

## MiniaTurk: Culture, History, and Memory in Turkey in Post-1980s

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The main purpose of this study is to be able to delineate the phenomenal changes that museum as an institution has undertaken in Turkey in the years following 1980s. In tracing these transformations, the emphasis is given to narrations of culture, memory and history. Grounded on concepts as such, the study contends with museums that invest exclusively in the organization and visualization of the information of the past and its practices – which leaves art museums, military museums and/or industrial museums outside the scope.

Our intention is to provide at first a brief outline, establishing the emergence and fundamentals of museum practices in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, so as to capture the museum at its nascent site as an institution of modernity. While tracing the initial function of the museum as encyclopedia of nation-building (Özyürek 2001), our focus will be on portraying the experience of the late Ottoman and early Republican periods in particular. Later on, our focus will gradually move in time with the aim of grasping how customs of “framing the nation” are transformed in the course of changing political, social and economical agendas. Grounding the framework on the crisis of space-time conceptions of modernity and the upsurge of memory practices, we will try to analyze the last twenty years of museum practices in Turkey in the light of: (1) the withdrawal of rigid cultural politics of the State on exhibition rights, (2) the changes in the narrator function, and (3) the privatization of museal projects. In tackling with the spatio-temporal reorganization of modern modes of production, we will inevitably delve into the effects of debates around globalization and multiculturalism – particularly on conservation and heritage politics. Finally, departing from the example of Miniaturk – a theme park, curating a selection of miniaturized historical and architectural pieces as a “Showcase of Turkey” – we will try to identify the neo-conservative tendencies of post-1980s’ museum practices in Turkey so as to trace the structural transformations in the space

and body of the museum, along with transformations in representation strategies and power relations at work.

## Museum as Encyclopedia of Nation-Building

For the following section, we will be utilizing the rather general metaphor of “museum as encyclopedia”<sup>1</sup> in engaging with the theorization of museal projects in Turkey in the late Ottoman and early Republic periods. Although these two periods show discrepancies in terms of basic ideological premises, several continuities could be claimed – with their roots in the idea of modernization<sup>2</sup>.

The emergence of museological practices in the late Ottoman period can be seen as an extension of two general tendencies: Westernization and centralization – the former involving incorporation of modern institutional forms into the new legal and administrative system; and the latter involving realization of a centralized and unified Ottoman identity<sup>3</sup>. In terms of technique and ideology, however, it appears that quite distinguishing problematics were at work (Shaw 2004). The visualization of the past in the late Ottoman political atmosphere was less a matter of constructing national identity, and more a matter of interfering with daily politics and of negotiating inter-state dynamics – as in the first museal examples of the weaponry collection at St. Irene, and the following exhibition of Janissary military models.

In and through the following instances (the initiation of Imperial Museum in 1877, and the pioneering work of *Osman Hamdi*), however, concerns over national identity and narrative self-legitimization came to be more and more noticeable. Ottomans were at the time constantly challenged by nationalist upheavals in peripheral territories, and were unsuccessful in confronting them with a military response. For purposes of territorial accord, the introduction of an integral Ottoman identity was a necessity. At the service of creating and visualizing a unified account, the multiplicity of pieces from territories all around were to be compiled and assimilated in the volume of the encyclopaedic museum with proper techniques of ordering and representing. Hence, if the initial exhibitions are left aside, the late Ottoman period can be said to witness a relatively substantial effort in the construction of a singular identity discourse – sanctioned not only by the emergence of a concern over the accumulation of pieces in the same space, but also by the increase of restrictions on private property and mobility rights.

Early Republican museum space shares considerable commonalities with its Ottoman equivalent while at the same time bearing quite idiosyncratic features in terms of negotiating with its audiences and actors. Most appreciably, originating in the overall public policies of

