

A Nation Having Internalized Love For The Animals, The Ottomans

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Abstract: The rapidly improving technology of present age and conditions of modern life unfortunately drive us to lead result-oriented lives solely. Indeed our expectations from daily technological products are only better functionality and easy use. All these never-ending desires and hopes inevitably push us towards sluggishness. This also prevents us to realize certain practices and values in addition to undermining our explorative souls. Under these circumstances we no longer notice the things happening all around us and amidst these things we miss there are also national values and heritages. We just pass near hundreds of ancient structures but simply ignore what they are and for which purposes they had been built earlier. Yet in reality the cultural values and assets possessed by a nation can only be kept alive through transferring to next generations. On that accounts it should be one of our primary tasks to protect the works of our ancestors and transfer them to young generations. The works on animals all accomplished by our ancestors are so profound that they remain to be matchless even this present day. A closer look at history would unravel that in Middle Ages when even men -let alone animals- were deemed worthless in Europe the Ottoman Territory provided ubiquitous rights for even the animals. The Ottoman made no discrimination between wild and domestic animals and rendered the exact affection for both types. While protecting wild animals on hills they granted the same rights for domesticated animals as well. However as works and architectural structures under focus are examined scrutinisingly it appears that birds in particular have taken a distinguished position amidst all the other untamed animals. As a natural consequence the love for bird inherent in our culture also played role in establishing “bird houses”. Bird houses which epitomize the love for animals are also unique models with their exquisite architectural features. These birdhouses were mostly positioned in the sunniest and calmest, highest and safest walls of houses and these nature and environment friendly houses also were also a taste for the eye. This evidences to the love and affection our ancestors cultivated for animals. Present research aiming to imbue young people with the protection of nature and animals is at the same time directed towards the new generation who shall be enlightened on the love of our ancestors for the animals, high value paid to animals, elevated position given to animals.

Key words: The Ottoman, Birdhouses, Animal Rights, Historic Animal Hospital.

INTRODUCTION

In this world human beings, animals, all living and non-living things coexist much as there is no such fair share amidst all. Indeed while expanding their own environment, human beings shrink or even destruct the natural habitat of animals. This inevitably confronts humans and animals face to face and it is mostly animals which are destined to lose in this confrontation. It is well known that people are generally fond of animals but there are certain discrepancies too since human beings' relationship with animals is settled on top of a confusing and shaking foundation. Animals are sometimes the very best friends of humans while contrastingly they are also used as test mice, or aimed targets in shooting, or poor beings that we shed all our hatred and desperation or even the food on our plates. In reality animals have always been the living beings that proved to be utmost useful in the development of humanity and civilizations. They have served the humanity in innumerable ways a few of which are serum products and fertilization of plants. While abiding by their natural and harmonious tasks the animals actually manifest that they are a part of nature and the nature itself has a harmonious balance. It is so pathetic that despite being the closest living existences to humans they are the ones that suffer most from men. It is only natural that some humans lack animal love which may be acceptable to a certain level. Yet it should also be underlined that no one has the right to harm animals. As stated brilliantly by Tolstoy “killing a human being is just one step ahead of killing an animal”.

It is such a pity that currently this fine line has been completely destructed. Indeed there is no logical explanation why municipalities collect animals, murder animals brutally in garbage trucks by pressing or poisoning or simply throwing them to care centers. To the end of altering these malpractices and enable better living conditions for animals the states convened in 1978 to put “Animal Protection Law” into effect. It is however only sad that this practice is still far below the desired level.

Westerners who could finally realize the existence of animals as late as 20th century despite animal-protection laws they issued are still far away from the love of animals that was once cultivated by Ottomans. Surprisingly our ancestors, long long years ago, granted the very same rights to animals just as they did to men. In the Middle Age Europe where people were stratified as high class or slaves the Ottomans established empathy with animals and treated the animals with dignity. In those ages even when it was under discussion if women were human beings in Ottoman lands the animals were treated with respect. This respect went so far that Europeans mocked the love and affection that Ottomans cultivated for animals.

