

ARCHIVING, REMEMBERING, AESTHETICIZING "OLD" ISTANBUL: THE CASE OF THE
FABIATO MANSION

by
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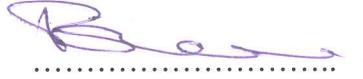
ARCHIVING, REMEMBERING, AESTHETICIZING "OLD" ISTANBUL: THE
CASE OF THE FABIATO MANSION

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Abstract

Key words: aestheticization, memory, archive, cultural policy, Levantine, non-Muslim minorities, Turkey's Automobile and Touring Club, Büyükada, Istanbul.

Based on archival and ethnographic research, this research depicts the story of a Levantine mansion which is situated on Büyükada, Istanbul. Conceptualizing the dispossession of the Fabiato Mansion as part of the political violence targeting the non-Muslim communities of Turkey, the thesis aims to capture the continuum between the processes of ethnic cleansing and the Turkification of capital. Following the story of the Fabiato Mansion, which was confiscated in 1993 after the death of its owner, Aurora Fabiato, and transformed into a “culture house” upon the initiative of Turkey’s Touring and Automobile Club (Touring), this thesis attempts at a critical analysis of the aestheticization process and the institutional and individual remembering, as well as silencing, practices around the mansion.

The aestheticization process of the Fabiato Mansion can be characterized as a process that aims at turning loss into a consumable product in the form of a touristic curiosity. A particular presentation of Levantine history justifies the appropriation of the building, while attuning its inhabitants and its history with discourses of Turkish history that glosses over systematic political violence and nationalization of property.

The thesis investigates how the history of the mansion is reflected in various archives while at the same time focusing on contemporary memory practices. Taking both institutional archiving and personal memory as instances of knowledge production as much as knowledge preservation, it argues that the knowledge production surrounding the Fabiato Mansion needs to be understood as a process of silencing with gendered and ethnicized dimensions. The silence produced and upheld by state and non-state archives, as well as individuals take different forms, which can be summarized as follows: first, aestheticization as a tool to silence the story of the reminiscences of the past; second, the marginalization of personal memory (vs. written documentation and official history); third, the normalization of political violence through cultural policy; and fourth, archival silencing.

Özet

Anahtar kelimeler: estetize etme, hafıza, arşiv, kültür politikaları, Levanten, Gayri-Müslim azınlıklar, Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu, Büyükaada, İstanbul.

Arşiv ve etnografik araştırmaya dayanan bu çalışma, İstanbul Büyükaada'da bulunan bir Levanten köşkünün hikayesini anlatıyor. Köşke el konulması eylemini, Türkiye'de gayrimüslim toplulukları hedef alan siyasal şiddetin bir unsuru olarak kavramsallaştırmak suretiyle, etnik temizlik ve sermayenin Türkleştirilmesi süreçleri arasındaki devamlılığı ortaya koymayı amaçlıyor. Sahibi Aurora Fabiato'nun vefat etmesinin ardından, 1993 senesinde el konularak, Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kulübü'nün girişimiyle bir "kültür evi"ne dönüştürülen Fabiato Köşkü'nün hikâyesini takip eden bu çalışma, estetize etme süreci ile birlikte, kurumsal ve kişisel hatırlama pratiklerinin ve köşkü saran sessizleştirme pratiklerinin eleştirel bir tahlilini yapmaya çalışıyor.

Fabiato Köşkü'nün estetize edilmesi, mevcut bir kaybı turistik merak uyandırmak marifetiyle tüketilebilir bir ürüne dönüştürme süreci olarak nitelendirilebilir. Levanten tarihinin bu özgül sunumu, binaya el konulmasını meşrulaştırırken, binanın sakinlerini ve tarihini, gayrimüslimlere uygulanan sistematik siyasal şiddet ve mülkiyetin millileştirilme boyutlarını hasır altı eden resmi tarih tezleriyle uyumlu bir hale getiriyor.

Bu tez, bir yandan köşkün tarihinin çeşitli arşivlerde nasıl yansıtıldığını araştırırken, bir yandan da güncel hatırlama pratiklerine odaklanıyor. Kurumsal arşivleme ve kişisel hafızayı bilgi üretimi ve muhafaza süreçlerinin bir uğrağı olarak değerlendirerek, Fabiato Köşkü ile alakalı bilgi üretiminin, toplumsal cinsiyet ve etnik kimlik boyutlarıyla birlikte ele alınması gereken bir sessizleştirme süreciyle ilintili olarak anlaşılması gerektiğini öne sürüyor. Hem arşivler hem de bireyler vasıtasıyla muhtelif şekillerde üretilip sürdürülen sessizleştirme süreçleri şöyle özetlenebilir: ilk olarak, estetize etme süreçlerinin geçmişin kalıntılarına dair hikâyeleri örtükleştirilen bir şekilde araçsallaştırılması; ikinci olarak kültür politikaları yoluyla siyasal şiddetin normalleştirilmesi; üçüncü olarak kişisel hafızanın yazılı döküman ve resmi tarih karşısında değersizleştirilmesi; ve son olarak arşivlerin ürettiği sessizlik.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Confronting state sponsored collective violence is quite a new phenomenon in Turkey. Campaigns initiated by NGOs and civil society groups have opened a place in the collective memory from the Armenian Genocide in 1915, the Capital Tax enactment in 1942, September 6-7 events in 1955, and acts of political violence and discrimination experienced by Kurdish and Alevi populations since the early years of the Republic. However, each form of political violence has had limited public representation. Those events, more often than not, have been represented as sporadic anomalies as if the processes of ethnic cleansing and the Turkification of capital do not have a continuum. Goetz Aly states that conceptualizations of the acts of political violence as sporadic anomalies may lead us towards optimistic convictions such as: “we today would have behaved much better than the average person did back then” (Aly, 2007:4). As Aly states, the culprits of the past were not monsters but ordinary people who were “dreaming of a house with a garden, of buying a car or of taking vacation” and not “tremendously interested in the potential cost of their short-term welfare to their neighbors or to future generations” (Aly, 2007:4).

In this thesis, I try to depict the different forms of political violence experienced by a single Levantine woman, Aurora Fabiato, with a specific focus on her mansion. The Fabiato Mansion was confiscated after the decease of Aurora Fabiato and transformed into a “Kültür Evi”¹ by the Touring and Automobile Company of Turkey. Conceptualizing the dispossession of the Fabiato Mansion, which once belonged to the Fabiato Family, as a part of the political violence targeting non-Muslims communities of Turkey, I seek to capture the continuum between the processes of ethnic cleansing and the Turkification of capital. Moreover, I discuss the role of *culture* in the justification of political and economic violence, and the production of historical silences. Based on archival and ethnographic research, this thesis attempts at a critical analysis of the aestheticization process and the institutional and individual remembering, as well as silencing, practices around the Fabiato Mansion.

¹Literal translation for “Kültür Evi” is “House of Culture” or “Culture House,” which has elitist connotation in Turkish. It resonates strongly with the Republican politics of “bringing culture to the people,” where culture is often regarded as “high culture.” I will be using the Turkish term throughout the text.

The Presentation of the Case

The Fabiato Mansion, a triplex building, became the main residence of the Fabiato family which consisted of three people in 1912; Spiridon Fabiato (1868-1943), Gemma Giuliani Pavlina (1876-1932) and their adopted daughter Aurora (1907-1977) who was born under the surname *Agapiou* and came from Karamanlı background.² The mansion was built as a hotel in 1878 upon the request of Artemisyo Leonardo. Her husband Yorgo Maryano was a prominent leather manufacturer (Gülersoy, 1997a:6). The hotel was built at *Çankaya Avenue, no.21 Nizam* quarter in Prinkipo which is the biggest of the Prince Islands and only a short ferry ride away from Istanbul. Prinkipo along with other Prince Islands hosted a large non-Muslim population especially during the period between mid 19th century and the First World War.

I encountered with the story of the Fabiato family for the first time during my internship at the Ottoman Bank Archive and Research Centre. For a researcher in the field of Ottoman history, who is interested in personal stories, the OBARC is an attractive place. As an undergraduate student of Ottoman history who had heard much about the lack of personal documents produced by individuals in the Ottoman realm, I was fascinated by the collection of personal documents at the OBARC, where I found the private archive of the Fabiato family. I was working at OBARC as an intern when the Fabiato archive's acquisition was realized in 2009 and spent nearly a year cataloging this archive. The private archive of the Fabiato family consists of approximately 1400 documents, produced between 1851 and 1973. In order to contextualize my research, I first want to present the brief story of the family based on the documents in this archive and then I will present the ethnographic part of my research.

Spiridon (Spiro) *Fabiato* (1868-1943), the second son of *Nikolaos Fabiato* and *Calliroe Haggiandrea*, was born and raised in Istanbul. Until 1914 he served as an officer in the Imperial Ottoman Bank branch of the same city.³ *Gemma Giuliani-Fabiato* (1876-1932), the daughter of *Antonio Giuliani* and *Beatrice-Ortansia Hanson*, was also born in Istanbul and was the wife of Spiridon Fabiato. *Aurora Fabiato-Scotto* (1909-1977), whose surname

² “Gerçi rum isek de Rumca bilmez Türkçe söyleriz/ Ne Türkçe yazar okuruz ne de Rumca söyleriz/ Öyle bir mahludi hattı tarikatımız vardır/Hurufumuz yonaniçe türkçe meram eyleriz” This verse is used by the Karamanlis -Orthodox Christians who wrote in Turkish using the Greek alphabet- to define themselves in the late nineteenth century. Evangelia Balta, *Beyond the Language Frontier: Studies on the Karamanlis and the Karamanlidika Printing*, İstanbul: ISIS Press, 2010, p:49.

³ SALT Research, the Fabiato Archive, document coded as AFMFB029178 dated to July 22nd 1938.

was *Agapiou* at birth, was adopted by the Fabiato family.⁴ Although their main residence was a triplex mansion, built in 1878, at *Çankaya Avenue, no.21 Nizam* in Büyükada (Prinkipo), other family houses are also mentioned in the archive. The *Ağa Hamam* street house in Istanbul's district of Pera is a good example for these.⁵

The content of the archival documents range from everyday events in their neighborhood Büyükada to the intimate world of the family. From the documents, it is possible to extrapolate details about their lives: what they ate at home, how they furnished their rental houses, how much they spent for the garden, and so on. We have in fact a detailed inventory of their furniture and other household possessions through the half century (1900-1950), that the archive covers.⁶ The archive does not only relate to social matters but also covers economic activities of the family. For instance, it gives information on the tenants of their several commercial properties.

Socio-economically speaking, the status of the Fabiato family eventually follows a downward trajectory.⁷ In terms of their economic fortune, there are a number of questions that the archive does not answer, such as where the Fabiatos' considerable commercial property came from, given that Fabiato, like his father (Cervati, 1883:240). was a mere employee of the Imperial Ottoman Bank. It is worthwhile to note the origins of the family from both sides: the family is linked to long-established and illustrious merchants and entrepreneurial families within the Ottoman geography, cutting across a number of ethnic groups – Greeks (Skaramanga) along with British (Handson) (Frangakis-Syrett, 1992:100-101, 180-181, 256.) The decline in the economic trajectory coincides with Aurora's deteriorating relationship with her neighbors. The extent of her troubled relationship with her neighbors on Prinkipo –which involved different court cases- and of their documentation in the archive, underscores remarkable issues regarding the way a Levantine woman approached law and negotiated with other members of the society in which she lived. The way that Aurora chooses to establish a relation with the law is quite *maladroit*. Her aggressive attitude reflected in the reports starts making sense only when the world around her is taken into the consideration. One who reads only the official court reports can easily get the idea that

⁴ SALT Research, Fabiato Archive, documents coded as AFMFB015005, AFMFB070014. In the document coded as AFMFB015005 and in the letter coded as AFMFB070014 from Gemma Fabiato to Elena Pecci show that Aurora Fabiato had troubles to obtain permit of staying in Istanbul from Turkish authorities in absence of Italian passport or identity card. Aurora Fabiato was adopted because of that she wasn't Italian citizen.

⁵ SALT Research, Fabiato Archive, document coded as AFMFB028054.

⁶ SALT Research, Fabiato Archive, documents coded as AFMFB083001, AFMFB029230.

⁷ Beginning from the mid 1930s, the documentation on the tax expenses, calculations about *buhran vergisi* and *varlık vergisi* become visible in the archive.

Aurora could not cope with the atmosphere that surrounded her. In this thesis, I argue that the court reports need to be read as the reflections of a woman entrenched in the identity politics of the pre-Second World War period, who was not involved in any other economic activity than running her family estates and who had to cope with the declining socio-economic status of the family.

Entering the Field

I visited the mansion, wherein resides the architectural reminiscence of the family, for the first time when I was working on the archive. During my visit, I learned that the mansion was transformed into *Büyükada Kültür Evi* (House of Culture) by Turkey's Touring and Automobile Club. According to the story told in the two pages brochure of the *Büyükada Kültür Evi*, the mansion was confiscated after Aurora passed away, since she had no one to bequeath it. It was then that the Touring Club took charge of the renovation of the building and turned it into a "culture house" (Gülersoy, 1997a).

When I inquired about the building and the Fabiato family, the gardener told me that the manager of one of the famous restaurants on the Island is a relative of the housekeeping family of the Fabiato Mansion. Without further ado, I went to the restaurant and found Ahmet Bey.⁸ While looking for the restaurant, I remembered the drawing that I had recently catalogued which showed the shops that belonged to the Fabiato family. However because of the change in the street names, I could not be sure about my recollection. From my short conversation with Ahmet Bey, I learned that Aurora Fabiato desperately tried to bequeath the mansion to the two daughters of the housekeeping family (Sevgi and Mine), who grew up in the mansion. Ahmet Bey got very excited to hear that I was interested in the story of the Fabiato Mansion. He encouraged me to talk to Sevgi Hanım whose residence is right next to the *Kültür Evi*. The last words I can recall before I left the restaurant were: "You have to tell these things, how much trouble these people went through. You have to write all of these."

On my way to visit "the people who went through so much trouble" according to the account of Ahmet Bey, I was feeling lost in the story into which I found myself immersed. I could not grasp exactly to what I was advised to give a voice; however it was obvious that whatever had gone wrong had not been accounted for. After being encouraged by Ahmet

⁸ In order to protect the privacy of my interlocutors, I kept their names anonymous and instead used pseudonyms to denote their speech. However, I did not conceal the names of public figures such as the general director of the Touring Club or the director of Museum of the Princes' Islands.

Bey, I knocked on the door of the mansion situated right next to the *Kültür Evi*. Yet, what I confronted with was Sevgi Hanım’s silence in response to my enthusiastic questions. When Sevgi hanım closed the door, I was feeling like somebody who had transgressed the boundaries of someone’s personal space. After facing growing silence which resisted questions loaded with enthusiasm, I became convinced that Aurora’s story was not the only one waiting to be lent an ear in this mansion. This is how my curiosities extended beyond the field of history and found new ethnographic articulations.

The Sources

Subsequent to my first visit, I started doing research about the Touring Club. I soon became aware that the renovation of the Fabiato Mansion was part of a bigger “rescue project” which includes the restoration of the Fenerbahçe Park, Khedives, and Soğukçeşme Street. At the beginning, I tried to pursue the story of the mansion through the Touring Club’s publications. However this led to a deadlock when all I could find was two- or three-page brochures, documenting Çelik Gülersoy’s speech given during the opening ceremony of the *Kültür Evi*. In other words, I could not reach any information about the Fabiato Mansion that went beyond what the gardener of the *Kültür Evi* told me during my first visit. While I was getting confused about the Club’s positioning, the interview I conducted with Orhan Silier helped me a lot in terms of finding my way to continue to my research. His nuanced explications on the positionality of the Touring Club were mind-opening in terms of placing the Club among the institutions dealing with cultural heritage.

With the hope of finding additional documentation, I started visiting the various Touring Club institutions in Istanbul. This is how, following OBARC where the archive documenting the early years of the mansion was found, the institutions related to the Touring Club, namely the Istanbul Library and the Touring’s library, became key sites of my ethnographic research. In addition to my visits to these libraries, I also conducted an interview with Murat Kalkan, who is the general director of Touring Club, and Mustafa Pehlivanoglu, the architect who was responsible for the restoration of the Fabiato Mansion.

The Museum of the Princes’ Islands, the first city museum project, was the third stop in my ethnographic journey around the mansion. Although the documentation on the Prince Islands helped me to contextualize the Fabiato Mansion, I could not reach any specific information about the mansion itself. Nevertheless, the interview I conducted with Halim Bulutoğlu, the director of the museum, provided guidance for my subsequent research visits

and interviews. I also benefited immensely from his accounts of the Touring's Club activities on the Islands and his witnessing of the period of restoration.

In search of documentation regarding the dispossession process of the mansion, I also visited state institutions such as the Municipality of the Prince Islands, the Directorate General of National Property (*Milli Emlak*) and the Prefecture of the Prince Islands (*Adalar Kaymakamlığı*) where the Land Registry Office (*Tapu Dairesi*) and Civil Court of Peace (*Sulh Mahkemesi*) reside. Including the interview I did with Mustafa Farsakoğlu, the current mayor of the Prince Islands, the accounts of my visits to these institutions form Chapter IV of my thesis: "The Institutional Remembering Mechanisms."

Methodological Challenges

I should acknowledge that while following my curiosity, the possible difficulties of doing a historical ethnography were hardly apparent to me. The first difficulty I encountered was related to the language of the documents and the ambiguous positions of the Levantine identity. The documents belonging to the Fabiato family's private archive are produced in six different languages: Ottoman Turkish, Turkish, French, Greek, Italian and Spanish (only one document). Since I can read neither Greek nor Italian, my research was already restricted. The issue of Aurora's nationality status is a good example of the linguistic challenge I faced in this research project. In terms of their identity, their cross-national networks come through in multiple and vivid ways. The Fabiato family moved back and forth between the nation states of Turkey and Greece. They did so both literally and in terms of their participation in both societies, as well as in terms of their view of themselves in both national and cultural terms, which were quite nationalist in the first half of the 20th century. For example, from 1935 onwards, Aurora tried to obtain Italian nationality status. From the documentation in French, I was able to grasp that Aurora faced red-tape problems due to her status as an adoptive child in her application for Italian citizenship. Elena Pecci (her cousin) helped Aurora from Rome, thanks to her close relationships with Rome's elite. The writings indicate that Aurora was in contact with Mr. Perassi and Mr. Salomone, friends of Elena, as advisors from 1935 to 1938. In this period, Aurora joined the Italian Fascist Party in Pireaus, Athens, probably to facilitate her nationality application.⁹ Aurora sent several letters to the Foreign Minister in Rome to get Italian nationality, but in 1938, received the first negative response,

⁹ SALT Research, Fabiato Archive, document coded as AFMFB065, dated 1935.

which cited her adopted status as the main justification for rejection. After this response Aurora contacted the new Istanbul Consul Luca Badoglio, son of Marshal Pietro Badoglio,¹⁰ in an effort to resolve her citizenship issue, but was not successful. The vague situation about her nationality status becomes more complicated when we take into consideration a document prepared by the Greek authorities. In a temporary visa issued by Greek Consulate in 1930, her nationality is cited as Italian.¹¹ While my friend Christos Kyriakopoulos was working on the documentation in Greek, he found out that Aurora was able to obtain Italian citizenship in 1930.¹² However, Emiliano Bugetti, who worked on the Italian documentation noted in his report that, one of Aurora's applications for Italian citizenship was refused by Italian authorities in 1938.¹³

The ambiguity related to Aurora's nationality seems to have played a key role in the dispossession of the mansion. While Aurora is introduced as a Turkish citizen in the accounts of Çelik Gülersoy, the legendary general director of the Touring Club,¹⁴ in the land registry office's archive Aurora was considered as Italian. As it will be described in detail in Chapter II, the nationality of Aurora played a significant role in the dispossession of the mansion. It should be noted that this ambiguity is not exclusive to Aurora's story. It is the ultimate result of the shrinking of the social identity which was "actively produced and reconfigured through living within the confines of a fixed urban territory and sharing the resources and pressures associated with it" during the Ottoman Empire (Zandi-Sayek, 2011:23). In addition, this vagueness not only has to do with Levantines' multinational engagements. As Mesut Yeğen states, "the oscillation of Turkish citizenship between a political and ethnic definition is primarily a matter of the texts constituting Turkish citizenship. In other words, I will attempt to disclose that an ethnic idea of Turkish citizenship is not merely an issue of citizenship

¹⁰“Pietro Badoglio, (28 September 1871 – 1 November 1956) was an Italian soldier and politician. He was a member of the National Fascist Party and commanded his nation's troops under the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini in the Second Italo-Abyssinian War; his efforts gained him the title Duke of Addis Abeba. On 24 July 1943, as Italy had suffered several setbacks in World War II, Mussolini summoned the Fascist Grand Council, which voted no confidence in Mussolini. The following day *Il Duce* was removed from government by King Victor Emmanuel III and arrested. Badoglio was named Prime Minister of Italy and while mass confusion in Italy reigned, he eventually signed an armistice with the Allies.” From the report of Christos Kyriakopoulos submitted to OBARC in March 2011.

¹¹ SALT Research, Fabiato Archive, document coded as AFMFB029004, dated October 10th 1930. The temporary visa issued by Greek authorities in 1927 for Spiridon, Gemma and Aurora Fabiato.

¹² “[...] All of them were practicing Catholics and had obtained Italian citizenship.” From the report of Christos Kyriakopoulos submitted to OBARC in March 2011.

¹³ “Aurora sent several letters to the Foreign Minister to get Italian nationality but in 1938 obtained her first negative answer due to the fact she was adopted.” From the report of Emiliano Bugatti submitted to OBARC in September 2010.

¹⁴ “[...] Türk uyruğundaki hanımın kanunî mirasçısız vafatı gerekçesiyle mülkünün Maliye'ye devrini [...]” Çelik Gülersoy, “Büyükkada Kültür Evi” in *Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu Belleteni*. (1997):185 – 364, pp:5-8, p:6.

practices, rather, the ambiguity in question is primarily a textual issue” (Yeğen, 2004:55). Based on this vagueness the Turkish State can play with the concept of Turkishness by constantly redefining its connotations: “being a subject of Turkish Republic, being a Turkish subject, and being Turkish” (Yeğen, 2004:56).

Another challenge I encountered during my study was about access to the archives. Initially, I experienced this challenge as one of managing my research time. As I began analyzing the research process, though, I realized that this challenge had been a significant part of my learning process. Hence, the analysis of this structural silence constitutes a major part of my thesis. I should also admit that the traces of the problem of access may have left a mark on my language and analyses. It has been challenging to provide empathetic accounts of my experiences in the Touring library, the Directorate General of National Property (*Milli Emlak*), Land Registry Office (*Tapu Dairesi*) and the Civil Court of Peace (*Adalar Sulh Mahkemesi*).

In order to illustrate what I experienced, I want to share two ethnographic accounts from my field work. The first episode took place at the District Government Building of the Prince Islands (*Adalar Kaymaklığı*) which hosts both the Land Registry Office and the Civil Court of Peace. At the entrance of the Civil Court of Peace, the *Mübaşir* (court usher) welcomed me and my lawyer friend with these words: “A decision from 1977, that’s impossible, where are you going to find that. [...] Come tomorrow, I don’t have the key of the key of the storehouse on me.”¹⁵ We searched for the documents related to the lawsuit regarding Aroura's inheritance. The court clerk's office records all phases of a lawsuit handled by this court in the case registrar, which is classified by year. In addition to the case registrar, the court clerk's office files the documents regarding the final verdict of a lawsuit in the final verdict folders, which are also classified by year. Although there are only two reference numbers written on the title deed, it took two hours to explain what we needed, and which file may cover the decision that we were looking for. What we experienced during these two hours was the tense relationship between different units of the state. The officers of the Civil Court of Peace were constantly trying to convince us that the Land Registry Office had the documents we needed, accusing them of hiding documents from us:

Mübaşir (Court Usher): “It’s for sure in the Land Registry [Office], why don’t you check there. They don’t give it to you, right? They won’t. Who knows whom these houses were given to, look, the plot is really big, too.”

¹⁵ From my field diary the part related to my Civil Court of Peace field trip dated 15.07.2013.

The dialogue between us (my friend the lawyer and I) and officer of the Land Registry was in line with the *mübaşir*'s insights:

Title Deeds Officer (*tapu memuru*):“Where did you get the title deed from?” “

Ezgi the lawyer: “From the Municipality of the Prince Islands.”

Officer: (laughing) Who do you know at the Municipality?

Ezgi: When I said I'm a lawyer they showed it to me, actually I don't know anybody there.

Officer: That's not how it works here of course, we don't show the file to anybody who comes here saying they are a lawyer. ¹⁶

The title deeds officer did not show us the file on the grounds that Ezgi does not have a proxy, despite the fact that it is not necessary by law in order to view the file. We spent six hours in the same building going back and forth between Land Registry and the Civil Court of Peace. We could not reach any document from the archive of the Civil Court of Peace; we were told that the dossier was effaced. Thereupon, we asked for the case registrar of the year the lawsuit was filed; however, it could not be found. Finally, we requested the folder in which the documents regarding the final verdict related to this case were kept; however, we saw that the case verdict number we traced was given to another file which was not related to Aurora's inheritance. As we were moving from one office to another, the title deeds officer left half an hour early and someone else came to replace him. The newcomer did not want to argue with us and allowed us to see the file. Hence, for the last thirty minutes before the end of the working day, we were allowed to see the file related to the Fabiato Mansion. During this half hour, we rushed through all the documents in the file. Presumably we could not make sense of entire content of the documentation. However, we could trace the signs of Aurora's ambiguous nationality and the vague justification of the dispossession from this documentation.