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- 1 It seems appropriate to conceptualize the modern institution of the museum as an encyclopedia of nation-building – with reference Esra Ozyurek’s (2001) differentiation between the encyclopedia and the newspaper. The newspaper is the site of a perpetual forgetting – in it, one can refer to the current agenda of a society, only to be replaced the next day. Whereas, the encyclopedia is the embodiment of the very act of remembrance itself – of the fundamental definitions and practices regarding a nation’s official identity and culture.
  - 2 It is also important to note that the periodization employed in the rest of this paper relies on Madran and Onal’s (2000) examinations of museal practices in Turkey in five episodes. Accordingly, the pioneering steps in museum practices cover the years between 1840 and 1880. Following this preliminary stage is: (1) the period of the eminent archaeologist *Osman Hamdi* (1880 to 1910s); (2) the early Republican era (1920-1950); (3) the period of political transformation (1960 to mid-1970s); (4) the period of cultural transformation (1980s); and (5) the period of multicultural transformation (1990s to today). It is by no means a matter of chance that the articulation of these time spheres coincide with changes in the political, economic and social climate of the country. Museum politics, in this sense, can be easily said to advance in the shadow of, at times intervening in, these processes.
  - 3 An example in this regard is the way in which the tradition of collecting unique pieces that date back to 15th century (the reign of Mehmet II) was quite effortlessly transformed into a modern institutional practice by mid-19th century.

the early Republican era, and in contrast to Ottoman conventions, the museums were categorized as one of the most significant sites for inducing and widening the consciousness of being a nation by way of educating the masses (Madran and Onal 2000) and distributing cultural identity<sup>4</sup>. The central concerns, in this regard, of the early Republican museum politics in general could be said to be: (1) the development of an aesthetic discourse on the former period's heritage; (2) the invention of the new tradition, along with its *modus operandi*; and (3) the distribution of these modes of operation through various administrative and public bodies – in this case, the museum and exhibition branches of the Peoples' Houses.

The first step was the conversion of *Topkapı* Palace (Istanbul) and *Mevlevihane* (Konya) into national museums on 3 March 1924 – date of the official defeat of the Ottoman dynasty<sup>5</sup>. The significance of these two places lie in their iconographic value: the former representing the glorious Ottoman past and the latter, its rooted religious practices – both fundamentally opposed by the Republican ideology. The second step involves invention of new memory sites in the new geography with the aim of constructing a knowledge of historical past. As the new capital where all political and ideological apparatuses of the new regime were concentrated, Ankara stood as the major antagonist figure against the memories that Istanbul embodied. Hence, it is possible to see at this stage the continuity with Ottoman centralization policies in the sense of an encyclopaedic concentration of national identity and cultural capital; only with a twist – a relocation of the center.

The dominant ambition of the encyclopedia was a search for origins – of the Turkish nation – in the framework provided by antique Anatolian civilizations. The early Republican ideology of history (namely the Turkish History Thesis) provided the theoretical basis of this investigation. Adopting principles and methodology of modern historiography, it favored a chrono-deterministic mindset and fostered extensive archaeological research in peripheral regions. Concern over creating an entire narration for Anatolian Turks materialized itself in the inscription of old civilizations and ancient Turkish heritage as ancestor and origin. The archeological studies were mainly based on pre-Ottoman and pre-Islamic civilizations that had existed in Anatolia, particularly focusing on the organic links between the Hittites and the Turks (Şimşek 2002: 154). Hence, the early Republican nationalist historiography laid its basis on the proposition of a “golden age” (Smith 1999: 48) – Hittitean past – while associating contemporary Turkish presence with progressive features of civilization. It is no coincidence then that the first museum founded in Ankara, which included the initial archeological findings from early excavations, was designated the Hittites Museum<sup>6</sup>. Clearly stemming from nationalist historiography and its methods, it served the construction of a unique narrative, founded upon a linear and chronological perspective that encapsulates the Anatolian Turkish past. The museum functioned as an instrument in legitimizing Turkish subsistence in Anatolia, and thus could be conceived as part of a general project in which a

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4 In his speech at the First Congress of the Advisory Board for Antique Pieces, the acceleration in the collection of large number of pieces was evaluated by *Hasan Ali Yücel* as an achievement of the Republican regime. Accordingly, the comparison of archives and the number of museums between the periods 1880-1923 and 1923-1943 was demonstrating the superiority of the Republican regime over late Ottoman politics in terms of the creation and preservation of national identity.

5 The conversion of the *Topkapı* Palace had evidently been initiated during the previous period, but with different motivations. Whereas the Ottoman intention was to frame the private space that had been the ground of centuries-long hegemony in the glorious memory of the dynasty, the Republican intention was to submit this private space to public use.

