Finding Istanbul in the Archives of Suna Kıraç Library
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- City Collections
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- Local History and Urban Life
- Music - Arts and Architecture
- Rare Books and Manuscripts
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Views of the Bosphorus from different collections, 1900s to 2015
The Mehmet Nihat Nigizberk Collection of Architectural Photographs and Drawings consists of photographs, photo cards, notebooks, plans and architectural drawings related to specific historical buildings and also construction and restoration projects in the architect’s archive. These archival materials, which bear witness to the Late Ottoman and early republican era in Turkey, reflect the conditions of the historical monuments (primarily examples of Anatolian Seljuks, Ottoman, Mamluk and Arab architecture) and also applications of architectural practices in construction and restoration as well as social and cultural environment of the period.

The photographs and photo cards, as the main body of the collection located in 18 albums and 11 envelopes, comprised of images of over 100 unique structures in over 40 cities such as Istanbul, Bursa, Konya, Damascus, Jerusalem, Gaza and Cairo ranging in the geographies of Anatolia, the Middle East and North Africa.

The notebooks of the architect (16 in total, 7000 pages), dating from 1909 to 1948, also form a valuable source for researchers as they contain a wide range of information related to architect’s restoration and construction projects, voyage notes, personal observations, architectural calculations, drawings, construction material types and their prices.

Mehmet Nihat Nigizberk
1880-1945

1908, Graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts, Istanbul, School of Architecture

1909, Worked in different positions (designer, construction chief) in the Directorate of Foundations.

1937, Construction manager at Directorate of Foundations

1943, Retired at will
Cahide Tamer Historic Buildings Restoration Projects Collection includes a variety of archival materials such as documents, correspondence, photographs, drawings and plans of restoration projects that Cahide Tamer (1915-2005) has involved in her career between 1943-1974, who is also one of the women high architects and restorators in Early Turkish Republic Period.

Originally classified in structure-based albums and folders, this extensive archive consists of more than 150 historic buildings of Byzantine and Ottoman architecture in Marmara Region mainly in Istanbul.

Including iconic structures of Istanbul as Topkapı Palace, Hagia Sophia, Chora, Istanbul Archaeological Museum, Tekfur Palace, Marmara Sea and Land Walls, Rumeli Fortress, Yedikule Fortress, Fountain of Ahmet III, Güzelce Aqueduct, the Spice Bazaar, Yenikapı Mevlevi Lodge, Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa Mansion, the collection gathers different structure types like mosque, church, tomb, palace, museum, library, bazaar, mevlevi lodge, madrassa, fountain, aqueduct, fortification and fortress.

The collection is a valuable source for the researchers who are focusing on the historic building restoration works and applications in Turkey during 1940-1980.

The collection which is transferred to Suna Kıraç Library by the end of 2018, is donated to the library archive by the architect’s daughter Ayşe Nur Ökten with the initiative of Koç University Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for Late Antique and Byzantine Studies (GABAM, Barış Altan). The collection process including classification, identification (GABAM, Ali Öz) and translation of the archival materials is supported by GABAM between the years 2019 and 2020.
The **Josephine Powell Slide Collection** includes the professional works of freelance photographer and kilim researcher Josephine Powell from the period of her work in Turkey. Although she regretted not starting to take pictures of Turkish nomads and villagers until late in her life, she still travelled extensively around the country between 1974 and 1994, amassing a huge archive of photos (approximately 30,000 images) concentrating on village and nomadic lifestyles. Six thousand of these photographs are of textiles; the rest are of the daily life of villagers and nomads, primarily people who worked with textiles. Thirty volumes of field notes documenting these trips are also included in the collection. Her interest in weaving in particular resulted in photography and field notes of special interest to textile scholars. Her notes comment on and explain the ethnographic perspective, among other topics of interest to the broader scholarly community.

Another part of the archive consists of audiovisual fragments which show her wide geographic interest as well. These consist of images of priceless textiles and ethnographic recordings about them and their manufacture from a region spanning from Central Asia to Turkey.

In her travels, Powell never stopped collecting any and all kinds of artefacts used by Anatolian people for the purposes of agriculture and other daily tasks. Today, the results of her extensive efforts to collect ethnographic objects belong to the Sadberk Hanım Museum, in Büyükdere, İstanbul. This collection of objects includes over 400 flatweaves and more than 1,000 wooden and metal artefacts.

