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Property, finance and architecture. The Imperial Ottoman Bank's branch buildings

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When 'upgraded' to a state bank in 1863, the assets of the Imperial Ottoman Bank (IOB) bank did not include any property from the former Ottoman Bank established in 1856. The IOB continued to use the premises of the former Ottoman Bank located in a 18th century building of the St. Pierre & St. Paul Monastery on the main commercial axis from Galata tower to the sea. The impressive headquarters of the bank would only be built thirty years later on the initiative of Sir Edgar Vincent, General Manager from 1889 to 1897. In a letter written to the London committee he complained about the building, stressing that it 'renders control impossible' and added that 'the smells are so bad that I wonder that half the staff are not down with typhoid fever'.¹ As a result the headquarters were commissioned to the Levantine Architect Alexandre Vallauri (1850-1921) and inaugurated in 1892. This story is a well known story and this paper does not intend to deal with the details of this building, which is now SALT Galata. Rather, it will deal with the history of branches, which are still used today by the Garanti Bank.

According to the statutes of the bank as well as the 1875 agreement with the government, branches would be opened in the provinces of the Empire; the cities of Izmir, Trabzon, Beirut and Salonica were explicitly mentioned but a second branch in Istanbul was not considered at that time. Several years later, in 1886, when the bank was to a large extent relieved of its duties as treasurer to the Public Debt Administration, it decided to explore the commercial market. However, the need to open a branch on the other side of the bridge became imperative. The branch should have started its activities in one of the rented offices as was the case in Galata or any other city



The Stamboul branch, 1930. SALT Research, OBA, Real Estates Albums.

of the Empire. Once the market was considered to be flourishing, the bank then decided to invest in property. Thus while the Stamboul branch would have the privilege of owning its premises, the Pera branch, opened in 1891, would first rent its offices in the Cité de Péra, at the corner of Theater Street² and then under the British School on the Grand rue de Péra.³

But the fact that another branch in Istanbul was not mentioned in the statutes caused problems when trying to transfer the property of Stamboul branch in the bank's name.⁴

Located on Yeni Cami Street in Eminönü, the premises of the Stamboul branch were also built by the architect of the bank, Alexandre Vallauri,⁵ on a plot of land which stood two houses to the side of Şeyh Mehmed Geylanî's burial place and four shops to the side of the Yeni Cami courtyard. The land was purchased in 1894,⁶ and although the exact date of construction is unknown, it was most probably completed in 1895 or in the beginning of 1896, since neither the building nor the plots appear in the list of the bank's properties established in June 1894.⁷ These are mentioned in another inventory prepared two years later in June 1896.⁸ As with the head offices, this building, too, was soon found to be insufficient during the prosperous and booming business years, and an annex was built in 1906 by the architect engineer, M. Barouh⁹, on the Yeni Cami side of the branch, expanding it to 499,50 m².¹⁰

The new plots on Kırbaç Street between the Yeni Cami courtyard and the premises had a surface of 201 to 230 m². Their price was estimated at 10,000 liras.¹¹ They were bought and registered in 1905 in the name of Jules Deffès, general manager from 1904 to 1910. The value of the building was estimated at approximately 19,000 liras by Vallauri in 1898 before the addition of the annex, the construction

1 SALT Research, Ottoman Bank London, LA 24032, 'Plans and elevation of the Imperial Ottoman Bank's offices in Constantinople drawn by Alexandre Vallauri, with related original in-letters', Lettre of Sir Edgar Vincent to Mr. Lander, February 7, 1890.

2 The French engineer, R. Huber, who drew a map in 1887-1891 of the northern quarters of the Golden Horn to be presented to the Sultan in 1892 and rectified in 1895. Huber, Plan de Pera, Taxim, Pancaldi et Feriköy, plan dressé en 1887-91 et rectifié en grande partie en 1895, 49 / I-H.

