

Review

Non-Muslim Cemeteries as Multicultural Urban Heritage in Istanbul: The Case of the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery

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Abstract

This review examines non-Muslim cemeteries in Istanbul as multicultural urban heritage landscapes, using the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery as its principal case. Rather than treating cemeteries solely as religious or funerary spaces, it conceptualizes them as material archives of urban memory, minority presence, spatial displacement, and heritage governance. Drawing on a literature review, historical documentation, spatial mapping, and field observation, the article first traces the transformation of non-Muslim cemeteries from the Ottoman period to the Republican period, with particular attention to their relocation, disappearance, and reuse within processes of urban modernization. It then analyses the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery in terms of its establishment, multinational governance structure, architectural and funerary features, transferred memorial elements, digitisation practices, and conservation initiatives. The case illustrates the layered relationships among urban development, multicultural identity, and sustainable conservation. The article argues that Istanbul's surviving non-Muslim cemeteries should be understood as living spaces of memory and cultural landscapes whose protection requires documentation, public awareness, and multi-actor heritage governance.

Keywords: Ottoman period; non-Muslim cemeteries; Feriköy Protestant Cemetery; cultural heritage

1. Introduction: Cemetery Heritage and Multicultural Urban Memory

Cemeteries are not only places of burial, mourning, and religious practice; they are also material archives of urban history, social identity, cultural plurality, and collective memory. In multicultural cities, cemetery landscapes record the presence of different communities through their spatial locations, inscriptions, funerary monuments, ritual practices, ownership structures, and patterns of continuity or displacement. Within this framework, non-Muslim cemeteries in Istanbul constitute a significant but often overlooked component of the city's multicultural urban heritage. They reveal how religious communities were spatially organized, how minority identities were represented in the urban landscape, and how processes of modernization, relocation, and conservation transformed the material traces of communal memory.

The Ottoman imperial system accommodated religious and communal diversity through legally and administratively differentiated structures, most notably the millet system. Under Islamic law, when a city with a non-Muslim population was conquered, a



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covenant known as a *zimmet akdi* was concluded with its inhabitants, and non-Muslims who accepted it were referred to as *zimmis*. Within this framework, the rights of non-Muslim communities were legally recognised in several respects [1]. According to Eryılmaz, until the beginning of the twentieth century, the term *millet* in Ottoman usage referred primarily to a community sharing the same religion or sect [2,3] (p. 6). The Ottoman state therefore classified Muslims as one *millet* and non-Muslims as separate *millets* according to religious and sectarian affiliation.

In Ottoman documents, non-Muslims were referred to by terms such as *Tebaa-i gayrimüslime* (non-Muslim subjects), *cemaat-ı muhtelif* (different communities), and *milel-i muhtelif* (different nations). These communities were generally classified according to religious and sectarian belonging, including Christians, Jews, and other groups [3,4]. Karataş [1] (p. 269) defines the main non-Muslim *millets* within the Ottoman system as Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, while also noting that Catholics and Protestants became increasingly visible within this framework from the eighteenth century onwards. This institutional differentiation is important for understanding the formation, use, and management of non-Muslim cemeteries, since burial grounds were closely linked to communal identity, religious authority, and administrative recognition.

In the Ottoman Empire, non-Muslim communities conducted many of their affairs with the state through their own communal and religious representatives. The Orthodox Christians were represented by the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Jews by the Rabbinate, and the Armenians by the Armenian Patriarchate [3]. While Muslims were subject to Sharia law in the administration of the state, non-Muslims maintained a degree of autonomy in social and religious matters such as marriage, inheritance, and death within the framework of their own communal regulations. This autonomy also shaped funerary practices and cemetery organization, making burial grounds key spatial indicators of communal presence and institutional continuity.

Istanbul has historically been a mosaic of different languages, religions, and cultures, and this plurality has been reflected in its religious, educational, medical, residential, and funerary landscapes. Gürçay [5] provides a detailed historical account of the diverse belief communities that existed in Istanbul during the Ottoman period, including the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, the Armenian Patriarchate, and the Bulgarian Exarchate. These institutions were not only religious authorities but also actors that contributed to the spatial organization of communal life. Churches, schools, hospitals, residences, and cemeteries together formed a network of non-Muslim urban presence, particularly visible in districts such as Galata, Pera, Tatavla, Pangaltı, Şişli, and Feriköy.

From the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, Istanbul's non-Muslim and foreign communities became increasingly visible through new urban institutions and architectural forms. Galata and Pera, long associated with port trade, diplomacy, and European commercial networks, became central areas of social and spatial transformation. The long-standing commercial relationships established by Greeks, Armenians, Latins, and Levantines with European companies contributed to the development of the city's commercial and cultural ties with Europe [6]. Following the Tanzimat and Islahat reforms, schools that had initially operated within churches or modest premises increasingly became independent institutions, while Greek, Latin, and Armenian hospitals emerged as prominent healthcare establishments. In parallel, the residences of affluent non-Muslim and Latin families reflected the changing urban culture of the nineteenth century [6].

The transformation of Galata and Pera was also connected to legal, economic, and spatial changes in the nineteenth century. Following the 1867 law that clarified property rights for foreigners, the architectural character of the area began to change through the construction of monumental buildings, bell-towered churches, banks and insurance offices,

commercial buildings, schools, hospitals, and residences [6]. Within this broader process, cemeteries were not marginal spaces but integral components of the same multicultural urban landscape. They recorded demographic presence, communal boundaries, religious affiliation, social status, and transnational connections while also becoming sites affected by urban modernization and spatial reorganization.

One of the early indicators of the spatial shift from Pera and Galata towards Şişli was the construction of the Saint Esprit Church in 1846. Following the Great Galata Fire and the construction of Saint Esprit, settlement expanded around the church, contributing to the formation of the present-day neighbourhoods of Tatavla and Feriköy. After the construction of the Taksim Barracks, a tree-lined road extending from Taksim to Pangaltı was opened in 1869, further strengthening the northward expansion of the city [6,7]. In this context, cemetery areas became crucial indicators of both population density and urban development. Even when the non-Muslim population living around these areas decreased, the surviving cemeteries and related buildings continued to preserve the material traces of Istanbul's multicultural past.

For this reason, non-Muslim cemeteries in Istanbul should be understood not merely as burial grounds, but as multicultural urban heritage landscapes that reveal the spatial politics of modernization, minority memory, and conservation governance. Their relocation, disappearance, survival, or continued use reflects broader transformations in urban planning, communal identity, property relations, and heritage conservation. This article examines the historical development and spatial transformation of non-Muslim cemeteries in Istanbul during the Ottoman and Republican periods, with a particular focus on the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery. By analysing its establishment, architectural character, multinational governance structure, memorial elements, and role in cultural memory, the study treats Feriköy Protestant Cemetery as an analytically selected, information-rich case exemplar for understanding cemetery heritage as a living component of Istanbul's multicultural urban memory.

2. Conceptual Framework: Cemeteries as Multicultural Urban Heritage Landscapes

Cemeteries are not passive burial grounds but layered cultural landscapes in which religious affiliation, minority identity, urban transformation, material memory, and heritage governance intersect. In multicultural cities, burial spaces operate as spatial records of communities that may have changed, diminished, relocated, or become less visible over time. Their gravestones, inscriptions, chapels, monuments, burial registers, vegetation, circulation patterns, and administrative structures together form a complex heritage system. Therefore, cemetery heritage should be understood not only through architectural or funerary elements, but also through the broader urban, social, and institutional relations that shape its continuity.

Contemporary heritage studies increasingly approach heritage not as an intrinsic and stable property of objects or places, but as a present-oriented process through which material remains, practices, memories, identities, and institutional claims are selected, negotiated, and made meaningful [8,9]. This perspective shifts attention from the preservation of isolated physical fabric to the social, cultural, and political relationships through which places acquire significance. It also recognises that heritage identification and conservation are not neutral activities, since decisions about what should be valued, protected, or interpreted are shaped by professional authority, planning systems, institutional priorities, and unequal power relations [9].

For minority burial landscapes, this critical perspective is particularly important because heritage significance is produced not only by surviving monuments, buildings,

and records, but also by communal memory, ritual practice, belonging, displacement, and the recognition—or misrecognition—of historically less visible groups [10,11]. Social and communal values are therefore neither fixed nor entirely contained within the physical site; they are continually reproduced through experience, remembrance, institutional practice, and relationships between communities and place [10,11]. At the same time, values-based approaches caution against treating heritage categories as universal, neutral, or mutually exclusive. Although value typologies can clarify and communicate significance, they may obscure context-specific meanings when applied as fixed classifications [12]. Accordingly, the six dimensions used in this article are understood as interrelated and context-sensitive analytical lenses rather than as a universal hierarchy of heritage values.

