

Formation of the Historical Commercial Centre in Bursa, the First Capital City of Ottoman Empire

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Abstract: The study of "Formation of the Historical Commercial City Centre in Bursa, the First Capital City of Ottoman Empire" shows the formation process of the city centre consisting of varied commercial buildings as khans, arasta bridge, bazaars, open markets-emporiums- and stores. The historical city centre, because of its plentiful khans, is called as "the Region of Khans". The Region of Khans started to be formed outside the citadel with a bedesten centred commercial area after Emir Khan in the second half of 14th century and experienced an intense structuring process until the mid-16th century. Istanbul became the new capital city of the Empire with the conquest of Istanbul in 1453 and here after in Bursa city centre, the structuring speed decreased.

Key words: Historical city centre • The Region of Khans • Khans • Bazaars • Bedesten

INTRODUCTION

This study has aimed to determine the formation principles of the city centre in Ottoman Empire in Bursa, the first Ottoman city. In the scope of this study, the historical development of Bursa and its socio-economic structure have been searched and the physical formation process of the city centre -the Region of Khans- has been examined and the formation principles of the city centre have been tried to be determined.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the scope of this study existing written documents, thesis, articles, papers, constant publications, Ottoman Court Archives - Şeriye Sicili- and yearbooks kept regularly from 1450s; travel books, charter of waqfs, writings and censuses, old photograph albums, air photos, old maps, planning studies and monographic monuments belonging to the city and to the monumental structures have been searched in order to be able to get the physical data of the city. The formation process of the city centre starting to be formed in 14th century and fulfilling its development to a large extent in the mid 16th century, has been chronologically examined on the 1862 Suphi Beg Map.

Historical Development of Bursa Between 14th and 16th

Centuries: The city of Bursa was founded by Bithynians becoming an independent kingdom in 327 B.C. The name of the city, Purisias was changed first to Prusa and then to Bursa [1, 2]. The Kingdom of Bithynia joined to the Roman Empire in 74 B.C. When the Roman Empire was divided in 395, the city of Bursa became a part of East Roman Empire. During his reign (525-565) the Emperor Justinianos founded a small thermal city in Pythia (Çekirge) by building a palace. During this era Bursa stood up both with its baths and its silk production. Captured by the Ottomans in 1326, Bursa was ruled as a type of principality (tekmuruk) for about thousand years [3].

Annexed to the Ottoman Empire in 1326 by Sultan Orhan, the city of Bursa became the first Ottoman capital. During this era the city was built up and the most powerful governmental institution of the Ottoman Empire, the Palace was established in Bursa [4]. Ottoman Sultans located the high mounts of the city and respectively, Orhan, Hudavendigar, Yıldırım, Ye'îl and Muradiye Kulliyes were constructed on these mounts. The area between these kulliyes consisted of the monumental structures and places constructed by statesmen through waqfs.

With the conquest of Istanbul in 1453 the centre of government was moved to Istanbul. Consequently, scholars and senior soldiers close to the Sultan departed

from Bursa as well. Developing until the mid 16th century the city went through a relatively quiet period from the 17th century to the mid 19th century. For a long time, Bursa was governed as a sanjak bounded to Anatolian Province of which centre was Kütahya after the governmental activities started to be carried out in Istanbul[5].

Socio-economic Structure of Bursa Between 14th and 16th Centuries: Starting with the Byzantine Period the silk production continued as silk trade in the 14th century and in this way silk textile industry flourished. For the raw material of silk industry was inadequate in Bursa, a major centre of silk trade in the 15th century; raw silk was imported from Iran. The economy of the city developed

through the silk textile industry depending on the raw silk[6]. At the end of the 16th century and at the beginning of the 17th century Ottoman cities generally had a population of 3.000 or 10.000 people, however Bursa was the only city of which population was over 50.000 people (Fig. 1).

