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Abstract (maximum 150 words): This essay investigates the representation of sixteenth-century architecture during the Ottoman Empire in Elif Shafak's (2014) The *Architect's Apprentice* and Mathias Enard's (2018) Tell Them of Battles, Kings and Elephants. Working with Walter Benjamin's concept of architecture as testimony to mythology, the essay classifies the novels as architecture-ologies which demythologise empire at a moment of literal construction. The essay argues that, via the symbols of dome and bridge, the novels intervene in contemporary Ottoman nostalgia, both by treating architecture as memorialising transcultural exchange, but also by reconstructing memories of transcultural violence founding the architecture and the Ottoman Empire. Building on the dialogue between literature and architecture, particularly Henry James's 'house of fiction,' the essay reveals how the novels' ekphrases -- their trans-mediation of dome and bridge into different forms of historical fiction – put into narrative perspective the imperial conquests and transcultural violence supporting the architecture of Sinan and Michelangelo.

Keywords (maximum 6): Enard; historical fiction; Shafak; transcultural memory

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The invisible dome and the unbuilt bridge: contemporary fiction and the mythologies of Ottoman architecture.

> Architecture as the most important testimony to latent 'mythology.'
>
> -- Walter Benjamin (1999)

> Such is the aspect that today The Portrait [of a Lady] wears for me: a structure reared with an 'architectural' competence.
>
> -- Henry James (1934)

Introduction

Two recent novels about architecture in sixteenth-century Istanbul and the Ottoman Empire raise questions about the relation between contemporary fiction and memories of architecture of the Ottoman Empire. Elif Shafak's (2014) The *Architect's Apprentice* and Mathias Enard's (2018) Tell Them of Battles, Kings and Elephants (hereafter Tell Them) are two very different novels. Shafak's historical fiction reconstructs the life, work and times of the Ottoman Empire's most famous architect, Sinan. Enard's faction or counterfactual history (fiction imagining alternative history) depicts Michelangelo on a trip to Istanbul he never made, to build a bridge over the Bosphorus he never built, in response to an invitation from the Sultan that he never accepted. The novels are also antithetical in style: Enard oneiric and fragmentary; Shafak realistic and detailed.

Yet if as Walter Benjamin (1999) writes in his Arcades Project, architecture is the 'most important testimony to latent "mythology,"' a 'collective dream,' then in common both novels creatively investigate the mythologies and collective dreams of the Ottoman Empire. Their focus on the same period, on architecture and on these architects marks a fictional return to a moment of literal construction for the Ottoman Empire. As for Benjamin, for Shafak and Enard engaging architecture facilitates demythologisation of national and imperial mythologies, deconstruction of ideological constructions, and reflecting on history while also reproducing alternative and untold histories.

Their return to Ottoman foundations marks a welcome intervention into what has been widely recognised as contemporary 'nostalgia' for the Ottoman Empire, which shapes the 'neo-Ottoman' politics of Tayyip Erdoğan's Turkey, but which also manifests in popular representations of the Empire, both in Turkey and the West (Shariatmadari, 2013). Ottoman nostalgia works to 'romanticise political union' between former Ottoman states, and between their ethnicities, which are now multiply riven, by depicting the Ottoman Empire as a 'dreamlike and luxurious' multicultural harmony (Shariatmadari, 2013). Shafak's and Enard's novels provide what we might call an architecture-ology, that is knowledge or writing (logos) about architecture, in order to uncover the complexities beneath such mythologies of the Ottoman Empire. Specifically, from sixteenth-century architecture, Shafak's and Enard's novels create possibilities, but also show some of the problems, of transcultural exchange under the Ottoman Empire. In writing about architecture, the novels also translate architecture into writing, performing a kind of ekphrasis -- that is, putting visual art into literature – borrowing from the architecture they write about to shape their own literary form.

Historical fictions

Architecture combines artistry with technology, structural building with aesthetic creativity; it is at once engineering and symbolisation, as Benjamin's Arcades Project (1999) suggests. The two novels likewise combine historical frames with artistic choices, offering different versions of this combination. Shafak's novel continues the nineteenth-century tradition of the historical novel. Enard's novel is closer to 'historiographic metafiction': the hybrid coined by Linda Hutcheon (1988: 105-123) (interestingly first in relation to postmodern architecture) for postmodern fiction that is historical but in postmodern self-conscious fashion wants to address the dynamic of putting history into fiction. The historical novel works to bring the past to fictional reality. It is conventionally focused on a central character, often historically real, or has historically real personages in purview, and is set against a background of historical events. Historiographic metafiction in distinction 'is fiction which uses metafictional techniques to remind us that history is a construction, not something natural that equates to the "the past." History is not "the past," but a narrative based on documents and other material created in the past' (Nicol, 2009: 100). If historical fiction naturalises the past, including an unfamiliar or as yet untold one, historiographic metafiction performs a parodic textualisation of the past, conveying the fictionalisations of history. The latter explicitly problematizes the telling of history: both the facts of what happened and their representation.

Sinan is not the first historical figure Shafak has represented – most significant in her oeuvre is the Persian Sufi poet Rumi, at the centre of her novel Forty Rules of Love (Shafak, 2010) – but The *Architect's* Apprentice is her most historically rooted novel, and unlike Forty Rules of a Love does not maintain any narrative frame in the present. The *Architect's* Apprentice

is also Shafak's most Ottoman novel in English. One of her longest, it is detailed in its account of Ottoman history, society and architecture. The novel spans roughly the fifty years of Sinan's architectural career, from the building of his first structure for Sultan Suleiman and his appointment as royal architect (in 1538) to his death at almost 100 (in 1588). It depicts the Sultanate over a period covering three sultans; the construction of foundational Ottoman buildings including Suleiman's mosque, mosques for Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha and Princess Mihrimah, foundations and a hammam for the Sultana Hürem; the repair of the Hagia Sophia and the reconstruction of the Byzantine water system in Istanbul; and the erection and destruction of the Galata observatory. The plot of the novel is shaped by the wars of Ottoman conquest, including that of Belgrade and Cyprus, the advance on the Habsburg Empire, and also landmark disasters such as plagues and the Istanbul fire, after which Sultan Selim commissions Sinan to rebuild the city. The world of the novel correlates closely to personae and events in the history of the Ottoman Empire. The novel also depicts in detail Sinan's architectural works, their design and their construction. In her 'Author's Note' that serves as the afterword, Shafak (2015: 453) writes of how her idea for the novel emerged while she was stuck in traffic in Istanbul opposite Molla Celebi, one of Sinan's mosques. Returning to this period via architecture is a draw for Shafak as a novelist invested in transcultural memory, most likely because particularly during Suleiman's reign Europeans admired the architecture, among other things, in the empire (Finkel, 2005: 116).

