

The Historical Center of Bursa Through the Eyes of Western Travelers in the 19th Century: The Hisar District

19. Yüzyılda Batılı Seyyahların Gözüyle Bursa'nın Tarihi Merkezi: Hisar Bölgesi

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Abstract

The territories once occupied by the Ottoman Empire, replete with cultural abundance, have perennially captivated the attention of explorers. Bursa stands as a quintessential city, epitomizing the cultural opulence of the Ottoman heritage. With this value, Bursa has attracted the attention of foreign travelers for centuries and travelers have visited this city for various reasons. Visits began in the 15th century, increased in the 19th century and many diplomats, merchants and scientists came to the city. Most of the travelers who came also explored and researched the Hisar District, the historical center of Bursa.

When looking at the 19th century, it becomes evident that, just as in previous centuries, the Hisar District, in addition to the city's overall social life and cultural wealth, has garnered the interest of travelers. Within the societal urban structure of Hisar, historical edifices, its architectural fabric, monumental structures, the fort's layout, religious establishments and other social constructs have amplified this interest. For this reason, the district is deemed significant by these travelers. They have articulated their perspectives about the Hisar District in their travelogues. Furthermore, travelers have elaborated on the Hisar District's physical structures, its history, architecture and artistic attributes in their writings.

Keywords

Ottoman Empire, Early Modern Travelers, Bursa Hisar, Bursa Palace, Bursa Tophane

Öz

Kültürel zenginliği ile bir hazine niteliğinde olan Osmanlı Devleti'nin bulunduğu topraklar, seyyahların ilgi odağındadır. Bursa şehri de Osmanlı Devleti'nin kültürel zenginliğini yansıtan önemli kentlerdendir. Bu değeriyle Bursa asırlardan beri yabancı seyyahların ilgisini çekmiş, seyyahlar çeşitli nedenlerle bu şehri ziyarete gelmiştir. Ziyaretler 15. yüzyılda başlamış 19. yüzyılda çoğalmış, pek çok diplomat, tüccar ve bilim insanı şehre gelmiştir. Gelen seyyahların çoğu da Bursa'nın tarihi merkezi olan Hisar Bölgesi'ni gezmiş, araştırmıştır.

Genel olarak 19. yüzyıla bakıldığında Hisar Bölgesi'nin, şehirdeki sosyal yaşam ve kültürel zenginliklerin yanı sıra, toplumsal kent yapısı içinde tarihi yapılar, mimari dokusu, anıtsal yapılar, kale yapısı, dini yapılar ve sosyal yapılar seyyahların ilgisini arttırmıştır. Bu nedenle seyyahlar tarafından bölgenin önemli olduğu düşünülmektedir. Seyahatnamelerinde Hisar Bölgesi ile ilgili düşüncelerini belirtmişlerdir. Ayrıca eserlerinde fiziki yapıları, tarihini, mimarisi ve sanatsal özelliklerini ayrıntılı olarak vermişlerdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Osmanlı Devleti, Yakınçağ Seyyahlar, Bursa Hisar, Bursa Saray, Bursa Tophane

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1. Introduction

The inaugural capital of the Ottoman Empire, Bursa, has witnessed the presence of diverse civilizations throughout the centuries. Reflecting the cultural richness of ancient civilizations and the Ottoman Empire, this city is akin to a treasure trove. Beyond encountering traces of this cultural treasure, Bursa, with its natural beauties, hot springs and status as a trade center, has attracted the attention of foreign travelers for centuries. Moreover, its proximity to Istanbul makes it a district easily accessible for travelers.¹ Most travelers visiting Bursa have provided extensive information about the city. Particularly in the 19th century, due to advancements in transportation, there was a marked augmentation in exploratory expeditions, leading to a substantial influx of travelers to Bursa. Consequently, throughout the 19th century, Bursa hosted myriad travelers.²

Nearly every explorer who journeyed to Bursa invariably explored the Hisar District, representing the essence and nucleus of Bursa, positioning it as an essential locale rarely bypassed. Taking a comprehensive view of Bursa's city center, known as the Hisar District, it becomes evident that it has been a focal point of interest for Western travelers for centuries, owing to the city's lively social scene and rich cultural heritage. Upon closer examination, this allure can be ascribed to the urban fabric of Hisar, its architectural diversity, monumental edifices, the fort's intricate design, religious structures, and the coexistence of diverse social institutions, all of which have ensnared travelers with their aesthetic charm. The evident cultural richness and the plethora of attractions within the district have greatly influenced travelers, thereby increasing their interest in the area. Consequently, its significance has been recognized by many travelers. Additionally, its elevated location and the view from Tophane Park have enchanted a majority of those who toured the Hisar District.

