



POLITECNICO DI TORINO

**Master's Degree in
ARCHITECTURE FOR HERITAGE**
Master's Degree Thesis

**Karaköy Square Through Changes:
Urban Modernization and Heritagization in Istanbul from
1910 to 1960**

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Karaköy Square has an important position in Istanbul, Türkiye, where commercial activities and history intersect over time. It had plenty of changes throughout history, especially during the creation of the square. The main focus of this research is: How Did Urban Modernization and Heritagization Transform Karaköy Square in Istanbul between 1910–1960? The research examines both physical and socio-cultural changes that contribute to Karaköy Square's character.

Through historical research, the thesis investigates the urban transformation that reshaped Karaköy Square's physical landscape, by highlighting how historical buildings were demolished and how these changes affected the collective memory. It contains the creation of the square itself by demolishing existing structures and the result of the loss of urban heritage. In addition, it analyzes any alterations to Karaköy's overall silhouette.

Beyond the tangible, the research focuses on the intangible factors that contribute to Karaköy Square's character. Karaköy used to be a minority-dominated region since at least the late Ottoman period, particularly in the 19th and early 20th centuries. With the change of policies and the crises in the 20th century in Türkiye, it affected Karaköy's sociocultural identity, and as a result, it changed the identity of the place. The research creates a link between intangible values and their perception.

The main goal of the thesis is to create a complete historical narrative of Karaköy Square's multilayered transformation. The research provides a link to how the urban area was not only physically transformed by losing its cultural heritage but also how its identity was reshaped by the changing social and political aspects of the country between 1910 to 1960.

Keywords: Karaköy Square, tangible and intangible, identity, modernization, memory, urban development

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Ve tabii ki, en değerli destekçilerim, canım ailem... İyi günümde, zor günümde yanımda olan, beni her daim sevgiyle saran, sabırla dinleyen ve gücümü hiç kaybetmememi sağlayan kalplerinize teşekkür ederim.

Abstract.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	5
Table of contents.....	6-7
1. Introduction.....	9-10
1.1 Aim and Scope	10-12
1.2 Methodology and Sources	12-13
1.3 Structure of the thesis	13-14
2. Overview of Karaköy Square Before 1910.....	17
2.1 The site and historical background of Karaköy Square.....	17-18
2.2 Urban developments and transformations history	18-19
3. Building of Karaköy Square (1910-1950).....	21
3.1 Urban Development and Infrastructure.....	21
3.1.1 The New Tram line (1912).....	22-24
3.1.2 Construction of New Bridge (1913)	25-34
3.2 The New Landmark of the Square: Karaköy Palace	34-35
3.3 Urban transformations and Planning Efforts: Henri Prost	36-44
3.4 The New Representative of Karaköy Square: Alemdar Kardeşler Building	44-47
4. Destruction for Modernization: Karaköy in the Menderes Era (1950-1960).....	49
4.1 Shifting Visions: Prost's Dismissal and the Reworking of Urban Plans	50-53
4.2 The Menderes Demolitions and Urban Rebirth	54-67

5. Karaköy in Early 1960's.....	69
5.1 Opening of Underpass.....	69-72
5.2 The 1960 Military Coup and the End of the Menderes Era	73-75
6. Conflicts and Crises	77
6.1 Wagon-li Incident.....	78-81
6.2 Wealth Tax.....	81-83
6.3 6-7 September 1955 Events	84-89
6.4 Istanbul's Rise as Europe's Urban Model and The Chamber of Architects' Declaration	89-91
7. Did Urban Transformations Take Place to Change the Socio-Cultural Structure of Karaköy?.....	93-95
8. The Achieved Character Of Karaköy Square..	97-103
9. Conclusion.....	105-106
10. References.....	109-117

1- INTRODUCTION

1- INTRODUCTION

Karaköy Square is located on the intersection of the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus which is on the European side of Istanbul/ Türkiye. (Figure1) This strategic location has made the region the center of historical, economic and social dynamics throughout history. Thus, it has become an important reflection of the cosmopolitan structure of Istanbul. In the 20th century, it has witnessed rapid and radical change and transformation processes. These changes had an impact on the region's social identity, memory, and cultural significance in addition to its physical structures.



Figure 1. Location of Karaköy, Istanbul Municipality Maps, District Border
Map (<https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)

This thesis examines the half-century period between 1910 and 1960 to examine the urban transformation that took place in Karaköy Square. The main reason for choosing this time period is that these years witnessed radical and multifaceted changes in both the physical appearance and social fabric of Istanbul, and Karaköy in particular. It also represents a dynamic and complex phase. It is a process that extends from the formation of a new identity for the square in the early 1910s with new infrastructure projects in Karaköy. This was not only shaped by technical and architectural plans. It was also shaped by political preferences, ideological orientations and various socio-economic fractures. This period includes modernist planners such as Henri Prost for the city. Later, it is a process in which the transformation gained momentum with the influence of the radical demolition and construction policies initiated by Adnan Menderes in the 1950s. However, this process of change was not limited to plans and projects. Social ruptures such as the Wagon-Li Incident, the Wealth Tax application and the September 6-7 Events have also deeply shaken the social structure of Karaköy and shaped the memory and use of the space. Therefore, the period 1910-1960 is important in terms of understanding the multi-layered identity of Karaköy, which was shaped by both modernization efforts and the social traumas. This study does not only examine the physical dimension of the transformation that occurred in the period. The political wills, economic policies and social tensions that triggered this transformation will also be evaluated with a holistic perspective.

1.1 AIM AND SCOPE

The main purpose of this thesis is to analyze the relationship between tangible and intangible heritage that Karaköy Square went through in the 20th century between 1910-1960. Therefore, it is limited to Karaköy Square and its immediate surroundings. (Figure 2) The focus of the research is to address the physical structure of the square, the surrounding streets, trade centers, transportation connections and its relationship with the social dynamics of this region.

The study examines how urban projects, demolitions and modernization processes in the region affected the physical texture. Also evaluating the reflections of these changes on social identity, memory and cultural dynamics.



*Figure 2. Focus Area of the Thesis: 1966 Orthophoto
(created by author from <https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)*

Tangible Dimension: The architectural structures of the square and the changes in the transportation infrastructure will be discussed. Plans and urban arrangements will be examined. In this context, the construction of the tram line, the opening of the New Bridge, underpass projects, urban planning activities of Henri Prost and the demolitions of the Menderes period will be examined. After, the achieved character will be defined.

Intangible Dimension: The effects of the demolitions on social memory and cultural identity will be evaluated. Political and cultural traumas affecting the people will be compiled. In particular, the effects of historical events such as the Wealth Tax, the September 6-7 Events, the Wagon-li incident and the impressions on local and global scale on the identity of Karaköy will be analyzed in detail.

In this thesis, the transformation process of Karaköy Square in the 20th century will be examined as a whole. While architectural and urban-focused changes are examined concretely, changes in terms of social memory and cultural identity will be addressed abstractly. In this context, the effects of changes in the physical structure on social dynamics will be examined. The main goal of the study is to present all the tangible and intangible changes that the region has undergone mainly between 1910-1960 and to establish their relationships with each other.

1.2 METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

This study is methodologically based on qualitative research techniques. It adopts a multi-layered approach that combines textual and visual analyses. Primary sources, primarily archival documents, municipal reports, cadastral maps, city plans and visual materials, were used. In addition, secondary literature focusing on the urban modernization policies, crises and conflicts of the period supported the contextual framework of the study.

Historical maps from different periods were collected in order to follow and interpret spatial transformations. These maps were superimposed and systematically compared. With comparative analysis, the changes in Karaköy Square, the displacement or disappearance of some structures, were identified. Visual materials such as photographs and postcards were evaluated together with the maps using an iconographic reading method. This method made it possible to understand not only the physical transformations but also the symbolic representations of the space in a multi-layered way.

The iconographic approach was particularly useful in analyzing the change in the visual identity of the square over time. Not only demolitions and new constructions, but also the meaning of the square were examined through visual documents. In this way, structural interventions were evaluated together with the ruptures in urban memory and identity.

In addition, newspapers of the period were examined and how social and political events were reflected in urban space was investigated. This study does not only cover concrete physical changes. It also takes into account the abstract transformation dimensions such as memory, ideology and cultural representation inherent in the spatial narrative of Karaköy Square.

With this multi-layered method, it was revealed that the transformation of Karaköy Square between 1910 and 1960 was not limited to the physical reconstruction process alone; it was also a complex interaction of urban images that changed with multi-layered interventions.

1.3 THESIS STRUCTURE

The thesis follows a thematic structure to comprehensively examine the transformation of Karaköy Square between 1910 to 1960.

- The first section is the Introduction, which is the general framework, methodology and structure of the study.
- The second section is a brief introduction to the history of the square until 1910. It provides a background to the period before the main focus period. It examines how the physical and social context of Karaköy Square was shaped.
- The third section examines the developments in Karaköy Square between 1910 and 1950. It examines infrastructure projects such as the tram line, the New Bridge. As well as Henri Prost's efforts to plan Istanbul and the urban developments that took place during this period.
- The fourth section describes the demolition and reconstruction activities carried out in Karaköy within the scope of the modernization policies of the Adnan Menderes government.

- The fifth section focuses on the changes it went through in the 1960s are discussed within the framework of underpass projects and new urban visions.
- The sixth section examines the conflicts that changed the socio-cultural identity of the region during the period of urban changes.
- The seventh section discusses whether urban transformations are taking place to change the socio-cultural structure of Karaköy
- The eighth section discusses the transforming identity of the region by analyzing the new architectural and urban representatives of Karaköy Square.

2. OVERVIEW OF KARAKÖY SQUARE BEFORE 1912

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Karaköy Square has contributed significantly to Istanbul's historical texture. Its history is multilayered, having hosted three separate civilizations and being geographically advantageous. Its complex structure of Karaköy allows us to identify the interactions between its social, cultural, and economic aspects as well as its physical surroundings.

2.1 LOCATION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF KARAKÖY SQUARE:

Karaköy has been part of Istanbul's boundaries since the fifth century. Karaköy, which was added to the borders by the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius II, reached its peak status in the 13th century, when the Genoese settled. The Genoese employed this area for a variety of commercial enterprises due to its strategic location. Thus, it became Istanbul's busiest port district. As seen in the 1442 Cristoforo Buondelmonte Istanbul Engraving, the territory was designed to be secured from foreign attacks, therefore walls were built. With the development of the borders, additional walls and towers were built. After, the structure began to disintegrate in the 16th century. (Küçük and Mazlum, 2017, 90)

In 1838, Karaköy started to grow into the Ottoman Empire's global hub for trade and banking after the foreign trade agreement with England and France was signed. Leading banks from western nations began opening branches in this area one after another. As a result of this development, contributing to the region's economic growth and turning it into a commercial hub with increased maritime traffic.

The Crimean War, which the Ottomans fought alongside England and France against Russia, exposed the area to the inflow of several ethnic groups in the 19th century. This demographic diversity was the precursor to the important legal reforms made during the

Tanzimat¹ period. The concept of citizenship, which emerged part of these reforms, granted individuals to acquire property regardless of ethnic identity. With the development of trade, Karaköy became a center, therefore land and real estate gained value and Karaköy's spatial transformation was unavoidable.

The source of the name “Karaköy” is believed to come from the Karaite Jews who arrived during the Crimean War and spoke Tatar Turkish. "Karai" means "bookstore & reader" in Hebrew, and they adopted this term since they solely accepted the Torah. Over time, this name is believed to have evolved into karaiköy, karayköy, and karaköy. (Sabah, 2015)

2.2 URBAN DEVELOPMENTS AND TRANSFORMATIONS HISTORY:

The urban transformation of Karaköy began in the 18th century when the Galata walls began to lose their importance and gained momentum in the 19th century. Beginning in the 1800's, permission was granted to build houses on the walls on condition that a certain fee was paid to the municipality. This was one of the first steps in opening the area to urban transformation by losing the defensive function of the walls. In addition, the demolition of the Karaköy wall gate in 1857-1858 allowed the Karaköy Square to expand and ensured that the area became the center of commercial and social activities. (Kafesçioğlu, 2016, 182) These changes indicate a significant transformation process in the urban texture and spatial order of Karaköy.

The period between 1850-1900 was decisive in the physical transformation of Karaköy because it witnessed frequent major fire disasters. Large areas were emptied due to fires and new construction opportunities arose in their place. In line with the period's

¹ *Tanzimat: The Tanzimat was a period of reform and modernization that took place in the Ottoman Empire between 1839 and 1876. The word "Tanzimat" is of Arabic origin and means "regulations" or "reorganization." The main purpose of this period was to strengthen the weakened structure of the empire, to approach an equal order with European states, and to carry out political, administrative, legal and social*

modernizing aspirations, new zoning and regulation rules were introduced, aiming to make the region safer. (Küçük and Mazlum, 2017, 96) Thus, the transformation of Karaköy's road and structural texture began.

Sultan Abdulhamid II requested that experts be brought from France to beautify and, if necessary, rebuild Istanbul, and for this purpose, Joseph Antoine Bouvard, the chief architect of the Paris Municipality and the designer of the magnificent exhibition structures at the 1878 Paris World Exhibition, was contacted. Invited to plan Istanbul in 1901, Bouvard stated that he could not leave the city due to his responsibilities in Paris; however, he agreed to work remotely. Bouvard emphasized that detailed maps of the city should be prepared first in order for city planning to be carried out. Instead, Bouvard developed proposals for the city using large-scale photographs of certain areas of Istanbul. One of his two proposals included the Karaköy District. However, these projects did not take into account the topography and existing texture of Istanbul, but displayed an understanding that placed large mosques at the center of the design and reflected the formalist urban aesthetics of the Beaux-Arts style.

Furthermore, it was an important turning point in the development of maps. Foreign insurance companies opened branches in Istanbul and took on the task of drawing maps showing the fire risk of the city, and thus Charles Edward Goad prepared a plan covering the Karaköy region between 1904 and 1906. With the declaration of the Second Constitutional Era in 1908, the preparation of a realistic plan for the holistic treatment of Istanbul came to the agenda. Antoine Bouvard was invited again in 1908 and his views were taken. Bouvard emphasized once again that the current maps should be prepared first, and in this direction, a commission established in 1909 began work on creating city maps. (Bilsel, 2015)

3. BUILDING OF KARAKÖY SQUARE (1910-1950)

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The years between 1910-1950 represent from the end of the Ottoman Empire to the early years of the Republic of Türkiye until Adnan Menderes era. Karaköy undertook an effort to maintain its historical identity at this time, but it also searched for a new identity that corresponded to the ideas of modern urbanism. Therefore, Karaköy Square became the focal point of the city's multidimensional transformations with its strategic location. The physical structure of the square was transformed with infrastructure projects. Urban planning studies reshaped the urban space of the region. The region has become the center of attraction of transformation processes.

3.1 URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Karaköy Square's physical characteristics and urban infrastructure underwent major changes between 1910 and 1950. Numerous projects were carried out in accordance with modernization goals as a result of the Ottoman Empire's transition to the Republic. In addition to being a hub for trade and transit at this time, Karaköy was also an important location for infrastructural development in the city.

One of the fundamental elements of urban development and infrastructure projects has been the improvement of transportation systems. These projects have strengthened Karaköy's transportation connections. Furthermore, transformed the square into a strategic point of urban mobility in Istanbul. Thus, with infrastructure projects, the physical boundaries of Karaköy Square have been expanded.

3.1.1 THE NEW TRAM LINE (1912):

In Istanbul, the transformation of transportation infrastructure began in the years when horse-drawn trams were the main means of transportation at the end of the 19th century. However, with the growth of the city's population and the advancement of industrialization, this mode of transportation became insufficient. Consequently, the search for faster and more efficient alternatives gained momentum. 1912 was an important turning point for Istanbul. Marking the beginning of a major transformation in transportation during the final years of the Ottoman Empire. In particular, in 1912, During the Balkan War, the government made horse-drawn trams unusable in Istanbul due to the need to transport soldiers and ammunition. (Engin, 2015) This created an opportunity for the electrification of the city's transportation system.



*Figure 3. Horse-Drawn Tram in Karaköy (around 1900's,
<https://www.eskiistanbul.net/tag/karak%C3%B6y/> accessed 25 December, 2024)*



*Figure 4. Horse-Drawn Tram in Karaköy Bridge, around 1900's, Levi et Fils
Pierre de Gigord Collection (<https://www.eskiistanbul.net/tag/karak%C3%B6y/>
accessed 25 December, 2024)*

The confiscation of the horses in the tram company during the Balkan War meant that the traditional horse-drawn trams in Istanbul became history. During this period, the transportation infrastructure in Istanbul entered a major transformation process. In 1911, an agreement was made to switch the tram line to an electric system and electric trams began to arrive in Istanbul. (Engin, 2015) These electric trams were an important step not only in terms of transportation but also in the modernization of the social structure of Istanbul. From 1912 onwards, many important points in the city, including Karaköy Square, were reshaped for the new tram line.

The urban interventions made in Karaköy Square for the passage of the tram line not only ensured the modernization of transportation but also affected the architectural structures in this region. Karaköy had an important place as the commercial center of Istanbul for many years. However, some structures in this area had to be rebuilt or moved back in order for the tram line to pass.

In 1912, the necessary space was opened for the construction of the tram line, and some structures were demolished or moved back in the process. In this context, an important example in the study area is the Borsa (Commission and Consolidated) Inn. This inn was demolished and rebuilt as a single storey. Such structural interventions not only changed the urban texture of Istanbul, but also reshaped the city's commercial, transportation and social structures.



Figure 5. Karaköy - Eminönü Tram Line Opening, 1914
(<https://www.eskiistanbul.net/tag/karak%C3%B6y/>, accessed December 25, 2024)

The creation of the tram line had a great impact not only on Karaköy Square but also on different parts of the city. An important commercial center such as Karaköy was directly connected to Eminönü by an electric tram line with the new bridge, and this made the city an important center in terms of transportation as well as trade. Since electric trams were much faster and more efficient than horse-drawn trams, the way people got around also changed rapidly. This transformation increased the mobility in densely populated areas such as Karaköy and reshaped the city's commercial life.