As counterfactual history, Tell Them is contrary to historical fact. Yet Enard's faction derives from and incorporates a number of historical texts: Michelangelo's letters to his brothers, which Enard quotes; plans of the Hagia Sophia sent by Michelangelo and held by the Vatican library; and a sketch, 'Project for a Bridge for the Golden Horn,' attributed to

Michelangelo, that Enard (2018: 139) notes was recently discovered in the Ottoman archives. In length more a novella than novel, Tell Them is comprised of vignettes rather than chapters. Its timespan is also short, from May 1506 for a duration of three months -- set just a few years before the historical beginning of The Architect's Apprentice. The story imagines Michelangelo accepting Sultan Bayezid's commission to work on a bridge across the Golden Horn and exchanging Florence for Istanbul. Enard's Michelangelo is motivated mostly out of revenge against Pope Julius, since the latter was not paying for work he had commissioned Michelangelo to undertake in Rome, particularly the building of the pope's future tomb, but also out of competitiveness with fellow artist and architect Leonardo, whose design for the bridge the Sultan has already rejected. The novel seeds in other historical figures, most prominently Meishi of Pristina, the Ottoman-Albanian poet. It marks the following historical events as having just taken place -- and the first two will prove essential to the plot of the novel: the Christian reconquest of Andalusia at the end of the fifteenth century; the subsequent expulsion of Muslims and Jews from Spain and their welcome to the Ottoman Empire by Bayezid; and the discovery of America. Reference is also made to the Ottoman-Venetian wars, with the emphasis on peace. If Shafak's scope and copious detail produce a novel that resembles the encompassing dome that becomes its motif, Enard's concision makes his novel feel like a narrow and fragmented bridge. Indeed Enard explicitly compares his art of writing to sculpture, a process of whittling down rather than building-up: 'In my books, it's much like how a sculptor, when carving a figure, discards matter to get the shape. And not like a painter who works up from a blank with paint. I imagine myself as much more a sculptor than a painter' (Enard and Maleney, 2018). Enard's novel is the more deconstructive approach to Ottoman history, pivoting on the unbuilt bridge.

Mythologies

Benjamin's (1999) reading of architecture as the most important testimony to latent mythology finds in architectural designs the signs of state ideals -- in the case of the Paris arcades, also imperial. He views the nineteenth-century arcades as symbols not simply of Western modernity but of Napoleonic imperial grandiosity. In representing Ottoman architecture Shafak's and Enard's novels also examine the mythologies attaching to empire, particularly the Ottoman Empire.

Admittedly, Shafak's work as a whole has been attracted to a mythology of transculturalism, especially in or after the Ottoman Empire. A central seam in her fiction is Istanbul, a city she presents as combinatory both of multiple minority cultures and of East and West. Shafak tends to depict Istanbul as a near-character, a feature she shares with fellow Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk. Indeed, the word 'soul,' which Shafak (2016b) uses in an interview with Pamuk to identify the dimension of Istanbul his work accesses, describes well her own approach. In the interview Shafak (2016b) describes Istanbul as a 'city of collective amnesia,' a symptom of 'the [Turkish] state's selective memory' operative in 'the jingoistic rhetoric in Turkey about "our noble Ottoman ancestors." These imperial dreams have encouraged a disastrous neo-Ottoman foreign policy in the Middle East, a dangerous fusion of nationalism and Islamism.' Both novelists might be said to create in fictionalised memories of Istanbul the 'plurality and nuance' which Shafak (2016b) counterposes to '[t]he increasing dominance of an ideology of sameness throughout our motherland.' A challenge to the state's selective memory and the 'collective amnesia' of Istanbul, contemporary literature thus offers an alternative, culturally diverse and contradictory, account of Turkish and Ottoman history.

Nagihan Haliloğlu (2009: 389) has compared Shafak and Pamuk on the grounds of their 'nostalgic ethic or discourse' toward Istanbul as 'significant other.' But if Pamuk tends to wander widely through city and neighbourhoods, Shafak is interested in structures, in -- as Haliloğlu (2009: 389) puts it in relation to Shafak's (2015) novel The Flea Palace -- the 'microcosm of the apartment block.' As this last comment suggests, Shafak has another consistent interest throughout her work, one that often connects to transcultural Ottoman memories: architecture. Houses or other structures, whether in use, abandoned, ruined or only in memory, are often key to plot, characters, themes. They are alternately sites of memory or forgetting, personal and cultural: structures for the historical unconscious that can erupt into the private present. They are symbols of memories that are destroyed, buried or recycled and repurposed. Shafak (2018) has recently argued that 'Nations don't always learn from history' and – again: it is a persistent concern -- that 'Turkey, in general, is a society of collective amnesia.' Architectural structures are a key device for Shafak to bring into play the Ottoman foundations of Turkey's present, to address mythologies of empire. Recurrent motifs of buried foundations, graveyards and tombs in her fiction suggest archaeology, but the fiction might be read more as an architecture-ology of the past, an exploration of architecture for what it can reveal of the Ottoman Empire in the context of Turkey's present.

In being set within the Ottoman Empire and focused on architecture, Tell Them is more exceptional in Enard's oeuvre, although continuity with his other work lies in its themes of cultural encounters (particularly East/West) and travel. However, Compass, Enard's (2017) extraordinarily rich exploration of orientalism (Said is a prominent reference), incorporates the Ottoman Empire and travels, via the bed-bound narrator's memories, to Istanbul. In common with Tell Them's presentation of the city as transcultural mediation, and even deploying the same

symbol for this of the bridge, Compass evokes Istanbul as 'a wrenching of beauty on the frontier – whether you regard Constantinople as the easternmost city in Europe or the westernmost city in Asia, as an end or a beginning, as a bridge or border, this mixed nature is fractured by nature, and the place weighs on history as history itself weighs on humans' (Enard, 2017). The narrator remembers visiting the tomb of Sinan, and 'the Süleymaniye mosque, built by Sinan the Divine for Süleyman the Magnificent' (Enard, 2017). Sinan's architecture induces an epiphany about perfection and imperfection, the human and the divine. At first, the narrator experiences the sublime: 'alone in the monument, alone surrounded by light, alone in this place with its disconcerting proportions; the circle of the immense cupola is welcoming, and hundreds of windows surround me' (Enard, 2017). But then the building's encompassing flawlessness cuts off any bridge to his frailty:

> very soon the beauty eludes and rejects me. .. . what my eyes perceive now indeed looks magnificent to me, but has nothing in common with the sensation I've just felt. A great sadness grips me, suddenly, a loss, a sinister vision of the reality of the world and all its imperfections, its pain, a sadness accentuated by the perfection of the building and a phrase comes to me: only the proportions are divine, the rest belongs to humans. (Enard, 2017)

That architecture conceals its human constructedness and human pain is a theme both Tell Them and *The Architect's* Apprentice will return to as a major rather than minor key.