Travelers have described what they saw and experienced, their observations and their personal experiences in their travelogues from their own perspectives. They have expressed their thoughts about the Hisar District. Many travelers, from Charles Texier to Baptistin Pojoulat, from Charles Ambroise Bernard to George William Frederick Howard, have conveyed their thoughts and impressions in their travelogues. Additionally, while travelers have depicted the physical

¹ Travelers from Istanbul to Bursa utilized both land and sea routes for their journeys. They traveled by land through the routes of Izmit and Iznik. Additionally, we observe that they would take ferries to Mudanya, then proceed to Bursa. By the mid-19th century, steamships began operating between Istanbul and Mudanya. As the 19th century drew to a close, trains were introduced to connect Mudanya and Bursa. This advancement facilitated day trips to Bursa, subsequently increasing the frequency of travels to the city. In August 1902, French travelers departing from Istanbul to visit Bursa first arrived in Mudanya by morning ferries. From Mudanya, they used the railway to reach Bursa by train. After touring significant sites in Bursa, they returned to Mudanya by train in the late afternoon and from there, they boarded their ferries back to Istanbul. (BOA., DH. ŞFR., 314/83.)

² Travelers from various professions have visited Bursa. Diplomats, merchants, religious officials, archaeologists, painters and art historians have toured the city, captured its essence in photographs and many have shared their memories in their travelogues. Austen Henry Layard (1817-1894) emerges as a particularly distinguished traveler to Bursa among his contemporaries. Born in Paris in 1817, Austen Henry Layard was an archaeologist, cuneiform script expert, art historian, politician and diplomat. He arrived in Istanbul in 1839 and later traveled to Afyon, Karaman, Silifke, Bursa, Kütahya and Adana. (See Bayraktar, 2011: 282.) As an example of religious officials, we can mention the Polish Archbishop of Mohylew, Ignacy Holowinski. During his visit to Bursa, Holowinski toured the thermal baths and remarked on the therapeutic properties of the waters. (Topaktaş Üstüner, 2019: 38.)

structures of the Hisar District, they have also described the historical background, architecture and artistic features of these structures in their works and travelogues.³

We observed that travelers extensively depicted the Bursa Hisar District visually in their travelogues. In doing so, they employed various methods. Generally, two predominant approaches are evident. One approach offers an expansive perspective of Hisar, while the other delves into the specific edifices within this area. Typically, when portraying Hisar's landscape, they visualized the view from the top or slopes of Hisar looking down on the Bursa plain or the view from the plain looking up at Hisar and its structures. For visualization, they employed techniques such as miniature painting, different coloring methods, engravings, lithographs and photography. The prolific inclusion of imagery in the travel narratives undeniably heightened readers' curiosity to explore the location, consequently boosting the volume of travelers in the ensuing years.

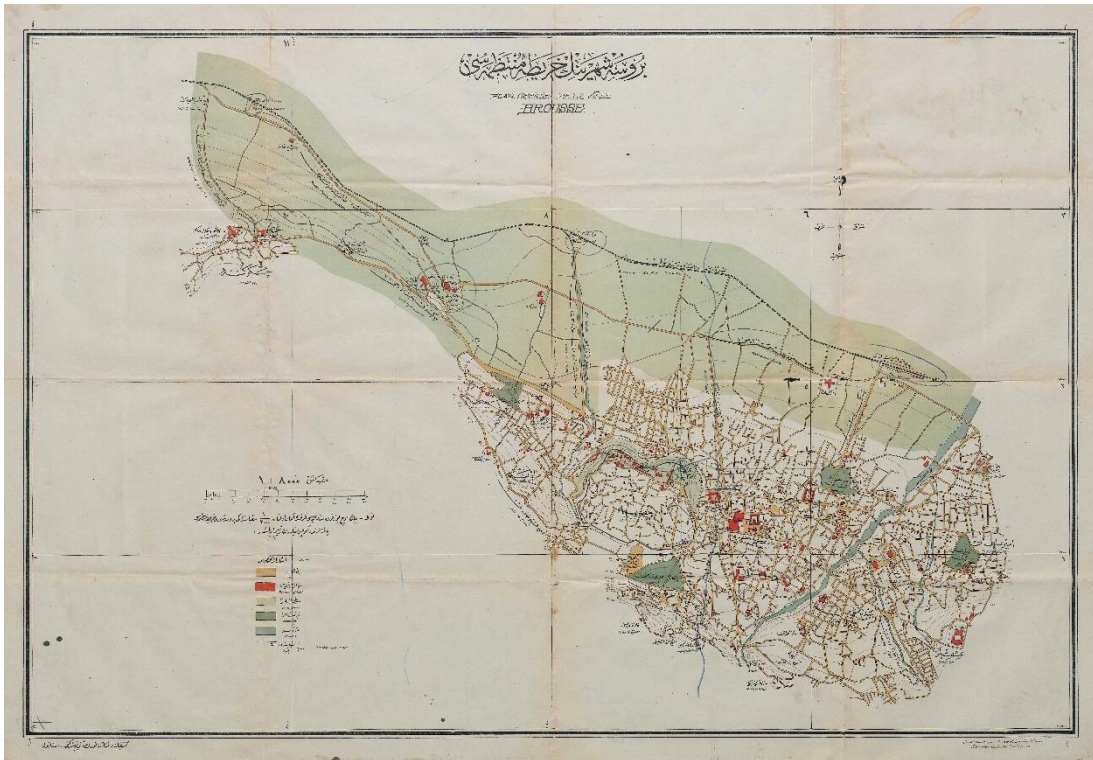


Figure 1: "Map of Bursa"