When the silk textile industry became important in Italy, Ottoman Empire made some adjustments ensuring Bursa to reach its heyday as a manufacture and trade centre [7]. As a result of these adjustments, Silk Road started to pass over Bursa and Tabriz-Bursa silk trade route became significant. Consequently, Bursa was provided with raw silk supplements and turned into a transfer centre of trade goods [8].

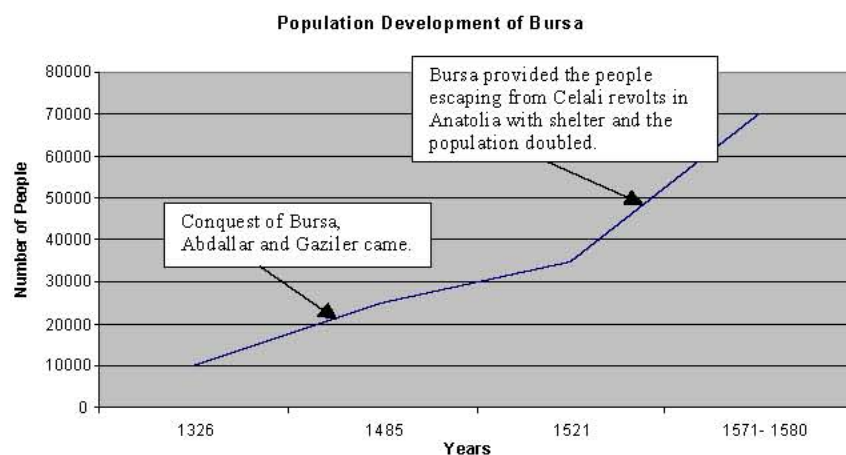


Fig. 1: Population development of Bursa according to the years

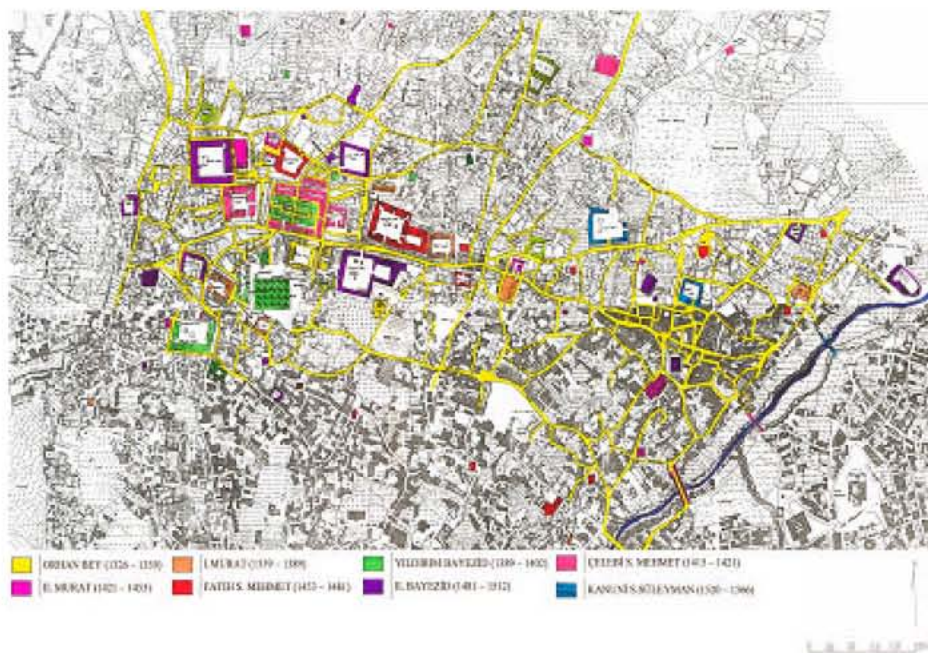


Fig. 2: The historical evolution of monumental buildings in the Khans Region at the end of the 16th century[15]

In the 14th century the only caravan route to Bursa for the goods from the East wasn't the Silk Road but also it was the Spice Road originated from Southeast Asia and passing over Bursa, Baghdad, Mosul and Halep. Thanks to the Spice Road, Bursa turned into a warehouse of all types of spices [2]. As understood from the number of the silk guilds, caravan trade made the specialized local manufacture develop [9].

