Urban Plans of Ankara in the 20th and 21st Century

Subject Review

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Because of its geographical location within Central Anatolia, Ankara and its vicinity has been inhabited for about 12,000 years by many settlements and various civilizations. In this study, the pertinent literature about the urban development of Ankara is surveyed and evaluated. This includes Ankara both before and after the Turkish Republican Period (1923-present), the major public improvement plans that have been proposed for the city, the application of these plans and their outcomes.
Various civilizations have been living in and around Ankara for about 12,000 years. Traces of the first permanent settlement in the region date back to approximately 2000 BCE. Following this, the region witnessed the settlement of Hittites, Phrygians, Lydians, Persians, Galatians, Romans, and Byzantines. From the 11th century onwards, the Seljuk and the Ottomans civilizations began to settle the region.

As is the case with the settlement of many other antique cities, there have been several geographic reasons for inhabiting this region, such as vast productive agricultural areas, abundant water sources, and a steep hill in the near vicinity. The precise date of construction of the Ankara Castle—located on that steep hill—is not exactly known, but it is thought that it was constructed by the Hittites because of their military garrison that was located inside. However, this supposition has not yet been corroborated by archaeological excavations. The castle covers an area of approximately 43 km², and is surrounded by tall walls ranging between 14-16 m. The inner castle is a four-story structure with two gates, one of which has a portcullis.

After the Hittites, the Ankara Castle was used by the Romans and then the Byzantines. In 189 BCE, Ankara was invaded by the Roman Consul Manilus Vulso. In 25 BCE, because of its geographical and military importance, Ankara was declared the capital of the Roman province of Galatia by Augustus. In 138 AD, towards the end of the ruling period of the Roman Emperor Hadrian, Ankara was divided into 12 districts, called phylai. This division process took place at and on the slopes of the Ankara Castle. In the 2nd century AD, Ankara became a metropolis of the Roman Empire when it grew to have around 100,000 inhabitants.

Upon the division of Roman Empire in 395 AD into east and west, Ankara found itself in the territories of Eastern Roman Empire (or Byzantium) and was made the capital of a province called ”Galatia Prima” until the end of the fourth century. Later, because of religious and denominational in-fighting, the rapid spread of diseases, and attacks by the Arabs, the city suffered considerably. During these troublesome periods, in the second half of the 7th century, the outer castle wall of Ankara Castle was built by the Byzantines to surround the old castle completely. Although it has been repaired many times, the Ankara Castle still contains an inner castle, which covers the peak of the hill, and an outer castle with battlements and towers that surround the inner castle.

Turkish tribes began to settle in the region from the 11th century onwards, at which point the sovereignty of Turkish principalities started to be felt on the development of the city and also in the region. In the 12th century, the first mosque of Ankara – Alaeddin Camii – was built. In addition to this, a Muslim theological school (madrasa), a palace, and another mosque were built near the Alaeddin Mosque, although these buildings are no longer standing today. Upon the rapid and great increase in trade at the beginning of 13th century, the city gained many shops and commercial buildings (khan). Because of long lasting fights for the throne in the 14th century, improvements to the city were impossible, and eventually Ankara fell into ruin. Upon Ottoman sovereignty in the 15th century, many new mosques, mescits (small mosques), and tombs were built on the slope and flat area outside the castle. Each mosque and mescit was a nucleus for a district. The number of districts in Ankara at this time—including the districts within the castle—exceeded 30 and number of inhabitants reached approximately 5,000-6,000. During the 16th century, however, the population of Ankara increased two-fold, the number of districts reached 81,
and consequently, the city expanded considerably towards the south and west in the flat area around the castle. For this reason, after this point, it is no longer possible to talk about Ankara as a merely a castle (Fig. 2). The city continued to expand and to increase the number of its inhabitants in later periods, too. This expansion took place on the increasingly settled flat areas just outside the castle (Fig. 3). In 1917, Ankara suffered a devastating fire and because most of the city was built of wood, lost one-third of its buildings. Before fully overcoming the difficulties of re-building after this fire, the city’s fate changed completely on 13 October 1923, when it was declared the capital of the new Turkish Republic.

