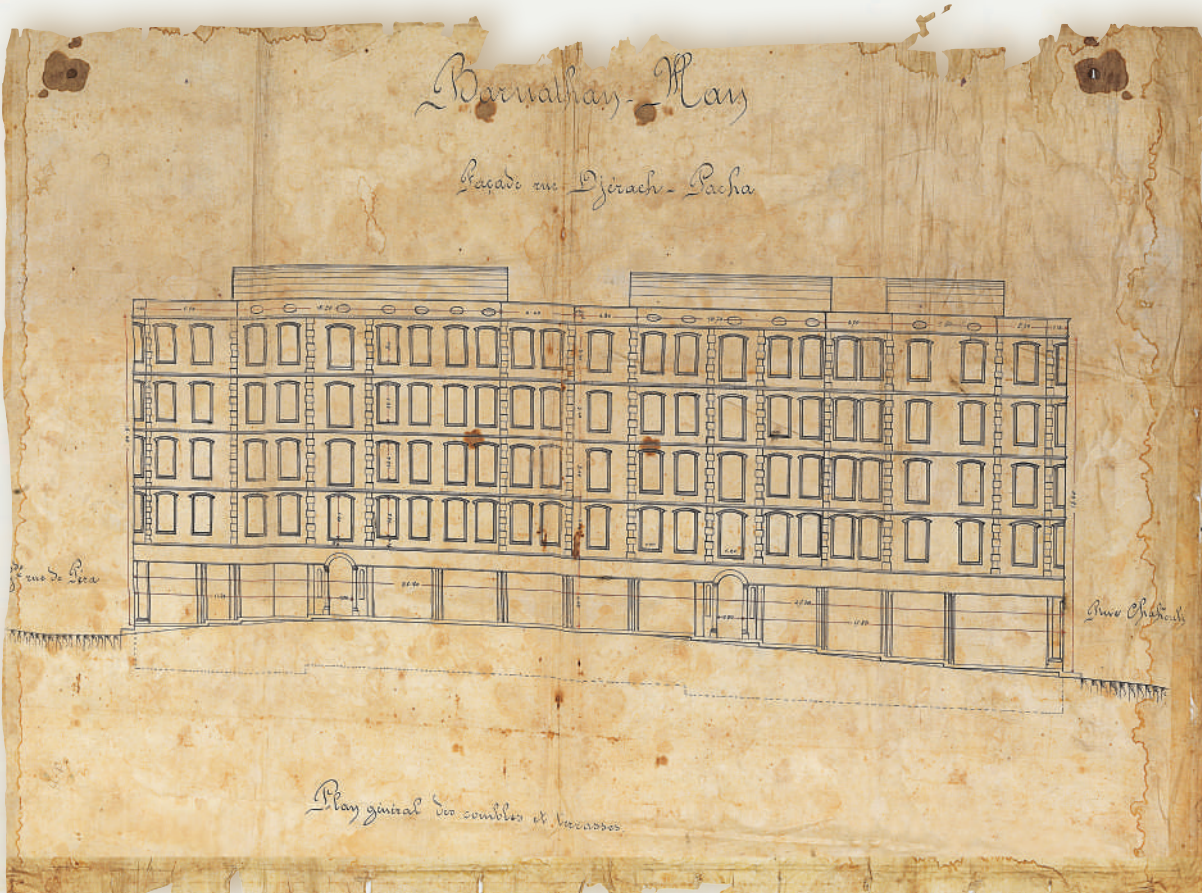


BARNATHAN APARTMENTS

Çiğdem Oğuz



NAR YATIRIM





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Barnathan Apartments

Çiğdem Oğuz 2016

With Contributions

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Barnathan

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ÇİÇDEM OĞUZ





Barnathan Apartments





As one of the earliest examples of 19th-century apartments in Galata, the Barnathan Apartments was built almost 130 years ago.

On the two main gates of the building, the years 1892 and 1893, together with the corresponding Jewish dates 5652 and 5654, were engraved.

The name of the apartment, just like many Beyoğlu apartments, originates from the family name of the property owner.

The building is purchased by İbrahim Özer and Aytaç Biter in 2011.

