

# NEW URBAN PLANNING

TOPIC

## ROOM 24: THE CITY IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> C.

### Urban developments (1800-1840)

#### The embellishment of the city (1800-1840)

During the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c., a number of attempts at embellishment were made: the first stone facades of the Place Bellecour following the revolutionary destruction, removal of the city cemeteries and construction of the rue de Bourbon (now rue Victor Hugo), the rue de la Préfecture and the passage de l'Argue. In 1832, the Perrache water station was completed at the same time as the first railway between Saint-Étienne and Lyon was set up (1827-1832). The infilling of the "Perrache peninsula" brought with it new subdivision plans.

However, Lyon was slow in its modernisation. Traffic flow was still difficult, even dangerous. Sunlight found it hard to penetrate through the insalubrious and often precariously constructed buildings. The city centre of France's second-largest industrial and trading centre was simply not suitable for welcoming travellers and foreigners who had come to do business...

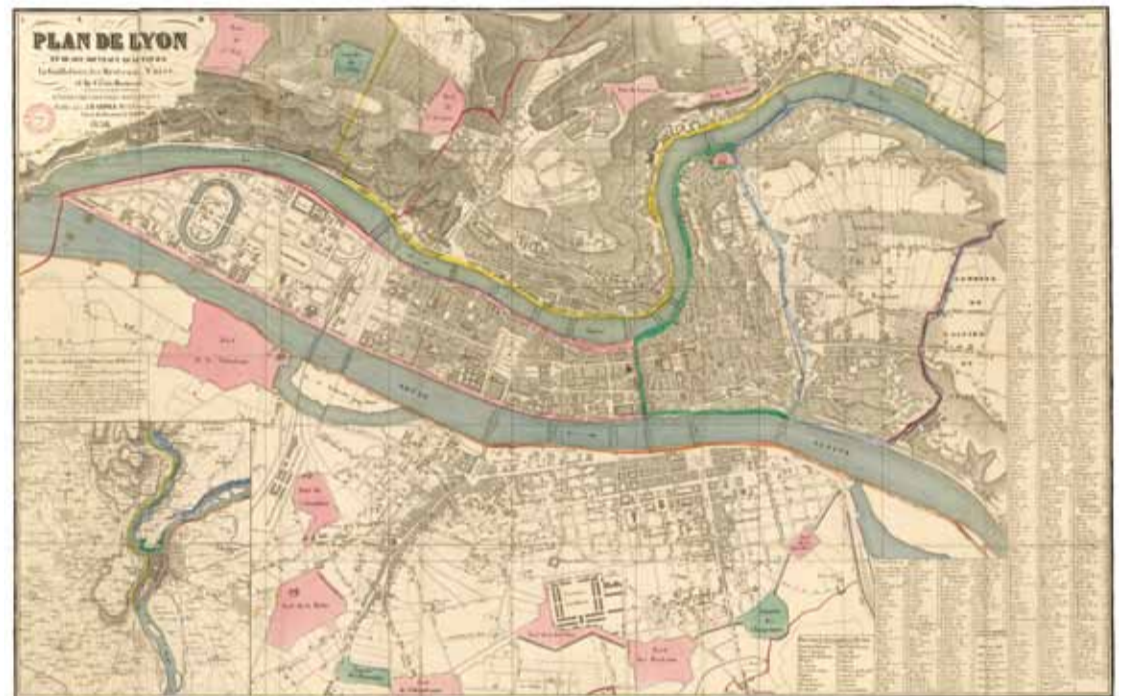
#### The city is transformed (1840-1870)

Around 1845, the rue d'Algérie, Constantine and Lanterne became the first major modern streets in Lyon. Their facades were built in a neoclassical style. The architects Jean Amédée Savoye (1804-1878) and Benoît Poncet (1806-1881) also created the rue Centrale (1845-1859), the rue Paul Chenavard and the rue de Brest, the leading real estate transaction at the heart of the city. The selected route entailed the destruction of many homes and recast the city in a new light between the place des Terreaux and the place des Jacobins. Many new buildings sprang up, the historic city began to fade into the background and the poorer populations had to take refuge in surrounding communities or in unsanitary homes.

#### The city grows (1852)

By virtue of a decree of 24 March 1852, the communes of Vaise, La Guillotière and La Croix-Rousse became part of Lyon:

- Vaise was home to a number of commercial facilities, especially as a water station was built there.
- The old town of La Guillotière was gradually transformed, with tall neoclassical building standing alongside rammed earth houses. Shops and small industries were set up.
- At La Croix-Rousse, there were plans for vast tree-lined avenues connected by squares. This was accompanied by the construction of houses for the silk traders working at Les Terreaux.



Map of Lyon and its new quarters La Guillotière, Les Brotteaux, Vaise and La Croix-Rousse, coloured engraving, Daudet and Joubert, published by J. B. Gadola, 1856, Inv. 1149.2

### The great works of Prefect Vaïsse (1853-1864)

#### Opening up of the major thoroughfares

On 25 March 1853, a vast planning enterprise was undertaken in Lyon, much like the work initiated by Haussmann in Paris, led by Claude-Marius Vaïsse (1799-1864) (Inv. 48.206), the mayor and prefect of the city. By the end of the year, architect René Dardel (1796-1871) had been commissioned to draw up plans for the "regeneration of the centre of the peninsula".