At the theoretical level, this framework also draws on critical heritage and memory studies. Smith conceptualises heritage as a cultural process through which values are selected, authorised, performed, and communicated, rather than as a self-evident quality inherent in material objects or places [13]. Nora's notion of *lieux de mémoire* is equally relevant to cemeteries because it explains how places, objects, rituals, and archives become focal points of collective memory when the continuity of lived memory is disrupted [14]. At the urban scale, UNESCO's Historic Urban Landscape approach extends heritage analysis beyond the boundaries of an individual site to include its wider setting, open spaces, natural features, social and cultural practices, economic processes, and intangible associations with diversity and identity [15]. Together, these perspectives support the interpretation of non-Muslim cemeteries as relational and contested components of Istanbul's urban landscape rather than as isolated collections of funerary monuments.

More specifically, cemetery scholarship defines cemeteries as bounded and ordered burial places whose physical organisation, ritual functions, ownership arrangements, sacred character, and relationship to community history generate multiple social and political meanings [16]. Recent research on urban cemeteries also emphasises that burial landscapes combine cultural, memorial, ecological, and sustainability values that cannot be managed independently [17]. Heritage-governance scholarship further identifies legitimacy and voice, strategic direction, performance, accountability, and fairness as relevant principles for the stewardship of cultural heritage institutions [18]. Digital heritage research similarly demonstrates that digitisation affects not only preservation but also knowledge production, interpretation, institutional authority, and access [19]. UNESCO's digital heritage principles additionally underline the need to maintain long-term accessibility while protecting sensitive and personal information [20]. Together, these perspectives strengthen the use of cemetery heritage, cultural landscape, heritage governance, digital documentation, and sustainable conservation as interconnected analytical dimensions.

More specifically, cemetery scholarship identifies cemeteries as demarcated and internally ordered burial places whose material organisation, ownership, ritual use, sacred character, and relationship to community history enable them to carry multiple social and political meanings [16]. Research on nineteenth-century garden cemeteries further interprets them as designed landscapes that mediate relationships among the dead, the bereaved, memory, social structure, public health, and urban form [21]. Recent scholarship on urban Asian cemeteries extends this understanding by demonstrating that burial grounds combine cultural, memorial, ecological, and sustainability values and that their conservation requires attention to the interdependence of natural and cultural heritage [17]. These cemetery-specific perspectives reinforce the interpretation of burial grounds in this review as living cultural landscapes rather than as collections of isolated monuments.

In the context of Istanbul, non-Muslim cemeteries are particularly significant because they document the long-term presence of different religious and ethnic communities within the Ottoman and Republican urban landscape. These cemeteries reflect the spatial

organization of minority communities, the transformation of burial practices, the relocation of older cemetery areas, and the changing relationship between urban modernization and cultural memory. Some cemetery sites have disappeared or been transformed into public spaces, while others have survived as active burial grounds, enclosed cultural landscapes, or fragments of transferred memory. In this respect, cemeteries function both as material archives and as urban memory spaces.

Building on this critical and values-based perspective, this article uses the concept of a “multicultural urban heritage landscape” to interpret non-Muslim cemeteries as spaces in which tangible and intangible heritage values overlap. Tangible values include grave-stones, chapels, monuments, walls, gates, burial records, and spatial layouts. Intangible values include ritual continuity, communal belonging, memory transfer, minority identity, and multi-actor governance. The Feriköy Protestant Cemetery is examined within this conceptual framework because it brings together several heritage dimensions. It contains memorial elements transferred from earlier burial grounds and has a multinational governance structure. It also preserves architectural and funerary heritage while continuing to operate as an active site of memory, documentation, and conservation.

Accordingly, Table 1 does not propose a new universal taxonomy of cemetery heritage. It operationalises concepts drawn from critical heritage studies, memory studies, values-based conservation, and the Historic Urban Landscape approach as context-sensitive lenses for interpreting cemetery landscapes [8–21]. The categories are therefore used to organise the review and establish relationships among material evidence, memory, minority identity, landscape, governance, and conservation rather than to rank heritage values.

Table 1. Conceptual framework for interpreting cemeteries as multicultural urban heritage landscapes.

Concept	The Corresponding Term in the Article
Cemetery heritage	Burial plots, gravestones, chapel, monuments, inscriptions, burial records, spatial organisation, and continuing funerary and commemorative use
Urban Memory	Memories transferred from Taksim/Grand Champs to Feriköy
Minority heritage	Protestant, Latin, Armenian, Levantine, and diplomatic communities
Cultural landscape	Cemetery ensemble, vegetation, circulation, monumental elements, ritual continuity, and relationship to the surrounding urban setting
Heritage governance	Consular committee, community donations, digital archive
Sustainable conservation	Documentation, maintenance, access, public awareness

These six categories form the analytical structure of the review. Sections 4 and 5 present the historical, spatial, architectural, documentary, and institutional evidence associated with each category. Section 6 returns to the same categories to interpret their conservation significance, tensions, and limitations, while Section 7 synthesises the conclusions supported by the evidence. The categories are therefore used consistently across the conceptual framework, case evidence, discussion, and conclusion rather than as descriptive labels confined to Table 1.

3. Review Method and Analytical Approach

This study adopts a qualitative and integrative review approach. It synthesises published scholarship, historical studies, institutional reports, archival references, municipal

data, cartographic material, and field-based architectural observations concerning non-Muslim cemeteries in Istanbul. The literature and documentary sources constitute the primary evidential basis of the review. Mapping, photographic documentation, and field observation are used to contextualise, compare, and clarify this published and documentary record rather than to generate a standalone experimental or quantitative dataset. Through this approach, the review connects the historical development of cemetery landscapes with debates on urban memory, minority heritage, cultural landscape, governance, documentation, and conservation. The methodological structure is organised into three interrelated stages (Figure 1).

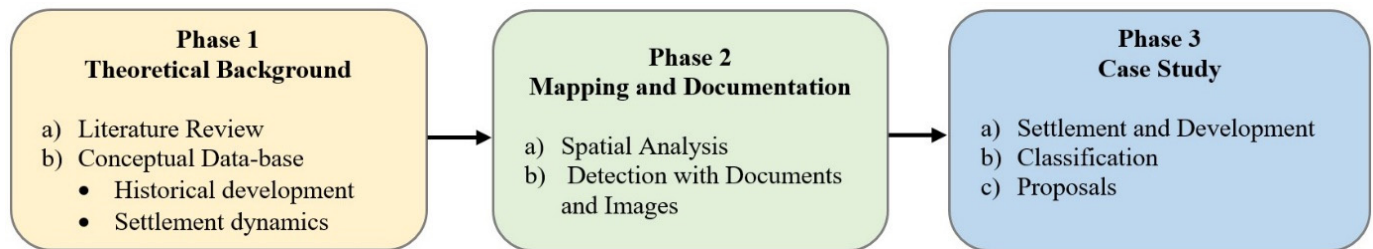


Figure 1. Methodological framework of the article.

The review corpus was assembled through an iterative and purposive search rather than through an exhaustive systematic-review protocol. The search covered peer-reviewed articles, scholarly books and chapters, postgraduate theses, institutional reports, municipal and heritage documents, archival references, and cartographic sources. English and Turkish search terms were combined around five thematic clusters: non-Muslim and minority cemeteries in Istanbul; the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery; cemetery heritage and cultural landscapes; urban memory and minority heritage; and heritage governance, digitisation, and sustainable conservation. Sources were retained when they provided: (1) direct historical or spatial evidence concerning non-Muslim cemeteries in Istanbul; (2) documented information on Feriköy's architectural elements, governance, burial records, documentation, or conservation history; or (3) an established theoretical or methodological framework relevant to the six analytical dimensions. Duplicate materials, sources without identifiable scholarly or institutional provenance, and materials lacking direct relevance to the scope of the review were excluded. The process was integrative and interpretive; it did not seek exhaustive coverage, meta-analysis, or PRISMA-style reporting.

In the first stage, an integrative literature review was conducted to establish the historical and conceptual basis of the study. The review focused on the transformation of non-Muslim cemeteries in Istanbul, the role of religious and communal structures in the Ottoman urban system, and the spatial dynamics that shaped the location, relocation, disappearance, or survival of cemetery sites. A conceptual source corpus was compiled from scholarly publications, historical studies, institutional reports, archival references, and previous research on non-Muslim communities, cemetery landscapes, and urban transformation. The literature review was organised around two main axes: (1) the historical development and transformation of non-Muslim cemeteries; and (2) the socio-political and spatial dynamics that influenced their location within the urban structure, particularly during the Ottoman and early modernisation periods.