3.1.2 CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BRIDGE (1913):

The Galata Bridge has become one of the most important symbols of Istanbul, both historically and culturally. When we look at the history of bridge construction over the Golden Horn, we see that a series of bridge construction attempts were made during the Ottoman period. The first bridge was built in 1836 during the reign of Sultan Mahmud II under the name of "Hayratiye Bridge". This bridge was located between Unkapanı and Azapkapı and aimed to meet the growing commercial needs of Istanbul. Then, during the reign of Sultan Abdülmecid, a wooden pontoon bridge was built to connect Eminönü and Karaköy in 1845. This bridge was called "Cisr-i Cedid" (New Bridge) and remained in service for approximately 18 years. (Okumuş, 2024)

Later, an iron bridge built in 1875 connected the two sides of the Golden Horn, facilitating trade and transportation. This bridge was the first openable bridge for maritime traffic. (Özen, 2011, 38) However, this bridge began to be inadequate over the years due to the increasing population and trade volume. Despite its 24 iron piers, this bridge had a wooden floor with 480 meters long and 14 meters wide. Therefore, it was neither suitable for vehicle traffic nor for an electric tram infrastructure after the horse-drawn trams were phased out. Bridges were not only physical structures, but also important symbols of Istanbul's modernization efforts.



Figure 6. Wooden Galata Bridge with Heavy Pedestrian Traffic (around 1900's, unknown, <https://www.kanalistanbul.com.tr/listanbul-kopruleri-ve-hikayeleri-galata-koprusul> accessed 07 January, 2025)



Figure 7. Porters Carrying Goods on a Wooden Galata Bridge (1908, unknown, <https://forummeskeni.com/konular/unutulan-bir-meslek-osmanlinin-emektar-iscileri-hamallar.2989/> accessed 07 January, 2025)

The New Galata Bridge, built in 1913, is one of the modernization efforts of the late Ottoman Empire. In the years before the Second Constitutional Era, the old bridge was in a dilapidated state and was in danger of sinking. This situation necessitated the construction of a new bridge. In this context, an agreement was made with a German company on April 18, 1907 for the construction of the new bridge. According to the initial plans, the bridge was designed to be 462 meters long and 20 meters wide. In addition, it was planned to leave two large passage areas for small sea vessels. (Tlbenti, 1956, 3)

After the declaration of the Second Constitutional Era in 1908, the projects were re-evaluated. The government found the width of the bridge insufficient and decided to increase it to 25 meters. Other design changes were added and a new agreement was made in November 1909. The materials used in the construction of the bridge were brought from Germany and the pieces were assembled on site. Construction was completed in 1912 and the bridge was opened with a ceremony held on April 27, 1913, the anniversary of Sultan Read's accession to the throne. The old bridge was removed from Karaky and moved to Unkapanı, where it was used until 1939. A new bridge was built in Unkapanı in 1939. (Tlbenti, 1956, 3)

Like previous bridges, crossing this bridge was also subject to a fee until 1930. Tolls were collected from the booths at the entrances of the bridge according to the number of people in the vehicle and the amount of cargo carried. (Erener, 2021) However, according to a source dated October 21, 1956, the Karaköy Bridge underwent a major repair two years ago and the trams were removed, but it was no longer sufficient for the needs. (Tülbentçi, 1956, 3)

The bridge was positioned a little further towards the Golden Horn. This was an important urban planning decision. This change facilitated the formation of Eminönü and Karaköy squares. Karaköy Square is located at the point where the bridge connects. The location of the new bridge was determined to both regulate maritime traffic on the Golden Horn and provide better connections to the squares.

The decisions taken regarding the newly constructed Galata Bridge also had significant effects on Karaköy Square. Especially the widening of the bridge and the advancement of its location caused architectural changes in the square. The effects on the buildings in the square, which started with the passage of the tram line, also led to the demolition of some buildings with the connection of the new bridge.



Figure 8. Marking the differences by overlaying the 1913 German Blueprints map onto the 1905 Goad map. (created by author),

Goad Map: Charles Edouard Goad, 1905,

<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/110010>, accessed 20 january, 2025

German Blueprints Map: 1913, <https://sehirplanlama.ibb.istanbul/beyoglu-arsivi-haritalar/> accessed 20 january 2025

In this context, three main structures in the study area were directly affected: Borsa (Commission and Consolidated) Inn, Del Genio Brasserie & Restaurant and Aziziye Police Station.

In the map comparison, the building block on the right is the Borsa (Commission and Consolidated) Inn. It is one of the most striking examples of the changes in Karaköy Square because of the tram construction. Firstly, in 1858, a decision was made by the municipal council to build a new inn to provide income to the municipality on the west of the Karaköy Square. A competition was held in 1859 for the Borsa Inn, which was built in 1861, became an important structure for the commercial life of Istanbul. This inn has an important historical function, especially as one of the places where the stock exchange activities in Istanbul were carried out by both Muslim-Turks and minorities. This inn bordered the square and was functionally an example of an early modern structure with its traditional courtyard inn character. (Kafesçioğlu, 2016) It represents the early modernization period with its interior layout and function. This inn, one of the important structures of the square, has shaped the commercial life of Istanbul both architecturally and functionally. In 1912, a change was made to the Borsa Inn in order to provide the necessary distance for the passage of the electric tram line reaching Karaköy. In this context, the structure was pulled back from its place and rebuilt by the architect Jean Barborini by the Sixth Municipal Department [Beyoğlu Municipality] as a single storey.

This intervention became one of the important symbols of urban change and modernization in Istanbul. The withdrawal of the Borsa Inn from its place was a difficult process that required coping with the bureaucratic difficulties of the period. However, this change was an indicator of the modernization of Istanbul's transportation infrastructure and the shaping of Karaköy Square with new functions. Such interventions symbolize the efforts to establish a balance between historical structures and modern transportation systems and initiated an important urban transformation process by taking into account both the cultural heritage and contemporary needs of the city.

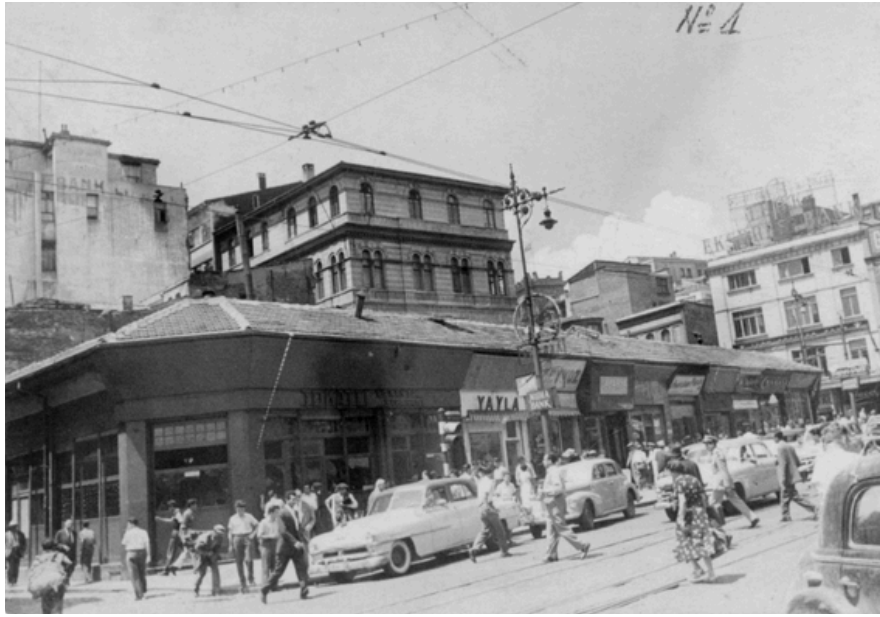


Figure 9. The single-storey Borsa (Commission and Consolidated) Inn designed by architect Jean Barborini, Before 1958, Cemal Işın
(<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/117257> Accessed 20 January, 2025)

On the other corner of Fermeneciler Street, there is a two-story building. It was recorded as Del Genio Brasserie & Restaurant on Charles Edward Goad's 1905 map. It was put into service for the public with different functions over time. When we look at the German Blueprints map of 1913, we see that the building block has gotten smaller. This situation gives the impression that the building was cut out or was demolished and rebuilt. However, there is no definite information about this building. Based on the map data alone, it is understood that it underwent a structural transformation. On the Suat Nirven Map dated 1947 (Figure 12), this building was named "Mehmet Ali Pasha Inn". From the inscription on it, it is understood that the building was used as the Post and Telegraph Organization (PTT) for a period. Although there is no concrete information about who built the building and when, it is known that the Dersaadet Chamber of Commerce started operating in Mehmet Ali Pasha Inn in 1882. This situation strengthens the possibility that the building was built during that period.



*Figure 10. Mehmet Ali Pasha Inn Marked As Dersaadet Chamber of Commerce
(unknown date, Istanbul Chamber of Commerce,
<https://istanbulticaretgazetesi.com/galeri/mehmet-ali-pasa-han>, accessed 27
January, 2025)*

On the 1905 Goad Map, the building on the left, close to the sea, at the beginning of the bridge is named Aziziye Police Station. Aziziye Police Station was built in 1866 when pedestrian traffic on the Galata Bridge increased significantly and the need for security became an increasingly important issue. It is one of the 232 police stations built by the Ottoman Sultan Sultan Abdulaziz. The building was known among the public as the “Ornate Police Station” due to its aesthetic architecture and eye-catching decorations. With its elegant and detailed stonework, facade and decorations, Aziziye Police Station became one of the most striking structures of the period. Beyond being just a security point, it became one of the symbol structures of Karaköy. However, it was seriously damaged in the great earthquake that occurred in 1893 and lost much of its structural integrity. (Çağlayan, 2016, 147) Thereupon, it was repaired by the famous Italian architect Raimondo Tommaso D’Aronco.



Figure 11. Aziziye Police Station, Max Fruchtermann, 1855
(<https://saltonline.org/en/2762/photography-collections-at-salt-research>,
accessed 5 May 2025)

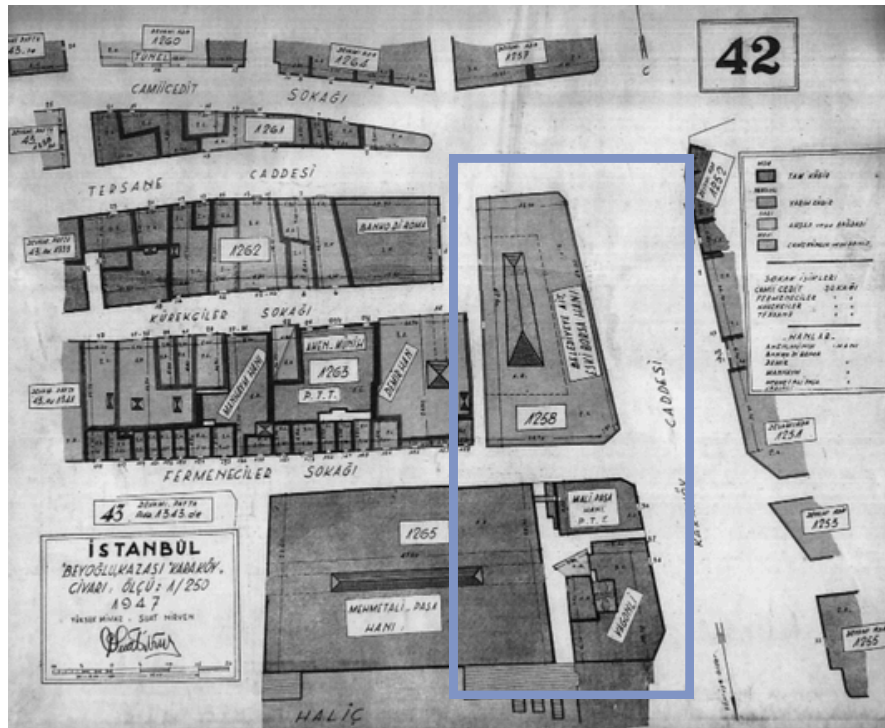


Figure 12. Suat Nirven Map, 1947
(<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/192185>, accessed 27
January 2025)

After the demolition of the Aziziye Police Station, as seen on the Suat Nirven Map dated 1947 (Figure 12), a new structure was built in this area in 1910: the Wagon-Li (Wagons Lits Cook) building. This building belonged to the Wagon-Li company, a French

railway company famous especially for its sleeping and dining cars. (Asar, 2023) Wagon-Li played an important role in railway transportation in Europe since the end of the 19th century. This building, as a part of this multicultural structure of Karaköy, symbolized the presence of the French company in the region amidst the shops and trading points belonging to foreigners in the region. This situation further reinforced both the cultural and commercial diversity of Karaköy.



Figure 13. Wagon-Li, Wolfenstein: Karaköy, İstanbul, 1950
(<https://www.eskiistanbul.net/4543/wolfenstein-karakoy-istanbul-1950>,
accessed 6 May 2025)

Raimondo D'Aronco is a famous Italian architect who gained fame with his Art Nouveau style. He built a new mosque in 1903 in place of the old Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque in Karaköy Square. (Esmer, 2013) There was a small church here during the Byzantine period. With the conquest of Istanbul, the church was converted into a mosque. During the reign of Fatih Sultan Mehmet, it began to be used as a lodge. The lodge, which was ruined over time, was demolished by the Grand Vizier of the period. His name is Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha, and was rebuilt in 1670 as a fevkani² mosque. On the lower floor of the mosque, shops and warehouses were added in order to provide income for the place of worship and to meet the expenses of the mosque.

² Fevkani: Fevkani is a multi-storey mosque type with the ground floor generally used for commercial purposes and the upper floor a place of worship. This use was frequently preferred during the Ottoman
32 period, especially in densely populated districts.

The name of the mosque became synonymous with its founder, Kara Mustafa Pasha, over time. However, in 1902, Sultan Abdulhamid decided to build a new mosque for this mosque, which was destroyed over time. Following this decision, it was decided that the cafeteria named Cafe d'Orient, which was operating in the area where the mosque would be built, should not be demolished. (Esmer, 2013) Therefore, it was decided to build the new mosque on top of the existing shops. The leading architects of the period, Gotzo, Patrokles, Kampanakis and Raimondo D'Aronco, submitted projects for this new mosque. Sultan Abdulhamid found the project proposed by D'Aronco more interesting and accepted this project and construction began. While the new mosque was being built, the shops and cafeteria on the lower floor were connected to the foundations of the old mosque by means of steel girders in order to be compatible. The main mass of the structure and its minaret were designed in an octagonal shape. Thus, the mosque was given a unique form. It has an octagonal structure, a marble exterior decorated with floral reliefs and a carved wooden minaret. It was also known as the wooden mosque. The new mosque stands out as the smallest structure in D'Aronco's career, especially with its elegant design and small scale. The details of this building are one of the examples of the architect's aesthetic understanding reflecting the Art Nouveau style.



Figure 14. Aziziye Police Station on the left, Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque on the right; and Military Parade, Salt Research, before 1910)

(<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/125074>, accessed 6 May 2025)



Figure 15. Wagon-Li building on the left, Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque on the right, Aydınlık, 1934 (<https://www.aydinlik.com.tr/haber/ilk-defa-goreceginiz-istanbulun-eski-fotograflari-417057>, accessed 6 May 2025)

3.2 THE NEW LANDMARK OF THE SQUARE: KARAKÖY PALACE

Karaköy Square continued to be the commercial and cultural center of the city in the early 1900s. From the Ottoman period to the Republic, the structures in the square were the basic elements that shaped the architectural and socio-economic structure of the city. One of the most important examples of this transformation is the demolition of Aziziye Police Station, which had been the symbol of the square for many years. With the demolition of the station, Karaköy Square for a long time did not have a clear symbol. However, Karaköy Palace, which was built in 1920, became the new symbol of the square.

Karaköy Palas was designed by Italian architect Giulio Mongeri in 1920. The structure was originally designed as a four-story building, but over time, a floor was added and it became five-story. The building has a rectangular plan and symmetrical layout. With the construction of Karaköy Palas, the western facade of Karaköy Square was redefined. The entrances of the building are directly related to the square and support the commercial

identity of this area in both physical and functional terms. Despite this, the historical identity of the building has been preserved and has survived to the present day.