(Salt Araştırma: <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/111021>)

In our research article, we have concentrated on the Hisar District, which is located at the heart of Bursa, owing to its historical, natural, and cultural importance. Our study primarily revolves around the 19th century, a period marked by frequent visits by travelers to this area. The perspectives and views of the travelers, their travelogues, travel notes, letters and visual sources have been examined. The district, which hosts significant artifacts of Ottoman cultural heritage,

³ Travelers from France, Charles Texier, embarked on two expeditions in Anatolia, the first in 1833 and the second commencing in 1843. His travel accounts stem from these two journeys (Texier, 2002; Texier, 1839). Another French traveler, Baptistin Poujoulat, visited Bursa in 1837. In his travelogue, he provides a general overview of central Bursa while also detailing some of its more remote districts (Poujoulat, 1840). The Austrian physician Charles Ambroise Bernard (1808-1844) taught at the Galatasaray Lyceum in Istanbul. between 1838 and 1843, making occasional trips to Bursa. His observations from Bursa are chronicled in his 1842 French publication titled "Les Bains de Brousse" (See Bernard, 1842; for its Turkish version see Bernard, 1943). The English traveler Frederick Howard documented his 1853 visit to Bursa in his travelogue (See Howard, 1855).

has been evaluated in conjunction with Western historical sources, domestic and foreign literature and Ottoman archive documents. While there exists a plethora of travelogues and documents pertinent to our research, we have scrupulously scrutinized them within the confines of this paper, endeavoring to present a comprehensive perspective on the travelers by means of illustrative examples. As it's not feasible to convey all this information in the span of an article, we briefly touched upon the subject through the lens of Western travelers who visited the Bursa Hisar District in the 19th century, providing a few examples. While the information provided by travelers may vary in detail, the subjects they touched upon generally resemble one another. Henceforth, our endeavor has been to augment the extant scholarship concerning the Bursa Hisar District by elucidating how specific influential Western travelers typically portrayed its social, architectural, artistic, and cultural facets.

2. Interest of Western Travelers in the Hisar District in the 19th Century

The lands of Bursa have hosted numerous civilizations since ancient times, resulting in a plethora of structures from different periods. Particularly after the Ottoman Empire's conquest of Bursa in 1326, renovation efforts commenced in the city. Restructuring efforts were made around the castle. Following Osman Gazi, his son Orhan Gazi, who became the sultan in 1326, transformed the monastery within Bursa's castle into a mosque. He also ordered the establishment of a palace named Bey Sarayı (Bey Palace). Today, this locale is known as Tophane. Bursa, being the center of the Ottoman Principality, quickly transformed into an Ottoman district with its construction activities. Some of the main monumental structures from this era still survive today (İnalçık, 1992: 446-449). When considering these monuments, the baths, mausoleums, mosques, tombs, small mosques, madrasahs, fountains and urban remains located in the Hisar District have significantly attracted the attention of Western travelers. Especially in the 19th century, Bursa's baths drew travelers both for their therapeutic qualities and as sites of interest (Kutlu Dilbaz, 2019: 181-200). Their intrigue led travelers to vividly describe these structures. Many of them illustrated these structures in their travelogues, thereby echoing the essence of the Hisar District in the countries they visited. In the works of these travelers, we often find extensive depictions of the structures, outdoor spaces, landscapes and images.

From the conquest of Bursa until 1402, the city functioned as the capital of the Ottoman Empire, with Ottoman sultans taking up residence in the Hisar District, which constituted the epicenter of Bursa. Even after the capital was moved from this location post-1402, the significance of Bursa Hisar was not diminished. Elite members of the dynasty and top-ranking bureaucrats and city administrators continued to reside in Hisar for many years. With its dungeons, janissary soldiers and high-ranking officials who visited, the Hisar District maintained its position as an administrative center for years (Ergenç, 2014: 26-29). Thus, by the 19th century, the Hisar District, with its historical importance intact, drew the attention of Western travelers due to its historical structures, urban architecture, cultural values and historical past.



Figure 2: "Clock Tower in Bursa's Tophane Garden"
(i.Ü.NEKYA, 90752 / 28)

In the 19th century, when examining the general information provided by travelers about the Hisar District, the foremost figure that emerges is the Austrian embassy translator and historian, Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall. Joseph von Hammer arrived in Istanbul in 1799 to work as an interpreter at the Austrian Embassy (Ortaylı, 1997: 491). In August 1804, he undertook a journey to Bursa with his friends (Eyice, 1983: 542). The renowned historical significance and natural beauty of this city, once inhabited by Byzantine Emperors and Ottoman sultans, enticed him to travel to Bursa (Hammer, 1818; also see Hammer, 1820: 241-335). Joseph von Hammer's accounts from his visits suggest that, in addition to the cultural aspects of the region, the social life and, to some extent, economic activities significantly piqued the interest of travelers (Dörtok Abacı, 2008: 395).

