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The city that is discovered as you experience
it, and loved as discovered...



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'If the world were a single state, İstanbul would have been its capital.'

Napoleon Bonaparte

The capital of empires... The city that dominated continents... The cradle of civilisation... The meeting point of cultures and civilisations... These are some of the thousands of phrases that describe İstanbul. Yet neither words nor any amount of reading or listening are sufficient to truly describe and become familiar with the city. Only when you walk along its historic streets, when you see with your own eyes the architectural masterpieces of Byzantine and Ottoman Empires in their original setting, when you enjoy the panoramic vistas of its unique location, and when you start to explore its mystical beauties – only then will you begin to discover, and to fall in love with İstanbul...



Istanbul is the most developed and largest city of Turkey, and the latest discoveries indicate that the history of human habitation goes back 400,000 years ago. The Megarians settled and founded the city of Byzantium that later lent its name to the Byzantine Empire. However, the first settlers in the region established their city Chalcedon (Kadıköy), on 'the land of blind people' which was strategically less important. And the Megarians, led by an Oracle, became aware of the beauty of Seraglio Point (Sarayburnu), and they established their city there on the opposite side of the Chalcedon.





Today the historical peninsula is the most beautiful part of İstanbul, and is strategically well placed. The city is surrounded by a seascape peppered with distant islands, and this, together with the Golden Horn (Haliç), the estuary that thrusts into the land along the peninsula, make İstanbul a unique place – and, throughout its long history, a city that many desired to conquer. But the desire to possess the city cannot be explained only by its strategic position or unsurpassed beauty; it has a different attraction, a mystical magnetism that drew states, empires and great conquerors towards it. This attraction led to a long history of conflict, conquest and



occupation between those determined to maintain their hold on the city and those who strove to capture it.

For more than 1,500 years İstanbul was the capital of two empires, first the Byzantine and later the Ottoman. It was beautified accordingly with magnificent monuments and became a metropolis where diverse cultures, nations and religions mingle. Those cultures, nations and religions are the small pieces that form the mosaic of İstanbul. Perhaps some of those little pieces do not mean much to you, but as an ensemble they make up the unique majesty of İstanbul.

The Royal Purple Years of İstanbul: The Period of the Byzantine Empire

Royal purple is the colour of the Byzantine imperial family. The Byzantine emperors called themselves 'the Royal Purple Blooded'; they were born in purple-decorated rooms, they wore purple mantles when they were enthroned, and they were buried in purple sarcophagi; so their whole lives were identified with purple.

The purple years of İstanbul may be considered to have started in 330 when Emperor Constantine declared the city the capital of his empire. Until 1453, when it was conquered by the Ottomans, the city had served as the capital of the Byzantine Empire. During the sovereignty of Byzantine Empire it was adorned with several works of art to become the most magnificent city of the world, even in those years when the Byzantines themselves were enfeebled.

When the Roman Empire needed a base to stage its campaigns towards the East, there was not much need to explore further afield: İstanbul's unique location and strategic position made it the best choice. The capital was first called 'New Rome', and indeed the city is quite similar to Rome. Both cities were based on seven



hills; the original settlement area of İstanbul was surrounded on three sides by the Sea of Marmara and the Golden Horn, while Rome was surrounded by the River Tiber; the layout of both cities looks like a scalene triangle. Perhaps those features were influential in choosing the location of 'New Rome'. However, physical similarities were not deemed enough, and so every resource of the empire was drawn up to enhance the magnificence of the new city.

Byzantium was in fact a continuation of Rome, and the Byzantines called themselves 'Romans' even until the day their empire came to an end. Yet there was a significant difference between the Byzantines and their ancestors: Christianity. In Byzantium, Roman temples were replaced with churches. Displaying unique examples of Byzantine painting and architecture, these buildings were scattered across the historical peninsula as well as in other parts of İstanbul. Some of the most important Byzantine masterpieces in İstanbul are public buildings such as the hippodrome, water cisterns, palaces, thoroughfares and public squares and the city walls.

The identity of İstanbul that began to be formed by the Byzantines was further shaped during the period of Ottoman Empire.





The Most Valuable Heritage of the Ottoman Empire

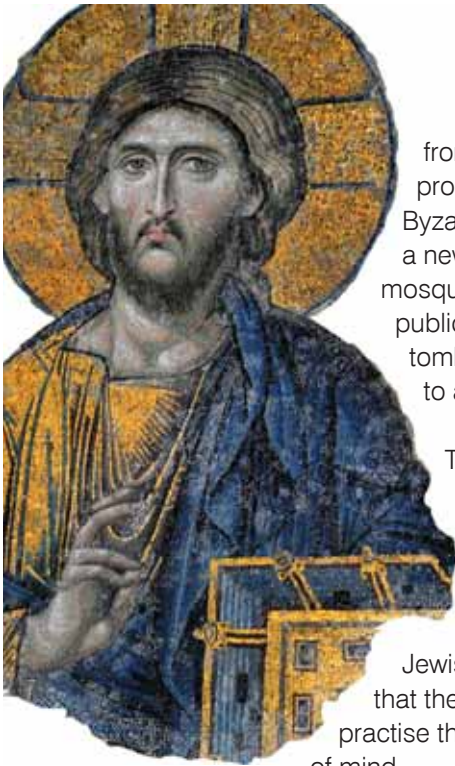
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The reason why İstanbul is one of the most beautiful cities of the world stems from the fact that its natural beauty has been enhanced by human endeavour. The most important building activities started in the Byzantine Period, and the city was then embellished further during the Ottoman Period.

Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror declared İstanbul the capital of Ottoman Empire after he conquered the city in 1453. Over the next 450 years the city was adorned with superb Ottoman works of art. Building activities after the conquest gained pace during the reign of Sultan Bayezid II, with the finest works built by Mimar Sinan, the Chief Royal Architect. This world famous architect put his signature on the silhouette of İstanbul with several masterpieces. Of course, he was fortunate to live through the most glorious period of Ottoman history, a coincidence that played a major role in his work. Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent generously put the riches of the empire at the disposal of Sinan in order to enable him to beautify İstanbul. Sinan responded to his generosity by adorning İstanbul with buildings that still evoke admiration in visitors thanks to his superlative talent and skill. Sinan's apprentices and disciples continued this work after him, so that İstanbul,



Mimar Sinan



from being the most prominent city of the Byzantine Empire, gained a new identity with mosques, caravanserais, public bathhouses and tombs and became a city to admire.

The Ottomans wisely tolerated religions other than Islam, and dedicated many places of worship to Christian and

Jewish communities so that these peoples could practise their religion in peace of mind.

Because of this tolerant outlook, mosques, churches and synagogues stood and still stand side by side. This is the physical evidence of the fact that İstanbul was the symbol of tolerance and fraternity of religions.



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The Tour Guide of İstanbul; an Asian as well as a European City

Asia and Europe are like two lovers who long to embrace but cannot because of the straits. The union of those two lovers is İstanbul. Besides these two continents it has also unified many peoples from different cultures for thousands of years. While in one part you can experience the mystery of the East, in the other you can explore the European aspect. In many areas of the city the minarets of mosques, the symbols of Islam, stand high next to churches and synagogues. Both modern and historical architecture can be seen on the same street, and hidden beauty spots can be found all across the city.

İstanbul cannot be seen or experienced in with all its glorious colours in just a couple of days. The visitor needs a couple of weeks to explore this magnificent city. You have to walk along the



streets to get the feel of the city, and avoid public transport if you are to enjoy the experience of finding hidden gems. The following are the routes that we recommend you try.

The Historical Peninsula: 'Within the Royal Walls'; 'Sultanahmet and Environs'; from 'Eminönü' to 'Süleymaniye' – From 'Süleymaniye' to 'Eminönü'; 'Fatih' along the 'Golden Horn'. The walk at 'Fener' and 'Balat' as well as sightseeing along the 'Divanyolu' (which follows the Byzantine 'Mese' road), where you can see examples of monumental architecture, will help you to familiarise yourself with the historical peninsula.



The European Side of the İstanbul Strait:

Galata and its environs have been the centre of commerce since the antiquity. A walk from here to Ortaköy or to Beyoğlu, the heart of İstanbul's entertainment industry, would be a good start.

The Asian Face of İstanbul: On the Asian side of İstanbul are Kadıköy and Üsküdar which were hunting grounds and pleasure gardens during the Byzantine and Ottoman periods. A walk along the Strait is also highly recommended.

Boat Tour on the İstanbul Strait: A boat tour on the Strait, connecting the Sea of Marmara to the Black Sea, is a delightful way of seeing İstanbul without setting foot either in Asia or in Europe. You can also take a boat trip to the Prince Islands to escape the hustle and bustle of İstanbul.



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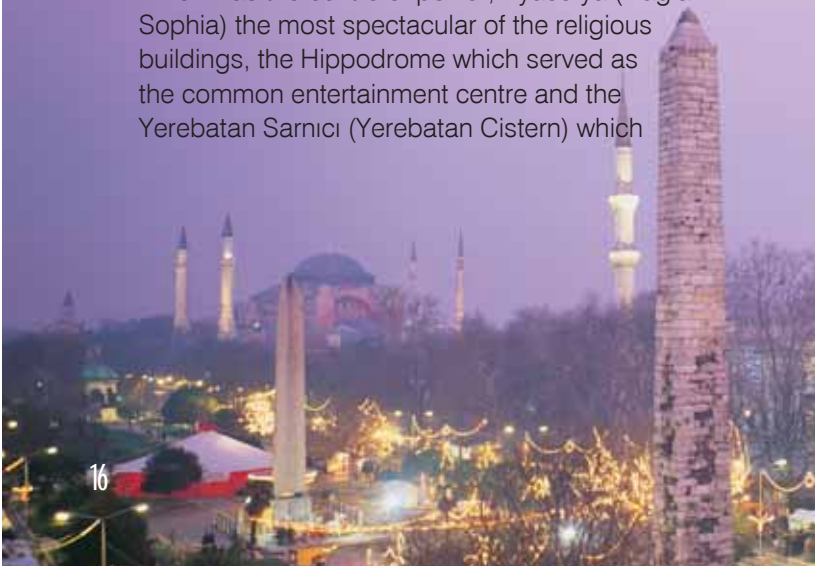
The Historical Peninsula

The Heart of the Historical Peninsula: Sultanahmet and Its Environs

The most magnificent of İstanbul's monuments are clustered on the historical peninsula, the triangular piece of land surrounded by the Sea of Marmara to the west and south, by the Golden Horn to the north and by the city walls to the east. The Megarians settled here and Septimus Severus, who was largely responsible for the pre-Byzantine settlement, paid particular attention to this area. The city walls, which were built according to plans that the Emperor Constantine drew up with a spear, form the base of the triangle.

The centre of the land that was the core of İstanbul was the area we know today as Sultanahmet Square. The most prominent examples of Byzantine and Ottoman architecture can be seen in close proximity here.

In the Byzantine Period the centre of the city was the Hippodrome and its environs. The palace which was the centre of power; Ayasofya (Hagia Sophia) the most spectacular of the religious buildings, the Hippodrome which served as the common entertainment centre and the Yerebatan Sarnıcı (Yerebatan Cistern) which





Yerebatan Cistern

supplied most of the city's water, had all been gathered here at the city centre. The Hippodrome was the site of many riots as well as chariot races in Byzantine Period. During the Ottoman times the square where the Hippodrome used to stand became the site for the circumcision ceremonies of the Sultan's sons. These ceremonies lasted for forty days and forty nights, during which jugglers and magicians performed their tricks. This was also where the principal religious and state buildings, including Topkapı Palace, were constructed.



Sultanahmet Square

A tram line operates along Hüdavendigâr Street, the road that climbs towards Sultanahmet from Sirkeci. The Royal City Walls enclose the gardens of Topkapı Palace to the left. These walls have several portals, and across the road the first thing of interest is the former **Bab-ı Ali** (Sublime Porte) which houses the Governor's Office at present. The name of this part means 'the portal of pashas', and it is the gate to the palace of the Grand Vizier. The term Bab-ı Ali later applied to all the buildings in the complex. Renovated several times in its history, the area has witnessed some of the most important episodes in Ottoman history.

The road along the walls leads to one of the most important monuments of the ancient world, the magnificent Ayasofya, which bedazzles the visitors.



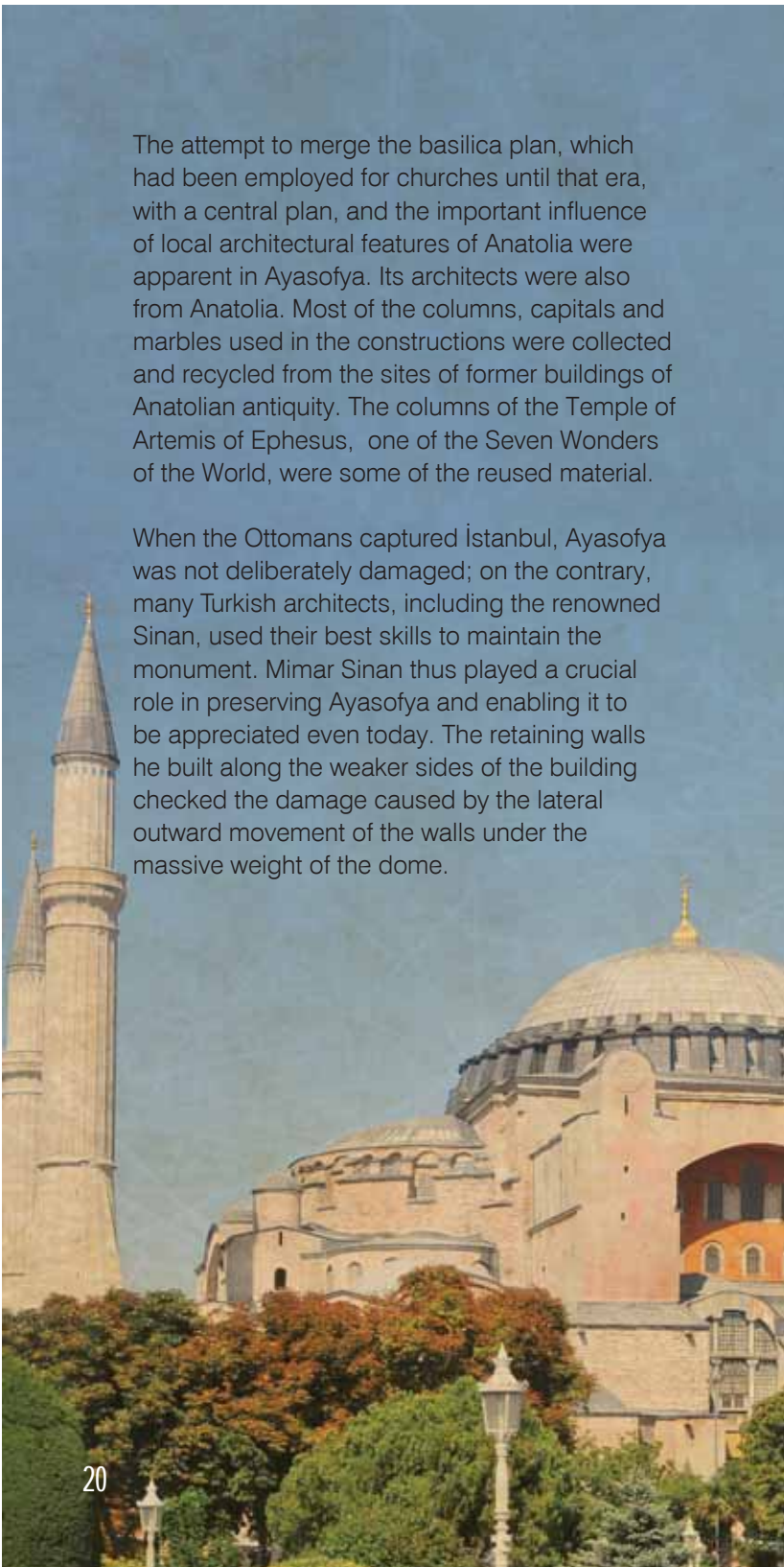
The most glorious architectural heritage of Byzantine Empire is **Ayasofya** which has been referred to as the eighth wonder of the world and it is one of the most important surviving works of Byzantine Period. Ayasofya was built under the auspices of Emperor Justinian I, who, along with Emperor Constantine, made great contributions to İstanbul. Massive in size and reputation, the basilica stood for centuries as one of the world's most significant buildings, and, despite suffering damage from natural disasters such as fire and earthquakes, has survived to this day. Ayasofya is not only renowned for its magnificent architecture but also for its exquisite Byzantine mosaics.

The Emperor Justinian, who ruled during one of the most brilliant periods of Byzantine Empire, wished to construct a basilica surpassing the legendary Solomon's Temple. The outcome was the Ayasofya. The basilica was designed in a period when Byzantine religious architecture was in search of new ideas, and Ayasofya became famous not only for the magnificence of its construction but also as a superb and unique example of Byzantine religious architecture.



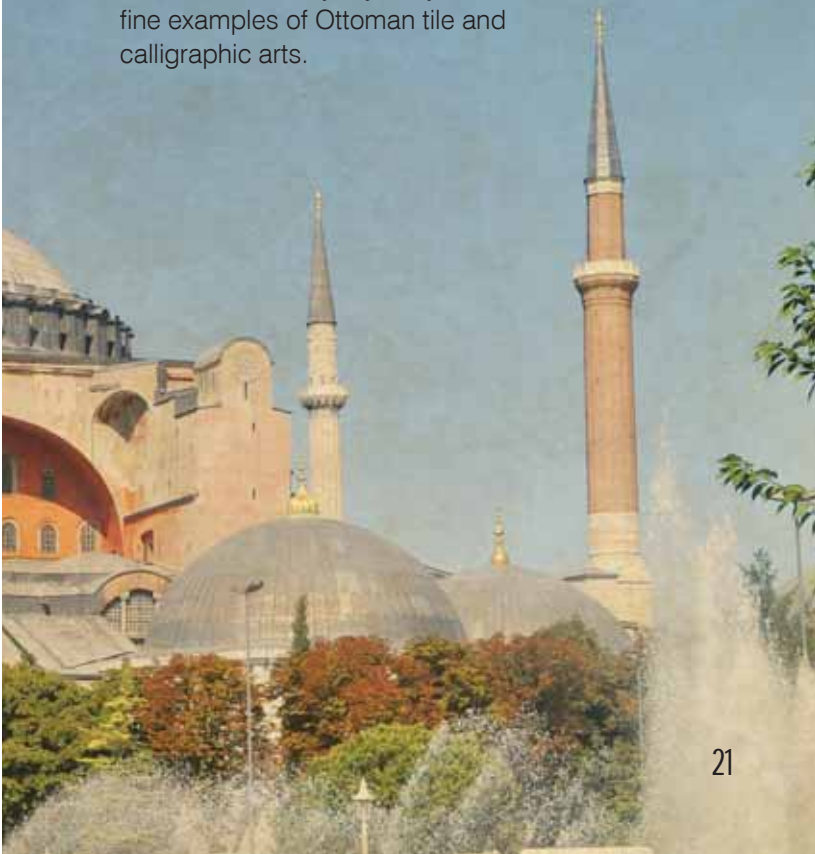
The attempt to merge the basilica plan, which had been employed for churches until that era, with a central plan, and the important influence of local architectural features of Anatolia were apparent in Ayasofya. Its architects were also from Anatolia. Most of the columns, capitals and marbles used in the constructions were collected and recycled from the sites of former buildings of Anatolian antiquity. The columns of the Temple of Artemis of Ephesus, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, were some of the reused material.

