

PHOTOGRAPHY AT ARMS: “EARLY REPUBLICAN ANKARA” FROM NATION- BUILDING TO POLITICS OF NOSTALGIA

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1. “Othmar’s Photographs on view in Ankara”, <http://www.eczacibasi.com/articles/detail/detail1.asp?id=832>.

On April the 18th, 2007, an exhibition entitled “The Light from Ankara: Photographs by Othmar Pferschy” was opened with a reception at Ankara Palas State Guesthouse in Ankara (**Figure 1**). Numerous public figures attended the reception which was hosted by Bülent Eczacıbaşı, the Chairman of the Board of Eczacıbaşı Holding. The exhibition belonged to İstanbul Modern (İstanbul Museum of Modern Art), the first private museum of modern art in Turkey founded by the Eczacıbaşı group in 2004. It had previously been displayed in İstanbul in 2006 (between January 31st and May 14th) and as Eczacıbaşı stated in his opening speech, it was intended to bring the exhibit to Ankara ever since. This was because Pferschy’s photographs documented the founding of the Republic and displayed this undertaking to the outside world:

“His photographs of that period were used in innumerable publications, as well as on stamps, postcards, banknotes and calendars. For that reason, we believed it was our duty, decades later, to re-exhibit in Ankara the work of this great friend and photographer of our country, including his photographs of our capital.” (1)

The site of the exhibition was quite fitting in this sense. Located across the old building of the National Assembly, Ankara Palas was one of the most important locales of early Republican Ankara, housing balls and parties as stages for the new lifestyle to be spread nation-wide. And, here were the photographs of early Republican Ankara, inhabiting the spaces they had pictured. Although Eczacıbaşı’s opening speech addressed the delay in the arrival of the exhibit in Ankara; what he did not mention was the precise timing of the exhibition. In fact, Ankara had been stage for one of the largest mass rallies protesting the government in relation to the upcoming presidential elections a few days earlier. The rallies would recur throughout the country in the following weekends and the political turmoil would escalate with the intervention of the armed forces and eventually be resolved only after the early parliamentary elections in July. The conflict was defined as to whether the moderate Islamist Justice and Development

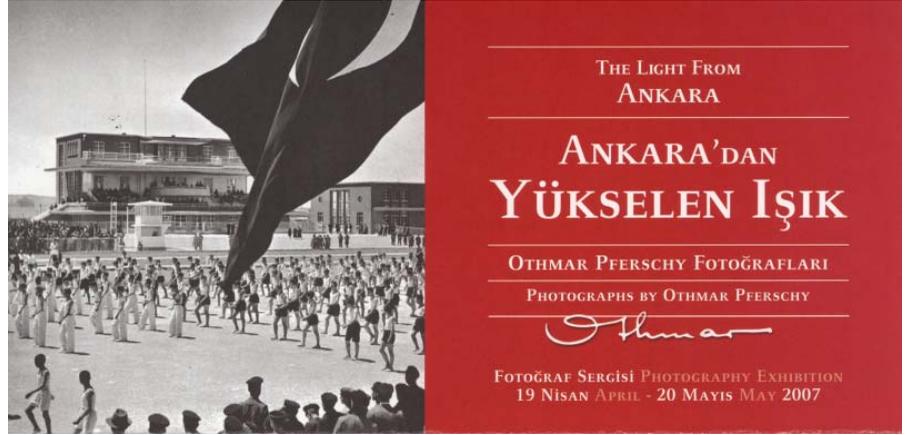


Figure 1. The brochure of "The Light From Ankara: Photographs by Othmar Pferschy".

Party, which had been ruling the country for four-and-a-half years, would succeed in taking control of the presidency, the last stronghold of the state bureaucracy. It was within this turmoil that the Othmar Pferschy exhibition traveled to Ankara from İstanbul, with a slight change in its title. While the İstanbul exhibit was entitled "In the Light of the Republic: The Photographs of Othmar Pferschy", the first part of the title was changed into "The Light from Ankara" in the new exhibit. It was felt that the relation between Ankara and the young Republic, and Pferschy's photographs as the mediator between these two required a stronger emphasis in the title.

The photographic representations of spaces and their utilization in nation-building has been a topic of scholarly analyses for some time. Such analyses have focused on the making of national identities through identification with particular places and the mediation of this process by visual images. If one source for this line of inquiry was the debates on photographic theory and the characteristic of photography as being embedded in power relations (Burgin, 1982; Bolton, 1988; Tagg, 1988), another source was the growing interest in the role of space within social and cultural studies (Lefebvre, 1991; Gregory, 1994). As a result, the role of visual representations of space within (especially colonial) power relations came under close scrutiny since the previous decade (Ryan, 1997; Gregory, 2003; Height and Sampson, 2004). A major topic was the role of photography (especially landscape imagery) in the making of national identities (Daniels, 1993; Jäger, 2003). Following these studies, I will, in the first part of this paper, analyze the use of Pferschy's photographs of Ankara by the young Turkish state in nation-building. In the second part, however, I will focus on the resurfacing of the same imagery parallel (in fact, in response) to the rise of political Islam in Turkey in the 1990s. I will argue that the 2007 exhibition of Pferschy photographs should be understood as a culmination of this trend putting the image of Ankara into political use through generating *nostalgia*. This time labeled as "early Republican Ankara", this image served as a major tool in representing the early Republican period as an idealized socio-political milieu.

REPRESENTING NATION (IN) BUILDING

Let me start with an image: a photograph of photographs (Figure 2). The photographs we see are arranged symmetrically around a center, the size of images getting smaller as they move away from it. A symmetrical and hierarchical organization of photographs; and what we are looking at is the photograph of such a composition rather than the individual photographs



Figure 2. "Architecture in new Ankara" (Pferschy, 1936).



Figure 3. The first photography exhibition in Ankara (Pferschy, 1936).

themselves. Nevertheless, the individual photographs are legible as well. They show us buildings, streets and monuments; an urban fabric of mostly empty spaces. And in the center, there is the image of Kemal Atatürk, central to what these photographs represent, vital to the material existence of their order.