Another traveler who provided information about the Hisar District in his travelogue is John Fuller, who visited Bursa in October 1818. The English traveler Fuller mentioned that while wandering around Bursa, which still retained traces of the magnificence of the Ottoman Empire, he observed that many mosques were in a state of decay, dilapidation or abandonment. Later on, he discusses the mausoleum of Osman Bey, the founder of the Ottoman State, and then the mausoleum of his son, Orhan Bey, who became the second ruler and conquered Bursa. Fuller was notably struck by the illumination of these sultans' graves with lamps and their adornment with expensive shawls. He describes the central position of the Hisar District and the structure of the city. He observes that the city is nestled at the foot of a mountain, surrounded by a wooded landscape, overlooking the plain, and integrated into an ancient castle situated atop a rocky hill (Fuller, 1829: 70-71; Yıldırım, 2014: 278).

In 1834, for the purpose of research, the French traveler Charles Felix-Marie Texier visited Bursa. In his writings, he touched upon the city's historical structures, social life, architecture and

geography. Texier described that Bursa is composed of the Hisar District and its peripheral neighborhoods, located on a hillside of Uludağ and overlooking the city from an elevated position (Texier, 2002: 201).

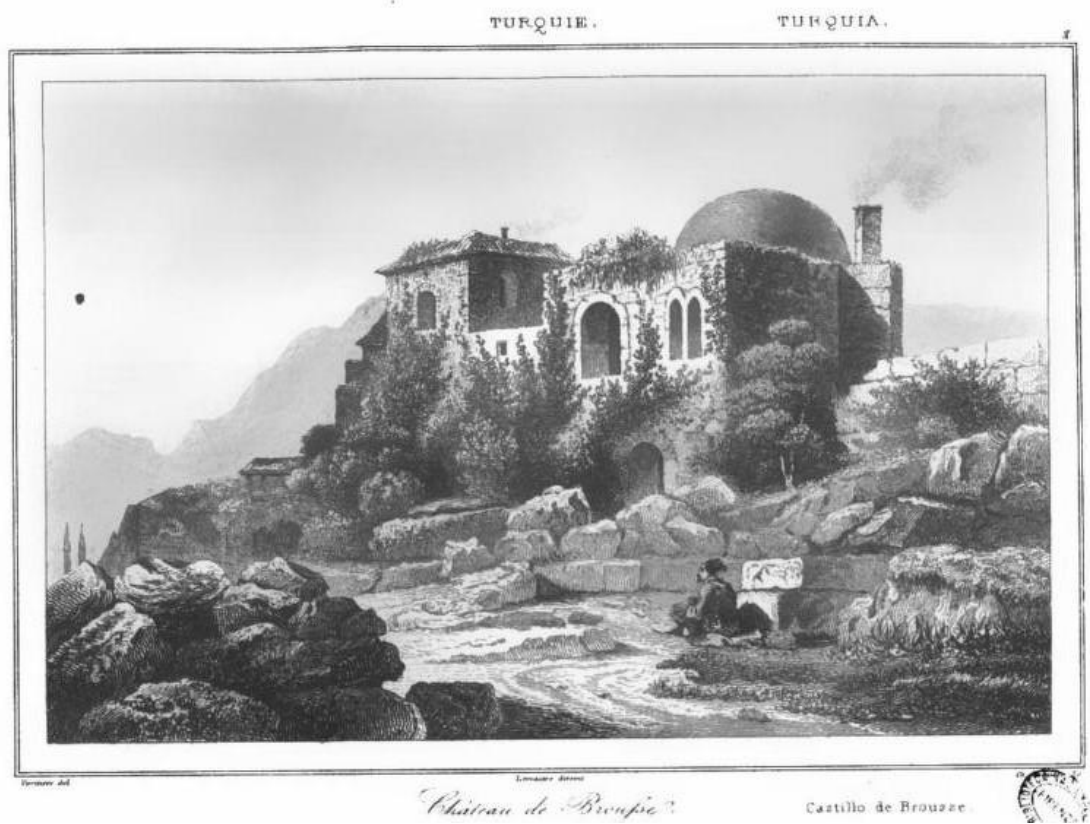


Figure 3: "Bursa Fortress - Bey Palace (Bey Sarayı)"
(Jouannin, 1853, Gravure no: 2.)