In the second stage, mapping and documentation were undertaken to identify the spatial distribution and transformation patterns of non-Muslim cemeteries in Istanbul. Existing documents, historical references, visual materials, municipal data, maps, and field-based observations were used together to distinguish between surviving, lost, relocated, and transformed cemetery sites. The mapping process was not treated merely as a

cartographic exercise. It was used to interpret the relationships among cemetery landscapes, urban expansion, public-space production, and changing demographic patterns. In this way, spatial documentation supported the broader heritage-based reading of cemeteries as urban memory spaces.

In the third stage, the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery was selected as the principal case through purposive case selection. Six criteria derived from the conceptual framework guided this selection:

- demonstrable historical continuity with earlier burial grounds;
- continued use as an active cemetery;
- the presence of architectural, funerary, and material heritage elements;
- evidence of transferred memorial and documentary memory;
- a multi-actor governance structure;
- documented conservation and digitisation initiatives.

The broader historical and spatial survey identified surviving, relocated, transformed, and lost non-Muslim cemetery sites across Istanbul. Feriköy was selected because the six criteria are simultaneously observable and documentable within a single site, enabling the relationships among spatial displacement, minority memory, architectural heritage, governance, documentation, and sustainable conservation to be examined together. The case is therefore treated as an information-rich case exemplar rather than as a statistically representative sample of all non-Muslim cemeteries in Istanbul. Field observations and photographic documentation were used to analyse the cemetery's spatial layout, chapel, gravestones, monuments, circulation patterns, green character, and relationship with the surrounding urban fabric. In addition, the cemetery's governance arrangements, burial records, documentation initiatives, and conservation practices were evaluated in relation to the conceptual framework developed in the previous section. Publicly accessible sources and the materials available to the authors did not provide anonymised recent burial data disaggregated by nationality, citizenship, denomination, place of residence, or community affiliation. The study therefore distinguishes the historically documented composition of those buried at Feriköy from the demographic profile of its current users and does not attempt a quantitative reconstruction of the latter.

The analysis was structured according to six interrelated heritage dimensions: cemetery heritage, urban memory, minority heritage, cultural landscape, heritage governance, and sustainable conservation. These dimensions allowed the study to connect historical evidence, spatial documentation, architectural observation, and conservation-oriented interpretation.

For the purposes of this review, sustainable conservation is defined operationally as the long-term capacity to maintain six interdependent conditions: (1) the material care of graves, monuments, architectural elements, and boundary structures; (2) the continuity of burial, mourning, and commemorative functions; (3) documentary conservation, digitisation, and responsible access to burial records; (4) institutional and governance capacity for recurring maintenance and decision-making; (5) the management of vegetation and the cemetery's ecological and landscape character; and (6) interpretation and public access compatible with dignity, privacy, authenticity, and safety. These conditions are assessed qualitatively through documented evidence. The review does not calculate a numerical sustainability score or assume that all six conditions have been fully implemented at Feriköy.

The analytical framework was constructed through a thematic synthesis of the heritage scholarship reviewed in Section 2. Concepts recurring across the literature on cemetery heritage, urban memory, minority heritage, cultural landscapes, heritage governance, and sustainable conservation were consolidated into six interrelated dimensions. These dimensions were then operationalised through the forms of evidence presented in Table 1 and applied consistently to historical publications, maps, institutional records, documen-

tary sources, and field-based architectural observations. Heritage values were identified when they were supported by documented evidence from one or more of these source categories and, where possible, were examined across multiple forms of evidence. Sustainability was not assessed through a numerical index or ranking system. It was interpreted qualitatively in relation to continuity of use, maintenance, documentation, accessibility, governance, ecological care, and the capacity to balance conservation requirements with the cemetery's continuing funerary function. The framework therefore supports an analytical and interpretive review rather than a statistical evaluation or universally applicable heritage-ranking model.

The methodological aim was therefore not to claim statistical representativeness, but to use Feriköy as an analytically strategic case exemplar through which multiple dimensions of Istanbul's multicultural cemetery heritage can be examined within a single, historically continuous site. The manuscript is therefore positioned as an analytical review rather than as a systematic review, an experimental study, or a concise encyclopaedic entry: its principal contribution lies in synthesising dispersed historical and heritage scholarship, establishing a thematic framework, comparing cemetery trajectories, and critically discussing their conservation implications.

4. Historical Background: Non-Muslim Cemeteries in Istanbul

The historical development of non-Muslim cemeteries in Istanbul should be understood through the interaction of demographic change, socioeconomic restructuring, urban expansion, and institutional continuity. From the Ottoman period onwards, cemetery sites were not merely functional burial grounds; they also registered the changing spatial presence, social composition, economic position, and administrative recognition of different religious and foreign communities. Their establishment, expansion, relocation, decline, or continued use was therefore shaped both by urban-planning decisions and by changes in the communities that created and maintained them. The history of these cemeteries must therefore be read alongside the transformation of Galata, Pera, Taksim, Pangaltı, Şişli, Feriköy, and other neighbourhoods. In these districts, non-Muslim and foreign communities became visible through interconnected commercial, diplomatic, religious, educational, medical, residential, and funerary landscapes.

Until the fifteenth century, Pera functioned as a commercial district outside the historical centre, where non-Muslim communities were concentrated around the coastal axis shaped by port trade. The upper areas of Pera were used by the non-Muslim population as agricultural land and cemetery grounds [22]. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, the construction of the Galata Mevlevihane by Sultan Bayezid II contributed to the increasing presence of the Muslim population in the area. By the sixteenth century, this vitality attracted Western states, particularly France, and led to the establishment of embassies around Pera. The diplomatic and commercial activity generated by these embassies also encouraged the construction of Western-style buildings for embassy staff and other non-Muslim populations, a process that continued into the nineteenth century [23].

By the nineteenth century, Westernisation policies and the proclamation of the Tanzimat Edict in 1839 had intensified the presence of foreign communities and accelerated the transformation of Pera. From the 1840s onward, the district became associated with luxury shops, restaurants, hotels, and cultural activities, acquiring the character of a Western-oriented urban centre [8]. However, the growing demand for public open space also placed cemetery areas on the agenda of urban-transformation. The local population used nearby cemeteries for social and recreational activities, highlighting the shortage of planned public spaces in this part of the city [22,24]. At the same time, the military zone formed by the Topçu, Mecidiye, and Gümüşsuyu barracks limited the potential for public use in the

Taksim area. Consequently, non-Muslim cemetery lands in Beyoğlu and Galata came to be considered suitable sites for new public spaces, particularly in Taksim and Tepebaşı. Their relocation towards Şişli, then regarded as the urban periphery, became a central component of this transformation [23]. Cemetery relocation thus reflected not only the physical expansion and modernisation of the city, but also the changing size, social geography, economic position, and institutional needs of the communities that used and maintained these burial grounds.

The Grand Champs Cemetery represents one of the most significant examples of this process. Located on the site of present-day Taksim Gezi Park and the surrounding area, Grand Champs was one of Istanbul's oldest known cemetery landscapes used by Armenians, Latins, Catholics, Protestants, and Greeks. The cemetery had been in use since 1561 and served as a burial ground for non-Muslims who died during plague outbreaks. According to İnciciyan, in the eighteenth century the largest section of the Grand Champs Cemetery was the Armenian Cemetery, while other sections were used by Latins, Catholics, Protestants, and Greeks [6,25]. The Greek section of the cemetery is thought to have been located around today's Taksim area, where Aya Triada Greek Church and Zappeion Greek Girls' High School are situated. The northern part of the cemetery was reserved for Russians, Serbs, Bulgarians, and Montenegrins, while the southern section was used for Greek Orthodox burials [6,26,27].

Although the exact size of Grand Champs Cemetery remains uncertain, its historical extent was considerable. Alp notes that the area included the land later occupied by the Artillery Barracks and approximately 13,500 arşın, or around 47,000 m², from which bones were removed in 1864 [6]. Akın also emphasizes the large scale of the cemetery, estimating that it extended from the area of today's Atatürk Cultural Centre towards Dolmabahçe and Fındıklı and was more than twice the size of the walled Galata settlement [28]. As the cemetery was gradually expropriated and opened to urban development, its remaining sections were pushed towards Pangaltı. The area where Armenians were predominantly buried became the Pangaltı Armenian Cemetery, also known as Surp Agop Armenian Cemetery. According to Kömürcüyan, gravestones dating from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries were found in this cemetery, while no gravestones after 1865 were recorded, suggesting that burials shifted to the Şişli Armenian Cemetery after that date [6,29].

