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Book Review

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***Sadness of the City "About Edirne History and Architecture"***  
***by Rifki Melül Meriç***  
*Edirne, 2013*  
*223 pages*  
*ISBN 9786054031986*

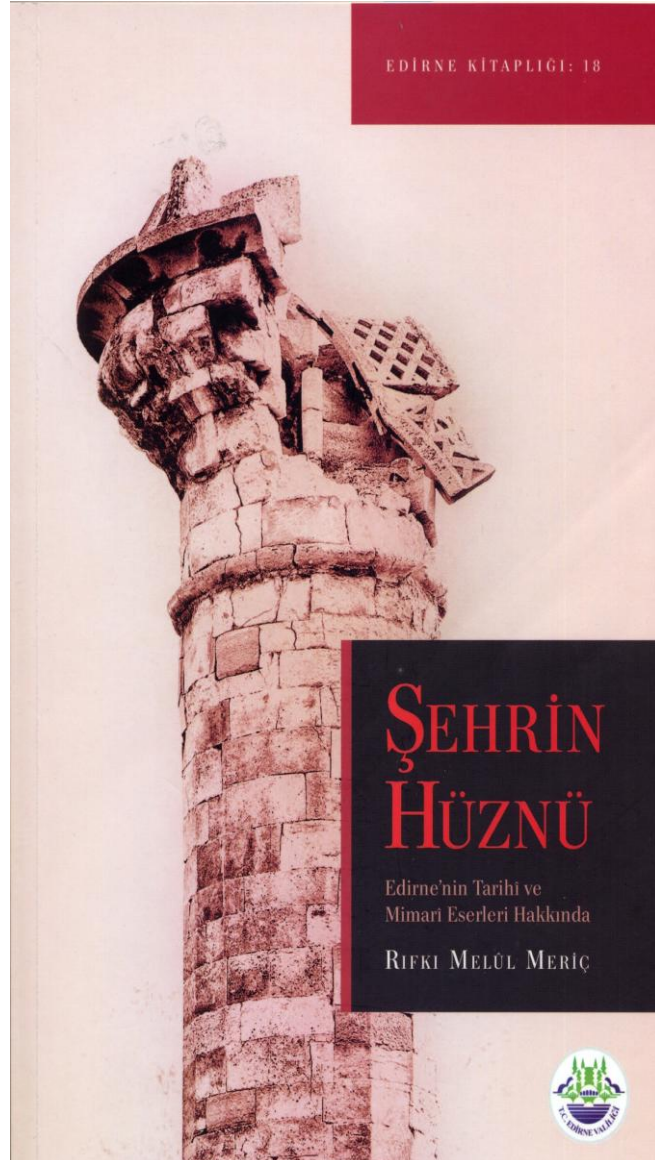
Hilmi Yavuz says: "Gloominess is what is the most appropriate for us or what we understand most." Imagine a city that in every stage of its history shows and express just one thing - sadness. That city is Edirne.

"Şehrin Hüzünü" (The Gloominess of the City) is Rifki Melül Meriç's book which was published as the 18th book of the Edirne Governor's Office and which was written for the Turkish Art History Research Magazine in 1963 and excerpted from the article "About the Historical and Architectural Arts of Edirne". The governor of Edirne Mr. Hasan Duruer tells about the purpose of the publishing of the book in his presentation writing as; "The person gets up from the place he had fallen" says one of our proverbs. And we wanted to share Rifki Melül Meriç's article with our community considering the awareness of our aim instead of "hiding or ignoring the truths" never settle up with the yesterday but "walking through the tomorrow by knowing our yesterday".

With the conquest in 1361 and immediately after that began the reconstruction of all its constructions after declaration of the acceptance of being capital city, Edirne is a Turkish city now. It was equipped with padishah palace and kasırs, sultans and the mosques, mescids, wells, khans, Turkish baths, bridges, bedestens and ceteras builded by benefactors. After the first half period of 19th century with the exposition of Russian, Bulgarian and Greek invasions and earthquakes and fires city begins loosing its identity. In his article, Rifki Melül Meriç narrates this situation;

"The researches that I made in the summer and the autumn in 1945 in Edirne, Municipality and the Director of Foundations document, records and some of the results that I came up with while I was working on these records are presented in this article.

Photos of the sources and proofs which shows the damage of the some graveyards in the buildings such as



mosques, mescids, shrines and lodges which were presented in the magament of Municipality and the Director of Foundations.”

“According to the results that I concluded, most of the historical architecture structures would maintain until today and also for a long time in the future : mosques , madrasas’, Turkish baths, khans, caravanserais , shrines, taps. All these structures had been demolished by humanity and the wrathful "blind axe" not by themselves... " Part from the ignorant people had done this in order to get some stones bricks and timber for free for their needs and they easily join in this vandalism.

“The ones who are responsible, who ordered and showed indifference about these graves in which our people were buried,including our conquerors of our great nation who added more places to our country, our most precious scientists , poets and artists, our soldiers ,civilians and major people, our fathers and grandfathers, our great family members through history are guilty because they own our places and live there , in the name of our great history, future and other civilazions...”

“No doubt that the biggest responsibilty belong to people who uses their power for their own acquaintances, force and authority, for their own thoughts and benefits and abuse their incumbency in the bad manner, municipal councilors and mayors, public inspectors,governor , prefect ,director , architect and engineers”

“Most of the charity buildings are disabled. By calling some of them ‘debris’ firstly their structures, and then their lands are sold.Some of the buildings and land that are put of for sale, lands of the collapsed buildings are not recorded in the selling decree because of the related administrations are not even aware of the names of them.Some of them that are decided to be sold, water treasures for instance, although its belong to finance shortlist it’s sold by foundations administration; some of them are removed from the sale list by realizing after.Minaret stones are sold seperately. Lahid and gravestones in the cemetery of the walls ready with built sidewalks are furnished. Sultan Selim madrasa occupying Edirne Archeology and Ethnography Museum and Sultan Selim mosque's qibla courtyard has been posted and thus from destruction rescued who had been able gravestones, and building inscriptions mikdar 1924 on mevcud of those one-thousandth is not even...”

In his research Rıfki Melül Meriç, wrote about the buildings which are burned,destroyed and sold one by one and also about the conservation and liquidation of the foundation buildings and about the correspondence of the prominent people of that period and shared with us.”Şehrin Hüznü” (The Sadness of the City) is a intensive document for not to repeat the same stumbles which was made in the past. Finally, let's finish by the word of Rıfki Melul Meric; "Nations, their past, their vaunted inherited from the past, and they will live in accordance with the civil works.”.