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A new city for a new state. City planning and the formation of national identity in the Balkans (1820s–1920s)

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During the 19th century the European provinces of the polyethnic Ottoman Empire were dismantled and a number of new national states were created in the Balkan peninsula: Greece, Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria between 1829 and 1878, Albania and modern Greece in the 1910s and up to 1922. At the same time the Ottoman Empire was driven to modernize and reform its traditional theocratic institutions, following the model of the European states of the time. A prolonged interior unrest, national liberation movements/insurrections and successive wars, such as the two Balkan Wars (1912–1913), the first World War (1914–1918) and the Asia Minor Campaign (1920–1922), resulted in frontier changes, extensive damage to existing towns and countryside and millions of refugees in search of new homes. It is thus easy to understand that the establishment of a new network of settlements within new national frontiers acquired a distinct importance, and the reconstruction of cities was placed at the heart of the modernizing programmes of the states involved. In fact, new states sought to motivate production and economic activity, as well as emphasize a national identity, by effacing all memories of Ottoman rule, still persistant in urban fabrics (the Ottomans occupied the Balkans for four to five centuries). This paper examines the city planning operations and legislation in modern Balkan countries, including the modernization of Ottoman cities during the Tanzimat era of reorganization.

Introduction

The annexation of new Greek cities, the appearance of which so explicitly reflects the character of their former rulers, renders imperative that measures be taken in order that those cities be appropriately upgraded the soonest possible, with regard to the aspect of their buildings and structures [1]. Wherever there was only misery and devastation, today there appears a flourishing country. Cities had to be entirely reconstructed. . . . We had to replace everything . . .[2].

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Figure 1. Territorial changes in the Balkans, 1815–1920s. Modern frontiers are indicated by black lines.
Between the 1820s and the 1920s profound transformations took place in the Balkan peninsula. This was the time of the great dismantling of the polyethnic Ottoman Empire, when a number of new national states were created: Greece (in its contemporary southern provinces) in 1828, Serbia (autonomous since 1815), Romania and Bulgaria between 1829 and 1878, Albania and modern Greece in the 1910s and up to 1922. A period of great interior unrest at the turn of the century was followed by successive wars, such as the two Balkan Wars (1912–1913), the first World War (1914–1918) and the Asia Minor Campaign (1920–1922), leading to frontier changes, extensive damage to existing towns and countryside, and millions of refugees in search of new homes (Fig. 1).

All through the 19th century the role of the city as a promoter of modernity and capitalism had never been questioned. It is therefore easy to understand that the establishment of a new network of settlements within national boundaries acquired a distinct importance, and the reconstruction of cities was placed at the heart of modernizing programmes for the states involved. The reasons for this effort were practical and functional, as well as ideological. Not only should the new state motivate production and economic activity, but it should emphasize a national identity by effacing all memories of Ottoman rule, which had lasted between four and five centuries and had left deep marks on urban fabrics and landscape. It is significant, though not surprising, that in this effort they were ‘accompanied’ by the Ottoman state, which, approximately in the same period, was driven to modernize and to reform its traditional theocratic institutions, following the model of the European states of the time.

In order to appreciate the significance and the extent of the questions involved in the remaking of Balkan cities, it is helpful to consider some aspects of the conditions prevailing in the Balkans prior to the period examined here.

In the course of the 19th century, Ottoman rule in the Balkans had been identified not only as religious and political oppression but also as economic and social stagnation. While most of the European states had undergone important transformations with regard to constitutional government, civil rights and social reform, the Ottoman Empire remained an essentially medieval state. It was governed as an absolute monarchy, with obsolete institutions relying on juridical distinctions of its subjects on the basis of their religious affiliation. The different ethnic-religious groups were administered through communal organisation, non-Moslems having a distinctly inferior status [3].

The Ottoman Empire had become aware of western superiority since the 18th century for a variety of reasons, mainly military. Still, early efforts towards westernization focused only upon aspects of technology and education, and they strived to reorganize the army and to establish new types of administrative agencies/bodies. It was only in 1839 that Sultan Abdülmedjid, wishing to halt the disintegration of the Empire, signed the Tanzimat Charter, which made possible, especially after 1856, an extensive economic and socio-political transformation of the old political system. Indeed, Tanzimat means reordering, reorganization. It was founded upon a double political emancipation: the granting of equal rights to all Ottoman subjects, whether Moslem or not, and the separation of state and public administration from religious law. For the first time in Ottoman history the relationship between government and the people was defined and codified, and concepts of equality, liberty and human rights were introduced in the political discourse [4]. The ‘westernization’ was greatly
encouraged, when not imposed, by western European states wishing to control national liberation movements, as well as in search of new markets.

In the past the translation of the traditional Moslem—Ottoman society into space had been shaped along some main themes: communal organization of ethnic—religious groups expressing themselves through territorial patterns; gender segregation encouraging a limited range of spatial solutions; and property laws giving prominence to pre-existing rights of individuals, collective users of land and immovable property, thereby reproducing continually old patterns of space [5].

Hence the physical structure and form of Balkan cities, whether inherited by the young nations in the course of the 19th century or remaining under the Ottomans, were quite different from those of western European cities, in addition to differences referring to legal status and social formation of cities in the West [6]. Although a general description would not easily apply to all Balkan cities [7], they still shared some common characteristics. These included: an anarchic development with rural areas inserted within city limits; no specific role assigned to ancient fortification, if it had existed; an extremely twisted and neglected system of narrow, filthy streets; a polyethnic population living in separate residential quarters each with an introverted, strictly supervised communal life of its own; specially reserved quarters for market places and workshops; absence of a civic centre; few public buildings made of stone, while individual houses were made with poor, non-solid materials; low building densities allowing each house to stand in its own garden; and a total lack of infrastructures [8] (Figures 5a, 6, 7). Urban life was fragmented and capital was not invested in immovable property, as long as property rights, and even life and honour of non-Moslems were not guaranteed by the state. The physical setting thus appeared incapable of responding to and supporting the radical changes in economic and social organisation and in cultural and political attitudes introduced by the new national regimes, as well as by the modernizing Ottoman Empire. In fact, town remodelling was immediately regarded by all Balkan officials as an efficient and tangible means to express the will of the state to modernize, and cities appeared as a terrain *par excellence* for the implementation of new policies with regard to urban space, activities and institutions.

