3 The Imperial Palaces in Comparative Perspective

Topkapı, Kremlin, and Hofburg

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In his book *Around the Kremlin,* George T. Lowth compared the city of Moscow to Constantinople and emphasized the cosmopolitan character of both imperial capitals and their role in bridging the East with the West:

> There is a charm peculiar to Moscow among the cities of the world. It is in itself the centre of the history of a people – a people one day fated to play a great part in the drama of the future. But at present the charm of Moscow is in its past story and in its present life. The interest of the past story of the city arises out of its peculiar position as the connecting link between the East and the West. In this its situation is something analogous to that of Constantinople, standing upon the confines of two divisions of the earth, and thus it has had to bear the discords of different races and to be the scene of the conflicts of opposing peoples.[1]

The concept of the "imperial city" has many layers, nuances, and complexities; and its definition still lacks scholarly consensus in the post-imperial world. Imperial capitals, on the other hand, provide fertile ground for analyzing and studying the imperial city as sites of imperial power and monarchic grandeur, as stages of royal ceremonials and ostentatious processions, and as urban showcases of imperial architecture. Particularly Istanbul, Vienna, and Moscow, the capitals and former capitals of the three continental empires, are prolific centers for a comparative discussion of how imperial ideologies were transmitted and disseminated and how these empires manifested themselves in the urban context. This chapter investigates the architectural, administrative, and ceremonial configurations of the three capitals of the Ottoman, Habsburg, and Tsarist Empires, with a particular focus on their imperial palaces.

Imperial cities, particularly the imperial capitals, are spatially shaped, culturally defined, and architecturally marked by civil and religious monuments, administrative buildings, public works and institutions, and, most remarkably, by imperial palaces. Strategically located and, more often

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than not, surrounded by imposing walls, elevated towers, and monumental gates, palaces dominated the urban fabric of the pre-modern city as the epicenters of architectural glory, court culture, and ostentatious ceremonials. As stated by Lawrence Vale, the government centers, capitols, and palaces, apart from fulfilling bureaucratic or official needs, convey ideological messages as symbols of state power and identity.[2] In the pre-modern world, imperial palaces confirmed the continuity of the monarchy, manifested courtly power, and displayed the empire's glory and endurance via court traditions, processions, and rituals. Thus they were accepted as urban imprints marking the longevity, patrimony, and legitimacy of the court. Moreover, imperial palaces – apart from defining and shaping the urban morphology of the city they were built in, with their vast areas, immense number of inhabitants, and parasitical formations – were configured as a city-within-the-city. Therefore, imperial palaces themselves can be scrutinized as an imperial city with certain institutional, architectural, and urban characteristics.

This research discusses the role of palaces, both as architectural monuments and as seats of monarchs, in defining and shaping the imperial city. Particularly focusing on the Tsarist, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires, this chapter undertakes a comparative analysis of the imperial palaces of these neighboring rival empires. Apart from bearing the utmost political significance as centers of the state and residences of the imperial households, these palaces also played a significant role in shaping the urban landscape of the three imperial cities: Vienna, Istanbul, and Moscow. Therefore, with their unique architectural features and remarkable morphologies, the imperial palaces became distinguishing landmarks of these cities and were positioned as visual and spatial insignias of the empires. The Hofburg, Topkapı, and Kremlin palaces were established during the late medieval era and, being the seats of royal dynasties for several centuries, they responded to the changing sociopolitical and urban contexts. These royal edifices reflected the political and ideological transformations of the state as their architectural, physical, ceremonial, and symbolic configurations changed over time.

Contrary to the illusion of stability and permanence, palaces alter with time, transforming their urban and natural environment with them. As suggested by Donald Preziosi, cities and their architectural components are not "perceived in a vacuum"; rather, their "formal and functional characteristics are understood in relationship to those of other structures."[3] In other words, "cities and its parts engender, reflect, legitimize and sustain the lived realities of social groups."[4] Therefore, within the scope of this research, I do not address imperial palaces as static architectural edifices; on the contrary, I position them as dynamic entities in constant relation with the city, as interactive institutions that responded to the sociopolitical and

urban transformations and changing power balances. The ongoing modifications, renovations, and extensions that shaped the morphology of the palaces over centuries reflected the changing self-image and transforming visual ideologies of the empires.

These modifications were most apparent during critical times when the futures of the empires – or the dynasties – were at stake. From this perspective, rather than scrutinizing the early modern period, during which courtly power dominated the political arena, I will focus on the turbulent long nineteenth century, when all three continental empires faced drastic changes in their political, economic, and social structures. Hence, in this study, I aim to highlight the role of the imperial palaces in the urban layout of imperial capitals and touch upon the most significant transformations that took place during the long nineteenth century. Numerous studies have been conducted on imperial courts and palaces, focusing on the medieval and early modern eras when the imperial canons and royal decorum were established.[5] However, the last century of these palaces, as witnesses of turbulent transformations, modernization endeavors, and eventually the collapse of these empires, has been mostly overlooked.

During the modernization of the Eastern European empires, the capitals and the imperial palaces transformed physically and symbolically, adopting new roles, meanings, and functions. Rather than tackling numerous new palaces built by the Ottomans, Habsburgs, and Romanovs during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as showcases of modernization, progress, and grandeur, this chapter will focus on the transformation of the "premodern/medieval/traditional" palaces. My discussion revolves around the imperial palaces of the Topkapı in Istanbul, the Kremlin in Moscow, and the Hofburg in Vienna as the historic cores of the three continental empires. I address the transformation of these royal edifices during the modernization of the empires, simultaneous to the decline of the absolute authority of the monarchies. Therefore, this research deals with the strategies of legitimacy developed by the Ottomans, Habsburgs, and Romanovs during the long nineteenth century and discusses their common and diverging features. Such an analysis also sheds light on the cross-imperial interactions and aspirations; offering a transnational perspective, it hopes to open a discussion on the comparative analysis of urban landscapes of "imperial cities."

In this chapter, I focus on the developments and transitions within these three imperial complexes that blur the physical and symbolic boundaries between the ruler and the ruled, between the realms of the imperial and the mundane. In this regard, I discuss the opening of the royal grounds and imperial treasures for public visits. The sacred and secular collections preserved in the imperial palaces for several centuries started being displayed for distinguished guests as symbols of dynastic longevity, imperial

prosperity, and religious legitimacy as early as the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the public display of the imperial regalia and royal treasures became a common practice by the nineteenth century. I analyze the symbolic and museological implications of these displays in the context of the politics of imperial self-fashioning of the Austrian, Russian, and Ottoman Empires.

I also address some of the physical and architectural transformations that took place in imperial precincts, mainly focusing on the urban landscape surrounding the palaces. Apart from the addition of new wings and annexes to the palace proper, modern institutions, particularly museums, were erected within the precincts of the imperial complexes. In a similar manner, reconfiguration of the imperial gardens into public parks during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is discussed as a political strategy responding to the changing power structures, as well as social and urban trends of the era. The royal domains opened up for the use of the people, promoting their education and well-being. Therefore, during these turbulent times, the strict spatial and patrician division between the citizens and the monarchy started to fade and became permeable within the imperial city. Under growing pressure to establish constitutional regimes, the monarchs of Eastern Europe had to renounce their ultimate authority and demand popular support from their subjects. In this regard, the inauguration of imperial museums and the conversion of imperial gardens into public parks were not solely urban interventions for modernizing the cityscape but were manifestations of changing political power balances.

