Beykoz Glassware and Elements that Shaped It in the Nineteenth Century
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Introduction
Beykoz glassware owes its name to a region in Istanbul, Turkey where glass articles were produced in glass workshops and factories during most of the nineteenth century. Although the production of Beykoz-style items continues today, the number of original nineteenth-century Beykoz glass products is relatively small. Found only in museums and in private collections, they have become precious collectors’ items that represent a cultural heritage. This article provides a short history of this particular product family and an examination of the intangible elements that shaped it. We explore the links between the cultural elements, cultural transformation, daily life, industrial developments, and design of Beykoz glassware in a historical context.

Although a rich variety of Beykoz ware was created, characteristic products included laledan or tulip vases, rose water sprinklers, bird-shaped perfume containers, ewers, sherbet cups, and Venetian-style products known as çeşmibülbül (cheshmibulbul). The production of glassware was supported by the Ottoman court as part of a large-scale industrialization effort. Luxurious glass and porcelain items flooded the Ottoman capital as a new market emerged—on that resulted from the modernization efforts of the Sultans. Glass items produced at Beykoz could only partially satisfy the appetite of the elite Ottoman families and the non-Muslims leading the cultural transformation. The remaining demand was satisfied mostly by glass products imported from France and Bohemia.

Industrial, Social, and Cultural Setting in Nineteenth-Century Istanbul
The Ottoman Empire was being reshaped by political and industrial forces throughout the nineteenth century. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, while the industrial revolution was spreading in Europe, the Ottoman industry relied on crafts and small workshops. Important products included woven fabric, carpets, leather products, metal products, weapons, jewelry, fur garments, and glazed tile. Most of these products were sold in the local...
markets, although various types of fabric such as atlas, silk and velvet, leather goods, carpets, ornamented weapons, and silver products were also exported to Europe. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Sultan Selim III (1789-1807) implemented certain reforms in military and industrial fields. During his reign, important initiatives were undertaken in the production of canons, guns, gunpowder, broadcloth, and paper. Technology transfer was realized primarily by bringing in machines, specialists, and technicians from France and Great Britain. Sultan Selim also sent a Sufi dervish named Mehmed Dede to Venice to learn glassmaking techniques. After his return, Mehmed Dede opened a workshop at Beykoz and started to manufacture glass products.

Industrial reforms initiated by Selim III were continued by Mahmud II (1808-39) and Abdülmecid (1839-61). Various factories were built between 1827 and 1836, and some older factories were modified to accommodate steam power instead of animal power. Large-scale industrial developments took place during the reign of Abdülmecid. An industrial and agricultural zone was established after 1842 on a 130-kilometer belt near the Marmara shore. This zone included a foundry and machine works in Zeytinburnu, a boatyard for small steamships, an iron works, a spinning and weaving factory in Bakırköy, and a model farm in Yeşilköy. Porcelain and glass industries were also supported during this period.

The modernization efforts were officially declared in 1839 by the Rose Garden Reform Decree, also known as Tanzimat Fermanı, which aimed to reorganize the whole Ottoman Empire. Although these reforms are beyond the scope of this article, we examine some of their industrial and social implications. In general, modernization for rulers such as Selim III, Mahmud II, and Abdülmecid meant adopting European political, military, and industrial systems, including certain customs. For example, at the time of Mahmud II, concerts, balls, and ballets were organized, and learning French, wearing European style costumes, and listening to European music came into fashion. Even consumption of wine during official visits was permitted by the Sultan. All of these changes affected the traditional Ottoman ways, customs, and related material culture.

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**Beykoz-Style Products: A Fusion of East and West**

Throughout the nineteenth century, various glass and porcelain factories were established in Beykoz and Paşabahçe, along the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus. Some of these factories were private ventures founded by special permission from the Sultan. The remaining ones, called the Fabrika-i Hümayun (Imperial Factory), belonged to the Imperial Government. Ahmet Fethi Paşa, one of the brothers-in-law of Sultan Abdülmecid and the Commander of the Imperial Artillery, invested in a porcelain and glass factory near İncirköy (a village in Beykoz) in 1844. According to an 1847
report written by MacFarlane, who personally visited this establishment, it was composed of two separate factories: the glass factory belonging to Ahmet Fethi Paşa and the porcelain factory belonging to the Sultan and his mother. At the time of his visit that summer, 14 German workmen and an old English foreman worked at the glass factory. However, the employee profile changed constantly, with French, Italian, or German workers and Turkish or Armenian administrators replacing one another. Products such as ornamented tumblers, water jugs, drinking cups, coffee cups, ewers, basins, scent bottles, vases, and inkstands were produced at this factory. MacFarlane reported that administrative problems and a lack of a continuous coal supply resulted in excessive costs and low manufacturing efficiency. Although no other known documents have been found that relate to this factory, a collection of Beykoz glassware produced there is still owned by the grandson of Ahmet Fethi Paşa, and the types of items in that collection fit the description given by MacFarlane.⁶

