This paper discusses the contribution of two Italian technocrats, Storari and Barberini, to the restructuring of Istanbul's urban form during the 1850s and the 1860s, a period characterized by intensive regularization aimed at transforming the Ottoman capital into an European style urban centre. The attempt paralleled the greater venture to salvage the Ottoman Empire by reforming its traditional institutions on the basis of models borrowed from Europe. A new approach to urban design was introduced in 1836 by Mustafa Reşit Paşa, a leading political figure and one of the authors of the Tanzimat Charter (1839), acknowledged by many historians as the beginning point of the modernization process in the Ottoman Empire. Having been on diplomatic missions to Paris, Vienna, and London, Mustafa Reşit Paşa had grown to admire the European cities, and wanted to elevate the Ottoman capital to their standards. Accordingly, he advocated a “scientific” approach to planning, which meant a rigorous pursuit of “geometrical rules” (keval-i hendese) to bring an order to the street fabric. This, in effect, called for cutting straight and wide arteries through the existing maze-like patterns, themselves a creation of the Ottoman process of neighborhood development, widely shared in the world of Islam and based on a legal system which accepted the primacy of the private realm over the public realm. Mustafa Reşit Paşa argued that regularization would improve communication throughout the city and thus help to control the recurring fires that periodically demolished large areas. His guidelines formed the foundations of the successive regulations governing physical planning and construction activities from 1848 on, providing the backbone of all urban design decisions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Furthermore, Mustafa Reşit Paşa argued that foreign architects and engineers should be commissioned to redesign and rebuild Istanbul. This proposal, again adopted in the following decades, was based on his confidence in the knowledge and experience of Europeans in the “architectural science (fenn-i mimari) of modern planning.” Storari and Barberini’s involvement in the “remaking of Istanbul” should be understood within this operative context. The main justification for Mustafa Reşit Paşa’s call to regularize the urban fabric was the vulnerability of Istanbul’s wooden resid-
broken only by the naked outlines of great hills; unfamiliar views were opened up; broad sheets of light poured down upon vast open spaces covered with ashes. While here and there the melancholy of a blackened and half-ruined chimney stood like a gravestone marking the site of a desolated hearth. Whole quarters had disappeared as though they had been Bedouin encampments swept away by a cyclone. Through many streets, which could only be traced by the double line of black, smoking ruins, thousands of homeless wandered up and down, ragged and dishevelled.  

Before the 1840s, the continuous rebuilding of Istanbul's residential fabric necessitated by fires was carried out according to previously established patterns, reiterating the labyrinthine street network. From the 1840s on, however, the overriding concern to find radical solutions for fire prevention, paired with the fervor for modernization, resulted in a new appreciation of urban design and every burnt-down area became a stage for formal urban change. The 1856 Aksaray fire that destroyed more than 650 buildings was a major turning point in the history of Istanbul's urban form. Following this fire, for the first time in the Ottoman capital, a systematic survey of the burnt site was made, and an alternative urban design scheme was drawn and implemented. The task was given to an Italian engineer, Luigi Storari. Storari's plan, drawn over the pre-fire pattern, survives in the Topkapi Museum Archives.

An imperial order specified the character of the desired plan: it was to conform to the "new pattern" (heyet-i cedide); hence it was to be regular with straight and wide streets. In compliance with the order, Storari regularized the organic street network of the quarter. Main crossroads, clearly visible in the pre-fire fabric of Aksaray, corresponded to the intersection of the north-south road leading from Unkapani on the Golden Horn to Yenikapi on the Sea of Marmara, and the east-west Aksaray Caddesi, the continuation of Divanyolu. Storari emphasized the significance of these arteries by widening and straightening them; by cutting off the corners that defined the cross-roads, he further accentuated their importance. Though by no means a public square in the European sense, the new intersection was perceived as such; and was even described as a "belle place."