Urban Layout

The palace, being the seat of the court and the visual and political epicenter of the empire, defined the urban layout of the imperial capitals and shaped the so-called "imperial style." The imperial palaces of the Kremlin, Topkapı, and Hofburg within the urban fabric of Moscow, Istanbul, and Vienna employ comparable architectural morphologies, particularly for their urban environments. While the palaces defined the cityscape of the capitals, they were also shaped by the urban landscape and the sociopolitical structure. In other words, the imperial palaces were not unchanging and stable elements adorning the city; on the contrary, they were historically active participants in shaping and defining the urban fabric. As administrative and ceremonial centers, the palaces and their environments were positioned as the markers of imperial processions and became places of attraction for the urban elite to inhabit and relate with the main public squares of the cities in question, promoting exuberant urban life and trade. Moreover, the immediate surroundings of the imperial palaces were mostly

adorned with various monumental civic, military, and religious structures characterizing the urban morphology.

Before the emergence of the Russian Empire, the timber Kremlin was founded as early as the thirteenth century at a triangular site along the Moskva River as a military base. The medieval citadel established the nucleus of the urban precinct and has remained at the heart of the city of Moscow until this day; the city developed around this historical core peripherally. Kremlin literally means "fortified castle," and its timber walls were replaced with white stone during the fourteenth century. The fortifications were reconstructed with red brick during the reign of Ivan III (the Great) (r. 1462–1505) in the late fifteenth century. Italian architects Pietro Antonio Solario, Marco Ruffo, Antonio Friazin, and Alevisio the Milanese were responsible for the construction of the fortification walls and the nineteen significant towers that characterized and monumentalized the Kremlin. There are five stepped gate towers, three circular towers at the corners of the triangular plot, and eleven watchtowers on the Kremlin's walls. The main gate of the Kremlin opening to Red Square and St. Basil's Cathedral also marked the ceremonial route for imperial processions. This gate was marked with the renowned Savior (*Spasskaia*) Tower, which was built in 1491, and its height was later extended with the addition of the clock tower in 1625. The gate and the tower of the Savior were the loci of royal ceremonies, processions, and triumphal parades, including coronations, funeral corteges, campaign processions, and religious rituals in Tsarist Russia.[6] The imperial complex of the Kremlin encompassed numerous administrative, residential, and religious buildings, including the Palace of Facets, Terem Palace, and the Bell Tower of Ivan the Great. Religious structures were mostly grouped around the Cathedral Square, which housed the renowned Cathedral of Annunciation, Archangel Cathedral, the Cathedral of Assumption, and the Palace of Patriarchs. The Kremlin defined the administrative and religious center of the imperial capital and remained the main seat of the tsars until the eighteenth century.[7]

When Peter the Great moved the court from Moscow to St. Petersburg in 1712, the Kremlin lost its superior position yet kept its symbolic and ceremonial significance as the historical and traditional core of the empire. Being at the heart of the Russian motherland, Moscow and the Kremlin continued to host numerous royal ceremonies, such as coronations and weddings. Architectural modifications to the palace continued even after the relocation of the capital. Especially after the fire of 1737, the royal complex went through comprehensive renovations. In 1787, the monumental Kremlin Senate was constructed by Matvey Kazakov in neoclassical style with the order of Catherine II (the Great) (r. 1762–1796). Following Napoleon I's siege in 1812, the palace complex, which was severely damaged,

was renewed by the Commission for Construction in Moscow. Between 1838 and 1848, the Great Kremlin Palace was constructed by Konstantin Ton in Russo-Byzantine style. During the same period, a modern and monumental armory was designed by the same architect and inaugurated in 1851.[8] Being the largest building in the Kremlin, the Great Kremlin Palace redefined the Kremlin's view from the river Moskva, and together with the new armory, these new additions glorified the imperial complex and restored its former prestige. By the turn of the century, a grand monument to Alexander II was commissioned by Alexander III and unveiled in 1898 during the time of Nicholas II. In this imposing monument that contributed to the renowned silhouette of the Kremlin, the bronze statue of the former tsar was centrally placed under a pyramidical canopy and flanked by colonnaded galleries overlooking Moskva River.

Similar to the Kremlin Palace, the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul was constructed along the water, over the Acropolis of Constantinople after its conquest by the Ottomans in 1453. The palace was constructed by Mehmed II (r. 1444–1446, 1451–1481) as his second palace in the city and therefore known as the New Palace (*Saray-ı Cedid-i Amire*). Being located at the tip of the peninsula known as Seraglio (Ital., from *saray* = palace), the royal complex is surrounded by the Sea of Marmara, the Bosphorus Strait, and the Golden Horn. Due to its location at the edge of an already inhabited Byzantine capital and due to the geographical limitations of the peninsula, the city of Istanbul could not expand peripherally around the palace. Thus, the city developed across the Golden Horn toward the north and the east along two shores of the Bosphorus Strait.

The Topkapı Palace was already bordered by Byzantine city walls along the sea, and Mehmed II later added the imperial land walls (*Sur-i Sultani*) in 1478, creating a fortified citadel. There were seven external gates, four on the land walls and three on the sea walls. The palace's main gate called the Imperial Gate (*Bab-ı Hümayun*) marked the ceremonial route toward the main imperial mosque Hagia Sophia and the principal square of the city, the Hippodrome.[9] The palace was composed of successive courtyards, dedicated to different functions, which were positioned from more public to more private. These courtyards, each surrounded with walls, were pierced with majestic imperial gates.[10]

The palace underwent extensive renovations and remodeling during its life as the seat of the Ottoman rulers for almost four centuries. Major interventions took place during the reign of Süleyman I (the Magnificent) (r. 1520–1566), monumentalizing the existing architectural program. By the late sixteenth century, the Harem section of the palace had been expanded and reformulated. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries new sultanic pavilions were added to the complex and the timber summer palace was built at the tip of the Seraglio peninsula. Especially following

catastrophic fires and earthquakes, the Topkapı Palace underwent intensive renovations, yet its initial architectural and ceremonial composition was preserved. During the course of the nineteenth century, new and modern institutions, such as barracks, military hospitals, ammunition depots, museums, and a school of fine arts, were erected within the precincts of the palace. The walls surrounding the Topkapı Palace were also partially demolished in 1870 during the reign of Abdülaziz (r. 1861–1876) for the construction of the Orient Express railway, which connected Istanbul to European capitals. Thus, the sultan's privy lands were opened for public use and the palace grounds had become a symbol and an agent of modernization by the late nineteenth century.[11]

Geographically speaking, both the Topkapı and the Kremlin were built on hilltops, bordered by water on two sides and surrounded with imposing walls, marked with imperial gates and towers. Thus, the two fortified palaces encompassing vast areas of land were defined as a "city within the city." While the Kremlin constituted an actual walled city, around which the suburbs of Moscow developed, the Topkapı Palace was established at an already inhabited and developed capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. Unlike the Kremlin, which had developed and transformed over centuries, the Ottoman Palace was commissioned by Mehmed II and built in a short period, between 1460 and 1478, and secluded from the rest of the vibrant port city of Constantinople by majestic walls. The imposing walls enclosing the Kremlin and Topkapı – both of which were built during the fifteenth century – have remained mostly intact to this day, and the silhouettes of these imperial palaces shaped the impressive and picturesque panoramas of Istanbul and Moscow.

