

The City Walls of Kostantiniyye/Istanbul in the Sixteenth Century: Collapses, Repairs, and Functions

The main task of the city walls* of Constantinople was, naturally, to protect the city against military offensives¹. However, some sections gained – either soon after their construction or later, from the early 5th century onwards – additional functions: several segments of the wards of the Theodosian Land Walls were used, for example, as graveyards² or for vegetable gardens (in peace times) (fig. 1)³, while certain towers served as depots⁴. The towers with a side gate to the ward were surely more appropriate for this kind of usages (fig. 2). In at least one case, a gateway-tower was decorated with posterior religious paintings (fig. 3)⁵, and a few later towers or edifices acted as belvederes⁶. It has been reasonably suggested that several city gates of the Land Walls were custom points for goods that reached the city *via* overland routes (sketch 1)⁷. Some towers of the Blachernai Walls (the



Fig. 1 Land Walls. General view. – (Photo N. Asutay-Effenberger).

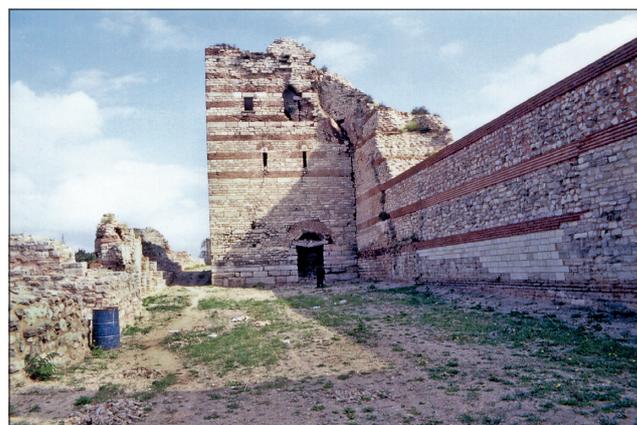


Fig. 2 Land Walls. Tower no. 62. – (Photo N. Asutay-Effenberger).

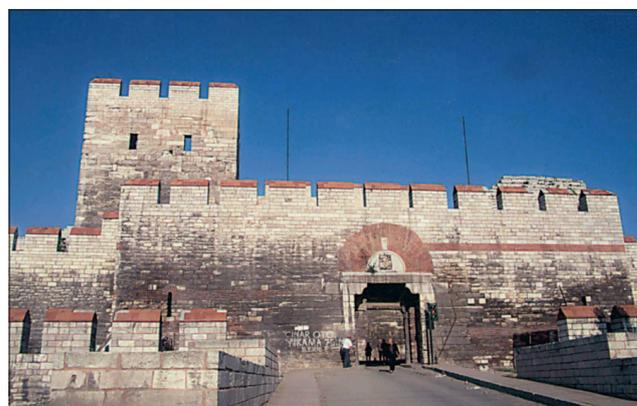


Fig. 3 Land Walls. Mevlevihane Kapı. – (Photo N. Asutay-Effenberger).

* When I use the singulars »bulwark«, »fortification«, »fortress«, »defensive line« or the plural »city walls« I am referring to the whole defence system, including the land walls and both sea walls (Marmara and Golden Horn).

1 Here can only be mentioned a limited number of studies on this subject: for the Land Walls, see Meyer-Plath/Schneider, Landmauer. – Asutay-Effenberger, Landmauer (with sources and secondary literature). – Asutay-Effenberger, Delineating 72-88. – For a short essay, see N. Asutay-Effenberger, Theodosian Walls. Koç University, Istanbul City Walls Project/Turkish and English (online) (in following will be cited as KU-Project) <https://istanbulsurlari.ku.edu.tr/en/essay/54/theodosian-walls> (21.06.2024). – For the Blachernai Walls, see Asutay-Effenberger, Blachernai 253-276 (with sources and secondary literature). – See also N. Semiz, Sea Walls. KU-Project: <https://istanbulsurlari.ku.edu.tr/en/essay/60/sea-walls> (21.02.2025). – For a short essay about the entire fortification in Turkish, see Asutay-Effenberger, Surlar ve Kapılar 69-100 (with sources and secondary literature).

2 Cod. Theod. XV.1.51 (4. April 413). – Cf. Asutay-Effenberger, Landmauer 51-53. 110. – Asutay-Effenberger, Delineating 74.

3 Cod. Theod. XV.1.51 (4. April 413). – Cf. Asutay-Effenberger, Landmauer 2. – Asutay-Effenberger, Delineating 74. – For a compilation of the secondary literature, see Ricci, Resilient Landscape 125-138.

4 Cf. Van Millingen, Walls 52.

5 Meyer-Plath/Schneider, Landmauer 68, registered on the second floor of the northern gateway-tower of Mevlevihane Kapı (tower no. 51) some remnants of paintings over a white ground. Schneider identified some of them as the tips of shoes and halos of saints and suggested that they belong to a later painting: »Stuck- und Farbreste an den Pfeilern und Nischen lassen erkennen, daß das Obergeschoß in späterer Zeit einmal verputzt und nach den erhaltenen Schuhspitzen und Nimben mit Heiligenfiguren auf weißem Grund bemalt war«. These remains were reconstructed by Krischen, Landmauer 8 and plate 10. It can be that this floor had at one point an additional sacral function. It is also possible that these images were put there to protect the gateway in the Late Byzantine era. However, I would prefer not to speculate as we do not have any substantial details or knowledge about these paintings.

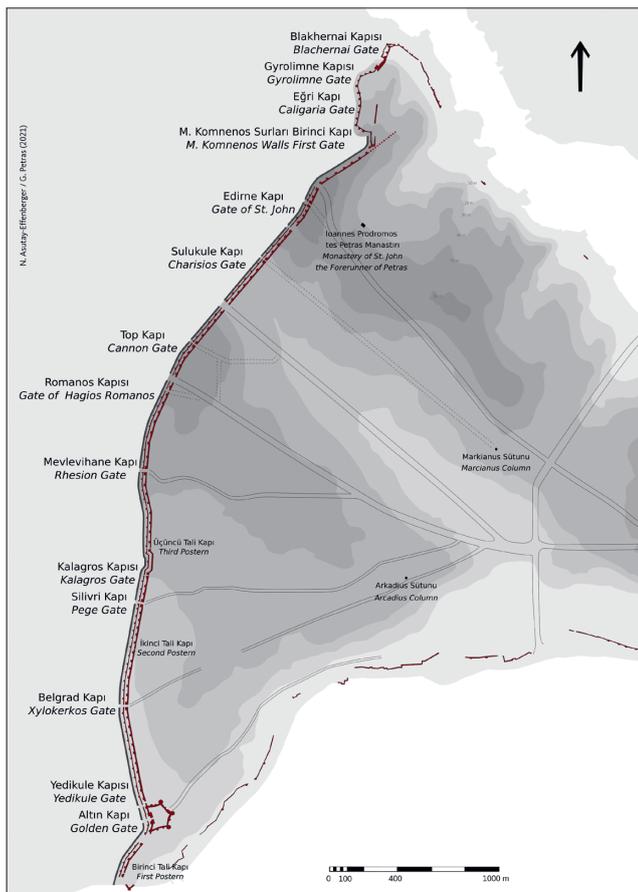
6 Asutay-Effenberger, Landmauer 110-117.

7 Cf. Matschke, Tore 189-222 esp. 200-204 (with further literature).



Fig. 4 Blachernai Walls. Northern section with towers no. 15, 16, 18. – (Photo N. Asutay-Effenberger).

northern extension of the Land Walls) seem to have served as prisons (fig. 4)⁸ or as belvederes as well (sketch 1)⁹. It appears that the above-mentioned tasks were also applicable to the defensive line of the shore (fig. 5); this one possessed also edifices integrated later, like palaces or belvederes¹⁰, and the trade harbours, jetties, customs, commercial buildings, shops, markets, money-changers, depots, etc., stood here¹¹.



Sketch 1 Land Walls and gates. – (Drawing N. Asutay-Effenberger / Guido Petras).

In the Middle Byzantine period, in particular, after the foundation of Italian quarters – especially from the 11th century –, the area of modern Eminönü was the main witness of the intensive international maritime trade traffic (sketch 2; fig. 6)¹². Various towers in this vicinity were apparently depots as well¹³, while some others of the shore were probably used as lighthouses¹⁴ or as fastening points for the chains that blocked the entrance of the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn¹⁵. Anyway the fortification of the city held further important roles beyond its basic military function; it contributed also to the civil and commercial aspects of the Byzantine city over time.

