumour, it was either the American Ambassador in Constantinople, Henry Morgenthau, or Prince Abdülmecid Efendi. Gomidas was the music instructor to Abdülmecid Efendi’s wife, also, his personal physician was Dr. Vahram Torkomian, another Armenian who was arrested with Gomidas on April 24, 1915 and was allowed to return to Istanbul. See, Rita Soulahian Kuyumjian, *Archeology of Madness: Komitas, Portrait of an Armenian Icon* (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2001), pp. 130-131.

¹¹⁵ ‘Van: Narrative by Mr. Y. K. Rushdouni’ in Arnold Toynbee (ed.), *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Fallodon* (London; New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916), p. 65.

¹¹⁶ Quoted in Kirakosyan, *Փառնու թերթի անկյունիք*, pp. 126-127.

¹¹⁷ Rogan, *Fall of the Ottomans*, p. 171.

where sculptures in the church there were ‘completely destroyed’.¹¹⁸ Yet in *Sipan Mountain from Ktuts Island*, he chose to turn away from the noise and desecration, and depict a moment of stillness, in which Van appears as an almost sacred natural paradise, devoid of signs of war.



FIGURE 3.19: Panos Terlemezian, *Sipan Mountain from Ktuts Island* (Սիփանի սարը Կտուց կղզուց), 1915, Oil on canvas, 70 x 90 cm © National Gallery of Armenia.

Not all Ottoman Armenian artists who survived the war were in a position to resist the Ottoman state as Terlemezian did, however. Indeed, perhaps due to the perceived instrumentality of visual arts during wartime, several artists seem to have survived the deportations simply by virtue of being painters. When the Armenian intellectuals were arrested in Istanbul on 24 April, for example, there was not a single

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Kirakosyan, *Փառու թերթիկագրանի*, p. 30.

professional painter among them.¹¹⁹ Some were permitted to remain in Istanbul, such as Viçen Arslanyan, an academic painter of still lifes and Istanbul interiors and urban landscapes who taught art classes at the Galatasaray Lycée until 1922.¹²⁰ Likewise, Levon Serope Kurkjian, a professional Ottoman Armenian painter who had trained and worked in Paris, was residing in Cilicia (Vilayet of Adana),¹²¹ and was working as a professional painter at the outbreak of war.¹²² Like Terlemezian, Kurkjian was a realist painter, depicting the lives of ordinary people: ‘one can readily discern a nation in the pictures of Kurkjian; herein lies the value of the painter’, wrote a French critic about the artist.¹²³ In April 1915, Kurkjian was not deported because the governor of Adana required him to produce ‘war paintings for the notables of the city.’ He soon became an ‘engineer-painter’ for the Baghdad railroad line, and remained so until the end of the war.¹²⁴ Yet it should not be forgotten that the Ottoman Armenian

¹¹⁹ Teotig, *11 Nisan Anıtı/Memorial to April 11* (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2010). In 1919, Teotig compiled this biographical work covering around 700 Armenian intellectuals, clergymen, and community leaders who perished during the deportations. In 2010, the work was translated from Armenian to Turkish and English. For the English translation, see, Rita Soluhaian Kuyumjian, *Teotig: Biography; Monument to April 11* (Gomidas Institute, 2010).

¹²⁰ *Mekteb-i Sultani'den Galatasaray Lisesi'ne: Ressamlar, 1868-1968*, p. 277.

¹²¹ The Armenian-populated Cilicia was the seat of an Armenian kingdom in the medieval ages. By the end of the nineteenth century, the region became a separate Ottoman province, the province of Adana.

¹²² Born in the working class Armenian populated district of Samatya, at the age of twenty, Kurkjian attended the Academy of Fine Arts, and upon his graduation, moved to Izmir and worked as an art instructor. Travelling to Paris, he enrolled at the Académie Julian as a pupil of Jean-Paul Laurens, and was accepted as a member of the prestigious Union Internationale des Beaux-Arts et des Lettres, and his works won entry in European galleries, exhibiting in Paris and Brussels and acquired by French and American collectors. For more on Kurkdjian, see, Kürkman, *Armenian Painters in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1923*, p. 546; Saris, *Armenian Painting*, p. 77-78.

¹²³ Lefèvre, quoted without reference in Saris, *Armenian Painting*, p. 78.

¹²⁴ Teotig (Teotig Labdjindjian), *Ünİtİmİnİ Smptİgnİgİ, 1916-1920* [Everyone's Almanac] (Constantinople: Publishing House), 1920, pp. 87. In Adana, Kurkjian met the Armenian priest and intellectual Grigor Balakian, who had been arrested in Istanbul on 24 April. Balakian was one of only very few among the group to survive the ordeal. In his memoirs, Balakian referred to Kurkjian as a ‘noble and self-sacrificing’ man and ‘a very close friend’: ‘During the period of my employment in management of the Adana railroad construction, I had had the chance to get to know Kurkjian, an Armenian painter who had lived for many years in Paris, attaining fame and also winning the appreciation of prominent European artists. For his professional work he came to Cilicia, and when the war broke out suddenly in 1914, he was forced to remain here and thus was saved from the fatal roads of exile. Noble and self-sacrificing, this fine artist became a very close friend, and an inseparable bond of love and compassion grew between us. He had been a willing companion in my pain and grief—

intellectuals were joined in death by many other artists arrested throughout the empire's provinces. The Ottoman Armenian ceramicist, David Ohannessian, barely survived the deportations. When the war started, Ohannessian was residing in Kütahya, whose governor (*mutasarrıf*), Faik Ali Bey, resisted the deportation orders. After Faik Ali Bey was removed from his post in March 1916 and relocated to Gallipoli, Armenians in the city were deported, including Ohannessian and his family. Surviving typhus and starvation on the roads, which for so many led on to death marches through the Syrian Desert towards the refugee camps of Dayr al-Zur and Mosul, Ohannessian and his family were finally able to reach Aleppo.¹²⁵ Although the total number of artists who died during the deportations is not precisely known,¹²⁶ the 'promising' thirty-one year-old painter from İzmit, Hrant Asdvadzadurian was certainly among those who were not able to survive the ordeal.¹²⁷

Even if artists managed to survive the deportations, however, there were decreasing spaces and opportunities for non-Turkish and non-Muslim artists in the Ottoman cultural sphere. In July 1915, a document was sent from the Minister of Education to the War Ministry requesting the replacement of two Ottoman Armenian photographers working at the Gallipoli front on the basis that 'their morals and connection to the fatherland are uncertain.' Era and Koçu Efendiler were replaced by

even in my most miserable days he had visited my hiding places to comfort me.' Grigoris Balakian, *The Armenian Golgotha: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide, 1914-1918*, translated by Peter Balakian and Aris Sevag (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), p. 401. Balakian's memoirs were originally published in Armenian in two volumes: in 1922 and 1959, respectively.

¹²⁵ See, Sato Moughalian, 'From Kütahya to Al-Quds: David Ohannessian and the Birth of the Armenian Ceramics Trade in Jerusalem', *Armenian Ceramic Art of Kütahya* (Yerevan: Komitas Museum Institute, 2016), pp. 84-95.

¹²⁶ According to Alexander Keshishian, the number of 'painters and sculptors' who did not survive the deportations is 168, though Keshishian does not seem to have indicated the exact years (between 1910-1924?): Alexander Keshishian, *al-Mashāniq al-'Arabīyah wa-al-majāzir al-Armanīyah: min khilāl jalsāt muḥākamāt zu 'amā' Hizb al-Ittiḥād wa-al-Taraqqī* (Aleppo, 1992), p. 252. I would like to thank Richard Mourad Anooshian for helping me with the translation of this source from Arabic to English.

¹²⁷ Teodig, *11 Nisan Anıtı*, p. 156.

Necati Bey; a Muslim Ottoman instructor of photography whose ‘patriotism and dutifulness are known’.¹²⁸ In cultural and intellectual circles, the campaign against the Ottoman Armenian intelligentsia and populations in Anatolia was paralleled by an increasingly vocal cultural formation around the ideology of Turkism. Membership of the *Türk Ocağı* (Turkish Hearths Association)—an important semi-official forum for Turkist cultural thought which attracted many literary intellectuals¹²⁹—was not open to ‘non Turks’, and the organization explicitly excluded both Ottoman non-Muslims and foreign Muslims.¹³⁰ Against this current, the writer Halide Edib—the first female member of the Hearths and later a member of its administrative committee (in 1918)—attempted to modify the organization’s constitution to permit acceptance of ‘those minorities who adopted Turkish tradition and culture,’ in a (largely unsuccessful) attempt to ‘prevent the Association from leaning towards racism’.¹³¹ Indeed, a minor painting exhibition organised in late summer 1915 at the Istanbul Turkish Hearths featured no paintings by non-Muslim artists.¹³²

¹²⁸ See the document sent from the Minister of Education to the War Ministry dating from 8 July 1915. BOA. MF. MKT. 1210-33/1. Quoted in İsmail Sabah, *Çanakkale Savaşları’nın Eğitim Kurumuna Etkisi, 1914-1916* (Unpublished MA Thesis, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi, 2013), p. 147.

¹²⁹ For a comprehensive study on Turkist intellectual culture in the Ottoman Empire during the war years, see, Köroğlu, *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity*.

¹³⁰ It is, however, important to note that the situation seems to have been different for non-Turkish Muslim groups, such as Albanians and Kurds. In fact the chief ideologist of Turkish nationalism Ziya Gökalp, who was also a member of the *Türk Ocağı*, was of Kurdish origin. Yet, Ziya Gökalp considered himself a Turk; for him, national identity was determined not by physical traits but by cultural ones. For further information on how the nationalist policies of the CUP aiming at the Turkification of the non-Turkish Muslim groups deepened divisions among those people, see Fuat Dündar, *İttihat ve Terakki’nin Müslümanları İskân Politikası, 1913-1918* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2001).

¹³¹ Halide Edip Adivar, *Türk’ün Ateşle İmtihanı: İstiklal Savaşı Hatıraları* (Istanbul: Can Yayınları, 2014 [1928]), p. 19, fn.3. On the Turkish Hearths Association, see, Fusun Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları, 1912-1931* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1997).

¹³² The works were by Muslim Ottoman artists only, including Çallı İbrahim, Nazmi Ziya, Halil Pasha, İsmail Hakkı Bey, Şevket Bey, İzzet Bey, Mahmut Bey, and Hüseyin Avni. For the artists’ names, see Hüseyin Tuncer, Yücel Hacaloğlu, Ragıp Memişoğlu (eds.), *Türk Ocakları Tarihi: Açıklamalı Kronoloji 1912-1997*, Vol.I (Ankara: Türk Yurdu Yayınları, 1998), p. 38.

Representing the Empire

From April 1915 onwards, two concurrent events raised the question of how the Ottoman Empire was able to represent itself internally and internationally: the huge Ottoman losses during the Gallipoli campaign which defied traditional modes of representation of battle, and the international condemnation of the Armenian massacres which threatened to revert the empire's image as a potential site of modernity and civilisation. Gallipoli prompted the Ottoman government to commission professional artists to search out a new visual language appropriate to both the scale of the Ottoman sacrifice and a new sense of national optimism, though painters seem to have found this task more difficult than poets. At the same time, the state and cultural elite pursued cultural strategies to both deepen cultural ties with the Ottomans' German and Austro-Hungarian allies and secure their place within modern European civilisation, banishing forever the spectre of the 'terrible Turk' so forcefully reanimated after the Armenian massacres.

'To Immortalize the Heroic Campaign of the Guardians of Gallipoli'

Following their naval defeat at the Dardanelles, the British and French mounted a second attempt to secure access to the straits with full scale land invasion at Gallipoli (Çanakkale) on the 25 April 1915. The daring but deadly landing skirmishes with well-prepared and grimly determined Ottoman defenders quickly solidified into astonishingly bloody trench warfare which raged through the summer and autumn of 1915, until ending in full Allied withdrawal in early January 1916. Unlike the other fronts of the war, and even unlike all other battles the Empire had been through, and

despite (or perhaps because of) the 300,000 casualties,¹³³ Gallipoli provided and inspired the most prevalent and residual images in the visual memory of the late-Ottoman Empire. The bravery of the ordinary soldier was lauded in contemporary newspapers, and the government immediately set out to ensure that the campaign would be memorialised and commemorated, not just by the usual soldier propagandists, but by the empire's professional artists. Necati Bey was at the Gallipoli front in early September 1915 to film the Ottoman troops.¹³⁴ In October, a group of Syrian writers and intellectuals visited the Gallipoli front upon Cemal Pasha's initiative.¹³⁵ Sultan Mehmed V. Reşad composed a lyric poem (*gazel*) about the campaign, lauding the bravery of Ottoman soldiers safeguarding the 'heart of Islam', against the 'two of Muslims' mighty enemies':

United did two of Muslims' mighty enemies
Assail Gallipoli by sea and land.
Yet did God's aid reach our army
And our every soldier a steel-framed fort become.
At last did the enemy accept his impotence
Faced with our soldier sons' resolve.
Coming to seize the heart of Islam
He fled with his honour in the dust.
Reşad! Cover your prayer rug in thanks
And pray God ever guard the Muslim lands.¹³⁶

¹³³ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 118.

¹³⁴ According to diary of the Major İzzettin Bey, Necati Bey 'took images' in 8 September and 10 September. Quoted in Ahmet Esenkaya, 'Binbaşı İzzettin Bey'in Günlüğü ve Mustafa Kemal Bey', in Lokman Erdemir and Kürşat Solak (eds.), *Çanakkale Muharebeleri'nin İdaresi: Komutanlar ve Stratejiler* (Ankara: Çanakkale Valiliği Yayınları, 2015), p. 157.

¹³⁵ Ayhan Aktar, 'A Propaganda Tour Organized by Djemal Pasha: The Arab Literati's Visit to the Gallipoli Front, 18-23 October 1915' in M. Talha Çiçek (ed.), *Syria in World War I: Politics, Economy, and Society* (London; New York: Routledge), pp. 61-86.

¹³⁶ Sultan Mehmed V Reşad's poem was published in various contemporary journals and newspapers, including the *Harb Mecmuası*, No: 11, August, 1916; *Tasvir-i Efkar*, No: 1857, 8 September 1916; *Servet-i Fünun*, No: 1317, 14 September 1916. The poem was also published in the special issue of the *Yeni Mecmua*: 'Çanakkale Nüsha-yı Fevkalâdesi' (Gallipoli extraordinary issue), in 1918. As quoted in Jenny Macleod, *Gallipoli* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 157-158. For further information on the Sultan's *gazel*, see Enfel Doğan and Fatih Tıǧlı, 'Sultan V. Mehmed Reşad'ın Çanakkale Gazeli ve Bu Gazele Yazılan Tahmisler', *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi*, Vol: 33 (2005), pp. 41-96.

The Ottoman state also encouraged writers, musicians, and artists to produce works about the Gallipoli campaign for public consumption. In early July 1915, the Ministry of War invited a group of intellectuals to visit the battlefield to gather material for war-related and patriotic works.¹³⁷ The trip was at the initiative of the Ottoman army commander-in-chief and Minister of War Enver Pasha. In a letter directed to the Ministry of Education, the War Ministry wrote that the objective of the trip was to make the soldiers' 'sacrifice live forever in national memory and to raise the new generation with these feelings'.¹³⁸ In a few days, the daily *İkdam* announced the goal of the trip as 'to immortalize the heroic campaign of the guardians of Gallipoli that so astounded the world.'¹³⁹

While most artists who took the trip were writers, there were also two Ottoman painters in attendance: Çallı İbrahim and Nazmi Ziya; both had received their art educations in Istanbul and later in Paris.¹⁴⁰ At the time of the Gallipoli trip, Çallı İbrahim was teaching at the Istanbul Academy of Fine Arts and Nazmi Ziya was working as an education supervisor. On the evening of 11 July, the group gathered at the Sirkeci Train Station 'with the green double-laurel marked on their left arms and their khaki colour linen clothes', as one poet in the group, İbrahim Alaeddin, later recalled the day:

¹³⁷ For the most comprehensive study of the Gallipoli trip, see, Beşir Ayyazoğlu, *Edebiyatın Çanakkale'yle İmtihani: Arıburnu ve Seddülbahir'de On Gün* (Istanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2015).

¹³⁸ See the Ministry of War's request to the Ministry of Education for fifteen days' leave of absence for the painter Nazmi Ziya for the Gallipoli trip. BOA, MFT.MKT, 1210/28, 22 Haziran 1331 [5 July 1915].

¹³⁹ As reported in *İkdam*, 11 July 1915, p. 1.

¹⁴⁰ The names of the artists who went to the Gallipoli front that summer were: Ağaoğlu Ahmed, Ali Canip, Celal Sahir, Enis Behiç, Hakkı Süha, Hamdullah Suphi, Hıfzı Tevfik, Muhittin, Orhan Seyfi, Selahattin, Mehmed Emin, Yusuf Razi, Ömer Seyfettin, İbrahim Alaeddin and Müfit Ratip; the musician Ahmed Yekta; and the painters İbrahim Çallı and Nazmi Ziya. See İbrahim Alaettin [Gövsal]'s introduction to the second edition of *Çanakkale İzleri: Anafartalar'ın Müebbet Kahramanına* (Istanbul: Semih Lütfi-Sühulet Kütüphanesi, 1932 [1922]). Also, Köroğlu, *Ottoman Propaganda*, pp. 82-83.

Through Uzunköprü, Keşan, Bolayır and Gelibolu we arrived in the fifth-army headquarters and from there we wandered into the Arıburnu and Seddülbahir battle zones, and after that we came to Çanakkale and saw the defences [...] The cemeteries like cities and the battalions of unburied bodies have left me with a never-to-be-forgotten ache. I witnessed what a catastrophic and lofty madness war is.¹⁴¹

Such an emotional and critical engagement with the conflict, however, did not make it to the contemporary press. The strict censorship only allowed a jingoistic rhetoric for war. On 24 July 1915, the daily *Sabah* featured the declaration written by members of the group:

O, the heroic army, the founder and saviour of the nation! On behalf of the thinking and feeling children of the people, we have come to you [...] Now we are returning to Istanbul, filled with pride. There we will tell all your brothers and sisters the heroism we witnessed; we will tell of your bravery and sacrifices, unique in the history of the world, and of how you lifted your brows to the sky at the last disaster. O the army that has cleansed the honour and pride of Islam and Turkishness with its holy blood! [...] Even your enemies applaud your valour. May the moon and crescent flag, under whose shadow you fought like lions as you raised it, shine on our mosques and shrines until the last judgment. May hatred and revenge boil in the veins of the veterans as the martyrs' souls rise into the sky. Should you die, God's heaven is yours, and if you survive, the gratitude of the nation. May you live long, and down with our enemies!¹⁴²

Typically, the nationalist writer from the group Hamdullah Suphi, who was most likely one of the main writers behind the declaration in the daily *Sabah*, reiterated his jingoistic sentiments in another newspaper:

The three big arts, painting, music, and literature, were going to utter their respect and love for the soldiers who defend Çanakkale, and their

¹⁴¹ See the introduction by İbrahim Alaeddin in *Çanakkale İzleri*, unnumbered.

¹⁴² 'Hitabe-i Şükran', *Sabah*, 11 Temmuz 1331 [24 July 1915], p. 4; quoted in Çakır, *Türk Şiirinde Çanakkale*, p. 45.

gratitude and admiration to that sublime, old Turkish sword shining like a crimson dawn on the ridge of Çanakkale.¹⁴³

The Ministry of War officially commissioned poets to produce war poetry in which ordinary soldiers of the Ottoman army were expected to be heroized as the country's defenders and guardians (*bekçi*). Having inspired by the Gallipoli victory and the direct commission from the War Ministry, a committed nationalist and patriotic poet Yusuf Ziya wrote a collection of war poetry under the name *Akından Akına* (From One Raid to Another). Having been produced in large editions (10,000) and distributed amongst soldiers, Yusuf Ziya was reportedly given enough cash to buy a four-room house for this pro-war book.¹⁴⁴

The painters Nazmi Ziya and Çallı İbrahim, however, had more difficulty joining the loud patriotic cheering of the poets or the marine painters. Whether they volunteered or were directly invited by the Ministry of War is unclear, but both seem to have struggled to immediately reconcile the extreme sensory spectacle of the front into an appropriate visual form. Nazmi Ziya did not exhibit any war-related works during the First World War, and, though Çallı İbrahim was one of the few artists whose art was shaped by the war, his first war paintings after returning from the front were far from being mere recruitment tools or sanitized celebrations of 'national' martyrs, as we shall see in Chapter IV and Chapter V.

¹⁴³ Hamdullah Suphi's accounts on this trip appeared as series of articles in the same year. These articles, titled 'Çanakkale', were published in the daily *İkdam*. I use the 1929 collection of his writings in this study. Hamdullah Suphi, *Günebakan* (Ankara: Türk Ocakları İlim ve Sanat Heyeti Neşriyatı, 1929), p. 81. See, also, Murat Çulcu (ed.), *İkdam Gazetesinde Çanakkale Cephesi* (İstanbul: Denizler Kitabevi, 2004).

¹⁴⁴ Yusuf Ziya [Ortaç], *Bizim Yokuş* (İstanbul: Akbaba Yayınları, 1966), pp. 41-45; Mignon, *Neither Shiraz Nor Paris*, pp. 97-98.

To the ‘Leaders in the West’: ‘We Are Their Equals’

Undoubtedly, the major threat to the international reputation of the Ottomans in the first part of the war was the CUP policy of purging Anatolia of the Ottoman Armenians. By summer 1915, the massacres and deportations had already been internationally condemned by intellectuals, governments, and the press, claiming that the Ottoman Empire’s policies were ‘against humanity and civilisation’. On 24 May 1915, France, Britain, and Russia declared:

In view of these new crimes of Turkey against humanity and civilisation the Allied governments announce publicly to the Sublime Port that they will hold personally responsible [for] these crimes all members of the Ottoman government and those of their agents who are implicated in such massacres.¹⁴⁵

The CUP was closely watching the reactions. *The New York Times* alone published over 120 articles in 1915 on the massacres.¹⁴⁶ On 9 August 1915, Enver Pasha made the following remark in Istanbul to George Abel Schreiner:

We must show those who hate us that we do not fear them. We must show those who think little of us that we do not care a rap for their opinions. We must show the leaders in the West that we are their equals—in war as in peace.¹⁴⁷

On 20 October, the popular British magazine of humour and satire *the Punch* featured a caricature depicting the German Kaiser and Sultan Mehmed V. Reşad, holding a

¹⁴⁵ Quoted in Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Holt, 2007), p. x. Also see, Alex J. Bellamy, *Massacres and Morality: Mass Atrocities in An Age of Civilian Immunity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 65.

¹⁴⁶ For the most comprehensive study on the press coverage of the genocide, particularly in the American press, see, Richard Kloian, *The Armenian Genocide: News Accounts from the American Press (1915-1922)* (Berkeley: Anto Printing, 1980).

¹⁴⁷ George Abel Schreiner, *From Berlin to Bagdad: Behind the Scenes in the Near East* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1918), pp. 331-332. George Abel Schreiner stayed in Istanbul and Gallipoli for nine months between February and November 1915, and had an audience with the Sultan and some CUP leaders, including Enver Pasha.

bloody knife and sabre; behind Kaiser writes 'Belgium', and in front of the Sultan, lie a dead woman and child on which 'Armenia' is written. Ferdinand stands behind and says 'When I went to Bulgaria I resolved that if there were to be any assassinations I would be on the side of the assassins.'

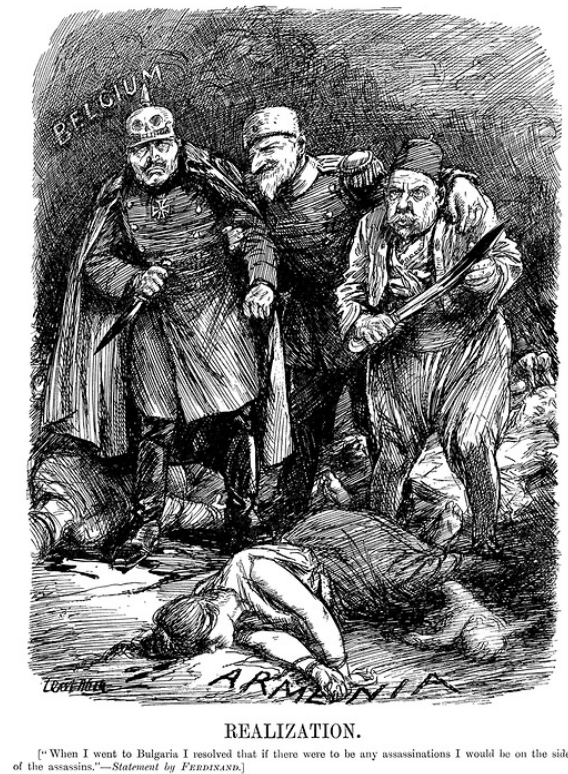


FIGURE 3.20: *Punch*, 20 October 1915. Caricature depicting the German Kaiser, Ferdinand, and Sultan Mehmed V. Reşad.

Australian newspapers were not silent either. Charles Bean, who would later wrote a poem about the 'Turkish soldier' Abdul who 'played the gentleman' at Gallipoli,¹⁴⁸ warned in December 1915 that 'The Turks, as the world knows, are at the present moment engaged-in an endeavour to wipe out the Armenian nation before they are

¹⁴⁸ *The Anzac Book: Written and Illustrated in Gallipoli by the Men of Anzac* (London; New York; Melbourne: Cassell, 1916).

stopped.¹⁴⁹ Around the same time, some American newspapers had aimed bitter invectives at the Ottoman state and its policy against the Armenian population: ‘There is no Turkish civilization and no Turkish literature and no Turkish art’ wrote one American journalist: ‘No wonder that the population of Asia minor today is barely one-third of what it was before the Turkish blight fell upon that beautiful and fertile garden of the ancient world.’¹⁵⁰ This reversion in the European and Anglo-American Press to the traditional view of the Ottomans as atavistic and marauding Turks who could not be trusted to behave within the bounds of civilised (Christian) decency may have been a factor, as we shall see in the following chapters, in the organization of subsequent painting exhibitions that suggested both the empire’s integration with European civilization and, from 1916, the still cosmopolitan character of its art world.

Yet the revelations of genocide may also have privately strained the Ottoman’s relations with their military allies, Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Publicly, however, both states remained silent on the Armenian issue throughout the war, mostly by introducing ‘military censorship on the coverage’ of the Ottoman Empire at the time.¹⁵¹ Indeed, at one of the press conferences held on 7 October 1915, German authorities decided the following: ‘About the Armenian atrocities we have to state the following: This internal Turkish administrative issue (i.e. the deportation of the Armenians) must not only threaten our friendly relations

¹⁴⁹ Captain Bean, ‘An Armenian’s Simple Talk: Horrible Story of Massacres’, *West Australian*, 2 December 1915, p. 8.

¹⁵⁰ James Morgan, ‘Fallen Nations: The Martyrdom of Armenia’, *Washington Herald*, 12 December 1915, p. 75.

¹⁵¹ Tessa Hofmann, ‘From Silence to Re-Remembrance: The Response of German Media to Massacres and Genocide Against the Ottoman Armenians’, in Joceline Chabot et. al (eds.), *Mass Media and the Genocide of the Armenians: One Hundred Years of Uncertain Representation* (London: Palgrave: Macmillan, 2016), p. 90. For the most recent and comprehensive work on the Armenian genocide and Germany, see also, Stefan Orlig, *Justifying Genocide: Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016).

with Turkey, but is currently not even to be discussed. In the meantime it is therefore mandatory to keep silence'.¹⁵² Nevertheless, there were other issues with the Ottomans' allies, especially with the German Empire, many of whose leaders had initially been wary of an alliance with Europe's 'sick man'. When the Ottoman Empire entered the war in 1914, its treasury was virtually empty. Throughout the war years, the Ottomans were keen to secure loans of large sums of money from the German Empire.¹⁵³ In fact, as much as the focus of the early propaganda efforts was to improve the morale of the battlefield, it was also to prove that the Ottoman state was as competent as its allies in all respects to propaganda and policy coordination for the war cause.

During the first two years of the war, the ruling CUP was mainly concerned with collaborating with German and Austro-Hungarian official war artists for propaganda purposes. In the autumn of 1915, the Austria-Hungarian War Ministry sent an official war painter named Wilhelm Viktor Krausz to the Ottoman Empire. His aim was to paint the portraits of eminent statesmen of the Ottoman Empire and Central Powers and also to do some sketches in the Gallipoli campaign.¹⁵⁴ During first months in Istanbul and Gallipoli, Krausz produced portraits of prominent Ottoman

¹⁵² Quoted in Hofmann, 'From Silence to Re-Remembrance', p. 90.

¹⁵³ The Ottoman Empire borrowed 235,056,344 Ottoman lira from the German Empire during the course of the war. See, p. 113. Zafer Toprak, *İttihad-Terakki ve Cihan Harbi: Savaş Ekonomisi ve Türkiye'de Devletçilik* (Istanbul: Homer, 2003), p. 113. See, also, Ulrich Trumpener, *Germany and the Ottoman Empire, 1914-1918* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968).

¹⁵⁴ For the most comprehensive analysis of Krausz's exhibition, see Bahattin Öztuncay, 'Wilhelm Viktor Krausz: The War Painter in the Ottoman Empire,' in Bahattin Öztuncay (ed.) *I. Dünya Savaşı'nda İttifak Cephesinde/ Propaganda and War: The Allied Front During the First World War* (Istanbul: Vehbi Koç Vakfı, 2014), p. 13. According to Öztuncay, the date of the opening was on 28 March 1916. Yet in some contemporary newspapers, the date of the opening was announced to be held on Friday, 31 March. See, for instance, 'Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi'nde Resim Sergisi', *İkdam*, 2 April 1916. *İkdam* relates that Krausz had been 'in Istanbul since Kanunusani', the month which was, according to the Rumi calendar then in use, equivalent to either January or February in the Gregorian calendar.

commanders including Sultan Mehmed V. Reşad, Grand vizier Said Halim Pasha, Enver Pasha, and Talat Pasha.¹⁵⁵



3.21a William Krausz, *Sultan Mehmed Reşad*, 1915, oil on canvas, 95x78 cm © Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi



3.21b William Krausz, *Said Halim Pasha*, 1915, oil on canvas, 63x57 cm © Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi

In a development that would prefigure state cultural policy after 1916, director of the Academy of Fine Arts and of the Imperial Museum Halil Edhem now sought to foreground relations between Ottoman painting and the European tradition. In November 1915, the Academy of Fine Arts also held an art exhibition, displaying the painting collection which Halil Edhem had been collecting since 1910. Though those works were mostly copies of the masterpieces by well-known foreign artists such as Dürer and Rembrandt, it provided an alternative art space in the midst of propaganda as well as a step to acquire contemporary Ottoman painting that would be exhibited in

¹⁵⁵ In March 1916, Krausz's paintings were exhibited at the Academy of Fine Arts. Chapter IV.

the forthcoming Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibitions in 1916 and 1917, as we shall see in the next chapter.

In the political forefront, however, were xenophobic and bellicose public statements and attitudes. When the President of the Ottoman Parliament, Halil Bey, for instance, delivered a speech in early October 1915 he clearly juxtaposed the Ottoman's civilizing and humanizing war aim with the lower motives of the empire's enemies:

The most momentous outcome of this war shall be, [...] against the English selfishness, Russian greed, French vengefulness, and Italian treachery which has brought about the destructive loss of billions of people and billions in wealth, [...] the eternal conservation of humanity. To obtain such a felicitous and monumental outcome, the Ottoman nation will gladly endure every sacrifice.¹⁵⁶

In late 1915, Talat Pasha ordered that all French and English signs over the shops were painted and replaced by Arabic characters and even with national colours of red and white in many places.¹⁵⁷ As such, the cosmopolitan face of Pera was changed drastically, and visual symbols of Muslim nationalism and Turkification came to completely dominate the public spaces of the empire's capital.

Concluding Remarks

During the first year of the war, the Ottoman art world was marked by deep political and social changes; some progressive, others regressive in the extreme. The war created new opportunities that many artists and would-be artists did not have before 1914: Whilst some artists, especially those with a military painting education,

¹⁵⁶ MMZC, 3rd Term, Assembly Year 1, Vol. 1, 22 Eylül 1331 [5 October 1915]: Meclis-i Mebusan Zabıt Cerideleri (Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 1991), p. 490.

¹⁵⁷ Harry Stuermer, *Two War Years in Constantinople: Sketches of German and Young Turkish Ethics and Politics*, trans. Harry Stuermer and E. Allen (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1917), p. 155.

benefited from the commissioning of popular art forms (war poster, postcards, and illustrations), progressive elements in the Ottoman cultural elite also managed to turn the situation of the art world in a 'state of war' to their own advantage. The foundation of the Academy of Fine Arts for Women—which in 'normal' times could have easily have been rejected as a concession to conservative or traditional sentiment—was now, in time of war, embraced as a bold step towards the progressive modernisation of the art world, and, by extension, Ottoman social life. Nevertheless, the conflict also precipitated the dissolution of the long-standing integrated and cosmopolitan Ottoman art world. The ruling CUP and its policy of 'cultural Turkism',¹⁵⁸ as well as the hardening of Muslim attitudes towards foreigners and non-Muslims after the invasion at Gallipoli and the Armenian genocide of 1915, left the non-Turkish and non-Muslim Ottoman painters increasingly excluded from the state-sanctioned cultural sphere. Many Ottoman painters' peacetime artistic careers were cut short when the war started; some had to leave their art education in Paris, some went to fight at the fronts, and still others perished in exile and could never fulfil their creative talents. Art discussions and reviews almost disappeared as art journals stopped publication and the remaining ones had to fill their pages with war-related articles. Throughout this period, state and semi-official patrons continued to commission relatively 'official' and sanitized depictions of the war for internal and international propaganda purposes; to mobilize national sentiment for the war effort, to commemorate the defensive victory at Gallipoli, and to rescue the CUP state and its allies' international reputations from accusations of military incompetence and of atrocity against the Ottoman Armenians. It was not until 1916 that more personal and

¹⁵⁸ David Kushner, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism, 1876-1908* (London: Frank Cass, 1977).

un-sanitized visual language of war emerged which eventually challenged the conventional and idealised forms of war images, as we shall see in the following chapters.

CHAPTER IV

AMBIVALENT VISIONS: CIVIC INITIATIVES AND PAINTING IN THE PROLONGED WAR, 1916-1917

‘It was a dead year for the arts and literature’ wrote one critic in March 1916 in the nationalist *Türk Yurdu* (Turkish Homeland) magazine, referring to the dearth of cultural journalism in the first year of the war.¹ Such a view was perhaps too pessimistic to be entirely true. On the one hand, critical discussion of art on the home front had been reduced, as column inches for art news and art journals faced material and political restrictions. On the other hand, with the outbreak of war, as described in Chapter III, the CUP-dominated Ottoman state and semi-official voluntary associations such as the National Defence League and the Navy League sought to actively intervene in and shape artistic production. The aim was to encourage artists to produce war-related works for historic record and propaganda purposes. But if the new state and semi-official patrons had contributed to the differentiation and increased capacity of the Ottoman art market, their involvement also raised new—and, in many respects more challenging—practical and aesthetic problems for Ottoman painters.

This chapter looks at the war’s second and third art seasons, winter of 1915-1916 and 1916-1917. It argues that, far from disappearing because of the difficulties and privations Ottoman painters faced during the war’s first year, Ottoman cultural life entered a phase of renewal in 1916 and 1917. Those two years were key for the professionalization and popularization of modern Ottoman painting in Istanbul: a new regulation titled ‘Exhibition of the Fine Arts’ (*Sinâât-ı Nefîse Sergisi*) was drafted

¹ C.S. ‘Edebi Yıl’, *Türk Yurdu*, No: 105, 23 March 1916. Murat Şefkatli (ed.), *Türk Yurdu*, Vol. 5 (Ankara: Tütibay Yayınları, 2000), p. 20.

under the auspices of the Academy of Fine Arts (*Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi*); and, as a direct result of the regulation, a diverse community of non-Muslim and Muslim Ottoman painters, among them many women artists, displayed their artworks to the Istanbul public in two major art exhibitions. Furthermore, it was in those exhibitions that Ottoman painters effectively introduced the French Impressionist style to a wider Ottoman public. Together, these aspects suggest that a community of more civic-minded Ottomans (including museum directors, art historians, some aristocrats, and painters themselves), whose aim was to assure Istanbul's artistic vitality, were temporarily able to open up a less propagandistic and exclusivist artistic space in the war's second and third art seasons. This period also suggests the beginning of a critical change in the visual representation of war by Ottoman painters, as conventional imagery of sublime heroism and glory began to fragment and be replaced by more ambivalent visions of ordinary soldiers and the modern battlefield.

Contesting Visions in Wartime Cultural Policy

Since the outbreak of the war, the CUP state employed every available means of cultural propaganda to promote the country's prestige in its relations with its allies. The quest to continue previous artistic relations or establish new ones with allied nations became a political and cultural necessity. The much publicized and celebrated inauguration of the Balkan Zug in January 1916, connecting Berlin to Istanbul in less than three days, made such events easier and more affordable. In May 1916, an association for the 'promotion of artistic and literary relations between Germany and her allies' was founded under the auspices of the German government in Berlin.² The first lecture of the association was on Turkish art and literature. Meanwhile

² 'Germany Forms an Art Alliance to Draw Allies Closer to Her', *The Washington Post*, 21 May 1916, p. 14.

architectural competitions were held at the German-Turkish Friendship House (*Das Haus der Freundschaft*),³ educational scholarships were provided for Ottoman students in German schools, and various German lecturers were employed in the university at Istanbul (*Darülfünun*).⁴ The year 1916 was marked by major cultural events between the Ottoman Empire and Germany, and by the beginning of a new cultural exchange between the Austro-Hungarian capital Vienna and Istanbul, which, as Bahattin Öztuncay argues, ‘reached its highest level in the arenas of art and culture’ during the First World War.⁵ Joseph Pomiankowski, the military attaché at the Austrian Embassy in Istanbul, would later note that the First World War marked the beginning of an intense cultural encounter:

The society of Constantinople, which had exclusively gravitated towards Paris until the war, became familiar with the products of Viennese art and industry and with the Austrian, and especially the Viennese, character through the propaganda that unfolded in the years 1916, 1917 and 1918. In an amiable way, it was demonstrated to the society of Constantinople that Viennese products could absolutely compete with those from Paris in many respects and had the great advantage of Vienna being much closer and easier to reach than the French metropolis.⁶

Among the cultural organization between Istanbul and Vienna was the solo exhibition of the Austria-Hungarian war painter Wilhelm Viktor Krausz, held at the

³ The idea of building a ‘Friendship House’ was introduced to the Deutsch-Türkische Vereinigung (German-Turkish Association), founded in 1913, by the German-Turkish Association based in Berlin and Istanbul and also by the executive secretary of the German Werkbund Ernst Jackh. See the exhibition catalogue, *100 Jahre Deutscher Werkbund, 1907-2007* (München: Architekturmuseum der Technischen Universität München, Akademie der Künste Berlin, 2007). Suha Özkan, ‘Türk-Alman Dostluk Yurdu Öneri Yarışması, 1916’, *Journal of the Faculty of Architecture, Middle Technical University*, Issue: 2, Vol: 1 (1975), pp. 177-210.

