

THE INNS OF BUCHAREST. A STUDY OF POTENTIAL PATTERNS USED IN THE WALLACHIAN CAPITAL

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Abstract. The present paper aims to draw a general perspective on the possible models which the builders of the great inns of Bucharest might have considered when they decided to erect those ensembles. The directions indicated by the 19th century bibliography point towards the Italian Peninsula, with the Venetian *Fondaci* and the Genovese trading posts as reference points. The ideas therein would be adopted by the historians and researchers of the following century with no attempt to further the investigation on this topic towards a thorough analysis of the general context or the architectural form. Doubts regarding the filiations from the western world are expressed no sooner than the second half of last century, when the alternative of the Near East is brought to discussion, a much more probable hypothesis given the economic and political relationships that Wallachia used to have with the Ottoman Empire. Despite the seemingly general consensus reached by this new research direction, it has not yet stirred any attempt to go deeper into the subject so as to address the inns of the Ottoman Empire beyond the general and vague descriptions.

Rezumat. Studiul de față încearcă să contureze o perspectivă generală asupra posibilelor modele pe care constructorii marilor hanuri din București le-au avut atunci când au decis realizarea acestor ansambluri. Direcțiile sugerate de bibliografia secolului al XIX-lea trimit către Peninsula Italică, *fondaco*-urile venețiene și cantoarele genoveze constituind puncte de reper. Ideile formulate vor fi preluate de istoricii sau cercetătorii veacului următor fără a exista o încercare de aprofundare a subiectului în care să fie analizat contextul general sau formele arhitecturale. Îndoieli cu privire la filiațiile venite din lumea occidentală sunt enunțate abia în a doua jumătate a secolului trecut când este pusă în discuție alternativa Orientului Apropiat, ipoteză mult mai probabilă având în vedere relațiile politice și economice pe care Țara Românească le avea cu Imperiul Otoman. Deși noua direcție de cercetare pare să fi întrunit consensul general, până în prezent nu a existat o încercare de detaliere a subiectului în care studiul hanurilor din Imperiul Otoman să depășească formulări vagi.

Out of the old inns built in Bucharest, only three cases can be still explored, and those have been several times rebuilt. They are *Manuc's Inn*, built by Emanuel Mârzaian, the rich merchandiser, in the first decade of the 19th century, the *Inn with a Linden Trees* built in 1833 by Ștefan Popovici and Anastasie Hagi Gheorghe Polizu, as well as *Gabroveni Commercial Passage*, almost totally rebuilt following the great fire in 1847, by Hagi Tudor Tudorache, the engross merchandiser. Considering that all of them were built in the first half of the 19th century when the programme was in decline, the particular "passage" configuration of the last two may lead to insufficiently researched hypotheses on the architectural analysis of such buildings. While trying to get more reliable information, the archaeological explorations undertaken along time, the analysis of lithographies or the plans completed by mid-19th century may provide satisfactory results, yet insufficient especially if we consider the grand compounds run by monasteries or local princes. The study of similar examples built outside Wallachia may offer solutions as long as the debate focuses on a wide comprehensive context part of the political, economical, cultural and geographical background. The attempt to identify possible models followed by the builders of the 17th century is a constant in nearly all writings on this topic, by making references to Western Europe or the Orient. No matter what the current stand, none of the authors tried to detail or seriously back up the assumed viewpoint; there were statements only, which leave no room for further interpretation.

Research directions

While referring to inns, this topic comes up treated successively in the exterior Carpathian area by various travellers, diplomats or military officers who, on their stop in such buildings, describe the general configuration of station places, observing the impressions and personal experiences during that time. Some of those descriptions are noteworthy, so much more as they are often mentioned again by other several coming travellers. Among those leaving suggestive images of inns, we could mention Anton Maria Del Chiaro, the princely secretary of Brancovan Waywode, abbot Bošković while crossing Wallachia and Moldavia in his trip from Constantinople to Poland at the end of the 18th century, and this list should also include Ion Ghica, the text of the latter being adopted in a more or less precise way by all those trying to suggest the shape of old

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inns in words:¹ “wide square yards with high and strong walls around, with thick oak, iron-plated gates, set with spikes, rails and chains, with a belfry above the entryway; in the middle of the yard, a church, surrounded by strong masonry houses, partitioned one next to the other, each with its own deep cellar, vaulted warehouse, and iron doors taken on a corridor, arches on stone pillars with capitals above, rooms all having windows and doors along a porch surrounding the inn from one end to the other, facing two wide staircases, covered and face to face, all in an Italian style, a pattern met in the Archipel and the Black Sea where the Genovese had their outposts”.²

The theme of inns, thoroughly researched, especially the ones in Bucharest, is met along time in various major writings, being reference information for other numerous mentions, such as: *The History of Bucharest* by George Ionescu-Gion,³ *A Bibliographic Repertoire of Feudal Monuments in Bucharest* by historian Nicolae Stoicescu⁴ and *The History of Bucharest Inns*⁵ by George Potra who turns into a required reference for all those exploring this topic. Temporary mentions or those referring to a particular case are made by various authors, in their effort to capture the spirit of the previous centuries in the heart of the city along Dâmbovița banks or in their intention to come up with answers, based on finding new archive sources or resulting from archaeological research, which add to the history, progress or configuration of one of the main inns.⁶ Generally speaking, all those studies focused on legal or administrative documents enhance the historic progress of the inn-like compounds, while issues connected to architecture or functional operation are only partially described.

Even if the linguistic sources suggest influences coming from the Orient, most of those researchers exploring one way or the other the theme of inns in Wallachia direct the sources of emergence of such compounds to the area of Italian peninsula, which needs to be understood for the constant reference to the texts of the Florentine Anton Maria Del Chiaro,⁷ those of Ion Ghica and the *History of Bucharest* by Ionescu-Gion.⁸

The references and the similarities pointed by Del Chiaro focus on the lines of Catholic monasteries, and the expressed analogy relies on strong features in his country of origin, which could not be easily ignored by the author. Perhaps that an additional reason which contributed to the comparison between an inn and a monastery could have been the strong connection between those two programmes, starting with the Brancovan era. The direction suggested by Del Chiaro made the historians and writers of the 19th century look for the roots of the inn in the Western Europe though, highlighting formal similarities with Genovese *trading posts* or those *fondachi* in the Venetian area. If Ion Ghica makes but a passing reference to the buildings of the Genovese merchants in the Mediterranean and its coastal areas, Ionescu-Gion, in an interesting contribution, indicates, as a starting point of the inn architecture in Bucharest the buildings in which the foreign merchants of Venice used to run their business, “il fondaco de’Turchi, il fondaco de’Tedeschi, il fondaco de’Armeni”.⁹ Moreover, as an additional reason to confirm that theory, the author says that, when Șerban Cantacuzino builds the first inn, quite majestic in the Wallachian capital, he would have known the Venetian models which he, or his own brother, Constantin Stolnic,¹⁰ would have seen in the Western world. Similar assumptions are supported by

¹ George I. Ionescu-Gion, Nicolae Bănescu, Grigore Ionescu, Constantin C. Giurescu, Ștefan Ionescu, Cezara Muncenic, and Lelia Zamani.

² Ghica 1959, p. 234.

³ Ionescu-Gion 1899.

⁴ Stoicescu 1961.

⁵ Potra 1985.

⁶ General literature by Dionisiu Fotino, Constantin C. Giurescu, Ștefan Ionescu, Cezara Mucenic, Lelia Zamani, while specific contributions include Domenico Caselli, Gheorghe Nedioglu, Panait I. Panait, Cornel Taloș, and Ioana-Maria Petrescu.