On the map showing the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire in the beginning of the 19th century, Greece and Romania are borderlands of European Turkey. They were also the first to acquire a more or less independent status. According to available population figures [9], Bulgaria seemed to have a denser network of urban settlements, more evenly distributed in national territory, while Serbia and Greece had much smaller cities when they acquired independence. Romania had a larger capital city and a dense network of very small urban centres. In all cases, planning developed as a very centralized procedure, and it was carried out by central government agencies [10], often in collaboration with foreign experts. Local authorities, if existing, were seldom asked to express opinions, and then only in a procedural way. This should not be surprising: in their internal development the new regimes followed a similar general pattern, which opted for centralized bureaucratic monarchies and shifted political control from traditional local communities to the central authority of the capital city [11]. We must also consider the urgent character of the planning operations as well as their strong ideological connotations; and we should keep in mind that in the beginning of the
19th century Athens, Bucharest, Sofia and Belgrade were provincial cities; the great Balkan centres of the Empire had been Constantinople, Thessaloniki and Adrianople.

In this general context the making of new capital cities appeared as a first priority task, while Istanbul could afford to be transformed at a slower pace [12]. All the same, Bucharest, the seat of an autonomous principality in the 18th century, had 70,000 inhabitants in 1831 and some impressive buildings, especially churches and fine upper class residences. The regime chose to proceed to a gradual restructuring by establishing urban regulations; nevertheless, it undertook some speedier planning operations in the central districts, in order to create civic squares and commercial places. Athens, in contrast was offered the luxury of a large neo-Classical planning scheme in 1834, which provided space for new central functions and for a rapidly increasing population. (The existing traditional quarters around the Acropolis housed about 5000 inhabitants in 1830.) Belgrade, with 25,000 inhabitants in 1866, preferred to plan the extension of the historic centre after 1867. Sofia was completely redesigned in 1878–1880, starting with quarters abandoned by departing Ottomans. In all cases planning schemes were coupled with the construction of royal palaces, government buildings and new cathedrals, and they contributed in creating a completely different urban scenery which was considered more appropriate for a capital. The Athens and Sofia operations were perhaps the most impressive; in Athens because of the quality of the plan; in Sofia because of the scale of public architecture.

A comparison of modernization programmes would indeed prove to be an interesting but complex task. A discussion has already begun among historians and other scholars trying to define the exact terms of the ‘westernization’ processes adopted by different states in the area [13]. This paper will only trace the formulation of town planning policies in an effort to assess the respective goals and achievements of the newly created Balkan states. These include: the making of capital cities, the remodelling and expansion of existing cities, the creation of new towns or their reconstruction after total destruction. Also, special mention will be made of the modernization of Ottoman cities in the European provinces during the Tanzimat era.

Romania

In Romania, the provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia had an active urban life during the 18th century, and many cities had evolved into important commercial centres, attracting merchants from southern Ottoman provinces. The two principalities had been governed from 1716 onwards by Greek Phanariot families, appointed by the Porte, who tried to establish a separate urban legislation. Regulations in force were inspired by Byzantine laws dating from the 14th century and even earlier, and they seemed quite adapted to local traditions and existing institutional framework. This effort of reactivating centuries-old urban codes forms an interesting chapter in town planning history [14], which will not be examined here.

Romanian cities had largely escaped the Islamisation that marked all other Balkan cities, yet, their structure and form conformed to the oriental model, and it is believed by historians
that, in general, Turkish suzerainty had a retarding influence on the urbanization of Romania in contrast to the growth of other European cities [15].

After 1829, when the old regime was abolished, a two-fold town planning policy was established. A most urgent task was to set rules that would gradually modify existing cities. The first urban regulations were incorporated in the Organic Statutes, issued in 1831 in Wallachia [16], and they concerned planning, control of growth and administration of towns, breaking with the former 'Byzantine' regulation [17]. Their principal aim was to introduce sanitary standards and to embellish Bucharest. Anarchic development should be controlled, and more 'urban' patterns of growth adopted. This meant that the city area had to be delimitated and densified, and construction to take place strictly within the limits.

Figure 2. Danubian cities redesigned. (a) Turnu Magurel, (b) Marrodin, (c) Oltenita, (d) Bechet.
Moreover, a hierarchy of streets was defined with corresponding minimum street widths, and all unnecessary streets closed down. Different locations of food and produce markets were indicated, while some public spaces were reserved for civic functions and promenades. Also, provision was made that new large, rectilinear avenues would be opened through the huge gardens of private housing, so that people would live according to new hygienic principles.

The Organic Statute of Moldavia, issued in 1832, was very similar. Planning regulations were found in the 3rd chapter [18], and they applied to Iasi, capital of Moldavia. Provisions were almost identical to those of Bucharest, but there were some additional ones that showed an evolving attitude to more complex planning goals. For instance, new lateral streets were to be opened to facilitate the commercial traffic from north to south (1st section, article 48). Also, all new constructions were to be made of stone or bricks and roofs covered with tiles, for reasons of fire prevention (article 52).

The gradual, piecemeal transformation was helped out by frequent fires. French architects were the authors of a plan for the square of St George in the very centre of Bucharest in 1847 and of a ‘Plan général de la Place du Grand Marché’ in 1851, where, in the middle of crooked streets, public and private land was redesigned in new regular patterns.

At the same time it was decided to redesign completely the cities on the left bank of the Danube, which, according to the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829, had been evacuated by the Turks. The resumption of free shipping and trade on the Danube was expected to result in the rapid development of coastal cities. Entirely new plans were prepared by foreign experts (Austrians, Germans, Czechs) as early as 1832. They resemble the ideal shapes of a simplified Renaissance style, not conforming to tradition or landscape and they inaugurate a new period in local town design inspired by different ages of town planning – from Roman tradition to Spanish colonial cities to military planning of the same period [19] (Fig. 2).

