

Turkey in the Great Exhibition of 1851

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Introduction

The nineteenth century international exhibitions were “great new rituals of self-congratulation”¹ celebrating economic and industrial progress.² They were important showcases for modernization and industrialization advances, and served to display the riches and luxury of certain countries beyond the realm of the industrial revolution.

Exhibitions on an international level evolved gradually as a cultural phenomenon.³ National exhibitions have been held in Paris since the end of the eighteenth century. In 1847 and 1848 in England, a series of national exhibitions including the first “Great Exhibition” were held under the patronage of key figures such as Prince Albert and Sir Henry Cole. The evolution of exhibitions from the national scene into the international area was a by-product of the internationalization of modernization. The Crystal Palace itself, where the first international exhibition was held in London in 1851, has been described as the first embodiment of a commodity culture and the first modern building, marking the origin of industrial design and even the advent of modernity.⁴ The Royal Committee decided that the 1851 Exhibition was to be at an international level embracing foreign production. The eastern half of the Crystal Palace was given to foreign countries,⁵ and the western half to Britain and the British Empire. The Turkish court was in the eastern part of the palace, in the north transept on the ground floor, next to Egypt, Persia, and Greece.

Since the second half of the eighteenth century, Turkey was undergoing a phase of new structural development in terms of military, monetary, and governmental systems. As a result of the reformations of 1839, known as “*Tanzimat*,”⁶ and the commercial treaties of the first half of the nineteenth century, “change” rapidly replaced “inertia” in the industrialization and commoditization of Turkey in the modern Western sense.⁷ Many of the new central institutions of the second half of the nineteenth century led the way to the establishment of the Turkish Republic, and still are impacting on the social institutional structure.

At the end of the eighteenth century and in the beginning of the nineteenth century, commercial trade with Middle and Eastern Europe in Turkey was more important than with Western Europe.⁸

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The capacity of the overseas and foreign trade of Turkey was no more than one to two percent of the total production of the Turkish Empire.⁹ The tableau was in a rapid change during the hundred-year period between the end of the Napoleonic wars in Europe and the First World War. Commerce between Western Europe and Turkey grew stronger through commercial treaty conventions. The Ottoman economy was exporting raw materials, foodstuffs, and alimentary products; while importing manufactured goods and certain other alimentary products. One of the characteristics of Ottoman exportation was “the variety of goods”; none of the goods exported were more than twelve percent of the total, so no product was superior to another. More than the half of the imported goods were manufactured.¹⁰ Some examples of manufactured Ottoman goods worth noting were handwoven rugs, carpets, and some small furniture items.

Britain had the privilege of exporting her products into the Ottoman market with very low tariffs after the “Balta Limani Commercial Treaty” was signed in 1838. The Ottoman market as a foreign, liberal trade arena started to develop faster after the Crimean War,¹¹ and the local market was bombarded with English cotton. As it is today, one of the main Turkish industries was textiles. The local weavers started using low-cost English fibers and yarns, resulting in a decrease in the spinning industry in provincial Anatolia. However, the change in the origin of cotton fibers did not affect the existing weaving industry. English designs were not attractive to local people, who went on consuming domestic fabrics with their own local taste.¹² The number of the looms increased rather than decreased in the wake of this liberal foreign trade.¹³ This arguably was due to the traditional consumption habits, allocating certain amounts of the market to local manufacturers with the domestic market in mind. A reflection of the textile tradition was evident at all of the international exhibitions involving Turkey in the nineteenth century.

Turkish Organization for the Great Exhibition

The Sultan who guided Turkey into the Great Exhibition was Abd-ul-Mejid I.¹⁴ Foreign affairs were in a critical state when he became the ruler, because the Ottoman Empire already had started falling apart under pressure from nationalist movements. Furthermore, Abd-ul-Mejid was known for his close relations with Queen Victoria. The warm relationship between Britain and Turkey, fortified by the changes in the institutional structure after the reorganization of 1839, enabled Turkey to be one of the officially invited participants at the world’s first international exhibition.

According to a governmental declaration in *Ceride-i Havadis*, an official newspaper, the objective of the Ottoman Empire in exhibiting at the exhibition was to show the productivity of the lands owned, to demonstrate the industrial and artistic ability of the Empire, and to display the endeavor of Sultan Abd-ul-Mejid in the

development of the country.¹⁵ Abd-ul-Mejid, himself, was a key actor in Turkish participation in the Great Exhibition. During his reign, Westernization accelerated. He was the first prince to be educated under Western norms. It is known that he subscribed to many European periodicals and newspapers, including the French *Débas* and *Illustrations*. The 1839 and the 1856 reformations of Abd-ul-Mejid echoed both throughout Turkey and abroad. The resulting changes transformed the face of Istanbul into a more cosmopolitan city, and attracted the interest of the European countries to the changing spatial meaning of Istanbul. The Sultan's attitude towards women and their position in society also was modernist compared to that of previous sultans. Ottoman women, especially in Istanbul, started to go out alone and mingle with the rest of the society, concomitant with minorities mingling with the Turkish population. Non-Muslim Ottomans and foreigners benefited from the reformations which created equality regulations on possession laws. They were the leading groups in the Westernization of everyday life, since they were involved in domestic and international trade.

The change in everyday routines, a tendency toward luxury, and a demand for new artistic expression led to changes in furniture, music, fine arts, and decoration, all in the Western sense. Abd-ul-Mejid's personality, his educational background, and the desire for modernization he inherited from his father had a strong supportive function in all these changes. He totally changed the everyday life in the palace, although he showed his respect for his ancestors in official ceremonies by observing traditional protocols. The changing consumption habits of foreigners and non-Muslim minorities of Istanbul also were a strong catalyst in the new local consumerism spreading through even middle-class Ottoman families. Another important factor in changing everyday routines was the luxurious and consumerist lives of families who left Egypt because of the opposition to reforms and modernization there.