My experience in the Directorate General of National Property was more explanatory about the reasons why the archive should be protected from the researchers. After having a 20-minute conversation with the director of the Kadıköy branch and the officer responsible from the parcels of Büyükkada (which included questions regarding where I'm from, where my father is coming from, why I choose to study on the Fabiato Mansion, and so on) I asked whether I could have a look at the file and received the following response:

¹⁶ From my field diary the part related to my Civil Court of Peace field trip dated 15.07.2013.

Director: “No, we can’t give any information about the tenant. Look, now you are going to write, the tenant has done a perfect job, how nice has this become, culture and stuff like that, and afterwards we’ll be in the headlines, they’ve shut down the wonderful culture house, the Directorate General of National Property has taken it away from them, etc. We can’t give information about the tenants. [Turning to one of the office workers] Get out the title deed for our girl here, she can have a look at that. If there’s anything else we can help with, let us know and we’ll take care of it.

Çiçek: I understand, you are trying to protect the right of the tenant. But what is more important for me is the period before Touring. The tenant...

Director: I don’t have to explain to you why we don’t open the documents. See, we are not in the position of giving documents in favor or against anybody. I have devoted enough time for you this morning, if you like, you can write a petition downstairs [...].

After being rejected by the director who was talking to me with a disturbingly infantilizing tone, I went to the office of the woman responsible for the parcels of the Prince Islands to listen to further accounts of “security”:

Çiçek: Yes, but I still don’t understand why you keep these files closed.

Woman responsible for the Nizam neighbourhood on Büyükdada: Those won’t be open anyway, they’re internal files, you never know who will use them for what purpose. In that case let the journalists come, let’s give them all kinds of information directly. [...]

Woman: I’m really sorry but I cannot give you any information.

Çiçek: No, it’s just that I don’t understand the reason.

Woman: The reason? Well this is a state institution, if I go to the title deeds office they won’t give me information just by verbal statement, either; you have to have a relation with the file.

Çiçek: What kind of relation? I’m trying to establish a relation with the file. I came with a petition that shows that I’m doing research.

Woman: But we won’t open them, they are the files of the *Milli Emlak*.

Çiçek: So I can’t access the files of the lawsuit?

Woman: No you can’t. What are you going to do with them anyway?

Çiçek: I'm trying to write the history of the family, I'm trying to find information about the family.

Woman: I understand, but we have to take into consideration bad intentions, that's why we can't open them.

Çiçek: What would bad intentions mean, if one of the world's five most evil people had access to the file, what could they do?

Woman: (laughing) How am I going to tell you this now?

Çiçek: I'm just trying to understand why these files are kept closed for someone coming from the university. It's nothing personal against you...

Woman: I understand, but if you worked here you'd understand. For example, journalists publish some documents, then lawsuits are opened, you know. Like that, as long as information does not seep out from us, information won't be disclosed from us. It is prohibited. Only if you are a shareholder or something like that, or if you have a certified letter of an attorney, then it's possible.

In line with the demand voiced in the 2012 Declaration regarding the seized properties of Armenian foundations, I would argue that the archives of the Directorate General of Foundations, Land Registry Cadastre and the Directorate General of National Property should be open to public not only for the return of the seized properties to its owners but also for carrying research projects based on their documentations (Altuğ, 2012:378). However, the prohibitive stance I exemplified above “reveals that public institutions still view the subject from a ‘state security’ perspective” (Altuğ, 2012:23).

Finally, I will briefly mention the problem I encountered while trying to merge the different narratives coming from a wide variety of sources. For a research project dealing with a long time period, I had to rely on a multiplicity of sources ranging from historical archives to in-depth interviews focusing on memory. However, during my research, the point which made the gathering of data even harder was the discontinuity of the chronologies of the different archival documentations. Therefore, as I elucidate in Chapter IV, I spent a considerable amount of time in different public and private institutions' archives. Thus, considering different versions of the mansion's story that I derived from different archives, which offer their own chronologies, the creation of a chronology for my own story has been rather challenging. At times, I felt as if I was narrating a detective story which starts with the dispossession of the Fabiato Mansion. Reversing the chronology of the mansion, I decided to present firstly the setting where the political violence that the mansion was experienced and

continue with exploring the details of the different layers of political violence in the following chapters. After depicting the dispossession and the aestheticization process of the mansion, in Chapter III I will portray the life at the mansion during the last years of Aurora. Lastly, I will recount on the production of archival silencing and the background information about the institutions that play a significant role in the production of archival silencing.

Thesis Outline

Following the Introduction, in Chapter II, based on what I grasped from the archival research and the interviews I conducted, I seek to depict the dispossession and the restoration of the Fabiato Mansion. All of my interlocutors (eight in total) are witnesses to this period. By utilizing their accounts and the documentation that I could access, I try to conceptualize the dispossession and renovation of the Fabiato Mansion as an aestheticized form of political violence inflicted on minorities. In addition, I discuss the relationality between the silencing in the archives and the silencing of people who are directly or indirectly related to the Fabiato Mansion.

The ethnographic knowledge production is dissected in the Chapter III where I focus on the depiction of the mansion during Aurora's last years by making use of the documentation of SALT Research and the memories of individuals regarding the Fabiato Mansion and the Fabiato family. This part of my research can be interpreted both as an attempt to bring to life what I could grasp from the archival documentation and juxtapose the silences I *accessed* in the archives and the living memories of my interlocutors. In order to depict the way that the mansion during Aurora's last years is remembered, I pay particular attention to three interviews which I conducted with people with whom Aurora had personal connection.¹⁷ Focusing on memories that relate to Aurora and the Fabiato Mansion, I argue that the dispossession of the Fabiato Mansion was nothing but the most concrete part of the political violence that targeted the Fabiato Family. In this chapter, the in-between positionality of Aurora is analyzed along with the positions of the interlocutors in order to expose different layers of silencing related to Aurora's life.

Chapter IV tries to present the *kitchen* of my archival research where I critically analyze the institutions which provide documentation on the Fabiato Mansion in their "archives". In this chapter, the relationality between the accessibility of the archives and the

¹⁷ I was able to reach these three interlocutors thanks to Lorans Baruh and Orhan Silier.

silences created around the archiving practices are analyzed in detail. I argue that it is possible to see the different forms of silencing I discuss in the previous chapters as the result of the inaccessibility of the archives. Production of archival silencing is intricately linked to the perpetuation of political violence.

CHAPTER II

At the Crossroad of Dispossession and Aestheticization

Encountering the violent attack against the Democratic Society Party (Demokratik Toplum Partisi)¹⁸ by middle class inhabitants of Izmir in the last month of the year 2009 reminds Baskın Oran of his memories of September 6th, 1955, “the last day of Izmir’s cosmopolitanism” as he puts.¹⁹ Remembering the September 6-7 events, when the non-Muslim citizens of Turkey were physically attacked, sexually harassed and the shops they were running were plundered (Balca, 2009), took him back to the story of his Levantine friend Lülü, whose father was deported from Turkey during the Cyprus crisis in 1964.²⁰ The Kurdish question, which still occupies a significant place in the Turkish internal politics, constitutes a remainder of the long history of political violence of this county. While following the remnants of a Levantine mansion, which was dispossessed in 1993 and became a culture house, and tracing the memories generated around its reminiscence, I will try to depict the place of the aestheticization process in the politics of Turkification.

Conceptualizing the dispossession of the Fabiato Mansion in the line of the structural Turkification practices such as dispossession of Armenian *emval-i metruke* (abandoned property), the enactment of Capital Tax (1943), September 6-7 events (1955), and the forced migration of Kurds (1990s), I argue that the multilayered structure of the dispossession can enlarge our perspective of Turkification. The mansion’s story, at the crossroad of Turkification and aestheticization, can introduce the role of aestheticization in the practices of political violence which may help to conceptualize the Turkification process in a larger framework. Thus, we can start making sense of actors such as the Toruing Club and the Ministry of Culture who have contributed to this process.

As Adorno states, “[t]he past will have been worked through only when the causes continue to exist does the captivating spell of the past remain to this day broken” (Adorno, 1959:103). I argue that the story of the mansion can also contribute to the discussions on the current liberal cultural politics which is nourished by the discourse of multicultural diversity.

¹⁸ Partiya Civaka Demokratik, was founded in 2005 as the successor of the Democratic People’s Party (DEHAP) which was banned in 2005 by the Constitutional Court on the grounds that it supported the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

¹⁹ Oran, Baskın. “İzmir’in ‘gâvur’luğu ve ‘faşist’liği”, *Radikal*, 06.12.2009. accessed from http://www.radikal.com.tr/radikal2/izmirin_gavurlugu_ve_fasistligi-967953 on 23.08.2013.

²⁰ Oran, Baskın. “İzmir’in ‘gâvur’luğu ve ‘faşist’liği”, *Radikal*, 06.12.2009. accessed from http://www.radikal.com.tr/radikal2/izmirin_gavurlugu_ve_fasistligi-967953 on 23.08.2013.

Without confronting with the past, opening spaces to voice the ‘cultures’ of people who are not present now and here, can be interpreted as the continuation of nationalist cultural politics (Bilal, 2008:238). The Touring Club, who took responsibility to restore the building and transform it into a culture house, did not publish anything related to the cultural legacy of the Levantine. As I will discuss in detail later, during the opening of the *Büyükkada Kültür Evi*, the mansion was *adorned* with Turkish flags and the Levantine as an adjective survived only as a cultural reference point like many of those building which are called in daily life Rum house or Armenian house without recalling the question of “where they are now”.

In this chapter, I aim to juxtapose the archival information I was able to access with the personal memories of witnesses to Aurora’s life in order to analyze the dispossession of the Fabiato Mansion. Leaving the particular forms of silencing in the archives and the silenced memories through marginalization to the coming chapters, this chapter focuses on the ways in which the story of the mansion is silenced through aestheticization. It is quite complicating to document the process between Aurora’s decease in 1977 and the confiscation of the mansion in 1993. From what I could catch from the limited available documentations, I illustrate the stages in the following: Firstly, right after the death of Aurora, the state intervened in the inheritance process and assigned a trustee (*kayyum*) for a period of investigation of possible inheritor. The first action of the trustee was to lock the valuables which belonged to Aurora to the third floor of the mansion. During this investigation, a flat of the mansion continued to be rented and the housekeeping family, who moved to the mansion during Aurora’s last years, continued to live in the mansion. However, because of the mansion’s inadequate physical conditions both the tenants and housekeeping family moved from the mansion.

While the mansion was slowly becoming uninhabitable, the inheritance court case was following two different procedures. The elimination of possible inheritors, namely the housekeeping family and the Saint Pasifico Church, by the Turkish state will be described in detail in the following pages. The state’s elimination of its possible rivals does not refer to the end of the mansion’s adventure. Right after its confiscation, the mansion became an object of desire between different state institutions. The point of intersection of the Touring Club and Fabiato Mansion refers not only to the final stages of dispossession but also to the starting point of the aestheticization process.

II.1 The Story of Dispossession

Although the building was closed, in my first visit to the *Büyükada Kültür Evi*, I was lucky enough meeting with the gardener who works for the Touring Club and takes care of the building and the garden of the mansion. When he learned that I am conducting a research about the story of the mansion he directed me to the groom of the housekeeping family of the Fabiato Mansion, holds²¹ one of Fabiato family's estates located at Balıkçıl Street, and runs one of the famous restaurants in Büyükada. From Ahmet, the groom, I learned that Aurora Fabiato desperately tried to bequeath the mansion to the two daughters of her nursemaid (Sevgi and Mine), who grew up in the mansion. However, she failed in her attempt.

Since the housekeeping family refused to talk to me, my limited information about them comes from my three interlocutors who personally knew Aurora and the housekeeping family.²² During my interviews with Güzin Hanım, Müberra Hanım and Haldun Bey,²³ I learned that the housekeeping family moved to Büyükada in the early 1940s. Since they refused to talk to me, I do not know the reason of their immigration. From the Prince Islands' history of the migration, we know that Islands first encountered the migration from the eastern part of Turkey right after the Dersim massacre in 1938. The establishment of the first *cem* house in Burgaz Ada followed this wave of migration.²⁴ From the account of Haldun Bey and Güzin Hanım I learned that the family moved into the little house in the garden of the Fabiato Mansion and started to work for the Fabiato family in the early 40s.

In contrast to the Ahmet Bey's account, Haldun Bey, a neighbor of the Fabiato family, remembers that although Aurora had bequeathed some of her real estate to the gardener family, she did not want to bestow the mansion before her death because of her fear to be disposed.²⁵ According to the account of Çelik Gülersoy, based on the existence of an oral will, the housekeeping family claimed that Aurora bequeathed the mansion to them. The demand of the housekeeping family based on Aurora's oral will was rejected by the court. Gülersoy's account about this rejection is as follows: "Although they filed a court case for the

²¹ I'm not sure whether Ahmet rents this place or he owns it. It seems that the unusual tax he has to pay to the state proves his ambivalent position.

²² I will elaborate on the relationality between the silencing of personal memories and the archiving practices in the last chapter where I question the knowledge production of my research.

²³ In order to stick to the story of dispossession at this point, I leave the analyses of interlocutors' accounts to the second chapter.

²⁴ *Göç Bağlantıları Sergisi Projesi 2012*. 2012. İstanbul: Adalı Yayınları.

²⁵ From the interview I conducted with Haldun Bey on February 28th 2013.

historical mansion and the garden to be transferred to them based on the oral will, the court rejected their claim and decided that the property would be transferred to the Public Treasury by reason of the death of the Turkish citizen women without lawful heir in 1993” (Gülersoy, 1997a:6). Although Çelik Gülersoy states that Aurora has Turkish nationality, in the documentation I could reach in the Land Registry, Aurora is recognized as an Italian during the inheritance court case. Her nationality played a key role in the dispossession of the mansion. The justification of the dispossession was explained through the agreement of 26 March 1931 between the Kingdom of Italy and Turkey. According to the agreement, in case of disagreements regarding the inheritance (*tereke*) of Italian nationals, the consulate can appropriate businesses related to the inheritance, it can seal the inheritance and appropriate it. Paragraph 21 defines the consulate’s authorities. They don’t regulate the relations of those individuals with other states and protect the citizens’ reciprocal commercial, industrial, economic and social and cultural interests. Since the state cannot be accepted as a commercial person, this does not include a regulation regarding the security of property. Therefore inheritance is not the right of the consulate. At the same time, the Turkish Republic, with reference to the National Private Law No. 448 specifies that inheritance without heirs’ remains with the state and defines itself as heir.

Müberra Hanım tells the refusal of the oral will as follows:

Çiçek: You know why the oral will of Aurora was rejected?

Müberra Hanım: It had to do with witnesses. One witness said yes and another said no. The controversial witnessing broke down the process.

Ç: Who are the witnesses, do you know them?

Müberra hanım: People living on the Islands. People that Aurora also knew, and in whose presence she talked about the inheritance.

Ç: And why they committed perjury then?

(silence)

Ç: Did they have any financial or whatever axe to grind?

Müberra Hanım: What would be their interest? No! They just did not want that the housekeeping family become the owner of the mansion.

Güzin hanım: Yes, unfortunately it is that simple.²⁶

²⁶ From the interview I had done with Müberra Hanım and her daughter Güzin Hanım in February 17th 2013.

While trying to make sense of the first stages of the dispossession, namely the state intervention into the inheritance process, it might be noteworthy to elaborate on the “gardener question” as it is called among the Islanders. During our conversation about the dispossession of the Fabiato Mansion Halim Bulutoğlu, the vice president of the Adalar Foundation and the Director of the Museum of the Princes' Islands, warned me about the “gardener’s problem”. Ascending tensions related to the Cyprus crisis resulted with the significant decrease in Rum and Greek inhabitants. This decrease became visible in emptying of real estate. The “gardener question” appeared after 1964 when people who were taking care of the houses started to illegally profit by the “abandoned” real estate by renting it out or turning them into their main residences. On the one hand, while portraying the state intervention, I found significant to mention this atmosphere where gardeners’ families are threatened as usual suspects, as a point strengthened the state’s hand. On the other hand, it is quite understandable that the family members kindly refused to do an interview with one who is studying the story of the mansion. Without speculating on the possible reasons of Sevgi’s and Mine’s silences, I would like to argue that their silence needs to be read within the context of closed and destroyed archives in state and non-state institutions. What is the relationship between the inaccessibility of archives and the (self)silencing and marginalization of narratives of political violence? I discuss this question and others in Chapter IV where I analyze the production of silences in the framework of my research.

As regards the quashing of the *official* will, the archival documentation is even more limited. Gülersoy only refers to the oral will’s quashing and does not mention about the Aurora’s mother’s will which declares the Saint Pasifico Church as the inheritor after her husband and daughter’s decease. In her will, Gemma Guiliani bequeathed the mansion to her husband Spiridon Fabiato and his adopted daughter Aurora Fabiato. She also added in her testament that after Spiridon’s and Aurora’s deaths that the mansion should be left to the Saint Pasifico Latin-Catholic Church. Gemma Giuliani died in 1932. After his father’s death in 1943, Aurora married Mr. Scotto. When Aurora lost her husband in 1957 she took the decision to bequeath one third of the building (the left side of the garden) to the housekeeping family; to his wife and two daughters. She also registered one third of the mansion in the name of the three women. As I indicated in the Introduction where I described the challenges I encountered during my research, the file concerning the Saint Pasifico Latin-Catholic Church’s court case is missing in the Büyükada courthouse’s archive. However, in the Land Registry’s archive there are documents showing that the legal personality status of the Saint Pasifico Church was investigated by local authorities. The annotation regarding that the

mansion will be bequeathed to Saint Pasifico Catholic Church after the decease of Spiridon and Aurora Fabiato remained on the record of the property kept by the land registry office until 1992: “The entire masonry mansion is registered under the name of Italian citizen Aurora Scotto, the daughter of Giuseppe Spiridione and it is stated in the statements and the annotation for the inheritance measure in the annotations’ section that upon death of the inheritors, hereby the property will be financially exclusive to the Saint Pasifico Catholic Church located in Büyük Ada (the inheritors are Spiridon Fabiato and the inheritor Aurora Fabiato).”²⁷

Although I could not find any documentation regarding the result of this investigation, the confiscation of the mansion also indicates the refusal of the legal personality status of the Saint Pasifico Church. Haldun Bey recalls this period as following:

"A rumor came out. There is a catholic church here. The rumor had it that she wanted to endow her property to this place, to give it to this place. And then it appeared that churches didn't have a legal personality. Therefore this donation couldn't be made. Hence, the ownership property rested with the Public Treasury."

The court case ended with the precise elimination of gardener family and the Saint Pasifico Church thus, the mansion transferred to Directorate General of National Property in 1993.²⁸

I presume that the changes in law concerning non-Muslim foundations in 1971, might be relevant to the decision of confiscation. In 1971, “the 2nd Civil Chamber of the Supreme Court of Appeals unanimously approves the use of 1936 declarations as foundation charters. Thus it is decreed that community foundations that did not have foundations in the declarations of which there is no clarity that they will accept donations cannot acquire immovable asserts either directly or through donations made by will.” This became a modal case in 1974 and the community foundations lost great majority of immovable asserts acquired after 1936 (Yılmaz, 2012:411). It is noteworthy to draw attention that the refusal to recognize the legal personalities of the spiritual leaderships of non-Muslim communities is

²⁷ From the Archive of the Municipality of the Island, file number 64-1096. The document dated to 2.09.1992, enumerated 480.

²⁸ The complete explanation available in the title deed: “while the entire property is registered under the name of Aurora Scotto, this time by means of the registration of the property under the name of the Public Treasury in accordance the Adalar Civil Court of Peace’ verdict with the case number 1977/12 and the decision number 1992/3 dated 3/18/1993 attached to the letters of the General Directorate of National Estate of the Istanbul Revenue Office numbered 13213 dated 4/1/1993”.

one of the main problems regarding the state's policies in relation to minorities (Yılmaz, 2012:381). As the documentations of dispossession processes are inaccessible presenting a depiction of them is quite complicated.

The life at the mansion was continuing while in the legal sphere the oral will of Aurora and the official will of Gemma were quashed. According to the story that I heard from Güzin Hanım, who is the daughter of the tenant of summer Müberra Hanım who passed a significant part of her childhood at the mansion, after the death of mamaka,²⁹ the third flat of the mansion was locked up and sealed. However, the mansion continued to be rented via a trustee (*kayyum*) who was appointed by the state. Following the appointment of a trustee, in other words right after the death of Aurora Fabiato, the spatial use of the mansion was radically changed for those of who were living there, namely the housekeeping family, who were using the mansion itself as the main residence after the death of Aurora's husband, and the tenants of the mansion. The third flat along with some other rooms in the second floor, where Aurora used to live were filled out with the "valuable" objects belonging to Aurora Fabiato, and locked under the control of the trustee. According to Müberra Hanım's narration, in a very short period of two years or so, the mansion was significantly damaged due to the moisture that spread from the rooms where the valuable objects were locked up in the third floors.³⁰

"The woman's room was sealed. There was her *chiffoiner*, her wardrobe, and her bed. They were closed as they were. Because there were both her underwear and her clothes.... They became completely rotten. The rugs, which they mentioned, were in the garret, as I remember. The rugs became rotten. The roof-ceiling fell apart. They got rotten by the water coming from the roof."³¹

Following the collapse of the roof, the mansion could not host any more tenants. The housekeeping family, who was in charge of the mansion during Aurora's last years, also moved to their residence right next to the Fabiato Mansion.³²

After the confiscation of the Fabiato Mansion in 1993, an attempt to renovate the building was initiated by the Touring Club in 1997 and it was promoted by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Although in Gülersoy's account the abandonment of the building between the years 1977 and 1993 held an important place, he does not give the kind of details that Ahmet Bey or Güzin Hanım offered. According to Güzin Hanım's narration after the

²⁹ The way that Güzin hanım used to call Aurora Fabiato. Mamaka means mum in Greek.

³⁰ From the interview I conducted with Müberra Hanım and her daughter Güzin Hanım on February 17th 2013.

³¹ From the interview I conducted with Müberra Hanım and her daughter Güzin Hanım on February 17th 2013.

³² From the interview I conducted with Müberra Hanım and her daughter Güzin Hanım on February 17th 2013.

finalization of the court case the mansion was in a way plundered by officials of Directorate General of National Property.

Ç: What happened to the stuff in the Mansion?

Güzin Hanım: [...] the group coming from the Public Treasury smashed. One by one they emptied all of them. Even, they badly took out the cabinet in the kitchen.

Ç: Was it after the court case closed?

G: After.

Ç: You mean after the property was unsealed.³³

Gülersoy's account does not present any explanation for the ways in which the mansion lost its authentic objects (Gülersoy, 1997a:7).³⁴

The mansion continued to change hands after its confiscation. Although everyone that I spoke to mentioned the General Directorate of Security (GDS) as one of the relocation point of the mansion, I could not find any documentation that went beyond gossip, except one sentenced in Gülersoy's article which offers a vague story about the mansion's appropriation by GDS in 1995. Haldun Bey refers to the information about GDS' engagement as rumor:

"It was allocated for the use of the general directorate of security affairs. A rumor as such came out, but it did not happen. Another rumor came out that it would be turned into a guest house. But then it turned out not to be true. They did not use it, never during that process."³⁵

Müberra and Güliz Hanım narrate this period as follows:

G: I heard that they wanted to use it as public housing. However, they could not since it needed repairment. They couldn't do anything with it. And it remained as it was. According to my knowledge, it was given to Çelik Gülersoy, but I don't know about the transition period.

Ç: It isn't being used as public housing, is it?

M: No no. I mean, they intended to.

G: I presume it was never used. Because the inside of it was falling off. It was their intention, I mean it was going to be used, but it needed serious restoration.

M: Sure, sure.

G: Since they could not have it repaired, they rented it to Touring.

³³ From the interview I conducted with Müberra Hanım and her daughter Güzin Hanım in February 17th 2013.

³⁴"In the meantime, the building which has lost all its interior decoration and furniture, is now dilapidated and its garden resembles a jungle."

³⁵ Taken from the interview I conducted with Haldun Bey on March 28th 2013.

M: Yes.

