



OBSERVATIONS ON SİNAN'S MOSQUES AND MASJIDS IN EYÜP



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Illustration 1. Arpacıbaşı Masjid.
(Photo: Aras Neftçi)

It would not be inappropriate to consider Sinan, the famous architect of the 16th century, as the reigning architect of Istanbul. Istanbul has the greatest share of art created by Sinan, more than four hundred works. Istanbul, a city that ranked as the most important cultural, art and trade center of the world in the 16th century, was the symbol of Ottoman-Turkish sovereignty. In this sense, Istanbul with its location which displayed the political, commercial, cultural and artistic power of the Ottoman Empire, had an important architectural status. It should not be forgotten that Sinan, in relevance to the political power and perception of the state, intensified his architectural endeavors on this city after it became a world capital.

The Eyüp Sultan district has the greatest share of the works of art by Sinan. We have identified 28 structures in Eyüp that were constructed by Sinan. According to types, they are: 10 tombs, 8 mosques and masjids, 4 educational structures, 3 public baths, 2 palaces and 1 dervish lodge. This distribution of structures shows that Eyüp was considered to be the most important necropolis of Istanbul.

One can list Sinan's works of art in Eyüp by structural types as follows.

MOSQUES AND MASJIDS

Arpacıbaşı Masjid

Davut Ağa Masjid

Defterdar (district treasurer) Mosque

Dökmeciler (people doing casting) Masjid

Nişancı (marksman) Mustafa Pasha Mosque

Süleyman Subaşı (Karcı Süleyman, Müzevir or Münzevi) Masjid

Şah (shah) Sultan Mosque

Zal Mahmut Pasha Mosque

EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURES

Sokullu Mehmed Pasha Medresse

Sokullu Mehmed Pasha Darülkurra

Zal Mahmud Pasha Medresse (Upper Medresse)

Zal Mahmud Pasha Medresse (Lower Medresse)

TOMBS

Aya Pasha Tomb

Dukaginzade Mehmed Pasha Tomb



Illustration 2. Davut Ağa Masjid.
(Photo: Aras Neftçi)

Illustration 3. Davut Ağa Masjid, damages done to the surrounding wall.
(Photo: Aras Neftçi)

Illustration 4. Davut Ağa Masjid, the interior room added.
(Photo: Aras Neftçi)



Lala Hüseyin Pasha Tomb
 Pertev Pasha Tomb
 Semiz Ali Pasha Tomb
 Siyavuş Pasha Tomb
 Siyavuş Pasha Child's Tomb
 Sokullu Mehmed Pasha Tomb
 Sokullu Mehmed Pasha Child's Tomb

Zal Mahmud Pasha Tomb

PUBLIC BATHS

Dere (Akarçeşme/Çömlekçiler) Bath

Nişancı Mustafa Pasha Bath

Tomb (Old New) Bath

PALACES

Semiz Ali Pasha Palace (there are 2 palaces in the literature, but we have no knowledge about them).

DERVISH LODGE

Shah Sultan Lodge (non-existent today)

Most of Sinan's works in Eyüp are still standing today. Presently, out of 28 structures only four have disappeared. In this paper, we will consider the mosques and the masjids built by Sinan in Eyüp.

Arpacıbaşı Masjid

Arpacıbaşı Masjid is in Akarçeşme, Eyüp. It was built by Arpacı Hayrettin. The time when it was built is not definitely known. The masjid, which has framed walls and a wooden roof, has an asymmetrical design. The present masjid, which exhibits a completely different design from its original one, was renovated in 1901 and again in 1986. Today, it does not reflect Sinan's style in any way. (Photograph 1)

Davut Ağa Masjid

Also known as Kapağası Masjid, this masjid is in Eyüp Nişancı. Davut Ağa, its founder, died in 1555 and is buried in front of its minaret. It is a small masjid which has a roof and a short minaret. Even though it has gone through a number of renovations, it has been preserved, relatively speaking. Some interior alterations were made, such as the addition of a room that is used as a library. Unfortunately, the use of inappropriate materials has damaged its original simple and naive outer appearance. The asphalt road which goes right along its side has been raised and the windows on its boundary wall have become level with the ground. It is



apparent that occasional collisions of heavy vehicles with this wall have broken and shattered the wall and window jambs. Thus, certain precautions should be taken to save this masjid from further damage. (Photographs 2, 3 and 4)

