The architectural heritage of Istanbul and the ideology of preservation

Space is nothing but the inscription of time in the world, spaces are the realizations, inscriptions in the simultaneity of the external world of a series of times...

Henri Lefebvre

The building legacy of the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul’s historic peninsula has been the object of complex, often contradictory practices and policies during the republican period. To account for the continuities as well as the disruptions that mark the predicament of this patrimony, it is necessary to explore changing urban development policies and shifting functional, material, and visual meanings attributed to buildings from the past. Early years of the Republic were marked by a modernist architectural practice that renounced ties with Ottoman precedents, in opposition to an architectural historiography that venerated them. Caught between these two, the field of preservation became a stage on which history was played off against modernity. Leading figures engaged with the survival of the Ottoman heritage faced the task of reconciling significations ascribed to historic buildings with priorities that guided contemporary agendas of urban renewal. Seemingly incongruous moments in time inscribed upon city space were coded and recoded to suit prevalent ideological priorities. Acts of construction, restoration, or destruction became powerful visual manifestations of cultural politics, addressing the religious and national sentiments of the public.

With the proclamation of the Republic, the status of Istanbul, the unrivaled primary city of the Ottoman Empire, was ceded to Ankara, which became the capital of the Republic and the symbolic site of the new order. Before long, the mission of modern architecture was explicitly connected to that of Kemalist reforms. The pure and abstract forms of modernism, purged of historicism, were tied up with such aspirations of the Republic as emancipation from Oriental identity and participation in contemporary Western civilization. In this framework, Istanbul represented the forsaken Ottoman past. As the nation’s scarce resources were allotted to the construction of Ankara, Istanbul was left in a state of despairing misery and devastation that had begun with the fires of the nineteenth century and continued with years of poverty and neglect.

Throughout the early years of the Republic, certain patterns emerge in the treatment of the timeworn city of Istanbul that refer back to its remaking as an Islamic capital after the Ottoman conquest. Among the heirs of the city, several scholars and architects stand out as persistent but at times inconsistent shapers of its preservation policies. Since the same persons who were involved with articulating architectural historiography in the early Republic were often also influential in formulating preservation principles, their endeavors shed light upon the complexities and contradictions of their positions as manifested by discrepancies between their practice and their discourse.

In the Ottoman period, until the nineteenth century, the esteem bestowed upon charitable and religious complexes as well as their expedience had ensured their continued maintenance and repair within the framework of their individual pious foundations. Their vital role as agents of city building had enhanced their prominent status for centuries. The decline and deterioration of the illustrious city, which started towards the end of the nineteenth century and continued into the 1930s, transformed its monuments into dilapidated, dysfunctional, and fragmented buildings surrounded by empty plots and derelict houses. The 1930s were marked by resignation to overwhelming decay, resulting in efforts to document the threatened architectural heritage with immaculate drawings—idealized representations that compensated for actual decrepitude. The redevelopment of Istanbul began in the 1950s, after the revolutionary fervor of the early Republic had subsided. Under the pretext of recuperating monuments from ruins and clearing their environs,
the crumbling city was modernized by opening roads from one end of the historic peninsula to the other. Roads replaced socio-religious complexes as regulators of urban form; demolition took the place of construction. Divested of their previous significance, monuments became isolated visual objects displayed in newly opened urban vistas. Sustained maintenance and repairs provided by pious foundations gave way to occasional restorations reduced to saving appearances. To fully understand these subsequent shifts in positions and policies regarding the Ottoman heritage, it is important to begin with the traditional order of Ottoman imarets.

OTTOMAN ISTANBUL: THE RISE AND DECLINE OF IMARETS

The transformation of the ruinous Byzantine capital into the thriving (mamur) city of the Ottomans was achieved through the construction of socio-religious complexes, or imarets. The urban image of Istanbul was Islamized by monumental mosques and their dependencies that crowned prominent sites facing the Golden Horn and distinguished lesser locations in the walled city. Built as imperial feats or as enterprises of lower-ranking patrons, imarets constituted the cores of residential settlements. Neighborhoods grew around them and were named after them. They not only served as indispensable public institutions and estimable monuments but also as signs of permanence amidst ephemeral gardens and precarious wooden mansions. The upkeep of imarets was ensured by their individual pious foundations (waqfs, Turkish evkaf), and substantial repairs of distinguished buildings were carried out by the corps of royal architects. Patrons endowed property not only for the management of imarets but also for their upkeep in perpetuity. Revenue from vast lands as well as innumerable buildings thus bequeathed provided for running and maintaining the charitable institutions. In fact, expenses pertaining to the care of imarets had precedence over the salaries of their staff. Each waqf was intended to be autonomous and permanent, as were its institutions and buildings. The terms of waqfs were absolute and unchanging, since their legal force relied on Muslim religious law, the shari’a. Waqfs were overseen by kadıs—judges who enacted the shari’a in each of the four districts of Istanbul as well as being chief urban administrators. Churches converted to mosques also acquired endowments to run and preserve them as well as adjacent buildings to complement them. Primary among all such buildings was the city’s first imperial mosque, the Hagia Sophia. Mehmed II converted six churches to mosques, one to a madrasa, and still another to a convent. Transformation of churches and monasteries continued under Beyazid II and Selim I. Although the shari’a banned the construction of new churches in Muslim neighborhoods and restricted their repairs, arbitrary demolition or appropriation of a church or masjid that was intact and in use was discouraged. Only with imperial consent could it be replaced by a Friday mosque; following this, a substitute sanctuary had to be constructed in a relatively uninhabited area, or an existing one in bad condition restored as compensation (bedel) for the place of worship that had been torn down. Dilapidated and deserted smaller churches, on the other hand, were subjected to a practice called yeniliş (revitalization), whereupon they were either reused as neighborhood masjids or annexed to convents to avoid their total dereliction.

The imaret bestowed welfare on its environment and was itself intended to thrive indefinitely. In fact, imar (to build), tamir (repair), and imaret all derive from the Arabic word ‘umrân, which signifies “bringing or returning to a state of prosperity.” Imarets regulated urban growth and encouraged settlement in scantily built districts. Residences eventually filled the spaces between imarets; streets took form as semiprivate, narrow tracts leading to houses. Contrary to imarets, timber dwellings were modest in dimension and transient by nature. Hence the cityscape acquired a dual character in terms of scale, status, and endurance. Contemporary depictions and descriptions of the city accentuated its monuments, with the uniform residential fabric interpreted as an uninterrupted neutral background (fig. 1). European visitors often remarked about the absence of street names, pointing to the function of imarets as reference points in identifying directions. On late-sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ottoman maps, houses formed a continuous texture, without streets between them (fig. 2). In fact, streets were virtually unrepresented, and even the most significant thoroughfares were barely implied. Above all, this idealized cityscape was depicted facing the Golden Horn, its skyline crowned by imperial mosques (fig. 3). Istanbul was shaped to be viewed from outside, from vantage points along the coasts. This externally projected, idyllic view was lost to pedestrians who rambled along its cramped streets.
The nineteenth century signaled a rupture with tradition in the Ottoman city. The court, along with the grandees, left Istanbul for the suburbs. But with Muslim refugees arriving from southeastern Europe and southern Russia, the population nevertheless grew at an unprecedented rate. The immigrants settled in Istanbul, complying with the old custom of ignoring building regulations: houses invaded open spaces in and around monuments and encroached upon streets whose already narrow widths diminished even further (figs. 4 and 5), increasing the risk of fire not only for the densely packed houses but also for the public buildings they abutted. In fact, 117 great fires devastated vast areas of Istanbul between 1853 and 1906 (figs. 6 and 7). Consequently, a third of the Muslim population—some 30,000 refugees in addition to fire victims—was homeless in 1882. Provisionally resided in mosques, convennts, and madrasas, an intrusion that further afflicted the already imperiled monuments. In a survey conducted in 1920, *Constantinople Today*, many mosques were reported to be occupied by fire victims and refugees (figs. 8 and 9). The congested residential fabric was no longer a neutral backdrop to the *imarets*, but a virtual threat. Since houses continued to be hastily constructed and reconstructed, elaborate mansions slowly gave way to make-shift dwellings. The recurrence of fires diminished the city’s capacity to recover after each disaster. A report prepared for Abdülhamid II in 1879, which compared the ruinous condition of Istanbul to the prosperity of Galata, indicated vacant plots left unbuilt for as many as fifty years after the fires.

