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# Interactions between Turkish Building Professionals and French Advisors in the Reconstruction of Historical Cities in Western Anatolia

Pelin Bolca

Postdoctoral researcher, Politecnico di Torino, Italy

## Introduction

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk led the Turkish army to victory in the Turkish Independence War (1918-1922). On 1 November 1922, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey abolished the Ottoman Empire. On 29 October 1923, the foundation of the Turkish Republic was officially announced. Next, a strategic political decision moved the capital city from İstanbul to Ankara, a small town in the middle of Anatolia. The new government passed a series of radical reforms, transforming Turkey's social, political, and economic structure. The reforms aimed to build a new nation-state to shape a secular, modern future. Sharia-based Ottoman law was abandoned. The stated goal of the new government was “to reach the level of contemporary civilization (*muasır medeniyetler*).”<sup>1</sup> This was to be achieved through progress with modern principles observed in Western Europe. However, as Charles Taylor argues, “non-European countries in the nation-building process wanted to do what had already been done in Europe. But they were aware that they could not directly imitate their practices. This could not be a solution.”<sup>2</sup> In parallel, Republicans strongly asserted that far from imitating European models, their policy was concerned with how “to learn and adopt what it is seen as good because it is conceived as suitable for local culture.”<sup>3</sup> The process of learning and adopting European theories was to be implemented across the country.

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1 Afet İNAN, *Atatürk Hakkında Hatıralar ve Belgeler*, Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1984.

2 Charles TAYLOR, “Nationalism and Modernity,” in Ronald BEINER, *Theorizing Nationalism*, Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1999 (SUNY series in Political Theory: Contemporary Issues).

3 Afet İNAN, *op. cit.* (note 1).

In the language of the Republicans, the modernization of cities was associated with meeting every citizen's need for "civilization and sanitation," as well as economic concerns.<sup>4</sup> The perceived need for "civilization" and "sanitation" referred mainly to the illiterate population living in rural Anatolia. Many villages had no schools or clinics; the region as a whole lacked road or rail networks and vehicles. Moreover, some communities were still trying to preserve a pro-sharia lifestyle, opposed to Republican reforms. Such counterviews were not welcome in an ideological atmosphere advocating secularism and modernity. The Republic's political leaders saw these communities as a social problem that needed to be solved. During the interwar period, it was no coincidence that urban planning was fostered as a solution to support nation-building.<sup>5</sup> Creating model modern cities was perceived as the key to disseminating Republican reforms.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, the Turkish Government was aware that urban planning offered scientific and innovative solutions for some of the social and physical problems faced during the post-war recovery period. Therefore, even before the official declaration of the Republic, Republicans sought to reformulate the constitutional and institutional framework to facilitate the planning processes. To meet this urgent need, military engineers were assigned to rebuild many small cities and villages in Anatolia,<sup>7</sup> and local companies were established to reconstruct the cities. In 1922, the Turkish Architecture and Construction Company (*Türk İmar ve İnşaat Şirketi*) and the Exploration and Construction Company (*Keşfiyat ve İnşaat Anonim Şirketi*) were formed, aiming to conduct projects, prepare city maps and analyze infrastructural and topographical data.<sup>8</sup> These companies were founded by local architects and engineers who had been trained in the education system established in the Late Ottoman

4 See the speech of the Minister of Interior, Şükrü Kaya dated 20.03.1930 in *Correspondence of TBMM meeting*, March 20, 1930. Ankara (Turkey), Archive of Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Zabıt Ceredesi, 17.

5 Vilma HASTAOĞLOU MARTINIDIS, "Urban aesthetics and national identity: the refashioning of Eastern Mediterranean cities between 1900 and 1940," *Planning Perspectives*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2011, p. 153-182. DOI: [10.1080/02665433.2011.550442](https://doi.org/10.1080/02665433.2011.550442).

6 Sibel BOZDOĞAN, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic*, Seattle, WA; London: University of Washington Press, 2001 (Studies in Modernity and National Identity).

7 İlhan TEKELİ, "Türkiye'de Kent Planlamasının Tarihîsel Kökleri," in Tamer GÖK and Orta DOĞU, *Türkiye'de İmar Planlaması*, Ankara: Middle East Technical University, 1980, and İlhan TEKELİ, *Modernizm, modernite ve Türkiye'nin kent planlama tarihi*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2009 (İlhan Tekeli toplu eserler).

8 After the foundation of the Republic in 1923, these two companies were officially recognized by the government, in GÜNDÜZ ÖKÇÜN, *1920-1930 yılları arasında kurulan türk anonim şirketlerinde yabancı sermaye*, Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1971, p. 54-55.

Period, which had adopted French models, inspired by Haussmann's transformation of Paris, 1853-70.<sup>9</sup> The builders were quickly commissioned by the municipalities of many small cities to prepare plans. However, their education was antiquated. Knowledge, techniques, and construction laws needed to be updated in order to meet the needs of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup> That is why the new government contacted European advisors. Many French experts were contacted, continuing the French model that had dominated since the last years of the Ottoman Period.

In addition, the interwar political atmosphere in Europe supplied a further stimulus. With Hitler on the rise, the Turkish Republic invited 63 German-speaking professors and architects seeking to leave their country.<sup>11</sup> All these invitations aimed to learn the latest modern developments of the century from Europe and adapt them to the Turkish context of urbanism and architecture both in practice and theory.

In Turkish historiography, the conquest of İzmir, the city where the Greek army left Anatolia defeated by Turkey, marks the endpoint of the Turkish Independence War. These events were followed by the Great İzmir Fire of September 1922. Many neighborhoods were in ruins<sup>12</sup>—both physically and socially. For the Republicans, the recovery process was a convenient opportunity to integrate ideological change into society. Moreover, İzmir was already multicultural, compared to other Western Anatolian cities. It bore

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9 In 1882 two academies were founded in İstanbul with the aim of providing higher education to the elites who would work in the fields of architecture and engineering: On the one hand, Fine Arts Academy—currently known as Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University—was formulated based on *École des Beaux-Arts*. On the other hand, although German thought became more dominant in the following years, the basis of Engineering Academy—currently known as Istanbul Technical University—was formed according to the principles of the *École des Ponts et Chaussées*; in İlhan TEKELİ and Selim İLKIN, *Osmanlı imparatorluğu'nda eğitim ve bilgi üretim sisteminin oluşumu ve dönüşümü*, [Ankara]: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1993 (Türk tarih kurumu, 07, VII. dizi).

10 Since the early years of the Republic were a transitional period to build a new ideology, many laws remained in force until the 1930s. The first urban law of the Ottoman Period, the *Ebniye* Law of 1882, was the most important in affecting the fate of the cities in the very first years of the Republic. See the mentioned law in Ankara (Turkey), *Ebniye Kanunu*, November 14, 1882. Turkish Republic Ottoman Archive, DVN. MKL, col. 22-27. In the Ottoman language, *ebniye* means “buildings, constructions.” The main purpose of these regulations was to widen the streets and to reorganize the road network according to the grid system, in ZEYNEP ÇELİK, *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman city in the nineteenth century*, Berkeley, CA; Los Angeles, CA; London: University of California Press, 1993.

11 Esra AKCAN, *Architecture in Translation: Germany, Turkey, and the Modern House*, Durham, NC; London: Duke University Press, 2012.

12 Biray KOLLUOĞLU KIRLI, “Forgetting the Smyrna Fire,” *History Workshop Journal*, no. 60, 2005, p. 25-44. DOI: [10.1093/hwj/dbi005](https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbi005). For a recent reading on Smyrna Fire see Kalliopi AMYGDALOU, “Déjà Vu at the Archive: Photography, National Narratives, and the Multiple Histories of the Smyrna Fire,” *International Journal of Islamic Architecture*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2020, p. 315-336.

fewer traces of the Ottoman Empire, a trait that suited the Republicans seeking to tone down such traces nationwide. The port of İzmir was also the gateway for European trade with Anatolia. Connecting İzmir with the new capital, Ankara, was crucial to the economic, cultural, and social developments in the first years of the Republic. Therefore, İzmir's urban planning had to be in line with modern principles and reach the level of contemporary European cities.

All this made İzmir the ideal showcase for the reformist vision. Without delay, in 1922, the French architect and urbanist Henri Prost (1874-1959) was contacted. This link formed the basis for the planning studies to be carried out by other French professionals in the Western Anatolian cities on the İzmir-Ankara line during the first years of the Republic. Although the French consultants traveled widely within the given chronology, this article focuses on the Western Anatolia region.