In 1845, a second glass and crystal factory had been established by Mustafa Nuri Paşa, also at İncirköy. Because of financial difficulties, this factory was purchased by the state in 1846, upon his request. In the Ottoman archives, this factory is referred to as İncir (or İncirköy) Glass and Crystal Factory, and sometimes as the Imperial Crystal Factory. Because this factory was owned by the state, several documents related to financial and administrative matters can be found in the Ottoman archives. A chronology of significant events based on the archives is given in Table 1.⁷

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Document</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04.13.1846</td>
<td>Purchase of the İncir Glass and Crystal Factory from Bursa Governor Mustafa Nuri Paşa by the State Treasury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—.—.1846</td>
<td>Assignment of Tahir Bey, director of the Imperial Mint, as manager of the Glass Factory</td>
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<tr>
<td>03.18.1846</td>
<td>Placement of Austrian employees in the glass factory</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.27.1846</td>
<td>Presentation to the Sultan of çeşmibülbül samples manufactured at the Glass Factory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.28.1846</td>
<td>Thank you note for the samples presented to high-ranking officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.17.1848</td>
<td>Request for payment by Todori, who sold wood to the Glass Factory but was not paid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.20.1855</td>
<td>Record of the debt of Höce Sozba, translator of the Glass Factory, to Nahid Bey, bookkeeper of the Imperial Mint and manager of the Glass Factory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.15.1855</td>
<td>Assignment of two officers to the Kavak Dock for wood to be provided for the Glass Factory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.06.1857</td>
<td>Assignment of Zeki Efendi, former bookkeeper of the Imperial Mint, as bookkeeper of the Glass Factory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.02.1858</td>
<td>Transformation of the Glass and Crystal Factory to the Spermaceti Candle Factory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.26.1858</td>
<td>Payment of the remaining part of the salary to the Austrian, Esiçerbir Gark</td>
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</tbody>
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⁷ Based on abstracts provided online by the Turkish Prime Ministry, General Management of Government Archives, Ottoman Archive Catalogs available from: http://www.devletarsivleri.gov.tr/katalog/ (accessed June 27, 2011).
Based on the archives and the chronology given in Table 1, we can infer that the factory started production in 1846 and lasted for only 12 years, that it was managed by Ottoman officials from the Imperial Treasury and the Imperial Mint, and that Austrians (and probably other Europeans), assisted by a translator, were also employed in the factory. Good-quality çeşmibülbül samples were presented to high-ranking officials and the Sultan. Such products were appreciated, praised, and sent to international exhibitions, including the 1851 London and 1856 Paris exhibitions. Several glass products manufactured at the İncirköy Glass and Crystal Factory were exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London.8

The official catalog of the exhibition lists the following items: “Glass porringers, with saucers and covers, glass cups, nar-guilé glasses and plates, glass jugs, glass hash-ab, or sherbet bowls, with covers and saucers, crystal decanter and glass—Manufactured at the Imperial Glass House of Indgir-keny, Constantinople.” In addition to these glass products, the catalog also lists many China items that were “Manufactured at Fethi Pasha’s Pottery of Indgir-keny-Constantinople.” A book written toward the end of the London exhibition comments on products found at the Crystal Palace and mentions, among other products from Turkey, some gilded sherbet cups manufactured at İncirköy. Some of the çeşmibülbül products (listed as Venetian glass in the catalog) were rewarded honorable mention during the exhibition.10

Beykoz glassware fell into two main categories: traditional products and new products. Traditional products maintained forms that were centuries old. Among them were rose water sprinklers, laledans (tulip vases), ewers, and suspended oil lamps. Rose water sprinklers were popular in most Islamic cultures, with their characteristic pear-like base and long neck and dating back to the fourteenth-century Mamluk Dynasty. Such forms were perpetuated in the Ottoman culture by the Ehl-i Hiref and by individual artisans who were typically members of loncas or trade guilds. Ehl-i Hiref was the name given to skilled artisans who were specially selected to work for the Ottoman Palace. Artisans of this organization included weapons makers, watchmakers, jewelers, tailors, glass makers, and many others. When the demand for products exceeded the capacity of the Ehl-i Hiref, works were produced by state-owned workshops outside the Palace whose artisans were members of loncas or trade guilds. Ehl-i Hiref had lost their importance even before the modernization and industrialization efforts of the nineteenth century.11

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9 The name of the village, İncirköy, can be encountered as İncirkey (which is the pronunciation respelling of this word) in some historical documents. However, it was misspelled in the catalog.