THE REPUBLICAN PERIOD

RAZDoblje Republike Turske

On the one hand, the founders of the Republic of Turkey chose Ankara as a capital city with the aim of creating a modern city, because it was at the center of the country in terms of transportation and communications. On the other hand, Ankara would also be the symbol of the new republic, having a separate identity from the former Ottoman Empire and its capital, Istanbul. In addition, it was thought that a planned and healthy growth of the new capital, setting an example for the other cities in Turkey, was very important. Furthermore, Ankara had undertaken a great mission by creating a new center to counteract Istanbul — that is, to form a balanced distribution of population, economic activities, and public institutions throughout the country.

The urgent needs of the period were determined jointly by the Municipality of Ankara and the Ministry of Public Improvements and Housing by taking all the above into account. Those needs were:

- reorganization of the municipality and the city council,
- preparation of a city plan,
- elimination of sewage and water shortages,
- night-time illumination of the city,
- housing construction to counteract the housing shortage,
- arranging inner city transportation with the existing streets or roads,
- establishment of telephone communication facilities.

Intensive effort to bring solutions to these issues had been made and paid off rapidly, followed by a reorganization of municipality. The new office started to get ready for preparing a city plan as the first step to satisfy the remaining needs.

- **Lörcher Plan Period (1924-1932)** — The Municipality of Ankara hired a German capital investment company called “Turkish Joint Stock Company for Estimating and Building Construction” to make, in a sense, the first modern urban plan of Ankara. This plan was prepared by an urban specialist of the company named Dr. Carl Christoph Lörcher. Lörcher actually prepared two plans for Ankara. The first of these was prepared in 1924 in which Lörcher generally planned to place the growing population of the city around the Ankara Castle. However, pressure imposed by the rapid population growth before the plan could be implemented brought the plan to such a point that it was impossible to carry it out. Lörcher’s second plan, prepared in 1925, was quite forward-thinking in its recommendations. It required the erection of a new city directly to the south of the old one. This new city, which was consciously isolated from the old city, was an independent new “management district” (Fig. 4).

This meant that the capital of Turkey would no longer be represented by bazaars and trade centers, as was the custom in Ottoman cities. Instead, the city would be represented by ministries and other governmental office buildings — all symbols of the newly-formed state and its government.

As has been mentioned, there were actually two settlement plans, one for south-east of the castle and its vicinity and another for a new city. In both settlements, one-story or at most two-story buildings would be built. The plans also emphasized meeting the needs of people for parks, green space open outdoor areas in a “garden city” type of settlements. The only connection between the old and the new cities would be by means of Millet Caddesi (Street of the Nations), which would also be a prestigious axis of the new management city. The luxurious boulevards of Europe were taken as architectural models in the design of this new prestigious axis, which was the extension of north-south axis of the old city.

Instead of preserving the Ankara Castle merely as a historical and cultural object, Lörcher preferred to use it in his city plan for Ankara as an active and symbolic element. For this reason, in his plans, the monumental effects of the castle have been placed in the front of the silhouette of the city. In planning what strict order and hierarchical system should be used, an obvious ladder of importance revealed itself according to the ranking from public to private. While state management
Another issue to be seriously considered was public education. A central unified and government-controlled system was the aim. For this reason, Muslim theological schools, Dervish lodges and similar Ottoman theological institutions were abolished. Dr. Lörcher proposed to build groups of huge and complex buildings that would gather all educational institutions together. He planned these buildings so that on one hand they would have a monumental effect on the citizens, and on the other hand they would have a visual relationship with the Ankara Castle. In other places, the construction of sports fields in conjunction with the public parks and open spaces were proposed in the city plan (Figs. 7 and 8).

