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A MODERNIZATION UTOPIA: GALATA AND PERA DURING THE LATE OTTOMAN ERA

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Abstract

Following the Ottoman conquest in 1453, *Intra Muros* Stamboul was adorned with edifices reflecting Ottoman monumental and vernacular architecture. With all the Muslim influence dominating the Historic Peninsula, a different story was taking place just across the Golden Horn. The autonomous Genoese city, Galata, and its extension Pera continued housing Levantine, European, and non-Muslim populations. By the 19th century, due to its cosmopolitan population, architectural fabric, and urban layout, this area has developed into a "typical" European city and accepted as the "modern" face of the Ottoman capital. This paper develops an understanding of the "modernization utopia" of the Ottomans and focuses on the urban implications of this utopia in Galata and Pera. This paper offers a critical, yet, theoretical framework for reading architectural and urban transformations that took place in Beyoğlu, beginning with the declaration of Tanzimat until the Young Turk revolution. The article also discusses the first municipal body that was established at Galata and Pera and presents some of the projects conducted by the Sixth District in urban scale as modernization interventions.

Keywords: Galata, Pera, Modernization Utopia, Sixth District, Urban Transformation.

BİR MODERNLEŞME ÜTOPYASI: GEÇ OSMANLI DÖNEMİNDE GALATA VE PERA

Öz

Osmanlı fethinden sonra Suriçi İstanbul hızla dönüşmüş ve klasik Osmanlı mimari eserleriyle donatılmış olsa da, Haliç'in karşı yakasında yer alan Galata ve uzantısı olan Pera'da farklı bir hikaye süregelmiştir. Ceneviz döneminden itibaren otonom bir statüye sahip olan bu bölge, gayri-Müslim yoğunluklu bir nüfus barındırmaya devam etmiş, özellikler yabancı elçiliklerin kurulması ile Avrupalı ve Levanten nüfus için bir çekim alanı haline gelmiştir. 19. yüzyıla gelindiğinde ise bölge, kozmopolit yapısı, mimari dokusu ve kentsel yerleşimi ile "tipik" bir Avrupa kenti görünümüne bürünmüş, Osmanlı başkentinin "modern" yüzünü temsil etmeye başlamıştır. Bu makale 19. yüzyılda Osmanlı "modernleşme ütopyası"nın kentsel alandaki etkilerini incelemektedir. Dolayısıyla Tanzimat'ın ilanından Jön Türk devrimine kadar olan süreçte, Galata ve Pera'nın kentsel ve mimari dönüşümü modernleşme penceresinden değerlendirilmektedir. Bu bağlamda, Altıncı Daire'nin kurulması, ilk belediyeçilik hizmetleri ve tarihi Galata surlarının yıkılması gibi örnekler, kentsel modernleşme bağlamında incelenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Galata, Pera, Modernleşme Ütopyası, Altıncı Daire, Kentsel Dönüşüm

1. INTRODUCTION

The urban fabric can be described by using the ecosystem, a coherent unity constituted around one or several cities, old and recent. Such a description may lose what is essential. Indeed the significance of urban fabric is not limited to its morphology. It is the support of a more or less degraded, 'way of life': *urban society*. On the economic base of the urban fabric appear phenomena of another order, that of social and 'cultural' life (Lefebvre, 2000, 72).

A city is composed of a complex stratum and integrated web of practices. The spatial character of a place, informs us about its history, culture, and nature while deciphering the economical, political and social characteristics of its inhabitants. Obviously, the opposite is also valid: a place gains character with all the culture that was produced, that is being produced, and that will be produced by the urban society. However, culture is not something solid to be seen, or static to be read, or something frozen to be defined. It is a dynamic and always changing and interconnecting web of structures, traditions, beliefs, and relations that surrounds the individual, influencing the perceptions, actions and reactions of the society. Culture can be defined as a dynamic human production of difference and variety; and it is the non-reducible multiplicity of this production (Tanju, 2007). Cities, then, can be defined as the cross-sections of intersecting cultures. The city, by its nature, becomes the meeting point and stratification of different cultures, traditions, customs, and societies. When an urban entity is considered, instead of focusing on an isolated layer, the ever changing/evolving character of the city needs to be considered. All cultural practices are either closely or loosely connected and related with one and other in a given time and/or space, forming a complex network of socio-cultural relations and interactions.