Defterdar (Nazlı Mahmud Efendi) Mosque

This mosque is in a district with the same name in Eyüp. According to its epitaph, it was built in 1540. The mosque, which has an almost square design, has a short minaret. The mosque has a roof built at an angle and its main walls are made of coarse cut-travertine. Obviously, its hipped-roof covered with tile has been restored. It underwent extensive renovations after the earthquakes in 1768 and 1895. It is known that Nazlı Mahmud Efendi, the founder of this mosque, was a calligrapher. Inside the enclosed graveyard in the grounds of the mosque, there is a canopy-shaped tomb facing south which has the features of Sinan's style similar to Ayas Pasha Tomb.

There is a crack on the kible wall of the mosque starting from the arched-window farthest to the left of the top series of windows and gets deeper along its path towards the window below. This may be serious and should be taken care of. (Photographs 5 and 6)

Düğmecibaşı Masjîd (Düğmeciler Mosque)

Calling this structure, which is located in Olukbayır, the Düğmeciler (button-makers) Masjîd has become a commonly accepted error. The masjîd, which is built of stone, is designed

with a square shape and is roofed. Its minaret is of cut-stone and sits on square footing. In 1822, through the efforts of Lalezar Kalfa, the third treasurer of the Harem of Mahmud II and Ayvansarayi, the writer of Hadika, first the paths to the fountain used for ritual ablutions, then the masjîd were restored for five silver coins and the floors were covered with new straw matting. The structure which was later damaged by the 1894 earthquake, was renovated in 1897 (Hegira 1313) through endowments bequeathed by Emine and Fatma Hanım. The epitaph documenting this renovation used to be in place until recent years.

During our last visit to the structure, we realized that it had undergone still another restoration. Both the interior and the exterior parts of the mosque have been covered with new materials. It seems that its minaret has also been restored recently and has been ornamented with paint. Aside from these unseemly interventions, the missing inscription for the 1897 renovation is also interesting. Why the epitaph was removed and where it went is a mystery. (Illustration 7)

Nişancı Mustafa Pasha Mosque

It is not known when this mosque was built, but we do know that it was commissioned by Mustafa Pasha, the son of Celaddin from Tosya



Illustration 5. Defterdar (Nazlı Mahmud Efendi) Mosque.

Illustration 6. Defterdar Mosque, the crack on the Kible wall.

Illustration 7. Düğmeciler Mosque.

Illustration 8. Nişancı Mustafa Pasha Masjid, last assembly hall.
(Photo: Aras Neftçi)



Illustration 9. Süleyman Subaşı Masjid.
(Photo: Aras Neftçi)



Illustration 10. Shah Sultan Mosque.
(Photo: Aras Neftçi)

(who died in 1567-8). The mosque has nearly a square design, a four-sided roof, ceiling and a single minaret. It was renewed after the fire in 1780 and thus lost its original design, architectural features and, in short, its identity.

It was observed that the front wall, where the main door of the present mosque is located, has been erected with inappropriately painted bricks, and supposedly a last assembly room has been created which seems to have been covered with inferior quality materials. Apart from these, the ritual ablution area and the toilets have not been properly constructed either.

The stone building with walls of alternating colors, which is in the area next to the mosque, has a fountain and stores in its ground floor. A stairway on the side leads to the upper



floor where there is a room which looks more like a classroom. It is claimed that the building, which is now used as a library, was once the Rami Mehmed Pasha School. (Photograph 8)

Süleyman Subaşı Masjid

This masjid is known as *Müzevvir* (mischief-maker), *Münzevi* (hermit) and *Karcı* (snow-seller) Süleyman Masjid. The most interesting feature of the mosque, whose date is unknown, is its dwarf minaret. Its design is nearly square, has a roof and the walls are made of rubble stone. The most recent renovation of the masjid must have been an exaggerated attempt to decorate it. As a result, the restoration of the main door in the front and the new structure fused to the back of the mosque have damaged its traditional features.