3 In an album of the bank's branches dated 1930, the branch was still there. See SALT Research, Ottoman Bank Archive (OBA), IMHAL002, 'Banque Ottomane. Photographies des immeubles occupés par les agences de Turquie et de Grèce, 1930'. It was around 1950, when the bank took over the building named İkizler, formerly owned by Siniossoglou, and located on Saka Street. At that time it transferred its Pera branch to a property owned by the bank located the other side of the İstiklal Caddesi. See both locations on the plan by Suat Nirven, Beyoğlu: Meşrutiyet ve İstiklal Caddesi arası, 1/500, October 1950 and in that of Charles Goad, Plan d'assurance de Constantinople, v. 2, Pera-Galata, no: 37, 1905.

4 Ottoman State Archive (BOA), YA.RES 88-86, 'Bankı 'Osmanî uhdesinde bulunan emlak hakkında yapılacak mu'ameleye dâ'ir', 1315.R.17 (September 15, 1897), doc. 2.

5 Mustafa Servet Akpolat, 'Francız Kökenli Levanten Mimar, Alexandre Vallauri', PhD diss., Hacettepe University, Ankara, September 1991, pp. 113-114.

6 Mentioned in BOA, YA.RES 88-86, op. cit.

7 SALT Research, OBA, XKHY003 00007, 'Banque Impériale Ottomane (Immeubles)', doc. 2E003-005.

8 SALT Research, OBA, XKHY003 00003, op. cit., doc. 5

9 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV012, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1904-1905', Meeting of May 10, 1905, p. 513.

10 From the file of Bahçekapı [former Yeni Cami] Branch kept at the department of Real Estate and Construction at the Garanti Bank.

11 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV012, op. cit., Meeting of November 3, 1904, p. 257.



Samsun branch, 1930. SALT Research, OBA, *Real Estates Albums*.

charges of which amounted to 8,600 liras, all expenses included.¹² This three storey building with its orientalist details could be classified as eclectic or in line with neo-classical Ottoman architectural style.¹³

The bank's head office and its Stamboul branch were located at the centre of the business and finance districts. This strategy was also followed for all branches of the bank opened outside the capital city of the Empire. As was the case for Stamboul, once the branch had reached a satisfactory amount of profit and it was found that the business would be prosperous, it could have the privilege of constructing its own building instead of renting offices. The decisions were submitted to London and Paris-based committees. Their approval of investment was sought and given only after the file was meticulously studied and discussed.

Following the Salonica branch, which was rebuilt after its bombing by Bulgarian revolutionaries in 1904 by the Italian architect Vitalliano Posetti (1838-1918),¹⁴ new investment decisions were taken for two other port cities: Samsun, in the Black Sea; and Beirut, in the Eastern Mediterranean¹⁵. On the eve of the 20th century, Samsun was a multiethnic city, partially due to the presence of the European Consulates and an important site for the business of tobacco, where the Regie

invested heavily. A letter sent on May 10, 1905 to the Paris committee revealed the need for greater space and the approval of constructing a new building was sought. This highlighted the fact that the lack of space resulted in customers' invasion of the employees' offices, which had several inconveniences for the way in which the bank ran its business. It was also mentioned that the bank tried unsuccessfully to find an investor who would undertake construction, which would meet the requirements of the bank, so that it could be rented for a long period. Thus the bank decided to look for a plot to construct its own building. But it was not an easy task because of high prices. Finally a plot was found at a moderate price in the business district that was owned by the Port Company. The architect and engineer M. Barouh estimated the cost of the building including the plot of 670 m² in the Kaleiçi quarter to be 4,000 liras.¹⁶ The approval of the two committees was wired in May 1925.¹⁷ It was decided that Barouh should undertake building both the Beirut and Samsun-based buildings. The final quote of the building in Samsun, which was constructed on a site of about 450 m² with a small garden of 220 m² at the back¹⁸, was 4,100 liras.¹⁹ The price included the plot. The contract of June 8 was signed by the Barouh & Amar architect office²⁰, located in Gumuchlu Han in Galata²¹. The contract mentioned that this price covered the construction of the building and of its surrounding walls as well as the repair of the garden wall adjacent to the quay. It comprised all travel expenses of the engineer Barouh as well as a 5% commission. The furnishing of the building, the heating installation, the water pipes and municipal taxes were not included in it. The work could start immediately and would last a year.²² It seems that the building was completed on

time since according to a letter of the Legal Department, the title of the new building was issued in July 1906 in the name of the general manager of the bank, Jules Deffès.²³