Bursa, in order to be able to be a world trade centre, attracted the trade roads from the west and in the 15th century Bursa also became a domestic trade centre. Merchants from Florence, Genoa and Venice purchased silk in Bursa and they sold woollen products. In short, this procedure occurred as *the barter of the woollen products with the silk ones* [10]. In 1501 Mr. Maringhi, the commercial agent of the Medici family of Florence was in Koza Han, which showed the importance of the city [11].

Until the mid 16th century, the city of Bursa was an international trade centre where silky, spicy and soft goods were sold through the western agents [2]. As a result of the wars with Iran in 1520, the import of raw silk was forbidden and many weaving looms were closed down. In conclusion silk trade and silk textile industry started to deteriorate. Lasting from the end of the 16th century to the mid 17th century, Celali revolts affected Bursa negatively. The dissolution in state-owned land system and the changes in transportation and in the world trade caused Bursa to experience a quiet period.

The Physical Formation Process of the Region of Khans:

Before the Ottoman Empire, the city consisted of the citadel, the khaner citadel where the Tekfur Palace was and Down Citadel (Kale Altı) [2]. It has been understood that in the residential area restricted by the city walls there were no public buildings and no manufacture and trade structures required by urbanization.

The khaner citadel was captured without a large destruction by Sultan Orhan in 1326 and the Tekfur Palace in the khaner citadel was used by Sultan Orhan. After this period intense migration to Bursa took place and new districts started to be built up in the area restricted by the city walls. Before the east gate, the main entrance of the city called as Down Citadel, Tahtakale started to be constructed for the first time outside the citadel in 1339 [12].

Orhan Gazi made mosques, madrasahs, khans and bazaars constructed outside the citadel in Bursa, a small principality during the Byzantine period and thus he founded important waqfs. Yıldırım Bayezit ensured the passing of the trade roads over Bursa and he made

monumental structures built with a planned approach. Because of the construction activities and the rich waqfs during the Çelebi Mehmet period, Bursa started to grow and develop [3], (Fig.2).

During Orhan Gazi Period the old city was restricted by the city walls and the new city started to be built up 200-300 m northwest of this area on an empty area [13]. The city centre, starting to be quickly formed during the 14th and the 15th centuries was constructed near the citadel in case of any negative situation. This shows the need of safe places both for the people and their trade goods [14].

The khans started to be built up so that the collection and the delivery of the caravan trade goods, starting in the 14th century and continuing until the mid 16th century, could be ensured, a shopping environment could be created and the necessity for exchanging important products and for bargaining in closed places could be fulfilled. The khans in Bursa were called according to the names of the goods they collected and delivered like Rice Khan, Silk Khan, Silk Cocoon Khan, Trap Khan and Salt Khan. Starting with Orhan Gazi and continuing with other sultans and the statesmen the construction process occurred as a complementary application. The khans, market quarters and the bazaars in the Region of Khans stood around Bedesten and they continued their development in the direction of east-west which was suitable for the topography of the region. Particularly in Bursa, the construction of Bedesten (the central building) where the most valuable goods were bought and sold and also the most valuable commodities were preserved is the most concrete proof that shows the importance of the city in international trade (Fig. 3).

As the number of the khans increased in Bursa commercial city center, a cooperation began and on the roads connected the khans, new bazaars were opened in the form of guilds whose production and selling functions differentiated and specialized in particular products with the philosophy of ahilik. The people producing and marketing the same goods gathered in order of guild in particular places and streets so the khaner and the outer places became identical [3]. As can be understood from the names in the registers, every tradesman took part in a different bazaar or on a different street (Fig. 4 & 5). Some of these bazaars were: Herbalists, Candy Sellers, coppersmiths, carpenters, Basket makers, quilt-makers, sculpcap makers, knife makers. It was observed that the religious roots didn't affect the occupation of the places in Bazaars; muslim and nonmuslim tradesmen gathered together in the same places [16]. The bazaars were either formed in the style of the shops surrounding a street