Josephine Powell
1919 - 2007

She earned a Bachelor of Arts from Cornell University in 1941. Four years later she got her master's degree at the New York School for Social Work at Columbia University.

She left the United States on the SS Ernie Pyle to work for the International Refugee and Resettlement Organization for Displaced Persons (IRRODP). She was stationed in Tanganyika, Tanzania, and later transferred to Munich, Germany. She would not return to the United States for another 40 years.

For many decades, Josephine Powell lived in Rome and earned her living as an architectural photographer. In 1974 Powell moved from Rome to Istanbul. When she was commissioned to write a book on kilims, she discovered that not much research had been done on them. She went into the field to do research herself. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s she visited nomads and villagers in Anatolia, photographing their daily activities and their handicrafts.
A digital archive of the Byzantine monuments located in Istanbul as documented and seen from the eyes of five different photographers The Byzantine Monuments Photographs Archive is an ongoing project by Koç University Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for Late Antique and Byzantine Studies (GABAM) to create a digital photographic archive of Byzantine monuments in Istanbul. The core of the archive is made up of monuments found across the Historic Peninsula. Professional photographers have made several visits to each monument to photograph the buildings under the most ideal weather, light and environmental conditions. The archive includes photographs of all visible exterior and interior facades of each monument, and covers a wide range of details from wall paintings to mosaics, and from inscriptions to capitals. Where possible aerial drone photography has been used to document the monument's location within the current urban environment. The archive will continue to grow as new photographs of the monuments are added.

THE KOÇ UNIVERSITY STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION CENTER FOR LATE ANTIQUE AND BYZANTINE STUDIES (GABAM), was established with the support of Koç University and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation in January 2015 at Koç University’s Rumelifeneri Campus. GABAM is the first scientific research center dedicated to Byzantine art history and archaeology to be established in Turkey.

GABAM is a scientific research center established to realize this important potential. The Center aims to engage in scientific research and activities related to the Late Antique and Byzantine cultural periods (circa the 3rd and 15th centuries AD) and make contributions of universal significance to the relevant scientific disciplines.
The Soundscape of Istanbul project was conducted by Pınar Çevikayak Yelmi during her doctoral research at Koç University supervised by Assoc. Prof. Nina Ergin, Assoc. Prof. Sertaç Kağı and Assoc. Prof. Asım Evren Yantaç.

The Soundscape of Istanbul project approaches everyday traditions and daily urban life from a sonic perspective and aims to increase public awareness of cultural sounds by means of exhibitions. Sounds are inevitable parts of our daily lives and our cultures. Also, sounds are of great importance in terms of intangible cultural heritage. Sonic cultural heritage is twice endangered due to physical characteristics of sound itself and dynamic structure of intangible culture. Sounds that are not protected or archived get lost forever. In a dynamic city such as Istanbul, daily life and urban sounds change rapidly. Therefore, it is significant and necessary to protect cultural soundmarks of the city as expeditiously as possible to sustain cultural identity and cultural memory.

In this project, sound symbols of Istanbul were determined according to an online survey and interviews. These characteristic urban sounds were recorded with professional equipment throughout the year 2015. A specific metadata system was developed for cultural sounds and the collection of “The Soundscape of Istanbul” was made publicly accessible at Koç University Suna Kıraç Library. Thus, the collection lays background which future soundscapes and the recreation of past soundscapes may, then, be added as well.

In order to expand this sound collection, “Soundsslike” project (soundsslike.com) was initiated. In this project, an interactive platform was developed which anyone can upload their own sound recordings. The main aim of the project is to raise public awareness of urban and cultural sounds and to protect these sounds as a collective work.

The Soundscape of Istanbul project became associate partners with Europeana Sounds and the collection can also be accessible under Europeana Sounds portal. The project was also presented as an interactive installation in Koç University Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations (RCAC) and by means of an experiential exhibition in Studio-X Istanbul.

The Soundscape of Istanbul project, besides being first of its kind, is very significant as it may lead to further multidisciplinary research as sonic culture is deeply dependent on various factors such as sociological, political, and economic conditions.

