THE OTTOMAN SURVEY OF 1455 AND THE CONQUEROR'S ISTANBUL

HALİL İNALCIK

This is a preliminary report and a tentative analysis of a survey of Istanbul made by the order of Mehmed II the Conqueror in the year 1455[1]. The introduction to the section concerning Galata tells us that this part of the register was completed in early Muharrem 860 of Hegira corresponding to 11-20 December 1455 A.D., or about two and half years after the conquest. A photocopy of the manuscript, which bears no archival notice, was given to me for stduy by late Professor Bekir Sıtkı Baykal.

In this incomplete manuscript only 128 pages are extant. Of the section on Galata, only the last few pages are missing, while the part dealing with Istanbul, of which we have only 37 pages, has large gaps. The entire northern section of the city on the eastern side of a line from Edirne-Kapı to the Küçük-Ayasofya Mosque on the Marmara coast is missing. That is to say the most populous areas of the Golden Horn, with the Tefkur Sarayı, Fatih, Bayezid, Ayasofya quarters are missing in the photocopy. However, recently, the missing part has been discovered in a register of the central financial department (*Baş-Muhasebe*), torn from the original and incorporated into the register[2].

Since Byzantine Istanbul was taken by force (*'anwatan*) and Galata by agreement under an 'ahdnāme; a covenant, the people and properties in each were differently treated in accordance with the different stipulations of Islamic Law. I examined the part dealing with Galata, altogether 91 pages in my study dealing with Galata. The introduction to the part concerning Galata is extant, it says:

[1] For the document see H. İnalcık, "Ottoman Galata, 1453-1553", in E. Eldem, ed., *Première Recontre Internationale sur l'empire Ottoman et la Turquie Moderne*, Istanbul, 1991.

[2] I am indebted to Professor İdris Bostan for informing me about it. Material from it is not included in this study.

"This is the copy of a defter (register) concerning the people and houses of Galata. In order that the people subjected to cizya (poll tax) or exempted from it and their financial strength as well as the buildings belonging to the Sultan's treasury, subject to rent with the yearly payment, or those exempted ones with no payment be known through a detailed volume, a survey is ordered by our Sultan Mehmed son of Murad Khan. This is completed in the early Muharrem of the year of eight hundred and sixty of the Prophet's Hidjra (11-21 of December of 1455)." It is to be kept in mind that the system of registration and taxation of Istanbul totally differs from those of Galata. In the Istanbul section of the incomplete register, in the 23 Mahalles, or quarters, we counted 918 houses, 291 of them are noted "empty" or "in ruins".

The Islamic Law stipulated that in a city taken by force (*'anwatan*) the land and buildings belonged to the ruler. So in the first days of the conquest the sultan "donated to all the grandees, and to those of his household, the magnificent homes of the rich with gardens and fields and vineyards inside of the city. To some of them he even gave beautiful churches as their private residences."[3] The rest of the land and buildings was to be registered for the imperial treasury. The Sultan's primary concern after the conquest was to repopulate quickly his new capital city[4].

Critovoulos, the Greek historian close to the sultan gives interesting details about the settlement of the captive Greeks in the city in the first days after the conquest[5]. "The dead of Romans and foreigners as was reported in all the fighting and in the capture itself, all told, men, women and children well-nigh four thousand and a little more than fifty thousand were taken prisoners including about five hundred from the whole army." One fifth of the captives, the Sultan's share about one thousand men were settled "together with their wives and children, along the shores of the city harbor, since they were seafaring men whom they previously had called

[3] *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, by Critovoulos, translated from the Greek by Charles T.Riggs, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954, 76.

[4] See, H. İnalcık, "The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 23-24, (1969-1970), 231-249.

[5] Critovoulos, ibid.

Stenites. He gave them houses and freed them from taxes for a specified time"[6].

Also Sultan's initial decision was to settle "the nobility whom he approved of to live there with their wives and children. Accordingly he gave them houses and lands and provisions for living, and tried in every way to help them"[7]. But then, following the warning that the nobility including the Grand Duke Notaras "would no longer hesitate to plot in their own interests and seek to get back what they formerly had or else would desert to the enemies" they were all executed. Later he punished those who gave him the advice, namely his viziers Zaganos and Shihabeddin[8]. On the basis of the evidence from the survey we find two successive waves of settlers in the quarters of the conquered city. The first settlers came immediately after the conquest. Eyewitness Ottoman historian Tursun Bey reports[9] that the Conqueror proclaimed that whoever came of his own accord, be he rich or poor, could select whatever abandoned house or mansion he chose, and be granted the freehold of it. Tursun adds that numerous people hearing the call came and occupied houses and mansions. It appears that this triggered a wave of settlers from Anatolia and Thrace. But those who arrived soon deserted, seeing no chance of survival in a ruinous dead city. Before he left for Adrianople in June 1453, the Conqueror had also ordered that five thousand households be deported to Istanbul by September 1453. The first governor (subashi) of Istanbul, Karishturan Suleyman beg, was given special orders for the task of repopulating the city. During the summer of 1453, people from Galata and Silivri (Sylembria) were deported to Istanbul.