Two institutions emerged in this climate. As depleted revenues and neglectful trustees were menacing the waqf system, pious foundations were brought under the jurisdiction of a central state authority, the Minh ...
istry of Pious Foundations (Nezaret-i Evkaf-ı Hümayun), in 1836. Not only was the legal autonomy of each pious foundation violated but its financial independence was also terminated, since collecting waqf funds soon became the responsibility of the treasury, with only a percentage, at the discretion of the state, returned to the waqf system. On the other hand, the regulation of urban life, which had been the responsibility of kadis, was entrusted to the municipality (sehremevneti) in 1855. Urban administration as well as preservation thus broke loose of religious authority. Henceforth, imar and tamir would no longer be complementary concerns but conflicting acts. City development, taken by progressive municipal officials to be synonymous with clearing operations and the opening of roads, would clash with the preservation of monuments, the urgent task of the conservative Evkaf Ministry functionaries, who tried to save them from being sacrificed. The unsightly residential fabric and deficient street network, in the meantime, would serve as the rationale for each overhaul in the old city.
The most noteworthy case of such discord concerned Cemil Pasha, a modernizing, secular urban administrator whose views were at odds with the pious concerns of the Evkaf ministers; as sehemini (mayor) from 1912 to 1914, then again in 1919–20, he was their most vocal critic. Making a case for the complete obliteration of old Istanbul except for its major monuments and the construction of a modern city, Cemil Pasha complained that neither he nor his successors would ever be able to evade Evkaf administrators. Compelled by the urgency of a cholera epidemic among refugees arriving after the Balkan War (1912–13), he petitioned to collect the gravely ill at the Hagia Sophia, Sultan Ahmed, and Tophane mosques but was denied permission by Ziya Pasha, the Evkaf minister, on the grounds that a place of worship would be defiled by such use. Receiving subsequent consent from the Şeyhülislam, the supreme religious authority, Cemil Pasha nevertheless proceeded to deal with the crisis on his terms. On another occasion, he cleared the surroundings of the Hagia Sophia, but his attempt to demolish Sinan’s Ayasofya baths across from it was thwarted. He encountered the resistance of the minister Hayri Efendi when he removed a portion of a cemetery that was in the way as he widened the road from Sirkeci to Gülhane. Blamed for abusing Islamic monuments (abdat-æ Islamiye) when he also tried to remove a dervish convent and a sacred tomb, Cemil Pasha was forced by the ensuing outcry to resign.

Dispute over the preservation of waqf monuments had roused religious sentiments. The Commission for the Improvement of Roads (Islahat-æ Turuk Komisyonu), established after the 1865 Hocaçada fire, instigated the first clearing operation as part of the Tanzimat city reforms. Divanyolu, the “invisible” main street of the walled city, was widened from an average of 5 meters to 16 meters in order to accommodate trams (fig. 10). Not only did the street itself become visible, but the expanded space also revealed the monuments flanking it. Yet to this end, two rooms of the Atik Ali Pasha Madrasa and its entire public kitchen and convent (1496), half of the Köprülü Madrasa (1659), portions of the Çemberli baths (1583) and the Elçi Hami, and various tombs were also demolished; Köprülü’s mausoleum was dismantled and moved elsewhere. Hence the integrity of two imarets was irrevocably lost. This was the earliest incidence of monuments being surrendered to roads in a quest for modernization. It would not be the last.
ignation until then reserved for ancient Greek and Roman remains. To cite an early example, the minister of education Münif Pasha referred thus to the Çinili Köşk, in the precinct of Topkapı Palace, on the occasion of its conversion into a museum in 1880: “Even this building we are in is equal in rank to an ancient one.” The statute regarding the opening of the Academy of Fine Arts in 1883 listed as a required course “Science of Antiquities (ilm-i asar-ı atika),” because of the notable failure to preserve mosques, mausoleums, and madrasas as well as an observed decline in the quality of architectural design. The most apparent indication of the rupture with precedent was the Ottoman Revival style of architecture introduced in 1909, a concession that Ottoman monuments already belonged to an irredeemable past that could only be revived with new interpretations and references.

In 1912, a law for the preservation of monuments (Muhafaza-i Abidat Hakkında Nizamname) was drafted, vaguely specifying that “places and works from any period whatsoever” be preserved as antiquities. This law repeated articles of an earlier antiquities law (1906), which had focused on archaeological finds but counted all historical buildings among property to be preserved. Established in 1915, the Council for the Preservation of Monuments (Asar-ı Atika Encümeni) was an advisory body for the implementation of the law in Istanbul. However, two issues introduced with the new law paradoxically concerned demolition, not protection. By appealing to the council and following a complicated procedure, a government might indeed tear down a historic building; in fact, one of the main functions of the council was to decide which buildings were worthy of preservation. Moreover, if such a building were in a precarious condition and posed danger to its surroundings, it could be pulled down immediately, skipping the bureaucratic process, provided that any decorated and inscribed parts of it were preserved. This would prove to be an enduring and convenient pretext exploited by local administrators for demolitions. Thus the law can be interpreted as both an endeavor at protection and a recognition of the inevitability of loss. Another ambiguous and connected venture was the creation of a museum where precious items from mosques, masjids, mausoleums, and convents would be collected and displayed. Its venue was the public kitchen of the Süleymaniye complex, apparently in need of a new function. As a concession that under the new law some buildings in the care of the Evkaf administration would soon cease to exist, the Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi (Islamic Endowments Museum) was founded in 1914 to save at least the holdings of these buildings, including such treasured components as tiles.

The reorganization of the Evkaf Ministry following the 1908 constitutional revolution raised Kemalettin Bey to prominence as an architect and restorer. A new department, the Technical Commission for Construction and Repairs (İnşaat ve Tamirat Heyeti-i Fenîyesi), was created in 1909, and Kemalettin Bey was appointed its head. He became one of the founders of the Revival style that turned to Ottoman monuments for inspiration and was in addition the main authority for their restoration. During ten prolific years in office, he restored several imperial mosques and built numerous mausoleums, mosques, schools, and office and apartment buildings. Subscribing to the prevalent Turkish nationalist movement of the time, Kemalettin Bey contended that Turkish monuments, long neglected under Western influence (Frenk tesir-i esiratı), should be treasured: “Every Turk should protect as his own these monuments of national civilization (medeniyyet-i millîye asar) and create his new civilization (medeniyyet-i cedide) by enhancing them.” At the Academy of Fine Arts, Kemalettin Bey taught a course comparing Ottoman monuments with other world masterpieces. More important, his workshop at the Evkaf functioned like a school for teaching and reviving Ottoman architecture that had “deteriorated after
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the eighteenth century. His so-called National Style was derided as the “Evkaf Style” because it drew on emblematic elements of Ottoman religious architecture, but his students would continue to pursue the history and preservation of Ottoman architecture and deploy it as an architectural source. Among these students were Sedat Çetintaş and Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi. In retrospect, Çetintaş weighed an apprenticeship at Kemalettin Bey’s workshop against an education at the academy as follows: the former, in his view, was dedicated to an appreciation of Turkish architecture; the latter, under the tutelage of foreign instructors, to that of Greco-Roman and Renaissance architecture.

Kemalettin Bey was instrumental to imbuing Ottoman monuments with national significance beyond their obvious religious associations.

Kemalettin Bey’s career at the Evkaf also reflects the inherent conflicts between *imār* and *tamir* during the final years of the Ottoman Empire, even though his office sought to reconcile them. In 1910, the advent of a new minister changed the priorities of the ministry; increasing resources by either selling waqf land and ruinous waqf buildings or replacing them with revenue-generating edifices took precedence over repairs. Ironically, several buildings designed by Kemalettin Bey brought about the demolition of Ottoman monuments seemingly under his protection. Three madrasas, three public kitchens, a primary school, and a bath were razed to clear sites for seven of Kemalettin Bey’s buildings for the Evkaf. To open space for his First Vakıf Han near Eminönü, the seventeenth-century Vani Efendi Madrasa was pulled down and a substitute madrasa built nearby. Likewise, for the construction of his colossal Fourth Vakıf Han in the same district, Abdülhamid I’s public kitchen and school were demolished; its *sebîl* and fountain were dismantled and assembled elsewhere, while the madrasa and mausoleum survived across the road. The substitute for Abdülhamid I’s public kitchen, for its part, was constructed on a site emptied by tearing down Selim I’s older building with the same function (fig. 11).

