

OPENING ADDRESS
BY IRCICA DIRECTOR GENERAL PROF.DR. EKMELEDDİN İHSANOĞLU
AT THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE TODAY, ISTANBUL AND SÜLEYMANIYE
AREA AND MOSTAR 2004 PROGRAM
July 1, 1995

Distinguished guests,

We are delighted to open the architectural workshop on Istanbul and Süleymaniye Area which is expected to contribute to the preservation of the Islamic cultural heritage. This workshop is the result of a fruitful cooperation that has been going on for months between the Metropolitan Municipality of Greater Istanbul and the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA). This workshop and the second phase of the project titled Mostar 2004 are expected to help promote the academic and technical study of the Islamic cultural heritage in Istanbul and in Mostar, two cities historically and culturally linked to each other. These projects will also contribute to increasing the awareness of the world opinion on the preservation and restoration of this heritage. In addition to their academic and architectural importance, these workshops have added significance because of the historical and architectural characteristics of the areas they deal with. The valuable contributions of the Metropolitan Municipality of Greater Istanbul to an architectural program of such significance is an example of the importance that they are giving to the preservation of the cultural heritage.

The district of Süleymaniye is a historical area located on third hill of the seven hills of İstanbul, where important architectural monuments built in the glorious period of the Ottoman Civilisation are found. With the construction by Mimar Sinan of the Süleymaniye Complex in the 16th century, this area became a centre of culture and education and increased the aesthetical beauty of the Golden Horn panorama. Around the Magnificent Mosque, Mimar Sinan also built a primary school, a Quranic school, four medressas, a Hadith school, a medical School, a hospical, a public kitchen, a guest-house and a public bath. Religious, cultural and educational activities are carried out here for centuries with a spirit of social solidarity. The complex houses many monuments in addition to the tombs of Süleyman the Magnificent and Hürrem Sultan. The architecture of the area was enriched with palaces and kiosks built by Mimar Sinan. However, later, the population of Istanbul increased fast and this area gradually became a commercial quarter. The opening of Süleymaniye area to commerce required that new roads be built and some buildings be demolished for this purpose. Hence the aesthetical and architectural characteristics of this area which represent the excellence of Ottoman architecture weakened with time. Therefore, it is very important that urgent efforts be deployed to restore the architecture of Süleymaniye and give it back the qualities of a centre of culture.

The first part of the workshop will focus on an analysis of the architectural heritage of Greater Istanbul. The second part will be devoted to the development



of guidelines and suggestions of measures for the protection and restoration of the Süleymaniye area. For this purpose, a pilot project will be carried out on the spot.

As to the second part of the workshop, it will aim to draw plans and make recommendations for the restoration of the architectural heritage of Bosnia and Hercegovina which has been destroyed by attacks which for the last three years have aimed at eliminating the Muslim presence and the Islamic culture in the middle of Europe. The workshop will be the continuation of the MOSTAR 2004 project started last year at IRCICA. Nearly 100 specialists from 25 renowned universities in 22 countries had participated in last year's workshop where a total of 28 lectures were given. At the outcome of the workshop architectural plans and models were suggested to help the restoration of Mostar and especially the Old Town once peace is established. During the four centuries of Ottoman rule Bosnia witnessed the peaceful coexistence of people with different beliefs living in common neighborhoods, with their own mosques, churches or synagogues. The architecture of those areas built in the Ottoman period reflect the tolerance and justice which reigned at that time in state administration and society life.

This year's workshop will summarize the results of last year's work. It will also include the International Multidisciplinary Program for Urban Preservation of Bosnia and Hercegovina which will involve the attention and participation of an international community of architects, educators, historians, and students together with their Bosnian counterparts. Thus, students and professionals from architectural schools in Europe, North America, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa will work in cooperation with a multicultural team from Bosnia towards the rebuilding of Mostar Old Town and the bridge.

We hope that this program organised jointly with the Metropolitan Municipality of Greater Istanbul will constitute the beginning of similar activities to be organised in cooperation in future. I wish to take this opportunity to warmly thank the Metropolitan Mayor Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Secretary General Prof. Dr. Kahraman Emmioğlu, advisors to the Mayor Mr. Ali Yılmaz Örnek and Architect Mr. İsmet Şahin and other officials of the Municipality which contributed to the realisation of this project. I also wish to thank Yıldız Technical University, all international organisations, universities and cultural institutions and particularly the participants, who came a long way to contribute to implement this program successfully as an international activity of cultural exchange.

IRCICA as the first international institution established in Istanbul and a research centre which carries out heritage preservation projects, is proud to be rendering a modest service to the dear city of Istanbul through this activity.

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