

# C onstruction, Remaking and Remembering: Historic Preservation in the Early Decades of the Turkish Republic

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## Introduction

The Turkish Republic's foundation in 1923 started the construction process of a modern nation-state. The word 'modern' is open to several interpretations and widely debated. In this paper, it is used for a specific territory (mainly İstanbul) and a specific period (1923-1950). Moreover, the main aim of the paper is to understand not the Turkish modernism but how the modern Turkey conceived historic preservation. However, for the Turkish Republic, historic preservation is intertwined with efforts of modernization. Turkey is not the only example; many nation-states struggled through their imperial pasts in the process of building their 'nations'.<sup>(1)</sup> In his seminal book, James C. Scott highlights that the first half of the nineteenth century was significant in terms of formation of the nation-states because the states discovered their power to transform the society.<sup>(2)</sup> Also for Turkey, the nineteenth century (the late-Ottoman era) is significant in terms of transformation of the society by the state. Even though the foundation of the Turkish Republic is a detachment from the Ottoman Empire, at the same time, it was this late-Ottoman era that some of the foundational principles of the republic were flourished. In fact, some of the ideals of the Republican period were already well-established among a limited progressive community in the early twentieth century during the second constitutional era (1908-1918); an era that the Ottoman state was governed by an authoritarian single-party parliament under the symbolic existence of several sultans.

As Kasaba suggests, even though the Turkish Republic had an ambitious intention to get detached from the Ottoman past, it is inevitable to study the Ottoman legacy to understand the modern Turkish history.<sup>(3)</sup> Also in historic preservation, Ottoman legacy was effective during the Republican period. It may seem ironic that the republic ambitiously wanted to alienate the Ottoman memories but it continued using the Ottoman legislative and institutional system at the same time for the protection of the Ottoman monuments. However,

<sup>(1)</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno, University of Nevada Press, 1991). In this work, Smith questions how 'nations' have anthropologically emerged and generates a taxonomy of different modes that nations were formed.

<sup>(2)</sup> James C. Scott, *Seeing like a state: how certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed* (London, Yale University Press, 1998), 3.

<sup>(3)</sup> Reşat Kasaba, "Introduction", in *Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. Reşat Kasaba (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3.

the reason of the republican neglect' to create a new preservation system may be better understood when one gains an insight into the Republican goal of nation-making.

The foundation of the Turkish Republic was a project to create a modern secular nation-state out of the centuries-old Ottoman Empire. This project needed strong reforms to transform the society, to restructure the state structure, and to create and display the face of the new state through urban planning and architecture. However, the modernization of Turkey started in the late eighteenth century with the military investments to adopt the European developments.<sup>(4)</sup> This movement penetrated the state structure and the society in the 1830s as well and continued accelerating throughout the nineteenth century. Westernization was not only a response to the successive military failures, but it was also a response to the post-French Revolution global conditions. During the westernization era, archaeology was the primary source to produce the Ottoman national identity.<sup>(5)</sup> Antiquities, hence the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine past of the Ottoman Empire was instrumental in creating the image of the Ottoman nation. First Ottoman archaeological excavations, first museums, and first legislations to regulate archaeological activities were the tools that the Ottoman ruling class exploited to create a Europeanized Ottoman image. A part of the society (the Muslim community) was not happy with these investments on the Christian and pagan history. In 1908, this reactive community managed the Young Turk Revolution and as they gained power, the questions on the national identity were reconsidered. The Young Turk Revolution in 1908 was the turmoil for the Ottoman Empire; the parliament was formed, Sultan Abdulhamid II was dethroned, the constitutional monarchy was established, and lastly, the nationalist and Islamic ideas spread among the intellectuals. And consequentially, rather than archaeological artifacts, architectural monuments dominated the historic preservation discourse. As the monuments from

<sup>(4)</sup> Carter Vaughn Findley, "The Tanzimat", in *Turkey in the Modern World*, ed Reşat Kasaba (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008), 11-37.

<sup>(5)</sup> Foreign teams excavated the Ottoman lands since the eighteenth century. The Ottoman interest on archaeological activities emerged as a reaction to these foreign teams who ambitiously exported the findings to European and American museums. For a comprehensive understanding of the late Ottoman Empire's cultural life, see Wendy M. Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2003).

the Ottoman and the Seljukid past (with other words, from the Islamic past) became more important than antiquities; also in the new constructions, the projects took references from the Ottoman architectural elements. This Ottoman revivalist “style” is called “First National Architecture” (and the contemporaries called it as “National Architectural Renaissance”). First National Architecture continued also during the first decade following the foundation of the Turkish Republic until the beginning of the 1930s. Today, the republic's capital, Ankara, still bears the most significant examples of this eclectic style, which combined the Ottoman architectural elements (such as spherical domes, buttresses, tile decoration) with the new materials and construction technique (iron, reinforced concrete, and steel).<sup>(6)</sup>

The Ottoman efforts on the preservation of monuments were interrupted with successive wars. As will be discussed further below, for the Republic, it was going to take the construction of a new modern capital before the Ottoman and Seljukid edifices were addressed as important monuments that should be protected; or at least, not demolished.

The Young Turk Revolution had been conceived by many as a breakthrough to solve the major problems of the empire, however, in the later years, the freedom atmosphere was lost. As the parliament replaced the power of the sultan, the system slowly became more autocratic to silence the opposition.<sup>(7)</sup> The beginning of the twentieth century was difficult; the Balkan Wars started in 1912 and consequentially, freedom and democracy became less valuable virtues for the government. With the First World War, the situation got even worse and with the dominance of the army members in the parliament, Turkey was ruled with a military-dominated dictatorship until 1918.<sup>(8)</sup> Mustafa Kemal Atatürk started the Turkish Independence War in 1919 after the First World War was lost as an ally to Germany. The occupying forces were defeated and the Turkish Republic was founded in 1923.

The parliament, which was already established in 1922, accepted intense reforms rapidly under the presidency of Atatürk. Sultanate was already abolished in 1922; and in 1924 caliphate was also abolished and the educational system was renewed to invalidate the Islamic education. In 1925, religious lodges (*tekke*), tombs (*türbe*), and *zawiyahs* (spaces of fraternities, *zaviye*) were abolished; the alphabet was changed from Arabic to Latin script in 1928. All these reforms were a part of a modernist project to create a secular modern nation-state. Given this context, one can trace that the young Republic was willing to forget the memories of the Ottoman past. Therefore, it had to manage the material evidences that the Empire left without compromising on the goal

<sup>(6)</sup> For the use of architecture in creating the early Republican state, see İnci Aslanoğlu, *Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Mimarlığı 1923-1938* (Ankara, ODTÜ Mimarlık Fakültesi Yayınları, 1980); Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2001); Sibel Bozdoğan, Esra Akcan, *Turkey: modern architectures in history* (London, Reaktion Books, 2012). For the late-Ottoman era archaeological activities see Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*; Mustafa Cezar, *Sanatta Batı'ya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi* (İstanbul, Erol Kerim Aksoy Kültür, Eğitim, Spor ve Sağlık Vakfı, 1995).

<sup>(7)</sup> Mehmet Şükrü Haniöğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (London, Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>(8)</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London, Oxford University Press, 1961), 222-227.



of creating the modern state. Furthermore, the neglect of the Ottoman monuments had carried the danger of offending the Muslim community, which had already reacted during the second constitutional era. Therefore, changing the capital from İstanbul to Ankara, to a certain extent, helped the republic manage the Ottoman monuments.

### Constructing: a capital

When it was declared as the new capital, Ankara did not bear the qualities needed for a capital city. It was a small town was settled on and around the Roman citadel. Even though the arrival of railways in 1893 had increased the commercial activity; Ankara had not had any other transportation connections, infrastructure, or other proper public services that could accommodate new institutions.<sup>(9)</sup> The old capital İstanbul, on the other hand, had already been devastated with fires and earthquakes, moreover; the city had already transformed as the representational stage of the westernization efforts in the nineteenth cen-

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Ankara in the early 1930s. Excerpts from the documentary movie *Ankara: The Heart of Turkey*, 1933. This documentary was commissioned to the Soviet film-makers for the tenth-year anniversary of the Republic. It is one of the most important visuals of Ankara in the early Republican period

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<sup>(9)</sup> Vilma Hastaoglou-Martinidis, "Urban aesthetics and national identity: the refashioning of Eastern Mediterranean cities between 1900 and 1940", *Planning Perspectives* 26, n. 2 (2011), 153-182.