The clear centrality of the arrangement inevitably draws our attention to the figure at the center, which seems to be virtually holding these (photographed) spaces and their representations –the photographs- in place. Hence, it requires further attention. The image shows us the bust of Atatürk, and the light falling on to the left side of the face might get the observer for a second and lead her to think this is a real statue. Thanks to the clearly distinguishable picture frame, though, we quickly realize that this is just an illusion; it is not a statue hanging in the air but the two-dimensional image of a statue. Then we realize another feature of the space framed within the photograph, which could serve as an excuse to our misperception: the surface onto which the photographs are hung is not flat, and the central axis of the composition corresponds to the central axis of the concave surface itself. The real depth of the (exhibition) space supports the illusionary depth of the picture of the statue. Therefore, what we see at the center, we can conclude, is not a bust of Atatürk but a photograph of his bust; that is, the representation of a representation. But why is that so? And does it have anything to do with the 49 images surrounding the portrait? A second photograph zooming out and providing a larger framework shall provide some answers to these questions (**Figure 3**).

The second photograph shows the first photography exhibition in Ankara, which was held within the spacious interior of the newly finished Exhibition Hall in early 1936. In fact, the building itself also appears in one of the photographs that we see in **Figure 2**. Opened on February 29th 1936, the "Turkey; the Country of Beauty, History and Work" Exhibition displayed over 600 images depicting the "beauties" of Turkey (Ak, 2001, 224): its natural scenery and archaeological heritage along with its growing industry and its expanding transportation network. Moreover, the centerpiece of the exhibition, of which the first photograph we have seen depicts a closer view, includes the pictures of Ankara, the new capital of the young Republic. Declared as the capital city only a few days before the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, Ankara quickly became the symbol of nation-building process. The physical transformation of the small Ottoman town into a modern capital was seen as a counterpart to the nation's social transformation. Hence, it should not be surprising to see "in

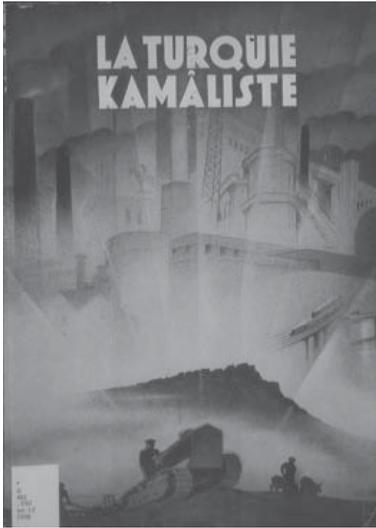


Figure 4. The cover of *La Turquie Kamaliste* (12, April 1936).

the center of the hall as a special attraction point, the pictures of Ankara, the symbol of new Turkey, with its wonderful buildings, wide streets and artistic monuments, assembled around the portrait of its mental author” (Pferschy, 1936, 19). Appropriately, the section title we see in the second photograph which does not exist in the closer view that was taken during the preparation of the exhibition reads: “Ankara is the symbol of Turkish building”.

Below, I will discuss how the set of photographs in **Figure 2** have constituted a particular visual representation of Ankara functioning as a spatial representation of modern Turkey. As the above-mentioned section title of the exhibition reveals, Ankara was already the symbol of the Republican project of nation-building, however, we have to remember that every representation is an attempt to fix meaning. The Ankara that represents modern Turkey is precisely the Ankara in the making; in order to show the will to build, the city was photographed as a newly constructed environment. And this representation inevitably yields to its being frozen in time at a crucial moment: immediately after its construction and right before its occupation by inhabitants.

IMAGINING THE EARLY REPUBLICAN CAPITAL

In 1933, the General Directorate of Press, which was under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until that date, was reorganized under the Ministry of Interiors. Under its new director Vedat Nedim Tör the organization gave particular attention to photography. Amateur competitions and small exhibitions were organized in *Halkevleri* (People’s Houses) in various cities in order to popularize photography. In addition, the Directorate undertook an extensive project of publishing visual material on Turkey to be distributed abroad. The major objective here was to present Turkey in its historical richness, natural beauty and modernist construction. A major publication of the Directorate was the journal *La Turquie Kamaliste*, which began publication in 1934 (**Figure 4**). The journal was intended for foreign audience as well as the Turkish; hence articles were published in French, English and German. It included high quality photographs from different parts of the country displaying historical sites and natural environments. The journal also included a section exclusively on Ankara, “Ankara Construit”, depicting the city under construction, in comparison to the İstanbul section representing what had been culturally inherited. For *La Turquie Kamaliste* and other publications, the Directorate needed a photographic archive of the country as well as Ankara. A message was sent to the governors of the provinces requesting photographs of their regions. This first attempt to build such an archive failed miserably since the photographs sent to Ankara were, in Tör’s words, “terribly ugly, tasteless and tedious” (Tör, 1976, 23). The only exception was an envelope sent from İstanbul by a photographer working in a studio in İstanbul. Tör ordered the governor of İstanbul to “find and send this man to Ankara ASAP.” The man was Othmar Pferschy, a young Austrian national, who was already losing his job in a studio due to a new law prohibiting foreigners to work in various professions including photography. He was hired by the Directorate as the specialist photographer and was assigned to travel and shoot photographs of the country. The 16,000 photographs he shot in two year’s time would make the bulk of the archive of the Directorate, and would be used in government publications for decades.

As these photographs were mostly produced to be included in publications intended for foreign audience, they initially function for the part of the

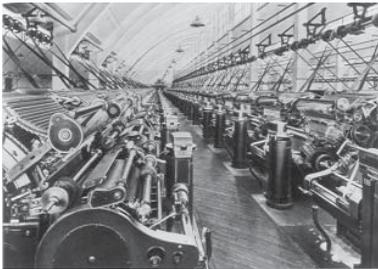


Figure 5. Turkish peasants at work (*La Turquie Kamaliste* (12, April 1936).

Figure 6. Interior view from the Kayseri textile factory (General Directorate of Press, 1936).

Figure 7. The building of the General Chief of Staff (General Directorate of Press, 1936).

Figure 8. "The Call of the Youth" (General Directorate of Press, 1936).

2. In addition to *La Turquie Kamaliste*, a descriptive book narrating the development of Republican Turkey, *La Turquie Contemporaine* (1935), and a photography album *Fotoğrafla Türkiye* (1936) were also published in the same years.

Republican elite to identify with the Western gaze. Nevertheless, here I will rather focus on the role of these images as a medium between the nation-state and its subjects, since their viewing by national subjects has significant effects *vis-à-vis* the power relations between the state and the citizens. While these images had already begun circulation abroad by then (2), the 1936 exhibition was the first comprehensive display of the Directorate's collection to the national audience. The exhibit, which would later travel abroad, includes a number of themes, which would recur in later exhibits as well as the publications. These major themes are: the documentation of the country and her cultural wealth, the depiction of its industrial achievements, the building of Ankara, and finally the representation of the Turkish people.