⁷ The inn is described as “a building space of high and strong walls along a big cloister raised by monks, arch-shaped shops around for fire security; such shops are open by either Christian or Turkish merchants for a monthly rent; there are guards to lock the gates of the inn each evening and monitor the safety and the well-being of the merchants.” Del Chiaro 1718, p. 373.

⁸ Ionescu-Gion 1899, pp. 478-482.

⁹ Ionescu-Gion 1899, p. 841.

¹⁰ High official at the royal court, in charge of royal meals, tasting dishes to prevent poisoning.

Nicolae Stoicescu¹¹ and Ștefan Ionescu,¹² the former introducing a new direction of study discussing references coming from the area of Constantinople. The idea of Oriental roots is highlighted by George Potra¹³ as well, who, more than that, cast a doubt on architectural connections with Western Europe. The search of sources inspiring Bucharest inns is thus directed to the area of great cities in the Turkish Empire, yet it is stated with no further details.



Fig. 1. Fondaco dei Tedeschi. General view (Andreas Praefcke – http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9f/Fondaco_dei_Tedeschi_from_Rialto.jpg).

itself, in the area of the Mediterranean Sea, which is not accidental if we follow the multitude of caravan itineraries crossing vast lands, from the Middle East, to the Northern African shore and the South of Europe, further to the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. The major shapes, the architecture and details have no clear uniformity, being adjusted to needs, wishes and cultural traditions coming from investors and users. Various images come up, and materials with various features are used, while the architectural language has various shapes as well, including the ability of interpretation for people educated in diverse cultural backgrounds when they relate to spaces coming from a common root.

Fondaco dei Tedeschi, in the outlines still visible today (Fig. 1), where merchants coming from Central and North-Western Europe used to come, be they German, Dutch, or Polish, emerge in the Venetian space in the early 16th century, being the result of ample interventions taken by authorities. The building replaces an older structure used for trade by the same Northerners, which was seriously damaged by a fire in early 1505. The rebuilding of the site¹⁶ is funded by a decision of the senate, which indicates the importance of the place for the economy of the republic. On that occasion, several plots nearby are bought, to enable the new structure to meet the increasing needs of the users. In order to provide an adequate answer to the demands formulated, a competition is organized and at least three of the participating projects are presented to the senate: two by the

Venetian Inns

A position linked to the influences coming from the Western world may emerge after a research on Venetian *fondacos* built for the Turkish, Persian, Armenian merchants or those of the Northern areas of Europe mentioned by Romanian historians in their works.

The etymology of *fondaco*, as pointed by Donatela Calabi,¹⁴ is a mix of the Arabic *funduq* translated as warehouse and *fhondac*, which names a public house, the mix of two featuring precisely the key functions of an inn. In Arabic, the word seems to have emerged since antiquity, being a phonetic version of the Greek *pandokeion*¹⁵ which implies the concept of everyone's accessible accommodation.

The word *funduq*, emerged in the Orient, will spread, along with the architecture programme

¹¹ Stoicescu, p. 91.

¹² Ionescu 1974, p. 17.

¹³ Potra 1985, p. 36.

¹⁴ Calabi 1993, p. 229.

¹⁵ *Pandokeion* is a building placed along commercial and pilgrimage routes, used for both rest and supplies. Concina 1997, p. 16.

¹⁶ The whole intervention was managed by the Venetian authorities, and the works were completed in three years. Even if, at a first glance, the time between 1505 and 1508 seems long, we need to point out that this was a complex programme coming up with new functional and architectural solutions. Once all works completed, the building was appreciated by its contemporaries as an “opera bellissima”. Concina 1997, p. 254.

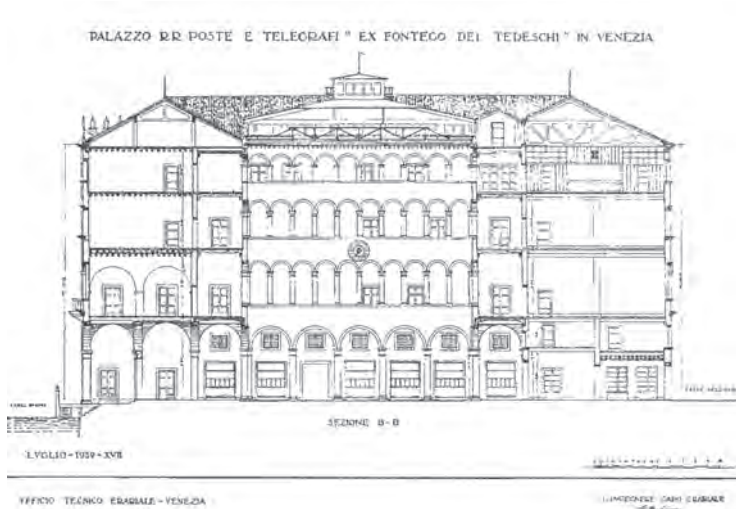


Fig. 2. Fondaco dei Tedeschi. Section (G. Gerbino *apud* Concina 1997, pl. XVIII).

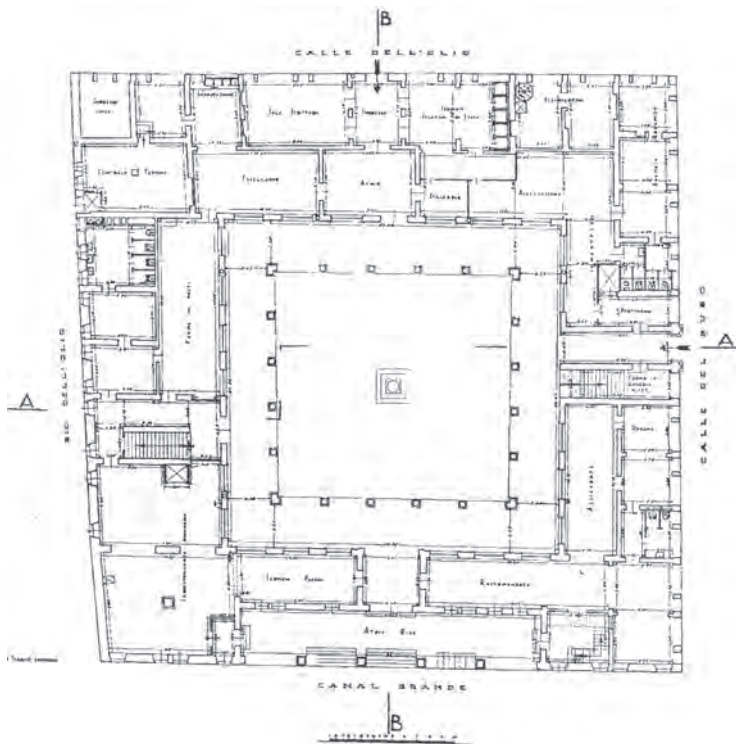


Fig. 3. Fondaco dei Tedeschi. Plan (G. Gerbino *apud* Concina 1997, pl. XVI).

Venetian Giorgio Spavento¹⁷ and one by Hieronymus, a German “master”, and the last one is declared a winner. The selected solution, unusual for a spontaneously developed Venice, adopts rectangular shapes, possibly due to a generous plot of land, resulting from the purchase of other properties nearby, following a rigour specific to the Northerners, but also the organization of commercial buildings in Asia Minor through the reiteration of the inner courtyard and the open galleries facing it (Fig. 2). The central space is developed on four storeys, and confined by superimposed round-arched galleries, the ground-floor bays twice as wide as those of the other floors. The rooms are placed along the perimeter, most of them to the yard, and have various functions, mainly of warehouses, while the upper ones were used for accommodation (Fig. 3). The main façade, facing the *Canal Grande*, is tripartite, the upper register consisting of two storeys. It is composed of a median section sided by two projections of the ground floor, their upper part ending with balconies on brackets. Between the two areas there is a wide loggia with 5 bays opening to the wharf, where the office of the city representatives is also located, in a position to carefully monitor the activities of the Northern merchants. The loggia is marked by round arches, a formula adopted for the first floor openings, while this option is no longer used for the second floor where simple surrounds with architraves are preferred. The whole composition was supported by frescoes,¹⁸ a polychrome decoration vanishing in time given excessive humidity. At the ground floor, open to side streets, there were various shops, placed in a way with no influence on the activity inside, and this favoured considerable income given the location in a highly preferred area by merchants.