In his study of the embeddedness of modern literature in architectural forms, David Spurr (2012: 224) writes that 'Architectural forms of the past are more conducive to narrative form,

partly because of the richness of their symbolic associations and partly because each of these forms, as well as each concrete instance of it, has a history of its own. The building mediates between the present and the past, and this mediation itself serves as a kind of larger narrative.' If in Enard's and Shafak's novels particular architectural structures emerge that are key symbols for unlocking their oeuvres, it is because, as already part symbolic, architecture lends itself to literary representation. Each novel has a distinct architectural structure that becomes its literary trope: the dome in Shafak, the bridge in Enard.

The dome in The *Architect's* Apprentice is a recurrent shape in Shafak's representation of Sinan's architecture and indeed beyond it. The novel's narrator, Jahan – one of the architect's apprentices – while helping Sinan to construct the Suleimaniye mosque, stands under the structure feeling as if 'the dome had blended with the firmament above' (Shafak, 2014: 158). The other side of this symbolic coin is that the heavens are encompassed within the mosque, and the Ottoman dome becomes a microcosm of the cosmos and a figure for transcultural inclusivity. 'the world as an enormous building site': 'Never before had [Jahan] thought of God as an architect. Christians, Jews, Muslims, Zoroastrians and people of myriad faiths and creeds lived under the same invisible dome' (Shafak, 2014: 158). The dome translates in the novel symbolically from the Suleimaniye, to Sinan's rebuilding of the Hagia Sophia, where the need to produce a bigger dome than the church is Shafak's symbol for the Ottomans' determination to reuse, but also to erase and surpass, the structures of Byzantine Constantinople. The dome appears at the close of the novel, set in Agra under the Mughal Empire, as Jahan ends up in India helping to build the Taj Mahal, the tomb for the Shah's wife, in particular to design its dome, so that he is known as the 'dome maker' (Shafak, 2014: 451). The dome is again the symbol of an encompassing erasure of all differences, not only between identities – religions, cultures and,

here, via the imperially translated symbol of the dome, empires -- but between times, as the architectural symbol encompasses both ends of Jahan's life. As Jahan narrates,

> We live, toil and die under the same invisible dome. Rich and poor, Mohammedan and baptized, free and slave, man and woman, Sultan and mahout, masters and apprentice. . . . I have come to believe that if there is one shape that reaches us out to all of us, it is the dome. That is where all the distinctions disappear and every single sound, whether of joy or sorrow, merges into one huge silence of all-encompassing love. When I think of this world in such a way, I feel dazed and disorientated, and cannot tell any longer where the future begins and the past ends; where the West falls and the East rises.' (Shafak, 2014: 452)

Jahan vocalises a bland theory of universalist humanism, but the novel will use its fictionalisation of the life and times of Sinan to deconstruct this idealistic trope of encompassment. It is important that the dome is twice described as 'invisible' – in association with the Suleimaniye as much as the Taj Mahal. Other perspectives on Sinan and his architecture, as with a certain angle of light coming through windows into a dome, will help to make the invisible visible.

In Tell Them the arch architectural symbol is the bridge, which finds its concrete instance in that Michelangelo has been commissioned by the Sultan to build. The bridge is a symbol of connectivity rather than inclusivity. Michelangelo believes that he will succeed where Leonardo failed because he has travelled to the city and understood the bridge's purpose as symbol of the Ottoman Empire's ideal to combine sides otherwise divided: 'A giant bridge between two fortresses./A fortified bridge' (Enard, 2018: 53). Michelangelo envisions that he will translate

the fortification of what is on either side of the Golden Horn – but also the fortification of a connection between Europe and Asia – to become the physical strength of the bridge. But whilst the dome in The *Architect's* Apprentice encompasses the novel, the bridge in Tell Them remains uncompleted. Events compel the collapse of Michelangelo's plans as forcefully as the collapse of the bridge before connections have been fully made. Just three years following his visit, as Michelangelo begins work on the Sistine chapel, Istanbul undergoes an earthquake, and Michelangelo's bridge, which is still in progress, 'weakened, the work collapses: its rubble will be carried off to the Bosphorus by the water, stirred into fury by the earthquake, and no one will talk about it again' (Enard, 2018: 134). Both structures of encompassing and connective transcultural memories, dome and bridge, are also therefore symbols of the failure of transcultural exchange: the dome will fail to provide celestial encompassment when what it encompasses becomes visible; the bridge will collapse when the designed connections are never completed.

That historic architecture becomes fertile ground for contemporary literature to find such symbols for transcultural memory is shaped by the period that both novels represent – the same century and within a few decades. Both novels engage with the mythology of architecture at this time as a transcultural bridge or dome, a medium connecting and encompassing West and East, Renaissance and Ottoman. It is significant that the novels echo the same buildings and the same architects, with both seizing on certain buildings and these architectural designers as part of a transculturally shared pattern. While Shafak's novel is about Sinan, and Enard's about Michelangelo, nevertheless each architect appears if only by allusion in the other novel. Architectural histories (Goodwin, 1987; Goodwin, 1993, Necipoğlu, 2005) also note parallels between the architects and between Ottoman and Renaissance architecture. However, in both

novels, the proximity is brought much closer than ever happened in history, to the extent that correspondence, exchanged visits or near-encounters in the novels can be seen as entirely fabricated when read alongside the architectural histories. The divergence from historical record tells us much about contemporary fiction's desire to emphasize, in the face of contemporary East-West political splits and the simplifications of transcultural memory in Turkey's neo-Ottomanism, architecture as a medium for lost transcultural memories.

In *The Architect's Apprentice* Sinan seems to have in his possession sketches of a building Michelangelo was in the process of working on in Rome: 'San Pietro, and when it was finished it would possess the largest dome in all Christendom' (Shafak, 2014: 173). Sinan instructs his apprentices to go to Rome, study Saint Peter's and connect it to Ottoman architecture. 'Compare what they've done there to what we're doing here. If you aim to excel in your craft, you ought to study the work of others' (Shafak, 2014: 173), Sinan says, and this includes, to his apprentices' shock, 'the Franks' and architecture in the Balkans, Anatolia, Syria, Egypt, Iraq and the Caucasus. The achievements of architecture in other words depend upon transcultural borrowing, the view that every geographical or religious difference is encompassed under the same symbolic dome. Indeed, in Rome, as he watches the construction of St Peter's with its dome, Jahan has a thought of the same sublime pattern as that he had under the Suleimaniye: 'here, too, was the centre of the universe' (Shafak, 2014: 181). Shafak's Jahan obtains the sketch of the bridge over the Golden Horn produced by Leonardo that Enard's novel retrieves from the Ottoman archives, and also sketches by Michelangelo, 'most of them domes – belonging to the Pantheon, Florence's cathedral and the Hagia Sophia' (Shafak, 2014: 164). The *Architect's Apprentice* imagines a meeting between Sinan's apprentices and the elderly Michelangelo ,'Il Divino' (Shafak, 2014: 182), who relates how the Sultan wanted him to come

to Istanbul -- the invitation that Enard turns into faction: 'It wasn't meant to be' (Shafak, 2014: 184). Michelangelo asks them about the Suleimaniye mosque and receives and returns a letter from Sinan. But this letter and the sketches Sinan's apprentices make in Rome of Michelangelo's and other buildings are destroyed by another of Sinan's apprentices, Davud, who is the other 'Architect's Apprentice.' 'The correspondence between the Chief Architect of Rome and the Chief Royal Architect of Istanbul was severed, not for the first time' (Shafak, 2014: 189). That the two architects remain finally unencompassed under a single dome, even in the fiction which pulls them toward proximity, presents a supreme East-West encounter as a lost historical possibility.