In 1859 Wallachia and Moldavia were united and the state of Romania was created; all bonds with Turkey were broken, although full independence was not gained until 1878. New urban legislation was issued in 1864 [20], concerning expropriation. In the 1870s, following Baron Haussmann’s Parisian design, important works were started in Romania’s capital Bucharest. New boulevards were projected, several town squares were replanned, parks were built and the course of the Dimbovitsa river regulated. Similar development occurred in other major towns.

Greece

In Greece, the setting up of an urban network of viable towns, capable of growing and developing, was one of the most important projects of the young nation after its creation. In his Declaration to the Hellenes (6 August 1829), Governor Capodistrias said his first aim was to reconstruct cities and thus promote manufacture and trade. Although population figures were not very dependable before 1853, freed settlements were few in number and mostly destroyed during the independence war: Nauplie, Corinth, Patras, Tripoli and Athens had less than 10,000 inhabitants, while some of the most important urban centres, where Greeks prospered in intellectual and economic activities, had not been included in the early frontiers and remained under Ottoman rule (Thessaloniki, Larissa, Janina, Serres). Creating cities
where the national leadership would be seated and urban activities would emerge and flourish was then vital for the life of the new country. A vast effort was immediately undertaken to reconstruct existing settlements and to found new cities, as well as to attract new inhabitants (refugees and peasants) and promote economic development.

A vote of the National Convention in 1831 stipulated the terms of the procedure: land would be offered gratis, as an incentive, to those “wishing to construct cities or suburbs in places where only lie ruins or wherever they wish, on condition that a plan would be submitted”. Some general instructions were included in the vote: the surface area of individual plots would not exceed 400–600 square metres; an area would be allotted to public and municipal buildings; building would have to take place within a year; selling of land was not permitted. At the same time, a guided effort was undertaken to revive famous cities of antiquity, such as Sparta, Patras, Pireus and Eretria. New plans were drawn, mostly in an orthogonal grid, which was considered as an outcome of ancient Greek planning tradition (Hippodamean plan). Migrants or refugees arriving to settle in the motherland were directed to them.

During the ‘Bavarian’ period that followed [21] the same policy was carried on, but there was also urban legislation to support it, along with great activity employed to make plans for Athens. The appointment of Athens as capital of the new country in 1834, as well as the planning of the city, were matters of the utmost importance for the new regime [22]. Athens had been a small town in ruins with 5000 inhabitants in 1830, confined around the Acropolis hill. New plans by Cleanthis and Schaubert, modified later by Leo Von Klentze, provided a neo-Classical scheme for the ‘modern’ city, juxtaposed with the existing settlement and the ruins of the antique city (Fig. 3a).

The planning law of 1835 is a first class document in the history of planning [23]. This unique document imposed a strictly geometrical form for all settlements to be founded, and proposed a model form of a modern Greek city, as illustrated in the earlier plans for Pireus and Eretria, designed by the architects Cleanthis and Schaubert (Figs 3b and 3c). The law began with a set of rules for the selection of a suitable site [24]. Good accessibility had to be sought, as well as the presence of communication networks, good farming land, and an adequate water supply. If networks did not exist, the eventual cost of establishing them had to be considered (articles 1, 2, 3). Preferable geographical characteristics and orientation pointed to the sea coasts, rivers or a hill slope with inclination towards the south or east (article 4). A plan had to be drawn, for which an orthogonal grid was recommended; it ought to be oriented with its four corners pointing to the four cardinal points of the compass, exactly as in the Spanish regulations, so that the sun shone equally on all parts of the city (article 6).

Four articles dealt with streets and squares (6—9). Streets should have a minimum width of 6 metres, but should not be too wide to provide shade and protection from heat. Several squares, not overspacious, should be symmetrically distributed in the city. All streets and squares should be paved, the larger ones with sidewalks, arcades and alleys. Public and religious buildings, such as church, school, town hall, hotel, presbytery, should be placed facing a large free space in order to form a civic centre. Cemeteries, hospitals, ‘madhouses’ and prisons should lie on the outskirts of the town. Also, special space was allotted to noisy or unhealthy workshops, slaughterhouses, factories, tanneries and the like.
Some additional rules governed such matters as control of construction and height restrictions (no more than two stories) and even went so far as to prescribe colours for house fronts: snow white, bright red and yellow were considered ‘unhealthy’. Around the city, promenades with fruit trees should be created, to provide shade and free space for distraction.

A year later, in 1836, a second law was passed to deal with the problems of the gradual adaptation of Athens to the new plan, and it was soon enforced in all existing settlements [25]. Its purpose was to introduce order in the existing historical centres by rendering more regular “the three more important streets of each city”. Building lines were imposed, street fronts of buildings were to be continuous [26] with uniform height (two floors), irregular plots had to be ‘reformed’, while those smaller than 110 square metres were bought by the municipality.

Greek planning could boast many instances of towns designed or replanned from their foundations with new regular layouts, according to the laws of 1835 and 1836. By 1912, 174 settlements had been planned on the Greek mainland, Athens and Pireus not included. This accounts for all (32) towns with more than 5000 inhabitants, and 102 smaller towns [27]. Whether drawn up to solve specific problems posed by expansion of formerly insignificant settlements, or to facilitate total reconstruction after disasters such as wars, earthquakes and
fires, or to accommodate large scale migrations directed to re-generate famous cities of antiquity, town planning in Greece took on a two-fold character: it was meant to re-establish the long-lost link to western civilization; it also aimed at underlining the continuity with cherished periods of the Greek past, such as classical antiquity and the Byzantine tradition.

A substantial change in attitude appeared in the 20th century. When Macedonia and Thrace, with important cities such as Thessaloniki and Serres, were integrated into Greece, state intervention took on a different character. Modern planning procedures were adopted \[28\], and the reference to classical antiquity was substituted by powerful arguments in favour of universal forms of progress attained through industrial development. Two reconstruction plans stand out as unique examples of the new approach: Serres in 1914–18 and Thessaloniki (Salonica) after 1917.

