Mike Bode, Liana Kuyumcuyan, Murat Tülek (eds)

# Pedestrian Modernities

## Blind Spots in Turkish Cultural Heritage

Svenska Forskningsinstitutet i Istanbul

Dragomanen

Årsskrift för Svenska Forskningsinstitutet i Istanbul 26/2024

# Dragomanen

Årsskrift utgiven av
Svenska Forskningsinstitutet i Istanbul &
Föreningen Svenska Istanbulinstitutets Vänner

Serieredaktör och ansvarig utgivare:
Simon Stjernholm

ISSN 1402-358X
ISBN 978-91-89840-27-0


Omslagsbild framsida: Mike Bode
Tryckeri: Livonia (Lettland) 2024, i samarbete med Printpool

Dragomanen erhålles vid medlemskap i Föreningen Svenska Istanbulinstitutets Vänner

# Content

Introduction 5
MIKE BODE, LIANA KUYUMCUYAN, MURAT TÜLEK

I. HERITAGE AND PRESERVATION

In Search of Modern Heritage in Turkey 8
BJÖRN MAGNUSSON STAAF

Modern But Forgotten 23
LIANA KUYUMCUYAN, MURAT TÜLEK,
YAŞAR ADNAN ADANALI

The Search for National Identity in Cosmopolitan Izmir 48
SERKAN TURGUT

Early Republican Commercial Buildings on Architect Kemalettin Street, Izmir 64
MINE HAMAMCIOĞLU-TURAN

Insert / Miracle World 91
MIKE BODE

II. WALKING AS A MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

Walking as a Means for Producing Knowledge 106
CATHARINA GABRIELSSON

City Space between Voluntarism from Above and Subversion from Below 115
FERHAT KENTEL

Early Republican Ideology Through the Works of Tevfik Sırrı Gür in Mersin 136
ULAŞ BAYRAKTAR

III. MODERNISM(S)

Florya walk-through 152
MIKE BODE

Pedestrian Modernities 166
OLOF HEILO

A World of Ruins and a World of Technology 177
ANDERS ACKFELDT

Contributors 191

Bernt Brendemoens upptäckter på den turkiska dialektkartan 193
ÉVA Á. CSATÓ OCH LARS JOHANSON

# Introduction

MIKE BODE, LIANA KUYUMCUYAN, MURAT TÜLEK
Visual artist and researcher based in Sweden and Türkiye
PhD candidate at the National Technical University of Athens
Independent urban researcher based in Istanbul

*Blind Spot* was the name given to an interdisciplinary cultural heritage project that brought together academics, architects, historians, artists, urban planners, researchers and cultural initiatives from Sweden and Türkiye with the idea of exploring buildings and places typical of Türkiye's early Republican (and preceding) modernism which are often overlooked or neglected.

The project began in 2023 with a number of online meetings hosted by the cultural initiatives Postane in Istanbul, Bayetav in Izmir and Kültürhane in Mersin, all initiatives that are engaged in questions of urbanity and the preservation of cultural heritage in Türkiye. From these initial meetings, a series of seminars were developed in the form of walking tours in the three partner cities. These discursive walks were supplemented with presentations, lectures, visits to exhibitions and side events and were held together by a continuous flow of enthusiastic discussions. Some of the reflections that emerged from the walks are presented here in this issue of *Dragomanen*.

Initially, the term *blind spot* was used to denote early Republican urban places that are no longer valued and run the risk of being demolished or lost. But the term also came to conjure up the historical layers in cityscapes which are often hidden from sight and difficult to detect. In a broader sense *blind spots* can also be understood as misconceptions, historical glitches, or thoughts and ideals that have fallen by the wayside.

From the outset, the participants were free to determine the format of their contributions to this book. Some of the texts are academic, others take the form of essays, personal reflections, photo series, diaries or notes. Some writers have focused on the historical and cultural significance of the buildings and places we visited during the walks, shedding light on architects who have not been extensively studied or buildings that are more often not considered as heritage and thus not adequately protected. Others reflect on how these buildings can be read as former representations of the Nation State, while other contributions discuss the essence of the modern project and early Republican architecture in Türkiye. In parallel, several of the texts also include deliberations on the act of walking as a form of knowledge production.

We hope this issue can contribute to the continuing dialogue about modernity in Türkiye and the importance of preserving these crucial yet often forgotten sites of Turkish collective history.

# I. Heritage and preservation

# In Search of Modern Heritage in Turkey

*Notes from November 2024*

BJÖRN MAGNUSSON STAAF
Museologist, Lund University

This essay is primarily based on diary notes from the traveling workshop *Blind Spot* that took place in November 2023. I have later added some text to it, but I've tried to keep my individual voice and personal reflections as far as possible. It is thus an essay in the most literal sense, a try to reason around topics in a rather associative and unrestricted way. Thus, I hope the reader will have patience with the lack of common scholarly stringency that one could expect.

## The illusive concepts of 'Heritage' and the 'Modern' (5th of November)

Talking about the amazing view across the Golden Horn is always a safe social icebreaker. One immediately gets on a common ground, because it's impossible to deny that the view is amazing. It also leads to interesting conversations, going beyond the usual common small talk. Apart from Istanbul, few other cities can offer such views that have these conversation-piece qualities. The restaurant in Beyoglu, where we met up, Anders [Ackfeldt], Catharina [Gabrielsson], Mike [Bode], Olof [Heilo], Sara [Brolund de Carvalho], and me, did have a splendid view over the Golden Horn. It was a good place to get to know the others in our little crowd, and of course, we were all baffled over the view of it, even if I knew

that Anders, Mike, and Olof could enjoy this sight almost every day. However, I still think they somehow get baffled by it.

Some in our group I know quite well since before, and others were new acquaintances. For the next five days, we would be on the search for the modern in Istanbul, Mersin, and Izmir. My first impression, as we introduced ourselves, was that we were quite a mixed group regarding interests and backgrounds. Yet, on second thought, I gathered that we were not so different after all. The waiter would probably see us as a party of academics, artists, but first and foremost, foreigners. Us being foreigners is perhaps one of the most important qualities of this project, granted that some of us do have a considerable knowledge of Turkish society. Mike greeted us and, again, introduced us to the topic of our travelling workshop. On this trip, we were going to meet up with experts on various aspects of the history of twentieth century Turkey, as well as on Turkish architecture from the first decades of the Turkish Republic. What we hopefully could contribute with was the gaze from the outside, and things that would catch our specific attention on this trip. What would we perhaps come to associate with general aspects of the Modern? Or, perhaps even more interesting, would we distinguish some aspects of the Turkish Modern, that we would find to be perhaps more unique and specific for Turkey? The questions that Mike presented have a clear bearing on heritage perspectives. The foreign eye can be of relevance when discussing heritage. Hopefully, this could be the contribution of our group coming from Sweden.

Mike's introduction got some of us talking about heritage and different understandings of what heritage may be. It's an understatement to say that Turkey has a very rich and complex heritage, dating back to the early Stone Age, and all the way to the twentieth century. The number of different historical sites in the country is overwhelming. However, what can be considered to be a part of heritage cannot be reduced to mere buildings, objects, or traditional practices isolated in themselves. Heritage is nothing self-evident. Its meaning is a part of a discourse and at the same time something that actually 'does' something. If one uses the vocabulary of Bruno Latour and Actor Network Theory, it's an actant. It affects social action. Heritage can – from the point of view of public administration – be something that must be handled with particular care and consideration, for example, in urban planning. What parts of the older urban

fabric are to be kept in city renewal? Urban planning often requires considerations both of the past and what is to come. These highly concrete and practical tasks require a discussion of what the past means in current society, an analysis that requires dialogue and, at times, also debate. The point of bringing different perspectives on history and its material as well as immaterial expressions into the discussion is to create an awareness of possible blind spots in society in general. The blind spots in the past, often reflect blind spots in the present. Heritage discussions are thus also often a part of a negotiation with certain political implications.

The meanings of heritage are related to how the past is understood, and how these understandings grasp apprehensions of the present and mould social and cultural identities. It might seem like a high-set ambition for the current project and travelling workshop, *Blind Spot*, but it could, at least in a humble way, contribute to a discussion related to these aspects of heritage discussion.

Heritage is a complex concept, and so is indeed also the notion of 'Modern'. We discussed this during the dinner at the restaurant, and it's quite evident that we within the group have differing views on how to understand the Modern. All of us were also right in our ways of reasoning, even if I, in some instances, had the feeling that we were talking past each other. Catharina and Sara underscored the importance of keeping the concepts of Modern and Modernism separate from the term Modernity. The Modern can be understood as an idea relating to the belief that objective science should be the ideological guide for society, an idea that became influential in both socialist and liberal ideologies at the end of the nineteenth century. The concept of the Modern can, from this angle, be described, as being based on a positivistic understanding of science as being fully objective. The ideals of the Modern would also come to artistic material expression, for example, in architecture. These aesthetic ideals are better referred to as expressions of Modernism. A common idea, if yet not universal in the Modernistic architectural theory, was that function should be the prime object of design, and not historical tradition, or historicist references and symbolism. It is difficult to ascribe a distinct political ideology to Modernist architecture. It appeared both in democratic countries, for example in Germany during the Weimar Republic, in France, and Sweden, as well as in countries with authoritarian regimes like Italy, and the Soviet Union. The same can be said for the classicist architectural style, which also was widespread during the 1920s and

1930s. The Classicist architecture of the early twentieth century has often wrongly become associated primarily with fascist and socialist countries, while it actually was very common also in democracies like the USA. During the dinner, we vividly discussed what we might come to see and experience of the modernist architecture of the early republican era on the upcoming trip.

Another understanding of the Modern that also came up during the conversation was to regard it as a historical era. Yet, this understanding of the Modern could be better labelled as Modernity, as Catharina and Sara suggested. From this perspective, Modernity is very much a concept that historians have used to describe eras in the past. In German historiography, the period between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries is often described as the Early Modern (a pity they didn't call it Early Modernity to avoid confusion). A period that was extremely dynamic in a multitude of dimensions; technological, communicative, economical, and not the least in philosophical and theological understandings of individuality and society. It was also a time that was transformative in Western art. New theories of visual perspectives developed aiming to recreate how the human individual apprehended the world in front of them from a specific given point. This new way of depicting the world invited the viewer to literally take the artist's way of observing the world.

It's from this early modern period that we have some of the first seemingly credible depictions of the panoramic view of Constantinople seen across from the Golden Horn. The Danish artist Melchior Lorch made one of the very first of these 'realistic' panoramas in 1559, as he was in Constantinople together with an embassy sent from the Habsburg emperor to Sultan Suleiman, the Magnificent. Melchior's panorama prospect is several meters long, and he has clearly made the prospect from some different viewpoints along the Pera side of the Golden Horn. It appears as an almost convincing depiction of what Constantinople might have looked like in the middle of the 1500s. Yet, if one closely scrutinizes the picture certain edifices can be detected that must have been merged into the picture even if they can't possibly have been seen from the Pera side. We know this because some of the buildings that Lorch added to his prospect are still standing and are just as invisible from our view as they must have been back then. Lorch wanted to maximize the number of interesting motifs, not necessarily make a simple depiction of what he actually saw.

However, the Constantinople skyline from the 1550s is not too different from what we can see from the restaurant in 2023. The great mosques on the other side still serve as points of reference for one's gaze. The Mosque of Suleiman the Great, designed by Mimar Sinan, was newly inaugurated when Lorch made his drawing. One could say that this mosque was then modern for its time. Constantinople radically transformed during that century, metamorphosing from being the capital of the old Byzantine Empire into becoming the capital of the new Ottoman Empire. It was an urban transubstantiation that to a large degree made the city into what it was before the commencement of modernization of Istanbul during the 20th century. Suleiman the Magnificent's mosque still looks very much the same when one sees it today as it did 450 years ago, but we now apprehend it as something old, a part of a heritage. The mosques as well as the whole skyline of the old city can be described as a form of heritage. Something from the past, that conveys meaning into the present. When we left the restaurant we wished each other a good night's sleep, and we again commented on the spectacular view.

## The Modern in Istanbul – a complex tapestry (6th of November)

We met up for lunch at Postane in Galata, meeting Liana [Kuyumcuyan], Murat [Tülek], and Yaşar [Adanalı], who would take us for a city walk in search of the Modern in Istanbul. Postane is an urban solidarity space, which is situated a few blocks away from the Galata Tower, and it houses a library, a podcast and production studio, study places, a café, and a small fair-trade shop, as well as an urban gardening space on its rooftop. The mission of this solidarity space is to serve as a meeting point for people who are interested and engaged in creating a fairer and more livable world. A part of this work is dedicated to raising awareness of cultural and architectural heritage. The Postane building can definitely be seen as a part of the heritage in the Galata area. The space hosts an audio exhibition called *Postane: Archaeology of a Building*, designed by Liana and Murat, that narrates the history of the building. The building was built as the

British Post Office in Constantinople, designed by the British architect Joseph Nadin in the 1850s, right after the Crimean War.

After lunch, we went up the winding staircase to the rooftop garden to get a view of the surroundings. This area was basically a Little Britain in the second half of the 19th century and the era of the late Sultanate, and it is still reflected in the adjacent buildings to Postane. Next doors are the former British prison and the British Seaman's Hospital, which still serves as an infirmary. The Galata and Pera district was perhaps the most cosmopolitan area in the whole of Europe in the decades before the First World War, and architects of many different nationalities worked here. A mix of edifices in Historicist and Art Noveau style blend with older Ottoman buildings creating a fully unique setting of built environment. If cosmopolitanism is to be taken as a criterion for modernity, then this part of the late Sultanate Constantinople was a pinnacle of it. There is also an awareness of this heritage in Istanbul today. Many buildings from the turn of the century have been ambitiously renovated during the last couple of decades, and Postane is an example of this. It's not difficult to still find rundown buildings in this part of Istanbul, but the cause is more lack of financial funding, not a lack of notion of heritage values. In the afternoon we headed across the Galata bridge to another part of the city, in search of another part of history, what might be considered heritage blind spots.

Our first stop was the Eminönü Square situated by the Egyptian Bazaar. Liana pointed out that the Modern in a way does not necessarily have to be associated with what has been built, but what has been torn down. The wide-open space that makes out the square, bustling with people and heavy traffic, was created in the decades after the World War. A large number of older buildings for commercial use built in stones and bricks, often several centuries old, were torn down to give way for the new square. The square was a part of Henri Prost's plan for the modernization of Istanbul and was made in the 1930s and 1940s. Prost, who was a French architect, had before and during the First World War worked as a city planner in Morocco, strongly influencing the urban development of cities like Marrakech, Fes, Rabat, and Casablanca. He started working with different projects in Istanbul in the 1920s and was appointed head of the planning office in the city in the late 1930s as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was president of the Turkish Republic. Only parts of Prost's general plan came into

being during the 15 years that he spent in Istanbul, even if some of the ideas in the plan would continue to influence city planning in Istanbul during the Adnan Menderes presidential regime in the 1950s. The Eminönü Square is one of the places in the city where Prost's plan is most clearly detected, and it strongly reflects the ideals of the Modern.

It's easy to apprehend the ideals of the Modern as uncompromising, in that the old had to give way to the new. In many cases, the Modern also was unbending, as in the case of planning for new infrastructure. The news was also in many ways synonymous with transportation. Creating wide and easy access roads into the core of historic Istanbul was also a goal in Prost's plan. The traffic flows along the Golden Horn at Eminönü Square is a product of the infrastructure ideals of the Modern. All city plans are of course site-specific, but it is very easy to find parallels to the traffic solutions at Eminönü. However, the solutions of yesterday often are the problems of today, and the traffic situation at Eminönü is not uncomplicated in the present.

However, the idea behind the Eminönü Square was not only primarily to make way for cars and traffic. Prost also had plans for heritage preservation. The Eminönü project was also an important part of the idea of city conservation. The relation between the past and the new is complex within Modernism. The intention of Prost's plan was not to tear down all of Old Istanbul. Yet, one could say that his conservation ideas can be described as turning parts of Fatih into a kind of living Open Air Museum. In this Open Air Museum, certain objects were to be highlighted. If one looks at the Eminönü area, two of these objects were the New Mosque and the Egyptian Bazaar. The New Mosque, and the square in front of it, is situated right next to the Eminönü Square. Both the Egyptian Bazaar, and the New Mosque date from the 1660s, and they were also made into eye-catching motifs in Prost's plan. Before the creation of Eminönü Square, they were embedded in the settlement which was situated here until the middle of the twentieth century. One of Prost's intentions, to tear down what he called the "parasitic settlements" in the Eminönü area, was to clear the view to the more spectacular old buildings. The aesthetics of the Modern can in part be described as making architecture of the void. The plan was to highlight and further monumentalize buildings from a specific era in the past. The way these buildings are perceived today is quite different from how they were seen and

distinguished in the urban fabric for over three hundred years. The Eminönü Square can be regarded as a heritage site of the Modern, in that it reflects the Modern gaze on history in the middle of the twentieth century. The ideas of what the future is to be, inevitably become history, and ideas of what history signifies, also change with time. One could claim that Prost had a blind spot for parts of the past when he suggested the demolition of the old settlement in Eminönü area.

We walked up the street right past the Egyptian Bazaar. After only a few meters of cruising between shop stalls, and people passing by, one becomes engulfed by the busy, energetic, crowded, colourful life, that characterizes the Tahtakale district. Somehow, Murat managed to gather us all in front of the Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi & Sons Coffee Shop. I've bought coffee and *salep* here several times, but I must admit that this was a 'blind spot' for me. Previously, I've only been concentrating on my place in the queue in front of

*Detail of the Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi & Sons Coffee Shop in Istanbul by Zühtü Başar 1930. Photo: Mike Bode.*

the counter, I've never raised my head to look at the building. The shop, dating to 1932, is indisputably an early modernistic gem. It has clean lines, a ribbon of windows, an explicit structure where one clearly can detect the load-bearing elements, and it has no ornaments. The elegant functionality of the edifice becomes almost an ornament in itself. The architect was Zühtü Başar, who had studied at the Academy of Arts in Istanbul during the last years of the Sultanate. Başar moved his office to Ankara in the 1920s, where he became the official museum architect for the Turkish Republic. In this professional role, he worked with restorations of the Topkapi Palace among other historic sites in Turkey. He also designed a number of edifices in the so-called First National Architectural Movement, a style that was inspired by Ottoman architecture. However, his oeuvre also was to include private projects, such as the Kurukahveci coffee shop, as well as public ones, primarily in the Ankara region. The Kurukahveci Coffee Shop has a design that is very clearly modernistic, and different from most other edifices by Başar. The architectural historians Sibel Bozdoğan and Esra Acan have in a very interesting way pointed out the similarities and differences between the modernism that started to develop in Turkey during the 1930s with the modernism in France and Germany of the 1920s and 1930s. Bozdoğan and Acan describe how the so-called Second National Architectural Movement used architectural ornamentation in a most moderate way, parallel to the modernism in France and Germany, but still referred to old Anatolian Seljuk architecture using contrasting shapes of horizontality and verticality. The modernism of Turkish architecture that started to develop with the Second National Architectural Movement in the 1930s had a distinct idiom of itself. Yet, the Kurukahveci coffee shop does not have the traits of the Second National Architectural Movement. Its design rather matches the architectural ideals of architects like Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier instead. It is quite clear that Başar mastered historical architectural styles brilliantly, as well as different expressions of the Modern. It is tempting to regard him as somewhat of an architectural polyglot when it comes to design.

The Kurukahveci Coffee Shop appears as an exotic bird among the surrounding century-old traditional Ottoman houses, as if it had flown from the 1927 Modernist functionalistic Weissenhof Siedlung in Stuttgart and landed here in the middle of Old Istanbul. It's a bit paradoxical when one considers that

the National Socialists, who abhorred Modernism as it came to display in the 1920s and early 1930s in Germany, scoffed the Weissenhof Siedlung as decadence inspired by the Orient. One can discuss whether Istanbul is a part of the Orient or not, but the Kurukahveci Coffee Shop would most certainly have looked very exotic anywhere in Turkey in the 1930s. Yet, Turkish Modern architecture is in many aspects related to expressions of Modernism in other parts of the world, but it was also to develop some qualities that can be considered specific to Turkey.

The tour continued along the Golden Horn, passing the site where the Istanbul vegetable and fruit market once was situated. It was an excellent example of early Turkish Modernism, which was torn down in the 1980s. The fact that edifices like the vegetable and fruit market are being demolished or radically garbled is one of the reasons why our travelling workshop has come about. The architecture of the twentieth century Modern is still somewhat of a blind spot in the Turkish heritage discourse. The reason is not a lack of knowledge or expertise. A number of renowned and prominent Turkish architectural historians, such as Sibel Bozdoğan, Esra Acan and Murat Gül have written exhaustively on this topic. The Swedish Research Institute has also acted to put Turkish Modernist architecture in focus with their publication *Transformations of Public Space – Architecture and the Visual Arts in Late Modern Istanbul 1950–1980*, edited by Ipek Akpınar, Elâ Güngören, Johan Mårtelius and Gertrud Olsson. It is no doubt that Turkish Modernism in the eyes of a considerable part of specialists and professionals should be considered as an important heritage, but the idea still hasn't broken through in all authorities. Our walk in Fatih, together with Murat, Yaşar and Liana today was hopefully a most humble, yet still, step to change this.

The next stop of our walk was the Istanbul Textile Traders Market, located by Atatürk Avenue. This was also a complex of edifices that I had seen many times but never noticed. Yaşar showed us this fascinating compound, presenting its background. At first and superficial sight, the way I'd perceived it before this afternoon was a slightly neglected cluster of buildings from the 1960s. At a closer look, it's a remarkable example of how several centuries-old traditions and practices come together with forms and shapes of Modernism. The Istanbul Textile Traders Market can be described as a *han* of the Modern. The traditional

*View from the Istanbul Textile Traders Market İMÇ by Doğan Tekeli and Sami Sisa 1960–1967. Photo: Mike Bode.*

*han* is a structure of buildings, designed for production, storage, offices, selling, and other commercial purposes. These forms of commercial centers started to develop during the Middle Ages in the Islamic world. There is no direct equivalent in the West and North European Christian medieval cities and towns, but the market square filled some of the commercial functions of a *han* to a certain degree. Its roots can be traced to the caravanserais but are situated in urban contexts. The *han* played, and still play, a central role in the traditional fabric of cities located within large parts of the former Ottoman realm, as well as in many other Islamic cities outside the former empire. Radically put, everyday life in the premodern Ottoman city primarily revolved around three places: the mosque, the domestic residence, and the *han*. There are areas in Istanbul where *han*s constitute a central role in the urban life of today, such as in the Tahtakale district. However, the new forms of commercial structures that developed with modernity in the twentieth century challenged the *han*.

The Textile Traders Market was an attempt to meet these challenges, by creating new forms of accessibility, for example for customers coming by car.

*Detail of the Social Security Agency Complex by Sedad Hakkı Eldem 1962–1964. Photo: Mike Bode.*

The Modern architecture, letting in sunlight in another way than in the usually darker traditional *han*s, together with views over the city opening up from terraces, made this complex into something quite new. However, at the same time, the architecture clearly referred to the older form of *han*s. The shops, storages, and offices, being centred around square courtyards surrounded by four to five-story buildings, the entrances to the businesses on each floor reached by pharyngeal passages, maintaining both the intimacy as well as the sense of cooperative commonality of the traditional *han*. The wide number of convoluting courtyards connected by corridors and galleries can make one associate to structures found in Tahtakale.

The Textile Traders Market, fully completed in 1968, was designed by Doğan Tekeli, Sami Sisai and Metin Hepgüler. These architects follow an idea that seems to be common at least in parts of the Turkish Modern of the twentieth century, the ambition to connect history and the past with the present

and the new. One can see it in the work of Zühtü Başar, and not least in the oeuvre of Sedad Hakkı Eldem, the probably most famous of the architects who shaped the Turkish Modern. At the same time as the Textile Traders Market was being built, the Zeyrek Building Complex, designed by Eldem, was erected right across Atatürk Avenue. This cluster of buildings, which housed the Social Security Administration, was completed in 1964. A number of elements in this compound, such as the hip roofs, were inspired by forms from traditional Ottoman architecture and used in a free, playful manner. Eldem also took a concern for the surrounding environments and their specific historical character. By using the topography in a skilled manner he avoided blocking the view of the Zeyrek Church-Mosque, the former Byzantine Pantokrator Monastery, which was commissioned at the beginning of the twelfth century by Empress Irene. It's not surprising that Eldem showed this kind of respect for the older urban settlement of Istanbul. He was a member of the High Council for Historical Real Estate and Monuments, the chief official heritage agency in Turkey. A considerable knowledge of Turkish architectural history and a strong interest in heritage matters links Eldem with the aforementioned Başar. They also both stand for a form of Modernism that differs from Prost's, characterized by a more reflective and compromising perspective, aiming to find an interplay between the past and the present. This Turkish aspect of modernism is perhaps less confrontative and revolutionary in its manifestation, but could in a longer perspective be more sustainable. The radical modernism of Prost's general plan for Istanbul seems, at least in my eyes, to have aged the most.

The success of the Textile Traders Market can – perhaps from an economic-commercial point of view – be considered as rather moderate, at least in the twenty-first century. It was not overrun by customers as we made our visit. There were also quite a few shops and offices open for rent in the complex. Considering its attractive location, it could potentially be threatened by demolition in the future, even if it's so far not the case. The Zeyrek Building Complex is perhaps more likely to gain a heritage-protected status since it won the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1986, one of the most prestigious architectural prizes in Muslim societies.

Yet, the Textile Traders Market is in many ways an excellent example of what could be regarded as a part of Turkish heritage associated with both Modern and Modernity, and then not only from the point of view of architecture and design. Yaşar pointed out that the Textile Traders Market also had been a node for the development of popular music in Turkey from the 1970s and onwards. The complex didn't become a centre only for textile products. Several of the courtyards were let out to other types of businesses, and the music industry was one of them. There are still a number of shops selling music instruments, amplifiers, and even records, as well as production studios and offices for music agents in the courtyards. It's not the bustling music centre that it once was, but it's still an important meeting place for people with an interest in music. The age-old commercial structures of the *han*, served as a platform for the innovation, promotion, and expansion of popular music, an expression of art very much connected with modernity. One could say that this is a very important part of what constitutes heritage.

It reminds me of what we talked about the day before in the restaurant in regard to what defines heritage. It's not just the object itself, but what it does to us, and what it means for us. The origins of the concept of heritage could be of interest in this context. It is directly connected to ideas related to modernity, starting to get more commonly used in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars in Germany. The Swedish word for heritage is "kulturarv" and the first documented use of it was in a lecture by the author and professor Viktor Rydberg in 1887. Rydberg was lecturing about the early medieval Frankish culture and how it became dominant in Western Europe. The cause for the success of the Franks was, according to Rydberg, their historical awareness, and what one could call their mutually shared cultural memory, or their heritage. This heritage was not a conservative factor in their culture and society, on the contrary, it helped and enabled the Franks to embrace innovations and develop their society. Rydberg lectured about the Franks, but what he actually was talking about was the fast-transforming world of his own in the late nineteenth century, the age when modernity had its great breakthrough. History and the past were not a barrier to development, it was a platform for building a sustainable future, in Rydberg's reasoning. If one brings this reasoning into the present, then the node for popular music at the Textile Traders Market fits very well with how heritage can

be understood. The heritage of the past Modern in Turkey and elsewhere can be apprehended as a platform for the future and help us to spot other blind spots in society.

# Modern But Forgotten

*Walking the Blind Spots of Istanbul's Architectural Legacy*

LIANA KUYUMCUYAN, MURAT TÜLEK, YAŞAR ADNAN ADANALI
PhD candidate at the National Technical University of Athens
Independent urban researcher based in Istanbul
Founder and director of Postane in Istanbul

Blind spots in a constantly changing city like Istanbul are crucial to identify, as they can change or disappear in a short amount of time. As a megacity, Istanbul offers a wide array of sights with distinct personalities in its spaces. Tracing these personalities through time becomes an important tool for understanding the city we live in or pass through. To begin understanding one aspect of this, we wanted to focus on the area known as the 'historical peninsula' when addressing the concept of the 'blind spot'. This area, one of Istanbul's oldest and most touristic parts, is very much in view for many. However, some buildings in this heavily visited area are overlooked, representing some of the earliest examples of architecture from the new republican regime, with its new ideologies. These buildings, situated next to Ottoman-era structures, have become intriguing examples to examine today, particularly in terms of what we consider to be heritage.

In this article, we will delve into a walk we organized in Istanbul in November 2023, focusing on examples of modern architecture built between 1930 and 1970 on the historic side of the city. This route has served as a way for us to recall the architecture of a time that has become characterized by blind spots throughout Turkey, as all these buildings share an uncertain future. Rather than simply describing the route and the history of the buildings along it, this article will explore the aspects of these structures that remain 'blind' under certain headings, following the narrative of the route. These aspects are related to

buildings that do not exist today, or buildings that are being demolished and reconstructed, and buildings whose past and future are not discussed, in areas where traditional urban fabric and modernist planning intersected in Istanbul's history.

We wanted to explore this topic through a walking route because we firmly believe in the value of walking as a means to understand the architectural heritage of our cities, with all their complexities, historical layers, and urban contexts. Walking goes beyond knowledge production; it connects us to spaces on scales ranging from individual buildings to entire urban landscapes. Modern architectural heritage can easily be neglected when competing with the grandiose imperial heritage of the Roman, Byzantine, or Ottoman eras. Thus, it is important to acknowledge this heritage by walking through these vanished and barely surviving modern buildings, connecting them, observing their urban context, and seeking clues about their lived past and present.

The route of our walk was shaped by points such as Eminönü Square, Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi Building, Istanbul Chamber of Commerce building, the Vegetable and Fruit Market building (that does not exist today), Istanbul Textile Traders Market (IMÇ), Zeyrek Social Security Institution building, Tradesmen's Hospital and Sultanahmet Courthouse. None of these buildings have one or the same architectural style. They range from the plans of modernist urbanists trained in Beaux-Arts to Art Deco, from a modern building of the 1930s to Sedat Hakkı Eldem's work, defined as part of the Second National Architecture style.

In this article, we would like to discuss several examples of modern buildings chosen for this route, to discuss the process of 'modernization' of Istanbul, not just focusing on what has been torn down, but also, what the surviving buildings represent today. Many of these buildings, constructed with high hopes and significance by the newly established Republican state, are now decaying or being forgotten, in many cases they have already been demolished. These buildings have become the blind spots of the urban history of Istanbul by not being protected since they do not fulfil the idea of what constitutes 'heritage' today.


*Figure 1. Route of the walk. From Google Maps, annotated by the authors.*

## Heritage forgotten: Prost's Eminönü plan and the Fruit and Vegetable Market

While shaping this route, Eminönü Square was an important example that inspired our walk. This area which is surrounded by the Galata Bridge, Sirkeci, the commercial districts of Balıkpazarı, Yemiş İskelesi, and the Golden Horn (Haliç), was transformed into its shape today through various demolitions from the 1930s to the late 1980s, representing the ideology that we discussed throughout the whole walk. Today, there is not even a single spot left reminding us of how it was at the beginning of the twentieth century.

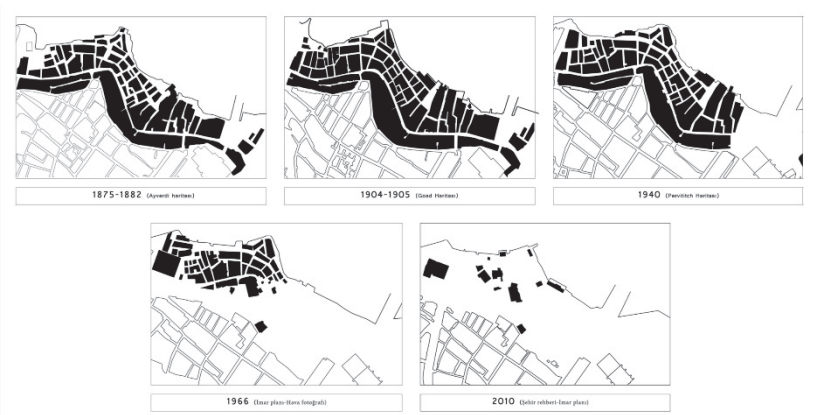



*Figure 2. From M. Tülek, "Eminönü Sahilinde Mekansal Değişimin İncelenmesi: 20. Yüzyıl Başında Balıkpazarı ve Yemiş İskelesi" (MA thesis MSGSÜ, Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü, 2015), 105.*

During this period, the districts of Balıkpazarı and Yemiş İskelesi between Eminönü and Unkapanı were located just outside the city walls of the Golden Horn. Considered the food warehouse of Istanbul from the Byzantine period until the Early Republican period, this area was an important place for the daily life of Istanbul in the late nineteenth century, famous for its fishmongers, wholesale and retail grocers, bakeries, cheese makers, streets where food sales such as fresh and dried fruits, cereals, olive oil were concentrated,[1] *kahvehane*s,[2] and taverns.

