Constantinople as an Imperial Capital: Mehmed II and the Making of the Ottoman Empire

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Faculty Introduction

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Baylie Adams successfully investigates the role of Constantinople as an Ottoman city in the formation of the Ottoman Empire. She evaluates the transition that the city underwent right after its conquest in 1453 with a refreshing look at the secondary literature. Adams also employs contemporaneous maps in her analysis and provides a new perspective on the evolution of the city from a Byzantine capital city into an Ottoman one. In doing so, she emphasizes how the architectural changes made in the city not only created a new imperial capital for the Ottoman Empire, but also triggered a series of new administrative policies that played essential roles in the making of the Ottoman Empire.

Abstract

When Mehmed II conquered Constantinople in 1453, the city was merely a shell of what it had been during its height. While Mehmed II seemed to understand the importance that Constantinople could play for the emerging Ottoman Empire, the city still resembled a Byzantine capital. Mehmed II aimed to transform the city into the seat of his new empire through policies he would implement. Canonical historical views argue that the Ottoman Empire was formed immediately after the siege of Constantinople. However, this paper claims that the Ottoman Empire was not formed overnight, but rather through a series of policies implemented by Mehmed II that helped shape the empire. Some of these policies would affect the architectural landscape of Constantinople, making it more recognizably Ottoman while allowing for remnants of Byzantine idioms to remain. Other policies would transform the role of the sultan, affecting the bureaucratic hierarchy and the power the Ottoman Grand Viziers had.

The Ottoman Empire was one of the longest-running dynastic empires in history, ruling from 1301 to 1918. However, it did not begin as an empire but as a small polity, with a slow transition to a state. The Ottoman dynasty was first founded in Anatolia (modern-day Turkey) around the thirteenth century and expanded into neighboring territories, first with Ertugrul Ghazi and then his son Osman. The Ottoman polity grew into an Ottoman state in the fifteenth century as it needed to administer to a larger number of people due to the continual expansion. Historians, who study the early modern period of the Ottoman Empire, argue that this transformation happened immediately after the successful siege on Constantinople in 1453.[1] This paper, however, will argue that the siege of Constantinople did not result in an immediate shift in the Ottoman state structure. Instead, Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1451-1481), had to implement architectural and administrative changes that eventually transformed the semi-nomadic Ottoman government and society into an empire. Architecturally, Mehmed II constructed recognizably Ottoman buildings within the existing cityscape. He also redesigned the layout of the city itself, routing roads for Ottoman customs and so they passed the new Ottoman structures. Administratively, Mehmed II diluted the presence of the sultan from the urban and public spheres. Instead, he created a distinct bureaucratic hierarchy that would remain in place. Mehmed's goal was to redefine the landscape of Constantinople to reflect the policies and traditions of the Ottoman Empire. Since Constantinople was already the seat of an imperial power, the Byzantine Empire, the relocation of the Ottoman capital from Edirne to Constantinople was a relatively smooth process.

Constantinople was the epicenter of the Eastern Roman Empire, later known as the Byzantine Empire from 324 AD on. The Roman Emperor Constantine, who founded Constantinople as his new capital city, constructed the city to be the New Rome. Soon after its construction, the city became a central location for the exchange of goods and knowledge in the Mediterranean region. It was an important stop on the Silk Road visited by traders and intellectuals alike. By the seventh century, it also came to be known as the seat of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Located by the Sea of Marmara, Constantinople was surrounded by heavily fortified walls. These walls proved impenetrable to the various groups, such as the Vandals, Goths, Sassanids of Persia, and Muslim armies, who attempted to sack the city.[2]

Constantinople's religious, political, military, and economic signifi-

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[1] Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600* trans. by Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber (New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc, 1973), 76-77.
[2] Stéphane Yerasimos, *Constantinople: Istanbul's Historical Heritage* (Paris: Konemann, 2005), 28.

cance was well known to the rulers of the medieval and early modern states located in Mediterranean region. For instance, the Muslim rulers of both the Umayyad and the Abbasid caliphates attempted to conquer Constantinople twelve times since the seventh century. For Mehmed II, who ascended the Ottoman throne at a very young age, the city was an undeniable prize in the midst of his domains. The young sultan was aware that this famed city's conquest would bring him legitimacy both within and beyond the Ottoman domains. Conquering the city would not only prove his talents as a sultan to his ruling elites, but also to the contemporary rulers in the Mediterranean region.

