

The construction of Middle Eastern museology in the context of power–knowledge relationship

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The museum has been an important instrument in the construction of the past since the nineteenth century. It has been a symbol of modernization as an institution built in all capitals in Europe from the nineteenth century. In terms of the Middle East, the museum has represented an institution that reflects development within the framework of modernization movements. Developing regional museums in this context has not only been used as a means of imperialist annexation but also, for local rulers, a means of attaining Western standards of modernity. In the first case, the construction of the museum is about revealing the construction of the past and emphasising the role played by the ancestors of Western power. In this study, the power–knowledge relationships behind the development of the museum as an institution in the Middle East is examined.

Keywords: museum; Middle East; archaeology; memory; power–knowledge

Introduction

The social sciences examine human and social relations. After the industrial revolution, Western information power investigated the Other by making this an object of study. Orientalism, art history and archeology all became means of researching the Other. The Other, described in terms such as “pre-Asian”, “Near East” and “East”, which is close to the European centre, corresponds to the region conceptualised over time as the “Middle East”. The borders of the region were determined based on the area across which the religion of Islam spread. The importance of the museum at this point was its role in making the Other an object of study. In this context, it should be noted that the geographical area of the spread of Islam and the scope of the Middle Eastern sections of Western museums are similar.

The hegemonic power of elites was an important ideological tool in the era of nationalisation in Europe. This orientation naturalised acceptance of the idea of a nation. The significant factor here is that hegemony in the homeland is established through ideological apparatuses based on consent, whereas hegemony in the annexed territories is established through military power. This led to a negative perception of the existence of Western institutions in the Middle East.

This paper shows how the development of the museum in the Middle East progressed with the spread of imperialism. It examines the historical background of the museum’s appearance in Middle Eastern society as a fundamental institution of Western knowledge and power. The

first part, which consists of two sections, explores the role of the museum as a tool for social construction. The second part examines the effect of colonialism in the Middle East and the ideology of archaeological activities that constitute the museum's main presence in the region.

Social construction of the museum idea and power relations

The term “museum” refers to the muses of ancient Greek mythology.¹ The origins of the museum lie in the Renaissance, going back to cabinets of curiosities and house of wonders. The collections that constituted these proto-museums were shaped by the tastes of the collectors. The process standardised and, with the Age of Enlightenment, museum collections became an important reference not only for private collectors but also for power in the construction of the past. Museums, as tools of information power, took their place in the memory of the city in all European capitals in the first half of the nineteenth century. The museum can be seen through the metaphor of the Roman god Janus, with its structure consisting of tangible objects and the symbols expressed by these objects.²

As museums took on the role of building society's past, their importance as institutions and places of power increased. Elites treated museum visits as an important ideological tool. The environment in which the individual participating in artistic activity grew up has intensified interest in museums and similar institutions.³ It should be noted here that individuals tend to resemble the community from which their behaviour and actions arises. This process has been important for society's elites and has created the truth it has determined in the formation of the society.⁴

Governments also created dominant groups and built ideological symbols with them. Thus, depending on the relationship established with the culture chosen as the centre, the boundaries between the centre and subcultures were determined.⁵ In this way, ruling elite used the museum as a means of communication within the structure it created.⁶ As can be seen, the museum is not only a place where interesting objects from the past are collected, but also an important tool for cementing the power of knowledge.

After the industrial revolution, Western powers began to look for territories to annex for their raw materials and markets. This was necessary to continue the development of capitalism. Furthermore, they sought to minimise the influence of other states on the established order by creating monopolies. To illustrate, capitalist entrepreneurs complained that places annexed by the military were not real markets.⁷ Through the dissemination of Western taste, the colonial powers tried to change the consumption habits of the population in the annexed territories in their favour. To this end, firstly, the colonising powers sought to build on their information about the annexed territory. The process included mapping the topography of the annexed region. Underground and surface resources were classified, providing access to raw material sources and taxes that could be collected from the colonised. The Europeans who annexed the

¹ HAGEN, H. A. The History of The Origin and Development of Musuem. In: H. H. Genoways and M. A. Andrei (eds.). *Museum Origins Reading in Early Museum History and Philosophy*. California: Left Coast Press, 2008, p. 40.

² BENNET, T. *Museums, Power, Knowledge: Selected Essays*. New York: Routledge, 2018, p. 51

³ FYFE, G., ROSS, M. Decoding the visitor's gaze: rethinking museum visiting. In: *The Sociological Review*, 43(1), 1995, pp. 127–150.

⁴ GECIENE, I. The Notion of Power in the Theories of Bourdieu, Foucault and Baudrillard. In: *Sociologija*. Mintis ir, 10, 2002, pp. 116–124.

⁵ BOURDIEU, P. Symbolic Power. In: *Critique of Anthropology*, 4(13–14), 1979, pp. 77–85.

⁶ SENNETT, R. *Authority*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1993, p. 29.