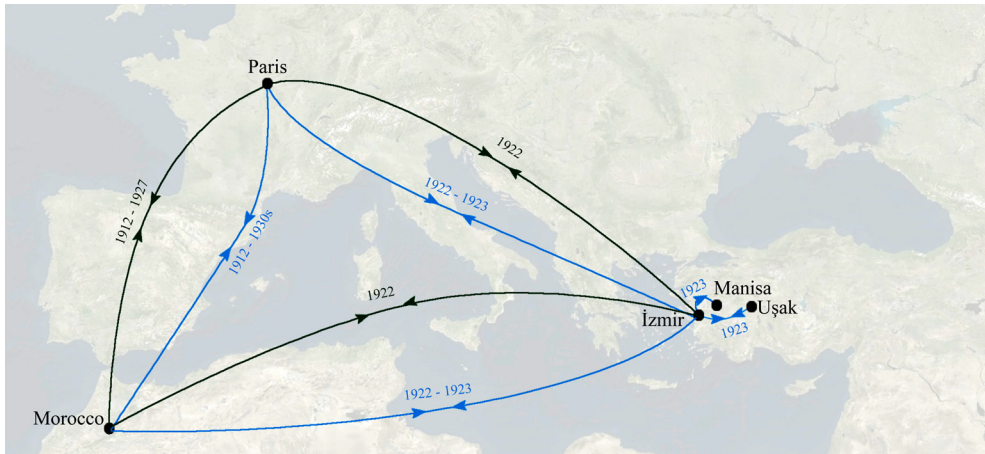


Figure 1: Mapping the travels of Henri Prost (black lines) and the Danger brothers (blue lines) during the first decade of Turkish Republic.

The travels of Henri Prost (black) and his colleagues the Danger brothers (blue), whose planning assignments included Manisa and Uşak, the two main stops on the direct rail line from İzmir to the capital city, Ankara.

Source: Pelin Bolca

The urban planning work Prost and the Dangers did for İzmir has already been covered extensively in the literature.<sup>13</sup> This article intends to go beyond

13 See the selected sources (in chronological order): CÂNÂ BİLSEL, "Ideology and urbanism during the Early Republican Period: two master plans for İzmir and scenarios of modernization," *Journal of the Faculty of Architecture*, vol. 16, no. 1-2, 1996. URL: [http://jfa.arch.metu.edu.tr/archive/0258-5316/1996/cilt16/sayi\\_1\\_2/13-30.pdf](http://jfa.arch.metu.edu.tr/archive/0258-5316/1996/cilt16/sayi_1_2/13-30.pdf). Accessed 17 April 2023. Kalliopi AMYGDALOU, "Building the Nation at the Crossroads of 'East' and 'West': Ernest Hébrard and Henri Prost in the Near East," *Opticon 1826*, vol. 16, no. 15, 2014, p. 1-14. URL: <https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1470742/1/Amygdalou,%20K.%20%20Building%20the%20Nation%20at%20the%20Crossroads%20.pdf>. Accessed 17 June 2023. Ellinor MORACK, "Expropriating the dead in Turkey: how the Armenian quarter of İzmir became Kültürpark," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2021, p. 240-259. DOI: [10.1080/13507486.2020.1832051](https://doi.org/10.1080/13507486.2020.1832051).

the İzmir Plan and analyze the planning experiences of other cities in Western Anatolia. Alongside this holistic perspective, we shall discuss whether the French advisors' experience in France's colonies was a factor in their commissioning by the new Turkish Republic. Moreover, given that the experience of these early years of urban planning formed the basis for the legal and practical consolidation of the Republican ideology in urban policies, the research traces the interaction between French and local advisors in this seminal process.

## Negotiations for Historic Cities in the Newly Formed Political Conditions of the Republic

Immediately after the Great Fire of 1922, the Mayor of İzmir, Şükrü Kaya, was asked to report on the most recent developments in urbanism in Europe. The new administration was seeking a model for the future modern Turkish city. One Paris daily reported "the Turkish government has started negotiations with foreign companies for the reconstruction of İzmir... They agreed to take advantage of foreign capital, but without political goals."<sup>14</sup> Şükrü Kaya had already traveled to Paris and been impressed by the Haussmannian transformation of the city. Visiting the French capital, he had been friendly with French intellectuals, and was comfortable cooperating with French advisors.<sup>15</sup> He was aware of the developments of French urbanism achieved by the Paris-based French Society of Urban Planners (*Société française des urbanistes-SFU*) during the interwar period.<sup>16</sup> This opened the way for the long-term presence in Anatolia of the SFU members.

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14 "La Reconstruction de Smyrne," *Journal des Débats Politiques et Littéraires*, December 1, 1922, p. 2.

15 A close friend of Atatürk, Şükrü Kaya had acted as an effective Republican negotiator at the Lausanne Conference of 1922-1923, which ended with the signature of the Lausanne Peace Treaty in 1923.

16 In 1911, a group of *Musée social* members formed the *Société française des architectes urbanistes* (SFU) where they developed intellectual ideas to control urban development by integrating hygienist and aesthetic concerns. The founder members were as follow: Architects (Donat Alfred Agache, Marcel Auburtin, André Bérard, Eugène Hénard, Léon Jaussely, Albert Parenty, Henri Prost) and landscape architects (Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier, Edouard Redont).

During the interwar period, many French advisors traveled the world, which resulted in the spread of European knowledge. They pursued goals such as the aim to bring civilization to the colonies, or to modernize a nation-states established after a long period of war. See Alfred Agache, Léon Jaussely and Jacques Lambert in Latin America in Arturo ALMANDOZ, *Planning Latin America's Capital Cities 1850-1950*, New York, NY; London: Routledge, 2002 (Planning, History and the Environment Series) or Ernest Hebrard in Greece in Kalliopi AMYGDALOU, "Building the Nation at the Crossroads of 'East' and 'West,'" *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 1-14, or Henri Prost in North Africa in Jean-Louis COHEN and Monique ELEB, *Casablanca: mythes et figures d'une aventure urbaine*, Paris: Hazan, 2004, and Prost in Turkey in İpek AKPINAR, "The Rebuilding of İstanbul Revisited: Foreign Planners in the Early Republican Years," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, special issue *Ambivalent Architectures*, vol. 50, 2014. DOI: [10.1017/S0896634600006580](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0896634600006580).



The political atmosphere of the newly established Republic also influenced the decision of which foreign professionals would be invited. After the new capital was declared to be Ankara, the government requested that foreign states build new embassies in that city. Germany, which officially recognized the Republic of Turkey, responded to this call and started construction works. France's stance was different. With Antioch (Hatay) and Alexandretta (İskenderun) still under French mandate and in delicate political circumstances, relations between France and Turkey played a significant role. On the one hand, these relations were somewhat strained on the Turkish side, since Turkey was uncomfortable with the unresolved French domination on its border.<sup>17</sup> In speeches to parliament, Şükrü Kaya frequently expressed his discomfort about the French presence in Syria.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, French authorities sought to prolong their political and economic domination in the mandate area in Syria by pursuing "pacification," the way they had recently done in North Africa. Under these circumstances, the appointment of Albert Sarraut as the French ambassador to Turkey was a shrewd choice. As Minister of the Colonies between 1920 and 1924, he was one of the central figures in French colonial policy in North Africa, collaborating for many years with Marshal Lyautey. Şükrü Kaya was assigned to organize on behalf of the Republicans the French-Turkish agreement carrying out the provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne (1923). His first mission was to welcome Sarraut to Turkey and conduct political negotiations with him.<sup>19</sup> Sarraut's statement prior to his departure for Ankara testified to the French strategy. He strongly underlined the importance of his experiences in North Africa for his new mission in Turkey in terms of his understanding of different races, cultures, and traditions. He then stated his main objectives in Turkey as follows: "I will

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Cânâ BİLSEL and Pierre PINON, *From the Imperial Capital to the Republican Modern City: Henri Prost's Planning of İstanbul (1936-1951)*, Exhibition Catalogue (İstanbul, Suna and İnan Kırac Foundation İstanbul Research Institute, 2010), İstanbul: Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2010, and Pelın BOLCA, Rosa TAMBORRINO and Fulvio RINAUDO, "Henri Prost in İstanbul: Urban Transformation Process of Taksim-Maçka Valley (park no. 2)," presented at the ISUF, Valencia, University of Valencia, 2018.

17 Bülent VARLIK, *Umumi Müfettişler Toplantı Tutanakları: 1936*, Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2010.

18 He claimed that French colonialists made illegal economic benefits by trading in Turkish territories in Ankara (Turkey), Archive of Grand National Assembly of Turkey–TBMM, Zabıt Ceredesi, 17, 1930.