İstanbul in the first quarter of the twentieth century.  
 Source: Mustafa Cezar, *Osmanlı Başkenti İstanbul* (İstanbul, Erol Kerim Aksoy Kültür, Eğitim, Spor ve Sağlık Vakfı, 2002), 388-389



ture.<sup>(10)</sup> After a decade of wars, the condition of İstanbul got even worse; the city was occupied after the First World War. Therefore, Ankara was an underdeveloped city to be the capital, but İstanbul was not the most suitable option either. When the capital was first moved to Ankara, there were expectations among bureaucrats, intellectuals, and even army members that the capital would be moved back to İstanbul after the new state and its bodies were sustained. However, these expectations were gradually disappointed by the Republican ruling class through political tactics avoiding a major reaction. In fact, even in the parliament, some representatives advocated that İstanbul should be treated as any other Turkish city regardless of its being the capital of both the Byzantine and the Ottoman Empires for centuries. The intellectual community of İstanbul, on the other hand, did not well receive the sudden loss of prestige and status.<sup>(11)</sup> The members of this intellectual community in İstanbul were eminent figures in the Ottoman era. They had also undertaken important achievements and they were still powerful in İstanbul to a certain extent. Therefore, changing the cap-

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<sup>(10)</sup> Zeynep Çelik, *The Remaking of İstanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century* (London, University of California Press, 1986).

<sup>(11)</sup> Murat Gül, *The Emergence of Modern İstanbul: Transformation and Modernisation of a City* (New York, Tauris Academic Studies, 2009), 84-91.



ital also facilitated the formation of a new powerful intellectual community that is committed to the republican ideals rather than the Ottoman Islamic life.<sup>(12)</sup>

Following the declaration of Ankara as the new capital, foreign expert planners were invited to plan the city. The first urban plan of Ankara is the Lörcher plan. However, this plan was partially implemented and another plan was needed in the late 1920s due to population increase.<sup>(13)</sup> An international competition was launched for the plan of the city. German town-planner Hermann Jansen won the competition and his plan was improved in 1932.<sup>(14)</sup> Not only in the new capital Ankara, but also in the other cities, the government invited European architects and town-planner. Jansen planned other cities of Turkey as well, such as Mersin and Gaziantep. The government contacted the renowned French urban planner Henri Prost for the reconstruction of İzmir after the 1922-fire; however, he recommended René and Raymond Danger instead, and served as a consultant in 1924-1925 for the plan of İzmir. The foreign experts were invited not only for planning towns and erecting buildings; but they were also asked to

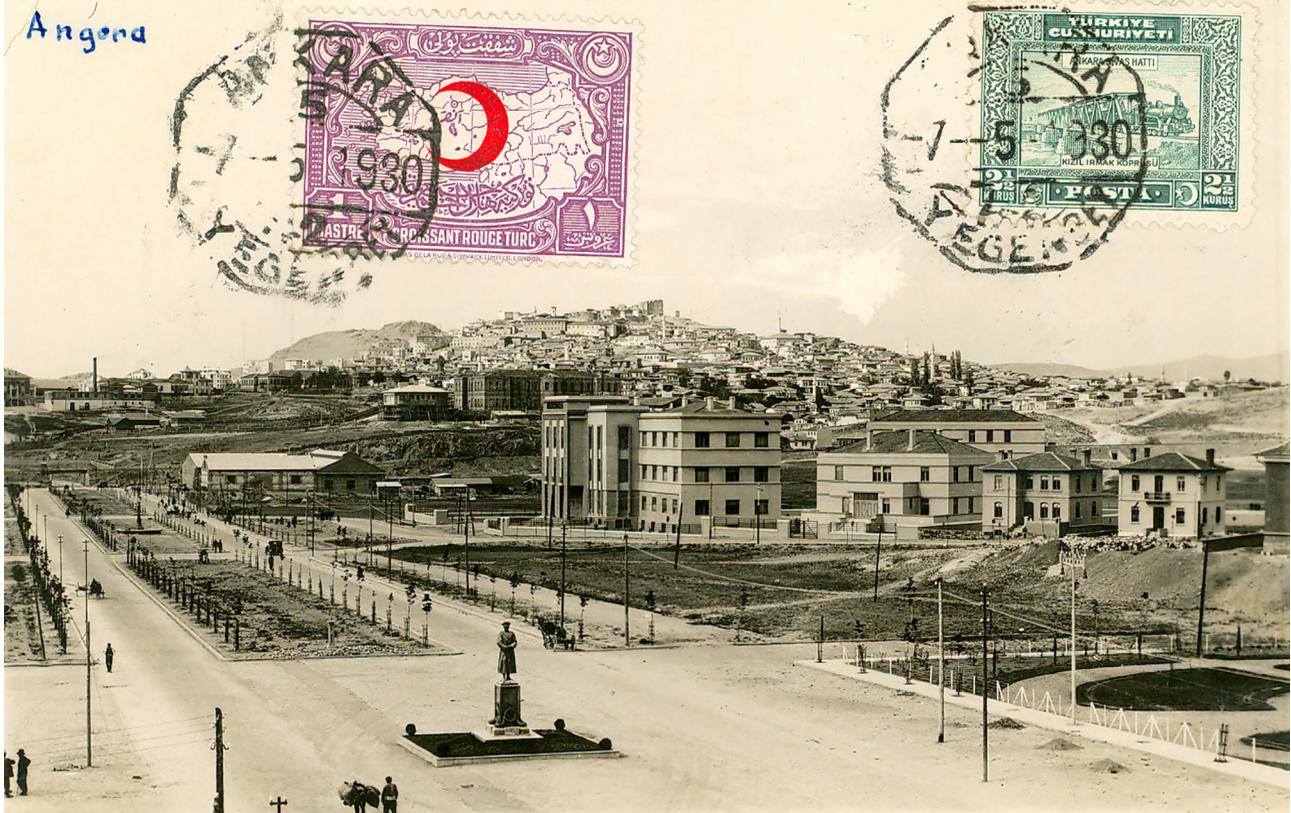
<sup>(12)</sup> Şerif Mardin, *Ş. Türkiye'de Toplum ve Siyaset: Makaleler 1* (İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 1990).

<sup>(13)</sup> Ali Cengizkan, *Ankara'nın İlk Planı 1924-25 Lörcher Planı: Kentsel Mekan Özellikleri. 1932 Jansen Planına ve Bugüne Katkıları, Etki ve Kalıntıları* (Ankara, Ankara Enstitüsü Vakfı, Arkadaş Yayıncılık, 2004).

<sup>(14)</sup> Gönül Tankut, *Bir Başkent'in İmarı: Ankara (1929-1929)* (Ankara, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1990).

Atatürk Boulevard in 1927 with new constructions on the foreground and the Ankara Castle (old town) on the background.

Source: Koç University VEKAM Archive, ID N. 2183



teach in academia. The restructuring of the educational system was not limited to the primary and secondary education, but also the higher education system was renewed. The higher education reform in 1933 has played a major role in the transformation of the Turkish universities. Following this reform, the number of the European professors in the universities increased.<sup>(15)</sup> As the European experts started to dominate the architectural practice, local architects reacted that a major budget was separated for hiring the foreigners. Even though there was a consensus that Turkey had not yet had the local expertise to execute large-scale public projects; local architects wanted to play a role in the transformation of the new Republic.<sup>(16)</sup>

<sup>(15)</sup> İhsan Doğramacı, "Higher Education Reform in Turkey - The University in the Service of the Community: Results After Three Years of Application", *Higher Education in Europe* 9, n. 4 (1984), 74-82.

<sup>(16)</sup> Zeki Sayar, "Yabancı mimara verdiğimiz servet", *Arkitekt*, 3, n. 87 (1938), 89.

It should be noted that like many major Anatolian cities, also Ankara had a multilayered historic town formed by prehistoric, Roman Galatia, Byzantine and Ottoman periods. However, both Lörcher and Jansen preferred projecting the new capital towards south and linking the north (old town) and south (new town) – *Yenişehir* with Atatürk Boulevard, which is the main axis of the city. As the

prominent Turkish modern novelist Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar stresses, despite the impressive historic remains, the main urban character of the city is shaped and marked by the Republican architecture.<sup>(17)</sup> In the 1930s, the Republican ruling class embraced a different architectural style abandoning the Ottoman revivalism. Simple forms and basic geometries were the essence of the new designs in the 1930s; this architectural language is called “the First International Architectural Movement” (“new architecture” or “cubic architecture” as the contemporaries would call). Interestingly, it was the same era that preservation of the Ottoman and Seljukid monuments became an important issue in the state agenda following the orders of Atatürk.

