



Panel Review

Approaching the Stratified City of Ankara as an Integral Unity

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“The Cultural Value and Identity of the City of Ankara on Its Way to UNESCO”

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“Panel and Forum: The Cultural Value and Identity of the City of Ankara on Its Way to UNESCO”, organized by Atılım University on 9 May 2016, has been an important event that provided those who are interested in the cultural heritage resources of Ankara -either by civilian or official purposes- to discuss on the issue.

Ankara is a stratified city with unique features. However, as can also be followed from the local media and from news on conservation, no consensus on the value of this uniqueness has yet been set. Şahin (2013) states that the issue of preserving the historic urban landscape continues through long and tiring courses of court cases in Turkey. Therefore, the Panel and the Forum can be interpreted as an initiative to search for a consensus on the heritage value of Ankara.

The purpose of the event was searching for how and discussing according to which criteria Ankara could be inscribed on World Heritage List. It is seen that the Organizing Committee of the event has carefully requested presentations from the invited panelists so that many aspects of the heritage resources in Ankara -particularly Ulus district- could be embraced. The mosaic was completed with the presentations by Ege Yıldırım (PhD) on the process of World Heritage List candidacy, by Prof. Mehmet Tuncer on the values of the pre-Republic heritage of Ankara with unsatisfactory efforts on their conservation, by Açalya Alpan (PhD) on urban design in stratified cities such as Ankara in the scope of the latest international urban conserva-

tion paradigm “Historic Urban Landscape”, by Prof. Elvan Altan on the architectural and unique features on the Early-Republican heritage of Ankara, and by Prof. Nuray Bayraktar on the inventory of civil architectural heritage of the Early-Republican period.

In the Forum which took place after the presentations, it was seen that the main emphasis was strictly on the Early-Republican heritage of Ankara. It is also observed by the author that the interest of the audience mostly depended on ideological purposes. According to Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (as revised in 2015), urban candidate should fit one of the following World Heritage definitions: [1] Cultural heritage: monuments; groups of buildings, sites [2] Mixed cultural and natural heritage [3] Cultural landscapes. The candidate should also possess “outstanding universal value”, which is defined as “cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity” in the Operational Guidelines (criteria for the assessment: section II.D of the document). Depending on the criteria, the candidate should also meet the conditions of authenticity and integrity. In the Panel and Forum, this particular outstanding value for Ankara is considered to be related to the unique Early-Republican Heritage since the authenticity of heritage resources belonging to other periods is under question due to damage, demolition or reconstruction whereas several buildings from the Republican period (might refer to the category of “group of buildings”) might meet the condition of authenticity and together they define the Early-Republican configuration of Ankara. In terms of the outstanding universal value, it might be recognized as a right approach on the way to UNESCO. However, another aspect of heritage, as can be followed in the recent international documents such as 2011 Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscape and in the recent heritage literature, is the “integrity” of the heritage, which might embrace diverse dimensions of the concept such as physical, structural, visual, perceptual, social and functional. Therefore, in Ankara case, the author has a worrying concern on the integrity of heritage in a stratified city such as Ankara when the emphasis would focus on the Early-Republican heritage. Moreover, since there is ideological conflict on Early-Republican period heritage, it might turn into a zero-sum game in which the parties would follow self-oriented values rather than a holistic view on heritage resources of the city. It should be noted that being a World Heritage