19 When foreign powers were asked to build embassies in Ankara, France was one of the countries that postponed taking action, unsure of the stability of the Republic. The Minister of the Council of Turkey tasked Şükrü Kaya with strengthening relations with France by keeping in touch with Sarraut in Ankara. *Lozan Antlaşması'nın gerektirdiği itilâfnameler için İstanbul'da Fransa ve İtalya ile yapılacak görüşmeler ve Fransa ile yapılacak Konsolosluk Anlaşması görüşmesine gidecek olan Şükrü Kaya'ya ödenecek ücret*, July 22, 1925. Ankara, Turkey, Republican State Archive, 46.4, 14.

seek to safeguard our moral influence and our material interests. I will support our *école* as I will seek trade deals....”<sup>20</sup>

Challenging France’s colonial rule in North Africa did not become an item on the Turkish political agenda until the early 1930s.<sup>21</sup> In the 1920s, criticism of French policy involved the threat to Turkey’s borders. Despite these criticisms and concerns prevailing in the interwar political atmosphere and Şükrü Kaya’s discomfort with the French colonialist policies on the borders of Turkey, he in fact ensured the establishment of an association in Paris for urban planning practices in Anatolia. On 30 December 1922, the Society of Studies for the Reconstruction of İzmir (*Société d’études pour la Reconstruction de Smyrne*) was established by eight French and Turkish founding members, in collaboration with the French Company of the Levant (*Compagnie Française du Levant*).<sup>22</sup> It became the first collaboration between the French and Turkish governments. Soon after, it was announced that “an Ottoman company has just been established in Paris with the assistance of the Banque de Paris and the Banque des Pays d’Orient, which is now controlled by the Banque Nationale de Credit, to participate in the reconstruction of destroyed buildings and districts in İzmir.”<sup>23</sup> The Society’s charter consisted of 49 articles. The main aims were identified as the construction of new buildings, regulation of demolished areas, execution and management of public works, and creation of a road network to meet the city’s needs after the fire. According to the charter, the Society “may take over the management of buildings to be constructed and may directly or indirectly involve (itself)

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20 Alfred MALLET, “Les idées de M. Albert Sarraut ambassadeur de France en Turquie,” *Le Figaro*, March 6, 1925.

21 Six years later, their *école* was harshly criticized. According to the Turkish press, although the French claimed to preserve the indigenous culture in their colonies, their policies were actually destructive. One journalist described the 1931 International Colonial Exposition in Paris as a “circus.” Marshal Lyautey, the French officer governing North Africa, was mocked as a circusgoer with armor and a fancy automobile. Moreover, reporters surmised that had the Republic not been declared, Istanbul’s Hagia Sophia or Dolmabahçe Palace would have been included in this exposition, with citizens on display. Sadri ETEM, “Koloni Sergisinde,” *Vakit*, June 15, 1931, p. 4.

22 Three of these founding members were Turkish (ex-Chief Rabbi of Turkey Nahoum Efendi; Turkish diplomat Rechid Sadi Bey; the architect Edhem Hamdi Bey) and five were French advisors (Elzéar Guiffroy, managing director of the Port of Smyrna; Mr. Chalas, industrial manager; Fernand Bonnier, administrator of Orosdi-Back Company; Paul Gille, managing director of the Société Centrale d’Études et d’Entreprises Générales; and André Vidal, managing director of Entreprises Centrales du Nord). “Travaux Public, Bâtiment, Matériaux,” *La Journée industrielle*, December 30, 1922, p. 5; MOYNE, “Société d’études pour la Reconstruction de Smyrne,” *La Loi*, January 19, 1923, p. 2-3.

23 “Bruits et Nouvelles,” *L’information financière économique et politique*, January 18, 1923, p. 5. The mention of the organization as an Ottoman society in the announcement might be a sign of the political alterations that dominated the period.



8 | in the commercial or industrial operations carried out” and “may invest in and create any similar or related, French or foreign, businesses, companies, agencies, branches or subsidiaries.”<sup>24</sup> One of the significant working principles of the Society, in which the French held a controlling interest, was to cooperate with local authorities. Article 28 of the regulation mandated the setting up of “a local advisory committee headquartered in İzmir, composed of five to ten members, for the study of questions on which an opinion is requested by the council or its delegates.”<sup>25</sup> Such cooperation was in parallel with the policy of the Republican ideology to acquire scientific knowledge; yet this last article can also be associated with the Turkish authorities’ unwillingness to relinquish all economic and decision-making control. In other words, with this article, the Republicans aimed to prevent France from using this economic power unilaterally in the future as a part of an imperialist strategy. Decisions regarding the economic interest would be subject to the approval of both parties. In addition, the involvement of local authorities in the decision-making process paved the way for a bottom-up process, as opposed to top-down.

In 1922, the Society for Reconstruction of İzmir contacted the architect-urbanist Henri Prost.<sup>26</sup> Prost, who had trained at Beaux-Arts, had contributed to the institutionalization of urbanism as a discipline, and was a founding member of SFU. In that period, he was mostly known as a colonial urbanist because of his long-term collaboration with Marshal Lyautey from 1912 onwards. He had directed construction projects in many towns and cities in French North Africa, and established the Special Service of Architecture and Urbanism in Morocco (*Service spécial d’architecture et d’urbanisme au Maroc*). Under his leadership, several master plans and urban interventions were implemented in historic Moroccan cities such as Casablanca, Rabat, and Fez. In fact, he was something of a specialist in integrating modern planning principles into a very old city. Moreover, in accordance with colonial policy, Prost was required to preserve local cultural values and historical monuments. Prost achieved these goals by segregating the indigenous town from the compound built for European life.<sup>27</sup> According to Prost, “the program imposed by Marshal

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24 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

26 In her research, Candaş Bilşel mentions that the reason for contacting Prost might be the result of a correspondence between Lyautey and Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, Candaş BİLŞEL, “Ideology and urbanism during the Early Republican Period,” *op. cit.* (note 13).

27 Carl H. NIGHTINGALE, *Segregation. A Global History of Divided Cities*, Chicago, IL; London: University of Chicago Press, 2012 (Historical Studies of Urban America). See also, Gwendolyn WRIGHT, *The Politics of*

Lyautey included an essential condition: complete separation (*séparation complète*)” of the two settlements. The reasons for this segregation belonged to several different categories: political, economic, hygienic, educative, and aesthetic.<sup>28</sup>

Like many other SFU members, Prost perceived his Moroccan task as a laboratory for developing his ideas on modern urbanism. In other words, the North African experience was seen as an unexplored learning space where French theories could be put into practice. Lyautey, who frequently mentioned that he aimed to “civilize” the indigenous people by modernizing Moroccan cities, always underlined his admiration for Prost’s approach. According to Lyautey, all the projects Prost had led had successfully fulfilled the purpose of French colonial policy.<sup>29</sup>

It should be noted that when the Turkish government contacted Prost, almost a decade had passed since the French urbanism experiment in Morocco. Prost received the invitation when he was already back in France, working on the *Plan d’aménagement de la région Parisienne* directed by Léon Jaussely and on the *Plan directeur de la côte Varoise* with the Danger brothers.<sup>30</sup> In other words, the Turkish Republican authorities sought an architect active in metropolitan France, planning further renovations in Paris and lecturing at the Institute of Urban Planning and the Special School of Architecture in Paris, not a colonial architect. This was also coherent with the perspective of the authorities in the Late Ottoman Period. When the Turkish Republicans hired a Paris-based professional for their renovation of Ankara and Western Anatolia, they were following in the footsteps of the Ottomans, who had invited many experts from France in the early 1900s.<sup>31</sup>

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*Design in French Colonial Urbanism*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991.; Janet ABU-LUGHOD, *Rabat, urban apartheid in Morocco*, Princeton, MA: Princeton University Press, 1980 (Princeton Studies on the Near East); Jean-Louis COHEN and Monique ELEB, *Casablanca, op. cit.* (note 16), Hélène VACHER, “Henri Prost and the Moroccan Colonial Experience,” *Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2015.

28 Henri PROST, “L’urbanisme au Maroc,” *Urbanisme*, Hors-Série, 1932.

29 Hubert LYAUTEY, *Paroles d’action: Madagascar, Sud-Oranais, Oran, Maroc (1900-1926)*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1927.

30 A recent study of Prost lists his planning activities in France in chronological order: Laurent HODEBERT, *Henri Prost et le projet d’architecture du sol urbain, 1910-1959*, PhD dissertation, in *Architecture*, Université Grenoble Alpes, Grenoble, 2018.

