



International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation.

The historic Sanliurfa city in Turkey

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Article Info

ISSN (online): 2582-7138

Volume: 04

Issue: 06

November-December 2023

Received: 05-10-2023;

Accepted: 06-11-2023

Page No: 768-786

Abstract

The author's visits to Turkey were numerous. They mostly related to visits to Istanbul, but also to cities in the Asian part of Turkey. Apart from Istanbul, which is located in both the European and Asian parts of Turkey, the author visited the city of Çanakkale, which, like Istanbul, was developed in both the European and Asian parts of Turkey. The visits to Istanbul had different reasons: a visit to Yildiz Technical University as part of the inter-faculty cooperation between the two faculties (when the author was the dean of the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Sarajevo), a visit to the Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) at a large number of scientific conferences (and participation in summer schools organized by IRCICA throughout Turkey) and rest and leisure. The visit to the city of Sanliurfa took place as part of the Summer School, June 27 - July 29, 2011.

Keywords: Turkey, Sanliurfa, Synergy of natural environment, social environment and man

1. Introduction

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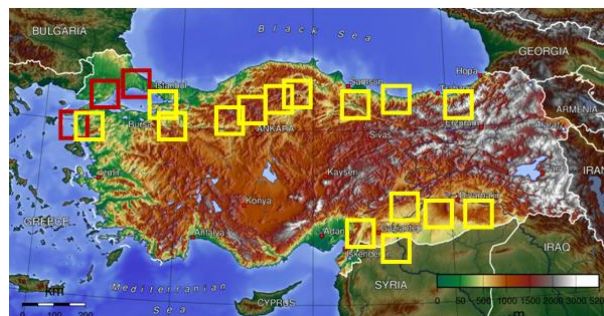


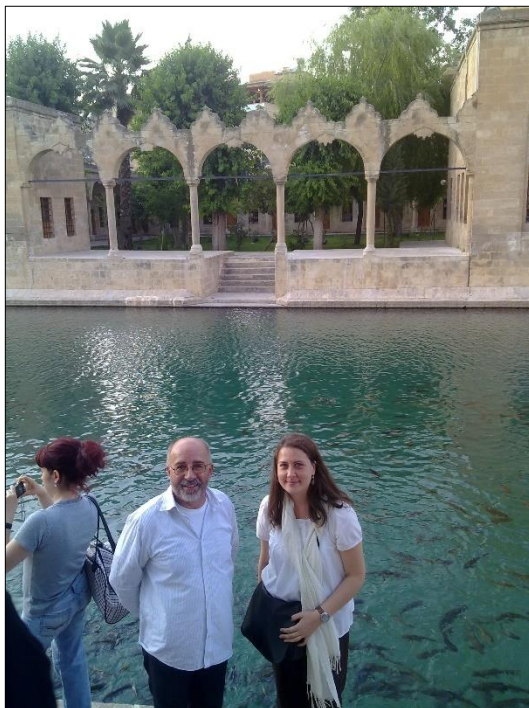
Fig 1: Map of Turkey. (The places the author visited (the European part of Turkey) are marked with red squares, and the places the author visited (the Asian part of Turkey) with yellow squares.

Source: Hadrovic, A. (2018). Architecture in the travelogues of an architect. Book 3: Asia, Faculty of Architecture University in Sarajevo, Sarajevo, pp. 1119 - 1189 (in Bosnian)



Source: Google Earth. Accessed: November 22, 2023.

Fig 2: Şanlıurfa. Location. Complex of holy places related to Ibrahim (Abraham), the forefather of Jews, Christians and Muslims: 1. Şanlıurfa Fortress, 2. Ibrahim (Abraham) Cave, 3. Ibrahim (Abraham) Pool, 4. 'Ayn Zeliha Lake, 5. Gölbaşı Park, 6. Mevlid-i Halil Camii, 7. Rızvaniye Camii



Source: Amir Pasic (July 7, 2011)



Fig 3: The author by Abraham's (Ibrahim's) pool in Şanlıurfa

Şanlıurfa is a city (with about 596,637 inhabitants, 2022) ^[6] located in the south of Turkey. The city is 151 km from Diyarbakir, 173 km from Mardin, 601 km from Ankara and 950 km from Istanbul. It is 80 km away from the great river Euphrates. Şanlıurfa is a large and historically significant city, the origin and development of which were greatly contributed by many peoples and their cultures: Sumerians (3500-2500 BC), Ebls (2500-2400 BC), Assyrians (2500-609 BC), Akkadians (2334-2193 BC), Babylonians (2300-1725 BC), Hittites (1600 BC), Hurri-Mitanes (1500-1300 BC), Arameans (11-8 century BC), Armenians (6th century BC),

Persians (6-4 century BC), Medes (1st century BC), Seleucids (4-3 century BC) Osroeni (132 BC-216), Romans (2-7 century), Sassanids (224-651), Byzantium (395-1453, with interruptions), the Khilafat (638-750-1517), the Ottomans (1516-1922), the modern Republic of Turkey (1924-present). It is today a multi-ethnic city where Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Armenians and other nations live ^[7]. During its history, the city changed its names, depending on who was its master: Urha (Armenian name), Urhai (Syrian name), Ar-Ruhā (الرحا, Arabic name), Orrha (Ορρα, Greek name), Antiochia na Callirhoe (Ἀντιόχεια ἡ ἐπὶ Καλλιρρόης, Greek