Enard depicts his young Michelangelo in Istanbul meeting 'the mobedesbashi, the chief engineer, who is not yet called the Chief Architect' (Enard, 2018: 28), just before Sinan would transform that office and the architecture of the Ottoman Empire. There is the Hagia Sophia but no Blue Mosque, and the city is still Constantinople and not yet Istanbul -- though the novel significantly interchanges names, therefore pivoting between Christian and Ottoman Empires, bringing these worlds and their rulers much closer to each other: 'The Empire was no longer Roman and not really the Empire: the city swayed between Ottomans, Greeks, Jews and Latins; the Sultan was named Bayezid II, nicknamed the Holy, the Pious, the Just. The Florentines and Venetians called him Bajazeto, the French Bajazet' (Enard, 2018: 13). Enard imagines Michelangelo's studio location in outbuildings of the former palace of the sultans, 'a stone's throw from a grandiose mosque whose construction had just been completed' (Enard, 2018: 34) – most likely, then, the Bayezid mosque, completed in 1506, a structure learning from Hagia Sophia (Godwin, 1993: 26). Like Shafak but in whittled-down prose Enard builds bridges in his imagined trip for the architect between architectural structures and places and via connecting

times. Michelangelo leaves Rome for Florence, where he will then go on to Constantinople 'the day before the laying of the first stone in St. Peter's Basilica' (Enard, 2018: 15). In Istanbul, he views the Hagia Sophia 'the church, that just fifteen years earlier, was the centre of Christianity' (Enard, 2018: 36). Twenty years later as he is drawing the dome for St. Peter's, Michelangelo will think of the cupola of Santa Sophia. Indeed, Enard traces Michelangelo's accomplishment in architecture and art to this imaginary visit to Istanbul, to Ottoman structures and to the cultural diversity he encounters: 'The cupola of St Peter is inspired by the Santa Sophia and Bayezid's mosque; the library of the Medicis is inspired by the Sultan's . . . . the statues of the chapel of the Medicis and even the Moses for Julius II bear the imprint of attitudes and characters he met here, in Constantinople' (Enard, 2018: 85).

Shafak's and Enard's depiction of Sinan and Michelangelo respectively and of the architects' relation to their art is remarkably similar. In both novels both architects apprehend the potential perfection in architecture as an extension of the perfection of God. But both are aware of the human limitations of their art. Shafak's Sinan, in keeping with Islamic custom, deliberately leaves flaws in his work. Enard's Michelangelo, when he is about to finish a structure, 'is both happy and sad; happy to have finished and sad that the work isn't as perfect as if God Himself had created it' (Enard, 2018: 116). Yet both novels also associate architecture with the corporeal. In *The Architect's Apprentice* Sinan writes in a letter to his apprentices: 'cities, too, are like human beings. They are not made of stones and wood, solely. They are of flesh and bone. They bleed when they are hurt. Every unlawful construction is a nail hammered into the heart of Istanbul. *Remember to pity a wounded city the way you pity a wounded person'* (Shafak, 2014: 291; italics in original). The city is similarly personified when Jahan sees Galata: 'Houses – half stone, half wood – were arranged in rows like decayed teeth' (Shafak, 2014: 367).

In Enard, Michelangelo conception of architecture is also corporealised: 'Architecture is the art of equilibrium; just as the body is ruled by precise laws – length of arms, of legs, position of muscles' (Enard, 2018: 53). However, both novels suggest that the architects' ideals of perfection in their art threaten the human. When Sinan leads on destruction of homes designated 'unlawful' in the repair of official Ottoman structures, Jahan is surprised to find that 'among an architect's tasks would be the protection of the city from its inhabitants and the protection of the past from the future' (Shafak, 2014: 291). When Michelangelo sketches the limbs of the dancer he desires but fails to love, it is as much an art to be mastered as designing buildings and as his desire.

Engaging with the mythologies surrounding Michelangelo and Sinan, both novels turn the figure of the architect into their central character, although in neither novel is he the principal narrative perspective. Sinan has interested Shafak for a while. In Three Daughters of Eve, the protagonist as a child is drawn to praying at local mosques, some of them by Sinan. 'She treasured the plentiful light from the high, arched windows, the chandeliers, the calligraphy, the architecture of Sinan'; but again invisibility is a problem: 'It troubled her, however, that the women's sections were either tucked away at the back or lodged upstairs behind curtains, always secluded, separate, small' (Shafak, 2016a: 84). In Bastard of Istanbul (Shafak, 2007), Sinan is evoked in an argument about Turkey's nationalist amnesia and transcultural memory. An Armenian-American writes to an Istanbul Turk in a chatroom: 'These magnificent mosques you show to tourists today, who was the architect behind them? Sinan! He designed palaces, hospitals, inns, aqueducts. . . . You exploit Sinan's intelligence and then deny he was Armenian' (Shafak, 2007: 260). Even his name has been subject to 'Turkifying,' since Sinan is a Turkish

name (Shafak, 2007: 260). In both of these novels, Sinan is a code for Shafak to negotiate transcultural Ottoman past and Turkish present.

The Armenian heritage of Sinan is important in *The Architect's* Apprentice. If it is an obvious yet minor contribution to Bastard of Istanbul's larger recovery of Armenian history in and after the Ottoman Empire (and which led to Shafak's prosecution for 'insulting Turkishness' [Lea, 2006]), in *The Architect's Apprentice* Sinan's Armenianness is implicit but essential to the story. It is introduced by Sinan himself, sharing his memories with Jahan. Sinan uses the word 'Zatik,' which the novel crosses generic boundaries to footnote as meaning 'Armenian Easter,' (Shafak, 2014: 96). The footnote implies that -- as with Bastard of Istanbul and all of Shafak's fiction which she has long since written in English -- this bestselling writer both in Turkey and internationally is reaching out to a Western audience, as well contributing to Turkey's understanding of its Ottoman inheritance of cultural diversity. Sinan recalls his origins in the village of Ağirnas, where the churches had no bells and his mother made yoghurt soup. He tells of becoming a Janissary, converting to Islam and fighting in the Ottoman wars of conquest. The *Architect's* Apprentice suggests that Sinan's Armenian heritage makes him suspect to the authorities. Clearing the illegal housing, Sinan is accused of being a 'Christian convert' who 'want[s] to destroy Muslim homes for the sake of a church' (Shafak, 2014: 286), the pre-conversion status of both person and building making them complicit. Yet the novel also suggests Sinan advances architecture because of his transcultural history and inclusivity. As the dome is all-encompassing, so is Sinan's architecture. Greek painters are brought to decorate a mosque. Another of his apprentices is also a convert from Christianity, from Spain, a woman no less, whom Shafak represents as passing as a mute man. Yet even while it might seem to be a paean to Sinan's transculturalism and remembrance of his own Armenian identity, The

*Architect's Appren*tice also shows Sinan as an architect of empire, as Shafak digs down to reveal the destruction that is additionally invisible in the mythology of Ottoman transculturalism.

