

How to deal with cultural heritage of stanbul: a dilemma among French town planners in the 30s of the Twentieth century

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# Studi e ricerche di storia dell'architettura

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Ferrara, palazzo della Ragione, costruito su progetto di Marcello Piacentini nel 1953-1956.

(Foto Sofia Nannini)

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# How to deal with cultural heritage of İstanbul: a dilemma among French town planners in the 30s of the Twentieth century

**Come gestire il patrimonio culturale di İstanbul: un dilemma tra gli urbanisti francesi degli anni Trenta del Novecento**

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*Politecnico di Torino*

## Introduction

In 1923, the collapse of Ottoman Empire through Turkish Independence War, and proclamation of the Republic of Turkey marked a turning point for Turkish history. The first decade of the Republic might be monitored through two lenses: post-war recovery and modernization of a country after a long-term sharia-based ruling class. This period included a series of reforms on laicism, and framed wide-range aspects from gender equality, alphabet reform, dress codes to encourage industrialization to ensure economic independence. The republicans' stance was announced as "to pursue the developments of contemporary civilizations"<sup>(1)</sup>. Under the framework of that statement, the meaning of contemporary civilizations was in line with the adaptation of western standards rather than directly applying them as an imitation. In other words, the strategy adopted was to learn the scientific and progressive knowledge from good practice and find the most appropriate way to integrate it into the local framework with a bottom-up approach<sup>(2)</sup>.

According to the Republicans, urban planning was seen as the unique solution to realize these dimensions and adapt to daily life in the urban environment in a systematic way. As anthropologist and political scientist James Scott highlighted while criticizing the system of beliefs he calls High Modernism – which centers on governments' overconfidence in their ability to design and operate society in accordance with purported scientific laws – urbanism was a common instrument for revolutionary countries in the first part of the 20th century. It was not perceived only as a way to implement new technologies but also as a means to apply a new way of conceiving the human activity of the community as a whole<sup>(3)</sup>.

In the first decade of Republic, a series of constitutional and legislative framework were regulated in order to facilitate the spread of republicanism as a new way of thinking and aid in the post-war recovery process of the urban environ-

<sup>(1)</sup> İnan Afet, *Atatürk Hakkında Hatıralar ve Belgeler* (Ankara, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1984).

<sup>(2)</sup> See the statement of Ziya Gökalp, deputy of Turkish Republic as "Culture is national, and civilization is international [...] for this reason, we might describe Turkey's progress as learning the technological, scientific and rational developments in the West in order to enrich Turkish society instead of being a Western imitation" in Ziya Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Esasları* (İstanbul, Ötüken Neşriyat, 1952), 27-29.

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

**Abstract:** In İstanbul, the political structure changed after the foundation of Turkish Republic in 1923. Aftermath period gathered together many actors to spread the republican ideology and reforms to every segment of country. However, how to deal with cultural heritage of İstanbul, old Ottoman capital, was a challenging question for local authorities. The search for an answer ended up with an urban planning competition launched by the municipality in 1933. Although French actor Henri Prost was tasked with preparing the plan in 1936, his collaborator Jacques Lambert prepared a draft in 1933.

Framing stance of local actors, this paper examines the legal framework that laid groundwork for İstanbul plan. Moreover, claiming the fact that involvement of different actors may set boundaries of urban history, it traces heritage-led vision of Lambert in Prost's final decisions. Lastly, it compares their conservationist approaches to local heritage based on two perspectives reported at short intervals.

**Keywords:** Urban History, Jacques Lambert, Urban Competitions, Cultural Heritage, Local Authorities



6.1

Ankara in 1920, in Hamamönü'nden Cebeci'ye Bakış, 1920. Ankara, Digital Archive of Koç University Vehbi Koç Ankara Studies Research Center – VEKAM.

ments. As Turkish historian İlhan Tekeli argued, the pursuit of implementing this strategy was later explained as a three-dimensional project. The first dimension involved the dissemination of republican ideology to ensure the sustainability of the nation-state. The second dimension was directly related to the industrialization of cities to develop their economic aspects and reduce foreign dependency. The last dimension encompassed both of these objectives with the purpose of shaping modern cities<sup>(4)</sup>.

The first action in this regard was the invitation of the French urbanist-architect Henri Prost to plan Izmir in 1922. Prost, along with his colleagues René and Raymond Danger, designed the urban plan for Izmir to be implemented in 1920s<sup>(5)</sup>. In the meantime, İstanbul lost its long-standing status as the capital following the announcement of Ankara as the new capital of the Republic. Consequently, urban planning in Ankara, a small city in the heart of Anatolia, became a top priority for local authorities [Fig. 6.1]. German urbanist Carl Lörcher was tasked with addressing this urgent need for the capital city, and his plan

<sup>(4)</sup> İlhan Tekeli, *Modernizm, modernite ve Türkiye'nin kent planlama tarihi* (İstanbul, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2009), 143-151.

<sup>(5)</sup> For further information see Cana Bilsel, "Ideology and urbanism during the Early Republican Period: two master plans for Izmir and scenarios of modernization", *Journal of the Faculty of Architecture*, 16, 1-2 (1996), 13-30 and Kalliopi Amygdalou, "Building the Nation at the crossroads of 'East' and 'West': Ernest Hébrard and Henri Prost in the near East", *Opticon* 1826, 16 (2014), 1-14.

was approved and put into practice in 1925<sup>(6)</sup>. These two cases marked the initial steps of the Republican Period, during which Turkey's urban history was shaped by the collaboration of local and foreign actors.

According to ruling class, the existing knowledge in Turkey was practically and theoretically insufficient to form 'modern vision', as expressed by the founder and first president of Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, during a meeting of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi – TBMM) in the late 20s of the Twentieth century:

Let me present my thoughts on public works (*umur-u nafia*): the needs of the country will be met in public works, where our local or public resources for construction and installation operation may be available. However, for the realization of these works, in cases where our current industry and capital are not sufficient to carry out major public works, applying maximum use of foreign capital and foreign specialists is essential from the point of view of ensuring the interest and prosperity of our country and the happiness and welfare of our nation in a short time.<sup>(7)</sup>

In Atatürk's statements, foreign actors mostly referred to pioneers in European countries. Although the inclusion of European actors in urban planning studies in Turkey was observed during the Late Ottoman Empire<sup>(8)</sup>, their cooperation was grounded and strengthened by a law enacted in 1927. Through the Industrial Encouragement Law No. 1055 (*Teşvik-i Sanayi Yasası*), the legal basis was established for inviting European experts. On the one hand, this law aimed to minimize the impact of the approaching Economic Depression of 1929 and to direct foreign capital to industry. On the other hand, it provided a legal framework for collaborating with foreign companies and architects. According to Article 9 of the law, "Necessary construction materials, raw materials for production, tools and spare parts can be imported from abroad if they cannot be supplied in the country. In this case, such cooperation will be exempted from tax"<sup>(9)</sup>. Although this law may seem material and practical in nature, it paved the way for local architects to work in practical collaboration with European specialists.