In Serres, burned by the Bulgarians in 1913, the inhabitants requested the adoption of the Frankfort urban legislation \[29\]. This is the only known case in Greece when a total redesign of the city was accepted eagerly by the population, who took part in the preparation of the planning scheme.

In the case of Thessaloniki, whose centre was almost entirely burned down in 1917 \[30\], state intervention took on an unprecedented character. Thessaloniki had been a major commercial and financial centre in the Balkans, and had been partly modernized by the Ottomans a few years earlier. Although new frontier lines had fragmented its vast hinterland, the Greek government hoped that the city would regain a metropolitan role and would be a seat of international activity. This vision was embodied in an ambitious comprehensive scheme. Indeed the plan drawn by French planner Ernest Hébrard was a monumental Beaux-Arts composition, around a major civic centre. A green belt confined the city to a surface area of 2400 hectares, eight times as great as the *intra muros* city. All the major themes of early 20th century city planning appeared: civic centre, urban parks, university campus, garden suburbs, workers’ housing and industrial zones. In the central zone, space allotted for administrative and financial functions was defined precisely; in some cases, such as the central square with its important buildings, architectural restrictions were also imposed (‘ordonnances’). Only a few selected historic buildings, mainly Roman and Byzantine, were preserved and used as focal points of the new design.

The plan also made provision for the extension of the urban area in several directions for a population forecast of 350 000 (as compared to the existing total of 170 000). Some extensions were for immediate construction, others more long-term. General types of land use in each zone of the city and specific types of land use within each zone were indicated, as well as population densities and intensity of development, coverage of lots and bulk of structures in relation to the designated land use of the zone in question. Its implementation followed very sophisticated techniques and marked a clean break with 19th century planning tradition.

However, beginning with the 1820s and up to the interwar period, through town planning, city space in Greece was laid out to promote, accommodate and support the emergence of an urban way of life; and also to proclaim the existence of a patronizing, dynamic central state and a society which had to be modernized by ridding itself of all ‘oriental’ traces. The ambitious neo-Classical early designs, the regular and unimaginative grids produced by government services after 1880 and the ‘modern’ planning operations of
the 1910s manifested this same concern, and they ended up by effacing traditional characteristics from practically all cities in the mainland.

Serbia

For Serbia, mainly a rural province, the founding of new cities and the replanning of existing ones was considered as a necessary step toward economic and social development, as well as national consolidation.

Serbia, like Greece earlier, was directed to the road of progress without local intellectual guidance. The pre-revolutionary flourishing had originated outside the restrained boundaries of the autonomous principality (1815). Although no more than 12,000 Ottomans remained in Serbian cities by 1834, the few cities were considered as 'polyethnic bazaars', where national identity was suspected to have been falsified [31]. "Beyond the peasants there is no Serbian nation" claimed the historians (repeating the famous phrase of Vuk Karadjic in 1827). The new Serbian cities had to be constituted by peasants [32].

Serbia was conscious from 1833 of the lack of urban centres and an effort was undertaken to project new cities (Loznica, Lesnica, Pozega, Gornji Milanovac, Bajina Basta) and to transfer some old ones to more suitable territory (Donji Milanovac, Krusevac etc) [33]. For instance, Bajina Basta had been a small village previously named Pljeskovo, which was abandoned by its Turkish inhabitants. A year later peasants of the neighbouring villages took possession of the deserted lands and they were joined by refugees from Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina [34]. A local market was organized and it developed quickly, thanks to the tobacco industry. Shops and inns opened and in 1872 the place was granted the status of a Varosh (city). Pierre Lavedan has published a small plan of Bajina Basta, in which the familiar rectangular blocks appear, 70 × 100–140 meters, with a central square in the middle.

Naturally, new plans were regular gridirons, and it is possible that colonization in Banat at the end of the 18th century by Austrians under Joseph II had served as an example [35]. After 1836 Serbs often invited Austrian engineers. In the 1860s Sabac and Pozarevac, abandoned by a Turkish population, were remodelled, while Smederovo was entirely reconstructed after having been burned down by the Turks [36].

Urban population doubled between 1839 and 1866 (Table 1), and tripled again between 1866 and 1900. Cities attracted Serbs of the Diaspora, rural populations, as well as Greeks, Czechs, Hungarians, Germans and Slovenes, who introduced new activities and new cultural models of life, affecting the urban setting [37]. However, the impact of planning decisions on urbanization was not very important, and population remained in the countryside, as population figures between 1862 and 1900 show.

