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La Città Palinsesto
The City as Palimpsest

Tracce, sguardi e narrazioni sulla complessità dei contesti urbani storici

Tracks, views and narrations on the complexity of historical urban contexts

Tomo secondo

Rappresentazione, conoscenza, conservazione

Representation, knowledge, conservation

a cura di
Maria Ines Pascariello e Alessandra Veropalumbo

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La Città Palinsesto
Tracce, sguardi e narrazioni sulla complessità dei contesti urbani storici
Tomo II - *Rappresentazione, conoscenza, conservazione*
a cura di Maria Ines PASCARIELLO e Alessandra VEROPALUMBO

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Everyone Has a Past: Selective Heritage Definitions in National Contexts

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Abstract
In the Middle East, during times of secularization (that came with modernization reforms in the twentieth century), Hellenistic and Byzantine past of the multilayered historic areas are valorized and communicated. During the times of conservative religious authorities, on the other hand, this past can become detested and Islamic past is favored, preserved, valorized and communicated. This paper aims at looking at the dynamics of this process through several cases from the Middle East countries focusing on the times of social conflicts.

Keywords
Politics of cultural heritage, Modernization in the Middle East, selective restoration.

Introduction
Trough cultural heritage it becomes possible for a society to tell its members what to remember and what to forget [Harvey 2001]. This mechanism is essential in modernization processes and the formation of nation-states. Anderson (1983) showed that the concept of 'nation' was needed for nationalism to function for the sake of the improved continuation of capitalist modes of production. In this process, a common past is a vital factor in imagining nations, and this common past is made possible via cultural heritage. The nineteenth century is a historically critical point in this regard, because the idea of 'cultural heritage' was produced in this period aligned with the idea of 'nation' and spread of 'nationalism'.
Especially the political use of archaeology is already well-studied in Europe in terms of the exploitation of archaeology to reinforce nationalist ideas [Kohl, Fawcett, 1995]. Trigger (1984) also suggests that most archaeological activities are undertaken with a nationalist agenda. He gives the example of the Czechs, who exploited archaeology to glorify their national past and to encourage resistance against Habsburg, Russian and Turkish domination. Similarly, in late-nineteenth century Western Europe, archaeology was used to create a common bond among communities divided by class differences. Likewise, [Hamilakis 2007, 358] also underlines the relationship between archaeology and nationalism: «nationalism produces the entity that gives meaning and purpose to it, 'the nation', and so does archaeology, as it produces the object of its desire, its *raison d'être*, the archaeological record».
Focusing on Turkey and Egypt, this paper will focus on the periods of sharp societal changes in order to investigate how cultural heritage plays an important role in managing the changing power relations.

1. Turkey
The modernization reforms of Turkey dates back to the eighteenth century. These reforms, in fact, was the acknowledgement of the European superiority over the Ottoman Empire, and even in the seventeenth century Ottomans had already accepted this superiority especially through military fails. In the urban scale, these reforms included the transformation of image of Ottoman city into a more cosmopolitan and Western image. Especially the historic peninsula which was exposed to large fires due to dense and wooden residential fabric of the

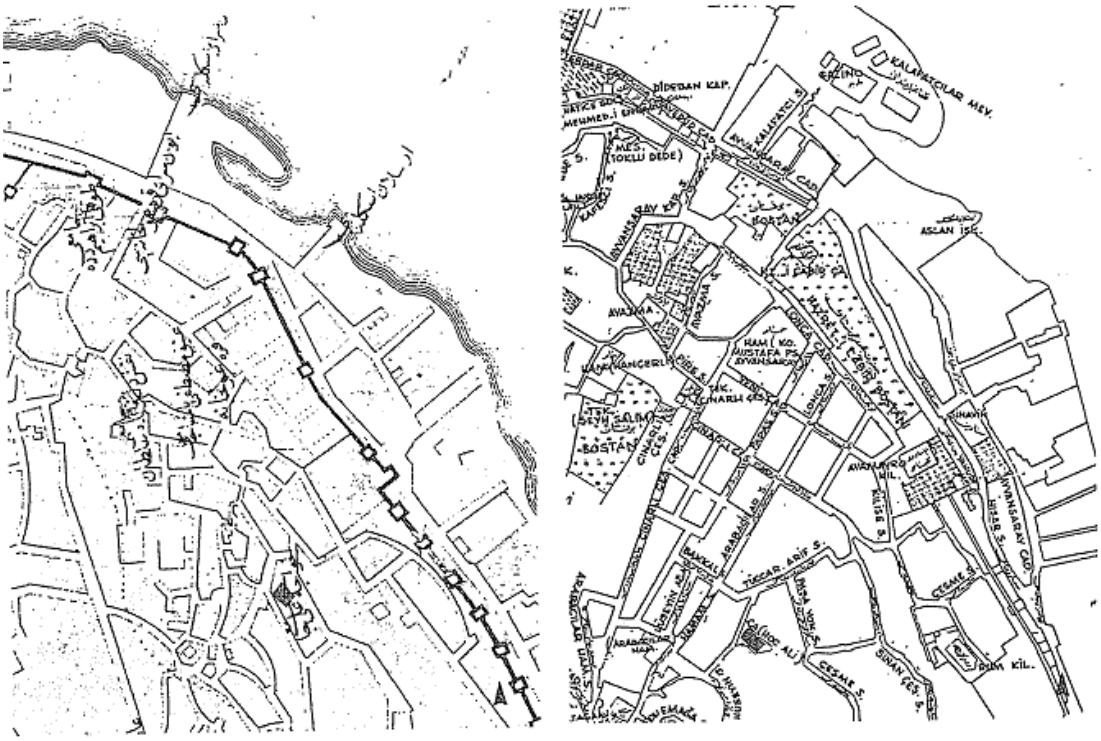
1: Helmuth von Moltke's Istanbul map, 1839.