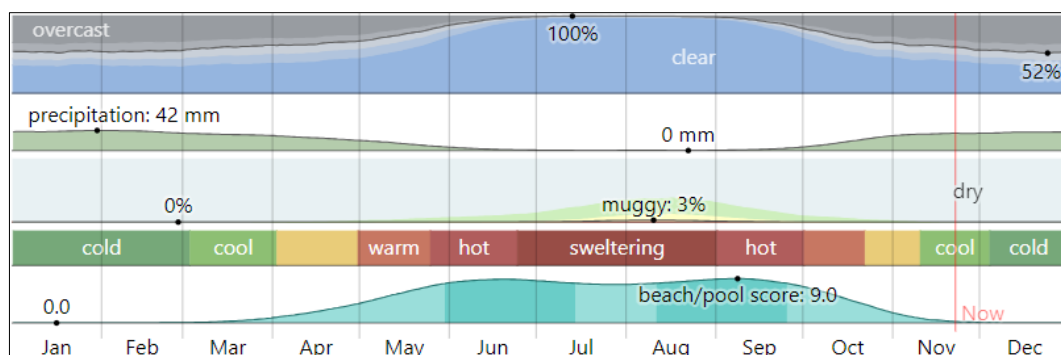
name), Justinopolis (under the Byzantine rule), Edessa ("Εδεσσα, under the Seleucid rule)...

Today's Turkish name, Şanlıurfa, is etymologically derived from the words "şanlı" (meaning "great", "dignified", "magnificent") and "urfa" (meaning "famous", "praised"). The name Şanlıurfa was introduced (1984) by the National Assembly of Turkey to honor this city for its immense contribution in Turkey's struggle for independence (Turkish War of Independence, 1919-1923) [8]. The name of this city is associated with many great legends, in which Jews, Christians and Muslims believe. One of them is related to Abraham (Ibrahim) [9] whom the ruler of Nimrud prepared to burn captive on the hill, but God, in order to save his favorite slave, turned the fire into water, and the embers of the fire into a multitude of fish in the water. Today, in the place mentioned in the legend, there is a large pool with fish, which is visited by many believers. Armenians believe that their alphabet was invented in Şanlıurfa (Urha) [8]. Archaeological finds, found in Duru, Harran and Nevali Cori, confirm the presence of man in the area of Şanlıurfa since 9000 BC. Archaeological sites in Göbekli Tepe, Gürcütepe and in the city of Şanlıurfa confirm the presence of man in the Neolithic Age (4500-2000 BC). At the archaeological site in Balıklıgöl, a statue of a man from the Neolithic era was found, which (as "Urfa Man") is now exhibited in the Museum of Archeology and Mosaics in Şanlıurfa. Although the site of Şanlıurfa (Urafa) originated in prehistory, its foundation as a city dates back to 304 BC when it was founded by Seleucus I Nicator (Greek: Σέλευκος Α Νικάτωρ, 358-281 BC). The city was named Edessa (Greek: Έδεσσα), after the city of the same name in the region of Macedonia, Greece. At the end of the 2nd century, the city was occupied by an alliance of Arab tribes, the Nabateans led by the Abgar dynasty, and Edessa became their capital [10]. Islam first arrived in the area of today's Şanlıurfa around the year 638, when this area was conquered by the Rashidian army (Khilafet), which at that time was led by the Ayyubidi dynasty [11]. European crusaders

led by Baldwin I (1060-1118) captured Edessa, and Baldwin I became its administrator [8]. This is how the first crusader state known as the County of Edessa was established, which imposed Latin Christianity on the churches found. The Crusader state fell (1144) before the attack of the Khilafat army (led by the Abbasid dynasty at the time) led by General Zengui. After the fall of the Crusader state, the area of today's Şanlıurfa was replaced by dynasties (which ruled the Khilafat): Zengids, Ayyubids, Sultanate of Rum, Ilkhanids, Memluks, Akkoyunlui and Safavids, when this area was ruled (1516) by the Ottoman Empire. Urfa became part of Aleppo Elayet. The city soon became the center of cotton, leather and jewelry trade. During the Ottoman administration, eight hammams were built in Urfa, along with other important buildings [12]. The British occupation of the city of Urfa began on March 7, 1919, and lasted until October 30, 1919, followed by the invasion of the French army, which lasted until April 23, 1920, when it was stopped by Turkish forces who fought for the independence of Turkey. Soon, the Turkish-French agreement was signed, according to which the French forces had to leave the area that has been within the framework of the Republic of Turkey since 1923. Today, Şanlıurfa is by all accounts a modern city with a perspective of constant further progress [12]. The city has its own airport (Şanlıurfa GAP Airport) which is located at a distance of 34 km from the city, with daily flights to Izmir, Ankara and Istanbul.

2. Natural resources and sights

Şanlıurfa has a hot Mediterranean climate (type Csa, according to the Köppen climate classification) with hot and dry summers and colder and wetter winters with sporadic snowfall. The highest summer temperature is 37 °C (July), and the lowest is 19 °C (June), while the highest winter temperature is 11 °C (December), and the lowest is 1 °C (January) [13,14] (Figure 4).