Both novels make use of historical sources and the biography of the architect, but differently as might be expected. In her author's note Shafak acknowledges a number of historical sources for The *Architect's* Apprentice. She singles out for credit Gülru Necipoğlu's (2005) The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire -- sent to her by a friend the week after she found herself stuck in front of the Molla Celebi -- thanking its author for her assistance 'both with her personal views on history and with her magnificent opus' (Shafak, 2014: 455). One can see that The Arch*itect's* Apprentice owes a good deal to Necipoğlu's book, indeed even some detailed imagery. Sinan's work, Necipoğlu (2005: 23) writes, 'turned Istanbul into a perpetual construction site.' The real debt, however, is to Necipoğlu's conception of Sinan as creating a cross-cultural architecture that came to define Ottoman style, and also architecture as embedded in larger cultural and political history – the 'age of Sinan' in Necipoğlu's title. On both the transcultural conception of architecture and the inextricability of architecture from Ottoman power, Shafak's fiction closely follows Necipoğlu's history.

Enard's historical sources about Michelangelo consist of a contemporaneous biography of Michelangelo by Ascanio Condivi, Michelangelo's letters (translated by Enard), plans of the Hagia Sophia and the sketch recently attributed to Michelangelo. However, in contrast to Shafak's accretion of realistic details about Sinan and his buildings, Enard (2018: 138) ends his author's note, 'For the rest, we know nothing.' In keeping with the instability of both historiographic metafiction and the unbuilt bridge, connections are not filled in. Also in contrast to Shafak, Enard includes and cites some of his sources, approximating the novel to a scholarly text and yet thereby adding to the novel's metafictional quality. As we are pushed through the

revolving door between historical document and imaginary fiction, we interrogate history and the story all the more. In contrast to Shafak with Sinan, Enard does give us Michelangelo's interiority, free indirect discourse via the architect's third-person perspective, although the effect is to render the architect more of a literary than a historical figure.

If Shafak fuses Sinan with his encompassing dome, Enard presents Michelangelo as a potential bridge between worlds. Actualising the visit of the sculptor from Florence to Istanbul makes the artist-architect the join between East and West, Ottoman and Christian Empires, Sultan and Pope, Istanbul and Rome/Florence/Venice, Renaissance and Ottoman architecture. The novel's narrow bridge of time helps. Enard presents Michelangelo as working simultaneously on the Sultan's bridge in Istanbul and the Pope's future tomb in Rome. But the transcultural connections are also enabled via the novel's attention to Michelangelo's interiority. Michelangelo's perception of cultural differences makes of them cross-cultural correlatives. He perceives the muezzins' call for prayer as 'surprising voices of those human church bells on top of the minarets' (Enard, 2018: 42). Istanbul reminds him of Venice: 'Sailing on the calm waters of the Bosphorus, Michelangelo remembers the crossing that separates Mestre from Venice' (Enard, 2018: 66). Enard's Michelangelo connects these cities of water, since he works on bridges for both and the narrative records his consciousness.

At other times Michelangelo's transcultural associations in his consciousness open up chasms between places and cultures. Pera is not a ghetto, he realises, and, unlike in Venice and Rome, in Istanbul minorities such as Jews and Christians can settle wherever they like. Again, unlike Christian states, especially so recently since the Inquisition and the expulsion of Jews and Muslims from Iberia, the 'Mohammedans' in Ottoman Istanbul are 'so tolerant of Christian things. Pera is populated mainly by Latins and Greeks; there are many churches. A few Jews

and Moors from far-off Andalusia stand out mainly by their dress. All those who refused to become Christian have recently been ejected from Spain' (Enard, 2018: 52). It is one such expelled figure who will bring both the narrative plot and Michelangelo's work on the bridge to an abrupt end. Even as he himself looks at 'Mohammedans' as infidels belonging in Dante's inferno, Michelangelo like Sinan faces opposition in his Christian affiliation from those who seek 'to block the construction of this impious bridge, the work of an infidel' (Enard, 2018: 120). The bridge is broken on all levels, from physical to cultural to consciousness.

As in The *Architect's* Apprentice, then, in Tell Them architecture is depicted as a medium for transcultural borrowing and incorporation. This can also produce a crossing between mediums at the same time as cultures. Thus, for instance, Michelangelo witnesses an execution by decapitation soon after his arrival in Istanbul, a scene that is immediately followed by a prolepsis of his depiction, three years later, in the Sistine Chapel, of the Jewish Judith carrying the head of Babylonian Holofernes. Enard's juxtaposition of these episodes without narrative connection suggests the physical theatre of the execution has been transfigured into art, that here is a trans-medial as well as a transcultural and trans-imperial bridge. His transposition of both scenes into writing produces another layer of translation, ekphrasis, dissolving distinctions not only between cultural acts but between visual and writerly mediums.

Ekphrases

Representing architecture, the novels also borrow from the medium of architecture. In form, as I have suggested, Shafak borrows from the dome, Enard from the bridge. The novels thus perform a kind of ekphrasis, that is transposing into literature another art form, particularly

but not exclusively visual. Ekphrasis, which might be understood as the literary ancestor of remediation, is defined as 'verbal description of, or meditation upon, a non-verbal work of art, real or imagined, usually a painting or sculpture' (Baldick, 2015). Literature's borrowing of architecture has been done before, perhaps most explicitly in Henry James's (1934) concept of 'the house of fiction.' James's analogy for the novel of a house highlights time, place and perspective as peculiar in his fiction. In their literary form, both novels borrow and heighten these features of architecture.

The Architect's Apprentice encompasses different dimensions of space and time under the dome of an integrated world history. In terms of space, Rome, Istanbul and Agra are all encompassed under a single symbol, the dome, as I have suggested. Geographically separate empires are also joined. Jahan and his elephant supposedly arrive in the Ottoman Empire from the Mughal Empire, and Jahan leaves the Ottomans for the Mughals. With gypsies wandering pivotally through its story, *The Architect's* Apprentice also alludes to the Spanish Empire. But travelling less in plot and place than Tell Them, *The Architect's Apprentice* is more fully encompassed in and of Ottoman Empire, the novel's dome thus becoming an archetypal Ottoman symbol. In conjoining disparate times and places, The *Architect's* Apprentice resembles Shafak's other novels which characteristically interweave times and parallel places. Time-switching is a key device for Shafak. It is way to unravel plots non-linearly; to conjoin or contrast places and cultures in different times; to bring together a sense of travelling in both time and space; and to treat the dimensions of time and space as crossing axes in themselves and with each other.