Istanbul, as the capital of the Ottoman Empire since the 15th century, reflects the centralized power and political authority of the Ottoman court. However, due to its multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and heterogeneous social structure, complex historical strata, and its diverse population, the definition and conceptualization of the imperial capital is away from its rather homogeneous counterparts. This study focuses on a specific part of Istanbul at a specific time period to explore the unavoidable tension between the past and the present, tradition and modernization, continuity and change. Being one of the major capitals of the Orthodox Christian world for many centuries, Constantinople has finally transformed into the very center of the Muslim world with the Ottoman conquest in 1453. Starting with Mehmed II, Ottoman emperors have (re)constructed the city to reflect their imperial powers and to reclaim the city as an Islamic capital. With all the Ottoman monumental and vernacular architecture dominating the *Intra Muros* city of Stanboul, a different story was taking place just across the Golden Horn. Galata and its extension Pera -meaning 'the other side' in Greek- continued housing a dense non-Muslim population.

Located in between the Northern shore of the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus, Galata had a different architectural, social, economical, and physical character than the Historic Peninsula. Galata has always had a special and autonomous status, since the Genoese settlement in the 10th century (Eyice, 2006). The Genoese colony -dominating and controlling the overseas trade- settled down just across from Constantinople, on the district that was called the 'Pera', meaning the other side in Greek (Eyice, 2006).

Through the end of the Middle Ages, Galata ports were among the most important centers of Eastern Mediterranean trade (Akin, 1998).

At the beginning of the 15th century, Italians were well aware of the inevitable expansion of the Turks. The Ottoman dream for invading Istanbul was about to realize and the Genoese were furtively supporting the Turks against Byzantines (Akin, 1998). Finally, in 1453 Mehmed II the Conqueror captured Constantinople. It was not just a city that the sultan invaded, but the very center of Orthodox Christianity, an empire that was the successor of ancient Rome, the Eastern frontier of Western civilization, and a vital hub for Mediterranean commerce. The deep impacts of this incident on the Ottoman, Turkish and World history have been studied in detail, however this article focuses on the course of developments within Galata and Pera after this great shift of power. Under Ottoman control, Galata continued keeping its autonomous character with a governor referred to as *Voyvoda* and several Greek, Jewish, and Turkish neighborhoods were created around the area to balance the Italian dominancy in the area (Çelik, 1993).

Between the 15th and 18th centuries, Galata remained as an important trade center and an international harbor of Ottoman the capital. For several centuries, Ottoman vernacular architecture dominated the urban landscape of the area, creating a somewhat homogeneous residential fabric (Tanyeli). The face of Galata and Pera has started changing with the establishment of the first foreign embassy in 1535 by France, probably due to the increased trade between France and Ottomans following the capitulations granted.¹ During the 16th and 17th centuries, English, Venetian, Dutch, Polish, and Danish embassies were also established in the area. In fact, foreign embassies, were refrained from *Intra Muros* city of Stamboul (Çelik, 1993). Hence, a considerable number of Europeans, Levantines², and non-Muslim Ottomans started residing in Pera, accumulated around their embassies (İnalçık, 1993-94). Thus, the face of Galata and Pera started changing by the 18th century; and during the course of the 19th century, the district faced a rapid urban transformation (Figure 1). Actually by the end of the 19th century, this area has developed into a 'typical' European city with its dominant Levantine, European, and non-Muslim population and Western social, cultural, urban, and architectural fabric.

2. TWO SHORES OF THE GOLDEN HORN

Wooden houses with large spread-out roofs warm their purple colors amidst fresh greenery and within enclosures whose mystery delights me; although they group themselves quite harmoniously around all these summits formed by really enormous mosques, a poisoned atmosphere hangs over Pera, under an unrelenting light (Le Corbusier, 1911, 92).

Le Corbusier, during his *Journey to the East* in 1911, visited Constantinople and admired the harmonious and mysterious urban fabric of the Historic Peninsula. However, his depiction of Pera as "poisonous" reflected the Orientalist anticipations of this renowned architect and his disdain for the mimicry of European architecture and city form (Figure 2). In fact, after the second quarter of the 19th century, there appeared a profound gap between the two shores of the Golden Horn. The "oriental and traditional" Stamboul, with

¹ Capitulation: Special economic rights and tax benefits for foreign traders.

² Levantine: Otoman citizens of European origin.

its impressive monuments and modest residential fabric lay against the “Europeanized” Galata and Pera with its masonry apartments, narrow streets and dense layout (Girardelli, 2007). Against all the physical, social, economic, and urban distinction between Galata and Stamboul, neither in Stamboul nor in Galata there was an obvious architectural distinction among Turkish, Jewish, Christian, or Muslim houses (Barata, 1840; Cerasi, 1998). The main distinction in the Ottoman capital emerged between the local residents of the city and its newcomers, especially from Europe.