⁷ WALLERSTEIN, I. *Historical Capitalism*. London: Verso, 1983, p. 34.

Middle East with the paradigm of modernisation built museums from this perspective. Behind these museum-building activities lay the desire to determine the relationship people established with the past.⁸

The power relationship, which started as the owner of magic and myth against the feeling of obscurity in the first societies, has been in a structure that controls and directs the circulating information. Starting from institutions such as family and kinship, the shadow of power has become the indispensable binder of all social constructions, together with the structures built as schools, factories, and educational areas.⁹ For example, Bentham's panopticon design (a prison in which all prisoners can be controlled by a single person) is an example of the expression of the idea of power in the modern period. According to Foucault, this system is analogous to the transformation of the whole society into an object of knowledge by power.¹⁰

Since settled communities began to form, control of information sources has been important to power. In this context, humanity's first settled communities focused on defence and protection. However, over time, this idea of protection turned into the desire to exert control over structures within the city. Governments that had tried to control public spaces in the past wanted to establish hegemony over all institutions with the modern period.¹¹ Rather than being seen as unconditional obedience to the government, control has become the rational equivalent of seeking the government's consent.¹² Foucault describes the importance of space and time regulation in the study of power relations in the context of surveillance and punishment. Power is not only an instrument of oppression (it provokes, warns, produces); it is exercised before it is seized (power can be seized in determined forms, such as the state or social class), and is associated with both the governed and those who govern. The basic premise of this relationship is that in the relationship between knowledge and power, the truth that is shown and demonstrated is determined by power.¹³ The regime of truth is a totality created for the production, organization and circulation of signs; truth is in a cyclical relationship with the system of power that produces it and the effects of power that disseminate it. Ideas and practices produced by governments will not disappear simply by saying "I do not accept". With the development of the state apparatus (finance, army, police) a new activity of power has emerged. The fact that power determines the daily behaviours, movements and attitudes of individuals is essential for the continuation of power. For instance, the knowledge that a child acquires through school education transforms that child into an object of power.¹⁴ Symbolic violence provides the formation of truth, as seen in the concept of punishment. This relationship is seen as a normal relationship between the dominator and the dominated. The naturalization of individual behaviour through symbolic violence has transformed ways of life in terms of speech, thought and action.¹⁵ This is recognition and acceptance between the dominant and the dominated. It illustrates the process by which the ruled tacitly accept the

⁸ BENNETT, T. *The Birth of the Museum*. London: Routledge, 1995, p.79–80.

⁹ HETHERINGTON, K. Foucault, the museum and the diagram. In: *The Sociological Review*, 59(3), 2001, pp. 457–475.

¹⁰ FOUCAULT, M. *Discipline and Punish The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage, 1975, p. 251.

¹¹ BURKE, P. *Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot*, New York: Polity Press, 2000, p. 60–61.

¹² BOCHENSKI, J. M. 'On Authority,' *Memorias del XIII Congreso Internacional de Filosofía*, 10, 1966, pp. 45–46.

¹³ DELEUZE, G. *Foucault*. University of Minnesota Press, 1988, pp. 89–101.

¹⁴ FOUCAULT, M. Truth and Power. In: C. Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge Selected Interviews and Other Writings*. New York: Pantheon Book, 1980, pp. 109–115.

¹⁵ BOURDIEU, P. *Masculine Domination*. California: Stanford University Press, 2001, p. 12.

imposed limits and often intentionally or unintentionally contribute to the domination being exercised over them.¹⁶

Truth is the information that the colonial power owners produced during the colonial period in order to seize dominance of the areas they annexed. Nineteenth-century colonial administrations aimed at the spatial transformation of annexed territories in this respect. In the next section, the development of the museum in the Middle East as a place that contains the starting points of history will be examined and its place in the knowledge–power construct is investigated.

The establishment of the museum in the Middle East Construction of the past, colonialism and archaeology

The historical construction of power was formed by elections that justified governments' hegemony.¹⁷ The hiding or destruction of documents, which are the raw material of historiography, by the hegemonic powers shows that government operates like a gigantic recording device that records the past according to its own self-perceptions. This phenomenon has ensured the permanence of hegemonic discourse with the emergence of the ruling elite.¹⁸ Classification of all sources for historiography and putting them in an accessible form, and how the writing will be presented, evaluated, and interpreted is determined by the choices of the power that implements this action.¹⁹ Especially, in the nineteenth century, historical literature gradually shifted to an ideological position. Historians went to the archives to find evidence to support their nationalism.²⁰

Archaeology gained importance as a science in the developmental period of nationalism. Ancient Greece and Rome, along with biblical archaeology, became important references for the development of romantic nationalism. From this nationalist archaeology, “celebratory” purposes emerged, such as to glorify patriotic feelings. Myths such as traditional folktales were bent to serve the interests of power. The imperialist states, which owned the archaeological discoveries, became the owners of discoveries and the legitimate heirs of the unearthed past.²¹ Europeans benefited from archaeology, which they used for their national identity, to assimilate the lands they annexed during the colonial period. To this purpose, postage stamps and coins were printed in which the archaeological artefacts annexed from colonised regions were graphically used, and artefacts from colonised culture were presented during the national celebrations.²²

Archaeology develops in three stages in the formation of the knowledge–power relationship. Firstly, it aims to show that the dominant power's ethnic identity is older and stronger than other ethnic identities, thanks to the cultural materials it possesses. Secondly, it

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 55.

