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CULTURAL PATTERNS: CHRISTIANITY VS ISLAM – THE LAST CHRISTIAN CENTURIES OF THE NEW ROME (VIEWED FROM WESTERN EYES)¹

Abstract: The paper aims to trace the image of the New Rome viewed by the eyes of Western travelers from the period before 1453, after 1453 and in the middle of the 16th century. Based on sources such as the texts of Pero Tafur, Bertrandon de la Broquière, Cristoforo Buondelmonti, Rui González de Clavijo, Arnold von Harff, Bonsignore Bonsignori and Bernardo Michelozzi, Nicolas de Nicolay, it will explore the clash of cultural patterns of Christianity and Islam, a clash that we observe in the City of the Constantine in the 15th and 16th centuries. The Western ideas about *the other* will be analyzed - the Christian from the East, the schismatic, the Muslim infidel, the Jew, all of them inhabiting the cultural space of the New Rome.

Key words: Western travellers, Constantinople, Monuments, St. Sophia, Christianity, Islam

The western travellers passing across the Balkans undoubtedly pay a special attention the Queen of all Cities (*Basileuosa*) - New Rome - Byzantine Constantinople and later Ottoman Istanbul. Most those voyagers who had visited Constantinople during the first half of the 15th century write about the problems which they had witnessed there – the depopulation, the aftermaths of the Ottoman incursions and so on. Those travellers who had visited Constantinople during the second half of the 15th century and later describe the changes that had taken place in the city after it was conquered by the Ottomans, both negative and positive. Here we shall examine several samples of travellers' accounts.

Like other travellers, Pero Tafur, from the 1430s, notes the shape of the city in the form of a triangle, as well as the strong and imposing fortress walls, but also its poor condition. *The city has very few inhabitants and is divided*

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into separate settlements². It is curious that the Spanish noble noted the poor maintenance of the imperial palace, as well as the information about the depopulation of the Byzantine capital in this period, data that are also found in the texts of other travelers, such as Bertrandon de la Broquière, for example.

From the same period is also the extremely interesting text of Bertrandon de la Broquière, who dwells in detail on the fortifications of Constantinople, *a very large and spacious city. The city consists of several villages, its area is more empty than built-up. There are many beautiful churches in it, such as "St. Sophia", which is the cathedral church*³.

The details about the population of Constantinople in the 1430s are available in the text of Cristoforo Buondelmonti. Whereas the descriptions of the western travellers concerning the Ottomans are generally positive, his account about the Byzantine capital summarizes the fully negative opinion of the West about the Orthodox Christians: *The city has few residents, who are declared enemies of the western Christianity; they had never signed a stable treaty of peace with the Latins. Moreover, even if they promised such a peace, they never kept their promise. Long ago this city was splendid and abundant with honours and wisdom, but today its residents have become rough and are ignorant of their former glory*⁴.

This text provides us a typical reflection of the western perception of the medieval Greek world – the Byzantines are schismatics, who had lost their former greatness as scholars and theologians falling into greed and ignorance, and for this reason they deservedly suffer by the attacks of the Ottomans, who are viewed as a God's punishment for their sins. Buondelmonti gives us a correct idea about the Byzantine capital during the first half of the 15th century – a decadent city with diminishing populace. Constantinople had already lost its prestige of an imperial city and its residents are strongly affected by a spiritual and material decay.

Similar conclusions about the corruption, venality and depravity of the Greeks, as well as about the total lack of tolerance between Latins and Greek one could easily identify in the account of Bertrandon de la Broquière.

I write this to warn others who might later have to deal with them. For all that I spent time with the Greeks and was in contact with them and did business

² Н. Марков, *Когато всички пътища водеха към Константинопол*. В. Търново, 2012, 452–454; Перо Тафур, *Странствия и пътешествия*, publication Л. К. Масиеля-Санчеса. Москва, 2006, § 180–182; A. Vasiliev, *Pero Tafur. A Spanish Traveler of the Fifteenth Century and His Visit to Constantinople, Trebizond and Italy*. Byzantion, 7, 1932, № 1, 75–122, esp. p. 110–111, 113; В. Гюзелев, „Бях в три страни, които и трите се казват България“. *Географско-пътеписни съчинения за България и българите от XV век*, Пловдив, 2014, 130–131.