What should be underlined here is: In order for something to be put into practice it does not necessarily have to be stated in a contract. What really matters is to internalize the spirit in the contract and consciously implementing it.

Our ancestors have cared for animals since the early history and they exemplified this love with the symbols of eagle, wolf, deer which they named Turkish tribes with, animal figures on tapis, animals that were the frequent motifs in their songs and literary works. With the adoption of Islam animal love embraced a new form. In the course of time animal love started to be seen as a religious obligation parallel to the motto "Love the created one for the sake of Creator." The Ottomans deemed all living beings as the trust of God thus it was essential to treat them all with affection and a brutal treatment would under no circumstances be tolerated.

We are today unbelievably far behind the road drawn by our ancestors. Man is no longer a part of nature which only makes it hard to feel and understand the animals. But in the past our ancestors lived in harmony with the nature, never ever slayed an animal but did their best to provide better living conditions for these beings.

Love for Birds in the Ottomans:

There is a variety of living beings in the nature and animals are part of this group. During the reign of Ottomans animals had always been protected and favored on both religious and humanitarian grounds. During those days there were even certain foundations aiming to protect the rights of animals.

By means of these foundations in times of turmoil our ancestors fed and watered the animals from small curbs and tanks (Merey 1978: 605-612) and also provided them shelter. These foundations attempted to protect all types of tamed-wild animal and toiled towards this end. This can be witnessed from the written sources and architectural structures they left behind. However a closer look at these resources and structures reveal that Ottomans had a particular interest towards birds. Indeed structures embroidered with bird figures grasp immediate attention in the art history of Ottomans.

In the specific age a wealth of bird species has been raised and protected throughout Ottoman territory. It is feasible to see from the history books and works that Turks cultivated particular affection towards birds even before they adopted Islam. Our ancestors believed in those ages that birds were sacred by virtue of their ability to fly. This exceptional ability was perceived to be an indication of might and power as well as one way of reaching the god of skies. Thus a divine feature was attributed to birds which received high respect. The reason lying behind the veneration towards birds such as stork, dove, sparrow, martin, collared dove is related to this approach. Killing, hunting or ruining bird nest were believed to be bringing bad luck. The meeting between Turks and Islam assisted in carrying the already existing love for animals to a top position. It is also referred in Quran that animals repeatedly call the name of God to set a model for humans (Nur Surah: 41). Considered to be close beings to God they have also been referred as bird of paradise or bird of angel (Aksel 1968: 4722). Prophet Suleiman was narrated to have used Hühüt bird as messenger and Ethiopian Army was reported to have been defeated by Swifts (Aksel 1959:35) and these events only contribute to the already strong position of birds.

In those ages Turks paid particular care towards "Bird" motif on accounts of all these reasons and employed this figure as a symbol in many places. The employment of bird as a symbol points to the significance paid to birds. Bird motifs drawn on the Seljuk Age China Works in Kubâd-Âbâd Palace (Önder 1967: 6-7), bird figures decorating front façade of circumcision room in Topkapı Palace (Mahir 1987: 127), peacock drawings in the tableaux smuggled and currently exhibited abroad¹ (Öney 1985: 45-46), carpets with bird motifs recognized by Ottomans as "servant with a bird" (Yetkin 1974: 97), bird embroidery in the handkerchief used in Sultan's Son Mehmet's official ceremony (Berker 1977:10), bird figure ornaments placed in 23616-23617-23623 inventory no redwoods that might have belonged to the Fountain Booth in İstanbul Maçka Military Museum (Barışta 1981a: 7, Barışta 1993b: 81) are just some of the examples. The Ottomans used a great number of bird motifs in almost all places of their everyday life which indeed points to the great veneration paid to birds.

