

Change of habitat- change of mentality at the time of the Haussmannian breakthroughs in the second half of the nineteenth century

(Changement de l'habitat - changement des mentalités aux temps des percées haussmanniennes dans la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle)

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the fundamental transformations of Paris in the second half of the nineteenth century, at the time of the Second Empire. Of course, we will not study these transformations with the eyes of a professional architect or a specialist in urban planning but with the "civilizationist" aim of someone who wishes to popularize the Great French culture and civilization. It is this period that is of most interest because it is to the Second Empire and to the Baron de Haussmann that Paris owes its brilliance and its power of cultural and romantic seduction today because it is this Prefect of Paris who took charge of the heaviest works of urban planning, systematization, the fight in favor of general hygiene, and a change of air and perspective in the old French capital, at the time mentioned above. Everything that was modern, from the capital's water supply to the bathrooms of every house and apartment (it was the time of the "sewerage" campaign), to the gas illumination of all Paris, to the grand boulevards thanks to which the French capital is renowned to this day, to modern urban planning and, above all, to the graceful new (late nineteenth century) Art Nouveau architecture that produced the Parisian masterpieces, we owe the whole to Baron d'Haussmann. It was him who dared to disembowel the old medieval Paris to adorn it with the brilliance of twentieth-century modernity; it was him, in fact, the man who changed the mentality of all by offering them a new habitat.

Keywords: *Civilizations; Haussmann; Paris; urbanism; architecture; modernization; change of mentalities;*

Résumé

Cet article est censé analyser les transformations fondamentales de Paris dans la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle, à l'époque du Second Empire. Certes, on ne va pas étudier ces transformations avec les yeux d'un architecte de métier, ni d'un spécialiste en urbanisme, mais avec la visée « civilisationiste » de celui qui souhaite populariser la grande culture et civilisation françaises. C'est cette époque qui intéresse le plus, car c'est au Second Empire et au baron de Haussmann que Paris doit son éclat et son pouvoir de séduction culturelle et romantique d'aujourd'hui, car c'est ce Préfet de Paris qui s'est chargé des plus lourds travaux d'urbanisme, de systématisation, du combat en faveur de l'hygiène générale, et de changement

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d'air et de perspective dans la vieille capitale française, à l'époque susmentionnée. Tout ce qui était moderne, depuis l'alimentation en eau de la capitale, aux salles de bains de chaque maison et appartement (c'était l'époque de la campagne « tout à l'égout »), à l'illumination à gaz de tout Paris, aux grands boulevards grâce auxquels la capitale française est renommée jusqu'à présent, à l'urbanisme moderne et, surtout, à la gracieuse nouvelle (fin XIXe siècle) architecture Art Nouveau qui a produit les chefs d'œuvres parisiennes, on doit le tout au baron d'Hausmann. C'est lui qui a osé éventrer le vieux Paris moyenâgeux pour le parer de l'éclat de la modernité du XXe siècle, c'est lui, en fait, qui a changé les mentalités de tous en leur offrant un habitat nouveau.

Mots clés : *Civilisations ; Haussmann ; Paris ; urbanisme ; architecture ; modernisation ; changement des mentalités ;*

As I said in my presentation in June, dedicated to the change of mentalities during the great architectural and urban development of the Haussmannian era, this year, within the International Conference *History, Spirituality, Culture. Dialogue and Interactivity 2024*, the tenth edition, held at the Lower Danube University in Galati, the dogma of the religion of urbanism became mandatory in Europe and even in the United States in the second half of the 19th century.

The main motto of urbanism from the era of the great Haussmannian transformations had three elements: "de l'eau, de l'air, de l'ombre". Water (running water, canal), air, large, bright windows (in the Middle Ages, windows were small), tall rooms, and shade. Urban parks were created for the entire Parisian population, as there was no urban park until that time. Of course, the upper classes had *the Jardin du Luxembourg*, their own park, and there is another discussion there. Also, during this period, the first malls, called *Les Grandes Surfaces*, appeared for the first time in history. Even today, all the ladies who arrive in Paris want to go shopping at *Printemps*, right next to the Gare Saint Lazare, because right between the Opéra Garnier - the architectural jewel of Paris - and the Gare Saint Lazare, right there are *Les Grandes Surfaces* (the big stores). From there appeared (and generalized) this fashion of presenting the merchandise. The French were the first masters of the presentation of goods in large shops intended for the public, and they appeared thought exactly like this: with large glass surfaces and huge exhibition spaces, obviously also designed by Baron de Haussmann, the brilliant architect and urban planner. And from then until today, we have worldwide networks, where the goods are best displayed, usually in French networks, such as Auchan, Carrefour, etc.