Another significant legal arrangement to institutionalize the urbanism as a discipline was the Law on Municipalities No. 1580 (*Belediyeler Kanunu*) in 1930. This law expanded the jurisdiction of the municipalities to accelerate planning activities. In particular, three articles of the law emphasize the content of urbanization works that the government expects from local authorities. Firstly,

<sup>(6)</sup> For further reading, see Ali Cengizkan, *Ankara'nın İlk planı. 1924-25 İrcher planı* (Ankara, Arkadaş Yayınevi, 2018).

<sup>(7)</sup> *Atatürk'ün söylev ve demeçleri I* (Ankara, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1989), 256.

<sup>(8)</sup> In the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire sought to be westernized under the effect of the French Revolution. During this period, many constitutional structure of the Empire had changed. İstanbul, as the capital of Empire, was the principal 'workplace' to develop and implement the westernized urban regulations. Zeynep Çelik highlights the similarity of the urbanization strategy that dominated this period with the practices seen in Paris after the French Revolution. Accordingly, the laws enacted in this period carried the traces of the French laws. In addition, she points out the desire to make İstanbul as Paris by mentioning the non-realized project of Historic Peninsula prepared by Beaux-Art trained architect Joseph Antoine Bouvard in 1902, in Zeynep Çelik, *The remaking of İstanbul: portrait of an ottoman city in the Nineteenth century* (Oakland, University of California Press, 1993).

<sup>(9)</sup> "Teşviki sanayi kanunu", *Official Gazette* (T.C. Resmi Gazete n. 608), June 15, 1927.

according to Article 30, “Each municipality is responsible for making maps, cadastre and urban plans with an urban program of at least five years”. Secondly, Article 31 indicates that “infrastructures, squares, streets and green areas of cities should be implemented in accordance with this plan”. Lastly, Article 33 stipulates that “the plan should include a library, reading halls for the public education, and the addition of green areas and sports facilities”<sup>(10)</sup>.

The primary purpose behind these measures was to align the decision-making bodies with the modern urban vision in harmony with Republicanism ideology. Additionally, it remains significant that these efforts also integrated instructive principles, particularly for those who have long been influenced by a Sharia-based ideology. Notably, Şükrü Kaya<sup>(11)</sup>, who served as the Interior Minister of the period, announced the content of the law during the assembly meeting in TBMM. During his speech, he also emphasized that there was still a gap in this law that needed to be addressed through additional legislation as soon as possible:

After that comes the cleanliness and health issues that citizens deserve. In fact, in some countries, municipalism (*belediyecilik*) has been developed a lot on this matter. Our municipalities were not currently able to do this [...] With this law, many principles have been adopted that will facilitate the life of our citizens [...] The “civilization and sanitation” of our cities is a need for every citizen, but it upsets us like an unfulfilled ideal.<sup>(12)</sup>

When he referred to “civilization”, he mainly had in mind the illiterate society living in small villages at Anatolia. The concept of “sanitation” was also closely related to this segment of the population. In many settlements of the region, there were no health centers or schools to meet these needs. Accessing places with these services was also not easy due to the lack of roads, railway networks, or vehicles. Furthermore, there were communities that still aimed to maintain a pro-Sharia lifestyle and opposed republican reforms. While the government believed that such ideological oppositions could be resolved by raising an educated society, it was also aware that transportation and public service problems could be addressed through urban planning.

Within all these legal arrangements, seeking to learn advanced knowledge and applying learned theories in Turkish context presented challenging aspects for the new government concerning both tangible and intangible heritage. As a part of the nation-building process, the aim was to highlight the multicultural history of the lands that had been under Ottoman rule for an extended period. The Republi-

<sup>(10)</sup> Articles 30, 31, 33 in “Belediyeler Kanunu”, *Official Gazette* (T.C. Resmi Gazete n. 1471), April 14, 1930.

<sup>(11)</sup> İl Şükrü Kaya was graduated from the Faculty of Law in İstanbul in 1908, then he went to Paris for higher education where he stayed four years. He was one of the pioneer advocates of secularism and modernization during the last years of Ottoman Empire. In addition, he was in charge of participating in the negotiations in Paris for the Treaty of Lausanne on behalf of the Republicans signed in 1923. For further information on the biography of Şükrü Kaya see, “Sayın şükrü kaya'nın özgeçmiş”, *Official Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/sayin-sukru-kaya\\_nin\\_ozgecmisi.tr.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/sayin-sukru-kaya_nin_ozgecmisi.tr.mfa), (last access: December 2022).

<sup>(12)</sup> Altı The speech of Şükrü Kaya in Correspondence of Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (TBMM) meeting of 20.03.1930 – in Archive of TBMM (ATBMM), *TBMM Zabıt Ceredesi*, 17. Yet, Public Hygiene Law No. 1593 (Umumi Hıfzıssıhha Kanunu) – came in force in the same year. This law framed many regulations regarding health and hygiene issues in urban areas: Article 262, in “Umumi hıfzıssıhha kanunu”, *Official Gazette* (T.C. Resmi Gazete n. 1489), May 6, 1930.

cans' assertion that Turkish roots could be traced back to the Hittites and Sumerians played a significant role in constructing the "national identity." Additionally, the desire to uncover Byzantine roots provided another dimension for emphasizing the multicultural and multi-layered characteristics of the country. With this overarching perspective, the Association of Turkish History (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*) was established in 1931 with the goal of launching various research projects and archaeological excavations<sup>(13)</sup>. Alongside the quest for Turkish origins, the conservation of Ottoman monuments posed another question that needed addressing. In contrast to the conservation strategy of the Ottoman Period, which was predominantly centered around Istanbul-oriented practices in the 19th century, the Council for the Protection of Monuments (*Anıtlar Koruma Kurulu*) established in 1933 aimed to extend its scope to encompass monuments in Anatolia. The primary responsibility of the council was to compile an inventory of the monuments to be protected<sup>(14)</sup>. The content of this inventory, created a few years after the capital moved to Ankara and Istanbul lost its status, is of significant importance. Among the 250 listed historic monuments, only 5 were from Istanbul. This clearly indicated the Republican government's intention to shift public perception away from Istanbul while addressing the Ottoman past.

The combination of "urban planning" and "conservation of heritage" discourses for the first time in Turkish urban history occurred with the enactment of the Municipal Building and Roads Law No. 2290 (*Belediye Yapı ve Yollar Kanunu*) in 1933. Article 4 of the law addressed the "conservation of historical artefacts in the urban area and making them remarkable". It specified that "the surrounding of the monuments and buildings requiring conservation will be opened with a minimum width of 10 meters"<sup>(15)</sup>. This marked the beginning of a new stage for the implementation of the urban plans. Additionally, after a decade of recovery period and the initiation of urban planning projects in İzmir and Ankara, the Turkish government was finally prepared to focus on planning for Istanbul. During the first decade of the Republic, Atatürk visited Istanbul only once, in 1927<sup>(16)</sup>. According to the architectural historian Murat Gül, Istanbul was a neglected city during that period<sup>(17)</sup>. Considering the strategy established for the spread of the ideology in the villages and small towns of Anatolia, the limited funds allocated for this strategy, and the fact that the political capital was in Ankara, not prioritizing the development of Istanbul in the first decade of the Republic might align with the political discourses. In other words, as emphasized by the architectural historian İpek Akpınar, it was about equalizing the privileges that Istanbul had enjoyed for many years with the other cities of Anatolia rather than negligence<sup>(18)</sup>. In 1933, Atatürk's second visit to Istanbul paved the way for the commencement of urban planning for the city. During this

<sup>(13)</sup> Mesut Dinler, *Modernization through past: cultural heritage during the late ottoman and the early-republican period in Turkey* (Pisa, Edizioni ETS, 2019).

