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The Use of Courtyards and Open Areas in the Ottoman Period in İstanbul

Gülhan Benli

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1. Introduction

The courtyards of the mosques were gathering places frequently in use, public meetings always had a pleasant environment. The courts of the Imperial mosques and large building complexes called "*külliye*", have a regularity and symmetrical form. Evliya Çelebi [1], the famous Ottoman Turkish travel writer, tells us of the fragrance of the mosque courtyards, with fruit trees and flower beds. The types of Ottoman open space other than mosque-courts are open praying platforms; "*namazgah*", open air grounds promenade; "*mesire*" or meadows/large green areas which were called "*çayır*". Open praying platforms which Ottomans called "*Namazgah*" have regular forms, although the open spaces of the Ottoman urban model has been judged to be formless. The open areas of Ottomans were not architecturally designed; their margins are quite casual or simply enhanced by single monuments. The open air grounds, promenade (*Mesire*) are the actual core of the open air system. The open space when it is very large does not have a form as it is natural and has a manner of being situated in nature. They were quite widespread in public use in the 18th century and they represented a form that was latent in the preceding period.

2. A type of open area: Külliye

Until the mid-16th century, the daily life of the common people was experienced around the mosque, open market and residence. Since the social life was self-enclosed, public open spaces were not felt as required; instead the courtyards of mosques and *külliyes* were used as gathering places for the people. The *külliyes* built after the Sultan Mehmed *the Conqueror* conquered Constantinople, were building complexes which reached wide functional resources, possessing an urban vision, with their inherent structures of multiple functionality. These complexes which harbored various functions of religious service, education, social aid (hosting travelers, feeding the poor and providing health-care for the

sick) and trade, were designed keeping the whole of the city in consideration. One of the characteristics of the Islamic cities, great mosque and market constituting the city-center, is also prevalent for the külliyes built in İstanbul.

Large külliyes were institutions which addressed the needs of the society, enabling social development and betterment by providing social services. Large-scale külliyes in İstanbul (Fatih Külliyesi, Süleymaniye Külliyesi, Şehzade Külliyesi, Sultanahmet Külliyesi etc.) are enormous social institutions consisting of a mosque, *turbe* (a sepulcher for usually religiously reputable people), *hazire* (a reserved burial area surrounded with fences), *medrese* (or 'madrasah', muslim theological school), *sıbyan mektebi* (primary school for young boys), *şifahane* (hospital), *imaret* (public soup-kitchen), *sebil* (public water distribution place), fountain, market, lodging inn and a *hamam* (Turkish bath).

Major Ottoman Külliyes in İstanbul were located on the main road axis of the city and corresponded to the preceding Roman and Byzantine era forums; however the spatial differences in two types of spaces are the results of the differences between Byzantine and Ottoman social structures. The decisions concerning the urban life were announced to the public in mosques and mosque courtyards, thus they held the function of communication between the government and the people, well before the information age. The reactions of the community were evaluated in those public spaces, to be reported to the government. However, some courtyards were nested with the külliye of the mosque, or the neighboring market, undertaking several other functions. The surrounding shopkeepers came to the mosque for *namaz*, five times a day, and after the prayers, they held conversations with other shopkeepers usually about commercial, social or political issues. The children of those shopkeepers, who comes with their fathers attended to lessons of Arabic, Persian, religious rules and ethics in those mosques. In the courtyards of large, central mosques, chatters or peddlers were present through all day. These courtyards were also "appointment" points; those who came from the provincial areas or residents of peripheral neighborhoods used the courtyards as reference points, met each other in these public areas.

3. Natural and public parks – Promenades

Places for promenade, as today is called as "picnic" after the Western societies, were open spaces of common use in spring and summer months in the Ottoman society. Although promenades are not architectural works, they are a major historical element in the urban planning of İstanbul. In the heart of the 16th century İstanbul, the area around the Bayram Pasha Creek (Lykos Creek as called in the Byzantine era) was called Yenibahçe and was the most preferred promenade.