To all this was added the art, the art of the Third Empire, because then the current called *Art Nouveau exploded in art*, in Paris, in Vienna, *Jugendstil*, meaning the young style, or the youthful style. In Paris, it was called *Art Nouveau*. Where did this current in art come from? With graceful lines, with glass, with delicate materials, for not only the lines but also the materials were graceful. Glass, porcelain, crystal, etc. were used. The curved line was used in harmonies and the harmony was never broken. Neither vertically nor horizontally. For example, in architecture, it is known that vertical harmony is never broken, only horizontally, to break the monotony of the facades. There was no break here. Everything was flowing... Of course, under the influence of Japanese art that Europeans were discovering with amazement and

delight at the end of the 19th century. It is, more precisely, the famous *Wave (Kanagawa-okinamiura)*, or the *Great Wave of Kanagawa* of Hokusai, who inspired, among others, the great Van Gogh.



Figure no.1. Katsushika Hokusai, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*.

Source: The image is extracted from the website:

https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marele_val_de_la_Kanagawa#/media/Fi%C8%99ier:Katsushika_Hokusai_-_Thirty-Six_Views_of_Mount_Fuji-_The_Great_Wave_Off_the_Coast_of_Kanagawa_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg (accessed on 5.10.2024, at 1:41 p.m.).



Figure no. 2. The Guimard entrances to the Paris metro station.

Source: The image was extracted from the website:

https://www.parisladouce.com/2023/01/entrees-metro-guimard-paris-edicules.html#google_vignette (accessed on 6.10.2024, at 8:40 p.m.).



Figure no. 3. The dragonfly of the Dauphine station.

Source: The image was extracted from the website:

https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entr%C3%A9e_de_m%C3%A9tro_Guimard#/media/Fichier:Paris_16_-_La_libellule_de_la_station_Dauphine_-2.jpg (accessed on 6.10.2024, at 8:43 p.m.).

Art Nouveau, in architecture, probably produced the masterpiece of Paris. The most beautiful monument in Paris is and will remain, in my humble opinion, but informed (an educated guess), *Opéra Garnier*, but we'll come back to this topic later. All these huge and unique transformations that also appear in London (*Bishops gate Institute* and *Crystal Palace*) were made later, after this infusion of *Art Nouveau* (followed by *Art Deco*) in Paris. This infusion of architectural aestheticism could only be done on the solid foundation of a logical urbanism.

Another fundamental feature of Haussmannian Parisian urbanism is the radial model, as shown before, and that of the two huge main axes that cross the center of Paris. The longest axis, the longitudinal axis, starts from the Louvre, crosses l'Arc de Triomphe des Tuileries, Place Concorde (point 0 of Paris, marked by the famous Egyptian obelisk over 3000 years old and brought by Napoleon Bonaparte from his campaign in Egypt), then continue across the entire Champs Elysée to the large Place de l'Étoile (the largest intersection in Europe) in the middle of which the famous Arc de Triomphe de l' Étoile reigns, like a huge stone dice (as Anatole France called it), to then throw another 5 km onto the Boulevard Charles de Gaulle to the modern Défense quarter, full of glass and metal skyscrapers (the Parisian replica given to the classic Manhattan in New York, but also to the new Canary Wharf in London), with its gigantic cube. On a clear day, if you sit with your back to the Louvre, under the Arc de Triomphe of the Tuileries, you can see in a straight line for about 10 km, Jardin des Tuileries, Champs Elysée, Place de l' Étoile, Boulevard Charles de Gaulle, to the Défense, the gaze passing through or under three triumphal arches, in ascending order, that is, increasingly larger, but also in chronological order, perfectly

aligned, in a perfectly straight line: Tuileries, Étoile and Défense, in perfect symmetry, or, dare I say, super-symmetry.



Figure no. 4. Historic axis of Paris.

Source: Both images were extracted from the website:

https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Axe_historique_de_Paris (accessed on 25.10.2024, at 4:32 p.m.).