<sup>(14)</sup> "The rebuilding of İstanbul revisited: foreign planners in the early republican years" (İstanbul, Devlet Matbaası, 1933).

<sup>(15)</sup> Melih Ersoy, *Osmanlıdan günümüze İmar ve yasalar* (İstanbul, Ninova, 2020), 137.

<sup>(16)</sup> A year after the first Republican Monument of the city was inaugurated in 1928 and located in Taksim, where later a Republican Square was planned.

<sup>(17)</sup> Murat Gül, *The emergence of modern Istanbul: transformation and modernisation of a city* (London, Tauris Academic Studies, 2009), 88.

<sup>(18)</sup> İpek Akpınar, *The rebuilding of İstanbul revisited: foreign planners in the early republican years*, PhD thesis (University College of London, 2003), 44.

trip, he primarily visited the museums in the Historic Peninsula, and it was decided to initiate an international urban planning competition for Istanbul. As an immediate action, a draft law was enacted for submission to parliamentary approval<sup>(19)</sup>. Positioning these circumstances, the launching year of competition in 1933 holds significance when considering two key factors. On the one hand, the Industrial Encouragement Law No. 1055 in 1927 paved the way for collaboration with both local and foreign architects. A few years later, in 1933, despite the inter-war period, the economic support allocated for foreign experts who would provide scientific guidance in the field of heritage, reinforced collaboration, highlighting the instructive nature of this era. The effects of these collaborations formed the foundation that would be observed in the development of numerous heritage-driven architectural and urbanization projects until the 1950s. On the other hand, in 1933, the enactment of Law No: 2290 and the establishment of the Council for the Protection of Monuments created a legal framework for all urban planning studies, solidifying a path that would extend until 1957. In other words, the principles of urbanism were centered on three fundamental elements: hygiene, transportation, and aesthetics. Therefore, the year 1933 marked a significant turning point in legislative arrangements that had a profound impact on urban history by involving foreign actors. It marked the beginning of long-term collaborations that influenced many decisions in heritage-driven urban planning studies.

These frameworks made the government ready for the launch of the Istanbul urban planning process. In 1933, the Mayor of İstanbul Muhittin Üstündağ, announced that an international urban competition was organized, inviting three foreign actors to submit their ideas: Hermann Eltgöz from Germany, Alfred Agache and Henri Prost from France received the invitations<sup>(20)</sup>. Prost declined the invitation and suggested that his collaborator, Jacques Lambert, participate on his behalf. As later explained by Prost's colleague, Joseph Marrast, "It was Lambert who was assigned to prepare a report in İstanbul on behalf of Prost"<sup>(21)</sup>.

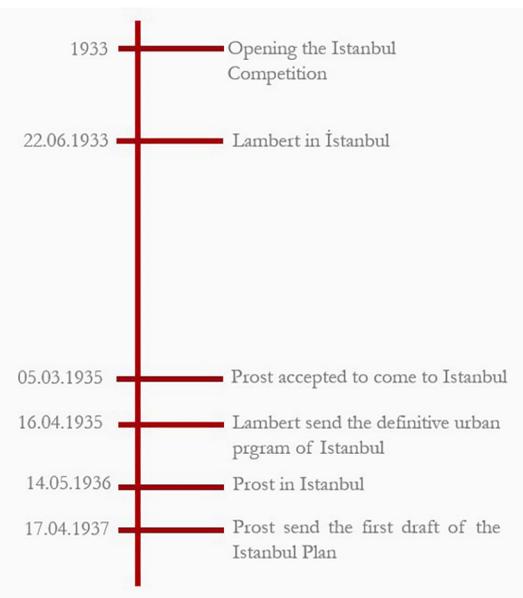
In 1933, Agache, Lambert and Eltgöz came to İstanbul to analyze the city's needs and prepare the draft of their proposals. In the same year, among of the three urbanists who had officially participated in the competition, only Agache and Eltgöz sent their final proposals to the local authorities. When the jury met for the first time in 1934 to discuss the submitted proposals, they only had Lambert's draft report, while the others had sent detailed definitive reports<sup>(22)</sup>. Although Eltgöz won the competition, this was not announced until 1935. Meanwhile, communication with Prost continued unabated, and he finally agreed with İstanbul Municipality in 1935. Moreover, according to the contract, Prost would remain as a consultant,

<sup>(19)</sup> Turkish Republican Archive in Ankara (TRA), *Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü*, col. 30-10-0-0, İstanbul için yapılacak imar planının müsabaka yoluyla tesbiti amacıyla hazırlanan kanun teklifi, 08.02.1933.

<sup>(20)</sup> Cana Bilsel, Pierre Pinon, *From the imperial capital to the republican modern city: Henri Prost's planning of İstanbul (1936-1951)* (İstanbul, Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation İstanbul Research Institute, 2010).

<sup>(21)</sup> Joseph Marrast, "Maroc," in *L'oeuvre de Henri Prost: architecture et urbanisme* (Paris, Académie d'architecture, 1960).

<sup>(22)</sup> "Şehir planını seçecek heyet dün seçildi", *Milliyet*, January 17, 1934.



6.2

A scheme of the chronology of the events produced by the author, based on the literature review and collection of archival documents.

<sup>(23)</sup> Among others, see the pioneer researches in chronological order in Gül, *The emergence of modern Istanbul*; Bilsel, Pinon, *From the imperial capital*; İpek Akpınar, "The rebuilding of İstanbul revisited: foreign planners in the early republican years", *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 50 (2014), 59-92.

<sup>(24)</sup> Bruno Latour, "On actor-network theory. A few clarifications, plus more than a few complications", *Philosophical Literary Journal Logos*, 1, 27 (2017), 173-97. See also, Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the social: an introduction to actor-network-theory* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>(25)</sup> Giorgio Piccinato, "How many histories. Notes on the tradition of urban history and the reasons that force us to change – Changing windows upon the city", in *Windows Upon Planning History*, edited by Karl Friedhelm Fischer, Uwe Altröck (New York, Routledge, 2018).

<sup>(26)</sup> Guy Louis Vallet, "La SFU de 1911 à Nos Jours", *Urbanisme*, 217 (1987); Vincent Berdoulay, Paul Claval, *Aux débuts de l'urbanisme Français. Regards croisés de scientifiques et de professionnels: fin XIXe-début XXe siècle* (Paris, l'Harmattan, 2001).