Shafak's narrative a-chronologies might be understood, in fact, as a literary attempt to redress what she identifies repeatedly as Turkey's amnesia.. The cultural inflection of time, the

different values of remembering, forgetting or different chronologies, again a familiar idea in Shafak's fiction, appears in The *Architect's Apprentice.* In phrasing that runs across not only her fiction but Shafak's cultural and political commentary, the omniscient central narrative describes the novel's main locale as 'Istanbul, where forgetting was easier than remembering' (Shafak, 2014: 263). Busbecq, the Austrian ambassador to the Sultan, gives (orientalist, in the classic sense as criticised by Said) voice to a comparable idea about the different cultural values attributed to time and history: 'the Turks have no sense of chronology. That is the first thing every foreigner needs to learn in this land. They muddle up historical events. Today succeeds tomorrow, and tomorrow might proceed yesterday' (Shafak, 2014: 150). Yet while its narrative span of time like its span of space is much more centred within Ottoman history, along with Shafak's other novels *The Architect's Apprentice* in its organisation appears as if it wants to outrun and out-manipulate misapprehensions of history, both the Ottoman nostalgia of the present Turkish government and the ahistoricism attributed to the East by past Western orientalism.

The opening note in the novel is proleptic of the story to come, even though it is analeptic chronologically. The note will also be resumed at the end of the novel, retrospectively framing the main story from the dislocated perspective of another place and time – Agra, 1632, well beyond the Ottoman Empire and after the death of Sinan. In the note, which unlike the novel's dominant omniscient narrative, is in the first-person and which uses the very same phrasing Shafak (2016b) has put in her own voice in her political and cultural commentary on present-day Turkey, Jahan gives voice to a notion of architecture that brings together the dimensions of place and time:

> I think about Istanbul every day. People must be walking now across the courtyards of the mosques, not knowing, not seeing. They would rather assume that the buildings around them had been there since the time of Noah. They were not. We raised them: Muslims and Christians, craftsmen and galley slaves, humans and animals, day upon day. But Istanbul is a city of easy forgettings. Things are written in water over there, except the works of my master, which are written in stone. (Shafak, 2014: 2)

This memory of architecture of Istanbul and of Sinan seeks to correct the amnesiac liquidities Shafak condemns in Turkey. Here is a sense in which architecture can hold an archaeology of the past – architecture as archaeology: architecture-ology – as in The Flea Palace (Shafak, 2015), where stones scattered around or lying beneath the city also span times and remember a transcultural Ottoman past.

While it is mostly encompassed in the Ottoman Empire, therefore, *The Architect's* Apprentice digs beneath Turkey's Ottoman nostalgia to show the occluded strata of the Byzantine Empire and other non-Muslim cultures underlying the Ottoman Empire. The architecture of Shafak's Sinan remembers and recycles the past. His reconstruction of the Hagia Sophia causes master architect and his apprentices to negotiate the layering of times, empires and religions, as they effectively restore this Ottoman mosque-former-Byzantine-church. Sinan is accused by some of the Ottoman religious and juridical authorities of using stones from the old church for the mosque. He also incorporates them in building the tomb of Sultan's wife. His architecture thus joins religions, times and empires. Persuading the Sultan that Istanbul's water system needs to be repaired, he tells his apprentices they need to work with Byzantine foundations, literally: the Byzantine water system that lies underneath the city. 'Sinan ordered

them to research the methods undertaken by the craftsmen of the past. They needed to understand how the Byzantines had succeeded and how they had failed if they wish to do better themselves' (Shafak, 2014: 236). In their transcultural and trans-imperial history, the stones hold the solution for the future.

Shafak depicts how Sinan faces opposition from those around him based on the architectural structures' trans-imperial and trans-religious memory: 'the aqueducts dated from the days of the infidels. Why repair them if not to spread idolatry?' (Shafak, 2014: 243). Digging into the Ottoman past, working with the very ground of its foundations, Sinan is accused of disturbing a time before that should remain undisturbed. With the foundations of one structure, he is considered to be 'befouling a sacred place', displacing the ghost of a 'saint' (as in The Flea Palace), here a Muslim soldier killed by 'infidels' in the conquest of Constantinople (Shafak, 2014: 241). His architecture digs down dangerously, in other words, into the state's founding mythologies. Sinan's own only partially buried Armenian Christianity connects him to these buried Christian histories. For Shafak, time-switching means that, far from being repressed, the past coexists with the present. Though the novel is historically Ottoman, in fact, its historicism encompasses not only the pre-Ottoman but the present. Sinan's work on the water system is necessitated because immigrants are coming to the city, including non-Muslims and from the provinces. The Grand Vizier opposes Sinan: 'Fresh water meant fresh migrants' (Shafak, 2014: 197). An emphatic rebuttal to readings that might see Shafak as uncritically celebrating Ottoman transculturalism, the Ottoman Vizier is a historic correlative for contemporary leaders who seek to control immigration and resources such as water. Shafak's historicism resonates so much with the present that the novels can sometimes feel anachronistic. But if the present and past are encompassed in an enclosed space in her novels, under the same

dome, it can be a powerful and popular way to remember history to interrupt contemporary amnesia.

In contrast, Enard's modernist approach fragments time and underlines the foreignness of the past, its unbridgeability. Even though it pivots on an event that did not happen, it feels more historic, less presentist than Shafak. The temporal estrangement is conveyed in part through the original textual materials appearing in the novel, which the non-fluid narrative stumbles upon, like relics from a previous age. The materialist historicism is also established in the lists Michelangelo keeps in his notebook that the novel reproduces from time to time, including fragments of Renaissance/Ottoman architecture: '22 May: cipolin, ophite, sarrancolin, serpentine, canela, delfino, porphyry, obsidian, marble from Cinna. So many names, colours, materials, whereas the most beautiful, the only one worth anything, is white, white, white without veins, grooves or colorations. /He misses marble' (Enard, 2018: 63). The words from architecture are the literary building blocks for the novel's translation of architecture, and as such they are transhistorical and transcultural and trans-imperial. But they also remain obstinately unassimilated in the narrative. The estrangement of the past not only prevents the novel from being anachronistic but its experimental treatment of time gives it an avant-garde aesthetic. Enard has been accused (Mars-Jones, 2019) of producing 'an instability about the use of mixed tense,' but his tense confusion supports the sense of times being out of joint, like the bridge and unlike Shafak's fluid assimilation.