One of the most important ideas related to the new city – as a counterpart to the castle in the old city – was to build a monumental building at the highest point outside of the castle by constructing a “national park” with the same area covered by the government’s management buildings. However, when the application of Lörcher’s plan started, some problems appeared. Firstly, because of high land prices, the plan was found inefficient in stimulating the new settlement around Ankara. Secondly, while public improvements were introduced to the new city in the south, the emerging low density and its rural image was not found to be satisfactory.

Besides these problems, the most significant difficulty for carrying out Lörcher’s plan was the four-fold increase in city population between 1924-1927. In the end, all these problems urged the government to make a new urban plan for Ankara. Even if the Lörcher plan could not be applied entirely, it would always have a determinative role in the future development of Ankara as a capital, since it had set the basic planning principles for “old” and “new” cities.

Despite the abandonment of Lörcher’s plan, some infrastructure developments were put into effect, the greatest successes of which were:

- The construction of a modern water supply and sewage system completed in 1925.
- The repair and improvement of existing main roads and streets, and the opening of new streets.
- Mass transportation services in the city started in 1924 with buses from Keçiören to Çankaya.
- An electricity and coal gas company was founded in 1928, and all streets in the city began to be illuminated rapidly.

**Jansen Plan Period (1932-1957)** – In order to determine a new urban plan, the Municipality of Ankara organized a competition for such a plan (by invitation only) in 1927. Hermann Jansen and Joseph Brix, instructors from the Berlin Polytechnic (now, Berlin Institute of Technology), and the Frenchman Léon Jaussely were invited to participate. The competitors were instructed to plan for an Ankara containing a farsighted estimate of 300,000 inhabitants. Jansen’s plan won the competition and became effective in 1932 after the approval of the Turkish government’s Council of Ministers. It is believed that the most important factor in winning this competition was the respect that Jansen’s plan had shown for the old city (Fig. 11).

Jansen’s plan determined general zoning areas, vehicle and pedestrian circulation as a main backbone of the city, and indicated Ankara’s main development direction towards the south. The castle, which was the nucleus of...
of the settlement, was adopted as "the crown of the city". With this plan, Ankara began to be furnished with healthcare buildings, sports fields, schools, museums, new squares and statues (Figs. 9 and 10). In addition, a Forestry Farm (Orman Çiftliği) and a City Zoo were founded in order to prove the point that irrigation, agriculture and animal husbandry can also be done in a region without proper natural resources of a city.19

This period was the beginning of Ankara's intense development. In order to support the implementation of housing, residentially-zoned parcels in the planned residential areas were distributed to those who demanded them.20 Also during this period, the first mass housing started in Ankara by means of a cooperative — the "Bahcelievler Housing Cooperative" — whose shareholders were middle- and upper-rank bureaucrats. This was founded in 1934 with the immense financial and spiritual support of the Municipality of Ankara and the Turkish State. With this project, also prepared by Jansen, the expansion of Ankara started in the east-west direction. Another public initiative that was introduced to provide lodging for government officials was called the Saraçoğlu District. This was planned by the German planner Paul Bonatz, constructed 1944-45 and was the first example of multi-story housing in Ankara.

During all these applications, Jansen thought that in order for his plan to be successful, there were two conditions that had to be absolutely met: powerful management and the prevention of land speculation. Powerful management was easy to put into effect because the Turkish government also thought the same way and had ample power to accomplish this.21 In contrast, putting the second condition into effect was not so easy. It was impossible to prevent land speculations without reorganizing the land ownership distribution of the city, especially in the developmental areas, without having a sufficient stock of land in the government's hands, which is appropriate for public improvements and building construction, and by only lawful regularities. It was also not sufficient to provide land stock only in the developmental areas of the city because, unless the present city reached a saturation point, turning towards the developmental areas would not be as intense as expected. The investments for accelerating this trend would increase the expenditures of city's development too much. After all, the monetarial sources of a state that was recently founded on the ruins of the First World War (the Turkish government) were very insufficient for nationalizing open land to provide a stock of building area.22