The Ottoman system of historic preservation – in terms of legal and institutional management of the architectural heritage – continued in the Republican period. However, this system did not fit the post-Republican governmental restructuring. Particularly, the properties that were owned by the pious foundations were the main reason of this misfit.<sup>(18)</sup> Especially after the thirteenth century, *vakıf* institutions were the primary actors of the architectural and urban development.<sup>(19)</sup> Also after the conquest of Constantinople, *vakıf* complexes both triggered the urban sprawl (new districts would emerge around the socio-religious complexes [*imaref*] that were constructed by their individual *vakıfs*) and gave the city its Islamic character. In the eighteenth century, the *vakıf* structure started to deteriorate, and in 1836, the Imperial Ministry of Pious Foundations (*Nezaret-i Evkaf-i Hümayun*) was established for the central management of these pious foundations. In the nineteenth century, as a part of westernization, an urban planning systematic had already emerged surpassing the role of *vakıfs* in urban activities. Such ineffectiveness necessitated the reorganization of the Ministry after the above-mentioned Young Turk Revolution in 1908.<sup>(20)</sup> In terms of preservation of the architectural heritage, the reorganized Ministry of Pious Foundations and its 1914 sub-committee the Scientific Committee for the Construction and Repairs (*İTHF - İnşaat ve Tamirat Heyet-i Fenniyesi*) were the fundamental Ottoman institutions that continued also in the Republican period. In the last decades of the Empire, the establishment of the Council for the Preservation of Monuments (*MAAE - Muhafaza-i Asar-ı Atika Encümeni*) (as a public body in charge of restoration works in İstanbul) in 1917 was the last attempt for the preservation of historic monuments.<sup>(21)</sup>

The Republic ratified the MAAE in 1925 and some of its founding members; Kemalettin Bey (1870-1927), Halil Edhem (Eldem) (1861-1938), and Celâl Esad (Arseven) (1876-1971) continued their service.<sup>(22)</sup> Halil Eldem was the director of the Imperial Museum (*Müze-i Hümayun*) in those years and was also the

<sup>(17)</sup> Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *Beş Şehir* (İstanbul, Dergah Yayınları, 1946).

<sup>(18)</sup> The pious foundations, *vakıf* and *evkaf* (plural) in Turkish, were the basic structures of the Islamic societies (A similar social organization, in fact, had already existed in the Roman and Greek periods as well). *Vakıf* simply means donating a property for the public use for charity purposes. Sultans, family members of the sultans, members of the ruling class, wealthy community leaders are the actors who established their *vakıf*. Privately owned *vakıfs* were directed by a board, controlled by *kadı* (judges who solved the cases per the sharia rules), and inspected by the investors working under *kadı*. Mehmet Bayartan, “Osmanlı Şehirlerinde Vakıflar ve Vakıf Sisteminin Şehre Kattığı Değerler”, *Osmanlı Bilimi Araştırmaları*, X, n.1 (2008), 157-175.

<sup>(19)</sup> Ömür Bakır, “Vakfiyelerde Binaların Tamirati ile İlgili Şartlar ve Bunlara Uyuması”, *Vakıflar Dergisi*, X, (2006), 113-126.

<sup>(20)</sup> Nur Altınyıldız, “The Architectural Heritage of İstanbul and the Ideology of Preservation”, *Muqarnas*, 24 (2007), 281-306: 284.

<sup>(21)</sup> Emre Madran, “Cumhuriyetin ilk otuz yılında (1920-1950) koruma alanının örgütlenmesi”, *METU Journal of Faculty of Architecture* 16, n.1-2 (1996), 59-97, 61-62. The Ottoman legislative framework did not include any articles about the immovable heritage. Only the last legal change (which came in 1912) had some articles, but these articles did not regulate the protection of the old buildings but rather outlined how to demolish them when they expose danger for the environment. MAAE had to decide which buildings should be demolished; therefore, in a sense, MAAE functioned as a public body that accepted from the beginning that the loss of built heritage was inevitable in İstanbul. See also Altınyıldız, “The Architectural Heritage”, 286.

<sup>(22)</sup> Ümit Fırat Açıkgöz, “On the Uses and Meanings of Architectural Preservation in Early Republican İstanbul On the Uses and Meanings of Architectural Preservation in Early Republican İstanbul (1923-1950)”, *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 1, n. 1-2 (2014), 167-185. Drawing a picture on how early Republic conceived historic preservation, Açıkgöz’s research shows that the activities of MAAE could be considered mainly as a struggle to resist against the urbanization projects in the early Republican İstanbul.

member of a 1911 founded civil initiative called “the Society of the Admirers of the City of İstanbul” (*İstanbul Şehri Muhipleri Cemiyeti*).<sup>(23)</sup> According to the 1912 action report of the society, some of the accomplishments included documentation of the condition of the city walls, protection (from demolish) of a madrasa (*Feyzullah Efendi Medresesi*), documentation (*rölöve*) of a sea-shore house (*Köprülü yalı*), clearance of the vegetation and the surrounding slum-structures from the Rumali Castle (*Rumeli Hisarı*), and the preparation of a guidebook for İstanbul.<sup>(24)</sup>

Kemalettin Bey, on the other hand, was the head of the above-mentioned 1914-sub-committee of the Ministry of Pious Foundations, ITHF and he was influenced by the nationalist and Islamist ideas that developed and spread at the turn of the century. He had carried out several restoration projects of various *vakıf* buildings. He repaired many landmarks of the historic peninsula of İstanbul including the Hagia Sophia, the Sultan Ahmet Mosque, and the Fatih Mosque.<sup>(25)</sup> He advocated that the Turkish monuments had long been neglected because of the European influences. His teachings in the Academy of Fine Arts had a curriculum to teach the Ottoman and Seljukid works of art.<sup>(26)</sup> He continuously published not only about his ideas on the neglect of old monuments from the Ottoman and the Seljukid period, but he also promoted the architectural and artistic features of the significant works of this period.<sup>(27)</sup> As the head of the ITHF, Kemalettin Bey was also responsible for the protection of the *vakıf* buildings.<sup>(28)</sup> However, there were also cases that some *vakıf* buildings were demolished to erect new projects also designed by Kemalettin Bey himself. Kemalettin Bey directed the ITHF as a school to educate young architects and as an atelier to develop and test his ideas on the “Turkish” national monuments. Some of the architects who had worked at the ITHF became eminent figures of historic preservation in the later years. The founding members of the MAAE were influential actors of the cultural life of the Second Constitutional era. Their ideas shaped the historic preservation culture as well; they held enough power to shape the historic built environment. The authority of MAAE was limited to İstanbul and both the individuals and the public bodies were obliged to obtain MAAE approval for the repair, removal, or demolishing of an old structure. The members had to be experts of history, historic artifacts, fine arts, and architecture.<sup>(29)</sup> The first major restoration work carried out under the management of MAAE was the repair of the dome of the Hagia Sophia by Kemalettin Bey in the mid-1920s. Another significant implementation was the restoration of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque with the special order of Atatürk.<sup>(30)</sup> In the early 1930s, a committee was formed to address the needs of monu-

<sup>(23)</sup> The main purpose of the society was to promote the natural and historic features of İstanbul and contacting the local authorities for the protection of these features. Just a few years after its foundation, this initiative was forgotten with the chaos of the First World War. However, it was restructured after the foundation of the Republic as ‘İstanbul Devotees Club (*İstanbul’u Sevenler Kulübü*)’. See Semavi Eyice, (1994), “İstanbul Şehri Muhipleri Cemiyeti” in *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, (İstanbul, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1994), 236.

<sup>(24)</sup> Stefanos Yerasimos, “Tanzimattan Günümüze Türkiye’de Kültürel Mirası Koruma Söylemi”, *İstanbul*, 54 (2005), 42-55, 47.

<sup>(25)</sup> Yıldırım Yavuz, “Mimar Kemalettin Bey (1870-1927)”, *METU Journal of Faculty of Architecture* 7, n. 1 (1981), 53-76.

<sup>(26)</sup> Altınyıldız, “The Architectural Heritage”, 286.

<sup>(27)</sup> İlhan Tekeli, Selim İlkin, *Mimar Kemalettin’in Yazdıkları* (Ankara, Şevki Vanlı Mimarlık Vakfı Yayınları, 1997).

<sup>(28)</sup> In 1924, the Ministry of Endowments was terminated and its functions were transferred to the directorate with the same name. Kemalettin Bey continued his service as the head of the directorate until his death in 1927.

<sup>(29)</sup> Madran, “Cumhuriyetin”, 64.

<sup>(30)</sup> Altınyıldız, “The Architectural Heritage”, 288.

ments in Turkey. This committee has published a report in 1935, *Works of the Commission for the Protection of Old Monuments in 1933-1935* published by the State Publishing House.<sup>(31)</sup> In this publication, it was strongly reiterated in many pages that the most important and spectacular works of the human history are in the land of *Türks* and these works and sites are incomparable to any other country. Also, the Ottoman mentality was despised for giving the antique artifacts to foreigners without hesitation: “the evil mentality of the Ottoman state is completely dismantled by the Republican will. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk initiated the first step of this dismantle”.<sup>(32)</sup> The first step that the book referred was a telegram that was sent by Atatürk to the Prime Minister İsmet İnönü during Atatürk’s tour to Anatolia in 1931. This telegram was about the condition of the archaeological findings in various cities and the condition of Ottoman and Seljukid monuments particularly in Konya, an inner Anatolian city.<sup>(33)</sup> Konya is a city that houses the masterworks of the Seljukid period and it is also an important religious center due to the existence of *mevlevihane* (religious complex of *Sufism*) of Rumi.