¹⁷ FREEMAN, C. *Egypt, Greece, and Rome: Civilizations of the Ancient Mediterranean*. Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 10–13.

¹⁸ THOMPSON, P. *The Voice of The Past*. Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 3.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 26.

²⁰ IGGERS, G. *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2005, pp. 5–53.

²¹ SILBERMAN, N. Promised lands and chosen peoples: The politics and poetics of archaeological narrative. In: P. L. Kohl & C. Fawcett (eds.). *Nationalism, politics, and the practice of archaeology*. Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 249–252.

²² SILBERMAN, N. *Between Past and Present Archaeology, Ideology, and Nationalism in the Modern Middle East*. New York: Henry Holt Company, 1989, pp. 2–7.

ensures that all cultural productions are seen as valuable and respectable. Finally, it ensures that visions of the future are not built on a complete rejection of the past. Many modern states have claimed dominance over the land they control as the legal heirs of ancient civilizations, with the name of the state being the same as the historical empire.²³ Archaeology plays an important role in the construction of the future and serves as a national symbol. National symbols are based not only on victories but also on the presence of sacrificial ancestors. 'Israel's Masada and French Alesia are histories built for this.²⁴ When archaeology is considered alongside the construction of culture, emphasising its connection with the present will increase the reality of archaeology. It should also be noted that archaeology is a discipline that should be emphasised for all cultural systems. For example, nationalism was built on the locality of countries by making use of archaeology in the context of the romantic movement. National identity is about the continuity of the people living on the territory of the country and the importance of the citizenship bond.²⁵ Archaeology has provided important knowledge-building activity. Examining archaeology in the colonial period shows the development of the hegemony-building process. In this process, the act of exploration makes explorers the agents of the action, while the explored land and community are objectified by the explorers.²⁶

Colonialism refers to control by people from outside the region in question. Colonialism involves an extensive web of relationships, including trade, bargaining, enslavement, genocide, and rebellion.²⁷ Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, archaeology has developed as a discipline that aims to be "patriotic" and hold "the memory of the land".²⁸ Knowledge production and dominance over the knowledge produced are important for colonial administrations, which can dominate the power relationship by defining the discourse. Archaeological knowledge, based on chronological progression, also sanctioned the discovery and annexation of other cultures in the name of science. Therefore, the idea formed that the works annexed from colonial regions would be better exhibited in Western museums. The ownership of the Elgin Marbles exhibited in the British Museum was thus affirmed.²⁹ Establishing knowledge dominance over ancient cities was achieved by owning artefacts obtained from the city. It also fulfilled an important function that shaped history and ideology. Realising the construction of the past on land dominated by the colonial administration aims to ensure the justification of annexation. When the people living in the area where the ancient city is located do not see the past of the ancient city as their own, it confirms this phenomenon.³⁰

The view of the Muslim majority in the Middle East on archaeology is that archaeology refers to the pre-Islamic period of ignorance; they do not consider those who inhabited the

²³ KOHL, P. L. Nationalism and Archaeology: On the Constructions of Nations and the Reconstructions of the Remote Past. In: *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 27(1), (2003), pp. 223–246.

²⁴ SHNIREL'MAN, V. A. Nationalism and Archeology. In: *Anthropology & Archeology of Eurasia*, 52(2), 2014, pp. 13–32.

²⁵ TRIGGER, B. G. Romanticism, Nationalism, and Archaeology. In: P. L. Kohl & C. Fawcett (eds.). *Nationalism, politics, and the practice of archaeology*. Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 264–269.

²⁶ DUSSEL, E. Eurocentrism and Modernity (Introduction to the Frankfurt Lectures). In: P. A. Bove (ed.). *The Postmodernism debate in Latin America*. Duke University Press, 1993, p. 66.

²⁷ LOOMBA, A. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge, 1998, p. 19.

²⁸ BURKE, P. *A Social History of Knowledge II From the Encyclopedia to Wikipedia*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012, p. 217.

²⁹ MORO-ABADIA, O. The History of Archaeology as a 'Colonial Discourse'. In: *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology*, 16(2), 2006, pp. 4–17.