Source: Climate and Average Weather Year Round in Şanlıurfa Turkey

<https://weatherspark.com/y/100709/Average-Weather-in-%C5%9Eanl%C4%B1urfa-Turkey-Year-Round>,

Accessed: November 22, 2023.

Fig 4: Şanlıurfa weather by month

Şanlıurfa is one of several cities that developed in the upper part of the Euphrates and Tigris basin on the fertile plains, where the vast Mesopotamian culture was founded (4000-1000 BC), one of the oldest cultures in the world, which is often called the "cradle of civilization" [15] (Figures 5-13). Fertile plains with the possibility of irrigation from numerous watercourses, this place has always been a source of rich income from agriculture, and lively trade transformed this

wealth into other types of wealth with which numerous works of material culture were built, including architectural ones. Due to the legend and belief surrounding the attempt to burn Ibrahim (Abraham) and his divine salvation, the city of Şanlıurfa became a city of pilgrimage, which made it a living city all the time, where not only material wealth was acquired, but also knowledge (science).



Source: <https://elements.envato.com/halfeti-euphrates-river-in-sanliurfa-Y49X5D5>, Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Fig 5: Euphrates River near Sanliurfa



Source: <https://www.suyapi.com.tr/en/18636/Mardin-Ceylanpınar-Plains-Irrigation-Project>, Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Fig 6: Spacious Sanliurfa fields with an irrigation system



Source: <https://www.textilegence.com/en/sanliurfa-expects-high-yield-in-cotton/>, Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Source: <https://thegeeeye.com/visual-feast-common-poppies-sanliurfa/>, Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Fig 7: Left: Cotton growing in the vast fields of Sanliurfa. Right: Growing poppies in the vast fields of Sanliurfa

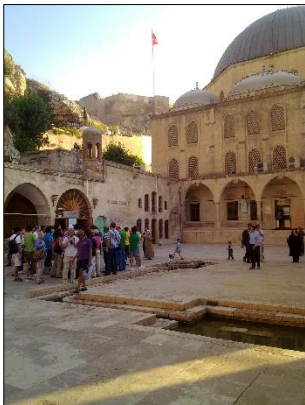
Ibrahim's (Abraham's) cave in Şanlıurfa (Turkish: Şanlıurfa'daki İbrahim Mağarası, English: Abraham's Cave in Sanliurfa) is, according to legend, the place where Ibrahim (Abraham) was born, and where his mother kept him for

seven years, being the king Nimrud wanted to kill him, considering him a threat to his kingdom^[3,16]. The cave is accessed from the harem of the Mevlid-i Halil mosque (Figure 8).



Source: <https://hometurkey.com/en/destinations/sanliurfa>, Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Fig 8: A complex of holy places in Sanliurfa related to Ibrahim (Abraham), the forefather of Jews, Christians and Muslims

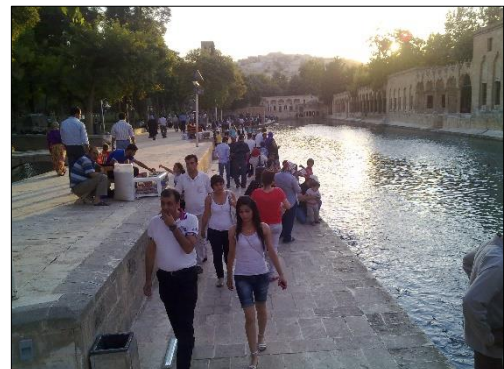


Abraham's (Ibrahim's) pool in Şanlıurfa (Turkish: İbrahim'in Şanlıurfa'deki hakuzi, English: The legendary Pool of Sacred Fish (Balıklıgöl)) is the legendary pool of sacred fish (Balıklıgöl), God's response to the salvation of Ibrahim (Abraham) after he was the ruler Nimrud wanted to burn in a huge fire. God, according to belief, turned fire into water, and its crane into fish. The pool is located in the courtyard of the Halil-ur-Rahman Mosque, which was built (1211) by the Ayyubids. The pool is surrounded by Gölbaşı Gardens designed by architect Merih Karaaslan. According to legend, looking at the fish in the pool opens the gates of heaven ^[3,17] (Figures 10,11).



Source: Author (July 7, 2011)

Fig 9: Ibrahim's (Abraham's) cave in Şanlıurfa



Source: Author (July 7, 2011)

Fig 10: Abraham's (Ibrahim's) pool in Şanlıurfa



Source: Author (July 7, 2011)

Fig 11: The position that Ibrahim (a.s) reached when he was placed on the throne

Ayn Zeliha Lake (Turkish: Aynzeliha Gölü) is a spring and lake at the foot of Şanlıurfa Fortress. The source was named after Zulaykha, a follower of Ibrahim (Abraham), daughter of King Nimrud. According to legend, when King Nimrud threw Ibrahim (Abraham) into the fire, his daughter Zulaykha told her father that she believed in Ibrahim's (Abraham) religion. According to legend, her father also threw her into the fire, where a lake was then created. The lake is revered as a holy place ^[3,18] (Figure 12).