After the conquest of Constantinople, Mehmed II faced many issues overcoming the remnants of the Byzantine Empire and replacing them with identifiably Ottoman urban spaces, architectural structures, and institutions. While Mehmed II did not try to eradicate Constantinople of every Byzantine structure or symbol, he did strive to incorporate them into the newly evolving Ottoman ideology. By changing the location of the Ottoman capital from Edirne to Constantinople, the sultan had to establish an Ottoman city from a pre-existing cornerstone of Christianity. Mehmed II initiated architectural construction policies as an attempt to articulate the new Ottoman ideology and construct a new imperial capital. Mehmed II bureaucratically altered the Ottoman state by transitioning into a more secluded role of sultan and relinquishing power to his Grand Viziers. Beginning with the change of the city's name from *Estambol* to *Islambol*, meaning abounding in Islam, Mehmed II tried to assert that Constantinople would be the new capital or *takht*, meaning throne.[3] For Mehmed II to successfully make Constantinople the capital for the Ottoman State, his policies would not only need to merge the pre-existing *Ghazi* tradition with a new imperial ideology, but also visually represent the Ottomans in what was a previous Byzantine city.[4] He altered Constantinople into an Ottoman imperial capital through architectural programs, the relocation of people, the assertion of a new imperial ideology and capital city, and a new visual representation of the city. Mehmed II's architectural, social, and political policies after the siege of Constantinople helped the transition of the Ottoman state into a nascent Ottoman Empire.

[3] Halil Inalcık, "The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City," *Dumberton Oaks Papers* 23/24 (1969): 233.
[4] Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 56-9, 62-67. *Ghazis* were known to be border warriors. They were nomadic, moving from one raid to the next and living off of the plunder from the conquered lands.

Architectural Construction Programs: Monumental Changes

The focus of Mehmed II's policies, after the siege of Constantinople, was the city's structures. Mehmed II had to overcome the association of Constantinople with Christianity; then, he had to assert a purely Ottoman dominance within the city walls. The Byzantine structure the Ottomans first turned their attention to was the Cathedral Hagia Sofia.[5] The Hagia Sofia, because of its location within the city, its size, and its dome, was an easily distinguishable structure within the city that denoted Byzantium's previous grandeur. Mehmed II, needing to quickly assert an Ottoman presence, chose to make the Hagia Sophia his Friday Mosque.[6] The Friday Mosque was where the sultan would lead prayers and was an important symbol of the sultan for the people. Mehmed II's transformation of the Hagia Sophia into a Friday Mosque was minimal at best. The sultan simply removed any remnants of Christian liturgy from the walls of the Hagia Sophia to denounce it as a Christian church. To establish the Hagia Sofia as his Friday Mosque, Mehmed only hung up the absolute essentials, leaving the Christian paintings on the walls and structural decor around the inside and outside of the building.[7] This shows Mehmed II's acceptance of previous Byzantine architectural grandeur, as well as what influence the Hagia Sofia played in the layout of Constantinople. His lack of changes to the walls and structure of the Hagia Sophia imply Mehmed II was quickly asserting Ottoman dominance, while not looking to overshadow the empire that came before him. He would continue to assimilate pre-existing Byzantine idioms[8] and structures into the construction of Constantinople as the center of Ottoman's polity. Mehmed II's decision to establish a Friday Mosque immediately after the conquering of the city displays the importance he placed on changing Constantinople into a city that was representative of the Ottoman narrative.

When creating his new imperial capital, Mehmed II also began the construction of a palace for himself and the imperial family in the center of the city, partially within the site of the forum *Tauri*.[9] The first palace, located centrally to the population of the city, would continue to mark Constantinople as the sultan's new capital; because it bridged

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[5] Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul: Cultural Encounter, Imperial Vision, and the Construction of the Ottoman Capital* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009)*,* 18-9.

