

Chapter 2: Physical Characteristics, Toponyms and Identity

Which parts of the Istanbul street mesh can be called Divan Yolu? The Ottoman and modern Turkish toponyms corresponding to the main thoroughfare running from Ayasofya to Edirne Kapı are not of much help in determining its identity. Could it and should it be called the Divanyolu as it has been done, on and off, all through the 18th century? Contrarily, is the sole tract leading from Ayasofya to Beyazıt the Divanyolu proper? Or else, in an even more restrictive interpretation reflected by the official Istanbul toponyms of the last half century, should we consider Divanyolu the short street which leads from Firuz Ağa to Çemberlitaş, and—this is no mere coincidence—which corresponds to the Mese Regia, the straight arcade street which connected the Million and Chalke palace gate to the Forum of Constantine? It has also to be considered that Ottoman street names and numbers were no firm reference for the identification of space and place, as *mahalle* were, and that most pre-20th century maps of Istanbul were drawn and labelled by foreigners, some authoritatively familiar with ottoman officialdom, others much less so.

It is in the 18th century that the appellation Divan Yolu becomes manifestly and frequently used.

Naima never uses the place-name Divanyolu, though he has quite a few occasions to do so. Some dramatic and colourful events take place in front of the Valide Hamam, the Darphane, the Arslanhane: one feels there is a spatial unity through which the events and their quarrelling and fighting protagonists parade. During the conspiracy to oust Sultan Ibrahim and his sustainers, the “*stubborn and foolish*” Mülakkab Pasha, Kadı Asker of Rumeli, wants to attend the meeting of the conspirators in the Sultan Ahmet Mosque, where, however, he is not wanted. He and his magnificent retinue encounter by the Valide Hamam the hostile Şeyhülislam, who had warned him against participating. He tries to cavalcade along the Şeyhülislam, but is pushed away and vituperated by the street crowds all along the way

to Atmeydanı and the mosque gate where he is lynched.¹⁰ In 1644, the newly appointed Kethüda Bey, Murad Ağa, revives the old tradition of the double *alkış* (acclamation) once dedicated to the chief Kethüda by his followers on his return from the Divan—the first, when coming out of the Bab-ü Hümayun, the second by the Süleymaniye mosque, the *alkış* clique having run before him to repeat their exploit.¹¹

The stage of those events is then a precise and well-defined spatial frame: that of the eastern part of the Topkapı-Beyazıt-Edirnekapi axis. Was that the Divanyolu? I think so, though other streets, such as the Gedik Pasha Caddesi seem just as clearly delineated as possible alternate routes in the 1810 map and in other early 19th century maps. If the scene was Divanyolu, and it plausibly was, why does Naima not give it a name?

¹⁰ Mustafa Naima, *Naima Tarihi*, İstanbul: Z. Danışman Yayınevi [1967-1969], 1846. See also Mustafa Naima, *Annals of the Turkish Empire from 1591 to 1659 of the Christian era*, London: Oriental Translation Fund 1832.

¹¹ Ibid., 1655.



Fig. 2: *The Divan axis and its main monuments.*

The Surname-i Vehbi describes the final October 1720 *sünnet* (circumcision) procession after the fifteen-day festival for the circumcision of Ahmet III's sons. Its references to the Divanyolu are ambiguous. Of the *alay* assembled in Eski Saray under the guidance of the Sadrazam, and on its progression to the Topkapı Palace, Vehbi writes in folios 152b and 153a: *And after the beginning of the imperial procession had reached Ak Saray [having emerged] from the Gate of the Musk-Dealers (Miskçiler kapusu) and [passed] through Paymasters (Vezneciler) [and proceeded] before Old Chambers of the Janissaries (Eski Odalar) and past Horhor Fountain at the head of Saddlers-House (Serrac-bane called "Saraçhane" today), [it followed] Divanyolu without passing before the Lâleli Fountain, Old Mints (Darbhane-i Atik), or Baths of the Queen Mother (Valide Hammamı) and arrived, replete with magnificence and pomp, at the perfectly-designed and heart-fetchingly beautiful pavilion that had been newly constructed at the Court Studios in the vicinity of the Lions Menagerie (Arslan-*

hane) so that his Majesty the Sultan might view the passage of the festival-trees (nahıl).¹²

It is not difficult to follow so far the procession: it exited from the Old Palace (Eski Saray, A in fig.3) in Beyazıt through a new breach made in the precinct wall for the very big *nahıl* (presumably the main group went through the southern gate), moved West through Vezneciler up to Saraçhane Başı, past the janissary quarters (curiously the Şehzade mosque is not mentioned), plied left to Aksaray through the Horhor residential quarter where it inverted its direction and turned eastwards by the Lâleli fountain¹³, the Old Mint and the

¹² See in the facsimile volume of the Surname-i Vehbi (Seyyit Vehbi, *Surname: Sultan Ahmed the Ill's Festival of 1720*, Bern: Ertuğ Editions, 2000), Ragnar's translation of "Ve alay-ı hümayunun ibtidası Miskçiler kapusundan Vezneciler içinden Eski Odalar önünden Serrac-hane başında Horhor Çeşmesi'nden Ak Saray'a çıktıktan sonra Divanyolu ile Lâleli Çeşme ve Darb-hane-ı 'Atik ve Valide Hammamı önünden mürur etmedin Azametli Padişah alay nahılların seyr için Arslan-hane kurbunda Nakkaş-hane'de ibda'u inşa olunan kasr-ı bi-kusur-ı dil-keş-nakş-ı temaşayı şayeste-saz-ı teşrif-ı kudum-ı iclal ü şevket ve müterakkıb-ı alay-ı pür-haşmet oldular". I have only changed the passage "...[it followed] Divanyolu without passing before the Lâleli Fountain, Old Mints (Darbhane-i Atik), or Baths of the Queen Mother (Valide Hammamı)..". in "...[it followed] Divanyolu before passing by the Lâleli Fountain, Old Mints (Darbhane-i Atik), or Baths of the Queen Mother (Valide Hammamı)..". interpreting "mürur etmedin" as "mürur etmeden", since there would be no sense in listing buildings not paraded by, especially when they are on the Divanyolu proper, as in this case. Bypassing them would have meant parading within the narrow (and by 1720, surely vaulted) streets of the Covered Bazaar (Kapalıçarşı).