The making of the urban space of Belgrade has a rather complicated history. From 1688 onwards [until 1867] the city fell successively under Austrian and Ottoman rule many times [38]. In the plan of 1884 (supported by a plan of 1878 where all individual plots were shown) four stages in its growth are easily distinguished. The first and second concern the Grad and the Varosh (Fortress and first extension outside the Walls) (Fig. 4). The unsupervised development of the Varosh resulted in a slow deterioration of its regular grid. Under
Table 1. Balkan populations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Surface area (km²)</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Urban population</th>
<th>Urban population as %</th>
<th>Population of capital</th>
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<td>Serbia</td>
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<td>5000 (1717)</td>
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<td>1834</td>
<td>37 700</td>
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<td>2500 (1820)</td>
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<td>1839</td>
<td>800 000</td>
<td>50 000</td>
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<td>1848</td>
<td>826 000</td>
<td>53 000</td>
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<td>18 600 (1848)</td>
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<td>1859</td>
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<td>1866</td>
<td>1 216 000</td>
<td>116 000</td>
<td>9.5</td>
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<td>25 000 (1866)</td>
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<td>1 335 000</td>
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<td>1 902 000</td>
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<td>12.4</td>
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<td>1890</td>
<td>2 185 000</td>
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<td>54 000 (1890)</td>
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<td>1900</td>
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<td>70 000 (1900)</td>
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<td>1910</td>
<td>6 996 000</td>
<td>1 195 000</td>
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<td>341 000</td>
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<td>Bulgaria</td>
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<td>336 102</td>
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<td>20 000</td>
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<td>3 154 375</td>
<td>611 250</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>45 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>3 744 000</td>
<td>745 560</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>67 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>4 337 513</td>
<td>829 322</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>103 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>45 516</td>
<td>938 765</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14 000 (1836)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>753 400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16 558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838–9</td>
<td>823 773</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25 109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844–5</td>
<td>960 236</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>1 062 627</td>
<td>277 748</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>30 969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>1 096 810</td>
<td>279 139</td>
<td>25.45</td>
<td></td>
<td>41 298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>50 211</td>
<td>1 457 894</td>
<td>19.76</td>
<td></td>
<td>44 510</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: a. The total population includes urban, rural, and semi-rural areas. b. Data for Serbia include only Belgrade (capital). c. Data for Romania include Bucharest (capital). d. Data for Serbia include only Belgrade (capital). e. Data for Bulgaria include only Sofia (capital). f. Data for Romania include Bucharest (capital). g. Data for Serbia include only Belgrade (capital). h. Data for Romania include Bucharest (capital). i. Data for Bulgaria include only Sofia (capital).
Table 1. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Surface area (km²)</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Urban population¹</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Population of capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>63 606</td>
<td>1 679 470</td>
<td>367 494</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 187 000</td>
<td>486 915</td>
<td>22.22</td>
<td>114 355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 433 806</td>
<td>526 000</td>
<td>22.22</td>
<td>128 735</td>
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<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 631 952</td>
<td>628 000</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>175 430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>130 199</td>
<td>5 021 952</td>
<td>1 908 800</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>453 042²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Turkey¹</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>56 937</td>
<td>1 731 872</td>
<td>685 562</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>135 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Cities with more than 2000 inhabitants, Serbia excepted.
²G. Castellan, *op. cit.* [9], p. 121. For population figures of different serbian cities in the 1830s, see also G. Castellan, *Les villes de Serbie au début du XIXe siècle*, in *Structure Sociale et développement culturel des villes Sud-Est Européennes au XVII—XVIIIe siècles*, Bucarest: AIESEE, 1975. For 1866, see N. Todorov, *op. cit.* [9], p. 338: Second to Belgrade are Kragujevac (6386 h), Pozarevac (6909), Sabac (6516) and Smederevo (5122 h). The rest of Serbian cities had less than 5000 inhabitants.
⁴V. Georgescu and E. Popescu, *op. cit.* [14], pp. 69–73. In 1832, the second city was Craiova with 11 666 inhabitants. All other cities were smaller. Ploesti with a very important commercial activity had only 5701 h.
⁹Urban population in Bulgaria in 1900 is: Sofia 67 000, Philippopoli (Plovdiv) 43 000, Rouse 32 700, Varna 34 800, Sliven 24 500, Choumen 23 100. 18 cities have 10 000–20 000 inhabitants (Stara Zagora, Plevens, Vidin, Haskovo, etc.) and 21 more cities have 5000–10 000, *La Bulgarie Contemporaine, op. cit.* [2], p. 52–3.
¹⁰Greek National Statistics.
¹¹Greater Athens area, Pireus included. In fact the evolution of Pireus is very suggestive: the plan of the new city was approved on 27 December 1833 and refugees and migrants from Chios, Hydra, Samos and the Peloponnese were immediately settled. The population evolved as follows: 1836 1011; 1861 6452; 1870 10 936; 1879 21 718; 1889 34 327; 1896 50 201; 1907 73 579; 1920 131 170; 1928 251 659.
¹²Last Ottoman census. The figures concern only the vilayets of Thessaloniki and Monastir. See C. Hadjimihalis *et al.*, *op. cit.* [8].
the Ottomans the Varosh expanded to the east along rural land and developed in an anarchical way; the shapes of plots reveal the rural origin of the new quarters (third stage). During their second reign (1717–1739), the Austrians pulled down a good half of oriental Belgrade, in order to build fortifications. They also parcelled the old Turkish cemetery, making an orthogonal scheme of streets and a small square (shown in Fig. 4b). When the Turks came back, they succeeded for a further fifty years in restoring an oriental appearance.

Figure 4. Belgrade: Grad and Varosh. (a–c) Transformations in the 18th century, (d) Turkish plan of 1863.
After the third two-year Austrian rule the life of the oriental town was completely discontinued. Up to 1867 buildings perished but the fabric survived. In accordance with the terms of the Conference in Kadlindza (1862) it was decided to knock down a part of the Turkish quarters.

After liberation a general plan was prepared by Josimovich [39]. New quarters were designed on a rational street pattern 'correcting' the rural parcelling of land. Buildings were rapidly constructed along European architectural forms (Late Rococo, Renaissance, Empire and Sécession) and western life styles were explicitly adopted [40]. More than the street plan, architectural style, infrastructure and functioning of the city attested to its new identity. Having lived for long in alternation between the oriental and the western world, Belgrade was certain of the choices to make. As Elysée Reclus wrote in the early 1870s:

The ambition of the Serbs is to make disappear from their country everything that would remind them of the Ottoman rule; they are working on it with a striking energy, and one can say that, materially, it is almost accomplished. The Turkish Belgrade has ceased to exist; it has been replaced by a western city like Paris or Budapest; palaces in European style stand on the place of former mosques with domes and minarets; magnificent boulevards cross the old neighbourhoods with crooked streets, and a lovely planted park covers the place where the Turks used to exhibit columns with cut off, bleeding heads...

An interesting effort to remodel the Oriental city was undertaken in the case of Skopje, after its integration into Serbia in 1914 (Fig. 5) [42]. In the meantime there was an evolution in

![Figure 5. Skopje. Traditional layout and proposed plan.](image)
planning ideas on an international scale, and new sanitary and aesthetic principles had prevailed, as in the case of Thessaloniki. A plan for the city was prepared in 1929 by its mayor Joseph Mikhailovich, who was also an architect. The plan introduced a monumental axis, civic parks, garden suburbs and provided for the expansion of the city from 436 hectares and 70,000 inhabitants, to 1055 hectares and 150,000 inhabitants. Neighbourhood centres, sports facilities and social amenities were planned, especially on the south bank of the Vardar river, the site of the 19th and early 20th century quarters. The traditional city on the northern bank was regularized with large thoroughfares. The old Turkish bazaar in the centre would be entirely redesigned to form a commercial piazza of a rather monumental form, as well as the old residential quarters of Jews, Greeks and Gypsies. The quarters of Slavs would be preserved, and some streets would be widened.

