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# A TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO GALATA

AKDOĞAN ÖZKAN



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AKDOĞAN ÖZKAN

# A Traveler's Guide to **GALATA**

Translated by VOLKAN ERSOY

  
**MERODDI**  
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## **A Traveler's Guide to GALATA**

Akdoğan Özkan 2016

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# Introduction

Although Galata district of İstanbul is full of tourist attractions with great historical importance, it is often overlooked by international visitors, who seem to be content with Sultanahmet area and the historical monuments there.

Of course, the main tourist sights in Sultanahmet are definite must-sees. But any Istanbul visit not including Galata district will always be missing.

Getting Galata into your itinerary is always rewarding.

While the main tourist sights in Sultanahmet are definite must-sees, getting Galata into your itinerary has some other rewards. First of all, most of the sites in Galata are off the main tourist radar. They are far less crowded than the ones in Sultanahmet and offer more relaxed atmosphere. Plus, you will be so close to the fine dining spots of the city, where the locals attend.

The best way to discover Galata, like any other town, is on foot. So hit the streets, make your own way around, or follow the walking routes described in the book and see the wonders of Galata for yourself. Do you wish to explore a mysterious Middle-Age inscription to understand what the story is behind? Just stroll along the streets with the book. Surprises are endless.

First three chapters of the book focus on the historical background of Galata region. And the last four chapters focus on a particular part of the Galata district and follow a specific itinerary, which takes you to the most important and the interesting historic spots in that neighborhood.

I have also added to the book some interesting stories of well-known figures of Galata in the past. So, enjoy the histories and ponder the mysteries that have been written in the streets you're strolling.

Included in the book also are easy-to use maps with practical directions on how to get to your touring targets. So, explore every twist and absorb the ambience of the different routes.

Exploring Galata has never been so easy, informative and fun!

This brief guidebook should prove useable as well as readable for those who have limited time to spend in the area. To be able to prepare such a guidebook was not possible without the help of others. Thus, I should thank Gülistan Şenol, the art director of the book for her patient contributions in the graphical layout of the book.

I am also grateful to Volkan Ersoy who not only translated the book from Turkish into English but also corrected my otherwise overlooked mistakes and helped with some sections.

Last but not least, researching and writing this book would not be possible without the generous support of my sponsors, Toshiba Turkey and Meroddi Hotels. I am grateful for their continued support all along the project.

**Akdoğan Özkan**

May 2015, Istanbul

# Chapter One

## **GALATA IN THE ANTIQUITY**

**GALATA**

## FIG-YARD OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Some of our earliest knowledge about Galata comes from Dionysius of Byzantium, an epic poet and geographer of the 2nd century AD. In his *Anaplous Bosprou* (Voyage through the Bosphorus), which is regarded as one of the most important geographical texts of antiquity, he describes the city of Byzantium and the coastline of Bosphorus, and refers to the region as Sykides (origin: Greek;=fig) instead of Galata. According to Dionysius, the region took its name after the multitude and beauty of its fig trees.<sup>(1)</sup>

An anonymous Latin description of Constantinople and its regions, probably written ca. 447-50 during the reign of Roman Emperor Theodosius II, refers to the region as Sykai.<sup>(2)</sup> While this manuscript is considered to be one of the most reliable sources on the ancient history of Istanbul, it doesn't include an enlightening explanation about the origin of the name Galata. The manuscript underlines that the city, founded by Constantine I as New Rome, was divided, as in Rome, into 14 administrative districts in the mid 5<sup>th</sup> century. Because 13 was considered to be an unlucky number, the walled city of Constantinople lack a 13<sup>th</sup> district, and it fell to Sykai (RegioSykai;i.e.Galata) to be the 13<sup>th</sup> district as a more rural, "beyond-the-wall" suburb of the city.

Stephanus of Byzantium, another contemporary author who wrote the geographical dictionary "Ethnica" ca. 530 AD, says that in his time Sykai was called Ioustinianai, named after the Emperor Justinian – which might indicate that in 528 AD the emperor had developed the area with new and renovated structures. However, Stephanus does not go into detail, and the lack of mention in "Of the Buildings of Justinian" by the prominent Justinian scholar Procopius makes even the name Ioustinianai questionable. This book refers to the city's outer districts as Ioukoundianai.<sup>(3)</sup>

Based on some statements in Justinian's mandates, the French-born Pierre Gilles (or Petrus Gyllius in Latin), one of the most known authors of the Medieval Age, claims that the name Ioukoundianai in Procopius' book might have been



*Galata is said to have taken its ancient name (Sykeai) after the multitude of its fig trees, which can still be seen, although rarely, in the region – as in the case of this specimen across the Karaköy Police Station.*





*Galata from the Golden Horn*

a misspelling. He asserts that the 13<sup>th</sup> district of the city was first named as Sykai, and then as Ioustinianai, followed by the names Pera and Galata.<sup>(4)</sup>

## THE ORIGINS OF THE NAMES PERA AND GALATA

According to Gyllius, the hillside on the opposite shore of Constantinople was named as Peran en Sykais [The Fig Field on the Other Side] by the Byzantines, referring to the “other side” of the Golden Horn.<sup>(5)</sup> In the later periods, this region, located just above Galata, came to be (and still is) known simply as Pera.

Once referred to as Sykai, it is

uncertain how Galata later received its current name. Evliya Çelebi asserts that it comes from the Greek word gala/galaktos (meaning “milk”) because of the dairy farms located in there, although this etymologic explanation is not favored by today’s historians.

We also know that the savage Celtic tribe of Galatai (Gauls) had come from Europe to raid Central Anatolia in the 3rd century BC. Yet, there is no record about any Galatian settlement or castle here, nor that the region was named after them.

The most likely theory, however, is that Galata is a name of Italian origin, because the region was favored by the



*First map of Constantinople (1422) by Florentine cartographer Cristoforo Buondelmonte shows Regio Sycae (Galata) in some detail as well.*

Italian seafarers during the Medieval Age. It is possible that it comes from the Italian word calata (downward slope), or scalata (climbing), or scala (stairs) because of the steep slope (or stairs) leading to the coastline where Golden Horn opens to the Bosphorus. If this theory is true, then we can say that Yüksek Kaldırım (lit. High Pavement), the steep central pedestrian axis which used to connect the port to the Tower and further to the vineyards (Pera) behind it, is the corresponding Turkish name for Galata.

And, who knows, maybe even the antique name Sykai was not coming from fig trees but from the stairs (Skala-) that led down to the wharf.

In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, being an Istanbuliot (or, rather Constantinopolitan) used to mean being from the southern side of the Golden Horn. Even if Galata was officially considered a part of Istanbul, it was connoting to a physically different land.

According to Dionysius of Byzantium, Galata's northwestern boundary was reaching as far along the Golden Horn as where Kasımpaşa is located today. From Kağıthane to Galata, the entire coastline of the Golden Horn was covered with forests in the antiquity. Both in the Roman and Ottoman eras, the area came to be established as a summer and hunting resort with summer pavilions. The bay where Kasımpaşa Shipyard is located today was called Khoirag[re]ia (meaning "boar hunt" in Greek), probably because the boars coming down from the hills were trapped and hunted there. Thus, the Karaköy district might have been taken its name from "Khoiragia" rather than from Crimean Karaites, a Turkic-speaking Jewish community established in the region.

According to Dionysios, the land strip extending from Khoiragia to an isthmian promontory (Kıstak Burnu; today's Azapkapı) at the tip of Golden Horn Bay was previously called Hipposthenes, and the tomb of the Megarean hero Hipposthenes was

located on this promontory.<sup>(6)</sup>

An engraved map, designed in 1422 by the Italian monk and traveler Cristoforo Buondelmonti (the earliest known map of Constantinople), shows a mausoleum, believed to be of Hipposthenes, and a windmill around Kasımpaşa, just outside the walls of Galata.

According to Hesychius, a chronicler of Justinian's age, the Sykai land was home to a renowned temple dedicated to Amphiaraus, the warrior hero of Argos who was considered a healing and fortune-telling god because of his ability to foresee the future. It also suggests that the Argives might also have a share, as Megarean colonists, in the foundation of Istanbul in the 7<sup>th</sup> BC. On the other hand, Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII, reigning from 913 to 959 AD, counts Boeotians among the founders of Byzantium. So this may well be an indication that the Amphiaraus cult might have been brought to Byzantium by them.

The large plain near the mouth of the Golden Horn at the southern end of Galata (today's Tophane) was called Metopon (meaning "forehead"), and Apollo was being honored here. Lying here between the Galata wharf and Tophane promontory was the beautiful Ostreodes bay, so named for being a popular oyster picking place.

According to Petrus Gyllius, who included in his book a Latin translation of Dionysius' work, the oyster from



*Genoese legacy in Galata, centuries later.*

this bay used to be one of luxurious eating habits of the wealthy in the antiquity. These oysters were probably in great demand by the Orthodox who abstain from foods that contain meat or products from animals with red blood for 49 days during the Great Lent. Gyllius says that in time the shallow part of the sea had been reclaimed and built on, and the Ostreodes Bay had turned into a boat anchorage area with a shore full of waste. Ultimately the oysters had gradually become extinct, as had many riches of Istanbul.<sup>(7)</sup>



*Galata Steps, (or Scalata) in 19<sup>th</sup> century from the objective of Sébah & Joaillier.*

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Venetians became the fastest growing community with the privileges they gained. The chief of the Venetian colony in Istanbul was called “bailo” (pl. “bailos”), a title by which the holder was representing Venice before the Byzantine Emperor. Initially responsible for the promotion and protection of the Venetian trade, the bailo gained political and diplomatic responsibilities in time, assuming the role of Venice’s ambassador to Istanbul.<sup>(8)</sup>

The bailo’s mansion was at first in Eminönü, near the Fish Market and the Jewish quarter. Later, the “Venetian

Palace” in Pera became the bailo’s seat. Based on Marin Sanudo’s *Diarii*, Müller-Wiener asserts that the first Venetian bailo to reside in Pera, from 1499 onward, was Andrea Zancani. On the other hand, a Venetian-Ottoman treaty dated 1521 permits the bailo to reside within the walled city of Constantinople.<sup>(9)</sup>

The origin of the name Beyoğlu is said to have come from Aloisio Gritti, the illegitimate son of Andrea Gritti (1455-1538) from a Greek woman from Pera. Andrea Gritti was the Venetian bailo in Istanbul (and later, the Dodge of Venice). Eremya Çelebi informs us that Aloisio Gritti, the “son of bailo,” was known to Turks as “Bey oğlu”

(literally, “Son of a Lord”). As a result, the area from Gezi Park, around which Gritti’s sumptuous mansion used to be located, to Galatasaray had been named as Beyoğlu.<sup>(10)</sup> Frequented by the Sultan and the viziers, this big mansion was so magnificent, the region that includes the entire Galata and the Peran Vineyards came to be named as “Beyoğlu.”<sup>(11)</sup>

Although such theories about the origin of the name are found in many sources, it might have also been coming directly from the Turkish pronunciation of “Bailo” (Bayolu), without leaving any need for further explanation.



## Chapter Two

# **GALATA FROM THE MIDDLE AGE TO THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

GALATA

## WHY ITALIANS SETTLED IN ISTANBUL?

From early on, Galata was one of the most important outer districts and ports of Constantinople. Because of its strategic location next to the natural harbor of Golden Horn in the junction of seaways, it became a trade hub since the ancient times.

When many from seafarer Italian city-states (Amalfians, Pisans, Genoese and Venetians) set out in the Middle Age to build colonies in the Mediterranean, Constantinople came out to be one of the most suitable settlement options: it was the consumption center of the Byzantine Empire, and it was in great need of tradesmen because wealthy Byzantine aristocrats were investing in land rather than engaging in trade.<sup>(1)</sup>

Also, losing their position to Muslims in the Mediterranean, the Italians pinned their hopes to Byzantine lands to be able to undertake the transit trade to Central and Western Europe. Thus, they could transport the spices and quality textiles of the Far East to Europe, or have access to Middle Eastern markets to sell European products.<sup>(2)</sup>

The seafarer city-states of Italy signed treaties with the Byzantine Empire and gained important rights and privileges not only in terms of trade but also in administrative and legislative issues concerning themselves. Equipped with such rights and privileges, they spread from Constantinople to establish colonies in other important port cities. By the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century all trade throughout the Empire was dominated by Italians.

## FROM AMALFIANS TO VENETIANS, TRADE IN ISTANBUL

Even before Venetians and Genoese, Amalfians were the first merchants to transport goods from Constantinople to Italy. As they were Catholics, Byzantium allocated them a church dedicated to Virgin Mary (Deiparae seu Mariae Amalphitarum de Latina), and a monastery. When they grew in number and their representation before the Byzantine Empire became



*Galata region is shown in "La Ville de Constantinople," Jaspas Isaac's bird's eye view map of Istanbul, ca. 1654.*

necessary, Pantaleone, the leader of the Amalfian community, was granted with the titles of Patrice and Consul in 1066. The Amalfian community was established in the region between Zindankapı and Balıkpazarı gates in today's Eminönü.

The Venetians were natural merchants out of geographical necessity. They first gained the right to exercise commerce in the Byzantine territory with a treaty between Emperor Basil II and Doge Pietro Orseolo II in 992. The treaty was granting them lower taxes for crossing the Dardanelles Strait. With improved relations, the Venetian population in Constantinople grew. Amalfians lost their dominance to Venetians by the end of 11<sup>th</sup> century.

In return for support against Normans in Italy, the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118) had to grant Venetians, in 1082,

further privileges that would enable them to penetrate more into the Levant. Now the Venetian subjects had the right to exercise commerce without having to pay customs levy and sales tax (kommerkion). A dock and warehouses were allocated to them at Praktika, on the southern coastline of the Golden Horn,<sup>(3)</sup> and they were allowed to hold their own courts to resolve inter-community disputes.

Pisans and Genoese followed the example of Venetians. In 1112, Alexios I Komnenos granted some privileges to Pisans. Established around Bahçekapı, the Pisan colony had a dock near the place where Yeni Cami (New Mosque) is located today, and a cemetery just inland from the dock. Venetians, however, were the fastest growing colony among others.

## GENOESE SETTLE IN BAHÇEKAPI

Arriving at Istanbul at the end of 11th century, the Genoese had to wait until 1142 to be able to acquire trade privileges that the Venetians, their archrival, had since 992. A comprehensive treaty with more meaningful privileges was signed in 1155. Still, the rights they acquired were lagging behind the Venetians, almost at the same level with the Pisans.

In 1162, the Genoese population in the capitol had reached to 300. They inhabited mostly within the Eminönü region, in the neighborhood called “Embolum de Sancta Cruce”. However, they came under attack by the rival Pisans, backed by the Byzantines and Venetians, and their properties were looted and smashed.

The Genoese who stayed and didn't flee settled near the Pisan neighborhood around Bahçekapı (Porta Neori). They acquired new rights from the Emperor with a treaty dated November 1169. To prevent disputes between Italian colonies, Galata was shown to Genoese as a more suitable place to settle outside the walled city. The Genoese objected, as Galata was not considered a developed commercial district at the time. Eventually, at the insistence of the Genoese envoy Amico de Murta, emperor Manuel I Komnenos agreed in 1170 to allocate a neighborhood in the Coparion district

within the city, close to the Pisan quarter.<sup>(4)</sup>

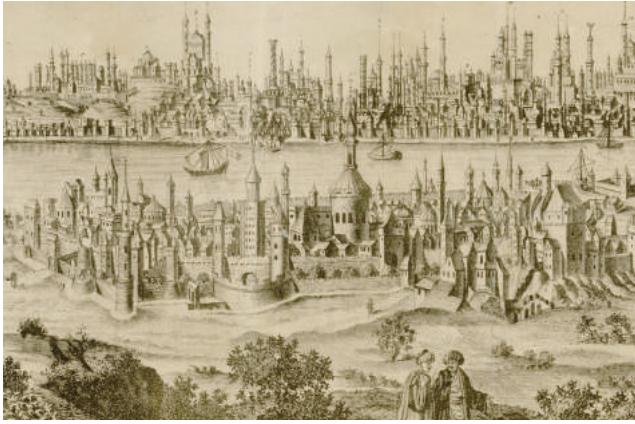
In 1190, the Republic of Genoa abolished the title of Consul and instead decided to appoint an impartial professional who would act both as a kind of mayor and as military commander and magistrate in the colonies, bearing the new title of *Podesta*. From then on, the Galata colony would be administered by a *podesta*, and the customs revenue would be collected by him on behalf of the Republic of Genoa.

## GENOESE MIGRATION TO GALATA

Just when the future was looking rosier for the Genoese, Constantinople was invaded by the armies of the Fourth Crusade in 1204. The city, full of treasures of classic and middle ages, suffered from wide scale looting and arson. The crusaders also put a halt to the Byzantine Empire and founded the Catholic state of Latin Empire, which would last 57 years. With the Latin invasion, Genoese were banished from Istanbul.

In July 1261, Byzantines recaptured the city and ended the Latin Empire. Thus, the trade dominance enjoyed by the Venetians since the treaty of 1082, was lost to Genoese who supported the Byzantines during the Latin era. Genoese maintained their control over trade until the Ottoman conquest in 1453.

In 1267, an agreement signed with



*Christoph Scheffler's drawing of Istanbul, ca. 1730.*

the Genoese envoy De Camilla, and Galata was designated to the Genoese as an additional settlement place. In fact, the Genoese had acquired the right to settle in the region around 1160. Not favored at the time for remaining outside the city walls, Galata would definitely transform into a Genoese neighborhood after 1267, having its best times under the Genoese.

## **GALATA: EUROPE IN BYZANTIUM**

As the hillside of Galata was occupied by a Byzantine garrison, the Genoese first inhabited the skirts of the hill, but soon they transformed the region into an autonomous, fortified area. With its trading and cultural strengths, Galata was quickly developing, turning into “Europe in Byzantium” with the foreigners who chose to settle here.

The Genoese-Byzantine friendship was sometimes rocky, but the advantageous position of the Genoa over other Italian states persisted. They built other colonies in other important port cities such as Chios, Phocaea (Foça), and Amastris (Amasra), as well as in the Prince Islands. Wherever they go, they were implementing new practices to differentiate themselves from Venetians who were hated by the Byzantines.

According to a research published in 1946 by Fr. Benedetto

Palazzo, the prior of Saint Peter's Church in Galata, the boundaries of the Genoese prerogative were, based on the treaty of 1304, extending from today's SALT Galata building (Bankalar Caddesi, former Ottoman Bank headquarters) in the east to today's Kartopu Sokağı\* (150m above Kalafat Caddesi\* around Azapkapı) in the west. <sup>(5)</sup>

## GENOESE GALATA: STATE WITHIN THE STATE!

Empowered with revenues from customs levies, and in line with the political decline of the Byzantium, Genoese gradually expanded their boundaries and fortifications as far as Azapkapı, Şişhane, Kule, and Tophane. They built a tower from which a large chain can be pulled across to block the entrance to the Golden Horn (i.e. the port). The Genoese colony in Galata was turning into a "state within a state" as the Empire was losing power.

British historian Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) observes the competitive prowess of the Genoese: "The Empire might soon have sunk into a province of Genoa, if the Republic had not been checked by the ruin of her freedom and naval power."<sup>(6)</sup>

Ibn Battuta, one of the greatest travelers of Middle Age, visited Galata in 1334. The Berber traveler writes the following about Galatans: "These infidels are of different kinds, including

Genoese, Venetians, Romans and people of France. (...) They are all men of commerce and their harbor is one of the largest in the world. I saw there about a hundred large galleys, and the small ships were too many to be counted. The bazaars are rich and colorful but filthy, and a small and very dirty, sewage-like river runs through them."<sup>(7)</sup>

So, what were the dealings of these "men of commerce" of Ibn Battuta? According to the historical sources, crops such as wheat and barley, spices and exotic produce, as well as seafood such as salt dried fish and caviar were being transported to the Genoa Republic. The slave trade from the Black Sea region – especially from Crimea where slaves were captured through raiding parties, known as "harvesting the steppe" – to Europe was also being carried out via Galata. Galata had become an administrative center from where eastern Genoese colonies, except Chios, were ruled.

## GALATA AFTER THE CONQUEST

When Constantinople was under siege by the Ottomans, the Genoese understood that they cannot cope with such a large army and its cannons, and remained impartial. Upon the fall of the city, they relinquished the key of Galata to Ottomans, and in June 1<sup>st</sup> 1453, they signed a pact with Zağanos Pasha, the

(\* ) Translator's Note: Cadde/Caddesi = Larger, main road; Sokak/Sokağı = narrower side streets.



*Galata Tower, 1862  
(Francis Bedford).*

grand vizier to Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror. Pinned in Greek and bearing the Sultan's seal, the pact was leaving the ownership of Galata to Ottomans, but securing the safety and trading rights of the Genoese. Mehmed II had some of the fortification walls of Galata demolished. Genoa sent two envoys to Ottomans to gain the return of Galata to Genoa and to secure permission for the repair the walls, but their pleas have never been answered. One of Galata's largest churches (the Church of San Paolo e San Domenico) was converted to a mosque by Mehmed II. Yet, the Sultan understood the crucial importance of Galata for the Ottoman economy, and always supported the merchants here.

The community of Latin-rite Christian subjects of the sultan was called Perots after Pera, the name often used by Europeans for Galata. After 1453, things didn't work out as well as Perots wanted, especially in terms of judiciary autonomy. Many of the Latin-rite inhabitants of Istanbul had fled both before and after its fall, but a core group of Genoese families, known as the Magnifica Comunita di Pera, had remained in Galata. It was overseen by a council of 12 officials, who replaced the pre-conquest Genoese podesta (mayor) and met regularly at the cathedral of San Francesco.<sup>(6)</sup>





19<sup>th</sup> century Galata  
(Atatürk Library  
Postcards Archive,  
No: 5689)

Unlike other non-Muslim subject millets, or religious communities (Ottoman Greeks, Armenians, Jews), the Magnifica Comunita was not accorded legal or political rights, but rather was under the civil governance of a voivode who was changed in March every year. Judicial administration was carried out by a high-rank qadi (judge) of the Ottoman judiciary. The jurisdiction of Galata qadiship was covering 300 villages and 44 sub-districts from Yeniköy to Kasımpaşa, from Marmara Island to Erdek and Bandırma. Peace and security of Galata was in the hands of the Admiral in Chief, and the marines were acting as the police force. Beyoğlu, being close to Tophane (lit. “Cannonry”), was left to the control of artillerymen. The seat of qadiship was Galata Court, around today’s Hırdavatçılar Çarşısı (Hardware Bazaar). Though this court is a thing of past, its name lives on as a street where it was once located.

Although Galata preserved its cosmopolitan character until recent times, some Turkification started just after the conquest. A 1478-dated document from Topkapı Palace archives tells us that Galata had 535 Muslim houses versus 592 Greek, 332 European and 62 Armenian houses in those years.<sup>(9)</sup>

The Christians were gradually retreating from the districts that lie between the coastline and the Galata Tower towards





the plain and the Pera Vineyards behind the town. A new city with Levantine character was emerging around the embassies that started to take up residence here. Among the vineyards, there were only two Turkish buildings: The Mawlawi Dervish Lodge of Galata and the Imperial School of Galatasaray.

In 1581, a report by Bishop Pietro Cedulini estimates, with a possible degree of exaggeration, 500 free Ottoman-Catholic subjects in Galata. He also counted 2000 slaves, 500 manumitted slaves, 500 to 600 foreign merchants (mostly from Spain, Italy and Sicily), and 100 persons attached to embassies.<sup>(10)</sup>

However another report from 1600 estimates the number of Perot families as few as 17 to 28. A subsequent report was adding 150 Protestant families to the Christian population of the city.<sup>(11)</sup>

Shrinking in number, the Catholic community had long resisted assimilation into the Greek Orthodox or Muslim population, but after some time they started to adopt Greek customs while still observing the rules of Catholic faith. Visitors of Pera would now call them Genoese Greeks. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Greek became the daily language of the community.

In 17<sup>th</sup> century, during Evliya Çelebi's time, Christian residences were no longer seen around the main fortress (Başhisar). On the other hand, Jesuit Father P. Tarillon reports that Galata then held a Latin population of 300 to 400 Genoese, about 3 thousands of embassy

personnel and merchants, and 4 to 5 thousands of galley slaves.<sup>(12)</sup>

## GALATA REGAINS ITS EUROPEAN CHARACTER

Populated by bank and office buildings as the finance center of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, as well as pioneering the apartment-type dwellings, the region regained a new European character. Modern city planning practices were first implemented here.

In 1854-1855, the street names were officially registered; in 1857 the streets were lit with gas, and in 1858 the houses were being numbered. In 1864, municipal services (Şehremaneti) were established in Istanbul, 6<sup>th</sup> Municipal Department being responsible for the Galata-Beyoğlu region. Galata also witnessed the other face of modernization: the municipality demolished the fortifications and closed the historical moats. Once 2800m in length, only a few ruined short strips and the Galata Tower remained of the historic fortresses. Not much remained from the Genoese era buildings in Galata. The Piazzetta and the Bourse – near the Karaköy end of the Tunnel (underground funicular) – simply disappeared. The Palazzo del Comune, known to be constructed after the fire of 1315, is still standing with its missing front facade (see Bereket Han).



1493 engraving of Hartmann Schedel



The Haliç Chain

## The Chain Between Constantinople and Galata

Although created in 1493, Hartmann Schedel's engraving is a depiction of Constantinople in the Byzantine era, and it is the first printed and second oldest image of the city in Western sources. This stylized illustration depicts the city as seen from the Marmara Sea, also showing the defensive chain placed at the mouth of Golden Horn (Haliç) between the walled city of Constantinople and the Galata-Pera district. One end of this great chain was fastened to the Kentenarian Tower at Sirkeci, and the other end to the cellar floor of a tower known as "Tor de Galathas" at Karaköy, where Yeraltı Mosque (or Kurşunlu Mahzen Mosque) is located today. Some part of this chain is now on display at İstanbul Archeology Museums, located under Oya A. Şirinöz's 1994-dated painting, which she based on the 1493-dated engraving by Hartmann Schedel.



The 1994 painting of Oya A. Şirinöz, based on the 1493 engraving of Hartmann Schedel.

## Chapter Three

# WALLS OF GALATA

GALATA



*Remains of the inner city walls of Galata near Harup Gate*

## FORTIFICATION OF A CITY

The March 1304 treaty with the Byzantium was granting self-governance rights to the Genoese colony in Galata, but it didn't grant them the right to build fortification walls. However, the Genoese were, on account of Venetian attacks, filling the space between their houses with thick walls, turning Galata into a stronghold. Taking advantage of weakening Byzantium authority, step by step they advanced the walls, digging moats around them.

They also built fortified towers at certain locations to defend the city against potential attacks. While Kleizm's map



*A window on the Galata walls.*

shows 16 of such towers, it is possible that there were others not shown on that map.<sup>(1)</sup> In 1348, a tower was built on the most inland point of the Galata walls to protect the inland part of the city. Known as Galata Tower today, it is the only fully standing tower thanks to intermittent restorations.

## BOUNDARIES OF “GENOESE PRINCE ROYALS”

As the prerogative area of Genoese was expanding, earlier walls were remaining inside, and new outer walls were being built to surround a larger area. In time, 5 walled neighborhoods were formed through this progression.

The line of outer walls, about 2.8 km in length and 2 m in thickness, was surrounding an area of 37 ha (0.37 km<sup>2</sup>). According to Evliya Çelebi, the circuit of Galata Walls was 10,060 paces. The walls had 205 bastions and 13,000 crenellations.<sup>(2)</sup>

The seaward walls enclosed the city on the sides of the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn, joining the land walls that stretch from the first dry dock basin at today's Azapkapı north to Şişhane, from there to Galata Tower, and thence to Tophane and again to the coast. At the coastline a narrow strip of land between the walls and the sea allowed ships to unload their freights.

The walls that were damaged during the 1509 earthquake were restored and survived until the mid-19th century. Evliya Çelebi describes the Galata Fortress of the mid-17th century: “About a mile north of the Fortress of Constantinople, across the gulf, it's a seaward fortress of trapezoid shape. This fine looking

*A battered wall tower  
as seen from Şair Ziya  
Paşa Street.*



and solid fortress is made of stone. All around, the walls are of single layer – not three layers as Istanbul's walls. However, three rows of walls within the fortress divide the city into partitions and each one is subjugated to a Genoese prince royal."<sup>(3)</sup>

Against landward threats, a 15 m wide moat was dug along the walls. Back in the days, access to the city was through the gates that rise over these moats. The moats (*hendek* in Turkish) were covered over upon the arrival of municipal services to Istanbul, but some of their names live on today in street and sokak (side street) names: "Lüleci Hendek Caddesi", "Büyük Hendek Caddesi," and "Küçük Hendek Sokak".

## GALATA'S WALL GATES

The names, numbers, and the order of the gates of the Galata walls are not fully identified, and there are different theories about them. According to Austrian historian Joseph von Hammer (1774-1856), there were 12 seaward wall gates. Based on the more detailed descriptions of Schneider and Nomidis, researcher Behzat Üsdiken counts 11 gates: Azap (Porta di San Antonio), Buğulu Sokak, Kürkçü, Yağ Kapanı, Balık Pazarı, Karaköy, Kurşunlu Mahzen, Yeni, Mumhane, Kireç, and Eğri Gates. <sup>(4)</sup>

Azap Gate, the first gate in

the west, was located in front of Mehmet Pasha Mosque, at the foot of today's Atatürk Bridge. It took its name from "azaps," or "azeps," a class of Ottoman marine infantry. Their barracks were near the shipyard. On the Genoese engravings, the gate's old name is "Porta San Antonio".

The road that lies from 6<sup>th</sup> Municipal Department to the Atatürk Bridge was called Meyit Slope until recent times, because Meyit Gate was the next one after the Azap Gate. Evliya Çelebi says that this fortress-shaped gate was overlooking the Kasımpaşa Shipyard.

On the eastern side there were three landward gates: Tophane Gate, Küçük Kule Gate and Büyük Kule Gate. Especially during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Küçük Kule Gate was providing access from Galata to Beyoğlu. It was demolished in 1862.

The well-documented Çeşme Meydanı (or Közlüklü Yanık) and Horozlu Yanık (or Harup) gates used to be landward boundary gates but they remained inside the city when Galata's boundaries expanded.<sup>(5)</sup>

Semavi Eyice names many other gates which remained inside the city with the expansion; some of them were important double-leaf gates and some were simple single-leaf gates.<sup>(6)</sup>





*The marble inscription of the first tower on the west of the Galata Tower, dated March 25, 1387; with Archangel Michael flanked by the coats of arms of the Genoa and the Podesta D'oria. - Istanbul Archeological Museums.*

During the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the gates on the outer walls were still in place. A travel guide written by John Murray in 1845 tells us that Pera was separated from Galata by gated fortification walls and the gates were being closed for the night. Murray claims that Galata didn't have an oriental character but rather resembled a second class Italian town.<sup>(7)</sup>

## INSCRIPTIONS, GATES FALL VICTIM TO URBANIZATION

On the grounds that they were impeding the urban rearrangement efforts and obstructing the traffic in Galata, most of the fortification walls were taken down during 1864-1865 by a municipal decision. The moats were filled and covered over in 1866. Arguably being the first "urban transformation" program of the city, these demolitions were said to reclaim a total land area of 10,000 square meters. The revenues from the sale of these lands were to be used for the construction of the university (Darülfünun) behind the Hagia Sophia.<sup>(8)</sup>

*Galata Tower by night.*

© iStockphoto.com / Ugurhan Betin







*Inscription found on a tower on the Galata walls (near Büyüik Hendek Street) : "The worthy and noble person, master Nicolaus Antonius Spinula built this (stone) for the tower in a few days during his term as podesta fort he Roman Empire. Nineteenth day of May 1442."*

As Galata walls are destroyed – except for a few small sections – we don't have a chance to see wall gates today. Only Harup Gate (or Harip) survived, but its site was recently closed to pedestrian traffic because of the Şişhane – Haliç subway crossing.

There used to be inscriptions and insignia over most of the wall gates, which provide important information about the history of the region. These were insignia of Genoese doges or podestas, accompanied by the wall's date of construction.

Some of the walls were bearing the Byzantine imperial insignia of 4 B's, representing the initials of the imperial motto "Basileus Basileon Besileuon Basileusi" (King of Kings, Ruling over Rulers). Such insignia were as if reminding Galata's Genoese community that they were under the absolute rule of the Byzantine emperor. Some of them can be seen in the Istanbul Archeology Museums.

*Harup  
Gate  
as seen  
from the  
Yanikkapı  
Street.*



*The typical Byzantine  
inscription found on  
the Galata walls.  
4 B's mean "Basileus  
Basileon Basileuon  
Basileousi" (The  
Emperor of the  
Emperors who Rules  
Emperors). - Istanbul  
Archeological  
Museums.*

Until the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Semavi Eyice explains, the Byzantium insignia were placed on the right, the honorary side of the plate. He mentions about an inscription plate from 1349, which bears the insignia on the less honorary left side. They were soon to be removed entirely from such plates.<sup>(9)</sup> In other words, it was also possible to understand from these plates how the Genoese colony transformed into a "state within the Byzantine state."

One of the most informative among the maps of Galata from different eras is a map commissioned in 1864, before the demolition of the Galata walls, by Victor Marie de Launay, an assistant engineer and archivist at the 6<sup>th</sup> Municipal Department of Istanbul. He listed the locations of the walls on the map, also creating a register of the inscriptions and insignia on them. Then, he saved them from demolition and had them carried to the Galata Tower. These marble plates were later moved to the Istanbul Archeology Museum, and they are on display in the Latin section today.

## Chapter Four

# WALKING GALATA: TOUR I

Azapkapı - Perşembe Pazarı

GALATA





*Ruins of Galata Walls leading to Inner Azap Gate (Azap Kapı).*

**DIRECTIONS:** Our tour starts from the place known in the Ottoman era as Azapkapı (Azap Gate) Fountain Square. You can get there via Haliç stop of the Yenikapı-Hacıosman subway. Take the escalator down from Azapkapı Exit, and straight ahead on the right is one of the rare Galata wall sections still standing today. To see more, take the walls to your left and follow the street.

## WALL RUINS LEADING TO INNER AZAP GATE

Towards Tersane Street, the wall ruins extending 25-30m along southwest-northeast axis are from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Though they now remain under the subway crossing, they are still impressive. As understood from old maps and Evliya Çelebi's notes, these are not outer but inner walls.

The Azap Gate was around the northern end of Unkapanı Bridge, and the Meyit Gate was at the junction of Tersane Street and Refik Saydam Street. All traces of these main access gates of Galata are now erased.

Inner Azap Gate used to be located at the point where the wall ruins under the subway crossing lead today's Tersane Street. 80 m further along Yolcuzaade Sokak is Harup/Harip Gate.

**DIRECTIONS:** After the wall ruins and just before the bus stop of Azapkapı Haliç Subway, you will see a trilingual information board about Galata Walls. Turn left to the west from here, taking the road that leads parallel to Tersane Street. Just before the Saliha Sultan Fountain, located under a tall plane tree, turn left from the narrow passage. Proceed across Perşembe Pazarı Car Park towards Sokollu Mehmet Pasha Mosque. Its main door is on the Golden Horn side.

## AZAPKAPI SOKOLLU MEHMET PASHA MOSQUE

For a traveler who lands on Galata wharfs in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the experience would be an awe-inspiring one, because the squares these wharfs opened to were adorned with matchless monuments. The western wharf, located near the Azap Gate (which survived almost until the 20<sup>th</sup> century), was one of the most important wharfs of the Golden Horn port. On the square behind the wharf, located just next to the Azap Gate, was Sokollu Mehmet Pasha Mosque. Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmet Pasha had it built by Architect Sinan in 1577.

Just behind the mosque was Saliha Sultan Sıbyan Mektebi (infants school), and Saliha Sultan Fountain,

a magnificent monument built by the same benefactor. Next to it were Azapkapı (Yeşildirek) Hammam and its drinking water kiosk (Ottoman sebil), built to serve for the Azap marines in the Ottoman navy. About 150 m southwest of the mosque was a complex with commercial importance: Yelkenciler Han (han = Ottoman commercial compound, inn). Today this han is in a secluded location, far from its former glory. Saliha Sultan Infants School was lost to road construction works in 1950s, and half of the sebil is covered by a metal plate. As for the square on which the mosque used to stand... you cannot call it a square anymore. Today, it's not possible to sense the former glory of the Sokollu Mehmet Pasha Mosque, either. It is shadowed by the Atatürk Bridge and Subway Crossing because of the elevation difference.

