

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE TURKISH HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY TO THE FIRST STAGE OF THE  
GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAM FOR THE PROTECTION  
OF MONUMENTS IN EDIRNE (1933-1941):  
PRESERVATION POLICIES AND IDEOLOGY IN THE  
REPRESENTATION OF ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

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**Introduction**

Although this paper focuses on the first campaign of restoration works carried on in a scientific base right at the beginning of the Republican period in Turkey, the main aim is to discuss the restoration activity essentially from an ideological point of view.<sup>1</sup> In particular the study stresses how the preservation practice gained immediately an institutional value as much as it become a mean to re-code historical buildings according to an ideological agenda, whose prime goal was to popularize the image of a nation grounded on its architectural heritage.

The paper takes in consideration a set of restoration works realized in Edirne and in its surroundings between 1933 and 1941. These works were included in the agenda of the governmental Program for the Protection of Monuments directed by the Ministry of Education and executed, as from 1933, on a national scale by a special committee

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<sup>1</sup> An early version of this paper has been presented on the Architecture History Conference/Turkey I, held in Ankara at the Middle East Technical University on October 2010 (abstract published). This revised and extended version intends to offer a critical contribution in the study of early restoration activity in Turkey. The study originates from the investigation of Bruno Taut's official involvement, as a foreign expert, in a group of restoration works included in the State Program, see: Giorgio Gasco, "Bruno Taut and the Program for the Protection of Monuments in Turkey (1937-38)", *Metu JFA*, 27: 2, pp. 15-36. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Çetin Aykurt head of the archive of the Turkish Historical Society, who gave me his kindly support in examining the material of Halil Ethem Eldem's legacy. I wish also to thank my friend Jülide Zeynep Öztürk for her valuable help in translating part of the official reports published by the Committee for the Protection of Monuments and by the Association of Edirne Monuments Friends.

(*Anıtları Koruma Komisyonu*). The case study of Edirne quite suits to discuss in a critical fashion the aims of the project carried on by the State. Moreover it gives evidences on the articulated operative structure of the program that implied the reciprocal involvement of three main institutional actors: the Ministry of Education (*Maarif Vekaleti*), the General Directorate of Pious Foundations (*Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü*), and the Turkish Historical Society (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*).

On one hand, the restoration activity in Edirne disclosed immediately an evident ideological character, since it became the privileged practice to present, for the first time, the historical buildings as a monuments of the nation. By this point of view the paper stresses the importance given to the dissemination of the results and to the display of this recovered past that found its outlet in a dynamic publishing activity supported especially by the Turkish Historical Society that allowed Edirne's restoration works to become the best show-case for the effort of the Ministry.

On the other side, the agenda of this set of works, in spite of the peripheral nature of the context, actually counted, among other actors, the involvement of a number of key figures of the Turkish intellectual and political milieu: from the professors of Istanbul Fine Arts Academy Celal Esat Arseven and Bruno Taut to the members of the Turkish Historical Society Halil Ethem Eldem and the General Kazım Dirik.

The synergic cooperation between different institutions, brought out by the case study of Edirne, allows to interpret the beginning of restoration activity in Turkey as the result of a modern cultural policy whose prime objective was to display the historical buildings of the country in terms of national icons. Furthermore the paper explores the ideological side of these works, stressing their value as a pioneering enterprise of a modern nation that celebrated its emerging culture in the protection and preservation of monuments as a sign of progress and civilization.

### **State and Restoration**

Although a proper policy on protection and restoration issues had been already started in Turkey during the Ottoman Empire,<sup>2</sup> it is pre-

<sup>2</sup> In late Ottoman time (specifically during the *Tanzimat* period) the governmental structure supposed to deal with these issues was named "Regulations for Ancient Monuments"

cisely with the foundation of the Republic that the first scientific restoration works were set up thanks to the effort of the Directorate of Antiquities and Museums under the Ministry of Education.<sup>3</sup> With the foundation of the Republic, the State charged of both control and direction of monuments. For the first time restoration works were managed by a central power in an organic and rational way. This meant first of all a clear success from a scientific point of view, inasmuch the works were carried on in a methodological way according to a specific and precise program. Moreover it had also an effective set back at political level, for it stood as evidence of the efficiency and modernity of the republican government, an effective and thoughtful institution able to direct both the study and the protection of its national heritage. The fortunate circumstance arisen with the foundation of the Republic, enabled the State to play that central and prime role defined by the professor Albert Gabriel as the sole necessary condition for the successful setting up of a work and research program in the field of monuments protection.<sup>4</sup> Alongside a series of considerations regarding the protection of the national heritage, the French professor pointed out the primary necessity to fix a set of methodological rules to guide restoration works in an effective and univocal way on a national level. In order to deal with this aim in the terms of a national project, the role of the state, then, assumes a decisive importance for the coordination and management of the different activities involved.<sup>5</sup> In particular, Gabriel stressed how a restoration project is the result of an integrated process that includes several operative steps: from survey to document-

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(*Asar-ı Atika Nizamnamesi*) established in 1884. The head was Osman Hamdi Bey, the founder of the Imperial Museums and the Fine Arts Imperial School (*Sanayi-i Nefise Mekteb-i Alisti*). In 1917 this structure was re-organized in the shape of a Committee named "Council for the Protection of Ancient Monuments" (*Muhafaza-i Asar-ı Atika Encümeni Daimisi*) and its direction was entrusted to Halil Ethem Eldhem at that time Head of both Imperial Museums and Fine Arts Imperial School. Yet the responsibilities of both were restricted only to the monuments included in Istanbul municipality. The control of repairing work on territorial scale was managed by local institutions in connection with religious power, *Vakıf*, entrusted to take care of pious foundations like Islamic schools, Tombs, and Mosques. See: Emre Madran, *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Kültür Varlıklarının Korunmasına İlişkin Tutumlar ve Düzenlemeler: 1800-1950*, ODTÜ Mimarlık Fakültesi, Ankara 2002, pp. 107-109.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, p. 109.

<sup>4</sup> See: Albert Gabriel, "La Restauration des Monuments Historiques Turcs", *Vakıflar Dergisi* 1, Ankara 1938, pp. 11-19. Albert Gabriel (1883-1972) was a French architect and archeologist, and the director of the Institut Francais d'Archeologie in Istanbul.

<sup>5</sup> Idem, p. 14.

ing the structure and the major spatial features of the buildings, from careful cataloguing and recording of all the problematic issues to the preparation of detailed cost estimates. This kind of central management and scientific approach was effectively carried on by the Turkish State under the direction of the Ministry of Education. The necessity to outline a general program to direct restoration works in a scientific way surfaced as a prime task after 1930. At that time the question concerning the protection of cultural assets had become central in the Turkish cultural debate,<sup>6</sup> charged by an open political attitude. The protection of the historical heritage indeed assumed a symbolical role for the identity of the Nation. The restored monuments in fact were strategically presented in terms of national icons able to embody the identity roots of the country.

The task was entrusted to the Ministry of Education under the name of *Program for the Protection of Ancient Monuments*. This Program was defined by the Ministry of Culture and approved by the committee of ministries on 28 June 1933<sup>7</sup>. The main aim of this program was to ensure a basic and consistent orchestration of the Government's efforts and to manage the practical activities on the territory by means of a multilevel operative scheme. On one side the program centered on the Ministry and on the Directorate of Antiquities and Museums (the governmental expression of the former in the activity of protection and preservation of the cultural assets); on the other it was able to penetrate over all the territory, thanks to the action of a scientific committee based in Ankara<sup>8</sup> and assisted by a series of local boards in close touch with the museums and cultural institutions of their respective regions<sup>9</sup>.

Moreover, two other Institutions were entrusted to cooperate with the Ministry to work out the Program: an Official Department called

<sup>6</sup> See: Üstün Alsaç, *Türkiye'de Restorasyon*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 1992, pp. 15-19.

<sup>7</sup> Anıtları Koruma Komisyonu, *Anıtları Koruma Komisyonunun 1933-1935 Yıllarındaki Çalışmaları*, İstanbul Devlet Basımevi, İstanbul 1935, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> After an initial study phase, when the agenda of this Committee faced the practical side of protection works, a brand new office was established by ministerial decree on 15/06/1936 with the duty to execute all the survey operations. This survey office (*rölöve bürosu*) was based in the Fine Arts Academy in İstanbul. Sedat Çetintaş was appointed to the direction of this other governmental body while Halil Ethem Eldem was assigned to supervise the projects and the research developed inside the office. See: Madran, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

<sup>9</sup> See: A. S. Ülgen, *Anıtların Korunması ve Onarılması*, Maarif Matbaası, İstanbul 1946, p. 23.