The Conqueror returned to Istanbul in the autumn of the same year. Seeing that his orders for the repopulation of the city had not succeeded as he had hoped, he took strict measures[10]. In order to encourage those Christians who had fled before the siege to return

[6] Ibid., 83.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 84-88; for Mehmed II's favors to the Greeks in later periods, see H. İnalcık, "The Status of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch", *Essays in Ottoman History*, İstanbul: Eren, 1998, 204-206.

[9] *The History of Mehmed the Conqueror by Tursun Beg*, H. İnalcık and R. Murphey, Minneapolis and Chicago: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1978.

[10] See "Istanbul" (H. İnalcık), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, IV, 224-226.

and settle in İstanbul, Sphrantzes asserts,[11] he appointed George Scholarios Patriarch on 6 January 1454. The Sultan then went to Bursa to punish "some local authorities" for their failure to persuade the citizens of Bursa to migrate to Istanbul. There he ordered the deportation of a number of people to settle the new Muslim town of Eyüp outside of Istanbul[12].

Staying in Bursa 35 days, he returned to Istanbul and then set out for Adrianople in the winter, that is, the winter of 1454-1455. Our survey book, completed in December 1455, shows the situation just one year later. He must have given orders for the survey before he left for Edirne.

Giving the details on the identity of the settlers, the survey allows us to determine the patterns of settlement. Here, we have taken for examples the quarters of Top-Yıkıgı, Altı-Mermer Ipsomathya (Samatya), and İsa-Kermesi the quarters with the largest groups of settlers.

The Top-Yıkıgı quarter had 83 households broken down into 5 Greek, 33 Muslim and 45 Jewish households. Prior to these new settlers, the houses were occupied by settlers from Kocaeli (41), Eflugan (Kastamonu) (3), Bolu (3) İnönü (21), Kestel (Bursa district), Manisa, Borlu, Burgaz, Çorlu and Tekvur-Dagı (20) and Jews from Filibe (Plovdiv) (34). Other Muslim settlers were from Burgaz (1) and there were Jews from Edirne (Adrianople), Castoria and Livadya.

One of the quite extensively settled quarters, the quarter of Ipsomathya displays an interesting picture. The early settlers, 18 from areas as widely scattered as Eregli, Mudurnu, Hızırbey-eli, Bolu, Gerede in Northwestern Anatolia, Koca-eli, Bursa, Balıkesir, Seferihisar and Menteşe in Western Anatolia, as well as from Gelibolu in Rumeli, were all Muslims. Among the 13 "Rums"

[11] *The Fall of the Byzantine Empire, A Chronicle by George Sphrantzes*, 1101-1477, translated by Marios Philippides, Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980, 134: "He (the Sultan) further declared the restoration of houses and property to those the had abandoned our city before the siege if they returned home, they would be treated according to their rank and religion, as if nothing had happened."

[12] For Eyüp see "Eyüp Projesi", *Eyüp: Dün/Bugün, Symposium*, 11-12, December 1993, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları 1994, 1-23.

(Greeks) in the quarter, three are distinguished as Istanbullu, natives of Istanbul, and one as a keşiş, a monk. The quarter's population at the time of the survey, however, shows quite a different picture. While most of the early Muslim settlers are marked as runaways, the Greeks apparently stayed on; the houses abondoned by Muslims and others were occupied by a large group of Jews, 37 in number to be exact from Izdin (Zituni) in Greece. Thus, at the time of the survey the quarter had a predominantly Jewish settlement. It should be noted that eight houses in the monasteries continued to be occupied by Muslim settlers. A house abondoned by Şahin of Bolu was occupied by two Rums. There were no Jews in the monestery houses.

