

## **Turkish Museology Outlook: Past, Present & Prospects**

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### **Abstract**

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*Because of the rich cultural and historical heritage history that Turkey possess, museology and museum tourism in Turkey is an area that needs improvement. Turkey is like the meeting point of numerous civilizations like Hittite, Phrygia, Lydia, Urartu, Ion, Seljuk, Greek, Roman, Islam, Ottoman. As the basic role of museums is to collect, preserve and demonstrate the world heritage, Turkey by its location needs to overemphasize museology and the improvement of museum services. It is hard to say that Turkey has fully benefited from its potential in terms of museum tourism. When the museum visitor data in Turkey is examined, it is observed that the museums do not receive the necessary attention regarding the cultural & historical richness, and the museums visited by tourists only constitute a small number compared to other museums around the World.*

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**Keywords:** Museums, Turkish Museology, Role of Museums in Tourism

### **Introduction**

In contrast to the various heritage sites, theme parks and urban/rural zones, museums represent a more specialized and a more tightly defined category of cultural display. In terms of tourism, history can be demonstrated with the aid of five places; which are monuments, archeology museums, ethnography museums, libraries, folklore institutes (Şapolyo, 1972, p. 52). A widely accepted definition of museum describes it as “an institution which collects, documents, preserves, exhibits and interprets material evidence and associated information for the public benefit. (quoted from Selwood et al. 1995, Dicks, 2003, p. 145).

Museums comprehensively were grouped as open air museums, traditional museums and science centers and art galleries (Beech and Chadwick, 2006, p. 289). National museums, specialized museums, general and local museums, open air museums, working museums, site museums and virtual museums are some of the specified museums by ICOM-International Council of Museums (ICOM, 2004, p. 3-5). The character of a museum is determined largely by the nature of its collections and hence Smith (2003) discussed the role of museums in displaying dark tourism, ethnic, indigenous minority heritage, industrial heritage and ethnographic museums and finally underlined the ecomuseum concept that is concerned to incorporate all the disciplines which are normally involved in museology comprising archaeology, social history, understanding of people and places (p. 87).

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## WHY MUSEUMS BECAME A SIGNIFICANT TOURIST ATTRACTION

Museums are popular tourist and leisure attractions throughout the world. In regard to Beeho and Prentice, (1996, p. 473) *“there has been a rapid increase in the number of museums opened in Great Britain since the 1960s. Indeed, by 1990 there were almost 2500 museums in Great Britain twice as many as in 1960. In 1993, the British Tourist Authority (BTA) recorded 79 million visits to museums and art galleries in Great Britain.”*

Hamnett and Shoval(2003, p. 223) in their study “Museums as Flagships of Urban Development.” summarized the significance of museums in increasing tourist numbers as follows: *“The expansion of the demand for new forms of cultural consumption has changed the character of tourism to cities, enabling localities to initiate strategies for urban development based on cultural assumption by tourists as well as the local population. In the process of visiting museums has become something of a mass consumption activity for many urban tourists. The Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam and Rembrandt’s “Night Watch” at the Rijksmuseum are now part of the mass tourist experience along with Leonardo da Vinci’s Mona Lisa at the Louvre for Paris.”*

They listed the reasons why museums have become an urban tourism strategy and urban cultural policy under 4 headings (Hamnett and Shoval, 2003, p. 224):

1. A “Flagship Museum” becomes a must-see attraction for visitors to the city and by extending their average stay in the city, it results more money being spent in the city.
2. A museum with constantly changing exhibits helps to attract repeat visitors.
3. Spectacular museums have become an attraction in themselves and often become icons for the city as a whole.
4. Museums also serve the local population and are not just geared towards visitors to the city.

Museums are increasing in importance as globalization appears to induce cultural homogenization. These heritage storehouses offer unique educational opportunities to the public, to school children and especially to foreign students all of whom are drawn to them for visual validation of natural history and ethnography (Smith, 2001, p. 281).

Culture is now a key element of urban competition, both in terms of civic pride and image and its ability to attract visitors. Prestige museums also offer a potential vehicle for reinforcing the legitimacy of city and regional governments in social, cultural and economic terms (Hamnett and Shoval, 2003, p. 233). It is also an important prospective tool for urban regeneration.