This area, which generally consisted of two- to three-story buildings built on pile foundations due to the embankment[3] and narrow and muddy streets, was the subject of demands for regulation and modernization after the Tanzimat Decree and especially after the Crimean War.

[1] M. Tülek, "1896 Yılında Balıkpazarı Ve Yemiş İskelesi: İstanbul Limanı'nın İki Mahallesinde Ekonomik Ve Sosyal Topografya Çözümlemeleri," *VIII. Türk Deniz Ticareti Tariihii Sempozyumu Bildiriler Kitabı* (İstanbul Yayınları, 2016), 242–256.
[2] *Kahvehane* can be translated as "coffee house" and is a space where men play games and drink coffee or tea during their leisure time.
[3] M. W. Wolfgang, *İstanbul Limanı* (Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), 2.

In the early Republican period, this was one of the first areas where the new Republic's modernist planning approach started to intervene. The first serious operation regarding the physical change in the area took place in the late 1930s. Henri Prost, the French architect and urban planner, was commissioned to draft the plans for Istanbul in 1936, and one of his first important operations was the expansion of Eminönü Square. In his plan, Prost's priority was to "rid the mosque of unnecessary buildings around it".[4] Towards the end of the 1930s, the shops in front of the Yeni Mosque, the Balıkpazarı Gate, and two building blocks in the square, including the Valide Han, were demolished and expanded, opening the way for the Valide Mosque.[5]

This first operation was a small part of the Eminönü plan. Prost's plan called for the opening up of wide roads from Eminönü to Divanyolu and Beyazıt, and, through a series of expropriations and new arrangements, the Eminönü waterfront was to be transformed into "a new ornament for the entrance of Old Istanbul from the Golden Horn".[6] This entailed the demolition of some monuments as well as many buildings that set the stage for an important part of daily life. In this period, most planners' view of historical areas was dominated by a conservation approach that emphasized monumental buildings by cleaning up their surroundings. Although such a conservation approach prioritized the preservation of monuments, cleaning up their surroundings completely destroyed the urban context in which the monument was located.

Before Prost's first operation took place, another important intervention had been made in the area. In 1935, a modern Vegetable and Fruit Market (*Meyve-Sebze Hali*) building was constructed on the Keresteciler Quay to the west of Yemiş İskelesi, aiming to organize the business of selling vegetables and fruits in the region. The only serious study made on this building, which today has almost no trace in our urban memory, was conducted by Namık Erkal.[7]

---

[4] P. Pierre, "Kapalıçarşı Çevresi ve Eminönü Meydanı," in *İmparatorluk Başkentinden Cumhuriyet'in Modern Kentine: Henri Prost'un İstanbul Planlaması (1936–1951)*, ed. F. C. Bilsel and P. Pinon (İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2010), 323.

[5] İstanbul Belediyesi, *Güzelleşen İstanbul* XX (Yüzyıl, İstanbul Maarif Matbaası, 1944).

[6] Pierre, "Kapalıçarşı Çevresi," 327–329.

[7] N. Erkal, "Odunkapı Pazarından Sebze ve Meyve Hali'n: Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi'nde İstanbul Keresteciler Rıhtımı'nın Mekânsal Dönüşümü," *Cumhuriyet'in Mekânları, Zamanları, İnsanları* (Dipnot Yayınları, 2010), 81–106.

According to Erkal, this building – the foundation of which was laid on 23 October, 1933, as part of the Republic's tenth-anniversary ceremonies – can be seen "not only as a service building but also as a monument to the Republic."

*Figure 3. The Fruit and Vegetable Market, 1935. Source: Arkitekt no. 55–56 (1935), 195.*

Although the architect of the building is not known, it is stated that its design was made by the Municipal Committee of Science (*Belediye Fenni Heyeti*). The building had a classical plan with historical references although it had a modern exterior. Erkal likens this typology to the Egyptian Bazaar (*Mısır Çarşısı*).[8] The concrete building's roofing was glass, with metal sunshades to protect it from the outside. The building was designed with a modernist aesthetic, from its lighting elements to its furniture. Covering an area of 6300 square meters, the building included sixty-two shops, a hall, warehouses, and offices, as well as a coffee house, restaurant, and a casino building. The warehouse and the café were on the seafront side and twelve offices were on the highway side. The casino and the restaurant were symmetrically located on both sides of the building.[9] With these functions, the Market building not only regulated the sale of food but also

[8] Erkal, "Odunkapı Pazarından Sebze," 92.
[9] Belediye Fen Heyeti, "İstanbul Meyve ve Sebze Hali," *Arkitekt* no. 55–56 (1935), 192.

contrasted with Balıkpazarı, famous for its traditional taverns of the Ottoman period, with its casino and restaurant. Erkal says that these functions should be interpreted as indicative of a new way of life in the early Republic.[10]

The construction of the Market building 'consolidated' the vegetable and fruit trade, one of the important components of the traditional 'perishable food' wholesaling in the back streets of Yemiş İskelesi, in a modern building. This new form of vegetable and fruit trade was one of the important changes that affected the economic profile of Yemiş İskelesi and Balıkpazarı.

Although the Prost plan proposed radical changes in the urban fabric of Eminönü, this market building was preserved. However, working throughout the 1940s, Prost's plans for Eminönü were never realized. In 1951, just after the Democrat Party came to power in the 1950 general elections, Prost's job was terminated. About seven years after Prost's departure, Istanbul witnessed massive expropriation operations – named after Prime Minister Menderes. One of the first locations where these operations, which aimed for a land-oriented transportation infrastructure in Istanbul and resulted in the opening of wide avenues in the historical city centers through massive demolitions, was the Eminönü coast. During the Menderes' demolitions in Eminönü, a large part of the Balıkpazarı neighborhood was demolished and a wide avenue was opened up between Unkapanı and Eminönü.

İpek Akpınar notes that Aru and Ziyaoğlu, who were part of the committee that evaluated Prost's plan during the Menderes period, said that the engineers in charge of the expropriation operations adopted the slogan: "Let's fix the hump of this city".[11] This discourse brings to mind the Eminönü waterfront, with its curved streets that follow the old city wall and the Balıkpazarı and Yemiş İskelesi. Indeed, it is seen that one of the "humps of the city" was eliminated by the straight and wide Unkapanı-Eminönü road that was opened after the reconstruction activity.[12]

---

[10] Erkal, "Odunkapı Pazarından Sebze," 92.
[11] İ. Akpınar, "İstanbul'da Modern Bir Pay-ı Taht: Prost Planı Çevresinde Menderes'in İcraatı," *İmparatorluk Başkentinden Cumhuriyet'in Modern Kentine: Henri Prost'un İstanbul Planlaması (1936–1951)*, ed. F. C. Bilsel and P. Pinon (İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2010), 190.
[12] Tülek, "Eminönü Sahilinde," 169.

However, after the Menderes operations, the market building was still functioning. By the 1950s, the building had moved away from its monumental service building image of 1936. The market area was enlarged with many additional buildings and the modern, monumental building was lost in the market area.[13]

By the 1980s, the last demolitions of the area took place. In the second half of the 1980s, during Mayor Bedrettin Dalan's Golden Horn operations, Eminönü, like many other areas on the Golden Horn coast, was the scene of demolitions. In this process, both the expanded market building with its annexes and the buildings on the Yemiş İskelesi – which had survived the demolitions of the Menderes' operations – were demolished.

Today, Istanbul's urban memory has inherited neither the important districts of daily life that the modernist planning of the 1930s wanted to regulate nor the modern market building that was built with the desire to regulate these districts. From the early 20th century to the present day, the Eminönü coast stands out as a real blind spot in our urban memory with its wide roadways, underpasses, piers, a few monumental buildings from the Yemiş İskelesi area, and the tram stop, seating areas, and bicycle paths built after the new arrangement of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality.

## Heritage reconstructed: Istanbul Chamber of Commerce building

Another discussion on approaching modern architecture in Turkey as 'heritage' is the demolition and reconstruction of modernist buildings. As seen in the most well-known examples of such practice, the Atatürk Cultural Center in Taksim and the Mecidiyeköy Liquor Factory, the reconstruction of these buildings has brought to life many important discussions about the act of preservation. Even if they are reconstructed in a similar form, do they still have the same characteristics as the original building?

[13] Erkal, "Odunkapı Pazarından Sebze," 95.

Most of the modern buildings built after the Republic are not registered, and despite the efforts by experts,[14] they are completely demolished for reasons such as durability. In rare cases, the building is demolished and then reconstructed. Of course, during these reconstructions, the original form of the building changes, sometimes due to the innovations brought by developing technology, sometimes due to the new function to be given. In this process, the artworks produced for the building may also be lost or moved to another location. In the end, the reconstructed building becomes a new one, only trying to carry a 'heritage' on its shoulders that is only created by its external 'appearance'.


*Figure 4. The Istanbul Chamber of Commerce Building. Source: Arkitekt 2, no. 342 (1971): 57–62.*

The Istanbul Chamber of Commerce building, located between Eminönü and the Unkapanı waterfront and designed by Orhan Şahinler, is a good example of this reconstruction debate. The building was realized after a competition in 1963. The building was completed in 1970 due to works done to reinforce the

[14] For an example of specialised societies on Modern Architecture, see http://www.docomomo-tr.org/.

ground of the building, which was built on the mud layers of the banks of the Golden Horn.

The 1960s, when the building was designed, was a time of localist and contextualist approaches in general. It can be said that the design of the building was rational and in line with the international style.

The Istanbul Chamber of Commerce was an office building with two main masses, one low and the other higher. The building contained reliefs, stained glass, ceramic panels, and furniture by several important artists. As seen in many other countries in the world, architect-artist collaborations became popular, especially after the Second World War. In this sense, the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce building was also an important building since it contained many important works of artists from that time, such as the stained-glass windows of Neşet Günal, Azdemir Altan, and Adnan Çoker; reliefs of Şadi Çalık and Tamer Başoğlu; the ceramic panel of Devrim Erbil; and the meeting room and foyer chairs designed by the architect Abdurrahman Hancı.[15]

In 1986, the building underwent renovations and was opened for use by Istanbul Commerce University in 2001. This decision was highly criticized by Orhan Şahinler, who frequently stated that the building was not suitable to be used as a university. After fifteen years the university moved to another campus. Although the building was again used for different purposes under the Chamber of Commerce, it remained mostly idle until it was demolished in 2021. During this process, the building began to slide towards the sea. So instead of being reinforced from the foundation, it was demolished in 2021 and rebuilt.

One important question to be asked here is why modern architecture has not become a part of our 'heritage' and thereby protected. After how many years does a building become heritage, or what kind of an ideology does it have to represent?

> It would not be wrong to say that the works of modern architecture built in Turkey in the twentieth century have (could) not been sufficiently preserved despite their small number. One of the important reasons for this is the belief that buildings from

[15] M. Kılınç and M. Gülen, "Orhan Şahinler'in Türkiye Modern Mimarlığına Bıraktığı İki Miras: İstanbul Ticaret Odası Binası ve Üsküdar Vapur İskelesi, " *mimar.ist.* 18, no. 62 (2018): 72.

> this period do not have heritage value. As is often the case in Turkey, it can be said that the conservation awareness of the buildings of the period has not developed sufficiently, and the acceptance of modern architecture as heritage is still a problematic area.[16]

As Kılınç and Gülen state in their article, strengthening the building according to its needs without damaging its core values is still not a preferred practice. In the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce building, the base has always been a problem, which also caused its construction to last seven years. In 2021, when it was decided that the building needed to be reconstructed due to its tilt towards the sea, one option was instead to restore its base with a new piling system for a smaller amount of money. But, in the end, it was decided to completely rebuild the building, spending twice as much to make it more 'robust'.[17] Today, the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce building is still under construction, and the Chamber of Commerce has been moved to another building in Eminönü. It is not known where the artworks and the designed furniture of the building are being kept or whether they have even been preserved, and it is not known if the new building will eventually house them again or not. Whether the new building will carry the legacy of the old building, remains to be seen.

## Heritage unspoken: Istanbul Textile Traders Market

When you turn your back to the Golden Horn and face the aqueduct completed by the Roman Emperor Valens at the end of the fourth century, the rows of modern blocks to your left along the slope are the Istanbul Textile Traders Market (*İstanbul Manifaturacılar Çarşısı*), shortly known as IMÇ. IMÇ can be considered one of the most distinctive, centrally located, yet overlooked areas in the city. Stretching over a long and narrow plot of forty-five thousand square

[16] Kılınç and Gülen, "Orhan Şahinler'in," 70.
[17] Fatih Haber, "Doğal yeşil alandaki İTO Binası Yenileniyor," 2 March 2021, https://www.fatihhaber.com/dogal-yesil-alandaki-ito-binasi-yenileniyor/3603/.

meters, this area, partially cleared by fires and expropriations, was sold to a cooperative founded by Fabric and Textile Wholesalers operating in the historical peninsula in 1954. In response to their need for more suitable working and trading spaces in the modern city, the winning architectural project by architects Doğan Tekeli, Sami Sisa, and Metin Hepgüler was implemented.


*Figure 5. Photo: Gültekin Çizgen. Source: Salt Archive.*

By 1967, the construction of one of the city's first modern shopping areas was completed. This structure considered a masterpiece of Turkish modernist architecture, is said to have been cleverly designed to create a contrast with the historical fabric of the peninsula. When entering the buildings, one has the sense that they have always been there, belonging to this historical context. It is a planned place, yet it seamlessly incorporates the evolution it has undergone over time. Every corner reveals an intriguing detail. The public spaces, courtyards, and viewpoints inside surpass today's standards.

The plan and architectural project of IMÇ, as well as the public art pieces in and around it, were commissioned through competitions. It is evident that

modernism was an ideal at that time, quite different from today's business methods. Unfortunately, the care shown in creating these public art pieces is not reflected in their preservation today. The IMÇ blocks, which should be considered urban heritage, are not under protection. Therefore, their future is uncertain and fragile. They are targets of large-scale real estate development projects, as well as more subtle gentrification processes, mainly driven by the creative industries.

*Figure 6. Photo: Doğan Tekeli, Sami Sisa, Metin Hepgüler. Source: Salt Research, Doğan Tekeli Archive.*

Although the impressive architecture of IMÇ has led the public to discuss the future of the site, whether it should be preserved or not, and the status of the artworks, this situation has an incomplete side for cultural heritage debates. Unfortunately, the neighbourhoods that existed here before the IMÇ was built and were demolished in the 1940s when Atatürk Boulevard was opened are not included in our urban memory and therefore not subject to discussions either.

*Figure 7. Istanbul Textile Traders' Market: Photographs taken before construction. Source: Salt Research, Doğan Tekeli Archive.*

Approximately twenty-five years before the IMÇ building was constructed, the construction of Atatürk Boulevard, began within the scope of Prost's Istanbul Plan. Designed in 1937, the boulevard was begun in 1941 and completed in 1945.[18] Starting from the Unkapanı Bridge, Atatürk Boulevard passes under the Valens Arch and reaches the Marmara Sea, forming a wide main artery that runs right through the centre of the Historic Peninsula.

Albert Gabriel, the founder of the French Archaeological Institute, says the following about Atatürk Boulevard:

[18] P. Pinon, "Atatürk Bulvarı ve Fatih Meydanı," *İmparatorluk Başkentinden Cumhuriyet'in Modern Kentine: Henri Prost'un İstanbul Planlaması (1936–1951)*, ed. F. C. Bilsel and P. Pinon (İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2010), 307.

> Moving from Beyoğlu to Istanbul, Prost's plan shows the same principles of logic, order, and openness, with the same concern to make the old capital a clean city where all the rules of modern hygiene can be adapted while preserving its personality...
>
> Two separated by a large grass-covered, wooded area. Old neighborhoods with their serpentine streets and unhealthy houses were demolished to make way for this spacious avenue with a busy road...[19]

Thus, he states that a unique structure such as the Valens Arch is protected from any kind of damage and begins to list "famous monuments on the boulevard that stand out from the mass of houses surrounding them". These statements are a clear example of the "monument-emphasizing" conservation approach of the period mentioned in Eminönü Square and its plan.

These districts in the historical topography of Istanbul with their ordinary buildings and winding streets, which were defined as "unhealthy" before the expropriations for Atatürk Boulevard between Zeyrek, Vefa, and Unkapanı in the historical centre of Istanbul, seem to have become a 'blind spot' in cultural heritage discussions due to the qualified modern architecture of İMÇ and SGK buildings.

This situation shows us the drawbacks of discussing cultural heritage debates through single buildings. It is necessary to memorialize not only a single period of a space or the building on it but the entire process of spatial change, including questions about the future of the space.

## Heritage ambiguous: Sultanahmet Courthouse and The Zeyrek Social Security Institution Complex

Many buildings which were significant at the time are faced with neglect and idleness today. Big building complexes that represented the power and capability of the newly built state started to be seen as new opportunities for construction today.

[19] Pinon, "Atatürk Bulvarı," 309f.

Due to today's spatial problems, it has become more popular to demolish large building complexes of public buildings and replace them with houses with smaller apartments, hotels, or shopping malls. The central districts of Istanbul, which cannot keep up with today's growing population, are therefore seen as a great rent provider. Sometimes buildings that cannot be directly demolished are left neglected and idle for a long time. These buildings, which are not regularly maintained, weaken over time, causing visual pollution in the city centre. To eliminate this pollution over time, the idea of demolishing and replacing the building with a new project that will 'humanize' that space is put forward. These projects do not, of course, go to publicly owned buildings or to create public space.

In contrast to the example of the IMÇ, the Sultanahmet Courthouse had a highly controversial construction process due to the location of the building. The modern courthouse building, built on a layered terrain, contains a rich and complex historical heritage due to its archaeological remains from the Byzantine and Ottoman periods. The building was designed by Sedat Hakkı Eldem[20] and Emin Onat, two of the most important names of modern architecture in Turkey; it has an important place in social memory as well as in the heritage of modern architecture.

[20] The Second National Architecture Movement came out as a reaction to the dominance of foreign architects since 1927 as a new national movement to strengthen the sense of unity and solidarity with the effect of World War II and the effort to return to the essence. Sedad Hakkı Eldem was one of the leaders developing this movement, effective in Turkey between 1938 and 1950.

*Figure 8. Photo: Ahmet Birant. Source: Salt Research, Kemali Söylemezoğlu Archive.*

The Courthouse was constructed after demolishing a part of the Ibrahim Paşa Palace. Although the building was completed in 1955, the first debates centered around the İbrahim Paşa Palace go back to 1933. That year, a fire broke out in Sultanahmet, and the Darülfunun building, which was used as a courthouse, burned down along with many other buildings in the area. After this fire, an architectural competition was launched in 1934 to address the need for a courthouse.[21] In this competition, the courthouse was planned to be built on the Tomruk land, north of Sultanahmet. In the competition, Asım Kömürcüoğlu's project was selected.[22] However, it was realized that the land envisaged for this project was insufficient. While the process progressed very slowly, discussions on the location of the building started.

[21] M. Karadeniz, "İstanbul'da Üç Kamu Yapısının, Yapım ve Yıkım Süreçleriyle Ulusal ve Mesleki Basına Yansımaları," (Master thesis, Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, 2019), 64.
[22] Karadeniz, "İstanbul'da Üç Kamu Yapısının," 64.

In 1939, Prost's Istanbul plan was approved and the place allocated for the courthouse was designated as the location of the Ibrahim Paşa Palace. Prost designed this space as a Republican Square, which before was known as the Hippodrome during the Byzantine period and the *Atmeydanı* during the Ottoman period; and the Courthouse, together with the Vilayet Palace, took its place in this square design.[23] Prost's proposal for an archaeological park in the area also aimed to excavate and reveal the late antique and Byzantine periods in the area.

The project and its location have been the subject of much debate from the moment it first came to the agenda. From Albert Gabriel to Ali Saim Ülgen,[24] from Hasan Ali Yücel to Sedat Çetintaş, many experts had their say and intervened in different ways on the future of this square, which is one of the most important areas of both the Byzantine and Ottoman periods.

During this period, proposals such as demolishing some of the Ottoman buildings and then uncovering the remains of late antiquity and Byzantium through archaeological excavations were discussed; however, these proposals led to debates on whether these Ottoman buildings were also important structures that should be preserved. On the other hand, there were also plans to design a square with new modern buildings symbolizing the young Republic.

In the discussions that proceeded along these three axes drawn by Byzantium, the Ottoman Empire, and the new Republic, the persistent opposition and criticism of architect Sedat Çetintaş, then president of the Istanbul Branch of the Union of Architects, gave direction to the conservation approaches. Some architects saw the İbrahimpaşa Palace as an ordinary old building and defended its demolition. On the contrary, Çetintaş mentioned it as a very important building, and he published articles and a book on this subject.[25] In one of his articles, he says: "If this palace is demolished, it means that there is no concept

[23] Pinon, "Atatürk Bulvarı," 279–285.

[24] Salt Archives, "İstanbul Adliye Sarayının Ayasofya'ya Bitişik Eski Arsada Yapılacağı Haberi Üzerine Not," https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/92336 (accessed 26 September 2024).

[25] S. Çetintaş, *Saray ve Kervansaraylarımız Arasında İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*, Cumhuriyet Matbaası (1939).

of monument in this society".[26] In one of his last articles on the subject, he states that the new Courthouse should not become "a monument of injustice in terms of culture and history".[27]

Part of the Ibrahim Pasha Palace was demolished in 1939 despite many objections.[28] It is known that in 1941, Hasan li Yücel, the Deputy Minister of Education, tried to prevent the demolition of the remaining parts by saying, "It is murder to demolish this palace".[29]

In the following years, the courthouse building was again on the agenda, and two more competitions were organized in 1946 and 1949. The winner of the 1949 competition was Sedat Hakkı Eldem and Emin Onat.

After the competition, the foundation of the Courthouse was laid in 1951, despite the opposition. When the first phase of the building was completed in 1955, parts of the Ibrahim Paşa Palace dating back to the 16th century were demolished and archaeological excavations were carried out at the same time. Due to the discovery of the remains of Byzantine structures during these excavations, the entire project could not be realized and only one court's block was completed.

The building – with all its controversies – is considered to be a very important building for the heritage of modern architecture. The building was considered a turning point in Sedat Hakkı Eldem's career. It is an example that is mostly used to mark the transition from the Second National Architecture movement to the International Style with rationalist design.[30] Uğur Tanyeli, on the other hand, states that it is a "mid-passenger modernist" building under the light of these traces.[31]

---

[26] S. Çetintaş, "İbrahimpaşa Sarayı Tarihe Karışırken," *Cumhuriyet*, 2 August 1939.
[27] Karadeniz, "İstanbul'da Üç Kamu Yapısının," 74.
[28] E. Karakoç and H. U. Yıldırım, "Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Kültür Varlıklarının Korunması Meselesinde Kurumlar Arası İlişkilerin Rolü," *Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi* 7, no. 4 (2020): 2023–2024.
[29] Karakoç and Yıldırım, "Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e," 2024.
[30] Ayşen Kaya quoted from Bozdoğan & Tapan. A. Kaya, "Betonarme Modern Mimari Miras Örneği: Sultanahmet Adalet Sarayı'nın Yapısal Müdahale Yönteminin Tartışılması" (Master's thesis, Kadir Has Üniversitesi), 114–116.
[31] Karadeniz, "İstanbul'da Üç Kamu Yapısının," 63.

Years later, Sedat Hakkı Eldem then revisits the project to complete the building. He develops new ideas to cover the ruins. In 1965, the Conservation Decree authorized the project on the condition that the palace ruins be preserved inside or outside the new building. Interestingly, Eldem, the author of the project, is among the signatories of this decision. However, these revisions were not implemented. In 1978, the revisions came to the agenda again and became the subject of new discussions. In this period, the discussions were not only about Sultanahmet and historical heritage[32] but also on a wider scale. In 1979, architect and urbanist Haydar Karabey emphasized the ruins in the area stating that the courthouse should not be located in the historical city centre, and a central courthouse should be considered as a whole with the services to be added. He stated that the location of a new courthouse should be determined by representatives of professional chambers and the judiciary and that a solution would be the implementation of a project that is "compatible with the aforementioned demands and observes environmental relations" through a competition.[33]

Eldem's expansion projects were never implemented. Throughout this whole process, the Courthouse has been actively used since 1955. The fact that the building is located in Sultanahmet makes it one of the important factors affecting the economic geography of the region by gathering additional services related to the courthouse around it. Apart from its place in the everyday life of courthouse employees, judges, prosecutors, and lawyers, the building is an important place of memory for social memory. The building, where many important trials for political history were held, was also the scene of many conflicts in the 1960s and 70s. Many protests were organized in front of the building. In 1968, the representation of a funeral for Vedat Demircioğlu, who was killed by being thrown from the second floor during a police raid on a dormitory at Istanbul Technical University during the Sixth Fleet protests, was

[32] Salt Archivs, "Adliye Sarayı 1948, Sultanahmet, İstanbul: Sultanahmet yöresinin tarihsel niteliğine dikkat edilmelidir," https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/91361 (accessed 26 September 2024).
[33] H. Karabey, "Sultanahmet'de Adliye," *Cumhuriyet*, 10 March 1979.

held in front of the Sultanahmet Courthouse.[34] Until the 2000s, many demonstrations and press statements were also held here.

By 2011, the building was abandoned. Two large new buildings were built to accommodate the central courthouses in Çağlayan and Kartal. At the time of the courthouse's relocation, the idea of transferring the building to the municipality and turning it into a City Museum was proposed. However, Ertuğrul Günay, the Minister of Culture, stated that archaeological excavations will be carried out in and around the building.[35] Until 2014, the building was not used and then it was allocated to the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education, which is still used by them. It is not clear what will happen to the building in the coming years.

The Social Security Institution complex in Zeyrek, also designed by Sedat Hakkı Eldem, is in a similar situation to the Sultanahmet Courthouse and shares an uncertain future. Zeyrek Social Security Institution Complex is one of the projects designed by Eldem under the light of The Second National Architecture Movement, as an interpretation of his repertoire of traditional Turkish houses.[36] Designed by Eldem for the Social Security Institution in 1962, the complex of public buildings was constructed between 1962 and 1964. It was selected in a competition with limited participation. Eldem was awarded the Aga Khan Architecture Prize in 1986 for this building. The Aga Khan jury commented that it was "one of the earliest and most refined examples of contextual architecture of the international modern movement".

The complex was originally intended to consist of a workhouse, dispensary, bazaar, bank, and café. However, this purpose was never realized, and it was refunctionalized as the offices of two separate institutions, Cibâli Social Security Institution, and Unkapanı Social Security Institution. The blocks of different sizes are positioned on the sloping land in a way that does not disrupt the surrounding landscape and is primarily in harmony with the identity of the neighborhood behind them. This preference is also expressed in the window

[34] F. Kürkçüoğlu, "Utanç gecesi," *Bir Arti Bir*, 17 July 2019, https://birartibir.org/utanc-gecesi/.
[35] Haber Türk, "İstanbul Adliyesi taşınıyor!" 18 March 2011, https://www.haberturk.com/yasam/haber/611625-istanbul-adliyesi-tasiniyor.
[36] M. E. Akyürek and M. S. Ökten, "Zeyrek SSK Binaları Üzerine Yapı ve Strüktür Bağlamında Bir İnceleme," *İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim Üniversitesi Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü Dergisi* 2, no. 1 (2020), 37.

elements and the projecting shape of the building masses. The Zeyrek Social Security Institution Complex, located on the street connecting Unkapanı and Sarachane, is composed of five different masses that descend to the lower elevation of the Zeyrek slope.

Its large horizontal footprint allows it to blend in very well with the space it occupies. Thanks to the gaps between the building blocks, the architecture that adapts to the slope, and the low-rise structure, the building was a great success at the time it was built, as it completely adapted to the road. It is also an important example as it was built following a national modern architecture movement that Eldem was influenced by.

The building was constructed with a successful design that blended meticulously with its surroundings. Although it is still used for its original purpose, it now stands in a state of disrepair. Not only the exterior but also the interior of the building is in disrepair. Although the interior design, which reflects Eldem's architectural language, bears very important characteristics of its period, this neglect shows how much value was attached to this architectural style. Of course, it is debatable how appropriate it is for today's concerns about space due to the increasing population, as this large building functions as a public building. But still, The Zeyrek Social Security Institution Complex carries an important architectural style that was developed during the early Republic, translating the concerns of the day through design for us to understand the ideology of the time today.

Recently, there have been news reports that the building is being put up for sale and might become a hotel. There is no finalized future for the building. However, as in the case of the Sultanahmet Courthouse, there is no comprehensive public debate on this situation.

Nevertheless, these two buildings, of which Eldem is one of the architects, can be the scene of a very productive debate on urban heritage. For example, how should this layered heritage of the Courthouse be handled? Which heritage should be protected: The heritage of the famous modernist architects Sedat Hakkı Eldem and Emin Onat, the heritage of İbrahimpaşa Palace, or the Byzantine heritage beneath it? Or is the trace left in the memory of all urbanites during the Courthouse function between 1955–2011 a legacy? Can a more

layered and holistic heritage debate be held in the public sphere without being forced to choose any particular period?

*Figure 9. The Zeyrek Social Security Institution Complex. Source: Salt Research.*

## Making blind spots visible

Discussing these 'blind spots' also leads us to question the role of public discourse in shaping what is in fact considered heritage. If a building or site is not recognized in public discourse, can it truly be considered heritage? The act of remembering – and what is chosen to be remembered – is inherently political. The decision of what to preserve, walk through, and narrate shapes the city's identity and reflects the power dynamics at play in urban memory.

The practice of narrating these histories, as we have done in our walk, is itself a form of urban practice. It resists the manipulation of history by ensuring that the stories of these overlooked spaces are told, challenging the selective focus of architectural history. This narrative practice invites us to consider the entire lifecycle of a space, rather than isolating a single period or structure as 'good' or worthy of preservation. Remembering a completely demolished building, for example, contributes to the discourse by highlighting the loss and questioning the decisions that led to its erasure.

A striking contrast to these lost and neglected buildings is the Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi Building. Located at the corner of Tahmis Street, a bustling pedestrian area near the Spice Bazaar, this building represents one of the most well-preserved examples of modern architectural heritage in the historic peninsula. Designed by Zühtü Başar in 1932,[37] this Art Deco structure blends modern, functional Bauhaus design with Art Deco elements, embodying the aspirations of the early Republican period. The building's contemporary addition by Han Tümertekin in 2019, which includes a coffee library and exhibition space, further celebrates and preserves its historical significance. Compared to the lost, overlooked, worn-out and threatened examples of modern architectural heritage in the historical peninsula, the Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi Building is a structure that uniquely preserves and celebrates its past.


*Figures 10 and 11. Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi Building, 1933. Source: Arkitekt (left). New Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi Building by Han Tümertekin, 2022. Source: Design Unlimited, ed. Liana Kuyumcayan, no. 13 (2022), 56 (right).*

[37] M. Zühtü, "Bir Kurukahveci Ticarethanesi," *Arkitekt* no. 28 (1922): 105–108.

By walking through these spaces and engaging with their histories and current conditions, we challenge conventional notions of heritage, advocating for the recognition and protection of Istanbul's modern architectural legacy. These blind spots, if left unaddressed, risk disappearing entirely, taking with them vital pieces of the city's evolving identity. Through our walk, we hope to illuminate these hidden facets of Istanbul, ensuring they remain a visible and valued part of the city's rich and diverse heritage. We also aim to prompt a deeper conversation, not only among researchers but also with local authorities and decision-makers, about what should be remembered and why.

# The Search for National Identity in Cosmopolitan Izmir

*The Short-lived Story of the National Architectural Movement*

SERKAN TURGUT
Academic studies coordinator at Bayetav in Izmir

## Introduction

Izmir, which bears the traces of many different civilisations, is an important port city with a rich history dating back eight thousand years. When one thinks of Izmir's cultural heritage, the historic Kemeraltı district comes to mind first, followed by various buildings built mostly in the nineteenth century, especially Greek and Levantine houses. Izmir also bears traces of ancient times: ancient sites such as Ephesus, Pergamon, Foça, and traces from thousands of years ago, such as the Yeşilova and Smyrna mounds revealed by recent excavations, strengthen the city's identity. However, another element of Izmir's cultural heritage that is often overlooked is the area between Fevzipaşa and Gazi Boulevard, where examples of the First National Architectural Movement can be found. Although it is home to important architectural examples of the early Republican period, the buildings in this area, located in the city's most central location, have lost their importance over time and are now invisible.

