

Tourists, Pilgrims, and the Rules of Place

In July 2013 I joined a small group of tourists visiting Eyüp during Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting. Because it was Ramadan, Eyüp was crowded with people who came to pray in the central Mosque of Eyüp Sultan, attend the municipality's performances, enjoy Eyüp's numerous cafés and restaurants, and take in the district's atmosphere. All the members of our group were citizens of Turkey, Istanbul residents, and able to afford the tour's cost (roughly a hundred dollars). Falling as it did during the month of Ramadan, our tour was advertised as a *sahur* tour, meaning that we would visit Eyüp's monuments at night before finishing with a *sahur* meal at one of Eyüp's local restaurants.¹

At one point in the tour we passed into the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan. Much of the mosque's inner courtyard had been covered with carpet, and people sat scattered throughout the space. Some were praying in small groups, performing their *teravih namazı*.² Others stood facing the tomb of Halid bin Zeyd, their hands cupped in front of them as they prayed. Most people, however, were simply relaxing on the carpets. Our small group followed the guide, listening to his voice over the small earbuds that we had been provided.

We must have made a curious sight, because one man who happened to be in the mosque pulled me aside to ask about our group. "Did you hire the guide yourself?" he asked. "Did you know each other beforehand? How much was it?" I answered the first two questions truthfully: Yes, we had hired our guide, and no, we didn't know each other before we started the tour. I lied about the last question, because I was embarrassed about spending over 150 liras, which seemed almost excessive in a district where many residents made do with monthly incomes of 800 liras or less.³

After hearing my answers, the man bid me well and praised what our group was doing. "*Helal olsun*," he said, "you're gaining knowledge about religion" (*bilgi ahyorsunuz din üzerine*).⁴



FIGURE 15. Passing through the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan on a Ramadan tour, July 2013.

But as we parted, another passing man muttered derisively to his companion, “They’re tourists” (*Onlar turist*).

This brief encounter calls our attention to two distinct but interrelated “rules of place” that operate in the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan. The first might be termed “religious” rules, linked to appropriate ways of knowing about Islam and behaving as Muslims. The second might be termed “tourist” rules, linked to a different way of encountering sites of historical, cultural, and artistic value.⁵ For those familiar with Istanbul, these two distinct systems are central to the everyday experience of the city’s major mosques. On the one hand, mosques like Sultanahmet, Süleymaniye, the New Mosque (Yeni Camii), and most recently the Hagia Sophia are key sites through which Muslims engage with Istanbul as a city with a rich Muslim history.⁶ On the other hand, many of these sites are also celebrated as World Heritage sites, a designation that tends to downplay their devotional importance and stress an ostensibly “secular” character. These tensions between these two sets of rules are not unique to Turkey. In sites ranging from the Vatican to the Taj Mahal, from the Shrine of Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi in Konya to the missions of San Antonio, Texas, the line between “pilgrim” and “tourist” takes many forms around the world.⁷

Yet the boundaries between religious visitors and tourists are blurred in practice more often than it might seem. While encounters between the different types of visitors sometimes lead to clashes and debates, these different groups can also coexist or simply pass each other by. Rather than assuming that “religious” and

“tourist” rules are applied the same way irrespective of geography, this chapter pays attention to the ways that rules of place come to be defined in, from, and for the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan.

Here I take inspiration from scholarship that helps us move beyond static binaries. Lara Deeb and Mona Harb, for example, ask us to consider “moral rubrics,” the “different sets of ideals and values that are revealed as well as produced through discourses and actions in [different registers].”⁸ Elsewhere, Anna Secor uses the concept of “regimes” to make sense of the “hegemonic rules or norms regarding [everyday life] that characterize particular spaces.”⁹ These and other terms provide ways to conceptualize the uneven “possibilities of encounter, transformation, and the ‘in-between’” that can emerge when different rules come into proximity.¹⁰ Yet I find “rules” important because they capture both lived encounters between the tourist and the religious and the complicated norms, codes, and definitions that define Eyüp as a place of Islam. In a more general sense, the rules of place are at the center of struggles over the meaning and significance of places at multiple scales. The articulation, transmission, and enforcement of these rules play central roles in the making of place.

Although the first man approved of our activities (“You’re gaining knowledge about religion”), the second man’s derisive comment (“They’re tourists”) was an implicit judgment that drew upon rules that differentiated between better (that is, religious) and worse (that is, touristic) ways of moving through the mosque. Yet our tour group was also moving through the mosque according to a set of rules other than the “appropriate” rules of place in a mosque. For us, the mosque’s historical, cultural, and artistic value didn’t rule out its use as a space of worship, but neither did the mosque’s status as a site of worship exclude our mode of moving through it.

In the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan, these rules include those that separate the ritual, sacred space of the mosque from the broader fabric of the city; those that establish certain permissible and impermissible acts in certain locations within the mosque; and those that signal visitors’ religious identity, the purpose of their visit, and even their place of origin. In short, one might easily speak of the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan having “its” rules of place, in much the same way that places are spoken of as having “their own” histories.¹¹ One might also see our Ramadan encounter as a competition between two different and fixed sets of rules, one that corresponds to a “religious” lifestyle and one that corresponds to a “secular” life.