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In the 19th century, Max Müller, one of the prominent religious researchers of England, visited Istanbul and Bursa with his wife Georgina Müller. Georgina Müller penned the observations and observations they amassed during their stays, chronicled as correspondence. In the letters she published in 1897, she provides general information about the Hisar District while touring Bursa (Türkan, 2021: 9). She mentioned that the city of Bursa is established over three hills that are an extension of Uludağ, with the primary city located on the central hill. Atop this hill, she highlighted the existence of Bursa Castle the palace where the Ottoman sultans resided and the mausoleums of Sultan Osman and Sultan Orhan (Müller, 1897: 156-157; Müller, 2010: 107-108).

3. Important Structures in the Hisar District Through the Eyes of Western Travelers

Bursa, the inaugural significant hub of the Ottoman Empire, is a fortress city transformed from Byzantine control into an Ottoman metropolis (Küskü, 2017: 132). The Hisar District, where the fortress walls are located, stands as the heart of Bursa. The structures in Bursa's Hisar District, which played a crucial role in the city's fortifications, have captured the interest of travelers for centuries. In particular, landmarks such as Bursa Fortress and its gates, the Bey Palace, the tombs of Osman Gazi and Orhan Gazi and their family and the Tophane Park, which encompasses this wealth of historical richness, have made the Hisar District a frequently visited area by travelers. This district continued to be visited by Western travelers, becoming the subject of drawings, engravings and photographs, in the 19th century.

3.1. Bursa Fortress and Its Gates Through the Eyes of 19th Century Western Travelers

One of the most captivating structures for travelers is the Bursa Fortress and its gates. A significant portion of the Bursa Fortress is built upon natural rock formations and is surrounded by walls that stretch 3.38 km in length. On the side facing Pınarbaşı, due to the challenges of defense, it was constructed in a double-wall style. Bursa Fortress boasts six gates: Yer Kapı (Bab-ı Zemin), Fetih Kapı (Su Kapısı), Zindan Kapı, Tahtakale Kapı, the main entrance known as the Saltanat Kapı and Kaplıca Kapı, which opens towards the spa region of Çekirge (Elbas, 2014: 13-14).

Travelers have depicted these gates in their travelogues from their own viewpoints. For instance, Charles Felix-Marie Texier, during his 1834 visit to Bursa Fortress, mentioned that there were three gates leading into the city. The gate to the north was named Tabak (Debbağ), the western one was termed "Kaplıca" and the eastern one was denominated "Yer Kapısı" (Ground Gate). He further highlighted the presence of Zindan Kapı and Su Kapı, albeit emphasizing their smaller stature and lesser use. He elucidated that these gates were brick-built, overlaid with marble. Highlighting that the fortress had five gates, Texier described the walled ancient city as being built upon a rock to the north. He observed that the foundational portions of the western walls were of ancient origin, constructed using extensive limestone blocks arranged in both horizontal and vertical orientations Facing the mountain on the southern flank, he noted the city's superior fortifications. The towers within the fortress, spaced at intervals of twenty meters, were quadrangular, constructed from travertine and a significant part was made using marble stones sourced from ancient ruins. He also observed that some sections within the walls showcased beautifully crafted pieces (Texier, 2002: 201).

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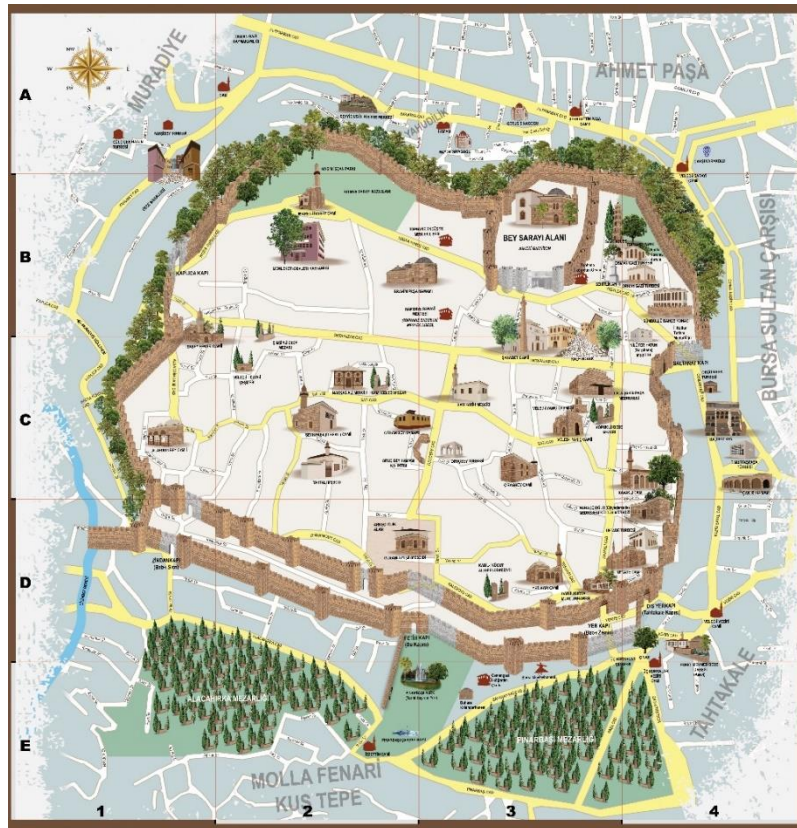