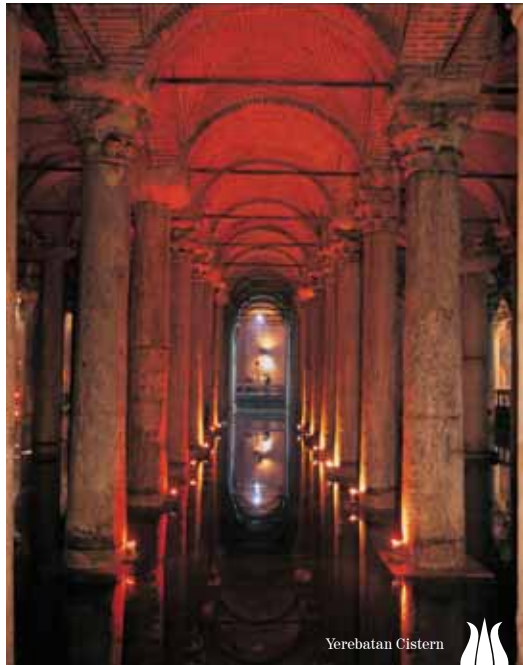
When the Ottomans captured İstanbul, Ayasofya was not deliberately damaged; on the contrary, many Turkish architects, including the renowned Sinan, used their best skills to maintain the monument. Mimar Sinan thus played a crucial role in preserving Ayasofya and enabling it to be appreciated even today. The retaining walls he built along the weaker sides of the building checked the damage caused by the lateral outward movement of the walls under the massive weight of the dome.



This sacred place of Christianity was converted to a holy shrine of Islam during the Ottoman Period. The legends about the site that had survived from the ancient times added to its sacred nature. Therefore, many Ottoman Sultans commissioned their tombs to be built within the courtyard of Ayasofya. *Şadırvan*, the ablution fountain, situated in the courtyard was commissioned by Sultan Mahmut I in 1740. As its construction coincided with the period when Ottoman architectural style was merging with European styles, the elaborate decorations and protruding eaves of the fountain reflect the influence of the Baroque.

The mosaics of Ayasofya, which were uncovered after it became a museum, are the foremost examples of Byzantine art of the ninth to twelfth centuries. Similarly, Ayasofya also boasts fine examples of Ottoman tile and calligraphic arts.





Yerebatan Cistern: One of İstanbul's major shortcomings was the insufficient supply of drinking water. However, neither the Byzantines nor the Ottomans let their populations suffer because of that shortfall. Even before the city became the capital of Byzantine Empire there were some attempts to bring water into the city, and during the Byzantine Period several public cisterns were built. One of the prime examples of them is Yerebatan Cistern, located right across Ayasofya. It provided water to İstanbul during the Byzantine Period. It is also called Yerebatan Palace since it is the largest of all cisterns in İstanbul. When you climb down to the main holding area of the cistern you realise that the analogy is not baseless. The cistern's roof was supported by 336 columns. One of them is known as the weeping column since it was decorated with crying eyes and eye drops which are so skilfully carved that in the humid air of the cistern it seems as if the drops are really trickling down. The shallow water level in the cistern,

where small fish swim, and the wooden platforms built just above the water level, lead the visitors to the most attractive feature of the cistern – the head of Medusa, which is rumoured to turn the unwary gazer into stone if directly looked at in the eye. The medusa heads were used as the base of columns, and it was believed that they were brought here to protect the city from evil. That was why they were placed upside down or sideways.

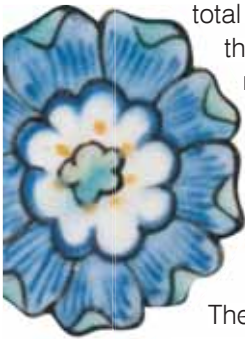
You may be reluctant to leave behind the cool and refreshing air of the cistern; but there is more to see above ground. First is the Haseki Hürrem



Hamam, the public bathhouse commissioned by Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent for his love, Hürrem Sultan (Roxelana). Built by Mimar Sinan, this bathhouse is situated between Ayasofya and Sultan Ahmet Mosque. Hürrem Sultan was brought to the palace to be trained as a concubine in the harem (the sacrosanct female quarters of the royal household). She managed to attract the attention of Sultan Süleyman with her smartness and beauty in quite a short space of time. Hürrem Sultan commissioned many public works bearing her name, and so takes her place of glory in Ottoman history. Her tomb is next to the tomb of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent in the courtyard of Süleymaniye Mosque, considered as one of the city's most treasured buildings.



Sultan Ahmet Mosque: Sultan Ahmet Mosque, also known as the Blue Mosque, is one of the monuments of İstanbul that has become its symbol. The tiles are superb examples of the tile art of the period, and even the actual number of the tiles used was recorded: exactly 21,043, each of which is priceless, but collectively lent their colour to the name of the mosque. There are a total of 16 *şerefes* (*muezzin's* platforms) on the mosque's minarets. That figure is a reference to the fact that Ahmet was the 16th sultan in the Ottoman succession. The architect of the mosque was one of the apprentices of Mimar Sinan, Sedefkar (master of inlaying mother-of-pearl) Mehmet Aga.



The tomb of Sultan Ahmet I, who commissioned the mosque, was constructed in the gardens of the mosque as a detached building next to the front courtyard. Opposite the tomb stands **the German Empire's Gift to the Ottomans, the Alman Çeşmesi** (German

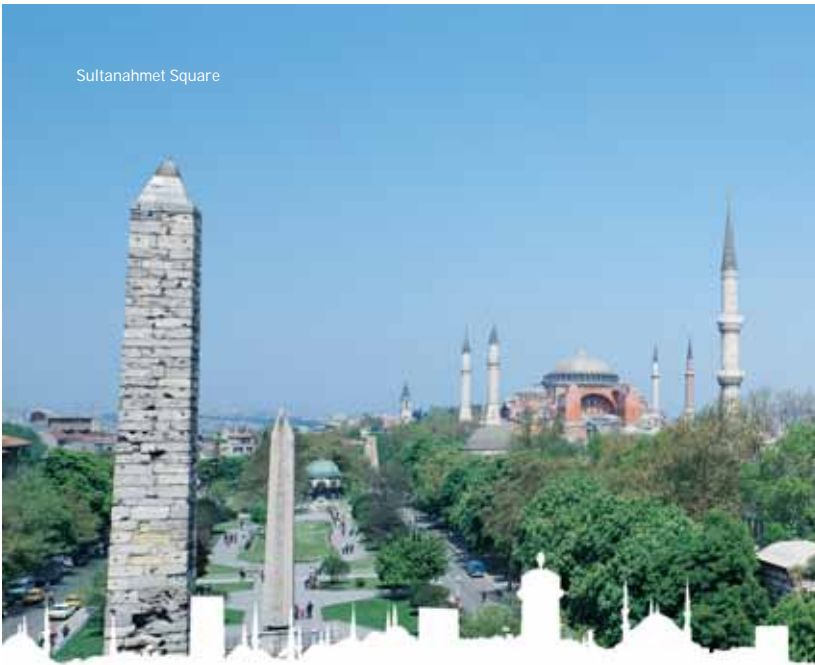


German Fountain

Fountain). The fountain was a gift from Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany to commemorate his visit to İstanbul in 1901, and all of its parts were produced in Germany, hence it bears this name. The internal face of the dome was gilded. It stands in the very place where the gate of the ancient hippodrome stood, which was decorated with numerous statues and monuments.

The Hippodrome; the Site of Entertainment and Rebellion, Victories and Massacres: The Hippodrome, with its final seating capacity of 100,000 people, is located in the square facing the Sultan Ahmet Mosque, and its construction was commenced by Septimus Severus in the beginning of the 3rd century AD. However, it was not completed until the reign of Constantine, who made İstanbul his capital and the most prominent city of his time and who constantly strove to make it greater and more beautiful than Rome. During the Byzantine Period the Hippodrome was the stage for the rivalry between the Blues and Greens, factions who were engaged in passionate struggles to support

Sultanahmet Square



their own racers, like our present-day sports fans. Three of the important monuments of the Hippodrome are still standing. They are the 'Dikilitaş' (Obelisk), the 'Yılanlı Sütun' (Serpentine Column), and the 'Örme Sütun' (Walled Obelisk). These monuments were erected on the central spine of the race track. Visitors should also be reminded that the monument to Porfirius, the legendary champion of those races, can today be seen at İstanbul Archaeological Museum. Let us take a closer look at these monuments.

From the Ayasofya end of the square the first monument is the **Dikilitaş** (Obelisk), which was brought from Egypt with great difficulty, and erected only after months of effort by an army of workers. Its hieroglyphs were deciphered as late as the 18th century; before that, during the Ottoman and Byzantine periods, the signs carved on the obelisk were believed to quell evil spirits and spells. When the inscriptions were deciphered, it was understood that the obelisk was commissioned by the Pharaoh Thutmosis III of Egypt in the year 1550 BC. The original obelisk was actually far taller than what is seen



at the present time since more than half of it was cut off in order to place in on a cargo vessel available at the time. Erecting the obelisk took such a long time and so much effort that the Emperor Theodosius, who succeeded in the task in 390, had an inscription carved on the huge cubic base of the erected obelisk, saying that despite its having presented a challenge for so many years, it had finally submitted to the will of Emperor Theodosius. The inscription also stated how it had been erected over a period of 32 days, and contained depictions of that heroic feat. Other carvings on the base depict the chariot races and life and wars of Theodosius.

The Örme Sütun (Walled Obelisk) is across the square and between them stands the smaller bronze monument which is known as **Yılanlı Sütun** (Serpentine Column). Yılanlı Sütun was originally erected in the Temple of Apollo at Delphi in the 5th century BC to commemorate a victory against the Persian army and it was made by melting weapons and armour captured in the war. It was originally a leg that consisted



of serpents coiled over each other and at the top each serpent's head was separated to form a tripod to hold a vessel where an eternal flame was kept burning for the memory of the war. The vessel had long disappeared and the serpent heads collapsed. The reason why Constantine brought the monument to İstanbul is interesting. The widespread belief of the period was that the monument, consisting of serpents, had a mystical power to keep İstanbul safe from snakes and vermin infestation. While the serpents' necks and heads have not survived to our day, part of one head was found during excavations and can be seen at the **İstanbul Archaeological Museums**.

The Örme Sütun (Walled Obelisk) is the last of the extant monuments. It was commissioned by the Emperor Constantine VII in 944, and, as its name suggests, it was made of courses of masonry. When it was completed it supported a bronze sphere, and the marks of fixing studs in the masonry indicate that the obelisk was fully clad with bronze plaques depicting the wars of Emperor Basileus I of Macedonia. During the Latin occupation between 1204 and 1261 those plaques were removed and melted down to make weapons, bronze goods and to mint money.



The Hippodrome was not always a place where the people were entertained and where joyous cries could be heard. The bloodiest uprisings of history, the mass punishment of rebels and the massacre of thousands of people also took place there. The infamous Nika Revolt, when many Byzantine monuments including Ayasofya were set alight in 532, was put down in the bloodiest manner there and thousands were killed on the terraces and track of the Hippodrome. The square also played an important role in the Yeniçeri (Janissary) revolts and many were executed there.

The southern tip of the Hippodrome has survived to the present day. Just looking at that part enables us to realise how grandiose it once was. Despite being devastated during the Byzantine Period, the Ottomans gave it a new lease of life by organising the state festivities there, so it continued to serve as the place of public entertainment. Various games and shows were staged there, and the monuments of the Hippodrome were depicted in Ottoman miniature paintings. Entertainments were also shown in

the miniature paintings, for example the high tightropes set between the obelisks for rope walkers, horse riders performing stunts before the Yılanlı Sütun, and tradesmen and artisan guilds displaying their rades on carts in a procession during the festivities. The miniature paintings also show that the Chariot Races of Byzantium was replaced with *cirit* (the jereed, a horseback team game where the aim was to score hits with a blunt wooden javelin on the other team's riders).



Environs of the Hippodrome

As the environs of the Hippodrome were the earliest settlement areas of the city, the earliest monuments of İstanbul are situated here. As this area was also at the heart of Ottoman government, many important buildings were constructed here.

In the hierarchy of the Ottoman Empire, the Grand Vizier was the person next to the Sultan, so their mansion houses were built close to Topkapı Palace, where state affairs were

discussed and settled. İbrahim Pasha was the vizier and son-in-law of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, and his palace was built near the Hippodrome. This building serves as the **Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts**, on the edge of the square. The museum exhibits valuable Seljuk and Ottoman carpets and other artefacts covering a long period of history ranging back to the 7th century. We recommend visitors to spare time for the museum since the production of knotted carpets was one of the most important artistic activities of the Islamic countries.



Binbirdirek Cistern

Binbirdirek Sarnıcı (Cistern of Philoxenos) is another monumental building that can be visited on the same site. This was the second largest cistern of İstanbul after Yerebatan. As the Ottomans preferred running instead of still water it fell into disuse and was even forgotten for a long period of time. Its construction started in the 4th century, and it had 264 columns supporting the vaults. At present it hosts occasional artistic exhibitions. One of the most important buildings around the Hippodrome was the **Büyük Saray** (Great Palace), which was the first imperial

palace of İstanbul and famous for its mosaics; in that sense it resembles the Ottoman Topkapı Palace. Both of them were set upon the land extending to the sea shore, and enlarged with additional buildings over time. The Büyük Saray was first occupied in the 4th century and stayed in service until the 10th century through extensions, though it gradually lost its prominence. From the 11th century the favourite palace of the Byzantine emperors became the Tekfur Sarayı (Palace of the Porphyrogenitus), which is situated in present-day Fatih District near the city walls. It is quite well preserved.



By contrast, the Büyük Saray, which was situated on the land between the Hippodrome and the shores of the Sea of Marmara, did not fare well, and today there are only a few remainders of its past glory. The most important survival is the mosaic floor, which was probably part of a grand hall or a courtyard. The mosaics are believed to date from the period between 450 and 550, and are considered to be one of the finest examples of early Byzantine art. They depict a wide spectrum of scenes including realistic portrays of daily life including humans and animals in their natural settings as well as mystical creatures, and children's playing and games. These unique

artefacts can be seen in the The Museum of Mosaics of the Great Palace in the Arasta Bazaar situated on the seaward side of the Sultan Ahmet Mosque.

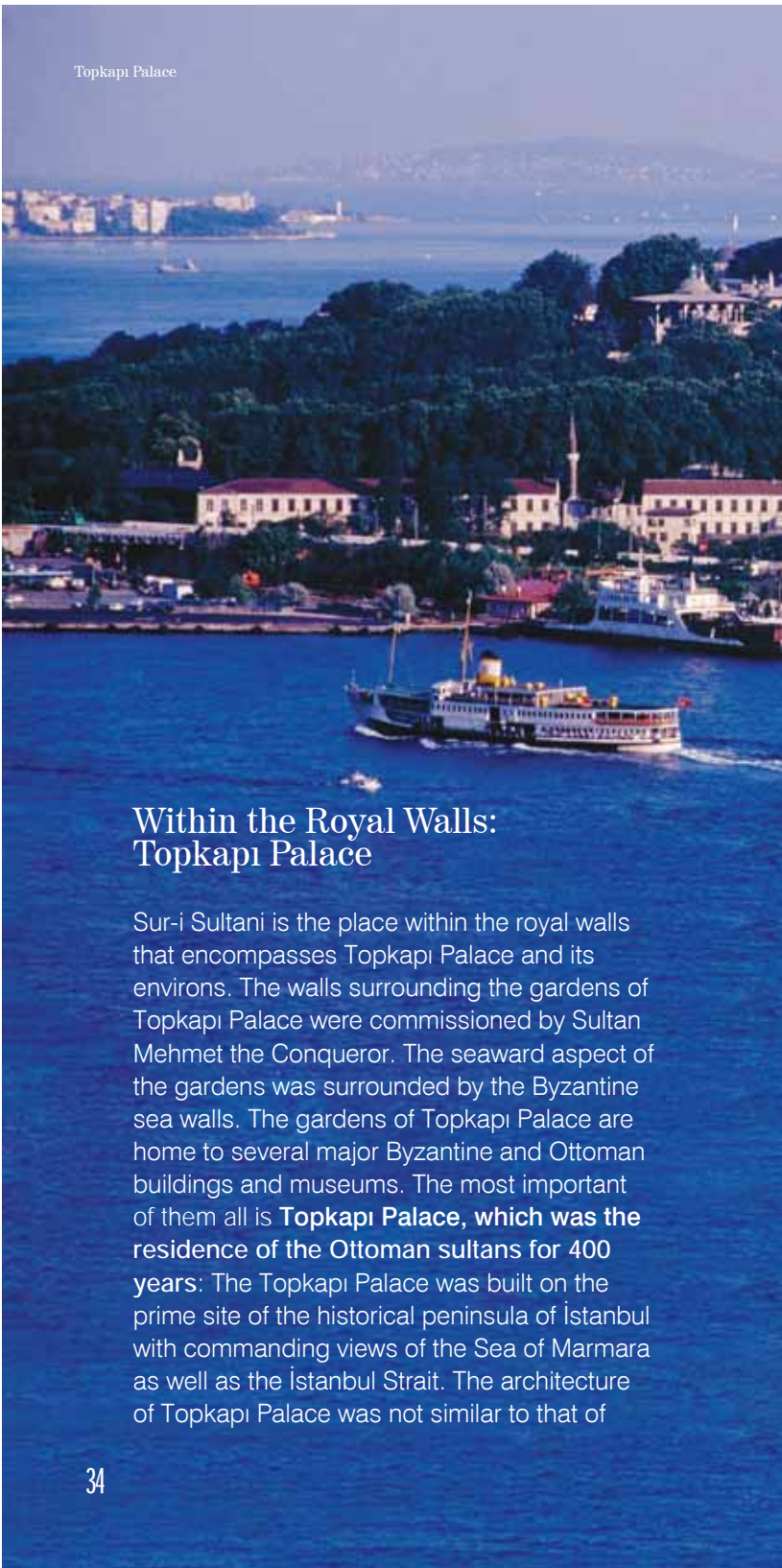
Some surviving parts of Büyük Saray can be seen at the Çatladıkapı (Bull and Lion Gate) where the sea walls end. The area used to be the summer palace of the Byzantine emperors. Built in 842, the palace was also known as **Bucaleon** or **Hormisdas Palace**. Today the cellars, gate, and marble jambs can be seen.

The building known today as the **Küçük Ayasofya Mosque** was formerly the Church of the Saints Sergius and Bacchus. To get here, after leaving the Museum of Mosaics of the Great Palace, follow the Küçük Ayasofya Street; the church is not far from the palace. Emperor Justinian also made great efforts to enrich the beauty of the city. And this building, constructed between 526 and 530, was commissioned by him in memory of these both saints after a dream he had seen. The capitals and entablature with inscriptions surrounding the building are from the original 6th century building and are fine examples of early Byzantine art.



