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New porticoed streets for ancient Istanbul
Innovation and historicism in eighteenth-century Ottoman urban culture

Alper Metin[1]

Abstract: *This paper analyzes the emergence of new porticoed commercial arteries in the Ottoman capital starting from that of the Damad İbrahim Paşa complex. Precisely around 1720s, Istanbul became a laboratory for new architectural and urban ideas, thanks to both internal dynamics of the empire and to the intensification of the interactions with foreign cultures. More directly than ever, the architecture of the city started dialoguing with remote sources, exponentially enriching its formal and typological vocabulary. The present study tries to explore the background of this urban novelty with a fresh look, taking in consideration all the factors which rendered eighteenth-century Istanbul a unique crossroad of people, cultures, and ideas. Interactions with Western Europe, the conquest of new territories in the Aegean, and the possible role of the local Ottoman and pre-Ottoman references are thoroughly discussed to depict a complex a panorama which spans over seven decades, till the completion of the Mihrişah Valide Sultan Complex in 1801.*

Keywords: *porticated arteries, Damad İbrahim Paşa Complex, colonnaded streets.*

Much has been said about the traditional fabric of the Ottoman city, presenting its apparent lack of rigid geometric rules in dichotomy with the Western European urban planning principles of the Early Modern Era. If the Renaissance city ideal represented the culmination of the urge for rationalization, with its clear geometric layouts and attentive hierarchical and proportional relations between the parts[2], the Ottoman counterpart was often seen as a rather unplanned and spontaneous organism, especially in its residential areas. Certainly, in some of the ambitious public enterprises of the rulers or high-ranking personalities related to the imperial power, orthogonal layout was largely used, such as in the complexes of Bayezid II in Edirne (1484-1488) and Çoban

1. Department of the Arts, University of Bologna (alper.metin2@unibo.it).
2. These ideals could not always materialize but they nevertheless left a solid mark on the urban culture of the period. The literature on the Renaissance city is very ample. See, inter alia, Calabi 2001, which concisely synthetizes the subject and highlights its more relevant aspects.

Mustafa Paşa in Gebze (around 1522-1524)[3]. However, these enclosed and inward oriented complexes remained strongly self-centered, relating only partially with the surroundings with a few access points. Therefore, they are to be considered as vast architectural projects rather than reflections of a crystalized urban idea.

Few and quite well-known exceptions in the capital Ḳosṭanṭīnīye (today Istanbul)[4], such as the complexes built by Mehmed II (initiated in 1463) and Suleiman I (1550-1557)[5] manifested an evident desire for better established geometric rules between the single buildings and the urban structure surrounding them. In these cases, even though the complex remained quite self-referential, hints of an intent of unitary idealism with the immediate urban context can be found. In the first example, between the madrasas proper and the preparatory schools (*tetimme medresesi*) facing them were shaped long and perfectly rectilinear streets. Since these educational buildings were not surrounded by enclosing walls (differently from the mosque, the hospital, and the guesthouse), the streets among them displayed a public character rather than that of an internal path to the complex. However, both the madrasas and the preparatory schools were introverted buildings with austere elevations. Moreover, the madrasas had their entrance from the outer courtyard of the mosque located at the opposite edge. Thus, these streets were rather secondary, and did not display major differences from those between the enclosing walls of the mosque and the hospital. The buildings flanking them do not really take advantage of this urban situation and seem almost ignoring their existence. The situation is similar (if not more evident) in the complex of Suleiman I (*fig*. 1). Moreover, in all these cases, a remarkable divergence from the Western sphere emerges also in typological choices: till the very end of the eighteenth century, Ottomans did not adopt rectilinear arteries for residential purposes[6].

3. On the former, see Necipoğlu 2005, pp. 94-95 and Kuban 2007, pp. 197-200; while on the latter Necipoğlu 2005, pp. 53-54 and Kuban 2007, pp. 234-236.
4. On the Ottomanization of the city after 1453: Kuban 1996, pp. 198-286. On our period of interest more specifically: Cerasi 1988, Cerasi 2008.
5. Both complexes are among the most studied Ottoman works of all times. The former is better known as Fatih (the conqueror) complex, while the complex of Suleiman I is known as Süleymaniye. For a concise yet exhaustive analysis, see Kuban 2007, pp. 177-180 on the former, and *ibidem*, pp. 277-294 and Necipoğlu 2005, pp. 205-222 on the latter.
6. An attempt of comparison between the rectinilear arteries in the Western and Ottoman contexts can be found in Wolf 2011.

In conclusion, even though introducing a rectilinear grill to the otherwise irregular urban fabric, these streets can in any way be compared to the arteries of the Antiquity nor to those of the Renaissance.

Direklerarası: the turning point of a gradual change

We need to wait till the end of the so-called Tulip Age to find the earliest rectilinear Ottoman artery in the capital to display a strongly intentional character, excluding obviously the Roman (and later Byzantine) *Mese*, which after 1453 became *Divanyolu* largely keeping its original functions[7]. Born as *Çārşū-ı Cedīd* (New Market) and quickly came to be known as *Direklerarası*, this new throughfare of the city was inaugurated in 1728-1729 as the commercial component of the Damad İbrahim Paşa Complex (whose remaining parts were already in use from 1720-1721)[8]. In contrast with traditional caravanserais, inns, and bazaars, which were frequently included in this kind of philanthropic complexes to generate revenue, *Direklerarası* was nothing but a double-porticoed street (*fig*. 2). Its forms, as we shall see, were both novel and familiar to its users. The name itself, entered in use shortly after its inauguration, literally meaning "between the columns", is particularly significant to understand its immediate reception and appropriation by the dwellers of the city.

Before this example, commercial buildings of the philanthropic complexes were monolithic volumes, further articulated with the introduction of a central courtyard in the most luxurious examples[9]. Moreover, whether with or without a courtyard, they remained as introverted structures, like the madrasas we have mentioned. Thus, both functional and visual contacts with the exterior public space were limited. In this case, however, the building seems split in half becoming two independent volumes which flank a rectilinear public street. Therefore, the external perimeters, which once constituted the image of an austere building, tend to disappear, leaving visible only what used to be an internal part, the arcades.

7. On this street and the continuity of its use and prestige during the Ottoman period: Cerasi 2005.
8. Studies on this complex are surprisingly limited (Eyice 1993; Kuban 1993; Tosun 1994; all encyclopedia entries) and its relevance in the Ottoman urban history seems never fully appreciated. A recent study on its social aspects is Tunç Yaşar 2023, from which I reported the original naming (p. 125).
9. For an overview: Kuban 2007, pp. 393-406; Cezar 1985, pp. 17-38.