- 8 According to Meyer-Plath/Schneider, Landmauer 102 footnote 1, tower no. 15 at Blachernai was the Anemas Dungeon. – Cf. Asutay-Effenberger, Blachernai 261, fig. 10. – For further discussion and a new revised map of the region, see N. Asutay-Effenberger, Blachernai Palace and the so-called Anemas Dungeon. KU-Project: <https://istanbulcitywalls.ku.edu.tr/en/essay/72/blachernai-palace-and-the-so-called-anemas-dungeon> (21.06.2024).
- 9 Asutay-Effenberger, Landmauer 131-134. – Asutay-Effenberger, Lebensstil 169-188. – Asutay-Effenberger, Blachernai 253-276 esp. 271-272.
- 10 For example the Bukoleon Palace, see most recently Heher, Bukoleon Palace 109-132. – See also Asutay-Effenberger, Mermer-Kule 270-274. – Asutay-Effenberger, Landmauer 110-117.
- 11 See Asutay-Effenberger, Die »porta veteris rectoris« 129-141. – Necipoğlu, Social Topography 133-143 esp. 134. – Cf. footnote 12, below.
- 12 Here can only be mentioned a limited number of works (with sources) on this subject: Schreiner, Kaufleute 175-191. – Maltézou, Il quartiere veneziano 30-61. – Müller-Wiener, Häfen 6-31. – Berger, Ufergegend 149-165. – Magdalino, Maritime Neighborhoods 209-226. – Jacoby, Venetian Quarter 153-170. – Frankopan, Trade 135-160. – Magdalino, Constantinople 80-102. – Ağır, Venedik. – Kislinger, Old Harbours 133-139. – Schreiner, Landing Stages 151-160. – See also the contributions in Kislinger/Koder/Külzer, Handelsgüter.
- 13 See Maltézou, Il quartiere veneziano 30-61 esp. 53 no. 38 (*turris cum volta que est subtus ipsam turrem*).
- 14 For a discussion and literature about the tower at the eastern boundary of the Bukoleon Palace, see Heher, Bukoleon 109-132 esp. 126-128.
- 15 See Mango, Triumphal Way 173-186. – Effenberger, Buondelmonti 24-25. – Magdalino, Acropolis Gate 147-156. – Kislinger, Eugenios-Tor 725-731. – Kislinger, Superharbour 171-178.

Fig. 5 Sea Walls and the Topkapı Sarayı. – (Photo Devrim Sezer).



Fig. 6 Vicinity of Eminönü (former Balıkpazarı Kapısı) with Yeni Camii. – (Photo N. Asutay-Effenberger).



Sketch 2 Eminönü and vicinity. – (Drawing N. Asutay-Effenberger / Guido Petras, modified after Schneider, Mauern und Tore 104 Plan IV).

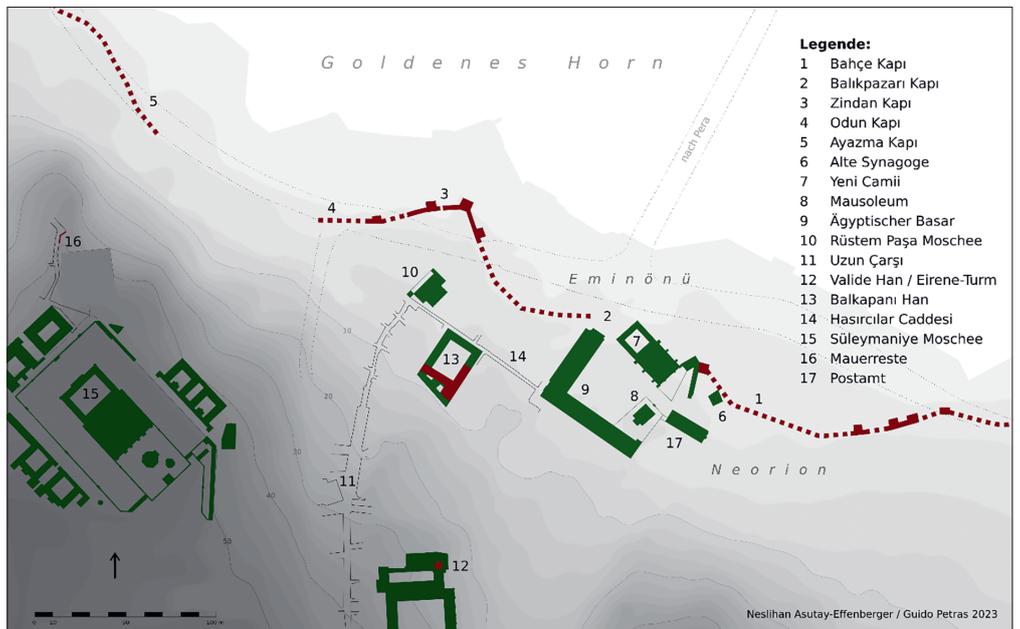




Fig. 7 Sea Walls. Tower with inscription bands. – (Photo Görkem Kızılkayak).

During the entire Byzantine era, both the city and its bulwark were repeatedly affected by natural disasters and needed to be repaired as rapidly as possible¹⁶. Written sources and preserved inscriptions tell us about these restorations (fig. 7)¹⁷, and traces on the masonry confirm such activities (fig. 1)¹⁸. Several sieges also contributed to the cycles of collapse and repair, with the last one culminating in the conquest of the city on May 29, 1453. After this point, the maintenance of the fortress was under the purview of the Ottoman sultans. As recently noted in a related short report¹⁹: »... despite the existence of rich archival material, there is no detailed study so far from the point of view of the scholars who deal with Ottoman art or history that investigates the state of city walls after 1453 by examining the sources and considering the repairs and the walls' relationship with the city«. The lack of research into or discussion of Ottoman repair activities during the sixteenth century is especially prob-

lematic. The following essay can in no sense fill this gap; rather, I intend to compare some Ottoman sources with contemporary traveller accounts plus with physical remains and to deal with the question of what role(s) the city walls played for the Ottoman capital, particularly in the sixteenth century²⁰.

The First Ottoman Repairs

Let us start in the fifteenth century: Kritoboulos from Imbros wrote about the first Ottoman repairs, noting: »Then he [Sultan Mehmed II (1444-1446/1451-1481)] ordered the sections of the Walls that had collapsed from the canons to be completely rebuilt in safety and to reinforce them wherever they had suffered damage from time, both on land and at the sea«²¹. Another contemporary witness, Tursun Bey, gives comparable information²²: »He [Sultan Mehmed II]

16 See, for example, Guidoboni, *Earthquakes*, passim. – Cf. Asutay-Effenberger, *Landmauer* 35-51 and 174 footnote 733 (with further literature).

17 Meyer-Plath/Schneider, *Landmauer* 157-166. – Asutay-Effenberger, *Landmauer* 148-173. – Dirimtekin, *Marmara Surları* 61-70 (with further literature). – Dirimtekin, *Haliç Surları* 67-76 (with further literature).

18 Meyer-Plath/Schneider, *Landmauer*, passim. – Asutay-Effenberger, *Landmauer* 173-181. – Dirimtekin, *Marmara Surları*, passim. – Dirimtekin, *Haliç Surları*, passim.

19 A. Han, *City Walls in Ottoman Sources*. KU-Project: <https://istanbulsurlari.ku.edu.tr/en/essay/27/city-walls-in-ottoman-sources> (21.06.2024).

20 It is not possible to give all sources and occurrences within this short essay. The aim is to demonstrate the general situation of the walls by citing some selected accounts and events.

21 Kritobulos II, 1, 10-12 (p. 90): ἔπειτα κελεύει τὰ κατετριφθέντα τοῦ τείχους παρὰ τῶν μηχανῶν τειχίζειν τε ἀσφαλῶς πάντα καί, ὅτι ἄλλη πεπονηκός ἦν τῷ χρόνῳ κατὰ τε γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν, ἀνορθοῦν. – For a German translation, see Reinsch, *Mehmet II*, 143 (»Dann befahl er [Sultan Mehmed II (1444-1446/1451-1481)], die von den Geschützen niedergerissenen Abschnitte der Mauer sämtlich sicher wiederaufzubauen und sie auch dort, wo sie sonst durch die Zeit Schaden genommen hatten, sowohl auf der Land- als auch auf der Seeseite auszubessern«). – See also Kritobulos II, 10, 25-27 (p. 100). – Reinsch, *Mehmet II*, 157 (statement after the completion of the repair works); for a contemporary statement about the city and the walls, see also Angiolello, *Viaggio* 24-39.

22 Tursun Bey 75: »sür-i Kostantiniyye'yi meremmet idüp, binâsin tecdit itti«.

Fig. 8 Yedikule. Curtain between pylon no. 10 and tower no. 11. – (Photo N. Asutay-Effenberger).



revitalized the fortification of Kostantiniyye by repairing«²³. A fifteenth-century document prepared by the first mayor of Istanbul, Hızır Bey, in the summer of 1453 to present to Mehmed II²⁴, confirms the statements of these authors, by writing²⁵: »The first part extending 40 *arşun* (one arshun equals 68cm or *zirâ*) in length and 12 in width, was rebuilt anew from the foundation to the top; Beyond that tower the repair of the part of the wall, which was demolished 54 *zira*' (dhira) long and 12 *zira*' in width, is completed; Beyond that the part demolished 130 *zira*' (dhira) long and 7 *zira*' high, is repaired completely; Beyond that the demolished part, 4 *zira*' (dhira) long and 12 *zira*' high is also rebuilt completely ... In sum, all these rebuilt walls come to 342 *zirâ*' (dhira) long, 82 *zirâ*' high and each one 3 *zirâ*' thick. As to us, we gave up now this work, thanks to your blessed support, let it be known this way. In this business your slaves the *aga* of *adjemi-oghlan*s and *subaşı* of *'ulûfeciler*, who were assigned to this work, performed in perfect cooperation, let it be known in full respect to your majesty. Anyhow, the final decision belongs to the High Porte«.