Birdhouses in Ottoman Culture:

Our ancestors achieved great deeds for the whole humanity once they adopted settled- living. Particularly in the territory they lived in, they structured permanent works of architecture which also included birdhouses. As a matter of fact bird palaces established in those times clearly prove the love cultivated for animals then. Bird palaces provided shelter for birds in addition to serving as decoration of house. Such shelters integrated in houses became prevalent in Ottoman architecture after the 17th century in particular (Figure 1) (Eyice 1994: 571). These are only a few of the cultural works that were transferred from the past.



Fig. 1: Ayazma Mosque, Sultan III. Mustafa Mosque, Üsküdar/Istanbul, 1760-1761).

Birdhouses were man-made structures built to assist birds in sheltering and travelling (Bariřta 1994: 133). These houses were mostly made of the same construction material of the house (Figure 2), (Yavař 1994: 543) itself yet there were some others in the shape of a hole as well. It is possible to come across such birdhouses not only in Muslim sanctuaries but also in churches and synagogues² which actually underlines the love of bird amidst people from all religious faiths (Bektař 1998: 119). Nonetheless it is safe to argue that the presence of such sanctuaries in Ottoman lands alone indicates that these people could also have been originally affected from Ottoman Architecture. These structures reflect the traces of Turkish style architecture.³ Flat and pointed Turkish arch ornamentations were not widespread in Byzantium and Christian culture. Only a few remnants of this structure (Malik 1959: 40) is present today a sample of which is available in Ahrida Synagogue (Bektař 1998: 119).



Fig. 2: Sadr-ı Esbak Hasan Pasha Madrasah, (1745) İstanbul).

The samples of this architectural work known as Birdhouses or Bird Palaces are most common in İstanbul. (For more figures see Bariřta 2000) Additionally in Anatolian cities Sivas, Antalya, Amasya, Kastamonu, Kayseri, Nevşehir, Ankara, Sivas, Edirne, Kırklareli, Tekirdağ, Bolu, Bursa, Milas, Erzurum, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Mardin and Doğu Beyazıt it is also possible to come across these structures.

Bird palaces established till the ends of 19th century are indicative of the profound taste and mastery of Ottoman architecture (Figure 3) (Seçkin 1994: 468) as well as the high aesthetics and deep love for birds.



Fig. 3: Yeni Valide Mosque İstanbul/Üsküdar (1708-1710)

In addition to particular care towards high aesthetics and refinement (Aksel 1968: 4722-4726) the feature of the walls where bird houses were built also underline the magnificent love of Ottomans for the birds. That is related to the fact that these birdhouses were mostly positioned in the sunniest and calmest, highest and safest walls of houses and these nature and environment friendly houses also were also a taste for the eye. Bird palaces which used to be simple structures initially assumed a totally different character in the 18th and 19th century particularly. These masterpieces were ensconced under bridges, or safe walls of the mosques, madrasahs, palaces and houses.

Amongst these architecturally impeccable bird palaces which can readily set a model even for present day there are some models that are completely positioned on the wall as well as other models that go beyond the wall. The architectural model in the form of a palace outside was built during 18th century. These structures could be one-roomed or two and three rooms as well. In İstanbul it is quite normal to see those miniature bird palaces which have a window and balcony.

In the Eye of Foreigners, Ottoman Love for Birds:

Travelers from Europe cite in their own travel letters that they were struck with astonishment once they witnessed the treatment of our ancestors towards animals. Austrian Emperor Ferdinand's ambassador Flemish-origin OgierGhiselin de Busbecqwho visited İstanbul for the very first time in 1555 cited in this letter a plane tree expanding around itself. He also reported that under this tree bird sellers were waiting with all the birds with them and the passerby were paying money just to set all these birds free.⁴The twitters of these freed birds on tree branches were more than enough to make people who set them free happy since these people believed that it was the way birds showed their gratitude towards their saviors (Forster 2005: 166).