Constructed on an elevated platform for being very close to the sea, the mosque is in octagonal shape. Architect Sinan seated its dome on arches supported by eight columns, applying, in a smaller scale, the same system he used for the Selimiye Mosque in Edirne. Entrance to the mosque is from a two-storey, covered narthex. Galleries extend on its three sides. Its long-standing restoration was expected to be finished, hopefully in 2016.



*Sokollu Mehmet Pasha Mosque from the Golden Horn.*



**DIRECTIONS:** Follow your steps back after visiting the Sokollu Mosque, turn left at the point where you reach Tersane Street, and you'll see the Saliha Sultan Fountain.



*Good example of Ottoman art on the Saliha Sultan Fountain.*

## SALIHA SULTAN FOUNTAIN

Featuring a drinking water kiosk in the middle and two taps on both sides, this monumental fountain was one of the most beautiful freestanding meydan fountains (lit. “Square fountain”) of old Istanbul. Today the square does not exist but Saliha Sultan Fountain continues to be arguably the most remarkable of the monuments built by benefactors. It is at the northern end of the Atatürk Bridge, to the south of a complicated road junction. It can be seen from the westernmost end of the Tersane Street.

Lacking abundant water resources, Galata was supplying water from old Istanbul, even during the Genoese era. The growing population in the 18<sup>th</sup> century made the need for water even

more pressing. In such cases, beneficent dynasty members, rather than the state treasury, would take the situation at hand. Following the custom, Saliha Sultan, mother of Sultan Mahmut I, came to Galatans’ help (she was rumored to have spent her childhood in the region). Thanks to the efforts of her son, aqueducts had been built to convey water from Istanbul’s Northern Forests to the Taksim reservoir. She had her namesake fountain built near the shipyard in Galata, taking its water from this reservoir.

Although it was built during the time of head architect Mehmet Ağa of Kayseri, the architect of the fountain is uncertain. With its kiosk, it was designed as a block of asymmetrical

*1838 engraving  
of Saliha Sultan  
Fountain by William  
Henry Bartlett.*



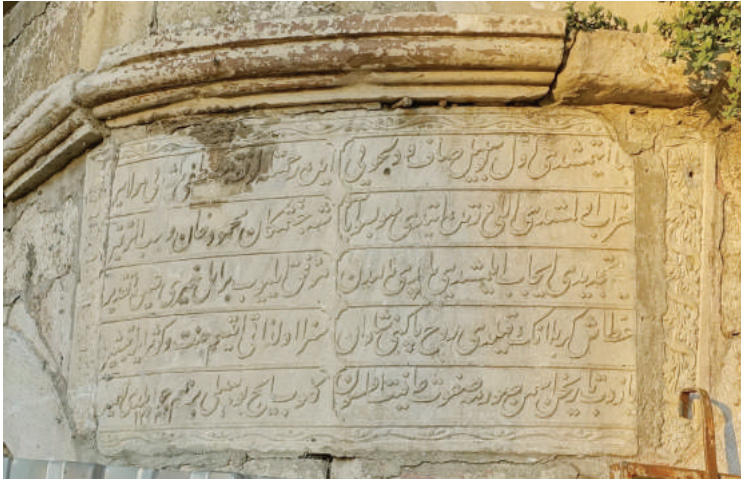
polygon shape. The calligrapher was Mehmet Rasih Efendi of Eğrikapı.<sup>(1)</sup> According to the calligraphic inscription, written by Seyyit Vehbi, a famous Ottoman poet of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was built in 1732-33.

Saliha Sultan had the fountain built concurrently with an infants' school. It was to the north of the fountain, close to the sea. Reportedly, the fountain, Saliha Sultan Sıbyan Mektebi (infants school), Sokollu Mosque, and Yeşildirek Hammam were together forming a külliye (Ottoman social complex).<sup>(2)</sup> The infants' school was demolished in 1957 for the road works of Atatürk Bridge, stripping the Fountain Square off one of its monumental buildings. Today, the only way to see the fountain in its historic environment is to check the 1838 dated engraving of William Henry Bartlett.

Still, you wouldn't regret if you pay a visit. It's one of the best examples of Ottoman art with its ornamented roof with wide eaves, its metal festoons, hand-drawn motifs, muqarnas niches, and beautiful decorations.<sup>(3)</sup>

The fountain had its first major restoration in 1953 with the help from drawings created by Italian architect Montani Efendi in 1873.<sup>(4)</sup> The last restoration was carried out in 2005. Brass taps were manufactured with inspiration from historical images, and fitted into their place. But soon they were stolen away, and today the fountain cannot even perform its basic function.





The inscription on the Mehmed Pasha Sebil dating back to 1846-1847.

**DIRECTIONS:** Return to the bus stop of Azapkapı Haliç Subway and use the pedestrian access in front of it to cross the street. To the left of the lovely restaurant, which is accessed by stairs, you will see Mehmet Pasha Sebil (drinking water kiosk).

### MEHMED PASHA SEBİL (ÇİNİLİ HAMMAM SEBİL)

It is also known as Yeşildirek Sebil or Çinili Hammam (Tiled Hammam) Sebil. This water kiosk is on the left corner from the restaurant at 120 Tersane Street. In the past, a narrow street (Yolcuzade Sokak) used to lead up from here. Since the subway construction, however, access to the street was blocked with a metal panel, which also prevents visitors from seeing this beautiful sebil in its entirety. Its architecture is in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Tanzimat (Ottoman Reform Era) style, and the inscription on its rounded corner gives the construction date as 1846-1847. Once, it was rented as a shop after being restored by the Directorate of Foundations, during which time it lost its original appearance when the tenant removed its cast iron grid. <sup>(5)</sup>

*The old  
entrance  
to the  
Yeşildirek  
Hamмам.*



***DIRECTIONS:** Facing the sebil, turn your back to the sea and you will see on the left, a bit ahead, the Yeşildirek Hammam. Its entrance is on Tersane Street side.*

## YEŞİLDİREK HAMMAM

Located at 124 Tersane Street, the hammam (Turkish bath) is still functioning. It was constructed by the Architect Sinan on the order of Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmet Pasha, and endowed to the Azapkapı Mosque. In “Tezkire’ül-Mi’marin” (a book on Sinan’s works the architect himself had had written), it is referred to as “Grand Vizier Mehmet Pasha Hammam at Azapkapı of Galata.” Evliya Çelebi, too, calls it “Mehmet Pasha Hammam.” Still, it is also known with other names such as Çeşme Square Hammam, Azapkapısı Hammam, Sokollu Mehmet Pasha Hammam, as well as “Yeşildirek Hamam” (lit. “Green Column”) which is said to be coming from the eight columns in the men’s section.<sup>(6)</sup>

Interior of the hammam used to be covered with Ottoman ceramic tiles. Today, the hot room is covered with piped faience tiles. The hand-drawn artwork on an unpainted section of the wall is the only surviving original artwork.

Current form of the building is not the same as its original 16<sup>th</sup> century form either. The entrance used to be located on the left, on Yolcu Hamamı Sokağı, but it was covered during the road works of 1957 and a new door was opened from Tersane Street.



*14<sup>th</sup> century walls and the 21<sup>st</sup> century bridge in the background.*

**DIRECTIONS:** *We can now proceed from the left of the hammam and begin to climb Galata's slopes from Yolcu Hamamı Sokağı. Let's enter Çam Sokak just across the Yolcuzade Mosque, to the left. Take the beautiful red brick building at No.4 to your right and climb the slope to reach Yolcuzade Mektebi Sokak. This street, which is lined with many Ottoman inns, will lead you to Nazlı Hanım Sokak. Turn right and proceed about 50m to the empty lot on the right; you will see the wall ruins ahead.*

## WALL RUINS NEARBY THE HARUP GATE

If you had the chance to visit Galata in the 16th century and land on a Golden Horn wharf, say, near Saint Antonio Gate, you would enter the city by passing through the old Buğulu (Bugalice) Gate, proceed to the north along the wall line on your left and, after some walk, you would encounter the Harup Gate from 1387, and the Saint Bartholomew Tower from 1442, further along to the north. This is the point

where inner walls of Galata used to meet the outer walls, marking the northern boundary of the city. The tower doesn't exist today. If you walk the lot a bit to the south, towards the sea, however, you will see a wall ruin of more than 50m in length. This is the section remaining from Galata's inner walls. As of the writing of this book, the area looks like a gruesome dump because of the building demolition works. However, those who are intrigued enough to pay a visit would enjoy not only a mysterious remnant of the city from the 14<sup>th</sup> century but also a panoramic view of Istanbul. In the past, you would also be able to see Harup Gate from this vantage point ahead, but today the inscribed section of the wall is out of view because of the Şişhane-Haliç subway line.



*Section of a possible Roman water-pipe on the remains of the inner Galata walls near the Mürver Street.*

**DIRECTIONS:** *The path on the left will take you to the facade of the Harup Gate that remains within the fortification walls. But for now, let's follow our steps back to Nazlı Hanım Sokak. If you turn right, the street name changes to Yüksek Minare a bit further. Ahead, you will see the Emekyemez Mescidi (mescid = small mosque) with its green façade.*

## EMEKYEMEZ MESCİDİ

Located at 1 Minare Sokağı, Emekyemez quarter, this triangular mescid (small mosque) is from Galata's Turkification period after the Conquest. A benefactor named Hüsamettin Efendi had had it built. His grave (d. 1591) is within the premises. Reportedly, the mescid was named so (lit. emek yemez = recompense justly) because the workers constructing it were paid promptly, even before their sweat dries up.

The gilded inscription above the mescid's entrance is from the Holy



*The only surviving gate and the coat of arms of Genoa between those of the Doria (left) and De Merude (right) families.*

Qur'an ("And the places of worship are for Allah (alone), so invoke not any one along with Allah"). The date hereby (1302 AH, i.e. 1884) is the restoration date. Some years after the restoration, it had been dilapidated by neglect, and used long as a warehouse. It was restored again in 1948.<sup>(7)</sup>

The mescid has stone masonry walls and a brickwork minaret. It lacks a narthex and it has a small burial area to the right of the entrance. The imam's lodge is on the Tutsak Sokağı side.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Walk around the Emekyemez Mescidi and go down Tutsak Sokağı. After passing along the men's section of the mosque, you will see Cudîdil Valide Sultan Fountain.*

## CUDÎDİL VALİDE SULTAN FOUNTAIN

The fountain is in Yüksek Minare Sokağı near Emekyemez Mescidi. Because of the elevation difference between the intersecting streets, today it seems as if half sunk to the ground. It was made of limestone in the classical style. Its tap slab, known as ayna taşı, has flower motifs on both sides. Its inscription gives the date 110 AH (1698-1699), and praises the fountain for its being a matchless work. Reportedly, this fountain is in the list of works to be restored by the Istanbul Municipality.



**DIRECTIONS:** Walk straight down from Cudîdil Valide Sultan Fountain to the intersection of Tutsak Sokak and Mürver Sokak. Turn right, and then left, and you will see ahead the Harup Gate's façade that remains within the fortification walls.

*Harup Gate on the Galata Walls.*

## HARUP GATE

As mentioned before, most of Galata's walls were demolished during the development project of 1864, and only a few sections have survived until today. One of them is Harup/Harip Gate, which was previously on outer walls but later became an inner gate because of the expansion of Genoese settlements during the era.

Once located about 80m northeast of the Inner Azap Gate on the same inner wall line, Harup Gate is somewhat still standing today. To see the 14th century inscription, walk down Emekyemez Sokak until it intersects with Mürver Sokak. Walk through the Gate towards the Haliç-Şişhane subway route, that is passing as close as 10m to this gate. Above the gate is an inscription, believed to be of the Doria and De Merude (or Merodi) families, which once ruled Galata. For protection, the Chamber of Architects installed a steel grid on the inscription after it was damaged by a work machine in 2005.



*A 16<sup>th</sup> century fountain in Galata serves today as a basement for an office.*



**DIRECTIONS:** Now go back through the gate, and you are on Yanıkkapı Sokak. If you follow the street for 100 m between the contrast of renovated houses and houses in ruin, you'll come to Abdüssalah Sokak on the right. At this corner, with street nameplate hidden behind traffic signs, you'll see a "composite" building. Its ground floor (!) is the historic Sokollu Mehmet Pasha Fountain. To observe the front face of the fountain, stop for a while on Yanıkkapı Sokak. Then you may turn to Abdüssalah Sokak.

## SOKOLLU MEHMET PASHA FOUNTAIN

At the intersection of Yanıkkapı Sokak and Abdüssalah Sokak in Azapkapı, this single-fronted, simple fountain is half buried into the ground. In a way, it stands as a manifestation of our harsh attitude towards historical monuments. As its basin and tap are lost, it is difficult to understand it was once a fountain. The fountain's inscription, once located above its niche, was stolen away in 2007. Even worse, a part of the fountain wall was broken and a shop was opened inside, adding an upper storey for an office. The stolen inscription of the fountain was containing a 3-stanza poem, showing that the public fountain was built in 976 AH (1568-1569) in the name of Sokollu Mehmet Pasha, the grand vizier of Sultan Selim. It is one of the oldest fountains of the Ottoman Galata.<sup>(8)</sup>

**DIRECTIONS:** Walk down Abdüssalah Sokak. Further on the left, you'll see Arab Cami Çıkmaızı (cul-de-sac). Proceed without entering if you like, and turn left to Hoca Hanım Sokak down the road. Follow the rightward curve of the street from the wrapped kebab shop, and you'll come to the iron courtyard gates of the Arab Mosque. Before you enter, the old wooden frame mansion at no. 15 across the gate is also worth having a look.



*It is believed that the Arab Mosque was built on the ruins of the Orthodox church of Agia Irini.*

## ARAB MOSQUE

It is one of the most interesting architectural feats of the city, one of a kind in Galata and the whole Istanbul. In the courtyard, first the şadırvan (a type of fountain that provides water for drinking or ritual ablutions) greets the eye. At the end of the yard is a grave adjacent to the building. It is claimed to belong to Mesleme bin Abdülmelik, an Ummayyad general who is known with his expedition against Byzantium in 717-718. Based on this claim, the building is said to be constructed originally as a mosque. However, it's baseless thinking that a mosque could be constructed in the city during the Arab sieges of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries. <sup>(9)</sup>

In fact, it is known from detailed studies that it was constructed as a

Dominican church at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It is believed, however, that even this church was built on the ruins of the Orthodox church of Agia Irini. After the conquest, the church has lost most of its community, and converted to a mosque under the name Arab Mosque. It fell victim to almost all great fires through its history in Galata, and was renovated numerous times. As none of the renovations were keeping with the architectural character of the building, it reached the present day with serious transformations.

Today the building has a rectangular plan, 49 m in length and 21 m in width. Its square bell tower has a pyramidal roof, and functions today as a minaret. On its east side, it is possible to see the traces from the old church of 14<sup>th</sup> century.

To the right of the courtyard, the

ribbed vaults of the arch reflect the early gothic style of the building. Also in the mihrab (high altar) section, there are several gothic windows with pointed arches.

At the end of the courtyard, to the right of the passage that opens to Galata Mahkemesi Sokak, a marble door case with engravings can be seen. According to Celal Esad Arseven, it belongs to the original door which was once located under the tower, but then moved to its current place for protection.<sup>(10)</sup>

The most comprehensive work on Arab Mosque was penned by Fr. Benedetto Palazzo, the prior of Saint Peter's Church in Galata (between 1933 and 1938), after a study of 10 years. The book, named "L'Arap Djami ou Eglise Saint Paul a Galata," was published in 1946, and it tackles with the claims about the mysterious past of the Arab Mosque.

Benedetto Palazzo concludes that it was built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century by



*"(This) tombstone belongs to the noble Niliani and Batiste Argenti and their Families. Eighteenth day of February 1392" says the Genoese inscription, which was found in Arab Mosque and transferred to the Istanbul Archaeological Museum.*

the Dominican Order who wanted to introduce the Catholic faith in Byzantium, the center of Orthodoxy. According to him, the church's founder was probably Guillaume Bernard de Gaillac, a Dominican prior who arrived to Constantinople with his entourage in 1299 from Tolouse in France. According to Byzantine historian Pachymeres, in 1307 the Byzantine Emperor expelled them from the city with all other Latin-rite clergymen for fear that the Catholic faith may spread among Orthodox priests. Subsequently, Gaillac and his entourage took refuge in Pera. Gaillac wanted to construct a convent in Pera for Catholics in the region. To this end, he first had a temporary, small church constructed and dedicated it to Saint Paul. In the mean time, the Genoese in the region donated the lot of the Agia Irini (St. Irene) Church which then was in ruins.

Agia Irini was reportedly constructed in late antiquity by Pertinax, the Bishop of Byzantium, and renovated by the Emperor Justinian in 532. Today, the marble plinth in a glass covered pit at the arched entrance of the mosque is believed to be of Agia Irini Church, from the Justinian era.<sup>(11)</sup>

As time went by, Agia Irini went to ruins, and on its lot, Gaillac started to build a large convent and a church, dedicated to St. Dominic, the founder of the Dominic Order. The construction, however, was to be completed by the next generations. As the small church



built by Gaillac was dedicated to St. Paul, the next church also came to be known as such, although it was officially dedicated to St. Dominic.

It can be said that the St. Paul Church has survived to the present day – even if as a mosque through various transformations – but the convent has gone without a trace. It was referred to as Galata Dominican Convent, or Convent of Pera, or as Conventus Saint Dominici. It used to be located parallel to the church, in the northern part of the courtyard of today's Arab Mosque. The entrance was through the door under the bell tower, and along its apses.

Wolfgang Müller-Wiener says that the northeastern niche of the church at the time might have had small chapels serving as burial places for Genoese families.<sup>(12)</sup> In fact, two Latin headstones were found – on the main entrance under the bell tower, and above the arch of the southern-side entrance, from 1323 and 2337, respectively. Based on this, Palazzo concludes that the construction started before 1323, and ended around 1337.

The mosque probably took its name from the Arabs who fled Spain at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, took refuge in the Ottoman Empire, and settled in this region.

During the reign of Sultan Mehmet III (1595-1603), when the mosque was renovated, the structures around it were demolished against potential damages to the mosque. The great fire in 1731



*The square bell tower of Arab Mosque has a pyramidal roof and functions as a minaret .*

resulted in significant architectural transformations in 1734-35, when Saliha Sultan, mother of Sultan Mahmut I, embarked upon a large scale renovation campaign. At this time, the mosque's many gothic features were replaced by components of Ottoman architecture. The fountain in the courtyard was also built during the same time.

The great fires, which were not uncommon around Galata, have frequently affected the Arab Mosque. After one of such fires, it was renovated in 1807-1808 by Adile Sultan, daughter of Mahmud II, followed by another renovation in 1854-1855. A comprehensive renovation under the supervision of Giritli Hasan Bey took place between 1913 and 1919, during which above mentioned medieval headstones and Byzantine parapet slabs were found under the ground.

**DIRECTIONS:** After visiting Arab Mosque, take the passage on the right to Galata Mahkemesi Sokak. If you take Nafe Sokak straight across and walk towards the seaside, you'll reach 50-60m ahead to Tersane Street, where we have started our tour. Turn left to Karaköy direction; cross the street at Yapı Kredi Bank on the left, and enter Taflan Sokağı. This narrow street is intersected by Yemenciler Street ahead. Here, you may want to check the red brick building at no. 41, which has ceramic tiles with clover design. Turn left and walk along Yemeniciler Street. On the right, on buildings at no. 9, 11, and 13, you'll see the remains of Galata's seaward wall line, probably from 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century. Ahead, the street turns right and ends near the sea. To the left, you'll see the pink painted Makbul İbrahim Pasha Mosque with its wooden framed minaret; turn right here and walk parallel to the sea along Makaracılar Street. On the seaside once was the Yağkapanı Wharf, one of Galata's oldest trade wharfs where goods from distant ports used to be unloaded. At the end of the street, turn right from Balıkçı Kemal'in Yeri fish restaurant to Kurtçu Hamam Sokak. A few meters ahead, on the right, you'll see the iron gate of Yelkenciler Han, a 17<sup>th</sup> century building.

## YELKENCİLER HAN

In Azapkapı, on the seaward side of Tersane Street and near Yemeniciler Sokağı, is one of the two most important buildings – except for the bedesten, or covered bazaar – of Ottoman Galata: Yelkenciler Han (han = Ottoman commercial complex/inn). As the mescid (small Muslim sanctuary) that used to be located inside was constructed by Kemankeş Mustafa Pasha, he is considered the benefactor of the han, too.<sup>(13)</sup> Based on Mustafa Pasha's date of death in 1647, Yelkenciler Han is seen as a 17<sup>th</sup> century building; as such, it is one of the rare hans which survived from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It was called Yelkenciler Han (lit. yelkenciler = sailmakers) because sailcloth for boats was being made here in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The courtyard of the han is accessed through a barrel vaulted passage. On both sides of the narrow, long courtyard, shops with arched stone masonry walls are lined. Yelkenciler Han is a two-storey building in rectangular form (44 x 15m). In the past, upper floor rooms were opening to a porch, which doesn't exist today because of many transformations the upper floor had been subject to.

**DIRECTIONS:** Walk up the slope of Kurtçu Hamam Sokak to Yemeniciler Street; first, turn right, and then left, and reach again to Tersane Street via Ziyalı Sokak. If you turn right, right at this point, you will see two streets ahead the direction plate for Arab Kayyum Sokağı. At the corner of this street and Tersane Street, at no. 79, is Galata Bedesteni (bedesten = covered bazaar) from the era of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror.

## GALATA BEDESTENİ

Bedestens were important commercial centers of Ottoman era Turkish cities. Galata Bedesteni, one of these centers, is located in the Lonca neighborhood, which extends inward from the Yağkaparı Gate (or, formerly, İskelekapısı Gate). The main entrance to the building is today from Tersane Street. Evliya Çelebi mentions about the bedesten's four gates, as well as about the vaulted shops lining the outside façades, selling products such as broadcloth, Chios brocades, Chios fustians, and clothing of Cezâyir (Aegean archipelago).<sup>(14)</sup>

The date of construction is debated. According to Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, who studied the architecture of the era of Mehmed the Conqueror (Mehmed II), the bedesten was among the Ayasofya endowments, constructed during the Mehmed II era and used as a warehouse. It was converted to a bedesten with a firman (edict) of Sultan



The main entrance to the Galata Bedesteni is today from Tersane Street.

Murad III in 1585.<sup>(15)</sup> However, some sources, including this firman, contradict as to the number of domes. Semavi Eyice concludes that the bedesten is not from the Mehmed II era but older, and it was constructed with only nine domes rather than twelve or twenty.<sup>(16)</sup> Today, Galata Bedesteni has a square plan and nine segments that are divided by four pillars. A dome sits on each segment.

The bedesten remained closed for long years during the Republic era. In 1996, the original wooden (oak) dividers were discarded and the building was converted to a commercial center. A historical function of bedestens was that they were primordial “banks,” or, more precisely, during the times when banks do not exist, people of Istanbul used to entrust to bedestens their money, jewels and other valuables, in sealed chests, for a fee. These chests, named as memleket sandıkları (or, “homeland chests/ funds”), used to be secured in the vaults of the bedestens. It may be noted, as an interesting aside, that the foundation of the Ziraat (Agriculture) Bank was based on these funds.



*A Corinthian column head, probably from the St. Michele church of Byzantine times serves as a hand water pump stand in Kurşunlu Han today.*

**DIRECTIONS:** Continue your walk along Tersane Street towards Karaköy. A few meters ahead, behind an empty car parking lot, you may see another segment of Galata's seaward wall remains. Another eye-catcher is a marvelous building at no.55, adorned with Corinthian pilasters on both sides. Unfortunately its ornamental façade is covered with every kind of signboards. Turn right from its corner to Kardeşim Sokak, and then again to the right from the first alley. You are at the entrance of Kurşunlu Han at no. 47, across the mouth of Kürekçiler Kapısı Sokak. Before entering, you may want to check the building on your left, the Enomataarchi Han.

## KURŞUNLU HAN

Galata had another han, rather operating like a caravanserai for merchants who visit the city. Known also as Rüstem Pasha Caravanserai, it was the most

important commercial building of Ottoman Galata besides Bedesten and Yelkenciler Han. It was registered as "Kurşunlu Han" under the 1561-dated endowment of Rüstem Pasha, one of the grand viziers of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. It was built by Architect Sinan between 1544 and 1550. During those days, Kurşunlu

Han was close to Yağkaparı and Balıkpazarı gates on the Golden Horn coastline, and it was favored mostly by Christian customers. Entry to the caravanserai is through a gate with a pointed arch. Next to the entrance is a fountain basin from the Byzantium era, made by carving a Corinthian column head. Kurşunlu Han has two floors. The pillars and the brickwork of the ground floor are different from those on the second floor, which suggests that it might be built on the plot of St. Michele Church after its demolition. Built as the seat of Genoese religious leaders, the first mention of this church dates back to 1296. The support system on the second floor is entirely in the style of 16<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman architecture. The windows have rectangular stone frames.

The han measures 83 x 35 m and its classic style, narrow and long courtyard measures 47 x 8.25 m. The ground floor has 27 rooms and 2 evyans (or, iwan, vaulted portal opening onto a courtyard), while the second floor has 30 rooms.<sup>(17)</sup>

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow your steps back to Tersane Street and cross it. Take the Zincirli Han Sokak which intersects Tersane Street vertically, on the left. Ahead, turn left to Keresteci Fazıl Sokak. This street, lined with historical buildings with latticed windows, ends at the intersection of Perşembe Pazarı Street. This neighborhood is full of Galata's oldest and most interesting buildings and hans. Walk across the crossroads to Galata Mahkemesi Sokak.

## GALATA MAHKEMESİ SOKAK

After the Conquest, the city was divided into four, for the purposes of judiciary administration: Istanbul (i.e. the historical peninsula), and Bilâd-ı Selâse (i.e. remaining three regions). In other words, four qadiship were created to administer judicial affairs in Istanbul, Eyüp, Galata, and Üsküdar. The seat of the Galata qadi used to be located on Galata Mahkemesi Sokağı.

It's a narrow street that barely allows the passage of a vehicle and it is lined with 4- or 5-storey hans and office buildings with shops on the ground floor – just like many other narrow streets, or sokak, in the region. Some of the buildings on the street and its vicinity are of note for being examples of the architecture styles of Ottoman, Byzantium and Genoese eras; especially the following:

- The building at the intersection of Galata Mahkemesi Street and Perşembe Pazarı Street...
- The building at the intersection of Perşembe Pazarı Street and Keresteci Fazıl Sokak...
- The han at the intersection of Perşembe Pazarı Street and Eski Tay Çıkmazı Sokak.

Although there is no record about their construction dates, they probably date back to 18<sup>th</sup>, or even 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>(18)</sup>



*Sakı Han on Galata Mahkemesi Street might have served in the 17<sup>th</sup> century as the Judicial Center of Galata Qadiship*



*Some buildings on the Galata Mahkemesi Street dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.*

**DIRECTIONS:** *Return to Perşembe Pazarı Street and turn left. On the left you'll see Yoğurtçu Han at no. 14, and Ticaret Han at no. 12.*

## TİCARET HAN

The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78 left the defeated Ottoman government with a heavy foreign debt, most of which borrowed through Galata Bankers. To oversee and secure repayment of the debt, an international committee was formed, and the Ottoman government was forced to sign an agreement with Galata Bankers and the Ottoman Bank. The agreement, named as the “Decree of 1879,” was handing the collection and management rights of taxes from alcoholic beverages and tobacco over to Ottoman Bank and Galata Bankers for 10 years. The revenues of the resulting monopoly were transferred to a company founded by foreign banks under the name “Tütün Rejisi” (the Régie Company), and it operated as a foreign company until its abolishment in 1925. Between 1891 and 1909, the head office of the Régie Company was the ground floor of Ticaret Han. Upper floors were mostly occupied by merchants and brokers. According to the records of Şark Ticaret Yıllıkları (Oriental Trade Directories), important persons and establishments in the han included the Chamber of Commerce of France, banker and lawyer Agop Köçeoğlu, banker K. Gümüşgerdan, and

Banker Delmedico & Cie.<sup>(19)</sup> Some of the companies in the han were affiliated to French banker Rotschild.

Ticaret Han was built in 1881, but the architect and the founder are unknown. Its name is written in Arabic and Latin letters on the iron panel above the entrance. The han has another entrance from Galata Mahkemesi Sokak. The building sits on a site of 1,300 sqm and spreads over 3 floors and a mezzanine. The upper floors are lined with porches and the ground floor opens to the inner court; as such, it resembles the Ottoman hans. However, the façades and the glass-roofed court have a European feel. The court was used as a tobacco warehouse during its first years. The two-storey barracks in the court and a longitudinal addition built during later years took away from its beauty.<sup>(20)</sup>

**DIRECTIONS:** *Continue your walk up Perşembe Pazarı Street, and on the right you'll see Yeni Cami Fountain at the corner of the street which took its name from it. A few meters ahead, on the left, is Eski Tay Çıkmaşı (cul-de-sac). The entrance of Serpuş Han is at no.1 of this very narrow cul-de-sac.*

## SERPUŞ HAN

Located at the intersection of Perşembe Pazarı Street and Eski Tay Çıkmaşı, this historic han catches the eye with its face stone and brick drywall work. The three-storey building doesn't have a courtyard. It is believed to be

constructed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century on the foundation of an old Genoese or Byzantine building. According to the Oriental Trade Directories, it housed not only merchants but also booksellers during late 19<sup>th</sup> century. On the outer façade are asymmetrical, cascading projections on stone masonry cantilevers; and the entrance gate has a rounded arch. The rooms are connected to each other via vaulted halls and corridors. The windows of mid-level floors have arches and they are fitted with cast iron grids. The windows of other floors have rectangular marble frames. Above these frames are pointed faux arches from brickwork. In one of the rooms, a ceiling painting catches the eye.

**DIRECTIONS:** *On the same street, directly opposite Serpuş Han, is another beautiful building at no. 2 (Köseoğlu İş Hanı). After checking it, follow your steps back to Tersane Street, and proceed towards Karaköy. On the left, two streets ahead, you'll see Bereketzade Medresesi Sokak, which will lead you, on the right, to the mosque of its namesake medrese (madrasa; Muslim institution of higher theological learning).*

## BEREKETZÂDE MEDRESESI

On this street was once Bereketzâde Külliyesi (külliye = Islamic social complex). The original mosque of the külliye does not exist anymore.



*In the upper floor of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Serpuş Han, a ceiling painting catches the eye.*

However, the medrese building that survived is used partly as a mosque today. The building has a dome that sits on a hexagonal frame, but the niche and the pulpit are not aligned to the axis of the building, which tells us that it was not originally constructed as a mosque. Serious restoration in 1977 and 1986 took away from its architectural originality. Some of the rooms of the medrese are today used for Qur'an courses.

The founder of the building, Hacı Mehmet Pasha, was a chamberlain to the mother of Sultan Mustafa II and Sultan Ahmet III. The inscription above the entrance informs us that it was constructed in 1705. The building's brick and stone walls were constructed using the drywall technique. The façade on Bereketzâde Medresesi Sokak has a birdhouse in the form of rectangular pavilion.



**DIRECTIONS:** Follow Söğüt Sokak to the right of Bereketzâde Medresesi Mosque, and turn left to Teğmen Hüseyin Sofu Sokak. You will see pink painted Çituri Han.

## ÇİTURI HAN

Çituri Han is at the intersection of Teğmen Hüseyin Sofu Sokağı (former Mertebani Sokak) and Söğüt Sokak. At the beginning of 20th century, the printing house of Alexandros (Aleko) and Dimitris Tsitouris (Çituri) brothers, named as “Çituri Biraderler Basımevi” (Printworks of Çituri Brothers), used to be located in this han.

Still known as Çituri Han, it is one

of the 19<sup>th</sup> century hans in Galata that retained its original character. It was built in 1861, and the first owner was Vasil Hacıyanopulos. During that period it was called as “İbret Han,” and was hosting stock brokers, merchants and insurance agencies.<sup>(21)</sup> Çituri Brothers were said to have bought this building in 1918, and added two more floors to the two existing ones.<sup>(22)</sup> The entrance on 5 Teğmen Hüseyin Sofu Sokak is of neo-classical style. The stone

## Famous Printers: Çituri Brothers



*This building on the Meşrutiyet Street belonged to Çituri Brothers in the past.*

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Çituri Brothers' Printhouse of Alexandre (Aleko) and Dimitris Çituri (Tsitouri) had served many local and foreign publications. They were also operating a stationery shop at the same location.

The Çituri Family was the owner of a building at the corner of Meşrutiyet Street and Kibeleziade Sokak. At the time, the building was called as Çituri Apartment, and it is now situated just opposite to Galata Antik Hotel (formerly, Decugis House).

The Çituris had made a name for themselves with their printhouse, where they had printed many foreign language publications, including “The Tourists’ Istanbul” (1953), one of the first comprehensive tourist guides on Istanbul.

In the 1950s, “Yeryüzü” magazine, published by the period’s young litterateurs and writers such as Fethi Naci, Metin Özek, Arif Damar, and Şükran Kurdakul, was also amongst the publications printed by the Çituris. This biweekly continued only for 11 issues

masonry building has a simple façade, but a curved arch under a triangular pediment, and two fluted pilasters with Ionic capitals on both sides adorn the entrance. Çituri Brothers' printhouse had served many local and foreign publications, but they also had a stationary shop on the ground floor. They sold the han when they left Turkey but the building retained its outlook until today. Also during the 90s, the ground floor had a stationery shop as if a reminiscent of Çituri Brothers. Today it is occupied by a hardware shop. The upper floors of the pink painted building are mostly used as depot.



*The neo-classical style entrance of Çituri Han, which served at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century as a printing house of Alexandros and Dimitris Tsitouris brothers.*

between 1 November 1951 and 15 March 1952. During those hard times, Çituries were under pressure by the police, and they didn't want to print the magazine after a few issues. Metin Özek, one of the managing editors, would visit the Çituri Han before every issue and beg Çituri brothers to print it. Each time Çituris would say, "It's for the last time, you know." To persuade them, the editors would appeal to the help of famous Turkish poet Can Yücel, as the Çituris couldn't refuse him. When the conditions became more difficult to handle, however, they had to stop publishing the magazine after eleven issues.<sup>(1)</sup>

While the editors of the magazine continued their path, albeit under different publications and in different ways, the future didn't get any better for these two Greek printer brothers, especially in the aftermath of the Istanbul pogrom of 6-7 September 1955. Following a ridiculous

accusation of "provoking the church priests against Turkey," the Çituri brothers were deported in November 1957 with a decision of the Cabinet. Aleko Çituri lost his life in Athens in August 1961, four years after his departure from Turkey.

In Istanbul, the Çituris had also wanted to take advantage of the commercial activity in Pera by opening a stationery shop there. For this purpose, they took over a pharmacy (belonging to one Isak Sevy) at 337 İstiklal Street (at the corner of Eski Çiçekçi Sokak) and converted it to a stationery shop.<sup>(2)</sup> Today, this shop is at no 185, just opposite to Odakule Business Center, and it is operated by Panter Kirtasiye, which sells stationery as well as souvenirs.

(1) Metin Özek ile Söyleşi, Cumhuriyet Pazar Dergi, 14 March 2004.

(2) Behzat Üsdiken, "Pera'dan Beyoğlu'na 1840 – 1955," Akbank Sanat Yayınları, 1999.

**DIRECTIONS:** Return back to Söğüt Sokak, and this time turn left. Make another left when you arrive Perçemli Sokak, and the street will lead you, ahead on the right, to the Zulfaris Synagogue.

## ZÜLFARİS SYNAGOGUE

Zulfaris is a very old synagogue that is hard to find in the busy Karaköy area. On the entrance of the synagogue is a verse from the Hebrew Bible:

“Also, seek the peace and the prosperity of the city to which I have carried you to exile. Pray to the Lord for it”  
– Yeremiyahu, 29:7.

The vaults suggest a building from Genoese era, and there is evidence that a synagogue existed in this place already in 1671. This synagogue, named Kal Kadosh Galata (Holy Synagogue of Galata), was better known as Zulfaris, former name of the street (a distortion from Zülf-ü Arus, meaning bride's long lock of hair). However the actual building was re-erected over its original foundations in the 1823, and repair work was carried out in 1890 with the financial assistance of the Camondo Family. The synagogue was closed to religious services in 1985, as there were no more Jews residing in the neighbourhood. The building was restored and remodelled to suit a museum and functioned between 2001 and 2015 as the Quincentennial Foundation Museum of Turkish Jews. The museum that aims to collect, preserve, exhibit, and disseminate the cultural heritage of the Turkish Jews closed its doors on September 22, 2015. The Jewish museum operates in the Neve Shalom Synagogue since January 2016.

