

Platform of Anatolian Religions and Beliefs Platform / Those who are backing our cultural heritage Vanguards of Our Cultural Heritage / Part 16

"Kardes pPractice and Memory Tours" with Narod Avci and Rudi Sayat Pulatyan

TOPICS: Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage, Details and Scope of Kardes Project, Expansion of Kardes to other cCities, Future Plans and Goals

Nükhet Everi: Today we are with Narod Avcı and Rudi Sayat Pulatyan from the Hrant Dink Foundation infor our interviews for the Anatolian Religions and Beliefs Platform interviews. Firstly, could you introduce yourselves to us?

Rudi Sayat Pulatyan: I work with Narod as the coordinator of the Kardes application at the Hrant Dink Foundation. We also have a team mate called Atom Shashkal. After my bachelor's degree in history, I came to Istanbul and started my master's degree in cultural studies and research. At that time, Narod called me one day and told me that there was a position at the foundation. This is how I got acquainted with the foundation and together we came up with the Kardes project.

Narod Avcı: I did my bachelor's degree in Sociology and New Media, then I started my master's degree in History. During my master's degree, I started working at the fHrant Dink Foundation as a Cultural Heritage Coordinator. I have been in this position for three and a half 3 ½ years. Together with Rudy, we tried to develop the Kardes project.

Nükhet Everi: You download the Kardes application on your phone and run after follow cultural heritage on the streets of Istanbul. Can you elaborate on this project? Why did you decide on such a project?

Narod Avcı: The Foundation has been carrying out cultural heritage projects for years. They have prepared a map of Turkey'sTürkiye's cultural heritage. The Kardes project emerged in order to use this archive more widely. We wanted to discover the unique story of each street in Istanbul.

Rudi Sayat Pulatyan: We follow street stories. We have stops like Mektep Sokak in Moda. We reveal the stories of these streets. We are planning to expand this project outside Istanbul. We aim to carry out similar works in cities such as Izmir or Ankara. We have concentrated on Istanbul, but we plan to carry expand this work to different cities in Anatolia in the future. For example, cultural heritage surveys were conducted in Kayseri, Adana, and Sivas and these studies were published in a book. We plan to organise memory tours in these cities as well.

Narod Avcı: We want to develop this project further. Every street, every building has a story. For example, there could even be a tour even inside the Sirkeci Station. Our additions about Istanbul's cultural heritage will continue. There are two tours in Kınalıada and there may be more.

Nükhet Everi: Have you done any work on the vocalisation of this application?

Rudi Sayat Pulatyan: Our content was voluntarily vocalised by artists. Especially tThe Beyoğlu Theatre Tour with Tilbe Saran's voice in particular adds a different dimension to the content. In theis Covid-19 pandemic period, people are were having a different experience by listening to these stories at home.

Nükhet Everi: Such projects are very important to keep our cultural heritage alive. What are your future plans?

Narod Avcı: In the short term, we plan to expand to other cities. In the long term, we plan to prepare memory tours in different cities of Anatolia. In this way, we can bring our cultural heritage to a wider audience. Cultural heritage surveys were conducted in Kayseri, Adana, and Sivas and these studies

were published in a book. We plan to prepare memory tours in these cities as well. During these studies, we also contacted and came into contact with local people. We also included their stories in our projects.

Rudi Sayat Pulatyan: While carrying out these projects, we also met with local guides and tour companies in the region. We shaped our tours by taking their suggestions into consideration. Each tour consists of approximately 10-12 stops and the walking distance is between 3-4 minutes. In total, the tours take 1.5-2 hours.

Nükhet Everi: What were the challenges you faced while realising these projects?

Narod Avcı: One of the biggest challenges was to reveal the story of each street and building accurately and in detail. For this, we conducted literature reviews and interviewed local people. We collected many interesting stories and information, especially during the fieldwork.

Rudi Sayat Pulatyan: Another challenge was to physically experience the tours on foot and determine the appropriate routes. In a hilly city like Istanbul, it can sometimes be difficult to determine routes that everyone can walk comfortably. However, we completed our tours by overcoming these difficulties.