6 It was soon renamed Ankara Museum of Archaeology; and, finally Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, in 1967 – as its narration incorporated pieces other than those that belonged to the Hittites past such as the Neolithic Age or the Phrygia period in Anatolia. The change in name and content is argued by Gür (2001) to be the result of changes in cultural policy and political ideology – a shift in focus from a search for predecessors (in time) towards a territory-based identification (in space).

homogenous Turkish culture was put forward and a national identity established (Gür 2001: 220-221).

Apart from the Museum of Archaeology, the early Republic also initiated the Ethnography Museum in 1925. It was built anew as an exemplary instance of national architecture school (designed by *Arif Hikmet Koyunoğlu*) in a previously Muslim district, the *Namazgah* region of Ankara (Atasoy 1996: 1465). This first museum building was instituted upon the mapping of contemporary and daily habits of people living particularly in rural areas. Apart from Turkish artifacts from the Seljuk period, folk attire, ornaments, clogs, shoes, accessories, and finally samples of traditional Turkish handcrafts were put on display. Mainly collected from adjacent religious centers in the Anatolian countryside, these cultural objects provided indications of contemporary everyday life, rather than referring to the knowledge of the past. Like a glossary, these indicators established the official record of how Turkish society practiced its daily life, how people dressed and what they produced (Madran and Önal 2000: 183). Seen in this light, the ideology and cultural politics of the early Republican era can be said to employ, in conceptualizing cultural practices, a rather more territorial framework so as to contain a wider geography in mapping a homogenous culture.

Museum practices of the early Republican era, apart from those initiated by central government, also included those organized at a local scale under the auspices of the Peoples Houses. Inauguration of museum and exhibition branches, although differentiating at a regional basis, shared a common foundation (Arık 1947: 111-123). Two aspects of the organization of branches warranted their effective functioning. The first of these was again related to the educative function of the State, and took the form of consciousness-raising in society – which proved crucial in instilling and spreading the fundamentals of official nationalist policies on cultural affairs. And, second was related to the way in which voluntary participation thrived on the notion of citizenship (Duncan 1995: 24). In claiming equality to the masses in all spheres, the Republican politics precisely opposed the exclusion of public from spaces of display, and thus was able to stimulate collective research. It was a distinguishing characteristic of museum and exhibition branches to operate as a small-scale house-of-commons in which public was entitled to congregate and negotiate certain issues. Thus combining the invigorating effect of the sense of citizenship with an educative function, the State was able to dominate infrastructural contributions of the periphery, and render its own governmental tone active in a demarcated public sphere<sup>7</sup>.

Hence, as a general ground rule in the Republican era, it could be said that museum practices concentrated on two major issues: (1) the establishment of a primordial relationship between a geographical region and its citizens, through the discovery of trans-historical bonds, for purposes of self-legitimization; and (2) the representation of the new nation and its citizens in the framework of a series of cultural characteristics. The period also employed the idea of the “golden age”, which provided the means for undermining those memory codes associated with Ottoman sovereignty.

## Modernity in Crisis, Museum in Crisis

Modernity and its institutions were confronted by a crisis sometime during the second half of 20th century, so the story goes. The dissolution of modernity’s spatio-temporal coordinates, of future into present (Urry 1990), was matched by the uprise of memory practices (that which essentially is informal, subjective, and unreliable) in historical discourse – which had

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7 In the annual report of the museum and exhibition branch located in Bergama, it was reported that there were initiations in the direction of publishing research studies that prove the Turkish origin of the Greeks – which shows that the framework of Turkish History Thesis found its echoes in peripheral practices as well.

so far effectively identified itself with formality, objectivity, and certainty<sup>8</sup>. The overwhelming “memory boom” of 1980s, paradoxically paralleled by an amnesia that is caused by instantaneously changing agendas, was in this regard principally evaluated as the defeat of history (Huyssen 2000). Just as the anxiety of people to survive led to an escape from amnesia, the weakening of future fuelled the appeal to the past. Accompanied by the longing for a sense of harmony gone astray, the resistive urge was specifically in conformity with the main course of conservative ideology: the revival and reinforcement of nostalgia in daily practices. Systematically distorting attention away from contemporary polarizations and conflicts, the commodification of history constructed an aura around a primordial past from which pain has been removed (Lowenthal 1985). The inevitable result was a de-contextualized re-mapping of the past.

