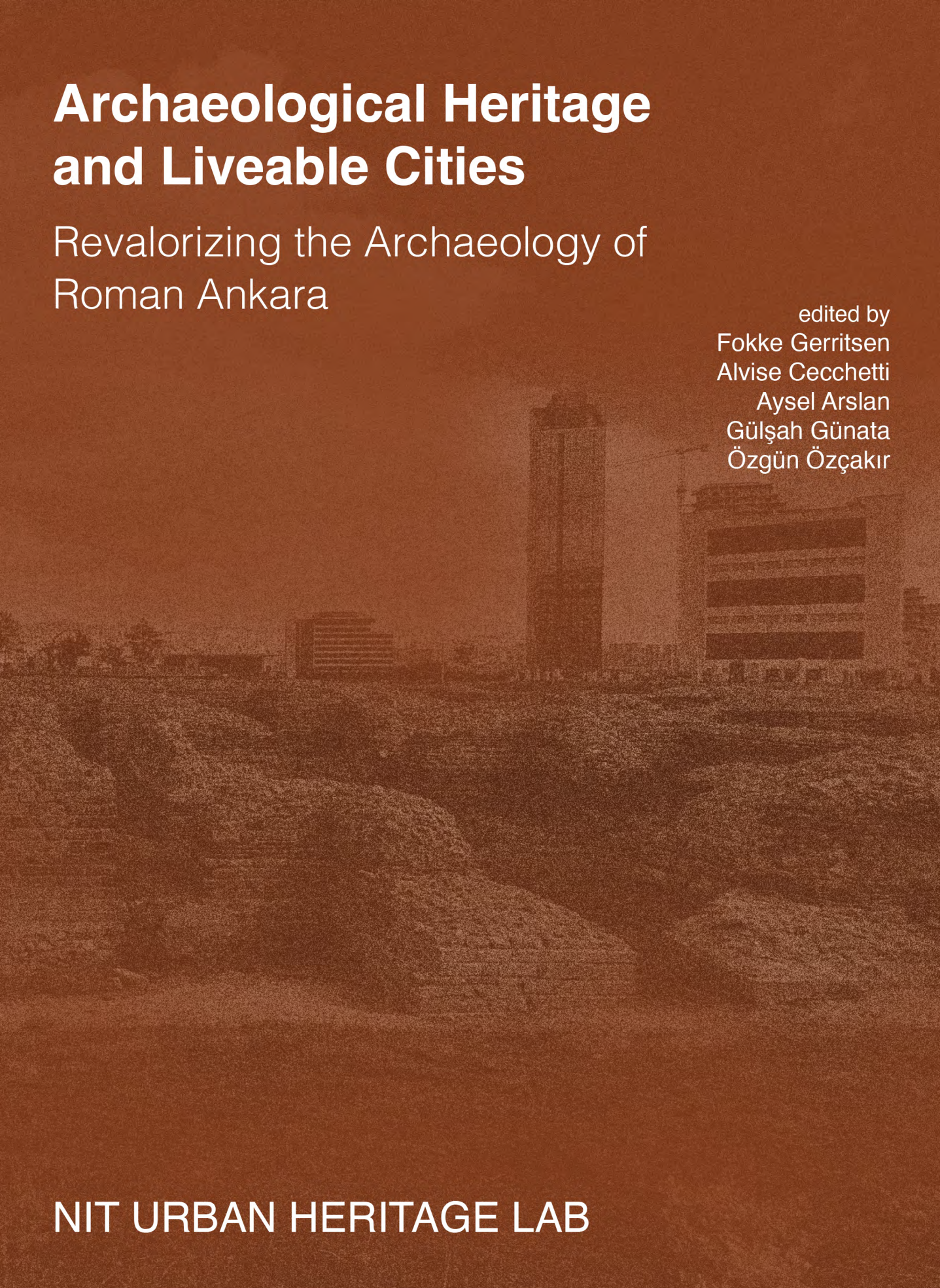
Archaeological Heritage and Liveable Cities