In contrast, the Hofburg Palace was neither built on a hilltop nor by the water, and it was not surrounded by fortification walls. The medieval Swiss Court (*Schweizerhof*), establishing the core of the palace, was built as a part of the new fortifications of Vienna during the thirteenth century, outside the Roman city that established the historic city center. Even though Vienna had become one of the seats of the Habsburg dynasty by the thirteenth century, the city only flourished after its declaration as the residence of the Holy Roman Emperor during the fifteenth century. The two Ottoman sieges of Vienna in 1529 and 1683, respectively, were crucial turning points in its history. Following the first Ottoman siege, the fortifications of the city were reinforced by state-of-the-art technology, and an empty band of land surrounding the city walls, known as a glacis, was left uninhabited, which became an integral element of Vienna's urban development. As Vienna developed into an imperial city, the Hofburg Palace also expanded and transformed; during the sixteenth century it took the form of a Renaissance palace.[12] As the Hofburg continued to develop at the south-west edge of Vienna, adjacent to the city walls, the palace remained

the passage between the city center and the suburbs for many centuries, until the demolition of the city walls in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The Hofburg Palace, located adjacent to the city walls, was historically positioned as the entrance to the city proper, and access to Vienna took place through its royal gates. This route, heading toward St. Stephen's Cathedral, the city's religious center, and its main square, Stephansplatz, was the main itinerary for royal and religious processions. Unlike most of its counterparts, the Hofburg was located at the periphery of the city and positioned as the threshold between the suburbs and the city center. It remained visually and physically accessible for the Viennese and was not segregated from the urban fabric with walls. The medieval morphology of the Hofburg, a quadrangular castle with four corner towers known as the Alte Burg, was almost completely transformed with subsequent additions and extensions. During the sixteenth century, a new wing known as the Amalienburg and a new Renaissance building known as the Stallburg, housing the imperial stables and later the royal art collection, were added to the complex. A new wing was constructed by Leopold I (r. 1658–1705), connecting the old and new sections of the imperial complex. Following the elimination of the Ottoman threat after the second siege of Vienna, the city enjoyed a period of prosperity and political stability during the eighteenth century. The Hofburg Palace underwent significant modifications – its corner towers were removed and the Court Library, the new Imperial Chancellery, and the court stables were constructed. The renewal of the Michaelerplatz façade of the royal complex transformed the architectural morphology of the palace, as well as its relationship with the urban context. The reign of Maria Theresa (r. 1740–1780) also marked a symbolic transformation, when the strict distinction between the sections for men and women was blurred.[13]

Despite these extensions, the Hofburg's integration with the urban fabric of Vienna and its "permeability" remained unchanged.[14] The concept of accessibility and visibility became even more evident when the walls surrounding the inner city that bordered the royal complex were demolished during the mid-nineteenth century. During the reign of Franz Joseph I (r. 1848–1916), under the supervision of the imperial council, the inner city walls of Vienna were demolished, and the area was converted into a ring road that encircled the urban core of the city. The vicinity of the Ringstrasse was adorned with numerous monumental buildings, including the City Hall, the Parliament, the Opera, the University, and the Museums of Art and Natural History. On the empty lot that emerged with the demolition of the city walls, a new ostentatious wing, known as the Neue Burg, was added to the Hofburg Palace. Also, an ambitious project for creating a large ceremonial imperial plaza (*Kaiserforum*) between the palace and the

museums was initiated. The project was interrupted due to the outbreak of World War I and it was never entirely completed. Still, the Hofburg Palace remained an integral part of the modernizing city that extended toward the Ringstrasse and positioned itself as a dynastic hub while successfully shaping and integrating with Vienna's urban development.[15]

Politics of Relocation

During the long course of their dynastic rule, the Ottoman, Habsburg, and Romanov rulers built numerous residences and summer palaces at various locations within their capital cities as well as in their imperial domains, while the late medieval palaces of the Topkapı, Hofburg, and Kremlin remained as the main seat of the empires for many centuries. However, by the end of the early modern era, these traditional medieval palaces were being gradually neglected and abandoned in favor of new, modern, and ostentatious residences. The relocation of the imperial family, in this respect, was a clear political message and manifested a break with the past.

The most radical shift took place in Tsarist Russia during the early eighteenth century, when Peter the Great abandoned the traditional capital city, Moscow, in favor of his new capital, St. Petersburg, in 1712. While St. Petersburg represented the modern and Westernized face of Tsarist Russia, Moscow and the Kremlin were associated with traditional values and the historical roots of the empire and were believed to represent the real essence of the country. Even though the most significant pieces of the royal collections were transferred to St. Petersburg together with the royal family, Moscow maintained its prominence as a historical and ceremonial center, and imperial regalia continued to be kept in the Treasury of the Kremlin.[16]

Notably, coronation ceremonies were performed in the Kremlin. These ceremonies were conducted as grand public spectacles, where the entry procession of the emperor or the empress to Moscow, their arrival at the Kremlin through Red Square, and their greeting ceremony through the imperial gate of the Kremlin were celebrated with great pomp and splendor. All coronation ceremonies between 1724 and 1896 were held in the Kremlin, performed to confirm the legitimacy of the ruler and to reinforce the sentimental relation of the tsar and the tsarina to their subjects.[17] Especially during the turbulent nineteenth-century, when the legitimacy of monarchies was at stake, "invented traditions," ruler visibility, and public spectacles gained even more significance as means of assuring imperial power and confirming dynastic continuity.[18] In this context, the historic capital and the old imperial palace of the Kremlin were positioned as the symbol of the Russian imperial past, and coronation ceremonies were promoted with ostentatious processions, photo albums, public spectacles, and press coverage.

The Ottoman case was also similar to that of Russia, even though Istanbul remained as the capital of the empire until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.[19] By the early eighteenth century, the Topkapı Palace started losing its principal position with the construction of several new summer palaces and pleasure gardens beyond the *intra muros* city of Istanbul, particularly along the Asian and European shores of the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn.[20] The traditional Topkapı Palace was frequented less and less, and, eventually, by the mid-nineteenth century, it was completely abandoned by the imperial family. Sultan Abdülmecid I (r. 1839–1861) relocated the imperial household in 1856 to his newly built Dolmabahçe Palace along the European shores of the Bosphorus. This grand masonry structure designed by the Ottoman-Armenian architects Garabet and Nigoğos Balyan, with its neo-classical and rococo architectural style, 600-meter-long white marble facade, and ostentatious decoration, was accepted as a manifestation of Ottoman Westernization and modernization. During the course of the nineteenth century, the Çırağan, Beylerbeyi, and Yıldız palaces were also erected on the shores and hills of the Bosphorus and served as the main seats of the late Ottoman rulers, shifting the locus of power and the urban development of the city toward the north.

As the function of the Topkapı Palace as an imperial residence came to an end, its ceremonial and symbolic roles were emphasized, and the historic palace continued to be the venue for the ceremonies of utmost importance, such as accession and allegiance ceremonies, sword girding processions,[21] royal funerals, weddings, and *bairam* (religious feast) greetings. Annual visits of the sultan to the Chamber of Sacred Relics, where the Holy Mantle of the Prophet Muhammad was kept, also started being conducted as flamboyant public processions from the new palaces to the traditional Topkapı Palace, representing the religious and political role of the sultanate.[22] It is also notable that a new imperial pavilion, Mecidiye Kiosk, was erected for Abdülmecid I. at the prestigious Fourth Court of the palace after the monarch's move to Dolmabahçe Palace. This was a clear manifestation of the value attributed to the old Topkapı Palace by the Ottoman rulers even after its abandonment, and with its neo-classical and baroque architectural features, Mecidiye Kiosk visually and architecturally linked the traditional Topkapı to the new Dolmabahçe Palace.[23]

Unlike the Russian or Ottoman dynasties, the Habsburgs, as the Holy Roman Emperors, had several seats and residences in various cities of Europe. While Vienna had always kept its prominence, Prague housed the imperial court between 1583 and 1611. After the return of the dynasty to Vienna, the city flourished as the imperial capital, and new residences, such as Favorita, Laxenburg, or Kaiserebersdorf in the vicinity of Vienna, were erected or expanded. Especially following the elimination of the "Turkish



Figure 3.1a Funeral of Sultan Abdülaziz by the Middle Gate of the Topkapı Palace, 1876.

