



## EYÜP SULTAN THROUGH A. SÜHEYL ÜNVER'S EYES



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*Prof. Dr. Sayar was born in Istanbul in 1946 where he completed his primary school and lycee educations. He graduated from the Faculty of Economics in Istanbul University and earned a Masters degree from Birmingham University in England. He served as an assistant in the Faculty of Economics in Istanbul University where he became an associate professor in 1980. He transferred to the Faculty of Political Science at the same university in 1982, where he became a professor in 1988. Presently, he is the chairman of the Department of History of Economics in Istanbul University. Prof. Sayar's main area of interest is the historical evaluation of the "Theory of Economics." One of his important works in this area is the Modernization of Ottoman Ideas of Economics that was published in 1986. He is the author of books titled Portrayal Studies from Ottomans to the Republic and Changes in Economical, Cultural and Governmental Philosophies from Ottomans to the 21st Century. He has also written numerous articles which have been published in various journals. His original works written as expressions of gratitude for his teachers are the Life, Personality and Works of A. Süheyl Ünver (1994) and The Intellectual Portrait of an Economist: Sabri F. Ülgener (1998). He is presently continuing his work along these lines with a book to be titled T. W. Hutchison, a Philosopher and an Economist.*



Illustration 1. Süheyl Ünver.  
(A. G. Sayar, *A. Süheyl Ünver*, İstanbul, 1994)



Illustration 2. The cover of Süheyl Ünver's articles published by İstanbul Municipality.

Süheyl Ünver, who has acknowledged the privilege of being from İstanbul by his articles, paintings and note-books and has left behind an incredible archives of the city, is indeed one of the most distinguished persons of merit in this country. For him, İstanbul was a summary of Turkish history and a concrete expression of the Turkish spirit.

Süheyl Ünver's discovery of İstanbul was a consequence of pain and suffering. His youth corresponds with the last days of a great empire, the Armistice. The country was under invasion and the people, in spirit, expected a way out from darkness to light. It was during those inauspicious days that Süheyl Ünver started to roam the streets of İstanbul, taking notes of what he saw. The mosques, masjids, springs and fountains, wooden houses and mansions, cemeteries; all of these historical works of art promised young Süheyl that the days ahead would be luminous. Just like the beloved master Yahya Kemal, he was one who dreamt of conquest in defeat. The conclusion he reached was also the same: a nation

who created this historical texture and engraved its spirit on stone could never be abased!

The Eyüp Sultan district also showed young Süheyl the way out of darkness. His first visit to the place was in 1916, but these visits became more frequent after 1918. His interest bloomed with the visit to Hz. Halid İbni Zeyd Eba Eyübel-Ensari and gradually developed into a passionate love. He solved the mystery of the conquest of İstanbul by Akşemseddin's dream. It was as if the discovery of Hz. Halid's grave through revelation by a dream and the construction of a mosque at the site of his burial had placed the district within an unbreakable spiritual lantern. Süheyl was bewitched by this spirituality that seemed to encompass each and every stone and vegetation in Eyüp Sultan and its vicinity. He had found the magic key to the heart of this district. Now, let's go back to 1918 and after, to the beginning of Süheyl Ünver's Eyüp Sultan adventures and let's roam the streets of the district together with him.

"...The interest to promenade in İstanbul developed in those days. Once in a while he would leave Haseki and go to visit the district of Eyüp Sultan. In those years, Eyüp Sultan and its vicinity which Süheyl observed had an aura of