³ Le Voyage d'Outremer de Bertrandon de la Broquière, publication Ch. Schefer, Paris, 1892, 153; Берtrandон де ла Брокиер, *Задморско пътешествие*, publication Б. Мутафчиева, София, 1968, 79; Н. Марков, *op. cit.*, 428; The Voyage d'Outremer by Bertrandon de la Broquière, publication G. R. Kline, New York, 1988, 99; В. Гюзелев, *op. cit.*, 96.

⁴ Cristoforo Buondelmonti, *Liber insularum archipelagi*, transkription des Exemplars Universitäts und Landesbibliothek Düsseldorf Ms.G 13, publication Karl Bayer, Wiesbaden 2007. In this edition the text is given in Latin and in German. The description of Constantinople is on pages 50–52.

*with them, I found more friendship among the Turks and would sooner trust myself to them than to the Greeks. It seems to me that they don't like the Christians who are loyal to the Church of Rome*⁵.

The reports of Western travelers about the preserved ancient monuments in the Byzantine capital are curious.

The Spanish envoy Pero Tafur spoke about ancient remains⁶ like Hippodrome, describes the Serpent column with snakes. Apparently, the Spaniard is confusing the image of the Serpent Column, where there are three snakes, not two, twisted into each other. The Serpent Column is known to have been created by the Greeks from a trophy Persian weapon after the Battle of Plataea in 479 BC, brought from Delphi to Constantinople under Constantine the Great (306–337) and placed in the Hippodrome.

In his account of the ancient monuments in the Byzantine capital, Tafur dwells on the cisterns with which Constantinople was rich, he also talks about the Column of Justinian, which according to his information was dedicated to Constantine the Great⁷. *...This knight, they say, is Constantine, and that he prognosticated that from that quarter which he indicated with his finger would come the destruction of Greece, and so it was*⁸.

Rui González de Clavijo also stops at the Hippodrome of Constantinople in detail. In his story, we find references to the famous Egyptian obelisk, as well as to the other main landmark - the Serpent Column. Clavijo also gives a detailed account of the famous column with the statue of Justinian, as he rightly notes in his text: *And this marvelous figure on horseback, they say, represents the Emperor Justinian, who built this monument and this church, and in his time performed great and remarkable exploits against the Turks*⁹.

We also find an extremely detailed description of a number of historical sites in Constantinople in Cristoforo Buondelmonti's *Liber insularum archipelago*.

⁵ The Voyage d'Outremer by Bertrandon de la Broquière, publication G. R. Kline, New York, 1988, 94-95.

⁶ Pero Tafur, Travels and Adventures 1435–1439, publication Malcolm Letts. London, 1926; J. P. A Van der Vin, *Travellers to Greece and Constantinople. Ancient Monuments and Old Traditions in Medieval Travellers' Tales*. 1–2. Istanbul, 1980, 690 ff; A. Vasiliev, *Op. cit.*, 108–110; Перио Тафур, Странствия и путешествия, § 178–179 are about the Hippodrome.

⁷ It is the statue of Justinian, located on the Augusteion, which originally belonged to the Emperor Theodosius the Great (379-395). Emperor Justinian (527-565) destroyed the column of Theodosius and erected in its place his own column with equestrian statue of gold-plated bronze facing east, holding the orb with the cross in his left hand and his right pointing east. The statue was destroyed by the Ottoman Turks in the 16th century. R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine. Développement urbain et répertoire topographique*, Paris, 1964, 74–75.

⁸ Pero Tafur, Travels and Adventures 1435–1439, publication Malcolm Letts. London, 1926, ch. XIII; J.P.A Van der Vin, *Op. cit.*, 698; A. Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, 105; Перио Тафур, Странствия и путешествия, § 174; Н. Марков, *op. cit.*, с. 448.

⁹ Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, Embassy to Tamerlane 1403–1406, publication Guy le Strange, London-New York, 1928 (repr. 2005), 40; Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo, The Spanish Embassy to Samarkand 1403–1406, publication Ivan Dujčev, I. Sreznevskij, London, 1971, 66–67.