The Fethiye Madrasa, which had been built as an adjunct to the Pammakaristos Church when it was converted to the Fethiye Mosque in 1588, was knocked down by the Evkaf Ministry some time between 1911 and 1915 because it was dilapidated; Kemalettin Bey designed a new madrasa on the model of the old one. Paradoxically, during roughly the same years Kemalettin Bey was writing newspaper articles strongly condemning the practice of “brutally cutting through” precious remnants of the past in order to build “sickly and ugly straight roads,” blaming this on ignorance and rancor. His protest was apparently directed against the Islahat-Turuk Komisyonu for past crimes and at Cemil Pasha, then sehremini, for vehemently trying to pull down the Ebu’l Fazl Mahmut Efendi Madrasa for the tramway. A reverent Muslim as well as a fervent nationalist, Kemalettin Bey asserted that “sacred places demolished, ancient trees cut, bones of the dead broken, their ruins will all be buried under broad and hideous, long and gruesome roads.” Like legislation and institutions for preservation, his ambivalent attitude, torn between protection and demolition, was a legacy of the late Ottoman period to the Republic and would survive until the latter half of the twentieth century.

REPUBLICAN ISTANBUL: THE PRESERVATION OF RUINS

The 1906 antiquities law and the 1912 law for the preservation of monuments remained in force until 1973. The Council for the Preservation of Monuments, which had been established in 1915, was ratified by the republican government in 1925 and renamed Muhaʃaş-i Asar-i Atika Encümeni; its founding members, Kemalettin Bey, Halil Edhem (Eldem), and Celâl Esad (Arseven), maintained their positions. It acted as the main advisory body on preservation in Istanbul until 1951. Kemalettin Bey’s service was brief because
of his death in 1927, but Halil Edhem and Arseven’s preeminence as influential intellectuals in the fields of history, art, archaeology, architecture, and preservation continued throughout the early years of the Republic. Besides their collaboration on the council, they both became founding members of the Turkish Historical Society, which sought to establish the roots of Turkish history in the pre-Ottoman past of Anatolia. Halil Edhem had replaced his brother Osman Hamdi Bey as the director of Müze-i Hümayun, the Imperial Museum, in 1910; for twenty-one years he held this post, which also made him responsible for the supervision of monument preservation. It was he, in fact, who in 1915 had proposed the constitution of the Council for the Preservation of Monuments, as a consultative body to the imperial museum. He presided over the conversion of the Topkapı Palace into a museum in 1924 as well as its ensuing restoration.

In 1909 Arseven had published Constantinople de Byzance à Stamboul, the first of his many publications on art, architecture, and urbanism. He wrote Türklerde Sanat (Art of the Turks) in 1932 as part of the ideologically driven Turkish History Thesis of the Turkish Historical Society.

The Evkaf Ministry was closed down in 1924, but its functions were transferred to the directorate of the same name. In 1925, Kemalettin Bey was once again appointed the director of its department of construction and repairs. One of two significant restorations undertaken during these initial years of the Republic was the repair under Kemalettin Bey of the dome of Hagia Sophia, thus sustaining its status as the foremost monument of Istanbul. The other major restoration, ordered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, concerned the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. These were the continuities, but there were also discontinuities.

Istanbul as it had been rebuilt in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with a view to creating a uniformly urbanized and densely populated city, gave way to abandonment in the 1930s. It suffered not only the loss of its longstanding eminence as the capital city but also the departure of its inhabitants. Since its population was almost halved, vast fire-stricken areas remained empty, wastelands constituted about a third of its terrain (fig. 12). In this context, in Halil Edhem’s words, “ruins became more ruinous,” until the 1950s, “ruin” would be the term most frequently and consistently used to describe the old city.

Despite the discourse exalting national monuments, the building legacy of the past was suspended in a state of decay. Moreover, the inevitability of its loss was conceded even by those who were responsible for its protection. Three members of the Preservation Council used exactly the same words to voice their helplessness in the face of perishing monuments as well as houses. Halil Edhem wrote that “the most important Turkish architectural works are...doomed to be abandoned,” continuing, “If we were to pass by one of the many burned areas in the city, we would see hundreds of mosque ruins, wrecked tombs, and cem-

Fig. 12. Urban terrain abandoned after a fire: the environs of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque in 1928. (After Cezar, Osmanlı Başkenti İstanbul, 388–89)
etery remains. These are beyond being repaired and restored. Their presence in destitution, on the other hand, is a shame for our city; to cope with such ruins, it is necessary to abide by the preservation law,” i.e., its article allowing demolitions. He added, “Today Istanbul is the greatest wasteland (virane) of the world… some buildings can be sacrificed to put an end to this situation.” Arseven asserted that “mansions and big houses are...doomed to disappear.” The architect Sedad Hakki Eldem reiterated that “the residential tradition of old times is doomed to disappear, in fact is disappearing, only too rapidly.”

Decrepit residences surrounded dilapidated imarets (figs. 13–16). Disrepair and dereliction marked monumental public buildings as well as modest houses. Imarets ceased to be indispensable functional cores of neighborhoods. Madrasas were closed down in 1924, followed by mausoleums, convents, and zaviyes (derwish lodges) in 1925. Their buildings were turned over to the Ministry of Education and the city administration, Idare-i Hüsusiye. Any with historical and aesthetic value were to be kept by the Evkaf, the rest sold for the construction of new school buildings. Fountains and sebiljs along with their water sources were given to the municipality in 1926, as were cemeteries. Mosques were transferred to the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Reşidi) in 1924, only to be retrieved and returned to the waqf administration in 1931.

Preservation came on the agenda of the republican government when in 1931 Atatürk drew attention to...
the dilapidated state of historic buildings. Within a month, the Council of ministers decided to establish a preservation board, Anaylx Koruma Komisyonu, aiming at “the conservation of antiquities everywhere.” Subsequently, the Ministry of Education prepared the bill for a law to replace the one enacted in 1906 and published a booklet titled Tarihi Abide ve Eserlerimizi Korumaq a Mecburuz (We Are Obliged to Conserve Our Historical Monuments and Antiquities), in which an article by Halil Edhem acknowledged the destruction of many such monuments, admitting that works from the Turkish era, like others, were in a “despicable state” of disrepair. The bill was never brought to parliament for ratification, however, and therefore never enacted. The whole effort remained without consequence. The lack of maintenance that Halil Edhem had justified by financial insufficiency continued to impede the preservation of historic buildings.

Mosques and masjids had become redundant for the sparsely populated city, and several that were crumbling and no longer attended were closed down. Consequently, a commission was constituted by the Evkaf administration to classify mosques, list them according to the population they served, and eliminate those that were unneeded. The ones retained would eventually be repaired. The Evkaf assessed the state of certain buildings under its care as too dilapidated to be repaired and started selling their remains (enkaz satmak), thereby getting rid of superfluous buildings in its hands and also generating income for the upkeep of remaining ones. In the process, heritage was reduced to wreckage. The public referred to such discarded buildings as kadro harci: literally, “dismissed from staff.” One striking case of squander concerned the remains of the Balaban Ağâ Mescidi, which were sold to a contractor. The officials of the Imperial Museum intervened and started what would be the first Turkish archaeological excavation of a Byzantine building. This stands in contrast to the Ottoman tradition of sevendirmesi, the reuse of decaying and deserted minor churches to stop their further ruin and, at the same time, to encourage settlement around them. In these years, however, it was not only the smaller buildings but even imperial complexes that suffered from selectivity in the treatment of historic buildings. Zeki Sayar, working as an assistant architect in the city administration circa 1931, was asked to prepare a report for the demolition of the derelict school of the Sultan Ahmed complex and the sale of its stone. Filled with indignation, he applied for its restoration. In 1952, the school was still unrepaired and its ruin occupied by the homeless. Along similar lines, Halil Edhem, in an address to the first Congress of Turkish History in 1932, referred to the proficient repair work at the Sultan Ahmed Mosque but finished his talk with slides of one of its courtyard gates before and after the demolition of the rooms over it. The Evkaf had sold off the rooms and consequently could not prevent the destruction. Auxiliary spaces of imaret that had formerly accommodated such functionaries of pious foundations as Qur’an reciters had apparently become obsolete (fig. 17); what were in actuality integral parts of monuments were interpreted as later additions and disposed of.

