



Article

Historic Zeyrek District, Fatih , Istanbul

Fatma Sedes,

Istanbul Aydin University , Architecture Restoration Program

ABSTRACT

Major factors which effect the change of -physical formation in historical Zeyrek- Istanbul are the fires that occurred in various periods and their destructions beginning from 1960's. Gradually increasing immigration from rural areas to urban areas with industrialization was also another major factor. Though there were always developing activities in walled city, beginning from the second half of 19th century to the end of 20th century these developments caused the disappearance of many of the cultural assets, streets and neighborhoods. The factors which caused to a destruction in Zeyrek in those days are very important, because traditional Ottoman wooden architecture was going into extinction. So the samples of traditional Ottoman wooden architecture and restoration programs on such buildings gained great importance. Within this context, the Governorship of Istanbul, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Istanbul 1st Regional Directorate for Foundations, Fatih Municipality and by partnership with several related non-governmental organizations the restorations have been carried out, and the restoration works of the Molla Zeyrek Mosque(Pantocrator Church) is being completed by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and Istanbul 1st Regional Directorate for Foundations.

Keywords: Historical environment, man's decay, Zeyrek-Istanbul, restoration, physical texture ,Pantocrator Church

1.INTRODUCTION

There are not any information about initial settlement history and development of the Zeyrek region. This district's name in the Byzantine period is not known. Only one certain information is that it was within the city walls during the Emperor Constantine I. Period (324-337), however it is not stated in which region it was [1].

As recognized in the beginning periods of Byzantine as a district with monasteries, Zeyrek was a region with habitation density throughout history. The region took a "religious area" characteristic within the city with the Church of Holy Apostles (Havariyyun Kilisesi) which was built by Constantine I. and is a location in which the emperors were interred. Since the Church of Holy Apostles built in 4th century took the function to be an imperial graveyard, it has began to leave such a characteristic to the Monastery of the Pantocrator (Pantokrator Manastırı) from the

beginning of 12th century forward - which was built on the sets on a hill dominating the urban fabric. Because of its important feature, the Monastery of the Pantocrator became one of the important points of the city for the mid- and late/ Byzantine period [3].

Starting from 12th century, which was built by Queen Irene who was the wife of Emperor Iohannes Komnenos (1118-1143), the large part of this monastery was completed before 1136 which was understood from its establishment guide line called "Typikon". From this source it's learned that there were rooms that allocated to priests around the churches and a hospital in the monastery as well. Before 1136, a second church was built on the north side of the big principal monastery church and a funerary chapel added between these two; in this way the church composed of three constructions adjacent to one another [3].



Figure 1. Zeyrek 2419 – 35 parcel of lot

After the conquest of Constantinople, a new construction movement began, as the Emperor Fatih the conqueror wanted the Byzantines to turn back who moved away from their habitat. After that a part of these community (Turkish, Greek, Armenian and Jews) were transported to some places in Anatolia and Rumelia by him. The houses in the city were distributed to those seizers or outsiders as a real estate. To the Greek community some neighborhoods were assigned. Also houses and monasteries to military men and cenobites were assigned. Since the period of Emperor Fatih the population of Istanbul increased, due to immigration to the city was continuing. Giving its names -some of them rest until today- to those neighborhoods that they settled, these people inhabited around Bayezid and Aksaray. After the conquest, as big groups they brought from Konya and Karaman, and placed here [4].

After the conquest, there were arising dwelling units around the religious buildings which were effective in

Istanbul; it's one of the results of the Turkish-Islamic settlements (Fig. 1). By big centers of population -that organized with large and small *külliyes* (islamic-ottoman social complex)- and built on the hills which is easy to be perceived, several religious buildings and neighborhood connections were made, so an urban organization formed for Istanbul [4].

The Zeyrek district is adjacent to many neighborhoods resting in between the Suleymaniye Mosque, Fatih Mosque, Şehzade Mosque and Yavuz Sultan Mosque, religious buildings was built and the region has turned into a muslim settlement (Fig. 2). Together with the already built religious buildings, even the Pantepoptes and Pantokrator churches have began to be used as mosques. Belonging to mid- Byzantine period, the Church of the Monastery of Christ Pantokrator which reached today, was turned into so-called "Molla Zeyrek Mosque".