Pınar Çevikayak Yelmi received her Bachelor’s degree from the department of Industrial Design at Middle East Technical University (Ankara, Turkey, 2008) and her Master’s degree from the department of Visual Communication Design at Politecnico di Milano (Milano, Italy, 2012). Her studies on sounds of Istanbul started during her Master’s education. She designed an unconventional guide system including a website, a smart phone application and a sonic souvenir which aims to guide through urban sounds. It was her challenge to design visual interfaces for auditory urban experiences.

Having discovered the richness of cultural sounds in Istanbul, she decided to conduct further research under a PhD program in the department of Design, Technology, Society at Koç University (Istanbul, Turkey, 2012-2017). Since “The Soundscape of Istanbul” project is located at the intersection of soundscape studies, intangible cultural heritage, museum studies, sensory studies, interaction design, experience design, exhibition design and participatory design, it suits this multidisciplinary program very well.
The physical growth of Istanbul in its history (Modified from Karakuyu, 2006)

View of Istanbul over Hagia Sophia, 2017, ays255, Tan, Gökhan, GABAM

View of the Bosphorus, 1910s, MNN_alb03_phc_001, Mehmet Nihat Nigizberk Collection

Bosphorus Bridge, 1978, 2220-37-4, Jopsehine Powell Slide Collection
Monuments

Hagia Sophia, 1910s, İstanbul, Mehmet Nihat Nigizberk Collection, MNN_ALB07_phc_057

Hagia Sophia, 1955, İstanbul, Cahide Tamer Collection, CTA_S103_A03_phg_01

Hagia Sophia, 2018, İstanbul, GABAM, Aydoğmuş, Tahsin, Ays008

German Fountain (left), Fountain of Ahmed III, İstanbul (right), 1910s, Mehmet Nihat Nigizberk Collection, MNN_ALB08_phc_048

Sirkeci Train Station, 1970s, İstanbul, Josephine Powell Slide Collection, 2615-21A-1,

Basilica Cistern, 2018, GABAM, Aydoğmuş, Tahsin, Baz001,
Hagia Sophia, before and after restoration, 1955, İstanbul CTA_S103_A03 Cahide Tamer Collection
Feneri Isa Mosque / Lips Monastery, before and after restoration, 1959-1960, Istanbul, CTA_S099_A01 Cahide Tamer Collection
Hekimoğlu Ali Pasha Mosque, 1958, İstanbul, CTA_S034_A01, Cahide Tamer Collection
Çorlulu Ali Pasha Madrasa, 1959, İstanbul, CTA_S019_A01, Cahide Tamer Collection
Tekfur Palace, (Palace of the Porphyrogenitus / Blachernae Palace), 1956, İstanbul CTA_S100_A01_phg_19, Cahide Tamer Collection

Saint Irene, interior view, 1953, İstanbul, CTA_S101_A01_phg_21, Cahide Tamer Collection

Kariye Mosque / Chora Church, 1945-1946, İstanbul, CTA_S102_D01_phg_04, Cahide Tamer Collection

Tekfur Palace, (Palace of the Porphyrogenitus / Blachernae Palace), 1996, İstanbul, Aydoğanuş, Tahsin, tek008, GABAM

Saint Irene, interior view, 2015, İstanbul, Aydoğanuş, Tahsin, air017, GABAM

Kariye Mosque / Chora Church, 1991, İstanbul, Aydoğanuş, Tahsin, kar009, GABAM
Frescoes and mosaics in İstanbul’s Chora Museum covered up.
https://arkeofili.com/camiye-donusturulen-kariyedeki-mozaik-ve-freskler-kapatildi/
The enthroned Christ and the donor of the church Metochites mosaic from inner narthex (detail), Kariye Mosque / Chora Church, Istanbul, 1991, Aydoğanuş, Tahsin, kar057

Harrowing of Hell (Anastatis) and the Archangel Michael frescoes in the south chapel, Kariye Mosque / Chora Church, 1991, İstanbul, Aydoğanuş, Tahsin, kar121

The domical vault with the miracles of Christ mosaics from outer narthex (the miracle at Cana detail), Kariye Mosque / Chora Church, 1991, İstanbul, Aydoğanuş, Tahsin, kar103