**DIRECTIONS:** After finishing your visit to the synagogue, return to Tersane Street and head towards the Golden Horn coast of Perşembe Pazarı, the last stop in this tour. To reach this point, take the stairs just to the right of the Karaköy foot of the Galata Bridge. The stairs will lead you to the Karaköy Fish Market where you can walk around fish stalls and restaurants, and breathe the delicious scents that have been here for hundreds of years.

## PERŞEMBE PAZARI COASTLINE

Galata coastline of the Golden Horn is in fact one of the best places to enjoy Istanbul's historic silhouette, especially during the sunset, and visiting the Perşembe Pazarı coastline would be the crowning touch to end the tour. Alexander Van Millingen had had this experience years ago and wrote the following lines for Istanbul:

"The view of Constantinople from the Golden Horn, whether seen from the bridges that cross the harbour, or from Pera, is universally admitted to be as impressive and beautiful a spectacle as any city in the world can present. The visitor of a day recognizes its wonderful attractions at the first glance, and long familiarity never allows one to feel satisfied that he has given to the scene all the admiration which it deserves. (...) Nor is the vision less memorable towards sunset, when the lights and shadows paint this varied surface of hills and valleys, of land and water, while the long array of mosques and minarets upon the hills overhanging the Golden Horn rests against the deepening glory of the sky."<sup>(23)</sup>



## Chapter Five

# **WALKING GALATA: TOUR II**

**Tophane - Karaköy**

**GALATA**







**DIRECTIONS:** *The tour starts at Tophane, from the intersection of Meclis-i Mebusan and Boğazkesen Streets; you can get there easily by tram or public bus. Walk up the slope from Boğazkesen Street and turn right to Defterdar Yokuşu ahead. You'll come to the entrance of a historic building, Tophane-i Amire, at no. 2.*

## TOPHANE-İ AMİRE

Following Istanbul's conquest by Mehmed II, Galata became not only the commercial but also the military center of the Ottomans' naval power. During the period, a state shipyard called Tersane-i Âmire was built to the western end of Galata, stretching from Azapkapı to the mouth of the Golden Horn. And on the eastern end, an arsenal, called as Tophane-i Amire, was built to cast the cannons for the Ottoman navy and army.

Just after the conquest, an area was allocated for cannon foundries at the Eastern Gate of Galata. Once these foundries were built, the gate came to be referred as "Porta delle Bombarde" by the foreign travelers.

Evliya Çelebi mentions that this arsenal was later enlarged with additional rooms by Sultan Bayezit II. Süleiman the Magnificent [reigned from 1520-1566] had all outbuildings of Tophâne-i Âmire demolished, and rebuilt a new arsenal. As some wooden frame buildings of Tophane were damaged during the fire of 1132 AH (1720-1721), a large cistern was built in 1723-24 under the supervision of Topçubaşı İbrahim Ağa, the head-gunner. Also a pavilion was built the

same year for Sultan's use during his visits. In 1743 all buildings of Tophane-i Amire were demolished and rebuilt in their current form. In 1843, Ohannes and Boghos Dadyan Brothers, the head powder-makers of the Ottoman state, opened the Zeytinburnu Ironworks (Grande Fabrique), which soon started to operate as armory to cast cannons and other guns. In 1850, when Zeytinburnu facility started to operate at full capacity, cannon production ended in Tophâne-i Âmire.<sup>(1)</sup>

During the Republic, the buildings of Tophane remained for long years in the possession of the Defense Ministry. In 1992, they were handed over to the Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University. This historic building is used today as the university's Culture and Arts Center, with its three multi-purpose exhibition halls. It is open for visits every day between 10:00 to 19:00.



*15<sup>th</sup> century cannon foundry for the Imperial Artillery*

**DIRECTIONS:** After your visit to Tophane-i Amire, follow your steps back to the junction and try to picture how this large square, with Tophane Fountain in the center, used to look and function in the past.

## TOPHANE SQUARE AND THE WATERFRONT

Named as Metopon (forehead) during the Byzantine era, Tophane (lit. “cannon foundry”) gained a new character after the Conquest with the establishment of iron foundries and artillery barracks. During the period, the eastern end of Galata was crawling with artillerymen and cannon foundry workers. With the arrival of others from different segments of the society, Tophane became a large settlement. Evliya Çelebi wrote in the 17<sup>th</sup> century that there were 70 Muslim, 20 Greek, 7 Armenian neighborhoods, and several Jewish houses in Tophane. The cannon production in the region reached its climax during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent.



*Tophane Square, with the cannons in front and the Nusretiye Mosque at the back, 1862 (Photo: Francis Bedford).*

Jérôme Maurand, a French priest of Antibes who visited Istanbul in 1544, reported about the Tophane of the Süleyman the Magnificent era:<sup>(2)</sup>

“We saw here cannons of every kind, including a basilica of 24 palms length, as well as seven mortars which were used against Rhodes. On the barrel of one mortar, you could see the trace of a cannonball shot from the Rhodes castle. A man could fit inside its barrel. We also saw a 22-palm long culverin in the form of a Corinthian column, and a 15-palm long mortar. Brought by İbrahim Pasha from Hungary, this mortar had beautiful reliefs on it. About 40-50 Germans work in the cannon foundry.”

Tophane took this look and image also to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It was like a scene from “a gun exhibition,” with all cannons lined side by side.<sup>(3)</sup>

French botanist Joseph Pitton de Tournefort (1656-1708) visits the region in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He reports that the foundry was located about a hundred steps back from the shore, and the Turks were casting very good cannons there.

The scene changed dramatically during the reign of Selim III: The cannons were gone, the plane trees which adorned the square were cut down, and the enlarged square was turned into an exercise ground for Nizam-ı Cedid (lit. “New Order”) Army.

During mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, Tophane had a beautiful square with a wooden wharf on the coast. Monuments such as Tophane Fountain and Kılıç Ali Pasha Külliye were adorning the square.

Although having a wharf, Tophane was lacking in a modern dock for ships. This requirement reached its peak during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, because the ships had to moor to the buoys just off the Galata coast, and the passengers had to take barges or rowboats to the wharf. In 1892, a French company undertook the construction and operation of a dock, but the boatmen and bargemen, who were employed at the wharf, objected. For this and other reasons, the construction was held back, and finally a dock that stretched 785m from Galata Bridge to Tophane was completed in 1895. Memphis, a French passenger ship, became the first ship to moor in the Galata dock in September 1895. A part of the dock, however, collapsed in 1898, and the repair work continued until 1900.<sup>(4)</sup> In 1940, a passenger lounge on piles was constructed for the dock.

Although having the most needed dock by the 20<sup>th</sup> century, glamorous times were over for Tophane region and the square. Istanbul's economy was already beaten by the lost wars, and later, the exchange of population cost the city many investors, skilled workforce, and craftsmen. Istanbul's share from the world trade had plunged significantly.

One of the solutions found by the government to the decline was to create

the first "free trade zone" of the Republic in an area that stretches today from the water-pipe cafés by the side of Nusretiye Mosque onwards, to the north of it. Thus, the first automotive assembly plant of the Turkish Republic was founded in 1929 by Ford Motor Company. The company's assembly lines for automobiles, trucks and tractors used to be situated in the car park lot that you have to cross today to enter Istanbul Modern Art Museum.

Galata Dock had a special significance for 20<sup>th</sup> century Istanbul that it became the scene for 3 large-scale migrations:

- Tens of thousands of refugees who escaped from Russia after October 1917 Revolution came to Istanbul.

- After the departure of the occupation forces from Istanbul, thousands of Greeks, Armenians and Levantines left the city for fear that the new Turkish government would call non-Muslims to account for their support to the foreign occupants.

- With the foundation of the Israeli state in 1948 in Palastine, tens of thousands of Jews of Istanbul left for their new country.

Also, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the modern Turkish state, departed from Galata docks to Samsun for his assignment as the Inspector of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army. With his 21 companions, he took a motorboat from the docks on 16 May 1919, and went on board SS Bandırma, which lay anchored off the Maiden Tower (Kız Kulesi).

*Tophane Fountain is an 18<sup>th</sup> century public fountain built in the Ottoman rococo architecture.*



**DIRECTIONS:** *Cross the Meclis-i Mebusan Street, and walk towards the Tophane Fountain which used to be the center of the historic square.*

## TOPHANE FOUNTAIN

This matchless monument adorns Tophane Square in the eastern Galata. Tophane Fountain has the tallest walls in any fountain in the city and its marble façades are adorned with relief motifs. It is also named as Sultan Mahmud Fountain because it was built in 1732-33 by Sultan Mahmud I as part of the water network of Galata and Beyoğlu. It was put into service on the same date as the opening of Taksim water system, and the water was released from Taksim by Sultan Mahmud I with a ceremony.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, picturing the fountain in the dynamism of the adjacent port was popular among the engraving artists. It was then situated in the center of the Tophane Square, closer to the coast, but due to land reclamation it is now some way inland.

The fountain was built with a roof with wide eaves, but the roof broke down in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and arranged as a flat terrace in 1837. In fact, a photograph taken by Sebah & Joaillier ca. 1888-1901 shows the fountain with a flat top in the form of a terrace. In 1957-58, Istanbul Water Department restored it to its original shape based on old engravings. <sup>(5)</sup>

A number of relief plant motives – fruit trees in pots, flowers in vases – adorn the walls of the fountain in line with the fashion of its construction period. It features a 40-stanza long eulogy by poet Nafihi.

Tophane Fountain was lastly renovated in 2006 by ‘Saka Su,’ an affiliate of GıdaSA Company in the Sabancı Group. On this occasion, the ornaments of the fountain were re-gilded with gold leaf, the eaves and the dome were reconstructed based on historical engravings.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Tophane İskelesi Street lies between the fountain and, the Kılıç Ali Pasha Complex, which is situated about 25m to the southeast. Cross the street to the complex, which is composed of a mosque and other külliye buildings (külliye = Islamic social complex).*

## KILIÇ ALİ PASHA COMPLEX

Once located outside the Galata walls, Kılıç Ali Pasha Mosque bears the name of an Ottoman seaman of Italian origin, who has been the Grand Admiral of the Ottoman fleet between 1571 and 1578. Although it is a wharf-side mosque like the Azapkapı Mosque on the west side of Galata, it is the center of the külliye, which is composed of a medrese (Muslim theological school), türbe (tomb), and a hammam. The Kılıç Ali Pasha Mosque, the hammam, and a large part of the Tophane Square were built on land reclaimed from the sea. Kılıç Ali Pasha brought Christian slaves from the shipyard to work for land reclamation, and then, on made ground, he had Imperial Architect Sinan built the complex in 1580.

The plan of the mosque resembles that of Hagia Sophia. Having carefully examined the plan and superstructure of the Hagia Sophia, Sinan applied his own interpretation to Kılıç Ali Pasha Mosque, in a smaller scale and with a different architectural approach. Illuminated by 147 windows, including the 24 windows in the drum of the dome, Kılıç Ali Pasha Mosque gets more light than the Hagia Sophia. As only the Sultan held the right to have mosques with more than one minaret built in the Ottoman

Empire, Kılıç Ali Pasha Mosque has only one minaret. For the same reason, its dome is also smaller than the mosques commissioned by the Sultan.

Against the possibility that the slaves might be summoned back to the shipyard before the completion, Kılıç Ali Pasha had also an edict issued for the construction of a church for them in the vicinity. This church was built at the corner of the Galata walls facing the mosque, with bunkhouses around it. The church was later lost to a fire, but reportedly its altar had survived by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>(6)</sup>

The birth name of Kılıç Ali Pasha is Giovanni Dionigi Galeni – referred to as Occhiali, or Ouloudj (Uluç) Ali in the



*Illuminated by 147 windows, including the 24 windows in the drum of the dome, Kılıç Ali Pasha Mosque gets more light than the Hagia Sophia.*

Italian sources. He was born in 1500 – or, in 1519, according to some sources – in a Calabria village as the son of a poor fisherman. Reportedly, he fell captive to Barbary pirates of Algeria in his teens, when he was on his way to Naples to be trained as a priest. He was forced to serve as galley slave for years. Later he converted to Islam, gained his freedom, and took the name Ali. When he became a pirate, he was called as Uluç, a name given to non-Barbary pirates.

He came to Istanbul in 1551 to work at the shipyard; he joined the siege of Malta, and then was promoted to the rank of sancakbey (military governor) of İzmir. He took back Tunisia from Spanish in 1569. In 1571,

upon the news that the crusaders set sail against Ottomans, he argued in the War Council to confront them in the open sea, but this idea was rejected by Ali Pasha, then the Grand Admiral. The Battle of Lepanto was held in Naupactus (İnebahtı) Gulf and Uluç Ali Pasha commanded the left flank of Ali Pasha's fleet. He outmaneuvered the Maltese Knights on the left flank and captured their flagship. When the Ottoman defeat became obvious, however, he succeeded in extricating his ships, and gathered up the scattered remaining ships of the Ottoman fleet along the way and returned to Istanbul with 80 vessels. Sultan Selim II appointed him as Grand Admiral, and gave him the honorary title of "Kılıç." His career as Grand Admiral continued with victories in various battles.

Kılıç Ali Pasha was married to Selime Hatun, but remained without children. He died on 21 June 1587, and buried to his tomb at Kılıç Ali Pasha Mosque. His fortune, estimated to be worth around half a million gold coins, was remitted to the state treasury.<sup>(7)</sup>

Based on the endowment registers of the mosque, it is claimed that the name Miguel de Saavedra Cervantes, author of Don Quixote, was amongst the Christian slaves who worked for the construction of the mosque. Although there is no information in Cervantes' works to verify this claim, it is known that he fell captive to the Turks of Algeria during his trip in 1575 from Naples to Marseille, until his ransom was paid by Spanish in 1580.



*With the two-storey gallery and the two exedrae, Kılıç Ali Pasha Mosque resembles Hagia Sophia (Ayasofya).*



**DIRECTIONS:** After visiting the külliye, return back to İskele Street and turn towards the sea. Take the Kılıç Ali Pasha Mescidi Sokak on the right, and continue along the Murakıp Sokak, which contains the remains of a Byzantine monastery – and a car park (!) erected on them. Then walk your way to Mumhane Street. Cross the street and take Dericiler Sokak on the right. Ahead you'll see a small mescid on the Ali Pasha Değirmeni Sokak.

## SULTAN BAYEZİD MESCİD

Sultan Bayezid Mescid also faces Necati Bey Street, which lies in parallel to Kemaraltı Street between Karaköy and Tophane. The building does not feature typical architectural elements of its construction era. According to the inscription on its fountain, it was renovated in 1292 AH (1875) to its current appearance.<sup>(8)</sup>

**DIRECTIONS:** Walk towards Karaköy, following the Ali Pasha Değirmeni Sokak. Just before the street continues as Hoca Tahsin Sokak, at the intersection of Akçe Sokak, you will see a 15<sup>th</sup> century Greek Orthodox church. Its original name is Panagia Kafatiani Orthodox Church but it is used today as the "Church of Virgin Mary of the Autocephalous Turkish Orthodox Patriarchate."

## PANAGIA KAFATIANI ORTHODOX CHURCH

This church is believed to be built in 1475 by the Greeks of the Kefe Khanate of Crimea, who arrived to Istanbul in 1462.



Ruins of the Hristos Kremastos monastery hosts a public car park (!) today.

As it is dedicated to Virgin Mary, it is referred to as Kefe Meryemi (Panagia Kafatiani). Here, the icon of Virgin Mary, which is kept in the northern nave of the church, is believed to be brought from Kefe by the Crimean Greeks.<sup>(9)</sup>

The church was built in the form of a basilica with three naves, but it took its current appearance after being burnt down many times during its history. The inscription on the southern narthex reads that it opened doors on 1 September 1734. The inscription plate also features a depiction of Virgin Mary with child Jesus. The Panagia Kafatiani Church suffered great damage during the retaliations against



Panagia Kafatiani Orthodox Church.



Istanbul's Greek churches, in return for the Greek revolt in 1821 in the Peloponnese. The present building was built after these events cooled down. In fact, another inscription in the western narthex, above the entrance of the naos, reads that the church was completely renovated from the foundations up during Sultan Abülmecit's reign (1839-1861), and re-opened doors on 11 August 1840. A line in the inscription is of note: "no revengeful shall enter; (those who enter) shall be blessed but not be damned like Judas, who betrayed Jesus."<sup>(10)</sup> While Panagia Kafatiani was the central church of the Greeks of Galata during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was occupied in 1924 by Papa Eftim and his followers. Since then, the church is known as the Turkish Orthodox Patriarchate. However, it is not recognized by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Fener (Phanar).

***DIRECTIONS:** From the corner of the church, turn right to Akçe Sokak towards Necatibey Street. Cross the street and turn left towards Karaköy. On the right, at the corner of Sakızcılar Sokak, is an Armenian Orthodox church, which dates back to the pre-conquest period.*

## SURP KRIKOR LUSAVORIÇ CHURCH

After the foundation of the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul (1461), 55 Armenian churches have been built in the city. Some 30 of them are still open to worship, and Surp Krikor Lusavoriç is the oldest in Istanbul still in existence today. Situated on Kemeraltı Street, the church is said to date back to pre-conquest era. Eremya Çelebi, who claims that it was built by merchants from Kefe, gives the construction date as 1436<sup>(11)</sup>, while some other sources date it back to 1360, 1361, or 1391.

However, historian Ğugas İnciciyan objects that 1391 is the date when the land was bought. In fact, a more plausible conclusion can be drawn from the dates of the artifacts found in the church: until 1953, the ground floor had a headstone and a statue of Virgin Mary from 1431, and a bible - handwritten by Mağakya Apeğa - from 1440. So the construction date should



*Surp  
Krikor  
Lusavoriç  
Church.*

have been 1431.<sup>(12)</sup> From 1431 up until the conquest, the church has functioned as the only sanctuary and community center for the Armenian community of Istanbul. During the Ottoman era, it continued this function until the church in Samatya was assigned to Armenians and became a Patriarchate. Also, Armenian Catholic clergymen conducted liturgy here, until Surp Pirgiç Church was opened in 1834.

The building was renovated after being seriously damaged in the Great Fire of Galata in 1660. It was burned down again in 1731, but renovated to a better-than-before state within only 3 months by the famous imperial architect Sarkis Kalfa who adorned it with Kütahtya ceramic tiles. Following another fire in 1771, it was rebuilt by Minas Kalfa in 1800, and then served long years as the main religious and cultural center of the Armenian community.

In 1958, during the road expansion works on Kemaraltı Street, the church was demolished after a part of the land was expropriated. It was re-built on the remaining land between 1962 and 1966. Today, the church is 10 m in width and 14 m in length, and its height is 23 m to the top of the dome. The basement floor includes a sanctuary where colophons, valuable ceramic tile remains, and 18<sup>th</sup> century headstones are kept.<sup>(13)</sup>

**DIRECTIONS:** From the high school, take Kemeraltı Street towards Karaköy. Vekilharç Sokak is ahead on the left. A 16<sup>th</sup> century church dedicated to John the Baptist (Aya Yani) is located at the end of the street, at no. 15 to the left. It is known by Greeks as Agios Ioannis Prodromos Orthodox Church.

## GETRONAGAN HIGH SCHOOL

One of the five Armenian high schools in Istanbul, the Getronagan Lycee is also known as the “Galatasaray of Armenians” – with Galatasaray historically being one of the most influential high schools of Turkey. Through the efforts of Patriarch Nerses Varjabedian, Getronagan (meaning “central” in Armenian) opened in 1886 with 64 students.<sup>(14)</sup> The education is bilingual: Armenian and Turkish.

Photographer Ara Güler, caricaturist Sarkis Paçacı, writers Hagop Mintzuri and Migirdiç Margosyan, and musician Hayko Cepkin are among the graduates of the school. The piano used by Gomidas Vartabed during his years in the school is still kept here in its renovated state.

Today having only 12 classrooms and 230 students, this long-established school celebrated its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012.

**DIRECTIONS:** Continue along Sakızcılar Sokak. At no. 9 is Getronagan High School, one of the most important educational institutions in Istanbul. The façade overlooks the Kemeraltı Street. One of the best places to see the high school is the roof terrace of Galata Greek Primary School.

## AGIOS IOANNIS PRODROMOS ORTHODOX CHURCH

This church dedicated to and named after John the Baptist (Aya Yani), is located in the middle of a courtyard surrounded by high walls. Although the exact construction date is unknown, its name is referred to in records from 1583. Also, an archive record dated 1585 mentions about a Galata neighborhood named as Aya Yani (Agios Ioannis), probably named after the church.



*Agios Ioannis Prodromos Orthodox Church.*

The church has frequently fallen victim to fires. After a fire in 1696, the renovation took place only after the Greeks of Chios obtained a firman (edict) from the Sultan that it could be rebuilt from the foundations up – hence, it was also once known as Sakızlı Kilise (lit. “Chiotian Church”). The churchyard contains the graves of Chiotian Greeks, dating from 1842 to 1863.

Above the entrance, which is coaxial to the naos, is the church’s white marble inscription. The inscription is divided into two, each half containing lines to honor reconstructions from two different years: 1734 and 1799.

(15)

The building was renovated also in 1874, 1884, and 1894. The church contains some important holy relics of the Orthodox world, including the hand of Agios Dionysios, and the corpse of Agios Thalalaïos. The iconostasis of the three-naved church features scenes from the life of Jesus.

Today, the church is under the Turkish Orthodox Patriarchate.

**DIRECTIONS:** Return to Necatibey Street and cross; turn right and walk towards Karaköy. On the left, just after Baş Cerrah Sokak, turn to Karanlık Fırın Sokak, which will lead you to Hoca Tahsin Sokak. At no.2 is Agios Nikolaos, another Orthodox church in the region.

## AGIOS NIKOLAOS ORTHODOX CHURCH

This church is dedicated Agios Nikolaos (St. Nicholas), patron saint of seamen. He was the Bishop of Myra (or, Demre in modern-day Turkey) in Lycia. As the church was frequented mostly by the Cephalonian Greek sailors, it also contains an icon of Agios Gerasioma, patron saint of Cephalonians.

The church was erected on the ruins of a church, which was dedicated to Agios Antonios during the Byzantine era. In fact, the ayazma (holy spring), accessed via stairs down from the southeast of the narthex, is named after Agios Antonios.

The church has frequently fallen victim to fires, and it was rebuilt many times. According to Timotheos Sophianos, it was rebuilt in 1773, following the fire of 1771, with money contributed by sailors, fermene (embroidered vest) makers, broadcloth makers, and furriers. It fell victim to another fire in 1796, and reopened in 1804 after extensive repair work. It fell into ruin in 1821, and rebuilt from foundations up in 1834. In 1887 another renovation took place.<sup>(16)</sup>

The church was built in the form of a basilica with three naves, in the traditional architecture style of Greek churches in 1830s. Covered with a gable roof, the building is 30.2m in length, 15.5 m in width, and 13.3 m in height. It has three inscription plates, and they document the years of restorations/reconstructions. Its wooden iconostasis catches the eye with its craftsmanship.<sup>(17)</sup>

The church suffered damages during the 6-7 September 1955 events, and passed to the Turkish Orthodox Patriarchate in 1965, at a time when Turkish-Greek relations were clouded over the Cyprus dispute.



*Agios Nikolaos  
Orthodox Church.*

**DIRECTIONS:** Turn right from Ayios Nikolaos on Hoca Tahsin Sokak, and ahead, make another right to Karatavuk Sokak. This street will lead you to Mumhane Street. Cross the street and turn left. Ahead is the entrance of the French Passage, a 19<sup>th</sup> century complex, which will lead you to the waterfront.

## FRENCH PASSAGE

French Passage (Cité Française), or Fransız Pasajı in Turkish, is a commerce center between Kemankeş and Mumhane Streets – it is very close to present-day Karaköy police station. Its splendid cast iron gates are kept closed during the night. The building was constructed during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, just behind the French wharf in Galata. Via this passage, merchandise unloaded from barges to the wharf used to be carried to the street. This passage played a practical role for long years until a modern dock for ships to moor in was constructed in 1895.

Time didn't treat this example of neo-classical architecture well: it was already in ruins during the 1960s. Fortunately, it was renovated between 1992 and 1994. As three additional floors were to be added to the three existing ones, 112 piles were driven first to 35m depths, in order to stabilize the foundation.

Today situated on a 10,000 square meter site, the French Passage Trade Center contains 118 shops and stores of various sizes. The trade center seems to have found a new life after all years. Still, the addition of three glass-covered modern office floors seems out of odds with the rest of the building. For some, however, this is the only way to give new life to old buildings and put them into use at the same time.

*French Passage  
(Cité Française).*



**DIRECTIONS:** Turn right from the exit of the French Passage, and follow Kemankeş Street for another 100m. You'll see Şarap İskeleyi Street on the right.

## ŞARAP İSKELESİ STREET

Wine was once brought by vessels to Istanbul in casks from Erdek, Foça, Bozcaada (Tenedos island) and Bülbülce, unloaded at Galata's "Şarap İskeleyi" (meaning "Wine Wharf"), and from there, hauled to taverns. During the Ottoman era, the "Hamr Emaneti," a revenues office responsible for administering and collecting alcoholic beverage taxes from all taverns, was also close to this Wine Wharf.

<sup>(18)</sup> The historical wharf was dismantled around 1895, before a modern dock was constructed. Its name, however, still lives on in "Şarap İskeleyi Sokak," a small street that connects Kemankeş and Mumhane Streets. More interestingly, during even earlier times, the street used to be called as "Krasoskala," which means "wine wharf" in Greek.

The wharf was also providing a springboard for the families who have large vineyards on the Marmara and Aegean islands. One such striking example is Zarifis, one of the richest Ottoman families in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The family became rich by transporting wine, grape-juice and grape molasses from their vineyards and wineries on the Marmara island of Aloni (today, Paşalimanı). They were using large rowboats to ship their goods, and unloading them at "Krasoskala" for distribution to taverns. Wealth gained through this means would later help them to become one of the "Galata bankers."<sup>(19)</sup>

It is referred to in many historical sources that the street used to be lined with many taverns that befit its name. Today, Karaköy Lokantası is the only restaurant/tavern on the street.



*Wine, brought by vessels to Istanbul, was unloaded at Galata's "Şarap İskeleyi" (meaning "Wine Wharf").*



## Galata Taverns in the Past

For the habitants of the city from the Byzantines to the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottomans, the Golden Horn used to mean what the Bosphorus means for today's Istanbulis. Like chalets and wharfs, the taverns also appeared at first along the Golden Horn – until they moved to the coastline of Bosphorus.

The taverns were mostly located near the wharfs, especially in Tahtakale and Galata regions where the non-Muslim population used to center around before the Conquest. Reportedly, the taverns on the Galata coastline – from the inner parts of the estuary to Tophane – were not less in numbers than in any place of the world.

We don't possess much information as to the wharf taverns of Istanbul during the Byzantine era. Still, we learn about their existence and names from Michael Psellos, the famous Byzantine philosopher and historian of the 11<sup>th</sup> century: Melitağros, Spanos, Gorgoplutos... Some of our earliest knowledge about the Ottoman era taverns comes from Latifi of Kastamonu, a 16<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman author who wrote about Istanbul and its social life in his "Risale-i Evsaf-ı İstanbul" (Guide of Istanbul).

He says that Galata was full of taverns from one end to the other, and the locals were never seen without a cup of liquor in their hands. He frowns upon Galata, a district which is "enough to make a saint swear" with all its Christian inhabitants, instrumentalists and singers, and then he leavens the dose of criticism: "If a Muslims visits here to steal a day and leave his troubles behind, he

ends the day downtrodden with his cloths torn and his turban out of place." According to him, it's not easy to free oneself once one falls into this place's clasps.<sup>(1)</sup>

In his Book of Travels, Evliya Çelebi notes that there were 1,060 taverns in Istanbul, 200 of them only in Galata. "Galata is all about taverns," he says.<sup>(2)</sup>

Michel Baudier, a 17<sup>th</sup> century author, gives the number of taverns in Istanbul as more than 1,500.<sup>(3)</sup>

Galata was essentially a customs port city. Ships with merchandise from the Occident, Orient and Africa used to be unloaded and loaded here, at many wharfs, or "gates," of the city. The Balıkpazarı Wharf (lit. "Fish Market Wharf"), situated between the Yağkapanı and Karaköy Gates of the Galata walls, was one of the most prominent of the wharfs in the region. As it was also home to the fish market – from where seafood could be bought to accompany the spirits – the most colorful taverns of the city were located here.

Eremya Çelebi Kömürçian tells us from the 17<sup>th</sup> century that there were about 20 fishmongers next to the Balıkpazarı Wharf, and that the rest of the coastline was full of taverns.<sup>(4)</sup> It should be noted, however, that the old Galata Fish Market was located before the intersection of today's Kardeşim Sokak and Fermenteciler Street. In other words, it was located within the Yeniciami Neighborhood, further to the west of the current Karaköy Fish Market at the foot of the Galata Bridge.



*A Galata tavern on the drawing of Sabiha Bozcalı.*

The taverns around the Balıkpazarı wharf – like any other wharf in Galata – were social gathering places frequented mostly by seamen, merchants, caulkers, and carpenters of Greek, Jewish, Turkish, Genoese, Venetian, or Spanish origin. Researcher and writer Ekrem Işın points out to the Mediterranean cosmopolitanism in Galata, and argues that the only human type who can be considered universal in the Classic era was born out of this environment, which usually was not regarded in a positive light.<sup>(5)</sup>

In his *Book of Travels*, Evliya Çelebi tells us that, in the Galata taverns were sold “various notorious forbidden ruby-dripping wines, including muscadine,” and he counts Taş Merdiven, Kefeli, Manyalı, Mihalaki, Kaşkaval, Sumbüllü, Konstanti, Saranda amongst the popular taverns of the era.<sup>(6)</sup> For the Muslim Turks, operating taverns was legalized only after the Second Constitutional Era (1908). In the Ottoman Empire, the taverns were operated by non-Muslims. In fact, the majority of the people in Galata were non-Muslims. Based on a population census during the reign of Sultan Murat IV, Galata

was inhabited by 200 thousand Christians and Jews, but only by 64 thousand Muslims. Ottoman taverns were mostly owned by the Ottoman Greeks of Chios, Peloponnese (in particular, Tsakonians from the town of Leonidio in the Eastern Peloponnese), or of Cappadocia.

There were two types of Ottoman taverns: “koltuk” and “gedikli”.

The places which were selling liquor under the disguise of a tripery, an offal restaurant, or a pickle shop were called as “koltuk tavern.” Eremya Çelebi Kömürçiyân mentions about such places in the Jewish neighborhoods on Hasköy-Kasımpaşa coastline, offering customers grape arrack to go along with dried sturgeon or codfish. He also says that Alonia wine goes very well with skewed swordfish kebab with bay leaves.<sup>(7)</sup> On the other hand, a limited number of taverns licensed by the Ottoman state were called “gedikli.” During those times, any activity was subject to a permit named *gedik*, and the tavern *gediks* were inherited from father to son. If the son wouldn’t want to keep a tavern, the lodge of taverns would hand the permit over to a suitable tavern employee, the skills and honesty of whom could be attested. After the rule of Sultan Abdülaziz, such licensed taverns begun to be called as “selatin taverns” (literally “imperial taverns,” indicating their elite status).

Mehmet Tefik Bey, who wrote in 1880 “The Tavern or the Habitual Evening Drinkers of Istanbul,” a 48-page booklet on Istanbul taverns, lists the names of 83 licensed Istanbul taverns of the era.<sup>(8)</sup>

In the 19th century, the grocery store-

taverns – a new kind of drinking place seen in almost every neighborhood – were added to these two types of taverns. In such places, the customers would have one or two quick shots of uzo or wine, accompanied with some appetizers, while waiting for their grocery order being prepared.

As in Greek, the owner of the tavern was called as "barba," and the bartender as "mastori," while in some taverns the barba would handle the mastori's job himself. 10- to 18-year old attendants, who were responsible for bringing candles to the table or putting cinders in tobacco bowls, were called as "ateş oğlanı" ("cinderboy") in Turkish, or as "pedimou" ("my child") in Greek. In some taverns, cupbearers would assume the cinderboy's job. Mostly from the island of Chios, these handsome, young cupbearers were called as "muğbeçe," meaning the tavern-keeper's apprentice.

The frequenters of Balıkpazarı taverns were mostly boatmen, bargemen, porters, hammam attendants, and horse cart drivers – the kind of people the elites used to call "riff-raff." Mariners were also visiting such places, but the authors of the era say that they wouldn't sit around for more than a couple of drinks, off to see the "belles of Galata." The Greeks were using almost all of their vineyard harvest to produce wine, and they were in fierce competition with the Jews. Famous Ancona, Tenedos (Bozcaada) and Saragossa wines of the time were brought by ships and unloaded at Kraso Skala (Wine Wharf), the last wharf of Galata on the Tophane coastline. Unless there was a ban on liquor, the unloaded wine would

go through the customs procedures and then carried to taverns in casks or earthenware containers. Although forbidden, some wine casks would be opened at the wharf for individual customers, who would fill the wine into their wine skins and take it to their homes. Kraso Skala was dismantled during the construction of the Galata Docks in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the "Şarap İskeleyi Sokak" (Whine Wharf Street), once leading to the wharf and famous for its taverns, is still there in Karaköy. Unfortunately, none of the taverns on this street has survived until today. Today, if you want to visit a wharf tavern, your options are incomparably limited. Karaköy Lokantası (at 35A, Kemankeş Street, with one side on Şarap İskeleyi Sokak) is one of the few taverns in the region.

- (1) Latifi, "Risale-i Evsaf-ı İstanbul," Edited by: Nermin Suner, İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti Yayınları, İstanbul, 1977.
- (2) [Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi, Cilt 1, Book 2, p. 660, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed., Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2008.
- (3) Michel Baudier, "Histoire Generale du Serail et de la Cour du Grand Seigneur des Turcs," Paris, 1626.
- (4) Eremya Çelebi, Kömürçüyan, "İstanbul Tarihi- XVII. Asırda İstanbul," p. 35, Eren Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 1988.
- (5) Ekrem Işın, "Gündelik Hayatta İstanbul," İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1995.
- (6) Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi, Vol. 1, Book 1, p. 394, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed., Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2008.
- (7) Eremya Çelebi Kömürçüyan, "İstanbul Tarihi- XVII. Asırda İstanbul," Eren Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 1988.
- (8) Mehmet Tevfik Bey, "İstanbul'da Bir Sene," p. 156-157, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1991.

**DIRECTIONS:** At the intersection of *Şarap İskeleyi Sokak* and *Kemankeş Street*, towards the sea, you'll see *Çinili Han*, a beautiful han adorned with ceramic tiles.

## BUILDINGS ON THE WATERFRONT

*Çinili Han*



One of the two important buildings on Galata Docks is *Çinili Han*, which was built in Art Nouveau style in 1910-11. It is located on *Kemankeş Street*, and inhabited by the Directorate of Customs. The second one is *Merkez Rıhtım Han*, to the left end of *Kemankeş Street*, and situated perpendicular to the coast. It was built between 1912 and 1914, and it is currently inhabited by the Turkish Maritime Organization.

**DIRECTIONS:** At the end of *Kemankeş Street*, the road turns around the multi-storey car park to the right. Follow this road towards *Gümrük Sokak*. About 25-30 m ahead is the entrance of *Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque* on the left.

## KEMANKEŞ KARA MUSTAFA PASHA MOSQUE

*Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque* was once a church within the seaward walls of Galata, close to the now-vanished *Kastellon Tower*. Rumor has it that inappropriate

things went on during some liturgies during the reign of Sultan *İbrahim*. Thereupon the Grand Vizier *Kara Mustafa Pasha* evicted the priests in 1642 and converted the church into a mosque.<sup>(20)</sup>

On both sides of the stairs to the entrance are the seals of Solomon (six pointed stars). This symbol of Judaism was also being used on some Ottoman works.

The mosque was built on a 220-sqm plot, and it has a single dome with semi-domes on four sides. The pulpit is made of wood.

Next to the courtyard gate is a fountain which, was built in 1732 on behalf of *Reisülküttab* (Ottoman



*Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque.*

equivalent of the secretary of foreign affairs) İsmail Efendi. The inscription above the entrance informs that the mosque was renovated in 1766.