Each volume was made of a regular row of shops preceded by a continuous portico, in a fully modular composition (*fig*. 3). If we look from a larger perspective, we can recognize that contrarily to Romans or Byzantines, Ottomans built autonomous porticoes only around enclosed spaces with well-defined architectural functions, such as the courtyards leading into mosques, and did not make use of similar arrangements for framing transitional urban spaces, whether linear or not. Ottomans did not surround their squares with porticoes, either. For instance, neither the Hippodrome (*At Meydānı* in Ottoman Turkish) nor the large space surrounding the Tophane Pier, which have been persistently kept as squares (or at least as void spaces within the intense urban fabric) underwent operations like those of Piazza San Marco in Venice or Place des Vosges in Paris[10]. Therefore, even though the portico was a deeply rooted element in the Ottoman tradition, its use was quite strictly codified and did not include such urban applications.

An architectural type frequently used especially during fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the *ārāsta* (today rendered as *arasta* in Turkish)[11], was an elongated bazaar usually consisting of two opposite rows of shops. However, except two well-known examples, these were covered buildings like inns and caravanserais, and did not generate a public urban space. Among all Ottoman buildings, the ones which may have offered the closest references to Direklerarası are certainly the *arastas* of the complexes of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa (*fig*. 4) in Lüleburgaz (completed in 1570) and that of the Sultan Ahmed (Blue) Mosque in Istanbul (1617)[12]. In both cases, an open-air street is created, which generates a similar urban situation.

Notwithstanding, thanks to its architectural features, Direklerarası results even more strongly intentional compared to its sixteenth-century predecessor. If the *arasta* of Lüleburgaz is formed mostly by shops which are addorsed to other structures (hammam and madrasa

10. Calabi proposes the Byzantine forum as the origin of these porticoed quadrilateral squares, which became a leitmotiv of the Renaissance city. Other than those already mentioned, we can remind the Piazza Ducale of Vigevano (1492-1494), and the Plaza Mayor of Madrid (starting from 1590). See Calabi 2001, pp. 46-61.
11. Kuban 2007, p. 398.
12. Necipoğlu 2005, pp. 348-355; Kuban 2007, pp. 399-400; Wolf 2011, pp. 239-241. In this latter study the author compares the *arasta* with two other examples built by the same patron (in Payas and Aleppo). However, these are covered buildings, like many others around the empire, thus it does not seem very convenient to put them in relation from the point of view of the urban morphology.

in the southern section and caravanserais in the northern one), in *Direklerarası* this situation only applies to the first seven shops of the northern row adjoining the remaining structures of the complex. In other words, taking into consideration the Sultan Ahmed experience, *Direklerarası* shaped predominantly by free-standing rows of shops which were manifestly thought for an urban purpose, rather than enriching the edges of other buildings with the insertion of shops. From the opposite part of the Damad İbrahim Paşa complex; the southern row of shops neighbored the premises of the janissary barracks known as *Eski Odalar* ("Old Chambers")[13], with which it could not have any permeability for obvious reasons. Moreover, the *arastas* of Lüleburgaz and Sultan Ahmed did not feature porticoes, which were with no doubt the most characteristic element of *Direklerarası*. Thus, even though the eighteenth-century project may be conceptually influenced by these precursors, in terms of architectural configuration it clearly differs from them. In conclusion, these factors put together allow us to speak of a gradual evolution of an Ottoman idea of rectilinear artery in which *Direklerarası* represents the purest and the most crystalized example prior to the bold introduction of the Western European urbanism criteria into the imperial capital during the sultanates of Selim III (1789-1807) and Mahmud II (1808-1839).

If there were not perfectly matching Ottoman predecessors, which models the architects of *Direklerarası* may have been looking at? For answering this question, we are obliged to consider the complex architectural and urban dynamics of the city at the beginning of the eighteenth century. With the return of the court to Istanbul in 1703, after a long absence in which the sultans resided in the imperial palace of Edirne, the city has gained a new momentum in both architectural patronage and urban development. The increasing search for a fresh architectural and decorative language, strengthened by the urban ambitions of the patrons who desired a new self-affirmation both on the local and the global stage, led to an extraordinarily prolific century. Inaugurating first the so-called Tulip Age, and starting from 1740s, what today is usually referred to as the Ottoman Baro-

13. On the history of this building: Sunar 2015.

que[14], the architects of the capital have profoundly renovated their forms and expertise coming from multiple sources. The main source of novelty seems to have been the West (see below), even though especially at the initial stage the intercultural traffic with Persianate and Mughal East was also not neglectable[15]. Moreover, the West is to be understood a cultural sphere rather than geographical designation, territories politically belonging to the Sublime Port but carrying an Italian artistic background such as Crete, Peloponnese and Chios played a pivotal role. To this bidirectional opening of horizons, we also need to add a more intimate and retrospective (yet not less interesting) inner look of the Ottomans to the legacy of their own core lands, such as Greek, Roman, Byzantine but also Seljuk and Anatolian *beylik* heritages. For the purposes of this essay, the reconsideration especially of the pre-Islamic local heritage will be an interesting component of our reflection[16].

Possible references: at home, abroad or in between?

How 'local' could be the origins of *Direklerarası*? As Kuban has already pointed out, the portico itself (*revāḳ*) was among those elements which the Ottomans inherited from Late Antique and Byzantine structures which they permanently used, restored, and transformed[17]. Nevertheless, in this observation Kuban refers more precisely to those which preceded structures of prestige, such as the case with mosques starting from the fourteenth century (see for example the imaret-mosque of Orhan Bey in Bursa, 1339-1340)[18]. As frequently observed in architectural history, this new element, which must have first appeared for formal reasons, quickly gained a secondary

14. Numerous studies have been conducted on these periods. For the most recent ones: Kuban 2007, pp. 499-570; Hamadeh 2008; Rüstem 2019; Metin 2022a. On more specifically urban aspects: Cerasi 1988; Hamadeh 2007; Kuban 1996, pp. 336-362.
15. Important aspects of the contacts with Iran, Central Asia and Mughal India have been highlighted in various points of Hamadeh 2008 (see for example pp. 85-86 and pp. 199-200).
16. I have started working on this vast subject with a conference paper entitled *Precursing the novel, recalling the bygone: material and ideal presence of the past in 18th-century Istanbul constructions*, to be published in late 2024 (Brill Publisers).
17. Kuban 2007, pp. 124, 128-129, 165. See also Ögel-Ağır 2005, which offers an interesting comparative lecture on loggias/ porticoes around the Mediterranean.
18. *Ibidem*, pp. 83-85.

significance endowing it also with a functional role. When preceding a mosque, these porticoes are more specifically called *son cemā'at maḫfili* / *maḥalli*, which translates as "space for latecomers"[19]. Who arrives late should ideally stay at the portico so as not to disturb the prayer (*namāz*) that has already begun. However, the formal purposes were certainly stronger (and perhaps more valid), since throughout the inventive sixteenth century this element was introduced for ennobling also other architectural types. For instance, in 1556 Sinan added an elegant portico to the public bathhouse in front of Hagia Sophia, commissioned by Hürrem Sultan (known as Roxelana in Western languages)[20].