He describes Justinian's column, tells us in detail about the Hippodrome (about the Serpent Column, about the Egyptian Obelisk), and also mentions numerous cisterns with which the Byzantine capital was rich.

Buondelmonti's highly detailed account of the antiquities of Constantinople complements the comprehensive picture of the Byzantine capital created by Western European travellers. Typical of the period of the Italian Renaissance, Western man is no stranger to the interest in ancient remains - triumphal columns, obelisks, cisterns, ancient inscriptions.

Of the travellers after 1453, Bonsignore Bonsignori and Bernardo Michelozzi, two clerics who lived in the end of the 15th century, also give very interesting descriptions of the ancient remains of the Hippodrome of Constantinople.

During their first month in Constantinople Michelozzi and Bonsignori visited many of the most impressive historical sites of this remarkable city there included the Hippodrome, where Michelozzi copied some Greek inscriptions and translated them into Latin. From his part Bonsignori was greatly impressed by snake-shaped bronze column and the fifty feet high Egyptian obelisk whose marble base was commissioned by the emperor Theodosius¹⁰. On the fringe of the so-called "Square of the Hippodrome" Bonsignori spotted another bunch of ancient remains. However, he preferred not to scrutinize them lest he become suspicious to the Turks¹¹.

A number of Western travelers stop at the ancient monuments and historical sites in Constantinople. Visiting the Hippodrome, they describe the Serpent Column, some of them mention its role as a city talisman protecting the city from snakes (Clavijo, Angiolello), as apparently in the 15th century and until its end the Serpent Column was not mutilated and the snakes were still not beheaded. Another important object in Constantinople that makes an impression on Western travelers is Justinian's column. This is the latest triumphal column in honor of the victory of Justinian the Great over the Persians, it was built on the Augusteion Square and was located in the close vicinity of St. Sophia Church. It represented an equestrian statue of the emperor on a column, who in his left hand held the orb with a cross, a symbol of the Christian oikoumene, and with his right hand pointed to the east. The column had taken on the meaning of a talisman protecting the city from the eastern enemy - i.e. from the infidel Muslims, and in the 15th century it became a symbol of the struggle against the Ottomans.

From the travellers' reports, it can be concluded that in the 15th century the population of the city was no longer sure who was depicted on the column - most foreigners mention Justinian, but for Pero Tafur and Broquière it was Constantine the Great, for Ciriaco from Ancona - Heraclius (610–641) and for Angiolello it is Augustine (354–430), the confusion possibly coming from the name of the square, which is called the Augusteion.

¹⁰ E. Borsook, *The Travels of Bernardo Michelozzi and Bonsignore Bonsignori in the Levant (1497–1498)*, Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, 36, 1973, 145–197. 160, n. 87. Bonsignore's memoirs are preserved in Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Firenze (BNCF), MSS Magl. XIII, 93.

¹¹ E. Borsook, *op. cit.*, 160, n. 89 - BNCF, MSS Magl. XIII, 93.

Travelers who pass through the Byzantine capital of Constantinople pay special attention to the churches, monasteries and holy relics kept there. Of course, the Great Church “St. Sophia” is the one that mostly attracts the interest of the pilgrims.

Very detailed is the information about the churches of Constantinople and the relics kept in them, which was left by the Spanish envoy Rui González de Clavijo. His stay in the Byzantine capital was long (the winter of 1403–1404) and he had the opportunity with Byzantine companions to tour a number of churches and monasteries and enjoy their art and architecture, the precious relics kept in them. Of course, the famous church “St. Sophia” is in the focus. Clavijo wrote the following about it: “*St. Sophia in Greek means True Wisdom. It is the largest of all [churches], the most revered among them, and has the greatest privileges of all the churches in the city. It has canons who are called monks and serve in it as in a cathedral church*”¹².

Equally detailed and intriguing is the description of another Spaniard, Pero Tafur. Tafur shares his vivid impressions of the Church of “St. Sophia”, just like Clavijo he wants to be taken around the churches of Constantinople and reflects his observations in his text. His first “clash” with “St. Sophia” he describes as follows: *we saw a very high mountain, more than a hundred miles off, and they told us that it was St. Sophia, which is in Constantinople*¹³. Undoubtedly “St. Sophia” strongly impressed the Spanish nobleman and it is no wonder that, like other travelers, he wanted to examine it carefully, and made a detailed description. *It is very large and they say that in the days of the prosperity of Constantinople there were in it six thousand clergy. ... This mosaic work is so fine that not even a brush could attempt to better it. ... The floor is made of great stones; most delicately cut, which are very magnificent*...¹⁴.

