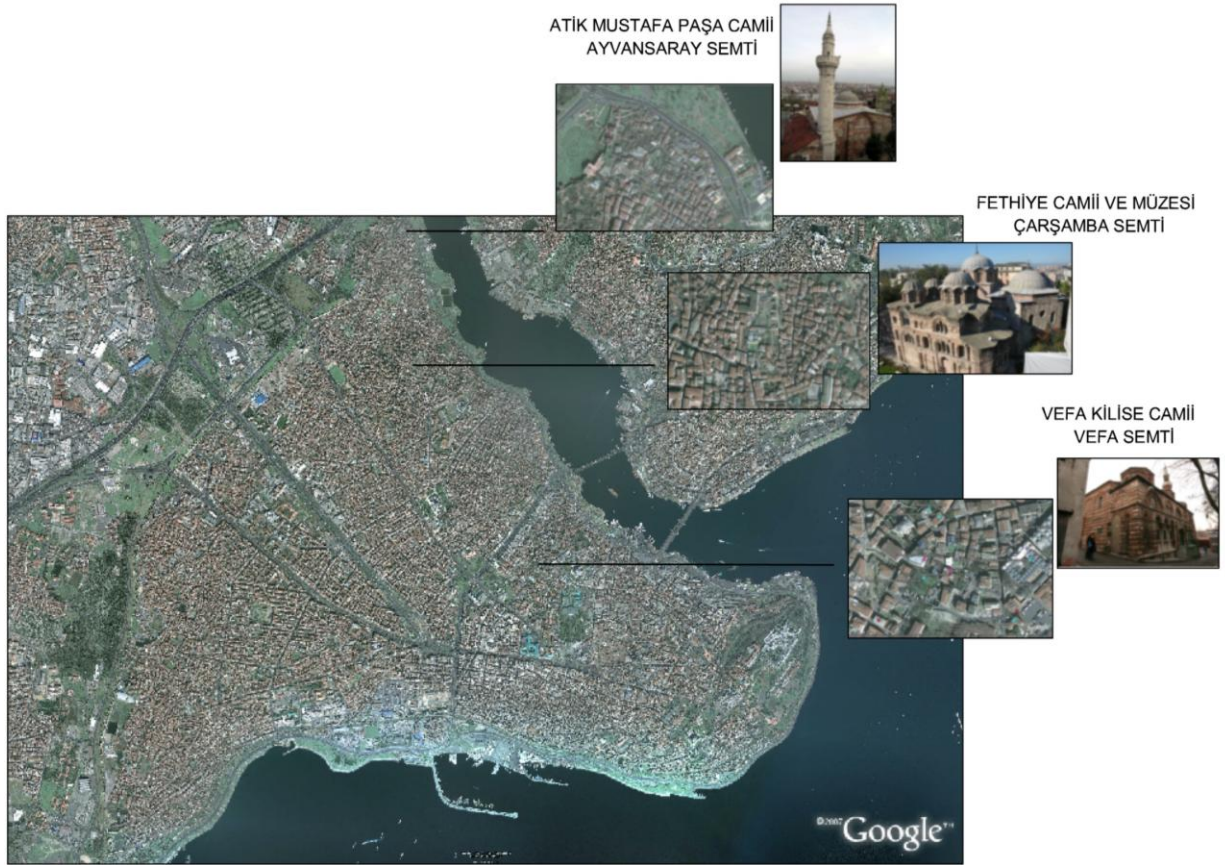


Extended Abstract : Proposals for the integrated conservation of three Middle Byzantine Period churches and their neighborhoods in Istanbul



-Figure 1 : Vefa Kilise Camii, Atik Mustafa Paşa Camii and Fethiye Camii (Pammakaristos Monastery Church) and their neighborhoods : Süleymaniye, Ayvansaray and Çarşamba.