19th century was defined as a period of decline for the Ottoman Empire, which was then called the “sick man of Europe” (İnalçık & Quataert, 2004). Starting with the 19th century, Empire’s ruling elite reluctantly accepted the superiority of European powers and desperately tried to close the military, technological, and intellectual gap between them. Along with consecutive reforms, many European architects, scholars, military commanders, and technicians were invited to “modernize” Ottoman military practices and educational, cultural, and architectural institutions. Nevertheless, modernization of institutions or practices was not sufficient, as the distinction between the East and the West was deeper than Ottoman elites presumed it was. Despite the Ottoman elite’s attempts for a rather ‘immanent modernity’ at the beginning of the 18th century during the Tulip Age, those efforts for modernity came to an end in 1730 with the Patrona Halil uprising, which clearly proves the severe public resistance against ‘change’ (Salzmann, 2000). The resistance against change rooted in the diverse epistemological understandings of the Eastern and Western contexts. According to the cultural theory of modernity, “progress” occurs in “traditional” societies through modernization as a culture-neutral process (Taylor, 2001). In this case, all cultural and historic contexts are believed to unfold and institutions, practices and the society would transform into a single layered, homogeneous state of modernity.

The Anglo-Turkish Convention of 1838 was a manifestation of economic and political superiority of European powers over the Ottoman Empire. According to this treaty, the Ottoman Empire will allow British merchants and their collaborators to have full access to all Ottoman markets, abolishing all monopolies and will provide tax exemptions. It was also an attempt of Ottomans for becoming a part of the European league and foreign capital flow officially commenced in the empire, which declare economical and political dominance of European powers over the “sick man of Europe” (Çelik, 1993). The declaration of *Tanzimat* reforms in 1839 provided great rights and benefits especially for Europeans and also for non-Muslim minorities. With this treaty, European model was appropriated and applied to all institutions from military to education, from bureaucracy to judiciary. In 1855, the Ottoman Empire was provided foreign loans for the first time in its history to finance the Crimean war (Çulcu, 2006). This was apparently an economic intervention and within a short time period, a significant number of European merchants, traders and bankers settled down in Istanbul, around Pera close to their embassies. Between 1840 and 1900, approximately 100,000 non-Muslim newcomers settled down in Galata and Pera (Shaw & Shaw, 2002).

During the 19th century, Galata and Stamboul regions had considerably diverse social, physical, and cultural structure and strata. While *Intra Muros* city of Stamboul maintained a more traditional structure, in terms of buildings and social institutions; Galata and Pera faced a significant transformation and according growth. As shown in the 1840 S.D.U.K. Map of Constantinople (Figure 3), Stamboul did not grow much beyond the traditional Byzantine city-walls. However, Galata faced an incredible population increase and

the city extended beyond the city-walls in three different directions, from Taksim to Şişli, from Tophane to Dolmabahçe, and from Beşiktaş to Teşvikiye and Nişantaşı (Çelik, 1993). The traditional population rate of 60% Muslim and 40% non-Muslim in Istanbul has changed during the 19th century and reached a reverse rate of 40% Muslim and 60% non-Muslim by the end of the century (Girardelli, 2007). The reason for this demographic shift, despite the heavy Muslim migration from the Balkans to Istanbul, was the settlement of Europeans to the area due to the legal rights and economic benefits ensured with the capitulations and *Tanzimat* reforms (Çelik, 1993).

The urban fabric of Galata and Pera was away from harmony and unity by the beginning of the 19th century. The crowded, dirty and narrow streets were packed with a mix of masonry apartments, single-family residences, timber houses, shops and ateliers inside the city-walls (Akin, 1998). The uncanny places located around the ports of Galata housed bars, taverns, brothels, pawnbrokers. The disorganized pattern of the streets and dense building pattern -interrupted sometimes with an embassy complex, a medium sized church, an Armenian school, a Jewish Synagogue or a large scale commercial building- formed a complex web of urban functions. The diverse crowd accumulated towards the Galata Bridge, which dominated the trade axis between the two shores of Golden Horn. Famous Italian writer Edmondo De Amicis described the cosmopolitan multiplicity of the Galata Bridge by these words: "Standing there, you can see all Constantinople pass by in the course of an hour.... Try to imagine the most extravagant contrasts of costume, every variety of type and social class, and your wildest dreams will fall short of the reality; in the course of ten minutes, and in the space of a few feet, you will have seen a mixture of race and dress you never conceived before." (Amicis, 1896, 45-46). In fact, it was the modernization ideal of Ottoman elites to establish "order" within the city and to develop the area with modern infrastructure, transportation, and municipal services.