General Directorate of Pious Foundations (*Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü*)<sup>10</sup> and the Turkish Historical Society (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*)<sup>11</sup>. The cooperation and the synergy between these two Institutions and the Ministry of Education was beneficial to establish an effective diffused management of the heritage and eventually it was thanks to this trilateral machinery that the program was able to be executed as an ideological strategy. Beside the aim to carry on, for the first time in the country, a restoration program on scientific basis, the State *Program for the Protection of Ancient Monuments* indeed manifests how the celebration of the past heritage played a recognized role for the benefit of the National Ideology.

In this respect the Turkish Historical Society especially played a key role as the privileged platform for the discussion of all the problems ingrained with the protection of the historical heritage of the nation. In particular the intense and high quality publishing policy of the Society eventually succeeded in the attempt to popularize the efforts of the State by the dissemination of the first results. The definitive structural outline of the Society was settled during the first two congresses, that actually were a powerful showcase to celebrate the achieved advances. The second congress in particular was devoted to discuss the topic of historical heritage at large, including in the objectives of the association the collaboration with the Ministry in the common aim of protecting also the architectural monuments<sup>12</sup>. To state the importance of this congress an entire issue of *La Turquie Kemaliste* (the the most powerful propaganda journal edited by the Ministry of Education) was devoted to present and illustrate the event<sup>13</sup> (Picture 1). The organizational structure of the congress clearly reflects the operative synergy at the base of the Ministerial Program at that time already set in motion: the Minister of Education, Saffet Arıkan, acted as the chairman of the congress, and the vice-president of the Turkish Historical Society, the professor Afet İnan, together with the professor Halil Ethem Eldem, acted as vice

<sup>10</sup> The General Directorate of Pious Foundations was established in 1924 as a Governmental Institution after the abolition of *Şer'iyye ve Evkaf Vekaleti*, although only in 1935 its general features were defined by Governmental Decree (2762 sayılı *Vakıflar Kanunu*).

<sup>11</sup> The Turkish Historical Society was established in 1931 with a first set of responsibilities regarding archaeological studies. The organization and the tasks of the Society were defined during the first two national congress in 1932 and 1937.

<sup>12</sup> See: *Türk Tarih Kongresi 20-25 Eylül 1937* (proceedings of the congress), Istanbul 1943.

<sup>13</sup> Muzzafer Göker, "Le Deuxième Congrès d'Histoire Turque", *La Turquie Kemaliste*, 21-22, 1937, pp. 2-3.

chair-persons (Picture 2). Halil Ethem Eldem, in charge since 1935 as the director of the scientific committee of the Society, supervised a preliminary research project devoted to check the condition of monuments in Ankara, Istanbul, Bursa, Izmir and Edirne.<sup>14</sup> The Turkish Historical Society, under the supervision of Halil Ethem Eldem, carried on in the following years a systematic research on the history and in particular the architectural heritage of Turkey.

The main goal of this congress, apart from setting the basis for future researches, was to glorify the efforts of the Society (and consequently of the State) through the study of History, which was until then quite confined in the field of archaeological research. Consistently, with this idea to put the study of history on stage, a history exhibition was organized in the *Dolmabahçe* Palace in Istanbul to successfully complete the congress (Picture 3). The main body of the exhibit was devoted to display a series of ancient remains coming from archaeological excavations in different part of the country.<sup>15</sup> A section was devoted to represent the historic architectonic heritage of the country to demonstrate the new horizon of the Society (Picture 4). With the second congress the necessity of a close collaboration between the Society and the other Institutions engaged in the State Program was stated; in particular, a coordinated plan of work was officially established as a common agenda to be shared between the Turkish Historical Society, the General Directorate of Pious Foundations and the Ministry of Education. The proceedings of the congress state the new role of the Society as it follows:

“... Other activities of the Society.

... d) Protection of historical heritage of our country. The Turkish Historical Society published a declaration in order to disclose to the public the different initiatives connected with this duty. How it is stated in this declaration, the main aim of the Society is to co-operate together with the Ministry of Education (*Maarif Vekaleti*) and the

<sup>14</sup> Under the name *Türk Tarih Araştırma Kurumu Programı Avan Projesi*, this research program had been set by the Turkish Historical Society according to a complex template that included different operative areas. See: Madran, op. cit., pp. 151-153; Afet İnan, “Türk Tarih Kurumunun 1937’den 1943’e Kadar Arkeoloji Çalışmaları Hakkında”, *Belleten*, VIII:29, pp. 39-51.

<sup>15</sup> The setting of the exhibition, as it is possible to grasp from the pages of *La Turquie Kemaliste*, seems quite an anticipation of the main displaying organization of the future museum of Anatolian Civilization whose construction was already under discussion in early 1937. See: Gasco, op. cit., pp. 22-24.

General Directorate of Pious Foundations (*Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü*) in order to succeed in study of the Turkish history.”<sup>16</sup>

### **The Agenda of the Ministerial Committee for the Protection of Monuments**

The first step of the governmental program was the establishment in 1933 of a specific Committee for Monuments' Protection (*Anıtları Koruma Komisyonu*)<sup>17</sup> with the task of directing the preliminary stages for the preservation of monuments in Central Anatolia. The Committee counted as a members, Macit Rüstü Kural (architect), Sedat Çetintaş (architect), and Franz Miltner (archaeologist).<sup>18</sup> The activity of this committee was fully devoted to manage a systematic work composed by a wide range of tasks, from the organization of photographic surveys to the drawing up of descriptive reports for each enlisted monuments, from the definition of a detailed strategic plan with operative phases to the preparation of economic analysis.

The committee was entrusted by the Ministry of Education to accomplish this program and set to work immediately according to a three-year schedule (1933-1935). This preliminary phase of the program, which was mainly characterized by an extensive survey campaign, was completed with the publication of a detailed report in 1935 (Picture 5). Results and evidence from this report give a broad picture of the efforts of the scientific team of this committee in the fulfilment of the challenging task of giving monuments back their prestige and dignity, defined in the report pages as *the mission for tomorrow*.<sup>19</sup> This phase of work was carried out by the architect Sedat Çetintaş, responsible for the measured survey drawings of buildings, and by a photographer, in charge of producing a complete photographic documentation for the purpose of classification and official registration of monuments, and for the preparing of diverse publications.

<sup>16</sup> *Türk Tarih Kongresi 20-25 Eylül 1937* (proceedings of the congress), Istanbul 1943, xxxvi.

<sup>17</sup> See: Madran, op. cit., pp. 108-109. This Committee started immediately to work and in 1935 it published a full report illustrating the agenda of its first two years of activity, see: *Anıtları Koruma Komisyonu*, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> Idem, pp. 11-12. The report refers to a photographer too, but only his surname (Schültz) is mentioned.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 6.

The construction of this visual material was conceived to assure an immediate popularity to the historical buildings of the country<sup>20</sup>, and turned out to be effective in order to put the past on display in the shape of a cultural-historical heritage shared by the nation. The committee drafted a broad agenda of initiatives to popularize the past as a national value, including the collaboration with the publishing network of the ministry to diffuse the results of their scientific works at large, the preparation of an illustrated map to visualize the historical and cultural heritage of the country, and the editing of 3500 post-cards illustrating the monuments of the country in the aim to display and sell them in museums.<sup>21</sup> The common aim of these initiatives, and in particular the latter one, was to display the new appearance of the ancient buildings, that, rescued from a state of neglect, were then presented in the new status of monuments, as the first cultural-historical assets of the Turkish nation.<sup>22</sup> As might be expected, the report blamed the Ottoman Empire for this state of neglect and held up the new nation as an example of strong respect for the roots of its own past, a modern nation that views at the protection and preservation policies as a sign of progress and civilization.

The scientific and rational organization that distinguished the activity of the Committee, allowed the protection of historical buildings to gain an immediate popularity. Moreover, as a result of the modern cultural policy pursued by the Ministry of Education, protection and restoration activity became the effective tool to introduce to a large audience the buildings of the past in terms of treasures of the Nation. The significance of antiquity, in fact, was transformed into a romantic value shared by people, and became a chance to address the emotional attachment of citizens to the national state. The works realized in Edirne are very suitable to evaluate in a critical fashion this ideological exploiting of the past.

### **Edirne and the Visualization of the Past**

In the Thrace region a local association assumed the responsibility of the Ministerial Committee for the protection of the monuments. It

<sup>20</sup> In 1935 was organized in Ankara an exhibition of the survey drawings of Sedat Çetintaş. The exhibition counted 50 drawing boards illustrating especially monuments in Bursa and Edirne. See: *Ibidem*, p.12.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>22</sup> It is not by chance that the major part of the minor repairing works concerned cleaning works on the façades of buildings or on their valuable decorative structures.



was officially established on October the 4<sup>th</sup> of 1935 with the name of "Association of the Friend of Old Buildings of Edirne and surroundings" (*Edirne ve Yöresi Eski Eserleri Sevenler Kurumu*). In the same year a statute was published in the shape of a booklet; its set of 20 articles illustrates the aims and the structure of the Association<sup>23</sup> (Picture 6). At the time of its foundation it consisted of 77 members among which two personalities stood out: the General Kazim Dirik, Senior Inspector for the Thrace region<sup>24</sup> and Honorary Member of the Turkish Historical Society, who held the position as head of the association, and Esad Serezli, the director of the Pious Foundations (*Evkaf*).<sup>25</sup> Their presence as central figures in the Edirne Association is a clear evidence of the operative structure of the Program for the Protection of Monuments, centered, as it has been already stressed, around three governmental institutions: the Ministry of Education, the Turkish Historical Society, and the General Directorate of Pious Foundations.

