

Chapter 5: The Pashas and the Representation of Power

The complex and stratified significances of the Divan street as a cultural artefact was built up through many strata of functional, aesthetic and symbolic factors. Its form was the work of the Sultans in a much lesser measure than could be expected. After all, it was not a ceremonial route for the Court alone.

One layer of symbolic and formal significance was due to the action of Pasha patrons of the late 17th and of the 18th century. It is commonly held that the Divanyolu was so named because of the traffic of Pashas and of their crowded retinues from the Divan to and from their palaces. Those palaces—*konak* and *saray*—were interchangeable, and often changed ownership and tenure. This, added to the fact that any procession would have its start or its point of arrival at the Pasha's or vizier's residence or at the imperial ladies' Eski Saray, meant that the ceremonial routes would branch off towards the specific *konak* or *saray*, and that the Divanyolu could have been perceived as a fasciculus of routes fanning out to the surrounding street system.

The scene of the daily processions of Pashas and members of the Divan plying at least twice a week between the Palace and their *konaks* was in itself a paradigm of power: their own power and that of the state they served. The main thoroughfare and its side streets had become, whatever their architectural coherence or disorder, a theatre for the powerful. In time, acquiring formal articulation through architectural monuments—the pashas had inserted into the urban scene small and medium-size *rakıf* building compounds and their accessory elements: *türbe*, *hazire* walls, *sebil*...—the paradigm grew into a metaphor of power. It produced a coherent street architecture obtained strictly through the dialectics of these accessory elements, independent but mutually sympathetic.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Lacking explicit graphic documentation of the preceding period, we can only presume, on the basis of typological analysis, that the Divanyolu acquired architectural coherence, in some stretches and only during and after the 17th century through a peculiar composition and design of the pasha ensembles. The deep unity

More and more, in the 17th and the 18th centuries, that power took less ephemeral material forms of representation. The distant view of the Sultan's magnificence sometimes edged up to the Divan Yolu but did not dominate it (the Fatih, Şehzade and Beyazıt mosques were exceptions). The Pashas' tombs and *hazire* and schools and libraries crowded the view. And they were there to stay.

Of course, the milieu of the Pashas and the Court were not entirely separate entities. The many marriages, symbolic or factual, of Sultan Ibrahim's daughters to the Pashas he wanted to promote or favour, were enhanced by festive processions with ornamental *nabul* carried through the streets to the Topkapı Saray. The “jewel-clad *caryes*” (concubines) his viziers offered him, too, went the same way. One of the most important of these *gelin* or *çeyiz alayı* recounted by Naima was that of Fazlı Pasha and the Sultan's eldest daughter. The magnificent procession started near the mint (presumably in Tavşantaşı, south of Beyazıt), passed by the Kenan Pasha Saray into the Eski Saray, where the Sadrazam with the costly *nabul* and precious gifts, the viziers and the Şeyhülislam, and other grandees accompanied the bride in a coach, through the *kuşbağ* (bird-sellers' shops and stands) to the Atmeydan and from there, to Topkapı Palace.⁹⁰

of these constructions, which tend to build up a harmonious scene, is lost when the single monuments or parts of monuments remain isolated—much has been demolished—or have been studied out of context.

⁹⁰ Naima, *Naima Tarihi*, 1756. As often happened, eaves and *çikma* bow windows had to be demolished for the passage of the *nabul* in the narrow streets from the mint to Eski Saray.