¹⁷ Calabi 1993, p. 803.

¹⁸ The artists completing the paintings are Giorgione and Titian, irrefutable representatives of the Italian *Cinquecento*. Concina 1997, p. 182.

The trade increase with the Turks, both feared and wanted at the same time, goes on starting with the 16th century. Even if such contacts were mostly caused by the fights between the two sides, since the main reason was the wish of both to control the shipping routes in the Mediterranean Sea and, implicitly, to hold a monopoly on shipped goods, there still was a rapprochement generated by mutual commercial interests. Thus, there are many subjects of the Sultan in the ducal town, who, quite often, have conflicts with the locals caused by behaviour and attitude. They were living in town starting with the 15th century, with no interdiction on a certain place or area. Given the increasing dissatisfaction of the locals to the pagans causing conflicts, and also the numerous fights with the army of the Sublime Porte, aiming for a better control over the Ottomans, the senate decides in 1575 their move in a well-defined space, asking the Venetian nobles to give away a palace which was to become “*casa della nazione turchesca*”.¹⁹ Finding a place which was to host all those coming from the Ottoman Empire is also insistently demanded by the Sublime Porte, and this enhances after the Battle of Lepanto. To be more convincing in this request, they mention the customs and traditions different from those of the Christians, but also the position of the Jews in *Ghetto Vecchio*. Despite the willingness of both parties to find

a way for this issue, a real solution is not adopted until the early coming century; and the delay was caused by the lack of a place in a central area, of considerable size where all those coming from the Empire could be accommodated.

The construction will be used by the Turks for almost two centuries and is one of the oldest in Venice, being built on *Canal Grande* in the early 14th century by Angelo Pesaro,²⁰ by uniting several properties of the family. At the end of the century, the palace is bought by the republic and donated, a few decades later, to the Duke of Ferrara, Nicolaus the 2nd, as an acknowledgement of his services to Venice. After the death of the last Duke of Ferrara (1597), and an intense inheritance dispute, the construction turns to Antonio Priuli's property in 1601, as a key figure who will become Doge of Venice. Two decades later, the



Fig. 4. Fondaco dei Turchi before restoration (Concina 1997, fig. 64).

palace is rendered for use to Ottoman subjects, but not before being transformed, to meet the needs of the new users, while trying to isolate it from the rest of the city. All the openings facing the neighbouring quarters are walled up and only those facing *Canal Grande* are left as such. The main façade, compact at that time,²¹ is structurally articulated by two wide loggias. At the ground floor, the boats landing area was defined by nine columns with Corinthian capitals supporting round arches of Byzantine manner. At the first floor, the opening is characterised by a higher number of columns carrying arches, similarly to the lower floor (Fig. 4).

As for the plan, the structure of the old palace is easily recognizable, its conversion taking place in the third decade of the 17th century, being neatly adapted to the existing structure. The functional models specific to that type of building in the Near East or the current ones in Venice²² at that time were not followed, the changes trying to provide a favourable answer to requests asked by beneficiaries. A major change asked by the Muslim tradition involves the presence of a mosque, and one of the rooms in the compound is changed for the

¹⁹ Concina 1997, p. 221.

²⁰ Gruyer 1976, p. 390, *apud* Emmons 2004, p. 2.

²¹ At mid-19th century, the inn was in a state of advanced degradation, being rebuilt by Federico Berchet between 1860-1880. The interventions affected the whole structure, and only the façade to the *Canal Grande* was preserved – not fully though, since an additional level was added at the corners, as well as various details. This late intervention is strongly criticized by specialists.

²² *Fondaco dei Tedeschi*.



needs of the community.²³ The ancillary spaces are organized around a small central yard (*corticela*), and opposed to the loggias facing *Canal Grande*, a second inner yard is placed, with key spaces of the construction facing this area (Fig. 5).

The historians exploring the topic of Venetian architecture meant for commercial trades confirm, quite often, the presence of buildings where foreigners were accommodated, others than the Northerners and the Turks,²⁴ but, unfortunately, the disparition of those buildings, as well as the fragmented data to be gathered could not render a clear image of the volumes, shapes of a functional layout of those buildings.

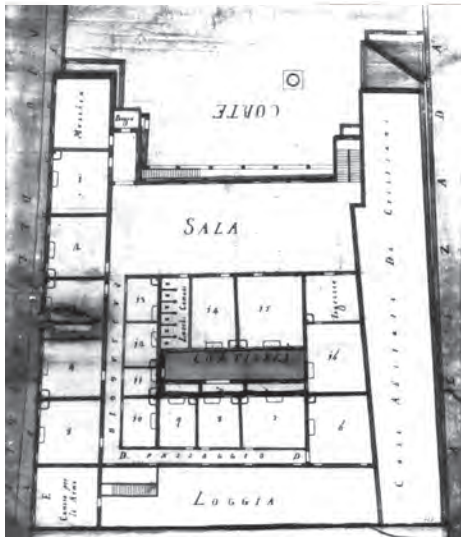


Fig. 5 Fondaco dei Turchi. Plan (Venezia, Archivio di Stato, Miscellanea Mappe 571/3 *apud* Concina 1997, fig. 67).

Fig. 6. Overview of commercial buildings known as: *al-wakala*, *kervansaray*, *funduq*, *han*, *khan* etc (Petru Mortu).

Inns of Asia Minor

The second position taken by Romanian historians discussing the origins of the inn programme in Wallachia, makes reference to the Orient, with no further details. A wider view, both for the geographic space, including the area of the Aegean Sea Archipelago, the Near East and Asia Minor, but also in time, may lead to identifying examples circulating in various forms in this entire area, and later reaching the East-European territories (Fig. 6).

Extra-urban Inns (*caravanserai*)

The etymology of the word *caravanserai* points to the Central Asian area, with variants in the Persian *kārvānsarā* and the Turkish *kervansaray*. It is defined by the combination of *kārvān* which may stand for a caravan and *sara* which designates a building provided with an interior yard. The association of the two indicates a shelter for caravans, where people, animals and goods are hosted for a while; short, in general. This type of programme, appeared and developed in Asia Minor area, has known different other names too, the most common being *han* or *khan*, with no difference in meaning

²³ Emmons 2004, p. 5. The presence of a space for Muslims is also deduced by Ionnescu-Gion 1899, p. 481.

²⁴ Other mentions are for the Armenians, the Maghrebians, and the Persians (Calabi 1993, p. 243), but also for spaces where one could meet Tuscans and Greeks.



Fig. 7. Aksaray Sultan Han. Entrance façade (Georges Jansoone – <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/04/Turkey.Aksaray014.jpg>).

between the two. The statement is not generally valid, as there are cases when the caravanserai defines the extra-urban buildings accompanying the caravan routes, and the han those placed in an urban setting.²⁵ All those routes, connected to the Silk Road, were linking the main cities of the region. We may thus mention that which passed through Erzurum, Sivas, Ankara, Bursa and Istanbul, with deviations to the Black Sea harbours of Trabzon and Samsun, and the route divided at Sivas and uniting Kayaseri, Aksarai, Konia and Antalya; while the one from Kayseri went to Near East through Gaziantep and Aleppo, to

then cross with the road including the towns on the Eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea, and further to Damascus, Jerusalem or Amman.