It is often tempting to think of the rules of place that apply in the mosque as being essential to the mosque (a product of some internal quality) and as something unchanged (as Eyüp Sultan has always been a sacred place, its current rules of place must have always been). This chapter complicates that assumption by making two linked arguments.

First, although the rules of place in Eyüp Sultan are specific to this mosque, those rules are not rooted in this place. I show that these rules are produced

through the interconnections of people, practices, and shared narratives. These rules are both particular to this place and connected to elsewhere. Second, I argue that the rules of place are often incomplete. I focus on three ways in which those rules of place are shown to be flexible and open to other interpretations: when foreigners move through the mosque; when domestic tourists move through the mosque; and when women move through the mosque. These are moments when the commonsense norms and habits that define this mosque encounter people who either don't know those norms, engage with them differently, or are perceived by others as somehow outside the standard rules of place.

TRANSMITTING THE RULES OF PLACE

As a mosque, Eyüp Sultan shares many of its rules of place with tens of thousands of mosques around the world. Rules that govern how people perform their ablutions before prayer, comport themselves within the mosque, and arrange themselves vis-à-vis others around them form a common texture of faith for Muslims. However, there are also rules specific to Eyüp Sultan, rules that are shaped by the specific conjunction of people, buildings, and objects in this mosque.

The central—and fundamental—architectural space of any mosque is its main prayer space. Prayer spaces almost always share a common set of features. There will be a prayer niche (*mihrab*) that orients people in the direction of Mecca (the *qiblah/kible*). In Friday congregational mosques, there will be a pulpit (*minbar*) along with a preacher's pulpit (*vaiz kursu*). Carpets will cover the floors. Low shelves will be found beside the doors and arranged around the outer edges of the mosque so that visitors might store their shoes during prayer. Although the primary function of this space is the performance of prayer, it can also be used for teaching, reading, thinking, and even sleeping. Although nearly all mosques in Turkey are administered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, any explicitly political act—such as the distribution of election pamphlets or flyers—is forbidden within the interior of the mosque. The main prayer space of Eyüp Sultan—as with almost all mosques—is also reserved for men. Although women sometimes circulate through the rear section of the main prayer space, the center of the mosque is a strongly gendered space.

The threshold of a mosque thus marks a key zone of transition between an interior space for prayer and the outside world. Although the precise location of a mosque's main door can vary widely, both historic Ottoman mosques and more recently constructed ones usually locate the main entrance along the main axis of the prayer niche. The area immediately outside of this door is known as the *son cemaat yeri*, a place for men who arrive late to the congregational prayer. The *son cemaat yeri* is usually incorporated into a courtyard (*avlu*). In contrast to the interior prayer space of the mosque, the *avlu* can oscillate between being used as an “interior” space for prayer and being used as an “external” space,

connected to the broader life of the city. In contrast to the overwhelmingly male character of the mosque's interior, the courtyard—and particularly the courtyard of Eyüp Sultan—is decidedly more mixed, with men and women visiting alongside one another.

Two things make the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan unique among Ottoman-era mosques of Istanbul. First, the tomb of Halid bin Zeyd is built into the mosque itself.¹² Both tombs and mosques are found throughout Istanbul, but they are almost always built separately. In contrast, the tomb of Halid bin Zeyd forms one beautifully tiled wall of the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan. Therefore, the inner courtyard of Eyüp Sultan is used both as an auxiliary prayer space for the mosque proper and as a devotional space for people who come to visit the tomb.

The second thing that makes Eyüp Sultan distinctive is its sequence of courtyards. Until the eighteenth century, most major Ottoman mosques were designed along relatively similar plans: a large interior prayer space, covered with a dome, and a single rectangular courtyard, aligned along an axis marked by the direction of prayer. The current mosque was reconstructed from the ground up at the end of the eighteenth century. In this second form, a new, outer courtyard was added to the structure of the mosque. This outer courtyard included several elements: an ablutions fountain (*şadırvan*), several small rooms designated for mosque staff; and an entrance to the sultan's loge (now used for the women's section in the mosque). In addition to being architecturally singular within Istanbul, the courtyards are also functionally important. Because of the large number of people who visit the mosque, the outer courtyard has come to be used as an important auxiliary prayer space. Since the renovation of the square adjacent to the mosque in the 1990s, that square has also been used as an auxiliary prayer space.

The unique shape of the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan has several consequences for the rules of place that apply in the mosque. Two are especially important. First, the positioning of the courtyards in relation to the tomb of Halid bin Zeyd means that most of the mosque complex is open to the elements. Entering the mosque—particularly to pray—requires a set of actions that specifically distinguish the interior from the exterior of the mosque (for example, removing one's shoes, women covering their hair and shoulders, performing one's ablutions before prayer, using one's right foot to enter the mosque, uttering a prayer to Allah). Because much of Eyüp Sultan is exterior to the central prayer space, it means that people do not necessarily perform the same actions that they might on entering the mosque's interior.