Sokollu Mehmet Pasha Mosque

The route can be completed by a visit to the **Sokollu Mehmet Pasha Mosque**, which was one of the greatest works of Mimar Sinan and famous for its tile decorations. The route returns to Sultanahmet Square, and lets you to take in the mesmerising atmosphere.



Within the Royal Walls: Topkapı Palace

Sur-i Sultani is the place within the royal walls that encompasses Topkapı Palace and its environs. The walls surrounding the gardens of Topkapı Palace were commissioned by Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror. The seaward aspect of the gardens was surrounded by the Byzantine sea walls. The gardens of Topkapı Palace are home to several major Byzantine and Ottoman buildings and museums. The most important of them all is **Topkapı Palace, which was the residence of the Ottoman sultans for 400 years**: The Topkapı Palace was built on the prime site of the historical peninsula of İstanbul with commanding views of the Sea of Marmara as well as the İstanbul Strait. The architecture of Topkapı Palace was not similar to that of

European palaces. The Ottoman sultans paid great attention to building grandiose religious buildings, while they kept the architecture of their own residences quite plain, just enough to meet their needs. This was probably due to the influence of Islamic thought.

Topkapı Palace was the centre of imperial administration as well as the residence of the sultan and his wives. The spectacular ceremonies in which the sultan and all the high officers of the Ottoman state took part with all their regalia during important festivities, and the audience ceremonies granted to an ambassador, as well as execution of the death penalty of any high state officer, all took place in this palace. It was therefore a place that witnessed almost all of the most important events in the history of Ottoman Empire.

Gate of Salutation



Topkapı Palace, the first place to visit on arrival in İstanbul, is actually not a single building but a complex of individual buildings set out on a large garden. Its history cannot be restricted to a single period. While its construction was started on the orders of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror, he died before its completion. The initial building was completed in 1478 during the reign of Sultan Bayezid II, and over the next 400 years the palace was enlarged by adding new buildings according to the needs of the period as a residence and administrative centre. Towards the mid-19th century the sultans preferred the new palaces along the İstanbul Strait such as Dolmabahçe, Beylerbeyi, and Çırağan; however, Topkapı was never abandoned as it also housed the Chamber of Sacred Relics, which was regularly maintained and repaired. Also, many state officials continued to live in the palace.

Topkapı Palace could be reached by walking through the square between Ayasofya and Sultan Ahmet Mosque. Before gaining entry to the

palace grounds, the visitor is welcomed by the **Fountain of Sultan Ahmet III**. The importance given to water by the Turks has always been quite special. Satisfying the thirst of a living creature is considered as one of the best deeds a human being can commit. In accordance with that belief you will find fountains in unexpected places throughout Anatolia. Fountains have also been seen as symbols of cleanliness. The Seljuk and Ottoman states therefore built and decorated monumental fountains wherever they gained control or established a new settlement. As we have mentioned above, one of the shortcomings of the geographical location of İstanbul was its inadequate water resources in the vicinity. Unlike the Byzantines, who had built cisterns to collect water, the Ottomans opted to bring running water to fountains, and they built monumental fountains. This was the consequence of the belief that running water was cleaner than still water. The most monumental fountains of the Ottomans – as you may have guessed already – were built in İstanbul. In the old days there were more than 10,000 fountains in the city, and while many of them no longer exist, the most spectacular have survived. Built in 1728, the Fountain of Sultan Ahmet III is probably the finest example in İstanbul and indeed in the whole territory of the empire. On the walls of the fountain are poems and eulogies inscribed in the Ottoman Turkish.

As you pass this bedazzling fountain you will see in front of you a monumental portal: this is the **Bab-ı Hümayun** (The Imperial Gate), which was the main entrance to the palace during the



Fountain of Sultan Ahmet III



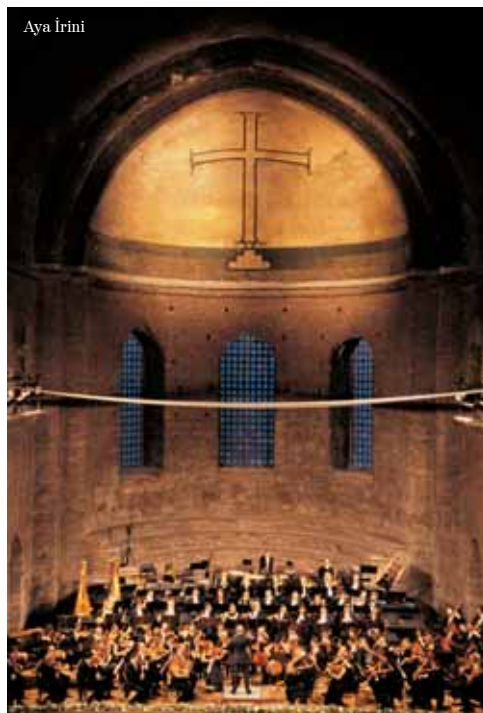
Harem, Topkapı Palace

Ottoman Period and remains so today. The gate was built during the reign of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror, and the apartment on the top floor of the gatehouse is the Beytülmal (the property of the Islamic state) offices which take in the belongings of the palace officials who died without an heir for safekeeping before transferring them to the Imperial Treasury.

After entering through the Bab-ı Hümayun, the first courtyard that welcomes you is the **Alay Meydanı** (Parade Ground) of the Janissary Troops. During the Ottoman Period most parts of the Topkapı Palace was forbidden to ordinary people. However, on certain days the first courtyard was open to the public, when people could gain access to officials to pursue their business and put forward complaints. The tree-lined avenue leading towards the Bab-üs Selam (Gate of Salutation) was the road used when Ottoman sultans left palace for war, when foreign embassies were welcomed and when baksheesh was distributed during a sultan's enthronement ceremony. So the road was the first witness of many important events in Ottoman history.

In the first courtyard there are other Byzantine and Ottoman buildings. **The Aya İrini** (Hagia Irene) Church was one of the first Byzantine

churches built during the reign of Constantine, and it was burnt down during the Nika Revolt in 532. The emperor rebuilt the church just like Ayasofya. Because of its architectural perfection the Aya İrini has outstanding acoustic features; not surprisingly, it is a preferred location for concerts. If you visit the city during the İstanbul Music Festival you can enjoy an audio feast in that historical building. It is closed at other times and can only be visited with special permission.



Behind the Aya İrini Church is another important building that has survived to the present day: the **Darphane-i Amire** (Imperial Mint). Minting Ottoman coins and then the coins of the Turkish Republic continued here until 1967. The building has workshops for casting, rolling, blanking and die-stamping, as well as repairing and mould preparation units. There were also workshops used for the production of precious items and jewellery.

The road leads from Bab-ı Hümayun to another gate which, on both sides, has towers resembling a medieval castle. This is the Bab-üs Selam Kapısı (Gate of Salutation) connecting two courtyards. The gate is opened to the second courtyard where you cannot fail to notice the ticket offices and x-ray security devices mounted on high platforms. These were actually designed to provide vantage points for high state officials and military officers who took part in the Divan (Imperial Council) meetings.



The second courtyard is named the **Divan Meydanı** (Courtyard of the Imperial Council). Ulufe, the quarterly wages of the soldiers of Ottoman military, was distributed from this square. The audiences of the embassies were also held in this courtyard. As in the first courtyard, here a road (the Vizier's Road) leads to the Divan-ı Hümayun (Chamber of Imperial Council) and the Bab-üs Saade (Gate of Felicity).

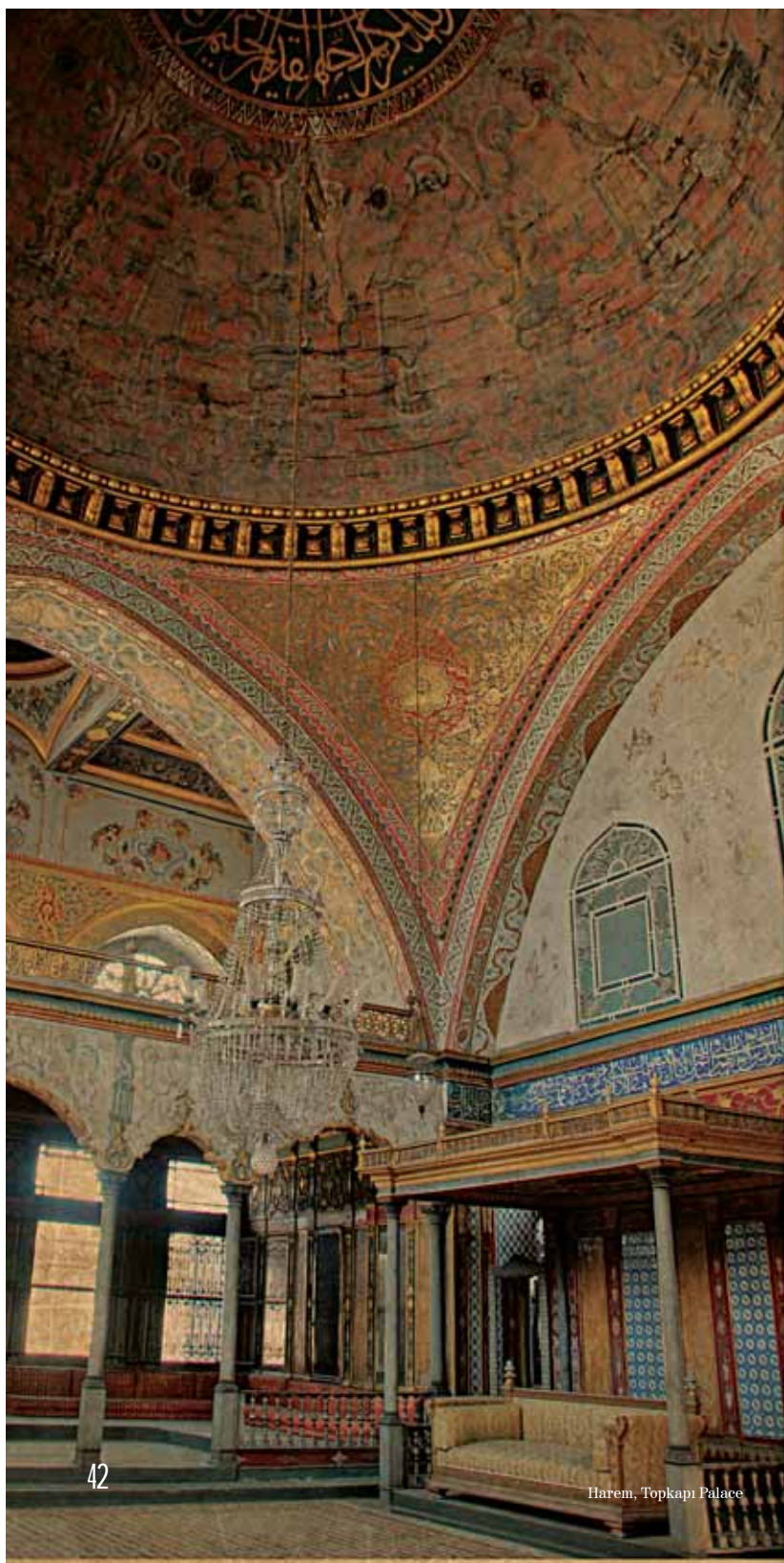
To the right of the courtyard is the first building opened to visitors, the **Saray Mutfakları** (Palace Kitchens), which has high chimneys. The kitchens were originally built in the 15th century,

and repaired and renovated by Mimar Sinan according to the needs of the period. The kitchens were used to prepare regular daily meals for the household, and foods for occasional feasts were prepared by a large group of servants. The sultan's dishes were prepared in a special department known as sultan's kitchen by the chief cook. Today the kitchens function as a museum exhibiting rare Chinese and Japanese porcelain given as gifts to the Ottomans, as well as the copperware, porcelain and ceramic kitchenware of the Ottoman palace kitchens.

As we have already noted, the Topkapı Palace complex was not completed in a single period but was extended by adding individual buildings as the need arose. On the left of the courtyard across the kitchens stands **Divan-ı Hümayun** (Chamber of the Imperial Council), built during the reign of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. The term Divan (Council) referred to the meetings where the most important state affairs were discussed. Such meetings would deal with a wide range of problems, from individuals' requests to state appointments. The two buildings at either end of this part are the Divan-ı Hümayun Kalemi (Secretariat of the Imperial Council) and Defterhane (The Office Keeping the Records of Imperial Edicts).



Imperial Council meetings were chaired by the sultans until the reign of Sultan Mehmet the



Conqueror; henceforth the Grand Vizier took up that duty. The reason cited for this change was that the matters which could not be discussed openly and plainly in the presence of sultan could be more easily handled in the new manner. On one of the walls of Kubbealtı (Under the Dome, that is, another name of the Chamber of Imperial Council) there is a gilded iron grill called the **Kafes-i Müşebbek**. It is the window of a private chamber from where the sultan could discreetly listen to the proceedings of the Council. Council meetings were held there until the 18th century when the Grand Vizier's Office moved to the Bab-ı Ali (Sublime Porte). The tower with a spire next to the Chambers is the **Adalet Kasrı** (Tower of Justice). The reason why it is higher than the rest of the buildings can be explained by the fact that the Ottomans valued justice as a virtue higher than any other; and it was also a symbolic expression of the sultan's vigilance against injustice.

The next building attached to the Divan-ı Hümayun is the **Hazine Bölümü** (Imperial Treasury) where the state's treasures were kept. Naturally it was the most closely guarded section of the palace and it was used to store the taxes collected, and it could only be opened by the Grand Vizier who kept the imperial seal. At present it is used as the armoury, where the arms of Ottoman sultans are displayed.

While the exterior of the various Topkapı Palace buildings are quite plain, the internal decoration is elaborate. The most beautiful can be found in the **Harem Dairesi** (Private Apartments of the Sultan), one of the most interesting part of Topkapı Palace (to visit the Harem one must purchase a ticket). This was the most secret and forbidden area of the palace where only the sultan, his family members, and servants of the Harem department could enter. It gave rise to many legends as there was very little information available about it. Most

of the prominent painters of Europe depicted the Harem as they imagined it. The secrecy and forbidding entry to any strangers lasted until the reign of Sultan Selim III, when for the first time foreign visitors' wives were allowed in. In line with the piecemeal development of Ottoman palace architecture, several rooms were added to the Harem, where Harem officials performed their duties and concubines provided their services. Some of the chambers are named after the sultan who commissioned them. For example, the Chamber of Sultan Murat III was built by Mimar Sinan on the sultan's command. There are about 300 rooms in the Harem. There are also nine bathhouses, two mosques and a hospital. Some of the rooms were assigned to the sultan's male children, concubines, Harem Agas, that is, the eunuchs, and other servants. The most beautiful rooms were devoted to the mothers of the sultans, namely 'Valide Sultan' who was the highest ranking person in the Harem. The tile decorations of the chambers of the sultans were also exquisite.

One of the most important sections of Topkapı Palace is the **Bab-üs Saade** (Gate of Felicity) that serves as the passage from the second courtyard to the third courtyard,

and because of this it was the most important gate of the palace. During holy day festivities the sultan seated in front of this gate and the ceremonies and processions marking the event took place on the courtyard in front of this gate.

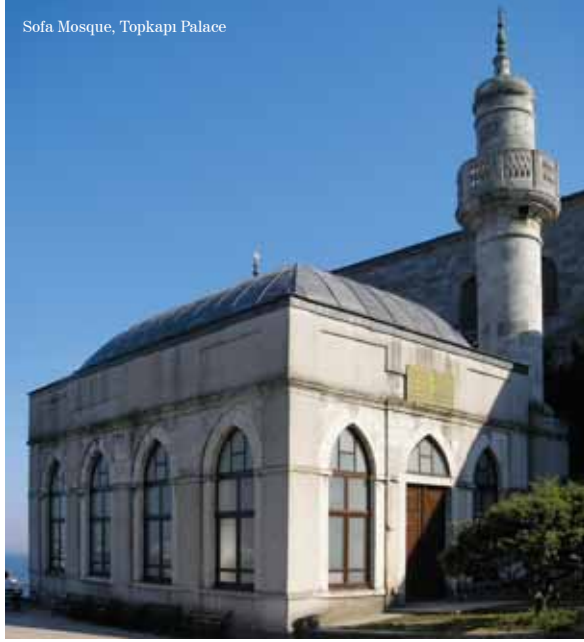


Passing through the gate the first building across the courtyard is the **Arz Odası** (Audience Chamber), where Ottoman Sultans met foreign embassies. Behind that building stood the **Enderun Kütüphanesi** (Library of Imperial College) and the **Ağalar Camii** (Aghas' Mosque). This courtyard is the most visited part of the Topkapı Palace complex, largely because of the permanent exhibitions in the rooms around the courtyard. Artefacts from the Treasury of Topkapı Palace can be seen here. The artefacts displayed in Topkapı Palace Museum are invaluable owing to their both material and sentimental values; moreover, they were deemed important enough to become the topic of Hollywood movies. All the riches of the Ottoman Empire, which was one of the most important and richest empires of the world for 600 years, were kept at the Topkapı Palace. Among the grandeur of those years what has come down to us in the present day are the gifts of rulers of other states, objects d'art decorated with priceless gemstones, the personal weapons and armour of the sultans, and their ceremonial garments.

The most important and holiest of all exhibition halls of the Topkapı Palace is the **Mukaddes Emanetler Dairesi** (Chamber of Sacred Relics), which were set in the former 'Has Oda' (Sultan's Private Chambers) and audience chamber as well as other ancillary chambers. The Sacred Relics considered holy and highly significant by all Muslims are exhibited here. Among them are the relics of the Prophet Mohammed; silver and gold inlaid keys of the door of the Kaaba; artefacts used by Prophets Moses, Abraham and Joseph, and the arms and armour of the first four caliphs of Islam. It was customary for the Ottoman



Sofa Mosque, Topkapı Palace



sultans to send valuable gifts to Mecca and Medina, the holy cities of Islam, during the hajj period. The caravans bearing those valuable gifts were ceremonially sent off from this spot.

The last place to visit at Topkapı is the area which was the terrace of the palace until the beginning of 17th century when new pavilions were built there. It is known as the Fourth Courtyard or **Sofa-i Hümayun** (Imperial Sofa). The most important buildings here are the two pavilions of the Topkapı Palace, the pavilion of Revan (Yerevan) and of Bağdat (Baghdad), built to commemorate Sultan Murat IV's conquest of Yerevan in 1636, and Baghdad in 1639.

Note: The Museum can be visited between 09.00 and 17.00 every day except Tuesdays. Some sections of the museum may be closed temporarily for repairs and maintenance. For up-to-date information about daily tours and closures please visit the website: www.topkapisarayi.gov.tr.

Witnesses to History: Archaeological Museums of İstanbul

The Royal Walls do not only surround Topkapı Palace. Within the Royal Walls are Archaeological Museums of İstanbul, which consist of the Archaeological Museum, Museum of Ancient Orient, and the Çinili Köşk (Tiled Kiosk) Museum, all of which are among the world's famous museums.