3. THE MODERNIZATION UTOPIA

Utopias are emplacements having no real place. They are emplacements that maintain a general relation of direct or inverse analogy with the real space of society. They are society perfected or the reverse of society, but in any case these utopias are spaces that are fundamentally and essentially unreal (Foucault, 2000).

According to Foucault (2000) utopia is closely related with the society that it belongs, referencing to what it lacks. The desire for a perfected society is basically the reverse of that particular society, a society that hopes to be something else, something idealized, and of course something un-real and non-existing. A utopia cannot be understood as a willingness of a particular society to become another actual society. On the contrary, a utopia should have its roots deep inside the society itself, trying to transform a society into what it lacks. 'Modernization utopia' in the Ottoman case, shall not be interpreted as an Ottoman aspiration for becoming inherently European, but rather, a reluctant desire for change.

There are many underlying reasons for the 'modernization utopia' of the Ottoman emulating the West. One of the main factors is the problematic understanding and definition of modernity. The utopia dreams of absorbing everything positive about the Western society and excluding all the defects of its inner dynamics.

According to Charles Taylor, there are two main theories of modernity, *cultural* theory of modernity and *acultural* theory of modernity (Taylor, 2001). *Cultural* theory describes modernity as a transformation that took place in a specific culture, namely in Western culture. According to this theory, modernization is related with social context and culture. According to the *acultural* theory, modernity is taken as a set of rules and transformations, which are applicable to any culture. The general understanding of modernity falls under the second theory. Not surprisingly, Ottomans Westernization and modernization utopia was not an exception, as their understanding of modernization counterpart with Taylor's description of *acultural* theory: "The belief that modernity comes from a single, universally applicable operation imposes a falsely uniform pattern on the multiple encounters of non-Western cultures with the exigencies of science, technology, and industrialization. As long as we are bemused by the "enlightenment package, we will believe that all cultures have to undergo a range of cultural changes. (...) As they lose their traditional illusions, they will come together on the "rationally grounded" outlook, which has resisted the challenge. The march of modernity will end up making all cultures look the same. This means of course, that we expect they will end up looking Western." (Taylor, 2001).

4. REORDER & CORRECTION (TANZIMAT & ISLAHAT)

With reference to the other points, as they must be regulated the concurrence of enlightened opinions, our Council of Justice (augmented by as many new members as may deemed necessary), to whom will be adjoined, on certain days which we shall appoint our Ministers and the Notables of the Empire, will meet for the purpose of establishing the fundamental laws on those points relating to the security of life and property, and the imposition of the taxes. Every one in these assemblies will state his ideas freely, and give his advice freely (Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu, 1839).

Tanzimat-ı Hayriye or "Auspicious Reorderings", a set of administrative reforms declared in 1839, were acclaimed by the majority of the Ottomans with the desire for "order" and "correction" (Shaw & Shaw, 2002). The charter, giving equal rights to all Muslim and non-Muslim citizens and secure their basic rights, was accepted as a major step towards the modernization utopia (İnalçık & Quaraert, 2004). With the support of Western nations, the Ottoman government aimed at reforming state institutions, replacing the traditional ones with modern institutions imported from the West (Shaw & Shaw, 2002). The results of this regularization were much different from its initial goal. The charter created a motive for modernization and initiated a set of social and institutional changes imported from Europe (Özer, 2005). Creating a robust central authority, setting a modern and continuous army, protecting the rights of individuals, providing freedom and equality to all citizens, and adapting the European life-style to the Ottoman society were the objectives of the reforms. Hence, Western art, architecture, fashion, clothing, entertainment became popular among the Ottoman elite.

Even though, Tanzimat Reforms and the following Islahat Charter -declared in 1856- had serious political, economical, and social impacts, these reforms were away from entirely transforming the traditional structure of the Ottoman society. There existed resistance towards change, especially within the traditional neighborhoods of Istanbul. Not only among the Muslim but also Christian and Jewish communities living at the Historic Peninsula resisted this enforced change (Eren, 2001). However, it could be stated

that European, non-Muslim, Levantine populations of Galata and Pera affirmed, endorsed, and benefited from these reforms.

