The question posed here is that of the degree of dependency of Sinan on his patrons, all of them public figures and members at different levels in the imperial administration, concerning the composition and the location of his works. To this date the evolution of Sinan’s work has been studied without this aspect and considered as an intrinsic evolution supposedly based solely on earlier models and on his own search for perfection. The addition of a new parameter, the status, function, or even personality of the patron, would help to clarify some questions.

The first question is: does any direct liaison exist between the status of patrons and the elements composing a külliye or the architectural elements and the mosque? It is clearly not a matter of stating that ensembles grow and become more complex if their sponsors are more highly placed, but of seeing whether there are attributes specific to a status or to a function that would consequently be withheld from others.

In general, the answer is negative. We cannot speak of the plan of a mosque or of another building specific to any category, or of a programme and composition of a külliye characteristic of any function. There are, however, certain exceptions: the minaret, only Imperial mosques were allowed to have more than one; I would add to this the size of the dome. The domes of vizierial mosques have an average diameter of 12 to 13 metres and a maximum of 15; e.g., the Rüstem Pasha mosque in Istanbul. Whereas the domes of Imperial mosques go from 18 metres (Sehzade or Mihrimah of Edirnekapı) to over 30 metres (Selimiye). We know the Ottoman obsession with domes, such as comes out in practice or in texts (Sinan’s biography, among others); thus the hypothesis that monumental domes measuring over 15 metres in diameter were reserved for the Imperial mosques seems absolutely plausible.

On the contrary, a third exception remains an open hypothesis: the courtyard with a portico as a specific attribute of Imperial mosques. Appearing for the first time in Ottoman architecture in the mosque called Üç Serefeli of Murad II at Edirne, it seems afterwards directly linked with the Imperial mosque but its function is not clearly determined. From the middle of the 16th century, Sinan conceived the madrasa courtyard for the vizierial

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mosques. If we consider the courtyard as an exclusively Imperial attribute, we can then put forward the hypothesis that the madrasa courtyard — quite apart from the possibilities this offers for composition and the use of an undecided space — permits a constraint to be circumscribed. But toward the end of Sinan’s life, two vizierial mosques probably built by his assistants — Mesim Pasha and Nisancı Mehmed Pasha — openly possess porticoed courtyards without resorting to the subterfuge of the madrasa. Moreover, looking carefully at mosques prior to Sinan, we find one built by Güzelo Hasan Bey in 1499 in the small town of Hayrabolu, a reduced copy of Üç Serefeli, with a tiny courtyard of two on three arcades. Clearly, the first two cases may be attributed to a late evolution and the last one to an exception due to the founder’s kinship to Bayezid II (he was his son-in-law). Stress can likewise be placed on the functionally separate or added character of this madrasa which has no hint of intimacy to the mosque. This mosque, contrary to the first Zaviye mosques, full of recesses, is both unitary and monumental (Sokollu at Kadirga, Kara Ahmed Pasha). In extreme cases such as at Lüleburgaz one can hardly imagine the normal functioning of a madrasa situated on the passage between an arasta, a caravansary and a mosque. However we cannot claim, as the matter stands at present, that the courtyard was the exclusive appertainence of the Imperial mosque in Sinan’s day.

The case of the courtyard does not therefore provide a proof, and that of the minaret being without much consequence, there remains the dome which could clearly have a decisive influence on architecture: especially in cases where a vast covered space was necessary, if this could not be obtained by a single large dome, it was necessary to have recourse to more complex solutions. This possibility occurs for at least one category of Sinan’s patrons: the three commanders of the Imperial fleet who had mosques built by him: Sinan Pasha, Piyale Pasha and Kılıç Ali Pasha. These three mosques are the most atypical of his repertoire. All three adopt archaic solutions, the first the plan of Üç Serefeli in Edirne, the second that of the Ulucami with several equal domes, while the third quite simply imitates Hagia Sophia. Art
historians are somewhat embarrassed by these three cases. They tend to consider the first one as the point of departure of an evolution towards the hexagonal dome plan, and the other two as workshop exercises. But one might wonder why it was necessary to repeat the plan of Uç Serefeli before going on to the single hexagonal dome, and why the architects of "the Sinan agency" sought help in such models as Ulucami or Hagia Sophia. The contrary, one sees Sinan's team taking the initiative towards the master's closing years, rather seeking original solutions. These three mosques share a common characteristic: to cover a far larger useful area than other vizierial mosques. Unable to increase the size of the dome because of institutional constraints, they were obliged to adopt old models which had to limit the dome for technical considerations. Moreover, not content with the area thus obtained, they tried to increase it by adding internal galleries (hence the utility of Hagia Sophia as a model for Kılıç Ali Pasha), external galleries (Piyale Pasha) and a complex system of porticos and porch roofs in all three cases.