Istanbul, as the former capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, has a unique collection of Byzantine monuments which are part of a multi-layered urban fabric. Unfortunately, most of the Byzantine monuments and the neighborhoods in which these unique medieval buildings are situated, present a poor state of preservation today. They are in need of urgent care and call for preservation and improvement. Thus, three of the Middle Byzantine Era churches: Vefa Kilise Camii, Atik Mustafa Paşa Camii and Fethiye Camii (Pammakaristos Monastery Church) and their neighborhoods, Süleymaniye, Ayvansaray and Çarşamba (covering an approximate number of twenty-five quarters) were chosen for this study (Fig. 1). Since a wide period can be attributed to Byzantine architecture,

Middle Byzantine Era with its specific building characteristics was chosen and all of the three monuments' first construction dates belong to the above-mentioned period.

After the Iconoclasm in the Middle Byzantine Period (843-1204), Byzantine society changed radically and religion became the dominant factor in all areas of life. Private worshipping and increase in the number of monasteries resulted in a new form in church architecture. As several Byzantine specialists such as Professors Cyril Mango, Robert Ousterhout and Paul Magdalino state, this new form expresses itself both in Middle (843-1204) and Late (1261-1453) Byzantine Eras and therefore can best be examined together due to the fact that all the Middle Byzantine Era structures had additions in the Late Byzantine Era. The aim of the study was to provide a thorough analysis and develop proposals for the three selected edifices which had been built between 843-1204 in Constantinople, as the capital of the Byzantine Empire and the center of the economic, social and architectural development of the eastern Mediterranean civilization. The three edifices had additions and went through interventions in the Late Era (1261-1453). These additions and interventions, also their Ottoman and Turkish Republican periods were as well thoroughly examined in the course of this study.

A monument cannot be considered apart from its physical environment and neighboring settlements. Therefore, this dissertation focusing on three Middle Byzantine churches, also provides detailed information about their neighborhoods. Two of the inspected monuments are part of the areas (Süleymaniye, Ayvansaray) on UNESCO's World Heritage List and the third one (Çarşamba) has close interaction to the listed areas. Therefore these neighborhoods also have a role as important cultural heritage and should be improved along with the monuments themselves. As a result of the examination of the surroundings and legal dimensions, it is noteworthy to mention that the monuments and their neighborhoods are currently threatened by a law (#5366-Renewal Law) which came into force in 2006 and changed the status of the Süleymaniye and Ayvansaray from conservation sites to "renewal areas"¹. Although Süleymaniye and part of Ayvansaray are World Heritage Areas, they have been declared as renewal areas. However, they possess archeological remains in addition to their architectural features. The projects developed

¹ #5366 presumes that renewal areas have lost their unique cultural heritage and it enables total reconstructions of the physical environment .

for these renewal areas will change the sizes of parcels, fabric and heights of the settlements as well as harming the Golden Horn Walls in priority and other archeological remains. Therefore, the authenticity of the areas will be consequently lost.

Some of the concerns which my dissertation addresses are as follows: 1. What type of buildings and/or physical-social environment do we encounter as we approach these medieval buildings and what do their vicinities offer us today?, 2. The conditions of the monuments nearby, 3. Which entirety (building complex, monastery etc.) were these buildings a part of in the past and who did previously observe or write on them?, 4. The traces of the previous interventions and earthquakes or other kinds of structural damage which might have caused these interventions. Besides earthquakes, fires which caused damages were traced back. With the above mentioned guidance, my starting point was library and archival research, followed by photographic surveys, measured drawings and chronological analyses.

In order to provide some insight to the abovementioned questions, I consulted various libraries (The Library of German Institute of Archeology in Istanbul, The Library of the Istanbul Research Institute, The Library of American Research Institute in Istanbul and archives (Dumbarton Oaks Archives (Washington, D.C., USA), The Archives of European Center for Byzantine and Post- Byzantine Monuments (Thessaloniki), The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry of Turkish Republic, The Archives of the General Directorate of the Pious Foundations, The Archives of the Istanbul Archeology Museum and Abdulhamit Archives for references (Fig.2). Regarding the Ottoman Archives documents, assistance from experts was received for the precise transcriptions of the manuscripts from Ottoman to Turkish. First, each building's location was described and important monuments in their vicinities were examined. Then the long pasts and previous interventions of the buildings were explained. Photographic albums were prepared and measured drawings were developed with the help of a laser total station. Drawings were accompanied by detailed descriptions taking into account the new research and recent observations. To be able to conduct a thorough analysis, I examined carefully the fabric of the buildings and the changes which they have gone through. Finally, evaluations on the buildings and their surroundings were made.



