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Constantinopolis/Istanbul: Cultural Encounter, Imperial Vision, And The Construction Of The Ottoman Capital (Buildings, Landscapes, And Societies)



Synopsis

A symbolic locus embodying myriad meanings, the political center of the Eastern Mediterranean, and one of the old world's largest urban centers, Constantinople was the site of large-scale urban and architectural interventions. Changing visions—the changing political, cultural, and religious orientations of those who lived there and those who ruled from there—inscribed themselves in its spaces, transforming it and lending it new meanings. Constantinopolis/Istanbul is about such a period of change and remaking: following its capture in 1453, the city was host to a grandly conceived urban project meant to rebuild and transform the capital of Eastern Rome as the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Cigdem Kafescioglu traces the construction and representation of Ottoman Istanbul, threading histories of politics, culture, and architecture into the fabric of the urban landscape. Attentive to the preservation and destruction of artifacts from the past, Constantinopolis/Istanbul shapes an understanding of emerging modes of spatiality and visibility in Ottoman Istanbul as central components of a complex and fascinating urban process, that of the creation of a capital city through the interpretation and appropriation of another.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Cigdem Kafescioglu's elegant study examines the creation of the Ottoman capital of Istanbul through the reformulation of the Byzantine capital of Constantinople. The book provides clarity, nuance, and new perspectives on a formative period in the city's history. It is well written, engaging, packed with valuable observations, and based on important new

archival documents. This is a significant contribution to urban history in general and to the history and architecture of Byzantine Constantinople and Ottoman Istanbul in particular.

•Robert Ousterhout, University of Pennsylvania
“Linking the rebuilding of the conquered city to the building of the empire, Kafescioğlu traces interventions to urban and architectural forms, interweaving them with shifting political, ideological, and religious issues. The arguments are powerful and convincingly presented. The research is top-notch and integrates material from many sources, including an impressive range of hitherto untapped archival documents.”

•Zeynep Çelik, New Jersey Institute of Technology
“This latest title in the award-winning Buildings, Landscapes, and Societies series does not disappoint. Elegantly designed with a double column layout that is easy on the eye, this book is profusely illustrated with eight color plates, five maps, and 152 black-and-white photographs, plans, or other drawings to scale. This book is highly recommended for academic and research libraries supporting historical research.”

•Janine J. Henri, ARLIS/NA Reviews
“Kafescioğlu argues that the foundations of Istanbul’s later development were laid out in the first decades following the conquest, but this involved a complex dynamics in which diverse cultural traditions, Ottoman and Byzantine, along with Renaissance ideas of ordering the urban environment encountered each other. . . . [Constantinople/Istanbul] will undoubtedly remain an important resource for new Istanbul studies for years to come.”

•Ipek Taffeli, CAA Reviews
“For Byzantinists, 1453 is an ending, for Ottomanists, a beginning. For the history of the city neither is correct, one of the important contributions of this book. Byzantinists need to engage this new book and to rise to its challenges. . . . Constantinople/Istanbul is our best analysis of the early history of the Ottoman City.”

•Robert S. Nelson, Art Bulletin
“Constantinople/Istanbul is a painstakingly researched and documented and lavishly illustrated account of the city from 1453 to 1581. Its numerous maps, photographs, and plates combine with the written analysis to produce an in-depth study which will be of great value to both specialists and general readers.”

•Valerie Kennedy, Sixteenth Century Journal
“There is much to recommend in Ciğdem Kafescioğlu’s carefully researched and elegant book, not the least of which is a thorough analysis of the transformation of Byzantine Constantinople into Ottoman Istanbul.”

•Andrea Bubenik, Parergon

Çelik is Associate Professor of History of Art and Architecture at Boğaziçi University.

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