The second central axis, the transverse one, just intersects the Champs Élysée, passes between the two masterpieces of Art Nouveau (or Deco), Le Grand Palais and Le Petit Palais (graceful palaces of glass and wrought iron), and connects the Palace Élysée by the Lord of the Invalids, the famous gilded dome of Paris and where Napoleon is buried, on top of the most beautiful bridge in the world and which is the Alexander III bridge. By the way, Alexander III is the tsar who defeated Napoleon. They were friends, betrayed, defeated, and handed over to the English, after which he had great remorse and built a wonderful Art Nouveau bridge in Paris, to which he also gave a name, more precisely, his name. After he betrayed and killed him, full of remorse, he prepared for him in the Lord of the Invalids a huge sarcophagus made of porphyry (the most expensive stone possible), and the sarcophagus in which Napoleon is buried has a bicorn shape, just like the famous Napoleonic hat, so as a tribute. Friendship, betrayal, destruction, and finally, a splendid monument! Only those who have not known the friendship of the Russians cannot understand, in

depth, the Slavic soul! We, the Romanians, understand him, but we do not enjoy this understanding at all...



Figure no. 5. Alexander III Bridge in Paris.

Source: The image was extracted from the website: <https://parissecret.com/paris-lhistoire-et-les-secrets-du-mythique-pont-alexandre-iii/> (accessed on 25.10.2024, at 2:57 p.m.).



Figure no. 6. The Dome of the Invalides & Napoleon's Tomb.

Source: Both images were extracted from the website: https://www.parisladouce.com/2023/01/entrees-metro-guimard-paris-edicules.html#google_vignette (accessed on 25.10.2024, at 3:05 p.m.).

Paris has always been more than a city. Paris has been and has remained a state of mind, or, if you will, the state of aggregation of the souls of Parisians, whose reflection has solidified, throughout history, in the most beautiful and famous city in the world. As Pierre Sansot said, "*in a city, you never know who reflects and who is reflected*", what is the sound and what is the echo, who has a fever in the evening, whether it is the city lights or the busy passers-by" (Sansot, 2004, p. 32). This reflection was amplified especially in the 19th century, the time when the face of the city was, on several occasions, mutilated, decomposed, and then recomposed because

the Paris we know today is deeply dependent on this century when two-thirds of its current surface area were built or remodeled.



Figure no. 7. The two comparative maps: the first until 1848, the second around 1860.

Source: Both images were extracted from the website:

https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fortifications_de_Paris_aux_XIXe_et_XXe_si%C3%A8cles
(accessed on 25.10.2024, at 4:32 p.m.).

As shown in my previous papers in French about the Haussmannian housing and living revolution (Gălățanu, 2016, pp. 547-555; Gălățanu, 2009, pp. 13-16; Gălățanu, 2017, pp. 13 -16)², Paris took on its modern face that we know today, thanks exactly to this Haussmannian revolution, under the Second Empire. Appointed Prefect of the Seine and ennobled by Napoleon III, Baron Haussmann designed an ambitious policy concerning urban planning and knew how to surround himself with competent collaborators, such as Alphand and Belgrand (Cars & Pinon, 1998). Prefect Haussmann continued Rambuteau's transformations on a much larger scale and provided Paris with a network of axes that, even today, constitute its main framework, especially the east-west axis that leaves the view free from the Arc de Triomphe de Tuileries to the Grande Arche de la Défense, passing through the Tuileries Gardens, the Place de Concorde, the Champs-Élysées, the Place de l'Etoile and along the

² This paper includes some rewrites in English, this time, of some important sections of my previous research in French: Gălățanu, Daniel, *La transfiguration de Paris sous le Second Empire* in «*Perspectives and Problems of Integration in the European Space of Research and Education*» University of Cahul, Republic of Moldova, 2016, 9 pages (pp. 547-555, X5), ISBN: 978-9975-914-90-1.; 978-9975-88-011-4., https://ibn.idsi.md/ro/vizualizare_articol/126707/crossref ; https://ibn.idsi.md/ro/author_articles/45383. See also: Gălățanu, Daniel, *La Cité dans la poésie française moderne de Baudelaire à Apollinaire*, Galați University Press 2009, pp. 13-16 (<https://www.sudoc.abes.fr/cbs/xslt//DB=2.1/SET=1/TTL=1/SHW?FRST=2>), et Gălățanu, Daniel, *La Cité dans la poésie française moderne de Baudelaire à Apollinaire* (2^e édition, revue, corrigée et augmentée), Presses Académiques Francophones, Saarbrücken, 2017 (<https://portal.dnb.de/opac.htm?method=showFullRecord¤tResultId=%22daniel%22+and+%22galatanu%22%26any¤tPosition=0>), pp. 13-16.