¹³ The name probably derives from the tulip gardens in the area. The Lâleli Çeşme is not that of the Lâleli külliye which did not exist then. See Garden of the Mosques for 'Lalezar mescidi' built before 1706 with a mimber donated by Çiçekçi Mehmet Bey, son of the founder (178, 192). 'Lâleli çeşme' could be located in Horhor or Şehremini (this last quarter is, however, too far out to be credibly on the route). See also a possible connection to the 'Lalezar baghi' pleasure grounds mentioned by Evliya (Evliya

Valide Hamam, and, finally, paraded under the Sultan's window in the Nakkaşhane (see fig. 4).

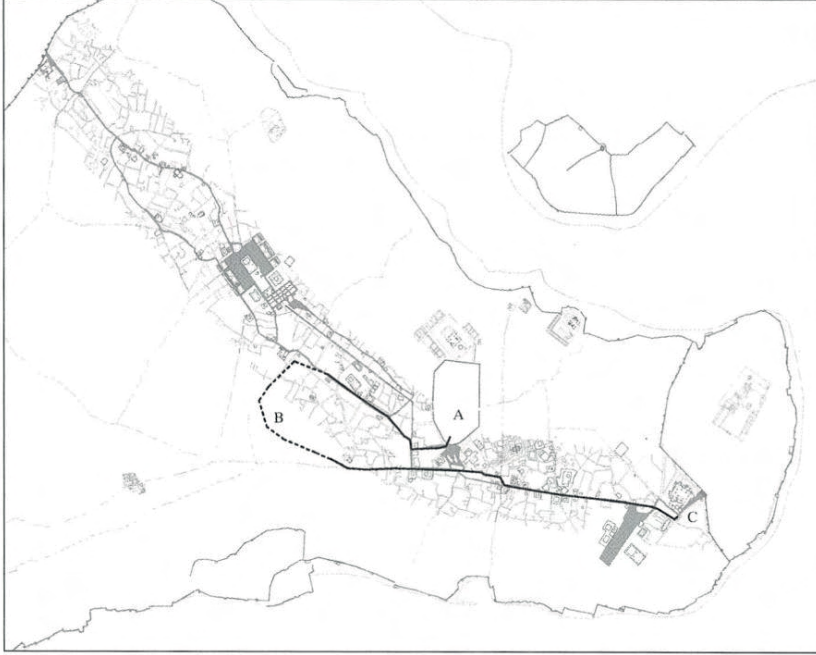


Fig. 3: The 1720 sünnet procession route as described by the Vehbi Surname. A Eski Saray. B Horhor. C Arslanhane.

Now the question is: does “*Divanyolu ile*” mean entering the Divanyolu at this point, or moving towards the Divanyolu? Was then the tract from Aksaray also called Divanyolu? The common interpretation,¹⁴ even more contorted than Vehbi’s long sentence, has

Celebi, *Narrative of travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa, in the seventeenth century, translated from the Turkish by the Ritter Joseph von Hammer*, London: Parbury, Allen, & Co. 1834-50 / reprint New York: Johnson Reprint Corp. 1968, II 84-85), and the pre-mid 18th century Lâleli Çeşmesi mentioned for its nearness to the Abbas Ağa sebil.

¹⁴ For example R.E. Koçu, *Seyid Vehbi-Surname* (Üçüncü Ahmedin oğullarının sünnet düğünü), Istanbul: 1939. For a better documented critical study see: Esin Atıl, Levni and the Surname:

been that the Divanyolu was reached after going through Lâleli and Simkeşhane and is probably influenced by modern place-names, which emphasize the monumentality of the eastern part of the street, whereas, as we shall see, 18th to 19th century placename giving was more extensive.

Again, it would seem that for Vehbi the Divanyolu ends where the Sultan is seated, that is, at the window of the Nakkaşhane (the royal miniature workshop) supposedly near the Arslanhane (an ancient Byzantine building converted to royal menagerie). Now, this is perplexing: in Kauffer's plan, taken up also by Melling (who would want to be precise about things regarding the court), the Arslanhane is within a maze of narrow streets south of Ayasofya.¹⁵

the story of an eighteenth-century Ottoman festival, İstanbul: Koçbank, c1999.

¹⁵ The plan of the Topkapı Palace grounds and approaches in Antoine-Ignace Melling, "Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople et des rives du Bosphore, d'après les dessins de M. Melling, avec un texte rédigé par Lacretelle le jeune", Paris: Treuttel 1809-1819 clearly starts the "Divan Joli" with the Firuz Ağa mosque near the İbrahim Pasha palace, delineating an avenue whose ceremonial function can be imagined along the south-western precinct wall of Ayasofya.

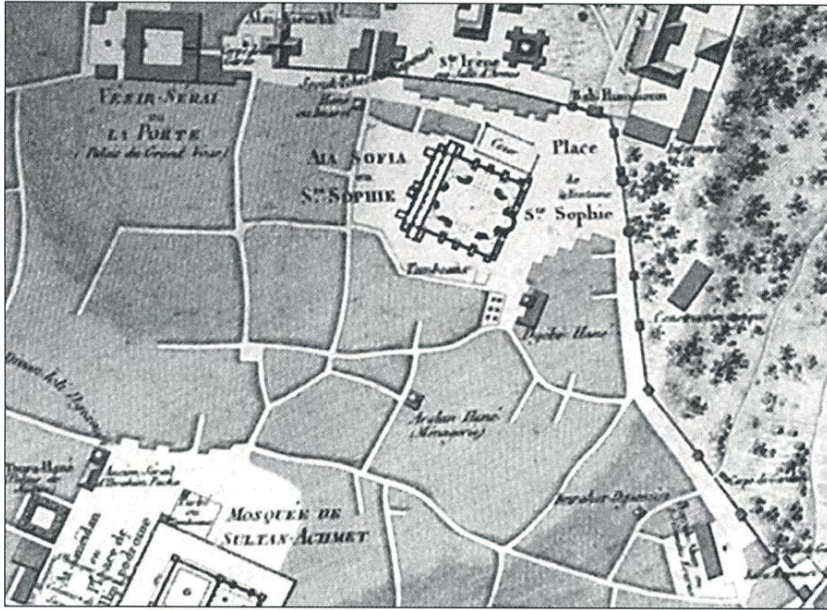


Fig. 4: Detail from the Kauffer-Melling map. The map ends the Divanyolu with the Firuz Ağa mosque (centre left). The Arslanhane is in the centre.