The removal of the Pangaltı Armenian Cemetery in the twentieth century further demonstrates how cemetery heritage became entangled with urban development and public land policies. The cemetery, which remained in existence until the 1930s in the area where the Divan Hotel stands today, was completely removed after it became municipal property in 1939. Approximately 4800 gravestones were transferred to the Şişli Armenian Cemetery. Several prominent graves were moved to church gardens. The grave of Patriarch Hagop of Julfa was transferred to the garden of the Beyoğlu Surp Yerortutyun Church. The grave of Hagop Gataghikos Chughayetsi was moved to the garden of the Üç Horan Church [6,30]. These transfers indicate that the disappearance of a cemetery did not necessarily erase its material memory; rather, fragments of memory were relocated, reassembled, and preserved in new communal settings.

Ueno's analysis of the Armenian cemetery in Beyoğlu further demonstrates that cemetery closure and relocation were not merely technical outcomes of urban expansion, but were shaped by negotiations between Ottoman authorities and Armenian communal institutions over cemetery closure, relocation, and the reorganisation of urban space [31].

The Feriköy Latin Catholic Cemetery and the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery emerged directly within this context of relocation and spatial reorganization. The Feriköy Latin Catholic Cemetery was an important nineteenth-century cemetery that continued to serve the Latin community. The cemetery, surrounded by a wall funded by the French army,

was initially used for the burial of French soldiers who died in hospitals in Pera. Its use was also connected to the transfer of gravestones and bones collected from the Grand Champs Cemetery between 1863 and 1864. In 1870, a memorial tomb was built with 178 gravestones collected from the Grand Champs Cemetery, and the collected bones were placed inside it [6,32]. The Feriköy Protestant Cemetery, established in the same period and separated from the Latin Catholic Cemetery by Abide-i Hürriyet Avenue, was founded in 1859 following the removal of the Grand Champs Cemetery. It became the principal burial ground for Protestants and constitutes the main case exemplar examined in this article.

Beyond Taksim, Pangaltı, and Feriköy, Istanbul contains a wider network of non-Muslim cemeteries that reflects different patterns of survival, relocation, fragmentation, and disappearance. Some cemeteries, such as the Şişli Greek Orthodox Cemetery, Şişli Armenian cemeteries, Balıklı Armenian and Greek cemeteries, Edirnekapı Armenian Cemetery, Kurtuluş Aya Lefter Cemetery, Kadıköy Latin Catholic Cemetery, and Haydarpaşa English Cemetery, have survived as active or historically significant cemetery landscapes. Others, including several Armenian, Greek, and Latin cemeteries in Beşiktaş, Ortaköy, Yeşilköy, and other districts, have been removed, reduced, or transformed as a result of urban expansion, road construction, municipal decisions, or changes in community presence [6]. This broader distribution shows that non-Muslim cemeteries should be understood as a citywide heritage network rather than isolated burial grounds.

Legal and administrative factors also shaped the location, expansion, and protection of non-Muslim cemeteries. Cemetery boundaries were demarcated under state supervision and in consultation with authorised representatives, including foundation trustees, sergeants, and prominent members of non-Muslim communities. When necessary, cemeteries were expanded through the allocation of additional land. If cemetery lands were located on state property, non-Muslim communities paid a tithe for their use; in some cases, a tithe was also paid to foundations when cemetery areas were allocated from foundation property [33]. Disputes concerning cemeteries were generally resolved by qadis. Encroachments on cemetery lands allocated to non-Muslims, including the construction of houses, were often adjudicated in favour of the affected communities [33]. These practices demonstrate that cemetery spaces were not informal or marginal areas but legally defined and administratively regulated components of the Ottoman urban order.

Communal differentiation and intercommunal disputes further affected burial practices and cemetery allocation. In the nineteenth century, the recognition of Catholics in 1830 and Protestants in 1850 as separate communities created new questions concerning burial rights, particularly among Armenian groups. Since many Catholic and Protestant Armenians had previously used Orthodox Armenian cemeteries, the emergence of separate communal status required new burial arrangements. Türkan identifies two main solutions in Istanbul: the burial of Catholic Armenians at the edge of Orthodox Armenian cemeteries, or the allocation of a separate cemetery shared with Protestants [34]. The dispute concerning the Armenian cemetery in Taksim became especially significant. After the Armenian patriarch requested the removal of the Taksim Cemetery in 1893, a commission was established to determine its legal status. The commission eventually concluded that three-quarters of the cemetery belonged to the Armenians and one-quarter to the Catholics. The issue later involved foreign diplomatic pressure, particularly from the French embassy, and was finally resolved in 1897 [34]. This case reveals that cemetery heritage in Istanbul was shaped not only by urban planning but also by religious affiliation, communal negotiation, property rights, and international diplomacy.

The demographic trajectory of Istanbul's Protestant and Levantine communities cannot be reconstructed as a single continuous numerical series because the categories used to identify these groups changed over time. Protestantism acquired formal communal

recognition within the Ottoman administrative system in 1850, whereas “Levantine” remained a more fluid designation encompassing locally established families of European origin or affiliation whose nationality, legal subjecthood, language, and religious identity varied [19,35–37]. Nevertheless, the available historical literature indicates a period of increased demographic and institutional visibility from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Protestant and Levantine residents became particularly associated with Galata, Pera, Pangaltı, Şişli, and Feriköy, where diplomatic missions, commercial networks, churches, schools, hospitals, residences, and burial grounds formed interconnected landscapes of communal presence [6,35–37]. The establishment of the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery should therefore be understood within this broader phase of institutional consolidation and northward residential expansion rather than as an isolated funerary development.

During the twentieth century, the demographic significance of these communities changed from concentrated communal presence towards smaller-scale and more dispersed forms of continuity. This development should also be interpreted in relation to the rapid transformation of Istanbul’s overall population. Republican-era demographic studies distinguish an initial period of reorganisation between 1923 and 1950, a phase of intensive internal migration and metropolitan growth between 1950 and 1980, and continued large-scale urban expansion after 1980 [38]. As Istanbul grew into a much larger and more heterogeneous metropolis, its long-established Protestant and Levantine communities formed an increasingly limited proportion of the city’s population, even though certain churches, cemeteries, diplomatic connections, family networks, and administrative institutions continued to operate. A precise present-day numerical comparison is not possible because contemporary official population statistics are residence-based and do not provide a historically continuous Istanbul-level series corresponding to either Protestant affiliation or Levantine identity [39]. Demographic continuity must therefore be assessed cautiously through institutional records, burial registers, active cemetery use, and surviving community organisations rather than through unsupported population estimates.

The relationship between economic transformation and burial patterns should be interpreted through changes in community presence, mobility, employment, and institutional continuity rather than as a simple one-to-one correlation. In the late Ottoman period, European trade, diplomatic representation, foreign enterprise, and transnational commercial networks supported the growth of resident Protestant, foreign, and Levantine communities and the development of the churches, schools, hospitals, residences, and burial grounds associated with them [6,37]. The collapse of the imperial order and the transition to the Republic substantially altered this institutional and economic environment. From the late Ottoman period onwards, economic-nationalist policies increasingly sought to reduce foreign economic influence, promote a Muslim/Turkish commercial class, and redefine the position of non-Muslim economic actors [40]. During the early Republican period, foreign and non-Muslim personnel in some formerly privileged companies were progressively replaced, while subsequent measures—including the 1942 Wealth Tax—contributed to the loss or liquidation of non-Muslim employment, property, and enterprises and, over the longer term, to further emigration [41–44]. These processes affected cemetery use indirectly by reducing or dispersing the communities from which burials originated and by weakening the continuity of locally concentrated family and commercial networks. Feriköy therefore gradually changed from a cemetery associated with expanding nineteenth-century diplomatic, commercial, and expatriate communities into an active burial and heritage site serving smaller and more spatially dispersed networks. However, because the available records do not provide a continuous annual series connecting specific economic events with changes in interment rates, this relationship is interpreted as a long-term historical transformation rather than as a directly measurable causal sequence.

According to recent municipal data, Istanbul contains 573 cemetery areas in total, of which 506 are Muslim cemeteries and 67 are non-Muslim or minority cemeteries. Of these, 306 cemeteries are located on the European side, including 45 minority cemeteries, while 267 are located on the Asian side, including 22 minority cemeteries. Together, these cemeteries cover approximately 1375 hectares [45,46] (p. 290). Figure 2 maps the non-Muslim cemeteries discussed in this review on Istanbul's European side and distinguishes between sites that survive today and those that no longer exist.