Promenades are places for countryside walks, which displayed a vast expansion in the 18th century. They were one of the first places the people preferred to visit for pleasure in leisure days and holidays. Being at liberty in those vast meadows always rejoiced the visitors. Enjoying the cool breeze of the Bosphorus in the shades of huge trees was a popular entertainment for the residents of İstanbul. During the public improvement works in the 16th century under the command of Suleyman the Magnificent, gardens in İstanbul were also

reconstructed. Many gardeners were assigned for the reconstruction works. Hasbahçe¹ in Sarayburnu, İstanbul; Halkalı Garden, Üsküdar Garden, HaydarPaşa Garden are some among those gardens.

On Fridays the people went to promenades with rowboats, carts, animals or on foot. Light rowboats, which were called “*piyade*” were built for using in tours of this kind. Families who did not have rowboats would rent them. As a result of the ongoing popularity of these excursion areas and outdoors, various promenades were formed in İstanbul, which contributes even more to the beauty of the city. Greenwoods next to the rivers of İstanbul stand out as pleasant places used by the people in spring and summer seasons. The hills constituting the topography of İstanbul create eye pleasing perspectives, with the green texture formed by the trees, shrubs and meadow grass.

4. Landscape designs in promenades

Promenades were composed in places allowed by the topography of İstanbul, according to the existing structure of the land, freely and with respect to the nature; being the largest common use areas and usually had flat meadows. However, there are much smaller promenades near the city, which made landscape designs necessary from a topographical view. The solution was hanging gardens in these areas. Küçük Çamlıca, Sütlüce or Çubuklu promenades of İstanbul were planned as terraces overlooking to the sea. In Sarıyer Çırcır promenade, the sustaining walls, whose drawing samples can be found in Drawing 1, are placed on the land by avoiding any damage on the natural beauty [2]. Today, some of the century-old trees in this area are cut down. The common feature of these examples is that the floor is divided into separate layers with sustaining walls and the open area is organized as a hanging garden, facing one specific direction. The separate terraces enabled different families independently. The trees were planted in layers on the terraces.

The handmade paths in the promenade are rare, narrow and are paved with stones which are in various sizes and not fully smooth. The paths are straight in direction, where the land allows. The paths are used for connecting the meadows at specific points. The formation of the trees had an important place in promenades. Large shades are formed by preserving the existing trees and planting other trees next to them. Reference points such as fountains, target stones and outdoor praying places, called *namazgâh* were placed in appropriate points in the area.

Flat meadows were separated for entertainment, games or sports. Plane trees were preferred in promenades due to its large shade. Starting in the 18th century, especially in hanging gardens, stone pines were used, by planting in rows [2]. It is possible to see many of those stone pines in many hanging gardens which are today in the boundaries of private properties. From the 19th century on, ornamental trees such as “Magnolia” and “Blue Pine” were two of the most popular choices. While the common people prepared food from the earlier day and brought them in food boxes, the rich people had their servants bring their food on rowboats.

¹ Hasbahçe: the garden of Sultans.

4.1. The most famous meadow and promenade of İstanbul: Kağıthane Promenade

The name of the Kağıthane River used to be Barbis in the Byzantine times. This open area became a promenade which hosted various entertainments in the beginning of the 1600s. Kağıthane Promenade was popular among the people of İstanbul for several centuries. It is one of the largest promenade of İstanbul, with respect to its length. For women who usually preferred travelling on land, a one-day excursion to Kağıthane was a cause to celebrate. For travelling they used a cart pulled by two oxen, decorated with red fringes. Inside the car cushions were laid and on top of it an awning was spread on a pillar (Figure 2).

Kağıthane was popular especially because of its water. The Kırk Çeşme Waters which was brought to İstanbul in the time of Suleyman the Magnificent was distributed from Kağıthane. Orchards and gardens were not allowed where the water conduits were passing in Kağıthane. In the meadows around Kağıthane, also grazing and building sheep pens were prohibited. Kağıthane Valley, whose width varies from part to part, and lies between two naked ranges of hills, formed an extraordinary effective and proportionate space. Over the river which traversed the promenade, two wooden bridges were built and a certain part of the river was taken in a canal with a wall.

As the longest canal built in Ottoman era landscape architecture, from the first bridge to the land, one part of the bank was reserved for women, when the other side was for men. Sometimes the popularity went on to congestion, and it made berthing the rowboats, or even rowing impossible.