The masjid has no courtyard (enclosed graveyard), but there is a fountain that bears no inscription and is located on the street, in the direction to kible. The most interesting aspect of the fountain is its possession of a small spring. Due to continual elevation of the road, the drinking basin of the fountain is now almost buried in the ground. The fountain also has a dirty appearance because it is continuously splattered by dust and soil as vehicles pass on this road that has no sidewalk. (Photograph 9)

Shah Sultan Mosque

This mosque is on Silahtarağa Street in the Bahariye district of Eyüp. According to its epitaph, it was built by the daughter of Yavuz Sultan Selim in 1556. The mosque is rectangular in width and has a roof. It has stone-brick main walls and a tiled roof. The last assembly area in the front has wide eaves and wood columns. The main walls and the pulpit of the minaret date to the 16th century. The minaret itself is believed to belong to the 18th century. It is understood that the wood columns were erected in 1971. The mosque was demolished in the 1766 earthquake and was reconstructed during the time of Mustafa III. Since the decision to remove the buildings along the Golden Horn, it has been



standing alone, all by itself. As a result, its assembly has been greatly reduced and it has lost its liveliness due to decreased interest of the people. (Photograph 10)

Zal Mahmut Pasha Mosque

Grand Vizier “*Damat*” (son-in-law) Zal Mahmud Pasha was the founder of this mosque. It stands at the center of Sinan’s most important “*külliye*” (the charitable buildings of a religious facility, usually composed of schools, a mosque, mental hospital, hospital, soup kitchen, etc) in Eyüp. This *külliye* had much to contribute to the historical identity of Eyüp. The rectangular mosque in cubical form, with its four-rows of windows, dominates over the other elements of the institution. Its minaret, which was demolished in the 1894 earthquake, was reconstructed and the whole structure underwent extensive renovation between 1955-1963.

In spite of its great significance, the *külliye*, as a whole, has been deprived of the care it deserves. Particularly, the western walls of its grounds have become very dirty, due to speeding vehicles on the road which goes along these walls. Undoubtedly, closing this road, which is narrow and has no sidewalk, would also be desirable to save these structures from imminent damages that would arise from ground vibrations caused by the fast moving traffic. It was also observed that the stone railings in the last assembly hall and in the upper medresseh were broken in parts. The first step to be taken should be to repair these before any further damage. It should also be noted that both the madrasa and the other structures in the *külliye*



Illustration 11. Zal Mahmud Pasha Mosque, the condition of the west wall of the *külliye* suffering from traffic. (Photo: Aras Neftçi)

Illustration 12. Zal Mahmud Pasha Mosque, the condition of railings in the last assembly room and the upper madrasa. (Photo: Aras Neftçi)

deserve a much closer attention and that they should be handled with more care. (Photographs 11 and 12)

Finally, it can be stated that all mosques and masjids that were built by Architect Sinan in Eyüp have survived until the present. The important monuments, such as the Zal Mahmud Külliye, have retained their identity. While some of the mosques and masjids survived with loss of their original identity, others were partially preserved. Particularly, most of the district masjids suffered damage because of unfortunate interventions. Obviously, many such interventions were motivated by good intentions; even so, acting without expert opinion and an evaluation of the value of the structure and worst of all, intervening with no official authorization cause irreversible damages in these works of art.

Aside from all of these, recent damages to some structures which have so far been preserved are beginning to be apparent. In fact, some are now in poor condition due to negligence and misuse and others are being eroded by improper treatment. We must be reasonable and logical in our approach to these works of art.

All institutions, official-civil or central-local, as well as individuals in all levels of the society should be more sensitive towards the preservation of these architectural values, which are the documents of our cultural history. Their protection from further damages caused by improper acts of renovation, should be a part of our responsibilities as citizens.