<sup>(27)</sup> Pierre-Yves Saunier, "Au service du plan: hommes et structures de l'urbanisme municipal à Lyon au 20<sup>e</sup> siècle", in *Forma Urbis: les plans généraux de Lyon, XVIe au XXe Siècle* (Lyon, Archives Municipales de Lyon, 1997), 135-44. See also, Dominique Bertin, "Grande opération au nord des terrains par l'ingénieur Jacques-Henri Lambert (1941-1946)", *Bulletin de La Société Historique, Archéologique et Littéraire de Lyon*, 22 (1993), 41-51.

while the local architects direct the Urban Planning Bureau of İstanbul. As seen in [Fig. 6.2], a few weeks later, Turkish government received Lambert's final proposal. Prost stayed in İstanbul until the 50s of the Twentieth century and his decisions directed the urban transformation of the city from the perspective of Ottoman capital to modern metropole of the Republican Period.

In 1937, Prost submitted the first part of the urban plan for European Side of İstanbul (*Le plan directeur de la rive européenne d'Istanbul*) with two separated folders, one for Historical Peninsula, other for Pera/Beyoğlu. During his stay, he gathered all his proposals and decisions in seven volumes which were united under the name of *Les Transformation d'Istanbul*. Each volume deals with a different quarter or content.

Many researches have focused on the Prost's İstanbul planning from the 30s to the 50s of the Twentieth century<sup>(23)</sup>. However, this article considers the interaction between multiple actors, rather than monographic studies, as a way to frame a parallel urban history. French philosopher Bruno Latour describes the actor-network-theory trilogy as "nothing can be understood without knowing the relationship of actors. Because, everything is linked to each other, and relationships form the fundamental logic of natural or man-made developments"<sup>(24)</sup>. Moreover, in a recent publication Giorgio Piccinato underscores how the involved actors may define the boundaries of urban history or how they may affect the characterization of historic cities as a part of urban heritage<sup>(25)</sup>. Therefore, by allowing for the interactions of multiple influences, the working atmosphere affects the implementation methods, results, action criteria, process and perspectives from both local and international lenses.

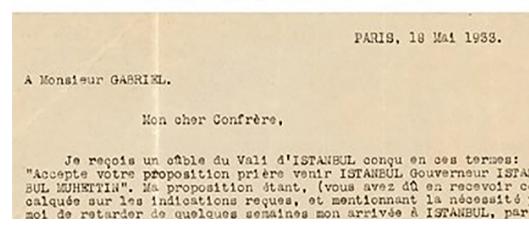
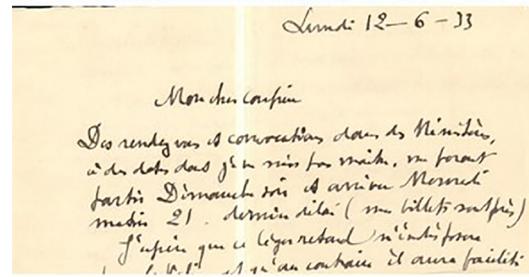
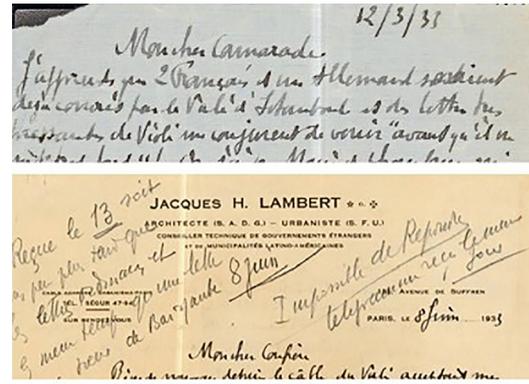
From these perspectives, this article prioritize Lambert's professional path as Prost's student and assistant. It compares Prost's heritage-led decisions, as identified in his seven volumes, with a particular concentration on *Les Transformation d'Istanbul Tome VII: Vieil İstanbul*, and also examines his notes and correspondences alongside with Lambert's proposal entitled *Revigoration d'Istanbul*. Finally, it investigates this comparison as component of postcolonial discourses.

### The background of Lambert's arrival in İstanbul on behalf of Prost

Although Agache, Lambert, and Prost had different experiences and put their theories into practice in diverse settings, they all emerged from the same educational background and intellectual community. Agache and Prost served as founding members of the French Society of Urbanists (*Société française des Urbanistes – SFU*) in Paris, where numerous scientific research endeavors were conducted to develop urban planning criteria for implementation<sup>(26)</sup>. Lambert, on the other hand,

joined later as a student of Agache and Prost. He received his training in North Africa while collaborating with Prost at a young age. Subsequently, Prost invited him to participate in the planning processes of many cities in Latin America, where Agache also played an active role in urban planning<sup>(27)</sup>. In the 30s of the Twentieth century, Lambert was called back by Prost to take part in the Paris project<sup>(28)</sup>. However, the Turkish government did not promptly acknowledge Lambert's involvement; instead, local authorities insisted on communicating with Prost. Throughout this period, Albert Gabriel, an archaeologist with extensive experience in Turkey, played a pivotal role in facilitating an agreement between the Turkish government and Lambert. Until the 50s of the Twentieth century, Gabriel served as the government consultant responsible for influencing decisions in Turkey's conservation policies. Moreover, he mentored numerous local architects who played a significant part in the enactment of these policies<sup>(29)</sup>. As a result of Turkey's reluctance to attend Lambert's participation, Gabriel met with him during his visits to Paris. As seen in the correspondances between Lambert and Gabriel [Fig. 6.3], he continued to inform him about the country's current socio-cultural, economic and political situation. In addition, he offered his availability both for convince the Turkish authorities, and for advising him in the preparation of his proposal. Lambert was aware that he was not as experienced in urban planning as other candidates. Additionally, he was informed that Turkish authorities were still in contact with Prost. In a letter, he wrote to Gabriel, he said: "if it is true that a personality like Prost is in the ranks, his good character and his admirable technicality would make me hesitate to accept anything other than a secondary role at his side if that is his desire"<sup>(30)</sup>. Despite this, he mentioned his experience in America and his eagerness to make progress on this matter. He stated that he would follow any of Gabriel's advice to "achieve something honourable" between the East and West:

As a follow-up to our conversation of yesterday, I am sending you herewith a copy of the letters that I received from Istanbul [...] I apply myself to follow all your precise indications in this matter - to remain in my proposal neither too ambitious nor too simple. Now, not wanting to take advantage of your moments in Paris, of which you have moreover given me very generously and amicably a large part, I would like to tell you how happy I would be to come, in this special sector of urbanism, to assist to the extent of my strength the great national work that you are pursuing in the East and to achieve something honourable for the two countries.<sup>(31)</sup>



6.3  
The letter series sent from Lambert to Gabriel in 1933. Istanbul, Archive of the Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes (IFEA), *Fond Lambert*, courtesy of Observatoire Urbain d'Istanbul

<sup>(27)</sup> Istanbul, Archive of the Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes (IFEA), *Fond Lambert*, Jacques Lambert's letter to Jacques Gabriel, 28.04.1933.