Second, the blurring of the boundary between the interior and the exterior of the mosque has consequences for the interaction between men and women. The Mosque of Eyüp Sultan is one of the few mosques in Istanbul where women can participate in communal prayers in areas that are visible to the general public. In most cases, women's prayer areas are screened in from view. Because the number



FIGURE 16. Outer courtyard of the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan, showing the ablution fountain (*şadırvan*) and the entrance to the women's section, February 2012.

of women visiting the mosque for communal prayers is so high relative to the space available inside the mosque, mosque authorities have established women's prayer areas at the rear of the outer courtyard and at the rear of the square outside. But if most mosques share a common rule that the performance of prayer by women is to be separate from the performance of prayer by men, Eyüp Sultan represents a modification of that rule.

In addition to the mosque's physical layout, public texts including signs, placards, and posted announcements play an important role in conveying the rules of place.¹³ The overwhelming majority of these objects are written in Turkish by the office of the Eyüp district *müftü* (chief religious official). Two permanent placards explain the significance of Halid bin Zeyd. Several signs list a range of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors for those visiting the mosque and tombs. In addition to the tomb of Halid bin Zeyd, the mosque complex is filled with an assortment of other tombs and graves, many of which are also labeled with small signs of varying length. By explaining the "proper" historical and religious significance of the mosque/tomb complex and by communicating a set of rules about "proper" visitation practices, these signs render the mosque complex legible to domestic visitors.

One striking difference between Eyüp Sultan and many of Istanbul's other major mosque monuments is the lack of signage in languages other than Turkish. This

contrasts with many of the mosques in the popular tourist areas of Sultanahmet and Süleymaniye. There, the signage almost always includes explanatory text as well as rules (such as dressing in appropriate clothing and not eating) addressed to tourists in different languages. During the years 2011 to 2013, the single instance of a sign in a language other than Turkish in the mosque was a large panel written in Arabic. Donated by King Idris I of Libya in the 1950s, the panel retells the story of Halid bin Zeyd. As Turkey has become an increasingly popular tourist destination for Arabic-speaking visitors over the past decade, the panel has come to be read by an entirely new audience.

It is also important to remember that there is another important kind of public text in the mosque: a wide array of calligraphy in Arabic script. Some of this is Arabic, usually quoting from the Qur'an or from the *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad. Other passages, however, are written in Ottoman Turkish. The overwhelming majority of visitors today cannot read the inscriptions; despite that, the mere visibility of these inscriptions—even if they are not necessarily legible—marks the mosque complex as a religious space.

The Mosque of Eyüp Sultan is visited by upward of three million people per year, of whom the vast majority are residents of Turkey. Among visitors from Turkey, the majority come for “religious” purposes, and their visits are exceptional events, often coinciding with births, deaths, important exams, weddings, and/or religious holidays. The large number of people who visit the mosque complex—often for the first time—poses a particular challenge for establishing shared rules of place. There are three primary ways that people learn how to configure their bodies according to the rules of place.

Social networks are the most important factor affecting an individual's understanding of the rules of place in Eyüp Sultan. Families continue to be the first and primary source of religious knowledge in contemporary Turkey.¹⁴ When people visit as a family unit, fathers and mothers frequently instruct their children in “appropriate” behaviors, whether by showing them how to hold their hands in prayer, reciting Qur'anic prayers with them, or scolding them if the children are misbehaving. People will also visit with a group of friends, in which case one individual might be more familiar with the mosque than the others. Visitors might also belong to a *tarikat* (Sufi brotherhood) or *cemaat* (Muslim community). Within the space of the mosque, women and men who belong to these groups mark themselves through their dress (ranging from how women tie their headscarves to the sorts of rings that men wear) and their manner of praying (how they hold their hands in supplication).¹⁵

When people visit the mosque, they can also be acutely aware of the behavior of those around them. Most of the time this awareness is passive, and it resembles the way that people everywhere negotiate crowded situations. Sometimes visitors will imitate the actions of those around them. This is especially true in the immediate vicinity of the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan, where individuals who

pray at or concentrate on other (poorly marked or illegible) graves or tombs can attract the attention of passersby. Finally, visitors also critique the actions of those around them. Although these critiques rarely take the form of direct argument or accusation, visitors will frequently share their negative evaluations of other people in the mosque. This explains why our tour group attracted such attention during Ramadan. During a moment in which nearly everybody seemed to be in the mosque for devotional purposes, our group's conduct stood out and generated divergent responses.

Mosque staff and attendants are the third factor shaping visitors' embodied movement through the mosque. Their numbers include tomb attendants, municipal police (*zabita*), plainclothes police officers, and mosque custodial staff. Collectively known as the *görevli* (on duty), they can all intervene in activities they deem inappropriate. For example, custodial staff might ask someone writing their prayer on a wall to stop, or a tomb attendant might interrupt someone's prayer on the grounds that it is "superstitious." Compared to the large number of visitors who pass through Eyüp Sultan every year, the staff presence is relatively small. Nevertheless, their enforcement of the rules of place plays a key role in shaping how the mosque is used.

Although these rules are normative, they are neither unchanging nor always equally applied. Indeed, their very status as normative is the product of ongoing debates about the regulation, requirement, and transformation of the practices that constitute Islam.¹⁶ Below, I turn to three moments in which those rules of place are shown to be flexible and open to other interpretations: when foreigners move through the mosque; when domestic tourists move through the mosque; and when women move through the mosque. These are moments when the commonsense norms and habits that define this mosque encounter people who either don't know those norms, engage with them differently, or are understood by others to be somehow outside of the standard rules of place.