Revalorizing the Archaeology of Roman Ankara

edited by
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Multilayered Cities and Their Challenges

Ayşe Güliz Bilgin Altınöz
Middle East Technical University

> "It is clear enough space and time, however conceived, are the great framework within which we order our experience. We live in time-places."
> (Lynch, 1972, p. 241)

Cities as Multilayered Living Heritage Places

Settlements are the products of complex and continuous interaction between humans and their physical environments, shaped by various external factors. In this interaction process, the physical environment, with its features such as location, geomorphology, climate, flora and fauna, natural resources and events, transportation, and the built environment, constitutes the specific setting, context, and conditions of the settlement. Meanwhile, humans play a significant role in shaping settlements through their traditions, culture, beliefs, lifestyles, habits, production methods, skills, tastes, and values, which are transmitted across generations. In addition to the interaction between humans and their physical environment, external factors such as economic, political, ideological, legal, and administrative contexts, along with conditions, significantly influence the formation of settlements (Bilgin Altınöz, 2023, pp. 191–192).

In addition to all these, "time" plays a crucial role in the shaping of settlements. As defined by Margaret Yourcenar (1996), "that mighty sculpture, time" reshapes everything and inevitably brings change. As time progresses, humans, the physical environment, and external forces all change. This change is reflected in both the settlement system and the tangible and intangible components of settlements, manifesting as continuity, rupture, transformation, and modification. With passing time, while some settlements are completely abandoned and disappear, historical continuity can still be observed in many others, even if their importance, status, size, uses, users, and spatial characteristics change (Figure 1). This complex and continuous interaction process is not only evident in shaping the individual settlements but also in the formation of the broader settlement system and regional transportation networks (Bilgin Altınöz, 2023, pp. 191–192).

Cities are significant components of the broader geography and settlement system. They often reflect



Figure 1: Formation of multilayered places (revised from Bilgin Altınöz, 2023, p. 192).

a long and complex process of historical continuity, where successive cultures and eras contribute to the physical, spatial, and cultural characteristics of the urban landscape over time. Each historical period adds its own distinct physical and cultural expressions, collectively forming various layers or strata that contribute to the cities' historical, cultural, and physical depth. The remains and traces of different periods, sometimes side by side, sometimes overlapping, constitute the historical layering of today's city, which can be defined as "multilayered cities."

Multilayered Cities as Materialization of Time and Memory

Multilayered cities are continuously inhabited by urban landscapes where traces of different historical periods coexist (Bilgin Altınöz, 2002, p. 1). The current structure of multilayered cities is a result of the dynamic relationship between space and time. Kevin Lynch (1972, p. 173) describes the ideal environment for human development as a "collage of time," which is more than just a mix of old and new; it is the accumulation of rich traces of the past that are deliberately juxtaposed to enhance the form and meaning of each, while maintaining a coherent whole. In multilayered cities, with each epoch adding its physical elements, the city develops as a layered whole (Figure 2).

As Thomas (1996, p. 60) notes, "an object never signifies in and of itself, but through a web of relations with other things." This applies to cities as well: cities are experienced and shaped through networks of relationships. Multilayered cities are multidimensional and multilayered living places formed as a result of complex and dynamic relationships both within each period and layer and between different periods and layers (Bilgin Altınöz, 2021, p. 107). Thus, the traces of historical continuity, evident in architecture and urban form, are not simply superimposed chronologically, but are linked with dynamic interaction between physical structures, socio-cultural practices, collective memories, and urban identities throughout history.

The various layers of a multilayered city can establish different types of relationships with one another. These relationships may be purely physical, whereby "the architectural strata touch but do not inform each other" (Boyer, 1994, p. 19). In this case,



Figure 2: Ankara Castle, as a representation of a "collage of time" incorporating components from the Roman, Byzantine, Seljukid, and Ottoman layers of the city, many of which remain in use today.