Even grand imperial mosques fell into disrepair, the Süleymaniye among them: although the Evkaf claimed to have repaired the monument in 1933, it remained in markedly poor condition. In 1935, a front-page caricature in the daily Cumhuriyet represented the apparition of Mimar Sinan on the anniversary of his death, saying, “They speak praises to my memory at the Süleymaniye and the Selimiye, as I cry out in lamentation for each and every one of my thousand-and-one ruinous buildings” (fig. 18). The next day, the paper published an article titled “The Condition of the Süleymaniye Monument” with a photograph showing the mosque courtyard filled with rainwater. The caption denounced the disastrous state of the building, in whose vicinity Sinan’s anniversary celebrations had been conducted that very day. Also in 1935, the preservation board acknowledged in a report that “monuments created by the Turk,” among
them buildings belonging to the Fatih, Suleymaniye, Şehzade, and Topkapı Palace complexes, were about to collapse due to neglect. The Board admitted that the distribution of imaret buildings to various state agencies had been detrimental to their upkeep, leading not only to negligent disrepair but also to deliberate damage.88 Ironically, the celebrated Ottoman architect Sinan was being hailed as a national hero while major Ottoman monuments—among them his buildings—were suffering.89

Imarets, originally envisioned as self-sufficient and integrated complexes, not only became functionally and administratively dispersed, but would also be physically divided. The Building and Roads Law of 1933 required that an open space with a radius of 10 meters be left around each monument.90 It thus established as standard practice the previously random Tanzimat procedure, based on Haussmann’s model, of clearing the surroundings of monuments. Each building, individually encapsulated within a space of its own, was envisioned in isolation (fig. 19). The implementation of this law was delayed until the 1950s, however, simply because the buildings were derelict. In 1935, during discussions on a city development plan, proposals for clearing and opening the environs of monuments were rejected by Halil Edhem on the grounds that “they were all ruins” and unfit to be exposed.91

Mosques and masjids, which had been the cores of Istanbul’s redevelopment, became signifiers of its downfall. The tight and continuous urban fabric depicted in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century maps gave way to recurrent vacant grounds. Since there was no demand for new construction, converting empty urban land to green areas was the only remedy found to supplant the wrecks and ruins; Istanbul’s “legendary gardens” would be revived as compensation for the loss of its built environment.92

Churches and city walls were not excepted from the overall dilapidation (fig. 20). Since lack of resources constituted the main justification for deficiencies of upkeep, however, priorities had to be set, and this was accomplished with recourse to the designations “national patrimony” and “national monument.” The 1931 draft of the law for preservation referred to “national monument” (milli abide) and prime ministerial decrees of 1934 and 1935 to “national and historical works” (milli ve tarihi eserler) and “superior monuments of Turkishness” (Türklüğun yüksek abideleri).93 In the mid-1930s the Ministry of Education issued to every school the following decree: “All historic works in Turkey attest to the creativity and culture of the Turkish race, even if they are referred to as Hittite, Phrygian, Lydian, Roman, Byzantine, or Ottoman. Denomination only designates periods. All are Turkish, and hence it is the duty of all Turks to preserve them.”94 The preservation board, for its part, acknowledged the histori-
and artistic merit of Byzantine works but declared that Turkish monuments had an additional political value, being “imperishable, petrified testimonies of our existence on this land.” Consequently, it justified the maintenance of Byzantine structures in a round-about way, by asserting that these monuments attested to “the advanced level of Byzantine civilization and hence expose[d] the intensity of the Turkish struggle to defeat and replace it.” In his speech at the Congress of Turkish History, Halil Edhem defended the city walls against attempts at demolition by claiming that Turkish repairs made them more Turkish than Byzantine. Likewise, the architect Kemal Altan, who was also a member of the Council for the Preservation of Monuments, referred to the Hagia Sophia as “this crippled, aged historic monument that owes its lengthy existence to our maintenance and hence has become ours in essence.”

Henri Prost, the French urban planner who completed a proposal for Istanbul in 1938, granted that the preservation of preconquest monuments, with the exception of the Hagia Sophia, awaited foreign resources, since the means of the country were hardly adequate to look after the Turkish monuments. On the other hand, his plan was criticized for privileging the Byzantine heritage of the city, since he designated the area encompassing the Hagia Sophia, the Hippodrome, and Great Palace as an archaeological park and the environs of the land walls as a protected zone (fig. 21). In the 1950s the planner Hans Högg would be similarly blamed for overemphasizing Byzantine monuments.) One critic of Prost’s conclusions was Sedat Çetintaş, who contended that his plan erased all traces of the Ottoman era in the so-called archaeological park except the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. He therefore questioned whether “the ‘monument,’ according to Mr. Prost, was limited to the Byzantine.”

Çetintaş took the approaching 500th anniversary of the conquest of Constantinople (1953) as an opportunity to highlight Turkish heritage, in keeping with his training under Kemalettin Bey at the Evkaf. In 1939 he put together a celebration committee, the Güzideler Komisyonu, comprising the intellectual elite. Employing the poet Yahya Kemal’s slogan “Turkish Istanbul,” a comprehensive program of celebration was prepared and a considerable budget allotted for the restoration of Mehmed II’s monuments. The aim was to draw attention to the Ottoman past, but the repair of the city walls and of Byzantine monuments
converted to mosques during the time of Mehmed II were also foreseen, to be financed by a separate budget. The mayor of Istanbul, Fahrettin Kerim Gökay, proclaimed that “this would show the entire world our respectful preservation of Byzantine works and, hence, our contribution to the culture and civilization of mankind.” The program was given up in 1951, allegedly due to budget constraints. But in 1950 the intellectuals of the celebration committee formed an institute, the Istanbul Felüh Cemiyeti, which still survives. Although the restoration of even the mosque of Mehmed II failed to take place, the institute issued a series of publications in time for the anniversary. The volume on the architecture of the period, Fatih Devri Mimari, was prepared by Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, another student of Kemalettin Bey and the head of the institute for thirty years, whose works on early Ottoman architecture were inspired by K. A. C. Creswell’s Early Muslim Architecture and The Muslim Architecture of Egypt. More radically Ottomanist and Islamist than Çetintaş, Ayverdi voiced reactionary sentiments against revolutionary modernization efforts, accusing early republican bureaucrats and intellectuals of outright hostility against Ottoman culture and misplaced partiality towards “even the shards of the Romans and Byzantines.”

Republican administrations neither undertook extensive repairs of Byzantine and Ottoman monuments nor embarked upon outright demolitions. They perpetuated the dilapidated condition of Istanbul as handed down from the Ottoman Empire, since ruins provided a convenient pretext for treating its architectural heritage with ambivalence. Material vestiges of the Ottoman past were proclaimed as the national patrimony of the emerging Turkish state, supporting its claims over the land. Yet this same heritage was kept at a distance, abandoned in wreckage, since it also represented a disowned past. The seemingly inert neglect and oversight generated its own powerful symbolism of demythification. Decaying Istanbul was the reminder not of the Ottoman age of splendor and magnificence but of its later period of decline, disaster, and darkness. It represented a history that haunted the present and screened from view the earlier history of glory, which, for its part, was honored in historiographic texts and immaculate drawings.

SAVING APPEARANCES: METICULOUS REPRESENTATION AND MAJESTIC DISPLAY

In this climate of submissiveness, two separate but almost simultaneous endeavors stand out. Both were directed towards documentation—one of Ottoman monuments, the other of houses. In 1932 Sedat Çetintaş was commissioned by Atatürk to prepare measured drawings of Sinan’s Şehzade Mosque for exhibition at the 1933 Chicago World’s Fair. (This echoed Ibrahim Ethem Pasha’s earlier venture for the Vienna World Exposition of 1873, which included preparation of the official volume on Ottoman architecture, the Uşûl-i Mi’mâr-i ‘Osmânî, exalting Sinan.) Concurrently, Çetintaş wrote Osmanlı Türk Mimarisi (Ottoman Turkish Architecture) for the Turkish Historical Society’s venture of compiling a new history; Arseven had undertaken its section on Turkish art. Drawing became Çetintaş’s lifetime occupation; nine exhibitions of his works were held over twenty-two years, and he published two volumes on the monuments of Bursa (fig. 22). His aim was “saving the monuments of our civilization from assaults, disguises, and destruction through ignorance, providing them with the means of scientific restoration.” Although he mentions restoration as the ultimate aim, what he produced were not working drawings of ailing buildings but rather idealized depictions of perfect monuments (fig. 23). Each drawing, in fact, had two versions: a draft of the building’s “current condition” and a meticulous rendering of its so-called original state, a timeless image that eliminated all traces of destruction and decay. According to a reviewer of one of his exhibitions, “The drawings exposed the noble past and the ignoble present state of our monuments.” Although Çetintaş worked as the first architect member of the preservation board and the chief architect of its survey office, he favored monumental and classical examples of the Ottoman heritage over “lesser” and later specimens, thereby illustrating the impact of an ideologically charged architectural historiography on the practice of preservation. He became influential in the selection of buildings to be preserved and was even instrumental in the demolition of several.

