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THE HUB OF THE CITY: THE BEDESTAN OF ISTANBUL

Mehmed the Conqueror, in rebuilding Istanbul after its conquest, followed the patterns laid down by his Middle Eastern predecessors.[1] In its physical structure the city was to have an "Islamic character" so that the Muslim community could live in accordance with the prescriptions of the *Sharia*. Thus a religious center with a congregational mosque was built to be the focus of city life. Next to it were placed charitable institutions directed toward the fulfillment of religious obligations. These included *imarets*, or hospices for the poor and for travelers, and hospitals. To finance these religious charitable institutions, a number of revenue-producing establishments came into being on the principle of *wakf* (pious endowment). These revenue-producing establishments were designed also to meet the social and economic needs of the Muslim community.[2]

In accordance with the traditional Middle Eastern view of state and society, the social structure of the city followed a set pattern. The city population was composed of three major groups: the upper class attached to the Palace, including the military and the *ulema;* the merchant class engaged in both interregional and international trade; and the craftsmen. The latter two groups were *reaya,* the productive urban taxpayers. They differed from each other, however, not only in their economic activities but also in their legal status. The craftsmen were subject to *hisba,* or market regulations; their supply of raw materials and rate of production was controlled, and their prices were fixed by the state. The merchants were not only exempt from *hisba* but were also encouraged to accumulate wealth by whatever activities they deemed proper.

The merchants were themselves divided into two classes: "resident" (*kā'id* or *kā'in*) and "traveling" (*saffār*). The *bedestan* was the resident merchants' place of business; nearby were the *khans* or caravanserais where the traveling merchants lodged.[3] Also nearby were the rows of shops (*dükkan, hânût*) where the craftsmen worked, each craft having its own row. Altogether these constituted the bazaar (*çarsu=çarşi,* or

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[1] For a discussion of the pre-Ottoman Islamic city, its origins and its physical and social structures see J. Sauvaget, "Esquisse d'une histoire de la ville de Damas," *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* **8** (1934):422-80; G. Marçais, "La conception des villes dans l'Islam," *Revue d'Alger* **1** (1945):517-33; *idem.*, "Considérations sur les villes musulmanes," *Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin* **6** (1954); N. Pigulevskaja, *Les villes de l'état iranien aux époques parthe et sassanide* (Paris and The Hague, 1963); and *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed. (hereafter E *I*²) s.v. "Baghdad," "Bukhara," "Bursa," "Fustat," "Halab," and "Istanbul." For a strong reaction to the idea of a typical Islamic city with a corporate social structure (L. Massignon's thesis), see I.M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967); *idem.*, ed., *Middle Eastern Cities* (Berkeley and Los Anglels, 1969); A. Hourani and S.M. Stern, eds., *The Islamic City* (Philadelphia, 1969); H.A. Miskimin, D. Herlihy and A.L. Udovitch, eds., *The Medieval City* (New Haven and London, 1977); and the special issue of *Arabica* **9,** no. 3 (1962) on Baghdad.

[2] For recent studies on Ottoman urbanism, see Osman Ergin, *Türk Şehirlerinde Imaret Sistemi* (Istanbul, 1939); Ö. L. Barkan, "Quelques observations sur l'organization économique et social des villes Ottomanes," *Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin* **7** (1955): 264-310; N. Todorov, *Balkanskiiatgrad XV-XIX vek.* (Sofia, 1972) (forthcoming in English); L. Fekete, "Ofener Kaufleute zur Zeit der Türkenherrschaft," *Festschrift F. Giese* (Leipzig, 1941); Halil Inalcik, "The Impact of The Annales School on Ottoman Studies and New Findings," *Review* **1** (1978): 77-80; and, *idem.*, in *EI*², s.v. "Istanbul," pp.

suk). These two key groups—merchants and craftsmen—determined the social and economic character of every Ottoman city and of Islamic cities in general.[4] Slaughterhouses, tanneries, oil presses, dye-houses and the like were established to provide materials and services needed by the craftsmen, while the population in general was served by wholesale markets (*kapans* or *kabbân*) built to provide sources for flour, fruit, honey, oil, fish, vegetables, salt, coal, horses and slaves.[5]

Apparently originating in the Greco-Roman basilica or *kaiserion*, the *bedestan* (or *bazzâzistân* or *qaysariyya*, as it was called in Arab lands, Eastern Asia Minor and Iran) was the central building of the commercial part of the town.[6] Because the *bedestan* was an institution linked to international trade, it existed in only the most important cities, and in Ottoman survey books the *bedestan* was always listed among the prominent institutions of a city. In fact, Evliya Çelebi, in his work describing Ottoman cities, divided them into two classes—cities with, and cities without a *bedestan*.[7]

As a rule, the city with a *bedestan* was a center for international trade. It was generally densely populated and numbered among its inhabitants wealthy members of the ruling class and successful capitalist merchants who imported valuable wares. The construction of a *bedestan* in an otherwise unimportant town could assist considerably in the development of that town as a commercial center by attracting the big merchants, to whom the protection provided by a *bedestan* was vital.[8] In fact, in many instances a *bedestan* was built on the initiative of the Ottoman government, or of some vizir or governor, for the purpose of promoting trade. On the other hand, a *bedestan* was sometimes built in response to the demands of merchants who, because of their economic success, felt the need for a place in the city in which they could conduct business with security. As a rule, *bedestans* were built as *wakf* to provide revenue for charitable projects. The Bedestan of Istanbul and the bazaar around it were constructed by the Sultan to foster the city's economic life and were part of the reconstruction of the city after its destruction during the conquest.[9]