The exhibit creates a relation between the newly-born nation-state and the country, defining the latter as the raw material that is to become the nation. On the one hand, the gaze of the state documenting the country's belongings affirms its own power on these possessions (Anderson, 1991, 163-185). At the same time, the origin of nationhood is found in the idyllic views of the countryside (Jäger, 2003). That is, the documenting gaze of the nation-state simultaneously identifies the land as the "motherland" and marks it as state possession. On the other hand, the will to construct a modern nation is displayed through literal depiction of building via industry and architecture. However, the representation of the nation is troubled by an essential paradox: the claim to an ever-existing spirit of nationhood contradicts with the idea of building the nation. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that while images of the countryside shows working peasants, the industrial imagery exclude working men and women; what is seen is only the perfect order of machines in endless repetition (Figure 5, 6). The working peasants are a manifestation of the national spirit in the countryside, whereas they would appear as disconcerting the perfect harmony of machines in the factory. The same is true for architecture as well. As the whole exhibit culminates in the images of the newly built capital, architecture serves as the metaphor of nation-building. Nevertheless, this is an architecture devoid of human life (Figure 7). Although the new capital is to accommodate as well as symbolize a new -modern- way of life, the lack of the subjects of such life style in the photographs of Ankara is striking. It should not surprise us then to see Kemal Atatürk, "the mental author" of Turkish building, cast in bronze rather than as a man of flesh and blood in the central photograph of the exhibit. If architecture has to divorce itself from human existence in order to support the visual narrative of nationhood, then the city itself has to give up its future and stick with being the metaphor of nation-building. The void of everyday life in the representation of Ankara cannot be filled with a human image even if this is its "mental author". This void could best be filled with a statue of the leader; another piece of architecture frozen in time.

Finally, the Turkish people are represented as *nation* in the exhibit. The two major features of nationhood emerge here as unity and strength. It is not surprising to see the young nation represented via the youth, and that the virile bodies are always displayed in procession. It is worth noting here that the depiction of the bodies in this imagery is strikingly similar to the depiction of machines in the factory space (Figure 8).

Here, we shall turn to the set of photographs in Figure 2. These photographs show us the newly finished buildings, streets and monuments of Ankara. They would also appear in a major publication of the

Directorate, the photography album *Fotoğrafla Türkiye* (General Directorate of Press, 1936). The album was composed of one-page photographs with titles in four languages (Turkish, English, French and German). All of the photographs were taken by Pferschy himself, and were included in the 1936 exhibition. In the publication –as was the case with the exhibition– Ankara occupied a special section. The representation of the city in these images presented architecture –that of the newly built government buildings– as the paradigm of the Turkish state: perfectly shaped, yet distanced from the social environment.

Pferschy's photographs showing the architecture of Ankara contain a number of representational strategies producing a particular effect, which functions in the making of a particular subject position in relation to the nation-state. First of all, as discussed above, the representation of the built environment lacks the depiction of social interactions. Secondly, the framing of these photographs almost always includes a line of demarcation between the building and the observer; the depth created by a spatial barrier functions as a tool fixing the distance between the state and its subjects (**Figure 9**). The use of a vanishing line in the perspective as a line of demarcation fulfills two functions. Initially, it supports the depth of the picture plane and consequently strengthens the image of architecture as solid object. Such image of architecture as a free-standing entity, in return, represents the nation-state as firm and stable. Moreover, the line of demarcation stretching infinitely implies the permanence of the distance between architecture in display (hence the nation-state it represents) and the observer-subject. A close look at the photographs in **Figure 2** reveals that their organization emphasizes the centrality of the composition by situating the photographs appropriately so that the dominant vanishing line in each one is directed to the image of Atatürk at the center.

Finally, the buildings in Pferschy's photographs are almost always viewed with an angle avoiding a direct frontal view. This choice also has significant effects. The visibility of more than one façade reinforces the above mentioned perception of the buildings as free-standing objects representing the firmness of the state. Yet, this angular vista denies a direct frontal view, thus prohibits the possibility of communication between the building and the observer-subject.

These images, then, do not merely depict the cityscape; they mediate the relation between the nation-state and its subjects (3). The image these photographs construct, the meaning they narrate is the transformation of the small Ottoman town into a modern capital. And the frequent presence of monuments within these images is a constant reminder that this transformation takes place under a determined state power. Here, the urban environments of Ankara appear not as a habitable city but as a series of spaces of representation. Space for representation, one can even say, because these images are precisely produced to represent Ankara as an object; an architecture to be looked at, rather than being experienced. Nevertheless, these spaces, as it is the ill fate of every piece of architecture, would be subject to the eroding use of their inhabitants in the upcoming decades. But, what about the frozen image itself? Can the meaning persist while its signifier vanishes in time? To see if and how the representation of early Republican Ankara had disappeared, we shall look at the image of Ankara after the end of the single-party rule.

3. It has to be noted that the visual making of modern subjects does not necessarily occur under state domination. For appropriation of photography in producing alternate meanings of the urban environment in early Republican Ankara through the works of local photographers, see Batuman, 2004.



Figure 9. The Grand National Assembly (General Directorate of Press, 1936).

Figure 10. A tourist brochure from 1955.

ANKARA IN THE POST-WAR ERA

The single-party rule of the Republican People's Party came to an end in the wake of the Second World War. Although the RPP managed to maintain its position in the first free elections on 1946, the 1950 elections were a victory for the Democrat Party. Essentially representing commercial and (relatively weaker) industrial segments of the bourgeoisie and the landlords, the DP was supported by all social groups that were against the single-party rule (Karpat, 1973, 58; Kongar, 1995, 160). The new government abandoned statist policies of protectionism and put liberal policies into implementation, integrating the country's economy into the world market. Between 1923 and 1950, although Ankara performed as the political and administrative center of the country, İstanbul remained as the industrial and business center of the country, its largest port, and the center of cultural and intellectual life. In tune with their political preferences, the DP governments openly favored İstanbul against Ankara as the former represented entrepreneurship while the latter was now seen as the symbol of bureaucratic power. As the Republican cadres had invested in Ankara to diminish the dominance of İstanbul, this trend was reversed under the Democrat Party. During the 1950s, public investments flowed into İstanbul, and it was the end of an era that was characterized by the distrust of the state elite towards İstanbul.

In the meantime, Ankara was going through social and physical transformations. Getting its share from the rapid urbanization occurring nation-wide, the city was not the unoccupied environment in Pfershy's photographs anymore. With vehicular traffic flowing in wide boulevards, expanding businesses supported by the growing consumer population, higher apartment blocks and even newly constructed skyscrapers, Ankara of the 1950s seem no different than its counterparts in other parts of the world. Stripped off of its view as the heart of the nation, the representation of the city was now a different one (Figure 10). Based on a different conception of modernity foregrounding mobility, this new imagery displayed Ankara as an orderly environment with its parks, streets and proudly displayed state of the art buses, as well as its industry as witnessed by the smoke coming out of the factory chimneys in the background. Its empty spaces were now lively environments occupied by inhabitants.