-Figure 2 : Fethiye Camii at Tscharchamba, Abdulhamit Archives (around 1890's).

My summer fellowship at Dumbarton Oaks Library and Fieldwork Archives in 2008 provided me with some very important photographs from the field works and surveys. They have been of great help in making comparisons while writing my detailed descriptions. Since recent interventions have wiped out many key traces on the buildings, such archival photographs present more information than the current conditions of the buildings. By examining previous photographs from archives or dissertations in detail, it was possible to discover great losses such as the parapet slabs dating back to seventh century A.D (Fig. 3). They disappeared from the minaret balcony of Kilise Camii sometime after 1995 when they could have been photographed in-situ probably for a last time by Erdoğan².

² Erdoğan, E.G, 1996, İstanbul'daki Osmanlı Yapılarında Kullanılan Devşirme Malzemenin Değerlendirilmesi (Master Thesis), İstanbul Üniversitesi, İstanbul.



-Figure 3: Parapet slab dating back to seventh century A.D. It disappeared from the minaret balcony of Kilise Camii after 1995 (Erdoğan, plate:502).

Another contribution of the archival research was the photographs of the North Church of the Fethiye Camii taken by the Byzantine Institute of America when it was stripped completely out of its plaster during The Pious Foundations' repair in 1957-59. By the help of these photographs, which have not been evaluated in detail since they were taken, it was possible to compare the previous and current conditions. A book³ was published about Pammakaristos (the Fethiye Camii), but it was mainly based on the restoration of the Byzantine Institute of America in the South Church.

After the 1980's, a suffering for the cultural heritage as never before has been experienced due to lack of awareness of the society for the preservation of the cultural heritage, along with religious fanaticism. The rise in the value of the land in Istanbul and

³ Mango, Cyril, 1978, *The Mosaics and Frescoes of St. Mary Pammakaristos (Fethiye Camii) at Istanbul*, (Hans Belting, Cyril Mango, Doula Mouriki), Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.

the gaps in the Turkish legal system augmented the problems. All of the three churches have been repaired without any projects and permission from The Pious Foundations. Atik Mustafa Paşa, which was treated in the above mentioned manner, has some very severe structural problems, which can be viewed with the naked eye. The cracks and deformations should be carefully examined with non-destructive testing methods; the cracks should be monitored.

Finally, I would like to add that the buildings' long histories, their past repairs and additions, their neighborhoods, current users and social environment all present important problems requiring consideration and solutions. The three Middle Byzantine-era monuments, which have been the subject of the study, highlight the urban fabric and are unique historical assets which convey valuable information about the architectural styles, building techniques, decorative arts and social life of the Middle Ages. It is as important for their neighborhoods as the monuments themselves to preserve the authentic features, for the sustainability of the urban memory and integrated value of a monument with its physical and social environment. In the course of the study, data from library and archival research were collected, photographic surveys, measured drawings on the sites, descriptions and chronological analyses were prepared and evaluated in the scope of architectural conservation discipline. After I inspected the construction techniques, structural features, materials, known repairs, contemporary functions, the problems of the buildings and their neighborhoods, I searched for convenient proposals that begin from the environmental scale and then focus on the buildings themselves. As a result, guidelines for the preservation and improvement of these medieval buildings and their neighborhoods were developed. Bearing in mind the earthquake risk, proposals for maintenance, repair, management and utilization of the architectural and archeological values were put forward.

I sincerely hope that these guidelines and proposals will be of help for future studies. Environmental proposals for the neighborhoods are determined to be used as a base for future plans in urban conservation. The guidelines for the monuments can be used as a reference in case of an intervention on any of the three edifices. The parts of the monuments which should be “carefully or in priority” examined/excavated are precisely indicated in the guidelines.