Both novels avoid the romanticisation or domestication of history. Shafak has been charged (Furlanetto, 2015) with 'imperial nostalgia' in her other novels, even to the point of being 'neo-Ottomanist' (passim), although I would argue that her novels typically satirise Ottoman history. *The Architect's Apprentice* does not offer a rosy depiction of the Ottoman

Empire. Along with Shafak's villainisation of the Vizier, the three sultans under whom Sinan serves are variously corrupt, pious, egoistic and vain, and they all at points obstruct, as well as instruct, Sinan's architecture. When the plot begins, Suleiman is on the throne, but even Suleiman the Magnificent arranges for a son to be murdered and kills his own vizier. Then there is 'Selim the sot' (Shafak, 2015: passim). Then Murad III, who the novel foreshadows arranging for his brothers to be strangled and buried in the gardens of Hagia Sophia in a turbeh built by Sinan next to the tomb of his father. Buildings, monuments and palaces thus memorialise Ottoman history but are also shown to render invisible betrayal, murder and Ottoman absolutism. Architecture records, but also silences, persecution: when Sinan rides through Istanbul he notes the prohibition of bells on Armenian and Greek churches. The architecture bears and bares the mythology of the state.

Both novels show that underneath mythologies of transcultural bridging and encompassing lie imperial conquest and transcultural violence. Benjamin (1999) notes that iron was necessary for the construction of the arcades in Paris. Marking 'the first time in the history of architecture, an artificial building material appears,' iron enabled the French Napoleonic Empire to develop its architecture as Hellenic revival, which Benjamin calls a 'style of revolutionary terrorism, for which the state is an end in itself.' Under the signs of dome and bridge, foundational to the building of religious and civic structures, Shafak and Enard encode the conquests, expulsions, persecutions, and transcultural oppressions that enabled technologies of empire. As Ellen Eve Frank (1983) writes in her book on the intersection between literature and architecture, 'a building is not an object (product) only; it is, importantly, an activity.' Historical novels can narrate this activity with a view to exposing alternative or buried histories.

In The *Architect's* Apprentice, Sinan's architectural progress is enabled by the Ottoman Empire's expansion and territorial conquest. Sinan is commissioned to build the Seilimiye mosque after the Ottomans conquer Cyprus, based on Sultan Selim's promise to Mohammed if the island should fall. For the mosque commissioned by Selim's father, the Suleimaniye, Sinan uses materials made available because of the other territories the Empire has conquered:

> Lead and iron were brought from Serbia and Bosnia, timber from Varna [Bulgaria]. The marble was brought from Arab lands, and from the site where King Solomon's palace had once been [Jerusalem], the polished surfaces still reflecting the beauty of the Queen of Sheba. One giant column was from the Baalbeck, the Sun City [Lebanon]. Seventeen pillars were removed from the Hippodrome [Istanbul/Constantinople], disturbing the angry ghost of the Empress Theodora. (Shafak, 2014: 143)

Some of the resistance to Sinan is put up by slaves and enforced labourers who are the spoils from such imperial conquests, without whom the architecture would not be built; of the slaves who build the mosques, almost half are Christians, some are Jews, and the remainder are Muslim.

Sinan also has to engage in conquest, territorial expansion and population expulsion on a smaller but symbolic scale. In order to repair the Hagia Sophia, Sinan and his apprentices must demolish the houses that have sprung up unlawfully, created by immigrants. The immigrants, who arrive in Istanbul, mobilised by Ottoman progress and conquest, have taken shelter under the mosque and now their dwelling literally threatens the structure: 'Together, they leaned against the mosque, pushing it from four sides. Such had been the pressure that the western walls

of the Hagia Sophia, where the settlement was the most dense, had begun to tilt inwards' (Shafak, 2014: 283). The competition is between state structure or people's livelihoods, and Sinan has no hesitation in shoring up the former at the expense of the latter. The immigrants' homes are themselves built from stones broken off from the Hagia Sophia. Architecture in The *Architect's* Apprentice thus provides a rich symbol for contestation between sites and their communities which did actually take place in and after the Ottoman Empire (Barkey, 2015), the physical strata bearing memories of imperial conquest, conversion and violence. Small spaces run deep in memory. At one point, Ottoman authorities refuse to restore a Byzantine fountain in a village which has run dry. Only when told that underneath the Byzantine structure is a Sufi shrine is the fountain restored. The only difference is which mythology wins out as the architectural testimony.

Compared to the Ottoman authorities, Sinan might appear an ethical character in The *Architect's* Apprentice, but as with the structures themselves, things are not what they appear on the surface. The apprentice who increasingly scuppers Sinan's projects -- from destroying correspondence and shared architectural plans with Michelangelo to the appointment of Jahan as Sinan's heir -- speaks, particularly about the socio-political costs of architecture, the most acute and contemporarily resonant lines. His character seems to be based on the historical figure Davud Agha, whom Goodwin calls Sinan's 'pre-eminent' (1993: 56) and 'most interesting' (1993: 63) apprentice. The novel stages a conflict between Sinan and Davud, continued between Jahan and Davud, hinging on the moral and indeed mortal costs of Ottoman building and territorial expansion. When his village was conquered by Sultan Suleiman, Davud's family were slaughtered, leaving him the only survivor. To Jahan after their master's death, he criticises Sinan for not only turning a blind eye to but benefitting from the violence:

> Every colossal mosque we built was raised thanks to the revenues from another conquest. On their way to the battleground the army would raze villages to the ground, kill more of my people. Our master never cared for these sorrows. He refused to see that, without bloodshed elsewhere, there would be no money, and without money there would be no building in the capital. (Shafak, 2014: 413)

The encompassing scope of the novel, then, far from facilitating an all-embracing nostalgia about the Ottoman Empire, allows it to have at its centre – an angle of light showing the darkness otherwise invisible within the dome – such memories of transcultural violence as a condition of the Empire.

Enard also encapsulates in buildings the deep structures of imperial transcultural violence. Viewing the Hagia Sophia brings to Michelangelo's mind the successive advances of imperial conquest underlying the building and its transformation. In associating this dome with that of St Peter's, he will also equate empires, Roman and Ottoman, Ottoman and Byzantine, Christina and Islamic, in their destructions as much as their constructions. He

> looks at the church that, just fifteen years earlier, was still the centre of Christianity. He thinks of Constantine, of Justinian, of the imperial purple and of the more or less barbaric crusaders that have entered it on horseback to emerge loaded down with relics; twenty years later, drawing a dome for the Basilica of St Peter in Rome, he would think again of the cupola of that Santa Sophia. (Enard, 2018: 36)

Buildings are enmeshed with the history of empires and their characters, and vice versa, characters in the novel telling histories repressed by empires. The gypsy dancer who speaks in the novel, and whom Michelangelo so desires, having been expelled from Andalusia is a human 'relic' -- of imperial conquest, of Christian and 'barbaric crusaders.' The transcultural and trans-imperial connection between the Italian architect and his Jewish/Muslim lover is also, in the end, one of violence and conquest. If the bridge fails to reach over the Golden Horn, so it does between Michelangelo and the dancer, who says, 'Bridges are beautiful things, so long as they last; everything will perish. You are capable of stretching out a stone footbridge, but you don't know how to let yourself go in the arms that are waiting for you' (Enard, 2018; 118). Like Sinan, Michelangelo is shown to be unable to connect to the human costs of the architecture of empire.