This new representation was clearly evidence to the disappearance of the image of Ankara as the lifeless signifier of nation-in-building. Ironically, it was also the affirmation of the possibility of a representation of "early Republican Ankara". The existence of an *early* Republican Ankara requires an after-life that would allow it to be identified as an earlier phase. But it also requires a need to define a particular era as "early Republican period". This, in return, raises the question of when and why does the need to recall this historical period arises. Below, I will argue that the rise of "early Republican Ankara" as a representation should be understood as a nostalgic call that has emerged within the particular political conditions of the 1990s.

EARLY REPUBLICAN ANKARA AND THE POLITICS OF NOSTALGIA

Although the founding years of the Turkish Republic has always been a major field of inquiry, this period was not identified as "early republican period" until the 1990s (4). This era was generally labeled either in political terms (single-party period) or with direct reference to the leader (Atatürk

4. The only exception to this was Aslanoğlu's (1980) study on the architecture of early Republican period. Nevertheless, her study of the period between 1923 and 1938 does not include any explanation as to why the analyzed period was defined as "early Republican period".

5. Ironically enough, the decade witnessed a wave of privatization of state enterprises parallel to an increase in human rights violations. In other words, the call for liberalization of the Turkish state found echo only in economic terms, whereas its political requirements were left aside.

6. Etymologically nostalgia comes from the Greek for "a painful longing" (*algia*) to return home (*nostos*). The original use of the term referred to the symptoms of homesick Swiss soldiers in the 17th century (Boym, 2001, 3).

period). Most of these studies were produced within the field of political history, and were generally descriptive narratives uncritically documenting the details of the analyzed era. The early 1990s, however, witnessed the rise of a critical approach to the founding years of the republic. Finding echo in the political sphere through the concept of "second republic", this was the importation of postmodern critique into Turkish political history (Sezer, 1993). The critique was based on the authoritarian character of the nation-building process, and the dominant role of the state throughout the republican history as a result (Altan, 1992; Sever and Dizdar, 1993). Accordingly, foundational principles of the republic such as protectionism in economy and rigid interpretations of nationalism and secularism were seen as reflections of particular historical conditions that had long been obsolete. Consistent with the global rise of a neo-liberal ideology in the 1990s, the most vocally criticized aspect of state control was that within the domain of economy (5). Such critical approach towards the founding years of the republic, supported by the global spread of cultural studies, would give way to the flourishing of scholarly analyses problematizing various dimensions of social and cultural life within the making of modern Turkey.

Within this body of scholarly work, Ankara emerged as a particular object of analysis. If one reason for this was the above-mentioned critical debates targeting the early republican history, the other was the growing interest in the role of space in social sciences in the same period. First as the physical stage of early republican years, and then as an embodiment of the republican project itself, Ankara became a favorite topic for scholarly research in the second half of the 1990s (Tankut, 1993; Caner, 1996; Lynch, 1996; Koçak, 1998; Kezer, 1999). Such studies analyzed the nation-building process in terms of space production, function of spatial practices in identity formation, urban and architectural expressions of socio-cultural performances, and ideological representations as inscribed in built environments. Although assessing it critically, these studies contributed to the making of "early Republican Ankara" as a spatial representation, by identifying it as the object of their analyses.

Nonetheless, the political climate in Turkey would also support the rise of "early Republican Ankara" in the early 1990s. The 1990s in Turkey would be marked by two major streams of political subversion provoking long lasting concerns for the part of the political establishment. The first of these was the armed Kurdish insurrection that escalated in the wake of the Gulf War. The second one was the rise of political Islam, which would continue troubling Turkish politics with its electoral victories until today. The increasing influence of political Islam provoked a gradually intensifying anxiety for the part of urban middle classes that had embraced the modernist and secular culture of the republic. The feeling of being under the threat of Islamist oppression, such anxiety quickly molded itself into a form of *nostalgia* for the golden age of the early Republic.

Nostalgia is clearly an effect of change; as Boym (2001) suggests, nostalgia and progress are the alter egos of each other. Hence, nostalgia is an essential part of modernity. The anxiety caused by change triggers longing for an ideal(ized) past. That is, nostalgia is a matter of the present more than it is a matter of the past. The recollection of the past from the detached viewpoint of the present serves for the re-appropriation of the present (Westwood and Williams, 1997, 12). Moreover, the past that is longed for is not only a recollection but a re-presentation; it is a constructed situation primarily addressing the present condition. As the origin of the term reveals (6), what nostalgia longs for is home (Davis, 1979). And the 1990s in

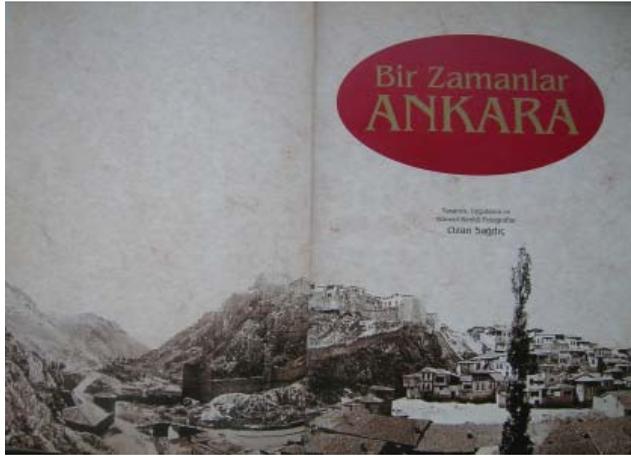


Figure 11. Cover pages of Sağıdıç (1993).



Figure 12. Sample pages from Sağıdıç (1993, 34-5).

Turkey witnessed the emergence of nostalgia for the early republican period, a major focus of which was the city of Ankara, the home imagined as the untainted locus of Republican modernity (7). Imagined as a tabula rasa for the republican project, Ankara of the 1930s was christened as “early Republican Ankara”, a fixed image to become the lost object of nostalgic yearning.