## WORLDWIDE MUSEOLOGY & VISITOR NUMBERS

According to an estimate by UNESCO, there were roughly 104 thousand such organizations in the world as of March 2021, with the regions of North America and Western Europe reporting the highest number of museums worldwide. Meanwhile, the United States topped the list of the countries worldwide ranked by the number of museums, accounting for nearly one-third of all institutions (Statista, 2022).

**Table 1. Leading Countries Worldwide Ranked by Estimated Number of Museums as of March 2021**

Name of Country	Number of Museums
United States	33082
Germany	6741
Japan	5738
China	5535
Russian Federation	5415
France	4811
Brazil	3906
Italy	3195
UK and Northern Ireland	3183
Canada	2245
Spain	1732
Sweden	1600
Thailand	1526
Mexico	1320
Poland	1233
Argentina	1183
Switzerland	1129
Republic of Korea	1102
Australia	919
Belgium	912
Hungary	813
Austria	776
Netherlands	688
Portugal	662
Ukraine	647

Source: Statista, 2022

Museum attendance in 2020 was not an indicator of scale, popularity, marketing, market size, or special exhibitions, but rather the unusual conditions imposed by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic (AECOM, 2022). Attendance at museums and galleries worldwide declined severely in 2020 over the previous year.

The Louvre in Paris generally occupies the top spot on charts, and it retains its most-visited status. Overall, the Louvre in Paris, France, registered around 9.6 million visitors in 2019 with the highest figure. In 2020 again the Louvre recorded the highest figure, receiving approximately 2.7 million visitors. Comparing the change with the previous year of 2019, pandemic shows its sharp decrease in visitor numbers though Louvre seems to be the least affected. (See at Table 2) The National Museum of China in Beijing placed second on the ranking in 2020, with 1.6 million visitors (Statista, 2022).

Five of the most visited museums in the world were located in China in 2020 with the aggregated attendance reaching 6.3 million. As most of the Chinese museums are now free of admission charges, which boosts attendance and advances reservation systems that have been put into practice for some time, nonetheless, so that even before the pandemic, visitors had developed the habit of planning their museum visits ahead of time (AECOM, 2022).

Overall, 13 of the 19 most visited museums in the world were based in Europe and the United States as of 2020 (Statista, 2022).

As stated before, the United States topped the list of the countries worldwide ranked by the number of museums, accounting for nearly one-third of all institutions. Museums are a key part of urban cultural tourism and Tate Modern in London which opened in 2001 is now attracting over five million visitors a year (Hamnett and Shoval, 2003, p. 225). The United Kingdom reported five of the most visited museums worldwide, with total attendance adding up to six million in 2020. Regarding the previous year only in the UK; British Museum, Tate Modern, National Gallery, Natural History Museum, Victoria & Albert Museum, Science Museum (South Kensington) welcomed 30,9 million visitors.

Museums have to accept local, national and international laws concerning business, charities and trusts and, in particular, the care and preservation of cultural objects. Most countries have laws relating precisely to the formation of museums, mainly national museums. In the UK, the Museums and Galleries Act, 1992 applies to all museums which receive some government funding and sets out the formation and functions of boards of trustees, as well as regulations for acquisition and removal, lending and borrowing, transfers, gifts, insurances and financial obligations. Museums covered by the Act are required by law to operate in accordance with the Act, to maintain, exhibit and grant access to collections, to promote public understanding and enjoyment of the collections and to submit an annual report and accounts to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). (Matassa, 2011). In addition, there are a range of not-for-profit organizations operating in the tourism industry, the most high-profile in the UK are London based museums and art galleries such as the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the National Gallery and the relatively new Tate Modern (Beech and Chadwick, 2006, p. 144).

**Table 2. Top 10 Museums Worldwide In terms of Attendance Figures 2019/2020**

MUSEUM LOCATION	2019	2020	% CHANG E
LOUVRE, PARIS, FRANCE	9,600,000	2,700,000	-71,9
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CHINA, BEIJING, CHINA	7,390,000	1,600,000	-78,3
VATICAN MUSEUMS, VATICAN, VATICAN CITY	6,883,000	1,300,000	-81,1
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK, U.S.	6,770,000	1,125,000	-83,4
BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON, U.K.	6,208,000	1,275,000	-79,5
TATE MODERN, LONDON, U.K	6,098,000	1,433,000	-76,5
NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON, U.K.	6,011,000	1,197,000	-80,1
NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM, LONDON, U.K	5,424,000	1,197,000	-77,9
AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, NEW YORK U.S.	5,000,000	N/A	N/A
STATE HERMITAGE, ST PETERSBURG, RUSSIA	4,957,000	969,000	-78,8

Source: Theme Index Museum Index 2020. AECOM, 2022.