The main feature of the plans was the cutting through of rue Impériale (now rue de la République) (Inv. 38.99.30 – **Construction of the street**). The aim was to open up a broad straight avenue through the old town, from which other roads would spring. In 1854, Benoît Poncet set up the Rue Impériale Realty Company (Inv. 1394.19) – still active in 2010 – which was appointed by the prefect to open up the street and put up the new buildings. In 1856, with the consent of the Municipality and the State, it undertook a huge range of different public works.

In 1863, for example, the destruction of the Prefecture made it possible to create rue Gasparin, open up rue Childebert and extend rue des Archers as far as the Célestins. On the left bank of the Rhone, after the floods of 1856, a more coherent layout of the roads was implemented, with the project to extend the Cours de Brosse (now cours Gambetta).

### Continuity between amenities

The city endowed itself with more modern facilities: water distribution (1854-1856), the Cordeliers Hall (1858), the Exchange and Trade Centre (1855-1862), Hospital of the Croix-Rousse (1857-1861) and St. Joseph's Hospital. From 1856, Denis and Eugène Bülher created the Parc de la Tête d'Or and transferred the botanical gardens there.



Parc de la tête d'or construction site, view from the right bank of the Rhone, black-and-white photograph, anonymous, 1858, Inv. N 549.17

The city linked these infrastructures together, in particular by building a number of bridges, such as Pont Vaïsse. While Perrache Station was being built (1856-1857), René Dardel created a road to link it to the new centre by widening the rue de la Charité.



Northern end of the rue de la Charité, black-and-white photograph, anonymous, second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c., Inv. 1278.6

Just before the fall of the Second Empire (1852-1870), the destruction of part of the quarter of Saint Paul showed a willingness on the part of urban designers to turn their attention to areas that had been left untouched by modernisation. The railway station of Saint-Paul was built in 1873.

### Awareness of Lyon's heritage (1840-1901)

#### Voices making themselves heard

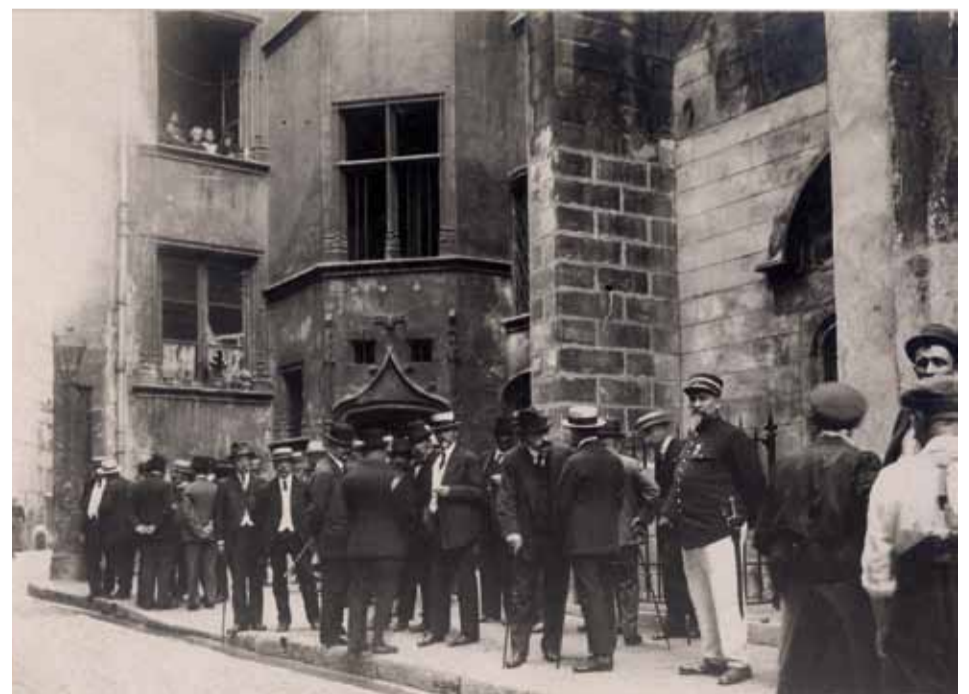
The disappearance of the evidence of the past led many people to want to preserve its memory. On 2 July 1842, the architects of the Lyon Academic Society of Architecture undertook to create a collection of all the old buildings threatened with demolition. In 1857, the Academy of Sciences, Belles Lettres and Arts of Lyon formed a history and archaeology committee in order to monitor building work and to save any antique or mediaeval objects or inscriptions that could be used to enrich the municipal collections. In 1861, a

contest was organised by the Academic Society of Architecture to "perpetuate, by means of drawing, the memory of all of the monuments and fragments of art across the city (...) that are threatened by decay, neglect or the modification of public roadways (...)".

#### Creation of the "Commission archéologique du Vieux-Lyon" (Archaeological Commission of Vieux-Lyon).

The city authorities could not ignore such initiatives and remain indifferent to the criticisms that met each new urban operation. Consequently, on 3 May 1898, they founded the Archaeological Commission of Vieux-Lyon (Inv. N 1237.4 – Creation), whose task it was to inform and to identify, select and save, physically or through drawings or photography, fragments of the districts that were disappearing (Inv. SN 429 – Demolition in the Grôlée quarter).

Reorganised in 1901 following the election of Mayor Victor Augagneur (1855-1931), the Commission expanded its activities with the creation of a museum devoted to the history of Lyon. Following a suggestion made in 1874 by L. Niepce, this museum was housed in the former residence of the Gadagne family, thus demonstrating the importance of conserving historical vestiges. The collections of the Gadagne Museum, which was inaugurated in 1921, were enriched by items recovered during these urban demolition projects.



Inauguration of the Gadagne Museum, photograph of life in Lyon, 1921, Inv. G 40.25