Source:

https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipMeI_0cdK2h10V0FjVDeUzCaj2IA2MxnUdJ3b2V=h720

Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Fig 12: 'Ayn Zeliha Lake

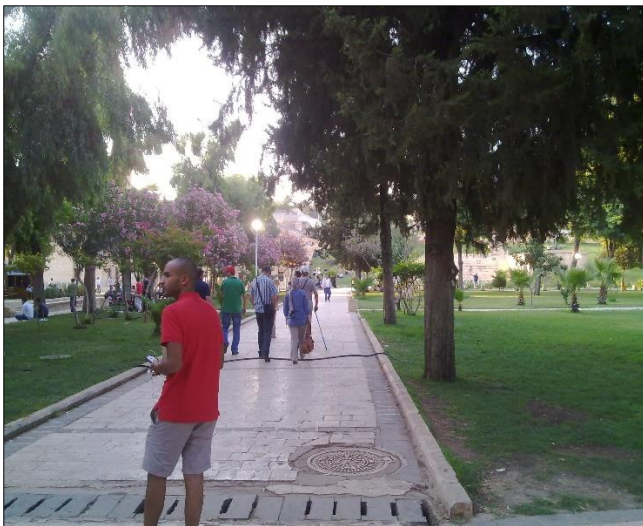
Gölbaşı Park (Turkish: Gölbaşı Park, English: Gölbaşı Garden) is located in Bıçakçı Mahallesi next to the Abraham (Ibrahim) Pool in Şanlıurfa'. Within the park is the Ayn Zeliha lake ^[3,19] (Figure 13).





Source: Author (July 7, 2011)

Fig 13: Gölbaşı Park



3. Architectural cultural and historical heritage

Rarely any city in the world has such a rich history as the city of Şanlıurfa. It was built by many nations, each with its own rich cultural tradition, so that today's city of Şanlıurfa is a cosmopolitan city in the full sense. The great religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) have their roots here, since Ibrahim (Abraham) is considered the forefather of all Jews, all Christians and all Muslims.

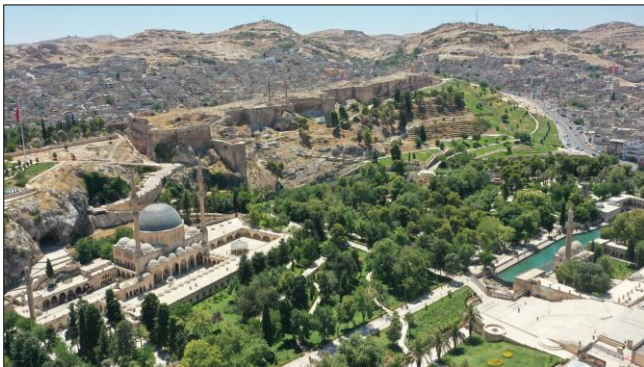
Göbekli Hill (Turkish: Göbekli Tepe) is the oldest known temple in the world ^[20] which was built around 11500 BC. The archaeological site is located about 12 km from Şanlıurfa, northeast. The diameter of the temple complex is about 300 m, and its height is 15 m. The temple was discovered (1996) by a German archaeological team led by Klaus Schmidt (Figure 14).



Source: <https://arkeonews.net/turkey-discovers-11-new-major-hills-near-famed-gobeklitepe/>, Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Fig 14: Göbekli Hill

Şanlıurfa Castle or Urfa Castle (Turkish: Şanlıurfa Kalesi) was originally built during the reign of the ancient Osroen in Urfa, and most of its preserved structure today was built (814) during the reign of the Abbasid dynasty in Urfa. Today, this fortress is an open-air museum ^[21] (Figure 15).



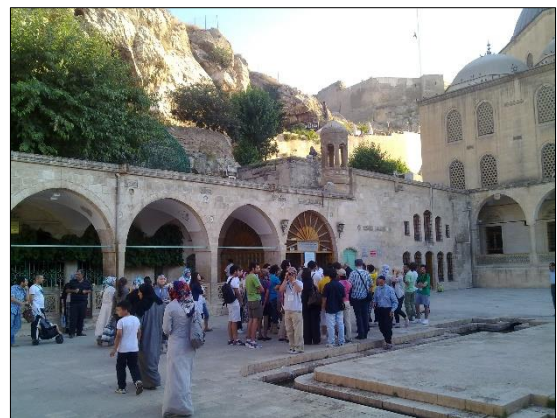
Source: <https://www.vecteezy.com/video/6526714-aerial-rising-view-historical-sanliurfa-castle-site-in-urfa-city-famous-travel-destination-in-turkey>, Accessed: November 23, 2023.