Shortly before the conquest of Constantinople, the Üç Şerefeli Mosque in Edirne (1438-1447)[21] already featured a courtyard with a four-sided portico (came to be known as *avli* or *avlu*, borrowed from Greek *αυλή*, which also gave *aula* to Latin). The kinship of this new architectural configuration with Late-Antique and Byzantine atrium / *quadriporticus* (which in turn derived from earlier forms of peristyle of the *domus*) is rather self-evident[22]. However, the origin of the idea of a porticoed public street is not as easy to pinpoint as that of a single *revāḳ* or a four-sided *avlu* for multiple reasons. The first one is chronological. The single portico reminiscent of the church narthexes appeared already in the initial phase of the Ottoman civilization when the center of cultural gravity was between Iznik (Nicaea) and Bursa (Prusa)[23]. On the other hand, the emergence of the four-sided *avlu* corresponds to the shift of the imperial references to more Western territories including Edirne (Adrianople), the Balkan peninsula and more importantly Istanbul (Constantinople)[24]. Contrarily to those, *Direklerarası* was born centuries later, when the Ottoman artistic and architectural norms crystalized between the three imperial capitals (with their respective pre-Ottoman references) witnessed a slowdown of new citations throughout the seventeenth century.

19. Metin 2022a, p. 44. For a concise look at the relationships between the early Ottoman architectural culture and the local Byzantine heritage: Ousterhout 1995.
20. Kuban 2007, pp. 346-347.
21. A detailed analysis of the mosque and its courtyard can be found in Kuban 2007, pp. 143-148.
22. An emblematic building which kept intact its atrium till our day is the Hagia Eirene Church in Istanbul.
23. An overview of the Late-Antique and Byzantine Iznik can be found in Concina 2003, pp. 139-145. The Turkification process of Iznik is analyzed in Tanyeli 2021 pp. 242-246. On Bursa: Tanyeli 2021 pp. 230-235. A joint analysis of Bursa and Iznik in Early Ottoman architectural and urban culture is Kuban 2007, pp. 68-71.
24. On Edirne: Tanyeli 2021 pp. 235-242 and Kuban 2007, pp. 71-73.

Certainly, Ottomans inhabited several Greco-Roman cities with streets flanked by columns or porticoes[25], among which Ephesus (once called Ayasuluk, today Efes/Selçuk) might be the best example (*fig*. 5)[26]. Also the Levant area was rich in significant cases such as Antioch (Antakya) and Palmyra (Tedmür, modern-day Syria)[27]. Istanbul itself had a porticated street which flanked the Forum of Theodosius and was concluded by the monumental triumphal arch of the same emperor[28]. By the time of the Ottoman conquest, any of these porticoes was in integral state. In some cases, they might have been still recognizable[29]; however, we can not speak of a continuity in use like in many other architectural types or urban configurations. This is a key point: we do not possess sufficient evidence to claim that Ottomans had studied the Antiquities via fragments in archeological state, as it was a common endeavor in Renaissance Italy. They certainly acknowledged and appreciated the grandeur of the monuments they inherited, and clearly learnt from those, but not necessarily from the examples which were not anymore inhabitable. While Sinan was emulating Hagia Sophia or the Roman aqueducts, these were still in use and in good conditions. However, such was not the case with the Greco-Roman porticated streets, which already lost their architectural integrity and functional consistency long time be-

25. A recent publication explored the history of the street in the Western context in much detail (Tartakowsky 2022), on the Antiquity see part I. A detailed discussion about the urban environment that Turks have found upon their arrival in Anatolia is Tanyeli 2021 pp. 59-82. An interesting study focusing precisely on the afterlife of the porticated streets following the fall of the Roman Empire is Dey 2015, pp. 65-126. Less coherent appears the comparison with ancient stoas as proposed in Tunç Yaşar 2023, because of explicit differences in urban morphology.
26. After a long Byzantine stage, Ephesus belonged to the *beylik* (emirate) of Aydın between 1304 and 1425, becoming Ottoman thereafter. Thus, Ottomans found a city which has already been controlled, inhabited, and modified by Turks for over a century. See Foss 1979 (on the *beylik* and Ottoman stage, pp. 141-180); Concina 2003, pp. 96-102 (on the Byzantine modification of the Late-Antique city); Tanyeli 2021 pp. 198-203.
27. Numerous studies have been conducted on the area and its porticoed streets by Catherine Saliou, see Saliou 1996 in particular on Palmyra. The mid-eighteenth-century drawings by Giovanni Borra in Dawkins-Woods 1753 show Palmyra and its porticoes in a perfect state and thus are to be considered mostly as restitution rather than survey drawings. The accompanying text clearly states how they were defaced. On Antioch and its intersecting porticoed streets: Concina 2003, pp. 50-52. Moreover, Cerasi reminds the case of Anjar, however it seems less pertinent because of the scarce relevance of the region under the Sublime Porte.
28. On the porticoes of Byzantium / Constantinople: Kuban 1996, pp. 43-44; Mango 2001. For an overview of the Byzantine Constantinople; Kuban 1996, pp. 149-188; Concina 2003, pp. 3-46. More specifically on the afterlife of the colonnaded street of the city: Dey 2015, pp. 77-84.
29. For instance, in Aleppo the colonnaded street was enclosed with walls becoming part of the *souq* (market) of the Islamic city.

fore the shaping of the Ottoman civilization. On the other hand, both architects and patrons were certainly keen to preserve the practice of spoliation also throughout the eighteenth century, for example the Nuruosmaniye Mosque's porticoed courtyard was built (1748-1755) with shafts coming from Pergamon (Bergama)[30]. Notwithstanding, the material spoliation did not necessarily bring along the importation of architectural or urban ideas, neither in the Ottoman context nor in any other society.