³⁰ GOODE, J. F. *Negotiating for The Past Archeology, Nationalism, and Diplomacy in the Middle East, 1919–1941*. University of Texas Press, 2007, pp. 31–33.

region in ancient times to be their ancestors. Western archaeologists have stated that the people living in the region today came later and were not related to the natives of the ancient cities. For instance, there is a hypothesis that Iran, the West of Arabia, was under Persian and Sassanian control, and the Arab identity of the region was formed by Islamic conquests.³¹ The colonial administration defended this argument and tried to show that ownership of land could change constantly. Thus, it was able to speak about the past of the land. This is one of the important reasons for archaeology's placement at the forefront of the colonial activities of the Western states. Interest shifted from the possession of archaeological materials from annexed regions to systematic research and production. As a result, a Eurocentric perspective dominated and the Other was defined.³² This was achieved through three models. First, the colonialists established their settlement in the annexed territory without involving the local community. Second, the colonial powers changed local communities as a result of their relationship with them. Finally, the life of the colonised area was influenced by the culture of the colonial power's homeland. This process has been constructed on the basis that the information about the annexed region was considered "unhistorical" by the annexing community.³³ In this respect, the first step was the acceptance of the power of colonial violence. The second step determined the limits of the discourse produced during actions such as thinking, speaking and writing and it was ensured that people knew when to remain silent.³⁴ Postcolonial movements in the Middle East developed in relation to defensive modernisation. The official withdrawal of the colonial powers from the Middle East did not necessarily mean that they gave up their desire to maintain economic and cultural hegemony.³⁵

Dominance over the colonial geography was achieved by bringing archaeological material from the colonies to the homeland. Such monuments and artefacts were exhibited in museums or in city centres. They were even used as national symbols by the colonisers.³⁶ For example, in Egypt or other regions annexed by Europeans, it was formed with the 'sublime' purpose of uncovering and saving the past from the people living in the region who do not understand its value.³⁷ For these reasons, nineteenth-century nationalism developed within the framework of modernisation movements. For example, Mehmet Ali Pasha brought in experts from the West to protect Egypt's ancient artefacts. For example, Auguste Mariette was assigned to the Egyptian Antiquities Service (1858). The process continued in the twentieth century with opposition to the colonial rule based on the concept of homeland. The formation of the nation provided the formation of cultural memory.³⁸

³¹ POTTS, D. T. The Gulf Arab states and their archaeology. In: L. Meskell (ed.). *Archaeology Under Fire*. London: Routledge, 2002, pp. 195–196.

³² BROOKS, A., YOUNG, R. Historical Archaeology and Heritage in the Middle East: A Preliminary Overview. In: *Historical Archaeology*, 50(4), 2016, pp. 22–35.

³³ JORDAN, K. A. Colonies, Colonialism, and Cultural Entanglement: The Archaeology of Postcolumbian Intercultural Relations. In: D. Gaimster and T. Majewski (eds.). *International Handbook of Historical Archaeology*. New York: Springer, 2009, pp. 32–34.

³⁴ MOGSTAD, H., TSE, L. Decolonizing Anthropology. In: *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology*, 36 (2), pp. 53–72

³⁵ ALKADRY, M. G. Colonialism, Globalization and Democracy in the Decolonized Middle East. In: *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, 24(4), 2002, pp. 739–762.

³⁶ KOHL, P. L. Nationalism..., pp. 223–246.

³⁷ GOODE, J. F. Negotiating..., pp. 68–69.

³⁸ HASSAN, F. 2002. Memorabilia: archaeological materiality and national identity in Egypt. In: Lynn Meskell (ed.). *Archaeology Under Fire: Nationalism, Politics and Heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East*. London: Routledge, 2002, pp. 203–204.

The reaction against colonial hegemony was mainly based on national independence and freedom. While national independence involved resistance and decolonisation, freedom involved the acceptance of democratic values. Decolonisation movements were mainly directed against the two great Western powers, Britain and France, in the Middle East.³⁹ The nationalisation of Iranian oil was a turning point in the development of postcolonial movements. Thus, the political decolonisation struggle spread throughout the Middle East.⁴⁰ This process continued in Egypt with 'Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal, after which rebellion against colonial rule spread throughout the Middle East.⁴¹

The main reason for the reaction against colonialism was the fact that it was a global economic network as well as the superior side in cultural relations.⁴² In the construction of this idea of superiority, the distinction between the colonialist and the colonised was drawn with thick lines on the lands where colonial activities took place. For example, while the spaces where the colonial administration lived were clean and modern, while the spaces occupied by locals were not.⁴³ In order to define the boundaries of the Other, the strangeness of the objects owned by the Other was emphasised and these 'local objects' became artefacts to display in museums.⁴⁴ Following this, archaeology and museums established the context of these objects by determining the period and intended use of the objects in their collections. This context also helped to define the place where the discovery took place. For example, many parts of the Middle East were named according to their relationship with the Ancient Greek and Roman past.⁴⁵ For example, the name Syria was based on ancient Greek texts referring to the country centred around Damascus.⁴⁶

This is similar to the requirement to refer to Western researchers in the production of scientific publications by non-Western researchers, whereas Western researchers are not required to follow and refer to non-Western authors.⁴⁷ In this respect, the next section analyses the background of the museum ideology constructed in the Middle East.