Another bank building was commissioned for the Eskişehir branch. Eskişehir is a city at the intersection of Istanbul, Ankara and Konya on the Baghdad Railway line, which reached the city in 1892. The increasing population and flourishing economy at the turn of the 20th century attracted the attention of the general management in Istanbul, which asked for authorisation to open a branch. The committees gave it on November 11, 1903.²⁴ The branch was opened in 1904 in a rented office located in the centre of the city. The contract was signed for five years with an annual fee of 48 liras and the flat above was rented for the director for 12 liras/year.²⁵ Soon, the office facilities came up short. Two suggestions of constructing a building for the branch on a long-term contract, one by Raif Bey at the market place²⁶, and the other by Hadji Edhem Bey,²⁷ didn't materialize. Thus the management decided to buy a plot and construct the building with its own means. The first proposal of the branch to buy a plot of 1,400 m² at 1,000 liras²⁸ wasn't followed up. Finally, the proposal to buy a plot of 1,200 pica or 690 m² in the business center of the city at 600 liras for its offices and storage area was approved.²⁹ One month later, an additional 52 liras was approved to increase the size of the plot to 1,312 pica³⁰ or 734 m².³¹

Two offers were received from the architects Moro and Carayannakis for the building and its depots. After consulting the architect adviser of the bank, Antoine Perpignani (1843-1910³²), the building was commissioned to Carayannakis. Carayannakis offered a better price at 3,431 liras as compared to that of Moro, which was 5,100 liras. As an illustration

12 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV013, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1905-1907', Meeting of April 10, 1907, p. 623. The first estimation of the architect Vitalis was 6.000 liras. See SALT Research, OBA, CDPV012, op. cit. Meeting of November 3, 1904, p. 257.

13 Zeyneti Uluadam, 'Garanti Bankası Eminönü Şube Binası Restitüsyon Raporu' [Restitution Report of Garanti Bank Eminönü Branch Building], 2008, p. 1.

14 For the story of Salonica branch see <http://www.obarsiv.com/english/as-salonica-branch.html>

15 This article does not include the story of the building of the Beirut branch designed by the architect Barouh and the builder Derviche Haddad in 1906. The branch was transferred to the Banque de Syrie et du Liban after the World War I and destroyed during the civil war.

16 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA008, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance active, 1904/05', Lettre no 1627, May 10, 1905, p. 617-18. In the weekly meeting of May 10, 1905, the price of the plot is mentioned as 1,500 liras. CDPV012, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1904/05' Meeting of May 10, 1905, p. 511-512.

17 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV012, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1904-1905', Meeting of May 19, 1905, p. 524.

18 'Harici Ekspertiz Raporu' [The External Expertise Report], November 11, 1996. From the file of Samsun Branch kept at the Department of Real Estates and Construction at the Garanti Bank.

19 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV012, op. cit., p. 545, June 3, 1905.

20 After the fire of 1890, Barouh & Amar reconstructed the Jake Abbott Mansion, where the Salonica branch of the Imperial Ottoman Bank was installed before the bombing of 1903. <http://www.radamanth.fotki.com/1/architects/1/barouh-amar/>

21 SALT Research, Yearbooks, *Annuaire Oriental*, 1909, p. 1049.

22 SALT Research, OBA, IMDIV01702891, 'Banque Imperiale Ottomane - Samsoun'.

23 Ibid.

24 SALT Research, LA24035001, 'List of Branches of the Imperial Ottoman Bank', 1914, p. 5.

25 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV012, op. cit., 1904-1905, Meeting of June 6, 1904, p. 11.