Because of this, at the beginning of 1930 the first squatters' houses of Turkey appeared in Ankara, constructed by those who did not want to or could not purchase properly regulated parcels of land. Alternatively, those who could not pay the expenses for the land in parceled areas and, according to their social status could not build squatter's houses either, bought land outside of the plan and forced the alteration of the plan. In fact, the leading figure of these attempts was the Bahcelievler Housing Cooperative. Having seen the increase in such movements, the Directorate for Public Improvements made a drastic change to the Jansen Plan in 1937 by adding another axis of development in the east-west direction to the north-south axis already present in the plan.23

This east-west axis seriously affected the planned development concept of Ankara. Starting in 1938, the development of Ankara began to move away from Jansen's plan of "creating a new capital". Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, President of the Republic of Turkey, was the main proponent of creating a planned capital but he died in November 1938, and in the days following his death Jansen was dismissed.

In the following years, the population of Ankara rapidly increased, reaching 226,712 in 1945. Squatters' houses became accepted as the fact of the city, and were legalized by law number 5218, which passed in 1949.24 The Jansen plan estimated that the population of 300,000 would be reached by 1978. Upon reaching this figure in the 1950s, and the drastic enlargement of the city that had caused the legalization of squatters' houses, an urgent need for a new plan emerged.

- Yücel-Uybadin Plan Period (1957-70) – Nihat Yücel and Raşit Uybadin won another competition for an Ankara Plan in 1957. In this updated plan, Ankara was designed as a single-center city that would develop like an oil stain.25 The Yücel-Uybadin Plan was an endeavor to provide a unity to the Jansen Plan, which was really two separate plans. The existing north-south and east-west axes of the city were preserved, the natural valleys and streams in the city were declared unavailable for settlement, and the natural air currents of the city were not hindered.26

The plan also proposed a higher density settlement than the Jansen Plan. In fact, several years after the application of the Yücel-Uyba-
The most fatal problem for the citizens of Ankara in the 1970s was this heavy air pollution.27

The Yücel-Uybadin Plan estimated the population of Ankara in 2000 to be 750,000, but by 1965 it was already over 905,000. Although the city had a new plan, there was no change in its rapid development and enlargement fashion. With many industrial districts founded during this period, Ankara was no longer only the center of administrative, educational, and cultural affairs; it was, at the same time, an industrially developing city. Since the expectations of the 1950s related to this new plan had not come true in the 1960s, this achievement brought about an idea of founding a continuous planning office for the city. Accordingly, the Office for Ankara Metropolitan Area Master Plan was founded in 1969.28

### Grand Ankara Master Public Improvement Plan Period (1970-2007)

- **Grand Ankara Master Public Improvement Plan** (Fig. 12), at the beginning of 1960s, the number of allowed building stories was increased by 2–3, paving the way for a denser city. At this time, all building areas in the city were subject to a demolish-build-sell understanding and very much market-driven. Examples of residential architecture from the 1920s and 1930s were outright destroyed, creating an important idleness in historical memory of Ankara. A rapid increase in number of multi-story apartment buildings in the 1960s caused heavy air pollution, especially in the winter months when many households (including apartments) burned coal to heat their interiors. The most fatal problem for the citizens of Ankara in the 1970s was this heavy air pollution.27

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### Grand Ankara Master Public Improvement Plan Period (1970-2007)

- **Grand Ankara Master Public Improvement Plan Period (1970-2007)** – This plan was prepared by the Office for Ankara Metropolitan Area Master Plan in first half of 1970s. It aimed to deploy the density in the city center, and to ensure a healthy development of the city for 70% of its population who had begun to live in slums. The plan was especially interested in future developmental areas of the city rather than existing settled areas. A deployment towards the west was accepted as the fundamental improvement strategy of the city. Following the 1970s, great housing and industrial districts were developed in this direction. With the efforts of the same office, the surroundings of the city were forested and a green band was brought about in 1980s.29