This telegram was published in another 1933 publication by the State Publication House; *We Are Obligated to Protect Our Historic Monuments and Assets*.<sup>(34)</sup> The publication provided “the List of Historic Buildings in Need of Urgent Repair” which included more than 250 monuments in 95 cities. İstanbul only had five monuments in this list. The publication included also a draft for the law on the protection of old monuments with a supporting text for the reasoning of the law. Atatürk’s telegram was triggering to accelerate the historic preservation efforts in this period and it is a very important document (in terms of understanding the Republican attitude towards the Ottoman past) not only due to the issues that the letter addressed; but also, due to those that were avoided. It is noteworthy that the monuments in İstanbul were not even mentioned in this telegram. This attitude may represent just another example of the deliberate neglect towards İstanbul with an ideological goal to alienate the Ottoman memories.

‘*Türk-ness*’ of the monuments was strongly highlighted in these publications. Moreover, also the committee members (such as Kemalettin Bey or Celal Esad [Arseven]) were ideologically searching the Turkish-ness in their new projects. As Açıkgöz underlines, labeling a monument as a *Turkish monument* was not only an ideological act, but it was also a tool to make a monument more valuable in the eyes of the authorities.<sup>(35)</sup> Therefore, this nationalist anthropomorphism helped the preservationist community prevent the demolition of the historic structures. However, even then, labeling the cultural heritage with the Turkish identity was not the invention of the preservationists. On the contrary,

<sup>(31)</sup> *Anıtları Koruma Komisyonunun 1933-1935 Yıllarındaki Çalışmaları* (İstanbul, İstanbul Devlet Basımevi, 1935).

<sup>(32)</sup> This criticism against the Ottoman state is mostly due to the antiquities that were shipped to foreign museums such as Louvre Museum, Berlin Museum, MET, etc. See Hamit Zübeyr, *Tarihi Abidelerimizi Koruyalım* (Ankara, Hakimiyeti Milliye Matbaası, 1932). However, in the 1930s, the Republican period, in fact, was still benefitting from the Ottoman legislation on antiquities which guaranteed that any finding could not be exported and would belong to the state. A set of decrees were regulated in the nineteenth century, mainly for managing archaeological activities. This decrees remained effective until the ‘Law on Old Assets’ was prepared in 1973. In terms of archaeological activities, this law also made minor changes.

<sup>(33)</sup> *Anıtları Koruma Komisyonunun 1933-1935 Yıllarındaki Çalışmaları*, 8-9.

<sup>(34)</sup> *Tarihi Abide ve Eserlerimizi Korumağa Mecburuz* (İstanbul, Devlet Matbaası, 1933).

<sup>(35)</sup> Ümit Fırat Açıkgöz, “On the Uses”.

5.4

A session during the First History Congress.

Source: *Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi: Müzakere Zabıtları* (Ankara, T.C. Maarif Vekaleti, 1932), 92

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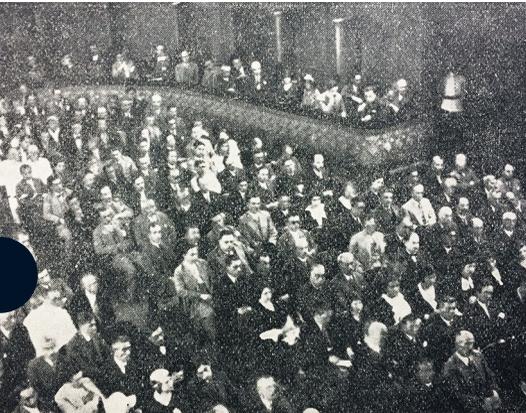
Ankara in the eighteenth century by an anonymous painter.

(Kurşunlu Han and Mahmut Paşa Bedesteni,

located between the second and the third fortification,

highlighted with white outlines).

Source: Rijkmuseum Digital Archive, Object Number: SK-A-2055



<sup>(36)</sup> When it was first established in 1930; TTK was the Turkish Hearths' Committee for the Study of Turkish History (*Türk Ocakları Türk Tarihi Tetkik Heyeti*). This committee formed a sub-committee for the investigation of the Turkish history. A few months later, the Turkish Hearths became inactive whereas the sub-committee continued its mission being reorganized as the Society for the Study of Turkish History (*Türk Tarihini Tetkik Cemiyeti*) in 1931, which would eventually become the Turkish History Association in 1935. See Afet İnan, *Gazi M. Kemal Atatürk ve Türk Tarih Kurumu* (Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basım Evi, 1953).

<sup>(37)</sup> *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları - Methal Kısmı* (İstanbul, Devlet Matbaası, 1931).

it was an official government project that was strategically and carefully implemented with the support of the most powerful figure of Turkey, Atatürk, who also drafted the initial ideas of the project. Atatürk believed that the roots of the Turkish nation dates to the prehistoric ages and this root could be illuminated with scientific methods of history and archaeology. With his orders, the Turkish Historical Society (*Türk Tarih Kurumu* - TTK) was established in 1930 with the duty of researching the roots of the Turkish race.<sup>(36)</sup> The conclusion was that the *Türk* race was rooted in Central Asia, and because of a major draught, they had diffused and settled in China, India, Middle-East, Egypt, North Africa, Aegean coasts, and Europe. They improved all the civilizations on these lands this migration. Therefore, the current inhabitants of these geographies were suggested to be *Türks*. Moreover, the existence of *Türks* in Anatolia was dated to the Sumerian and Hittite civilizations.<sup>(37)</sup> This thesis was first promoted with the First Turkish History Congress in 1932. What followed the congress was the intense archaeological excavations directed by TTK all over Turkey. The find-



ings of these campaigns were promoted in international and national scientific meetings. Moreover, university departments were also established as a part of these efforts to formulate the Turkish history. According to the evidence collected from the archaeological campaigns, the context of the thesis was reduced to Anatolia. In the Second History Congress in 1937, the main presentations focused on the argument that Sumerians and Hittites were the ancestors of *Türks*.<sup>(38)</sup> Therefore the *Türk-ness* of the cultural heritage had already existed in the official discourse.

*Türk-ness* of the Hittites was reinforced with the Hittite Museum as well. The construction of museum was already on the agenda with the special orders of Atatürk. In 1930, *Kurşunlu Han* was decided as the new museum and to be restored together with its old bazaar, *Mahmut Paşa Bedesteni*. In the eighteenth century, these two buildings were two of the dominating elements of the urban form, however, the 1881-fire damaged the city and both buildings became ruins. With the restoration, the few surrounding buildings were cleaned to give

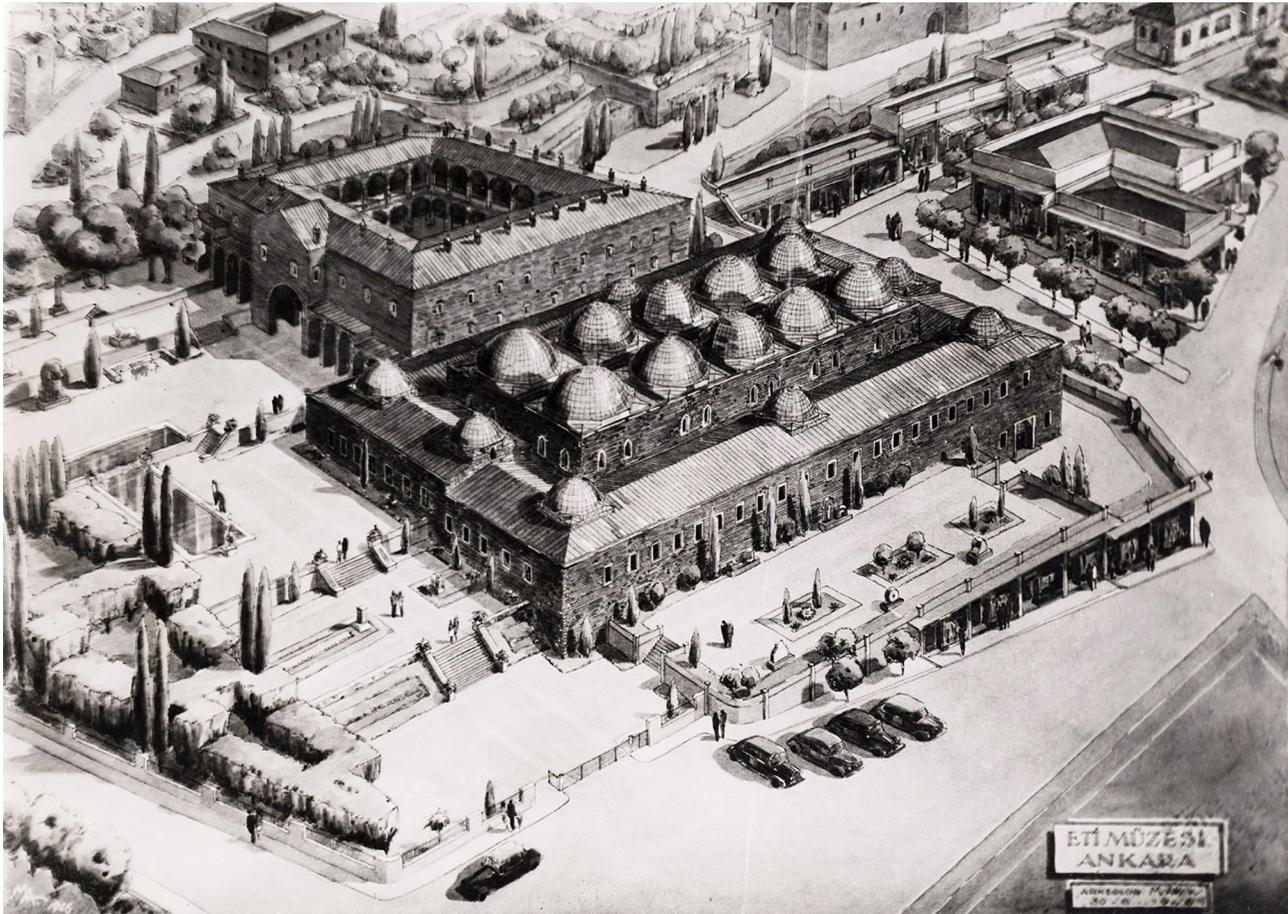
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5.6

Kurşunlu Han before the restoration.