According to the ancient Turkish traditions, 6th of May was accepted as the coming of spring and in the *Hidrellez* Festivals on that day hundreds of people from all over İstanbul would visit Kağıthane on boats and carts. The river passing in the middle of the area enabled a convenient atmosphere for boat rides. Huge clothes, rugs, carpets were laid on the ground to sit in the shades of huge plane trees, under the drooping willows and poplar trees on the banks. Tents were set up for groups.

The most frequent visits to Kağıthane promenade were in spring, and it was not preferred in hot months of the summer. In the area men sat under the trees, next to the river, while women mostly toured around in carts. Kağıthane promenade was both a place the people enjoyed, and also a place for official feasts, meetings and weddings. It is known that goldsmiths and saddler makers among the guild branches set up tents in the area for both entertainment and mercantile negotiations. Evliya Celebi mentions the plane, poplar and willow trees on the both banks of the river in the 17th century, and calls the area with the name of "*Lalezar*". This definition indicates that the tulip flower (*lale* in Turkish) was commonly used in the area. Eremya Çelebi Kömürçüyan (1637-1695) [3] tells us that from the huge dairy farms in the area, milk and yoghurt was provided to the Ottoman palace, there were huge trees and mills near the river and the people of İstanbul visited the place for entertainment. The reason why Kağıthane came to be known with the name of "Sa'dabad" in Europe is the foundation of Sa'dabad Palace here in 1722. Sa'dabad defines the complex

of palaces, summer palaces and gardens in the area and the style of entertainment and living.

The main landscape designs in the area started in 1719, in the times of Sultan Ahmed III. Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi who was sent to Paris as an ambassador was deeply affected by the Versailles, Fontainebleau Palaces and gardens of other French mansions and palaces. The mansions, summer houses, fountains and gardens around Kağıthane were built upon his descriptions of those gardens to the palace authorities. The area with the plane trees was arranged, rows of trees were planted on two sides of the river, and rose and tulip gardens were formed in 1721. The most important aspect of the area is the waterfalls created in here. Sa'dabad reached the peak of its fame during the "Tulip Era" of the Ottoman Empire. The usage of water together with architectural applications defines a periodic characteristic.

The Sa'dabad Summer Palace, with its marble floors, built on top of 30 columns next to the river, had an important place and left important traces in the Ottoman history, culture, arts and literature. Kağıthane Promenade kept its importance by being an actively used area until the beginning of the 20th century. The area which was for a period used as a military zone, now is filled with residential buildings. Today, apart from plane and ash trees, two types of trees which are not found in elsewhere in Istanbul: first is American swamp cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) and the second is Zelkova (*Zelkova carpinifolia*), a type of elm tree originating in North Persia. Four of the American cypress trees (trunk peripheries: 290, 285, 268 and 265 cm's.) and two of the Zelkovas (trunk peripheries: 285 and 277 cm's.) are in considerably good health and are estimated to be 200-250 years old [4]. Those trees are presumed to be the ones which could reach our day and age, among the hundreds of exotic trees brought from European plantations for this promenade area.



Figure 2. An ox-cart going to the promenade area, in a photograph by B. Kargopoulo, 1854.



Figure 3. Kağıthane Festivals in the beginning of the 20th century in a photograph by Berggren.



Figure 4. İmrahor (Mirahur) Mansion in Kağıthane Promenade area and the touring rowboats



Figure 5. Rowboats on the Kağıthane river, 19th century.



Figure 6. Çaglayan Summer Palace built next to the water canal by Sultan Abdulaziz in 1862 (Ircica archives). (Çaglayan Summer Palace was built in the place of previous sultan mansions. Its architects are Agop and Sarkis Balyan. The water of the river was taken in a canal, directed in front of the palace and it enabled an unlike landscape design)

4.2. The largest entertainment area of Istanbul: Beykoz Meadow

The area known as Beykoz Meadow or Tokat Garden, is known to exist since the time of Mehmed II the Conqueror (the second half of the 15th century). The meadow which lies kilometers deep from the Bosphorus is famous for the abundance of water springs. The river which passes through the meadow is dry today, yet it was a scene for rowboat tours until the end of 19th century (Figure 7) [2]. The area, like Kağıthane Promenade area was beautified with various fountains, mansions and halls.