The specific economic functions of a *bedestan* were three. First, it was the place where the merchants' valuable imported wares, primarily textiles, were safely stored and sold. Second, it was the center where the resident merchants conducted their financial transactions and organized their overland caravans and commercial sea voyages. Third, the *bedestan* was the place where all sorts of valuables belonging to individuals—principally jewelry and money—were safely guarded under state protection in especially designed safes. In addition, the coffers of the *bedestan* served as the place of safekeeping for items held in trust (*emanet*); these included the fortunes of missing persons being held until a legal time period (*bayt al-mal*) had elapsed, trust funds for legally-protected minors such as orphans (*yetim mali*), and important documents concerning the city's inhabitants. In sum, the *bedestans* in many respects played the role of modern banks and exchanges. (As such, they were a favorite target of robbers.)[10]

Above all, the *bedestan* was the headquarters for the merchant guild trading in precious textiles (*baz*, thence *bazzâz* and *bazzâzistân* or *bazzâziyya*). The merchants of the *bedestan* held an imperial decree and a legal document from the *cadi* guaranteeing the monopoly privilege of their guild. They guarded this monopoly jealously. For example, in 1609, when wares of the type the merchants dealt in were being sold in drugstores (*attar*) in Galata, the merchants of that city's *bedestan* complained directly to the Sultan.[11] (In the mid-sixteenth century, however, the government eliminated the absolute monopoly over the sale of textiles, ruling that unless a special *ferman* were issued to the contrary, merchants could not prevent the sale of clothing outside the *bedestan*.)[12]

Constructed to fill the specific functions of well-protected storage vault and major trade center, the *bedestan* building holds a unique place in the history of the development of Ottoman architecture.[13] In its design it was no doubt similar to many other traditional, solid buildings of the Middle East.[14] The oldest *bedestans* which survive today are those of Bursa, built under Orkhan and Bayezid I in the fourteenth century.[15] The Ottoman *bedestan* was a compact stone building, square or, more often, rectangular in shape, with thick walls and lead-encased domes. It towered over the commercial

[4] C. Cahen, "Zur Geschichte der städtischen Gesellschaft im islamischen Orient des Mittelalters," *Saeculum* **9**, pp. 59-76; and Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*. Muslim geographiers such as Istakhri, Ibn Haukal, Makdisi, Ibn al-Balkhi, Idrisi, Yakut, Abu'l-Fida and Ibn Battuta point out this basic social structure in Islamic cities from Central Asia to Morocco. For the Ottoman period, see Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, 10 vols. (Istanbul, 1898-1938).

[5] See Halil Inalcik, "Bursa," *Belletan* **24** (1960):56-61.

[6] *Bedestan, bedesten* and *bezisten* are popular forms in Turkish of *bezzâzistân*, i.e., the mart of textile dealers (*bazzâz*). In formal language, *bazzâzistân* and *dâr al-bazzâziyya* are the preferred forms. On *qaysariyya*, see Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, pp. 59-60; Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, index: *"qaysayriyya"*; on *qaysariyya* in Morocco, see J. Berque in *Hommage à Braudel*, vol. I, pp. 125-26. In Greco-Roman cities the basilica performed the same function as the *bedestan*: see A.F. Pauly and G. Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopaedia der Klassischen Alterthumswissenschaft*, pp. 83-95.

[7] *Seyahatname*, vol. III, p. 383. The largest cities in Rumili with stone *bedestans* were, in descending order of size, Edirne, Selânik, Serez, Yenişehir, Sofya, Belgrad, Budin, Bosna-Saray, Üsküp, and Filibe. Some other small towns also had their own stone *bedestans* as, e.g., Bayburd and Bolu in Anatolia; see Evliya Çelibi, vol. II, pp. 173, 345.

[8] Immediately after the conquest of Cyprus, the merchants settled in Nicosia (Lefkosa) asked the government to repair and convert a ruined church in the Aya-Sofya Bazaar into a *bedestan*. They argued that "it will be beneficial to all people and our wares will be well protected" (Başvekâlet Archives, *Mühimme* 23:109, dated 15 Radjab 981). See also the document reproduced at the end of this article. Mahmud Pasha Bedestani in Ankara was especially designed for the sale and [illegible]

[9] The founding of the *bedestan* in Galata is mentioned by A. Refik, *16. Asırda İstanbul Hayatı* (Istanbul, 1935), p. 133. Evliya Çelebi comments about Iznik that "although there is no *bedestan* here, all kinds of valuable wares can be found" (*Seyahatname*, vol. II, p. 8). For a discussion of the *bedestan*'s function as a safe place for valuables in trust, documents and the like, see Ç. Uluçay, *17. Asirda Saruhan'da Eşkiyalik* (Istanbul, 1944), docs. nos. 90, 117; and *idem.*, *18. Asırda Saruhan'da Eşkiyalik*, (Istanbul, 1955), doc. no. 15. See also *Silahdar Tarihi*, II, 270; *Cevdet Tarihi*, VIII, 688; and I. Dalsar, *Bursa'da İpekçilik* (Istanbul, 1960), p. 170. J. Porter, in *Observations* (London, 1979), p. 312, compares the *bedestan* (*"bezestyn"*) to a great exchange.

[10] A. Refik, *11. Asr -i Hicri'de İstanbul Hayatı* (Istanbul, 1931), doc. no. 80.

[11] A regulation attributed to the Nishanci Celâl-zâde provides that a party building a *bedestan* could not force people to trade in clothes within it, and a *ferman* was issued to this effect (*Kanunname*, Ankara University, Dil ve Tarih-Cografya Faculty Library, Ismail Saip MS 5120, 1382a).