If the idea of a porticated street stemmed from local sources, the closest possibility might be the core areas of the bazaars, which in most cases was nothing else but the exponential expansion of a street with shops facing each other. By roofing this street an *arasta* was obtained, before finally evolving into much complex urban-scale buildings (*bedesten*) or building ensembles (*çarşı*)[31]. The peculiar (and in most cases multilayered) structure of the *çarşı* was distinctively Ottoman, and it marked the main core of the city more than any other architectural or urban work (*fig*. 6). In newly annexed territories similar market areas shaped either following intentional plans and commissions either quite spontaneously, but the results somehow always fitted in recognizable patterns and the city gained an Ottoman *çarşı*. However, this genesis process took place much before than the emergence of *Direklerarası*, most examples of Ottoman *arasta*, *bedesten*, and *çarşı* dating to previous stages, especially to fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is hard to claim that an Ottoman architect could have eyewitnessed the gradual flourishing of a *çarşı* starting from an initial core similar to a porticoed street already in the seventeenth century. With no doubt Ottoman market areas continuously grew and got transformed to meet new demands also in the following centuries, so the dimensions kept increasing, but this does not seem to have conducted to more specific reflections on the origins we have just analyzed. In other words, we do not possess any evidence to claim that a local architect could have 'skinned' these intricate architectural and urban complexes to ideally extract the initial core to be taken as a reference for *Direklerarası*.

30. Rüstem 2019, pp. 122, 152, 201. A register taken during the construction of the complex gives detailed account of from which points of the empire the materials and the builders were provided.
31. Kuban 2007, pp. 393-406 (especially 395-398). A detailed study on the evolution of the Ottoman çarşı and its relevance within the urban dynamics is Cezar 1985 (pp. 57-90). More specifically on the eighteenth-century developments: Cerasi 1988.

We might conclude that even though the Ottomans frequently found themselves in comparable architectural and urban situations, the idea of *Direklerarası* could difficultly be an extrapolation or abstraction of already familiar forms and building habits. Nor it can be readily accepted as a sign of archeological erudition, since we have enough information on how Ottomans viewed the ruins of the cities of the Classical past (differently than the buildings which were still in use) till the very end of the eighteenth century[32].

Multiple faces of the "West"

Which could have therefore been the origins of this novelty? Given the political dynamics of the period, we might immediately think of the abundance of possible Western models, such as the double-porticoed streets of North-Eastern Italy. In cities like Bologna, Padova (*fig*. 7), Vicenza and Treviso, the historical urban fabric is recognizably rich in porticoes (around 40 kilometers of portico can be found only in the medieval areas of Bologna)[33]. In these places – where the Ottomans were surely present for numerous reasons, mainly commerce – cases in which two porticoes face each other defining a public street are quite common. More unlikely is a link with (fewer and les consistent) French examples such as Louhans in Burgundy, even though France and the Ottoman Empire where strictly tied commercial and political partners.

If the roots of *Direklerarası* are to be searched in Western Europe, Venice with many *sotopòrteghi* flanking her channels and *calli* must be considered the most presumable point of contact. The bazaar of the Damad İbrahim Paşa Complex strongly reminds the porticoes of the goldsmiths' street Ruga dei Oresi (or Ruga degli Orefici, Italianized version), a throughfare not far from Fontego dei Turchi (Turks' Inn) which connects the Rialto Bridge with the hectic market area of the

32. In Eldem 2011 is offered an interesting panorama, where the author analyzes how the «blissful indifference» of the Ottoman authorities towards the ruins of the Antiquity started changing only starting from around 1812 (pp. 281-295). The situation for the patrons of architecture was no different. The witness of Western European engravings and travelers' descriptions are also quite eloquent on the subject and confirm Eldem's thesis.

33. A publication centered around the peculiarity of Bologna's porticoes but with an attempt of contextualizing them in the Italian and European panorama is Bocchi-Smurra 2015 (on Bologna: pp. 11-36). On Padova, whose central area is equally relevant: Maretto 1987.

lagoon (*fig*. 8). Here, like in Istanbul, two rectilinear volumes whose main feature is the portico were added (and in a certain sense imposed) to a rather irregular urban fabric, as inserts giving geometric order and monumentality to the market area after the devastating fire of 1514. The Southern building is the Drapperia (drapery), while the Northern one is part of the Fabbriche Vecchie by Scarpagnino[34]. Given the centuries-old exchanges between Venice and Istanbul, Ruga dei Oresi was certainly well known to the wealthiest Ottomans. Among its customers were many statesmen; for instance, as early as the in the sixteenth century, the lavish four-crown helmet of Suleiman the Magnificent (1532) was made by Rialto craftsmen, presumably here in Ruga dei Oresi[35]. Furthermore, it must be underscored that the complex of the grand vizier was the first major urban work to be built after the Peace of Passarowitz (1718) which finally ended the centuries-long Ottoman-Venetian wars inaugurating a new season of cultural and diplomatic exchange between the two powers.

Within the Venetian context, this nomenclature was also significant and interesting per se, since *ruga* (which shares the same late-Latin etymology with *rue* in French) is a *calle* flanked by contiguous buildings, which in most cases hosted shops at least at the ground floors[36]. This need for further specification in naming, in a city like Venice where the commerce was vital in every age, must have stemmed from similar sociolinguistic processes which led the Istanbulites to coin the peculiar name of *Direklerarası*. As this naming also suggests, dwellers of the Ottoman capital certainly acknowledged the novelty of this urban operation. If in Western Europe, after the opening of Via Giulia in Rome (starting from 1508) the creation of new rectilinear and ample streets had become a characteristic feature of the Early Modern urban culture, the Ottomans seems to have continued their urban habits based on architectural complexes till the eighteenth century. Thus, *Direklerarası* constituted a radical turning point since for the first time the boundaries of the previous *modus operandi* got decisively eroded.

34. Calabi-Morachiello 1987, pp. 61-78. A few decades later, Sansovino completed the architectural and urban development of the market area with the addition of the Fabbriche Nuove (1553-1555). *Ibidem*, pp. 142-159.
35. On this helmet: Necipoğlu 2005, pp. 27-28; Necipoğlu 2019, pp. 129-131.
36. Boerio 1826, p. 515. Initially *ruga* seems to have been a synonym of *calle*, witnessing by time a semantic narrowing. Other significant examples are Ruga dei Spezieri (of spice merchants) and Rugagiuffa (where Armenians from Julfa traded).