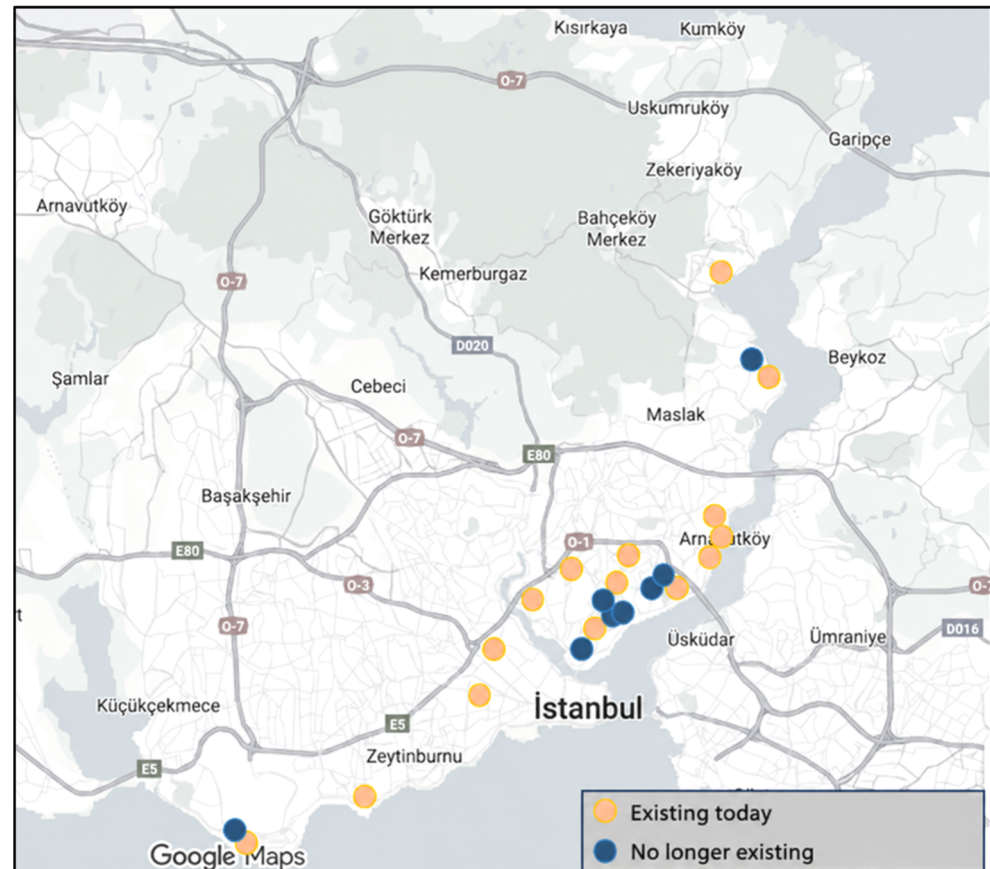


Figure 2. Existing and former non-Muslim cemeteries on Istanbul's European side. Source: authors, using the publicly accessible Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality map service.

In this historical context, non-Muslim cemeteries in Istanbul can be classified into four main categories: surviving and active cemeteries, relocated cemetery landscapes, transformed or partially erased cemetery sites, and lost cemeteries known primarily through archival or secondary sources. This classification allows cemetery heritage to be interpreted not only through the physical condition of individual sites, but also through the interaction of demographic change, socioeconomic restructuring, urban modernisation, minority memory, spatial displacement, institutional continuity, and conservation practice. The Feriköy Protestant Cemetery is particularly important within this framework because it embodies several of these processes simultaneously: it is a surviving and active cemetery, a site of transferred memory from earlier burial grounds, a multinational heritage landscape, and a case of ongoing documentation and conservation.

To clarify the comparative position of Feriköy, four cemetery landscapes discussed in the historical narrative were examined through a common set of dimensions: current condition and use, community profile, relationship to displacement or transferred memory, architectural and material heritage, governance structure, and documentation or conservation practices. The comparison is contrastive rather than exhaustive. It includes a lost and

relocated cemetery landscape, a parallel Catholic cemetery established through nineteenth-century relocation, a military–diplomatic cemetery associated with a particular foreign community, and the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery as the principal case exemplar (Table 2).

Table 2. Comparative positioning of selected non-Muslim cemetery landscapes in Istanbul.

Cemetery Landscape	Current Condition and Use	Historical and Community Profile	Principal Heritage, Governance, and Documentation Characteristics	Comparative Significance
Grand Champs and Pangaltı Armenian cemetery landscape	The former cemetery areas were removed, fragmented, or converted to other urban uses; gravestones, remains, and selected graves were transferred to Şişli cemeteries and church gardens.	A historically multi-community burial landscape associated particularly with Armenian, Greek, Latin, Catholic, and Protestant communities in and around Taksim and Pangaltı.	Demonstrates expropriation, urban transformation, physical loss, and the relocation of material memory; no longer functions as an intact cemetery landscape.	Represents the pattern of lost or transformed cemetery heritage and shows that material memory may continue through transferred fragments even after the original site disappears.
Feriköy Latin Catholic Cemetery	A surviving cemetery established during the nineteenth-century relocation of burial grounds from the Taksim–Grand Champs area; it remains an important Catholic burial landscape.	Associated with Latin Catholic and Levantine communities, as well as French military and diplomatic presence.	Contains transferred gravestones and human remains, a collective memorial containing material from Grand Champs, and a notable ensemble of nineteenth-century funerary monuments [32,47].	Represents relocation with continued communal use and provides the closest spatial and historical parallel to the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery.
Haydarpaşa British Cemetery	A surviving cemetery and memorial landscape established during the Crimean War; civilian British burials were admitted from 1867 onwards.	Associated initially with British military deaths and subsequently with British diplomatic representatives, civilians, and Levantine British families.	Characterised by its military and diplomatic origins, the Scutari Monument, Victorian cemetery planning, and nationally specific commemorative and funerary traditions [48,49].	Represents a military–diplomatic and nationally affiliated cemetery landscape, demonstrating another form of transnational cemetery heritage in Istanbul.
Feriköy Protestant Cemetery	A surviving and active burial ground established in the nineteenth century and continuing under multinational administration.	Associated with Protestant, foreign, diplomatic, Levantine, and Ottoman Armenian Protestant communities.	Combines transferred memorial elements, a Neo-Gothic chapel, monumental graves, burial registers, multinational governance, active use, digitisation, research collaboration, and continuing conservation initiatives [50–54].	Combines several patterns visible separately in the comparison cases: relocation, active use, transferred memory, transnational community presence, multi-actor governance, and documentary conservation. It is therefore treated as an information-rich case exemplar, not as a statistically representative sample.

The comparison shows that no single cemetery can represent the full diversity of Istanbul’s non-Muslim burial landscapes. Grand Champs and Pangaltı primarily demonstrate disappearance, fragmentation, and transferred memory; the Feriköy Latin Catholic Cemetery demonstrates relocation combined with continued denominational use and

funerary-monumental continuity; and the Haydarpaşa British Cemetery represents a military-diplomatic and nationally affiliated commemorative landscape. Feriköy Protestant Cemetery shares individual characteristics with each of these cases but is distinguished by their convergence within a single active site. It simultaneously preserves transferred material memory, architectural and funerary heritage, a multinational governance structure, documentary records, digitisation initiatives, and continuing burial and conservation functions. Its analytical value therefore derives from the concentration and interaction of these dimensions rather than from a claim that it is typical of every non-Muslim cemetery in Istanbul.

5. The Feriköy Protestant Cemetery as a Case Exemplar

As demonstrated by the comparative positioning presented in Table 2, the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery is examined here as an analytically selected and information-rich case exemplar for interpreting non-Muslim cemeteries in Istanbul as multicultural urban heritage landscapes. Located today within one of the city's densely built central districts, the cemetery brings together several heritage dimensions: transferred memory from earlier burial grounds, multinational administration, architectural and funerary heritage, documentary value, and ongoing conservation initiatives. Its significance derives not only from its continued use as a burial ground, but also from its role as a material archive of Istanbul's nineteenth-century cosmopolitan structure, diplomatic networks, minority communities, and urban modernization processes.

5.1. *Spatial Displacement and the Production of Modern Public Space*

The historical roots of the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery are directly connected to the relocation of older non-Muslim burial grounds that once extended across the area between present-day Taksim Square and Dolmabahçe Palace. The so-called "French Cemetery" had been used for burials since the sixteenth century; however, by the second half of the nineteenth century, cemetery areas in and around Taksim increasingly became part of broader debates on urban development, public space, and modernization. The northward expansion of the city from Galata and Pera towards Taksim, Pangaltı, Şişli, and Feriköy transformed the spatial position of non-Muslim cemeteries and gradually shifted burial grounds from central urban areas to what was then considered the urban periphery.