Is that ceremonial avenue cooped up within that mesh, or is the Divanyolu itself an area, a group of streets through which run processions near the Topkapı Saray, and not a monumentally defined space? A funeral, or the Sultan's sword girdling *alay*, would have run along the southern precinct wall of Ayasofya, in view of the royal *türbe*, not in the irregular mesh by the Arslanhane.

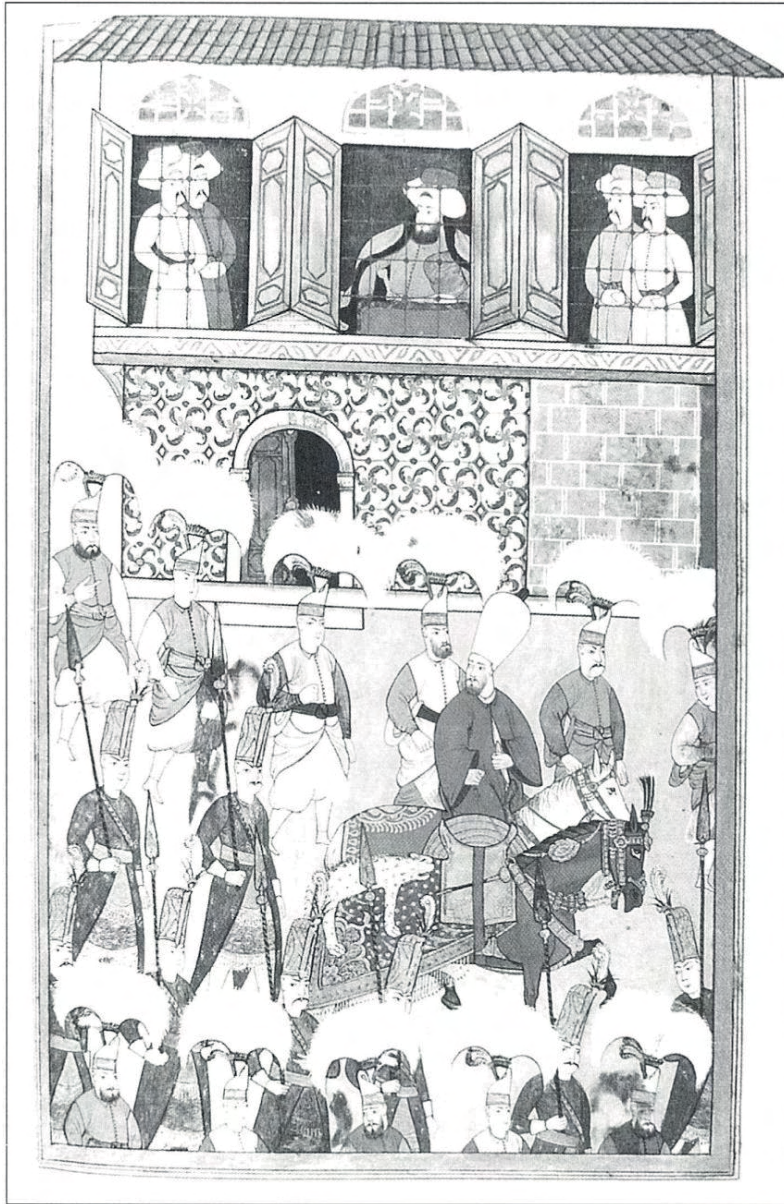


Fig. 5: *Ahmet III watches the 1720 sünnet procession from the Nakkaşhane in the Arslanhane near Ayasofya (Surname-i Vehbi).*

Western or Western-oriented local observers all through the 18th century keep faith to an even more extensive nomenclature.

İnciciyan¹⁶ calls Divan Yolu both streets running west to Edirnekapi and the south-western city gate, this last street roughly corresponding to the Mese which linked the Roman Imperial palace to the Via Egnatia. Cantemir does not call it so but stresses its importance, both in writing and in his well notated map.¹⁷ D’Ohsson involves the whole northern axis, and not only its eastern part: “*Dans la Capitale il n’y a qu’une seule rue remarquable par sa largeur et par son étendue; c’est le Divan-yoli: elle s’étend depuis le Sérail jusqu’à la porte Edirné-Capoussy...*”¹⁸ Carbognano¹⁹ says of it “*riesce bella ed agevole, quella dicesi Divan-Iolu, la quale dal Serraglio conduce alla porta di Adrianopoli.*”

Less explicit, but all the more convincing, is the *Ruzname* of Ahmet Efendi, Selim the Third’s private secretary, an almost daily log which gives us an exhaustive eleven-year picture of Selim’s movements in the city.²⁰ In more than one case the route is defined as running through the Divanyolu, especially when reporting on the trip to the farther mosques (Koca Mustafa Pasha, Hekimoğlu Ali Pasha...).

A decade after d’Ohsson, the engineer Seyyit Hasan, drafting the so-called Beyazıt II aqueduct map,²¹ places the toponym Divanyolu

¹⁶ Ğ. İnciciyan, *XVIII. asırda İstanbul*, ed. Hrand D. Andreasyan, İstanbul: Baha Matbaası 1976 [İstanbul Matbaası 1956], 76.

¹⁷ He was a privileged witness who could appreciate the importance of the street—in part, corresponding to the ancient Xerolophos—despite some restrictions in access. Demetrius Cantemir, *Late Prince of Moldavia, The History of the Growth and Decay of the Othoman Empire*, London: 1756 [Latin original 1734], 101 and note 13: “*Aksarai - White Palace: so is the Street called by the Turks which looks to the Propontis, where now are the beautiful Chambers of the Janizaries... Jengiödalar... thro’ this street is not permitted even to the Women of the Janizaries to pass.*”

¹⁸ D’Ohsson *Tableau*, II 175.

¹⁹ Cosimo Comidas da Carbognano, *Descrizione topografica dello stato presente di Constantinopoli*, Bassano: 1794, 51.

²⁰ Serkâtîbi Ahmet Efendi, *III. Selim’in Sırkatibi Ahmed Efendi tarafından tutulan Ruzname*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi 1993.

