



BRILL

MIDDLE EAST JOURNAL OF CULTURE AND
COMMUNICATION 16 (2023) 229–257



brill.com/mjcc

Sacred (re)Collections

Culture, Space and Boundary Negotiation in Turkish-Islamic Memory Politics

Torsten Janson | ORCID: 0000-0002-0565-8069

Lund University, Lund, Sweden

torsten.janson@ctr.lu.se

Neşe Kınıkoğlu | ORCID: 0000-0002-6074-5261

Istanbul Medeniyet University, Istanbul, Turkey

nese.kinikoglu@medeniyet.edu.tr

Abstract

This article discusses how state-organized, memory-cultural production drawing on religious signifiers contributes to a sacralization of Turkish public memory institutions and public space. This reinforces an Islamic-nationalist imagination of contemporary Turkey. The article explores state-led, disciplinary interventions in museal space (the Sacred Trusts exhibition of relics at Topkapı Palace Museum) and commemorative ritual in public space, display and education (the rise, fall and recalibration of Holy Birth Week (Kutlu Doğum Haftası)). Drawing on theories of symbolic politics, nationalism, memory and space, the article elucidates the sacralization of Turkish memory production as a contesting yet malleable negotiation of nationalism. Innovative Islamic memory practice and ritualization requires careful discursive and disciplinary boundary drawing, catering to theological sensitivities and Sunni-orthodox mores. Then again, the spatial boundaries between various memory-cultural domains are becoming less distinct. Today, Islamic-nationalist imaginaries surface in the interstices of public memory institutions, public education and everyday public space.

Keywords

Turkey – Islam – nationalism – memory – symbolic politics – sacralization

1 Turkish Nationalism and the Politics of Sacralization

Religion has become distinctly present in Turkish public institutions and public space during the past decades, in terms of political discourse as well as cultural and ritual visibility. President Erdoğan's commitment to 'raise a pious generation' (*Hürriyet* 2012) has manifested in several reforms and political initiatives, not least in the educational sphere. The ban on headscarves has gradually been lifted from public schools, universities and other state institutions (Özcan 2019: 62). The establishment of religious vocational schools (*imam hatip*) has increased sharply, rising to more than five thousand in 2019 (*Milliyet* 2019). Recent educational reform has increased the role of religion in public education and strengthened the focus on Ottoman history and language (Tokdoğan 2018), stirring critical debate (Tremblay 2016; Bursalı 2017). And these state politics have evolved alongside a booming commercial market for commodities appealing to an (imagined) Islamic/Ottoman past, in competition with a secularist commodification of memory (Navaro-Yashin 2002; Kandiyoti and Saktanber 2002; Ergin and Karakaya 2017).

Such processes feed into a memory-political contest of Turkish nationalism. The Ottoman-Islamic past, systematically obscured in Kemalist historiography, has become central in the construction of an alternative, hegemonic national identity (White 2014; Tokdoğan 2018). Turkey is imagined in continuity with the Ottoman past, contesting the secularist depiction of the Turkish Republic as a break with history (Çınar 2005; Koyuncu 2014).

Today, state-led commemorative practices reinvent the Ottoman past in nostalgic celebrations of the Islamic and imperial legacy of Turkey. Over the last two decades, new state museums have been established to construct and display a glorious, multicultural and religious Ottoman past, for example Miniatürk and the 1453 Panorama Museum (Hand 2013; Koyuncu 2014; Tokdoğan 2018; Yılmaz and Uysal 2007; Janson forthcoming). Istanbul Day, an annual commemoration of the conquest of the city on May 29, has become an alternative national day (Çınar 2005), more spectacularly celebrated than any republican equivalent (Bozoğlu 2020: 107). Celebrations have taken an increasingly Islamic and ritual character, marked with Quran recitations in Ayasofya (Hagia Sophia), along with festive events in the public (*Anadolu Agency* 2020). This, in turn, has brought new fuel to the longstanding debates on the status of Ayasofya (and Chora museum). Developments reached their apex (or nadir) with the official decision to revert Ayasofya into a formal mosque, during the summer of 2020 (*BBC News* 2020).

Then again, the appeal to 'Islamic values' and an Ottoman past hardly signifies any wholesale rejection of the secularity of the state. To the contrary,

the crafting of Islamic-nationalist imaginations serves to legitimize and differentiate a neoconservative and neoliberal politico-economic order within the confines of secular republicanism (Tuğal 2009). In this context, we argue, the cultural production of Islamic memory plays a significant role.

Despite the academic interest in religious aspects of Turkish (and Middle Eastern) politics during past decades, less attention has been devoted to the symbolic and cultural aspects (Tepe 2008; Khatib 2012; Wolfgram 2015). In the Turkish context, little work has explored the crafting of Islamic-political imaginations on a state level, analyzing cultural memory production and ritualization in empirical detail (for notable exceptions, c.f. Çınar 2005; Kandiyoti and Saktanber 2006; Özyürek 2007; Karahasan 2015; Bozoğlu 2020). There is a particular need for studies of the didactics of Islamic memory-cultural practice, in visual and spatial representation. How is the past narrated and ritualized? Under what auspices and according to what ideological and theological considerations? How far can ritual practices 'bend' in the interest of mobilization and appeal to young (and not so young) audiences?

In order to discuss such questions, this article analyzes the spatial appropriation and (re)sacralization of Topkapı Palace, which was turned into a museum with the 1923 proclamation of the secular Turkish Republic. Secondly, we explore the ritual practices and memory-cultural displays of the invented tradition (Hobsbawm 1983) of Holy Birth Week (*Kutlu Doğum Haftası*), commemorating Prophet Muhammad in public and centralized celebrations since 1989.¹ And thirdly, we discuss how these memory-cultural domains recently have come to merge, as memory institutions extend their boundaries to encompass urban public space and the educational sphere of the classroom. The article partly relies on interviews with museum staff, documentation and observations in Topkapı Palace Museum (2012–2019);² partly on policy documents, ministry statements, educational resources and debates in news media (2010–2020).

We argue that spatial and visual aspects of Islamic memory-cultural production are essential for the crafting of an Islamic-Turkish nationalism. State museums and centralized ritual commemorations not only challenge Kemal-

1 *Kutlu Doğum Haftası* literally translates into 'Blessed Birth Week'. Turkish international media outlets have however translated it with 'Holy Birth Week', a translation we adapt here. In 2017, the celebrations were reconceptualized and reorganized as 'Mevlidi Nebi', the processes behind which we shall analyze below.

2 Neşe Kınıkoğlu carried out interviews and observations at Topkapı Palace Museum from 2012 to 2013. Torsten Janson did observations at the museum at six occasions, once before the 2007 reorganization and on five occasions from 2012 to 2019.

ist historiography, they contribute to a broader, visual-ritual sacralization of the Turkish public space and cultural sphere. They anchor Islamic-nationalist imaginations in institutional memory. And they bolster educational reform with ritual performance and bodily practice. All the same, inventive ritual and cultural practices require careful boundary drawing, catering to theological sensitivities. Didactic instrumentality is negotiated vis-à-vis principles of 'sound' religion. Boundaries are drawn and redrawn. The sacralization of Turkish public institutions and space through Islamic memory-cultural production hence does not occur once and for all, but surfaces as a dynamic and malleable process.

2 Symbolic Politics, Nationalist Memory and Spatial Practice

What are the political functions of state-organized, Islamic memory-cultural production in contemporary Turkey? In order to unpack this question, we will take our point of departure in a juxtaposition of theories of symbolic politics, nationalism, memory and space. We here theorize politics as a symbolically expressed public negotiation process of communitarian and national values (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996: 7). Political legitimacy depends on the catching, negotiation and forging of public *imaginations*. Political cultural production, accordingly, crafts visual and spatial *imageries* by manipulating and managing systems of signification (Wedeen 1999). In such processes, institutional memory production and public ritual play significant roles.