Source: Le Monde Illustré, June 24, 1876, p. 412; Bibliothèque nationale de France, FOL-LC2–2943, ark:/12148/bpt6k63714684.

Figure 3.1b The funeral procession of Emperor Franz Joseph leaving the Hofburg Palace, 1916.

Source: Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Funeral_Franz-Joseph.webm.

Figure 3.1c Coronation procession of Tsar Nicholas II by the Spassky Gate of the Kremlin Palace, 1894.

Source: Russian Historical Library, https://algoritm-centr.ru/en/greece-and-rome/velikii-greh-kak-koronaciya-nikolaya-ii-obernulas-hodynskoi-davkoi.html

Threat" with the defeat of the Ottoman army in 1683, Vienna enjoyed economic prosperity and a growing population, and the city was adorned with impressive baroque monuments. During the eighteenth century, the Hofburg Palace was also expanded with the addition of new wings. Additionally, flamboyant new palaces on a grand scale were also built around Vienna, such as the Belvedere and Schönbrunn palaces. The Schönbrunn Palace and gardens served as the primary summer residence of the royal family until the end of the empire, and especially during the last years of Franz Joseph, this baroque palace became the main residence of the imperial family.[24] Yet the Hofburg Palace retained its political and symbolic prominence and remained as the seat of the government and served as the winter residence of the royal family until the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The Hofburg Palace also continued to serve as the stage for the most significant religious and royal ceremonies, such as coronation ceremonies, funerals, Corpus Christi processions, *Anniversarium* military ceremonies in commemoration of the dead, crowning anniversaries, and birthday celebrations of the rulers. Hence, the imperial palace remained as the chief ceremonial venue, manifesting the historical legitimacy of the ruling elite. Following the death of Charles VI, the House of Lorrain took over the dynastic line in 1740 with the bond of marriage; nevertheless, the daughter of Charles VI, Maria Theresa, continued to rule the hereditary lands herself. Therefore, the Habsburg dynasty and their long hereditary line of succession became more crucial for justifying her rule, as well as the sovereignty of her successors. Especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the palace was surrounded by public plazas, which were adorned with monumental statues of national heroes such as Empress Maria Theresa, Archduke Carl, Prince Eugene, and Emperor Joseph II. Thus, the ceremonial role and the architectural configuration of the traditional Hofburg Palace communicated the empire's past, accentuating its link with the Habsburg dynasty.[25]

Hence, during the period of political and social transformations, the traditional imperial palaces of all three empires were utilized as symbols of dynastic continuity and imperial legitimacy. The palaces adopted new roles as stages for ostentatious imperial ceremonies that were conducted for the public visibility and approval of the ruler. Therefore, these royal edifices continued to mark the route for the royal processions and remained significant imperial hubs and urban landmarks in the transforming cityscapes of Istanbul, Moscow, and Vienna (Figures 3.1a–3.1c). In the turbulent sociopolitical context of the nineteenth century, the traditional medieval palaces assumed new roles representing the history of the empire and confirming the hereditary rights of rulers, thus endorsing the legitimacy and durability of dynasties.

The Imperial Collections

The imperial palaces were not only spatial manifestations of power but also the loci of imperial heritage, within which royal treasures and imperial regalia were collected and preserved generation after generation. Royal collections, apart from their material and tangible value, were also considered as symbols of dynastic and religious continuity and legitimacy. The treasures and heirlooms of the dynasty ranged from books and manuscripts to arms and armor, from sacred relics to jewelry, and from artworks to regal garments. These invaluable objects, either produced in royal workshops, brought in as war spoils, or offered as diplomatic gifts, provide insights about the material culture and artistic achievements of the empire. Previously exclusive to the gaze of courtiers, the royal collections became of scholarly interest and intellectual curiosity during the early modern period. Thus, the princely collections, imperial treasuries (*Schatzkammer*), cabinets of curiosities (*Kunstkammer*), and royal collections of arts, armory, and antiquities started being displayed first to aristocratic circles and diplomatic audiences, then to distinguished guests and visitors, and eventually to travelers and to the public at large.[26] The treasuries of the Ottoman, Habsburg, and Romanov dynasties were no exception, with the royal collections being displayed to certain visitors by the eighteenth century.

The Habsburgs were among the earliest to display their royal treasuries. The Habsburg Treasury, which included the imperial crown of the Holy Roman Empire, was comprised of ecclesiastical and secular collections, both of which had been kept at the sacristy of the Hofburg Chapel since the fourteenth century.[27] By the sixteenth century, both collections had been moved to another wing of the Hofburg Palace and placed in spatially connected chambers, known as *Schatzkammer.* The collection, including relics, regalia, royal documents, artworks, curiosities, and jewelry, had an essential role in the Habsburg dynastic tradition and was enriched over time, especially with the incorporation of the insignia and the treasures of the Holy Roman Empire by the end of the eighteenth century. The Treasury Chamber remained in the Swiss Wing, the oldest remaining section of the palatial complex, and underwent several restorations, especially during the seventeenth century. During the eighteenth century, the ecclesiastical and secular collections of the treasury were separated, an inventory of the collections was made, and some pieces were transferred to various other palaces for display.[28]

For instance, the royal art collection was sent to the Upper Belvedere Palace for display, and the Lower Belvedere was designated for the amber and antiquarian collections. Similarly, the imperial arms collection was displayed in the Imperial Arsenal, which was built in 1855 near the

Belvedere Gate and served as a military museum. Following the decree of Emperor Franz Joseph I ordering the demolition of city walls in 1857, several public institutions were established on the Ringstrasse that promoted and enriched artistic and intellectual life in Vienna. Two major museums, the Museum of Art History (*Kunsthistorisches Museum)* and the Museum of Natural History (*Naturhistorisches Museum),* were built across from the Hofburg Palace as a part of the Kaiserforum project. The collections of these two prestigious museums, known as Court Museums (*Hofmuseen*), were partially derived from the royal collections; in 1871 the treasury collection was reorganized and in 1891 selected artworks were moved to the newly completed Museum of Art History. The Court Museums, as their names imply, were strategically positioned across from the Hofburg Palace and planned as a part of the ostentatiously expanded royal complex.[29] The aim was to make the invaluable royal collections accessible to a wider public and to glorify the monarchy via modern and scientific institutions. The Hofburg was positioned as an institution for public education, promoting imperial and national identity to the visiting public.[30]

Apart from the royal collections that were transferred to summer palaces and public museums, a special treasury collection, consisting of the crown jewels and the ecclesiastical treasures belonging to the Holy Roman Emperors and the Habsburgs remained at the Treasury Chamber (*Schatzkammer*) of the Hofburg Palace. The Treasury Chamber at the Hofburg included objects of political and religious value, which were accepted as symbols of dynastic power and legitimacy and therefore guarded in the historic Swiss Wing in line with the court traditions. The most celebrated items of the imperial treasury included insignia and regalia of the Holy Roman Empire and the heirlooms of the House of Habsburg. The Ainkhürn (Unicorn) and the Agate Bowl from the fourth century, which was looted from Constantinople during the Latin invasion of the city in 1204, were considered the most precious possessions of the Habsburg collection, in addition to the Imperial Crown, Coronation Gospels, Imperial Cross, the Sabre of Charlemagne, the St. Maurice Sword (*Reichsschwert*), the Imperial Orb (*Reichsapfel*), and the silk coronation robes belonging to the Holy Roman Emperors.[31]

Maria Theresa, being the last sovereign of the Habsburg line, ordered the opening of the Treasury Chamber for visits, which was enriched with the invaluable jewel collection belonging to her husband Francis Stephen of Lorraine. Walnut display cases with windows were installed in 1747 to create a mesmerizing impact on the visitor.[32] As the Habsburg dynasty came to an end with the reign of Maria Theresa, the public display of the ecclesiastical collection, together with the imperial regalia and insignia, reinforced the legitimacy of her rule and manifested the power and longevity

of the House of Habsburg. The public exhibit of the treasury came to a halt during the reign of her son, Joseph II, and the treasury remained closed until the nineteenth century.