[6] Pınar Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), 69.

[7] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 20.

[8] Idiom, in this sense, refers to the distinctive architectural style as a characteristic mode of expression. Used here and throughout the paper, the term expresses a strong sense of cultural style.

[9] Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire,* 76-77.

the two continents of Europe and Asia together, Mehmed II adopted the titles of "Ruler of the Two Continents and Two Seas" and Caesar.[10] Since Constantinople had been the seat of Eastern Orthodoxy or the Eastern Roman Empire, Mehmed II felt as though he was the heir to these titles with his new capital. This is one of the reasons moving his capital established a clear shift in the imperial ideology. It is important to note that Mehmed II's first palace also incorporated various Byzantine traditions and idioms into its architecture.[11] In the creation of an Ottoman palace, the sultan assimilated Byzantine architectural idioms, showing that he was trying to reproduce the grandeur of the city.

Continuously incorporating existing Byzantine structures in the new Ottoman capital indicates the sultan's desire to reinvent Constantinople as his capital, not remake it from a heap of rubble. In contrast, Mehmed II did not make this first palace his place of residence.[12] Mehmed II decided that the Old Palace's central location made him feel insecure, and instead moved into another newly constructed palace on the edge of the city.[13] The placement and design of the residence, the New Palace, secluded Mehmed II from the Ottoman people and marked a beginning of the imperial ideology of isolationism. However, his initial construction of the Old Palace highlights his need to enforce an Ottoman presence in Constantinople. By originally creating the palace in the center of the city, Mehmed II placed the loci of power in the midst of the public sphere. It is possible the sultan did this to create a sense of Ottoman locality among the people in the city.

The New Palace and New Mosque complex began construction in 1459 by Mehmed II's decree. This was the sultan's attempt to establish the permanent seat of the Ottoman Empire as Constantinople while simultaneously dealing with the tension between the *Ghazi* tradition and new imperial ideology.[14] The New Palace, or the Topkapi Palace, strongly emphasized the new imperial and sultanic ideology that Mehmed II would be incorporating into the Ottoman Empire, such as isolationism. The New Palace's location is one of the first things that denotes this isolationist line. Mehmed II no longer felt secure in the Old Palace, as it was directly located in the midst of the city. The sultan's location of the New Palace is the complete opposite of the Old Palace, distant and secluded from the rest of the Ottoman public. Since Mehmed II moved the Topkapi

[10] Inalcik Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire: 1300-1914,* ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 18.
[11] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 22-3.
[12] Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire,* 76.
[13] Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire*, 76-7.
[14] Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire,* 70-1.

Palace to the northeastern tip of the peninsula, on the site of the Byzantine ancient acropolis, he influenced later decisions about Ottoman uses of space.[15] The size of the New Palace almost formed a city within the walled city itself, thus isolating the sultan from his people.[16] The New Palace would become the new loci of rule within Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire, as all government business was held within one of the three palace courtyards.[17] The New Palace became the administrative center with the Grand Viziers and was where Mehmed II's slaves were educated.[18] While the palace was the physical center of imperial power, Mehmed increasingly delegated more power to others. Topkapi's placement on top of the old acropolis asserted Mehmed II's claim to the throne of Eastern Orthodoxy. Since the *Ghazi* tradition was to continue fighting for land, this could have been the sultan's attempt to rally the Ottoman people's desire to reclaim all the land that had been held by the Roman Empire. This may have been Mehmed II's attempt to reconcile the imperial ideology with that of the *Ghazi* tradition.[19] The New Palace also visually linked the sultan and the Ottoman polity to its subjects.[20]

The New Mosque was similar to the New Palace in the fact that it was new in terms of its multifunctional use. It also shared similarities with the New Palace as the New Mosque was built on the previous location of the Byzantine Church of the Holy Apostles.[21] While the Hagia Sofia had been incorporated by the Ottoman society, Mehmed II completely tore down the Church of the Holy Apostles to make room for his New Mosque. Similar to the New Palace, the New Mosque set precedents for future urban programs within Constantinople. However, the New Mosque served more purposes for the Ottoman public than the New Palace and the Hagia Sofia did. Mehmed II built structures around the New Mosque that established the Ottoman polity in the public realm, such as *madrasas* and kitchens. This established a public sphere around the New Mosque. However, while Mehmed II connected the Ottoman polity to the Ottoman people, he also secluded himself from the people. He did this by also building a funerary on the New Mosque grounds, as well as having his own private entrance into the mosque.[22] This separated him from the public, reinforcing the new Ottoman imperial ideology of isolationism.