Galata and Pera inhabited the most cosmopolitan, mobile, and liberal population of the capital. As an essential port of Mediterranean trade and due to its historically autonomous status, the social, political and economic institutions were woven with much looser set of rules. This flexibility and openness for change made the district a point of attraction for a small number of liberal Turks as well. Especially, the new generation of Ottoman elite, admiring Europe and Western way of living, started moving to or at least regularly visiting the area. Along with resistance there was also curiosity and interest for the new, different, and uncanny prospects of modern life-style.

Pera underwent a frenzied urban development after the second half of the 19th century. New building types were introduced responding to the new modern lifestyle. A hybrid architectural style combining Western and Eastern elements has developed (Özlu Kayaalp & Eyüce, 2007). With the increasing number of Europeans residing in the district, European workforce and craftsmanship became available for the construction of masonry buildings with neo-classical façades, bay windows and angle braces. Apart from the residential fabric many schools, hospitals, restaurants, hotels, theaters, shops, and apartments were built in European fashion, especially on *Grand Rue de Pera*, an important axis connecting Taksim to Galata (Shaw & Shaw, 2002).

In 1854, as a part of the modernization efforts, a municipal organization for the city was established for the first time. The city was divided into 14 regions while Beyoglu district was chosen as the pilot area and named as the Sixth District (Akin, 1998). This municipal body bore a wide range of responsibilities and powers, from construction and maintenance of buildings, streets, transportation, and infrastructure to tax collection (Shaw & Shaw, 2002). As a result, the inhabitants of Galata and Pera benefited from a series of services and projects provided by the Sixth District, as the area attained a more “European” and “modern” look.

5. THE SIXTH DISTRICT

There are fifty-four cities in the island, all large and well built, the manners, customs, and laws of which are the same, and they are all contrived as near in the same manner as the ground on which they stand will allow. The nearest lie at least twenty-four miles' distance from one another, and the most remote are not so far distant but that a man can go on foot in one day from it to that which lies next it. (...) Every city is divided into four equal parts, and in the middle of each there is a market-place (Thomas More, 1895, 55, 74).

The physical and urban transformations taking place in Galata and Pera were directly related with the economic and political developments of the era. As Zeynep Çelik (1993) points out, following the Tanzimat reforms there was a conscious effort for the regularization of the urban fabric by introducing modern administrative units. One of the first attempts to modernize the urban administration was the establishment of prefecture (*şehremaneti*) and foundation of the Commission for the Order of the City (*İntizam-ı Şehir Komisyonu*) in 1855. However, these bodies proved to be insufficient and a new set of regulations were

issued, and the city of Istanbul was divided into fourteen municipal districts in 1857. According to this legislation, the “Sixth District” (*Altıncı Daire*) was founded as a pilot municipal body, responsible from Galata, Beyoğlu, and Tophane regions of Istanbul (Tümerkan, 1946).

The central government initiated the municipal organization starting from Galata, due to the increasing demand and willingness of the “Westernized” inhabitants of the region for municipal services. Such a local authority was believed to create a sense of Ottoman citizenship and secular identity in the heterogeneous demographic structure of the area (Rosenthal, 1980). It is believed that the municipal organization adopted the French model and took the *Sixieme Arrondissement* of Paris as a name for itself. This semi-autonomous body would be directed by a municipal council that was composed of Turkish, non-Muslim, and European members, which represented the cosmopolitan population of the area. A Muslim director has to be appointed to the council by the central government, who was responsible for directly reporting to the Sublime Porte.

Against all the public enthusiasm and governmental support, the Sixth District council was not able to achieve its ambitious goals, failed to collect the anticipated taxes and finally bankrupted in 1862. According to Rosenthal (1980), foreign embassies and European power holders played a major role in the failure of the council, due to their conflicting interests with the municipal body. Still, the Sixth District managed to evoke public awareness, provided basic municipal services, and initiated urban transformation of the area, starting from the prosperous commercial zones of the district. Some of the services included the cadastral survey of the area; leveling, paving, lighting, and widening of major streets; opening up new transportation axes between Galata and Şişli; planning of the port area; the construction of Karaköy Han; and the fight against prostitution (Toprak, 1993-95).

In 1863, central government took a more active role in the administration of the region and implemented a broader social service policy. During the directorship of Server Paşa the District managed to gain financial stability. A public hospital was founded to serve the poor inhabitants of the area; a public park, named *Taksim Bahçesi*, was inaugurated at the *Grands Champs des Morts*; and municipal services were distributed more egalitarian within the district. According to Rosenthal (1980), against the common prejudice, Ottoman officials proved to be more effective than their Levantine and Christian counterparts in directing the local authority and offering municipal services.