When the facade layout facing Karaköy Square is examined, Ottoman and Byzantine elements specific to the 1st National Architecture Movement³ were used. (Aktemur-Arslan, 2006) In addition, it is seen that the influences of Western Neoclassicism and Art Nouveau are also evident. The projections on the facade, Byzantine column capitals and plasters decorated with plant motifs show the eclectic stance of the building within the architecture of the period. The reliefs placed on the round arch spandrels and the decorations arranged in geometric panels show that it was inspired by both Ottoman and Western art. It is thought that the architect Mongeri designed it under the influence of the architectural tradition in Northern Italy and that this building reflects the palazzo typology in Milan in particular. (Aktemur-Arslan, 2006)

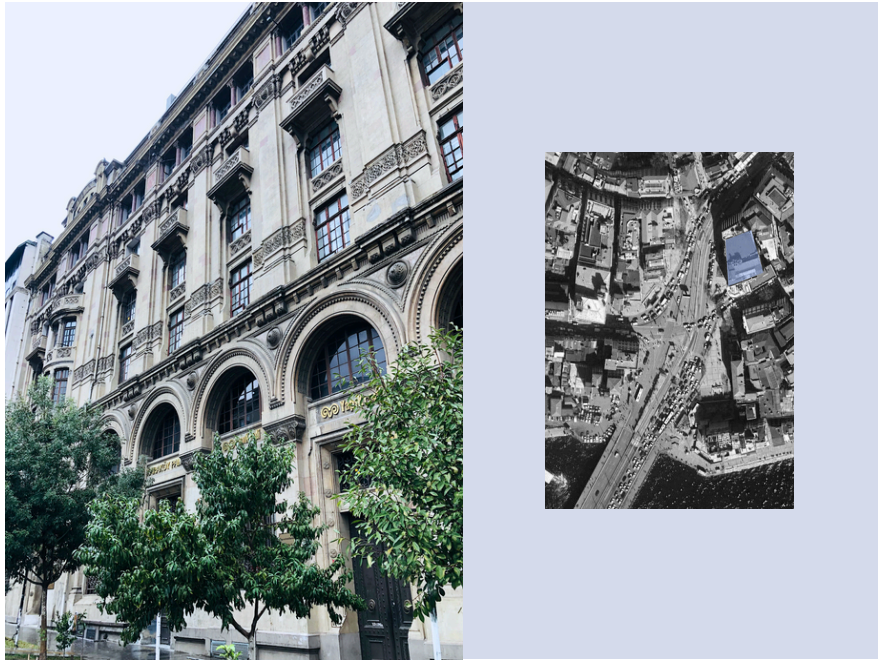


Figure 16. Karaköy Palace, Inan Kenan Olgar, 2022

(<https://kulturenvanteri.com/en/yer/karakoy-palasi/#16.65/41.022883/28.975653>, accessed 6 May 2025)

Key Map: Created by author on 2022 Satellite Map from IBB Sehir Haritalari
(<https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)

³ *The 1st National Architecture Movement: This movement in Türkiye dates back to the late Ottoman Empire and the early years of the Republic. It aimed to move away from Western influences and develop an architectural style that reflected the cultural identity and traditions of the Turkish people. This movement was particularly intended to carry the traces of traditional Turkish architecture with folk structures and local materials.*

3.3 URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS AND PLANNING EFFORTS: HENRI PROST

From the beginning of the 1900s onwards, Istanbul entered a process of urban transformation. This was part of the modernization efforts of the Ottoman Empire. Especially in the late Ottoman Empire, during the reign of Abdulhamid II, the urbanism approach in Western Europe was influenced. For this reason, infrastructure improvements, transportation projects and urban fabric organization efforts were carried out in the Karaköy area. However, these transformation efforts were mostly fragmented and local; they were not holistic urban planning. In the early 20th century, Istanbul had a rapidly growing population. Therefore, it needed new planning approaches due to transportation deficiencies and irregular construction.

In the early 1900s, modernization movements in Istanbul were limited to infrastructure projects in Karaköy. The construction of the Karaköy tram line in 1912 facilitated transportation in the area and increased the existing commercial vitality of the square. The reconstruction of the Galata Bridge in 1913 also began to change the structural identity of Karaköy. However, such projects could not adequately respond to the rapidly changing needs of the city. There was a need for more comprehensive planning.

The declaration of the Republic in 1923 changed not only the political structure of Türkiye but also its social and urban dynamics. The new administration wanted to build a modern and contemporary state. It aimed to transform the irregular urbanization inherited from the Ottoman Empire. However, with the declaration of Ankara as the capital in 1932, Istanbul entered a new era. Although Istanbul lost its status as the capital, it continued to be the most important economic, commercial and cultural center of the country. In the early years of the Republic, the biggest problems of Istanbul were infrastructural deficiencies, transportation problems, irregular construction and public health issues. During this period, the new administration both made legal arrangements and initiated a comprehensive urban transformation process with the support of international urban experts.

The "Law on Municipalities" that went into effect in 1930 radically changed the administrative structure of Istanbul. With this law, the provincial and municipal administrations were united under a single roof. Thus, a centralized model was adopted in the administration of Istanbul. This new structure granted municipalities broader powers and also aimed to systematize the city administration. However, with the powers granted to municipalities, it was also required to prepare a plan for the development of Istanbul within five years. (Tekeli, 2013, 78) This was an important step in shaping the future of Istanbul in a planned manner. However, serious difficulties were experienced due to lack of financing and technical capacity.

The "Law on Public Health" that went into effect the same year in 1930 foresaw the cities being brought into compliance with modern standards in terms of public health. This law particularly covered the regulation of basic services such as infrastructure systems, sewage, clean water supply and transportation. In Karaköy, issues such as the widening of the main arteries connected to the Galata Bridge, the organization of the square and the improvement of irregular structures in the surrounding area began to be discussed during this period. However, the financial resources were insufficient in terms of implementing the required plans, and therefore their implementation was delayed.

In 1932, a decision was made to prepare a comprehensive city plan for the development of Istanbul. A limited competition was held among international city planners to prepare a plan for Istanbul, using the method used in Ankara's planning as an example. Funds were allocated for this purpose in the 1932 and 1933 budgets. (Tekeli, 2013, 79)

Those invited to the competition were: Herman Elgötz, Alfred Agache, Jacques H. Lambert and Henri Prost.

Elgötz is an experienced German urban planner, especially known for his success in the planning of the city of Essen. With this success, he started to work in the urban planning department at the Technische Hochschule in Berlin.

Agache is a French planner. He was the vice president of the French Urbanists Association. He carried out the planning of the city of Dunkerque in France. When he was called to plan Istanbul, he was about to complete the city plan of Rio de Janeiro, the capital of Brazil. At the same time, he was a follower of the Le Play and since he was a part of the "Science Sociale" circle, he had a sociology-based urban planning approach.

Prost won the Rome Prize while studying at the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts. During his studies at the Villa Medici between 1902-1907, he came to Istanbul and was interested in the Byzantine period situation of Hagia Sophia and its surroundings. During this period, he carried out survey and reconstruction studies of the region. In 1909, he won first place in the international competition organized for the planning of the city of Antwerp. During the governorship of Marshal Lyautey in Morocco, he took part in the planning of many cities, especially Casablanca and Rabat, as well as Meknes, Fez and Marrakech. In 1926, he prepared a plan for the great fire area in Izmir together with R. Danger. In addition, in 1924, he undertook the planning of the 200-kilometer coastline in the Cote d'Azur Varoise region. From 1928 onwards, he served as the President of the Paris Region Planning Board.

In 1933, these planners, except for Prost, came to Istanbul and conducted various examinations in the city. The prepared report was presented to the municipality. The maps of the city were given to them, but no detailed planning program was presented. The planners were asked to prepare a report and sketches containing their suggestions for Istanbul and submit them to the municipality. In addition, during their stay in Istanbul, they shared their urbanism understanding and views at conferences held in higher education institutions that provide architectural education. The studies prepared were later translated and published. Afterwards, a comparative evaluation was made by a seven-person technical commission. (Tekeli, 2013, 79- 80) As a result, Herman Elgötz won the competition because it was thought to be more realistic; but for unknown reasons he was not given the authority to plan Istanbul. (Bayındır Uluskan, 2007, 117)

During this process, Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933 changed the political balance in Europe. Many intellectuals, scientists and urban planners in Germany were forced to leave their countries. The famous urban planner, the chief planner of Berlin, Martin Wagner, was one of them. He was invited to plan Istanbul. Martin Wagner has carried out one of the most serious studies in this field by conducting a comprehensive traffic analysis on urban planning in Türkiye. Wagner, who describes himself as an expert in urbanization problems, argued that Türkiye's modernization cities should create their own style. According to him, architecture is not only a matter of design, but also a process that must be supported by a strong economy. (Bayındır Uluskan, 2007, 117-118) Wagner, who was in Türkiye between 1935 and 1938, made important warnings about issues such as expropriation, land prices and demolitions. However, his suggestions were not taken into consideration sufficiently. While the fact that economic factors were ignored in urban planning studies shows that planning is a long-term process, the projects of the period were canceled many times and a stable urban planning policy could not be established.

At the end of 1933, Henri Prost was invited by the Turkish Ambassador in Paris, Suad Davas, to plan a spa settlement in Yalova. Prost, who came to Istanbul in the summer of 1935, observed the current state of the city and developed his views on urban planning during his time there. After a while, he received an official offer from the Governor and Mayor of Istanbul, Muhittin Üstündağ, to work as a “consultant” in the planning of Istanbul. (Bilsel, 2015)

In 1936, a two-year contract was signed between the Istanbul Municipality and Henri Prost. Thus, Prost was tasked with preparing the Master Plan and Program of Istanbul. Accordingly, an urban planning office was established within the Istanbul Municipality, enabling Prost and his team to carry out the planning work. Prost and his team worked intensively on the master plan until 1937. Prost emphasized the need for topographic and social data in the planning process. He stated that the process was prolonged due to the lack of comprehensive data about the city.

Due to the lack of sufficient maps about the city, Prost took aerial photographs and collected detailed topographic information. The collection of this data took two years. Finally, the plan covering the Beyoğlu and Pera regions of the European side, including Karaköy, was completed on September 15, 1937. This process was followed by the 1/5,000 scale master plan and 1/2,000 scale detailed plans, which were completed on May 30, 1939.

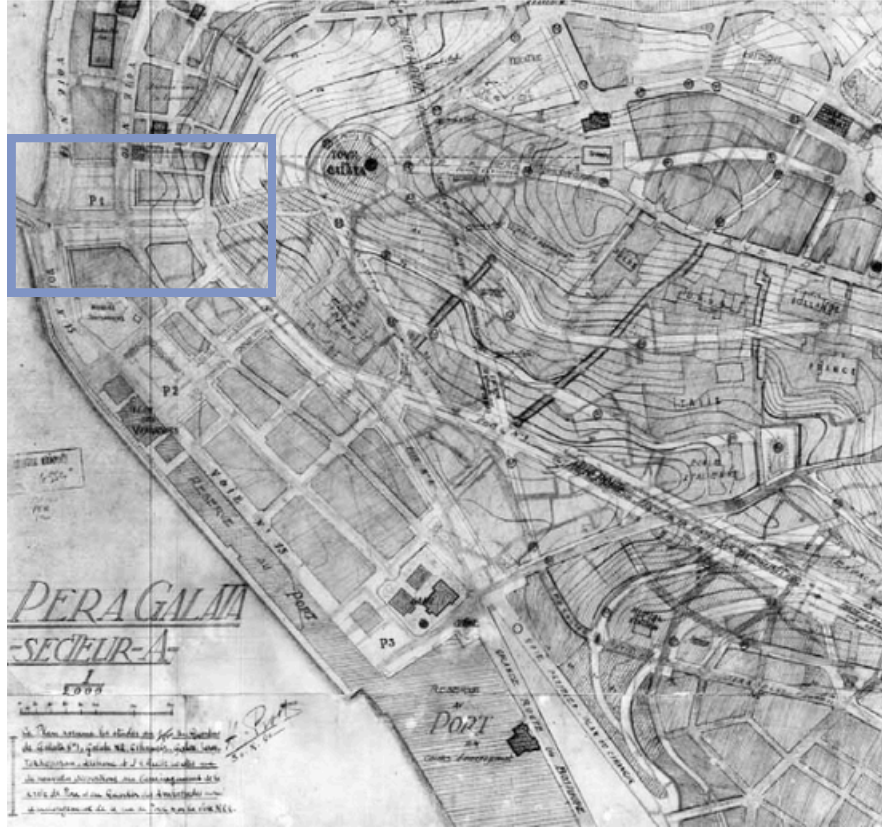


Figure 17. Henri Prost, *Pera-Galata Proposal*, IBB Şehir Haritaları, 1937)
(<https://sehirplanlama.ibb.istanbul/beyoglu-arsivi-haritalar/> accessed 6 May 2025)

This plan was first submitted to the Ministry of the Interior. However, shortly afterwards, the zoning work was transferred to the Ministry of Public Works. Therefore, the plan was reviewed again, and later some revisions were suggested. (Bayındır Uluskan, 2007, 120) Throughout the process, developments such as the death of Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Türkiye, and the resignation of Muhittin Üstündağ, the Governor and Mayor of Istanbul at the time, affected this process. While the approval process of the plan was prolonged, urban transformation and zoning work in Istanbul were also affected by this uncertainty.

Dr. Lütfi Kırdar, who took office in 1938, accelerated the approval process of Prost's plans and the plan was finally approved by the authorities in Ankara in 1939. (Bilsel, 2015) However, at this stage, an evaluation report was prepared by Wagner questioning the realism of the plan. In addition, the lack of financing methods and land policies in terms of its applicability was emphasized. Despite all these criticisms, the plan came into effect in 1939. (Tekeli, 2013, 80) In addition, it was envisaged that the plan would be implemented in 15 years. An implementation program consisting of three periods of five years each was prepared.

In the late 1930s, especially in early 1938, there was also movement among Turkish architects. Turkish architects argued that they should be given a role in the process of detailing the main projects prepared by Prost. For this reason, they applied to the municipality. Prost stated, "I will prepare the main project, and the details should be undertaken by Turkish architects." (Bayındır Uluskan, 2007, 145) This situation supported the demands of Turkish architects on this issue. However, these statements were not fully reflected in practice and unfortunately the participation of Turkish architects remained limited.

The main purpose of Henri Prost's master plan was to create a modern transportation infrastructure while preserving the natural and historical texture of Istanbul. It was to make urban centers such as Karaköy more functional. Instead of encouraging the expansion of the city towards the west, Prost suggested that existing areas be used more intensively. In this direction, he concluded that the Istanbul master plan should not be a "development plan" (plan d'extension) but rather a "concentration/gathering plan" (plan de concentration). (Bilsel, 2015) For this, he aimed to restructure urban areas that had developed separately from each other around a spine. In this plan, transportation networks within the city were reorganized, new arteries and roads were opened, and transportation was made more efficient. Prost emphasized that the transportation system should be modernized while preserving the historical and cultural structure of the city. In this context, he tried to strengthen the connections within the city by focusing on certain axes.

Karaköy was an important area in Prost's planning. It was positioned as the city's trade center. It was desired to preserve its historical texture but integrate it into a modern transportation network. Prost gave importance to the organization of the main roads in Karaköy and its surroundings. He expanded the roads connecting Taksim and Karaköy and his aim was to make this area more accessible with the central business areas. He also increased the capacity of the Galata Bridge. In this way, the connection between Eminönü and Karaköy was strengthened. The transportation arrangements proposed to strengthen the connection between Karaköy and Eminönü aimed to increase the integration of motor vehicles into the city. Prost predicted that individual car use would become widespread in the future. He positioned Karaköy within the main trade axis of Istanbul. (Tekeli, 2013, 84)

In 1943, Henri Prost prepared the Ten-Year Implementation Plan. It aimed to accelerate the modernization process of Istanbul and to have the city undergo a major transformation for the 500th anniversary of the conquest in 1953. Instead of the 15-year implementation period previously envisioned by Prost, a shorter-term plan was prepared due to the economic and social difficulties brought on by the war. World War II, which began in 1939, had a profound effect on the country's economic and political decisions, even though it did not directly bring Türkiye into the war. Türkiye did not officially join the war during this period but it increased its defense spending against a possible invasion threat. Therefore, it allocated its public budget primarily for military measures. During this period, resources allocated to large infrastructure projects were restricted, and urbanization activities slowed down. In other words, many of the transformations envisioned by Prost had to be postponed. This situation gradually began to reduce Henri Prost's influence on Istanbul.

Another important factor in the decline of Prost's influence was the political changes in Türkiye. Since the declaration of the Republic in 1923, the country has been governed by a single-party regime. In this regime, urbanization policies were largely shaped by state

control. However, after 1945, democratization movements gained momentum worldwide. Türkiye was also part of this process. With the end of World War II, the transition to a multi-party system began. The Democrat Party began to rise with the first multi-party elections held in 1946.

This political change also had a major impact on Istanbul's urban planning policies. Prost's plans were consistent with the single-party government's vision of modernization, but with the transition to multi-party life, new governments' different urban planning approaches emerged. Prost's plans were notable for their conservation-oriented arrangements. However, the new governments prioritize infrastructure projects and the development of transportation networks. The Democrat Party, in particular, focused on issues such as wide roads, new transportation lines, and the development of industrial zones. This change caused many of Prost's projects to either remain unfinished or to be addressed from a different perspective.

Zoning laws enacted in 1948 and 1949 changed the urbanization process of Istanbul. Although Law No. 5218, which came into effect in 1948, was enacted to prevent shantytowns in Ankara, zoning amnesty was spread throughout the country with Law No. 5228, "Encouragement of Building Construction." These laws gave municipalities the authority to acquire treasury land and allocate land to those who did not have homes, while also paving the way for the legalization of unlicensed structures. Law No. 5431, enacted in 1949, aimed to stop unlicensed construction and to register existing illegal structures. These laws also had an effect in Karaköy. In Karaköy, where Prost's plans aimed for orderly construction, the legitimization of existing illegal structures with the zoning amnesty in 1948 slowed down the transformation process in the region. The law, which came into effect in 1949, envisaged increased inspections. However, with the transition to the multi-party era, these practices weakened and unplanned construction accelerated. Karaköy did not undergo a transformation as Prost had envisioned during this process. Prost's understanding of planning was in direct conflict with these new zoning policies. Therefore, Prost's plans based on public spaces and orderly urbanization became impractical.

As a result of all these developments, Prost's position in Istanbul became increasingly controversial. Changes in the administrative structure and speculative pressures on urban space accelerated. Criticisms of the planning approach increased. Academicians, especially in architecture faculties and experts in the field of urban planning, began to question Prost's position as the sole authority in shaping Istanbul's urban future. Although Prost envisioned a long-term modernization strategy for the city, economic difficulties and changing policy plans prevented his full implementation. Despite this, his influence on Istanbul's transformation process was undeniable. He left a permanent mark on the city's spatial structure.

3.4 THE NEW REPRESENTATIVE OF KARAKÖY SQUARE: ALEMDAR KARDEŞLER BUILDING

The Alemdar Kardeşler Building is the result of a competition opened in 1947 for the construction of an office building. It is located on a plot adjacent to the Karaköy Palace, built in 1920 in Karaköy Square. There was a 4-storey brick building on this parcel. An architectural competition was held for the first time in Türkiye for an unofficial building in 1947. The competition was held through the Istanbul Branch of the Turkish Association of Master Architects. 25 projects participated in the competition. The jury selected Nezih Eldem's project as the winner, while the project of the Orhan Safa and Kemal Ahmet Aru group was chosen as the second. Eldem's design aimed to integrate with the urban fabric while trying to adapt to the architectural character of the Karaköy Palace. However, it was not implemented due to economic and construction policies, and instead the Safa-Aru group's proposal was implemented.