As noted in studies of nationalism, representations of the past are central for political imaginations in the present (Anderson 1983; Hobsbawm 1983; Connerton 1989; Langenbacher, Niven and Wittlinger 2015). Any claim to 'nationness' includes contested processes and references to contingent events (Brubaker 1996). As such, national imaginations rely on the remembering or forgetting of shared glories/traumas of the past (Anderson 1983; Özyürek 2007; Haugbolle 2010; Dorroll forthcoming). Nationalism resembles religion, Benedict Anderson points out, in forging 'links between the dead and the yet unborn' (Anderson 1983: 11): nations are imagined as founded in an immemorial past, on the course toward an endless future.

Nationalist rhetoric shares another characteristic with religion, Paul Connerton observes, in its reliance on ritualized memory practice. Images of the past are not only inscribed in cultural traditions and interpreted intellectually: they are conveyed and sustained through performance (Connerton 1989: 4). Commemorative ritual in bodily practice renders memory socially tangible and institutionally solid (Connerton 1989: 72; Duncan 2005). And conversely, when

political mobilization draws on collectively remembered events in the past and familiar ritual formulae, this resonates with popular-historical memory and institutional practice. In this sense, the past provides social forms, interpretive frames as well as ulterior motivations, susceptible to appropriation in the political present (Chelkowski and Dabashi 1999; Eickelman and Piscatori 1996). Then again, precisely as a result of such resonances, innovative forms for religious commemoration are sensitive matters. They (intentionally or unintentionally) challenge doctrinal ideas and ritual practices as established in orthodoxy—or other domains of theological opinion. Thus, ritual-cultural inventiveness inherently questions religious boundaries—triggering mechanisms of boundary maintenance (Van der Veer 1994: 11; Janson 2012).

Public memory institutions are central to the ideological defining and branding of the past. Here we aim to explore how a state appropriates, strategizes and organizes public memory institutions and ritual practices, in the construction and contest of nationalist imaginations. As such, national memories are commodities on a memory market (Wolfgang 2015), produced and consumed in scriptural, visual and ritual transactions. Memory agents professionally *make* history (Gudehus 2007), and often so in the hands of political stakeholders, benefactors and commercial interests (Barrett 2011). The past is a ‘pool of resources’ (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996: 29), available for the production of memory dictated by contemporary political agendas and (aesthetic, historical, scientific) discourses. Carol Duncan put it well: ‘In the museum, art history displaces history ...’ (Duncan 1991: 92).

But national memory culture not only defines (and idealizes/traumatizes) the past worthy of (re)collection and public display. It spatially and symbolically appropriates public cultural institutions and spaces, through processes of negotiation and contest (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1988; Chelkowski and Dabashi 1999). Memory institutions *spatialize* the past through distinct choices of organization and representation (Duncan 1991; Barrett 2011).

To extrapolate on Henri Lefebvre (1974/1991): nationalist memory culture not only (re)collects ‘things in space’—it produces ‘national space’ itself. To display artefacts or to ritually commemorate the past *in* space constructs conceptual definitions *of* space (Lefebvre 1974/1991: 29; Çınar and Bender 2007). Lefebvre identifies three ‘moments’ in the production of space: (1) concrete spatial practices; (2) the representations of space (by politicians and planners); and (3) the perception (and symbolization) of space in lived experience (Lefebvre 1974/1991: 26–46). The interrelation of these three moments poses important questions. What occupies the interstices between political representations of space and its symbolization in visual display or religious practice? Whether answered in terms of ‘culture’, ‘artistic creativity’ or ‘imagination’, this raises

questions of *how*, *why*, *by whom* and *for whom* (Lefebvre 1974/1991: 43). Hence, the political function of memory practice boils down to a metanarrative question: *why* should the past be remembered, displayed or ritualized, and under what auspices (Gudehus 2007)?

To summarize our theoretical and methodological approach: in order to understand the role of Islamic memory-cultural production in contemporary Turkish nationalism, we explore the didactic crafting, negotiation and disciplinary bounding of state-run memory practice. *How* do Islamic memory-cultural processes contribute to a sacralization of Turkish public institutions and spaces? Under what *auspices*; and through what *visual-ritual spatializations*? *Why* and *for whom* are Islamic imaginations forged, in pursuit of what communitarian ‘needs’ and political purposes? Finally, in relation to what theological *sensitivities* are practices of sacralization negotiated? With such questions in mind, the following sections explore the Sacred Trusts section of Topkapı Palace Museum and the celebrations (and controversies) of Holy Birth Week.

3 Disciplining (re)Collections: the Sacred Trusts of Topkapı Palace Museum

Topkapı Palace Museum is the very nucleus of Islamic-Ottoman memory. The palace was the administrative heart of the Ottoman Empire and crucial for the Ottoman claim on the Caliphate. In (de facto) lieu of genealogical links to the Prophet’s dynasty (Hjärpe 2008),³ the Ottomans forged (Sunni) religio-political legitimacy as the Custodian of the Two Holy Sites of Mecca and Medina; protection of the pilgrimage; military campaigns against the (Shiite) Persian Empire; and patronage of Islamic arts and sciences.

Of particular importance for the symbolic representation of legitimacy were the Islamic artefacts and relics⁴ dispatched to Istanbul from Mecca, Medina and Cairo in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, after the Ottoman victory over the Mamluk dynasty in 1517. The guardianship of the relics had been bestowed upon the caliphs and the governor of Mecca after the Prophet’s death. As vestiges of the Prophet as well as the holy lands (Wheeler 2006), the relics

3 The Ottomans no less claimed descent from the Prophet (and further back to the first human being and prophet, Adam), as illustrated by the many *Silsilenames* (Books of Genealogy) produced from the 16th century.

4 We here understand ‘relics’ in its emic sense, as artifacts considered sacred and/or authentic according to institutional representation.

were held to carry divine blessings (*baraka*), emanating to owners as well as viewers. The possession of the sacred items hence positioned the Ottomans not only as the legitimate heirs to the caliphate, but as guardians of the Prophet's salvific 'presence' in the world. The collection was kept in the palace, conceptualized as the Sacred Trusts (*Emanet-i Mukaddesi*), the centerpieces of which were the Prophet's Holy Mantle (*Hirka-i Saadet*) and Noble Banner (*Sancak-ı Şerif*), paraded in imperial ceremony and military campaigns.

After the 1923 proclamation of the Turkish Republic, Topkapı Palace was turned into a museum. Buildings of the palace were converted into exhibition halls, displaying belongings of the sultans as isolated objects, in chronological order. Thus, the museumification of Topkapı Palace signified the fall of the Empire and its replacement by the modern, secular Republic (Shaw 2003: 43; Karahasan 2015: 95). Accordingly, the relics section remained closed until 1962, illustrating the public obscurity of Islam under Kemalist rule (Shaw 2010: 129). Once opened, the collection was presented along a secular taxonomy, as desacralized, politically insignificant artefacts of (at best) historical and artistic value (Yücel 1982: 9; Duncan 2005). Hence the collection was institutionally dis-embedded (Zubaida 2011: 3) from its politico-religious significance.

Since the 1990s, however, Topkapı Palace Museum has been re-embedded into a religio-political framework, appealing to the Ottoman past. This has partly taken shape in museum practices that commemorate individual sultans, 'founding moments' in the Ottoman past (e.g., Istanbul Day), and religious as well as culinary days (e.g., Muharram Day, Miraj, Baklava Day). The museum also highlights Ottoman 'palace traditions' (Dursun 2014), re-animating the palace gardens through parades and musical performances in historical costumes and horse-back archery shows (Karahasan 2015: 214–224). Temporary, thematic exhibits are arranged side by side with attractively reorganized, affective and multisensory displays of the permanent collections. In line with trends in global museology (Harrison 2005; Classen 2017), the nostalgic orchestration of 'Ottoman traditions' hence has taken a distinctly theatrical character.

Yet, entertainment and theatrical ritualization go hand in hand with a more solemn appeal to religious sentiment and historical-political imaginations. The Sacred Trusts section has metaphorized into a quasi-sacred space through curatorial and disciplinary interventions. The consecutive reorganizations of 1997 and 2007 signify a metanarrative shift in the very definition of the museum as a memory site. This shift was enacted through careful boundary maintenance. The reorganizations of memory space have balanced an affective appeal to sacred historiography with narrative, architectural, visual, aural as well as bodily discipline, in order to ensure (allegedly) proper, Sunni Islamic, orthodox mores.