Pantocrator Christ and the Old Testament Prophets mosaic in the south dome of inner narthex (detail), Kariye Mosque / Chora Church, 1991, İstanbul, Aydoğanuş, Tahsin, kar045

Christ taken to Jerusalem for passover mosaic from outer narthex, Kariye Mosque / Chora Church, 1991, İstanbul, Aydoğanuş, Tahsin, kar097

The birth of the Virgin mosaic from inner narthex, Kariye Mosque / Chora Church, 1991, İstanbul, Aydoğanuş, Tahsin, kar062

GABAM Byzantine Monuments Photographs Archive

Vegetable Gardens, 1970s, Istanbul, 2615-20A-0, Josephine Powell Slide Collection
Yeni Camii (Yeni Valide Mosque) window drawing, 1910s, İstanbul, MNN_NB_08, Mehmet Nihat Nigizberk Collection

Yeni Camii (Yeni Valide Mosque) ablution fountain in the courtyard, 1910s, İstanbul, MNN_ALB07_phc_095, Mehmet Nihat Nigizberk Collection

Yeni Camii (Yeni Valide Mosque) ablution fountain in the courtyard, 1963, CTA_S097_A05_phg_02, Cahide Tamer Collection

Yeni Camii (Yeni Valide Mosque), general view, 1975, 2054-31-5, Josephine Powell Slide Collection
Boats in the Bosphorus, 1910s, İstanbul, MNN_ALB07_phc_086, Mehmet Nihat Nigizberk Collection


Ferry in the Bosphorus, 1910s, İstanbul, MNN_ALB07_phc_062, Mehmet Nihat Nigizberk Collection

Ferry at the port, 2015, İstanbul, VAPUR_004, The Soundscape of Istanbul
Posters, 1975, 2054-(31)-1

Street Life (Strike banner), 1975, 2054-(33)-3

Boys swimming in the Bosphorus, 1975, 2053-7-3

People fishing along the Bosphorus, 1978, 2220-15-4


Views from İstanbul, Josephine Powell Slide Collection
Rug Auctions, Istanbul, 1978, 222A-10-2, Josephine Powell Collection
Lemonade sellers, 1978, İstanbul, 222A-6-9 / 2220-2-1, Josephine Powell Slide Collection
Lemonade sellers, 1978, İstanbul, 2220-27-3, Josephine Powell Slide Collection
A Roman mosaic from Tunisia showing a trireme vessel during the Roman Empire

A modern reconstruction showing the bronze ram as well as a basic eye design used for intimidation

A luzzu (A traditional fishing boat from the Maltese islands

These eyes may be the modern survival of an ancient Phoenician custom by the ancient Greeks and Egyptians. They are referred to as, the Eye of Horus or of Osiris, symbol of protection, good health and said to protect the fishermen while at sea.
On Istiklal Street, we listen to the bells of the Nostalgic Tramway and its movement on the rails. We also hear the noise of crowds. (02.06.2015)
Markets in İstanbul, 2015, İstanbul, The Soundscape of Istanbul
Suna Kıraç Library was aware that digitization and digital creation become social and cultural expressions of the contemporary age. İstanbul and its heritage, urban culture was part of world history and the city has universal value must be protected by digital preservation.
- SKL is creating digital heritage with born digital entities.
- With its digital collections SKL is participating e-learning. The library function as digital schools that offer formal packaging for specific skills and topics as well as general browsing for creative discovery and self-guided, informal learning.
- Library reference team organized library session on subject in humanities and during these trainings students have opportunity to browse SKL digital collections. They also used these materials for their papers, projects and their thesis with purpose for educational and research. In addition to this, digital collection team organized trainings on digital collections and present share library treasure with different audiences including students.
- SKL digital collections are providing free, public access to more thousands materials in a digital platform to support open education and open access in educational section.
- SKL is capable of constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of their communities by reimagining the future with an eye toward innovation and continue to digitalization of İstanbul heritage for next generations.

Istanbul and its peninsula is changing fast and surely. To remind İstanbul, its history and culture, Suna Kıraç Library will continue to digitalization projects on İstanbul and without barriers provide access to the library’s resources and collections.
Thank you for your attention...