Figure 4: "Bursa Hisar (Inner Castle) District"

(<https://www.bursa.com.tr/uploads/2021/02/bursa-kalesi-ve-kale-ici-yapilari-haritasi.jpg> (30.09.2023))

Bursa Fortress has attracted significant attention from travelers. In 1802, the traveler William George Browne visited Bursa and was profoundly captivated by the panorama of its plain (Browne, 1820: 110). Another traveler captivated by the landscape of Bursa was Hammer, who likened the city, adorned with mosques, bathsand pavilions, to a beautiful painting. He referred to the city as "Green Bursa" and mentioned entering it through the Beşikler Gate. In the latter segment of his travel account, he describes the city center and the Hisar District. The gates of the Hisar District also feature in his account. He describes Bursa, nestled at the foot of Mount Uludağ, as being accessible from the east through the Yer Gate, from the north via the Tabak Gate, from the south through the Zindan Gate and from the west by the Kaplıca and Su Gates (Tunalı, 2005: 334-335). He points out that these gates lead to a narrow strip separating the back of the palace from the peaks of Mount Uludağ (Hammer, 1818, 15-16; Hammer, 2020: 31).

Bursa was one of the significant cities in silk production during the Ottoman Empire era, a prominence as evident in the narratives of travelers. For instance, Charles Marie Texier mentioned that the surroundings of Bursa's walls were covered with mulberry trees (Texier, 2002: 201). Among the numerous travelers who could be referenced, one of the most renowned is the British traveler Julia Pardoe, who explored the Ottoman Empire's domains in 1835 and spent nine months there. Pardoe detailed her impressions of Bursa in a book published in 1837. Pardoe has described the engagement of the Bursa populace in sericulture as follows:

"Driving before them the animals who were to return laden with mulberry branches for the nurture of the silk-worms which are reared in millions at Broussa. The number of individuals constantly employed in providing food for these insects must be very great, as we have counted upwards of two hundred horses, mules, and donkeys, bearing closely-packed loads of boughs, passing in one day beneath our windows from the same gate of the city; and, as the immense plain is covered with trees, which are each year cut closely down to the trunk, the consumption may be imagined." (Julia Pardoe, 1837: 74).

Observing the era, we see that the Hisar District was populated with mulberry trees and there were plans to establish a silk weaving factory. So abundant were the mulberry trees around the Zindan Gate of Hisar that in the summer of 1842, suggestions were made to establish a silk manufacturing facility in the area (BOA., A.MKT., 91-53.). Despite the inclination to set up a factory, this would happen in the subsequent years. By the mid-19th century, silk production was done in homes, with the first silk weaving factory being established in 1908 (Bayram, 2013: 46). Caroline Paine, who visited Bursa in the mid-19th century, also noted that the industrious people relied on the mulberry tree for their livelihood (Yıldırım, 2014: 283).

The fortress structures of Bursa were occasionally damaged and required repairs. In April 1911, due to the deterioration of the fortress wall atop Kirkmerdiven, repair work was initiated. An evaluation report was formulated and a schematic of the vicinity was drafted. Considering that this ancient fortification was nearing its collapse, a restoration evaluation document was generated and forwarded to the Ottoman Empire's principal museum, Müze-i Hümayun (BOA. MF.MKT. 1171-11).

3.2. The Osman Gazi and Orhan Gazi Mausoleums in the Eyes of Western Travelers in the 19th Century

Within the social urban structure of Hisar, tombs have garnered significant interest. The existence of the tombs of the founders of the Ottoman Empire and their descendants imparts unparalleled significance to this region. Travelers have regarded this region as particularly noteworthy. One of the earliest travelers to mention Bursa was Ibn Battuta (Aykut, 1999: 361-368). In his accounts of

Bursa, he also referred to the tomb of Osman Gazi. After briefly providing information about Orhan Bey, he mentions his father, Osman Gazi. He further mentions that Osman Gazi's tomb was situated in a mosque, which was formerly a church belonging to the Christians (Eyice, 1962: 131-132).

Another traveler who described the tomb of Osman Gazi was the Englishwoman Mary Adelaide Walker. Walker provided historical information about the Ottoman Empire in her accounts. She too mentioned that Osman Bey was interred in a location known as Daoul Monastery and emphasized its historical significance (Walker, 1886: 103).