In the 1939 general congress of this local association a report illustrating the first period of its activity was published<sup>26</sup> (Picture 7). The report includes a list of the works on some of the most significant historical buildings of Edirne.<sup>27</sup> Although these interventions concerned minor repairs as well as cleaning operations, the report emphasizes how they were essential to ensure the complete protection of these buildings explicitly defined as *national monuments*. They are no longer simply buildings being in need of treatment, they are monuments in a condition of neglect, forgotten. The ultimate meaning of these works is somehow to increase the importance, the symbolic value of those buildings. This act of "giving value" reaches its apex when the buildings are officially declared as monuments. To elevate the buildings to the status of monuments in fact it means eventually to give them back the digni-

<sup>23</sup> Eski Eserleri Sevenler Kurumu, *Edirne Ve Yöresi Eski Eserleri Sevenler Kurumu Tüzüğü*, Edirne 1935.

<sup>24</sup> The regional governorship of Thrace was the second General Inspectorate (including the provinces of Kırklareli, Edirne, Tekirdağ, and Çanakkale) to be established by governmental decree on February 19<sup>th</sup> 1934. See: *Birinci Genel Müfettişlik*, Istanbul 1939, p. 194.

<sup>25</sup> Eski Eserleri Sevenler Kurumunun, op. cit., pp. 9-11.

<sup>26</sup> Eski Eserleri Sevenler Kurumu, *Edirne Ve Yöresi Eski Eserleri Sevenler Kurumunun 1939 Umumi Kongre Raporu*, Istanbul 1939.

<sup>27</sup> Idem, pp. 5-6. The list includes among others the following buildings: the complex of the student dormitory (*Darıssbyan*) near the *Selimiye* Mosque, the *Kervansaray* of Ekmekçioğlu Paşa, the Han of Rüstem Paşa, the structures of the Hospital (*Tıp Medresesi-Darışşifa*) of the *İkinci Beyazıt* Mosque, and the *Sokullu* Hamam.

ty due to an architectural asset, namely to put them on display, clean, renewed, restored to their former splendor.

Thanks to the unremitting action of the Association, the works on the monuments in Edirne found a very fertile terrain to emerge as exemplar interventions on a national level. This success depended very much on a large activity of dissemination and visualization of the results that had been already pursued as a prime objective in the agenda of the State Program for the Protection of Monuments. In line with the priorities set by the ministerial Committee in 1935 in fact, the report of Edirne Association gave particular emphasis to the significance of publishing leaflets and other promotional material concerning the works in progress. The generation of an immediate and broad public diffusion of the results achieved by the Association, proved to be essential to celebrate the salvage of a number of local monuments and their assimilation as a national heritage.<sup>28</sup>

The Turkish Historical Society seems to have played a leading role in the construction of a specific visual material to present those monuments in the shape of national icons. As it has been already pointed out, Halil Ethem Eldem in particular, was the most influential figure for the supervision of the whole activity of research and promotion in the field of the protection of monuments on the behalf of the Historical Society.<sup>29</sup> In the case of Edirne the first decisive action was the preparation of a set of postcards portraying the main monuments which were included in the agenda of the Association of the Friend of Old Buildings of Edirne and surroundings. These postcards, sealed inside an envelope, have been recently found in the archive of the Turkish Historical Society, among the items forming part of Halil Ethem Eldem's legacy.<sup>30</sup> The envelope has been posted on January the 21<sup>st</sup> 1937 from Edirne by the Director of the local branch of Pious

<sup>28</sup> In particular the report refers the decision to deliver such publications in the pavilion of Thrace at the International Fair of Izmir, see: *Ibidem*, p. 10.

<sup>29</sup> See: Madran, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

<sup>30</sup> Turkish Historical Society Archive: HEE (Halil Ethem Eldem's Legacy), box 3, envelope 6 [15 items]. The body of documents that compound the legacy of Halil Ethem Eldem was entrusted to the archive of the Turkish Historical Society in 1939. The legacy is kept in the photographic session of the archive and it consists of a large collection (1721 items) that includes private and official documents, manuscripts, and in particular visual material illustrating art works and monuments from different Turkish cities. I express once more my gratitude to the Director of the Turkish Historical Society Archive, Dr. Çetin Aykurt, for the kindly permission to photograph and to publish this material.

Foundations, Esat Serezli, and sent to Halil Ethem Eldem's home address in Istanbul (Pictures 8, 9). The set consists of 14 postcards of the same size and it has been edited according to the usual template of actual postcards: a photographic image stands on the frontal side, the back side reproduces the typical layout useful for mailing (Pictures 10-37). The reverse of each postcard is signed by Esat Serezli who annotated in his own writing the essential information concerning the subject of the front image, together with the date.<sup>31</sup> The 14 photographs portray different features of the principal mosques of Edirne,<sup>32</sup> some show the buildings from the outside, others from the inside, some give a view on architectural structure or decoration details, others illustrate the main elements that characterize the interior of mosques.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to this set, the envelope includes another postcard dated June the 25<sup>th</sup> 1936 that most likely was intended as a sample for the following series (Pictures 38, 39). Slightly larger in size than the others, on the frontal side it portrays a close view of the balcony of one of the minarets of the Selimiye Mosque and on the back the blank space is filled as it follows:

"Estimated Excellency Halil Edhem  
One of the balconies of a minaret from the Selimiye  
Masterwork of Sinan in Edirne.  
Edirne 25-06-936

Architect of the General Inspectorate  
Mazhar Altan "<sup>34</sup>

The design of this sample in general terms conforms with the graphic style of the final set, yet the subject portrayed in the front image is decidedly different. The close view of one of the balconies of a minaret from the Selimiye, actually suggests a quite sophisticated approach that seems to have been essential in the idea proposed by the

<sup>31</sup> All the 14 reverse side of the post cards set have been filled by the Serezli's hand writing on January the 1<sup>st</sup> of 1937, six days before the mailing took place.

<sup>32</sup> The mosque of Bayezid II, the Selimiye mosque, the *Uç Serefeli* mosque, the *Eski* mosque (also named after the Sultan *Çelebi*), and the *Miradiye* mosque.

<sup>33</sup> In particular, the semicircular niche that indicates the *kible*, the *Mihrap*, a raised platform from which the *imam* addresses the congregation, the *Minber*, and the *Hünkar mahfili*, the gallery particularly designed for the Sultan.

<sup>34</sup> Mazhar Altan was the Architect of the General Inspectorate of Thrace region (*İkinci Umumi Müfettişlik*) whose Senior Inspector was at the time the General Kazim Dirik.

architect Mazhar Altan. The idea to portray the monuments not directly, but focusing on architectural or decorative details, implies the reference to a cultured audience, able to read and interpret this kind of representation. On the contrary, for the editing of the final set, Esat Serezli followed a less experimental line, preferring a decidedly classical kind of representation in which the buildings are framed in conventional external compositions or in bright interior views. Nevertheless the final result discloses a prominent professional taste. The set of postcards prepared by Serezli, in fact displays fine and carefully edited images intended for a broader audience. These images were eventually assembled according to an aesthetics format instantly comprehensible. Far from the sophisticated approach of Mazhar Altan, the postcards edited by Esat Serezli were designed to transmit a clear message to an audience as larger as possible. Finally this project aimed to present for the first time in Turkey the monuments no longer as a privilege for an elitist culture but as a cultural heritage reserved for all the nation.

The set of postcards portraying the monuments of Edirne stands as a quite evidence of the mechanism set in motion by the State for the Program for the Protection of Monuments, based on a cooperation between those same institutions here represented by the three official figures, the editing of the postcards is centred on.<sup>35</sup> It is obvious how the design of these postcards had taken on a clear ideological value more than a simple documentary one. These images disclose a precise goal: to enhance the visual potential of those monuments turning them into a powerful set of icons ready to be diffused throughout the country. Eventually the popularizing of these images would generate a strong popular attachment for the monuments of the nation, hence conforming in this way another long term project supported by the Turkish State: the construction of a national identity. The benefit originated by such visual editing project is quite evident. The images of the monuments of Edirne were just a part of a broader design that included monuments from many other cities and localities listed in the agenda of the Committee for the Protection of Monuments. As a whole these images would compound a collection of national treasures that the

<sup>35</sup> Esad Serezli was the director of the Edirne branch of the General Directorate of Pious Foundations, Mazhar Altan the architect appointed to the regional governorship of Thrace (the institution that directed on the behalf of State all the official activities in the region), Halil Edhem Eldem the supervisor of the research activity of the Turkish Historical Society.

