

The Eyüp Sultan Mosque (Turkish: Eyüp Sultan Camii) is a mosque situated in the Eyüp district of Istanbul, outside the city walls near the Golden Horn. The present building dates from the beginning of the 19th century. The mosque complex includes a mausoleum marking the spot where Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, the standard-bearer and friend of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, is said to have been buried.

History[edit]

A mosque complex (külliye) was constructed on the site in 1458 by the Ottoman Turks only five years after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453.[1] By the end of the 18th century the mosque was in a ruinous state, perhaps as a result of earthquake damage, and in 1798 sultan Selim III ordered the whole structure other than the minarets to be pulled down and rebuilt. This work was completed in 1800. The eastern minaret was rebuilt in the original style by Mahmud II in 1822.[2][3]

Eyüp Sultan is believed to have died during the first Arab siege of Constantinople in the 670s. His tomb is greatly venerated by Muslims. The mausoleum is on the north side of a courtyard opposite the main entrance to the prayer hall of the mosque.[3]

The mosque was the traditional site for the coronation ceremony of the Ottoman Sultans, where the new sultan was girded with the sword of Osman.[4] The Eyüp Sultan Mosque is Turkey's oldest and most sacred mosque.[citation needed] Its style was changed a couple of times when the Ottomans built it based on their style and architecture during their time, however, when Sultan Selim III took over in the 1800s, he rebuilt the mosque in the Baroque style after an earthquake as previously mentioned.[5] Its new architecture consisted of crystal chandeliers, iznik tiles, and a mixture of different architecture that resembles different time periods. This mosque is next in line of being one of the most important sites for Muslims with Mecca in Saudi Arabia being the first making a significant symbol for Islam. The history behind its name goes back as far as the time of Muhammad where his closest and trustworthy friend was named Eyüp.[5] In addition, this mosque is surrounded by the tombs of significant people that are buried there, which attracts many more Muslims. An important fact that many people confuse is Abu Ayyub al-Ansari's name, which is Eyüp Ensari in Turkish.[6] It was also believed that Abu Ayyub al-Ansari was buried somewhere around the mosque where people had continuously searched for him.[7] In 1458, the tomb was found and the mosque was built next to the tomb. The initiative to build this mosque was during the times of Mehmet the Conqueror where his teacher's dream, Akşemsettin, was to build a mosque in the remembrance and burial place of Eyüp Ensari.[6] Another reason why this mosque is also extremely important for Muslims is due to the reason that the mosque also holds a couple of the personal belongings of Muhammad that have been preserved.[6] One important individual's tomb who is also here belongs to Sokollu Mehmet Paşa.[6] This person was an Ottoman vizier, or chief minister, who served in 1565 under Süleyman the Magnificent and Selim II.[8] Sokollu Mehmet Paşa was also drafted into a child devşirme (collection or gathering in Turkish) and was ranked as one as the highest in the group.[9]

Architecture[edit]

The word baroque characterizes and illustrates something that is dramatic, highly detailed, or complex. This artistic style started in the 1600s in Rome, Italy where it began to spread

from there.[10] After a possible earthquake, Sultan Selim III wanted to rebuild the Eyüp Sultan Mosque using this style that involves motion, drama, high-contrast architecture and design for the mosque. This particular artistic style attempted to portray an atmosphere that appealed and attracted one's emotions and senses where people could almost feel its meaning and significance.[10] The Baroque style from different nations and cultures influenced the Ottoman Empire in many ways. The Ottoman Turks began to adapt many styles from the West and even more artistic taste from Europe where they added a bit of their culture into their new art.[11] The Ottoman Empire were even more excited to continue their existing changes in their style after many foreigners were astonished and impressed by the new architecture, which marked an important time for change in Ottoman architecture.[11] In addition, this time period was greatly influenced by the Baroque style not only through the Ottoman Empire but throughout the world from Europe to the Philippines. Its uniqueness and rare art was what attracted the Ottomans due to its exaggeration involved in the different pieces where people could almost see the art moving. Baroque art was exhibited in all sorts of activities and buildings including religious rituals, opera, churches, palaces, etc.[12]

Influences[edit]

Since the mosque was built during Mehmed the Conqueror's time, this was a time of war where Mehmed was mostly interested in warfare and military related buildings and construction. However, he was involved in many charity projects where he would help the poor with food, but he never took credit for any of his good work.[dubious – discuss] His great grandson, Süleyman the Magnificent, was also an important figure for the mosque due to its rich history with all the many important individuals' tombs that are found here.[13][14][verification needed]

Tiles[edit]

The wall of the mausoleum facing the mosque has a number of contrasting panels of Iznik tiles. They date from several different periods and were brought together during the reconstruction of mosque in 1798-1799.[15] The walls of the vestibule to the mausoleum are also covered in Iznik tiles. They have the characteristic sealing-wax red slip and date from around 1580.[15] Similar tiles to those in the vestibule are displayed in several museums outside Turkey; they probably once covered the walls of the now demolished entrance hall (camekân) to the baths.[16][17][a]

The British Museum has a panel of three blue and turquoise Iznik tiles, dating from around 1550, that are similar to some of those that now decorate the external wall of the shrine.[24][25]

Gallery[edit]

Entrance to the complex

Prayer hall and niche (mihrab)

Ablution fountain (şadırvan)

Pulpit (minbar)

Interior of the dome

Mausoleum of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari

Quranic verse written in Arabic

Ottoman calligraphy

The Mihrab

The two Minarets

Water Fountain

Water Fountain, Quranic Verse in Arabic

Tiles now in the Louvre in Paris

Tiles now in the British Museum in London

Gate entrance. Quranic verse written in Arabic (إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ): "The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in Allah and the Last Day"

Eyup Mosque gate to complex

Eyup Mosque courtyard with entrance

Eyup Mosque courtyard with entrance

Eyup Mosque interior

See also[edit]

List of mosques

Ottoman architecture

Notes[edit]