⁴ Sinan Kunalalp, ‘Winning Hearts and Minds during the War’, in Öztuncay (ed.), *I. Dünya Savaşı’nda İttifak Cephesinde*, pp. 40-67.

⁵ Öztuncay, ‘Wilhelm Viktor Krausz’, p. 13.

⁶ Joseph Pomiankowski, *Der Zusammenbruch des Osmanischen Reiches* (Graz: Akademische Druck und Verlagsanstalt, 1969 [1928]), p. 326. Pomiankowski’s book also appeared in Turkish: Joseph Pomiankowski, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun Çöküşü: ‘1914-1918 Birinci Dünya Savaşı’* (İstanbul: Kayihan Yayınları, 1990).

Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul in March 1916.⁷ The exhibition of Krausz, who had been working as an official war artist in the empire since 1915 (Chapter III), creating portraits of the senior Ottoman officials and soldiers as well as the Gallipoli front, was a significant event especially for the ruling elite. The opening, held at the Academy of Fine Arts, was conducted by the Grand vizier Said Halim Pasha who was accompanied by other eminent statesmen including Enver Pasha and the Austrian Ambassador.⁸ According to *İkdam*, the exhibition was ‘visited by a great many enthusiastic Turkish youths’, showing the ‘increasing inclination and goodwill towards the painting branch of the Fine Arts’ in the Ottoman Empire.⁹ After Istanbul, paintings were also brought to Vienna and exhibited to the public for seventeen days between 28 December 1916 and 14 January 1917 in Künstlerhaus Wien.¹⁰ The release of the exhibition catalogue followed in the same year, published in Vienna by the Austrian Ministry of War, in which the portraits were reproduced above the signature of each figure, with the exception of the very first portrait, that of Sultan Mehmed V Reşad.¹¹

⁷ For the most comprehensive analysis of Krausz’s exhibition, see Öztuncay, ‘Wilhelm Viktor Krausz: The War Painter in the Ottoman Empire,’ in Öztuncay (ed.) *I. Dünya Savaşı’nda İttifak Cephesinde*, p. 13.

⁸ *İkdam*, ‘Sanayi-i Nefise’, 2 April 1916. In May, Krausz received a third-class Mecidi order for his work. BOA, MV, 242/29, 02 Cemazeyilahir 1334 [6 May 1916]. Krausz’s exhibition was also the last major exhibit held in this building, as the Academy was moved to a slightly larger building in Çagaloğlu in October 1916. Şükrü Aysan, *Sanayi-i Nefise Mekteb-i Ali’sinden Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi’ne, 1883-1928* (Istanbul: Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi, 2004).

⁹ *İkdam*, 2 April 1916. After Istanbul, paintings were brought to Vienna and exhibited to the public for seventeen days between 28 December 1916 and 14 January 1917 in Künstlerhaus Wien. The release of the exhibition catalogue followed in the same year, published in Vienna by the Austrian Ministry of War, in which the portraits were reproduced above the signature of each figure, with the exception of the very first portrait, that of Sultan Mehmed V Reşad (r. 1909-1918). *Die Türkei im Weltkrieg: Bildnisse und Skizzen von Wilhelm Victor Krausz* (Wien: Kriegsministeriums, 1916).

¹⁰ Halil Edhem remembers the place of the exhibition as the Vienna Imperial Museum. See, Halil Edhem, *Elvah-ı Nakşiye Koleksiyonu* (Istanbul: Matbaa-yı Âmire, 1924). However, as the poster of the exhibition clearly indicates, the exhibition was held in the ‘Künstlerhaus Wien.’

¹¹ *Die Türkei im Weltkrieg: Bildnisse und Skizzen von Wilhelm Victor Krausz* (Wien: Kriegsministeriums, 1916).



FIGURE 4.1: Exhibition poster for Wilhelm Viktor Krausz's exhibition, 1917 © Library of Congress

Furthermore, in 1916, the German artist Reinhard Pfahler von Othegraven asked for permission from the Ottoman Sultan to do work at the trenches.¹² Around the same time, the German official war artist Fritz Grottemeyer was also approached by Enver Pasha to travel with the Ottoman army in order to cover the campaigns.¹³ For nine months from February until the mid-November in 1916 Grottemeyer travelled extensively through the Ottoman Empire.



FIGURE 4.2: Fritz Grottemeyer, *On the Banks of the River Çakıt, Public works on the Taurus Mountains*, 1916, oil on cardboard © Stadtmuseum Münster.

¹² BOA, HR.SYS, 2419/24, 04 April 1916.

¹³ Ludwig Budde, 'Die Türkeibilder des Malers Fritz Grottemeyer im Kriegsjahr 1916', *Deutsch-Türkische Gesellschaft/Mitteilungen*, No: 110 (December, 1987), pp. 1-7. *Les orientalistes des École allemande et autrichienne* (Paris: ACR Édition, 2000), pp. 78-80.

From 1916 onwards, the CUP enhanced its control of the cultural sphere, although mostly in the international domain. Cultural exchanges with the allies became even more an important component of its portfolio of wartime policies and remained so until the end of the war. Proving Ottoman modernity and civilisation in allied countries was given high priority, and this seems to have left a vacuum at the core of the domestic Ottoman art world, enabling a coterie of art directors, instructors, artists, and art collectors of mostly aristocratic background and Ottomanist tendencies to influence cultural policy and administer the art world. Indeed, contrary to the early part of the war, when propaganda efforts led by the Ottoman government or by semi-official voluntary organisations had dominated the art scene, 1916 and 1917 were marked by cultural initiatives which had a civic touch to them.

Patronage during the Prolonged War: 'Poor Painters'

The year 1916 was pivotal in terms of the public perception of the progress of the war. As elsewhere, underlying this transformation was the growing realisation that the conflict would not be as brief as at first hoped. The year began with encouraging news from the fronts: The Allied Powers evacuated the entire Gallipoli Peninsula in early January, followed by another military victory in Kut al-Amara in April.¹⁴ These two Ottoman victories were propagandized enthusiastically in state-sponsored journals and postcards, but had come at an immense economic cost to the empire. By 1916, the volume of Ottoman external trade had already lost approximately eighty per cent of

¹⁴ The evacuation of the Gallipoli peninsula took place in two stages: Suvla and Anzac on 18-19 December 1915; and Helles on 8-9 January 1916. For most recent studies, see, for example, Edward J. Erickson, *Gallipoli: Command Under Fire* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2015); Rogan, *Fall of the Ottomans*, particularly his chapter on 'The Ottoman Triumph at Gallipoli'. On Kut al-Amara, see, Nikolas Gardner, *The Siege of Kut-al-Amara: At War in Mesopotamia, 1915-1916* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014).

its pre-war value.¹⁵ From early 1916 onwards, there was a reduction in the quality and quantity of the available food and the prices of staple foods were rising dramatically. One of the correspondents wrote in May 1916 that: ‘Constantinople is threatened with famine [...] deaths from starvation now occur daily [...] Business is practically at a standstill, and prices have increased enormously [...] the only bread procurable is black and unpalatable.’¹⁶ At the same time, the war also created a new class of war profiteers. According to the journalist Zekeriya Sertel, this class was ‘connected to the CUP’ and ‘made a fortune beyond measure’ with ‘black marketing, corruption, and bribery.’¹⁷

By 1916, even professional painters and the traditional picture-collecting classes (metropolitan upper and middle-classes) were among those severely affected by inflation and economic instability. The reduced opportunities for private commissions and exhibition sales had to be supplemented by teaching, postcard and magazine designs, or by state sinecures or semi-official commissions. Nevertheless, the latter seem to have been available to painters of certain styles and backgrounds while excluding others. In July 1916, Nazmi Ziya wrote that ‘poor painters are either kept busy with other jobs to earn their living or complain of a tremendous daily grind to survive’.¹⁸ Some representatives of the older generation could continue to work within the cultural establishment, such as Şevket Bey and Viçen Arslanyan who taught regular art classes at the Galatasaray Lyceé. Nazmi Ziya himself managed to find regular paid work, working as an education supervisor after his return from Paris

¹⁵ Şevket Pamuk, ‘The Ottoman Economy in World War I’, in Stephen Broadberry and Mark Harrison (eds.), *The Economies of World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 118. On the First World War economy see also, Vedat Eldem, *Harp ve Mütareke Yıllarında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun Ekonomisi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1994); Zafer Toprak, *İttihad-Terakki ve Cihan Harbi: Savaş Ekonomisi ve Türkiye’de Devletçilik* (Istanbul: Homer, 2003).

¹⁶ Anonymous, ‘Famine Prices in Turkey’, *The Times*, 18 May 1916, p. 5.

¹⁷ Zekeriya Sertel, *Hatırladıklarım* (Remzi Kitapevi, Istanbul: Remzi, 2001 [1968]), p. 58.

¹⁸ N.Z. [Nazmi Ziya], ‘Resim Sergisi Münasebetiyle’, *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 16 July 1916.

and as Head Secretariat for the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul after November 1917.¹⁹ As recipients of Ministry of Education sponsorship, Hikmet Bey, Mehmed Ruhi, and Çallı İbrahim had all immediately started teaching at the Academy of Fine Arts upon their return to Istanbul from Paris in 1914.²⁰ Another young painter, Ali Cemal, was able to use his military background to obtain commissions for illustrations in newspapers like *Tasvir-i Efkâr* and *Harb Mecmuası* and for postage stamps from the Ministry of Post and Telegraphy.²¹ Nevertheless, painters who could not rely on state connections or patronage grew more and more poverty-stricken and desperate. The young Circassian painter Avni Lifij later recalled of the hardship of the home front that ‘my tongue was raw from eating dry bread, and I tightened my belt not to hear the hungry noises my stomach was making’.²² Upon graduation from the Academy of Fine Arts around 1910, Avni had enrolled at the Académie Julian in Paris under the sponsorship of Prince Abdülmecid Efendi, but, as a privately sponsored art student, was not guaranteed a teaching job on his return to Istanbul, though he does seem to have taught art and French in Istanbul high schools.²³ Avni’s interest in experimenting with the motifs and styles of Symbolism, his poetic interpretations of landscapes and figures, and mood-creating and intense colours do not seem to have won him any official commissions in the first year of the war, however.

¹⁹ See the official documents in the Ottoman archives referring to Nazmi Ziya’s responsibilities as a government employee: BOA, MF. MKT, 1234/45, 22 Şaban 1333 [5 July 1915]; BOA, MF. MKT, 1231/37, 22 Muharrem 1336 [7 November 1917].

²⁰ See, Chapter III.

²¹ G. B. [Galib Bahtiyar], ‘Galatasaraylılar Yurdu Resim Sergisi: Sergide Teşhir Edilen Levhalar Hakkında Mütalea’, *İkdam*, 30 June 1916.

²² See the interview conducted with Avni Lifij’s wife, Harika Lifij. Elif Naci, ‘Avni Lifij Türk Resmine Yeni Bir Çeşni Getirdi’, *Milliyet Sanat Dergisi*, 08 June 1973, pp. 8-11.

²³ Ahmet Kamil Gören, *Avni Lifij* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi, 2001).

A Law for the ‘Progress of Fine Arts’

In February 1916, a three-page regulation (*talimatname*) carrying the title ‘Exhibition of the Fine Arts’ (*Sinâât-ı Nefise Sergisi*) was drafted to be addressed to the Minister of Education Ahmed Şükrü Bey. The aim, according to the regulation’s first article, was to ‘serve the progress of the fine arts’ by opening ‘exhibitions in Istanbul under the appellation of fine arts every year’.²⁴ The regulation seems to have been worded as a sort of ecumenical vision, including all types of art and artist and without dictating a style or subject matter. After some minor wording changes, the by-law (*nizamname*) was promulgated on 12 April 1917,²⁵ and was sent to the relevant authorities, including the *Vilayet* of Aleppo and the *Sanjak* of Zor.²⁶

According to the regulation, a selection committee would be appointed by the Ministry of Education upon the proposal of the Academy of Fine Arts to choose the artworks to be hung in the gallery space and award the prizes.²⁷ This official selection was very much modelled after the tradition of the Paris Salons (created by Louis XIV), rather than that of the nineteenth century *Salon des Indépendants*, which was known for its motto ‘no jury, no prizes’. The creation of a jury was also a new departure for the Ottoman art world; previous painting exhibitions had been jury-free—an oversight considered highly problematic by many artists, many of whom had trained at the Academy of Fine Arts, where students’ exhibitions had selection committees composed of art instructors.²⁸ In a review for the 1903 Salon exhibition, for instance, Celâl Esad had complained that, unlike European countries, the lack of

²⁴ BOA, MF. MÜZ 3/59, 06 Şubat 1331 [19 February 1916].

²⁵ BOA. İ. DÜİT, 20/21, 20 Cemaziyelahir Sene 1335 [12 April 1917]. It was published in the official newspaper on 28 April: ‘Sinâât-ı Nefise Sergisi Nizamnamesi’, *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, 28 April 1917.

²⁶ BOA. MF. MKT 1228/34, 23 Şevval Sene 335 [12 August 1917]; BOA. MF. MKT 1228/44, 23 Şevval Sene 335 [12 August 1917].

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ For the Academy of Fine Arts and its exhibition juries, see, Seza Sinanlar, *Pera’da Resim Üretim Ortamı, 1844-1916* (PhD dissertation, Istanbul Teknik Üniversitesi, 2008). By the same author, *Pera Sergileri: Pera Ressamları* (Istanbul: Norgunk Yayıncılık, 2010).

an exhibition jury in the Ottoman Empire had a negative influence on the quality of artworks.²⁹ The law thus seems to have been conceived as a step in the further professionalization and development of the Ottoman fine arts.

More than this, however, the 1916 Exhibitions Law was a cultural policy driven by an investment and belief in civilisation as a universal, and is thus an example of a civic-minded vision to enhance the city's artistic and cultural life mentioned earlier. Though the document was signed by director of the Archaeology Museum Halil Bey, the then director of the Academy of Fine Arts,³⁰ it seems that the art historian Mehmed Vahid might also have engaged with the process. Mehmed Vahid was an art history instructor both at the Academy of Fine Arts and at the Ottoman University (*Darülfünun*).³¹ He was also a prolific writer of many articles on subjects ranging from art history to the collections in the Imperial Museum. He had published a translation of the French archeologist Saloman Reinach's *Apollo: histoire générale des arts plastiques*; an illustrated survey of art history from prehistoric times to the nineteenth century based on Reinach's *École du Louvre* lectures.³² Like his father-in-law Osman Hamdi Bey, Mehmed Vahid was a Francophile by inclination. In contrast to many of his contemporaries, who preferred to use a fashionably simple Turkish, Mehmed Vahid preferred to conserve the eloquence of the more sophisticated Ottoman language blended with Persian and Arabic syntax and idioms.

²⁹ Celâl Esad, 'Salon', *Malumat*, 11 June 1903.

³⁰ The Academy of Fine Arts was affiliated to the Archaeology Museum until 25 April 1917. Until that time, director of the Museum was also director of the Academy. Osman Hamdi Bey served as its first director (between 1883 and 1910) and after his death in 1910, the position was occupied by Halil Bey until April 1917, when the Academy became an independent institution under the direction of the respected painter Halil Paşa. For the most detailed study on the foundation of the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul, see Cezar, *Sanatta Batı'ya Açılışı ve Osman Hamdi*; Çoker (ed.), *Osman Hamdi ve Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi*; Ürekli, *Sanayi- Nefise Mektebi'nin Kuruluşu ve Türk Eğitim Tarihindeki Yeri*. Chapter II.

³¹ For the most comprehensive study on Mehmed Vahid and his involvement with the Academy of Fine Arts, see, Seçkin Naipoğlu, *Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi'nde Sanat Tarihi Yaklaşımı ve Vahit Bey* (PhD dissertation, Hacettepe University, 2008).

³² Salomon Reinach, *Apollo: histoire générale des arts plastiques* (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1904). Salomon Reinach, *Apollo: Tarih-i Umûmî-i Sînâât*, trans. Vahid (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1330 [1914]).

In fact, one of the most striking aspects of the Regulation is its use of the term ‘*sınâât-ı nefîse*’ rather than ‘*sanâyi-i nefîse*’—the former was particularly and consciously preferred by Mehmed Vahid in contrast to other art critics, such as Celâl Esad, who preferred the latter.³³

Halil Edhem, on the other hand, had been schooled in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland and, as Edhem Eldem puts it, was not as Francophile as his brother Osman Hamdi Bey who ‘represented a Eurocentric universal worldview’.³⁴ Halil Edhem’s attention was more directed to ‘local and national elements,’ and when he replaced his late brother Osman Hamdi Bey in 1910 as director of the Imperial Museum, his focus was mostly on Anatolian Islamic culture.³⁵ The driving force behind his cultural concerns, however, was neither parochial nor ethno-nationalist. In September 1915, he penned a letter to the Ministry of Education to request a ‘third class Osmani medal’ for the retired French-born Polish art instructor of the Academy of Fine Arts, Joseph Warnia for his contribution to ‘raising many students since the foundation of the Academy’.³⁶ Furthermore, he took a rather straightforward universalist view of war and its cultural destructiveness. Later in the war, in a special issue of the *Yeni Mecmua*, he would express concern about the damage to works of art not only in the Ottoman Empire or Germany or Austria, but also in France, Belgium, and Russia.³⁷

³³ Vahid, *Bazı Istilâhât-ı Mühimme-i Sınâiyye Hakkında Mütâlâât* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1331 [1916]). Cf. Celal Esâd, *Istilâhât-ı İlmiye Encümeni Tarafından Sanayi-i Nefisede Mevcud Kelimat ve Tabirat İçin Vaz ve Tedvini Tensib Olunan Istilahat Mecmuasıdır* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1330 [1914/1915]). For further discussion on the difference between Mehmed Vahid and Celâl Esad’s translation for the term ‘art’, see the introduction written by Nuran Yazıcı to Celâl Esad Arseven, *Güzel Sanatlar Terimleri Alanında Öncü Bir Çalışma: Sanâyi-i Nefîse Istilâhâtı Mecmûası* (İstanbul: Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi, 2012).

³⁴ Edhem Eldem, *Osman Hamdi Bey Sözlüğü* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2010), p. 258.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ BOA, MF.MKT. 1212/31, 3 Eylül 1331[16 September 1915].

³⁷ Halil Edhem, ‘Harb-i Umumide Antika ve Eşya-yı Nefise Ticareti’, *Yeni Mecmua*, 1918. This study uses the transliterated version of the special issue of the *Yeni Mecmua* Magazine. Murat Çulcu (ed.), *Yeni Mecmua’nın Nüsha-i Fevkaledesi: Çanakkale, 18 Mart 1915* (İstanbul: E Yayınları), pp. 142-144.

In fact, the language of the Regulation he prepared was explicitly inclusive. In the second article of what seems to be the earliest draft of the regulation, the phrase ‘yet foreigners cannot receive a financial award’ was crossed-out entirely from the document by one of its editors (or by himself).³⁸ Instead, in later versions—both in the documents at Ottoman archives and in its publication in April 1917 in the official journal of the Ottoman government, *Takvim-i Vekâyi*—the words ‘Ottoman and foreign artists can participate in Fine Arts exhibitions’ were inserted. Though the concept of ‘foreigner’ here was restricted to non-Ottoman citizens like Warnia (not non-Muslim Ottomans),³⁹ the regulation clearly appealed to a wider circle of artists, rather than only to those who identified as Muslim Turks.

The Galatasaraylılar Yurdu Exhibitions of 1916-17

In summer 1916, less than five months after the drafting of the Regulation, and as a direct result of its promulgation, a major painting exhibition was organized at the Galatasaraylılar Yurdu in the cosmopolitan district of Pera. The chosen venue was the previous club of *Società Operaia*, an association for Italian workers since 1863. The building had been converted to a club for the nearby Lycée de Galatasaray in February in 1916, with the aim of being ‘beneficial in the realm of learning and literature’.⁴⁰

Conspicuous among the members of the selection committees chosen by the Academy of Fine Arts were Ottoman statesmen whose patronage had supported both

³⁸ ‘~~Ecneler yalnız mükafat ı nakdiyye alamazlar~~’.

³⁹ For the Ottoman state’s policy of foreigners during the First World War, see, Ramazan Sonat, *I. Dünya Savaşı Yıllarında Osmanlı Devletinin Muhasım Devlet Tebaası Politikası (1914-1918)* (MA Thesis, Selçuk Üniversitesi, 2014).

⁴⁰ ‘Galatasaraylılar Yurdu’, *Türk Yurdu*, 6 April 1916, No: 106. Şefkatli, *Türk Yurdu*, p. 40. For further information on *Società Operaia*, see Paolo Girardelli, *Istanbul e L’Italia, 1837-1908: Confronto e Interpretazioni Reciproche di due Tradizioni Architettoniche* (PhD Diss. Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico I. Naples, 1994). Before the war, the building had already hosted a few painting exhibitions; the last of those had been held in 1911. *Catalogue de l’exposition artistique à la société operaia* (Constantinople, 1911).

Muslim and non-Muslim Ottoman artists. The 1916 committee was comprised of painter Halil Pasha; the architect Edhem Bey; director of the Archaeology Museum and the Academy of Fine Arts Halil Bey; Grand Vizier Said Halim Pasha; Chief Minister of Public Works (*Nâfia Nâzırı*) Abbas Halim Pasha; and, Chief Minister of the Bureau of Protocol of the Imperial Council (*Teşrifât-ı Umumiye Nâzırı*) İsmail Cenani Bey.⁴¹ Said Halim Pasha, known for his antipathy to Turkist ideas,⁴² had a great interest in painting; recently he had even donated a painting from his collection to the Academy of Fine Arts.⁴³ Abbas Halim Pasha, who was Said Halim Pasha's brother, had a close association with Ottoman painters. He had sponsored İbrahim Feyhaman's art education in Paris⁴⁴ and commissioned a series of family portraits from the artist during the war years.⁴⁵ Similarly, İsmail Cenani Bey was another patron of arts and a lover of painting; he visited Ottoman artists' studios regularly to see and purchase their work, including the Ottoman Armenian painter Panos Terlemezian.⁴⁶ For the 1917 exhibition, Halil Pasha, Said Halim Pasha, Abbas Halim Pasha, and Halil Bey remained in the committee; while, İsmail Cenani Bey was replaced by Reşad Fuad Bey, a member of the Council of State (*Şûrâyı Devlet*), and

⁴¹ 'Resim Sergisi: Tenkidat ve Mütalat', *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 4 August 1916.

⁴² Said Halim Pasha is known to have refused the name 'Turkish' for the Society of Turkish Studies (*Türkiyat Cemiyeti*) in 1915, which was founded with the name of The Society for the Study of the Islamic and National Culture (*Âsâr-ı İslâmiye ve Milliye Tetkik Encümeni*) in the same year. Mehmet Şakir Ülkütaşır, 'Fuad Köprülü ve Bazı Basın Hatıraları', *Türk Kültürü*, Issue: 47, September 1966, p. 976. On Said Halim, see, Ahmet Şeyhun, *Said Halim Pasha: An Ottoman Statesman and an Islamist Thinker (1865-1921)* (Unpublished PhD dissertation, McGill University, 2002).

⁴³ He was thanked for his donation in the introduction of *Sanâyi-i Nefîse-i Şâhâne Mektebinde Mevcud Âsâr-ı Nakşiye ile Bazı Heyâkilin Muhtasar Fihristidir* (Istanbul: Matbaa-ı Âmire, [1334] 1915/1916), p. 6. It is important to note that some sources mistakenly identify the year of this publication as Rumi and, hence, write the year as 1918. Though Rumi was more commonly used than Hijri back then, one can easily see the Hijri date '1 Muharrem 1334' at the end of the introduction. Hence the year of the publication must be either 1915 or 1916.

⁴⁴ Hikmet Onat, 'Interview' in Nurullah Berk and Hüseyin Gezer, *50 Yılın Türk Resim ve Heykeli* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası, 1973), pp.17-8. For İbrahim Feyhaman Bey's art training in Paris, see BOA, MF. MKT, 1177/73, 23 Muharrem 1330 [13 January 1912].

⁴⁵ Today some of these portraits belong to the collection of the Mimar Sinan University Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture.

⁴⁶ See, Terlemezian's memoirs: Bilal and Burcu, *Gomidas Vartabed*, forthcoming.

so was Edhem Bey by the painter Nazmi Ziya.⁴⁷ Reşad Fuad Bey, one of the founders of the Museum of Pious Foundations (*Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi*), was an eager collector of antique and other works of art.⁴⁸ His large collection included works by Ottoman painters, such as the ones produced by the Ottoman Armenian imperial portraits Sebuhan Manas.⁴⁹

In the 1916 exhibition, forty-four artists⁵⁰ displayed their artworks to the Ottoman public for one and a half months until the second week of August 1916.⁵¹ The display brought together famous painters such as the Ottoman Muslim painters Halil and Zekai Pashas, and the Ottoman Armenian Viçen Arslanyan, as well as emerging talents like Çallı İbrahim and İbrahim Feyhaman. Some painters exhibited their work in Istanbul for the first time, such as the Ottoman Greek painter Eleni Iliadis. The exhibition also provided an opportunity for young art students, like Şeref Bey (then at the Academy of Fine Arts), Maide Esad Hanım, and Müzdan Said Hanım (both then at the Academy of Fine Arts for Women),⁵² to participate in this major art

⁴⁷ 'Resim Sergisi Mükafatları', *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 10 August 1917.

⁴⁸ Atilla Çetin, 'Reşad Fuad Bey', *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 6 (Ankara; İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı; Tarih Vakfı, 1993-1995), p. 317.

⁴⁹ Nurdan Küçükhasaköylü, 'Osmanlı Sarayı'nda Ermeni Ressamlar: Manas Ailesi', *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* (June 2011), p. 174.

⁵⁰ According to the exhibition catalogue, the artists were: Cevad Bey, Monsieur Renemax, Mademoiselle Mari Bahar, Sedat Simavi Bey, Mehmed Said Bey, Midhat Rebii Bey, Mahmud Bey, Hüseyin Rifat Bey, Mademoiselle Mari Kıbrızlıyan, Hüseyin Avni Bey Lifij, Sami Bey, Halil Paşa, Muazzez Bey, Kemaleddin Bey, Maide Esad Hanım, Rupen Seropyan Efendi, Namık İsmail Efendi, Vahan Atamyas Efendi, Mademoiselle Eleni Iliadis, İzzet Bey, Zekai Paşa, Şeref Bey, Halid Bey, İsmail Hakkı Bey, Müzdan Said Hanım, İbrahim Bey Çallı, Hikmet Bey, Monsieur Arslanyan, Ruhi Bey, Arif Hikmet Bey, Dimitraki Trifidi Efendi, Galib Efendi, Tovmas Efendi Baldazar, Celile Hikmet Hanım, Şevki Bey, Harika Hanım, Vecih Bey, İbrahim Feyhaman Bey, Nazmi Ziya Bey, Mademoiselle Hinkeni, Madame Rafael, Samson Efendi Arzuruni, Ali Cemal Bey, and İzzet Ziya Bey. *Galatasaraylılar Yurdu Resim Sergisi: Birinci Sene* (Dersaadet, 1332 [1916]).

⁵¹ 'Resim Sergisi Kapanıyor', *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 13 August 1916.

⁵² The Academy of Fine Arts for Women (*İnas Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi*) was founded on 13 October 1914. See, Chapter III. For women painters see, Taha Toros, *İlk Kadın Ressamlarımız* (İstanbul: Akbank, 1988); Berke İnel and Burçak İnel, 'Discovering the Missing Heroines: The Role of Women Painters in Early Modernist Art in Turkey', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (April, 2002), pp.205-12; Wendy Shaw, 'Where Did the Women Go? Female Artists from the Ottoman Empire to the Early Years of the Turkish Republic', *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 23, No: 1 (2011), pp.13-37.

event.⁵³ The exhibition also actively encouraged Ottoman women to attend by declaring ‘women-only’ days on certain days of the week.⁵⁴ With its inclusive and progressive posture, this exhibition played an important role in tentatively (re)establishing an inclusive and integrated art world where, as in the pre-war years, many Muslim and non-Muslim artists were again part of the vibrant art scene.

Amongst the privations and propaganda of wartime Istanbul, there seems to have been much public anticipation of the new painting exhibition. Already in April 1916, exhibition news started to appear, almost in two months advance. The *Tasvir-i Efkâr* announced with confidence that the aim of the forthcoming exhibition was to ‘restore to the Ottoman fine arts their rightful place and once profound demand and popularity’.⁵⁵ Yet this popular enthusiasm did not affect all branches of the Ottoman state equally. The opening ceremony was held on Friday, 30 June 1916, and the exhibition was inaugurated by the honorary president of the Ottoman Society of Painters, Prince Abdülmecid Efendi: a great patron of art who provided ample support to painters of all backgrounds during the war and himself a talented painter of historical scenes.⁵⁶ Also present at both opening ceremonies was the Grand Vizier

⁵³ Şeref [Akdik] (1899-1972) would later become one of the most popular painters of the Republican era. Gültekin Elibal, *Şeref Akdik: Hayatı, Sanatı, Eserleri* (İstanbul: Ar Ajans Resim, 1974). In Turkish art history writing, Maide Esad Hanım [?-?] is almost an unknown figure. The main source for her enrollment at the Academy is her colleague and classmate Belkıs Mustafa (1896-1925) class notes dating 1916. For a transliteration of Belkıs Mustafa’s notes, see Asım Mutlu, ‘Ressam Belkıs Mustafa’nın Yaşamı ve Onun Desenleri İle Yakın Çevresinden bir Kesit’, *Sanat Çevresi*, Issue: 101 (March 1987), pp. 10-13. Müzdan Said [Arel] (1897-1986) was another first graduates of the Academy. For further information, see, Mutlu, ‘Ressam Belkıs Mustafa’nın Yaşamı’. Toros, *İlk Kadın Ressamlarımız*.

⁵⁴ The press reported the women only days as Tuesdays and Saturdays at first, but later as Mondays. ‘Galatasaraylılar Yurdunda Resim, *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 14 June 1916. Cf. ‘Galatasaraylılar Yurdunda Resim Sergisi’, *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 29 June 1916; ‘Galatasaraylılar Yurdunda Resim Sergisi’, *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 2 July 1916.

⁵⁵ ‘Galatasaraylılar Yurdunda Resim Sergisi’, *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 6 May 1916.

⁵⁶ Just before the war started, one of Abdülmecid Efendi’s paintings had been exhibited in Paris at the famous Salon Exhibition of 1914. For a reproduction of Abdülmecid Efendi’s work titled *La leçon d’histoire*, see the exhibition catalogue *1914 Société des artistes français: Catalogue illustré du salon, peinture et sculpture* (Paris, 1914), p. 180. Chapter II. During the war years, Abdülmecid Efendi painted a series of historical scenes and portraits. He painted his impressive full-length portrait of the famous Ottoman playwright Abdülhak Hamid during the early days of the war. He donated the work to the Collection of Decorated Panels (*Elvah-ı Nakşiye Koleksiyonu*) in 1915. Yet, it was not until the

Said Halim Pasha. While the Ottoman government did send representatives to the event (the Grand Vizier Said Halim Pasha and the Ministry of Justice İbrahim Pasha),⁵⁷ there was one conspicuous absence: the Minister of War Enver Pasha. Indeed, in late March 1916, Enver Pasha had attended the opening ceremony of Wilhelm Viktor Krausz's art exhibition in Istanbul, as we have seen. He was actively initiated and participated in propagandistic cultural events during the war years.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, he seems to have shown little interest in civic events with involvement by non-Muslim artists, and didn't deign to attend either Galatasaray exhibition.

Even though official propaganda was far from being the main objective of the Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibitions, they do seem to have had a positive impact on the international image of the Ottoman Empire. In June 1916, regarding the increasing accusations of the Ottoman state's anti-Armenian policies, Talat Pasha had made some confessions to a German journalist in Istanbul, explaining that 'We are not savages [...] We have been blamed for not making a distinction between the innocent and the guilty. It was impossible; the innocent of to-day might become the guilty of to-morrow'.⁵⁹ Yet he knew too well that the Entente Powers showed little interest in his justification. As we shall see, the 1916 Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibition had some coverage in the American press, which saw it as 'Occidental influences in Turkey'⁶⁰ and provided a kind of alternative to the accusations, which claimed that 'there is no

1918 Vienna Exhibition that he displayed his works in an exhibition after the outbreak of war. For the Vienna exhibition, see, Chapter II and Chapter IV.

⁵⁷ G. B. [Galib Bahtiyar], 'Galatasaraylılar Yurdu Resim Sergisi: Sergide Teşhir Edilen Levhalar Hakkında Mütalea', *İkdam*, 30 June 1916; 'Resim Sergisi'nin Küşadı', *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 1 July 1916; 'Galatasaraylılar Yurdunda Resim Sergisi', *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 2 July 1916.

⁵⁸ For further information on Enver Pasha and his propagandist mission in the field of Ottoman culture, see Chapter III and Chapter V.

⁵⁹ The interview also appeared in the English-speaking press. 'The Massacre of Armenians: A Turkish Confession', *The Times*, 20 June 1916, p. 21. The same article was also published in *The Guardian*, 20 June 1916, p. 10.

⁶⁰ *Ankansas City Daily Traveler*, 22 August 1916, p. 6.

Turkish civilization and no Turkish literature and no Turkish art.’⁶¹ Whether by design or not, the Galatarasaraylılar Yurdu exhibitions seem to have provided an opportunity for Ottoman artists to show the empire’s other faces, particularly those of women and Christian communities in Ottoman society.

Prominent in the 1916 exhibition were more than twenty works by the 21-year old Ottoman Greek painter Eleni Iliadis:⁶² the largest number of works displayed by any one painter at the Galatasaraylılar Yurdu. Born in Istanbul in 1895, Iliadis had received her art training in Munich.⁶³ Later described as a ‘highly accomplished portraitist’, in the 1916 exhibition, the majority of her works were portraits, but she also exhibited still-lives and landscapes.⁶⁴

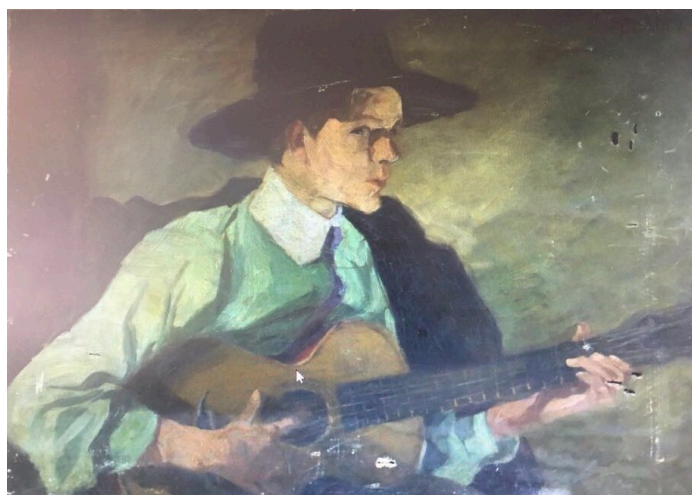


FIGURE 4.3: Eleni Iliadis, *Guitar Player (Kitaracı)*, undated, oil on canvas, 65 x 90 cm © Ankara Museum of Painting and Sculpture.⁶⁵

⁶¹ James Morgan, ‘Fallen Nations: The Martyrdom of Armenia’, *The Washington Herald*, 12 December 1915, p. 75.

⁶² For Eleni Iliadis, see, Αθανάσιος Παπάς, *Πολίτες Ζωγράφοι και Αγιογράφοι του Δεκάτου Ενάτου και Εικοστού Αιώνα* (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Δόμος, 1989), p. 52; Mayda Saris, *Istanbulu Rum Ressamlar/Greek Painters of Istanbul* (Istanbul: Bir Zamanlar Yayıncılık, 2010), p. 144; Gizem Tongo, ‘Tarih ve Hafıza Arasında: Geç Osmanlı Dönemi İstanbul’unda Bir Ressam; Eleni Iliadis’, *Toplumsal Tarih*, No: 272 (August 2016), pp. 57-63.

⁶³ Women could not enrol at the Munich Academy at the time, so Eleni Iliadis worked at the private studio of Moritz Heymann and Hermann Groeber. Tongo, ‘Tarih ve Hafıza Arasında’, p. 57. Women were finally accepted at the Munich Academy as late as 1920. Robin Lenman, ‘A Community in Transition: Painters in Munich, 1886-1924’, *Central European History*, Vol. 15, No.1 (1982), pp. 3-33.

⁶⁴ For her solo exhibition in Istanbul in 1918, an anonymous writer in the *Osmanischer Lloyd* described her as a ‘highly accomplished portraitist’. ‘Unsre zweite Ausstellung’, *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 9 Mart 1918. See, Chapter V.

⁶⁵ I would like to thank vice director of Ankara Museum of Painting and Sculpture for helping me find Eleni Iliadis’ painting in the archive of the museum.

Alongside Iliadis, nine other women painters also exhibited their work, including Celile Hikmet Hanım and Mari Kıbrızlıyan. In fact, the 1916 exhibition is an example of the increasing visibility of Ottoman women—and especially Muslim women—in the public domain throughout the war years.⁶⁶ This progressive stance inevitably drew the attention of the international media. In rather condescending terms, the monthly commercial journal from Hamburg *Deutsche Levante Zeitung* wrote:

[The exhibition] features around two hundred paintings, a number of which are of real artistic value. The Ladies of Stambul did not want to miss out either, and submitted a number of *finely felt* pictures.⁶⁷

Contemporary American newspapers saw the presence of ‘Turkish women’ painters as an ‘evidence’, not of Ottoman women’s increasing independence, but of ‘Occidental influences in Turkey’:

As an evidence of the constant increase of Occidental influences in Turkey, a considerable number of *young* Turkish women were *permitted to* exhibit their paintings at an exhibition ... Some 200 paintings in all, many of them by women, and all of them by Turkish painters, were placed on view.⁶⁸

In contrast, reviewers in the Ottoman press critics rarely found the participation of Ottoman women artists as noteworthy. Instead, they praised the 1916 exhibition as the finest of Ottoman painting to date, hailing it—in distinctly nationalist tones—as a

⁶⁶ On Ottoman women and the First World War: Elif Mahir Metinsoy, *Poor Ottoman Turkish Women During World War I: Women’s Experiences and Politics in Everyday Life, 1914-1923* (PhD Thesis, Bogazici University, 2012); Tiğince Özkiper Oktar, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Kadının Çalışma Yaşamı* (Istanbul: bilim Teknik Yayınevi, 1998); Yavuz Selim Karakışla, *Women, Work and War in the Ottoman Empire: Society for the Employment of Ottoman Muslim Women 1916-1923* (Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archive and Research Centre, 2005).

