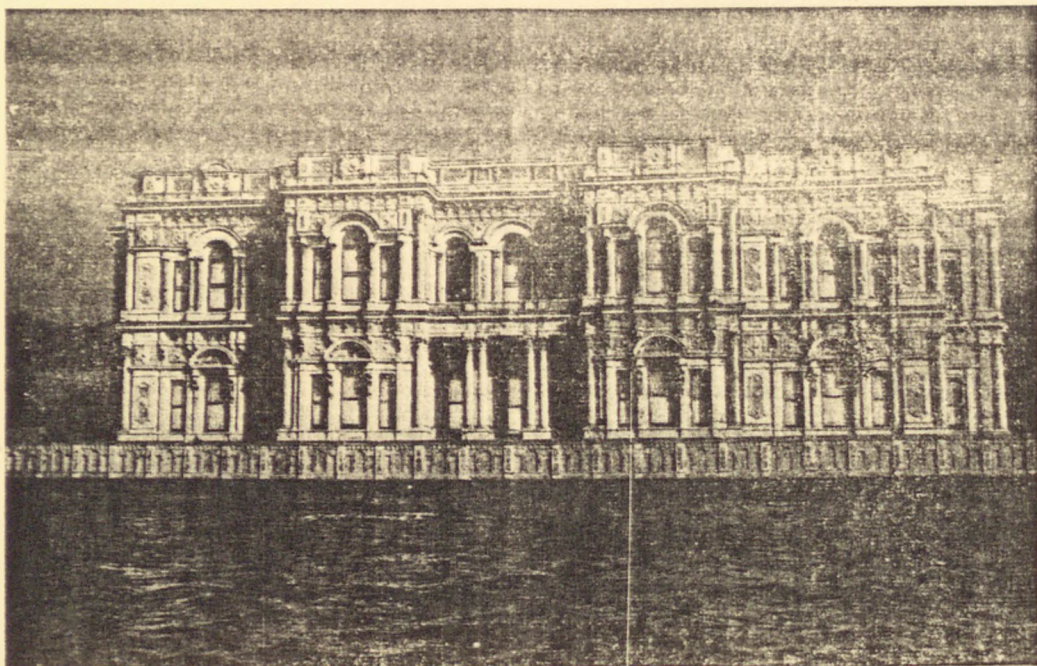


The Palace of Beylerbeyi



Beylerbeyi sarayı
Le Palais de Beylerbeyi (Bosphore)

No one can deny that the imperial Ottoman palaces situated alongside the Bosphorus are adding charm to this exquisite Waterway which has so graciously been chanted by poets and writers through the centuries.

Palaces and old Turkish seashore mansions called «Yalı» which were so lavishly built were once decorating the shores of the Bosphorus. They, being wooden constructions, have long ago been ruined, burnt or demolished. The present palace of Dolmabahçe, Çırağan, Yıldız, Beylerbeyi and Göksuyu are all constructions of the last century.

After the first half of the nineteenth century, we see the Sultans having abandoned the old palace of Seraglio in favor of the Dolmabahçe palace, built in 1853 by Sultan Abdülmecit. The other big palaces were built on subsequent dates.

The district where the present Palace of Beylerbeyi lies was called by the Byzantines Chrysokeramos, the word being composed of "chrysos" meaning golden and "keramos" meaning tile. In fact, there was existing in that palace an old church venerated in the name of the virgin erected by Justin and Sophia which was covered by highly polished tiles reflecting the sun rays like gold. On account of the presence of this church the place had been called by the Turks Istavros Garden. All the hinterland of an extension of two and a half kilometers to the interior leading to Sultan

Çiftlik and Bulgurlu, called by the Byzantines Eleon, was densely covered with centuries old pine trees extending to Büyük Çamlıca.

This lovely spot, facing the waters of the Bosphorus and backed by such a beautiful forest, was more systematically embellished by the Vezir, Damat İbrahim Paşa.

A wooden palace built here in 1612 was called Şevkabad. It was here that the Sultan Murad IV was born. This palace was subsequently rebuilt again in wood by Mahmut II, until it offered its place to the present one built by Abdül Aziz in 1965.

Its architect, the Armenian Serkis Balian was also the constructor of the Dolmabahçe Palace.

The style is heavily luxurious. Its spacious and orientally decorated big reception walls which are ornamented with pond and colonades have a most imposing impression.

The palace, rather than used as imperial living quarters, was mostly disposed as a guesthouse to prominent foreign guests. As such we can cite the names of Queen Eugenie of France who visited Abdülaziz in 1867, the Shah Nasreddin, King Nikola of Montenegro, the Grand Duke Nikola of Russia and Marshal Graf Von Moltke Melmirth. The latter has left us a meticulous description of the palace.

It was here that Abdül Hamit II spent part of his last days.

In this palace there had been displayed for the first time in Turkey the apparatus of telegraph. The American Professor Smith had installed telegraphic communication within the quarters of the palace thus

having attracted the admiration and the congratulations of Sultan Abdülhamit.

The palace has during the period of the Turkish Republic served on various occasions for entertaining several leaders of foreign countries who visited Turkey.

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