Site does not have the ability to prevent conflict on the heritage resources as can be followed from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Ankara is an evolved city with a long history (3000 BC) and has been settled in history by the Hatti, Hittites, Phrygians, Lycians, Persians, Helens, Galatians, Romans, Byzantines, Seljuks, Ottomans and Turks. No particular structure has left from pre-Roman period of the city; however from ancient historiographer Herodot it is known that the famous "King's Way" of the Phrygians was passing by Ankara. Besides, there exists approximately twenty Phrygians tumuluses around the historic center of the city and it is supposed that there is a layer of Phrygians lying under the Walled Town (Citadel) of Ankara. Traces from Galatians have been found during the archaeological excavations in the Walled Town's fortification walls and in the basement of the Augustus Temple in Hacibayram Mound. In the 8th century BC, Hacibayram area became the acropolis of the town. Before taken by the Romans and became a province of the Roman Empire, Ankara had been the capital city of the Galatians. There are many heritage resources from the Romans particularly in the historic center of the city, such as the public baths, temples, theatre, sewerage system, and other non-identified structures. In 25 BC, Temple of Augustus was constructed in which the epigraph of Res Gestae still exists. After the Roman Empire was divided into two, Ankara became a Byzantine city and with the coming of the Seljuks to Anatolia, it turned into a Seljuk city and the first mosques were built. In the Ottoman period, Ottoman mosques, fountains, Turkish baths (hammams), bedestens and hans were added to the city. In 1607-1608, a second town wall was constructed to protect the city from Celali Outbreaks. The most important mosque from the period is the Hacı Bayram-ı Veli Mosque which stands on Hacibayram Mound and is in touch with the Augustus Temple. In the 19th century, Ankara had an ethnical diversity consisting of the Muslims, Orthodox Greeks, Armenians, Catholic Armenians, Jewish and Protestants, which also had a spatial reflection on urban space. In 1923, Ankara was declared as the Capital of the newly founded Turkish Republic. Ankara's Modern Era constitutes the design and construction of the Capital city, and in this manner it is unique in World's urban history as one of the few designed capital cities of the early 20th century such as Canberra and New Delhi. The city's Modern stratum is basically a national interpretation of the dominant international paradigms and movements -Beaux Arts, Garden City, Modernist movement- of the Era in architecture, urban design and city planning.

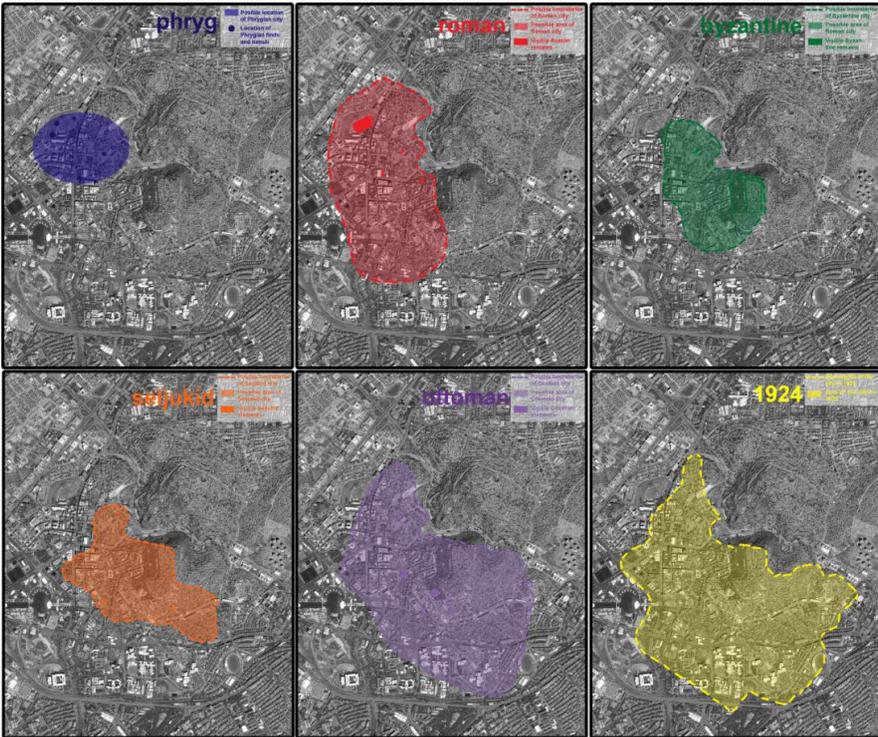


Figure 1: The Stratification of Ankara-Ulus. In sequence: The Phryg, the Roman, the Byzantine, the Seljuk, the Ottoman and the Early Republican strata of Ankara (source: Mutlu, 2012, p. 61)