Set within the conditions of a fragmented and accelerated temporality, the space of after-the-modern museum practices quite directly embodied these transformations, and took fairly distinctive forms, especially in the years following 1980s. Experiential layouts that permit the object to occupy a universe that is rather continuous with that of the visitor came to the fore. Replacing the model of “museum as encyclopedia” was the reign of live, communicating, interactive, participatory, open-air and/or virtual museums (Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 127). Introduction, in the meantime, of transnational capitalist affairs and their politics brought about new power dynamics. The focus on nation, in terms of content and thematics, turned into the prominence of those fragments making up the nation. Informed also by discourses of globalization and multiculturalism, the exhibition complex was invaded by alternative memories. The new authority of “taste,” and the new proprietor of “symbolic power” (Bourdieu 1989), appeared in the guise of capital-holders and other narrators who, not necessarily following nationalist interests, did rehearse divergent fashions of identity construction. Reaching beyond the sheer aim of housing collections that are permanently exhibited and supplied with large-scale archives (Urry 1999: 130), the cultural center model allowed the inclusion of other components (such as cafés, shops, restaurants, cinemas) in the body of the museum which now tolerated its visitors to spend longer amounts of time. Already equipped with a range of new departments such as new media centers, or activities such as children’s education, the museum space turned into a highly organized and ideal site for mass production and consumption. Other effective management strategies fed upon the appeal of culture and history as commodities, and were responsible for the invention of new on-site conservation practices that assert a spatial simultaneity of, and a temporal continuity between, past and present – such as the re-construction of old villages and heritage sites. Pushed out of its protective shell and mainly designed for accommodating leisure activities, the museum space assumed the terminology and vocabulary of a must-see attraction that, by way of producing and reproducing a selective past, held its equally problematic share in the insertion of nostalgia into daily practices.

In Turkey, the museum practices following 1980s appeared to have been fundamentally shaped by this agenda. Up until 1973, the exhibition of objects with historical and cultural value was regulated by the set of laws once created by *Osman Hamdi*. Basically concerned with inhibiting national and international smuggling, these laws also rendered the State as the only authoritative party capable of opening a museum. Revisions in law enacted in 1973, 1983, and 1984 indicated that a lot was about to change. Most importantly, non-governmental collection owners were also granted the right to exhibit – provided that objects would be

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8 According to Nora (1989), “memory and history, far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition. Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains permanent evolution; open to dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer.”

inspected by the General Directorate of Museums and Monuments. This way, the objects in these small-scale collections were approved eligible, and recorded in official publications and catalogues, which simultaneously acted as a measure in preventing their commercialization. Withdrawal of the State, as the only single agency with power over visualizations of the past, put an end to its monopoly on national and cultural identity, and thus provided alternative memory practices with an opportunity to come to the fore.

Beginning with early 1980s, a number of exhibition facilities were established in the names of actual people, of various foundations, and/or banks. Many institutions such as universities and associations were involved in the organization of museums, projecting their own perspectives on narrations of history and culture. And, finally, pioneering bourgeois families such as *Sabancı* and *Koç* unlocked the doors of their larger-than-life collections to public in the form of private museums. The content and context of all these collections were highly varied, including peculiar objects throughout a wide range of time-periods and disciplines. Hence, the entrance of these collections into the space of the museum introduced new power dynamics into the cultural scene and politics of 1980s and after.

Apart from the privatization of museums, the far-reaching extent of cultural heritage applications was a significant characteristic of contemporary museum practices in the 1980s of Turkey. Under the lure of the reworking of global and multicultural politics, heritage sites have been integrated into everyday life to such a degree that cities, as physical embodiments of history, became “crucial sites where different claims to the past are formulated and contested” (Bartu 2001). In the context of heritage customs, joining UNESCO’s World Heritage Convention in 1983 was the first step for Turkey. What followed was the enlisting of numerous architectural and historical sites as world heritage, including Istanbul, Safranbolu, *Boğazköy-Hattuşaş*, Mt. Nemrut, Xanthos-Lethoon, Troy, Pamukkale, and *Göreme-Cappadocia*. Memory practices taking shape in the vicinities of these regions became the ground for the establishment of new identity politics in a period following the trauma of the *coup-d’etat* of 1980. Emphasis was given to the coexistence of diverse cultures on the same geography throughout history, which provided the basis of multiculturalist remembrances. However, the innocence of these coexistence images was quite dubious, since politics of the past took on very different meanings depending on the answers one gives to the political questions of which past to preserve and promote, and to whom.