The construction of Middle Eastern museums

Although museums existed before the nineteenth century, they could only be visited by aristocrats or members of the ruling class who had the right to see the objects on display. The detention of individuals in prisons and the preservation of archaeological artefacts in museums both illustrate the ideology behind the formation of institutions in this period. In addition, the exhibition of private collections also started during this period.⁴⁸ Opening museums to

³⁹ ALKADRY, Colonialism...

⁴⁰ SCHAYEGH, C., DI-CAPUA, Y., Why Decolonization? In: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 52, 2020, pp. 137–145.

⁴¹ SHAKRY, O. "History without Documents": The Vexed Archives of Decolonization in the Middle East. In: *The American Historical Review*, 120(3), 2015, pp. 920–934.

⁴² HAASE, D. Decolonizing Fairy-Tale Studies. In: *Marvels & Tales*, 24(1), 2010, pp. 17–38

⁴³ GO, J., Decolonizing Bourdieu: Colonial and Postcolonial Theory in Pierre Bourdieu's Early Work. In: *Sociological Theory*, 31 (1), pp. 49–74

⁴⁴ MCTAVISH, L. *Defining the Modern Museum: A Case Study of the Challenges of Exchange*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013, p. 6

⁴⁵ LYONS, C. L., PAPADOPOULOS, K. *The Archaeology of Colonialism*. Getty Publications, 2002, pp. 2–7

⁴⁶ TVEDINES, J. A. The Origin of the Name "Syria". In: *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 40(2), 1981, p. 139

⁴⁷ CHAKRABARTY, D. Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for 'Indian' Pasts? In: *Representations*, 37, 1992, pp. 1–26

⁴⁸ BENNET, T. Museums..., pp. 23–25.

the public ensured that objects that were under the protection of the state were transformed into “works of art” and used as a tool of hegemony in the hands of the government. In the nineteenth century, the use of museums as a means of education and acculturation and the fact that the work of art was owned by the state aimed to create “citizen consciousness”.⁴⁹

In the context of colonialism, museums were used as an important means of communication, providing a voice over the annexed territory and culture. As a result, museums became mechanisms of vision and discourse. This process cemented the museum as a national institution in the context of rising secularism’s push against the power of the church in the nineteenth century. Through ideological institutions such as museums and libraries, European colonial powers exercised the power of their knowledge over the spaces they annexed. The art teachers of the British Empire trained at South Kensington Museum according to a special curriculum. The relationship between the coloniser and the territories it annexed was established through the creation of catalogues, brochures and exhibitions with similar characteristics, and the concept of taste was shaped by the influence of power. The construction of taste became ingrained as exams and student exchanges moved along the orbit of the colonial administration. The works of local artists from the colonies entered the international art market thanks to the artistic knowledge gained from the colonial centre.⁵⁰ Knowledge about the annexed colony was produced through archaeology, surface surveys and geography. The artefacts unearthed in excavations went to the colonial centre and knowledge produced from them was constructed on the basis of the institutions and the ideology of the coloniser. However, the number of artefacts unearthed in excavations meant that they needed to be preserved in the annexed region. To this end, local museums were initially established by the colonial state to ensure the safe continuation of its own knowledge production. Locality, in this framework, meant that the people were seen only as workers. The colonial administration emphasised the difference between the local people and the artefacts unearthed in excavations. The production of knowledge was based on the fact that the land was inhabited by different ethnic groups before the local population.⁵¹ The exception to this is that in areas of the Middle East where Christian populations are concentrated, the past is supported by the Christian population. For example, the French colonial administration in Lebanon constructed the Phoenician past in education with a primordialist understanding of history. However, the British colonial administrators adopted a different method from their French counterparts. They tried to prevent the Muslim-majority Egyptians from learning about the ‘past history of the Pharaohs out of concern that they might engage in a “national uprising”.⁵² The museum, as a place mostly connected with the bourgeoisie and aristocracy in Europe, followed a similar path in terms of local power in the Middle East.⁵³

The colonialist knowledge production of the Middle East was carried out by the usurpation of the cultures of other Middle Eastern countries that came under colonial control, as Napoleon did with Egypt. This is analogous to the Roman imperial tradition of bringing artefacts from the annexed place to the centre. For example, the obelisk brought from Luxor in 1936 became a symbol, unveiled by the king of France to a crowd of 200,000 people. Important monumental

⁴⁹ GRAY, C. *The Politics of Museums*. New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2015, p. 8.

⁵⁰ BENNET, T. *Museums...*, p. 8.

⁵¹ GRAY, C. *The Politics...*, p. 9.

