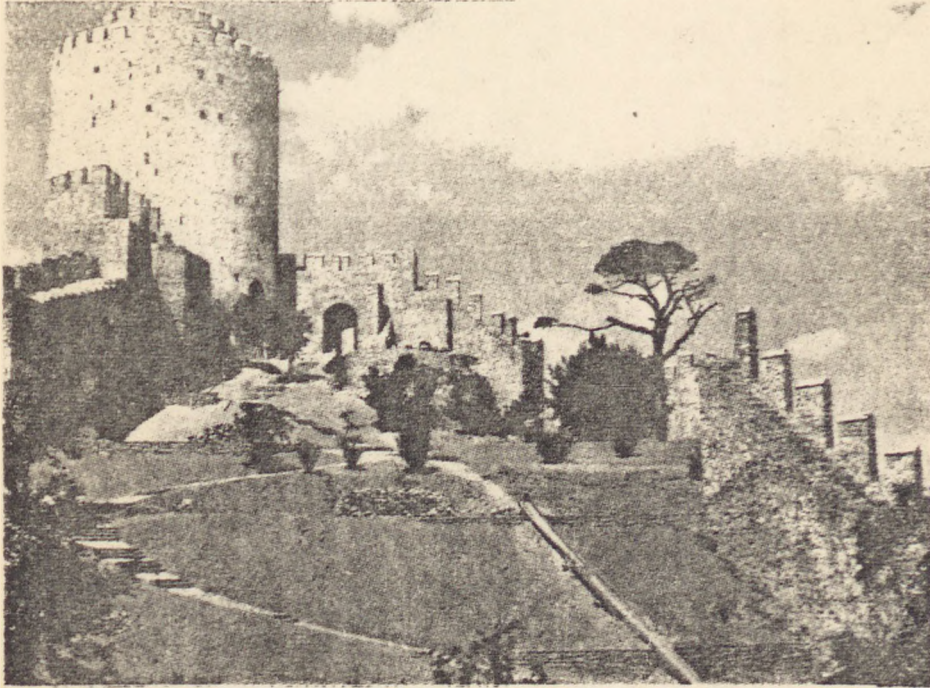


## Rumeli Hisari



Tâmiri biten Rumeli Hisari

Le Château de Rumeli Hisari sur le Bosphore après les travaux de restauration

A deed aiming well which was recently accomplished by the Turkish Government is the restoration of the imposing fortresses of Rumeli Hisari on the Bosphorus.

For centuries opposing armies, either in pursuit of one another or merely in traveling back and forth from Europe to Asia, have crossed the Bosphorus at this, the narrowest point of the famous Strait. From Herodotus, we know that Darius, the King of the Persians, bridged the Bosphorus at this point in 513 B.C. to enable his army of 700,000 men to march against the Scythians. For this task, he employed the Greek architect-engineer, Mandrocleus, an islander from Samos.

This passage was repeated 1141 years later, in 628 A.D. when Heraclius, the Byzantine Emperor, returned victoriously from Persia. At that time the Byzantine Empire was at the peak of its glory.

A third mass passage was made in 1049 by the Goth crusaders on their way from Europe to the Holy Lands.

By the beginning of the 15th century, the Byzantine Empire, partly due to foreign invasions from several fronts and partly due to interior disputes, had already weakened. The Turks in 1359 A.D. had con-

quered Bursa, which they made their capital. The Byzantine Emperor, Cantacuzane, gave Orhan I his daughter, Theodora, for a wife so as to keep on good terms with him. Orhan crossed the Dardanelles to join with the Byzantines in the fight against the Serbians and Bulgarians. Thus the Turks obtained land west of Byzance, too. They had also occupied Mt. Aidos and the fortress of Samandra, an island about three hours' distant from Scutari.

After Orhan's death, Murat I besieged Adrianople, but was assassinated during his campaign in Serbia. Beyazit I conquered many territories one after another. He dethroned the Byzantine Emperor John I, and enthroned Andronicus IV. He also built the fortress of Anadolu Hisar, thus preparing the way for the siege of Constantinople. Mehmet I, his successor, kept on good terms with the Byzantines so as to reorganize his country while he fought the Venetians by sea. Murad II besieged Constantinople without success. It was Mehmet II who was to succeed in this achievement.

In 1452 he set about building the walls of Rumeli Hisari, declaring to the Byzantines that this measure was taken against the Venetians whose ships were passing through the Bosphorus without paying the

necessary tolls. The Byzantines sent embassies to Mehmet II to persuade him to give up his plan, but he continued the construction of the fortress, which stands to this day.

He put all his resources into it. One thousand masons and one thousand stone-carriers went to work under the personal supervision of Mehmet himself. Many a worker died, but in three months the walls were completed. The fortress is built in the form of a triangle and it is said that its course spells the word Mehmet in Arabic.

In the construction, materials from the church «Taxiarchai» of Anaplous (now Arnavutköy) was used. Debris of Byzantine columns, capitals of architraves can be seen today on the walls.

The shape was suggested by Mehmet himself. There are three big heavy towers, one at each corner and other small, squareshaped ones. All the inhabitants of the Asiatic coast contributed to the work, by furnishing Mehmet II with construction materials.

The fortress was finally built and Mehmet appointed as governor Firuz Ağa. Big cannons were employed to prevent the passage of enemy vessels past this narrow spot called by the Turks «Boğaz Kesen».

With the restoration of this famous monument, Rumeli Hisari, has, doubtless, become one of the most important tourist attractions of the country.

**Basil A. PHOTIADES**

Kişisel Arşivlerde İstanbul Belleği  
Taha Toros Arşivi



\* 0 0 1 5 8 0 1 1 5 0 1 0 \*