The plan of Skopje was not implemented. In 1933 the city still showed the persistence of Oriental town design, although new architectural forms and types of buildings had been adopted. Indeed, Muslims retained a powerful political position in these areas, and Ottoman traditions were regarded as a part of a local, archaic heritage. Skopje, Sarayevo, Prizren, Bitola, etc. preserved their traditional characteristics for many years [43].

Bulgaria

When Bulgaria acquired its independence in 1878 there was an extended urban network, evenly distributed in the national territory, and containing a great number of middle-sized cities with 20,000–40,000 inhabitants.

An early modernization had been undertaken in the 1860s, when the famous Ottoman statesman Midhat Pasha was appointed governor of the Danube province, with the task of implementing an experimental modernizing programme. Ameliorating highways and communications, building of bridges and quays were important features [44]. Five highways connected Sofia with Belgrade, Constantinople, Kyustendil, Lom and Rouse. On entering the town, they disappeared in a labyrinth of narrow crooked streets. Midhat pulled down many buildings to extend these highways into the main streets, which would form the basis of the town’s future layout.

Once independent, Bulgaria decided upon quick action. Over 870 houses of departing Turks were immediately demolished in a Sofia that had only 18,000–20,000 inhabitants. This tabula rasa policy was applied only in Sofia. Still, the need to reform the cities and open new broad and rectilinear streets to serve administration and commercial centres was strongly felt. The Russian army engineers were the first to assist in the reconstruction, drawing up cadastral surveys and plans. Some directives on a national scale were issued and regulation plans were quickly worked out. Their authors were often amateurs, including teachers, but also foreigners, Czechs, Germans and Poles. Between 1878 and 1885 almost half of the Bulgarian cities had plans prepared for them (26 in Bulgaria and 10 in Eastern Rumelia) [45]. But plans were only partially carried out for lack of financial support and opposing private interests. The old fabrics persisted and only some streets were widened, while new standards were applied in expanding neighbourhoods in Plovdiv, Burgas or Varna.
Little is known about Plovdiv (for seven years the capital of East Rumelia) because the fire of 1891 destroyed the archives of the municipality. However, cadastral and town planning projects were drawn up in the first years of independence. According to the 1891 plan of the city signed by Joseph Schnitter (Fig. 6), streets were improved in the central part of the town, while in the outskirts there sprang up new districts to house inhabitants in this rapidly developing centre of production, trade and culture [46]. This plan is a typical example of Balkan planning of the era. It is a simple alignment plan, introducing some public open space, with proposals to widen and regularize some main streets. In much the same way as in Romania and Greece, public space was created on former gardens or in empty spaces where open markets were held.

Besides Sofia, only Stara Zagora (burned down in 1877) was entirely redesigned according to new planning principles (Fig. 7). The plan of Stara Zagora offers a good example of what was considered a ‘modern’ city. Preliminary work was undertaken by Russian engineers [47]. Its ‘American’ plan, prepared by the Czech Lubor Bayer, is a perfectly regular grid; streets have standard widths of 10, 16 or 20 metres and individual lots have a surface area of 330 or 660 square metres. Only the plots in the marketplace are much smaller, measuring 4 × 6 or 4 × 7.5. The plan was implemented as early as 1879, ignoring all remnants of the past, even buildings that had survived and did not conform to it. It was not always favourably accepted by its contemporaries who compared it to parcels in a vegetable garden or to an army camp [48].

In Sofia a cadastral plan of the existing town was drawn by French engineers C. Amadier and B. Roubal, while Proschek designed a partial plan for the district surrounding the grain market as early as 1877–8. The new capital was to develop along modern lines so an ‘American’ plan was also drawn here. Still, this was more sophisticated than the plan of Stara Zagora, perhaps because of the influence of Haussmann’s boulevards in Paris. In fact, the five radial avenues of Midhat and a circular street, which had replaced the old moat, were coordinated along with a rectangular street system to form a monumental design composition for the civic centre of the new capital [49].

The plan was implemented district by district, starting with the eastern parts. After 1888 it attacked the centre, razing the old market place. Mayor Petkov, supported by Stamboulov’s government, did not hesitate to demolish all buildings not conforming to the plan: old churches, mosques and synagogues. The ghetto was abolished, but Jews moved en bloc into another quarter. The northern quarters with the railroad station, were redesigned in 1888. In the 1890s it was the turn of the southwestern districts. By the end of the 19th century there was nothing to remind the people of the Ottoman past, except for the five main streets and the location of some squares and public gardens.

More realistic tendencies, conforming to local conditions, appeared at the end of the 19th century, resulting from the efforts of Bulgarian architects, among them Georgi Nenov, Yordan Milanov and Petko Momchilov. These tendencies found expression in the Law for Development of the Settlements (1897), requiring the satisfactory relation of town planning to existing local conditions, as well as the preservation and further development, in harmony with the specific nature and pattern, of the towns, as in the examples of Koprichtiva, Bansko, Elena and Lovetch. This law was to apply to all settlements with more than 50 houses, which were to have cadastral surveys and new plans before 1912 [50].
Figure 6. Plovdiv. Expansion scheme, 1891.
Figure 7. Bulgarian cities redesigned. (a) Stara Zagora, (b) Sofia.

Is it possible that this unexpectedly early appreciation of traditional values was due to financial difficulties or to unstable political conditions? Or, perhaps, the Bulgarians felt more comfortable in their reconquered cities than the people of other nations in the area? An answer could be sought in the period that preceded independence, when there was an upsurge in national consciousness and the National Revival movement was created in architecture (1840–78).

Ottoman Empire

As mentioned previously, within the Tanzimat context the city was seen as a major testing area for reform, thus motivating important planning operations as well as the establishment of new urban institutions (municipal government and administration), planning and building regulations.