## HISTORY of TURKISH MUSEOLOGY

The first general museum in Turkey was established in the nineteenth century. Although museum studies in the Ottoman Empire started in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, antiquities collection dates back to earlier dates. Since the reign of Mehmed the Conqueror, in the Church of Hagia Irene, which had been used as a munition, the outdated war equipment and the weapons taken as booty in the wars were collected.

Thus, the foundations of the Military Museum started in this period. Furthermore, in the inner courtyard of Topkapı Palace, the Byzantine period sarcophagus, column bases and capitals were brought together by the Fatih Sultan Mehmed's command (Kuruloğlu, 2010, p. 48).

With regard to Şapolyo (1971, p. 72), the works of historical value were kept in the palaces of the sultans and since the time of Yavuz Sultan Selim, historical artifacts have been kept in Ottoman palaces. These artifacts were kept in the Yedikule castle and Murat III transferred these works to Topkapı Palace to Şapolyo (1971, p. 72). Abdülhamid II also established a museum in Yıldız Palace.

The museology has been in a constant change and progress since the Military Museum opened in the Church of Hagia Irene in 1846 with the efforts of the Marshal of the Imperial Arsenal Ahmed Fethi Pasha (Ateşoğulları, 2022, p. 35). He established the first museum in Turkey by turning Hagia Irene Church in Topkapı Palace into a museum called "Muzehane-i Hümayun in 1846 that was used as a Military Museum for a long time (Şapolyo, 1971, p. 72). With reference to Kuruoğulları (2010, p. 48) the concept of museum was officially first used by the Grand Viziership to Maarif-i Umumiye Nezareti (Ministry of Education). For the first time the word "museum" was included as "müzehane" in an instruction letter dated 29 January 1869 sent to his custody and the expression Museum-i Hümayun was used as on July 8, 1869 with the first appointed headmaster of Museum-i Hümayun was Edward Goold, a Catholic Irishman. Goold who had been teaching history and philosophy at Galatasaray Sultanisi (Galatasaray Lycee) was appointed as the principal. Goold, found statues from Marmara Island, Tekirdağ and Kapıdağ peninsulas and thus 160 works were collected (Atasoy, 1985, p. 1458). After Goold, Minister of Education Ahmet Vefik Pasha appointed Doctor Dethier, one of the German scholars, as the director (Şapolyo, 1971, p. 72). After that, Suphi Pasha turned the Tiled Mansion into a museum. When Dethier died in 1881, Osman Hamdi Bey was appointed instead. He was a painter educated in Paris for twelve years who took various government positions as he worked in the Office of Foreign Affairs and as the head of the sixth municipality in Istanbul. It was Osman Hamdi Bey who developed Turkish museology and who issued the Asar-ı Atika (Ancient Monument) Regulation for the protection of the ancient artifacts unearthed from the excavations Şapolyo (1971, p. 72). In the Ottoman Empire, three Asar-ı Atika Regulations were issued first in 1869, then in the years of 1874 and 1884 (Karaduman, 2004, p. 73).

According to this regulation, all the works published were left to the state. Regarding Şapolyo (1971, p. 72), Osman Hamdi Bey transferred the works he collected from all over Anatolia to Istanbul and specifically brought the Alexander Sarcophagus and the Crying Girls Sarcophagus to the museum. Osman Hamdi Bey led the Istanbul Archeology Museum to be built around Gülhane Park in 1869. He has become the founder of Turkish museology.

In the 1874 Asar-ı Atika Regulation, which was put into effect during the Dethier period, there were 36 articles. According to the famous 3rd article; one-third of the artifacts excavated to the state, one-third the landlord and a third of it belonged to the landlord. The excavator could save on the share as he wished, and he could take it abroad. According to the 1869 Regulations it was forbidden to issue works abroad, except for coins, in 1874 this was permitted (Kuruloğlu, 2010, p. 51 quoted from Çal, 1997).

Upon the death of Osman Hamdi Bey in 1909, his brother Halil Edhem Bey was appointed as the curator who also developed museology as he was the founder of the Topkapı Palace museum (Şapolyo, 1971, p. 72). After these two noteworthy figures, Turkey has gained a modern museology.