The foundation of Beykoz Promenade was in the time of Mehmed II the Conqueror and it was a busier scene compared to other promenades. Special care was given to the area as Sultan Murad IV. (1623-1640) enjoyed throwing javelin and hunting in the area. “Waistcloth wearing” ceremonies, which represent the rises of status from apprenticeship to foremanship, and to the mastership were organized in this promenade for decades.

Groups of Istanbul craftsmen used to go to a promenade away from the city every year with their foremen and apprentices as a tradition of the guilds². They would set up tents in the area and stayed for several days, up to 10 days. For example, goldsmiths’ guild would go to Kağıthane, when shoemakers always preferred the Beykoz meadow. Guild governors also invited the sultan, by sending appropriate gifts via their assistants. Popular entertainments such as wrestling competitions between apprentice boys, *çengi*³ and *köçek*⁴ dancers, *orta oyunu*⁵ and *karagöz*⁶ performances, funambulist shows were organized. Promenade were never deserted through the summer season. When football was starting to be played in Turkey, one of the first game fields was Beykoz meadow, due to its flat topography. Also,

² Guild: a professional association, founded by organized merchants and artisans living in the same area.

³ Çengi: a female-dancer who uses cymbals

⁴ Köçek: a male dancer disguised as female

⁵ Orta oyunu: Ottoman folk theater performed in open space, inside the crowd

⁶ Karagöz: traditional shadow puppet play, based on imitation and conversation

the meadow had been used for military purposes, such as the accumulation of the soldiers and camping.



Figure 7. Beykoz Meadow, S. H. Eldem, A: Summer house and its garden, B: Fountain, C: Barracks, D: *Namazgah*, E: Seaport and summer house, F: Stable

4.3. Göksu Promenade, also known as “The Sweet Waters of Asia”

Two valleys parallel to each other, formed by Big and Small Göksu rivers, and the meadow in between two, was the most famous promenade area, known as “The Sweet Waters of Asia”, in the Anatolian side of Istanbul. Göksu Promenade which enveloped a large area, was an entertainment scene for officials of high-ranks, princes and aristocratic stratum until the time of Abdulhamid II., and the common people started to use the area in the time of Abdulhamid II.

Evliya Celebi tells that health-giving water ran in Göksu River and was surrounded by high trees. The season for Göksu started in the hot summer days and continued until autumn, unlike Kağıthane. On summer nights with full moon rowboat tours were organized on Göksu. Göksu Promenade was famous for its corn, eggplant and the fair that is founded in the area. Although a river passes the area like Kağıthane, the topographical structure is different. There were wooden bridges on the river and there were greenwoods, fountains and a *namazgah* around it.

Miss Julia Pardoe, who visited Istanbul in the 18th century, describes the Küçüksu meadow, where she went with Geselligkeit Duma Funckerin as such: “*The Valley of Guiuk-Suy*⁷, charmingly situated about mid-way of the Bosphorus, and called by Europeans the Asian Sweet Waters, owes its charm and its popularity to the circumstance of its being intersected by a pretty stream of fresh water, which, after flowing along under the shadows of tall and leafy trees, finally mingles its pigmy ripples with the swifter waves of the channel. [...] The visitor to Guiuk-Suy might fancy himself in Arcadia, so lovely is the locality. [...] On Fridays, (the Mahommedan Sabbath,) the valley is thronged with holiday-keeping idlers. [...] The Fountain of Guiuk-Suy stands in the midst of a double avenue of trees, which fringe the border of the Bosphorus. It is built of delicate white marble, is extremely elegant in design, and elaborately ornamented with arabesques. The spot which it adorns is a point of reunion for the fair idlers of the valley, when the evening breeze upon the channel

⁷ Guiuk-Suy: Göksu

renders this portion of the glen more cool and delicious than that in which they pass the earlier hours of the day ; and is only separated from it by the stream already named, which is traversed by a heavy wooden bridge...” [5].