FOREIGNERS IN THE MOSQUE

Historical Ottoman mosques occupy an interesting field in Istanbul today. On the one hand, they continue to be places of ongoing worship, which are staffed by officially appointed imams, managed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and regularly attended by residents and visitors alike. On the other hand, they are also historical sites, identified in guidebooks and tourist itineraries as sites of cultural value. Foreigners' visiting of mosques—and the visiting of non-Muslim foreigners in particular—presents one important challenge to the typical rules of place that apply in a mosque like Eyüp Sultan.

One anecdote, frequently repeated in nineteenth-century Istanbul travelogues, gives one clue to the relationship between foreigners and the rules of place in the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan, and particularly the way that mobility reproduces and

transforms the rules of place. In the 19th century, the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan and the tomb of Halid bin Zeyd were off-limits to non-Muslim foreigners. The only way for a non-Muslim to visit the mosque was in disguise. This is because dress marked one of the central means through which ethnic and religious identities were performed in late Ottoman Istanbul. As the story goes, an “infidel” couple donned a “Turkish disguise” (*déguisement turc*) and entered the mosque. As soon as they crossed the mosque’s threshold, they were overcome and revealed as Christians.¹⁷ This rule of place no longer applies in the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan, but the anecdote reminds us that non-Muslim foreigners—identifiable by their dress, language, and comportment—were once seen to be violating the rules of place that applied there. The rules of place involve different kinds of mobilities: non-Muslim foreigners are marked as foreign precisely by their mobility through the city (and through the mosque in particular).

Today it is easy to identify non-Muslim foreigners by means of their relationship to the rules of place in Eyüp Sultan. In contrast to Muslim visitors, non-Muslim foreign visitors are generally not familiar with the layout of the mosque and the rules that shape one’s movement through it. Likewise, most foreign visitors do not read Turkish. Their ignorance of Turkish renders the mosque’s public texts (and the rules they convey) illegible. Foreign visitors do imitate Turkish visitors—most visibly when women cover their head on passing from the square into the outer courtyard—but their mistakes are policed in a different way by mosque staff.

Beginning in the early part of the twentieth century, restrictions on non-Muslim visitation began to change, and foreigners gradually started to visit the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan more freely. While one might assume that foreigners were always liable to be ignorant (and thus potentially in violation of) the rules of place that applied in the mosque, foreigners are sometimes marked as more respectful of the sacredness of a place like Eyüp Sultan. Earlier, for example, we looked at Cemal Ögüt’s distinction between domestic and foreign visitors. Ögüt’s account articulated what would become a theme common in many of the guides and pamphlets published about Eyüp Sultan in the 1960s and ’70s: visitors (from Turkey) were ignorant and did not show the respect appropriate to this place. The key point to draw from Ögüt’s account is that *even* foreigners—assumed to be non-Muslims and therefore ignorant of the religious significance of this mosque and tomb—were able to comport themselves in a more appropriate way. Locals and residents refused to change their behavior as they passed from the street (where smoking cigarettes and singing would be appropriate) into the mosque (where such acts were disrespectful). In this case, foreigners provide a useful foil to explain what Muslims should be doing.

Foreigners continue to be a point of reference for many Muslim Turks when they describe what makes the mosque special. I asked Zafer—a young man, pious, and relatively new to Istanbul—about what made Eyüp different from other parts of the city, and he responded by drawing a fascinating comparison between Eyüp



FIGURE 17. Tourists observing Friday prayers in the central square, September 2012.

Sultan and the major historical monuments of Sultanahmet. Here in Eyüp Sultan, he said, “You rarely see underdressed [*çıplak*] people. . . . ‘Open’ [*açık*] people come but they cover up with something [when they do]. . . . It’s not that way in Sultanahmet. [There] someone wearing a miniskirt can go into the mosque there with just a head scarf [*sadece bir baş örtüsüyle*] but that’s something I’ve never encountered here [in Eyüp Sultan].” He continued, “There are clear rules for every place, how a mosque is dressed for, how it is entered. . . . Now, Sultanahmet is a place that should be thought of in the same way, but I think that there are more people who pay attention in Eyüp Sultan.”¹⁸

Zafer’s description provides one way to think about the tensions produced by encounters between “non-Muslim” (usually foreign) visitors who don’t follow the rules of place and the clear “Muslim” rules of place in Eyüp. Implicit in Zafer’s explanation is the topography of tourism in Istanbul. The most touristed district of the city is Sultanahmet. There are two reasons for this. First, three of Istanbul’s most important historic monuments—the Hagia Sophia, the Sultanahmet Mosque (also known as the Blue Mosque), and the Topkapı Palace—are located within an easy walk of each other. For tourists with limited time, the district provides an easily accessible snapshot of Istanbul. Second, there is a well-developed infrastructure (good transportation, signage in different languages, the availability of guides, and a dense cluster of hotels) in Sultanahmet that makes it easy for foreign tourists to orient themselves.

In contrast, Eyüp—and here Zafer's use of "Eyüp Sultan" refers to the mosque in particular—is relatively peripheral to the city's primary tourist itineraries. Although the number of restaurants catering to tourists has increased since the late 1990s and new hotels have opened, Eyüp lacks much of the infrastructure that has turned Sultanahmet into a heavily trafficked tourist area.