A prominent and prolific European-educated architect and a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts as well as a member of the Council for the Preservation of Monuments, Sedad Hakki Eldem described Istanbul between 1925 and 1930 as distinguished by “vacated neighborhoods, but [with] houses, mansions,
and seaside residences still standing as if living their final days.\textsuperscript{115} He made beautiful charcoal drawings and watercolor paintings of idyllic houses and exhibited them in Paris in 1928 and Berlin in 1929–30.\textsuperscript{116} These were not depictions of specific buildings but hypothetical renderings of nameless and timeless structures. They would inspire him to start a new Ottoman Revival, much as Ottoman monuments had motivated Kemalettin Bey in the 1910s. Ironically, one of Eldem’s early works, the Ahmet Ağaoğlu house (1936), was raised over the remaining ground-floor walls of a wooden mansion that had been dismantled for the construction of the new house. The discarded building’s material was reused to give the current one its “old Turkish character.”\textsuperscript{117} Coincidentally, in 1932, the same year that Çetintıaş began his career, Eldem initiated what he called “national architecture seminars” at the Academy of Fine Arts.\textsuperscript{118} His students prepared pristine representations of old and often rundown houses and mansions (fig. 24).\textsuperscript{119} These too were idealized depictions despite being called rölöve, “survey drawings.” Although a major portion of the archive was destroyed during a fire in 1948, Eldem’s sustained efforts resulted in several volumes of publications in which timber-frame houses were categorized according to plan types (fig. 25).\textsuperscript{120}

Neither Çetintıaş nor Eldem took preservation as his aim. Rather, each was aspiring to compile the necessary documents to generate his version of national architecture. In fact, it was Arseven who had initially suggested the preparation of measured drawings of important monuments in order to establish the fundamental principles of Ottoman architecture, so that it might be distinguished from Arab and Persian architecture and utilized as a source for contemporary building practice.\textsuperscript{121} Çetintıaş wanted to provide material not only for writing architectural history but also for “connecting modern Turkish architecture to its roots”;\textsuperscript{122} in his words, “The constructions of the Republic should rely on national traditions.”\textsuperscript{123} Eldem referred to a lost tradition awaiting rebirth, one that would also awaken students of architecture to “beauties other than those of the West.”\textsuperscript{124} Although both sought a national idiom for contemporary architecture, Çetintıaş’s highlighting of Ottoman classicism as the singular site of Turkish identity was a nationalist reaction to the modernist break with the Ottoman and Islamic past in the early republican period, whereas Eldem’s interest in the traditional Turkish house was a modernist appreciation of the vernacular as a timeless source of that same identity. Çetintıaş’s views were shaped by his education under Kemalettin Bey at the academy and at the Evkaf Ministry, while Eldem discovered the modern traits of the Turkish house during his stay in Europe.\textsuperscript{125} Since their ideologies and agendas were divergent, Çetintıaş could not refrain from criticizing Eldem’s efforts as futile. He wrote reviews for Eldem’s seminar exhibitions, declaring that it was impossible to achieve a national architecture based on the vernacular. In his two reviews of the 1942 exhibition, he voiced his disappointment at not finding any works of the classical period among the drawings. He denounced the “cubic architectural education” at the academy, claiming that “we impair the minds of our youth with foreign scrap,” and declaring that “in twelve years the seminar has not yielded...
any architects who appreciate and embrace national architecture.”

The refocusing of attention on the predicament of Istanbul in the 1950s coincided with the end of the revolutionary single-party regime of the Republican People’s Party and rise to power of the conservative Democrat Party. The new government called for the restitution of Istanbul to reestablish connection with the Ottoman heritage. To make its politics visible, it initiated an extensive urban development operation in 1956. In Prime Minister Adnan Menderes’s words, the time had come “to conquer Istanbul once again.” The alleged aim was to reinstate the monuments that were surrounded and obstructed by ruins—to return them to their past majesty and display them in their new contexts. Paradoxically, Istanbul was to reconnect with its past by being dramatically renewed through the construction of 50-to-60-meter-wide straight roads that cut through the historical peninsula (fig. 26). The street, conspicuously missing in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century representations of the city, was transformed into the highly prominent boulevard. As Menderes’s advisor, Hans Högg, conceded, the new scheme was nothing but a reproduction of Haussmann’s nineteenth-century model for Paris. During the overhaul, not only were the scale and texture of the traditional city irrevocably altered but countless buildings were moved to new locations, several were chopped off, some were half buried, others had their foundations exposed, and 7,289 buildings—among them mosques, masjids, baths, fountains, sebil and cemeteries—were demolished (figs. 27 and 28). When the Patriarchate protested the demolition of a church in Karaköy, the complaint was received with indignation, since forty-six mosques had already been pulled down and this was the first church to be sacrificed. Naturally, no substitute buildings were constructed to compensate for the losses, as had been the custom in Ottoman times; in any case, sanctuaries were being sacrificed to roads, not to grander places of worship.

The operation started at the city gate where Mehmed II had made his entrance to Istanbul: ironically, this symbolically loaded gate was demolished to make way for the impressive road (fig. 29). The towers flanking the road, on the other hand, were hastily repaired and reconstructed. To mask the demolitions that were “wiping the city clean of its architectural and historical character,” imperial mosques were glorified by being restored and displayed along the new avenues (figs. 30–32). Each would be viewed like a carefully framed easel painting, from vistas created along the roads and between the newly constructed buildings bordering them; the prospects created within the city would now rival the privileged panorama of Istanbul from the sea. Imar and tamir were seemingly reconciled, but effort was concentrated on the repair of building exteriors rather than on interventions that would be conducive to structural survival. “Financial, scientific, technical, and aesthetic misdeeds” in restorations of the 1950s resulted in the 1960 dismissal of...
the director-general of the Evkaf and his team. The restoration of the Süleymaniye Mosque, for example, resulted in the removal of its original timber components and damage to its exterior stone surfaces—the aim having been to scrub it clean of all accretions of age and present it as a perfect, sublime object, much like Çetintas’s timeless depictions. Likewise, faulty restorations deprived other monuments of basic maintenance but deeply abraded their stonework to expose clean surfaces. The fragmentary visual presence of imaret buildings in new urban contexts took precedence over the sustained permanence of their materiality and unity.

The use of lead in prominent monuments is a revealing indication of this change. One distinguishing sign of high status in Ottoman imarets was their lead-covered domes. Sheathing roofs with lead also ensured the buildings’ impermeability and endurance. A lead foundry conceived as part of the foundation of the Fatih complex had made this indispensable material available for later repairs, and two craftsmen responsible for the repair of lead on its domes were among its permanent staff. Over time, constant maintenance apparently waned. Kemalettin Bey had recommended the revival of the old lead foundries in the draft of his preservation resolution, prepared in 1908. In the 1930s, however, not only was lead frequently stolen from the roofs of decaying monuments, but the Evkaf started selling it off—in one case, by auction. Restorations of the 1950s frequently dispensed altogether with the use of this expensive material, substituting cement, which from a distance could not be visually distinguished from lead but which proved detrimental to the historic buildings.

The entire Byzantine heritage of Istanbul became the object of fleeting attention in the 1950s because the International Congress of Byzantine Studies would meet there in 1955. Yet again, interventions addressed appearances. Monuments that scholars would visit were hastily cleaned and patched up to avoid embarrassment. More substantial repairs would wait until subsequent years.

Broad avenues that replaced the “invisible” narrow streets of earlier times opened up the interior of the city. Ruinous monuments concealed behind the shambles and wrecks were rediscovered and reconstructed. Others, unornamented and of smaller scale, were “not considered worthy of being exhibited along asphalt roads,” and consequently were demolished. Much as imarets had been generators of urban development in the Ottoman reconstruction of Istanbul, roads gave form to the “reconquered” city. The road became the new monument (fig. 33).
CONCLUSION: CONNECTIONS AND DISCONNECTIONS

The radical redevelopment of Istanbul that administrators in the 1950s dared to undertake ultimately differentiated contemporary from traditional Istanbul. The rudimentary restoration of selected monuments, "made to sparkle like rare diamonds," merely masked the audacious demolitions. In urban topography, the asserted aim of reconnecting with the Ottoman heritage resulted in disrupting continuity with the past more drastically than ever before.