Kara Mustafa Pasha, the founder of the mosque, held the post of grand vizier for five years during the last years of the reign of Sultan Murad IV. His mastery in archery earned him the moniker “Kemankeş” (lit. “archer”). He was executed by hanging by the order of the Sultan and buried to a tomb next to his medrese (theological school), which used to be located between Bayezid Mosque and Çorlulu Ali Pasha Mosque. His tomb and medrese were demolished during roadworks.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Follow Gümriük Sokak towards the direction of the sea and take the narrow pedestrian-only street on the right. Ahead you’ll see the stairs that leads down to the entrance of Kurşunlu Mahzen Mosque, also known as “Yeraltı Mosque.”*

## KURŞUNLU MAHZEN (UNDERGROUND) MOSQUE

Located near the Karaköy ferry terminal, this mosque has an entrance accessed by a few steps down, in contrast to other mosques. Actually, these few steps are not enough for it to be called as “Yeraltı” (meaning “underground”), so it is believed that the name comes from its having a dark interior. The mosque is composed of

vaults and has two main entrances: one on the seaside and the other on the landside. The landward door is accessed down the stairs, while seaward door is at ground level.

The building was originally built on Galata walls as a watchtower to monitor the coastline, but only its lower part – which is used as mosque – remains today. According to the Byzantine manuscripts on the history of Constantinople (Patria of Constantinople), the tower was built during the reign of Emperor Tiberius II (578-582). Also, the Chronicles of Theophanes (717 AD), which details the history of the Byzantium from 602 to 813 AD, mentions that a chain was pulled across from this tower – then known as the “Tower of Galata Neighborhood” – to the Kantenarian Tower (Tower of Eugenius) at Sirkeci, in order to keep access to the Golden Horn under control. In other words, the chain, which forced Mehmed I to carry his fleet over land, was kept under this tower.

This strategic tower would mark the fate of the city throughout the history. It remained under Byzantine control until 1352, and then handed over to Genoese with an agreement signed in the Blakharnea Palace.

In 1203, the tower fell into the hands of the armies of the Fourth Crusade, just before Constantinople was captured and pillaged by them. Geoffroi de Villehardouin (1160-1212), a knight and the chronicler of the crusade, mentioned

*Kurşunlu  
Mahzen Mosque;  
"Underground"  
Mosque, once a  
strategic tower.*



about the tower as “Tor de Galathas” (Galata Tower)<sup>(21)</sup>, which caused it to be confused by future readers with the Galata Tower up the hill. Later sources name it as Kastellon Tower.

The tower collapsed in time. Reportedly, it was used as a cellar (“mahzen,” in Turkish) for a long period after the Conquest.

Kurşunlu Mahzen Kiosk, one of the nicest examples of the Turkish civilian architecture, was built on this structure. During the 1750s, the low-ceilinged basement of the structure was converted to a mosque by the Grand Vizier Çorlulu Köse Bahir Mustafa Pasha.<sup>(22)</sup> It is still open to worship as Yeraltı Mosque.

The interior of the mosque receives natural light only through its seaward windows. The mosque has 54 squat pillars with a low vaulted ceiling. The vaults are in semi-dome shape. Its tower-shaped single-balcony minaret was rebuilt by Sultan Mahmud I after an earthquake.

The mosque also contains what is claimed to be the burials of the prophet Muhammed’s companions. Reportedly, the burials of Vehb bin Huşeyre and Amr bin As, who were killed by the Byzantines during Constantinople’s siege by the Umayyad commander Mesleme Bin Abdülmelik, and the burial of Süfyan bin Uyeyne, were found here.

**DIRECTIONS:** Turn right from the seaward door of Kurşunlu Mahzen Mosque and walk along the street among the shops. From the first corner turn right to Halil Pasha Sokak. At no 23 is the entrance of Ömer Âbid Han, but before entering, you may want to climb some steps up the stairs just across the han, in order to get a better view of its Mansard style roof.

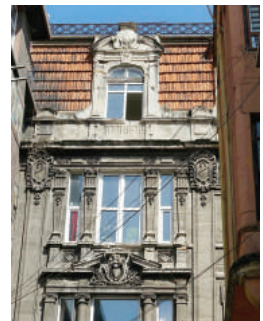
## ÖMER ÂBİD HAN

The han has an entrance from the Yemişçi Sokak, but the main entrance is on Halil Pasha Sokak, next to a crowded pedestrian area around Karaköy ferry terminal.

It was built in 1909-10 by Alexandre Vallaury, a famous Levantine architect of the time, on the order of Arab İzzet Pasha, first chamberlain of Sultan Abdülhamid II. The first residential electricity system in Istanbul was tested at İzzet Pasha's mansion – which was near Yıldız Palace – with equipment brought from Germany.

Built on 1040 piles for being close to the sea, and featuring a central heating system, Ömer Âbid Han was a modern building for its time. The architect Vallaury is said to be inspired by Turkish residential architecture, applying a synthesis of eastern and western styles in most of his post-1895 works. However, Ömer Âbid Han was seemingly an exception. The façade, having rather a western style, is adorned with decorative elements borrowed from the baroque, renaissance, and classical periods. The four-storey building sits on a plan area of 1,183 sqm, making it one of the largest hans in Istanbul. However, it doesn't feature a courtyard, and it is composed of interconnecting rooms. Each room has at least one window that opens either to the street, or to the halls. The Mansard style roof offers a larger living space.

During its first years, Ömer Âbid Han was used as the grain bourse, inhabited by millers, brokers, ship owners, maritime agents, lawyers, and insurance companies. In 1992, it was evacuated for demolition and reconstruction as a hotel, but the plan was abandoned because of its historical value.<sup>(23)</sup> Today, it is mostly inhabited by electronic parts shops.



*Ömer Âbid Han has a Mansard style roof.*



## A Guinea Pig for Electricity: Arap İzzet Pasha

While Istanbul's introduction to electric power was during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, he was also responsible for its delay because of his deep concerns of safety. At the end of 1890s, Germans who were in good terms with the Ottoman throne believed that it's time for Istanbul to have electric power. Prince Bernhard Von Bulow, the German State Minister for Foreign Affairs, describes in his memoirs how he and German Emperor Wilhelm II visited Istanbul, trying to talk the Sultan round to it. Although they reminded Siemens' proposal to illuminate Istanbul, von Bulow says, they were unsuccessful in persuading the Sultan, as he was too concerned about the dangers of electric sparks.<sup>(1)</sup>

On the other hand, there were many people and entrepreneurs who believed that Sultan Abdülhamid should have at least started this journey of electricity from his own Yıldız Palace. A German Jew named Weinberg, who was a photographer and the owner of an imported merchandise store in Beyoğlu, led the way by importing the required equipment from Germany. Abdülhamid was still unsure of the results, however, and he was reluctant to take the risks by being a test subject for the first trials. Fortunately, Arap İzzet Pasha, who was in good relations with the foreign companies, came to his rescue.

Arap İzzet Pasha was born in Damascus during mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as the son of

Holo Pasha, one of the wealthiest feudal lords in Syria, and a Crimean woman named Fatma. After receiving a good education, he came to Istanbul in his young ages and entered into the service of Sultan Abdülaziz. During the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid, he gradually rose in ranks to become one of the most powerful of the Ottoman statesmen.

Foreign companies which demand prerogatives to produce and sell electric power in Istanbul have already convinced Arap İzzet Pasha, the Second Chamberlain to the Sultan at the time: equipment imported from Germany would be installed at his mansion in Yıldız neighborhood of Istanbul. İzzet Pasha's wooden frame mansion, which used to be situated on the right hand side down today's Barbaros Boulevard, next to Said Çiftçi Dispensary, would be a guinea pig for electric power trials.

The electric equipment was installed in the mansion by another German Jew engineer named Otto. The generator was placed in the garden, and power cables were run from the generator to the mansion. Once the tests were complete, the switch was turned on one night to supply the mansion with power. İzzet Pasha's mansion was now the only place bathed in light during the dark Istanbul nights.

Quick to adapt to this innovation, İzzet Pasha even went on to install a cinematography machine in his mansion to

watch with his friends the latest films sent from Europe. One night, however, overheated cables caused the current to arc, and the resulting sparks set the mansion on fire. Despite the efforts of the fire brigade, this beautiful mansion was reduced to ashes.<sup>(2)</sup>

What's worse, a young maid of the mansion, sleeping unaware of the situation, lost her life to the fire.

Sultan Abdülhamid II was informed of the fire when he was in meeting with the French ambassador in Yıldız Palace. Believing that electricity might turn his palace into ashes even from long distances via a cable, Sultan Abdülhamid was proved right in his concerns.

After the fire, İzzet Pasha took his family and moved to Şehremini (Governor) Reşit Pasha's (his son's father-in-law) waterfront residence in Bebek. However, the main damage was to the people of Istanbul. They had to wait until Abdülhamid's deposition to have electricity. Budapest-based Ganz Company established the Ottoman Electric Company Inc. in 1911. The same year, a land was bought at the mouth of Kağıthane and Alibeyköy rivers to build the Silahtarağa Power Station. The power plant was put into service on 11th February 1914, supplying initially the tram network, followed shortly by the city network, private facilities, and establishments. Electric powered street lighting came to Istanbul in the 1920s.<sup>(3)</sup>



*Arap İzzet Holo Pasha.*

**(1)** Bülow, Bernhard, Fürst von, "Memoirs of Prince von Bülow, 2 vols, trans. F.A. Voigt, Boston: Little, Brown and Company," 1931-1931."

**(2)** Murat Bardakçı, "Beyaz Enerji Krizimiz Bir Yangınla Başladı," *Hürriyet Newspaper*, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2001.

**(3)** Mehmet Mazak, "Gündelik Hayattan Renklerle Eski İstanbul," p. 172-173, Yeditepe Yayınları, İstanbul, 2009.

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow your steps back to the exit and turn left. Make another left, and then right and you'll be on the Rıhtım Street, which lies parallel to the sea. The building just before the bridge, at 1 Rıhtım Street, is adorned with animal figures, and it belongs to Ziraat Bank. Entrance is on the western side.

## ZİRAAT BANK BUILDING

*Ziraat Bank Building; Some claim that the statue of the man on the Ziraat Bank building is of "Hiram the Master Mason."*



During the World War I, German and Austrian-Hungarian banks extended their activities in Galata. Germany-based Wiener Bank Verein acquired a big building, which was situated on the street that lies from Galata Bridge to Karaköy, and which formerly belonged to Credit Lyonnais Bank of France. The bank had it rebuilt between 1910 and 1912.

In 1944, this building was handed over to Ziraat Bank (established in 1988 under state guarantee, with the function of supporting farmers and agricultural institutions as the first agricultural bank of the country). It is still being used by the bank.<sup>(24)</sup>

The building has an eclectic architecture. Four high-reliefs adorn the upper parts of its southwest (front) and seaward façades, two of which feature an eagle on the bow of a wooden vessel. One interesting detail about the statues on the building is the claim that they are Masonic symbols. On the left corner of the seaward terrace (Galata bridge side) is a statue of a woman with two crouching children on both sides. On the right corner of the terrace is a statue of a man dressed in a long tunic, holding a hammer and a chisel in his hands. Some claim that the statue of the man is of "Hiram the Master Mason," and that the statue of the woman is of "the Widow," his mother, as described in the Hebrew Bible.

**DIRECTIONS:** *At the end of the Rıhtım Street, turn right, leave the Ziraat Bankası building behind and walk for another 150- 200 m to Kemeraltı Street. On the right is a stately building: Karaköy Palas.*

## KARAKÖY PALAS

Karaköy Palas is the most flamboyant and glorious building on the square of the same name. Not a namesake square, however: Karaköy Square did not exist at the time. Karaköy Palas was the last example of the group of prestigious buildings mostly clustered around the Karaköy side of the Voyvoda Street.

During the demolitions of 1956 to 1958, the buildings on the opposite side were taken down in order to open a square, and Karaköy Palas came into view with all its glamour. The square (!) is ugly, but the building is impressive.

The building has three entrances on its façade. The entrance in the middle is for the office block. Left and right entrances are for the branch offices of two unrelated banks. On the side of one

of the arched windows is the signature of Mongeri, its architect.

The building was designed during late 1910s by the Istanbul-born Levantine architect Giulio Mongeri (1873-1953), and during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has been home to many foreign companies.

Giulio Mongeri was one of the most important architects of the era. He was also a lecturer at the Academy of Fine Arts (named as Istanbul Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi at the time), and he is considered to be one of the names, together with Vallauri and Jasmund, behind the most noteworthy Istanbul buildings in the “Western Historicism” style. He is also the architect of the St. Antoine Church. He left Istanbul during the World War I, but returned back to the Academy after the war, and contributed to the training of the first generation architects of the Republic until 1930. The headquarters of the Ottoman Bank, Ziraat Bank, and İş Bank in Ankara are also among his works.



*Designed by Istanbul-born Levantine architect Giulio Mongeri, Karaköy Palace is the most flamboyant building on the Karaköy Square.*



## Chapter Six

# **WALKING GALATA: TOUR III**

Voyvoda

GALATA





**DIRECTIONS:** *Our tour starts at Şişhane. You can get there by taking the Yenikapı-Haciosman subway train to Şişhane stop. When you get off the train, follow the signs first to İstiklal Caddesi-Şişhane, and then to Şişhane. The escalator will take you to Meşrutiyet Street. Walk up to the point where you see the sign to Kiblelizade Sokak ahead, and turn right. Across Meşrutiyet Street, at the mouth of the stairs that lead to Nergis Sokak, you will see the Decugis House, now functioning as a hotel.*

## DECUGIS HOUSE

The building is located at the intersection of Meşrutiyet Street and Nergis Sokak (10, Nergis Sokak) and it functions as Galata Antik Hotel today. It was built in 1881 as a three-storey mansion for the Decugis family. You can see the name of the architect, Alexander Vallaury, on the main street side of the building. Construction date is written above the entrance. Henri Hypollite Décugis, a well-known Frenchborn Levantine businessman, moved in this building with his family just after its construction. One of the oldest stone buildings in Pera; it has been a house for Decugis family for more than 60 years.

Henri Décugis was the general agent in Turkey for well-known tableware brands such as Christofle, Haviland, and Baccarat. His store, named “Constantinople-Pera,” was at 471-472 Grande Rue de Pera (today, İstiklal Street).<sup>(1)</sup> His tableware could have been found not only on the tables of the Pera’s elite, but also in Dolmabahçe Palace, Pera Palas Hotel, Marquise Patisserie, or even in the Orient Express train.

After his wife’s death in 1940, Henri Decugis lived as a recluse in his mansion and closed all the shutters in sign of

mourning. He died in 1942, and his son took over the house and the store. However, the events of 6-7 September (1955) forced him to sell the house and migrate to France. In 2001, the estate was bought by the Arguş family. Two young sisters, Ebru and Duygu Arguş had the building renovated by a team of experts from Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, before opening it as Galata Antique Hotel with a special permit for historic buildings.<sup>(2)</sup> Once a house of mourning, this 23-room boutique hotel now honors the memory of the Decugis family.

The building just across the Decugis House, at 1, Kiblelizade Sokak, was once called as Çituri Apartment. It belonged to Çitury family who, during early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was providing printing services for many local and foreign publications of the time, as well as operating a stationary shop.

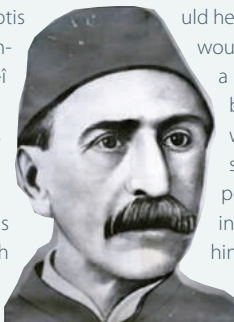


*Decugis House serves as a hotel today.*

## "Go Tell It To Marko Pasha!"

The old Turkish adage of "Go tell it to Marko Pasha" takes its source from Dr. Markos Apostolidis Pitsiotis, the private doctor of Sultan Abdülaziz and Sultan Abdülhamid. His house was on Kabristan Sokak in Şişhane. Markos Apostolidis Pitsiotis (1824 -1888) was also the commander of Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-i Şâhâne (the Imperial Medical School at Gülhane), and he was the first physician to rise to the rank of mirliva (brigadier general) in the Ottoman Army. For this reason, he was referred to with the title "Paşa" (Pasha). In 1877, he co-founded the Red Crescent (Hilâl-i Ahmer Cemiyeti, or today's Kızılay) with Aziz Bey of Crimea, and became the first chairman of this institution. For his time, Marko Pasha was very knowledgeable and experienced in surgery and medicinal plants. He had three children (Arjeta, Yorgo, and Marika).<sup>(1)</sup>

As for the roots of the famous adage "Go tell it to Marko Pasha..." Being a mild-mannered, patient doctor, administrator, and a member of the Senate (elected in 1877), Marko Pasha had to accept many visitors every day and listen to their problems. He would listen, or at least pretend to listen, the complaints and demands of the teachers, students, and even of those who had no connection with him but merely encouraged by his fatherly look.<sup>(2)</sup> Once a visitor finished telling his problem, Marko Pasha would pause a moment and ask with his typical Greek



*Like many other  
physicists, Dr. Markos  
Apostolidis Pitsiotis  
lived in Galata.*

accent: "Yes I see, but what (about it)?" The visitor would tell his problem once more, in greater detail, only to get the same, calmly expressed response: "Yes I see, but what?" The visitor, exhausted from telling his story, would helplessly leave, seeing that the Pasha wouldn't provide him with a solution. If a visitor turns out to be more stubborn than Marko Pasha, then he would call his right hand and first secretary Muhtar Efendi and whisper into his ear: "Dear Efendi, please invent something to write and send him away."<sup>(3)</sup> And sometimes he would pretend not understanding, and ask in Greek to a person next to him: "Ti lei?"<sup>(4)</sup>

According to Despina Anats, his granddaughter, Marko Pasha would even use his famous "Yes I see, but what?" to stall off the Ottoman Greeks who came to him with complaints about Young Turks.<sup>(5)</sup>

Once the Pasha's notorious behavior was heard amongst the people, "go tell it to Marko Pasha" came to be used as an expression to avert somebody, as if to say "that's all I can do." According to writer Said Duhani, the adage meant, "Tell your complaints – or expectations – to the walls."<sup>(6)</sup> A more dramatic example of Marko Pasha's refusal to answer the demands of those who appeal to him had presented itself during the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz, when he was the imperial head physician. Marko Pasha, an unmatched physician with uncompromised work ethic, was summoned to the palace by Grand Vizier Hüseyin Avni

Pasha in the aftermath of Abdülaziz's dethronement and execution. The late emperor was murdered by cutting both of his wrists, and Marko Pasha was asked to write and sign a forensic report to attest a suicide, without even touching Abdülaziz's corpse. Marko Pasha was in fact a friend of the Grand Vizier, but he refused writing such a report. The putschists then went to find another doctor who could be persuaded to arrange a suicide report for the murder. After the accession of Abdülhamid to the throne, Marko Pasha became the private doctor of the new Sultan too. Marko Pasha died at the age of 64, and his grave is in Kuzguncuk Greek Cemetery.

(1) Seda Çakmak, "Derdini Marko Paşaya Anlat'ın Kökeni," *Star newspaper*, 18th October 2010.

(2) Said N. Duhani, "Beyoğlu'nun Adı Pera İken," p. 22, *Çelik Gülersoy Vakfı İstanbul Kütüphanesi Yayınları*, İstanbul, 1990.

(3) Çağatay Üstün, "Derdini Marko Paşaya Anlat," *Van Tıp Dergisi*, Vol. 8, Issue 4, p. 134, September 2001.

(4) "What is he saying?"). [Nevra Bucak's interview with Anais Martin, "İstanbul'da Kuzen Semtler," *Türk Dili Magazine*, Issue 144, May–June 2011.

(5) Murat Kesik, "Marko Pasha efsanesi çöktü," *Vatan Newspaper*, 19 September 2010.

(6) Said N. Duhani, "Beyoğlu'nun Adı Pera İken," p. 22, *Çelik Gülersoy Vakfı İstanbul Kütüphanesi Yayınları*, İstanbul, 1990.

### *"Yes I see, the sound echoes. But what?"*

*In a time when ideas of freedom was spreading amongst the students, the Medical School students gathered at an evening roll-call and shout at once "Padişahım alaşağı" ("Down with the Sultan"), instead of the customary triple "Padişahım çok yaşa" ("Long live the Sultan"). Hearing this, the alarmed class supervisors appeared before Marko Pasha the next day in order to inform him. But had he ever really listened to someone's problem? He summoned the students, and a group of student representatives came to his presence. The students defended themselves: "Dear Pasha, you studied physics. As you know, the sound echoes between four walls, which distort the words. We shouted 'long live,' but the class supervisors were standing afar, and in accordance with the rules of physics, our shout must have reached to their ears as 'down with'."*

*Satisfied with this explanation, Marko Pasha turned to the supervisors and said: "The students are right; this is what the rules of physics and science dictate." But the Pasha was nobody's fool: after the supervisors left, he turned this time to the students and said: "Yes I see, the sound echoes. But what?"*

(\*) Çağatay Üstün, "Derdini Marko Paşaya Anlat," *Van Tıp Dergisi*, Vol. 8, Issue 4, p. 135, September 2001.



*Sixth Municipal Department building with its neoclassical style façade.*

**DIRECTIONS:** Return back from Meşrutiyet Street to Şişhane Square. Before you turn right from subway escalators to the down-sloping street, you'll see a large white building on your diagonal left. Today home to the Municipality of Beyoğlu, it was once the building of the 6<sup>th</sup> Municipal Department.

## FORMER 6<sup>TH</sup> MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENT

6<sup>th</sup> Municipal Department (“Altıncı Daire-i Belediye” in Ottoman Turkish) was the first western-style municipality of Istanbul. It was formed to serve the 6<sup>th</sup> of the 14 districts of Istanbul – namely, Galata and Pera. During the first term of Edouard Blacque Bey – who was the head of the 6<sup>th</sup> Department from 1876 to 1890, and from 1893 to 1895 – it was decided to build a modern municipality building. It is this white building, which was designed by Italian architect Giovanni Barborini and opened doors in 1890. Until the formation of Beyoğlu Municipality in 1924, it was called as 6<sup>th</sup> Municipal Department.

The building, with its neoclassical style façade, overlooks the Golden Horn and the historic peninsula.

After the Crimean War (1853-56), a need appeared for the establishment of a new, modern local administrative authority in order to bring order into the city's disrupted public services. A commission formed for the purpose reviewed municipal practices in the European capitals and drafted a regulation. As a result, Istanbul was divided into 14 municipal districts – following the examples of Imperial Rome and the Byzantine Constantinople. Although Beyoğlu would be the first district to implement the new practices, it was called “6<sup>th</sup> Department” after the 6<sup>th</sup> Arrondissement of Paris, the most developed district of Paris. As the commerce and finance center of Istanbul, and as a district with valuable properties and affluent foreigner and non-Muslim Ottoman residents, the 6<sup>th</sup> District was in need of development.

The mission of the 6<sup>th</sup> Department was to introduce European-style public services and urban development arrangements in the region. As a division that operated directly under the Grand Vizier's office, the 6<sup>th</sup> Department was endowed with the powers of a Ministry of Development.<sup>(3)</sup> The Department started putting plans into motion from 1857 onwards.

One of the first acts of the 6<sup>th</sup> Department was to produce cadastral maps and parcelation plans of Beyoğlu and Galata. Accordingly, street signs and building numbers were placed. A tender was held in 1859 for the cleaning of the streets. The streets were divided into 3 classes: First class streets were to be swept every day while the third class streets once a week. Of course, westernized elite neighborhoods of Beyoğlu received the best treatment. Public parks for recreational use were created at Taksim and Tepebaşı; and the İstiklal Street was paved. Following the draft of a city plan, the roads were enlarged, old buildings were demolished, the streets were paved, and the sewage network was completed.

During the 1870s, Cadde-i Kebir – today's İstiklal Street – became the first street to be lined with street lamps, powered by gas from the Dolmabahçe Gasworks. Then, the



gas-powered street lights spread to other regions such as Galata, Pera, Yüksek Kaldırım, Pangaltı, Fındıklı, Tophane-i Amire, Talimhane, and Saraçhane.

In 1869, a permit was granted to Konstantin Karapano Efendi to operate horse-drawn trams. The first tram line was opened in 1871 between Azapkapı-Beşiktaş; and the

Karaköy-Şişli line followed in 1883.

During the Republic era, the historic and symbolic building was used as the district governorate until 1960s; then, it was re-assigned as the regional directorate of the Istanbul Municipality. In 1984, Beyoğlu region, covering 45 neighborhoods, was reincorporated as a district

## Furniture Was Their Business: Psalty Family

As the number of new apartments in Galata was rapidly expanding during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the demand for furniture has also increased. Many stores selling imported European furniture were opened to meet the demand of Istanbulis. With them, the production and consumption of contemporary furniture in Istanbul started and became widespread. One of the most well-known among them was Maison Psalty, a furniture and accessories store which was founded in 1867 by an Ottoman Greek named Georges Jean (Yanni) Psalty.

Psalty, adapting the fashionable designs of European furniture to the taste of Ottoman clientele – or, sometimes directly imitating them – gained considerable reputation among Pera's wealthy families, as well as in court circles. The main store of Psaltys was located opposite the 6<sup>th</sup> Municipal Department, on Müellif Sokak (at no.8 on former Kabristan Street).<sup>(1)</sup> In this store, Psaltys (or Ipsalties, as pronounced by Turks) were selling European brands as their agent, as

well as making furniture themselves to order. Especially the "Thonet" chairs, imported from Austria, were very popular. Again imported from Austria, Psalty's bedroom, dining room and living room sets, secretaries, and cupboards aroused much interest among the wealthy and the court circles.

In the following years, Psaltys opened a branch at 146, Grande Rue de Pera (İstiklal Street), followed by other branches in the region. The company had 30 employees.

Psalty family also gave their name to the lovely passage which connects Küçük Hendek Street to Şahkulu Street. A block in the passage was probably housing one of Psalty's manufacturing facilities in Istanbul. (Consisting of three blocks and a courtyard, this structure was renovated in 2010, staying as close as possible to its original).

Psaltys also had a building – again, probably used for manufacturing purposes – at 866, Amber Sokak (today Tutsak Sokak) in Galata. In 1932, aging father Psalty handed the business to his son Georgiades (Psalty) Micropoulos, who studied in Paris, specia-

municipality, and the building was assigned to the newly established Beyoğlu Municipality. When “modern additions” were made on both sides and at the top floor of the building during a controversial restoration in 2014, criticism came from academic circles that the building had lost its original character.



*Psalty Furniture and Decoration Co.  
ended furniture production in 1952*

lizing in furnishing and interior decoration. After the foundation of the Republic, the company submitted proposals for government tenders. In 1941, they won the contract for the furnishing of the State Airlines Administration's head office.<sup>(2)</sup>

“Psalty Furniture and Decoration Co.” ended furniture production in 1952. During the 50s, however, the second-hand furniture of Maison Psalty gained antique status and were sold at a store named “Dekorasyon” at 353, İstiklal Street. Even today, it is possible to come across well-maintained Psalty furniture at antique shops and auctioneers.

Psaltys had also produced furniture for Dolmabahçe Palace, and some examples of both import and own production furniture of Psalties (the latter bearing the label “Maison Psalty-Constantinople”) can be seen by visitors in Room No. 51 of the Palace.<sup>(3)</sup>

Poet İlhan Berk says that Georgiades (Psalty) Micropoulos had ruled over Müellif Sokak like a feudal lord ruling over his lands, and he gives the following description about him:

“In a photograph of him, Psalty is tall, with thin eyebrows on an oblong, slender face. He is dressed as a European (otherwise is unimaginable) – ruffs starched, holding a cane. He has a dark beard, a small chin, and a small mouth. As reported by somebody who had talked with him, he was skipping ‘r’s altogether. His left eye was continuously twitching. And like all carefree Levantines, he was daydreaming a lot.”<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) *İkdam Newspaper*, 7 April 1899.

(2) TCBDA/CAK 2/15230, 13/1/1941 and Şebnem Uzunarslan, “Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Konutlarında Mekan ve Mobilya, Sanatta Yeterlilik Tezi, MS University, Institute of Science, Istanbul, May 2002.

(3) *Maison Psalty, “Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi, Vol. 5, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013.*

(4) İlhan Berk, “Galata”, p. 88-89, *Adam Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 1985.*



*Frej Apartments before the last restoration.*

**DIRECTIONS:** Now cross the street and walk down the slope. Leave the Tax Office and the subway exit behind, and proceed towards the mouth of Büyük Hendek Street. Here, straight ahead, you'll see the Frej Apartment.

## Splendid Life Ends Tragically

The Frej (Freige) Family, who once owned the glorious Frej Apartments at the intersection of Büyük Hendek and Okçu Musa Streets on Şişhane Square, was a wealthy Levantine family from Beirut. Reportedly, the paternal side of the family was of Maronite origin. The family's wealth was vast enough to seek 99-year coasting trade rights for the Ottoman Empire's ports in the Eastern Mediterranean, including Haifa and Tripolitania.<sup>(1)</sup>

Selim Hanna Frej, the son of the family, married to the daughter of Glavanis, a wealthy family of Galata. (Çelik Gülersoy refers to Glavanis as the "owner of the Tepebaşı Square.") He had three children from this marriage: Jan, Alfred, and Anjel (Angel). When the mansion of Glavanis was sold a short while after the birth of Anjel, Selim Hanna Bey had Frej Apartment built, and moved with his family to the second floor after the construction. Frej Family lived there for two years.

By the time Anjel Hanım had reached the age of marriage, the Ottoman Empire

had become history and the new Turkish Republic Selim had been formed. At the time, the reputation of Dukaginzâde Mehmed Feridun Bey (1894-1976), a handsome staff officer who made a name as the captor of Greek commander Trikopis during the Independence War, had reached to the ears of young girls in Pera. Ultimately, the families of both sides agreed to the marriage of Anjel Frej Hanım and Feridun Bey.

As a staff captain of the Turkish Army, Feridun Bey (1894-1976), worked for a while as a teacher of tactics, and, later, of war history, at the War Academy. However, he had to leave the Army in 1927 upon the passing of a law that forbid marriage of officers to persons of foreign origin.<sup>(2)</sup>

In the young Turkish Republic, origins and last names were always an issue. Therefore, Angel became Aysel, while Dukaginzâde Feridun Bey took Dirimtekin as his last name. Nevertheless, "Monsieur and Madame Dirimtekin" became the most distinguished faces in Istanbul's high society. They were the most sought-after figures

## FREJ APARTMENTS

In Istanbul, multi-storey masonry buildings and apartments were first introduced - and quickly spread - around the Galata and Pera regions. New construction methods and materials were brought from Europe,

and applied first in this region of the city. One of these buildings was Frej Apartment, which catches the eye with its dashing façade, on the corner of Büyük Hendek and Okçu Musa streets. It takes its name from the Levantine Frej (Freige) family, one of the prominent families in Istanbul's high society.<sup>(4)</sup>

of official and diplomatic parties. At such parties, Aysel Hanım was wearing elegant hats only to be found in the most expensive stores of Europe, while Feridun Bey, now a historian by hobby, was posing in his sash and foreign decorations, and showing off with his intellectual personality to a crowd who were happy to chat with him. Coming from a noble Albanian family, Feridun Bey was proudly wearing his cornelian signet ring of Dukaginzâdes.<sup>(3)</sup>

After his discharge from the Army in 1927, Feridun Bey took administrative positions in various institutions (Turkish Aeronautical Association, Istanbul Directorate of Physical Education and Sports, Eminönü Community Center, Turkish Touring Foundation, etc.). When he retired in 1948, the couple sold the Frej Apartment for 150 thousand lira and moved to an apartment flat in Nişantaşı. As an amateur historian, Feridun Bey published several articles on various research subjects, including the Conquest of Constantinople. He even wor-



*Feridun  
Dirimtekin*

ked as the director of Hagi Sophia Museum between 1955 and 1971. In 1976 Feridun Bey lost his life to a heart attack after falling into an uncovered pit in a Galata street. From then on, the story didn't go so well for Aysel Hanım. She got into row with the other heirs of the Frej estate, who even went so far as to putting her to a mental hospital for a while. She spent her last years in her flat at 60/1 Osmanbey Şair Nigar Street, and died in 1988 after breaking her hip by falling into an uncovered municipal excavation pit, just like her husband.

(1) Afife Batur, "Frej Apartmanı", *Istanbul Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 3, Istanbul, 1994

(2) Semavi Eyice, "Dirimtekin Feridun", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 9, p. 372, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları*

(3) Çelik Gülersoy, "Beyoğlu'nda Gezerken", p. 45, *Çelik Gülersoy Vakfı Yayını*, Istanbul, 2003

Its exact date of construction is unknown. Based on its architectural style, Afife Batur estimates it to be from late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>(5)</sup>, while Çelik Gülersoy states that it might have been built in 1905 or in 1906. The architect was Konstantinos Kyriakidis (1881-1942), an Ottoman Greek who left Istanbul for Athens in 1922. Word has it that the children figures on the building were representing the children of the Frej family.<sup>(6)</sup>

The stones for the façade were brought from Malta, and marbles for the stairs from Italy. When completed, the building had a gas heating system, the latest luxury of the era. During the Constitutional Period, electricity was connected.<sup>(7)</sup>

Although Frej Apartment is considered by many as a cultural asset that should have been protected carefully with all the antiques in it, it was classified as a second-class historical building, and its interior was gutted and rebuilt between 1987 and 1989. This controversial restoration left only the façade in its original form: the design of the lobby and the floors have changed, the original plaster ceiling decorations, doors, and many other details were destroyed. The Frej Apartment was bought by Sarkuysan Group in 1983, and has been used as the service building of the company for long years. In 2011 the building changed hands again, purchased by Park Elektrik, a company in the Ciner Group. As of the time of writing, this 11-storey, 3,850-sqm building is again under restoration.

***DIRECTIONS:** Now, to your left, take the Büyük Hendeke Street that leads to Galata Tower Square. In the past, especially before 1948, the street was populated by Jewish residents.*

## BÜYÜK AND KÜÇÜK HENDEK STREETS

In Turkish, Büyük Hendeke means “large – and deep – moat”, while Küçük Hendeke meaning “small moat.” The Genoese dug moats around the Galata walls just like Byzantines did for Istanbul. At the time, these moats were as wide as 15 m,



*Küçük Hendek Street*

and they were lined with cascading embankments to hold the water. Access to and from the city was through the gates in the walls, and they were kept closed during the night.<sup>(8)</sup>

Evliya Çelebi mentions about the Büyük Hendek which used to stretch from Meyyit Gate to Tophane Gate. "I have seen thousands of fortresses but never a moat like this," he says and adds: "Only that of Akkerman, where the Dniester flows into the Black Sea, might match it. There are always sailors in this trench twisting ship cables, marlines, and life ropes."<sup>(9)</sup>

The moats were the scene of ruffian acts, especially during the heyday of the janissaries. Scarlatos Byzantios (1798 -1878), an Ottoman Greek and the author of "Konstantinoupolis," says that dagger fights and duels between janissaries were taking place here. "I'll see you at the moats," the janissaries would say, just like the Frenchmen who challenge opponents to a duel at the Boulogne Forests.<sup>(10)</sup>

One of the first initiatives of the 6<sup>th</sup> Municipal Department following its establishment in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century was to cover up the moats and re-zone the reclaimed land for development. Today's Büyük Hendek and Küçük Hendek streets (and Lüleci Hendek Street to the east of Galata Tower) are the neighborhoods where these old moats used to stretch along the city walls.



**DIRECTIONS:** *Büyüik Hendek Street will lead you to Neve Shalom Synagogue and the Jewish Museum on the right hand side, at no. 43.*

## NEVE SHALOM SYNAGOGUE AND THE JEWISH MUSEUM

While Jews were mostly settled in districts such as Balat and Hasköy during the Ottoman era, they also inhabited Galata and established a community there, once it gained commercial significance. Hence, there are many synagogues in Galata, Neve Shalom, being the largest, newest and the most important one. Belonging to Sephardic Jews, Neve Shalom, that opened doors in 1951 has been the most frequented synagogue by the Jews of Istanbul. Since January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016, it now functions as the Quincentennial Foundation Museum of Turkish Jews. The museum, which had functioned previously in Zulfaris Synagogue in Karaköy between November

2001-December 2015 aims to collect, preserve, exhibit, and disseminate knowledge about the cultural heritage of the Turkish Jews.