By the nineteenth century, the royal collections, including the Imperial Treasury, Minerals Cabinet, Cabinet of Coins and Antiquities, and Zoology Cabinet, together with the imperial apartments, were opened for public visits. As early as 1846, the ceremonial chambers of the Hofburg and the Imperial Treasury collection were opened to the public.[33] The collections were closed in wintertime, could be visited when the imperial family was residing at their summer palace, and were open two days per week during the 1850s. During the 1870s, the number of visiting days was increased to three days per week. Especially before the Vienna World's Fair of 1873, the treasury collection and ceremonial halls of the Hofburg Palace were listed among the major cultural attractions of the city. According to the guidebooks of the era, which provide detailed information about the visiting procedures, the Imperial Treasury was open from May to November, on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and a written petition to the Imperial Chancellery had to be made a day in advance.[34]

The Ottoman notable Hayrullah Efendi, who visited Vienna in 1863, wrote in his memoirs that the arms museum, state treasury, emperor's palace, and the library were among the major attractions of the city and open for visits. He proudly added that he even visited the imperial palace. According to his observations, the rooms of the Hofburg Palace, which opened into each other, were adorned with exquisite furnishings and precious tile stoves at each corner. On the invaluable marble tables were numerous priceless antiquities on display. Hayrullah Efendi also noted that the palace walls were covered with paintings depicting old battle scenes between the Ottomans and Austrians.[35]

Hence, the Hofburg Palace and its royal collections laid the foundations of the celebrated museums in Vienna. The imperial palace, with its surrounding vicinity, adopted an educational role and promoted the legitimacy of the Habsburg dynasty by accentuating its longevity and positioning it as the fathers/mothers of the nation. The imperial court, initiating the grand urban project of the Ringstrasse, situated the Hofburg Palace at the cultural and administrative core of the city, as the epicenter of art, civilization, and progress. In this context, opening of the royal regalia, which was kept at the core of the Hofburg Palace, for public visits accentuated their sense of identity and belonging. The visits glorified the rooted history of the empire and its prosperity in the eyes of foreign and local visitors.

Similar to the Hofburg Palace, the Kremlin also included royal ateliers and several treasuries for preserving items of religious, historic, military,

and monetary value. Within the royal precincts of the Kremlin, apart from various administrative and religious buildings, there existed the Public Treasury, the Armory Chamber, the Stables Treasury, and the tsar's private treasury. The Armory Chamber (*Oruzheinaia Palata*) in the Kremlin was founded in the sixteenth century as an arsenal for manufacture, purchase, and storage of firearms, jewelry, religious icons, and objects of everyday use for the royal family. Apart from housing ateliers for icon painters, gunsmiths, and jewelry makers, the Armory Chamber functioned as a repository for royal treasures and military spoils.[36] After the relocation of the royal family to St. Petersburg, a remarkable portion of the royal ateliers were transferred to the new capital. Still, the state regalia that were used for coronation ceremonies continued to be kept in the Kremlin.[37]

As the Kremlin Armory lost its industrial importance for housing royal workshops and court artisans, it was incorporated into a single institution and renamed the "Workshop and Armory Chamber" in 1727, becoming a venue for preserving objects of artistic, historical, and ceremonial value. During this era, palace grounds and royal collections were opened for visits during the absence of the royal family. In fact, as early as 1718, the Kremlin's antiquities and jewelry collections were put on display in glass cases and shown to distinguished visitors. During the reign of Catherine II, coronation dresses and ancient state regalia were also placed in the Workshop and Armory Chamber, in addition to historic suits of armor on life-size wooden dummies.

The idea for constructing a new building for the preservation and public display of the collection and for making a scientific inventory of the items was taken up during the mid-eighteenth century. Eventually, on March 22, 1806, the Armory Chamber was officially declared as a museum by the decree of Emperor Alexander I (r. 1801–1825), and construction of a new building to house the unified and expanded collections was commenced. Following its museumification, an inventory of the collection was made in 1807 and the objects that were previously sent to other palaces or departments were brought back. In 1810, again on the order of Alexander I, the St. Petersburg Armory was abolished, and its collections were transferred to the Kremlin, positioning the old palace as the showcase for Russian artistic and military achievements as well as an emblem of Muscovite heritage.

In 1810, the construction of a new Armory Chamber was completed, but right after its inauguration the newly built museum building was damaged by the fire of 1812, during Napoleon I's invasion of Moscow. After Napoleon's withdrawal, the collection that previously had been sent to Nizhnii-Novgorod was partially brought back to the Kremlin.[38] Following the restoration of the Armory Chamber, the collection was opened

to visitors in 1814. The exhibition of the collections followed a certain thematic path, which started with ancestral regalia in the Throne Hall, followed by the exhibition of the crowns of conquered kingdoms and diplomatic gifts, and ended with the armament section where ancient military regalia were displayed. Thus, the Armory Chamber became Russia's first national historical museum, where exhibits promoted the idea of dynastic glory, extensive territories, and military power of the motherland in the eyes of its people.[39]

After 1831, a museum director was appointed by imperial edict for scientific museal study and maintenance of the collection, and a catalogue of more than 10,000 objects was compiled.[40] In 1851, as a part of the Grand Kremlin Palace, a new Armory Chamber was constructed by the imperial architect Konstantin Ton at the southwestern corner of the Kremlin. The monumental neoclassical building had two stories and was designed to express the grandeur and prosperity of the Russian tsars. An invaluable collection of ancient state regalia, ceremonial robes, vestments of bishops, gold and silverware by Russian craftsmen, ancient arms and armor, royal carriages, and ceremonial harnesses were pompously displayed in the nine large halls of the new Armory Chamber.

During the nineteenth century, it was possible for tourists and travelers to visit some parts of the Kremlin and the Armory Chamber to see the treasury of the tsars.[41] According to Murray's *Handbook for Russia* from 1865, the Armory at the Kremlin (*Oruzheinaia Palata*) was the "depository of venerated historical objects, and of treasures hereditary in the reigning house," which included the arts of the East and the West. The guidebook also informs its readers that the tickets for visiting the "Kremlin Treasury" could be obtained from the Chamberlain's Office in the Senate building and that the collection was open from Monday to Thursday, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.[42]

When the collection was closed to tourists, the students of the Stroganov Art School and artists studied the collections, and the armory became a prominent center for research and methodology.[43] Hence the royal collections, primarily representing the rooted history and glory of the dynasty, were publicly displayed for educational purposes and positioned as prime examples of traditional Russian arts and crafts. The Romanovs, gradually distancing themselves from the idea of Westernization and St. Petersburg during the course of the nineteenth century, deliberately positioned the old capital of the empire and the Kremlin as the ultimate manifestation of Russian identity and national culture.[44] In response to the idea of Russian Renaissance, museums and educational institutions were established in and around the palace with the aim of studying, glorifying, and resurrecting medieval Russian arts.[45]