In a different part of his letter Busbecq mentioned that Turks had a great harmony with their horses so the horses recognized their riders on the spot, that they trained their horses with great love and care, adorned them with amulets to be safe from evil eyes, that they never beat their horses and even allowed them to come inside their houses.

Having visited Turkey between 1655- 1656 French-origin Jean Thevenot also penned similar expressions to exemplify the love of Turks for animals. He too mentioned that Turks went to the open market first to buy then to set birds free. He noted that the reason Turks set those birds free was that they believed that in the next world these birds would be the witnesses of their good deeds (Thevenot 1665: 95-97).

Thevenot also added in this report that that Turks left some of their inheritance to be used for the shelter and food of street animals.

Lady Montague is another foreigner who referred in her letter the impressions she received on the treatment of Ottomans towards animals. Lady Montague lived in Turkey, İstanbul for 2 years in 1716 with her husband Edward Wortley Montagu appointed as Ottoman Ambassador of Great Britain. During her reside she referred to the Ottoman approvingly in her letters. In one of these letters (Montagu 1998) she provided at length information as regards the treatment of Ottomans towards birds. LadyMontague in her letter mentioned that doves were particularly safeguarded since they possessed particular sacredness in the eyes of Turks. Furthermore she explained in her letter that Ottoman people also paid high respect to storks which they believed to migrate to Mecca in winter then travelled back from Holy Land. In her memoirs she also mentioned that storks that built nests in house roofs were never disturbed since households believed that would bring bad luck for the residents (Montagu 1973: 70-71).

Another traveler Gerard de Nerval referred to the birdhouses in his 19th century dated interesting research. Nerval in his work pointed to the bird-raising practiced by dervishes in tekkes, the existence of foundations serving merely to that purpose, the wooden, carved houses on the wall of gardens safe from humans. Gerard de Nerval stated that these were small bird houses built exclusively and solely for the birds (Nerval 1974: 113).

Traveler Edmondo de Amicis who visited İstanbul in the 19th century also mentioned in his work that Turks loved and protected numerous bird species. Birds feeling assured of the love and care humans had were

comfortable to live close to people and he continued in his letter that sparrows and some other species were so close to people that they could be fed from palm. Amicis continued in his work that birds built their nests under the eaves where they were not disturbed, that crows cawed in seven-tower, storks were protected, birds accompanied people from the top of sea and birds dominated almost all living spaces in Turkish lands.

Prussian von Moltke in his "Letters from Turkey" cited the benevolence of Turks. Moltke in his work reported that in the district of Üsküdar there used to be a cat hospital, a pigeon care-center in Beyazıt Mosque court and in the cemeteries there were small holes for the birds to drink water. Moltke also added that "these holes were filled with rain and animals could drink water in hot days when water was scarce".⁵

If we draw a comparison between today and past it becomes crystal clear that as a nation we are today far far behind from the deeds of our ancestors. Our ancestors viewed themselves as part of the nature and treated all animals and plants with respect knowing that they all had souls.

Some European writers expressed their astonishment with the fair treatment Ottomans paid to the animals during that age. It was indeed so astounding to see that certain rights that were deprived from citizens in their states were granted even to animals in Ottoman lands. These writers were on the whole approving these attitudes yet some of them found the extreme affection bizarre. One of these critical names was French Priest Du Loir (Dodurka, Tamer. "European States and Animal Rights in Turkey from the Past till Present Day" 05.04.2012. <<http://www.fatihbelediyesiyedikulehayvanbarinagi.com>>) French priest in his 1600 dated travel book stated that "The Ottoman valuation of animal love as if it were a religious task and treating the animals as if they were humans" was hilarious. Despite their efforts to mock such practices, the Ottomans never left their own way and continued what they believed to be true.