area had become an experimentation site for the Western urban planning implementation. Basis of such a reform movement in urban fabric was founded admiration of the bureaucrats of the period who visited cities like Paris, Vienne and London and following their return, promoted a more scientific urban planning understanding which would suggest orthogonal street pattern fitting to geometric/mathematical rules rather than *cul-de-sac* dominated organic urban pattern [Çelik 1986]. In order to regulate the street pattern, the German engineer Helmuth von Moltke was commissioned and the first thing that Moltke did was creating the map of İstanbul.

First regulation on urban planning activities was launched in 1848 and followed by 1858, 1863, 1875, 1877 and lastly in 1882 regulations (*Ebniye Nizamnameleri*). These six regulations were basically aiming to fix same issues; classification of streets according to their widths, lighting situations and density.

Çelik (1986) underlines that newly planned districts differed from each other according to extent of the fire, topography and location of the districts. If the burnt district was large and prestigious, reconstruction of the site had become a renovation project by its own. If there were a monumental building or a commercial activity on the site, then these features would lead the construction of a large street passing through district. However if the fire did not burnt a huge area but effected a smaller area, transformation had happened differently; The area were not planned as a part of an integral urban plan but rather remained as small regular grids within an organic texture. So, through the six regulations on urban planning activities, two different attitudes had emerged; one was prestigious renewal projects of valuable sites burnt down with large fires and the other was regulation of neighborhoods after relatively small scale fires. Çelik (1986) gives reconstruction of Ayvansaray as an example to small scaled rearrangements of burnt neighborhoods (fig. 2).

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire after a decade of wars - Balkan Wars (1912-1913), First World War (1914-1918), and finally the Turkish Independence War (1919-1922)- and the foundation of a new nation state carried the modernization process to a new stage and accelerated the enactment of reforms for the formation of a secular modern nation state out of a centuries old dynasty. As a new national history was being designed and validated; dealing with the Ottoman past was also a major problem for the new republic, and authority over urban space was one of the main tools to establish this authority. French architect-urbanist Henri Prost was invited by the republican regime to for the master plan of Istanbul.



34. Plan of Ayvansaray, circa 1850 *35. Plan of Ayvansaray, circa 1870*

2: Çelik's (1986) comparison of Ayvansaray before and after fires.

Prost was contracted in 1936 and submitted the first phase of his proposal, the Master Plan for the European Side, in 1937. Aligned with the republican ideology of creating a modern secular nation state, Prost's master plan began to be implemented throughout the 1940s. General principles of the plan was shaped around three main themes; transportation (*la circulation*), hygiene (*l'hygiene*), and aesthetics (*l'esthetique*) [Daver 1944] and the main proposals can be summarized as zoning decisions (including new development and heavy industry zones), transportation infrastructures (new ports, train stations), large squares and public parks, open-airs (*espaces libres*), destruction of structures surrounding monuments, and construction of large boulevards and streets [Bilsel, Pinon 2010].