⁶⁷ ‘Es sind gegen 200 Bilder ausgestellt, darunter eine ganze Anzahl von wirklich künstlerischem Wert. Auch die Damen Stambuls wollten nicht zurückstehen und haben eine Reihe feinempfundener Bilder eingesandt.’ *Deutsche Levante Zeitung*, 1 August 1916, p. 513. My emphasis.

⁶⁸ *Ankansas City Daily Traveler*, 22 August 1916, p. 6. See other contemporary American newspapers on the same exhibition: *Harrisburg Daily Independent*, 14 August 1916, p. 8; *The Allentown Democrat*, 22 August 1916, p. 7; *Independence Daily Reporter*, 22 August 1916, p. 2; *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 3 September 1916, p. 22. My emphasis.

profound achievement for ‘Ottoman’ art: *Tasvir-i Efkâr* praised this ‘first [truly] beautiful and national’ painting exhibition, characterized it as a demonstration of ‘our nation being capable of everything’⁶⁹ and thanked the government and the public for their support and the high demand.⁷⁰ *İkdam* considered it a great success for ‘our painting and artistic life’.⁷¹ Also writing in *İkdam*, the nationalist writer Galib Bahtiyar only mentioned the high participation of non-Muslims in passing, when he wrote of his ‘pleasant surprise’ that the art works were produced ‘with a few exceptions, by Turkish artists’.⁷²

One year later, in mid-June 1917, the second Galatasaraylılar Yurdu Exhibition opened its doors to the Istanbul public.⁷³ The memory of the previous exhibition, as well as a one-month postponement in the actual day of opening, all contributed to the excitement about the inauguration ceremony.⁷⁴ Like the 1916 exhibition, the popular Prince Abdülmecid Efendi inaugurated the display and was accompanied by the Grand Vizier Said Halim Pasha. This time, however, another member of the Ottoman royal family Prince Abdülhalim Efendi (1894-1926), grandson of Sultan Abdülmecid (r. 1839-1961), was also present—a detail the newspapers emphasized.⁷⁵ Compared to the first Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibition, the second exhibition was smaller, comprising one hundred and fifty-nine works created by thirty-seven artists.⁷⁶ The decrease in the number of the paintings was

⁶⁹ ‘Resim Sergisi Küşadı’, *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 1 July 1916.

⁷⁰ ‘Resim Sergisi Kapanıyor’, *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 13 August 1916.

⁷¹ ‘Resim Sergisi’, *İkdam*, 1 July 1916. My emphasis.

⁷² G. B. [Galib Bahtiyar], ‘Galatasaraylılar Yurdu Resim Sergisi: Sergide Teşhir Edilen Levhalar Hakkında Mütalea’, *İkdam*, 30 June 1916. My emphasis.

⁷³ ‘Resim Sergisi Açılıyor’, *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 14 June 1917. ‘Galatasaraylılar Yurdunda İkinci Resim Sergisi’, *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 16 June 1917.

⁷⁴ An opening date of 18 May was advertised in the newspapers as early as March, but the exhibition would eventually open in April. ‘1333 Resim Sergisi’, *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 16 March 1917; ‘Resim Sergisi’, *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 22 April 1917.

⁷⁵ ‘Galatasaraylılar Yurdunda İkinci Resim Sergisi’, *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 16 June 1917.

⁷⁶ These artists were; Arslanyan Efendi, Bakkalyan Efendi, Celile Hikmet Hanım, Cevad Bey, Çallı İbrahim Bey, Fehmi Bey, Frenkyan Efendi, Fuad Bey, Halil Pasha, Harika Hanım, Hikmet Bey,

attributed to the continuing conflict as well as to the selection committee that had rejected around forty paintings on the basis of their quality.⁷⁷ Various non-Muslim artists participated in the exhibition to that extent that their number was almost equal to the Muslims. Among the artworks on display were paintings by, again, Halil Pasha, Çallı İbrahim, İbrahim Feyhaman, Viçen Arslanyan, and Eleni Iliadis, alongside the work of newcomers such as Israel Feldman, a Jewish painter of Russian origin, who exhibited three works.⁷⁸ Again, Saturdays and Mondays were reserved as ‘women-only’ days to encourage female attendance.⁷⁹

The newly founded weekly magazine *Yeni Mecmua* devoted four entire pages to the 1917 exhibition complete with reproductions of some of its paintings.⁸⁰ The *Yeni Mecmua* was founded in July 1917 by Ziya Gökalp, a member of the Central Committee of the CUP. Though the journal was supported by the CUP, it was known to be less political than magazines like *Türk Yurdu*.⁸¹ This lengthy article was also the first exhibition review to be illustrated with reproductions of paintings after the outbreak of war, perhaps because the halftone photomechanical process was now an expensive business.⁸² The author of the piece was the painter Nazmi Ziya. Unlike the Turkist reviewer of the 1916 exhibition, Galib Bahtiyar, Nazmi Ziya placed the

İbrahim Feyhaman Bey, İmadüddün Vehbi Bey, İzzet Ziya Bey, Kalfayan Efendi, M. Arakelyan, Madame İzbet Hakel, Mademoiselle Eleni Iliadis, Mademoiselle Mazarya, Mademoiselle Pezas, Mademoiselle Tamar Françes, Mademoiselle Yanakopulou, Melek Ziya Hanım, Monsieur E. Malla, Monsieur Feldman, Monsieur Milman, Monsieur Şink Parahavez, Namık Bey, Nazmi Ziya Bey, Ömer Adil Bey, Ruşen Zamir Hanım, Sami Bey (Bahriyeli), Sami Bey, Seyyid Bey, Şevket Bey, Zekai Pasha. *Galatasaraylılar Yurdu Resim Sergisi: İkinci Sene* (Dersaadet, 1333 [1917]).

⁷⁷ ‘Galatasaraylılar Yurdunda İkinci Resim Sergisi’, *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 16 June 1917.

⁷⁸ *Galatasaraylılar Yurdu Resim Sergisi: İkinci Sene* (Dersaadet, 1333 [1917]). Israel Feldman, later to be known as Israel Paldi (Feldman), was born in Ukraine in 1892. He first immigrated to Palestine in 1909 and later to Munich in 1911 where he enrolled at the prestigious Munich Art Academy, moving to Istanbul with the outbreak of war and staying in the city until 1919. *The Twenties in Israeli Art* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Museum, 1982), p. 130.

⁷⁹ ‘Resim Sergisi’, *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 19 June 1917.

⁸⁰ Nazmi Ziya, ‘Sanayi-i Nefise,’ *Yeni Mecmua*, Issue: 8, 30 August 1917, pp. 149-152.

⁸¹ In fact, Erol Köroğlu notes that the magazine’s use of high quality paper, which was a great privilege in a time when even normal paper was fairly scarce, was very much related to that fact that it was supported by the CUP. See, Köroğlu, *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity*, pp. 90-96.

⁸² The halftone photomechanical process allowed the art works to be reproduced in mass quantity and made available to a wide audience in low costs. Chapter II.

participants of the 1917 exhibition in the broader category of Ottomans, and claimed to be ‘grateful’ that there had now been organized ‘exhibitions that are adorned with works by Ottoman artists *only*’.⁸³ Though on some occasions Nazmi Ziya used the words ‘Ottoman’ and ‘Turkish’ interchangeably, it is also true his characterisation of the participants did not rely on distinct ethnic entities such as Muslim Ottoman, Ottoman Armenian, Ottoman Jewish, or Ottoman Greek. Nevertheless, Nazmi Ziya’s article was illustrated with paintings produced by only Muslim Ottoman painters, namely: Çallı İbrahim, Hikmet Bey, Şevket Bey, Namık İsmail, and İbrahim Feyhaman.⁸⁴ This absence of non-Muslims painters’ works in the publication may well have been due to CUP influence on the journal, but may also have been due to the changing political and ideological circumstances as the war progressed.

In many ways, the year 1917 marked a major turning point in the progress of the war, and this had an appreciable effect on cultural policy in the empire. By the end of 1917, three years of hard-fought total war, with human suffering on an unprecedented scale, the Ottoman Empire had suffered a terrible number of casualties. The home front was even more severely hit by the tremendous economic problems. In April, America entered the war on the side of the allies, which would very much change the course of the war in their favour. Around the same time of the opening of the 1917 exhibition, Greece declared war on the Ottoman Empire. In fact, while for the 1916 exhibition, the committee had awarded silver arts medals (*gümüş sanayi madalyası*) to four painters, among them was Eleni Iliadis (together with İbrahim

⁸³ Nazmi Ziya, ‘Sanayi-i Nefise,’ *Yeni Mecmua*, Issue: 8, 30 August 1917, pp. 149-152.

⁸⁴ The reproduced paintings were: Hikmet’s *Beşiktaş*, a landscape painting of the Bosphorus viewed from the shores of Istanbul; Çallı İbrahim’s *Büyük Ada*, a landscape painting featuring two women wondering in the woods at one of the Princess Islands; two interior paintings of mosques by Şevket Bey, namely *Mihrab* (Prayer-Niche) and *Cami Kapısı* (The Gate of the Mosque); Namık İsmail’s *Tefekkür* (Contemplation), a genre painting depicting a woman in her room alone; Namık İsmail’s *Lale Devri* (Tulip Age), a historical painting set in the eighteenth century Tulip Period; and a portrait painting by Feyhaman İbrahim Bey. Nazmi Ziya, ‘Sanayi-i Nefise,’ *Yeni Mecmua*, Issue: 8, 30 August 1917, pp. 149-152.

Feyhaman, Avni Lifij, and Çallı İbrahim),⁸⁵ for the second exhibition, the number of the awards decreased to three, and only Muslim Ottomans—Hüseyin Zekai, Namık İsmail, and Şevket Bey—received prizes.⁸⁶

Whether because the national and international coverage of the Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibitions themselves alerted the CUP government to the propaganda value of war painting, or to the political potential of the civic and cosmopolitan artistic space they had opened up, it now moved to yoke Ottoman painting to its war effort. In the war's final art season, the War Ministry would directly commission artworks by the painters (and by the only Ottoman Muslims) for an 'Exhibition of War Paintings' which were to be planned to be exhibited in the capital cities of the allies.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, during the war's second and third art seasons of 1916 and 1917, the civic-minded Ottoman cultural initiative behind the Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibitions had attempted to foreground and encourage ambivalent and non-propagandist currents in Ottoman painting.

Art and the 'Spiritual Anguish' of the Home Front

To Live at Ease

In 1916 and 1917, war did not disappear from intellectual life, neither from public culture, but its novelty had worn off. The diminishing patriotic popular culture might suggest that the conflict had become a reality that Ottomans wanted to escape from. The winter of 1916 was enlivened by the famous Austro-Hungarian composer Franz Lehár's visit. His operetta, performed at the Petit Champ Theatre, was among the

⁸⁵ BOA, İ. DUİT 66/38, 11 L 1334 [11 August 1916]. *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, No: 2617, 3 August 1332 [16 August 1916]. *Tasvir-i Efkâr* notes that in addition to silver medals, a number of special mentions (*zîkr-i cemil*) were also awarded. 'Resim Sergisi: Tenkidat ve Mütalat', *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 4 August 1916.

⁸⁶ *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, No: 3029, 14 Teşrîn-i Evvel 1333 [14 October 1917].

⁸⁷ See Chapter V.

most popular hits of the year.⁸⁸ In January 1917, the Istanbul public filled the theatre to watch a French comedy, *La Belle Aventure*, adapted to Turkish as *Bir Çiçek İki Böcek*.⁸⁹ In the winter of 1917, the comedy film *Bican Efendi*, featuring a kind of an Ottoman Charlie Chaplin character, became so popular that they made a series of sequels in later years.⁹⁰

At the same time, the strict censorship regulations enacted by the Ottoman state made the life both on the home front and the battlefield immensely difficult: each and every written documents, including any correspondence sent via the post, was subject to censorship; and, in the case of any suspect, journals and newspapers were subject to severe measurements.⁹¹ According to the journalist Ahmed Emin [Yalman], there were many Ottomans who were not happy at all with the idea of entering another major war after the disaster of the Balkan Wars, but those people ‘were disorganized and silent’ as ‘all the available organized channels in the country were in the hands of a minority which was composed of pro-war extremists.’⁹² Despite its apparent quietude, such abhorrence for the war was nevertheless passionately felt, even among the Ottoman upper classes. In December 1915, Nigâr Hanım, the celebrated woman poet and whose diary entries were often filled with pessimistic thoughts and hopelessness due to the continuing war, wrote in her private diary:

⁸⁸ The performance was also attended by some Ottoman royal women. See the memoirs of Sherifa Musbah Haidar, daughter of Amir Ali Haidar, a Sherif of Mecca. Princess Musbah Haidar, *Arabesque* (London: Hutchinson, 1944), pp. 97-101.

⁸⁹ A. D. ‘Temâşâ Musâhebesi: Dârülbeyânın Yeni Bir Piyesi’, *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 27 Kânûn-ı Sâni 1917.

⁹⁰ ‘Neue türkische filme’, *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 2 November 1917. On Ottoman cinema, see, Canan Balan, ‘Wondrous Pictures in Istanbul: From Cosmopolitanism to Nationalism’, in Richard Abel, Giorgio Bertellini, Rob King (eds.), *Early Cinema and the ‘National’* (New Barnet: John Libbey Publishing, 2008), pp. 172-185. For further information on propaganda films during the First World War: Özde Çeliktemel-Thomen, ‘Cinema and Propaganda in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War’, Paper presented at the International Conference Not All Quiet on the Ottoman Fronts: Neglected Perspectives on a Global War, 1914-1918, Istanbul, Turkey, 8-12 April 2014.

⁹¹ *Sansür Talimâtname* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Askeriye, [1330] 1914). Beşikçi, *Ottoman Mobilization*, p. 55.

⁹² Ahmet Emin Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte Gördüklerim ve Geçirdiklerim* (İstanbul: Yenilik Basmevi, 1970), p. 219.

O that perished youth, those minds, that beauty, the talent. Those lamenting mothers and lovers. That whole mass of humanity swept away. It is this memory that ceaselessly breaks my heart and leaves me desolate. O God! If continuing this world war is not some madness, then it is without doubt an unequalled species of murder.⁹³

In 1917, Nigâr Hanım noted in her diary that she had been able to spend ‘a lovely two hours’ in the Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibition.⁹⁴ In fact, with their emphasis on sunlight and beautiful scenery, most Ottoman painters at Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibitions conjured up an enjoyable world for their viewers, far away from the realities of the conflict; or a pleasing distraction to make life bearable in the midst of a war. Beautiful canvases respond to those ‘broken hearts’. In an 1917 article, titled the ‘Importance of Art’, Nazmi Ziya praised the ‘West’ in healing ‘the spiritual anguish’ of people through art:

There are theatres, music, entertainments, promenades, museum, and exhibitions to heal the spiritual anguish [of the people in the West] ... there are fine arts to provide spiritual serenity and enhance the sensibility of each individual. Only through this, people can live at ease, and be bound to life and to the fatherland.⁹⁵

The desire to make their paintings more marketable for the patrons, old and new, might have also persuaded Ottoman painters to dilute negative scenes about the contemporary conflict. For Nazmi Ziya, the patriotic role of art seems not to have been incompatible with its universal role in making everyday experience a pleasant one. Indeed, he gave some artistic advice on how to make the paintings ‘national and civilised’. For the same article, he chose mostly light-hearted landscape paintings and images of modern women, including Namık İsmail’s *Contemplation (Tefekkür)* (fig.

⁹³ Nigâr Hanım’s son, Salih Keramet Nigâr (1885-1987), donated his mother’s diaries to the Aşyan Museum in 1959. Since then a small section from the manuscript has been published twice, first by Salih Keramet Nigâr himself in 1959 and later by Nazan Bekiroğlu in 1998: Nigar bint Osman, *Hayatının Hikayesi* (Istanbul: Ekin Basımevi, 1959); Nazan Bekiroğlu, *Şair Nigar Hanım* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1998). This study uses both. The quote here is from Bekiroğlu, *Şair Nigar Hanım*, p. 120.

⁹⁴ Bekiroğlu, *Şair Nigar Hanım*, p. 166.

⁹⁵ Nazmi Ziya, ‘Sanatın Kıymeti’, *Yeni Mecmua*, 13 September 1917.

4.9), a genre painting depicting a young woman in a room, and Çallı İbrahim's *Big Island (Büyük Ada)* (fig. 4.10), a landscape painting featuring two women in the woods.⁹⁶ Though contemporary exhibition reviews do not reveal much detail about the identity of the new picture collectors, Nazmi Ziya hinted elsewhere that a 'considerable amount of money' was spent for the artworks in Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibitions.⁹⁷ Ottoman artists thus seem to have understood this renewed interest in painting as an advantage. For the 1916 exhibition, Nazmi Ziya expressed his optimism: 'to see that this exhibition is not neglected even during the long years of disastrous wars awakens honour and pride in our hearts.'⁹⁸

As we shall see, both Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibitions successfully managed to offer a flavour of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Ottoman painting, and were dedicated less to a specific style than to an effort to promote artistic excellence and its appreciation among the Ottoman public.

Cosmopolitan Styles: From Academicism to Impressionism

During the war years, Ottoman painting was experiencing significant diversification brought about by, among other things, academically trained painters who returned from study in Europe with new styles. Whilst looking inward for a creation of a solid 'national art' tradition, or, in the words of Nazmi Ziya, of an 'Ottoman art', painters were also looking outward, particularly toward Europe, to which most talented

⁹⁶ Other reproduced paintings were: two interior paintings of mosques by Şevket Bey, namely *Mihrab* (Prayer-Niche) and *Cami Kapısı* (The Gate of the Mosque); Hikmet's *Beşiktaş*, a landscape painting of the Bosphorus viewed from the shores of Istanbul; Namık İsmail's *Lale Devri* (Tulip Age), a historical painting set in the eighteenth century Tulip Period; and a portrait by Feyhaman İbrahim Bey. Nazmi Ziya, 'Sanayi-i Nefise,' *Yeni Mecmua*, Issue: 8, 30 August 1917, pp. 149-152.

⁹⁷ N.Z. [Nazmi Ziya], 'Resim Sergisi Münasebetiyle', *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 16 July 1916.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Ottoman art students had been sent for art education.⁹⁹ For the 1917 exhibition, Nazmi Ziya defined painting as ‘a flower of civilisation’:

not only did [our painters] take classes from the greatest masters of Europe, but they also put themselves forward, exhibited their works at official exhibitions, and brought to our country the unparalleled skills they gathered there to create, in so short a time, an Ottoman art [...] as it is necessary in all the fine arts, including painting, to study the greatest works regardless of nation or sex, our painters have appreciated and learned from the diverse styles of great teachers from every corner of Europe.¹⁰⁰

No other collection of Ottoman paintings could have more clearly revealed the results of Ottoman painters’ European studies than that shown at the Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibitions; the landscapes, portraits, interiors, and war-related subjects were executed in styles ranging from academic to Symbolic and to Impressionist. Thus, on the one hand, Hüseyin Zekai Pasha’s still-lives (fig. 4.4) were in the academic style, so were the interiors of mosques by Viçen Arslanyan (fig. 4.5). Yet their traditional, highly finished surface and meticulous approach to conventional subjects were displayed along with younger generation of artists who represented the more recent trend of Impressionism: a new interest in the effects of sunlight; experience with vigorous brushstrokes; and, emphasis on the narrative and sentimentality rather than the decoration.

⁹⁹ Nazmi Ziya, for instance, received his art training in the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul, then, later in the Académie Julian in Paris where he was trained under the auspices of Marcel André Baschet and Henri Royer. See, Artun, *Paris’ten Modernlik Tercümeleri*, p. 157. For further information on Ottoman painters and their art education in Europe, see Chapter II.

¹⁰⁰ Nazmi Ziya, ‘Sanayi-i Nefise’, *Yeni Mecmua*, 30 August 1917, pp. 149-150.



FIGURE 4.4: Hüseyin Zekai Pasha, *still-life* (*Natürmort*) (1917), oil on canvas, 80 x 100 cm © Bilginsoy Collection.



FIGURE 4.5: Viçen Arslanyan, Interior of *Hagia Sophia* (*Aya Sofya*) (undated), oil on canvas, 75 x 58 cm © Private Collection.

The young generation's interest in impressionistic style and *plein air* painting was also shared by some members of the older generation, such as Halil Pasha who was almost sixty years old in 1916 and who was one of the most celebrated and privileged Ottoman painters of his era. Halil Pasha had worked with the leading French academic painter Jean-Léon Gérôme in Paris and already proved himself a powerful artist, being awarded a medal during the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1889.¹⁰¹ For the exhibition, he selected a number of portrait and landscape paintings, one of which was a 'beautiful artwork' as the daily *Tasvir-i Efkâr* emphasized,¹⁰² featuring an Istanbul town under the morning sun. In *Morning View of Çengelköy* (*Çengelköy'den Sabah Manzarası*) (fig. 4.6), Halil Pasha captures the momentary beauty of the sunrise and the slow motion of the Bosphorus water, in a similar style and technique to other impressionist painters.

¹⁰¹ For Halil Pasha's name in the list of Gérôme's students: 'Liste des élèves de Gérôme', Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Peintre, sculpteur et graveur* (Vesoul: Musée de Vesoul, 1981), p. 32. See also, Artun, *Paris'ten Modernlik Tercümeleri*.

¹⁰² 'Resim Sergisi Küşadı', *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 1 July 1916.



FIGURE 4.6: Halil Pasha, *Morning View of Çengelköy* (*Çengelköy'den Sabah Manzarası*) (1916), oil on canvas, 65 x 90 cm © Ankara Museum of Painting and Sculpture.

In the exhibitions, there were also artists who, while experimenting with impressionist style, chose to represent more challenging realist subject matter. On the wall facing the 1916 exhibition's entrance hung a large, even monumental, painting *Development* (*Kalkınma*) measuring 172 x 505 cm, painted by Avni Lifij on removable canvas panels (fig. 4.7). The work was inspired by the themes of modern life and urbanisation, showing labourers engaged in various tasks at a construction site on a sunny day, with the Haydarpasha Train station visible in the right background.¹⁰³ *Development* represented a radical departure from the academic style Avni Lifij had received at the Académie Julian from the French history painter Jean Paul Laurens. Not only did he distance himself from a highly finished surface or from grand and exalted subject matters, but his matte, pale colours, and simplified forms, which were suggestive of the appearance of fresco painting, distinguished him from

¹⁰³ According to Celâl Esad, who was the municipal head of Istanbul's Kadıköy district during the war years, *Development* had been originally commissioned for the Municipal Building in Kadıköy. Arseven, *Sanat ve Siyaset Hatıralarım*.

others in the exhibitions. For *Development* one critic was quick to point out that the work ‘is a new epoch and style for us’.¹⁰⁴



FIGURE 4.7: Hüseyin Avni Lifij, *Development (Kalkınma)* (1916), oil on canvas, 172 x 505 cm © MSGSÜ Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture.

One of the genres in the display was portraiture, which was exemplified at its best by the Impressionist İbrahim Feyhaman Bey. Upon finishing the Galatasaray Lyceé, Feyhaman was sent to Paris with the endorsement of Abbas Halim Pasha and had enrolled, like Avni Lifij, at the Académie Julian. Yet, different from Avni, he worked with the famous academic painter Fernand Cormon and became one of the most successful portrait painters in Istanbul. Quite different from his French instructor Cormon, İbrahim Feyhaman worked spontaneously, with fluid brushstrokes combined with vivid colour highlights. He mostly simplified his compositions, focussing on the sitter rather than the surrounding decorations or the accessories. Among İbrahim Feyhaman’s sitters were various Ottoman statesmen and intellectuals. Two of the portraits he displayed in 1916 were of Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi, the last official chronicler (*vakanüvis*) of the Ottoman Empire,¹⁰⁵ and of Dr. Akil Muhtar, one of the most renowned doctors of the era (fig. 4.8). His sympathetic portrait of Dr. Akil

¹⁰⁴ ‘Resim Sergisi Küşadı’, *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 1 July 1916.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Resim Sergisi: Tenkidat ve Mütalat’, *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 4 August 1916.

Muhtar, however, differs from most of his other works. The primary emphasis is on the sitter's engagement with his profession: the doctor is portrayed in his laboratory surrounded by paraphernalia and about to do an experiment on a rabbit. The composition is portrayed in a very similar fashion to those images of the famous French chemist and microbiologist Louis Pasteur appeared in the nineteenth century. In fact, after having received his medical training first in Istanbul and later in Geneva, Dr. Akil Muhtar worked at the Pasteur Institute in Paris.



FIGURE 4.8: İbrahim Feyhaman, *Portrait of Dr. Akil Muhtar (Dr. Akil Muhtar'ın Portresi)* (1916), oil on canvas, 92 x 73 cm © Istanbul University Medical Faculty Collection

Another developing trend was genre painting—the depiction of private scenes and everyday social activity. The Dutch school of genre painting had already flourished at different parts of the world in the late nineteenth century. From Victorian Britain and its cult of domesticity to France and its ‘rediscovery’ by the French art critic Champfleury, it found similar expressions in the Ottoman Empire. Yet different from European artists, Ottoman painters mostly portrayed a fairly narrow, middle-

and upper-middle-class slice of society, and especially women from that class. This trend paralleled economic and political changes in women's life in the empire, as elsewhere.¹⁰⁶

One of the most successful examples of the domestic genre is Namık İsmail's painting *Contemplation*, displayed in the 1917 exhibition (fig. 4.9). In *Contemplation*, Namık İsmail took as his subject a scene from an urban bourgeois life. He depicts the leisure moment of a young woman in her domestic space next to a bookshelf and in front of a calligraphic panel bearing 'bismillah' (in the name of God) written in *celi talik*. The painter was only twenty-seven years old when he displayed his *Contemplation*. Born into a Muslim upper-middle class family, Namık İsmail had taken his first art classes from Şevket Bey and Viçen Arslanyan at Galatasaray Lyceé; and later enrolled at the Académie Julian. With the outbreak of war, he was recruited as a reserve officer and served on the Caucasian front until he contracted typhus and returned to Istanbul.¹⁰⁷ Though he had already exhibited two landscape paintings at the previous exhibition, Namık İsmail truly made his début in 1917. Critics were immediately impressed by the young painter. One critic noted: 'Namık Bey is very young, but there is no doubt that if he practices he will be a magnificent artist.'¹⁰⁸ 'He gives us great hopes for the future of our arts' wrote another one.¹⁰⁹ Nazmi Ziya favourably compared him to other impressionists and found him much more successful in engaging with the psychology of the sitter in his canvases.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ For example, in 1917, the Family Law recognized the right of women to obtain divorce, being the first written document of such an example in a Muslim country. Chapter V.

¹⁰⁷ Chapter II and Chapter III.

¹⁰⁸ 'Galatasaraylılar Yurdunda İkinci Resim Sergisi', *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 16 June 1917.

¹⁰⁹ 'Ziyaret: Resim Sergisi 333', *Muallim*, 1 July 1917.

¹¹⁰ Nazmi Ziya, 'Sanayi-i Nefise', *Yeni Mecmua*, 30 August 1917.

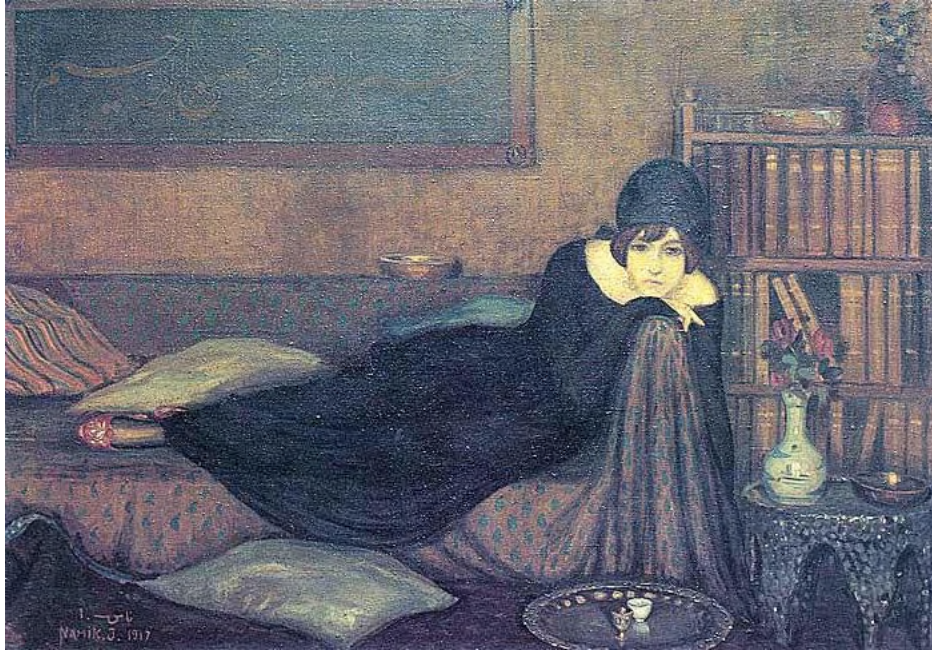


FIGURE 4.9: Namık İsmail, *Contemplation (Tefekkür)* (1917), oil on canvas, 180 x 131 cm © MSGSÜ Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture

Landscape painting was the most popular genre of art in both exhibitions. It offered great latitude for experimenting with Impressionism. In their choice of landscape subjects Ottoman painters drew on the French Impressionists by bringing painting outdoors, but they found inspiration in their own native scenery, which was, often, the silhouette of Istanbul. In addition to Halil Pasha, Çallı İbrahim was also singled out by critics as one of the best practitioners of the genre; his *Büyük Ada Island (Büyük Ada)* (fig. 4.10), which depicts two women with highly fashionable clothes wondering at one of the Princes' Islands, received highly positive reviews.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ 'Ziyaret: Resim Sergisi 333', *Muallim*, 1 July 1917;



FIGURE 4.10: Çallı İbrahim, *Büyük Ada Island (Büyük Ada)* (1917), oil on canvas © Private Collection, photograph by Ayşenur Güler.¹¹²

Given the uncertain economic conditions during the war years, interior paintings, portraits, and most of all, small-size landscapes might have also brought painters some financial relief. In fact, by the turn of the century, the taste of the Ottoman middle-class buying public, which mostly satisfied their cultural needs from painting exhibitions, was oriented towards Istanbul landscapes.¹¹³ There was an interest in landscape painting in the expanding Ottoman art market starting from the late nineteenth-century; unlike historical paintings, landscapes were understandable, desirable, and also affordable. Moreover, traditional norms of taste for non-figurative painting were most likely still prevalent among some sections of the Empire's ruling elites who had been particularly interested in either Bosphorus views or imperial

¹¹² I would like to thank Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu for helping me find Çallı İbrahim's 1917 painting *Big Island*. I also would like to thank Ayşenur Güler for sharing the photograph of the painting she took a few years ago.

¹¹³ Famous Ottoman architectural structures, such as the Green Tomb in Bursa, were also desirable subjects for the art market, both at home and abroad. For brief information on pre-war exhibitions in Istanbul, see Chapter II.

Ottoman mosques at previous Istanbul exhibitions in the early twentieth century.

Istanbul landscapes had always been a desirable subject for the international art world, too. When the *Deutsche Levante Zeitung* published a relatively short review of the 1916 Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibition, landscape paintings were the subject of praise:

Great work has been done in particular in the domain of landscape painting. The glorious views around Constantinople are indeed an inviting motif.¹¹⁴

The majority of the paintings displayed in both exhibitions were thus far from acting as tools of state propaganda. Though there were war-related works, as we shall see, the motive behind these paintings was neither to act as a recruitment tool nor as an expression of patriotism. In fact, Ottoman painters' general 'lack of interest' in the conflict seems to have confused some vociferous patriots.

Ambiguity in War Painting

In 1916, the debates as to whether Ottoman intellectuals, writers, and artists were 'working hard enough' to support the war cause reached to an unprecedented level, and many Ottoman intellectuals started to reconsider their social and cultural role within the society and for the national cause. Already in August 1915, one anonymous critic writing for the *Türk Yurdu* had expressed his discontent that military scenes comprised only a minority of the paintings produced in that year, even though 'these art works are the products of war years.'¹¹⁵ In a provocative 1916 article, the intellectual R. M. Fuad compared painters to writers; he claimed that though 'our painters were not totally alien to the events [*vekayi*]', he continued, 'poets and

¹¹⁴ *Deutsche Levante Zeitung*, 1 August 1916, p. 513.

¹¹⁵ An anonymous editor of the *Türk Yurdu* magazine penned his discontent after Hamdullah Subhi's article. Hamdullah Subhi, 'Türklükte Nefis Sanatlar: Son Resim Sergisi,' *Türk Yurdu*, 12 August 1915; Şefkatli (ed.), *Türk Yurdu*, Vol. 4, p. 197.

writers' [*şair ve edip*] were most engaged with the war among the intellectual class.¹¹⁶ Some intellectuals' obsessive insistence on reading and seeing the conflict was even more severe. In November 1916, Ziya Gökalp penned a poem he entitled *Asker ve Şâir* (Soldier and Poet). The patriotic poem condemned all writers who are not participating in propaganda activities: 'The pen of the lazy poet should be taken away from him and he should be sent to the front and made to dig the graves of the martyred soldiers'.¹¹⁷ The war exacerbated fundamental differences among Ottoman intellectuals. There were those, like Ziya Gökalp, who lacked any sense of hesitation about the on-going conflict, and there were those who remained 'silent', at least in public, about it. In a way, distancing oneself from the loud bravado of the patriotic culture was political in nature.

During the First World War, as Mehmet Beşikçi emphasizes, 'war was portrayed as an opportunity for a Muslim to find his way to heaven through martyrdom,' and such an 'honour' was 'open to any Muslim.'¹¹⁸ Various narratives and stories about the honourable ordinary Muslim soldier from the corners of Anatolia appeared in contemporary publications.¹¹⁹ In those narratives, death was honoured and presented in a truly religious perspective; a sacrifice for the state was no less a reality than a sacrifice for Islam. The representation of the 'Anatolian peasant' as the ordinary soldier helped common men and women imagine their place in the 'abstract category' of the nation, when the Ottoman state attempted to mobilize the entire

¹¹⁶ R. M. Fuad, 'Müttefiklerimizin Düşündükleri', *Türk Yurdu*, 12 October 1916, in *Türk Yurdu*, Murat Şefkatli ed. Vol. 5 (Ankara: Tütibay Yayınları, 2000), p. 223.

¹¹⁷ Ziya Gökalp, 'Asker ve Şair', *Harb Mecmuası*, November 1916, p. 214. Quoted in Köroğlu, *Ottoman Propaganda*, p. 9.

¹¹⁸ Beşikçi, *Ottoman Mobilization*, pp. 78-79.

¹¹⁹ 'Bir Kahraman Asker: İsmail Çavuş', *Harb Mecmuası*, No. 4 (January 1916); 'Nasuh Onbaşı', *Harb Mecmuası*, No. 8 (April 1916); 'Kadir Oğlu Mehmed Çavuş', *Harb Mecmuası*, No. 8 (April 1916). Beşikçi, *Ottoman Mobilization*, pp. 79-80. On the concept of the 'unknown soldier' ('*meçhul asker*') particularly in the early Republic, see Alexandre Toumarkine 'L'invention permanente des soldats inconnus en Turquie', in François Cochet and Jean-Noël Grandhomme (eds.), *Les soldats inconnus de la grande guerre. La mort, le deuil, la mémoire*, SOTECA 14-18 éditions, 2012, pp. 191-206.

Ottoman population, particularly Anatolian Muslim masses, using mass propaganda.¹²⁰

The search for new meanings for the ongoing conflict led to a unique artistic response created not only by the war itself, but also by the cultural and intellectual milieu which formed the basis for the emerging belief in the Anatolian peasant as the source of patriotism. The nationalist agenda of the war years in general and some Ottoman intellectuals' interest in the Anatolian peasantry was to transform the cultural mentality of the period. In 1917, Harry Stuermer, the German correspondent journalist of *Kölnische Zeitung* in Istanbul between 1915 and 1916, made the following observation:

Under the spiritual inspiration of Mehmed Emin, the national poet of Anatolian birth whose poems with their sympathy of form make such a warm-hearted and successful appeal to the best kind of patriotism, men have begun since 1916, even in the circles of the arrogant 'Stamboul Effendi,' to take an interest in the *kaba türk* (uncouth Turk), the Anatolian peasant, his needs and his civilisation. The real, needy, primitive Turk of the Interior has suddenly become the general favourite.¹²¹

The poets in the group known as the *Beş Hececiler* (Five Syllabists) also focused on the ordinary reality of Anatolian people in their works and sought to connect them, as Laurent Mignon observes, 'to their nationalist project of self-definition.'¹²² In Yusuf Ziyâ's wartime poetry, for instance, martyrdom for the fatherland was glorified and

¹²⁰ For Ottoman mobilization during the war years, see Beşikçi, *Ottoman Mobilization*.

¹²¹ Harry Stuermer, *Two War Years in Constantinople, Sketches of German and Young Turkish Ethics and Politics*, trans. E. Allen (Hodder and Stoughton, 1917), p. 184.

¹²² Laurent Mignon, 'Introduction: A Poet in Dialogue with the World' in Atıf Behramoğlu, *I've Learned Some Things: Selected Poems*, trans. Walter G. Andrews (Austin: University of Texas Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 2008), pp. xvii-xviii.

celebrated as a devotion to the duty for the land; soldiers fight in order to ‘recreate the idyllic conditions of Anatolia.’¹²³

As we have seen so far, most Ottoman artists chose not to represent the on-going conflict on their canvases, but realities of what is termed total war had a major impact on the art of some other Ottoman painters. The years 1916-1917 marked a new beginning for Ottoman war painting: conventional imagery of the heroic and victorious fight against an enemy began to fragment into a more ambivalent configuration.

From Glorious Sultans to the Unknown Soldier

Battle painting had traditionally had an important position in Ottoman aristocratic culture: it was commissioned by Ottoman sultans (mostly from European artists); displayed in their palaces; featured in the exhibitions held at Military Schools;¹²⁴ and, reproduced and appeared on the pages of contemporary Ottoman publications.¹²⁵ For some occasions, the sultans themselves even provided sketches and revisions on those commissions. Between 1865 and 1872, Sultan Abdülaziz and his Polish court painter Stanisław Chlebowski, for instance, collaborated to produce historical Ottoman war scenes, as we have seen previously.¹²⁶ Another artist who provided academic battle paintings was the Italian artist Fausto Zonaro; he was appointed as a court painter to Sultan Abdülhamid II in 1896 and occupied the position until the dethronement of the Sultan in 1909. The battle paintings produced by Chlebowski and Zonaro celebrated

¹²³ Mignon, *Neither Shiraz Nor Paris*, p. 101.