26 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV014, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1907-09', Meeting of August 6, 1907, p. 2.

27 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV014, op. cit., Meeting of August 14, 1907, p. 20.

28 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV013, op. cit., Meeting of March 28, 1907, p. 106.

29 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV014, op. cit., Meeting of February 5, 1908, pp. 291-292 and February 13, 1908, p. 302.

30 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV014, op. cit., Meeting of March 3, 1908, p. 336.

31 Deed title established instead of the old one written in Arabic script. From the file of Eskişehir Branch kept at the department of Real Estate and Construction at the Garanti Bank.

32 SALT Research, OBA, XKSE006 05444, 'Perpignani Antoine'

of his design plans he showed the building he had designed for the company of Deirmendjian & Sons. A one storey building was built on a construction site of 395 m² as well as the adjacent depots³³ were completed in December 1909.³⁴ However, it seems that the construction expenses exceeded the proposed amount as Carayannakis sought compensation for this loss three months into completion of the work. This compensation was refused on the basis that the bank needed at least six months to determine if the construction would serve the needs of the branch.³⁵

The following buildings were erected during the Republican era: the IOB, which survived this era by removing 'imperial' from its name and by adapting to the new regime, first constructed a new building in Mersin. The reason behind this is described in a lettre sent to the Paris committee. The director of the Mersin branch had expected a high increase in the annual fee of the rent. And yet the building was in a dilapidated condition and no longer fit the needs of the branch. Arguing that there was a lack of buildings suitable for the branch, the director suggested constructing a new one with depots for storing goods. The lettre added that this construction project was based on the growth prospects of city's economy.³⁶

Mersin was well connected to its hinterland through the Adana-Mersin railway line, first opened in 1886 and then transferred to the Baghdad Railway in 1908.³⁷ As Mersin emerged as a new and dynamic commercial centre, the number of trading companies increased at the turn of the 20th century. The IOB also took part in the financial transactions of Mersin through its new branch, opened in 1892. The flourishing economy also transformed the urban fabric of the city, which would continue during the early Republican period.³⁸

The Istanbul management was in favour



Eskişehir branch, 1930. SALT Research, OBA, Real Estates Albums.

of the proposal sent from Mersin and following a positive answer from the Paris committee, a detailed project was submitted for approval in November 10, 1925. The cost of the project would be 84,700 liras, including a two-storey building, which would be constructed on a site of 380 m².³⁹ The plot of 2,000 m² would be bought for 7,000 liras. It was noted that the price of 3,5 liras/m² was really low due to the owner's expectations that the construction of the bank's building would increase the value of the surrounding plots, which were owned by the same proprietor. Moreover, it was well located in the business centre on the road leading to the Municipality, not far from the sea and the train station as well as from the Government House.⁴⁰ One month later, another lettre sent to the committees, indicated that a plot of 600 m² was added to the main one at the same price in order to avoid any other construction in the near proximity of the branch. The details and plans of the construction were also added in the lettre. Architects in Paris analysed the project in detail. Their report was sent on March 12, 1926.⁴¹ However, these comments were not taken into consideration. The Istanbul management was in a hurry to finish the construction work in order to relocate the branch to its new location before the rent contract of the former one, which would expire on May 31, 1926. So, the project was approved and the construction work started when the report was received.⁴²

Very soon, the complaint of the directors about the size of their apartments was taken into consideration. Following the consultation