However, against the strategy of the city's master plan, the city kept developing towards the south. In this district, an area of attraction emerged whose territories expanded gradually. In addition, with the mass housing applications put into effect in 1980s, the city also continued to develop towards the west and south-west.30 This plan, which was oriented towards the year 1990, has played a great role in the formation of today's urban form in Ankara by having selected the applied axes as the fundamental development politics.31

- **2023 Capital Ankara Master Public Improvement Plan (2007-present)** – After the Grand Ankara Master Public Improvement Plan completed its mission, the 2015 Structural Plan Scheme, and some time later, the
2023 Planning Studies (1998) were prepared. Because of disagreement, however, these two plans could not be approved nor put into effect. After a long interruption, the 2023 Capital Ankara Master Public Improvement Plan was approved and put into effect (Fig. 13).32

The 2023 Capital Ankara Master Public Improvement Plan aims to design and manage the process related to the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey, which will take place in 2023. This plan has been prepared in the same direction with its aims and has taken the following decisions:

- The aim is not to find new areas of settlement, but to interfere with the problems of the city in the existing settled areas.
- To provide methods of intervention “to improve quality of living” in the settled areas of the city.
- Since the aim is not to produce a completed document, some ways of alteration towards public participation can be made throughout the plan.
- To make a series of sectoral and spatial studies which will make the present economy a production economy, which should make the economy of Ankara powerful.
- By protecting the continuity of natural, cultural, and environmental values and wealth of the city of Ankara to reduce speculative pressures on these areas.
- For the macroform of the city not to be "scattering-deploying" and uncontrolled development, to create a combined city macroform in terms of social and spatial meanings.
- By taking into account other plans and their applications that opened too much land for settlement in an uncontrolled fashion over the potential development of the city, and did not protect the cultivable lands catchment areas that must have been protected; to form a priority that reconsiders these again in the directions of principles and fundamentals of the new plan.
- To define the principles that remove the risks and dangers of a calamity and form a more powerful city environment against probable calamities.33

The 2023 Capital Ankara Master Public Improvement Plan has predicted that the high-density of the city would continue and the development towards west would be supported. In the context of studies about removing squatter housing, regions of mass housing were established, and a plan has been made that creates new areas of commerce, health, education, and recreation. The development of the city has been continued in the context of this plan. Since there is not a fixed plan, once in a while, regional alterations are able to be made in the direction of fundamental decisions.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

**DISKUSIJA I ZAKLJUČAK**

Before 1924, Ankara was a small Anatolian town. Having grown from 65,000 in 1924 to approximately 5 million inhabitants in 2010, Ankara has been transformed into a large metropolis. This transformation of the last 88 years is given, together with its fundamental characteristics, in Table I.

After examining the plan-based development process of Ankara from 1924 to today, some fundamental points draw attention. These are as follows:

- Keeping the decisions of planned development shown in earlier Republican periods.
- Emergence of fundamental decisions for the development of the city.
- Great increase in population of the city.
- The emergence of a housing shortage that could never be solved.

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32 2006: 707-708
33 2006: 707-708
The emergence of land speculation and squatters’ houses problems caused by this shortage.

The emergence of building cooperatives and mass housing to meet the housing shortage.

The two circumstances mentioned below have appeared because of the political and economical pressures and the gradual lost of planning determination and following it:

- The problem of squatters’ houses that could never be solved came to an impasse by legalizing these houses.
- The demolition of traditional houses and the lost memory of historical houses.
- Air pollution caused by a dense settlement.
- The foundation of the Office for Ankara Metropolitan Area Master Plan.
- The beginning of deploying dense settlement in the center of Ankara by way of the new plan prepared by the above-mentioned office, and a fight against squatters’ houses.
- Because of disagreements, a new public improvement plan had not been completed until 2007.
- A partially-lasting planning period that related to the fundamental decisions brought about by the new public improvement plan.