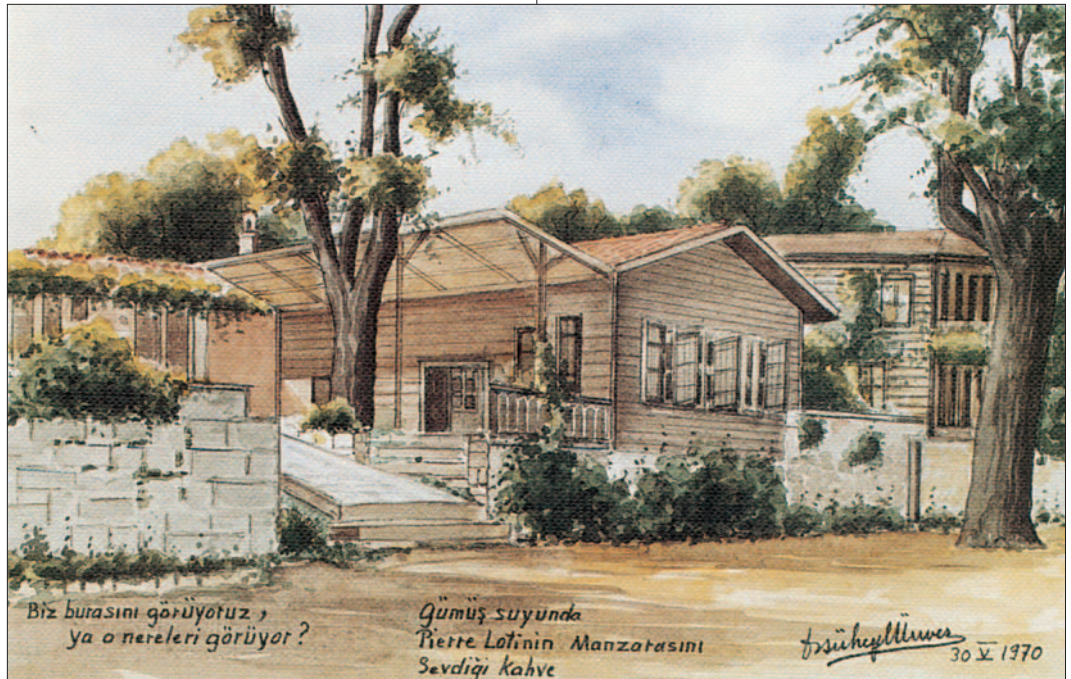


Illustration 3. Piyer Loti cafe in watercolors by Süheyl Ünver. (*My Beloved İstanbul*)

spirituality that got implanted in him. During the days of the Armistice, one of the only consolations for Turkish people who were physically and spiritually suffering from the consequences of the World War I, was the chattering of children on the streets. After all, the residents of Eyüp were protected under the wings of the host of a great Prophet. Süheyl used to walk the streets of Eyüp with a deep curiosity. He had always found these streets, lined by wooden houses with latticework projections extending from outside of their windows and clay roofing tiles on wide and airy attics, very attractive. As he walked from one street to another, he would never miss the view presented by a dwarf single-minaret masjid, sometimes with a neighboring fountain and would sketch it either by a charcoal or watercolor drawing in his pocket book. In Eyüp, gazing at the opposite hills buried in green and particularly admiring the Piyer Loti cafe in the midst of cemeteries on Karyağdı hill gave him a special kind of pleasure. For Süheyl, Eyüp at the time was like a beautiful woman presenting a spectrum of colors for landscape artists. As he roamed the streets of Eyüp, full of desire to absorb and learn everything, how could he have known that a beautiful little girl chattering on one of these streets who was then merely 4-5 years old would one day become the most important part of his life? Süheyl always came to the Eyüp Sultan Mosque first and then visited the tomb from where he walked to the mysterious cemeteries which surrounded the mosque and concealed the spirituality of heavens high up in the sky. Many statesmen such as grand viziers and pashas, as well as scholars, poets, hodjas and dervishes rest in the bosom of Eyüp cemeteries. Süheyl was attracted by the fact that the spirituality of the Eyüp Mosque and its environs constituted a source of consolation for the people of İstanbul. After returning to the mosque, he would visit Hafız Cemal Efendi, his friend from Medresetül Hattatin, and stroll in the courtyard of the mosque. On Fridays in Eyüp bazaar, when every other place was closed, he would

carefully examine the black and painted cardboard panels produced by Firakî, a folk calligrapher. These inscriptions by Firakî could not be matched even by the most beautiful samples of calligraphy. Süheyl knew enough of good quality calligraphy to make this kind of a comparison. He found the answer to his curiosity in this Eyüp bazaar. There were quite a few examples of calligraphy in the stores. The strange thing was that most of these were done by Firakî, the person he had seen in the courtyard of the mosque a short while ago, who was an unknown personality. So, to satisfy his curiosity he kept asking around. Finally, the tradesmen in the bazaar explained to him that they value Firakî's calligraphy because, "they bring them luck and more profit." He likes the words of one of them very much. Here is the couplet which he repeated to himself for years:

"I circled the whole world and could not find a crown for me,

I neither met a satisfied crook, nor a needy honest one."

After the bazaar in Eyüp, Süheyl would go to the small clock room of the timekeeper right next to the mosque. The walls in this place were also decorated with framed inscriptions. He would read these without wasting any time and would take notes in his pocket-book or notebook.<sup>1</sup>

The reasons why Süheyl Ünver remained loyal to Eyüp are obvious. For one, the notebooks he kept, the booklet he wrote out, his papers, articles, charcoal and watercolor drawings are his main bonds with Eyüp. Here we may also consider the fact that Mustafa Enver Bey, his father, rests in the Eyüp cemetery. However, this is not the whole picture. Eyüp Sultan would reward Süheyl, who so sincerely and heartily served him, with Müzehher Hanım (born in 1915), one of its very own daughters who was born and grew up there.