This study is based on research carried out within the scope of the Izmir part of the *Blind Spot* project, which brought together academics and artists from various disciplines to draw attention to examples of cultural heritage that still exist but have fallen out of favour and are disappearing, raising awareness for their preservation. This study aims to draw attention to how architecture transformed in parallel with historical and ideological positions in the early Republican period and to emphasize the political function of urban areas in the

process of nation-building. And, of course, to make visible the stories of buildings that lost their political functions and were abandoned to their fate over time.

In this article, the cosmopolitan Izmir before 1922 will be mentioned first, then the First National Architectural Movement, which dominated the buildings built in the area where lots of cultural heritage was destroyed after the 1922 fire, will be mentioned and how these buildings became invisible over time will be discussed.

## Looking at cosmopolitan Izmir

From the seventeenth century onwards, Izmir becomes a port city of increasing importance. This port city, where the flow of food and raw materials from the East is transported to the Western world, experienced its prime time in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Izmir, which hosted Greeks, Muslims, Jews, Armenians, and European merchants in the course of its history, was able to display a multicultural characteristic as a port city at the western end of Anatolia, far from the imperial centre. The mid-nineteenth century map prepared by Luigi Storari (Figure 1) showing the spatial distribution of the city is very important for understanding the fragmented development of the city.

The area marked with "1" on the map is the traditional bazaar, "2" shows the Muslim neighbourhoods, "3" the Jewish neighbourhoods, "4" the Armenian neighbourhood, now known as Kültür Park, "5" shows the Greek neighbourhoods and "6" is the Levantine neighbourhoods. Even though the information on the population of different ethnic and religious communities living in Izmir varies in Greek and Ottoman sources, it can be said that the Turkish and Greek populations in Izmir were close to each other and constituted more than half of the total population, the Armenian and Jewish populations were equal to each other, and there was a Levantine population close to ten percent at the time.

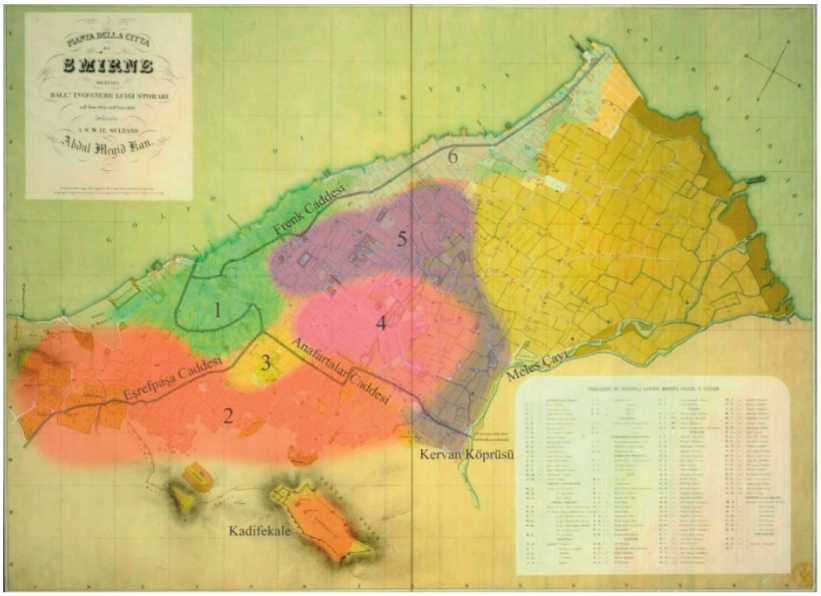



*Figure 1. Reproduced from Alpaslan 2012, 33. H. İ. Alpaslan, "Osmanlı dönemi İzmir'i'nde milletlerin sosyo-ekonomik konumlarındaki değişimlerin yerleşim dokusuna etkileri," Ege Coğrafya Dergisi 21, no. 2 (2012): 33.*

By the nineteenth century, the modernised areas of the city were inhabited by Greeks and Levantines. In particular, the shift of the new harbour to the Levantine area led to the concentration of trade in the area. This led to the port coast of Izmir being depicted as a European city in the accounts of Western travellers:

> ... for the European traveller from distant countries, Izmir is like a second homeland. Everything in this city, customs, and habits, reminds the language of civilisation, as if spreading its sweet influence all around. Especially in the Frankish quarter, which is adorned with prosperity and pleasure, where civilisation and elegance in behaviour

> dominate, and where charming houses are located, one's heart is filled with these pleasant memories and dreams.[1]
>
> ... despite the impression given by its minarets symbolising a Turkish city, its cemeteries with wide cypresses, its narrow and steep roads, Izmir is not really a standard part of Turkey, neither in terms of its customs nor its people. It is a commercial area and a very cosmopolitan settlement. This great trading post of the Near East was home to people from all nations with access to the Mediterranean. Here you will find a Turkish *han* next to a Frankish hotel, a synagogue, or a church next to a mosque. The smell of European cigarettes mingles with that of hookahs. Izmir is a caravanserai where all people mingle, where all languages are spoken, where all clothes are worn side by side.[2]

It can be said that the European depiction of Izmir, which is prominent in travellers' narratives, stems from the Frankish quarter and the Greek and Armenian quarters next to it. In fact, in this period, there was a Western and modern Izmir on the one hand, and a Muslim Izmir with its narrow streets and makeshift buildings spilling over the foothills of the mountains on the other. In this sense, it is possible to say that Izmir was divided into two cultural worlds and two spatial zones.

Even if we say that five different communities lived in Izmir during this period and that the city was cosmopolitan, this unity in the city did not result from the intermingling of populations but developed in the form of spatial and cultural juxtaposition.[3] Even if this leads to a cultural interaction, it is necessary to say that these communities are spatially and culturally differentiated. The area that we focus on in this article starts from the transition line of this differentiation and is often referred to as the modern Izmir. The mentioned multicultural-cosmopolitan characteristics of this area relate to the period before 1922. After the fire, this situation remained almost at the discursive level and its physical reality disappeared. Here it would be appropriate to make a brief evaluation of this process.

---

[1] R. Beyru, *19. yüzyılda İzmir kenti* (Literatür Yayınları, 2011), 89.
[2] Beyru, *19. yüzyılda*, 89.
[3] H. İ. Alpaslan, "Osmanlı dönemi İzmir'i'nde milletlerin sosyo-ekonomik konumlarındaki değişimlerin yerleşim dokusuna etkileri," *Ege Coğrafya Dergisi* 21, no. 2 (2012): 25–35.

## The road to 1922 and the end of an era

The data on the Greek and Turkish population data is controversial, as previously mentioned. In fact, the reason for this is related to the autochthony claims of both communities regarding the city. This situation paved the way for the occupation of Izmir after the First World War. The Greeks occupied Smyrna on 15 May 1919, claiming historical ownership, and ruled the city until 9 September 1922.

The longest front of the Turkish War of Independence was the Western Front and the Greeks were fought against during this period. On September 9th, when the Turkish army reconquered Izmir and in the days that followed, the War of Independence came to an end, but long-lasting tension remained for the people living in this area.

As the Turkish army entered the city, those who had supported the Greeks were forced to leave. However, the real destruction was caused by the fire that started a few days later in the modern and non-Muslim parts of the city and continued for days (Figure 2 and 3). After the fire, 'Western Izmir' was almost completely destroyed. This also meant the end of the cosmopolitan Izmir, and in the years that followed, Izmir's mainly Greek, Armenian, and Levantine communities were forced to emigrate from the city.[4]

As seen in the travellers' narratives, the area of Izmir destroyed by fire is a place not associated with the Turkish and Muslim populations. For the founders of the young Republic, the fire provided an opportunity for the city's Turkish national identity to become visible. Izmir was the only city that was actually occupied after the First World War. Also, it is the city where the first spark of the War of Independence was lit and where, in the national imagination, the enemy was "thrown into the sea" and victory was achieved. These characteristics identified the liberation of Izmir with the liberation of the country and came to the fore as a symbol of the War of Independence.

[4] M. C. Smyrnelis, *İzmir 1830–1930 unutulmuş bir kent mi? Bir Osmanlı limanından hatıralar*, trans. I. Gürden (İletişim Yayınları, 2008).

*Figure 2. HMS Iron Duke as seen from HMS King George V at the Great Fire of Izmir. Source: https://www.wikiwand.com/en/articles/HMS_Iron_Duke_(1912).*


*Figure 3. After the Izmir fire, 20 January 1923. Photo: Frédéric Gadmer. Source: Archives de la Planète.*

This symbolic value of Izmir gave political meanings to the post-fire construction processes of the focal region. The architectural structures that began to rise from the ruins of the fire began to replace the 'non-Turkish' symbols of the previous period with their monumental features. Care was taken to ensure that the commercial buildings, mostly owned by the state, were symbols that could be boasted about and whose national characteristics were emphasised. This precinct, which was reconstructed with these motives, was later called the First National Architectural Movement and was designed as a synthesis that sought to bring together the modern and the traditional with Turkish history, in Ziya Gökalp's terms, a synthesis that sought to bring culture with civilisation.[5] Before delving into the reasons for this, it would be appropriate to frame the Turkish modernisation process in the most general terms.

## Architecture as a quest for national modernisation

Turkish modernisation was shaped with a top-down approach depending on the answers given by bureaucratic and political elites to the question, "How can the state be saved?". In chronological order, what Yusuf Akçura calls "three styles of politics,"[6] Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkism became prominent responses according to the conditions of the day. The Ottoman response to this question evolved into Islamism as a result of the independence attempts of non-Muslim groups, and the Islamism response evolved into Turkism as a result of the efforts of Muslim peoples to break away from the Ottoman Empire, especially after the Balkan Wars.

As can be seen, the beginning of nationalist discourse in Turkish political history does not go back very far. After the Second Constitutional Monarchy, especially the Balkan Wars, nationalist discourse became widespread and became the main engine of the Republican era.[7] With the Republican regime, the founding cadre tended to derive the legitimacy of their power from the idea of

[5] T. Parla, *Ziya Gökalp, Kemalizm ve Türkiye'de korporatizm* (İletişim Yayınları, 1993).
[6] Y. Akçura, *Üç tarz-ı siyaset* (Salon Yayınları, 2016).
[7] F. Georgeon, "Türk milliyetçiliği üzerine düşünceler," in *Modern Türkiye'de siyasi düşünce cilt 4: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora, Murat Gültekengil (İletişim Yayınları, 2009), 23–36.

the nation, and all activities of the political elites were tried to be based on this idealised idea of the nation.[8]

There are different views on where nationalism, the driving force of Turkish modernisation, derives its references from. Where should Turkishness draw its nourishment from? We observe that the debates on the scope and content of Turkishness have developed along two strong lines. The dominant line from the 1910s to the early 1920s was the development of nationalism by including symbols from Ottoman history. On the other hand, after the 1930s, it developed in the form of defining the Ottoman Empire as a period in which Turkishness was oppressed and in the process of constructing an idealised abstract Turkishness.

The National Architectural Movement, which is the reflection of the first of these nationalisms in the field of architecture, was developed on the understanding of reconstructing the Ottoman and *Selçuklu* past using modern techniques and styles. In the following years, these styles were widely referred to as the First National Architectural Movement or the National Architectural Style and were considered by many as the Renaissance of a National style of Architecture. The pioneers of this movement were inspired by Ottoman and *Selçuklu* architecture and attempted to incorporate these references into modern architecture, and a new identity was created by combining traditional Anatolian motifs and *Selçuklu* elements with contemporary architectural understanding.

The buildings constructed during this period were generally monumental and symbolic and aimed to emphasise national identity. The First National Architectural Movement aimed to contribute to the creation and strengthening of national identity by reflecting Turkey's historical and cultural heritage.[9] One of the main characteristics of this movement was to build a new identity by combining the heritage of the past with the needs of the present. The examples of this movement were developed within the framework of the contradiction and relationship between the Western and the local. The buildings of the First National Architecture Period, the first examples of which we see extensively in

[8] F. Ahmad, *Modern Türkiye'nin oluşumu*, trans. Y. Alogan (Kaynak Yayınları, 2009).
[9] E. Çubukçu, "Erken Cumhuriyet dönemi mimarisinde ulusal kimlik arayışı: Ankara'daki kamu yapıları," *Kültür Araştırmaları Dergisi* no. 9 (2021): 359–378.

Istanbul, have been the reflection of the modernisation issue that has been going on since Tanzimat.[10]

One of the pioneers of this movement was Architect Kemalettin Bey, who gave his name to the precinct we are focusing on. Kemalettin Bey made significant contributions to Turkey's efforts to modernise and create a national identity after Ankara became the capital in the early years of the Republic. Known for his monumental buildings adorned with national symbols, Kemalettin Bey adopted the basic principles of the movement and endeavoured to shape Turkey's national identity through architecture. Ahmet Cevat Pasha Mausoleum, Ali Rıza Pasha Mausoleum, Ankara Evkaf Apartment Building, Çamlıca Girls' High School are all examples of this endeavour.[11]

Another representative of the First National Architectural Movement is Vedat Tek, who attempted to create a contemporary style inspired by traditional Turkish architecture. Tek, who is especially known for his buildings in Ankara, contributed to Turkey's international recognition in terms of his architecture. Ankara Palas, Post and Telegraph Nezareti Building in Istanbul, Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre, Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil Apartment, Haydarpaşa Ferry Pier are among his main works.[12]

Combining decorative elements taken from *Selçuklu* and classical Ottoman architecture with new construction techniques was the basic approach of the movement. Architects Kemalettin and Tek set out to purify the country's architecture from foreign influences and tended towards local selectivity, which greatly influenced not only the last period of the Ottoman Empire but also Turkish architecture in the early years of the Republic. This architectural approach, of which there are scattered examples in centres such as Ankara and Istanbul, is seen to have developed in Izmir's quay area.

As mentioned in the previous section, Izmir has a cosmopolitan and Western heritage. In this sense, the city's commercial district was shaped by a 'non-

[10] S. Kızıldere and M. Sözen, "İstanbul'da Birinci Ulusal Mimarlık Dönemi yapılarının kent bütünü içindeki yerinin değerlendirilmesi," *İTÜDERGİSİ/b* 2, no. 1 (2011).
[11] Y. Yavuz, "Mimar Kemalettin Bey (1870–1927)," *ODTÜ Mimarlık Fakültesi Dergisi* 7, no. 1 (1981): 1–10.
[12] Ü. Erdoğan and E. Eynallı, "Mimar Vedat Tek," *Restorasyon Konservasyon-Arkeoloji ve Sanat Tarihi Yıllığı*, no. 11 (2015): 44–55.

Turkish' cultural heritage. The destruction of this area, which was the financial and commercial centre of the city after the fire, where the docks were located, and non-Muslims lived, allowed the reconstruction of this area in the Republican period. These constructions were created with an architectural understanding in which national symbols would be visible. In fact, Republican modernisation tended to break its ties with the past and tend towards reconstruction with a Westernist understanding and is radical in the cultural field. It is possible to say that the National Architectural Movement has gained a different meaning in Izmir.

During the construction process, the buildings were mainly commercial buildings such as banks, stock exchanges, customs buildings, and administrative and financial state buildings. In addition to these buildings, large commercial *han*s, warehouses, and service-producing spaces to meet daily needs were also constructed.

In this study, we focus on Mimar Kemalettin Street and a small area around it (see Figure 4), which is located between Fevzi Paşa Boulevard and Gazi Boulevard on the seafront of Izmir and near the Pasaport area, formerly known as the docks. This area contains the iconic buildings of Izmir from the early Republican period. This area is historically an area where traditional Izmir and modern Izmir are separated from each other and intertwined in places.

These two cultural areas are separated by Fevzi Paşa Boulevard. To the south of this boulevard, which connects the Basmane Train Station, which opened in 1866, and the Konak Pier building, which was built as the French Custom building, is a traditional Ottoman bazaar, and to the north is a new centre, historically known as the "Frenk neighbourhood," was inhabited mostly by Greeks and Levantines. This area was largely destroyed by fire in 1922 and rebuilt. During this period, prominent examples of the National Architectural Movement in Izmir began to emerge. The Kantar Police Station at the Pasaport Pier are early example of this movement.

Among these examples is also the Turkish Quarry building completed in 1925 by architect Necmettin Emre, which now serves as the state theatre in the Konak district, the National Library and the National Cinema, which are dated 1926 and built by the architect Tahsin Sermet, and found in the same area.

*Figure 4. The studied area in Izmir. Google Earth view.*

We will now focus on The Ottoman Bank dated 1926, the Borsa Palace built in 1926–28, the Büyük Kardiçalı Han built in 1928, the Silahçı (Tüfekçi) Han dated 1928, the Hacı Sadık Akseki Business Han, the Vakıflar Bank building built in 1930–32, and some other large and small buildings in the vicinity.[13]

One of the first reinforced concrete buildings in Turkey, Kardıçalı Han (Figure 5) was built in 1928 by architect Mehmet Fesçi. The *han*, which is one of the important examples of the First National Architectural Movement, was damaged in a fire in 2019 and was completely evacuated after the 2020 Izmir earthquake. Kardıçalı Han has recently come to the fore with the looting of the building by thieves entering the building. The first floor was covered with bricks to protect the building from thieves, so it appears abandoned.

[13] İ. Kuyulu, "İzmir'de Cumhuriyet dönemi mimarisi," *Sanat Tarihi Dergisi*, no. 10 (2000): 10.

*Figure 5. Büyük Kardıçalı Han. Photo by the author.*

One of the most important buildings in the neighbourhood we examined is Silahçıoğlu Han built in 1928 (Figure 6). Silahçıoğlu Han, a First National Architecture Period building with a façade on Gazi Boulevard and Necati Bey Street, is made with traditional building materials. Today the building is called Doğan Güven Business Centre and serves the wedding dress industry. The domed corner building, which often attracts attention with its interior and exterior architecture, once served as the Evening Girls' Art School where women from Izmir were educated. Silahçıoğlu Han's marble façade, columned door entrances, roof mouldings, dome, arched windows, tiles, stairs, balustrades, and plasters make the building quickly recognisable from the outside.

*Figure 6. Silahçıoğlu Han. Photo by the author.*

Borsa building (Figure 7) is the work of Tahsin Sermet Bey, who is also the architect of Izmir National Library and Izmir National Cinema buildings. Opened in 1928, the Borsa building is located in Konak District. There are Gazi Boulevard to the north, Cumhuriyet Boulevard to the west, and Şehit Fethi Bey Street to the east. Reflecting all the characteristics of the First National Architecture Movement, the building is one of the most remarkable corner buildings in this region.

Another building of the First National Architecture Period located on Mimar Kemalettin Street in Izmir is Akseki Han (Figure 8). Located in the centre of Mimar Kemaleddin Street, the building bears the characteristic features of the period with its corner structure, outward-facing shops and stores on the ground floor, and rooms opening to the common corridor on the upper two floors. Built by architect Necmettin Emre in 1927, Akseki Han attracts attention with its historical Kütahya tile decorations on its exterior. Like the other historical buildings on the street, Akseki Han has been transformed into a wedding dress and textile materials sales store.

*Figure 7. İzmir Borsa Building. Photo by the author.*

*Figure 8. Hacı Sadık Akseki Business Center. Photo by the author.*

# Conclusion

At the end of the 19th century, Izmir was one of the most important harbour cities of the period, where different cultures lived together. The aftermath of the First World War, and especially the fire of 1922, marked an important turning point in the city's history. This great fire, which most people in Izmir are not aware of and which eludes the collective memory, unfortunately, caused great damage to the multi-identity structure of Izmir. On the one hand, the fire caused people of different religions and cultures living in the city to leave Izmir, and on the other hand, it destroyed the architectural heritage of these cultures.

The fire, which occurred in the centre of the city allowed the young Republic to rebuild the area. Since the reconstruction process was parallel to the nation-building and modernisation efforts, political functions were attributed to the architectural processes. The buildings constructed in the early Republican period became symbols of Izmir's modernisation process and nationalisation efforts. When cultural heritage is reduced to a political function, its value can be transformed in parallel with political debates. The fate of the National Architectural Movement also changed depending on political debates, and this movement fell out of favour before the 1930s.

If we look at Izmir in particular, it is possible to say that the buildings in this precinct are quite invisible in the city today. This precinct is known as the customs area for many people in Izmir, which used to be the departure point of bus services and is now known as an area where the wedding dress sector is concentrated. Unfortunately, these valuable buildings do not receive the value they deserve today and are often neglected and in danger of being lost.

In this context, this area, which is the centre of Izmir, has important buildings to protect and preserve historical and cultural heritage. The preservation of these buildings is not only a historical responsibility but is also important to strengthen the cultural identity and reinforce the connection of the inhabitants with their city. Conservation and preservation efforts should keep alive both the physical structures and their social memory.

In conclusion, preserving Izmir's multi-identity structure and the legacy of the National Architectural Movement is critical to passing on a period of the city's past to future generations. This process requires not only the preservation

of historic buildings but also an understanding of their multi-layered meanings and stories. The preservation of Izmir's historical and cultural heritage should be considered as part of a wider process of social awareness and collective memory building. In addition, the fire-destroyed and unremembered heritage of this precinct should be recalled and reflected upon as part of this collective memory. These forgotten or vanished values are an integral part of Izmir's historical identity and remembering them will contribute to a deeper understanding of the city's culture.

# Early Republican Commercial Buildings on Architect Kemalettin Street, Izmir

MINE HAMAMCIOĞLU-TURAN
Architectural historian based in Izmir

This study takes into consideration the city of Izmir in which major urban scale alterations had taken place during the founding of the Turkish Republic as a nation-state. The aim is to introduce the historic commercial buildings that represent First National scope between 1923 and 1930s, and Early Modernist scope in Izmir starting with the 1930s, and discuss their heritage values and conservation problems. The study is limited to the buildings along Architect Kemalettin Street, which was the border between the restructured portion of Izmir after the fire in 1922 and the traditional Ottoman bazaar (Figure 1). The studied commercial buildings on Architect Kemalettin Street are presented with their block and lot numbers; for example, 953 block, lot 70. If the buildings have specific names, they are also stated. The presentation starts from the northwest and follows a clockwise order for both scopes. Surveying of the buildings with inventory sheets was realized in 1998.[1] Photographic surveys were repeated in 2014 and 2024. Old air photographs, archive documents available in Konak Municipality and the Izmir Number 1 Regional Conservation Board

[1] M. Hamamcioglu, "Retrospective Evaluation of Space Organization Principles in Architecture, Architect Kemalettin Street in Izmir" (PhD thesis, Izmir Institute of Technology, 2000).

of Cultural Assets, land registry records, and literature review are the other sources of data. The areas of the parcels and the heights of the eaves are presented. If there is any archive data or inscription panel about construction and intervention dates and architects, these are stated. Gallery floor refers to a partial floor above the ground level, low in height, and recessed from the entrance façade. Mezzanine floor refers to a full floor above the ground level, but relatively low in height.

## Theoretical background

Izmir on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean has been settled for eight thousand five hundred years. The portion between Mount Pagos and the harbour's eastern coast dates back to the fourth century B.C. In the Classical period, Izmir was a trade centre on the Euro-Asian Silk Road. Its commercial significance was re-established in the seventeenth century.[2] In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the commercial centre around the inner harbour expanded towards the north. This has given way to an increase in the number of architectural productions and an opportunity to experience various design manners. The fire at the end of the Independence War in 1922 caused the loss of this expansion, which included many commercial buildings.[3] The young Republic attributed significance to the development of Izmir as a national centre of economy. Accordingly, raisins, figs, olive oil, wool, medical and chemical goods (acorn nuts, opium, etc.), cotton, and rugs were exported.[4] Textile goods, sugar, grains, minerals, and industrial oil were imported.[5] The burnt portion by the pier was redeveloped as a commercial, residential, and recreation zone according to the Danger-Prost plan approved in 1925. A new ownership pattern

[2] N. Ülker, *Izmir Şehri Tarihi* (Akademi Kitapevi Yayınları, 1994), 1–17.
[3] E. Serçe, *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyete Izmir'de Belediye (1868–1945)* (Eylül Yayınları, 1998), 173.
[4] T. Baykara, *Izmir Şehri ve Tarihi* (Ege Üniversitesi Matbaası, 1974), 104; S. Yetkin and E. Serçe, *Kurulusundan Günümüze Izmir Ticaret Borsası Tarihi* (Iletişimevi, 1998), 98, 99, 105, 123; F. Çolak, *II. Meşrutiyet'ten Cumhuriyet'e Izmir Şehrinde Üretim ve Dış Ticaret (1908–1923)* (Birlesik Matbaacılik Gida, Turizm, Ticaret ve Sanayi Ltd. Sti., 2013), 241.
[5] Çolak, *II. Meşrutiyet'ten*, 234.

was established, and the new parcels were sold by the Municipality.[6] Financial firms or small tradesmen making agreements to form groups bought the parcels in the area defined as the business and commerce district south of the redevelopment zone and north of the traditional bazaar of Kemeraltı. Many commercial buildings were constructed here between 1925 and 1930.[7] These buildings were in the First National Architecture as a reflection of the desire for nationalization in economy and architecture; for example, the Stock Exchange Building at the north of the site designed by the national architect Tahsin Sermet in 1926.[8] The mentioned style could be combined with the styles experienced in the previous decades, such as Art Nouveau, Neoclassical, or Baroque; for example, the Izmir Branch of Italian Commercial Bank at the north of the site designed by the Italian architect Giulio Mongeri in 1928.[9]

In the 1930s, the selling of parcels, payment of the parts of the already bought parcels, and construction of new buildings almost stopped because of the economic crisis at a global scale.[10] Nevertheless, significance was attributed to opening new streets. Architect Kemalettin Street gained its presence appearance to a great extent in this time interval.[11] Khans at the block corners or large stores were built along the street. Early Modernism was experienced in Izmir starting in the 1930s.[12] The majority of the public buildings and a limited amount of civil buildings were built in this style in the 1930s. This was related to the economic crisis at a global scale and the limited export of construction materials. In 1953, the cement factory Cimentas was established in Izmir, leading to an increase in reinforced concrete constructions. The architects of the prestigious buildings could be foreign.[13] The civil ones were designed by native architects.[14]

---

[6] Serçe, *Tanzimat'tan*, 172.
[7] Serçe, *Tanzimat'tan*, 260f.
[8] Yetkin and Serçe, *Kurulusundan*, 133.
[9] C. Berkant, "Italian Architects in Smyrna," *Italian Architects in Mediterranean Countries*, Proceedings of the First International Conference, Alexandria, 15–16 November 2007 (Bundecchi-Vivaldi, Pontodera, 2008), 331–339.
[10] Yetkin and Serçe, *Kurulusundan*, 147; Serçe, *Tanzimat'tan*, 260, 262,
[11] Serçe, *Tanzimat'tan*, 266–268.
[12] U. Tanyeli, *Çağdaş Izmir'in Mimarlık Serüveni, Üç Izmir* (Yapi Kredi Yayınları, 1992), 335.
[13] Berkant, "Italian Architects."
[14] Tanyeli, *Çağdaş Izmir'in*.

Architect Kemallettin Street is at the southern border of the fire zone, running along the west-east axis (Figure 1). The northern and western portions of the street were completely affected by the fire and redeveloped according to the Danger–Prost Plan until the economic crisis in 1929. Architect Kemalettin Street still reflects the urban space concept of the plan with its linear organization terminating with the sea at the west. However, possible tree series along the street, for example as in the Gazi Boulevard at the north of the studied site, are not present. Some of the Ottoman buildings at the southern and eastern parts of Architect Kemalettin Street together with the curvature of the old Osmaniye Street have been preserved. Osmaniye Street is used to connect the northeastern entrance of the city to the traditional bazaar of Kemeraltı at the south of the studied site. In 1932, Izmir Municipality revised the Plan. Accordingly, Gazi Osman Pasa Street, marking the eastern border of Architect Kemalettin Street was opened. The buildings from the Early Republican period, which covers the time interval between 1923 and the 1950s, were commercial khans with the First National and Early Modernism scopes, respectively. Following the population increase, the Development Plan was renewed following the project competition in 1951.[15] This was followed by the declaration of a Floor Ownership Law in 1965.[16] Accordingly, the building stock on the studied site has been renewed with six to ten-story commercial buildings. Today, Architect Kemalettin Street is on the borders of Akdeniz and Hasan Hoca neigbourhoods of the Konak district of Izmir city. There are both historic and contemporary commercial khans and shops in contiguous order on both sides of the street. They cover almost the whole of their lots. Retail and wholesale trade of clothing, generally wedding and ball gowns, are seen at present.

[15] Izmir Municipality (1952). *Jury Report of Izmir City Development Plan International Conquest*, Izmir Metropolitan Municipality Archives.

[16] RT, 1965. Law of Condominium Numbered 634 and Dated 23/6/1965, Republic of Türkiye, Presidency Legislation Database, https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuatmetin/1.5.634.pdf (accessed 16 August 2024).

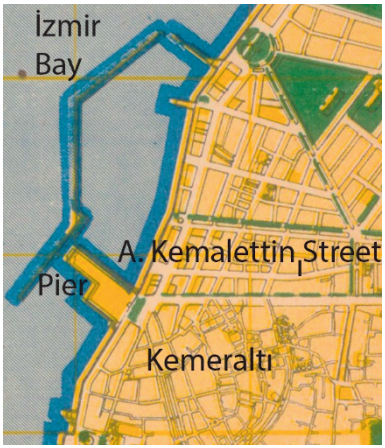



*Figure 1. Location of Architect Kemalettin Street on 1941 Plan of Izmir (revised from IHPCMD, 2024).*

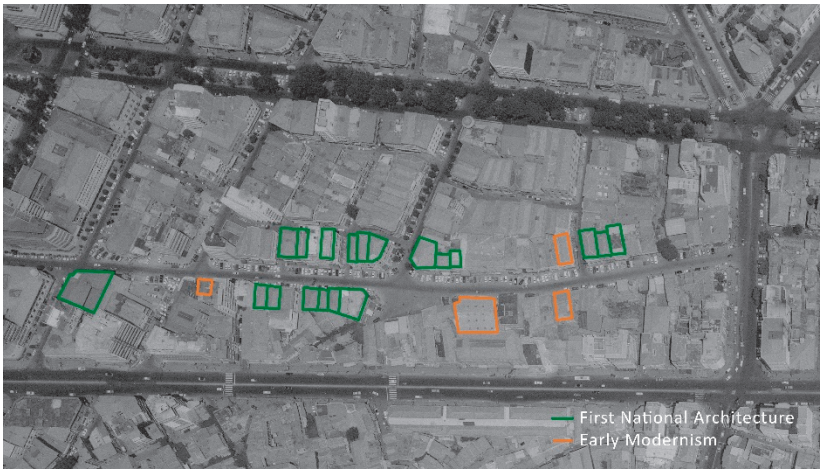



*Figure 2. The studied buildings on Architect Kemalettin Street in 1972 (revised from IZTECH, 2021).*

## First National Architecture scope on Architect Kemalettin Street

Nineteen commercial khans represent First National Architecture scope on Architect Kemalettin Street (Figure 2). They all have reinforced concrete frame systems.

962/4, 5: It is a three-story shop building at a block corner with a gallery floor and a basement in the Akdeniz Neighbourhood (Figure 3a, b). The parcel size is 304 square meters. The building height is thirteen meters. The twin shops flanking one another are organized around a symmetry axis. It was listed in 1988. In 1996, the authentic partitioning walls and stairs were removed and an elevator was added. Levent Biltekin prepared the refurbishment project.[17] Since 1998, the retail and wholesale trade of clothing has been observed.

962/7: It is a shop building in Akdeniz Neighbourhood (Figure 3a, b). The parcel size is 152 square meters. The building height is thirteen meters. Retail and wholesale trade of drapery and carpet have been observed since 1998. It was a three-story shop building with a gallery and a basement A mezzanine floor was recorded in place of the gallery. No spatial division was observed excluding those of the stairs and the wet spaces. The openings were enlarged and hidden behind a curtain wall. Finishing materials were renewed. The eave representing its First National Architecture scope was present in 1998, but it is lost today. It is not listed.

962/1: It was a four-story shop building with a mezzanine and basement in the Akdeniz Neighbourhood (Figure 3a, b). The parcel size is 150 square meters. The building height is twenty-two meters. It was listed in 1988. In 1994, an eight-story building behind the old façades was constructed.[18] Production and retail and wholesale trade of clothing has continued since 1998 by focusing on nightgowns today. The original façade characteristics are preserved: wide eaves, rhythmic placement of pointed arched upper windows, rectangular bottom openings, rectangular balconies supported with brackets, eaves protecting the shop windows, and decoration of top eaves, balconies, and opening corners with floral motives.