Göksu Promenade started to fall into decay as from the end of the times of Abdulhamid II. and lost its vivacity with the announcement of the second constitutionalism. Today the meadow between the two rivers is filled with buildings, however the topography can still be perceived.



Figure 8. Women having a picnic in the promenade, 1854.

4.4. Sports field of Istanbul: Okmeydanı Meadow and Promenade

Okmeydanı, in the European side of İstanbul, near Kasımpaşa, was created by Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror by confiscating the gardens and yards in the area after he conquered the city. By decrees, intervening with the area, burying the dead and making gardens were prohibited [6]. In this large meadow there was a lodge for archers, a mosque, a sultan summer house, and a large *namazgah* with a marble pulpit. Also, at various places of this land, range stones with epitaphs were erected. These stones erected as memories of empire-wide archery competitions were each objects of art. Today this historical area is occupied by squatter houses and most of the range stones are lost. Ottoman sultans used to come to this land by sea, climbed to Okmeydanı on horses which stay in the stables and played a sport which is a favorite of Turks, “cirit” or also called as “çavgan”⁸. “Cirit” is a

⁸ Çavgan; Cirit match (an equestrian game between two teams in which short javelins are thrown) How the game is played: A one meter long, heavy and thick stick, made of either dried oak or peeled date tree branches is used. The players on their horses make two rows facing each other, by leaving a distance of 100 m. between each horse rider. One of the riders in a team shouts the name of a player in the opposing team, riding his horse towards, and the game starts. The player who rides his horse throws the javelin to his opponent and starts running back. The player to whom the javelin was thrown chases the runner and throws him the javelin. Meanwhile, another player from the team of the runner starts chasing the player who is chasing his team-mate and the games continues in this manner. The target in the game is the rider on the horse. If the javelin hits the horse, the thrower is disqualified. Therefore the riders employ different tactics to avoid the javelin thrown towards them. Ducking, drooping to the sides of the horse, and some

short lance, made of hard wood, with an iron head. The game is a centuries-old one, played on horses in two teams. It is a field and war game, which was played in many open areas in the empire. To attract the public attention, drums and shawms were played.



Figure 9. Sultan Selim III. Period “Cirit Field”, in an engraving by Melling.

5. The garden of the Sultan: Hasbahçes

It is known that in the Ottoman era, like all the houses and mansions, also palaces, summer houses and manors of the sultan had gardens. Gardens which were allocated to the sultan, outside the Ottoman Palace, were called “*hasbahçe*” and for the gardening works in those gardens, skilled gardeners were trained in the Bostancı Ocağı [7]. Most of the buildings in the Hasbahçe of the Topkapı Palace in İstanbul were centers for teaching science and arts. Architect Sinan, who carried the Ottoman architecture to its peak, and architect Mehmed Aga are known to have studied in the inspiring atmosphere of those hasbahçes. It was common practice to found and run gardens in various places of Istanbul for financial income and personal pleasures, and this was the task of the class of Bostancı, who had an important place in the Ottoman Palace. Officials of the Bostancı Ocağı served either in the Hasbahçe of the palace, or in other gardens outside the palace.

Gardens which belonged to the palace were scattered in various parts of Istanbul. The number of those gardens increased or decreased, in line with the choices of the sultan governing the Ottoman Empire. According to Evliya Çelebi, the number of the hasbahces was 21, and the number of promenades was 30. Most of them were used for daily visits. In some of the gardens and meadows, horses of the palace were grazed.

For resting and entertainment purposes, sultans preferred these gardens and promenades in and around İstanbul. Major parks and promenades were also open to the public in specific days of the week. Most probably these meadows were enjoyed by the common people of Constantinople in the Byzantine era. Hasbahces, apart from the palace gardens were the first examples of planned green areas. Besides, parks, orchards and graveyards were also open

acrobatics are employed. Every hit on target wins a point for the team. After all the players throwing their javelins, the winner is announced according to the number of hits.

areas used by the people. *At Meydanı* (Horse Square) in Sultanahmet, where the Sultan Festivals were organized is the only example for squares [8]. “Tersane Garden”, which was an open area used frequently by Sultan Mehmed II who conquered İstanbul, is located in Haskoy, İstanbul; between Sütlüce and Kasımpaşa. Although it is not in the boundaries of the Ottoman Palace, it is accepted as a palace garden and here a summer house was built and various vegetables and fruits of the best kind, such as lemon, bitter orange, citron, pomegranate, grapes, peaches, and apricots were grown. According to Eremya Çelebi, who gives a depiction of the place in the 17th century, the existing mansions in the area were allocated to the harem and its garden was decorated with flowers in all colours, and the stone pine trees grew high as they constituted a dome on top of the garden [3].