Abd-ul-Mejid advanced the progress of industrialization with two important factories inaugurated during his reign. These were the Imperial Beykoz Porcelain and Glass Factory (*Beykoz Fabrika-i Hümayun*) and the Imperial Hereke Rug Factory (*Hereke Fabrika-i Hümayun*). The Imperial Feshane Garment Factory (*Feshane Fabrika-i Hümayun*) had already been in production since 1833 during the reign of Mahmud II, his father. Sultan Mahmud II made it obligatory to wear uniforms and fezzes for certain soldiers in an attempt to renovate the army. The Feshane Factory was under the direction of European experts, and it had been manufacturing fezzes and garments both for the army and the public.¹⁶ Feshane was one of the longest surviving imperial factories, whose products had to compete with the private sector and foreign products in the marketplace. This is one of the reasons why it could partially survive into the 1980s. Thus, it is not surprising that Feshane products had their place in the nineteenth century international exhibitions.

From the beginning, there was uncertainty about what facets of industry the Great Exhibition would epitomize: finished decorative products, finished goods regardless of their decorative qualities, or the production processes. Finally, the British exhibits were classified into four main categories: "raw materials," "machinery," "manufactures," and "fine arts"; and then into several sub-categories covering thirty classes. Turkish administrators in Istanbul; and especially Ismail Pasha, who was responsible for the organization of the collection as the Minister of Commerce and Agriculture; were keen on the way the Turkish exhibits were classified. The classification system of the British exhibits imitated and honored the manufacturing process: raw materials were taken by heavy machinery in order to manufacture works of industry.¹⁷ The representation of the production process cannot be traced in the Turkish exhibits, which were classified into two main groups, and then into several sub-divisions of "natural products" and "manufactured goods." Natural products included raw materials, minerals, foodstuffs, and agricultural products; while manufactured goods included both handmade and industrial Turkish production. The classification of natural products took place under the direction of the mineralogist Pauliny. The manufactured objects were classified under the direction of the English agent Charles Lafontaine.¹⁸ The success of the classification system of the Turkish exhibits was highlighted in the illustrated catalogue of the exhibition published by *Art Journal*:¹⁹

The inductive system thus adapted by an Oriental people, might have been worthily imitated by other nations. This serious [attempt] can be read with facility, and instructive are the tongues of the trees and the sermons of the stones of the Ottoman Empire. The dye woods are numerous. The grains and other vegetable produce are varied; and their balsam, resins, and pharmaceutical preparations of considerable value. ... The systematic arrangement adopted proves, however, that the Turk might become an apt student in inductive science; and it is not improbable but that the interest felt in the city of Sultan in this gathering under the auspices of the consort of the Queen of England, may have its influence in leading back to the East that kind of learning which has had a general bearing towards the Western regions of the earth.

The Turkish articles were decided by the committees formed by the local administration and officers, and the selected pieces were labeled with names and prices, in order to be sent to the Ministry of Commerce.²⁰ Labels were mostly the names of the producers or makers, the same for most of the products that were in the official catalogue of the Great Exhibition.²¹ In order to encourage people to take part, it was announced that the items exhibited would be

on sale in London, and this was a chance to export products. The Turkish exhibit, collected from seven hundred manufacturers, included more than three thousand objects, of which one thousand three hundred were manufactured items.²² There had been an official correspondence between the ministry in Istanbul and the provinces, according to the documents at the archives of the Prime Ministry of Turkish Republic (PMTR), in order to collect the articles for London. In one of the royal commission meetings for the exhibition in March 1850, Prince Albert pointed out the exhibition regulations to an audience of mayors with an attempt to incite them to establish a local committee, and these regulations were translated into French, German, Italian, Turkish, and Arabic, and sent to various national organizational committees.²³ The Ministry of Commerce informed the provinces on the basis of these regulations. Halep and Filibe,²⁴ Tirhala,²⁵ Saida and Tripoli,²⁶ Erzurum,²⁷ Konya,²⁸ Cyprus,²⁹ Yanya,³⁰ Eflak,³¹ Vidin,³² Edirne³³ and Jerusalem³⁴ were among the provinces that Istanbul corresponded with for the exhibition.³⁵ The Turkish Government, without considering any religious distinctions, had asked manufacturers to ship their products first to Istanbul and then to London without charge in order to encourage local industry participation in the exhibition.³⁶

The Istanbul Grand Gallery Exhibition

Before the final shipment to Southampton, the collected items were displayed to a group of people including statesmen, ambassadors, artisans, and tradesmen in the Grand Gallery of the Ministry of Commerce in Istanbul.³⁷ Abd-ul-Mejid visited the exhibition, together with his chamberlains and officers, on March 22, 1851. The princes Murad Efendi and Abd-ul-Hamid Efendi, along with the majestic mother of the Sultan, visited the gallery afterwards. The Sultan was fond of the organization and the system of classification. In the gallery, he carefully examined the natural products, spent a long time in front of the mineralogy collection, and he was particularly interested in garments.³⁸ All of Turkish industry, from the grandest to the modest, aroused the Sultan's curiosity.

The idea of "exhibition" was not unfamiliar to Ottoman rulers. A tradition of exhibiting craftsman's ability in parades on important days had existed long before. The craftsmen practiced their ability in front of the Sultan in a certain order, which also was a sign of their importance. The Istanbul Grand Gallery Exhibition, was different compared to former exhibitions in the system of exhibiting, and was important in distinguishing and imparting the maker from the product. The Sultan's personal visit to the gallery is evidence of his attitude of encouraging Turkish people to become modernized.