The Law on Animals Passed by Ottomans and Sample Events from the Past:

The Ottomans had cultivated such profound love and justice for animals that they did not have the heart even to disturb the spider webs in their houses. Indeed our history preserves similar examples one of which is the event reported in Velâyetname (Book on the Life of Muslim Saints). According to the reported information in 1140, a pigeon built a nest on top of the tent of Seljuk Sultan Sencer Bey. Upon realizing that Sultan Sencer left a watchman there and continued his military expedition. The watchman waited near the tent and kept a constant eye on it till the nestlings got mature enough to fly independently. Only after that had he removed the tent and left.

Another event exemplifying animal protection coincides with the age of Sultan II. Beyazıt. II. Beyazıt Mosque was built between the years 1501-1505. During construction stage the area was occupied by pigeons. Those pigeons became almost friends with workers and not left the area till the completion of mosque. Having witnessed this union, II. Beyazıt allocated from state treasury an annual budget of 30 gold coins to supply the pigeons and other birds with wheat, rice and corn and pay the salary of bird-taker in the mosque. This bird taker would be all year round in charge of providing bird food and health care of the birds in cases of sickness and injuries. The offspring of these birds are still alive in the very same mosque.

Sultan II. Beyazıt did not only care about birds but other animals equally. The Sultan allotted gold coins from the treasury to feed the street dogs in the same age.

Our ancestors protected the nature and lived in harmony. They never tortured any living thing and always protected their rights. The Ottomans actually put these laws into action rather than keeping in theory. To the end of implementing these applications they established foundations and passed laws. To illustrate;

- Foundations to protect and cultivate animals and trees were established.
 - Cat hospitals were opened in Üsküdar and Dolmabahçe.
 - These foundations fed the animals when food and water was scarce, they put water bowls for the animals (Merey 1978: 605-612).
 - To enable birds to drink water safely and easily, water bowls were put on the high walls in mosques.
 - During the reign of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror it was mandatory to place in the new constructions water bowls and drinking basins to enable birds to drink water safely and easily.
- Integrating bird houses to official buildings which is a tradition dating back to Seljuk age continued the same during Ottomans as well. The earliest bird house is cited to date back to 13th century building İzzeddin Keykavus Şifahane (Hospital) in Seljuk Empire <www.efgan.net>.
- Water bowls for birds in cemeteries is a practice specific to our civilization alone. Christian civilizations have no such tradition.
 - It was a law that near mosques and tekkes an area would be spared to provide care for the cats and dogs and cats would be fed each new day with liver and clean water.
 - Foundations were set to provide food, accommodation and health care service for the street animals. At the sole expense of these foundations huts were built to provide shelter for puppies and kittens. There were also regularly paid workers of these foundations in charge of supplying food and clean water to these huts.

- In freezing winter months, in order to keep wild animals on the hills, prairies and woods alive fresh meat, plants, salt, bird food and hays were left to their natural habitats. The cost of such food and salary of the care takers were either met by treasury or foundations themselves.

- It was strictly forbidden to hunt the offspring of game animals or animals at the stage of pregnancy or breeding.

- The Ottomans built refined and elaborate shelters for animals equaling to the beauty of houses. The best exemplifications are carved and decorated bird palaces.

- Our ancestors placed water bowls along the roadsides for wild animals and supplied great amounts of food to feed these animals.

- In the midst of winter, the deer with no food on the hills were fed by “deer caretakers”.

- During the time of migration it was forbidden to hunt birds.

- Kanunnâme⁶ enacted during the rule of II. Beyazıt was to protect the rights of animals (İstanbul İhtisâb Kanunnâmesi (Book of Law) 1935: 58-73, Akgündüz 1990: 296-297).

- During the construction of Süleymaniye Külliye (Social Complex) in 1550, a firman (decree)⁷ was passed to ban loading of animals with extreme weights.

- During the reign of III. Murat in year 1587 a firman (decree) was passed to ban loading animals with extreme weights.

- In 1600 it became unlawful to kill animals of which meat was not edible. New sanctions were introduced on edible animals. These sanctions were,

• the knives used to cut edible animals must be sharp enough,

• the animals to cut must be blindfolded,

• the butchers must be master of their domain,

• the animals should feel minimum pain while being killed. The state officials would periodically control the implementation of these sanctions.