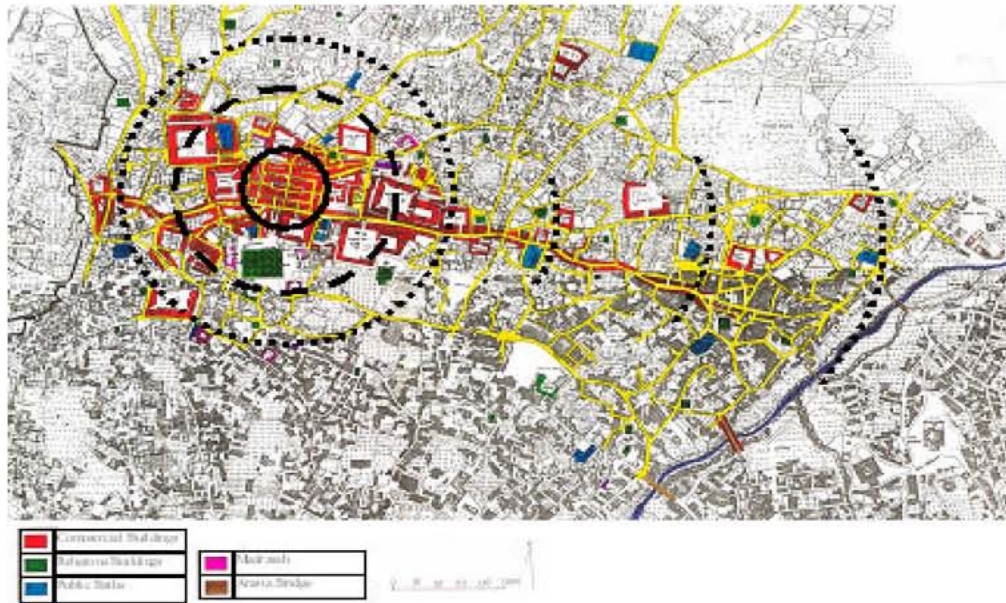


Fig. 3: The historical evolution of commercial buildings in the Khans Region at the end of the 16th century[15]

Table 1: The historical commercial buildings in the region are listed at the table below

| Century | Period | Khans |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 14th century | Orhan Gazi (1326-1359) | Emir Khan |
| | Murat I (1359-1389) | Kapan (Trap) Khan, Bezir Khan |
| | Yıldırım Bayezid (1389-1402) | Bedesten |
| 15th century | Çelebi Sultan Mehmet (1415-1421) | Ipek (Silk) Khan, Geyve Khan, Yoghurt Khan, Gelincik Bazaar, Sipahi Bazaar, Hadji Ivaz Pasha Bazaar, Yorgancılar Bazaar |
| | II. Murat (1421-1453) | Irgandı Arasta Bridge, Kutahya (Çukur) Khan, Katır (Mule) Khan |
| | Fatih Sultan Mehmet (1453-1481) | Salt Bazaar Khan, Fidan Khan, Karaca Bey Khan |
| | II. Bayezid | Koza (Silk Cocoon) Khan, Piriç (Rice) Khan, Bali Bey Khan, Doğangözü Khan, Eski-Yeni (New-Old) Khan, Kamberler Khan |
| 16th century | Kanuni Sultan Süleyman (1520-1566) | Davut Pasha Khan, Galle Bazaar Khan |
| 14th-16th centuries | The periods are not exactly known | Mudanya Khan, Kepezler Khan, Zeytin Khans, Demirkapı Bazaar, Hadji Osman Aga Khan |

or built as a distinct place. In this sense, the bazaars are examined under the headings of food trade, textile, woodwork, mine decoration (handwork), leather manufacturing and the others.