A few years later, the Yedikule castle was built (1457-1458) at the south-west corner of the city, directly behind the Golden Gate of the Theodosian Land Walls; it included both Byzantine pylons, two further towers (nos. 8 and 11), and the related curtain walls (sketch 1)²⁶. Ottoman masonry from several repair campaigns can be recognized in this segment of the walls (fig. 8)²⁷. Construction activities in the vicinity of the defensive line continued: in 1478, the New Palace (*Saray-ı Cedid* / Topkapı Sarayı) was erected on the eastern point of the city (Seraglio Point), and a section of the Byzantine sea walls became the seafront fortification line of the palace (fig. 5)²⁸. This portion was intensively renewed. Traces of the diverse Ottoman repairs can still be observed at many locations at the sea walls as well (fig. 9). The Ottoman renewal of the fifteenth century seemed not only to focus on repairing injury caused by cannons²⁹ but also on repairing damage that had developed over time, especially by seismic movements³⁰. We do not have an accurate picture of the extent of the destruction of the earthquake from January 16, 1489 (H. 13 Safer 894), which may have necessitated

23 Translation by the author.

24 Topkapı Sarayı Archiv No. E. 1175.

25 For the English translation (including the parenthesis and italics), see İnalıcı, *Surveys* 633-634. – For a transcription, see Tunay, *Kara Surları* 338: »...yıkılan burgazın tülü ki kırk arşun ve kaddi on iki arşundur. Külliyyen temelinden yeni olunup tamam olundu ve andan öte bir yerki elli dört zira ve on iki arşun kaddi yıkılmış idi, ol dahi tamam oldu ve andan öte bir yer ki yüz otuz zirâ tülü ve yedi arşun kaddi ile yıkılmış idi, ol dahi tamam oldu ve andan öte dört arşun yer ki, on iki arşun kaddi ile yıkılmış idi, ol dahi tamam olundu ... Bu cümle yapılan bina hesap olunup üç yüz kırk iki zira uzununu ve seksen iki kaddi ve üçer zirâ arzı olundu ve yine dahi mübârek himmetiniz ile işten ferâgat eyledik. Şöylece malûm oluna ve bina üzerine yoldaşlık için konulan Acemi Oğlanlar Ağası ve Ulufeciler Subaşı olan kullarınızın dahi haylıca yoldaşlukları olmuştur, ayağınız toprağına şöylece mûlum oluna. Baki ferman...«. – This document is related to the repair of the vicinity of the Gate of Saint Romanos in the Land Walls, for a discussion, see Asutay-Effenberger, *Landmauer* 93-94.

26 See Kritobulos II, I, 14-15 (p. 90): ἔτι δὲ κελεύει τευχίζειν καὶ φρούριον ἔρμυδὸν περὶ που τὴν Χρυσέαν, ἧ ποτε τῶν βασιλέων τὸ φρούριον ἦν. –

For the German translation, see Reinsch, *Mehmet II*, 143. – Also, Tursun Bey 75: »Ve denize ve kuruya hükm ider bir küşede bir ahmedek yaptı« («and he built an inner fortress on a corner, which dominates both the land and the sea«. Translation by author). – For some secondary literature, see: Gabriel, *Châteaux* 85-114. – Ayverdi, *Fatih Devri* 662-677. – Meyer-Plath/Schneider, *Landmauer* 42. – Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon* 339-341. – For more literature, see N. Asutay-Effenberger, *Yedikule Hisarı (Castle of Seven Towers)*. KU-Project: <https://istanbulsurlari.ku.edu.tr/en/essay/26/yedikule-hisari-castle-of-seven-towers> (21.06.2024).

27 Asutay-Effenberger, *Landmauer* 150 (K 10/11).

28 Necipoğlu, *Topkapı Palace* 4-30 (written and visual sources, secondary literature).

29 Reinsch, *Mehmet II*, 143: »...die von den Geschützen niedergehenden Abschnitte der Mauer«. – For a reconstruction of the cannon of Urban, see Asutay-Effenberger, *Kanonmeister Urban* 211-225.

30 Reinsch, *Mehmet II*, 143: »...wo sie sonst durch die Zeit Schaden genommen hatten«



Fig. 9 Sea Walls. Tower and Curtain with Ottoman repairs. – (Photo N. Asutay-Effenberger).

extensive restorations³¹. However a German visitor to the city in around 1496, the knight and pilgrim Arnold von Harff, talks about the Theodosian Land Walls, with a certain admiration and does not mention any dilapidation or neglect³²: »So, one side [of the fortification], which lays near the land, is surrounded by strong walls and towers... in front of it lay three filled-up moats [two wards and a moat], in which now some game animals run«³³. It seems that some sections of the wards and of the moat of the Theodosian Land Walls were used as places to keep some wild animals during the stay of von Harff (sketch 1; fig. 1).

Furthermore, a late fifteenth-century copy of the map of Buondelmonti, which was drawn after the Ottoman conquest, presents the whole fortification as intact³⁴. Of course, such depictions, in which the walls serve as an ideal frame for the city, can be interpreted as symbolic³⁵.

Collapse and Repair until the 1560s

The first decade of the sixteenth century in Istanbul ended with a terrible catastrophe, known as the »little apocalypse« (*kıyâmet-i suğra*). A gigantic earthquake occurred in 1509 (H. 915) and destroyed not only almost every building within

the city, including the last remnants of the Constantinian Golden Gate, but also a considerable part of the city walls³⁶. Among others the Ottoman chronicler Rûhî provides detailed information about the consequences of this calamity, noting³⁷: »On Thursday, August 12, 1509 (H. 25 Rebiülâhîr 915), the city was devastated by a huge earthquake. The triple fortified wall of Constantine [i. e., the Theodosian Land Walls] on the land side, from the so-called Eğri Kapı to Yedikule, from here to the İshak Paşa Kapsısı on the shore, from here to the vicinity of the sultan's residence, which looks over sea, from Dilsüz Kapsısı to the Kayıklar Kapsısı, from here to some towers (*kuleler*) and the towers/forts (*burgozlar*) of the sea walls, a route of 140 thousand masons' *zirâ* was completely broken down [...] Five thousand people died«³⁸. The given route or fix points emphasize that both the land and the sea walls were gravely affected. A conversion of the masons' *zirâ* (0.75 or 0.90 m) to meters, as well as the statement about 5000 deaths, clearly shows the dimensions of the disaster. Many other contemporary accounts provide (with some deviations) similar information³⁹. As stated by the same author, Sultan Bayezid II (1481-1512) soon ordered a temporary earthquake tax of 22 silver coins (*akçe*) – from each household – to alleviate the financial burden. For the restoration work, 37 000 men from Anatolia and 29 000 men

31 See Sakin, Depremler 32. 68 (with sources).

32 Arnold von Harff, Pilgerfahrt 204, 4-7: »soe is die eyn sijde nae deme lande gar mit stercken muren ind thurnen vmtzoigen, seestzien voesse dick ind dar vur drij vffgefoidert grauen, dae inne mencherley willbraet zo deser tzijt inne leyffen«.

33 Translation by the author.

34 Effenberger, Buondelmonti, fig. 32. – For further visual sources, see also Effenberger, Pictorial Sources 19-31.

35 See A. Effenberger, Depicting the City Walls. KU-Project: <https://istanbulsurlari.ku.edu.tr/en/essay/63/depicting-the-city-walls> (21.06.2024).

36 See Sakin, Depremler 41-49. 97-113. – See also Ambraseys/Finkel, Earthquake 167-174.

37 For the passage of Rûhî, see Sakin, Depremler 97-98: »Ve bu tarihin sene 915 rebî'ul-Âhîr ayınınun yiğirmi beşinci gece şişenbe gecesi zelzele-i 'azîm olub, nefsi-Konstantîn'ün üç kat hisârı, ki kurudan yanıdır, Eğri Kapı demekle ma'rûf kapu[dan] Yedi Kule'ye denli, andan deryâ cânibi ta İshâk Paşa Kapsısı'na varınca, andan Hudâvendigâr'un kendü haremî civârı, ki deryâya muttasıldır, Dilsüz Kapsısı'ndan Kayıklar Kapsusu'na denli, andan deryâ cânibi yer yer kuleler ve burgozlar, bir yerden yüz kırk bin zirâ' bennâ zirâ'ıyle yıkılabı viran oldı... beş bin mikdan kişi helak oldı«. Square brackets are Sakin's.