With the 1997 reorganization, the exhibition was expanded with additional belongings of the Prophet as well as historical artefacts from the Kaba sanctuary. The objects were placed in free-standing display units, yet without any coherent, thematic framework. A second change was the introduction of around-the-clock Quran recitation in the first hall of the relics department, reconnecting to Ottoman practices. For this purpose, a telephone-booth-sized box was provided for the reciting imam close to the entry of the exhibit.

However, the enhanced sacrosanct atmosphere of the exhibit brought unintended consequences. The items sometimes became subject to 'unwarranted' veneration, when visitors tried to touch and kiss the display units (just as had been practice in devotional practice of the Ottoman court). As one security guard put it: some visitors seemed to consider the visit as a 'semi-pilgrimage'. Most members of the museum staff, according to our interviews, consider this as incompatible with 'true Islam' and stemming from 'illiteracy' and 'local Islamic practices'. Such concerns triggered the 2007 reorganization, when new and deeper display cases were installed, aimed at curbing 'tomb like scenes', to quote the curator. Hence the second reorganization established physical as well as affective boundaries between visitors and relics, in pursuit of 'sound' Islamic principles—and notably so in (partial) reversal of Ottoman precedence.

While such measures were taken to limit 'over-zealous', ritualistic behavior, the second reorganization actually emphasized the sacred character of the section in other respects. Instruction texts were placed by the entry (and on the website), requesting visitors to observe a 'modest' dress code and to 'refrain from entering the Sacred Relics Department with shorts, mini-skirts, tank-tops or strapless clothes' (*Milliyet* 2018). The sacred ambience was also literally amplified with a new sound system, augmenting the Quran recitation as 'background music' for the entire exhibition, to quote the architect. The 'recital box' of 1997 had proved problematic. Sometimes visitors attempted to open it to figure out what went on inside. The 2007 reorganization solved the problem by providing a desk close to the exit, behind which the imam recites the Quran in real time. He is flanked by plasma screens, displaying the Quranic text in Arabic, as well as in Turkish and English translation (Fig. 1). The physical presence of the reciting imam and the transcriptions serve to tie down the 'background music' to formal ritual practice and textuality. More than a quaint soundscape, this is the Divine Revelation, the arrangement indicates.

Among the most significant changes in the 2007 reorganization was the crafting of a historiographical narrative, through didactic, architectural, textual and visual means. Each of the three halls of the exhibit were devoted to a theme, communicated in information texts, but also through implicit subtexts appealing to Islamic rituals and popular traditions. The first exhibition



FIGURE 1 Quran recitation, 2007 reorganization
PHOTOGRAPH BY NEŞE KINIKOĞLU

hall displays the theme of 'Mecca'. It revolves around the Kaba sanctuary, with its double significance as the birthplace of Islamic creed and the symbolic-ritual center of Islamic worship (recalled in daily prayer and in pilgrimage). The section contains monumental Kaba doors and draining pipes, keys and locks to the sanctuary and the golden cases of the Black Stone of the Kaba.⁵ The visitors hence symbolically enter the very cradle of humankind and monotheism, on a journey toward the present.

Of particular interest for the boundary maintenance in this section is a miniature model of the Kaba itself, placed in a glass casing in front of a monumental photo of the Mecca sanctuary. According to tradition, the pious Sultan Ahmad I (1590–1603) had used this model in (highly unorthodox) circumambulation, mimicking the ritual of *tavaf* during pilgrimage (Diker 2015: 28; Necipoğlu 1986). In face of the concerns that visitors similarly may venerate it as a 'Kaba Junior', the architect placed the display case in a location preventing

5 According to Islamic tradition, the 'Black Stone' is a piece of the altar built by Adam, the first human being (and prophet).

circumambulation. He also chose to illustrate 'sound' ritual practice by placing the model on sand, in which circles were drawn. The solution establishes boundaries through the bodily disciplining of visitors, as well as the graphic illustration of 'proper' *tavaf*, symbolically 'locating' the model in Mecca. And again, notions of the 'proper' is defined in opposition to Ottoman 'illicit' practice.

The second hall displays the theme of 'The Abrahamic religions', illustrated with relics and artefacts of earlier prophets: the sword of Davud (David), the staff of Musa (Moses), the bowl of Ibrahim (Abraham), the turban of Yusuf (Joseph), and the relics of Yahya's (John the Baptist) hand and arm. But here we also find the golden footprint from Prophet Muhammad's mysterious Night Journey (*isra*) and Ascension (*mi'raj*). According to the architect, this section aims to convey that all prophets are united in the singularity of God, emphasizing the material reflection of this singularity. The *profane* objects represent the role of the prophets in *sacred* history. This distinction is reflected in the didactic framing of the artefacts. On the one hand, the display employs dramatic visuals to create an atmosphere of sanctity. For instance, the staff of Musa is staged against a desert-like rock formation and a burning fire, recalling the tradition of God's manifestation for the prophet on Mount Sinai. On the other hand, the information texts establish the objects' 'facticity', through (quasi)historical, geographic and biographical 'data' about the prophets.

Such measures may have been devised to underscore monotheistic singularity. No less, it establishes the superiority of Islam—epitomized by the didactic choice of placing Muhammad's footprint in this section. The Prophet's Night Journey and ensuing Ascension through the heavens not only associates Muhammad with the former prophets he encountered during his journey: it also establishes his uniqueness. According to tradition, Muhammad alone was granted access to the ultimate layers of heaven, where he received the instructions of daily prayers (*salat*). The motifs of *isra* and *mi'raj* thus establish the very kernel of Islamic ritual practice, as well as the superiority of Islam in relation to earlier monotheistic creeds. Without explicating such relations in any textual material, the exhibit reanimates the hierarchy by surrounding the footprint of Muhammad with relics from previous (and lesser) prophets, positioning Islam as the crown of creation.

In the third hall, visitors encounter the theme of 'Muhammed and his companions'. This is the heart of the collection, containing relics and personal items of Muhammad—most prominent among them the Mantle and the Banner—as well as artefacts from the Prophet's companions. Just as during Ottoman times, the Mantel and Banner are set apart in their boxes inside the Chamber of the Blessed Mantle. From a visitor's perspective, this underscores their

distinction, but also renders them more distant compared with other items of the exhibit, displayed in plain view and proximity of the visitor. Here we find the swords of the four 'Rightly Guided' Caliphs (*al-Rashidun*) revered in Sunni Islamic historiography; the Prophet's seal in its signet ring (which came function as the symbol for the Caliph as the Prophet's vicegerent) and a letter of invitation (*da'wa*, the Islamic concept of mission) to the leaders of the world to convert to Islam (Hedin, Janson and Westerlund 2016). Notably, in this hall the didactic choices differ from the second chamber. No dramatic illustrations are employed. Visually, the items are left to speak from themselves, lending the display a somber air. On the other hand, information boards, video installations and audio-guides underscore the worldliness of the artefacts.

This section represents Islam as a political order, equally relevant for past, present and posterity. The display of the Mantle, Banner, signet ring, letter of *da'wa* and power symbols of *al-Rashidun* not only highlights Muhammad's worldly leadership and the transmission of his political, administrative and military power through the caliphal institution: the very presence of such vestiges of sacrosanct-cum-worldly leadership in Topkapı Palace illustrates the Ottoman claim on caliphal power. And ultimately, in light of current memory-political reconnections to Ottoman legacies, the exhibition subtly indicates Turkey's self-representation as a custodian of Islamic principles, flirting with caliphal ambitions. To quote Islamic studies scholar Jan Hjärpe: 'Is it too bold to speak of something of a "caliphal function", but without a Caliph?' (Hjärpe 2012: 65).

All in all, the references to the glories of the past suggest a religio-political paradigm for the present. The museum spatially represents and constructs Islamic history as a 'pool of resources' (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996: 29), with relevance far beyond the walls of Topkapı Palace. Perhaps no one has formulated it better than Erdoğan himself, at the grand 2007 re-opening of the reorganized Sacred Trust section: 'This is not only a museum, it is the house of a living civilization' (Haberler 2007).