31 In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the aftermath of the French Revolution, the Ottoman Empire showed concern for Westernization. During this period, many of the Empire’s constitutional structures were changed. Zeynep Çelik highlights parallels between Istanbul and post-revolutionary Paris in the dominant urbanization strategy of the period. Likewise, the laws enacted in this period reflect French legislation. In addition, she traces the desire to make Istanbul like Paris by mentioning the unrealized Historic Peninsula project prepared by Beaux-Arts trained architect Joseph Antoine Bouvard in 1902, ZEYNEP ÇELİK, *The Remaking of Istanbul*,

Although French colonial policies were mentioned in Turkish discussions of architecture and urban planning in the 1930s, there was still no clear opposition to them. As Turkish scholar Sibel Bozdoğan has underlined, “one of the interesting aspects of the 1930s was that the term colonization had no negative connotations”.<sup>32</sup> With the institutionalization process that gave structure to the reforms, journals were established to publish the writings of local architects and engineers. In their articles, many Turkish architects published their opinions of the potential effects on historic cities of the Republic’s modernization program.<sup>33</sup> Many of them connected the Republican’s “modernization” argument to the main discourse of French colonial policy at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which was bringing “civilization” to North Africa. However, their argument framed a different perspective that contrasted with the political agenda. The negative atmosphere that dominated political criticism was not seen in the field of architecture and urban planning. The understanding of integrating the word “colonization” or “colonial” with architecture and urbanism was also perceived differently: it was meant as a progressive and enlightened situation that helped to improve the socio-cultural, economic, and physical environment of the countryside.<sup>34</sup> Referring to the agriculture-oriented urbanization established in order to maintain the economic balances in Europe, one of the prominent local architects, Zeki Sayar, stated that the equivalent of this in Turkey is “internal colonization.” According to him, if the central Turkish government “colonized” the small cities in Anatolia, the economy would be strengthened, schools would be improved, and a generation of modern, secular youth would rise.<sup>35</sup> By positioning these perspectives, it can be argued that the scientific approach in the architectural debate should be considered separately from the critique of colonialist politics. As a result, invitations to French planning professionals to plan Turkish cities should be seen as independent from the Frenchmen’s colonial background and colonialist policies overall. Instead, discussions were focused on the fact that those “conveying civilization” to the urban environment were foreigners, not local experts. In other words, the main critique was that as outsiders, these

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*op. cit.* (note 10).

32 Sibel BOZDOĞAN, *Modernism and Nation Building*, *op. cit.* (note 6).

33 Recent research recalls the history of the first architecture magazine of this period, *Arkitekt*, and how it influenced the urban policies of the period in Ali CENGİZKAN, İnan DERİN and Müge CENGİZKAN, *Zeki Sayar ve arkitekt. Tasarlamak, örgütlemek, belgelemek*, Ankara: Mimarlar Odası Yayınları, 2015.

34 Sabri GÜLTEKİN, “Melez Terbiye,” *Ülkü*, vol. 2, no. 7, 1933; Sibel BOZDOĞAN, *Modernism and Nation Building*, *op. cit.* (note 6).

35 Zeki SAYAR, “İç Kolonizasyon,” *Arkitekt*, no. 68, 1936, p. 231-235.

consultants were insufficiently acquainted with the urban environment, the characteristics of Turkish cities, and the needs of local culture. In this light, it can be argued that the reactions of Turkish authorities were related to the fact that the professionals were foreigners, not that they had a colonial background.

## Traces of the Society of Studies for the Reconstruction of İzmir in modernizing Western Anatolia

The European influence was immediately noted by a rapid development of these extensive and often deserted territories. Turkey, tightly circumscribed, experienced a burst of revolt, freeing the western part of its Asian territory from the Greeks. It then wanted to modernize... Turkey is not “colonial”; however... would have been interesting to know İzmir, where M. H. Prost had already drawn up plans long before the war, and which, destroyed by the fire of 1922, is rebuilt on a modern and ample plan.<sup>36</sup>

Maurice Pillet delivered the speech above at the International Colonial Urbanism Congress (*Congrès International de l'Urbanisme aux Colonies et dans les Pays Tropicaux*) organized in Paris in 1931 as a part of the International Colonial Exhibition (*L'Exposition Coloniale Internationale de Paris*). Connecting the modernization processes of Eastern cultures to the influence of French colonialist policies, Pillet<sup>37</sup> emphasized that Prost's approach on İzmir was not undertaken within a colonial framework. The mention of the İzmir Plan in a colonial exhibition might have been a reaction to rising anticolonial sentiment in France at that time. Government officials, on the defensive, might have wished to point out that they were modernizing other countries as well.

In 1922, when the Society of Studies for the Reconstruction of İzmir contacted Prost, he stated that he could remain as a consultant for the İzmir Plan but lacked the time to fully undertake the task. He suggested the studio led by his friends and collaborators René and Raymond Danger.<sup>38</sup> This was not

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36 “L'emprise européenne se signala de suite par une rapide mise en valeur de ces territoires étendus et bien souvent déserts. La Turquie, resserrée sur elle-même, connut un sursaut de révolte, qui libéra des Grecs la partie occidentale de son territoire asiatique. Elle tint alors à se moderniser... La Turquie n'est pas « coloniale » ; cependant... aurait été intéressante à connaître, comme aussi Smyrne, où M. H. Prost avait déjà élaboré des plans, longtemps avant la guerre, et qui, rasée par l'incendie de 1922, se reconstruit sur un plan moderne et ample.” Maurice PILLET, “L'urbanisme dans l'Orient Moderne Rapport Général,” in Jean ROYER *L'urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays tropicaux. 1. Communications & rapports du Congrès international de l'urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays de latitude intertropicale*, La Charité-sur-Loire : Delaunay, 1932.

37 A Beaux-Arts architect, Maurice Pillet was in charge on the survey of ongoing developments in Eastern countries. URL: <https://agorha.inha.fr/ark:/54721/fd5d00f9-854e-46b6-b0c5-72a13a5f84cb>. Accessed 21 April 2023.

38 Candaş BİLSEL, “Ideology and urbanism during the Early Republican Period,” *op. cit.* (note 13). Kalliopi AMYGDALOU, “Building the Nation at the Crossroads of ‘East’ and ‘West,’” *op. cit.* (note 13). René Danger

12 | a motiveless choice: the collaboration between Prost and the Danger brothers had started in North Africa and continued in France.<sup>39</sup> On the basis of Prost's recommendation, in 1923, René Danger, as the main representative of the studio, signed the contract with the İzmir Municipality. According to the deal, Prost stayed on as a consultant on the plan. A two-year experience in Turkey began for the Danger brothers. Meanwhile, according to the regulations of the Society, a team of local doctors, architects, and engineers was appointed by the municipality to analyze the city's geographical, economic, meteorological, hydrological, and geological situation. Based on these analyses, the team identified the main needs of the city and presented a report to the Danger brothers.<sup>40</sup> The main requirements were the reconstruction of burnt districts and the construction of administrative, commercial, and residential areas, to transform İzmir into a modern city, culturally and economically.<sup>41</sup>

In this framework, transportation was a central focus of the plan. In line with the industrialization program that was the backbone of Republican ideology, one of the most important tasks was the establishment of railways. As mentioned before, the port city of İzmir was the main gateway to Western Anatolia, linking Europe to the capital city, Ankara. The Prost-Danger Plan proposed a central train station ensuring this connection by rail. The new İzmir-Manisa-Uşak-Ankara railway line was to include two small cities in Western Anatolia. The administrator of the Society of Studies for the Reconstruction of İzmir, Paul Gille, asked René Danger to contact the municipalities of Manisa and Uşak to prepare reconstruction plans.<sup>42</sup>

The Society aimed to create a holistic planning process from İzmir to Ankara. Manisa, also known as Magnesia, was the first stop. The city, located only 40 km from İzmir, had been nearly completely destroyed by fire during the Greco-Turkish War. René and his brother Raymond Danger travelled

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specialized as a surveyor-urbanist even though he had not been trained at either the Beaux-Arts or Villa Medici. In 1919, he established *Société des plans régulateurs de villes* in Paris with his brother Raymond Danger, his son Paul Danger and his daughter Thérèse Danger. This family studio soon became popular as "*Danger frères et fils*." In the following years, the studio carried out several planning studies not only in France, but in overseas locations such as Algeria, Antioch, Beirut, and Syria, Paris (France), *Notice biographique*, n.d. IFA (Online archive), Danger frères et fils. URL: [https://archiwebture.citedelarchitecture.fr/fonds/FRAPN02\\_DANGE](https://archiwebture.citedelarchitecture.fr/fonds/FRAPN02_DANGE). Accessed 12 December 2022.

39 Frédéric SEITZ, *L'École spéciale d'architecture, 1865-1930: une entreprise d'idée*, Paris: Picard, 1995.

40 "Le plan d'aménagement de la ville de Smyrne," *L'Architecture*, vol. 40, no. 4, 1927. See also, Candaş BİLSEL, "Ideology and urbanism during the Early Republican Period," *op. cit.* (note 13), and Kalliopi AMYGDALOU, "Building the Nation at the Crossroads of 'East' and 'West,'" *op. cit.* (note 13).