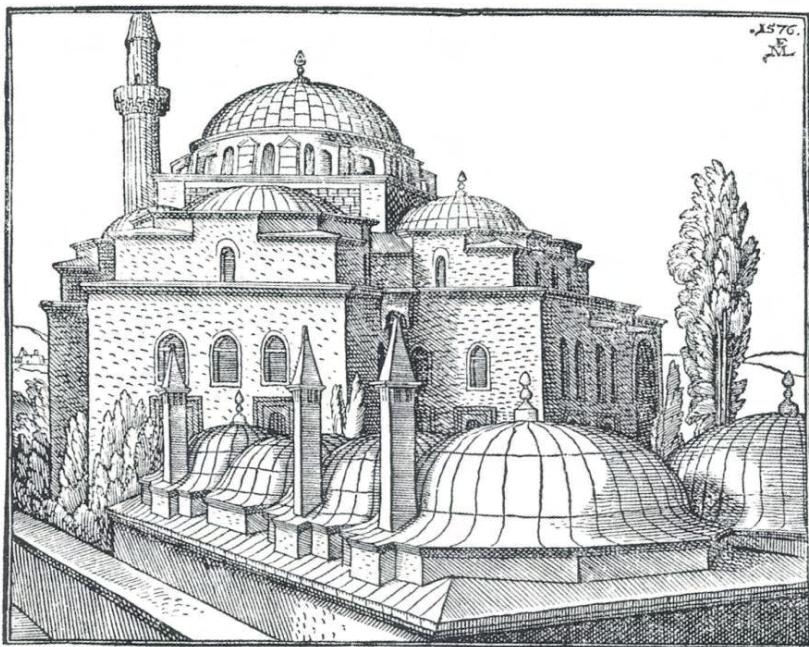


Fig. 24: *Pasha mosque on the Divanyolu; Alik Ali Pasha in Çemberlitaş, 1496-97.*

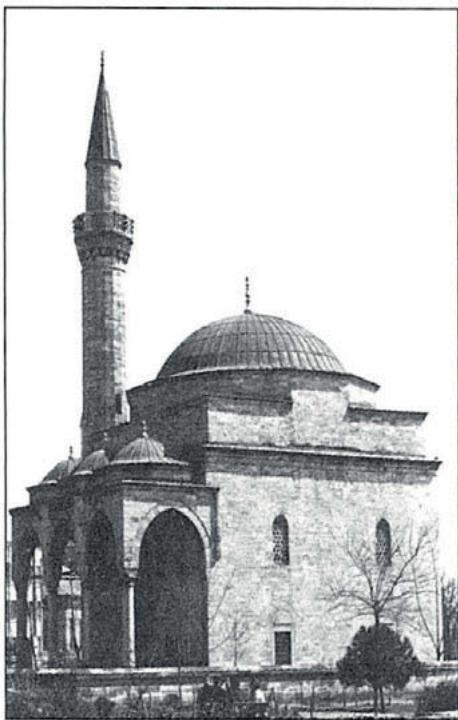


Fig. 25: *Pasha mosque on the Divanyolu; Fıruz Ağa, 1490.*

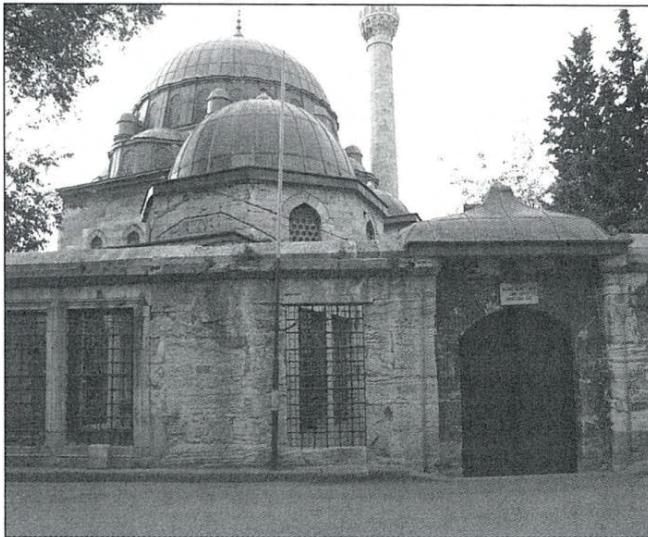


Fig. 26: *Pasha mosque on the Divanyolu; Nışancı Mehmet Paşa, 1584-88.*

From the point of view of patronage, and consequently, from that of site selection, functional and dimensional aspects of the *vakıf* endowed, there were noteworthy differences between the after-16th century Pasha endowments and the earlier ones, and, generally, of those of the Sultans.

Especially in terms of urban and architectural policies and siting.⁹¹ Most of the mosques on the axis dated from the 15th and 16th centuries when the Sultans and the Pashas, perhaps then much closer to the Sultan's power structure, focused on the *nahiye* structure of the city and its urbanization, and less on their personal and family piety.⁹² Similarly, most Divan axis mescit were founded in the Fatih and Beyazıt periods.