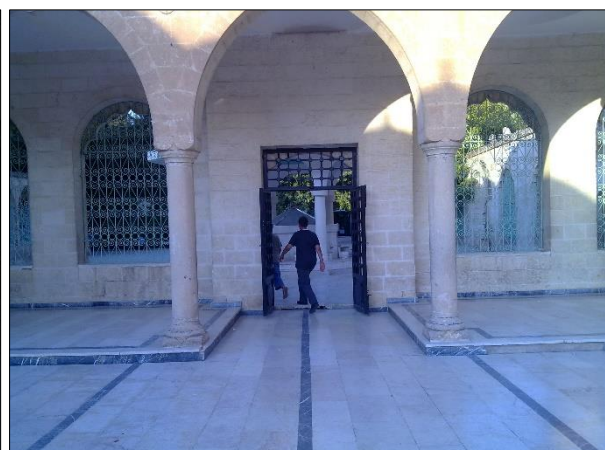
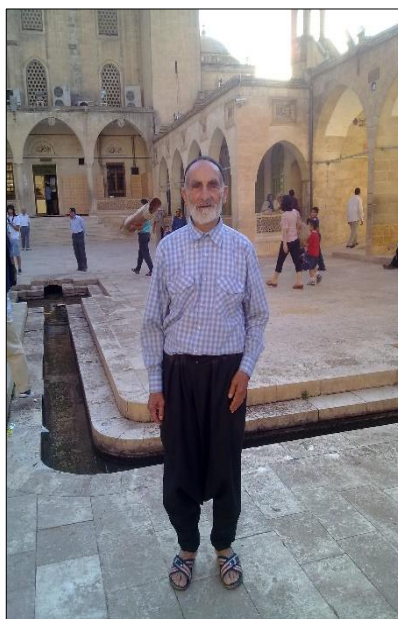
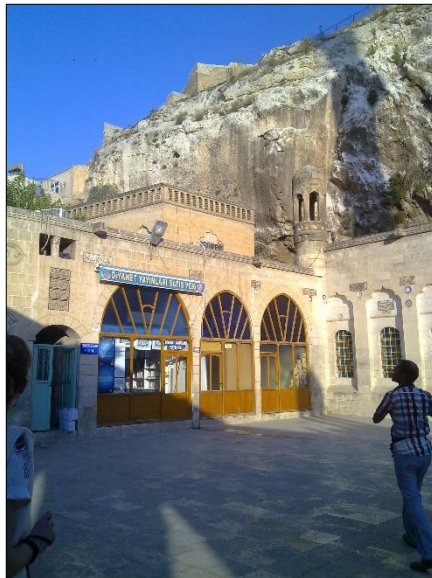
Source: <https://raillynews.com/2023/01/A-walking-path-was-built-for-visits-to-the-historical-Urfa-castle/>, Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Fig 15: Şanlıurfa Castle or Urfa Castle

Mevlid-i Halil Mosque (Turkish: Mevlid-i Halil Camii) is the oldest mosque in Urfa, located in the immediate vicinity of Ibrahim's (Abraham's) cave. Originally, a synagogue stood there, which (435-436) was remodeled into the Church of St. Stephon. On the site of the church (1170-1175) Nur al-Din Zengi (1118-1174), the leader of the Oghuz Turkish Zengid dynasty, built a mosque. The mosque has a spacious courtyard (harem) with a fountain and a turbet. From the

harem, there is direct access to Ibrahim's cave, which gives this mosque great importance in the world of Islam ^[3,22] (Figure 16).









Source: Author (July 7, 2011)

Fig 16: Mevlid-i Halil Mosque

The Great Mosque of Urfa (Turkish: Ulu Camii) was built (1170) on the site of an earlier church that the Arabs called the "Red Church". Tradition identifies this place as the place

where Jesus' burial shroud (Shroud of Turin) was thrown. On the south side of the mosque is a fountain built (1781) by Firuz Bey^[3,23] (Figure 17).





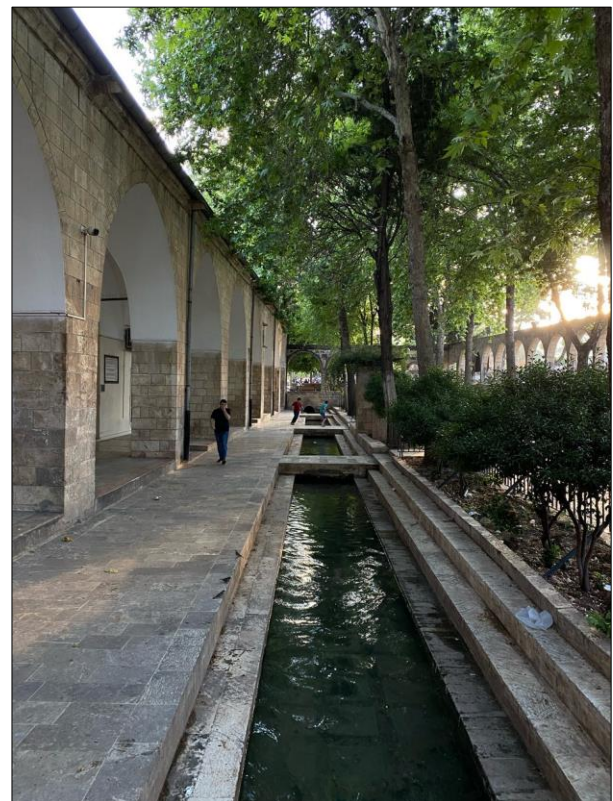
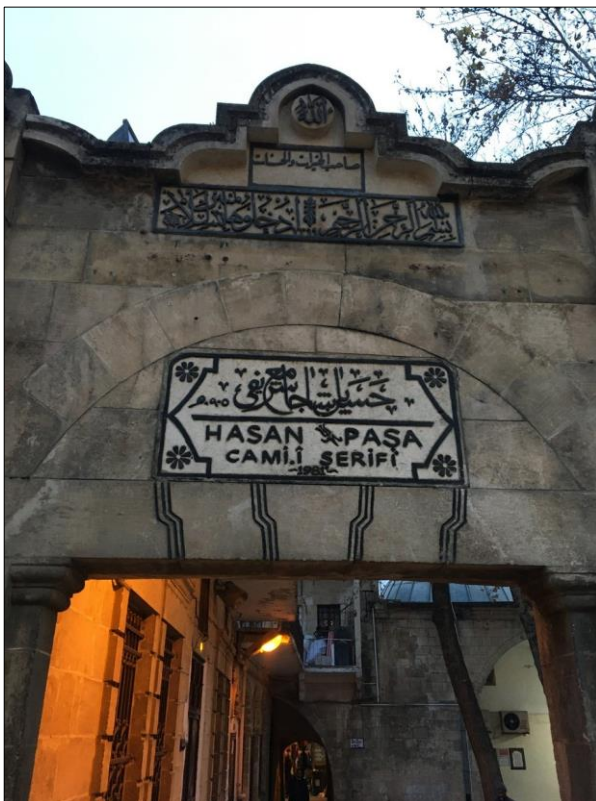
Source: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/465981892689480286/>, Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Source: <https://www.urfamiz.com/ulu-camii.html>, Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Fig 17: The Great Mosque Urfa