When we came closer to the *telos* of Gülersoy's narration in his article, we learn that thanks to İstemihan Talay (Minister of Culture) and Bülent Ecevit (Prime Minister) the Touring Company rented Fabiato Mansion for 25 years starting from 1997 from the Ministry of Culture (Gülersoy, 1997a:7). There is no explanation about how the mansion's property right could be taken back from GDS and was given to the Ministry of Culture. When I called the GDS in Ankara to ask about the mansion's situation between 1995 and 1997, the person on the phone could make nothing of what I was trying to explain. Thus, they could not find any documentation about the Fabiato Mansion in the archive of GDS. The details about Gülersoy's working principles given by Mustafa Pehlivanoglu, the architect who designed the restoration plan for Fabiato Masion, helps diffuse the mystery around GDS. While I was complaining about the lack of documentation Pehlivanoglu said:

“They don't even know this at the General Directorate of Security. A general director has probably demanded this on paper. What can you do by sending a policeman there... The mansion needs to pass through a process, and because they didn't have time for that they probably said this is none of our business and gave it back (...) When you go to the General Directorate of Security what will happen, they'll say who should we ask, will drop a note and forget when another phone call comes in.”³⁶

The last stop of this untrammled flux, namely the Touring Club quite similar to GDS became concerned about the Fabiato Mansion by chance. Bulutoğlu talks about the meeting of the Touring Club and Fabiato Mansion through the life story of Gülersoy who moved to Büyükkada during 90s:

“He was living in a very nice house in Zekeriyaköy, but he decided to move from there when they started construction high voltage lines. Because he regarded the Islands as liberated zone [from the air pollution and the like] he settled down here. At some point he started living in a house opposite the John Pasha Mansion, in which Ahmet Emin Yalman also lived some time. He bought this house in the name of Touring. He used a part of it as an office. Because he had devoted his life to Touring and because he was the 'single man' in the leadership the transfers

³⁶ From the interview I conducted with Mustafa Pehlivanoglu, March 26th 2013.

between his personal property and Touring property are blurred. That he moved to the Islands was the result of his sickness but also of his motivation to do business on the Islands.”³⁷

When Gülersoy moved to Büyükada, he had in mind to open a culture house where concerts and events may take place; the Fabiato Mansion appeared as a suitable ruin to transform primarily because of its garden: “It’s a building of the size we wanted with a nice garden. Actually the garden is of great attraction to us. To rescue the mansion is a different thing, but the garden is attractive. We are looking for a place to use as a cafeteria and hold concerts.”³⁸

Putting forward the informal relations between the Touring Club and the public institutions, Pehlivanoğlu took the scarcity of documentation to be quite normal. He explains the undocumented process of relocating the mansion to Touring Company as follows:

“At that time it was easier, now it is more difficult. When the Minister asked ‘What can I do for you Çelik’, and he said ‘give me that building,’ the Minister would take note and have it bought for him. The law had little to do in this process. When the Minister sees the possibility of something good coming out of it, he says ‘Can I do something for you’, ‘Let us also be of help in this matter.’ ‘I saw the Fabiato Mansion, if you gave that to me... it’s without an owner anyway, I’ll take care of it’ he [Gülersoy] would say. ‘Of course, of course’ they say, that’s how he gets it. Don’t get this wrong, don’t exaggerate this. The institution acts as if it is above the state. Right now the state itself can’t even behave that freely, they want 40 reports now.”³⁹

Before discussing the aestheticization of the mansion I will sum up the process of dispossession of the mansion. Étienne Balibar states that the formation of nation state constitutes a retrospective illusion and composes the link between the practices of formation and reproduction. The continuum in such practices makes the continuity possible in the structure of the nation state (Balibar, 1991:86). The demographic engineering policies and resettlement acts of the state have been persisted after the formation of the Republic. The plan of *Eastern Region Reform Commission* (1926), the Capital Tax case (1942), the abolishment of the dual nationality and the deportation of the Rum population in 1964, September 6-7 events in 1955, and the evacuations of Kurdish villages after the coup d’état of

³⁷ From the interview I conducted with Halim Bulutoğlu, March 6th 2013.

³⁸ From the interview I conducted with Mustafa Pehlivanoğlu, March 26th 2013.

³⁹ From the interview I conducted with Mustafa Pehlivanoğlu, March 26th 2013.

1980 are examples of what we call as Turkification practices, which are innate to the state formation.

I propose to contextualize the dispossession of the Fabiato Mansion in 1977 along these lines. In this case we see that the state claims itself as the sole authority in the redistribution of the dispossession. In other words, the competition around the mansion was limited among state institutions. Although Gemma's will was approved by local authorities before her decease indicating her will to bequeath the mansion to the Saint Pasifico Latin-Catholic Church, the state intervention to the process finalized by the dispossession of the mansion (Gülersoy, 1997a:5-8). Concerning the oral will, the housekeeping family who has migrated from Erzincan to Büyükada around 1940s did not count as a legitimate partner during the dispossession of the Fabiato Mansion. Indeed, the state did not need to share its legitimacy with the people who were influenced by the demographic engineering policies of 40s.

To sum up, despite the limited accessible documentation about the legal process, it would be appropriate to say that the competition which was only open to state institutions was quite contentious. As Mustafa Pehlivanoğlu puts forward, the mansion changed several hands based on oral and spontaneous decisions.⁴⁰ The documentation, which pictured the period of confiscation (1977-1993), is on the archive of Directorate General of National Property; however, not available to the third parties. The period after 1993, which refers to the competition among state institutions, is mostly not documented. For example, there is very limited information of the General Directory of Security's involvement to the process of dispossession, except for one document and the gossips surrounding Büyükada. The district governor of the Islands (*Adalar kaymakamı*) wrote a petition to the mayor of the Islands on behalf of General Directory of Security asking the construction plan of the Fabiato Mansion to be sent.⁴¹ According to Pehlivanoğlu, the involvement of the Touring Club has nothing to do with the spirit of redemption or so as it is voiced in Çelik Gülersoy's articles (Gülersoy, 1997a:6); it is rather the result of having good relations with the contemporary minister of culture, İstemihan Talay. All in all, I frame the dispossession of the mansion as a prolongation of the state intervention to the "left behind", "abandoned" or "not having a legal inheritor" (Gülersoy, 1997a:6) real estate. The stages in the story of the mansion, such as the transmission of the mansion's property right to the Cultural Ministry and The Touring Club

⁴⁰ From the interview I conducted with Mustafa Pehlivanoğlu, March 26th 2013.

⁴¹ From the archive of the Municipality of the Prince Islands, the document encoded B.05.1.EGM.4.34.23.71.996/557. Sent from district governor of the Islands to the mayor of the Islands, in 1996 September 27.

becoming the main actor in the transformation of the building into a culture house, should be considered within the framework of the cultural policies of the 90s. For instance, the culture and art might be considered the hip concepts of the waves of rediscovering Istanbul after the coup d'état of 1980. In accordance with the memory boom which generated a market centered tendency of renovating the “abandoned” real estate, the Fabiato Mansion transformed a culture house in order to “bring back” the island’s culture to those new comers who are the new owners of “what was left behind”.

II.2 Culture Wars: Competing Aesthetic Values of the 1990s

In order to contextualize the political atmosphere that led to the transformation of the Fabiato Mansion into a culture house, I would first like to contextualize the different poles of the aesthetics debate initiated in the 1990s. Ayfer Bartu claims that “the struggle between preservationists and advocates of an untrammelled modernization shows us how the history and the reminiscences of the past can be utilized as symbolic capital in current political contentions” (Bartu, 2000:47). Not only in the early Republican period but also later, Touring was perceived as being on the side of the preservationists and supported by the Chamber of Architects as an actor especially against the municipalities which was calling for the initiation of so-called modernization projects, whereby the buildings of non-Muslim populations would be destroyed for opening de-historicized grounds to rebuild on (Bartu, 2000:47). During the 1980s, Istanbul experienced aggressive transformation practices undertaken by Turgut Özal in order to turn it into a global, world-class city. During his governance, Turkey became acquainted with global commodity capitalism which intensively affected the urban texture; emerging shopping malls, five-star hotels, and entertainment centers and the like (Bartu, 2001:135). The Istanbul mayor of the time, Bedrettin Dalan, was extremely motivated to transform “Istanbul from a tired city whose glory resides in the past history, into a metropolis full of promise for the 21st century”⁴². The debate, which left its mark on the 1980s urban agenda, was the Beyoğlu revitalization/demolition project proposed by Dalan. The main oppositional side was occupied by the Chamber of Architects, which was the carrier of conservationists’ flag against the “modernizers” represented by Dalan’s side. For Dalan, what Beyoğlu needed in order to develop was to be “cleaned, rehabilitated and -in parts-demolished” (Bartu, 2001:136). For the opposite side, the demolition of Tarlabası amounted

⁴² Cited in Bartu, 2001:135.

to “selling the city to multinational corporations” or “what happened on September 6th and 7th” (Bartu, 2001:137).

Following this burning debate on cultural heritage, during 1990s such debates as “what does being from Turkey mean” or “which Beyoğlu” became prevalent. In the mid 1990s, the Welfare Party, an Islamist conservative party rose to power by winning the municipal elections. In Beyoğlu, the cultural and touristic centre of Istanbul, the notion of being local reconfigured the urban space (Navaro-Yasin, 2000:79). For the Chamber of Architects, claiming to be conservationists against the most conservative party representatives in the parliament was not as easy any more as it had been during the 1980s vis-à-vis Dalan. After Welfare Party called for the “conquest of the city the second time by those they referred to as the real owners of the city” (Bartu, 2001:143), the Chamber of Architects organized a counter panel the same day. The panel’s name speaks for itself: “*Fetih Söylemi ve Çağdaşlık: İstanbul ve Tarih Bilinci, Kent ve Uygarlık Kültürü*” [The Discourse of Conquest and Modernity: Istanbul and the Consciousness of History, the Culture of the City and Civilization]. The “alternative meeting’s” booklet opens with these words of İstanbul Büyükşehir Branch of the Chamber of Architects:

“The political and ideological expressions at the “conquest celebrations” organized for the 544th anniversary of İstanbul’s seizure have a backward content that neglects the mutual cultural influence between civilizations and encourages conflict and backwardness instead of reminding the society of a modern historical consciousness promoting the virtues of peace, tolerance and solidarity” (TBMMOB Mimarlar Odası İstanbul Büyükşehir Şubesi, 1997:3).

Along with the organization of à la turca Reconquista, the attempt to demolish the historical city walls, and building a mosque at Taksim square were also criticized harshly during the panel. One of the points calling for attention is the imaginary ways of defining what is conservatism and who is the real conservative. Referring to the Refah Party members Oktay Ekinci, member of the Chamber of Architects who is architect himself stated;

“The situation is obvious; these are not conservative or anything like that, because conservative parties work to maintain the traces left by cultures and history and there is no selective stance” (TBMMOB Mimarlar Odası İstanbul Büyükşehir Şubesi, 1997:11)

When the discussions on the construction of a new mosque at the heart of Taksim were escalating, the Club completed the renovation of the Fabiato Mansion and declared it with these words at the opening ceremony which took place on September 9th :

“In this recent period when Istanbul was corrupted rapidly by losing its green fields and architectural texture, there still remained an untouched corner of Istanbul; the Prince Islands and especially Büyükada. In 1997, Touring brought into view the Fabiato Mansion, which is one of the five magnificent buildings in Büyükada. This huge building in ruins, was repaired by Touring, and opened to service with its library, café, meeting rooms and garden which is now turned into a heaven. With the classical music concerts held in summer the culture and art was introduced once again to the island after a century. This time, it is accessible for everybody” (Aslan, 2001:98).

The struggle in the domain of architectural and urban planning also prepared the basis of the debates about the meanings of being Turkish, European and Istanbulite (Bartu, 2000:48). While speculating on newly gained meanings of those identities, we should be aware that these “cultural identities” of a city are “far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continual play of history, culture and power”.⁴³ The anti-imperialistic tendency, which was a significant element of both left and right-wing political movements, made the discussion on being European and Turkish at the same time even more complicated. The complex and torn Turkish subjectivity, which, on the one hand, is keen to identify itself with European civilization but on the other hand defines itself through the anti-imperialistic struggle, became more and more visible during 1990s. The noticeable result of this tension was the rendering of non-Muslim communities of this geography as symbols of imperialistic politics (Bartu, 2001:49).

The discourse that the Touring Club produced around the renovation process of the Fabiato Mansion provides a striking example to account for this tension. While reintegrating a “ruin” left from Levantines into public space, the Touring also brought the culture of the Islands “back” by turning the lounge room of the mansion into a classical concert hall. When we put together the image of the renovated mansion adorned with Turkish flags and the classical music concert hall we may have hard times in drawing a line between Turkishness and Europeaness. However the following quote, from an activist critical of Dalan’s projects, provides one possible account of the common point between these clashing discourses, the *magical* glue which may stick together the opposite poles:

“We need neither the nostalgic nor the brothel version of Beyoğlu. We need a national and clean Beyoğlu. One cannot argue that since people are gone,

⁴³ Cited in Bartu, 2001:152.

we should also get rid of the buildings. We are neither Franks nor Levantines. We have to restore these buildings and open them up for tourists. We should be the hosts and Levantines should be the guests” (Bartu, 2001:140).

This quote clearly shows that the aestheticization discourse was used to define the changing positions; more specifically, the changing of landlords. The reflection of such a tendency became concrete at the *Büyükkada Kültür Evi* where it is not possible to find anything related to the former landlords. Transforming the room of Aurora Fabiato into the room of Çelik Gülersoy embodies the attempt to erase the past inhabitants of the place while protecting the façade of the building.

II. 3 The Aestheticization of the Fabiato Mansion

“[...] We are starting the transformation of a huge mansion, belonging to a Levantine family of Italian background, into a Culture House by adorning it with Turkish flags. These flags decorating the streets do not symbolize chauvinism, but an enthusiasm, a love, in a single word a synthesis and a Renaissance: a republican institution in the service of its public in a Levantine mansion. A cultural institution at the level of international standards” (Gülersoy, 1997b:3).

The opening ceremony of the *Büyükkada Kültür Evi* in 1997 starts with these words of Çelik Gülersoy, the director of the Touring and Automobile Company of Turkey. His speech continues with other expressions of excitement for having a “cultural institution” which conforms to the international standards and symbolizes a synthesis. As far as we can understand from his affective opening remark, the word “synthesis” refers to the change in the ownership of the mansion. By adorning it with Turkish flags, the Fabiato Mansion, formerly belonging to a Levantine inhabitant, has been transformed into *Büyükkada Kültür Evi*. The main lounge was turned into an exhibition hall and the garden has been used as a café for visitors. Çelik Gülersoy’s speech is exemplary of the discourse produced around the processes of renovation of “abandoned” real estate that formerly belonged to non-Muslims of this geography. What captures my attention in this renovation/Turkification process is the transformation of a *loss* into a fundamental element of the national cultural capital.

In the brochure, openness to the public is emphasized frequently as a characteristic of the culture house.⁴⁴ It seems that renovation is used here as a justification to transgress the boundaries of private property. Presenting itself as the defender of aesthetic values and the cultural heritage also acquitted the Touring Company's informal accumulation of property in the discursive level. While claiming that it is unacceptable to leave the Levantine heritage abandoned, Touring Company does not give us any clues about the reasons for this abandonment. According to Gülersoy, the shiny life in Prince Islands automatically faded right after the foundation of Turkish Republic because the embassies and multinational companies moved to Ankara (Gülersoy, 1999:2).⁴⁵ In his description, there is no place for the atrocities of Late Ottoman or Republican Period. One article written by Gülersoy entitled "The Armenian Question" is an explicit example of total denial in line with official history. By referring to the Armenian armed group ASALA's violent attracts in the 1970s and 80s, Çelik Gülersoy states:

"It is quite clear that the history Turkey is passing through a very special period. [...] The main justification put forward for the violence directed against Turkey is based on the Armenian events of seventy or eighty years ago. Several documents published at that time concerning these events, which have been exaggerated and distorted, will be re-printed in these pages" (Gülersoy, 1984-85:76-77).

In the article entitled "Kurum ve Atatürk" he expresses his gratefulness to Mustafa Kemal and the deep attachment not only to the founding father but also the early republican period can be easily noticed (Gülersoy, 1982:3). However, acts of political violence of the period following the early republican period were not ignored such as September 6-7 events (1955) or 1964-78 Cyprus events (Gülersoy, 1999:3).

The way in which Gülersoy describes the mission of *Büyükada Kültür Evi* evokes Hobsbawm's notion of invented traditions. Building upon the "abandonment," Gülersoy claims to overcome the rupture in the history of Büyükada through institutions like *Büyükada Kültür Evi* which are designed as venues for classical music concerts, exhibitions, and tango dance shows (Gülersoy, 1999:2). Glorifying the vibrant cultural life before the Republican period, Çelik Gülersoy establishes a reference point in the past and asserts that *Büyükada*

⁴⁴ "After the 1997 restoration, following services have been provided by the establishment which is open to the public and now called "culture house": snack restaurant, library, meeting rooms, concert in summer-nights." (Gülersoy, 1997b:3)

⁴⁵ "Bu parlak yaşam, Cumhuriyetle beraber elçiliklerin Ankara'ya taşınması ve bir çok yabancı şirketin yurt dışına dönmesi sonucunda, doğal olarak sönmüşlüğü" (Gülersoy, 1999:2).

Kültür Evi will be the place where the real tradition of Prince Islands will reproduce again. As Hobsbawm states “insofar as there is such reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of ‘invented’ traditions is the continuity with it is largely factitious” (Hobsbawm, 1983:2). The frequent usage of the metaphor of ‘Renaissance’ seems also having something to do with inventing tradition. As far as I could grasp the word Renaissance is used by Gülersoy only in the republican context. What *Büyükada Kültür Evi* aims at a rebirth; is the ‘enlightenment’ after the dark ages that Turkey thus Prince Islands experienced after the Republican period. By giving only practical details -which includes *who* but not *how*- about the mansion, Gülersoy, on the one hand, mystifies the past of the mansion and, on the other hand, contextualizes Touring Company’s profit from the obsolete, dilapidated appearance of the building in the frame of “abandoned Prince Islands”. From the damage assessment and restoration plans, it does not take much effort to grasp the extent to which the mansion was decayed. Pehlivanoğlu also affirms that what was transferred to the Touring Club was not a mansion, but a ruin: “When the state turned it over to us it was like a ruin. We received it as a ruin.”⁴⁶ The aestheticization process and the discourse of gentrification mutually form their *raison d’être*.

Adorno in his short essay entitled “Valéry Proust Museum” discusses the characteristics of aestheticized objects exhibited in museums or galleries by contrasting Paul Valéry’s and Marcel Proust’s views. He establishes the etymological link between the museum and the mausoleum which is based on the process of dying: “Museums are like the family sepulchres of works of art” (Adorno, 1996:173). In a way, this argument also underlines the spiritual sphere that museum built on as a container for dead objects, where people come to mourn. While comparing the two different approaches to the aestheticization process, he implies that museums are the murderers of works of art; they kill them through displacement and decontextualization which makes them lose their vitality. “Art becomes a matter of education and information; Venues becomes a document. Education defeats art” (Adorno, 1996:176). Valéry in his article “Le problème des musées” has also a counter attitude towards the museum; for him the museum is a place where “we put the art of the past to death” (Adorno, 1996:176). In *A l’ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* Proust reserves much more place to the viewer in contrast to Valéry who highlights the production process of the artist. Valéry writes by using the metaphors of death whereas Proust emphasizes the [possibility for a] second life that museum provides to the works of art. Adorno positions

⁴⁶ Taken from the interview I conducted with Mustafa Pehlivanoğlu, March 26th 2013.

himself with distance from the claims of both sides stating that Valéry fetishizes the role of the artist whereas Proust overplays the viewers' position (Adorno, 1996:183). How can we situate the Fabiato Mansion within this theoretical debate; should we consider it as a dead or a revitalized object?

Max Weber explains the common ground of aestheticization and religiosity as the practice of “emotional propaganda and mass appeals” (Weber, 1946:343). He historicizes this process starting from the development of intellectualism that promoted the rationalization of life. Within this process, art gained a function to produce salvation from rationalism and became a rival of salvation religion (Weber, 1946:342). Based on Weber's argument, one can claim that the potential of art's propagandist character is embodied in the aestheticization process. Inside of the culture house there is no inscription indicating the authenticity of the house decoration. There is only one sentence in Gülersoy's article entitled “*Büyükada Kültür Evi*” about the furniture in the mansion which proclaims that all the equipment was brought from the ex-mansions of Touring and *Büyükada Kültür Evi* was decorated appropriately to its time.⁴⁷ However, the visitor is not informed whether the furniture was used to host the Fabiato family's guests or not. The visitor cannot make the differentiation between the artifacts and chairs, tables brought totally out of context. Although the mansion still keeps the form of a living place, the lounge room has been transformed into a concert hall and the garden into a snack restaurant.⁴⁸ In other words, the aestheticization process in this case includes the dehistoricization and the decontextualization of the function of the mansion as well as the objects, which are exhibited in the mansion, and the attribution of a sublime value; an importance and validity to the place (Svetlana, 1991). This aestheticization practice, which includes modifications in the garden (decorating with flowers, planting trees, renovation of the walls) and the interior of the building itself (changing the place of the kitchen and bathroom) constitutes an intervention to the function of the building. The documentation found in the archive of the Municipality of Islands indicates moreover that, during the restoration process, Touring took the decision to put up a wall to segregate the house which the housekeeping family still inhabits.⁴⁹ The construction of this new wall prevents any possible interaction with the ex-inhabitants of the mansion. The documentation also clearly shows that the renovation process was inaugurated without the necessary documentation and

⁴⁷ “The interior of the empty building was decorated in the style of the period with furniture from Touring's old mansions” (Gülersoy, 1997a:8).

⁴⁸ It should be noted that the *Büyükada Kültür Evi* is kept closed during the year of 2013.

⁴⁹ The petition written by Emin Kul and Korhan Berzeg exemplifies the disturbance the neighbors caused by the construction going on in the Fabiato Mansion. From the Archive of the Municipality of the Island, file number 64-1096. The document dated to 05.07.1999.

permits. The file of the Fabiato Mansion is full of petitions and decisions to stop the executions whose demands were never fulfilled.⁵⁰ Pehlivanoğlu points out the legal process of the renovation:

“Restorations carried out by the Culture and Arts Department are generally without an architect, because out of the institution’s 13 departments none is directly concerned with restoration. What does this mean? Whatever Mr Gülersoy wants, that’s it. A la Çelik. The law of protection, permits aren’t very important. (...) We always took care of issues with the board. Because he used to push the process forward we would clean up after him. No lies. Whoever saw me used to say “oh no, him again”. There’s a problem, we’re here to take care of the funeral.”⁵¹

Along with its changing characteristic; the mansion also gained a new meaning, a sublime value that was not the case before the *renovation*. The Fabiato Mansion turned out to be a library, a concert hall and a meeting place.⁵² The wife of the current mayor of Islands, Hatice Farsakoğlu remembers the *Büyükada Kültür Evi* as follows: “The first fashion show on the islands was done there. For the first time an arts house open to everybody was opened on the Islands. There were signature days and concerts. People also came from outside, the concerts used to be very crowded.”⁵³ Mustafa Farsakoğlu, who was the *Kaymakam* (governor) during the renovation of the mansion and who is now the mayor of the Islands associates the audience of the Culture House with the elites of the island: “The activities were visited by socially high-status people, scientists, artists, business men, high-level administrators etc. It’s going to sound bad, but it was more the elite that came.”⁵⁴

These processes do not only legitimize the reification of the mansion and the change in its ownership, but also evoke a remembering mechanism. Buildings have considerable authority in evoking memories. As Ahıska states, “[m]onuments contribute to the closure of the past as a dead body. However they also forge a regime of memory and desire that serves power” (Ahıska, 2011:9). In the case of *Büyükada Kültür Evi*, it seems safe to state that the

⁵⁰ From the Archive of the Municipality of the Island, file number 64-1096. The document dated to 06.02.1999, enumerated 89/90.

⁵¹ Taken from the interview I conducted with Mustafa Pehlivanoğlu, March 26th 2013.

⁵² “In the inclined garden the old concrete walls were renewed, clad in bricks, the ground covered with natural stone blocks and trees and flowers planted everywhere. For the new usage the building’s basement was reserved for the kitchen, the new WCs and storage rooms. The building’s ground floor was reserved for a library (the first on the Islands) as my donation on the right hand side, a winter café on the left side and the top floor as a space for concerts and different meetings with a piano. This floor was decorated in bright and light colours and with lacquered furniture” (Gülersoy, 1997a:8).

⁵³ From the interview I conducted with Mustafa and Hatice Farsakoğlu, March 21th 2013.

⁵⁴ From the interview I conducted with Mustafa and Hatice Farsakoğlu, March 21th 2013.

transformation process and the discourse established around it by Çelik Gülersoy manifests in a clear manner the motivation of reinventing a non-existent culture of Prince Islands by placing it into the republican frame.

II.4 Conclusion: the Mansion as a Nostalgia and Melancholia Generating Object

Although the Touring Company published a series of books and booklets to present the renovation activities of the company, there is no detailed documentation about the Fabiato Mansion, except the few pages of a brochure which was published to be distributed during the opening ceremony after the renovation and two short articles of Çelik Gülersoy published in *Belleten* of Touring Company. The only article directly concerned with the mansion arrives at the *telos* which refers to Touring's coming into the scene. Gülersoy's narration became more and more dramatic in order to glorify the drastic change in the situation of the mansion. In 1997, Touring finalized the renovation process of the mansion and the Fabiato Mansion was transformed to *Büyükada Kültür Evi* which is still in *service*: “[...] under the unfavourable conditions of winter the ruined building and its wild garden were completely renovated by the Institution in the short period of eight months” (Gülersoy, 1997a:7). Pehlivanoğlu postulates Gülersoy's general discontentment and dissatisfaction about the project of *Büyükada Kültür Evi* as the possible explanation of lack of investigation: “He might have not written because he didn't feel like it. (...) It did not represent a prime importance. He did not communicate at all with the previous tenants, he never intended to write. (...) He started with large ambitions, but when the project started to be unsuccessful it became unpleasant”.⁵⁵ Before Pehlivanoğlu's interview I was assuming that the lack of written documentation has something to do with possible problems encountered during the dispossession process. However, Pehlivanoğlu undoubtedly suggests that it is related to the disappointment Gülersoy experienced on the Prince Islands:

“He was annoyed. During the stage of running it he was annoyed by the reaction of the people. Actually he never provided any service towards the people. He wanted to serve an elite strata entirely. He wasn't aware that this strata did not exist. He didn't know that what we call My lord of Istanbul, that is somebody listening to classical music and eating cake does not exist. Right now that person does not exist in our culture. People who are a little non-Muslim, a little francophone, who graduated from Galatasaray High School, who have seen

⁵⁵ Taken from the interview I conducted with Mustafa Pehlivanoğlu, March 26th 2013.