In terms of the values that guided the treatment of the built legacy, the sweeping operations of the 1950s were tied up with a definitive break with tradition that had emerged during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Incongruously, the turning point in urban development as well as preservation came about in the final years of the Ottoman Empire rather than the initial years of the Republic, when the Ottoman past was explicitly disowned. Introduced at that time were not only laws, institutions, and practices that shaped
preservation policies but also contradictory customs that would set the pattern for years to come. Above all, after the disintegration of the waqf system in 1836, the perpetuity ascribed to imaret buildings maintained by their individual waqfs gave way to the concession of their mortality. At roughly the same time, Ottoman monuments built in the past started being regarded as “antiquities”—an ambivalent label that conveyed the recognition of their obsolescence as much as the bestowal of esteem. Consequently, in the second decade of the twentieth century, Kemalettin Bey became as instrumental to demolitions as to the restoration of historic buildings, while the 1912 law for preservation provided the alibi for eradicating monuments precisely at the same time that it ordained the terms of their safeguarding. Along these lines, members of the Council for the Preservation of Monuments would concede in the 1930s that, given their desolation and redundancy, historic buildings were destined to disappear. The Evkaf administration’s policy of generat-

Fig. 30. The Valide Mosque before the overhaul. (After Cezar, Osmanlı Başkenti İstanbul, 545)

Fig. 31. Opening the road that crosses in front of the Valide Mosque. (After İstanbul’un Kitabı, 33)

Fig. 32. The Valide Mosque in its new setting. (After Cezar, Osmanlı Başkenti İstanbul, 543)
ing revenue at the expense of waqf property between 1910 and 1920 prefigured the 1930s practice of selling the remains of historic buildings, much as the prioritization of roads over monuments during the urban reforms of the Tanzimat period constituted a precedent for the Democrat Party’s overhaul of Istanbul in the 1950s.

Ironically, the architectural patrimony of the Ottomans was squandered as it was venerated. From the late nineteenth century to the 1950s, endeavors at preservation were linked with the quest to find a national idiom in architecture. The two were connected because the decline in the design quality of new buildings came to be associated with submission to Western influence and the denunciation of tradition. The course titled “Science of Antiquities” introduced into the curriculum of the Academy of Fine Arts in 1883 is emblematic of their correlation: it was foreseen as a remedy to both the deficiency in protecting the architectural heritage and the failure in creating distinguished architectural works. Hence Kemalettin Bey would call for the preservation of the monuments of national civilization in order to create a new civilization. Prominent protagonists of preservation also engaged with historic buildings in their pursuit of a national identity for contemporary architecture. A search for roots in the Ottoman past to stimulate the present permeated Arseven’s discourse and Kemalettin Bey’s efforts at the Evkaf, as well as the ventures and projects of Çetintas, Ayverdi, and Eldem, whose writings offered the classical monuments of the Ottomans and Turkish houses as alternatives to Western models. With these buildings given such an abstract, inspirational role, their materiality was quite readily relinquished; their immortality was sought in the drawings that documented them—idealized images, meticulously drawn on paper and published in architectural history texts. Çetintas’ first volume of Türk Mimari Anıtları (Turkish Architectural Monuments), published in 1946, would be introduced as a work that bestowed “immortality to our monuments.”151 The images of monuments in their perfected form covered up their actual wretched state in the 1930s. On the other hand, the superficial restorations and reconstructions of the 1950s simulated the idealized drawings by treating monuments as views and displaying them like framed paintings.

During the 1930s, at the height of the revolutionary zeal for nation building, Istanbul was ignored as the ruinous site of the abandoned Ottoman and Islamic past, while Ankara was prioritized as the modern and secular site of the emerging nation-state. Istanbul’s dilapidation, inherited from the Empire, was sustained for decades, its decadence conveniently serving as a foil for modern and pristine Ankara. While material vestiges of the Ottoman past waned in the historical center of Istanbul, its masterpieces epitomized by Sinan’s works were exalted in the discourse of the nation-builders as signifiers of Turkish identity and creativity. They simultaneously dissociated the new, modern nation-state from its predecessor, the diseased Ottoman Empire of the recent past, and took pride in the remote heroic age of that empire. The 1950s return to Istanbul signified an end to the role of the city as the site of abandoned history. Urban renewal prioritized the modernization of old Istanbul, the cursory restoration of its monuments serving merely to adorn drastically altered inner-city spaces.

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NOTES

Author’s note: Some of the data used in this paper, including references to the daily newspaper Çümbüşyet, are taken from my dis-
sertation, “Tarihsel Çevreyi Korumanın Türkiye’ye Özugü” Köşulları, Istanbul 1923–1973” (Circumstances Specific to Turkey in the Conservation of the Historical Environment, Istanbul 1923–1973), completed in 1998 at Istanbul Technical University. The framework for this paper is partially the result of research conducted at Harvard University in the summer of 2000 with a post-doctoral fellowship from the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture.


2. For instance, three Friday mosques built by Sinan supplanted even the main street, Mese/Divanyolu, is merely suggested by the symmetrical alignment of monuments along an invisible course, rather than specified as a visible path. She also points to a “symbolic tension between the viewing place along the Golden Horn and the inner city space.” Höffet Orbay, "Istanbul Viewed,” International Journal of Middle East Studies 10, 2 (May 1979): 266, 276.


6. Osman Ergin, a historian of the city and its administration, refers to the Faith and Suleymaniye complexes as “each a flourishing monument, like a citadel amidst low wooden buildings,” and to imams in general as “each a product of prosperity, of civilization among runnign buildings of cities.” Osman Ergin, Türkiye’de Şehirciliğin Tarihsî İncesi (Istanbul: Istanbul Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi, 1956), 37, 38.


9. The word “waqf” derives from the Arabic verb asqaqaq, “to stop, to stand still,” as noted by Nazif Öztürk, "Turkish History after the Ottoman Empire” (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), 57, 58, 118.

10. Mehmed II granted invaluable property to its pious foundation: "each a surviving custom. In 1931 Eldem wrote to a "symbolic tension between the viewing place along the Golden Horn and the inner city space." Höffet Orbay, "Istanbul Viewed,” International Journal of Middle East Studies 10, 2 (May 1979): 266, 276.


12. For instance, three Friday mosques built by Sinan supplanted even the main street, Mese/Divanyolu, is merely suggested by the symmetrical alignment of monuments along an invisible course, rather than specified as a visible path. She also points to a “symbolic tension between the viewing place along the Golden Horn and the inner city space.” Höffet Orbay, "Istanbul Viewed,” International Journal of Middle East Studies 10, 2 (May 1979): 266, 276.


15. Masjids were evenly spaced at about 150–200 meters from each other, and permission for the performance in them of Friday prayers was granted by the sultan according to the population served: Necipoğlu, Age of Sinan, 47–50.


17. Cited in Necipoğlu, Age of Sinan, 110.

18. Orbay draws attention to the conspicuous absence of streets on maps of the city, and writes, "even the main street, Mese/Divanyolu, is merely suggested by the symmetrical alignment of monuments along an invisible course, rather than specified as a visible path. She also points to a “symbolic tension between the viewing place along the Golden Horn and the inner city space.” Höffet Orbay, "Istanbul Viewed,” International Journal of Middle East Studies 10, 2 (May 1979): 266, 276.


25. Ibid.


27. Fires were viewed ambivalently. Apparently destructive, they were also considered opportunities for opening up the stifling city. For instance, Osman Nuri Ergin claimed in 1914 that the Hocapasa fire (harkâs kehâr of 1865) brought more gratification than grief to Istanbul: Mecelle 5, 1222. The prom-inent poet Ahmet Hasım would voice similar sentiments in a newspaper article published in 1928: "The inhabitants of Istanbul should feel gratitude for fires that accomplish the duties of the municipality.” Ahmet Hasım, "Yeni Mimari,” in Bize Görsü, Gurbahane-i Laklakan, Frankfurt Seyahatnamesi (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basmevi, 1969): 26–27.