Fig. 4: Tradesmen in the bazaar. Photo: Sébah&Joaillier, 1890 [17]



Fig. 5: Shoe makers in the Bazaar. Photo: Sébah&Joaillier, 1894 [17]

Table 2: The commercial bazaars in the region are listed at the table below

| Bazaars | Functions in the bazaars |
|--|---|
| Food trade bazaars | herbalists, fruit sellers, chickpea sellers, kebab makers, cooked sheep head sellers, coffee houses, boza (a beverage made of fermented millet) sellers, pubs, grocers', butchers' and °erbetçiler. |
| Texture trade bazaars | silk industry, scullicap making, cloth painting, weaving, Sofculuk (cloth made of the hair of goats, camels etc.), dress making, cotton fluffing, alboyacılık, chukha making (broad cloth making), taffeta making, madder (root paint) making, linen weaving, köföncölük, thread making, felt making, quilt making like Hadji Ivaz Pasha Bazaar, Quilt Makers Bazaar, Gelincik Bazaar |
| Wooden work trade bazaar | Sipahi Bazaar dealing with wooden work, carpenters, chest makers, basket makers |
| Mine decoration (Ironmongers and coppersmith) Trade Bazaar | knife makers, saddlers, blacksmiths, needle makers and goldsmiths |
| Leather manufacturing trade bazaar | shoe makers called as slipper makers, Haffafçılar (cheap shoe makers) |

It is known that most of the bazaars are occupied on Uzun Çarşı which was the oldest part of the city centre, starting to be built up with Emir Khan.

Open markets districts in Bursa ensured the food consumed by the city dwellers from the agricultural areas around the city and made some products needing a specialized approach produced and marketed in the city. The open bazaars set up on some certain days of the week near the mosques or small mosques provided the daily food need of the people in the city. The reasons why the open markets were situated near the mosques were both the willing of the villagers and nomads performing the noon ritual worship in a mosque and the people who densely populated in those places[18]. In the large trade district in Bursa there were open markets where food and other city consuming products, animals and slaves were sold. In this sense, some of the bazaars in Bursa were: Fish Bazaar, Çıra Bazaar, Saman Bazaar, Chicken Bazaar, Salt Bazaar, Horse Bazaar and Slave Bazaar.

In the Region of Khans shops were the largest in number and the simplest in style and their construction materials were the most varied. The shops could be on a roofless street or under a covered bazaar in a row in an in or in a bedesten[14].

Evlıya Çelebi mentioned that there were 9000 shops in Uzun Çarşı (Uzun Bazaar). After the second half of the 16th century, because of the socio-economic and political structure a new construction was not added to the city structure in Bursa. It can be observed that important changes in the physical and social structure did not

happen in Bursa and that the city preserved its stable structure. Because of the necessity for the defence of the city against Celali Revolts started in Anatolian, a protection wall was built up and the transportation in the city and the construction process happened inside these borders.

CONCLUSION

The development of the Region of Khans was determined with Emir Khan constructed as the first bedesten around the horse-market by Orhan Gazi. With the philosophy of ahilik and later with the organization of guild, trade activities began and as a result of the development in silk trade bedestens and khans were built up and it was seen that the city grew up depending on the manufacture and the trade. The city continued to grow up topographically in the west-east direction by the construction of commercial activities, bedesten, arasta bridge, bazaars, open market places and stores on an area outside the citadel in the Horse-Market restricted by Orhan Gazi Kulliye. Around the bedesten different occupational groups formed a separate unit. It was clearly seen that in Bursa market square streets developed around the bedesten and were directed to the doors of the bedesten. Around the bedesten specialized streets in manufacture, trade and service activities appeared.

In the city of Bursa market square was the focal point and the districts were located around the commercial center and connected with a road network to the center. The commercial center wasn't only a shopping centre but also it was the heart of the city where people worshipped, gathered and also the place where social decisions were made for the public; and all social and cultural activities were carried out with its mosque, its khan for the travellers, its bedesten for shopping, its madrasahs and its baths where the water and the green came together.

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