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15 Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 59.
16 Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire,* 76.
17 Inalcik, The Ottoman Empire, 76-7.
18 Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire,* 76-7.
19 Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds,* 152-3.
20 Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 66.
21 Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 66.
22 Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 48-50.

The New Mosque is also a unique architectural structure to observe when investigating the transition to the imperial ideology. It demarcates a shift into isolationism while simultaneously showing the Ottomans' interconnectedness to the larger world. It also marks a more secular time for the Ottomans while integrating schools and more into the mosques. The New Mosque compound shows the complexity behind the Ottoman ideology and political sphere in which they lived. As the funerary and private entrance points to an isolationist move by Sultan Mehmed II, the architectural construction of the New Mosque will point to an internationally connected Ottoman Empire. The New Mosque was strangely geometric for Ottoman buildings.[23] The geometric symmetry of the New Mosque strikingly resembles the plan of the *Ospedale Maggiore* in Milan.[24] The similarities to the plan in Milan shows that while Mehmed II may have wanted to be isolationist with his own people, he did not transfer that over to the Ottoman's foreign policy. Instead, it seems he understood the importance of interconnected worlds, such as the movement of people, objects, and ideas over borders and into each other's realms.[25] This can also be seen with Mehmed II's attempt to redirect trade through Constantinople. The New Mosque acted as more than a religious mosque, but an economically and politically influential building.

The New Mosque as a religious institution directly affected the religious aspects of the Ottoman Empire. The religious hierarchy was officially set in stone because Mehmed II redefined the social and religious order. The sultan redefined the religious order by pushing out the Sufi dervishes. Since the New Mosque did not include a Sufi convent, it marked a change in mosque complexes, as previous mosques normally did.[26] The New Mosque complex did not include the convent, but instead had rows of *madrasas* on either side of the plaza.[27] This was a shift from religious to administrative complexes attached to the mosques, all of which were subjected to the authority of the sultan. This education system was built to mirror, or surpass, the success of the Byzantine Apostles College.[28] Perhaps this was why Mehmed II completely destroyed the Church of the Holy Apostles, to replace it with an Ottoman institution that would function as it had.

Mehmed II did not just focus on creating religious and administrative hierarchies with Constantinople. He also created a commercial space, attend-

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[23] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 72-4.
[24] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 73.
[25] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 75.
[26] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 75-6.
[27] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 76.
[28] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 70.

ing to the needs of the Ottoman people.[29] Mehmed II created the *bedestan*, which was a singular building with fifteen domes that housed various shopfronts. This *bedestan* also allowed for Ottoman supervision of commercial activity taking place in the city center,[30] merging the Ottoman polity and the Ottoman commercial district. The *bedestan* also gives an example of how Mehmed II assimilated Byzantine idioms into Ottoman structures. At the *bedestan*, a Byzantine eagle survived over the eastern gate.[31] The existence of the Byzantine eagle shows that Mehmed II still allowed for Byzantine symbols to prevail within the walls, especially on such a prominent building. The construction of the *bedestan* does not solely consist of just the building. The *bedestan* includes the space surrounding the structure to allow for the gradual growth of the city.[32] The construction on the space around the city reinforced the connection between the commercial activity and the state, as it supervised the construction.[33]