38 Translation (and square brackets) by the author.

39 For further accounts, see Sakin, Depremler 101-113.

Fig. 10 Land Walls. Edirne Kapi. – (Photo N. Asutay-Effenberger).



from European territories of the empire were hired – one out of every twenty households –, 3000 masons and carpenters, 3000 cavalymen (*müsellem*), and 8000 foot soldiers (*yaya*) helped with the lime kilns⁴⁰. According to the sources the repair work on the city walls took two months⁴¹. The physical traces of this intervention and the related inscriptions are partially visible today. Two sections of the Land Walls bore repair inscriptions of Sultan Bayezid II: an Arabic written panel at Edirne Kapi (*sketch 1; fig. 10*)⁴² and the now-lost slab from Silivri Kapi (*sketch 1; fig. 11*)⁴³.

A comparable disaster is not known until 1556. On May 11, 1556 (H. 1 Receb 963), during the reign of sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (1520-1566), the city and its walls were devastated by a strong seismic movement, and they again required extensive repairs⁴⁴.

But earthquakes were not the only reason the walls collapsed. Fires also threatened the bulwark from time to time⁴⁵. The sea walls or its vicinity, in particular, were very often

affected by infernos⁴⁶. A huge one in 1510 that started in the vicinity of Balat caused a lot of property damage in the area between Balat and Balıkpazarı (the fish market) on the southern shore of the Golden Horn (*sketch 2; figs 6. 12*)⁴⁷. A similar catastrophe occurred on August 25, 1515 (H. 15 Receb 921) around the Covered Bazaar (*bedesten*)⁴⁸. We do not know exactly to what extent the walls were affected dur-

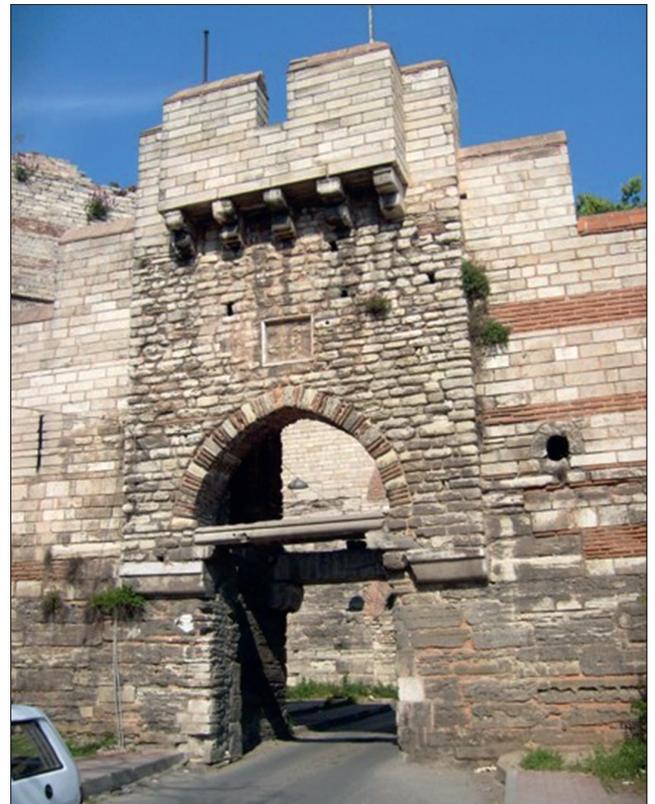


Fig. 11 Land Walls. Silivri Kapi. – (Photo N. Asutay-Effenberger).

40 For the passage of Rûhî, see Sakin, Depremler 98.

41 Sakin, Depremler 101.

42 Meyer-Plath/Schneider, Landmauer 159 no. 52. – Asutay-Effenberger, Landmauer 83-85. 96-106. – Cf. Sakin, Depremler 99. – See also N. Asutay-Effenberger, Edirne Kapi. KU-Project: <https://istanbulsurlari.ku.edu.tr/en/essay/41/edirne-kapi> (21.06.2024).

43 Meyer-Plath/Schneider, Landmauer 159 no. 53. – Asutay-Effenberger, Landmauer fig. 79. – See also N. Asutay-Effenberger, Silivri Kapi. KU-Project: <https://istanbulcitywalls.ku.edu.tr/en/essay/46/silivri-kapi> (21.06.2024). Today only the empty frame is visible.

44 Sakin, Depremler 32. 68.

45 Sakaoğlu, Yangınlar 427-438. – for a recent contribution to some important fires see, Necipoğlu, Mythical Space 197-232. – For some fires in the Byzantine era (and literature), see Asutay-Effenberger, Kynegeion 161-178 esp. 161. – Cf. Schneider, Brände 382-483.

46 One of the earlier fires (after a terrible storm and thunderbolt), which destroyed the vicinity of the Hippodrome took place on July 21, 1489 (H. 22 Şaban 894). See, Anonim Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman 128. – Cf. Sakaoğlu, Yangınlar 429.

47 Sakaoğlu, Yangınlar 429.

48 Sakaoğlu, Yangınlar 429. – Ayasofya Vakıfları Tahrir Defteri, fol. 25b (for a transcription, see Baş, Tahrir Defteri 81).



Fig. 12 Melchior Lorichs. Panorama of Istanbul (vicinity of Zindan Kapı). Sheet 9. – (Leiden University Libraries BPL 1758).

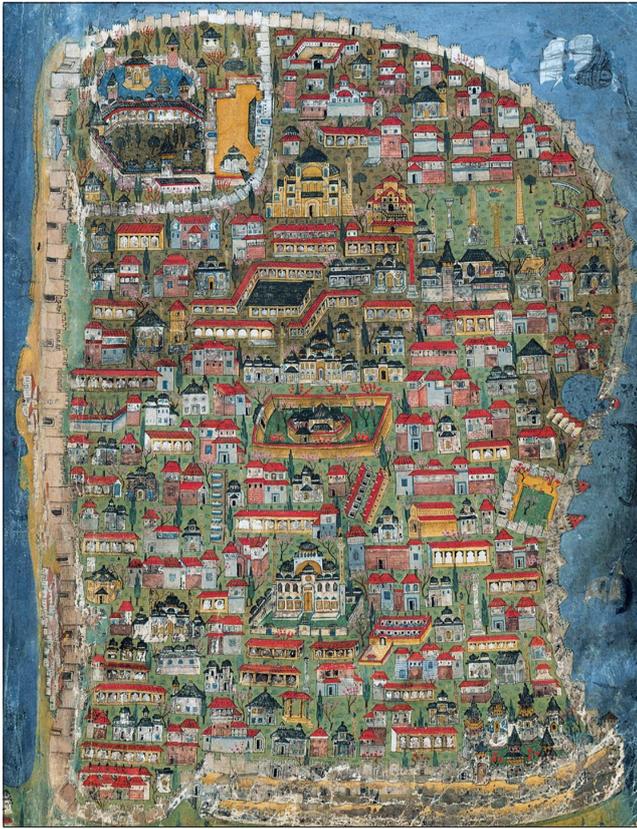


Fig. 13 Matrakçı Nasuh. Map of Istanbul. – (After Beyan-ı Menâzil 8b).

ing both of these calamities, but two other major fires, which began around Zindan Kapı on July 13, 1538 (H. 15 Safer 945) and on August 13, 1554 (H. 14 Ramazan 961), in the time of Süleyman the Magnificent, created serious consequences, especially for the Golden Horn Walls (sketch 2; figs 6. 12). According to the anonymous *Tevârih-i Âli Osman*, the fire in 1538 began in the shops of pitch and tar and nearly the whole segment between modern Eminönü and Odun Kapı was burned⁴⁹. It noted that »Even outside of the walls, the depots (*mahzenler*) and shops on the shore from Balıkpazarı to Odun İskelesi [Wood Pier] and Ahi Çelebi Mosque and others were completely burned to ashes«⁵⁰. The fire in 1554 must have been the reason for the significant damage around Zindan Kapı⁵¹ »from Tahtakale to Odun kapı«⁵².