²¹ Partial 1:2500 scale map of Istanbul drawn by the military engineer Seyyit Hasan around 1810-15, in the *Türk ve İslam Eserleri*

in at least three different points of his drawing: not only in Çemberlitaş (“*Divanyolu sebili*”), but also south of the Bozdoğan aqueduct near Saraçhane, and in Karagümrük, well after Fatih, just before Zincirli Kapı. He calls Edirne Kapı Caddesi the very last tract, almost devoid of important *vakıf* monuments except the conclusive Mihrimah group.

The 1836 von Moltke map²² goes as far as to name the street we might call the southern branch of the axis and which links Beyazıt to

Müzesi n.3339. See Kâzım Çeçen, *II. Bayezid su yolu haritaları*, İstanbul: İstanbul Su ve Kanalizasyon İdaresi 1997.

- ²² Helmuth, Graf von Moltke, *Karte von Constantinopel 1/25.000*, Berlin 1842. Moltke is in quite a different position from the other map-makers of the first half of the 19th century. His old school-master, the geographer Ritter, considered him “*a born topographer with a genial eye for every landscape characteristics*”. See also Helmuth, Graf von Moltke, *Letters of Field-Marshal Count Helmuth von Moltke to his mother e his brothers*, London: J.R. Osgood McIlvaine & Co. 1891, and Helmuth, Graf von Moltke, *Aufzeichnungen, Briefe, Schriften, Reden mit Zeichnungen aus Moltkes Skizzenbuch*, Ebenhausen bei München: W. Langewiesche-Brandt [1922]. Moltke’s first survey was of the winter 1836-37. His first version of the map, he writes his mother in February 1837, was commissioned by the ‘Grand Seigneur’ (the Sultan), adding that “*the map will in the future be one of the most interesting results of my residence in Turkey*”. Ergin (Nuri Osman Ergin, *Mecelle-i umur-i belediyye* [1922], reprint İstanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür İşleri, 1995, 1243-45), Yerasimos (Stefan Yerasimos, *Homines et Idées dans l’Espace Ottoman*, İstanbul: Analecta Isisiana XXIX 1997, 323), and Çelik (Çelik *Remaking*, 84), seem to suggest that the Moltke map was the basis for an urban reform proposal of the street system, and not merely a survey drawing. Much has been said and written on a version of the map overwritten with notes and sketches which Ergin saw in 1915, but has not been found again. It is curious that Moltke let pass such a grand design without comment in his writings. Effectively, the 1836 plan has a very linear Beyazıt-Hekimoğlu connection if compared to the Kauffer plans (both 1786 and later versions) in which the Beyazıt-Lâleli-Hekimoğlu axis twists and meanders, while the Beyazıt-Edirnekapı route appears much straighter. It is more a question of perception than

Koca Mustafa Pasha, Divanyolu. The place name Divan Yolu appears in the Turkish version of the map near the Lâleli mosque, and in the German version it is even further west. The very marked, and certainly mistaken, linear continuity of the Ayasofya-Beyazıt axis with the Lâleli-Aksaray route in his map was perhaps no casual mistake, nor a project intention, but the result of the common opinion that this too was part of the Divan Yolu. He certainly referred to a common convention when defining the Divanyolu so extensively.²³

At the end of the Mahmut II period, with the avenues to Beşiktaş and Dolmabahçe already delineated, and the Mahmut II *türbe* built, Baratta calls Divanyolu “*una delle più belle e spaziose vie di Costantinopoli, della quale occupa una cresta centrale. Contansi in essa, tra molti altri ragguardevoli edifici, il mausoleo di Soliman Pasha, la moschea di Nisciangi Pasha, di Chemli-Kammam e Carakumruk...*”²⁴ naming, in other words, a good tract of the Edirnekapı route Divanyolu, just as Mühendis Seyyit Hasan did a few years earlier and as the *Rużname* suggests.

a question of projects, and might also be due to hasty survey by Moltke, or to small changes in the building context during and after the construction of the Lâleli, Simkeřhane, Tařhan *vakıf* works on the Beyazıt-Lâleli-Hekimoęlu axis, perhaps not perceived decades after Moltke by map-makers reluctant to spend much time in the “more Muslim” quarters west of Beyazıt, relying, as most did, on previous surveys.

²³ True, the main purpose of his mapping work had been military and aimed at the geographical precision of the outskirts of the town, and he obviously drew on the work of Kauffer, Hammer and Barbié du Bocage. It was no mere tourist and curiosity- or collector-oriented map, as could be the almost contemporary Davies 1:20.000 scale map in J.-J. Hellert, *Atlas de l'Empire Ottoman*, Paris: Bêlizard, Dufouret C.ie 1844. Von Moltke, assigned to Istanbul by the Prussian Army General Staff and later ‘lent’ to the Serasker, had travelled in daily contact with Mahmut II for days. When the map was published, he had risen in rank to a position that would forbid him to neglect light-heartedly the correct street names in two different editions.

²⁴ Antonio Baratta, *Constantinopoli effigiata e descritta*, [Genova: 1830] Torino: Fontana e Pomba 1840, 559.

In this paper I shall call, for the sake of convenience, Divan axis the whole thoroughfare from Ayasofya to Edirnekapı, involved as it is in ceremonial processions and flanked by important *vakıf* works, and Divanyolu proper the street that runs from Ayasofya to Çarşıkapı, that is to the bifurcation at the eastern corner of the Kemankeş building compound in 19th century maps. I am not going to give a conclusive interpretation on whether the Beyazıt-Aksaray-Haseki-Koca Mustafa Pasha axis, or at least part of it, can be included in the Divan axis system. It probably was so for some time after the construction of the Lâleli and Taş Han works,²⁵ but no lasting mark in this sense has been left in written and drawn records.

There can be no doubt as to the fitting toponyms of the Divanyolu proper up to the Kemankeş complex. It is, moreover, an easily recognizable single space.

The Divan axis was the channel for important processions in and out of the city and across the city, was called the Divanyolu in many occasions (but not always) over a very long period. It is not, however, a single street or a line of streets in sequence. In many tracts it is formed by two or more streets running in parallel; very probably, ceremonial processions would proceed in one or the other of the streets, to touch important events or artefacts—imperial *türbe* in certain occasions, janissary *oda* entrances or market districts in others—or simply to channel crowds through every possible space in that mesh of bottlenecks.

Although street naming was of scarce relevance in Ottoman towns, or in any pre-Modern town, name-giving does, nevertheless, afford circumstantial evidence on the collective memory of urban roles.