28. Writer Falih Rıfkı refers to pre-1908 Istanbul as follows: “… with the downfall of the inhabitants of Istanbul, old mansions
also fell, to be replaced by small, ramshackle houses—their furnishings barely filling two horse-carts—this Istanbul would also disappear in 60 years’ time.” Faith Rifki Atay, Battı Yıldızlar (Istanbul: Batek, 1999), 13. The mansion burned or torn down is repeatedly used as a metaphor for the diminishing empire in Turkish novels from the late nineteenth century on: see Nur Güranli-Arslan, “Kaybolan Konuşt’un İzinde,” in 75 Yılda Doğmuş Kent ve Mimari, ed. Y. Sey (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası ve Tarih Vakfı, 1998), 325–42.

Eyice recounts that the city recovered within a couple of months after each disaster due to the facility of timber construction with the help of workers brought in from Rumelia and Anatolia. Eyice, “Tarih İçinde İstanbul,” 118–19.


33. Mustafa Cezar,...


36. The mosques of Sultan Ahmed, Fatih, and Yeni Cami, and also the Hagia Sophia, the repair of which he undertook once more after his reappointment in 1925: Yıldırım Yavuz, Mimar Kemalettin ve Birinci Ulusal Mimarlaklı Dönem (Ankara: ODTÜ, 1981), 16.


39. İnci Aslanoğlu, “Birinci ve İkinci Milli Mimarlaklı Akımları Üzerine Dişincteler,” in Mimarlar Türk Milli İlahı İlahı Seklini (İstanbul: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 1984), 41.

40. Çetin, “Mimar Kemalettin,” 165.

41. The restructuring in 1909 had been conducted by Hammade Pasha. Hayri Efendi (1910–16) and Sait Pasha (1911), his successors, reoriented the ministry’s activities. See Yavuz, Mimar Kemalettin, 16. In 1909, the state owed the waqf system 1,757,602 kurus: Gızakça, History of Philanthropic Foundations, 84. This is an indication of the failure to reform the waqf system through centralization and, possibly, a reason for seeking to generate funds for it.

42. Yavuz, Mimar Kemalettin, 147–48.

43. Ergin, Türkiye’de Şehircilik Tarihi İnkılapı, 62–69, and Yavuz, Mimar Kemalettin, 173, 227. The new public kitchen bears an inscription with the date of both the original and the substitute, 1780 and 1917.

44. Other replacements were his Harikzedegan Apartments for fire victims, constructed in the place of the decaying Laleli比起, the covered bazaar, as a means of nationalist expression, divesting objects of their religious value at home and resisting European cultural supremacy abroad: Wendy M. K. Shaw, Possessors and Possessed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 299–11. But given the 1912 law, creating a place to keep prized possessions and components of razed waqf buildings had probably been an exigency.

45. It was Kemalettin Bey who prepared a report in 1908 directed towards the creation of a new department at the ministry. He called for constant maintenance (nezaret-i mütemadiye) and extensive repair (tımarıvı evesesi), or as with other illegal buildings, or as with the superiors of monuments of Islam. See his “İsken Hanımın Yımlarının Sureti-i İrzası Hakında Mimar Kemalettin Beyefendi Taraftanın Nezaretete Takdim Olunan Dava,” in Mimar Kemalettin’in Yıllarında, ed. İlhan Tekeli ve Selim İkkin (Ankara: Şevki Vural Miraklar Vakfı, 1997), 89–92.

46. The mosques of Sultan Ahmed, Fatih, and Yeni Cami, and also the Hagia Sophia, the repair of which he undertook once more after his reappointment in 1925: Yıldırım Yavuz, Mimar Kemalettin ve Birinci Ulusal Mimarlaklı Dönem (Ankara: ODTÜ, 1981), 16.


49. İnci Aslanoğlu, “Birinci ve İkinci Milli Mimarlaklı Akımları Üzerine Dişincteler,” in Mimarlar Türk Milli İlahı İlahı Seklini (İstanbul: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 1984), 41.


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55. “İmara Belde Fikrinin Yanlış Tatbikinden Mütevellid Tahribat”...
56. Ebü’l Fadl Mahmuf Efendi Madrasa, built before 1648, had been damaged during the 1894 earthquake, partially demolished for the tramway between Şehzadebaşi and Edirnekapı, and listed in 1914 as too ruinous to be conserved.


58. He also announced that if demolishers were to prevail, only the iron rails of trams bought from European factories would be left to bequeath to future generations: “Eski İstanbul” (1913), and “Mektuplar ve Ceşaplarımı” (1913), in Tekeli and Ilin, Mimar Kemalettin’in Y aztıkları, 114 and 111.


60. The Gayrımékmenlik Eski Eserler ve Anıtlar Yüksek Kurulu, or Superior Council of Monuments, replaced it, headed by Celâl Esad Arseven until 1953.


64. Kemalettin Bey mentioned some details of the repair in a letter to his wife dated to September 10, 1926: Yavuz, Mimar Kemalettin, 16, 75; also, Kemal Altan, “Aya sofya Etrafinde Türk San’at Ejler,” Arkiv 9 (1955): 264–65. The crack in Hagia Sophia’s dome was considered significant enough to be discussed at a session of the Council of Ministers: Cumhuriyet, May 12, 1925. Lead placed on its dome during repairs constituted a major portion of the Evkaf’s budget in these years: the Evkaf’i, Sept. 4, 1926, and Jan. 30, 1928.

65. Again, lead on its dome was renewed: Cumhuriyet, Nov. 18, 1929.

66. By 1927 the population, which had reached 1,150,000 at the beginning of the twentieth century, had fallen to 690,857. The decline was more acutely felt in the historic peninsula, since its neighborhoods were no longer in demand. See Tekeli, Development, 50.


68. Halil Ethem, “Abide lerimiz Hali,” in Maarif Vekâleti, Cumhuriyet, II, 114 and 111.

69. The municipality, on its part, sold abandoned cemeteries, metruk mezarlıklar, apparently not counting the dead as inhabitants: Cumhuriyet, Sept. 3, 1931. It announced that it would pull down derelict houses and finance the venture by selling their wreckage: Cumhuriyet, May 11, 1935.

70. Halil Ethem, Camülerimiz, 11.

71. Cumhuriyet, May 17, 1930.


74. Halil Edhem, “Müzeler,” in Maarif Vekâleti, Tarihi Abide ve Eserlerimiz Koruma Komisyonu Mecburusu (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1933), 5.

75. metruk kılınma mahküm olunacaktır: Halil Ethem, Camülerimiz, Topkapı Sarayı (İstanbul: Kanaat Kitaphanesi, 1932), 11.


77. A regulation was issued in 1932 and a law in 1935 for the classification of mosques and masjids and the sale of those unclassified. The reasoning behind this was either that unclassified mosques and masjids no longer had congregations and had ma-nur counterparts nearby, or that they were in a state of ruin or such condition that they might be given up for future roads. Three hundred eighty-six waqf buildings were sold in Istanbul alone, the sales peaking in 1938: Nazif Öztürk, Türk Yenileşme Tarifi Çerçevesinde Vakıf Mülkiyetleri (Ankara: Türk Diyanet Vakfı), 473–93.

78. The municipality, on its part, sold abandoned cemeteries, metruk mezarlıklar, apparently not counting the dead as inhabitants: Cumhuriyet, Sept. 3, 1931. It announced that it would pull down derelict houses and finance the venture by selling their wreckage: Cumhuriyet, May 11, 1935.

79. Halil Ethem, Camülerimiz, 11.

80. Halil Ethem, “Abide lerimiz Hali,” in Maarif Vekâleti, Tarihi Abide ve Eserlerimiz Koruma Komisyonu Mecburusu (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1933), 5.

81. metruk kılınma mahküm olunacaktır: Halil Ethem, Camülerimiz, Topkapı Sarayı (İstanbul: Kanaat Kitaphanesi, 1932), 11.


84. Halil Edhem, “Müzeler,” in Maarif Vekâleti, Tarihi Abide ve Eserlerimiz Koruma Komisyonu Mecburusu (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1933), 5.

85. metruk kılınma mahküm olunacaktır: Halil Ethem, Camülerimiz, Topkapı Sarayı (İstanbul: Kanaat Kitaphanesi, 1932), 11.


87. Halil Ethem, “Müzeler,” in Maarif Vekâleti, Tarihi Abide ve Eserlerimiz Koruma Komisyonu Mecburusu (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1933), 5.