Roman, Ottoman and Modern/Early-Republican Eras of the city, each has a particular spatial configuration. The route of the North-South oriented major street of Roman Ankara, *Cardo*, and the route of the Colonnaded Street linking the Roman Baths and Augustus Temple have been revealed. Although the East-West oriented major street, *Decumanus*, has not yet been discovered in Ankara, the routes of *Cardo* and the Colonnaded Street give clues of the spatial configuration of the Roman Era of the town. The Ottoman Town, constituting commercial centers and ethnical neighborhoods mainly developed at the Western and Southern parts of the Walled Town (Citadel), has been conserved in the Hermann Jansen Plan in the Early-Republican Era; however, exposed to significant destruction after the 1950s by the later plans. The survived parts were designated as “conservation sites” in 1980 with the enactment of the Act no 2863 on the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Beings. The Act

introduced and obligated “conservation development plans” in conservation sites by cancelling the provisions of the general master plan for these sites and delivered the authority of preparing conservation development plans to municipalities. Upon the legislation, Ankara Greater Municipality organized a competition for the conservation development plan of the historic center of Ankara, called Ulus, and of the Walled Town. For the conservation development plan of Ulus historic center, the winner was a group from Middle East Technical University (METU), Faculty of Architecture leaded by beloved Prof.Dr. Raci Bademli. The plan was a novelty and success in national scale in terms of its holistic approach to management, strategic planning, urban design, architecture and street furniture. It handled the issues of conservation, rehabilitation, renewal and development; it also introduced new concepts and approaches through plan notes to overcome the deficiencies in the legislation. It was approved by the Municipality in 1990. However, the implementation process was interrupted by the enactment of the Act no 5366 on Renovating, Conserving and Actively Using Historical Assets in 2005. The new law regarding conservation sites in Turkey introduced an incremental and renewal-led conservation approach and it is in contrast with international approaches and policies. Following the enactment, in 2005, Ulus historic center was declared as “Ankara Historic Town Center Renewal Area” according to the new law (Figure 2 and 3) and the approved conservation plan of 1990 by METU Project Team was cancelled by the Municipal Council of Ankara Greater Municipality. The later incremental developments inside the borders of the area and in neighboring areas have given significant damages to the authenticity and multi-dimensional integrity of the historic urban landscape. (Figure 4, 5 and 6) Besides, as observed by the author, no detailed and satisfactory analyses and inventory studies in the area, demonstrating the stratified structure of the historic center have been made in the pre-project process, which would support the integrity issues in a multi-dimensional manner.

While the stratified structure of the historic center is neglected, the area faces another recent threat. Today, the Modern/Early-Republican stratum of the city is problematic due to ideological and political conflicts as can be followed from the media news on the cases of Iller Bank, Marmara Palace, Çankaya Palace, Saraçoğlu Quarter and Zafer Square. Ex-industrial and station area of Ankara, belonging to the Modern/Early-Republican stratum in the vicinity of the historic center should also not

be neglected. A registered heritage, Maltepe Gas Factory was demolished in 2006 by the Ankara Greater Municipality; other registered industrial heritage resources in the area face a similar threat. Another registered heritage resource, Ankara Train Station built in 1937 is under the pressure of the new train station, which is being constructed on the side of the old station without paying consideration to historic context of the area, including the green axes of the city created in the Early-Republican Period. In the scope of the project, more than 50 Plane trees were cut in May 2016.