[12] On the *bedestan* in Ottoman architecture, see A.S. Ülgen, "Ankara'da Mahmud Pasa Bedestani ve Bitisindeki Han" in *Fatih ve İstanbul*, vol. I, pp. 69-77; Gündüz Özdeş, *Turk Çarşilari* (Istanbul, 1953); K. Kepeci, *Bursa Hanlari* (Bursa, 1935); E.H. Ayverdi, *Fatih Devri Mimarisi* (Istanbul, 1953), pp. 398-414; T. Gökbilgin, *Edirne, Paşa Livasi* (Istanbul, 1952), p. 93. Architecturally the Ottoman *han* or caravanserai had a plan completely different from that of the *bedestan*; for the comfort of the traveling merchants, the caravanserai was built around a large courtyard, open to the sky, usually with a fountain and basin in the center. For the early Ottoman caravanserais in Bursa, see E.H. Ayverdi, *Osmanli Mimarisinde Fatih Devri*, vol. III (Istanbul, 1973), pp. 126-32; and Semavi Eyice, "Eski Hani," *Tarih Dergisi*, no. 24 (1970):93-130.

[13] See n. 6 above on the basilica of Constantinople; see also R. Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine: development urbain et repertoire topographique*, 2nd ed., (Paris,1964), pp. 157-60.

[14] Kepeci, *Bursa Hanlari*, p. 3. Sedat Çetintaş, *Turk Mimari Anitlari, Osmanli Devri, Bursa'da Ilk Eserler* (Istanbul, 146); Ismail Baykal, *Bursa ve Anitlari* (Bursa, 1950), p. 103; Orkhan's *bedestan* is mentioned in the *cadi* records as "Bezzâzistân-i Atik"; it is the covered building adjacent to the *Bey* or *Emir Han*. In the *Evkaf Defteri* of Hudavendigar it is

district of the city like a fortress. Small windows were located in the upper part of its walls. There was usually one gate on each of its sides, from which the broad streets (*shahrah*) of the bazaar radiated out in four directions. Inside, the *bedestan* was divided by thick pillars into square compartments, each of which had a dome over it. The compartments inside a *bedestan* numbered from four to twenty. Outside the *bedestan* there were shops set up against its walls, and the *çarşis*, the rows of shops for the various crafts, were built nearby on both sides of the streets parallel to the axis of the *bedestan*. Outside of this complex additional rows of shops were constructed in squares or rectangles.[16]

The Old Bedestan of Istanbul

The Conqueror decided on the construction of the Istanbul Bedestan in 1456. Construction was completed in the winter of 1460-1461. Kritovoulos, a contemporary source, described the original *bedestan* as

> a very large and very fine market place near the center of the city near the Palace [the old Palace in the Forum Tauri] . . . protected by very strong walls on the outside and divided on the inside into very beautiful and spacious colonnades.[17]

In the Byzantine period, in this area on the Imperial Road (Mese) and near the Forum Constantini, there was a basilica where valuable wares were sold.[18] However, the Bedestan and the *Büyük çarşi* (Great Bazaar or Covered Bazaar) of Istanbul appears to have been located to the west of the Byzantine construction. That the Bedestan and Grand Bazaar were originally built by the Conqueror is confirmed beyond a doubt by both the *wakf* registers and the statements of the Byzantine historian Kritovoulos. Furthermore, in its architectural features it is clearly the apex of a development which can be followed through the earlier *bedestans* built in other Ottoman cities before 1453.[19]

The first *bedestan* of Istanbul came to be known by various names. In the *wakf* registers of the Conqueror it is referred to as *Dâr al-Bazzâziyya al-Djadida*, or, simply, *Bazzâziyya* or *Bazzâzistân*. At a later period it was called the *Eski-Bedestan* (Old Bedestan) or the *Iç-Bedestan* (Inner Bedestan) or the *Djewâhir-Bedestani* (Jewelry Bedestan). According to the *wakf* register of Aya-Sofya, dated 1520, a second *bedestan* was built for the cotton cloth merchants (*kirbâscis*). This was located to the

[16] For plans of the Great Bazaar, see Charles White, *Three Years in Constantinople*, vol. III (London, 1845), p. 1; *Istanbul Şehir Rehberi* (Istanbul, 1931); *Islam Ansiklopedisi* (hereafter *IA*) vol. II, p. 440; Ayverdi, *Osmanli Mimarisinde Fatih Devri*, vol. III, pp. 126-32. For an outline of the Great Bazaar and the *bedestans*, see R. Mantran, *Istanbul dans la seconde moitié du XVII^e siècle* (Paris, 1962), pp. 463-67.

[17] *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, T. Riggs, trans. (Princeton, 1954), pp. 104-105. On the completion of the structure, see Doukas, trans. H.J. Magoulias (Detroit, 1975), p. 258.

[18] Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine*, pp. 97, 99, 157.

[19] See Ayverdi, *Osmanli Mimarisinde Fatih Devri*, vol. III, pp. 126-32. On earlier Ottoman bedestans in Bursa and Edirne under Bayezid I (1389-1402) and Mehmed I (1413-1421), see *idem.*, *Osmanli Mimarisinin Ilk Devri* (Istanbul, 1966), pp. 169-71, and *idem.*, *Osmanli Mimarisinde Mehmed Çelebi ve II. Sultan Murad Devri*, vol. II, (Istanbul, 1972), p. 162 and photo on p. 266b.

east of the Old Bedestan and consisted of sixty shops inside and twelve shops outside. Later this was replaced by a larger structure with twenty domes where silks (*sandal*) were sold. The *Sandal Bedestani*, now the Auction Hall, was the largest *bedestan* of the Empire. The Old Bedestan remained, specializing in jewelry, furs, precious textiles and arms.[20]

The most reliable and oldest sources on the Bedestan and the surrounding Bazaar are the *wakf* deeds and registers. According to a *wakf* deed of 1473, written in Arabic, the Bedestan contained 124 shops with coffers (*sanduk*), and outside it there were 72 shops occupied by various craftsmen.[21] In the register, the rows of shops are listed as follows: the bazaar of silk merchants (*sûq al-kazzâzin*), the bazaar of the cap-makers (*sûq al-kallânisin* or *kavukcular ve takyeciler*), the bazaar of used goods (*bit-pazari*), the bazaar of bootmakers (*sûq al-khaffâfin* or *kavaflar*), the bazaar of saddlers (*sûq al-sarrâdjin*), and the bazaar of cotton-wool dressers (*sûq al-hallâdjin*).

