

A HILL THAT HAS EVOLVED INTO A SYMBOL OF ÜSKÜDAR: ÇAMLICA*

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ABSTRACT

The beauties sheltered by the Çamlıca Hill, which poses a symbol of the Üsküdar neighborhood in the World's capitol-İstanbul, attracts the interest of not only the locals, but also of foreign tourists. The Big Çamlıca Hill (262m.) is the highest spot of Üsküdar.Çamlıca which was used by the sultans as a hunting and leisure resort in the past, is a significant scenery viewing terrace.Meanwhile geographically, it virtually poses as a geography laboratory.

Key words : Üsküdar, Çamlıca, tourism geography, symbol.

Jel Code : Z00

ÜSKÜDAR'IN SİMGESİ HALİNE GELMİŞ BİR TEPE: ÇAMLICA

ÖZET

Dünya başkenti İstanbul'un Üsküdar semtinin bir simgesi durumundaki Çamlıca Tepesi'nin sahip olduğu güzellikler, sadece yerli halkın değil, aynı zamanda yabancı turistlerin de ilgisini çekmektedir.Büyük Çamlıca Tepesi (262m.) Üsküdar'ın en yüksek noktasıdır.Geçmiş dönemde padişahların av ve dinlenme yeri olarak kllandığı Çamlıca, önemli bir manzara seyir noktasıdır.Coğrafi açıdan da, adeta bir coğrafya laboratuvarı niteliğindedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler : Üsküdar,Çamlıca, turizm coğrafyası, sembol.

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Çamlıca, a source of inspiration for numerous authors and poets, also poses as a laboratory, in other words a geographical museum, for geographers, because it is possible to make many observations with respect to both physical and human and economic aspects of geography here. Therefore, students newly starting geography education at the university are definitely brought up to Çamlıca by their teachers for field exercises. Here, first Çamlıca itself, and then geography issues that may be observed in the close and far surroundings of Çamlıca are started to be investigated. First Çamlıca itself, and then what can be seen from Çamlıca will be explained below (Photograph: 1) .



Photograph 1: Night view of the Bosphorus Bridge from Çamlıca (From the archive of Üsküdar Municipality).

Çamlıca is the name of two hills, located close to each other, on the Anatolian Side of the İstanbul Bosphorus, between Üsküdar and Ümraniye (Figure: 1). From these, the Big Çamlıca is 262 m tall, and the Small Çamlıca is 226 m tall, and in the neck separating these two hills, the Kısıklı neighborhood is located (Photograph: 2). And the position of Çamlıca as virtually being a geography laboratory or a geography museum, also emerges in the name of

the Kısıklı neighborhood. “Kısık”, which is purely a Turkish word, expresses a narrow pass or a crossover between two tall sections (an area trapped between two elevations). And the neighborhood which has exactly been established in such an area has been named “Kısıklı” due to this geographical feature.

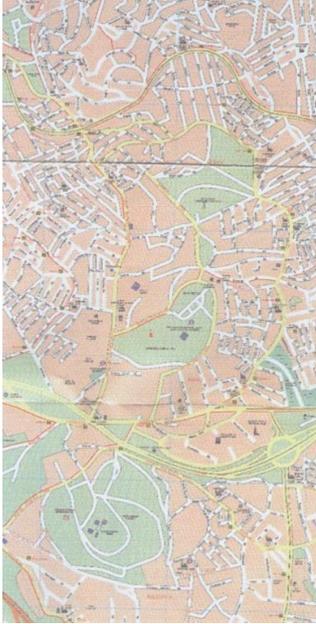


Figure: In the Üsküdar city plan, the location of the Big and Small Çamlıca Hills and Kısıklı separating them.



Photograph 2: The Kısıklı pass separating the B.Çamlıca (262m.) and S.Çamlıca (226m.) hills from each other (N.UNAL).