The quarter Isa-Kermesi, named after the church with the same name, shows a pattern evidently different from the others, since it kept its more pronounced Greek character. In this quarter we find Muslim settlers from various parts of Anatolia, including Bolu, Yenice, Ayazmend, Ankara and Bogaz-Hisar. Six of these Muslims occupied the houses in the courtyard of the monastery of Ayo Dimitri "Palologoz". There were 19 Rum living in the quarter including eight "kalogerya", one "kalogeros", one priest and four other Rums, all living in the houses belonging to the monastery of Mirlosi. This is the only quarter with a Greek majority, apparently most of them being affiliated with the monasteries and churches in the quarter. It may be that the monastery of "Mirlosi", with its nuns, was left undisturbed by the Turkish invaders. The great number of Greek religious people living in the city after the conquest is noteworthy. The Jews from Lofca (Lovec) in Bulgaria seem to have been deportees. In the quarter of Altı-Mermer, the Muslims from Çorlu in Thrace were in majority (14 households) while those who abondoned the place included Muslims from Bolu (2 households) and Çaga (4 households) a place near Bolu. In the last group we find one tanner, one *fakih* and one *akhi*. The fact that some left the city after obtaining an official permit (*idhn*) indicates that once settled one could not leave the city at one's own will. So many of the first settlers who left were marked as runaways.

In our survey, Greeks are called *Rum* or *Rumî*. They are sometimes mentioned with reference to their origins: Yorgi from Edirne, Yorgi from Silivri, Manul, Athanas, Yorgi of Istanbul,

Thodoros (Monastery Aya Nergiro), or to their professions: Dimitri the shoemaker, Vasiliko the grain seller, Thoma the scribe, Agapenos, the constructor (yapucı), the priest (papas) Wasilikos, Mihal, the gardener, a keşiş or kalogeros.

Of the 27 monasteries listed in the fragment of the survey, only one is still occupied by Greeks. The others are deserted or inhabited by Muslim immigrants. 40 churches are listed for the section covered by the fragment, many of them situated within the walls of a monastery. Only two churches still belong to the Greeks. Five churches are inhabited by Muslim immigrants. Most of the others, having no congregations, were in ruin.

It was Cübbe Ali Bey, then the governor of Bursa, who was entrusted with the task of conducting the survey. He chose as the surveyor scribe his cousin, Tursun bey, the famous historian of the reign of Mehmed the Conqueror[13]. Tursun describes the purpose and the general background of the registration: Following the conquest of the city, the Sultan declared that anyone who came of his own free will and took possession and resided in a house abandoned by its former resident, would become its proprietor. Thereupon, people rich and poor flocked into the city and occupied houses and palaces. Later the Sultan issued a new edict to the effect that all such houses should be registered and each charged with a rent (*mukâta'a*), suitable for its conditions. What was to be granted as property, it was explained, was the building; the ground of it belonged to the *wakf* for the mosque of Ayosofya, so that the plot of the building was subject to a rent.

Tursun adds: "Because of the registration many houses changed hands. For instance, a person who was not able to pay the rent for the plot had to leave and get another house suitable for his means. When the register was completed and submitted to the Sultan it became apparent that approximately two thousand fuçı or 100 million akça was realized. But immediately after, the Sultan, out of his favour, granted the rent to his *kuls* (the military) and subjects, and ordered that certificates, adorned with his tughra, the imperial seal, be given to them free of any charge of rent (*mukâta'a*).

[13] For his biography see H. İnalcık, "Tursun Beg, Historian of Mehmed the Conqueror's Time", *WZKM*, 69 (1977), 55-71.

The conqueror, who after the conquest claimed to be successor to the Roman emperors, taking the title of the *Kayser-i Rûm*, zealously started to repopulate and rebuild the ruined city. The details given by the chroniclers, mainly Critovoulos and Tursun and Ottoman documentation, give quite a clear picture of the task of rebuilding his imperial capital. In this respect the survey of 1455 is our most detailed and reliable source about the conditions of the buildings, including churches and monasteries, after the conquest, and about his continuous efforts to repopulate.