Source: SALT Online Archive, Code: TASUH6742023

<sup>(38)</sup> For a history on the political use of archaeology during the early Republican period, see Tuğba Tanyeri-Erdemir, "Archaeology as a Source of National Pride in the Early Years of the Turkish Republic", *Journal of Field Archaeology* 31, n. 4 (2006), 381-393; Çiğdem Atakuman, "Cradle or crucible: Anatolia and archaeology in the early years of the Turkish Republic (1923 - 1938)", *Journal of Social Archaeology* 8 (2008), 214-235. For a comparison of the political use of archaeology in the late-Ottoman and the early-Republican era, see Mesut Dinler, "The Knife's Edge of the Present: Archaeology in Turkey from the Nineteenth Century to the 1940s", *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* DOI: 10.1007/s10761-017-0446-x.



5.7  
 Perspective drawing from the restoration project for the Hittite Museum (currently, it is called the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations).  
 Source: SALT Online Archive TASUH6742001

the museum a nice garden and to make it visible. Gasco suggests that with the project “the recent Ottoman past was erased, the remote one was exhumed”.<sup>(39)</sup> The museum was restored to display the prehistoric artifacts collected from the above-mentioned archaeological excavations. Moreover, as the project’s perspective planning clearly demonstrates, the museum building itself was also presented as an object. When the museum was opened to the public in 1945-1946, the visitors would be expected not only to learn and be proud about the material evidences of the historic roots of the Turkish nation (through the museum objects) but also to reconsider their relations with the Ottoman past (through the museum building itself). Interpreted as such, this restoration project poses several questions about the republic’s relation with the Ottoman past through cultural heritage. If the republic wanted to alienate the Ottoman memories (as suggested above), why would it also care to restore monuments belonged to those memories? This museum and the restoration project equivocally demonstrate how the re-

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<sup>(39)</sup> Giorgio Gasco, “Bruno Taut and the Program for the Protection of Monuments in Turkey (1937-38): Three Case Studies: Ankara, Edirne and Bursa”, *METU Journal of Faculty of Architecture* 27, n. 2 (2010), 15-36, 22.

public managed the Ottoman ‘history’. With the Hittite Museum, firstly, it was possible to generate the Turkish national identity based on prehistoric ages; which helped define a balanced attitude towards the Islamic and the Christian past. Secondly, and more importantly, the museum was the ultimate tool for the republic to operate on the Ottoman ‘memories’ to generate the ‘history’. In other words, the museum, as an Ottoman monument, provided a *lieux de memoire*.<sup>(40)</sup> Since “memory attaches itself to sites, whereas history attaches itself to events”,<sup>(41)</sup> the restoration of a ruined building into a spectacle would produce the ‘event’ which would eventually help the republic generate the Ottoman ‘history’. Thirdly, and lastly, this project shows how the empty imperial building stock inherited from the empire was a major problem for the republic. It should be noted that whenever the power structures change, the building stock of the previous power holders becomes vitally important to manage the social change. One can remember the French Revolution and how the revolutionary communities reused, demolished, sold, vandalized, or converted the buildings of the monarchy and the clergy.<sup>(42)</sup> It may seem unreasonable to compare the French Revolution to the *Kemalist* Revolution (of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk), however, both the republican rulers and the actors of the second constitutional era were under the influence of the post-French Revolution values. Even though the republican propaganda visuals also exploited a similar comparison (between the French and Kemalist revolutions) through the state publications,<sup>(43)</sup> Bozdoğan argues that the Italian Fascist architecture better resembles the Turkish experience than the French Revolution.<sup>(44)</sup> However, as mentioned above, in terms of production of *lieux de memoire* (in the sense that Nora investigates for France) through the management of the historic environment, there is a global pattern. In Turkey, the formulation of MAAE was the first act to reproduce this pattern. However, a more crucial step, as will be discussed further below, was going to come towards the mid-1930s with İstanbul’s urban planning implementations.

### Remaking: the past

Following the suggestions of the special committee (formed after Atatürk’s telegram), a new committee was formed; The Committee on the Preservation of Monuments (*AKK – Anıtları Koruma Komisyonu*). It was foreseen in the report that four committees would be formed in four cities (Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir and Elazığ) for the protection of monuments all over Turkey. However, only one was established due to lack of experts. The report had addressed some major issues that MAAE was already struggling. One of these main issues was the Islamic religious complexes (*külliye*) that were managed by the Ottoman *vakıf*

<sup>(40)</sup> Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire”, *Representations* 26 (1989), 7-24.

<sup>(41)</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>(42)</sup> Françoise Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>(43)</sup> *La Turquie Kemaliste* was a journal published from 1933 to 1949 to promote the republican accomplishments to the western world. It was published by the Official Publication Directorate in French, German, and English.

<sup>(44)</sup> Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism*. In the second chapter of her book, Bozdoğan investigates the modernist architecture in the 1930s in a global context and several times, she highlights how the Turkish architectural community were influenced by the Italian architecture.

system. With the Republican reforms, different buildings of a single complex – that are *vakif* properties – were distributed to various governmental bodies. Mosques of architectural significance were owned by the Directorate of Pious Foundations;<sup>(45)</sup> religious lodges (*tekke*) and shrines (*türbe*) by the Ministry of Education, Islamic education schools (*madrassa*) by various bodies (only if they did not fit with the renewed educational system, otherwise by the Ministry of Education), fountains and cemeteries by the municipalities. The committee also suggested the central management of these edifices (together with a national registry system) in accordance with a program prepared by AKK.<sup>(46)</sup>

Even though the lack of resources was a major obstacle for the restoration works, the coordination among these diverse public stakeholders was a bigger problem. It made it almost impossible to generate a comprehensive conservation strategy for the complexes. MAAE also had addressed this problem. However, the constant warnings of the council members of this İstanbul-based committee did not echo very strongly in Ankara.<sup>(47)</sup> Sometimes, these stakeholders would demolish or remove the historic structures even without asking MAAE approval.<sup>(48)</sup> The other public bodies did not recognize the authority of MAAE, thus, the only committee that was responsible for historic preservation was not a powerful one. All these problems made it inevitable to change the management strategy of MAAE. AKK, on the other hand, was more powerful and its authority was covering the whole country, not only İstanbul. But still, its power was not fully recognized by other public bodies. Urbanization efforts of the local authorities continued challenging AKK's decisions. Prof. Franz Miltner was attained as the head of AKK. He had studied Ephesus for many years for the Institute of Archaeology in Vienna. Other members were two architect members, and the German photographer Schuller (who worked in Alishar archaeological site [close to Ankara] excavated by the Chicago University Oriental Institute) with his Turkish assistant.<sup>(49)</sup> Between 1933 and 1935, AKK undertook 44 monuments-related projects in twenty cities. Most of these projects were the repair of monuments, however, there were also some projects for removal of (dismantling and then re-mantling) obelisks, fire prevention projects, construction of visitor promenades, inventories, printing brochures, and the survey drawings- the last requiring an important portion of the budget.<sup>(50)</sup> Only five of these projects were in İstanbul.<sup>(51)</sup> For AKK, documentation of the monuments was at the core of historic preservation. The urbanization projects were endangering monuments. As narrated by Arık, one of the eminent archaeologists of Turkey: "The monuments were sacrificed for road constructions, or sometimes even for the construction of cinema theatres, judging the buildings

<sup>(45)</sup> In 1924, the Ministry of Pious Foundations became a directorate to function with the same name.

<sup>(46)</sup> *Anıtları Koruma Komisyonunun 1933-1935 Yıllarındaki Çalışmaları*.