We should not, however, understand the sacralization of the museal space as any fixed order, or as resulting from square top-down political impositions. The current display has resulted from complex negotiations between political stakeholders and the didactic considerations of the professionals involved. Neither is the boundary maintenance of sacred/profane or sound/un-sound practices established once and for all. Boundary drawing takes place on a daily basis in the museum and remains contested terrain. There have been disagreements between the members of the museum staff. Some have favored a chronological display of the objects as *imperial* artefacts, rather than the present thematic display with its emphasis of the collection's religious significance (Karahasan 2015:

166–177). The thematic organization of the current display embraces pedagogic tendencies in global museology; yet it is subsumed under an overarching, religiously inspired metanarrative.

As is clear from the above, the reorganizations of the Sacred Trusts section have thoroughly altered the narrative and affective representation of the collection. Through curatorial interventions and didactic choices, the exhibit today forges a quasi-sacred space, fundamentally different from other sections of the museum (and other museums in Istanbul). Encapsulated in the ritual ambience of Quranic revelation, the exhibition guides the visitor through the material vestiges of prophethood, delving into sacred history—and establishes the Ottoman/Turkish custodianship of this legacy. Then again, the exhibit also establishes distinct boundaries: the Sacred Trusts section should *not* be treated as a (formal) ritual locus. Visitors are invited to approach it with modesty, respect and affect—but not with ‘improper’ veneration, and not in line with ‘illicit’ or ‘ignorant’ practice.

To reconnect to Lefebvre: more than a collection of sacred things in museal space, the museum *spatializes sacred history* and symbolizes this *contemporary* space as a carrier of ‘sound’ Sunni-Islamic orthopraxy. As such, the exhibit establishes a distinct metanarrative supporting an ideological notion of Turkish-Islamic nationhood: the role of Topkapı Palace Museum is to commemorate (and construct) the Ottoman-Islamic past as a virtuous-political paradigm for the Turkish present.

4 **Respatializing the Sacred: Ritual Invention and Islamic Memory in Public Space**

The spatial representation of Islamic memory in Topkapı Palace Museum elucidates the processes of sacralization within the walls of a public Turkish memory institution. The past decade, however, has witnessed a broader process of sacralization in and of Turkish public space. Few cases illustrate this better than the establishment of Holy Birth Week (*Kutlu Doğum Haftası*, henceforth HNW). As shall be clear from the following, not only did this state-organized celebration ritualize Islamic memory in Turkish public space and public education. It further accentuated the boundary negotiation of ‘sound’ versus ‘unsound’ orchestrations of Islamic creed and practice. And in the process, the very confines of national memory institutions have come to expand. We are currently witnessing a third—tacit yet plainly public—reorganization and respatialization of the Sacred Trusts, as Islamic relics are literally taken into the streets.

HBW was conceptualized as early as 1989, in an attempt to centralize popular Mevlid celebrations, commemorating the birth of Prophet Muhammed. Mevlid (or Mevrit, Mawlid, Maulid) has been celebrated across the Muslim world for centuries. It has never been part of the formal Islamic ritual duties (*'ibadat*) as defined in Islamic jurisprudence. While subject to longstanding polemical discussion, it nonetheless has been approved by a majority of Islamic scholars (Katz 2007: 169).⁶ Even so, some segments of purist opinion have denounced Mevlid (as well as the veneration of 'saints' as the 'friends of God', *wali Allah*) as *bid'a*, unlawful innovation of Islamic ritual and doctrine. Or in a word: heresy. With the proliferation of purist moral conservatism (particularly within Wahhabism and Salafism), such critique has intensified, in scholarly debate as well as the blogosphere (Schielke 2006, Svensson 2014). Already from the outset, therefore, the very ambition to centralize Mevlid under the auspices of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, henceforth Diyanet) was thorny theological territory.

Interestingly however, the controversy HBW came to incur was not primarily theological-conceptual. It rather concerned the spatial and temporal organization of the celebration. Originally, HBW had not been conceived as any separate event. It aimed at creating a national platform and public layer for Mevlid, through conferences, concerts, exhibitions and competitions. It was organized according to the Islamic *hijra* calendar, from the twelfth night of Rabi'ul-Awwal (the third month in the Islamic calendar). In 1994, however, religious authorities decided to celebrate HBW according to the Gregorian calendar around April 20 (though Mevlid occurred in August this year, according to the *hijra* calendar). This, in turn, meant a conspicuous temporal collision with the National Sovereignty and Children's Day on April 23 (marking the foundation of the Turkish Grand National Assembly). Being one of the principal secular-Republican national commemorations, the collision incurred vocal secularist critique. Not until 2008, however (and notably soon after The Turkish Armed Forces officially had denounced HBW as 'a reactionary activity' (*Hürriyet* 2007)), was the festival fixed to April 14–20 (Koyuncu 2014: 182–184).

This temporal dis-embedding from the *hijra* calendar thus severed HBW's temporal as well as ritual connection to 'Mevlid proper'. Consequently, an entire set of core rituals had to be established for HBW. As described in detail by Gurkas (2013), the celebrations opened with a night devoted to readings of

6 Mevlid was officially celebrated in the Ottoman court from 1588, but here it 'had the character of a household celebration and did not include any public display or address' (Hagen 2014: 372).



FIGURE 2 'Religion is sincerity towards people'. Poster for HBW 2014 under the theme of 'Religion and Conscience', quoting the hadith: 'The Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the people are safe ...'
PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS 2014

traditional *mevlit* poetry (praising the bodily features and moral qualities of the Prophet). On Rose Day (*Gül Günü*), personnel of the Diyanet distributed stems of red roses to the public—the rose being the quintessential symbol for the Prophet, of particular importance in Turkish devotional tradition (Gruber 2014; Janson forthcoming). And during the charitable Blessed Meal (*Kutlu Doğum Aşı*), political and religious dignitaries shared meat, rice and *ayran* with the public, appropriating the customs of traditional Mevlid celebrations. Despite being an entirely invented yearly fixture, HBW hence relied on ritual, symbolic and bodily practices with deep resonance in Turkish devotional traditions.

Following the fixing of the celebration to a given week, HBW was significantly expanded and centrally regulated. In 2010, Diyanet issued detailed instructions and visual resources for the local festival committees, defining 'activities, which would enlighten all segments of the society, on religion, religious practice and morals' (*Resmi Gazete* 2010). More than 19,000 events all over Turkey were organized that year. The Diyanet carefully underscored HBW to be a pedagogical and cultural event—not any religious ritual per se. From this point, schools became a primary target for HBW, culminating in the 2011 inclusion of HBW in the public school curriculum, on orders of the Ministry of National Education. A yearly theme was defined for each celebration, such as Human Dignity; Religion and Conscience; or Teaching Compassion (Fig. 2).

The themes were didacticized in educational resources. Each year a 10–15-minute-long educational film was produced and screened in HBW ceremonies



FIGURE 3 Scene from HBW film 2011, visualizing the Prophet Muhammad with a calligraphic 'm' in Islamic green, set in front of a waterfall, with the message that 'one Prophet heralds heaven'

PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS 2020

in public schools, broadcast on national television and circulated through YouTube and other media. The films are strikingly well-produced, glossy and dramatic, in a visual style of Discovery Channel documentaries (Fig. 3). In somber and haughty narrative, they appeal to affect and morale through dichotomies of virtues and vices, as illustrated in the table below (Fig. 4), and frequent references to personages and tropes from Islamic tradition. Crowded urban streets and shopping malls signify 'addiction' to consumption, worldly ambitions, alcohol and drugs. Rupturing volcanoes and thunderstorms alternate with scenes of war and fleeing refugees. In contrast, virtues are illustrated with fertile pastures, blossoming flowers, mighty rivers, deserts and mountains—juxtaposed with Muslims in communal prayer or circumambulation of the Kaba. The visuals alternate with narrative injunctions, such as 'do not marginalize the other' or 'let us unite'. In this way, in addressing school audiences, the films summon Islamic symbolism in the representation of 'national virtues' such as communitarianism and solidarity, rectifying the calamities of modern existence. The films construct Islam as a Turkish-nationalist 'ethics of citizenship' (Koyuncu 2014: 177).