After years of meticulous work, it is restored according to the original design, and its name is changed into Barnathan from Halil-Hamit.

We contacted the members of the Barnathan family and they have united in Istanbul thanks to the restoration project.

The building has opened its doors to the guests with a boutique hotel, cafe, and a restaurant that offers traditional cuisine along with an exhibition hall.





Historical development of Galata in the 19th century and the emergence of block apartments

The Barnathan Apartments is located in the heart of historical Beyoğlu. It consists of three blocks with separate entrances and the whole blocks cover the narrow Tımarcı Street. Before giving detailed information about this monumental building, it is important to understand the context in which the block apartments emerged in the Late Ottoman Empire. Since the construction of the Barnathan Apartments was a result of the social and economic transformation of Galata and Pera in the 19th century, first we will consider the historical development of these districts.

Today the Barnathan Apartments is associated with the Galata neighborhood due to its location and the perfect view of the Galata Tower that it has. The history of Galata makes such monumental buildings even more interesting. Starting from the origin

of the ‘Galata’ name, one would find fascinating stories and legends. There are several accounts on the origin of this name. Many sources indicate that the ancient name of the district was Sycae, which means ‘the place of fig trees’.⁽¹⁾ Approximately until the 7th century, Sycae referred to a larger district as an area encompassing the Golden Horn. After the restoration of the main buildings in this region, i.e. theaters, churches, and the city walls, the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I named it Justinianopolis. By his death, the name Justinianopolis was forgotten and the name Sycae was revived. On the other hand, the origin of the word ‘Galata’ is a mystery. According to some accounts, the guards of the district center, where baths, churches, theaters and mills were situated, were known as Collegiatos and this name in time turned into Galata. Another story is that the word referred to



Galata Wooden Houses, G. Berggen, ca. 1880. (German Archeological Institute Photography Archives, 539, R 29.019)

the milk production in this district since the word ‘Gala’ means milk in Greek. Evliya Çelebi, the most famous Ottoman traveler of the 17th century, supported this theory in his Book of Travels: “It [Galata] takes its name from gala, which means milk in Greek. During the time of the Greek Emperors, the place was inhabited by the shepherds and

their herds, and the place was famous for its dairies.”⁽²⁾ The last account on the origin of the name, which is widely accepted in the literature, is that Galata word was derived from the name of a Celtic community, Galatians.⁽³⁾ On the other hand, ‘Pera’ means ‘opposite side’ in Greek, and some sources used Pera and Galata interchangeably despite they



refer to two separate districts. During the Fourth Crusade (1204), Istanbul (Constantinople) was stormed and plundered by the crusaders. Michael Palaiologos, a member of the Byzantine royal family, made an alliance with the Genoese and seized the city back from the crusaders in 1261. As a consequence of this alliance, the Genoese gained privileges to establish colonies in the Galata district.⁽⁴⁾ Also, they had gained power over the Venetians and Pisans in Galata and declared themselves as ‘Magnifica Communita di Peyra’ meaning the Great Community of Pera.⁽⁵⁾ Once the settlement in Galata expanded to the north, the district which is known as Beyoğlu today came to be known as Pera, while the parts closer to the Galata Tower and the city walls were referred as Galata. Some sources indicate that Turkish people preferred to call this part as Beyoğlu (son of the lord), which refers to Venetian Luigi Gritti, the son of Andrea Gritti the Doge of Venice, who was a close friend of the Ottoman sultan Suleyman the Magnificent. Gritti built

a mansion for himself on the height above Galata closer to today’s Taksim square.⁽⁶⁾ Said Duhani also supported this view on the origin of the Beyoğlu name in his memoirs: “Today’s Pera was called as Beyoğlu from the 16th century on since the Venetian Balyos [consul] established a summer residence between Galatasaray and Taksim with a view of Bosphorus.”⁽⁷⁾

Before the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans, the Galata district was a Genoese colony. An appointed governor from Genoa called ‘Podesta’ was the head of this colony. The city walls in the region, whereof today only the ruins can be seen, were constructed by the Genoese as they took advantage of the weakness of the Byzantium Empire. During the conquest of the city by the Ottoman Empire in 1453, the Genoese Podesta and the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror came to an agreement. According to this agreement, the Genoese community would surrender to the Ottoman sultan in return for respecting the trade, travel