of the adviser architect Mongeri, the Istanbul management approved⁴³ revisions as well as additions suggested by the architect and constructor Orisdiz Zaglioli⁴⁴. An additional 10,312 liras would be paid for: the enlargement of the flat; the fenced enclosure with a wall and iron railings; the pavement; well drilling; pump installation; and the construction of the laundry room.⁴⁵ The Paris committee was very surprised that the concerns about the apartments surfaced only when the construction work was well advanced. Furthermore, it was expected that this enlargement, which would be taken from the balcony, would not affect the facade of the building nor the roof light illuminating the offices at the entrance.⁴⁶ The Istanbul management answered that in order to ensure better conditions such as spaciousness and staff well being in a hot city like Mersin and considering that additional expenses were not high, the modifications were approved. Briefly, the number of rooms would be increased from 4 to 5 for the director and from 3 to 4 for the adjoint director and their height was increased from 3,5 to 4 m. Moreover, a ventilation system, which harnessed the breeze from the sea during the day and from the mountains during the night, essential in a hot and humid city like Mersin, was installed.⁴⁷ As for the warning about the light and the facade, Istanbul management replied to the committee that Mongeri had assured management that they would not be badly affected.⁴⁸ However the construction work lasted longer than expected, and the bank had to renew its rent contract of the building that the branch was using until the end of the construction work.⁴⁹ It seems that the branch moved to its new building in the first half of 1927. In June, the baths were sent from Istanbul to be installed in the bathrooms of the directors⁵⁰ while in November, the branch submitted a proposal and its budget to Istanbul Management for transforming the uncultivated plot around the

33 The depots were sold on July 1, 1993 to a textile company, Sarar, which transformed it into a shop. See also the decision of the board of May 18, 1993. From the file of Eskişehir Branch kept at the department of Real Estate and Construction at the Garanti Bank.

34 SALT Research, CDPV015, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1909/10', Meeting of December 6, 1909, p. 318.

35 SALT Research, CDPV015, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1909/10', Meeting of March 18, 1910, p. 441.

36 SALT Research, CDCPCA029, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance active, 1925', Lettre no: 738, July 8, 1925 and attached to it see the copy of the lettre sent by the Mersin branch on June 8, 1925.

37 Tülin Selvi Ünlü, Tolga Ünlü, From Railway Station to the Light-house, Mersin, Mersin Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2009, p. 59.

38 Tolga Ünlü, Tülin Selvi Ünlü, Developing Commerce Changing City: Mersin 1850-1950, Mersin Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2012, p. 125.

43 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP032, op. cit., Lettre no: 308, dated May 26, 1926, see the notes dated May 12, 1926 attached to it.

44 John A. Rizzo, *Annuaire Oriental, Oriental Directory, Constantinople, 1927*, p. 368.

45 Ibid.

46 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP032, op. cit., Lettre no: 390 dated June 28, 1926.

47 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA030, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance active, 1926', Lettre no: 565 dated June 16, 1926.

48 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP032, op. cit., Lettre dated July 24, 1926 and the Mongeri's Lettre of July 18, 1926 attached to the Lettre no: 390 ibid.

49 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV03700079A001, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1926', Meeting of July 15, 1926, p. 654.

50 SALT Research, OBA, CPPV039, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1927', Meeting of June 30, 1927, p. 396.



Mersin branch, 1930. SALT Research, OBA, Real Estates Albums.



Ankara branch . SALT Research, OBA, Real Estates Photos.

building into a garden, which was approved.⁵¹ A title deed of the branch issued in 1933 indicates that part of this garden was confiscated by the Municipality for the roads at the back and the left hand side of the building.⁵² According to the parcel plan, the size of the plot decreased from 2,600 to 2,562 m². The depots remained there until 1996.⁵³

Branches of Ankara and İzmir, which were of symbolic importance for the new regime, replaced previous buildings that had burnt down during the war years. Ankara was proclaimed the capital of the new regime and all resources were spent to transform this small town into a capital city. The new state building architecture started to shape the new Ankara. In 1926, the Ottoman Bank, one of the most prestigious financial institutions of the time, began construction at the corner of the avenue known as the Banks Avenue in the Ulus district. In a lettre sent to the committee in Paris, its splendid location was communicated. It was located opposite to the National Defence Committee and the Administration of the Post Office and was next to the Agricultural Bank, which was close to state agencies and in a newly developing part of the city.⁵⁴ The plot of 1,000 m² was bought at 25.000 liras. The former plot of 720 m² on the Avenue of the Train Station was confiscated by the government for inclusion into the premises of the National Assembly. The price was set at 15 liras/m², which is a total price of 10,800 liras. Thus the bank would pay the difference of 14,200 liras to the state for the new plot.⁵⁵