Abd-ul-Mejid personally attended the openings of new institutions. He registered his children in one of the new schools with a Western curriculum, and publicly made it known.

The exhibits were loaded onto the steam-powered frigate *Feizi Bahri* on April 5, 1851,³⁹ which arrived in Southampton on April 26, and was the first Turkish steamship to visit England.⁴⁰ Although provinces were told to send the items by the end of February, and despite all the efforts of Ismail Pasha, the ship could not reach Southampton on time. Turkish products were put into the exhibition right after the opening of the Crystal Palace.⁴¹ The collection was accompanied by a group of official representatives from Turkey, including officers from the ministries of commerce and agriculture: Hisan Bey, Emin Bey, Nessip Bey, Vehbi Efendi, and Rifat Efendi; interpreters Yorgaki and Gadban; advocates, bankers and entrepreneurs such as members of the Camondo Family; professors from military and medicine schools; architects and engineers including Arakel and Mardiros Dadian; and Ambassador Mussurus Pasha.⁴² A group of the Ottoman representatives traveled all around Europe after their visit to London.⁴³ One member of the Balian Family, the son of the Imperial Architect Carabet, acting as the art advisor to Sultan Abd-ul-Mejid; and Cemaletdin Pasha, the brother-in-law of the Sultan, also were on board.⁴⁴ Besides the official representatives, there also were prominent members of the general public including artisans from different guilds.⁴⁵ Among them was Eflaki Ahmed Dede Efendi, who was financially supported by the government to exhibit the clock he made and then to go on to Paris to study industry.⁴⁶ Kostaki Mussurus Pasha, a member of the Mussurus family of Fener of Greek origin, would be one of the key figures in attendance at the following international exhibitions. The Dadians later acted as the head of the Tophane Artillery Factory in Istanbul, where they designed and manufactured several military items. *The Times* reported that the English people were surprised when they saw the way the Turks on the steamship were dressed. None of the members of the Turkish group on board wore anything resembling traditional Turkish costumes.⁴⁷

The Turkish Court in the Great Exhibition

What “industry” meant in 1851 is critical in interpreting the displays of the nineteenth century international exhibitions. “Industry” in the first half of the nineteenth century meant something quite different from what it means today. Both the classification system of the Great Exhibition and the Turkish exhibits overlap the term “industry”; described as organized economic activity concerned with the manufacture, extraction, and processing of raw materials, or construction.⁴⁸ Today, industry also is described as “a branch of commercial enterprise concerned with the output of a specified product or service.”⁴⁹ In parallel with this contemporary approach, Cole began his introduction to the “Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue” of the Great Exhibition of 1851 by declaring that the activity of the day chiefly develops itself in “commercial industry”; and it is in accordance with the spirit of the age that the

nations of the world have then collected together their choicest productions.⁵⁰ He did not limit “productions” to goods manufactured by machines, and used the broader phrase “commercial industry” to include any product of commercial value. Europe was at peace for almost forty years, and the Great Exhibition was a tribute to what could be accomplished if natural resources and mankind’s thinking were not devoted to war, but peace and commerce. Therefore, the exhibits were objects of all sorts of “productions with a commercial value,” and the products of exceptional craftsmanship were positioned next to products made by machines. Revealing the choices people had, the Great Exhibition did not prove that one form of production was better than another.⁵¹ Rather, it appreciated the progress made by industry and the intelligence of man in rendering useful raw materials, and molding its productions into forms of beauty as was stated by Hunt in his “The Science of the Exhibition.”⁵²

The Turkish Court was on the ground floor, in the Eastern Wing, next to Egypt, Persia, and Greece. It was close to the southern entrance and the Crystal Fountain, which was one of the attractions for visitors.⁵³ The space was organized under the direction of Zohrab and Major;⁵⁴ and was designed by the architect Gottfried Semper.⁵⁵ Semper was in London as a refugee from the 1848 revolution in Germany,⁵⁶ and he also was in charge of other courts including Egypt. The Turkish Court was an attempt by Semper to merge architecture and the exhibits to form an aesthetic unity that would clarify the ethnographic features of the products, and make the total entry more attractive to the general public.⁵⁷ Most of the exhibits were hung on the walls and placed on tables covered with fabric, resembling a Turkish Bazaar that lets the admirer touch what he sees. There also were robes, precious textile works, and fragile items displayed in plain showcases of glass and on wood panels. (Figure 1)

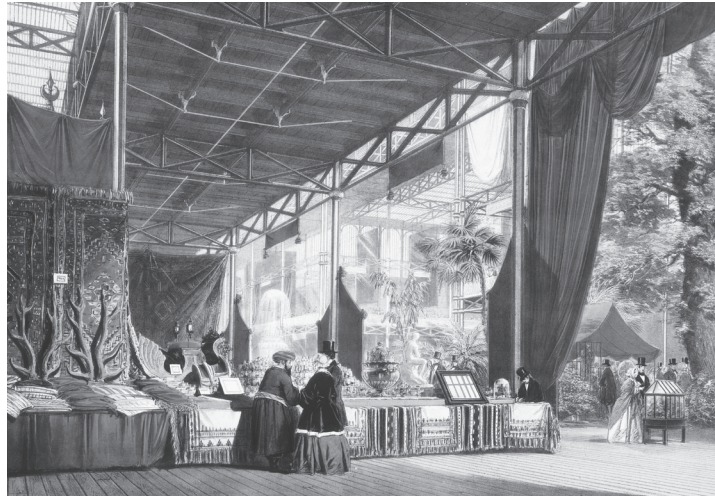
The main exhibits of Turkey were raw materials. Manufactured products included glassware, earthenware from