Europe and are used to Parisian cafes... what do they do, they listen to a few pieces on the accordion in the cafe in Paris, they eat cake and drink coffee and eat a sandwich in the evening. We tried to apply that model. While it doesn't exist anywhere.”⁵⁶

I think the mansion as an agonizing object also opens the discussion of nostalgia and melancholia. According to Esra Özyürek the "nostalgic take on modernity which can also be called nostalgic modernity is a political ideology, as well as a discursive and a sentimental condition" (Özyürek, 2006:19-20). In the case of Gülersoy, the past as a reference point that did not lead to passivity that detained him in a state of longing, but had a constructive side which constituted projects for a non-existing audience. In addition, nostalgia saved him from the burden of confronting the reason for the disappearance of the non-Muslims of Old Istanbul. As Renato Rosaldo claims, "nostalgia is a particularly appropriate emotion to invoke in attempting to establish one's innocence and at the same time talk about what one has destroyed" (Rosaldo, 1989:108). Coming from *notos* –returning home, and *algia*-longing, nostalgia evokes a sentiment of loss and displacement, “but it is also a romance with one’s fantasy” (Boym, 2001:xiii). Similar to fantasies, nostalgia is not only about the past but also deals with present and has direct impact on realities of the future (Boym, 2001:xiv).

Following Walter Benjamin, I argue that the only way to establish an active and open relationship with history is to mourn the remains of the past. The politics of mourning might be described as the creative process mediating a hopeful or hopeless relationship between loss and history (Eng & Kazanjian, 2002:2). Thus, the loss is inseparable from the remains since the loss is known only through what remains of it. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian suggest that in order to create an “active rather than reactive, prescient rather than nostalgic, abundant rather than lacking, social rather than solipsistic, militant rather than reactionary” politics of mourning, can be generated through the animation of history within the “creation of bodies and subjects, spaces and representations, ideals and knowledges” (Eng & Kazanjian, 2002:2). It seems that the inseparable association of mourning and melancholia can be helpful to establish an active relationship with history. According to Eng and Kazandjian, “While mourning abandons lost objects by laying their histories to rest, melancholia’s continued and open relation to the past finally allows us to gain new perspectives on and new understandings of loss objects” (Eng & Kazanjian, 2002:4). Freud defined melancholia as a physical condition generated out of the loss of a loved object. For

⁵⁶ Taken from the interview I conducted with Mustafa Pehlivanoglu, March 26th 2013.

Freud, mourning is an essential element in terms of overcoming melancholia. “If mourning allowed for grieving” overcoming of the feeling of loss through the lapse of time might be possible (Navaro-Yashin, 2009:15). Yael Navaro-Yashin in her work on Cyprus discusses melancholia with reference to ‘ethnic conflict’. She asserts that “when the person who has been lost is one who belongs to the community of the so-defined ‘enemy’, the loss is not symbolized as a ‘loss’, and therefore it is not grieved over” (Navaro-Yashin, 2009:15). When the feeling of loss is not registered or ritualized; it can generate melancholia “a psychical-subjective state where the object of loss is largely unconscious to the identity of the mourner and where, therefore, the loss is irredeemable, ambivalent, and lingering” (Navaro-Yashin, 2009:16). Furthermore, she proposes the notions of *spatial melancholia* and *melancholic objects* to show that melancholia mediates also through objects and non-human environments (Navaro-Yashin, 2009:17).

To conclude, I believe that it is possible to talk about a physical loss in the case of Levantines. Today there are no Levantines in Prinkipo to mourn the *loss* of Levantine culture. Rather than romanticizing this *loss* or offering a picture which can represent this *loss*; (Nichanian, 2002) like a collector who tries to capture the sequences of this story, I suggest to think about the *Büyükada Kültür Evi* as a *melancholic object* which reminds us of the Levantine culture, and the political violence that they and the people around them –literally living next to the mansion- have been subjected to. While talking to Ahmet in his restaurant, he and some of his friends who are running a shop or living around, told me that their water and electricity bills are still in the name of Aurora Fabiato. Aurora, whose ghost still haunts Prinkipo’s inhabitants through electricity or water bills and the Fabiato Mansion as a space which generates memories, can be seen as the agonizing object, the “persistence of a present past or the return of the dead which the worldwide work of mourning cannot get rid of” (Derrida, 1994:101). In the background of Aurora’s ghostly presence, the next chapter discusses the ways in which Aurora's last years are remembered by those who were in close proximity to Aurora..

CHAPTER III

Different Practices of Remembering the Political Violence at ‘Home’

“Memory was a topic for poets and their visions of a golden age or, conversely, for their tales about the hauntings of a restless past” (Huysen, 2003:2) says Andreas Huysen pointing to a time when the stories of ghosts were a popular topic for storytellers. However, through the modern media of reproduction, the relationality between past and present has drastically changed. The blurring of temporal boundaries through such media as the internet have allowed the relocation of the past to the present (Huysen, 2003:1). Huysen recounts that the clash between history, the means “to guarantee the relative stability of the past in its pastness” (Huysen, 2003:1), and memory might be interpreted in two ways: the weakening of the stable associations regarding the legitimacy of family, nation and state which were established upon “invented traditions” (Hobsbawm, 1983) and the reorganization of respective geographic and political groundings in the process of globalization. Or, it might also signify the renegotiation of the practices of local and globalizing forces (Huysen, 2003:4).

With its increased significance in contemporary politics, memory, according to Huysen, is at times used to justify mass political violence. For instance, the legitimization of NATO’s “humanitarian intervention” in Kosovo was “largely depended on Holocaust memory” (Huysen, 2003:13). Although such examples point to memory’s substantial integration into “high” politics, I argue that memory also has transformative potential for exposing the silences that shape high politics and mainstream historiography. Literary works, memoirs and oral history interviews, by revealing the perspectives of silenced subjects, not only challenge the fetishization of archival documents but also make visible the role of the subject in the history writing process (Ginzburg, 1996). As Michel-Rolph Trouillot states:

“Human beings participate in history both as actors and as narrators. The inherent ambivalence of the word “history” in many modern languages, including English, suggests this dual participation. In vernacular use, history means both the facts of the matter and a narrative of those facts, both “what happened” and “that which is said to have happened.” The first meaning places the emphasis on the sociohistorical process, the second on our knowledge of that process or on a story about that process” (Trouillot, 1995:2).

In this section, I will try to depict different accounts of “what (might have) happened” and “who is saying what (might have) happened”. Moreover, I will bring together insights from the documents and the narratives arising from the different memories that circulate to elaborate on the ways that the past was experienced and is remembered in the present (Assman, 2006). As it is mentioned in the Introduction, the private archive of the Fabiato family which is now open to researchers at SALT Research is the only documentation which presents fragments from the everyday life at the Fabiato Mansion. The private archive of the Fabiato family also consists of the set of documents produced and located at the Fabiato Mansion. The journey of the archive started with the process of dispossession which was described in detail in Chapter II. Without ascribing a given world-shattering role to memory and situating it “in the intersection between the individual and culture” (Swanson, 2000:111) I will contextualize the memory/remembrance of my informants “not as a separate realm from authorized domains of knowledge, but itself constituted through historically specific cultural knowledges” (Swanson, 2000:111). To do so, I will put forward my interlocutors’ positionings on what they “remember.” I propose that the memories of the informants can revitalize the factual clues present in the archival documentation. With the help of memory, which “allows us to call on singular experiences in an effort to make sense of the present” (Ahiska, 2009), the archival knowledge of everyday life at the Fabiato Mansion may become a “living force”.

III.1 The Interlocutors

Güzin Hanım,⁵⁷ who was a baby while her family was renting the little house in the Fabiato Mansion’s garden and later a flat in the Fabiato Mansion, was astonished when she realized her family does not have any photographs taken at the mansion: “There is no, absolutely no photograph. I’m really puzzled why there isn’t any, but it’s really like that.”⁵⁸ Haldun Bey, who was a kid when Aurora was coming to chat with his mother, neither has any photographs of the house nor of Aurora. They both complained about the lack of visual documentation and asked me to bring them if I have access to any visuals. Why would Müberra and Güzin Hanım and Haldun Bey feel the need to offer me visual material when I asked them about their recollections of the mansion and of Aurora Fabiato? None of them voiced a reason, but

⁵⁷ I had a three-hour-long interview with Güzin Hanım and her mother Müberra Hanım together. They were renters of Aurora Fabiato for five years during the summers.

From the interview I conducted with Müberra and her daughter Güzin Hanım, February 17th 2013.

⁵⁸ From the interview I conducted with Müberra Hanım and her daughter Güzin Hanım, February 17th 2013.

they all started looking for visuals right after I said I was working on the private archive of the Fabiato family. Is it because, compared to the written documentation I have accessed, their memories seemed to them as fleeting? Was this an effort to fix the temporariness of the *verba* with visuals? Is it that the link between sign and signifier is more fleeting in the case of spoken words-memory in comparison to spoken words and photography? It seems to me that they were in search of visual material to strengthen the ties between spoken words and memory. Possessing a photograph would also concretize their personal relationality with the story of the Fabiato Mansion. In what follows, I discuss this effort in the context of the reliability of memories, and their place in the social sciences. In the absence of a photograph, a sign in itself, my interlocutors were not only talking about “what happened” but were also sharing, directly or indirectly, their personal relationship to the events related to Aurora Fabiato and the Fabiato Mansion.

III.1.1 The Setting: Actors Coming Together at the Scene

As I put forward in the previous chapter, The Fabiato Mansion was not built upon the request of Fabiato family as indicated in the Museum of Islands’ architectural map.⁵⁹ Rather, the Fabiato family first encountered the mansion as a hotel which was situated at Çankaya Street in Prinkipo. According to Müberra Hanım and Haldun Bey, Gemma Giuliani and her husband Spiridon Fabiato stayed at the hotel and upon the request of Gemma, Spiridon decided to buy the hotel:

Haldun Bey: “They come to the hotel as customers, the woman really likes the hotel and Fabiato buys the hotel.”

Müberra hanım: “It’s a rumor so who knows how true... His wife really liked it, she said ‘I want this’. The guy had money and so he bought it.”

In harmony with the citations quoted above, Müberra Hanım and Güzin Hanım’s accounts were almost always in accord with one another, and Haldun Bey’s had a different tone. While Haldun Bey’s narration is closer to the authoritative language of the documents and follows facts and figures, the Müberra and Güzin Hanım’s narrations have the nuances of the past perfect tense (*-miş’li geçmiş zaman*) and past tense (*-di’li geçmiş zaman*). In other words, while telling the stories, Müberra Hanım and Güzin Hanım emphasize their sources and make the differentiations between *rivayet* (rumour) and what they personally experienced. From the title deed (*tapu senedi*) we know that the Fabiato Mansion, a triplex building, became the

⁵⁹ <http://harita.adalarmuzesi.org/harita.php>

main residence of the Fabiato family in 1912, a period that none of my interviewees personally witnessed.

Their narration of Aurora's adoptive status also displayed striking differences. While Müberra Hanım stated, "Eee, in my childhood I always heard that she was adopted, but I don't know how true it is, that means it emerged from the archive."⁶⁰ Haldun Bey who is at the same age range, recounted the adoption story as follows: "Afterwards they adopt Aurora from the orphanage. It's not their own... After adopting her, they settle here [at the Fabiato Mansion]."⁶¹

One of the fundamental actors' coming to the scene dates back to the 1940s. Haldun Bey narrates the coming of the housekeeper family as follows:

Çiçek: So how did they meet the family?

Haldun Bey: The family comes from Erzincan. When the others left the garden, they asked for it.

Çiçek: What year did they come from Erzincan?

Haldun Bey: I don't know exactly, something like 45.

Çiçek: When they first came to the Island, did they immediately settle down at the Mansion.

Haldun Bey: At the mansion, but they lived in the outbuilding. When they come they work as gardeners at the Fabiato Mansion. His wife and the kids stayed in the outbuilding.⁶²

Haldun Bey remembers the coming of the housekeeper family to the mansion in relation to old gardener quitting his job, whereas Müberra Hanım tries to remember the approximate date of the Housekeeper family's coming with reference to the family members' year of birth:

Müberra Hanım: She is from here. Sevgi was very small when they came to the Island. So she counts as being from here.

Çiçek: Mrs. Fadime and Mr. Imam, are they from the Island?

Müberra hanım: I'll say they came later, they are from Erzincan.

Çiçek: Himm. When did they come?

Müberra hanım: In 40, the 40s.⁶³

⁶⁰ From the interview I conducted with Müberra Hanım and her daughter Güzin Hanım in February 17th 2013.

⁶¹ From the interview I conducted with Haldun Bey in February 28th 2013.

⁶² From the interview I conducted with Haldun Bey in February 28th 2013.

⁶³ From the interview I conducted with Müberra Hanım and her daughter Güzin Hanım in February 17th 2013.

After introducing the main actors of the stories that are narrated by two informants, I want to elaborate on different positionings of the interlocutors that underwrite their above narrations. I interviewed Müberra Hanım and her daughter Güzin Hanım in their house. Two hours long interview was full of affective gestures such as laughter and grief. Müberra Hanım spent her childhood and her youth at the Islands. She has a Rum background. Although Müberra hanım is coming from an *Adalı, Rum* family, she states that she became a *yazlıkçı* (coming to the Islands for the summer) for more than 40 years.

Gülay: She was born and grew up on the Island. [Referring to her mother]

Müberra: (laughing)

Çiçek: And afterwards you came to rent during the summers...

Müberra: Yes, we became summer housers (laughing).⁶⁴

It was in 1969 that Müberra Hanım's story first intersected with the Fabiato Mansion. With her six to eight months old daughter, Güzin,⁶⁵ and her husband, they first rented the little house (*küçük ev*) in the Mansion's garden in 1969. Then, in the following summers, they rented the second flat of the Mansion. Their relation with the Mansion continued after Aurora's death in 1977 as they rented the Mansion from a trustee (*kayyum*) appointed by the state in 1978.

Müberra Hanım: Aaa, for one year, actually two years we, like, spent the summers in different houses. Afterwards we heard that the small house is for rent. We went, talked. My parents knew the woman anyway. They knew Aurora because I'm from here as well. Eee, we went there with the help of the gardener and talked and rented it. We used to go during the summers, in the winter Mrs. Fadime would live there, they would have an oven.

The housekeeper family is present not only in Müberra Hanım's first encounter with the mansion but in every stage of her narration. Their relationship that was initially based on "service" transformed into friendship. This transformation of the relationship also connotes a relationality which goes beyond class positioning. Therefore, they are still in contact with the

⁶⁴ From the interview I conducted with Müberra Hanım and her daughter Güzin Hanım in February 17th 2013.

⁶⁵ Gülay Hanım: We lived in the small house. So that's where we know *mamaka* from.

A: Müberra Hanım: Sixty... eight, sixty nine. In sixty-nine we moved to the small house. You were small... you were a baby. You were six, eight months old when we moved there... Sixty nine."

From the interview I conducted with Müberra Hanım and her daughter Güzin Hanım in February 17th 2013.

daughters of the housekeeper family Sevgi and Mine.⁶⁶ It should be noted that the story of the Müberra and Güzin Hanım narrate the stories of women. İbrahim Bey, the father-husband figure of the housekeeper family is quite invisible in their story while in Haldun Bey's narration the gardener İbrahim Bey represents the housekeeper family. For example, as I quoted above, he narrates the coming of the housekeeper family to the Fabiato Mansion as follows: "In the mansion, but they lived in the outbuilding. When they come he works as a gardener in the Fabiato Mansion. His wife and his children lived in the outbuilding."⁶⁷ From this account it is quite possible to grasp that the wife of the gardener, Fadime hanım, was not working at the Mansion. However, in Güzin and Müberra Hanım's accounts there is a detailed description of housework undertaken by Fadime Hanım.

Haldun Bey, who grew up in a mansion at Çankaya Street across the Fabiato Mansion as the son of Aurora's neighbor, has the outsider view of the Fabiato Mansion in comparison to the Müberra and Güzin Hanım who spent considerable time at the little house, which shares the same garden with the Fabiato Mansion. He positions himself as the neighbor of Aurora and the sequences from the life of the housekeeper appear in his narration to give details of Aurora's life. His class positioning is quite sharp in that sense. It is also possible to state that his gender positioning sharply differentiates itself from that of the Müberra and Güzin Hanım as it will be elaborated on through different examples in the following sections.

III.2 Life at the Mansion: How is it Remembered?

"What a culture remembers and what it chooses to forget are intricately bound up with issues of power and hegemony, and thus with gender." (Hirsch & Smith, 2002:6)

After situating the actors to the scene and briefly describing the positionings of the informants I want to tell the story of the Fabiato Mansion based on the memories of my informants.

My informants have very limited recollections of Gemma and Spiridon Fabiato. In their private archive of the Fabiato family it is quite hard to catch sequences from Gemma's life. The documentation about Gemma concentrates on her health problems,⁶⁸ and her

⁶⁶ In fact, during my interview, Müberra Hanım and Güzin Hanım made a plan to visit Sevgi Hanım during Easter celebration. (From my field diary the part related to my Müberra Hanım and Güzin Hanım visit on February 17th 2013).

⁶⁷ From the interview I conducted with Haldun Bey on February 28th 2013.

⁶⁸ SALT Research, Fabiato Archive, documents coded as AFMFB070003, AFMFB070004, AFMFB070012. Correspondences between Gemma Fabiato and Elena Pecci about Gemma's health problems.

death.⁶⁹ Although in an encyclopedic entry Gemma is mentioned as a painter⁷⁰ it is not possible to find any mention of this in the archival documentation. Haldun Bey does not recall any details of how Aurora talked about her mother, either:

Çiçek: Do you remember the mother [referring to Gemma Giuliani] at all?

Haldun Bey: No, I don't remember her.

Çiçek: I read that she was a painter...

Haldun Bey: The lady didn't say the mother was a painter, but she would talk a lot about her.

Çiçek: How would she talk about her?

Haldun Bey: Like a daughter talks about her mother, that's how she talked about her.⁷¹

In other words, for Haldun Bey, there is nothing that differentiated how Aurora talked about her mother from the typical utterances of daughters about their mothers, and hence nothing specific to remember.

Haldun Bey, whose narration is mostly based on facts and figures rather than his affective positioning, tells the story of the family wealth through Spiridon's economic activities. From the documentation in the private archive of the family, I could not grasp where the wealth of the Fabiato family came from. As far as I could see, Spiridon, like his father, was an employee of the Imperial Ottoman Bank (Cervati, 1883:240) and both Gemma and Spiridon sides of the family had familial relations with well-known merchant families such as the Skaramangas and the Handsoms.⁷² However, neither the familial relations nor being an Ottoman Bank officer are enough to speculate about the wealth of the Fabiato family. According to Haldun Bey's account, Spiridon Fabiato was a *tefecî* (pawnbroker) and he bought shops in Prinkipo by lending money to the owners of these places:

"I remember Fabiato vaguely... This man was in banking. He had real estate at various locations on the island. In Tepeköy, in the centre, here and there. With my mind as a child I wondered how does he buy all these places like that, but actually

⁶⁹ SALT Research, Fabiato Archive, the draft of Gemma's will coded as AFMFB015014; documents related to legal process after Gemma's decease coded as AFMFB028002.

⁷⁰ "Fabiato Köşkü" in *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, v.8, 1993, p:150.

⁷¹ From the interview I conducted with Haldun Bey, February 28th 2013.

⁷² SALT Research, Fabiato Archive, documents coded as AFMFB074 and AFMFB042001. In the archive there are two family three of the couple of Usep Alepoğlu and Tereza Olivo binti Panayotti where the familial linkage of Fabiato family can be drawn.

he would lend money to people, like mortgage. When the guy didn't pay, he would get the property.”⁷³

The husband Spiridon who bought the Mansion to please his wife, was mentioned only once out of the economic context. Haldun Bey remembers him as a tall man who would promenade in the garden: “Her father was tall like a stick. He used to walk around in the garden.”⁷⁴ As far as I could see, there is no sign referring to Gemma or Aurora's economic activity in the archive. The reason why Spiridon is remembered principally with money related issues seemed to me to be related to the Fabiato Mansion which is the most visible material trace of the past surviving in the present. My three informants are in the age range that allows them to remember first-hand Aurora Fabiato inheriting this economic positionality of her father.

In contrast to her father, who left behind several shops at the centre of Büyükada, and a luxurious residence which is one of the five biggest mansions on the Islands, Aurora is remembered by the difficulties she encountered in the economic realm. The economic problems that the family encountered had begun before Aurora became responsible of the management of their real estate. From the correspondences, rental contracts and personal notes produced in French and Greek between the years 1927-1930, it seems that the Fabiato family stayed in Athens, renting an apartment from Mr. Anagnostaras at Cavalioti Street.⁷⁵ From the correspondences it is possible to grasp that the family moved back to Istanbul due to Gemma's health problems.⁷⁶ The deterioration of the family's economic situation can also be dated to this period.⁷⁷ In the following period, the documents related to the impact in the tax system and the heavy *varlık vergisi* (Capital Tax) become visible in the archive.⁷⁸

⁷³ From the interview I conducted with Haldun Bey on February 28th 2013.

⁷⁴ From the interview I conducted with Haldun bey in February 28th 2013.

⁷⁵ The documents produced between the years 1927-1930 documenting the trip to Athens are mostly in Greek. Thanks to the great effort of Christos Kyriakopoulos who catalogued the Greek documents of the Fabiato archive, I, as one who cannot read Greek, can follow the plot of the story documented in Greek language.

⁷⁶ SALT Research, Fabiato Archive, documents coded as AFMFB070001, AFMFB070003. Correspondences between Countess Elena Pecci and Gemma Fabiato about Gemma's poor health condition.

⁷⁷ The report of Christos Kyriakopoulos about the Greek documentation in the Fabiato archive to Ottoman Bank Archive and Research Centre in March 2011.

⁷⁸ SALT Research, Fabiato Archive, documents coded as AFMFB051010 produced between 17.12.1942-23.03.1943; the register of the year 1944 coded as AFMFB040; documents coded as AFMFB047011 produced between the years 1926-1948 are examples of documents related to the Capital Tax.

The Fabiato family's stay in Athens is remembered quite differently by my informants. Gemma's health problems are not mentioned in their remembrances. Haldun Bey remembers this stay as a touristic trip:

Çiçek: There was a period when they went to Greece and came back...

Haldun bey: They went like tourists, they didn't stay for long. They couldn't find a place like the Island. They came back.⁷⁹

On the other hand, Müberra Hanım narrates the stay in Athens in relation to the economic difficulties that the family encountered. Moreover, she also narrated that this period was perceived as a permanent move from the mansion by some neighbors:

Müberra Hanım: Afterwards they lived through financial difficulties, we heard that they migrated to Greece. Then they came back to Istanbul afterwards.

Çiçek: When do they come back?

Müberra Hanım: Ee, the health of Aurora's mother... That is the Fabiato parents. (...) I don't know the date but as I said, there was a period when they declined and they went to Greece and later returned. (...) Because some told... they closed the house. The parents were alive then. They closed the house, they left and came back I don't know how many years later. And they saw that many things were missing in the house. Pots were missing, I don't know what else. Then they saw some of the things at their neighbours. The woman recognized her pots, her chairs. But she couldn't say anything, that's what I heard.

Ç: Hmm.

Güzin Hanım: Yes, that's possible.

Müberra Hanım: This going back and forth...

Güzin Hanım: Since they went all together...

Müberra Hanım: It means it was true they wouldn't come back.

Çiçek: So why do they come back?

Müberra Hanım: Well it's their own country!

(Silences for 25seconds)

Güzin Hanım: Like, it means, it means they couldn't adapt [to Athens]. My guess is that it was an adaptation matter.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ From the interview I conducted with Haldun Bey, February 28th 2013.

⁸⁰ From the interview I conducted with Müberra Hanım and her daughter Güzin Hanım, February 17th 2013.

This quote reveals two fundamental issues; the first one is connected to the relationship between Müberra Hanım and me, and the second one is related to the positionality of the Fabiato family. In order to elaborate on the first point, I would have liked to attach a sound file to this text, since it is difficult to describe the changing tone of Müberra Hanım's voice when I started to talk about Fabiato family's return to Büyükkada. Right after I asked about the possible reason of Fabiato family's return, Müberra Hanım's tone changed drastically. With a somewhat harsh voice, she impelled me to remember that Turkey, more specifically Büyükkada, is the homeland of the Fabiato family. Unexpectedly confronted with the sensitivity of a woman coming from a minority background in the middle of the interview, I could not react for a while and thereupon Güzin Hanım tried to normalize the flow of the conversation. During the interview, this was the only moment that I felt as an outsider. By outsider, I mean here somebody who does not experience the uncanny feeling that minorities constantly confront: the feeling of not being accepted as a local or native. At the beginning, the feeling of having said something wrong made me feel paralyzed, but shortly, with the help of Müberra Hanım's changing tone of voice, I realized that what expired was a manifestation of the ongoing boundaries between our experiences of citizenship and belonging. Now, while reading the transcription and re-listening to the interview, I realize that what disturbed me was finding myself sounding like the state, reminding Müberra Hanım of her outsider position. My discomfort comes from the possibility that I have triggered Müberra Hanım's anxiety that she, too, might experience a similar situation.

Except from my realization of the invisible boundaries between me, a woman with "Turkish" cultural background, and Müberra Hanım, a woman with a Rum cultural background, this moment may also refer to an uneasiness of revealing something personal for Müberra Hanım. During our conversation, Müberra Hanım came across as quite comfortable and talkative. She was willing to talk about her memories of Aurora and the Fabiato Mansion; she seemed to find it important to voice Aurora's story. She preserved the emphatic ground during the interview. However, she did not feel comfortable when she was talking about herself, or articulating her own positionality. In other words, talking about Aurora from an empathetic ground to an outsider (to me) was acceptable up until her own positionality as a minority member became explicit. With the possibility of self-revelation, the safe and comfortable ground apparently started to shake. Without being informed about my own cultural/ethnic/religious identification, I presume that Müberra hanım did not want to be identified as a person voicing minority rights and therefore preferred to stay in the empathetic

safe zone, which, as Didier Fassin states, goes hand in hand with the satisfaction of helping the unfortunate rather than the recognition of rights (Fassin, 2012: ix-xii).