In the contemporary sense, the "journey of museology" started with Osman Hamdi Bey's appointment in 1881 and has evolved to the present day with rational steps taken since the first years of the Republic (Ateşoğulları, 2022, p. 35). These experiences about museology gained until the last days of the Ottoman Empire continued by being transferred to the Republican period (Kuruloğlu, 2010, p. 60).

Boyras (2020, p. 18) summarized the early Republican Period as, M. K. Atatürk took several initiatives such as protecting historical and cultural structures and taking institutional steps in this process (quoted from Erbay 2017, p. 109).

As the religious shrines and lodges were closed down in 1925, numerous valued art pieces and collections were moved to the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts building, formerly the palace of Pargalı Ibrahim Pasha. Furthermore, it was decided to turn the Topkapı Palace, one of Istanbul's symbolic structures, into a museum in 1924, only about a year after the proclamation of the republic. (The same decision was made for Hagia Sophia in 1934, which was earlier used as a church and mosque) (quoted from Polat et al. 2014, p. 72).

Some of the early period Turkish museums with founding years were listed chronologically at table 3. The first museum established in the republican era was that of Archeology Museum in Ankara in 1923, it was retitled as the Hittite Museum in 1930 and lately as the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in 1967.

**Table 3. Early Period Turkish Museums with Founding Years**

<b>Name of the Museum</b>	<b>Founding Year</b>
Istanbul Archeology Museum	1869
Tiled Kiosk (ÇiniliKöşk) Museum	1881
Topkapı Palace Museum	1846
Naval (Bahriye) Museum	1897
Orient Museum	1911
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts	1914
Ankara Archeology Museum	1923
Dolmabahçe Palace Museum	1923
İzmir Museum	1923
Bursa Museum	1923
Adana Museum	1923
Antalya Museum	1923
Edirne Museum	1923
Hagia Sophia (Ayasofya) Museum	1925
Beyazit Ethnography Museum	1925
Turkish and İslamic Art Museum	1925
Mevlana Museum	1926
Tokat Museum	1926
Sivas Museum	1927
Amasya Museum	1928
Kayseri Museum	1929
Ankara Ethnography Museum	1927
Afyon Museum	1930
Fire Brigade Museum	1932
Çanakkale Museum	1932
Bergama Museum	1934
Efes Museum	1934
İzmir Museum	1934
Manisa Museum	1935
Hatay Museum	1938
Niğde Museum	1939
Kastamonu Museum	1941
Aşiyen Museum	1945

Source: Adopted from Şapolyo, 1971, p. 72.

The most important development regarding Turkish museology in 1950 was Turkey's becoming a member to the International Council of Museums (ICOM), which was an important step in following the Western standards (Boyras, 2020, p. 20). Turkish museology started to take steps towards international museology after 1970. The Turkish ICOM National Committee regulation issued in 1970 was effective in this (Atagök, 2010, p. 9).

## **DEVELOPMENT of TURKISH MUSEOLOGY**

The 1960s are known as the years with new museums in the history of Turkish museology. Opening sequentially in 1965, 1967 and 1968, Yalvaç Museum, Alanya Museum and Erzurum Museum were among the museums that embodied the spread of cultural institutionalization to Anatolia (Boyras, 2020, p. 21).

Nevertheless, the representation of museums in Turkish policies markedly began with the established of Ministry of Culture (now Ministry of Culture and Tourism). In 1972, the Ministry of Culture was established and the museums were connected to this ministry, and the management of the museums was gathered under the same roof (Erbay 2017: 110). Museology studies in Turkey were redefined with the legal regulations made in 1983; the Law on Conservation of Cultural and Natural Assets, published in the Official Gazette with the number 2863 on 21.7.1983, brought up the re-evaluation of museology studies (Erbay 2017, p. 110).

The museology, which gained a new momentum with the opening of private museums after 1980, has also increased in numbers with the City Museums opened by local governments in recent years (Ateşoğulları, 2022, p. 35).

According to Ateşoğulları (2022, p. 42) to increase the number of museums in Turkey, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism studies were carried out with the aim of renewing and 161 museums were repaired and renewed. Again in the same period, 51 new museum met its visitors for the first time. 16 existing museums such as Şanlıurfa Archeology Museum, Adana Museum, Uşak Museum, Kayseri Museum, Mersin Museum, Çanakkale Troy Museum and the Van Museum continue to serve in their newly built buildings. The renovation of 4 museums, and projects of 17 new museums have been ongoing promising efforts.