Aksaray Caddesi was the most prominent artery of this quarter, and to display its importance Storari repeated the cross-roads pattern three times along the thoroughfare. All other streets were neatly aligned. Storari's streets were devoid of encroachments, and the numerous dead-ends of the pre-fire Aksaray had disappeared. Yet the new block sizes were still similar to the pre-fire blocks, and the residential scale was unaffected. However, the seclusion of many residential blocks was diminished by the demolition of the culs-de-sac and the privacy of neighborhood streets was considerably reduced. Conforming to the regulations of 1848 Building Regulation which for the first time in Ottoman urban policy had categorized the streets according to width and importance, Storari proposed a similar classification, but in more generous dimensions than those provided by the legal apparatus. Storari's main artery, the east-west Aksaray Caddesi, was 9.50 m. wide, while the secondary streets were 7.60 m. and 6.00 m. The 1848 regulation, on the other hand, had specified the main avenues to be a minimum of 7.60 m. wide, and the others 6.00 m. and 4.50 m. The new neighborhood was viewed as a strong manifestation of European planning.
principles and was compared to the contemporary reconstruction of Paris under Napoleon III — to the degree that Baron Haussmann’s direct involvement was rumoured. The Aksaray scheme also became a target of the later critics of Westernization trends in urban planning and architecture. Storari and the Ottoman reformers were accused of beginning a process that disregarded the local heritage. For example, around the turn of the present century, an architect named Mazhar Bey condemned the “hypocritical (riyakar) and unnationalistic (milliyetsiz) spirit of Tanzimat” for the imitation of the straight and wide arteries of Paris in Istanbul.

Nevertheless, the scheme initiated an irreversible transformation process and every post-fire urban design plan thereafter displayed a grid format. Storari’s name is associated with several smaller-scale urban design operations, again in areas leveled by fires. For example, after the 1856 fire that destroyed an area of five or six blocks of the Mirahur quarter in the southwestern part of the city on the Sea of Marmara, the neighborhood was given a major street, Mirahur Caddesi. This artery, running in the northeast-southwest orientation, formed a bridge between Samatya Caddesi in the northeast and Yedikule Caddesi in the southwest, the former being the main street parallel to the Marmara shore and the latter providing the connection to the Golden Gate on the Theodosian Walls. Nevertheless, as only the burned portion was regularized, the points where Mirahur Caddesi met Samatya Caddesi and Yedikule Caddesi were still not conveniently wide and prominent.

While being adjacent to the Sea of Marmara, the Mirahur neighborhood originally did not have direct access to the waterfront, where several factories and workshops were located. By inserting a straight, though not uniformly wide, road that cut Mirahur Caddesi at right angles, Storari provided the neighborhood with a direct outlet to the shore. The importance of the cross-roads was punctuated by bevelled corners. Storari also redesigned the Küçük Mustafa Paşa neighborhood in 1862, after a fire that destroyed 242 buildings effecting a longitudinal area on the northern slope of the city’s fourth hill. He reorganized the blocks orthogonally as topography permitted and demolished the dead-ends. However, following the main trend of the times, the block sizes, hence the residential scale, remained unchanged. A new feature brought to this neighborhood was the Kara Sarıklı Caddesi, created by the widening of a pre-fire street that climbed the hill from the Golden Horn toward the Mehmetiyen Complex. The bevelled corners at the main crossing gave the neighborhood a centre and helped to establish a hierarchy in the street system.

Luigi Storari’s activities in the capital extended beyond the city proper to the suburbs. The Bosphorus villages were in the process of gaining new popularity during this period. In addition to many upper-class mansions, both Ottoman and European, summer residences of foreign embassies favored the banks of the waterway. Improved communication systems further enhanced the development. For example, in 1848, the road that ran parallel to the water (on the European side) was repaired; in 1851, an Ottoman corporation, Şirket-i Hayriye, started operating commuter boats up and down the Bosphorus. Consequently, new neighborhoods were developed here by private enterprises according to overall plans. Among them was the “Quartier de la Paix”, erected in 1856, honouring the Paris Peace Treaty. A major intervention into the existing Büyükdere village, its main avenue, Rue de la Paix, helped to create a new ambience, “elegant et jouissant d’une belle vue.”

In 1857, Storari designed a similar settlement for another village, Bayakköy — on the European side of the Bosphorus. Placed on a vacant land on the waterfront which belonged to the grand vizier Ahmed Reşit Paşa, the “Nuovo Villaggio in Bojagikioi” also aimed at a potential European clientele residing in the Pera section on the capital — as witnessed by advertisements for such developments in the foreign-language newspapers of Istanbul, for example, the Journal de Constantinople. Storari’s village was larger than the Quartier de la Paix. Arranged in a gridiron pattern, it consisted of 45 square blocks, each measuring 70 m. by 70 m. At three intersections, the designer repeated his hallmark, the bevelled corners, to give some monumentality to the locations.

Nine years later the Aksaray fire that launched Storari’s career in Istanbul, on 18th September 1865, Istanbul experienced the most destructive fire in its history. A vast area, defined by the Sea of Marmara in the south, the Golden Horn in the north, the Beyazıt külliye in the west, and the Haghia
Sophia-Sultan Ahmet mosque axis in the east, was burned to the ground in a period of thirty-two hours.\textsuperscript{29} The extent of the Big Fire (\textit{huri-k kebin}), as it came to be called, forced the government to search for radical measures. A commission, the Islahat-i Turuk Komisyonu (ITK, Commission for Road Development) was formed to oversee an extensive program of planning and rebuilding. Although the priority focused on the burned area, the commission was empowered to bring modern planning to the entire city. The extent of the work done between 1865 and 1869 was unparalleled in the history of the city — perhaps with the exception of the 16th century.