Another description of Constantinople from the same period, by the Italian traveler Cristoforo Buondelmonti, is very moving. Buondelmonti dwells in detail on “St. Sophia”, noting with sadness that despite its magnificence, the church has fallen into disrepair. *Now only the shell of the church remains and everything in it is ruined and destroyed*¹⁵.

At the very end of the 15th century, the two Florentine clerics Bonsignori and Bernardo Michelozzi also visited Constantinople and, like other pilgrims, travelled around the city and visited many churches, Greek and Armenian. However, it was of course Justinian’s “St Sophia” which impressed them most. They visited it three times and were astonished by its sheer size, as well as by its splendid mosaics and marble revetments. The relevant text of Bonsignori’s memoirs reads: *The magnificent church of St. Sophia is today Istanbul’s main mosque. It features five aisles and a nave, and its walls are*

¹² Narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo to the Court of Timour, at Samarkand, AD 1403–1406. publication *Clements R. Markham*. London, 1859, 36; Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo, *The Spanish Embassy to Samarkand*, 66–67.

¹³ J. P. A. Van der Vin, *Op. cit.*, 697; H. Марков, *op. cit.*, 440.

¹⁴ Pero Tafur, *Travels and Adventures 1435–1439*, ch. XIII; J. P. A. Van der Vin, *op. cit.*, 697; Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, 103; Перио Тафур, *Странствия и путешествия*, § 171–173; H. Марков, *op. cit.*, 447.

¹⁵ Cristoforo Buondelmonti, *Liber insularum archipelagi*, 51.

covered with mosaics. Above the nave's main entrance, one still can vaguely distinguish the image of Jesus Pantocrator; which is today plastered over and decorated with Turkish inscriptions¹⁶.

For the German traveller from the end of the 15th century, Arnold von Harff, as well as for all Christians from then until today, visiting one of the unforgettable architectural wonders of the former Byzantine capital - the church of "St. Sophia" was very important. He tells us in detail about its architecture, external and internal decoration, dwells on the Ottoman customs, which deprived this temple of the images of saints: *Then we went to the main church, in Christian times called „St. Sophia”, which is now the mezquita, or house of prayer of the Turkish emperor, into which I was admitted with the help of a German apostate Christian.*

*It is an indescribably beautiful and magnificent church, built by the Christians; above, below, and on all sides it is entirely of marble, with costly moldings in gold, and mosaics within. All the altars of the images of the saints, which were built there after our manner, are utterly destroyed or broken, for the pagans and Turks do not want to have images in their churches, because they believe and say that it was idolatry...*¹⁷

Undoubtedly, some of the most interesting data about already Ottoman Constantinople and from the end of the 15th century are provided by the two clerics B. Bonsignori and B. Michelozzi. Based on Bonsignori's account, close to the Hippodrome there was a church which was once dedicated to St. Mark¹⁸. The Turks were currently using it as a shelter or zoo for housing exotic wild beasts. These animals strongly impressed the two Florentines: *I discovered a magnificent old church situated at a short distance from the Hippodrome. It was transformed into a stable for housing wild beasts. I saw there a giraffe, but it was not as beautiful as the one the Sultan had sent to Florence few years ago. There were also several lions and leopards fettered in chains. Just beneath the vaults of the said church I suddenly came across two huge elephants*¹⁹.

Like the two Florentine clerics, Arnold von Harff notes that some churches of Constantinople were turned into a place to keep wild animals. *Then we walked through the city, and were admitted into many churches which had formerly been Christian, and which were now full of wild animals, for there I saw ten lions in chains, three elephants, two gazelles. These are animals that produce musk. I also saw wild cats, rats, mice, hedgehogs and other animals all chained up*²⁰.

¹⁶ E. Borsook, *op. cit.*, 160, n. 92 - BNCF, MSS Magl. XIII, 93.

