
INTRODUCTION

Situated on the European side of Istanbul, Eyupsultan is both one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city and also one that holds a very special place as a depository of both the cultural property and movable cultural property of the city, chief among them the plastic arts of its tombstones. The music and literature that sprang from the district also hold a unique place in Turkish culture and art forms in the area of phonetic arts. Despite the fact that the area has been a subject of research, and a source of inspiration, for many writers, scientists, and artists, not all of the features and qualities of the district have yet been determined in a chronological and systematic fashion. This district has been a continual residence of Turks since the 15th century and it was thus imperative that we prepare a monography of Eyupsultan that included both a documentation of the products of Turkish culture and art of this district and an analysis of the current situation, so that we can pass this information down to future generations. Conscious of this fact, the Eyup Municipality initiated a project outlined within a ten-year framework. Within the first stage of the program (1997-2005) the Municipality organized a series of symposia and published the findings in eight separate volumes. In 2005 the project directed its efforts at informing international circles about some of the accumulated findings that had been collected in the nation-wide symposia. This book is a first example of the steps taken towards the preparation of an Eyüpsultan Monography and represents a selection of a group of papers that were previously published in the earlier volumes. By doing this, the information gathered at the national level will be carried to an international platform. This book has been prepared as a gift aiming to introduce and present certain aspects of the culture and art of Eyüpsultan.

This book developed out of a nine-year long effort that consisted of carefully staged and gradual steps. The symposia held periodically each May presented the views of authorities on such subjects as the documentation, preservation, restoration, and revitalization of products of cultural legacy. In addition to these academics, various artists were also invited to Eyüp so that, just as the scientists were preparing a foundation for the district based on scientific research, the beautiful district around the Golden Horn could also become the subject of artists who could record with photographs, painting, graphics, ceramics, and plastic arts, along with music and literature, their own unique manners of observation. Within this process, efforts were made to inform both the residents of Eyüb and others who are fond of this district on subjects related to Eyüb's former features so they could once again become current. The events organized to this end were carried out within a high level artistic climate.

The symposia were organized into single sections, thus allowing participants the time to debate and discuss, and to share their information and knowledge with one another. The symposia were further enlivened with artistic events organized around symposia subjects. Twenty-three papers were delivered at the first symposia held in 1997 on subjects ranging from Eyüpsultan history, the place the district held in the Ottoman capital city of Istanbul, the identities of some of the major religious leaders buried in the district, and the cultural property located in the area. The number of papers delivered at the second symposia held in 1998, the Symposia of Eyüpsultan's Historical Culture and Art, increased to 36. By 1999, 45 papers were delivered. Because that year marked the 700th anniversary of the founding of the Ottoman Empire, the subject range that year was widened and the geographical area included in the study was not restricted to Istanbul alone, but rather stretched from Anatolia to the Balkans. Forty-four papers were read at the succeeding fourth symposia held in 2000; 40 in 2002, 55 in 2003, and 41 in 2004. In this way, during the succeeding symposia a total of 337 papers were published and contributed to the worlds of science and art.

In addition to the monumental structures of Eyüpsultan, its tombs—turbe, public fountains, mosques, religious lodges, madrasa, libraries, Turkish baths, schools and residences, along with

such huge structures as charitable institutions and barracks, its graveyards, halls, and grave stones all serve to provide us with valuable information about everyday life in the Ottoman Empire. While the symposia was originally organized by gathering together scientists working in the fields of history and art history with the aim of documenting the district's movable cultural property in the realm of plastic arts and determining the 20th century state of the district, in time the scientists contributing to the symposia began to direct their efforts towards such subjects as folklore, Turkish language and literature, the history of religion, and architecture and restoration. The participation of artists and masters in the fields of miniature, calligraphy, gilding, and handicrafts infused the symposia with even more color and vitality. In addition to these visual arts, the symposia were further broadened with the participation of audio directed arts, as specialists in phonetic and dramatic arts joined into the discussions. The symposia thus began to include a wide spectrum of subjects from various fields of science and the arts.

Eyüp became the site for inter-university dialogue as scientists and artists from various universities joined the symposia and thus Eyüpsultan began to be analyzed both culturally and artistically by scientists holding a range of different perspectives. An atmosphere that combined both science and art was created, bringing together academicians from the social sciences, fine arts, and traditional Turkish arts and enlivening the events even further and bringing them to a new dimension with plastic art exhibits, musical performances, and concerts performed by the Eyüp Municipality Mehter Band.

In other words, events and efforts began to focus and center on a district of Istanbul that had been selected as a pilot area and gradually Eyüp was transformed into a window onto Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Each symposia was propelled by the symposia that had preceded it and with this interdisciplinary approach, the district of Eyüp, along with its surroundings, Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire were observed and analyzed in great detail. The Eyüpsultan Municipality thus built an archive, a depository of knowledge, made up of all the data and findings that had developed out of the symposia. This information was then published into eight separate editions that included papers that ranged from the architecture of the district, its graveyards, handicrafts, toy making traditions, pottery workshops, music schools, the painters and travelers who used Eyüp as their subjects, the companions of the Prophet who are buried here, and the administrative officials who played a role in the district. Thus it was that very important strides were taken towards the construction of an Eyüp monography.

These efforts carried out by the Eyüp Municipality have shed light on a district and have attracted the attention of academicians and artists to the neighborhood, thus stimulating the search for new knowledge about the area. While this has been developing, within the nine years of the project a group of people who have grown committed to Eyüp, and who may be termed a cultural and art group, has formed. In this sense, this book is made up of the papers that make up one part of the works of enthusiasts of the physical cultural heritage of Eyüpsultan.

We offer you here a selection of some of the collective articles written about Eyüp, a district whose very stones and soil were consummate parts of Istanbul during the Ottoman Empire period, articles that take us all on a journey through a time tunnel. I congratulate the Eyüp Municipality for this endeavor that will represent an example for the other municipalities in the city. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my-and the other members of the Eyüp supporters group-sincere gratitude to the Eyüp Municipality for their efforts in moving this research that was carried out on a national level to an international arena, for allowing us to greatly expand our communication networks, and for giving us the unique opportunities to experience the unique beauties of this district, to live in Eyüp for a time, to be able to wander through its streets and to sit under the willows along the Golden Horn, sipping tea and gazing at the purple Judas trees.

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