Hasan Pedishah Mosque (Turkish: Hasan Pedishah Camii) is located near the Complex of Holy Places related to Ibrahim (Abraham) in Sanliurfa (Balıklıgöl). The mosque was built (at the end of the 15th century) by Hasan Pedishah (sultan), a ruler from the Akkoyunlu dynasty. The harem of this mosque is an extremely rich and pleasant space with trees and a stream (the water of which is taken from the Rahman lake),

which is crossed by small bridges to the porch of the mosque. Water has a multiple meaning: it contributes to the pleasant microclimate of the space (in warm Sanliurfa) and represents a symbolic border over which the crossing means cleansing the faithful before entering the main prayer area. The mosque was renovated several times ^[3,24] (Figure 18).





Source: <https://seyyahdefteri.com/hasan-padisah-cami-nerede-nasil-gidilir-sanliurfa/>, Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Source: <https://tr.foursquare.com/v/hasan-padi%C5%9Fah-camii/51b5a885498e954e833555aba>, Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Fig 18: Hasan Pedishah Mosque

Gümrük Inn (Turkish: Gümrük Hanı) is the most famous inn in Sanliurfa. The Han was built (1562) during the reign of

Sultan Selim II (1524-1574) ^[3,25], (Figure 19).



Source: <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/kultur-sanat/osmanli-doneminden-kalan-gumruk-hani-ticari-canliligini-koruyor-390484.html>

Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Source: <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/kultur-sanat/osmanli-doneminden-kalan-gumruk-hani-ticari-canliligini-koruyor-390484.html> Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Fig 19: Gümrük Inn

Mevlevihane Mosque (Turkish: Mevlevihane Camii) was built before 1650, since in that year the travel writer Evliya Çelebi (Mehmed Zilli, known as Evliya Çelebi, 1611-1682) stayed in Şanlıurfa and mentions this mosque in his Travels (Seyahatname) ^[26] (Figure 20).

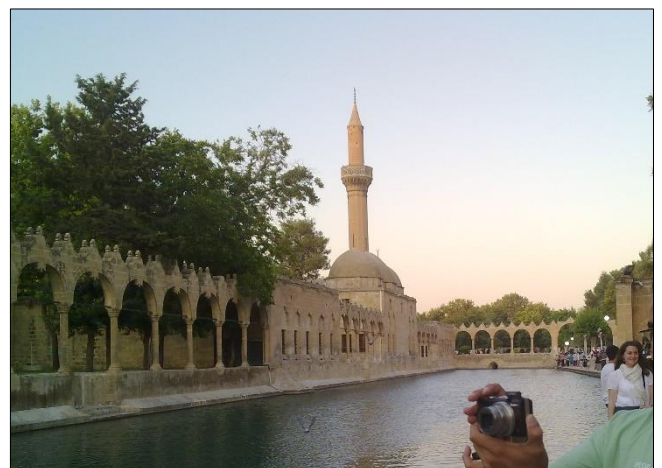
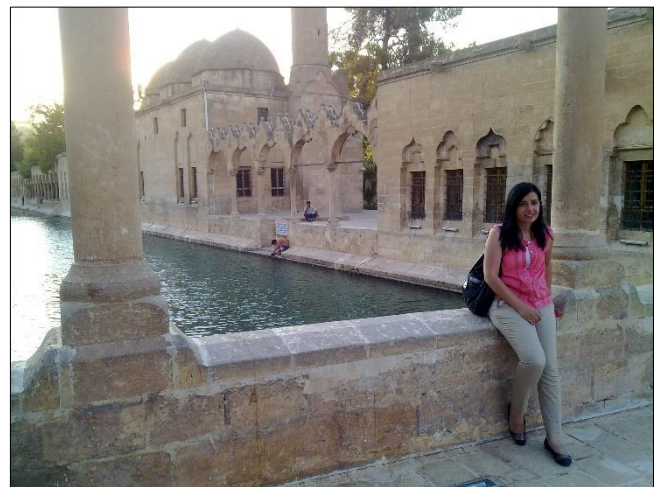