Zafer's comparison draws our attention not to the numbers of tourists who visit but to the rules of place that they follow. Especially important are the rules that correspond to entering the mosque. All mosques in Istanbul visited by tourists will provide head scarves and ankle-length dresses that visitors—primarily women, but sometimes men as well—can use to cover their bare heads, shoulders, and legs. In many cases, attendants will be stationed at the mosque entrance to make sure that foreign visitors are dressed appropriately. However, because of the number of people who visit Sultanahmet, it is sometimes difficult for attendants to stop every foreign tourist, hence Zafer's observation about someone entering the mosque "wearing a miniskirt."

The "foreignness" of tourists is not a fixed, physical quality. Rather, it is signaled through embodied practices and objects that tourists use. These include the use of cameras, speaking in languages other than Turkish, traveling in groups, participating in religious practices like prayer, and choices about dress. Because Sultanahmet is usually visited as part of a "heritage" itinerary that links the Topkapı Palace, the Sultanahmet Mosque, and—until its 2020 reclassification as a mosque—the Hagia Sophia, tourists often encounter Islam as something looked at rather than lived in.¹⁹ In Eyüp, by contrast, non-Muslim tourists often visit precisely to experience a "living" Islam. This brings its own tensions with it, but it helps to explain why "foreignness" plays out differently in Eyüp. Despite the relative absence of staff monitoring their behavior, tourists seem to follow a different set of rules in this place.

In Zafer's telling, every mosque should have the same rules: they should be entered in a certain way, and one should dress in a certain way. Ideally, he believed, the rules would be the same everywhere, but he noted that these rules of place are more frequently observed in Eyüp Sultan. His observation points to a broader insight: buildings are defined by their rules, but those rules are also always in dialogue with places and the people who move through them. How and for whom these rules operate can take multiple forms.

IS HERITAGE "FOREIGN"?

One striking shift of the past two decades has been the increasing number of Muslim tourists visiting Turkey. Many of these tourists are from the Arabic-speaking Middle East, including the Persian Gulf, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, but there are also tourists from Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom.²⁰ These tourists share many of the same itineraries as other foreign tourists (such

as visiting the Topkapı Palace, climbing the Galata Tower, and visiting the Grand Bazaar), but they differ in their understanding of the rules of place that apply in Eyüp Sultan. The key difference lies in their relationship to the mosque: non-Muslim foreign tourists move through the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan as a devotional space for other people; Muslim foreign tourists move through the mosque as their own devotional space. While foreign Muslim tourists often find much of the mosque's signage illegible (because they don't speak or read Turkish), their knowledge of the embodied practices of piety make their adherence to the rules of place quite different. If nothing else, the increasingly visible presence of foreign Muslim tourists has helped to decouple a long-standing association between being foreign and being non-Muslim.

In November 2011, for example, a small group of men from Pakistan were reading the inscription donated by King Idris I. I was reminded suddenly that nearly all the mosque's signage is in Turkish, something that sets the mosque apart from many of the other historic mosques like Sultanahmet and Süleymaniye. They turned to a group of people standing beside them. "Turkiya?" they asked. "No," their neighbors answered, "España."

More than anything, the presence of foreign tourists in the mosque demonstrates that "foreignness" is produced in part by violating the "proper" rules of place. At the beginning of the twentieth century, foreigners' different habits of dress, language, and worship helped to mark them as "foreign." A century later, some of those habits have changed: many "foreigners" are now visiting from majority Muslim countries, and many forms of dress are less visibly marked as "Turk" and "foreign." At the same time, many Turks have also shifted their relationship to the mosque, encountering it not necessarily as worshippers but as heritage tourists.

Since the 1990s, a second shift has reconfigured assumptions about what it means to be a tourist in Eyüp Sultan: the emergence of domestically oriented "heritage tourism," a term I use to refer to a subset of the Turkish tourism industry that caters to individuals explicitly interested in learning about "their" history. This was the motivation that guided the 2013 *sahur* tour with which I opened this chapter. While on that tour I spoke with one of the other participants—a middle-aged Istanbul resident—about why he joined tours like this. He explained, "We go to Europe, and we see all their churches and museums, but we don't do the same in our own country. A couple of years ago, we realized we didn't know Istanbul. So we started to do these tours, and bit by bit we've started to learn Istanbul."

These tours offer a fascinating opportunity to think about the encounter between two different kinds of rules: those that apply to religious visitors to Eyüp Sultan, and those that apply to "tourists." While often in tension, these two types of rules are not necessarily mutually exclusive. As I showed above, foreign tourists often visit mosques alongside domestic worshippers. Domestic tourists in mosques, however, raise a different sort of issue, because they challenge the assumed equivalence of "Turk" and "Muslim."