State was able to rescue from decline and ruin, and eventually to edit in the form of symbols of the nation.

The set of these images discusses the very concept of monuments and enriches their value. The traditional idea of monuments as a remembrance of the past is here supplemented with another interpretation that considers the restored monuments as a chance to celebrate the present. Once restored in their original features, unquestionably the monuments become a means to glorify the past, but in the same time they are brought back to the present to act as effective representations of the roots of the new nation, and as a very visible sign of the modern and scientific protection policy pursued by the State. The visualization of the past, of which the postcards set of Edirne is a significant example, is meant to construct on a popular base a modern idea of cultural heritage. In this way the ultimate goal is to unite the country through the construction of a collective vision, where the idea of the nation appears under the guise of a landscape of monuments.<sup>36</sup>

### **Bruno Taut in Edirne**

In connection with the rise of popularity of the restoration works in Edirne, an episode apparently of minor importance, occurred during the preliminary phase of the activity carried by the Edirne Association, which is worth mentioning here.

In January 1938 the German professor Bruno Taut,<sup>37</sup> together with his colleague professor Celal Esat Arseven,<sup>38</sup> his assistant Şinasi Lugal and a group of 25 students of the Istanbul Fine Arts Academy,

<sup>36</sup> This has been a common process in those countries where the historic preservation activity emerged as a strategic policy for the formation of the Nation State. The case study of the early restoration works in Edirne represents a pioneering attempt in this direction undertaken in Turkey. Moreover it proves how the practice of preservation developed according to an ideological plan and it became an effective tool to make visible the State cultural policies intended to boost in the public a sense of national identity.

<sup>37</sup> Bruno Taut (1880-1938) arrived in Turkey on November 1936 after being appointed both head of the Architecture Department in the Istanbul Fine Arts Academy and director of the Architectural Office of the Ministry of Education. The official status connected with these two positions afforded Taut a so widespread respect in the country that he was asked to express his opinion in circumstances escaping from his specific duties. This visit to Edirne was not an isolated case, for Taut was also involved in other two occasions with reference to restoration works. See: Gasco, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-36.

<sup>38</sup> Celal Esat Arseven (1875-1971) was a professor of History of Architecture and Town Planning in the Architecture Department of the Academy under the Taut's tenure.

paid a visit to Edirne<sup>39</sup> (picture 40). On the very first day of their stay Bruno Taut was asked to draw up a report on the current works:

“In Edirne. There in Europa Oteli with Celal Esat. Then with Nürullah and the Vice-Director. With them and with ca. 25 students to Senior-Inspector General Kazım Dirik. We and students again with car (as a matter of facts a Camion) given us by him [who] in the morning was with us during the inspection. He wants a report!”<sup>40</sup>

The meeting with General Kazım Dirik and other person responsible, and in particular the desire of the former to have a report drafted by Taut, gives to the episode an official character so that the visit assume other features than those of a simple study trip with students. The very fact that Taut himself refers to the trip as an “inspection” confirms this hypothesis. Hence it is possible to put the trip of the Istanbul Fine Arts Academy in connection with the agenda of the Association of the Friend of Old Buildings of Edirne itself, for it was not a normal tour to Edirne but instead a visit purposely focused on the body of works the Association was concerned with and that aroused a great deal of interest.

According to the evidence of the Taut’s diary, the agenda of the group included a number of monuments among the very historical heritage of the city, which were included in the set of postcards edited the year before: the *Selimiye Mosque*, *Üç Şerefeli Mosque*, *Kervansaray*, *Gazi Mihal Mosque*, *Yıldırım Mosque*, and Complex of *İkinci Beyazıt Mosque*.<sup>41</sup>

On the way back to Istanbul, Taut noted some ideas for the report he was asked to write:

“Important points for report: no planting little trees in open spaces in front of the buildings, avoiding use of concrete, covering all the kitsch colors with white paint, in Selimiye showing up original color, if it’s possible preserve the unusual delicacy of the wall in Yıldırım Cami, paying attention in choosing stones for capitals of

<sup>39</sup> References to this school trip are also included in the memories of Sedat Çetintaş. See: A. Ödekan, *Yazıları ve Rolöveleriyle Sedat Çetintaş*, Istanbul 2004, p. 35.

<sup>40</sup> Akademie der Künste Baukunst Archive (Berlin: AKB), *Istanbul Journal*, Bruno Taut Samlung 01-273, 21/01/38, p. 92. Original handwritten text is in the archive of Iwanami Shoten Publishing House in Tokio, Taut’s legacy (Iw 36). The notes of Bruno Taut have been translated into English by the prof. Esin Boyacıoğlu on the base of a transcription of the original manuscript by Mrs Maria Bier Gola.

<sup>41</sup> Idem, 21/01/1938, pp. 93-94. Taut included in his diary a series of personal annotations on Selimiye Mosque and İkinci Beyazıt complex that are here left out because they do not concern the present topic. See: Gasco, op. cit., pp. 25-27.

Selimiye's courtyard, in particular the Kervansaray is deserving of protection."<sup>42</sup>

These short but precise notes refer to minor repairs obviously not completed yet, therefore Taut's report can be considered as a preventive advice concerning the following phase of interventions already then under process in Edirne.<sup>43</sup>

There is nothing to be surprised at Bruno Taut's involvement in the protection agenda of Edirne Association, for the agenda of ministerial program of protection in particular referred to the possibility to asking foreign experts for official advices.<sup>44</sup> Moreover the chance to rely on the cooperation of a such well known and respected figure, did not depend as much, by a typically professional point of view, on specific ability, as on the chance to take advantage of his "charisma" as state architect in legitimizing a method (scientific restoration) and an aim (the institutionalization of the past). Edirne was indeed getting ready to celebrate on a National level the visualization of its own past.

#### **Edirne On Display: The role of the Turkish Historical Society in the dissemination of the results**

After the visit of Taut, the Edirne's protection program entered its execution phase. A complete account of these interventions is included in the report that the Edirne Association published in 1941<sup>45</sup> to illustrate the fulfillment of the work program between 1939 and 1940 (picture 41). The report refers to a list of a number of buildings on which a wide spectrum of interventions, from simple repairing works to real restorations ones, were performed. This set of works comprised the first real restoration activity in Edirne and concerned especially the historical commercial structures of the city (the *Ekmekçioglu Kervansaray*, the

<sup>42</sup> *Istanbul Journal*, op. cit., 22/01/1938, p. 95.

<sup>43</sup> The first phase of work covered a period of four years, from 1935 to 1939. This second one, as it will be further mentioned, came to an end in 1941 and the results were methodically organized for a broad diffusion in 1941.

<sup>44</sup> The report the Committee for Antiquities' Protection (Anıtları Koruma Komisyonu) submitted to the Ministry in 1935 referred expressly to the possibility to involve foreign experts either in report drawing or in site visits. The same report included a financial program providing for a money supply kept to cover these experts' travel expenses. See: Madran, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>45</sup> *Eski Eserleri Sevenler Kurumu, Edirne Ve Yöresi Eski Eserleri Sevenler Kurumunun 1939-1940 Çalışma Raporu*, İstanbul 1941, pp. 3-14.

*Rüstem Paşa Han*, and the *Arasta Han*<sup>46</sup>) that had been already checked in the previous phase of the work.<sup>47</sup>

Also this second report points out the necessity to publish books and other material concerning the set of the realized works. A particular emphasis then was devoted to the specific aim to generate an immediate public diffusion of the images of Edirne's buildings destined to rise to the rank of national monuments. The report refers to the activity of a laboratory of photography and film established by the General Inspectorate of Thrace, and in particular to its prime task in the preparation of a set of images picturing the buildings gradually restored and intended to be sent to important authorities and committees.<sup>48</sup>

The preliminary phase of the State Program for the Protection of Monuments and the activity of the local Association in Edirne were brought to conclusion within a decade (1933-1941) and form a set of exemplary works that marks the beginning of a restoration culture in Turkey. Those carried out in Edirne especially become the best show case to celebrate at a national level the efforts of the Ministry.