At the entrance of the Archaeological Museums the first building on the left is the **Museum of Ancient Orient**. This museum houses rare artefacts collected from the Ottoman territory before the First World War, from lands such as Egypt, Syria and Palestine, as well as Anatolian finds.



The most important item held in the museum is the Kadesh Peace Treaty, which is known to be the oldest recorded treaty in the world. Also there are almost 75,000 cuneiform tablets, making the museum an important resource for this type of artefact.

The Archaeological Museum forms the main body of the Archaeological Museums of İstanbul and exhibits the most well-known items such as

the Sarcophagus of Alexander the Great, and Sarcophagus of Crying Women, as well as numerous artefacts from successive Anatolian civilisations. Recently a new ancillary building has been added to the complex so the exhibition capacity has greatly increased, and two storeys of the old building built at the end of the 19th century were devoted to the exhibition of unique artefacts such as statues, sarcophagi and coins from antiquity to the Byzantine Period. The four



storeys of the six-storey ancillary building are open to visitors. The ground floor is designed to introduce children to history and stimulate their interest in the subject. The first floor is dedicated to the history of İstanbul. The second floor is dedicated to the Trojan War, and displays artefacts from excavations at Troy as well as other settlements in Anatolia: this exhibition is called 'Anatolia through Antiquity and Troy'. The upper floor is dedicated to exhibiting artefacts from lands such as Syria and Palestine, formerly part of the Ottoman Empire.

The museum opposite the Archaeology Museum is the **Çinili Köşk Museum**. This building is one of the oldest examples of civilian architecture in İstanbul, and was built in 1472. Its name is derived from the tile mosaics on its facade. And as its name suggests, it exhibits tiles and ceramic artefacts from the Seljuk and Ottoman periods.

Gardens of Topkapı Palace: Gülhane Park



Gotlar Column, Gülhane Park

The Sur-i Sultani within the Royal Walls includes not only the buildings that have stood witness to important episodes in world history, but also beautiful landscaped gardens. The first of those gardens is **Gülhane** (Rosehouse) **Park**. Today, the tulip is a flower mainly associated with other countries. Perhaps in your mind too tulips are identified with other countries. However, you should know that the first tulip bulbs were sent abroad from İstanbul in the Ottoman Period. The tulip has even lent its name to the most controversial era of Ottoman history. If you visit İstanbul in season, you will find tulips in bloom in Gülhane Park – a wonderful haven for those trying to escape from summer heat, a place where you can enjoy sea breezes under the cool shade of centuries-old trees. The park also has a panoramic view of the Sea of Marmara,

the Golden Horn and the İstanbul Strait, as it is situated on the tip of the historical peninsula. The park is also associated with the Tanzimat (reorganisation of the state) reforms since the Rescript of Gülhane was proclaimed here. The Tanzimat Museum, which exhibits documents and photographs relating to that important period of the Ottoman Empire, is situated in Gülhane Park.

The Has Ahırlar (Royal Stables) is a part of Gülhane Park, and at present they house the Islamic Science and Technology Museum. The museum exhibits replicas, built according to written records, of various devices and tools invented and developed by Islamic scientists between the 8th and 16th centuries. Among them are the world map designed by 70 geographers and astronomers in a thirty-year period in 9th century, and the oldest clock of the world that works in accordance with the time system which is still in use. We recommend a visit to the museum for an insight into the contribution of scientists from the Islamic world to the world history of science.



From Mese to Divanyolu: Squares and Monuments of İstanbul



İstanbul was laid out along two main roads in the Byzantine Period. One of them was *Kardo* which ran between Golden Horn and the harbours along the shores of Sea of Marmara. The other was *Mese*, connecting the seven squares of Byzantium. *Kardo* was the commercial route as it connected the harbours, while *Mese* had a more important function. As Byzantium was regarded as the centre of the world, all roads leading to different parts of the world were assumed to start from İstanbul, and their first metres were on the *Mese*. Emperors leaving for a war or returning victorious passed under the *Altınkapı* (Golden Gate – *Porte Aurea*), which was on the city walls where *Mese* passed through at a place near present-day *Yedikule*.

On this thoroughfare various Byzantine emperors built squares bearing their names, and decorated them with monuments. Although these squares, located at equidistance, couldn't survive to the present day, some of the monuments are still extant.

This important road of the Byzantine Period was not neglected during the Ottoman Period, and continued to be used. It only changed its identity, together with the rest of the town, and was renamed as Divanyolu which literally means the road to the court. The road took this name because the viziers attending to the Divan (Imperial Court) sessions at Topkapı Palace used that road on leaving the palace meetings. Despite the name changed its fate remained the same: rebels used the route to storm the palace, and many were executed along it. In short, the road has witnessed the history of İstanbul.

The first square along the road was the **Augusteion Square**, today known as Sultanahmet Square. During the Roman Period, and its continuation, the Byzantine Period, the squares or forums were surrounded by various buildings. Augusteion Square was surrounded by the Great Palace, the Hippodrome and Ayasofya, the most important monuments of the past to have survived to our day. The **Million Stone** was regarded as the starting point of all destinations when İstanbul was considered to be the centre of the world. Although it is an unassuming broken column near the Yerebatan Cistern that fails to attract the attention of passersby at present, it was the starting point of all roads in the Byzantine Period.

The road called Mese in Byzantine Period and Divanyolu in Ottoman Period was approximately on the same route with today's tram line. By following the tram line the other squares can be reached. As this route played an interesting role in the Ottoman Period, to follow its course enables visitors to see some important Ottoman buildings. The first building is the **Firuz Agha Mosque**, which is located to the left of the road.

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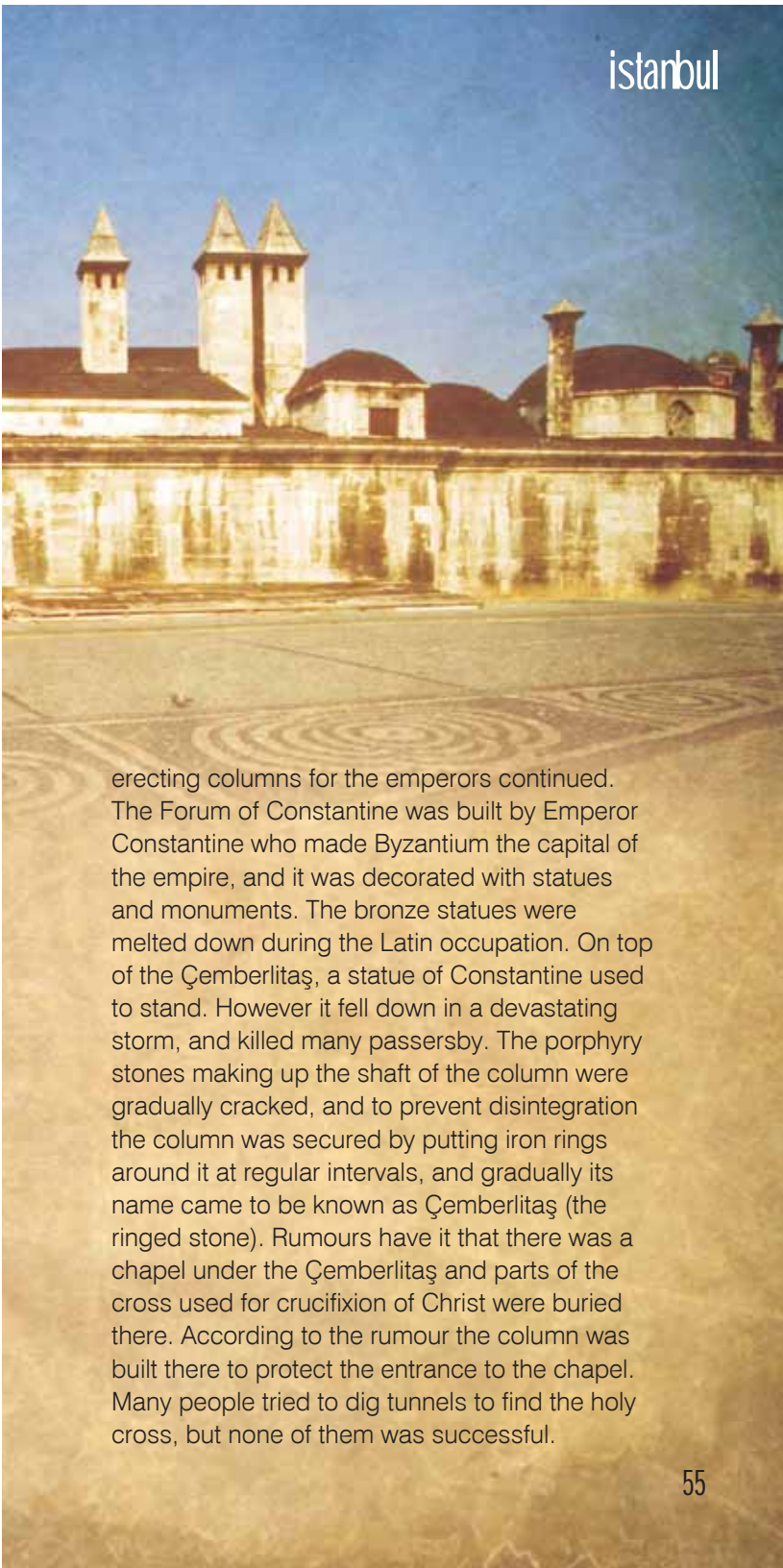




This is one of the oldest mosques in İstanbul, and was completed in 1491. Contrary to other mosques with single minarets, its minaret is on the left-hand side.

A bit further on to your right is the **Kızlarağası Mehmet Agha Madrasah**. When **Çemberlitaş** appears on your sight, you are in danger of focusing on it and missing other important buildings, so beware. First of these is the **Tomb of Sultan Mahmut II** that was built in 1840. In the tomb are the graves of Sultans Mahmut II, Abdülaziz and Abdülhamit II, who ruled during the last period of the Ottoman Empire.

The second square after the Augusteion Square is the **Forum of Constantine**, and at present the **Çemberlitaş** (Column of Constantine or Burnt Column) stands as a silent reminder. In the Byzantine Period, the Roman tradition of



erecting columns for the emperors continued. The Forum of Constantine was built by Emperor Constantine who made Byzantium the capital of the empire, and it was decorated with statues and monuments. The bronze statues were melted down during the Latin occupation. On top of the Çemberlitaş, a statue of Constantine used to stand. However it fell down in a devastating storm, and killed many passersby. The porphyry stones making up the shaft of the column were gradually cracked, and to prevent disintegration the column was secured by putting iron rings around it at regular intervals, and gradually its name came to be known as Çemberlitaş (the ringed stone). Rumours have it that there was a chapel under the Çemberlitaş and parts of the cross used for crucifixion of Christ were buried there. According to the rumour the column was built there to protect the entrance to the chapel. Many people tried to dig tunnels to find the holy cross, but none of them was successful.

At the **Forum of Theodosius** (Beyazıt Square) the Mese road divided into two branches. One of the branches continued towards today's Aksaray, and led to Yedikule and Altınkapı, and the other branch to the present-day Edirnekapı. If you leave the tram line and follow the road towards Edirnekapı you will find two more forums. The first is the **Forum of Philadelphion** at Şehzadebaşı, though there are no remains from this forum today.

The next forum is the **Forum of Amasterianon**, which was situated on the site of present-day İskenderpaşa Square in Fatih District where the Column of Marcian known in Turkish as the Kıztaşı (Maiden Stone) still stands. The

Turkish name is associated with the reliefs on its base which led to many tales about the column. One of them is about a maiden who was carrying a stone block for the construction of Ayasofya when she was deceived by a genie to shift the stone there. When she realised her mistake she was unable to move it. Another rumour refers to the magical nature of the column which bends forwards to reveal the maidens who are not virgins. In reality the column was erected in 455 AD for Emperor Marcian, and the reliefs were actually depictions of Nike, the goddess of victory. The column most probably related one of the victories of the emperor or wished him success in a battle. The bronze statue of Marcian was looted and taken back to Europe in 13th century, as happened to many monuments in İstanbul.



From Eminönü to Süleymaniye – From Süleymaniye to Eminönü

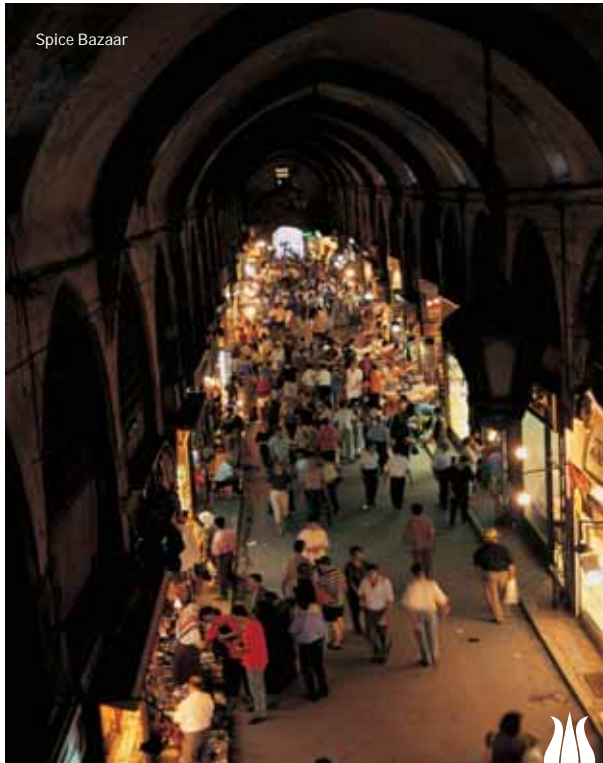


The most important building in Sirkeci is the **Sirkeci Gar Binası (Sirkeci Train Station)**. The building was designed by foreign architects, as became the fashion in the later periods of Ottoman rule. It has been İstanbul's gate to Europe, and the arrival place of European visitors who were attracted by the mythical capital of Ottomans and the legendary East for decades.

The history of the building dates back to 1890. During the construction period a particular importance was attached to the harmony of this building with the İstanbul's architectural character. İstanbul, which connects the East and the West, also created connections between European architecture and Oriental styles. There is a small museum in the Terminal where artefacts related to the Ottoman railways and the history of the Terminal are on permanent display.



The first building that strikes visitors to Eminönü is the **Yeni Cami** (New Mosque), which has always a flock of pigeons on the stairs and courtyard. Its construction commenced in 1597, but was completed in 1663. With the 66-year construction period the mosque has a distinctive place in the Ottoman history. The tiles and mother-of-pearl inlaid *mahfil* (the raised platform for the sultan) are worth close inspection. The mosque is a part of a complex and another largest building in this complex is Mısır Çarşısı (Spice Bazaar or Egyptian Bazaar), one of the oldest and most important covered markets of İstanbul. Goods from Egypt used to be sold here. At present, it sells spices and other gift items to visitors who drop by to shop while soaking up the atmosphere. One of the most visited spots of İstanbul, it is consequently still a meeting



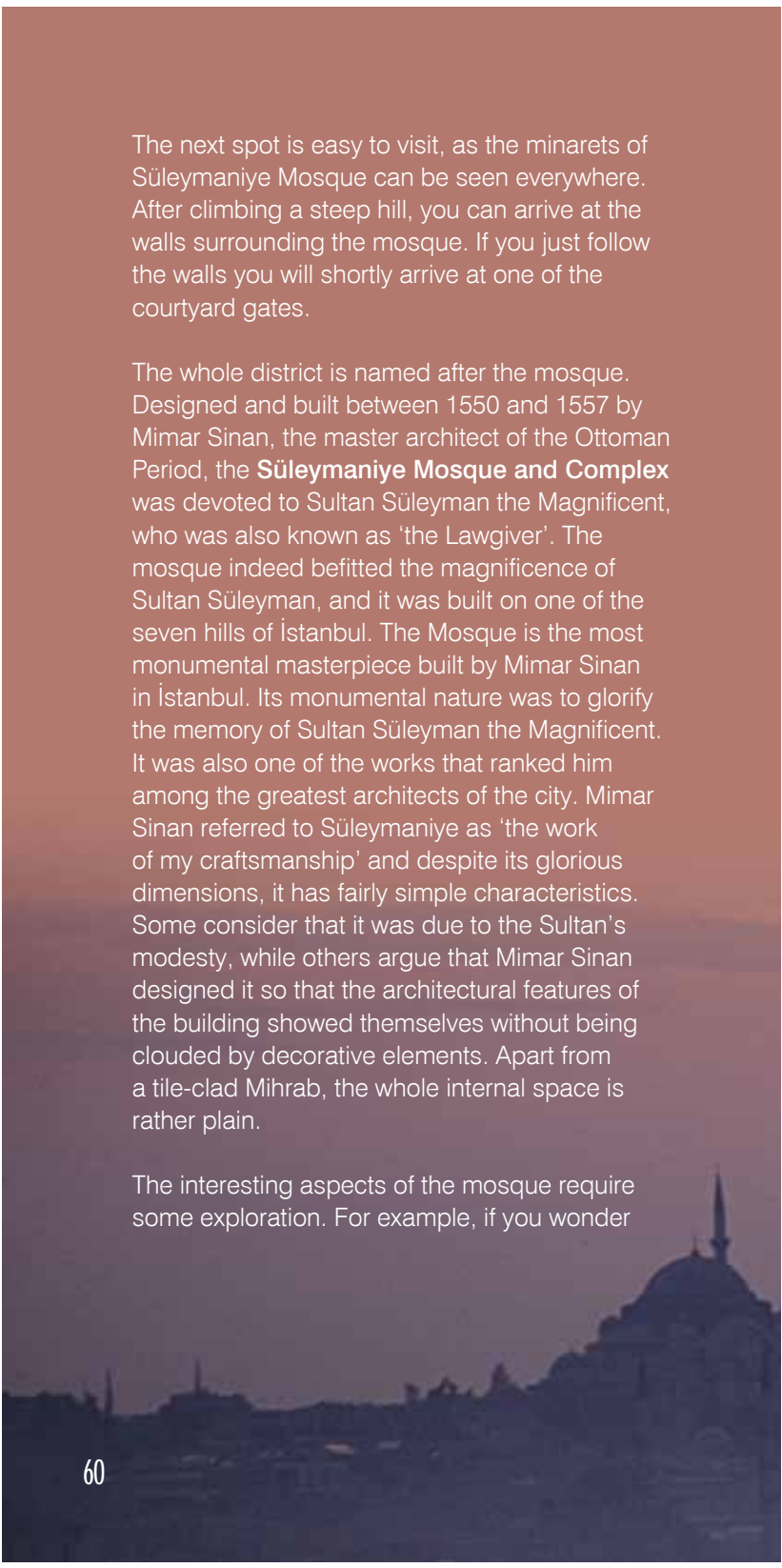
point of diverse cultures, as it has been the case throughout its history.

Being one of the most beautiful mosques of İstanbul, the **Rüstem Pasha Mosque** was designed and built by Mimar Sinan, the imperial architect. It is situated off the main road along the Golden Horn, and to reach it you have to pass through the narrow side streets. It was built on a raised platform so it commands the silhouette of İstanbul. It was commissioned by Rüstem Pasha, the Grand Vizier and son-in-law of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. Rüstem Pasha had a reputation for meanness during his lifetime, but towards the end of his life he spent exorbitant amounts of money on the construction of this mosque and decorated it with the most exquisite İznik tiles. Its interior is so rich that it can be considered a museum of tiles.