In this context, the relocation of cemetery areas was not simply a functional response to the need for new burial grounds. It was also part of the production of modern public space in Istanbul. The conversion of former cemetery lands into urban spaces such as Taksim and Tepebaşı reveals how cemetery landscapes became embedded in the spatial politics of modernization. Feriköy emerged within this transformation as one of the new burial landscapes that preserved fragments of memory transferred from earlier cemetery sites, while also reflecting the changing geography of Istanbul's non-Muslim communities.

5.2. *Feriköy as a Continuity Site of Transferred Memory*

In 1853, land in Feriköy was allocated for the relocation of Catholic and Protestant graves from cemetery sites in Taksim. As the first allocated area soon became insufficient, the site was reorganized: in 1857, one area was allocated to Catholics, while a second area, still in use today, was designated for Protestants. The Protestant cemetery, separated from the Latin Catholic Cemetery by Abide-i Hürriyet Avenue, is bounded by Ergenekon Avenue, Rumeli Avenue, Bilgiç Street, and a surrounding wall. A section of the cemetery was also allocated to Ottoman subjects of the Protestant Armenian faith. The sections owned by foreign states cover approximately 3.1 acres; together with the area allocated

to Ottoman Armenian Protestants, the cemetery extends over approximately 3.5 acres (Figure 3).

The establishment of the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery was closely linked to diplomatic negotiations. In 1857, the King of Prussia petitioned Sultan Abdülmecid I for a Protestant burial ground. The decree issued by the Sultan emphasized that the burial ground previously allocated to Catholics was insufficient and that members of both churches should be treated equally through the allocation of a new site for Protestants [6,55]. Following the removal of the Grand Champs Cemetery, Latin Protestants buried in the Frankish section near the Beyoğlu Barracks were first transferred to an area near the Mekteb-i Harbiye in Pangaltı and, after 1859, to Feriköy. In this sense, the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery functions as a continuity site of transferred memory: it preserves material and symbolic links to earlier burial landscapes that were displaced by urban transformation.



Figure 3. Feriköy Protestant Cemetery on the 8th Pervititch map dated January 1925. Adapted from [56].

5.3. Multinational Governance and Heritage Management

The Feriköy Protestant Cemetery is also significant because of its multinational governance structure. On 29 April 1857, the land in Feriköy was transferred to the ambassadors of seven political entities: Great Britain, Prussia, the United States of America, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, and the Federal Cities of the Hanseatic League. Representatives of these entities negotiated and drafted regulations for the cemetery's management, subject to approval by their respective governments. The regulations defined

institutional responsibilities, staff duties, and cost-sharing arrangements [50]. The seven entities agreed to administer the cemetery on an annual rotating basis, and the Kingdom of Prussia, which had requested the land, assumed responsibility for the first year [51].

The Feriköy Protestant Cemetery and its chapel were opened in February 1859, and from 1860 onwards, the transfer of coffins and gravestones from Taksim accelerated. Today, the cemetery continues to be managed by a committee formed by representatives of the consulates of Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Sweden, Hungary, Switzerland, and the United States [50]. The continuity of British, American, and Dutch representation from the Ottoman period to the present is particularly noteworthy. The former Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian kingdoms are now represented by Sweden, while Prussia and the Federal Cities of the Hanseatic League are represented by Germany. Hungary and Switzerland later became represented on the governing committee because of their Protestant communities. The maintenance of the cemetery is supported through consular and community donations, as well as burial revenues.

Although the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery continues to function as an active burial ground, the current demographic composition of its users cannot be established from publicly accessible evidence. The approximately 5000 interments recorded since the cemetery's establishment represent its cumulative historical burial population rather than the profile of those currently using its services. Available institutional sources document the cemetery's historically international and predominantly Protestant character, but they do not provide a contemporary breakdown of burials by nationality, citizenship, denomination, place of residence, or community affiliation [53,54]. The manuscript therefore does not assign a precise demographic profile to present-day users. Such an assessment would require access to anonymised recent burial registers and administrative records held by the Diplomatic Governing Board.

This governance model makes Feriköy more than a cemetery belonging to a single community. It represents a multi-actor heritage governance structure in which diplomatic, communal, religious, and conservation-related responsibilities overlap. Its operational management includes maintenance, burial services, documentation, visitor access, and the allocation of financial resources.

5.4. Architectural and Material Heritage Values

The Feriköy Protestant Cemetery preserves a rich ensemble of architectural, funerary, and documentary heritage elements. The memorial elements transferred from the former Frankish Cemetery establish a physical and symbolic link between the earlier burial grounds of Taksim and the present cemetery landscape in Feriköy. To date, approximately 5000 burials have taken place in the cemetery, and nearly 1000 monumental graves have been constructed (Figure 4). The site is therefore not only an active burial ground, but also a cultural heritage landscape that records multiple generations of foreign, Levantine, Protestant, diplomatic, and local communities.

The cemetery contains the graves of people from diverse national and social backgrounds. Alongside families who lived in Istanbul for generations, it includes the graves of individuals who died while visiting the city or serving aboard ships. This diversity reflects the transnational character of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Istanbul. The "Wall of Monuments" near the entrance is particularly significant. Composed of stone monuments, tomb covers, sarcophagus lids, and elements decorated with coats of arms, this wall contains artefacts dating from the sixteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth century. These pieces were brought from the Taksim cemetery area and no longer correspond to specific burials, yet they preserve the memory of the earlier cemetery landscape within the present site.



Figure 4. Photographs of the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery. (a) gravestones from the site (the personal information shown in the image has been blurred); (b) some gravestones surrounded by fences.

The “Bone House” near the apse of the chapel is another important material element. It was used for the collection of bones after the expiration of temporary burial rights, while those who paid for permanent burial plots were commemorated through more elaborate and often monumental graves. Collective monuments, such as the Dutch Monument and the Robert College Monument, further demonstrate the documentary and memorial character of the cemetery. The Dutch Monument, located in the section reserved for the Netherlands, commemorates the remains transferred to the cemetery in 1864. The Robert College Monument, placed on the west wall in 2003, records the names of teachers and administrative staff who appear in the burial registers but do not have individual gravestones.

The cemetery also contains the graves of individuals who contributed to Istanbul’s visual, intellectual, educational, and documentary history. Examples include Swedish photographer Per Wilhelm Berggren, postcard publisher Max Fruchtermann, and German academic and diplomat Andreas David Mordtmann. Other figures include missionary and editor John Kingsley Birge, Swiss writer Ernest Mamboury, and Irish-American academic and writer John Freely. These figures show that Feriköy Protestant Cemetery is not only a funerary landscape but also a memory archive of Istanbul’s cultural production, documentation, education, and international networks.

The chapel within the cemetery grounds is one of the most important architectural components of the site. It was registered as a cultural asset requiring protection by Decision No. 368 of the Istanbul No. 2 Regional Council for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets, dated 9 June 2006. The decision did not assign a protection group. As a cemetery chapel, the building is modest in scale and simple in decoration (Figure 5). It is a single-storey masonry structure with a cruciform plan and Neo-Gothic architectural character. It shares certain stylistic features with the Crimean Memorial Church in Beyoğlu, which was built in 1858–1859 by architect George Edmund Street, and with All Saints Moda, also known as Istanbul Presbyterian Church, which was built in Moda in 1878.

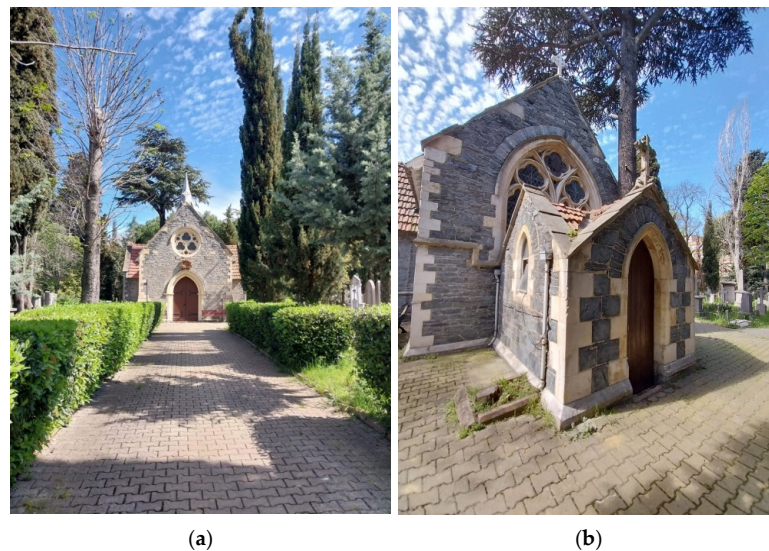


Figure 5. Photographs of the chapel. (a) the view from main entrance; (b) the view from backside of the church.