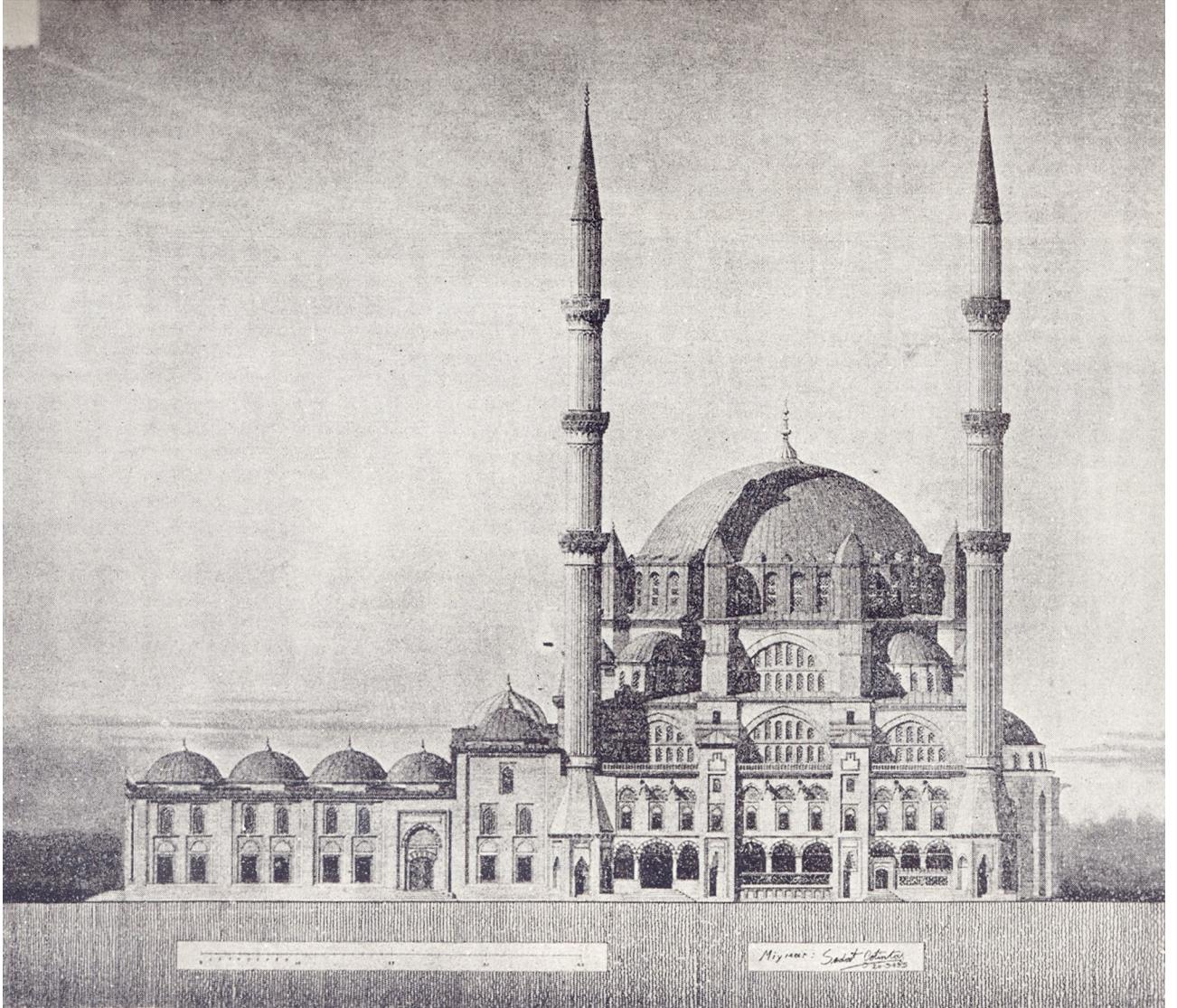
<sup>(47)</sup> Altınıyıldız, "The Architectural Heritage", 287-291.

<sup>(48)</sup> Açıkgöz, "On the Uses", 174.

<sup>(49)</sup> *Anıtları Koruma Komisyonunun 1933-1935 Yıllarındaki Çalışmaları*, 11-12.

<sup>(50)</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>(51)</sup> The Republican apathy towards İstanbul was not only evident in the number of restoration works, but also in the number of new constructions. In the 1930s, new modern buildings were being constructed in the major cities of Turkey. In İstanbul, on the other hand, only a few modern buildings were constructed in the early decades. See Gül, *Emergence*, 79.



only from their dilapidated external look, without taking photographs or making drawings".<sup>(52)</sup> Therefore, documenting the monuments was crucially important to safeguard them. One of the two architect members, Sedat Çetintaş was solely responsible to produce the survey drawings (*rölöve*, in Turkish) of the Turkish monuments in various cities.<sup>(53)</sup> AKK was given a new survey bureau in 1936 specifically for producing *rölöve* drawings. Çetintaş was the head of this Survey Bureau (*Rölöve Bürosu*) in Bursa and he started compiling the *rölöves* of the monuments in Bursa, the first capital of the Ottoman Empire. Çetintaş's drawings were displayed in various cities and sent to Europe for exhibitions.<sup>(54)</sup> Çetintaş was educated under Kemalettin Bey and he was also influenced from the nationalist ideas in architecture. His impressive restitution drawings reinforced his ideological engagements through representing these monuments in their best conditions. Another renown Turkish architect, Sedat Hakkı Eldem (1908-1988) is another important actor who have been affective in documentation of cultural heritage. He was a very productive architect and

5.8

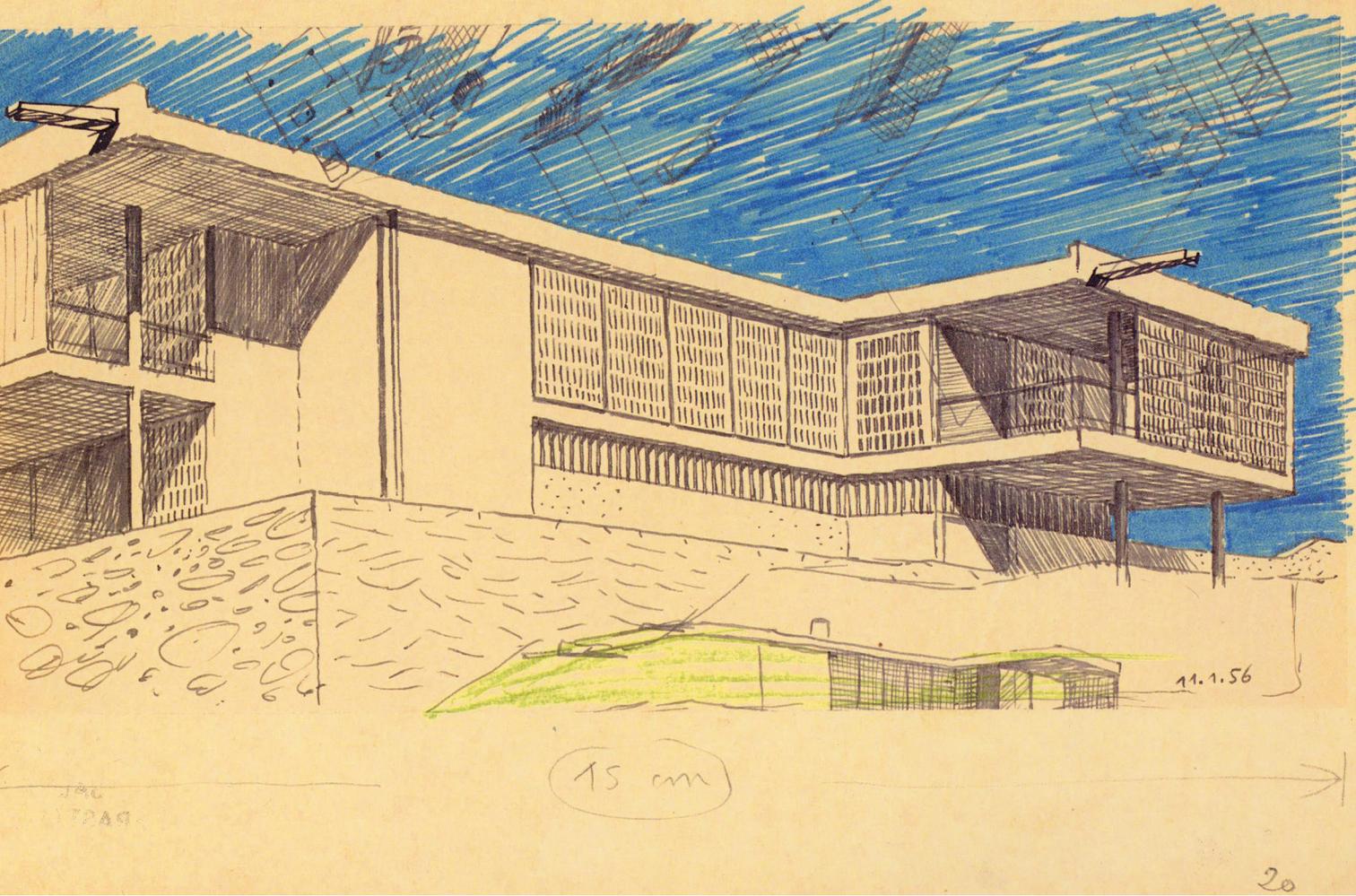
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Sedat Çetintaş's *rölöve* of the Selimiye Mosque in Edirne.  
Source: *Türk Mimari Eserlerin*

<sup>(52)</sup> Remzi Oğuz Arık, *Türk Müzeciliğine Bir Bakış* (İstanbul, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1953), 35.