Nezih Eldem's project aimed to create continuity by adapting to the floor heights of Karaköy Palas. The ground floor of the building was also designed to have the same height as the adjacent palas. The stores are on the ground floor. The mezzanine floor is reserved for

administrative units. The office floors ended at the eaves level of Karaköy Palas. An architectural harmony was achieved by using similar materials on the facade. (Akın, 2003) Despite this harmony, the project was criticized in terms of economic efficiency. According to the evaluation of the period, the project did not sufficiently benefit from the expansion opportunities offered by the current zoning rules, and this was a disadvantage for the investor.

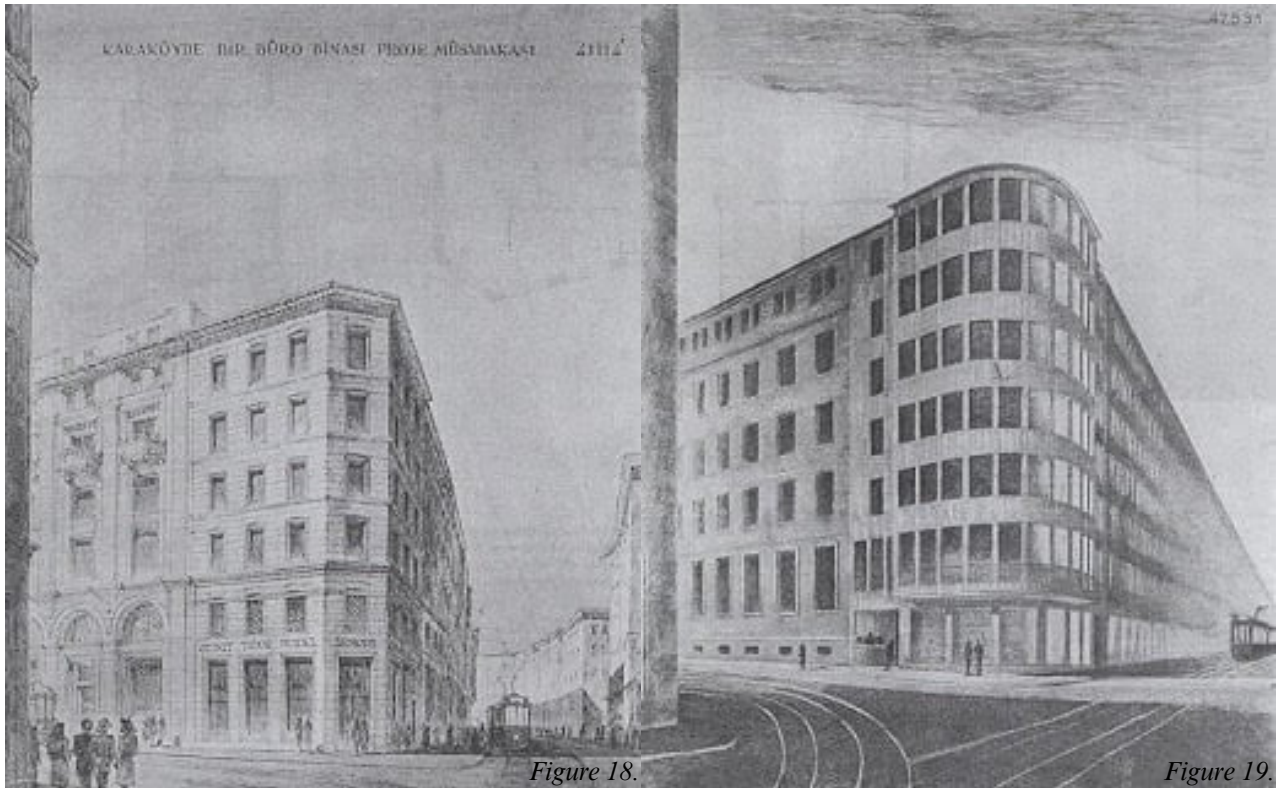


Figure 18. Nezih Eldem, Alemдар, Kardeşler Building, Karaköy Unimplemented Competition Project, 1947

Figure 19. Orhan Safa, Kemal Ahmet Aru, Alemдар Kardeşler Building, Karaköy Competition Project, 1947

(<https://www.herumutortakarar.com/alemdar-kardesler-buro-binasi-seref-hani/#uael-gallery-6> , accessed 6 May 2025)

The design that was chosen first by the jury but was not implemented aimed to ensure the continuity of the urban space. According to Günkut Akın's analysis, Eldem's perspective was in integrity by evaluating the urban space on a human scale. In contrast, the Safa-Aru project that was chosen second ignored the existing urban environment. This implemented design could not reach "a harmonious structure with the environment" proposed in the competition project. (Akın, 2003)



*Figure 20. Alemdar Kardeşler Building Next to Karaköy Palace
(<https://www.herumutortakarar.com/alemdar-kardesler-buro-binasi-seref-hani/#uael-gallery-6> , accessed 6 May 2025)*

*Key Map: Created by author on 2022 Satellite Map from IBB Sehir Haritaları
(<https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)*

During this period, Turkish architects were competing with foreign architects. This competition was also important in terms of the struggle they gave to ensure their professional legitimacy. In Türkiye, the architectural profession was in the process of becoming autonomous from the 1930s onwards. There was a struggle against foreign architects. Turkish architects were against the granting of public projects to foreign architects. They demanded that competitions be organized more often in order to provide them with opportunities. After the Exhibition House Competition in 1933, these demands increased even more. (Sayar, 2004) However, as in the example of the Alemdar Kardeşler Building competition, the implementation of the selected projects did not always yield ideal results in terms of architecture and urbanism.

The Alemdar Kardeşler Building is also controversial in terms of its functionality in the transformation process of Karaköy Square. During the period when the building was built, Karaköy was a region with intense trade and financial activity. In this context, the new

building should not only adapt to the physical environment but also support urban circulation and commercial structure. However, the views that Nezih Eldem's project, which was not implemented, was more successful in terms of architectural integrity are still debated today. Eldem had an approach that saw urban space as an interior and evaluated it on a human scale. He aimed to strengthen the interaction between the building and the city as a part of the square. In contrast, the Safa-Aru project is disconnected from the existing environmental factors. Today, the building design could not fully integrate with the urban texture of Karaköy.



Figure 21. Before Alemdar Kardeşler Building before 1947

Figure 22. After Alemdar Kardeşler Building after 1947

(<https://www.eskiistanbul.net/tag/karak%C3%B6y/>, accessed 6 May 2025)

4. DESTRUCTION FOR MODERNIZATION: KARAKÖY IN MENDERES ERA (1950-1960)

4. DESTRUCTION FOR MODERNIZATION: KARAKÖY IN MENDERES ERA (1950-1960)

Until the 1950s, there was a balanced and conservation-oriented urbanism approach in Karaköy in line with the plans of Henri Prost. However, with the Democrat Party coming to power in 1950, rapid modernization was targeted. Under the leadership of Adnan Menderes, extensive transformations were initiated to make Istanbul resemble the great metropolises of the West, and the biggest changes took place in Karaköy. In Karaköy, major demolitions were carried out to widen the roads and enlarge the squares. Prost's gradual transformation approach was abandoned. Radical changes were made in a short time. Thus, the physical and commercial structure of the region underwent a radical change. Thus, Karaköy experienced a loss of identity along with the modernization process.

Although the Menderes period projects aimed to transform Istanbul into a modern city, they affected urban memory with this transformation. The demolitions in Karaköy questioned the balance between renewal and preservation. In this section, the changes in planning, large-scale demolitions and transformations that took place in Karaköy during the Menderes period will be discussed.

4.1 SHIFTING VISIONS: PROST'S DISMISSAL AND THE REWORKING OF URBAN PLANS

The early 1950s were important in Istanbul's urban planning. With the transition from a single-party government to a multi-party system, urban planning policies also changed. There were rapidly increasing urbanization, economic difficulties, and speculative land pressures. This situation led to a reevaluation of existing plans. During this process, Henri Prost had been at the helm of Istanbul's planning since the 1930s. However, he began to be increasingly criticized in changing political and professional dynamics. Prost had been working under a single-party government for years. This governor had concentrated all authority in his hands and worked in harmony with Prost. However, in 1949, Fahrettin Kerim Gökay was appointed as the governor and mayor of Istanbul. (Bilsel, 2015) This situation changed the balance. Different perspectives emerged in urban planning with the new political environment. Prost's power to shape Istanbul's future single-handedly began to be discussed. Academicians and urban planning experts, especially in architecture faculties, criticized Prost's methods and argued for the need for a more participatory and local-sensitive planning approach.

During the same period, there were economic conditions and the post-war reconstruction process. This made urban planning difficult. The population was increasing and land values were rising. Prost, however, had not foreseen an increasing population. Although Prost insisted on preserving the holistic framework of his plans, this approach became unsustainable with the new socio-political changes. Pressure from both professional circles and political actors increased. As a result, Prost's contract was not renewed and he left his position on December 26, 1950. (Bilsel, 2015) This departure symbolized the end of a period in Istanbul's modernization process.

However, Prost's influence on Istanbul did not end with his departure. His comprehensive plans, which shaped the city's modern infrastructure, transportation networks, and zoning regulations guided the city's development in the following years.

Yet with Prost's departure, the concept of urbanism also changed. Throughout the 1950s, Istanbul was shaped according to the priorities of the new political administration. Rapid modernization efforts were made.

Although some of the city plans prepared by Henri Prost for Istanbul were implemented, these plans had to be re-evaluated in the 1950s. Because of the rapid growth in the city and the new administration's different priorities. In line with the modernization goal, the opening of wide roads, the revision of square arrangements and vehicle traffic were prioritized. In this context, the Revision Commission was established in 1950. (Tekeli, 2013) It included the leading architects and city planners of the period. Its purpose was to evaluate Prost's plans. The commission began to evaluate if it was compatible with Istanbul's historical structure, economic requirements and growing city population. As a result of the examinations, it was decided that a significant portion of the urban arrangements proposed by Prost no longer met the needs of the day. It was thought that they were inadequate to adapt to Istanbul's rapidly growing population and developing transportation network. The need for a new planning process was emphasized.

As of 1952, the process of creating and implementing new zoning regulations for Istanbul began to be carried out by the Municipality Zoning Directorate. During this process, Istanbul's existing plans had to be modernized. The aim was to make urban transportation more functional, and studies were conducted under the guidance of the Advisory Board, which included leading urban planners of the period. It was a new planning process that also included the commercial and cultural centers of the city, such as Karaköy, Beyoğlu. The primary goal was to expand main roads, organize squares, and provide the necessary infrastructure for the city to transform into a modern metropolis. Prost's plans were not completely rejected during the studies. Instead, certain changes were made and reconsidered. It was decided that some of the regulations envisioned by Prost, especially in Karaköy Square and its surroundings, were not applicable. Larger-scale interventions began to be planned in accordance with the transportation policies of the period.

One of the most important developments in this period was the Beyoğlu District Zoning Plan prepared in 1953. The main objectives of the plan were to regulate dense construction in Beyoğlu, improve traffic flow and implement urban transformation projects. The connection between Karaköy and Beyoğlu had to be strengthened. For this purpose, it was aimed to open new roads and expand the squares to make them more useful. The plan symbolized the beginning of a new era in Istanbul's urban planning concept. Due to the population growth in the city and the increasing use of cars, there was a heavy traffic problem especially in areas such as Taksim and Karaköy. It was necessary to open wide roads in these densely used areas and to implement solutions that would ease transportation. In Karaköy, the idea of making the square more organized and reducing the density of buildings in the surrounding area was put forward. In addition, it was decided to determine new commercial areas in Beyoğlu in general.



Figure 23. Beyoğlu District Zoning Plan, Sheet 9/4 (Scale 1:500), Salt Research, 1953

(<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/191439>, accessed 7 May 2025)

In 1954, the Beyoğlu District Zoning Plan was approved by the Ministry of Public Works and entered into force. (Tekeli, 2013, 98) Thus, large-scale urban transformation applications began in the center of Istanbul. However, this transformation process led to significant debates among architects and city planners. The planned demolitions and new

construction arrangements in areas such as Beyoğlu and Karaköy were, on the one hand, considered as modernization. On the other hand, it was certain that the historical texture would be damaged. Especially towards the mid-1950s, a great deal of distance was given to Prost's plans. Istanbul's transformation process now turned towards larger-scale projects. The new arrangements planned in Karaköy envisaged the removal of old structures surrounding the square. This meant that the area would take on a completely different identity. This paved the way for new construction, especially in this area where trade was concentrated.

When the 1:500 scale zoning plan covering Karaköy is examined, it is seen that the building blocks surrounding Karaköy Square are largely defined by new high-rise building arrangements. There are especially building blocks determined with heights of 12.50, 18.50, 21.50 and 24.50 meters. This may indicate that the region was shaped as a dense trade center. This new order is somewhat parallel to the drafts presented by Prost in the late 1930s. However, with the Menderes period, there were more comprehensive transformations in practice. Most of the roads proposed in Prost's plans were preserved. However, after 1954, these axes may have begun to be arranged as wider boulevards in order to accommodate the increasing traffic density. The aim was to replace the old structures that determined the character of Karaköy with higher and more functional commercial structures within the framework of this new order. In the following section, the traditional texture of the region will be irreversibly changed and will lead to discussions.

4.2 THE MENDERES DEMOLITIONS AND URBAN REBIRTH

Prime Minister Adnan Menderes made radical urban transformations for the modernization process of Türkiye. He had a policy focused on development and economic growth. This process directly affected the physical structure of big cities such as Istanbul. In Menderes' political vision, urbanism was not only for the purpose of developing infrastructure. It also symbolized the power of his government. It was used as a tool to show this power in physical space. He used this power as a showcase to show Türkiye's development. For this, the narrow and complicated street texture had to be eliminated. These places had to be shaped with modern boulevards in his own understanding. This was also a strategy that included the aim of gaining political support. The goal was to create a perception of modernization in the public and thus to gain the support of potential voters.

With the laws enacted on August 18 and 21, 1956, the reconstruction of Istanbul became legal. (Bariş- Altunel, 2011, 66) Thus, large-scale urban interventions gained momentum. The Advisory Board was established in 1956. It was to provide technical and academic support for this transformation process. Even so, its function ended in a short time. Unfortunately, the process was largely driven by political decisions. The new Zoning Law came into force in the same year. It provided a legal basis for the reshaping of Istanbul. This law made it mandatory for municipalities with a population of over 5,000 to prepare zoning plans. This situation accelerated urban regulations.

During this period when Menderes would put urban planning policies into practice, large-scale demolitions began in Karaköy Square, Istanbul's historical neighborhoods. In 1957, the Istanbul Municipality made an agreement with German professor Hans Högg in order to further advance urban planning. In the same year, the Istanbul Zoning Planning Directorate was established by the Bank of Provinces to coordinate the urban transformation process. Between 1957 and 1960, Högg prepared more detailed zoning

plans for Istanbul. (Bilsel, 2015) On April 1, 1958, the Istanbul Zoning Planning Directorate officially began planning the metropolitan area.

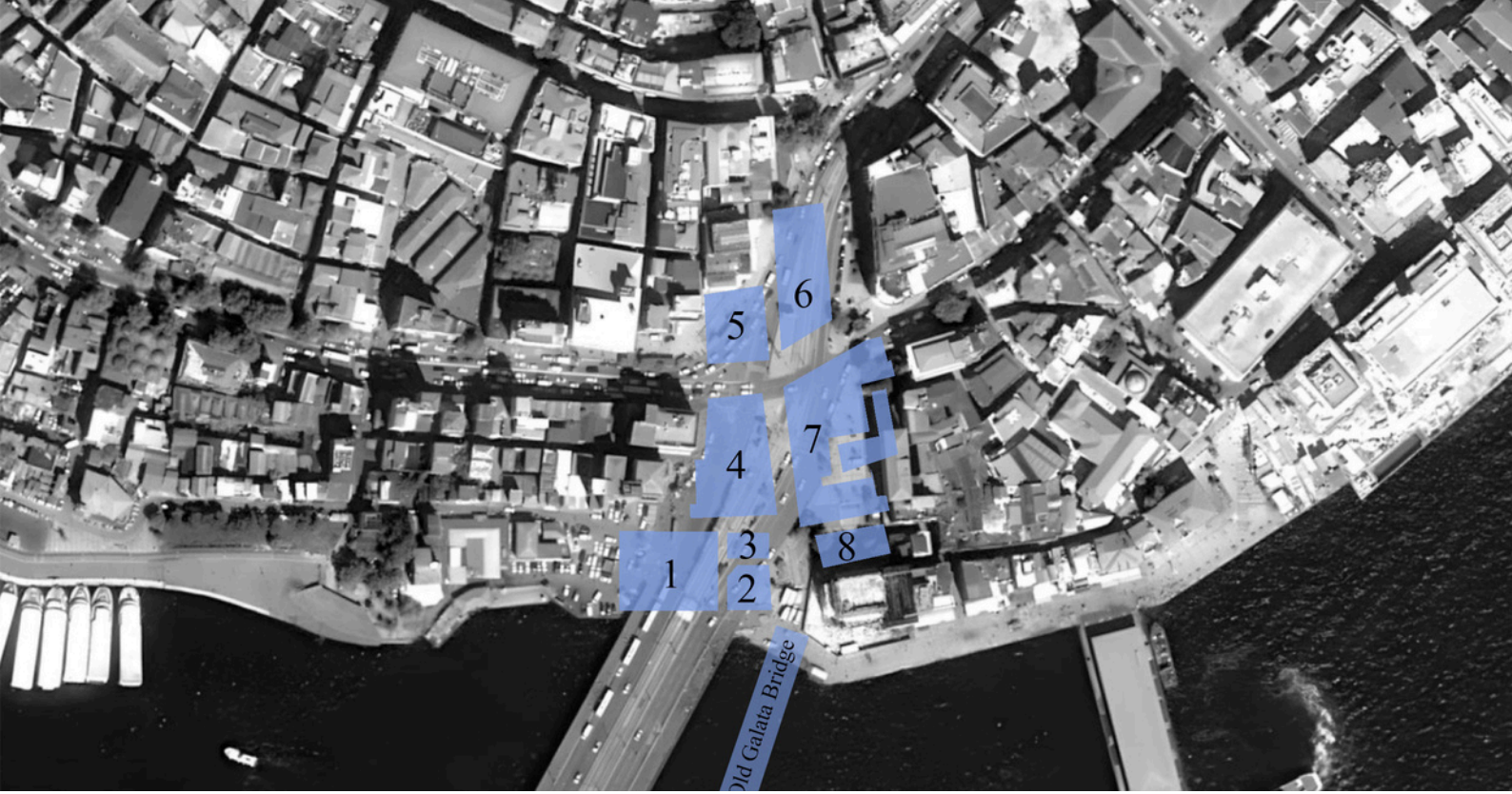
The Menderes administration prioritized the construction of new structures for the sake of modernization rather than preserving the “old.” During this process, Ottoman-era inns, mosque enclosures, examples of wooden civil architecture, and historical passages were demolished. Traditional Ottoman period inns were particularly damaged during this process. These inns were important structures where merchants, tradesmen, and artisans came together. However, during the modernization drive, these inns were seen as idle, useless, and an obstacle to economic development. We can say that this perspective was against the preservation of historical structures. Instead, the construction of new structures that were considered larger and more functional was encouraged. In Karaköy, this situation also significantly changed the economic structure of the region. Small tradesmen and artisans began to lose their place to large business centers and banks. The commercial culture that had previously developed within the neighborhood was being replaced by large capitalists. Thus, not only the buildings were affected, but the texture of trade and city life was also changing.