Boulevard Charles de Gaulle, which represents, in terms of distance, more than 10 kilometers.

At that time, Paris absorbed its suburbs up to the Thiers enclosure in 1860 (by these two comparative maps: the first until 1848, the second, around 1860): Haussmann enjoyed the support of Napoleon III, who personally participated in some projects. Haussmann's urban planning was characterized by the creation of a vast network of grand boulevards, which literally and without choosing, gutted the territory of the city, whether it was the prestigious districts of the center or the peripheral areas in the process of urbanization (Texier, 2005).

These are globally designed routes that intersect at star-shaped intersections (the famous Parisian radial model):



Figure no. 8. The Arc de Triomphe and the Parisian radial model.

Source: The image was extracted from the website:

<https://www.istockphoto.com/fr/photo/arc-de-triomphe-du-ciel-paris-gm1324189687-409611510> (accessed on 25.10.2024, at 3:40 p.m.).

At the same time, an extremely active policy was adopted in terms of public development and construction: a network of streets, sewers, water and gas distribution (in short, hygiene), halls, markets, high schools, barracks, prisons, hospitals, and gardens. All this would be enough in Paris for a century... It is important to say that the "all in the sewer" campaign of Rambuteau's time was even more virulent in the Haussmann era. The media gave real lessons in hygiene so that people would become familiar with the use of the sewer, urinals and toilets, and even the shower:



Figure no. 9. The Haussmannian house.

Source: The image was extracted from the website <https://www.unjourdeplusaparis.com/paris-reportage/reconnaitre-immeuble-haussmannien> (accessed on 25.10.2024, at 4:24 p.m.).

During the Second Empire, thematic architecture was used in Paris for squares (Place de l'Etoile, Place Saint-Michel, Place du Théâtre-Français) and the buildings in front of the Gare du Nord. Paris in the 19th century was also very coherent from an architectural point of view (Gilbert, 2000). Entire streets and neighborhoods were built so quickly that the houses (equipped with all modern amenities: water, gas, sewers) that made them up had more or less the same style. It was the classic Haussmannian building, made of cut stone, composed of five floors plus an attic with wrought iron balconies.



Figure no. 10. Specimen of bathroom layout.

Source: The image was extracted from the website: <https://e-monumen.net/patrimoine-monumental/cadet-achille/> (accessed on 25.10.2024, at 3:41 p.m.).

It is important to say that in the Haussmann style, the aesthetic gradation of buildings is proportional to the social gradation. Urban planning regulations contribute to the architectural unity of the facades (exceeding the alignment of buildings or their facades is prohibited, and their height is limited).

Left on purpose at the end, "pour la bonne bouche", as the French people say the last, but of course, not least, Opera Garnier is undoubtedly the masterpiece of both Art Nouveau and general Paris architecture. This unique building (in our opinion, the most beautiful secular construction in the world and of all time) was built between 1862-1875. "The facades of the building, which borrow from the Italian style, some colonnades, are enriched with sculptures, the most remarkable of which is undoubtedly Carpeaux's Dance. Inside, one is dazzled by the magnificent Grand Staircase and the Grand Foyer, sumptuously decorated" (Păun, p. 249). The pediment of the building houses, we allow ourselves to add, the gilded busts, as a sign of supreme homage, of the greatest composers (most of them German!): Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and, finally a Frenchman, Hector Berlioz.