Source: <https://tumac.org/urfa-mevlevihanesi-ve-urfa-mevlevihanesinde-yapilan-dini-musiki-icralarinin-din-disi-musiki-icralarina-yansimasi/>, Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Source: <https://nomatto.com/en/the-mosque-of-mevlevihane>, Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Fig 20: Mevlevihane Mosque

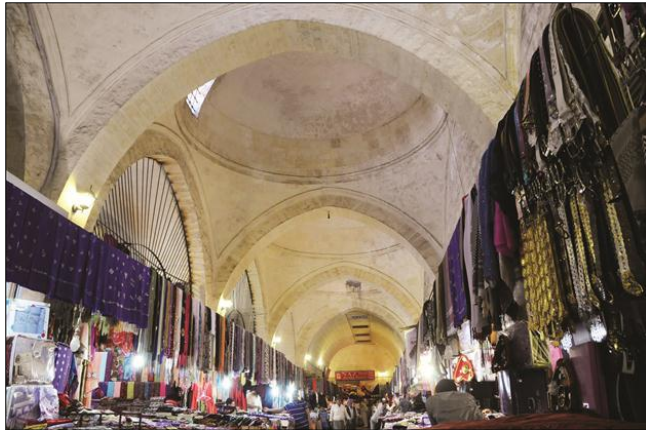
Rızvaniye Mosque (Turkish: Rızvaniye Camii) is an Ottoman mosque built (1716) by Balıklı Göl, the then governor of the city, near the Balıklıgöl Complex, Abraham's (Ibrahim's) Pool in Şanlıurfa. The mosque is oriented towards Abraham's (Ibrahim's) pool, while on the opposite side there are two spacious, richly decorated gardens ^[3,27] (Figure 21).



Source: Author (July 7, 2011)

Fig 21: Rızvaniye Mosque

Sanliurfa Bazaar (Turkish: Sanliurfa Bedesten), located near Gümrük han and Rızman Ahmet Paşa Vakfıya, built in 1740, is one of the most representative examples of Ottoman bezistans in Turkey. Bezistan's disposition, construction and materialization reflect a deep understanding of the natural environment (especially the extremely hot summers) of Şanlıurfa^[28] (Figure 22).



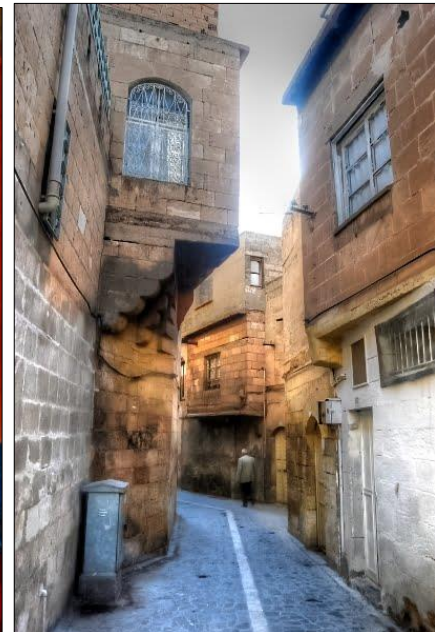
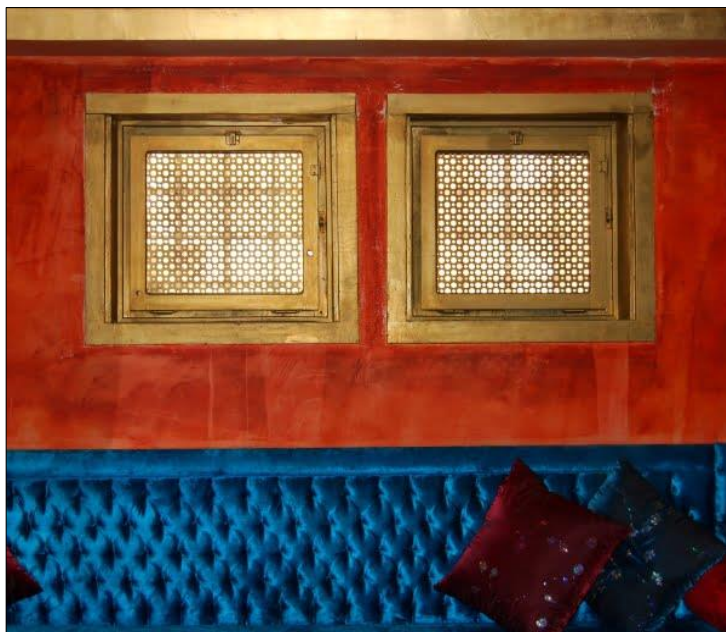
Source: <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/sanliurfas-bazaars-have-much-to-offer-tourists-6403>, Accessed: November 23, 2023.