The question I advance, however, is not a matter of names. It is: given the importance of this axis in the symbols and ceremonials of Ottoman society and in the daily life and culture of Istanbul, how and in which parts and aspects was it associated to the values and functions of that culture? Could we assert that Divanyolu was the name for routes linking imperial sites? And what was its relationship to the daily life and activities of the city?

²⁵ The trend was confirmed much later, towards the end of the 19th century, too, with construction of the Aksaray Valide mosque by the Italian architect Montani.



Fig. 6: Detail of the 1520 Varassore engraving based on a view of Constantinople of around 1480. Note the winding but discernible route from Ayasofya ("S. Sophia") and Topkapı Palace ("El Seraglio novo"), by the column of Constantine ("Colona Serpentina"), Eski Saray ("Seraglio vecchio"), up to the Fatih complex ("Almaratro") and city walls.

Variations and bifurcations of the route

In the various maps of Istanbul drawn over a period of three centuries, the route's width and path vary enormously. To what degree are these variations due to varying perceptions, to the observer's subjective or cultural attitude, and to what degree to effective changes in the layout of the Divan axis? There are blatant contrasts in the representation of those streets in the maps of Buondelmonti, Vavassore, Seyyit Hasan, Cantemir, Reben, Kauffer, and many others. Vavassore, for example, shows a tortuous tract from Ayasofya to Çemberlitaş followed by a regular line from this last to Beyazıt (fig. 6). But here, as in many other maps, the representation of city blocks and building masses rather than streets gives a false impression of the effective form of streets. Also, distances are foreshortened where the mapmaker did not, or could not, dispose of a precise survey. This is particularly true of the axis west of Fatih. Even Stolpe, who presumably resorted to modern topographical instrumentation, foreshortens the street between Nişancı and Hafız Pasha mosques and eliminates the Kumrulu *mescit*.²⁶

The deformation of the street layout in maps does not evolve progressively, in time or in a given direction that might suggest an effective change in physical form, or in the fruition of the various channels of streets forming the axis. The Reben Homann map of 1764,²⁷ which shows a single linear and very clear street (fig. 7), is contradicted by earlier and later maps which show a more complex or confuse system. It demonstrates not so much an evolution of the street, as an oversimplified interpretation of the system.

²⁶ The difficulty for Western mapmakers to do surveying in the more traditional Moslem quarters may have been exaggerated, but it certainly influenced the graphic description of those parts of the city.

²⁷ Bosphorus Thracicus - Der Kanal der Schwarzen Meer... geometrisch aufgenommen durch Johann Baptist von Reben, Kaysl. Königl. Ungarl. Ingenieur Hauptmann, herausgegeben durch die Homaenne. Erben zu Nürnberg 1764.

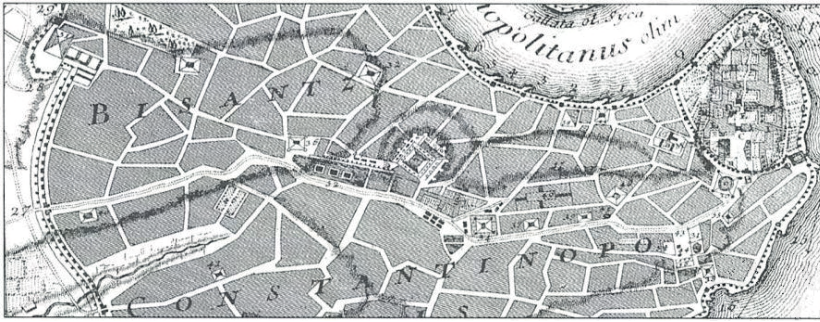


Fig. 7: The axis running through Istanbul in the 1764 Reben-Homann map.

In 1776 Choiseul-Gouffier wrote: “En traversant la ville pour se rendre à la porte d’Andrinople, on rencontre presque sur une meme ligne les Mosquées, ou Djschami, baties par les Empereurs...”²⁸

²⁸ Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier, *Voyage Pittoresque de la Grèce*, vol. I Paris, 1782, vol. II Paris, 1809.



Fig. 8: The axis in the fourth decade of the 19th century in the Davies map based on the Kauffer and Barbié du Bocage surveys (176-1820). From Hellert, 1844. Above: from the Fatih complex to Beyazıt and Eski Saray. Below: from Beyazıt to Topkapı Palace.



Fig. 9: The Divan yolu and the north-western branch of the axis in the 1836 Von Moltke map.
 Top: from Fatih to Edirnekapi. Centre: from Fatih to Beyazıt and Eski Saray. Bottom:
 from Beyazıt to Ayasofya.

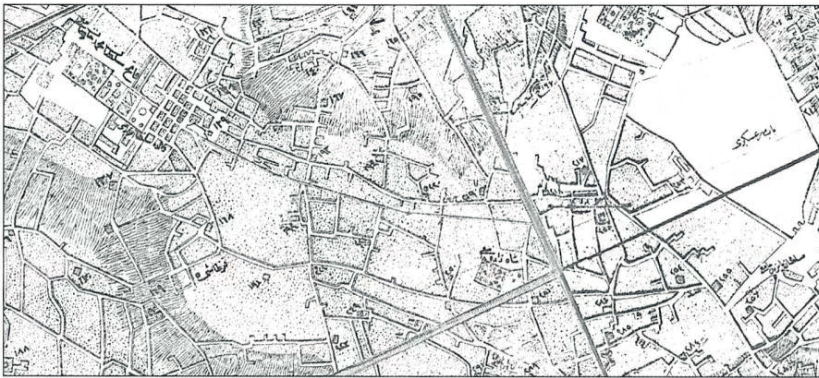


Fig. 10: The Divan axis in the 1848 Dar-as-Sultanah map. Top: from Edirnekapi to Fatih. Centre: from Fatih to Eski Saray. Bottom: from Eski Saray and Beyazıt to Ayasofya.

In the map contained in that book²⁹ the Bâbıâli-Edirnekapı route appears more direct and linear than it has ever been (Cfr. fig. 8).

Half a century later, the 1836-37 von Moltke map suggests that the Divanyolu develops south of Beyazıt, that there is no direct connection between Şehzade and Fatih, and that the route is aimed at the heart of the Fatih ensemble through the urban fabric north of the Valens aqueduct (fig. 9). On the contrary, as far as we can deduce from maps, descriptions and *vakıf* sites, the axis had evolved through the 17th to the 18th centuries, as a fasciculus of streets running from Ayasofya-Topkapı to Edirne Kapı and Yedikule, rather than as a single, architecturally recognizable street-corridor. We can argue, then, that the Divan axis can be considered, from a geometrical-spatial point of view, not as a unique and continuous space, but as a compound of streets along a general direction, in many points defined by alternative routes, in other words, a directionally rather than geometrically defined system.