Based on the additional article 2 of the law "Regulation on the Establishment and Duties of the National Museum Chairmanship" for the establishment of museum managements in the national museums that are determined by the Ministry, museum managements should consist of museum chairman, museum director affiliated to the chairman, administrative manager, affiliated services, and a museum council. Here, the duties of administrative management, the museum council, the education and library services, and marketing and promotion services of the museums of national quality are significant in term of marketing efforts and implementing retraining programs for the staff. The relevant regulations about Additional Article No. 2 have been stated in 2005.(Official Gazette, 2005, issue 25990). The marketing and promotion services, which are affiliated to the administrative managers, are responsible for promoting the museum with various channels by collaborating with the local authorities and tourism agencies, carrying out some marketing activities to attract audience, for the same purposes collaborating with various public bodies, corporate organizations, NGOs, universities, schools, foundations, associations and so on. They are also responsible for preparing and providing some visual or written media coverage local or national, planning strategies for visitor satisfaction in the museum, and managing and controlling the facility areas in the museum.

The education and library services, which is affiliated to the museum managers, are in charge of preparing and executing retraining and internal services programs (relevant to ICOM), collaborating with universities on the matter, informing the staff about the professional publications about Museology and museum materials, preparing programs about museum education and protection of the cultural heritage for the schools, and so on. However, the regulatory status of the law fell into desuetude in 2006. Although the regulations on the law were annulled, such additional article in the law indicates that there are infrastructural efforts on establishing marketing and educational services in museums. There is a sponsorship law (Law no. 5225) especially for supporting the cultural initiatives (enterprises) and investments that involves the state museums. The law is providing various tax exemptions for the sponsored organization which could encourage the organizations (Official Gazette, 2004, no. 25529).

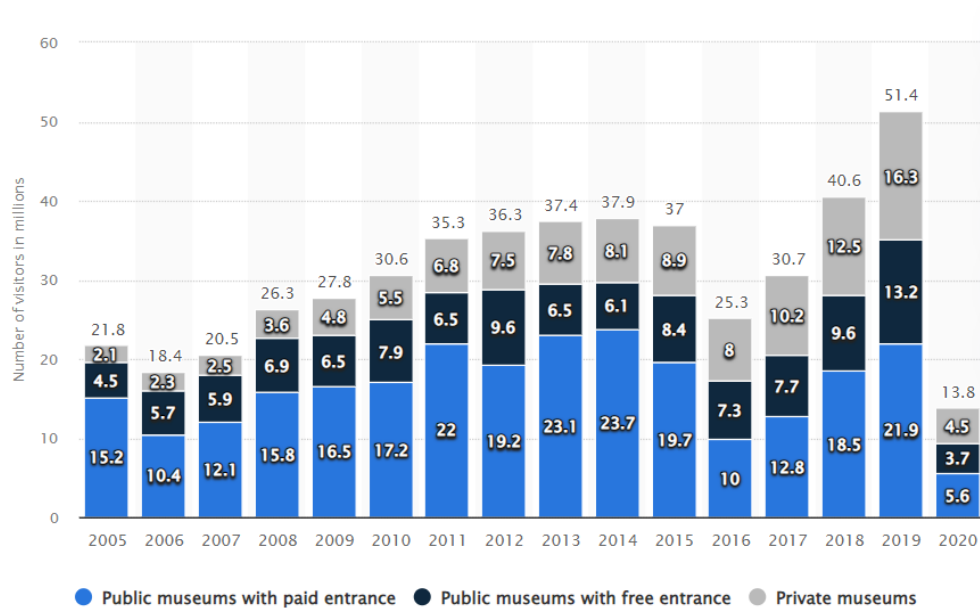
Hence it is vital to remark the financial management of the Ministry and its function within the state museums. The Central Directorate of Revolving Fund of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism; henceforth CDRF (Döner Sermaye İşletmesi Merkez Müdürlüğü – DÖSİMM) has been established for providing and managing revenue resource to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism by the Law of Revolving Fund (Döner Sermaye Kanunu, No. 2252) in 19<sup>th</sup> June 1979 (Official Gazette, 1979, issue 16679). In the law it is stated that the revolving fund of the Ministry of Culture is used mainly in the operational fields of production and sales of the related services and/or products for antiquities, monuments, museums, libraries, documentation, publication, advertisement (promotion of all kinds), cultural centers and so forth. Moreover, the revolving fund is used for infrastructural services of cultural and tourism investments, printing, distribution, promotional and informative publications, souvenir production, setting up gift shops, organizing exhibits, cooperating with national and international institutions on tourism. (The Central Directorate of Revolving Funds, DOSİMM, 2004, Issue. 25516). The regulations of this directorate has been changed in years 2007 and 2009 and sub-articles have been added by 2020.