Figure 3: The Roman Bath in Ankara stands as an "archaeological ghetto"; a site that physically persists yet lacks any integral relationship with its surrounding context.

components from earlier layers may contribute to the city's diversity without being integrally embedded within its overall structure. Such remnants of former periods, which lack a substantive relationship with their surrounding physical, social, or functional context, may be regarded as "archaeological ghettos" within the urban fabric (Figure 3). In other cases, components from different layers can have both physical and semantic relationships. Hence, they become integral parts of the city due to their reuse and transformation over time, reflecting historical continuity. Regardless of whether the relationship is purely physical or includes semantic connections, the various layers and their components play a significant role in shaping the contemporary structure of the multilayered city. It is the interplay of these different layers and their relationships that form the town's identity, which can be defined as both "diversity" and "specificity" in multilayered towns. Consequently, one of the town's most important values is its ability to create a continuous line connecting different historical periods while maintaining its unity in diversity and specificity (Zanchetti & Jokilehto, 1997, pp. 42–44).

The accumulation of tangible and intangible traces of different eras and cultures reflected in the architecture, urban form, spatial practices, cultural meanings, and memories shapes the complex fabric of multilayered cities. This accumulation, representing the effects of time in urban settlements, is referred to as the "patina of the city" (Zanchetti, 2006) (Figure 4).

Contrary to accumulations, the development of stratified cities can involve also disruptions and erasures, leading to losses that manifest as "lacunae," which are gaps within different strata. When there are lacunae, it becomes challenging to understand and interpret the multilayered city. Just as missing text in a manuscript can obscure meaning, lost or diminished physical elements can hinder our comprehension of history.

Multilayered cities not only represent the physical remnants of various eras and cultures, but they also embody the shared experiences, narratives, and values of the communities that have lived and interacted within them. The spatial practices

of communities, their ways of inhabiting and adapting spaces, reinforce or transform spatial patterns, further enhancing the layered character of multilayered cities. Consequently, the stratification in multilayered cities is not only physical; it is also the materialization of memories that reflect the diverse histories embedded in the urban fabric. Memory connects space with individuals and communities. While personal memory is limited by lifespan and individual experience, collective memory encompasses shared events and persists across generations, depending on the transmission of knowledge. Multi-layered cities are repositories of both personal and collective memories (Bilgin Altınöz, 2014). Pierre Nora (1989) refers to the real environments of memory, which develop naturally and spontaneously, as *milieux de mémoire*. When these real places are lost, *lieux de mémoire*, that is, "sites of memory," are formed through intentional efforts to recall and recreate material, symbolic, or functional connections to the past (Nora, 1989). Multilayered cities serve as *milieux de mémoire* where there also exist *lieux de mémoire*.

Challenges of Managing and Intervening in Multilayered Cities

In multilayered cities, the conservation of historical stratification while development and life continue is a complex issue, raising questions about how to manage and intervene in such complex and stratified urban landscapes. Intervening in multilayered urban contexts has evolved significantly over the past several decades, shifting from narrowly focused, period-specific practices toward more integrated, participatory, and context-sensitive approaches. The complexity of stratified urban environments demands an equally complex and reflexive framework for intervention, one that recognizes the spatial and temporal depth of cities while embracing contemporary urban realities.

The earliest systematic responses to urban-layered heritage often emerged as "rescue archaeology," driven by the urgent need to salvage remains endangered by destruction and rapid urban development. These interventions, although well-intentioned, focused on individual monuments or sites, often neglecting broader urban continuity. Rescue archaeology prioritized recovery and documentation instead of integrated urban planning, which inadvertently reinforced a fragmented understanding of the urban past (Bilgin, 1996; Bilgin Altınöz, 2021).