Özyürek (2006) defines the nostalgia for the early Republican period that emerged in the 1990s as “nostalgic Kemalism”. According to her, the major supporters of nostalgia were the ones negatively influenced by the economic liberalization of the 1980s. The bureaucratic elite and the middle class civil servants not only deprived economically, but also lost their privileged status in the public sphere. In addition, the political pressures from the rising Islamism and Kurdish separatism and the increasing intervention of the IMF and the EU into the Turkish economy and politics (especially in regards to human rights violations) created considerable discontent (Özyürek, 2006, 16-17). In other words, nostalgia emerged as an ideological response to the declining material conditions of a particular social stratum in the 1990s. And “early Republican Ankara” was to be a significant object to be deployed in the materialization of this nostalgic discourse. Parallel to the political tides, it is possible to detect three instances where Ankara emerged as an instrument of politics of nostalgia: first in the early 1990s, then in 1997-98 (throughout the indirect military intervention forcing the Islamist Welfare Party government to step down and the consecutive celebration campaign for the 75th anniversary of the Republic), and finally during the presidential elections in 2007.

In early 1990s, the Ankara Greater Municipality started a campaign to raise consciousness among the citizens of Ankara. A number of events honoring the 70th anniversary of Ankara’s declaration as the capital were accompanied by a number of publications. While an *Ankara City Bibliography* was published for the first time in 1992, two other publications stood out with their particular use of early republican Ankara photographs. In an attempt to create a visual archive of the early republican Ankara, *Ankara Posta Kartları ve Belge Fotoğrafları Arşivi* brought together photographs of Ankara (Belko, 1994). *Bir Zamanlar Ankara*, on the other hand, presented a narrative of the foundation of the Republic (hence republican Ankara) with a significant use of early Ankara photographs (Sağıdıç, 1993). In addition to those of the Ankara Greater Municipality, the Ministry of Culture also published a volume on Ankara (Özel, 1992).

7. The constructedness of the image of early Republican Ankara in the 1930s has also been analyzed to an extent. A major instrument for such image construction was monuments built in various locations across city. For the making of the Republican imaginary through monuments in Ankara, see Sargın (2004), and Batuman (2005).

8. The common structure of Sağıdıç (1993) and Özel (1992) presents a brief introduction to the ancient history of Ankara (from antiquity to the War of Independence in 20-25 pages) followed by a major section (of approximately 100 pages) on early Republican Ankara. This is followed by contemporary photographs of Ankara. Batur (1994) allocates its sections rather evenly to various historical periods of Ankara, while also making use of Ankara photographs of later periods.

Finally, another collection bringing together historical analyses, personal accounts as well as literary pieces on Ankara was published by a private bank (Batur, 1994).

These four books which were published almost simultaneously share certain features regarding the resurfacing of early Republican Ankara photographs. As one of them itself was a photography album (Belko, 1994), these oversize books made extensive use of Ankara photographs of the 1920s and 1930s, and as the images were their major feature they were printed on high quality paper. Especially Sağıdıç (1993) and Özel (1992) were attempts at creating visual narratives on early republican Ankara (Figure 11). These publications not only presented a linear history, but also presented a particular route to look at early Republican Ankara (8). The visual narrative, consistent with the idea of *displaying* the making of a new capital, begins with the old –wrecked– town of Ankara, moves on to the rebuilt city center (Station Street and Ulus), then to the newly built government center and the villas in Yenışehir (Figure 12). Hence, these publications reproduce a nostalgic narrative on early republican Ankara as the ideal home of republican modernity. What is striking is the omission of post-1950 history of Ankara in this narrative. The early republican Ankara becomes the only history of Ankara. However, it is also crucial here to consider the circulation of this nostalgic image of Ankara in public. If the price of these four volumes (as mentioned above, all of which are oversize and printed on high quality paper) are considered, it is clear that these books could only be purchased by the upper-middle class citizens of Ankara, those who would be the promoters of nostalgic Kemalism throughout the 1990s.

Here, it is necessary to clarify the relationship between the two distinct sets of publications on Ankara that has emerged in the early 1990s. As discussed above, a significant body of scholarly work produced throughout the 1990s aimed at critical engagement with the early Republican period. These studies uncovered various aspects of urban experience that were influential in shaping the nation building process. Nevertheless, by defining “early republican Ankara” as their object of analysis, they contributed to the making of “early Republican Ankara” as a representation; a representation that would quickly be appropriated by the political discourse of nostalgia. The second set of publications, on the other hand, was less scholarly, much less critical in their approach to the early Republican period and significantly visual in their content. These publications, whether consciously or unconsciously, played a direct role in the reproduction of the visual representation of “early republican Ankara” within a nostalgic atmosphere.

The second wave of early republican nostalgia came after the traumatic experience of having an Islamist government for the first time in Turkish Republican history. The 1995 electoral victory of the Islamist Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*) and its coming to power was responded by the Armed Forces with an intervention forcing the government to resign and the closing down of the Welfare Party in 1997. However, the electoral base of political Islam was still a problem and the celebrations for the 75th anniversary of the Republic in 1998 turned into a major event disseminating nostalgia as a unifying ideology. Among other activities, two exhibits appear to be important in visualizing the nostalgic discourse yearning for the early Republican period (Özyürek, 2001). The “Three Generations of the Republic” and the “Creating a Citizen” exhibits, organized by the History Foundation and the Yapı Kredi Bank respectively, displayed images of

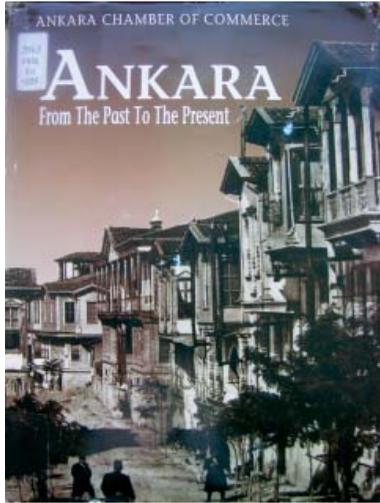


Figure 13. Cover of Ankara Chamber of Commerce (1998).

the national subjects in the early republican period, showing the visitors a model of the ideal citizen (9). The 75th anniversary celebrations were modeled after the 10th anniversary, longing for the enthusiasm of 1933. One of the most noticeable signs of nostalgia for the early republican period was the revival of the 10th Anniversary March (*10. Yıl Marşı*) (Özyürek, 2006, 168).

Similar to the publications mentioned above, new oversize books with extensive amount of photographs of early republican Ankara were published in 1998 (Evren, 1998; Ankara Chamber of Commerce, 1998) (10). Moreover, *Fotoğrafla Türkiye* was reprinted by the General Directorate of Press and Broadcasting and was presented to the public with a ceremony at Ankara Palas on October 12th, 1998 (Targaç, 2000, 86). Early Republican Ankara was once again the major tool for representing the nostalgic discourse pointing at the early republican period as the ideal socio-political milieu.