Another way that Mehmed II created an urban space for the Ottoman public was with the construction of bathhouses in Constantinople. A historian of the time, Kritovoulos, noted the creation of the bathhouses and how the sultan used existing Byzantine aqueducts in their creation.[34] The bathhouses were culturally assimilated by the Ottomans from the Romans and Byzantines.[35] The assimilation of yet another aspect of Byzantine culture by the Ottomans, though they encountered it previously in their existence, shows their willingness to accept other cultures. Multiple bathhouses preserved Byzantine memories and remnants of the Byzantine bathhouses exist consistently within the Ottoman Empire.[36] The bathhouses also formed an urban space that would be accessible to all people who lived within the city walls, be they Muslims, Christian, or not.[37] The creation of these structures was significant because they were not religious nor were they commercial. Instead, they were simply structures for the public sphere that simultaneously played key roles in religious aspects.[38]

The first religious Ottoman building project was the Abu Ayyub al-Ansari Mosque complex. Mehmed II discovered the grave site of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari on the Golden Horn outside of the walls of the city. It is speculated that

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[29] Kritovoulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror,* trans. Charles T. Riggs (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1954), 104-5.
[30] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 35.
[31] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 37.
[32] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 39.
[33] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 40.
[34] Kritovoulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror,* 105.
[35] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 103.
[36] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 104.
[37] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 106.
[38] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 107.

the building of the Ayyub Mosque was a way for Mehmed II to legitimize his decision to make Constantinople the new imperial capital.[39] Few in the Ottoman political sphere were in favor of the settling of the city; therefore, Mehmed needed to make the city appear more Ottoman. The secondary effect of the creation of the Ayyub Mosque outside of the city walls was to consolidate the *Ghazi* tradition and the new imperial ideology.[40] A neighborhood grew around the mosque that was predominantly Muslim, though not a part of Constantinople because it was not within the walled city.[41] The Ayyub Mosque served two purposes then, to legitimize the move to Constantinople and to repair the relationship between the two ideologies.

The construction of these architectural projects served a diplomatic purpose for Mehmed II through more than just the assertion of an Ottoman capital. It is often assumed that the Ottomans were outside the scope of European politics and diplomacy, but this is a baseless assumption.[42] The Ottomans regularly hosted diplomatic ambassadors from European and Muslim countries after 1453 in Constantinople.[43] Their creation of the architectural structures along the pre-existing *Mese*, or procession route for the Byzantines, shows their goal to promote an image of grandeur and monumental superiority when guests arrived in the city. It is now known that when ambassadors would arrive in Constantinople they would demand an exorbitant procession through the city on their way to the Topkapi Palace.[44] While the layout of these architectural structures was planned for the diplomatic procession process, it exemplifies the strong emphasis Mehmed II put on constructing Ottoman buildings. The sultan would not want an ambassador walking down the *Mese* and wondering if it was truly an Ottoman capital city. Thus, the construction of Ottoman buildings along the procession route strengthened the aggressive Ottoman claim to Constantinople.

Restructuring of the Administrative Hierarchy: The Grand Viziers

When Mehmed II conquered the walled city, Constantinople was just a fraction of the former glory it once was during the Byzantine Empire. The sultan attempted to repopulate Constantinople by moving people from throughout Anatolia, and other conquered areas, and forcing them to

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[39] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 46-7.
[40] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 46-7.
[41] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 47.
[42] Emrah Safa Gürkan, "Early Modern Istanbul as a Center for Diplomacy," *Istanbul 29 Mayıs University, Department of Political Science and International Relations,* 4-5.
[43] Gürkan, "Early Modern Istanbul," 2-6.
[44] Gürkan, "Early Modern Istanbul," 4-5.