From the minutes of the board in Istanbul, it is clear that much care was given to the construction of the new building. The Paris

Committee was reluctant to work with a German company and introduced French counterparts like la Régie Générale de Chemins de Fer & Travaux Publics.⁵⁶ However Giulio Mongeri (1873-1953), the Levantine adviser architect of the bank since 1911⁵⁷, insisted on collaborating with Philipp Holzmann from Frankfurt acting through Nazım Bey. Nazım Bey had undertaken several projects in the city including the Italian Embassy in Ankara⁵⁸. As Mongeri was not living in Ankara, he wanted to entrust the construction to a company with skilled labor, keeping the necessary material stocks.⁵⁹ Finally, the Paris committee consented in working with this company on the condition that the intermediary Nazım Bey mediated between the parties.⁶⁰

The cost of the construction was estimated at 200,000 - 220,000 liras⁶¹ and to this would be added the treasury, electricity and the heating system installations and counters.⁶² The additional cost was forecast at 29,250 liras by Mongeri. This took into consideration that the price of the vault was calculated at the rate of a German company C. Ade, located in Berlin, and which was cheaper than British or French vaults sold by Chatwood, Milners and Fichet. The first floor of this three storey building was conceived for banking activities and particular attention was paid to the offices of the directors who would be in touch with ministers, diplomatic figures or other state officers. The second floor was dedicated to the apartment of the director, which included an office, two rooms, a servant room, a restroom, a saloon

and a dining room for the receptions.⁶³ The last floor was designed as a semi-open terrace.⁶⁴ Although it was not mentioned explicitly, the branch most probably moved to its new premises at the beginning of 1928.

The new branch building in İzmir was also constructed in the same period. The former building was located on the quay. It had burnt down on September 15, 1922 during a fire which destroyed a space of about 3 million square meters in the city. Following the proclamation of the Republic, the municipality signed a contract with René and Raymond Danger brothers for an urban plan, which was approved in July 1925⁶⁵ and immediately implemented.⁶⁶ In the same year, a law was approved that designated the destroyed area as wasteland, giving the municipality the right to confiscate the land.⁶⁷

The bank first attempted to buy the building of National Bank of Greece in İzmir but the exchange could not be concluded since the building belonged to the properties included in an agreement concerning the exchange of populations and thus became the property of the municipality.⁶⁸ A second attempt to buy a plot to construct the building from Muammer Uşakizade⁶⁹ also failed as the municipality also appropriated this plot.⁷⁰ A few months later, the Boulevard Company offered the bank a plot of 832.14 m² at 43.5 lira/m². The bank's management negotiated the price of 48,000 liras and asked the approval of the Paris committee.⁷¹ The plot, which was at the corner of the two new avenues, namely Gazi Paşa and Fevzi Paşa, was well situated and close to the customs, municipality and other government administration buildings. Although it was felt that the plot was inferior to the one conceived as 1,000 or 1,200 m², it would be sufficient for the services of the bank.⁷²

63 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA029A, op. cit., Lettre no 519 of June 3, 1926, p. 948.

64 Mehmet Sarıoğlu, 'Bankalar Caddesinin Öyküsü', *Uzman Gözüyle Bankacılık*, no: 27, p. 54.

65 Cänä Bilsel, 'Bir Şehir Küllerinden Yeniden Doğuyor: Cumhuriyet Smyrna'sının Kuruluşu', *İzmir 1830-1930 unutulmuş bir kent mi? Bir Osmanlı limanından hatıralar*, ed. by Marie-Carmen Smyrnelis, İstanbul: İletişim, 2009, p. 243-245.

66 Uğur Tanyeli, 'Modern İzmir's Architectural Venture', *Three Ages of İzmir: Palimpsest of Cultures*, İstanbul: YKY, 2003, p. 334.