It is not merely speculation to suggest that the Ottomans were very much influenced and inspired by their most immediate rivals, the Austrian and Russian Empires. The Ottomans closely followed the developments of the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the nineteenth century. The European tour by Sultan Abdülaziz in particular was a turning point in the diplomatic relations and interactions of the Ottoman Empire with European states. Attending the inauguration ceremony of the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris in 1867, Abdülaziz visited London, Koblenz, Vienna, and Budapest, and was hosted by French, English, Belgian, Prussian, Austrian, and Hungarian rulers. During his visit to Vienna, Abdülaziz stayed at Schönbrunn Palace and visited the major monuments and attractions of the city, including museums, palaces, gardens, theaters, and the city's renowned fortifications. Abdülaziz also paid a visit to the art gallery at the Belvedere Palace and the military museum at Ambras Castle, showing a genuine interest in the arms and armor on display.[46]

During the nineteenth century, World's Fairs were among the most important international events that facilitated cross-imperial interactions and cultural exchanges. A couple of years after their royal participation in the Universal Exhibition in Paris, the Ottomans attended the 1873 World's Fair in Vienna. Paying utmost attention to this event, Ottoman pavillons were established at the fairgrounds, as well as a one-to-one scale replica of the Fountain of Ahmed III. In addition to three prestigious academic volumes introducing the cultural richness, sartorial diversity, and architectural eminence of the empire, some 200 pieces from the Imperial Treasury of the Ottoman rulers were sent to Vienna to be displayed publicly.[47] During the assembly of the iron display pavilion, invaluable pieces from the Ottoman Treasury were kept safe at the treasury of the Hofburg Palace.[48] Emperor Franz Joseph I attended the inauguration of the treasury pavilion and, according to Ottoman sources, expressed his appreciation for the "elegance and good taste of the construction."[49] According to Osman Hamdi, who was the exhibition commissioner, "the Emperor seemed really interested in examining the precious objects contained in the windows of the Imperial Treasury, and in particular he was occupied with the fine arms, many of which belonged to our illustrious sovereigns."[50]

In fact, Austrian interest in Ottoman treasuries was not limited to this occasion, as the Topkapı Palace and its Imperial Treasury in Istanbul had been visited several times by Austrian aristocrats and dignitaries during the nineteenth century. In 1855 and 1856, for instance, Austrian aristocrats were given a permit to visit the Imperial Treasury, yet their insistent demand to visit the Chamber of Sacred Relics, in which the Holy Mantle of the Prophet Muhammad was kept, was denied.[51] A number of Habsburg dignitaries subsequently paid official visits to the Topkapı Palace and were shown the Imperial

Treasury, including Crown Prince Rudolf and his wife, Princess Stéphanie, in 1884; the daughter of Emperor Franz Joseph, Princess Gisela, her son Prince Konrad, and her younger relative Prince Heinrich in 1908, and finally Emperor Charles I of Austria-Hungary and Empress Zita in 1918 (Figure 3.2).[52]

In contrast, the diplomatic visits of the Ottoman imperial family to Europe did not continue after the exceptional visit of Abdülaziz. To compensate for his physical absence, Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) exchanged photographic albums with numerous monarchs and sent prestigious ones abroad depicting vast geographies of the Ottoman Empire, including the Topkapı Palace and its treasury.[53] Additionally, the sultan collected prints from all around the world, curating his celebrated photography collection in the Yıldız Palace. There are numerous pictures depicting Vienna and Moscow in his rich collection.[54] The prints of Vienna primarily depicted the ambitious urban transformation project centered on the Ringstrasse. The newly built imperial museums, the Opera, the City Hall, and the boulevards in Vienna were portrayed with captions in German, French, and English, presenting the aspiring modernization of the Austrian capital.

In a similar fashion, there existed numerous prints from the Kremlin in the large photography collection of Abdülhamid II.[55] Photographs depicted



Figure 3.2 The Emperor of Austria-Hungary Charles I and his wife Empress Zita during their visit to the Topkapı Palace in 1918.

Source: Austrian National Library, 212.394-C.

the renewed Armory Chamber of the Kremlin with its wide halls, in which numerous objects belonging to Russian imperial heritage were methodically displayed. The ostentatious and careful display of arms and armor, ceremonial garments, thrones, regalia, portraits, royal carriages, and banners in display cases must have been an inspiration for the Ottomans to display their own imperial heritage. The Ottoman captions underneath the photographs indicate Abdülhamid's interest in the Kremlin Palace museum and verify the physical and symbolic relationship between the two ancient palaces and their collections (Figure 3.3). For instance, a photograph captioned as "*Salle d'Armes*" includes a note written in Ottoman Turkish:

> The picture of the Treasury Chamber of the Russian Tsars in the Kremlin Palace in Moscow (This chamber is very similar to that of the Imperial Treasury in the Topkapı Palace [and] it is believed that a sword belonging to Hazret-i Zeynel Abidin is among the collection).[56]



Figure 3.3 Armory Chamber in the Kremlin displaying the thrones, armor, portraits, and other valuables captioned in Ottoman Turkish.

Source: Istanbul University, Rare Books Library, Abdülhamid II Albums, 91238-0022.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, in line with other dynasties, the Ottomans opened their royal collections to visitors. Historically, there were several treasuries and collections kept in the first, second, and third courts of the Topkapı Palace, which included the collections of antique arms, royal harnesses, books and manuscripts, the Imperial Treasury, and the collection of sacred relics. Among those treasures, the Imperial Treasury, housing the personal treasures of the sultans and located at the Third Courtyard of the Topkapı Palace, was of particular interest for the Europeans and its doors gradually opened for distinguished foreign visitors by the mid-nineteenth century.[57]

It is documented that some sections of the palace and its outer gardens were already being shown to European ambassadors and high-ranking royals from the late eighteenth century. The Russian ambassador, together with the French and English ambassadors, was among the first notables that were granted access to visit the gardens of the Topkapı Palace, as stated in an imperial decree from 1805.[58] In 1846 a double collection of antique arms and antiquities was also established in the atrium of the Imperial Armory, the former Byzantine church (St. Irene) located at the first court of the Topkapı Palace. The double collection was established by the Marshall of the Imperial Armory, Ahmet Fethi Pasha, who was formerly the Ottoman Ambassador to Russia, France, and Austria; he is believed to have visited the collections at Ambras Castle and the Lower Belvedere.[59] In the Imperial Armory, apart from ancient arms and armor, the costumes of the Janissary corps, which had been abolished two decades earlier, were also displayed on life-size mannequins.

While the military collection remained in the Imperial Armory, the antiquities collection was renamed the Imperial Museum (*Müze-i Hmayun*) and in 1875 transferred to a fifteenth-century sultanic kiosk, known as the Tiled Pavilion, in the outer gardens of the Topkapı Palace. Later in the 1890s, the archeological museum flourished under the direction of the renowned Ottoman bureaucrat, painter, and archeologist Osman Hamdi. Between 1891 and 1907, a modern and monumental archeological museum was built (in three phases) in neoclassical style in the outer gardens of the palace by the famous Levantine architect of the time, Alexandre Vallaury, for the display of the expanding archeological collections (Figure 3.4).[60]

During the reign of Abdülmecid I, the inner courts of the palace and the royal pavilions opened to foreign visitors.[61] Only after the sultan's relocation to Dolmabahçe Palace did the Imperial Treasury at the Topkapı Palace open its doors to distinguished visitors, and windowed display cabinets were assembled in the first chamber of the treasury in 1856.[62] Within time, the visits to royal collections and to the inner courts of the Topkapı Palace became more systematic, and the number of visitors increased considerably. The display of some pieces from the Imperial Treasury in the 1873



Figure 3.4 Imperial Treasury at the Topkapı Palace, 1880–1893.
Source: Istanbul University, Rare Books Library, Abdülhamid II Albums, 90838-0011.