Through the study of various regulations which appeared in the years 1848, 1864, 1882, and 1891, as well as of committee reports dealing with embellishments, improvements and
reconstruction after fires (with Istanbul as an experimental field), some basic aspects of the Ottoman town planning of the period can be determined. They concern the appointment of municipal bodies and local services agencies; the creation of public spaces; the planting of infrastructures such as water pipes, public and private lighting, sewers, communications and public transport; also the installation of railway and new port facilities; and the imposition of building alignments and regulations intended to provoke a progressive transformation of the urban fabric. Thus geometric order would be introduced into the informal layout of cities, public and private space for new needs provided, and new standards of sanitation and fire prevention applied. These documents, along with successive modifications to them from 1848 to 1891, form a very interesting part of 19th century planning history [51].

The Ottoman provinces in the Balkans (whose larger part was integrated into Greece after 1912) were directly exposed to western influence, and played a significant role in the development of new economic and social relations. Efficient transport and communication facilities, a centuries old urban culture, the dynamism of various ethnic groups (Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians, Vlachs, Jews) with intricate networks of relations with Europe, along with reform measures, gave great impetus to the commercial development of coastal cities such as Thessaloniki, Cavala and Dedeagatch (Alexandroupolis) between 1870 and 1900, and also Volos up to 1880. In the same period some smaller inland cities besides Thessaloniki, namely Veria, Naoussa, and Edessa, witnessed their first industrial development, which occurred after massive investment by Greek and Jewish merchants into manufacturing. The installation of railways, linking the region with the European network, significantly affected the continental settlements, causing the decline of some flourishing cities, such as Adrianople, Monastir, Serres, and the development of others on crossroads (Comotini, Xanthi, etc.).

Planning operations included the extension of Volos (1841–1845) and Cavala (1864), the founding of the new town of Dedeagatch (1878), the redesign of the centre of Jannina after the fire of 1869 and of Adrianople in 1905, and the modernization of Monastir around 1890 and of Thessaloniki between 1870 and 1890 [52]. Especially in Thessaloniki, which was the most important port in the Balkans, Ottoman planning operations included the demolition of the sea walls for the construction of a quay and a modern port linked to new railway infrastructure; also the making of a modern sea front for the city, as well as of a central business district (from 1870); the opening of boulevards and the planning of new residential areas (1879–1889); the regularization of an existing urban fabric through regulations imposed on individual housebuilding, or through the redesign of large central areas after a great fire in 1890 [53].

The effort to westernize quite successfully transformed the larger Ottoman cities. Fortifications were demolished, avenues, squares and public gardens appeared, expansion schemes were prepared for residential purposes and new types of private and public buildings were erected. Efficient means were introduced to implement significant modifications to street and plot systems, including land consolidation measures imposed after fires. They resulted in the opening and expansion of the introverted cities beyond traditional barriers. Thus a new way of life was supported, breaking with the strict religious–communal bonds, and helping the formation of new socio-professional groups moving freely within a renewed urban setting. But this was a process of slow, piecemeal transformations which excluded comprehensive planning schemes. Despite serious disfunctioning, Ottoman town planning of the time
strove simply to accommodate new needs and activities within an archaic urban structure. A more radical remodelling did not yet seem possible.

The proof to that would be the significant decision of Kemal Ataturk, to transfer the capital of modern Turkey from Istanbul to Ankara, early in the 1920s. In more than a symbolic gesture, just as Constantine the Great moved the Roman capital from Rome to New Rome—Constantinople in the 4th century, considering the former incapable of serving the changing needs of the Empire, Kemal considered that the fabulous capital of two great empires, despite its modernization, would be unable to support properly the radical changes introduced by a modern secular state. Old fabrics, after all, do carry memories that could seriously endanger new schemes [54].

Conclusions

Over the course of a century (1820–1920), planning in the Balkans developed along a great variety of urban models, such as the early neo-Classical—Colonial models, the late 19th century concepts, as well as the sophisticated 20th century schemes. Modernization was built on the ruins of historical tradition and on a unanimous will to efface all trace of a past which had lasted five centuries. Creating a new national identity meant emphasizing all elements that separated people who had lived next to each other for centuries, and to minimize all common traditions and local particularities. In this line of thinking, historical heritage was generally rejected, everything local seemed a reminder of foreign rule, of ethnic and religious oppression, and of social and economic retrogression. The Ottoman Empire also tried to halt its disintegration and assimilate non-Moslem Ottomans by applying similar policies. This divorce from history would traumatize the future making of cities in the Balkans, with some noteworthy exceptions in Bulgaria and Romania, where architectural tradition was sometimes cherished as local heritage and not as an Ottoman remnant.

In the attempt to escape from what was considered as an embarrassing past and to catch up with Western economies, urban growth was viewed as a goal in itself. The making of an urban identity was not inspired by different interpretations of historical and geographical characteristics, but followed a hurriedly accepted concept of ‘modernity’, placing the accent on the form of the fabric, on geometrical layouts, on the ‘formal’ aspects of the city. At the same time the social, legal and technical questions involved in the evolution of planning discipline in the West were neglected. An interesting change of attitude, observed in the early 20th century with the planning operations in Thessaloniki, Serres and Skopje, was short-lived and did not produce more consistent policies towards urban development.

Contemporary Balkan cities are essentially cities of the 20th century. Departing from a common heritage, they followed distinct and diverse political destinies, whether in the Western Block (Greece) or within the Eastern. Yet town planning remained for all of them a very centralized procedure, directly subject to political imperatives. The absence of powerful local institutions controlling the making of urban space would form an additional factor to the more or less undiversified appearance of cities. Indeed, in a more long-term view of historical development, the loss of memory, of common tradition, and of specific patterns of growth and development on a regional or local scale would not simplify contemporary urban
problems, and it would often even contribute to making history a mystifying riddle, rather than a process of national self-knowledge.