In those years indeed an intense activity of promotion was directed to literally put Edirne on the limelight. During the period between 1938 and 1940 several images of Edirne's monuments appeared repeatedly to embellish the pages of *La Turquie Kemaliste*. The section of the journal titled "La Turquie pays de soleil de beauté et d'histoire" in particular was devoted to display the architectonic treasures of Edirne. Together with full page shots of *Selimiye* and *Üç Şerefeli* Mosques a number of monuments from Edirne are also included<sup>49</sup> (picture 42). Apart the effectiveness of *La Turquie Kemaliste* in popularize the idea of Edirne as a place rich of historical monuments, the major contribution in promoting and displaying the local restoration activity is due to the concern of the Turkish Historical Society. Most likely the position of General Kazım Dirik as honorary member of the Society, eventually played a key role to ensure a decisive focus of attention on the preservation works completed in Edirne.

<sup>46</sup> Idem, pp. 4-6.

<sup>47</sup> The architect Mahzar Altan supervised the execution of survey drawings, in particular plans for *Rüstem Paşa Han* and *Ekmekçiöğlü Kervansaray*. See: *Eski Eserleri Sevenler Kurumu* (1939), op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>48</sup> See: *Eski Eserleri Sevenler Kurumu* (1941), op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>49</sup> *La Turquie Kemaliste*, 28 (1938), 31 (1939), 32 (1939), 40 (1940).



The General Kazım Dirik indeed assumed the responsibility for promoting the works in Edirne, as it is proved by a letter that İhsan Sungu, Vice-President of the Turkish Historical Society, addressed to him on January the 7<sup>th</sup> of 1941. The text of this letter, published in the report of the Association of Edirne in 1941,<sup>50</sup> offers a clear evidence of how Edirne kept a central place in the agenda of Turkish Historical Society short after the restoration works were executed. In particular it discloses that General Kazım Dirik provided the Society of all the necessary information altogether a photographic album to illustrate the restored buildings in Edirne. Beside the due gratitude the Vice-Director is pleased to express to the General, the main concern of the letter resides in the great interest aroused by the provided material, with the result that the Society planned to publish the set of realized works in the next issue of its authoritative journal *Bellekten*.

With the editing of a review devoted to display the new appearance of some of those monuments and published in 1941, the Turkish Historical Society played a decisive role to celebrate the restoration enterprise in Edirne.<sup>51</sup> The review examines a group of six buildings whose restorations were recently completed<sup>52</sup> (picture 43). The value of the contribution of the publication does not reside in the introductory note (the text indeed is very short and consists in nothing but a tribute of esteem and gratitude to the General Dirik's efforts and a list of the restored buildings), on the contrary it is definitely visual. Hence the set of images that completes the review plays a prime role. As it emerges from the letter of İhsan Sungu, the general Dirik had already sent a portfolio with specific photos about the works, yet these images according to the vice-president of the Historical Society did not match the qualitative standard of the publication, therefore a new set of images had been kindly requested. In the light of this evidence the images acquire a specific value that is worth being critically discussed. These photographs picture the buildings from above in order to focus on the most problematic structures of that restoration: the vaults and the

<sup>50</sup> Eski Eserleri Sevenler Kurumu (1941), op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>51</sup> "Trakya'da Tamir Edilen Tarihi Eserler", *Bellekten*, V: 17-18, 1941, pp. 181-182.

<sup>52</sup> The group includes the *Rüstem Paşa Han*, the *Arasta*, the *Sokullu Hamam*, the *Ali Paşa Çarşısı*, the *Ekmekçiöğlü Kervansaray*, and the *Sokullu Mosque* in Havsa, the same buildings that were mentioned in the report of the Edirne Association edited in 1941. In particular the *Ekmekçiöğlü Kervansaray* had been also inspected by the group of the Istanbul Fine Arts Academy during the visit to Edirne in January 1938. See: *Istanbul Journal*, op. cit., 22/01/1938, p. 94.

domes. The first image of the series (picture 44) is particularly meaningful from this point of view, for it seems suitably conceived accordingly to a specific aim. It portrays the *Rüstem Paşa Han* framed from its main façade and with its numerous domes clearly visible. Yet neither the structural nor the aesthetic features of the monument seem to be the real subject of this shot. The image suggests something else. In the open space in front of the building's main gate ten or so mules stand, very likely those same animals the construction materials had been carried by. Higher up, on the roof of the building, among and on the domes, a number of men solemnly pose. Some in their shirtsleeves, others in their suits: those who directed and carried out the works. Therefore the image does not simply depict the monument as a subject in itself, but it moves further presenting it as the final result of a process: the preservation process. Indeed the image works out to cast powerfully the narration of a team enterprise; its utmost goal is the celebration of the preservation process, the restoration works as the fruitful cooperation of those men in order to rescue a monument. The Turkish Historical Society with this review eventually succeeded in the celebration of the restoration works in Edirne as an enterprise that brought together a local committee with the highest governmental institutions of the country and stood as a master work in the agenda of the Ministry.



Picture 1: Cover of *La Turquie Kemaliste* n. 21-22, 1937. Special issue devoted to the II Congress of Turkish History and to the Exhibition of History, 20-26 September 1937.



Picture 2: The Minister of National Education, Saffet Arikan, as a Chairman of the Congress reading his speech.  
(*La Turquie Kemaliste*, 21-22, 1937, p. 3)



Picture 3: Section dedicated to the Exhibition of History edited by İhsan Sungu.  
(*La Turquie Kemaliste*, 21-22, 1937, p. 13)



Picture 4: Part of the exhibition displays the architectonic heritage of the country.  
(*La Turquie Kemaliste*, 21-22, 1937, p. 72)



Picture 5: Cover of the report edited by the Ministerial Committee.  
(Anıtları Koruma Komisyonu, *Anıtları Koruma Komisyonunun 1933-1935 Yıllarındaki Çalışmaları*, 1935)



Picture 6: Cover of the Statute of the Edirne Association.  
(*Edirne Ve Yöresi Eski Eserleri Sevenler Kurumu Tüzüğü*, 1935)



Picture 7: Cover of the report of the General Congress.  
(*Edirne Ve Yöresi Eski Eserleri Sevenler Kurumunun Umumi Kongre Raporu*, 1939)



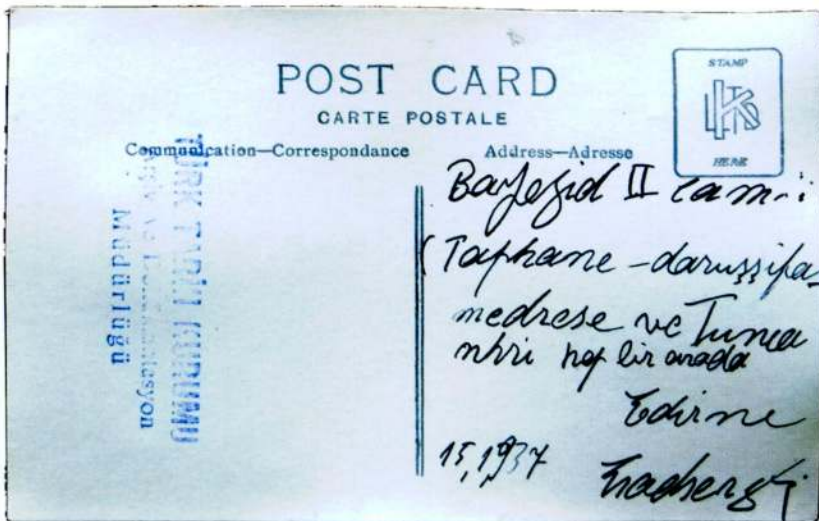
Picture 8: Envelope containing the Postcards Series edited by Esat Serezli, back. (Turkish Historical Society Archive: HEE [Halil Ethem Eldem's Legacy], box 3, envelope 6)



Picture 9: Envelope containing the Postcards Series edited by Esat Serezli, front. (Turkish Historical Society Archive: HEE [Halil Ethem Eldem's Legacy], box 3, envelope 6)

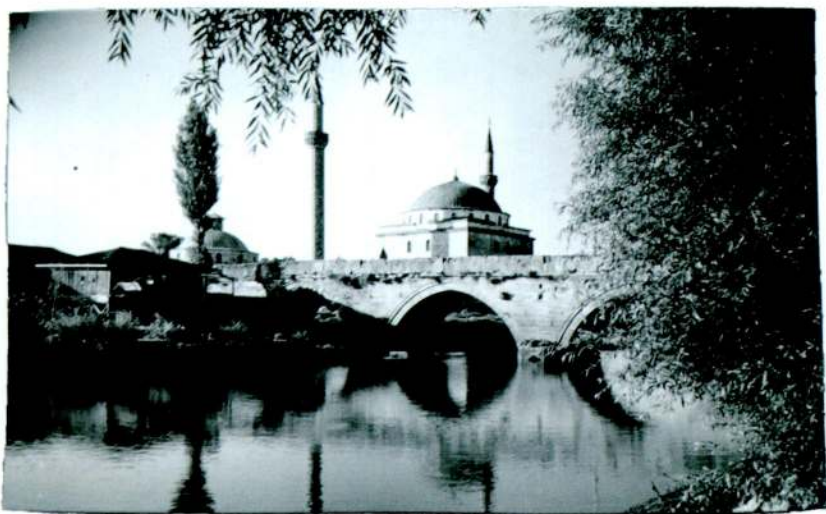


Picture 10: Postcard 1, front.