We do not know who the architect was or who may have ideated the porticated street. Allak reports the name of a certain Ebubekir[37]; however, there is no further information about either who he was or his hypothetical role in the design of the complex. Pamukciyan, on the other hand, lists the complex among the works of the Ottoman-Armenian architect Araboğlu Hacı Melidon Kalfa, born in Kayseri[38]. Kuban suggests, based on the well-known bibliophilia of the patron, that it may have been the grand vizier himself, inspired by a Western book, who ordered it in such features[39]. However, to be taken in consideration, this hypothesis would certainly need further substantiation since we do not possess an exhaustive inventory of books possessed by the patron[40]. Furthermore, in addition to the commercial ties we have already underscored, hints of an indisputably direct knowledge of the Venetian forms, types and know-hows frequently appear in the architectural and urban culture of the time, thanks also to the newly established Cretan network following the conquest of the island[41]. These new connections with the Venetian cultural sphere were even more far-reaching than what could have offered the printed material or a simple visit to the lagoon, since they were based on the movement of architects, artists, and master builders with a complete set of expertise, much beyond the merely formal issues.

Indeed, as archive evidence proves, similar porticoes were built also in Venetian Candia (today Heraklion, known by the Ottomans as Ḳandiye). Following the models of the lagoon, they appeared both in administrative, commercial, and residential architectures. Other than the Loggia, which was a porticoed building in a strongly complementary re-

37. Allak 2017, p. 22.
38. Pamukciyan 1993, p. 292.
39. Kuban 1993, p. 549.
40. Rüstem 2019, pp. 206-207. The list published in İrepoğlu 1986 on the Western books found in the library of the imperial palace certainly helps us to have an idea about the circulation of those at least among the uppermost circles of the capital. However, lamentably, on a few of them bear some indications on the terminus *ante quem* these book might have reached the Ottoman capital. For instance, a set of *Nouveau Theatre d'Italie* by Joan Blaeu, which features annotations in Ottoman Turkish (in most cases direct translations largely loyal to the original text) certainly reached Istanbul before 1732/1733 (still five years after the completion of *Direklerarası*), as suggests the signature of İbrahim Müteferrika on the flyleaf of vol. 1 (Topkapı Palace Museum Library, H. 2724) and the reverse of the frontispiece of vol. 3 (H. 2751).
41. On the architectural ties with Crete: Metin 2022a. Here is a list of page numbers where the topic is discussed: 216, 253-256, 283-284, 335-339, 396-397, 417-421, 436-437, 446-448, 453-454, 503, 546, 562, 600, 632-633, 646, 651, 662-663, 666-671.

lationship with the square, an examples of commercial artery with porticoes (a *ruga di botteghe*) could be found in the area flanking the city gate called Porta di Piazza, or more often by its name in vulgo, *Voltone*[42] (*fig*. 9). In 1577, adjacent to this monumental gate at the heart of the city was designed a vast building containing 29 shops with a continuous portico on the ground level (of which only 23 are visible in the drawing reproduced here). Above the portico were warehouses for fodder and wheat on three floors, thus the building had an entirely commercial character. Across the street was the Palazzo Ducale, which also had shops preceded by a portico on the ground floor, even though in this case with wooden posts supporting the eaves of a jutting awning, as visible in a 1590 drawing by Geōrgios Klōntzas (*fig*. 10)[43]. Therefore, this street, which was a double-porticoed rectilinear commercial throughfare flaking an important government building, was strikingly similar to what *Direklerarası* would become for Istanbul about 150 years later.

As thoroughly analyzed by Calabi, the restoration of the gate and the construction of this new commercial artery were among the main efforts of Giacomo Foscarini, the governor of Regno di Candia (the name given to Crete during the Venetian rule), to establish a new sense of order and prosperity on the island after the Battle of Lepanto against the Ottomans (1571)[44]. Also residential constructions of the period, such as the Quartiere San Giorgio, featured similar porticoes. These operations followed the architectural conventions of the motherland which we have already mentioned (the portico flanking the *Voltone* Gate clearly recalls, also in its architectural composition, the Fabbriche Vecchie inaugurated half a century before). Evidently, Foscarini desired to revive this regional capital endowing it with features which would recognizably echo Venice, where porticoes were abundant.

Thanks to a detailed register published by Kolovos, we know that right after the conquest of the city in 1669, Ottomans found 17 shops flaking the Voltone (all in good conditions) and 19 under the Palazzo Ducale (16 in good conditions)[45]. Thus, the porticoed street was apparently still in use preserving its architectural and urban consistency.

42. Calabi 1998, pp. 268-274; Georgopoulou 2001, pp. 45-47; Kolovos 2018, pp. 79-81.
43. Georgopoulou 2001, pp. 90, 94-95.
44. Calabi 1998, pp. 269-271.
45. Kolovos 2018, pp. 79-81 (on the mentioned buildings). The register in question is kept at Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi in Istanbul (Tapu Tahrir 798).

Ottomans kept using and, over time, repairing these buildings. At the same time, they seem to have imported the architectural configuration of the *Voltone* to Istanbul precisely during the conquest of Candia. The imperial pavilion of the *Yeñi Cāmi'* ("New Mosque") in Eminönü district (around 1665), which constitues an outstanding novelty for the local architectural culture with its centrally positioned monumental vault, faithfully follows its Cretan reference[46]. Moreover, following the conquest of the remaining three Venetian possessions on the island and the reconquest of Peloponnese in 1715 (thus the complete annihilation of the risk of a potential vengeance of the Serenissima), Crete started a new flourishing in both economical and architectural terms.

In other words, even though in a distant province, some Ottomans were already familiar with the idea which led to *Direklerarası* at first hand. Furthermore, it should be noted that our patron, Damad İbrahim Paşa got promoted to grand vizierate also thanks to his participation in the 1715 achievements. During this last Ottoman-Venetian battle, he accompanied as a bureaucrat the general and the grand vizier of the time Silahdar Ali Paşa (later known as *Şehid*), whose library in Istanbul (1715-1716) is also strongly reminiscent of Venetian architectural culture with its peculiar L-shaped external staircase[47]. Hence, it would not be discording with the patterns of the period nor exceptional within the architectural dynamics of the early eighteenth-century capital if also *Direklerarası* had a Veneto-Aegean ancestry. In fact, in multiple construction sites of the period, we have archival evidence on the presence of Aegean professionals (see for instance the document mentioned on note 27), giving further strength to this hypothesis.

Possible ties with the Veneto-Aegean sphere are not merely limited to urban aspects, either. The cross-vault roofing instead of hemispherical domes (*fig*. 3), the use of round arches instead of the traditional pointed ones are also among the novelties to be considered (*fig*. 2). More importantly for our purposes, the peculiar Doricizing and palmette capitals used in the porticoes must be the earliest examples of non-traditional capitals carved by the Ottomans in the city[48].