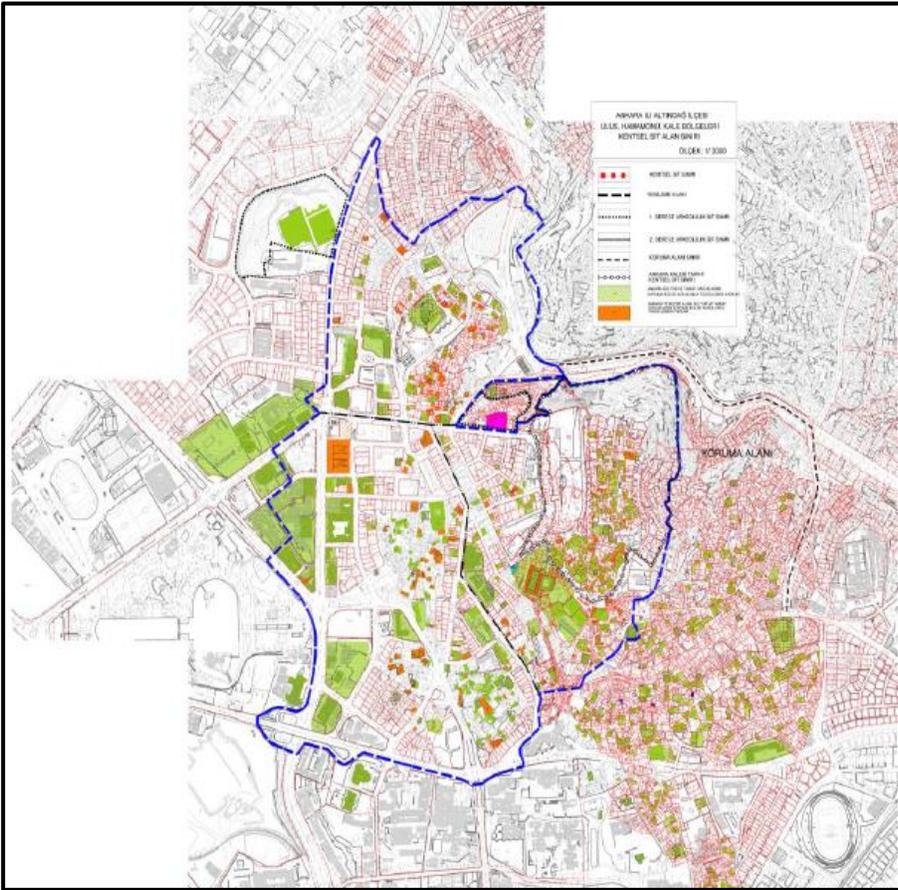


Figure 2: Border of Ankara Historic Town Center Renewal Area in 1:2000 scale (source: ABB, KUDEM, in Işık, 2012, p. 73)



Figure 3: The satellite image of the area showing the project staging (*etap*) in Ankara Historic Town Center Renewal Area (source: ABB, KUDEM, in Işık, 2012, p. 74)

It is not new for the World to witness the damage on the contested cultural heritage and a literature on the issue has already been developed with the studies of John Tunbridge in the 1980's. To conserve the integral unity of the stratified Ankara as a whole, the author argues that a neutral heritage discourse over "integrity" with no reference to ideology should be developed. The approach of "Historic Urban Landscape" (HUL) introduced by UNESCO in 2005, regarded as a paradigm shift in urban conservation, can be taken as a base for such a discourse. The HUL approach considers the city as a socio-culturally and socio-spatially stratified entity, which has evolved in history and continue its evolution, and privileges the integrity of heritage rather than values. It is this evolution that has to be transmitted to future generations.



Figure 4: New constructions in Ulus-Hacıbayram area is pseudo Ottoman architecture (source: Personal Archive of Açılya Alpan, 2014)



Figure 5: New constructions in pseudo Ottoman architecture at the forefront and at the background recent multi-storey developments damaging the silhouette of the Walled Town (Citadel). Photograph is taken from Ulus-Hacıbayram Panoramic Terrace towards the Walled Town (source: Personal Archive of Açılya Alpan, 2014)



Figure 6: Recent multi-storey developments damaging the silhouette of the Walled Town (Citadel) seen from the Hacıbayram mound, as shown in Figure 5. They also break the visual harmony of the urban landscape. Photograph is taken from the Panoramic Terrace of the Walled Town (source: Personal Archive of Açalya Alpan, 2014)

In stratified cities, rather than a particular layer, the integral unity of the city should be respected and conserved. The author proposes that approaching the city as a stratified entity enables a twofold examination of integrity, which together refer to the “integral unity”: [1] intra-integrity referring to the context based relation among heritage resources as components of a single historic period, which is a stratum. The components have a particular role in the unique spatial configuration of the Era or the stratum; and [2] inter-integrity referring to the multi-contextual relationships among different strata of the city. As mentioned before in Ankara, several strata of the city have a particular spatial configuration. These different layers/strata might either have easily identifiable intersection or interaction points or have less notable interactions. These points and their potentials of integrity -including physical, structural, visual, perceptual, social and functional integrity- should be clearly identified before making decisions and taking actions. Destruction of any tangible heritage belonging to a particular stratum damages these intra and inter integrities and the integral unity of the historic urban landscape in result.

Moreover, in connection with the international priorities both in urban conservation, urban governance and urban design, while providing the integrity, also resilience should be supported against climate change, social segregation, terror, natural disasters, economic deprivation, negative effects of tourism, poverty, migration, destructive side of neoliberal policies and other threats. Therefore, any conservation approach regard-

ing the heritage resources of Ankara should be developed holistically considering the integral unity of the historic urban landscape without also neglecting the contemporary threats the city faces. Such kind of an approach, supported by UNESCO, might contribute more to the conservation of the city and its legibility of evolution by future generations.

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