Figure 1
General view of the Turkish Court facing north.
From *Dickinson's Comprehensive Pictures of the Great Exhibition* (London: Dickinson Brothers, 1854). © V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Figure 2

Corner view of the Turkish Court facing the North Transept. From *Dickinson's Comprehensive Pictures of the Great Exhibition* (London: Dickinson Brothers, 1854). © V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

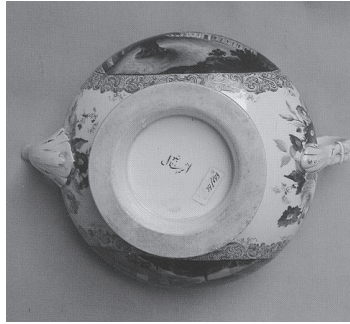


Kütahya and Tophane, copperware, woven and nonwoven fabrics, ready-to-wear clothing from Feshane, leather products, various embroidered garments, soft furniture, mattresses, cushions, rugs and carpets from western Anatolia, and baskets woven in various forms. Other items included silver and goldsmiths' products of different techniques and forms; along with metalsmiths' products such as gardening tools, hand tools, scissors for specific purposes, money safes, pistols, swords and scabbards, and Turkish bath and barber sets.⁵⁸ The process of manufacture did not constitute any part of the Turkish exhibition, although raw materials and end products were on display. The lack of "process display" may be related to the fact that "process" and "product" distinction of nineteenth century Western manufacturing was not established in Turkish industry. Turkish production was not based on rationalized and systematic knowledge. Therefore, "manufacturing process" did not constitute a separate category other than the product: production basically was based on traditional tacit knowledge, and had only begun to change. (Figure 2)

The exhibits depicted the product range and material artifacts of Turkish daily life, although some of them were custom-designed products involving great skill which were not in use by ordinary people. The craft productions were privately manufactured items, while a significant part of the products were manufactured by state-owned factories. The glass and porcelain-ware manufactured in the Beykoz Imperial Factory were exhibited in every nineteenth and early twentieth century exhibition attended. Prior to this factory, there were small workshops spread throughout Istanbul. These workshops were joined under one umbrella with the support of the Sultan in order to manufacture higher quality products. From then on, rationalization and process control became important. The Beykoz porcelain and glassware were manufactured with an "*Eser-i Istanbul*" stamp meaning "artwork of Istanbul," which was accepted as a guarantee of quality and was under official protection. "*Eser-i*

Figure 3

"Eser-i Istanbul" stamp on a porcelain teapot of the late nineteenth century in the Topkapı Palace Museum, Inventory No: 34/649.



Istanbul was one of the first Turkish trademarks. Beykoz porcelain and glassware of were designed in the Vienna and Saxony styles blended with Turkish taste, which generally were luxurious objects affording decorative functions. In addition, the Beykoz product range included designs for both specific and ordinary daily living habits and rituals. On the other hand, the ready-to-wear clothing of the Imperial Feshane Garment Factory is worth noting because of its rational manufacturing system using standardized sizes and plain designs for use by the Turkish public and soldiers. The manufactured items collected from all over Turkey were generally in use by wealthy people, while a small portion of these items included products within the reach of the ordinary man. (Figure 3)

Victorian heavy top, floral, and naturalistic ornamentation was one of the important elements of style widely represented by the countries in the Great Exhibition. Dense ornamentation also was one of the characteristics of nineteenth century Turkish products. A new style of ornamentation could be read in most of the manufactured objects and also the architecture of Turkey since the eighteenth century, mingling the Ottoman and Islamic tradition with the revivals and naturalism of the West. This new sense of ornamentation in the Turkish exhibits was not easily recognizable by foreign critics. Turkish products were portrayed as perfect, while they were criticized for being the result of a slow-gathered experience.⁵⁹ Turkey also was criticized for being far from science, for exhibiting "little or nothing adapted to the support and comfort of the masses"; and for being too "rich and aristocratic" together with China, Italy, and Austria in contrast to "those nations which are more free and have proportionally more articles on exhibition that are of service to the common people."⁶⁰

At the end of the exhibition, certain products received awards based on their "novelty, ingenuity, economy in cost and maintenance, durability, excellence of workmanship, fitness for purpose, new application of old principles, improved beauty of form, accuracy and certainty of performance, and beauty of design in form and color with reference to utility."⁶¹ Some of the Turkish products and institutions that received awards were the high-quality agricultural products and many handcrafted products such as home textiles and

the products of the Imperial Beykoz Glass and Porcelain Factory.⁶² The prize list also included the names of the makers, manufacturers, and workshops; enabling one to learn the individual producers of the time.