So, against a useful area of 300 m² for the Sokollu mosque at Kadırga and of 350 m² for that of the same Grand Vizier at Azapkapı, the mosque of Sinan Pasha reaches 400 m², to which another 250 m² may be added for the first portico, today closed, and the second one. Kılıç Ali Pasha has a useful ground area of 760 m² plus 370 m² for the galleries. Mihrimah of Edirnekapi, with its 18 m diameter dome and its side domes measure only 736 m², an area surpassed by Kılıç Ali Pasha on the ground with a dome of 12 m in diameter. It has an area of 634 m² under its double portico and porch roofs. Lastly, the six domes of Piyale Pasha each having a dimater of 8.5 m, cover 712 m², while the vast system of porticos, porch roofs and side galleries, today largely destroyed, must have arrived at about 2000 m² of covered area.

Pondering the reasons for these extensive areas, we reach the meeting point of patronal function, plan and location. These three great Admirals of the Empire established their mosques in districts where sailors lived when the fleet was at anchor in the capital and, for Piyale Pasha, in the district of the shipyard workers. These mosques therefore served for
their great collective prayers prior to the fleet’s departure, and required a large capacity. We thus have here proof of the necessity to include, in our typological research, details characteristic of the patrons. The programme for the külliye seems more directly linked to their location than to the status of the patrons. Aptullah Kuran, in this aspect, divided the külliye into three categories: stage or market külliye, provide board and lodging for travellers (imarets, caravansaries); urban külliye, where educational and social functions (madrasa, hospitals) have pride of place; and mixed külliye, which are stage/market külliye situated in important towns.

If we look at the location of the külliye attributed to Sinan in the Ottoman Empire, we see that the vast majority are on a single route, the Empire’s main artery of communication, linking Edirne and Damascus, via Istanbul, Konya and Aleppo (the only noteworthy exceptions are the külliye of Murad III at Manisa, a place of sojourn of the heir apparent, Rüstem Pasha at Tekirdağ, and Sokollu Mehmet Pasha, consisting solely of an imaret and a caravansaray, at Rudo, near Višegrád, the birthplace of the grand Vizier). On this route the Imperial külliye mark the main stages, Edirne, Istanbul and Damascus, with the exception of the külliye that Selim II, when heir-apparent, built at the Karapinar stage, while the vizierial complexes fill the gaps.

Between Istanbul and Edirne almost every stage of the imperial route linking the two capitals has an important work by Sinan, as if the grandees of the Empire, whose wealth astonishes and shocks us at the same time, wanted to redeem themselves in the eyes of the sovereign and the population by displaying their will to do good works. But at the same time, by placing themselves in the most frequented places, they assured themselves of the best returns on things built for profit-making purposes, such as the arasta or the hammam. Thus past Edirne, after the Svilengrad stage, where Sinan had a hand in the bridge built by Qoban Mustapha Pasha in 1528, there are no more large külliye.