10 Author unknown, The Crystal Palace and Its Contents (London: W. M. Clark, 1851), 183–84; Authority of the Royal Commission, Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, Reports by the Juries vol. I Introductory, Awards, Reports, Classes I to IV (London: Spicer Brothers, 1852), clxxii.

Another traditional product was the *laledan*. A miniature from the seventeenth century, from Topkapı Palace Museum, shows a scene where the Sultan is being entertained. In the middle of this miniature, three vases are sitting on a low table and have flowers in them. One of the vases, which appears to be of porcelain, has a wide neck and many carnations are in it. The other two seem to be filigrana vases with seven tulips in each one. Beykoz-style laledans have similar forms to the filigrana vases depicted in this miniature, the main difference being a pedestal added below the round body.\(^{12}\)

Glass products new to the Ottoman culture and produced by Beykoz workshops or factories borrowed their forms from European products. Boxes, smelling salt bottles (Figure 1), pistol-shaped scent bottles, candy dishes [bonbonnière], medicine bottles (Figure 2), pipes (Figure 3), and large plates were created. However, these products were usually decorated in the same style as other Beykoz objects. Decoration techniques included cutting, gilding, and enameling (Figure 4). Cutting was typically applied to colorless crystal and sometimes to colored transparent glass objects. Gilding and enameling were applied to all types of Beykoz glassware, except for *çeşmibülbül*. *Çeşmibülbül* objects were not decorated any further. Decorative motifs included flowers and foliage patterns, as well as crescent, star, and heart symbols (Figure 5).\(^{13}\)

Even some production centers in Bohemia manufactured glass products for the Ottoman market using the same forms and decoration. The Bohemian workshops of Franz Anton Zahn and Franz Vogel in Steinschönau were two of the largest exporters to the Ottoman Empire and to the Orient. A well-preserved rose water sprinkler (Figure 6), manufactured by the firm Franz Vogel around 1818 for the Turkish market, is displayed today at the Glass Museum in Passau, Germany. The striking similarity of this

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12 Fuat Bayramoğlu, *Türk Cam Sanatı ve Beykoz İşleri* [Turkish Glass Art and Beykoz Ware] (Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası, 1996), 16.
sample to others produced at Beykoz workshops indicates that a common design language was already used at the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹⁴

**Beykoz Glassware Within a Cultural Context**

A strong relationship linked the culture of nineteenth century Istanbul and the products manufactured there. Such a relationship can be analyzed from three different cultural perspectives: activities in daily life, including daily rituals and ceremonies; European influences and the transformation of the society, including the desire for luxury goods; and religious influences.

Before mass production and the emergence of press advertisements, middle-class and lower-middle-class residents of Istanbul owned only a few personal items, simple clothing, and basic furniture. Most items in Muslim households were related to Islamic

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**Figure 4a**
Pilgrim flask, 19 cm, cut and gilt colorless glass, max. dia. 15.5 cm.

**Figure 4b**
Ewer with three horizontal rows of gilt partitions containing enameled flowers, white opaline glass, 15.9 cm high, max. dia. 6.6 cm (Şişecam Collection).

**Figure 5a**
Ewer with ten horizontal rows of floral decorations and two heart motifs with gilt interiors on each side, white opaline glass, 26 cm high, max. dia. 12 cm.

**Figure 5b**
Mug decorated with star and crescent motifs in three medallions and foliage pattern, purple blue opaline glass, 9 cm high, max. dia. 11 cm (Şişecam Collection).
rituals, such as prayer rugs, ewers, and bowls for ablution, as well as watches, quadrants, and hourglasses for timekeeping. Browsing through the lists of ten estate inventories between 1750 and 1801, we also see a few glass items, including a glass frame, glass plates, and a glass lantern.15

Some engravings and paintings depicting Istanbul’s daily life in the nineteenth-century show how various glass objects were used for different purposes. For example, an engraving from 1854 shows a petitioner with a glass vase on his table, while another from 1855 shows a candy shop with glass jars and bottles storing the candy (Figure 7). A painting by Mıgırdıç Civanyan, titled “A Coffehouse in Tophane,” shows many glass objects used in a central coffeehouse during the nineteenth century. Here we can identify many hookah bottles, vases, ewers, and cups—all made of clear or translucent glass (Figure 8).
Figure 8a
“A Coffehouse in Tophane.”