The visibility of domestic tour companies catering to domestic tourists who want to visit sites of the Ottoman past is a relatively recent phenomenon, dating back to the 1990s. While this sector's growth has many causes, four stand out. First, the Ottoman past was reconfigured as an attractive and cosmopolitan destination.²¹ Although major monuments like mosques and palaces had always been important tour destinations, the 1990s were marked by a popularization of the Ottoman past. Second, beginning in the 1990s but especially since the 2000s, there have been massive investments in tourist facilities and restoration projects.²² Third, the rise in living standards in Turkey has enabled the growth of leisure activities like tourism. Domestic tourism is one part of an expanded landscape of popular consumption. Being able to go on boutique tours like these is part of the complicated cultural politics of tourism in Turkey today, a politics that turns on questions of public access and social distinction.²³ Finally, there has also been a shift in the cultural politics of distinction that characterize Turkey's relationship to Europe. Whereas being "cultured" once involved visiting Europe's museums, it can now include domestic tourism organized around the splendors of the Ottoman past.

The tour company I joined was one of the first to be established in Istanbul. They have been in business for roughly the past twenty years and currently offer a varied range of tours, including Istanbul-focused tours, domestic tours, and international tours to locations ranging from Cuba and the Great Wall of China to Central Europe and India. In the two tours I joined, their clientele seemed to be relatively wealthy and well-educated Istanbul residents. Consequently, the rules of place observed by this tourist agency linked expectations about class, cultural outlook, and a particular form of tourist mobility. The ethnographic encounters below are drawn from those two tours.

Our tours followed an itinerary similar to the one traced by "foreign" tourists: we began at the café of Pierre Loti, walked down through the cemetery, visited the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan, and then passed through a variety of other heritage sites, including the public kitchen (*imaret*) of Mihrişah Sultan and the tomb of Sultan Reşad (Mehmed V). While everyone who comes to Eyüp—religious visitor or tourist—visits the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan, "religious" visitors generally do not visit sites like the *imaret* of Mihrişah Sultan or the tomb of Sultan Reşad, marking one key difference between the itineraries of "religious" visitors and heritage tourists.

While many domestic heritage tourists share a common understanding of the rules of place with "foreign" tourists, there is one key difference: their relationship to those sites, one that oscillates between "other" and "ours." This is why the man's description of going to Europe to see "churches and museums" but not making the same investment in "our country" is so interesting. Despite visitors engaging with this history as "ours," the everyday sharing of history (as when different groups of Turks visit and move through Eyüp Sultan) is often far more complicated. The

imagined community suggested by “our Ottoman past” frequently dissolves into debates about political, ethnic, social, and religious identity. Indeed, many of these boutique heritage tourists overlap with foreign tourists who rarely engage with the people and ongoing life that fills many monumental spaces in Istanbul.

On a December morning in 2012, our small group met in front of the Atatürk Culture Center in Taksim. We were twelve in total: two older couples, perhaps retired, two friends traveling together, four of us on our own, a representative from the tour company, and our guide. We boarded our small bus, where we were given portable broadcasting sets and headphones. The day before, I had received a text message from the tour operator: “Note: We request that our female guests bring a head covering [*baş örtüsü*] with them.” Implicit in the note was an assumption that the tour participants did not wear *tesettür*, the head covering that frequently marks women’s piety. As I noticed when our group gathered, none of the women, in fact, did.

While our bus made its way through light morning traffic from Taksim to Eyüp, our guide explained the importance of the district. He began—as most of my pious interlocutors in Eyüp did—with the figure of Eyüp Sultan, the standard-bearer (*bayraktar*) of the Prophet. However, I noticed that his phrasing differed in one small but important way from many of my devout interlocutors in Eyüp. Whereas they would almost always say “our Prophet” (*Hizmet Peygamberimiz*), our guide dropped the possessive, saying only “the Prophet” (*Hizmet Peygamber*).

The shift between “the Prophet” and “our Prophet” corresponds to two different ways that people engage with the religious importance of Eyüp. Those who use “our Prophet” are trying to evoke a mutual religious community in which connection to the Prophet Muhammad functions as one of the primary markers of belonging. On this trip, our guide’s use of “the Prophet” instead of “our Prophet” was not a rejection of belief or religious identity. Rather, it marked one attempt to bracket off the use of Islam as a common axis of identity.

Indeed, these tours have a complicated relationship to the public forms of religiosity found in Eyüp today. The tours that I participated in always visited the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan, but we never stopped to pray formally. This isn’t to say that participants were opposed to religion in their lives. As one woman explained to me as we toured Eyüp together, she used to come regularly to the mosque to perform two *rekat*.²⁴ “I’m Muslim,” she said, “so coming here is a sort of relationship; it’s good for one’s soul.” But our tours were never timed to coincide with the large communal prayers that now take place in Eyüp, particularly on Fridays and weekends. While there may have been a logistical benefit to this (the mosque was less crowded), it also avoided a very visible contrast between the communal performance of prayer and tourists’ modes of moving through the mosque.

The mosque complex of Eyüp Sultan is frequently crowded with visitors. Observing people’s adherence to the “normative” rules of place is a quick and relatively easy way for visitors to classify the people around them. Practices like taking

photographs, listening to guides, not praying at the tomb of Halid bin Zeyd, and moving in groups quickly mark visitors as “tourists.”