While rescue archaeology in urban areas still remains as an urgent action, alongside this, a shift occurred toward "urban archaeology," where the richness of archaeological remains beneath modern cities necessitated a more holistic approach. Accordingly, urban archaeology, extending beyond excavations in urban contexts, considered all the layers of urban settings by integration, combining excavation, research, and public engagement in settings where archaeological layers are not removed from their urban context but interpreted as part of a multilayered city (Bilgin, 1996; Bilgin Altınöz, 2021). Thus, managing multilayered cities requires a



Figure 4: Ankara as a living multilayered city. The patina of the city reflects the continuous transformation and accumulation of physical elements from diverse historical layers.



Figure 5: Roman Theater in Ankara. (Left) The existing remains of the original structure before the interventions, largely lost through the re-use of its materials in the construction of the Byzantine Citadel and later Seljukid and Ottoman structures. (Right) The "new" Roman Theater, reconstructed by the local authority to emphasize the archaeological strata of the city.

comprehensive process of stratigraphic analysis, assessment, and interpretation, which provides understanding and representing the layers of time and memory embedded in space as a critical foundation for informed decision-making in multilayered cities. Addressing the patina, which consists of accumulated traces, and the lacunae, representing gaps from lost traces of past periods and cultures, requires a process of "revealing" and "reintegrating" these remnants. This can be achieved through comprehensive conservation, planning, and design interventions that recontextualize them within the current urban context and the ongoing life, while contributing to the formation of new strata in contemporary and future urban landscapes. These efforts emphasized in situ conservation, adaptive reuse, and presenting urban stratigraphy as a visible and intelligible narrative within the contemporary city.

As dynamic living heritage places that embody the complexity of historical continuity, the challenges of conserving and managing multilayered cities extend beyond mere archaeological, architectural, or urban aspects. Tangible and intangible traces of various historical layers that co-exist are not often valued equally. Certain periods, cultures, and histories may be considered more significant than others, based on differing narratives generated by broader societal values and power structures (Bilgin Altınöz, 2014; Özçakır, Bilgin Altınöz, & Mignosa, 2022). There may be alternative narratives, interpretations, and memories associated with different layers. Different groups interpret and connect with the past in diverse ways, bringing their own set of priorities and agendas to the table (Figure 5).

This transforms multilayered cities into terrains of negotiation between memory and forgetting, old and new, continuity and change. As a result, the conservation and management of multilayered cities becomes a multidimensional, multi-actor, multidisciplinary complex process that needs to go beyond aesthetic and technical concerns and address the deep connections between place, time, and meaning. This complexity involves interpretative and selective aspects, making decisions in and about multilayered contexts a social, cultural, and political act, due to the struggle for control over the city's narrative.

Multilayered cities, as stratified contexts, exhibit complexities arising from the juxtaposition of various strata with various personal and collective memories (Lamunière, Venturi, & Leatherbarrow, 1995). Memory is inherently selective, dynamic, and shaped by social, political, and cultural contexts. Just as people remember or forget selectively, societies alter physical traces of memory selectively. Hence, multilayered cities as *milieux de mémoire* may be intervened in and deliberately reshaped to create *lieux de mémoire*, which are imposed from the top down by authorities in power (Nora, 1989) (Figure 6).

Decisions regarding what to expose, protect, or reinterpret carry long-term implications for how cities remember, narrate, and negotiate their

histories. This leads to the demolition, reconstruction, or invention of physical markers, forming a "politics of memory" (King, 1993; Barthel, 1996; Huyssen, 2003) as well as the "economics of memory." Political and economic motives can result in the "re-invention of traditions" (Hobsbawm, 1983) and memories, through erasures, exposures, reconstructions of memory places of different past strata, that prioritize economic or political objectives over scientific considerations. Such actions can result in the loss of valuable historical evidence and the erasure of significant cultural layers, further complicating the challenging task of conserving multilayered cities (Figure 7).

Türkiye's geography, spanning Anatolia and Thrace, has been home to many civilizations since prehistoric times, due to its strategic location and diverse landscape. As a result, many cities in Türkiye display the essential characteristics of layered settlements. In the multilayered cities of Türkiye, the long history of settlement, combined with waves of cultural transformation and political change, has generated complex urban landscapes where continuity is at once visible and vulnerable.