41 *Ibid.*

42 "Plan d'aménagement de Magnésie du Sipyle," *L'Architecture*, vol. 12, 1924, p. 151-158.

to Manisa and analyzed the economic, social, cultural, demographical, and topographical aspects of the city. Although there is no document in the local archives to show that the municipality of Manisa was contacted, René Danger was aware of the existence of a 1:2,000 scale map prepared in 1920 showing the urban fabric of Manisa before the fires. Based on this map, the brothers began to develop their planning proposal. Finally, they submitted their *Plan d'aménagement de la ville de Magnésie* with four more detailed plans showing the city government buildings, a public park with a football pitch, the train station, and workers' housing in garden apartments. The planners also presented several sketches prepared by their collaborators in Paris of how Manis would look after renovation.<sup>43</sup> The French press described the Dangers' work as "a success for the spread of French doctrines to foreign lands."<sup>44</sup> However, the Turkish media did not report that the Danger brothers were working on other cities besides İzmir. Moreover, their plan was not reviewed by Manisa authorities. The only mention of the planning studies in the minutes of the Manisa town council meetings notes that "a company in France tried to be included, but [its work] was not concluded." There are no other details, reports, or official agreements about the collaboration of the Danger brothers with Manisa Municipality.<sup>45</sup> On November 29, 1922, the municipality signed its official contract with the Turkish Architecture and Construction Company. The plan prepared by local architects, Selahattin Bey and Akif Bey, was approved on July 21, 1923.<sup>46</sup> Both the Danger brothers' plan and that of the Turkish architects were based on 1:2000 scale maps prepared by the municipality in 1920. However, they represented different points of view in terms of urbanism and heritage policy.

In the program prepared by the Dangers, two main aspects were prioritized for rebuilding or repairing after the fire: preservation and restoration of religious and historical monuments to respect the city's traditions, and maintenance of the existing commercial and administrative district. At that point, the planning decisions diverged from the poly-centered urbanism

43 *Ibid.*

44 "La Renaissance des Cités," *Comoedia*, Paris, August 15, 1924, p. 3.

45 Nusret KÖKLÜ, *Manisa Şehir Atlası*, [s.l.]: NA, 1993, vol. 3. The existing literature on this matter does not contain any details other than mentioning that Aziz Bey collaborated with "a French company." Chronology see, Sümer GÜLER, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Manisa*, İzmir: Yaşar Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı Yayınları, 1984; Nejdett BİLGİ, *XX. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Manisa Kazası*, Unpublished PhD dissertation, Ege University, İzmir, 1996, p. 218; Müge AYDIN, *Geç Osmanlı Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Değişen Kent Dokusunun Süreklilik Bağlamında İncelenmesi İşgal Öncesi/Sonrası Manisa*, PhD dissertation, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, 2019, p. 71.

46 Nusret KÖKLÜ, *Manisa Şehir Atlası*, *op. cit.* (note 45).



14 | approach in North Africa, with which Danger brothers were familiar. Instead of dividing the historical fabric by creating a new modern city center, they placed new settlements at the periphery in connection with the existing historical core. This decision not only avoided a radical urban transformation of the city but also reduced the cost to the newly born Turkish government, which had limited economic resources. Lastly, transportation and hygiene issues were tackled as fundamental elements in accomplishing these two main priorities. The Danger Plan proposed a transportation network that would maintain the traces of existing 19<sup>th</sup> century road lines in the city, widening some of the roads to create broad avenues. Arguing that trams should be the main form of public transportation, the Danger brothers prepared sketches on how to expand the streets by identifying their specific dimensions. Moreover, they designed new roads connecting important points of the city, such as the city government buildings, the train station, and three historical mosques. In short, this plan preserved the existing urban fabric while aiming to provide for the smoothest flow of traffic at the lowest cost.<sup>47</sup>

As figure 2 shows, contrary to the Danger plan, the plan designed by local architects that was finally implemented recommended demolishing buildings to create an urban fabric arranged on a grid system. In other words, instead of adopting the suggestions of the French planners, the proposal was prepared in accordance with the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Ottoman *Ebniye* laws, as mentioned in the municipality report:

Although Manisa is the second-largest city in the Aegean after İzmir, it was an Ottoman city that developed and grew according to the necessities of the past centuries. In terms of the removal of narrow and dead-end streets, it was found appropriate to organize and develop the city properly, not as it was, but also by making use of the provisions of the *Ebniye* Law in force at that time.<sup>48</sup>

Another significant element in the planning decisions was the proposal to transform the existing cemetery areas into public parks. According to René Danger, “Turkish cemeteries are suitable for transformation into a public park, and these areas should be preserved with their vegetation by expanding green spaces around them.”<sup>49</sup> He advocated preserving vegetation because “the tree also plays a very important role in the beauty of the city. In this respect, I would like to enjoy the plane and cypress trees of the beautiful

47 René DANGER, “Şehir Planı,” *Belediyeler Dergisi*, no. 2, 1935, p. 9.

48 Nusret KÖKLÜ, *Manisa Şehir Atlası*, *op. cit.* (note 45).

49 “Plan d’aménagement de Magnésie du Sipyle,” *op. cit.* (note 42), p. 155.

city of Manisa.<sup>50</sup> In the Ottoman period, from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, some | 15

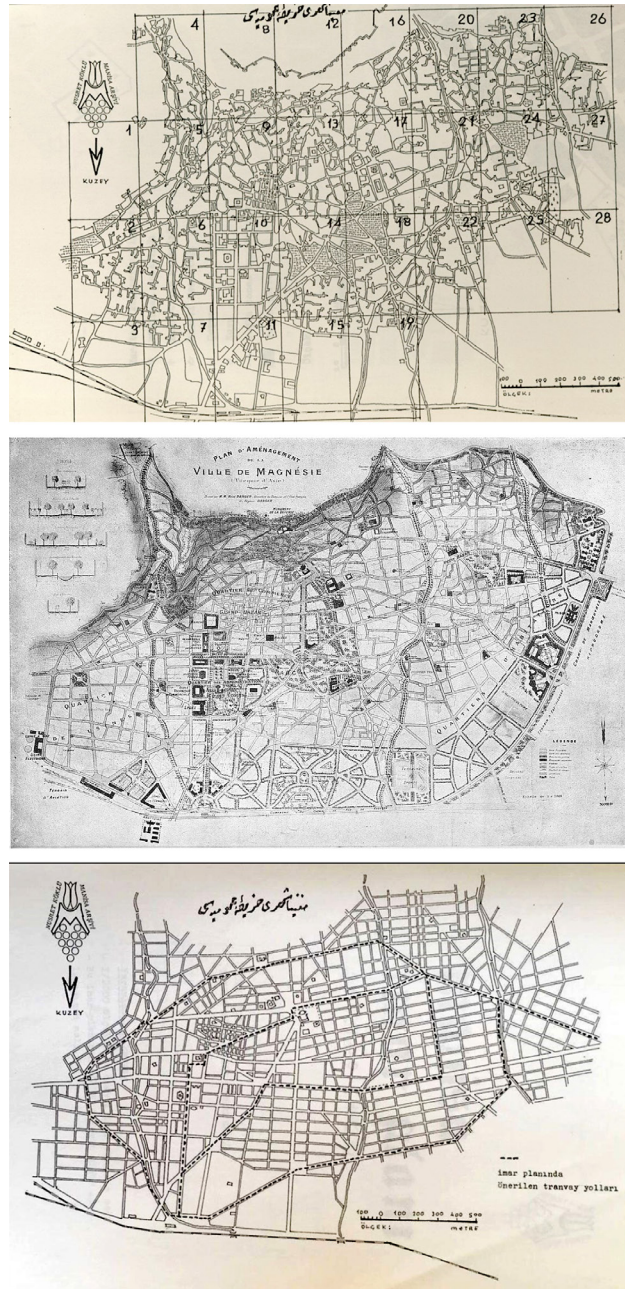


Figure 2: Three maps of the proposed renovation of Manisa. The one prepared by the local architects of Manisa Municipality in 1920 (top); the plan prepared by René Danger in 1923 (middle); and the approved urban plan for Manisa prepared by Selahattin Bey and Akif Bey in

50 René DANGER, “Şehir Planı”, *op. cit.* (note 47).

16 | 1923 (bottom).  
Source: Nusret KÖKLÜ, *Manisa Şehir Atlası*, [s.l.]: NA, 1993, vol. 3 (top); "Plan d'aménagement de Magnésie du Sipyle," *L'Architecture*, vol. 12, 1924, p. 157 (middle); Nusret KÖKLÜ, *Manisa Şehir Atlası*, [s.l.]: NA, 1993, vol. 3 (bottom).

cemeteries in the middle of Turkish cities had already begun to be transformed into parks, as happened in France. However, most of these transformations had followed a strategy of moving the cemeteries to the periphery, rather than preserving them in place. Following this, the approved plan for Manisa aimed to remove the cemeteries from the historic core of the city and replace them with new settlements. A few years later, Danger criticized this decision as:

Here, I would like to express my personal opinion, with the permission of my Turkish readers. Like Pierre Loti, I am a fan of Turkish cemeteries, their deep silence and poetry, and their cypresses. But is it not possible to turn these cemeteries into parks in order to live a healthy life, and thus to ensure the health of the city with the respect we owe to the dead, and then to remove the cemeteries to out of the city?<sup>51</sup>

Although the approved urban program never mentioned the Danger Plan, some features were similar, such as the preservation of the three historic 16<sup>th</sup>-century mosques. The Danger Plan proposed a wide avenue connecting the municipal buildings with the mosques. The avenue would end in a newly created park containing the municipal buildings, located in the historic city center. This connection also appeared on the approved plan, although the proposed width was kept narrower.<sup>52</sup> The square was realized in the 1930s (fig. 3).