The conqueror declared the first day of his entry to the conquered city that "from now on Istanbul is my *that*, throne (city)" or imperial capital city. (Tursun Bey) and that Hagia Sophia the Câmi'-i Kebîr, or the Great Mosque of his capital city. In 1457 the Conqueror made over to the *wakf* (charitable foundation) of Aya Sofya other Byzantine religious buildings, now converted to Muslim use: Pantocrator or Zeyrek Cami'i, St. Saviour Pantepoptes, or Eski Imaret Cami'i and Mescid at the Citadel at Silivri. The result of the sack and enslavement of its population was that the city was denuded of its former inhabitants and the character which it had possessed in the Byzantine period was radically changed[14]. In 1463 the Conqueror ordered the construction of a mosque and a Sultanic complex, '*imâret* in his own name, Fâtih Sultan Mehmed. The complex included a Mosque, eight secondary and eight higher medreses, a hospice, an imaret (public kitchen), a hospital, a primary school and a library. Around the complex Saddler's hall with 110 shops and two bathhouses. To the north there were the horse market and the stables. To the south of the saddler's hall new barracks for the Janissaries were built. The annual income of the complex from the *wakf* resources reached around 32.000 gold pieces. Those employees in the mosque and other pious foundations in the number of 383 men received their salaries from the *wakf* fund. Besides the free food dispensed at the public kitchen, 3.300 loaves of bread were daily distributed to the employees and the poor.

[14] For the city's development under the Ottomans see, "Istanbul" (H. İnalcık), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2. edition.

These facilities constituted the core of a typical Ottoman city, providing all kinds of religious, social, and economic services. The spatial distribution of functions of the Byzantine facilities within intramural Istanbul in general remained unchanged during the Ottoman era. The *Bedestan*, covered bazaar for valuable goods, and the Grand Bazaar sections with bazaars (çarşıs) of the city, for example, also had the same functions during the Byzantine period. The Byzantine Hippodrome, converted into the *At Meydanı* continued to serve as the main public open space where spectacles were organized during events such as weddings, circumcisions, or *cirit* (javelin throwing) games. Unkapanı, the Flour Trading Hall in the port region of the Golden Horn, had also been the place for the weighing and distribution of flour during the Byzantine era. The town of Eyüp beyond the city walls, however, was from the very beginning established as a Turkish town. Here, a *türbe* (mausoleum), mosque, and *imaret* complex, built by Mehmed the Conqueror on a tomb -allegedly that of Aba Ayyub Ansârî, one of Prophet Mohammed's companions-developed in time into a typical Ottoman town. The first inhabitants of this town were forcibly brought from the city of Bursa. Later on Aba Ayyub came to be considered the patron of Istanbul. The town of Eyüp, like the holy cities of medieval Europe, became a center for the tombs of saints and great personages and a destination of pilgrimage renowned in the entire Muslim world.

In 1459, the viziers of the Sultan, upon his orders, began to construct similar complexes in other parts of the city and new districts of Istanbul developed around these complexes (see the Attached Plan: Pict. III).

The most important complexes (*külliye*) built during the era of Mehmed the Conqueror and of his son Bayezid II, were those of Mahmud Pasha, Murad Pasha, Gedik Ahmed Pasha, Mustafa Pasha, Çandarlı İbrahim Pasha and Hadım Ali Pasha. In time, new *nahiyes* emerged around these complexes, which provided the city with mosques, medreses, schools, *imarets* and other religious and social services, and by 1500, the 12 *nahiyes* of Istanbul came into being. The *Surici* (intramural) Istanbul, which covers an area of 13 square kilometers, cannot be considered as a prototypical city, organized in concentric circles around the city center. It has instead developed in

various *nahiyes* within this area, each *nahiye* having a large *külliye* at the centre. Similarly each residential district, in turn, developed around a mosque, church, or a synagogue. These complexes reflect a patrimonial and hierarchical order in the city's constitution. No Vizier could build complexes larger than those of the Sultan. Common people were only allowed to build small mosques (*mescid*) in the districts. If a "centre" were to be defined for the city of Istanbul, it would probably be the port region of the Golden Horn and the marketplace where the Grand Bazaar was located. The port region, where provisions and merchandise were received into large trading halls (*kapan*) and the caravansaries and Grand Bazaar, where caravans unloaded their wares, were connected to each other by parallel streets, with shops situated on both sides. The port region and the Covered Bazaar constituted the commercial hub of Ottoman Istanbul, as it does today and had done so earlier, in the Byzantine era.