<sup>(29)</sup> Living in Turkey since the first years of Republic, he studied Byzantine, Ottoman and Turkish history, he was a consultant of the conservation of historic monuments of Turkish Government. In 1930, he was appointed as the first director of the French Institute of Anatolian Studies (*Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes - IFEA*) in Istanbul where he conducted many researches, documentation projects and archeological excavations in Pierre Pinon, "Le Vie et l'oeuvre d'Albert Gabriel", in Pierre Pinon, *Albert Gabriel (1883-1972). Architecte, Archéologue, Artiste, Voyageur* (Istanbul, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2006).

<sup>(30)</sup> Archive of IFEA, *Fond Lambert*, Jacques Lambert's letter to Jacques Gabriel, 12.03.1933, courtesy of Observatoire Urbain d'Istanbul.

<sup>(31)</sup> Archive of IFEA, *Fond Lambert*, Jacques Lambert's letter to Jacques Gabriel, 23.03.1933, courtesy of Observatoire Urbain d'Istanbul.

In April 1933, Turkish authorities made a public announcement regarding the potential participation of another French urbanist in the competition. It was indicated that Lambert was being considered in the process alongside the other three competitors because Prost had not definitively declined his involvement<sup>(32)</sup>. However, just a few days later, Mayor Üstündağ wrote to Lambert, stating that “nothing is certain yet” and mentioning that they were still awaiting a clear response from Prost. In this state of uncertainty, Lambert had already begun to plan his trip to İstanbul. However, the Paris Region Plan, led by Prost, was about to receive the necessary approvals and budget from the ministry. This meant that the implementation of the Paris Plan would begin actively in a short time, which framed an intensive working schedule that affected both Lambert, who was Prost’s assistant on the plan, and Prost himself. Lambert shared his concerns with Gabriel, underlining the need to organize the schedule between Paris and İstanbul and discussing it with Prost:

the Ministry, the Superior Committee and Prost ask me to be there for the start of Plan of the Paris Region [...] This setback can only delay the arrival in İstanbul by a few weeks, maybe two [...] I need to discuss it with Prost as soon as possible to understand his expectations [...] I receive the letter from Vali, a copy of which is attached, and I answer it, according to the terms of your indications, except as regards the date of my mission, for the aforementioned reason.<sup>(33)</sup>

<sup>(32)</sup> See the newspaper article entitled “Four Urbanist Will Prepare the Urban Plan”. “Dört mütehassis şehrin planını hazırlayacaklar”, *Milliyet*, April 15, 1933. In this article, it was mentioned that Agache and Eltgöz have accepted the participation and that they will arrive in İstanbul in the following weeks. Moreover, although it was not indicated that Prost had accepted, it was underlined that he will be also in İstanbul in the following months. Lastly, it was underlined that “based on the advices of French authorities in Turkey” Lambert became the fourth candidate of the competition.

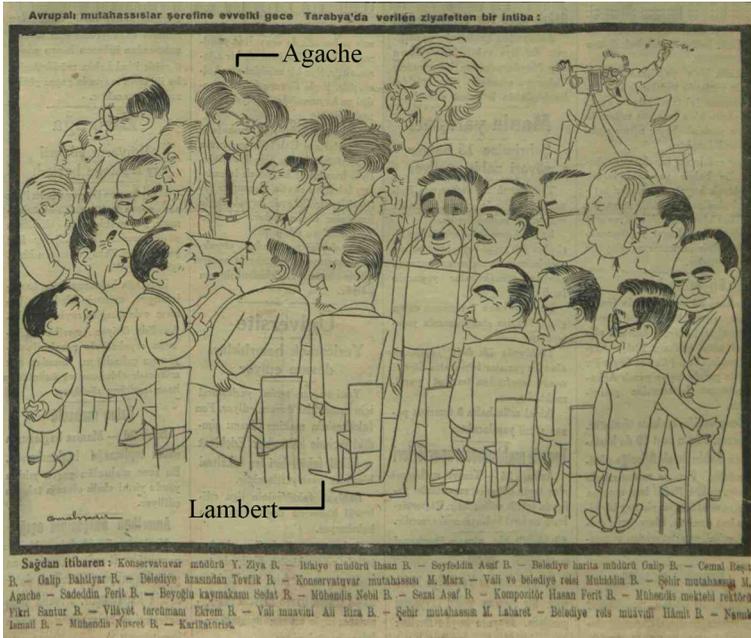
<sup>(33)</sup> Archive of IFEA, *Fond Lambert*, Jacques Lambert’s letter to Jacques Gabriel, 28.04.1933, courtesy of Observatoire Urbain d’İstanbul.

<sup>(34)</sup> See Prost’s letter to Üstündağ in Bilsel, Henri Prost’s planning works in İstanbul (1936-1951): transforming the structure of a city through master plans and urban operations in Bilsel, Pinon, *From the imperial capital*, 157, note 15.

<sup>(35)</sup> Archive of IFEA, *Fond Lambert*, Jacques Lambert’s letter to Jacques Gabriel, 08.06.1933, courtesy of Observatoire Urbain d’İstanbul.

On June 8, 1933, two significant letters were sent with the same date: one from Lambert to Gabriel and the second from Prost to Üstündağ. In his letter, Prost informed that he would not be able to travel to İstanbul in a short time since the Paris Plan was officially approved. In the same letter, he also emphasized his confidence in Lambert’s analysis to be completed in Turkey, by fostering the fact that he will visit İstanbul as soon as possible<sup>(34)</sup>. In the meantime, Lambert informed Gabriel about the details of his travel to İstanbul with these words “I have recently informed the Mayor about my arrival to İstanbul [...] I also informed the Mayor that I will accompany Prost when he comes to İstanbul in November”<sup>(35)</sup>.

The arrival in İstanbul and the mobility of each urbanist in Anatolia were widely covered in printed media [Fig. 6.4]. Moreover, their first impressions of the city and their ideas about urban planning and cultural heritage were frequently discussed in the articles published by local architects. The primary reason for this public propaganda was the desire of the republicans to announce that İstanbul was being modernized according to European standards, both locally and inter-



6.4 The caricature depicting the dinner organized in honor of the European specialists, in "Avrupalı mütahassıslar şerefine Tarabya'da verilen ziyafetten bir intiba", *Akşam*, June 27, 1933

6.5 The newspaper article summarizing the first impressions of Agache, Lambert and Eltgöz.  
("Avrupalı mütahassıslar şerefine dün gece arabya'da verilen ziyafetten bir intiba", *Akşam*, June 27, 1933)