According to a later "detailed" register drawn up in 1489 for the collection of *wakf* revenues, the *bedestan* then contained 126 shops inside, and there were 782 shops in the bazaars around it, for a total of 908 shops in all.[22]

According to the register of 1520, the *bedestan* contained 126 shops with coffers and 15 corner shops (*köshe*) before it was destroyed by fire in 1516; when it was rebuilt after the fire, it housed 140 shops with coffers and 28 corner shops.[23]

In a register of 19 July 1496 in which all of the *wakfs* of the Conqueror are listed, we find the following:

[20] There existed only two *bedestans* in the Great Bazaar area. Evliya Çelebi, in *Seyahatname*, vol. I, ppp. 614, 617, mentions only two *bedestans* in Istanbul, one called *Bedestan-i Atik* or *Eski Bedestan* (Old Bedestan) and the other called *Bedestan-i Djedid* or *Yeni Bedestan* (New Bedestan); he attributes the construction of both to Mehmed II, the Conqueror, but the *wakf* deed of 1520 establishes that the New Bedestan was built after that year. Evliya Celibi states that, unlike the Old Bedestan, in the New Bedestan "no sale is made of precious things like jewelry but luxurious garments like silks and the like." This explains why the New Bedestan was also called the Silk (*Sandal*) Bedestan, while the Old Bedestan was known also as the Jewelry Bedestan. Cf. Le Brun, *Voyage au Levant*, (Paris 1714), pp. 46-47. Cristobal de Villalon, in *Viage de Turquia* (Madrid, 1905), pp. 304, enumerated jewelry and silks of gold and silver as being on sale in the Bezistan and observed that in one shop alone was found as much jewelry for sale as in the whole square of Medina del Campo. For information on wares sold at the Old Bedestan in the sixteenth century, see Ramberti (1534), trans. A.H. Lybyer, in *The Government of the Ottoman Empire* (New York, 1966), p. 241; Hans Dernschwam, *Tagebuch einer Reise nach Konstantinopel und Keleinasien*, F. Babinger, ed. (Munich and Leipzig, 1923), p. 93; J. Sanderson, *Travels, 1584-1602*, (London, 1931), p. 78; *Itineraire de Jean Maurant*, L. Dorez, ed. (Paris, 1901), pp. 336-37; Nicolas de Nicolay, *Les Navigations, Péregrinations et Voyages faicte en Turquie* (Antwerp, 1576), p. 239. Slave merchants did their selling in the *bedestans*, with only male slaves customarily being sold in the Old Bedestan: see A. Refik, *Istanbul Hayati, 1000-1100* (Istanbul, 1931), pp. 25-26.

[21] Published by Osman Ergin, *Fatih Imareti Vakfiyesi* (Istanbul, 1945). The original *vakfiyye* of 1473 (text on p. 6 in Ergin, ed.) reads: *"Al-Dâr al-Bazzâziya al-djadida al-Ma'rufa bi-Bezastan allati fi dakhiliha mi' ata wa arba 'in wa 'ishrin sandukan min sanâdik al-Bazzâziya."* That is *bedestan* is refered to here as "new" simply means that it was newly built; Ergin's inference (*IA*, s.v. "Bedestan," pp. 40-41) that this was the New Bedestan or Silk Bedestan is mistaken. The New Bedestan was built after 1520 in the place of the Small Bedestan or *Kirbascilar Bedestani*. "Al-Bazzâziya al-sughra allati yeskunu fihâ al-kirbasiyyûn," states the *vakfiyye* of 1520. In the 1520 deed only *sanduks* or coffers were mentioned as existing in the Bedestan. Evliya Çelebi speaks of *dolabs* (boxes) and *mahzens* (stores) in *Seyahatname*, I, p. 614, 617. In some *bedestans* there is mention only of shops (*dukkans*); see Ayverdi, *Instanbul Vakiflari Tahrir Defteri* (Istanbul, 1973), p. 68. White (*Three Years in Constantinople*, vol. I, p. 174) speaks of "strong, fire-proof boxes sunken into a wall of masonary under the floor." Evliya asserts that there were "underground depots *[mahzen]* with iron gates" into which wares displayed in the outer shops were carried and stored each day (p. 612). Dernschwam mentions wooden boxes in which precious textiles are were stored in the shops (*Tagebuch einer Reise nach Konstantinopel*, p. 93).

[22] Başvekâlet Archives, Istanbul, Maliyeden Müdevver No. 19.

[23] Istanbul Belediye Kütüphanesi, M. Cevdet Kitaplari, No. 0.61.

Al-Bazzâziyya, located in Istanbul, the seat of the Ottoman Sultanate, near the *Imaret* of the late Mahmud Pasha in the district of the Çakir-Agha Mosque, contains 128 sanduks with the dependent shops which are adjacent to it. Those in its environs occupied by cloth merchants, cap-makers, tailors, and others known as *Bit-Pazari* are altogether 849.[24]

In the following table is shown the number of shops within the *bedestan* and in the *çarşi* outside it as recorded in various *wakf* documents.