In 1492, when the Sephardic Jews of Spain escaped the Inquisition's clutches to reach Ottoman lands, they were equipped with the profound expertise they had gained through their Golden Age in Andalusia. Maybe the most important element of this expertise was the printing press. David and Samuel Ibn Nahmias Brothers, having just arrived, founded in 1493 the first printing house in Istanbul. The Jews were skilled in typography, and printing innovations such as italic typeface, page layout, foil stamping technique, and drop cap were introduced by the Sonsino family, who came from Italy to settle in Istanbul. The calligrapher and caster of the first Ottoman printing house, founded by İbrahim Müteferrika in 1727, was also a Jew: Ribí Yona ben Yaakov Eskenazi. Thanks to the museum's invaluable display of items, we learn so much about the memorable events and the personalities of the Jewish culture.

The Jews of Galata were mostly inhabited around Kuledibi neighbourhood (the literal meaning of Kuledibi is "under the tower"), most of them living on Büyüik Hendek Street in the second half of the 19th century. According to the Oriental Trade Directories records from 1881, they were usually employed as doctors or merchants.<sup>(11)</sup>

Its construction was deemed necessary

*Neve Shalom Synagogue*



when Zulfaris Synagogue and Keneset (Apollon) Synagogue (which was closed later in 1982) became insufficient for Galata's growing Jewish community in the 1940s. It was designed by Elias Ventura and Bernard Motola, two young Jewish graduate architects of Istanbul Technical University. It is claimed that the Aragon Synagogue, again built by Sephradim Jews, used to rise on the same plot before Neve Shalom.<sup>(12)</sup>

The synagogue's stained glass patterns were created at the State Fine Arts Academy, and applied to glass imported from England. The architectural calculations for the dome, which was to support a heavy chandelier, were done by the famous architect Bodin, and the dome was cast by the Master Plasterer Garbis.<sup>(13)</sup>

Meaning "Oasis of Peace" in Hebrew, Neve Şalom Synagogue suffered three terrorist attacks. On September 6, 1986, gunmen opened fire during a Shabbat service, which resulted in the death of our 22 Jewish citizens. The bullet and bomb marks on the upper left corner of the marble Ehal were left unrepaired as a reminder of this sorrowful day. On 1<sup>st</sup> March 1992, a bomb attack by two terrorists was prevented by the security measures in front of the synagogue, without damage or casualties. The third attack took place during the Sabbath service on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2003, and it was carried out simultaneously with a similar one against Şişli Beth Israel Synagogue. Two bomb-carrying

trucks were detonated in front of the synagogues, costing the lives of 6 members of the Jewish community, 11 passers-by, 5 security personnel, and a policeman.

Visiting hours of the Quincentennial Foundation Museum of Turkish Jews are: 10:00 to 16:00 on Mondays to Thursdays, 10:00 to 13:00 on Fridays and 10:00 to 14:00 on Sundays. It is closed on Saturdays and religious holidays.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Continue your walk up the Büyüik Hendek Street. Ahead, turn right to Şair Ziya Pasha Street. Down the street, on the left, you will see Laleli Çeşme (lit. Tulip Fountain) at the corner of the eponymous street.*

## LALELİ FOUNTAIN

Located at the corner of Laleli Çeşme Sokağı, Laleli Fountain is a stunning example of Art Nouveau architecture applied to a fountain. Although it doesn't bear an inscription, it is believed to be designed by Italian architect Raimondo Tommaso D'Aronco, and built in 1904. He worked in the Ottoman Empire between 1893 and 1909, and designed – and contributed to the restoration of – a large number of works in Istanbul. On the fountain, placed at the corner that marks the intersection of the two streets, is a sun motif in a central rosette. Branches emanate from the rosette on both faces of the fountain. Each face of the cut-stone fountain features a tap.

**DIRECTIONS:** Continue your walk down Şair Ziya Pasha Street. The Italian Synagogue is at no. 23, on the left.

## ITALIAN SYNAGOGUE

The Genoese sanctuaries in Galata are not limited to Catholic churches, because the region was also inhabited by a large Italian Jewish community. One of their synagogues in Galata was Kal de Los Francos Synagogue, today known as Italian Synagogue.

According to the information collected from the community archives and other sources, the synagogue was constructed as a result of a dispute on a steep fee asked from the Italian Jews for a wedding (or burial) service. Reportedly, the Italian Jew community appealed to Comm. Cerutti, the representative of the Italian Kingdom in Istanbul, to ask permission for leaving the central Jewish community. On 16 April 1982, the Italian government officially announced its decision to recognize - and to protect the religious freedom of - the separated Italian Jewish community, on condition that they preserve their Italian nationality.<sup>(14)</sup>

The Italian Jews first used the synagogue on the Zülfaris Street. Following its destruction, they temporarily rented a place on Küçük Hendek Street, while starting the construction of a synagogue on a plot of land bought on Şair Ziya Pasha Street (formerly, Kuledibi Şahsuvar Street). In 1885, the Ottoman government granted an official permit for the synagogue.

This first synagogue was demolished in 1931, but the Italian Jewish community built in its place the current one.<sup>(15)</sup> In 1980 it was renovated. The synagogue is worth seeing with its gothic façade and marble stairs. On its wall is an elaborate hand-drawn “shiviti,” probably by a local calligrapher.

Only about 100 Italian Jewish families are estimated to remain in Istanbul today. The synagogue once had an attendance of 300-400, but lately, the attendance is only 25-30 even on special religious days. Ceremonies such as Bar Mitzvah, Bat Mitzvah and weddings are very rare. Although



*Kal de Los Francos Synagogue, today known as Italian Synagogue.*

the synagogue belongs to the Italian community, it is open to all Jews.

Rifat Behar, one of the leading members of the community, talked to the Şalom newspaper longingly about the old days:

“Our favorite pastime was touring around from Tozkoparan up to Galata Tower. All neighborhood shops were closed for Kippur. Sweets used to be sold on the streets during the festival of Purim. On Simchat Torah, the streets were full of lanterns. The synagogues were also full. In our tradition we sprinkle oil in the synagogues, and three barrels of oil used to be brought here on Kippurs. Now nobody does it.”<sup>(16)</sup>

***DIRECTIONS:** Find your way around the synagogue to the empty lot behind it. Behind the hedges you'll see a tower still standing between the remains of the Genoese era walls of Galata.*

## GENOESE TOWER AND THE WALLS

Galata Tower was not the only tower in the Galata walls built by Genoese. Marie de Launay, an engineer who created a map of Galata walls in 1864 during his employment at the 6<sup>th</sup> Municipal Department, states that the seaward walls of Galata had 12 towers, one every 33 meters. Based on Kleizm's map, the art historian Celal Esad Arseven gives the number of towers as 16.<sup>(17)</sup> None of the seaward towers survived until today.

However, there are several remaining landward towers that we may have a chance to see. Two of these towers are located just to the west of Galata Kulesi Street. During the course of time buildings were constructed around them but they still preserve their form. These towers are roughly square in plan but their northwest (outward) faces are in nearly hemisphere shape. They are visible from the top of the Galata Tower, which offers visitors a panoramic view, but if you want to see one of them closer, you have to get into the empty lot adjacent to the Italian Synagogue (just after the synagogue on your way down towards Bankalar Street). On this lot, you'll have a chance to see the tower from 15-20 m afar.

Another wall tower from the Genoese era can be seen near the intersection of Lüleci Hendek and Revani Streets, within the premises of St. Benoit High School.

Celal Esad Arseven also mentions about the foundations remaining from a tower on Kale Street in Topthane.



*Another surviving part of Galata walls and a tower.*

**DIRECTIONS:** At the end of Şair Ziya Pasha Street, turn right to Okçu Musa Street. Ahead, on the right, is Okçu Musa Mescidi.

## OKÇU MUSA MESCİDİ

As this mescid (small mosque) do not bear an inscription, the construction date is unknown. Word has it that Okçu Musa was the head archer of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (“okçu” meaning “archer” in Turkish), and that he had this mescid built in this eponymous neighborhood, one of the first Muslim settlements in Galata. It was constructed as a two-storey building, using the drywall technique. The courtyard contains a well, and a tomb, which is believed to be of Okçu Musa. The minaret has a single balcony. In 1939, the General Directorate of Foundations renovated the walls and constructed a 5-storey building adjacent to the mescid. The first two floors of that building is an addition to the mescid, and the other floors are being used as lodging.



*The mihrap section of Okçu Musa Mescidi.*

***DIRECTIONS:** Follow your steps back on the Okçu Musa Street until you reach to Bankalar Street.*

## **BANKALAR STREET**

At the beginning of the 20th century, Bankalar Street (lit. “Banks Street”) was home to “the masters of money” who had the Ottoman government on a string. Today, you may still find here the offices of some banks and insurance companies, but it is mostly occupied by electronic parts stores and importers. To understand how it turned out to be like this, we have to go backwards and tell the story from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

“Galata abounds with pickpockets in the south, drunkards in the west, murderers in the north, and chanteuses in the east,” says Hagop Baronyan, an Ottoman Armenian author from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Then he adds: “There is no limit to spending and folly.”<sup>(18)</sup>

Yes, these words were probably true for mid-19<sup>th</sup> century merchants and bankers in the region, but the Ottoman Empire had already arrived to the limits of spending, if not the folly. In order to finance the Crimean War, the state became forced in 1854 to borrow foreign money via Galatan bankers. It was followed by other foreign borrowings in 1855, 1858, and 1860.

“Galatan bankers” is a term which was used for non-Muslim businessmen who were engaged in usury in two commercial buildings (han in Turkish) - ‘Komisyon Han’ (Commision Han) and ‘Havyar Hanı’ (Caviar Han) – and most of them were essentially goldsmiths. They played an important role in the history of the Ottoman economy until the establishment of the Public Debt Administration (Düyûn-u Umumiye), and especially until the foundation of the Ottoman Bank. The Galatan bankers also helped the Ottoman government in collecting taxes, providing short-term credits to clear the debts of the treasury, and exporting and circulating coins.

In time, the debt of the government to the Galatan

goldsmiths has reached to more than 80 million gold liras. Some part of the promissory notes and jewelry pledged in return for this debt were seized by foreign merchants and bankers. Salivating at the prospect of big profits, foreign banks came to Istanbul to have their share in the finance market. In the 1860s, the Ottoman government begun

to borrow not only from Galatan goldsmiths but also from the foreign banks. An era of banks had started.

"Bank-ı Osmanî-i Şahane," one of the first banks operating in Istanbul was founded in 1863 and financed by British and French capital. The Bank acted as an intermediary for the borrowings of the Ottoman Empire, endowed with the prerogative of

## Financier of the Sultans: Zarifi Family



*Leonidas George Zarifi at 1860  
(by Camille Silvy, National Portrait  
Gallery, London).*

Zarifi first engaged in commerce in the 18th century, by supplying Galata with wine, grape juice and grape molass from their own vineyards on the island of Paşalimanı (former Aloni), Sea of Marmara. In the 1770s, they already owned a large company based in Istanbul. They lived first in Arnavutköy, and then in Fener districts of Istanbul.

Yorgo Zarifi, the grandson of the first Zarifi, was born in 1810 in Arnavutköy. As his father's name was known to be on the list of financial backers of the Philiki Eteria (a secret Greek organization whose purpose was to liberate Greece from Ottoman rule), the family left Istanbul for Odessa during the Greek uprising in the Peloponnese. Yorgo Zarifi was only 16 at the time. Tsar Alexander I gave him a free entry to the Lycée Richelieu. After eight years in Odessa, they went to now-independent Greece.

Missing his home country, however, Yorgo returned to Istanbul and started



coining money when necessary. The Bank became the treasurer of the Empire with an agreement signed in 1875.

During this period, Abraham Behor Camondo and Nissim Camondo, the grandsons of the city's influential Camondo family, partnered with Istanbul's finance circles – mostly composed of Greek

Orthodox businessmen – to found a bank under the name *Societe Generale de L'Empire Ottoman*. The purpose of the bank was to ensure that the Empire's loan borrowing tenders are won by the Galatan bankers. With an edict of the Sultan, the bank was assigned as the "short term treasurer for internal and foreign loans."<sup>(19)</sup>

to work for Stefanos Zafiropoulos, the famous Greek banker of Galata. In 1836, he married to Eleni, the eldest daughter of the Zafiropoulos family. After some time, he became partners with Zafiropoulos family, entered into the banking sector and assumed important roles in the Ottoman finance system. His involvement in the Ottoman government's debt raising started during early 1850s, just after *Der-saadet Bank* (*Banque de Constantinople*) was liquidated.

Yorgo Zarifi was now the president of a newly established bank: *Societe Generale de L'Empire Ottoman* (*Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Şirket-i Umumiyesi*). The bank was unrivalled in the Empire's domestic debt raising. Zarifi served as the president of the bank between 1864–1864, and remained in the board until his death. His son Loanidas and his son-in-law Ulyse Negroponte (married to Sofia) were also in the bank's board. His other son-in law Antoine Vlasto (married

to Therese) was the bank's chief inspector. Seven out of nine members of the bank's board were Greeks.

The head office of the bank was in a han (on *Kürekçiler Sokak*) belonging to the Camondo family, who contributed to the urban development of Galata by building many hans and apartments between 1868 and 1909. This han became home to other important banks in the beginning of the 20th century, and it was sold to German-based *Wiener Bank Verein* in 1911.

The Ottoman government's bankruptcy in 1876 was a turning point for Zarifi's career because he became involved in certain political developments in the aftermath of it. He found new opportunities in this period of instability which started with the dethronement of Sultan Abdülaziz, and continued during the first years of Sultan Abdülhamid's rule.<sup>(1)</sup>

Zarifi's close friendship with Abdülhamid had started when he was a prince. When Abdülhamid unexpectedly ascen-

Between 1864 and 1868, the bank was unrivalled in winning internal loan borrowing tenders. From 1868, the bank had to compete with the İtibar-ı Umumiye Bank of the Societe General Group, which was owned by the Rotschids, a family of German Jewish bankers.<sup>(20)</sup>

The banks founded after 1864 in Galata were mostly based around the port, in the southern region of the city.

Nine of ten hans of Camondos were in Galata.<sup>(21)</sup>

In 1892, the Ottoman Bank had its twin office buildings designed by the renowned architect Alexandre Vallaury at 11 Voyvoda Street. It was to be used as the head office of a company founded with some foreign banks to administer the monopolies of the Public Debt Administration. One of the buildings was occupied by the

ded to the throne, Zarifi undertook an important role in managing the financial affairs of the government and the court. He played an important role in financing the 1877-1888 Ottoman-Russian War by providing loans to the government, although the magnitude of the interest rates and the severity of the loan conditions were to that extent to distress the Sultan.

1880 was the beginning of a golden era for the Societe Generale de L'Empire Ottoman. Together with some other Galatan bankers, the bank was granted the tax-farming rights for the Empire's many revenue sources – such as stamp duties, alcoholic beverages, and fishing. Yorgo Zarifi also played an important role in the foundation of the Ottoman Pubic Debt Administration.

During this last era of the Ottomans, the deficit between the Empire's external revenues and external spending grew increasingly. As the country was reeling under a heavy foreign debt from the 1850s, it became more and more crucial to close the

deficit. The Empire was relying upon transit trade as an effective revenue source to close the deficit. Like most other Galatan Bankers, Zarifi was one of the businessmen behind the transit trade between the Black Sea region and the Middle East.

When Yorgo Zarifi retired from business for health reasons, his son Leonidas Zarifi (1840-1923) took over the helm. Yorgo had a stroke in 1884 and died in Istanbul. His heart was removed and, with a separate ceremony, placed in a marble memorial in Agia Paraskevi Church in Tarabya.

In 1904 Deutsche Orient Bank has already been established in Istanbul and Leonidas Zarifi was representing the Ottoman interest in the board of the bank. So, it wouldn't be so farfetched to refer to Zarifis as "the family who established the banking system in the Ottoman Empire."

On the eve of Balkan Wars, Zarifis became partners with Baron Hirsch to finance Berlin-Baghdad railway, thereby increasing their wealth.

head office of the Ottoman Bank, and the other became the administration building of the Régie Company (currently it is used by the Central Bank).

From then on, Voyvoda Street (later named as Bankalar Street) became Istanbul's center of finance. Following the example of Ottoman Bank, many other banks and bankers moved their offices to this street.

As of late 19<sup>th</sup> century some of the banks located here were: Banque de Salonique, Deutsche Bank, Banque Russe pour le Commerce Etranger, Banque d'Athènes, Commercial Bank of the Near East Ltd, Hollantse Bank-Uni, and Banco di Roma, Banca Commerciale Italiana. During the Republic, banks such as the Central Bank, Sümerbank and Garanti Bank were added.

Zarifis continued to live in Istanbul until early 1920s, but then they left Istanbul for Marseilles when the Greek Army begun to invade the Asia Minor. The family had already one leg in Marseilles, as Leonidas' brother Perikles Zarifi (1844-1927) had founded there a company in 1909, under the name P. Zarifi&Cie. This company became Zarifi&Cie in 1970, and it is currently managed by Perikles Zarifi's 5<sup>th</sup> generation grandson Theodore Zarifi.

Yorgo Zarifi has always been known as a prominent benefactor of his time. The magnificent, castle-like building of the Greek Orthodox School in Fener, the Balıklı Greek Hospital, and the Agia Paraskevi Greek Orthodox Church in Tarabya were sponsored by him. In addition, he was one of the founders of the Greek Philological Association of Constantinople which earned a world-wide reputation with its library of thousands of books, as well as its publications and activities. His wife Eleni also sponsored the construction of the Central Greek Girls' School in Pera (which closed

doors in 1990 for the lack of students), as well as donating the building of the Greek Orphanage in Büyüka (Prinkipo Island) – the latter is known to be the world's second largest wooden building and it remains unused since its closure in 1964.

(\*) Murat Hulkiender, *"Bir Galata Bankerinin Portresi: George Zarifi (1806-1884)"*, p. 127, *Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi, İstanbul, 2003.*

## Philantropist Banker: Christakis Zografos



*Christakis Zografos.*

Christakis Zografos (1820-1898) was born in the small village of Kestorat in the Northern Epirus region of Albania. After graduation he came to Istanbul to work for his father. After a while, he opened with a partner a small currency exchange office in Galata. This was young Christakis' first introduction to the finance market.

In the course of time, Christakis Zografos became a banker. Between 1854 and 1881, he was amongst the prominent bankers who help the Ottoman government finding loans from the international finance markets. He was now known as Christaki Efendi. In 1864, he became one of the

founding partners of Societe Generale de L'Empire Ottoman, a bank that came to be known as "Societe Generale" (or, in Turkish pronunciation, "Sosyete Jenerali"). In 1870, he also became a partner of the newly founded Istanbul Tram Company.

Through his close relations with the court, he had a voice in the financial policies of the state. Christaki Efendi earned the trust of, and was awarded by, three successive Sultans.

He also acted as the chairman of the Greek community's Mixed National Council (Muhtelit Milli Meclisi) for long years, and made numerous donations to the community. In his home place in Epirus he founded a male and female teachers college. He donated 10 thousand gold liras for the construction of a six-storey school in Beyoğlu (Zografeion Lyceum). He had only two conditions for this donation: It should be a science lyceum, and its running costs should be covered by the Beyoğlu Community who would also be responsible for administration of the school. The Zografeion Lyceum opened doors for education on 19 September 1893.

Christaki Efendi was also a prominent name in Yeniköy district. In 1870 he founded a girls' high school in Yeniköy. This school was burnt down in 1950, and evacuated in 1954. From then until recent times, the building, a property of the Greek Orthodox Church, was allocated to the service of poor families. In 2012 it was rented

to the Kadir Has Foundation to be used as a college.<sup>(1)</sup>

Christakis Zografos was also the first mayor of Yeniköy municipality. *La Turquie* newspaper of 24 January 1874 informs its readers that Yeniköy Municipality, headed by Christaki Efendi Zografos, was established with a decree of the Sultan.<sup>(2)</sup>

The Cite de Pera – known also as Christaki Passage, or today, as Çiçek Pasajı (Flower Passage) – was also built by Christaki Zografos, in place of Naum Theater that was burnt down during the 1870 Great Fire of Pera. It was designed by Cleanthe Zonno, and opened doors in 1876 after two years of construction. The ground floors of the passage were occupied by the flower shops and flower auctioneers. The building is a three-storey structure including the ground floor. In 1908, the Grand Vizier Said Pasha bought it from Christaki Efendi. In the following years, the children of the Grand Vizier lived in the flats of the upper floor. During this period the passage was known as “Said Pasha Passage.”

From the 1940s, beerhouses and taverns were opened in the passage, causing the residents and flower shops to gradually abandon the place. After some time, only the name “flower” remained from those shops.

Zografos’ son Yorgo Christakis Zografos (1863-1920) completed his doctorate in 1888 in Paris Law School, and became a diplomat. In 1914, he temporarily acted as the state president of the Autonomous Northern Epirus Republic. With the outbreak of the World War I he went to Greece and

took an assignment as a bank director, and then, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Father Christaki Efendi, although earning the trust of the Sultans, was also one of the important names behind a court plot concerning some jewelry. The beginning of the story dates back to 1876, a difficult year for the Empire. At the time, the Ottoman government had declared bankruptcy because of the piling domestic debts during and after the period of *Tanzimat* (Reformation), as well as because of the foreign debts caused by the Crimean War of 1853-1856.

In 1876, Sultan Abdülaziz had been deposed and the new Sultan Murad V was receiving loans from Christakis Zografos since the time when he was just a prince. He had already owed a large sum of debt to Christaki Efendi.<sup>(3)</sup>

After Sultan Abdülaziz’s dramatic dethronement in 1876, his assets in cash and bonds were seized, while some of the court jewelry was confiscated by Şevki Efsar Valide Sultan, the mother of the new Sultan, and by her chief ally Damat Nuri Pasha, who was appointed by Sultan Murad V as the new *Mabeyn Müşiri* (Lord Marshall).<sup>(4)</sup> The confiscated jewelry also included trays of diamonds and gold coins given to the court as gifts for Murad’s ascension. The pieces of jewelry were counted and documented one by one, before being stored in chests. Seized cash money was reserved for the costs of Murad’s ascension ceremony. Bonds with a worth of 7.4 million lira, and 3,106 equity shares of Rumeli Railways were transferred to the

Bank-ı Osmani (Ottoman Bank) in return for the debts of the Treasury.<sup>(5)</sup>

As for the jewelry, it was pledged to Christos Efendi (who wanted to collect the loans he had made to the Sultan as soon as possible), because he had proposed to grant “a new loan of 247.5 thousand Ottoman gold liras” to the indebted Treasury. However, he would hold back 211.5 thousand gold liras out of this loan for the debts of Murad V from his princehood time: “I will also hold the jewelry in pledge until the repayment of the debt,” he said.<sup>(6)</sup>

Apparently, Christaki Efendi had understood that the instability in the Empire would last a long time, while the reign of Sultan Murad V would be short-lived: After a while he transferred the personal debts of the Sultan onto the Treasury, and took the pledged jewelry with him to Europe. According to the researchers, with this last move, Christaki Efendi aimed to prevent any future lawsuits against him for the jewelry which actually belonged to the Ottoman dynasty.<sup>(7)</sup> Murad V was deposed after reigning for only 93 days, and his successor Sultan Abdulhamid II too found himself in need of money to be able to secure his power. By the way, Christaki Efendi's agreement with the previous Sultan was about to expire on 27 August 1877, and he would earn the right to put the jewelry on sale within one month of its expiration. Therefore, Sultan Abdülhamid proposed a new agreement to Christaki Efendi, who was in Paris at the time. With this agreement, and under

the guarantee of Banker Zarifi, 37 real estate properties in and around İstanbul were pledged to Christaki Efendi, and the jewelry were returned to the Ottoman dynasty.

However, during the 31 March Incident (13 April 1909 on the Gregorian calendar) Abdulhamid II was deposed, and a group of insurgents ransacked the Yıldız Palace. The jewelry remaining from the pillage was auctioned and sold abroad by the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki).<sup>(8)</sup>

**(1)** Sevag Beşiktaşlıyan, “Bir Zamanlar Cemiyet-i Edebiye, Şimdi Otopark,” *Agos newspaper*, 13 October 2012.

**(2)** Ayşe Derin Öncel, “Apartman: Galata’da Yeni Bir Konut Tipi,” p. 59, *Kitap Yayınevi*, İstanbul, 2014.

**(3)** Arzu Terzi, “Sarayda İktidar Mücadelesi,” 2nd Ed, *Timaş Yayınları*, İstanbul, 2011.

**(4)** Mahmud Celaleddin Pasha, “Mirat-ı Hakikat,” p. 99, İstanbul, 1983.

**(5)** Mahmud Celaleddin Pasha, “Mirat-ı Hakikat,” p. 124-126, İstanbul, 1983, [Mehmet Memduh, “Mirat-ı Şuûnat,” p. 104, İstanbul, 1990.

**(6)** Arzu Terzi, “Sarayda İktidar Mücadelesi,” 2nd Ed, *Timaş Yayınları*, İstanbul, 2011.

**(7)** Erman Turgut, Feyzullah Uyanık, “Doç Dr. Arzu Terzi ile İle ‘Saray, Mücevher, İktidar’ kitabı üzerine Röportaj,” *İstanbultarih.com*, 11 March 2010.

**(8)** Arzu Terzi, “Sarayda İktidar Mücadelesi,” 2nd Ed, *Timaş Yayınları*, İstanbul, 2011.

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow Bankalar Street towards Karaköy. Ahead at no. 24, you will see Hezaren Han with its dashing façade.

## HEZAREN HAN

Like the Ottoman Bank building, Hezaren Han was designed by Alexander Vallaury, and it opened doors in 1903 after a record-breaking construction period of 5 months. Not counting the basement and the ground floor, the building has 4 floors. Three floors of the building were rented by Société du Tombac (Tobacco Company), and the other floor was occupied by Banker Eugenidi. Hezaren Han features one of the most eye-catching façades on Bankalar Street. The motifs on the facade are in a dynamic flow, with a certain Art Nouveau style. As a whole, it represents a mixture of Art Nouveau, Baroque and Neoclassical styles. The windows on each floor have a different design. The oriel bay that projects above the ground floor is supported by corbels decorated with acanthus leaves.

<sup>(22)</sup> Similar Baroque-style corbels can also be found on the 1905-built Varış İş Hanı up the street (at no.32). The three-part window group on the second level of the oriel bay features neoclassical style plasters of Ancient Greece and Rome architecture.



Hezaren Han.

**DIRECTIONS:** Walk past along the Burla building at no. 23 (another old building which stands here since many long years), and proceed down to Perşembe Pazarı Street. To the left, the stairs will lead you up to Galata Kulesi Sokak. The building at the mouth of the stairs is Bereket Han, once known as “Palazzo Comunale,” or the seat of the Genoese podesta.

## BEREKET HAN

Before the Conquest, the Genoese colony in Galata was ruled by a governor, who was called as “podesta,” and assigned by the Genoa Republic as its permanent ambassador to Byzantium. Also, customs levies were collected by this



podesta on behalf of the Genoa Republic. The inner walls built by Genoese were bearing not only the insignia of the leading families of Genoa, but also of the podesta. The seat of podesta in Galata was known as “Palazzo Comunale” (Community Palace), or the Palace of Podesta.

The first Palazzo Comunale, one of the most interesting buildings in Galata, was burnt down in a fire in 1315. It was replaced by a new palace but only a part of the second building has survived until today. A drawing and a photograph from 1850 (belonging to Baron R. Cecco, the ambassador to Sardinia) shows that the building had a gothic façade. At the time, the Palazzo Comunale was looking almost identical to the Palazzo di San Giorgio in Genoa, Italy (it was built in 1260 as a government office and is still standing).

Although the Palace of the Podesta is seen in its original form on a panoramic photo taken in 1857 by James Robertson & Felice Beato, a photo taken by Berggren in 1875 shows it with a different façade design. The fate of the building has changed during the 1870s. The building's façade, extending along the Voyvoda Street (later, Bankalar Street), was demolished for the new tram line. The remaining part of the building was probably renovated during the 1880s.<sup>(23)</sup> Above the door in the simple rear wing of the building is a late copy of a Genoese era insignia.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Bereket Han was occupied mostly by French, British and German insurance companies.<sup>(24)</sup>

The building is known today as Bereket Han, and its rear wing, having no special architectural character, is still standing in its original form. Today, the building sits on a plan area of 220 sqm and it has 5 floors. It was bought by a businessman in the 2000s, and it is under restoration as of April 2015, rumored to be opened as a hotel.

*An old drawing shows Bereket Han used to have a Gothic façade in the past.*



**DIRECTIONS:** *Continue your walk down the Bankalar Street. After crossing Perşembe Pazarı Street on the right, you'll see Voyvoda Han at no. 19, next to the Akbank building.*

## VOYVODA HAN

As the building does not bear an inscription, the architect and the exact construction date is unknown. Based on the Oriental Trade Directories and the Goad insurance maps, the construction date is estimated to be 1903-04.<sup>(25)</sup>

The building has arrived to the present day without design alterations. Between 1905 and 1925, it was occupied mostly by insurance companies. As it has a narrow footprint, the companies occupying the office floors were not so big.<sup>(26)</sup>

The façade of the building represents a mixture of Neoclassical, Neo-Baroque and Art Nouveau styles, Neoclassical being the most pronounced one. This eclectic façade is adorned with two-storey high pilasters with Corinthian capitals.<sup>(27)</sup>

Until recent times, a British Royal Coat of Arms could be seen on one of the ground floor walls, belonging to the agency of the British Post Office, a former tenant of the building.



*Voyvoda Han with its eclectic façade.*



*The SALT Galata building was the head office of Ottoman Bank until 1998.*

**DIRECTIONS:** Continue your path down the Bankalar Street. After passing the Banka Sokak on the right, you'll arrive to the twin buildings of the Ottoman Bank. Today, one of the buildings is home to the Central Bank at no. 13, and the other to SALT Galata at no. 11.

## **SALT GALATA (THE OTTOMAN BANK MUSEUM AND THE CENTRAL BANK BUILDING)**

Financed by British capital, the Ottoman Bank was founded in 1863, under the name “Bank-ı Osmanî-i Şahane.” It was acting as the Imperial Central Bank and Treasurer. In 1889, Sir Edgar Vincent was assigned as the director of the Ottoman Bank. As the Ottoman Bank developed, Sir Edgar Vincent envisioned a new headquarter building to match the institution’s recently acquired power. The plans for a twin building, located on Voyvoda Street in Galata, were commissioned in 1890 to Alexandre Vallauray, a Frenchborn Levantine and one of the most outstanding

architects of the time. The twin buildings were completed within 2 years on a lot owned by the Regie Company (Tobacco Company). The new head office of the Ottoman Bank opened doors on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1892 at 11 Voyvoda Street.<sup>(28)</sup>

The world-famous safe manufacturer Samuel Chatwood of London undertook the construction of a 'steel fort' housing various safe rooms that belonged to the building. The bank's gold reserve—weighing thirteen tons—was transferred from the bank's former vault in Saint-Pierre Han to its new location. The building's massive structure dominated Galata, symbolizing its distinct position between East and West by employing neo-classical style on its façade, and neo-orientalist on the rear wing facing the Golden Horn.

The twin buildings were incomparably more modern than the bank's previous buildings. One of the buildings was occupied by the Ottoman Bank, and the other by the Regie Company. One was functioning as the central bank, and the other as the revenues administration, both being administered by the representatives of foreign capital groups. These two sister companies were now closer both to the "stock market," and to the "bridge".

Under Sir Vincent's management, the Ottoman Bank reached large masses by offering short-term advances and deposit banking services. During the 1890s, the Ottoman Bank's growing commercial activity, its widening branch network and Sir Vincent's dynamic management helped establish an unchallengeable control over the market.

The building was the head office of the Ottoman Bank until 1998, and then it became the bank's Karaköy branch. In 2001, the Ottoman Bank merged with Garanti Bank, the main shareholder since 1996, thus putting an end to its 145 years of existence. Following the merger, the building was used for a while as the Ottoman Bank Museum and a branch office of Garanti Bank.

Later, the building has gone through an extensive restoration project led by Aga Han award-winner architect Han Tumertekin, and was turned into a non-profit cultural center. Named as "SALT Galata," the cultural center opened doors in November 2011, and it holds a library and an archive for researchers, a 219-seat auditorium, the redesigned Ottoman Bank Museum, workshop spaces, and exhibition spaces. SALT Galata is closed on Sundays and Mondays, open for visits from 12:00

to 20:00 on Wednesdays, and from 10:00 to 18:00 on other days.

The other building remained in the possession of the Regie Company until 1925, when it was appropriated by the government of the Turkish Republic. In 1933, it was assigned to the Monopoly Administration, but it was sold to the Central Bank of Turkey the next year. It is still being used as the Istanbul branch of the Central Bank. The Ottoman Bank building had one of its most tragic days when a group of Armenian

## An "Ottomanist" Banknote

The banknote that was issued on 15 July 1880 by the Ottoman Bank was rather unique for a number of reasons apart from the fact that it was the bank's first one-lira note. First of all, although it was issued in 1880 during the fourth year of the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, it bore the date of

1875, and carried the tuğra (monogram) of Sultan Abdülaziz, who was dethroned in 1876. It appears that the banknote had been prepared and printed in 1875 but had been on hold since, due to the critical financial circumstances of the time. The most interesting aspect of the banknote was that it carried inscriptions in no less than five languages: Turkish and French, as usual, but also Greek, Armenian and Arabic. The date on it was in Julian calendar instead of Islamic calendar. In this form, it was very much reminiscent of the Ottomanist ideology of the time it was first designed. The issue, however, was a disaster, as the first round of 8,000 notes was returned to the bank almost immediately. The photo hereby shows a one-lira note with the stamp of Mustafa Mazhar, and the signature of Sir Edgar Vincent and E. Beauvais.



*An 1880 banknote of 1 Ottoman Lira with the stamps in four languages -Turkish, French, Greek and Armenian (Ottoman Bank Archives -SALT Galata).*

nationalists occupied it on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1896. During those days, Sultan Abdülhamid II was in power, and the clashes between the Muslim population of Anatolia and the Armenian nationalists – who were backed by the big states of Europe – has turned into a massacre in which 1800 Muslims and 8,000 non-Muslims lost their lives. In this climate, 26 militants of the Armenian Revolution Federation organized an armed assault in an effort to raise awareness and action by the European powers, especially by Russia. In view of its key role in the international finance, they stormed the Ottoman Bank armed with pistols, grenades and dynamite sticks, killing two bank guards and wounding two others.<sup>(29)</sup>

The Ottoman soldiers surrounded the building and the resulting firefight left casualties from both sides. The director of the bank, Sir Edgar Vincent, who had fled at the beginning of the occupation, asked the Russian embassy to play the role of negotiator. An Armenian dragoman, named Maximov, from the Russian Embassy carried out the talks between the occupants and the Yıldız Palace. The demands of the militants, who were holding 154 of the bank employees and customers hostage, included stopping the armed blockade against the bank, putting an end to the massacres in Anatolia and Istanbul, giving written guarantees about the reforms to be carried in the Armenian provinces, and liberating all Armenian political prisoners.

Although the Palace didn't give a positive response to these demands, a safe passage was promised for the surviving militants to go abroad, on condition that they end the occupation. After 36 hours of occupation, the 17 surviving militants gave up their demands and took shelter on board Sir Edgar Vincent's private yacht.<sup>(30)</sup> They were then taken to the French ship *Gironde*, and sent off to Marseilles.

## An Extraordinary Architect: Alexandre Vallaury

Alexandre Vallaury is the architect of the Ottoman Bank and Regie Company buildings on Bankalar Street. He is known to have designed at least 25 buildings, including Pera Palas Hotel, in Istanbul.

Vallaury was born in 1850 to a wealthy Levantine family in Istanbul, and graduated from Saint Joseph College in Kadıköy. After the college, he was sent to Fine Arts Academy (Ecole des Beaux-Arts) in Paris, one of the world's best schools on architecture at the time. He attended to the Coquart Atelier in Paris between 1869 and 1878, before returning to Istanbul.

After exhibiting his relief drawings and designs at Elifba Art Club in 1880 and 1881, Vallury became a household name in art circles. While continuing with his drawings and attending to exhibitions, he was also accepted to the School of Fine Arts (Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi) as an instructor. He lectured in this institution between 1883 and 1908.