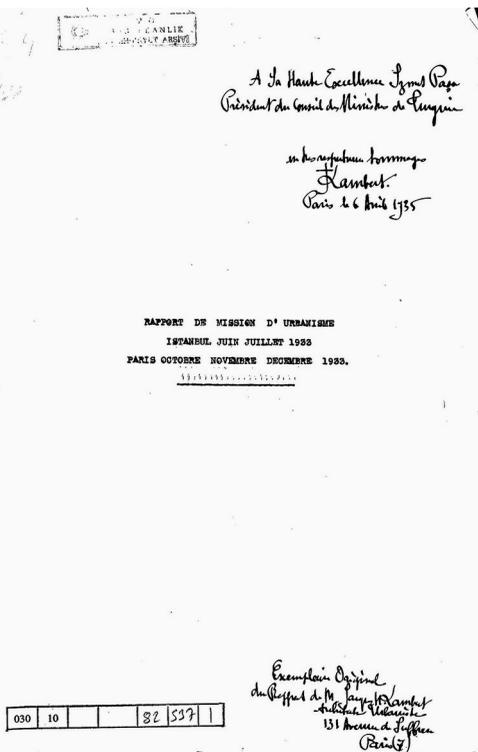


nationally. Each urbanist visited the historical sites of İstanbul accompanied by an engineer from İstanbul Municipality. They were also provided with an inventory of existing historic monuments prepared in the last three years, city maps and a report prepared by the municipal engineers. During their stays, they also visited the capital city, and public conferences were organized to discuss the planning ideas with locals [Fig. 6.5]. In his conference, Lambert mainly focused on general principals of urbanism on hygiene, transportation and aesthetic instead of expressing his previous experiences. He highlighted the existing hygiene problems in the industrial area around Golden Horn and the port in Historic Peninsula. According to Lambert, the İstanbul plan could not be made with a similar approach to the metropolises he had experienced so far. It had its own characteristic, local culture and urban history. For these reasons, it was necessary to combine the local values with modern principles to plan İstanbul in a unique method. Moreover, he emphasized that to realize such an implementation, it was necessary to work in cooperation with the municipality and local authorities<sup>36)</sup>. The aspects that Lambert pointed out in his conference, where he presented his first impressions, reveal his preconditioned understanding on the socio-political situation of Turkey and the expectations of local authorities.

However, as mentioned before, unlike other urbanists, Lambert did not send his final report at the end of his İstanbul stay. On 16 April 1935, Prime Minister İstmet İnönü received Lambert's proposal with a letter in which he complained about the speculations in newspaper articles and reviews of his ideas, although

<sup>36)</sup> See the newspaper article entitled "What will the city plan be like? French Professor Talks About the Characteristics of the City and its Preparation" in "Şehir planı nasıl olacak? Fransız profesör Şehrin hususiyetinden ve ona göre hazırlıktan bahsediyor", *Milliyet*, July 27, 1933. See also, another one entitled "The Urbanist Gave a Lecture" in "Şehircilik mütahassısı konferans verdi", *Milliyet*, August 1, 1933.

<sup>36)</sup> See the newspaper article entitled "What will the city plan be like? French Professor Talks About the Characteristics of the City and its Preparation" in "Şehir planı nasıl olacak?". See also, another one entitled "The Urbanist Gave a Lecture" in "Şehircilik mütahassısı konferans verdi".



6.6

The cover page of Lambert's report. Turkish Republican Archive in Ankara, col. 30-10-0-0, *Rapport de Mission*

he has not yet submitted a definitive report. He stated that due to this lack, he decided to send the report in order to prevent any wrong judgment or misunderstanding that may occur<sup>(37)</sup>.

In the introduction of the report, Lambert emphasized that he principally focused on the zones destroyed by fires as requested by the Mayor Üstündağ. However, he stated that he prepared a more comprehensive report because, during his on-site investigations, he realized that the reconstruction works in these regions had already been started by local actors. Therefore, he based his report into two main aspects: to propose the modifications that it is still possible to make in these burnt areas despite the already implemented advanced reconstruction; to meet the modern needs of the city by integrating these partial reconstructions throughout the entire city in a comprehensive plan. Tracing the history of İstanbul back to Byzantine Period, Lambert divided the problems of the city into three main aspects: Urbanism techniques, Economic, Cultural. The report was named *Revigoration d'İstanbul* [Fig. 6.6], and it consists of a total of 89 pages. The criteria for the planning of these three aspects were categorized under three main parts, where he detailed his program.

Moreover, he emphasized that he examined the city under three main sections in order to solve these problems: the first one was the "Industrial İstanbul", serving as the economic center of East Mediterranean. The second was "Cultural İstanbul (University and Artistic)", positioned as the center of the world civilizations. The last one was "Sportive and Touristic İstanbul" as the center of the sport culture and international tourism. Planning İstanbul as an economic center was mentioned in the plans of the three urbanists. However, contrary to others' description of İstanbul as the center of Middle East, Lambert's depiction of the Eastern Mediterranean is an indication of his understanding of the changing socio-cultural perspective and ideology after the Republic. In addition, he emphasized the necessity to collaborate with local experts by forming an equip including Turkish architects, to constitute a "national approach for the historic cities"<sup>(38)</sup>. This emphasis on determining a national method is related to the desire of the republican ideology to "learn from the west and adapt it to the local culture".

### Prost's heritage-led decisions and perspective in comparison to Lambert

Lambert's plan was twofold: New Center and Monumental İstanbul. The connection of these two parts involved defining new solutions for transportation, adapting new public functions to promote the cultural values, and creating an industrial zone. These were the complementary aspects to effect the *Revigoration d'İstanbul* as in his words<sup>(39)</sup>. He explained his strategy as follows:

<sup>(37)</sup> TRA, *Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü*, col. 30-10-0-0, *Rapport de Mission d'Urbanisme İstanbul Juin-Juillet 1933, Paris Octobre-Novembre-December 1933*, 06.04.1935.

<sup>(38)</sup> Seventh chapter of Lambert's report entitled *Arrangements for improving housing conditions and facilitating the construction market in İstanbul* in TRA, *Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü*, col. 30-10-0-0, *Rapport de Mission*.

<sup>(39)</sup> The fifth chapter of Lambert's report entitled "İstanbul Urban Regulations Diagram" in TRA, *Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü*, col. 30-10-0-0, *Rapport de Mission*.

The creation of ISTANBUL-INDUSTRIAL first, those of CULTURAL ISTANBUL and of SPORTIVE AND TOURISTIC ISTANBUL [...] these THREE MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE INVIGORATING of the metropole can mark for it the beginning of a NEW ERA, in conformity with the high destinies of this country.<sup>(40)</sup>

The new center and monumental İstanbul in his report were planned under two different regulations. On the one hand, the monumental İstanbul referred the Historic Peninsula. On the other hand, the new center was defined as Pera/Beyoğlu in Galata shores where the European inhabitancy have already been developed during the late Ottoman Period. In addition, the Golden Horn was perceived as the connecting element between the monumental İstanbul and new center. A similar approach was defined in Prost Plan as:

This poly-centered approach should have been in a mutual connection rather than a separation. The main characteristics of the city were identified in two folds: İstanbul: The CITY OF THE ART AND SPORT, İstanbul: GREAT MARITIME, COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL CITY.<sup>(41)</sup>

According to Lambert “if the historic cities can offer a long-term history, they might present a bright future for industrial aspects by creating a contrast with its heritage”<sup>(42)</sup>. In other words, the integration of cultural tourism in an industrial city is the perfect match for both economic development of the country and the international reputation of the city. Therefore, his report contains several suggestions to promote the cultural tourism of İstanbul by emphasizing the city’s multi-layered history and richness of its historic monuments.