Evlıya Çelebi, in his work “Seyahatname” tells us about the Tersane Garden that various orders to liven up the place were given by Sultan Mehmet II. the Conqueror, various baths and summer palaces, rooms, halls, pools and tank-fountains were built, around 12000 cypress trees were planted in the area [1]. In the times of Murad IV, around 100 bostancı foremen were registered in the bostancı ocağı of the Tersane Garden. As these areas were only used in the summer months, the residents of the sultan were stone structures and the residents for the servants were either tents or wooden structures, giving rise to frequent fires which caused major problems in the area. Ahmed I, İbrahim, Mehmed IV, Ahmed III, and Selim III were Ottoman sultans who frequently used the green areas of the Tersane Garden. It is recorded in written accounts that Sultan Mehmed the Hunter who came back from a siege in 1677 watched the Galata craftsmen from his caged manor in this garden, and watched a funambulist in 1678 [9]. In the periods to follow, Tersane Garden’s name was changed to Aynalıkavak Garden and a stable⁹ was added as in many other hasbahces.

6. Main principles of open area planning in the Ottoman period

Use of water as a need

As the most crucial need of any living, water had been carried using pipe drains and aqueducts, then pools, and distributed to all over the city. For keeping the green texture in open areas and gardens, Ottomans took water from springs or creeks, forwarded it to artificial channels and brought water to the lands. For this purpose, a slight slope on the ground helped with easing the flow in the channels. Where the slope was not enough, artificial grades were formed in the channels. Considering the planning level, it might be stated that the network of channels which intersect in straight lines, pioneered to the geometrical landscape architecture. The sections and width of the channels were specified according to their types of directing and sharing the water. In joints and intersection points, storage reservoirs and circulation ponds were built and in time they were also changed into decorative pools.

Use of water for scenic and relaxation purposes

Water is one of the most actively used elements in the Ottoman architecture and landscape architecture. From hospital architecture to residential buildings, a variety of application is

⁹ Stable: the stable built for the horses of the sultan and other lesser palace authorities

observed. In open areas, water is used with elements such as decorative pools, waterfalls, cascades, etc. to bring comfort and vivacity to the atmosphere. In many pools, animal shaped sculptures which flowed water from the mouth were used as decorative elements.

Building hanging gardens

In Ottoman landscape architecture, applications of hanging terraces to make slopes level (which is an ancient eastern tradition) were plenty. As the slope of the land increased, the water flowed stronger and reached the desired speed. The garden ground becomes sloped, instead of horizontal. Due to these two reasons which cannot possibly be accepted, the ground was divided into horizontal layers, graded and the area is held by sustaining walls. These applications gave birth to hanging gardens. It became possible to enable a normal current for the channels in their shortened lengths and many elements to decorate the garden are achieved. These are points of superior view and comfort, together with the waterfalls, which are a result of the channels passing from one grade to another.

Road planning

One of the characteristics of the gardens is the elevation of the roads. Due to the roads in the shape of dams or levees, garden plans could keep their traditional axially and order.

Building kiosks on various points in the gardens

The Eastern garden is usually accepted as the beginning of the understanding of garden. Although scattering kiosks in various points in the gardens is accepted as an application which is widely practiced in the East, most of the Ottoman promenades and large gardens had kiosks and summer houses in small or large scales.