Here, it is necessary to mention an important difference between the publications that appeared in early 1990s and those came out in the final years of the decade. While the former set of publications reproduced all available photographs of early republican Ankara, the latter set included publications selectively including the photographs of the General Directorate of Press. This differentiation brings out a semi-conscious categorization of early Ankara photographs: on the one hand, the photographs of the Directorate (mostly taken by Pferschy), and on the other, the numerous photographs produced by local photographers throughout the 1920s and 1930s. While images belonging to both of these categories have been reproduced since the early 1990s, the reprinting of *Fotoğrafla Türkiye* marks the emergence of different perceptions regarding these two sets of images. As discussed in the first part of this paper, the photographs taken by Pferschy display the modernist built environment of Ankara as a metaphor of nation-building. Here, architecture represents simultaneously the nation and the nation-state as its immediate representative. Meanwhile, the heterogeneous bulk of photographs taken by civil photographers had either tried to display the perfection of the new urban environment (similar to Pferschy), or focused on a different subject (generally the daily life in the city) and used the built environment as a background.

9. According to the research held by the History Foundation during the display of the "Three Generations of the Republic", the majority of the visitors of the exhibit were upper-middle class individuals with high income and high education levels (Özyürek, 2001, 204).

10. Interestingly enough, these publications also influenced the above-mentioned researches critically investigating the early Republican history of Ankara. Appearing as the visual documentation of early Republican Ankara, these volumes did not only verify the existence of something called "early Republican Ankara" they also allowed the researches scrutinizing the urban environment and its relation to the project of nation-building to overlook the constructedness of such representation. Hence, the analyses aiming at questioning the spatial dimension of nation-building became supports for the re-circulation of "early Republican Ankara" as an historical fact rather than an ideologically constructed spatial representation.

Clearly, the meanings produced by these photographs are determined by the temporality of the observer's gaze. That is, the perception of the observer is framed by her point in time. This is more so when we are speaking of a nostalgic effect generated by photographs. Therefore, those photographs which do not focus on the new architecture of early Republican Ankara are perceived as representations of the not-yet-modernized state of Ankara (Figure 13). The new architecture of the capital has to be understood as modern within the contemporary architectural codes. Otherwise, even if the photographs show newly finished buildings, or even if they have no intention of attributing architecture a particular function in representing modernity, they easily end up being signifiers of pre-modern Ankara. For instance, the building of Ziraat Bank of the late 1920s would not seem as a modern building to a contemporary observer (Figure 14).

In other words, the early republican Ankara photographs tell the viewers of the modernization of Ankara via comparison between the city of the 1930s and its current condition. We either see examples of old Ankara

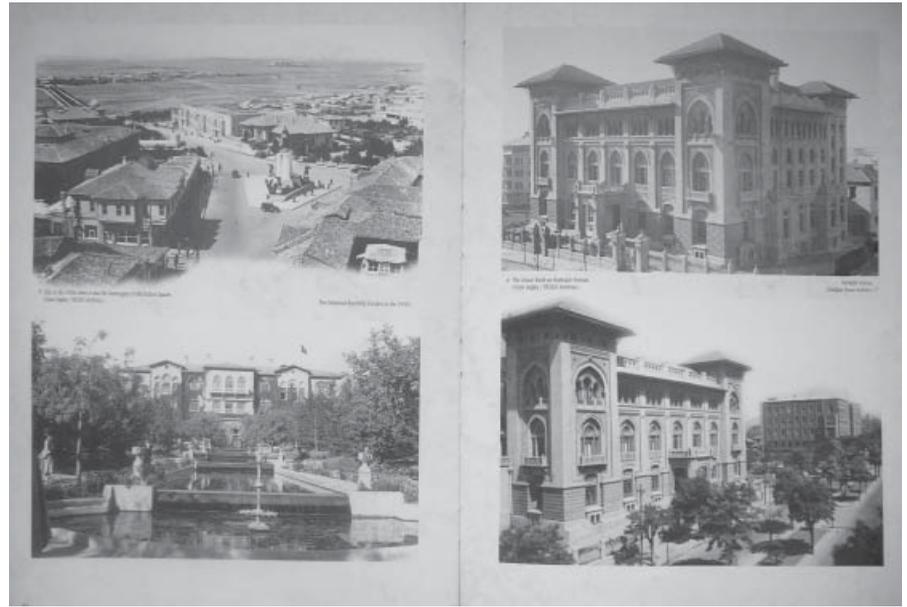


Figure 14. Sample pages from Ankara Chamber of Commerce (1998, 46-7).



Figure 15. Sample pages from Özel (1992, 26-7).

(prior to the building of modernist environments), in which case the observer compares this imagery with her own living conditions and affirms modernization as a transformation from what she sees to what she experiences today. Or we see images directly focusing on the newly finished modernist environments, in which case the observer affirms the displayed urban environment as an ideal but long lost milieu in comparison to the contemporary –imperfect– condition of the city. These two comparisons can even be juxtaposed by presenting images of Ankara from the 1900s, 1930s and the 1990s (Figure 15). The small town in ruins had miraculously developed into a modern capital, which later has become an overcrowded city marked by pollution and traffic congestion. In other words, the visual representation of early republican Ankara is by no means limited to the photographs circulated by the General Directorate of Press. Yet, all these photographs are caught up within the same rhetoric of nostalgia, within which the paradigmatic photographs of Pferschy still



Figure 16. The “Republican Rally” in Tandoğan Square (İstanbul indymedia, URL: <http://istanbul.indymedia.org/uploads/2008/04/pic.jpg>)

11. Both the Atatürkist Thought Association and the Support for Modern Life Association were established in late 1989 and were effective throughout the 1990s as civil agents promoting Kemalist ideology. In 1998 and 1999 civil servants such as judges, prosecutors, teachers and military officers were allowed to become members of the Atatürkist Thought Association (Erdoğan, 2000).

12. Different numbers were given for the amount of people attending the rally; the Ankara Police Department announced that 583.000 people were in Tandoğan Square, while according to the Atatürkist Thought Association the number was more than 1 million. The number of people visiting Atatürk’s mausoleum on April 14 was announced as 370.000, the highest number until today. The next rally was in İstanbul on April 29th., On May 5th, there were rallies in both Manisa and Çanakkale. On May 13th, another one with a high level of participation took place in İzmir.