Reflections and Consequences of the Great Exhibition of 1851

From the very beginning, the Great Exhibition was accepted as a milestone, although the resulting stories it triggered could not be foreseen. The introduction to the illustrated catalogue of the Exhibition accepts it as the planted seed, of which the future is to produce the fruit.⁶³ In the meeting that launched the Great Exhibition of 1851, where a structural framework around which the exhibition could be organized was established, Prince Albert suggested “exhibition, competition, and encouragement” as the three reasons for organizing “a great collection of the works of industry and art in London.”⁶⁴ Turkish industry was far from being competitive in terms of manufacture, while the exhibition encouraged free trade, entrepreneurship, and new governmental regulations afterwards. The *Journal de Constantinople* reported that it was unfair to pretend that Turkey had to hold a rank superior to those countries of advanced industry in the Exhibition. However, the reporter anticipated that Turkey would benefit greatly from the efforts in entering such a new appeal to her.⁶⁵

Understandably, the reflections of the Exhibition had important consequences in Turkey. As already pointed out, a preexhibition was organized in Istanbul. This was the first “Turkish National Exhibition of Industry,” with certain visitors becoming entrepreneurs in the following years. According to the *Journal de Constantinople*,⁶⁶ more than a year before, Ismail Pasha already had planned to organize a national exhibition, but the circumstances were not favorable. This exhibition aimed to encourage the industry and commerce of Turkey with prizes for “beauty, perfection and, above all, *le bon marché*” to be given to those exhibits chosen by certain juries. After the exhibition in the Ministry of Commerce, Ismail Pasha again proposed the organization of yearly national exhibitions like the ones in France. But this time the main intention was exhibiting the beauty and the perfection of the whole production of the Empire to the entire public.⁶⁷ Limiting the audience to certain people in the Istanbul Grand Gallery Exhibition may have been related to the limited space and the shortage of time for the shipment to London. Ismail Pasha proposed that a forthcoming national exhibition had to be open to the public so that arts, agriculture, and industry could advance more rapidly. Combining the idea of progress with the concept of exhibition, in this case, can be counted as an ideal toward development in the Western mentality.

Turkey went on participating in the following European and American international exhibitions, and accelerated its industrialization and modernization. By the time of the European interna-

tional exhibitions that took place after the Great Exhibition of 1851, the Sultan Abd-ul-Mejid and later Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz had moved from the old Topkapı Palace to the Yıldız and the Dolmabahçe Palaces, respectively, which were Western in style and all dressed up with late nineteenth century infrastructure. During the reign of Abd-ul-Mejid, the Dolmabahçe Palace was not fully furnished.⁶⁸ A full shift to the use of Western furniture and products in daily palace life took place after Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz visited the Paris Exposition in 1867. Some of Abd-ul-Aziz's consultants already had visited the Great Exhibition, and were aware of the industrial novelties. In Paris, Abd-ul-Aziz ordered art pieces, furniture, and other products to decorate the new palaces. Afterwards, replicas, interpretations, and redesigns of these products according to the needs of the Turkish lifestyle were put into production in the workshops of the palace. In addition, consultants from Germany and England were employed in the imperial factories.

The Great Exhibition was a competition not only between products, but also among values.⁶⁹ Turkey was enthusiastic about exhibiting, since just participating in the exhibition was an important step in "Westernization." The cultural self-definition of Turkey during the nineteenth century is particularly interesting because of the struggle to balance Western modernization with traditional values. Many Muslim nations accepted European supremacy and attempted to remodel their institutions according to Western precedents. They were also in search for cultural identity under the strong impact of European paradigms. Because Europe represented the technologically advanced, "scientific" world, its "record" of another culture carried authority.⁷⁰ Cultural identity was much debated during the intense period of socio-cultural transformation that Turkey was experiencing. Two main issues were in dispute: first, maintaining the old cultural forms while adopting Western technology by incorporating new elements into local culture, and thereby creating an "evolutionary bridge" between the old and the new; or to evaluate and fundamentally redefine their self-identity according to Western views, and thus create a "revolutionary rupture" between the old and the new. The architectural representations of Turkey mostly belonged to the latter trend.⁷¹ On the other hand, the products used in daily life were divided into two opposing classes in the sense of "evolutionary" and "revolutionary" even in the discourse of everyday people: the "*alla Turca*" style represented the former, and the "*alla Franca*" style the latter. *Alla Turca* resembled "the traditional but the uncomfortable," and *alla Franca* "the Western and the comfortable," as the author Ahmet Mithat Efendi pointed out in his novel *Felâhât-ı Bey ve Râkım Efendi*. This essential contradiction was one of the main subjects of the new Turkish literature. Authors at the time developed characters of two opposite poles, surrounded by opposing cultural materiality in conflict with each other. Either the modern or the traditional character, and his life among his material

surroundings, were immoral according to the author's point of view. So the main debate was not the style, form, material, or design of products, but the tangible view of life, values, and meanings with which they were associated.

For a long time, Istanbulites went on living in an amalgam of "alla Turca" and "alla Franca." For example, the custom of taking pillows, mattresses, and other traditional soft furniture when moving seasonally to the Bosphorus now included Western consoles, armchairs, and sofas. There were one-month breaks in the use of alla Franca pieces during Ramadan. This is important in analyzing how people related the use of a certain artifact to certain meanings. The exhibits from Turkey were far from depicting these polarity struggles within Turkish Society. On the contrary, beyond such social issues, the image that the Sultan wanted to present was exclusively the wealth and courage of the Turkish Empire.

Reports in the Turkish press at the time refer to the Great Exhibition as "the Universal Exhibition," "the Glass Palace Exhibition," "the Crystal Palace Exhibition," or "the Clear Palace Exhibition." The local daily newspapers went on publishing articles about the preparations of both Britain and Turkey, the opening ceremony, and the exhibiting countries. The news was not only about people, countries, and the exhibits, but also about the building of the exhibition.