46. The most detailed study on this complex is Thys-Şenocak 2007, pp. 187-268. The author mentions the triumphal references to the conquest of Crete in its calligraphic inscriptions, my contribution is therefore highlighting the architectural ties, to complete the picture.
47. For an exhaustive analysis of the building and a comparison with the Veneto-Aegean models: Metin 2022a, pp. 333-341.
48. Since we do not possess a scientific survey nor complete photos of the street, it is not possible to

The portico flaking the *Voltone* of Candia was built supported by piers, however columns with similar capitals were widespread both in Cretan cities and Venice. For instance, a portico with Doricizing columns and round arches (and no upper floors) on the Ruga Maistra ("main street") of Candia can be seen in another drawing by Klōntzas depicting a Corpus Domini procession[49]. In Venice, dozens of porticoes of late medieval and fifteenth-century origin also bear Doricizing capitals, such as the *fondamenta* of Giacinto Gallina among many other possible examples (*fig*.12).

Completed just few years later, the entrance portico of a religious building, the Mosque of Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa (1734-1735) featured two non-traditional capitals, of which the four central ones offer a more elaborate version of the Doricizing *Direklerarası* model while the first and last ones clearly reflect the influence of Venetian references (*fig*. 11). These medievalizing capitals with beveled corners[50] were very widespread around the whole area of influence of the Serenissima and scholars have labeled them with multiple names, such as *San Lazzaro-type*, or *Verona-type*[51]. In the Cretan context, those and variants can be found in the San Marco Cathedral and San Pietro Church in Candia, and Santa Maria dei Barozzi Church near Rethymno. Also in the case of this mosque, the patron was a grand vizier, and more interestingly, his personal background somehow intersected with the Aegean. His father who gave him this nickname (*Hekimoğlu* meaning "son of the doctor") was the chief doctor Nuh Efendi from Crete, possibly a renegade of Venetian origin according to some sources[52]. Whether this might be true or not, he could have naturally kept some ties with his father's place of origin as it was not rare in the Ottoman world. Pal-

determine today which capitals featured palmette reliefs and which one did not, and whether if there was a precise rule regarding the capitals in the overall design.

49. Biblioteca Marciana, Ms. Graec. VII, 22 -1466, fol. 134v, reproduced in Georgopoulou 2001 as fig. 67. Even though I believe it must be possible, I was not able to identify the building yet.
50. I believe that in the Venetian context these capitals might have stemmed in their turn from more geometric Byzantine examples. However, that would be an inquiry for another study. What appears clear that those of the Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa Mosque are certainly related to the Venetian cultural sphere rather than to any other source, given their forms, proportions and relations between different parts.
51. It is quite significant that the name of the San Lazzaro type refers to the church used from 1717 by the Armenian- Catholic Mechitarists whose most members were coming from the Ottoman lands (further considerations can be found in Metin 2022a, pp. 394-395). On this capital type and the church in question: Scolari 1984.
52. Aktepe 1998.

mette capitals also appeared in other works of the time, such as in the small complex of Mehmed Emin Ağa on the Kabataş shore (completed in 1741-1742). With the tripartition of its cemetery precinct wall obtained with peculiar pilasters (note also the fluted-and-reeded profile of the capitals and the treatment of the lateral surfaces), and its novel decorative repertoire, this work shares overt similarities with the Bembo Fountain in Candia (dated 1554 or 1558)[53].

The legacy of Direklerarası

Prior to its gradual disappearance in 1910 (*fig*. 13), *Direklerarası* had not only been an important commercial artery but also became a significant cultural hub, particularly in the nineteenth century[54]. Therefore, we can affirm that the efforts for a new urban culture of the intellectual grand vizier had chance to create concrete outcomes, at least in the capital. More than elsewhere in the Nuruosmaniye Complex (1748-1755), the most prominent and interesting architectural work of the century commissioned by the charismatic sultan Mahmud I (r. 1730-1754)[55], the lesson was wisely emulated. The Northern border of the complex, where we find the luxurious library of the emperor at the Eastern part[56], is elevated on a platform under which are housed two rows of stores which encounter each other forming the corner (*fig*. 14). This operation is a clear architectural response to the surrounding urban fabric. Due to the presence of the Grand Bazaar and numerous inns and shops, this was the most intensely commercial area of the entire city during the Ottoman times. The northern edge of the platform, which joins with that of the mosque, creates a long arcade in front of an important commercial structure in the city, Çuhacı Han, an inn commissioned by Damad İbrahim Paşa, the patron of Direklerarası. With such features, the work is strongly influenced by the grand vizier's work in Şehzadebaşı, which was completed two decades earlier.

53. On the fountain: Calabi 1998, pp. 274-278. On its ties with the eighteenth-century Ottoman architecture: Metin 2022a, pp. 417-421.
54. Tosun 1994 and Tunç Yaşar 2023.
55. This complex was thoroughly studied in Rüstem 2019, pp. 111-170 and Metin 2022a, pp. 68-176. The tie with *Direklerarası* was already recognized by Maurice Cerasi.
56. More specifically on the library building: Metin 2022b.

Şahin and Cerasi, starting from the profiles of the capitals, associated this portico with city's Byzantine cisterns[57]. However, from both typological and urban points of view, this association would result quite less convincing than the Venetian connection. In fact, both because of the synthetic Doric capitals used and of morphological and urban aspects, one rather has the impression of glimpsing a corner of the commercial part of a medieval Venetian city, whether on the lagoon or within the Stato da Mar.

The eighteenth-century Ottoman architectural and urban culture was admittedly complex and thus not easy to decipher. However, acknowledging and appreciating the multitude of its sources (among which the intense ties with the Italian cultural sphere and the role of the Aegean territories) opens new possibilities of research. Towards the end of the century, more precisely under the rule of Selim III, the Ottoman capital entered a new phase with much clearer references directly to Western European sources and models, both in the conception of the single buildings and in that of the urban conceptions. Emblematic of this period is the Mihrişah Valide Sultan complex commissioned by the mother of the sultan (1792-1796, completed with the addition of the maktab in 1801), endowing the Ottoman capital with a novel rectilinear and monumental street in an accentuated Westernizing key (*fig*. 15)[58]. The intermediary step represented by *Direklerarası* and the Nuruosmaniye complex is therefore particularly significant for its sophisticated syncretism in skillfully bringing together local and outlandish forms and know-hows, melting them in a pot, and wisely taking out of it unique and original results.

57. Şahin 2009, pp. 247-248; Cerasi 2008, p. 488.
58. This complex frames the Coronation Street (*Cülus Yolu*) between the Bostan Pier and the Eyüp Sultan Mosque, which hosted one of the most important imperial ceremonies at the inauguration of a new sultanate. I am currently working on a book chapter entirely dedicated to the complex with a particular emphasis on its urban value. The title of the chapter is *Matronage and "Urban Design" in a Changing Capital: Ottoman sultanas shaping Istanbul from Turhan Hatice to Mihrişah (1660-1801)* and it will appear in *Women as Builders, Designers, and Critics of the Built Environment, 1200 -1800* (Routledge, edited by Shelley E. Roff).