In all of these processes, the most destructive development for Ankara has been the squatter’s housing which has occupied a great portion of the city just like a disease. When studied in more detail, the population of the city increased approximately two-fold from 1920 to 1926, two and a half-fold more from 1926 to 1928 – which means that in eight years, the total population increase had been more than four-fold. This population increase would have a destructive dimension not only on a poor country such as the Turkish Republic that had just completed a War of Independence, but even on a wealthy country.34

While experiencing such a population trend, it was impossible even to think about a parallel increase in housing production. That is to say, under the conditions of that period, there was no other solution to the problem than the one that emerged. One way or the other, it has taken almost 50 years to eliminate the construction of squatters’ houses, whose emergence was caused by a great need for houses.

The importance of planning has been appreciated once more in the process of Ankara’s development. Ankara has been developed and is still developing in the directions of five different public improvement plans since 1927. Because of correct and fundamental decisions that were taken in the early plans, some problems and distress periods have been surmounted without causing other, more difficult to solve problems.

While preparing an urban plan, basic planning principles are taken into account. In this study too, some common urban planning principles have been taken into account in all the urban plans of Ankara discussed here. These are shortly given below:

- care for visionary / futuristic goals set for the good of the country and the region,
- establish general improvement directions correctly,
- determine places, sizes, and quantities of social and cultural institutions required, according to the population of the region,
- plan the transportation, roads, gas, electricity, water and sewerage systems, etc., carefully,
- preserve the aesthetics of the city, environment, and nature,
- make an urban plan that can be juridistically, administratively, economically, and technically applicable.

Following such basic urban planning principles in planning minimizes potential problems. In fact, this approach is the sign of responsibility felt for the future generations of the nation.

[Translated by: Dr. Christopher Samuel Wilson]
Podrucje Ankare i njezine okolice bilježi tragove naseljenosti unatrag 12.000 godina. Tragovi prvih stalnih naselja u ovoj regiji stari su 4000 godina. Oštar su na prostoru ove regije nastajala naselja Hethita, Frigijaca, Lidiijaca, Perzijanaca, Galacana, Rimljana, Bizantijana, Seljuka i Turaka. Kao što je to često slučaj i s drugim antickim gradovima, počinje nekoliko geografskih razloga zbog kojih su ova područja od dvajne naseljena. To su, prije svega: široke plodne poljoprivredne površine, obilni vodični resursi i strma uzvisina u neposrednoj blizini. Točno vrijeme izgradnje tvrđave u Ankari, pozicionirane na toj stojnoj uzvisini, nije poznato, no smatra se da su je izgradili Hethiti za potrebe svojega vojnog garnizona. Ta pretpostavka još uvijek nije potkrijepljena i arheološkim istraživanjima.

U 15. stoljeću Turci su izgradili brojne nove dzamije, male dzamije i grobnice na padini između 5 i 6 tisuće šteta. U to je doba u Ankari bilo više od 30 džamija bila je jezgra oko koje se razvila određena džamija i grobnice na padini izvan tvrđave te njima.

U 16. stoljeću broj stanovnika dvostruko se povećao, broj cetvrt s vlastitom upravom. Ta pretpostavka još uvijek nije potkrijepljena i arheološkim istraživanjima. To je razlog za činjenicu da je Ankara bila sjećanje transportnih i komunikacijskih pravaca za cijelu zemlju. S druge strane, početak 19. stoljeća je Ankara prepoznala važnost planiranja i gradnje, a to je provedeno u djelo plana 1924.-1925. godine. Dakle, u Ankari se razvijala i još se uvijek razvija prema sjeveru i istoku.

**Urbanistički planovi Ankare tijekom 20. i početkom 21. stoljeća**

**Summary**

**Sazetak**