Notes and References

1. D. Diamantidis, Greek Minister of Transport (and town planning), addressing Parliament on 19 September 1914.
3. For a penetrating insight into the social and political history of the Ottoman Empire and its more recent evolution see R. Mantran (ed.), *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, Paris: Fayard, 1989.
4. For more information regarding the 19th century background, see Z. Celik, *The Remaking of Istanbul. Portrait of an Ottoman City in the 19th Century*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1986, esp. pp. 31–5. Z. Celik remarks that these quick and superficial adaptations from French revolutionary vocabulary were mainly addressed to the international commercial bourgeoisie, and they provided the necessary institutions to foster Western control, rather than being geared toward the masses. Nevertheless it is true that they were favourably accepted by non-Moslen populations.
6. Lack of political autonomy and of a legal identity of the Ottoman city; absence of an authority or institution directly responsible for the city; presence in the city of a bourgeoisie related to the state.
10. With the exception of the Ottoman Empire.
12. See the monograph by Celik, 1986, op. cit. [4].
13. See: AIESEE, 1980, op. cit. [7]. Papers in original languages have been published by the Balkan Institute of Sofia.
15. E.A. Gutkind has included a long aperçu of urban development in Romania since early ages in his *International History of City Development*, vol. 8, New York: Free Press; London: Macmillan, 1972, pp. 89–139.
17. I am grateful to professor N. Lascu of the Architectural Institute of Bucharest for sending me the integral document of the regulations, titled *Règlement sur l'assainissement, l'embellissement et le maintien du bon ordre dans la ville de Bucarest*. Some very interesting clauses are the following: 1er chapitre: (1re section, 1er article) limitation du développement urbain par la définition d'un périmètre; (3e article) 10 barrières de la ville sont établies; (2e section, 6e article) sont fermées toutes les rues inutiles; (7e article) toutes les rues de la ville doivent voir une largeur de 6 toises au moins; (4e section, 18e article) sont établis 4 emplacements pour les marchés des produits portés hors de la ville (bois, fer, charbon, etc); (22e article) sont établis six marchés alimentaires; (5e section, 34e article) trois places seront destinées à des promenades publiques; (36e article) on prévoit l'existence officielle de l'architecte de la ville.
18. *Annexe HC, Concernant l'organisation des Ephories de la ville.*
19. C. Sfîntescu, *Urbanistica generala*, *Urbanismul* nos 1–2 (1933) 17–88 (in Romanian). Cities entirely redesigned are: Mavrodin (183.); Turnu Magurel (1836), built as planned by a German engineer; Turnu Severin (185.) designed by Austrian engineer Mauritz von Ott and built as planned; Oltenita (1852) designed by engineer Scarlat Popovici as a perfect grid; Cuza (1860); Bechet (1874). See also Gutkind, 1972, *op. cit.* [15], for the plans of Bechet and Galati. Sfîntescu believes that the plans prepared in 1836 and 1835 for the expansion of towns of Braila and Focsani, as well as the replanning of Giurgiu, under Russian governor Kiselev in the early 1830s, were particularly influencing.
20. Sfîntescu, 1933, *op. cit.* [19], p. 84. Expropriation laws were taken after French legislation of 1841. They were applied in 1866 for the first time for the construction of railways between Bucharest and Giurgiu. They were amended in 1884 and remained in force until the First World War.
extravagant observation, tracing down the influence behind this document is not an easy task. Its authors were undoubtedly Bavarians; the planning concepts were close to those used in Russia in the 18th century and in other countries proceeding to a large scale interior colonization. (For instance the Prussian colonization in Silesia during the 18th century, where chessboard plans were also used.) See A.V. Bunin, *Geschichte des Russischen Städtebaues bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*, 1961; E.A. Gutkind, *International History of City Development, Vol. 1: Central Europe*. New York: Free Press; London: Macmillan, 1964, pp. 125–7.

25. Royal Decree of 9 April 1836, *Concerning the implementation of the plan for Athens*, Royal Decree of 5 June 1842, *Extending the Athens’ plan regulations to all parts of the Kingdom*.

26. Continuous fronts of buildings were rare in oriental-Ottoman cities, because proximity was considered a threat to residential privacy. Their imposition is a novelty underlining the will to introduce a ‘modernized look’ in the Greek cities.

27. V. Hastaoglou, K. Kafkoula and N. Papmihos, *City plans in 19th Century Greece*, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 1990, p. 234 (in Greek). See also the article by the same authors, Urban modernization and national renaissance. Town planning in 19th century Greece, *Planning Perspectives* (Forthcoming).

28. Reflecting the international emergence of modern planning discipline in the 1910s.

29. Law Adickes of 1902, introducing land consolidation measures (‘remembrement/umlegung’), known under the name of its author, the burgmeister Franz Adickes. This powerful planning instrument was familiar to Greeks of the former provinces of the Ottoman Empire, because it had been included in the 1882 Ottoman planning regulation, as we will see later.


31. The polyethnic constitution of urban populations was particularly apparent/obvious in the marketplaces, which were traditionally separate districts. In the serbian cities “the shops belonged to the traditional Balkan merchants of Armenian, Jewish, Vlach, Greek or Turkish origin”, D. Milic, Economic modernization, trade and handcraft in Serbia, during the 19th century, AIESEE, 1980, op. cit. [7], pp. 206–15.


35. See also ref. 19, supra.


40. See N. Vuco, Industrial revolution and urban modernization in Serbia, during the 19th century, in AIESEE, op. cit. [7], pp. 199–205.

41. Reclus, 1876, op. cit. [36], p. 290.


44. J. Lampe and M.R. Jackson, *Balkan Economic History, 1550–1950. From Imperial Borderlands*
Planning and national identity


46. The 1891 plan of Plovdiv was sent to me by the architects Thetis and Bojidar Kadief.

47. Gutkind, 1972, op. cit. [15], p. 58.


49. Gutkind, op. cit. [15], p. 68. Lory (1985, op. cit. [8], p. 103) says there were thoughts to build a New Sofia at a certain distance from the old one.


53. The same area reburned in 1917, offering the opportunity to Greek authorities to implement Ernest Hébrard's plan.

54. This observation, however, does not imply that the important geopolitical considerations leading to the transfer of the Turkish capital to Ankara should be ignored.