The Islamic city, like the city of antiquity, appears to consist of two parts. The commercial and social life of the city is focused around the main temple and the main marketplace, both of which have a highly planned and organized character. Beyond these two areas lie the residential districts organized located at random. Ottoman Istanbul proper can be said to have emerged during the era of Bayezid II, when the population of the city probably reached 200,000. The intramural Istanbul was the actual metropolitan area at that time. Üsküdar, the terminating point for caravans coming from Asia, as well as Galata and Eyüp (Haslar) on the European side constituted separate towns. It was as late as the 19th century that the Galata-Pera region expanded rapidly to the north and overshadowed the old Istanbul. The transformation of the eastern shores of Üsküdar-Kadıköy and Pendik into a metropolitan city took place even later, in the 1950-1990 period. However, the function of the Istanbul-Galata as the city's commercial centre did not change since Mehmed the Conqueror had laid the foundations of the Turkish city of Istanbul. The overriding objective of the well-established Ottoman tradition of urbanism, based on the institution of *wakfs*, charitable foundations is summarized thus in a couplet in the charter of the Foundations:

Hüner bir şehr bünyâd etmektir

Re'âyâ kalbin âbâd etmektir

(Mastery is to build a city

So to make the people happy)

Villages around Istanbul

The population of the 164 villages around the city, within an area from the European shores of the Bosphorus to the Black Sea and Eyüp, had either fled before and after the siege or enslaved. These villages were of vital importance for supplying produce to the city and had to be fast repopulated. At first, the Conqueror forcibly settled the Turcoman Yörük nomads in some of the villages. He then brought Greek and Serbian peasants taken prisoner during his campaigns in the Balkans to these villages. The Christian villagers were given first the status of slave sharecroppers (*Ortakcıkul*) working on state-owned lands. However, over time they were assimilated to the free peasant population under the status of *ra'iyyet*[15].

[15] See, Ö.L. Barkan, "XV. ve XVI. Asırlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Toprak İşçiliğinin Organizasyon Şekilleri: Kulluklar ve Ortakçı Kullar", *İ.Ü. İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, I and II, 29-74, 448-56.

Buildings and Inhabitants in Certain Districts of Istanbul According to the Survey of 1455

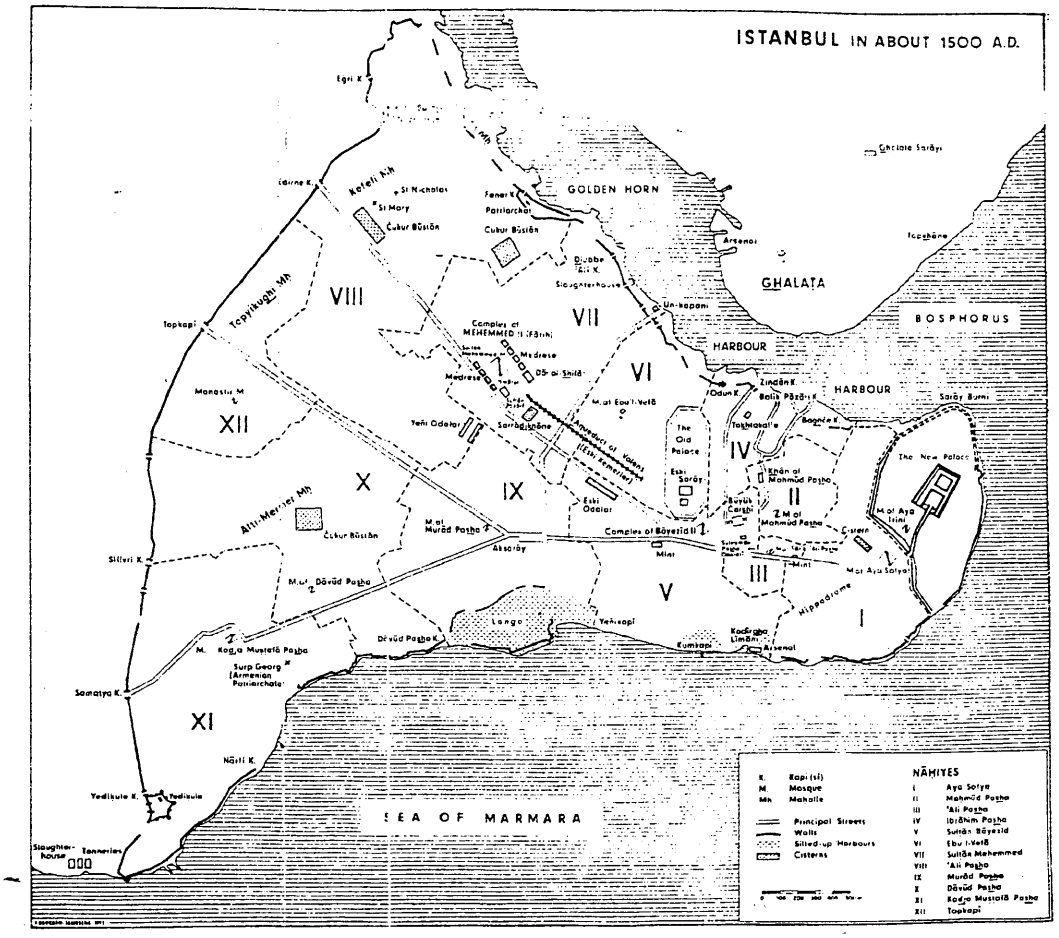
Quarters	Buildings								Inhabitants			
	House occupied	House empty	Room	Çartak	Shop	Monastery	Church	Vinery	Rum	Muslim	Jew	
1. Kızlar Manastırı	3 (5)	2 (4)				1			1	3	-	
2. Koron	5 (6)	1 (2)			1				5	1	-	Shop occupied by "çerçi" Yahya one house in ruins
3. Can-Alıcı	4 (8)	3 (4)				2			4	-	-	
a. Monastery Mayametro	in ruins											Houses in the monastery(a) in ruins Monastery(b) occupied by the dervishes of Baba Ali Haydari
b. Mon.Aya Marina												
4. Mesoyani ميسو يانى	1	3 (7)							-	1	-	abandoned by Muslim settlers
5. Liko Spiros	1	8 (9)							-	1	-	Afluganlu
6. Lips	7 (16)	7 (22)	5		2	1	2		-	2	7	one church in ruins see Monasteries
7. Kir Martas	10 (27)	8 (9)				2	2		3	-	-	Monasteries
a. Monastery Kir Martas												
b. Monastery Khiynas(?)												
8. Megalo Dhimestiko	2 (3)	4 (12)							2	-	-	
9. Manastır Ayos Khristo feroz	2 (5)	3 (9)				1	1		-	2	-	Monastery and church abandoned
10. Sūfiyān	17 (22)	5			1	-	1		-	5	14	