During this period, the monastery buildings were also used as a *madrassa* (muslim theological school) to the completion time of the Fatih Külliye (1463-1470). Given its administration to Molla Zeyrek Mehmet Efendi, this *madrassa* was engaged to a foundation that was established by Fatih the Conqueror. After the *madrassa* was moved to the Fatih Külliye, Ayverdi [5]claims that the monastery buildings were used as dyeing plants in a period, in the first quarter of the 16th century those units were destroyed and instead of those, different buildings built such as, the Zebbili Ali Efendi school. Relevant to the topic, it is claimed that the Pantokrator Church turned into a mosque. The monastery rooms on the façade of *mihrab* were belonged also to the church extension, where the mosque was used as *madrassa* and they were covered up with vaults in single file, and some parts of them were existing in 1938. Today, excluding the churches, other buildings which belong to the monastery are not found. Merely it's found that the Zeyrek Cistern and other relative little cisterns already in the region that belongs to the Byzantine period, also building basis can be encountered with the cistern structures. Another important monastery church in Zeyrek is the Pantepoptes Monastery which turned into a mosque. Excluding the mosque, other buildings belonging to this monastery cannot reached to present day.



Figure 2. 2419 Ada- 50, 51, 52 Parcel of lots

Built by Çakır Ağa (died in 1457) in 15th century as a small mosque, and afterwards appointed to be repaired by Great Architect Sinan and turned to a mosque the Üsküplü Mosque and Bath (Bostan Bath) was built. Also wanted to be built by Tokatlı Paşmakçı Hüsameddin Efendi -who was an *ulema* and Tokat people- the Salih Pasha (İbn Meddas) small mosque and some others were built as follows;

- ordered by Hacı Ali Ağam -who was the son of Timurhan having function of the head butcher (*kasapbaşı*) in front of Fatih the conqueror- the Kasap Demirhan Small Mosque (1462),
- ordered by Sinan Ağa -who was the responsible and accredited man for the Fatih Mosque- the Sinan Ağa Mosque,
- by Hızır Bey -who was the first *kadi* of Istanbul- the Hacı Kadın Mosque,
- by Grand vizier Mehmet Pasha (died in 1495) -who was the Grand vizier of Fatih the Conqueror- the Manısalı Mehmet Pasha Külliye (Fig. 3).



Figure 3. Pervititch Map, 1933

- ordered by Hacı Hasan (died in 1505) to Architect Sinan in 16th century the Hacı Hasanazade Small mosque,
- ordered by Bıçakçı Alaeddin in 1503 the Bıçakçı Small mosque,
- ordered by Hamid Mahmut Efendi (died in 1577) who was known as the groom of “Çivizade” -one of the *shaykh al-islams* in 16th century- on an infrastructure that remaining from Byzantine period the Hamid Efendi Madrasa,
- ordered by Piri Mehmet Pasha -who was the grand vizier of Suleyman the Magnificent- as a zawiya to İshak Karamani, later in 1526-1527 turned to a madrasa the Piri Mehmet Pasha Madrasa,
- by Zenbilli Ali Efendi (died in 1525) -who was the eighth *shaykh al-islam* of the Ottoman Empire- the Zenbilli Ali Efendi Ottoman elementary-primary school,
- to be built by Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha for the purpose of gaining revenues to his madrasa in Beşiktaş between 1540-1546 the Çinili Hamam (a bath with tiles),
- to be built by Haydar Pasha -who was one of the viziers of Suleyman the Magnificent- in 1569 the Haydar Pasha Külliye,
- to be built by *Shaykh al-islam* Çivizade Mehmet Efendi (died in 1587) the Çivizade Small mosque and a madrasa that not reached to present day,
- to be built by Damat Mehmet Efendi -who was one of the companions of Emperor Murad III and a Mudurnu people- the Damat Mehmet Efendi Madrasa,

- by *Shaykh al-islam* Kadızade Ahmet Şemseddin Efendi (died in 1580) the Çırçır Small mosque,
 - and by Gazanfer Ağa -who was one of the chief white eunuchs and particular concierge of Emperor Mehmed III- the Gazanfer Ağa Külliye.



Figure 4. 2419 Ada-35 parcel of lot

Within the 17th century, the region had three big fires in the years 1633, 1660 and 1693. These fires led to regeneration of many buildings (Fig. 4). Within this century, the Çelebi Mehmet Ağa and Azebler Baths were built by Mehmet Ağa -who was one of the janissary heads-, and the Salih Pasha Foundation to the boundary wall of Salih Small mosque was built by Grand vizier Salih Pasha that massacred in 1647 by Sultan İbrahim.