13. The participants of these rallies stirred debates as to their social identity, and various explanations were forwarded. Ayata (2007) argued the rise of “new middle classes” composed mainly of white-collar professionals acquiring positions through education. According to Oran (2007), this social stratum should be identified as “literate petty-bourgeoisie”. Insel (2007), on the other hand, pointed at the role of state within the political process that took place throughout early 2007 and defined the Turkish political system as a “praetorian republic”, arguing that it is a pluralist system limited by military influence.

represent the ideal image of the republican capital to be identified across time.

Although the 1999 elections in the wake of the military intervention witnessed a drop in the support for political Islam, the newly established moderate Islamist Justice and Development Party gained a significant victory in the 2002 elections. Consolidating its power in the 2004 local elections, the JDP ruled the country until 2007 avoiding confrontation with the political establishment and the Armed Forces. Nevertheless, the general elections were scheduled for November 2007 while the presidential elections were to be held in April 2007. With the JDP having a significant majority in the parliament, it was clear since 2002 that the JDP would single-handedly elect the new president.

In early 2007 the debates around the presidential elections heated since it became clear that the JDP would not call for early elections and that they were determined to elect the president. On the other hand, it was simply intolerable for the political establishment to have an Islamist president, since the presidency was viewed as the last stronghold of secularism. Hence, a significant mobilization emerged to force the JDP to call for early elections or at least prevent its nomination of an Islamist figure (the most likely figure being Prime Minister himself) for presidency. Ankara was to be once again the medium of nostalgic republicanism, this time also as a stage for public protest. Organized by NGOs such as the Atatürkist Thought Association and the Support for Modern Life Association (11), a series of anti-JDP protests took place in major Turkish cities in April-May 2007. The first of these protests took place in Tandoğan Square in Ankara, close to Atatürk’s mausoleum which was also a significant locus for the protests. In fact, the protesters marched from the Square to the Mausoleum as a part of the demonstrations (Figure 16). The rally had significant participation, and was carried on in various cities in the following weeks (12). Nevertheless, the Ankara rally stood out as a secularist demonstration for the part of urban middle classes raising concern regarding the insurance of their way of life (13).

14. After his death in 1984, Pferschy's daughter Astrid von Schell donated his archive of 1714 negatives and 1293 prints to İstanbul Modern in 2005 (Özdes, 2006, 30). 160 of these photographs were included in the exhibit "In the Light of the Republic: The Photographs of Othmar Pferschy" organized by Engin Özdes, the curator of the İstanbul Modern Photography Gallery.

15. An album of the photographs from the Ankara exhibit was also published earlier and put in display at the reception.

16. The mobilization against the possible presidency of Prime Minister Erdoğan resulted in the nomination of Abdullah Gül, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, on April 24th. As the oppositional RPP took the first round of elections to the Supreme Court to be nullified, the Armed Forces issued a statement on its web site on April 27th, the day of the first round of presidential elections. Considered as an ultimatum objecting Gül's candidacy, the statement was affective. The Court nullified the first round of elections on May 1st, during the ongoing protests. The presidential elections were postponed on May 9th, and the government called for early elections the next day. The general elections were held on July 22nd, and resulted in another victory for the JDP. Abdullah Gül was elected president eventually on August 28th.

It is within this context that the Othmar Pferschy exhibit of İstanbul Modern arrived in Ankara (14). In this new exhibit, the number of Ankara photographs was increased, and the title was changed into "The Light from Ankara: Photographs by Othmar Pferschy". Considering the political use of early republican Ankara photographs throughout the 1990s, it should not be surprising to see that government representatives, politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen, artists and even retired ministers were present at the opening of the exhibit. Pferschy's photographs were the paradigmatic examples of "early Republican Ankara", and they were home once again (15). The photographs by Pferschy being hung for the exhibit at Ankara Palas during the weekend of April 14-15 should be understood as a counterpart of the mournful chants echoing in the courtyard of Atatürk's Mausoleum as well as the militia costumes (of the War of Independence) and the slogans of dedication (in defense of secularism) in Tandoğan Square. All of these were components of the same nostalgic discourse calling citizens to identify with these symbols (of the past) and act accordingly (at the present).

Although the political ends were not achieved through the anti-JDP campaign of 2007 (16), the reproduction of "early Republican Ankara" as a spatial signifier of republicanism (once again) was significant. It was mentioned above that the photographs of early Republican Ankara were by no means limited to those produced by the General Directorate of Press. Nevertheless, the reproduction of the early Republican Ankara photographs throughout the past two decades brings out two significant points. The first point is the gradual differentiation of the two sets of images, namely those produced by the General Directorate and those taken by local photographers in the later publications. The ultimate example marking this separation was the exhibition of Pferschy's photographs in Ankara. This point becomes more striking considering a very recent publication that has come out during the writing of this paper. The three volume album *Cumhuriyetin Başkenti*, including more than 2500 early Ankara postcards produced by local photographers between 1890 and 1945, categorizes the material according to their producers (Cangır, 2007). Here, the heterogeneity of the photographic representation of early Republican Ankara becomes evident. Nonetheless, the second point is that although these two sets of images produce different meanings, they are subject to the same rhetoric. As they are reproduced and circulated within the contemporary political environment, they cannot avoid becoming appropriated by the politics of nostalgia. Pferschy's images constitute the visual core of such nostalgic longing for republicanism by displaying modernization and sovereign nation-state as inseparable. The local photographs, meanwhile, rather than presenting an ideal image to identify with, present a not-yet modernized environment to the contemporary eyes, pointing out to our contemporary modernity as a republican accomplishment.

CONCLUSION

The construction of Ankara as the capital of modern Turkey has always been a symbol of nation-building. And photography has always been a major medium in representing Ankara as a signifier of the republican undertaking towards creating a modern nation. Hence, the photographs of Ankara of the early Republican years have always been components of a political narrative. The representation of Ankara fulfilled an important function in mediating the relation between the nation state and its

citizens. The photographs of Ankara produced a particular subject effect, directing the observer-citizens to identify with the state in a particular way. This paper had two main objectives in this respect. The first objective was to analyze the construction of the particular image of Ankara as representative of nation-building in the 1930s. The second one, on the other hand, was to investigate the re-emergence of the same imagery in the form of "early Republican Ankara" in the 1990s.

The emphasis on 'building' being its essential aspect, this image presented Ankara in the making; the city was presented as a newly finished environment. As every representation is a constructed one aiming at fixing a meaning, such representation of Ankara also had to omit certain features. A crucial aspect of this imagery was the lack of social life of Ankara. The cityscape was displayed right after its construction and right before its occupation by inhabitants. Architecture, here, appeared as a means to represent the state. And the photographs of governmental buildings contained specific features supporting the image of architecture (hence the state) in perfect shape and distanced from the social environment.