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51 *Ibid.*

52 While Danger had designed a 31-meter avenue, this width was 20-meter in the approved plan.



Figure 3: The historical municipality and Republican Square of Manisa in the 1930s.

Source: *Manisa Municipality*, Manica Municipality Official Website, n.d. Tarihçe.

URL: <http://www.manisa.gov.tr/tarihce>.

After Manisa, René Danger was assigned by the Society of the Reconstruction of İzmir to conduct scientific analyses and prepare a modern urban plan for Uşak, which was the seat of the Administrative Quarter for the Kütahya province at that time. Contrary to what happened with the Manisa and İzmir proposals, the planners did not have a plan of Uşak that they could use as a base. Therefore, they first surveyed the town's topography to make a 1:2000 scale map of the region. In addition to the topographical data, the map included the boundaries of the area, the existing commercial zone, the burnt areas, the important historical mosques, and the hammam.<sup>53</sup> The Dangers designed two plans for Uşak: *État actuel avec anomalie des courbes de niveau* (Current State, with Contour Line Anomaly) and *Remèdes apportés à cette déformation* (Remedies for this Deformation). The first document set out the existing situation with topographical data and fire zones, and highlighted the main urban problems of Uşak. The second showed their proposal for the municipal government zone around Republic Square. It was to include such public buildings as a theater, a school, a museum, a library, and a town hall. Moreover, the planners submitted an urban program that included practical

53 René DANGER, "Une étude de plan régulateur d'Ouchak (Anatolie)," *L'Ingénieur constructeur de travaux publics*, 1925, p. 25-33.

18 | and economic suggestions to solve the problems they had identified.<sup>54</sup>

These problems were mostly related to the district infrastructure. Chief among them was the risk of flood for the ruins of neighborhoods that were nearly destroyed during the war. The draft Danger Plan suggested two infrastructural solutions.<sup>55</sup> In addition, the draft plan recommended the industrialization of Uşak's artisanal rug-weaving activity, famous in Western countries. It proposed selecting an industrial zone considered prevailing winds to lessen the impact on residential areas. However, these suggestions did not appear on the plan that was finally submitted, which was divided into four main sections: location, population, water flow, and winds.

The population section of the program described the proposed link between the commercial and administrative centers in detail. According to Danger, "the *çarşı* (commercial area) is already in an established position," and they should not "displace the tradition without serious reason."<sup>56</sup> Consequently, the proposal for the Administrative Quarter, which included Republican Square and the public buildings, left the historical core of Uşak, located between the commercial area and the train station, intact. Soon afterwards, however, due to shifting political alliances in Uşak, the mayor changed (three times between 1923-1927). During this period, many partial plans were implemented according to the *Ebniye* laws. In 1933, after the Building and Roads Law required every city to have an urban plan, the first planning works were started by local architects.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, the plan submitted by Danger was never realized.

In the meantime, the İzmir Plan was finalized by the Danger-Prost cooperation and submitted with Prost's signature. The plan was accepted by the municipality in 1925. However, in an atmosphere where the political structure had changed, and in a multi-layered city like İzmir, the question of what to preserve and what to demolish was challenging. Amydalou and Morack have highlighted Prost's clear intention to preserve several monuments in the burnt area.<sup>58</sup> The plan envisaged the city in two parts: the modern and historic

54 *Ibid.*

55 The Dangers explained that the riverbed had deformed over time due to the buildings built around it. In addition, the bridge over the river had increased the deformation by partially blocking the flow of water. They proposed reconstructing the thalweg to increase the flow of water under the bridge or diverting the water supply from the small valley's tributaries and transferring them downstream, in René DANGER, "La Topographie dans l'urbanisme," *L'Architecture*, no. 3, 1929.

56 René DANGER, "Une étude de plan régulateur d'Ouchak (Anatolie)," *op. cit.* (note 53).

57 Haşım TÜMER, *Uşak Tarihi*, İstanbul: Uşak Halk Eğitimine Yardım Derneği Kültür Yayınları, 1971.

58 Kalliopi AMYDALOU, "Building the Nation at the Crossroads of 'East' and 'West,'" *op. cit.* (note 13),



centers. As Bilsel has pointed out, the planners adopted a poly-centered approach.<sup>59</sup> This choice pointed to a holistic planning approach rather than the segregation style in the French colonies. The French advisors were aware that, unlike the French colonial authorities, preoccupied with dividing their new cities, the Turkish Republican officials aimed to make nation-building visible. This awareness is reflected in the plan by linking the historical and modern quarter with a modernist framework. It was inspired by two main guidelines (**fig. 4**). Firstly, the plan was conceived to create a new settlement designed on the basis of typical Beaux-Arts approach, combining aesthetics and public health by opening wide avenues and creating multifunctional public parks. Secondly, the Prost-Danger Plan envisaged a preservationist approach to the parts of the historical urban fabric that had survived the fires. Moreover, the

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p. 1-14; Ellinor MORACK, "Expropriating the dead in Turkey," *op. cit.* (note 13).

59 Candaş BILSEL, "Ideology and urbanism during the Early Republican Period," *op. cit.* (note 13). Bilsel provides a detailed analysis of the first urban planning process of İzmir in the Early Republican Period by highlighting the planning criteria of Prost-Danger collaboration based on the original documents gathered by archival research conducted in Paris. In her seminal study, she demonstrated the first traces of French urbanism in İzmir, which started from there and spread to different historical cities of Anatolia.



20 | plan envisaged the creation of a Republican Square between the modern and historic districts.

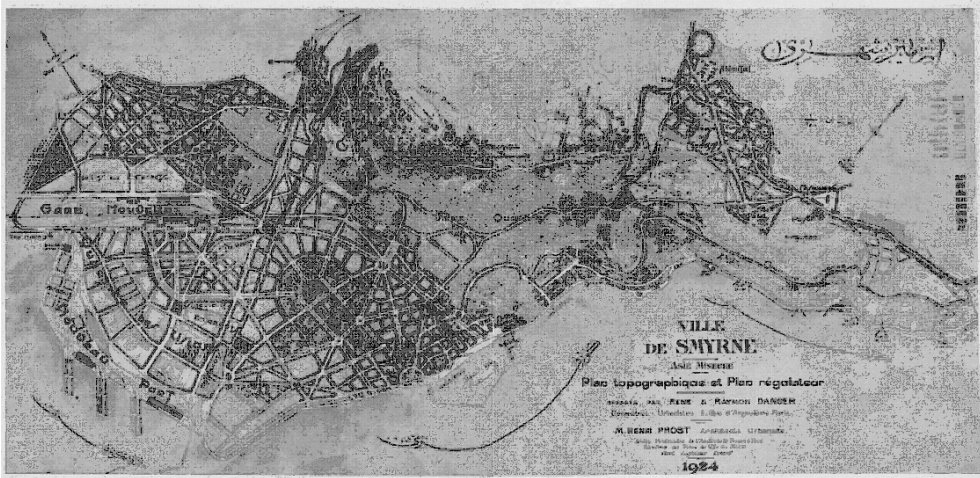


Figure 4: *Plan Aménagement de la ville d'Izmir* prepared by Danger-Prost in 1924.

Source: "Le plan d'aménagement de la ville de Smyrne," *L'Architecture*, vol. 40, no. 4, 1927.