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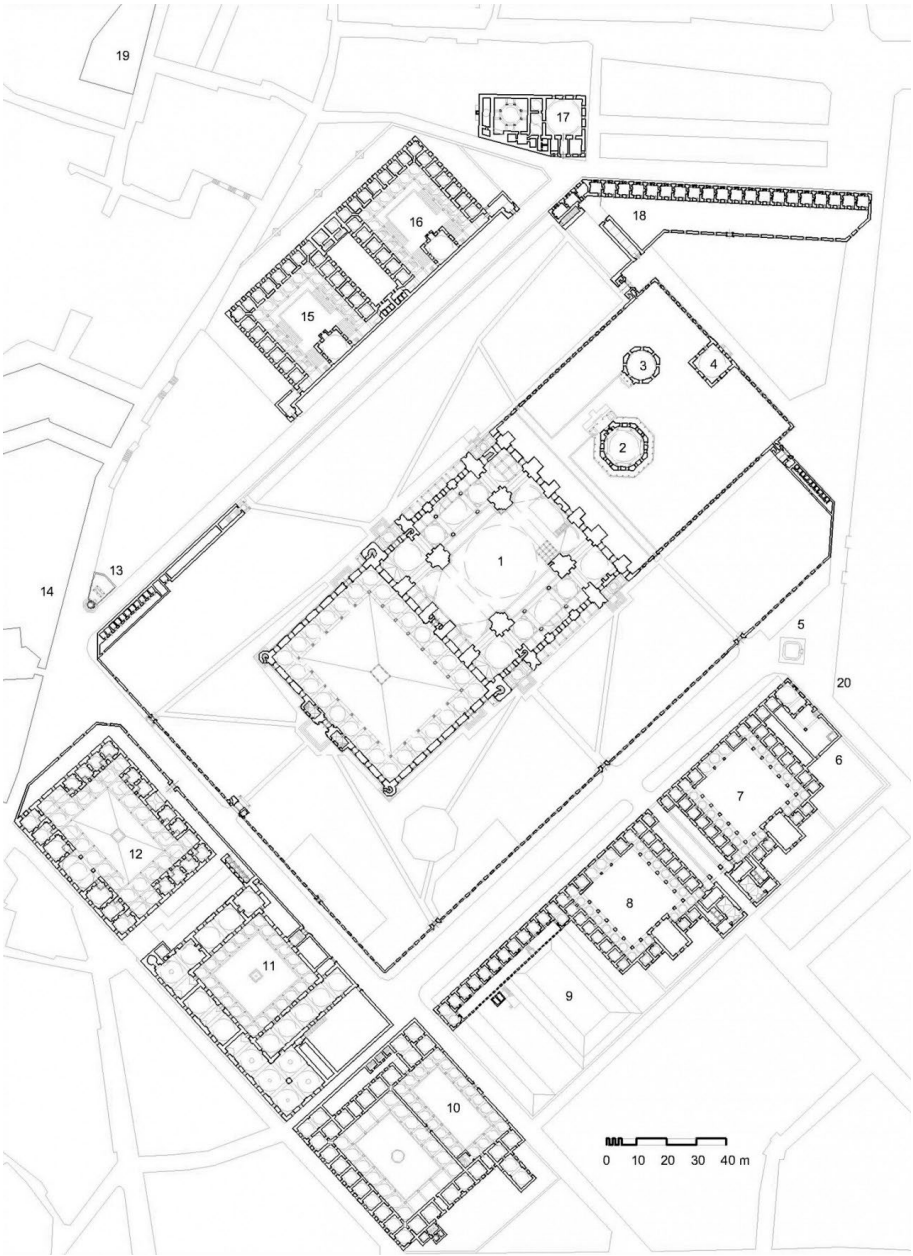

*Fig. 1 – Arben N. Arapi, Plan of the complex of Suleiman I in Istanbul (*Necipoğlu *2005, p. 205). Note the orthogonal disposal of the secondary buildings pivoting around the main core (1. mosque, 2 - 3 sultanic mausoleums). Especially 10. hospital, 11. hospice and 12. guesthouse, generate a rectilinear artery conditioning the urban fabric.*

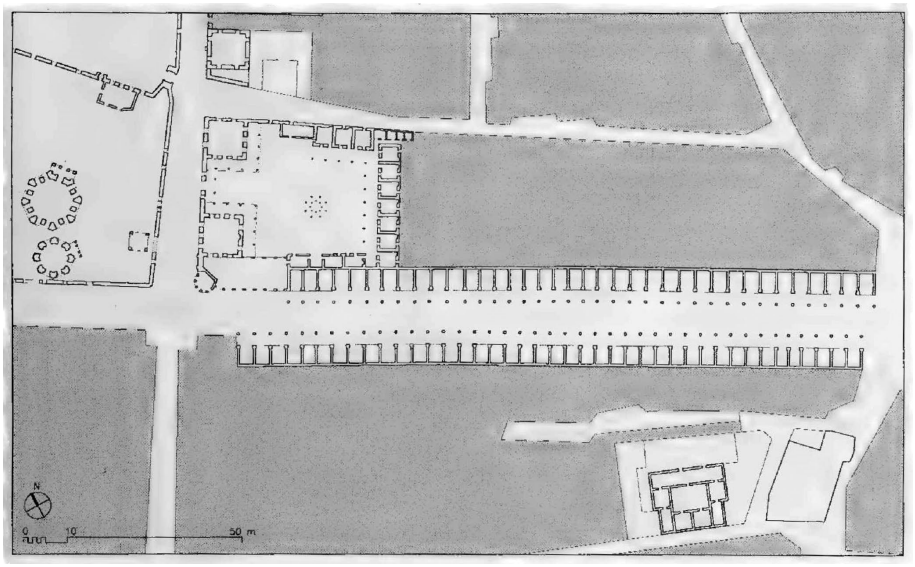

Fig. 2 – Istanbul, Direklerarası *(shopping porticoes of the Damad İbrahim Paşa Complex), completed in 1728-1729. Postcard with a photograph by Nikolas Andriomenos (© SALT Research, id. no. AHISTFATI05, with permission).*
Fig. 3 – Istanbul, Plan of the Damad İbrahim Paşa Complex (Cerasi 2008).