The second point I want to put forward about the above mentioned quotation is related to Fabiato family's positionality. The episode of stolen belongings of the family that Müberra Hanım described above recalls the 'looting hunts' (*ganimet avı*) which took place after the partition of Cyprus in 1974 (Navaro-Yashin, 2009:2). Although the period that the Fabiato family spent in Athens (1927-1930) is described as the period of "rebuilding" on the Island,⁸¹ following Dilek Güven we can interpret this episode as a sign of the structural political violence towards ethnic minorities, as a part of the ethnic homogenization policy which intensified after the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 (Güven, 2005:1-5). One may also go further and state that, Müberra Hanım's anxiety, which echoes in her voice while describing Fabiato's stolen belongings, reveals the uncanny feeling of "this might also happen to me", present among minorities.

I would like to elaborate on the different perceptions of my interlocutor of the political violence outlined above by making use of other examples. Müberra Hanım recounts that Aurora was having trouble to collect her rental income from her shops at the *çarşı* area of Büyükada:

Müberra Hanım: A: Aa, that's possible, possible. But she experienced poverty in the midst of wealth the woman.

Gülay Hanım: Ay yes.

Ç: Like what?

Müberra Hanım: A woman who had so many shops in the centre couldn't collect her rent. (...) They didn't give it to her. No, in any case this woman has a lot of shops, I'm making this up – let's say 200, why should I give it to her they would say, this is enough. The woman couldn't oppose this because she was not powerful. (...) Her lawyer also tricked her.⁸²

Haldun Bey's account of this issue is in harmony with the tendency which is exposed in the previous quotations: "It's natural, some want to receive rent, the tenant doesn't want to pay

⁸¹ From the inscription board named "The Early Republic Period: From the 1920s to the 1940s: Rebuilding". This board takes part of the permanent collection of the Museum of the Prince's Islands.

⁸² From the interview I conducted with Müberra and her daughter Güzin, February 17th 2013.

rent. What can be more natural than that?”⁸³ Haldun Bey’s perception is quite different from Müberra Hanım’s, a difference that is both gendered and ethnicized. While Müberra Hanım indicates that as a lonely and single woman, Aurora encountered both economic and social difficulties, for Haldun Bey Aurora’s life was like others living on the Island, without any specialty in negative or positive sense. To him, not being able to collect rental income is nothing more than the “ordinary” conflicting interests of tenant and landlord. Juxtaposed with Müberra Hanım’s account, what is at stake in Haldun Bey’s effort of rationalization and normalization is the indifference towards the gendered and ethnicized positionality of the landlady. Built upon this indifference, the notion of wish and right are mixed up in his account. In other words, the right to collect rent for a landlady becomes wishfulness when it comes to a single Levantine woman, who is codified in hosted position in the land of Turks. As far as I can trace from the family archive, her hosted positioning was remembered her quite strictly after the enactment of the Capita Tax in 1942 which is conceptualized by Ayhan Aktar as an ‘anti minority’ tax. Aurora classified the warnings of distraint (*haciz*) sent by *Emlak ve Eytam Bankası* and her receipts of Capital Tax together.⁸⁴ As Aktar puts forward, the Capital Tax as a practice of Turkification policies aims the elimination of ‘those who are not one of us’ (Aktar, 2009:43). Taking as granted the troubles of a Levantine woman, when she was trying to perform the landlord also connotes the denial of accepting her in a hosting position. Derrida’s conceptualization of hospitality reveals the existential tension between the master of the house and the hosted. The master, who holds the power to host, should also have control over the hosted in order to be hospitable. When the host loses its control over his guests, the host cannot be any more hospitable (Derrida, 2000:134-135). The place reserved for Aurora in this frame of hospitality is being the hosted in that country thus, when she performs the landlord, she can only “wish” to collect her rental income. Following the conceptualization of Melisa Bilal who claims that delocalization does not only reveal the internal displacement but also hinting at the feeling of not being at home, the delocalized positionality of Aurora can be read as the ultimate result of the nationalist identity politics in Turkey (Bilal, 2008:238).

⁸³ From the interview I conducted with Haldun bey in February 28th 2013.

⁸⁴ SALT Research, Fabiato archive, the file coded as AFMFB047011.

III.3 Following a Metonym: *Mamaka*

In what follows, I would like to concentrate on Aurora's positionality in the domestic sphere where she was in the position of "hosting" her tenants and the housekeeping family.⁸⁵ Aurora, who is remembered with economic and social troubles as mentioned above, is recalled as an uncompromising landlord figure. Haldun Bey accounts that Aurora did not have many friends and she had no relatives in the Islands or in Istanbul. According to his account, her socialization out of the Mansion was limited to one or two friends:

Çiçek: Who are her friends? Acquaintances from the church or...?

Hasan Bey: She doesn't have any, she doesn't have any relations with anybody. Well my mother... there was... she died not long ago. Mrs Lemika. There was her brother/sister etc, she gave some of the land to them, they made a house.⁸⁶

In accordance with Haldun Bey's account, Güzin and Müberra Hanım also state that Aurora was spending most of her time at the mansion:

Güzin Hanım: Always at home.

Müberra Hanım: Yes, always at home.

Çiçek: So she didn't spend much time outside?

Müberra Hanım: She used to go down to the garden and sit down. Sometimes she went to the shop and took a little tour.

Çiçek: What shop are you speaking about?

Müberra Hanım: Her own shops, her restaurants. I mean her own business.

Çiçek: The shops that were rented out?

Müberra Hanım: All were rented out. Afterwards, well, she used to go the church, to Saint Pasifico...⁸⁷

⁸⁵ According to the account of Müberra Hanım, the housekeeper family was living in the little house when they first moved to the Fabiato mansion. Then after Aurora's husband decease, they moved to the mansion and started sharing the mansion with Aurora and her tenants who were renting the second floor of the mansion: Müberra hanım: "And then, ıııı, again Mrs. Fadime... but Mrs. Fadime used to.... to serve them, I would say, when her husband was alive. She would prepare the food, the service, ect. After her husband died, ıı, she gave her a room at the floor at which Aroura used to stay.... her children there, ııı, it was both for companionship ... for her to start the heating stove... because the house was heated by the heating stove. Nevertheless, now there is central heating there." From the interview I conducted with Müberra Hanım and her daughter Güzin Hanım, February 17th 2013.

⁸⁶ From the interview I conducted with Haldun Bey, February 28th 2013.

⁸⁷ From the interview I conducted with Müberra Hanım and her daughter Güzin Hanım, February 17th 2013.

The time that Aurora spent at home is remembered quite differently by my interlocutors. Haldun Bey recalls the image of Aurora who is most of the time busy with worshipping or suing people who were occupying places belonged to her:

Hasan Bey: She didn't know how to read and write, she wasn't concerned with reading and writing. All she did was to busy herself with God and the Prophet. With Jesus and stuff.

Çiçek: So she got on well with the church then?

Hasan bey: Very well, my dear, after all the church needed money. When the church needed money she used to donate I think, she had income from a lot of places. There is income from some places in Istanbul. She took it from there and gave it to the church. She had income from the restaurants and shops in the centre. From there she gave it to the church I guess.

Çiçek: Then she spent her everyday life mostly with worshipping.

Hasan bey: And with the courts. For example she'll try to prove that a plot of land belongs to herself. There is Lido Terrace on the way to Anadolu Club. With a view on the coast, now it's a residency. Opposite the pier. If you pass by there there is a plot from the top to the bottom. She went to court with it, with the land deeds and stuff, and got that place.⁸⁸

Juxtaposing the way Haldun Bey expresses the illiteracy⁸⁹ of Aurora and the way he rationalizes every possible subject matter (no exception for religious affairs) with material and earthly explanations reminded me of the mainstream Levantine image which is predicated on being torn apart between the Orient and the Occident. As the way they have been speaking European languages sound weird to 'real' Europeans, their Turkish was also a subject to humor (Yerasimos, 2006). In the eyes of 'real' Europeans, they were the ones who did not possess the sophisticated European knowledge (art, culture etc.) except for the dress code. In the eyes of the 'locals', Levantines were part of the comprador bourgeoisie (*komprador burjuvazi*) that the state desperately tried to get rid of (Güven, 2005:15).⁹⁰

⁸⁸ From the interview I conducted with Haldun Bey on February 28th 2013.

⁸⁹ I was quite astonished when Haldun Bey said that Aurora did not have anything to do with reading or writing since in the private archive of the family there are quite a big number of letters written in Greek and French signed by Aurora. When I mentioned the letters signed in the name of Aurora he was also surprised.

⁹⁰ Referring to the Capital Tax: "This law is at the same time a revolutionary law. It's a possibility to gain our economic independence. We will expel the foreigner dominating the market and return the Turkish market into Turkish hands."

Müberra Hanım also recounts that Aurora’s Turkish was a subject of humor among children in the mansion:

Müberra Hanım: Well she also spoke Greek, we spoke with her. Her Turkish was a little like Ottoman Turkish... For example “it is necessary” [*iktiza eder*]... (laughing).

Gülay Hanım: It was a word I didn’t know until she said it. ...

Çiçek: (laughing)

Müberra Hanım: Think about it. She always talked like that to the kids. ⁹¹

Aurora, who was remembered as one who was speaking with Ottoman Turkish words, was called as *mamaka* among the children of the mansion. At the beginning of the interview, Güzin Hanım stated that for the first time she heard from me the name Aurora; she never called Aurora with her name. Like the children of the housekeeper family, she was calling her *mamaka* which means mummy (*anneciğim*):

Gülay Hanım: First of all when you say Aurora... for example this is not the name I know. I used to say *mamaka*.

Müberra Hanım: Yes and all the kids in the garden said *mamaka* to her.

Gülay Hanım: Yes, we called her *mamaka*. That is I only learnt her name talking to you, I didn’t know that name...

Güzin Hanım had internalized and normalized calling a woman who did not have a child as mummy to the extent that she would say, “I didn’t know that name you are calling her”⁹² referring to Aurora. Calling a woman, who is not their own mother, as mummy deserves attention.

Haldun Bey also remarked that the children of the housekeeper family were calling Aurora *mamaka*:

“[...] now these kids were tiny when they came. When they later went around saying *mamaka*, *mamaka*, the woman liked it. First she took the kids inside her house, later the people too.”⁹³

Although he met with Aurora when he was a little boy, he states that he never called Aurora *mamaka*. On the other hand, Güzin Hanım who was sharing the same locality with the

⁹¹ From the interview I conducted with Müberra Hanım and her daughter Güzin Hanım, February 17th 2013.

⁹² “I did not know that name”. From the interview I conducted with Müberra Hanım and her daughter Güzin Hanım, February 17th 2013.

⁹³ From the interview I conducted with Haldun Bey, February 28th 2013.

housekeeping family was calling Aurora *mamaka*. Calling the landlord “mummy” might make more sense when the relationality between the landlord and the housekeeping family is contextualized. According to Müberra hanım’s narration, there was quite a bit of traffic between the little house where the housekeeping family lived and the mansion, before the decease of Aurora’s husband:

"First they lived in the little house. (...) In the summer they used to stay there, in the winter they would come to the mansion. That is there was such a traffic thing with them. (...) Because they would also light the woman’s oven, and cook her food. That’s the way they stayed in the same place. (...) And then, hmm, Mrs Fadime, when her husband’s health..., Mrs Fadime would serve them let’s say. That is serving the food, preparing this and that. After her husband died, hmm, she gave her a room on the same floor, she put her kids there, hmm, to be a companion, and her oven... because it was a house with heater, not like now, now there is central heating."⁹⁴

In the account of Müberra hanım, the housekeeping family was responsible for the cleaning, cooking, and gardening. However Haldun bey remembers only the responsibility of the gardener who is the father figure of the family:

Haldun Bey: When they come, he works as a gardener at the Fabiato Mansion. His wife and children stay in the outbuilding.

Çiçek: Does his wife look after the kitchen, cleaning?

(silence)

Çiçek: Does she make food and stuff?

Haldun Bey: I don’t know they details but they surely didn’t go hungry.⁹⁵

When the silence coming right after my question related to domestic labor and his response following that silence are juxtaposed with his accounts about the mother of Aurora quoted above,⁹⁶ it is possible to argue that in Haldun Bey’s account there is no place for women’s stories. The stories related to Aurora’s memories of her mother as well as the domestic labor of housekeeping family are “details” which are trivialized or erased in his narration.

⁹⁴ From the interview I conducted with Müberra Hanım and her daughter Güzin Hanım, February 17th 2013.

⁹⁵ From the interview I conducted with Haldun Bey, February 28th 2013.

⁹⁶ “Çiçek: Do you remember the mother [referring to Gemma Giuliani] at all?/ Haldun bey: No, I don’t remember her./Çiçek: I read that she was a painter.../Haldun bey: The lady didn’t say the mother was a painter, but she would talk a lot about her./Çiçek: How? / Haldun bey: Like a daughter talks about her mother, that’s how she talked about her.” From the interview I conducted with Haldun Bey, February 28th 2013.

Thereby, returning to women's memories of women, I want to elaborate on the significance of *mamaka* in order to expose the relationality between Aurora and housekeeper family. In Güzin Hanım's memory, Aurora was a nice but distant person who preserved personal boundaries:

Güzin Hanım: When I remember Mamaka I remember... I remember her well towards me, but it's like you're both scared and you like her, she's both distanced and warm. There are people who unite opposite poles, she was like that for me. I mean both distanced and warm, both cold and warm, both...

Çiçek: Did you use to drink together, I mean would you sit together at the table and drink tea?

Güzin Hanım: I don't remember this at all.

Müberra Hanım: No.

Güzin Hanım, who was playing with Sevgi and Mine –the daughters of the housekeepers differentiates her positionality from that of the housekeeper family in the eyes of Aurora:

Güzin Hanım: She was a little bit disciplined.

Müberra Hanım: Yes, disciplined.

Gülây Hanım: Now what the position gives you, of the type who oppresses those working for her a little. Because Sevgi and Fadime Hanım worked for her.

Müberra Hanım: They say they didn't get any salary. But you know, at this time the dinner has to be ready, somebody will come, the table has to be set. It's holiday on this date, preparations according to that. No laundry in the washing machine. Even though they had a washing machine she had the laundry washed by hand, downstairs in the thing...

Güzin Hanım: Yes, well we heard that she was hard on them but she wasn't like that towards us.

Aurora, who had close relations with Güzin Hanım whom she called *yer elması*⁹⁷ and who was portrayed by Güzin and Müberra Hanım as a fragile woman outside of the mansion, is narrated as an uncompromising landlord at home. The relationality between Aurora and the housekeeping family as narrated by the Müberra Hanım and Güliz Hanım sound like an urban

⁹⁷ "Güzin hanım: She would call me Jerusalem artichoke (laughing loud) / Çiçek: laughing / Gülây Hanım: She would call me directly Jerusalem artichoke, she would say 'my Jerusalem artichoke arrived'. (laughing) she called me that why, I don't know." From the interview I conducted with Müberra and her daughter Güzin, February 17th 2013.

type of feudal relationship where salary in cash is not codified as a type of payment. According to the account of the Güzin and Müberra Hanım, the expectations of Aurora from the housekeeping family were quite high:

Gülay Hanım: The gardener had a part where he grew vegetables. He grew a whole lot of vegetables. I don't know, there were zucchini and things like that, a lot of vegetables and fruits. One of those plots, for example one time he had bees. One period Imam Amca made honey. (...)

Müberra Hanım: Yes, there were bee hives. This was also Mamaka's thing.

Çiçek: Was it Aurora's demand to make honey?

Müberra Hanım: Of course, of course, she wanted her own honey.

Gülay: Well most likely, why would Imam Amca deal with bees otherwise.

Müberra Hanım: When she wanted to produce she did, she would distribute it to friends.

(...)

Çiçek: So there was also sowing in the garden I guess?

Müberra Hanım: Of course, of course. Why do you have a gardener? He's going to work.

Gülay Hanım: (laughing)

Müberra hanım: There were tomatoes, cucumbers, two walnut trees. Four linden trees. (...) Grapes.

Çiçek: So Aurora directly dealt with the garden then?

Müberra Hanım: Of course.

(...)

Çiçek: And she also directly dealt with the kitchen.

Müberra hanım: What do they say to those who work in the house?

Çiçek: Steward?

Müberra hanım: Steward. An exhausted one.

Gülay hanım: (laughing).⁹⁸

At this very point, it might be useful to remember that people who were living in the mansion and responsible for almost everything related to the place were started to be 'hosted' in the mansion around 1940s. Just because Sevgi Hanım refused to talk with me on the grounds that

⁹⁸ From the interview I conducted with Müberra and her daughter Güzin, February 17th 2013.

she does not want to remember those hard times,⁹⁹ I do not have any clue about their reason to move from Erzincan to Büyükada.¹⁰⁰ It seems possible that the dynamics of housekeeper family's migration to Büyükada and move into the Fabiato Mansion, gave the Fabiato family the chance to perform the "hospitable landlord." Calling Aurora *mamaka* can be interpreted as an indication of what might be called urban serfdom, where the housekeeper family was in the position of accepting to "work for peanuts." Aurora, as a figure, who was taking care of Sevgi's and Mine's education, also bequeathed one third of the garden's land to Sevgi and Mine: "Well she brought up their children, she sent them to school, and worked a lot for them. And they, well... now she donated the plot opposite the house to them. She made a house there, they live there."¹⁰¹

Conclusion

Müberra Hanım, Güzin Hanım and Haldun Bey are the only interlocutors in my research who had established a relationship with the Fabiato Mansion before its renovation process. As I have shown above, their positionalities are quite different, and strongly gendered. While the Müberra and Güzin Hanım tell almost a women-only story where the father figure of the housekeeper family is hardly mentioned, -just once in relation to the garden- Haldun Bey's memories are mostly based on "factual," as opposed to personal, knowledge of Aurora and he recalls the housekeeper family around the (gardening) labour of the male head of the family.

Based on the informants' accounts, it seems possible to state that Aurora was performing two diverging roles: in the domestic realm she was the hospitable landlord who had opened the doors of her mansion to a family newly emigrated from eastern Turkey, in exchange for their services. However, Aurora could not perform the role of hospitable landlord outside of her garden's border, where she turned into "the guest" of locals (and of the Turkish state).

Owing to that, it is possible to state that the political violence targeted Aurora not only in economic formats such as the enactment of the Capital Tax but also in the form of delocalization. Aurora, who experienced the exclusion based on her ethno-religious identity, was constantly reminded that she was not the real owner of the place in which she lived

⁹⁹ Güzin hanım, who is still in contact with Sevgi, called her because of my project. However Sevgi kindly refused to have an interview with me by providing justifications such as "I don't want to remember those hard times". I do not have any sign helping me to place this 'hard times' into the story of housekeeper family. However, I presume that she was referring the period of dispossession of the mansion following the decease of Aurora that I pictured in the previous chapter.

¹⁰⁰ The first registered wave of migration from Eastern Turkey to the Prince's Islands is dated to 1938, after the Dersim massacre. *Göç Bağlantıları Sergisi Projesi 2012*. 2012. İstanbul: Adalı Yayınları.

¹⁰¹ From the interview I conducted with Haldun Bey in February 28th 2013.

(Bilal, 2005:238). From this point onward, the dispossession of the mansion described in the previous chapter can be read as the materialized form of the violence Aurora was experienced throughout her life. In addition, the way Haldun Bey normalizes the dispossession of the mansion indicates that the silencing of the dispossession is even present in the discourse of the people who were in the close circle of Aurora. Along with Haldun Bey's attitude, Müberra Hanım's anxiety concerning her Rum background can be read as the signs of the perpetuated political violence which takes different forms. The different layers of silencings which I tried to depict in this chapter are contextualized in the following chapter in a larger framework where I problematize the relation between the practices of silencing and archiving.

CHAPTER IV

The Politics of Archiving: Contextualizing Archives and Archival Practices

When history and memory, particularly vis-à-vis non-Muslims, are sites of heated controversy and legal battle, the “archive” becomes a particularly loaded political site, and conducting research on a Levantine mansion from 1878, situated in Büyükada becomes a particularly loaded political endeavor. In her historical ethnography on Dutch colonialism, Ann Stoler does not introduce archives as entities or places, but archiving as a process. She states that archives are the condensed sites of epistemological and political anxieties rather than skewed and biased sources (Stoler, 2009:20). Discussing the political importance of archives, Derrida claims that archive “doesn’t consist simply in remembering, in living memory, in anamnesis, but in consigning, in inscribing a trace in some external location, there is no archive without some location, that is, some space *outside*. Archive is not a living memory. It is a location. That is why the political power of the archons is so essential in the definition of the archive”.¹⁰²

It is possible to argue that the silences of the housekeeping family about the Dispossession of the mansion (discussed in Chapter III) can be interpreted as the continuation of the archiving process. In other words, the memories which are kept in an outside space cannot be revitalized because of the archival practice itself. The silences in the story of the Fabiato Mansion which are weaved together in different ways constitute the focus of this chapter. Conceptualizing the silencing of the dispossession and aestheticization of the Fabiato Mansion as practices of political violence put forward in the previous chapters, this chapter specifically concentrates on the practices of archiving. As the discriminatory social relationality surrounded Aurora’s life and the dispossession of the Fabiato Mansion are interpreted as a part of the larger structural political violence towards non-Muslims in Turkey, the frame of analyses will include the literature on silencings of different non-Muslim communities.

In this chapter, I try to present the *kitchen* of my research; the way I accessed the knowledge of the story I narrated in the previous chapters. More specifically this chapter addresses such questions as: Which institutions reserve a place for documenting the Fabiato Mansion? What may their archival practices tell us about their institutional identity? In what

¹⁰² Cited in Ahiska, 2009.

ways do their practices of archiving or documenting differ from each other? What is silenced in these archival processes and whose voice comes into prominence? And finally, what do these institutions have to say about the practice of archiving in Turkey? Based on my ethnographic encounters with SALT Research, The Touring and Automobile Club of Turkey, Directorate General of National Property (*Milli Emlak*), the Museum of the Prince's Islands, the Land Registry Office (*Tapu Dairesi*), Civil Court of Peace (*Sulh Mahkemesi*) and lastly the Municipality of the Princes' Islands, as well as a close reading of the existing written documentation on and by these institutions, this chapter aims to critically analyze the archival practices of the institutions that have a say on the Fabiato Mansion, and to elaborate on the process of knowledge production of this particular research.

IV.1 The Ottoman Bank Archive and Research Centre / SALT Research

According to historian Edhem Eldem, the recent public and academic interest in the first half of 20th century signals “the hope of uncovering an alternative reading of the country’s relatively recent past” (Eldem, 2006:20-22). Eldem discusses the new wave of “rediscovering” Istanbul, which has been prevalent in the past two decades, as a desire to renovate the spaces which symbolize “an intimate knowledge and practice [...] disappearing or even gone forever” (Eldem, 2006:24). He points out that the great danger of this process, which promotes “the profusion of stereotypes and clichés,” is that it produces several misrepresentations. For instance, a self-sustaining portrayal of the Galata-Pera district, particularly in the shadow of newly renovated prestigious buildings, makes invisible the historical existence and recent disappearance of a “silent majority” composed of modest employees, shopkeepers and near-proletariat crowds (Eldem, 2006:24).

The restoration of the Imperial Ottoman Bank’s historical headquarter in 2011 might be conceptualized as part of the gentrification process of the Beyoğlu-Karaköy area. With an increasing number of cultural institutions moving into the district, the locality of Karaköy, Galata and Pera, previously defined by small shops, has become a district of art institutions, hotels, and cafes. With its chic café/restaurant, the Ottoman Bank Research Centre (OBRC)/SALT situated on the historical Bankalar Caddesi provides a complex of art and research.

Before trying to contextualize the place of the Fabiato archive in the larger perspective of the OBARC, I will briefly introduce the institutional transformation of the research centre. The OBARC was founded in 1997 by the Ottoman Bank in collaboration

with the Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı.¹⁰³ From 1997 to the end of 2010 OBARC provided services to researchers with its library and archive. The archive is composed of two major sections: The archive of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, which is “the first private collection available for research in Turkey”, offers an alternative to the State archives for researches dealing with the economic and financial aspects of the late Ottoman period. The second part of the OBARC archive deals with a larger context and area that consists of “the process of modernization in Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East”.¹⁰⁴

While the first section is specifically composed of the digital copies of the Imperial Ottoman Bank documentations (cash books, ledgers, banknotes, foreign exchange operation books, correspondences between different departments and branches of the Bank, stocks and bonds receipts, real estate books, income tax cheques etc.) the second section is composed of the digital copies of “magazines, monographs, statistics, [...] documents pertaining to prominent families, [...] postcards, photographs, portraits and maps” belonging to different collections.¹⁰⁵ Documents acquired from several *sahafs* of Istanbul, Ankara and auctions held in Istanbul constitute the basis of the second section. This section contains both institutional archives of, for example, the Italian Consulate, the Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in Galata, the World Council of Churches and private collections of individuals such as Ali Saim Ülgen, Maryam Şahinyan, and the Fabiato family. The private archive of the Fabiato family was acquired by the OBARC through the sahaf Necati of Fatih district. Sahaf Necati claimed that he bought the documents from a street seller who found the archive along with the furniture.