⁵² WOOD, M. The Use of the Pharaonic Past in Modern Egyptian Nationalism. In: *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, 35, 1998, pp.179–196.

⁵³ NOORANI, Y. *Culture and Hegemony in The Colonial Middle East*. New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2010, p. 49.

structures of the ancient world were embedded in the cultures of colonial countries as their own symbols. Ownership of ancient-world artefacts constituted an important source of competition between rival states, as seen in the rivalry between the Louvre and the British Museum for the possession of antiquities during the colonial period.⁵⁴ Historical artefacts from the Middle East were included in the collections of private and public institutions in the West. The mystery over these artefacts was deciphered by experts working for the colonial administration. The Rosetta Stone, which was solved by Champollion in 1822, and the Behistun Inscription in 1847, were prominent discoveries in the West. Another important point is that the Middle East region is source of Mesopotamian myths and religious stories and is accepted as the centre of the world by the Abrahamic religions. In Western popular culture, information obtained from archaeological excavations (such as the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb) intensified during this period. The colonial governments established scientific associations and financed research. These included the Palestine Studies Fund (1865) and the German Palestine Society (1877). Western experts headed the cultural institutes built in the Middle East during this period.⁵⁵

Archaeological excavations in the Middle East played an important role, and museums grew with these activities. Western states were important supporters of archaeological excavations. For this purpose, they created associations and funds. Established by the British, the Egypt Exploration Fund (EEF) was the first institution to receive official permission to excavate in the Middle East. In this period, many adventurous scholars made discoveries about the past of the region. This includes ' Austen Henry Layard's work at Nineveh (1848) and ' John Turtle Wood's at Ephesus (1863). The acquisition and display of monuments was seen as the right of the colonial state. World exhibitions represented a race to demonstrate dominance over the artefacts from colonial regions. These exhibitions were organised under five headings: 1) machines produced by Westerners with technical knowledge; 2) handmade productions of people with artistic knowledge; 3) non-normal, "strange" or "monstrous" objects; 4) exhibitions which demonstrated ownership of the conquered territories; and 5) "primitive people" exhibited as trophies or for the purposes of scientific scrutiny. The short duration of the exhibitions increased the importance of the museum as an institution and permanently exhibited artefacts became a symbol of dominance over the archaeology, tourism, underground and surface resources of the colonised country. European audiences were able to acquire previously unknown (to them) information about the ancient world and the past thanks to the information presented in museums. In this way, archaeological objects became objects of knowledge for the audience.⁵⁶

Looking at the museum through the metaphor of the perpetuation of oral knowledge through writing, the oral narratives of past cultures are fixed through the museum's power of power of exhibition and closure. From this framework, the ruling apparatus regulated the basic reference points and behavioural rituals of culture and society.⁵⁷ For example, a new paradigm was created by the romantics of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, who refused to accept that Greece, which they saw as the origin of Europe, had been influenced by Africans

⁵⁴ KOHL, P. L. Nationalism..., pp. 223–246.

⁵⁵ EMBERLING, G. *Pioneers to the Past American Archaeologists in The Middle East 1919–1920*. Chicago Press Corporation, 2010, pp. 15–18.

⁵⁶ RIGGS, C. Ancient Egypt in the Museum Concepts and Constructions. In: Alan B. Lloyd (ed.). *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, pp. 1129–1153. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, p. 1129–1153.

⁵⁷ WOLFF, J. Cultural Studies and the Sociology of Culture. In: D. Inglis and J. Hughson (eds.). *The sociology of art: ways of seeing*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005, pp. 87–97.

and Semites. Instead they argued that ancient Greek culture formed without any interaction as a starting point.⁵⁸ The construction of the past emerged as an important concept at this point. Mythological references were perceived as texts emphasising the present.⁵⁹ Modern European states strengthened their power by attempting to use knowledge of the ancient world various ways. While the British fought with the Germans to claim the Greek past, the French latched onto Roman history, especially with the policies of Napoleon. High culture was measured by how much knowledge of the ancient world was possessed.⁶⁰ Memory is not only concerned with the past, both backwards and forwards, but also with the construction of the present and the future.⁶¹ An important example in this regard is that the Ottoman museology tradition emphasises land ownership; it aimed to show that it owned the ancient Anatolian past by preserving and exhibiting artefacts. The Jerusalem Museum, a branch of the Ottoman Imperial Museum, showed that although the Ottoman Empire was in a weak position, its deep relationship with land ownership continued these ambitions for the future.⁶² Moreover, the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb (1922) popularised Egypt's Pharaonic past. Through Pharaonism, Egypt has sought to remove itself from the Arab and Muslim regional memory and link it to Mediterranean civilisation and through it to the Hellenistic past and Europe.⁶³