The process of determining the buildings to be demolished in Karaköy was also quite complex. As a reflection of the urban policies of the period, rapid and sudden decisions were made. However, it was difficult to say that this process was carried out within the framework of a clear plan. Most demolitions first started to widen the main arteries. Then, they continued to provide commercial transformation in certain areas. Although some consultations were made before the demolition, the process was mostly carried out with sudden interventions. For this reason, many buildings were removed without any thought of restoration or integration.

The implementation phase of the demolitions also proceeded in a similarly unplanned manner. Before the demolitions began, some information was given to the tradesmen and

property owners in the area. However, the speed and certainty of the process caught many people unprepared. There was no gradual process in the previously determined areas. Construction equipment was suddenly put into operation. In a region like Karaköy, which was a center of trade, such demolitions created uncertainty for the tradesmen. Many shop owners lost their jobs without being able to find a place to move. Some could not continue their work in newly built modern offices due to high rents. There were both positive and critical comments about the demolitions in the press of the period. Newspapers close to the government supported the necessity of this transformation for Istanbul to become a modern world city. Other opposition publications wrote that the cultural and historical heritage was being destroyed. These also changed the economic structure of the region. While the traditional texture of Karaköy was being lost, a colder but more orderly city appearance was taking its place.

In this process, some symbolic structures and commercial buildings in the Karaköy scale were demolished, the square was expanded and new roads were opened. The majority of the demolitions began in 1956 and intensified in 1958. The inns, mosques and commercial buildings around Karaköy Square were gradually removed. An attempt was made to give the area a new appearance.



*Figure 24. Comparative marking of the Goad map with the 2022 satellite photo,
Created by Author;*

- 1- Mehmet Ali Pasha Inn*
- 2- Aziziye Police Station*
- 3- Del Genio Brasserie Restaurant*
- 4- Borsa Inn*
- 5- Nur Inn*
- 6- Galata Bon Marche*
- 7- Haviar Inn*
- 8- Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque*

One of the first buildings affected by the demolition process was the Wagon Li building. This building was built as a smaller but as a multi-story building instead of the Aziziye Police Station, which was demolished due to the narrowness of the point where the bridge reached. It was used as the headquarters of the French Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Li in Istanbul. It was an administrative and commercial building connected to the sleeping wagon services during the Ottoman and early Republican periods.



Figure 25. Wagon-Li Building Before Demolition, before 1956
(<https://www.eskiistanbul.net/tag/karak%C3%B6y/>, accessed 7 May 2025)



Figure 26. Demolition of the Wagon-Li Building, Cemal Işın, 1958
(<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/115213>, accessed 7 May 2025)

Wagon-li building's architecture had neo-classical and art nouveau styles reflecting the European influences of the period. It had elegant facade decorations, large windows and a symmetrical layout. At the same time, it was a building that symbolized the privileged position of foreign capital in Türkiye. It was demolished within the scope of Adnan Menderes' comprehensive urbanization projects. It was replaced by wider roads and square arrangements within the framework of the modernization efforts to open up the

large square and road in Karaköy. Like many other landmarks in Karaköy, it too has been erased as part of a rapidly changing urban vision. It now lives only in old photographs and urban memory.

Another example is the Mehmet Ali Pasha Inn next to the Wagon Li. It was a structure that had a great impact on the silhouette from the Galata Bridge. Due to its location, this inn was one of the important centers of commercial life around Karaköy Square during the Ottoman and early Republican periods. It was a frequent destination for merchants in the region. Over time, it hosted many different businesses from different communities.

Mehmet Ali Pasha Inn was built in the second half of the 19th century. It is a structure that follows the classical Ottoman inn typology. There were shops on the ground floor and commercial offices on the upper floors. However, towards the end of the 19th century, Western influence became evident in Ottoman architecture. Thus, European-style ornaments were included on the inn's facade. The entrance door and facade details have an aesthetic that is different from classical Ottoman inns. As mentioned before, the demolition of the Del Genio Brasserie part of the inn was identified by comparing the 1905 Goad map with the 1913 German Blues.



Figure 27. Mehmet Ali Pasha Inn Before Demolitions, Foto Işın, before 1958
(<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/109264>, accessed 7 May 2025)



Figure 28. Mehmet Ali Pasha Inn While Demolitions, Foto Işın, 1958
(<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/97583>, accessed 7 May 2025)

Mehmet Ali Pasha Inn was completely demolished in order to expand Karaköy Square once again. After the demolition, the square was expanded as a whole. Karaköy's urban silhouette was reshaped with this transformation. If Mehmet Ali Pasha Inn had been preserved, it could have continued to function as a space contributing to the revitalized commercial and cultural texture of Karaköy today. However, with the rapid and unplanned modernization process, this historical heritage was completely destroyed and its square was expanded. This led to a differentiation in urban perception.

The Haviar Inn building block on the western side of the square was also demolished to expand the square. The group of spaces that formed naturally, including the city walls, was known as Haviar Inn. (Kafesçioğlu, 2016, 198) Haviar Inn took its name from caviar, one of the important trade products of the period. During the Ottoman period, caviar was brought from the Black Sea. This caviar was processed especially by merchants in Karaköy and its surroundings. It was then offered to both the domestic and foreign markets. This trade center also began to be known as Haviar Inn, and over time this name became permanent. Haviar Inn also served as the first stock exchange of Istanbul. Later, the stock exchange activities were moved to the Commission and Consolidated Inn built across the square.

The year of construction of the building is unknown, but it can be seen on Carl Stolpe's Istanbul Plan of 1882. In terms of architecture, it had the characteristic features of 19th century Ottoman commercial inns. Stone and brick were generally used as materials. It had a traditional inner courtyard plan. While the ground floor of the inn was generally used for storage areas and shops, there were rooms on the upper floors where merchants could stay.

During the Adnan Menderes period, Havyar Inn was also completely demolished as part of the expansion of Karaköy Square. After the demolition, the area where the inn was located was used for square arrangements and new transportation arteries. Thus, the traditional commercial texture of Karaköy has changed to a great extent. A commercial block that developed organically and was in contact with the city walls has disappeared.



Figure 29. Demolition of Havyar Inn

*(<https://image.milimaj.com/ilmilliyet/75/770x0/674253eb30363706df9671ea.jpg>,
accessed 7 May 2025)*

The other major intervention to expand the square was the demolition of the Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque. As previously described, after its transformation in 1903, it had become a structure reflecting the characteristics of classical Ottoman architecture. It contributed to the religious and cultural life of the region. It was one of the most important elements determining the silhouette of the square.

While the squares were being tried to be refreshed, the historical heritage was largely ignored in this process. The Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque was also badly affected by this process. It was demolished in 1957. The authorities at that time did not want the structure to be completely destroyed before the demolition. Instead, they planned to dismantle its parts and rebuild it somewhere else. In this context, it was considered to rebuild the mosque in Kınalıada. For this purpose, the portable parts of the structure were carefully dismantled. However, this project was never implemented. The portable parts of the mosque were lost in the Sea of Marmara because the ship carrying the stones sank. This unsuccessful attempt shows that it was a period implemented with unplanned and sudden decisions. It is also a reflection of bad urban transformation policies that caused the loss of an important cultural heritage.



Figure 30. and 31. Demolished building block next to Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Paşa Mosque in Karaköy, Halûk Doğanbey, 1958
(<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/74330>, accessed 7 May 2025)

Today, the area where the mosque is located is still empty. The mosque was demolished and no structure was built in its place. It is an unused empty land between the existing blocks. It is one of the most concrete examples of how the city's memory was erased during the transformation process of Karaköy Square. It is also evidence of the lack

continuity in the planning of the square and the lack of planning in which urban transformation projects were carried out. The destruction of the Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque is not only the loss of a place of worship. It has been the subject of serious criticism by local people and historians. Such interventions have weakened the connection that the city has established with the past. It has caused the cultural heritage to be sacrificed for modernization policies.

Another building that was demolished was Borsa Inn, or Commission and Consolidated Inn as it was called at the time. As mentioned before, it underwent its first transformation in 1912 for the passage of the electric tram line that reached Karaköy. In order to provide the necessary distance, the structure was pulled back in accordance with the urban planning strategies of the period and rebuilt as a single storey. (Kafesçioğlu, 2016, 183) The inn had a traditional form with a preserved inner courtyard. It still hosted the stock exchange and commercial activities of the period. In 1958, as part of Adnan Menderes' large-scale urban planning, Borsa Inn, like many other buildings in the square, was completely destroyed.

As with many other structures, the demolition was carried out suddenly and quickly. In its place, roads and the square area were expanded. It brought a new city form. With the removal of Borsa Inn, the northeast side of the square became completely open. This made it easier to open the area to different uses in the future. With this expansion, Nordstern Inn, which was behind the Borsa Inn became visible.



Figure 32. The Borsa Inn before it was demolished, before 1958
(<https://www.eskiistanbul.net/6411/eski-istanbul-yikilmadan-once-karakoy-deki-tek-katli-magazalar>, accessed 8 May 2025)



Figure 33. Demolition of Borsa Inn, Cemal Işın, 1958
(<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/93538>, accessed 8 May 2025)

Another structure that was demolished was the Galata Bon Marche on the north side of the square. Galata Bon Marche was built in the late 19th century. It reflected the modern shopping concept of the period. The term "Bon Marche" comes from the French word for "good market". It was a large shopping center that aimed to serve customers with a wide range of products. Galata Bon Marche is considered one of the first modern stores in Istanbul. The building had large display windows, and the interior had high ceilings and spacious spaces. It was opened with the initiative of the French Bartoli Brothers who

settled in Istanbul after the Crimean War. The first store was opened on Istiklal Street. In 1926, the store changed hands. It was purchased by Karlmann, a Viennese Jew who had ready-made clothing stores in Galata. It became known as Karlmann Bon Marche. The stores offered a wide range of products, from clothing to household goods. Galata Bon Marche was also completely destroyed in 1958 during the Menderes transformations. After the demolition, the square was enlarged. With its demolition, a typical example of Istanbul's early shopping arcades was lost.



Figure 34. Before the demolition of Bon Marche, Cemal Işın, 1958
(<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/113289>, accessed 8 May 2025)

The block behind the Galata Bon Marche is Nur Inn. It was built in the late 19th century. It was named after the Armenian-origin Ottoman merchant and banker Ohannes Nuradungyan. (Akay- Ardiçoğlu, 2014) This building also functioned as a business center. Its architecture is made of stone and brick materials. It was in the classical courtyard inn typology. There were shops and warehouses on the lower floors and commercial offices on the upper floors. However, within the scope of Adnan Menderes' square opening project, Nur Inn was also demolished. First, the roof tiles and wooden joinery of the Inn were removed and the demolition process was started and it was completely removed. The area where the Nur Inn was located was turned into a part of the square.



*Figure 35. The voids and rubble left by the demolition, unknown
(<https://leksiseyler.com/adnan-menderes-doneminde-istanbulda-yapilan-korkunc-mimari-operasyon>, accessed 8 May 2025)*



*Figure 36. The voids and rubble left by the demolition, unknown
(<https://www.herumutortakarar.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/alemdar-kardesler-5.jpg>, accessed 8 May 2025)*

The bridge in Galata had also fallen out of use over time. Since it was built in 1912, it has been one of the busiest crossing points of the city. By the 1950s, traffic load had increased significantly. Structural wear and tear had also occurred over time. For this reason, it needed serious maintenance and repair. In this process, especially during the

Menderes period, when urban transformation projects gained momentum, it was desired to increase the functionality of the bridge. Thus, a comprehensive repair work was carried out in 1957-1958. During this process, reinforcement was made in the carrier systems of the bridge. Repairs were carried out to make pedestrian and vehicle crossings safer. However, during this repair, significant disruptions were experienced in the traffic flow in Karaköy. The disorder in the area became even more apparent with the transformation process in the square.

As a result of all these interventions, Karaköy Square was expanded with a modern urbanization move. However, the new order that emerged was neither aesthetically nor functionally satisfactory. Since the demolitions in the area were carried out in order to open up the square, the resulting void was not evaluated with any planned architectural intervention. On the contrary, it became an irregular and undefined void. Traditional inns and trade centers have given way to anonymous open spaces. The dynamism specific to Karaköy's historical trade center has weakened.

These demolitions carried out in the 1950s under the name of "modernization" actually caused Karaköy's identity to be compromised. The transformations carried out to make the square more spacious resulted in the erasure of urban memory. Karaköy, which had been one of Istanbul's important trade points until that day, gradually became a cold and dysfunctional public space after this process. It has largely lost its original character defined by its historical structures. For this reason, the transformations of the Menderes period can be considered as a breaking point that affected Karaköy not only physically but also economically.

5. KARAKÖY IN EARLY 1960'S

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With the end of the Karaköy phase of the Adnan Menderes operations, Karaköy now had wide streets and an empty square. It bore the traces of Menderes' vision of "modern Istanbul." The demolitions were largely complete, and there were efforts to establish a new order in Karaköy in place of the destroyed past. The structures built, the roads arranged, and the new infrastructures integrated. They aimed to respond not only to functional needs but also to the ideology of the period. The new infrastructure projects were part of the efforts to modernize the city. However, political turmoil also had an impact during this period. A military coup took place in 1960. It was a significant event that affected both Türkiye's form of government and the development of cities. Political uncertainties and economic difficulties affected the speed and form of these transformations. This section will examine how the political, social, and infrastructural changes of the early 1960s transformed Karaköy.

5.1 OPENING OF UNDERPASS

In the early 1960s, Istanbul experienced a rapid transformation, especially in transportation and infrastructure, because of increasing population and vehicle traffic. This was also happening in Karaköy Square, one of the city's important transition points. The increasing vehicle density in Karaköy conflicted with pedestrian circulation in the square. As the crowd exiting the Galata Bridge crossed the square and headed towards Eminönü, traffic congestion occurred. This congestion caused problems not only in terms of transportation but also in terms of spatial experience. The safety and comfort of residents in public spaces were becoming more and more threatened. These conditions gave birth to the idea of a pedestrian underpass to be placed in Karaköy Square.



Figure 37. Heavy traffic in Karaköy Square before the underpass, Hilmi Şahenk, 1961 (<http://www.eskiistanbul.net/thumb/karakoy-1961-8352.jpg>, accessed 12 May 2025)



Figure 38. Underpass Construction, Kültür Envanteri, unknown (<https://kulturenvanteri.com/karakoy-meydani-ve-carsili-altgecit-insaatil/>, accessed 12 May 2025)

However, this underpass was not only a functional solution; it was planned with the aim of creating a social and commercial area as well. Construction began in 1964 and it was opened a year later. Karaköy Underpass was one of the first underground bazaar passages in Istanbul. (Yücel, 2024, 84) It was a structure built in line with the city's modernization goal. It was a passage that organized the circulation of pedestrians with its entrances and exits connected to the square from four different corners. It can be called an alternative public space that developed underground. One of the most characteristic aspects of the underpass was that it was designed not only as a transition area but also as an underground trade axis. There were 23 shops inside.

These shops enabled tradesmen from different sectors to benefit from the density of Karaköy. There were many small businesses ranging from shoemakers to booksellers, watchmakers to silversmiths. Thus, a solution was found for the traffic congestion experienced on the upper side and a small bazaar was created underground. However, as a direct result of this solution, the pedestrian movement on Karaköy Square was almost completely pulled underground. The presence of pedestrians who used to cross the square, wait in front of benches, buy newspapers and cross the street was pushed underground. The square that remained above was now left to the dominance of vehicles rather than pedestrians.

As a result of this transformation, Karaköy Square continued to be a 'square' physically, but it began to become a functional intersection. (Kafesçioğlu, 2016, 184) There was only the widening traffic flow and vehicle paths on top. Thus, one of the contradictions of modern urbanization became apparent here. An arrangement made for the safety and flow of pedestrians distanced them from public space. In fact, it eliminated the most fundamental element that made the square a 'square' – the pedestrian presence. The underpass was functional. However, Karaköy was diminished socially and spatially.