With their strong architectural backgrounds, Vallaury and Mongeri have a special place in Istanbul's past. Like Guilio Mongeri (who studied at the Brera Academy in Milan), Vallaury also based his work on classic architecture while combining it with local architectural styles.<sup>(1)</sup>

The first building designed by Vallury is the School of Fine Arts at Fındıklı. His most known works, however, are the Ottoman Bank

Building (today SALT Galata), and Pera Palas Hotel that was built with the purpose of accommodating the passengers of the Orient Express. Following the 1894 Istanbul earthquake, he was appointed to work in various commissions for city planning. He also designed mansions and residences for the upper echelons of Ottoman high officials between 1900

and 1904. Following the establishment of the second constitutional monarchy (23 July 1908), he resigned from his post at the School of Fine Arts. Vallaury died in 1921; his grave is at Feriköy Latin Catholic Cemetery.



*Decugis House*

His major works in Istanbul include:

- The Union Française Building (1896) opposite Pera Palas Hotel;
- Decugis House (1881, today Galata Antik Hotel) which was built next to the 6th Municipal Department as a residence for a Levantine family;
- The Cercle d'Orient Building (1884), having one of the largest façades amongst the other buildings on İstiklal Street, and built of masonry construction in tune with the other buildings in the area (it also includes the former Emek Movie Theater);
- Hidayet Mosque (1887), designed with an orientalist approach at Bahçekapı, Eminönü;
- The main building of Istanbul Archaeology Museums (1891-1907), designed with an



architecture approach that a museum building should be of Neo-Greek style;

- The Imperial School of Medicine (Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-i Şahane; 1893-1902) at Haydarpaşa, co-designed with Raimondo d'Aronco, representing a departure from their typical approaches (the building was used as Haydarpaşa High School between 1934 and 1984, and later, as the Haydarpaşa Campus of Marmara University);

- Tokatlıyan Hotel at Beyoğlu, the interior of which was completely re-designed afterwards;

- The building of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration (1897; today İstanbul High School) at Çağaloğlu, designed with an intention of capturing and reinterpreting the Ottoman architectural tradition;

- Cemil Topuzlu Mansion, an example of civilian architecture with its wooden frame construction and elements borrowed from national architectural styles;

- Greek Orphanage (1898-1899) at Büyükdada (Prinkipo Island);

- Yeni Han at Karaköy

- Ömer Abid Han (1902) at Karaköy;

- Afif Pasha Waterfront Residence (1910) at Yeniköy (later known as Muhayyeş Residence);

- Mecid Efendi Mansion at Bağlarbaşı, designed entirely in wooden frame construction;

- Café Lebon (1880), which came to be known as Café Marquise (Markiz Pastanesi) after 1940.<sup>(2)</sup>

It's not a coincidence that Café Lebon (today Café Marquise, or Markiz Pastanesi) in Beyoğlu was designed by Alexandre Vallaury. His

sister Hellene Vallaury was married to Edward M. Lebon, who was working at her father's patisserie on İstiklal Street (Grande Rue de Pera). After serving long years as a cook for General Horace Sebastiani, the 33rd ambassador of France to Ottoman Empire, Edward M. Lebon stayed in İstanbul and opened the famous Café Lebon at the entrance of Passage Oriental, one of the oldest passages in Beyoğlu. Therefore, this patisserie was representing a family tradition for Hellene Vallaury. The French-made chocolate dragées and bonbons at Café Lebon had been much praised in Journal de Constantinople of 14 November 1859. Following Edward's death, Hellene opened a new patisserie in 1881, at the corner of Hristaki Passage (today "Çiçek Passage" on İstiklal Street).<sup>(3)</sup> The pastry tradition of the Vallaury family ended when Hellene died in 1891. Café Lebon was considered as one of the three best patisseries in Pera. The original Café Lebon at Passage Oriental changed hands in 1942, and the new owner changed its name to Marquise (Markiz), taking inspiration from the famous Marquise de Sevigne chocolates of France. Café Marquise has played an important role in the social and cultural life of İstanbul.

**(1)** Ayşe Derin Öncel, "Apartman; Galatada Yeni Bir Konut Tipi," p. 312, *Kitap Yayınevi, İstanbul*, 2014.

**(2)** Mustafa Servet Akpolat, "Levanten Kökenli Fransız Mimar Aléxandre Vallaury," *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Sanat Tarihi Anabilim Dalı, Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi*, 1991.

**(3)** Nur Akın, "19. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Galata ve Pera," p. 288, *Literatür Yayınları, İstanbul*, 2011.

## The British Director Of The Ottoman Bank:

Sir Edgar Vincent (1857-1941), also came to be known as Lord D'Abernon by the end of his career, was the British general director of the Ottoman Bank between 1889 and 1897. He was known with his ambitious and dynamic character, as well as for causing crises, which were unwelcomed by the Ottomans. Haydar Kazgan, one of the leading economic historians of Turkey (1921-2009), refers to him as "the general director who left his mark in finance history as the king of tricksters."<sup>(1)</sup>

One of his policies was to get the Bank involved in South African mining shares on European stock exchanges. This caused a speculation craze in Constantinople where tens of thousands of people bought South African mining shares, a lot of them with money loaned from the Ottoman Bank. This led to a run on the Bank in late 1895 and then a crash in the share values, followed by an international panic and the financial ruin of many of those who invested in the shares. Vincent was heavily condemned for his role in the disaster, though he personally made a fortune from the shares.

Vincent was born to a noble family at Slinfold, West Sussex and educated at Eton College for the diplomatic service. Instead, he spent five years as a member of the

Coldstream Guards before coming into the service as secretary to Lord Edmond Fitz-Maurice, Queen's Commissioner on the East Rumelian Question.

He was also assigned as the Commissioner for the Evacuation of Thessaly (ceded to Greece by Turkey), and as the member of the Board of Ottoman Public Debt Administra-

tion, which was established in 1881. During this latter assignment, Edgar Vincent submitted reports that justify Bulgarian government's refusal to repay its debts to the Administration, and hence he was not much liked by the Ottomans. He worked in Egypt before being assigned to his post as the director of Ottoman Bank in 1889. He married to Helen Venetia Duncom in 1890, and entered into politics after leaving Turkey.

In 1899 he was elected as

Conservative Member of the Parliament from Exeter. Between 1920 and 1925 he was assigned as Britain's ambassador to Berlin.

Behind Vincent's assignment as a general director to the Ottoman Bank was a series of events that led to the foundation of the Regie Company to conduct the collection of all tobacco revenues in the country.

With the Rûsum-u Sitte (Six Indirect Taxes) Agreement of 1879, the tobacco



*Sir Edgar Vincent,  
General Director of  
Ottoman Bank  
(1889-1897).*

## Sir Edgar Vincent

monopoly in the Ottoman territories was given to a company founded by the Galatan Bankers. In time, this company was replaced by the Ottoman Public Debt Administration (Düyûn-u Umûmiye) to manage the debts of the Empire. Although this new governing body helped increase the revenues, the Ottoman government was not so happy about the situation. The government's purpose was to limit the amount left to the Administration from the collected revenues, and take the rest for itself. Ultimately, the parties reached a reconciliation agreement that was based on sharing the profit.

However, when the tobacco taxes collected by the Administration remained low in 1881-1882, a new idea came up for establishing a separate company to do the job. The French were claiming that leaving the collection of the tobacco taxes to the Administration would not bring a new benefit as the Administration was lacking the support of a bank or another financial institution. They believed in the necessity of founding a new joint interest company, with the backing of a finance group, in order to increase the tobacco revenues. Sir Edgar Vincent was not sharing the same opinion. He argued for reducing the taxes on tobacco farmers, and better reorganizing the Regie Company, and thus increasing tobacco revenues via tax labels. The Ottoman government found the proposal of the French more favorable. Although Edgar Vincent opposed to the French proposal, he still signed for the estab-

lishment of the new company. According to Haydar Kazgan, the reason was obvious.

"Seeing that he was opposing to the proposal, they would try to convince him to join their side, and offer him to be the general director of the Ottoman Bank."<sup>(2)</sup>

In 1883, the Regie Company was officially founded. It was granted a 30-year monopoly over buying, processing and selling all tobacco produced within the Ottoman territories. Galatan Bankers were not amongst the founders. A revenue source that represented more than 20% of the Ottoman agriculture was now under the sole control of the Regie Company. Sir Edgar Vincent, who supported the tax labels during the foundation of the company, resigned from his board membership in the Ottoman Public Debt Administration as he was assigned as the financial advisor to the Egyptian government. However it would not last long and he would soon be assigned as the general director of the Ottoman Bank.

(1) Haydar Kazgan, "Galata Bankerleri", p. 352, *Tarihçi Kitabevi, İstanbul, 2014.*

(2) Haydar Kazgan, "Galata Bankerleri", p. 253, *Tarihçi Kitabevi, İstanbul, 2014.*



*Ottoman Foreign Exchange and Bonds Company.*

**DIRECTIONS:** *Across the street from SALT Galata is the HSBC building at no. 12. It is also known as Şirket-i Osmaniye building, named after the bank that had it built.*

## ŞİRKET-İ OSMANİYE-İ KAMBIYO VE ESHAM

The building is estimated to be built in the 1880s, and it was shown on 1895-dated R. Huber map. Although it is known today as HSBC building – it was also known as Demirbank building for a period of time – the inscription on its wall gives the name of the original company which commissioned it: Société Ottomane de Change et de Valeurs (Şirket-i Osmaniye-i Kambiyo ve Esham, or Ottoman Foreign Exchange and Bonds Company). The bank, founded in 1872, used this building until its liquidation in 1901-02, and then the building served as the British Consulate from 1903 until the 1940s. During the 1950s, the building was handed over to the Şimşek Elektrik Co, and then to Türk Ekspres Bank in 1953. It was bought in 1959 by Demirbank, serving as its head office until 1998, and then as its Karaköy branch office.<sup>(31)</sup> It was sold to HSBC Bank in 2001, and it serves today as the Karaköy branch office of the same bank.

**DIRECTIONS:** *The side wings of the HSBC building and Has Han (serving today as a boutique hotel) are separated by the Camondo Stairs, maybe the most charming of the city's stairs.*

## CAMONDO STAIRS

In 1856, the City Planning Council (“İntizam-i Şehir Komisyonu”) was established under Şehremaneti, the first local governing body of Istanbul. This council made many



*Art-Nouveau style Camondo Stairs.*

proposals for the development of Galata-Pera region, which was chosen as the pilot project site. From the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the region began to acquire a European look with renewed and gas-lit streets, and new hans and buildings. Abraham-Salamon Camondo, one of the influential members of the council, made a personal contribution to such efforts by having a two-way stairs (in the form of number 8) built up from the Voyvoda (Bankalar) Street.

It is believed that the Camondo Stairs (Eskaleras de Kamondo) were built sometime between 1870 and 1880.<sup>(32)</sup>

Art nouveau style stairs connect Bankalar Street to Kart Çınar Sokak, and it is one of a kind in the city – and it is even difficult to find a similar one around the world. Maybe a resemblance can be found to the 1910-built Strudlhofstiege stairs in the Alsergrund district of Vienna.

During the mid-1980s, the stairs were renovated, as noted on a plate on one of the landings midway. While the plate gives the names of the contributors to the renovation, it is saddening; to say the least, that there is no mention about Abraham-Salamon Camondo, who was probably the biggest philanthropist of 19<sup>th</sup> century Istanbul.

## From A Vast Fortune To Extinction:

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire, the major role in the institutionalization and urbanization of finance capital was probably played by Camondos, a Sephardic Jewish family of Portugal origin. Although their name (Ca'mondo/Casa del mondo) means "the house of the world," they were forced to seek shelter at the four corners of the earth. Fleeing from the Inquisition, the family first settled in Venice, and then in Istanbul. In the 1840s, they became the most prominent bankers of Galata after the Baltacı (Baltazzi) family. Through two generations, Camondo Family left its mark on many fields in Galata, from banks to companies, from educational institutions to public

works. They also established a small-scale real estate empire in Istanbul. As social entrepreneurs and philanthropists, Camondos played an important role in the society. In 1869, the grandchildren of the family settled in Paris while their bank was still active in Istanbul.

The family's most famous personality in the Ottoman realm was Ortaköy-born "grandfather" Abraham Salamon Camondo (1781-1873). Reportedly his father was a common crier, and a leader of the Ortaköy Synagogue.

According to some sources, the Camondos' branching into finance started in 1802 – or in 1815 to some others – when Isaac Camondo and his bigger brother Abraham Camondo founded their own bank, "Isaac Camondo & Cie." On Isaac's death from plague in 1832, his brother Abraham Salomon inherited the bank. He prospered greatly without leaving the helm for thirty years. At the time, bankers of foreign origin were not permitted to directly foreclose the mortgaged real estate properties on the debtor's failure to repay his debt. However, Camondos overcame this difficulty by having a special permit issued by the Sultan, who was in need of loans because of the burden of the past wars. He granted Abraham Salomon Camondo the right to own real estate "on condition that he will not set an example to others." He was granted with this right because he was the financier banker to the Ottoman state before the establishment of the Ottoman Bank. Almost thro-



*Abraham Salomon and  
Nissim Camondo in 1868.*

# Camondo Family

throughout the entire Crimean War, his bank financed the Ottoman government.

Camondo Family constructed numerous buildings that left their mark in the modernization of the Ottomans. The most famous of such constructions is the Camondo Steps on Bankalar Street. Other notable buildings constructed by the family include the Headquarters of the Northern Sea Area Command in Kasımpaşa, Galata Residence, Camondo Han on Serdar-ı Ekrem Street, Büyükkada Han on Meşrutiyet Street, Saatçi Han in Karaköy, Latif Han, Lacivert Han, Yakut Han, Kuyumcular Han, Lüleci Han, and Gül Han.

The real estate properties of Camondos in İstanbul included 10 hans, 50 shops (some of which were inside these hans), 27 apartments in Galata and Pera (five of which were private residences), and a theater.

During the municipal development projects carried out from 1855 to 1865, the area between Felek and Kürekçiler Streets in Galata was defined as the commercial district of the city. This area - in which Camondos' 10 commercial buildings (mostly hans) were located - was inhabited by prominent banks.

During that period, all of the six new banks of İstanbul chose Galata for their head office, and four of them were the tenants of Camondos - Credit Lyonnais, Societe Generale de Change et de Valeur, Banque de Constantinople, and Societe Generale de L'Empire Ottoman.

In the second half of the 19th century,

the Ottoman government was receiving loans not only from Galatan goldsmiths but also from the foreign banks. In this period, Abraham Behor (1829-1889) and Nissim (1830-1889) - the grandsons of Abraham Salamon Camondo - partnered with the finance circles (mostly from the Greek Orthodox community) to found the Societe Generale de L'Empire Ottoman in 1864.

The Camondos also contributed to the renovation of İstanbul by taking place in the Municipal Commission of 1856. As part of this responsibility, they provided project design support and loans for activities such as street illumination, street and sidewalk pavement, and constructing new commercial buildings within the jurisdiction of the 6<sup>th</sup> Municipal Department. Also, they participated in the foundation of Şirket-i Hayriye (İstanbul Ferry Company), and founded the first tram company of İstanbul (La Société des Tramways de Constantinople) in 1870 with their Greek Orthodox banking partners such as Zografos and Zarifi.

When they left for Paris in 1869, Abraham Behor was 40, and Nissim was 39 years old. From Paris, they continued to run the bilingual (Turkish and French) school they had built in Hasköy district of İstanbul. Both brothers died in 1889. Their respective sons Issac (1851-1911) and Moise (1860-1935) would immediately and entirely stop the family's support for education and philanthropic mission. Instead, the two cousins rose amongst the leading patrons of arts in Paris. As expressed by Nora Şeni, who is



known with her comprehensive research on Camondos, Abraham Salamon and Nesim had now "given up on the Orient."

Abraham Salomon died in Paris at the age of 92, and was buried in the mausoleum built for him in the Hasköy Jewish cemetery, as per his will. The Ottoman government organized a commemorative ceremony on his name. Since their arrival in the Ottoman territory, no other Jew had garnered so much respect.

After the 1970s, his neglected mausoleum has deteriorated into a state of heavy disrepair and received damage due to vandalism, but recently it was restored with the financial support of Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Agency and the efforts of Architect Hayim Beraha.

For Moise Camondo, the family business and properties in Istanbul were "endless trouble." Instead of dealing with them, he allowed himself to be drawn into the social life in Paris, his trips to St. Moritz and Monte Carlo, and his passion for luxury automobiles. Although he was the wealthiest French real estate baron in Turkey, he wouldn't mind it at all.<sup>(1)</sup> In 1908, he took his 16-year old son Nissim for a trip to Istanbul, like a tourist visiting an exotic country. His purpose was to make Nissim familiar with the family properties in Istanbul but their stay in Moise's summer residence in Tarabya remained their only visit to Turkey. In 1914, with the outbreak of WWI, Nessim enlisted into the French Army. He was killed in an aerial combat in September 1917.<sup>(2)</sup>

Following the tragic loss of his only son, Moise Camondo largely withdrew from so-

ciety. In 1935, he donated his home at 63 Rue Manceau, its 18th century furniture and a rich art collection to Paris's Decorative Arts Society as a museum in honor of the loss of his son. He died the same year.<sup>(3)</sup>

After the German occupation of France during World War II, his daughter, Béatrice (1894-1943), his son-of-law Léon Reinach and their children, Fanny and Bertrand, deported by the French, died in the Auschwitz concentration camp.

As the Camondo family died out without leaving heirs, their 176 properties in Istanbul were escheated by the National Real Estate Directorate.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Nora Şeni, *Sopie La Terneç, "Camondolar: Bir Hanedanın Çöküşü"*, p. 225, Kitap Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2010.

(2) Nora Şeni, *Sopie La Terneç, "Camondolar: Bir Hanedanın Çöküşü"*, p. 270, Kitap Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2010.

(3) Nora Şeni, *"Oryantalizm ve Hayırseverliğin ittifakı"*, p. 96, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2009.

(4) Haydar Kazgan, *"Galata Bankerleri"*, p. 341, Tarihçi Kitabevi, İstanbul, 2014.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Let's continue our walk down the Bankalar Street. On your right, after Bereketzade Medreseşi Sokağı, you'll come to Assicurazioni Generali Han at no. 9.*

## ASSICURAZIONI GENERALI HAN

The building was commissioned by the Italian insurance company Assicurazioni Generali to Italian architect Giulio Mongeri in 1909. It is known that previously Vitali Han of Antoine and Cesar Vitalis used to be situated in its place. The ground and first floors of the building was rented by the Banque de Salonique between 1913 and 1944. Established in 1908 and financed by Austrian and French capital, the bank later concentrated on activities in the Ottoman territories and became "Turkified." The major novelty brought by the bank was giving bankbooks to its depositors in Istanbul, and offering 4 percent interest to deposits from 25 kuruş (piastre) to 300 liras.<sup>(33)</sup> As it was providing funds for the industries, the Banque de Salonique was the most important finance institution in the Ottoman Empire, and played an important role in the Ottoman finance system's integration to the world economy.<sup>(34)</sup>

Mongeri, the architect of the building, had an office in the han. The other tenants included famous Greek bankers Eugenidi (between 1913 and 1925), and Yeorgidas Leonidas Zarifi (between 1930 and 1944).<sup>(35)</sup>

The building was occupied by the International Industry Bank in 1968, by Interbank in 1990, and by Generali Insurance during the later years. The building was lastly bought by İsmet Koçak, the owner of Koçak Gold, who plans to convert it into a hotel.<sup>(36)</sup>

The heavily decorated and eclectic façade of the building was designed with a mixture of elements borrowed from Classical, Baroque, Art Nouveau and Renaissance styles. The name of the building is written just above the entrance both in Latin letters and in Ottoman Turkish.



*Assicurazioni Generali Han.*



**DIRECTIONS:** *On your left hand side, at no. 8, stands Yeni Bahtiyar Office Building with its wide façade.*

## BAHTİYAR HAN

It is one of the best-protected hans in Galata. As it doesn't bear an inscription, the construction date and architect is unknown but it is believed to be built in 1903-04.

The fire insurance maps of Charles E. Goad from 1905 shows its name as "Bahtiyar & Camondo," which may suggest that it was built by the Camondos. However, the archive records of the Beyoğlu Municipality shows Gad Frano, one of the first lawyers with a doctorate degree in Turkey, as its oldest owner.<sup>(37)</sup> Gad Franko, who was also an author and one of the leading intellectuals of Turkish Republic's single-party period, failed to pay his taxes because of the discriminating and arbitrary Wealth Tax Act of 1942, and was sent to exile in Aşkale. The han, owned by this author of the first explanatory handbook on Turkish Civil Code, was confiscated and sold to the Agricultural Products Office.<sup>(38)</sup>

According to the Oriental Trade Directories of 1913, Bahtiyar Han was mostly inhabited by the Turkey agencies of the western insurance companies such as La Reserve National, La National, and Norwich Union. The inhabitants

*Bahtiyar Han might have been built by Camondo Family.*



also included a broker, three lawyers, and two architects.<sup>(39)</sup>

The rear wing of the building overlooks the Banker Sokak (former Kamondo Sokak). It was built with 5 floors on a plan area of 530 sqm. From the first floor up, the building features three oriel bays supported by corbels.

**DIRECTIONS:** Continue your walk down the Bankalar Street. Just after the Teğmen Hüseyin Sofu Sokak, at no. 5, you'll see a building, which used to be known as Tütün Han, and later, as Sümerbank Building. The building functions as a hotel today.

## TÜTÜN HAN

Tütün Han was built in 1911 on the lot created by combining the lots of three demolished hans. As it was built by Ünyon Sigorta (Union Insurance), the first insurance company operating in the country, its old name was Ünyon Han.

Following the great fire of Beyoğlu, which destroyed about 3,000 houses and office buildings in 1870, the British and French insurance companies took the opportunity and started operations in Istanbul. Ünyon Sigorta Kumpanyası (L'Union of France) was established in 1893 as the country's first insurance company, and it was collaborating with the Ottoman Bank. Through the years, the han was inhabited by many other banks and insurance companies. In 2000, the building was bought by Tütün Bank, and from then on it was named as Tütün Han. Today it belongs to Yılmaz Ulusoy Holding and operates as Vault Karaköy, the House Hotel.

The building has 5 floors (including the ground floor), and sits on a floor plan of 443 sqm.<sup>(40)</sup> It has a cut-stone façade with ornate decorations. Turquoise ceramic tiles between the floors and on both sides of the windows

add a colorful touch to the building. The quadrantal oriel bay, starting from the second floor above the entrance, gives a turret look to this section of the building.

**DIRECTIONS:** On the Karaköy mouth of the Bankalar Street, at no 2. on the left, a corner building attracts the attention. It has a corner turret on the top and one of the façades overlooks Yüeksek Kaldırım.

## MİNERVA HAN

This beautiful building was constructed between 1911 and 1913. One of the pioneering reinforced concrete structures of the period, Minerva Han first became home to Banque d'Athènes, which was founded by a wealthy Greek to provide finance to the Ottoman Greek merchants during the last years of the Empire. Later, it was inhabited by other banks and insurance companies. The largest bank amongst them, however, was Deutsche Bank, which pioneered a capitalization and monopolization



*Minerva Han first became a home to Banque d'Athènes.*

movement in the finance sector.

Deutsche Bank, one of the globally active deposit and investment banks in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has achieved a major growth by acquiring 21 other banks between 1914 and 1925.<sup>(41)</sup> During the 1940s, the bank's Galata branch office was located in Minerva Han.

Today, Minerva Han functions as the Istanbul Policy Center of the Sabancı University. The building has an area of 3,484 sqm and its round façade is decorated with ceramic tiles and statuettes. The building has a high ground floor, 5 standard floors and a penthouse.

At the entrance of the building is a bust of a woman wearing a helmet, representing Minerva, the namesake of the building and the Roman counterpart of the Greek goddess Athena. There are also statuettes of Venus, carrying bowls of fruits. On the 5<sup>th</sup> floor there are reliefs of a pair of intertwined snakes, the symbol of physicians.



*The Terziler (Tofre Begadim) Synagogue of the "Ashkenazi" community.*

**DIRECTIONS:** Now, follow your step back and enter to the narrow street that lies between no.2 and no.4 at Bankalar Street. Climb the street up a few meters and turn left to Banker Sokak. At no. 4, you'll see the light blue façade of Terziler Synagogue. The façade of the building overlooks Felek Sokak.

## TERZİLER SYNAGOGUE

Terziler Synagogue (lit. "Tailors' Synagogue"), or "Tofre Begadim Synagogue" as the Jewish community calls it, belonged to Ashkenazi Jews. It was built through an 1839 edict of Sultan Abdülhamid II, which was granted as a reward to Mayer Shonman, the head of Tailors' Guild and the imperial tailor of janissaries. The synagogue was opened for service in 1894 after the completion of the construction by the Tailors' Guild.

Some of Istanbul Jews were Ashkenazi tailors and textile suppliers who arrived from Austria during mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Tailoring and textile were a frequent line of work amongst the Jews. These Jews used to import apparel fabric, and practice tailoring for men and women in the gradually westernized Ottoman Empire.

The entry to the synagogue is through three steps leading to a crown gate. Above the door is a tablet of 10 Commandments. The synagogue was renovated in 1985, but it has been home to various exhibitions and cultural activities since 1998 as its community has diminished now.

**DIRECTIONS:** Continue along the street to Kart Çınar Sokak ahead. The first building on the left was the British Embassy during early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The second building was a han which first belonged to Dersaadet Water Company, and after 1898, to the Armenian family of Tahtaburunyans. The first building on the right (no. 2) is Sankt George (Austria) High School, a centennial educational institution. The group of buildings within the school's premises includes a Catholic Church, which dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

## SANKT GEORGE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND HIGH SCHOOL

One of the three still-standing medieval Latin-rite churches in Galata is the Sankt George Catholic Church on Kart Çınar Sokak. It is believed to be built in 1303 with an edict by the Byzantine Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282 - 1328).

Next to the church, there used to be a monastery which was inhabited after 1626 by the French Capuchin monks. The church was seriously damaged in the fire of 1660, but renovated in 1676. When it was burnt down entirely in the fire of 1731, it was rebuilt by the French envoy of the period. It is understood from the inscription on the monastery wall that this latter restoration was completed in 1732.

The church was bought in 1784 and assigned as the seat of the Pope's representative, but later this seat was moved to the St. Trinity Church.<sup>(42)</sup>

Cosimo Comidas Carbognano, an 18<sup>th</sup> century writer, describes its location: "It is between the houses of the French merchants, where an open market is held every Thursdays."<sup>(43)</sup> This definition may suggest that the

name Perşembe Pazarı (lit. Thursday Market), i.e. the name of a street in the region, refers to a history of hundreds of years.

The building was used as military hospital by French in 1809. After taking serious damage in the fire of 1831, it was handed over to Franciscan priests in 1853. The whole complex of buildings, including the St. Georg Church, was bought in 1882 by Austrian Lazarists. The opposite building (today's Austria High School) was used in the past as a primary school and orphanage for the German-speaking Catholic children. We are more informed about the rest: Secondary and high school classes were added by the Austrian religious institution "Lazaristen und Barmherzige Schwestern" which administered the school. In 1913 the high school produced its first graduates.

Today functioning as a Latin-rite Catholic Church, St. George was redecorated in 1963 by Anton Lehmen, a painter of Vienna school, through the efforts of the Austrian Cardinalship.

*Saint Pierre Han  
bears the insignia  
of the Kingdom of  
France and the Count  
of St. Priest.*



**DIRECTIONS:** Continue your walk along Kart Çınar Sokağı. To your right, at no. 8, is Galata Foundation building, which was being used by the Andreas Koromilas Print House during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Andreas Koromilas' facility started operating in 1842 in Galata, which was considered to be the center of printing in Istanbul. He also had a well-known print house in Athens. Leave the lattice windowed buildings – and the rear wing of Bereket Han on the left – behind, cross the Perşembe Pazarı Sokak and continue your walk on Eski Banka Sokak. The gigantic building lying along the right side of the street is Saint Pierre Han, built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

## SAINT PIERRE HAN

The Saint Pierre Han was built in 1771 upon the request of François-Emmanuel Guignard, the Count of St. Priest, and France's envoy to Istanbul between 1768 and 1785. His purpose was to establish a bank and a lodge in Galata.

Built with bricks and cut-stones using the drywall method, the façade of the building bears the insignia of the Kingdom of France and the Count of St. Priest. A marble plaque on the same façade reads that Andre Chenier, a poet beheaded during the French Revolution, was born in the building. However, its accuracy is doubtful because Chenier was born 9 years before the construction of the building. The historians argue



that the poet might be born in one of the buildings of the Dominican monastery, which was located on the same plot before St. Pierre Han, but burnt down during a fire in Galata.

During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Saint Pierre Han was mostly occupied by French capital investors. However, the administration office of the “first” Ottoman Bank, founded in 1856 by British capital, was also located here. In 1863, it was merged into the new Bank-ı Osmanî-i Şahane (the Imperial Ottoman Bank), which was financed by British and French capital. For this reason, the Oriental Trade Directories issued after 1868 do not list the Ottoman Bank among the tenants of Saint Pierre Han.<sup>(44)</sup>

More importantly, the building was the heart of the Empire’s architecture circles. Between 1910 and 1921, eight architect’s offices were opened in the han. When the building was rented out room-by-room, the total number of the architect’s offices operating from the han increased to 23 within 37 years. The architects who had an office in Saint Pierre Han included Marco G. Langas, Giulio Mongeri, and Emilio Faracci.<sup>(45)</sup> One of its longest-staying tenants was Alexandros Yenidiünya (from 1913 to 1931), an architect who is known with his unique Art Nouveau approach. Alexandre Vallauray, one of the period’s most important architects in Istanbul, also had an office here between 1920 and 1921.



*Andre Chenier, a poet beheaded during the French Revolution was born within the neighbourhood of St. Pierre Han.*

Also, Saint Pierre Han became home to two architects’ associations – “Association des Architectes et Ingénieurs en Turquie” and “OMANIA (Association Ottomane des Architectes et Ouvriers Maçons)” – between 1911 and 1921.<sup>(46)</sup>

The other tenants of the han included Mayer Amschel Rotschild’s “Societe Generale d’Orient” (1896-1897), Chamber of Commerce of Italy, Chamber of Commerce of Greece, Küçük İstikraz Sandığı (Small Loans Fund; 1930-1942), and some insurance companies.<sup>(47)</sup>

Later, Saint Pierre Han fell from grace and became home to various manufacturers and workshops for long years. Recently, it was rented to Bahçeşehir University. As of mid-2014, it is waiting for restoration to be converted into a cultural center.

An interesting fact about Saint Pierre Han is that Turkey’s first blue jean fabrics (i.e. denim) were produced here during the 1950s.

## Blue Jean Production at Saint Pierre Han

An interesting fact about Saint-Pierre Han is that Turkey's first blue jean fabrics (i.e. denim, or "kot" in Turkish) were produced there. In fact, "kot" is the last name of Muhteşem (Kot) Bey, a businessman of Albanian origin who first introduced this fabric into Turkey by manufacturing it in his facilities at Saint-Pierre Han. In other words, it is a typical case of a brand name becoming a generic category name – like it happened with Gillette, or Jeep.

Muhteşem Kot was born in 1925 in Kosovo and his family moved to Edremit in Turkey when he was a young boy. During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he went to Paris with eight gold lira inherited from his father, and studied tailoring. On his return to Turkey, he settled in Istanbul and begun working as a tailor, making a name for himself with his high quality products. During a visit to France in late 1940s, Kot saw garments made of blue jean fabric. This textile, made of indigo warp threads and natural color (white) weft threads, was already getting popular in Europe. Fascinated by the strength and stitching of the textile, Kot decided to produce it in Turkey.

It's a pleasant coincidence that Kot had first seen the blue jean textile in France, and chosen Galata, an old Genoese colony, to establish his manufacturing facilities – because, blue jean takes its name from the

color of the clothing worn by the Genoese sailors: "Blue de Gênes" in French, or "Genoa blue."

The story of denim itself is also interesting. The protagonist of the story, Levi Strauss was a German immigrant who came to USA in 1853, when he was 24 years old. Strauss was producing canvas trousers for



miners during the Gold Rush period, but decided to change its textile upon miners' complaints that it was too coarse and hurting their legs. So he replaced canvas with a sturdy cotton warp-faced twill textile from the Nîmes city in Southern France. This fabric with diagonal ribs was called "serge de Nîmes" (fabric with diagonal ribs from Nîmes). Once it crossed the

Atlantic, its name was first shortened to "de Nîmes," which became "denim" in the course of time.

Ironically, the city of Nîmes was first introduced to the ancestors of this fabric by the Ottomans in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Nîmes had developed this style of weaving by importing blue and white cotton fabric from Turkey. It is not surprising though, because in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries the Ottoman textile and weaving industry was only second to the Indian textiles.<sup>(1)</sup>

According to İnalçık, "The first prototypes of blue jean were produced in the southern provinces of the Ottoman Empire, and

then the fabric was adopted by the Spanish as a type of clothing worn by plantation workers. Then, it spread to the world."

In other words, Muhteşem Kot, probably without being aware of its roots in Anatolia, reintroduced a contemporary version of the fabric to Turkey. As soon as he returned from France, he began the trials to manufacture the same kind of denim at his facilities in Saint-Pierre Han in Galata. He first tried to sell it through door-to-door marketing in the commerce centers of Galata. In time, the pants made of his denim fabric became the sought-after products of many clothing shops all around Turkey. When Muhteşem Kot died in 1958, his company was producing 200 denim pants per day. <sup>(2)</sup> After his death, his business was inherited by his wife, his brother-in-law, and his son Aytaç Koç – who, like himself, studied tailoring in France, at the "Institut Ladevèze-Darroux."

In 1960, the family applied for a trademark registration, and registered their denim products under the brand name "Kot." Now very popular amongst the workers and farmers, the "Kot" brand participated in 1978 to the first Blue Jean Fair in Europe: the times were changing and giving way to the era of stone-washed denims. Kot followed the suit and used pumice stones to wash their denims.

1980s was a period when Prime Minister Turgut Özal abandoned protective policies and opened Turkey's doors to the free market economy. In this period, the sales

of foreign brands boomed and Kot Company began to have difficulty competing against them. When business took a turn for the worse, Kot stopped production in 1992, and rented their factory building. This would be the end of Kot brand's journey in Turkey.

Maybe Kot was successful enough to give its name to a generic category of fabric, but, as Aytaç Kot confesses, they "failed to make consumers aware that 'kot' is not a type of textile but a brand."<sup>(3)</sup>

Aytaç Kot attempted to create consumer awareness by using the marketing motto "kot is not Kot," but without much success. Consumers went on thinking that blue jean was a type of fabric developed by Americans, and "kot" was simply the Turkish translation of the word.

Ultimately, Kot Company was erased from the history, but its name slipped into the everyday Turkish language in sentences such as "I bought a Levi's kot today."

**(1)** Prof. Dr. Halil İnalçık, "Türkiye Tekstil Tarihi Üzerine Araştırmalar," İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, İstanbul, 2008.

**(2)** Özgür Gözler, "Kot Diye Başlayıp Küt Diye Dünya Pazarına Girdik," *Milliyet* newspaper, 30 August 2003.

**(3)** Yener Süsoy, "Interview with Aytaç Kot," *Hürriyet* newspaper, 10 March 2003.

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow your steps back and turn left to Galata Kulesi Sokak. Ahead, at no. 28, you will come to the main entrance of the Saint Pierre and Saint Paul Church.

## SAINT PIERRE AND SAINT PAUL CHURCH

The Latins had built 9 churches in Galata by the end of 18th century. Amongst them, only three medieval Latin-rite churches are still standing. Saint Pierre Church is one of them and it is located in Bereketzade neighborhood, near Saint Georges Church.

When the Dominican St. Paul Church in Galata was converted to a mosque (Arap Mosque) after the Conquest, its Catholic community lost their sanctuary. However, Angelo Zaccaria, a Venetian nobleman, donated his own land – which was adjacent to the lot of Arap Mosque – to the Dominican priests.<sup>(48)</sup>

It is believed that the priests moved to this lot in 1475. P. Inciciyan writes that since 1525 the priests had on this lot a small masonry church, named as Sen Piyer and Sen Paul (Saint Pierre and Saint Paul).<sup>(49)</sup> The Genoese frequented this church and used the attached monastery until 1603. Later, they built

on the same lot a new and more functional church. However, it was burnt down during the fire on 11 April 1660, with only the iron door remaining. Only seven of 20 houses in the vicinity have been saved.<sup>(50)</sup> Although the community had a new wooden church built here, it was, too, burnt down in the fire of 1731. The building suffered the same fate several times until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and it was repaired each time.<sup>(51)</sup> Finally, the Dominicans decided to commission the famous architect Gaspare Fossati

*St. Pierre and  
St. Paul Church.*



(1809-1883), because he had restored the Hagia Sophia and had the experience to be able to build the most robust church for them. Fossati designed a basilica-type church adjacent to a section of the old Genoese walls. The construction of the new Saint Pierre and Saint Paul Church was completed in 1843<sup>(52)</sup>, and it is this building that we see at 28, Galata Kulesi Sokak.