---

[17] RT, 1996. Refurbishment Project by Levent Biltekin for 962/4, 5, Republic of Türkiye, Konak Municipality Archives.

[18] RT, 1994. Refurbishment Project by Salih Seymen Architects for 962/1, Republic of Türkiye, Konak Municipality Archives.

*Figure 3a. Block 962 in 1998, 962/4, 5 (left) and 962/7 (by the high-rise building).*


*Figure 3b. The same block in 2024, 962/4, 5 (left), 962/7 (grey building in the middle) and 962/1 (right), viewed from Architect Kemalettin Street.*

*Figure 4a. Block 961 in 1998, 961/4, 5 and 6.*

961/4, 5 and 6: It is a shop building at a block corner in Akdeniz Neighbourhood. The parcel size is 165 square meters and ten meters in height. It has two stories and a basement. The perforated parapet hiding the hipped roof, rhythmic rectangular windows at the upper level, the single large opening of the shop with decoration at its top corners, and horizontal cornices represent its First Nationalist scope (Figure 4a). Retail and wholesale trade of drapery in 1998 was replaced with that of nightgowns today. In the renovation by Coskun Ilguner in 1983, wet spaces and division walls were added.[19] It was listed in 1988. Further spatial divisions and alterations of authentic façade characteristics were made later. The *cumba* is also an addition (Figure 4b).

961/2: It is a shop building in Akdeniz Neighbourhood (Figure 4b). The parcel size is 155 square meters. The building height is fifteen and a half meters. It is a four-story building with a gallery floor and a basement. It was listed in 1988. Production and retail and wholesale trade of clothing was realized in 1998. Today, it is abandoned. The spatial organization was altered with wet space and stairs additions and the addition or removal of division walls. Renewal of finishing material, cornices, and joinery are observed both at the interior and exterior. The original arrangement of the façade has been preserved.

[19] RT, 1983. Refurbishment Project by Coskun Ilguner for 961/4, 5, and 6, Republic of Türkiye, Konak Municipality Archives.


*Figure 4b. The same block in 2024, 961 / 4, 5 and 6 (left), 961/ 2 (middle), 961/ 1 (right) (b), viewed from Architect Kemalettin Street.*

961/1: It is a commercial khan dated to 1927 (Figure 4b). It is at the corner of a building block in the Akdeniz Neighbourhood. The parcel size is 179 square meters. The building height is fifteen and a half meters. It has a chamfered corner and an elevated entrance. It has three stories, a mezzanine, and a basement. It was renovated in 1966 by Ismail Toktay.[20] Rearrangement of the ground floor and renewal of finishing material and joinery were realized. It was listed in 1988. Production of clothing, retail, and wholesale trade of clothing, carpets, and blankets realized in 1998 was replaced with the trade of drapery today. The façade arrangement, perforated parapets hiding the hipped roof, pointed arches, rectangular balconies supported with brackets, arched and rectangular rhythmic windows, glass eaves supported by iron brackets at the ground level, tile panels, floral and baklava motives have been preserved at a great extent.

[20] RT, 1966. Refurbishment Project by Ismail Toktay for 961/1, Republic of Türkiye, Konak Municipality Archives.


*Figure 5a. Block 957 in 2024, 957/11, 12 and 13 (left), 957/9, 10 (middle, right), viewed from Architect Kemalettin Street.*

957/11, 12 and 13: It is a commercial khan (Hacı Sadık Akseki İşhanı) designed by Necmettin Emre and dated to 1927[21] at a block corner in Akdeniz Neighbourhood (Figure 5a). The parcel size is 249 square meters. The building height is sixteen meters. It has a chamfered corner. The ground story is composed of a series of shops, whereas the upper units are organized around a central hall. It was listed in 1988. It was a three-story building with a basement. In 1998, two-floor additions were recorded at the eastern portion of the mass. The addition or removal of division walls, the addition of an elevator, and renewal of finishing material and joinery were observed. Today, one of the additional floors has been removed. Dome crowning the building corner, the hipped roof and its eaves, rhythmic openings with pointed arches at the top floor and rectangular ones at

[21] G. Saygı, "Documentation of Necatibey Boulevard in Izmir with Close Range Digital Photogrammetry" (MS thesis, Izmir Institute of Technology, 2009).

*Figure 5b. Block 957 in 1998, 957 / 9, 10, interior view of the western shop.*

the bottom, rectangular balconies supported with brackets, tile panels and floral motives, corner decorations, and pilasters have been preserved to a great extent.

957/9, 10: It is a commercial khan with twin shops on the ground level in Akdeniz Neighborhood (Figure 5a). The total parcel size is 210 square meters. The building height is thirteen meters. It had a two-story building with a gallery and a basement. The spaces were organized around a hall on the symmetry axis. In a renovation in 1952, a residential unit was created on the first floor.[22] It was listed in 1988. Production, retail, and wholesale trade of clothing have been recorded since 1998. In 1998, the small central opening on the ceiling of the shops used to transport goods and the authentic organization of the shop windows and the lower eaves protecting these shop windows were preserved (Figure 5b). A roof story addition, conversion of the gallery floor into a mezzanine, addition, and removal of division walls and stairs, alteration of window openings, renewal of finishing material and joinery, and removal of the bottom eave at the western portion were recorded. Today, the glass eaves at the ground level, baklava decorations, and cornices have been partially preserved.

957/34: It was a two-story shop building with a mezzanine and basement in the Akdeniz Neighbourhood (Figure 5a). The parcel size is 195 square meters. The building height is nineteen meters. Three-story additions, a mass addition

[22] RT, 1952. Refurbishment Project for 957/9, 10, Republic of Türkiye, Konak Municipality Archives.

with three stories flanking the structure at its north, rearrangement of all floor levels, addition of an elevator, renewal of finishing material, and enlargement of façade openings have been recorded since 1998. Production and retail and wholesale trade of clothing was realized in 1998. Today, it is replaced with those of trousseau (Figure 5a). It is not listed.

956/7: It is a shop building with a height of ten meters at a block corner in Akdeniz Neighbourhood (Figure 6a). The parcel size is 200 square meters. It has two stories, a mezzanine, and a basement. Its hipped and tiled roof (Figure 2) was replaced with a gable one out of corrugated sheets. It was listed in 1988. In 1998, total rearrangement of the spatial organization at all floor levels, and renewal of finishing material, joinery, and shutters was observed. The façade organization at ground level is in a totally renewed state today. Production, and retail and wholesale trade of casual clothing in 1998 (Figure 6b) is partially replaced with that of wedding gowns today. The ornamental iron door leaves documented in 1998 are building materials that have been available in the construction market since the nineteenth century. The overall façade composition with rhythmic pointed arched and rectangular windows, pilasters, and decoration of corners of openings represent the First Nationalist Architecture scope, but the curvilinear and floral patterns used in the decoration recall the Art Nouveau style of the late Ottoman era.[23]

[23] A. Batur, "Art Nuoveau, Dünden Bugüne Istanbul Ansiklopedisi," *Istanbul: Turkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfi* 1 (1993), 327–333.


*Figure 6a. Block 956 in 2024, 956/7 (left), 956/6 (middle) 956/5 (right), as viewed from the Architect Kemalettin Street.*

956/6: It is a shop building with a height of ten meters in Akdeniz Neighbourhood (Figure 6a). The parcel size is 190 square meters. It has two stories, a mezzanine, and a basement. During the renovation by Fuat Cebeci in 1957, a mezzanine floor out of wooden elements was added and the first floor was rearranged to include a residential unit.[24] It was listed in 1988. Its hipped and tiled roof is still present. Further alteration of the interior spaces, renewal of finishing material, and reorganization of the façade at ground level have been recorded since 1998. The wide eaves, depressed arched openings, rectangular balconies, pilasters, and corner decorations representing the First Nationalist Architecture at the first-floor level were preserved in 1998. Today, the paintings and signboards restrict to observation of these authentic qualities. Production,

[24] RT, 1957. Refurbishment Project by Fuat Cebeci for 956/6, Republic of Türkiye, Konak Municipality Archives.

retail, and wholesale trade of casual clothing in 1998 has been replaced with that of wedding gowns today. Today, trade of fabric and clothing on the ground level, and an atelier of wedding gowns on the upper floor is present.

*Figure 6b. Block 956 in 1998, atelier on the first floor of 956/7.*

956/5: It was a shop building probably with two floors and a gallery in Akdeniz Neighbourhood (Figure 6a). The parcel size is 180 square meters. In 1998, it was thirteen meters in height together with an additional roof story. Then, all floor levels were in a rearranged state. Today, it is reconstructed as a seven-story commercial khan. In the land registry, it is recorded as a storage building with a shop on the ground level.[25] It is not listed. The retail and wholesale trade of casual clothing in 1998 has been replaced with the production and trade of wedding gowns today.

[25] RT, 2024. Lot Inquiry Database, Republic of Türkiye, https://parselsorgu.tkgm.gov.tr/ (accessed 10 June 2024).

*Figure 7a. Block 7495 in 1998, 7495/4, 3, 2 and 1, from left to right, viewed from the Architect Kemalettin Street.*

7495/4 (Peker Khan): It is at the intersection point of old Osmaniye Street leading to the traditional Bazaar of Kemeralti and the Architect Kemalettin Street of the Early Republican period (Figure 2). As revealed in the inscription panel, the khan dates to 1929. The parcel size is 264 square meters and height is thirteen and a half meters. It is a three-story building with a chamfered corner, gallery, and basement floors in the Hasan Hoca Neighborhood (Figure 7a). It has been listed since 1988. The galleries were partially converted into mezzanine floors, and spatial rearrangements were observed, but the authentic mosaic tiles of the halls, iron balustrades, and some of the interior door leaves and joinery were present in 1998 (Figure 7b). The roof story addition recorded in 1998 is removed today. The façade arrangement of the First Nationalist Architecture scope has been preserved together with the wide eaves, rectangular balconies, semicircular arched and rectangular opening series at the top and lower levels, respectively; and floral and geometric patterns at the eaves, corners of openings, and balconies. The finishing material and joinery are renewed extensively today.

Retail and wholesale trade of casual clothing on the ground floor, storages, and workshops on the upper floors in 1998 have been replaced with wedding gowns and men's suits.

*Figure 7b. Block 7495 in 1998, upper hall of 7495/4.*

7495/3: It is a three-story shop building with a mezzanine and basement in the Hasan Hoca Neighborhood (Figure 7a). The parcel size is 141 square meters and the height is thirteen and a half meters. The renovation by Huseyin Terzioglu in 1988 included the addition of division walls and the provision of a transparent curtain wall at the façade.[26] In 1998, the authentic eaves and brackets representing the First Nationalist Architecture were preserved, but the openings of the upper levels and the shop were completely altered. Today, these openings have been restored, but their proportions and forms and the contemporary finishing material seem to be incompatible. It is not listed. Retail and wholesale trade of casual clothing on the bottom floors and workshops and storage on the upper ones in 1998 have been partially replaced with nightgowns today.

[26] RT, 1988. Refurbishment Project by Huseyin Terzioglu for 7495/3, Republic of Türkiye, Konak Municipality Archive.

*Figure 8a and 8b. Block 7495 in 1998: opening in the shop's ceiling in 7495/2 (a), a gusset with an enormous size on the first floor of 7495/1 (b).*

7495/2: It is a shop building (Figure 7a). The parcel size is 128 square meters and the height is ten meters. It was a two-story building with a gallery at the ground level in the Hasan Hoca Neighborhood. The gallery was already converted into a mezzanine in 1998 and a partial roof story at the western portion was added. The authentic parapet crowning the building, cornices, two rectangular windows on the first floor, shop windows and their iron shutters on the street level, the interior organization, ceiling opening, and the shelf system (Figure 8a) were preserved in 1998, but today they are lost. Retail and wholesale trade of casual clothing in 1998 has been replaced with nightgowns today. It is not listed.

7495/1: It is a shop building at its block corner in the Hasan Hoca Neighborhood (Figure 7a). The parcel size is 132 square meters. The height is nine meters. It has two stories and a mezzanine. The authentic central opening in the floor slabs continued to be used for the transportation of goods between floors in 1998. Bulky reinforced concrete elements document the incompetency of the period designers in

the reinforced concrete frame system (Figure 8b). Several alterations were observed in 1998: enlargement of the gallery floor to create a mezzanine, enlargement of some window openings at the side facade, and renewal of finishing material and joinery. Today, the facade organization is further altered. The authentic eaves, brackets, arched and rectangular windows, cornices, and panels can be partially observed today. Retail and wholesale trade of casual clothing in 1998 was partially replaced with that of wedding gowns. It was listed in 1988.

7470/3: It is a shop building in the Hasan Hoca Neighborhood (Figure 9a). The parcel size is 117 square meters and the height is fifteen meters. It was probably a two-story building with a gallery floor. In 1998, total rearrangement of the spatial organization and facade, conversion of the gallery floor into a full floor, and addition of two stories were observed in 1998 and they have been sustained. Retail and wholesale trade of drapery has been recorded since 1998. It is not listed.

7470/2: It is a shop building (Figure 9a). The parcel size is 120 square meters and the height is thirteen and a half meters. It has three stories with a mezzanine in the Hasan Hoca Neighborhood. It was listed in 1988. Retail and wholesale trade of clothing on the ground level and workshops and storage spaces on the upper ones have been recorded since 1998. The authentic eaves, its brackets, pilasters, cornices, and the opening form of the street level were preserved in 1998 (Figure 9b). These are all lost today excluding the eaves. The authentic hipped roof has been replaced with a gable roof as well. Production and retail and wholesale trade of children's clothing was observed in 1998. Today, nightgowns are produced and sold.


*Figure 9a. Block 7470/3 (left) and 2 (right) in 2024 as viewed from the street.*


*Figure 9b. Block 7470/2 in 1998.*

951/2 (Kardıcalı Han): It is by Mehmet Fesci and is dated to 1928.[27] The parcel size is 1718 square meters and the height is fourteen and a half meters. It is a three-story commercial khan with a mezzanine in the Akdeniz neighbourhood (Figure 10a). The commercial units were organized around a central gallery at all levels (Figure 10b). It was listed in 1988. The addition of partitioning walls and a mass in the courtyard, renewal of finishing material, and joinery in many of the spaces and facades were observed in 1998. Retail and wholesale trade of clothing, industrial spare parts and electronic devices, pharmacy, bookstore, café and bar on the ground level, workshops and offices on the upper ones were recorded in 1998. Today, the building is abandoned because it was declared as a structure at risk of collapse after the earthquake of 2020; the ground floor openings are filled in. Many of the authentic characteristics can be followed: hipped and tiled roof, chamfered building corners crowned with domes, pointed arches, rhythmic arched or rectangular openings, rectangular balconies, tile panels, floral ornamentation, decoration of corners of openings and eaves, brackets, mosaic tiles, balustrades, and an elevator (Figure 10c).

[27] İ. Aslanoğlu, *Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Mimarlığı* (Odtü Mimarlık Fakültesi Basım İşliği, 1980), 127.

*Figure 10a. Block 951/2 in 2024 as viewed from the street.*

## Early modernism scope on Architect Kemalletin Street

The commercial khans that represent Early Modernism on Architect Kemalettin Street are four in number. The building in 957/32 (Dedem Khan) is a three-story commercial khan with a basement in the Akdeniz neighbourhood (Figure 11a). It is a corner building with a land coverage of 180 square meters and a height of ten meters. Retail and wholesale trade of clothing has been observed in the khan since 1998. In the land registry, it is recorded as two shops out of stone and brick.[28] In the 1972 orthophoto, the L planned building with a gable roof hidden behind the parapets, and a light shaft and additional masses

[28] RT, 2024. Lot Inquiry Database, Republic of Türkiye, https://parselsorgu.tkgm.gov.tr/ (accessed 10 June 2024).

at its west are visible. The original spaces at the street sides and the additional spaces by the light shaft on the upper floors are all organized around a linear hall. The ground floor, which is relatively higher than the upper ones in a similar manner to the First Nationalist scope buildings along the street, is composed of a series of shops flanking one another. The utilization of a reinforced concrete frame system and rectangular horizontal windows may be signs of its Early Modernist scope. The *cumba*-like projection of the upper floors may be considered a continuation of the local building element vocabulary of the previous century. The limited number of stories may be a sign of its early construction date. Both the spatial organization and the facades have been altered many times. The building is not listed.

The khan in block 953, lot forty-three is a four-story commercial khan in the Akdeniz Neighbourhood (Figure 11b). The land coverage and height are 224 square meters and fifteen meters and eighty centimeters, respectively. Retail and wholesale trade of clothing has been carried out since 1998. A story was added later. In the orthophoto of 1972, its gable roof with eaves on the street side is visible. In the survey of 1998, the total spaces on each story organized around the small central gallery continuing throughout the building were observed. In fact, this scheme had been experienced in the neighbouring two-storied shop building at the west and with an inscription dating to 1907–1908 (953/41). Nevertheless, offices and storage around the central space, and an additional roof floor were already added in 1998. Today, the building is in a further altered state: It was integrated with the small lot flanking it at its west (953/42). In 1998, a single-story masonry structure used as storage was present in this neighbouring lot. Its reinforced concrete frame system and rectangular horizontal window series may be interpreted as Early Modernist qualities. The presence of eaves, symmetric façade organization, and the cumba-like projection of the upper stories may be evaluated as characteristics that sustain the architectural tradition of the late Ottoman era in Izmir. A limited story number may be taken as a sign of a relatively early date of construction. Nevertheless, the extent of alterations both in the spatial organization and the façade has increased throughout the years. The building is not listed.

*Figure 10b and c. Block 951/2 in 1998, the central gallery (a), and the elevator (b).*



*Figure 11a and b. Block 957/32 (a) and block 953/43 (b) in 1998 as viewed from the street.*


*Figure 12a. Block 953/70 as viewed from the street in 1998.*

The building in 953/70 is a four-story commercial khan in the Akdeniz Neighbourhood (Figure 12a). The land coverage is 800 square meters and the height is thirteen meters. Retail and wholesale trade of drapery and clothing in 1998 was replaced with clothing today. The roof story has not been used. In the land registry, it is recorded as a commercial building out of stone and brick. In the orthophoto of 1972, the hipped roof out of reinforced concrete slabs is exposed without finishing, and square skylight series are visible (Figure 2). Its large storage spaces making use of the advantage of the reinforced concrete frame system (Figure 11b), and grey spatter dash plaster finish on façade walls contrasting with white cornices around the openings and their white joinery may be evaluated as characteristics that represent Early Modernist scope. Symmetric façade organization and the cumba-like projection of the last two stories may be considered as qualities sustained from the late Ottoman traditional buildings in Izmir. The geometric decoration used in the parapets, horizontal windows turning corners and finished with semi-circular window frames, decorated main entrance in rectangular form, and with iron and glass leaves may be questioned

as qualities in Art Deco style. The limited story number points out a relatively early construction date. The positioning of the shops and offices on the ground and upper floors on the street side of the large storage at the rear is a utilitarian preference that has been sustained since the Ottoman era. Nevertheless, the entrance is not at the centre, but through the units at the sides. The contrast between the façade elements was lost with the renewal of the colour codes (Figure 12b). It is not listed.

*Figure 12b. Block 953/70 in 1998, storage space under the roof.*

The building in 368/36 (Yazmacioglu Khan) is a four-story commercial khan in the Hasan Hoca Neighbourhood (Figure 12c). The land coverage and height are 154 square meters and seventeen meters, respectively. Retail and wholesale trade of clothing on the bottom floors and sewing on the upper floors have been observed since 1998. In the land registry, it is recorded as a shop building out of stone and brick. Its gable roof is legible in the 1972 orthophoto. There is no


*Figure 12c. Block 368/36 in 1998.*

gallery, but a central hall from which the offices, storages, and workshops are entered on the upper floors. The ground floor has the shop and the entrance hall at its west. A partial roof story recessed from the street side was added based on a refurbishment project prepared by Suat Erdeniz in 1950.[29] Removal or addition of the non-load bearing walls between various spaces was realized in 1963 and 1974.[30] Therefore, the building was already constructed before 1950. Its reinforced concrete frame system, rectangular windows placed rhythmically, and vertical and horizontal cornices around the openings are in line with Early Modernism. However, the gable roof with eaves, symmetric façade organization, and *cumba*-like central projection of the upper stories are qualities that present the continuation of the local building tradition. The narrow balconies at the sides recall the Art Deco style. The contrast between the grey plaster finish and the white cornices, the original double-leaf window panels of the upper stories, and the iron shutters of the shop windows were preserved in 1998, but today these are totally renewed with white plaster and single window panels. The spatial organization has been extensively altered. The khan is not listed.

[29] RT, 1950. Refurbishment Project by Suat Erdeniz for 368/36, Republic of Türkiye, Konak Municipality Archives.
[30] RT, 1974. Refurbishment Project by Altan Atamer for 368/36, Republic of Türkiye, Konak Municipality Archives.

# Conclusion

The Early Republican Architecture was represented in the commercial buildings in the harbour city of Izmir with two different scopes: First Nationalist Architecture and Early Modernism between 1923 and 1930s and until the 1950s, respectively. They have both sustained the local commercial architecture manners. The relatively small shop buildings were composed of a single unit with built-in shelf systems and openings in the centre of their ceilings providing connection with the storage and atelier spaces on the upper floors. The khans were composed of a series of shops at the ground level. The upper floors were organized around central halls. The two scopes both experimented with reinforced concrete frame systems. The Early Modernist examples used the system more competently since some experience has been gained so far. The differences were in the aesthetic preferences: e.g. façade organization, decoration manner, etc. The Early Modernist buildings include *cumba*s, which attributes them a local quality. Rectangular windows, white horizontal and vertical cornices, and grey plastering attribute them a Modernist look. Organization of the facades in Art Deco style is sometimes seen. All of them should be preserved since they document the history of commercial architecture on the western coast of the country.

# Insert

*Miracle World*

MIKE BODE


AKKAYA


İZMİR
BÜYÜKŞEHİR
BELEDİYESİ


Erva
Moda Evi


nilmark
ALYA Wedding Dress GELİNLİK & NİŞANLIK
ALYA Wedding Dress
Simar TEKSTİL
Simar TEKSTİL
TUFAN


TMZ
Kardelen
Atakan
Bel Anje
BDR
COMPANY


Valeria
www.alidentel.com

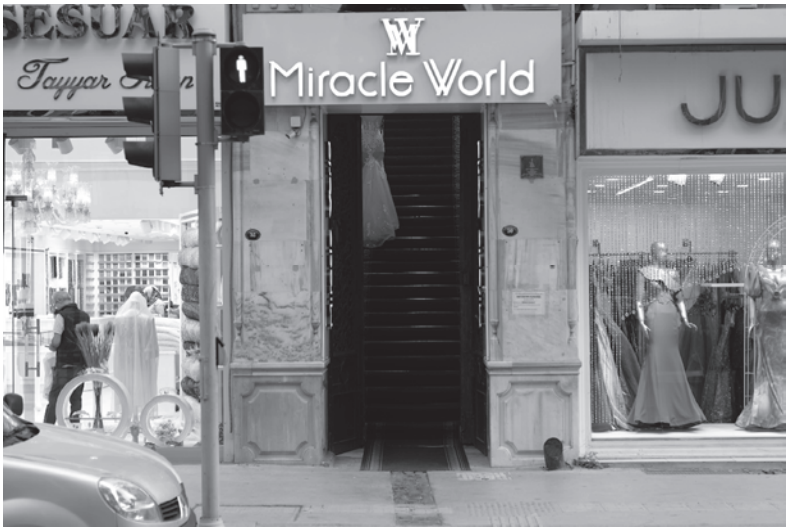

Hassasiyet Taşır...
0232 445 11 11 / 0539 352 93 70
MİMAR KEMALETTİN ŞUBESİ
ŞİNANLAR
ayriss


Efsun Moda
Efsun Moda


ÖR


ÖZGÜR
Taşımacılık San. ve Tic. Ltd. Şt.
www.ozgurtasimacilik.com.tr
MİMAR KEMALETTİN ŞUBESİ


SMOKIN


Miracle World
JU


brillife
Taşımacılık San


N.R.C
N.R.C


İZMİR
BÜYÜKŞEHİR
BELEDİYESİ
İZMİR
BÜYÜKŞEHİR
BELEDİYESİ


Gürbulak

# II. Walking as a means of knowledge production

# Walking as a Means for Producing Knowledge

*Notes on Blind Spots*

CATHARINA GABRIELSSON
Associate Professor, KTH in Stockholm

In 1948, two members of the Swedish legation in Ankara took up an offer from a Turkish politician to accompany him on a trip around western Anatolia in his new American "station wagon." The purpose was to survey the potential for tourism in a region still inaccessible to outsiders, in a country still undergoing industrialization. Forty years later, documentation of the trip based on the Swedish participants' diaries was published in *Meddelanden*.[1] It describes excursions to abandoned ruins, overnight stays in remote villages, lush plantations viewed from the car and stops at small local factories. The journey is sometimes hazardous on next-to-non-existent dusty roads that, combined with a tight programme and many official receptions, often exhaust the travellers. Although the stated objective was to survey the remnants of Greek antiquity, using the Swedish legates as "test tourists," their record shows how the intention was also to demonstrate the progressive ambitions of the modern state to foreign visitors.

For a contemporary reader, the article is a striking eyewitness account of a country characterised by an overlay of times and temporalities; where ancient structures and primordial livelihoods still mix and collide with modern

[1] T. Hagen, "Resa i västra Turkiet 23–31 augusti 1948", *Svenska Forskningsinstitutet i Istanbul: Meddelanden* 13 (1988): 76–89.

boulevards and large-scale agricultural establishments. But equally striking is the extent to which the travellers' diaries replicate the image arranged and curated by their host. Descriptions of discomforts and pleasures are punctuated by facts and figures that convey the industrial and military achievements of the state. Describing a visit to "one of Turkey's five breeding stations," it is recorded that it encompasses "10.000 hectares, 480 workers, 75 students, 703 horses, 764 cattle, 5.000 hens, 460 pigs; 200–250 calves are born each year." A sheep farm is said to be based on "an improved domestic Turkish breed" (from the original Hungarian), followed by an observation that the military airfield nearby has "several runways and a large amount (30–50) of masonry protective walls against bomb splinters". It is noted, in passing, that the region they are travelling through used to be "entirely Greek". But any question or anxiety this might stir is quickly put to rest by the assurance that the new Turkish inhabitants "are very dexterous and energetic and have shown to be fully capable of taking over the farming and crafts of their predecessors".[2] When arriving in Izmir, the Swedish delegates are taken on a tour. They note that "the Armenian part was burnt-off [*avbränd*] after the take-over of Izmir by Atatürk's troops", and that the area hence has been converted into a park that holds the industrial fair.[3] With that, they stroll down to the harbour for an evening meal.

As travelogues go, "Resa i västra Turkiet 23–31 augusti 1948" (*Travel in Western Turkey 23rd–31st August 1948*) is a disturbing record of a subservient attitude to the autocratic Turkish state.[4] Given that travel accounts have forged the Western understanding of Turkey – indeed, that Istanbul (in particular) only entered into the European imagination through the eyes of the traveller, the envoy or the foreign agent, whose letters and reports were sent back home[5] – unravelling the context for this article is evidently beyond the scope of this essay.

---

[2] Hagen, 78. The last quote derives from the Turkish politician, a member of parliament, who arranged the trip.

[3] Hagen, 81.

[4] The broader context of this trip, and why the travel notes were prepared and selected for publication 40 years later, is unclear.

[5] Cf. Writing the social history of Izmir in the first half of the 19th century, the author (Rauf Beyru) states: "it is no secret that the chief source on which this research is based are the travel notes of that period, all of which are written by foreign writers and travelers who visited Izmir at those dates"; R. Beyru, *Three ages of Izmir: Palimpsest of Cultures* (Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1993), 145.

For our purposes here, however, it serves as an outset to ask what it is that we see, and what we don't see, as visitors and travellers. Whose guiding do we depend on, to what is our attention directed, and from what do we avert our eyes? In what follows, I will offer some reflections on this topic, drawing on impressions and insights generated by the project presented in this issue of *Dragomanen*, particularly as inspired by its tentative title: *Blind Spot*.

When Mike Bode asked us to partake in a walk-based excursion in three Turkish cities – Istanbul, Izmir, and Mersin – it was an opportunity to contribute to the current re-conceptualisation of walking. As a mode of sensing, encountering, and knowing the world, walking is endowed with a long history that arguably, as a discourse, emerges with Robert Louis Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey* from 1879. Countless other authors and writers – from Ian Sinclair's psychogeography of London to Orhan Pamuk's wanderings through "the poor neighbourhoods" of Istanbul – have employed walking to generate narratives that unfold the complexities of place, people, and memory. Whether infused with a sense of discovery or used as a means for critique, walk-based narratives always entail a subjective approach, and have the advantage of conveying an almost immediate presence of the sensual realm – the smells, sounds, and appearances of specific locations – even long after these have ceased to exist.[6] If walking lays the ground for the modern subject – famously captured by the figure of the *flâneur*, produced by the experience of the modern metropolis – it points to walking as a complex practice that is politically charged; imbued with notions of self, power, and knowledge. Walking has to do with space and time, body and movement – but also with the gaze.

A new generation of scholars, artists, and activists have recently appropriated walking as a research method. Claimed as a means to question Western epistemologies critically and to advance new (more response-able and inclusive) ontologies, it is seen as an attempt to challenge "the lone white subject of

[6] I have previously touched upon walking in the city, and how the *Blue Guide* of Istanbul is based on walks whose descriptions preserve the sensescape of a city that is no more. See C. Gabrielsson, "The holey city: walking along Istanbul's Theodosian land walls," in *Deleuze and Architecture*, ed. Hélène Frichot and Stephen Loo (Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

Western Modernity surveying his landscape as possession".[7] Coined in terms of "deep walking," it is described as "thinking-in-movement", an embodied practice of concept formation that is "experimental and speculative, viscous, intense and collaborative".[8] The set-up of Mike Bode's project articulated some crucial aspects of such walking methodologies. The project was organised as a "walking dialogue," a "walking with," emphasizing the exchange between participants through sharing the experience of different sites. Moreover, the notion of 'blind spot' pointed to the limits of human perception and offered the potential of engaging with erased or disavowed histories. With a focus on cultural heritage, more precisely the architecture of the early Turkish Republic, the theme was centred on buildings stemming from a period that has largely gone unnoticed or remains unacknowledged within the broader history of architectural modernism.

To me, however, it proved impossible to overcome how the architectural production of this period coincided with the massive 'population exchange' carried out by the early Republican state. The blunt remarks of the Swedish legates in 1948 illustrate the extent to which these acts of violence and trauma had been accepted, covered over, and deemed legitimate as part of the formation of the Turkish state and the forging of a national identity. The question, for me, was how to reconcile with the fact that architecture is not only a manifestation of desires, values, habits, and structures of power – but that it may also be a powerful shield, enrolled in an apparatus of destruction, manipulation, and denial.

It must be said that we are blind to most of what surrounds us, our conscious perception being the outcome of intense neurological filtering. Hence 'blind spot' is not an exception to the norm: it is the norm. In distinction to notions of invisibility or absence, however, 'blind spot' suggests the presence of phenomena that lie beyond our field of vision; things we cannot see or choose to ignore – whether out of habit, for cultural or ideological reasons. Related to driving, movement, and traffic, 'blind spot' moreover suggests that such

[7] Quote from the endorsement by K. Yusoff of *Walking Methodologies in a More-than-Human World: WalkingLab*, ed. Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E. Truman (Routledge, 2018).
[8] Quote from the endorsement by Margaret Sommerville of *Walking Methodologies*.

ignorance poses a threat that might come to lethal consequences. Before visiting Izmir, I had been oblivious to the atrocities of the burning of Smyrna (its Ottoman name) in September 1922. The horrific details became an obsession as I was searching for material online, looking at old newsreels whose silent, flickering black-and-white images showed the bellowing smoke extending in all directions; the desperate crowds of people cramming the waterfront; and the military ships of the European central powers laying in passive (non-interference) wait outside in the bay.[9] The many thousand Armenians and Greeks killed by the fire (verging between ten thousand and 125.000, depending on the source) are inseparably linked to the millions who were forced into migration during the population exchange. The fire annihilated large parts of Smyrna, one of the oldest settlements in the world – a city that since its incorporation into the Ottoman empire in the fifteenth century had developed into a remarkably diverse and vibrant cosmopolis.[10]

Walking through Izmir, we were shown the manufacturing buildings in the commercial district close to the port, marking the edge to the "burnt-off" part of the city. As examples of the architecture of the early modern Republic, the pragmatic and eclectic aesthetics of these buildings illustrated the continuous presence of an Ottoman past. But combined with modernist traits, they were also expressions of the future, manifesting the new business opportunities that had emerged with the collapse of former hierarchies through the process of ethnic cleansing. Many of these buildings have since been transformed to near unrecognition – showing the signs of time, transformations of use and ownership, negligence as well as opportunism – bearing evidence to how building

[9] The films are on YouTube and other digital platforms, readily accessible through Google.