Figure 8b
Detail showing various glass objects used in the nineteenth century (photograph taken by authors with kind permission from Pera Museum).
An impressive engraving created by Melling (Figure 9) shows many details about a wedding procession. Melling worked as an architect for Selim III between 1790 and 1798. Between 1800 and 1803 he worked for Napoleon Bonaparte and prepared a collection of drawings depicting panoramic views, architecture, and ceremonies in Istanbul. The details of these drawings are described in a book by Melling, published in 1819, which also mentions the use of glass vases: “…Then come two men who carry on their heads big trays filled with many flowers…” The illustration shows one of the interesting uses of vases with narrow necks, designed to hold one or a few tulips or other flowers, such as hyacinths as shown in Figure 9.16

Flowers had a special place in the Ottoman culture. The period between 1718 and 1730 was later coined the tulip era because of the tulip craze among the Ottoman elite. During the time of Sultan Ahmed III (1703-1730), Ottoman Turkey became the center of flower farming of the western world. Tulips had priority among all other flowers in the gardens of the elite. Tulips were so important that anyone who cultivated their bulbs enjoyed a privileged place in the society—no matter what his socioeconomic status or education. Other than tulips, florists’ flowers were limited to roses, carnations, hyacinths, daffodils, jonquils, and cyclamens. In the eighteenth century, enthusiasts cultivated various flowers in their gardens in all seasons. These flowers were placed in porcelain vases or “bottles with long necks.”

Similar to tulips, roses were also very important in Ottoman culture. Rose water and frankincense were common in the daily lives and ceremonies of Ottoman people; it was offered to guests when receiving them or when bidding them goodbye. It was sprinkled on hands, handkerchiefs, and beards of guests in religious gatherings. Rose water was used in various desserts, in sherbets, and in lotions and potions. One custom called for sprinkling rose water on the hands after meals. It was held in containers and sprinklers of many different forms. Beykoz glassware showed the largest variety and creativity in these containers. Although the most common form was the one with a pear-like base and a long neck (as already discussed), Beykoz-style rose water containers were also produced in the form of ewers, pistols, birds, and barrels. Bird-shaped containers were technically some of the most complex products among Beykoz glasswares (Figure 10). However, rose water started to lose its popularity with the import of European perfumes and eau de cologne during the Abdulhamid period (1876-1909).

Glassware for Dining

Glassware was not common in conventional dining in the Ottoman culture until the nineteenth century. Before modernized dining customs, food was eaten around a wooden or metal tray placed on a piece of cloth on the floor. Food was commonly served...
on brass plates, although porcelain plates were used by the upper class and in the Sultan’s palace. A few glass items were used infrequently by the upper class in the 18th century. European-style furniture and eating customs were adapted by non-Muslims in Galata and Pera, and by Sultan Abdulmecid, who abandoned Topkapı Palace in favor of the Western-style furnishings at Dolmabahçe Palace in 1856. According to an American traveler’s account, the use of forks and knives was already spread to customers of eating places in Istanbul by the 1890s.20

Before the availability of refrigerators, food and drinks were cooled using ice and snow that remained from the winter or was brought from the mountains. In the summer, ice was cut and carried in felt wrappings to Topkapı Palace from the reservoirs in Uludağ Mountain near Bursa and Katırlı Mountain near Gemlik. Ice and snow was kept in ice wells in Istanbul. An interesting decanter, called a karlık (snow holder), was invented to keep the contents cool without the risk of contaminating them using ice or snow bought from ice shops. Figure 11 shows a çeşmibülbül snow holder from the Topkapı Palace collection. The snow was placed in the pouch to cool water, sorbet, or other drinks. Snow holders made from ordinary glass were also used in the Aegean region for similar purposes. Figure 12 shows an example from İzmir from the beginning of the twentieth century.21

Beykoz glass products of many different forms and functions were produced for dining purposes. Well-preserved examples of decanters, mugs, bowls, plates, salt shakers, coffee cups, bottles, boza jugs, and egg cups remain in private collections or museums. Boza, a drink widely consumed by the Ottoman people in winter time, was a thick, viscous drink, and the boza jug, likely

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19 Özer, Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Yaşam ve Moda, 18; Francis Marion Crawford, 1890’arda İstanbul (Old Constantinople) (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası, 2006), 50; Yerasimos, 500 Yıllık Osmanlı Mutfağı, 42.