While school audiences may have been the primary target for HBW as a pedagogical venture, the celebration also retained and strengthened its 'high cultural' (and ritual) profile during the same years. This found shape in high-

Recurrent contrasts			
Good		Bad	
Visual representation	Highlighted value	Visual representation	Highlighted value
Harmonious fertile nature; Celestial bodies	Brotherhood; Moral; Religious order	Fire; Volcanos; Thunderstorms;	Conflict and war; Cruelty; Animosity and hatred
Scenes of prayer and preaching; Mosques	Moral refinement; Closeness to God	Crowded urban streets; Shopping-malls; Money	Distorted, misdirected morals; Greed and egoism

FIGURE 4 Visual/moral codes in HBW films

profile devotional art shows. From 2010, displays of calligraphic art and *tesbih* (rosaries for commemorative ritual) were organized, in steadily aggrandizing scales and settings. The expositions particularly focused on *hilye-i şerif*, the art of calligraphic, commemorative ‘depictions’ of the Prophet, flourishing in Ottoman art from the seventeenth century (Janson forthcoming; Gruber 2014). The spatial choice of venues is telling. In 2014, the exposition was organized in Topkapı Palace Museum and Ayasofya: the former imperial palace and the national mosque (both turned into secular museums by the Kemalist republic; the latter recently reverted into a formal mosque). The art show was named ‘Love for the Prophet, from Hejaz to Istanbul’, drawing on the trans-spatial interconnection of Istanbul with the region of the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina. The ritualization of the event was further accentuated during the grand opening, when the Quran was recited in Ayasofya for the first time in 85 years (appealing to the interests promoting the reversion). Despite its self-designation as ‘cultural’ and ‘educational’, HBW thus constructed itself through incessant, commemorative references to sacred history, ritual and space.

The expositions were also carefully instrumentalized in political discourse. President Erdoğan referred to the 2013 and 2014 exhibitions as ‘the world’s largest exhibition of Hilye-i Şerif’ (Aşk-ı Nebi 2013: 10) and ‘the most impor-

tant Islamic Classical Arts event until this date' (Diyanet Website: 2014-04-09). While Istanbul has been a center for Islamic arts for centuries, today collectors come to the city to acquire *new* calligraphy, the President underscored (Aşk-ı Nebi 2013: 10). In the *hilye* and *tesbih* expositions, HBW hence found a cultural form feeding into an ancient and distinctly Ottoman commemorative and devotional tradition. It concomitantly represented Istanbul as a national-ritual nexus and a hub for *living* Islamic arts—and Turkey as a patron for such endeavors (Janson forthcoming).

5 Out of Scale: Spatio-Temporal Boundaries Contested and Redrawn

With remarkable speed, HBW had been ritualized in Turkish public space and republican time, centrally regulated and didacticized in appropriation of urban squares, stadiums, auditoriums as well as classrooms. In the span of a few years, it had transformed from small, locally organized event into a massive, state-organized, national celebration. By 2017, more than 30,000 activities were organized (Presidency of Religious Affairs Facebook 2017)—the vast majority targeting school children.

With its upscaling, the celebration became considerably more lavish and conspicuous. Paradoxically, the centralization ultimately led to a gradual loss of control, as the local HBW enthusiasm sometimes went over the top. On Rose Day 2012 in the Kapadokya region, roses were dropped over cities from a hot-air balloon, while 'religious officials read hymns (*ilahiler*)' (Haber3 2012). In downtown Bitlis 2013, citizens were both horrified and amused, when an armored car sprayed rose water over pedestrians and buildings with its water cannon. The intention was to make the celebrations public by bringing them to the streets, officials explained (*Milliyet* 2013). In some cases, the Diyanet apparently felt compelled to intervene, drawing boundaries for acceptable forms of commemoration. In 2015, the Diyanet opened a formal investigation concerning a Quran-shaped birthday cake 'for the Prophet', crafted by Quran students in the Tokat province during HBW in 2013 (*Hürriyet Daily News* 2015a). And a case drawing national attention was the Kaba-model, measuring some 4–5 meters, displayed in the Üsküdar district of Istanbul during HBW in 2015.

The representation of the mini-Kaba and the debates it stirred deserves some elaboration. It was part of a temporary, 'historical' theme park, consisting of models referring to popular (if not necessarily orthodox) Islamic traditions. The models were presented with (quasi)historical information texts directed at a school audience and the exhibit also featured student performances and Quran recitation. The park was called 'A Trip from Üsküdar to the

Age of Felicity' (*Üsküdar'dan Asr-ı Saadet'e Yolculuk*), incurring the notion of *asr-ı saadet*, the ideal society during the era of the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad and the 'Rightly Guided Caliphs'. Hence mundane, urban public space was appropriated in symbolical animation of the trans-spatial interconnection of Istanbul with sacred history and geography. This symbolic interlinking became explicitly manifest in the inaugurating address of Mayor Hilmi Türkmen: '[w]e call our Üsküdar the land of Haram and the land of Kaba', offering those unable to make the pilgrimage a tinge of its atmosphere (Üsküdar Municipality 2015).

Of little surprise, the Kaba replica was immediately picked up in satire. Performance artist Cihat Duman dressed up in pilgrim attire to perform a mock *hajj* to the mini-Kaba (and was subsequently detained) (*Hürriyet* 2015). And satirical *LeMan* paraded on its front page a cartoon, where a man asks his friend about the destination for his pilgrimage (*hajj*): 'Oh, it was convenient', comes the response, 'Üsküdar!' (*LeMan* 2015). Religious authorities, for their part, took the matter seriously. The Diyanet issued a statement, warning that 'it would be a grave sin to perform circumambulation (*tavaf*) around the Kaba model'. Subsequently, the miniature was discretely removed from the exposition during the night of 22 April 2015 (*Hürriyet* 2015)—as were Mayor Türkmen's statements from the Üsküdar Municipality Webpage.

From its outset, the celebration of HBW had drawn critique in secularist opinion. Its introduction into the Turkish calendar of festivities and school curriculum was seen as a religious intrusion in conflict with secular principles (*Hürriyet Daily News* 2011; Kandiyoti and Emanet 2017: 872). The celebration, severed from traditional Mevlid, had also been questioned on theological religious in some segments of religious opinion (Gurkas 2013). As illustrated by the mini-Kaba controversy, however, it was not until HBW attained a distinct public character that such critique became more vocal and serious. The very concept of HBW as well as its temporal organization was increasingly questioned as representing illicit *bid'a*, an innovation of formal ritual. Does not HBW turn Mevlid into some Westernized, quasi-Christmas? And even if accepted as such, should it be celebrated *twice* per year? Is it not *bid'a* to break with the *hijra* calendar and subsume an Islamic holiday under *secular* Republican time (Atay 2017)? The Diyanet responded by emphasizing that HBW and Mevlid were altogether separate:

Holy Birth Week is not an alternative Mawlid Night which has been observed for centuries on Rabi' al-awwal 12th. ... [HBW] is another occasion of commemorating Allah's Messenger with scholarly and cultural activities and cannot be labeled as *bi'dah* (innovation). ... Mawlid night

programs that have been observed in this land joyfully for a thousand years must continue with further enrichment. Holy Birth Week must be turned into a Siret Week that covers his Sunnah, siret (life) high moral, and universal message with scholarly activities

Presidency of Religious Affairs Facebook 2017

The references to *sunna* (the Prophet's normative precedence, one of the principal sources of *fiqh*, jurisprudence) and the literary canon of *sira* (Prophet biographies) are noteworthy. They serve to conceptually dissociate HBW from a (formal) ritual context altogether. They represent the space appropriated by the celebration as part of a scriptural and scholastic venture, of indisputable theological legitimacy. Not only are the allegations of *bid'a* irrelevant. HBW, to the contrary, is represented as theologically commendable. This said, the formulation 'must be turned into a Siret Week' suggests that Diyanet tacitly acknowledged that HBW so far had not reached its final, ideal form.