Vienna World's Fair must have triggered international attention toward the "exotic and rich" treasury of the Ottoman rulers. By the late nineteenth century, the *Seraglio* (Topkapı Palace) had become one of the most popular tourist destinations of Constantinople. According to a newspaper article from 1886,

> [t]he great museum of Constantinople, though it is not so styled, is of course the Sultan's Treasury in the Seraglio. […] The permission to visit the Seraglio is not so difficult to obtain […] Many people have visited it before […] It is a favor which can only be obtained from the Sultan by the mediation of one's ambassador, and the visitor for whom the *irade* [imperial decree] is made out must be a person of rank or a specialist in art or possess some other qualifications to excuse the trouble he is giving both to the Embassy and to His Majesty.[63]

To visit the Imperial Treasury and the Topkapı Palace, one had to obtain an imperial decree (*irade*) from the palace through diplomatic channels. According to guidebooks of the time, entrance to the Imperial Treasury cost

around USD 30 (approximately USD 900 in today's currency) for a tourist group, which could include up to 20 people.[64] During the palatial tour, in addition to the treasury collection, the inner courts and the imperial kiosks of the palace were also shown to visitors with a certain performative ceremonial. The tourists were also hosted at the imperial Mecidiye Kiosk and offered tobacco, Turkish coffee, and sherbet at its terrace. For instance in 1884, during the visit of Austrian Crown Prince Rudolf and his wife, Princess Stéphanie of Belgium, a small-scale political scandal broke out. According to Ottoman archival documents, when the crown prince and his wife arrived at the terrace of the Mecidiye Kiosk, it was recorded that the archduchess admired the beauty of the view, and as a response, the crown prince said that "I assure you that this very point will be your residence with the title Queen of the Orient." According to the document, the King of Belgium, the father of the archduchess, disapproved these comments and reproached her.[65]

The visits to the Topkapı Palace were not exclusive to the members of the royalty. In fact, between 1878 and 1891, during the second quarter of the reign of Abdülhamid II, it is recorded that 531 foreign groups visited the palace and the Imperial Treasury. According to documents from the Topkapı Palace Museum Archives, among those visitors, 64 groups were from Russia and 23 groups were from Austria.[66] However, the doors of the Topkapı Palace remained closed for Ottoman subjects throughout the nineteenth century, up until the end of Abdülhamid II's reign. Unlike its contemporaries, the Ottoman state did not use the imperial collections for domestic propaganda or dynastic legitimacy, but rather utilized the royal collections as tools for promoting the self-image of the empire to the eyes of Westerners. Nineteenth-century Ottoman rulers choose to keep the palace and the heirlooms of their ancestors away from the public gaze, guarding the aura of secrecy and seclusion of the imperial grounds, in line with the traditional Ottoman visual ideologies that promoted the invisibility of the ruler and his locus.[67]

Only after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, the inner courts and royal collections of the palace became accessible for the Ottoman citizens. Following the declaration of the Second Constitution, in line with the declining prestige and authority of the monarchy, the royal collections at the Topkapı Palace opened for domestic visits.[68] In accordance with their nationalist ideology and aim to debilitate the authority and prestige of the sultanate, the Young Turks started controlling dynastic properties and opening imperial grounds to the public. For instance, the Imperial Armory at St. Irene, which was closed for visits during the Hamidian era, was also reorganized and renamed the Military Museum and opened to the public. The Military Museum aimed at promoting nationalist ideologies and

patriotic feelings of Ottoman subjects, especially during the tough years of the Balkan Wars and World War I.[69] Likewise, it is documented that thousands of foreign and local visitors, most of them students, poured into the Imperial Treasury of the Topkapı Palace to visit the world-renowned riches of the Ottoman sultans.[70] Following the museumification of the royal collections, the Imperial Treasury thus attained an educational role, and the heirlooms of the Ottoman dynasty were displayed publicly, creating a sense of national belonging and loyalty.

Over the course of the long nineteenth century, the royal apartments and imperial treasuries of the Ottoman, Romanov, and Habsburg dynasties started being displayed to visitors via parallel strategies of self-display. Dealing with legitimacy crises, monarchies developed various tactics to affirm their sovereignty and popularity, such as increasing the permeability between the imperial and the non-imperial or establishing a symbolic and spatial link between the monarch and his subjects. In this context, the gradual museumification of royal complexes had direct and indirect implications for imperial capitals, rendering novel ways for experiencing and perceiving imperial pasts. Having access to once forbidden quarters of imperial palaces created a sense of privilege, admiration, and belonging for the onlooker, but at the same time broke the spell of mystery and invisibility of the monarchy.

In fact, the imperial palaces displayed themselves not only to the actual visitors – their textual and visual depictions also made them accessible to a wider populace. Travel accounts, guidebooks, newspapers, and illustrated journals of the time depicted the unimaginable wealth of the sovereigns. Apart from increasing the number of travelers – thanks to developments in transportation – postcards and photographs of imperial capitals, historic palaces, royal processions, and dynastic treasures circulated publicly, and some were sent as gift albums to other courts, establishing a visual network among monarchies. Therefore, a shared vocabulary of imperial self-fashioning, based on interaction, emulation, and competition, appeared among the empires of Eastern Europe.

During this period, imperial ceremonies and public processions increased in splendor and visibility, confirming the authority and popularity of sovereigns. Particularly the traffic between the new and old palaces was orchestrated as grandiose urban spectacles. In this context, palaces and their monumental gates marked sublime points of reference in the urban fabric, defining the routes and the ultimate destinations for these royal processions. The ceremonials, therefore, spread beyond the confinements of royal precincts and became public events, shaping the spectators' vision and experience of the city.

Universities, art academies, research institutions, libraries, and modern museums were also founded in and around the imperial palaces, positioning them as centers of academic and artistic knowledge. In a similar fashion, imperial gardens, dedicated to the pleasure of the royal family, were converted into public parks for the benefit of the citizens. For instance, in 1823, the northern part of the imperial gardens of the Hofburg Palace was reconfigured as a public park and renamed Volksgarten. Even though the Hofgarten (Burggarten) remained closed for the public, the imperial domains of the Volksgarten, as suggested by its name, were opened to the populace and, even more so, dedicated to public wellbeing. In a similar manner, following the Napoleonic wars, Tsar Alexander I ordered the conversion of the Kremlin's imperial gardens that were stretching outside its western walls into a public park. The park, known as Kremlin Gardens, was inaugurated for Muscovites in 1823 and later renamed Alexander Gardens.[71] Following their Austrian and Russian rivals almost a century later, the Ottoman ruler Mehmed V Reşad (r. 1909–1918) approved the conversion of the imperial gardens of Gülhane at the Topkapı Palace into a public park. Inaugurated in 1914 with the efforts of the mayor of Istanbul Cemil (Topuzlu) Pasha, the Gülhane Park was dedicated solely to public health and welfare, and any activity that might generate income was strictly prohibited.[72] The project could be interpreted as a political outcome of the constitutional monarchy that was declared in 1908, enforcing control over dynastic properties.