20 Murat Bardakçı, “Eşkıya Buz Dağlarını Basınca Sarayda Pijen Yemekler Koktu,” (“When Bandits Occupied the Ice Mountains, Food Made in the Palace Turned Rotten”) Hürriyet Yaşam October 8, 2005; the snow holder from İzmir belongs to the private collection of Özkan Arıkantürk, personal communication (İzmir, 2011).
designed for the specific necessities of this drink, had no beak (Figure 13a), although other decanters used for water or sorbet did (Figure 13b). The existence of specific products, such as salt shakers, egg cups, and boza jugs, suggests that they were produced for their intended functions. However, we have no evidence showing that Beykoz glassware was actually used in daily life, even by the wealthy.

**Glassware as Luxury Goods**

As mentioned, the number of glass objects used in a common household in Istanbul was relatively limited. However, Beykoz and imported glass products were luxury goods among the elite. Luxury goods and products of Western origin were used as indicators of social status. The use of Western-style products for interior decoration and home furnishings increased rapidly in the nineteenth century, especially among pro-Western upper- and middle-class families. A painting by Şefik, depicting a dining table in Yıldız Palace in the 1890s, shows a table arranged in European style; on the table are many drinking glasses of various sizes, plus decanters. The painting provides a good example of the importance of luxurious tableware during this period. The consumption of imported goods was further encouraged by the 1838 Baltalimanı free trade agreement signed between the Ottomans and Great Britain, and by subsequent agreements with other European countries. Beykoz glassware, including large, decorated bowls and plates,
European-style jewelry boxes, bonbonnières, and perfume bottles reflected the interest of the Ottoman elite in luxury goods. The use of gilding and cutting for decoration further emphasized the sense of luxury conveyed by Beykoz products.  

Mystical Influences on Design

The influence of mysticism on the design of Beykoz glassware is much stronger than has been recognized by earlier studies. Many motifs and forms used in Beykoz products can be traced back to shapes and symbols used by two Islamic sects prominent in the Ottoman Empire: the Alevi-Bektaşi and the Mevlevi (Sufi). For example, the 12-cornered rosette at the base of the vase in Figure 14a is most likely a representation of the Bektaşi stone of resignation. The 12 corners symbolize the 12 imams of the Alevi faith. Similar decorations can be found in other Beykoz products, sometimes with a smaller number of corners (8 or 10), which may indicate the continuation of the use of this decoration by other workers who did not know the significance of this form. Another religious symbol found in certain Beykoz products is the heart (Figure 5a). Although this shape is a universal symbol of love today, it was not so in the Ottoman culture. This symbol was (and still is) used by followers of the Mevlevi faith in the form of a winged heart. The heart is a symbol of the human heart situated between the physical body and the spirit. The wings indicate the flight of the heart to higher spheres or spiritual attainment. Although as a decoration...
on Beykoz glassware, the heart was typically used in the plain form, the winged heart symbol also made very rare appearances in some Beykoz products. Another mystical symbol, occasionally found in the caps of ewers or mugs (Figure 14b), is a form that represents the tall felth hat worn by the Mevlevi followers, which also represents their tombstone. Sultan Selim III was a member of the Mevlevi order and frequently visited the Galata dervish lodge. Given the close ties between him and the Mevlevis, his support of the Beykoz glass industry, and the influence of the Mevlevi Mehmed Dede on the establishment of the glass workshops, we can see why the Mevlevi symbols appeared on Beykoz glassware.23

Decline of the Beykoz Glass Industry
After the 1850s, the Ottoman industry in general came under great pressure because of an immense influx of low-cost European products into local markets. Some factories improved their production methods and managed to cope with this pressure until the twentieth century; meanwhile, others—including the Beykoz glass factory—were forced eventually to shut down. After the Beykoz Glass Factory was closed in 1858, no large-scale glass production occurred until 1899. In 1899, a new glass factory was founded by Saul Modiano. It ceased operation in 1922 because Istanbul was occupied and the owners of the factory had to leave the country. This tumultuous period set the stage for the end of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of the Turkish Republic, led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The world wars, economic difficulties, the creation of a new nation, and all the changes that accompanied it, including the adoption of the Latin alphabet, caused part of the culture to be abandoned or forgotten. Nevertheless, thanks to the efforts of Paşabahçe Glass Factories, Beykoz-style products were revived in the 1970s and are still being produced in the traditional style.24

Acknowledgements
We are grateful to Şişecam and Perihan Atila for opening Şişecam’s antique glass collection and photo archive to us; to Özkan and Ismet Arıkantürk for providing us with valuable information and photographs about snow holders; to Nevin Bengal for the illustration she provided; and to Ömür Tufan from Topkapı Palace for providing information about Beykoz glassware and for the opportunity to photograph some items from the Topkapı Palace Collection. We also thank Asst. Prof. Laurie Churchman and Prof. Xander van Eck for their helpful comments.