The implementation of the plan began with the new settlements and the Republican Square. However, existing *Ebniye* laws prevented the realization of many of its other features. During a *Musée Social* meeting, Prost noted that "the laws in Turkey are very often the act of the Sultan."<sup>60</sup> He referred to the article of *Ebniye* Law stipulating "Those who want to construct new buildings or settlements should submit a petition and a map to the municipalities. After the examinations by local authorities, the documents that are found suitable are sent to the Sultan's order and only the projects that receive the Sultan's permission (*irade-i seniyye*) can be started."<sup>61</sup> However, it was impossible to apply the law in a political system formed by the Republic and without the Sultan. The second problem that Prost mentioned in the same meeting was related to property ownership. With the end of the war, the Lausanne Peace Treaty caused a massive population movement. On the one hand, population loss occurred in many cities of Anatolia, when non-Muslims emigrated. On the other hand, Turks coming from outside the Turkish Republic's borders—mainly from Greece and the Balkans—had to settle in the cities in Asia Minor.<sup>62</sup> One of the biggest consequences of these massive population movements was

60 Georges RISLER, "Travaux des Sections," *Le Musée social, revue mensuelle*, 1927, p. 269-279.

61 "Ebniye Kanunu," Chapter 2, Article 16, Direction of the streets, *op. cit.* (note 10).

62 İlhan TEKELİ, "19. Yüzyılda İstanbul Metropol Alanının Dönüşümü," *Modernleşme Sürecinde Osmanlı Kentleri*, 1996, vol. 2.

an ownership problem. In order to resolve the problems and accelerate the construction works, the *Ebniye* Law underwent two reforms. Firstly, according to the new Act No. 642 of 1925, “districts where more than 150 buildings have burned down are considered vacant land.”<sup>63</sup> This gave municipalities the authority to demolish buildings when they deemed it necessary, even if they were not damaged, in the areas where the new settlement would be built. Secondly, Expropriation Act No. 583 went into effect in 1925.<sup>64</sup> This law, instead of preserving the historical urban fabric, paved the way for the establishment of modern settlements outside these centers.

Creating open spaces was an outstanding feature of the plan, and local authorities thought it important to have a large square with a Republican Monument to celebrate national holidays. The construction of the Republican Square was thus initiated, despite the municipality’s limited budget. This square, planned on the basis of Beaux-Arts principles, was designed to host the new city government building. It was located far from the historical urban fabric recommended for preservation. In addition, recalling the purpose for the construction of the Boulevard du Quatre Zouaves in Casablanca, designed by Prost in 1912,<sup>65</sup> the Republican Square of İzmir served as a symbolic gateway to the city for visitors arriving by sea (fig. 5).



Figure 5: The Republican Square of İzmir in the 1930s.

Source: İzmir (Turkey), *Gazi Heykeli*, Ahmet Piriştina City Archive, Altan Altın Bağış Fonu.

63 Melih ERSOY, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze İmar ve Yasalar*, İstanbul: Ninova, 2020, p. 119.

64 *Ibid*, p. 121.

65 Jean-Louis COHEN and Monique ELEB, *Casablanca*, *op. cit.* (note 16).

Most of the İzmir Plan had been carried out by the 1930s. In the meantime, Republicans seeking traces of the pre-Ottoman period started to claim that “Turks existed in these lands before the Ottomans, and the Turkish nation originated with the Hittites and Sumerians.”<sup>66</sup> This discourse, which was a component of the nation-building process, found a response in the archeological excavations and historical research initiated in Anatolia after the establishment of the Turkish Historical Society in 1931.<sup>67</sup> Even though this research was allocated only a limited budget, the findings caused attention to the preservation of Ottoman monuments to slacken. It can be claimed that the implementation process of the Prost-Danger İzmir Plan already bore the traces of this attitude. As Kalliopi Amygdalou’s research underlined, Prost’s sketches listed many Byzantine and Roman buildings in the historic city center as “repairable” monuments to be preserved.<sup>68</sup>

However, in response to the urgent need for post-war recovery, local authorities prioritized building new housing and infrastructure over preserving the historical settlement. In 1927, during a meeting in the *Musée Social*, Rene Danger commented “There are no interesting monuments in İzmir.”<sup>69</sup> His statement betrays a questionable bias, in contrast with Prost’s list. The fact that Danger conducted the on-site survey in tandem with the Turkish authorities may point to the conclusion that local advisors had an impact on his discourse. Only a few years later, in 1931, although the Danger brothers noted that “the plan is being implemented exactly” during their visit to İzmir,<sup>70</sup> local authorities had already decided to revise the İzmir Plan, especially for the planning of the historical urban fabric.<sup>71</sup> This was confirmed by a statement of the mayor of İzmir, Behiç Uz:

“For İzmir, Prost’s point of view is not always appropriate. The city of İzmir is definitely not suited to preserving any monument in the middle of the street as a decorative element. (...) However, works by [Ottoman architect] Mimar Sinan deserve to be preserved by the city. It can be left in the middle of the street and parks can be created around it.”<sup>72</sup>

66 Afet İNAN, *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları - Methal Kısmı*, İstanbul, Devlet Matbaası, 1931.

67 For further information, see, Mesut DİNLER, *Modernization through Past: Cultural Heritage during the Late Ottoman and the Early Republican period in Turkey*, Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2019.

68 Kalliopi AMYGDALOU, “Building the Nation at the Crossroads of ‘East’ and ‘West,’” *op. cit.* (note 13).

69 Georges RISLER, “Travaux des Sections,” *op. cit.* (note 60).

70 “İzmirin imar planında neden, sonradan bazı değişiklik yapılmış?,” *Akşam*, December 14, 1937, p. 5.

71 Kalliopi AMYGDALOU, “Building the Nation at the Crossroads of ‘East’ and ‘West,’” *op. cit.* (note 13). See also, Cânâ BİLSEL, “Ideology and urbanism during the Early Republican Period,” *op. cit.* (note 13).

72 Ulvi OLGAC, *Guzel İzmir ne idi? Ne oldu?*, İzmir: Meşher Basımevi, 1939.

Thus, despite Turkey's multi-layered character, the perception of heritage was limited to the monuments built by famous Ottoman figures such as Mimar Sinan. Comparing Prost's initial perspective on listing the monuments to be protected, this statement shows how fast heritage-related ideas changed and how the decision makers were unsure of the best approach, in the first years of the Republic.

## Conclusion

During the first decade of the Turkish Republic, many construction laws were modernized and the field of urbanism was institutionalized. In parallel, the Republicans sought to learn and import recent innovations, technical knowledge, and skills from European advisors to modernize Turkish cities. Within this framework, the establishment of the Society of Studies for Reconstruction of İzmir played a key role in welcoming French professionals to Anatolia. In 1922, the Prost – Danger collaboration in İzmir became the first example of urban planning studies produced by foreign professionals.<sup>73</sup> However, instead of being limited to a single city, due to the holistic planning approach requirements, it encompassed several cities in Western Anatolia. In other words, the task of planning the line connecting İzmir to Ankara as a whole brought Manisa and Uşak to the attention of the French professionals. However, this seems to have been a one-sided attempt fostered by a French perspective. Although the Dangers' planning studies included Manisa and Uşak, there is no indication that the Turkish authorities made such a request. Moreover, given that the Turkish government did not have the budget for large-scale urban transformations in small cities, it is no coincidence that the studies of the French urbanists did not yield results. Yet, as mentioned in this article, the fact that the Danger brothers were aware of a base plan of Manisa is an indication that they were in contact with the local authorities, even if unofficially. The limited budget and the not yet fully structured legal framework prevented the urgent rebuilding process needed in a small city like Manisa from being carried out in accordance with the Dangers' plan. Furthermore, as the Uşak case showed, the unstable political structure in small cities was another reason why municipalities did not immediately concentrate on a new planning approach.

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73 In 1922, this was the first occasion that the Turkish government came into contact with French advisors, but it was also the beginning of a collaboration that would last until the 1950s: in Candaş BİLSEL, "Ideology and urbanism during the Early Republican Period," and Pierre PINON, *From the Imperial Capital to the Republican Modern City*, *op. cit.* (note 13).



Positioning these circumstances, it can be observed that the mobility of French advisors in Western Anatolia was a combination of the French desire to keep control with a neo-colonialist approach in the interwar period and the Turkish Republic's search for economic and technological support for the effort of both post-war recovery and modernization. The fact that the Danger brothers carried out these studies using the Society's funds can be explained as a matter of professional curiosity. However, considering that the plan was established within the framework of cooperation, it can be argued that it is the result of a bilateral basis. On the basis of Ambassador Sarraut's pledge to "seek to safeguard material interests of France" during his stay in Turkey, the work of the Dangers could be seen as research preliminary to possible future investments of France in Western Anatolia. However, the fact that local players had an equal say in the decision-making process regarding the investments to be made can be seen as a means of counterbalancing any attempt by France to control economic power. In other words, this bilateral approach was institutionalized under the Society and resulted in the initiation of an urban planning process for the reconstruction of three cities in Western Anatolia.