Yet, we submit, the core of the controversy was neither conceptual, nor content related. It concerned *space*, *scale* and *time*. As opposed to the sacralization of the memory institution of Topkapı Palace Museum, HBW was staged in plain, public view, in streets, squares, stadiums and through national broadcasting. For more than two decades, it had been arranged as a marginal, locally organized event, stirring neither broad enthusiasm, nor severe critique. Only after its rescaling and spatial publicization since 2010, organized in hundreds of cities and thousands of public schools, did it begin to incur serious theological critique. On top of this, HBW took place in secular, republican time, dismembered both from the ritual space of traditional Mevlid and the temporal order of the *hijra* calendar. As a sum effect, to draw on Mary Douglas (1966), HBW became a 'matter out of place', breaking spatio-temporal taxonomies and taboos. It hence was conceived as 'ritually impure' and 'abominable'. The more publicly visible, the more it was considered as contaminated with secular profanity.

In the face of growing critique, religious authorities de facto conceded (yet without admitting any fault). In 2017, Diyanet director Mehmet Görmez was replaced with Ali Erbaş. The latter promptly communicated that the celebrations henceforth should follow the *hijra* calendar, thus reconciling state-organized celebration with traditional Mevlid (*Anadolu Agency* 2017). In the process, HBW was reconceptualized as Mevlidi Nebi—literally The Prophet's Birth. Notably, this recent reconceptualization and temporal readjustment co-occurred with shifts in the representation of the sacred. While rescaled and receding from the ritual innovations of the hey-day of HBW, Turkish memory-cultural production continues to inscribe public space with Islamic signifi-



FIGURE 5 Imam hatip students displaying crafts from sacred history, HBW 2016
BAKİŞ GAZETESİ 2019

cations. This involves new visual significations, spatializations and memory agents, but also administrative changes of central memory sites.

Mevlidi Nebi continue to be commemorated in (the confined spaces of) public schools. Educational films continue to be produced. The Prophet is commemorated through student performances of Quran recitation, hymns, choreographies and displays of commemorative crafts—not least Kaba models and scenes from sacred history (*Bakış Gazetesi* 2019) (Fig. 5). And, intriguingly, recent celebrations have forged connections with the relics of Topkapı Palace Museum. In recent years, photographic exhibits of the Sacred Trusts have been organized not only in public schools. They have also appeared in public space across Turkey: from the Eyüpsultan Mosque in Istanbul (Eyüpsultan Belediyesi 2019) to small urban squares in Anatolia (*Milliyet* 2018); from state museums such as Archaeology Museum of Hatay (*Söz Gazetesi* 2019) to public service providers such as the Istanbul Tramway (İETT 2016) (Fig. 6).

In effect, this represents a third reorganization of the Sacred Trusts, creating sacred 'satellites' in everyday public space, orbiting around the central memory site of Topkapı Palace Museum. And this reorganization, in turn, has co-occurred with administrative changes at the museum. With a presidential decree in 2019, Topkapı Palace Museum was turned into a 'national palace' under the National Assembly (*Resmi Gazete* 2019). Unlike all other Ottoman palaces, the museum had previously been affiliated with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Utkuluer 2014: 70). Not only does this institutional transformation place the palace directly under the Presidency of the



FIGURE 6 Sacred Trusts photographic exhibition, Tünel Station, Istanbul, 2016
IETT 2016

Republic of Turkey. It further enforces the metanarrative representation of the palace as a national memory site, and a nucleus of sacred (re)collections.

6 Conclusion: Sacred (re)Collections and the Reversal of Memory Politics

This article has captured how state-led memory-cultural production drawing on religious signifiers contributes to a sacralization of Turkish public memory institutions and space. This reinforces the Islamic-nationalist imagination of contemporary Turkey. However, as illustrated by the sacralization of the Sacred Trusts (within and without the physical confines of the museum) and the recalibration of centralized Mevlid celebration, such initiatives require careful boundary drawing. When orchestrated outside of ‘acceptable’ (conceptual, spatial, scalar and temporal) confines, innovative Islamic-commemorative practice has stumbled on cumbersome critique. As a result, after a decade of ‘adventurous’ cultural and ritual innovations, the sacralization of Turkish memory production appears to have redrawn its boundaries: into traditional ritual; into museal display; and into the sphere of public education.

We may read the two cases in focus for this article as two distinct yet related approaches to the politics of Islamization, as it surfaces in memory-cultural production. HBW was characterized by inventive Islamic-ritual practices, orchestrated in plain view and appropriation of everyday public space. It proved to be a temporary success of mobilization, yet ultimately failed to establish legitimacy. In response, rather than surrendering its potential to contribute to the 'raising of a pious generation', the venture was conceptually and temporarily re-anchored in the ritual setting of traditional Mevlid. It may prove viable or not. But the newly launched *Mevlidi Nebi* establishes rapport and continuity with familiar ritual and theological/mythological formulae—historically so central for inventive nationalist-commemorative ceremonies, from the First Republic of France (Connerton 1989) to the Islamic Republic of Iran (Chelkowski and Dabashi 1999).

In contrast (or, perhaps, in conjunction), the sacralization of Topkapı Palace Museum produces Islamic-nationalist imaginations within the confines of a public memory institution. This, in turn, recasts the meaning of the museum as such and resignifies the 'Turkish national culture' thus displayed. Nationalism here surfaces in a contest of the very notion of the secular museum. This goes hand in hand with recent efforts to revert the museums of Ayasofya and Chora into formal mosques. It coincides with the construction, invention and idealization of Ottoman history in museums such as the Panorama 1453 and MiniaTürk. Again, it co-occurs with the strengthening of the links between sacralized/idealized museal display and (supposedly) secular public education. And, finally, while such museums accommodate traits of global museum pedagogies (appealing to affect, multisensory experience and entertainment), they engage visitors in an ideological, dichotomizing, authoritarian and monological address—a far cry from the ideals commonly associated with 'new museology' (Harrison 2005; Classen 2017; Janson forthcoming).

Despite the lower profile of public ritualization since the HBW debacle, therefore, the ambitions of sacralizing Turkish national memory persist, in continuously malleable forms of cultural production and display. Today, Islamic-nationalist imaginations and (re)collections surface in the interstices of public memory institutions, public education and everyday public space. This reinforces broader political processes, aiming at the upgrading, publicizing and pedagogical dissemination of 'Islamic virtues'. Religious-commemorative school projects go hand in hand with the upscaling of religion in recent Turkish educational reform. And the sacralizing reorganizations of national-museal space represent a reversal of the memory politics of early republican days. Politically trivialized for decades, Topkapı Palace and Ayasofya today are (re)elevated as centerpieces of religio-political and nationalist signification.

As demonstrated in this article, memory-cultural Islamization finds shape in a nexus of institutional negotiations, narrative re-dispositions, architectural interventions and didactic-disciplinary practices. Neither national museums, nor school rooms, nor urban squares emerge as once-and-for-all 'sacralized spaces'. Sacralization emerges as an ideological spatialization of memory, incurring religious/historiographic symbolism in institutional, pedagogic and urban-public practice. Turkish memory institutions and public space may indeed stage encounters between memory-producing professionals and their consumers/co-producers. And such ventures no doubt testify to the political ambition of upgrading religious signifiers in Turkish society. Then again, the outcome of such encounters is a different matter altogether. Ultimately, sacralization remains a mere potential: in the interface of visitor and Islamic artefact; of pupil and crafted mini-Kaba.