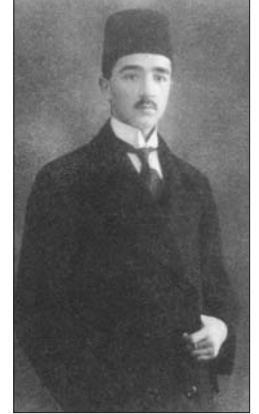


Illustration 4. Dr. Süheyl Ünver at Gülhane Hospital when he was an Assistant in Dermatology, 1922. (A. G. Sayar, *A. Süheyl Ünver*, İstanbul, 1994)

1. A. G. Sayar, *A. Süheyl Ünver*, İstanbul, 1994, pp. 95-96.
2. Note-book No: 267, Süleymaniye Library.
3. Note-book No.: 663, Süleymaniye Library.
4. Note-book No.: 670, Süleymaniye Library.

Illustration 5. The Sheikh room of the *Şeyhülislam* (Sheikhulislam) Dervish Lodge in Baba Haydar, Eyüp Sultan. (*My Beloved İstanbul*)



Illustration 6. Dr. Süheyl Ünver while drawing a picture in Emirsultan, Bursa, 1950. (A. G. Sayar, *A. Süheyl Ünver*, İstanbul, 1994)

Illustration 7. Baba Nakkaş Hasan Pasha and Salahi Mehmed Bey Masjids in Eyüp Sultan drawn by Dr. Süheyl Ünver, 1920-1960. (*My Beloved İstanbul*)



5. A. S. Ünver, "The Illness of Süleyman The Magnificent in His Last Austrian Campaign, His Death, Funeral and Burial," *Kanuni Award, Kanuni Armağanı*, Ankara, 1970, pp. 301-306.
6. A. S. Ünver, "Davud Pasha Palace," *Turkish Touring and Automobile Association Bulletin*, Issue 239, 1961, pp. 6-7.
7. *Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu Bülteni*, Issue 314, 1972, pp. 9-12.
8. *Atatürk Conferences 1971-1972*, V, (Ankara 1975), pp. 217-257.
9. *Dirim*, Issue 10, (1948), pp. 248-253.

Illustration 8. The front page of the book by Dr. Süheyl Ünver which covers 53 of his water color paintings. Published by İstanbul Municipality in 1996.



Illustration 9. The gravestone of Dr. Süheyl Ünver in Edirnekapı/Eyüp. (Eyüp Municipality Archives)

Süheyl Ünver has presented Eyüp of 1920's with unmatched drawings, on-sight observations and historical information in his first note-book on Eyüp titled "Eyübnâme"<sup>2</sup> which he started to prepare after 1918. His second note-book is called the "Eyüp Sultan Cemetery"<sup>3</sup> in which he writes about the existing gravestones around Eyüp Sultan. "Eyüp Sultan Name,"<sup>4</sup> the third note-book is concerned with detailed identification of each existing historical structure in the district and appears as if it is the registry of property belonging to the district. Süheyl Ünver's love of Eyüp Sultan, particularly Hz. Halid İbni Zeyd, motivated him in his work and was reflected in many of his booklet's, articles, charcoal and watercolor drawings. We should note here that Süheyl Ünver's drawings have been gathered in an album by the İstanbul Municipality under the title *İstanbul of A. Süheyl Ünver* (İstanbul, 1997). It should also be stated that some of the 267 colored and charcoal drawings of Eyüp and vicinity were gathered from various obscure historical corners through Süheyl Ünver's endeavours and were saved from being lost.

Undoubtedly, among Süheyl Ünver's publications on Eyüp, the article titled "İstanbul'da Sahabe Kabirleri" (Graves in İstanbul of the Prophet Muhammad's Companions), (İstanbul, 1953) is noteworthy in the sense that it reveals the importance he gave to Hz. Halid İbni Zeyd. In the section on these graves, the names on them, their locations and present conditions, Ünver gives detailed information on Eyüp Sultan and his Tomb based on original sources.