¹⁰³ The head of the History Foundation defines the vision the foundation: “Yet the History Foundation, more than being the result of the heated environment of the period in which it was founded, comes about as a reaction against the prevalent understanding of history and historiography until this day and even more so against the fascist thought atmosphere created by the 1980s. The History Foundation is founded when a heterogeneous collective not only of historians but also of intellectuals of the humanities and others, who are sensitive to these topics, get together. The time it was founded was a time when a small point of criticism, a small revision in Turkey’s historiography and perception of history was very valuable. In society, this criticism and revisionism encounters a great response. (As a matter of fact, we will see more clearly in later years that the state-centered historiography, despite all struggles, did not encounter a response amongst the masses.) In fact, there had always been such a tendency amongst leftist and some Islamist academics and intellectuals. Now people who questioned, rejected the official account of history and more generally the official historiography had the opportunity to come out into the open and express themselves. It was the History Foundation which institutionalized the attempts in this direction undertaken by democratic intellectuals.” Ayşe Akdeniz, "Bülent Bilmez’le Tarih Vakfı ve Tarihçilik Halleri: 'Türkiye’de en güçlü tabu, Atatürk tabusudur. En yaygın olan tabu ise tabii ki 1915’tir'" accessed from <http://www.agos.com.tr/bulent-bilmezle-tarih-vakfi-ve-tarihcilik-halleri-turkiyede-en-guclu-tabu-aturk-tabusudur-en-yaygin-olan-tabu-ise-tabii-ki-1915tir-5027.html> on 1.09.2013.

¹⁰⁴ Available online: <http://www.obarsiv.com/english/others.html> (accessed 18.09.2013).

¹⁰⁵ Available online: <http://www.obarsiv.com/english/others.html> (accessed 18.09.2013)

The Ottoman Bank, which “was a modest, private British bank trying to find a niche in the still underdeveloped Ottoman financial market”,¹⁰⁶ was established in 1856.¹⁰⁷ The bank had a durable career until it “was sold in 1996 by its major shareholder Paribas to Doğuş Group and served under this new identity for another five years. In 2001, following the severe crisis that shook the Turkish economy and financial markets, it merged with Garanti Bank, thus putting an end to its 145 years of existence.”¹⁰⁸ Since the end of 2012 OBARC has effectively merged with Garanti Gallery and Platform Garanti under the name of SALT.¹⁰⁹

During the period of the merge with Platform Garanti and Garanti Gallery, the situation of the Ottoman Bank Archive started to be questioned. Although the OBARC presents the Imperial Ottoman Bank’s archive as its “core endeavor”¹¹⁰ which can “offer new possibilities for the study of political, economic, financial and social history of the period from the end of the Ottoman Empire to the establishment of the new Turkish Republic”,¹¹¹ one section of the documentation is kept closed, which – although never officially stated – is clearly related to the connection of the documents to the Armenian Genocide.¹¹²

Although SALT Research continues to encourage research in the field of memory studies, reserving a considerable place to ignored, silenced local histories,¹¹³ the archive of the Imperial Ottoman Bank is still not available to researchers. The silencing of the Armenian

¹⁰⁶ Available online: <http://www.obmuze.com/#kronolojik>, (accessed 18.08.2013).

¹⁰⁷ “Following a disastrous experiment with paper money, the Ottoman government sought the establishment of a bank of issue, which was finalized in 1862, with the Ottoman Bank outrunning all of its rivals in obtaining this privilege. Strengthened by the addition of French capital, the Ottoman Bank became the Imperial Ottoman Bank, marking the beginning of a durable and successful career as a state bank.” Available online: <http://www.obmuze.com/#kronolojik> (accessed 18.09.2013)

¹⁰⁸ Available online: <http://www.obmuze.com/#kronolojik> (accessed 18.09.2013)

¹⁰⁹ Available online: <http://www.obarsiv.com/english/welcome.html> (accessed 18.09.2013)

¹¹⁰ “Apart from its core endeavor, the classification of the Ottoman Bank archives, the centre has undertaken a number of projects up to now, including research related to oral history, publications, exhibitions, a documentary, colloquium and a competition.” <http://www.obarsiv.com/english/archive.html>

¹¹¹ Available online: <http://www.obarsiv.com/english/archive.html> (accessed 18.09.2013)

¹¹² While merging the archive of OBARC with Platform Garanti and Garanti Gallery, a discussion around the Ottoman Bank Archive took place upon the initiative of the Director of Research and Programs at SALT, Vasif Kortun. This discussion resulted in a decision to investigate the Imperial Ottoman Bank archive. Following this decision, historian Ahmet Kuyaş spent several weeks in the archive of the Imperial Ottoman Bank and wrote a report. The report was not shared with the archivists or librarians, so I do not know what the content of the report was. Yet following the report it was decided that the previously closed sections would remain closed to researchers, most likely due to the delicacy of the political and historical content of the documents in relation to 1915.

¹¹³ 2013 research funds were awarded to research projects dealing with painting tours around Anatolia, the Ulucanlar Museum, the Archeology and Ethnography museum and non-Muslims gravestones in Istanbul. For the list of researchers who received funding see: “Salt’tan altı projeye araştırma fonu desteği”, *Radikal*, 15.04.2013, accessed from <http://www.radikal.com.tr/radikal.aspx?atype=radikaldetayv3&articleid=1129587&categoryid=41> on 14.05.2013.

Genocide also reveals itself in the chronological narration of the bank on its official website. The chronological narration highlights one event from the Ottoman geography and one from Europe to depict each year along a time line. The section reserved to the time period 1915-1918 does not mention the Genocide at all; in line with the mainstream historiography, 1915 is associated with Ottoman victory at Dardanelles. The chronology points out the abolishment of capitulations (1914), the victory at the Dardanelles (1915), the rebellion of Sharif Hussains (1916), defeats at the Arab front (1917), the armistice (1918), the beginning of the War of Independence (1919), and the opening of the National Assembly (1920).¹¹⁴

How can one situate a research institution that on the one hand silences the Armenian Genocide and on the other hand opens spaces to voice stories of “marginalized” groups, such as that of Maryam Şahinyan’s – an Armenian photographer with a studio in Beyoğlu during the 1950s through the 1970s?¹¹⁵ Ceren Özgül’s article highlights the ways in which the effects of cultural diversity and the discourse of religious tolerance have been used as a tool to silence the claims for recognition of minority rights within the legal realm. In her article, “Legally Armenian”, Özgül focuses on the three name-change court cases put forward by Armenian citizens of Turkey and states that the key element of the success at the courts depended on the strategic emphasis on religious and cultural character.¹¹⁶ Ramazan, the only successful plaintiff in her research, claimed that his name does not represent his religious affiliation and its cultural character, which allowed him to formulate his demand in an *acceptable* way to the Turkish court. He was granted the right to change his name to Daniel, the name of a prophet who lived in ancient Turkey.¹¹⁷ In a context where acknowledging the Armenian Genocide is persecuted as insulting Turkishness according to the Turkish Penal Code article 301, is criminalized as ethnic propaganda and considered to provoke enmity according to the Turkish Penal Code article 312, the strategy that promises success is to play on religious tolerance.¹¹⁸

Another aspect of the religious tolerance discourse might be followed through the popularization of *semah*, an Alevi ritual. *Semah* found its place in the public sphere and

¹¹⁴ Available online: <http://www.obmuze.com/#paper-Money-again/war-and-crisis> (accessed 18.09.2013)

¹¹⁵ Available online: “Foto Galatasaray”: http://saltonline.org/en/#!/en/90/open-archive-1-foto-galatasaray_break/ (accessed 18.09.2013); Available online: “Who is Maryam Şahinyan”: <http://saltonline.org/en/141/> (accessed 18.09.2013)

¹¹⁶ Ceren Özgül. forthcoming. Legally Armenian. Secular Politics of Identity and Name Change in the Mid-Level Courts of Istanbul. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*.

¹¹⁷ Ceren Özgül. forthcoming. Legally Armenian. Secular Politics of Identity and Name Change in the Mid-Level Courts of Istanbul. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*.

¹¹⁸ Ceren Özgül. forthcoming. Legally Armenian. Secular Politics of Identity and Name Change in the Mid-Level Courts of Istanbul. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*.

became popular following the government's initiative regarding the Alevi in 2009 (mostly as a result of negotiations between the government and the EU). According to Kabir Tambar, on the one hand *semah* became known among the wider population and it made Alevi become visible in the public sphere, on the other hand such attractiveness has its danger of becoming a culturalized expression and losing its religious significance while transforming in accordance with the majority (Tambar, 2010:674-675).

Silencing of the Armenian Genocide through the closure of a part of the Imperial Ottoman Bank archive and the act of remembering 1915 through "the Dardanelles victory," alongside the exhibition on Armenian woman photographer Maryam Şahinyan's photography archive makes it difficult to situate SALT in the memory production market. Considering the cases mentioned above, it seems possible to construe SALT as an institution that avoids the legal and political struggle by not acknowledging the Genocide but that at the same time chooses to punch holes in the mainstream historiography by making visible the stories of Armenians who lived on this land. Similar to the popularization of *semah* without a political recognition of Alevi rights, the effort of creating reference points to Armenian experiences without the acknowledgement of the Genocide as in Şahinyan's case has its danger of being stuck in a culturalist frame devoid of socio-political context. However as in the case of Ramazan/Daniel, Şahinyan might evoke the existence of Armenians in this geography. Thus, the Şahinyan exhibition can also be interpreted as one of the careful steps to recognize Armenian existence (and loss) through cultural production.

After this brief discussion of the politics and practice of archiving at OBARC, I will now try to place the Fabiato family's private archive in this general framework. In the first place, it would be appropriate to state that the way the Fabiato archive was catalogued does not allow for the kind of "culturalization" that we observe in the cases of Şahinyan and Ramazan/Daniel. As is the case for the entire documentation in the second section of the OBARC archive, the Fabiato archive was catalogued without any (self) censorship. One of the reasons why the Fabiato archive does not neatly translate into a culturalized memory of Levantines in Prinkipo Island, is its interconnectedness with political institutions and political history. In other words, the practices such as Capital Tax (*varlık vergisi*) and depression tax (*buhran vergisi*) were not silenced either in the institutional discourse of the research

centre¹¹⁹ or in the case of the Fabiato family.¹²⁰ Thus, the Fabiato archive presents a case that is integral to the research centre's general framing of the early republican period.

IV.1.1 The Practice of Archiving at OBARC/SALT

After trying to distinguish the position of the Fabiato archive from the Imperial Ottoman Bank documentation above, now I would like to describe the practice of archiving at OBARC and the materiality of the Fabiato archive. The private archive of the Fabiato family contains roughly 1400 documents.¹²¹

The variety of the languages used in the documents is an indicator of the multi-lingual and multi-spatial engagements of the Fabiato family – and Levantine families in general. Thus, the facts that the correspondences between Aurora Fabiato and Elena Pecci, Aurora's family friend who lived in Rome and whom Aurora called "cousin" were made in Italian; the correspondences between Spiridon Fabiato and his lawyers were in French; those between him and his family in Greek; the documents concerning the expenses of the Mansion were in Ottoman Turkish and Turkish; death certificates of some relatives were in Latin, and the newspapers clippings, which were included in the archive, were in Spanish.

The documents in the archive were purchased for TL 350.000 from Demir sahaf, i.e. Mehmet Necati Altaş on March 26th, 2010. When the documents were purchased from the sahaf, they were filed in the way the family would use them. Once transferred to the OBARC, the Fabiato archive was identified and classified in accordance with the Provenance System, like all other documents in OBARC.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Ayhan Aktar's presentation about the Capital Tax still figures on the older official website of the OBARC: Ayhan Aktar, "Varlık Vergisinin Hikayesi." Available online:

http://www.obarsiv.com/guncel_vct_2003_aa.html (accessed 18.09.2013)

Furthermore, the presence of 32 books dealing with the Capital Tax issue at the library shows the researcher that OBARC and present-day SALT does not have any hesitancy to promote an alternative historical narration as it is the case for 1915.

¹²⁰ While cataloging the archive of Fabiato family all indications about the economic and social aspects of Turkification practices are included in a detailed way. (I feel the need to repeat that this practice is in harmony with the OBARC's practices of cataloging the second part of the archive in general.)

¹²¹ Although the archive covers the years between 1851 and 1973, most of the documents in the archive come from the period between 1900 and 1955. There are only a few documents regarding the years 1851-1900 (less than ten), most of them do not follow one another. The documentations dated after the year 1955 are very few in number and mostly in the form of photographs.

¹²² During the classification process, which was carried out according to the chronological order in which the documents were created, the form used by the creators of these documents was preserved instead of juxtaposing documents that were alike. For instance, the correspondences between Elena Pecci and Aurora Fabiato in Italian, which were approximately 300 in number and dated between 1931 and 1942, were arranged in chronological order and classified in such a way that these letters alternated each other; whereas they were not put together with letters in Italian which were written to other persons. Another example of this classification technique is the files in which the bills and the receipts concerning the expenses of the Mansion were kept. The

Although the material allocation of the documents to different files is important for the archiving practice itself, this cannot be said to be of key importance for the researcher. Because the documents are digitized after they were enumerated in the order of the file in which they were kept, the researcher can only reach the material from digital media. Digitally, the researcher can also easily juxtapose documents from different files and possibly create different connections than if confronted with the linear chronological progression in which files are classified. The digitalizing process interrupts the relationship between the archive and the researcher in terms of both the way the archive is physically put together and the dust of the archive. While the digitalizing puts a physical distance between the archive and the researcher, it certainly enables the documents to be protected for a long time. Thus, even though the Fabiato archive documents are not damaged, the notebooks and letters are delicate materials that can be easily torn.

It is the captions, which the archivist wrote in order to describe each group of documents that allow the researcher to reach the documents that s/he seeks in the digitalized archive.¹²³ Documents can be viewed digitally with SALT's software, which allows searching the SALT library and the archive catalogue simultaneously. This combination of primary sources (archive material) and secondary sources (literature) in the search engines affects the way the research is conducted, breaking the hierarchy between the primary and the secondary sources concerning originality; but, at the same time, encouraging the researcher to use the archive more effectively.

Concerning the content of the archival documentation it is possible to picture certain aspects of life in the Fabiato Mansion, such as with whom the mansion's inhabitants were in contact, with whom they were in trouble, where they were working, how much they were spending, and to whom they were renting their flats. However, the content of the archive does not give any information about how the Fabiato family started to live in this mansion, which was originally built as a hotel. Furthermore, the story of the dispossession, which belongs to the time period following Aurora Fabiato's decease (1977), is out of the documentation's scope. In other words, for a research that seeks to follow primarily the story of the Fabiato Mansion, the private collection of the family provides a sense of the people and the

documents in these files were also preserved in chronological order; however, documents that were kept in different files were not merged and juxtaposed.

¹²³ The researcher can search the archive's database by using key words, dates, the type and language of the document. The database includes the captions written by and the document properties indicated by the archivist.

relationships around the mansion but no information about the building itself, except for utility bills and the like.

In summary, SALT Research, which is one of the rare research institutions in Turkey investing in the social and economic histories at the micro level, takes a culturalist stand towards the Armenian Genocide, arguably the biggest taboo of Ottoman-Turkish history, while not abstaining from documenting the reflections and consequences of political violence such as the enactment of the Capital Tax (1942), September 6-7 events (1955), and the like, in the lives of individuals and families. As a corporation of Garanti Bank, SALT Research does not situate itself as a place where the claims on recognition of rights can be voiced. However, as it is seen in the case of the Fabiato family's archive, SALT does not hesitate to give a voice to the fragments from the history of a mansion which was confiscated by the Turkish state authorities and also contains documentation on the tax capital debts of the family.

IV.2 Turkey's Touring and Automobile Club

The second institution, which has produced documentation about the Fabiato Mansion, is Turkey's Touring and Automobile Club. In what follows, I try to map the Club and its situatedness within the political conjuncture of the 1990s, when the restoration of the Fabiato Mansion took place.

During my first visit to the Fabiato Mansion in the summer of 2010, I learned that the mansion had been transformed into *Büyükkada Kültür Evi* (Culture House), a Touring and Automobile Club enterprise, and was still partially in use. During this first visit, I was only able to enjoy an instant coffee at the garden of the *Kültür Evi*, but could not enter the mansion. There were only two employees working at the *Kültür Evi*; the gardener was busy with the plantation of flowers and the waiter was serving tea and coffee in the marble service platform in the garden, the only living part of the mansion. When I asked the gardener whether I could enter the mansion, he told me that there was construction work going on inside the building and that is why the mansion had to be kept closed. Even though there was no sign of construction anywhere, I did not insist.

Instead, we started having a conversation about the story of the mansion. The gardener provided me with some contact information, such as the manager of a famous restaurant situated at the centre of the island and the old gardener's family who were living right next to the mansion. While giving me the brochure of the *Kültür Evi* which consists of nothing but the opening speech of Çelik Gülersoy, he said: "If Mr. Gülersoy were here he

would tell you everything... He was like a walking library, you just had to ask him and he would talk until the morning.”¹²⁴ The dialogue continued as follows:

Çiçek: So did he tell you anything about the mansion?

Gardener: Mr. Gülersoy was a great person, after his death the institution could not recover... He’s written everything down, everything is in this brochure. You should have come when Mr. Gülersoy was still alive... you came late.¹²⁵

From the brochure he gave me, I found out that the Touring Club leased the mansion in 1997 for 25 years and that after financing the restoration of the building, they turned into into *Büyükada Kültür Evi*.

The Touring Club has a long history, and not only in the domain of restoration. It is a continuation of the Turkish Travellers’ Association (*Türk Seyyahın Cemiyeti*), which was inaugurated right after the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. The agenda of the association, to a large extent, was attuned to the views of state builder elites such as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk whose vision of tourism ranged from the promotion of the nascent nation-state by organizing exhibitions to producing films for educating translators and guides, to modernization of cities and villages (Atabinen, 1934:9). In the bylaws of the company, we see that Touring was practically responsible for everything one can imagine with regards to the domain of tourism. During the foundational period, under the leadership of Saffet Atabinen, historian and diplomat, and with the help of a group of intellectuals, the Dolmabahçe palace was opened to tourism and Atatürk’s *Nutuk* (The Speech) was translated into French (Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu, 1989:10-11).

In 1965, Çelik Gülersoy (1966-2003)¹²⁶, the charismatic administrator, was appointed to the Club as the general manager; marking the beginning of “a new, western-inspired era,” the brochure suggests.¹²⁷ Although the Club has a long history, Gülersoy is perceived as the founding father inside and outside of the institution. My interlocutors were referring to the “vision of Çelik Bey” rather than the vision of the Club.¹²⁸ When I visited Mustafa Farsakoğlu, the current mayor of the Prince Islands, I passed by the portrait of Çelik Gülersoy entitled “Touring’s Unforgettable President Çelik Gülersoy” (*Turing’in Unutulmaz Başkanı*

¹²⁴ From my field diary the part related to my *Büyükada Kültür Evi* field trip dated 20.06.2009.

¹²⁵ From my field diary the part related to my *Büyükada Kültür Evi* field trip dated 20.06.2009.

¹²⁶ Available online: <http://www.turing.org.tr/eng/celikgulersoy/main.htm> (accessed 18.09.2013)

¹²⁷ Available online: <http://www.turing.org.tr/eng/tarihcemiz.asp> (accessed 18.09.2013)

¹²⁸ Orhan Silier: “After the death of Çelik Gülersoy, the Touring Club has moved to a new direction which does not accord much with what they had during Çelik Bey’s administration.” From the interview I conducted with Orhan Silier, February 22nd 2013. Mustafa Farsakoğlu: “His vision was way ahead of the understanding of administration of his time. He was capable of thinking outside the box. (...) A president whose vision was not approved.” From the interview I conducted with Mustafa and Hatice Farsakoğlu, March 21th 2013.

Çelik Gülersoy)¹²⁹ which was hanging in the corridor. The mayor witnessed the restoration of the Fabiato Mansion while being the *kaymakam* (district governor of the Prince Islands) and described Gülersoy's administration as follows:

“Mr. Gülersoy led Touring like a single man. You know how in some homes the father does everything, like how you pay the debts, where you borrow money from, nobody knows these things and when the father dies everything breaks down. Mr. Gülersoy was like that. Nobody could succeed him.”¹³⁰

Mustafa Pehlivanoglu, the architect responsible from the restoration of the mansion, narrates Gülersoy's style of administration in accordance with Farsakoğlu:

“Mr. Gülersoy would not work with professionals because he wanted to be in the position to dictate. He was the single man without discussion. He would also say this openly himself.”¹³¹

Çelik Gülersoy, a lawyer, published a series of booklets entitled “Istanbul Library” (*İstanbul Kitaplığı*) which focus on the history and the cultural heritage of Istanbul. The publishing process went hand in hand with molding public opinion and raising awareness about the patrimonies located mainly in the Old Town, Karaköy, Galata, and Pera, that is to say mainly non-Muslim areas. Both in Gülersoy's and in Touring's publications there are numerous descriptions of what exactly Touring is busy with.¹³² I suppose the following citation is an evocative narrative in order to grasp the way in which Touring Club identifies itself:

“We can define Touring as an example for institutions who work for the public good, or in othe Arif Müfit Manselr words as ‘a national source of pride for the state which cannot provide luxury and fantasy, as a step for those private individuals who seek to do such things themselves, which produces beauties for the people.’ [...] Touring: That is ‘the institution taking culture, art and history to the people’” (Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu, 1989:5).

In the foundational bylaw of Touring and Automobile Club of Turkey, the principal objective of the establishment is defined as the promotion of sea, land and air tourism (Türkiye Turing

¹²⁹ The portray was hanged at the corridor of Prince's Islands municipality next to Türkan Saylan's, Ataol Behramoğlu's and Nazım Hikmet Ran's portrays.

¹³⁰ From the interview I conducted with Mustafa and Hatice Farsakoğlu, March 21th 2013.

¹³¹ From the interview I conducted with Mustafa Pehlivanoglu, March 26th 2013.

¹³² “The little book we are presenting is being published in order to respond a little bit to the need for knowledge, which we can see emerging in many sectors of our society. What is this institution, “Turkey's Touring and Automobile Institution”? When was it founded, with what aim, and what does it do today?” (Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu, 1984:4).

ve Otomobil Kurumu, 1995:5). Accordingly, Touring Club describes its responsibilities as follows:

“To work for the protection and valuation of monuments and natural beauties, which are the proof of civilization of the Turkish nation and to attempt at removing things that destroy beautiful views and to undertake publications”;

“to work for the development of construction in the homeland’s water and thermal spring as well as summer house, vacation and beach areas”, “to work for the protection and valuation of the country’s cultural and artistic values” (Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu, 1995:6-7).

It is also determined in the bylaw that in order to realize its aims cited above, the company has the right to establish and manage hotels, tea gardens, and restaurants (Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu, 1995:9). The year 1971 signifies a turning point in the history of Touring Club in terms of creating the financial basis of establishing and running small businesses. “The Club pioneered the system of granting temporary import licenses (which were a kind of guarantee voucher for Turkish customs) at the border, to Turkish people who lived abroad and were coming to Turkey for holidays with their cars” (Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu, 1989:12). As part of an agreement with the Municipality of Istanbul, the Club gained admission to the development and administration of parks and pavilions in Istanbul (Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu, 1989:12). The Club associates this period as the “cherishing of cultural, artistic and touristic places”.¹³³ Mustafa Pehlivanoğlu¹³⁴, the architect who worked for the Club as the Branch Director of the Culture and Arts Department (“Kültür ve Sanat şube müdürü”) and who was responsible for the Fabiato Mansion’s restoration, described the initiation of the practice of *carnet de passage* as following:

“In order to allow Turks who were working abroad to bring their cars into Turkey they were given a document and had to pay 40 Mark. This income was connected to Touring by law. Think of it like a *carnet de passage*. A document that automobile institutions had agreed upon for them to take their cars into other countries. We followed the guy with this document. Now calculate this with 100 thousand cars. We didn’t know what to do with this money and started to buy real estate property. The restoration started after this flow of money. The state put out a tender twice for the restoration of Bab-ı Ali. Nobody accepted it with the

¹³³ Available online: <http://www.turing.org.tr/eng/tarihcemiz.asp> (accessed 18.09.2013).

¹³⁴ Mustafa Pehlivanoğlu worked for Touring as the branch director of culture and art department between April 1976 – January 1978. Although he preferred to continue his carrier in different architects office, he was still in charge of Touring’s restoration projects.

official costs. We said to the state ‘you do the control, we give the money’. We put out the tender, we gave the job to the guys at the price they asked for. There was nothing like that in the tender laws at that time. Now it is more difficult. With all this money, Mr. Gülersoy could have also increased the salaries, but he didn’t, he always looked around for what he could rescue.”¹³⁵

By means of the *carnet de passage* income, Touring renovated several historical buildings and gentrified public spaces such as parks and pavilion: The renovated Yıldız Park, Fenerbahçe Park, The Yellow, the White and the Pink Pavilion in Emirgan Park, and the Palace of the Khedive are products of this period.

The restoration of the Fabiato Mansion (1997-98) did not take place during the “golden age” of the Club. The unexpected removal of “the obligation to take a temporary import document from customs, deprived the Club of its main income source and started a new period of financial difficulties in the summer of 1990.”¹³⁶ Mustafa Pehlivanoglu who witnessed this regulation change states that the income of *carnet de passage* was vital for the Club’s funding of its restoration projects.

Pehlivanoglu: “Suddenly in the 80s Touring declined. The *carnet de passage* finished, Touring fell. One day we woke up and the *carnet de passage* was gone. A source that brought trillions of money per year dried up at once.”¹³⁷

While emphasizing the financial importance of *carnet de passage*, Pehlivanoglu also points out the political tension between the Club and the local government. The public visibility granted as a result of significant urban transformation projects turned the Club into a rival to the local government. While the local elections were approaching, Çelik Gülersoy’s candidacy for the Mayor’s office became a possibility. Thus a new layer of complexity was added to the competitive relationship between the Club and the local government. “At the end of 1994, the Municipality of Istanbul did not renew the agreement on parks and pavilions and asked the Club to vacate” symbolically the most important places for the Club.¹³⁸ Pehlivanoglu summarizes the political tension between the local government and the Club as follows:

¹³⁵ From the interview I conducted with Mustafa Pehlivanoglu, March 26th 2013.