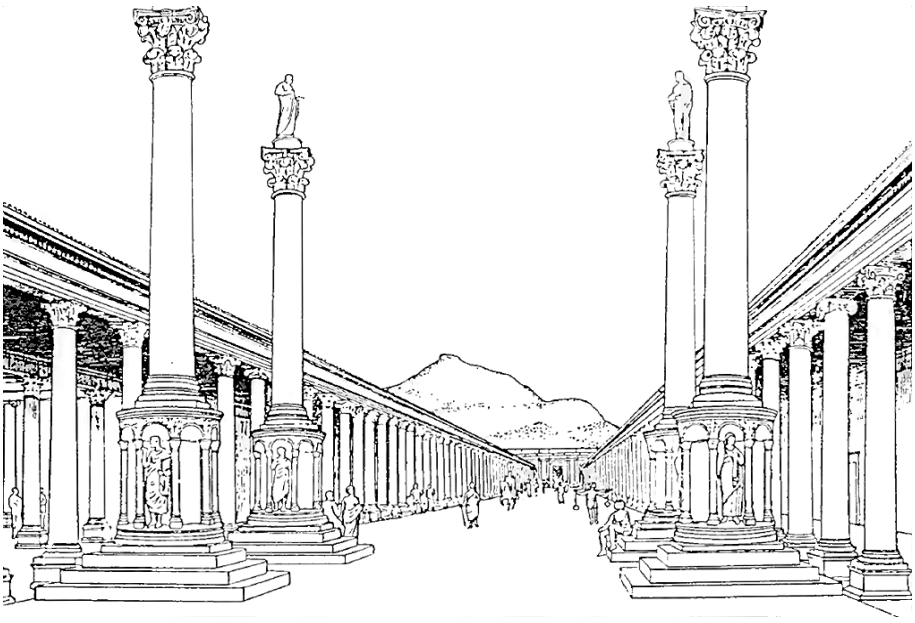

*Fig. 4 – Luigi Mayer, the shopping street (*arasta*) of the Sokollu Mehmed Paşa Complex in Lüleburgaz by Sinan (*Views in the Ottoman Dominions*, London: P. Bowyer, 1810).*
*Fig. 5 – Restitution drawing of the Arcadian Street with the Tetrakionion in Ephesus (*Wilberg-Heberdey *1906).*

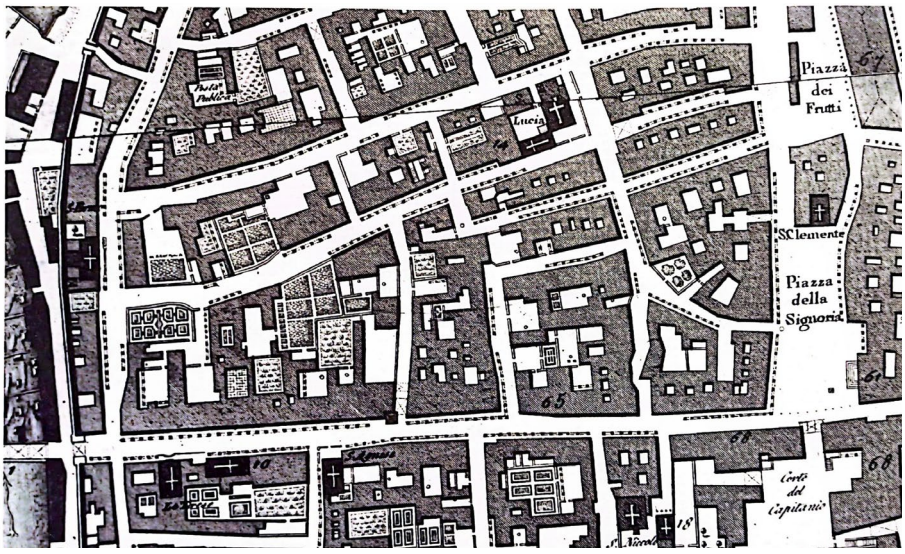

*Fig. 6 – Istanbul, Grand Bazaar (*Kapalıçarşı*), the carpet sellers' street, one of the earliest cores of the complex, possibly born as an unroofed throughfare (photo, 2023).*
*Fig. 7 – Plan showing the porticoes of the central areas of Padova (*Maretto *1987).*

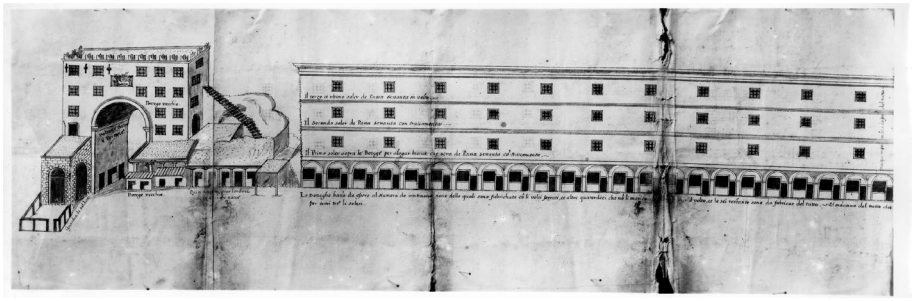

Fig. 8 – Venice, portico of the Fabbriche Vecchie with the Draperia on the left. Between them runs the Ruga dei Oresi, the main porticoed street of the Rialto Markets (photo, 2023).
Fig. 9 – The Porta di Piazza (or Voltone*) Gate (at left) and the porticoed street of shops (at right) in Candia, modern-day Heraklion (*Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *S*enato, Dispacci, Provveditori da terra e da mar e altre cariche*, b. 506, filza 740, disegno 1, with permission id. no. 11/2024).*

Fig. 10 – Geōrgios Klōntzas, view of the ducal palace in Candia in 1590, from Istoria ab origine mundi *(Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Gr. VII, 22 [=1466], f. 84r, with permission id. no. 7/24).*

Fig. 11 – Istanbul, entrance portico of the Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa Mosque (1734-1735), detail from the capitals (photo, 2023).

Fig. 12 – Venice, Fondamenta Giacinto Gallina covered by a portico with Doricizing capitals (photo, 2023).

Fig. 13 – Istanbul, Direklerarası *as it stood after the gradual destruction started in 1910, photo (© SALT Research, id. no. AHISTSEHZ008, with permission).*
Fig. 14 – Istanbul, North-Western corner of the Nuruosmaniye Complex with the curvy polygonal courtyard of the mosque (on top) and the portico with shops (photo of Jean Pascal Sébah and Polycarpe Joaillier).

*Fig. 15 – Istanbul, the Coronation Street (*Cülus Yolu*) in Eyüp, framed by the Mihrişah Valide Sultan Complex since 1792 (photo, 2023).*