[10] It was not only the Armenian quarters that was "burnt-off", as stated in the Swedish travel report. The fire destroyed the northern part of the city, including the Greek (Rum) and European and/or Levantine neighbourhood (known as Frank or Frenk); only the Muslim and Jewish parts survived. The circumstances around the outbreak remain a matter of contention, and different national narratives place the blame on different culprits. It seems likely, however, that the fire was started/enabled by the Turkish troops, with the intention to create a 'clean plate' and wipe out a Christian minorities' stronghold. It is noteworthy that the common phrase in reference to this catastrophic event – that is, as an active 'burning' – also suggests that the fire was no accident. Leyla Neyzi, "The Burning of Smyrna/Izmir (1922) Revisited: Coming to Terms with the Past in the Present," in *The Past as Resource in the Turkic Speaking World*, ed. Ildikó Bellér-Hann, (Ergon, 2016). Open Access via https://doi.org/10.5771/9783956506888.

conservation, and indeed cultural heritage at large, has not been a priority in Turkey. But without prior knowledge (provided by our Turkish companions), the ambiguous rationality of this architecture escapes the eye. The underlying premises are inaccessible to the senses, and the robust material presence of these buildings seems to deny the violence and trauma that constitute their background conditions of possibility. Architecture cannot properly be understood through mere sensorial impressions, despite the abundance of sources that claim the opposite.[11] So, what are the terms for producing knowledge through walking, when elements of the past have been obliterated or denied, and even the existing is shrouded in mystery? What reaches the senses of urban life – its smells, sounds, appearances, conducts, and rhythms – are entangled in a complex web of relations and dependencies that we, as visitors, are oblivious to.

"To live is to leave traces", Walter Benjamin states in a well-known passage.[12] Discussing the birth of the bourgeois interior, he conjures up a frozen moment where things have been left exactly as they are, positioning the reader as if before a forensic scene. Describing the imprints of everyday life on covers and furniture, he muses: "The detective story that follows these traces comes into being." Benjamin is addressing the home, where preserving the traces of individual lives is of strategic importance for installing a distinction to the roaming metropolis outside. But surely the city is also a carrier of traces? The lives of the poor leave little behind, but buildings and street names may still remind us of the rich and mighty. In today's societies driven by consumption and cities shaped by profit, however, it goes without saying that the relationship between home and work, private and public, has been utterly transformed. The repeated make-overs of the image-based home might well exceed the speed of transformations in the urban realm. Yet, as shown by Benjamin's "Arcades Project," the city is replete with the traces of anonymous lives; collective imaginaries and structural forces

[11] I am alluding to the enduring influence of architectural phenomenology, which erroneously bases its epistemological claims on sensorial perception. See C. Gabrielsson and H. Mattsson, *Brytpunkter: postmodernismens estetik och politik i svensk arkitektur*, ch. 2 (Makadam/Kriterium, forthcoming).

[12] W. Benjamin, "Louis Philippe, or the Interior", part IV, *Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century* (multiple editions). Most English (and Swedish) translations use the word "dwell" (*bo*) rather than "live" in this sentence. Not having access to the original, I interpret it to be a general statement ("to live is to leave traces") i.e. not exclusive to the home, since Benjamin goes on to say, "in the interior these [traces] are emphasized".

have left their imprints on institutions, streets, and alleys. Architectural shapes, materials, and decorations are imbued with the presence of the past, wrought into a complex dialectic with the traits of a constantly shifting modernity. Detecting these traces in the city, however, calls for an acute sensibility, a visual competence, and a sharp mind.

The traces of the multitude that used to inhabit places like Istanbul, Mersin, and Izmir are fragmented, weak, and unevenly distributed. Close to imperceptible, they sometimes only exist as voids. In Mersin, the magnificent promenade along the seafront is dangerously inaccessible due to the four-lane traffic highway that runs alongside. In terms of public investments, it can be seen as a sign of care for the city's population, but equally of a politics directed at modelling an image of progress and success. It takes a conscious effort to conjure up the dense environment of storage spaces, shipping docks, and harbour equipment that one imagines were here before. In Istanbul, the crowds and seagulls swarming by the seafront of the Golden Horn are similarly the outcomes of urban clearance, disclosing how the formation of the modern city habitually included obliterating what came before. In Izmir, walking along the prestigious inner-city street that starts close to the converted Greek Orthodox church – a long, high, and narrow space, lined with palm trees, that radiates with a quintessential urbanity – we come across an unbuilt, fenced-in area. On first impression, it is impossible to tell whether it is a disused cemetery or some kind of private garden. Overgrown with spontaneous vegetation and seemingly abandoned, it reminds of a Berlin Brache; vacant lots, left over from the bombings during the war, that often have sprawled unique ecologies and function as sanctuaries for urban wildlife. But the material and immaterial entanglements made manifest in this particular case – social, legal, historical, political, and economic – are as inaccessible to us as the forbidden space itself.

If recognizing the limits of perception is the primary rule, the second rule imposed by 'blind spot' is learning to pay attention. The philosopher of science Isabelle Stengers stresses the need to resist the hegemonic blindness inferred by the alliance of neoliberal politics, techno-capitalist progress, and business-oriented science. Compelling us to *faire attention* (where "*faire*" means "to make" or "to do", also encompassing the meaning of "look out" or "be careful"), Stengers notes that "[w]hat we have been ordered to forget is not the capacity to

pay attention, but the *art* of paying attention. If there is an art, and not just a capacity, this is because it is a matter of learning and cultivating, that is to say, *making* ourselves pay attention."[13] It is to say that we must distance ourselves from the common sense embedded in habitual phrases, from that which is "defined as a priori worthy of attention", and resist the temptation "to separate what must be taken into account and what may be neglected".[14] Paying attention is thus not only a matter of what we see but what we hear, think, and believe. In our project of "walking-in-dialogue", the attention was explicitly directed at situations and phenomena that contest given worldviews and official "order-words". The arbitrary collection of books in the Kültürhane library (Mersin), for instance, turned out to be a salvage from the shelves of academics, quickly grabbed at the moment of their expulsion from the university due to signing a petition or such. Philosophers and sociologists now spend their time making coffee and snacks for the general public, drawn here by an outreaching program. It shows how the making of common space serves as a prerequisite for building knowledge, in this case, created through a subversive academic practice "by foot".

Appropriated as a research method, walking is seen as an embodied practice that carries the potential to undo the distinction between the subject and object of knowledge. In so far as it is based on a sensorial experience, however, I would argue that it relies on the capacity to identify and decipher signs. Especially when engaging with a past that is disowned and repressed, it is a practice close to tracing ghosts. As shown by the British artist Steven McQueen's film "Occupied City" – a project that searches for traces of the Jewish population in Amsterdam, before and after the expulsion by the Nazis – it takes careful archaeological digging to identify locations, hide-outs and paths, together with an almost psychic sensibility.[15] Much has been written about traces and signs, detecting and decoding. Here, suffice to say that traces are usually understood as indexical

[13] I. Stengers, *In Catastrophic Times: Resisting the Coming Barbarism* (Open Humanities Press in collaboration with Meson Press, 2015), 62; italics added.
[14] Stengers, 62.
[15] T. Brook, "Steve McQueen: Occupied City, a Nazi-era documentary that connects the past to the present," *BBC*, 21 December 2023, https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20231221-steve-mcqueen-occupied-city-a-nazi-era-documentary-that-connects-the-past-to-the-present.

– physical imprints of an object or an event – and that C. S. Peirce (the modern founder of semiotics) considered them "empty signs", that is, as devoid of human intention.[16] But what also should be noted is the distinction between denotation and connotation, which points to the inherent ambiguity of signs. On the one hand, they are carriers of 'facts' (denotation), on the other, they readily give rise to interpretations and associations (connotation). For Deleuze, it is a mistake to think that signs ultimately represent some 'truth' in the object; the significance of signs is how they create an immanent reality of sensations, emotions, gestures, and social codes. Coping with that reality is a learning process, based on the deciphering and interpretation of signs: "Everything that teaches us something emits signs; every act of learning is an interpretation of signs or hieroglyphs", he writes.[17] To the extent that walking offers a means for knowledge production, it crucially depends on our ability to not just sense, but to collectively make sense of what we see, hear, and feel. Depending on language as a shared significatory system, signs thus carry a direct link to what it means to be human and partake in the production of subjectivity. Who we are, or become, depends on our capacity to respond to signs, but also to emit them, which in the highest form (according to Deleuze) constitutes an art form.

[16] It is perhaps for this reason that traces hold such power over the imagination: "In the trace, things speak for themselves: they are not spoken." See M. A. Doane, Introduction to "Indexicality: Trace and Sign," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 18, no. 1 (2007): 3.
[17] G. Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (Continuum, 2008), 4.

# City Space between Voluntarism from Above and Subversion from Below

FERHAT KENTEL*
Academic and sociologist based in Izmir

In every city in Turkey, we can see most of the stages of Turkish modernization and the nature of its process. Turkish modernization, together with Turkish nationalism, carried a secular and national identity to many parts of the public space (mosques, schools, factories, etc.). All the conflicts, dreams, and negotiations around identity are reflected in cities. Turkish cities in general, and Izmir in particular, have been a testing ground of secular nationalism and the process of modernization. In this article, I will focus on the area called Mimar Kemalettin Bazaar, now called Mimar Kemalettin Fashion Centre, located between Gazi and Fevzi Paşa boulevards in the centre of Izmir. Through the connection between the ideological construction of national identity and the case of the Mimar Kemalettin Area (MKA), I will examine the texture of urban space on its economic, social, and cultural levels.

* I would like to thank the Swedish Consulate and especially Mike Bode, who created the idea that paved the way for this article and brought together the contributors to this book. I would also like to thank Hacer Yeşilçay, who helped me develop a detailed insight about the Mimar Kemalettin Fashion Centre in Izmir.

## Turkish modernization and the creation of the nation

On the one hand, the Turkish nation-state tried to connect the Central Asian roots of the Turks with an emphasis on blood (*jus sanguinis*), culture, and race. However, on the other hand, and at the same time (changing it according to time and context), with the emphasis on land (*jus soli*) and civilization or citizenship, Turkish nationalism referred to equal citizenship, regardless of the ethnic or cultural origin of those living on its territory. Therefore, very different conceptions of nationalism have allowed the Turkish national identity to be drawn in all directions in a wide range, according to the conjuncture, and to be an indispensable reference in any case. Needy state elites, ideological cadres, and actors in everyday life had the opportunity to construct themselves within nationalism with different interpretations.

In addition to these 'theoretical' and ideological references that become functional in socialization processes, nationalism can be seen as a defence mechanism in everyday life. For individuals of many different ethnic and religious backgrounds, nationalism is a 'community' or 'home' that provides protection or shelter. As such, it is a tool that everyone who lives in the communal home envisions to both defend and, when necessary, attack against everyone else. And again, we can talk about nationalisms that paradoxically scatter rather than unite.[1]

While the authoritarian discourses of unity and solidarity of Turkish nationalism, which does not create unity within itself and resorts to different risks, enemies, and self-definitions cyclically, has constantly undermined social reconciliation, its reflection on space has been fragmented, discontinuous, and chaotic. In other words, nationalism can be a source of reference in all situations and therefore has always maintained its power except in some exceptional cases. In light of this suggestion, we can discern the basic features of nationalism reflected in the urban space in Izmir as follows:

[1] F. Kentel, M. Ahıska and F. Genç, *The indivisible integrity of the nation: Disintegrating nationalism(s) in the process of democratization* (TESEV, 2007).

The Turkish army, which entered from Turkish (Muslim) neighbourhoods such as Tilkilik and passed through Anafartalar Street to 'liberate' Izmir in 1922, and the Republic of Turkey, founded by the modernizing elites intertwined with this army, entered a difficult nation-building process. This process contained paradoxical elements, on the one hand, nation-building elites were trying to turn the adjective 'Turk', which was not very popular during the Ottoman period, into a glorified identity. On the other hand, the new national ideology adopted a modern vision in the image of '*Gâvur* Izmir',[2] defined as the 'other' of the Muslim population, rather than the urban space where the Turkish-Muslim ethnoreligious mass from which this national identity was nourished and lived. In other words, the architects of the Turkification policy tried to build the new city in the 'Western' image, not in the culture of the 'Turks'.

When the Turkish army entered Izmir to "save the *Gâvur* Izmir" and "throw the Greeks into the sea", the Turkish-Muslim streets were not much different from today. In contrast, the neighbourhoods inhabited by the non-Muslim population almost disappeared from the map of Izmir in the great fire that broke out after the Turkish army entered Izmir on 9 September 1922. In Alsancak, a small number of Greek houses survived, while the Armenian neighbourhood was completely destroyed; the cosmopolitan human geography came to an end. In fact, the people who participated in creating Izmir as a dynamic and strong city and the economic centre had disappeared. While the past was being destroyed, conditions emerged for creating a different kind of space, an urban space where the new nation will be built. Anything can now be done in this empty space.

Undoubtedly, the economy of the Republic of Turkey, which emerged from World War I and the subsequent 'War of Independence' against the invasions,

[2] *Gavur* is an adjective used for non-Muslim subjects during the Ottoman Empire, which roughly translates to 'infidel'. The *gavur* adjective for Izmir corresponds to a spatial designation to describe the non-Muslim neighbourhoods of the city compared to the Muslim neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods were largely destroyed in a massive fire during the Turkish takeover of the city in 1922. However, the modern city of Izmir was founded in this *gavur* space instead of the traditional Muslim-Turkish neighbourhoods. Today, the adjective *gavur* has a somewhat metaphorical meaning. The term '*Gavur* Izmir' is used by more traditional segments of society in reference to the average inhabitants of Izmir, who live in a more secular culture than the average in Turkey. However, this adjective is not only an adjective given by outsiders; Izmiris who want to underline the secular identity of Izmir also adopt this adjective in a kind of 'trans-coding'.

was in a state of deep fragility. A crucial event that made this fragility much more radical was the deportation of Armenians, one of the important actors in the economy, from Anatolian lands in 1915. Another was the burning of Izmir, one of the most important ports of the Empire, at the time, and the destruction of the non-Muslim components of the economy. Thus, the economy and industry in Anatolia collapsed. Ottoman citizens, who could be considered the bourgeoisie of that period, were deported, lost their lives, or had their property confiscated. Therefore, when the new Turkish nation was being established, everything was 'created out of nothing', as often emphasised in the emotional construction processes of the nation. This claim of creation out of nothing was true because the industrial and financial capacity of the economy was destroyed precisely by these forced deportations and population movements.

One of the first steps taken in a short time was the Izmir Economic Congress held in 1923. The congress was organized in order to bring Izmir, which was not able to overcome the wounds of the fire for a long time, rise from its ashes, create a new local and national bourgeoisie, and draw a new and 'theoretical' path to the economy. However, the choice of venue for the congress was ironic. Just as the congress held in Erzurum before the War of Independence, was held in the Armenian Sanasaryan School, the Izmir Economic Congress, which was the first important step of the post-war national economy, was held in a venue that belonged to an Armenian merchant of grapes and figs, Aram Hamparsumyan Han[3] (later known as Banka Han and Guiffray Han).

The burnt neighbourhoods of *Gâvur* Izmir are a large area where 'everything' can be done and the 'new' can be sketched. However, this construction was not an easy task and had to involve a well-defined strategy. However, at least, one area that remained in ruins for many years in the middle of this exhausted city eventually emerged as Kültürpark, the symbol of the new Izmir and a place where a function for the future was defined. Kültürpark, inspired by the parks that adorn the centres of many European capitals, also echoed the developmental discourse of the time; with the idea of an international fair, it has become a venue where practical examples of Turkey's economic development are exhibited.

[3] I prefer to use the Turkish term *han* instead of 'inn', to refer to the local authentic character and the commercial content of these buildings.

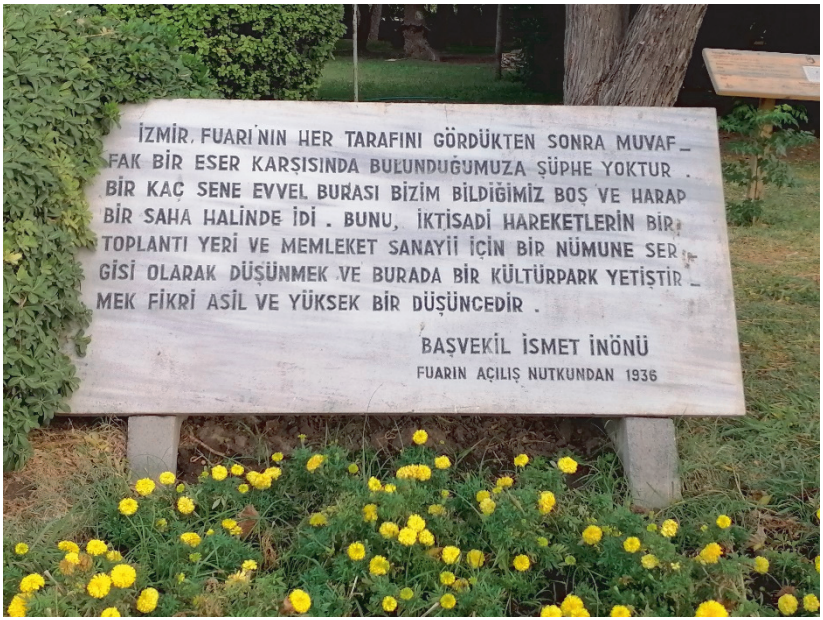



*Figure 1. From Kültürpark. Photo: Ferhat Kentel.*

Kültürpark, a green park that arose out of the ruins and ashes of a lost city cannot be mentioned without acknowledging the lives, bodies, houses and souls mixed in the soil since 1922. Nevertheless, the following words expressed by the then Prime Minister İsmet İnönü in 1936, quoted on a plaque in the park, reveal the ideological construction of this early republican period, and establish the shorthand conjunction between 'absence' and 'innovation':

> After seeing every aspect of the Izmir Fair, there is no doubt that we have seen a successful work. A few years ago, as we know, this place was an empty and dilapidated field. The idea of considering this as a meeting place of economic movements and a sample exhibition for the country's industry and of growing a Kültürpark here is a noble and lofty idea. (Prime Minister İsmet İnönü, from the opening speech of the Fair, 1936; Figure 1.)

Therefore, after the immense tragedy of the fire, Izmir lost its '*Gâvur*' part, and 'Turkish and Muslim Izmir' was preserved. However, instead of the image of 'Turkish and Muslim Izmir', the urban politics for the new Izmir tried to arise with an architecture that pursued its lost 'infidelity'. Kültürpark, which covers the multicultural structure of Izmir, has turned into the green showcase of this new city.

## Urban architectural bricolage

Initially, under the initiative of the state and elitist actors, experiments were made with French (civilizational) and German (cultural) types of nation-building tools that negotiated with religiosity based on a secular form of nationalism. Efforts to establish a nation and national identity were also reflected in cities. However, although the republican elites acted with the will to establish a new nation and new cities, urban spaces are 'social spaces', as conceptualized by Henri Lefebvre, and are 'spaces produced' together by decision-makers, experts and those who live in the city conducting their everyday lives.[4] Or, in parallel and, according to Michel de Certeau, there is a 'strategy' in the shaping of cities that is decision-making, norm-setting, and boundary-drawing, but does not have a single owner; the city is primarily a 'strategic production'. On the other hand, in this strategic area (or under 'discourses'), the citizens 'consume' the city with their 'tactics'. This consumption is not a reproduction; it is a 'secondary production'; citizens transform the city they inhabit into another city by 'subverting' it, unlike plans, science, and ideologies.[5]

Therefore, like national identity or nationalism, cities are constantly changing within this production-consumption relationship, sometimes creating 'brand new' manifestations in radical ways. Sometimes protected, sometimes destroyed, sometimes returned with nostalgia, but in any case, new lives and new perceptions are created in social spaces that produce new forms of belonging. In other words, in one sense, like all other cities – but under particular conditions

[4] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Blackwell Publishing, 1991), particularly pp. 33, 38–40.
[5] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (University of California Press, 1984), 91–110.

– Izmir is a city that is foreseen, designed, and produced by the strategic actors, elites and experts, who decide about the city. However, on the other hand, the citizens have carried Izmir and the Mimar Kemalettin region, which is our subject, to other unforeseen channels by consuming, interpreting, or 'bricolating' them with their practices.

As a result, the new national identity was based on the reinstatement of Turkishness, which had been discredited by the Ottoman administration; instead of the Ottoman and Muslim heritage, this new identity was reconstructed in a 'Western' style. This was achieved to some extent, but in addition to Western Turkishness, manifestations that were not foreseen by the strategic national identity, such as Kurdishness and conservative Islam, also emerged as secondary productions. In a way that is paradoxical but at the same time parallel, the new 'Turkish' architecture was not based on 'Turkish' places such as Tilkilik and Anafartalar; 'Western Izmir' became a model. In a sense, the challenge was to establish a Western image, not by glorifying the 'Turkish' neighbourhood, but in the place of what was destroyed in an erased neighbourhood and pointing to what was destroyed.

## Walking in the city

So far, we have tried to examine the process of the construction of Turkish national identity and the special place that Izmir plays in this construction process from historical, social and cultural perspectives. Now, let us shift our perspective and method and try to understand one dimension of the spatial transformation of this city through a neighbourhood – Mimar Kemalettin Street and its surroundings – within this general framework. Let's both 'walk'[6] and try to discern the practices in and around Mimar Kemalettin Street, which although

[6] "Walking in the city" is the title of a chapter in Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*. According to de Certeau, 'walking in the city' is both a physical act and a metaphorical reference for understanding the everyday life of urban users. In this neighbourhood of Izmir, we both describe our physical walk and discuss the new meanings that the neighbourhood expresses and produces through this walk.

a very lively place during business hours, and despite its historical value, has been ignored and not given its due, is in a sense a 'blind spot'.

Let us depart from Konak Pier, which was built as the Customs House in 1867 (thought to have been designed by Gustave Eiffel) and is now a shopping center; let us then enter Fevzi Paşa Boulevard, right in front of us, and reach the Çankaya metro stop a short distance away.

Here a story begins to emerge.


*Figure 2. Photo: Ferhat Kentel.*

The right side of the road is Kemeraltı. And one of the entrances to the historical Kemeraltı district welcomes you with a huge "Allah" sign (Figure 2). The sign is slightly unsettling and is a subject of humour when one is explaining the road directions but cannot be used with much humour for fear of sinning. Actually, descriptions or metaphorical uses such as "I am waiting near God", and "Enter next to God" symbolically reproduce an urban space in interaction. This writing, which was formerly said to be in Arabic letters, adapted to the alphabet reform as a new 'sacredness' over time, but lost its sanctity and, like all translated religious discourses, lost its mystery and turned into just another street decoration. In fact, how the republic produces other meanings while being 'consumed' can be seen through this symbolic interaction.

After passing the "Allah" sign, traces of the shaved walls of Büyük Karaosmanoğlu Han and wall fragments of the almost destroyed Selvili Han can be seen. In addition to these two hands, historically important buildings such as Mirkelamoğlu Han, Küçük, and Büyük Kuzuoğlu Hans were either demolished or partially destroyed during the construction of Fevzi Paşa Street, which was opened in 1941 to connect the Customs building and Basmane Train Station.

History is largely lost, but it seems to continue to remind passers-by on the sidewalk. The ruins of this *han* do not attract much attention from passers-by. Or an ancient Byzantine-looking piece of building that tells of its existence through the remains of a few bricks, as an archaeological or fossil-like architectural waste, shows that the old has no longer the strength to endure. On the other hand, a shanty room was placed on the first floor of the historical Büyük Karaosmanoğlu Han, as if to compensate for the demolished part (Figure 3).

We can also make a note about the region. The approximately two and a half kilometers long Frank Street, which extends from the place we classify as 'old' to the north, that is, to the areas we classify as 'new', where mostly Greek and Levantine populations were living, via Fevzi Paşa Street, was also erased during the fire of 1922. This street, which starts in front of Vezir Han in the Hisarönü area of Kemeraltı and extends to the Alsancak port, parallel to Kordon, also gives us some important clues about how memory is formed accompanied by a vanished place.


*Figure 3. Büyük Karaosmanoğlu Han. Photo: Ferhat Kentel.*

For example, the surprise, reaction, and ignorance of those who looked at the many street signs and plaques in Greek on Frank Street seen in a 1908 photograph on Facebook indicate some rules of the national identity building process. Thanks to these segments of discourse, we can see how urban space, whether preserved or erased, is an important element for national memory in general.[7] These comments point to what Ernest Renan wrote about the element of 'forgetting' in that process.[8] The national identity rises by forgetting the 'unnecessary' historical facts.

Instead of walking straight across from Konak Pier, we continue on Şehit Fethibey Street on the left, and as we enter Mimar Kemalettin Street, we first come across the statue of Mimar Kemalettin Bey, whose name was adopted for the street and neighbourhood. The fact that Kemalettin's statue was erected here gives us clues about the content of the history and memory that was intended to be created. While the right (south) side of the Fevzi Paşa boulevard, that is, the Turkish and Muslim Kemeraltı, had modest protection in its scale, the left side of the boulevard could not be protected (because it was burned); therefore, it is not a place that carries any social memory; a 'fiction of memory' had to be placed in this area later. Kemalettin's statue is also a part of this fiction. In other words, fiction and reminders help the reconstruction of the memory of those who live in a place that has no memory.

The right side of Fevzi Paşa Boulevard is South, even 'Orient': it is old, and its connection with the old and traditional continues. Passing through there (God's place), you go East, to the old Turkish-Muslim neighbourhoods. The left side is the North, even the 'West'; it is a new urban space. The Great Izmir Fire, which stopped in Kemeraltı, occurred in the West. This side of the city has

[7] It seems that those who commented online (with many errors according to Turkish language rules) on the Greek signs on Frank Street in the photograph do not have in their national collective memory any knowledge of Greek traces in the history of Izmir: "Are you sure if it's Izmir, it doesn't say anything in Turkish" / "It's not Izmir, it's like the city of Athens in Greece" / "It's obvious from the signs that there are traitors among us, the Ottomans couldn't finish off the traitors, and there still won't be an end to them" / "I didn't know either, it's like it's a street in Athens, all the signs are in Greek" / "Didn't we throw (them) it into the sea?"

[8] Ernest Renan, "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" (1882), *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol 1 (Calman-Lévy, 1949); see also Yves Déloye, "Etat, nation et identité nationale: pour une clarification conceptuelle," in Noëlle Burgi (ed.), *Fractures de l'Etat-nation* (Kimé, 1994).

been recreated from scratch, in the name of a new republic, with a new nation. In this recreated space, when we go East from Gazi Boulevard, which is parallel to Fevzi Paşa Boulevard and 250 meters to the North, we arrive at Kültürpark, in other words, the heart of Izmir's vanished history. That is where the Armenian neighbourhood and Greek culture disappeared.

When you leave Konak Pier, the part that corresponds to the left/north/ new side of Fevzi Paşa Boulevard, up to Gazi Boulevard, is the most emblematic part of the region. Mimar Kemalettin Street and its surroundings, located between these two boulevards, are a region where important traces of architecture under the influence of Mimar Kemalettin can be seen. This area was renovated and put into service in 2001, Mimar Kemalettin Street was closed to traffic and pedestrianized, and the statue of Mimar Kemalettin was erected. In this form, Mimar Kemalettin Street has been transformed into Mimar Kemalettin Fashion Centre.

As a representation of the transitional phase from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey, architect Kemalettin developed a unique architectural style that included the aesthetics of traditional Ottoman architecture and the urban aesthetics of the modern West. There are many examples of the First National Architectural Movement, which was shaped by interaction with other architects, in this region of Izmir. It seems that Kemalettin and other representatives of the movement tried to develop an architectural model suitable for a new identity, made references to the past, and placed curves, vaults, porticoes, and arches inspired by Ottoman and even Seljuk culture, towers on the corners of buildings and domes on top of them. They also made small doses of oriental and arabesque touches. However, they also believed that the floors should be higher, 'modern' and comfortable, with high ceilings. In a sense, they exhibited an eclectic approach.

## Absence and eclecticism

Mimar Kemalettin Area (MKA) functioned as a trade centre during the Republican period. Along with its ever-changing face, the types of trade it hosted have also changed. Defined in the Izmir Historical Port City Management Plan as "Mimar Kemalettin Urban Protected Area" in 1988 and 2022, this region where

60 buildings are registered within the protected area is a symbolic, even 'charismatic' region, but it is not seen as a touristic area. There are names and photos of all the *han*s on the websites that list the cultural heritage and cultural inventory of the city, but this is mainly a commercial area, except for the curiosity of 'experts' who are interested in history, memory, and architecture. Here, architectural works called the First National Architectural Movement are the decoration of commercial activity.

In addition to the state and city bureaucracy and experts, in other words, the strategic actors who design cities and play a ruling role in their production, in the transformation of the Mimar Kemalettin region, businesses, and ordinary citizens have also transformed the area by consuming it in their own practices, interpreting it and subjecting it to secondary production.

Behind the historical heritage appearance of these buildings are the spaces where shops are housed, and where commerce is housed functionally rather than for memory. For now, commerce squeezes into these buildings, mostly by adapting, destroying their internal structures when deemed necessary, demolishing their walls, and expanding their exposition halls. The outward image is also changed; the exterior-facing facades of the entrance, first, and even all floors are equipped with showcases. In the showcases, lifeless mannequins are seen, mostly wedding dress and evening dress mannequins, as well as groom's attire or children's circumcision garments. In this state, the function in the area, formerly known as Mimar Kemalettin Bazaar, has risen to another level and started to strain the space; its name has now been changed to Mimar Kemalettin Fashion Centre.

Over time, the influence of Kemalettin's style, which put traditional touches on the city that was imagined in a Western style, also faded away; in the capitalist market logic, urbanites created their own cities. Architect Kemalettin's city and the aesthetics of early republican architecture were valued to the extent that they could adapt to the market. Over time, while the region became the place of bridal dress shops in the free market logic, multiculturalism disappeared, and Kemalettin's places, along with the wedding dresses, turned into 'non-existent places' whose value is only appreciated by academic experts.

The market and its actors continued other experiments instead of the plans of the initial modernizing elite. Today, MKA is the location of a bridal industry

with around a thousand companies (according to the website of the Izmir Chamber of Commerce), extending all the way to Basmane station. It is the region where wholesale or retail sales are made, where mainly wedding dresses but also dresses called *abiye* (*habillé*), 'haute couture', etc. are produced or goods imported from China are sold.

The market is taking over the neighbourhood where the most authentic early republican architecture can be found and where Architect Kemalettin himself left his mark. In a way, the market does not tolerate Kemalettin, it imposes its own aesthetics and functions; creates its own unique authenticity; bridal shops decorate domed and arched apartment buildings. In addition to Turkish, Persian, and Arabic signs, it is possible to see many of Western-style and prestige-creating brands. In addition to the descriptions of "wedding dress", "fashion", and "haute couture" in French, English, and Italian, company and brand names such as Valeria Wedding Dress, Torres Cerimonia, Miracle World, Ja – De Galliano, Bianca Vito and Porium Novias adorn the showcases (see Mike Bode's insert in this issue).

Therefore, the influence of Kemalettin's style, which put Seljuk accents in the city imagined in a Western style, has also faded; in the capitalist market logic, urbanites create their own cities. While the city of architect Kemalettin became the place of bridal dress shops in the free market logic, Kemalettin's places were also transformed by the multiculturalism behind the wedding dresses. The market has produced other manifestations instead of the plans of the original modernizing elite.

MKA has a feature that contains many paradoxes and therefore provokes possibilities of thinking about space. The Fashion Centre or bridal shops seem to have reduced this district to a single function. We can talk about an intense function that makes the First National Architectural Movement and the historical perspective invisible. Despite all the respectable and sacred activities carried out to 'protect historical monuments', we can claim that the area produces its own protection through to the intense and dynamic activity it contains.