¹²⁴ For the photographs of these exhibitions and the battle paintings displayed in them, see, for instance, *Servet-i Fünun*, Issue: 931, 19 Mart 1324 [1 April 1908].

¹²⁵ For example, Fausto Zonaro’s battle painting of the Greco-Turkish War of 1897 appeared on the cover of the 375th issue of the *Servet-i Fünun*; which was accompanied with a lengthy article about the painter. M. Sadık, ‘Şövalye Fausto Zonaro’, *Servet-i Fünun*, No: 375, 7 Mayıs 1314 [20 May 1898].

¹²⁶ Chapter II.

and glorified the imperial imagery; Ottoman war victories were portrayed with the glorious sultans in the centre leading their armies. Like in Chlebowski's 1872 *The Pitched Battle of Mohaç* (fig. 4.11) or Zonaro's 1903 *Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror* (fig. 4.12), the most painted battle scenes of these times were the conquests of Sultan Selim I (r.1512-20) and Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (r.1520-66); the times when the Empire was perceived to have reached its peak of power and prestige. As Ahmet Ersoy argues, these images corresponded to the 'historicist' spirit of the late-*Tanzimat* period when identification with 'the glorious days of yore offered relief from the grim realities of the present,'¹²⁷ and when the public sentiment resonated with 'a romantic yearning for the founding years of the Ottoman Empire.'¹²⁸ Moreover, conventional battlefield paintings were mainly characterised by detailed representation of events and mostly by a hierarchical organisation of the subjects (the sultan, Ottoman soldiers, and the other side). Despite their stylistic differences, both Chlebowski and Zonaro display a technical virtuosity with their polished academic depictions; with them, representing war is more a craftsman's challenge than a personal expression.

Nevertheless, with the constitutional changes preceding the war, the imagery of the strong sultan leading the Ottoman army in war paintings would very much give way to the image of the Ottoman soldier fighting for the national cause. Indeed, the visions and ideals of the painters during the Galatasaray exhibitions were in tune with this novel understanding and representation of the fatherland. The model hero was no longer Süleyman the Magnificent approaching Vienna but the enthusiastic and strong

¹²⁷ Ahmet Ersoy, 'Osman Hamdi Bey and the Historiophile Mood: Orientalist Vision and the Romantic Sense of the Past in Late Ottoman Culture,' in Zeynep İnankur, Reina Lewis and Mary Roberts (eds.), *The Poetics and Politics of Place: Ottoman Istanbul and British Orientalism* (Istanbul: Pera Museum, 2011), p. 146.

¹²⁸ Ahmet Ersoy, *On the Sources of the 'Ottoman Renaissance': Architectural Revival and Its Discourse during the Abdülaziz Era, 1861-76* (Unpublished PhD Diss., Harvard University, 2000).

Anatolian peasant fighting in solidarity for the *vatan* (fatherland) with his characteristics of simplicity, humbleness, but also, hardiness and resilience.



FIGURE 4.11: Stanislaw Chlebowski, *The Pitched Battle of Mohaç* (c. 1865-1872), oil on canvas, 112 x 175 cm © Istanbul Military Museum.



FIGURE 4.12: Fausto Zonaro, *Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror* (1908), oil on canvas, 77 x 100 cm © TBMM National Palaces Collection.

One example to show this loss of the Sultanic symbolic power is the 1916 Wilhelm Victor Krausz exhibition, which was dedicated to the Young Turks rather than to the Ottoman Sultan. Of particular note is the symbolic relationship between the image of the aged Sultan Mehmed V Reşad and the powerful images of the three leaders of the CUP: Talat, Cemal, and Enver. Though in the German catalogue, the date of the enthronement of the Sultan Mehmed V Reşad, 27 April 1909, is stated as the ‘national rebirth’ [*nationale Wiedergeburt*] for the Ottomans, the emphasis on the Young Turks as having directed the ‘fate of Turkey since 1908’ was very much linked to the contemporary strength of the CUP and of its leaders in the war cause.¹²⁹ In a similar vein, the Ottoman War Medal (*Harb Madalyası*), created in March 1915, was designed in such a way that the size of the star and crescent was much bigger than the

¹²⁹ *Die Türkei im Weltkrieg: Bildnisse und Skizzen von Wilhelm Victor Krausz* (Wien: Kriegsministeriums, 1916).

tuğra, the imperial cipher of the Sultan. As Edhem Eldem points out ‘a strong government and a rising current of nationalism may have contributed to a gradual marginalization of the cipher of a weak and increasingly symbolic Sultan.’¹³⁰ In fact, the disproportion between the size of the star and crescent, which was almost universally recognized as ‘Turkish’ and the *tuğra*, the Imperial symbol of sovereignty, as Eldem continues, ‘seems to have been meaningful in a period when Turkish nationalism had started to find its first ideological expressions.’¹³¹ Yet even this more conventional visual language of war as the preserve of great men on display in the Krausz exhibition was absent from an art which aimed to capture the quintessential warrior of the new war: the unknown soldier.

One Ottoman painter who concentrated almost exclusively on the unknown soldier during the First World War was Ali Cemal. His direct, immediate, and unadorned style enabled him to make a living during the war years, publishing war-related drawings and pictures of soldiers in contemporary newspapers.¹³² He participated only in the first Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibition; he displayed a work entitled *Guard at Maydos (Maydos’ta Bekçi)* (fig. 4.13), showing two soldiers in their trench: one reads what looks like a newspaper with almost a smile; the other examines the enemy side of no-man’s land via binoculars. Ali Cemal seems to have avoided the death or distress of soldiers but preferred to depict them in a workaday normality bordering on comfort; an interesting detail given that in militarised Ottoman society, the powerful symbolism of the martyrdom (*şehâdet*) and its cultural representations had traditionally established sacrifice for the fatherland as honourable and heroic.

¹³⁰ Eldem, *Pride and Privilege*, p. 423.

¹³¹ Ibid, p. 423.

¹³² Chapter III.



FIGURE 4.13: Ali Cemal, *A Guard at Maydos* (*Maydos'ta Bekçi*) (1916), oil on canvas, 48 x 38 cm © Naci Terzi Collection.

Çallı İbrahim was also one of the few artists whose art was shaped by the war. Though he mostly painted beautiful women in *plein air* settings, he also displayed paintings of soldiers at the Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibitions. Like Ali Cemal's *Guard at Maydos*, Çallı İbrahim's *Private Soldier* (1916) (fig. 4.14) conveys a sense of 'everydayness' in the life of soldiers, showing a sentry equipped with a rifle waiting in front of his tent.

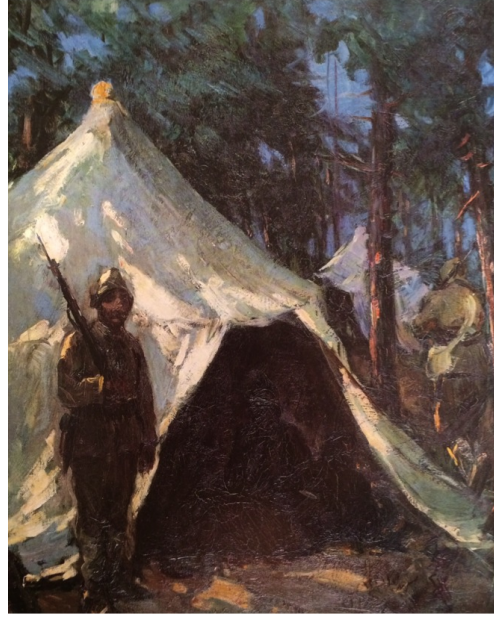


FIGURE 4.14: Çallı İbrahim, *Private Soldier* (1916), oil on canvas, 60 x 49 cm © Yapı Kredi Collection.

Galip Bahtiyar praised Çallı İbrahim's private soldier paintings and their simplicity in depicting 'the quiet sacrifice of Turkish sons' which, he added, 'fortified my love for the Fatherland'.¹³³ The patriotic writer, however, was expressing a preference for *Private Soldier* after having condemned the stark realism of other war paintings by Çallı İbrahim that are much less easy to categorize as an unambiguously patriotic representation of the Ottomans at war.

Ambivalence in Battle: Çallı İbrahim's *Night Attack*

While unrealistic representations of the war continued to dominate the vocabulary of Ottoman intellectuals such as Galip Bahtiyar, Yusuf Ziyâ, Mehmed Emin, and Ziya Gökalp, by the winter of 1915, feelings of horror and nausea began to appear in the private diaries of some Ottoman soldiers. In his diary on 22 November 1915, Mehmed Fasih, an Ottoman lieutenant, described the ubiquitous carnage and decay at Gallipoli:

¹³³ G. B. [Galip Bahtiyar], 'Galatasaraylılar Yurdu Resim Sergisi: Sergide Teşhir Edilen Levhalar Hakkında Mütalea', *İkdam*, 30 June 1916.

Captain and I go to inspect damage to our trenches ... Six dead lie there. Dismembered, parts of their bodies are intermingled. Blood has drained out of bodies, and chests and arms look like wax. Shins and legs, seared by the explosion, are purple. Some bones have been stripped of flesh. The men's features are unrecognizable. Pitch black...¹³⁴

Mehmed Fasih continued his entry with a poem:

Graves, graves...lie open throughout the World, / Lightning has
blighted the rose gardens, / Soldiers, soldiers...have become corpses, /
Heroes are now carrion for wild beasts.¹³⁵

Sooner or later, ambivalence also came to be, what Raymond Williams calls, an 'emergent'¹³⁶ motif within representations of war configured by Ottoman painters too. Though an idealised vision of war continued to be part of some Ottoman artworks, especially the ones produced by maritime painters like Ismail Hakkı,¹³⁷ the experience of total war and its consequences had a major effect on Ottoman war paintings, leading some Ottoman artists to depict the conflict with highly ambivalent and complex images. Unlike paintings of warships and sea battles, the vulnerability, fragility, suffering, and the presence of death in those paintings suggested a confrontation with the 'real war'.

Çallı İbrahim was not sent to the front to fight, but the war's psychological effect was significant in shaping his art. In July 1915, as we have already seen in the previous chapter, he had joined Nazmi Ziya and other Ottoman intellectuals on his own initiative to visit the Gallipoli battlefield in July 1915.¹³⁸ One of the artworks he

¹³⁴ Mehmed Fasih, *Lone Pine (Bloody Ridge) Diary of Lt. Mehmed Fasih, 5th Imperial Ottoman Army, Gallipoli, 1915: The Campaign as Viewed from Ottoman Trenches* (Istanbul: Denizler Kitabevi, 1997), p. 32.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ The concepts of 'emergent', 'dominant', and 'residual' were drawn by Raymond Williams in order to explain the dynamic and complex quality of culture. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

¹³⁷ See, Chapter III.

¹³⁸ Unlike Çallı İbrahim, Nazmı Ziya had received a formal invitation letter addressed to him via the Ministry of Education. BOA, MF. MKT, 1234/45, 22 Şaban 1333 [5 July 1915]. In contrast, Çallı

displayed for the 1917 Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibition *Wounded Soldier (Yaralı Asker)* (1917) (fig. 4.15) portrays two exhausted soldiers, one of whom has a head wound, walking by leaning on each other through an otherwise abandoned landscape.



FIGURE 4.15: Çallı İbrahim, *Wounded Soldier (Yaralı Asker)* (1917), oil on canvas, 193 x 81 cm © Ankara Museum of Painting and Sculpture.

Above all, however, it is his *Night Attack (Gece Baskını)* (1916) (fig. 4.16) that is one of the most remarkably ambivalent works produced by an Ottoman painter during the war years.¹³⁹ *Night Attack* shows the almost indistinguishable soldiers of two sides trying to batter each other to death with rifle-butts or bare hands in a nightmarish tableau. In the centre of the composition, our eyes meet those of an extremely terrified soldier, terrorised to the point of madness by the violence surrounding him. Çallı's struggling soldiers are almost indistinguishable from the night of horrors. In the very dark colours of the canvas, it is almost impossible to distinguish the uniforms of one side from the other.

İbrahim might have joined the group voluntarily. BOA, MF. ALY, 81/44, 25 Haziran 1331 [8 July 1915]. See Chapter III.

¹³⁹ *Night Attack* was exhibited in 1916 in Istanbul and in 1918 in Vienna. In his comprehensive study of the 'Şişli Atölyesi', which is the subject of my next chapter, Ahmet Kamil Gören mistakenly gives the date of Çallı's work as 1918. The work, however, was produced in 1916, and exhibited three times during the First World War: twice in Istanbul in 1916 and 1917, and once in Vienna in 1918. Today the work belongs to the collection of the Istanbul Military Museum (*Askeri Müze*). Cf. Gören, *Türk Resim Sanatında Şişli Atölyesi ve Viyana Sergisi*.



FIGURE 4.16: İbrahim Çallı, *Night Attack (Gece Baskını)* (1916), oil on canvas, 175 x 225 cm © Istanbul Military Museum.

Night Attack elicited a mixed reception from the critics. According to

Deutsche Levante Zeitung:

The battle of the Turkish heroes at the Dardanelles enthused many capable painters; a picture of a scene at night depicting trench warfare is particularly noteworthy. It is a glorification of the Turkish soldiers' tempestuous force of attack, of hand-to-hand and of bayonet fighting.¹⁴⁰

Nevertheless, the ultra-nationalist Galib Bahtiyar found the work, particularly its soldiers, like a mise-en-scene 'deviated from naturalness'; the work, for the writer, was 'not even as artistically valuable as other much smaller war-related works'.¹⁴¹ Galib Bahtiyar had published many propagandistic pieces and articles during the war years: for him, death for the fatherland was the ultimate goal of the hero to the extent

¹⁴⁰ *Deutsche Levante Zeitung*, 1 August 1916, p. 513.

¹⁴¹ G. B. [Galib Bahtiyar], 'Galatasaraylılar Yurdu Resim Sergisi: Sergide Teşhir Edilen Levhalar Hakkında Mütalea', *İkdam*, 30 June 1916.

that the proud mothers who lost their sons for the war cause would do the same thing again because ‘why would otherwise mothers give birth to soldier sons?’¹⁴² So, it is not surprising that a writer like Galib Bahtiyar was not happy with the fact that Çallı İbrahim conveyed strong emotions about the destructive force of the war and made no secret of the terror in his soldiers’ faces—of their terror, frantic, despairing, immediate, personal, and universal. For Çallı İbrahim, the war was not only a question of dying honourably, phlegmatically, and stoically for the fatherland in the trenches. In *Night Attack*, war is inseparable from dehumanizing violence and mass death: the work brings those ‘heroes’ closer to us, reduces their sizes, de-heroizes and de-mythologes them; and, reveals the very vulnerability and weakness of the human body. Çallı İbrahim’s ambivalent configuration of the war would also be taken up by other Ottoman painters, like Avni Lifij and Namık İsmail, as we shall see in the following chapter.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter argued that civic-minded Ottomans remained a significant factor in shaping the art of painting in the war’s second and third art seasons. As we have seen, the *Sinâât-ı Nefîse Sergisi* regulation was fundamental in maximising the chances of artistic works, particularly oil paintings, reaching a wider public in the city of Istanbul: painters could access to fellow artists, patrons, and the Ottoman public, regardless of what they preferred to depict in their artworks. Furthermore, Ottoman painters tended to cling to the international flavour of their styles and multicultural coexistence in their attempt to cope with the war and its shattering effects. Aesthetically, and to a certain extent politically, they managed to remain autonomous

¹⁴² Galib Bahtiyar, ‘Hayâtı Milliyemiz Menâzırından: Osmanlı Kadınları’, *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 14 Nisan 1915.

and independent from the demands of an official patriotic agenda and in the midst of increasingly exclusivist and Turkist policies. Furthermore, we have also seen that whilst some painters distanced themselves from the war theme, others moved toward a more personal visual representation of war and its reality, especially after 1916. While there was no explicit pacifism or anti-war sentiments, Ottoman painters' cosmopolitan and non-propagandist stance in their art and the art world they were part of suggest ambivalence towards ethno-nationalist cultural policy and with war as a cultural institution.

CHAPTER V

‘CIVILISATION AND COMPETENCE’: DISPLAYING OTTOMAN WAR PAINTINGS TO THEIR ALLIES, 1917-1918

The previous chapters have identified a dialectical tension in the wartime Ottoman art world regarding the production of paintings of war-related subjects. From the outbreak of the war, the Ottoman state and the semi-official voluntary associations undertook to orient artistic production to the war cause, encouraging the production of propagandistic images of Ottoman military successes to celebrate and inspire patriotic spirit. When not subject to these requirements, however, most painters chose to avoid war as a subject, probably due to some combination of difficult material conditions, norms of taste among patrons and art market actors, and the generally ambivalent feeling towards the prolonged conflict among civilians. There were a few notable attempts by civilian painters and the more civic-minded art world to paint and exhibit representations of the war in a more critical or ambiguous mode, but, as the war progressed, these voices would become either excluded or absorbed by an increasingly dominant militaristic and nationalistic cultural agenda.

In the war's final art season, the winter of 1917-1918, the Ottoman state moved to increase its influence over Ottoman painters and painting. In the early autumn of 1917, the Ministry of War began to sponsor and facilitate some Ottoman painters to make war pictures with the aim of exhibiting the works in the capitals of the allies. The commissioning of artists exemplified the political and cultural mission of the ruling CUP, which sought to promote its 'civilisation' in the Western World. It was a costly venture at a time when the war had badly stretched Ottoman resources, but key actors within the Ottoman state saw this cultural offensive as a priority. The resulting Exhibition of War Paintings, which later travelled to Vienna, brought

together works by a group of painters comprised of established artists, many with military art training, and a few younger and emerging talents freshly returned from training in Europe or from fighting at the fronts. While the state patrons were ecumenical in involving painters of diverse training and stylistic preferences, they appear to have been less open-minded in terms of gender and ethnic and religious identities. In contrast to the relative openness of previous Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibitions, Ottoman art production in the final year of the war came under the influence of the militaristic and nationalistic program of the CUP government, and women and non-Muslim painters found themselves without the state support they received in the war's second and third art seasons.

This chapter will narrate last art season of the war in four parts: the first contextualizes the ruling CUP's initiatives in the war's final year to create national and western cultural institutions, including a national library, national bank, and national museum. The second, and central, section of the chapter tells the story of the commissioning of Ottoman painters by the Ottoman state in the early autumn of 1917 and analyses the resulting art exhibitions: the 'Exhibition of War Paintings' (*Harb Resimleri Sergisi*) held in Istanbul in the winter of 1917, and the 'Exhibition of Turkish Painters' (*Ausstellung Türkischer Maler*) held in the spring of 1918 in Vienna. This part focuses at length on the major themes and motifs of the war paintings produced by Ottoman painters for this exhibition. One of the ironies of the final year is that the efforts by the Ministry of War to extend state control over patronage and define war-related themes for artists to develop actually provided Ottoman painters an unprecedented opportunity to experiment liberally with the visual language of war. Indeed, one of the claims of this chapter is that several of those war paintings are far more ambivalent and ambiguous about war and soldiering than has

generally been considered in either academic or popular readings in Turkey. The final section looks at the wider Istanbul art world in the spring of 1918, which was mostly facilitated by the Ottoman's German allies: Avni Lifij and Eleni Iliadis' solo exhibitions hosted at the editorial office of the newspaper *Osmanischer Lloyd*, and the Munich exhibition which included a mixture of decorative arts, crafts, as well as, painting and sculpture—all produced by German artists.

1917: The Year of National Culture

By the autumn of 1917, the war had already become a source of despair and frustration for many Ottoman citizens, and the prestige of the CUP state was in some question on the international and home fronts. It was now clear that the defensive Gallipoli Campaign of 1915 was the only battle the Ottoman army had conclusively won since the outbreak of the conflict. After the final reversal at Kut al-Amara in February 1917, the Ottoman army was being chased out of Mesopotamia by the British at a great cost in lives, and false rumours rumbled along the Eastern front that the Minister for War, Enver Pasha, had been removed from his post.¹ Day-by-day, morale on the home front was being eroded by privations, demoralization, and perhaps even sabotage. On 6 September 1917, a massive explosion at the Haydarpaşa train station left Istanbul in shock and turmoil. Large supplies of ammunition and medical supplies necessary to sustain Enver Pasha's plan to retake Baghdad² disappeared into thin air, along with many human lives. Looking back, Charles

¹ From the diaries of the Armenian doctor Avedis Cemcemian, quoted in Arsen Yarman, *Ermeni Etibba Cemiyeti (1912-1922): Osmanlı'da Tıptan Siyasete Bir Kurum* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları), p. 294.

² In June 1917, Enver Pasha proposed the creation of a new Ottoman formation under German command, General Erich von Falkenhayn, to retake Baghdad. It would be called the 'Yıldırım Army' (The Thunderbolt Army Group) and would combine 'Halil Pasha's Sixth Army and a new Seventh Army under Mustafa Kemal's command with a full German infantry division.' See, Rogan, *Fall of the Ottomans*, p. 342.

Vinicombe remembered of the day, ‘many lives were lost [...] help was impossible for no one dared go near the raging inferno.’³ With the Ottoman press under strict wartime censorship, the explosion was blamed on an accident, though doubts seem to have proliferated in the gaps in the official story.⁴

Added to the unprecedented losses of Ottoman territory and personnel were economic woes that hit the home front particularly. In February 1917, another 32 million lira had to be borrowed from the Ottomans’ German allies, and in return another series of paper money was printed,⁵ the fifth such since the first paper money was issued in 1915.⁶ Shortages often reached the point that there was ‘no meat, no rice, no potatoes,’ as Nigar Hanım wrote in her private diary on 31 July 1917.⁷ Wartime hyperinflation meant that the overall cost of living had risen almost eight times since the war started (see tables 1 and 2 in appendix). The increasing hunger and discomfort emboldened some sectors of the Ottoman intelligentsia to raise a critical voice. On 20 September 1917, the satirical journal *Karagöz* (Black Eye), which had so far been uncritical of the CUP’s war policies, featured an illustration showing the Karagöz character answering a woman who complains about the ‘occupation’ of her laundry by four huge lice (fig. 5.1). Watching three lice dance a *halay* on an upturned laundry basket to the accompaniment of the other playing what

³ IWM, Charles Vinicombe’s letter to Hélène Philippe, dated 25 October 1920 (GB/NNAF/D92614 [Former ISAAR ref: GB/NNAF/D4544]). Not only did the plan to retake Bagdad fail, but also in couple of days, the British army made a decisive military breakthrough on the Palestinian front where the Ottomans were outflanked on 31 September. See, James E. Kitchen, *The British Army in the Middle East: Morale and Military Identity in the Sinai and Palestine Campaigns, 1916-18* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), p. 210.

⁴ An English resident of Pera, Marie Lyster, wrote in her diary that ‘It seems this mishap was the result of an accident, but of course everyone has a different tale to tell’. Ian Lyster (ed.), *Among the Ottomans: Diaries from Turkey in World War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), p. 32. Marie Lyster (1865-1965) was married to Alfred James Lyster (1865-1949), who had been sent as Chief Cashier to the Imperial Bank in Istanbul in the late nineteenth century. According to Marie Lyster’s grandson Ian Lyster, Marie and her mother had also acquired US nationality and, hence, could stay on in Istanbul as citizens of a neutral state until the US entered the war in 1917.

⁵ Toprak, *İttihad-Terakki ve Cihan Harbi*, p. 116.

⁶ Edhem Eldem, *A History of the Ottoman Bank* (Istanbul: Osmanlı Bankası, 1999), p. 308.

⁷ Bekiroğlu, *Şair Nigar Hanım*, p. 116.

looks like a piano, Karagöz replies: ‘sister dear, with soap this expensive, give thanks that they are not dragging us around by the legs.’⁸



FIGURE 5.1: *Karagöz*, No: 1008, 20 Teşrin-i Evvel 1333 [20 September 1917], p. 4.

While this example might suggest a public still able to laugh off its discomforts, the general mood on the streets seems to have been increasingly sullen and resentful. When the Ottomans’ chief ally the Kaiser visited Istanbul in October, he was officially received with official fanfare and every demonstration of ceremonial protocol,⁹ but, as Vinicombe observed the procession from his terrace, ‘there was no cheering, nor enthusiasm manifested by the people,’¹⁰ and strict security measures saw a curfew for foreign citizens and the temporary exile of potential agitators to the Princes’ Islands.¹¹ On the other hand, on 29 October, as Marie Lyster wrote, ‘all Pera [...] was beflagged’¹² to celebrate the military success of a combined Austro-German

⁸ ‘Bacıciğim, sabun böyle bu derece pahalı olunca bizi bile bacaklarımızdan sürüklemediklerine şükür et.’ *Karagöz*, No: 1008, 20 Teşrin-i Evvel 1333 [20 September 1917], p. 4.

⁹ The visit was largely covered in the *Harb Mecmuası*, No. 22 (Teşrin-i Evvel 1333). For the Kaiser’s third and last visit to the Ottoman Empire, see, Ö. Kürşad Karacagil, ‘Alman İmparatoru İstanbul’da (1917)’, *Gazi Akademik Bakış*, Vol. 6, Issue: 12 (Summer 2013), pp. 111-133.

¹⁰ IWM, Vinicombe’s letter to Hélène Philippe, 25 October 1920.

¹¹ Lyster (ed.), *Among the Ottomans*, p. 34.

¹² Ibid, p. 37.

force against the Italian positions at the Battle of Caporetto,¹³ though, given the muted reaction to the Kaiser's visit, it is unclear how spontaneous such demonstrations of alliance patriotism were. The next week, the Ottoman army seemed to win some respite in the East when the Bolshevik party seized power in Russia partly on the back of a military rebellion and denounced the war as an imperialist project. The resulting armistice between the Ottomans and Russia, signed on 18 December, was a great encouragement to the military commanders of the alliance, allowing redeployments to the Western front and the retaking of Ottoman lands lost in the first half of the war to Russia. Yet it may also have emboldened rebellious feeling against the CUP regime among civilians and troops. From September 1917 to the end of the war (and beyond), the Ottoman press became increasingly critical of the war economy, with even the pro-CUP journal *Yeni Mecmua* publishing articles pouring scorn on the rising class of war profiteers (*harb zenginleri*).¹⁴ Meanwhile, the Ottoman army continued to experience high casualties, lack of discipline, and mass desertions, as detailed in a report dated 13 December 1917 by Liman von Sanders, the newly appointed chief of staff for the Austrian-Hungarian seventh army in Galicia:

Through a series of errors the numerical strength of the combatant troops of the Turkish Army and their fighting efficiency has sunk to a level so low that it cannot be overlooked [...] According to official reports barely 12,000 men returned, and these in a miserable condition. All the rest were killed, died of hunger or cold, or were captured [...] According to the lowest statements this army lost 60,000 men from hunger and disease, and later from cold, the loss from enemy effect being the smallest [...] The Turkish Army today has more than 300,000 desertions. They are not men that go over to the enemy, but

¹³ Rogan, *Fall of the Ottomans*, p. 356. The Battle of Caporetto (also known as the Twelfth Battle of the Isonzo) was fought between the Austrian-Hungarians and Germans against the Italians. The battle brought the near collapse of the Italian army, leading to its withdrawal to the Piave River. Mario Morselli, *Caporetto, 1917: Victory or Defeat?* (London: Frank Cass, 2001).

¹⁴ Refik Halit, 'Harb Zenginleri', *Yeni Mecmua*, No: 42, 2 May 1918, p. 301; Tekin Alp, 'Harp Zenginleri Meselesi', *Yeni Mecmua*, No: 42, 2 May 1918, p. 313.

for the most part return to the country in the rear where they rob and plunder and make the country insecure.¹⁵

As the military and economic prestige of the empire continued to face setbacks at home and abroad, there came an intensified concern among state and semi-official intellectuals in means to boost diminishing Ottoman morale and securing its international reputation. This would have consequences on the cultural policies pursued by the CUP government between 1917 and 1918.

The CUP State as Patron: 'An Opportunity for Our Painters'

The Ottomans' failure seriously to catch up with the cultural hegemony of Europe continued to cause frustration for the CUP government and its intellectual supporters in the final year of the war. The cultural elite and the ruling CUP remained deeply concerned with promoting Ottoman culture in allied countries as proof of the empire's membership in the 'civilised' world of the nations. In late June 1916, an article had appeared in the *Türk Yurdu* praising the Bulgarians for promoting their 'national art' in Vienna and Berlin.¹⁶ The author expected the Ottomans to likewise introduce themselves to Europeans with a show of cultural and civilisational strength:

If we want to introduce ourselves to Europeans, in fact to our European allies and brothers in arms, as equal fellows, it is not sufficient to trust only our recruitment [...] we also have to show that we are strong in civilisation, or at least capable of it.¹⁷

¹⁵ Liman von Sanders, *Fünf Jahre Türkei* (Berlin: August Scherl, 1920). Liman von Sanders's book was also published in Ottoman Turkish in 1921 with the title of *Türkiye'de Beş Sene* (Dersaadet: Matbaa-i Askeriye, 1337 [1921]). This quote is taken from the English translation of the book, *Five Years in Turkey* (Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins Co., 1928), pp. 189-191.

¹⁶ T.Y. 'Viyana'da Milli Bulgar Temaşa Heyeti', *Türk Yurdu*, Issue: 112, 29 Haziran 1916, in *Türk Yurdu*, Vol. 5, pp. 121-4. For Bulgarian culture and the First World War, see Evelina Kelbetcheva, 'Between Apology and Denial: Bulgarian Culture during World War I' in Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites (eds.), *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainment and Propaganda, 1914-18* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 210.

¹⁷ T.Y. 'Viyana'da Milli Bulgar Temaşa Heyeti', in *Türk Yurdu*, Vol. 5, p. 123.

This new current of cultural nationalism was articulated, perhaps ironically, as an urgent need to catch up with European civilisation. Particularly after the Minister of Interior Talat Pasha, a nationalist Turkist, replaced Said Halim Pasha, a conservative Ottomanist, as the grand vizier on 15 February 1917, the CUP state moved to create a series of national and nationalising institutions that looked beyond the war to a process of national consolidation. Just a few days after his appointment, Talat addressed the Ottoman parliament and read his cabinet's programme to the deputies:

Gentlemen, we know that our nation, in very tight interaction with European civilisation, is existentially connected by alliance to the Central Powers and cannot remain indifferent to the necessities of civilisation and modernity. Victory in the war is necessary, both for national security and for reform and innovation. We will walk toward this goal with firm determination.¹⁸

Thus, at a moment of political, social, and economic crisis, the CUP reaffirmed its vision of modernity as essential to civilisation and its place in the Western world, pursuing what Tarık Zafer Tunaya has called 'nationalisation-westernisation principles.'¹⁹ In March 1917, a national bank with the name of *Crédit National Ottoman* (*Osmanlı İtibar-ı Milli Bankası*) was officially founded in which shares and employment were only given to Ottoman citizens.²⁰ Around the same time, the CUP also implemented a series of legal and cultural initiatives some of which followed, according to Şükrü Hanioglu, 'a clear secularising agenda'.²¹ The Ottoman Law of

¹⁸ Tevfik Çavdar, *Talat Paşa: Bir Örgüt Ustasının Yaşam Öyküsü* (Ankara: Dost, 1984), p. 390; quoted in Uğur Ü. Üngör, *'A Reign of Terror': CUP Rule in Diyarbakir Province* (MA Thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2005), p. 80.

¹⁹ 'milliyetçilik-garpcılık', Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler, Vol I: İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi 1908-1918* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2015 [1952]), p. 66.

²⁰ Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de Ekonomi ve Toplum (1908-1950): İttihat-Terakki ve Devletçilik* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1995), p. 69. Eldem, *A History of the Ottoman Bank*, p. 339.

²¹ Şükrü Hanioglu, 'The Second Constitutional Period' in Reşat Kasaba (ed.), *Cambridge History of Turkey: Vol. 4; Turkey in the Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 104.

Family Rights (1917), for instance, granted women certain rights in marriage including divorce and allowed them to require monogamy as a marriage condition.²² In March 1917, the thirteen-day difference between the Gregorian and Rumi calendars was eliminated; as such a modified Gregorian calendar was introduced officially for the first time in Ottoman history. Official reforms would also be seen in cultural life, and the CUP congress of 1917 approved the foundation of various modern and national institutions, including a national library, national archive, and national music and film industries were all formed under the auspices of the CUP.²³

By 1917, then, the CUP government seems to have realised that its goal of promoting Ottoman culture and civilisation among its allies could not be better realised than with an international exhibition of Ottoman arts. The initial impetus for such an exhibition seems to have come from within the government, though perhaps partly at the prompting of its German ally. On 25 February 1917, the Ottoman embassy attaché in Berlin wrote to the Ministry of War that ‘for the first Ottoman exhibition in Germany’ the building of ‘Königliche Akademie has been allocated’.²⁴ The Ministry of War, together with the attaché in Berlin, decided to display both modern and traditional Ottoman art objects including ‘rugs, kilims, tiles, book bindings, calligraphy, guns, and jewellery’. For war-related works, or, as it is termed in the documents, ‘paintings about war and our commanders’, the authorities felt optimistic that they could either bring together such works at short notice via

²² Judith E. Tucker, ‘Revisiting Reform: Women and the Ottoman Law of Family Rights, 1917’, *The Arab Studies Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Fall 1996), pp. 4-17. Nihan Altınbaş, *Marriage and Divorce in Early Twentieth Century Ottoman Society: The Law of Family Rights of 1917* (PhD Thesis, Bilkent University, 2014).

²³ As reported in *Tanin*, 21 Eylül 1333 [21 September 1917]; Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler*, Vol I, p. 66.

²⁴ BOA. MF. MKT 1223/11, 03 Cemazeyilevvel 1335 [25 February 1917].

‘newspapers advertisements’ or from the collections of the ‘Military School, other state buildings, palaces, and the paintings at the Red Crescent Exhibition’.

This plan was nevertheless faced with the frequently remarked general unwillingness of Ottoman artists to pursue appropriately ‘patriotic’ subjects. True, a few painters had benefitted from the mass media demand for patriotic war images as an expanded public arena for their works: illustrated magazines like *Donanma Mecmuası* and *Harb Mecmuası* commissioned war-related works from painters with military training such as Hüseyin Hüsnü and Ali Cemal, and the mass production of paintings as postcards was also made possible under the patronage of the patriotic associations, such as with the National Defence League’s 1915 postcard series of maritime painter İsmail Hakkı’s depictions of the Ottoman naval campaign in the Dardanelles.²⁵ Nevertheless, of the battle paintings the propagandistic press printed, a considerable number of the images were by European artists. The *Donanma Mecmuası*, for instance, featured works by the well-known German illustrator and ethnographer Max Karl Tilke, whilst the *Harb Mecmuası* used the works of the German war artist Fritz Grotemeyer.²⁶ There was, then, a general and prevailing reluctance to produce war-related images among Ottoman painters, best exemplified by the dearth of military themes at the Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibitions in the summers of 1916 and 1917.²⁷ During the war years, upper-and middle-class art buyers at Istanbul still seem to have preferred still-lives, portraits, and landscape paintings,

²⁵ For İsmail Hakkı’s wartime works, see Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu, ‘Çanakkale Savaşı’nın Ressamı Bahriyeli İsmail Hakkı Bey’, *Taç*, No: 8 (Fall 2016-Winter 2017). Chapter III.

²⁶ See, for instance, Max Karl Tilke’s work depicting ‘the British and Indian dromedary cavalries fleeing before the Ottoman assault’ in Iraq: *Donanma Mecmuası*, No: 122, 17 Kanun-i evvel 1331 [30 December 1915], pp. 1168-1169. Fritz Grotemeyer’s work picturing ‘the Palestinian front’ appeared in *Harb Mecmuası*, No: 24, Kanun-i Evvel 1333 [December 1917], p. 378.

²⁷ Chapter IV.

and the few war-related works exhibited in the 1916 and 1917 Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibitions had yet to be sold.²⁸

The exhibition organizers in the Ministry of War also felt it necessary to benefit from the experience of the Ottoman cultural establishment. When the letter reached Halil Edhem Bey, director of the Imperial Museum and the Academy of Fine Arts, he and his colleagues proposed, perhaps surprisingly, removing traditional Islamic culture from the exhibition to foreground Ottoman competence in modern and Western forms.²⁹ First, they wrote that the ‘majority of the paintings at the Military School, state buildings, and palaces had been painted by European, and particularly by French painters, and as such they cannot represent Ottoman painters at the Berlin exhibition.’ They also found the works produced by military school students ‘of no significance.’³⁰ Secondly, they suggested displaying works from ‘new decorative arts’ that would ‘show the progress within the country’. Their proposal was accepted by the authorities, who subsequently decided to send only modern Ottoman art to the capital of the allies, and, as for ‘paintings about war’, to commission Ottoman artists to produce war-related works.

Faced with this sudden need to commission artworks, the CUP may have been led to reflect on the consequences of the tremendous cuts it had made to state funding for, in particular, the art collection at the Academy of Fine Arts since 1914. Rather than reinstate support for established Ottoman cultural institutions, however, the government seems to have taken this opportunity to develop a longer-term cultural

²⁸ For instance, Çallı İbrahim’s *Night Attack* and Ali Cemal’s *A Guard in Maydos*, both displayed in 1916, were re-exhibited once again at the 1917 Exhibition of War Paintings in Istanbul and later in Vienna.

²⁹ At that time, Halil Edhem was still serving as director of the Academy of Fine Arts, before the painter Halil Pasha became its director in April 1917.

³⁰ Halil Edhem’s reply dated 26 March 1917. BOA. MF. MKT 1223/11, 03 Cemazeyilevvel 1335 [25 February 1917].

strategy to catalyze and support an appropriately national visual art. The most significant of these reforms was the creation, however short-lived, of the Fine Arts Council (*Sanayi-i Nefise Encümeni*) in May 1917 to provide public support for national arts.³¹ One of its aims was to publish a bi-monthly art journal, titled *Fine Arts Journal* (*Sanayi-i Nefise Mecmuası*), although in the event the publication could not be realised. Another significant step was the law regarding the foundation of a National Fine Arts Museum in Istanbul (*Asar-ı Nakşiye Müzesi*), as announced on 30 June 1917 in the official newspaper *Takvim-i Vekayi*.³² According to the law, the museum would include paintings by contemporary Ottoman and foreign artists, as well as both original and copies of artworks painted by old masters (*esatize-i kadime*). The establishment of a national fine arts museum had always been a dream of the cultural elite, and especially of Osman Hamdi Bey, since the foundation of the Academy of Fine Arts in 1883. While, ultimately, the law could not be brought into force during the war,³³ its passage shows clearly how the public function of painting also came to be seen as a status symbol, propaganda medium, and expression of civilisation by the CUP state.