The sequences of *medrese*, fountains and other buildings of public fruition in the direction of Edirnekapı-Ayasofya, shown in (fig. 2) may be accepted as a representation of the more important streets along that direction. Those sequences often form parallel chains. Some streets may have lost their importance and may have been substituted by alternative routes in the same direction and attracted *vakıf* investments. A significant case is that of the street that elbows north out of the Beyazıt-Aksaray route in front of the Hasan Pasha Han and the Simkeşhane, and bends around again westwards to the Şehzade colonnade street. This exceptionally north-south oriented diversion in a system running east-west aligns many important buildings.³⁰ It might have been formed as an alternative route to the

²⁹ Map drawn by Kauffer after survey in 1776: “*Carte Générale de la Ville de Constantinople et du Canal de la Mer Noire...*” published in: Choiseul-Gouffier *Voyage* (45x125 cm). Revised and updated editions have followed. See for example: “*Plan von Constantinopel und seinen Vorstaeden.... Geometrisch aufgenommen im J. 1776, berichtigt und vermehrt in J. 1786 von Fr. Kauffer, Ingenieur bey der französischen Gesandtschaft des Grafen Choiseul-Gouffier, mit neuen Zusätzen von J.B. Barbié du Bocage 1821*” (Berlin & Pesth 1821 (British Library Map Room, 43990.(10.)).

³⁰ The Seyyit Hasan Pasha *medrese* with its elaborate fountains and *sebil*, and Sabuncu Han, and at least one important *konak*, the late

direct Beyazıt-Şehzade connection, as the very interesting market streets of Beyazıt south of the Old Palace had gates which presumably were closed at certain hours and certain circumstances.³¹

The complexity and contradictions of the system is probably due to a peculiarity of Ottoman commercial urban space which developed along two apparently contrasting principles of formation through introvert precincts and through continuous streets. *Çarşı* quarters tended to be formed by regular parallel streets as well as by enclosure. *Hans* were the extreme result of this last trend. On the other hand, commercial and public activities could develop, either in diluted or concentrated quantities along linear and continuous streets. Concentration gave rise to enclosure. That is why it is so difficult to classify *çarşı* areas as closed precincts or as open street grids, and why the Divan axis in various points and epochs bypassed commercial areas and sought alternate routes.

Not all precincts react to urban connections in the same way. Market and commercial precincts (closed *çarşı* grids) had high surface densities, but in some cases, as in the Fatih Saraçhane market, let the main urban pedestrian traffic run through it.

Religious and *vakıf* precincts of the 16th to the 18th centuries, instead, have lower building densities and tended to avoid urban traffic. Significantly, the imperial *keüllie* of those centuries were placed off the Divan axis. No ancient map shows any direct link from the axis to Süleymaniye or to the Yavuz Selim complex. The Fatih ensemble is the only large building compound which is crossed by the axis and has even influenced the surrounding street mesh.³² Its

19th- early 20th century Zeynep Hanım Konak, and though further north, the 18th century Kapudan İbrahim Paşa Konak and mosque.

³¹ See the Seyyit Hasan map of around 1810 (*İst 1810 mp*).

³² I have argued this question in: Maurice Cerasi, "The Urban Perspective of Ottoman Monuments from Sinan to Mehmet Tahir: Change and Continuity", in *Aptullah Kuran İçin Yazılar - Essays in honour of Aptullah Kuran*, eds. Ç. Kafesçioğlu and L. Thyss-Şenocak, Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayınları 1999, 171-190, and in chapter xiii of Maurice Cerasi, *La Città del Levante: Civiltà urbana e architettura sotto gli Ottomani nei secoli XVIII-XIX*, Milano: Jaca Book 1988 (Turkish translation: Maurice Cerasi, *Osmanlı Kenti: Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda 18. ve 19. Yüzyıllarda Kent*

main gates were and still are part of the central urban scene for thousands of pedestrians on their daily errands.

(MC)

Appendix to Chapter 2: Variations in Path and Layout

The graphic reconstruction of the Divan axis and its monuments corresponds to a morphological condition relative to the first half of the 19th century (see plates III to VII). This historical period reflects a situation wherein the routes were consolidated in the previous centuries and at the same time responds to a factual state that had not yet undergone urban transformations, which after 1865 determined the progressive break-up of the historical city. The superposition of the 1880³³ map with the latest 1998 aerophotogrammetry enabled us to start tracing the street of the Divan axis. Comparison was possible because this historical map was created using the modern techniques of urban surveying. In the section of the Divan axis between Eski Saray and Edirnekapı, the 1880 map quite probably reflects the morphological situation in the first half of the 19th century; the layout of the main lanes in the map, are similar to those of much earlier historical maps.³⁴ On the other hand, the eastern part of the Divan axis, between the Beyazıt mosque and Ayasofya, had already been modified in 1880 by the urban operations of the Eighteen-sixties.³⁵ For the layout of the demolished or modified urban blocks we resorted to pre-1860 historical maps. These maps, prepared by Europeans or Ottoman technicians, feature particular representative techniques, deformations and in some cases inaccuracies, which require extra deductive effort in interpreting the urban layout. Despite its inaccuracies, the 1810 map provides us with useful information, deriving from the presence therein of numerous annotations and from the relief plan of some minor architectonic elements (doors and gateways, *sebil*, fountains, *türbe*) that are hard to represent using modern conventional methods.

To understand the variations in course, width and morphology of the lanes of the Divan axis we shall examine separately its various sections.

³³ See Map List, *Ist 1880 mp*.

³⁴ See *Ist 1810 mp*, *Ist 1848 mp*.

³⁵ See Appendix to Chapter 10.