Yet when I returned on a second tour during Ramadan, I realized that tourist practices, especially when those who practice them are identified as Turkish, become even more charged. Ramadan is marked by an intensification of religious observance in Eyüp. Although the exact form of the celebrations varies from year to year, the Eyüp Municipality constructs a variety of temporary structures and organizes a range of activities open to the public. Eyüp’s restaurants shift their hours and menus to cater to visitors seeking *iftar* and *sahur* meals (the two meals that mark, respectively, the end and the beginning of the fast). The number of people visiting Eyüp also increases. These visits almost always involve a visit to the mosque complex, where people will either pray in front of the tomb of Halid bin Zeyd or participate in one of the communal prayers (either the evening prayer following *iftar*, the supererogatory *teravih* prayers, or the dawn prayer immediately before the fast begins). Most importantly, the rules of place become sharpened, with the lines between observance and nonobservance becoming more defined during Ramadan.

Amidst that heightened observance, our tour group must have made a curious sight. It was nighttime, a period in which tours were rarely organized, and it was Ramadan, a period of more visible observance during which the rules of place were more defined. We were following our guide, shepherded along by a representative from the tour company. As we entered the mosque, our guide explained the significance of Lale Mustafa Paşa, a seventeenth-century grand vizier whose tomb abutted the tomb of Halid bin Zeyd. He called our attention to the baroque details of the mosque, the fountains constructed by Sultan Selim III that were adorned with Mevlevi headgear. From the way that our group arranged itself relative to these objects and our tour guide, it was clear that our visit was not guided by a set of religious norms, in contrast to that of nearly everyone else in the mosque. And yet our group was speaking in Turkish, which placed us alongside nearly everyone else in the mosque.

To be a tourist in Eyüp Sultan is to not follow the “normal” rules of place. However, responses to an encounter between religious and tourist rules could take many forms, as this chapter’s opening vignette made clear. One man approved of what we were doing: although we weren’t praying as a group or conducting ourselves in the typical way, we were learning about religion in our own way. But the second man’s dismissive comment—“They’re tourists”—was a reminder that the practice of tourism can be seen as less valuable than the practice of worship in the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan.

The increased number of visitors associated with Ramadan also results in a second tension, one produced by the interaction between men and women. I now turn to a series of moments and responses in which the visibility of women in the

mosque complex of Eyüp Sultan has produced tensions related to the “proper” rules of place.

WOMEN IN THE MOSQUE

One of the unique features of Eyüp Sultan is the relatively large presence of women. In part, this presence stems from the location of the tomb of Halid bin Zeyd. While both men and women practice tomb visitation to varying degrees around Istanbul, visiting tombs is frequently described as women’s devotional work.²⁵ Because a greater number of women visit the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan relative to other mosques in Istanbul, their participation in communal prayers raises questions about the “standard” rules of place that ought to govern the space of the mosque. Two rules are particularly important: the first governs the physical proximity between men and women immediately before and during prayer times; and the second concerns the visibility of women. While men often encounter these as “problems,” that evaluation is necessarily gendered in nature.²⁶

The most crowded night in the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan is the Night of Power (Kadir Gecesi), the night on which the Qur’an was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. As it falls during the last week of Ramadan, the night is the devotional high point of the month of fasting. Even people who do not fast for the month of Ramadan (or even observe it in any other way) will seek out a mosque on the Night of Power. The huge crowds that appear in Eyüp present a special difficulty because of the way that crowds render “appropriate” gender divisions nearly impossible.

The day before Kadir Gecesi in 2012, I had been advised to avoid the mosque. “You won’t even be able to take a step [from the crowds],” a policeman had warned me. He was right: by the time of the *teravih* prayers, the entire square in front of the mosque was filled with people trying to find a space in which to pray. I overheard two men from Ankara complaining about the scene. They were dismayed by what they found and complained about the proximity of men and women, who were praying “right beside one another” (*yanyanına*). This proximity posed special challenges for men who follow the Shafi’i *madhab*.²⁷ According to the strictures of that *madhab*, any physical contact between a man and a woman violates a man’s state of purity before prayer. If it happens, a man has to perform his ritual ablutions a second time for his prayers to be deemed acceptable and religiously appropriate.²⁸

There simply isn’t enough space to accommodate all the people who want to pray in Eyüp Sultan during Ramadan. Although the municipality works to arrange the square as an auxiliary prayer space, that still does not meet everyone’s needs. The women’s section is always more crowded than the men’s prayer section, to say nothing of the facilities for performing one’s ablutions. When I was observing morning prayers in 2012 and 2013, some women positioned themselves immediately in front of the mosque’s forward door. They could easily hear the



FIGURE 18. Signs in the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan, June 2013. From left to right, the signs warn women about appropriate dress, present the life of Halid bin Zeyd, and warn visitors about religiously inappropriate practices.

imam—and so follow the congregation in prayer—but their location sparked heated arguments. From where they prayed, the women were both in front of men and in front of the line marked by the imam inside the mosque.

In addition to the physical proximity of men and women in the mosque, women are also more visible in mixed gender spaces. One of the most notable examples of this visibility is women's performance of communal prayers in the square outside the mosque, where they can be seen by passersby. Although there are designated women's sections in nearly every mosque in Istanbul—both historic ones and those of more recent construction—it is rare that women's participation in prayers as part of the congregation (*cemaat*) is visible to the general public. One of my interlocutors, a young woman named Seher, also expressed her ambivalence with women's performance of communal prayers in the square. "It's not appropriate" (*uygun değildir*), she said.