Regarding the main curiosity of this paper, Prost's project is significant because Prost was criticized for undermining Ottoman monuments in favor of the Byzantine ones. Especially his Archaeological Park Project (which included excavations for revealing the Hippodrome and the Great Palace of Constantine and integrating these archaeological findings with the Hagia Sophia through creating terraced gardens) caused conflicts mainly with the Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities (*Eski Eserleri Koruma Encümeni*) which was the main preservation council of Istanbul [Altinyildiz 2007]. Another debated project of the 1940s was about the sixteenth-century İbrahim Paşa Palace (which was used as a prison in the nineteenth century and in the 1940s, it was already invisible due to surrounding structures) located on the site of the new Palace of Justice which was proposed in the Prost Plan. The commission and local architects reacted against this project, and even though the Palace of Justice was constructed, the Ibrahim Pasha Palace was also revealed (although remained unrestored) [Aykac 2020].

In fact, dealing with the Ottoman past in the aftermath of the empire was a problem not only for Turkey, but also for other nation-states that emerged as the Ottoman Empire collapsed.

Particularly in Balkans, a process of de-Ottomanization was on the agenda of the newly formed state structures. For instance, after Bulgaria became independent from Ottoman rule with the Russo-Turkish Wars in 1878, as Koyuncu (2013) suggests, Ottoman monuments were deliberately destroyed to erase the Islamic landmarks and to create new Christian monuments. She suggests that religion was the main trigger for the de-Ottomanization of the cityscape. The Ottoman era was conceived as an era in which Christianity was oppressed. In Skopje, where there existed a bigger Muslim community, on the other hand, after centuries of Ottoman rule, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes enacted secular reforms to generate a de-Ottomanized, European-looking city. Secularism, in this sense, functioned as an urban exclusion mechanism. Mattioli [Mattioli 2014] suggests that in Yugoslavia and Macedonia, the socialist state's secularism necessitated disciplining Islamic communities through urban exclusion and inclusion mechanisms. Also, in Turkey, as the secular reforms did not match with the old traditions of Ottoman daily life practice, the preservation of Ottoman monuments produced (what Foucault called) heterotopias.

2. Egypt

The Ottoman modernization had an impact in Egypt as well. The rebellion Ottoman governor Mehmed (Muhammed) Ali Pasha had established his own dynasty and Egypt was an autonomous Ottoman state under the control of the rebellious governor Mehmet (Muhammed) Ali Pasha until first the French, and then the British occupation. After the conquest of Egypt by Napoléon Bonaparte in 1798, archaeological artifacts began to be removed from the Ottoman Empire and shipped to Europe [Bahrani 2011]. When Napoleon occupied Egypt in 1798, he also initiated a process to collect antiquities. He was accompanied by a committee of scholars and these scholars acknowledged the importance of the antiquities in the region. Consequentially, many artifacts in Egypt were catalogued and shipped to France. When British troops took over the control of Egypt in 1801, the removal continued. The famous Rosetta Stone that is today displayed in the British Museum was also removed in this period.

Archaeology again played an important role in this period for modernization. It is noteworthy that the rebel Egyptian governor, Mehmed (Muhammed) Ali Pasha regularly gave gifts from Egypt to the same European monarchs. For instance, King Louis Philippe received the Luxor Obelisk which has been reassembled at the Place de la Concorde in Paris. A special ship was also constructed to transfer the obelisk [Bahrani 2011, 16]. In the same period, Sultan Mahmud II also gifted the friezes from Assos (an archaeological site in the Aegean Mediterranean) to the very same King Louis Philippe [Shaw 2003, 72]. In fact, just like the Ottoman state, Mehmed Ali Pasha was also undertaking a project to modernize Egypt through extensive reforms in the military and in education.

In his seminal work, Mitchell [Mitchell 2002, 179] writes: «One of the odd things about the arrival of the era of the modern nation-state was that for a state to prove that it was modern, it helped if it could also prove that it was ancient. A nation that wanted to show that it was up-to-date and deserved a place among the company of modern states needed, among other things, to produce a past». In this sense, there are similarities between Turkey and Egypt. As Turkey's modernization generated a link with the prehistoric civilizations such as Sumerian and Hittites, a similar 'new past' was also being designed in Egypt under the colonial rule established by the British military. In 1922, the year that British archaeologists discovered the tomb of Tutankhamen, Egypt also became partially independent from British. Accordingly, the archaeological discovery allowed to generate a national link with the Pharaonic past. Similar