<sup>(53)</sup> Madran, "Cumhuriyetin", 72.

<sup>(54)</sup> These drawings were displayed also in the 1953 Paris exhibition. The publication includes a letter by German professor Hanson to Mr. Çetintaş, in which Prof. Hanson appraises the quality of the drawings. *Türk Mimari Eserlerine Ait Rölöve Sergisi Resim ve Heykel Müzesinde*, (İstanbul, Maarif Basımevi, 1956).



5.9

Sedat Hakkı Eldem's perspective drawing for his project Derviş House in Prince Islands (*Büyükkada*) in İstanbul (the postcard for the exhibition *Sedat Hakkı Eldem II: Retrospektif* organized Osmanlı Bank Müzesi in İstanbul between 8 April - 5 July 2009). Source: SALT Online Archive, Code: ECEXSHEI001006

he carried out researches about civic traditional architecture as an inquiry for a Turkish/national architecture. His designs also reflected the outcomes of this research; he interpreted the characteristics of the Turkish vernacular architecture in a very abstract way in his buildings. He was seeking a localized Turkish vocabulary within the modernist architectural language.<sup>(55)</sup> His course at the Academy of Fine Arts was also structured in a similar fashion; the students were expected to produce the measured surveys of the examples of civic architecture in İstanbul. This course can be considered as the beginning of the restoration education in Turkey.<sup>(56)</sup>

5.9

Both Çetintaş and Eldem were seeking the Turkish-ness in architecture; however, Çetintaş's admiration for the Ottoman monumentality and Eldem's modernist interpretation of vernacular architecture were conflicting perspectives. For Çetintaş, the monumental Ottoman structures were the keys of the Turkish identity, not the civic architecture.<sup>(57)</sup>

Other than the *Turkification* of the monuments, the actors of heritage advocacy also referred to touristic and economic value of the monuments. They suggested that even though Turkey housed the most significant art and architectural works of the whole world (even more significant than what Italy and Greece have), it was not good at promoting neither these works nor natural values.<sup>(58)</sup> Despite all the protection efforts, at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, the monuments in İstanbul were in poor condition. In fact, historic preservation was limited to the reaction against the urbanization projects. Even

<sup>(55)</sup> Bozdoğan, *Modernism*, 158.

<sup>(56)</sup> *Rölöve I*, (İstanbul, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1968). This publication includes the student works of Sedat Hakkı Eldem's course. He was the head of the Rölöve Department in the Fine Arts Academy.

<sup>(57)</sup> Altınyıldız, "The Architectural Heritage", 294.

<sup>(58)</sup> Zübeyr, *Tarihi*.

though some urban projects were implemented, İstanbul had not yet had a city plan to solve the ongoing problems and generate a future vision. İstanbul was left aside not only physically, but also politically. This situation began to change with the announcement of an international urban planning competition for İstanbul.<sup>(59)</sup>

### Remembering: İstanbul

In 1933, an international competition was launched for the plan of İstanbul. However, the winning proposal was not implemented and instead, the French architect-planner Henri Prost was handpicked for the preparation of the master plan. The planning of İstanbul was a concern even before this competition. Even Le Corbusier had penned a letter to Atatürk in the early 1930s and expressed his interest in planning İstanbul. Le Corbusier had visited İstanbul in 1911 during his journey which he developed an utter fascination with İstanbul (that is also documented in famous *Voyage d'Orient*).<sup>(60)</sup>

Le Corbusier had sent a package to the Turkish Embassy in Paris to be delivered to Atatürk. This package had two catalogs and three books. Even though the package is missing in the Turkish archives, it is possible to understand from the correspondence that the main suggestion of Le Corbusier was preserving the historic environments and the significance of İstanbul.<sup>(61)</sup> Since the Republican authorities made use of urban planning not as a tool to control the urban growth but as a basic instrument of modernization, it was not likely that a master plan aiming at the historic preservation would appeal to the authorities.<sup>(62)</sup>

In a meeting with the Turkish architect Şemsa Demiren, Le Corbusier said

“I could have been planning İstanbul now instead of my biggest rival Prost if only I did not write that letter to Atatürk, which was my biggest strategical mistake. In this letter that I sent to the biggest revolutionist of a revolutionary nation, I suggested keeping the beautiful city of İstanbul as it was; with the dust and the earth of centuries”.<sup>(63)</sup>

Even though one can question the accuracy of Demiren's narration, this story affirms that a project that would not underline the modernization of İstanbul would not convince the authorities. It should be also highlighted that even though Turkey had a parliamentary democracy, the parliament had only one party until 1946. This power made it easier to execute the project of modernization. Prost was an appropriate name to meet these Republican expectations to transform and eventually modernize İstanbul. Prost had already been invit-

<sup>(59)</sup> It should be noted that the major monumental buildings such as Hagia Sophia Mosque, Sultanahmet Mosque, Süleymaniye Mosque, etc. were consensually considered significant even during the republican era. For a comparative study of republican-era restoration projects of the monumental buildings in İstanbul, see Burcu Selcen Coşkun and Demet Binan, “Cumhuriyet Dönemindeki Koruma ve Onarım Süreçlerine İstanbul'daki Anıtsal Yapılar Üzerinden Bir Bakış”, *tasarım + kuram*, 15 (2013), 103-126.

<sup>(60)</sup> For Le Corbusier's viewpoint on Turkey Republic's modernization, see Tülay Atak, “A Monument's Domain Atatürk, Le Corbusier, and Modern Masses”, *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism* 9, n. 2 (2012), 83-95.

<sup>(61)</sup> Enes Kortan, *Le Corbusier Gözüyle Türk Mimarlık ve Şehirciliği* (Ankara, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Mimarlık Fakültesi Yayınları, 1983), 93-96.

<sup>(62)</sup> İpek Akpınar, “The Rebuilding of İstanbul Revisited: Foreign Planners in the Early Republican Years”, *New Perspectives on Turkey* 50 (2014), 59-92; Cana Bilsel, “Remodelling the Imperial Capital in the Early Republican Era: The Representation of History in Henri Prost's Planning of İstanbul” in *Power and Culture: Identity, Ideology, Representation*, ed. Jonathan Osmond (Pisa, Pisa University Press, 2007), 95-115, 98.

<sup>(63)</sup> Şemsa Demiren, “Le Corbusier ile Mülakat”, *Arkitekt* 11-12, (1949), 230-231.

ed for the 1933-competition but had declined the invitation. He was replaced with Jacques Lambert who had been working with Prost for the planning of Paris. Other participants were Donat Alfred Agache (the planner of Buenos Aires) and German planner Elgötz (who worked for Essen's urban plan). The jury judged the projects per these criteria: rearrangement of the port facilities, zoning decisions, main arteries, railroads and the stations, air traffic, public spaces, legislative arrangements, and historic monuments. The jury decided that Elgötz's proposal was the most realistic one. His project stood out amongst others for the importance he paid for the protection of the natural and historic features of İstanbul. He proposed a network of small streets to connect the monuments, and stressed that main roads should not disturb these monuments.<sup>(64)</sup> Even though the winning proposal was not implemented, this competition was the start of the republican efforts to answer the planning needs of İstanbul.<sup>(65)</sup> In this period after the competition, the İstanbul Municipality invited the German architect and urban planner Martin Wagner as a consultant. His reports mainly included statistical data. He published his reports in Turkish journals as well. He was one of many intellectuals who escaped from the Nazi power in the Weimar Republic and came to Turkey. Wagner left Turkey in 1938 and moved to the United States.<sup>(66)</sup>

The competition had not satisfied the government. Instead, Prost was contacted again and directly offered the job. Prost was already familiar with Turkish cities; he had visited İstanbul during his studentship in 1904 and then in 1906 (with the *Prix de Rome* program) and he was the consultant for the plan of İzmir in 1924-25. Moreover, he was already familiar with the Islamic towns through his urban planning works in the French colonies such as Casablanca, Fez, Rabat, Meknes and Marrakech.