No word in the meaning of "design" can be found neither in the Turkish official documents nor press reports related to the exhibition. But beauty, perfection, shape, style, form, ornament, workmanship, craftsmanship, science, technique, and industry were terms that stood next to the comments on the exhibits in the local narratives.⁷² The Turkish crafts and products had incremental novelties in the way they were produced, and part of Turkish production comprised new material applications of old principles, while the mass manufacture of the imperial factories encompassed up-to-date systems of mechanization. But whether handcrafted or not, the conceptualization of production was far from questioning the relationship between art and industry, which was one of the central themes of the Great Exhibition. It is necessary to point out that, while the craftsmen were the designers and the makers of their products, the case in the imperial factories and workshops was a totally different story. High-craft products were appreciated within Turkish society. Mussurus Bey, the Turkish Ambassador in London, was ordered to sell the ordinary exhibits such as cereals even below the label prices, and to send back the authentic, handcraft products because British patrons could not understand their true value.⁷³

One of the aims of the Great Exhibition was to serve the reforms in the British design schools that Cole was in charge of, and also the vision he and Prince Albert shared which was unifying arts and production.⁷⁴ The last category of fine arts was mainly the result of these efforts, and it did not fit to the system of classifi-

cation symbolically representing the manufacturing process. Turkey did not exhibit any fine arts in the Western sense, although Sultan Abd-ul-Mejid himself was a calligraphy artist and a musician. Architectural drawings, oil paintings, photography, and sculpture, as well as natural history collections and archaeology from Turkey were exhibited for the first time in the 1867 Paris Exposition.⁷⁵

The Great Exhibition served well for participants to gather their wealth of nations and collect others as well. The governments of Britain and France, the Russian Czar, and the Turkish Sultan allocated considerable funds with which to buy educational specimens for the future national museums of industry, technology, and applied industrial art.⁷⁶ In fact, the Turkish minerals and natural products collection exhibited, together with the one bought in London, were to be submitted to the museum which the Ministry of Commerce proposed to found under the School of Agriculture.⁷⁷

Conclusion

The Great Exhibition of 1851 had significant impact on the early industrialization regulations and subsequent policies of the Turkish government. The Great Exhibition materialized in Turkey as the first public national exhibition of industry.⁷⁸ This first public exhibition took place in 1863 in Sultanahmet Square in Istanbul, and was known as "*Sergi-i Umumi Osmani*," meaning "The Public Ottoman Exhibition." The aim of the exhibition was to display the quality, range, variety, and the prices of the Turkish products, to diagnose the problems the manufacturers and producers faced, and to reward the successful ones. The first local tourism activities in Turkey were the organized tours to Istanbul to visit this exhibition.⁷⁹ The Istanbul Exhibition of 1863 was followed by others in Edirne, Bursa, and Izmir, which were important trade centers of Turkey.

According to the anthropologist Burton Benedict, human displays at the world's fairs were organized into national and racial hierarchies. Benedict summarized the classification of human types at the fairs as follows: (1) people as technicians, with a technician acting as part of a machine on display; (2) people as artisans, with an emphasis on tradition and ethnicity, as well as the "handmade" qualities of the products; (3) people as curiosities or freaks, with an emphasis on abnormal physiology and behavior; (4) people as trophies, most typically the conquered displayed by the conqueror in special enclosures; and (5) people as specimens or scientific objects, the subjects of anthropological and ethnographic research.⁸⁰ According to this classification scheme, the Turkish exhibits mostly were the products of artisans falling into group two, while the people of the industrial revolution such as Britain, Germany, and France formed the first group. At the time of the exhibition, the difference between "British" and "the other" was expressed regularly in the British press from different points of view. The English, celebrated for their industry, fell into Benedict's first group; while the Indians were

described as poor and simple; and Turks as a fine and handsome race of people, very grave and sensible except when they were angry.⁸¹

As it is to other exhibiting countries, the 1851 Exhibition was a beginning to create “the concept of displaying a nation” on the international level. Turkish representation at this exhibition, compared to its exhibits at the following nineteenth century European international exhibitions, was weak in terms of underlining the participation of Ottoman culture in world civilization. In the following European and American nineteenth century international exhibitions, the universal qualities of Ottoman architecture were emphasized to show how they might be incorporated into the repertoire of contemporary architecture; and artistic and industrial products often were presented with a similar intent: to link the Turkish Empire to the European community.⁸²

Finally, Turkey’s participation in the first international exhibition in 1851 was an inevitable and a remarkable event, both for the imperial family and Turkish society. From a foreigner’s perspective, it highlighted not the new Western dimensions of the Turkish society, but only the country’s craft tradition and her desire to become industrialized. From a domestic perspective, the exhibition provoked critical self-examination and reassessment, both in terms of production systems and the products of industry, and the national identity.

1 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital, 1848–1875* (London: Abacus, Time Warner Book Group, 2004), 47.
2 These exhibitions were a medium of national expression, and were known in Britain as Great Exhibitions; in France as Expositions Universelles; and in the U.S. as World’s Fairs. See, Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas—The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World’s Fairs, 1851–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 215.
3 *Ibid.*, 3.
4 Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 1.
5 The exhibition was really a success in its time in terms of being the first “international.” Governments were invited to take part through diplomatic channels. See Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 12.

6 The term means reorganization, resembling a period of reformation that lasted from 1839 to 1876.
7 The ultranationalist economic approach to Ottoman history always has blamed the nineteenth century commercial treaties signed with European powers as the reason for the “underdevelopment” of the “dependency.” This scenario, with its xenophobic hint and backed by the dependency paradigm of Marxism as well as nationalist historiography, has been looking for a scapegoat for modern Middle Eastern history in the commercial treaties of the mid-nineteenth century, and mainly the 1838 Anglo-Ottoman Commercial Convention. For further background, see Zafer Toprak, “The Ottoman Realities and Economic Mind in the Age of Nation State (1839–1914),” (The University of Athens Doctoral Program in Economics Monday Economic History Seminars 2004/2005), (accessed August 18, 2006 at www.econ.uoa.gr/UA/files/811318924.pdf).