The next spot is easy to visit, as the minarets of Süleymaniye Mosque can be seen everywhere. After climbing a steep hill, you can arrive at the walls surrounding the mosque. If you just follow the walls you will shortly arrive at one of the courtyard gates.

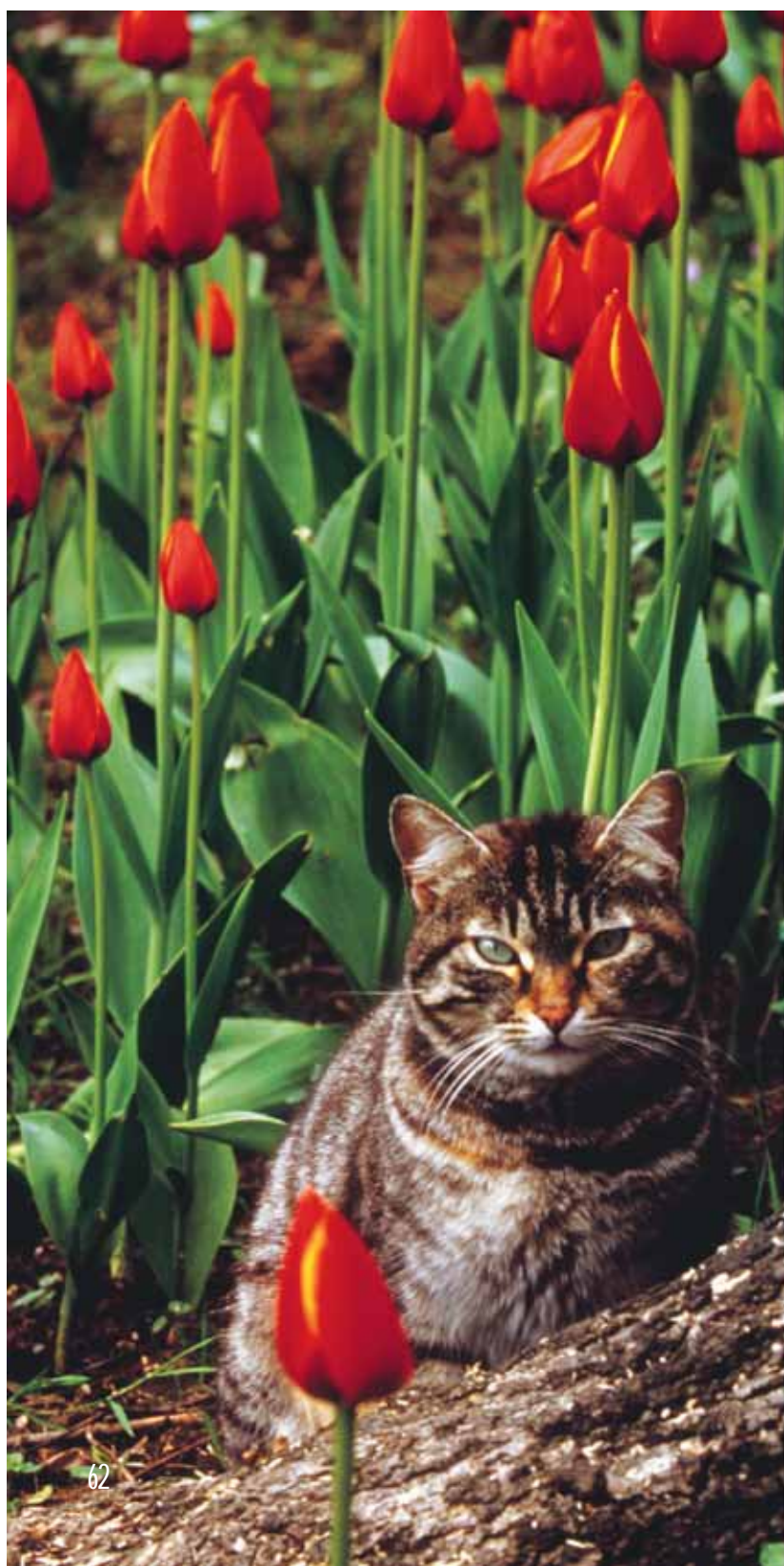
The whole district is named after the mosque. Designed and built between 1550 and 1557 by Mimar Sinan, the master architect of the Ottoman Period, the **Süleymaniye Mosque and Complex** was devoted to Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, who was also known as 'the Lawgiver'. The mosque indeed befitted the magnificence of Sultan Süleyman, and it was built on one of the seven hills of İstanbul. The Mosque is the most monumental masterpiece built by Mimar Sinan in İstanbul. Its monumental nature was to glorify the memory of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. It was also one of the works that ranked him among the greatest architects of the city. Mimar Sinan referred to Süleymaniye as 'the work of my craftsmanship' and despite its glorious dimensions, it has fairly simple characteristics. Some consider that it was due to the Sultan's modesty, while others argue that Mimar Sinan designed it so that the architectural features of the building showed themselves without being clouded by decorative elements. Apart from a tile-clad Mihrab, the whole internal space is rather plain.

The interesting aspects of the mosque require some exploration. For example, if you wonder



how the mosque has withstood frequent and powerful earthquakes or why no soot has accumulated under its domes despite the oil lamps and candles that have burnt for 450 years, or how its wonderful acoustics work, you can discover the answers here – in the hidden parts of Mimar Sinan's genius. The foundations of the mosque were given a certain amount of elasticity by placing juniper piles and beams among the masonry in order to enable it absorb the shock waves of earthquakes. To avoid soot accumulation on the interior surfaces due to hundreds of candles and oil lamps, he found a very creative solution: the design of the mosque has created a ventilating current which brought all the soot to a special chamber situated over the entrance portal. The soot collected here was used to produce ink used in calligraphy employed in *firmans*, the imperial edicts. Yet another stroke of genius was employed in the central dome of the mosque. He placed 255 pots into the fabric of the dome, and by doing so he improved the acoustics of the building and its thermal insulation. It was built as a multi-minaret mosque. If a mosque has more than one minaret, it means that it was built either by a sultan or by some member of his royal household.

The other buildings of the complex extend over a large area, and each building is rich and beautiful in its own way. The domed ceiling of the tomb of Süleyman the Magnificent was inlaid with precious stones, and gives the impression that you are looking at the stars on a dark night.



Its walls are clad with splendid İznik tiles. Another tomb in the courtyard belongs to Hürrem Sultan, the wife of Sultan Süleyman. The complex had four madrasahs, and each was devoted to a different level of education. Its darüşşifa (hospital) was built like a modern training hospital. The darüşşifa had two departments, one of which was devoted to patients, and the other was for education. The plain tomb of Mimar Sinan was placed next to the complex as an independent building. Despite creating so many glorious buildings, this master of architecture opted to build a very plain tomb for himself, a fact that can only be explained by his modesty.

The **Botanical Garden of İstanbul University** is situated behind the Süleymaniye Mosque and office of İstanbul's mufti. A secret heaven, it has a rich collection of plants from all over the world. A visit is highly recommended; but prior permission is required.

Let us continue on our route. When you reach Direklerarası, which used to be the public entertainment centre during the Ottoman Period, on the Şehzadebaşı Street, turn right and walk along the road. You first arrive at the **Damat İbrahim Pasha Complex**, which was built in 1720. All the buildings of this complex are set around a courtyard. The **Şehzade Mosque** gave its name to the road, and is an important milestone in the development of Mimar Sinan's architectural mastery. He himself referred the mosque as his 'work of apprenticeship', and it is widely believed that he built his masterpieces relying on the experiences he gathered during the design and construction of this mosque. The mosque was built for the memory of Şehzade Mehmet, a beloved son of Sultan Süleyman, who sadly died when he was just 22 years old.



The tombs in the courtyard with their spectacular tiles are also worth a visit. However, like many other tombs in Istanbul, they can only be visited on certain dates or with special permission.

If you proceed along the same road you will reach the **Fatih Sultan Mehmet Complex**, (Complex of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror), one of the first religious complexes built in Istanbul. The complex is also an earlier example of *selatin* mosques (imperial mosques of Ottoman sultans or their family members). A complex has the mosque as its central feature, and consists of a madrasah (religious college), imaret (public kitchens), and darüşşifa (hospital) as well as other buildings for charitable purposes, education, and health. The Fatih Complex used to have the first universities of Istanbul, the Mediterranean Madrasah and Black Sea Madrasah. Following the demise of Byzantium, Fatih underwent large-scale reconstruction and embellishment activities, and building this complex was part of that effort. It was also built on one of the seven hills of Istanbul, which was a very significant place during the Byzantine Period. On the same hill the Havariyun Church (Church of the Holy Apostles) used to stand, which contained the sacred cemetery of the Byzantine emperors. The mosque and other



buildings were built over the ruins of the church and sustained earthquake damage several times in its long history. They have nevertheless survived into our own day after successive repairs. One of the most splendid parts of the complex is the tomb where the internal decorations contain inlaid silver and gold patterning.

However, if you prefer not to proceed towards the Fatih Complex and turn right at the Şehzade Mosque, the road will take you to **Bozdoğan Su Kemer** (Valens Aqueduct), which served İstanbul for many years by bringing water into the city from distant sources. The aqueduct was repaired several times during the Byzantine Period as well as Ottoman Period and extended to new water sources to ensure a safe supply of water to İstanbul from several kilometres away.

If you continue the road you will reach **Vefa** District, which is famous for its *boza* (a thick malt drink made of fermented millet). The historic Vefa Bozacısı (boza producer and seller) is close to the Valens Aqueduct and Vefa Lycée. It is the preferred refreshing drink of the winter months, though even a summer visit is no excuse not to taste the famous drink.



Bozdoğan Aqueduct

Another significant building on the same route is the **Church of Christ Pantokrator**, today's **Zeyrek Mosque**. This monumental building was set on top of a hill. It has the largest floor area after Ayasofya for a surviving historical building in İstanbul. In this district you can find examples of the late Byzantine Period. The church is also dated to the end of Byzantine Period. However it was not designed and built in a single period. It consisted of several buildings commissioned by different Byzantine emperors and empresses.

If you visit Vefa on the first day of a calendar month, take a key with you and visit **Meryem Ana Ayazması** (Virgin Mary Holy Spring). The keys are important if you make a wish at the holy spring. The belief is that if you manage to keep the key for a month afterwards, your wish will definitely be realised in near future.

The route then leads you to the shores of the Golden Horn. Near the Atatürk Bridge spanning the Golden Horn turn right and walk alongside the shore to reach back to the Egyptian Bazaar where you can rest and recuperate with a nice meal at one of the restaurants serving fine food from the four corners of Turkey.



Intersection Point of Religions: Balat and Fener along the Golden Horn

The estuary, *Haliç* in Turkish, was called as the Golden Horn by the Byzantines. According to legend it was formed by the thrust of Io's horns that was transformed into a heifer by Zeus.

Another legend relates that the plentiful *palamut* fish (Atlantic bonito) makes the water shimmer with their reflective skin. Actually the sunrise and sunset lend its golden reflections to the still waters.



The Golden Horn was closely associated with the Tulip Era, the most controversial period of Ottoman history. During this period rich royal yachts plied the waters, splendid kiosks and mansion houses were built along the shores of the Golden Horn, and all the gardens displayed the most colourful examples of glorious tulips, which lent their name to the period. It is a pity that none of those kiosks or tulip gardens survived to the present day. However, we will visit three important buildings, each of them belonging to a different religious community and each was built during the Ottoman and Byzantine periods, over the hills with a commanding view of the Golden Horn.



At present two districts of İstanbul, Balat and Fener, are closely associated with the Golden Horn. Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror granted privileges to the Christian and Jewish communities living in the city to perform their rituals free of intervention. Those privileges are considered to be fine examples of Ottoman tolerance, and helped to keep the Christian community in the city. The Sephardic Jews who were expelled from Spain were accepted with open arms by the Ottomans and settled in the same part of the city. So Balat and Fener became a centre for the religious minorities of İstanbul. There, mosques, churches and synagogues can be seen side by side as if a living proof of the fraternity of religions.

The Synagogues of Balat: Balat, the district mostly populated by Jewish in the Ottoman Period was the scene of many important Jewish buildings, and some of them are still fulfilling their religious functions. The synagogues of the Sephardic Jewish community survived intact until 1940s when a great part of the community



Fener Orthodox Patriarchate

opted to resettle in Israel. However, there is still a thriving Jewish community living in the area. Two of their synagogues are on the Vodina Street, and the first one to visit is **Çana Synagogue**. The **Ahrida Synagogue** is on the same road though it was not built by Jews expelled from Spain but by those who emigrated from Macedonia. The shape of the synagogue resembles a ship, as a reference to the wandering Jew. The third synagogue is the **Yanbol Synagogue** which is situated on the Düriye Street, a street crossing the main road. It was built by the Jews who emigrated from Bulgaria. Along the shores of Haliç is the **Or-Ahayim (Light of Life) Hospital** which has attractive architectural features and was built as a Jewish hospital in 1896.

Museums of Haliç

After visiting the churches, synagogues and mosques of Haliç (Golden Horn), you may wish to visit the museums and cultural centres on the opposite shores. Here is a short list to choose from:

Miniatürk: Miniatürk is an open-air exhibition on the shores of the Haliç where 1:25 scale models of the most important buildings from antiquity to the Ottoman Period from across Turkey are on display.



Rahmi Koç Museum: The Rahmi Koç Museum is the first and only industrial museum of Turkey. It exhibits submarines, ships, airoplanes and

thousands of other industrial products. With its world renowned classic car section which includes private collections, it is among the must see museums in İstanbul.

Santral İstanbul: Santral İstanbul is quite close to Miniatürk on the shores of Haliç. It is a cultural centre created by renovating a thermal power station built originally in 1911 and which provided power to İstanbul until 1952. Even the underwater cables laid to supply power to the Anatolian side of the city were started from there. Today it houses a modern art museum, a museum devoted to power generation and distribution, workshops, and concert venues as well as cafés and restaurants.

The Holiest Grounds of İstanbul: Eyüp



Eyüp is the place just beyond the land walls along the shores of the Haliç, and houses the mosques, tombs and cemeteries of some significant personage of the Islamic religion. The holy character of Eyüp was established hundreds of years ago. During the Byzantine Period there were monastery churches on the grounds, none of which has survived. One of the reasons they disappeared lies in the fact that those areas out of the city walls were devastated during each siege the city was subjected to and military battles that devastated any building in the vicinity. After the Ottoman conquest of İstanbul, Eyüp was rebuilt and it eventually took on its present aspect.

If you proceed from the land walls towards Eyüp the first place to visit is **Defterdar Mahmut Efendi Mosque**, which is situated on Defterdar Street. The main buildings of all religions bear the symbols of that religion. Just as a church has a cross on top of the bell tower, so, in the



same manner, a minaret is normally topped with a crescent moon representing Islam. However, over the minaret of this mosque, a pen and an inkpot were placed to give the message that literacy is the best way of enlightenment and modernisation. The original inkpot and pen were destroyed in successive earthquakes; however, recently a new set has been installed.

If you continue on the Defferdar Street, along the shores of the Golden Horn you will come across a red building. This is the **Feshane** (Fez Factory), founded in 1835 to meet the increased demand for the fez, a type of red hat, as well as the production of uniforms for the Ottoman Imperial Army. It is one of the oldest factories in Turkey. After a long service life, Feshane now serves as an exhibition and conference hall and as an entertainment center during the festivities of Ramadan. From the pier of Feshane you can take boat trips aboard a replica of royal boats that were once used by Ottoman sultans to cross the İstanbul Strait.

Across Feshane, and next to the Municipality Building, stands the first museum of Eyüp, the **Nezih Eldem City Museum**. The building was actually the Military Cadet School, commissioned in 1884. The museum exhibits documents related to the history of Eyüp. Just behind the museum is the **Cezeri Kasım Mosque**. Curiously, another mosque in a different part of the city, situated across the Cağaloğlu Hammam (public bath) in Divanyolu, has the same name.

Zal Mahmut Pasha Complex is also on the same route and it was designed by Mimar Sinan. There you can visit the handcrafts workshops manufacturing the traditional wooden toys identified with Eyüp.

Eyüp Toymakers: Children who were starting primary school or who were to be circumcised were brought to visit Eyüp, and this custom still continues. It is believed that visiting this holy place would make them more successful in life, and that they would not face any hardship. One of the unintended consequences of the children's visits was the creation of a toy-making industry in Eyüp as early as the 17th century. Even the male heirs of the Ottoman Empire played with these toys, and today the same wooden toys are manufactured with traditional techniques, and are sold locally. As a memento of your visit to Eyüp, why not buy one? Who knows, maybe the magic will work for you!

The district is named after Eyüp Sultan, and the **Mosque and Tomb of Eyüp Sultan** are considered as the holiest place in İstanbul. Eyüp Ensari was a companion of the Prophet Mohammed, died during the siege of İstanbul by Arabs in 674-678, and was buried here. Following the conquest of İstanbul, Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror found the grave of Eyüp Ensari, and built a tomb over it, then a mosque and religious complex nearby. The complex was the first to be built in İstanbul.

The district of Eyüp gradually took shape around the complex commissioned by Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror. Many sultans after Mehmet built religious buildings in Eyüp and continued to develop it, so today there are many buildings in close proximity that reflect the different periods of Ottoman architecture. As Eyüp came to be considered a holy place, many from the higher echelons of Ottoman society as well as ordinary people chose Eyüp as their everlasting place of rest. And today the cemeteries of Eyüp contain various styles of funeral architecture, including intricately carved headstones.

At some distance from the Eyüp Cemetery, up on the hill is the **Pierre Loti Café**, which can be reached by road or by cable car departing from the shore. It is famous for the best panoramic view of the Golden Horn and Eyüp.



Pierre Loti (Louis Marie Julien Viaud) was a renowned French writer and traveller who lived between 1850 and 1923, and he was so impressed with İstanbul that he settled there. The café was his favourite haunt. Gazing at the silhouette of İstanbul he must have dreamed about his imaginary love, Aziyade, and called her name out loud to the other shore of the Golden Horn. As the time went by, the café took the name of Pierre Loti. The best way to end your pleasure trip to Eyüp is with a pot of tea at the Pierre Loti Café where you can take in the view and also buy some souvenirs.



The Insurmountable City Walls of İstanbul

The magic and attraction of İstanbul led to a fierce determination to capture the city. However, until 1453 the city walls of İstanbul checked the onslaughts of countless enemies that surrounded the city. In a sense the thousand-year-long life of Byzantium was due to its majestic city walls, which were one of the finest examples of Middle Age's military architecture.

The city walls built during the reign of Constantine, which marked the boundaries of present-day Sultanahmet and its environs, gradually became too small for a bustling city and its increasing population. In 415, only 120 years after the foundation of the original walls, the Theodosian walls marking the historical peninsula were built. These walls, which can be seen extending from the shores of the Halic to the shores of the Sea of Marmara, were built



by the Emperor Theodosius; however, they were repaired extensively over the centuries. The construction was sturdiest in the land walls, since the threat deemed lesser; the sea walls were not fortified as strongly as the land walls.