Figure 39. Karaköy After Underpasses

(<https://www.eskiistanbul.net/tag/karak%C3%B6y/> , accessed 12 May 2025)

However, the maintenance of the structure has been neglected over time. Especially since the 1990s, there have been both infrastructure deficiencies and security problems. Some of the shops inside have closed, while others still exist with low-profile products. Despite this, the passage has always managed to exist in Karaköy's memory. The Karaköy Underpass is still in place today. The renovation work carried out in 2024 also attempted to revive the market section. However, the upper square still belongs to vehicles. Pedestrians still pass underground, and the physical emptiness of the square remains.

5.2 THE 1960 MILITARY COUP AND THE END OF THE MENDERES ERA

In the 1950s, Istanbul was the center of transformation throughout the country. The Democratic Party government and its leader Adnan Menderes were at the forefront of this transformations. They were making moves in the name of modernization, development and contemporization. Urban spaces also became the area of these policies. Istanbul was transformed into a construction site during this period. Karaköy was the center of the transformations.

However, this rapid transformation was also the forerunner of conflicts. The architectural textures of the cities were being destroyed by unplanned and hasty interventions. The checks and balances in the administrative functioning of the state had also begun to fail. The radical changes made in Karaköy became one of the symbols of this tension over time. It was reflected both in the press and in technical reports that many parcels were expropriated without payment. Some rightful owners could not receive compensation for years and there was no transparency regarding who undertook the projects. In fact, in the municipality books of the period, there were areas around Karaköy that were claimed to belong to the municipality. However, it was known that even the records of the real estates were incomplete and that legal problems continued for a long time because of this. All these practices showed that there was an undemocratic city administration where the law was violated.

By 1960, there was an atmosphere of anxiety and uncertainty not only in Karaköy but throughout Türkiye. The authoritarian tendencies of the Democrat Party increased, especially from its second term onwards. It was enacting laws that restricted freedom of the press, putting pressure on universities and establishing institutions that overstepped constitutional control, such as the “Commission of Inquiry”. (Dokuyan- Yüksel, 2020, 21) This had a negative impact on the army and the public. During this period, student

marches were frequently held in Istanbul. Karaköy Square also hosted demonstrations. Young people crossed over the Galata Bridge chanting slogans.

On the morning of May 27, 1960, there was a different government in Türkiye. The Turkish Armed Forces seized power. The staff of the Democrat Party, primarily Adnan Menderes, were arrested. This process was not just a trial of a government. The entire system, values and practices it represented were also tried. The Yassıada Courts were opened. Among the cases opened was a file titled “Illegal use of Istanbul Municipality real estate”. There were also documents regarding expropriations in Karaköy and its surroundings. The documents in the court minutes contained some decisions with Menderes’ signature. It was said that they were put into practice without the approval of the relevant Council of Ministers. It was explained that the tender processes were violated in the Karaköy underpass and the surrounding construction arrangements and there were debts in these areas.

Another element was that the costs of some expropriations carried out in Karaköy during this process were not paid. These debts exceeded the budget of the Istanbul Municipality at the time. One of the accusations directed at Menderes in Yassıada was this issue: spending public resources in an uncontrolled manner, burdening the municipality and the treasury with unpayable debts. In fact, the prosecutor's indictments stated that the expropriation of a parcel in Karaköy was only completed on paper. In practice, it was stated that the property owners who were doing business there had been fighting a legal battle for years. Such documents had questioned the relationship Menderes had established with the city, both politically and economically.

During the trial process, Adnan Menderes was not only a politician. He was also considered as an “urban designer”. Yassıada prosecutors described his urban vision as centralist, disconnected from the people and populist. Defense lawyers argued that Menderes was a leader who had big dreams for Istanbul. However, the result did not

change. Menderes was hanged on September 17, 1961. (Dokuyan- Yüksel, 2020, 30) Political reasons were the priority in the decision to execute him. However, there were also the urban policies he implemented and the socio-political effects of these policies.

Today, Menderes' interventions can still be seen in many areas such as Karaköy. However, this symbolizes the fragility of a period rather than an achievement. Thus, Karaköy lost its status as a public space and became a square shaped by politics.

6. CONFLICTS AND CRISES

6. CONFLICTS AND CRISES

The transformation of Karaköy Square between 1910 and 1960 is too multi-layered to be explained solely by architectural projects or planning moves. Simultaneously with the physical transformations that took place during this period, there were events that affected the multicultural structure of Karaköy. These social and political conflicts also affected the memory of this region. Breaking points such as the Wagon-Li Incident, the Wealth Tax practices and the September 6-7, 1955 Events are not just temporary moments of crisis. These are developments that fundamentally affected the social fabric of Karaköy. These conflicts changed not only the physical environment but also the daily life, community structure and sense of belonging to the place in the region.

In this context, the transformation in Karaköy cannot be examined only through the change of concrete structures. It also affected the intangible cultural heritage of the region. The erasure of non-Muslim tradesmen from the region, the weakening of social diversity and the losses in the collective memory indicate that a transformation beyond physical interventions was experienced.

While all these social ruptures were taking place, the image of Istanbul presented to the outside world supported a completely different narrative. In 1959, Istanbul was highlighted in the international arena as the “modern city model of Europe.” However, despite this external praise and idealized urban image, it was in conflict with the internal dynamics of Istanbul and Karaköy in particular. This was also emphasized in the declarations published by the Chamber of Architects during this period. It shows the deep divergence between the reality in the city and the presented image.

The conflicts that will be examined in this section will be discussed with the aim of showing that Karaköy was going through a process of transformation that was not only physical but also social, cultural and symbolic.

6.1 WAGON-LI INCIDENT

Karaköy was one of the most cosmopolitan areas of Istanbul from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic. It preserved its multicultural structure until the mid-20th century. Different communities such as Jews, Greeks, Armenians, Levantines and Muslim Turks lived together in Karaköy. They worked in areas such as trade, banking and transportation. However, this multi-ethnic structure has experienced major changes over time with the process of Türkiye's economic and political transformations. During this period, important events affected the socio-economic structure of Karaköy and one of them is the Wagon-Li Incident of 1933. The Wagon-Li Incident was an event that occurred in Karaköy due to Türkiye's economic policies towards foreign-capital businesses and minorities.

The Wagon-Li Company (Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits) was a luxury train transportation company in Europe since the end of the 19th century. (Asar, 2023) The company was French. It had lines like the Orient Express on Ottoman lands. Istanbul was the company's Eastern European and Middle Eastern headquarters. As mentioned before, this headquarters building was built in 1910 in the area where the Aziziye Police Station was previously located in Karaköy. It was destroyed during the Menderes operations. It reflected the Western-influenced architectural style of the period. With its location in Karaköy Square, it served passengers coming to the port and business people engaged in trade. It was located in the commercial flow in the region. Therefore, it was a symbol of Karaköy's international structure.

However, after the declaration of the Republic, Türkiye had economic independence policies. Increasing nationalist discourses made such foreign-capital companies a subject of much debate. By the 1930s, the existence of companies such as Wagons-Li was being criticized, especially by nationalists.



Figure 40. Wagon-Li Building, unknown

(<https://leksiseyler.com/bir-turkun-fransiz-sirketinde-turkce-konustugu-icin-ceza-yemesiyle-baslayan-vagon-li-olayi>, accessed 6 May 2025)

During this period, as the wave of nationalism rose in Türkiye, an incident at the Wagon-Li Company quickly became a crisis. A Turkish citizen working at the Wagons-Li company was punished and then suspended for speaking Turkish at work. This incident was reported in the press and later caused a public backlash. It was a period when nationalist feelings were particularly high. Thus, sensitivities regarding the use of Turkish increased.

At the center of the incident was Naci Bey, who worked in the company's office in Karaköy. On February 22, 1933, he was warned by the Belgian manager Jannoni for speaking Turkish loudly to a customer who came to the company. The manager stated that the official language of the company was French. The manager first fined Naci Bey 25 kuruş. However, Naci Bey reacted harshly. His punishment was changed to a 15-day suspension from work. The incident received extensive coverage in the press. In particular, the news report in the Cumhuriyet newspaper with the headline "Those who do not want Turkish have no place in Türkiye!" received considerable support from the public. After

hearing about the incident, students from Darülfünun and the National Turkish Student Union came together on February 25, 1933 and marched to the company building. Among the protesters were well-known figures of the period, such as Cahit Arf and Peyami Safa. The protest quickly grew and turned into violence. The crowd increased its reaction and began to break the windows and doors of the office. The police who arrived at the scene tried to calm the crowd. However, the demonstrators managed to enter the building by chanting slogans such as “Those who insult Turkishness and do not speak Turkish will be expelled from this country!”. (Halıcı, 2010)

When the students entered the building, they first took the portrait of Atatürk hanging on the wall. This action showed that the incident had become a matter of national honor. The protesters started to break and destroy the office objects, saying, “This is not where this picture belongs!”. (Halıcı, 2010) However, they did not touch the company’s commercial elements, such as the tickets sold in the building. This showed that the action was carried out consciously against the company’s authority. During the incidents, the people in the area were also seen to support the protesters and applaud them. After this incident, only Naci Bey returned to work. At the same time, many foreign companies in Beyoğlu began to translate their signs into Turkish. The “Citizen, Speak Turkish!” campaign, which had been on the agenda since 1928, was revived. Finally, the Wagons-Li company was nationalized like many foreign companies left over from the Ottoman Empire. Today, it continues its activities in Türkiye with large investments.

The demolition of the Wagon-Li building in the 1950s was a gradual departure from the multi-layered structure of Karaköy. While the city was being reshaped in the name of modernization, some traces of the past were removed on the grounds that they did not match the ‘new’. This demolition meant that not only the architectural but also the social memory of Karaköy was lost. The void in its place no longer represented multilingualism and multiculturalism.

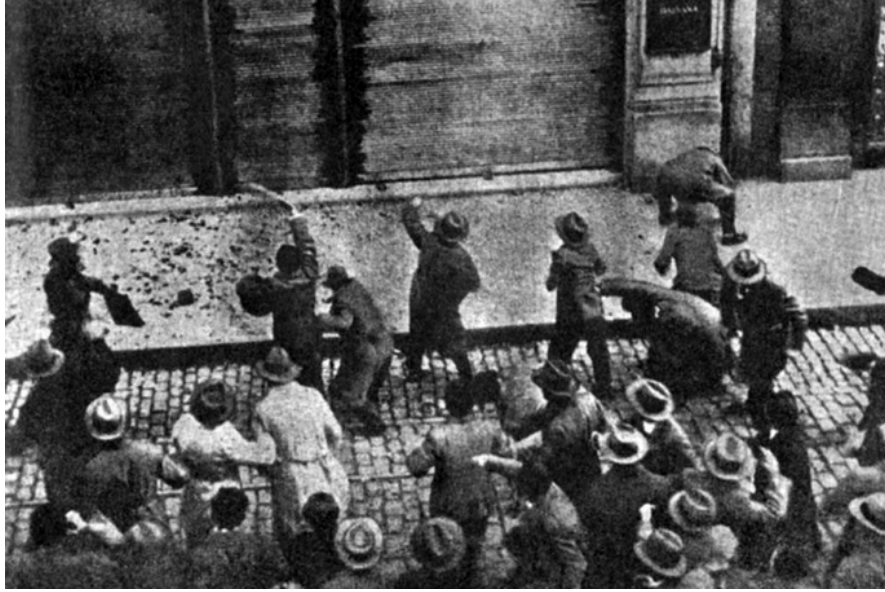


Figure 41. Wagon-Li Incident, unknown

(<https://www.indyturk.com/node/537231/haber/vagon-litz-hadisesi>, accessed 6 May 2025)

6.2 WEALTH TAX

One example of this nationalist economic policy during this period was the Wealth Tax, which came into effect on November 11, 1942. It was a wealth tax that affected the economic and social structure of Türkiye. It was intended to alleviate the economic hardships caused by World War II. It was enacted to tax the high earnings that emerged during the war and to increase state revenues. (Kızılkaya. 2016) However, its application and results specifically targeted non-Muslim minorities and were discriminatory. It can be said that the social oppression of minorities and foreign capital seen in the Wagon-Li Incident became state policy in the following years and was institutionalized with the Wealth Tax.

Since Karaköy was one of the most important trade centers of Istanbul, companies, insurance agencies and commercial establishments were in the majority. A large part of the trade in the region was carried out by non-Muslims. However, the national economic policy of the Republic of Türkiye was different from this situation. It was aimed to change the hands of this capital and strengthen the Turkish bourgeoisie. The Wealth Tax was also

one of the important steps of this transformation. During the war years, Türkiye was faced with severe economic conditions, despite not having entered the war directly. The ongoing war in Europe caused the prices of basic food and raw materials to rise. This caused foreign trade to shrink and government spending to increase. The government wanted to overcome this economic problem. It made a new tax regulation, especially to tax those who made large profits due to the war. However, the implementation of the Wealth Tax was essentially beyond an economic measure. It affected non-Muslim communities socially and politically.

The tax covered a wide range of people, primarily property owners, merchants and industrialists. During the implementation process, individuals were divided into different categories according to their ethnic and religious identities. The tax rates determined for Muslim Turks were lower. Non-Muslim citizens such as Greeks, Armenians and Jews were subject to much heavier taxes. When applying the tax, it was calculated based on estimated values rather than the actual assets of individuals. Especially in regions where trade was intense, such as Karaköy, the high taxes determined negatively affected the economic life of non-Muslim merchants.



Figure 42. Wealth Tax payments and toll booth queue, 1942
(<https://birartibir.org/etnik-mulksuzlestirme-ve-derin-dondurucul>, accessed 6 May 2025)

The sanctions foreseen for those who could not pay the Wealth Tax were very severe. They were exiled to the Aşkale district of Erzurum for forced labor. They were forced to do manual labor in the harsh winter conditions in Erzurum. These exiles were more than just financial punishments. Among those exiled to Aşkale were people of advanced age and with health problems. (Aktay, Saraç, and Dileyici, 2002) This situation also led to some deaths. The properties of those who could not pay the tax were confiscated and this caused a significant change of ownership in commercial companies. In the context of Karaköy, many businesses went bankrupt or changed owners. This transformation permanently changed the economic profile of the region. The businesses that changed owners were Muslim-Turkish entrepreneurs. The official statement of the government at that time was that this tax was necessary in order to balance the war economy.

The tax was abolished on March 15, 1944. The economic and social effects were felt for many years. It reduced the economic power of non-Muslim citizens and caused large-scale capital transfers. This went down in history as one of the most controversial examples of minority policies in Türkiye. After the abolition of the Wealth Tax, those who were exiled were able to return. However, their economic and psychological damage could not be reversed.

While the Wagon-Li Incident was an indicator of reactions to the economic and social status of minorities in Türkiye, the Wealth Tax made this process official policy. This tax, which targeted non-Muslim merchants in particular in regions located at the center of trade such as Karaköy, caused capital to change ownerships. It was a part of the Turkification policies. Perhaps, in order to understand the transformations taking place in Karaköy today, it is necessary to look at these changes that took place in the past. Urban transformation can sometimes be the result of not only economic but also social and political goals.

6.3 6-7 SEPTEMBER 1955 EVENTS

The 1950s were a period when both economic and social transformations accelerated in Türkiye. Following World War II, political balances were being reshaped in the world. While Türkiye's efforts to integrate into the Western part accelerated, there were also significant fractures in domestic politics. The Democrat Party, aimed to accelerate economic growth and focus on infrastructure projects. At the same time, it aimed to reduce state intervention and support the private sector. However, this process also caused significant tensions in the social sphere. In particular, economic difficulties, political polarization and the Cyprus issue became an international crisis. Nationalist and anti-communist discourses also increased in domestic politics.

During this period, Istanbul was changing rapidly under the influence of intense waves of migration. Karaköy, one of the city's commercial centers, was still an area of traditional minority communities. However, economic difficulties and the rise of the nationalist wave increased tensions towards non-Muslims. The discourse of "economic nationalism", which was frequently discussed in the press, was being used. This situation created a perception that non-Muslims were dominant in commercial life and made these communities targets. In addition, the increasing tension between Greeks and Turks in Cyprus was also creating social unrest in Türkiye.

In such an atmosphere, important events took place in Istanbul on September 6-7, 1955. This was more than just a two-day pogrom. On the one hand, these events showed the identity crisis in Türkiye's modernization process. On the other hand, they brought about an irreversible demographic and economic transformation in regions with a dense non-Muslim population and trade, such as Karaköy.

The summer months of 1955 were marked by increasing social and political tensions because The Cyprus issue had become a crisis between Türkiye and Greece in the interna-

tional arena. Greek Cypriots were demanding Enosis (the union of Cyprus with Greece). The EOKA organization was attacking Turks on the island. (Keser, 2012, 200) This situation has created sensitivity in the Turkish public opinion. The pro-government press in particular had processed the issue not only in the context of Cyprus but also in a way that would turn it into a reaction against the Greek community living in Türkiye. A perception was created that the “local Greeks” were committing treason. In this process, nationalism provokes the wave of violence that would occur on September 6-7.

The development that triggered the events was the false news that a bomb had been thrown at the house in Thessaloniki on 5 September 1955 where Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Türkiye, was born. Newspapers in Türkiye carried this on their headlines, creating an outrage. The İstanbul Ekspres newspaper, one of the publications of the Democrat Party, published its second edition on the afternoon of September 6th under the title “Our Father’s House Bombed”. (Yıldız, 2019, 103) The newspaper, which normally has a circulation of around 20-30 thousand, had a total of 290 thousand copies printed in this special edition. It was distributed rapidly in İstanbul in the evening. As the news spread, groups gathered at various points in İstanbul, especially in areas with a dense non-Muslim population such as Beyoğlu, Şişli, Nişantaşı, Kurtuluş and Karaköy. (Yıldız, 2019, 103) In a short time, they began to attack shops and houses.