The planning proposals for these three cities, developed simultaneously by consultants from the same team, nevertheless differ. Although Prost and Danger contradicted each other regarding heritage-led decisions in the İzmir Plan, the plan they developed together ultimately did not suggest any intervention in the historical city center. The preservationist approach was also reflected in the plans for Manisa and Uşak developed by the Danger brothers. The polycentric approach as envisaged for İzmir Plan was not, on the other hand, included into these two plans. Instead, the Dangers developed a settlement dispersed around the historic city center that fit into the city's topographical framework. This difference might be explained by the fact that Rene Danger was a topographic engineer, not an architect-urbanist, and the plans were not prepared by a multidisciplinary team.<sup>74</sup> However, it is significant that they proposed to support Uşak's economy by developing local skills and traditional crafts. Such a proposal, developed at a time when the concept seen today as the protection of intangible heritage was not yet defined, tells us that they approached their task with an innovative vision.

Although the İzmir Plan was the only one that was put into practice, the ideas brought by the French advisors affected the development of the new

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74 Yet, these experiences formed the basis of their planning for the cities under the French mandate on Turkey's southern border in 1936. For further information on their studies in 1936 see Ümit Fırat AÇIKGÖZ, *A Case in French Colonial Politics of Architecture and Urbanism: Antioch and Alexandretta During the Mandate*, unpublished master thesis, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, Halle, 2008.

Republic's legal and theoretical framework. The main impact of this process was twofold: the understanding that a common legal structure had to be developed for all cities, and that the *Ebniye* laws required sweeping reform. In line with this purpose, the first construction law of the Republican period, the "Municipal Building and Roads Law (*Belediye Yapı ve Yollar Kanunu*)" went into effect in 1933. Based on the wording of the title of the law, one might suppose that it was limited to regulating micro-scale constructions in the urban environment. However, this was the first movement to frame the city as a whole instead of shaping the cities with partial plans. Moreover, Article 52 of this law invalidated the *Ebniye* Law and its relevant requirements.<sup>75</sup> This meant that by 1933, all the traces of Ottoman law related to urbanism had been officially erased. The "Municipal Building and Roads Law" also included many firsts for the history of urbanism in the early Republican period. The terms "urbanism" and "urban program" were introduced into the laws of the Republic of Turkey for the first time; the conservation of historical monuments was also mentioned in the construction law. Moreover, the law stipulated that the buildings and monuments should be protected as a whole, within their context, rather than as individual objects. In short, the law required a large number of cities to be re-planned according to modern standards, ignoring the planning approach previously carried out by local advisors. This process created the legal framework that prevailed until the 1950s.

In addition, recalling Republican support for the goal of modernization, the local authorities welcomed the French approach. Compared to local architects and engineers, political figures played an important role in making and implementing decisions related to historic cities. As suggested in this article through Şükrü Kaya's stance as a political figure who collaborates with French architects, political relations and access to scientific knowledge for the planning of cities were considered separately from the political tensions between the two countries. On the one hand, Turkish authorities always refrained from linking Prost and Danger to their past colonial experiences. On the other hand, their plan scheme reflected no trace of a colonial attitude. Prost and his colleagues achieved this result by revising the developing principles of modern urbanism under the different frameworks of political atmospheres and depending on the relations of the architect/client. All these revisions of the period formed the basis of a shared history.

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75 "Belediye Yapı ve Yollar Kanunu," *Official Gazette (T.C. Resmi Gazete No: 2433)*, June 21, 1933.



## Abstract

The year 1923 was a turning point for Turkey. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire after a long war brought in Republican ideology centered on economic self-sufficiency and modern, secular values. With the proclamation of the Republic, the reconstruction of war-torn historical cities became a priority, to spread the new ideology and meet the country's industrial needs. The new authorities encouraged municipalities to consult with Western European architects, many of whom were invited in the first years of the Republic. Their knowledge of the latest technologies and modern urban planning principles in Europe were to be applied to reconstruct Anatolian towns and villages according to the modern ideology. To facilitate this cooperation, the Society of Studies for the Reconstruction of İzmir was established in Paris in 1922. It brought together French experts and Turkish authorities during the planning process of Western Anatolian cities. The most prominent French consultants were Paris-based Henri Prost and René Danger, working together in France after having gained long-term experience in French colonies.

This paper, firstly, highlights the mobility of these French professionals in Western Anatolia by tracing the history of their planning studies. Secondly, framing the political tension between the two countries, it aims to investigate whether the perspectives of the Turkish authorities associated the guest French architects and planners with colonial France. Lastly, it focuses on the post-war reconstruction process of historical cities in Western Anatolia, discussing the results of the interaction of the decision-makers and focusing on İzmir, Manisa, and Uşak.

## Résumé

Interactions entre professionnels turcs du bâtiment et conseillers français pour la reconstruction des villes historiques d'Anatolie occidentale

L'année 1923 marque un tournant pour la Turquie. L'effondrement de l'Empire ottoman après une longue période de guerre a donné naissance à une idéologie républicaine centrée sur l'auto-suffisance économique et des valeurs modernes et laïques. Avec la proclamation de la République, la reconstruction des villes historiques détruites par la guerre devient une priorité, afin de diffuser la nouvelle idéologie et de répondre aux besoins industriels du pays. Les nouvelles autorités encouragent les municipalités à consulter des architectes d'Europe occidentale, dont beaucoup ont été invités dans les premières années de la République. Leur connaissance des dernières technologies et des principes modernes européens en matière d'urbanisme devait être mise à profit pour reconstruire les villes et villages d'Anatolie conformément à la nouvelle idéologie. Pour faciliter cette coopération, la Société d'études pour la reconstruction d'Izmir est créée à Paris en 1922. Elle réunissait des experts français et des officiels turques autour du processus d'urbanisation des villes d'Anatolie occidentale. Les consultants français les plus importants furent Henri Prost et René Danger, basés à Paris, et travaillant ensemble en France après une longue expérience acquise dans les colonies françaises.

Dans un premier temps, cet article retrace leur voyage en Anatolie occidentale et leurs études préliminaires. Dans un second temps, et dans un contexte de tension politique entre les deux pays, on cherchera à déterminer dans quelle mesure les autorités turques associaient les architectes et urbanistes français invités aux desseins de la France coloniale. Enfin, on se concentre sur le processus de reconstruction d'après-guerre des cités

historiques d'Anatolie occidentale, et sur les résultats des échanges entre décideurs, avec une attention particulière portée aux villes d'İzmir, Manisa et Uşak.

### Resumen

Interacciones entre profesionales turcos de la construcción y asesores franceses en la reconstrucción de ciudades históricas en Anatolia occidental

El año 1923 fue un punto de inflexión para Turquía. El colapso del Imperio Otomano tras una larga guerra trajo consigo la ideología republicana centrada en la autosuficiencia económica y los valores modernos y seculares. Con la proclamación de la República, la reconstrucción de las ciudades históricas devastadas por la guerra se convirtió en una prioridad, para difundir la nueva ideología y satisfacer las necesidades industriales del país. Las nuevas autoridades animaron a los municipios a consultar con arquitectos de Europa Occidental, y muchos fueron invitados en los primeros años de la República. Sus conocimientos sobre las últimas tecnologías y los principios de la planificación urbana moderna en Europa debían aplicarse para reconstruir las ciudades y pueblos de Anatolia, de acuerdo con la ideología moderna. Para facilitar esta cooperación, en 1922 se creó en París la Sociedad de Estudios para la Reconstrucción de Esmirna. Esta sociedad reunió a expertos franceses y autoridades turcas durante el proceso de planificación de las ciudades de Anatolia occidental. Los consultores franceses más destacados fueron los parisinos Henri Prost y René Danger, que trabajaban juntos en Francia, tras haber adquirido una larga experiencia en las colonias francesas.

Este artículo, en primer lugar, destaca la movilidad de estos profesionales franceses en Anatolia occidental trazando la historia de sus estudios de planificación. En segundo lugar, enmarcando la tensión política entre ambos países, pretende investigar si las perspectivas de las autoridades turcas asociaban a los arquitectos y urbanistas franceses invitados con la Francia colonial. Por último, se centra en el proceso de reconstrucción de posguerra de las ciudades históricas de Anatolia occidental, analizando los resultados de la interacción de los responsables políticos y centrándose en Esmirna, Manisa y Uşak.

Keywords: urban planning history, expert, heritage, modernism, post-war reconstruction, French urbanism

Schlagwörter: Stadtplanungsgeschichte, Erbe, Expertise, Modernismus, Wiederaufbau nach dem Krieg, Französische Städtebau

Palabras claves: historia del urbanismo, experto, patrimonio, modernismo, reconstrucción de la posguerra, urbanismo francés

Mots-clés : histoire de l'urbanisme, expert, patrimoine, modernisme, reconstruction d'après-guerre, urbanisme français

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Personnes citées : Prost Henri (1874-1959), Danger René (1872-1954)