Now the city walls from the Haliç to the Sea of Marmara would accompany your sightseeing route to another part of Istanbul which were silent witnesses to thousand of years and wars.

The strongest and most insurmountable parts of İstanbul city walls are the land walls extending from the Sea of Marmara to the Haliç. As the Sea of Marmara provided an important protection, the sea walls were not deemed to be as strong as the land walls. As the land walls would face the staunchest attacks, they were designed and built to be as strong and enduring as possible. The sightseeing tour along the city walls gives you a chance to visit some important buildings, including some famous Byzantine ones.

Our excursion starts at the point where the city walls meet the Golden Horn. The first place to visit is **Atik Mustafa Pasha Mosque**. This was a church before the conquest, however the name and history of the old church is disputed. Some believe it was the church built for Saints Peter and Mark in 5th century, while others believe it was the Hagia Thekla Church built in the 9th century.

Amid the well-preserved part of the city walls stands the **Tekfur Sarayı** (the Palace of the Porphyrogenitus). It is the only surviving part of the Palace of Blachernae; therefore, this three storey palace has an important place in art history. Although it was built as early as the 5th century, it became the main residence of the Byzantine emperors at around the 12th century. During the Ottoman Period it was put to diverse and curious uses such as glass manufacture and even as a pen for royal giraffes.

The next Byzantine landmark to visit is the **Kariye Museum**. The name 'Kariye' derives from 'Chora', which means outside the city walls. The district was thus known before the land walls were built. Although it was used for a while as a mosque, the magnificent mosaics and frescoes were not damaged. They were only covered over with whitewash. They were discovered in mid-20th century and restored to reveal their original majesty. The church building dates back to the 12th century, but the frescoes and mosaics are from the 14th century. They represent the peak reached by Byzantine art before the European Renaissance. The frescoes are among the finest examples of



Byzantine art to be found anywhere in the world. They depict stories from the Bible as well as the life of Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ. Over the entrance door to the naos is the scene depicting Theodoros Metokhites offering the church to Jesus Christ – one of the few non-biblical scenes. A similar scene can also be found in Ayasofya.

One of the prominent gates on the land walls is Edirne Kapı (Gate of Polyandrion). Next to the Edirne Kapı is the **Mihrimah Sultan Mosque**, one of the finest mosques built by the imperial architect Mimar Sinan. Mihrimah Sultan was the daughter of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent and there are several buildings in various districts of İstanbul devoted to her. As it was built on a terrace it can be seen from quite far away. In order to let in a good deal of natural light the walls of the mosque are pierced by a number of windows.

When you pass through Belgrad Gate and approach the Sea of Marmara you come to the most famous section of the city walls, the **Yedikule Hisari**. The most splendid of all 55 gates on the City Walls during the Byzantine Period was the Altın Kapı (Golden Gate), the gate where the emperors and armies entered the city triumphantly after returning from a victorious military campaign. After the Ottoman conquest Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror added a fortress strengthened with towers here, which came to be known as the Yedikule Fortress (Fortress with Seven Towers). The Byzantine name, “**Golden Gate**”, came from the gilding on its façade. The Ottomans added five towers to the existing two towers, and formed a citadel which was later used as a storage area, then part of the treasury, and later as a prison. The layout of the fortress resembles a five-pointed star and its dungeons which were used as a prison for high-ranking officials during the Ottoman Period. It is now open to the public, with a permanent exhibition in the courtyard, including the canon balls and



other artefacts. The courtyard is also a venue for open-air concerts during the summer months. If you are not too tired, you may wish to continue along the shores of the Sea of Marmara to **Yenikapı**. The archaeological excavations of the Yenikapı area unearthed artefacts that shed light on the 8,000-year of history of İstanbul. In particular, the sunken boats of Yenikapı and other relics of the ancient port are considered to be highly important as they shed light on the Byzantine and Ottoman periods. The Theodosius Port of Yenikapı was built by Emperor Theodosius I at the end of the 4th century and remained in use until the 14th century. Other important finds are the foundation line of the sea walls built under the Emperor Constantine. In addition, the ruins of Eleftherion, one of the oldest ports of İstanbul built during the Byzantine Period, were also uncovered there. So if you are keen to learn more about the Byzantine history you should certainly visit Yenikapı.



The Commercial Harbour of both the Byzantines and the Ottomans: Galata and Its Environs

From Karaköy to Beyoğlu

Over the years, earthquakes and fires devastated parts of İstanbul, yet each time the city was born again out of its ashes as if it were the mythical Phoenix. Perhaps the most often devastated and rejuvenated parts of İstanbul are Galata and Beyoğlu.

Galata, or Karaköy as it is called today, is in the shape of a peninsula surrounded by the İstanbul Strait and the Golden Horn which, throughout history, has been the commercial port of İstanbul. During the Byzantine and Ottoman periods it maintained its importance as the most important harbour of the region, and a centre of commercial activities. The district is famous for its Tower, and the Genoese colony that settled there maintained commercial links with Europe during the Byzantine Period. Later, Iranians, Egyptians, Syrians, Turks and Levantine traders of European origin marketed their wares from the warehouses there, and distributed them to other parts of İstanbul.

As Galata maintained its commercial importance during the Ottoman Period, many warehouses were built in the district. The first embassies to the Ottoman Empire were settled in the same area, and it was also an entertainment center with its several drinking dens. At the end of the 19th century, the first banks of the Ottoman Empire were also clustered here, and consequently Galata became the financial centre and heart of the stock exchange. Its importance continued until the first years of the 21st century, though with

istanbul



Galata Tower

the relocation of important finance houses to Levent and Maslak districts, Galata finally lost its financial importance.



One of the most interesting aspects of Karaköy is that you can see the beauty of historical peninsula from a different perspective across the estuary. When you are at Sultanahmet, the other shores may not seem to so interesting. However, once you are at the Karaköy, the vista of the historical peninsula is majestic. Especially during the sunset, the reddish sky contrasting with the darkening silhouette of Sultanahmet, Ayasofya and Topkapı Palace offers the visitors a new horizon where the Ottoman royal mosques, built on top of the hills of İstanbul with their characteristic domes and minarets, are at their best in this most romantic of settings.

Nowadays two bridges, Galata Bridge and Atatürk Bridge, connect the historical peninsula and Galata. In the past, the Renaissance Master Leonardo da Vinci prepared designs to build a bridge over the Golden Horn. The great artist wrote a letter to Sultan Bayezid II and mentioned his intentions about the bridge, but most

probably was never given a chance to put his intentions into practice.

The Jewish community that settled in various areas of İstanbul and built places of worship there had a history exceeding half a millennium.

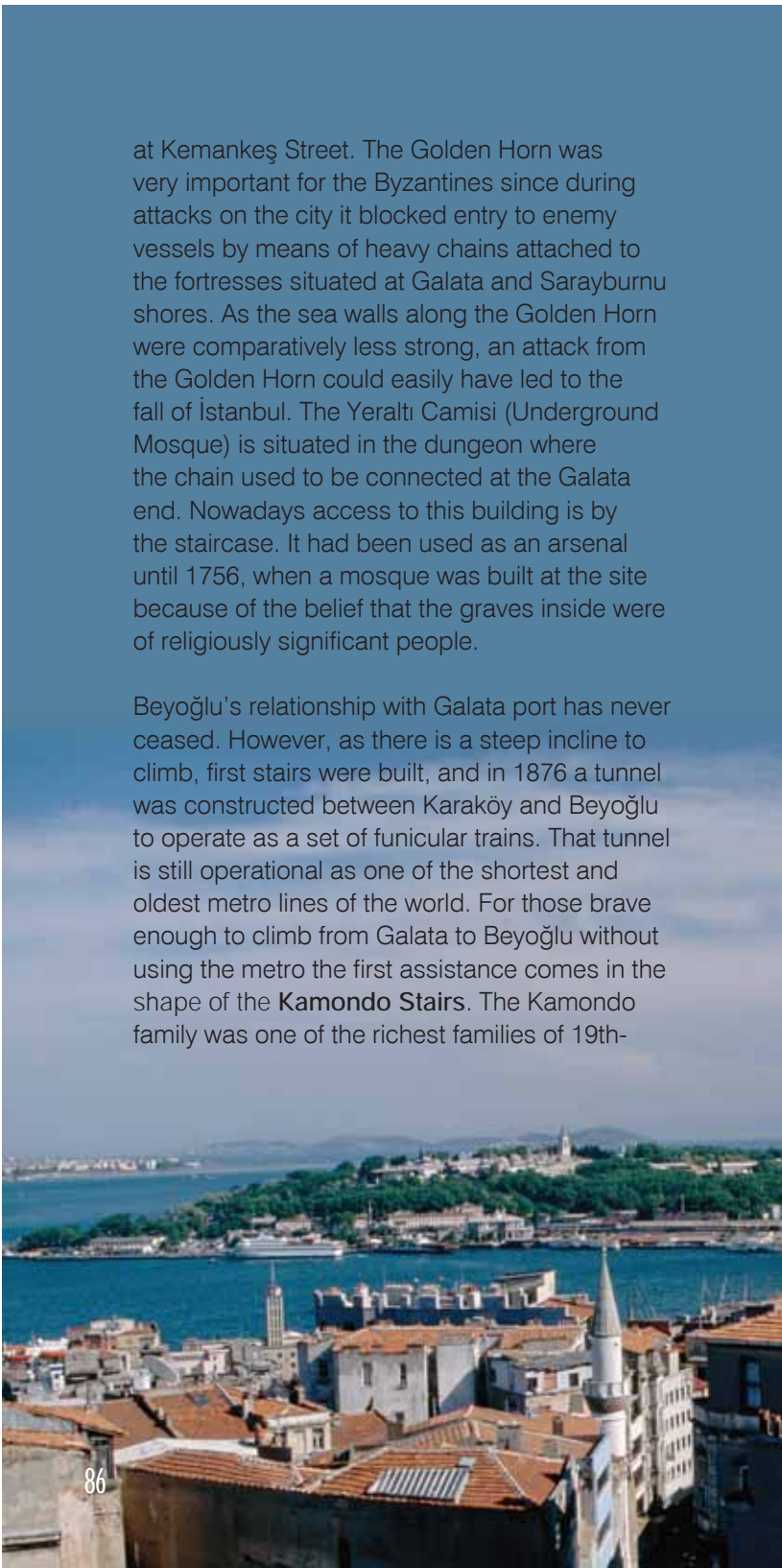


The Zülfaris Synagogue, situated in Perçemli Street across the Galata Bridge, has recently inaugurated the **Quincentennial Foundation Museum of Turkish Jews**, which commemorates the arrival of Sephardic Jews here. The museum exhibits various documents, garments and artefacts commemorating the historical experiences of Jews settled in Turkey and especially in İstanbul. The Monument of Rising Fires erected in front of the museum commemorates the Turkish Jews who lost their lives in several wars including the Dardanelles Battle and the War of Liberation.

Another highly recommended visit is to the **Yeraltı (Underground) Mosque** which is situated

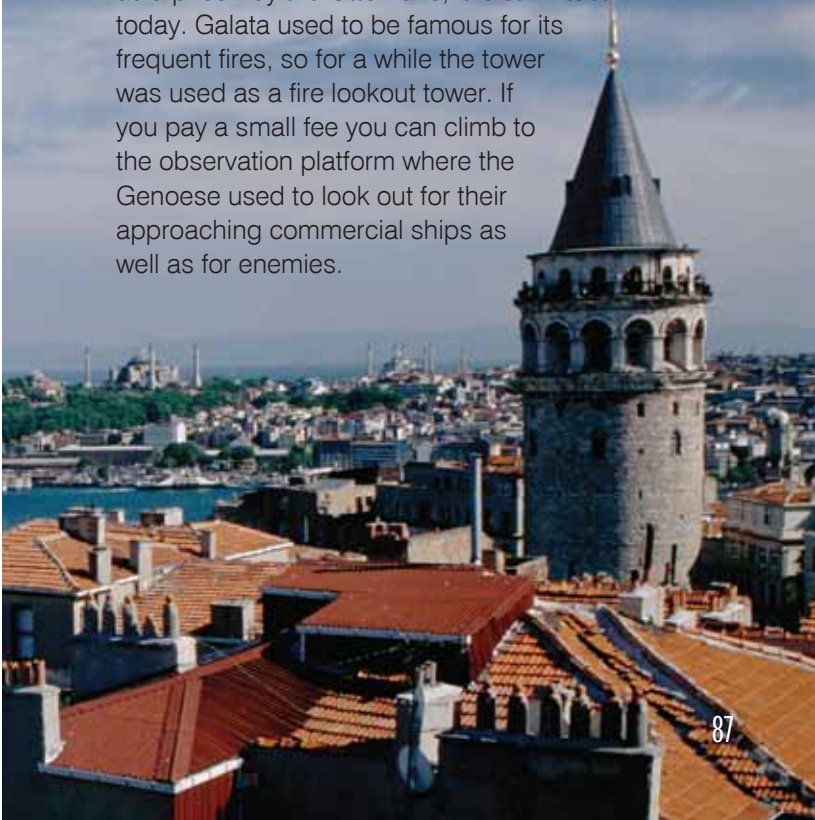
at Kemankeş Street. The Golden Horn was very important for the Byzantines since during attacks on the city it blocked entry to enemy vessels by means of heavy chains attached to the fortresses situated at Galata and Sarayburnu shores. As the sea walls along the Golden Horn were comparatively less strong, an attack from the Golden Horn could easily have led to the fall of İstanbul. The Yeraltı Camisi (Underground Mosque) is situated in the dungeon where the chain used to be connected at the Galata end. Nowadays access to this building is by the staircase. It had been used as an arsenal until 1756, when a mosque was built at the site because of the belief that the graves inside were of religiously significant people.

Beyoğlu's relationship with Galata port has never ceased. However, as there is a steep incline to climb, first stairs were built, and in 1876 a tunnel was constructed between Karaköy and Beyoğlu to operate as a set of funicular trains. That tunnel is still operational as one of the shortest and oldest metro lines of the world. For those brave enough to climb from Galata to Beyoğlu without using the metro the first assistance comes in the shape of the **Kamondo Stairs**. The Kamondo family was one of the richest families of 19th-



century İstanbul, and they were the benefactors of many public buildings including these famous stairs. As it was designed as a pair of staircases meeting at landings and curving apart for while until the next landing, it is also known as the stairs of love.

Another important feature of Karaköy is the traces of the Genoese community which has a very important place in the history of İstanbul. Naturally, the most important of them all is **Galata Kulesi** (Galata Tower). The tower that can be seen from various parts of İstanbul has been a symbol of Galata. It is a legacy of the Genoese colony that maintained commercial links between the Byzantines and Ottomans with the European countries. It was originally built in 1348 as a tower of the walls surrounding Galata, and used sometimes as a warehouse and sometimes as a prison by the Ottomans; it is still intact today. Galata used to be famous for its frequent fires, so for a while the tower was used as a fire lookout tower. If you pay a small fee you can climb to the observation platform where the Genoese used to look out for their approaching commercial ships as well as for enemies.





From here you have a commanding view over İstanbul from Prince Islands in the Sea of Marmara, to the İstanbul Strait and Golden Horn.

Centre of Entertainment and Life: Beyoğlu

During the late Ottoman Period, the European tradesmen, followed by the embassies community left the confines of Galata Walls surrounding the Galata port area, and created a new cosmopolitan development at Beyoğlu (Pera) along the lines of European cities, where diverse nationalities come together. The area of the settlement was referred to as Pera by seafarers and embassies community. The term means 'the other side' and refers to the area outside the old city. It is interesting to note that such a bustling part of today's İstanbul was previously viewed as a distant corner. The name Beyoğlu (meaning a lord's son) was associated with the son of a Byzantine emperor or an ambassador of Venice who once settled in the area.

The European-style mansion houses that can be found in Beyoğlu were built by European tradesmen and ambassadors who settled in İstanbul. As there used to be frequent fires devastating the region, it was prohibited to build wooden buildings; and the beautiful buildings that have survived to the present day generally date to the time after that ban.

Beyoğlu once used to be outside the Galata Walls. It was connected with other areas through new roads following the demolition of the walls, and its importance increased significantly. It is known that even in the early Ottoman Period there were entertainment venues in the vicinity, where seamen could enjoy the facilities before



their long sea journeys. At present, entertainment venues, art galleries, cinemas, theatres and concert and live music performance halls make it a cultural hub. Many cafés with street tables, as well as street performers mix in with the din of the crowds to create a street orchestra. Sometimes the streets become a veritable open-air exhibition.



İstiklal Caddesi

İstiklal Caddesi is one of the liveliest streets of Istanbul. Every day thousands walk through it. The only vehicular movement breaking the flood of human activity is the nostalgic thread of tramlines. Both sides of the street are lined with

art galleries, famous shops selling accessories and jewellery, cafés where lively talk goes on and passages where drinking dens are situated. Most of the buildings identified with the avenue as well as the passages were built at the turn of the 20th century under the influence of the art nouveau movement, which was at the height of fashion then. Beyoğlu together with Galata is closely associated with Europe and any new trend or fashion was quickly adopted there. The pilaster sculpture and some self-standing statues decorating the façades of the period buildings are worth close examination. At the mid-section of İstiklal Street the crowd thickens. The place where seafarers from diverse lands met during the Byzantine and Ottoman periods is today one of the most popular areas.



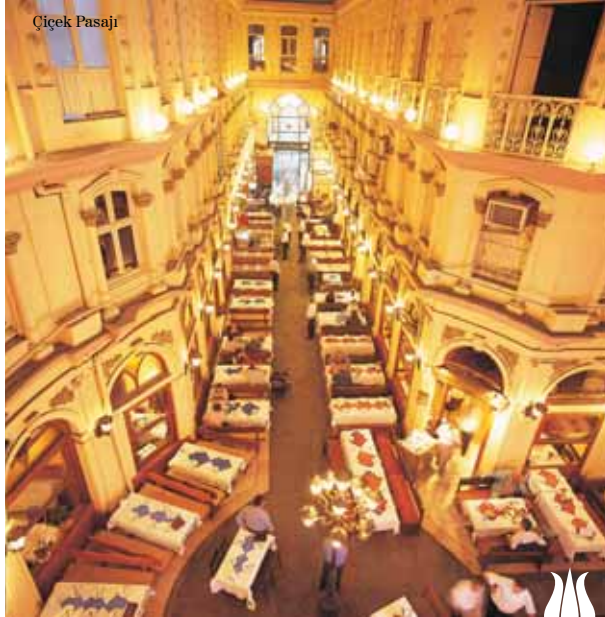
An interesting route from the terminus of Tünel (funicular) first leads you to **Galata Mevlevihanesi** (House of Mevlevi Sufi Order), in other words the **Museum of Divan Literature** situated at Galip Dede Street. The Mevlevihane was built in 1491 by Mehmet Dede, the grandson

of Mevlana Celaleddin-i Rumi who had a particular place in history on account of his teaching and philosophy. Despite being devastated in firestorm and other disasters the building, with repairs and renovation, has survived to our own day. On the first and last Saturday of every month, the Sema ritual (of whirling dervishes) is performed at the Semahane (ritual hall) section which is also used as a museum. In the Mevlevihane are also the cells of the dervishes who devoted themselves to the Mevlevi Order as well as a library. The tombs of masters and dervishes are in the courtyard. For those who wish to learn more about Mevlevi Order, a visit to the museum is a must, with its exhibits of artefacts relating to Mevlevi culture, classical Turkish musical instruments and illuminated manuscripts. The **Tomb of Galip Dede** is in front of the Mevlevihane.