At first, these events appeared to be a spontaneous popular movement. In fact, they were like a pre-organized and directed pogrom. The crowds were directed at specific targets, especially in commercial areas such as Karaköy, Beyoğlu. Many attackers joined the events with sledgehammers, pickaxes and bags of stones. They broke the windows of the shops and started looting. This may indicate that the attacks were not carried out suddenly and as a result of a natural outburst of anger, but within the framework of a pre-planned organization. The events escalated rapidly and the intervention of the police and military was quite delayed. This caused many areas of the city to become uncontrollable in a short time. The shops in Karaköy Square and its surroundings were also targeted in

particular. The attacks were not limited to the looting of goods; places of worship, schools and cemeteries belonging to Greeks, Armenians and Jews were also destroyed.

The government was unable to prevent the events from escalating to such an extent. In fact, according to some claims, it preferred to remain silent and watch as the events got out of control. Martial law was declared later in the night. With the intervention of the military, the wave of violence was brought under control. There was great destruction in the central areas of Istanbul, especially Karaköy, Beyoğlu. These events, which lasted throughout the night of September 6-7, did not only cause physical destruction. They also caused changes in the demographic and socio-economic structure of Türkiye in terms of minority communities.



*Figure 43. 6-7 September Events, Fahri Çoker, Tarih Vakfı Yayınları
(<https://140journos.com/fahri-%C3%A7oker-ar%C5%9Fivinden-foto%C4%9Fraflarla-6-7-eyl%C3%BCl-1955-olaylar%C4%B1-e9e863a2bac8>,
accessed 9 May 2025)*

Karaköy was affected not only physically but also in a sociocultural context as one of the areas targeted during the September 6-7 Events. The shops belonging to Greek, Armenian and Jewish tradesmen operating in the square and its surroundings were systematically looted, vandalized and sometimes completely destroyed. This did not only cause a temporary disruption of commercial life. It also caused a change in the

multicultural structure of Karaköy. There were non-Muslim communities that had lived in this area for generations and contributed to its economic vitality. Karaköy was no longer a safe living and commercial area. Immediately after the events, many people preferred to emigrate from the area due to the trauma they experienced and their concerns about their lives. These emigrations were not only individual but also occurred in groups. This situation radically changed the demographic structure of Karaköy.

While this social shock was taking place, there was another kind of destruction for Karaköy in the same period: comprehensive demolition and construction projects carried out in line with Adnan Menderes' "modern city" ideal, which was described in the previous sections. In the second half of the 1950s, Karaköy was not only the target of a pogrom but also of bulldozers. Thus, the texture of the district was gradually changed. The joint effect of the state's direct urban interventions and the violence on the streets caused the non-Muslim presence in the region to be erased both physically and symbolically. On the one hand, the shops were forcibly emptied, on the other hand, legal demolitions; this double destruction, one carried out by "angry crowds" and the other by "modernizing institutions," shattered Karaköy's multicultural identity.

After 1955, there was a visible change in the commercial structure of Karaköy. The vacated shops were quickly taken over by new owners. The economic structure of Karaköy, which was dominated by non-Muslims, shifted towards Muslim-Turkish capital. This situation created a transformation that also coincided with the "Turkification" discourses of the period. (Akpınar, 2015, 88) However, the background of this transition was elements such as violence, fear and exclusion. The destruction experienced in Karaköy and the violent events of September 6-7, although carried out with different tools, had the same ideological context and the same result: the suppression of Karaköy's multicultural, historical identity and the construction of a standardized "modern city" ideal in its place.

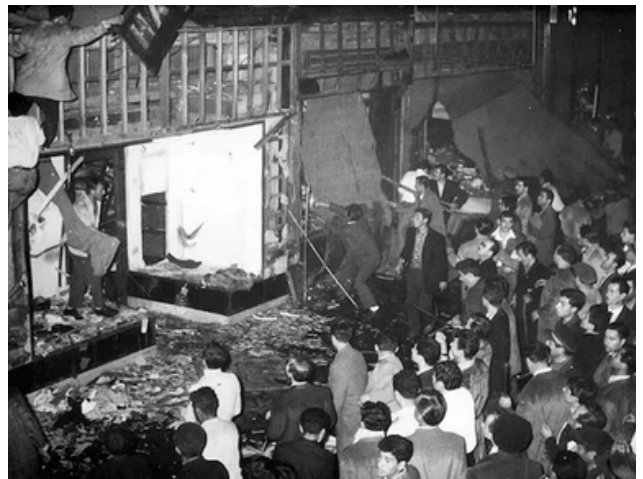


Figure 44, 45, 46, 47 and 48. 6-7 September Events, Fahri Çoker, Tarih Vakfı Yayınları
(<https://1140journos.com/fahri%C3%A7okerar%C5%9Fivindenfoto%C4%9Fraflarla-6-7-eyl%C3%BCl-1955-olaylar%C4%B1e9e863a2bac8>, accessed 9 May 2025)

All these developments caused Karaköy to become not only a trade center but also an area where social transformations, ruptures and state-led restructurings in Istanbul materialized. The September 6-7 events were not only a turning point in Karaköy's history. They also symbolized the collapse of its multicultural structure. These events revealed how Karaköy was subjected to a multifaceted “reconstruction” during the modernization process.

6.4 ISTANBUL'S RISE AS EUROPE'S URBAN MODEL AND THE CHAMBER OF ARCHITECTS' DECLARATION

At the end of the 1950s, Istanbul was in a transformation process that not only Türkiye but also Europe was following closely. There were extensive development projects carried out in the city, the reorganization of the transportation network and radical changes in the historical texture in the name of modernization. These also changed the urban history of Istanbul. During this transformation process, an award was given in Strasbourg by the Council of Europe on January 25, 1960: Istanbul was awarded the European Prize (Prix de l'Europe) for its urban development work in 1959. (Boysan, 2020) Thus, it was declared the “model city of Europe”. This award was the first time that Istanbul was appreciated to this extent at an international level. It also symbolized the Western visibility of modernization policies. However, this award was far from reflecting all aspects of the work carried out in the city. Because during the same period, architects, urban planners and certain segments of the public were questioning the effects of these transformations, especially on society.

During this period when Istanbul received the European Prize, the social and spatial consequences of the rapid transformation in the city became more visible. In 1960, a declaration was published by the Istanbul Branch of the Chamber of Architects of Türkiye. This declaration drew attention to the problems behind the apparent success story.

The declaration stated that the centralized and non-public understanding of urban planning was a problem. In addition, it expressed discomfort with the unplanned transformation of public living spaces and the systematic disregard of expert opinions. According to the Chamber of Architects, the modernization efforts carried out in Istanbul were far from considering the public interest. (Tekeli, 2013, 110) They were shaped more as political and economic showcase projects. The declaration emphasized that the new structures built in place of buildings demolished for technical reasons were architecturally identityless and unqualified. It stated that the conservation policies that would ensure the historical continuity of the city were almost never implemented. This declaration was contrary to the spirit of that period. It pointed to not only physical but also social injustice. It was talking about problems such as the displacement of people, the commercialization of public spaces, and the increasing use of spaces to serve only certain segments of society.

After Istanbul was awarded the European Prize in 1959, the events in Karaköy showed that this image of success was not valid for everyone. The demolitions, expropriations and unfinished projects around the square still defined the area as a transformation area. At the same time, there were uncertainties in the area. As a result of the interventions of the Menderes period, many structures had been removed. Vacant lots were filled with temporary solutions. The residents and tradesmen of the area had been displaced. This scattered and disjointed structure in Karaköy contradicted the praises coming from Europe. Modernization steps had caused social and spatial problems on a local scale. While the aim was for the public space to be accessible and functional for everyone, in reality this area had increasingly taken on an undefined, temporary and identity-less appearance.

All these developments showed that there was a gap between the prestige that Istanbul had gained in the eyes of Europe and the daily life experience of the city's residents. While the modernization projects were receiving international praise, the fragmentation of the urban fabric, displacements and social injustices were causing serious

problems on a local scale. The 1960 declaration of the Chamber of Architects also reported this tension. It expressed how the public interest was ignored in the planning processes and how professional responsibility was excluded. The transformation that a central area like Karaköy went through in this period, both physically and socially, was a reminder that modernization should not be seen as a decorative element. Unless the rise of Istanbul in the eyes of Europe was tried to be understood through the losses and ruptures experienced on a local scale.

7. DID URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS TAKE PLACE TO CHANGE THE SOCIO - CULTURAL STRUCTURE OF KARAKÖY?

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Were there only physical arrangements, zoning plans and modernization discourses behind the urban transformations experienced in Karaköy? Or was this transformation more complex and aimed at changing socio-cultural dynamics? It is not possible to give a superficial answer to this question. Because the story of Karaköy is not only about the rise and fall of buildings, but also about social memory, policies and cultural conflicts.

The shops, houses and places of worship that were attacked in the September 6-7 Events of 1955 belonged to Greeks, Armenians and Jews. That night, not only the windows were broken; the culture of living together and the polyphonic identity of Istanbul were also affected. Interestingly, just a few years after these events, the demolition of many buildings in Karaköy began. Moreover, some of the demolished buildings also belonged to non-Muslims. Some properties changed hands and were nationalized, while others were eliminated in the name of “modernization.”

The fundamental question is: Were these transformations only a physical arrangement, or were they part of a plan that aimed to reduce cultural diversity in the city? The Democrat Party, which was in power at the time, supported infrastructure and urbanization projects. At the same time, it aimed for nationalist-oriented development. With efforts to create a national bourgeoisie, there was a political atmosphere that would facilitate the withdrawal of non-Muslims from economic life in particular. It is possible that this atmosphere was reflected in urban planning.

At this point, we should not ignore the contradictory aspects of the period. For example, the Wagon-Li Incident that took place in 1933 (this incident was a critical moment when Turkey emphasized its sovereign rights against international companies) was widely discussed at the time. It even resonated with the French public. Interestingly, the building where this incident took place, the Wagon-Li building, was demolished in the late 1950s during the Menderes era. In a way, this is an erasure of international memory. However, there are also contradictions in these demolitions. One of the structures demolished during the same period was the Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque. However, this building, which used to be a church, had been converted into a mosque. It was a place of worship actively used by the Muslim community of the period. These examples show that the transformation did not only target non-Muslims. Everyone was affected. However, it is true that some groups were affected more deeply and permanently by this process. In other words, although the target group was not directly declared, the results were not equal.

This socio-economic transformation was particularly experienced with the tax imposed in 1942. It mainly targeted non-Muslim citizens and caused many properties to change hands. Although there was a time difference between the period when this tax was implemented and the large-scale demolitions in Karaköy, the economic pressure created changed the ownership structure and property relations in the region. Thus, it can be thought that it prepared the ground for future urban interventions.

The character of the region also changed immediately after the demolitions. The passages and shops that were previously operated by Jewish, Greek and Armenian merchants now had different owners. In addition to this physical transformation, there was also a loss of memory. Not only the spaces, but also the sounds and languages changed. The cosmopolitan diversity in Karaköy's daily life was no longer present. Instead, a more uniform structure emerged. This shows that the socio-cultural impact of the demolitions may have been merely a result.

In conclusion, the answer to the question “Did urban transformations originate from socio-cultural events?” is complex and thought-provoking. These transformations are not directly the result of a specific event. There is no concrete evidence that the changes were made for socio-cultural purposes. However, they were closely linked to socio-cultural events. Similarly, nationalist policies, Turkification tendencies, and economic pressures were also urban interventions that changed memory. Many structures that we cannot see in Karaköy today are physical, historical, and cultural losses. Behind all these losses, it is necessary to understand the socio-political dynamics of the period. Therefore, Karaköy’s transformation was not only architectural, but also socio-cultural.

8. THE ACHIEVED CHARACTER OF KARAKÖY SQUARE

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Karaköy Square is one of the centers of the countless transformations that Istanbul has gone through throughout history. It was once the center of Ottoman port activities. It has experienced different urban policies from the early years of the Republic to the Menderes period, and from there to today's rapid urbanization dynamics. It has been shaped under the influence of many different ideologies and urbanism. When Karaköy Square is looked at today, traces of the past are sometimes erased. There have been changes in its character. The spirit of the space has been reshaped by the overlapping layers of different periods. These layers are observed not only in architectural structures, but also in the ways buildings are used, the organization of facades, and even in the user profile of the square.

Karaköy Square no longer represented only a historical memory. Its new relationship with the urban life and sociocultural structure of contemporary Istanbul is also visible. Sometimes it is a transportation intersection, sometimes a meeting point. Understanding Karaköy Square today requires analyzing not only its physical form, but also the new identities it has gained during the transformation process.

This section will discuss the current character of Karaköy Square. Focusing on the facades, structural changes, spatial arrangements and forms of social interaction will be examined. It aims to show the relationship that Karaköy has established with the city.

To understand the current character of Karaköy Square, it is not enough to look only from the pedestrian level or the facades. Karaköy is also a district of Istanbul perceived from the sea. However, unfortunately, this silhouette has deteriorated over time.

When approaching Karaköy by ferry, the observed view no longer has the meaning and aesthetic integrity of the past. In the past, the structures that rose elegantly within the silhouette of Galata were accompanied by traces of their periods in the gaps between them. Today, there is a fragmented, discontinuous, disconnected set of structures in its place. There is no harmony between the height differences, facade materials and architectural languages, but rather a conflict.



Figure 49. Aerial photo of Karaköy Square, DHA, 2021
(<https://image.dha.com.tr/i/dha/75/0x0/6182ff1845d2a01ab04c45a1.jpg>,
accessed 8 May 2025)

One of the most important things that draws attention when viewed from the sea is the weakness in the facade compositions of the buildings. Some buildings face the coast with their inactive facades. With the demolition of the Wagon-li building and the Mehmet Ali Paşa Inn, the dysfunctional rear facade of the building behind them has emerged. This situation is a great spatial loss for one of the symbolic centers of Istanbul, such as Karaköy. In the past, the square had an architectural continuity along the coastline. Currently, there is a gap on one of the facades where the view is most beautiful. This area has not gone beyond being defined as a parking lot. It is not a point where the users of the square can enjoy their daily lives. Some new structures, especially the commercial buildings rising on the coastline, do not contribute to the silhouette at all, on the contrary, they suppress the historical texture. These structures also fail to present a contemporary architectural language. An urban space so intertwined with the sea should have been one of the most aesthetic areas of Istanbul.



Figure 50. The void at the location of Mehmet Ali Pasha Inn and Wagon-Li Building & Building with an inactive facade, Google Street View, October 2024. (<https://maps.app.goo.gl/XRLUz7J1GRry1QwW9>, accessed 5 June 2025)

Key Map: Created by author on 2022 Satellite Map from IBB Sehir Haritalari (<https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)

One of the elements that form the current character of Karaköy Square is the Nordstern Inn, which became visible with the demolition of Borsa Inn. It was located behind the Borsa Inn. However, it took its place in the Karaköy silhouette with the demolition of Borsa Inn. Nordstern also once had a function that was in line with the commercial texture of Karaköy. Today, it is a hotel with the transformation it has undergone. This new function has ensured both the survival of the structure and its connection with the city. However, the resulting spatial structure does not fully coincide with the commercial identity of Karaköy. Architecturally, it has proportions and a regular facade rhythm. There are symmetrical window arrangements, floor moldings and decorative details on the facade. This facade that emerges today reminds us of how layered Karaköy's architectural memory is.



Figure 51. Building with inactive facade and Nordstern hotel, Google Street View, January 2024.

(<https://maps.app.goo.gl/EiAa2PXKFTfVaqx77>, accessed 5 June 2025)

Key Map: Created by author on 2022 Satellite Map from IBB Sehir Haritaları (<https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)

There are ruins at the northwest corner of the underpass in Karaköy Square. It is interpreted as a part of the Galata Walls. However, it has neither been taken under protection nor supported by an explanatory plaque. Although it has significant potential for the historical continuity of the square, it has remained as an abandoned piece of structure. Cultural heritage has not been made visible. This view of the walls is one of the symbols that shows the general lack of planning in Karaköy Square and how historical elements have not been integrated into urban design in this region.



Figure 52. Galata Walls, Google Street View, February 2024. (<https://maps.app.goo.gl/6xobo3csmcNyq6EcA>, accessed 5 June 2025)

Key Map: Created by author on 2022 Satellite Map from IBB Sehir Haritaları (<https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)

Karaköy Palace, with its monumental architectural details, still remains in the historical memory of Karaköy Square. The palace looks even more elegant next to the new buildings, since they don't match it at all. The new building, especially the one built to the left of the palace, is against the entire aesthetic language of the historical structure with its contemporary form. It has glass facades, reflective surfaces and disproportionate heights. Instead of completing the facade aesthetics of the Karaköy Palace, it isolates it.

A similar situation applies to the Alemdar Kardeşler Building on the right side of the palace. This building was built in the 1950s with a project determined by a competition. Although the design that participated in the competition and established a more harmonious relationship with the square and the Palace won first prize, it was not implemented. Instead, the second project, which was less costly, was implemented for economic reasons. This decision also had negative effects in the long term in terms of the urban character of the square.



Figure 53. Karaköy Palas, Google Street View, January 2024. (<https://maps.app.goo.gl/19kpouhSgpW7DZwG9>, accessed 5 June 2025)

Key Map: Created by author on 2022 Satellite Map from IBB Sehir Haritaları (<https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)

There are new buildings on the eastern side of the square, facing the square after the demolition of Havyar Inn. It seems to have a temporary or complementary architectural character. It establishes a weak integrity with both the historical texture and the scale of the square. This situation reinforces the fragmented architectural appearance of the square.



Figure 54. Eastern Facade, Google Street View, January 2024. (<https://maps.app.goo.gl/1nhbMQm8G3AMuE3D8>, accessed 5 June 2025)

Key Map: Created by author on 2022 Satellite Map from IBB Sehir Haritalari (<https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)

Today, the parcel where the Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque once stood in Karaköy Square is still seen standing empty. Although it is physically empty, it also affects the integrity of the public space. It does not have any spatial function. It is an indicator of lack of planning. This creates a gap in the aesthetic, historical and social fabric of the area.



Figure 55. Location of Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque, Google Street View, January 2024.