One of the most ambitious operations of the Sixth District, which severely transformed the urban layout of the district, was the demolition of the historic Genoese walls surrounding Galata in 1863. The historic walls and towers, except for the Galata Tower were demolished, remaining moats were filled up and the cut-stones were auctioned for ongoing construction work (Figure 4). Following the European examples, new streets were formed, and modern settlements were established within the evacuated lots and filled-up lands (Figure 5). It could be stated that the demolition of the historic walls and construction of modern row houses in the area could be defined as the first “modern urban transformation” project realized in Istanbul during the Tanzimat era. The great fire of Pera in 1870, also severely transformed the urban character of the district. Apparently, the fire had a catastrophic impact on the area damaging approximately 3,500 houses and 163 neighborhoods. Following the catastrophic fire, the municipal works were suspended for some time and the district was almost entirely rebuilt with the international aid (Keyvaoğlu, 2017).

Following the fire, several large-scale masonry buildings were erected especially on and around *Cadde-i Kebir - Grand Rue de Pera*, which will change and define the architectural character of the axis.

With the declaration of Istanbul Municipal Act (*Dersaadet İdare-i Belediye Nizamnamesi*) in October 5th, 1877, the earlier regulations of 1857 and 1858, ensuring the autonomous and distinctive character of the Sixth District, came to an end. The Sixth District became one of the regular regions of the 20 districts of Istanbul (Toprak, 1993-95), later the number of the districts was decreased to ten. The sources and funds were directed towards the areas around the imperial palaces at Beşiktaş, Yıldız, and Ortaköy (Çelik, 1993). Still, the Sixth District kept its name and significance. During this period, one of the prominent figures of Istanbul, Edouard Blacque (Blak Bey) became the director of the Sixth District from 1879 to 1883 (Toprak, 1993-95) and again in 1893 (Akin, 2002). According to local sources, the period of Blacque was believed to be the most successful era in public works (Ortaylı, 1985). The opening of the Tepebaşı public garden and the construction of the *Sixth District Palace* by Barborini at Şişhane Circle during this period were significant urban projects changing the architectural and social fabric of the area (Akin, 2002).

However, in January 3rd, 1913 the Union and Progress government, having nationalist and centralist tendencies, discarded all municipal councils and united all districts under one municipal body. After loosing its privileged status in 1877, the Sixth District has finally lost its characteristic name as well in 1913 (Toprak, 1993-95). During the Young Turk era, the municipal body continued providing public services all round Istanbul. Reorganization of the Gülhane gardens in the Historic Peninsula and opening of main urban arteries during the directorship of Istanbul mayor Dr. Cemil Topuzlu could be considered as some of the memorable works conducted within this period. Bernard Lewis summarized this era of municipal organization as: "The Young Turks may have failed to give Turkey constitutional government. They did however, give Istanbul drains." (Lewis, 2002, 228).

Osman Nuri Ergin's magnum opus *Mecelle-i Umur-i Belediye* (1995), provides a detailed and meticulous survey of the history, institutional organization and legislative body of Istanbul municipalities from 1855 to 1928. Ergin also provides detailed accounts on the mayors of Istanbul during the same era, in his renowned work *İstanbul Şehreminleri* (1996). Starting with the Tanzimat reforms until the collapse of the empire, ordering and planning the urban landscape, municipal activities and interventions to the city were given utmost priority, as urban planning and municipal works were accepted as an ultimate indication of civilization and modernization. During this period, urban squares were planned, several public parks were opened, new arteries were established, major streets were paved, city walls were demolished, roads were widened, new settlements were organized, transportation was improved, and large scale impressive buildings were built (Çelik, 1993). Hence, modernization utopia of Ottoman elites -partially and inadequately- came to realization through the urban interventions facilitated by the local municipality during the late Ottoman era. The act of regulating and planning the urban fabric as a showcase of modernity continued after the foundation of the Turkish Republic as well.



Figure 1. Traditional Ottoman vernacular architecture vs. the new apartments of Pera.



Figure 2. Apartments of Pera from the perspective of young Edouard Jeanneret, Le Corbusier, 1911



Figure 3. 1840 S.D.U.K. Map of Constantinople



Figure 4. The walls of Galata before the demolition.



Figure 5. New row of apartments built after the demolition of Galata walls.

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