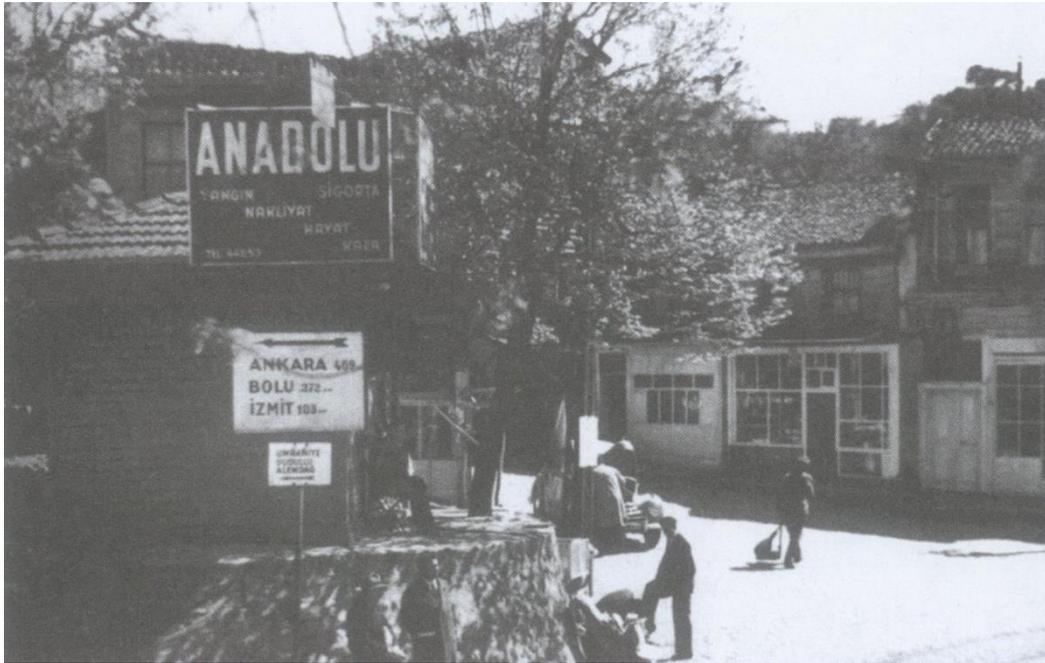
The geomorphological feature of the Çamlıca hills is that these hills are “buttes” (Darkot and Tuncel, 1984: 117). In physical geography, hills whose erosion levels have evaded the impacts of erosion and thus have remained higher as compared to their surroundings are called buttes (monadnock). One of the reasons allowing a butte to remain

above as compared to the surroundings is that the type of the stone structure in the said hill is more resistant to erosion. The presence of the stone type, which we call quartzite and is resistant to erosion due to its hardness, has allowed the Çamlıca hills to remain above the flatlands of 100-110 meters elevation (Bağlarbaşı square: 110m., Sultantepe 93m., Capitol's ground 115m) and form outliers (in return to the hard quartzite in the structure of the Çamlıca hills, areas such as the Bağlarbaşı square, Faculty of Religious Studies and the Capitol shopping center are located on schists that erode more easily as compared to quartzite, and these areas have been eroded and formed peneplain surfaces).

With respect to plant geography and the natural vegetation of the Çamlıca hills, the present vegetation does not reflect the natural vegetation. In the natural vegetation of the hills, the dominant type is the red pine (*Pinus brutia*) which is a xerophyte pine species. Besides the red pine, although not as widespread as the red pine – another pine species – nut pines (*pinus pinea*) also stand out. The presence of red pine trees in our day, although much less as compared to the past, as the dominant tree species on the İstanbul islands (Büyükada, Heybeli, Burgaz, Kınalı) which are located across Çamlıca and have the same geological structure (Regel, 1963: 50), leaves no doubts that the natural vegetation of the Çamlıcas is also this pine species. Both hills, with the forestation activities during the recent years, appear to be primarily covered by black pine (*Pinus nigra*) trees. However, the black pine normally is the natural pine species on lands above 500 meters in the Marmara region (Günel, 1997: 19). With respect to water geography, in addition to housing significant water sources such as Çamlıca water, Tomruk water, Kısıklı water, which are quality waters that are very low on lime as they seep through quartzite and have been highly demanded by the İstanbulites since the long past, the primary feature of Çamlıca is that the watershed line (taksim-i miyah as it was called in the past) between the waters heading to the Marmara and the waters heading to the Bosphorus passes through here.

The significance of the Çamlıcas, with respect to transportation geography, is the fact that the Kısıklı pass that we have mentioned above and noted as separating the two hills (Big and Small Çamlıca) is the spot through which a historical road passes (Arı, 2005) (Photograph: 3). This road is the road that starts at the Balaban pier of Üsküdar, passes between the two Çamlıcas, reaches Gebze over Molla Fenari and then either turns to the east and reaches all the way to Iranian Azerbaijan through Erzurum, or by crossing to the Dilburnu

(Hersek Delta) by boats at the Dil Pier (the present Dilovası) on the east of Gebze, and reaches the centers on the Aegean and the Mediterranean coasts or to Hejaz.



Photograph 3: In this photograph (Anonim, 2006: 155) taken as the Kısıklı square at the beginning of the Republican period, the highway signplate designating the distances to Ankara, Bolu and İzmit stands out. This also poses as evidence on the significance of Çamlıca with respect to transportation geography, which we have emphasized in the text .

Çamlıca also has another feature that should be recalled with respect to being a “first” in inner city transportation: the Üsküdar-Bağlarbaşı-Kısıklı line (4600 m), which is the first tramway line of the Anatolian side taken into operation in 1928, has allowed the İstanbulites to take more advantage of the Çamlıcas (Ergin, 2005). The fact that the tramways taken into operation on the European side in the 19th century, have been started between Üsküdar and Kısıklı first on the Anatolian side, also emphasizes the importance placed on Çamlıca.