“ Before the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans, the Galata district was a Genoese colony. ”

and religious rights of the Genoese community.⁽⁸⁾ From then on, the governor Podesta became ‘Voyvoda’, this time, he was appointed by the Ottoman Sultan. Apart from Genoese, Pisans, and Venetians, Galata was inhabited by the Greeks, Armenians and Sephardim before the Ottoman conquest. According to a census in 1455 there were only 20 Turks living in the region.⁽⁹⁾ Despite the existence of a cosmopolitan population, the neighborhoods were inhabited on the basis of ethnicity. Only the marketplaces were exceptional in this sense and ethnic variety was the main characteristic in such districts.⁽¹⁰⁾ After the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans, Turkish settlement in the area had increased progressively. Galata was among the most visited sights of Istanbul among the travelers. Evliya Çelebi, the famous 17th century

Ottoman traveler, described Galata in his Book of Travels as follows: “The best fruits, and drinks and food can be found here. A substance for life and soul, crop milk can be found here too.” “The town is full of infidels, who number 200,000 according to the census taken in the reign of Murad IV, whereas the Muslims are only 64,000. (...) There are four folks in Galata. First is sailors, second merchants, third is craftsmen. The fourth one is the carpenters. Many folks dress in the Algerian style because a great number of them are Arabs and Moors. There are wealthy captains, one of them is Captain Elvan. The Greeks keep the taverns; the Armenians are merchants and bankers; and the Jews are the negotiators in love matter.” “The best thing is white bread here, called francala [baguette]; besides the swearmeats, liqueurs, and confitures in



the sugar market. There is nowhere else to find these better, except for Damascus.

The halwa is sold in painted paper. The simit is seasoned with spice.”⁽¹¹⁾

Galata was a commercial center both under the Genoese and under the Ottoman rule. Thanks to the Genoese sea trade, the Galata port became an important one in the Mediterranean Sea. During the Ottoman era, the port continued to be a commercial center as well. The capitulations, which were the commercial privileges given to the foreign countries by the Ottoman sultan, contributed to this trade. Since the 16th century, the foreign embassies, embassy residences and churches were built in the heights above Galata, making this region more attractive for the European visitors. In fact, this ethnic variety and the wealth provided by trade led the emergence of a European way of life in this town earlier than any other places in the Ottoman Empire. In the second half of the 19th century, when the Barnathan Apartments were built, there were many merchants living in Galata from various

ethnic communities beside European tradesmen. During the Ottoman era, the city walls and the surroundings of the Galata Tower constituted the border of Galata town. The Barnathan Apartments, on the other hand, were located at the end of Grand Rue de Pera – today known as İstiklal Street.

The European settlement in Pera started in the 18th century thanks to the increasing trade and political relations between the Ottoman Empire and the European countries. Once the embassies were established in Pera permanently, the European citizens settled around these embassies. Pera, with respect to its architecture, the population, and the lifestyle, resembled a European city.

As far as we can see from the old maps and portrayals of the travelers, the narrow streets of the 19th century Galata were full of shops like marketplaces.

There were taverns, coffeehouses as well as tailors and barbershops between Pera and Galata. Back at the time, today’s Karaköy was the center of banks and bankers. Journalists, travelers, lawyers,



Constantinople,
Stambool.
Engraved by B.R.
Davies. Published
by the Society
for the Diffusion
of Useful
Knowledge,
59 Lincolns Inn
Fields, Septr.
1840. (London:
Chapman & Hall,
1844).

doctors and pharmacists were among the inhabitants. Pierre Loti, the famous French novelist, who visited Ottoman Istanbul in the 19th century mentioned Pera as follows: “Taxim, a busy quarter on the heights of Pera: European carriages and clothes jostling with the carriages and costumes of the Orient;

blazing heat and blazing sun; a mild breeze throws the dust and the yellowed leaves of August up in the air; the scent of the myrtles; the din of the fruit sellers; streets cluttered with grapes and watermelons... The very first moments of my sojourn in Constantinople etch these images in my memory.”⁽¹²⁾



