

FROM MARTYROPOLIS TO SILVAN
INTERNATIONAL SILVAN AND SULTAN I. KILIÇARSLAN
SYMPOSIUM

Importance of Meyyafarikin / Silvan

Silvan, one of the first settlements of humanity, is one of the oldest cities in the world that has hosted many civilizations. Located on the main road connecting Diyarbakır to Bitlis, at the hillsides of the Southeast Taurus Mountains surrounding the north of the Diyarbakır basin, Silvan is also one of the important crossroads of the historical Silk Road.

Silvan, which has changed hands many times throughout history, has also witnessed the domination struggle of the great states. The city, whose name is mentioned as "Mafârkın", "Farkın" or "Meyyâfârikin" in Islamic sources, is called "Martyropolis (City of Martyrs)" in Greek.

Since Meyyâfârikin is located on the Sassanid border of the Byzantine Empire, it has been one of the centers of intense political conflicts. Silvan, which witnessed the Byzantine-Sassanid struggle for centuries, transformed from being a garrison city to an important settlement center in time. Meyyâfârikin remained under Byzantine rule until it was conquered by Iyaz b. Ganem, by the Islamic armies during caliph Omar era. After the Umayyads, during the Abbasid rule, Hamdânis and Buwayhis dominated the city. Silvan, which was the capital of Marwanis for about a century, was one of the most important cities of the Middle Ages, and at the same time Meyyâfârikin was also a center which was visited frequently by merchants and travelers. Iranian traveler Nasser-ı Hüsrev has referred highly of the magnificence of the architectural structures in the city and the order of the city.

Silvan came under the administration of Great Seljuk State in 1085 and became one of the important centers of the Seljuk State. Silvan had a special place in the defense of Anatolia during the Crusades, became the eternal resting place

of Sultan Kılıç Arslan I of the Anatolian Seljuk State, who stopped the advance of the Crusader Armies.

Syrian Seljukids, Ahlatshahs, Artukids, Ayyubies and Anatolian Seljuks respectively dominated the city. In 1260, the Mongols captured the city after a long siege. The city, which resisted the Mongols for a long time, but was occupied due to famine and insufficient military support, was destroyed during this period, and the city, which has important examples of Muslim-Turkish architecture, suffered great damage. Meyyâfârikin, who remained under the rule of Timur and Sâfevi for a short time, came under the domination of the Ottoman Empire in 1515 and became one of the important town center of the state for four centuries until the withdrawal of the empire from the stage of history. Historical records reveal that many ethnic and religious groups lived together peacefully in Silvan for hundreds of years and that differences are an indispensable element of cultural wealth.

In Silvan, where there are many historical monuments such as Selahaddin Eyyubi Mosque, Kara Behlül Bey Mosque, Kemük and Malabadi Bridge, there are also the tombs of Hamdâni Emir Seyfüddevle, Celâleddin Harzemşah, Nâsiruddevle Ahmed, Artuklu Emir İlgazi and the Anatolian Seljuk Sultan I. Kılıç Arslan.

Silvan, is an exceptional venue in the military life of the founder of Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Mustafa Kemal Pasha, who achieved great success as the Commander of the Anafartalar Group in the Çanakkale Front during World War I, was appointed to the 16th Corps Command in Edirne after the Anafartalar Group Command was dissolved. However, after Bitlis was occupied by the Russians in the Eastern Front in those days (17 February 1916), it was decided to send Mustafa Kemal Pasha to the Eastern Front with his Corps. The 16th Corps Commander Mustafa Kemal Pasha saved Bitlis and Muş from Russian invasion while he was in headquarter in Silvan. In this

respect, Silvan became one of the important command centers where Mustafa Kemal Pasha achieved great military victories after the Çanakkale land wars.

It is planned to hold the "International Silvan and Sultan I. Kılıçarslan Symposium" hosted by Dicle University on 15-17 October 2021, the history, cultural, religious and architectural aspects of Silvan will be revealed by scientists in all aspects and the period of the Anatolian Seljuk Sultan I. Kılıçarslan will be discussed in the light of scientific data.