relocate to the city.[45] The forced relocation of people was one of the first policies enacted by Mehmed II after he successfully captured Constantinople, as part of the plan to bring the city back as an economically and politically important center.[46] This reorganization was led with a compulsory resettlement of the new city which served a variety of social, political, and economic purposes for the sultan and Constantinople.[47] Economically, Constantinople held a geographically vital position along key trade routes. However, Bursa had taken over as the important trade stop since Constantinople's decline.[48] Mehmed II wanted to return trade routes through the city to bring revenue in and restore the prominence of Constantinople, especially since it was to be his throne. The sultan possibly wanted to repopulate the city in an attempt to bring it back to its former grandeur before making it the new imperial capital. Mehmed II forced people throughout the entirety of the Ottoman Empire to relocate into Constantinople regardless of their religious affiliations.[49] He seems to have cared little about the religion of those who lived there and more about the number of people within the walls. Accordingly, Mehmed II issued orders requiring Christians, Jews, and Muslims from everywhere in his domains to be sent to Constantinople.[50] The sultan's zealousness to resettle the city showed his indifference to the religious preferences of the subjects. He also named George Scholarios as the Orthodox Patriarch to try and encourage the Greek inhabitants of the city to voluntarily move back to Constantinople.[51] What Mehmed II did care about was the planning of the city and the use of its space, which lead to the distinct boundaries of the suburbs.[52] The sultan established different sections, or quarters, of the city.[53] Mehmed II's administrative hierarchy helped to establish a triad of neighborhoods relatively divided in their ethnic backgrounds.[54] The repopulation of the city would lead to an increase in revenue for Mehmed's projects due to taxes paid by Muslims and non-Muslims.[55] The Grand Vizier, Has Murad Pasha, created a foundation in which the government would control the religio-political affiliations of the resettled community.[56] It can be seen that the Ottoman government

[45] Kritovoulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror,* 139-140.

[46] Inalcık, "The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population," 233.

[47] Inalcık, "The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population," 235.

[48] Inalcık, "The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population," 231.

[49] Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire,* 71.

[50] Inalcık, "The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population," 236.

[51] Inalcık, "The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population," 236.

[52] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 180-1.

[53] Inalcık, "The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population," 238.

[54] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 110-122.

[55] *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire,* 55-90.

[56] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 123.

still asserted control over the communities' religious, economic, and political lives. This is especially true because all information regarding the resettlement of people comes from endowment deeds and surveys.

With Constantinople as his new capital, Mehmed II needed to create a new imperial ideology that would represent the change the Ottoman state was undergoing. Instead of the sultan dealing directly with the subjects, an administrative hierarchy was established so that someone else would act as the sultan's intermediary.[57] The Grand Viziers were granted such power that they were allowed to facilitate their own urban architectural programs within Constantinople.[58] Mehmed's Grand Vizier during the conquest of Constantinople was Mahmud Pasha, whom Kritovoulos, the Byzantine historian, glorified in his work *The History of Mehmed the Conqueror*. Kritovoulos particularly emphasizes the monuments that the Grand Viziers built during his tenure.[59]

Mehmed II created a new configuration of power with the responsibilities handed to the viziers which would greatly affect the new capital.[60] Mahmud Pasha began the construction of his congressional mosque in the center of two Ottoman focal points that existed at the time, the Hagia Sophia, and the First Palace.[61] This is important because it shows that while Mehmed II was constructing the New Palace and isolating himself from his subjects, Mahmud Pasha was establishing his presence in the current center of the city. Mahmud Pasha also entertained the international or regional guests of Mehmed II in his foundation, often hosting them overnight.[62] Mahmud may have asserted more of an influence over these guests because he was in more constant contact with them. The Grand Viziers also had significant patronage and influence over the construction of the city. Mahmud Pasha's foundation included a free-standing fountain, allowing for free access of water to the Ottoman public.[63] This fountain signified the charity and prestige in which the public sphere came to view Mahmud Pasha and his complex. While the Grand Viziers did receive an influx of power during this time, Mehmed II and the role of sultan remained the absolute authority within the Ottoman Empire. The hierarchy of the relationship between Mehmed II and the Grand Viziers is evident in the architectural structures,[64] as evidenced

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[57] Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire,* 71.
[58] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 110-119.
[59] Kritovoulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror,* 141.
[60] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 109.
[61] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 110.
[62] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 113.
[63] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 116.
[64] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 117.

in the visual relationship between the two varying construction programs.