Quarters	Buildings								Inhabitants			
	House occupied	House empty	Room	Çartak	Shop	Monastery	Church	Vinery	Rum	Muslim	Jew	
11. Top-Yıkığı a. Monastery Marul b. Monastery Mama	68 (98)	18 (27)			5	2	5		5	33	45	Churches abandoned, see Monasteries
12. Kir Nikola Monastery Kir Nikola	4	6				1	-		-	5	-	see Monasteries
13. Ral Karmir	4	4				-	2		-	4	-	Church named Akşaşiloş, the other church made a mosque
14. Kılıc Manastır Kılıc	4 (5)	6 (13)				1			-	4	-	see Monasteries
15. Istradothna	7 (20)	5 (14)					1	2	-	7	-	2 vinery, abandoned one church, abandoned
16. Bāb-ı Silivri a. Sivastokrator Mamas b. Verbetidha c. Iskeb	9 (10)	14 (29)			3	3			3	7	-	see Monasteries 2 churcnes in ruin, one in use
17. Altı Mermer Monastery Aya Nergiro	20 (38)	19 (40)				1	2	1	1	19	-	one ahengerhane, smith shop, see Monasteries
18. Kartel Khrise Manastır Istudhyo	5 (13)	10 (16)				1	2					see Monasteries
19. Ipsomathya a. Manastır Zoodhokhu b. Manastır Ayos Athanos c. Manastır Buber	51 (68)	15 (25)			2	3	7		9	4	42	church Ayo Yorgis and six other churches in ruins or going down see Monasteries

Buildings and Inhabitants in Certain Districts of Istanbul According to the Survey of 1455

Quarters	Buildings								Inhabitants			
	House occupied	House empty	Room	Çartak	Shop	Monastery	Church	Vinery	Rum	Muslim	Jew	
20. Isa Kermesi a. Manastır Ayaz Mamoz b. Manastır Ayo Dimitre Palogoz c. Manastır Mirlos	8 (10)	6 (8)			1	3	5 (6)		6	3	-	one church abandoned the other in use
21. Kızıl-Taş a. Manastır Ayos Vasilos b. Manastır Pavslib c. Manastır Khristheleni d. Manastır Suyaninas	10 (17)	3 (4)			4	4	5		-	10	-	the church in ruins, one shop is used as a mosque
22. Azebān Manastır Rali Kirmeri	3	4 (7)				1	4		-	3	-	one mill abandoned
23. Büyük Balat	6	6 (21)				-	-		2	4	-	

Buildings and Inhabitants in Certain Districts of Istanbul According to the Survey of 1455



III. Plan ol İstanbul in about 1500 A.D.



550.yılında
FETİH ve İSTANBUL

The Conquest and Istanbul in 550th Anniversar

BİLDİRİLER





TÜRK TARİH KURUMU

2007