As in Ottoman times, the Consulates are lined up along the Beyoğlu. They were all built during the late Ottoman Period. When the capital moved from İstanbul to Ankara the embassies too moved; however, the buildings of embassies still stand and they are used for different purposes today. Some of the Consulates have churches or chapels in their courtyards for their religious rituals.

One spot famous for its cafés and bars of the İstiklal Street is **Asmalimescit Road**. One of the oldest hotels of İstanbul, the **Pera Palas**, is next to the never-sleeping entertainment hub. Next to the hotel is the Museum of Pera which houses paintings of famous Ottoman artists.



One of the most famous meeting points in İstiklal Street is the **Çiçek Pasajı** (Flower Passage), opposite the Galatasaray Lycée. The tables are always full, with customers of all ages busily chatting. To reach **Cezayir Street** you walk down the slope following the walls of Galatasaray Lycée and turn left.

The passage buildings illustrate the special atmosphere of the İstiklal Street. Most of them were built in the late 19th century or early 20th century, and each one has its own surprises. One

of the most interesting buildings is **Halep Pasajı** where a pilaster sculpture of a clown adorns the façade. The clown is actually a clue as to the original use of the building: it was formerly a circus. The famous Beyoğlu Cinema can also be found in that building.

In İstanbul the overwhelming Christian community is Orthodox. One of the grandest churches in İstanbul, **Aya Triada** (Holy Trinity) near Taksim Square is an Orthodox Church.



Taksim Meydanı (Taksim Square) is at the end of İstiklal Street. The square was the water distribution centre of İstanbul in the past and so it took the name Taksim which means distribution in Turkish. It is one of the busiest places in İstanbul, and never sleeps.

If you walk from one end of İstiklal Street to the other you will not have savoured it fully. So go back, walk slowly, visit the passages, sit in its cafés, bars and drinking dens and enjoy Turkish meze (starters) with your drink. After sunset walk the street once more. The crowd will be more

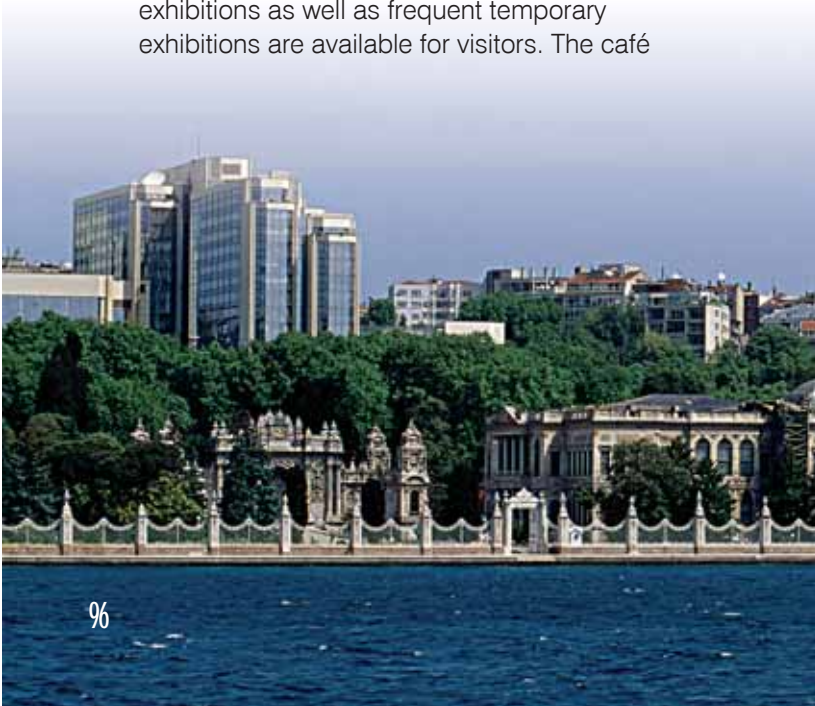
dense and the taste of the street different as the oriental music pouring out of the bars will take you to other worlds.

From Karaköy to Ortaköy

The route from Karaköy to Ortaköy is accompanied with the scenery dominated by the İstanbul Strait, which makes it one of the most enjoyable excursions in İstanbul.

After the Karaköy ferry terminus, the Meclisi Mebusan Street will lead you to a well-known place of İstanbul, Tophane (gun foundry). Tophane takes his name from the imperial workshops dedicated to gun making. There used to be other military buildings around the workshops.

Along the shores of Karaköy is the first museum of Turkey dedicated to modern art, **İstanbul Modern Art Museum**. In the museum permanent exhibitions as well as frequent temporary exhibitions are available for visitors. The café



at the museum offer a wide panorama of the İstanbul Strait including Sultanahmet. You may view the works of Turkish and foreign artists or enjoy a refreshing drink at the café to prepare yourself for the rigours of the next phase of the route.

On this route mosques and palaces are in close proximity along the shore. One of the most interesting mosques here is just past the Kabataş Pier – **Bezmialem Valide Sultan Mosque**, also known as Dolmabahçe Mosque. Its architectural style and clock tower reflect European architecture, and it was built in 1853 by Bezmialem Valide, the mother of Sultan Abdülmecit.

The secondary name of the mosque, Dolmabahçe, is also the name of the palace here. It is the first example of palaces set along the shores of the İstanbul Strait. Once Topkapı Palace was abandoned, the sultan and his family never returned there and settled instead in European- style palaces. **Mustafa Kemal Atatürk**, founder of the modern Turkish Republic, spent last days of his life here.



Dolmabahçe Palace



When you visit Dolmabahçe Palace, which came into use after the Topkapı Palace (which had been the seat of the Ottoman dynasty for 400 years) was abandoned, you will notice how palace life had changed.

The **Deniz Müzesi** (Naval Museum) is situated on a significant site. It is next to the **Tomb of Barbaros Hayrettin Pasha**, the most famous Grand Admiral of the Ottomans. The museum exhibits documents and objects related to Ottoman naval history as well as models of warships. There are a few examples of royal rowing boats and ensigns from the important victorious battles such as Battle of Preveza.

Barbaros Hayrettin whose tomb is next to the museum was a significant figure in world naval history. He was the first Grand Admiral of Ottoman navy, and fought against piracy in Mediterranean and won one of the largest and most important Turkish naval engagements, the

Battle of Preveza (an ensign from this battle is on view at the museum). There is certain poignancy in the fact that such an important mariner lies in his resting place within earshot of waves and with a commanding seascape before him. Since his burial in the tomb, the general staff of the naval armadas leaving port always paid a visit to his tomb. The tomb which was designed and built by the legendary architect Mimar Sinan is available for public viewing on 4 April and 1 July, but is closed to visitors at all other times.



After Topkapı was abandoned new palaces were built along the shore. However, the **Yıldız Palace** was different as it was built on a hill dominating İstanbul. Today the palace gardens, which are known as Yıldız Park, are a haven of peace in İstanbul. The largest building in the palace complex is the **Mabeyn (Interval) Kiosk** which was built during the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz. The most interesting part of the kiosk is the crystal balustrade made up of more than 3,000 separate parts, each of which has its own tune when tapped.

Çırağan Palace



If you proceed from Beşiktaş through Çırağan Street, lined with old trees, you come to the next palace building, Çırağan Palace. This was built by the Ottoman Sultan Abdülaziz in 1871, and it is used as a hotel nowadays. After passing along the Çırağan Palace, you arrive at the buildings of Galatasaray University and Kabataş Boys' High School. These buildings, used to be the ancillary buildings of the palace and known as Palaces of Feriye, were used by the sultan's children as well as high-ranking officers working at the palace.

Once you have completed this enjoyable route you will have reached **Ortaköy**, one of the entertainment centres of İstanbul. The **Ortaköy Mosque** is identified with the district and shows the influence of European architecture. It was commissioned by Sultan Abdülmecit in 1853 on one of the prime locations of the İstanbul Strait on a sliver of land jutting into the sea. Its first



patron and his successor, Sultan Abdülhamit, were known to come to this mosque for Friday prayers and then return to the Beylerbeyi Palace on the opposite shores of İstanbul Strait.

Following your excursion to Ortaköy you can rest in one of the tea gardens around the Ortaköy Mosque and enjoy the scenery of the İstanbul Strait, the Boğaziçi Bridge draped in the colours of the last sunrays. You may also wish to taste the famous *kumpir* (baked potatoes).



The Asian Face of İstanbul: Üsküdar and Kadıköy

City of the Blind: Kadıköy

According to the legends of the first settlers of İstanbul, Kadıköy was the land of blindmen who failed to see the beauty of Sarayburnu and who settled in Kadıköy instead. However, this is an unlikely story. Kadıköy may not have the geographical advantages of Sarayburnu, but it was believed to have a special air that helps the sick and prevents illness. So it served for generations of Byzantine and Ottoman emperors as hunting and recreation grounds. Kadıköy is one of the oldest settlements in İstanbul and surface surveys indicate that its history goes back to 3000 BC.



Haydarpaşa Train Station

Even today, though Kadıköy is part of a metropolis, it has not completely abandoned the summer residence atmosphere it was renowned for during the Byzantine and Ottoman periods. A nostalgic tram journey on the Bahariye-Moda-Mühürdar route brings you to the promenades of Moda, Kalamış and Fenerbahçe. With the tea houses in the green setting, they are ideal for those who want to escape from the city crowds. Both Byzantine and Ottoman emperors chose this area for their summer palaces. The Fenerbahçe peninsula has pedestrian routes lined with centennial trees and colourful displays of flowers.

The tables lining the shore enable you to enjoy a vista of the Sea of Marmara and the Prince Islands. And a hotair balloon takes its customers 300 metres high above the throng, offering a view of this world city from a bird's eye level.

One of the most important monuments of Kadıköy is the **Haydarpaşa Train Station**. Its German-style architecture at the seaside location makes it a symbol of Kadıköy. It is the point of departure for those travelling from İstanbul to cities and towns in Anatolia, as well as the terminal stop for those arriving from Anatolia. Its construction was completed in 1908. For those who arrived in İstanbul from Anatolia during the waves of mass immigration in the 20th century, this was their first foothold in İstanbul. Some of the warehouses were used for ammunition during the First World War, and a sabotage led to an explosion which caused extensive damage to building. However, the station has survived to our day as a monumental building on the Asian side of İstanbul.

Another symbolic building in Kadıköy is the **Süreyya Opera House**. It can be seen on the road between Haydarpaşa and Fenerbahçe. It was opened in 1927, and later converted to a cinema used for a long while. The building was recently renovated to its original use. Its architecture is quite interesting since it took bits and pieces from many theatres and opera buildings in various parts of Europe. For example, the hall resembles the Champs-Élysée Theatre in Paris, while the interior resembles German theatres.

Üsküdar

Across the Kız Kulesi (Leander's Tower), on the hills of Üsküdar, the gathering and worshipping place of the Celveti Sufi Order, the **Aziz Mahmut**



Ayazma Mosque

Hüdai Complex was built in 1595. The Celveti Order was one of the most important religious orders of the Ottoman Empire. The building was later extended with additional buildings, and used until 1925 as the seat of the religious order. After the new law banning orders and confiscating their buildings, it was used only as a mosque. Ottoman sultans paid respect to Mahmut Hüdai, the leader of the Order, and his tomb is visited by many people as we have seen in the case of Eyüp Sultan's tomb. The painted decorations of the interior of the mosque are splendid.

Kuzguncuk

A good example of how religions and nations may leave peacefully side by side can be found in Kuzguncuk District on the Anatolian shores of İstanbul Strait in Üsküdar County. Two churches, a synagogue and a mosque have for many years stood side by side here, and the **Surp Krikor Lusavoriç Church** and **Kuzguncuk Mosque**

even share the same courtyard. The Sephardic Jews who came from Spain, as well as Jews who settled in İstanbul before the Turkish conquest, settled in Kuzguncuk. Just behind the church and mosque is a synagogue and next to that is the Ayios Yeorgios Church. The cemeteries, not only the places of worship, are either side by side or across the same street. At the Nakkaştepe Cemetery 600-year-old Jewish graves lie alongside Muslim graves: opposite that cemetery is the Orthodox Cemetery.



Other important buildings of Kuzguncuk are the mansion houses lining the shores of İstanbul Strait, which are known as *yalı*, together with kiosks which represent the finest civil architecture of the late Ottoman Period. Kuzguncuk is one of the places of İstanbul which was not overdeveloped and so it has retained some of its natural features: the woods of Fethipaşa give a breathing space for all.

Beylerbeyi



As the Asian coast of İstanbul served as summer residence, offering rest and recreation during Byzantine and Ottoman periods, Beylerbeyi was also a favoured place. The most prominent building is the **Beylerbeyi Palace** which was commissioned by Sultan Abdülaziz in 1865. Sultans used it as their summer residence and it is believed that the present building was constructed over an earlier timber-framed and timber-clad structure that was demolished. Sultan Abdülaziz was famous for his love of the sea. Therefore, In addition to fine views of the İstanbul Strait the internal decorations are dominated by paintings of seascapes and famous ships.

Both in Asia and Europe... Neither in Asia nor in Europe: The İstanbul Strait Tour

Another way of enjoying İstanbul is to have a boat trip on the İstanbul Strait where the water reflects different colours at sunrise and sunset. The *yal/s* along the shores of İstanbul Strait were



built and enjoyed by Ottoman sultans, sultanas and pashas. The palaces where the Ottoman court moved to after abandoning Topkapı Palace are also along these shores. The most prominent of them all are Dolmabahçe and Beylerbeyi Palaces.

The first thing to mention regarding a boat trip on the İstanbul Strait is the **Kız Kulesi** (Leander's Tower) opposite Salacak. According to the legend, the Emperor Constantine had a daughter whom he loved deeply. An oracle predicted that the daughter would die from a snake bite. The emperor decided to build the tower with the belief that no snake could reach it from across the sea. However, there was no measure that could prevent the oracle from being realised. A basket of fruit was sent to the maiden with a snake stealthily concealed within it; and so she was bitten, and died from the venom. Yet another legend about the tower relates the sad love story of Hero and Leander, believed to have taken place in the tower. In reality the tower was built in the 12th century during the Byzantine Period. It was occasionally used as a prison but it was actually intended as a light house for shipping. The present shape of the tower was realised during the reign of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror and later Sultan Mahmut II.

The best season for boat tours on the İstanbul Strait in İstanbul is between the end of April and September – this is when blooming woods on either side of the strait create a veritable colour explosion. Purple is the most striking of those colours, the colour of the Byzantine emperors and the flowers of Judas Trees (*Cercis siliquastrum*).

Kuleli Askeri Lisesi (Military Cadets Lycée)



Both shores of İstanbul Strait were once lined with *yalis*. Although some have not withstood the passing of time and others have been destroyed by human hand, there are still a number of *yalis* along the shore. While they may look alike from afar, each has individual features, and was built under the influence of different architectural styles which were fashionable at the time. Generally they reflect the taste of the original owner, and the preferences of his architects and master builders, and therefore each is known by its owner's name. As you may quickly realise, most were built by pashas of Ottoman Period.

For example, along the Anatolian coast of the Strait lies Kuzguncuk, where there are *yalis* too. One of the best preserved examples is Pembe (Pink) Yalı, built in 18th century. If you proceed northwards and pass under the Boğaziçi Bridge, one of the most attractive palaces along the İstanbul Strait shores is the Beylerbeyi Palace on the Anatolian side, which serves as a museum. The palace was completed in 1865 and since then it was also used as residence of foreign dignitaries, emperors and statesmen during their visits to the empire.

Çengelköy, too, has its share of seaside kiosks and *yalis*. Those still remaining intact are Sadullah Pasha Yalısı, Abdullah Pasha Yalısı, Fenerli Yalı (a yalı with a lighthouse) and Server Bey Yalısı. The dominating white building under a leafy green backdrop is the Kuleli Askeri Lisesi (Military Cadets Lycée) which is the symbol of Çengelköy.

THE ISLANDS OF İSTANBUL

Like all major cities, İstanbul is always busy. For those who dislike the din and rush of the metropolis the ideal escape is provided by the islands of the Sea of Marmara. There are regular ferry services to all the inhabited islands.

After an earthquake, a mountain range was inundated by the Sea of Marmara leaving only the highest peaks above sea level which formed a set of islands called Prince Islands. Their silhouette can be seen from many parts of İstanbul. If you are really curious about them you cannot satisfy your curiosity by watching from afar. You can access them via one of the boats departing regularly to the islands. Once you discover the peaceful life style, the quiet and calm of the islands, the clean streets and unspoilt nature there, you will find returning to the city very difficult.

The islands form a row in the Sea of Marmara. The easternmost island is the smallest, and called Sedef Adası (Mother-of-Pearl Island), then comes Büyükada (Large Island), Heybeliada (Saddlebag Island), Burgazada and Kınalıada (Henna Island). Each island has its own special charm, and their popularity is directly related to their size. Ferries drop by each of them in the following order: first Kınalıada, then Burgazada, Heybeliada, and lastly Büyükada.

The regular ferry service departs for Prince Islands from Sirkeci, Kadıköy, Kabataş, Bostancı and Kartal piers, and the sea-bus catamarans depart from Kabataş, Sirkeci and Bostancı.



Kınalıada: Kınalıada is the first stop for ferries departing from İstanbul. Generally not many disembark there, as the favoured destination is Büyükada, but there is a lot to see on this island which cannot be found in the other islands.

Although there are fewer historical buildings and fewer panoramic views, during the summer months especially the island is more tranquil than the other islands and it has more beaches. So if you enjoy the sea and sun, disembark here and explore Kınalıada.

Burgazada: Burgazada is to the west of Heybeliada and the second stop after Kınalıada. It is the third largest of the Prince Islands. The most popular place in the island is the Bayrak Tepesi (Flag Hill), which has a panoramic view. Like the other islands Burgazada is secluded and was occupied in the past by ascetics and monks. On the summit of Bayrak Tepesi is the ruin of Christos monastery from the 9th century.

The island is a preferred place for literary and art luminaries due to its unique location and magnificent natural scenery, albeit being a second to Büyükada. One of its most famous inhabitants was the Turkish writer Sait Faik Abasıyanık. The mansion house in which the author died in 1954 serves today as the Museum of Sait Faik Abasıyanık. Opposite the museum is the Ayios Ioannis (St John the Baptist) Church, which is believed to date from the Byzantine Period.

Heybeliada: Heybeliada is the third stop for ferries coming from İstanbul, and the second largest island after Büyükada. It has more greenery than the other islands, and all areas excluding the settlements are forests. That is why it is the preferred spot for picnicking. The most favoured spot is the Değirmen Point, which is frequented by picknickers. As on all the islands, you can hire bikes to travel around or take a horse and cart ride. Its beaches are quieter than



Heybeliada

those of the other islands. On the highest point of the island is a monastery, Aya Triada (Holy Trinity). Special permission is required to visit the inside, but if you climb the hill you can at least enjoy the view.