Süheyl Ünver has noted even the most worn-out information on Eyüp and has referred to them at appropriate times. We learn from his collection of data that Kanuni Sultan Süleyman (Süleyman the Magnificent) visited Eyüp Sultan before leaving for his Siegetvar campaign.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, we learn about the history of Davud Pasha's palace in the vicinity of Eyüp Sultan from his article titled "The Palace of Davud Pasha." Ünver attached to this article two pictures which depict the palace at the time the article was written.<sup>6</sup> In "Inner Store Panels of the Last Century,"<sup>7</sup> another one of his articles, he investigates the framed inscriptions which have a religious connotation and are hung on interior store walls to bring good luck; as well as the calligraphers who wrote these in Eyüp.



Ünver has also studied the clock room of the timekeeper at the Eyüb Sultan Mosque. He gives truly invaluable information about Ahmed Ziya Akbulut, the last timekeeper of the Eyüb Sultan Mosque, and the clocks in his room in the article titled "The Clock-Rooms of Timekeepers in the Scientific History of the Ottoman Turks."<sup>8</sup>

The documentary article which he published under the title of "Another Page of Our Medical History Became a Thing of the Past," (Istanbul, 1946) is an expression of deep sorrow Süheyl Ünver felt at complete demolition of the Beşir Ağa Medrese in Baba Haydar quarter of Eyüb Sultan. This Medrese is non-existent today, but lives in Ünver's article. He expressed the importance of this Medrese with the following words:

"... Eyüb Sultan, the Beşir Ağa Medrese... was the nucleus of the initial academic meetings of the Turkish Medical Society, that is of our medical doctors. In fact, the place could have become the core of the *Cemiyet-i Tıbbiye-i Osmaniye* (The Ottoman Medical Society), similar to such institutions found in the West. It was not realized, cannot be realized any more. What a pity!"

In another one of his articles concerning Eyüb, the one titled "The Turkish Baths Outside of Istanbul,"<sup>9</sup> Süheyl Ünver lists the baths in Eyüb. Another one of Ünver's articles titled "A Discussion on Folkloric and Social Aspects of Sterility"<sup>10</sup> deals with the tomb, *Çifte Gelinler* (A Pair of Brides) in Eyüb Sultan, which is at the site of early studies on sterility. In the article "A Distressing Hour in Bahariye,"<sup>11</sup> Ünver talks about the heart-breaking condition of the Bahariye *Mevlevihane* (the lodge of Mevlevi dervishes). In his distress, Ünver would write a note-book on "Bahariye Mevlevihane"<sup>12</sup> which would contribute greatly to Mevlevi culture in İstanbul. Ünver requested that the Piyer Loti cafe in Gümüşsuyu, Eyüb be conserved for the future in his article titled "Demolished? Restored?"<sup>13</sup>

Süheyl Ünver's last article was on Eyüb Sultan. He wrote "Eyüb Sultan, From Past to Present"<sup>14</sup> just before his death. In this work he introduced some of the historical structures in Eyüb Sultan district through his brush and pen. The article which he wrote in 1963 and titled "Eyüb Sultan"<sup>15</sup> is merely a summary. However, it is the most genuine description of this beautiful district of İstanbul. Here we include some of the lines of this article which was written with a historical perspective:

"... We have created a site called Eyüb Sultan. You may call it the world, but it is not worldly. You may consider it the Heaven, the Heaven on earth. It is so sacred a place that people who go there regularly feel as if they have undergone a spiritual resurrection. They go, and if they are communicative, their spirits are exalted. They say a few things about what they have seen or heard or speak inwardly."

Süheyl Ünver continues: Eyüb Sultan is a place of contemplation. You have as much of art as you want, and history as well. Unfortunately, those who are familiar with its meaningful legends are so few that you don't ever come across them. Who knows what that Bostan İskele (Garden Wharf) would tell if it could talk? One should perceive the gentle splashing of the waves created by caiques gliding on waters of the Golden Horn centuries ago. Eyüb is a poem; too bad that Üsküdar has Yahya Kemal, but not Eyüb. So, there are few who go there and are elevated spiritually."

As we commemorate Süheyl Ünver, our blessed teacher, who left so much knowledge and so many documents behind for us, I am hoping that we shall continue to view Eyüb Sultan and its environments through his eyes and inwardly feel for this sacred place. Süheyl Ünver, our teacher, now rests in one of the cemeteries of Eyüb Sultan in Sakızağacı. Here I commemorate him with feelings of compassion and gratitude.

10. T.R.Kazancıgil, *Fundamentals of Diagnosis and Treatment of Sterility in Women*, İstanbul, 1958, pp. 3-7.
11. *Hür Vatan* (12. XII. 1961).
12. Note-book No: 730, Süleymaniye Library.
13. *Sabah* (19. V. 1966).
14. *Antika*, Issue 2, 1985, pp. 24-26.
15. *Selamet*, Issue 12, 1963, p. 3