Nevertheless, the injured areas were repaired, and the protection of the sea walls was regulated by a law. The relevant decree issued by the sultan, written on June 29, 1559 (H. 23 Ramazan 966), which gives us information about the existence of an earlier first decree from 1539/1540, reads as follows⁵³: »To the judge (*kadı*) and to the commandant (*subaşı*) of Istanbul...regardless of to whom they belong, remove all houses or bay windows that stand at the city side of the walls [lean against the wall] or on the walls, do not permit the construction of such buildings on the walls. I do not allow for houses, even at the city side, to stand closer to the fortification than four building or architect *arşın* [about

49 Anonim *Tevârih-i Âli Osman* 148: »... Hisardan taşra dahi Balık pazarından Odun iskelesine varınca yalıda olan mahzenler ve dükkânlar ve Ahi Çelebi Câmi'i ve gayri külli yandı.«

50 Translation by the author.

51 Anonim *Tevârih-i Âli Osman* 152: »Tahta kal'a dan ta Odun kapusuna varınca ...«

52 Translation by the author.

53 Ahmed Refik, *Onuncu Asr-ı Hicrî 58-59 no. 1*: »İstanbul kadısına ve subaşısına... hisar divarının iç yüzünde hisara muttasıl ve hisar divarı üzerinde yapılmış eğer evlerdir ve eğer şehnişinlerdir bilcümle her neyse ve her kimin ise külliye ref'idüb giderüb hisar divarı üzerinde asla anun gibilerden bina eseri komyasın. Ve divarın iç yüzünde dahi bina arşunile dört arşun mikdarı hisara karib yerden evler olmağa emrim yokdur ...«. In transcription the date 966 was mistakenly given as 1558. – Cf. Han, *İstanbul ve Galata* 33.

3 m]«⁵⁴. Some earlier foundation deeds (*vakfiye*) show that many properties stood, indeed, very close to the walls (*cidâr-ı kal'a*)⁵⁵. However a further foundation deed from April 1542 (H. 949 Muharrem'inin evâili)⁵⁶ and the above cited document from 1559 point out that the inhabitants continued to build in the same manner even after the first decree of the sultan. Probably also this situation made it necessary to repeat the first order in 1559.

The well-known Istanbul map by Matrakçı Nasuh, which was drawn in 1537 – one year before the above mentioned first fire – depicts the defensive line as continuous (fig. 13)⁵⁷. In his panorama from 1559 – five years after the second fire and in the same year as the second decree – Melchior Lorichs also presents the Golden Horn wall line as intact (fig. 12)⁵⁸, which can be either because of rapid repairs or because the artist chose to represent them symbolically. Some travel accounts mention the contemporary situation of the city or its fortress too, albeit with some discrepancies: for example Petrus Gyllius (1544-1547) does not tell us about a poor condition of all the walls⁵⁹, however the German visitor Hans Dernschwam notes (1553/1555)⁶⁰: »But the Turks build nothing. They do not want to keep the old beautiful edifices and let them to collapse«⁶¹. We do not know if the statement of the latter includes the city walls as well or if his words should be taken literally, as the above-mentioned repair activities are documented. I will return to this question later.

Collapse and Repair in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century (after the 1560s)

Istanbul hosted many foreign visitors also in the second half of the sixteenth century and many of them left us with important reports (with some deviations) about the city and its fortification. While the German traveller Michael von Saurau in 1567, during the period of Sultan Selim II (1566-1574),

represented the city walls only in an imaginary manner⁶²: »in the circuit walls have one thousand and five hundred towers«⁶³, another German visitor Hans Jacob Breuning von Buchenbach, who was in the city in 1579 – during the reign of sultan Murad III (1574-1595) – describes the fortress in more detail with the following words⁶⁴: »Toward the land is a triple wall (it is uncountable, with many towers) with its wards. The moat is twenty-five steps wide. The walls on the seaside are single and most are lower than the one mentioned before, of equal thickness and well-fortified with towers«⁶⁵. Although Breuning does not say anything about the contemporary condition of the walls, the German preacher Salomon Schweigger, who was in the city in the same period, between 1578 and 1581, paints a negative picture, writing⁶⁶: »The city is surrounded in all three places with walls... the sunset direction, the land side, has a triple wall. Between each wall lies a ward. The wall standing closest to the city is higher than the other two, the other two are barely half the height, they are thick and strengthened in the best way with many powerful towers. However, a large section is falling down, and the Turks are not repairing anything«⁶⁷. The same question as above must be raised here: should we take all his words literally⁶⁸? In my opinion, this statement is only partially in accordance with the facts and is worthy of examination: The city was affected by a terrible earthquake, on July 17, 1577, a few months before his arrival. Another German preacher, Stephan Gerlach, who was in Istanbul from 1573 to 1578, witnessed this catastrophe and noted⁶⁹, »In this evening, towards the dinner, occurred a violent earthquake. From that our whole house and not only the ground but also the sea was shaken, the galleys moved inside, the water welled as if it boiled«⁷⁰. Gerlach seemingly experienced not just an earthquake but also a huge tsunami, which surely caused serious damage to the walls. It is quite possible that Schweigger saw the collapsed portions of the bulwark and the rubble in the vicinity. I think that we can acknowledge the

54 Translation by the author.

55 For a document from February/March 1494 (H. 899 Cumâdelulâ'sinin evâsiti), see Tahrir Defteri I, 11 no. 71; for a further one from May 1535 (H. 941 Zilka'de'sinin evâhiri), see Tahrir Defteri I, 12 no. 85.

56 Tahrir Defteri I, 15 no. 112.

57 Beyan-ı Menâzil pl. 8b. – See also Asutay-Effenberger, Die porta veteris rectoris 129-141. – Effenberger, Depicting the City Walls. KU-Project: <https://istanbulurlari.ku.edu.tr/en/essay/63/depicting-the-city-walls> (June 21, 2024).

58 Oberhummer, Konstantinopel. – The Istanbul-Panorama of Melchior Lorichs is available online: <http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:2026523> (21.06.2024). – See also V. Papadopoulou, The Golden Horn Walls and its Gates in Melchior Lorichs's Panorama of Constantinople. KU-Project: <https://istanbulcitywalls.ku.edu.tr/en/essay/75/the-golden-horn-walls-and-its-gates-in-melchior-lorichs-panorama-of-constantinople> (21.06.2024).

59 Gyllius, Topographia I, XIX, 53-55 (reference to the city walls). – See Grélois, Pierre Gilles 304-305.

60 Dernschwam, Tagebuch 35: »Die turkhen aber bawen gar nichts, haben die ziltten schonen gepew nicht erhalten mugen vnd gar eingehen lassen«.

61 Translation by the author.

62 Von Saurau, Ortenliche Beschreibung 82: »...und in der Ringmauer eindausentundfünfhundert Türn.«

63 Translation by the author.

64 Breuning, Orientalische Reyß 47: »Ist gegen dem Land mit dreyfachen Mauren (deren jedliche unzählbar viel Thürne) sambt ihren Zwingern umbfangen.

Der Stadtgraben ist fünff und zwanzig schrit breit oder weit. Die Mauren/so auff das Meer respondiren sein einfach/und etwas niderträchtiger/als die vorgehen/gleichwol dick und mit Thürnen wol versehen«.

65 Translation by the author.

66 Schweigger, Reyssbeschreibung 105: »Die Stadt ist an allen drey Orten mit einer Maur umgeben/gegen Nidergang/da sie am Land ligt/hat es ein dryfache Maur/zwischen einer jeden Maur ein Zwinger/die Maur/so nechst an der Stadt/ist höher dann die andern zwo/die beyde aber seyn kaum halb so hoch/gar dick/und mit vielen starcken Thürnen auff's best versehen/doch fallen sie mehrertheils ein/dann die Türcken bessern nichts«. – For a list of the gates that were mentioned by travellers (including Schweigger), see Effenberger, Buondelmonti 74-79.

67 Translation by the author.

68 Schweigger, Reyssbeschreibung 102, depicts the city walls on his map as intact; they can of course be a symbolic frame of the city. For some other Ottoman and European drawings, see Effenberger, Buondelmonti figs 1-24. – Effenberger, Pictorial Sources 19-31.

69 Gerlach, Tage-Buch 364: »Diesen Abend gegen dem Nachtessen ist ein grosses Erdbeben gewesen/davon unser gantzes Haus/und nicht nur der Erdboden: sondern auch das Meer erschüttert/die Galleen darinnen sich beweget/und das Wasser über sich gequollen/als ob es gesotten hätte«. – Cf. Sakin, Depremler 32 footnote 120 (for some Ottoman accounts).