(<https://maps.app.goo.gl/1nhbMQm8G3AMuE3D8>, accessed 5 June 2025)

Key Map: Created by author on 2022 Satellite Map from IBB Sehir Haritalari (<https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)

The facade facing the square behind the mosque is now an inactive facade. To face one of the liveliest areas of urban life with a closed facade is to limit the relationship with

the square. It causes a disconnection even in a visual sense. Moreover, there are some window openings on the building that give the impression that they were opened later and are not compatible with the project. This makes the unplanned intervention apparent.

In November 2024, with the public announcement made by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, a concrete step was taken towards the reconstruction of the Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque. This structure was designed together with the Karaköy Square Library that will be located underneath. However, the construction process has not started yet.



Figure 56. Reconstructed rendering of Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque, AGS Mimarlık, 2012. (<https://www.agsmimarlik.com/projelkarakoy-cami>, accessed 6 June 2025)

Today's Karaköy Square has a complex character that overlays a multi-layered memory from the past, but also expresses it in various ways. This area, which is a place of trade, multiculturalism and mobility, has now become a transition point. The current use of the square mostly serves for transit and pedestrian movement, most of which is in the underpass. The facades, gaps and uninterrupted structures around it have become elements that damage the identity of the space. Some structures have been shaped with out-of-character additions, where the back facades of the buildings are exposed. Instead of spatial continuity, it has a fragmented appearance.

9. CONCLUSION

9. CONCLUSION

The transformation of Karaköy Square is not just a physical change. It is also a multi-layered story that reflects political, social and cultural events in Turkey's modernization process. This thesis examines the period from the beginning of the 20th century to the post-Menderes period. While examining the spatial changes that took place in Karaköy, it investigates whether these transformations are directly or indirectly related to socio-cultural events.

As a result of the analyses, it was determined that the transformation that Karaköy went through was apparently focused on infrastructure and urbanization. However, the impact of crises on the structure of the region was also great. Social traumas such as the Wealth Tax, the Wagon-Li Incident, and the September 6-7 Events, although not directly mentioned in urban planning documents, caused the non-Muslim population in the region to retreat economically and physically. Accordingly, it caused the area to become open to state interventions. This showed that socio-cultural events indirectly affected urban transformation.

The impact of politics on urbanization became more visible during the Democrat Party period. The vision of Istanbul as the “European capital” was attempted to be realized through large-scale demolitions and road projects. The participation of the local people was not ensured in this process. The declaration of the Chamber of Architects, which opposed this vision, showed the contradiction between the spatial strategies of the period and the needs of the society.

The thesis also addressed the material and spiritual cultural heritage of Karaköy. Not only the demolished buildings, but also the memories, habits, and multicultural lifestyles that were lost along with these areas were an important part of Karaköy's character. However, these values were often ignored in the planning processes.

In this context, the conflict between planning and social participation is important. The local people did not have a say in the decisions taken. Moreover, they were virtually excluded from the urban space with the underpasses and roads that were built. These projects, which deviated from the human scale, made the city accessible to vehicles. However, they distanced people from the urban space.

Karaköy Square still bears traces of its past today. It preserves its commercial identity to a certain extent. It is also a region surrounded by inactive facades and has become a crossroads. After all these changes, Karaköy is waiting to be redefined beyond being a square.

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Cover Photo: Souvenir de Constantinople. [Galata-Eminönü panoramik view], Hommer & Jonas, Dresden, <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/93532>

FIGURES:

Figure 1. Location of Karaköy, Istanbul Municipality Maps, District Border Map, (<https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)

Figure 2. Focus Area of the Thesis: 1966 Orthophoto (created by author from <https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)

Figure 3. Horse-Drawn Tram in Karaköy (around 1900’s, <https://www.eskiistanbul.net/tag/karak%C3%B6y/> accessed 25 December, 2024)

Figure 4. Horse-Drawn Tram in Karaköy Bridge (around 1900’s, Levi et Fils Pierre de Gigord Collection, <https://www.eskiistanbul.net/tag/karak%C3%B6y/> accessed 25 December, 2024)

Figure 5. Karaköy - Eminönü Tram Line Opening, 1914 (<https://www.eskiistanbul.net/tag/karak%C3%B6y/>, accessed December 25, 2024)

Figure 6. Wooden Galata Bridge with Heavy Pedestrian Traffic (around 1900's, unknown, <https://www.kanalistanbul.com.tr/istanbul-kopruleri-ve-hikayeleri-galata-koprusu/> accessed 07 January, 2025)

Figure 7. Porters Carrying Goods on a Wooden Galata Bridge (1908, unknown, <https://forummeskeni.com/konular/unutulan-bir-meslek-osmanlinin-emektar-iscileri-hamallar.2989/> accessed 07 January, 2025)

Figure 8. Marking the differences by overlaying the 1913 German Blueprints map onto the 1905 Goad map. (created by author),
Goad Map: Charles Edouard Goad, 1905, <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/110010>, accessed 20 January, 2025
German Blueprints Map: 1913, <https://sehirplanlama.ibb.istanbul/beyoglu-arsivi-haritalar/> accessed 20 January 2025

Figure 9. The single-storey Borsa (Commission and Consolidated) Inn designed by architect Jean Barborini, Before 1958, Cemal Işın, (<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/117257> Accessed 20 January, 2025)

Figure 10. Mehmet Ali Pasha Inn Marked As Dersaadet Chamber of Commerce (unknown date, Istanbul Chamber of Commerce, <https://istanbulticaretgazetesi.com/galeri/mehmet-ali-pasa-han>, accessed 27 January, 2025)

Figure 11. Aziziye Police Station, Max Fruchtermann, 1855, (<https://saltonline.org/en/2762/photography-collections-at-salt-research>, accessed 5 May 2025)

Figure 12. Suat Nirven Map, 1947 (<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/192185>, accessed 27 January 2025)

Figure 13. Wagon-Li, Wolfenstain: Karaköy, İstanbul, 1950 (<https://www.eskiistanbul.net/4543/wolfenstain-karakoy-istanbul-1950>, accessed 6 May 2025)

Figure 14. Aziziye Police Station on the left, Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque on the right; and Military Parade, Salt Research, before 1910) (<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/125074>, accessed 6 May 2025)

Figure 15. Wagon-Li building on the left, Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque on the right, Aydınlık, 1934 (<https://www.aydinlik.com.tr/haber/ilk-defa-goreceginiz-istanbulun-eski-fotograf-lari-417057>, accessed 6 May 2025)

Figure 16. Karaköy Palace, Inan Kenan Olgar, 2022 (<https://kulturenvanteri.com/en/yer/karakoy-palas/#16.65/41.022883/28.975653>, accessed 6 May 2025) Key Map: Created by author on 2022 Satellite Map from IBB Sehir Haritaları (<https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)

Figure 17. Henri Prost, Pera-Galata Proposal, IBB Şehir Haritaları, 1937)
(<https://sehirplanlama.ibb.istanbul/beyoglu-arsivi-haritalar/> accessed 6 May 2025)

Figure 18. Nezih Eldem, Alemdar, Kardeşler Building, Karaköy Unimplemented Competition Project, 1947 (<https://www.herumutortakarakar.com/alemdar-kardesler-buro-binasi-seref-hani/#uael-gallery-6>, accessed 6 May 2025)

Figure 19. Orhan Safa, Kemal Ahmet Aru, Alemdar Kardeşler Building, Karaköy Competition Project, 1947 (<https://www.herumutortakarakar.com/alemdar-kardesler-buro-binasi-seref-hani/#uael-gallery-6> , accessed 6 May 2025)

Figure 20. Alemdar Kardeşler Building Next to Karaköy Palace
(<https://www.herumutortakarakar.com/alemdar-kardesler-buro-binasi-seref-hani/#uael-gallery-6> , accessed 6 May 2025)

Key Map: Created by author on 2022 Satellite Map from IBB Sehir Haritaları
(<https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)

Figure 21. Before Alemdar Kardeşler Building before 1947
(<https://www.eskiistanbul.net/tag/karak%C3%B6y/>, accessed 6 May 2025)

Figure 22. After Alemdar Kardeşler Building after 1947
(<https://www.eskiistanbul.net/tag/karak%C3%B6y/>, accessed 6 May 2025)

Figure 23. Beyoğlu District Zoning Plan, Sheet 9/4 (Scale 1:500), Salt Research, 1953
(<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/191439>, accessed 7 May 2025)

Figure 24. Comparative marking of the Goad map with the 2022 satellite photo, Created by Author

Figure 25. Wagon-Li Building Before Demolition, before 1956
(<https://www.eskiistanbul.net/tag/karak%C3%B6y/>, accessed 7 May 2025)

Figure 26. Demolition of the Wagon-Li Building, Cemal Işın, 1958
(<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/115213>, accessed 7 May 2025)

Figure 27. Mehmet Ali Pasha Inn Before Demolitions, Foto Işın, before 1958
(<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/109264>, accessed 7 May 2025)

Figure 28. Mehmet Ali Pasha Inn While Demolitions, Foto Işın, 1958
(<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/97583>, accessed 7 May 2025)

Figure 29. Demolition of Haviar Inn
(<https://image.milimaj.com/i/milliyet/75/770x0/674253eb30363706df9671ea.jpg>, accessed 7 May 2025)

Figure 30. and 31. Demolished building block next to Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Paşa Mosque in Karaköy, Halûk Doğanbey, 1958
(<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/74330>, accessed 7 May 2025)

Figure 32. The Borsa Inn before it was demolished, before 1958
(<https://www.eskiistanbul.net/6411/eski-istanbul-yikilmadan-once-karakoy-deki-tek-katli-magazalar>, accessed 8 May 2025)

Figure 33. Demolition of Borsa Inn, Cemal Işın, 1958
(<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/93538>, accessed 8 May 2025)

Figure 34. Before the demolition of Bon Marche, Cemal Işın, 1958
(<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/113289>, accessed 8 May 2025)

Figure 35. The voids and rubble left by the demolition, unknown
(<https://eksiseyler.com/adnan-menderes-doneminde-istanbulda-yapilan-korkunc-mimari-operasyon>, accessed 8 May 2025)

Figure 36. The voids and rubble left by the demolition, unknown
(<https://www.herumutortakarakar.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/alemdar-kardesler-5.jpg>, accessed 8 May 2025)

Figure 37. Heavy traffic in Karaköy Square before the underpass, Hilmi Şahenk, 1961
(<http://www.eskiistanbul.net/thumb/karakoy-1961-8352.jpg>, accessed 12 May 2025)

Figure 38. Underpass Construction, Kültür Envanteri, unknown
(<https://kulturenvanteri.com/karakoy-meydani-ve-carsili-altgecit-insaati/>, accessed 12 May 2025)

Figure 39. Karaköy After Underpasses (<https://www.eskiistanbul.net/tag/karak%C3%B6y/> , accessed 12 May 2025)

Figure 40. Wagon-Li Building, unknown) (<https://eksiseyler.com/bir-turkun-fransiz-sirketinde-turkce-konustugu-icin-ceza-yemesiyle-baslayan-vagon-li-olayi>, accessed 6 May 2025)

Figure 41. Wagon-Li Incident, unknown
(<https://www.indyturk.com/node/537231/haber/vagon-litz-hadisesi>, accessed 6 May 2025)

Figure 42. Wealth Tax payments and toll booth queue, 1942 (<https://birartibir.org/etnik-mulksuzlestirme-ve-derin-dondurucu/>, accessed 6 May 2025)

Figure 43, 44, 45, 46, 47 and 48. 6-7 September Events, Fahri Çoker, Tarih Vakfı Yayınları
(<https://140journos.com/fahri-%C3%A7oker-ar%C5%9Fivinden-foto%C4%9Fraflarla-6-7-eyl%C3%BCl-1955-olaylar%C4%B1-e9e863a2bac8>, accessed 9 May 2025)

Figure 49. Aerial photo of Karaköy Square, DHA, 2021
(<https://image.dha.com.tr/i/dha/75/0x0/6182ff1845d2a01ab04c45a1.jpg>, accessed 8 May 2025)

Figure 50. The void at the location of Mehmet Ali Pasha Inn and Wagon-Li Building & Building with an inactive facade, Google Street View, October 2024.
(<https://maps.app.goo.gl/XRLUz7J1GRry1QwW9>, accessed 5 June 2025)
Key Map: Created by author on 2022 Satellite Map from IBB Sehir Haritaları
(<https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)

Figure 51. Building with inactive facade and Nordstern hotel, Google Street View, January 2024. (<https://maps.app.goo.gl/EiAa2PXKFTfVaqx77>, accessed 5 June 2025)
Key Map: Created by author on 2022 Satellite Map from IBB Sehir Haritaları
(<https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)

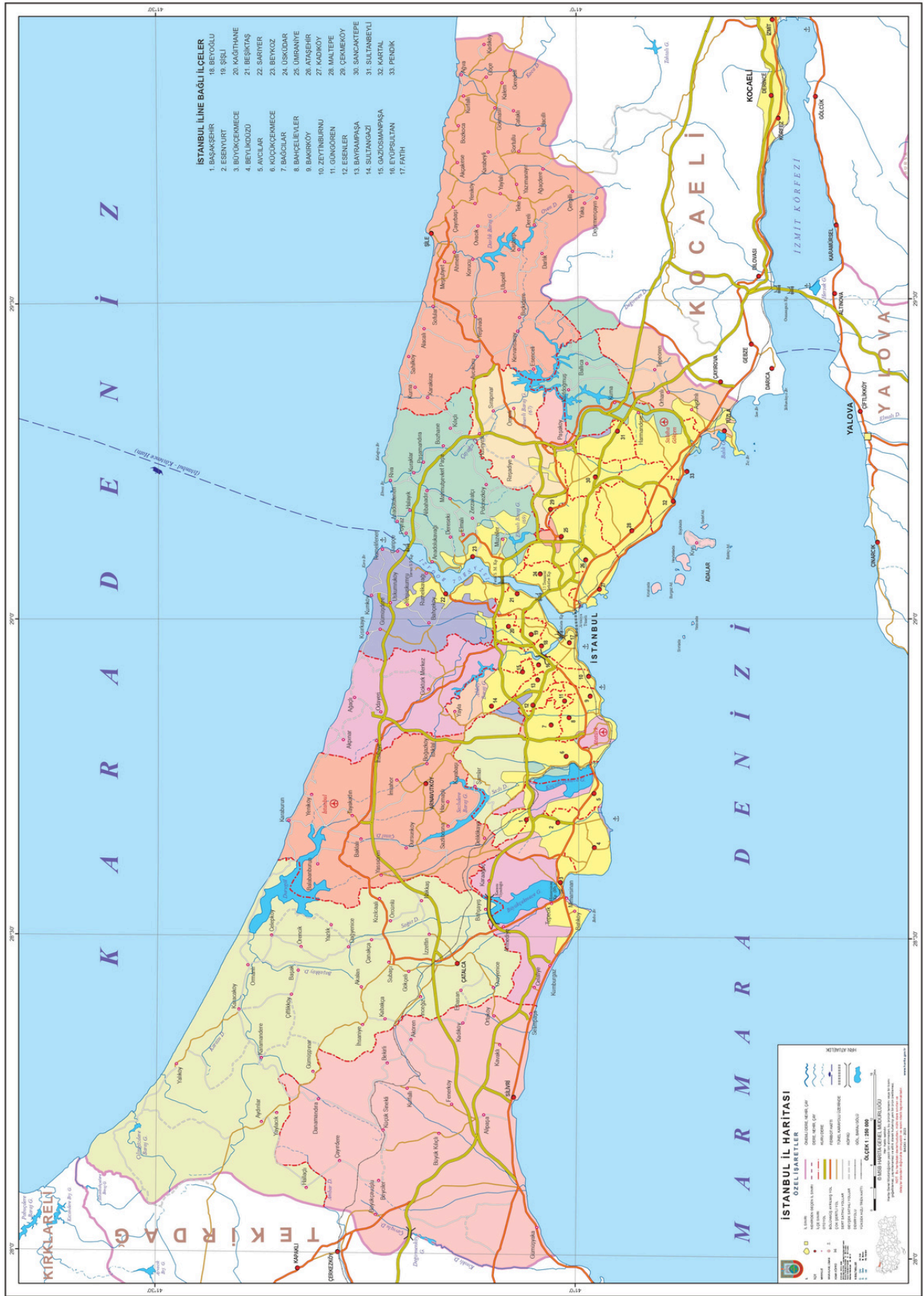
Figure 52. Galata Walls, Google Street View, February 2024.
(<https://maps.app.goo.gl/6xobo3csmcNyq6EcA>, accessed 5 June 2025)
Key Map: Created by author on 2022 Satellite Map from IBB Sehir Haritaları
(<https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)

Figure 53. Karaköy Palas, Google Street View, January 2024.
(<https://maps.app.goo.gl/19kpouhSgpW7DZwG9>, accessed 5 June 2025)
Key Map: Created by author on 2022 Satellite Map from IBB Sehir Haritaları
(<https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)

Figure 54. Eastern Facade, Google Street View, January 2024.
(<https://maps.app.goo.gl/1nhbMQm8G3AMuE3D8>, accessed 5 June 2025)
Key Map: Created by author on 2022 Satellite Map from IBB Sehir Haritaları
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Figure 55. Location of Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque, Google Street View, January 2024. (<https://maps.app.goo.gl/1nhbMQm8G3AMuE3D8>, accessed 5 June 2025)
Key Map: Created by author on 2022 Satellite Map from IBB Sehir Haritaları
(<https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)

Figure 56. Reconstructed rendering of Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque, AGS Mimarlık, 2012. (<https://www.agsmimarlik.com/proje/karakoy-cami>, accessed 6 June 2025)
Key Map: Created by author on 2022 Satellite Map from IBB Sehir Haritaları
(<https://sehirharitasiapi.ibb.gov.tr/>)



Official Map of Istanbul Civil Administration Province, Harita Genel Müdürlüğü, 2023.
 (<https://www.harita.gov.tr/urun/istanbul-mulk-idare-il-haritasi/393>, accessed 10 June 2025)