On the Asian side of the road, Sinan completed the network begun by the Seljuks and continued by the early Ottomans. The examples existing at Afyon, Inegöl and Gebze
are joined by those at Ilgin and Karapinar and further along by those of Payas at the Cicilician gates, of Aleppo and Damascus. As was the case for the European part of the route, here, too, two Grand Viziers, business men and builders par excellence, Rüstem Pasha and Sokollu Mehmet Pasha, steal the limelight. The first one set up two stages in Thrace (Edirne and Karistiran) and built one khan in Istanbul and four in Anatolia, while Sokollu established four stages in Thrace and just one (at Payas) in Anatolia. This process continued after the death of Sinan; at the end of the century the two great personages of the day, Lala Mustapha Pasha and Koca Sinan Pasha, vied with each other in building stage-külliye on the road between Damascus and Jerusalem. Lastly, the criteria of location of the külliye in the urban fabric of the capital can be grouped into a few categories. The large imperial külliye continue to characterize city space, situated on the spurs dominating the site (Sultan Selim, Süleymaniye, Mihrimah) on the triumphant highway Hagia Sophia and Topkapi Palace with the Edirne Gate (Sehzade and again Mihrimah) or with the points of entry and of transfer within the agglomeration (Atik Valide, Mihrimah of Uskudar and again Mihrimah of Edirnekapi, even if this function is not marked here by a stage-külliye). In this last case, curiously enough, we find only women's külliye, as was also the case later with Yeni Cami, situated on a point of transfer, perhaps because such strategic positions would enable these big külliye — although they possessed fewer endowments than those of the sovereigns — to be self-financing.

On the other hand the small foundations, mostly single mosques, sometimes accompanied by a madrasa, a tekte or a hammam, seem to fill the areas of the colonization of the city and its surroundings, started under Mehmed II. In fact, of the 58 roofed mosques — accompanied by other buildings — commissioned to Sinan by minor personages in the administrative hierarchy, 23 are situated outside of the walls, 18 in the districts close to the land walls, and only 17 in more central parts of the city. Most often these mosques were the origin of new city districts. Between these two extremes, the külliye of the viziers, pashas and other worthies who
were on the lookout for the best positions, undoubtedly depended as much on their financial capacities as on their political position. Thus, only Rüstem Pasha and Sokollu Mehmet Pasha succeeded in establishing themselves in the city centre. The former dislodged an old mosque, to perch his over a ground floor of boutiques in the heart of the most commercial district bordering on the Golden Horn. But as the dearth of land made a külliye unfeasible, he built his octagonal madrasa further away, in another central district, and his khan opposite, in the very heart of the Galata shopkeepers' district. Sokollu, preferring prestige to profits, built his külliye below the Hippodrome near his own palace. To this he added a second mosque built in the Genoese district of Galata and the Arsenal on the border of the Golden Horn, perhaps as a reminder of his past as Grand Admiral of the fleet.

The other worthies had several choices: establishing themselves at the city gates, following the model of Mihrimah, in strict hierarchy: Kara Ahmed Pasha, Grand Vizier, at Topkapi, the second main entrance to the city, Hadim Ibrahim Pasha, Vizier, at Silivrikapi, Ivaz Efendi, Kazasker, at Eğrikapi (this last mosque is not attributed to Sinan); taking advantage of the vicinity of the sacred tomb of Eyyüb, the Prophet's companion, which is a place greatly frequented by pious Moslems, such as the Vizier Zal Mahmud Pasha, who had on his conscience the murder of the heir-apparent Mustapha, but also Sokollu Mehmet Pasha, who, wanting to play at all the tables, built a funeral külliye for himself with a madrasa, at Eyyüb's tomb; or grouping themselves around a large, prestigious complex, as in the case of the Grand Vizier Mesih Pasha and of the Vizier Nisanci Mehmet Pasha, near the mosque of Fatih. Lastly, some found a site linked with their functions, as did the three admirals of the fleet, and Iskender Pasha, ex-Bostancibasi, who set up alongside the Bosphorus at Kanlica.

To conclude, the desire to possess a prestigious site, the problems of land purchase and the attraction of money-making locations, exert different degrees of influence, according to the personality of the patron, on the choice of site. The architect only came into the picture subsequently,
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mostly within a given site plot. But to determine this last point it is necessary to study more detailed documents such as the Waqfiyye or the court registers, which might enable us to reconstruct the formation processes of these complexes.

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