- The state enforced certain regulations to protect the animals that carried supplies and ammunition of the official bodies and to provide them shelter in the specific locations till they died. In 1654 animal farms were founded for these animals where they could live and receive care till they died. In the course of time the number of these farms multiplied.

- The Turks donated their own properties for the accommodation and feeding of animals. In order to put their will into action, they applied to judges and officialized their wills. Judges commissioned bakers and butchers to enact these wills and bakers and butchers took care of the animals as ordered. The judge preserved the right to supervise these officials at all times.

- While citing his memoirs on Gurebahane-i Laklakan (House of the Poor Storks), Ahmet Haşim makes reference to “Haffaflar Çarşısı” (shoe seller market). The master of Turkish Literature refers to the existence of a square in the middle of this bazaar and a building providing care services to the elderly and wounded animals. As mentioned by Ahmet Haşim, in the 1700s our ancestors established for the immigrant birds and wounded injured, disabled birds animal hospitals in many cities located on migration route. One of these hospitals is the one in Bursa; “Gurabâhâne-i Lâklâkan”. This matchless masterpiece is still upright as if to teach a lesson to all humankind. This historic sample has been restored with the loans of Bursa Center, Osmangazi Municipality and presented to be appreciated by the whole humanity.

- In 1856 a new regulation was introduced to rest pack animals on Fridays and allow their relaxation on this specific day. Anyone violating the regulation received severe punishment. City police commissioned by Şehremin⁸ were authorized to inspect the residents.

- City police commissioned by Şehremin (mayor) checked the bellies of animals to detect if any animals were left hungry. If they found a hungry animal the owner was punished.

- Abandoned street animals were fed and hosted by the locals and tradesmen.

Despite all, there were some times when animals were treated violently during the age of Ottomans. Due to the uncontrolled jump in the number of street animals in İstanbul, during the reign of I. Ahmet, all dogs were collected and left to the Anatolian part of the city. Since religious motives forbade the murder of animals it was deemed to be the most appropriate solution yet it proved to be useless. Not long after dogs filled the streets of İstanbul again. As a consequence, during the reign of Sultan II. Mahmut and Sultan Abdülaziz, the event that was named as “Hayırsız Island” misfortune took place and all the dogs were recollected to be left on “Hayırsız Island”. Yet the local people believed that such practice would bring bad luck thus they forced the officials to bring dogs back. However due to the rise in the number of dogs in year 1910, a similar event to “Hayırsız Island” was experienced again. All the street dogs were collected and taken to the island again. Dogs left without food on the island had no choice but to kill one another. That is unfortunately one black mark in our glorious history.

It is unfortunate that in contrast to the rise in Westernization in our country, there has been a downward shift in the love for animals. That is really pathetic that though we should have been the ones teaching what is right to the westerners, we failed to become free of their dominating culture and copied their improper practices. Having roots with Anatolia where the right and love for animals was used to be at its peak, we are obliged to

question elaborately the reasons why we ended up in such a pitiful position. We kill the animals and plants ruthlessly and brutally to obtain more lands to fallow and eliminate the vegetation to save more lands. Indeed it deserves a detailed sociological analysis what has become of the mentality that once cultivated such profound affection for animals. This love was so impeccable that just to keep the spider's net intact our ancestors would delay cleaning their house till the time the spider spun a new web.



Conclusion:

We as the descendants of a nation whose ancestors built hospitals for street animals, by virtue of their great generosity and thoughtfulness never left animals hungry, built shelters for birds and water bowls, supplied food for the deer and wolves in the woods, assigned local police to check the health of animals in market and conducted a great number of model practices are unfortunately condemned on this present day with the charges of maltreatment to animals.