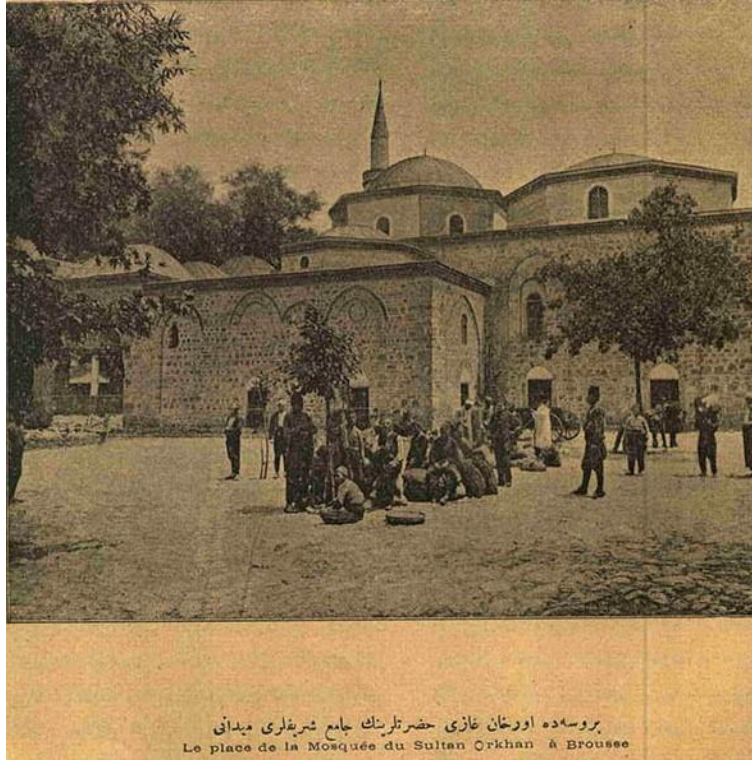


Figure 5: "Orhan Gazi Mausoleum and Square in Bursa"
(Servet-i Fünun Dergisi, 22 Ağustos 1901, S. 545, s. 1)

From their establishment until now, the tombs of Osman Gazi and Orhan Gazi, standing as enduring monuments of the Ottoman Empire, have faced various damages over the centuries. When we examine the 19th century, we note that they suffered significant damages. The first significant destruction occurred during the great fire in Bursa in November 1801. Through the eyes of travelers, this fire significantly impacted the tombs. Joseph von Hammer, visiting Bursa in 1804, elaborately described these invaluable mausoleums. After providing information about the tombs and architecturally describing them, he delved into the impact of the fire. He noted that at the century's outset, a devastating fire that spread across Bursa reached these mausoleums. However, he pointed out that they did not incur substantial damage from this calamity (Hammer, 1818: 48-50; Eyice, 1962: 134; Hammer, 2020: 62-64).



Figure 6: "Osman Gazi Mausoleum in Bursa"
(İ.Ü.NEKYA, 90758 / 3)

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Many of the travelers mentioned the massive earthquake that struck Bursa in 1855. In the years following this earthquake, it became evident that these two mausoleums had suffered substantial damage. Initiatives were launched to reconstruct and restore them. The tombs underwent maintenance and repairs (BOA., A.MKT.MHM., 75-54).⁴ Gardeners were assigned to maintain the gardens surrounding the mausoleums (BOA., İ.EV., 42-67-2 (19 September 1906)).

A meticulous approach was adopted in the upkeep of these tombs, with various attendants responsible for their upkeep. Notably, the mausoleum of Osman Gazi had several attendants to serve and maintain it (BOA., BEO, 2667-199970(7 September 1905)). Among these attendants, particular officers were appointed to supervise the safeguarding of the tombs (BOA., BEO., 2969-170132 (30 January 1904)). Additionally, a ceremonial guard was also among the staff assigned to the Osman Gazi Mausoleum (BOA., DH.MKT., 1437-72(05 July 1887)).⁵

⁴ After the earthquake in 1855, many damages occurred in the mausoleums. Maintenance and repair work began on these tombs due to this damage. In a document dated February 26, 1857, the costs of these repairs in the mausoleums of Orhan Gazi and Osman Gazi following the earthquake are specified (BOA. A.MKT.MVL., 84-83).

⁵ Furthermore, during this period, architectural significance was also attributed to the mausoleums. The plans for mausoleums and mosques have been drawn (BOA., PLK.p., 64-3443).



Figure 7: "Şehadet Mosque"
(İ.Ü.NEKYA, 779-38-13.)

3.3. Bey Palace (Bey Sarayı) through the Eyes of 19th Century Western Travelers

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The Bey Palace is situated at the summit of the hill known as Tophane, at the heart of the Hisar District, within the walls of Bursa Castleland was constructed by Orhan Gazi.⁶ The Bursa Palace was utilized by the sultans who visited until the 17th century (İnalçık, 1992: 447; for detailed information on Bey Palace, see Yılmaz, 2021).

Travelers from the West who visited Bursa in the 19th century often detailed various aspects of Bey Palace in their writings. For instance, Charles Felix-Marie Texier wrote about the palace, noting that Sultan Murat I had commissioned its construction on a hill commanding a view of the Bursa plain. During his visits in 1833 and 1843, he observed that the palace had been largely demolished, but remnants still hinted at its former splendor. He drew parallels between this palace and Sultan Selim's palace in Edirne, noting the primary residential areas of Bey Palace were contained within a single structure, with scattered pavilions throughout its gardens (Texier, 2002: 199).