Conflicting Visual Representations: How an Ottoman Constantinople was Perceived

The visual representation of the Ottoman Empire, especially Constantinople, stemmed as a product from the architectural renovations and repopulation efforts by Mehmed II. As cartographic technology advanced, Constantinople became a focal point for different cartographers. The cartographers each represented Constantinople under its new ruler in different ways that represented the feelings of their patrons, or possibly their country.[65] They did this by emphasizing different aspects of urban architecture within the cartographs, lamenting an ever-changing skyline of Constantinople. After the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans, there is still an emphasis by the cartographers on the Christian architecture and remaining heritage within the city.[66] This can be seen in Cristoforo Buondelmonti's *Liber Insularum Archipelagi*, ca. 1422 (see fig. 1).[67]

Cristoforo Buondelmonti was a Florentine monk and cartographer who traveled mainly around the Aegean Islands. He documented his travels in the *Liber Insularum Archipelagi* to detail the geography and experiences he encountered. However, Buondelmonti's maps did not all share the same view after the siege of Constantinople. For example the Düsseldorf map, created in 1480 (see fig. 2), emphasizes the Ottoman architectural constructions in the cityscape instead of lamenting solely on Christian buildings.[68]

Fig. 1:
Map of Constantinople (1480) by Cristoforo Buondelmonti in *Liber Insularum Archipelagi* (1824). Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

The Düsseldorf map was created for the Florentine patrons who

[65] Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire,* 72-4.
[66] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 145-7 (Figure 109).
[67] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 147.
[68] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 148.

paid for Boundelmonti's travels, as well as to be published. Buondelmonti was just one of the cartographers that took advantage of the growing interest in Constantinople. The map shows the newly built construction projects that Mehmed II completed in the Constantinople, such as the Topkapi Palace and the Hagia Sofia's minaret.[69] This illustrates an acceptance of the new owners of Constantinople, moving away from a completely westernized view of the city. The difference in these two maps demonstrates that the representation of Constantinople was varied in the fifteenth century and that there was an acceptance of an Ottoman Constantinople after its change in ownership.

Fig. 2:
Map of Constantinople (1480) by Cristoforo Buondelmonti in *Liber Insularum Archipelagi,* Düsseldorf.

Conclusion

Mehmed II attempted the tremendous task of transforming Constantinople from the seat of Eastern Orthodoxy and the Byzantine Empire into a distinctly Ottoman imperial capital.[70] While the city no longer embodied the glory it did at the height of the Byzantine Empire, Mehmed II strove to make it the seat to his empire. He did so by initiating an architectural construction program that would redefine the space within the city walls. By changing the layout of the city, the sultan hoped to change the connection of Christianity with Constantinople. However, Mehmed II did not strive to remove every remnant of the previous empire from his new capital. Since he claimed to inherit the throne to Eastern Orthodoxy, idioms that represented the Byzantine Empire were not unwelcome. Though the idioms were not expressly mentioned as Byzantine, Mehmed II continued the trend by assimilating the remains of the previous empire into the new. This was expressed through construction projects and new administrative restructuring. Mehmed II pushed to transform Constantinople into an Ottoman city to appease the opposition and the competing ideologies. The *Ghazi* tradition of nomadic lifestyle and warriorhood was coming in direct conflict with the new semi-nomadic lifestyle of an imperial capital.[71] By establishing Constantinople as the loci of Ottoman rule and culture, Mehmed II hoped to appease both sides of the ideological spectrum. Construction projects, such as the *bedestan,* the bathhouses, the New Mosque Complex and the Ayyub Mosque, focused on the needs of the Ottoman people rather than the administrative, bureaucratic, or religious elites. Mehmed II's changes within Constantinople would affect the Ottoman bureaucracy and Ottoman Empire for future generations. ∎

[69] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul,* 148.
[70] Harris, *Constantinople,* 198.
[71] Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire,* 71.

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Student Biography

Baylie Adams graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in History from Sam Houston State University in August of 2018 with an academic distinction in Middle East History. Baylie has a 4.0 SHSU GPA and has been on the President's and Dean's lists since arriving at SHSU in June of 2017. She was also involved in the Bearkat History Club. Baylie Adams will be attending SHSU in the fall 2018 to begin work toward a Master of Arts in history, where she will also be a Graduate Assistant. After completing her masters, Baylie plans to start work on a PhD in Middle East History.