8 The Empire extended to the Balkans, Anatolia, Syria, Tunisia, and Egypt at the end of the eighteenth century. Greece already had her independence in 1832, although some regions that belong to Greece today were still under the rule of the Ottomans; such as Thessalonica, where many manufacturers from there exhibited their products.
9 Sevkett Pamuk, *History of Economics Ottoman-Turkey in 100 Questions, 1550–1914* (Istanbul: Gerçek Press, 1988), 151–160. (Turkish)
10 *Ibid.*, 160–185.
11 The Crimean War lasted from March 1853 until April 1856, and was fought between Imperial Russia on the one side and an alliance of the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Second French Empire, the Kingdom of Sardinia, and the Ottoman Empire on the other. Most of the conflict took place on the Crimean Peninsula in the Black Sea, with military engagements also occurring in western Turkey, the Baltic Sea region, and in the Pacific Ocean.

- 12 Sevket Pamuk, *History of Economics Ottoman-Turkey in 100 Questions, 1550–1914*, 151–185.
- 13 Zafer Toprak, "The Ottoman Realities and Economic Mind in the Age of Nation State (1839–1914)": 4.
- 14 Abd-ul-Mejid; 31st sultan of the empire, son of reformist Mahmud the Second, and Bezmialem Sultan; ruled between 1839 and 1861. He is the father of the last four Ottoman sultans.
- 15 *Ceride-i Havadis*, September 1, 1850 (24 Za 1266). The dates in parenthesis in the endnotes are the original dates on the documents, according to the calendar used in Turkey until 1925.
- 16 The fez is a red felt hat in the shape of a truncated cone, and popularized in the Turkey in the nineteenth century.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 92.
- 18 *Journal de Constantinople*, March 9, 1851.
- 19 Robert Hunt, "The Science of the Exhibition," *Art Journal, Illustrated Catalogue of 1851* (London: Published for the proprietors by Georg Virtue, 1851): I-XVI, p.XIV.
- 20 *Ceride-i Havadis*, September 1, 1850 (24 Za 1266).
- 21 See Nikolaus Pevsner, *High Victorian Design: A Study of the Exhibits of 1851* (London: Architectural Press, 1951), 61.
- 22 Robert Hunt, "The Science of the Exhibition," and *Times* (April 24, 1851) reports that the Turkish shipment included 4,870 items.
- 23 Pieter van Wesemael, *Architecture of Instruction and Delight—A Socio-historical Analysis of World Exhibitions as a Didactic Phenomenon (1798–1851–1970)* (Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010, 2001), 699.
- 24 Document A.MKT.MHM 56-29, January 21, 1851 (18 Ra 1267), at the archives of the Prime Ministry of the Turkish Republic (PMTR).
- 25 Doc. A.MKT.NZD 30-98, April 1, 1851 (28 Ca 1267), at PMTR.
- 26 Doc. A.MKT.MHM 26-46, December 27, 1850 (22 S 1267), at PMTR. This document is about a letter that informs Dersaadet (Istanbul) about the collection of the exhibits for London, sent from the Governors of Saida and Tripoli to the Ministry of Commerce. Another document about Tripoli ref. numbered A.MKT.MHM 27-34, January 16, 1851 (13 Ra 1267) at PMTR, orders the governors to send the collected items immediately before February.
- 27 Doc. A.MKT.MHM 26-77, January 3, 1851 (29 S 1267), at PMTR.
- 28 According to the letter written to the Governor of Konya, the exhibits collected there were to be sent immediately to Dersaadet (Istanbul), Doc. A.MKT.MHM 27-53, January 20, 1851 (17 Ra 1267), at PMTR.
- 29 Doc. A.MKT.MHM 27-80, January 24, 1851 (21 Ra 1267), at PMTR.
- 30 Doc. A.MKT.MHM 28-24, January 31, 1851 (28 Ra 1267), at PMTR.
- 31 Doc. A.MKT.MHM 29-14, February 17, 1851 (15 R 1267), at PMTR. This document is about a letter from Eflak Governor Esteri Bey, written in French, that says the shipment of the items is complete, and the items are to be delivered by the Head of Commerce.
- 32 Doc. A.MKT.MHM 29-81, March 17, 1851 (03 Ca 1267), at PMTR.
- 33 Doc. A.MKT.MHM 28-68, February 10, 1851 (08 R 1267), at PMTR.
- 34 Doc. A.MKT.MHM 27-76, January 23, 1851 (20 Ra 1267), at PMTR.
- 35 Today, Halep is in Syria, and Filibe is the Turkish name for Plovdiv in Bulgaria. Tirhala is the Turkish name for Trikala in Thessaly, and Yanya refers to Janina, a city of Epirus; both in Greece today. Saida is in Lebanon and Tripoli in Libya. Eflak was the name for southern Romania, and Vidin is a town on the southern bank of the Danube in northwestern Bulgaria.
- 36 *Journal de Constantinople*, March 9, 1851.
- 37 *Ceride-i Havadis*, March 24, 1851 (21 Ca 1267), *Journal de Constantinople* (March 24, 1851).
- 38 *Ibid.*
- 39 Doc. A.MKT.MHM 29-64, March 5, 1851 (01 Ca 1267), and doc. A.MKT.NZD 43-70, 05/03/1851 (01 Ca 1267), at PMTR.
- 40 *Times* (April 27, 1851).
- 41 Rifat Önsoy, "The Exhibitions the Ottoman Empire Attended and 1863 Istanbul Exhibition," *Belleten: Turkish History Journal* 197:185 (1983): 195–235 (Turkish). See also Semra Germaner, "Attendance of the Ottoman Empire into International Exhibitions and Its Cultural Results," *History and Society* 95 (1991): 290 (Turkish).
- 42 Mussurus Pasha was the London ambassador of the Ottoman Empire in 1851. See Ilber Ortaylı, *The Longest Century of the Empire* (Istanbul: İletisim Press, 1999), 229.
- 43 Doc. A.MKT.NZD 30-101, March 28, 1851 (24 Ca 1267), and Doc. A.MKT.MHM 29-13, 20/02/1851 (18 R 1267), at PMTR.
- 44 Carabet's other son Sarkis, who is an important architect of the nineteenth century Istanbul, participated in the second Great Exhibition of 1862 with a steam machine and a pressure caldrone with safety vent for which he holds British patents. See Pars Tuglacı, *The Role of the Balian Family in Ottoman Architecture* (Istanbul: Yeni Çığır Bookstore Press, 1990), 42.
- 45 Doc. HR.MKT. 83-47, August 16, 1854 (22 ZA 1270), at PMTR.
- 46 Doc. A.MHT.MHM 32-100, May 30, 1851 (28/B/1267), at PMTR.
- 47 *Times* (April 27, 1851).
- 48 See John Black, *Dictionary of Economics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) and Graham Bannock, *The Penguin Dictionary of Economics* (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1992).
- 49 *Ibid.*
- 50 *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851: Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue* (London: Spicer Brothers, 1851), 1.
- 51 Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display*, 125.
- 52 Robert Hunt, "The Science of the Exhibition," *Art Journal, Illustrated Catalogue of 1851*: I.
- 53 See Artemis Yagou, "Facing the West: Greece in the Exhibition of 1851," *Design Issues* 19:4 (Autumn 2003): 86.
- 54 Semra Germaner, "Attendance of the Ottoman Empire into International Exhibitions and Its Cultural Results": 290.