70 Translation by author.

truth of parts of Schweigger's statement – that some sections of the city walls were indeed in poor condition during his stay – but the words »the Turks are not repairing anything« must be read, in my opinion, with a certain caution. As was the case previously, also after his departure, extensive repairs were carried out in the city, attested by a decree from May 5, 1583 (H. 12 Rebiülâhir 991). It was signed by sultan Murad III and reads⁷¹: »To the judge (*kadı*) of Midilli. Sinan, still the chief architect, may he stay forever in grandeur, sent me a letter, and implored that...for the repair of the city walls of Istanbul and for the commanded construction of the building at the sultan's palace it is necessary to have stonemasons and carpenters from Midilli, in total 6000 workers...I command that you send the mentioned number of stonemasons and carpenters immediately to Istanbul with all the necessary equipment«⁷². It is significant that also the restoration of the defensive line fell within the remit of the chief architect, Sinan⁷³; it is important to note too that statements like that of Schweigger must be examined thoroughly before being used for scholarly arguments. I think that here would be the appropriate place to return to the words of Dernschwam: »But the Turks build nothing. They do not want to keep the old beautiful edifices and let them collapse«⁷⁴. Dernschwam was surely in the city during the fire, which occurred on August 13, 1554. Two days before, on August 11, 1554, he was the witness of another catastrophe, which – as far as I know – has remained unnoticed until now. He wrote about this⁷⁵: »around the same time, on August 11 [1554] in the night, a huge storm wind arrived here, and the water flowing into the sea above Constantinople and Galata became so great that many villages above were erased and people were drowned«⁷⁶. Obviously, Kostantiniyye had experienced, during his stay, one disaster after another and looked sometimes accordingly. It is possible that he interpreted these extraordinary situations as the general state of the city. The earthquakes of May 6, 1593 (H. 4 Şaban 1001)⁷⁷, September 22, 1595 (H. 17 Muharrem 1004)⁷⁸, and February 1597 (H. Cumâdelâhire 1005)⁷⁹ were generally recorded as having minor seismic movements. However, it can be clearly seen that throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the old fortification was repeatedly repaired and supervised by the highest authorities.

71 Ahmed Refik, Onuncu Asr-ı Hicrî 29 no. 28: »Midillü kadısına...Hâlâ mimar başı olan Sinan dame mecdûhu mektub gönderüb ... İstanbul hisarının meremmet ve Sarayı Âmirenin ferman olunan bina mühimmi için Midillü kazasından altyüz nefer benna ve neccar ihrac olunub irsal olunmak lâzım olduğun bildirmeğin buyurdum ki vusul buldukda kazâi mezburdan zikrolunan mikdarı benna ve neccarı lâzım olan âlât ve esbâblarile...İstanbul'a irsal eyliyesin...«. – We do not know whether any other repairs took place between 1578 and 1583.

72 Translation by the author.

73 For an earlier document, which mentions the name of Sinan, see Han, İstanbul ve Galata 33 footnote 22.

74 Dernschwam, Tagebuch 35.

75 Dernschwam, Tagebuch 91: »umb die selb zeit, adi 11 Aug. in der nacht, ist hie ein grosser sturm windt khommen, vnd ist das wasser, so oberhalb Constantinapol vnd Galata in das meer fleust, in der selbigen nacht also gros khomen, das oberhalb vjll dorffer austrengt, auch leuth ertrengt«.

76 Translation by the author.

Now we must ask the following question: why was it necessary to put so much effort into keeping the walls intact when they had already lost their defensive function?

The Functions of the City Walls in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Kostantiniyye

Overall, it is true that the walls no longer served their primary (military) function, except for a section of the sea walls that was part of the fortification of the New Palace (fig. 5) and for a segment of the Land Walls that was integrated into the Yedikule Castle, as mentioned above (sketch 1; fig. 8). However, the old bulwark still defined the boundaries of the imperial city and likely gave the inhabitants a symbolic sense of protection. A decree from May 30, 1568 (H. 3 Zilhicce 975), signed by Sultan Selim II (1566-1574), provides us with the important information that all people, who travelled between the Asian and European parts of the city, needed (previously and then) to be checked at the piers in front of certain gates of the Marmara Sea Walls⁸⁰.

Contemporary and later documents inform us that the city walls belonged to the pious foundations (*vakıf*) of Sultan Mehmed II and were sources of revenues for the public treasury since they were, in essence, rental properties (*mukataa*)⁸¹. It means that the towers, wards, moat of the Land Walls and the towers plus the curtains of the sea walls could be rented to individuals for a multitude of functions, including as depots, vegetable gardens, etc. (figs 1-2)⁸². The *mukataa* system was in force in the sixteenth century and later.

In any case, the foundation deeds of Mehmed II mention, for example, a tower in the vicinity of Unkapanı (Northwest to Odun Kapı, sketch 2), in which the bowstring makers had their workshop (*kirışhane*)⁸³. According to Evliya Çelebi (about 1630) four towers in the same place served as workshops of the copper workers (*esnâf-ı bakır sızırıcıyan*)⁸⁴. It can be suggested that these craftsmen had been working there for over a long period (before 1630). From the same author we hear furthermore that the towers of the Land Walls between Silivri Kapı and Yeni Kapı (Mevlevihane Kapı) were depots for gunpowder (*bârûd-ı sıyah*) (sketch 1). In this regard he gives the important information that on the cor-

77 Târih-i Selânikî I, 312. – Sakin, Depremler 32 gives the day as May, 5.

78 Târih-i Selânikî II, 512. – Sakin, Depremler 32.

79 Târih-i Selânikî II, 670 gives the month as »Cumâdelâhire« (= Cemâziyelevvel) and adds the note as »evvel-i mâh-ı şubat« (beginning of February). – Sakin, Depremler 33 gives the date as February 11, 1597.

80 Ahmed Refik, Onuncu Asr-ı Hicrî 106 no. 6. In transcription the year was mistakenly given as 1567.

81 A. Han, City Walls in Ottoman Sources. KU-Project: <https://istanbulurlari.ku.edu.tr/en/essay/27/city-walls-in-ottoman-sources> (21.06.2024). – Cf. Han, İstanbul ve Galata 27-71.

82 The same rule is also valid for the walls of Galata see, Fatih İmaretî Vakfiyesi 235 § 204. – See also İnalçık, Galata 45. – Cf. Han, İstanbul ve Galata 27-71 esp. 40-45.

83 Fatih İmaretî Vakfiyesi 210 § 79.

84 Evliya Çelebi Seyahâtnameşi I, 308.



Fig. 14 Land Walls. Top Kapı. – (Photo Gökhan Tan).

onation day of sultan Mustafa I (1617-1618/1622-1623) a tower with gunpowder was struck by lightning and exploded, therefore it was decided to keep the gunpowder not in the same but in various towers⁸⁵. Through these statements we learn that at least one tower of the Land Walls was used as a depot for gunpowder before 1630. This use can also be one of the causes why some segments of these walls are particularly damaged. The above-cited statement of von Harff: »in front of it lay three filled-up moats [two wards and moat], in which now some game animals run« can be interpreted as meaning that some parts of the moat or of the wards were used as a place to keep some animals as well.

The text of a well-known imperial decree from the early sixteenth century illustrates what was, perhaps, the most important task of the walls. It reads⁸⁶, »Every type of good, like wheat, barley, millet, flour and oat, that arrives to Ko-

stantiniyye by land may not enter the city through any gates other than Edirne Kapı, Top Kapı and Yeni Kapı and may be directly brought to the scale / customhouse (*kapan*) ... Anybody who uses other gates to avoid custom duties or hides them by not bringing them to customs should be caught...«⁸⁷. This decree informs us that these three gates of the Land Walls, Edirne Kapı (sketch 1; fig. 10), Top Kapı (sketch 1; fig. 14) and Yeni Kapı (Mevlevihane Kapı) (sketch 1; fig. 3) corresponded directly with customhouses. Edirne Kapı, in particular, was mentioned in some later decrees⁸⁸ or foundation deeds⁸⁹ in connection with a customhouse (*gümrükhane*) and a nearby neighbourhood is called to this day Karagümrük (land custom)⁹⁰. Although we cannot say if the exact same gates communicated with the custom points during the Byzantine era, pragmatically, there was likely some continuity⁹¹.

85 Evliya Çelebi Seyahâtnâmesi I, 293.

86 Anhegger/İnalçık, Kânünnâme 47: »mahrûse-i Kostantaniyye'ye kurudan gelen buğdaydan ve arpadan ve darudan ve undan ve 'alafdan her ne gelürse Edrene-kapısı ve Top-kapısı ve Yeñi kapudan gelüb ve gayrı kapudan gelmeyüb doğru kapana gelüb ... her kim gümrük vermemek için ki gayrı kapudan getüre ve yâhud kapana getürmeyüb gizleye ki buluna ...«

87 Translation by the author.

88 Cf. Ahmed Refik, Onuncu Asr-ı Hicrî 15 no. 4 (from April 16, 1566/H. 26 Ramazan 973); 15-16 no. 5 (from April 12, 1566/H. 22 Ramazan 973). In both cases, in transcription, the year was mistakenly given as 1565. – see also Ahmed Refik, Onbirinci Asr-i Hicrî 22 no. 45 (from November 26, 1596/H. 5 Rebiülâhir 1005).

89 For a foundation deed from June/July 1577 (H. 985 Cemaziyelü'lâ'sının evâsiti) that mentions the customhouse in the neighborhood of the Atik Ali Paşa Mosque (i. e., in the vicinity of Edirne Kapı), see Tahrir Defteri II, 596-597 no. 2740.

90 The Ottoman author Rûhî calls one of the gates in the vicinity (most likely Edirne Kapı) as Kapan Kapusu (scale/custom gate), see Sakin, Depremler 99. – Evliya Çelebi Seyahâtnâmesi I, 297 says »This customhouse is in a place near Edirne Kapı, which was designated as Karagümrük« (»Bu gümrükhâne Edirne-kapusuna kârib Karagümrük nâmiyla ma'rûf olan yeredir«).