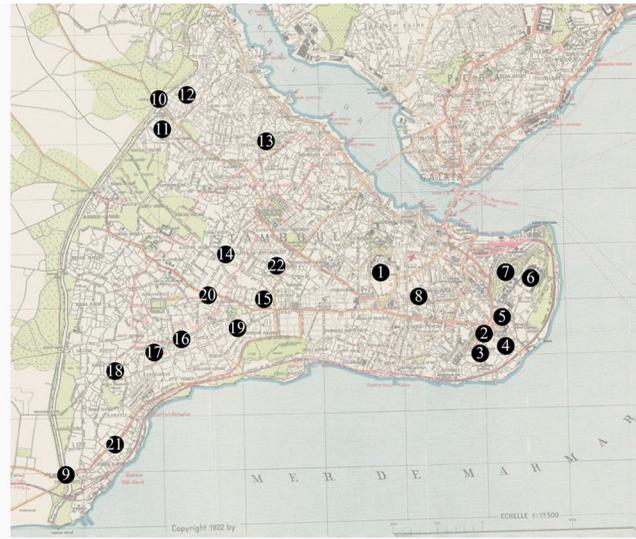
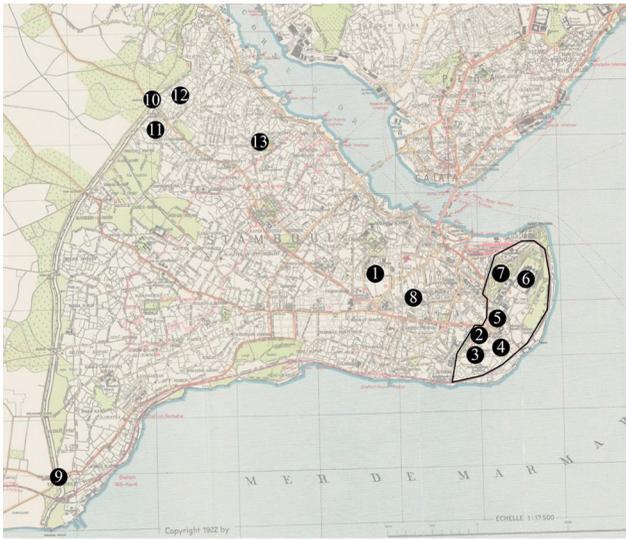
The “Cultural İstanbul” section was the only part of Lambert’s report in which the details of cultural heritage were explained. In his proposal, the approach to historic monuments was “inspired by the idea of highlighting the monumental wealth of the city”<sup>(43)</sup>. He developed a holistic proposal of open spaces and parks to enhance the city’s aesthetics. This holistic perspective was categorized in four topics: İstanbul Cité des Arts, İstanbul University, the city walls and fountains, tombs and mosques. The University and Cité des Arts area were located in the center of Historical Peninsula, which was perceived as the science, art and culture center of the Eastern Mediterranean. From his point of view, the surrounding of historic monuments should enrich the cultural atmosphere of this area. Therefore, his report includes specific details for some monuments

<sup>(40)</sup> The words written in uppercase by Lambert in the quotations from the original document have been directly incorporated into the entire article, see the conclusion of Lambert’s report, in TRA, *Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü*, col. 30-10-0-0, Rapport de Mission.

<sup>(41)</sup> The citations have been reported in Archive of IFEA, *Fond Prost*, col. 0586 – V, Les Transformation d’Istanbul Tome V: Port Come d’Or Industries, 1938, c. 15.

<sup>(42)</sup> The “Conclusion” of the third chapter of Lambert’s report, in TRA, *Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü*, col. 30-10-0-0, Rapport de Mission, c. 42.

<sup>(43)</sup> The “Enhancement of existing monumental groups” in the second chapter of Lambert’s report, TRA, *Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü*, col. 30-10-0-0, Rapport de Mission, c. 26.



- 1 Istanbul University and Beyazit Mosque
- 2 Remains of Byzantine Hippodrome
- 3 Sultan Ahmet Mosque
- 4 Archeological Excavation Site
- 5 Haghia Sophia
- 6 Topkapı Palace
- 7 The Gardens of Topkapı Palace
- 8 Grand Bazaar
- 9 Yedikule Gate
- 10 Edirne Kapı Gate
- 11 Mihrimah Sultan Mosque
- 12 Kariye Mosque
- 13 Yavuz Sultan Selim Mosque Complex

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- 12 Kariye Mosque
- 13 Yavuz Sultan Selim Mosque Complex
- 14 Feneri İsa Mosque
- 15 Muratpaşa Mosque
- 16 Davutpaşa Mosque
- 17 Alipaşa Mosque
- 18 Kocamustafapaşa Mosque
- 19 Cerrahpaşa Mosque
- 20 Haseki Mosque
- 21 İmrahor Mosque
- 22 Forum of Arcadius

### 6.7

The comparative visualization of the identified historic monuments by Jacques Lambert and Henri Prost.

(Left: The landmarks of Historical Monuments identified by Lambert in his report. Right: The historical monuments identified by Prost in "Edifices Historiques" in *Les Transformation d'Istanbul VII: Viele Istanbul. Basemaps: Plan d'Ensemble De La Villa De Constantinople*, 1922 in Harvard Map Collection, georeferenced by author, Software: QGIS)

and their surroundings identified by Lambert as landmarks. As seen in the comparative visualization in [Fig. 6.7], while Prost's decisions presented some historic monuments identified by Lambert, many others were also included.

Among the all heritage-led decisions, the three common projects stood out for both Lambert and Prost: the opening of Beyazit Square [Fig. 6.8], the organization of Sultanahmet Square where the ruins of Byzantine hippodrome located [Fig. 6.9], and the creation of an Archaeological Park [Fig. 6.10]. Additionally, the creation of a Republican Square in the Historical Peninsula was presented in both urban programs.

However, the identities of Beyazit and Sultanahmet Square defined by Lambert were altered in Prost's Plan. Lambert expressed his opinion as follows:

The *Place de la Republique* [...] ends to the south with a double hemicycle gallery. The lower part has a series of shops opening onto the semi-circular gallery which limits the floor of the place. Two staircases [...] allowing to enjoy, above the high houses there, from the panorama of the whole Marmara.<sup>(44)</sup>

<sup>(44)</sup> The "Istanbul Universitaire" of the second chapter of Lambert's report, in TRA, *Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü*, col. 30-10-0-0, *Rapport de Mission*, c. 26.



6.8

The view of Grand Bazaar, Sultan Ahmet Mosque and Haghia Sophia from the perspective of Istanbul University during the early period of 20th century.

(Online Collection of Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, col. 2024903\_EuropeanaPhotography\_KULeuven\_1010)



6.10

Archeological Site area at the shores of Historical Peninsula in Frédéric Gadmer. *Turquie, Constantinople, Vue sur Scutari et entrée de la Marmara*, 1922.

(Albert-Khan Collection, Online Archives de la Planète, col. A 36 362 S)

6.9

Franz Grasser, *Reisefotos Türkei. Istanbul. Hagia Sophia*, 1936. View of Hagia Sophia, from perspective of Sultanahmet Square, where the ruins of Byzantine hippodrome were located.