The constant revenues brought by the merchants lead to a protectionist policy of goods exchange, for both the territories dominated by the Persians, Seljuqs or later on by the Ottoman Turks. In the attempt to attract the trade with the Far East, away from the routes on the Northern shore of the Black Sea, under Mongolian control until the 14th century, the authorities invest in infrastructure and also try to cover an effective protection against bandits, including refunding for those robbed. The roads are repaired, solid bridges and numerous caravanserais are built as well, compounds where, besides shelter and protection, various services were offered. Generally speaking, the buildings were funded by affluent people such as the sultan, members of his family or high rank officials: pasha, vizier or bey.

Caravanserais were placed along commercial routes, being generally distributed at regulated distances, a 30-40 km interval, considering the physical capacity of pack animals, and actually representing the distance they could cover in 9-10 hours. The rule is not a strict one though, and there were cases when such buildings are placed at a shorter distance, when we refer to highly travelled routes or those in difficult areas, or when they were placed at longer intervals if large urban centres were along on the way.

A consistent area with lots of caravanserais built in the first half of the 13th century by the Seljuq Turks is that of Asia Minor. They were later supported by the Ottomans who took over the system of the previous centuries, bringing changes related to the new expectations of the merchants. The analysis of those buildings does not aim for a detailed research or particular case studies, but aims to highlight the components referring to the plan-and-space layout and the functional distribution of those compounds, along with other architectural features, while investigating how all those elements were later revived in the classical Ottoman period²⁶ and the next centuries.

The main purpose of caravanserais was accommodation, the provision of shelter to merchants' caravans or pilgrims, travellers, the sultan and his court, besides other activities which were developed.

Seen from far away, the appearance of a caravanserai is massive, being dominated by strong stone

²⁵ This most probably connects to Evlia Çelebi's remark about the inns in Bucharest and the place of rest for those worshipping Allah, while speaking of the later edifice: "a caravanserai, like an inn." A similar differentiation is mentioned by Maurice Cerasi who, refers to the caravanserais of the Ottoman era as extra-urban buildings, while the inns are seen as closest as possible to the commercial centre (Cerasi 1986, p. 126). Similar opinions are shared by Eleanor Sims and Kuban Doğan (Sims 2006, p. 82, 99 and Doğan 2010, p. 393).

²⁶ From mid-15th century until the last decades of the 17th century.



Fig. 8. Ağzikara Han. View of *iwan* (Boninho – <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/11/Agzikarahan1.jpg>).

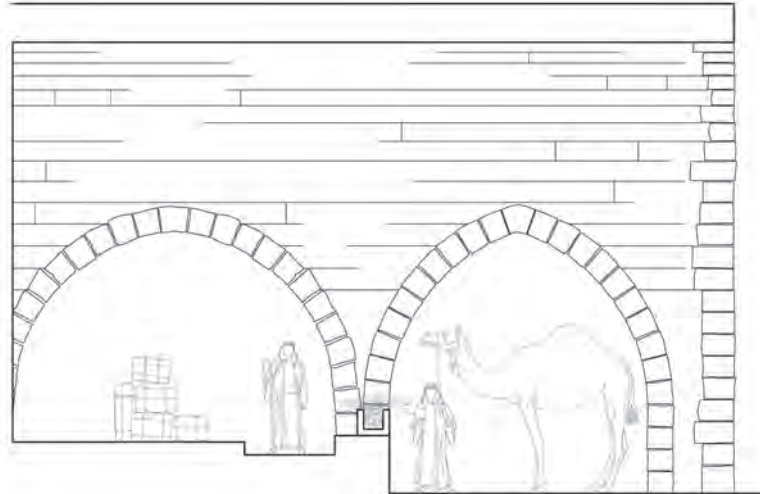


Fig. 9. Kargi Han. Section (Petru Mortu).

walls²⁷ supported by defence towers²⁸ and in some cases by crenellations,²⁹ suggesting the defensive role played when needed. Access was through only one entryway, fitted with massive iron or wooden doors locked by crossbars slid into the sidewalls (Fig. 7). The martial appearance may also be supported by the origins of that programme, which, following a common opinion³⁰ emerged from the fortified buildings named *ribats*,³¹ with visible influence on the planning and formal level. One argument for such a filiation is that, at the beginning of caravanserais, there was no clear distinction between the two types of buildings. Besides defence, there is a postage function, as they hosted the post stops (*menzil*) where messengers found what they needed to cover the distance between stops in a short while.

The accommodation, the key part of a caravanserai, implies people, animals and goods, so that the whole structure is thus organized to meet at their best the needs of the three elements. The access was via a wide space named *iwan*³² where most of the decoration was laid, made of stone carved in flat relief and variously coloured ceramic tiles with predominantly geometric patterns, stylized Koranic verses and *muqarnas* decorations (Fig. 8). The entrance was leading to a corridor where the rooms of the guards and the administrator were located, and from there, to a wide year along which the rooms were placed on one or two storeys. The central space, not covered, was used for traffic, as shelter for animals or loading and unloading goods. Sometimes, on a side of the courtyard, there is a vaulted space divided by a row of pillars, the two resulting spaces having different floor levels. The side facing the yard, at the same level with the latter, was meant to shelter the animals. Next to exterior walls, there was a platform called *seki*,³³ between 0.6 and 1.3 m high,³⁴ used for merchandise, mangers, and when the temperature allowed, as rest place for travellers. For a better separation of activities, the other bay, set apart for people and luggage was raised above the current level, to secure a minimum hygiene from

²⁷ Local materials are used for construction, such as faceted pale yellow limestone, mostly predominant.

²⁸ Pazar Han, Sahipata Han, Sari Han, Sultan Han near Kayseri, Sultan Han near Aksaray, or Zazadin Han, etc.

²⁹ Alara Han, and Sultan Han near Kayseri.

³⁰ Yavuz 1997, p. 81.

³¹ This is an Arabic word and refers to a relatively small fortification.

³² Closed on three sides and developed on height.

³³ Yavuz 1997, p. 84.

³⁴ The interval depended on the size of animals in the caravans. Depending on the geographical area, camels, dromedaries, horses or donkeys were preferred.



Fig. 10. Aksaray Sultan Han (Georges Jansoone – <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1c/Turkey.Aksaray005.jpg>).

the traffic and the area of feeding and watering animals.³⁵ (Figs. 9, 10)

The rooms for guests, the offices, the kitchens, the bathrooms and the annexes are placed along the perimeter, occupying the other sides, in a logical disposition. A key volume, accessible from the inner courtyard, usually placed on the opposite side to the entrance, consisted of a wide hall with three or five naves, covered by barrel- or pointed-vaults supported by pillars. The entrance, placed on the short side, was also through a briefly decorated *iwan*, in a formula which repeats detail elements present in the area of the main access. The interior meant for accommodating people and animals, as well as storing goods, was mainly used in the cold season. The space was dark; the light was coming in through small and narrow windows placed in the

upper section, with the role of additional protection against possible intrusions. For the great caravanserais,³⁶ in the central area there is a semi-spherical dome raised on a drum, pierced by openings for better light and air. The same purpose, of ventilation, is played by small rectangular gaps in the vaults.

The religious function is also present, most of the caravanserais having a wider or smaller place within their walls, where Muslims could pray. The position of the mosque or *mansjid*, to follow the Arabic terminology, varies inside the precinct, being though easily identified by the presence of the *mihrab*. It could be placed immediately next to the entrance or even on top of that, close to the rooms meant for living, or in the centre of the inner courtyard, in this last case being called *kiosk masjid*. If we refer to the Muslim space of pray, we need to refer to ablution fountains, the presence of water being part of the ritual. For the mosques placed centrally,³⁷ those were raised above the ground, being accessible via a stair next to the exterior walls, while the fountain was at the ground floor (Figs. 11-13).