Sharper debates emerge over how women dress within the mosque complex itself. In January 2013 I noticed a new sign that had been posted in visible locations within the mosque. It was addressed directly to the "esteemed women visitors [*ziyaretçi*]" to Eyüp Sultan: "Visitors [*misafir*] . . . conducting their pilgrimage [*ziyaret*] in accordance with Allah's commands is a religious commandment [*dini bir esas*]. For this reason, women visitors' entering of mosques (The House of Allah) and courtyards *bareheaded* and with tight and sleeveless blouses and tight pants and short skirts is not appropriate. Please, *let's pay attention*. Let's be of

assistance to the staff.”²⁹ The phrasing of the sign was noteworthy in several respects. First, it lumped the interior of the mosque with the exterior courtyards. One of the key rules of place that applies to women in mosques is the covering of one’s head. However, whether the courtyard of a mosque is part of that interior space remains an open question. While I observed many women—otherwise uncovered—who would tie a simple scarf around their head as they passed from the square into the outer courtyards of the mosque, I also saw many women who didn’t.

This visibility continues to be a debated topic. One online comment about Eyüp Sultan, posted by a male visitor in early 2015, raised a similar critique about the visibility of women. He wrote, “The spiritual [*manevi*] atmosphere there is being destroyed! I was there the first day of *bayram*! Both the interior and courtyard of the mosque had been turned into a podium! Women, [with] their butts and heads uncovered [*göt başı her yeri açık*], were displaying themselves everywhere!”

CONCLUSION

This chapter has made two arguments. First, the rules of place in Eyüp Sultan are conveyed in three primary ways: through the building itself; through the public texts posted throughout the complex; and through the management and control of bodies as they move through the mosque complex. Rather than understand those rules as connected only to Eyüp Sultan, I tried to show how the configuration of rules in this place are the product of interconnections that link this mosque to other places and histories.

Second, I argued that the rules of place are fragile and incomplete. Rather than “filling” the mosque (in the way that water fills a glass), these rules are tangled threads that snare some people but not others. Looking at three kinds of movement through the mosque complex—that of foreigners, heritage tourists, and women—I tried to show some of the ways that different subjects encountered the rules of place. To not follow the “rules” in Eyüp Sultan is to be foreign. Rather than an inherent (and unchanging) quality of visitors, “foreignness” is a condition produced by an inability to follow (or outright ignorance of) the rules. In the case of heritage tourists, I explored some of the ways that people from Turkey visit the mosque not as a space for their religious worship but as a heritage site. Despite the mosque being imagined as part of a shared “Ottoman” heritage, the experience of heritage tourists moving through Eyüp Sultan is sometimes in tension with the everyday devotional practices that typically fill the mosque. Finally, I turned to the presence of women in the mosque, arguing that the proximity between men and women in the mosque complex and the visibility of women provoked particular (male) anxieties about piety and sacredness.

There are four brief points that I want to draw from this analysis of the rules of place in Eyüp Sultan. First, it suggests that we should complicate our understanding of the geographies of the religious and secular that constitute Istanbul

today. That geography can be conceptualized in terms of “districts”—one district is conservative, another liberal, one religious, another secular. Building on Berna Turam’s critique of the “neighborhood wars” rubric, this chapter focuses instead on the small relations through which people negotiate the place of Islam.³⁰ Such an analysis is especially important in what we might assume to be the paradigmatic “sacred” space of the city: the mosque. Careful attention to the transmission and contestation of the rules of place directs our attention not only to the contested boundaries of the religious and secular but also to the places in which they overlap.

Second, the different ways that people follow (or don’t follow) the rules of place open up a discussion of what Lara Deeb has termed “authentication,” the “[establishment of] the true or correct meaning, understanding, or methods of various religious and social practices and beliefs.”³¹ Extending Deeb’s account, we might also focus not solely on the authentication of practices but also on the authentication of places. A feeling of authenticity requires ongoing forms of work and labor.³² But authenticating places also requires the articulation and definition of connections that link a place to elsewhere. Defining, articulating, and enforcing those rules of place is an important part of this project.

Third, rules of place are the products of different mobilities.³³ This is true in at least two senses. First, the rules of place constrain forms of mobility. Second, the rules of place that apply in Eyüp Sultan are also produced by the different movement of people, narratives, and objects into and out of the mosque. Debates about superstition and saint worship, for example, are shared between different mosques and tomb complexes, but they must also be brought there. Thought of in this way, we might also think about mobilities not only across space but also across time. Many of Eyüp Sultan’s rules of place are constituted by reference to an authoritative past, although the definition of that past remains an ongoing subject of debate.³⁴ The ongoing nature of that debate also reminds us that Eyüp Sultan’s rules also have their own history. The rules of place are “bound up with the *histories* which are told of them, *how* those histories are told, and which history turns out to be dominant.”³⁵

Finally, thinking in terms of the rules of place provides a useful complement to recent debates that conceptualize buildings not as fixed objects but as ongoing processes, variously made and unmade.³⁶ One of the key advantages of this approach is that it prompts us to understand the coherence of buildings—such as the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan—not as an inherent quality but as the product of contested everyday practices of inhabitation, movement, and consumption.³⁷ This chapter has tried to show that buildings—their physical layout, the public texts posted on them, and the people who work in them—are not simply the backdrop for social life but important agents in shaping the rules of place.