91 Cf. Matschke, Tore 189-222.

Now let us look at the sea walls again: Byzantine and European sources underline the role of the artificial harbours and the Golden Horn as a natural harbour for the commercial life of Constantinople⁹². Most of these sections kept their function during the Ottoman era (figs 6. 12-13)⁹³. When it was necessary, new gates were opened and new piers were added⁹⁴. The loading of different goods usually took place at the various piers/gates. Hans Dernschwam writes, for instance⁹⁵, »He [the Sultan] has in front of the fruit gate by the sea a special house into which he lets his fruit be brought«⁹⁶. These issues were later constantly reorganized by imperial orders as well. For example, a decree from July 5, 1572 (H. 23 Safer 980) regulates the import of fruits into the city with the following words⁹⁷: »To the judge (*kadi*) of Istanbul and to the public order officer (*muhtesib*) Mehmed ... to ensure that fruit that will be transported to Istanbul shall not be loaded at another mooring than the fruit pier (*meyve iskelesi*) ... [they] shall be loaded, as usual, at the fruit pier (*yemiş iskelesi*)«⁹⁸. A further decree from June 12, 1575 (H. 3 Rebiülevvel 983) refers to the importation of wood⁹⁹: »To the judge of Istanbul ... wood should directly be brought to the *odun* [wood] pier (near *Odun Kapı*)«¹⁰⁰. Another decree from May 12, 1585 (H. 12 Cemâziyelevvel 993) mentions the pier of the chief (*emin iskelesi*, see below) as arriving/loading point for the line¹⁰¹.

The main checkpoint (*gümrük kapanı*) and the office of the chief officer of the maritime customs (*gümrük emini*) was also located in the neighborhood of the sea walls near the later Yeni Camii (sketch 2; fig. 6)¹⁰². This area is still called today Eminönü, tied directly to the Ottoman maritime customhouse located there. As mentioned above, since different items were brought to their specially designated piers, several checkpoints, customhouses, and further officers were necessary¹⁰³. For example, Dernschwam specifically uses the plural form, by writing, »in the whole city there are ... customhouses«¹⁰⁴, as do some Ottoman sources of the sixteenth

century, which mention custom chiefs (*gümrük emînleri*) in the plural¹⁰⁵. Regarding the function of a tower and its location in the vicinity of Eminönü, Stephan Gerlach offers an important connection: that of Michael Kantakuzenos, who was a descendant of the Byzantine imperial family. He explains the high post of Kantakuzenos in the Ottoman Empire – he was responsible for the salt trade – and adds¹⁰⁶, »Not too far from this fish market there is a high and wide tower. In front of it a cottage was erected. Therein all of the salt of the city is sold«¹⁰⁷. A few lines later he refers to this tower as »salt tower«¹⁰⁸. This statement matches information in the foundation deeds of the sultan Mehmed II, which speak of a salt depot in proximity¹⁰⁹. Apparently the tower also served later as the office of the salt chief (*tuz emini*): Evliya Çelebi wrote¹¹⁰: »The workplace of the [salt] *emin* is a high, rectangular, huge tower between the Zindan Kapı and the Balıkpazarı Kapı«¹¹¹. So one can clearly see that the towers of the city walls also served as part of the customhouses.

After customs clearances all imported items were distributed throughout the city. We learn from Dernschwam about several selling points¹¹² and similar information is given to us, among others, by Petrus Gyllius, who describes, for example, selling centres in front of the sea walls¹¹³. Ottoman sources show additionally that the walls sometimes played a significant role by determining the prices: some shop owners set the selling prices depending on their location, in front of or behind the walls. We find several complaints by sellers in the archives, because merchants outside the city walls were allowed to set higher prices for their goods¹¹⁴.

The description of Gyllius – in addition to the above mentioned Ottoman and European accounts – matches the following statement by Ruy Gonzáles de Clavijo, who was in Constantinople, during the Byzantine era, between 1403 and 1404¹¹⁵: »And the biggest movement [largest commercial zone] of the city is at the gates, which open out to the sea, especially at the gates, which stand on the right side of

92 Cf. Footnote 12.
 93 Preiser-Kapeller, Moorings 141-146. – Kafescioğlu, İstanbul 30-31.
 94 New jetties were especially added on the shore of the Golden Horn. For example, the Ayazma Kapı on the Golden Horn was an Ottoman addition, see Asutay-Effenberger, Surlar ve Kapılar 69-100 esp. 88-89. – Cf. Schneider, Mauern und Tore 65-107 esp. 77. – Berger, Ufergegend 149-165 esp. 157.
 95 Dernschwam, Tagebuch 55: »Darczw hot er vor dem obst thor an dem meer ein sunderlich haws, dohin er seine fruchte füren ... lest«.
 96 Translation by the author.
 97 Ahmed Refik, Onuncu Asr-ı Hicrî 109 no. 13: »İstanbul kadısına ve muhtesib olan Mehmede.... İstanbul'a gelen meyveliyi Meyve [fruit] İskelesinden gayri yerde beyi etmeyüb olgeldüğü üzere ... Yemiş [fruit] İskelesinde beyi ideler...« – Cf. Bulunur, Galata 246 footnote 83.
 98 Translation by the author.
 99 Ahmed Refik, Onuncu Asr-ı Hicrî 113-114 no. 19: »İstanbul kadısına ... doğru Odun İskelesine getirüb...«.
 100 Translation by the author.
 101 Ahmed Refik, Onuncu Asr-ı Hicrî 132-133 no. 53.
 102 Fatih İmaretî Vakfiyesi 227 § 162. – Melchior Lorichs Panorama, sheet 7: noted as »Zul Hauss« (customhouse). – Cf. Petrus Gyllius, De Bosporo Thracio II, 2, 81 (I have used here the printed version from 1632). – See also Grémois, Pierre Gilles 102. – Müller-Wiener, Häfen 49. – Evliya Çelebi Seyahâtnameşi I, 297 calls the chief officer as »büyük gümrük emini«.
 103 See Gerlach, Tage-Buch 45 for the fish-customs (Fischzoll). – Cf. Bulunur, Galata 260.

104 Dernschwam, Tagebuch 93: »... in der ganczen stadt ... zolheuser ... gewesen sein«. – Cf. footnote 88. – According to a decree from May 1, 1566 (H. 11 Şevval 973) many gates of the city walls served as customs points; cf. Ahmed Refik, Onuncu Asr-ı Hicrî 105-106 no. 5 (in the transcription the year was mistakenly given as 1565).
 105 Cf. Ahmed Refik, Onuncu Asr-ı Hicrî 124 no. 40. – Cf. footnote 90.
 106 Gerlach, Tage-Buch 454: »Nicht weit von diesem Fischmarck ist ein hoher weiter Thurn/daran eine Hütten gebauet/darinnen alles Saltz der gantzen Stadt verkaufft wird«.
 107 Translation by the author.
 108 Gerlach, Tage-Buch 454: »Saltz-Thurn«.
 109 Fatih İmaretî Vakfiyesi 227 § 164.
 110 Evliya Çelebi Seyahâtnameşi I, 293: »Eminin kârhanesi Zindankapusu'yla Balıkbaşarı kapusu 'nun arasında ... evc-i semâya ser çekmiş çâr kuşe bir kulle-i azîmdir«.
 111 Translation by the author.
 112 Dernschwam, Tagebuch 93-94.
 113 Cf. Petrus Gyllius, De Bosporo Thracio II, 2, 81-84. – Grémois, Pierre Gilles 101-105.
 114 Ahmed Refik, Onuncu Asr-ı Hicrî 129 no. 49; 132 no. 53.
 115 Clavijo, Tamorlán III, 143 § 15: »e el mayor maneo es de la ciudad a las puertas que salen a la mar, señaladamente a las puertas que son en derecho de la ciudad de Pera ...«.

Fig. 15 Golden Horn Walls. Tower with the Tomb of Baba Cafer near Zindan Kapı. – (Photo Arne Effenberger).



the city of Pera¹¹⁶. So one can recognize, one more time, a certain continuity in the use of the waterfront after 1453 (figs 6. 12-13).

Various further non-military functions of the walls during the Ottoman time can also be mentioned here: they were still towers which served as lighthouses¹¹⁷, as prisons or as burial places: One of the prisons (since the fifteenth century) was the so-called Halil Paşa Tower between Eminönü and Zindan Kapı¹¹⁸. Melchior Lorichs also depicts in his panorama (sheet 9) a tower in proximity to Zindan Kapı with an accompanying inscription: »Der Kaiserin gefangenen Thurm« (The Empress's Prisoners Tower) (sketch 2; fig. 12)¹¹⁹. Stephan Gerlach informs us about a prison tower in the vicinity of the above-mentioned »salt tower« and

refers to a Byzantine inscription on the sea front of it. He notes¹²⁰: »Like all other towers in the neighbourhood, this one also bears an inscription of Emperor Theophilos«¹²¹. Regardless of whether all these sources talk about one and the same tower or not one can say: since many of the preserved towers of the sea walls still carry an inscription of Emperor Theophilos (fig. 7)¹²², the testimony of Gerlach leaves no room for doubt that at least one of them was an original Byzantine tower¹²³.