In a way, MKA is about historical value, architectural aesthetics, conservation, economy, market, formal-informal working conditions, administrative decisions, citizens' rights to the city, etc. It is a multi-dimensional and multi-layered city issue, and it involves a constant struggle between all these layers and different

actors. For example, the Great Kardiçalı Han, which is one of the most magnificent structures of MKA and had an important role in the commercial history of Izmir, has become unprotectable today after being seriously damaged due to the 2020 Izmir earthquake and evacuated for life safety. The walls built temporarily to protect the assets inside the building were broken and the inside of the *han* was looted. The future of the building, which according to news reports has been put up for sale, is unknown. In other words, the risk of an "empty and dilapidated area" that İsmet İnönü mentioned for the Kültürpark area continues for other reasons.

*Figure 4. Doğan Güven Business Center. Photo: Ferhat Kentel.*

We can give the example of the Silahçıoğlu Han to show how, paradoxically, the wedding dress market in the region also helps to rescue the architectural heritage. This *han*, built in 1928 at the intersection of Gazi Boulevard and Necati Bey Boulevard, is today called Doğan Güven Business Centre. This place has won

the Respect for History Local Preservation Award and is obviously carefully preserved with its exterior architecture. The interior of the domed building offers a very majestic and sparkling appearance. The company called Miracle World, which uses the building, belongs to an Iranian businessman. Atatürk photographs placed on both sides of the stairs leading up to the first floor present a kind of sign of loyalty or show the political side of the operator – in a very visible way (Figure 4). We can also say that the eclecticism of the First National Movement, in the buildings, is also reflected in the whole of MKA and inside the buildings today.

However, despite all these eclectic, plural, hybrid structures and practices, there is still something missing in MKA. Despite all its historical texture, this is a place where people just come and go. People come here just to pass through or to shop. The need to see and experience the historical examples of architecture here is only available to the minority and curious people. Also, this place hosts crowds only during the day; at night it is an empty space.

That is why, upon the request of the Izmir Chamber of Commerce and the Mimar Kemalettin Fashion Centre Association (MKMMD), a project was prepared to transform the Mimar Kemalettin Fashion Centre into a twenty-four hour living space, with a study carried out by the designer faculty members of Izmir University of Economics in 2020. This project, according to the university's website, envisages the square and its surroundings at the intersection of Necati Bey Boulevard and Mimar Kemalettin Street to be the focal point of tourists and Izmir residents with both a new image and the opportunities it provides, while remaining loyal to the historical texture.

We do not yet know at what stage this work is currently in. However, it seems that a special effort is being made to give dynamism to the square, a place where passers-by always witness huge parcels being carried (Figure 5). The Traditional Boyoz Festival, the first of which I witnessed on 8 June, 2023 (Figure 6), and the second of which was held on 26 June, 2024, and the IF Wedding Fashion Fair, which will be held at the Izmir Fair on 19–22 November, 2024 (Figure 7). Activities such as these all show the great importance given to MKA. In all these activities, the municipality and MKMMD organize fashion shows and cocktails in the square to make use of this historical area, a square where sacks, clothing

parcels, and bags are loaded and unloaded into pickup trucks in a hustle and bustle. After the show is over, the hustle and bustle continue where it left off.


*Figure 5. Mimar Kemalettin Street. Photo: Ferhat Kentel.*

In any case, according to a statement frequently heard by those working in the workshops, there is an intention to make MKA a 'new Champs-Elysées'. The participation of the Mayor of Konak district and the Mayor of Izmir Metropolitan Municipality Tunç Soyer in the *boyoz* festival held in 2023 has a special meaning for MKA. During the festival, where "five thousand hot *boyoz* and ice cold lemonade were distributed", MKMMD president and mayors shared their claims in public: "We are working to give a beautiful vision to the fashion center"; "This is a fashion center in the world, not only in Turkey"; "Architect Kemalettin has become a center that is a candidate to become a world brand and to achieve much more"; "Mimar Kemalettin Fashion Centre has

become one of the brands that will bring Izmir together with the world. We still have a lot of work to do to improve this area. We are ready to do anything."[9]

MKMMD is actually seeking recognition and legitimacy, accompanied by the desire to create a more distinguished place that works more 'efficiently'. However, let us also note that in all these activities and official speeches, Architect Kemalettin and the architectural value of the region are not mentioned.


*Figure 6. Mimar Kemalettin Street, Traditional Boyoz Festival. Photo: Ferhat Kentel.*

[9] Wedding Style, "Mimar Kemalettin Moda Merkezi 21. Yılını Boyoz Şenliğiyle Kutladı", 14 August 2023, https://weddingstyle.com.tr/mimar-kemalettin-moda-merkezi-21-yilini-boyoz-senligiyle-kutladi/.


*Figure 7. Announcement of Izmir Fair, November 2024. Photo: Ferhat Kentel.*

## The entangled performance of Architect Kemalettin and the market

MKA is an 'intermediate place'; it witnesses a story that is beyond the intentions of the founding strategists or written by the people who walk in the city – who consume it – but cannot read their story. The district effectively bridges the old and the new in space; it provides transitions in different planes. This spatial negotiation also evokes the ongoing negotiations in the construction of Turkish national identity. In the ideological discourse of Turkish national identity, the attempt of culturalist nationalism (emphasis on the essence) to be original ('Western' in technique; 'native' in culture) does not hold up; 'superstructural reform' (*inkılaplar*, or revolutions, as called by the republican elites) cannot

control the underlying structure. MKA also offers a concrete example of this construction in space. In social life (even in the most conservative segments), the power of Western, modernist, capitalist, and secular nationalist life and practices that erase the past is much stronger. As a result, the needle of spatial dynamics and lived practices are shifting towards 'civilization' and 'capitalist market' rather than 'culture'.

Therefore, the synthesis or eclecticism created by the Architect Kemalettin school, which aimed to build a kind of identity and is expected to serve the rising nation symbolically, falls into the background – a blind spot – against the political economy, construction, technology, and architecture of capitalism. The market is taking over cities by making its own rules (power relations) dominant.

However, as I mentioned earlier, it is not possible to understand an area where, according to official figures, there are approximately a thousand companies, and according to the statement of a skilled worker working in the region, there are around ten thousand workshops,[10] with only spatial observations and analyses. Because MKA has an 'underground' beyond all these spatial negotiations, architectural movements, trade, and fairs. This is also a place that is formed by class relations but does not show these relations. MKA contains a kind of 'slavery' system, especially for unskilled workers, including refugee workers, who are ununionized, uninsured, and have no negotiating capacity. In a sense, while MKA falls into the 'blind spot' architecturally, social classes and social justice issues also fall into their own kind of 'blind spot'.

Skilled workers are considered indispensable elements of the labour-intensive wedding dress market. These master-workers essentially ensure the survival of the clothing industry, especially wedding dress sewing. There is a strong relationship of equality between these workers. This equality stems from their bargaining power. There is even a café in the neighbourhood where skilled workers gather to discuss wage demands to be forwarded to the bosses (Figure 8). However, as an example of intra-class discrimination and corporatism, we also learn that while wage demands are being formulated in this café, contrarily to the passers-by, unskilled workers do not have the right to be around.

[10] Interview with a skilled worker in a wedding dress workshop, 1 June 2024.


*Figures 8 and 9. Photo: Ferhat Kentel.*

## Last word

As you wander around MKA and its surroundings, you can see the destroyed, demolished, and damaged *han*s, as if the lost souls of Izmir are now looking through the shop windows. Primarily with white wedding dresses, but also with red, navy blue, green, purple, and black evening dresses; lifeless mannequins wearing wedding, engagement, or *abiye* clothes are watching passers-by (Figure 9).

Izmir is a city where the burden of the past is heavy, and its public space has a hard time facing this burden. Despite many invisible and erased historical assets, Izmir carries visible or invisible traces. If the city were a person, we could say that this person would probably want to forget but could not (and which he did not show) and had to live with his memory. 'Plurality of the past' imposes itself on Izmir; protecting this plurality and richness is reflected in the discourse. However, on the other hand, 'conditions also impose themselves': the requirements of 'real' life push the 'necessary' practices on urban space into the background.

The eclectic architectural approach that we see in MKA lost its legitimacy in the face of other trends, especially reinforced concrete apartment buildings. But over time, in an environment where everything is constantly becoming outdated, it has gained a fictional and ideological value and negotiation power as part of a historically valuable memory.

However, today the issue is clear; will this value increase? Or will it melt away in the face of the functionality of the market and be replaced by 'modern' buildings?

# Early Republican Ideology Through the Works of Tevfik Sırrı Gür in Mersin

ULAŞ BAYRAKTAR
Co-founder and coordinator of Kültürhane in Mersin

Mersin was a coastal village until the second half of the nineteenth century. The fate of the village changed under the occupation of the region by the Egyptian governors. The acceleration of cotton production in the region started during the reign of Ibrahim Pasha, who took over the management of the region after the 1830s. He worked for the development of agriculture in the region, prepared a project for the irrigation of Tarsus, and increased the quality of wheat, barley, and cotton production by bringing seeds from Egypt and Cyprus. In addition, workers who were experts in cotton cultivation were brought from Syria, Egypt, and Cyprus. As a result of these efforts, the amount of cotton produced in Çukurova in the 1850s reached eleven thousand tons.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the British Textile Industry was supplying most of the cotton it needed from the United States, but British Industrialists also encouraged the development of cotton farming in places where the climate and soil were suitable, in order not to be dependent on a single source of raw materials. They foresaw that the developments in America would negatively affect the British economy and began to identify new regions where cotton could be grown. In this context, in 1857, the Manchester Cotton Supply Association determined India and Turkey as suitable countries for cotton cultivation.

Çukurova with Adana at its centre thus became a valuable land for cotton production. Mersin emerged as a strategic port for the export of this agricultural production.[1]

Moreover, forestry products for the construction of the Suez Canal were procured from the Taurus Mountains and sent by the same port. As a result of these critical changes, Mersin rapidly became a strategic port city from a small coastal village. After years of French occupation during the Independence War, it became the centre of İçel province.

The most prominent figure in the early Republican period was Mithat Toroğlu who had acted as the mayor of the city for three mandates between 1929 and 1942. His efforts as the mayor were mainly concentrated on solving the public health and infrastructural problems of the city.[2] But perhaps his most important action was inviting the famous German architect and urban planner Herman Jansen, who had also planned Ankara in 1932, to draw the first urban plan of Mersin in 1938. According to Jansen, two important elements would determine the "character of Mersin". The port was the first of these and would enable the city to develop as a "trade city." The second was the sea, which would enable Mersin to become a "beach city".[3]

The early Republican period of Mersin was thus launched by this scientific approach to urban planning. Although trade has been one of the main determinants of Mersin, its association with the sea has gradually weakened due to coastal roads and tall apartments along these boulevards. The impact of Jansen's plan has thus been very limited.

The actual impact of the Republican era started with the second appointment of Tevfik Sırrı Gür (Figure 1) as the governor in 1947 who marked the city with ideological symbols and structures of the founding principles of the young Republic.

---

[1] N. Özcanlı (ed.), *Adana Sanayi Tarihi* (ADASO Yayınları, 2008), 27.

[2] İ. Bozkurt and İ. H. Aytar, "Cumhuriyet'in Yerel Yönetim Politikası: Mithat Toroğlu'nun Mersin Belediyesi Başkanlığı Örneği (1929–1942)," *Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 6, no. 1 (2023): 63–80.

[3] T. Ünlü, "Mersin'in Mekânsal Biçimlenme Süreci ve Planlama Deneyimleri," *Gazi Üniv. Müh. Mim. Fak. Der.* Cilt 22, no. 3 (2007): 428.

*Figure 1. Tevfik Sırrı Gür. Source: https://wiki.kulturhane.org/.*

Born in 1892 and graduated from the Faculty of Public Administration (Mülkiye) in 1911, Gür worked as a district governor in various districts. During the National Struggle, he came to Ankara and worked in administrative positions under the Government of the Republic of Turkey. Later, he became one of the emblematic bureaucrats of the early Republican period introducing the political principles of the new regime with his governmental style and policies. He was appointed as the governor of Mersin (at that time the province was called İçel) first in 1931. He left Mersin in 1933 and served as governor first in Elazığ and then in Muş before becoming the governor of İçel for the second time on June 2, 1943. The policies that he executed during his second mandate until 1947, transformed the city and can be referred to in order to comprehend the ideology and the political spirit of the founding republican elite.[4]

Although widely acknowledged, Gür's works have not been viewed in this perspective as the expression of the Early Republican period. That is why, upon the invitation of the Consulate General of Sweden in İstanbul, we, as Kültürhane, proposed to track down the remaining buildings and sites of this period that have been rarely seen and discussed as a whole in this perspective. A walk going through seven spots identified through the governor's works will thus shed light on a political blind spot in the history of the city.

[4] Develi, Ş. (1996). Eserleriyle Anıtlaşan Vali Tevfik Sırrı Gür. Akdeniz Belediyesi Yayınları, Mersin.


*Figure 2. Itinerary of the Walk. From Google Maps, annotated by the author.*

The walk we propose follows an itinerary from East to West following the works of the governor (Figure 2). Starting in front of the train station that represents also the foundation of the settlement as an important naval location, we walk approximately five kilometres to stop in seven spots where we will find clues on the political mindset and governing style of the founding republican elite.

## Child Welfare Agency

We start our walk with the old building of the Turkish Child Welfare Agency facing the train station (Figure 3). The Agency was founded in 1921 in Ankara. The objective of the agency is the protection of orphans and poor children until the age of twelve. The foundation of such a public institution shortly after the opening of the Turkish Grand Assembly is the illustration of the welfare understanding of the New Regime as the Ottoman State did not assume the responsibility of social services that are carried out by foundations or guilds.

Although it was not founded by the State itself, Atatürk was the promoter of the initiative, and local bureaucrats were encouraged to support such institutions.

*Figure 3. Photo: Ulaş Bayraktar.*

We do not have information about the local branch of the agency in Mersin and yet we read from the local newspapers that it had hosted seventy-four children of which forty-one were earthquake survivors, in 1944 providing all their needs. From the same source, we learn that it had opened a primary school with its own resources. A year later, we learn from the same journal that the Agency had bought the land on which it built its building that is operational as a public library. All these activities were believed to be possible thanks to the active support of Gür. For instance, he helped the agency to open a summer cinema on the roof of the building creating an important source of revenue. Likewise, the governor seemed to vitalise the cultural life of the city through the opening of a cinema.

## Statue of İsmet İnönü

Next to the Child Welfare Agency, we see the statue of İsmet İnönü (Figure 4), one of the most prominent actors of the early Republican period who served as the second president of the Republic after the death of Atatürk. Statues, especially the ones representing Atatürk, are the main ideological symbol of Republicanism in Turkey. In all cities, schools, public institutions even in gated communities, we encounter thousands of them all around the country. They have been the host of public celebrations as well as the target of fundamentalist attacks. Gür had built two statues in Mersin, one of Atatürk, in front of the

Public House and a second one of İsmet İnönü right next to the Child Welfare Agency. In contrast to the number of Atatürk's statues, there are only 31 statues of İnönü in the whole country. The one that was built by the famous sculptor Kenan Yonguç in Mersin is the sixth one dating to 1945. It is three meters high located on a mount of four meters representing İnönü in civil clothes and facing north.

The year 1945 is also significant given that in that same year, a multipartite transition had occurred. Although the ruling Republican People's Party (CHP) had kept its power, the rise of the opposition was apparent. The construction of the statue might be interpreted as a sign of loyalty to the founding elite and the party by the governor.


*Figure 4. Statue of İsmet İnönü. Photo: Ulaş Bayraktar.*

## Entrance Gate of the Greek Orthodox Church

Our third stop is the gate of the old Greek Orthodox Church. It was a magnificent church with a high dome and a double bell tower with marble on all sides, seen in most of the old postcards of the city (Figure 5). It was built by Konstantin Mavromatti in 1885. Since it had no congregation after the population exchange, it was used as the Victory Mosque for a while. It was used as a cinema and theatre performance hall.


*Figure 5. Now demolished Greek Orthodox Church. Source: https://www.yumuktepe.com/hagios-georgios-kilisesi-ali-murat-merzeci/.*

As Gür lacked the resources to carry out his ambitious projects, he tried to alternatively find ways to do so. In contrast to the limited number of Orthodox in the city, there were two Orthodox churches, one Arab, and the other Greek. In the beginning, he asked the Arab community to donate their church to the State and move to the Greek Orthodox church which he promised to repair and renovate. The community refused the offer since they were upset about the governor who had expropriated a great part of the Church's garden while

constructing Atatürk Boulevard. If accepted, Gür would have not only acquired extra space for the Public House but also could use the material of the church. Upon refusal, the governor demolished the Greek Orthodox Church of which only the entrance gate remains now.

The Gate represents in a way the Turkification of the State. Once populous and powerful in the city, the non-Muslim community had to leave the new Republic either by themselves or obligatorily due to forced exile or population exchange. The entrance gate, hardly seen in the entrance of a bazaar, can be seen as the phantom of the once very cosmopolite Mersin.

## Tevfik Sırrı Gür High School

In the northeastern proximity of the gate, we arrive at our next stop, Tevfik Sırrı Gür High School (Figure 6). When Gür was appointed as the governor, there was no high school in Mersin. The secondary school students had to travel daily to Adana to pursue their studies. Although expressed on all occasions, the need was not seen by the state. Realizing the urgency of a high school, Gür promised its construction, but there were hard times in the middle of the Second World War. Although it kept its neutrality until the end of the war, Turkey had suffered enormously from the war conditions and thus had no resources at all for such grand work.

In order to secure funding, he ordered the opening of a branch of the Turkish Education Society which immediately started fundraising efforts. Gür actively participated in this fundraising by either encouraging or even forcing local businessmen to contribute. For example, the names of those who donated three thousand five hundred Liras had their names on the door of a classroom. In a short while, the society had managed to collect about 300,000 Turkish liras from more than a thousand people. To further enhance the resources, he bought tires and cement from Ankara and sold them in Mersin. The profit from this commercial activity was also transferred to the fund. He also introduced obligatory donations from importers and exporters.


*Figure 6. Tevfik Sırrı Gür High School. Photo: Ulaş Bayraktar.*

Having raised enough resources, he bought land from a non-Muslim family and asked a Hungarian descent engineer Massinger to draw the plan. The construction of the building was accomplished in 1945, but the Ministry did not issue permission for student admission in the first place. Gür appointed teachers from the Navy School that was temporarily located in Mersin due to the World War. Seeing the determination of the governor, the ministry had to officially open the school.[5]

The high school's construction and opening reveal how the early Republican bureaucrats valued education. In such difficult times, where even bread was distributed with rations, he dared to construct a school by encouraging and/or forcing local notables to contribute.

[5] D. Aslan, "Tevfik Sırrı Gür ve Mersin Valiliği," (MA thesis, Mersin University, 2001), 124.

## White Café

One of the founding elite's main objectives was to modernize people's way of living so that they became active cities of the young Republic. In addition to the importance attributed to education, cities' social and cultural life were to be transformed. These ambitions can be realized easily through Gür's works. Our next stop, the Stone Building on Atatürk Streed is an example (Figure 7).


*Figure 7. White Café. Photo: Ulaş Bayraktar.*

Until recently serving as the Metropolitan City Hall, the building known as the Stone Building to the south of the high school, formerly used as a house on top and a warehouse on the bottom, had been later converted into a workshop that produces horseshoes and nails, and the upper floor was once the Mersin İdman Yurdu Club. The governor found the building in its current state and created White Coffee (*Akkahve*) without interfering with the old state of the lower floor.

The Old Warehouse has become a luxury local that preserves its historical beauty. He brought the manager himself so that the politeness of the place would not be compromised. Here, people listened to music, danced, and spent time watching Atatürk Street from the large glass during the day. The most important service of *Akkahve* was to be a meeting and gathering place for young poets, musicians, and painters. The café is still remembered as an extraordinary hub for cultural encounters and activities. Gür also wanted to build a hotel on the upstairs of the café as there were only two hotels where tourists could comfortably stay. He managed to accomplish the rough work, but with his appointment to Kastamonu as the governor, the construction was halted, and the hotel was never achieved.

Upon the closure of the café, the building was used for a long time as the city hall. Recently, a renovation project was launched to transform it into a city museum.

## People's House (*Halk Evi*)

The cultural modernization of the society by Republican principles was one of the main objectives of the founding elite. While village institutes were introduced to educate and modernize rural populations, people's houses were opened in city centres. In order to reach the masses of the people with the values brought by the Republic, People's Houses were opened in fourteen provincial centres, especially Ankara, on 19 February, 1932, and this number increased greatly over time. Gür had opened a community centre right after his appointment, however he believed a larger centre was essential. He thus launched the project of building a prestigious community centre from scratch.

The area in the south of Silifke Street next to the governor's residence seemed suitable for this project. As mentioned above, he wanted to include the land of the Arab Orthodox Church in the project. Unsuccessful due to the objection of the Orthodox community, he built the centre between the Church and the residence. The construction naturally required a big budget. To find the funding he increased the cost of many necessities. He was also receiving a certain amount of money from the commodities going to and coming from Mersin Port,

especially oil and petroleum products, iron products, cement, and foodstuffs. Of course, not everyone paid this money voluntarily and complaints were made to Ankara about him. He certainly did not touch the collected money. A committee of three people kept the financial affairs and accounting records, and expenditure was at the discretion of this committee. The governor was interested only in the construction.

*Figure 8. People's House. Photo: Ulaş Bayraktar.*

He made the master plan of the construction himself and left the projects involving architectural details to the architects. The architects estimated the cost of the building as 2,800,000 TL. However, Tevfik Sırrı Gür had cost the entire building much less. Only 1,051,938 TL was spent on the whole construction. The Republican People's Party allocated only eighty-nine thousand TL for the furnishings of the building. Other than that, Gür received no other government aid.

Nine branches of activity were carried out in the community centre. These courses, such as Language-Literature, Fine Arts, Performance, Sports, Social Aid, Courses, Library-Publishing, Peasantism, History, Museum, Music, Foreign Language, and Oil Painting, were constantly in operation, and many men and women could benefit from these courses free of charge. Every day a doctor was

on duty at the Community Centre to examine the poor people. The community centre had also a revolving stage, which was then only available in Ankara and Istanbul in Turkey.

## Stadium

When appointed as the governor, Gür found an informal sports field with a wooden tribune surrounded by zinc that can seat a few hundred people was built in the place that was once a garage and still has a closed parking facility. The stadium which had the governor's name, was built by him with a closed tribune for twelve hundred people, an open tribune for twenty thousand people, an eight-lane athletics track, and a 105x70 meters football field. The stadium that served as the homeland for the city's soccer team *Mersin İdman Yurdu* had been left to solitude in 2013 due to the

*Figure 9. Tevfik Sırrı Gür Stadium in the 1970s. Source: https://www.facebook.com/markakentmersin/photos/a.1436399963277580/2244739952443573/?type=3.*

construction of a new stadium. In 2018, it was knocked down to become a people's park by the central government despite unanimous local opposition.[6]

The construction of such a big stadium was again an illustration of the early Republican ideology that valorised healthy youth ready for national service. Healthy, sporty bodies seemed to represent the strength of the young Republic vis-à-vis the past and present enemies.

## Conclusion

Social policies, education institutions, socio-cultural and sports venues as seen in Gür's works in Mersin were all revelations of the ideological character of the early Republic. Modernization of the state and society was the main objective of the founding elite. Legitimizing the state through social services, introducing new social and cultural habits, and idealisation of the youth went hand in hand during the founding years. Of course, none of these efforts were welcomed enthusiastically by the local notables. Nevertheless, the determined elite of the Republic were too determined to give up their ambitions against conservatory and pragmatist resistance. They did not hesitate to resort to force and enforced their policies. Building a nation-state was nowhere a thornless rose garden and was not either in Turkey. Relics of the Ancien Regime be it in the form of traditional notability or historical presence were details to be ignored given the determination of establishing a new regime.

The transition to a multipartite regime resulted in the weakening of this determination. As a matter of fact, Gür was appointed in 1947 to another province due to the local reactions and complaints. Three years later, when the Democrat Party took power, the modernization project as a whole was to be diluted rapidly, and populism would become the governing principle.

[6] https://www.fanatik.com.tr/futbol/tevfik-sirri-gur-stadina-ilk-kazma-vuruldu-2018305.

# III. Modernism(s)

# Florya Walk-through

MIKE BODE*
Visual artist and researcher based in Sweden and Türkiye

## Approaching

The Marine Mansion is situated west of Istanbul's former International Airport and accessed via the coastal road from Florya to Küçükçekmece. The building designed by the architect Seyfi Arkan for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1935 was a place that I had wanted to visit for a long time and was excited about seeing. It was November and I had taken the new Istanbul-Halkalı commuter train to Florya station and walked down to the beach.

To gain access, you must first pass through the side of the compound of the Grand National Assembly's social facilities, which felt somewhat intimidating and discordant with the idyllic images of playful families and bathers one usually associates with Florya in the 1930s. It also struck me that the beach itself was quite small.

At the foot of the long jetty leading out to the mansion there is a hut with a watchman selling entry tickets. Outside there is a sign explaining that the Mansion belongs to the Directorate of National Palaces of Turkey. It was from this vantage point that I first came to see the building, the light was facing me so the mansion was backlit and in shade depriving me of the experience of seeing the dazzling architectural white of Arkan's modernist masterpiece. Feeling somewhat disappointed I got my ticket and walked along the jetty up towards

* With acknowledgments and thanks to Seher Uysal, Esra Akcan, Bernt Brendemoen, Olof Heilo and Jens Peter Laut. A version of this text was first published in Swedish in *Ord&Bild* no. 3–4 2023, "Istanbul – Staden som palimpsest".

the building. I was reminded of a text by the anthropologist James Clifford who discusses how the experience of a place changes depending on when in its history you visit it.[1]

What had initially interested me in the building was the way in which it embodied an international architectural aesthetic style similar to some early Scandinavian modernist buildings, but also that it carried a specific symbolic language, one of leisure and healthy bodies in the sun, the sea, speed boats but moreover an architectural expression which was radical and new, demonstrating optimism and showing an openness to foreign influences.

Added to these fantasies I had also seen photographs and film footage of Atatürk during his visits to the mansion, rowing his boat, swimming with people in the sea, or playing with children on the beach, images which are still common today and belong to Atatürk's visual legacy. The father of the nation spent time with his subjects, people who were neither altogether accustomed to devoting their leisure time semi-naked together on the beach nor familiar with the social promises of modern architecture.

## Upon entry

I entered the first section of the building, a covered walkway with what appeared to have been service quarters on the right-hand side. This part of the building is more private, a rear side, and the windows facing the beach are mainly from the corridor in the west wing together with a few portholes referencing the notion of a boat or a ship. The building is in some respects two-dimensional, it has a back facing the beach which is private and opaque, and a front side facing the sea and sun with large windows and a boat jetty with all the guest rooms facing outwards towards the sea, also reminiscent of Ottoman water baths.[2]

At the end of the walkway one steps directly into the main building, and as my eyes adjusted from the sunlight I saw the impressive reception room with its

[1] J. Clifford, *Routes – Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Harvard University Press, 1993).

[2] E. Akcan, "Ambiguities of Transparency and Privacy in Seyfi Arkan's Houses for the Turkish Republic," *ODTÜ Mimarlık Fakültesi Dergisi* 22, no. 2 (2005): 25–49.

immense conference table and the large curved bay windows stretching around the front of the building and draped in sheer curtains which diffused the intense sunlight reflected in from the sea. Next to the modern furniture by the windows was a spectacular and large mechanical blackboard that appeared to be motorized and able to rotate from left to right and scroll up and down. I imagined Atatürk and his entourage using the blackboard to deliberate on the republican program. The room felt more like a seminar room rather than a reception area, a space where meetings and presentations could be held, a place for discussions, and where ideas could be drawn up.

In fact, during the last years of his life, Atatürk was becoming more and more interested in history and linguistics and in particular Sun Language Theory, a refuted hypothesis introduced by the Viennese linguist and Orientalist Hermann Feodor Kvergiç, which proposed that all human languages are descendants of one proto-Turkic primal language.[3] The summer mansion could very well have been one of the places where such discussions were held. Some evidence of this can be found to the left of the reception hall in Atatürk's office where there is a black and white photograph depicting a meeting in the same room in 1937 with the Swiss anthropologist Eugene Pittard together with Ayşe Afet İnan, one of Atatürk's adopted daughters. İnan was a PhD student of Pittard at the time and a sociologist and historian known for having measured hundreds of thousands of skulls in Anatolia in the 1930s in search of a unifying Turkish history.[4] At a time of rapid modernization and in the seismic shift from late Ottoman Turkey to the new republic, Atatürk was in need of historical legitimacy. According to linguist Ghil'ad Zuckermann, it is also possible that Atatürk's interest in Sun Language Theory was a way to sidestep the shortcomings of the Turkish language reform and legitimize the many Arabic and Persian words which the Turkish language authorities had not been able to do away with.[5]

[3] İ. Aytürk, "H. F. Kvergić and the Sun-Language Theory," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 159, no. 1 (2009): 23–44.
[4] "About: Afet İnan," DBPedia, https://dbpedia.org/page/Afet_İnan (accessed 26 September 2024).
[5] G. Zuckermann, *Language Contact and Lexical Enrichment in Israeli Hebrew* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 165.

## Moving through

I continued through the building via the obligatory map of info points staked out by the audio guide. The guide itself was a bit of a nuisance and got in the way of the spontaneous, physical, and spatial experience of the rooms, so not wanting my first impressions to be clouded by official museological explanations I concentrated instead on trying to experience the space and taking some snapshots with my iPhone.

The light that day was really quite beautiful with the sea glistening behind the sheer curtains, perfect for the architectural performativity of the building. As soon as I entered it became obvious to me that I had stepped into a staged enactment of ideas, a form of propaganda representing a new republican modernist dream. I have always found that Buildings which embody an ideological or philosophical positioning or gesturing become interesting when displaced by time. A building seen as an artifact of an idea. What also interested me was the distance that these gestures represented in the light of a very different Turkey today, post-Gezi Park protests, religious populism and President Erdogan.

Moving through Atatürk's living quarters, trying to avoid the ribbons and ropes strung up between the visitors and the furniture, I peered into the large bathroom, with its peculiar weighing chair, apparently used for the doctors to keep an eye on Atatürk's deteriorating health. I also passed a small room that contained a bed and what would have probably been Atatürk's chaise longue. Most of the furniture and light fittings in the mansion were designed by Arkan, something which was typical for architects at the time as there was no generic furniture to go with such modern buildings and was part of the mission to create a complete environment, to perform the modern dramaturgy of the space. The furniture and lighting were subtle, simple and practical.

Leaving the living quarters I proceeded down the corridor of the west wing, looking in on each of the guest rooms. It was clear that the rooms had been arranged and reinstalled to appear as they might have looked during Atatürk's time at the mansion. Interspersed with the rooms in the corridor there are some glass cabinets containing artifacts connected to Atatürk such as his bathing slippers, bathrobe, and bathing trunks, presumably brought back to the site when it was turned into a museum. One particular item that stood out was the

silver belt buckle on Atatürk's bathing trunks which depicted a naked figure athletically diving into the sea. The design had a sense of Art Nouveau about it and reminded me of early twentieth-century depictions of healthy bodies exercising, doing sports and becoming strong and vigorous subjects for their nation-state.

The mansion was obviously intended as a spectacle and a place that could be mediated. Arkan's design for the mansion underscored that this project was a testimony to the idea that the Republican Revolution was the people's revolution and that this was a place where the nation and its leader could come together. Newspapers and newsreels of the period often depicted and reported on Atatürk's leisure time at Florya and his encounters with his people, rowing his boat and swimming: "The most democratic president in the world who cruises in a rowboat among the masses."[6] The walls of the mansion are covered with such images including several iconic photographs of Atatürk with Ülkü Adatepe, the youngest of his eight adopted daughters. In the photographs and newsreels, we see them taking walks together on the beach promenade, learning to write on the blackboard or the little girl being disobedient lying on the ground outside while Atatürk even-temperedly looks on. The patient father of a young nation?

Walking back through the covered walkway I discovered another room that contained Atatürk's rowing boat and more photographs of him in the sea. At the end of the walkway, there is a small room which I had missed on my arrival containing a tiny exhibition about Seyfi Arkan, a few photographs, and documents including a letter from the municipality to Arkan confirming the completion of the mansion. It was a small and non-conclusive presentation but one that at least acknowledged the artist behind the work, like a tag or a signature to the building.