Bibliography

- Anadolu Agency* (2017). Diyanet İşleri Başkanı Erbaş'tan Mevlid Kandili Açıklaması. Accessed 20 November 2017: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/diyanet-isleri-baskani-erbaskan-mevlid-kandili-aciklamasi/963884>, 13 November 2017.
- Anadolu Agency* (2020). Turkey: Conquest Feast Organized at Hagia Sophia. Accessed 30 May 2020: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-conquest-feast-organized-at-hagia-sophia/1858463>, 30 May 2020.
- Anderson, Benedict (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Appadurai, Arjun & Carol Breckenridge (1988). Why Public Culture? *Public Culture*. (1, Fall): 5–9.
- Aşk-ı Nebi Catalogue (2013). *Hicaz'dan İstanbul'a Hz. Peygamber Sevgisi: Aşk-ı Nebi*. İstanbul: Bilnet Matbaacılık.
- Atay, Tayfun (2017). 'Mevlid-i Nebi', Noel'e Naziredir! *Cumhuriyet*, Accessed 4 December 2017: <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/tayfun-atay/mevlid-i-nebi-noele-naziredir-879152>, 4 December 2017.
- Barrett, Jennifer (2012). *Museums and the Public Sphere*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Bakış Gazetesi* (2019). Mevlidi Nebi Sergisi Açıldı. Streamed 7 November 2019. YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-1dorw6XvDI&list=PLlD3SH1-OHGR3sfHqmksvWPUxPBKizodk>.
- BBC News* (2020). Hagia Sophia: Turkey Turns Iconic Museum into A Mosque. Accessed 10 July 2020: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-53366307#:~:text=Built%201%2C500%20years%20ago%20as,opposition%20members%20opposed%20the%20move,> 10 July 2020.

- Bozoğlu, Gönü (2020). *Museums, Emotion, and Memory Culture: The Politics of the Past in Turkey*. London: Routledge.
- Bursalı, Orhan (2017). Yeni Müfredat Önerilerinde Büyük Yanlışlıklar: Osmanlı'ya Eleştirel Bakmazsan ... *Cumhuriyet*. Accessed 1 March 2020: <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/orhan-bursali/yeni-mufredat-onerilerinde-buyuk-yanlisliklar-osmanliya-elestirel-bakmazsan-662337>. 19 Jan. 2017.
- Brubaker, Rogers (1996). *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chelkowski, Peter J. and Hamid Dabashi (1999). *Staging a Revolution: Art of Persuasion in the Islamic Republic of Iran*. London: Booth-Clibborn Editions.
- Classen, Constance (2017). *The Museum of the Senses: Experiencing Art and Collections*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Connerton, Paul (1989). *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Çınar, Alev (2005). *Modernity, Islam and Secularism in Turkey: Bodies, Places and Time*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Çınar, Alev and Thomas Bender (2007). The City: Experience, Imagination, and Place. In Alev Çınar and Thomas Bender (eds.), *Urban Imaginaries: Locating the Modern City*, pp. xi–xxvi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Diker, Hasan Fırat (2015). A Modernized Exhibition Space at Topkapı Palace Museum. *Yapı* (408): 166–173.
- Dorroll, Courtney (forthcoming). Between Memory and Forgetting and Purity and Danger: The Case of the Ulucanlar Prison Museum. In Catharina Raudvere (ed.), *Heritage, Aesthetics and Belonging: Gender in Turkish Neo-Ottomanism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Douglas, Mary (1966). *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge and K Paul.
- Duncan, Carol (1991). Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship. In Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (eds.), *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, pp. 88–103. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Duncan, Carol (2005). The Art Museum as Ritual. In Gerard Corsane (ed.), *Heritage, Museums and Galleries: An Introductory Reader*, pp. 85–97. London: Routledge.
- Dursun, Ahmet Haluk (2014) Topkapı Palace Museum and Yearbook, in Ahmet Haluk Dursun (ed.) Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Yıllık-6. pp. 5–18. İstanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Sevenler Derneği.
- Eickelman, Dale F. and James Piscatori (1996). *Muslim Politics*. Woodstock: Princeton University Press.
- Ergin, Murat and Yağmur Karakaya (2017). Between Neo-Ottomanism and Ottomania: Navigating State-led and Popular Cultural Representations of the Past. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, (56): 33–59.

- Eyüpsultan Belediyesi (2019) Kutsal Emanetler Sergisi Eyüpsultan'da. Accessed 20 May 2019 <https://www.eyupsultan.bel.tr/tr/main/news/kutsal-emanetler-sergisi-eyupsu ltanda/14806>, 10 May 2019.
- Gruber, Christiane (2014). The Rose of the Prophet. Floral Metaphors in Late Ottoman Devotional Art. In David J. Roxburgh (ed.), *Envisioning Islamic Art and Architecture: Essays in Honor of Renata Holod*, pp. 223–249. Leiden: Brill.
- Gudehus, Christian (2007). Remembering World War II in Europe: Structures of Remembrance. In Esra Özyürek (ed.), *The Politics of Public Memory in Turkey*: pp. 69–87. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- Gurkas, Hakkı (2013). Claiming the Public Space for the Prophet Muhammad: The Blessed Birth Week. In Kenan Aksu (ed.), *Turkey: A Regional Power in the Making*, pp. 230–248. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Haber 3. (2012) Kapadokya'da 'Kutlu Doğum' Vesilesiyle Gökyüzünden İnsanlara Gül Atılar. Accessed 20 June 2015: <https://www.haber3.com/guncel/kapadokyada-kutlu -dogum-vesilesiyle-gokyuzunden-insanlara-gul-haberi-1246045>, 14 April 2012.
- Haberler (2007) Başbakan Erdoğan, Restorasyonu Tamamlanan Topkapı Sarayı Kutsal Emanetler Bölümü'nün Açılışını Yaptı. Accessed 5 March 2012 <https://www.haberler .com/basbakan-erdogan-restorasyonu-tamamlanan-topkapi-haberi/>, 29 December 2007.
- Hagen, Gottfried (2014). Mawlid, Ottoman. In Coeli Fitzpatrick and Adam Hani Walker (eds.), *Muhammad in History, Thought, and Culture. An Encyclopedia of the Prophet of God. Vol 1: A–M*, pp. 369–272. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO.
- Hand, Isaac. 2013. Place-Making and the Panorama 1453 Museum in Historical Context. *The MESSA Journal* 2(2): 20–27. Accessed 8 August 2013: <https://uchicagolights.files .wordpress.com/2014/03/lights020203.pdf>.
- Haugbolle, Sune (2010). *War and Memory in Lebanon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Harrison, Julia (2005). Ideas of Museums in the 1990s. In Gerard Corsane (ed), *Heritage, Museums and Galleries: An Introductory Reader*, pp. 38–53. London: Routledge.
- Hedin, Christer, Torsten Janson & David Westerlund (2016). Da'wa. In Richard C. Martin (ed), *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, pp. 170–174. New York: MacMillan.
- Hjärpe, Jan (2008). Heliga Rum i Muslimska Kontext. In S. Selander, S. Fallberg Sundmark and M. Ellnemyr (eds.), *Heliga Rum i Dagens Sverige*, pp. 118–129. Skellefteå: Artos and Norma.
- Hjärpe, Jan (2012). Moses Stav, Profetens Mantel och Ka'bas Nycklar. In Ernst Althin (ed.), *Utblickar mot Öster: Tretton Essäer om Orienten*, pp. 59–66. Stockholm: Svenska Orientsällskapet.
- Hobsbawm, Eric (1983). Introduction: Inventing Traditions. In Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, pp. 1–14. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Hürriyet* (2007) Genelkurmay'dan Çok Sert Açıklama. Accessed 20 January 2012: <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/genelkurmaydan-cok-sert-aciklama-6420961>, 29 April 2007.
- Hürriyet* (2012) Dindar Gençlik Yetiştireceğiz. Accessed 2 February 2012: <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/dindar-genclik-yetistirecegiz-19825231>, 2 February 2012.
- Hürriyet* (2015). Üsküdar'daki Kabe Maketi Kaldırıldı. Accessed 30 April 2015: <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/uskudardaki-kabe-maketi-kaldirildi-28807257>, 23 April 2015.
- Hürriyet Daily News* (2011). 'Holy Birth Week' Causing Controversy in Turkish Schools. 22 April 2011. [Authors' archived material.]
- Hürriyet Daily News* (2015a). Quran-shaped Cake Under Investigation in Northern Turkey. Accessed on 21 April 2015: <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/quran-shape-d-cake-under-investigation-in-northern-turkey-81321>, 20 April 2015.
- Hürriyet Daily News* (2015b) 'Replica Mecca' in Istanbul Raises Eyebrows. Accessed on 21 April 2015: <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/replica-mecca-in-istanbul-raises-eyebrows-81375>, 21 April 2015.
- İETT (2016). Kutsal Emanetler Fotoğraf Sergisi Tünel'de Açıldı. Accessed on 17 June 2017: <https://www.iett.istanbul/tr/main/news/kutsal-emanetler-fotograf-sergisi-tunelde-aci/2080>. 15 April 2016.
- Janson, Torsten (2012). Imaging Islamic Identity: Negotiated Norms of Representation in British Muslim Picture Books. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 32(2): 323–338, doi: 10.1215/1089201X-1628962.
- Janson, Torsten (forthcoming). Lovers of the Rose: Islamic Affect and the Politics of Commemoration in Turkish Museal Display. In Catharina Raudvere (ed.), *Heritage, Aesthetics and Belonging: Gender in Turkish Neo-Ottomanism*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Kandiyoti, Deniz, and Zühre Emanet (2017). Education as Battleground: The Capture of Minds in Turkey. *Globalizations*, 14(6), 869–876.
- Kandiyoti, Deniz and Ayşe Saktanber (eds.) (2002). *Fragments of Culture: The Everyday of Modern Turkey*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Karahasan, Neşe (2015). Exhibiting 'Turkishness' at a Time of Flux in Turkey: An Ethnography of the State. PhD dissertation, Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh.
- Katz, Marion Holmes (2007). *The Birth of The Prophet Muhammad: Devotional Piety in Sunni Islam*. London: Routledge.
- Khatib, Lina (2012). *Image Politics in the Middle East: The Role of the Visual in Political Struggle*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Koyuncu, Büke (2014). *'Benim Milletim ...': AK Parti İktidarı, Din ve Ulusal Kimlik*. Istanbul: İletişim.
- Langenbacher, Eric, Bill Niven and Ruth Wittlinger (2015). Introduction: Dynamics of Memory and Identity in Contemporary Europe. In Niven Langenbacher and Ruth