Besides, Melchior Lorichs illustrates on sheet 9 of his panorama a further tower with an accompanying inscription »in this lies the companion of S. Job, with the name Eldad«¹²⁴. This one was probably the same tower, where according to Dernschwam a »turkischer haylig [turkisch saint] named Baba

116 Translation by the author.

117 See Dirimtekin, *Marmara Surları* 29-30. – Cf. Heher, *Bukoleon Palace* 126-128.

118 See *Fatih İmaretı Vakfiyesi* 216-217 § 106. – Cf. Baş, *Tahrir Defteri* 105-111.

119 See Eyice, *Zindan* 129-138 esp. 132-133 (with further sources). – Most recently Ganchou, *Le palais* 169-256 esp. 254.

120 Gerlach, *Tage-Buch* 454: »und hat/wie fast alle andere Thürne in selbiger Stadt-Revier herumb/diese Aufschrift: Theophili Thurn/der in Christo fest stehet«.

121 Translation by the author.

122 Lower inscription band. – See Dirimtekin, *Marmara Surları* 64 no. 16 (with further literature).

123 Gerlach *Tage-Buch* 364.

124 »darin liegt S. Jobs Geselle mit Namen Eldad«. – For a discussion about this, see Eyice, *Zindan* 129-138 esp. 132-133 (with sources). – Cf. Effenberger, *Buondelmonti* 38-39. – For a short essay about the location of the graves of some Sahabes (companions of the Prophet Muhammed), close to the walls, see İşli, *Sahabe* 407-408.



Fig. 16 Sepetçiler Köşkü. – (Photo Devrim Sezer).



Fig. 17 Substructure of İncili Köşk. – (Photo N. Asutay-Effenberger).

Czaffer» was buried¹²⁵. This Byzantine tower with the tomb of Baba Cafer can still be visited today (fig. 15).

The fortification of the shore was occasionally integrated into the newly built palace units at the seashore too: the seventeenth-century coastal palace Sepetçiler Köşku is one of these examples; it was partially erected on the sea walls or on some Theophilos tower(s) (fig. 16)¹²⁶. In 1591, Sinan Paşa Köşkü (İncili Köşk), to the south of the church of Christos Soter, was constructed on a segment or tower originally belonging to the sea walls as well (fig. 17)¹²⁷.

Examples can be multiplied but, I think, those already presented here are enough to show the role of the Byzantine fortification during Ottoman times, particularly in the sixteenth century and to demonstrate a certain continuity in the use of some of its segments after the Ottoman conquest.

125 Dernschwam, Tagebuch 117.

126 Also for its predecessor see, Necipoğlu, Topkapi Palace 240-241. 302 footnote 252. – The Byzantine remnants (or towers) are still to be seen.

127 Tarih-i Selânikî 243. – See Necipoğlu, Topkapi Palace 226-231.

Closing Remarks

Despite having lost its primary military function (except for some segments), the former Byzantine bulwark now embraced the Ottoman capital. It stood as a symbol of protection for the inhabitants; for artists it framed the city ideally (fig. 13). The fortification continued to be used for tasks beyond defense, such as hosting vegetable gardens or prisons, belvederes, etc. However, their significant contribution, in my opinion, was the role in the commercial life of the city: Kostantiniyye was an important centre for global trade during the entire Ottoman era – especially in the sixteenth century¹²⁸ – and many intensive trade routes ended or began in front of the city walls, which offered spaces for workshops, offices, customs, depots, and warehouses for the goods, as well as separate sections for some of the products (figs 6, 12). The importance of the walls in this respect can also be traced back through the Turkish designations for some units, such as Kirişhane (bowstring workshop), Odun Kapısı (wood gate), Meyve Kapısı or Yemiş Kapısı (fruit gate), Balıkpazarı Kapısı (fish market gate), etc.

The defensive line was affected by several disasters, and various parts collapsed. Although some statements by travelers highlight the damaged state of the walls and a perceived

apathy by the Ottomans about repairing them, the broader context of the timelines of the calamities and repair activities suggest that we need to be cautious in taking them as the complete truth. As far as we can judge – from written sources, traces on the masonry and the inscriptions – the old bulwark, as a significant part of the civil and commercial life of the city, was repeatedly repaired and upgraded by the highest Ottoman authorities: the sultan ordered the restorations, the judge organized the administrative aspects, the military helped during the repair¹²⁹. The chief architect, sometimes even Sinan himself, was responsible for the architectural matters.

In 1608, an Armenian traveler, Simeon of Poland, described Kostantiniyye/Istanbul as follows: »there are in the city a lot of masjids, guest houses, foundations, medreses, tekkes, hospitals, soup kitchens, kitchens, covered bazaars, saddleries, stables, squares, baths, hotels, markets... coffees, palaces, vegetable gardens... the markets are full with goods and the streets are full with people«¹³⁰. Simeon mentions several points both the land and sea walls, including the gates, but does not say a single word about them being in a bad condition¹³¹. It is obvious that the early seventeenth-century visitor found a fully functioning city within an intact fortress, which reflected the economic prosperity of the sixteenth century.

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Summary / Zusammenfassung / Résumé

The City Walls of Kostantiniyye/Istanbul in the Sixteenth Century: Collapses, Repairs, and Functions

This article compares some Ottoman sources with contemporary travellers' accounts as well as the physical remains of the Byzantine city walls of Kostantiniyye/Istanbul and examines their role in the city, particularly in the sixteenth century. It shows that although the fortifications lost their defensive function after the Ottoman conquest (with the exception of a few sections), they continued to play an important role in the civil and commercial life of the city, as they had in part done before the Ottoman conquest. It is suggested that, pragmatically, there was probably some continuity. In addition, the repairs ordered by the sultans – sooner or later – after natural disasters underline the importance of the bulwark. Although several travel accounts paint a negative picture of the state of the walls during the Ottoman period, the evidence of repair activity (written sources, inscriptions, traces in the masonry) suggests that we should be cautious in taking them as the complete truth.

Die Stadtmauern von Kostantiniyye/Istanbul im 16. Jahrhundert: Einstürze, Reparaturen und Funktionen

Dieser Artikel vergleicht einige osmanische Quellen mit zeitgenössischen Reiseberichten und mit den Überresten der byzantinischen Stadtmauern von Kostantiniyye/Istanbul und untersucht ihre Rolle in der Stadt, insbesondere im 16. Jahrhundert. Es zeigt sich, dass die Befestigungsanlagen nach der osmanischen Eroberung zwar ihre Verteidigungsfunktion verloren (mit Ausnahme einiger weniger Abschnitte), jedoch weiterhin eine wichtige Rolle im zivilen und kommerziellen

Leben der Stadt spielten, wie dies teilweise auch vor der osmanischen Eroberung der Fall gewesen war. Dies lässt darauf schließen, dass es wahrscheinlich eine gewisse Kontinuität gab. Darüber hinaus unterstreichen die Reparaturen, die von den Sultanen zu einem früheren oder späteren Zeitpunkt nach Naturkatastrophen angeordnet wurden, die Bedeutung des Bollwerks. Obwohl mehrere Reiseberichte ein negatives Bild vom Zustand der Mauern während der osmanischen Ära zeichnen, deuten die nachweisbaren Reparaturarbeiten (schriftliche Quellen, Inschriften, Spuren im Mauerwerk) darauf hin, dass wir sie nicht für bare Münze nehmen dürfen.

Les remparts de Kostantiniyye/Istanbul au XVI^e siècle: effondrements, réparations et fonctions

Cet article compare certaines sources ottomanes avec des relations de voyage contemporaines et avec les vestiges des remparts byzantins de Kostantiniyye/Istanbul. Il examine également leur rôle dans la ville, notamment au XVI^e siècle. Il apparaît, bien que les fortifications aient perdu leur fonction défensive après la conquête ottomane (à l'exception de quelques sections), elles ont continué à jouer un rôle important dans la vie civile et commerciale de la ville, comme c'était en partie le cas avant la conquête ottomane. Il est suggéré qu'il y avait probablement une certaine continuité. En outre, les réparations ordonnées par les sultans à une date antérieure ou postérieure, à la suite de catastrophes naturelles, soulignent l'importance des remparts. Bien que plusieurs relations de voyage donnent une image négative de l'état des murailles à l'époque ottomane, les travaux de réparation attestés (sources écrites, inscriptions, traces dans la maçonnerie) indiquent que nous ne devons pas les prendre au premier degré.