Another traveler, Hammer, Portrayed the palace as one of the triad principal hubs that define the city of Bursa: the central city of Bursa, the outer neighborhoods and the palace (Hammer, 1818: 15-16; Hammer, 2020: 31). He underscored that the Bey Palace stood as one of the paramount edifices within the confines of Bursa Fortress. During his visit, he depicted the palace as being

⁶ After capturing Bursa, it is known that Orhan Gazi immediately converted a Byzantine church into a mosque and commissioned a palace next to it (Ergenç, 2014: 29). Joseph Hammer mentions that there were two palaces built by Sultan Murat I and Mehmed I (Hammer, 1818: 42-47; Hammer, 2020, 57-61). Vasileios I. Kandes posits that the palace was erected during the era of Murat I (Vasileios I. Kandes, 2009: 113). In a parallel vein, Texier echoes the sentiment by asserting that the edifice was established in the tenure of Murat I (Texier, 2002: 199).

enclosed by sturdy walls, situated atop steep rocky cliffs. In his era, the vicinity was referred to as the 'Inner Palace' or 'Tophane' and was encompassed by walls, resembling a neglected vegetable garden scattered with ruins. Hammer remarked that visitors coming to Tophane, with hopes of witnessing the ancient castle of the Ottoman Empire, might be disappointed by the mere sight of a vegetable garden and ruins. Nevertheless, he emphasized the breathtaking vista from this elevation, where one could behold the vast expanse of Bursa's plains, its villages, neighborhoods and architecture, presenting an awe-inspiring panorama (Hammer, 1818: 42-47; Hammer, 2020: 57-61).



Figure 8: "Bursa Bey Palace (Bey Sarayı)"
(Bursa'da Zaman, 2014: 12, Çizim: Cüneyt Şen Yavaş)

In the 19th Century, Vasileios Kandes, who frequently visited Bursa, described the Bey Palace in his 1883 Greek-published work as follows: "Within the Hisar, on the northern side where Tophane Park is located today and its surroundings, once stood the magnificent Bey Sarayı or Sarayı Sultani, which bore the name of the splendid Sultan Palaces." Furthermore, Kandes mentions that predecessors who visited the area, namely Texier and Bernard, could still distinguish the main outlines, locations of certain sections, baths and annexes. However, he himself did not encounter the slightest trace of the palace, indicating that the remnants had completely vanished. He found it necessary to comment on the view from Tophane Park, highlighting the palace's splendid location. He conjured images of the inaugural sultans of the Ottoman Empire and their lineage inhabiting that very locale. Standing on this side of the Hisar, he reveals he was entranced by a spell that was indescribable when gazing upon the city (Vasileios I. Kandes, 2009: 113-114).

Travelers often mention the landscape of Bursa in their journeys. Among these travelers, Julia Pardoe stands out with her prominent remarks about the scenery of Bursa. Pardoe remarked that she had never encountered such a breathtaking landscape in any country, and she wrote the following in her travelogue about the view of Bursa:

"The appearance of an Eastern city, as you look down upon it from any neighbouring height, is entirely devoid of that monotony which renders the roofs and chimneys of an European town so utterly uninteresting. It looks as though the houses had grown up gradually in the midst of a thick grove, and the eye lingers without weariness on the scene, where the glittering casements, touched by the sunlight, flash through the clustering leaves, and the wind heaves

aside the more flexile branches to reveal a stately portal, or a graceful kiosk.” (Julia Pardoe, 1837: 75-76).

4. Conclusion

One of the primary reasons for Bursa's allure among travelers lies in its abundant historical, cultural and geographical richness. Moreover, its closeness to Istanbul, a primary destination within the Ottoman Empire made it easy for travelers to transition to Bursa.

When we analyze the number of travelers who visited Bursa, we notice a significant increase during the 19th century. Simultaneously, the Hisar District emerges as one of the most frequently mentioned destinations in the narratives of travelers who visited Bursa. Most travelers who visited Bursa explored this area, or at the very least, paid a visit to its mausoleums or admired the Bursa Plain from Tophane Park.

Presently, maintenance, restoration and rejuvenation activities are being carried out in the Hisar District by the Bursa Metropolitan Municipality. Historical structures are being highlighted, attracting increased attention to the region. Visiting the historical monuments, exploring the mausoleums and marveling at the spectacular view of the Bursa Plain from Tophane Park is indeed a delightful experience. Moreover, the district, frequented by local travelers, holds significant importance, both with its historical structures and contributions to social life. The district, with its mosques, mausoleums and hammams, draws immense attention. It's common to spot photographers, as well as brides and grooms having their wedding photoshoots. Another attraction of the region is to sit in Tophane Park and lose oneself in the vista of the Bursa Plain. Hence, the Bursa Hisar District, with its enduring allure, remains a central attraction for numerous individuals.

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