	1473	1489	1496	Before 1516 fire	after fire
Bedestan	124 *sanduk*	126 *sanduk*	128 *sanduk*	*126 sanduk,* 15 *köshe*	*140 sanduk* 28 *köshe*
Çarşi	?	782	849	ca. 1,000	1,011

Fire destroyed the old Bedestan and the Great Bazaar on several occasions. On 17 Radjab 922 (16 August 1516), the Bedestan and about 1,000 shops around it burned down (as is indicated in the register of 1520).[25] Most of the businessmen went bankrupt. Later fires in which the Bedestan and the *Bit-Pazari* were destroyed occurred on the following dates: April 25, 1546; April 19, 1588; November 20, 1652; December 4, 1701; and April 27, 1750. Following the great fire of 1701, the Bedestan itself was rebuilt, and the structure which Charles White saw in 1843 was thought to have been a new building. E. H. Ayverdi is, however, of the opinion that in the rebuilding the basic structure of the fifteenth-century *bedestan*—its walls, domes, and gates—were preserved and still remained when Charles White saw the building.[26]

One of the best descriptions of the *bedestan* of the sixteenth century is Dernschwam's.[27] He states that there were two *bedestans* in Istanbul—stone buildings with domes supported by pillars and with high windows—in which all kinds of jewelry and silks were sold. Along the walls were wooden benches, two *eln* in width and one and one-half *eln* in height; on the benches against the walls were wooden boxes with gold-embroidered, colorful fabrics draped over them and valuable silks stored within them. The benches themselves were adorned with rugs and velvet pillows embroidered in gold, and some merchants had built annexes to their benches and spread rugs over them, making it almost impossible for three persons to walk abreast in the narrow ways between. In the *bedestans* were merchants of all nationalities—Turks, Greeks,

[24] Tahsin Öz, ed., *Zwei Stiftungsurkunden des Sultan Mehmed II. Fatih* (Istanbul, 1935). This *wakfiyye* was translated into Turkish in the middle of the sixteenth century and has been published in *Fatih Mehmed II Vakfiyeleri* (Ankara, 1938).

[25] The correct date is given in Rustem Pasa Tarihi, Istanbul University Library Ms., fol. 167a; cf. A.M. Schneider, "Brande in Konstantinopel," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* **41** (1941):382. M. Cezar, "Istanbul Yapilarinda Tahribat Yapan Yanginlar ve Tabii Afetler," *Türk Sanat Tarihi Araştirmalari,* vol. I, (Istanbul, 163) follows Hammer and gives the date as August 15, 1515.

[26] *Fatih Devri Mimarisi,* p. 400.

[27] Dernschwam, *Tagebuch einer Reise nach Konstantinopel,* p. 93.

Armenians and others. They chatted amicably with each other, ate and played games together. The possession of a shop in the *bedestan* gave great prestige to its owner.

The two *bedestans* were considered the most chic and cosmopolitan places in Istanbul. As the demand for space in the Old Bedestan grew ever greater, the rents were raised accordingly, as shown by the following table of rents in *akça.*

	Regular shops	Corner shops	Annual total of rents
1489	20	3 to 15	30,684
pre-1520	30	10 to 40	?
1520	40	10 to 45	51,888

In addition, the competition for shops was so keen that one could easily sell one's right of occupancy for 5,000 *guruş* — about 3,500 gold pieces.[28] In the 1840's, however, the *bedestan* began to lose its central place in the city's commercial life as the new center at Beyoglu (Pera), where European goods were sold, gained in public favor. White states that at this time only Muslim merchants occupied the Old Bedestan, while the good-will money customarily paid to get a shop in the Silk Bedestan dropped from 30,000 to 15,000 *guruş.*[29]

The merchants of the Old Bedestan

Detailed information about the shop owners of the old Bedestan also is found in the survey registers made for the use of the *djâbi* the collectors of *wakf* rents. According to the register of 1520, Muslims then occupied 123 of the total of 168 shops; 34 shops were rented by non-Muslims, and 5 corner shops and one *sanduk* shop were vacant. *Beyt'ul-mâldjis* (officials in charge of the properties which reverted to the state because there were no heirs) occupied two of the corner shops; a *beyt'ul-mâl emini* (chief of the property officials) and a *kassâm* of the *kadiasker* (an official whose duty it was to fix the shares of inheritances worth over 10,000 *akças* and to collect taxes due the *kadiasker*) occupied one shop each. In another corner shop the surplus left over from the *wakf* revenues of the Aya-Sofya mosque was kept.

According to the registers of 1489 and 1520, the distribution of non-Muslims in the old Bedestan was as follows:

[28] Evliya, *Seyahatname,* vol. I, p. 614.

[29] *Three Years in Constantinople,* vol. II, pp. 252, 257.

	Jews	Armenians	Greeks	Europeans	Total
1489	5	10	3	—	18
1520	18	13	2	1	34

The increase in the number of Jewish shopkeepers must be related to the arrival, after 1492, of large numbers of Jews from Spain, Portugal and Italy. Although it is noteworthy that the number of non-Muslims doubled in the thirty-one years between the registers, in the period as a whole the overwhelming majority of merchants in the Bedestan were Muslim.

It is not possible to show completely the distribution of Muslim merchants according to their social origins because in most cases no title is given next to the names in the register. In the register of 1520 there are no titles given for 66 of the 123 Muslim shop owners; the remaining 57 were classified as follows.

A.	*beys*	6
	ulema	6
	kapikulus	2
	çelebis	13
B.	*'âmil*	1
	mutevelli	1
	muhtesib	1
C.	*hodjas* (merchants)	10
	kethudâ	1
	craftsmen	7
D.	Arabs	6
	Persians	3
	Total	57

It will be seen that twenty-seven of the identified members of the Old Bedestan society were members of the elite class. Besides the *beys* and *ulema,* there were two soldiers, i.e., the *kapikulu* who belonged to the ranks of artillerymen and of *yayabashis* (officers of a Janissary unit). *Kapikulus* are listed as shop owners (*solaks* and *mehters*) even in the register of 1489. In addition, the 1520 register lists thirteen *çelebis*, i.e., the sons of persons in the elite class. Thus it appears that a rather high percentage of Muslim shop owners were probably from the upper classes.