¹⁷ Die Pilgerfahrt des Ritters Arnold von Harff von Cöln durch Italien, Syrien, Aegypten, Arabien, Aethiopien, Nubien, Palästina, die Türkei, Frankreich und Spanien wie er sie in den Jahren 1496 bis 1499 vollendet, beschrieben und durch Zeichnungen erläutert hat, publication *Dr. E. Von Groote*, Cöln, 1860, 208; The Pilgrimage of Arnold von Harff, publication *M. Letts*, London 1946, 243 – 244.

¹⁸ It is probably about the church of "St. St. Peter and Mark" in Constantinople. Al. van Millingen, *Byzantine Churches in Constantinople. Their History and Architecture*, London 1912, 191.

¹⁹ E. Borsook, *op. cit.*, 160, n. 90 - BNCF, MSS Magl. XIII, 93.

²⁰ Die Pilgerfahrt des Ritters Arnold von Harff, 206; The Pilgrimage of Arnold von

There is a similar account of wild animals in the churches of Constantinople in Giovan-Maria Angiolello. He writes the following: *There are several other main chapels near the mentioned building [St. Sophia]. In them, the Turks keep the elephants of the Great Turk, in another chapel - the lions, and in the third are the weapons of the Great Turk*²¹.

And some words about the city of New Rome as Ottoman Istanbul in 16th century.

In 1551, Nicolas de Nicolay, by order of the French king, entered in the embassy of Gabriel d'Aramon, which went to the Ottoman Empire, to the court of Suleiman the Magnificent (1520 - 1566). Nicolas' official task is to make a series of drawings from the country, and his unofficial task is to create maps, that is, de facto, he is a French spy in Turkey. In 1568, his book *Travels in Turkey in Four Books* was published, containing Nicolas' observations of the Ottoman court and people during his mission for the French crown in Constantinople in 1551. The book represents the first contemporary 16th century description of customs and costumes in the Ottoman world, and in fact one of the first very accurate descriptions of the Islamic world in Europe. After its appearance, the book achieved rapid success and popularity - it was quickly republished and translated into various languages and published in Italy, the Netherlands, England, and Germany. *Louis Danet* produced 60 engravings, believed to be based on original drawings by Nicolas de Nicolay, and they form a central element of the book, with each image followed by a brief description of Muslim rituals, religious practices and monuments. The images cover virtually every aspect of Ottoman daily life and depict figures ranging from the sultan and his wives to fighters, cooks and janissary generals. These 60 drawings are an invaluable source of information about the population of the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century.

The Italian edition of 1580 fully reproduces the drawings and engravings of the first edition of 1568²². And now we could scrutinize some specific data about Constantinople in the 16th century contained in the second book of Nicolas de Nicolay according to the Italian edition. The author speaks of the founding of Byzantium, modernly called Constantinople²³; about the transfer of the capital there by the *Great emperor Constantine*²⁴. In his account of the history of the empire, he reaches Mehmed II, *who wanted to destroy the Christians and gave the City three days of plunder; cruelty, sodomy*; tells of the loss of

Harff, 242.

²¹ П. Данова, *Джован-Мария Анджолело и неговото описание на Константинопол*, (сл. 1478), Историческо бъдеще, 2010, 1-2, 211-236, 229.

²² Nicolas de Nicolay, *Le Navigationi et viaggi, fatti nella Turchia ... Novamente tradotto di Francese in Italiano da Francesco Flori da Lilla, Aritmetico*, Venice, Francesco Ziletti, 1580.

²³ *Ibid.*, 100.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 103.

Constantinople, *the head of the Empire in the East, together with the city of Pera, called by the Turks Gala, stating that it happened on March 29, 1453, and was a great loss to Christianity*²⁵.