However, identifying and interpreting the remnants of these historical periods has become increasingly challenging. This is often due to insensitive urban development, inadequate conservation practices, fragmented planning processes, and selective and sometimes manipulative decisions based on political and economic considerations. As a result, the historical layers present in the physical and semantic structures of multilayered cities are rarely recognized, managed, or conserved holistically.

Concluding Remarks: Embracing Complexity for Integrated Conservation and Management of Multilayered Cities

Multilayered cities are the outcome of the interaction between place, people, and external factors that continuously change and are reshaped over time. They are repositories of tangible and intangible evidence of past eras and cultures, materialized as architectural and urban forms, spatial practices, memories, and identities. Multilayered cities are not passive archives; they are dynamic environments where life continues. Hence, conserving the remnants of historical stratification, while integrating them into the contemporary urban context and sustaining the city's layered character, and shaping the contemporary and even future strata of that layered urban landscape as part of the ongoing urban continuum, becomes a significant concern in these settings.

Accordingly, the conservation and management of multilayered cities become a challenging process that requires a critical and comprehensive approach, acknowledging the complexities of the stratified



Figure 6: Sakarya Quarter in Ankara. (Left) A living traditional residential fabric as a real environment of memory, milieu de mémoire, before large-scale interventions. (Right) Transformed into a lieu de mémoire, an intentionally constructed site through extensive reconstruction efforts.



Figure 7: Hacı Bayram Quarter in Ankara, where Hacı Bayram Mosque and the Temple of Augustus once coexisted within an Ottoman-era residential fabric that was later partially demolished to create a public square through modern urban design and architectural interventions. (Left) The demolition of modern-period additions, also damaging underlying archaeological strata. (Right) Reconstruction of an idealized "Ottoman fabric," reinforcing the mosque's dominance, driven by political and ideological agendas.

urban context shaped by its intricate fabric, history, memory, and identity. This calls for a scientifically grounded and thorough assessment of the tangible and intangible remnants of different historical layers within the contemporary context, while also embracing complexities, acknowledging conflicting values, and integrating diverse narratives.

Therefore, conserving, managing, and intervening in the multilayered cities cannot be purely scientific decisions; they are deeply connected to political, ideological, economic, and social factors. It is a process of dialogue between past and present, between different social groups, and between material traces and immaterial meanings. Addressing the *patina*, the accumulated traces of time, and intervening in the *lacunae*, the voids left by erasures, neglect, or destruction, requires critical and context-sensitive strategies. It is a complex process of spatial decision-making and design, influenced by many other inputs, such as contemporary functional requirements, social and political demands, economic considerations, as well as the decision makers' and designers' ambition to create a new stratum (Bilgin Altınöz, 2010; Bilgin Altınöz, 2014). As such, the conservation and management of multilayered cities is also a design act as well as a cultural and political negotiation, requiring inclusive dialogue among stakeholders, interdisciplinary collaboration, and respect for *milieux de mémoire*.

In conclusion, the future of multilayered cities depends on the ability to conserve their layers in a way that respects both their historical significance and their role in shaping the future. The conservation and management of these complex contexts require approaches that are data-driven, inclusive, and attentive to multiple meanings and memories, ensuring the continuity of their layered character. It becomes crucial to ensure that interventions are holistic, inclusive, and layered, just like the cities themselves. Through comprehensive analysis and assessments, careful interventions, inclusive dialogue, and a deep understanding of the city's layered identity, the richness of multilayered heritage can be safeguarded for generations to come.

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In what ways can urban archaeological heritage contribute to the liveability of cities and promote the sustainability of urban life?

What are the recommended strategies for preservation, presentation, and public outreach?

Within the NIT Urban Heritage Lab series, this book offers proposals for four distinct archaeological sites in Ankara, generated through a three-month multidisciplinary educational and research program, which incorporated on-site studies and a research-by-design methodology integrating academic and professional perspectives.



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