67 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV034, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1925', Meeting of May 30, 1925, p. 497.

68 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV034, op. cit., Meeting of May 5, 1925, p. 568.

69 Member of a prominent family in İzmir, who worked for a while at the bank.

70 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV034, op. cit., Meeting of June 27, 1925, pp. 596-597.

71 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA029; Comité de Paris. Correspondance active, 1925/26; Lettre no: 1303, December 24, 1925, p. 83-84.

72 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA028; Comité de Paris. Correspondance active, 1925; Lettre no: 916, September 10, 1925, p. 477.

51 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV039, op. cit., Meeting of November 3, 1927, p. 920.

52 From the file of Mersin Branch kept at the department of Real Estate and Construction at the Garanti Bank.

53 Ibid.

54 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA029A, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance active, 1926', Lettre no: 20, Lettre of January 8, 1926.

55 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV036, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1926', Meeting of January 21, 1926, pp. 67-68.

56 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP031, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance passive, 1926', Lettre no: 142, March 5, 1926.

57 Uğur Tanyeli, *Mimarlığın Aktörleri: Türkiye 1900-2000*, İstanbul: Garanti Galerisi, 2007, p. 374.

58 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA029A, op. cit., Lettre no: 156, February 13, 1926.

59 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA029A, op. cit., Lettre no: 263, March 15, 1926.

60 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP031, op. cit., Lettre no: 136, March 2, 1926.

61 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP032, op. cit., 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance passive, ???', June 18, 1926.

62 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA029A, op. cit., Lettre no 519 of June 3, 1926, p. 949.

The Paris committee felt that the location of the new plot was not as good as the earlier one and observed that the best location on the quays were sold to competitors of the bank, namely the Banco di Roma, İř Bankası, Deutsche Bank, la Banque française des Pays d'Orient et la Banque de Salonique as well as to different public and private agencies.⁷³ Thus the bank's management was criticised as slow in finding a plot to construct the building. However, the approval was given and the new plot was bought at 40,000 liras.

As was the case in Ankara, this building was commissioned to Mongeri and constructed by the company Philipp Holzmann. The plans of the building were submitted to the Paris committee on March 31, 1926⁷⁴ and carefully revised by their architects Naville & Chauquet, who found the projects worthy of execution. However, they added that a simpler plan would present a more serious style, which would better fit the image of the bank. Moreover the lighting of the hall of the counters was not good enough and the connections were considered complicated.⁷⁵ The Paris committee also commented that they would not want to have a fancy building like the ones done for exhibitions.⁷⁶ Mongeri, as the architect of several buildings commissioned by the government or its agencies, explained to the management that facades were important in Turkey and the nationalist regime was looking to develop a national architecture.⁷⁷ The general director, Pougnaodresse, wrote to the committee that the local taste should be followed but the committees as well as his own ideas should also be heeded. The decoration of the facades should be simplified as much as possible.⁷⁸ The Paris committee agreed to this but regretted that the architects of both parties could not work together because of the lack of time.⁷⁹

Regarding the concerns of the Paris committee with respect to the construction company, the bank wrote that the details of the offer of the construction work, amounting to

260,000 liras and presented by Mehmed Galib and İbrahim Galib acting as the agents of the Société Internationale de Génie Civil or the former company Simon Carvès, were incomplete. Moreover, the personal experience of Mongeri with this company in the construction of the Agricultural Bank in Ankara was not satisfactory. He reported that their work was not well organized, the company was using unskilled labor and their implementation was very bad. Even though their offer was higher, in numbers amounting to 287,000 liras,⁸⁰ these were the reasons why the management in Istanbul decided to work with Holzmann as had been the case in Ankara. Paris approved it by a telegram sent on June 30, 1926.⁸¹ The construction work included the modifications required on February, 1927⁸². It lasted longer than the expected time of 275 working days⁸³ and the bank had to extend the contract for three months to the end of 1927.⁸⁴ Finally, the branch moved to its new premises, classified as one of the examples of the first national architectural movement⁸⁵ in İzmir, on February 11, 1928.