The number of visitors to museums affiliated with the Directorate of Culture and Tourism in Turkey declined sharply in 2020 over the previous year due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Overall, Hagia Sophia was the most visited institution after and prior to the pandemic outbreak, (Table 4.) but the number of visitors dropped from roughly 3.8 million in 2019 to around 472 thousand in 2020.

**Table 4. Top 10 Museums & Archaeological Sites (Open Air Museum) in terms of Visitor Numbers (2019)**

MUSEUM & ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE (OPEN AIR MUSEUM)	VISITOR NUMBERS
İSTANBUL HAGIA SOPHIA MUSEUM	3.727.361
KONYA MEVLANA MUSEUM	3.464.155
İSTANBUL TOPKAPI PALACE MUSEUM	2.364.946
İZMİR EFES SITE	1.855.694
NEVŞEHİR GÖREME SITE	1.403.444
NEVŞEHİR KAYMAKLI UNDERGROUND CITY	632.970
NEVŞEHİR HACIBEKTAŞ MUSEUM	592.727
ÇANAKKALE TROIA SITE	583.491
ANKARA CUMHURİYET MUSEUM	515.309
NEVŞEHİR DERİNKUYU UNDERGROUND CITY	456.369
İSTANBUL ARKEOLOJİ MUSEUM	427.643





**Figure 1. Number of Visitors to Museums and Ruins in Turkey from 2005 to 2020. (Statista, 2022)**

## Conclusion

After analyzing the figures of Turkish museums, the relatively low number of museums requires a certain attention for the need of augmenting museums, providing variability and enhancing the quality of museum services. Considering the point of Dicks, (2003, p. 144), latest museum type is highly stylized, architecturally striking, technologically sophisticated, consumption oriented museum displaying the interdependence of culture, art, nature, science and/or technology. The interpretation of the attraction is also important to encourage the potential target market and in consideration of the costs involved in its presentation. For instance, science museum in London is targeted primarily at school children but requires a significant amount of technological resources for its interpretation of science (Dale and Robinson, 2005, p.103).

As UNESCO in 2015 with the “Recommendation Concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society” further highlighted the need to distinguish the value of museums in society, so that the museum sector appeals more visitors and benefits from funding, which is essential for its survival, for Turkey there is a need to modify policies, refine new strategies, improve digitization, mobile applications, and publications, include communities effectively including artists and promote educational programs through museums. Museums, as institutions to enthuse and support researches, maintain studies on conservation, research and social communication while they are transforming with new contemporary formations (Erbay 2017: 106).

*“The best city museums act as a starting point for the discovery of the city which can lead people to look with fresh, more informed and more tolerant eyes at the richness of the present urban environment and to imagine beyond it to past and possible future histories.”* Jones, I. (2008, s. 10).

Museums can be a unique resource for better understanding of the city’s present and also can provide an informed platform for planning the city’s future. In so doing, it can also be a forum for debate and discussion to enable city people to contribute actively to their city’s development. Turkish museums attendance figures also demonstrate that Turkey needs to attract more cultural tourists and specialize in museology and improve museology programs in the universities as well to be able to cope with global vision.

Finally, as underlined before, prestige museums offer a potential vehicle for reinforcing the legitimacy of city and serve as a civic pride. Museums that would become as a brand name for Turkey need to be developed. A tourist who come to Turkey will not only come to Turkey as a destination but especially will choose the destination to visit that well-known prestigious museum.

For instance, even though Gaziantep Zeugma Mosaic museum is the world largest mosaic museum, only 367.395 visitors had attended in 2019 and did not take the attention it deserved. Unique events can be hosted for these type of museums to take attention and influencers publishers can be leveraged or film induced tourism can be used to promote these “hidden less-known jewelry”. Furthermore, different sorts of museum can also be developed in Turkey like ecomuseums, thematic museums, etc. and also museum hotels can welcome the guests especially at historical towns.

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