Regularization of the street fabric constituted the core of ITK’s activities, but the goal surpassed the provision of an efficient communication system and addressed issues of urban aesthetics. For example, the Commission directed its attention to the accentuation of the main monuments by clearing their immediate surroundings. The wooden houses adjacent to Hagia Sophia were demolished and a square was carved in front, on the south, enabling unobstructed views of the monuments.\textsuperscript{24} The inspiration came from contemporary urban preservation trends practiced in Europe, especially in Paris, where Napoleon I’s concept of \textit{nettoyer par le vide} was put into effect under Napoleon III by Haussmann, who claimed that monuments were glorified by isolation. If Haussmann’s rules were not applied rigorously in Istanbul in the 1860s, a new sensibility was displayed toward the dialogue between the monuments and major arteries.

The case of Divanyolu stands out. This was the oldest artery in the city, dating back to the Byzantine days as the \textit{mese}, the porticoed central street that began in front of Hagia Sophia and, connecting the fora and splitting into two main avenues, led to the gates in the Theodosian walls. An historical keystone along this strip was Constantine’s column, the only monument still standing from the time of the city’s founder. The Ministry of Construction and Commerce (Nafia ve Ticaret Nezareti) gave the task of redesigning this area to an Italian architect, Barberini, whose other buildings in the Ottoman capital included the Municipal Palace of the Sixth District in Pera and various theatres, among them the Verdi Theatre.\textsuperscript{25}

Until the Big fire, Constantine’s column, once the center of his elliptical forum, was hidden amid a dense residential fabric. The English traveler Julia Pardoe described its sad state in 1839: “its beauty is entirely gone, as it has suffered so severely from the repeated conflagrations in its immediate vicinity, that it is cracked in every direction, and merely kept together by a strong wirework, which has been carefully woven about it. The pedestal upon which it stands measures thirty feet at its base, and is rendered interesting by the fact that several portions of the Holy Cross were built up within it and that the space amid which it stood consequently became a popular place of prayer, every mounted passenger reverently alighting from his horse as he passed before it; but the Moslem, not recognizing the divinity of the relics enshrined within its solid masonry, nor the sanctity of the spots thus hallowed, have surrounded the pillar on every side with mean and unsightly houses; and it is only in one solitary direction that the anxious antiquary can obtain a satisfactory view of this singular monument.”

Barberini cleared the ruins of the burned down houses here, and created a small triangular plaza around the column. This gesture was a pioneering attempt to incor-
porate the city’s Byzantine heritage into its modern image. In fact, with the area cleared around Constantine’s column, the newly-opened Hagia Sophia square, and the punctuated entrance to the Hippodrome, Divanyolu regained some of the glory that it had once possessed as the *mese* of the Byzantine capital.

Therefore, Storari and Barberini played an instrumental role in the formative phase of the regularization process that transformed much of Istanbul’s urban during the second half of the 19th century and that established the patterns for its future. As a final note, it should be pointed out that the Italian contribution to city building in the Ottoman capital did not remain restricted to a two-dimensional level. In addition to many buildings designed by Italian architects during this period, a number of sculptural urban intervention, for example a diminutive replica of the Spanish Steps in the Galata district, made their appearance in Istanbul, evoking European images, very much in demand by the political elite of the time.

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3. Ibid.
7. According to a document in the Prime Minister’s Archives (Başbakanlık Arşivi, BBA), İrade, Dahiyye, no. 20937, the number of buildings demolished in this fire is 666; in Ergin’s *Mecelle*, it is given as 748; and the *Journal de Constantinople* estimates 1000 houses and as many shops.
8. BBA, İrade, Dahiyye, no. 23150.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
15. Ergin claims that the majority of the post-fire schemes between 1856 and 1864 was prepared by Storari. In 1864, the Ottoman government ended Storari’s contract for unknown reasons. See: Ergin, *Mecelle*, I, pp. 1019-1020, note 75. Storari’s other work in the Empire is documented in *Guida con cenni storici di Smirna scritta dall’ingegnere L. Storari*, Torino, 1857.
16. BBA, Cevdet, Belediye, no. 3803.
18. BBA, Cevdet, Belediye, no. 5286.