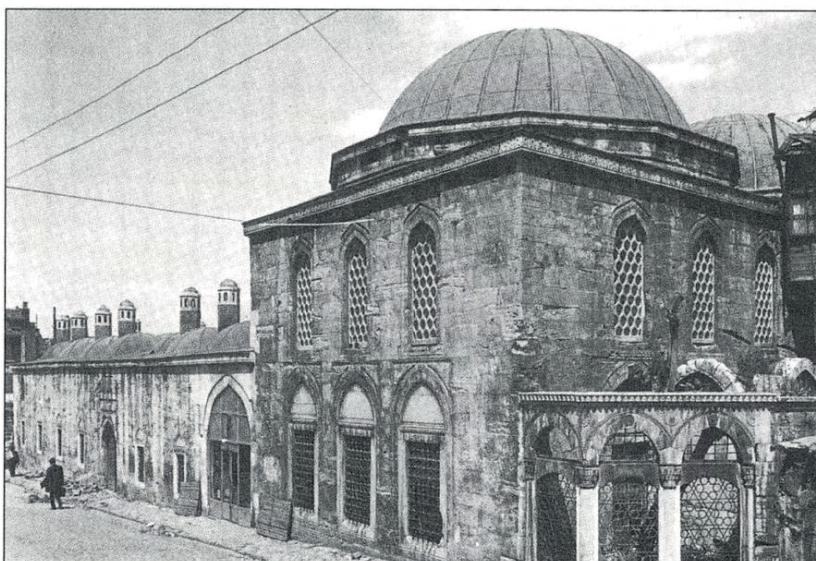
Mausoleums and *hazire* (small urban burial grounds within a *külliye*), associated to small *medrese*, were far more important in giving shape to the current and architectural fabric of the street. Of the 106 Sadrazam tombs documented, 25 are concentrated on the eastern tract of the Divan axis between Firuz Ağa and Aksaray, 39 are in Eyüp and Üsküdar, and only 42 are dispersed in all the rest of *intramuros* Istanbul.⁹³ The main group is within the *külliye* of the Köprülü, Çorlulu, and Merzifonlu families. The *medresetürbe* combination was a typical form of the emergent pashas' donations from the end of the 16th to mid 18th centuries and gave the Divanyolu a specific architectural character.⁹⁴ The *türbe* were surrounded by cemeteries for the Pasha families and followers, and sometimes were accompanied by *sebils* and fountains.

⁹¹ See fig. 2, map of the principal *vakıf* on and around the Divan Yolu. Note how the 16th to 18th century Sultan *vakıf* stand off the axis.

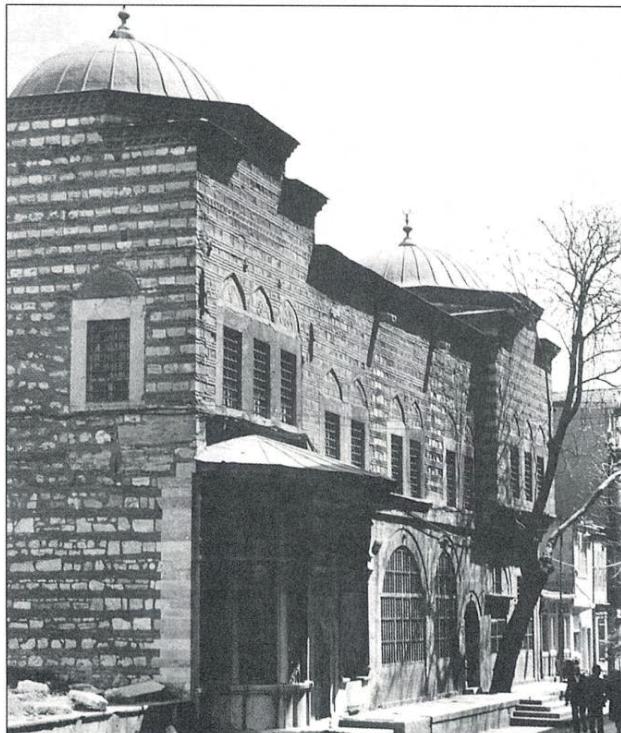
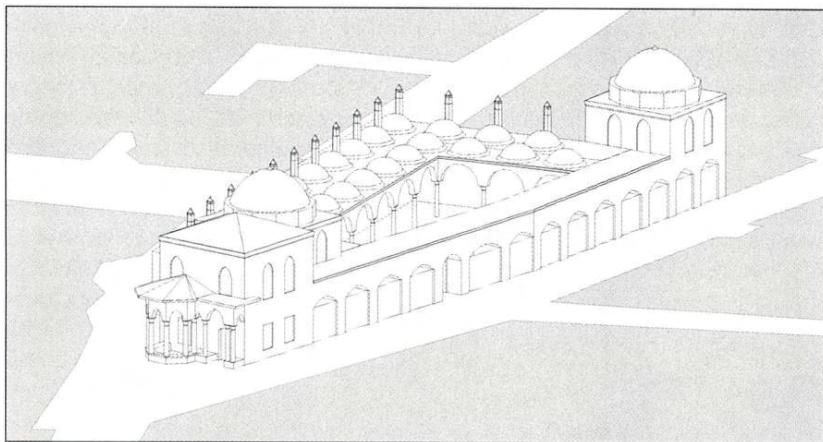
⁹² See Çiğdem Kafesçioğlu, "Vizieral Undertakings in the Making of Ottoman Istanbul", in *Art Turc/Turkish Art—Proceedings of the 10th International Congress of Turkish Arts*, Genève: 1999, 409-13.