In the beginning of 18th century, a fire was started in Cibali in 1716 which was the biggest up to that time.

From 20th century up to the present day, a destruction process of the structure has begun with several reasons such as an erosion on local identity which was generated from migrations and population movements, and due to the followed housing and town planning policies.

2. ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES OF URBAN STRUCTURE PROPERTIES

Zeyrek was established on a hillside that begins from the Ataturk Avenue and the Golden Horn, by high retaining walls which reaches up to 15 meters from the Ataturk Avenue side, with various terracing and sets that were made

in Byzantine period. On the formation of architectural structure and road structure that gives its unique characteristic to the region, the determinant effects of topographical features and education were clear. Depending upon topography, the roads formed as parallel to its declivity lines or as steep format that establishing connection between the sets[6].

As its spatial organization, developed around the Molla Zeyrek Mosque, the Zeyrek district formed depending upon several factors such as the building forms, dimensions and building types, facade features, a relationship between road wideness-and-building height and ownership structure.(Fig. 5) Zeyrek is one of the limited in number districts of Istanbul with its organic shaped streets that cut each other by non straight angles and dead ends, wooden houses and monumental buildings, and reached to the present day with its organic urban fabric relatively protected and has own to it an unique character.

When an evaluation has made in the region within the boundaries of Zeyrek Mosque and its surrounding World Heritage Site, it's seen that a great majority of the area as having 10,30 ha bigness has filled with housing areas. Usage of housing extended throughout the region. In the area, especially through the Haydar Street in north-south direction going a mixed usage is observing that includes local trade activities, however it can be said that the bigness of these areas is quite a little. These small businesses are found in the ground floors of the houses. Making sense that it is a non highly dense-middle class housing zone in this region the service buildings are in number little it's seen, and existing ones are found generally on the edges of the region. Present on the south side of the district, there are some types of buildings for instance the big Çinili Hamam (a bath with its tales - it's one of the architectural works of Great Architect Sinan), and on the north side found again Architect Sinan's work the Haydar Bath and founding further the north the Azebler Bath and opposite to it located the Çukur Bath (dating to 19th century) as a part of the Fatih Külliye, all these are the examples to such buildings. Composed from wooden buildings an architectural structure is longing up to the Golden Horn by containing the Çırçır district too. Most of the wooden houses which found in Zeyrek are wooden ribbon build-

ing that was built between the years 1800-1840. Sitting on an average 50 square meter those ribbon buildings are two-storey or 100 square meter gross area, and their parcel wideness change to a length between 5-10 m. As looking their living spaces to the street side and founding small gardens on their back sides those house lines have some common features, for instance an existence of the bay windows by d three-storey houses with an 100-150 different wideness and height. As for the wooden mansions can reached too little to the present day [7].

After 1930s in Istanbul because of both a rarity at wooden material and fire regulations examples of the masonry constructions have began to be built. Those constructions became dense on the south and west sides of the region. Built after this period houses in the region, despite their plan schemas and forms, materials and construction practices have changed, up to the end of the 1940s originality and harmony with the wooden structure maintained. As for the reinforced apartments which was built after 1950s are disharmonious constructions with the environment [8].



Figure 5. 2419 Ada-42 Parcel of lot

In the historical peninsula, defined as urban and historical protected area in the region, in Zeyrek there are in number 209 available, 73 disappearing and totally 282 cultural assets. The number of the total cultural assets in the area constitutes approximately 10% of the total cultural assets throughout the World Heritage Areas of Istanbul. Among

the cultural assets in the field, 32% of them are monumental work, as for 68% of them are civil cultural assets. The number of available monumental works are 78, disappeared 11; as for the number of available civil cultural assets are 131 and 62 disappeared one. When the cultural assets in the area evaluated according to their functions, it's seen that majority of them (74%) are houses. Besides the cultural assets which used as house number 47 cultural assets with reinforcement and in number 26 cultural assets with commercial use are in question. The cultural assets in the area are mainly found on the private property parcels. Constituting approximately 73% of the total 282 cultural assets, in number 207 constructions are private individual property. In the area, the rate of the total 44 cultural assets that publicly owned is approximately 16%, as for the rate of the owned by foundations the cultural assets in number 31 are approximately 11%.