88. K ütür Bakanlæ, “Abide lerimiz Hali,” in Maarif Vekâleti, Tarihi Abide ve Eserlerimiz Koruma Komisyonu Mecburusu (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1933), 5.

89. Halil Edhem, “Müzeler,” in Maarif Vekâleti, Tarihi Abide ve Eserlerimiz Koruma Komisyonu Mecburusu (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1933), 5.

90. Halil Ethem, “Müzeler,” in Maarif Vekâleti, Tarihi Abide ve Eserlerimiz Koruma Komisyonu Mecburusu (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1933), 5.

91. Halil Ethem, “Müzeler,” in Maarif Vekâleti, Tarihi Abide ve Eserlerimiz Koruma Komisyonu Mecburusu (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1933), 5.

92. Halil Ethem, “Müzeler,” in Maarif Vekâleti, Tarihi Abide ve Eserlerimiz Koruma Komisyonu Mecburusu (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1933), 5.
the Building Law of 1956 would also not only allow but oblige municipalities to demolish such buildings. The Superior Council would issue decisions in 1956, 1958, and 1970 to keep historic buildings from being subjected to this article: Feridun Akçar, Türkiye’de Tarihi Anıtlar Koruma Teklifleri ve Kanunları (İstanbul: Devlet Gazetleri Sanatlar Akademisi, 1977), 42–43. The demolitions of 1956–60 in Istanbul would be legitimized with this article, as noted by Behçet Unsal, “İstanbul’un İmâni ve Eski Eser Kaybı,” in Türk Sanat Tarihi Anıtları ve İnceleneler II (İstanbul: Millî Egitim Basmevi, 1969), 6–61.

91. Cumhuriyet, Feb. 6, 1935.
92. The 1927 census recorded 50,965 vacant plots, 685 vegetable gardens, and 949 gardens: Tekeli,Development, 52. Fifty thousand grapevines and ten thousand saplings were distributed to the populace in 1935 for the creation of vineyards and orchards in empty plots: Cumhuriyet, April 25, 1935. Building lots in fire areas were left unclaimed because they were in plentiful supply and not in demand—therefore, quite worthless. Their owners abandoned them to avoid taxation: Cumhuriyet, April 13, 1934. In 1956, the editorial of Cumhuriyet dwelled on the same issue: “While lettuce is being grown on land within the city, houses are being constructed way out in the outskirts”: Cumhuriyet, April 22, 1950.
93. Maarif Vekaleti, Tarihî Abide, 21; Cumhuriyet, Apr. 4, 1934, and Oct. 8, 1935.
94. Cited in Madran, “Cumhuriyet’in İlk Otuz Yılda,” 74. In 1943, the minister of education, Hasan Ali Yücel, conceded the confusion over identity: “All antiquities, whether bequeathed to us from our ancestors or from people whose ancestry is still uncertain, are worthy of our care as our indisputable patrimony.” See the preface to Ülgen, Anıtların Korunması, xiii.
95. Kültür Bakanlığı, Anıtlar Koruma, 17. Ark would voice similar sentiments in 1953, citing “monuments over this land to be utilized as title deeds of the nation”: Remzi Oğuz Ark, Türk Müzeciliğine Bir Bakış (İstanbul: Millî Egitim Basmevi, 1953), 36.
97. Cumhuriyet, July 11, 1932. When their restoration was finally decided in 1956, its cost aroused concern: Cumhuriyet, Feb. 1, 1936.
100. Such criticism was also based on Prost’s long allegiance to the Byzantine heritage of the city, which had begun when, as a scholar at the Academy of Rome, he had come to Istanbul in 1904–7 to study the Hagia Sophia. At the time, he had found the edifice in a lamentable state. See Aron Angel, “Henri Prost ve İstanbul’un İlk Nazım Planı,” Mimari 222 (1987): 35. Prost aimed to clear the environs of monuments and also to preserve the precious silhouette of the city by limiting to three stories the height of buildings to be constructed on land with an elevation above 40 meters—a measure that proved to be particularly effective for its preservation. Yada Akpınar interprets Prost’s public spaces around monuments as a return to the pre-Ottoman, Greco-Roman tradition and as a quest to open up the introverted neigh-

107. Ekrem Hakki Ayverdi, Makaleler (İstanbul: İstanbul Fethi Cemiyeti, 1985), 488.
108. Ibid., 408.
110. The minister of education Hasan Ali Yücel described Çetintas’s forthcoming books as “a corpus of Turkish architecture” and referred to his drawings as attempts to capture the original state of monuments that had been lost through centuries of misuse: see the preface to Ülgen, Anıtların Korunması, xv.
111. Ödekan, Yazzalar, 48. The exhibitions were held in Istanbul, Ankara, and Bursa, and in Paris.
112. Ödekan, who compiled his drawings and writings in two volumes, interprets them as “not technical drawings but attempts to nostalgically raise the fallen remains of a glorious age since lost.” Yazzalar, 59.
113. sosyal müzeciyle freskli kleinen: Cumhuriyet, Sept. 25, 1951.
114. In its report pertaining to the years 1940–41, the Council for the Preservation of Monuments criticized Çetintas’s deviation from objectivity in listing historic buildings because thirty buildings in the Süleymaniye neighborhood had been omitted, a condition that could have been conducive to their demolition: cited in Madran, “Cumhuriyet’in İlk Otuz Yılda,” 81. Ünsal noted, “He valued mosques and grand buildings, not really hans and mansions; he considered sobîs as Baroque, shoddy structures”: “Behçet Ünsal ile Çetintas Üzerine,” 110. Çetintas regarded any building constructed after the eighteenth century as worthless. For instance, he campaigned to have the Beyazid Bath and the Archaeological Museum pulled down but to save the Ibrahim Pasha Palace from demolition: Ödekan, Yazzalar, 49.
116. Sibel Bozhoğan, Suha Özkan, and Engin Yenal, Sedad Eldem: Architekt in Turkey (İstanbul: Literatur, 2005), 26–33. Eldem’s “Boğazçıkta Bir Yahir” about a seaside mansion on the Bosporus, includes measured drawings but specifies neither
the name nor the location of the building, “a representative example of the centralized plan type”: 106, 110.


119. One of his former students, Asım Mutlu, reminded that Eldem would urgently send them to houses about to be pulled down and added that he does not recall any initiative to save the buildings or to protest their demolition. Eradication of traditional buildings seemed to be considered natural. Asım Mutlu, “Asım Mutlu,” in Avchılda Mimarluk (İstanbul: YEM, 1995), 54.

120. Sedad H. Eldem, Türk Evi Plan Tipleri (İstanbul: İTÜ, 1968) and idem, Turkish Houses.


124. Eldem, Türk Evı Plan Tipleri, 12.


128. At this point, in 1950, Istanbul’s population had reached 983,000, with more refugees arriving in the following years: Rüyın Y. Keleș, “Şehr İstatistikleri,” 1966, 7.

129. Çumhuriyet, Feb. 27, 1957.

130. Çumhuriyet, Sept. 24, 1956. The sum set aside for the Evkaf to repair major monuments amounted to a mere 2.6% of the supplementary budget allotted for the redevelopment of Istanbul in 1957 (3 million out of 115.6 million liras): Çumhuriyet, Sept. 8, 1957.

131. This operation was equated with disasters in both its implementation and its consequences: “Istanbul acquired the appearance of a city that had been bombed” after “the devastating assault that struck it like lightning”: Zeki Sayar, “Imar ve Eski Eseler,” Arkıtuct 2 (1957): 49; “İstanbul’un İmarında Şehirci Mimarım Rolu,” Arkıtuct 5–4 (1956): 97. “Urban development operation like an earthquake in Istanbul”: Çumhuriyet 75 Yılı, vol. 2 (İstanbul: YKY, 1998), 408. “… What the explosives of wartime combatants had done in malice for
147. Cahide Tamer, Sultan Selim Medresesi Restorasyonu (İstanbul: TTO, 2002), 7.
149. Menderes had visited Tehran in April 1956 and was impressed by the new boulevards opened there: Burak Boyan, “Poli
tik Hummanın Silinmeyen İzleri,” İstanbul 4 (1995): 85, and Cumhuriyetin 75 Yıllı, 408. However, equating the modernizing of the city with the opening of roads is a legacy of nineteenth-century Tanzimat reformers.
150. İstanbul’un Kitabı (İstanbul: İstanbul Vilayeti, 1957[?]), 7.