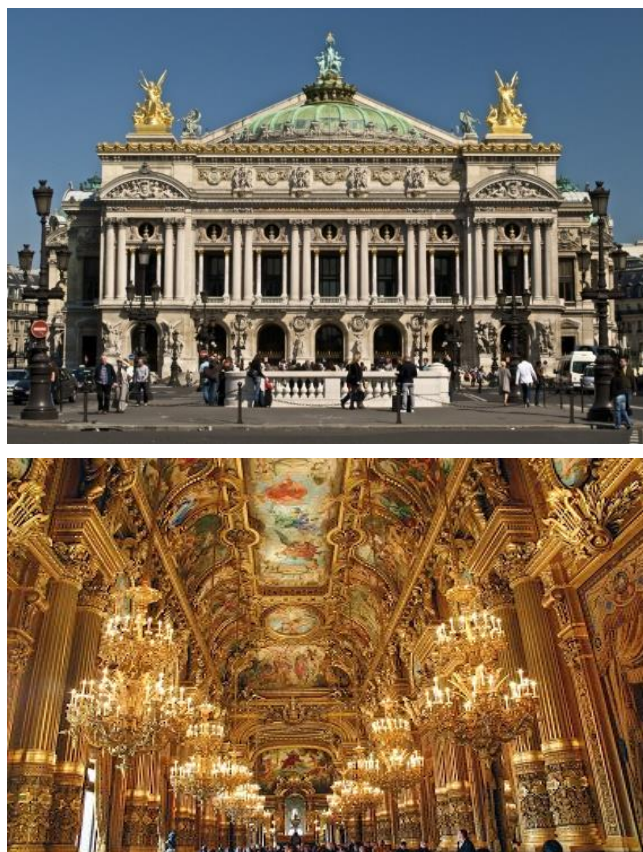


Figure no. 11. Garnier Palace and the Opera Garnier Foyer.

Source: Both images were extracted from the website:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palais_Garnier#/media/File:Paris_Opera_full_frontal_architecture,_May_2009.jpg (accessed on 25.10.2024, at 4:40 p.m.).

Haussmann's work was nevertheless the subject of virulent criticism. It was especially Victor Hugo who reproached him for the massacre of old Paris. The Republicans raged against Haussmann's work since they saw him as the prefect of the Empire, but it was always they who, once in power, continued Haussmann's developments. Even the architects criticized him, in turn, because by dint of seeing their creativity diminished in Haussmann's specifications, they campaigned to lighten the rules, thus favoring the appearance of the famous *Art Nouveau* (Gălăţanu, [2009 & 2017]; Gălăţanu, 2014).

During the Second Empire and the Third Republic, new building materials appeared especially wrought iron and glass, which allowed the realization of even more ambitious projects. At the end of the 19th century and until 1914, the most modest buildings began to benefit from sculpted stone facades, marble staircases and fireplaces, slate roofs, decorative plaster moldings on ceilings and walls. The Belle Epoque began graceful and spectacular and embellished Paris until the threshold of the abyss of the First World War. The Grand Palais, the Petit Palais, the Pont Alexandre III and, of course, the Pont Mirabeau, with which Apollinaire fell in love, are the wonders of this era.

We have already spoken in the past about Paris (Gălăţanu, [2009 & 2017]; Gălăţanu, 2014) as a setting for the literary and artistic works of the 19th century. The paradox of this physical space, sublimated in many writings of genius, is that it was not synchronous, contemporary, in most cases, with the most important creators of the 19th century. The great writers of the time: the Romantics, the Parnassians, the Realists, Baudelaire and the Symbolists, were condemned to evolve in the architectural setting of an essentially Renaissance and classical city, the Paris of previous centuries. The most notable exceptions are Zola, of course, with his famous naturalist novels, especially *Au Bonheur des dames* (whose action was precisely placed in the shops of the new Haussmannian districts), and the Belgian symbolist Verhaeren, the inventor of the famous formula "tentacular cities".

While preserving the imprint of the most ancient past in its body, Paris has been able to develop a homogeneous style over the centuries. This homogeneity results in a unique accumulation of monuments and an urban and architectural tradition that makes Paris so charming: alignment of buildings along tree-lined avenues, equal height under the influence of urban planning regulations, and decorated and symmetrical facades. Thus, it can be said, without fear to be wrong, that it is precisely to the great personality of the Baron de Haussmann and to the Second Empire that Paris owes its contemporary brilliance and its immense power of seduction that attracts millions of tourists from all over the planet every year. Because, in fact, every young bride from all over the world dreams of going on her honeymoon in Paris (except, perhaps, those who, not having passed their high school exams, dream of going to Dubai). It is exactly this change of habitat and perspective that influenced the mentalities of Parisians on the threshold of twentieth-century modernity and that prepared them to go through the industrial revolution and to embrace the immense anthropological changes of the new times.

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