The decision to commission Ottoman artists to produce war-related works and the planning for a museum to house them might also have been influenced by practices adopted by other belligerent countries, of which CUP officials would have been aware through the foreign press. In 1916, for instance, Wellington House, the British Government's Propaganda Bureau, had launched the Official War Artists

³¹ 'Sanayi-i Nefise Encümeni', *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 16 Mayıs 1333 [16 May 1917].

³² 'Asar-ı Nakşiye Müzesi Nizamnamesi', *Takvim-i Vekayi*, 30 Haziran 1333 [30 June 1917]. Halil Edhem, *Elvah-ı Nakşiye Koleksiyonu* (Istanbul: Matbaa-yı Âmire, 1924). See, also, Fatma Ürekli, 'Eminönü'nde Bir Sanat Kurumu: Asar-ı Nakşiye Müzesi', *Eminönü 2. Uluslararası Sempozyumu Tebliğler Kitabı* (Istanbul: Eminönü Belediyesi, 2007), pp. 352-356.

³³ The 1917 initiative for a national museum of fine arts would finally be implemented by the young Turkish Republic in 1926, but the inauguration of the Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture would have to wait until 1937. See the Conclusion.

scheme which recruited artists and sent them to the front. Partly because the war paintings produced by official war artists hardly attracted private buyers during the war, the British government decided to establish a National War Museum (which soon became known as the Imperial War Museum) for the specific purpose of collecting material about the ongoing conflict.³⁴

With promises of future institutions and support in place, there now seemed much less reason for Ottoman artists to restrain their patriotic impulses. On 9 August 1917, an anonymous article in the journal *Yeni Mecmua* berated Ottoman artists—novelists, poets, and painters alike—for not really engaging with the war, claiming that the Germans and French fervently produced artworks to ‘awaken the feelings of sacrifice and heroism’:

And what about us? So grievous a question is this that before it our thinkers, poets, artists can make no movement but to bow their heads. Yes, whilst our heroic soldiers are at battle with inexhaustible faith and energy on the borders of Caucasia, the deserts of Sinai and Iraq, and at Gallipoli, their heroism, which has raised the heights of humanity, could choke off the voice of the heart. Which brush has succeeded in depicting them? None, none, of course. Maybe a few colourless poems, one or two tuneless compositions, three or four artless paintings have appeared [...] And while a nation such as ours, in whose hearts the fires of heroism have burned undimmed by the disastrous centuries, have not the spirit to proclaim our own tale, a nation such as the cowardly and ridiculous Italians, who were created only for daily defeat in disgrace, raise storytellers as vigorous as “da Vinci”.³⁵

One of the key actors behind the implementation of the commission and exhibition of war paintings in 1917 was Celal Esad, an intellectual with close ties to the CUP state. Having received his art training at the Academy of Fine Arts in

³⁴ For further information on British war art and propaganda, see, Sue Malvern, *Modern Art, Britain, and the Great War: Witnessing, Testimony, and Remembrance* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2004); Paul Gough, *A Terrible Beauty: British Artists in the First World War* (Bristol: Sansom & Company, 2010). For the most recent study, see, James Fox, *British Art and the First World War, 1914-1924* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

³⁵ Anonymous, ‘Harb Edebiyatı’, *Yeni Mecmua*, No. 5, 9 August 1917, p. 81.

Istanbul, Celal Esad was a prolific art critic and municipal head of Istanbul's Kadıköy district during the war years. He had had a prominent status both in the art and political establishment, leading him to be one of the people approached by the Head of the Intelligence Service Seyfi Pasha for advice on propaganda. Many years later, Celal Esad recalled the 'lengthy report' he submitted to Seyfi Pasha:

Under the influence of publication against the Turks for centuries, even our allies consider us as a primitive nation. [In order to change] the inaccuracy of this consideration, [we shall] organize exhibitions and concerts in the capitals of our allies and prove our civilisation and competence.³⁶

Upon Seyfi Pasha's approval and insistence on seeing war-related works,³⁷ Celal Esad took the initiative to organise an art studio in the early autumn of 1917 for artists in a large warehouse in the Şişli district, not far from the memorial of the *Abide-i Hürriyet* (the Monument of Liberty).

Unlike for Enver Pasha's Galipoli initiative for artists to visit the Galipoli front in the summer of 1915, however, there seems to have been no call for artists in the press, and participation is likely to have been by invitation only. Indeed, by no means all prominent Ottoman artists were either offered or accepted the commission. Paris-educated civilian painter Nazmi Ziya, for instance, created no war paintings and exhibited no works in the subsequent exhibitions. Also conspicuously absent were notable Armenian war painters then working in the empire, such as the celebrated palace battle painter Simon Agopian³⁸ (who did in fact produce a painting of a pair of wounded Ottoman soldiers around this time, known as *Soldier Firing One-Handed* [*Tek Elle Ateş Eden Asker*]) or, perhaps, the patriotic illustrator of the journal *Resimli*

³⁶ Arseven, *Sanat ve Siyaset Hatıralarım*, p. 126.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 62.

³⁸ For Simon Agopian, see, Vazken Khatchig Davidian, 'Portrait of an Ottoman Armenian Artist of Constantinople: Rereading Teotig's Biography of Simon Hagopian', *Études arméniennes contemporaines*, no. 4, (2014), pp. 11-54. Chapter II.

Kitab during the Italo-Ottoman War, Stepan Agayan. While neither artist was necessarily affiliated with the artistic cutting edge by this point, Seyfi Pasha, the power behind studio organiser Celal Esad, was head of the Department of Intelligence, the War Ministry's 'Second Department', which was known to have been in charge of coordinating anti-Armenian agitation.³⁹



FIGURE 5.2: Simon Agopian, known as *Soldier Firing One-Handed* (*Tek Elle Ateş Eden Asker*), 1917, oil on canvas, 50 X 40 cm ©Istanbul Military Museum.

It is also noteworthy that, even though two women artists—Harika Hanım and Ruşen Zamir Hanım—eventually contributed non-war related works to the resulting exhibition, no women artists participated in the studio; not even the young star painter

³⁹ Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (London: Constable, 2007), p. 130. Indeed, as Taner Akçam puts it, Seyfi Pasha was regarded during the armistice period as 'one of the top five persons who had planned the genocide' by the British, leading his arrest in January 1919 for his role in the organisation of 'the exterminatory campaigns' against the Armenians in January 1919: Akçam, *A Shameful Act*, p. 471, fn. 77. See, also, Vahakn N. Dadrian, 'The Secret Young Turk Ittihadist Conference and the Decision for the World War I Genocide of the Armenians', *Holocaust and Genocide* 7, no. 2 (Spring 1998), pp. 173-201; Vahakn N. Dadrian and Taner Akçam, *Judgement at Istanbul: The Armenian Genocide Trials* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011).

of the 1916 and 1917 Galatasaraylılar exhibitions, Eleni Iliadis. In the end, eleven entirely male and Muslim artists met in a rather thrilling *mise-en-scene* and were given just three months to create a series of war paintings:

[In Şişli], trenches were dug, and a group of soldiers carried their guns, horses and artillery. Instantly, the paints and the oilcloths brought from Germany were distributed to the artists. Painters, such as Çallı İbrahim, Feyhaman, Namık İsmail, Hikmet Onat, Sami Yetik and Ali Sami sat in front of their easels in this big hangar with a glass roof. This crowd and sense of national mission gave them great enthusiasm for their work.⁴⁰

In terms of military background and experience of war painting, however, the eleven painters the Ottoman War Ministry sponsored that autumn were a reasonably diverse group. Only Mehmed Sami and Namık İsmail had experience of the combat zones during the First World War as soldiers.⁴¹ Mehmed Sami, coming from a military education background, served both in the Balkan Wars and the First World War. Namık İsmail, too, had served on the ill-fated Erzurum front as a reserve officer, making a few sketches of soldiers; but, after he was invalided back to Istanbul after falling ill with typhus around 1916, he attempted no paintings about his experience before the Şişli studio. Çallı İbrahim had been to the front as an observer, but his visit to the Gallipoli front in the summer of 1915 was only for a limited time, and whilst there he did not make any sketches but had created oil paintings around 1916 from memory and displayed his works in the same year at the Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibition. Though at the studio there were painters from the military education background, like Ali Cemal and Mehmed Ruhi, they had not gotten close to the action at the front lines either. A civilian-educated painter like the elder Ömer Adil would be

⁴⁰ Arseven, *Sanat ve Siyaset Hatıralarım*, pp. 62-63.

⁴¹ See Chapter III. See also Gizem Tongo, 'An Ambivalent Patriot: Namık İsmail, the First World War, and the Politics of Remembrance in Turkey', in Margaret Hutchinson and Steven Trout (eds.), *Painting, Memory, and the Great War* (Alabama: The University of Alabama Press), *forthcoming*.

completely unfamiliar with any war-related equipment. For non-combatant artists in particular, it was not an easy task to work directly from nature without visiting the combat zones.

This official war art initiative, as one might well call it, was therefore quite different from the ones established in other belligerent countries. In France, Britain, and Australia, for instance, there was a profound emphasis on the first-hand experience of the artists; painters were sent to the front for a certain time to eye-witness the combat zones.⁴² In the Ottoman case, however, the state was relatively reluctant to send its own painters to the fronts. Though Nazmi Ziya and Çallı İbrahim had visited the Gallipoli front in the summer of 1915, they were not expected to produce war images directly at the combat zone.⁴³ On the other hand, German and Austro-Hungarian painters, such as Wilhelm Viktor Krausz, Fritz Grottemeyer, and Reinhard Pfaehler von Otheграven were sent to the frontlines not only with their own armies but also with the Ottoman army.⁴⁴ Though Enver Pasha himself was highly interested in the propaganda power of cinema and photography and encouraged Ottoman citizens to take images at the front lines, he does not seem to have taken the same risk with Ottoman painters. In spite of the difficulties of transporting the photographic equipment to the war zone, the Ottoman photographer and instructor at the Teacher Training Academy in Istanbul (*Dârülmualîmîn-i Âliye*) Necati Bey established his reputation by going all the way ‘without any fear, to the front lines to take images’, for which he was praised by Enver Pasha in October 1915.⁴⁵ Painting

⁴² For Australia, see for instance, Margaret Hutchison, “‘Accurate to the Point of Mania’: Eyewitness Testimony and Memory Making in Australia’s Official Paintings of the First World War”, *Australian Historical Studies*, Vol: 46, Issue: 1 (2015), pp. 27-44.

⁴³ Chapter III.

⁴⁴ Chapter III and Chapter IV.

⁴⁵ BOA, MF. MKT, 1210/33, 20 September 1331 [3 October 1915]. In his letter, Enver Pasha uses the phrase ‘*avcı hatları*’ which can be translated either as ‘front lines’ or ‘skirmishing lines’.

the war at the front lines, however, was a different business. Many professional Ottoman painters were late impressionists working direct from nature. If sedate *plein air* methods were out of the question in combat zones, even making sketches and later converting them to oil paintings was neither safe nor straightforward. To approach the battle and take photographs or make sketches always carried the risk of being killed. On the Gallipoli front, for instance, the death rate for the Ottoman army had reached 4000 in one single day only.⁴⁶ But by summer 1917, there was no front to which the Ottoman high command could send the painters without fear of losing them in a sudden retreat or reversal. Furthermore, at the front, observing battles directly was almost impossible; trenches were deep, narrow and separated from the enemy trenches by the usually great distances of no man's land, and a thick layer of mud, dust, or smoke often covered the surrounding view. As one medical officer to the German Air Force put it, one can 'hardly ever see the enemy face-to-face.'⁴⁷

To overcome these problems, in the Şişli studio, every military detail was made available to the painters to pose, position and combine as they wished, at what must have been considerable expense. Trenches were dug, artillery and other war equipment were delivered, horses and soldiers were hired as models, and some necessary materials—paints and oilcloths—were brought from Germany. The painters may well have enjoyed the economic support they received from the War Ministry. After all, they had been struggling under the economic burden due to war, like the rest of the population. As Celal Esad would later recall: 'This was an opportunity for our

⁴⁶ The casualties for the 19 May 1915 attack, for instance, were 7000 wounded and 3960 dead. See, Lokman Erdemir, *Çanakkale Savaşı: Siyasi, Askeri ve Sosyal Yönleri* (İstanbul: Gökkuşbu, 2009), p. 341.

⁴⁷ Stephen Kurt Westmann, *Surgeon with the Kaiser's Army* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2014), p. 41.

painters. Even at nights they would work under the lamps, would not even go out for food, but rather had meals sent from the restaurants.’⁴⁸

On 15 November 1917, a promotional story about the Şişli studio and the upcoming exhibition of war paintings in the *Tasvir-i Efkar* reported the official narrative behind the CUP’s broader cultural policy: because the Ottoman Empire had hitherto produced no ‘war literature, war painting, or war music,’ while ‘all other belligerent countries [had] started producing works of art about war,’ war paintings had been commissioned ‘as a memorial to the World War,’ ‘a museum to house them’ established in law, and exhibitions planned in Istanbul and the allied capitals as a proof of Ottoman modernity and artistic ability.⁴⁹ The technical achievement and camaraderie of the Şişli studio was also a large part of the press interest in the exhibition. On 22 December, the day after the opening of the Istanbul exhibition, the daily *Tasvir-i Efkar* published a promotional photograph from the artists’ studio, showing the elder statesman of Ottoman painting, Prince Abdülmecid Efendi, posing with the painters as they worked on their canvases.⁵⁰ Abdülmecid Efendi himself neither worked at the studio nor exhibited any paintings in Istanbul (though he would send four works to the subsequent Vienna exhibition).

⁴⁸ Celal Esad, *Sanat ve Siyaset Hatıralarım*, p. 63.

⁴⁹ ‘Harb Resimleri’, *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 15 Tesrin-i Sani [15 November 1917].

⁵⁰ ‘Harb Ressamları Sergisi’, *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 22 Kanun-i Evvel 1333 [22 December 1917], p. 1.



FIGURE 5.3: Painters and models pose with the Prince. From left to right (excluding the helmeted models): Ali Cemal, Prince Abdülmecid Efendi, Namık İsmail, Çallı İbrahim, Hikmet. *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 22 Kanun-i Evvel 1333 [22 December 1917], p. 1.



FIGURE 5.4: Painters discussing Çallı İbrahim's then unfinished *Moving Artillery into Position* (*Topçu Mevzi Alırken*) with the Prince at the studio. From left to right: Ali Sami, Ali Cemal, Namık İsmail, Prince Abdülmecid Efendi, Çallı İbrahim, Hikmet, Mehmed Sami, and Mehmed Ruhi. Courtesy of Adnan Çoker. Published in Gören, *Türk Resim Sanatında Şişli Atölyesi ve Viyana Sergisi*, p. 41.

When the Exhibition of War Paintings opened in Istanbul in December 1917, a lengthy article on the front page of the daily *Tasvir-i Efkar* by Abidin Daver announced the state's 'purpose in organising this exhibition of war paintings' in Europe:

We must show that the Turks are not, as is generally supposed—and as proclaimed by our enemies—unworthy to live in Europe or a people devoid of civilisation, but that it is in fact our place among civilised countries which obliges us to introduce ourselves to our allies today and to our enemies tomorrow [...] We must show that we, too, have a share in the fine arts of music, architecture, painting and so forth; that we, too, have succeeded, after a fashion, both in the epoch of nations and the epoch of the West [...] That is our purpose in organising this exhibition of war paintings.⁵¹

In concert with CUP policy, the rhetoric linked the existence of the 'fine arts' to civilisation and being worthy of living 'in Europe'. The article did strike some dissonant notes, however, criticising the time limitation imposed by the War Ministry on the artists, and the allegation that painters had been placed under unnecessary artistic constraints.⁵² The writer, a close personal friend of the artist Ali Cemal, saw 'two difficulties' painters had faced whilst producing their works: first, 'three months was not enough'; second, 'painters could not work with their own inspiration or the way they know, but had to work under an external influence.' For him, it was not right to 'impose upon painters ideas which they do not see as appropriate or suitable.'⁵³ Avni Lifij, for instance, ultimately participated in the Istanbul Exhibition of War Paintings, but did not join the other painters at the government-sponsored

⁵¹ A. D. [Abidin Daver], 'Harb Resimleri Sergisi', *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 21 Kanuni Evvel 1333 [21 December 1917], p. 1. A much shorter translation from the *Tasvir-i Efkar* also appeared in the German Orientalist magazine *Der Neue Orient*, emphasizing the section on 'Turks' willing to show that they also had a 'place among civilised countries': 'Ausstellung von Kriegsbildern türkischer Maler', *Der Neue Orient*, Vol. 2, 1918, p. 284.

⁵² A. D. [Abidin Daver], 'Harb Resimleri Sergisi', *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 21 Kanuni Evvel 1333 [21 December 1917], p. 1.

⁵³ *Ibid*, p.1.

studio, preferring to work on his paintings independently, at his personal studio. Years later, his wife, who was also one of the participants of the Exhibition of War Paintings, recalled those days:

Even though [Avni Lifij] had hungry days during the First World War, he rejected [art] commissions because of the directives being made. He did not paint for money. He was a generous and idealist artist who wanted to show merely how he was feeling.⁵⁴

While Avni Lifij's refusal to work at the studio was perhaps a personal preference and not an explicit anti-war stance, it does indicate that generalisations about Ottoman artists' universal enthusiasm and support for the war cause need to be reconsidered.

Ambivalent Patriotism: 'Exhibition of War Paintings' in Istanbul, 1917

The Istanbul exhibition was officially opened on 20 December 1917 at the previous club of *Società Operaia*, like the two previous Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibitions.⁵⁵

The daily *Hilal* wrote of the 'scenes from military life and combat' in the exhibition, as the 'first attempt made by Turkish painters in an area from which they have deliberately turned away so far.'⁵⁶ Elif Naci was among the young art students at the Academy of Fine Arts who did not miss the chance to see the works,⁵⁷ and perhaps his enthusiasm was matched by some of the less artistically inclined youth who had jostled to see Wilhelm Krauss' war paintings in 1916. Emerging as a particular hero for this young audience was the soldier painter Namık İsmail, who achieved much acclaim as a war artist with his striking canvases and dynamic sketches. Elif Naci later recalled the day he first saw Namık İsmail's war paintings:

⁵⁴ *Milliyet Sanat Dergisi*, 08 June 1973, pp. 8-11.

⁵⁵ A. D. [Abidin Daver], 'Harb Resimleri Sergisi', *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 21 Kanuni Evvel 1333 [21 December 1917], p. 1.

⁵⁶ Anonymous, 'Tableaux de guerre', *Hilal*, 26 December 1917.

⁵⁷ Elif Naci was a student at the Academy of Fine Arts in 1917. According to his memoirs, he enjoyed the wartime exhibitions, especially the Exhibition of War Paintings in late 1917. Elif Naci, *Anılardan Damlalar* (Istanbul: Karacan Yayınları, 1981).

I met him during the Great War when he was a dapper cavalry officer. It was the paintings he displayed at the Exhibition of War Paintings which first attracted my attention. He was the youngest painter at the exhibition [...] We were students. Whether because of his painting's poetry or imagination or their sharp contours, Namık İsmail was the painter who left the biggest impression on us.⁵⁸

Nevertheless, perhaps due to the time and personnel constraints, the number of war paintings produced in the Şişli studio was not enough for a major display. When the exhibition was shown to the Istanbul public, it displayed 128 paintings, of which only around thirty-five per cent of them were directly related to the war. Some painters redisplayed contemporary and war-related works from previous exhibitions, including Avni Lifij's large oil-on-canvas painting of Ottoman workers, *Development* (1916), and Ali Cemal's war painting of a single ordinary soldier, *A Guard at Maydos* (1916). Like the previous exhibitions, the display included a mixture of portraits, landscapes, and interior scenes. Yet, compared to the high number of painters of the previous exhibitions, only nineteen artists participated in the Exhibition of War Paintings.⁵⁹ Of those nineteen painters, there were only two women—Harika Hanım and Ruşen Zamir Hanım—and not a single non-Muslim. In contrast to the conspicuous cosmopolitanism of the 1916 and 1917 Galatasaray exhibitions, then, the Exhibition of War Paintings was a predominantly male and exclusively Muslim formation. The exhibitions might have provided the state with an opportunity to show its allies its even-handed support for talented Ottoman artists regardless of their ethnic identity. But this did not happen. The Ottoman reviewers, for their part, did not find the

⁵⁸ Elif Naci, 'Namık İsmail: Sanatı, Şahsiyeti, Eserleri ve Hayatı', *Yeni Türk Mecmuası*, Issue: 5, February 1933, p. 415.

⁵⁹ As indicated at the exhibition catalogue the name of the artists were: Sami Bey, Namık İsmail Bey, Hikmet Bey, Çallı İbrahim Bey, Ruşen Zamir Hanım, İbrahim Feyhaman Bey, Ali Sami Bey, Zekai Pasha, Şevket Bey, Adil Bey, Cevad Bey, Halil Pasha, Harika Hanım, Hüseyin Avni Bey, İsmail Hakkı Bey, Ruhi Bey, Seyid Bey, and Tahsin Bey. For the catalogue, see Şerifoğlu, *Resim Tarihimizden: Galatasaray Sergileri, 1916-1951*, p. 29.

absence of non-Muslim painters even remotely odd, leaving it unremarked in generally celebratory coverage.

The war paintings produced for and exhibited in the Exhibition of War Paintings took a generally broader-minded approach to how they defined ‘war-related’ work than their CUP patrons’ phrase ‘paintings about war and our commanders’ would suggest. The exhibited war-related works ranged from scenes of soldiers fighting on foot, on their horses, or in their everyday life in trenches. While some artists chose to exhibit neo-traditional, sanitized or idealized images of soldiering, others chose to make grittier and more emotional statements about the carnage of battle or the devastation of the home front, including civilians in distress or mourning their loved ones. Though many of these war paintings show signs of having been commissioned and facilitated by the War Ministry for propagandistic purposes, it would be an underestimation of the painters and an oversimplification of the material to consider them all as mere wartime propaganda.

Painting the Battlefield

As seen in the previous chapter, Çallı İbrahim’s 1916 work *Night Attack*, exhibited here alongside his studio works, constituted a breaking point in the history of Ottoman war painting, introducing a different kind of configuration of war and what it does to the bodies and minds of the soldiers. Before 1914, the majority of war-related oil paintings were depictions of historic rather than contemporary wars, and were almost exclusively battle pictures. Such large-scale works were mostly of interest for military schools or the sultans themselves, who often commissioned artists to portray Ottoman warfare in the classical age, as additions to the palace collections.⁶⁰ Three exceptions

⁶⁰ Chapter II.

were the Greco-Ottoman war, depicted by the Italian artist Fausto Zonaro; the Russo-Ottoman war, painted by Simon Agopian, and, the Balkan Wars, whose battles were rendered by painters like Ali Sami and Halid Naci. Yet these pre-1914 war paintings were in no way ambivalent in their configuration of war and soldiering, and the mass spectacle of battle or parade was rendered as a celebration of Ottoman courage and military prowess, past and present. Works in the exhibition that seem to follow in this tradition, while showing traces of Çallı İbrahim's influence, are those by Mehmed Sami and Mehmed Ruhi on the theme of the Gallipoli campaign.

Mehmed Sami's *The Battle of İsmail Tepe* is the picture in the exhibition most reminiscent of traditional battle painting. The work is a powerful image of a battle that took place on the Gallipoli front at the İsmail Tepe, known to the British as 'W' Hill.⁶¹ On 21 August, the attack developed into a major engagement, resulting eventually in failure for the British army and loss of many lives for both sides.⁶² Mehmed Sami renders a strong sense of realism in depicting the battle, and the topography of the battlefield traces a terrifying panorama of human fighting, showing intersecting waves of soldiers attacking and attacked, repulsing, surviving, dying, and dead. In a representation of Ottoman soldier's ferocity, several are resorting to using their rifles as spears or clubs to stab or batter the enemy to death. Whereas in *Night Attack* this gesture had been met with horror on all faces, in the central panel of Mehmed Ruhi's stridently patriotic *Triptik (Tryptych)*, the Ottoman soldier's frenzied spearing of his fallen opponent seems to win the approval of the ancestral spirit of what looks like an Ottoman warrior who looms through the mist of battle.

⁶¹ 'Gallipoli Association': <http://www.gallipoli-association.org/on-this-day/august/08/>. Accessed 25 July 2017.

⁶² See, Peter Hart, *Gallipoli* (London: Profile Books, 2011); Peter Fitzsimons, *Gallipoli* (London: Bantam Press, 2015).



FIGURE 5.5: Mehmed Sami, *The Battle of İsmail Tepe (İsmail Tepe Savaşı)*, oil on canvas, 124 x 200 cm © The War of Independence Museum, Ankara.



FIGURE 5.6: Mehmed Ruhi, *Triptych (Triptik)*, oil on canvas, 222 X 141 cm © The War of Independence Museum, Ankara.

Restrained by comparison with his *Triptych*, Mehmed Ruhi's *After the Enemy Fled (Düşman Kaçtıktan Sonra)* eschews the spectacle of battle to show Ottoman soldiers calmly clearing the field of victory, though again having pursued the invading enemy as far as (and presumably beyond) the shoreline. The central figure of the Ottoman soldier, like most of his comrades, walks upright, confidently grasping a rifle in one hand and, quite casually, a tattered British flag in the other. In contrast to the

battle panel of *Triptych*, only the faces and stances of the enemy show any emotion, and the contorted features of the Anzac soldier in the bottom right of the picture contrasting sharply with the calm expression of the central figure, who does not seem to see the scattered bodies around him, but gazes sternly and impassively Westwards. Similar to Mehmed Sami's canvas, the blueish hues of the Ottomans' uniforms cause them stand out in relief against the earth where they have fallen in battle, unlike the dominant brown and khaki colors of the fallen enemy, who seem to melt into it.



FIGURE 5.7: Mehmed Ruhi, *After the Enemy Fled* (*Düşman Kaçtıktan Sonra*), oil on canvas, 119 x 86 cm © The War of Independence Museum, Ankara.

As seen in earlier chapters, in the First World War, the lack of a devilish 'other' is one of the most striking changes to the representation of war by Ottoman painters. The general lack of a distinction between 'innocent us' and 'guilty them' was in contrast to some works produced during the Balkan Wars, where a sense of

betrayal and a fear of massacre led to demonization of Christian adversaries.⁶³ The judgment in Mehmed Ruhi and Mehmed Sami's paintings is not against the comportment of individual enemy soldiers, but against the occupation of the country by enemy armies. The enemy soldier is not represented as malign or brutal, but disturbs an otherwise peaceful landscape; this disturbance leads to battle, and the landscape then bears their sufferings and violent death. Of course, the positive portrayal of the 'other side' as worthy, though vanquished, opponents also helps to further elevate one's own honour and fighting qualities.

A more compassionate treatment of the enemy can be found in Ali Cemal's painting *A Little Water (Biraz Su)*, portraying a wounded enemy soldier offered water by an Ottoman. In Istanbul, *A Little Water* was displayed under the name of *Ottoman Cavalry Offering Water to a Wounded Romanian (Roman Mecruhuna Su Veren Osmanlı Süvarisi)*, locating the scene on the Cilician front, as with many of Ali Cemal's submissions to the exhibition. In *A Little Water*, however, Ali Cemal emphasizes the human element of war—in contrast to the enemy as merely a function of the warfare in Mehmed Ruhi and Sami's canvases. Here, the facial expression of the Turkish soldier, which, unusually for Ali Cemal is rendered in detail, and foregrounds his gentle humanity and paternal care of the (non-Muslim) enemy. Ali Cemal here depicts the face of the enemy in detail and individuates and humanises its presence, though, similarly to Mehmed Ruhi and Mehmed Sami's battle scenes, it is the enemy face that displays the greatest intensity of emotion. This is a depiction of one's own conduct towards the enemy as civilised and humane, as in the 'gentlemanly' image of the Ottoman soldiers that grew up most memorably among the Anzac troops fighting at Gallipoli.

⁶³ Chapter II.



FIGURE 5.8: Ali Cemal, *A Little Water* (*Biraz Su*), 1917, oil on canvas, 146 x 117 cm © Istanbul Military Museum

The painting was championed by Ali Cemal's friend and critic Abidin Daver as being one of the best artworks of the entire exhibition.⁶⁴ Though the critic regarded the work less successful with regard to its colours, he praised its simplicity and the precise drawing of military equipment. One reason for the popularity of this image of the disciplined and even gentle Ottoman soldier was of course the damage to the empire's reputation due to the reports of the mass deportations and massacres of

⁶⁴ A. D. [Abidin Daver], 'Harb Resimleri Sergisi', *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 21 Kanuni Evvel 1333 [21 December 1917], p. 1. In the 1918 catalogue published in Vienna, the name of the work appeared only as '*A Little Water*' ('*Etwas Wasser!*').

Ottoman Armenians from Spring 1915, apparently instigated by the paramilitary ‘Special Organization’ (*Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*) and often carried out by a mixture of Ottoman troops, local Turkish civilians, and Kurdish irregulars. The Ottoman state had already been declared to have committed a crime ‘against humanity and civilisation’ by Britain, France and Russia for its anti-Armenian policy.⁶⁵ After the first siege of Kut al-Amara by the Ottoman Army in Spring 1916, the contemporary Armenian journal *Ararat* referenced an allegation in the British Parliament by Lord Robert Cecil, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs about the mistreatment of British prisoners. Quoting a poem by the Anzac soldier Charles Bean, the author cast doubt on the narrative of the merciful Ottoman warrior that grew up at Gallipoli: ‘if any of these heroes [i.e. British prisoners] should ever have the time and inspiration to write a book on his experiences and what he has seen in Mesopotamia, he would not, we feel sure, write as some of the Anzacs of the Gallipoli campaign have done: – We will judge you, Mr. Abdul, By the test by which we can – That with all your breath, in life, in death, You’ve played the gentleman.’⁶⁶ By 1917, the issue of the massacres was still sensitive enough for German censorship orders to indicate that ‘papers on the Armenian Question are subject to prior censorship.’⁶⁷ With the Ottoman army increasingly less and less able to properly provision its own troops, let alone sustain POWs, Ali Cemal’s reminder of Ottoman civility in war must have been a great comfort to Ottoman commanders and their foreign allies alike.

Another break with previous trends was that in the 1917 exhibition (and during the First World War more generally), was that representations of the enemy in war paintings were actually relatively rare, the more usual focus being on Ottoman

⁶⁵ Quoted in Akçam *A Shameful Act*, p. x. Also see, Alex J. Bellamy, *Massacres and Morality: Mass Atrocities in an Age of Civilian Immunity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 65.

⁶⁶ ‘The Situation in Armenia,’ *Ararat*, Vol. 4, No: 38 (August, 1916), p. 57.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Hofmann, ‘From Silence to Re-Remembrance,’ p. 90.

soldiers and their war experience. In 1917, this perhaps could have been due to the greater availability of Ottoman military materiel in the Şişli studio, or perhaps in turn due to a focus by state patrons on Ottoman military prestige. Nevertheless, battle paintings by Çallı İbrahim, who witnessed the front but never fought, and Namık İsmail, who was at this point a ‘soldier painter’ in every sense, choose to focus, not on the thrill of unmanning one’s enemy on the field, but on moments of experience of soldiering in the Ottoman army where the aims and organization of the war effort are subject to a sense of ambiguity.

In contrast to his *Night Attack*, Çallı İbrahim’s *Artillerymen Taking up Positions* (*Topçu Mevzi Alırken*) seems at first sight a straightforward realistic treatment of Ottoman troops engaged in a standard military manoeuvre. The energetic brushwork is clearly the technical centrepiece, and the golden sky seems to be reflected in the fiery scrafitto crests of the hills and glisten in the thick impasto of the muddy ground. The treacherous underfoot conditions with which troops at Gallipoli would have had to contend after any rain at all, lends these gunners’ uphill struggle a sense of heroism, even though it is clearly at some distance from any actual fighting. The irony of this scene is the uphill struggle of traditional horse and muscle power to deploy the latest military hardware, though a patriotic reading might be that, as in Mehmed Ruhi and Mehmed Sami’s pictures, it is the sheer endurance and determination of the Ottoman troops which is being celebrated. Yet the detachment’s ultimate objective remains obscure and uncertain, and the viewer cannot determine if what has reddened the surrounding hills is a hopeful sunrise or an ominous twilight.



FIGURE 5.9: Çallı İbrahim, *Artillerymen Taking up Positions (Topçu Mevzi Alırken)*, 1917, oil on canvas, 180 x 279 cm © Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture

Surely the most striking and disturbing battle paintings in the exhibition were by Namık İsmail. Namık İsmail experienced the battlefield as a reserve officer and saw and felt the human cost of the conflict first hand, which made it harder for him to reduce his war paintings to sanitized representations. His ambivalent conception of war as both sacrifice and loss is foremost in his battle painting, *Take Another (Al Bir Daha)*, which depicts four soldiers desperately defending their position against an enemy who remains unseen behind thick clouds of gun smoke.⁶⁸ On this canvas, Namık İsmail worked with a relatively limited colour range, with soft greens, warm hues of browns, and a very small amount of creamy white, creating an overall effect that is rather murky and gloomy. As in more unambiguously patriotic works, Namık İsmail's figures, some dead, some alive, seem resigned to their destiny. Here, though, it is not enemy but Ottoman soldiers who suffer the intense physical and emotional contortions of battle. In the right foreground, among spent shell casings and a

⁶⁸ Tongo, 'An Ambivalent Patriot: Namık İsmail'.

forgotten water flask, is another soldier, lying face down on the ground, clutching an injury in his lower back. Dominating the left of the composition, in relief against the wanly lit background, a soldier with a head bandage holds aloft a (last?) live shell in a defiant gesture.



FIGURE 5.10: Namık İsmail, *Take Another (Al Bir Daha)*, 1917, oil on canvas, 205 x 145 cm © Ankara Museum of Painting and Sculpture

Whether in his painting Namık İsmail emphasizes the patriotic and moral significance of fighting or decries the stark reality of being wounded and killed in war is rather ambiguous. The patriotic sentiment is immediately suggested by the title and the compositional focus on the shell in the fist of the defiant soldier, who forms the apex of the composition. The horror of the battlefield, on the other hand, clearly emerges as the eye falls away to the right and the striving, wounded, and fallen soldiers. The composition of the painting is horizontal, not vertical, and as such the eye oscillates between the defiant and the fallen soldiers equally, rather than

attempting to retain the emphasis on one figure.⁶⁹ Indeed, the focus on the facedown soldier becomes even more significant when we realise Namık İsmail had initially intended to include only the figure behind the field gun and the lying figure, the latter having been much larger and in the foreground in an earlier oil sketch.⁷⁰

Namık İsmail's dialogue with his war experience takes on a further level of meaning when his feelings for the loss of his close friend, a professional soldier named Halet, are taken into account. Only a few months before he started working on *Take Another*, Namık İsmail penned an emotional obituary to commemorate the first anniversary of his friend's death:

One year ago today, a twenty-five-year-old youth, Halet Ali, died a martyr on the Egyptian front [...] Today, on the anniversary of his martyrdom, I want to exhume those hearts that loved Halet, revive their year-old sorrow and renew their mourning. I will speak not of his patriotism and the heroism he exhibited, for nothing that could be said on this count could be as eloquent as the manner of his martyrdom. I will speak rather of the remarkable personality that I lost along with Halet; one who was sometimes practical, sometimes delicate, sometimes sick and sometimes sensitive, a lover of art, a poet and a devotee of adventure.⁷¹

Namık İsmail's writing here is skilful, using the rhetorical device of apophasis. He invokes and yet at the same time denies the dominant social discourse on death in battle as martyrdom for faith and fatherland to describe the irredeemable loss of the unique individual human person who was his beloved friend. Indeed, the overall feeling of this article is one of equivocation, expressing his ambivalence towards war as both honourable action ('the manner of his martyrdom') and pitiful loss (of a

⁶⁹ For an in-depth discussion on the choices artists have made between using the vertical or horizontal axis to organise a site of memory or other kinds of commemorative works, see, Jay Winter, *War Beyond Words: Languages of Memory from the Great War to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), particularly his chapter on 'The Geometry of Memory: Horizontality and War Memorials in the Twentieth Century and After'.

⁷⁰ For a reproduction of this oil sketch, see Zeynep Rona, *Namık İsmail* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1992), p. 167.

⁷¹ Namık İsmail, 'Halet'e Dair', *Servet-i Fünun*, 26 April 1917, p. 292.

‘remarkable personality’). Perhaps, too, the title of *Take Another* was chosen as an ambivalent gesture to Halet and all the other friends Namık İsmail lost to the war. The painting does not attempt to evoke hatred against a visible enemy who would ‘take another’ shell, or another life. In the absence of the enemy, however, it is the war itself which ‘takes another’.

Where Namık İsmail seems to move from ambivalence to what seems like outright critique, however, is in his remarkable (and much less reproduced) *Vortex of Victory* (*Girdab-ı Zafer*). This is an extraordinary painting of a cavalry charge, portraying soldiers on their horses hurtling over the edge of what looks to be a bottomless trench and into a void. The expressionless faces of the soldiers contrast with the horror in the eyes of the horses, as they realise that they have been ridden into an abyss.



FIGURE 5.11: Namık İsmail, *Vortex of Victory* (*Girdab-ı Zafer*), 1917, oil on canvas, 106 x 138 © Ankara Museum of Painting and Sculpture

A patriotic reading of this image would be that Namık İsmail, a cavalry officer himself, is showing these riders to have transcended their animal fears in service of their orders. The dark and lurid colours and sombre atmosphere here might also

suggest something of a tribute to fallen comrades from Namık İsmail's own unit.

While we should not project our present-day awareness that the First World War was one of the last conflicts to feature decisive cavalry engagements, it is tempting to see in the *Vortex of Victory* a cavalryman's objection to a military tactic that was struggling to retain dominance on the modern battlefield. And tempting too is the interpretation that resignation and fatalism has rendered these figures incapable of either fighting effectiveness or self-preservation. As with Çallı İbrahim's *Artillerymen Taking up Positions* and his own *Take Another*, Namık İsmail's composition sends an ambiguous message that can be interpreted either patriotically, as celebration of sacrifice and heroism, or as a subtle questioning of these values from the perspective of those ordered to do the dying.

Among the battlefield subjects depicted by Ottoman artists were scenes from the everyday life of the ordinary soldiers. As Jay Winter put it, it was during the First World War that 'terror took on the face of the *Frontsoldaten*, the *poilu*, Tommy Atkins, those unfortunate men who lived and died in a trench system.'⁷² It was the face of the Mehmetçik, the ordinary soldier, that came into particular focus in Ottoman painting.⁷³ This was typified in the exhibition by Ali Cemal's portraits of soldiers, often at rest and as an apparent extension of a landscape, which often resembled the work of an official photographer. Perhaps the most successful picture in this vein was by Hikmet, who found an impressionist style appropriate for his subject matter. In *Soldiers Reading a Letter in a Trench* (*Siperde Mektup Okuyan Askerler*), Hikmet depicts a seated soldier reading a piece of paper in a trench and in

⁷² Jay Winter, 'Faces, Voices and the Shadow of Catastrophe', in Estela Schindel and Pamela Colombo (eds.), *Space and the Memories of Violence: Landscapes of Erasure, Disappearance and Exception* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 88.