To sum up, the surfacing of neo-liberal politics in Turkey reflected on the evolution of museum politics in the form of the appearance of private museums in post-1980s. The investments in cultural sphere by private hands triggered destabilization of the power-composition of museum spaces, while raising hopes in the direction of more liberating practices with permeable and inclusive boundaries. However, as marketing and commodification methods of heritage politics came to the fore, it was obvious that power was simply about to reproduce and exhibit itself in new forms. In the meantime, self-representation of Turkey on the international platform turned into an active cultural policy. In this sense, participation of Turkey in the World Heritage Convention brought about further politics to be constructed on the idea and image of past. Nostalgic remapping of a multicultural geography, in compliance with selective memory practices and new tourism strategies, found its primordial expression in museums without walls. The visualization of this narration organized itself around an imagery of coexistence – of numerous religious communities and nations in universal and transhistorical harmony.

### Neo-Conservative Memory in Display: Miniaturk

*Miniaturk: Showcase of Turkey* sets an emblematic example of post-1980s museum practices in Turkey with its structural and narrative features that are notably unlike those of modern museums. Slipping on the role of reviving vanished memories of a cultural and social

geography that embodies traces of the initial modernization process of the Ottoman Empire during 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the exhibition complex is situated right along the shoreline of the Golden Horn, and envelops its contents with the aura of a fairy tale. Fragmented and non-linear, the internal structure of the park itself employs an eclectic series of remembrance strategies on the surface of which post-1980s power codes and dynamics materialize.

Miniaturk (a.k.a. Miniaturized Turkey Park) is initiated in 2001, and steadfastly finalized in 2003 by *Kültür A.Ş.* joint-stock company, which once belonged to Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality but later was privatized. It is located on the northern coast of the Golden Horn, at *Sütlüce* district, and covers about 60.000 square meters. Mainly populated by Greek and Armenian communities on the northern, and Jewish communities on the southern coast (Belge 1999: 112) during the Ottoman era, the area is accredited with housing a multicultural populace ever since the Byzantine age. Cosmopolitan background of the region seems to have survived up until mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, when the construction of rather small-scale shipyards along the coast of *Kasımpaşa* initiated the area's transformation into an industrial district. The change resulted in the pollution and depopulation of the coast in due course. Additionally effected by the advance of politics against non-Muslim populations, withdrawal of the inhabitants accelerated during 1940s and 50s, while the skirts of *Hasköy* and *Eyüp* districts evolved into new neighborhoods. Finally, the Golden Horn as a whole was prestigiously inserted into the rehabilitation and reconstruction programs of the Metropolitan Municipality during 1980s, with the initiative of mayor Bedrettin Dalan, so as to be turned into a leisure and entertainment zone (Dalan 1986). The cultural policies of the period mainly concentrated on reviving the delightful dissipation customs of the Ottoman Empire, dating back to the Tulip Era (1718-1730)<sup>9</sup>. Miniaturk is thus constructed, not randomly<sup>10</sup>, in the rehabilitated environment of the Golden Horn as an extension of the Regional Cultural Plan of the municipality<sup>11</sup>.