The Ayasofya district. The route from the Topkapı building towards the Hippodrome near the southern side of the Ayasofya wall enclosure split into two lanes. The first, alongside the sultan türbe inside the wall enclosure, was ritually and symbolically important (A). This branching off was due to the presence of a block that occupied the space between the mausoleums of Ayasofya and the Haseki Hürrem *hamam* of Sinan. Further on, the two paths united, and continued westwards, separated from the Hippodrome by another urban block (B).³⁶

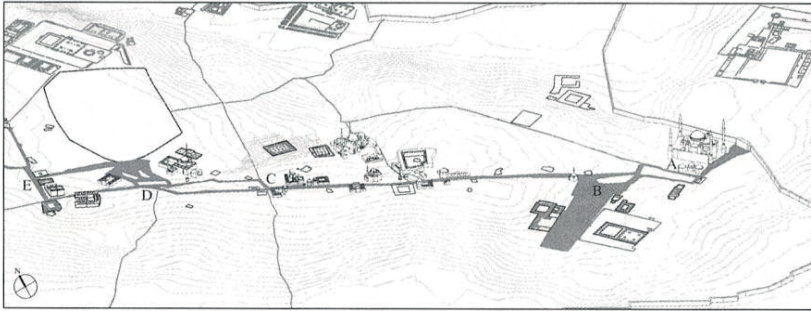


Fig. 11: *The Divan axis from Ayasofya to Beyazıt and Eski Saray.*

The section between the Hippodrome and the Koca Sinan Pasha medrese. This section, more or less corresponding to the antique Byzantine Mese Regia, was situated in a ridged position with respect to the natural relief. It was a straight lane and there was a high concentration of monumental buildings and charitable institutions. The linearity and considerable width of this street compared to the winding, narrow inland roads did not escape the notice of the authors of early 19th century representations.³⁷ We believe that the width of the street should have been around 8 metres at most, whereas different sources mention 6-6.5 metres, still quite wide for the time, and almost doubled following the urban-planning operations of the Eighteen-

³⁶ The blocks between Ayasofya and the Hippodrome can be seen on some historical maps preceding 1865. See *Melling mp* (fig. 4) *Ist 1848 mp* (fig. 10).

³⁷ See *Ist 1810 mp*, *Ist 1848 mp*.

sixties.³⁸ The route branched into two at the Kemankeş Mustafa Pasha and Kara Mustafa Pasha *medrese* (C).

The area later called Beyazıt Meydanı. As it approached the Beyazıt mosque, the route branched into two short sections that ran on both sides of a block, and came together again not much further in correspondence with the Beyazıt square (D). In the early 19th century, the Beyazıt square was marked by small buildings, mostly shops, that encircled the space between the mosque, the Beyazıt *medrese* and the wall enclosure of Eski Saray. In this point, the Divan axis continued along two alternative ways: across the Beyazıt square via a series of possible paths or continuing outside the square with a single route.

³⁸ This gauge hypothesis was derived from the reconstruction of the now partly demolished buildings (corner of the Çemberlitaş (Valide) Hamam womens' entrance hall, Köprülü porch) and the Allom drawing (fig. 12) for proportional comparison of heights and widths. For the urban-planning operations of the 19th century, see Chapter 10 and its Appendix.

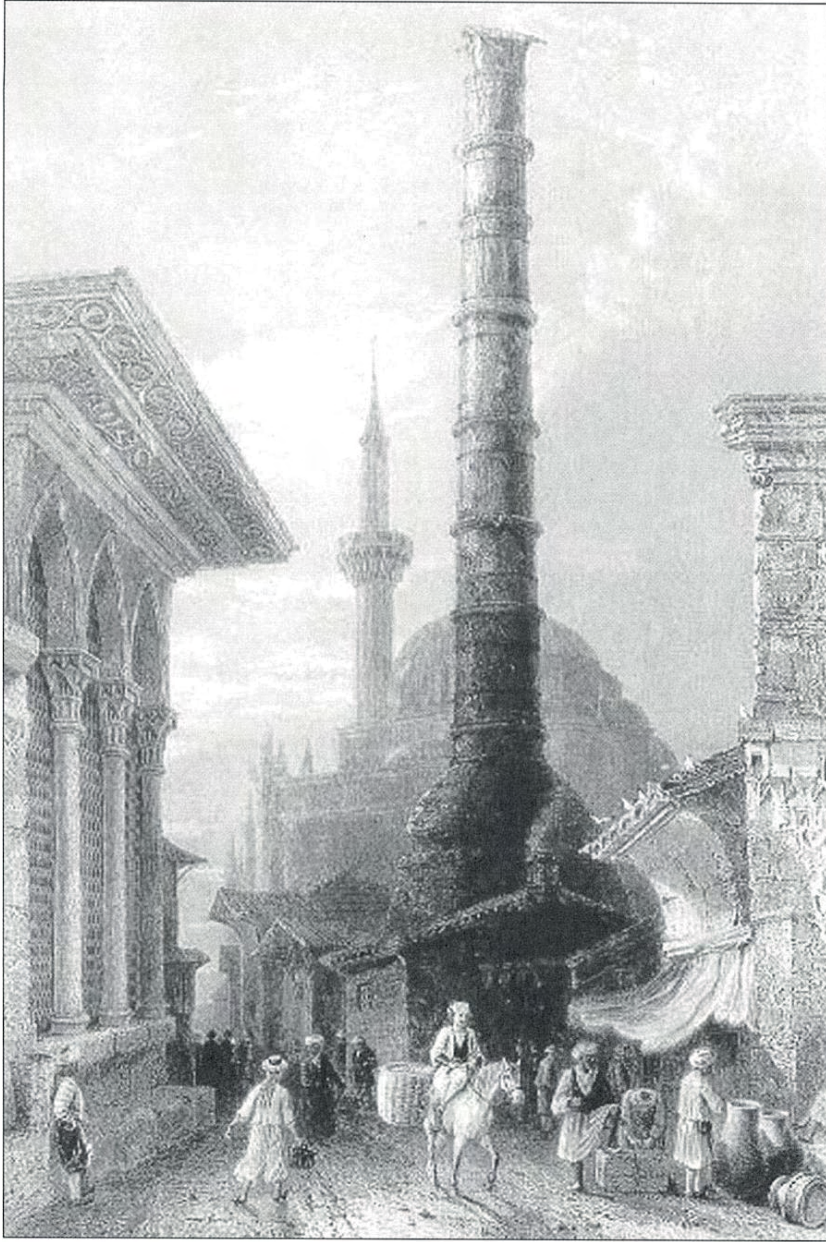


Fig. 12: *The porch of the Köprülü medrese prayer hall and the corner of the Valide Hamam before the post-1865 street widening operations. Engraving by Thomas Allom, 1840.*



Fig. 13: *The Beyazıt Meydanı surroundings in the 1810 Seyyit Hasan map. Note the gates in the market precinct between Eski Saray (top left) and the Beyazıt mosque (centre).*

The routes across the Beyazıt square originated from two gates or doors, situated within the rows of shops that defined the southern side of the square (fig. 13). Some buildings were freely placed inside the square itself, probably short-lived structures or shacks that could be used for trade, which forced the lanes that converged in this open space to branch off.³⁹ All the possible crossings had a natural exit in the gate between the Sabuncu Hanı *han* and the Seyyit Hasan Pasha *medrese* (E).