The construction stories of these buildings helps to understand how decisions were taken; what the power relations between local authorities, committees in Paris and London and the Istanbul management were; to follow the processes behind these decisions and their implementation; to grasp the differences between the Ottoman and Republican periods; and to trace the bank's relationship with the architects.



İzmir branch, ca 1928. SALT Research, OBA, Real Estates Photos.

The IOB used a number of adviser architects including Alexandre Vallauri, Antoine Perpignani and Giulio Mongeri. In a few cases, as was the case with branches in Eskişehir and Mersin, buildings were commissioned to a third party or a local architect and constructor under the supervision of the adviser architect. In the Republican period, the Paris committee was closely involved in the details of these plans. The idea was that these buildings were to be the face of the bank. Moreover, it was a question of security, as well as comfort of the staff and customers. Thus they insisted on having their say and established a close collaboration of architects in Paris with the adviser architect in Istanbul.⁸⁶ However, although they tried hard, the committees abroad were not successful in implementing their suggestions with regard to the architectural style, nor the construction processes of those buildings. The Paris committee had no other choice than to accept local decisions. Thus, although the bank remained a foreign investment until 1996, it had to adapt to the realities of the country and follow the local trends of the time, as was the case for the Mersin, Ankara and İzmir branches.

The branches described here were important investments of the time. They were represented in the main images of the bank and included on the maps of the towns. As the cities were expanding and their population increasing, new branches were opened. As a consequence those branches lost their previous uniqueness in the business. On the other hand, after the sale of the bank to the Doğuş Group in 1996, their interior was modified as the flats of the directors were transformed into offices. Nonetheless, these historical buildings remain important examples of urban civil architecture and today are considered a part of the historical legacy of those sites. ●

73 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP031, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance passive, 1926'; Lettre no: 13, January 8, 1926.

74 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA029A, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance active, 1925/26'; Lettre no: 316, March 31, 1926, p. 619.

75 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP032, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance passive, 1926'; Report of April 21, 1926 and attached to the Lettre dated April 26, 1926.

76 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP032, op. cit., Lettre dated April 26, 1926.

77 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA029A, op. cit., Lettre no: 520, sent on June 3, 1926, p. 950.

78 Ibid, p. 951.

79 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP032, op. cit., Lettre dated June 8, 1926.

80 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA031A, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance active, 1926/27'; Lettre no: 147, dated February 12, 1927, p. 565. The offer didn't include the installation of the electricity, the heating, the vaults and the counters, which were estimated by Mongeri to cost 37,500 liras. SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA030, op. cit., Lettre no: 629, June 30, 1925.

81 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP033, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance passive, 1926'; Lettre dated July 10, 1926. CDCPCA030, op. cit., Lettre no: 703, July 19, 1926, p. 275-276.

82 The branch asked for a new vault to keep the books inside and a lift for all floors, a storage room for opium and the widening of the passage leading to it, the relocation of the restrooms from the basement to the first floor. SALT Research, OBA, CDPV038, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1927'; Meeting of February 9, 1927, no: 27, p.3. SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA031A, op. cit., Lettre no: 147, February 12, 1927, pp. 564-565. By way of explanation, advances on commodities were a speciality of Anatolian branches, where agricultural production constituted the major backing of such transactions and opium was not considered illegal until 1930s. Edhem Eldem, A History of the Ottoman Bank, Istanbul, Ottoman Bank, 1999., p. 279.

83 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA030, op. cit., Lettre no: 629, June 30, 1925.

84 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV039, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1927'; Meeting of December 6, 1927, p. 999.

85 İnci Aslanoglu, Erken cumhuriyet dönemi mimarlığı 1923-1938, 3rd edition, Istanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2010, pp. 245-246.

86 OBA, CDCPCP032, op. cit., Lettre no: 215, April 13, 1926.