Figure 6. 2419 Ada-13Parcel of lot

3. A CHANGE ON THE PHYSICAL TEXTURE IN THE ZEYREK DISTRICT

Major factors that having effects on the change of physical tissue in Zeyrek are in various periods occurred fires and their destructions and beginning from 1950s with industrialization a gradually increasing immigration movement from rural areas to urban areas.

Like almost every places in the Old Istanbul, Zeyrek also affected negatively from big fires that Istanbul had lived;



Figure 7. 2419 Ada-45 Parcel of lot

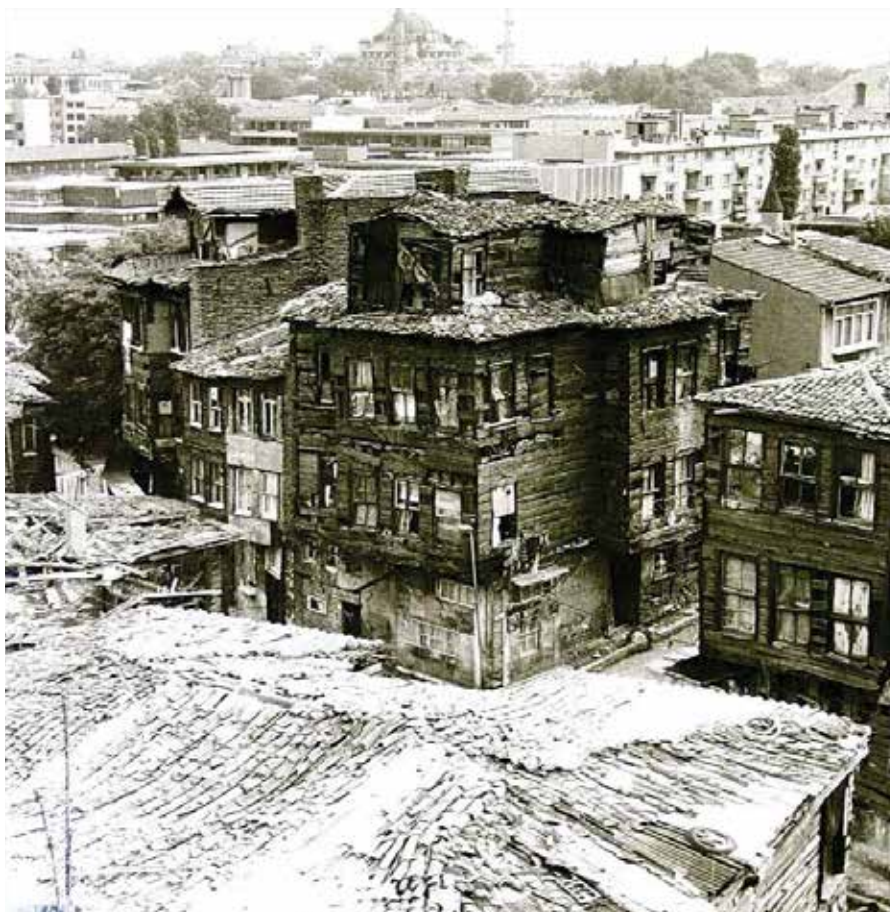


Figure 8. Zeyrek in 1900's

in consequence of those fires the buildings were should regenerated. Respectively in 1633, 1660, 1693, 1718, 1756, 1833, 1908 and 1918 occurred fires had destructed many of the buildings in Zeyrek and changed the street patterns.

In 19th century an overall implementation that includes reorganizing the fire areas by vertical cutting roads and in the way between them resting a square or rectangle wards, was applied to Zeyrek and its surrounding too. On the south of Zeyrek and Çırçır avenues resting a planned part with its straight angle is different from the traditional organic texture. The area which found between İtfaiye Avenue, Ömer Efendi Street and Old Mutaflar Street clearly separates from the old organic tissue [9].

The region was organized in the direction of the principles of Istanbul Structural Plan which came into force in 1939 and that prepared by Henri Prost, and afterwards according to the development implementations and in this context due to the vehicle traffic; the old texture

largely was changed by right-angled settlement plans. In 19th century, in the planning after the fires occurred was made points out that an harmony with the texture in the environment has been not taken into accounts. The area around the Molla Zeyrek Mosque, with its different angle roads and dead ends -as it's seen from the 1882-1884 city plan- has survived until today. On the Pervititch map that dated to 1933 the mansions -now, some of them disappeared or their number considerable has decreased- and the ribbon building can be seen. Began to be made after 1938 the Ataturk Boulevard caused both to disappearance of some of historical building and the structure of Suleymaniye and Zeyrek districts as of continuity and forming completeness.