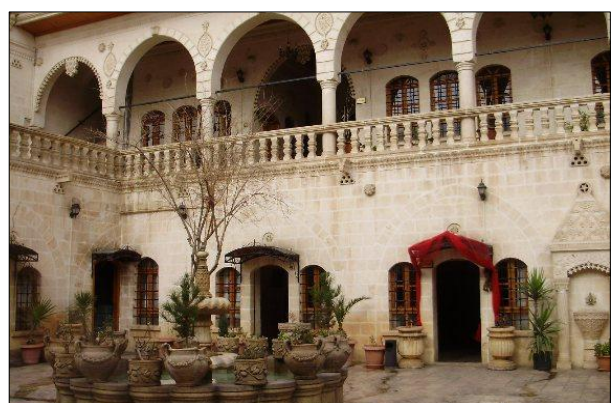
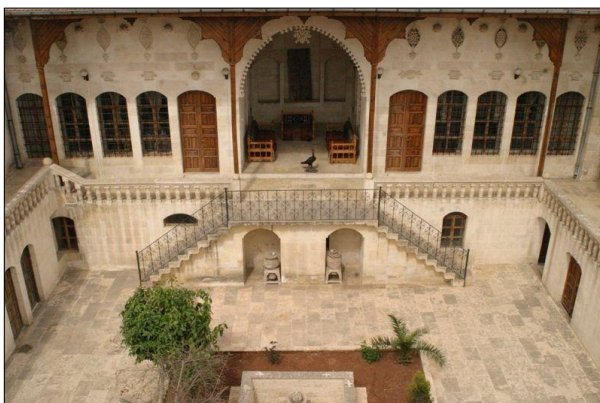
Fig 22: Sanliurfa Bazaar

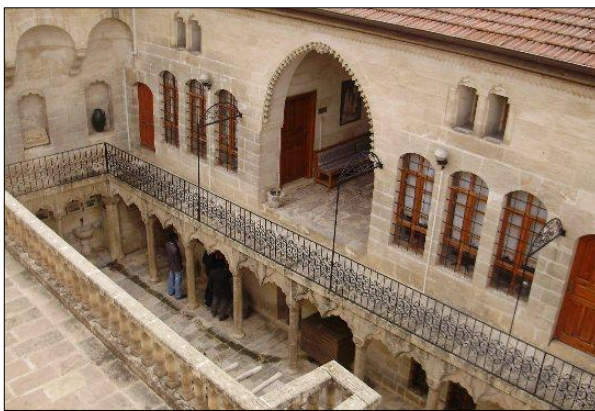
The traditional houses of Şanlıurfa (Turkish: Şanlıurfa'nın geçleri evleri, English: The traditional Urfa Houses) are an example of oriental town houses with differentiated public and private parts of the house complex. A well-preserved example of this house is located next to the post office, in the city's Kara Meydanı district^[29] (Figure 23).



Vernacular residential architecture around Sanliurfa







Source: <http://www.geziseyahat365.com/peygamberler-sehri-sanliurfa/>, Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Source: https://www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g652373-i21633412-Sanliurfa_Sanliurfa_Province.html
Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Source: <http://fle135-turkiye.pbworks.com/w/page/5905644/Sanliurfa>, Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Fig 23: Traditional houses of Şanlıurfa

Urfa's old town (Turkish: Urfa Eski Şehri) is a place of old traditions, long-lasting friendships and mystical societies. One of these traditions is "Sıra Geceleri" ("Alternate Nights") where people of similar ideas, worldviews and pleasures gather in such a way that the host of the gathering changes every night^[30]. It is believed that in "Sıra Geceleri" the idea

of Turkish resistance and the concept of the struggle for the liberation of the then Urfa from the French occupation in the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1923) was conceived. Similar traditions of gathering people on other grounds (carpet manufacturers, traders of various types of goods, for example), (Figure 24).





Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_18eut0BX4,
Accessed: November 23, 2023.

Fig 24: Social life in the Old Town of Urfa (Turkish: Urfa Eski Kent'te sosyal yaşam)



Conclusion

The author's visits to Turkey were numerous. They mostly related to visits to Istanbul, but also to cities in the Asian part of Turkey. Apart from Istanbul, which is located in both the European and Asian parts of Turkey, the author visited the city of Çanakkale, which, like Istanbul, was developed in both the European and Asian parts of Turkey. The visits had different reasons: the visits to Yıldız Technical University, Karadeniz Technical University, Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University, for example, took place within the framework of the interfaculty cooperation of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Sarajevo (when the author was the dean of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Sarajevo) with the aforementioned universities, with the coordination of the Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) and Professor Amir Pasic. The visit to the city of Sanliurfa took place as part of the Summer School, June 27 - July 29, 2011. The modern Republic of Turkey is a geographical area where rich layers of material culture are "stacked" (and preserved), from the earliest prehistory to the present day. It is safe to say that 'Turkey is the world museum of culture'. Professors from Turkey and all over the world, as well as students, participated in the mentioned summer schools as lecturers. What the professors and students saw on the spot greatly enriched their knowledge that they had acquired at 'their faculties', to their own benefit and to the benefit of the new generations that they will teach.

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