That the dancer announces this criticism of Michelangelo is powerful, since the dancer is in Istanbul and his/her art is shaped as a result of being subject to imperial conquest, expansion and expulsion. The dancer-lover is a parallel to Shafak's Davud, who serves as critic of and foil to Sinan and whose art – and apprenticeship – has been produced through imperial conquest of homeland. Enard's dancer is a gypsy who, we are repeatedly reminded, has 'lost a country': 'We are a people of the banished, of the condemned' (Enard, 2018: 11). Most likely s/he has been expelled from Andalusia, with the fall of Muslim Spain. The gypsy dancer provides the novel's most compelling narrative voice, the only first-person perspective in the novel, since otherwise the narrative is in the third-person perspective, either that of Michelangelo or occasionally the poet Meishi. The Andalusian 'I' is at once intimate and unclassifiable, specifically located in the past but now unlocatable -- either Arab or Jew, and not clearly gendered, either man or woman. The defamiliarisation is for Michelangelo a key part of the

attraction. He cannot translate exactly his/her songs and dances but he understands– and is drawn to – their melancholy and violence. 'It's the very ancient story of a country that today has disappeared' (Enard, 218: 90), the narrator-dancer tells us, and this story of love, murder and sudden and compelled departure transposes to become the plot of the novel. Immediately following the gypsy dancer's attempted murder of Michelangelo, the architect leaves Istanbul. The memory of lost and conquered Andalusia, which haunts the novel, thus brings to an end any bridge-building, transcultural and otherwise.

Jahan, also the sole narrative 'I' of The *Architect's* Apprentice, is similarly unlocatable in his transcultural origins. Jahan's transculturality is deceptive (invisible). He pretends to be Indian, and the novel itself seems to forget at points that he is not. He too tells stories to his lover, the Sultan's daughter, Princess Mihrimah, and his putative origins in 'Hindustan' (Shafak, 2014: 51) and departure from the 'Port of Goa' (Shafak, 2014: 64) are pivotal to these stories and the growing bond – transcultural also, we think at this point – between Mihrimah and Jahan. But over half way through the novel the reader discovers Jahan is from Anatolia, an immigrant from the countryside driven to Istanbul, like those that are pushed out by the reconstruction of the Hagia Sophia, like Davud, also from Anatolia. Shafak's Jahan and Enard's gypsy challenge the mythology of imperial transculturalism: both exiled from homelands at the cost of empires, though both also finding livelihoods, but under sufferance, within the Ottoman Empire. The figure of the gypsy, archetype of wandering, unlocatability and lost homeland, is prominent in both novels. In *The Architect's Apprentice* gypsies repeatedly save Jahan's life and thus ensure continuation of his narrative. Indeed, what gave Shafak the idea for the novel is not simply being outside a Sinan mosque but the presence of a gypsy. In a cab late for an appointment, Shafak is stuck outside 'Molla Celebi, one of Sinan's lesser known beauties. A Gypsy boy was

sitting on the wall next to it, pounding on a tin box that was turned upside down. I thought to myself that if the traffic did not clear any time soon, I might as well begin to imagine a story with the architect Sinan and the Gypsies in it' (Shafak, 2014: 453). It is following this incident that her friend sends Shafak the book by Necipoglu, and Shafak transforms the scene into the plot of her novel. The gypsy who has lost home and homeland, family, building and structures of belonging, wandering though both novels, unsettles the architecture of empire.

The narrative perspective is therefore important for both novelists in their fictional intervention into history. Shafak (2014: 453) puts in the foreground of her novel the 'figures in the background' that appear in one drawing from Necipoglu's history that catches eye: not Sultan Suleiman but behind him the elephant and the mahout, Jahan. Perspective is of course crucial to our experience of architecture. The space we occupy shapes and is shaped by our point of view. What the novels translate to most effect from architecture is perspective, in their narrative choices creating surprising and alternative lenses on history via the architecture and the architects. It is remarkable and key that both novels give us as the first-person point of view not the architect but the apprentice or the lover. What history would keep in the background comes in these novels to shape our view of the history being fictionally retold. The effect is to allow for a bringing to the surface what is otherwise in the background -- latent -- in mythologies of the Ottoman Empire.

Conclusion

Contemporary fiction's reconstruction of the architecture of the Ottoman Empire thus shows transcultural history as a building block of empire and of its architecture; but

ekphrastically trans-mediating architecture into historical fiction also sets in violent tension plural perspectives within Ottoman transcultural memory, and herein lies the particular value for Ottoman transcultural memories, and transcultural memory more broadly, of these fictionalisations of the architecture of the Ottoman Empire. The genre of the novel itself has been formally recognised to have a kind of architecture, put most famously by James (1934), but also by Benjamin (1999) after him, who wrote about the 'secret architecture of the book.' Enard, too, in interview says, 'If you can take the time to think about the book, its architecture, characters, plots and writing, then for me it's more satisfying' (Enard and Maleney, 2018). In her author's note to The Flea Palace Shafak (2015) has also written, in imagery very reminiscent of James (1934), of language in her fiction as being like a house, her departure to English like 'building a new home, brick by brick' (p. 447). Language as building blocks, characters, plots and writing as architecture: the imagery pertains to fiction as a house or building. It suggests that when writers construct or design their novels, in their writerly and narrative choices, architecture is a particular apposite register.

James's (1934) reflections on the architecture of the novel, and his term 'house of fiction,' emerge in his preface to his 1881 novel, Portrait of a Lady. His phrase appears in the context of his explanation of the importance of consciousness to the novel, playing on a doubled sense of perspective: 'The house of fiction has in short not one window, but a million -- a number of possible windows not to be reckoned, rather; every one of which has been pierced, or is still pierceable, in its vast front, by the need of the individual vision and by the pressure of the individual will.' James articulates the crucial role of these different narrative points of view, how variously they all shape the story, in a structuring but necessarily limiting fashion. Taking up one consciousness gave James the 'technical rigour, I now easily see, to inspire me with the

right confidence for erecting on such a plot of ground the neat and careful and proportioned pile of bricks that arches over it and that was thus to form, constructionally speaking, a literary monument.' The singular perspective on the scene is thus not the add-on but the very cornerstone necessary to the novel as technically-rigorous edifice.

The novels have in common with James and with each other this technically-rigorous perspectival sense of ekphrasis, as well as their encompassing and bridging approach to time and space. In their return to Ottoman architecture, they provide alternative perspectives on the Empire at a foundational moment above all through their narrative windows. The gypsy dancer and Michelangelo, Sinan and Jahan, are separated by narrative point of view and inextricably transcultural violence and loss – even as both novels promise in the architecture the possibility of transcultural encompassing and bridging. The potential fusions of Michelangelo's visit are washed away; the idealised reputation of Sinan, refractively seen through Davud's narrative via Jahan, is shown to hold otherwise invisible flaws. Bringing together Jamesian literary consciousness and Benjamin's cultural insights into architecture, both novels elucidate the political power of fictions of architecture to make manifest latent imperial mythologies.

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