The route outside Beyazıt square continued along its previous linear direction towards the Aksaray quarter. At the Beyazıt *hamam* and the Simkeşhane and Hasan Pasha Hanı *han* (F), this tract took a sharp turn to the north, towards Sabuncu Hanı, near which it joined the streets arriving from Beyazıt square.

The Divan axis from the Beyazıt quarter to the Fatih complex. After passing the Sabuncu Hanı, the Divan axis once again split into two lanes. Both headed towards the Fatih mosque following the direction set by the Valens aqueduct. Those two streets were parallel to the aqueduct and situated to its north and to its south and progressed more or less in a straight line.

³⁹ It is not very clear as to why the gates in some secondary streets are not shown in the 1810 map. If they did not exist the overall closure of this space failed.

The section north of the aqueduct followed the hollow between the Beyazıt and Fatih mosques, and became considerably steeper near the Fatih complex; it was characterised by a minor architectonic scale of buildings and by the prevailing presence of *medrese*, *mekteb* and *mescit*. Near the Fatih complex the route met the At Pazarı market to then branch out into an orthogonal network of possible paths (G). Access to the Fatih complex was through the main gateways situated to the south of the wall enclosure. Other entrances were present on the north-eastern side of the complex, between the buildings of the *medrese*.

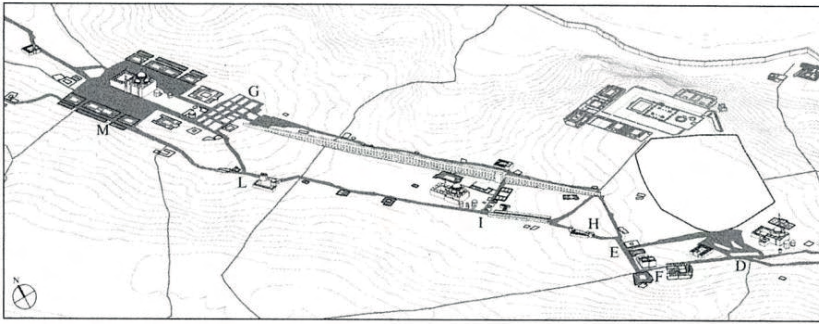


Fig. 14: The Divan axis from Beyazıt and Eski Saray to the Fatih complex.

The section south of the aqueduct originated at the Kuyucu Murat Pasha *medrese* and continued towards the Direkler Arası arcade *arasta* (H). This last arcade street aligned with the boundary wall of the Şehzade mosque, brushed against the important Old Barracks of the janissaries (I) and, in the section between these architectonic complexes, ran in a straight line with a constant width, not found anywhere else in the Divan axis. The route branched off into two sections near the Dülgerzade mosque (L). One branch of this axis joined a lateral street of the At Pazarı market and continued towards a main gateway on the southern side of the wall of the Fatih complex (fig. 15). Conversely, the other branch headed into the street between the double row of *medrese* on the south-western side of the complex itself (M). From this path, it was possible to continue towards the Karagümrük quarter, as well as to enter the inner courtyard of the mosque through the entries situated between the double row of *medrese* that made up the western side of the enclosure.

The Fatih complex, in relation to the relief of the city, is situated in one of the highest points of the area. Its geometrically regular,

symmetrical and clearly defined wall enclosure, is a unique example compared to the other monumental complexes of the city. The urban routes were conditioned by the geometric plan of the entrances. The axial disposition of the gates south of the enclosure wall with those to the north enabled an interesting continuity of the urban paths that crossed the large courtyard inside the enclosure.

From the Fatih complex to Edirnekapi. The Divan axis continued past the Fatih complex to cross a main road that arrived directly at the Edirne city gate on the Theodosian city walls. A secondary route joined it about halfway.



Fig. 15: The south-eastern gate (Çorba Kapısı) of the Fatih complex.

The main path originated from a gateway in the northern side of the wall of the Fatih complex (N). The route crossed the Karagümrük quarter and was much more winding than the other sections of the Divan axis described above. The central part of the lane in Zincirlikuyu, was thick with monumental buildings built in the classic period, of small and average architectonic scale (plate III).

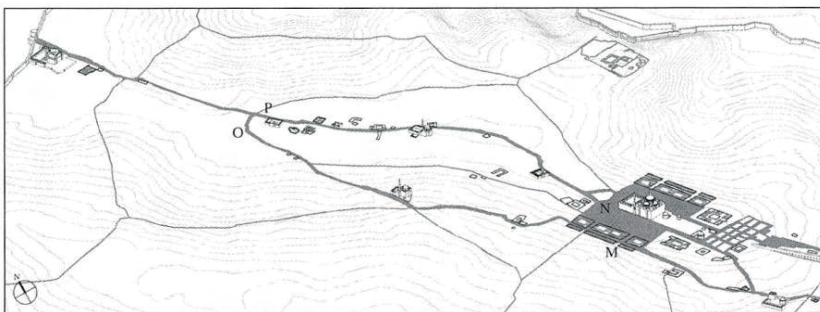


Fig. 16: *The Divan axis from the Fatih complex to Edirnekapi.*

A *secondary route* was situated further south and originated from the inner street within the south-western double *medrese* row of the Fatih complex (M). The route, characterised by a minimal presence of monumental buildings, ran along the Armenian neighbourhood and Karagümrük square (O) after passing Sinan's Mesih Ali Pasha mosque. This tract converged immediately afterwards with the main street, joining it near the Semiz Ali Pasha *medrese*, also by Mimar Sinan.

The 'land customs' or Karagümrük, which in fact gives its name to the neighbourhood, must have been situated in a not well-defined point of these two lanes, probably in the important square of the same name.

(EB, SD)