¹³⁶ Available online: <http://www.turing.org.tr/eng/tarihcemiz.asp> (accessed 18.09.2013)

¹³⁷ Taken from the interview I conducted with Mustafa Pehlivanoglu dated 26.03.2013.

¹³⁸ Touring was asked to vacated The Malta Pavilion, The Çadır (Tent) Pavilion, The Pink and Yellow Conservatories in Yıldız Park; The White Pavilion, The Yellow Pavilion and The Pink Pavilion in Emirgan Park; the facilities on Çamlıca Hill and the Summer Palace of the Khedive (Hıdiv). Available online: <http://www.turing.org.tr/eng/tarihcemiz.asp> (accessed 18.09.2013).

“In 89-90 the *carnet de passage* finished. This was a source that was taken away from us in response to the candidacy [of Çelik Gülersoy] for the mayor’s office. The pavilions were taken back, the pavilions that had been rented out to the Greater Municipality were given to Beltur. (...) Beltur was founded under the AKP municipality. The rise of Beltur is the decline of Touring. The facilities created by Touring were transmitted to Beltur.”¹³⁹

The 1990s does not only refer to a change of local power in Istanbul but also to a clash of aesthetic values. The discourses on aesthetic values produced by different political poles in the power struggle prepared the basis of “culture wars.” The details of this political conflict was introduced in Chapter II vis-à-vis the story of aesthetization of the Fabiato Mansion.

IV.2.1 Inaccessible but there; the Archive and Libraries of the Touring Club

Although Çelik Gülersoy defines the Club as the institution “bringing culture” to the public, it would be adequate to state that Touring is not the most hospitable institution for researchers. Two different documentation centers related to the Club promise to include in their collections key sources for my study: the Istanbul Library and the Touring Library. I will introduce how these three different documentation centers occupy an in-between zone of being both open and *closed* or inaccessible to researchers.

IV.2.2 Istanbul Library: (Sultanahmet, Soğukçeşme Sokak)¹⁴⁰

In an interview dated 2003, Deniz Yalav, the librarian of Istanbul Library, defines the library as Çelik Gülersoy’s object of pride.¹⁴¹ A considerable part of the library’s collection is composed of Gülersoy’s private collection. The thematic catalogue of the library is prepared by Gülersoy himself.¹⁴² The collection is specifically focused on Istanbul and composed of more than ten thousands books. The library is the essential part of the pious foundation that Çelik Gülersoy established in his name in 1990. The establishment of the pious foundation (*Çelik Gülersoy Vakfı*) can be contextualized as a result of the culture wars between the Club

¹³⁹ Taken from the interview I conducted with Mustafa Pehlivanoglu March 26th 2013.

¹⁴⁰ Available online: http://www.ayasofyakonaklari.com/tr/history_tr.jsp (accessed 18.09.2013).

¹⁴¹ From the interview conducted with the librarian of the Istanbul Library Deniz Yalav: “Çelik Gülersoy’un ve bu vakfın gözbebeği İstanbul Kitaplığı’dır.” Available online: http://www.obarsiv.com/guncel_celik_gulersoy.html (accessed 21.03.2013).

¹⁴² From the interview conducted with the librarian of the Istanbul Library Deniz Yalav: “Çelik Gülersoy’u, yine kimseye bırakmadan kendisinin yapmayı tercih ettiği, biraz öznel bir tasnifle gerçekleştirdiği kitaplığın katalog çalışmasını ben gerçekleştirdim.” Available online: http://www.obarsiv.com/guncel_celik_gulersoy.html (accessed 21.03.2013).

and the Welfare Party¹⁴³ that I will focus on in Chapter IV. In a Touring publication the *raison d'être* of the Library is explained as follows:

“The main reason why Gülersoy didn't make a hotel-pension here like on the other plots and reserve this for a library was to emphasize the importance of 'culture' against the passion of 'tourism' that swept over the country and the city in the 1980s. In order to prove that what makes a city are the theatres, museums, exhibition and conference venues more than the hotels” (Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu, 1995b:167).

Although the Club tries to show the Library as a part of its heritage, the foundation of the Çelik Gülersoy Foundation refers to a breaking point symbolizing the dissolution of the image and the perspective of Çelik Gülersoy and the Touring Club. The establishment of Çelik Gülersoy Foundation, also results in the relocation of the staff that Çelik Gülersoy relied on.¹⁴⁴ The ghost of Çelik Gülersoy is not only present on the walls in the form of portrait paintings but also in the form of a resistance to digitalization. It was interesting to hear from the librarian that the reason why the library does not have a digital catalogue is “The real research doesn't find their books through the Internet, Mr. Gülersoy didn't like these digital things anyway.”

The library does not have its own website, but its brief story and the thematic categorization of the books are shown on the website dedicated to the Ayasofya Mansions (Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu, 1989:54).¹⁴⁵ Contrary to my observations and experience, Deniz Yalav, the librarian of the Istanbul Library, thinks that the Library is public enough:

“We are criticized because the library isn't well known. There is probably no other library that has done that much advertisement; and moreover you can't market a library in the first place... The other day I met a friend of mine who is a tour guide and who is writing a book about Balat and Fener. I invited him, I said 'You're welcome, maybe you're missing some sources.' 'Where to?' he said. 'İstanbul Library'. 'Where is that?' he asked. The tour guide walks through

¹⁴³ From the interview I conducted with Orhan Silier, February 22th 2013.

¹⁴⁴ From the interview I conducted with Orhan Silier, February 22th 2013.

¹⁴⁵ Ayasofya Mansions at Soğukçeşme Street are a part of the Soğukçeşme Street restoration project. Ayasofya Mansions are the product of the restoration of row of old Istanbul houses. The website of Ayasofya Mansions has also a section dedicated to Istanbul Library: Available online: http://www.ayasofyakonaklari.com/tr/history_tr.jsp (accessed 21.03.2013).

Sultanahmet and doesn't know the library. This is a sociological fact and it is very real: we are a society that does not read, we don't like reading.”¹⁴⁶

This elitist discourse nourishing itself from being a part of a small literate group is not peculiar to the Library, yet it is in harmony with the Club's general positioning and discourse. The names of some books published by the Club can be considered as indicators of this approach: *An Organization that takes History, Music, Art, Culture and Technic to the People and Türkiye'ye bir Işık'tı: Turing 1977-1993*.¹⁴⁷

Even though the Istanbul Library is a library of specialization (*ihtisas kütüphanesi*) whose collection does not speak to a wide spectrum of readers and researchers, it is hard to argue that the library is able to make itself known and available. This is partly due to the limited staff: there are only two persons, a librarian and an elderly man who helps the librarian, who work at the library. As the collection is not organized as an open shelf system, where the researcher can find the book s/he is looking for, the librarian needs to find and bring the books for every request. Furthermore, because of the fact that the hard copy thematic catalogue is not easy to use, effectively researchers end up asking the librarian for suggested sources in their area of research. Since the researchers are not allowed to use the photocopy machine, the librarian is also responsible for making copies. So the responsibilities of the librarian are quite time consuming. Since the library is not financed by the Touring Club but by the Çelik Gülersoy Foundation, there is no budget to hire more librarians.¹⁴⁸ Neither for the librarian nor for the researcher, the library is not an easy place to work. Since there is no separate lecture or research room, the researcher has to study in the same small room where the librarian responds to phone calls, requests by other researchers and runs daily errands. The librarian is not somebody who is working there, but a person who embodies the values of Çelik Gülersoy and carries them to the present.

It seems possible to state that a very rich book collection specialized on Istanbul is both accessible and inaccessible at the same time. Not receiving economic support neither from the local government nor from the Touring Club compels the library to be partially-open

¹⁴⁶ From the interview conducted with the librarian of the Istanbul Library Deniz Yalav. Available online: http://www.obarsiv.com/guncel_celik_gulersoy.html (21.03.2013).

¹⁴⁷ It is interesting to note that in an interview done by Faruk Pekin, İlber Ortaylı, who is also known by his elitist and modernist statements, also criticizes Gülersoy's elitist discourse: "He very clearly took one part of the masses and excluded another. You need to embrace everybody if you want to make something rise, if you want to make something known. Unfortunately this is something peculiar for his generation, it's not an exception. We need to be careful that this won't characterize future generations because, if we like it or not, we have to live here with these people and only we can make something of this." From the interview conducted with İlber Ortaylı. Available online: http://www.obarsiv.com/guncel_celik_gulersoy.html (accessed 21.03.2013).

¹⁴⁸ From my field diary, the part related to my Istanbul Library field trip.

to the public. As a response to that situation, the surviving discourse of the Library, produced by the librarian and her assistant, lean towards a dichotomous understanding of the golden age under Gülersoy and the collapse that they are still experiencing.

IV.2.3 The Library of the Touring Club (Touring building at Sanayi Sitesi 4 Levent)

I was informed about the existence of the Library of the Touring Club thanks to Mustafa Pehlivanoğlu, the architect responsible for the restoration of the Fabiato Mansion. In his first years at the Touring Club Pehlivanoğlu worked at the library: “Actually it had a very broad collection, (...) I worked on classifying it for months. But of course nobody knows it. They don’t advertise it anywhere. I don’t think they’ll let you in if you knock on their door.”¹⁴⁹

My short phone call with the librarian of the Touring Club affirmed Pehlivanoğlu’s account:

Çiçek: I am looking for information about the Fabiato Mansion but I can’t access the catalogue over the Internet. (...)

Librarian : The catalogue? This is not an open library, and the catalogue of the library is not open for your use either. (...) I’ll look for you, if I find something I’ll let you know and you can come over.

She called me back after a week and gave me names of the books she thought that might be useful for me. These books were already available in the Istanbul Library. Still, with the idea to see the Library, I went to the Touring Club at Sanayi Sitesi 4 Levent. When I entered the Touring complex, I was surprised that in the middle of the industrial zone the complex has such a large area with three buildings established in a big garden.

The security guards accompanied me to the librarian’s office which does not have a spatial relation to the library. The librarian’s office is a part of the general office where Touring hosts its customers and collects the payment of *carnet de passage*. After finishing a long phone call related to her summer trip, the Librarian turned to me with investigative questions. In order to have access to the books she had mentioned during our phone conversation, I had to answer questions about who I am, what I am researching, what this research is related to (whether it is a part of my course work or an independent research), and from where I heard about the Fabiato Mansion and the library. The librarian took notes of all the answers I provided and then gave me the books.

¹⁴⁹ From the interview I conducted with Mustafa Pehlivanoğlu, March 26th 2013.

When I asked about the possibility to see the collection of the library, she started to describe the digitalization process going on at the library. “The library is closed,” she said, “because we are forming an online catalogue.” In the following part of our conversation, I understood that the library will not be open to outsiders when the automation process is over, either. I could not make sense of the reason to prepare an online catalogue for a closed library, and when I asked, I got the following response: “Yes, it is closed, but it was always closed.” The justification for the library being closed was that it was closed during the period of Çelik Gülersoy. If the library was closed during its golden age, it may still be closed. Although there were photocopy machines in the office, she told me that I am not allowed to take copies of the brochures or the books. However, she accepted that I took photos from the books. While reading the books in the midst of the office noise (carnet de passage payment collection, application for carnet de passage in different languages, phone calls etc.) two young librarians responsible for the automation process came into the librarian’s office. While the librarian was engaged in a phone conversation, we started to talk. When she realized that we were talking about the contents of the library, the librarian was upset “I have already given you the books you need, there’s nothing else in the library that will be of use for you. What are you still asking the kids about?” Consequently our dialogue came to an end and I left the Touring complex after taking the photos of the brochures and submitting a petition indicating that I need to enter the Fabiato Mansion for my study. The assistant to the general director called me two days later and said that I could visit the Mansion.

Approximately after a month of online research about the Touring Club, I saw that the new general director of the Club, Murat Kalkan, a trustee (*kayyum*) appointed by the court, was working for the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (*Türkiye Seyahat Acentaları Birliği – TÜRSAB*).¹⁵⁰ Through my grandfather who had worked for TÜRSAB, I was able to contact Murat Kalkan, who was working at TÜRSAB before being appointed as the general secretary of Touring Club. He began the conversation by stating that he officially refused my demand to visit the Fabiato Mansion which was closed. Yet, his assistant had given me verbal permission to visit the Fabiato Mansion with his knowledge. Alongside the awkwardness of the situation, this example gives clues about archival practices and cautions us against claims of “objectivity” and “historical accuracy” with regard to archives. My petition entered the

¹⁵⁰ “Başaran Ulusoy ‘Turing Başkanım’ diyor Turing kabul etmiyor”, *Turizm Güncel*, 7.6.2011 accessed from <http://www.turizmguncel.com/haber/basaran-ulusoy-turing-baskaniyim-diyor-turing-kabul-etmiyor-h6128.html> on 08.04.2013.

Touring archive with a mark of refusal, despite the fact that I was able to visit the mansion with their verbal approval.

Murat Bey was proud of the existence of the library: “We are talking about an amazing library with 20 thousand books.”¹⁵¹ However, his answer to my question about when the library would be accessible for researchers was not very promising: “Maybe we will make a library with duplicate books. (...) Of course we can’t have a library in this building.” (...) He also mentioned that he initiated a project to renew the archives of the Club since “Archives are very important, one who does not have a past can’t proceed into the future.”¹⁵² Even after meeting with the general director, I was not able to grant access to any archival documentation about the Fabiato Mansion. Murat Kalkan’s assistant told me that they could not find anything related to the Fabiato Mansion in the archive and added that: “*Milli Emlak* has taken over the building somehow, what you’re looking for is in their archive, I don’t know if it’ll be possible to get something from there.”¹⁵³

In Kalkan’s account, the problem with the Fabiato Mansion is as follows:

“The premises on Büyükağa don’t have a responsible director. It’s been closed for a long time, the business loses money. Everybody asks when will it be open but the business doesn’t have enough customers that can keep it running. We opened it last year and made a loss. This year the situation to get permission is problematic. We rented this place from the Ministry of Culture. Now *Milli Emlak* steps in and says this belongs to me, you have to rent this from me. But we want to rent it from the Ministry of Culture. We can rent it from the Ministry of Culture for longer and cheaper. You can be a private company but work for the public good.”¹⁵⁴

Although at the discursive level, the archive and, more broadly documenting the past, is very crucial for Touring, there is always a material excuse for not accomplishing this task. How can one interpret the coexistence of, on the one hand, the fetishism of the documents which became concrete in such statements as “Archives are very important, one who does not have a past can’t proceed into the future” and, on the other hand, the indifference towards the material conditions of the archives? Meltem Ahıska conceptualizes this coexistence not as a political manipulation or technical deficiency, but as being related to governmentality. She states that distorting and destroying archives result in bequeathing the holes to the next

¹⁵¹ From the interview I conducted with Murat Kalkan, May 10th 2013.

¹⁵² From the interview I conducted with Murat Kalkan, May 10th 2013.

¹⁵³ From the interview I conducted with Murat Kalkan, May 10th 2013.

¹⁵⁴ From the interview I conducted with Murat Kalkan, May 10th 2013.

generations. Thus, leaving behind such holes as inheritance results in the destruction of memory, which would have otherwise enabled historically informed debate on contemporary issues (Ahiska, 2009). In the case of the Fabiato Mansion and the Touring archive, what the closed Touring archives makes inaccessible is the story of the mansion before its transformation into a culture house.

IV.3 The Museum of the Princes' Islands

The Museum of the Princes' Islands was established by the Foundation of the Islands in cooperation with the Municipality of the Islands' in 2010. Although there were many attempts at founding city museums in different parts of Turkey, the Museum of the Princes' Islands is the first project that was realized. The financial contribution of the Istanbul 2010 European Cultural Capital Project has its undeniable impact in this success.¹⁵⁵

In harmony with the discourse of the Istanbul 2010 Project,¹⁵⁶ the Museum of the Princes' Islands embraces to produce the knowledge of happy bricolage: "The museum aims to promote awareness for the rich multi-cultural history of the Islands with all its values, to contribute to the preservation of its cultural, historical and natural heritage and the enrichment of its cultural life, as well as, to create a passion for the Prince Islands."¹⁵⁷ Although on the official website, the museum highlights its oral history and photography documentations, as of August 2013, the archive and the library of the museum are still not open.

The museum opened a platform where the islands' heritage is expressed through personal memories, oral history interviews and visual materials such as video testimonies and photographs. The narration of the permanent collection does not use the mainstream periodization of Turkish historiography but instead creates its own time categorizations. In other words, the history of the Islands is expressed with a new periodization in which established periods such as "Byzantine" "late Ottoman", "Abdülhamit II" do not have its

¹⁵⁵ The total budget of the Project is 1,800,000TL (including the taxes). 1,000,000TL was financed by the Istanbul 2010 Project and the rest 800,000TL was supported by the Foundation of the Islands. Available online: <http://www.adalarmuzesi.org/cms/adalarmuzesi/muze-projesi/proje-kurumsal-bilgileri> (accessed 18.09.2013).

¹⁵⁶ "The European Capitals of Culture initiative was set up to: highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures, celebrate the cultural ties that link Europeans together, bring people from different European countries into contact with each other's culture and promote mutual understanding, foster a feeling of European citizenship." Available online: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc413_en.htm (accessed 18.09.2013).

¹⁵⁷ Available online: <http://adalarmuzesi.org.tr/cms/english> (accessed 18.09.2013).

place. The narration of the permanent collection starts with a brief information covering the period before 1700 under the name of “Early Years: Before the 1700s; The Prince Islands’ modest residential settlements”. Starting from 1700, the information boards give details of political, cultural, economic, demographic, educational and architectural developments of the Islands. During the period between the years 1840-1890, the Islands experienced a significant population increase. This period is associated with the “Diversification in Architectural Styles, Freedom and Abundance”. The following introductory board dedicated to the period between the years 1894-1920 is named “One Small Turmoil and Two Big Wars; Demolition, Renewal and Recession”. In this section, the 1894 earthquake is introduced as the main event which damaged the urban texture but which did not stop the social and architectural revival on the islands. The First World War and the War of Independence are mentioned in this section as referential points signifying the end of the revival –“the decrease in demand for new buildings, financial difficulties and loss of labor”.¹⁵⁸ Similar to the narration on the official website of the Ottoman Bank Research Centre, where the history of the Bank is told within the socio-political framework of the time, there is no mention of the Armenian Genocide. The silencing of the Armenian Genocide is not the only resemblance between the narratives of two institutions. Significant dates associated with collective political violence towards non-Muslim citizens in the history of Turkey such as the Capital Tax of 1942, September 6-7 events (1955), and the Migrations of 1964 and 1974 also find expression in the narration of the Museum of the Princes’ Islands, as they do at SALT. These events are portrayed in a way to enlarge the limited depictions. The memories of Matild Tilda Levi from Büyükada and Alin Kaprielyan from Kınalıada illustrate the way that local people experienced the implication of the Capital Tax on the Islands.¹⁵⁹ The waves of migration are represented with “a great love story” between Mrs. Bedia Cavuri and Niko.¹⁶⁰

The permanent collection expresses the multi-layered ethnic structure of the Prince Islands not only in the chronological narration but also in the thematic information boards such as “The Prince Islands: a World of Pleasures and Enjoyment”¹⁶¹; “Education on the

¹⁵⁸ From the inscription board named “One Small Turmoil and Two Big Wars; Demolition, Renewal and Recession”. This board takes part of the permanent collection of the Museum of the Prince’s Islands.

¹⁵⁹ From the inscription board named “One Small Turmoil and Two Big Wars; Demolition, Renewal and Recession”. This board takes part of the permanent collection of the Museum of the Prince’s Islands.

¹⁶⁰ From the inscription board named “One Small Turmoil and Two Big Wars; Demolition, Renewal and Recession”. This board takes part of the permanent collection of the Museum of the Prince’s Islands.

¹⁶¹ From the inscription board named “The Prince Islands: a World of Pleasures and Enjoyment”. This board takes part of the permanent collection of the Museum of the Prince’s Islands..

Prince Islands During the Ottoman Empire”¹⁶²; and “Charitable Activities on the Islands during the Ottoman Empire”¹⁶³. While the visibility of diverse ethnic population challenges the mainstream nationalistic historical approach, the multicultural discourse may easily integrate into the neoliberal projects embodied by the gentrification of Istanbul.

As a city museum, the Museum of the Princes’ Islands has the tendency to depict a picture where all kinds of differences –natural, ethnic– find expression. The intention to give a total picture of ‘difference’ results in placing the natural diversity documentation right next to the thematically categorized photographs of demographic diversity. At this point, I suggest that Seyla Benhabib’s differentiation of the approaches of multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism might be useful. She states that multiculturalism has the tendency to suggest a position of having the virtue of being hospitable to foreigners whereas cosmopolitanism intends to define a basis to claim equal rights for foreigners. Without ignoring its differences, cosmopolitanism tries not to identify foreigners as the other of the local; rather its struggle is for bridging the status of local and foreigner on the basis of rights (Benhabib, 2004:35-39). This differentiation explains the closeness of multiculturalism to the commodification of difference in a ‘naturalized’ manner, which manifests itself as ‘cultural diversity’, ‘world city’, ‘city of culture’ reserves its place in the “global lexicon of city marketing” in this way. This naturalization not only makes the dilemmas of urban hierarchy and poverty invisible but also conveys a sense of belonging by proposing to live together as “Istanbul(el)ites” (Öncü, 2007:237-238).

Contrary to the dominant multicultural advertising discourse, Edhem Eldem suggests that the exotic narrations of the Galata Bridge, the “variegated crowd on Karaköy Square” and the undeniable existence of high level ethnic, religious and national variety concentrated in some special districts are not enough to declare the Istanbul of the Ottoman *fin de siècle* as the cradle of cosmopolitan culture (Eldem, 2006:28). The population in the Ottoman capital, which mingled and blended in urban space, demonstrated a significant capacity and propensity to found concrete barriers in the communal realm, which limited cultural interactions and made them pragmatic and superficial (Eldem, 2006:28). Therefore, Eldem argues that present days’ liberal historical discourse promotes tolerance as a lost virtue to describe the pluralism, social harmony and thus the cosmopolitanism of the past. However, the idealization of such *virtues* leads to a false historical representation (Eldem, 2006:29).

¹⁶² From the inscription board named “Education on the Prince Islands During the Ottoman Empire”. This board takes part of the permanent collection of the Museum of the Prince’s Islands.

¹⁶³ From the inscription board named “Charitable Activities on the Islands during the Ottoman Empire”. This board takes part of the permanent collection of the Museum of the Prince’s Islands.

Apart from the *reality* that the musealization process in the Museum of Princes' Islands aims to memorialize, the way that this *reality* is memorialized also deserves criticism. It should be noted that attempting to musealize the political oppression that non-Muslim communities were subjugated to in this geography has an educative value, and it opens a hole in *monumental* history (Keilbach, 2009:55-58). However, it should also be remarked that due to the lack of material conditions and awareness, the limited documentation is mostly a focus to represent the 'good old days' followed by the Capital Tax of the 1940s. As a result of using partial documentation to visualize the stories of non-Muslim communities, the representation of those stories cannot go beyond being frozen memories which reproduce the dichotomies like normalcy and abnormality, similar to the Holocaust musealization projects which reproduce the myth of before-after –happy days before the establishment of Capital Tax and the photos on the road to the forced labor camp (Hirsch & Spitzer, 2009:13). I suppose the street photos and everyday snapshots from public spaces used in the museum make more sense to challenge the monumental history than photographs and block stories of 'Levantine mansions' or Levantine families, since street photos can highlight the relationality between the public and private, as "telling objects, portraying how individuals perform their identities in public: how they inhabit public spaces and situate themselves in relation to class, cultural, and gender norms" (Hirsch & Spitzer, 2009:14).

IV.3.1 Documentation of the Museum of the Princes' Islands

As the archive and the library of Touring are not open to public yet, my only access to information about the Fabiato Mansion, apart from the SALT archive, have been through publicly accessible online databases set up by the Museum of the Princes' Islands. The architectural heritage database is a pool where the information about the buildings of the Islands are gathered. It is categorized by the period of establishment, by the function or location of the buildings or by the famous artists, musicians, authors, painters and athletes who lived in the buildings. Apart from the architectural heritage, there is also an online index of sea animals (*Deniz Canlıları İndeksi*).¹⁶⁴ In this database, the pictures and the basic characteristics (the name and the address of the building, the period of establishment, the function, the architectural characteristics, one photo of the building and the condition of the building) of the architectural heritage of the islands are represented. The effort to create an

¹⁶⁴ Available online <http://www.adalarmuzesi.org/cms/projeler/marmara-deniz-canlilari-indeksi/93-adalar-muzesi-deniz-canlilari-indeksi-bolum-1>(accessed 18.09.2013).

online architectural database also prepared the infrastructure of the project of “mapping the architectural heritage”¹⁶⁵ The Fabiato Mansion is mentioned twice in the frame of architectural heritage and was included in the two guided culture tours held in the summer of 2010: The tour of the garden cultures (*Bahçe Kültürü Turu*)¹⁶⁶ and the tour of architecture (*Büyükada Mimarlık Turu*).¹⁶⁷

It should be noted that the depiction of the Fabiato Mansion is very limited and problematic. Although the relations between the Museum and the Touring Club, as well as Çelik Gülersoy, are strong (*Adaevi* where some activities of the Museum are held is also called *Çelik Gülersoy Kültür Merkezi – Çelik Gülersoy Cultural Center*), the Museum does not use the documentations that the Club has published. Even though Çelik Gülersoy is accepted as a valid reference point in terms of cultural affairs, there is no exchange of knowledge or any special attempt to make the Club’s facility visible.