The main entrance is framed by a pointed limestone arch, and a rose-window motif appears on the entrance façade. Pointed arches also define the windows and the openings leading to the transept arms. Limestone tracery forms geometric motifs within the windows, while the stained-glass window in the apse is the building's most elaborate decorative feature. The chapel is covered by a tiled timber pitched roof, with crosses above the entrance and at the apse end. A lower annex attached to the apse has a pointed-arched entrance and windows with limestone detailing.

The interior of the chapel is equally restrained in character (Figure 6). The floor is covered with brick-coloured ceramic tiles. The altar is raised within the apse, and the surrounding space is arranged to accommodate a coffin during funeral ceremonies. The wooden benches in the nave and transepts provide seating for approximately 60–80 people. The chapel thus contributes to the architectural value of the cemetery while also supporting its continuing ritual function.



Figure 6. Photographs of the chapel's interior. (a) the view from inside of the church; (b) the view of the gabled roof from inside.

5.5. Documentation, Digitisation, and Sustainable Conservation

The recent conservation history of the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery shows how documentation, maintenance, digitisation, and public access have become central components of sustainable cemetery heritage. Between 1997 and 2005, the American Committee led several conservation initiatives related to the graves and maintenance of the chapel, funded by the bequest of Istanbul-born Emma “Charlie” Ehrmann (1921–1995) [52]. As part of this process, aerial photographs were used to prepare plans of the cemetery and its grave structures. Additional phases included the construction of a visitor centre, the preparation of an exhibition, and the publication of a book. The chapel and visitor-related spaces have also occasionally been used for exhibitions and receptions after funeral ceremonies.

In 2012, the cemetery management board requested support from the German Archaeological Institute Istanbul and the Orient-Institut Istanbul to make the grave and family records of those buried in Feriköy accessible. Digital images of two official burial registers, covering the periods 1858–1893 and 1894–1991, were produced and made available for use by relatives and researchers. Between 2013 and 2016, Richard Wittmann, Deputy Director of the Orient-Institut Istanbul, and a team of young academics transcribed these records and compiled them into a database in three languages: French, English, and German [52]. Today, the research team, composed primarily of academics, continues to support maintenance, restoration, structural strengthening, documentation, and other conservation activities at the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery.

This documentary programme is consistent with the ICOMOS Principles for the Recording of Monuments, Groups of Buildings and Sites, which identify recording as a fundamental means of understanding, defining, and recognising heritage values and emphasise shared responsibility for the creation, management, and dissemination of records [57].

From a digital heritage perspective, the Feriköy database should therefore be understood not simply as a technical reproduction of analogue burial registers, but as a managed knowledge resource whose long-term preservation, interpretive authority, accessibility, and privacy conditions require continuing institutional responsibility [19,20].

On the basis of the available sources, the documented conservation practices at the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery include the maintenance of graves and the chapel, aerial and plan-based documentation, the creation of visitor and exhibition facilities, the digitisation and transcription of burial registers, the development of a multilingual database, and continuing academic support for maintenance, reinforcement, documentation, and conservation-related work [52]. These initiatives provide evidence for several components of sustainable conservation, particularly material care, documentary conservation, institutional cooperation, and controlled public access. However, the available evidence does not demonstrate that all operational dimensions of sustainable conservation are implemented comprehensively, monitored through formal indicators, or secured through a published long-term management plan. Feriköy should therefore be understood as a site containing documented conservation practices and developing institutional capacities, rather than as a fully evaluated or universally transferable model of sustainable cemetery conservation.

The heritage-value categories and conservation implications summarised in Table 3 derive from the critical, values-based, landscape, documentation, interpretation, and governance frameworks discussed in Sections 2 and 6 [8–15,57–59]. The table translates these established frameworks into site-specific evidence from the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery. Its categories are used as interpretive and organisational tools rather than as a universal hierarchy, numerical index, or heritage-scoring system.

Table 3. Heritage values and conservation implications of the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery.

Heritage Dimension	Documented Evidence and Practices at Feriköy	Proposed Future Conservation Implication
Historical value	Allocation in 1857; opening in 1859; transferred gravestones and remains from Grand Champs/Taksim	The site should be conserved in relation to nineteenth-century modernization and cemetery relocation history
Multicultural value	British, Prussian/German, American, Dutch, Swedish, Swiss, Hungarian, Armenian Protestant and Levantine connections	Multi-actor heritage governance should be maintained and made visible
Architectural value	Neo-Gothic chapel, monumental graves, Wall of Monuments, collective burial monuments	Conservation should include both the chapel and funerary monuments
Documentary value	Burial registers, digitised records, trilingual database	Digital heritage management and researcher access should be strengthened
Urban ecological value	Green character within a dense urban district	The cemetery should be considered part of urban green heritage and open-space policy
Memory value	Transferred gravestones, bones, collective monuments, records of communities and individuals	Interpretation should highlight spatial displacement and the continuity of multicultural memory

The second column reports evidence and practices documented in the sources, institutional records, and field observations examined in this review. The third column presents conservation implications derived from the analytical framework; these implications should not be interpreted as measures already implemented, formally approved, or fully funded at the cemetery.

5.6. Analytical Traceability from Framework to Conclusions

To make the relationship among the conceptual framework, case evidence, discussion, and conclusions explicit, Table 4 traces each analytical category across the review. The matrix does not introduce a new classification or scoring system. It identifies the principal evidence associated with each category, the analytical issue developed in the Discussion, and the bounded conclusion supported by that evidence.

Table 4. Analytical traceability from conceptual categories to case evidence, discussion, and conclusions.

Conceptual Category	Principal Case Evidence Presented in Sections 4 and 5	Analytical Focus Revisited in Section 6	Bounded Conclusion in Section 7
Cemetery heritage	Chapel; gravestones; burial plots; collective monuments; Wall of Monuments; Bone House; inscriptions; continuing burial and commemorative use	Integrated care of material fabric, spatial relations, inscriptions, safety, authenticity, and continuing funerary function	Feriköy is both an active burial ground and a material–funerary heritage ensemble; conservation cannot be limited to isolated monuments
Urban memory	Relocation from Grand Champs and Taksim; transferred gravestones, bones, memorial elements, and documentary records	Displacement, partial loss, transfer, reassembly, and the continuing legibility of earlier cemetery landscapes	Urban memory persists through transferred material and documentary traces, although original spatial continuity has been disrupted

Table 4. *Cont.*

Conceptual Category	Principal Case Evidence Presented in Sections 4 and 5	Analytical Focus Revisited in Section 6	Bounded Conclusion in Section 7
Minority heritage	Protestant, Levantine, foreign, Armenian Protestant, diplomatic, and locally rooted associations; burial records and individual histories	Visibility, recognition, changing community presence, and the risk of reducing the site to a collection of foreign graves	Feriköy records plural and changing minority presences and should be interpreted through communal histories rather than nationality alone
Cultural landscape	Active burial use; chapel; circulation system; vegetation; enclosure; green character; relationship with the surrounding urban fabric	Balance among ritual use, mourning, access, vegetation, ecological value, safety, and material conservation	The site functions as a living cultural landscape in which funerary, architectural, ecological, and urban values are interdependent
Heritage governance	Multinational governing committee; consular representation; community support; burial revenues; institutional and academic collaboration	Shared responsibility, coordination, funding, decision-making, intervention standards, visitor management, and stakeholder negotiation	Governance continuity is a significant heritage capacity, but it requires continuing negotiation and should not be treated as conflict-free
Sustainable conservation	Grave and chapel maintenance; aerial and plan-based documentation; digitised burial registers; multilingual database; visitor and exhibition facilities; continuing academic support	Difference between documented practices and proposed implications; privacy, authenticity, monitoring, long-term planning, and institutional capacity	Feriköy demonstrates partial and developing conservation capacities, not a fully evaluated or universally transferable sustainability model

Note: The table traces the analytical use of the six categories across the manuscript. It does not imply that all categories are equally documented or that the listed conservation implications have already been implemented or formally approved.

6. Discussion: Heritage Values and Conservation Challenges

The following discussion revisits the six analytical dimensions established in the conceptual framework—cemetery heritage, urban memory, minority heritage, cultural landscape, heritage governance, and sustainable conservation—through the historical, material, documentary, spatial, and institutional evidence presented in Sections 4 and 5. These dimensions are not treated as independent or mutually exclusive categories. Instead, the discussion examines how they intersect at Feriköy through transferred memorial elements, continuing funerary use, minority and diplomatic associations, architectural and ecological characteristics, documentary records, and multi-actor governance. The resulting interpretations are subsequently synthesised and bounded in the Conclusion.