It is noteworthy that Bali Bey and Sinan Bey each had two shops. Unless they had retired, it is unlikely that such members of the elite class conducted the business of their shops themselves. We know that usually slaves were employed in such capacity.

The members of this upper class usually invested their capital in interregional trading ventures, either by overland caravans or by ship.[30]

Other named members of the Bedestan included an *'âmil* (tax-farmer), a *mutevelli* (superintendent of a *wakf*), and a former *muhtesib* (market inspector). Tax-farmers and *mutevellis* usually invested their capital in interregional trading and acquired first-hand experience in commerce.

The professional merchants, the *hodja,* made up the largest group of tenants next to the elite amateurs. These invested their capital in trading expeditions for which they employed agents, both free men and slaves.[31] The Ottoman *hodjas,* big merchants who, after the conquest, came to Istanbul from Edirne, Bursa and Ankara, played a central role in the development of Ottoman Istanbul by fostering the city's economic life through their business activities as well as by establishing *wakfs, mahalles* and commercial districts.[32] Seven merchants of the Old Bedestan were originally craftsmen: they included three booksellers (*sahhâfs*), one watchmaker, one coppersmith, one carpenter, and one tailor.

One shop owner was a woman, Gülnar Badji. In later registers women were frequently found on the list of craftsmen and traders owning shops in the *bedestan.* In the female slave trade women were conspicuously active.

As for foreign occupants, among the non-Muslims the name of an *efrendj Djoromi* is listed. Here the term *efrendj* obviously refers to an Italian. Foreign Muslim merchants were referred to as Arabs or Persians. We know that in this period merchants from Damascus and Aleppo and silk merchants from Iran occupied an important place in Ottoman commercial life.[33] In 1520, the Arab and Persian merchants who owned shops in the Old Bedestan were named as follows: Muhibb al-Dîn, 'Abd al-Kâdir, 'Alî, Yûsef, Abdu'l-Fadl, and Kadi Ibrahim, all Arabs; and Persians Kh^{w}adja Kâsim, Zayn al-Dîn, and Mahmûd b. Kh^{w}ajha Shams al-Dîn of Gilan. From the time of the Conqueror on, the Ottomans strongly encouraged the settlement of foreign merchants in the capital.

Administration and organization of the Old Bedestan

The Bedestan was under the general supervision of the imperial endowments department; however, the merchants doing business there had formed a guild corporation and, according to Evliya Çelebi (ca. 1638) the Bedestan was under the direct administration of an elected body composed of "*shaykhs, nakibs, duadjis* and one *kethuda.*"[34]

[30] See Inalcik, "Capital Formation," pp. 115, 124-32. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the composition of the merchants in the Bedestan did not change much, although Greeks and Armenians began to take over as middlemen in the growing European trade. According to Inciciyan, *Istanbul* (1804), H. Andreasyan, ed., (Istanbul, 1956), p. 27, the majority of the shop owners in the Old Bedestan were Muslims, while in the New Bedestan they were mostly Greeks and Latins from Chios; cf. Porter, *Observations,* p. 312. White (vol. I, p. 4) asserts that the Silk Bedestan was tenanted exclusively by Armenians.

[31] Inalcik, "Capital Formation," pp. 115,124-32.

[32] See *EI*^{2}, Vol. IV, s.v. "Istanbul," p. 231.

[33] See Halik Inalcik, "Bursa and the Commerce of the Levant," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 3 no. 2 (1960): 219-47; and *idem.*, "Capital Formation," pp. 108-109.

[34] *Seyahatname,* vol. I, pp. 611-13.

In addition it is stated that there were 300 [?] broker-criers (*dellâl*) operating inside the Bedestan and 200 [?] outside; that 70 [?] night watchmen (*pâsbân*) patrolled the building; and that 300 [?] porters (*hammâl*) were in service outside the Bedestan. It should be remembered, however, that the figures given by Evliya are usually grossly exaggerated. In the *wakf* deeds of 1496 the number of night watchmen is given as 4 only.[35]

Because of the importance of their respective services, the broker-criers and the night watchmen were appointed by the Sultan's diploma (*berât*) and kept under constant supervision by the public authorities. Other workers were required to show guarantors (*kefîl*) at the time of their appointment.

According to Charles White, who left a first-hand, detailed report of the organization and operation of the Bedestan corporation, those in direct charge included one *shaykh* or *kahya*, one deputy inspector (*nakîb*) and six elders:

> The *kahya* receives a small salary from the company, and other emoluments, such as may be derived from fines levied on those who transgress rules or attempt to pass off spurious articles, calculated to bring the trade into disrepute . . . The intendent and deputy are charged with matters of policy and are chosen by the *Esnaf* (members of the guild), to watch over their interests. They determine factory and market prices.[36]

The *kahya* was responsible before the government for the good behaviour of the guild members and for their strict compliance with the regulations and with the Sultan's orders.[37] Whenever there was an infringement of their rights, or the rights of members of associated trades around the Bedestan, guild representatives went to the court of the *cadi*, who usually sat at the Mahmud Pasha mosque nearby, to make their representations. As a rule, the *cadi* then reported the matter to the Sultan and awaited his orders before taking action.[38]

The Bedestan was open for business every day from early morning until noon (during Ramadan until the time for afternoon prayers). The watchmen cried out the call to noonday prayer and patrolled inside the Bedestan to make sure that no one remained inside. A prospective seller would seek out the chief broker-crier, inform him of the minimum price he would accept, and register the sale. Then the seller's goods would be carried around the market by a one of the numerous broker-criers who would try to get the highest price by asking for bids. "Half of the broker-criers sell goods by auction within the walls, and others perambulate the contiguous arcades for the same purpose."[39]

[35] According to White (*Three Years in Constantinople*, vol. I, p. 175) the Bedestan had twelve broker-criers and six watchmen. The watchmen stood on guard at the main entrances during the day and were responsible for protecting the place at night.