⁷³ 'Mehmetçik' is based on the diminutive form of a common Turkish name Mehmet and used as a general term that refers to all Turkish soldiers.

front of three soldiers. The warm colours of yellow and light brown contribute to the bright, sunny atmosphere of the canvas, and stands in sharp contrast to the darker and more forbidding colours of the listening soldiers.

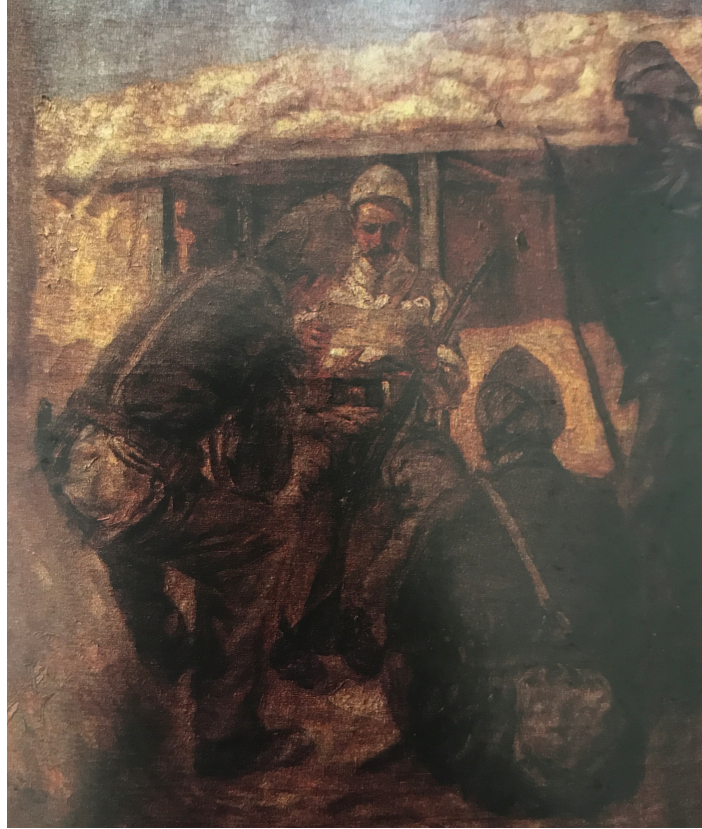


FIGURE 5.12: Hikmet, *Soldiers Reading a Letter in a Trench* (*Siperde Mektup Okuyan Askerler*), 1917, oil on canvas, 150 x 124 © Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture

Sending letters to the front was not an easy task during the war years. As early as 5 November 1914, the daily *Tanin* announced that all letters, whether incoming or outgoing, ‘must be sent in open envelopes,’⁷⁴ and each and every written correspondence was under the control of military authorities at headquarters. If a letter managed to pass the censorship, a literate officer often had to read it aloud to the receiver, for a large majority of ordinary soldiers in the Ottoman army were illiterate. Indeed, the overall literacy rate among the Ottoman population probably did not

⁷⁴ ‘Mektuplar Açık Yollanacak’, *Tanin*, 23 Teşrin-i Evvel 1330 [5 November 1914]; Beşikçi, *Ottoman Mobilization*, p. 55.

exceed ten per cent between 1914 and 1918, though this number was sometimes close to zero among the rural population, from which many conscripts were drawn.⁷⁵ This fabricated slice of military life might have been intended to show pastoral care of troops by educated officers and close emotional bonds across the ranks in the trenches. Nevertheless, the contrast between the enlightened officer, reading out confidently in the sunshine, and the solemn men, sat listening in the shadow of the trench, could also suggest a lack of sensitivity or a sense of shame.

Developments in projectile weaponry during the First World War also meant increased risk to civilians and their property. Mehmed Ali Laga saw for himself the battle sites of the Gallipoli front, and was inspired by the landscapes left behind by the fighting and shelling. Mehmed Ali was 36 at the outbreak of war; a graduate of the Military Academy, he had already served at the Balkan Wars. Commissioned as a ‘painter of the fortified area’ (*Mevki-i Müstahkem Ressamı*) early in the war, he produced numerous wash drawings and charcoal of the Gallipoli battlefields during the course of the First World War. Mehmed Ali did not participate in any major art events in Istanbul, including the Istanbul Exhibition of War Paintings, but he did contribute some nine watercolours to the Vienna exhibition. His simple sketch *Dardanelles after the Bombardment* (*Dardanellen nach dem Bombardement*) accords with his employment as a ‘painter of the fortified area’, but its message is ominous.

⁷⁵ Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, pp. 167-8; Erik J. Zürcher, ‘Little Mehmed in the Desert: The Ottoman Soldier’s Experience’, in Hugh Cecil and Peter Liddle (eds.), *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced* (London: Leo Cooper, 1988), pp. 230-241.



FIGURE 5.13: Mehmed Ali, *Dardanelles after the Bombardment* (*Dardanellen nach dem Bombardement*). Published in *Ausstellung Türkischer Maler*.

The demolished walls and the bare terrain represent how once a peaceful town has been reduced to silent ruins by bombardments. Though the buildings suggest recent civilian life, all are abandoned and the city is denuded and desolate. A patriotic reading might be outrage at the enemy who has wrought such destruction on an Ottoman town. Yet Mehmed Ali portrays a dead city and the soundless finality of departure and death. The completeness of the destruction has removed all human signifiers from this jumble of bricks and shattered stones. No flags fly, no church spires or minarets stand, just chimneys. The few trees among the ruins could mean the bombardment finished ten minutes before, or ten years. It is unclear who lived here or who did the bombarding, and the artist's fascination here may be with a landscape the war seemed to have emptied of all human passion.

While the paintings of the battlefield in the exhibition analysed have been selected to show that by no means all artists involved in this initiative were unambiguously propagandistic about the Ottoman military effort, those in the next section show that some artists represented the pressures and often devastation the war

brought to civilian population in a way that was more overtly critical of the war, and that they used images of women especially to do so.

Painting the Home Front

Another novel feature of the war paintings exhibited in 1917 was a focus on the struggles of civilians on the home front, and especially those of contemporary women. The vast majority of Ottoman families suffered the loss of a son or a husband between 1914 and 1918. Women, losing their beloved ones, had to assume new roles as they became the heads of hungry households in the fragile war economy. Though, as we shall see in the next section, the Ottoman women artists involved in the exhibition did not choose to address the war explicitly (or even implicitly) in their work, preferring more symbolist-influenced landscapes, portraits and fantasias, several male Ottoman painters used women's bodies as key symbols of the harshness of conditions for Ottoman citizens on the home front.

Having received his art education first at the Academy of Arts in Istanbul and later in Italy, Ömer Adil was in his late forties during the course of the war. By this time, he was a well-established painter, teaching both at the Academy of Fine Arts and the Academy of Fine Arts for Women. Since his appointment as director at the Academy of Fine Arts for Women in November 1915, his subject matter mostly remained the same, cantering on women and their daily lives.⁷⁶ The message of women's bereavement, mourning, and grief during the war infuses Ömer Adil's painting, *Eternal Memory (Ebedi Hatura)*.

⁷⁶ Ömer Adil replaced Mihri Hanım in November 1915 as director of the Academy of Fine Arts for Women. According to the official document at the Ministry of Education, Ömer Adil received two separate wages by both art institutions: 1500 kuruş from the Academy of Fine Arts and 800 kuruş from the Academy of Fine Arts for Women. IAMA, Müze-i Hümayun, Maarif Nezareti, 4-75/ 7080, 13 Teşrin-i Evvel 1331 [26 October 1915] and IAMA, Müze-i Hümayun, Maarif Nezareti, 4-93/ 7195, 21 Kanun-i Sani 1331 [3 February 1916]; Ürekli, 'Güzel Sanatlar Eğitiminde Osmanlı Hanımlarına Açılan Bir Pencere', p. 59, fn. 22.



FIGURE 5.14: Ömer Adil, *Eternal Memory* (*Ebedi Hatura*), 1917, oil on canvas, 80 x 114 cm © Cumhurbaşkanlığı Sanat Koleksiyonu

In his *Eternal Memory*, we find a representation of Ottoman women's psychological reaction to the war. *Eternal Memory* is a title that embraces both loyalty and resignation. The work depicts a young woman crying on a sofa around her husband's uniform. The scene suggests that it was not the intention of the artist to portray the moment she received the death news of her husband; the vivid blue bundle in front of her gives the impression that she has taken her husband's belongings out of their places to revisit his absence. A cradle, gun, and binoculars occupy the lower left side of the composition; lighter tonalities prevail the centre and on the right side: red sofa cover, yellow and green tablecloth, and a silver incense burner (*buhurdan*). The *mise en scène* is one of mourning, evoking bereavement, tragedy, the gender of grieving and its representation, the injustices of war. The bright palette of the work and the depiction of a mourning woman almost as a decorative scene are at odds with its

subject matter, perhaps reflecting Ömer Adil's threefold aim, that of focusing on bereavement and loss, presenting the interior of an Ottoman house to the Western gaze, and drawing attention to the honourable and symbolic gesture of the return of a dead soldiers' uniform and equipment to his family, however unlikely it was that this was actually army policy at this point in the war.⁷⁷

As can be seen in the side panels of Mehmet Ruhi's *Triptych*, the concept of mothers giving 'birth to soldier sons' was regarded as reinforcing national belonging and unity throughout the war years in the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁸ Their role as silent and proud mourners was seen as a patriotic act, whilst their distress and emotional suffering was given no public space. Identifying women's pain and grief with forgetting 'duties', an article in *Tanin* warned Ottoman women not to 'waste time crying' in March 1915:

Our country has entered the war, and every one of our brothers, husbands, sons and fathers have taken up arms and, dashed to the fronts, and have been found ready to sacrifice their lives to protect the nation [...] In days such as these, to waste time crying, or, falling into some barren sickness of the heart to become carried away by grief and hopelessness, and to forget our duties is simply not permissible.⁷⁹

Yet women's willing sacrifice of her beloved ones might have been simpler in the first year of the war, but as casualties began to mount, and as the Ottoman War Ministry handled the situation back on the home front without much sensitivity, an increasing number of women grieving for their fallen were left with a void. The majority received no news of their beloved ones at the front and had to live in

⁷⁷ The issue of how Ottoman authorities dealt with the return of dead soldiers or at least their belongings back to their families has not yet been much considered by historians. For the return of the fallen in other belligerent countries, see, Winter, *Sites of Memory*; particularly his essay on 'Homecomings: The Return of the Dead', pp. 15-28.

⁷⁸ Galib Bahtiyar, 'Hayâtı Milliyemiz Menâzırından: Osmanlı Kadınları', *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 14 Nisan 1915. Articles about women's patriotism often featured contemporary press: 'Arslan Yürekli bir Türk Kadını', *İkdam*, 17 Teşrin-i Sani 1330 [30 November 1914].

⁷⁹ 'Osmanlı Hanımları'na', *Tanin*, 27 Şubat 1331 [12 March 1915].

uncertainty, with no idea if their sons, husbands, fathers, or brothers were dead or alive. The misery caused by this ferocious ambiguity was strongly evoked in Irfan Orga's memoirs. Irfan Orga was only a child during the First World War, no older than nine. He remembers vividly, but certainly not fondly, the day his mother visited the War Office to demand news of her husband, Orga's father.

My mother told us of her day. The War Office had been crowded with other black-clad, anxious women, demanding news of their husbands [...] My mother stood for hours in that smelling, angry queue of humanity [...] The records showed that my father had been dead for many months. Timidly, my mother had asked where he died, and the official, dealing with her, had snapped that he could not be expected to know everything [...] My mother, remembering, said that he had spoken with great petulance, as though she and all the other unhappy women waiting here were in some way responsible for the deaths of their menfolk, thereby causing this gallant young man a great deal of unnecessary trouble. She had wanted to ask him something else but he had forestalled her, slamming the wooden window-shutter in her face, so that she had been forced to retire.⁸⁰

Orga's mother was not the only woman who received no information about their beloved ones and their whereabouts. All were treated the same way: 'crying, wailing, beseeching for information, old ones and young ones with babies, being unceremoniously pushed back from the enquiry windows.'⁸¹ Quite ironically, in contrast to European visual culture, especially German women painters, the image of the female mourner was not a popular subject in wartime Ottoman art.⁸² Ömer Adil's painting *Eternal Memory* is an exception in that sense.

⁸⁰ Irfan Orga, *Portrait of a Turkish Family* (London: Eland, 1988), p. 146.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

⁸² See, for instance, Claudia Siebrecht, 'Imagining the Absent Dead: Rituals of Bereavement and the Place of the War Death in German Women's Art during the First World War', *German History*, Vol. 29, No: 2 (2011) pp. 202-223; Claudia Siebrecht, *The Aesthetics of Loss: German Women's Art of the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Like Ömer Adil, Namık İsmail also chose as his subject the home front for the painting he simply titled *Typhus (Tifüs)* (1917); and evocation of how the wartime typhus epidemic devastated civilian lives. In the foreground, three women in black robes wait for something in the shadow of a stone building with a chimney, one holding her head in her hands in a mourning or comforting attitude. Down the street, two other women in black are visible; one approaches the viewer carrying a basket, the other holding the hand of a small child, perhaps part of the funeral procession on the left of the picture, in which two men dressed in work clothes carry a coffin through the sunlight to or from the mosque, which is visible through the haze in the background. In the top right of the picture, hover the nightmarish stylized shadows of crows.



FIGURE 5.15: Namık İsmail, *Typhus (Tifüs)*, 1917, oil on canvas, 170 x 130 cm © Ankara Museum of Painting and Sculpture

As Namık İsmail knew too well, a typhus epidemic grew up in the unsanitary and crowded wartime conditions of the Erzurum front, and killed an enormous number of people, civilians and soldiers alike. In December 1914, four hundred cases of civilian and military deaths were recorded per day in the city.⁸³ In the winter of 1915, a foreign doctor reported the situation in Erzurum as follows:

The dead were so numerous they forbade their burial by day, and at night they were carried naked by the wagon-load to the trenches [...] I saw a trench or rather a large hole half-filled dead bodies in every position, just as they had been thrown in like rubbish [...] Others were later thrown in on top of them, and all covered up. It was a terrible sight to see.⁸⁴

Namık İsmail was one the few lucky survivors to be sent to Istanbul for treatment,⁸⁵ and his *Typhus* is thus a testimonial of a deeply personal experience as the disease killed many of his friends. This evocation of civilian suffering thus may not be an explicit condemnation of the war or government neglect of civilian issues, but it is significant that it was produced for an exhibition of war-related works.

But when it came to an unflinching condemnation of the civilian cost of war, Avni Lifij took a step even further. In the Ottoman canon of First World War paintings there are few such disturbing images as Avni Lifij's *War/Allegory* (*Savaş/Alegori*). The painting's size (160 x 200 cm) and title suggest it is official war art, but it is the horrors and moral failures of war that are highlighted. Unlike Namık İsmail, Avni Lifij never served in the army. He lacked any direct knowledge of artillery and the battlefields, and, as noted before, chose not to study the simulacrum of war created in the Şişli studio. What distinguishes *War/Allegory* from Namık

⁸³ See Hikmet Özdemir, *The Ottoman Army, 1914-1918: Disease and Death on the Battlefield* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2008).

⁸⁴ Quoted in Rogan, *Fall of the Ottomans*, p. 161.

⁸⁵ 'Sanayi-i Nefise Müdürü Namık İsmail Bey'le Mülakat', *Meşale*, 1 July 1928, p. 8.

İsmail's works, and also the rest of the art works in the exhibition, is its unambiguous humanitarian and anti-war message.



FIGURE 5.16: Avni Lifij, *War/Allegory (Savaş/Alegori)*, oil on canvas, 160 x 200 cm © Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture

Here soldiers are not fighting other soldiers, war having travelled from the battlefields to trample over civilian territory, and the devastated non-combatants, elderly and young, constitute the heart of the work. As with Çallı İbrahim's *Night Attack*, one traumatized figure stares out at the viewer, though this time it is not a soldier but a nude young woman, naked and huddling among the sleeping or dead bodies of her female relatives and the wreckage of their horse cart. In the background, an elderly male figure seems to be draped over or crucified upon a dead tree. From the firestorm in the town in the distance stream men carrying burdens, perhaps as refugees or a work gang. The emphasis on the harmed civilians tells us something very different

about the war: The enemy is the action of war itself, destroying lives and nature and which is perceivable only by its consequences. There is no hope in the faces of those whose bodies lie shattered among the ruins. Here, war has destroyed the old meaning of landscapes for Avni Lifij, like for most artists; fields are no longer a source of pleasure, contemplation, or escape, but have become places of danger where people are abandoned to unknown fates.

The partial nudity of the female figures in this picture is perhaps a moral condemnation of rape, but perhaps also a deliberate reminder of the psycho-sexual license of war. In the nationalist discourse of war, women were often represented as a symbol of a home or homeland in need of defense. As Irvin Cemil-Schick has pointed out, read as a visual metaphor in nationalist texts, ‘sexual violence [...] provides a symbolically dense representation of territorial appropriation and of the inability of men to defend their territory and their manhood,’ a complex which is often mobilized repressively to further control ‘national’ women’s movement and morals.⁸⁶ Here, however, it is ambiguous whether Avni Lifij is appealing to the viewer’s patriarchal anxieties about Ottoman mothers, sisters, and daughters, or about the fate of all women in war. While a nationalist interpretation could easily draw on the history of intercommunal atrocity between Ottoman Muslim and Christian villages in the Balkans and Anatolia in the late Ottoman period and into the First World War, the location of what is depicted here is deliberately unidentifiable, suggesting a universalist interpretation.⁸⁷ Then again, perhaps the ‘allegory’ of Avni Lifij’s title is

⁸⁶ Irvin Cemil Schick, ‘Christian Maidens, Turkish Ravishers: The Sexualization of National Conflict in the Late Ottoman Period’, in Amila Buturović and Irvin Cemil Schick (eds.), *Women in the Ottoman Balkans: Gender, Culture and History* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris), pp. 273-305.

⁸⁷ The lack of a landmark for a location is significant, because in 1923, Avni Lifij produced a similar painting he named *Karagün (The Dark Day)*, which depicts a similar ruined landscape with two dead people being watched by a crow, but here one can notice a humble mosque and the destruction of its

a subtle critique of the hypocrisy of those who would desire war represented as an object of titillation or visual pleasure.

During the First World War, a new prototype of womanhood was constructed, different from the pre-war feminine archetype whose identity was mostly measured by her capacity as a mother or wife at home or by her beauty, as can be found in orientalist paintings produced by Osman Hamdi Bey. For visual artists, women provided a popular subject matter during the First World War. One popular image was that of woman as peacemaker. In fact, in war's iconography, it was often women's bodies who represented the dream of peace in most belligerent countries. As Joyce Berkman argued after the nineteenth century, the image of woman as 'peacemaker' was to become a common belief in both Europe and the United States and remained so during the war years.⁸⁸ To a certain extent, the peacemaker image was related to the implication that men are aggressive by 'nature' and women's 'maternal instincts' make them naturally pacifists; women were held to be on the side of life.

Such a view of women as central signifiers of peace can be seen on the cover illustration of the *Tasvir-i Efkar* in December 1917. Two seated soldiers and standing women (their wives?) in modern Ottoman clothing, one accompanied by a child with a popular contemporary toy, look up at a female figure in ancient Greek dress emerging from a laurel wreath and carrying an olive branch and a tablet on which is inscribed the word *sulh* (peace/compromise). It is thus significant that Ottoman women artists would choose not to represent war in their works for the exhibition, and that the image of the modern Ottoman woman should be so central to the content and

minarets on the left side. The painters' changing attitudes during the War of Independence and how it differed from that in the First World War will be discussed in the Conclusion (Chapter VI).

⁸⁸ Joyce Berkman, 'Feminism, War and Peace Politics: The Case of World War I' in Jean Bethke Elshtain and Sheila Tobias (eds.), *Woman, Militarism and War: Essays in History, Politics and Social Theory* (Savage, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1990), p. 142.

reception of the version of the exhibition that travelled to Vienna in early 1918 as the 'Exhibition of Turkish Painters'.

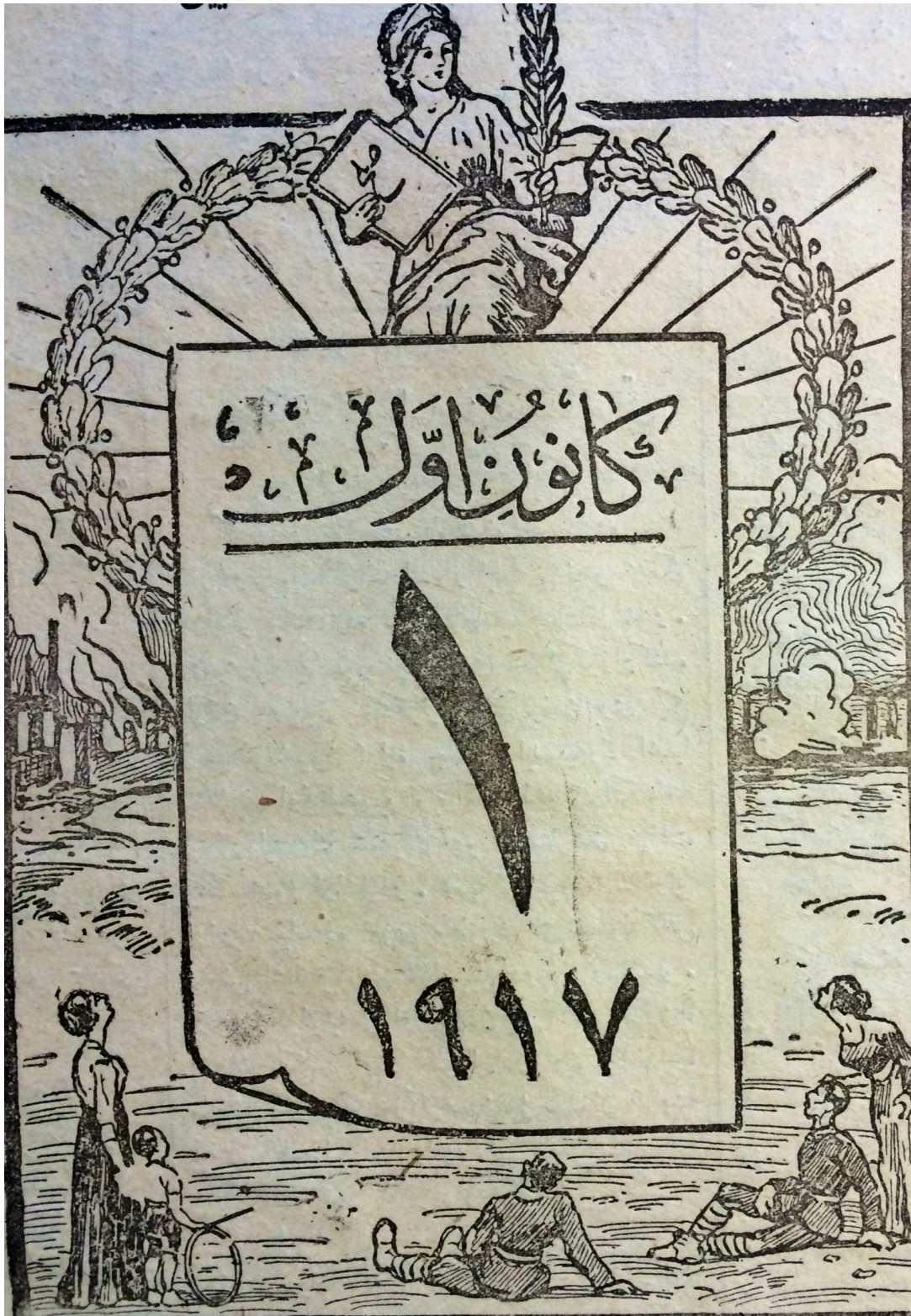


FIGURE 5.17: Cover Illustration, *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 1 Kanun-i Evvel 1333 [1 December 1917].

1918: The Art World and the Alliance

Civilisation and Prestige: ‘Exhibition of Turkish Painters’ in Vienna, 1918

The organisation of an Ottoman art exhibition in their allies’ capital cities had chiefly been conceived by the CUP state as an act of cultural diplomacy to shore up the alliance. After the closure of the Istanbul exhibition, Celal Esad and Namık İsmail were tasked by the Ottoman intelligence service to travel with the paintings and help organise their exhibition in the capitals of the allies: ‘Vienna, Berlin, Munich, Dresden, Budapest, and Sofia’.⁸⁹ The War Ministry decided to add more paintings for these temporary displays, so that they would also include ‘valuable artworks by Ottoman painters about other subjects [*sair mevzular*] too’.⁹⁰ On 17 November 1917, permission was requested (and later granted) to borrow four paintings from the collection of the Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts (Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi Müzesi).⁹¹ In February 1918, 142 paintings were put on a train to be displayed in the capitals of the allies, and the first stop—and, as it also would happen also the last—was the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.⁹²

When the paintings arrived in Vienna to be display at the University of Vienna, the Viennese painter Eduard Adrian Dussek arranged the artworks at the exhibition rooms.⁹³ On 15 May, the doors of the ‘Exhibition of Turkish Painters’

⁸⁹ A personal card from the Ottoman Bank dated 12 January 1918 describes Namık İsmail as employed by the ‘Deuxième Bureau’. Ottoman Bank Archives, Salt Research. For the name of the cities, see, Anonymous, ‘Informations: Nos peintres chez nos alliés’, *Hilal*, 11 February 1918, p. 1.

⁹⁰ BOA. MF. MKT. 1031/11, 17 Teşrin-i Sani 1333 [17 November 1917].

⁹¹ These were: İbrahim Feyhaman’s *Woman with Carnation Flower* (*Karanfilli Kadın*), Hikmet’s *Boats* (*Kayıklar*), Mehmed Ruhi’s *Collection for the Red Crescent* (*Hilal-i Ahmer İanesi*), and Namık İsmail’s *Contemplation* (*Tefekkür*). BOA. MF. MKT. 1031/11, 17 Teşrin-i Sani 1333 [17 November 1917].

⁹² Anonymous, ‘Informations: Nos peintres chez nos allies,’ *Hilal*, 11 February 1918, p. 1. It is likely that the Ministry of War preferred the Balkanzug for the transportation of the paintings, though I have not found a source which traces the story of this journey.

⁹³ ‘Theater, Kunst und Literatur’, *Deutsches Volksblatt*, 18 May 1918, p. 7. According to the article published in *Deutsches Volksblatt*, the exhibition took place in two rooms: ‘in the university’s ballroom and in a room adjacent to it’.

(*Ausstellung Türkischer Maler*), as the German-speaking press advertised it, opened to the public. It was to be on display for a month until 15 June.⁹⁴ The inauguration was held ‘ceremoniously’ by Archduke Franz Salvator, the ‘protector’ of the Austrian Committee for the Red Turkish Crescent and the Austrian Red Cross, according to the weekly *Das Interessante Blatt*.⁹⁵ As planned in advance, the profits of the exhibition would be donated to these two patriotic associations, as would those from the sale of the German catalogue, *Ausstellung Türkischer Maler* (Exhibition of Turkish Painters), in which some of the paintings were reproduced in black and white.⁹⁶



FIGURE 5.18: Poster of the Exhibition of Turkish Painters © IWM (Art. IWM PST 6732)

⁹⁴ ‘Kunstaussstellung türkischer Maler’, *Die Wiener Bilder*, No: 21, 26 May 1918, p. 8.

⁹⁵ ‘Ausstellung türkischer Maler’, *Das Interessante Blatt*, No: 22, 30 May 1918, p. 6.

⁹⁶ *Katalog der Ausstellung Türkischer Maler: Veranaltet vom osmanischen Kriegspressequartier in den verbündeten ländern* (1918).

The curiosity of the German-speaking press was aroused by what the Austrian daily *Die Zeit* announced as an exhibition by ‘twenty-one brave artists’ of the ‘rejuvenated Turkey.’⁹⁷ According to the *Berliner Tageblatts*, the exhibition meant ‘one has to believe that new times are starting in Turkey.’⁹⁸ The monthly art magazine *Die Christliche Kunst*, published in Munich, announced that ‘the Turkish guests too have joined the school of the Occident’.⁹⁹ Josef Bernhard wrote two lengthy articles for the *Sport und Salon* and *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*. He described the display as a ‘peculiar exhibition’ showing ‘the fatalistically ill-considered people of the Turks, once freed from the bonds of a constrained tradition, demonstrates a forceful will to exert itself in all areas of mental and artistic expression.’¹⁰⁰ He also conceded that ‘Turkish art is still in its infancy, characterised partly by German and partly by French influences.’¹⁰¹

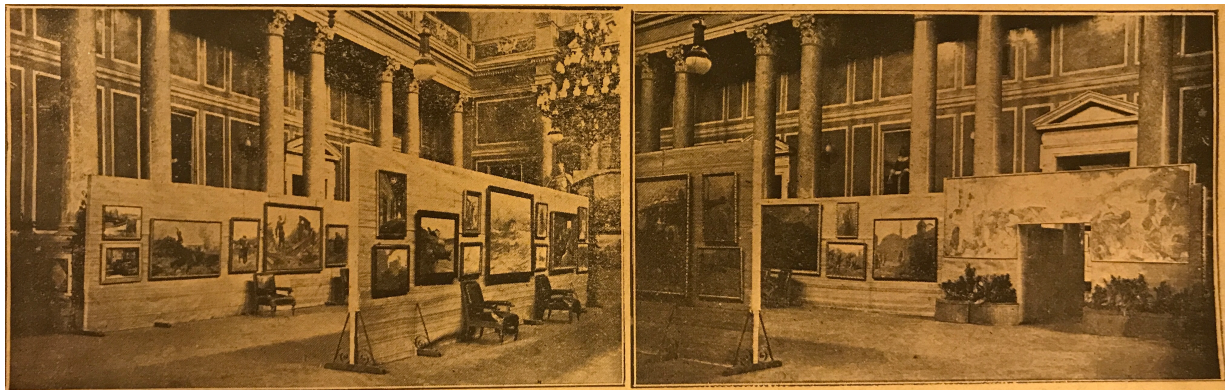


FIGURE 5.19: *Harb Mecmuası*, No: 27, Haziran 1334 [June 1918], p. 432.

⁹⁷ ‘Türkische Malerei’, *Die Zeit*, 15 May 1918. Zekai Pasha, who had exhibited one painting in the Istanbul 1917 Exhibition of War Paintings titled *Bir Konak Dahili* (*Interior of a Mansion*) did not take part in the Vienna exhibition, whilst Prince Abdülmecid Efendi, who had not participated in the 1917 exhibition, sent four paintings to Vienna. Another artist, who had not participated in the 1917 exhibition yet contributed to the Vienna exhibition was Mehmed Ali Laga.

⁹⁸ Arnold Höllriegel, ‘Die türkische Kunstausstellung in Wien’, *Berliner Tageblatts*; the snapshot of the newspaper appears without a date in Gören, *Türk Resim Sanatında Şişli Atölyesi ve Viyana Sergisi*, p. 58.

⁹⁹ ‘Vermischte Nachrichten: Ausstellung türkischer Maler in Wien’, *Die Christliche Kunst*, Vol. 14, 1917-1918, p. 32.

¹⁰⁰ Josef Bernhard, ‘Türkische maler in Wien’, *Sport und Salon*, no: 21, 26 May 1918, p. 7.

¹⁰¹ Josef Bernhard, ‘Türkische maler in Wien’, *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*, 26 May 1918, p. 601. The snapshot of the *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*’s article was also published in Gören, *Türk Resim Sanatında Şişli Atölyesi ve Viyana Sergisi*, pp. 64-67.

The primary strength of the exhibition was war-related works, but, in an extension of the Istanbul catalogue, nearly every category of modern Ottoman painting was represented: still life, figurative and genre paintings, portraits, and, of course, landscape paintings. For Joseph Bernhard, the landscape paintings were ‘excellent’ and ‘pleasant in their colourfulness and light effects.’¹⁰² In another article, he added that it was ‘in landscapes the Turkish painters reveal their ability far better’.¹⁰³ Halil Pasha’s *Morning View of Çengelköy*, already displayed in the 1916 Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibition, received much praise, as did Hikmet Bey’s Bosphorus landscapes, which, for Bernhard, were ‘characterised by a pearl colouring’ reminiscent of ‘Viennese painters’.¹⁰⁴



FIGURE 5.20: Hikmet Onat, *At the Harbour (Limanda)*, oil on canvas, 79,5 x 90 cm © Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture.

¹⁰² Bernhard, ‘Türkische maler in Wien’, *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*, p. 601.

¹⁰³ Bernhard, ‘Türkische maler in Wien’, *Sport und Salon*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁴ Bernhard, ‘Türkische maler in Wien’, *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*, p. 601.

Bernhard was also immediately attracted to the works of Şevket Bey, who contributed with two academic paintings, each depicting a religiously dressed man inside two Istanbul mosques: Rüstem Pasha Mosque and the (then) mosque of Hagia Sophia. For Bernhard, Şevket ‘leads us into the Orient; there really is something of a national art in him, something which one misses in other artists. He captures the Oriental fairy tale mood of ancient mosques in tone and colour.’¹⁰⁵



FIGURE 5.21 Şevket Bey, *Ayasofya (Hagia Sophia)* (undated), oil on canvas, 76 x 64 cm © Private Collection.

Of the two women artists to exhibit in Vienna, Harika Hanım was the best represented,¹⁰⁶ taking part with eight works including portraits, landscapes, and some symbolist-influenced fantasia. The work which received most acclaim from critics

¹⁰⁵ Bernhard, ‘Türkische maler in Wien’, *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*, p. 601.

¹⁰⁶ Ruşen Zamir Hanım, about whom little is known, submitted a successful but perhaps idealised landscape of a Turkish village framed by a rainbow, *Gökkuşağı (Rainbow)*, in a very similar style to that of Harika Hanım. Gören, *Şişli Atölyesi ve Viyana Sergisi*, pp. 121-122.

depicts the Greek gods and mortals in front of an Ionic temple; a subject known to the artist through literary translations from Greek and Latin, and also through visual representations of ancient stories in Renaissance painting, and reproduced widely in pre-war illustrated Ottoman journals.¹⁰⁷ Born in Istanbul to a middle-class bourgeois family, Harika Hanım's father was a medical doctor who was an enlightened and forward-looking man, wishing his daughter to have a sound, modern education. Harika Hanım was enrolled at the School for Female Teachers (*Darülmuallimat*) where she developed an interest in painting, later continued with private art classes she took from the painter Müfide Hanım. She became a professional painter, taking part in both of the Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibitions in 1916 and 1917. During the war years, she developed a productive working partnership with Avni Lifij, whom she later married. Bernhard immediately defined Harika Hanım as a 'courageous' woman who 'dares to appear on the scene with a bold topic: "The Greek Gods", mostly quite naked men and women.'¹⁰⁸ Calling her painting 'entirely scandalous', the reviewer for the *Die Zeit*, saw *Enjoyments of the Gods* as a victory for European civilisation:

Not only does she exhibit paintings publicly, but one of her works even displays the Olympus, the Gods of Greece! These fair-skinned Gods are seen in a tentative-impressionist and strangely Asian manner, but it is a Turkish woman who has paid homage to them, it is her highest triumph, a triumph of Europe.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Süheyla Yüksel, *Türk Edebiyatında Yunan Antikitesi (1860-1908)* (Sivas: Asitan Yayınları, 2010).

¹⁰⁸ Bernhard, 'Türkische maler in Wien', *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*, p. 601.

¹⁰⁹ 'Türkische Malerei', *Die Zeit*, 15 May 1918.



FIGURE 5.22 Harika Hanım, *Enjoyments of the Gods (İlahlar Eğleniyor)*, oil on canvas, 145 x 90 cm © Nilüfer Sayıt Collection. Published in Gören, *Türk Resim Sanatında Şişli Atölyesi ve Viyana Sergisi*, p. 100.

For the German-speaking press generally, however, it was Prince Abdülmecid Efendi and Namık İsmail who were the most popular artists at the show. Unsurprisingly, Abdülmecid Efendi's popularity was due to 'his high rank'¹¹⁰ as one who 'will at one point ascend the Sultan's throne,'¹¹¹ but also due to the choice of his subject matter from Ottoman palace life: two portraits (a self-portrait and the portrait of Sultan Selim I) and two genre paintings of finely dressed Ottoman aristocrats enjoying Western culture in well-appointed palace interiors. In fact, his paintings *Goethe in the Harem (Harem'de Goethe)* and *Beethoven in Harem (Harem'de Beethoven)* seem to have been chosen in a particular effort to please the German viewers and helped characterize him as an 'enthusiastic fan of European culture'.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Sch-r, 'Ausstellung türkischer Maler', *Deutsches Volksblatt*, V: 30, No: 10545 (15 May 1918), p. 7.

¹¹¹ Bernhard, 'Türkische maler in Wien', *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*, p. 601.

¹¹² Ibid. A lengthy article on Prince Abdülmecid Efendi and his paintings had already been penned by the Berlin journalist Rudolf Rotheit for the *Die Islamische Welt* and published in March 1917. R. Rt. [Rudolf Rotheit], 'Der Maler Prinz Abdul Medschid', *Die Islamische Welt*, No: 4 (7 March 1917), pp.

Namık İsmail, on the other hand, was lionised by critics as the artist ‘who exceeds his fellow artists by far’¹¹³; as ‘an artistically excellent painter [...] equally exquisite as a figurative artist and a landscapist’¹¹⁴; as the one ‘who will surely one day be at the top of young Turkish art’.¹¹⁵ Namık İsmail displayed seventeen oil paintings as well as sketches he had produced on the Erzurum front. The sense of the hopelessness, misery, and ambiguity of soldiers and civilians in wartime that animated his works made him, again, one of the most remarked and distinguished artists at the show.



FIGURE 5.23: Abdülmecid Efendi, *Goethe in the Harem (Harem'de Goethe)*, oil on canvas, 132 x 173 cm © Ankara Museum of Painting and Sculpture.

205-209. *Die Islamische Welt*, was an illustrated monthly journal on politics, economics, and culture, which published its first issue in Berlin on 19 November 1916.

¹¹³ ‘Türkische Malerei’, *Die Zeit*, 15 May 1918.

¹¹⁴ Sch-r, ‘Ausstellung türkischer Maler’, *Deutsches Volksblatt*, p. 7.

¹¹⁵ Bernhard, ‘Türkische maler in Wien’, *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*, p. 601.



FIGURE 5.24: Abdülmecid Efendi, *Beethoven in Harem* (*Harem'de Beethoven*), oil on canvas, 154 x 211 cm © Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture.