Othmar Pferschy's photographs of the 1930s stand out as the paradigmatic examples of such imagery, constituting the image of Republican Ankara. His photographs were used extensively in various government publications home and abroad, as well as postcards, stamps, calendars and even banknotes. While the image of Ankara as the symbol of nation-building was dominant throughout the single-party period, this image gave way to a different one in the post-War era. Replaced by a new notion of modernity emphasizing mobility and consumption, the image of Ankara as the locus of nation-building faded away, only to resurface in the 1990s as a political instrument.

The 1990s in Turkey witnessed the rise of a nostalgic yearning for the early Republican period as an ideological response to the declining material conditions of a particular social stratum. Especially the educated segments of urban middle classes feeling threatened regarding their way of life identified themselves with this nostalgic discourse. One of the major signifiers this emergent nostalgia found its expression in was "early Republican Ankara". The image of Ankara of the 1930s was reproduced and circulated to support the nostalgic discourse as a unifying ideology in the face of political Islam. First in the first years of the 1990s, then in the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the Republic, and finally in 2007 during the dispute on the presidential elections, photographs of early Republican Ankara circulated in public. The contemporary emergence of "early Republican Ankara" is a significant example of not only politics of nostalgia but also the political utilization of representations of space.

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FOTOĞRAF GÖREV BAŞINDA: ULUS İNŞASINDAN NOSTALJİ SİYASETİNE "ERKEN CUMHURİYET ANKARA'SI"

Ankara, gerek yeni kurulan Cumhuriyet'in gerekse modern bir ulus inşa etme projesinin önemli bir sembolü olmuştur. Başkent Ankara'nın inşası, yeni bir toplumsal yapının ve ona uygun siyasal rejimin kuruluşuna koşut olarak kavranmış, kentin yeni oluşan yapılı çevresi genç ulus-devletin kendisinin ve bu kurucu süreçteki kazanımlarının ifadelerini bulduğu bir araç olmuştur. Bu çerçevede 1930'lar Ankara'sı yeni kurulmuş bulunan Cumhuriyet'in gerek dış dünya ile gerekse kendi yurttaşlarıyla kuracağı ilişkide kendi varlığını görselleştireceği ideolojik bir temsile dönüşür. İnşa halindeki Ankara ve onun yeni tamamlanmış yapıları fotoğraflanarak çeşitli formatlarda basılıp çoğaltılmış, bu görsel temsil hem Ankara'ya, hem de ulus-devlete dair belli anlamlar üretmiştir. Burada dikkat edilmesi gereken nokta, bu görsel temsilin, özellikle ulus-devlet ile yurttaş-özneler arasında belirli bir özdeşleşme ilişkisi kurmuş olduğudur. Bu yazı, Ankara'nın 1930'larda kurulan görsel temsiline iki farklı tarihsel dönemdeki siyasal işlevini incelemektedir. İlk olarak devlet ve yurttaş arasında ilişki kurucu bir araç olarak Ankara temsiline fotoğraf aracılığıyla oluşumu incelenmiştir. İkinci olarak ise, aynı görsel temsilin 1990'larda, bu kez bambaşka bir siyasal ortamda bir kez daha siyasal bir araç olarak ortaya çıkışı, nostalji siyaseti çerçevesinde tartışılmıştır.

Yeni devlet ve yeni başkent inşası arasındaki koşutluk çerçevesinde başlıca vurgusu "inşa" ediminde olmak üzere 1930'larda oluşan Ankara imgesi, belli temsil stratejileri ile şekillenmiştir. Özellikle 1930'ların devlet yayınlarında yer bulan Ankara fotoğrafları incelendiğinde söz konusu görsel temsilin kentte süregiden toplumsal yaşantıyı içermediği, yapılı çevrenin yeni tamamlanmış ve henüz kullanıcılarca işgal edilmemiş bir anıyı yansıttığı görülür. Bu temsil içinde mimarlık ulus-devleti temsil eden bir araç olarak ortaya çıkarken, tekil yapıların görüntüleri gerek egemen devlet imgesini gerekse izleyici özne ile kurulan ilişkiyi tanımlayacak mesafeyi ortaya koyar.

Başkent Ankara imgesinin oluşumunda Othmar Pferschy'nin fotoğrafları paradigmatik örnekler olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Zira Pferschy'nin Matbuat Umum Müdürlüğü bünyesinde çektiği fotoğraflar yurtiçi ve yurt dışında yayınlanan belli başlı resmi yayınlarda olduğu kadar, pullar, takvimler, banknotlar gibi günlük dolaşımı sık olan görsel dokümanlarda da yer bulmuştur. Ulus-inşasının sembolü olarak Ankara imgesi özellikle tek parti döneminde yaygın biçimde üretilmişse de savaş sonrası dönemde bu imge yerini başka bir Ankara tasavvuruna bırakmıştır. Hareketliliğin ve tüketimin öne çıktığı yeni bir modernlik kavrayışı ile şekillenen bu yeni Ankara imgesinin önemi, 1930'larda üretilmiş olan temsiline ait olduğu dönemin sona ermiş olduğunu göstermesidir. Zira söz konusu temsiline

1990'larda yeniden üretimi "erken cumhuriyet Ankara'sı" biçiminde ve nostaljik bir siyasal söylemin unsuru olarak gerçekleşecektir.

90'lı yıllar, özellikle yükselen siyasal İslam karşısında, eğitimli ve kentli orta sınıfların yaşam biçimlerinin tehdit altında olduğu yönündeki kaygılarına yaslanan devletçi bir söylemin yükselişine sahne olmuştur. Erken Cumhuriyet dönemini idealize eden ve bu dönemin radikal modernite anlayışına yönelik bir nostaljiyi odağına alan bu söylem, önemli sembollerinden birini "erken Cumhuriyet Ankara'sı"nda bulmuştur. İlk olarak 90'ların ilk yıllarında, daha sonra 1998 yılında Cumhuriyet'in 75. yıldönümü kutlamaları kapsamında ve son olarak 2007 yılında cumhurbaşkanlığı seçimine ilişkin ortaya çıkan siyasal kriz sürecinde 1930'lar Ankara'sına ait görsel malzemeler tekrar tekrar dolaşıma girmiştir. 1930'larda ulus-inşası projesinin parçası olan Ankara'nın görsel temsili, 1990 sonrasında siyasal İslam karşısında bütünleştirici bir ideoloji kurma projesinin bir aracı olarak bir kez daha siyasal bir araç olmuştur.