- 55 Pieter van Wesemael, *Architecture of Instruction and Delight—A Socio-historical Analysis of World Exhibitions as a Didactic Phenomenon (1798–1851–1970)*, 176.
- 56 Nikolaus Pevsner, *High Victorian Design: A Study of The Exhibits of 1851*, 32.
- 57 Pieter van Wesemael, *Architecture of Instruction and Delight—A Socio-historical Analysis of World Exhibitions as a Didactic Phenomenon (1798–1851–1970)*, 176.
- 58 See Semra Germaner, *Official Catalogue of the Great Exhibition*, Robert Hunt, and *Ceride-i Havadis*, etc.
- 59 Robert Hunt, “The Science of the Exhibition”: XIV.
- 60 William Allen Drew, 1798–1879 *Glimpses and Gatherings During a Voyage and Visit to London and the Great Exhibition in the Summer of 1851* (Augusta: Homan & Manley; Boston: Abel Tompkins, 1852), 356–359.
- 61 Charles Harvard Gibbs-Smith, Victoria and Albert Museum: The Great Exhibition of 1851 (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1981), 17.
- 62 *Ceride-i Havadis*, November 11, 1851 (17 M 1268).
- 63 Preface, *Art Journal, Illustrated Catalogue of 1851* (London: Published for the Proprietors by Georg Virtue: 1851), viii.
- 64 Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display*, 14–23.
- 65 *Journal de Constantinople* (March 9, 1851).
- 66 *Journal de Constantinople* (March 24, 1851).
- 67 *Journal de Constantinople* (March 24, 1851).
- 68 Necdet Sakaoglu, “Lives in the New Palaces” in *MS History, Culture, Art and Architecture* (Ankara: TBMM Press, 1999), 26–47. (Turkish)
- 69 Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display*, 94.
- 70 Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 10.
- 71 *Ibid.*, 57.
- 72 The word “sanayi,” which has the same root as “artifice,” meaning “industry.” “Sanayi” included arts, artifacts, and the artificial world.
- 73 Doc. A.MKT.MVL 49-39, January 8, 1852 (15 Ra 1268), at PMTR. To reduce transportation expenses, instead of sending the shipment on a ship of the Empire, the ambassador was told to send them on the ships that were traveling to Istanbul.
- 74 Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display*, 23.
- 75 Gülname Turan, “A Gaze into Turkish Participation in the International Exhibitions and Universal Expositions of 19th Century Europe,” *Pride and Pre-Design: The Cultural Heritage and the Science of Design*, Proceedings of the 2nd International Meeting (Lisbon: IADE - Instituto de Artes Visuais Design e Marketing, May 2005): 389–394.
- 76 Pieter van Wesemael, *Architecture of Instruction and Delight—A Socio-historical Analysis of World Exhibitions as a Didactic Phenomenon (1798–1851–1970)*, 203.
- 77 *Journal de Constantinople* (March 9, 1851).
- 78 The Great Exhibition often triggered national exhibitions. See the case for Greece in Artemis Yagou, “Facing the West: Greece in the Exhibition of 1851”, 90. See also Timo Sarpaneva, *Finnish Design 1875–1975: 100 years of Finnish Industrial Design: Finnish Society of Craft and Design* (Helsinki: Otava Publishing Co., 1975), 21–29.
- 79 Zafer Toprak, “Tourism Endeavors in Istanbul” Ottoman Bank Achieve and Research Center Lecture Days (accessed October 24, 2006 at www.obarsiv.com/etkinlik_vct_0304_zafert_turizm.html) (Turkish).
- 80 Burton Benedict, “The Anthropology of World’s Fairs” in *The Anthropology of World’s Fairs*, (London and Berkeley: 1983), 2 and 43–45, quoted in Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient*, 20.
- 81 See Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display*, 167.
- 82 Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient*, 12.