Bedestens and urban inns (*han*; *khan*)

The analysis of the two types of compounds specific to the Orient in a common chapter aims to highlight the relationship between the two programmes and their connection with the commercial centre of the city.

The study of Bedestens in general also aims to define the main features of that programme, as it was known in the territories run by the Ottomans, to allow later a comparison with the “bedestens” in Wallachia.

Comparatively with the Seljuq buildings on the commercial routes crossing Anatolia and connecting it to other cities in the Orient, the inns and *bedestens*³⁸ try to settle as close as possible to the centre of a town, where the trade is intense. The commerce and manufacture functions of the Ottoman city are gathered in one single area named *čaryi*, of a considerable size reaching as much as 6% of the urbanized surface.³⁹ The presence of the bedesten implies the existence of many inns in the close vicinity, which, in their turn, concentrate other commercial activities run temporarily or permanently. The high number of merchants, the abundance

³⁵ A description of an inn, not very different to the system described above, is provided by Ragusan Bošković (1711-1787) who mentions in the diary of his journey from Constantinople to Poland “...along the wall, a sort of pavement a few feet up from the ground and a bit wider than the height of a man, with chimneys here and there; travellers rest there; the side where they have their feet is close to the manger for horses” Boscowitch 1772, *apud* Djuvara 2007, pp. 35-36.

³⁶ Ağzikara Han, Alay Han, Cay Han, Sultan Han near Kayseri, and Sultan Han near Aksaray.

³⁷ Interesting examples at Ağzikara, Sahipata, Kayseri, and Aksaray.

³⁸ Romanian researchers used the word *bezesten* or *bezestan*, but the Turkish literature mentions the *bedesten*. This paper will follow the initial terminology, given the connotation of the Orientals to such ensembles, which is different to that used in the North-Danube area, especially during the Middle Ages. Panait 1977, p. 26 and Simionescu, Cernovodeanu 1985, p. 58.

³⁹ Cerasi 1987, p. 126.

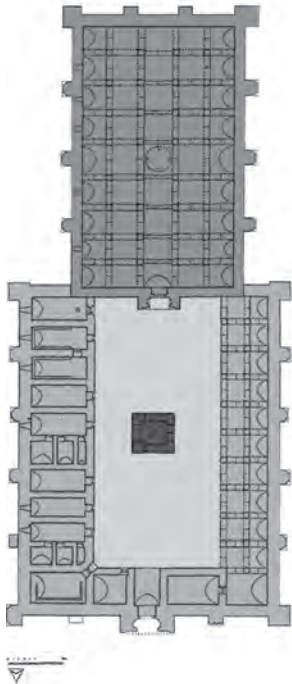


Fig. 11. Aksaray Sultan Han. Plan (Erdmann, *Das Anatolische Karavansaray des 13. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, Mann, 1961-1976 *apud* Yavuz 1997, p. 88).

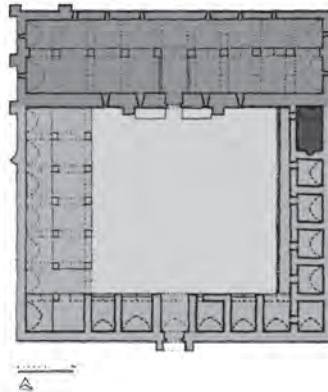


Fig. 12. Kargi Han. Plan (Erdmann, *Das Anatolische Karavansaray des 13. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, Mann, 1961-1976 *apud* Yavuz 1997, p. 84).

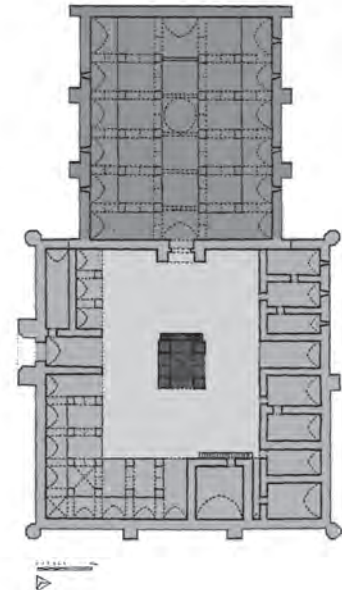


Fig. 13. Ağzikara Han. Plan (Erdmann, *Das Anatolische Karavansaray des 13. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, Mann, 1961-1976 *apud* Yavuz 1997, p. 89).

and diversity of their merchandise, bring about the intervention of the authorities which try to provide the tradesmen with the best conditions for their businesses. Not rarely, central streets are covered, turning the whole area into a relatively unitary structure where a less familiar traveller could hardly still recognize the *bedesten* and the inns. In this core, where the exchange is predominant, various workshops of producers or warehouses can be seen, but no housing. This is also the place for the headquarters of a large corporations, guilds or institutions representing the state (Figs. 14, 15).

The Bedesten is a building around which the commercial life of Ottoman cities revolved starting with the 14th century. The presence of such a building is closely linked to the inter-regional trade conducted by rich merchants and the leading representatives of the state, who exchange large quantities of goods and trade on major values. The importance of those buildings is noticed by Evlia Çelebi who, when describing the Ottoman cities, divides them into two types: with a *bedestan* and without.⁴⁰

In those buildings, closely connected with the inns and commercial streets (*arasta*⁴¹), the merchants of the city carry their activity, renting spaces depending on each one's financial means. From there, one could easily start business with merchants from foreign towns and cities, accommodated at the nearby inns, or with the craftsmen or the producers displaying their goods on streets or counters.

Simplifying considerably, the *bedesten* is an opaque building of a rectangular shape, smaller or larger depending on the importance of the city where it is built, with thick walls, covered by several domes. The access was usually through two entrances from the streets with an intense commercial activity. Valuable goods

⁴⁰ Inalcik 1979-80, p. 1.

⁴¹ Covered commercial streets. Often with a unitary structure, they are protected by walls and domes and are associated to various religious ensembles which they support financially.

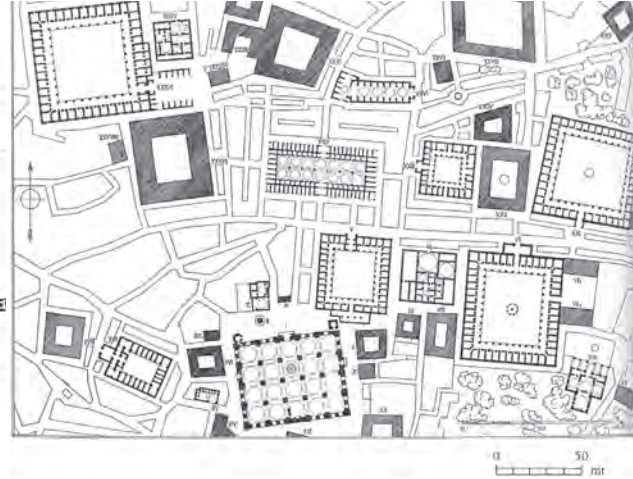


Fig. 14. Part of a commercial area in Istanbul (Cerasi 1986, fig. 24). Fig. 15. Part of a commercial area in Bursa (Cerasi 1986, fig. 27).



Fig. 16. General view of Edirne Bedesten (Petru Mortu).



Fig. 17. General view of Thessaloniki Bedesten (Bogdan Jiman).

from all over the Empire were brought there, stored and sold. The goods included fine silk, gems and precious metals, as well as slaves.⁴² (Figs. 16, 17)

If the construction of a bedesten is closely linked to the trade between the regions, being present only in the big cities, the **inn** is a constant presence in urban settlements. Their locations, in areas with high land prices, the general configuration, the considerable size, the materials used to protect the goods and those working inside made that such edifices, similarly to the Seljuq ones, be built mostly by rich people, with leading functions in the Empire administration.⁴³ The income from rents or fees on traded goods are directed to the founder or, most often, to the great religious ensembles⁴⁴ or charities, protected by the same investors.