Prost submitted the first phase of his proposal in 1937, the Master Plan for the European Side. This plan was not envisioning a comprehensive vision for the current and future problems of the city. Instead, it was a compilation of pivotal urban implementations. Bilsel suggests that even though the plan lacked a holistic vision, these individual interventions were strategically selected to organize and execute the overall transformation of İstanbul. However, this shortage was a major criticism against the plan.<sup>(68)</sup>

Prost, both knowing urban planning trends of the 1930s and being influenced by the Musée social, produced plans on various parts on İstanbul. Most of these plans were not implemented when his contract was terminated in 1951 (when the power of single party was ceded by *Demokrat Parti* in 1951 elections). However, he produced a vision that would guide the future implementations as

<sup>(64)</sup> "İstanbul Şehir Planı", *Arkitekt* 29, (1933), 154-161.

<sup>(65)</sup> Niyazi Duranay, Ersen Gürsel, Somer Ural, "Cumhuriyetten Bu Yana İstanbul Planlaması", *Arkitekt* 105, (1972), 67-108, 67.

<sup>(66)</sup> Gül, *Emergence*, 95-96.

<sup>(67)</sup> Cana F. Bilsel, "Henri Prost's Planning Works in İstanbul (1936-1951): Transforming the Structure of a City through Master Plans and Urban Operations", in *From the Imperial Capital to the Republican Modern City: Henri Prost's Planning of İstanbul*, eds. Cana F. Bilsel, Pierre Pinon (İstanbul, İstanbul Research Institute Catalogues, 2010), 101-165, 102.

<sup>(68)</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.



well. He exploited open spaces (*espaces libres*) and proposed the creation of public parks, together with a new road network. One of these parks (Park n. 2) was in the historic peninsula surrounding the Hagia Sophia, the Byzantine Hippodrome, the Topkapı Palace, and the Sultanahmet Mosque.<sup>(69)</sup> This was a radical decision in terms of historic preservation; because Prost proposed the liberation of historic monuments; he proposed height limitations to sustain the visibility of the monuments in the silhouette; and then re-organized the street network to provide vista to these monuments. However, the monuments were now missing a context due to liberations.<sup>(70)</sup>

5.10

Another radical transformation was organizing the Golden Horn's both coasts as the industrial zone.<sup>(71)</sup> Also in the first competition, the Golden Horn coasts were proposed as the zone of heavy industry by Jacques Lambert, and as the zone of small industry by Elgötz. The jury had stressed that heavy industry in the Golden Horn would damage İstanbul.<sup>(72)</sup> With the Prost Plan, İstanbul was transforming into a seemingly-modern city and these transformations were

5.10

Sultanahmet Mosque and the Square (the Byzantine Hippodrome) after the Prost plan.

Source: Cana Bilsel, "Remodelling", 109

<sup>(69)</sup> This park is one of four zones of historic peninsula of İstanbul that is registered in the UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1985.

<sup>(70)</sup> Cana F. Bilsel, "Henri Prost's"; İpek Akpınar, "The Rebuilding".

<sup>(71)</sup> Gül, *Emergence*, 103.

<sup>(72)</sup> "İstanbul Şehir Planı".

being zealously promoted to the public. *Güzelleşen İstanbul* (İstanbul Getting Beautified), a 1943-publication by the İstanbul Municipality, is significant both for the impressive number of urban projects (all projects were promoted with a before-after comparison) and the graphic design of the book (which was influenced by Soviet constructivism).

As mentioned above, in the beginning of the twentieth century, İstanbul was already an unmaintained city that most of historic monuments were lost with the fires, some areas were in ruins.<sup>(73)</sup> Prost made use of these areas; but at the same, he demolished residential historic buildings for enlarging the streets and constructing new boulevards. Especially the historic houses were easily demolished. Prost proposed that Eyüp district (which is renown as a religious center for the Muslim community due to the existence of the tomb of Abu Ayyub el-Ansari) would be protected as an area. He also proposed that the tombs that blocked the new road constructions would be removed to Eyüp.<sup>(74)</sup> Eyüp project was not implemented – like most of his other proposals.

Prost is a debated figure.<sup>(75)</sup> First of all, it is peculiar that he was commissioned as the chief planner when there was already a competition-winning project for İstanbul. This should be due to the republican need to modernize İstanbul rather than solving the urban problems and managing the future of the city. Secondly, his preservation approach is questionable: Bilsel suggests that Prost's Eyüp proposal could be considered as the first time that the conservation of 'urban areas' was introduced to the Turkish historic preservation system.<sup>(76)</sup> Gül, on the other hand, argues that Prost had damaged the historic fabric of İstanbul and contributed very little to the preservation legacy of Turkey.<sup>(77)</sup> He also stresses that Prost's project did not go beyond the 'beautification' of İstanbul and even the goal of modernizing İstanbul was not achieved.<sup>(78)</sup> However, Prost's plan was the official instrument of the Republican power to modernize the old capital and comfort their ideological perspectives. Prost exploited *espaces libres* as a tool of secularization; he encouraged the visibility of women in public and challenged the mosque-dominated urban character of the city.<sup>(79)</sup>

## Conclusion

In his book *İstanbul*, Orhan Pamuk wrote: "a feeling of deprivation, defeat, and loss, that came to İstanbul after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, had finally found us".<sup>(80)</sup> His book answers an important issue that this paper rather leaves unanswered. How do the republican efforts of historic preservation affect the lives of individuals? As an intellectual of bourgeois, Pamuk answers this question from his own life, yet still with a text that – arguably – provides a compre-

<sup>(73)</sup> Gül, *Emergence*.

<sup>(74)</sup> Cana F. Bilsel, "Henri Prost's".

<sup>(75)</sup> Not only for the urban planning history but also for the political history of Turkey, Prost is a controversial figure. When his contract was ended in 1951, his projects remained unimplemented. In the 1950s, a new party gained electoral power and challenged the republican ruling class (the previous power holders) and accused them for being elitists. However, the new power was also ceded with a coup d'état in 1960 (executing the prime minister). Therefore, in today's Turkish politics, advocating or accusing Prost immediately (and unfortunately) may put a scholar in a political position that he/she is either *Kemalist* or anti-republican. Nevertheless, in this paper, Prost is discussed to understand the republican understanding of cultural heritage denouncing this bi-coded spectrum.

<sup>(76)</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>(77)</sup> Gül, *Emergence*.

<sup>(78)</sup> Murat Gül, Richard Lamb, "Urban Planning in İstanbul in the Early Republican Period", *Architectural Theory Review* 9, n. 1 (2004), 59-81.

<sup>(79)</sup> İpek Akpınar, "İstanbul'u (Yeniden) İnşa Etmek: 1937 Henri Prost Planı", in *2000'den kesitler II: Cumhuriyet'in Mekanları/Zamanları/İnsanları*, eds. Elvan Algut, Bilge İmamoğlu (Ankara, Dipnot Yayınları - Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2010). See also İpek Akpınar, "The Rebuilding".

<sup>(80)</sup> Orhan Pamuk, *İstanbul: Şehir ve Hatıraları* (İstanbul, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), 24. English translation: *İstanbul: Memoires and the City* (New York, Vintage, 2005)

5.11

Beyazid Square in the historic peninsula. Demolished edifices are outlined in the 'before' images to suggest the demolition created a 'beautified' İstanbul.

Source: *Güzelleşen İstanbul*; SALT Online Archive, Code: THTPA836031

hensive, multidisciplinary narrative, which is enriching and mind opening. This paper, on the other hand, concentrates on the question that not the individuals, but how did the power structures act on cultural heritage?

When the Turkish Republic was founded, the cultural atmosphere resembled the second constitutional era when there existed an inquiry for a sense of communal unity based on a relatively recent concept: 'nation'. The rulers shifted the capital to Ankara; this decision was both a practical one (Ankara was geographically safe from the danger of a possible occupation and since it was in the central Anatolia, it was in equal distance to other cities) and a political one (Ankara was both far from the Ottoman memories and it had enough lands that modern architecture could be experienced freely). Even though the city had a historic town, the new capital was constructed rather on unpopulated lands of Ankara. Nevertheless, the attitude towards the historic town representationally manifested how the republic positioned itself against the Ottoman past.

The Ottoman past was still alive in İstanbul; therefore, a committee was in charge solely for İstanbul to make decisions for the Ottoman monuments. Meanwhile, a new historic reference was generated that would define the national identity of the new Turkish nation. Prehistoric civilizations that settled in and disappeared from Anatolia provided this historic reference. With this new national past, it was possible both to weaken the Ottoman links and to secularize the society. Once this new past was scientifically formulated by archaeology and delicately institutionalized by the state; the Ottoman and Seljukid monuments (Islamic monuments) could penetrate the preservationist concerns of the ruling class. Consequentially, the committee was restructured with an increased authority and decision-making power. Even though these monuments were left aside for they disturbed the reforms of secularization, this danger was eliminated to a certain extent since the republican institutionalization was moderately instated in the 1930s.

In the early 1930s, the republic realized that İstanbul could be modernized with urban planning. After a failed competition, another figure of power, Prost operated on İstanbul both preserving the important monuments of İstanbul, but also damaging the historic urban character. However, despite the existing studies, he still needs to be studied considering both his accomplishments and failures to fully acknowledge his legacy in the Turkish preservation culture.