Moreover, the five lines of information about the Fabiato Mansion in the database suffer from factual errors. For instance, it is written that “the building was built by Fabiato.”¹⁶⁸ The inaccurate information about the mansion in the Museum database is also used by the local government. In the maps prepared for tourists visiting the Prince Islands there is a brief mention of the *Büyükada Kültür Evi*, which also suggests that the mansion was built by Fabiato, not even specifying which Fabiato. “The mansion was built by Fabiato. The mansion is today open to the public as a café and functions as the *Büyükada Kültür Evi* with exhibitions in its garden.”¹⁶⁹

Similar to SALT Research, based on the silencing of Armenian Genocide, it seems possible to state that the Museum of the Princes’ Islands does not situate itself as a place to voice claims on recognition of rights. The museum is a product of the European Cultural Capital 2012 project where the institutions such as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Istanbul Municipality were active. As Banu Karaca suggests, these state institutions “prefer a tamed version of diversity, one that is clearly divorced from political claims. The state of on-the-ground politics notwithstanding, art has become the preferred platform on which to address issues of diversity” (Karaca, 2013:167). In a framework in which “an aestheticised

¹⁶⁵ Available online: <http://harita.adalarmuzesi.org/harita.php> (accessed 18.09.2013).

¹⁶⁶ Available online: <http://www.adalarmuzesi.org/cms/etkinlikler/etkinlik-listesi/icalrepeat.detail/2010/9/11/39/-/bahce-kueltuerue-turu> (accessed 18.09.2013)

¹⁶⁷ Available online: <http://www.adalarmuzesi.org/cms/etkinlikler/etkinlik-listesi/icalrepeat.detail/2010/8/23/21/-/bueyuekada-mimarlk-turu>(accessed 18.09.2013)

¹⁶⁸ Yet, in the Touring’s *Belleten* dedicated to the opening of the Büyükada Culture House, there was brief, but important, information regarding the history of the mansion. In this account it was clearly noted that the Mansion was built by Yorgo Maryano as a hotel in 1878. (Gülersoy: 1998:7)

¹⁶⁹ Available online: <http://harita.adalarmuzesi.org/harita.php> (accessed 18.09.2013)

notion of multiculturalism that conceptualizes most minorities in Turkey as nostalgic reminders of a multi-ethnic empire” (Karaca, 2013:167), it is not surprising that the Fabiato Mansion’s story is limited to a mention that it once belonged to a Levantine family. Apart from its *contribution* to cultural diversity, the details about the mansion are not deemed important, thus can include factual errors.

IV.4 The Local Government Archive / Municipality of the Princes’ Islands

Taking the permission from Department of Development and City Planning (*İmar ve Şehircilik Müdürlüğü*), I was able to access the archive of this department which is called “evrak büro.”¹⁷⁰ People usually use the documentation in this department to claim their right to land and property. The Prince Islands were accepted as a “protected area” (*sit alanı*) in 1984, and since then, the regulations have become more complicated. The municipality is responsible for controlling all kinds of construction (both in the private and public realm) on the Islands. The archive of this department is used by the Municipality to check the records related to each parcel of the land. For example when an inhabitant of the Islands comes to declare that s/he wants to do any kind of construction in her/his property, the municipality officer checks the story of the parcel and if there is any illegal construction done on it before; registers the demand, and sends an architect to check the plan of the construction. The approval of the plan is also done by this department. From the file related to the Fabiato Mansion, it is possible to follow the story starting from Aurora’s decease. The documents related to inheritance and dispossession is present in this file. The documentation fundamentally is about the period of restoration. The archive of the municipality gives also clues about the positioning of the Touring Club towards the neighborhood and the local governments. The archive of Municipality is the only state institution I had the access of its archive without any challenge.

IV.4.1 Archiving Practices at the Municipality of Princes’ Islands

Although the place where the development and city planning archive kept is called “*evrak depo*” (document storage space) it should be noted that there is a significant effort to archive. In the bulletin dated Winter 2012, five pages are dedicated to the “story of success” (Adalar Belediyesi, 2012:11), the renovation of the archive or, as the wife of the mayor Hatice Farsakoğlu called it, “the rescue operation”:

¹⁷⁰ Available online: <http://www.adalar.bel.tr/organizasyon.asp> (accessed 18.09.2013).

“They don’t understand the importance of the archive. [Showing the last issue of the Islands journal] I have edited this issue from beginning to end. Look at the state of these archives, this is how it was when we took over the municipality. As if we had used up the municipality’s billions. What have we done? We rescued these archives. Look at this, is this an archive or a garbage dump? We have rescued their futures.”¹⁷¹

This rescue operation has consisted of cleaning, classification (by parcel) of the documents which were left out to be rotten, digitalization, taking photographs of all the buildings, streets, parcels of the Islands, placing the classified documents to the fire-resistant and waterproof file folders, creation of the Geographical Information System (*Coğrafi Bilgi Sistemi*).

The aim of investing a considerable amount of money into the creation of a Municipality archive is expressed in the bulletin as follows: “Within the creation of the Geographical Information System we could create the integration between different public institutions” (Adalar Belediyesi, 2012:11). Yet, Mayor Farsakoğlu highlights the importance of the archive in another way: “Mr. Gülersoy always used to say that the archive is very important, those who don’t know their past can’t see their future!” Çelik Gülersoy is the eventual reference point on the topics of restoration, culture and to a lesser extent the Fabiato Mansion. There is no other information that the Farsakoğlu couple are able to offer regarding the story of the mansion: it starts and ends with Çelik Gülersoy. Parallel to the discourse of Hatice and Mustafa Farsakoğlu, the archive of the Municipality documents the period starting with the period of restoration.

The bulletin of the Municipality offers no information on the content of the archive. The emphasis is constantly on the renovation, classification and modernization of the archive. Without referring to the content of the archive, the responsible person for the archive expresses what she thinks about the “rescue operation”: “We were working under such difficult conditions (dirt, rust, humidity, insects, mice...) because the new file system took very long I kept up my friends’ motivation by telling them ‘We will get a prize for a well kept and clean archive’” (Adalar Belediyesi, 2012:9). The archive became the symbol of the service quality, the landmark of the Municipality’s positioning: “The fact that in order to judge the importance and degree of service, the appearance of the places that qualify as archives and the comparison with their current state is crucial reminds me of the expression

¹⁷¹ From the interview I conducted with Mustafa and Hatice Farsakoğlu, March 21th 2013.

“you can understand a lion from the place where he sleeps” (Adalar Belediyesi, 2012:9). This fetishism of the archive recalls the “document fetishism” in Ottoman historiography where the archive is considered as a value in itself (Deringil, 2001-2002). Believing that archive has a value in and of itself -not because it is a part of history writing process or another reason- is a reflection of the positivist tendency which has a strong relation with Occidentalism.

Perceiving the attitude towards the archive as a reference point to differentiate itself from the previous local governments can be considered in harmony with the general modernist discourse of the Municipality. As Fırat Küfeci said, “To lose the archive is to lose the past. As the great leader Atatürk said, societies that don’t know their history are condemned to extinction. By making these words our motto, we put all our efforts into rescuing the archive” (Adalar Belediyesi, 2012:10). When I asked the mayor about the content of the “rescued” archive, the only answer I was given was “the history of the Islands,” with the additional remark that “Written history has not yet been invented here.” Referring to the previous practices, he states that during his governance, written culture is started to be implemented in the district. The photos used in the article related to the “rescue operation” are organized in a way to give the impression of before/after. The situation before the operation is associated with mess, dusts and rats whereas the period after the process is connected to the order and hygiene (Adalar Belediyesi, 2012:10-11). I think this depiction goes hand in hand with what Ahıska calls Occidentalism in Turkey. The obsession with the image of Turkey appearing to 'the outside' as a modern country aims producing a static truth towards outside (Ahıska, 2006:25-26).

IV.5 Directorate General of National Property (Milli Emlak)

The Directorate General of National Property (DGNP) is a public institution that depends on the Finance Ministry. As its name speaks for itself it deals with what is called national property, i.e. concretely speaking 3.626.825 real estate in number and 218.967.928.178 square meters area.¹⁷² These huge numbers refer to more than half (%51) of the Turkish Republic’s territory (Özgür, 2006). Fields (*tarla*), landed property (*arazi*) and building plots (*arsa*) form the biggest proportion of the public treasury and Fabiato Mansion is one of the 112.550 buildings belong to it.

Management of these properties (renting, pursuing policies, creating inventories and determining the regulations) is under the authorization of the DGNP. The Fabiato

¹⁷² Milli Emlak Genel Müdürlüğü, "İstatistikler" accessed from: <http://www.milliemlak.gov.tr/web/guest/istatistiksel-bilgiler> on 17.07.2013.

Mansion/*Büyükada Kültür Evi* is one of the institutions in public use rented by the Directorate to Touring Club. Sait Çetinoğlu who is working on Armenian *emval-i metruke* (abandoned properties) states that *emval-i metruke* still has its place in the education of the officers working on the DGNP and Directorate General of Public Accounts (Çetinoğlu, 2009). I think the traces of this education can also be followed through my experiences at the DGNP's Kadıköy branch. Despite my questions related to the reasons why the archive is closed, I received no direct answer. The attitudes of the officers make one think that to protect the information in the archives is also a part of their jobs.

Although the file of the Fabiato Mansion happened to be on the desk of the officer I was sitting right next to, it was not possible to have a look to the archive of DGNP. I was given no clues about the practice of archiving, except for practices of protecting what they are archiving. As Ahıska states, "[t]he state almost acts like a clandestine organization that avoids and destroys written evidence to avoid Western scrutiny of its so-called modernity" (Ahıska, 2006:26).

The explanations of the officer and the director of the Kadıköy branch related to the inaccessibility of the archives were quite ambiguous. While repeating that they should protect the rights of the tenant (the Touring Club), they were constantly ignoring that the documentation starts by the confiscation of the Fabiato Mansion. The dispossession process is silenced by total erasure. When it comes to dispossession, the chuckles come to the scene right after the rhetoric question of "You probably haven't been able to proceed very far in your research."¹⁷³ The pleasure that the officer took while making the documents unavailable was also quite obvious. I decoded this weird grin on her face as pleasure coming from being on the side of the state's non-transparent practices.¹⁷⁴

The information which is kept closed at the DGNP is related to the dispossession of the Fabiato Mansion. In other words, the story of how the claim of the housekeeping family (based on the oral testament) and the will of Aurora's mother (in Gemma Guliani's will the Mansion was bequeathed to Saint Pasifico Latin-Catholic Church) were considered invalid is kept closed in this archive. As I will elaborate further in the next chapter, the gardener's family prefers not to talk about the dispossession process since they do not want to remember

¹⁷³ From my field diary the part related to my Directorate General of National Property field trip dated, 10.04.2013.

¹⁷⁴ From my field diary the part related to my Directorate General of National Property field trip dated 10.04.2013.

those days.¹⁷⁵ The archive of the Land Registry gives some clues about the inappropriate way that the confiscation has been realized but as there are big holes in the documentation it is not possible to depict the entire scene of dispossession.

IV.6 The Land Registry Office and the Civil Court of Peace

The building of Islands' prefecture also hosts the courthouse and Land Registry (*Tapu Dairesi*). Following the number of the decision given by the Civil Court of Peace (*Sulh Mahkemesi*) indicated in the title deed (*tapu senedi*) that I received from Directorate General of National Property [the only document I had access to in the DGNP's archive] , Ezgi, my friend who is a lawyer and I went to the Civil Court of Peace of the Islands. As I mentioned in the introduction, during the time we have passed in this building we experienced the tensions between the different state institutions namely courthouse of the Islands and the land registry office. As the file regarding Aurora's inheritance court case was missing, the only document we could reach came from the archive of the land registry. I will present the details of the limited information related to the arbitrary justifications of the dispossession in Chapter II.

The place where these institutions keep the files is not called archive but depot (*depo*) or cellar (*mahzen*). The naming of the place gives clues about the archiving practice. Neither the name nor the practice is there. The court case documentations are kept in the "storage" facility in the cellar for ten years and then sent to SEKA (*Türkiye Selüloz ve Kağıt Fabrikaları*) for recycling. The action of sending documents to SEKA is called "destroying the files" (*dosyaları imha etmek*). Hence, we cannot talk about a process of archiving but a process of systematic destruction.

IV.7 Conclusion

While waiting for the files at the Civil Court of Peace an old lady who speaks Rum-Turkish entered the office of the Civil Court of Peace (*sulh mahkemesi kalemi*). Her voice entered the room before her body. She was not tall enough to be visible to the officers who were sitting behind the information desk. She was shouting:

Old woman: Where is the prosecutor? Where is the prosecutor? I have a request!

[Silence, the officers looking at her face without saying a word]

I'm asking for the prosecutor, I have a request.

¹⁷⁵ That is the way that one of Melek Hanım's daughters explained their silence to Gülay Hanım when she told them about my project.

Officer: My Lady, you have to make an application.

Old lady: Who should I apply to, show me somebody.

Officer: The court room is next doors, pass over there. [The court house is at the same time the Office of the judge]

Perhaps because I had seen a very similar photo of Aurora attached to her will at the Tapu dairesi half an hour earlier, the old lady evoked in my mind the court case presented against Aurora on the grounds of her inconvenient behavior. One of her neighbors, Milto Berberoğlu (resident at Gülistan Street, no:20 Büyük Ada), opened a court case against Aurora in 1938 based on the declaration that Aurora came to his shop and shouted: “You steal my water from my cistern by entering my closed shop.”¹⁷⁶ The old and single Rum woman, defying social conventions, became associated in my mind with the state of Aurora whose story is lost at the archive of the Civil Court of Peace and kept closed in the archive of Directorate General of National Property.

This ethnographic account can be considered as the link between factual and the spectral elements of the archives. As Derrida states “[u]ndoubtedly, but in the first place because the structure of the archive is spectral. It is spectral a priori: neither present nor absent ‘in the flesh’, neither visible nor invisible, a trace always referring to another whose eyes can never be met” (Derrida, 1996:84). According to Meltem Ahıska, apart from the power-laden, factual elements, the archives have their subjective components as if from them the dead of the past can speak back to us in the present (Ahıska & Kırılı, 2006:21-22). In the case of missing archives, she states that memories of the past cannot put into any relationality and comparability with the facts of the past. In other words, “memories are not given a right and a place to exist in history. When the act of remembering cannot appropriate history in the form of archives, memories cannot achieve a public recognition” (Ahıska & Kırılı, 2006:22). Since the Islands’ population changed drastically with the political violence that targeted non-Muslim populations in the past century, there are very few people who can tell us the story of Aurora. Although the number of accessible memories are few, “there is still an excess of memories not put into any relationality and comparability,” as Ahıska states (Ahıska & Kırılı, 2006:22).

Speaking for the future, in other words making claims to truth and justice are strongly related to the archives. Consequently when archives are destroyed, the possibility of making claims to justice is taken away (Ahıska, 2006:28). Positioning the archives at the border of

¹⁷⁶ SALT Research, the Fabiato Archive, documents coded as AFMFB017012E003, dated 19.07.1938.

history and memory, it is possible to say that history “provides a ground for establishing and criticizing the relationality of specific experiences; yet, history can only be meaningful when actively appropriated by memories in the present” (Ahiska, 2006:27). When the archives are inaccessible or destroyed, the bridge between memory and history is collapsed.

The archive of the Directorate General of National Property is the key actor to document the process of dispossession of the Fabiato Mansion. What it presents is the total silencing. The only thing that the archive of DGNP can depict is a hole in the story of the mansion. The hole does not only refers to the silencing in the archives but also to crippled the memory. It is possible to argue that the silence of the housekeeping family regarding the dispossession is related to this hole. Memory cannot find a place for articulation with such a hole in the history. In other words, the memory’s place is dissolved in this hole and memory becomes shady like the archives itself (Ahiska, 2009:80)

The experience of following the Fabiato Mansion’s story shows that “not only history and historicity but also the claims for truth and justice” (Ahiska, 2006:28) are demolished in the case of inaccessible/destroyed archives. In the archives of public institutions, the reflections of the unarticulated anxiety of “they will come back and take *our* properties” still seems to be quite strong. Although the attempts of recently emerged institutional efforts to document micro histories such as SALT and the Museum of the Princes’ Islands are valuable to voice silenced stories, when it comes to making claims of justice, they are inadequate in the absence of public archives such as the Directorate General of National Property, Land Registry or state-sponsored institutions like the Touring Club. Following Walter Benjamin, I believe that taking a stance “in favor of the innumerable victims of historical injustice” who are still “covered by the piling wreckage of the past”, defending an “anamnestic solidarity” between the living and the dead, arguing that living generations should not aim at the future but at preceding generations in their striving for justice”¹⁷⁷ helps to link the past and present. Not only for the return of the properties to their owners, but the opening of the archives would also contribute to the research projects related to Turkey’s policies’ directed towards non-Muslims (Yılmaz, 2012:379). As it is seen in the case of the Fabiato Mansion’s story, until the archives become accessible, the political violence will continue in the form of silencing and marginalization of the personal memories which can voice the holes in the archives.

¹⁷⁷ Cited in Bevernage, 2008:150.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

On June 16th, 2013, the Turkish media celebrated the transformation of the third biggest synagogue in Edirne to a culture house through a process of restoration following a high bidding. They added: “Jewish community can worship here whenever they want”.¹⁷⁸ However, Edirne, once hosting a remarkable portion of the Jewish population living in the Ottoman land, is no longer a city that has Jewish inhabitants. Even though the synagogue was originally built in 1907 to serve the Jewish community, what does it mean to “open” it in the year 2010 as a culture house? Juxtaposition of silencing the violent attacks of 1934, namely the Events of Thrace that lead to the emigration of the Jewish population from Edirne and the restoration of the third biggest synagogue of the world by transforming it into a culture house can be read as an example of contemporary liberal cultural policies. Rather than opening a space for voicing the place of the different communities’ contribution to the existing cultural sphere, these kind of aestheticization projects lead to “touristic curiosity” (Bilal, 2008:243), presenting a theatrical frame where the different cultural productions are reduced into consumable products such as the Armenian music, the Rum house and the like (Bilal, 2008:242).

This thesis tries to portray a historical sequence which subsumes similar practices. Following a remnant of the Levantine culture, I attempted at depicting the different layers of political violence that both the mansion and its owner experienced. Taking into consideration Marc Nichanian’s conceptualization of impossibility, my aim was not to reach the knowledge of what was irreversibly destroyed or lost forever (Nichanian, 2011:122). In a Benjaminian fashion, I depicted the fragments of the past that the Fabiato Mansion’s story evokes. Studying the Fabiato Mansion, which was transformed into a “culture house” after its dispossession, requires answering questions on the politics of archive and memory. After reserving a chapter to the story of dispossession and aestheticization of the mansion which silences the story of the mansion, in the following chapters, I focused on the silences in personal memory (Chapter III) and in the archives (Chapter IV).

¹⁷⁸ Özmen,Engin. “3. büyük sinagog Edirne'de açılacak”, *Hürriyet*, 16.06.2013. accessed from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/23516726.asp> on 23.08.2013; “Sinagog Kültür Merkezi Olacak” *Edirne Gazetesi*, 18.06.2013. accessed from <http://www.edirnegazetesi.com.tr/sinagog-kultur-merkezi-olacak/> on 23.08.2013.

In Chapter II, based on archival documentation and personal memories, I tried to depict the dispossession and aestheticization of the mansion. While accounting for the process of dispossession, I realized that the ambiguity concerning Aurora's nationality is not only a complexity of multinational engagements of Levantines but a constitutive element of political violence. By the elimination of possible inheritors such as the housekeeper family and the Saint Pasifico Latin-Catholic Church, the state appeared the only legal inheritor of the mansion. And, the competition continued among state institutions after the dispossession. Here I argued that the aestheticization of the mansion was realized through three stages: dehistoricization, decontextualization and attribution of a sublime value. I conceptualized the result of the aestheticization process as the production of an agonizing object, which on the one hand silences the story of the mansion –by reducing it into a Levantine mansion- and on the other hand generates nostalgia and melancholia. Lastly, I argued that as an agonizing object, the mansion can be seen as the “persistence of a present past or the return of the dead which the worldwide work of mourning cannot get rid of” (Derrida, 1994:101).

Following what is evoked by the agonizing object, in Chapter III, I discuss the ways in which Aurora's last years, the mansion, and its dispossession are remembered and silenced in the narratives of those who lived in or around the Fabiato Mansion when Aurora was alive. After putting together the narrations of my three interlocutors in order to describe the setting, I tried to analyze the power relations in and outside of the mansion which surrounded the actors living in the mansion, namely the housekeeper family and Aurora Fabiato. By following the metonym *mamaka*, along with the relation between Aurora and her tenants, I observed that Aurora was performing two different roles in the domestic and public sphere. While being the hospitable host at home, she was “the guest” of locals and of the Turkish state outside of her residence. Along with the “anti minority” practices prosecuted by the Turkish state, Aurora was subjected to political violence produced in her social circle and in her neighborhood. Analyzing the positionalities of my interlocutors, I observed two different forms of silencing in their narrations: normalization or rationalization of political violence and erasure of ethnic identifications (e.g. the anxiety of my Rum interlocutor when she felt that her positionality was exposed). I argue that these instances of silencing can also be interpreted within a continuum in the process of dispossession and discrimination that translates into self-silencing, as well as the perceived impossibility of making claims for public recognition. In relation to the final chapter, it seems possible to state that these silences go hand in hand with the ‘holes’ in the archives. Based on the witnessing of my interlocutors,

it is possible to state that the dispossession of the mansion was not a turning point but the concrete outcome of the political violence that Aurora experienced during her life.

In Chapter IV, which deals with the production of silences in the archives, I tried to analyze the diverse practices of archiving and silencing at the institutional level. While defining archive as a process where the epistemological and political anxieties are exposed (Stoler, 2009:20), I tried to show that the silencing and normalization of the political violence targeting Aurora and the Fabiato Mansion cannot be analyzed distinctly from archival silencing. With a critical approach, I documented seven different institutions' archiving practices and the significant "holes" in their archival narratives.

The brief summary of the different institutional practices is as follows: The archive of the Fabiato family does not narrate a story that is disconnected from the SALT Research's general framing of the early Republican period. Avoiding legal and political controversy by not acknowledging the Genocide, SALT Research punches holes in the mainstream historiography by supporting research projects relating to the ignored, silenced local histories.

The second institution, namely The Touring and Automobile Club of Turkey, presents nothing more than large holes in the mansion's story. In the thesis, I have interpreted this situation not as an example of political manipulation or technical deficiency, but as a specific form of governmentality. For leaving behind the holes also causes the mutilation of the memory and disables the possibility of answering today's questions (Ahıska, 2009). More specifically, in Touring Club's archives, every stage of the mansion's story except the activities during the first years of the *Büyükkada Kültür Evi* are silenced.

The third stop of my fieldwork was the Directorate General of National Property. The key institution for the documentation of the dispossession of the mansion, was a site of total silencing. I presume that the silence of DGNP does not only bring into view the silencing in the archives but it also hinders the memory. I proposed that the silence of housekeeping family regarding to the dispossession is related to the holes DGNP document. In other words, the memory's place became dissolved in this hole and memory became shady like the archives itself (Ahıska, 2009:80).

The fourth institution is the first city museum of Istanbul, namely the Museum of the Princes' Islands. In the Museum's website and brochures, only five lines of information (with factual errors) are reserved for the Fabiato Mansion, which is the first culture house of the Princes' Islands. Based on the documentation related to the Fabiato Mansion, I argue that the Museum implements "an aestheticised notion of multiculturalism that conceptualizes most minorities in Turkey as nostalgic reminders of a multi-ethnic empire" (Karaca, 2013:167).

Thus, it is not surprising that the Fabiato Mansion enters the narration as a mansion that once belonged to a Levantine family, with little information on the process of dispossession.

The Municipality of the Princes' Islands, my fifth stop, was the only public institution that opened to me the doors of its archive without any hesitation. The archive which was arranged during the current mayor's administration, appears like a symbol of modernity in the discourse of municipality officers, including the mayor itself. I interpreted the sublime value which was attributed to the archive as a reflection of a positivist tendency which is closely related to "document fetishism" in Ottoman historiography. Renovating an archive of a public institution by a "rescue operation", not for the sake of the bureaucracy or history writing process but just because the archive has a value in and of itself (Deringil, 2001-2001:91) does not contribute to the history writing process. Nor does it voice the claims for public recognition. Since the archive of the municipality situates itself in the line of the obsession with the image of Turkey appearing to its subjects and "the outside" as a modern country which is able to produce a static truth (Ahiska, 2006:25-26).

The last two public institutions which took place in my analyses are the Land Registry Office (*Tapu Dairesi*) and the Civil Court of Peace (*Sulh Mahkemesi*) which are hosted in the building of the Prefecture of the Princes' Islands. Neither the name nor the practice of archiving is present in these institutions. Instead of archiving what I observed was the systematic destruction of the archival documentations by sending them regularly to a paper factory for recycling.

The main conclusion of this chapter is that the institutions which hold documentation about the Fabiato Mansion and the Fabiato Family are active agents of the knowledge production, thus the process of silencing. The diverse practices of silencing in these archives not only open considerable holes in the story of the mansion and the Fabiato family but also constitute an obstacle in the achievement of public recognition of political violence of the past.

The humble contribution of this thesis to the literature on the political violence towards non-Muslims in this country is the detailed depiction of four different layers of silencings: first, aestheticization as a tool to silence the story of the reminiscences of the past; second, the marginalization of personal memory (vs. written documentation and official history); third, the normalization of political violence through cultural policy; and fourth, archival silencing. The example of the synagogue in Edirne might be taken as a sign that

cultural policies, which aim at celebrating cultural diversity without acknowledging the reason of the non-existence of those diverse communities, will continue if not accelerate. I hope that the story of the Fabiato Mansion may help us in the creation of alternative cultural policies which do not disregard the consequences of the practices of political violence in the past and their ongoing forms.

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