[36] Ibid., vol. II, p. 251.

[37] See A. Refik, *Istanbul Hayati, 1000-1100*, pp. 25-26.

[38] See A. Refik, *On Altinci Asirda Istanbul Hayati* (Istanbul, 1935), p. 42.

[39] White, *Three Years in Constantinople*, vol. I, p. 175. For a regulation affecting brokers, see R. Anhegger and H. Inalcik, eds., *Kânûnname -i Sultani ber müceb -i 'örf -i Osmani* (Ankara, 1956, pp. 57-59; on the measures introduced against the malpractices of the brokers, see Refik, *On Altinci Asirda Istanbul Hayati*, p. 110 (the original is in *Mühimme Defteri* No. 22, p. 277, Başvekâlet Archives, Istanbul.) Refik also tells about the sale of silver vessels in the Bedestan (p. 136).

When valuables were deposited for safekeeping in the Bedestan, an inventory was made and the goods were delivered in trust to the syndics. In return for this service, the syndics collected a small fee from the owner at the time of withdrawal. Sometimes goods were unclaimed and became the property of the Bedestan. (However, in 1843 a new regulation required that unclaimed fortunes be turned over to the government.)[40]

The Büyük Çarşi or Great Bazaar of Istanbul

On each side of the four great streets radiating from the old Bedestan and of the streets parallel to them, rows of shops were built for traders and craftsmen.[41] The number of these shops increased from 782 in 1489, to 849 in 1496, and to 1,011 in 1520. The monthly rent from all of these amounted in 1489 to 15,395 *akça* and in 1520 to 34,153 *akça*. The Great Bazaar was planned as an extension of the Bedestan. As the rents from the shops belonged to the Aya-Sofya endowment, the *mutevellî*, the trustee for the endowment, was the direct supervisor of the shops. According to the register of 1520, the distribution of the shops was as shown in the table following this article. In the table, corner shops, some 74 in number, are not listed separately. It should be noted that the shops in a street facing a certain craft usually belonged to that craft and that some individuals owned more than one shop, while some shops were operated as partnerships.

In the seventeenth century, according to Evliya Çelebi, the Bazaar attached to the Bedestan included the following craft guilds. European woolen cloth dealers (*çukadjis*), satin dealers (mostly Jews), brocade dealers (*débadjis*), velvet weavers (*katifedjis*), cushion dealers (*yasdikdjis*), *dânâyi* silk weavers (*dârayidjis*), silk garment dealers (*hilatdjis*), shawl and girdle dealers (*kushakdjis*), *aladja* weavers (*aladjadjis*), bath cloth weavers (*peshtimaldjis*), *kemkhâ* dealers, *dimi* dealers, cotton cloth weavers (*bezdjis*), *boghasi* weavers, textile merchants (*bazzâzân*), carpet dealers (*khalidjis*), felt dealers (*abadjis*), coarse woolen cloth dealers (*kebedjis*), mohair cloak dealers (*sof-ihramdjis*), mohair dealers (*sofdjis*), the Soldiers' Bazaar (*Sipah Pazari*), the *Bit-Pazari* for used goods, the Women's Bazaar (*Avret Pazari*), and the middlemen (*meyandjis*); in the shops immediately outside the Bedestan were jewelers, makers of gold and silver thread (*klabdandjis* and *sirmadjis*), fine cotton textile dealers (*boghasidjis*), silk dealers (*kazzâz*), cap-makers (*takyedjis*) and booksellers (*sahhâfs*).[42] In parades each of these guilds marched as an independent group within the company of the Old Bedestan guild.

The *Bit-Pazari* always preserved its separate identity, although in the *wakf* register of the Conqueror it is included among the other annexes of the Bedestan.[43] Charles

[40] White, *Three Years in Constantinople*, vol. I, p. 175. Ergin, *EA*, s.v. "Bedestan," p. 442, recalls seeing 300 iron safes used for such a purpose in 1914.

[41] On the Great Bazaar, see O. N. Ergin, *EA*, vol. III s.v. "*Çarşi*," pp. 360-62; Avyerdi, *Fatih Devri Mimarisi*; G. Ozdes, *Türk Çarşilari* (Istanbul, 1953); S. Eyice, *EA*, s.v. "Istanbul," p. 1214; S. Tekiner, *The Great Bazar of Istanbul*, Turkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu Belleteni No. 92; H. Inalcik, *EI*², vol. II s.v. "Istanbul," pp. 227-29; S. Unver, *Fatih'in Oglu Bayezid'in Su Yolu Haritasi* (Istanbul, 1945).

[42] *Seyahatname*, vol. I, pp. 613-17.

[43] *Fatih Mehmet II Vakfiyeleri* (Ankara, 1938), p. 73. "All the shops in the bazaar known as *Bit-Pazari* is the annex of the *Bezzâziyye*." *Cf.* p. 20 of the text of the 1496 *wakf* deed.

White, in describing the *Bit-Pazari* in the 1840's, states that at this time used clothing was sold there, and retired Janissaries and Palace gardeners constituted the majority of the merchants. The merchants of the *Bit-Pazari* were prosperous; they sold expensive dresses, furs, and girdles and loaned money against the security of goods at rates of 10 to 20 percent. The *Bit-Pazari* had its own *kethuda* or *kahya* and its own criers. White also states that the street-sellers who displayed their used goods outside the *Bit-Pazari* were more numerous than the regular merchants inside.

