

Death in Istanbul Death and its Rituals in Ottoman- Islamic Culture

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Much can be revealed about the structure, the culture, and the mentalities of a society by studying the way it perceives and manages death. This is certainly true of Ottoman- Islamic society in general and, more particularly, of the population of the imperial capital, Istanbul. By investigating the five-century-long funerary culture of Istanbul from 1453 to 1922, this exhibition is an attempt at analyzing some of the major aspects of the question, from the perception of death to inheritance law, from suicide to executions, from tombstones to the practice of fratricide, and from the changing definition of martyrdom to funeral processions, in the light of a wide variety of objects and documents including tombstones, engravings, photographs, miniatures, and ritual artifacts.

The exhibition is conceived under seven main headings: city of the dead, Ottoman-Islamic death culture, empire and death, Ottoman tombstones, ways of dying, aspects of modernity, death and nationalism.