Though there were always development activities in walled city, beginning from the second half of 19th century to the end of 20th century were made development movements caused to disappear many of our cultural assets, streets and neighborhoods. The factors had had effect on the destruction in Zeyrek were;



Figure 9. Zeyrek after fire



Figure 10. Decay in Zeyrek

- Opening the walled city Istanbul and the Golden Horn to industrialization,
- Sourced from an increasing amount of demand to labor force happened immigration wave to the city,
- The development plans that increased the population density in the city,
- From the walled city were passed the many main road axis,
- To make big avenues, boulevards, park and to open coastal roads, an extinguishment of monumental buildings and civil architectural texture,
- For meeting an increased need to parking areas, especially with encouragement to individual transportation and its development, appeared an important issue as unlicensed parking areas, that cannot be prevented, which is known destroys the civil architectural texture.
- While in traditional parcel use, on a building parcel only on the one independent part a family was provided to be

sheltered, since the condominium regulation of the civil code, by forming more than one independent parts on a parcel resultant an increase in the density caused to destruction,

- Because of the reasons an increased density and floors in number, separate houses moved to apartments, and so the lanes and infrastructure became as insufficient against the needs.
- Available parcels united, in this way big and multiple-floor buildings were made.

Above explained reasons as the same happened in the historical peninsula, in Zeyrek increased the destruction of cultural heritage too.

Being found on the Ataturk Boulevard and used as administrative unit of the Social Security Administration, as belonging to Sedad Hakki Eldem -who is a pioneer architect of 20th century- a building complex is also among the cul-

tural assets within the area boundaries. Built between the years 1962-1964 this building complex though accepted as one of the samples of modern Turkish architecture it had has a determinant role on the change of the unique historical texture. By this building work Sedad Hakkı El-dem had has win the Ağa Han prize in 1986.

4. CONCLUSION

As lived a rapid housing and apartment house progressing between 1960-1975 in Zeyrek, after this area has been putted under protection by Ministry of Culture in 1979 by declaring it as a sit area, a limit brought to the new housing. In 1985, together with three other areas in the Historical Peninsula, the Molla Zeyrek Mosque and its surrounding has been added to the World Heritage List.

In 1995, as declared the overall Historical Peninsula as a sit area by Decision no 6848 in 12.07.1995 of Istanbul No 1 Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board, the Zeyrek district also has been identified as Urban and Historical Sit Area.

In last periods, in the region, as the samples of traditional Ottoman wooden architecture gained value to the civil cultural assets' restorations intended activities have been realized. Within this context, the Governorship of Istanbul, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Istanbul 1st Regional Directorate for Foundations, Fatih Municipality and with partnership with several related non-governmental organizations the restorations have been carried out, and the restoration works of the Molla Zeyrek Mosque is being continued by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality.

REFERENCES

- [1] Eyice, S., 1994. "Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi", Volume 7, p.555.
 - [2][2*] Op.cit.,p.555
 - [3] Oral-Seyhan, T., 1994. "Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi", Volume 4, p. 243
 - [4] Ayverdi,E.H. 1953."Osmanlı Mimarisinde Fatih Devri"-III,İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti Yayınları
 - [5] Çelik, Z., 19. yüzyılda Osmanlı Başkenti, Değişen İstanbul, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul, pp.18-30, 1998.
 - [6] Karaman, A. ve Önal, Ş., Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi, Volume 7, p. 553, 555, 1994.
 - [7] Müller-Wiener, W. and Cramer, J., İstanbul-Zeyrek Studien zur Erhaltung eines Traditionellen Wohngebietes, Deutsches Orient Institut, HAMBURG, p.34, 1982.
 - [8] Op.cit.,s.35
- (Figure 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 are from Fatma SEDES's archive)
- [9] GÜLERSOY N.Z, KORAMAZ,T.K "Urban Conservation Study Based on Computer Aided Design Techniques: A Case of Zeyrek-Istanbul", ISPRS Commission V Symposium, 2002, Close Range Imaging, Long Range Vision, 2-6 September 2002, Corfu, Greece, pp 369-372



Figure 11. A ruined house in Zeyrek