The text relates that Mehmed II ordered a population to be resettled in the City from various places, including Jews and Marans²⁶ from Spain, and soon Constantinople became a populous and rich city²⁷. The story continues with the description of ancient monuments preserved in Constantinople - such as the Hippodrome, called by the Turks Atmeidan, mentions the columns that are there; informs the reader about the numerous aqueducts and cisterns in Constantinople²⁸. Further, it dwells in detail on the Saray, where the Great Turk lives: *In the other corner of the city of the Greeks, ... is the Saray, where the Great Turk usually resides when he is in Constantinople. This Saray is fortified and surrounded with walls about two miles. In it on a hill, a beautiful garden is seen; around the porticoes of this garden as a chiostro of monks, there are about 200 rooms*, which Nicolay describes in detail and emphasizes as full of all kinds of miracles and decorations²⁹. *In this chiostro is also the Saray of the Sultan's wife, there are the children and youths, brought up according to the Mohammedan law*³⁰. His narrative continues with a description of the Old Women's Saray, which is in the center of the city, made by Mehmed before he built the one just described. *There are only two gates here, one is usually open and well-guarded by the Eunuchs, while the other is never opened. Within this Saray are many small cottages, set apart with the rooms, kitchens, and other conveniences, which are inhabited by the wives and concubines of the Great Turk. Their number is over 200, mostly daughters of Christians, some spoils in war, war against Greeks, Hungarians, Vlachs, Mingrelians*³¹, *and Italians, as well as others Christian nationalities; others were bought by the merchants, then by the Beylerbeys, pashas, and captains, and presented to the Great Turk, who kept them in this Saray, well clothed, well cared for, and well-guarded by the eunuchs*³².

In Nikolay's book next comes a description of the most famous temple of "St. Sophia": *The temple of St. Sophia was founded by Justinian, and is a work incomparable in size, structure, beauty, and wealth, in the center of which is a round dome, approaching the Roman Pantheon, which is a rotunda, but much higher and wider...The temple inside is inlaid and faced with large slabs of porphyry, serpentine and marbles of various colors, of extraordinary beauty and size... The roof of this temple is made of lead. The gates, which are the most beautiful in the world, are of Corinthian brass, elaborated in such a manner*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 105.

²⁶ Jews who had accepted the Christianity after the Alhambrian Decree of 1492, which allowed them to remain in Castile and Aragon but convert to Christianity.

²⁷ Nicolas de Nicolay, *op. cit.*, 105.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 109.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 111.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 112.

³¹ Mingrelia - a district in western Georgia

³² Nicolas de Nicolay, *op. cit.*, 115.

*that for a temple from the time of the Christian emperors it could be judged with great certainty that it was the most perfect, the richest, and the most magnificent temple not only in the East, but also in the whole world*³³.

Nikolay continues with a description of Ottoman religious and charitable institutions. *Besides this magnificent temple of St. Sophia, that is, of the Holy Wisdom, there are in Constantinople three other beautiful mosques, surrounded also by AMARATI (hospitals), fountains, schools for the study of the laws by poor youths. The first such mosque and amarat was founded by Sultan Mehmed II after he captured Constantinople, the second by Bayezid II (1481-1512), his son, and the third by Selim I (1512-1520), the father of Suleiman I, the current emperor. And here all three are buried, each of them in his own.*

*That [mosque] of Mehmed is the most beautiful and the richest, founded with 60 thousand ducats of income and similar in size to St. Sophia. There are about hundred houses covered with lead, made to shelter the doctors and priests according to their law, and to shelter all pilgrims and strangers, travelers of different nations and religions, and here they may rest with their servants and horses; for three whole days they could be housed and fed and their expenses covered without them paying anything. In addition, there are 150 rooms outside the mosque for the poor of the city...*³⁴.

Some of the most curious information about Ottoman Constantinople is contained in the data that Nicolay gives about the baths and the fashion of bathing among the Turks. *At Constantinople, as in the other Mohammedan cities of Greece, Asia, Africa, there is a great number of very fine baths, both public and private. They, like the ancient Greek and Roman baths, which were built and made with an industry too sumptuous and expensive to the point of impossibility. Thus, a large part of the public baths are decorated with columns, tables, floors inlaid with different marbles in rare colors and very beautiful*³⁵.

In conclusion we must stress that what we summarized above was only a fraction of the intriguing stories which could be found in the accounts of the western travellers and pilgrims who had travelled through the Constantinople in the 15th – 16th century.