While our ancestors were sensitive towards any issue concerning nature, new generation is so indifferent towards animal protection just as they are on many other issues. Failure to protect the accomplishments of such great civilization, negligence in popularizing the relevant practices achieved in the past but simply following some rules to supposedly protect the animals is just a futile attempt. It is worth remembering that in an age when let alone animal rights but human rights were devalued a matchless bird hospital "Gurebahane-i Laklakan" was founded and by admitting that animals were alive beings entrusted by God the Ottomans set a unique example to whole mankind. In those ages birds were cured in hospital and their rights were also protected. The laws went so far that even chicken cutting was bound to certain rules. History evidences that such practice was only common in our culture. We are expected to appreciate the high level of consideration in those practices and should be proud of our ancestors instead of being critical. All the deeds accomplished by our ancestors are far from being ordinary and simple. At this point it should also be noted that simply extolling the past but not moving further might cripple the attempts to reach a solution. As the descendants of Ottomans we need to question what we have accomplished this day for the animals. It is so beyond comprehension that a nation who once loved each creature for the sake of Creator ended up turning a blind eye to animals.

Indeed can it be true that we have now become a nation with no love for the animals? The answers may vary since it is also possible that some people may dislike, fear or abhor animals. However regardless of feeling fear or dislike, no one is entitled to eradicate or torture animals. Much as animal raising is recognized as a toil amidst Turkish people, we do cultivate great love animals. Yet it does not mean that a house with no pet has no love for animals. In that case just because they have pets in their houses Europeans do not necessary love and care for the rights of animals more than us. What we attempt to detect hereby is not related to unraveling the more benevolent nation. Rather we aim to explore how we ended up in this position while we were once a tolerant nation.

The answer to this question is kept in the Westernization Movement of Ottomans. As we got closer to the West in terms of approach and culture, our attitudes towards animals changed adversely. Middle Age sentiment of the Europeans mistakenly advocates that "Man as the most elevated being has the right to exploit anything." This approach has affected us equally. Dominant Western culture achieved to carry us away from the culture unique to us. In reality animal love is closely linked to emotions. Alterations in our cultural tenets can reshape these emotions but should never ever eliminate them thoroughly. Thus instead of changing the laws on protection of animal rights the approach should be altered. Or in other terms what had already existed before should simply be copied. Indeed this study is not related to anything new but the things and deeds already done and documented in the past.

Notes:

1 As cited in H. Örcün Barışta's article issued on Armed Forces Journal one of those paintings is peacock illustration exhibited in Victoria and Albert Museum. The second one is available in Washington Freer Gallery of Art.

2 Bektaş reports that birdhouses placed on the walls of the sanctuaries from different religions can be identified in Ahrida Synagogue in Istanbul, Balat; the other one in Jewish Bathing Cubicle and Turu Sina Agency

Group of Buildings next to AyiosIoannes(AyaYani) Church, another one in Ayios Prodrumes Church, the other in Ayios Dimitrios (Aya Dimitri) Church and another one in St. İren Church.

A similar reality exists inPanteleimon Church in Salonica, Kıran Church in Safranbolu,Ulu Mosque originally known as St. Stefano.

3 Flat and pointed* arches are unique to works reflecting Turkish traditions, not present in churches or monasteries from Byzantium age or succeeding empires.

* www.birdunyabilgi.netweb site informs us that “Flat and Pointed arches” have circular, oval, horseshoe, pointed, sliced, flat forms. In Turkish architecture pointed (penci) and flat arches were more dominant.

4 Catching and setting birds free was a widespread practice amidst Turks. Evliya Celebi referred to this practice such: “Gentle women and men used to visit bird markets every now and then just to buy then set them free”.

5 This tradition is still observed in Manisa city though not as common as in the past. Local people put water in small buckets on the roadsides to quench birds and dogs which points to the existence of a long-rooted tradition.

6 Book of Law (Kanunname) is the equivalent of Constitution.

7 Firman (decree) refers to written order of Ottoman Sultans.

8 Mayor of that age.

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