7. Effects of the Tulip Era on promenades

The period between the years 1718-1730 is named as "Tulip Era" in Ottoman history. Many changes and novelties took place in the Tulip Era in the Ottoman State. In this era when scientific advances were experienced, architectural activities were accelerated, translation committees were started, opening up new promenades to public use and reorganizing the old ones caused a more lively social life. The Ottoman women, who started going outdoors much more than they used to, who practiced more existence in the social life started to appear more in promenades. Even their clothing got more varied and more colorful. Not only the wealthy women, but women of all strata of the society had a sense of decoration in the era. In the accounts of the era, the lifestyle in Sa'dabad is one of the hot topics. Sa'dabad is not only the name of a promenade, or a palace, but the name of a huge structural complex and the name of the life style of the era. The bed of Kağıthane River was altered and a canal was built, and lands were given to 170 prominent statesmen to build eye pleasing manors on the both sides of the canal. A palace named Sa'dabad was built for Sultan Ahmed III between the years 1721-1722 [2].

Entertainments in Sa'dabad were the most important elements for enriching the social life in the Tulip Era. In old İstanbul gardens, first quadrangle shapes, then in the 18th century

rounded, oviform, sinuous lines, and then in the 19th century artificial lake forms gained importance. The first urban design example of the era, Kağıthane promenade also reflects this understanding [10]. Artificial hills, valleys, lakes and woods were intentionally formed to look natural. Natural gardens and promenades were placed in valley opening up to the Bosphorus or the Golden Horn, for the view. Groups of trees or single but monumental trees, water elements such as creeks, springs, canals, fountains, pools, stone or grass halls, viewing areas were formed in these vast areas. The flat meadow was kept for various entertainments, games, and sports activities such as javelin, wrestling and archery. Walkways were paved on the hills which surrounded the meadow as if an amphitheater. Especially the sloped land in Bosphorus gave possibility to various levee applications and in later times high cost levees with baroque curves found places in the proudest gardens [4].

8. Namazgahs

Namazgahs were places of praying outdoors, when mosque or prayer rooms were not available in the area. Namazgahs were built for summer services in the city and promenades. In namazgahs, Friday and Bairam prayings were held by groups of men. Also they were built out of the city, to cater for the needs of resting and praying while travelling.

Apart from the yards of the social complexes, the only open area typological element which has a certain architectural form is the namazgah. It was a platform, with a tiled floor, in square or rectangular shape, elevated from the surrounding area with a couple of stairs, with sides and top open. The architectural shape of the namazgahs are defined by the low walls enveloping the area, a pulpit and a mihrab. In some of the namazgahs on interurban road sides, there is only a rammed earth floor and a large stone which points to the direction of Mecca. On some of these stones, also the name of the person who financed the building of the namazgah, and various Quran verses are inscribed.

Where the climate is warm, there are also some examples where the top is covered with a roof (some have inner wooden ceilings) or shaded by trees such as plane or nettle trees. Around the namazgahs, fountains, wells or springs for drinking water and ritual ablution are also found. Some examples are two storied: first floor for a fountain, and upper floor for the namazgah. As the ones on the İstanbul – Baghdad road, some namazgahs which used to be on caravan-routes in the past, are in the city in our day, due to the growth of the cities. Also from some, only fountains or the mihrab stones are left, usually preserved as they were mistaken for tombstones. Also Julia Pardoe in her travel writings stated that the mihrab stone in front of the Kağıthane Summer Palace was a tombstone, by error.

9. Assessment and conclusion

It is difficult to specify and determine the scope, methods and principles of landscape architecture in a holistic way, for the public areas of the Ottoman era, as so few examples

remain. However, some information can be derived from the archives, engravings and works on the gardens.

In the designs of areas used commonly by the public, such as promenades, meadows and large gardens, largely and characteristically materials such as pools, sprinklers, fountains, sculptures were used. It is known that there were trees with large leaves which gave shades, fruit trees, pergolas, levees and stairs, sprinklers and sculptures, flower beds like roses and tulips and green areas around the pools. Geometrical elements are rarely used. In the designs of Ottoman gardens, applications which refer to the Islamic depiction of the Heaven were used: "Heaven is a garden in which rivers flow, with large pools and waterfalls, various trees, date palms and vineyards." With the desire to create a corner of the paradise in the world, plane, ash, lime, elm, nettle, bay, redbud trees; rose, tulip, jacinth and carnation flowers were used as decorative elements in the Ottoman gardens.