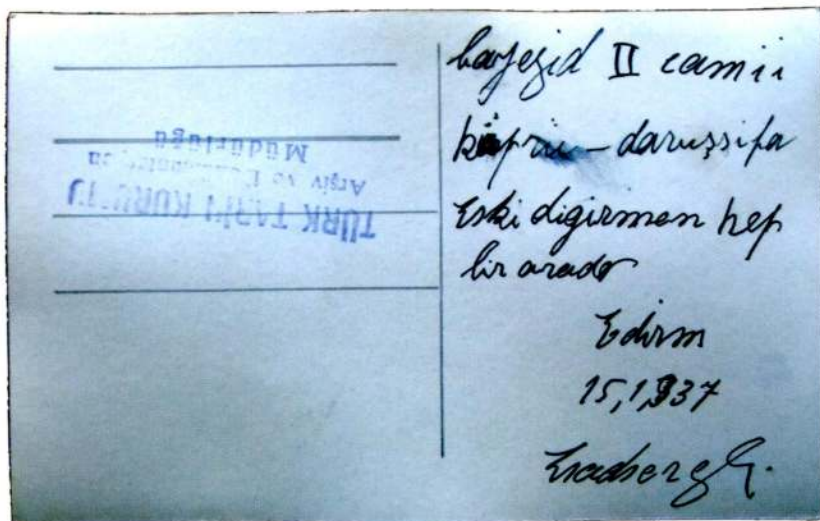


Picture 11: Postcard 1, back.

Mosque of Bayezid II (General view of the Hospice - school of medicine and river Tunca)  
Edirne 15, 1, 1937 Esat Erezi



Picture 12: Postcard 2, front.

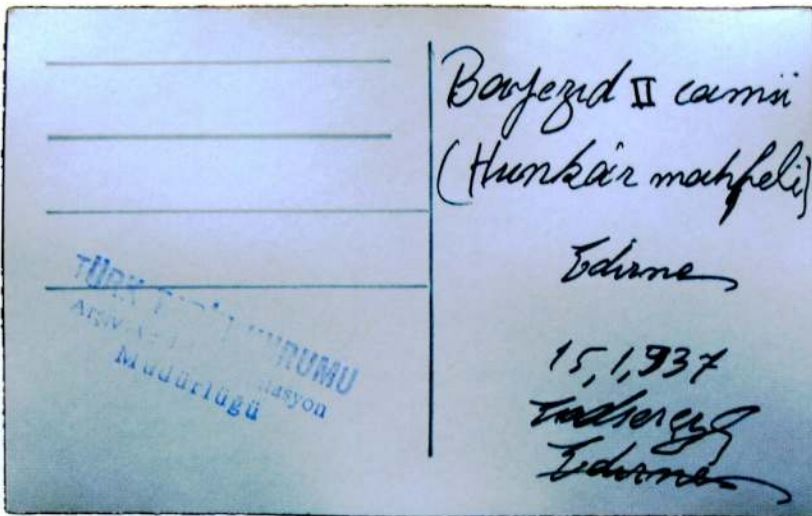


Picture 13: Postcard 2, back.  
Mosque of Bayezid II (General view of the bridge - hospital and old mill)  
Edirne 15, 1, 1937 Esat Erezli





Picture 14: Postcard 3, front.

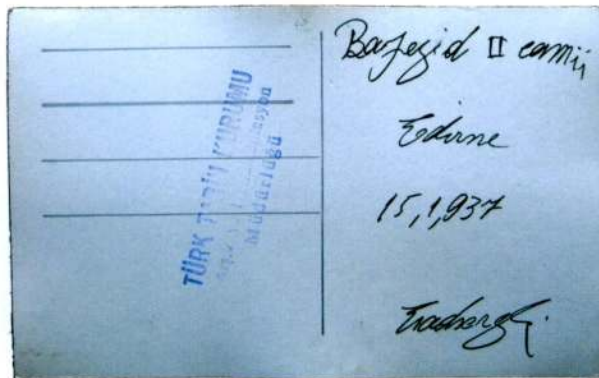


Picture 15: Postcard 3, back.  
Mosque of Bayezid II (The "Royal Suite")  
Edirne 15, 1, 1937 Esat Erezli

Giorgio Gasco



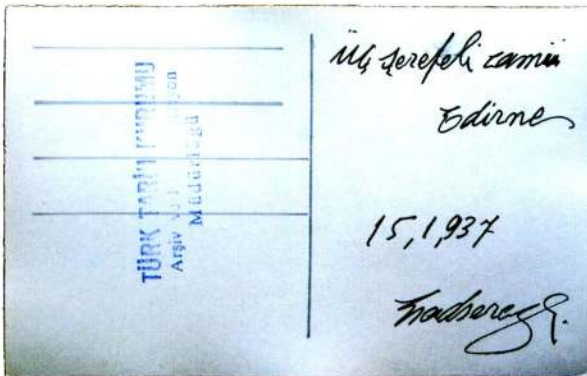
Picture 16: Postcard 4, front.



Picture 17: Postcard 4, back.  
Mosque of Bayezid II  
Edirne 15, 1, 1937 Esat Erezli



Picture 18: Postcard 5, front.



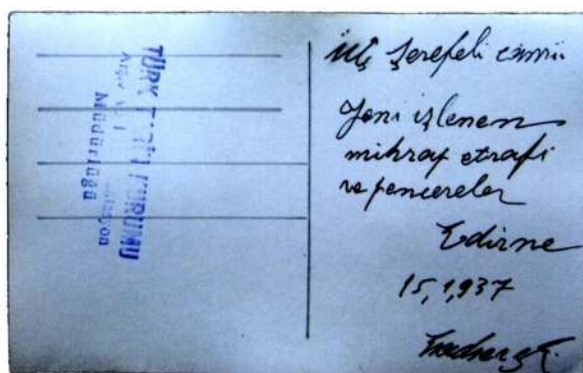
Picture 19: Postcard 5, back.

Üç Şerefeli Mosque  
Edirne 15, 1, 1937 Esat Erezli

Giorgio Gasco



Picture 20: Postcard 6, front.



Picture 21: Postcard 6, back.

Üç Şerefeli Mosque (Recently treated part around the Mihrap and windows)  
Edirne 15, 1, 1937 Esat Erezli



Picture 22: Postcard 7, front.



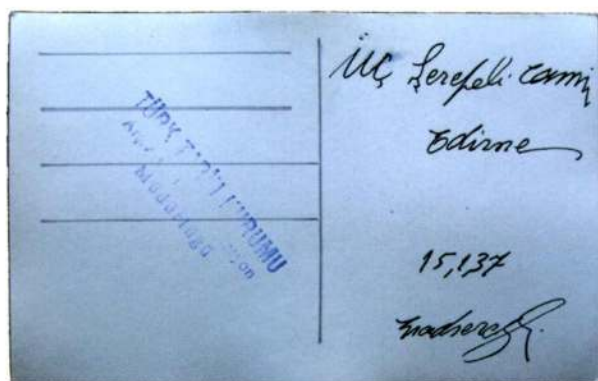
Picture 23: Postcard 7, back.

Üç Şerefeli Mosque (Main gate and historical inscription plaque)  
Edirne 15, 1, 1937 Esat Erezli

Giorgio Gasco



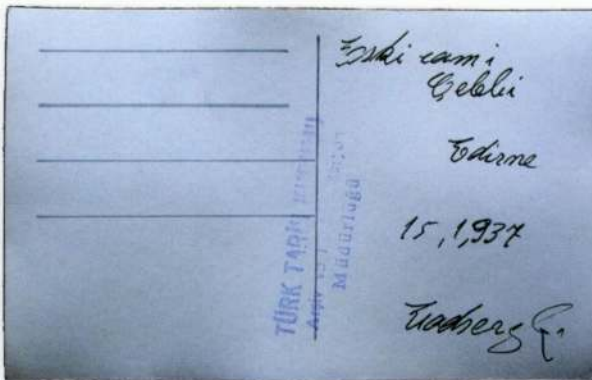
Picture 24: Postcard 8, front.