Büyükkada: Büyükkada is the most popular and largest island of İstanbul. Its beauty is striking once you disembark at the **Büyükkada Pier**. The building shows features of late Ottoman architecture and its dome, arched façade decorated with tiles, and stained-glass windows make it one of the finest examples of its kind. Take some time to visit the inside of the pier building before rushing out to explore the island. It is a kind of marine museum, with documents, models, old photos related to seafaring on permanent display. There is a café on the top floor where you can enjoy the seascape with a cup of tea or a cold drink.



After leaving the pier building you follow the road straight to the tower clock located in a square which is surrounded with timber mansion houses and kiosks. You can take a horse and cart ride from here to your destination or hire a bike since there is no motor vehicle on the island. Horse carts are ideal to explore the streets of Büyükada or to tour the island. Mimosa and thousands of other species of shrubs and flowers adorn the road sides, so bike tours are also very popular.

On the main streets the mansion houses, which are currently used as bars or hotels, are adorned with flower gardens which have become symbols of the island. The best examples can be seen in the Nizam neighbourhood. Other historical buildings are monasteries and churches. The **Christos Monastery** is one of the most popular sites in Büyükada. The Old Greek Orphanage situated next to the monastery is one of the largest timber buildings in the world.

The most visited spot of Büyükada has also the best view at the highest point of the island. This is the **Aya Yorgi Church**. The steep hill is very difficult to climb, but the scenery and view improves as you ascend. According to an

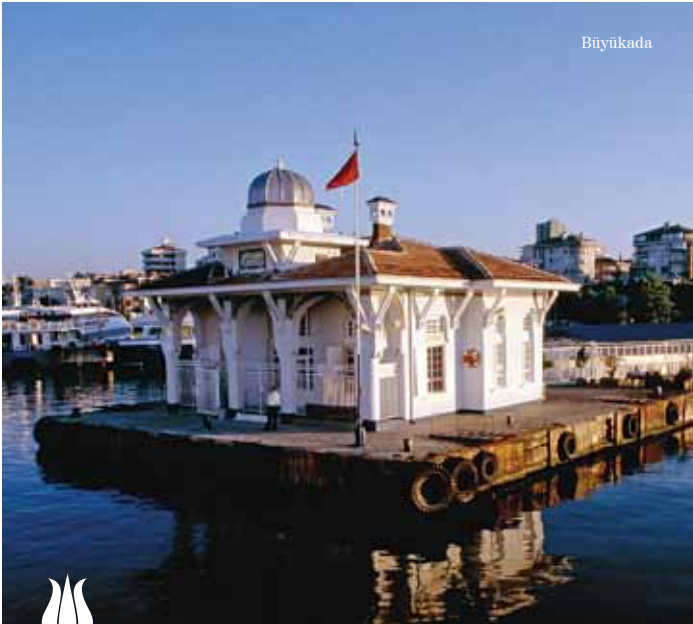


ancient belief, if a person climbs there barefoot, then his or her wishes will be fulfilled. Another way to achieve your wishes is to tie coloured rags to the trees lining the road, or to tie a piece of thread at one end of the slope and the other at the top – without breaking it. These methods may not appear realistic to you, but many people have brought gifts to the church as a thank you present: these are on permanent display in a glass cabinet inside the Aya Yorgi Church.

Büyükkada and love are inseparable, and on the Lovers Hill you will see many couples escaping from the city, walking hand in hand.

With its many remarkable features, the island is so rejuvenating that, before you realise it, the time comes to take the return ferry. If you come on a day trip you can watch the best sunset of Büyükkada at the pier or at Dilburnu during your last minutes on the island. Behind Heybeliada the city lights of İstanbul become clearly visible and the enchanting views capture your attention for hours.

Transport: Sea-bus catamarans as well as classical ferries departing from Kadıköy, Bostancı, and Kabataş piers provide regular services to the island. Some trips are direct, some stop at other islands. If you do not want to stay overnight the last boat departs to Bostancı at 00.30 hours.





Accommodation: If you want to enjoy and experience the whole Büyükada and stay for a couple of days, why not find a room in one of the former mansion houses that has been converted into a hotel?

Drinking and Eating: There are all manner of meat and fish restaurants on the island where you can also enjoy the island's own wines. The fish restaurants along the shore are a good choice, with their beautiful views of İstanbul. Rose shaped ice-cream and homemade wines are among the specialities. The patisseries and cafés along the both sides of the Pier are ideal for day trippers. To take an ice in one of the many ice-cream shops in Büyükada Square is an ideal way to cool down on a hot summer's day.

İstanbul: The Congress Centre

İstanbul ranks 19th among the world congress cities and 12th among European cities. İstanbul has modern congress facilities and centres to accommodate all needs, so it could be the preferred city for your meetings too. There are both privately owned congress facilities and luxury hotels offering special deals for congresses and meetings.



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EATING AND DRINKING



Luxurious restaurants and historical buildings converted into restaurants showcase the delicacies of Turkish and international cuisine in İstanbul with the additional bonus of the postcard-perfect scenery of the İstanbul Strait and panoramic views over İstanbul.

Historical sites that reflect the different features of İstanbul's past are some of the possible venues for a refined dinner. The first ones that come to mind are Galata Tower and Leander's Tower, both offering panoramic views of İstanbul, enchanted, even legendary places. Prior booking is essential

since they are both very popular. The restaurant in the Sirkeci Railway Terminus, the Ottomans' gateway to the West, used to be considered the most luxurious restaurant of its day. In Ortaköy the Hüsrev Kethuda Hammam, built by Mimar Sinan, is now a bar and restaurant. At Eminönü the Zindan Han is also a historical inn building put into service as a modern restaurant, and both of them are perfect spots for dining.

If you opt to have your dinner with a view of the İstanbul Strait and a panorama of Topkapı Palace, Ayasofya or Sultanahmet there are many restaurants available to meet these criteria, situated in fully modernised historical buildings. You can find virtually any cuisine in İstanbul, from any culture, and style aplenty. Our recommendation is to try Turkish cuisine, which is one of the three greatest cuisines of the world. At the restaurant of the hotel situated next to the Kariye Musuem, you can try food from the classical Ottoman Period, especially the food served to the sultans. However if you prefer other cuisines of the world there are many high quality restaurants to choose from. Restaurants serving Iranian, Russian, Argentinean food tend to cluster in İstiklal Street area.

The delicious fish dishes are highly recommended. The Sea of Marmara has since Roman times provided excellent fish and has shaped the cuisine of İstanbul. Palamut (Atlantic Bonito) and Lüfer (Bluefish) are the primary fishes of the İstanbul, depending on the season, though each type of fish is prepared differently – fried, grilled or baked, for example – according to the season. The best fish restaurants are along

the shores of the İstanbul Strait. If you prefer not to go to a luxury restaurant but have a fish meal there are many boats serving grilled fish and salad in bread.

İstanbul not only brought together many cultures but also created a kind of melting pot of Anatolian culture as a whole. Many Anatolian natives chose to live in İstanbul at some stage in their life because of the employment opportunities, and they created a cultural mosaic of their own by bringing their own cuisines to İstanbul. This is why you can find in İstanbul flavours from across Turkey. Most of these restaurants can be found around Sultanahmet and Spice Bazaar.

SHOPPING

One of the most important Ottoman institutions that ensured the longevity of the state was the *vakıf* (religious foundations) system. According to this system, when a mosque was commissioned a set of buildings was also planned to generate income, to meet the future expenses of employees, repairs and maintenance costs. One obvious choice was market buildings. So the story of **Kapalı Çarşı** (Covered Bazaar) and **Mısır Çarşısı** (Spice Bazaar) started in that manner, and they became the most visited places of İstanbul. Kapalı Çarşı reached its present form over a period of 250 years, and today everything from antiques to jewellery, from gold to cheap souvenirs is sold in over 3,000 shops. The original intention of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror was that this should generate income for the upkeep of Ayasofya. The Mısır Çarşısı had a similar aim; it was intended to provide for Yeni Cami (New Mosque). Today both



Kapalı Çarşı and Mısır Çarşısı are places where plenty of alternatives for purchasing souvenirs and mementos to remind İstanbul could be found. Both used to be primary trading places during the Ottoman Period, and today some traditional wares are still sold. Other products, however, are more modern. In this way these venues of İstanbul bring old and new, traditional and modern together. Along the street between Kapalı Çarşı and Nur-u Osmaniye Mosque are shops selling authentic Eastern wares such as carpets. The **Arasta Çarşısı** (Arasta Bazaar), situated behind the Sultan Ahmet Mosque, is yet another place where authentic goods and handicraft souvenirs can be found. Sultanahmet and its environs are other such areas. Old book enthusiasts should visit the **Sahaflar Çarşısı** (Booksellers' Market), which is situated between Beyazıt Mosque and Kapalı Çarşı.

Among İstanbul's shopping facilities you can find places selling simple jewellery and authentic



handicraft as well as shops selling famous world brands. The first place that comes to mind is **İstiklal Street**. In the larger shops you could find the most expensive world brands as well as smaller shops in the passages selling diverse goods. Musical instruments, simple jewellery, ready-made clothing, old books, and many individual shops line the street. The **Rumeli Street** in Harbiye district is famous for international brands of ready-made clothing and accessories.

In Kadıköy, **Bağdat Street** is also lined with shops. Apart from the more luxurious shops there are others in different parts of Kadıköy providing reasonable quality and prices. Antique enthusiasts should visit the **Tarihi Kadıköy Çarşısı** (Historical Market of Kadıköy). Antique dealers can be found along the Tellalzade Street in the market. On the **Kadıköy Sanatçılar Sokağı** (the Artists Road) along the road from Kadıköy to Bahariye you can buy artefacts produced in the workshops of ceramic artists, painters and sculptors.

If you do not want to spend too much time shopping by wandering in the streets, there are many shopping centres in İstanbul that gather many brands and types of goods under one roof. Among them the most prominent are Akmerkez, Atrium, Bauhaus, Capitol, Carousel, Carrefour, Cevahir İstanbul, Galleria, G-Mall, Kanyon, Maslak Çarşı, Mayadrom Shopping Centre, Metrocity, Olivium, Pabetland, Profilo Shopping Center and Tepe Nautilus Shopping Centre.

ENTERTAINMENT

İstanbul never sleeps. The morning starts before dawn with the departure of the fishermen to İstanbul Strait. Then come the fly fishers who go to the Galata Bridge to try their luck in the waters of the Golden Horn. Daylight brings the employees rushing to reach their workplaces on time, reminding visitors that İstanbul is a metropolis. Those who have to cross the waters have their preferred breakfast *simits* (bread rings laced with sesame seeds and dripped in diluted grape molasses before baking) onboard, and share part of it with the seagulls chasing the boats.



At the end of the day, when the sun starts, the city begins to shimmer. Now the movement is towards the entertainment centres where the whole fatigue of the day is cast away.

İstanbul is a centre of social and cultural life. It was declared European Capital of Culture 2010, and every year its historic cultural riches are complemented by exhibitions of world renowned artists. International arts and music

festivals bring artists and art lovers together. İstanbul hosts cultural and artistic activities of young generations in 1,000-year-old venues, deserving its claim to be the Capital of Culture. Some of the open-air events and events held in historic venues with superb acoustics are unique experiences not to be missed.

In Beyoğlu you can find 24-hour entertainment. There are beer houses where oriental music is performed, cafés and bars, as well as old style drinking dens in the Çiçek Pasajı (Flower Passage) and on Asmalımescit Road of Beyoğlu, which are the most popular spots.

Nişantaşı and Etiler are also renowned as luxurious entertainment venues.

Taksim and the coasts of İstanbul Strait boast prominent entertainment facilities.

On the Anatolian side, the bars in Kadıköy offer a night life that is well worth a visit. There are also seaside cafés and restaurants. If you are looking for more Turkish-style entertainment venues, try one of the authentic fishermen's drinking dens in Kumkapı and Yenikapı.

ACCOMMODATION

Together with Antalya, İstanbul is the most visited city by foreign holidaymakers in Turkey. It is also one of the prime congress centres of Europe, with many modern facilities. It provides accommodation of every type, including luxurious hotels, boutique hotels surrounded by historical buildings, and historic hotels.

TRANSPORT

By Air

There are two international airports in İstanbul.

İstanbul Atatürk Airport

Tel: (+90 212) 465 55 55

Web: www.ataturkairport.com

İstanbul Sabiha Gökçen Airport

Tel: (+90 216) 585 50 00

Web: www.sgairport.com

By Sea

İstanbul is the largest cruiser port of Turkey, and it is on the regular routes of cruises and yachts. The Salıpazarı (Tuesday Market) Cruiser Port of İstanbul is one of the ten most frequented ports in Europe.

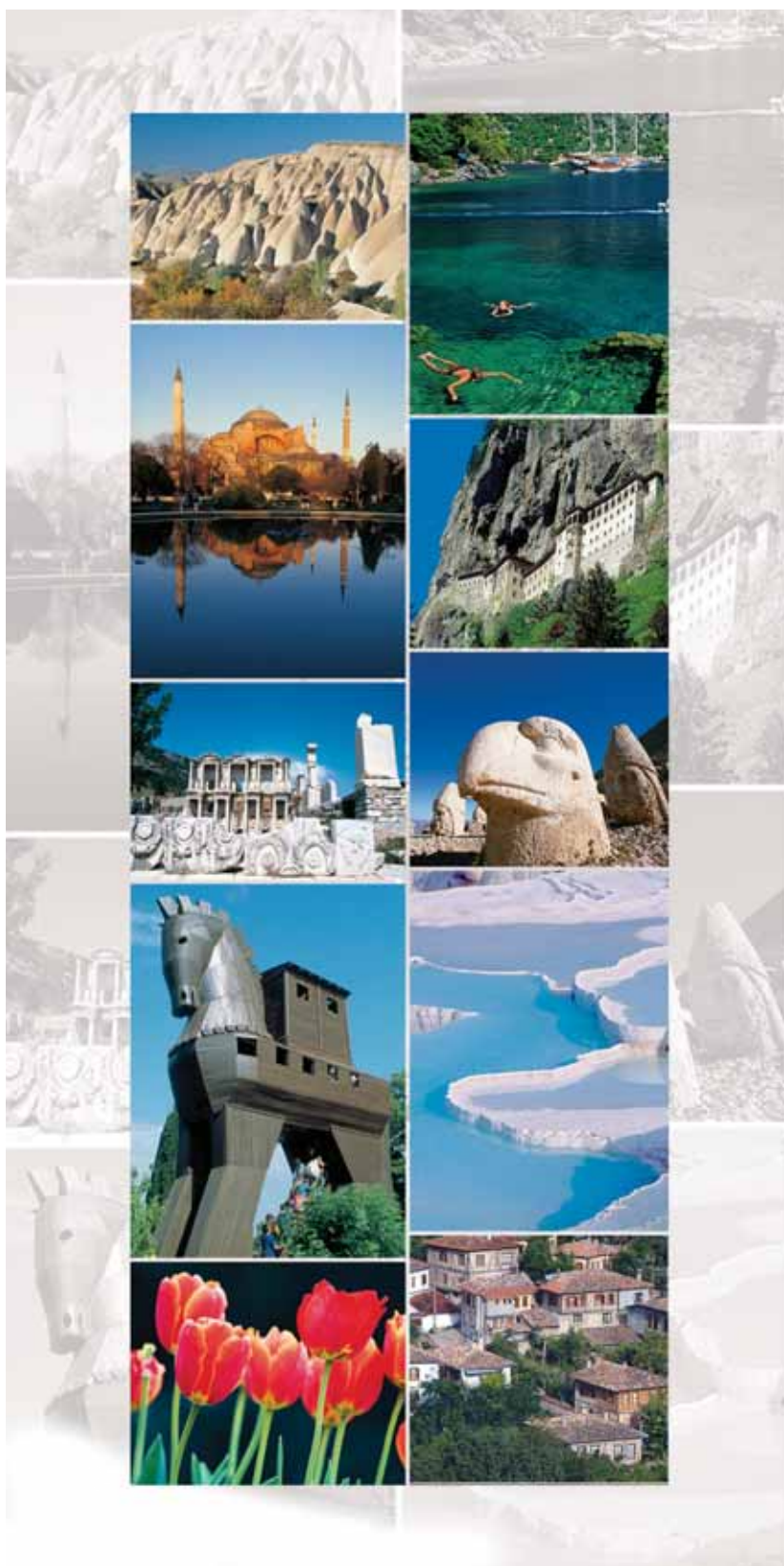
Intercity Transport

Transport in İstanbul depends greatly on city buses. There are about 500 routes regularly served by buses. As the İstanbul Strait facilitates sea travel, there are regular boat services. The bus terminals on both sides of the İstanbul Strait are connected by ferries crossing from Sirkeci, Haydarpaşa, Karaköy, and Eminönü, which provide a very pleasant mode of transport. Üsküdar is connected to Karaköy and Eminönü by ferry, and there are regular boat services to the Prince Islands departing from Sirkeci, Kadıköy, Bostancı, Kabataş and Kartal. There are also fast catamaran services to the Prince Islands departing from Sirkeci, Bostancı and



Kabataş. Detailed information about these services, schedules and cancellations, can be obtained from the website of İstanbul Sea Buses Corp. (IDO), where you can also purchase tickets online: www.ido.com.tr.

Underground Metro lines, metrobus connection and taxis are other options for travel in İstanbul. A nostalgic ride can be enjoyed on board an historical tram at İstiklal Street of Beyoğlu. The Tunnel, an underground funicular, designed and built in the late 19th century to climb the steep incline between Karaköy on the Haliç shore and the hilltop Beyoğlu, also provides an enjoyable excursion.



Cultural Heritage is Fragile

The world's cultural heritage is like a big puzzle. Each monument, each object, is an irreplaceable part of the overall picture which gives us insight into our origins, our development and our lives today. It helps us to understand and appreciate other cultures. Each discovery, each new interpretation adds to the puzzle and makes the picture clearer. We must ensure the protection of every single piece today, so that future generations may have the opportunities to enjoy the puzzle.

Many people are not aware that our cultural heritage is under stress from natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods, and from slower acting processes such as pollution or human actions. Even the most innocent gestures such as collecting ancient pieces of pottery or mosaics as souvenirs have a destructive impact if repeated by thousands. Touching an object of stone, metal or textile leaves traces of grease, acid or sweat on its surface. Climbing a monument wears down the structure underneath and can dismantle it. Writing or engraving names inflicts permanent damage. Strolling around narrow crowded places with bulky bags or backpacks might knock over an object or scratch a mural painting and ruin it. There are countless ways in which one can unknowingly contribute to the destruction of cultural heritage.

In 2020 there will be 1,6 billion visitors per year worldwide. Let us raise awareness of this issue so that we may join together to protect and enjoy the diversity and richness of our cultural heritage.

**International Organization for
Conservation of Cultural Heritage
(ICCROM)**



T.R. MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND TOURISM

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Graphic Design

Chess Creative - www.chesscreative.com

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Archive of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism

Print

Başak Matbaacılık ve Tanıtım Hiz. Ltd. Şti.

Tel: 0312 397 16 17 Fax: 0312 397 03 07

Ankara 2011

For Free Distribution