From the very end of the 15th century, a certain model is outlined, which will turn customary by the middle of the next century, with numerous such edifices planned by Mimar Koka Sinan,⁴⁵ practically generating forms repeated all over the Ottoman Empire and even beyond. The key shapes of the whole configuration

⁴² Nicolay 1989, pp. 140-141 *apud* Doğan 2010, p. 602.

⁴³ Inns *Büyük Valide, Vezir, Mustafa-Pasha, and Rüstem-Pasha* in Istanbul.

⁴⁴ Within such compounds (*küllie*), other functions could run, such as religious schools (*madrasahs*), hospitals (*darussifa*), canteens for the poor (*imaret*), care centres (*tabhane*), or public baths (*hamam*).

⁴⁵ See Necipoğlu 2005.



Fig. 18. Aerial view of Rüstem Pasha Han – Edirne (Ertan Çakırlar).

are rectangular, but with certain local adjustments if the building is placed in an existing urban fabric. The introverted building is defined by an ample inner courtyard with perimeter porticoes whereto all accommodation and ancillary spaces are oriented. Between those guidelines there is room for variation, trying to set connections with the outside, either through porticoes opened in the entrance area of the compounds, as one could notice at Nicosia⁴⁶ or by lining up shops along the outer perimeter, open towards the public space, as in the case of the inn built by Mahmud Pasha in Ankara or that of Rüstem Pasha in Edirne (Fig. 18). This trend will grow stronger in the 17th century, and especially in the next one, becoming a constant feature until this programme disappears.

Seen from outside, the massive appearance, as of a fortification, is characterized by thick walls made of stone, brick or the alternation of the two, repeating a well-known pattern in the Byzantine civilization (Fig. 19). The selection of materials and working techniques is closely connected to what each location could offer for such buildings. In the Near East and South-Eastern Anatolia limestone was used, in a formula employed in similar buildings of the Seljuq Turks, such as *Hân al-Umdân* in Acra, *Wazîr* in Alep, *Rüstem-Pasha* in Erzurum, *Pamuk* in Kayseri, *Büyük* in Nicosia and in Rumelia, at Edirne, for *Deveci* (Fig. 20) and *Ekmekçizade* inns. On the coast of the Aegean Archipelago and the capitals of the Empire (Bursa, Edirne, Constantinople) where the memories of the Byzantine are well marked, a facing of stone-and-brick work used, for instance at *Fidan* (sapling), *Pirinç* (rice) (Fig. 21), *Ipek* (silk) and *Koza* (silk



Fig. 19. Vezir Han – Istanbul (Petru Mortu).



Fig. 20. Deveci Han – Edirne (Petru Mortu).



Fig. 21. Pirinç Han – Bursa (Petru Mortu).

⁴⁶ *Büyük Inn*.

cocoon) inns in Bursa, erected by sultans and viziers in Istanbul or the inns built in Edirne, Thessaloniki, Plovdiv,⁴⁷ Belgrade, and Skopje.

The entrance is through a single access point, with a less monumental display than in the case of *iwans* from the previous centuries, most of the decoration being suppressed, or, when present, referring to geometrized patterns (*Koza* Inn, in Bursa) (Fig. 22) or relying on the combination of stone and brick laid in different bonds. The doors, well-hinged in the masonry structure, are made of wood and metal plated, to protect from potential fire or attackers (Fig. 23). The corridor at the entrance implies certain rooms for the guards and the administrators nearby, while leading to an inner courtyard, the central area, whereto the spaces for accommodation and various services open. Wide porticoes unfold along the perimeter of the courtyard, intermediating the relation between inside and outside, used for circulation or, in the case of the ground floor, supplementing the services area, be it occupied by shops, workshops or exchange offices. The arcades of the galleries follow the same module, and are separated horizontally by a median moulding and the first floor parapet. The arches, round or Ottoman, are decorated with archivolts or emphasized by the use of construction materials (Figs. 24, 25). The covering is made with barrel vaults,⁴⁸ with cross vaults or by domes on pendentives,



Fig. 22. Main entrance of Koza Han – Bursa (Petru Mortu).



Fig. 23. The gate of Büyük Yeni Han (Petru Mortu).



Fig. 24. Courtyard of Piriñ Han (Petru Mortu).



Fig. 25. Courtyard of Vezir Han (Petru Mortu).

⁴⁷ *Kurşunlu Inn* was one of the major buildings of the city, placed close to *Ulucami* mosque, built during the reign of Murad II (1421-1451). The position of the inn, one of the largest in Rumelia, can be traced back from several published photos and surveys (Cerasi 1986, p. 118 and <http://www.lostbulgaria.com/?p=3378>). Moreover, Slobodan Ćurčić mentions its existence (Slobodan Ćurčić 2010, p. 748), but his is not confirmed on site. At present, a commercial centre was built on the land of the former inn, sometime between the 70s and the 80s of the 20th century.

⁴⁸ Where needed, dormer vaults were adopted.

the last one being a leitmotif of the Ottoman architecture in its classical period.

Similarly to the Seljuq examples, the religious function is also represented by the mosques inside the inn's courtyard, and they could either be in the centre or set into the row of perimeter rooms. The presence of the place for praying in the centre of the inner courtyard, as in *Fidan* and *Koza* inns at Bursa, the *Büyük* inns in Constantinople and Nicosia, or other ensembles in Anatolia, suggests a well-shaped volume, developed on two levels (*kiosk masjid*). The first is aimed for the fountain, and the second for the ritual space, accessible via a monumental single-flight staircase.

A rule, not always applied though, especially where the land is very expensive, is the presence, on one of the sides of the inn, of a second courtyard meant for sheltering animals and vehicles. The occupied surface is smaller than the main yard and often the surrounding buildings are of a lower architectural quality. In this respect, one could mention the inn of Rüstem-Pasha in Edirne, *Kürkçü* (Furriers) Inn in Istanbul and *Fidan* in Bursa erected by Mahmud-Pasha under Mehmed II, as well as *Koza* (Fig. 26) and *Pirinç* in Bursa⁴⁹ built during Bayezid II, the son of the Conqueror.

In Constantinople, with regard to the composition of volumes, the functions, the building techniques and the details, the solutions are similar. The differences to appear are mainly caused by the land they are built on. In some cases, the prohibitive prices lead to an intensive use of the space, resulting in solutions deviated from the nearly square layout, or which adopt an increased building height, this being the case quite often after the turn of the 17th century. An interesting solution, resulted from similar conditions, is visible at *Büyük Valide* and *Yeni* inns where the bow-windows supported by stone brackets make their way into the public space.⁵⁰ (Figs. 27, 28)

Although mentioned by chronicles, the inns built by Mehmed and his intimates, soon after the Fall of the Constantinople, are not preserved, so as to their general shapes or detailed solutions one could only make assumptions. An example which may outline an image, not firm enough though, given the damages and the changes suffered long the centuries, is the *Kürkçü* inn, the oldest in town. One of the yards, the large one, defined a shape close to a square (40 x 45 m) with rooms (almost 90) set along the two floors, while the small one had a polygonal shape due to the features of the site. In the middle of the main courtyard there was a small mosque, now vanished, replaced by a construction alien to the local history. The similarities with the inns in Bursa are obvious, both in terms of organizing the functions, as well as the building solutions.