These urban interventions, in fact, could also be considered as the actions of shattering monarchies that were struggling to maintain their rule during the turbulent times before the Great War. The Ottoman, Tsarist, and Habsburg Empires all collapsed following World War I, and their imperial legacies were appropriated and utilized by the subsequent regimes. The Tsarist Empire was the earliest to come to an end after the revolution of 1917. The Bolsheviks brought an end to the monarchy and the Soviet State was founded under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924). Since St. Petersburg was considered too close to the West and vulnerable to external interventions, the capital of the new state was also changed – Moscow was declared the capital in March 1918 and the Kremlin was selected as Lenin's residence. Thus, the Kremlin Palace once again became the seat of the government, and the same year, the memorial monument of Tsar Alexander II was removed, and his statue was demolished. Additionally, several tsarist monuments, including the Church of Konstantin and Elena, the Ascension Convent, and the Small Nicholas Palace were destroyed by the Soviet regime in 1929 and replaced by the Military School of the Central Executive Committee. The modern building of the State

Kremlin Palace (Palace of Congresses) as a grandiose monument of Soviet architecture was erected in 1961 near the Trinity Tower.[73]

In 1924, following the death of Vladimir Lenin, a memorial mausoleum was built at Red Square adjacent to the Kremlin walls. During this period, however, public visits to the Kremlin were not allowed, since the memory of the Tsarist Empire and the massacre of the dynastic family were still fresh in the public memory.[74] The Kremlin reopened for public visits four decades later, and the Kremlin Museums were established as late as 1961. After reopening during the Soviet era, the collections of the Armory Chamber were reorganized, this time not to reflect the dynastic past of the tsars or the glory of the empire, but the merits of Russian fine arts and craftsmanship.

As discussed above, after the relocation of the royal family in 1856, the Topkapı Palace grounds were virtually converted into a museum district even before the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. After World War I, the Ottoman Empire was defeated, and Istanbul was occupied by the Allied powers. Strategic locations within the city – including piers, train stations, and military bases, as well as the outer gardens of the Topkapı Palace – were taken under the control of the occupation forces. In response, Turkish resistance forces, organized in Anatolia under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, defeated the Greek forces and took control of Istanbul. In October 1923, a year after the abolishment of the monarchy, the Turkish Republic was founded, and Ankara was declared the new capital of the new state. Thus, Istanbul lost its historical position as the imperial capital, and all imperial properties and dynastic collections were appropriated in the name of the nation. The Imperial Treasury and the collection of the Sacred Relics at the Topkapı Palace were sent to Ankara, where these powerful symbols of the sultanate were kept away from the public gaze.[75] In 1926, the first public sculpture of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was erected within the precincts of the Topkapı Palace, at the tip of Seraglio Point, a spot that is historically and politically significant. The statue, while demonstrating the modern, secular, and Westernized facets of the new republic, manifested the legitimacy and authority of the "founding father of the Turkish nation" over the palace of his ancestors.[76]

In April 1924, approximately six months after the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the Topkapı Palace was officially inaugurated as a state museum by order of Mustafa Kemal and his cabinet of ministers, and the palace-museum was put under the direction of the Museums of Antiquities. The museumification of the imperial palace was a powerful political statement, declaring the end of the Ottoman era and affirming the Turkish nation as the sole inheritor of Ottoman heritage. While the treasury collection and the sacred relics were confined at Ankara for several decades

until 1963, the rest of the royal collections were displayed at various halls and kiosks of the Topkapı Palace. The items were catalogued, classified, and displayed as distinct collections, such as silverware, porcelains, paintings and portraits, carriages and harnesses, textiles, manuscripts, and so on. Additionally, various collections of books and manuscripts were unified, registered, and catalogued. Eventually, the Topkapı Palace Museum Library with more than 20,000 manuscripts and books was established at the former palace mosque. Similarly, the archival documents kept in the palace vaults and treasures were classified under the Topkapı Palace Museum Archives. When the treasury and the sacred relics collections were sent back to their original locations in the Topkapı Palace during the 1960s, these items of extreme political and religious significance started being displayed as objects of "national heritage" in a secular museum setting, stripped from their former dynastic, ceremonial, or political connotations. The collection venerated a distant yet glorious past of the Turkish nation.

Like the Ottoman and the Tsarist Empires, the Austro-Hungarian Empire also disintegrated after World War I. In 1918, after the collapse of the empire, Emperor Charles left the country and took the private jewelry of the imperial family with him into exile. The Austrian Republic was founded in 1919 and remained independent until the annexation by Nazi Germany in 1938.[77] Adolf Hitler made his infamous balcony appearance at the Neue Burg wing of the Hofburg Palace in 1938, and the collection of the Holy Roman Empire at the Hofburg Palace was sent to Nuremberg by the Nazis. After World War II, Vienna remained as the state capital of the Republic of Austria and the Hofburg Palace functioned as the presidential residence. The treasury, which was held outside the country for almost a decade, was returned to the Hofburg only after 1946. In 1956, the Hofburg Treasury opened for touristic visits and was organized as a double collection of secular and ecclesiastical treasuries in its original location at the Swiss Court.[78]

The imperial palaces and imperial collections, after the collapse of the empires, conveyed ambiguous messages of history and patrimony. The imperial legacies were instrumentalized, nationalized, and utilized to legitimize the new ideologies, and palaces were reformulated as state museums and/or seats of the new regimes (Figures 3.5a–3.5c). The possession and display of imperial treasuries, objects of extreme political and religious significance, became a contentious issue, and the collections were kept away from the public eye during the aftermath of the empires for several decades. Only after World War II, when the legacy of empires was mostly erased from the public memory, were the imperial collections opened to the public in modern and secularized museum settings.



Figure 3.5a Unveiling of Mustafa Kemal's statue on the grounds of the Topkapı Palace, 1926.

Courtesy of Cengiz Kahraman.

Figure 3.5b Unveiling ceremony of the Prince Eugene monument on Heldenplatz, 1865.

Source: Wien Museum Inv.Nr. 9572/1, https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/en/object/809826/

Figure 3.5c Demolition of the statue of Tsar Alexander II, 1918.

Source: Kulturologia, https://kulturologia.ru/blogs/260120/45288

To conclude, the traditional imperial palaces of the Russian, Ottoman, and Austrian Empires went through architectural, symbolic, and spatial transformations, especially during the last century of the monarchies. All three

modernizing empires, which were considered as bridges between the East and the West, were striving to be a part of the league of European powers, politically and culturally. Architecture, especially of royal residences, was an effective means for manifesting their modernization endeavors. They also developed strategies for sustaining their power and control over their vast territories and multi-ethnic populations. Hence the imperial palaces and royal collections were attributed new meanings as glorious representations of the dynastic past and the heroic history of the empire. While they emulated the "Western" model, the Russian, Ottoman, and Austrian Empires also learned from and competed with each other and developed new politics of representation. The imperial palaces, as embodiments of their imperial history and hereditary rights, were given new functions and positioned as active agents for the modernization of the state and the imperial city, but they also acted as spaces for remembering and forgetting. Post-imperial reconfigurations recontextualized imperial palaces and imperial treasuries as national heritage, as well as agents of public memory. This study aims at raising comparative questions about the parallels and divergences between these continental empires in terms of their strategies for representing and remembering the past and for utilizing imperial spaces as political tools for changing ideologies.

Notes

1 George T. Lowth, *Around the Kremlin; or, Pictures of Life in Moscow* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1868), 1–2.
2 Lawrence J. Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).
3 Irene A. Bierman, Rifa'at Ali Abou-El-Haj, and Donald Preziosi, *The Ottoman City and Its Parts: Urban Structure and Social Order* (New Rochelle, NY: A.D. Caratzas, 1991), 104.
4 Preziosi, *The Ottoman City and Its Parts*, 4.
5 Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York: MIT Press, 1991); Herbert Karner, *Die Wiener Hofburg 1521–1705 Baugeschichte, Funktion und Etablierung als Kaiserresidenz* (Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2015); Arthur Voyce, *The Moscow Kremlin: Its History, Architecture, and Art Treasures* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971); Jeroen Frans Jozef Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: The Courts of Europe's Major Dynastic Rivals, 1550–1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Jeroen Frans Jozef Duindam, *Dynasties: A Global History of Power, 1300–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
6 Voyce, *The Moscow Kremlin*; Richard Wortman, *Russian Monarchy: Representation and Rule: Collected Articles* (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2013).
7 Voyce, *The Moscow Kremlin*, 32.
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