- Wittlinger (eds.), *Dynamics of Memory and Identity in Contemporary Europe*, pp. 1–13. Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Lefebvre, Henry (1991). *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- LeMan (2015). Üsküdar Belediyesi Dumur Etti, Meydana Kabe Kurdu. 2015/15.
- Milliyet (2013). Panzer, Bu Defa Gül Suyu Sıktı. Accessed 18 April 2013: <https://www.milliyet.com.tr/gundem/panzer-bu-defa-gul-suyu-sikti-1694445>, 16 April 2013.
- Milliyet (2018). Bakanlık: Uyarıp Şal Veriyoruz. Accessed 10 February 2018: <https://www.milliyet.com.tr/gundem/bakanlik-uyarip-sal-veriyoruz-2603822>, 5 February 2018.
- Milliyet (2019). İmam Hatiplerin Sayısı 5 bin 138'e Ulaştı. Accessed 25 September 2019: <https://www.milliyet.com.tr/egitim/imam-hatiplerin-sayisi-5-bin-138e-ulasti-6064455>, 25 September 2019.
- Navaro-Yashin, Yael (2002). *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Necipoğlu, Gülru (1986). Plans and Models in 15th and 16th Century Ottoman Architectural Practice. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 5(3): 224–243.
- Özcan, Esra (2019) *Mainstreaming the Headscarf: Islamist Politics and Women in the Turkish Media*. I.B. Tauris: London.
- Özyürek, Esra (2007). The Politics of Public Memory in Turkey. In Esra Özyürek (ed), *The Politics of Public Memory in Turkey*: pp. 69–87. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- Presidency of Religious Affairs (2020). 2011 Kutlu Doğum Sinevizyonu. Accessed 4 April 2020: <https://www2.diyanet.gov.tr/DinHizmetleriGenelMudurlugu/VideoGalerisi/2011%20Kutlu%20Do%u00c4%9fumu%20Sinevizyonu.mp4>, 1 January 2020.
- Presidency of Religious Affairs (2014). 2014 Kutlu Doğum: Din Samimiyettir. Accessed 7 February 2020: <https://mevlidinebi.diyanet.gov.tr/tr-TR/Anasayfa/Indeks>, 14 April 2014.
- Presidency of Religious Affairs Facebook (2017). Holy Birth Week activities must be carried out under Diyanet's Supervision and Care as per Relevant Provisions of the Regulations. Accessed 10 June 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/diyanetenglish/photos/a.167947970273899/363320254070002>, 19 May 2017.
- Resmî Gazete (2010). Kutlu Doğum Haftası İle Camiler Ve Din Görevlileri: Haftasını Kutlama Yönetmeliği. Accessed 10 March 2012: <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2010/02/20100213-7.htm>, 13 February 2010.
- Resmî Gazete (2019). Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı Hakkında Cumhurbaşkanlığı Kararnamesinde Değişiklik Yapılmasına Dair Cumhurbaşkanlığı Kararnamesi. Accessed 18 October 2019: <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2019/09/20190906-1.pdf>, 6 September 2019.
- Schielke, Samuli (2006). On Snacks and Saints: When Discourses of Rationality and Order Enter the Egyptian *mawlid*. *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, 51(135): 117–140.

- Shaw, Wendy (2003). *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire*. California: University of California Press.
- Shaw, Wendy (2010). Between the Secular and the Sacred: A New Face for the Department of the Holy Relics at the Topkapı Palace Museum. *Material Religion*, 6(1): 129–131.
- Söz Gazetesi (2019) Bugün Haydi Müzeye!. Accessed 3 March 2020: <https://sozgazetesi.com.tr/2019/05/18/bugun-haydi-muzeye/>, 18 May 2019.
- Svensson, Jonas (2014). ITZ BIDAHA BRO!!!! GT ME??: YouTube Mawlid and Voices of Praise and Blame. In Thomas Hoffman and Goran Larsson (eds.), *Muslims and the New Information and Communication Technologies: Notes from an Emerging and Infinite Field*, pp. 89–111. London: Springer.
- Tepe, Sultan (2008). *Beyond Sacred and Secular Politics of Religion in Israel and Turkey*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Tokdoğan, Nagehan (2018). *Yeni Osmanlıcılık: Hınç, Nostalji, Narsisizm*. Istanbul: İletişim.
- Tremblay, Pinar (2016). ‘Imamization’ Raising Eyebrows in Turkey. *Al-Monitor*. Accessed 16 April 2016: <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/04/turkey-imams-at-the-center-of-storm-again.html>. 15 April 2016.
- Tuğal, Cihan (2009). *Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Utkuluer, Hülya (2014). Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi’nin İlk 50 Yılı (1924–1975). In Ahmet Haluk Dursun (ed.), *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Yıllık-6*. pp. 59–81 Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Sevenler Derneği.
- Üsküdar Municipality (2015). Üsküdar’da Asr-I Saadet Coşkusu. [Authors’ archived material], 8 October 2015.
- Van der Veer, Peter (1994). *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Wedeer, Lisa (1999). *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wheeler, Brannon (2006). *Mecca and Eden: Rituals, Relics, and Territory in Islam*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- White, Jennifer (2014). *Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Wolfram, Mark A. (2015). The Memory Market Dictum: Gauging the Inherent Bias in Different Data Sources Common in Collective Memory Studies. In Niven Langenbacher and Ruth Wittlinger (eds), *Dynamics of Memory and Identity in Contemporary Europe*: pp. 55–68. Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Yilmaz, Seçil and Şafak Uysal (2007) MiniaTurk: Culture; History; and Memory in Turkey in Post-1980s. *NaMu; Making National Museums Program; Setting the Frames;*

26–28 February. Norrköping, Sweden (No. 022). Linköping University Electronic Press.

Yücel, Erdem (1982). *Hırka-i Saadet*. Istanbul: Yapı Kredi ve Bankası Kültür Sanat Hizmetleri.

Zubaida, Sami (2011). *Beyond Islam: A New Understanding of the Middle East*. London: I.B. Tauris.