The exhibition includes numerous miniaturized models that represent hundred and five monumental structures worthy of natural, national, and historical praise – such as the still-existing Hagia Sophia, Rumeli Fortress, *Sümela* Monastery, Qubbat As-Sakhray, and the ruins of Mount Nemrut as well as others that no longer survive such as the Temple of Artemis, the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, and the Castle of Ajyad. Temporally speaking, the selection extends all the way back from Antiquity to present-day. The geography that is covered, on the other hand, traverses not only contemporary Turkey but also earlier Ottoman provinces, stretching out from the Balkans to the Middle East. The pieces, more than temporally adhering to a sequential chronology, rather are reinforced into a space-based framework, and are categorized under three headings: Anatolia, Istanbul, and former Ottoman territories. The basic premise is to present “all times and places of Anatolia, together, all in one place and all at one time.” Simultaneity of the past and the present is offered, in this regard, as a unique experience that salvages interested sightseers from the arduous task of visiting these architectural wonders on-site. The visitors therefore are able to reach the information about a piece belonging to Antiquity, right after or just before touring around a monument that dates back to late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Two implications are in store, as a result of such spatio-temporal compression. From an optimistic point of view, the experience of the visitor is set free – of any external decision-making mechanism over his/her narration. This provides the visitor with an opportunity to stroll around independently, and discover narrative possibilities other than those rehearsed by official history. Overthrowing the hegemony of time and space over the discourse of the visitor hence seems to make room for carrying “the liberating potential of the museum that

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9 Newspaper clip from Radikal: “Haliç'te Sefahat,” 6 August 2001.

10 Newspaper clip from Cumhuriyet: “Minyatür Mirasa Akın,” 17 March 2003.

11 Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Yearly Plan, 1997 [online]: <http://www.ibb.gov.tr/index.htm>.

has never been entirely realized” (Walsh 1992: 38) into radical ends. However, the lack of temporal perception not only dehistoricizes the model-object but also decontextualizes the narration itself. The economy of scaling-down at work in miniaturization, coupled with the way in which these models negotiate with their real locations and other surrounding reproductions, bring about some other problems as well. Whereas the original structure continues to function in its original location, the miniaturized model cannot avoid being homogenized and reduced to the status of an icon in the eye of the beholder, for whom the information of its reality is reachable. Surgically isolated from its locality, the model is disengaged from its context as either a unique piece or an aesthetic form – which results in the commodification of the object as an individual case by itself, or respectively makes possible the promotion of Miniaturk as a “Showcase,” as a collection<sup>12</sup>.

More important than the way in which these objects, along with their multi-layered socio-political contexts, are rendered ineffective and harmless (Urry 1999: 172) is the way in which they are re-assimilated into the general framework of a central narration put forward in the body and structure of Miniaturk itself. That is: if these objects are subjected to a fundamental forgetting, they certainly are subjected to a secondary re-membering – as one set of signifiers that revolve around an identity construction are exchanged by another. As an initial hint, it is sufficient to draw attention to how the spatial division of the sub-sections (Anatolia, Istanbul, former Ottoman territories) precisely imitates the *eyalet* (provincial) system of the Ottoman administrative structure. The stakes and coordinates of this new narration, performed thus in the form of a memory-transplantation, will be more comprehensible once we delve into each sub-section in detail.

The Anatolia section includes not only models of historic or religious monuments, but also civil buildings such as Mardin Houses and natural sites such as Pamukkale. Most interestingly, the Tomb of Mevlana, coded as the symbol of Sufist tolerance, welcomes the visitors at the entrance of this section, and is said to stand for the voice of multiculturalism in and around Anatolia. Conversely, on the one hand, the general outline of the section by and large seems to emphasize Turkish and Islamic identity through models of mosques, castles and houses. So much so that the pieces belonging to antiquity are the only items with non-Islamic and non-Turkish origins (i.e. Greco-Roman heritage), although it is well-known that Anatolia has hosted many communities apart from its ancient past. Whilst, on the other hand, the idea of Anatolia as motherland is confirmed in the acknowledgment of former civilizations as the gain and wealth of Turkish cultural heritage. The ideological basis of this section, in this regard, seems clearly to be affected by the nationalist interests and methods of the early Republican era. Acclamations of pluralism, supported by the inclusion of a variety of building forms from different geographical regions and time-periods, are thwarted by the paradoxical exclusion of more recent Arab, Armenian, or Kurdish monuments. The multicultural framework of the Anatolian section thus can be said to omit the recent past and current multicultural structure of Anatolia – perhaps as an extension of the dominant neo-conservative tendencies of the 1980s in general, and the political ground of Miniaturk in particular.