(Online Collection of Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek, col. 440\_DDB\_SLUB\_2)



In the Prost's plan, a national library and museum were planned for the Beyazit Square. However, in contrast to Lambert's perspective, who believed that Beyazit Square was the most suitable place for this due to its proximity to İstanbul University, Prost decided to transform the open space near to Sultanahmet Mosque into a Republican Square<sup>(45)</sup>.

In addition, Lambert's Archaeological Park proposal was elaborated by Prost in the first volume of *Les Transformation d'Istanbul* prepared in 1936-1937. The idea first appeared in Lambert's report as "Public Gardens of the Cité des Arts (*Jardin Publics de la Cité des Arts*)", which was conceived as a large public park incorporating historic monuments and the garden of the Imperial area. It also included an archaeological excavation site to reveal the Byzantine roots. In his report, he detailed his idea as follows:

A set of Public Gardens, such as the Sofian Garden, between HAGHIA SOPHIA and SULTAN AHMET, presents terraces on the Marmara, the gardens of the Acropolis of Serat.

I would like it to have been given to us subsequently to develop a series of garden projects releasing, among the elegance and the variety of this art where the Orient reached such perfect achievements, a Turkish tradition whose expression does not exist, cannot find a more appropriate place than in this privileged site of nature and men.<sup>(46)</sup>

These contents and prospective borders of the park defined were the same in Prost Plan submitted in 1937. In addition, a square to be realized at the site of Byzantine Hippodrome (known as Horse Square – At Meydanı in Turkish in 1940s) was projected. In the Prost Plan, the idea was fostered as "Archaeological Park to be set up on the site of the Imperial Palaces, between the ramparts, Sultanahmet Mosque and Hagia Sophia"<sup>(47)</sup> and "an archaeological excavation project has to be done to reveal Byzantine roots in the acropolis area. Bleachers and terraces could then constitute a powerful base for buildings on the site and public life in Istanbul"<sup>(48)</sup>.

The main difference between Lambert's and Prost's views was the emphasis on the intangible values of the historic centre. Lambert envisioned the site as a place where the local craft was taught, developed and exhibited by the citizens. For this reason, he suggested that many shops in open spaces should be converted into workshops, thus contributing to both education and trade, as explained in his words:

<sup>(45)</sup> The "Place de Bayazid" in Archive of IFEA, *Fond Prost*, col. 41 – VII, *Les Transformation d'Istanbul Tome VII: Vieil İstanbul*.

<sup>(46)</sup> The "Jardins Publics de la Cité des Arts" in the second chapter of Lambert's report, in TRA, *Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü*, col. 30-10-0-0, *Rapport de Mission*, c. 26.

<sup>(47)</sup> The letter entitled "Nomenclature des Terrains Reserves par le Plan d'Amenagement pour des Fouilles Archeologiques" sent by Prost to the Director of Beaux-Arts, Louis Hautecoeur in 04.12.1944, in Archive of IFEA, *Fond Prost*, col. 405, *Notes et Correspondance de Henri Prost*, 1944.

<sup>(48)</sup> The "Parc Archéologique" section, in Archive of IFEA, *Fond Prost*, col. 41 – VII, *Les Transformation d'Istanbul Tome VII: Vieil İstanbul*.



6.11

One of the local shops selling traditional handcrafts in Grand Bazaar in 19th century. *Sébah & Joaillier, Boutique dans le Grand Bazar, İstanbul, 1880.*

(Online Archives of Salt Research Center, col. AHTUR0112)

A complex program, the development of which requires an in-depth study of local skills and possibilities, of the probable markets, but which finds its place in this outline of the display elements favorable to the renaissance of İstanbul.

Being able to be studied and carried out for themselves and independently of any other consideration, the realization of these sets is essential especially in the case of the creation of INDUSTRIAL-İSTANBUL, to counterbalance harmoniously the material effects of the economic development of the city.<sup>(49)</sup>

As seen in the above statement, the holistic perspective of the “Cultural İstanbul” zone also included the display of local crafts, and it was envisaged that these shops would create a space for this production. The main aim was to contribute to the economy and to attract touristic interest. In a period when the terminology “Intangible Cultural Heritage” had not yet been defined, Lambert’s tendency to enhance the local skills and traditions was significant. Considering the current international standards, his perception clearly covers a concept where the conservation of intangible and tangible cultural heritage is sustained. He further listed the possible branches of local art and suggested setting up workshops and individual or group studios to encourage the community to produce local products. The listed art branches represented a wide framework, such as stone sculptures, ceramic products, mosaics, carpet weaving, jewelry manufacture etc. [Fig. 6.11]. In the report, this area extended from the University district, continued through the area including the Grand Bazaar and reached the Cité des Arts.

In contrast to Lambert’s tendency, there is no such an evidence in the Prost Plan that he paid an attention to the intangible values of İstanbul. Instead, he proposed larger-scale changes, envisioning the historical site as a bazaar surrounded by historic monuments.

<sup>(49)</sup> The “Cultural İstanbul” of the second chapter of Lambert’s report, in TRA, *Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü*, col. 30-10-0-0, Rapport de Mission, cc. 23-27.

## Conclusion

The first decade of the Republic constituted significant changes in the political structure and represented the effort to establish the legal framework for its dissemination in the social and cultural atmosphere. In 1933, the legal implementation of the three main elements of the Istanbul city plan, “hygiene, aesthetics and transportation”, was guaranteed by the government. In this pursuit, heritage-oriented decisions were processed by considering more tangible values in urban planning programs. The two proposals of Lambert and Prost, prepared with a short time difference from each other, share common aspects on this matter. While most of Prost’s decisions were extended versions of the inputs proposed in Lambert’s report, the general lines were parallel and had shared components. Besides, the conservationist aspects can be traced in both approaches. The Archaeological Park project was the most shared decision translated from his collaborator’s proposal. However, when considering the current heritage glossary derived from postcolonial perspectives, strong differences can be suggested. Lambert’s plan contained a focus on intangible heritage values of local culture. His frequent emphasis on the importance he attaches to local skills and tradition is a clear indication of this. In particular, his mention to transform the historic city centre into a cultural area by integrating several workshops, studios and small productive places to improve local crafts is significant in this regard. He clearly underlined his desire to ensure the economic development in this area by preserving and enhancing local traditions with new technologies. This might be related to his goal of developing the industrial character of Istanbul rather than solely conserving its cultural heritage.

In contrast to his collaborator’s perspective, Prost’s program did not contain such inputs. However, his perspective was more aligned with the desires of the local authorities. Lambert’s emphasis on conserving intangible values was not suitable for the local authorities of a socio-culturally changing nation. Therefore, the reflection of Lambert’s approach is not included in Prost’s plan. In other words, Prost explicitly incorporated many of Lambert’s into his urban program, but he clearly made a selection during this translation. Yet, considering that universal terminology was not defined during that period, it could be said that Lambert’s perspective was more innovative than otherwise.

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