The single-nave church is a 35 meter long, 14 meter high and 8-10 meter wide edifice in the neoclassical style, built on a rectangular site. It was built in neoclassical style and has altars on four sides. The dome is worth seeing with stars painted against a sky-blue background. Immediately behind the high altar is a painting depicting the meeting of Saint Paul and Saint Peter, and it was done in 1847 by the Dominican Friar Serafino Guidotti.

In addition to the main altar, there are also four small altars in the church. The first features a painting on canvas by Guidotti depicting the death of Saint Dominic. The altarpiece facing it was made by Francesco Mauro and it portrays Saint Vincent Ferrer. The other two altars are the work of Giovanni Isola, canonized in 1847. One of the altars holds a polychrome painted statue of the Virgin Mary, entirely sculpted in wood, sent from Genoa to Galata in 1856.<sup>(53)</sup>

But, without any doubt, the greatest treasure of the church is the famous icon of Mary Odighitria (the guide) in the fourth altar. It depicts Virgin Mary, pointing at the child Jesus in her lap. According to Carbognano, the icon was painted on an old piece of wood in Italy.<sup>(54)</sup> On the other hand, Ernest Mamboury says that it was brought in 1475 from a Dominican church in Kefe (Crimea) to the St. Mary Church (probably to the church in the Cankurtaran neighborhood), and then transferred to this church.<sup>(55)</sup> The icon was saved from the fire of 1731. A silver bas-relief covers the surface of the icon (except for the faces), in order to protect the painting on it. The scene was copied from an icon by St. Luke (Lucas), the author of one of the gospels.<sup>(56)</sup>

The church possesses the holy relics of St. Renatus, St. Pierre, St. Paul, as well as St. Thomas and St. Dominic.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Continue your walk along Galata Kulesi Sokak; once past the Okçu Musa Primary School on your right, you will arrive to the “old British Police Station” at no.15, which today functions as Galata Evi Restaurant.*

## OLD BRITISH POLICE STATION

The building at 15 Galata Kulesi Sokak served as the British Prison between 1904 and 1919, and then, between 1919 and 1923, it was used as a police station by the occupation forces. They added a floor on the terrace, and built a cell, a toilet, a kitchen and a laundry in the courtyard. During the occupation, Galata Kulesi Sokak became the headquarters of the British Intelligence who was following the actions of Kuva-yi Milliye (lit. “Nationalist Forces” – irregular Turkish militia fighting the Allied forces).<sup>(57)</sup>

During the early years of the Republic, the building was assigned to the high-rank British officers who were based in Istanbul. In 1933, it was sold by the British Embassy to businessman Pierre Fournail for 425 Pounds.

Pierre Fournail added an oriel window to the building and used it as his residence. He was producing and repairing all kinds of machinery, engines and steamboats in his facilities at 36-38 Galata-Perşembe Pazarı. He also had grain mills, sugar plants and sawmills.

After his death in 1939, his daughter Mercedes Celestine Fournia took over the house and continued to live here with her husband until 1960. Then she rented the house to the nuns of the Austrian High School, and later, between 1973 and 1976, to goldsmiths Edmond and Arman Cendereciyan, who used the building as their workshop and office.

In 1976, Ohannes Muradyan, a metal-casting craftsmen rented the building to use it as his workshop, and he bought the building in 1979 from the Fournail

Family. When Muradyan died in 1990, the building was sold to the architect/planner couple Madire and Mete Göktuğ. In 1999, Göktuğs converted the property into a restaurant, and they are still operating it under the name “Galata Evi-Galata House.”

Because of its historic status, the property has Special Touristic Facility Certification since 2002. The restaurant is listed in the Istanbul guide of the Lonely Planet, and it owes its fame to a menu developed by Nadire Göktuğ based on her mother’s recipes from the Georgian cuisine. It is open for guests between 14:00 and 00:00, and it offers live music during the nights. The courtyard and the terrace are open during the summer months.

***DIRECTIONS:*** Continue your walk up Galata Kulesi Sokak; turn right to Bereketzâde Cami Sokak. On your right, at no. 8, is the Beyoğlu Göz Eğitim ve Araştırma Hastanesi (Beyoğlu Ophtalmic Training and Research Hospital). The hospital complex comprises the former British Seamen’s Hospital with its magnificent turret.

## OLD BRITISH SEAMEN’S HOSPITAL

If you have a look at Galata Tower when you are walking from Galata Bridge to Karaköy, an interesting turret next to it may attract your attention. At first sight it is difficult to make sense of it. Some resembles it to the tower of an English castle; some think that it is a bell tower. In fact, it is a part of Beyoğlu Ophtalmic Hospital, and it was once called as British Seamen’s Hospital.

The story of the hospital dates back to 1855, the time of the Crimean War. The Ottoman Empire had declared war against Russia. Great Britain and France stepped in to help the Ottomans, besieging Sevastopol. During this era, a need arose for a hospital, which would serve wounded British soldiers in Istanbul.



*Old British Seamen's Hospital resembling the tower of an English castle.*



Thus, the “British Seaman’s Hospital,” a two-storey, 50-bed hospital, was constructed.

The cost of the hospital was funded from the harbor duties paid by the British ships anchored in Istanbul. After the war, the building’s function as a “British hospital” continued. In fact, the British demolished the existing building and rebuilt a more comprehensive one in 1904 by commissioning English architect Henry Percy Adams (1865-1930). Although the turret was a part of this second hospital, it was not only for the sake of architecture: When they occupied Istanbul later, after the World War I, they used it as a watchtower to observe

the Bosphorus and to follow the British warships. In 1924, the hospital was handed over by the British to Kızılay (Turkish Red Crescent). In 1948, it was bought from Kızılay and converted to Beyoğlu Municipal Hospital. In 2001, its name was changed to Prof. Dr. N. Reşat Belger Beyoğlu Eye Hospital for Training and Research.

The best place to observe the authentic architecture and the turret of the building in all its grandeur is the terrace of Galata Konak Café, located at 2 Hacı Ali Sokak (continuation of Bereketzade Cami Sokak). This will also be the place where you would end this tour.

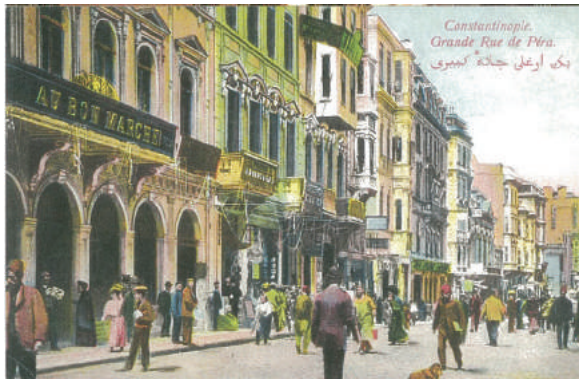
## Chapter Seven

# WALKING GALATA: TOUR IV

Pera - Yüksek Kaldırım

GALATA





*Grand Rue de Pera  
in a 19<sup>th</sup> century  
postcard.*

**DIRECTIONS:** Our tour starts from Tünel Meydanı (Tunnel Square) at the southwest end of İstiklal Street. You can get there by taking the underground funicular from Karaköy, or by taking the Yenikapı-Hacıosman subway train to Şişhane stop and following the signs to İstiklal Street exit.

## GRAND RUE de PERA: FROM VINEYARDS TO AN ENTERTAINMENT CENTER

In the past, vineyards and forestlands were stretching to the north of Galata walls, i.e. behind the Galata Tower. The region that we know today as Beyoğlu was once Pera Vineyards. The Tünel Square is named so because the upper station of the short underground railway line (the Tunnel) is located here, but in the 16<sup>th</sup> century this place was a vineyard surrounded by graveyards.

This part of Pera was first inhabited by the embassies of the foreign states rather than by Turks. As foreign states were not allowed to build embassies in the historic peninsula, they were inhabited in Galata, but to be able to stay away from the frequent plagues and fires, they started to build chalets in Pera that, at the time, was known with its fresh air. Then they turned these resorts into permanent residences around the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, foreign diplomats had more freedom here. For instance, Venetian bailos could easily tour around in Pera and help slaves and captives escape to their

homelands, while the gates of Galata were being kept closed during the night.<sup>(1)</sup> The French, first pioneers of the region, had established their first embassy in 1535 around the inner parts of Galata. After 1540s, they rented a property in Pera where the French Palace is located today. During late 16<sup>th</sup> century, they bought this property to build their permanent residence, which was rebuilt during 1840s in its current form after the fire of 1831.<sup>(2)</sup>

The British used to be inhabited around where Mimar Sinan University is located today. However the Muslims in the vicinity complained about them drinking and making noise, so they moved to their current residence in Galatasaray.<sup>(3)</sup>

The Prussian Embassy was one of the latecomers in the area, because the Prussian-Ottoman relations took off only after the 1761 Amity Treaty between the two countries. The first residence of the Prussians was a small rented house around the small graveyard in Pera. Until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, relations between the two countries saw a roller-coaster ride. Hence, the Prussians didn't acquire their own property for an embassy until that time, after which a rapid progress followed. In 1864, Count Brassier de Simon, the Prussian ambassador of the time, saw and liked a 3,700 sqm lot on the Yazıcı Street of Pera, and took it as an opportunity to rid the embassy of its small, rented residence.

Following the approval of Bismarck, the lot was bought in 1865 – together with the water wells and the 2-storey Mahmut Pasha Mansion in it. However, the lot didn't come into the Prussians' possession until a relevant edict was issued by the Sultan in 1868, only after which the embassy finally moved into its new residence. Actually, the Prussians had wanted to have a new and modern embassy residency built by the architect Huber Goebbel on the lot, but von Radowitz, the new Prussian ambassador of the time, bought another lot in Ayazpaşa, and the new embassy building was constructed there between 1874 and 1877. That building is near the Taksim Square and nowadays it is being used as the Istanbul Consulate General of Germany.

The urbanization movement in Pera was not limited

to the construction of new embassy buildings. After the establishment of 6<sup>th</sup> Municipal Department in 1864, Galata underwent a big expansion towards the Pera Vineyards. Land reclaimed through demolished city walls and covered moats –similar, in a way, to the “urban transformation” we witness today – were used for building masonry houses for the Levantines, Jews and Greeks.

By mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, as sea and railroad transportation was increasingly becoming popular, many hotels have also been built in the region for Europeans who visit the city for business or touristic purposes. Among these luxurious and comfortable hotels, built in the architectural style of the era, were:

Hotel D’Angleterre (1841), Hotel de Pera (1843), Hotel de Belle Vue (1845), Hotel de Petit Champs (1846), Hotel de l’Europe (1847), Hotel de Russie (1847), Grand Hotel d’Orient (1849), Hotel de Byzance (1849), Hotel de la Mediterranee (1850), Hotel de la Tour de Leandre (1854), Hotel des Ambassadeurs (1855), Hotel de Londre (1855), Hotel de Luxembourg (1879), Hotel Pera Palas (1895), Hotel Français Continental (1891), Hotel de Constantinople Hotel Anatolie, Granda Hotel National, Hotel de la Grande Bretagne, Maison Lebon.<sup>(4)</sup>

From 1849, the streets of Pera were lit by gas lanterns fueled by city gas, and other buildings were added to hotels in the course of time. Big stores began to show up in the region, selling

the new products of the Industrial Age. These included: Maison Romani, Magasin de Nouveautes, Maison Zizinia, Grand Bazaar Parisien, Bon Ton, Bourcier et Villan, Grand Barbulowitz, Grand Magasin de Gros, Maison Grombach (Ulmann), Bon Marche (1854), Velasti Freres, Vartan Bijouterie, Bazar Allemand, Bazar Indien.<sup>(5)</sup>

Our picture of Pera of the time would be lacking if we exclude the entertainment and meeting places with their contribution to the improvement of social life. Pera took its share from cafés, brasseries and charcuteries that reflect the Western eating and drinking habits of the time. With its theaters (attracting people from many different segments of the society) and reading halls (which were popular especially between 1840 and 1855), Pera was not much different from any European city. Especially Naum Theater, Concordia, Palais de Cristal, Teutonia, Petit Champs Theater and the Italian Opera were among the well-known venues that served the entertainment needs of the era.<sup>(6)</sup>

From 1840s to the beginning of the Balkan Wars in the 1910s, Pera inadvertently transformed into a center of culture and art, like Paris. Researcher Seza Sinanlar confirmed that between 1844 and 1916 more than 200 artists lived in Pera, and that hundreds of artworks were showcased in 95 exhibitions with contribution from 63 artist’s studios.<sup>(7)</sup>

Pera “was not a Paris,” but it was “the Paris of the Orient” - at least for a while!



**DIRECTIONS:** At Tünel Square, take Galipdede Street that leads down to Yüksek Kaldırım. A bit further on your left you will come to Galata Mevlevîhânesi (Galata Dervish Lodge) at no. 15.

## GALATA DERVISH LODGE

Galata Mevlevîhânesi, or Galata Dervish Lodge, is probably the oldest of the still-standing dervish lodges and cloisters in Istanbul – once, there were more than 300. It was built in 1491, on the foundations of the Agios Theodoros Monastery (from the Byzantium era) in an uninhabited area just outside the Galata walls. When the city's first plague outbreak claimed many lives in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, men were hired on St. Theodoros' order to dig graves on this hill (which would later be named after him). As the body count was growing, the historical sources report, St. Theodoros commanded the hired men to jump on the bodies to squeeze them into the graves.<sup>(8)</sup>

Evliya Çelebi, famous Ottoman traveler and author of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, wrote the following about Galata Mevlevîhânesi:

"In Galata, on top of the mountain outside the Kule Gate is Hazret-i Mevlana Celaled-din-i Rumî Mevlevîhânesi. This pinnacle dervish lodge was built on behalf of İskender Pasha, and it is comprised of a hundred dervish cells."<sup>(9)</sup>

İskender Pasha (d. 1506), one of the grand viziers of Sultan Bayezit

II, had this dervish lodge built in the lands of his hunting lodge. As it was outside the Kule Gate, it was also called as "Kulekapısı Mevlevîhânesi" for long years.

The woodland between the dervish lodge and the Galata walls were inhabited during the course of time by Muslim neighborhoods, and the area has lost its resort character. After some time, the dervish lodge was surrounded by other buildings, and remained inside the Şahkulu Neighborhood which grew around the Şahkulu mescid.<sup>(10)</sup>

Just next to the dervish lodge's entrance gate is a public fountain (sebil) which was built on behalf of Halet Efendi in 1819. Passing through the gate, you will see the lodge's burial area on the left hand side, and its well-kept garden on the right hand side.

The first sheikh of this oldest dervish lodge of Istanbul was Semaî Mehmed Dede, also known as Sheikh Divânî. After the first three sheikhs it was abandoned, and then used as a cloister for a while, and finally, during the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, it was returned to its original function through the efforts of its fourth sheikh, Sırrı Abdi Dede.

In time, the structure was expanded with various additions, and





*Whirling dervishes in the  
Mevlevi Dervish Lodge  
(Photo: Rick Danielson)*

transformed into a full-scale convent with annexes, tombs, a library and a large burial area.

Around 1765-66, the convent suffered great damage during the great fire of Tophane, and the original building was destroyed. It was repaired by Sultan Mustafa III. The next comprehensive restoration was carried out through the efforts of Sheikh Galip Dede, the 24<sup>th</sup> sheikh of the convent and the last grandmaster of the divan literature. Galip Dede had informed the Sultan about the destitute condition of the convent with a poem titled “Kasîde-i Tannâne” (lit. “Resonant Eulogy”) attached to his petition, and Sultan Selim III, also a follower of the Mevlevi order, had agreed to restore the building (in 1791-1792).<sup>(11)</sup>

Sultan Selim III would occasionally summon Galip Dede, or

sometimes visit the convent himself to attend to the rite and invocations, bestowing rich donations afterwards.

(12)

19<sup>th</sup> century was not short of fires and ensuing restorations and donations for the convent. During such restorations other additions – such as fountains, a sebilküttâb (a building with a fountain on the ground floor and a school the children of poor families on the first floor), a library, a cistern, a laundry, and tombs – were also made to the convent. The main building and most of the annexes took their current forms during the restorations of 1859-60 by Sultan Abdulmecid, although other small restorations followed until the end of the century.

Visiting the convent to see the whirling dervishes’ ritual (“sema”) was popular amongst the 19<sup>th</sup> century

travelers who came to Istanbul. Edmondo de Amicis, the famous Italian novelist who visited the city in 1874, wrote the following about the dervishes in Galata Mevlevîhânesi:

"What I did see among those men, and they were of all ages and aspects, was a grace and elegance of movement that might well be envied by some of our drawing-room dancers."<sup>(13)</sup>

The land of the convent was once larger than today. In 1899, some part of the land was used for building the German High School. After the closure and illegalization of the religious lodges in 1925, the main building was turned into a social community house ("halkevi"), and the sebilküttâb was transformed into a police station. A part of the burial ground on Şahkulu Bostanı Street was reclaimed between 1945 and 1947 to construct the Beyoğlu Marriage Office on it. The wooden tombs at the entrance of the sema house, the seraglio, the matbah-ı şerif (kitchen and novitiate in a dervish lodge), and other annexes were demolished in the process.

Galata Mevlevîhânesi – at least, a part of it – has survived until today thanks to the efforts of the Turkish Touring and Automobile Foundation, and especially of Reşit Saffet Atabinen and Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver. The dervish lodge was turned into a museum with a 20 year delay: After four years of comprehensive

restoration work, the building opened doors to public in 1975 as the Museum of Divan Literature.<sup>(14)</sup>

The headstone of İbrahim Müteferrika's grave, found in Hasköy, is now in the courtyard of the lodge. Also, French army officer Claude Alexandre de Bonneval – who entered into the service of Ottomans in 1729, and changed his name to Humbaracı Ahmet Pasha – was buried here. Ahmet Pasha had worked for the reformation of the Ottoman army and established a military engineering institution.

Following the restorations between 2007 and 2011, the building was reopened in November 2011 – this time as the Galata Mawlawi House Museum. Today, various musical instruments and dervish articles from different eras, poems of divan poets, and the handwritten manuscripts of famous personalities raised in the lodge (Sheikh Galib, Sheikh İsmâil Rusûhî Dede of Ankara, Esrar and Fasih Dedes, and the women poet Leylâ Hanım) are exhibited in the museum. The museum is open for visits every day except Mondays; it is also closed half day on the first days of Ramadan and Sacrifice holidays. The sema rituals (the performance of whirling dervishes) are on Sundays; also, Şeb-i Arûs ceremonies (the Night of Union which marks the anniversary of the death of Rumi) are held on 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup> days of every December.



*Barnathan Apartments before the restoration work.*

**DIRECTIONS:** At the exit of Galata Mawlawi House Museum, turn left and follow the Galipdede Street. In the past, this street was a part of İstiklal Street. About 100 m ahead, turn right to Tımarcı Sokak. The grandiose building stretching along this street is Barnathan Apartments.

## BARNATHAN APARTMENTS

Barnathan Apartments were once one of the most elite residence buildings in the Galata region. Stretching along the left hand side of the Tımarcı Sokak (former Cerrahpaşa Sokağı), it was one of the first examples of apartment-type residences constructed in Galata during late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The architect is Charles Marulletto, whose title was shown on the plan drawings as “ingénieur.” The construction started in the 1880s and continued until 1893. Unlike Doğan Apartments, it didn’t have a large courtyard with a view of the Marmara Sea, and hence, it didn’t become as popular.

By the left side of the first entrance door is written “5652” in Hebrew calendar, and “1892” in Gregorian calendar on the right side. Similarly, the door to the second block bears the dates “5654” and “1894” on its left and right sides, respectively. The third block turns towards the Şahkulu Çıkmazı (cul-de-sac) and it was constructed after 1896.

As the name suggests, these residence blocks belonged to the Barnathan family for long years. As they were constructed for the purpose of renting, the family didn’t live here and



continued their life mostly in Kadıköy and Moda.

As told by Cesar Alfredo Barnathan, a member of the family who was forced to leave Istanbul years ago and who is living in Buenos Aires now, “Barnathan” means “Daughter of the Prophet Natan” in Hebrew.

The origins of the family can be traced back to the Sephardic Jews who left Spain for the Ottoman Empire in 1492. The family members in Istanbul were mostly occupied in commerce, and they had strong international connections. Nissim Barnathan (1827-1907), who was considered to be the elder of the family, was a banker and the owner of the Barnathan Han in Eminönü. Some family members were in the cigarette rolling paper business. Again from the same family, Albert, Samuel and Fanny lost their lives in the Auschwitz Nazi concentration camps in 1944.<sup>(15)</sup> According to the surviving family members, a large part of the Barnathan family immigrated just before the World War I to Brazil or to the USA, while some members settled in France. Some others left Turkey during the late 1920s. By this time the apartments should have changed hands, because they are referred to as “Appartements Vlahioti Antoine” in the trade directories of 1921.

On an inheritance document from 1968, the name of the apartments was shown as “Hamit Bey Apartmanı,” while an earthquake insurance policy

from 2003 names it as “Halil Hamit Apartmanı.”<sup>(16)</sup> The second block was named as “Demir Apartmanı” during a later time period. From the Barnathans, only the inscription “Baranthan Han” remained above the second entrance.

At the time of construction, Galip Dede Street was a part of Rue de Pera (today's İstiklal Street), which means, the façade of the building was overlooking one of the most important streets of Istanbul. For this reason, the façade is more elaborate in design compared to other wings. The balconies are in classic “French balcony” style, and unlike other apartments, they are not supported by concrete corbels.

In 1892, when there was only the first block, only 8 people were living in the apartment. The first tenants were rather from the new middle class of the time: Levantine bank clerks and tradesmen, non-Muslim bankers, doctors, employees of the Ottoman Bank, goldsmiths, glass merchants, and professionals who work for the newly founded “Chemins de fer Orientaux” (i.e. the railway company operating between Vienna and Istanbul).

At the time, living in an apartment had some passing resemblance to the Western life-style. The locals would continue to live in their own wooden frame mansions for a long time.



*Serdar-ı Ekrem Street.*

**DIRECTIONS:** Return back to Galipdede Street and turn right. Down the street, turn left from the corner of the Mişeyyeczade Mosque at no. 87, to Serdar-ı Ekrem Street.

## SERDAR-I EKREM STREET

Serdar-ı Ekrem Street is one of the few streets with the tallest - and comparably large - residential buildings around the Galata Tower. Today lined with fashion design houses and stores, chic cafés and restaurants, it is considered to be housing the most valuable properties around Galata and Pera region. The following are some of the historic buildings – most of them from the 19<sup>th</sup> century – on Serdar-ı Ekrem Street: Zellich (no. 5), Vasiliadis (no. 10) Doğan (no. 30), Camondo (no. 22-24), Zarif (no. 23), Yusuf İzzettin Apartments, Hacı Said (no. 16) and (Salomon) Asseo (no. 15), Levi, (Elias) Braunstein (no. 20), (M.) Dikeos (33, 35 and 40), (Louis) Agostini, and (Carlo) Amancich (no. 36) apartments.

## Masters Of Lithography: Zellich Brothers

Zellichs were a Croatian family who made a reputation in the Ottoman Empire with their lithograph postcards. Antonio Zellich (1820-1890) of Brela was one of many Dalmatians who left his homeland in pursuit of a better life in 1840, and set out to the Ottoman imperial capital – Istanbul.

Upon arrival in the city, Antonio Zellich found employment at the lithographic print house of French-born Henri Caillol in Galata. He was lucky because Henri Caillol was the best person in the world to learn this job from. Caillol came to Istanbul with his nephew Jacques in 1831, when he was 26 years old, and decided to stay. After finding a teacher and learning Turkish in a short time, he went to visit the Ottoman statesmen to talk them into the advantages

of lithography. Ultimately, when he convinced *Serasker* Koca Hüseyin Pasha (*Serasker*: vizier who command the Ottoman Army) that the authentic beauty of the Ottoman calligraphic art can be preserved with the lithography technique, he was granted with the permission he demanded. He was allowed to establish a lithography workshop to meet the printing needs of Harbiye Nezâreti (Ottoman Ministry of War). There, he set up a press in 1831, and became the pioneer of lithography in the Ottoman Empire. He first

started by printing the field manuals for the training of the Army that was formed after the abolition of the janissary system. After completing this task successfully, Sultan Mahmud II granted him with a house, 500-kuruş monthly salary, and an additional subsistence allowance. In addition to the documents on military training, his lithography workshop printed

many poetry books, folktale books and dictionaries using Armenian, Ottoman and Greek typefaces. He also trained many lithograph artisans for the Empire. In 1836, he founded his own print house in Beyoğlu, near the Galata Dervish Lodge, with the permission of Mahmud II.<sup>(1)</sup>

By being an apprentice to Henri Caillol, Antonio Zellich mastered the art of lithography, and in 1852, he

contributed to the printing of a periodical named as "Journal Asiatique de Constantinople."

The print house was run by the Caillols until Henri Caillol's death in 1871, and then it was passed on to Antonio Zellich. Now, "A. Zellich et Fils" (Zellich and Sons) is the most well-known name in Istanbul's lithography scene. The collective works of Vartan Pasha, the author of the first Armeno-Turkish (Turkish in Armenian alphabet) novel named *Akabi's Story* (1851), were also printed by



*Antonio Zellich -  
the founder of the  
"Zellich & Fils"  
printing house.*

Antonio Zellich in two volumes.<sup>(2)</sup>

Antonio Zellich married and had six children including Michele (1851-1900), Gregoire (1853-1932), Nicholas (1859-1922), and Henri (1866-1932). In time, Gregoire became the right hand of his father. Antonio Zellich died in 1890 and buried to the Feriköy Catholic Cemetery. After his death, Gregoire took over the print house, while his siblings assumed different responsibilities in the company. Now the name of their company is "Zellich Frères" (Zellich Brothers).

"Zellich Frères" earned an empire-wide reputation with the postcards and posters they printed in their print house on Serdar-ı Ekrem Street (former Yazıcı Street). One of their biggest achievements was to print the Ottoman banknotes in 1914. With their work, Zellich Brothers have also won international awards and recognitions including the Order of St. Sylvester from Pope Leo XIII, and the Order of St. Sava from the Serbian King Alexander Obrenovic. They were also awarded with a medal by the Persian King Mozaffar ad-Din for printing Prince Mirza Reza Khan's book for 1889 Hague Peace Conference.

Besides their print house at Serdar-ı Ekrem Street, Zellich Brothers had branch offices at 351 İstiklal Street (opposite the Bon Marche store), and 21 Mahmudiye Street. The print house of the Zellich Brothers saw the 20th century, but the last record of it is from 1928.<sup>(3)</sup>

In 2011, The Croatian State TV broadcasted a 27-minute documentary on Anroine Zellich, directed by Srdjan Segaric.

**(1)** *Taş Basması, Alim Kahraman, TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi, Vol. 40, p. 144-145.*

**(2)** *Günül Özlem Ayaydın Cebe, "19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Toplumı ve Basılı Türkçe Edebiyat," Unpublished Doctorate Thesis, Bilkent University, Ekonomi Ve Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Türk Edebiyatı Bölümü, Ankara, August 2009.*

**(3)** *Günül Özlem Ayaydın Cebe, "19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Toplumı ve Basılı Türkçe Edebiyat," Unpublished Doctorate Thesis, Bilkent Üniversitesi, Ekonomi Ve Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Türk Edebiyatı Bölümü, Ankara, August 2009.*



**DIRECTIONS:** Continue your walk on Serdar-ı Ekrem Street. Just after the Braunstein Apartments at no. 20, you'll see the Camondo Han (or Kamondo Han) at no. 22-24. It was built by the Camondos, the famous banker, real-estate-rich, and philanthropist family of the era.

## CAMONDO HAN

Camondo family was one of the wealthiest Sephardic Jew families of Istanbul, and they made considerable contribution to the modernization of the city. They had many properties around Galata. Although they were being listed amongst the leading Jewish banker families of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, they owed most of their influence to building a real estate empire around Galata. In 1881, there were more than 170-180 shops, banks and offices paying rent to Camondos – and, of course, depositing the rent to Camondos' own bank.<sup>(17)</sup>

The real estate registers from 1874 and 1881 lists the hans (commercial buildings) owned by the Camondos in Istanbul: Saatçi Han (Perşembe Pazarı Sokak), Lacivert Han (Zülfaris Sokak), İbret Han (Söğüt Sokak), Latif Han (Söğüt Sokak), Dilber Han (Karaköy Square), Kamondo Han (1 Yorgancılar Sokak), Yakut Han (Mertebani Sokak), Kuyumcular Han (87 Yorgancılar Sokak), Lüileci Han (Sirkeci), and Gül Han (Billur Sokak).<sup>(18)</sup>

*Camondo Han from Tatar Beyi Street.*



Apart from these hans, Camondos had the following

residential properties: an apartment at 2-4-6 Felek Sokak, an apartment at 3-5 Polonya Sokak, 10 houses at 17 to 35 Hoca Ali Sokak, a house at 5 Mertebani Sokak, houses at 2-4-6-8 Mertebani Sokak, a house at 5 Kamondo Sokak, an apartment at 16 Hacı Ali Sokak, an apartment at 42 Yazıcı Sokak, a large residence at Yemenici and Kabristan Sokak, a house at 13 Glavani Sokak, an apartment at 6 Nane Sokak, a house at 9 Keklik

Sokak, a house at 41 Köybaşı Sokak in Yeniköy, and a house at 5 Söğütli Sokak in Büyükdere.

Camondo Han is probably the most famous one amongst the still-standing ones. The rear wing of the building overlooks Tatar Beyi Sokak.

Camondo Han was built between 1861 and 1868 in neoclassic style and it has a symmetrical plan. An introductory guide at Nissim Camondo Museum in Paris describes the location of the building: "It is adjacent to the Braunstein Apartment, the Doctor Castro Apartment, and the Camondo Residence on three sides, and the fourth side overlooks the Yazıcı Street."<sup>(19)</sup> (On the other hand, this building on Serdar-ı Ekrem Street – formerly, Yazıcı Street – should not be confused with the Camondo Han on Galata Yorgancılar Street, which was home to various banks and bankers between 1868 and 1909.)

The architect of the Camondo Han on Serdar-ı Ekrem Street is unknown, but we know that the offices in it were converted to apartment flats between 1870 and 1876 by Stampa, the trusted architect of Camondos. However, no one from the Camondo family had ever lived in these flats. The Camondos chose Galata only for their real estate and other investments. In fact, they had one foot in France, and some of the important members of the family – especially, Abraham Camondo, who had lost his only son Raphael – had immigrated to Paris during the first half of 1870s.

According to the administrative registers of the building from 1881, ten of the tenants were either European or Levantine, which is not surprising because the population census of 1882 shows that almost half of the inhabitants in Galata were "foreigners."

Camondos were one of the first among the real estate investors to understand that apartment flats were easier to rent, and generating more rental income, than detached houses. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, they converted several office buildings and detached houses to apartment flats in the vicinity. Famous names who lived in these flats included Hantz von der Heyde, the dentist of Sultan Abdülhamit, and Abidin Dino, the well-known Turkish painter. Dino's large flat/studio was identified with the Camondo Han, and it became a gathering place for many famous writers, poets and artists of the era.<sup>(20)</sup>

From 2000s, a new, bourgeois character was breathed into the already architecturally pleasant buildings on Serdar-ı Ekrem Street (formerly, Yazıcı Sokak). The investors were chasing after the spirit of the old times. The value created by this transformation made the street one of the trendiest locations in the city. Once home to bankers, insurance brokers and lawyers, the street is now lined with the stores and studios of the famous Turkish fashion designers, boutique hotels with historical pasts, and colorful café-restaurants.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Proceed down the street and leave Hoca Ali Sokak on the right hand side behind. At no 30, you will come across Doğan Apartments with its chrome-yellow wide façade and wooden shutters.*

## DOĞAN APARTMENTS

As mentioned before, the first property bought by the Prussian embassy in the Galata/Pera region was a lot with an old Turkish mansion on it, near the Galata Dervish Lodge. However, the Prussians later decided to build their embassy building in Ayazpaşa. After the fire of 1870, the old mansion was used for a while as a German nursery school (or crèche), and then it was demolished, except for one of its annexes. The Prussian ambassador wanted to sell the lot but the Ottoman Empire was in economic crisis, and nobody showed interest.

Then, Sultan Abdülhamit II gave a lot in Tarabya as a gift to the Prussian Emperor Wilhelm I, and the Prussians wanted to build a summer residence there. The construction was commissioned in 1885 to a British contractor, "Constantinople Land & Building Company Ltd." The contractor agreed to build the summer residence in return for the old lot in Galata, in addition to a payment of 60,750 Mark.

Due to the lack of evidence, it is unknown on whose name the purchasing was made, but after years of remaining empty, a spectacular apartment was built on the lot between

1892 and 1894 by Albert Helbig, a Belgian banker. The architect of the building – which would be known as Doğan Apartments years later – is unknown. However, Helbig at the time was living in Rue Misk (a side street of Grand Rue de Pera, or today's İstiklal Street), and the architect Serkis Balyan (1835-1899) was his neighbor. For this reason, it would not be unlikely that the building was designed by Balyan.<sup>(21)</sup>

Comprised of 45 flats, the building was designed as a rental residence for the elites, foreigners, Levantines, and wealthy Jews and Greeks. As the building belonged to the Helbig family until 1919, it was referred to as Helbig Apartments or Nahid Bey Apartments in real estate registers. A 1910-dated postcard shows the address as "Rue Yazidji Apartments, Helbig."

Following the Ottoman Empire's defeat in the World War I and the occupation of Istanbul in 1918, many citizens of German origin were forced to leave the city. As the owner died in the mean time, the building and its lot was auctioned off in 1919 by the Istanbul Execution Office to Mair de Botton, a businessman of Ottoman origin. Its name was now changed to Botton Han. During the time, mostly Greeks and Jews of Germany origin were living in this neighborhood. It

continued to be an elite neighborhood until the beginning of 1930s.

The flats of the apartment were rented by many small shops and businesses. However, the building was mortgaged, and when Buttons could not pay their debt, it was sold again in 1929 to the Berlin-based Victoria Insurance Company. Now, its name was Victoria Han.

In 1942, the building was sold to Doğan Insurance Company, which was owned by Kazım Taşkent, the founder of Yapı Kredi Bank. Taşkent names the building after his son, who had died in an accident in the Alps at the beginning of 1940s. The building was now called as "Doğan Apartments." Between 1950s and 70s, the flats in the apartment were sold one by one and made private residences. In 1985, there were 45 property owners in Doğan Apartments.

Doğan Apartments represent the beginning of the transition from detached houses to apartment flats in Beyoğlu. From early 2000s, the flats attracted the attention of middle-high classes, and begun to be occupied by younger generations with high living standards.

In 2003, the façade underwent a comprehensive renovation. The entrance of the building opens to a 330 sqm inner courtyard. The building, composed of four blocks, surrounds the courtyard from three sides, and the long northern wing protects the courtyard against the dominant north-



*Doğan Apartments belonged to the Belgian family of Helbigs until 1919.*

east winds of Istanbul. The courtyard has an unparalleled view of the Marmara Sea and Sarayburnu (Seraglio Point). Doğan Apartments is composed of 49 European style flats in sizes between 91 to 196 sqm. Considering its date of construction, they are very comfortable residences. The electricity was connected before the World War I. Each flat has a WC, kitchen, gas and water installations. Each room in the flats has a separate chimney outlet, totaling to 302 outlets.

*Crimean Anglican Church was built by the British in memory of those who died in the Crimean War of 1853-1856.*



**DIRECTIONS:** Continue your walk down the Serdar-ı Ekrem Street. Ahead, the road will first make a right turn, and then a left turn. Just after the Yazıcı Çıkmaşı, you will see the Crimean Anglican Church between the trees. It is at no 52 on the right hand side.

## CRIMEAN ANGLICAN CHURCH

Crimean Anglican Church is a Protestant church that was built in 1866 by the British in memory of British soldiers who died in the Crimean War (October 1853-February 1856). The architect is George Edmund Street (1824-1881) who also designed the Royal Courts of Justice in London.