All these travelogues offer us a plethora of fascinating descriptions of Byzantine and Ottoman Constantinople. Visitor like Pero Tafur, Broquière, Christoforo Buondelmonti pay special attention to the city's impressive walls and fortifications, to its triangular shape, to the Hippodrome, to Justinian's column, to the splendor of the Church of St. Sophia, but also remark that the city is severely depopulated and lacks maintenance. The travellers of the late 15th and of the 16th century like Bonsignori and Michelozzi, Alnold von Harff and Nicolas Nicolay point to the changes that had taken place, e.g. the conversion of St. Sophia into a mosque and to the use of several other churches as zoos. However, they also note the positive elements, namely that Mehmed II had ordered a population to be resettled in the City from various places, and that

³³ *Ibid.*, 118.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 119.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 120.

Constantinople had again become a populous and wealthy city. In this way, they share more and new interesting details about the customs and manners of the Ottomans, the new masters of the New Rome.

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КУЛТУРНИ ОБРОЦИ: ХРИШЋАНАСТВО ПРОТИВ ИСЛАМА – ПОСЛЕДЊИ
ХРИШЋАНСКИ ВЕКОВИ НОВОГ РИМА (ПОГЛЕДАНО ИЗ ЗАПАДНИХ ОЧИМА)

Западни путници који су пролазили Балканом несумњиво су посебну пажњу поклањали византијском Цариграду, касније османском Истанбулу. Путници који су посетили Цариград у првој половини 15. века пишу о његовој депопулацији као последици османских упада. Они који су га посетили у другој половини 15. века или касније описују промене у граду након османског освајања, како негативне, тако и позитивне. Током 1430-их, Шпанац Перо Тафур бележи да је Цариград имао облик троугла, окружен јаким, али запуштеним зидинама. У опису древних споменика византијске престонице, Тафур помиње Хиподром и Змијску колону. Посебно га је импресионирала Јустинијанова црква „Света Софија“. Из истог периода потиче и текст Берtrandона де ла Брокијера, који детаљно описује утврђења Цариграда.

Детаље о становништву Цариграда 1430-их налазимо код Кристофора Буонделмонтија, који изражава сасвим негативан став Запада према православним хришћанима. Његов текст нам даје добру слику византијске престонице у првој половини 15. века – декадентан град са све мањим бројем становника. Буонделмонти описује Јустинијанову колону, Хиподром и бројне цистерне у граду. Шпански изасланик Руи Гонзалес де Клавихо такође говори о Хиподрому, познатом египатском обелиску и Змијској колони, а посебну пажњу посвећује цариградским црквама, нарочито Великој цркви Свете Софије. Током италијанске ренесансе, западни путници живо се интересују за античке остатке, попут тријумфалних стубова, обелиска, цистерни и древних натписа. Крајем 15. века, флорентински свештеници Бонсињоре Бонсињори и Бернардо Микелоци дају занимљив опис Хиподрома, а Микелоци преписује неке грчке натписе и преводи их на латински. Немачки путник Арнолд фон Харф у касном 15. веку посећује цркву „Света Софија“ и детаљно описује њену архитектуру, спољну и унутрашњу декорацију. Он такође примећује да су неке цариградске цркве претворене у просторе за држање дивљих животиња. Сличан запис о животињама у црквама налази се и у делу Ђованија-Марије Анђолела. Године 1551, Никола де Николаи је учествовао у дипломатској мисији на двор Сулејмана Величанственог. У свом запису наводи да је Мехмед II наредио довођење становништва у Цариград из различитих крајева, укључујући Јевреје и маране из Шпаније. Николаи такође пише о јавним купатилима и турским навикама купања. Горепоменути аутори нам пружају мноштво занимљивих описа византијског и османског Цариграда. Путници попут Пероа Тафура, Берtrandона де ла Брокијера и Кристофора Буонделмонтија посебно истичу импресивне зидине и утврђења града, његов троугласти облик, Хиподром, Јустинијанову колону и сјај цркве Свете Софије, али такође примећују велику депопулацију и лоше одржавање града. Путници с краја 15. и 16. века, попут Бонсињорија, Микелоција, Арнолда фон Харфа и Николе де Николаија, наглашавају промене које су се догодиле, попут претварања Свете Софије у џамију и коришћења других цркава као зоолошких вртова. Међутим, такође примећују и позитивне аспекте – наредбу Мехмеда II да се у град насели становништво из различитих крајева, што је поново учинило Цариград густо насељеним и богатим градом.