Picture 25: Postcard 8, back.  
Üç Şerefeli Mosque  
Edirne 15, 1, 1937 Esat Erezli



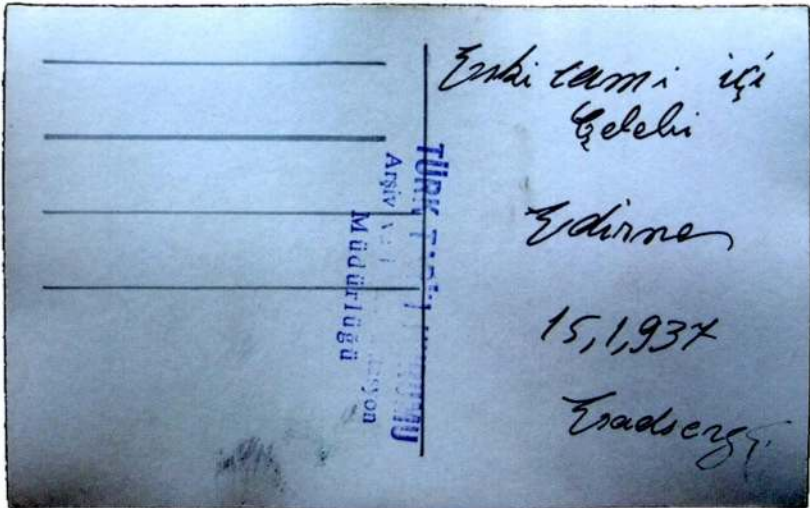
Picture 26: Postcard 9, front.



Picture 27: Postcard 9, back.  
Old Mosque [dedicated to] Çelebi  
Edirne 15, 1, 1937 Esat Erezli



Picture 28: Postcard 10, front.

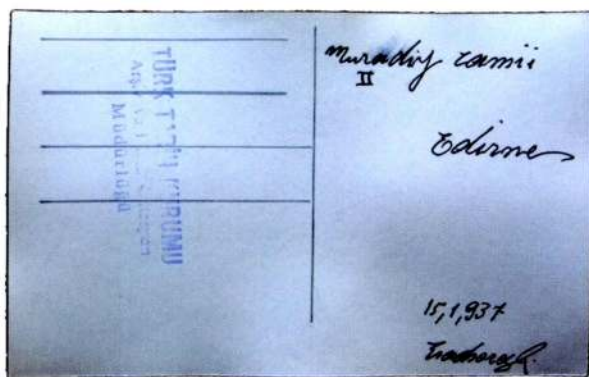


Picture 29: Postcard 10, back.  
Old Mosque [dedicated to] Çelebi, interior  
Edirne 15, 1, 1937 Esat Erezli





Picture 30: Postcard 11, front.

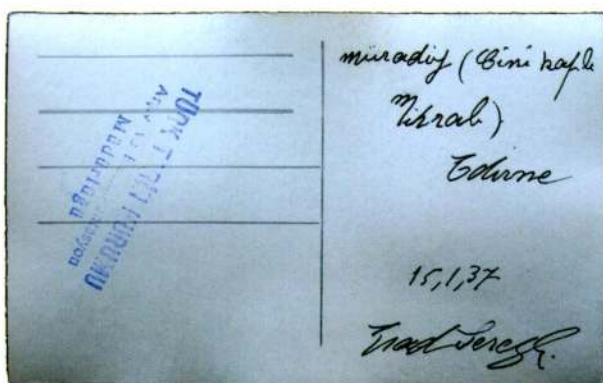


Picture 31: Postcard 11, back.  
Muradiye Mosque  
Edirne 15, 1, 1937 Esat Erezli

Giorgio Gasco



Picture 32: Postcard 12, front.



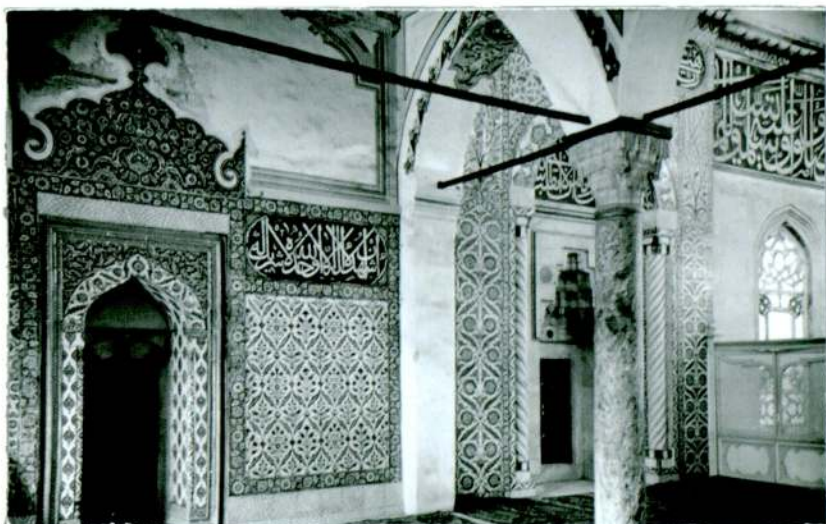
Picture 33: Postcard 12, back.  
Muradiye Mosque (Mihrap covered by ceramic tiles)  
Edirne 15, 1, 1937 Esat Erezli



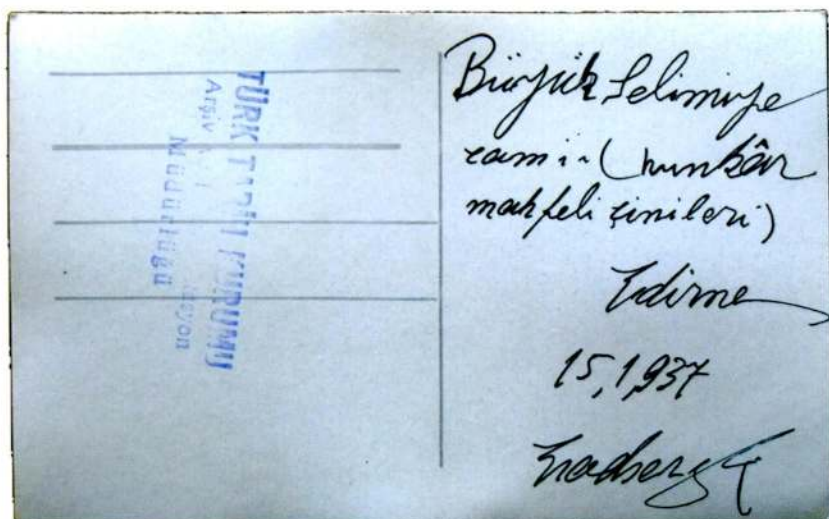
Picture 34: Postcard 13, front.



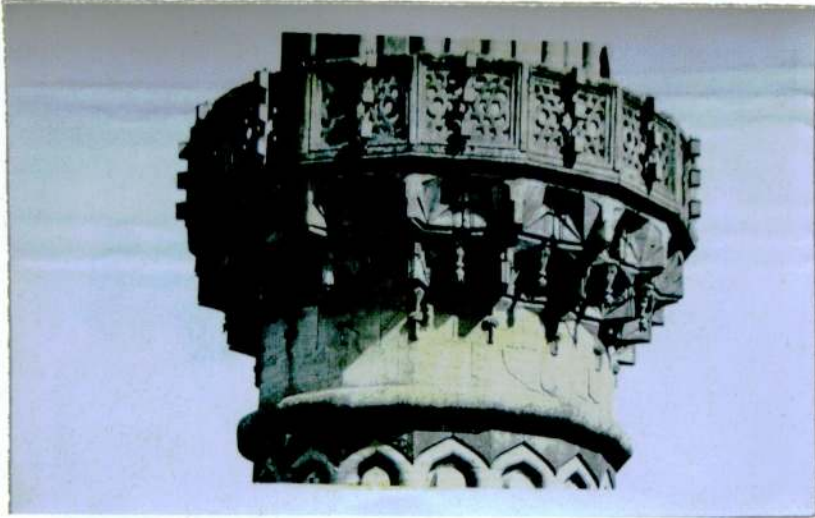
Picture 35: Postcard 13, back.  
Great Selimiye Mosque  
Edirne 15, 1, 1937 Esat Erezli



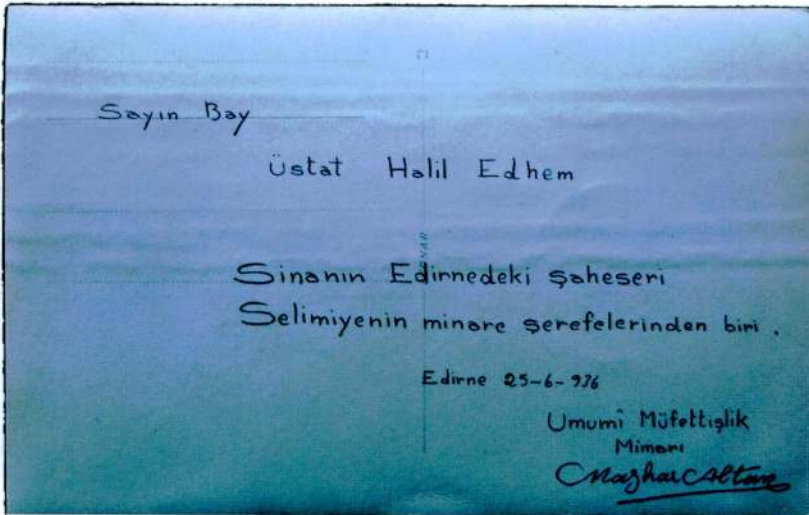
Picture 36: Postcard 14, front.