Broadly speaking, the exhibition received extensive critical attention both at home and in Vienna.¹¹⁶ The Ottoman press puffed with pride about the achievement, with the *Harb Mecmuası* devoting an expensive full-page spread of photographs to the exhibition.¹¹⁷ In the German-language press, much of the reviews were well-balanced, favourable to modern Ottoman art and painters, yet those articles also engaged in unabashedly Orientalist readings, with frequent mention of the prohibition of representational art in Islam. Relying on ahistorical understanding, the articles

¹¹⁶ 'Viyana'da Türk Ressamlarının Eserleri', *İkdam*, 15 Mart 1334 [15 March 1918], p. 2; 'Memalik-i Ecnebiyede İlk Osmanlı Sergisi', *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 30 Nisan 1334 [30 April 1918]; M. A., 'Türk Sanayi-i Nefisesi', *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 3 Mayıs 1334 [3 May 1918]; 'Viyana'da Osmanlı Resim Sergisi', *İkdam*, 17 Mayıs 1334 [17 May 1918], p. 2; 'Türk Ressamlarının Asarı', *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 17 Mayıs 1334 [17 May 1918], p. 2; 'Viyana'daki Osmanlı Sergisi'nin Resmi Küşadı', *İkdam*, 19 Mayıs 1334 [19 May 1918], p. 2; 'L'Exposition: des peintres turcs à Vienne', *Hilal*, 19 May 1918, p. 1; 'Nos artistes-peintres à Vienne', *Hilal*, 22 May 1918, p. 2; 'Osmanlı Ressamlarının Asarı', *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 22 Mayıs 1334 [22 May 1918], p. 2; M. A. 'Viyana'da Osmanlı Resim Sergisi', *İkdam*, 22 Mayıs 1334 [22 May 1918], p. 2; 'Viyana'da Osmanlı Resim Sergisi', *Sabah*, 22 Mayıs 1334 [22 May 1918], p. 2.

¹¹⁷ *Harb Mecmuası*, No. 27, Haziran 1334 [June 1918], p. 432.

seem to have approached Ottoman painting, what Edward Said would call, from ‘an uncritically essentialist standpoint’, looking at the Ottomans ‘from afar and, so to speak, from above.’¹¹⁸ Writing for the *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*, Joseph Bernhard, for instance, starts his review with a rhetorical question ‘Turkish paintings? Does that not sound like a fairy tale? Does the Koran not prohibit the portrayal of the objective world, and in particular of human beings?’¹¹⁹ In another article he reiterates similar sentiments:

Painting, as we understand it today, was, as is well known, foreign to all Islamic peoples. The Koran prohibited the representation of God and of everything divine. As a result of this comprehensive ban, iconoclastic fanaticism enabled the general oppression of all artistic activity, be it sculptural or pictorial. Only silent ornaments, plants that had been re-stylised to the point of unrecognizability, geometric shapes, calligraphy and embellished letters were permitted to appear on mosques, in books and on rugs as the sole expression of artistic aspiration.¹²⁰

In discussing the exhibition of Ottoman artists in Vienna, it was perhaps difficult for Austrian writers to avoid falling into the trap of an Orientalist reading. Of the articles on Ottoman painting that were written by European writers, the majority often refer to the Koran and adopt a religion-based analysis. Indeed, while there was some opposition to figural art especially in Arab and Ottoman lands (and less so in India and Iran),¹²¹ progressive Ottoman sultans such as Sultan Mahmud II also commissioned portraits to be hung in public spaces in the 1830s, including the

¹¹⁸ In the afterword to the 1995 edition of his 1978 book *Orientalism*, Said added that his objection to what he calls Orientalism is not that it is just the antiquarian study of Oriental languages, societies, and peoples but that as a system of thought Orientalism ‘approaches a heterogeneous, dynamic, and complex human reality from an uncritically essentialist standpoint [...] which observes the orient from afar and, so to speak, from above.’ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, [1978] 2003), p. 333.

¹¹⁹ Bernhard, ‘Türkische maler in Wien’, *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*, 26 May 1918, p. 601.

¹²⁰ Bernhard, ‘Türkische maler in Wien’, *Sport und Salon*, no: 21, 26 May 1918, p. 7.

¹²¹ On the transformation of Islamic art and architecture in the nineteenth-century, see, Doris Behrens-Abouseif and Stephen Vernoit (eds.), *Islamic Art in the 19th Century: Tradition, Innovation, and Eclecticism* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006); particularly, Stephen Vernoit, ‘The Visual Arts in Nineteenth-Century Muslim Thought’, pp. 19-35.

Sublime Port and military schools.¹²² In 1872, Sultan Abdülaziz took it even further by appointing the religious scholar Turşucuzade Muhtar Efendi *şeyhülislam* (the head of Islam) after the latter's issuing a legal ruling that 'declared pictures licit.'¹²³ Despite the increasing cultural ties among Germany, Austro-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire as a consequence of the alliance, and despite the intentions of the Ottoman state and cultural elite, a nuanced view of figurative painting in Muslim societies seems to have remained far from the imagination of the Western popular press during the course of the war.¹²⁴

Space for Alternatives in the Istanbul Art World in 1918

Apart from the 'Exhibition of Turkish Painters' in Vienna, the Ottoman state did not sanction or support any other domestic high art initiatives in the last months of the war. In fact, in Istanbul, continuing cultural initiatives by alliance actors, and Germans in particular, seem to have provided space for alternative voices that the CUP government was either unwilling or unable to accommodate. Nevertheless, the state still showed itself willing to spend money on cultural products of the alliance.

The Istanbul-based Germanophone newspaper *Osmanischer Lloyd* provided a small exhibition space for use by local artists. Founded in 1908 as a German-language daily newspaper in Istanbul, *Osmanischer Lloyd* was funded by the German Embassy and throughout the war years, became a significant propagandistic publication,

¹²² Chapter II.

¹²³ Schick, 'Some Islamic Determinants of Dress and Personal Appearance in Southwest Asia', p. 42. Chapter II.

¹²⁴ Perhaps, the most accurate observation on the history of modern Ottoman painting during the course of the war was penned by the prolific Jewish writer and art critic Lothar Brieger in 1917. In his article, 'Die türkische Malerei', richly illustrated with artworks by Osman Hamdi Bey and Halil Pasha, Brieger writes in detail about the development of easel painting in the Ottoman Empire. Tracing its history from the artistic encounters in the fifteenth century between Sultan Mehmed II and Renaissance painters, such as Gentile Bellini, Brieger continues with art schools founded in Istanbul in the nineteenth century. Lothar Brieger, 'Die türkische Malerei', *Die Islamische Welt*, No: 12 (November-December 1917), pp. 724-728.

representing the interests of the German Empire.¹²⁵ In addition to a mixture of political, economic, and social articles, its coverage on Ottoman culture and arts was extensive. Its editor in chief was Friedrich Schrader, a prolific journalist, archaeologist, and instructor at the prestigious Robert College who was known for his socialist politics.¹²⁶ During the course of the war, Schrader published various articles on Ottoman culture and language.¹²⁷ In March 1918, two Ottoman painters—Avni Lifij and Eleni Iliadis—both had lunchtime solo exhibitions between 11am and 2pm in the newspaper’s editorial office.

On 3 March 1918, the special exhibition dedicated to Avni Lifij’s paintings included a collection of landscapes, oil sketches, chalk drawings, and nudes by the artist, and was attended by a ‘large and select public, among them also almost all fellow-artists of the exhibitor’, according to *Osmanischer Lloyd*’s review.¹²⁸ One week later, the editorial office staged another one-day solo exhibition, this time by Eleni Iliadis, who had already established a reputation as a portraitist of impressive versatility. In 1916, she had received a fine-arts medal, being the first and only woman and non-Muslim painter to be so honoured in Ottoman history. Her portraits dominated the display, which also included charcoal drawings and pastels. Using ‘bold, broad brush stroke, lively, and saturated colouring’, Iliadis’ technical skill and

¹²⁵ On *Osmanischer Lloyd*, see, Irmgard Farah, *Die deutsche Pressepolitik und Propagandatätigkeit im Osmanischen Reich von 1908-1918 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des ‘Osmanischen Lloyd’* (Beirut: Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft; Stuttgart: In Kommission bei Franz Steiner, 1993).

¹²⁶ Friedrich Schrader was one of the contributors to the popular Marxist publication of the Social Democratic Party of Germany *Die Neue Zeit*. I would like to express my gratitude to Jochen Schrader, the great-grandson of Friedrich Schrader, for his guidance on Friedrich Schrader. See, also, Phillip Wirtz, ‘German Expatriates in Ottoman Istanbul: Friedrich Schrader and Martin Hartmann’, *Ottoman History Podcast*: <http://www.ottomanhistorypodcast.com/2016/08/germans-ottoman-istanbul.html>. Accessed 10 May 2017.

¹²⁷ Among many articles, see, Friedrich Schrader, ‘Die osmanische Miniaturkunst’, *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 11 October 1917, p. 2; Dr. Schrader, ‘Das Lachen spricht’, *Hande*, No. 2, 10 August 1916, pp. 2-3; Dr. F. Schrader, ‘Alttuerkischer Witz’, *Hande*, No. 11, 12 October 1916, p. 2; Dr. F. Schrader, ‘Stimmungen aus Pera: In der türkischen Operetta’, *Hande*, no. 23, 4 January 1917, pp. 2-3.

¹²⁸ ‘Unsere Ausstellung’, *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 4 March 1918.

bravura in rendering ‘the traits of the portrayed person with a sharp gaze’ impressed the critic in *Osmanischer Lloyd*: ‘she enters their soul with quick judgement and she knows how to find the representation of a person that truly characterises them’.¹²⁹

Between April and May, Istanbul also hosted another exhibition by Munich artists, which was, according to the daily *Hilal*, very well-attended—by about 5,000 people (not including the university students).¹³⁰ The material in the exhibition was a mixture of paintings, sculptures, and craft products.¹³¹ The profits from the exhibition and subsequent sale were donated to the Ottoman Red Crescent (*Hilal-i Ahmer*).¹³² In a few days, almost every object found a buyer: ‘it is highly unlikely that a single item will be returned to Munich,’ wrote one critic.¹³³ This enthusiasm by Istanbul collectors, so surprising given the widespread economic woes in the city, may also have had official encouragement. Under the direction of Halil Edhem, and at the insistence of Talat Pasha,¹³⁴ the Ottoman government purchased a painting by the famous German animal painter Heinrich Zügel, later added to the collection of the Academy of Fine Arts (*Elvah-ı Nakşiye Koleksiyonu*).¹³⁵

Such gestures of friendship and flattery towards the German ally may well have seemed more necessary than ever at this point. In summer 1918, to the dismay of Berlin, Minister of War Enver Pasha began to move troops across the Caucasus to help ‘liberate’ Azerbaijan, and its oil-rich capital Baku, from Bolshevik influence,

¹²⁹ ‘Unsere zweite Ausstellung’, *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 9 March 1918.

¹³⁰ ‘L’Exposition d’objets d’art et d’art appliqué de Munich’, *Hilal*, 9 May 1918, p. 3. The exhibition was officially opened on 25 April and was on view until 18 May, 1918. See, Vahid, ‘Sergi İntibaatından’, *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 19 Mayıs 1334 [19 May 1918].

¹³¹ ‘L’Exposition d’objets d’art et d’art appliqué de Munich’, *Hilal*, 13 May 1918, p. 2.

¹³² Vahid, ‘Sergi İntibaatından’, *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 19 Mayıs 1334 [19 May 1918].

¹³³ ‘L’Exposition d’objets d’art et d’art appliqué de Munich’, *Hilal*, 13 May 1918, p. 2.

¹³⁴ ‘Bizim Ressamlarımız’, *İkdam*, 16 Mayıs 1334 [16 May 1918], p. 1.

¹³⁵ ‘L’Exposition d’objets d’art et d’art appliqué de Munich’, *Hilal*, 7 May 1918, p. 4. According to *Hilal*, two paintings by the artist were bought, but the article describes only one painting. Furthermore, there was only one work by Heinrich Zügel in the collection. See, Halil Edhem, *Elvah-ı Nakşiye Koleksiyonu*, p. 131.

leading to a cooling of the alliance. In September 1918, Bulgaria concluded an armistice with France, closing the Balkanzug and effectively severing overland transport between the empire and its allies. Enver's armies, stretched dangerously thin in Palestine by his Caucasian gamble, were surprized at Gaza and then chased out of Syria throughout the Autumn, losing Damascus to the British and Arab Armies on 1 October. Faced with these defeats and intelligence that Germany was considering surrender to the United States, Talat and the unionist government resigned the following week on 8 October, and Talat and other senior members of the war government were welcomed in Berlin when they fled the empire the following month hoping to avoid prosecution for war crimes, particularly against the Ottoman Armenians.

Remarkably, in these tumultuous last months of the war, plans were still being made for a state supported art exhibition in the Ottoman capital. On 18 October 1918, the *Tasvir-i Efkar* carried call for submissions for a third Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibition.¹³⁶ Unbeknownst to the organizing committee, however, on 17 October 1918 the Ministry of Finance of Ahmed İzzet Pasha's new government had refused the committee's modest budget request for five thousand *kuruş*,¹³⁷ whether to distance itself from unionist cultural policy or due to more pressing fiscal concerns is not recorded. Nevertheless, that policy had left a strong impression on the Ottoman artworld; an imprint that would survive the coming armistice period and War of Independence to influence the production and reception of painting and the arts in general in the Republic of Turkey after 1923.

¹³⁶ 'Sanayi-i Nefise Sergisi', *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 18 Teşrin-i Evvel 1334 [18 October 1918].

¹³⁷ BOA, BEO. 4538/340350, 17 Teşrin-i Evvel 1334 [17 October 1918]. Actually, compared to the high prices for basic foods or other needs, such as cigarette or clothing, the requested budget of five thousand *kuruş* was not too high: it was equivalent to the cost of 185 kg of potatoes or of five pairs of shoes in 1918. For retail prices in Istanbul during the war years, see Eldem, *Harp ve Mütareke Yıllarında*, pp. 50-51. See tables 1 and 2 in appendix.

Concluding Remarks

By the autumn of 1917, there were severe food shortages across the empire, no outright military victory since the 1915 Gallipoli campaign, and the Ottoman state was still suffering from a loss of international reputation in the wake of the Armenian genocide. The commission of painters to produce modern war paintings was pivotal not only in terms of the state's cultural policy towards artists but also regarding its pursuit of prestige in the Western world. Painters were to some extent expected to justify their role and necessity for the war cause by producing war-related (though not necessarily propagandistic) artworks. Yet many artworks produced and exhibited as part of this initiative were either ambivalent about or unrelated to the war, or even, in one case, openly hostile. This may have been possible because, ultimately, for the CUP, it was the very existence of Western-mode of painting and of modern subjects to paint within the empire that had a propagandistic value, especially given that those art works were displayed in the capitals of the Ottoman's allies to considerable acclaim, whether or not the popular foreign press was fully able to cast off its prejudices about Ottoman culture. This shift in cultural policy, assisted by the CUP's general efforts at nationalisation, however, may have come at the expense of the plurality and diversity of the Ottoman art world, with only one painter outside of the Muslim formation of the state initiative was able to exhibit in a temporary space provided by a German newspaper in the last art season of the war.

The state commission of painters in the final year of the war were pivotal not only for wartime Ottoman art, but also for post-war Turkish painting. The predominantly 'Muslim Turkish' initiative was to set the tone of the Turkish Republic's cultural policy after the armistice period and Turkish War of Independence. The marginalisation of non-Muslim artists and the transformation of

the cultural milieu from a cosmopolitan to a ‘Turkified’ one had key effects on what the art world was like after the foundation of the Republic in 1923 and what *Turkish* art came to mean. The story of the studio and the subsequent exhibitions (Istanbul and Vienna) has become an indispensable fixture of Turkish modern art history writing, and equally for the collections of modern art museums in the country. In this context, it is important to recover the lost possibilities and roads not travelled in Ottoman art, as well as the range of alternative narratives and views of the war that emerged among Ottoman artists during the First World War.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, the First World War brought immense and unprecedented changes to public life in the Ottoman Empire and this had an immediate impact on visual culture and the conditions of art production. A militarised and mobilised country expanded across every aspect of life, including the art world and the artists. The cultural milieu immediately transformed from a pluralistic and cosmopolitan entity into a political faction in which an internal *kulturkampf* over the role of the arts shaped Ottoman culture and artists' duty toward society. Caught between militaristic agendas, often nourished by Turkist nationalism, and non-propagandist and more civic-minded initiatives, the Ottoman art world witnessed another battle on the home front.

There was a significant break between how war had been imagined before (in Ottoman-Greek War, Ottoman-Italian War, and the Balkan Wars), as we saw in Chapter II, and the reality of the First World War. The First World War put an end to conventions for battle painting, which either had served as a document of historical or contemporary military victories or as atrocity propaganda attempted to evoke hate and rage against the enemy. Between 1914 and 1918, the ordinary soldiers and civilians and their experience of the war with its suffering, maiming, dying, killing, and surviving became the real heart of the canvases. The war was not fought nobly and glamorously against a malign and brutal enemy; it was grim, deadly, and destructive on both the battle and the home fronts. As the meaning of war changed, so did artistic representation of the ordinary soldiers and the civilians in wartime.

As Samuel Hynes has eloquently explained, 'All wars divide—divide not only *our* side from *theirs*, but soldiers from civilians, men from women, one generation

from another, war-lovers from war-haters.’¹ The Ottoman art world was too divided, and so were the artists: some were put in soldier uniforms; others struggled to survive economically and artistically on the home front. As we saw in Chapter III, during the first year of the war, non-Muslims were increasingly excluded from the art world and some Ottoman Armenian artists faced deportation and death when the genocide began in 1915. Terlemezian and Kurkjian barely survived the deportations; the former, by resistance, the latter by the virtue of being an artist. As we have also seen in the same chapter, however, the culture of war also enabled some Ottoman artists to achieve a broader appeal in the popular culture via patriotic postcards and newspapers illustrations. Educational backgrounds and gender helped shape aesthetic responses. The mostly commissioned artists appear to have been the male ones coming from military education backgrounds. Under the patronage of the state and semi-official patriotic associations, Hüseyin Hüsnî, Ali Cemal, Mehmed Ruhi, and İsmail Hakkı used their artistic talents to further the war effort. Their art presented brave soldiers, stoic heroes, and strings of victories, whether on the battle or in the sea. This, however, should not lead us to overlook that there were other and perhaps stronger reasons for these artists to join the boisterous patriotic culture. Economic instability and inflation were severely felt by all classes. And artists were no exception to economic distress. Especially in the first year of the war, the lack of a major art exhibition reduced opportunities for painting sales. The demands of the patriotic mass media provided a lucrative alternative to the economic reluctance and stagnation of the differentiated art market, which was however, available only to artists of certain backgrounds and stylistic preferences in the first year of the war.

¹ Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and the English Culture* (New York: Collier, 1992), p. 337. Emphasis original.

As the conflict entered its second year, weariness and exhaustion and economic hardship spread every sector of Ottoman society. The prolonged conflict and the reigning nationalist ideologies posed great challenges to Ottoman painters. As we saw in Chapter IV, most Ottoman artists were in no mood to be rushed into giving up their peacetime styles. The material conditions, the taste of the art market, the general ambivalent feeling towards the prolonged conflict all, one way or another, discouraged them from painting the war. Instead, they continued producing and displaying landscapes, genre paintings, portraiture, still-lives, or symbolist and allegorical influenced works. Such tendencies were best exemplified by the Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibitions that took place in the summers of 1916 and 1917, which were civic-minded and cosmopolitan initiatives organized by a group of painters and the Academy of Fine Arts, and included works by numerous non-Muslim Ottoman artists. Yet there were also artists whose art was shaped by the war. Soon painters like Çallı İbrahim brought the war to their palette of imaginary. His *Night Attack* (1916) not only put an end to conventions for battle painting, but it also brought a new visual language to the configuration of war which was different from the relaxing or stoic soldiers appeared in popular culture in the first year of the war.

Çallı İbrahim's ambiguous visions of the modern battlefield and ordinary soldiers were soon followed by others. In the final year of the war, as we saw in Chapter V, modern Ottoman painting came to be seen as a significant cultural propaganda tool serving the interest of the Ottoman state to promote its 'civilisation and competence' in the Western World. In the autumn of 1917, the Ottoman War Ministry commissioned war paintings from the Ottoman artists with the aim of displaying them in the capitals of the allies. It was an unprecedented act of state sponsorship for the art of painting. One of the main arguments of the chapter was that

although these war paintings were commissioned by the War Ministry, it would be an oversimplification to consider them mere war propaganda. The war-related works exhibited in the ‘Exhibition of War Paintings’ and later in Vienna were full of ambiguous messages about the struggles of soldiers in battles and of the civilians left behind. Namık İsmail’s *Typhus*, Ömer Adil’s *Eternal Memory*, Mehmed Ali Laga’s simple sketch *Dardanelles after the Bombardment*, and Avni Lifij’s *War/Allegory* put new emphasis on human suffering and the civilian victims of war, shattering the idea of the ‘home front’ as places far from the touch of war.

As Annette Becker has claimed ‘war cultures were initially inseparable from the dominant mode of hatred of the enemy, intensified many times over by the suffering felt, for which the enemy was inevitably blamed.’² For Ottoman art, at least in the so-called high art of painting, the hatred towards the enemy was muted or invisible between 1914 and 1918. In fact, even in less ambiguous war paintings, as those by Mehmed Ruhi’s (*After the Enemy Fled*) and Mehmed Sami’s (*The Battle of İsmail Tepe*), it was *not* the individual enemy soldier but the very occupation of the country by enemy armies that was blamed for the suffering.

Still, the ambivalent engagement with the representation of war such as in the works of Namık İsmail (such as *Take Another* and *Vortex of Victory*) and other artists was perhaps not an explicit pacifist or even anti-war stance. Due to press censorship and CUP authoritarianism, the voice of protest against the war could never be explicitly articulated in the Ottoman Empire between 1914 and 1918. However, war paintings offer a dramatic example of silent protests. The official Turkish (art) history position on the First World War art has been that painters and their work were

² Annette Becker, ‘Arts’, in Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War: Vol III; Civil Society* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 504.

charged with a ‘national mission.’³ This argument rests on the claim that war paintings were propagandistic in their triumphalist and militarist narrative. This study, by contrast, has tried to explore the diverse narratives of Ottoman war paintings to reach a deeper and more multi-faceted understanding of these artworks, instead of looking at them merely from the perspective of propaganda and pro-war efforts. The anti-war feeling was perhaps never expressed clearly enough, but examined in their own historical and cultural moment, Ottoman painters’ war paintings were neither expressions of propagandistic nor pacifist sentiments, but were complex and ambiguous artworks about the struggles of soldiers in battle and the civilians on the home front. Thus one of the main claims of this study has been that claims of a general propaganda, jingoism, and militarism in Ottoman Art between 1914 and 1918 need to be reconsidered.

In his analysis of the social history of Britain between 1914 and 1918, Adrian Gregory has the following to say regarding the way the First World War is remembered today in Britain: ‘Subservient in memory. In many respects the British people of 1914-1918, soldier and civilian alike, have disappeared into our construction of them, our collective memory [...] I blame it on 1939-1945.’⁴ The Ottoman painters and their wartime art production have also ‘disappeared into our construction of them’; but I blame it instead on the occupation of Istanbul and the Asia Minor and on the War of Independence (1919-1922).

The Ottomans lost the First World War. On 30 October 1918, an Ottoman delegation headed by Rauf Bey, the Minister of the Navy, signed an armistice with Admiral Calthorpe, commander of the British Black Sea squadron, ending the four-

³ Arseven, *Sanat ve Siyaset Hatıralarım*, p. 63.

⁴ Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 277.

year conflict with the Entente Powers.⁵ Signed in the port of Mudros and on board in the British cruiser *Agamemnon*, the Armistice of Mudros brought extreme conditions to the defeated Ottomans: the army was demobilised; the entire telegraph and railroad network was surrendered; and, it gave the victorious Allies the right to occupy 'any strategic points in the event of a situation arising which threatens the security of the Allies' (Article 7), and allowed for occupation 'in case of disorder' (Article 24). On 1 November 1918, Enver, Talat, and Cemal Pashas, regarded as the 'main architects' of the Armenian genocide, fled on the last German warships out of the Bosphorus and made their way to Berlin. On 13 and 14 November 1918, more than three thousand British, French and Italian troops landed from the Allied ships to occupy Istanbul.⁶

The occupation lasted for four years and eleven months, and was thus longer than the First World War itself.⁷ During this time, the representatives of the three Allied countries, in political terms, wielded more power than the reigning Ottoman sultan, Mehmed VI Vahideddin. Having ascended to the throne after the death of his brother Sultan Mehmed V Reşad in July 1918, the new (and, would turn out to be the last) Sultan aimed at appeasing Britain so that a more favourable peace treaty could be obtained. In March 1919, he appointed as Grand Vizier his brother-in-law Damad Ferid. Pro-British and anti-nationalist, Damad Ferid Pasha reorganised the Liberal opposition from among its pre-1913 leaders and revived the former Party of Freedom and Alliance (*Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası*).⁸ Soon leading unionist intellectuals,

⁵ Erik J. Zürcher, 'The Ottoman Empire and the Armistice of Moudros', in Hugh Cecil and Peter H. Liddle (eds.), *At the Eleventh Hour: Reflections, Hopes, and Anxieties at the Closing of the Great War, 1918* (London: Leo Cooper, 1998), pp. 268-270.

⁶ Philip Mansel, *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire, 1453-1924* (London: Penguin, 1995), p. 380. Nur Bilge Criss, *Istanbul Under Allied Occupation, 1918-1923* (Leiden: Brill, 1999). The British occupied Pera, Şişli, and Galata; the French were in the suburbs to the West as well as Istanbul proper; and the Italians were located at the Asian shore.

⁷ Mansel, *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire*, p. 411.

⁸ Ali Birinci, *Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası: 2. Meşrutiyet Devrinde İttihat ve Terakki'ye Karşı Çıkanlar* (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2012).

including Ziya Gökalp, were exiled to Malta.⁹ Yet neither the unionists nor their nationalist sentiments lost their power to persuade and to mobilize.

The occupation by the Entente was greeted with joy by some sections of the population, who viewed the defeat of the empire as a political transformation and a step for liberation from centuries of Ottoman oppression. Yet the population in general was furious at the wartime decisions taken by the state in the first place. Starting in early November 1918, the press became fiercely critical of the CUP and its policies towards the Ottoman Armenians. One such example was the bitterly critical open letter penned by one of the celebrated Ottoman poets Ahmet Haşim and directed to the feminist and nationalist women writer Halide Edip. During the First World War, Halide Edip had been in charge of one of the orphanages at Aintoura in Lebanon, set up by Cemal Pasha to house Armenian children orphaned during the genocide; as Raymond Kevorkian has described, the orphanage acted as a ‘kind of laboratory in which Edip endeavoured to Turkify the children.’¹⁰ In his letter, Ahmet Haşim furiously demands that Halide Edip justify her actions:

Your [Cemal] Pasha, with his smoking, glittering motorcars, had invited you to Syria to watch a (Nero-esque) entertainment [...] You were as proud as missionaries going to Africa and as dapper and dizzy as wedding guests. But as a matter of fact, one does not meet intelligent people who are about to be killed without sensing danger and shuddering [...] At that time, people were being killed in Syria. The Pasha’s soldiers were binding their hands, his trials were imprisoning them, his executioners were hanging them, his young scribes were wielding their golden pens to transform the slaughter into panegyrics, and the Pasha, happy and haughty, got drunk at the feasts for the orphans of the victims, staring out from his beard with red eyes through the smoke at day dreams. And what were you doing that time? [...] Madam, the pasha called for your assistance as he, Moloch-like, was nourishing Turkishness with human corpses. I wish that before the fires that he kindled on one innocent race in the name of another had

⁹ Bilal N. Şimşir, *Malta Sürgünleri* (Istanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1985).

¹⁰ Raymond Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), p. 675. For a recent scholarship on Halide Edip and the Armenian genocide, see, Hülya Adak, *Halide Edip ve Siyasal Şiddet: Ermeni Kırımı, Diktatörlük ve Şiddetsizlik* (Istanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2016).

died out, those who collaborated with him could have stood to watch and reflect their light for one minute. You went there, and instead of revolting and returning, or grasping that murderous hand [...] and staying it, you remained and watched those bloody sunsets as if they were the birth of a hope.¹¹

A week later, the Armenian journal *Şant* published an article penned by Marujan Barsamyan, an English literature instructor at the University (*Darülfünun*), criticizing the liberal Ottoman journalist and poet Ali Kemal, who was then the president of the Ottoman parliament. The article started with a quote by Ali Kemal: ‘The crime is that of the previous government, and not of the nation. The Armenians should forget the injustices visited upon them. The responsibility for this does not lie with us, with the Turks; the responsibility lies with the government.’¹² Barsamyan’s article continues in a bitterly satirical tone:

Already certain Turkish newspapers and official fellows are using expressions such as the following: We should have forgotten the injustices visited upon us because it was not the Turkish nation who slaughtered us, laid waste to [our homes], and forcibly converted us [to Islam]. We should have forgotten the injustices that were committed because these were the crimes of individuals. Just like that... All these crimes should be laid on the shoulders of the rulers. We were massacred, robbed, forcibly converted, raped, but that’s how it goes ... We lost a million lives; a million lives! Hacked to pieces, tortured, strangled in prisons, starved to death in the desert... And in this way a wealth worth millions unravelled and was taken out of our hands; in the countryside no woman was left untarnished... But we have forgotten all, because it was not the Turkish people who did these things to us. It was the government. It was the gangs.¹³

In January 1919, the preliminary investigations that led to the first war-crimes trials in history began, and the proceedings were published in the official government

¹¹ Ahmet Haşim, ‘Der Zor’da Ermeniler Ölürken Ne Yaptınız?’, *Yeni İstanbul*, 9 November 1918. This letter was transliterated and published in Yarman, *Ermeni Etübbâ Cemiyeti 1912-1922*, pp. 279-280.

¹² Merujan Barsamyan, ‘Mornal ... Mornal’, *Şant*, 16 November 1918, p.11; Quoted in Ararat Şekeryan, *Edebiyat ve Felaket: Şant Dergisi ve Vahan Yarcanyan Şiirleri, 1918-1919* (MA Thesis, İstanbul Bilgi University, 2015), p. 167. Founded in 1911, the literary Armenian weekly *Şant* was published in İstanbul between 1911-1915 and 1918-1919.

¹³ Quoted in Şekeryan, *Edebiyat ve Felaket*, p. 167.

newspaper *Takvim-i Vakayi*. Soon Enver, Talat, and Cemal Pashas were sentenced to death in absentia by the Ottoman Special Military Tribunal for several war crimes, including the massacres of Armenians and Greeks.¹⁴ Yet in a few months, due to latter-day Philhellenic British Near East policy, some of this resentment and rage towards the CUP and its wartime crimes was to be redirected to the invasion of the Asia Minor by the Greek army.

When in May 1919, Greece, with strong support from Britain, was granted to occupy the area around İzmir, hundreds of thousands gathered in the Sultan Ahmet square in Istanbul to protest the Greek invasion. Organised mostly by professors and students from the University (*Darülfünun*), fierce public speeches were delivered to an immense crowd by nationalists, including Halide Edip.¹⁵ In fact, for the Anatolian Muslims, who constituted a large portion of the remains of the Ottoman Empire, the collapse at the end of the First World War had already created a void.¹⁶ Beginning in November 1918, a large number of unionist officers and significant amounts of equipment and weaponry were being smuggled to Anatolia.¹⁷ The Greek occupation only enflamed and intensified what had already started in November. The resistance now started to become a larger scale and unified national movement, beginning with its coordination in the Erzurum (July 1919) and the later Sivas Congress (September 1919).¹⁸ In Erzurum, which had suffered so atrociously during the war, the nationalist delegates announced their slogan as ‘either independence or death’ (*ya istiklal ya ölüm*) and established a political agenda based on national sovereignty. The nation

¹⁴ For the courts martial and how the tribunal gradually lost its effectiveness to judge the perpetrators, see, Vahakn N. Dadrian and Taner Akçam, *Judgement at Istanbul: The Armenian Genocide Trials* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011).

¹⁵ Şefika Kurnaz, *Cumhuriyet Öncesinde Türk Kadını (1839-1923)* (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1992), pp. 150-155.

¹⁶ Tevfik Bıyıklıoğlu, *Trakya’da Milli Mücadele* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1956).

¹⁷ The most important network behind this was the secretive *Karakol* (the Guard), founded in October 1918 and at the behest of Talat Pasha, with the aim of strengthening resistance in Anatolia and providing post-war security.

¹⁸ Uluğ İğdemir, *Sivas Kongresi Tutanakları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1986).

was defined in ethno-religious terms, as composing ‘Turks and Muslims’ who should join together against ‘the Christian invasion’ and ‘the policy of exterminating Islam.’¹⁹ In seven months, a new parliament was established in the Anatolian city of Ankara (23 April 1920), the Grand National Assembly (*Büyük Millet Meclisi*), as a clear revolt against the imperial government in Istanbul.²⁰ After May 1919, the Greek occupation of the Asia Minor reached massive proportions, as did the national struggle movement under the leadership Mustafa Kemal. The Treaty of Sévres, signed between the representatives of the Istanbul government and the Allied power on 10 August 1920, formalised the partition of the empire by reducing it to northern Asia Minor with Istanbul as its capital and by placing the rest of the territories under British, French and Italian mandate. The Treaty was immediately opposed by the nationalists in Ankara. Whilst a fatwa had already been issued in Istanbul at the request of the Istanbul government condemning the nationalists, including Mustafa Kemal, to death in absentia (April 1920), the Ankara government established the Independence Tribunals (*İstiklal Mahkemeleri*) to punish their opponents and deserters (September 1920). For two years, between 1920 and 1922, the Independence Tribunals issued 1,500 death penalty decrees for deserters.²¹

Mustafa Kemal was a member of the CUP, taking part in the 1908 revolution, in the 1909 ‘Action Army’ (against the 31 Mart incident), and the war in Libya in

¹⁹ Banu Turnaoğlu, *The Formation of Turkish Republicanism* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017), p. 199.

²⁰ See, Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, particularly, his essay ‘The Struggle for Independence’, pp. 133-165. Salahi Ramsdan Sonyel, *Turkish Diplomacy 1918-1923: Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish National Movement* (London: Sage Publications, 1975). Stanford J. Shaw, *From Empire to Republic: The Turkish War of National Liberation, A Documentary Study*, Vol. 2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2000); Hasan Kayalı, ‘The Struggle for Independence’, in Reşad Kasaba (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey: Turkey in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 112-146.

²¹ Aybars, *İstiklal Mahkemeleri*, p. 165. Beşikçi, *Ottoman Mobilization*, p. 307. As Mehmet Beşikçi has noted, this number was extraordinary, compared to the total number of death penalties issued for deserters in Britain and Germany between 1914 and 1918: ‘While the British courts martial decreed totally 269 death penalties, the German courts martial gave only 18 death penalties during the four years of the war’.

1911. Having fallen out with Enver, however, he remained outside the CUP's centre of power once Enver became the primary military leader after the 1913 military coup d'état.²² It was in 1915, as commander of the Anafarta front during the Gallipoli campaign, that Mustafa Kemal, now appointed as Pasha, made his name. When the First World ended, he was made a brigadier, in charge of all troops on the Syrian front.²³ In May 1919, Mustafa Kemal arrived in the Black Sea Coastal city of Samsun, as newly appointed inspector general of the ninth army. In two months, he cut his ties with the government in Istanbul and organised the national movement in Anatolia. Between 1919 and 1922, the nationalists led by Mustafa Kemal fought on two principal fronts 'against the British-backed Greeks in the West and the unsupported Armenians in the East.'²⁴ After the Armenian defeat in November 1920, an agreement was signed with the Bolsheviks in March 1921, followed by others with France and Italy (October 1921).²⁵ Following the collapse of the Greek army in September 1922, peace negotiations were held with the Ankara government at the Lausanne Conference in November and continued with breaks until July 1923. On the eve of the first conference, the sultanate was abolished and the last sovereign Sultan Mehmed VI Vahideddin left the country on 17 November 1922. Soon, Vahideddin's nephew Prince Abdülmecid Efendi, the celebrated painter and the great patron of the arts, was elected as the new caliph by the Turkish Parliament. In July 1923, the sovereignty of the new state was officially and internationally recognised at the Treaty of Lausanne. The Republic of Turkey (*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti*) was proclaimed on 29 October 1923 and Mustafa Kemal became its first president. The capital of the new country was now moved to Ankara, whilst Istanbul, which had served as the empire's political and

²² Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 142.

²³ On Mustafa Kemal, see, Andrew Mango, *Atatürk* (London: John Murray 2004).

²⁴ Şerif Mardin, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), p. 89.

²⁵ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, pp. 154-156.

cultural centre for almost 500 years, was abandoned to an era of official neglect. Not only did the occupation experience show that Istanbul was vulnerable to foreign intervention and invasion, but as the centre of the Sultanate and the Caliphate, it had to be replaced by a new capital at the 'heart of Anatolia' for the newly-born secular nation.²⁶ On 3 March 1924, the caliphate was abolished by the Turkish Parliament, and soon Abdülmecid Efendi, along with his family, was exiled to Switzerland.²⁷

The Artists and the Art World, 1918-1922

Conditions for the Ottoman population in the immediate post-war period were in some respects worse than during the First World War itself. To food shortages, inflation, diseases, crimes and the psychological burden of defeat were added the occupation which the Ottomans had long feared the most. At the end of the war, Istanbul was to become, as Philip Mansel has remarked, the 'only major European capital to suffer enemy occupation between the Napoleonic and the Second World wars'.²⁸

Soon after the occupation started, archeological excavations conducted by the Entente powers, especially by the French occupation forces in Istanbul, Adana, and Gallipoli, created unease among the Ottomans.²⁹ Halil Edhem, still serving as director of the Imperial Museum, did his best to remain informed about the excavations, though as Wendy Shaw has argued, the Imperial Museum could only regain some of the legal authority necessary to participate in archeological activities near the end of the occupation.³⁰ Nazmi Ziya became the director of the Academy of Fine Arts in

²⁶ Murat Gül, *The Emergence of Modern Istanbul: Transformation and Modernisation of A City* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009), p. 85.

²⁷ Salih Keramet Nigar, *Halife İkinci Abdülmecid* (Istanbul: İnkilap ve Aka Kitapevi, 1964).

²⁸ Mansel, *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire*, p. 411.

²⁹ Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, p. 213.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 215.