to the young Turkish Republic who was concerned to show that Turkey was modern and historically linked with Europe having the historical foundations, also in Egypt, an intellectual community insisted that the Egypt nation had Pharaonic origins which were the very basics of the European civilization [Mitchell 2002, 182].
Another similarity between Turkey and Egypt is the emergence of 'young' conservative groups at the turn of the twentieth century claiming 'historical equality' with Europe through cultural heritage. In the 1930s' Egypt, a right wing populist party called Young Egypt (Misr al-Fatah) advocated the link between Egyptians and Pharaonic past based on militarist imperialism under a leader that owns Mediterranean [Gershoni, Jankowski 2002]. In Turkey, on the other hand, another conservative intellectual community, which is called Young Turks (Jon Turks), managed the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, which succeed in transforming the absolute monarchy into a constitutional monarchy. The Ottoman revolutionaries did not want to terminate the monarchy; rather, they required 'Liberty, Equality, and Justice' (one may immediately detect the resonance of the French Revolution) under a tolerant sultan who would govern the Empire with more freedoms but still with the sharia [Hainoğlu 1995].
Adapting a postcolonial critical approach on modernism, Mitchell (2002) shows that the construction of the Aswan Dam along the Nile, on the one hand, destroyed the mud-brick traditional architecture of the Nubian villages (a community whose heritage and culture was not recognized by the official government), but on the other hand provided the possibility for Hassan Fathy, the eminent Cairo architect trained in modernist style, to design a new village of new mud-brick houses inspired by the traditional Nubian residential architecture. The architectural style of the internationally famous New Gurna village designed by Fathy for the relocation of Gurna people presents a case on the complexities of the relationship between national identity and cultural heritage. Yet the construction of the Aswan Dam was an internationally significant heritage development because by the mid-1960s, an international UNESCO-backed up campaign was launched to rescue the 1260 BCE temples of Abu Simbel in Nubia [Tamborrino, Willeke 2017]. This international rescue campaign (to relocate the temples to a position with higher altitude) paved the path for the idea of 'international cultural property' and it was an outcome of the post-war escalation of international collaboration [Glendinning 2013, 391-401].
In general, the construction of the Aswan Dam was linked to the political tensions of the Cold War. On the one hand, there was the sympathy of Nasser's government for the Soviets and the Soviet's stepping into the dam construction after the withdrawal of the World Bank and the US, while on the other hand, Israel, France, and Britain troops were located on the Suez Canal, which was geopolitically strategic for both the security of the Britain Empire and oil shipment. Within this context, the UNESCO campaign was an international effort of postwar peacemaking [Meskell 2018].
The reason that Hasan Fathy's New Gurna village remained incomplete manifests the relationship between national identity and cultural heritage in the Egypt context. First of all Fathy's valorization of the Nubian traditional architecture was not acknowledged as heritage of Egypt. On the contrary, Nubian people were treated as criminals. Another reason is that for Islamic society, this past was never representative of their identity.

Conclusion

Cultural heritage can be identified as a product of contemporary political mechanisms. These mechanisms produce 'cultural heritage' which becomes a tool for the present as much as it is the reminder of the past. In this paper, the early twentieth century modernization reforms in

two countries in MENA region are investigated in order to understand in which ways the nation is imagined, and in which ways cultural heritage helped enable such imaginations. To be able to do this, two countries are studies; Turkey and Egypt. These two cases are distinctive in terms of their modernization experiences: Turkey is a case to represent nation-states in the aftermath of collapse of the Ottoman Empire whereas Egypt exemplifies a process of modernization in which the colonial dynamics have a strong role. Focusing on these two cases, the paper will show how cultural heritage performed in line with modernization efforts.

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Questo volume accoglie le più recenti riflessioni attorno ai necessari fondamenti, teorici e di pensiero, nonché agli aspetti tecnici, artistici, tecnologici che portano a concepire la città e il paesaggio come palinsesto figurativo e fenomenologico. Città e paesaggio, infatti, continuamente soggetti a operazioni di cancellature e riscritture – in termini di progetto e restauro, di tutela e valorizzazione, di disegno e ridisegno – sono i testimoni visivi di come appare a noi il palinsesto oggi, grazie al connubio sempre più stretto fra tecnologie e strumenti di visione, in un'ottica proiettiva e trasformativa fortemente relazionale.

This volume contains the most recent reflections on the necessary foundations, theoretical and thought, as well as the technical, artistic, technological aspects that lead to conceiving the city and the landscape as a figurative and phenomenological palimpsest. City and landscape, in fact, continually subject to erasing and rewriting operations – in terms of project and restoration, protection and enhancement, design and redesign – are the visual witnesses of how the schedule appears to us today, thanks to the increasingly squeezed between technologies and tools of vision, in a highly relational projective and transformative perspective

In copertina: Teresa Tauro, *Il quadrato centrale di Neapolis. Ortofotopiano del centro antico di Napoli, compagnia Generale Riprese, 1990* (2020).