Other examples of compounds developed around an inner courtyard with porticoes and relatively square plan outlines may include inns *Büyük Valide*,⁵¹ *Vizier* and *Hassan Pasha*. The first one was built in the mid-17th century at Kösem's suggestion, wife of sultan Ahmed I and mother of sultans Murad IV and Ibrahim I. The compound was erected on the site of the former palace of Cerrah Mehmet-Pasha. It includes three yards, the middle one, close to a square⁵² being the largest. The access to the first yard is provided by a large gateway marked by a bow-window supported by massive stone brackets. The shape of the first yard is irregular, given the features of the plot, and the abutment on its limits. Beyond it, lies the main courtyard, distinguished by the generous porticoes of the first floor, the limestone arches and hemispherical domes. In the middle, following traditional formulae, a *masjid* was placed, currently replaced by a building of no architectural value. The third yard, lower than the other two given the features of the land, is oblong in shape and accessible via a vaulted corridor in the North-East. Opposite to the access, set into the structure of the ensemble, there is a

⁴⁹ At present, none of the inns preserves the secondary courtyards in their initial shape, but the researchers exploring them assumed their presence. Restoration works started at the middle of last century treated rather indifferently this issue, so this is now a mere assumption for *Fidan* and *Pirinç* inns. For *Koza* inn, there are visuals confirming the existence of the courtyard, with details of interior partitions. Doğan 2010, pp. 224-226.

⁵⁰ Maurice Cerasi thinks that bow-windows play rather an aesthetic role and that the language comes from the residential architecture, while wooden details were incorporated. Cerasi 1987, p. 127. One should not rule out the hypothesis of the use of such a solution with the aim of providing additional built space. The use of stone could not allow spectacular cantilevers, yet the repetition of this solution at each floor finally led to a substantial increase at the last floor.

⁵¹ *Valide* stands for *Sultan's Mother*.

⁵² Estimated size of 55 m. Freely 2011, p. 346.

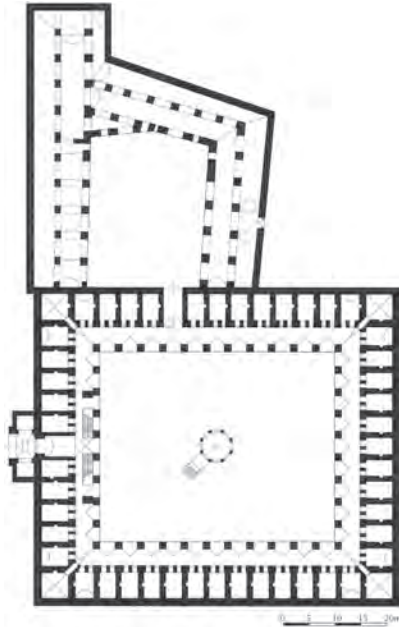


Fig. 26. Koza Han. Plan (A. Yüksel *apud* Doğan 2010, p. 225).



Fig. 27. Main entrance of Büyük Valide Han – Istanbul (Petru Mortu).

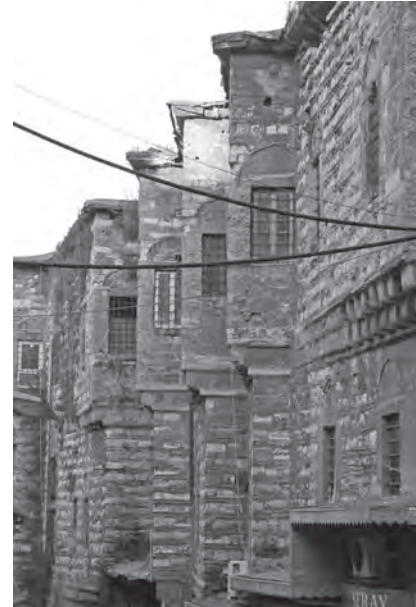


Fig. 28. North façade of Büyük Yeni Han marked by bow-windows (Petru Mortu).

square tower reminding of the Byzantine past of the city and the former palace of Cerrah Mehmet.⁵³ In the highest section of the former tower, now of a reduced height, there used to be a *masjid* covered by a rib vault.⁵⁴ Unfortunately, the passing of time and the permanent use led to repeated changes of the initial shapes which can hardly be figured out at present (Fig. 29).

Another inn with similar features is the one erected a few decades later (1659-1660) by Fazıl Ahmed Pasha, the Grand Vizier of Mehmed IV, to provide income for this family, Köprülü. The inn known as *Vezir* (vizier) is built in the South-Eastern end of the commercial area. It was used for a while to accommodate the representatives of foreign European powers in mission to Constantinople, and then it turned into the main slave market in town. The two-storey inn offers an opaque image to the exterior, with small windows piercing the bulk of masonry, while to the courtyard it shows the classical shapes of Ottoman inns: a stone and brick facing, porticoes and arches emphasized by archivolts. The rooms at the ground floor were used for secondary functions, while those at the first floor for the accommodation of guests.⁵⁵ (Fig. 30)

If the investigation criterion is the plain outline and the configuration of the inner yard, one type which can be studied is that of inns developed along their length, given the conditions of the plot. Such a structure can include two of the major inns in Istanbul, the one of Rüstem-Pasha (Fig. 31) and the one known as *Büyük Yeni* (Great and New) (Fig. 32). The first one is erected soon after 1550, following Rüstem-Pasha's wish, the Grand Vizier of Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566). In charge of the design no one else but Mimar Koka Sinan himself was in charge, who will also design for the same client the inns in Edirne (1560) and Erzurum (1544-1561), Ereğli, and other edifices.⁵⁶ It was built in Galata, on the place of Saint Michael Church, burnt in a fire in 1548.⁵⁷ The construction is characterized by a large, rectangular courtyard

⁵³ Goodwin 2003, p. 359.

⁵⁴ Freely 2011, p. 346.

⁵⁵ Freely 2011, p. 348.

⁵⁶ Necipoğlu 2005, p. 296-331.

⁵⁷ John Freely 2011 p. 240. Some authors claim that the Corinthian marble capital at the left side of the entrance is part of the former church.

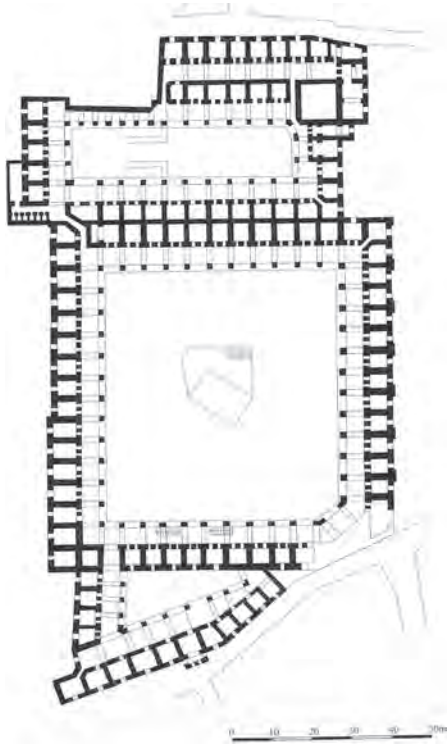


Fig. 29. Büyük Valide Han. Plan (Goodwin 2003, p. 360).

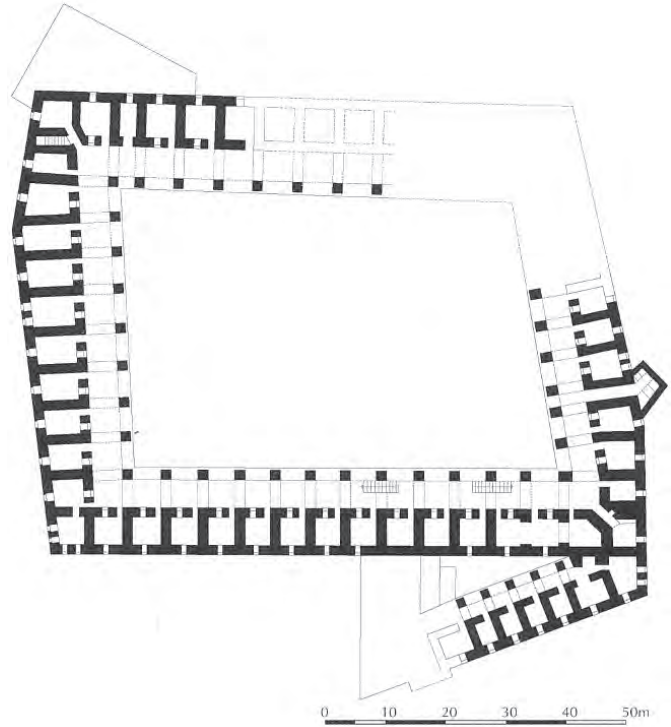


Fig. 30. Vezir Han. Plan (Z. Nayir *apud* Doğan 2010, p. 395).