1918, retaining his post only until 1921, but then becoming director once again in 1923. During the two year interim, as Bedri Rahmi reports, he even had to sell shoes to make ends meet.³¹ In January 1919, the Academy of Fine Arts, then under the directorship of Nazmi Ziya, had to be moved to a ‘six room small house’; the daily *Vakit* saw this as being tantamount to ‘killing the fine arts’ in the country.³² This was neither the first nor the last time the Academy lost its building to occupation forces.³³

The defeat and the occupation affected Ottoman artistic life in all kinds of ways. Namık İsmail switched from painting the war to renouncing it. Having left Istanbul in February 1918 for the Vienna exhibition, Namık İsmail found himself in Berlin in late 1918 and enrolled in the atelier of the German painter Lovis Corinth, one of the most important representatives of German Impressionism and Expressionism. In the grip of a general strike, the city of Berlin was trying to revive itself after the defeat of the German Empire. Armed conflicts between the Spartacists, led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, and the guards loyal to the new post-war government as well as police had already broken out in December 1918. Some Ottoman students, sent to Germany by the CUP government for education during the First World War, joined the Spartacus League and participated in the risings,³⁴ Namık İsmail among them. In 1919, Namık İsmail became one of the eighteen Turkish Spartacists and co-founded the Workers and Farmers Socialist Party (*İşçi ve Köylü Sosyalist Fırkası*).³⁵ His beautifully executed pencil sketches, including portraits of Karl Marx and the French antimilitarist socialist leader Jean Jaurès, appeared in the

³¹ Bedri Rahmi, *Nazmi Ziya* (Istanbul: Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi, 1937), p. 14.

³² ‘Sanayi-i Nefise’, *Vakit*, 14 Kanun-i Sani 1335 [14 January 1919].

³³ Until October 1921, the Academy of Fine Arts lost its temporary locations numerous times. See, Ürekli, *Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi’nin Kuruluşu*, pp. 257-260.

³⁴ Stefo Benlisoy, ‘Türkiyeli Spartakistler ve *Kurtuluş Dergisi*’, in Mete Ö. Alkan, Tanıl Bora, Murat Koraltürk (eds.), *Mete Tunçay’a Armağan* (Istanbul: İletişim 2007), pp. 461-494.

³⁵ Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye’de Sol Akımlar, 1908-1925* (Istanbul: BDS Yayınları, 1991), p. 467. See also Güler Bek Arat, ‘Siyasi Parti Başkanı, ‘Sosyalizm ve Sanat Makalelerinin Yazarı Ressam Namık İsmail’, *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Journal of Faculty of Letters*, Vol: 33, No: 1 (June 2016), pp. 13-28.

party's organ *Kurtuluş* (Liberation). He also wrote two articles to the journal he titled 'Socialism and Art', and started the first one with a quote—slightly modified for secular purposes—from the French pacifist writer Romain Rolland: 'Always, always sacrifice the trifles of life to art and truth'.³⁶ In the second piece, Namık İsmail told the world what he thought of the 'grand slaughter' of the First World War:

[The] decrepit civilisation has gifted us its last flower, this hitherto unseen and unheard of grand slaughter, and passed on grinning. Certainly, we find ourselves at the end of this era and the beginning of another [...] As people recover from the bloodshed, it is not rage and hatred they desire but freedom and love...³⁷

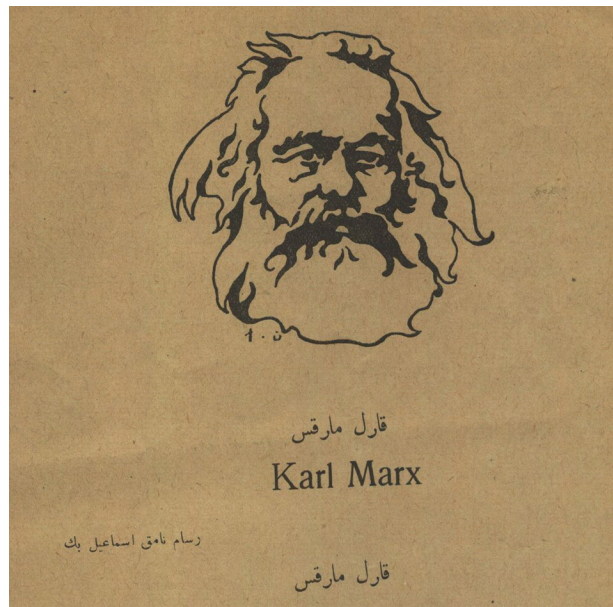


FIGURE 6.1: Namık İsmail, *Karl Marx*. Published in *Kurtuluş*, Issue: 1, 20 September 1919.

Namık İsmail's view was not untypical, and his emotions and anti-war sentiments were widespread. Perhaps the artistic reactions best reflecting the mood immediately after the defeat were the Ottoman Armenian artists' works configuring the war

³⁶ 'Her zaman, her zaman hayatın küçükliklerini sanata ve doğruluğa feda et'. Namık İsmail, 'Sosyalizm ve Sanat-2', *Kurtuluş*, Issue: 3, 20 November 1919, p. 41. Here Namık İsmail omits the reference to God in the original German, and also the French translation of the, text: 'Ppfere noch einmal alle Kleinsigkeiten des gesellschaftlichen Lebens Deiner Kunst, o: Gott über alles!'; 'Sacrifie, toujours les niaiseries de la vie à ton art! Dieu par-dessus tout.' Romain Rolland, *Vies des hommes illustres: Beethoven* (Paris: Cahiers de la Quinzaine, 1903), p. 48.

³⁷ Namık İsmail, 'Sosyalizm ve Sanat-1', *Kurtuluş*, Issue: 1, 20 September 1919, p. 10.

through their eyes, showing the despair and pathos of the refugees and the destruction of innocent human life. Their art contain no heroes, no victories; they collected from the war only what was damaged by it.

After the end of the First World War, a few Ottoman Armenian writers and intellectuals had returned to the city aiming to renew ‘Armenian literary and intellectual life.’³⁸ Among them was Panos Terlemezian who, having returned to Istanbul from his exile, now created a varied body of paintings depicting his favourite scenes of the city, including the Bosphorus and the Rumeli Hisari Castle.³⁹ In 1920, together with Levon Serovpe Kurkciyan, he held an art exhibition at the Armenian Association in Pera.⁴⁰ According to a contemporary Istanbul-based Armenian newspaper, the exhibition was well-visited by many important figures, including the painters Halil Pasha, Namık İsmail, Şevket Bey, İbrahim Feyhaman, Çallı İbrahim, and Sami.⁴¹ Terlemezian himself exhibited around ninety works in the exhibition, including landscapes of Lake Sevan and Mount Ararat, and his 1913 painting of his now traumatized and institutionalized friend Gomidas in Kütahya.⁴² Of this last, a

³⁸ Jennifer Manoukian, ‘Armenian Intellectual Life in Constantinople during the Armistice Period.’ <http://www.docblog.ottomanhistorypodcast.com/2014/04/armenian-intellectual-life-in.html>. Accessed 20 August 2017.

³⁹ After leaving his birthplace Van in 1915, Terlemezian was in Tbilisi to form the ‘Society of Armenian Painters,’ with Russian Armenian painters including Martiros Sarian, Yeghishe Tadevosyan, and Vardges Sureniants in 1916. Until the end of the First World War, he travelled in the Caucasus, including Batumi, Baku, and Yerevan. He created many paintings featuring Lake Sevan, buildings in Yerevan, Mount Ararat, as well as portraits and still lifes.

⁴⁰ According to an official document, kept at the archives of the Turkish General Staff, Military History and Strategic Studies (ATASE), an Armenian artists association was founded in Istanbul, with the title of ‘Armenian Society of the Fine Arts Union (‘*Ermeni Sanayi-i Nefise İttihadı Cemiyeti*’). ATASE, ISH-2, Sıra no: 4600, Kutu No: 58, Gömlek: 73, 26/02/1336. It is likely that Terlemezian and Kurkciyan’s exhibition was part of this initiative, though lacking a further document, one can only speculate.

⁴¹ *Ճագամարդ* (*Djagadamard*), 6 May 1920. According to the Armenian newspaper, *Djagadamard*, one of the visitors was Sami, but it is not clear whether he was Mehmed Sami or Ali Sami. I would like to thank Ari Şekeryan for his guidance with those Armenian newspapers.

⁴² *Վերջին Լուր* (*Verchin Lur*), 28 April 1920.

critic reported that it was ‘less impressive than upsetting, leaving us to reflect on the fate of this great master.’⁴³

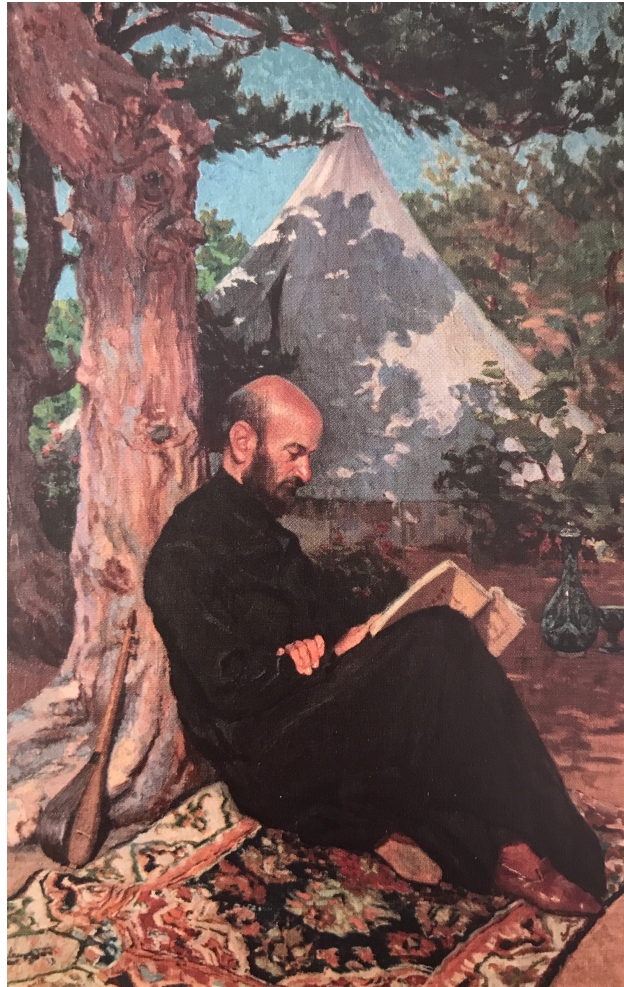


FIGURE 6.2: Panos Terlemezian, *Musicologist Gomidas* (Երաժշտագետ Կոմիդաս), 1913, oil on canvas, 80 x 53 cm © National Gallery of Armenia. Exhibited in Istanbul in 1920.

Terlemezian also exhibited a war painting called *Bloody Feast* (Արիւնոտ հրախփում), which, in the words of the famous Ottoman Armenian essayist Zaruhi Kalemkarian, depicted the infernal character of the morning after a massacre; ‘the dead bodies on the floor, the bushes still burning, not yet sending up smoke.’⁴⁴ For Kalemkarian, the picture proved that Terlemezian ‘was influenced by his environment and time.’⁴⁵

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Zaruhi Kalemkarian, *Djagadamard*, 15 April 1920.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* Today the whereabouts of this specific painting seems to be unknown, though the collection of the National Gallery of Armenia includes few paintings by Terlemezian in which he seems to have

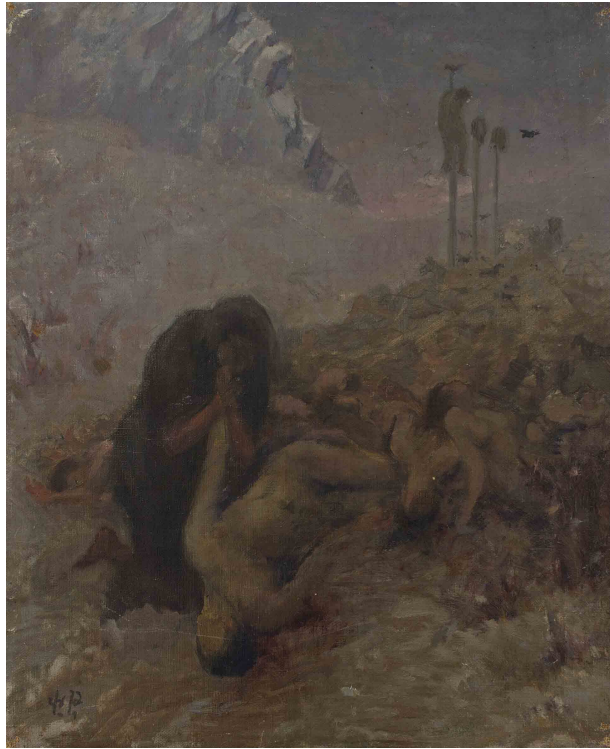


FIGURE 6.3: Panos Terlemezian, *A Mother Looking for Her Son Among the Corpses* (Մայրը որոնում է դիակների մեջ իր որդուն), undated © National Gallery of Armenia.

Terlemezian was not the only Ottoman Armenian artist who was ‘influenced by his environment and time’.⁴⁶ In 1921, Ottoman Armenian artists held a major exhibition in Istanbul, where a considerable number of the works represented the war and the Armenian genocide, including the works by Sarkis Khachadourian. Born in Malatya in 1886, Khachadourian had enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome in 1908 and continued his art training in Paris. At the end of the First World War, he was one of the artists who returned to Istanbul. In 1921, he exhibited more than 30 works to the Istanbul public, including images of Yerevan, the Ararat, and war refugees.

depicted the genocide, such as the oil on canvas titled, *A Mother Looking for Her Son Among the Corpses* (Մայրը Որոնում է Դիակների Մեջ Իր Որդուն).

⁴⁶ For further examples on visual culture and the Armenian Genocide see, Shahan Khachatryan, *Զուլի Գույներ: Եղեռնի Անդրադարձը Հայ Նկարչության Մէջ/ The Color of Pain: The Reflection of the Armenian Genocide in Armenian Painting* (Erevan: Sh. Khachatryan, 2010).

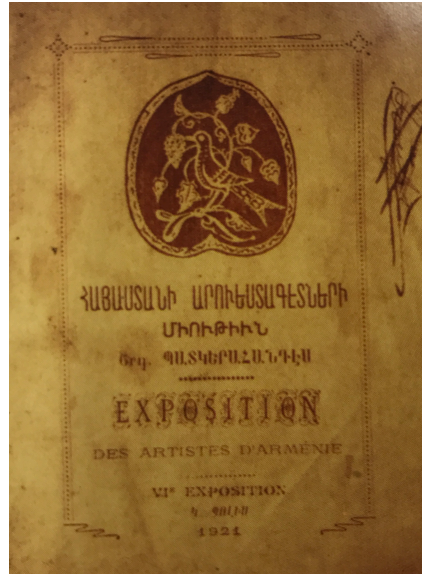


FIGURE 6.4: Exhibition Catalogue, 1921 Armenian Artists' Exhibition in Istanbul. Courtesy of Gizem Tongo.



FIGURE 6.5: Sarkis Khachadourian, *Immigration (Göç)*, oil on canvas, 80 x 140 cm © Private Collection. Published in Kürkman, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ermeni Ressamlar*, p. 450.

Yet as the allies' occupation of Istanbul began to look increasingly untenable in the face of the Turkish nationalist forces' defeat of the Greek army, various

Armenian artists began to look abroad once more. Both Khachadourian and Terlemezian left Istanbul in 1922 and never returned. Eleni Iliadis, too, one of the most prolific and celebrated painters from the First World War, soon had to leave Istanbul due to the compulsory population exchange, signed between Turkey and Greece (1923).⁴⁷ When she opened her first solo exhibition in Athens in 1924, most of her works were of Istanbul landscapes from various localities of the city's landmarks (*Rumelihisarı Castle, Hagia Sophia, The Golden Horne, and Büyük Ada*).⁴⁸ Like Khachadourian and Terlemezian, she did not return. By 1927, a large number of non-Muslims had already left Istanbul; the change in the centre of power, compulsory exchange of populations, and the Turkification policies of the new Republic with its dominant slogan of 'Turkey for the Turks' reduced the population of the city to nearly half of its pre-war population.⁴⁹

From these few articles (by Ahmet Haşim, Marujan Barsamyan, and Namık İsmail) and paintings (by Khachadourian and Terlemezian), a vision of the post-1918 empire emerges in all its indignation, anxieties, and uncertainties. In human and economic terms, the First World War was a disaster for every belligerent country; but, 'defeat', as Gregory has emphasized, 'is the worst "trauma"'.⁵⁰ Not only did the Ottomans lose the war, but perhaps 800,000 soldiers⁵¹ and over a million civilians had

⁴⁷ For the population exchange with Greece, see, İsmail Soysal, *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Antlaşmaları*, Cilt I (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1983).

⁴⁸ Ελένη Ηλιάδου, *Κατάλογος Έργων Ζωγραφικής* (Αθήνα, 1924). I would like to thank Myrto Aspioti for helping with the 1924 Greek exhibition catalogue.

⁴⁹ In 1927, the population of Istanbul was 690,857. Gül, *The Emergence of Modern Istanbul*, p. 88; Ayhan Aktar, 'Homogenising the Nation: Turkifying the Economy: Turkish Experience of Populations Exchange Reconsidered' in Renée Hirschon, *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003), p. 92.

⁵⁰ Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 2

⁵¹ As Caroline Finkel explains, estimates put the number of Ottoman 'soldiers killed in action at 325,000, while the number of wounded— of whom some 60,000 subsequently died— varies from 400,000 to 700,000. A further 400,000 men died of disease, bringing the total number of Ottoman combatant who died to almost 800,000' Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1923* (London: John Murray, 2006), p. 530.

perished for nothing.⁵² Wolfgang Schivelbusch has succinctly explained this trauma: ‘Defeated nations waste little time, after recovering from their initial shock, in finding scapegoats. The previous regime is held responsible both for leading the nation into the fateful misadventure of war and for directing it down a dead-end path long before the commencement of hostilities.’⁵³

After the defeat at the end of the First World War, the Ottoman Empire came to fully embrace ethnic nationalism. As early as 1921, the Ottoman Society of Painters had dropped the name *Ottoman* and became known as the *Türk Ressamlar Cemiyeti* (Turkish Society of Painters).⁵⁴ Though, in 1920, 1921, and 1922, Viçen Arslanyan joined the group for their annual Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibitions, he was the only remaining non-Muslim artist in those displays. Indeed, not only did he exhibit with the group for the last time in 1922, but he also ceased to teach at the Imperial Lycée of Galatasaray in the same year and became a teacher in Istanbul’s Armenian schools.⁵⁵ In the same year, the writer Ali Kemal was transported from Istanbul to the new capital Ankara to be judged for treason by the victorious Kemalists. He had become an advocate for Sultan’s collaborationist policies with Britain, and before he could reach Ankara, he was lynched by an angry mob.⁵⁶

⁵² The number of deported Armenians alone was around 1.2 million. Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks’ Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 258.

⁵³ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning and Recovery*, translated by Jefferson Chase (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003), p. 57.

⁵⁴ After the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the Society, now known as *Türk* not *Ottoman* anymore, remained active through the regular art exhibitions they organized in Istanbul and also in Ankara, the new capital of the Turkish Republic. In 1926, the Society’s name was changed again, this time to the *Türk Sanayi-i Nefise Birliği* (the Turkish Association of Fine Arts), a name the Society kept for only three years until 1929. For almost forty years, between 1929 and 1973, its name remained the *Güzel Sanatlar Birliği* (the Association of Fine Arts) before its more active painting branch was finally renamed as the *Güzel Sanatlar Birliği Resim Derneği* (the Club of Painting of the Association of Fine Arts) in 1973. Today the Society is still active, organizing art exhibitions in several cities of Turkey. The website of the Association is available at: <http://www.guzelsanatlarbirligi.com/anasayfa.htm>. Accessed 30 August 2017.

⁵⁵ *Mekteb-i Sultani’dan Galatasaray Lisesi’ne Ressamlar*, p. 276.

⁵⁶ In addition to serving as the president of the parliament and as the interior minister during the Armistice Period, Ali Kemal was also a leading journalist, publisher, critic, and novelist, who would be

During the occupation and the War of Independence, artists like Namık İsmail renounced the First World War. But did this disdain lead to a more general pacifist stance against war? Already in late 1919, Namık İsmail and the Workers and Farmers' Socialist Party lent its support to Mustafa Kemal in the Turkish War of Independence. After the foundation of the Republic, Namık İsmail remained active in the left movement. Yet in March 1925 when the law for Maintenance of Order (*Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu*), outlawing Communism, was passed in the Turkish Parliament, he faced the possibility of arrest. For a while in 1926 he had to hide in his friends' flat to escape police custody.⁵⁷ Yet at some point, he managed to rehabilitate himself with the ruling bloc, and in 1927 became director of the Academy of Fine Arts, remaining in the position until his death in 1935. Namık İsmail never returned to the First World War as a subject after the Vienna exhibition. In a 1928 interview, he confessed that he could never create a work of art as 'freely and guided only by my feelings' as the ones he produced during the First World War.⁵⁸ Namık İsmail became a fervent supporter of cultural reforms of the young Turkish Republic and one of the most prominent and influential painters in modern Turkish art. In the new-nation state, like the rest of the Muslim Ottoman painters who had participated in the 'Exhibition of War Paintings' in 1917, his war-related works, with their pessimistic atmospheres and the ambivalent representations of soldiering and civilians, were soon replaced in Republican Turkish art by images of proud and heroic soldiers, military officers, women civilians, and the founder of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal.

condemned, as Laurent Mignon wrote, 'to the recycle bin of literary history, because of his virulent opposition to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's liberation war.' Mignon, *Neither Shiraz nor Paris*, p. 52

⁵⁷ See the memoirs of Mina Urgan, *Bir Dinozorun Anıları* (Istanbul: YKY, 1998), p. 207.

⁵⁸ 'Sanayi-i Nefise Müdürü Namık İsmail Bey'le Mülakat', *Meşale*, 1 July 1928, p. 9.

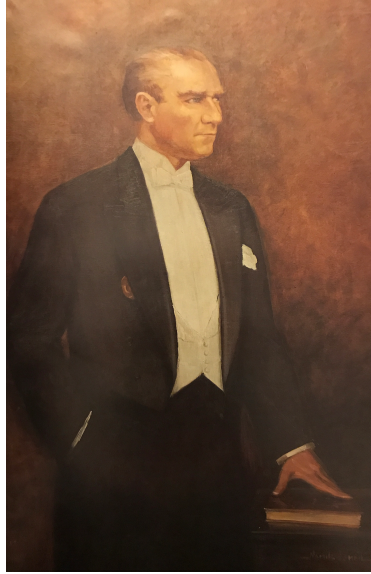


FIGURE 6.6: Namık İsmail, *Atatürk*, oil on canvas, 114 x 169 cm © Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture

Of all Ottoman artists who had been commissioned by the Ministry of War in the autumn of 1917 to produce war-related paintings, Avni Lifij was perhaps the most uncompromising and the bitterest. His *War/ Allegory* had employed an unambiguous message about the on-going conflict with its humanitarian and anti-war message. Amidst the devastation and ruins brought by the war, vulnerable civilians, women and men alike, were abandoned to their terrible destinies in an unidentified land. In 1923, Avni Lifij, once again, painted a similar scene he named *The Dark Day (Karagün)*. Like *War/ Allegory*, *The Dark Day* represents chaos and insecurity in a ruined landscape; but this time the dead mother and her child, watched by a crow, are clearly depicted in a ravaged Anatolian setting, as indicated by the mosque and its damaged minaret.



FIGURE 6.7: Avni Lifij, *The Dark Day (Karagün)*, 1923, oil on canvas, 93 x 118 cm © Ankara Museum of Painting and Sculpture.

For most Turkish artists, the War of Independence was a turning point, and Avni Lifij here recast his universalistic portrayal of horrors and moral failures of war as a local and particular one. The victims of war who cry out for justice are no longer the victims of any war, but specifically of the Greek occupation of Asia Minor.



FIGURE 6.8a: Poster for the War of Independence, 1919, *Saviours of Islam* (*Halaskaran-ı İslam*) © Samsun Kent Müzesi.



FIGURE 6.8b: Salahaddin Ömer, *Hero of Independence* (*İstiklal Kahramanı*), 1922 © National Library, Ankara. Published in *Türk Ocağı Koleksiyonu ve Selahattin Ömer Sergisi*.

One could go through numerous examples of the replacement of an ambivalent configuration of war, soldiering, and the home front in First World War art by patriotic representations of heroic soldiers, civilians, and military leaders during and after the War of Independence, though a more comprehensive analysis lies outside the scope of this study. The few examples given here are certainly sufficient to make the point that the occupation and the War of Independence were a shaping presence in the content of post-war visual culture. These representations were another version of war that became, and remain, the dominant imagining of war in Republican Turkish art.

A New Art World for a New Nation

One of the claims of this study has been that the First World War brought about a collision over the role of the arts in public life, in which ethnic Turkism and

militarism were in conflict with more cosmopolitan cultural sensibilities. Between 1914 and 1918, of the two sets of mentality, neither of them was victorious, yet the former would win hands down after the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923.

The early Turkish Republic did not see itself as the continuation of the Ottoman Empire but rather as a liberator from the Ottoman yoke.⁵⁹ With the aim of disassociating Turks from their Ottoman roots, history for Atatürk's Turkey became, to borrow a phrase from Eric Hobsbawm, 'part of the fund of knowledge' which was to be 'selected, written, pictured, popularized and institutionalized.'⁶⁰ The challenge was what to select and popularize. In art historical terms, only some of the Ottoman past of modern painting was chosen, and this selective history writing set aside no place for non-Muslim Ottoman painters. The group which came to be known as the 'Turkish Impressionists', including Çallı İbrahim, Avni Lifij, Ruhi, Namık İsmail, Nazmi Ziya, Feyhaman, Sami and Hikmet, has become an inseparable part of modern Turkish art history writing, and equally for the collections of modern Turkish art museums. When the *Europa-Year Book*, an annual survey of European politics, art, and literature, published a section dedicated to Turkey, its 'Art: Painters' included only those Muslim and male artists.⁶¹

In his comparative analysis of the tsarist and Soviet cultural policy, Christopher Read has argued that 'while institutions can be subjected to rapid revolutionary change, even large and fundamental ones such as armies, the justice

⁵⁹ Kemal Karpat, 'Introduction', in Kemal Karpat ed., *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

⁶⁰ Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.) *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003 [1983]), p. 13.

⁶¹ For the 1926 year book, the names were: 'Feheiman Bey, Namık İsmail Bey, Tchally İbrahim Bey, Shevket Bey, Avni Lifige Bey, Halil Pacha, Rouhi Bey'; for 1927, 'Feheiman Bey, Namık İsmail Bey, Tchally İbrahim Bey, Shevket Bey, Avni Lifige Bey, Rouhi Bey, Ali Sami Bey, Halil Pacha'; for 1928: 'Feheiman Bey, Namık İsmail Bey, Tchally İbrahim Bey, Shevket Bey, Avni Lifige Bey, Rouhi Bey, Ali Sami Bey, Halil Pacha'; and, for 1929: 'Feheiman Bey, Namık İsmail Bey, Tchally İbrahim Bey, Shevket Bey, Avni Lifige Bey, Rouhi Bey, Ali Sami Bey, Halil Pacha.' *The Europa Year-Book* (London: Europa Publishing Co. Ltd., 1926), p. 379; (1927), p. 487; (1928), p. 630; (1929), p. 530.

system, banks, finance, property, governance and so on, the hold of cultural norms and notions can be much more tenacious.’⁶² To a certain extent, this was the case for Turkey too. As much as the national narrative in Turkey made every effort to distance itself from the Young Turk elite and the CUP, and as much as Mustafa Kemal depicted himself as a ‘*deus ex machina* who created the new Turkey out of nothing, without any reference to the Young Turk heritage’, there were strong continuities between the late Ottoman Empire and the new nation state in terms of ideologies and cadres.⁶³ The *Sinâât-ı Nefîse Sergisi* law for the progress of the fine arts, addressed to the Minister of Education in 1916 and promulgated in 1917, is an example of this continuity.⁶⁴ With additions and changes, the law was promulgated once again on 12 September 1926. This time the main signatory was not the sultan, but the head of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal; and the city of the exhibitions was not Istanbul, but the new capital, Ankara.⁶⁵ Ironically, in the same year, Ahmed Şükrü Bey, who had confirmed the law during the First World War as the Minister of Education, was hanged for his alleged involvement with a conspiracy to kill Mustafa Kemal; he had become the outspoken member of the liberal opposition in the Turkish Parliament after 1923.

Last but not least, the collection of the Decorated Panels (*Elvah-ı Nakşiye Koleksiyonu*), inaugurated by Halil Edhem in 1910 and kept at the Academy of Fine Arts, now constituted the backbone of the painting collections at various museums in Republican Turkey. Despite all its gender and ethnic imbalance, Halil Edhem had

⁶² Christopher Read, ‘Revolution, Culture and Cultural Policy from Late Tsarism to the Early Soviet Years’, in Murray Frame, Steven Marks, Melissa Stockdale, and Boris Kolonitskii (eds.), *Cultural History of Russia in the Great War and Revolution, 1914-1922* (Slavica Publishers, 2014), p. 22.

⁶³ Erik J. Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building: From the Ottoman Empire and Atatürk’s Turkey* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), p. 247.

⁶⁴ BOA. İ. DUIT, 20/21, 20 Cemaziyelahir Sene 1335 [12 April 1917]; ‘Sinâât-ı Nefîse Sergisi Nizamnamesi’, *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, 28 April 1917. See, Chapter IV.

⁶⁵ ‘Sanayi-i Nefise Sergileri Hakkında Tanzim Olunan Talimatname’, *Düstur*, Üçüncü Tertip, Vol. 7, 12 September 1926, pp. 1661-1665.

done a remarkable job of compiling a painting collection that, for the number of painters and various subjects, expanded on the previous painting collections being compiled by Sultan Abdülaziz and Sultan Abdülhamid II in the late nineteenth century.⁶⁶ Though the collection had initially commissioned and purchased a number of copies of masterpieces of all schools from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, it was especially during the First World War that various original art works produced by Ottoman painters were bought for the collection. Paintings purchased from the Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibitions (1916 and 1917) and the Vienna Exhibition (1918) formed the basis of the collection. In 1924, Halil Edhem published the catalogue of the collection he had spent thirteen years compiling and that ultimately included 141 paintings, produced by 70 artists, ranging from the unknown to the famous.⁶⁷ Yet Eleni Iliadis' *Guitar Player (Kıtaracı)*, exhibited and awarded in the 1916 Galatasaraylılar Yurdu exhibition, was one of only two paintings by a non-Muslim Ottoman painter purchased for the collection (alongside a Mosque interior by Viçen Arslanyan). Quite remarkably, in 1924, Halil Edhem categorised *Guitar Player* under the German School together with the paintings of Heinrich von Zügel (bought in the 1918 Munich artists' exhibition in Istanbul) and Albrecht Dürer (a copy of Dürer's portrait of a young woman whose original was in Berlin).⁶⁸

Halil Edhem's vision was to build a museum of fine arts, but it had to wait for more than another decade until the opening of the first fine arts museum of the Turkish Republic. In 1937, the Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture (*İstanbul Resim ve Heykel Müzesi*) was founded by order of Mustafa Kemal—now known as 'Atatürk' ('father of the Turk') following the issuance of the surname law in 1934. There, a rigidly formalist approach juxtaposed the museum collection of Ottoman and

⁶⁶ Chapter II.

⁶⁷ Halil Edhem, *Elvah-ı Nakşiye Koleksiyonu* (İstanbul: Matbaa-yı Âmire, 1924).

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 59.

Turkish oil paintings in a chronological order where viewers moved past the early nineteenth century non-figurative paintings, on to the late-nineteenth century still-lifes, landscapes and orientalist paintings in the academic style, past early-twentieth century images of urban life, landscapes and portraits of ordinary people in a particularly impressionistic style ('Turkish Impressionists'), and finally arrived at the experimental, cubist and abstract art works of the young Republican artists. As a republican project that aimed at 'educating the country's people,' the collection directed viewers to follow a well-defined and teleological history of modern 'Turkish art,' where each style replaced the former one and was in turn replaced by a more 'western' and hence more 'developed' successor.⁶⁹ Unlike most works from the collection, however, Eleni Iliadis' *Guitar Player (Kitaracı)* was never displayed.⁷⁰

In the 1930s, most war paintings this study has focused on were kept in various collections. Mehmed Ruhi's *After the Enemy Fled* and *Triptych*, together with Mehmed Sami's *The Battle of İsmail Tepe* were in the collection of the Turkish Hearth in Ankara.⁷¹ One of Çallı İbrahim's ordinary soldier paintings were in the private collection of Prince Abdülmecid Efendi, who was living in exile in Europe, back then.⁷² Namık İsmail's *Take Another*, taken to Moscow in 1936 for a temporary exhibition, was in the collection at the Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture in 1937.⁷³ There, it was relabelled *The Last Shell (Son Mermi)* and placed in an

⁶⁹ Nurullah Berk 'Resim ve Heykel Müzesi', *Ar Dergisi*, No: 4 (1938); Semra Germaner, 'Elvah-ı Nahşiye Koleksiyonu'ndan Resim ve Heykel Müzesi'ne', *Serginin Sergisi* (Istanbul: MSGSÜ Yayını, 2009); Zeynep Yasa-Yaman, *Suretin Sireti: Bir Koleksiyonu Ziyaret* (Istanbul: Pera Müzesi, 2011).

⁷⁰ Today Eleni Iliadis' *Guitar Player* belongs to the collection of the Ankara Museum of Painting and Sculpture, but due to lack of any information about the painter and the work, it has been kept in the archives. As of August 2017, the museum authorities are planning to renovate the painting. I would like to thank once again vice director of the museum for collaborating with me in order to find Eleni Iliadis' painting in the archive.

⁷¹ See, the inventory of the War of Independence Museum, Ankara.

⁷² See the letter written by Salih K. Nigar, Abdülmecid Efendi's secretary, to the Military Museum, dated 15 April 1953. Taha Toros' archive.

⁷³ 'Moskova'da Türk Resim Sergisi', *Cumhuriyet*, 2 İkincikanun 1936 [2 January 1936], pp. 1, 5. See, also, 'TRT Arşiv: Moskova Türk Resim Sergisi', <http://www.trtarsiv.com/izle/101448/moskova-turk->

exhibition hall where it hung alongside impressionist works from Çallı İbrahim and other painters. As of today, most war paintings from the First World War are on permanent public display in various museums including the Military Museum (Istanbul), Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture, Ankara Museum of Painting and Sculpture, and the Independence War Museum (Ankara). Considered among the canonical representations of war in Turkish art, they, however, are often renamed anachronistically as works about the War of Independence and incorporated into a triumphalist and militarist narrative.

What people know of war, as Jay Winter has put it ‘is always mediated knowledge, shaped and refracted by the stories we are told.’⁷⁴ In a sharp contrast to ‘the delegitimation of war and of military heroism in Western Europe over the last 50 years [...] martyrology is a central, and at times, an essential part of the narrative of loss of life in wartime’, and it has remained persistently so in peacetime in Turkey.⁷⁵ Over the hundred years since their production, the interpretation of the war paintings from the First World War and the events they memorialise have been appropriated to fit the dominant political and cultural narratives of modern Turkey. In a country where, as Erik J. Zürcher has emphasized, nationalism is centred around the ‘idea that the Turks actually are a nation of soldiers, or even a soldier race,’ the ambiguous and complex aspects of the paintings’ responses to the First World War have been repeatedly and deliberately suppressed in favour of a more patriotic and heroic framing of the works.⁷⁶ Militarist and chauvinistic policies profoundly limited the

[resim-sergisi](#). Accessed, 14 August 2017. The inventory of the Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture. I am indebted to Burcu Pelvanoğlu for sharing her research with me on the painting collection.

⁷⁴ Winter, *War Beyond Words*, p. 69.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 126

⁷⁶ Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building*, p. 118. Indeed, one of Turkey’s best-known marches insists that ‘every Turk is Born a Soldier’ (*Her Türk Asker Doğar*). See, Ayşegül Altınay, *The Myth of the Military-Nation: Militarism, Gender, and Education in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

ways in which those paintings have been, and can be, interpreted: their meanings skewed as their history is reinterpreted, even reinvented. That this history has been rewritten in line with certain political and ideological agendas makes it all the more necessary to look at them afresh to try to understand them on their own terms.

TABLES

Table 1: Cost of Living Index during the First World War
(Cost of living in 1914=100)¹

1914	100
1915	130
1916	212
1917	846
1918	1,823

Table 2: Increase of Retail Prices during the First World War (Istanbul)²

	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918
Bread (free)	1.25	1.65	9.5	18	34
Bread (disturbed with fixed price)	-	-	1.6	2.5	2.5
Rice	3	5	20	45	92
Sugar (free)	3	7.5	30	112	195
Sugar (disturbed with fixed price)	-	-	-	20	30
Potato	1	1.6	3	14	27
Cheese	12	20	40	100	210
Shoes	70	130	230	350	1.100
Coal	115	126	200	420	975
Cigarette (per package)	2.5	2.5	5	10	15

¹ Zafer Toprak, *İttihad-Terakki ve Cihan Harbi: Savaş Ekonomisi ve Türkiye’de Devletçilik* (İstanbul: Homer, 2003), p. 154.

² Vedat Eldem, *Harp ve Mütareke Yıllarında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun Ekonomisi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1994), pp. 50-51.

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BOA, HR. SYS (Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi Kısım Evrakı)

BOA, İ. DUİT (Dosya Usulu İradeler)

BOA, MF. MKT (Maârif Nezâreti Mektubi Kalemi)

BOA, MF. MÜZ (Maârif Nezâreti Müze Tasnifi)

BOA, MF. ALY (Tedrisat-ı Aliye Dairesi)

BOA, MV (Meclis-i Vükela)

TBMM (Grand National Assembly of Turkey)

Newspapers archive

Halife Abdülmecid Efendi Koleksiyonu

IAMA (Istanbul Archeological Museums Archives)

Müze-i Hümayun, Maarif Nezareti

İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi Koleksiyonu

Yıldız Albümü

Bilkent University Library

Halil İnalcık Koleksiyonu

Boğaziçi University Library

Nadir Eserler Koleksiyonu

İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi

Taha Toros Arşivi

Salt Araştırma

Osmanlı Bankası Arşivi

Britain

London, Imperial War Museum

Private Letters of Charles Vinicombe

Oxford, St Antony's College, Middle East Centre Archive

Sir Andrew Ryan, GB165-0248

France

Paris, AGBU Nubarian Library

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Australian War Memorial
Harbiye Askeri Müze
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Milli Kütüphane
National Gallery of Armenia
Pera Müzesi
Samsun Kent Müzesi
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Hande

Harb Mecmuası

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Hilal

İkdam

Independence Daily Reporter

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Kadınlar Dünyası

Karagöz

Kurtuluş

Muallim

Malumat

Meşale

Milliyet Sanat Dergisi

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