## Exit

Leaving the mansion and walking back over the jetty to the beach I remember feeling exhilarated about having experienced the building's performativity, even

[6] E. Akcan, "Ambiguities of Transparency".

in its subjugated state as a museum. However, another more curious feeling followed me that day, the overhanging question why the modernist promise embodied in the mansion was never really fulfilled. At least not in the way it had in many European countries where similar architectural prototypes came to form the basis for a more structural and social modernist program.[7]

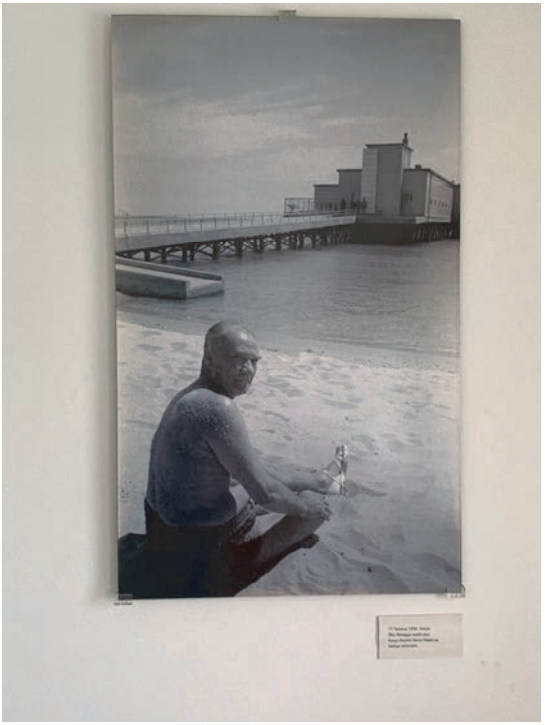
Seen in parallel with Atatürk's interest in Turkic origins and linguistics at the time and his attempts to find a national consciousness made me also think that the gestures embodied in the building might have originally fulfilled another more ambiguous agenda, something which both signalled an understanding of international movements and interactions with Europe, but at the same time something which turned inwards, towards the Turkish people, giving a pledge of what could be attained by the republic even if this was something that was far out of reach of most everyday people.

Wanting to linger a little while longer on these thoughts I stopped for a coffee in a nearby restaurant. Sitting in the bright empty dining hall looking out over at the sea and the Mansion off-season in November imparted a peculiar sense of loss and underscored the feeling of having just witnessed the relic of a promise which was never truly realized.

## *Images*

Florya, 2 November 2019.
Florya, 2 November 2019.
Florya, 12 September 2021.
Florya, 12 September 2021.
Florya, 2 June 2024.
Florya, 12 September 2021.
Florya Atatürk Marine Mansion, Istanbul courtesy of SALT Research, Gültekin Çizgen Archive. Anonymous photograph dated on rear in pencil "1938".

[7] H. Mattsson, *Swedish Modernism: Architecture, Consumption and the Welfare State* (Black Dog Publishing, 2010).



# Pedestrian Modernities

*Re-Orientating the Urban Experience*

OLOF HEILO
Historian and director of the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul

What is the defining moment of Turkish Modernity? The inauguration of Istanbul Hilton (1955)?[1] The first parliament in Ankara (1920)? The oppositional era between the two constitutions (1876–1908)? The Tanzimat reform program (1839–76)? The reign of Selim III (1789–1807)? The eighteenth-century *Lale Devri*, the seventeenth-century sultanate of women, or the Golden Age of Süleyman I in the sixteenth century? Was the Ottoman Empire not itself a driving force in the birth of the Modern world?[2]

As always, historical definitions blur in equal measure with distance and proximity to what they try to catch; the range where they appear clear and meaningful to the subject can be as attainable or elusive as the focal point of a telescope. The answer lies in the question: the paradigms are there to frame and highlight something, be it Atatürk, the Ottomans, Europe, or globalization. The Turkish case is further marred by a both Orientalist and Occidentalist tendency to, so to say, use the telescope from the wrong end and render the illusion of a greater mutual distance rather than the opposite. The definition itself, of course, is nowhere and everywhere to the one that is peering through the opening.

It is partly in an attempt to escape such confines that the following essay will endeavour to approach Turkish modernities from the perspective of the urban

[1] See K. Grinell, "När det moderna kom till stan och De blå pojkarna spelade i Hiltons bar," *Dragomanen* 17 (2015), for an earlier discussion about this (in Swedish).
[2] A. Mikhail, *God's Shadow: Sultan Selim, the Ottoman Empire, and the Making of the Modern World* (Norton, 2021). The ensuing academic quarrel is too complicated to refer here.

pedestrian. This is not to imply that walking in a city is an activity unaffected by cultural contexts, as becomes particularly evident when we consider its gendered dimensions.[3] However, certain experiences of cities appear to be common across modern cultures, as shown in the now classical work by Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*. The *flaneur*, a character well known from the nineteenth-century literary cityscapes of Paris and St. Petersburg, can be seen as the product of a rapidly changing and increasingly mobile world, where the street had become a stage for vendors, consumers, residents, and visitors to put themselves on display while retaining a level of anonymity that challenged traditional social hierarchies.[4] To a greater extent than the premodern city, where human relations had decided patterns of movement, the modern city was built on individual desire, and carefully curated by shopkeepers, entrepreneurs, and architects.

Unfortunately, Berman never wrote a chapter on Istanbul.[5] If he had done so, he would have found himself in a city with an unbroken history of being a metropolis long before the modern era, where some of the role models for Gogol's or Dostoyevsky's heroes had been roaming the streets a thousand years before the composition of *Nevsky Prospekt* or *The Double*.[6] To illustrate its multilayered nature, we might use the Direklerarası complex (1720) as a point of departure. This was a colonnaded market street that led up to the Şehzade Mosque from the area of Beyazıt, commissioned by the Grand Vizier of Ahmed III, Damat İbrahim Paşa of Nevşehir (1662–1730). Almost nothing remains of it today, since it has fallen victim to the many later impasses of modernity, which have entailed a constant broadening of the now heavily trafficked street towards

[3] S. Tuncer, *Women and Public Space in Turkey: Gender, Modernity and the Urban Experience* (I. B. Tauris, 2020).
[4] M. Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* (Simon and Schuster, 1982), esp. Ch. III–IV.
[5] A sort of 'dialogue' between Marshall Berman (who died in 2013) and Orhan Pamuk has been attempted by G. Millington and V. Rizov, "What makes city life meaningful is the things we hide," *City* 23, no. 6 (2019): 697–713. A forthcoming book by Johanna Chovanec, *Navigating Belonging in Post-Imperial Turkish Literature: Peyami Safa, Halide E. Adıvar and Ahmet H. Tanpınar* (Palgrave) deals with some facets of the urban flaneur in modern Turkish literature.
[6] *The Life of St. Andrew the Fool*, edited by Lennart Rydén (Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995), whose protagonist is a "Fool-in-Christ" of the kind that especially Dostoyevsky took interest in, offers fascinating glimpses of everyday life in 9th-century Constantinople.

*Figure 1. Remains of the Direklerarası porticoes, Şehzadebaşı, Istanbul. Photo by the author 2024.*

the Saraçhane intersection. But when it was built, it constituted an urban space of a kind that, in the words of Doğan Kuban, had not been erected in Istanbul since the days of Constantine the Great: an arcade street, a portico, providing light and shelter for people who came to buy, take a stroll, or sit down – a public space reminiscent of what the former Byzantine main street, the Mese, a little bit to the south, might have looked like.[7] By the late Ottoman period, it was a favoured spot for Istanbul *flaneurs* to show off and interact, sometimes creating a throng so massive that it was difficult to get through.[8]

Damat İbrahim Paşa became the most notorious victim of the Patrona Halil uprising in 1730, which led to the deposition of Sultan Ahmed III and the end of the *Lale Devri*. As Can Erimtan has showed, continuous attempts to ascribe a Westernizing agenda to the many building projects in this period – most notably the Saadabad Palace in Kağıthane – have little or no support in sources. The hypothesis seems to go back largely to the writings of Ahmet Refik (1881–1937), who was eager to explain the entire history of Modern Turkey as a process of Europeanization.[9] In fact, the Direklerarası era sees the lasting transformation of an Istanbul space that later Western visitors often understood as the epitome of the Orient: the

[7] D. Kuban, *Istanbul: An Urban History* (İş bankası, 1996), 407, 408.
[8] E. Boyar and K. Fleet, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 308.
[9] C. Erimtan, "The Perception of Saadabad,"in *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. D. Sajdi (I. B. Tauris, (2007), 41–62.

Kapalıçarşı or Grand Bazaar. After the devastating fire in 1701, the central market area around the two *bedestens* was rebuilt with the iconic brick vaulting that now renders the historically somewhat misleading impression of one amorphous, labyrinthine complex, although the covered part is technically just a small portion of the wider commercial area. It is here somewhere that we find one of modern Turkish literature's *flaneurs*, Mümtaz from Tanpınar's *Huzur* (published in 1949 but set at the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939), meditating on the city's social and urban decline.[10]

Strictly speaking, both the Direklerarası and the Kapalıçarşı can be understood as revivals of the ancient market streets of Constantinople, albeit in different ways. The outline of the "great portico" of the late Roman city, the Makros Embolos – the main north-south axis of the ancient street grid, running from the east-west axis of the Mese up to the harbor area of the Golden Horn – is still traceable in the part of the Grand Bazaar that was covered in the eighteenth century. Like all the streets in the old market areas, it has long ceased to follow a straight path, a transformation that is likely to predate the Ottomans by centuries, although this is difficult to know.[11] What can be said is that the early Ottoman parts of what has become the Kapalıçarşı, namely the two fifteenth-century *bedestens*, are built on regular plans, in line with similar complexes in Cairo, Aleppo, Tabriz or Isfahan. Outside of them, the streets are squiggly and narrow, suited for pedestrians and possibly riders but not vehicles.[12]

[10] "An afflicted road, he thought; a meaningless thought. But, like that, it'd been planted in his mind. An afflicted road, a road that had succumbed to leprosy of sorts, which had putrefied it in places up to the walls of the houses aligned on either side." A. H. Tanpınar, *Huzur*, trans. Erdag Göknar as *A Mind at Peace* (Archipelago Books, 1949), 71.

[11] A travel handbook for Russian pilgrims likens entering the late Byzantine city to "entering a great forest"; G. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1984), 44. Great thanks to Monica White for bringing this to my attention and providing me with the reference.

[12] Kuban, *Istanbul*, 343–345.

*Figure 2. Vaulted part of the ancient Makros Embolos, Kapaliçarşı, Istanbul. Photo by the author 2024.*

Because Istanbul was the centre of two Eastern Mediterranean empires for a millennium and a half, these characteristics must be considered in a wider historical perspective. Here, Damascus offers a convenient point of comparison. Just like Constantinople, this city had straight streets in Roman times, wide enough for horse-drawn chariots (and conveniently penetrable by imperial troops). During Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, it changed slowly and subtly, as centuries of shopkeepers intruded on the porticoes and eventually on the street itself.[13] It was no 'Oriental' trend – the Umayyad architecture in early Islamic Syria can even be seen as an attempt to reverse it[14] – but mirrored an overall development around the Mediterranean that saw the decline of the ancient public space and the rise of what would be known as the *mahalle* in the Muslim world – the closed, introverted neighbourhood,

[13] H. Kennedy, "From Polis to Madina: Urban Change in Late Antique and Early Islamic Syria," *Past & Present* no. 106 (1985): 3–27, esp. 11–19, for a comprehensible discussion about a model that was already proposed by the early twentieth-century historian of Damascus, Jean Sauvaget.
[14] R. Hillenbrand, "Anjar and Early Islamic Urbanism," in *The Idea and Ideal of the Town Between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. G. P. Brogiolo and B. Ward-Perkins (Brill, 1999), 59–98.

where the gathering place was the mosque, the church, or the synagogue (and only later, the coffee house).[15]

Like Istanbul, Damascus underwent changes in the eighteenth century that can be seen as forms of local modernization. Dana Sajdi has emphasized how ambitious building projects in this period belong in a wider context of growing social, gendered, cultural, and economic mobility, where public display of wealth and outdoor visibility of townspeople challenged traditional urban orders.[16] Over the course of the ensuing century, socioeconomic conditions drifted heavily in favour of the Christian community, leading to the 1860 riots when local Druze and Muslim mobs gutted the Christian quarters. From this point, the modernization of Damascus took a drastic top-down turn, as the Ottomans cracked down on sectarian violence and took stronger control over local affairs, initiating an urban renewal that was symbolically sealed by the creation of the Souq al-Hamidiyya. Following a major fire in 1893, this was conceived as the new pedestrian thoroughfare and market street of the old city, featuring fashionable textile shops – often with women as target customers – in a uniformly designed arcade with a vaulted roof of glass and steel.[17]

[15] On the latter, see A. Mikhail, "The Heart's Desire: Gender, Urban Space, and the Ottoman Coffee House," in *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee*, ed. D. Sajdi (Tauris, 2007), 133–170.
[16] D. Sajdi, *The Barber of Damascus: Noveau Literacy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Levant* (Stanford University Press, 2005), 14–34. See also R. Burns, *Damascus: A History* (Routledge, 2005), 240–46.
[17] Burns, *Damascus*, 251–261.

*Figure 3. Souq al-Hamidiyah, Damascus. Photo by Tarek Bajari 2022.*

To the colonial observer, who has the Crystal Palace or the boulevards of Haussmann in mind, all of this may appear as minor developments on an anxiously westwards-looking European periphery. In fact, the interplay of local dynamics, social unrest, and state ambition that would shape modern Damascus and Istanbul is similar to the one we find in nineteenth-century Vienna or Paris. This is not to say that all manifestations of modern change must be understood as mere local processes, or that globalization is a phenomenon unrelated to Western European expansionism. Paris remains the iconic example of nineteenth-century urban transformation, expressing the simultaneously inclusive and repressive mindset of a colonial empire, and twentieth century French urban planners would put a lasting mark on Eastern Mediterranean cities like Thessaloniki (Hebrard), Istanbul (Prost), and Damascus (Écochard).[18] The problem with the Parisiocentric history of the modern city is not that it is colonial, but that it historically manifests a peripheral position: Western Europe lacks the unbroken continuity of the Eastern Mediterranean urban centers, and

[18] In fact, already by the late Ottoman period, the Sultan asked Joseph Antoine Bouvard to prepare a new master plan for Istanbul: Boyar and Fleet, *A Social History*, 312.

its own story of modernity as a singular process is inapt to tell the story of cities with a much longer and more varied history as places of human interaction and political organization.

Interestingly, around the time when Ahmet Refik saw a Westernizing agenda in the Istanbul of Damat İbrahim Paşa, Walter Benjamin perceived echoes of Oriental Bazaars in the Parisian covered market streets, arcades, and department stores of the nineteenth century with their iconic glass-and-steel roofs. From the reign of Louis-Philippe (1830–1848), when "there were attempts to open bazaar-like shops and fixed-price stores in Paris", he drew the line to the Paris arcades that were built in response to the booming textile trade in the expanding colonial era of the 1820s and 1830s, and further back to the last decades of the eighteenth century: the Passage du Caire, he notes, was named after Napoleon's expedition to Egypt, and later furnished with sphinx-like heads over the entrance.[19] The modern city, it would seem, is simultaneously Orientalizing and Occidentalizing.


*Figures 4. Entrance to Passage du Caire, Paris. Photo by Eugène Atget 1903 (Wikimedia Commons).*

In nineteenth-century Istanbul, both trends can be observed in a characteristically localized way. The Grand Rue de Pera, today's Istiklal Avenue, which grew gradually broader over the course of more than a century, became the iconic 'modern' boulevard, the antithesis of the old commercial center of the Grand Bazaar. Indubitably, Pera was a 'foreign' neighbourhood in

[19] W. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, transl. H. Eiland and K. McLaughlin (Belknap, 2002), 37, 48, 55. Quoting Durand, he further notes how the Egyptian campaign created a fashion for shawls which "assumed Sphinx-like dimensions" after 1848.

the same sense as its predecessor Galata had been in Byzantine times; yet at the same time it was very local: its Classicising and Orientalizing façades with signs and inscriptions in Arabic, Latin, Greek or Armenian letters manifested an Ottoman public space where the power of the *mahalles* was broken, and where the languages, ethnicities, and religions in the empire were equally visible in the public. It still features a fascinating, and far from thoroughly studied, row of arcades or passages, all built after the last Beyoğlu fire in 1870 with telling names: Cité de Syrie, Passage Orientale, Agora Romylias... Just like their Parisian counterparts, these were private enterprises, not the result of large-scale state prospecting. Although several Istanbul streets do get widened in the late Ottoman period – this is when the Direklerarası begins to vanish – even the allegedly 'Western' Beyoğlu indicates a strong local resilience to attempts at creating a wider, straighter and most of all regular street grid.[20]

Then, of course, everything changes. With Henri Prost, Istanbul decisively embarks on an urban transformation that is still ongoing, with huge boulevards pushing through the sprawl. But these changes are no longer, as will soon become apparent, aimed at pedestrians. In a curious reversal of the Late Antique transformation of broader streets for chariots to narrow streets for pedestrians, the trend now goes in the opposite direction, where the pedestrian becomes pushed aside by the car. Berman addresses it in his chapter on Le Corbusier (who, incidentally, vied to become the city architect of Istanbul but lost it to Prost).[21] The boulevards, whose original aim had been to integrate the old, closed neighbourhoods into one, open urban arena, now begin to separate them again. The Atatürk Boulevard remains a thoroughfare for cars first and foremost; beyond the iconic Textile Traders Market and Sedad Hakkı Eldem's social security office building, the old neighbourhoods of Vefa and Unkapanı lie more entrenched than ever in the squiggly fabric of the premodern city.

In 1959, the Egyptian poet Ahmed Hijazi (b. 1935) reflected on the modern experience in a collection of poems called *Madina bila Qalb*, "Heartless City".

[20] Kuban, *Istanbul*, 463–67. Compare this to Cairo, which received an entirely new 'Parisian' city centre in the same period.
[21] Berman, *All That Is Solid*, 164–171.


*Figure 5. Suriye Pasaji, Istanbul from Istiklal Avenue. Photo by the author 2024.*

In one of them, a young country boy gets killed by a car as he visits Cairo; the witnesses have no idea who he is, and as his nameless body is removed from the street, life continues: "One boy came / one boy went".[22] It is the portrait of a city that has already become post-human: as opposed to the nineteenth-century flaneur, the twentieth-century pedestrian gets killed by the modern world before he gets to experience it.

It was during our city walk from Eminönü to Atatürk Boulevard on the first day of the Blind Spots project that some of us began to discuss where and when it is possible to speak of the beginning and end of the modern city. A century before Haussmann, the Marquis of Pombal had overseen the rebuilding of Lisbon after the devastating 1755 earthquake in a radically new way, based on the enlightened conviction that humans were able to use their mental and physical capacities to tame nature and create a safer and more beautiful world for themselves. If Western Europeans want to insist that they came up with this idea, they should at least have the decency of giving credits to the Portuguese rather than the French. But most of all, what the case highlights is the lasting impact of a non-human agency: in a way, the 1755 earthquake wiped out not only a pre-modern city, but also a pre-modern way of thinking about God, humans, and nature. The world that would call itself modern was built on its ruins.

[22] See M. Badawi, *A Short History of Modern Arabic Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1993), 69–70.

*Figure 6. The Atatürk Boulevard with the IMÇ in the background. Photo by the author 2024.*

With time, it would leave behind ruins, too. If the destruction wrecked by Haussmann upon the pre-modern fabric of Paris could still be explained as a necessary sacrifice for the greater benefit of the citizens, the legacies of similar projects in the twentieth century are far more divisive. The criticism that Berman directed against Robert Moses in New York is rather mild compared with the one that has targeted Adnan Menderes in Istanbul and Hjalmar Mehr in Stockholm.[23] It is hardly surprising that a general hesitation about the modern promise seems to set in during the second half of the twentieth century, when humanity had just shown itself capable of a destruction comparable to, or worse than that of a natural disaster. As Carl Gustav Jung would put it, it had learned to master nature, but not its own nature. From this perspective, the modern era – whenever we prefer to define it locally – should be globally located between the following two dates and places: Lisbon, 1 November 1755 and Hiroshima, 6 August 1945.[24]

[23] M. Gül, *The Emergence of Modern Istanbul: Transformation and Modernization of a City* (I B Tauris, 2009). The destruction of old Istanbul neighbourhoods was one of the points of accusation that were brought up against Menderes in the process that ended with his execution. In fact, already the Prost plans, though mitigated by vast parks and recreation areas, shows the outlines of what was to come – and the transformation accelerated further after Menderes.

[24] This essay could not have been written without the many discussions on architecture and urban space that I have had with Tonje Haugland Sørensen and Anja Mäkitalo throughout the years. I owe special thanks to Anders Ackfeldt for making me read Marshall Berman and providing me with vital input on the topic of modernity, and to Sara Brolund de Carvalho and Björn Magnusson Staaf for the discussion that is referred to by the end.

# A World of Ruins and a World of Technology

*Ludvig Nordström's Turkey*

ANDERS ACKFELDT*
Researcher and deputy director of the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul

> If you ask, then, what impression the people in the Anatolian countryside make, the answer is first and foremost: a good one, in fact, a very good one. The Turk differs, as he appears in everyday life, entirely from the traditional image that Europe … has had of him. This image, as we know, showed a gloomy fatalist, completely uninterested in everything except war and the houris of paradise.[1]

While participating in the interdisciplinary cultural heritage project *Blind Spot*, I was reading Ludvig Nordström's first-hand accounts and impressions of the modernization process during the early republican period in his book *Världs-Sverge: Skildringar ur svenska nationens liv (World-Sweden: Depictions from the Life of the Swedish Nation)*, published in 1928. The conversations with the participants, city walks, presentations, lectures, and exhibitions became an invaluable backdrop that informed the reading and understanding of this book written almost a hundred years ago.

This reflective engagement with Nordström's work also connects to the broader history of Sweden and the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly through the journeys of Swedish travellers to the region, which have been extensively documented, including in the pages of

* I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Olof Heilo for our ongoing discussions on the topic of modernity, as well as for his thoughtful reading and valuable feedback on early drafts of this text.
[1] L. Norström, *Lort-Sverige* (Kooperativa förbundets bokförlag, 1938), 185. Translations from the original Swedish by the author.

this series.[2] These travellers, motivated by a variety of purposes – whether diplomatic missions, scientific exploration, or artistic pursuits – each crafted their own distinctive narratives, enriching the exchange between the two regions. In the early Republican period of Turkey, Swedish travellers continued to explore and document their experiences, contributing to cultural, intellectual, and economic exchanges between Sweden and Turkey.

In the late Ottoman period Istanbul evolved into a tourist hotspot. The Pera Palace Hotel, which opened in 1895, became a favourite among affluent travellers from the Orient Express and epitomized the city's enduring allure. While the 1920s were marked by political and economic challenges, Istanbul maintained its status as a significant tourist destination, attracting visitors drawn by its historical importance, architectural beauty, and unique cultural experiences. Even though the accounts and stories of Swedish tourists and travellers during the early Republican period were often influenced by a 'Western gaze' and elements of Orientalism, these narratives also played a significant role in shaping Swedish perceptions of the newly formed republic's modernization efforts and contributed to the broader European discourse on nation-building and modernity in the twentieth century.

One such visitor with a particular interest in the young republic, was Ludvig "Lubbe" Nordström (1882–1942), a Swedish author and journalist.[3] Nordström was at the forefront of articulating and shaping Sweden's transformation into a modern industrial society. His extensive body of work during the 1920s and 1930s, which included prose fiction, travelogues, reportages, and numerous articles, vividly captured the pulse of a Swedish society in transition. During this time, Sweden rapidly shifted from a rural, agrarian society to an industrialized nation. This change brought significant urbanization, the growth of industries, and changes in living conditions and social dynamics.

The rise of the labour movement, social reforms, and improvements in public health and education were key aspects of this transformation. As Sweden modernized, it also strove to redefine its national identity, aiming to position itself as

[2] See O. Heilo (ed.), "Resenärer", *Dragomanen* no. 23 (2021).

[3] One of the few Swedish scholars who has explored Nordström's journey in Turkey is Peter Forsgren, Professor of literature at Linnaeus University. For a comprehensive analysis, see his "Att modernisera Orienten: Ludvig Nordströms reportage från Turkiet 1928", *Arbejderhistorie: tidsskrift for historie, kultur og politik* no. 1 (2011): 14–20.

a progressive and technologically advanced nation, actively wanting to participate in international discussions on development and modernization.

Nordström is probably most known to a broad Swedish public for a series of ten Swedish radio reports broadcasted on Swedish National Public Radio during the fall of 1938. Viewed as one of the first pieces of social journalism on Swedish radio, the series depicted issues of overcrowding and poor hygiene in various parts of Sweden. Nordström travelled extensively throughout the country, journeying from Skåne in the south to Norrbotten in the north. His explorations brought him face-to-face with the living conditions of many Swedes, highlighting the stark contrasts between different regions. Through his rich narratives, he aimed to expose the pressing social and health challenges faced by many communities. These reportages were also compiled into the book *Filthy-Sweden* (*Lort-Sverige*), published in 1938.

*Figure 1. Ludvig "Lubbe" Nordström, self portrait in watercolors from 1927. Source: Wikimedia Commons.*

Nordström's writings and reporting on 'Filthy-Sweden' are often credited with influencing public policy and contributing to the modernization and improvement of infrastructure and services in Sweden. His exploration of these themes aligns with his broader focus on Sweden's modernization. Additionally, Nordström's interest extended beyond Sweden's borders, as he was interested in the nation's influence in the broader context of international modernization and development. This interest took him on various journeys, one of which, in 1928, led him to Turkey.

Nordström was invited to Turkey by Gustaf Oscar Wallenberg (1863–1937), Sweden's envoy in Constantinople, to write a reportage with two main objectives. First, he wanted to provide the Swedish audience with an account of the ongoing Swedish

railway construction in the country. Second, he aimed to present modern Turkey to the Swedish public, offering them a firsthand perspective on Turkey's modernization, while also reflecting on Sweden's own progress and influence in the world.[4]

The result of this journey was published in the 1928 book. According to literature professor Peter Forsgren, the title of the book, *World-Sweden*, and the book itself reflect Sweden's ambition, as an increasingly industrialized and export-oriented nation, "to become a more significant player on the global economic stage".[5]

## Constantinople – World of Ruins

For Nordström, Turkey is a tableau of contrasts where the "World of Ruins" meets the "World of Technology". Istanbul (Constantinople), with its rich historical legacy and remnants of the Ottoman Empire, embodies the "World of Ruins." For Nordström, the past is ever-present in Istanbul. The city's ancient architecture, mosques, and palaces symbolize the grandeur of the past but also the decline and stagnation often associated with Orientalist narratives. For Nordström it is highly uncertain whether Istanbul can be considered a city at all; "Constantinople cannot, by European standards, be called a city, a European city, especially in our time when European cities … have been rebuilt into purely technical entities".[6] Nordström characterizes what he perceives as the chaotic and unplanned development of Istanbul with the following words:

> The city consists of a series of hills, which have never undergone any leveling, and up these hills, houses have begun to creep with winding paths between them, as the houses have grown together, the paths have become streets, and thus the streets of Constantinople form the most confusing network of winding narrow paths up and down the hills, between the most primitive houses, mostly made of wood, interspersed with temporary open spaces, wastelands, and with burnt lots that have never been rebuilt.[7]

[4] L. Nordström, *Världs-Sverge: Skildringar ur svenska nationens liv* (Albert Bonniers förlag, 1928), 5.
[5] Forsgren, "Att modernisera Orienten," 15.
[6] Nordström, *Världs-Sverge*, 221.
[7] Nordström, *Världs-Sverge*, 221f.

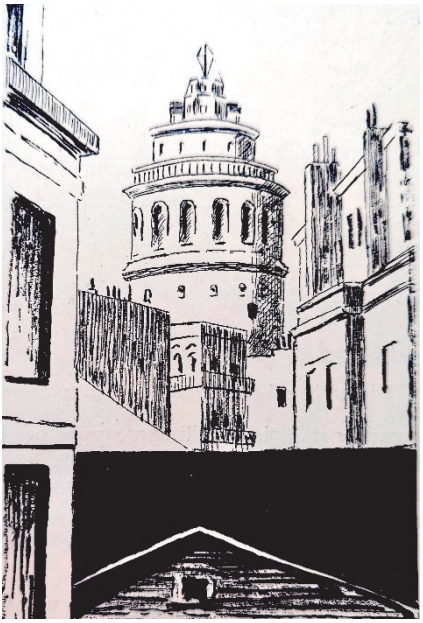


*Figure 2. The Galata-tower drawing by Nordström. Source: L. Nordström, Världs-Sverge (1928).*

Ludvig Nordström is also struck by the city's sensual, or rather sexual allure. In the streets, he sees the most beautiful and mystical women in the world, in the bookstores he notes the "pure and open pornography, that urges the reader to experiment in all areas of sexuality".[8] He further notes that every other pharmacy or doctor's office offers treatments for venereal diseases. This leads him to the conclusion that this pervasive sexuality in Istanbul has a similarly harmful impact on the Turkish people as alcohol did in Sweden.[9]

Nordströms captivation for the topic leads him to describe the "vertical" landscape and topography as uniquely charged with a sexual energy that grips the imagination, overpowering the will. With barely concealed delight he writes:

> A [more] purely sexually charged landscape I have never seen. I go further, it is the only landscape I have seen, which on my nervous system has worked precisely in a sexual way, so that I reacted spontaneously and irresistibly, just as one can react to a

[8] Nordström, *Världs-Sverge*, 226.

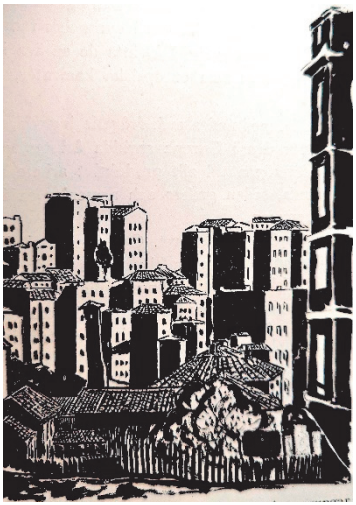
[9] In the early 1900s, Sweden faced significant challenges related to alcohol consumption. In response, Sweden introduced the Bratt System in 1919, named after Ivan Bratt, a medical doctor and social reformer. The system implemented strict controls on the sale and consumption of alcohol, including a state monopoly on alcohol sales and a rationing system known as the *motbok*. Under this system, individuals were limited in the amount of alcohol they could purchase, and the state maintained a record of their purchases. The system operated from 1919 to 1955 and has significantly influenced current attitudes and regulations.

> woman's face, when it is of a special, mystical composition, which takes such a grip on the imagination that the willpower breaks and ceases to function.[10]

*Figure 3. Constantinople Skyline drawing by Nordström. Source: L. Nordström, Världs-Sverge (1928).*

However, Nordström's view is that this sensuality, deeply rooted in the city's atmosphere, can be overcome by "intellectualism" and modern development. He suggests that through rational thought and cultural evolution, the overpowering sensual pull of Istanbul could be subdued, aligning the city more with "European ideals" of order and "intellectualism", rather than what he views as a raw emotional response of the past. As a testament to this, he notes the construction of "modern European residential houses" on the outskirts of the city but also "almost American skyscrapers rising from the mud".[11]

[10] Nordström, *Världs-Sverge*, 218.
[11] Nordström, *Världs-Sverge*, 226.



*Figures 4 and 5. Modern European residential houses in Constantinople, drawings by Nordström. Source: L. Nordström, Världs-Sverge (1928).*

## Angora – "A World of Technology"

In contrast, Ankara (Angora), the new capital under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, represents the "World of Technology." As a city deliberately chosen and developed to symbolize Turkey's break from its Ottoman past and its embrace of modernity, Ankara, for Nordström, stands as a testament to the nation's rapid strides toward modernization. The city's planned urban layout, modern buildings, and focus on infrastructure development highlight Turkey's efforts to redefine itself as a progressive, rational, and technologically advanced nation. In Ankara, Nordström sees the same processes of modernization and the same settler spirit as he has seen in the newly industrialized towns of northern Sweden. He compares the new capital to the northern Swedish military town of Boden:

> If I were to describe the first impression of this new Turkey's capital for Swedish readers, I would most appropriately compare it to Boden's fortress town in the northernmost part of Norrland. The similarity was actually striking. Both cities are located on a large plain, surrounded by dominant mountain heights, and both seem partly newly built, partly outposts towards an entirely new world. In other words, it is somewhat of an American newly established city over both of them.[12]

It is fair to say that Nordström is dazzled by Ankara, for him the entire city embodies the victory of European "intellectualism" over the "sexualism" of the Orient. As Nordström walks through Ankara, he describes the bustling, well-organized newly constructed boulevards, with scaffoldings, half-finished new buildings, and the constant sound of hammer strikes creating a soundtrack that echoes Europe's triumph over the Orient's past.