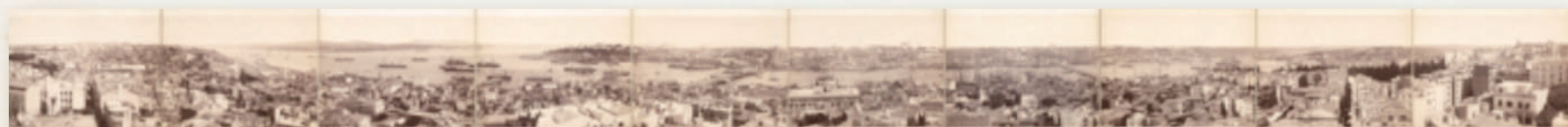
The Galata Tower

The Galata Tower was built in 1348 as the stronghold of the Genoese city walls. The Genoese named this tower as ‘the Tower of Christ’.⁽¹³⁾ Later on, the tower came to be known as the Galata Tower. Throughout the history, the Galata Tower served for some practical reasons. During the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent, the tower was used as a prison for imprisoned workers in Kasımpaşa Dockyard. In the 16th century, Takiyüddin Efendi, one of the most famous astronomers in the Ottoman Empire, used the tower as an observatory house. Sultan Murat III closed the observatory house and turned it into a prison again. During the opening of the tower as a touristic sight in the 1960s, skulls and human bones were found in the prison part.⁽¹⁴⁾ The Galata Tower

was also used as a fire-watch station.

The tower was destroyed many times due to the earthquakes and the fires. After the disasters, it was renovated and the conic part at the top was built on it. In 1875 this conic part was destroyed by a huge storm. The most recent renovation was in 1964. Since then the tower is being ran by a private tourism company.

Pascal Sébah and Polycarpe Joaillier, owners of one of the most famous photography studios of the Middle East in 19th century, took panoramic photos of Istanbul from the top of the Galata Tower in the 1880s. It is possible to see the rear facades of the first block of the Barnathan Apartments and the ongoing construction of the second block in these photos.



Sebah & Joaillier Photo Panorama de Constantinople, Pris de La Tour de Galata (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Online Catalog, Digital Number: pan 6a35826.)



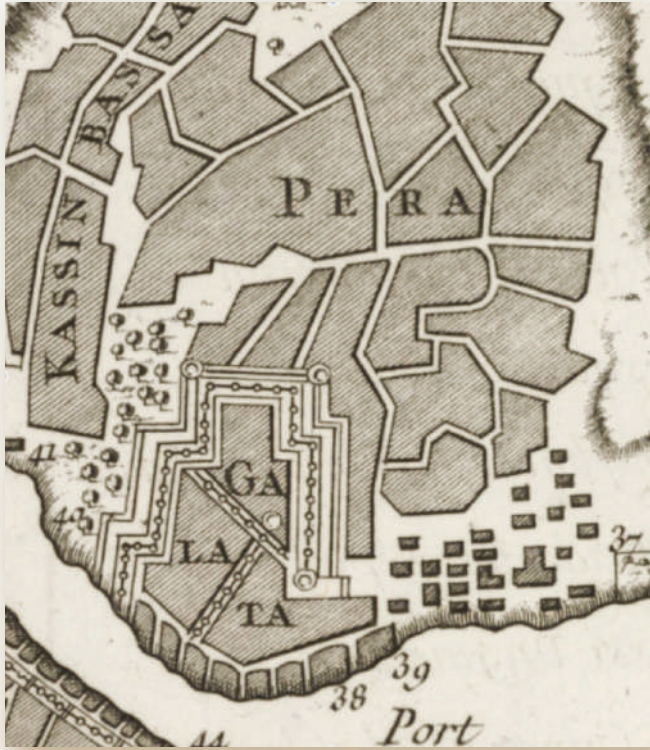


Apartments in Galata

The Barnathan Apartments were among the first samples of the multi-level houses in Beyoğlu. Considering block apartments that were constructed in the late 19th century, Barnathan and Helbig (today it is known as Doğan Apartments) were among the biggest buildings. Despite this fact, Barnathan did not get as much attention as Doğan Apartments. Probably, it is due to the fact that Barnathan was simpler compared to the distinctive architecture of Doğan Apartments (u-shaped with a courtyard) and the history (Doğan Apartments was the embassy of Prussia and later on hosted the Belgian Helbig family).