The museum is an important institution that embodies the past through objects and information. The French Revolution and the subsequent opening of the Louvre Palace to the public (where previously it was only accessible to aristocrats) was an important starting point in the formation of modern museums. Granting the public access to knowledge of the past was a revolutionary development. Through this, museums gained an important function in the historiography of power, helping to build consciousness of citizenship and the national state by designating French peasants as French citizens.⁶⁴ A similar ideology was embedded in all European states affected by the revolution. With this ideology, the museum has enabled citizens to honour their own past. Owning past masterpieces allowed museums to actively participate in the writing of the future by taking the past as reference.⁶⁵ The museum thus became an important informational tool that colonial states could benefit from. Colonial states used archaeology and museums as knowledge production machines. For example, as Curzon said of Indian archaeology surveys, "It is our duty to dig and explore, classify, reproduce and describe, copy and decipher, admire and preserve".⁶⁶ This construction continued with the colonising state's goal of creating colonised societies that think and behave like itself. For this purpose, the colonising state provided training to the elite that it wanted to benefit from among its own officials as well as the local people. Private schools built by western states were mostly

⁵⁸ BERNAL, M. *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization Volume I*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1987, pp. 440–441.

⁵⁹ FREEMAN, C. *Egypt...*, p. 22

⁶⁰ Ibidem, pp. 648–649.

⁶¹ ASSMANN, J. *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*. Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 46–50.

⁶² BEATRICE L. and TASKOMUR, H. The Imperial Museum of Antiquities in Jerusalem, 1890-1930: An Alternative Narrative. In: *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 55, 2013, pp. 6-45.

⁶³ WOOD, M. The Use of the Pharaonic Past in Modern Egyptian Nationalism. In: *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 35, 1998, pp.179–196.

⁶⁴ WEBER, E. *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914*. California: Stanford University Press, 1976, pp. 17–18.

⁶⁵ BAZIN, G. *Museum Age*. New York: Universe Book, 1967, p. 195.

⁶⁶ ANDERSON, B. *Imagined communities*. New York: Verso, 2006, p. 199.

built for the elite. The increase in the social status of children studying in foreign schools, thanks to the education they received and the languages they learned, increased the importance of these schools.⁶⁷ The tastes of individuals studying in these schools differed from those of the local community. Therefore the colonial power formed individuals who were dependent on it and did not fit the patterns of the local society. Bourdieu's concept and the argument that the cultural environment⁶⁸ of the family creates the taste of the individual shows that the taste in colonial regions is formed through education.

Determinations were made about the Middle East, the object of knowledge of the West. In this way, views on the East were legitimized and the continuation of knowledge production was ensured with these ideas.⁶⁹ The discourse created at this point transforms what is defined into an object of knowledge. As a result of that process, the discourse is accepted by those who recognize it. For example, local elites in the Middle East also used the museum discourse. Egypt is as an example of this process in the Middle East. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, under Mehmet Ali Pasha, the belief that modernisation could be achieved by becoming similar to Western countries became the dominant view across the region. This was exemplified by Egyptians who went to Europe for their studies. The personal story of Tahtavi, an important political and cultural figure of the period, details the process. Tahtavi went to France and realized the importance of museums there. When he returned to Egypt, he argued for a greater understanding of the importance of museums.⁷⁰ The first museum established in Egypt was the Bulaq Museum. It opened in 1858 and focused on the Pharaonic period. It aimed to legitimise the relationship that the West had established between Ancient Greece and Egypt. The museums built in Egypt were mostly linked to the ancient past, as were the first museums founded throughout the region. Another example is the Museum of Islamic Art, opened in Cairo in 1884 at al-Hakim Mosque.⁷¹ The influence of the Europeans in Egypt was dominant in the emergence of the museum. The "Egyptian Community Association" (1828) was established to create a "meeting point for travellers" in Egypt. In 1839, archaeological education was provided in Egypt based on archaeological texts from the association's library. In 1835, the Egyptian Antiquities Service was established. It was announced that permission had to be obtained before removing any antiquities from Egypt and that any attempt to do otherwise would be treated as smuggling. The first law stating that antiquities belonged to Egypt was enacted in 1835. This law clarified that any antiquities to be taken out of Egypt should be subject to a permit.⁷² Within the framework of this conservation policy, it was decided to establish a museum in Egypt to preserve local artefacts and enable both Egyptians and Westerners to learn about the region's ancient heritage. A building was constructed in the garden of the language school in Ezbekiye under the directorship of Tahtavi.⁷³ This organisation operated within the French orbit until Britain annexed Egypt in 1882.

⁶⁷ BASU, A. *Essays in the history Indian education*. New Delhi: Concept, 1982, pp. 63–66.

⁶⁸ P. BOURDIEU P., DARBEL, A. *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and Their Public*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997, p. 136.

⁶⁹ SAID, E. *Orientalism*. London: Penguin Books, 1979, p. 13.

⁷⁰ TAHTAVI, R. *An Imam In Paris: Al-Tahtavi's Visit To France 1826–1831*. London: Saqi, 2011, pp. 20–21.