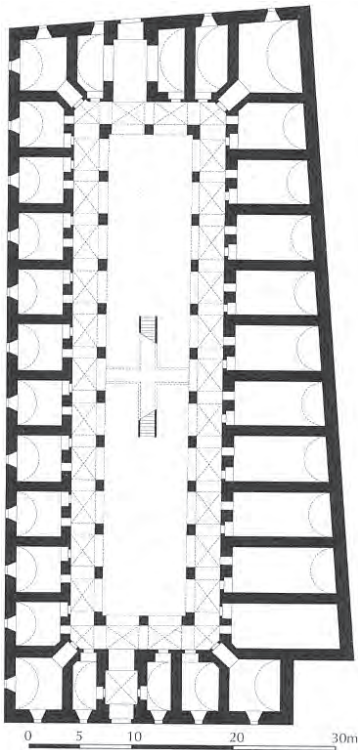


Fig. 31. Rüstem Pasha Han – Istanbul. Plan (A. Kuran, *apud* Doğan 2010, p. 396).

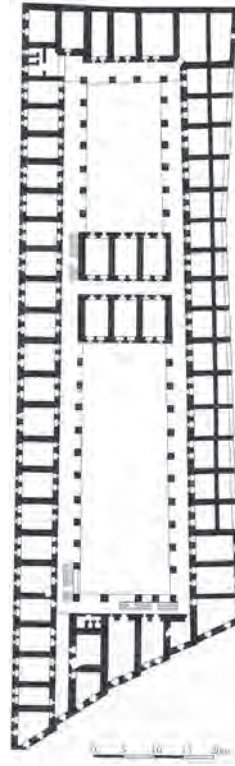


Fig. 32. Büyük Yeni Han – Istanbul. Plan (C. Gurlitt, *apud* Doğan 2010, p. 396).

divided in the middle by a volume meant for vertical circulation, a particular solution not met elsewhere. As for the architectural image, the similarities with the inn in Edirne are clear, the shape and the size of arches, the solution for the wall facing and the cornice (rows of bricks laid at 45°) (Figs. 33, 34).

The second representative inn is that known as *Büyük Yeni*, raised in the second half of the 18th century by Mustafa III (1757-1774). Beside the yard of a rectangular elongated shape (85 x 12-15 m) (Fig. 35) adapted to the plot, the inn has three storeys, one more than the traditional formula. The courtyard is divided by a compact volume which, given Godfrey Goodwin's opinion, was built later. The space for praying was probably in one of the larger rooms, the presence of a *masjid* in the middle of the courtyard not being possible given the limited width.⁵⁸

Another feature mentioned earlier refers to the use of stone brackets to support bow-windows facing the public space, a formula which, along with an interesting image, brings an extra built space, especially visible at the second floor. The detail solutions, the alternation of courses of limestone and brick, the archivolts above the openings at the upper floors are all elements to confer a truly picturesque character.

* * *

The journey in the study of commercial ensembles in the Ottoman Empire attempts to explore some prominent features for the study of this type of architecture, as it came during the 17th and 18th centuries in the area North of Danube, with a focus on Bucharest. As long as there is no physical evidence of the way inns may have looked at that time, the forms of architecture especially, any association with existing examples may outline a few working hypotheses. In an era when the influence of the Sublime Porte was clear in politics, the customs of the waywode and his court, the search for certain architectural patterns, even for the merely functional buildings, in the great cities of the Empire turns into a viable option. Comparisons between the ensembles in the two areas indicate similarities in shape, but also, more importantly, similarities for their functioning and administration.

It is also interesting the way Westerners look upon inns. Anton Maria Del Chiaro describes them, with reference to the Catholic monasteries, a reference to be found in the speech of the wife of the Ambassador of England to Constantinople, Lady Mary Montagu:⁵⁹ "Inns and caravanserais are truly impressive, with

⁵⁸ Goodwin, 2003, p. 392.

⁵⁹ English writer (1689-1762). She is now known for her letters, especially those written from Turkey, as Edward Wortley Montagu's wife while he was the English Ambassador to Constantinople (1716-1717).

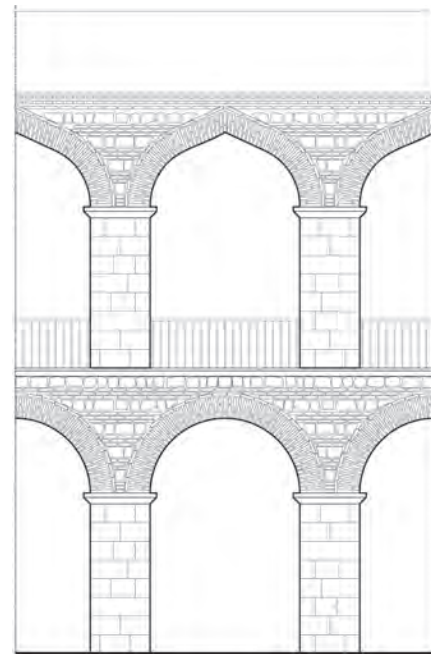


Fig. 33. Bay of Rüstem Pasha Han – Istanbul (Petru Mortu).

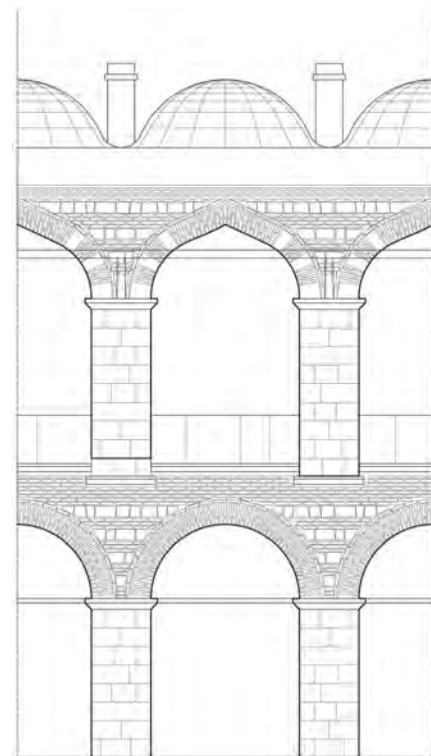


Fig. 34. Bay of Rüstem Pasha Han – Edirne (Petru Mortu).



great yards surrounded by arched porticoes with arcades and shops, offering craftsmen free accommodation. Inns always have a *mesjid*. Those inns resemble our monasteries, with wide yards surrounded by porches with columns and rooms. One could easily accommodate here four hundred people”.⁶⁰ Of course, the Western culture and references of the two led to the comparison being done with familiar ensembles to them.

The comparison, of the shapes only, no matter if it is about the West, the East or the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, may lead to unconvincing results or influenced by subjective opinions. Most probable, the functional and regional conditioning may have determined a common denominator, irrespective of a military garrison, monastery, inn or commercial ensemble.

Fig. 35. Courtyard of Büyük Yeni Han (Petru Mortu).

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⁶⁰ Montagu 1988, p. 126.

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