We would like to conclude our report, by pointing out to the significance of Çamlıca with respect to tourism geography. Although it is not within the sense of tourism of our day, Çamlıca also has a priority as a “summer resort area” or a “picnic area”. In this sense, its use dates back to the 17th century, as far as we know. The building of certain manors in the aforesaid century, during Ahmed I (1603-1617) and Murad IV (1623-1640) periods, plus the construction of a wooden palace during the Mehmed IV (Mehmed the Hunter, 1648-1687) period and the fountains for the Big and Small Çamlıca waters, had rendered the Çamlıca hills more attractive.

Near the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century, as the Janissary terror rendered transportation to distant resort areas such as Çamlıca unsafe, the significance of the Çamlıcas that was observed in the first half of the 17th century has started to decrease. In the 19th century, the Janissaries have been disengaged and security has been restored, and with the operation of the Şirketi Hayriye (local transportation) boats (Mülayim, 2005) , transportation from Çamlıca to the other neighborhoods of the city has been facilitated. As a consequence of these developments, the Big Çamlıca was actually included in the city life (at the time, Small Çamlıca retained the feature of being private property). This transportation convenience rendered not only Çamlıca, but also neighborhoods such as Acıbadem, Koşuyolu, Tophanelioğlu, Bağlarbaşı at its feet, as areas demanded for a “change of atmosphere”, “change of place” (i.e. a sort of tourism activity). The elite, other than the palace members, have started to have manors built on Çamlıca and its feet during the Mahmud II (1808-1831) period. The aforesaid sultan also used to go out to Çamlıca for excursions and hunting. As a matter of fact, upon the progress of his disease, his doctors have advised him to rest at the resort in Çamlıca for a “change of atmosphere” and the sultan has spent his last days in Çamlıca (Beydilli, 2003: 356) . This demonstrates that the significance of Çamlıca with respect to health tourism, which is a sub-branch of tourism, had already been comprehended two centuries before our day. The primary feature of Çamlıca in tourism, especially Big Çamlıca, is that it is the spot that best overlooks both the Marmara Sea and the Bosphorus, and in the meantime a substantial part of the Golden Horn and the historical peninsula (İstanbul peninsula) between the Golden Horn and the Marmara Sea. Meanwhile we, as two academic members teaching tourism geography, recommend guides to take the tourists who have come to İstanbul for the first time, up to Çamlıca first, and show and tell them about İstanbul and the natural beauties and historical monuments of İstanbul from there, and then take them on a tour of the city.

Yet, there also are other spots to have a good view of İstanbul: the Pierre Loti coffee house on the Eyüp slopes is one of the best view spots overlooking the Golden Horn and the İstanbul peninsula. However, it cannot overlook the İstanbul peninsula as completely and in full glory as Çamlıca. An eye looking from Çamlıca is able to distinguish how well the historical monuments on this peninsula fits the geographical structure of the peninsula (Tuncel, 2001: 239) , how the historical monuments have been positioned on the famous seven hills of İstanbul (4 of these hills may be easily seen from Çamlıca: the first hill of 45 m

on which the Topkapı Palace is located, the second hill almost of the same height on which the Nuruosmaniye Mosque has settled, the 60 m high third hill where the Beyazid Mosque is located and the Fatih Hill, also 60 m tall, separated from these with the pass at Saraçhane), and the renowned “Istanbul silhouette” admired so much by Western travelers, has been formed.

Çamlıca also holds a significant place in the cultural life of İstanbul, with respect to faith tourism. The “faith tourism” concept that has started to be used frequently in tourism related activities involves touristic visits made to religious areas such as Mecca, Medina, Karbala, Jerusalem, Vatican, Ephesus, Antakya, Tarsus in the broad sense. Meanwhile, in the stricter sense, visits made to holy areas (shrines, tombs, etc.) frequented by the locals, are also handled as faith tourism. And the visits made to the Selami Ali¹ Shrine set a good example for such faith tourism in the strict sense.

Another significance of Çamlıca with respect to tourism geography is that the route of the large bodied birds migrating to Africa passes from Çamlıca, and that the fall migration of eagles, falcons, buzzards, storks and various hawk species among such birds may be watched from here by ornithologists and tourists interested in birds² (Photograph: 4-5).

As a scientific requirement, we sadly would like to announce that we have to show the base stations (Photograph: 6) observed on Çamlıca, beauties of which we have emphasized so far, and the hideous and unfit urbanization views on its skirts, as an example of disfigurement unfit for Çamlıca.

¹ Selami Ali Efendi (D.1692), who has lived in the 17th century, is the founder of Sellamiye which is a branch of the Celvetiyye (founder Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi) sect. This wise person's shrine is located on the old road connecting Kısıklı with B.Çamlıca, while there is a quarter in Üsküdar bearing his name (Selami Ali Quarter = the neighborhood shortllycalled Selamsız in our day), plus a neighborhood called Selamiçeşme on Bağdat street, taking its name from a fountain that he has built.

² We would like to thank Özkan Üner from the İstanbul Bird Observation Group (İKGT) for the provided information.



Photograph 4-5: Passage of European Hobbies from Çamlıca during migration (I.EREL)



Photograph 6: Big Çamlıca Hill. (From the Üsküdar Municipality archive)

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