⁹³ See: M. Orhan Bayrak, *İstanbul'da Gömülüü Meşhur Adamlar (1453-1978)*, İstanbul 1978; Hakkı Önkal, *Osmanlı Hanedan Türbeleri*, Ankara: 1992. See also our findings in Chapter 6, notes 107-08.

⁹⁴ Kuran sees the origin of this new form of *türbe-medrese* complex in Sinan's Eyüp Sokullu complex taken up by Davut Agha and other Sinan disciples (Aptullah Kuran, *Sinan—the grand old master of Ottoman architecture*, Washington-Istanbul: AKA Press 1987, 132).



Medrese complexes on the Divanyolu. Fig. 27: *Gazanfer Ağa*, 1596. Fig. 28: *Ekmekçizade Ahmet Pasha*, first decade 17th century.



Medrese complexes on the Divanyolu. Fig. 29: Kuyucu Murat Pasha, around 1610. Fig. 30: Seyyit Hasan Pasha, 1745.

The hold of some important vizier families on the central part of the axis and their capability to maintain their representative status by architectural means is impressive. The Divan Yolu would not be

what it has been architecturally and spatially without the *türbe* and *hazire* of Köprülü, Çorlulu, Merzifonlu or Amcazade. A grand vizier might be demoted (almost all were) and even be decapitated (quite a few were), his *konaks* and *yahis* confiscated. And yet his mausoleum and the tombs of his sons and family, of his people would be there to remain and mark the urban scene.

Obviously, it is the *vakif* institution which insured that durability. But it is not the sole factor. The great power the pashas had acquired from the end of the 16th century up to the reign of Ahmet III (1703-1730) can be explained also with most sultans' indifference to the problems of the city (they had preferred living in Edirne during an over fifty year period), and indirectly with the weight acquired by the ladies of the court. Istanbul was left in the hands of *kaymakams*. Favourite pashas and court officials mediated court intrigues through the court ladies and obtained positions of prominence and influenced decisions concerning the city. Mantran holds that the Kızlar Ağası (the palace Chief Eunuch) had substantial power on the *vakif* because he could assign the sites and uphold a cause in presence of the sultan and the sultanahs.⁹⁵ Of course those positions of privilege were risky. Even in the less unstable 18th century, derogations and the overturning of positions brought confusion in urban policies. One example was that of the Grand Vizier Seyit Hasan. In mid century had prevailed the decision not to build any more *hans* within the city walls, but the pasha obtained a special derogation from the Sultan and built the important *han* on the Divanyolu to finance the maintenance of that other important religious foundation, his *medrese* on the bifurcated branch of the Divanyolu. Nevertheless, pressure was put on the Sultan, and the pasha was decapitated because he had circumvented the prohibition! And yet his tomb and buildings are still there, and many other *hans* would be built in the following eighty years!

All this changed in the course of the 19th century, (see Chapters 7 and 10), and *konaks* and burial space passed into new hands.

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⁹⁵ Mantran *Istanbul*, 173.