For Nordström, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk embodied this development more than anything else. By being the driving force behind Turkey's transformation from a traditional, Ottoman society to a modern, secular, and European-oriented nation. Nordström saw Atatürk as a symbol of European intellectualism, which he viewed as hallmarks of European civilization. Atatürk's efforts in constructing a new capital in Ankara, promoting secularism, and modernizing various aspects

[12] Nordström, *Världs-Sverge*, 238.

of Turkish society were perceived by Nordström as direct manifestations of this shift toward a more enlightened and prosperous future for Turkey, aligning it with European values and distancing it from its "dark" Ottoman past. While exploring the city, Nordström had a fleeting but, apparently, memorable encounter with the first president of the republic:

> But then it came rushing like an express train, a big car, gold-plated and closed, and there in it sat a man who looked straight and sternly at the people. It was Mustafa Kemal. The whole thing was the work of a few seconds, and in a blur of dust the moment disappeared. … What did this correct and squinted man remind me of? A western Industrialist or finance magnate. This strict man, who was the epitome of Europe, and whose intellectual victory over Asia's original sensualism lay clear in the vision I saw, the sight of a luxurious European car disappearing into a cloud of dust on a boulevard with two enormous wide carriageways and a tree-lined walkway in the middle.[13]

In this moment that seemed almost surreal, he caught a brief yet powerful glimpse of the leader who would come to shape the nation's future. This encounter, though brief, made an impression on Nordström, as it encapsulated the aura and authority of the man at the helm of the newly established republic. According to Peter Forsberg, Ludvig Nordström saw the Turkish leader and regime as part of a global trend towards modernization, like the Soviet Union and fascist Italy; this reflects Nordström's belief in the 1920s that economic factors were more important than politics in driving societal development.[14] In Nordström's eyes, Ankara became the ultimate symbol of Turkey's rebirth, embodying the nation's aspirations for a modern, rational future. This fleeting encounter with Atatürk, set against the backdrop of a rapidly transforming city, reinforced Nordström's view of Turkey as a country on the brink of a new, enlightened era, driven by the same forces of modernization he admired and championed across the globe.

[13] Nordström, *Världs-Sverge*, 245.
[14] Forsgren, "Att modernisera Orienten," 18.

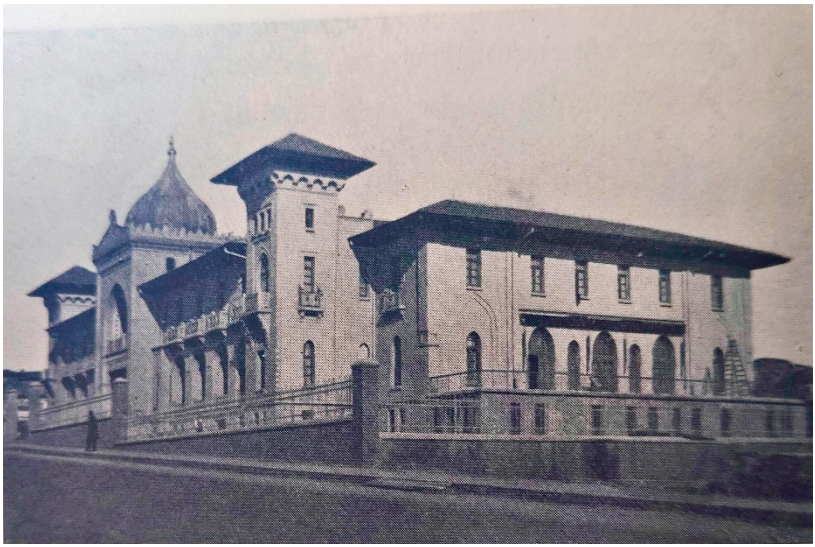


*Figure 6. Grand Hotel d'Angora. Photo: unknown. Photo: unknown. Source: L. Nordström, Världs-Sverge (1928).*

## "We come from ruins, but we're not ruined"

While reading Nordström's *World-Sweden*, I was reminded of the late Marshall Berman's words in Ric Burns' documentary about New York's urban decay in the 1960s. "We come from ruins, but we're not ruined", Berman explains, using the story of New York as an allegory for how urban life, despite the destructive forces of modernity, can still give rise to a remarkable wonder and creativityr.

It would be easy to categorize Nordström's writings within the tradition of Orientalist literary depictions. However, it's important to recognize that Nordström saw the so-called 'unchanging' Orient as a subject of transformation. In the light of Marshall Berman's exploration of modernity, Istanbul and Ankara during the 1920s can be understood as symbols of broader cultural and ideological shifts not only in Turkey but globally. Additionally, Nordström viewed Swedish society through a similar lens, highlighting the parallels between

Turkey's modernization and Sweden's own struggles with tradition and progress. This perspective challenges a simple Orientalist label, as he acknowledged the complexities of both 'Eastern' and 'Western' societies.

*Figure 7. The "new Angora" with the boulevard to Tchan Kaya. Photo: Unknown. Source: L. Nordström, Världs-Sverge (1928).*

In Nordström's reflections on Turkey, the Berman quote resonates with the transformation of Istanbul and Ankara. Istanbul, with its 'World of Ruins', embodies the legacy of the Ottoman Empire – rich in history but facing the challenges of modernization. Ankara, as the 'World of Technology', symbolizes the deliberate effort to forge a new identity, free from the constraints of the past. This duality reflects Berman's idea that, while a nation might emerge from ruins, it has the potential to rebuild and redefine itself, creating a new narrative of progress, modernity, and creativity.

The fact that both Sweden and Turkey had once been great powers adds another layer of significance to Nordström's reflections. Both nations experienced periods of considerable influence – Sweden during the seventeenth

century as a dominant force in Northern Europe, and Turkey as the heart of the Ottoman Empire, which spanned three continents at its height. By the 1920s, however, both countries were grappling with the legacies of their former glory and the need to redefine their national identities in a rapidly changing world. His reflections on Turkey, then, are not just about another country but also serve as a mirror for Sweden's own cultural and ideological challenges during a time of significant change. Moreover, Nordström's work highlights the tensions within Sweden's own cultural identity – the balancing act between tradition and modernity, between the allure of the past and the drive toward a progressive future something he would explore in for example in his most famous reportage *Filthy-Sweden* ten years later.

Throughout the book, Nordström's portrayal of Turkey is dominated by stark contrasts: the light of civilization versus the darkness of past traditions, the 'vertical' European cityscape against the 'horizontal' expanses of the East, and clean, straight boulevards juxtaposed with dirty, winding streets. One of the most prominent contrasts is between 'sexualism' and 'intellectualism'. While this binary was common during his time, it is paradoxical that Nordström still adheres to it in an era influenced by Freud, who argued that intellectualism and sexualism coexist within all individuals, challenging the crude separation of the 'civilized west' and 'primitive east' aspects of human nature. Even by the 1920s, such rigid contrasts were increasingly seen as outdated, as more nuanced perspectives on cultural differences began to emerge.

Nordström's narrative, which equates intellectualism with European modernity and views Turkey's transformation as a triumph over Eastern sexualism, clearly reflects a Eurocentric perspective. However, it is ironic that he clings to this dichotomy, given his awareness of the complexities of modernization and cultural shifts in both Turkey and Sweden. This highlights how, despite recognizing the complex nature of societal change, Nordström's work still reflects a reductive Orientalist framework, which, while still prevalent in his time, was also becoming increasingly obsolete.

This reflects a broader moral and cultural tendency in Sweden – and perhaps in other parts of Europe—to view modernization and rationality as inherently 'good' and to associate these traits primarily with Western civilization. The persistence of these dichotomies in Nordström's work, even as more nuanced

views began to emerge, suggests that Swedish moral thinking was, at the time, still grappling with deeply ingrained cultural biases and Eurocentric perspectives, struggling to reconcile these older frameworks with the emerging ideas that challenged such simplistic divisions.

*Figure 8. Ludvig Nordström together with Johannes Kolmodin, honorary attaché at the Swedish legation in Constantinople, on a country road somewhere in Anatolia. Photo: unknown. Source: L. Nordström, Världs-Sverge (1928).*

# Contributors

**Anders Ackfeldt** is a researcher and deputy director of the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul.

**Yaşar Adnan Adanalı** is the founder and director of Postane in Istanbul.

**Ulaş Bayraktar** is the Co-founder and coordinator of Kültürhane in Mersin.

**Mike Bode** is a visual artist and researcher based in Sweden and Türkiye and former Counsellor of Cultural Affairs at the Consulate General of Sweden in Istanbul.

**Catharina Gabrielsson** is an associate professor at KTH in Stockholm.

**Olof Heilo** is a historian and director of the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul.

**Ferhat Kentel** is an academic and the head of "Sociology Shop", a component of AVI (Art Venue Izmir).

**Liana Kuyumcuyan** is a social designer, and PhD candidate at the National Technical University of Athens.

**Björn Magnusson Staaf** is an associate professor at Lund University.

**Murat Tülek** is an independent urban researcher based in Istanbul.

**Mine Turan** is an architectural historian based in Izmir.

**Serkan Turgut** is an academic studies coordinator at Bayetav in Izmir.

With acknowledgements and thanks to Sara Brolund de Carvalho, artist, architect and adjunct at KTH, Stockholm; Burkay Gündüz and Deniz Şiar Bozkut at Kültürhane, Mersin and Asli Yurdanur former cultural coordinator at the Consulate General of Sweden in Istanbul for their input, support and participation.

*Pedestrian Modernities – Blind spots in Turkish Cultural Heritage* can be seen as an unattached companion to the Swedish Research Institute's publication "Transformations of Public Space" (Transactions 24).

Blind spot was initiated by the Consulate General of Sweden in collaboration with the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul and received generous support from the Swedish Arts Council.

SWEDISH
**ARTS**COUNCIL

# Bernt Brendemoens upptäckter på den turkiska dialektkartan

*Till minne av Bernt Brendemoen (1949–2024)*

ÉVA Á. CSATÓ OCH LARS JOHANSON
Professor em. i turkiska språk vid Uppsala universitet
Professor i turkologi vid Johannes Gutenberg-universitetet i Mainz samt docent vid Uppsala universitet

## Inledning

I Skandinavien är Bernt Brendemoen (1949–2024) mest känd för sin förmedling av turkisk litteratur, särskilt Orhan Pamuks verk, genom översättningar och artiklar. För Pamuks Nobelpris var Bernts bidrag betydande. I den turkologiska världen är Bernt berömd som den bästa moderna dialektologen, en forskare som genom långa resor i sin urgamla Landrover sökte svar på hur språkkontakt med grekiskan påverkat turkiska dialekter. Han kunde övertygande påvisa klara spår av grekiskan i östliga svartahavsdialekter, ännu idag ett hett ämne i Turkiet. Bernt har tidigare bett oss om att kasta mer ljus på hans dialektforskning som av brist på intresse för lokala förhållanden i Svartahavsområdet är så föga känd i Skandinavien och av politiska skäl tyvärr nedtystad i Turkiet. Detta bidrag till *Dragomanen* är formulerat på svenska med tanke på en bred, allmän läsekrets.

## Från grekiska till turkiska

Bernt Brendemoen inledde sin utbildning med klassiska studier vid universitetet i Oslo men utvecklade senare ett intresse för turkiskan på grund av en upplevelse under ett besök i Istanbuls arkeologiska museum. Eftersom han på den tiden inte kunde turkiska behövde han hjälp av en vän att tyda beskrivningen av den så kallade ’ormkolonnen’

på Hypodromen. Då konfronterades han för första gången med en sinnrikt konstruerad, lång och komplex turkisk sats i vilken konstituenterna var anordnade som i en spegelbild av den vanliga indoeuropeiska typen. Han blev så tagen av denna syntaktiska orm att han bytte ämne och började studera turkologi. Under sin livstid byggde han upp en bred kompetens i turkisk lingvistik och filologi och etablerade ämnet till full utveckling vid universitetet i Oslo.

Bernts tyngdpunkt i sin lingvistiska forskning blev kopplingen mellan grekiska och turkiska i Anatolien genom tiderna. Han sökte svar på frågor om de spår som kontakterna mellan språken lämnat i turkiska dialekter.

## Grekiskan i Centralanatolien och i Istanbul

Grekiska talades i det flerspråkiga Centralanatolien under tiden före turkarnas ankomst. Fastän enskilda turkiska stammar trängde in i området under nästan hela medeltiden blev turkiskans roll betydande först till följd av deras stora invandring efter slaget vid Manzikert, dagens Malazgirt, år 1071, något som markerade nedgången för Bysans hegemoni. Grekerna och turkarna lärde sig varandras språk. Tvåspråkighet blev vanlig under en lång tid. Det skildras bland annat i Kemal Tahirs historiska roman *Devlet Ana,* 'Moder Staten' (1967), som behandlar det osmanska rikets första tid. Med tiden blev turkiskans dominans i Centralanatolien stark. Det ledde till att grekiska varieteter starkt påverkades av turkiskan. Den så kallade kappadokiska grekiskan kännetecknades av tydliga turkiska drag, till exempel i formläran. Bernt ställer frågan huruvida denna grekiska uppstod som resultat av att turkisktalande kristna grupper övergick till grekiskan och att deras ursprungliga språk, det vill säga turkiskan, påverkade deras grekiska. Han diskuterar också ett alternativt scenario, enligt vilket de turkiska dragen i kappadokisk grekiska endast skulle vara resultatet av en stark turkisk dominans och sålunda inte av språkbyte (Brendemoen 1999).

Bernt ägnade sig intensivt åt de kristna grekernas turkiska texter, den så kallade karamanska litteraturen, som skrevs med grekisk skrift. Detta namn kommer av regionen Karaman i Centralanatolien och betecknar texter som används av turkisktalande ortodoxa kristna i Anatolien. De är nästan uteslutande översättningar från grekiska och franska. Bernts intresse var särskilt att undersöka

vad dessa texter kan säga om särdrag i turkiska dialekter, eftersom språket i karamanska texter är närmare till de olika regionala varieteterna av talad turkiska än samtida osmanska texter. I en artikel från 2016, ”Karamanlidic Literature and its Value as a Source for Spoken Turkish in the 18th and 19th Centuries”, observerar Bernt att texterna uppvisar centralanatoliska dialektdrag samt vissa kännetecken av det talade språket i Istanbul. Särskilt intressant är hans beskrivning av de morfologiska former som är typiska för karamanskan.

*Bernt Brendemoen. Foto: Privat.*

Bernts artikel ”An Eighteenth Century Karamanlidika Codex from Soumela Monastry in Trabzon” (2010) handlar om en kodex som bevarades i klostret i Sumela, skriven år 1782 av en munk som troligen ursprungligen kommit från Trabzonområdet. Bernt beskriver ovanliga syntaktiska drag i textens turkiska, till exempel oturkisk ordföljd, som i *tatlı suratını … xatun pananyanın*, ’the sweet face of the Lady Virgin’, där ägaren *xatun pananyanın*, ’Jungfruns’, följer efter den ägda *tatlı suratını*, ’hennes söta ansikte’, och förekomsten av det i turkiskan okända uttrycket *yok ki*, ordagrant ’icke-existerande att’, i betydelsen ’inte bara’. Men till sin besvikelse fann han dock inga tecken på att turkiskan i texten verkligen har påverkats av svartahavsturkiskan.

Bernt hade en utmärkt kännedom om Istanbuls historia och befolkning. I sitt bidrag till artikeln ”The Linguistic Landscape of Istanbul in the Seventeenth Century” (Brendemoen m.fl. 2010, 2016) skildrar Bernt de grekiska och armeniska kristna samhällenas ställning i 1600-talets Istanbul. Han beskriver historien hos två grupper av greker. De som var kvar efter den osmanska erövringen av staden och sedan levde ganska isolerade fortsatte att tala grekiska. Den andra gruppen var de turkisktalande grekisk ortodoxa karamanerna som

flyttades från Karaman till Istanbul under sultan Selims tid i början av 1500-talet. Post-byzantiska aristokratiska greker spelade en viktig politisk roll i det osmanska riket som dragomaner, mediatorer mellan osmanerna, minoriteter och främlingar. De hade stort inflytande på utvecklingen av den turkiska flottan från och med 1500-talet och i uppkomsten av ett språk, en blandning av grekiska, italienska och turkiska, som fungerade som lingua franca för sjömän i Levanten. Karamanerna utövade intensiv litterär verksamhet vilket deras böcker, tryckta i Istanbul, vittnar om.

## Bernts fältforskning i provinserna Trabzon och Rize

Alltifrån 1978 utförde Bernt ett intensivt fältarbete i östra Svartahavsområdet för att samla material till sina studier. Det resulterade i ett monumentalt arbete i två volymer, *The Turkish Dialects of Trabzon: Their Phonology and Historical Development* (2002), vilket är en syntes av hans lingvistiska, folkloristiska och historiska forskning om de språkvarieteter som talades i provinsen Trabzon och delvis också i provinsen Rize. Detta omfattande verk i vilket han väl utnyttjade sina utmärkta kunskaper av grekiska var, som vi vet, långt ifrån lätt att producera. Turkiska myndigheter hade misstankar mot denna utlännings långa vistelser och nära kontakter med folk som tillhörde minoritetsgrupper. I sin grundliga och djuplodande studie visar Bernt att de östliga svartahavsdialekterna har bevarat de mest arkaiska dragen och uppvisar de flesta innovationerna genom påverkan av främmande språk, särskilt av grekiskan. Han analyserar dialekterna synkroniskt och diakroniskt och identifierar de isoglosser som skiljer dem från andra anatoliska dialekter. Han framhåller hur dessa dialekter bidrar till vår kunskap om utvecklingen av den tidiga anatoliska turkiskan. Hans lingvistiska data kastar ljus över den medeltida processen av turkifiering i området om vilken tidigare mycket litet hade skrivits. Denna process är mycket olik den som ägde rum i resten av Anatolien. Dialekterna i provinsen Trabzon har bevarat talrika arkaismer som går tillbaka till det tidiga 1300-talet. På basen av lingvistisk evidens presenterar Bernt hypotesen att turkiskan var införd i området under denna tid. De huvudsakliga språkliga dragen har bevarats och

stundom omvandlats. En anledning till egenheterna var att varieteterna var fysiskt isolerade från den allmänna utvecklingen av anatolisk turkiska. En annan anledning var effekten av språkliga substrata, det vill säga talarnas ursprungliga språk, och adstrata, det vill säga andra språk som talades i det flerspråkiga samhället. Talare av grekiska och armeniska överförde drag från sina ursprungliga modersmål till sin turkiska.

Ända fram till de senare vågorna av turkisk invandring i området bestod majoriteten av befolkningen av partiellt helleniserade talare av kaukasiska språk. Grekiska hade tidigt talats i området. Fram till befolkningsutbytet år 1923 talades pontisk grekiska i stora delar av den östra Svartahavskusten.

## Svartahavsdialekter

Turkiska dialekter i östra Svartahavsområdet skiljer sig betydligt från alla andra turkiska dialekter i Anatolien. Besökare i trakterna gör sig lustiga över utpräglade egendomligheter som till exempel uppfordringen *Gidek!*, 'Låt oss gå!', istället för standardformen *Gidelim!*, ordformen *gun*, 'dag', i stället för standardformen *gün* och mycket annat. En resenär med nödvändiga kunskaper om regionens mångkulturella komplexitet kan fortfarande upptäcka människor med olika grad av kompetens i pontisk grekiska, armeniska samt laziska, som tillhör den kaukasiska språkfamiljen. Bernts livsverk innebär att han med sina fältforskningsinsatser dokumenterat, beskrivit och analyserat en stor del av denna delvis existenshotade rikedom. En sammanfattning presenterade han i sin ovannämnde bok om Trabzondialekterna (2002), ett banbrytande verk i turkisk dialektforskning.

Bernt sökte vidare svar på frågan: Varför avviker dessa dialekter så mycket från de andra turkiska varieteterna i Anatolien? Svaret ligger delvis i områdets geografiska belägenhet och delvis i de demografiska särdragen i regionen. Områdets geografiska särdrag är att en hög bergsrygg har hållit det isolerat från inlandet och djupa dalar i nord-sydlig riktning, flankerade av höga kullar på båda sidor om flodbäddarnas inre, har gjort både intern kontakt mellan dalarna och kommunikationen med områdena i öster och väster extremt svåra fram till den allra senaste tiden. Detta är anledningen till att dialekterna här i stort sett hållit sig utanför den språkliga utveckling som dialekterna söder om bergen och de

östanatoliska dialekterna i allmänhet har genomgått. Förutom det inflytande de har blivit utsatta för från grekiska, armeniska och kaukasiska språk har deras turkiska förblivit mer eller mindre som när de först kom till denna region. Men dialektkartan är sammansatt. I den västligaste delen av Trabzon talas den så kallade Çepni-dialekten, som är en centralanatolisk dialekt. Medan alla turkiska dialekter tillhör den ogusiska grenen av turkiskan är det här i öster också möjligt att hitta vissa element från den kiptjakiska grenen, som dominerar norr om Svarta havet. Dialekterna i Trabzon och Rize, delvis också i Artvin, uppvisar ändå en relativt homogen bild. Flera av de typiska dragen i de mest ålderdomliga språkområdena representerar ett påfallande gammalt utvecklingsstadium sannolikt från 1300-talet och inte, som vissa forskare har antagit, från tiden efter erövringen av Trabzon (1461).

I Trabzon hade den pontiska grekiskan, som redan nämnts, ett starkt inflytande. Den talades flitigt i stora delar av regionen fram till 1923, när den grekisk-ortodoxa befolkningen deporterades till Grekland som en del av det befolkningsutbyte som beslutades vid fredskonferensen i Lausanne. Grekiska talas fortfarande i flera byar i Çaykara och Tonya. I delar av Rize, särskilt byarna i Hemşin och vissa delar av provinsen Trabzon, var armeniskan ett viktigt kontaktspråk till turkiskan tillsammans med de två kaukasiska språken, laziska och georgiska (Brendemoen 2006).

## Några exempel på skillnader

Bernt menar att vissa skillnader är arkaiska, det vill säga att dialekterna bibehöll mycket gamla drag, medan andra är resultat av kontakten med icke-turkiska språk som talas i regionen.

Ett exempel på skillnaderna mellan Trabzon-dialekten och standardspråket är presensformerna av verbet *bil-*, 'att veta'.

| | Trabzon-dialekten | Standard-turkiskan |
|---|---|---|
| 'Jag vet' | *Biluyrum* | *Biliyorum* |
| 'Du vet' | *Biluysun* | *Biliyorsun* |
| 'Han/hon vet' | *Biluy* | *Biliyor* |
| 'Vi vet' | *Biluyuruḳ* | *Biliyoruz* |
| 'Ni vet' | *Biluysunuz* | *Biliyorsunuz* |
| 'De vet' | *Biluyler* | *Biliyorlar* |

Något som kan föra till missförstånd är att dativformer som i standardspråket uttrycker 'riktning till' används i lokativ betydelse, det vill säga 'befintlighet', till exempel *Näräyäsun*?, 'Var är du', som i standardspråket skulle uppfattas som 'Vart är du?', vilket vore oförståeligt. Svaret i dialekten är *Äväyum*, 'Jag är hemma', vilket i standarspråket också uttrycker något svårt begripligt, nämligen 'Jag är hem'.

Medan standardturkiskans meningar normalt slutar med verbet, följer objekt och andra satsdelar gärna efter verbet i dialekten. Till exempel står i meningen *Seçtiler oni kral*, 'De valde honom till kung', verbet *seçtiler*, 'de valde', på första plats och objektet *oni*, 'honom', och predikatsfyllnaden *kral*, 'kung', efter verbet. Detsamma gäller i meningen *Var idi bir padişah, var idi da bi karisi*, 'Det var en gång en sultan och hans hustru'. I standardturkiskan skulle dessa lyda som *Onu kral seçtiler* och *Bir padişah var idi, bir karısı var idi*. Denna meningsbyggnad kopierades in i turkiskan från talarnas egna ursprungliga icke-turkiska språk (Brendemoen 2023).

## Balkandialekter

I sina artiklar ”Aspects of Greek-Turkish Language Contact in Trabzon” (2006) och ”The West Rumelian Turks in Bulgaria and their Alleged Affiliation to the Eastern Black Sea Area” (2018) behandlar Bernt den intressanta frågan om relationen mellan de östra svartahavsdialekterna och turkiska dialekter på Balkan. Han påpekar att Balkan-dialekterna egendomligt nog ger argument för att datera de grundläggande dragen i Trabzon-dialekterna till andra hälften av 1300-talet. Särskilt de dialekter som talas i Västrumelien, omkring Vidin, delar viktiga karaktäristika med turkiskan i Trabzon och Rize. Detta beskrevs först av den ungerska turkologen Julius Németh i dennes bok om Vidin-dialekten, *Die Türken von Vidin* (1965). Bernts noggranna och detaljerade data om de östliga svartahavsdialekterna bekräftar Németh hypotes. Németh antog att likheterna beror på att i sultan Mehmet Fatihs tid på 1400-talet ett stort antal kristna deporterades från Trabzon till Balkan.

Bernt motsäger detta och formulerar ett helt övertygande alternativ. Han menar att dialekterna i båda regionerna går tillbaka till fornanatolisk turkiska som turkarna talade under den tid då Vidin-området och östra svartahavsregionen turkifierades. De arkaiska dragen i fornanatoliska har sedan påverkats av bulgariskan och grekiskan, de turkifierade befolkningsgruppernas två ursprungliga språk. Dessa båda språk, bulgariska och grekiska, har emellertid viktiga gemensamma drag, exempelvis i fonologin. Båda saknar vokalerna *ö* och *ü*, vilka i deras turkiska ersätts med *o* och *u*. Av samma anledning ersätts den fornanatoliska velara nasalkonsonanten *ŋ* i båda språken med *n*. Vissa skillnader mellan de två dialektområdena beror på att Trabzon-dialekten går tillbaka på ett äldre stadium i fornanatoliskans utveckling, medan Vidin-dialekten återspeglar ett något senare stadium, från den tid då Balkan på 1400-talet erövrades av turkarna. Bernt påpekar att isoleringen av de två dialekterna från det sammanhängande turkiska språkområdet har varit anledningen till att de arkaiska dragen bevarats. Han fördjupar sina tankar om Balkan-dialekterna i några viktiga artiklar, exempelvis den om infinitivformerna (Brendemoen 2013).

# Om framtida forskning

Bernts forskning har funnit skickliga efterföljare först och främst i Turkiet. Hans banbrytande insatser är där välkända och uppskattade. Ändå framhäver han i sina skrifter att idén att vissa drag, förutom de lexikaliska lånen, kan bero på kodkopiering från icke-turkiska språk, egendomligt nog nämns ganska sällan i dialektologin i Turkiet.

Bernts önskan var att hans forskning skulle följas upp i hans hemland. Hans efterföljare i språkkontaktforskningen är Emel Türker vid universitetet i Oslo som undersöker turkiskans utveckling i Norge. Vi hoppas att andra norska lingvister kan komma att träda i Bernts spår i dialektforskningen.

För att göra Bernts dialektforskning mer tillgänglig kommer en samlingsvolym med hans skrifter att utges under den närmaste framtiden.

## *Referenser*

Brendemoen, Bernt. ”Greek and Turkish Language Encounters in Anatolia.” I *Language Encounters Across Time and Space*, redigerad av Bernt Brendemoen, Elisabeth Lanza och Else Ryen. Novus, 1999.

Brendemoen, Bernt. *The Turkish Dialects of Trabzon. Their Phonology and Historical Development*, vol. 1–2. Turcologica 50. Harrassowitz, 2002.

Brendemoen, Bernt. ”Aspects of Greek-Turkish Language Contact in Trabzon.” I *Turkic Languages in Contact*, redigerad av Hendrik Boeschoten och Lars Johanson. Turcologica 61. Harrassowitz, 2006.

Brendemoen, Bernt, Éva Á. Csató, Lars Johanson, Claudia Römer och Heidi Stein. ”The Linguistic Landscape of Istanbul in the Seventeenth Century.” I *The Urban Mind. Cultural and Environmental Dynamics*, redigerad av Paul J. Sinclaire m.fl. Department of Archeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University, 2010.

Brendemoen, Bernt. ”An Eighteenth Century Karamanlidika Codex from Soumela Monastry in Trabzon.” I *Cries and Whispers in Karamanlidika Books*, redigerad av Evangelia Balta och Matthias Kappler. Turcologica 83. Harrassowitz, 2010.

Brendemoen, Bernt. ”Karamanlidic Literature and its Value as a Source for Spoken Turkish in the 18th and 19th Centuries.” *Turkic Languages* 20 (2016): 5–25.

Brendemoen, Bernt, Éva Á. Csató, Lars Johanson, Claudia Römer och Heidi Stein. ”The Linguistic Landscape of Istanbul in the Seventeenth Century.” I *Spoken Ottoman in Mediator Texts*, redigerad av Éva Á. Csató, Astrid Menz och Fikret Turan. Turcologica 106. Harrassowitz, 2016.

Brendemoen, Bernt. ”Turkish Dialects: Eastern Black Sea Coast.” I *Encyclopedia of Turkic Languages and Linguistics Online*, redigerad av Lars Johanson. Brill, 2023.

# Svenska Forskningsinstitutet i Istanbul

Svenska Forskningsinstitutet i Istanbul (SFII) bildades 1962 för att främja svensk och nordisk forskning i och om Turkiet, Främre Orienten och Centralasien, främst inom humaniora och samhällsvetenskap. Institutet är beläget inom Svenska generalkonsulatets område i Istanbul.

I institutets verksamhet ingår konferenser, seminarier och symposier, projektarbeten, doktorand- och magisterkurser, föreläsningsserier samt viss publiceringsverksamhet. SFII förfogar över både gästrum, arbetsplatser och bibliotek som kan utnyttjas av forskare och utser årligen ett antal stipendiater för längre eller kortare tids vistelser.

SFII:s forskarkollegium väljer styrelsen, vars ordförande utses av regeringen. Verksamheten finansieras huvudsakligen av Utbildningsdepartementet.

På Forskningsinstitutets hemsida (www.srii.org) finns information om bl.a. program, projekt, publikationer, stipendier, styrelse och forskarkollegium samt verksamhetsberättelser. Där finns också institutets e-bulletin Kalabalık! med löpande information om forskare, stipendiater, aktuella frågor och pågående aktiviteter vid institutet.

## *Föreningen Svenska Istanbulinstitutets Vänner*

Föreningen Svenska Istanbulinstitutets Vänner (FSIV) är en stödförening till institutet som bildades 1988. Ordförande är Suzanne Unge Sörling. Föreningen arrangerar egna kulturprogram med anknytning till Forskningsinstitutets verksamhetsområde. Medlemskap i FSIV erhålls genom insättning av årsavgiften 200 kronor (100 kronor för studenter upp till 27 års ålder) till PlusGirokonto 997 52-8 eller via Swish (123 359 3761) – glöm inte att ange betalningsorsak, namn och e-post. Information om vänföreningens program, resestipendium och verksamhet finns på institutets hemsida: www.srii.org/pages/vanforening.

*Kontaktuppgifter SFII*
P.k. 125 Beyoglu
TR-344 33 Istanbul
*Gatuadress*: Istiklal Caddesi 247
Tünel, Istanbul
*Tel*: +90 212 252 41 19
*E-post*: info@sri.org.tr

*Direktör*: Olof Heilo (olof.heilo@sri.org.tr)
*Vice direktör*: Anders Ackfeldt (anders.ackfeldt@sri.org.tr)
*Forskningssekreterare*: Helin Topal (helin.topal@sri.org.tr)

*Kansli i Stockholm*
Skeppargatan 8
114 52 Stockholm
*Tel*: +46 8 662 75 70
*Fax*: 08-665 3133
*E-post*: sfii@medelhavsinstituten.se

*Blind Spot* was the name given to an interdisciplinary cultural heritage project that brought together academics, architects, historians, artists, urban planners, researchers and cultural initiatives from Sweden and Türkiye with the idea of exploring buildings and places typical of Türkiye's early Republican (and preceding) modernism which are often overlooked or neglected.

The project began in 2023 with a number of online meetings hosted by the cultural initiatives Postane in Istanbul, Bayetav in Izmir and Kültürhane in Mersin, all initiatives that are engaged in questions of urbanity and the preservation of cultural heritage in Türkiye. From these initial meetings, a series of seminars were developed in the form of walking tours in the three partner cities. These discursive walks were supplemented with presentations, lectures, visits to exhibitions and side events and were held together by a continuous flow of enthusiastic discussions. Some of the reflections that emerged from the walks are presented here in this issue of *Dragomanen*.

SWEDISH ARTSCOUNCIL

Svenska Forskningsinstitutet i Istanbul
Föreningen Svenska Istanbulinstitutets Vänner

ISBN 978-91-89840-27-0