The ideological discourse and memory practices surfacing at the Istanbul section reaches as far back as the Byzantium. Offered on the one hand is a nostalgic map of the city, which includes the historical peninsula, and highlights in this region the existence of numerous masterpieces such as Hagia Sophia and the Blue Mosque. As distinct from the Anatolia section, promoted here on the other hand is an imagery of coexistence such that significant spots with Christian and Jewish origins, like St. Antoine Church or the Synagogue of *Ahır Kapi*, are exhibited along with Turkish-Islamic models. Also accentuated is the contemporary

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12 Please see the guidebook; also available [online]: [www.miniaturk.com.tr](http://www.miniaturk.com.tr).

facades of the city such as the Bosphorus Bridge, the *Atatürk* Airport, and the highway network – the representation of the last one in the form of an animated-model (with a 14m section, two tunnels, and 40 vehicles) outcries “We have highways!”, and quite literally pushes against the limits of ridicule. The inclusion of very contemporary and awarded architectural examples such as Profilo Shopping Center and *Yapı Kredi* Bank Headquarters not only is rooted in marketing strategies, but also brings about the vision of a modern Istanbul and its modern inhabitants.

The last section covers former Ottoman territories, and emphasizes: (1) the predominant underscoring of multicultural identity; (2) the articulation of Ottoman modernization, along with the hints of an underlying European identity; and finally (3) the contributions of the existence of a common Ottoman past in creating and maintaining a coexistence policy in these regions. The selection of sites to be represented is made on the basis of their being either commemorations of great victories (such as the Castle of Ajyad) or reminders of Ottoman or Islamic existence on the European terrain (as in the example of the Mostar Bridge). The revival of the extent of Ottoman borders throughout the “Golden Age” is a significant theme, as pieces from Balkans, Middle East, and North Africa – with specifically Ottoman, Turkish, and/or Islamic features – are displayed. The recall of former boundaries carries the intention of asserting the conviction that coexistence of multicultural practices in harmony was not something peculiar to Anatolia, but was to be equally witnessed throughout all geographies upon which the Turkish-Islamic past touched. In another sense, while the imperial Ottoman body is reconstructed through a series of remembrances, a homogenized community of signifiers is laid out as the proof and manifestation of this political body.

In sum, the memory that finds articulation in the texture of Miniaturk, while garnished with an emphasis on multiculturalism and coexistence, is predominantly based on the subsistence of Turkish and Islamic identity over a vast realm. If acts of remembering inevitably involve the articulation of present needs in the form of past material (Misztal 2003: 25), it is no surprise that Miniaturk as a project coincides, in temporal terms, with a political agenda that is marked by the process of Turkey’s integration to Europe; and prolongs, content-wise, an ideology that embodies the aspirations of *Turgut Özal* attracted in early 1980s to the idea of prescribing a genuine Ottoman identity in cultural discourse (Çetinsaya 2004: 378).

A political agenda and cultural identity as such, perhaps most appropriately encapsulated as Neo-Ottomanism, was mostly the product of recent drastic changes in the political mapping of the world caused by the dissolution of huge political systems such as Soviet Russia and Yugoslavia – both of which acted as hosts to either Turkish inhabitants or Ottoman inheritance (Çetinsaya 2004: 375). It was the revival of imperial Ottoman identity that would provide Turkey with the vision that was required in tackling with the balance-shifts in the area by way of re-imagining pre-WWI Ottoman realms and administrative structures (Çetinsaya 2004: 377). Tributes to Muslim communities in the Balkans, or to the Kurdish population dispersed throughout the north of Middle East, were all an expression of the neo-liberalism of 1980s – in the form of a neo-Ottomanism – in pursuit of a redefinition in the region (Çandar in Çetinsaya 2004: 379).

What Miniaturk offers is precisely the overall framework of such a redefinition – (1) the eagerness to claim a position in a fragmented and timeless post-colonial world by programmatically reinforcing a dehistoricized and decontextualized, yet inherently Ottoman, map on the surface of the Golden Horn; (2) the recurring fantasies of an imperial past around a glamorously multicultural social structure based on the nostalgic coexistence images of a late-19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman experience; and (3) the re-making of a modern society, which embraces the imperial senses previously underestimated by the Republican citizenship model, by way of being integrated into trans-national, trans-continental, and particularly European

networks and identity politics. Miniaturk enters the European Union before Turkey<sup>13</sup>, and endows it with an already gifted, sparkling and paradigmatic model – of a new, inspiringly para-historic, Otto-European citizenship.

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