Previously, the lot of this neo-gothic church was in a burial ground, like many others in the region. It was given to the British with an edict by Sultan Abdülmecid. The building is of cut-stone construction. All of its stones were brought from Malta, and the construction took 10 years. As the Sultan's edict was forbidding the use of Byzantine or Ottoman styles, the bell tower was built with an interesting looking pointed roof, with some resemblance to the medieval castles.

The church was closed in 1970 for the lack of a community. In 1991, Sri Lankan refugees claimed the church, and they opened it for service the same year, following a restoration.

**DIRECTIONS:** Turn right from the exit of the church. About 50 m ahead you will arrive to Kumbaracı Yokuşu that leads down to Tophane. Turn right from here and walk down the slope. At the end of the slope, you will see a fountain with two “star and crescent” symbols on both sides. The right side of the fountain is the beginning of Lüleci Hendek Street.

## LÜLECI HENDEK STREET

As mentioned before, Lüleci Hendek Street – like Büyük Hendek and Küçük Hendek Streets – marks the location of where a line of deep moats used to be. The Genoese had dug deep moats around the Galata walls just like the Byzantines had done for Istanbul walls.

One of the first actions of the 6<sup>th</sup> Municipal Department after its establishment during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century was filling these moats and opening up the reclaimed land for development.

Today lying parallel to the Kemeraltı Street, Lüleci Hendek Street is one of those neighborhoods that were built on land reclaimed from the old moats. The street took its name from the nearby Lüleciler Arastası (Lüle Makers’ Bazaar) where the shops of the “lüle” makers used to be located (lüle is the clay tobacco bowl of the pipes and water pipes). Although there are no remaining lüle makers in the area, the bazaar’s name lives on in the name of a nearby street.

Lüleciler Bazaar used to be located in Tophane, extending from the right side of the Kılıç Ali Pasha Mosque up to the mouth of Kumbaracılar

Slope. The shops in the bazaar were producing pipe and water pipe bowls, tobacco bowls, coffee cups, as well as inkpots, and coffee and sugar boxes. According to Musahipzâde Celal, there was only one shop remaining in the bazaar by the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>(22)</sup>

There was a pit – like a lime pit – in the basement of each lüle maker’s shop. A coral red clay, called as “lüleci çamuru” (pipe clay), was beaten in this pit to the consistency of a chewing gum. The craftsman would skillfully shape this clay into a bowl form, and decorate it with gold gilt motifs, ready to be fired.<sup>(23)</sup>



*A defunct public fountain of Ottoman era on the Lüleci Hendek Street.*



Thus, it can be said that the well-known “water pipe cafés” in today’s Tophane have some connection with the distant past.

The “lüleci” past of the Lüleci Hendek Street has long been erased. Today, it is one of the most rapidly developing, trendiest streets in Galata with new stores, boutiques, and cafés – like the nearby Serdar-ı Ekrem Street.

One of the oldest buildings in the neighborhood is a 1907-dated Art Nouveau building called as the Papadopoulos Brothers Apartment. Opposite to it is a concept store, called as Atelier, which showcases paintings by the famous Turkish painter İsmail Acar. The other historic apartments in the street include Mimicopoulo, Capozzi, and Casaretto apartments.

At the intersection of Kumbaracı Yokuşu (Kumbaracı Slope) and Lüleci Hendek Street is an 18<sup>th</sup> century fountain, standing in contrast to the new-found trendiness of the area. It is in a desolated state with its missing tap and basin, and covered with graffiti by the youngsters. Built in 1796-97 on behalf of Haznedar Bilâl Ağa (haznedar, meaning treasurer), the marble face of the fountain was decorated in a mixture of rococo and empire styles (empire

*An elegant entrance  
of a building in  
Lüleci Hendek  
Street.*



style was the official style of the empire during the Tanzimât Reformation era). On both sides of its inscription are star-and-crescent reliefs on raised medallions. The fountain used to mark the north eastern corner of the Galata walls. The historical maps show that there used to be a tower at this point.



**DIRECTIONS:** Continue your walk along the Lüleci Hendek Street until you reach to the Matbah Emini Hasan Ağa Fountain. Instead of turning right to Galip Dede Street, walk across and enter into the narrow street. It is a short way to the Galata Tower Square. To the left of the tower is a beautiful fountain, renovated in 2014.

## BEREKETZÂDE FOUNTAIN (MEHMET EFENDİ FOUNTAIN)

It is one of the most beautiful fountains of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Although the fountain has no relation with Bereketzâde Hacı Ali b. Hasan, the first warden of the Galata Tower/ Castle, it was named so because it was once located next to the Bereketzâde Mescid in the Galata neighborhood of the same name.<sup>(24)</sup>

Bereketzâde Fountain was built in 1732, in place of an old fountain, by Mehmet Efendi, the head defterdar of the era (defterdar: lit. treasurer/ bookkeeper, equaling to the title of Minister of Finance). In 1958, it was moved from its original location to the square in which Galata Tower stands today. Today, the only way to see the fountain in its original place is to check the 1856-dated engraving “Galata Tower and Bereketzâde Fountain” by the French orientalist painter and archeologist

Eugène Flandin (1809-1889), or its reproductions, successfully recreated on pyrographic wooden panels by Selahattin Ölçeroğlu in 2004.

The single-faced fountain is composed of three segments. The main fountain segment is in the middle with a recessed niche, and the inscription in the niche’s arch reads “Maşaallah” (“Praise be to Allah”). Each of the other two segments on both sides features an elevated small tap with oyster shell basin in a rectangular niche. The top part of the fountain is adorned with two plates with split figs in them. On both sides of the two fig plates are footed plates with pears in them. The spaces between the plates are adorned with flowers.

*Bereketzâde Fountain in Galata Square.*



*The Genoese built  
the Galata Tower  
in 1348.*



***DIRECTIONS:** Now we are ready to go up to the top of Galata Tower to enjoy the panoramic view of the city.*

## GALATA TOWER

Galata Tower was located on the highest point of the Galata walls, commanding a magnificent view of the Golden Horn and the southern end of the Bosphorus. It was built during the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century in an area which, according to historian Scarlatos Byzantios, used to be a burial ground during the time of Justinian (527-565).

During early 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Genoese, equipped with the privileges gained from the Byzantine Empire, begun to build fortifications around Galata. They were increasing their influence by taking advantage of the authority gap caused by the throne fights between Ioannes VI Kantakuzenos and the young co-emperor Ioannes V Palaiologos. Although the Genoese were not permitted to build towers, they used an opportunity which presented itself when Kantakuzenos fell ill in Demotica, and built the Galata Tower in 1348 at the most commanding point of Galata. In 1349, they connected the city walls to the tower. In 1444, the height of the Tower was raised – close to its current height.

The Byzantine sources refer to it as “Magalos Pyrgos” (meaning “Great Tower”), while Latins were calling it “Christea Turris” (Tower of Christ). A 1422-dated Istanbul map by the Florancian cartographer Cristoforo Buondelmonte

shows the tower with a conical cap with a cross on top. A letter by San Savino of Chiot to Pope Nicolas V also confirms that the tower used to have a big cross on the top.

Again according to San Savino of Chiot, Sultan Mehmed II shortened the tower by having it cut 10 arşın (about 7 m) from the top, as a display of power.<sup>(25)</sup>

Galata Tower took serious damage during the 1509 Constantinople earthquake, referred to as “The Lesser Judgment Day” by contemporaries. Reportedly, most parts of the tower had collapsed. The restoration work by Architect Murat bin Hayreddin was completed in 1511.

The look of the tower in the 16<sup>th</sup> century can be seen on an Istanbul miniature created between 1533 and 1535 by Matrakçı Nasuh, an Ottoman cartographer and miniaturist. The miniature is in the *Irak Seferi Menzîlnâmesi* (Iraq Expedition Journal), and it is kept in the Library of Istanbul University. On this miniature, the Galata Tower is depicted as a massive round tower with a conical cap.

In his *Book of Travels*, Evliya Çelebi says that from nowhere can one see the entire circuit of the walls of Istanbul, and its triangular shape, except from Galata Tower, and he adds:

“In clear weather, the Mountain of Monks (Cebel-i Ruhban, today Uludağ) which looms over Bursa is visible, and even the buildings of Bursa can be seen through a spyglass. This tower,

cylindrical in shape, is visible from three parasangs’ distance. The tower interior was a dungeon in ten layers; it is now a storage for Ottoman naval equipment.”<sup>(26)</sup>

Clearly, it was an exaggeration that the buildings of Bursa can be seen through a spyglass. For these lines, the famous Turkish poet and essayist Salah Bırsel (1919-1999) pokes fun at him: “If you use a spyglass, you can even see Bursa’s marketplace from the Tower, but our Evliya didn’t mention it because it would hardly be convincing.”<sup>(27)</sup>

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Tower was used for a while as a dungeon for Christian prisoners of war who were put to work at Kasımpaşa Shipyard. French traveler Pierre Lescapier, who visited Istanbul in 1573-74, confirms that the Tower was being used as a dungeon. Also, Michael Haberer of Bretten, who was a captive in Istanbul between 1582 and 1588, mentions that about 1,500 prisoners were being held in a tower in Galata. The Ottoman Galata was notorious for frequent fires because most of the buildings were of wooden frame construction. For this reason, the Galata Tower was used as a fire observatory post from 1717.

Istanbuliote geographical author P. Ç. İnciciyan mentions that in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the midnight hour was being announced by beating drums at the top of the Galata Tower. Based on a petition from 1780 for the repair of some musical instruments, Semavi Eyice, a well



*Waiting in the queue before climbing the steep steps of the Galata Tower.*

known Turkish art historian suggests that there may also have been a janissary band camp in the Tower during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>(28)</sup>

The conical roof of the Galata Tower, made of lead and wood, was burnt down in a fire in 1794, during the reign of Sultan Selim III. After the fire, the walls of the Tower were shortened by about 2 meters, then a floor was added with oriel windows on four sides, and it was covered again with a conical cap.

In 1831, the Tower caught fire again, destroying the top floor and the conical cap. During the ensuing restoration work, a high-ceilinged level with 14 windows, another 14-windowed observation level on top, and an all-around balcony were added. Also, the roof was covered with a steeper conical cap. (The inscription above the entrance of the Galata Tower, an epigraph by poet Pertev, tells about the restoration work and that it was carried out upon the order of Sultan Mahmud II.) After a strong storm in 1875, the framework

of the roof was heavily damaged and replaced by an octagonal wooden frame cupola. Italian author Edmondo de Amicis, who visited Istanbul during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, says: "The city of Galata is shaped like an open fan, of which the tower, placed on the crest of the hill, represents the pivot."<sup>(29)</sup>

The Tower remained in this shape until its final restoration in 1964. In its current form, according to Semavi Eyice, the first three floors of the Tower are entirely of Genoese work, while the rest was made by Turks. Indeed, the technique used for stairs between the third and fourth floors is different from the stairs between other floors. Today the stairs from the main entrance to the fourth floor is of stone, and lead up in a tunnel embedded into the wall. From the fourth floor up, the stairs are of wooden construction. The fifth floor has seven cannon ports. Semavi Eyice notes that the pointed brick arches of these ports leave no room for doubt that they were made by Turks.<sup>(30)</sup>



*Rue Yüksek Kaldırım from the objective of Sebah Joaillier in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

**DIRECTIONS:** After finishing your tour of the Galata Tower, return to Galip Dede Street and turn right to Yüksek Kaldırım Street.

## YÜKSEK KALDIRIM (GALATA STEPS)

Once, this street was a part of İstiklal Street. This 270 m long slope connects Galip Dede Street to Karaköy and the wharf; in other words, it connects Pera to the Galata coastline.

During the past times, travelers who land on one of the wharfs – or in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, on the dock – of Galata would probably use this main axis of the city in order to reach their hotels or embassies in Pera. Or should we say, it is where the famous Turkish poet Orhan Veli “kissed Eleni in broad daylight,” as he told us in one of his poems.

This steep slope was a very busy street during 1860s and 70s. It didn't escape from the French engineer Eugene Henri Gavand's notice that every day about 40 thousands of people were walking up or down this slope. In order to connect Galata, the city's finance center, to Pera, the

city's popular entertainment center, Gavand envisioned an underground funicular project. These two centers were finally connected in 1874 with a 570 m tunnel. During its first months, the people were referring to it as "mouse hole," even wondering "why someone might wish to go

## They Rocked the World With Cymbals:

Galip Dede Street is also known as a frequent visiting place for professional musicians. Leading towards Yüksek Kaldırım, the street is lined with many instrument stores. Attentive passers-by would not miss the brass cymbals in most of the shops' windows, and some of them bear the logo "Zilciyan" or "İstanbul Zilciler."

Although it's not a well-known fact, the cymbal as the indispensable instrument of rock and jazz music, was first developed, and introduced to the world, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by Zilciyans (or, Zildjians), an Ottoman family. Therefore, the cymbals in the windows of the instrument stores on and around Galip Dede Street represent the last generation products of a tradition that started in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Istanbul – a tradition which played an important role in the success of numerous bands and musicians, including the familiar names such as Beatles, Rolling Stones, Deep Purple, and Pink Floyd.

The story of Zilciyans, the first known inventor of cymbals, began in Istanbul's Samatya district, where they settled coming

from Black Sea region. The first known member of the family was Kerope, who grew up in the orphanage of the Surp Kevork Church. In the following years, he earned his life by making church bells. According to the Armenian sources, Kerope's first brass foundry was on today's Ağahamam Müşir Süleyman Pasha Street in Samatya (in the place of a shop at no. 45).<sup>(1)</sup>

After Kerope's death, the foundry passed to his son Avedis I, who was born in 1596. 17<sup>th</sup> century was offering new opportunities for craftsmen who work with brass (copper/tin) alloys. During this period, an instrument called zil (hand bell, or cymbal) was introduced to the Ottoman Mehteran band, one of the most deeply rooted army bands in the world. With an edict dated 1618, Sultan Mustafa I commissioned Avedis to make cymbals for the Janissary Army within the premises of Topkapı Palace. The Sultan also granted him with the title Zilciyan (Zilcioğlu). The cymbals casted by Avedis were played by band members in the last row, and accompanied the other



underground before their death.” On the other hand, it was now possible to climb up to Pera in just a few minutes - and by paying 20 para (1/200<sup>th</sup> of a gold lira).

Previously, one had no choice but walk to be able to reach Pera from the Galata wharfs. If you were

with baggage, as British publisher John Murray noted in his 1854-dated book, you had to hire a porter and pay him 5 para. We also learn from Murray’s notes that on Yüksek Kaldırım the best shop for travelers was the Stampa’s, the best hotel was Hotel d’Angleterre – followed by

## Zilciyan Family

instruments of the Mehteran band such as drums, *kös* and *nakkare* (types of kettledrums), and *zurna* (clarion). In 1623, Sultan Murat IV gave Avedis permission to leave the palace and establish his own foundry in Samatya. Avedis improved the sound of the cymbal by developing new brass production techniques and adding different metals to the alloy. Avedis was the first keeper of this secret alloy formula that would pass from father to son for generations. Thus, Avedis’ son Ahkam learned the secret of bell making from his father and took over the foundry in 1651.<sup>(2)</sup>

By the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century, cymbals were introduced to Europe. The first European composer to utilize cymbals was Nikolaus Strungk, in the 1680 opera *Esther*. When prominent composers like Mozart and Haydn started to regularly feature cymbals in their compositions, the cymbals of Zilciyan Family gained popularity among musicians all over Europe.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) abolished the Guild of Janis-



*Avedis Zildjian, the pioneer of the cymbal production in the USA.*



Hotel de Byzance with its beautiful view, and by Hotel d'Europe – and the daily rate for the less comfortable Hotel de Pera was 1.5 dollars.<sup>(31)</sup>

The British author Albert Richard Smith (1816-1860) also visited Istanbul in 1849, and stayed in Hotel d'Europe. He describes Stampa as the

“embodiment of Pera and Galata”:

“His shop is a marvelous depot of everything you want. He supplies you, with equal readiness, with a pot of Atkinson's bear's grease, or a bottle of Tennant's pale ale, a packet of Gillotts' pens, a dozen of Day and Martin's blacking, or a box

saries, and hence, the Mehteran Band as its integral part, and established a western style military band in its place. This development brought cymbal production almost to a halt. Still, three members of the Zilciyan Family - Hoca Artin, Kerope II, and Karabet – were believed to have continued cymbal production during this period. Avedis II Zilciyan, who is believed to be the son of Hoca Artin, participated to the 1851 World Trade Fair in London, as well as receiving quality and craftsmanship awards with his cymbals in London and Paris. Avedis II was visiting Europe frequently, and he returned from London with another award in 1862.

When he died in 1865, his brother Kerope II took over the business, as the two sons of Avedis II were very young at the time. The cymbals produced by Kerope II gained reputation with their rich tones and robustness – now they were bearing the brand name “K. Zildjian.” Kerope II participated in fairs in the USA (Chicago 1873, 1893) and Europe (Vienna and Bologna, 1888) to expand the market share of “K. Zildjian” cymbals.

Kerope died in 1910, and the family business was passed on to Harutyan, his

eldest son. When Harutyan chose a career as a statesman, Aram Zilciyan – who spent long years as an apprentice to his uncle Kerope – took over the company. However, the claims that Aram Zilciyan took part in the assassination attempt against Sultan Abdülhamit II in 1905 forced him to leave the country for Romania. In Budapest, Aram made cymbals under the Zildjian name (A. Zildjian & Cie), while still maintaining contact with the Istanbul factory (K.Zildjian & Cie), which had been supervised by Kerope's eldest daughter Victoria. When Victoria died, her nephew Mikael Dülgeryan helped run the foundry. In the meantime, Aram returned to Istanbul in 1926, but kept the factory in Bucharest open. In 1926, he also sold the rights to American distribution of his A. Zildjian & Cie cymbals to the Fred Gretsch Company.

<sup>(3)</sup>

Facing health problems and without an offspring, Aram wrote in 1908 to his nephew Avedis (III) who was living in Boston, USA, and asked him to come to Istanbul to take over the business. When Avedis III insisted in staying, however, Aram decided to migrate to USA. Avedis III was in clothing business, but encouraged by the

of Holloway's Pills. If you want some Harvey's sauce – you find it at Stampa's; you do not know the address of some merchant in Galata – Stampa will tell you directly; you are uncertain about the different departures of the steamers – Stampa has all the

information at his finger's ends, or if he by chance has not, his clever son is a walking Bradshaw. For good razors (of which I hold Heiffor's Sheffield ones, at a shilling, to be the best, and accordingly recommended him to lay in a stock for future demands), solar lamps, cutlery, London ink,

arrival of Aram, he founded a cymbal company in 1928. It was a time to capitalize on the jazz boom. In the big band era, working with drummers like Gene Krupa, Chick Webb, Papa Jo Jones and Buddy Rich, he developed the modern range of cymbals that came to define the modern drumming and percussion sound.<sup>(4)</sup>

When Avedis' son Robert Zilcayan (1923-2013) was at the age of 14, it was time for him to learn the secret manufacturing process of his ancestors. But the outbreak of the World War II had a dramatic impact on the business. Copper and tin, essential to cymbal production, were also the principal components of the war industry. Robert enlisted in the army and served as an infantryman in Europe.

Returning to the family factory after the war, Robert developed export sales, concentrating on European markets. The rock'n'roll and pop crazes fuelled demand for the company's cymbals, and in 1967 Zildjian established a subsidiary operation called Azco. In 1968, Robert bought the K. Zildjian Co. and all European trademarks on behalf of the

Avedis Zildjian Co. After a while, he also closed down the Istanbul factory.

After the death of Avedis in 1979, Robert's big brother Armand was appointed as the president of the company. After a while, the two Zildjian brothers quarrelled, and it took two years of litigation in the courts to reach a settlement under which Armand kept the original Zildjian company and Robert received the Azco subsidiary. Having taken the secret ma-



*The instrument stores in Şah Değirmeni Street hide not only Zildjian autographed cymbals but also a mysterious story of an Ottoman family.*

pasteboard, pins and needles, Stilton cheeses, gutta percha, otto of roses, sponge, Windsor soap, and Howqua's mixture, there is no shop like Stampa's."<sup>(32)</sup>

Of course it was not only the Stampa's Shop that attracted the interest of the Levantines and tourists.

According to the 1889-1890 Oriental Trade Directories, on Galipdede Street – from the Tunnel Square to the Lüleci Hendek Street – there were 15 shoe stores, 12 fashion designers, tailors and hat shops, 7 furniture stores (of which two stores belonging to Psaltys), 6 jewelers, 4

manufacturing formula with him as part of the deal, in 1981 Robert Zildjian opened a new cymbal company called Sabian – an acronym formed from the first two letters of the names of his children Sally, Bill and Andy – pitting it against his own brother's 350-year-old family business.

Within a few years Sabian was selling some 200,000 handmade cymbals a year, claiming a third of the global market and by 2010 was shipping more than 900,000 cymbals around the world annually. Robert Zildjian lost his life in 2013, and his business was passed on to his youngest child Andy.

On the other hand, Armand's K. Zildjian successfully competes against Sabian. With 2006 revenues of \$52 million, the Zildjian Company is now run by 14th-generation descendants Craigie and Debbie Zildjian.<sup>(5)</sup> Craigie and Debbie Zildjian weren't trusted with the secret until they were in their mid-30s and deemed sufficiently committed to the company - and they, too, have decided to keep the secret from their daughters, the 15<sup>th</sup> generation, for a few more years.<sup>(6)</sup>

When Aram migrated to the USA, Mikael Zilciyan took over the foundry on Samatya Ağahamamı Street and continued with the cymbal production using the

formula perfected by his ancestors. In 1965 he moved the foundry to Bayrampaşa, Sağmalcılar and run it until 1977. His cymbals, branded "K. Zilciyan" were being sold all over the world by the USA branch of the family.

However, in 1977 Mikael received a letter from his American relatives. It says Mikael's cymbals were not admired as before in the USA, and informs him that they will stop importing his cymbals.<sup>(7)</sup> In fact, the leading drummers of the world have begun to call pre-1977 cymbals as "Old K," and complain that the new cymbals were not up to the quality of old ones. With exports coming to a halt, Mikael was forced to close the foundry, and he died after some years.

On the other hand, Mehmet Tamdeğer and Agop and Oksan Tomurcuk brothers, who have been apprentices to Mikael Zilciyan since their young ages, did not want to give up the pursuit of cymbals. They founded a partnership called "İstanbul Zilciler," in order to put the secrets they learned into practice. In 1984, they imported their first hand-made cymbals to USA. When Agop Tomurcuk lost his life to an accident in 1996, the partners-

engravers, 4 groceries, 3 watch sellers, 3 pharmacies, 2 physician's offices, 2 haberdashers, 2 gun shops, 2 tobacco depots, 2 stove shops, and 2 tinsmiths.

(33)

Today Yüksek Kaldırım is an end-to-end asphalt paved street, but in the past it had wide cascading

steps as seen on old photos. In the early 1940s, during the office of Governor Lütfi Kırdar (1938-1949), the street was renewed and paved with cobblestones. This beautiful street has lost its character when it was asphalt paved during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

hip ended. Mehmet Tamdeğer's company took the name "İstanbul Mehmet," while the company founded by Agop Tomurcuk's sons Arman and Sarkis was registered as "İstanbul Agop."<sup>(8)</sup> In the meantime, three Turkish cymbal craftsmen who learned the job from Agop have founded another company, the "Turkish Zil."

In summary, the cymbal making tradition, which started in Istanbul in the 17th century, has now went beyond the Zilciyan Family, and proliferated into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The cymbals you will see in the shops on Galip Dede Street today whisper their long history.

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*Ashkenazi Synagogue  
on the Yüksek  
Kaldırım.*



**DIRECTIONS:** *Ashkenazi Synagogue is on the left hand side of Yüksek Kaldırım, at no. 27. It is just across the mouth of Horoz Sokak.*

## ASHKENAZI SYNAGOGUE

The first known Istanbul synagogue of Ashkenazi Jews, i.e. Jews of Germany, Austria and Eastern Europe origin, opened doors in 1831 in a house on Büyük Hendek Sokak. When they arrived in Ottoman territory, the Ashkenazi Jews wanted to preserve their peculiarities and orthodox practices, and did not want to blend with Sephardic Jews as they had more liberal approach to religion. This only worship place of Ashkenazi Jews was burnt down in 1866. After the fire, the Jews of Austrian origin built a wooden frame synagogue, known as “Österreich Temple,” on a lot where today Ashkenazi Synagogue is situated at 37 Yüksek Kaldırım.

In 1900, with a permit granted by the edict of Sultan Abdülhamit II, they replaced this wooden frame building with a new synagogue of masonry construction. Costing 60 thousand Frank, the new synagogue was financed by the Austrian Jews, especially with a large contribution from Herman Goldenberg, a leading member of the community.<sup>(34)</sup>

The designer of the building, which has a cathedral look, is given in some sources as the Italian architect Gabriel Tedeschi, while some others name G. J. Cornaro, a Venetian architect.

The synagogue is composed of seven floors with top two floors reserved for women. The holiest feature in any synagogue is the *ehal*, a niche or cabinet in the east wall where the *Sefer Torahs* (handwritten Torah scrolls, most sacred book within Judaism) are kept. According to Metin Delevi, the opening ceremony of the Ashkenazi Synagogue on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1900 was led by Baron de Calice, the Ambassador of Austria. However the ceremony was criticized for a long time by the community, because popping champagne during the placement of *Sefer Torahs* into the *ehal* was not a Jewish tradition.

The ebony *ehal* in the Ashkenazi Synagogue resembles Ottoman pavilions. In memory of his wife Rachel who died in 1904, Carl Carlmann donated the woodwork of the *ehal* and the *tevah* (prayer pulpit), and both were carved out of ebony wood by master wood carver Fogel. Carlmann was the owner of the “Maison Carlmann” clothing store in Beyoğlu, and he later operated the *Bonmarşé* (Bon Marché) department store.

The Ashkenazi Synagogue, which is the only active Ashkenazi sanctuary in Istanbul, is open to the public for morning prayers during the weekdays and for Shabbat prayers every Saturday morning. Also, on Shabbat days that fall between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, a traditional Shabbat service is being held before the Chief Rabbi and the leading members of the community. The synagogue holds weddings in the Ashkenazi tradition, and the bride circles seven times around the groom. If the groom is Ashkenazi, the wedding is absolutely held in this synagogue. If the father of a boy is Ashkenazi, his Bar-Mitzvah ceremony is also held here. The population of Ashkenazi in Turkey is around 800, including those who are married to a Sephardim. Accordingly, it is estimated that the Ashkenazi Jews today accounts for only 4 percent of the total Jewish population of Turkey, whereas during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this community used to account for 10 percent of the total Jewish population in Istanbul.<sup>(35)</sup>

**DIRECTIONS:** Continue your walk down the Yüksek Kaldırım Street. Just after the Ashkenazi Synagogue, you will see Alageyik Sokak on the left.

## ALAGEYİK AND ZÜREFA STREETS

Walking down the Alageyik Sokak, a bit further is a gate on the right hand side and the access through this gate is only allowed after an ID check because the Zürefa Sokak on the other side is home to the most active brothels of Istanbul. For this reason, it is one of the most crowded small streets of the city. "It is as if only this small street is charged with soothing the taut-strung nerves of Istanbul," says famous Turkish poet İlhan Berk, and he adds: "All the coming-of-age lads of Istanbul lose their virginity in this street."<sup>(36)</sup>

The street's location next to holy places such as St. Benoit Church, Surp Hisus Pırgıç Church, and Ashkenazi Synagogue – this proximity of "worship" and "debauchery" – speaks volumes for those who want to hear. Galata means some dose of Alageyik Sokak, too.

*Youngsters on the Alageyik Street.*





**DIRECTIONS:** *Continue your walk down to Alageyik Sokak; you will arrive directly to Kemeraltı Street.*

## KEMERALTI STREET

Kemeraltı Street was designed to funnel the traffic from the historic peninsula – via the Galata Bridge – to the north of the city, and in fact, it owes its name to the fire of 1771. Here's how it is:

In the place of the high school that is situated next to St. Benoit Church between Kemeraltı Street and Lüleci Hendek Sokak, there was once a monastery. As a wing of the monastery used to extend over to a “çukurbostan”, one of its arches used to be situated in the path of the future street. (While the literal meaning of Çukurbostan is “low elevation vegetable garden,” it also indicates that the garden may have been near or on an old cistern.)

In the fire of 1771, the monastery suffered a serious damage. Subsequently, it was rebuilt only on one side of the street, while the ruined arch was demolished upon the objection of a Turk who had a property in the garden. During the demolition, a barely readable inscription was found on the eastern face of the arch, bearing the Armenian name “Ovakim” and 1120 (1671 in Gregorian calendar) as the date.<sup>(37)</sup>

Today there is no trace remaining from the arch, which was reportedly sitting on wooden columns on a masonry base, but it gave its name to the Kemeraltı Street (lit. “Under-the-Arch Street”).

*The Kemeraltı Street in the mid 1950s with Tophane Fountain in restoration (Photo: SALT Araştırma archive).*





*Surp Hisus Pirgiç  
Armenian Church.*

**DIRECTIONS:** *At the mouth of the street, the massive building next to the florist on the right is Surp Hisus Pirgiç Armenian Church.*

## SURP HİSUS PIRGIÇ ARMENIAN CHURCH

Although most of the Armenians in Turkey are of Orthodox faith, there are some who converted to Catholicism under the influence of the missionaries. One of the most influential names of the era in this respect was Pope Clement VIII, who constituted in 1579 the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation in order to spread the Catholic faith among Christian communities. For the missionaries of the congregation, Istanbul was a suitable place because they would have the support of the Western diplomats at the Ottoman capital.

A priest named Clement Galanos came to Istanbul in 1630, and effectively helped spreading the Catholicism. With his knowledge of Armenian language and his skillfulness, he won not only the sympathy of Orthodox Armenian priests, but also of the Armenian youngsters who were athirst for the Western enlightenment. The efforts of the Orthodox Armenian Patriarchate to unite the Armenian community proved futile, and Catholic Armenian community

continued its growth. Ultimately, and because the European nations pressed through their embassies, Sultan Mahmud II recognized the Armenian Catholic millet (meaning non-Muslim subjects of the Sultan) with an edict he granted in 1830. Subsequently an Armenian Catholic Patriarchate was established in Istanbul.<sup>(38)</sup>

The first acts of the Armenian Catholic community were to select a spiritual leader who is acceptable to the Ottoman government, and to build their first church. Accordingly, the Surp Hisus Pirgiç Armenian Catholic Church was built on today's Kemeralti Street in Karaköy, next to St. Benoit High School. The construction of the church was funded by donations from the Armenian Catholic community, and it was opened for service in 1834. The community's General Assembly gained official status in 1880, with an edict by Sultan Abdülhamit II.

Through the course of time, the community opened other churches, as well as hospitals and district schools, and it saw a total of 12 patriarchs. After the foundation of the Republic, the seat of the Patriarchate was moved to Beirut in 1927, and its old seat in Istanbul became an Archbishopric. Today situated next to the Surp Asdvadzadzin (Virgin Mary) Cathedral in Atıf Yılmaz Street (formerly Sakızağacı) of Beyoğlu, the seat of the Archbishopric is the spiritual center of Istanbul's Catholic Armenians.

Surp Hisus Pirgiç Church is still active today and its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated in 1984 with a religious ceremony.

The masonry construction church has four small altars in addition to its main altar. The narthex on the western side of the building is composed of three segments. The grave of Beşar Sıhbi, the Emir of Lebanon, is also in the church.

During the construction of the church a plague outbreak occurred in Istanbul. Subsequently, an icon of Virgin Mary from the church was carried through the streets of the city, which was thought to play some role in the weakening impact of the plague. Apparently Sultan Mahmut II also had thought so, because he gave a diamond-studded gift to the church. The icon of Virgin Mary is still kept in the church.<sup>(39)</sup>



*Church of St. Benoit.*

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow your steps back to Kemeraltı Street and walk towards Kabataş direction. Ahead on the left hand side, at 11 Kemeraltı Street, you will see the Church of Saint Benoit and Saint Benoit High School.

## HIGH SCHOOL AND THE CHURCH OF SAINT BENOIT

The Church of Saint Benoit is situated in a land surrounded by high walls on Kemeraltı Street. It is the oldest active Roman Catholic Church in the region.

Although its construction date is uncertain, it is claimed to be built during the rule of Byzantine Emperor Kantakuzenos, and the papacy of Urbanus V (1362-1370) of the Benedictine Order.<sup>(40)</sup> In 1427, the church was placed under the control of the Benedictine monks, changing its name to “San Benedetto.” For this reason, some sources indicate its construction date as 1427. In summary, Saint Benoit is originally an Italian institution rather than a French one. The church is under the rule of Benedictine Order since the Genoese era of Galata. Although the building underwent many changes through time, its door and bell tower retained their original forms. Also, a monastery was built on the foundations of the adjacent old city walls.<sup>(41)</sup> Gyllius, a historian who wrote on Medieval and Byzantine periods, notes that the premises

of the monastery used to comprise a 300-column large cistern. According to him, the roof of the cistern had collapsed during his time and the priest were taking water from the cistern to water their vegetable garden.<sup>(42)</sup> (This also hints at why this place was called “Çukurbostan” (low elevation garden) during the Ottoman era.)

The church comprises several Levantine tombs from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. Next to the church is the Saint Benoit Private High School (Lycée Français Privé Saint-Benoît). Although the school’s official establishment date is 1783, it was reportedly constructed on the foundations of Santa-Maria della Misericordia (Monastero della Cisterna de Pera - Monastery of Pera Cistern), which was built by Genoese nuns of Benedictine Order. The bell tower at the entrance of the school is the only relic from that era.

According to Monsignor Pietro Cedula (1577-1633) who visited Istanbul in 1581<sup>(43)</sup>, Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent had first wanted to convert the Saint Benoit Church into a mosque, but later donated it to the Kingdom of France. In 1583, upon the request of King Henri III of France, Pope Gregorius XIII transferred the monastery from Benedictine Order to the Jesuit Order. Following the abolishment of the Jesuit Order, the church passed to the Lazarists for a while, but the French ambassador drove them out during the French Revolution. When the French

Revolution ended, a group of Lazarist priests arrived from Marseilles to take their church back in 1783.<sup>(44)</sup> It is this date which is acknowledged as the official foundation date of the school. While the school was at first accepting only the students of French origin, it later started to accept also the Ottoman students with a 1831-dated edict of Sultan Mahmud II.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the students of Saint-Benoit were mostly composed of the children of foreigners and Levantine families, but later the number of Ottoman non-Muslim children grew. During this period, however, the school mostly attracted Armenian Catholic and Bulgarian Catholic communities.

In 1844 a pharmacy, and in 1862 a dispensary were added to the school. The school also became the scene of the Ottoman Empire’s first scientific meteorology measurements, conducted by Fr. Jean Régner between 1848 and 1853. After suffering many fires and the wear of time, the school buildings were demolished and rebuilt to their current state between 1875 and 1880.

As in all the schools of foreign origin in Turkey, Saint-Benoit also underwent many changes with the 1924-dated Act of the Unification of Education, as well as with the 1935-dated Act of Private Educational Institutions.

There is no remaining nun in the school since Sister Monique Geins, the former vice-principal and a teacher of French language, left for France in 2009, after years of service.

**DIRECTIONS:** Continue your walk towards the same direction on Kemeraltı Street. 50 m ahead, on the left, you will arrive to Galata Rum Ortaokulu (Galata Greek Secondary School). The building is at 49 Kemeraltı Street, and it catches the eye from afar with its columns by the sides of the main entrance door and of the windows of upper floors.

## GALATA GREEK SCHOOL

Galata Greek School was built in 1885 for the education of the children of Ottoman Greek families. The architect of the neo-classical building is unknown. At first the school accepted only boys, but later, in 1935, it transitioned to mixed-gender education.

In 1968, its name was changed to Karaköy Greek Primary School. According to Irini Kehrioti, the school at the time had 230 pupils, 122 boys and 108 girls.<sup>(45)</sup>

However, the school lost many students during the 1960s and 1970s because of problems which caused many Greeks to flee the country for Greece. The number of students gradually decreased until 1985. In September 1998, the school was forced to discontinue the education for the lack of students and remained closed for ten years. It was renovated between in 1997 and reopened in 2001 as a preschool. In 2007 it was closed again because of insufficient number of students. The

building reopened its doors in 2012 for “Adhokrasi,” one of the two main exhibition events of Istanbul Design Biennial. Today the institution strives for finding life again as the “Karaköy Greek Private Preschool and Primary School.”

*Galata Greek School.*



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