Tersane Garden, Kağıthane, or with its later name Sa'dabad, and the Beykoz Meadow are the most cited, most depicted and most famous promenades of İstanbul in both local and foreign sources.

The festivals held in open areas were also causes for social solidarity and social cohesion. People from all strata of the society participated in those festivals, some as audience, some as performers, and some as workers. Among the most important aims of these festivals were creating a communication between the palace and the people, to satisfy the public curiosity about the palace, to receive the ideas of the people on the government and to reinforce the legal status on the people.

Racynski, who visited İstanbul in the August of 1814, tells his observations that Turks organize horse races in Atmeydani, entertainments in Kağıthane, javelin matches in Sa'dabad yard, and in these organizations thousands of people, men and women gather, giving rise to different perceptions than of Eastern tradition [11]. Miss Julia Pardoe, expresses her observations in a 19th century İstanbul promenade: "[...] *To enjoy what none know better how to appreciate than the Orientals — a bright sky, a running stream, flowers, leaves, and sunshine. Bullock-carriages, covered with gay- coloured awnings of silken shag, fringed with gold; gilded arabas, drawn by swift horses ; and caiques, the number of whose elegantly-clad rowers denotes the rank or wealth of their owners [...]* It is, in short, a spirit-stirring scene ; and the poorer classes who are unable to command a carriage, or a caique, will cheerfully toil on foot from the city, under a scorching sun, in order to secure their portion of the festival."

When the arrangements of urban open areas in the Ottoman Empire until the 18th century are examined, areas designed with as little intervention as possible to the nature, due to topographical and sociocultural aspects, still develop a unique style. However, after the 18th century, with the effects of European styles, the Ottoman style begins to change. After this period, Ottoman is heavily affected by European fashions of Baroque and English Naturalistic trends, and although Ottoman forms are kept in Ottoman palace gardens and promenades to some extent, many formal and informal arrangements were performed in decorations and details.

Some gardens kept giving service to the dwellers of the city for a long time, and some were deserted in short time. In the gardens which lost their appeal, public buildings such as barracks, hospitals, and ship building yards were built and in our day the old traces of the gardens are impossible to follow. Those green areas of the past have been shattered, dived and turned into private properties under the pressures of modernization and dens urbanization. Levees in some gardens were demolished according to the gardening trends of the day, the flower beds were altered, century-old trees were removed and replaced with foreign decorative plants and with these endeavors became works of the new era as a whole.

The affection and respect towards the nature in the Ottoman Period, the modesty in the gardens inside the nature continued until the beginning of the 19th century. The Ottomans felt the hidden beauty and possibilities of the piece of nature they came across with the most refined and indulgent sense and knew how to process these areas. Ottoman naturalist garden, unlike the European, was never carried away with romantic inclinations; never felt the need to build artificial ruins, grotesque and exotic structures [2]. The topographical slope was not accepted as a rule in beds and roads, the courage to draw straight lines in nature was displayed and it was succeeded, never causing impropriety, never going beyond the frames. Usually in Ottoman landscape architecture the piece of nature processed is not forced, but affected with small retouches and inclusions. All its power is in choosing the appropriate places and the incisiveness in discovering them [2]. Geometrical gardens formed in narrow terraces and yards of the monasteries and chateaus in Italy, France and England, with the inspirations of Roman villa, also took Ottoman garden planning in its command. In the 17th century, France reflected her brilliance in magnificent perspectives, parterres and aqueducts, creating the richest gardens based on geometrical and axial patterns. In the 18th century Europe, instead of the small geometrical garden, baroquely French gardens become more prominent. The garden designs in the Ottoman, kept its characteristics until the end of the 18th century, due to its proximity to Eastern and Muslim areas [2].



Figure 10. People having fun in Kağthane Promenade in an engraving by Thomas Allom, R. Walsh, *Constantinople and the Scenery of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor*, 1838.



Figure 11. People having fun in Kağıthane Promenade in an engraving by Barlett.

Author details

Gülhan Benli
*Istanbul Aydın University Faculty of Engineering and Architecture,
Architecture Department,
Florya Campus, İstanbul
Turkey*

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