This study demonstrates that non-Muslim cemeteries in Istanbul should be interpreted not only as religious or funerary spaces, but also as multicultural urban heritage landscapes shaped by spatial displacement, minority memory, legal-administrative structures, and conservation practices. The historical development of these cemeteries shows that burial grounds were repeatedly reshaped by processes of urban change. From the nineteenth century onward, in particular, Westernisation, the northward expansion of the city, and the creation of new public spaces transformed the location and visibility of many non-Muslim cemeteries. In several cases, cemetery sites in central districts were relocated, fragmented, or converted to public spaces and other urban uses, while their material traces were partly erased or transferred elsewhere [6,22,23].

The Feriköy Protestant Cemetery is significant because it preserves several layers of this transformation within a single site. It is at once an active burial ground, a repository of

transferred memorial elements from earlier cemetery landscapes, a site of multinational governance, and a cultural landscape containing architectural, funerary, documentary, and ecological values. The gravestones, chapel, Wall of Monuments, collective memorials, burial registers, and digitised records together form a multi-layered archive of Istanbul's Protestant, Levantine, diplomatic, and wider non-Muslim presence. In this respect, the cemetery functions not only as a place of commemoration but also as a spatial document of Istanbul's multicultural history.

The case also shows that cemetery heritage cannot be reduced to the conservation of individual monuments or buildings. Protecting the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery requires an integrated approach. The chapel, burial plots, gravestones, transferred fragments, archival records, circulation system, vegetation, boundary walls, and governance arrangements must be treated as interdependent components of the same heritage landscape. Its multinational governance model, historically rooted in the involvement of several consular authorities, offers a distinctive example of shared heritage responsibility [50,51]. This governance structure has supported continuous maintenance, documentation, and institutional care; however, it also underscores the need for long-term coordination among diplomatic actors, local authorities, researchers, conservation experts, and the wider public.

From a heritage-governance perspective, the significance of this arrangement lies not only in institutional continuity but also in the continuing negotiation of legitimacy and voice, strategic direction, performance, accountability, and fairness among the participating actors [18].

The conservation challenges of non-Muslim cemeteries in Istanbul can be grouped under four main issues. The first is material conservation, including the maintenance of gravestones, monuments, walls, inscriptions, chapels, and other architectural elements exposed to environmental decay, vandalism, neglect, or urban pressure. The second is documentary conservation, which concerns the recording, digitisation, translation, long-term safeguarding, and accessibility of burial records and archival materials. The work carried out on the Feriköy burial registers between 2012 and 2016 demonstrates the importance of digital documentation for both family history and academic research [52]. The third issue is urban conservation, since cemeteries located within dense urban districts are often treated as residual spaces rather than as heritage landscapes. The fourth issue is public interpretation, which involves making the multicultural and historical significance of these cemeteries visible without compromising their dignity, sacredness, or continuing funerary function.

These four challenges are not independent technical categories; within an active burial ground, they generate practical and ethical trade-offs. At Feriköy, the same heritage landscape supports burial and mourning, historical research, guided or individual visits, exhibitions, and occasional receptions held after funeral ceremonies [52]. Public interpretation can increase awareness of the cemetery's multicultural significance, yet visitor access, photography, explanatory signage, and event use must not disrupt funerary rituals, private mourning, or the contemplative character of the site. In accordance with the ICOMOS *Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites*, interpretation at Feriköy should facilitate access and understanding while remaining grounded in documented sources, respecting the site's setting and authenticity, and involving associated communities and relevant stakeholders [58]. The objective should therefore not be unrestricted public access, but carefully managed access differentiated according to the sacred, commemorative, research, and educational functions of particular spaces.

Documentary conservation presents a related tension between access and privacy. The digitisation and transcription of the Feriköy burial registers have increased their value for family history and academic research [52]. However, the ethical conditions governing

access to historical records are not necessarily identical to those applicable to recent burials or information connected to living relatives. Digital heritage management should therefore distinguish between records suitable for open research access and information requiring temporal, personal, or administrative restrictions. In this context, accessibility should be treated as a graduated responsibility rather than as the automatic publication of all available data.

Material and landscape conservation generate a further set of trade-offs. Cleaning, resetting, consolidating, or replacing deteriorated gravestones may improve safety and legibility, but overly intensive intervention can remove weathering, tool marks, inscriptions, and other material evidence that contributes to authenticity. Similarly, vegetation supports the cemetery's green, contemplative, and ecological character, while roots, moisture retention, and unmanaged growth may damage graves, boundary walls, circulation routes, and the chapel. Although the Florence Charter was formulated for historic gardens rather than cemeteries, its recognition of designed vegetal heritage as a living, perishable, and renewable composition offers a relevant comparative principle for the management of Feriköy's landscape [59]. Recent research on urban Asian cemeteries similarly demonstrates that cultural and ecological values are entangled and that sustainable conservation requires their joint rather than separate consideration [17].

Conservation decisions must therefore balance ecological continuity, material authenticity, visitor and user safety, and the requirements of ongoing burial activity. This balance is also institutional. Feriköy's multinational governance structure provides institutional continuity and distributes responsibility among several actors. However, decisions concerning funding, intervention standards, digital access, visitor management, and long-term maintenance require sustained coordination. This coordination should involve consular representatives, cemetery staff, researchers, conservation specialists, local authorities, active users, and bereaved families [50,51]. It demonstrates that surviving cemeteries should not be approached as isolated remnants of the past, but as living memory spaces that continue to connect urban history, community identity, architectural heritage, archival knowledge, and contemporary conservation governance. The challenge is therefore not only to preserve physical remains, but also to sustain the cultural meanings, institutional responsibilities, and public awareness that allow such sites to remain legible within the changing urban landscape. Taken together, the evidence shows that cemetery heritage, urban memory, minority heritage, cultural landscape, heritage governance, and sustainable conservation operate at Feriköy as interdependent dimensions whose continuity depends on coordinated material, documentary, ecological, institutional, and interpretive care.

7. Conclusions

This article has examined non-Muslim cemeteries in Istanbul as multicultural urban heritage landscapes, focusing on the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery as an analytically selected and information-rich case exemplar. The study has shown that these cemeteries are not merely burial grounds, but layered heritage sites where religious affiliation, minority identity, urban transformation, material memory, and conservation governance intersect. Their historical trajectories reveal broader processes of relocation, disappearance, survival, and reinterpretation within the changing urban structure of Istanbul.

The Feriköy Protestant Cemetery is particularly important because it brings together several dimensions of cemetery heritage. Its establishment is linked to the relocation of earlier burial grounds from Taksim and Grand Champs. Its multinational governance structure demonstrates institutional continuity and shared responsibility. The chapel, gravestones, collective monuments, and transferred memorial elements embody architectural and material heritage values. The burial registers and digitisation initiatives add an important

dimension of documentary conservation. Together, these characteristics make Feriköy both an active cemetery and a living archive of Istanbul's multicultural urban memory.

The evidence reviewed in this study indicates that conservation at the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery cannot be limited to the protection of individual monuments. For this site, an integrated approach is required—one that connects architectural conservation, grave and inscription documentation, archival digitisation, landscape maintenance, carefully managed public interpretation, and multi-actor governance. These requirements derive from the cemetery's documented material, funerary, documentary, ecological, and institutional characteristics and should not be interpreted as a universally applicable conservation formula.

The Feriköy example illustrates the value of documenting, mapping, maintaining, and interpreting surviving non-Muslim cemeteries as components of Istanbul's multicultural heritage. The comparative evidence examined in this review also supports the recording of lost, relocated, and transformed cemetery sites so that their contribution to the spatial and cultural history of the city remains visible. These observations are presented as case-based and evidence-bounded implications rather than as a universally applicable policy model.

Accordingly, the conclusions are limited to the scholarship, documentary evidence, field observations, and comparative cemetery patterns examined in this review; they are not presented as causal claims, a universal classification system, or a conservation model applicable to all cemetery landscapes.

In conclusion, the evidence reviewed here shows that the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery operates simultaneously as an active burial ground, a cultural landscape, a documentary archive, a multi-actor governance setting, and a space of memory. For this site, conservation therefore requires coordinated material, documentary, ecological, institutional, and interpretive care. Any application of these observations to other cemetery landscapes would require separate and context-specific assessment.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

IBB Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi)
BOA Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi)

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