⁷¹ DOYON, W. The Poetics of Egyptian Museum Practice. In: *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan*, 10, 2008, pp. 2–38.

⁷² IKRAM, S. Collecting and repatriating Egypt's past: Toward a new nationalism. In: H. Silverman (ed.) *Contested Cultural Heritage: Religion, Nationalism, Erasure, and Exclusion in a Global World*. New York: Springer, 2011, pp. 141–154.

⁷³ REID, D. *Whose Pharaohs? Archaeology, Museums and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009, pp. 54–58.

However, 'British interest in Egypt started with the "Egyptian Research Society" well before this invasion took place. The Egyptian Research Society aimed to support excavations initiated by British archaeologists in Egypt. Before the British occupation, the removal of artefacts found during the excavations abroad was prohibited in accordance with the recommendation of the French archaeologist Auguste Mariette. In 1882, an excavation of Tell el-Maskhuta, undertaken with the support of the Egypt Exploration Fund, broke the law. After the British Museum became a patron of the excavation, the exodus of excavated artefacts abroad increased.⁷⁴ Although Egypt was under British rule, the fact that the administrators of the Egyptian Museum were French meant that most of the archaeological finds that were exported went to France. However, as stated by the British ambassador to Ottoman Empire, Sir Stratford Canning, "the increase of British dominance in the excavations will thus lead to the Louvre museum being defeated by the House of Montagu" (i.e., the British Museum).⁷⁵ Hence, many artefacts unearthed during the excavations were taken abroad by excavation teams without being recorded.⁷⁶

The construction of the museum as a Western tool of colonial truth was realised with the establishment of archaeology and national museums across the Middle East. Subsequently, developments related to the identity of the nation occurred. Similarly, Islamic Arts museums were set up after archaeology museums, starting in the Ottoman Empire and Egypt at the beginning of the twentieth century. The first step became clear as a national museum was established, followed by the Museum of Islamic Arts. In this respect, museum development progressed according to a similar process. The spread of museums was first seen in imperialist policies and the annexation of non-Western countries by Western powers. Museums then gained visibility in the annexed territories. This led to the museum being seen outside the West as an instrument of hegemony of Western power–knowledge.

Conclusions

In terms of power, the museum has ensured that the myth of the past is fixed with objects. In the pre-museum period, the ownership of objects by individuals resulted in these collections gradually coming under the control of the state. This led to an increase in the importance of artefacts. As part of process, the museum, which was established as a means of fostering citizenship, was exported from colonising states and used as an ideological device of the West. The first reason for establishing museums outside the West was to preserve seized artefacts before they were brought to the colonial homeland. The second reason was so that colonial powers could demonstrate their power to other states and society. In this process, architectural visual culture was realised within the framework of the colonial country's architectural plans. Urban planning in colonial territories was also important in this respect. Cities built by Westerners were called new. Areas left as relatively untouched as the "old city" were characterized by decrepit buildings and disorder, while the new cities were the opposite. Cultural hegemony was created through the architectural construction of libraries, museums and similar structures. This phenomenon was aimed at the colonial homeland but also undertaken to establish hegemony over the people of the annexed region. The colonial rulers' conceptual construction of the museum was based around the important role of the ancient

⁷⁴ STEVENSON, A. Egyptian Archaeology and the Museum. *Oxford Handbooks Online*, 2015, pp. 2–3 https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1460661/1/Stevenson_Egyptian_Archaeology_and_the_Museum.pdf.

⁷⁵ KOHL, P. L. Nationalism..., pp. 223–246.

⁷⁶ MERRYMAN, J. H. *Imperialism, Art and Restitution*. Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 227.

world in the region's past and the Western concept of these lands as the "heir to antiquity". The colonial administration determined that the people living in the Middle East were themselves settlers from other places. Thus, based on their assumed role as guardians of their antiquities, they normalised the removal of artefacts in the name of preservation. In addition, the local elite of the annexed territories saw art as a means of cultural development and visited these new museums. They also encouraged this appreciation among members of the communities they influenced.

The expansion of the museum in the Middle East went hand-in-hand with the expansion of the imperialist movement. In addition to legitimising their ownership of the annexed territories, the colonial rulers sought to establish hegemony over the country's past by means of museums and archaeology. In this way, power created memory by owning both the land and the past. They morally justified this by asserting the natural responsibility saw in themselves. This attitude is embodied in Rudyard Kipling's "white 'man's burden" metaphor. In the Middle East, that "burden" of responsibility is embodied by the museum institution, developed to save the past from local communities that do not understand its value. The museum was thus conceived of as a place that justified the post-Ottoman nation-state in the Middle East.

Today, Middle Eastern countries have themselves established and supported museums, aiming to raise the national consciousness of their citizens and demonstrate that they can and, indeed, do protect their past.

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