Picture 37: Postcard 14, back.  
Great Selimiye Mosque (ceramic tiles of the "Royal Suite")  
Edirne 15, 1, 1937 Esat Erezli



Picture 38: Sample Postcard edited by Mazhar Altan, front.

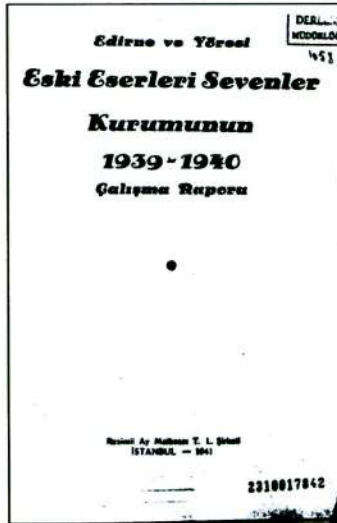


Picture 39: Sample Postcard edited by Mazhar Altan, back.  
One of the balconies of a minaret from the Selimiye, masterwork of Sinan in Edirne  
Edirne 25-06-37 Architect of the General Inspectorate Mazhar Altan

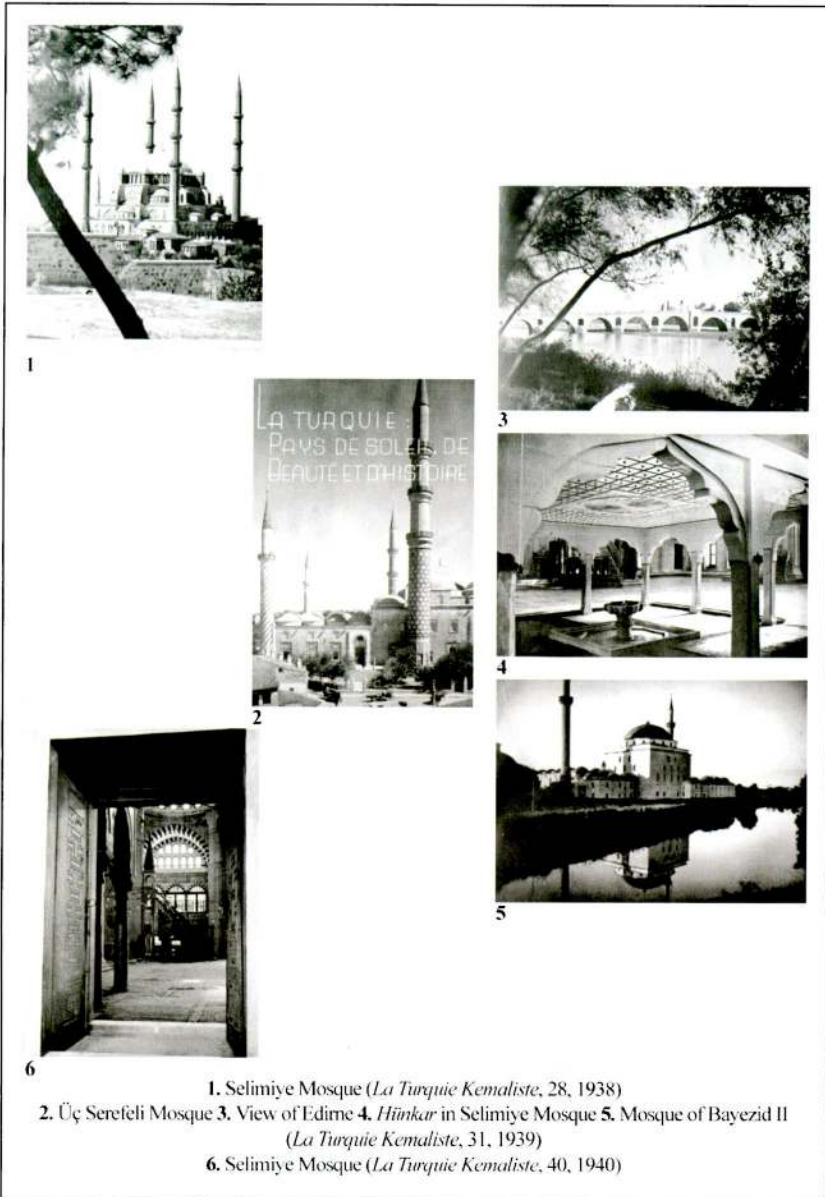
Giorgio Gasco



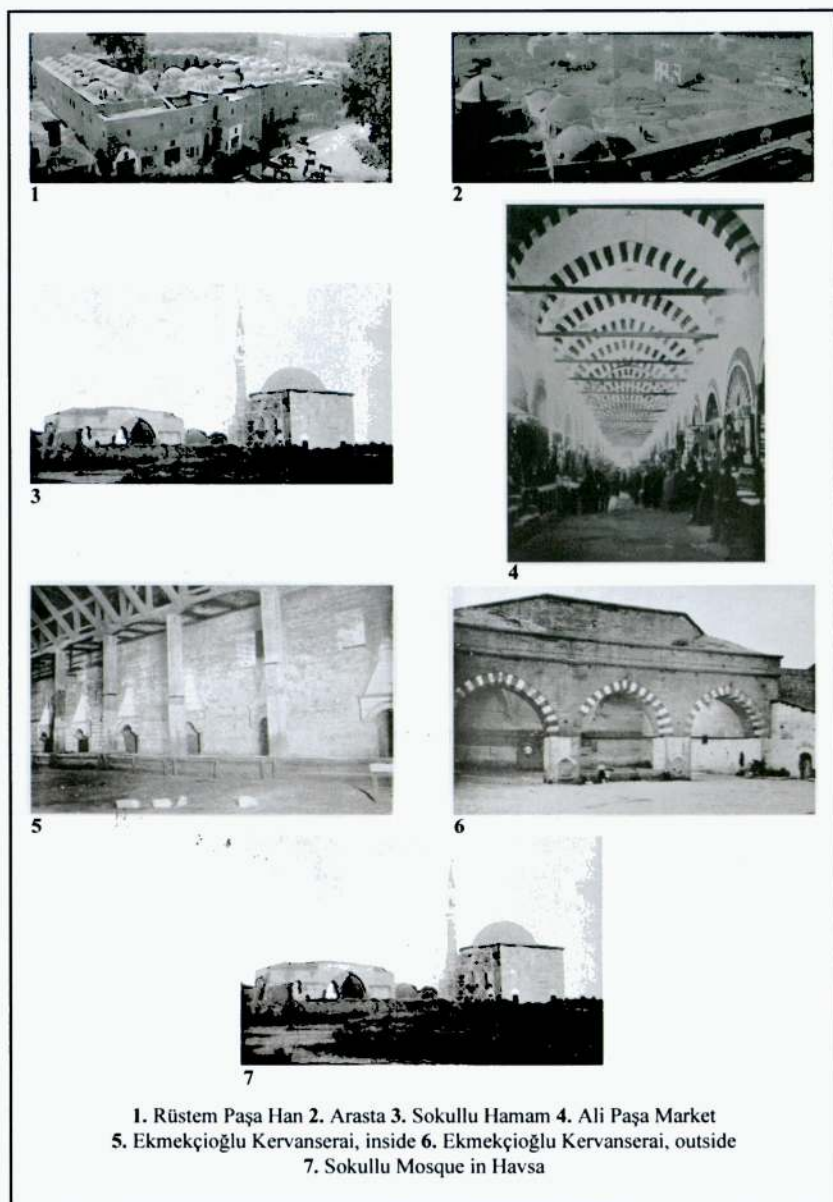
Picture 40: Bruno Taut in Edirne together with students from the Istanbul Fine Art Academy.  
(Ataman Demir, *Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi'nde Yabancı Hocalar*, 2008, p. 54)



Picture 41: Cover of the work activity report of the Edirne Association.  
(*Edirne Ve Yöresi Eski Eserleri Sevenler Kurumunun 1939-1940 Çalışma Raporu*, 1941)



Picture 42: Edirne on display in the pages of *La Turquie Kemaliste* (1938-1940).



Picture 43: Edirne's restoration works on display on *Belleten*.  
("Trakya'da Tamir Edilen Tarihi Eserler", *Belleten*, V: 17-18, 1941, pp. 181-182)





Picture 44: Workers posing on the roof of Rüstem Paşa Han.  
("Trakya'da Tamir Edilen Tarihi Eserler", *Belleten*, V: 17-18, 1941, pp. 181-182)