It should be noted that there were also other major commercial centers and buildings around the Old Bedestan and the Great Bazaar. To the east was a block of 220 shops known as the Mahmud Pasha Dükkanlari. (Counting the shops around and behind it, the total was 265.) To the south was the caravanserai called Süleyman Pasha Odalari, commonly known as the Slave Market (*Esir Pazari*). To the west were the Bodrum Kervansarayi, the Horse Market, and the *çarşi* of the bow-and-arrow-makers.

Crafts related to horses and horsemanship as a whole constituted a major branch of Ottoman industry. Before the Conqueror built his own mosque and the *Sultan Pazari* to serve as the new commercial center of Istanbul, the horse market and ancillary crafts were located to the west of the Old Bedestan. In 1470, when the *sarrachane* with its 110 shops was built near the *Sultan Pazari*, the Conqueror gave a monopoly in saddlemaking and other related crafts to the guild of the *sarrachane*. The register of 1493 lists 146 saddlers, all Muslims, some of them Janissaries, working in the *sarrachane*.[44]

More recent statistical data on the Great Bazaar is given by Osman Ergin.[45] In the 1940's, the *Büyük çarşi* covered an area of 30,700 square meters and included 3,000 shops. If those rooms in the *hans* used as workshops and shops are included in this total, the figure reaches 4,000. Around the Bazaar there originally existed twenty-one *hans*, six of which were destroyed by earthquakes. Most of these *hans* were connected with the streets of the Bazaar and thus became an integral part of it.[46] In the Bazaar itself are five small mosques, one school, seven fountains, one well, one running stream, and one public fountain with a basin. The Great Bazaar has eighteen gates to the outside.

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[44] On *sarrachane*, see Çagatay Uluçay, "Istanbul Sarrachanesi," *Tarih Dergisi* 3 nos. 5/6 (1951-52): 151; see also the renewal of the diploma in A. Refik, *Istanbul Hayati, 1100-1200* (Istanbul, 1930), p. 41.

[45] See Ergin, *EA*, vol. III s.v. "*Çarşi*" p. 361. Ergin was the head of the department of statistics in the municipality of Istanbul.

[46] Such an arrangement existed with the bazaars in Iranian cities; see, e.g., Abdelali Karank, *Athār -i Bāstāni -i Azerbaydjan*, vol. I, (Tehran, 1351 A.H.) pp. 14-51.

Crafts	No. of Occupied Shops	No. of Vacant Shops	No. of Craftsmen	No. of Partners	Muslim-Turks	Non-Muslims: Jews	Non-Muslims: Armenians	Non-Muslims: Greeks	Foreigners: Arabs	Foreigners: Persians	Foreigners: Europeans
Goldsmiths and money exchangers	30	—	52	20	41	3	—	7	—	1	—
Across from the above	22	—	45	21	31	2	6	6	—	—	—
Guild of *Gelincik-Pazari*	37	—	58	20	58	—	—	—	—	—	—
Facing the above	21	—	29	6	29	—	—	—	—	—	—
Turban makers (*kallanis*)	28	1	44	16	38	5	—	—	—	1	—
Facing the above	22	—	39	12	36	3	—	—	—	—	—
Jewish cloth-merchants	38	—	49	15	22	21	3	2	—	1	—
Facing the above	20	—	36	16	29	7	—	—	—	—	—
Makers of broadcloth and archery bows	10	—	16	6	13	3	—	—	—	—	—
Goldsmiths and money exchangers	34	4	32	9	29	—	1	3	—	—	1*
Goldsmiths	14	2	20	8	13	—	2	5	—	—	—
Facing the above	14	4	17	—	12	1	—	4	—	—	—
Gelincik-Pazari	58	—	98	38	92	3	3	—	—	—	—

*"Frenk" Battista

IMPERIAL PERMIT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A BEDESTAN AT ROSETTA



Translation

This is an imperial permit for Vizir Ali Pasha to build a *Bazzâzistân* in Reshid [Rosetta]. The contents of the imperial diploma state that the holder of this exalted imperial diploma, my vizir Ali Pasha*—may God maintain him in his high position,—when he was governor of Egypt, the merchants and wealthy traders all came together in his presence, and solicited him to build a *bazzâzistân* in the aforesaid city so that they would not have the worry of carrying their goods every morning and evening from home to the shop and back. Thereupon Ali Pasha built there in a well-protected place, a *bazzâzistân*, and all the population of the city came to the *cadi*'s court and asserted that it was to the best interest of everyone that all kinds of cloths sold by the yard [*zira'* = 65 cm], and perfumes and drugs be sold exclusively in the *bazzâzistân*, and that all the broker-criers of these trades do their transactions in that place. Since their decision was recorded in the *cadi*'s official register and a copy of it was sent to my exalted Porte with the request for an imperial *ferman* for its confirmation, I granted this imperial diploma and order that from now on all kinds of cloth sold by the yard, and perfumes and drugs are to be sold exclusively in the aforesaid *bazzâzistân* of Ali Pasha, and the broker-criers are to be on duty there. No one is to be obstructive by any means whatsoever. Let it be known in this fashion.

* The above document is contained in MS. *Munsha'at, British Museum Or. 9503, fol. 42*. The Manuscript includes mostly state papers of Sultan Süleyman's time. Under Süleyman I (1520-1566) there were two Ali Pashas, each of whnm became governor of Egypt—Semiz Ali Pasha in 1552, and Hadim Ali Pasha in 1559; see M. Süreyya, *Sidjill-i Osmani, III* (Istanbul 1895), pp. 498-99.