What were the social and economic conditions as well as the aesthetical motives that ended up with such gigantic multi-storey buildings? To answer this question we should take a closer look at the historical transformation of Galata and Pera in the 19th century. The establishment of local

municipalities stand as a unique step in this transformation thanks to the Regulation of 6th District in 1857 and with the General Regulation of Beyoğlu and Galata Districts in 1858, which brought the Western way of the city administration to the Ottoman Empire. Accordingly, Istanbul was separated into 14 different municipalities. Although the Beyoğlu municipality was the first, it was named as '6th District' inspired from the Paris' famous 'Sixième Arrondissement'. The projects of the municipality would change the appearance of the district completely. First of all, the streetlights were introduced, new roads were constructed and the district was mapped.⁽¹⁵⁾ Back then, the fires in Istanbul constituted the biggest danger destroying the wooden houses and causing the death of residents. Especially after the big fire of 1870 in Pera, which destroyed 8,000 buildings, the municipality's prior issue became



The city walls are shown in a map dated back to 1764. S. Bellin, Le Petit Atlas Maritime Recueil De Cartes et Plans Des Quatre Parties Du Monde (Paris, 1764).

preventing these fires. As a first step, the wooden houses of Galata and Pera had to be eliminated by encouraging the use of brick and stone materials in construction. In order to achieve this, the municipality allowed the construction of multi-storey houses and gave some privileges such as reductions on material transportation fees.⁽¹⁶⁾

Before the reconstruction of the district, the ancient gates of the Genoese city

walls were kept closed at the nights and isolated Galata from the northern part.⁽¹⁷⁾ It was also forbidden to walk at the nights without carrying lamps.⁽¹⁸⁾ The projects of the municipality attempted to provide security, new settlement areas and infrastructure for the district. Consequently, in order to provide unity between Galata and Pera and also to make money by selling the lands of the city walls, the municipality



W.H. Barlett, 1839

removed the famous Genoese city walls. Today, one can find some ruins of these walls. The alleys that appeared as ditches (hendek in Turkish) after the removal of the city walls took their names from those times such as Büyük Hendek, Küçük Hendek and Lüleci Hendek.⁽¹⁹⁾ The names of these streets, as well as famous Grand Rue de Pera,

were coined by the 6th Arrondissement municipality. The construction of the Tünel (tunnel subway) was another important step to unite Galata and Pera. Eugene Henry Gavand, a French engineer who visited Istanbul in 1867, designed the subway project to solve the transportation problem of Galata in 1872. Upon the approval of the



The 1909 insurance map shows the Ancien Cimetière parallel to the Şahkulu Street. (Charles Goad, İstanbul Sigorta Haritaları, ed. İrfan Dağdelen, İstanbul : İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kütüphane ve Müzeler Müdürlüğü , 2007).

project by Sultan Abdülaziz, Cavand established his 'The Metropolitan Railway of Constantinople, from Galata to Pera' company. The subway transportation to carry passengers up and down between Galata port and Pera began in 1875. The Tünel subway is the second subway of the world (after London).⁽²⁰⁾ As we can see from the map, the train goes right under

the Barnathan Apartments.

Removal of the ancient graveyards from the district was among the biggest projects of the municipality. There were two big graveyards in Galata covering a huge land. As a result of the construction and settlement projects these graveyards were removed. There was a Muslim cemetery, which was located very close



to Barnathan Apartments as well. There was another dynamic constituting the basis of the projects that the municipality was relying on: Increasing population of the district. The intensive commerce between Europe and the Ottoman Empire brought heavy port traffic. The marketplaces were covering all along the streets close to the port. The port also became the center of money exchange (this time more international) thanks to the establishment of the Ottoman Bank in 1856 nearby the traditional offices of bankers and brokers. This part is still named after these banks and known as Banks Street in Karaköy. All these commercial and financial activities increased the need for new residences in the area. On the other hand, the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 enabled a standardized registration system for private property owners and provided the basis for the transfer of the private property which enabled landowners to sell, invest or rent their properties under a more recognized registration system. All these regulations and socio-economic

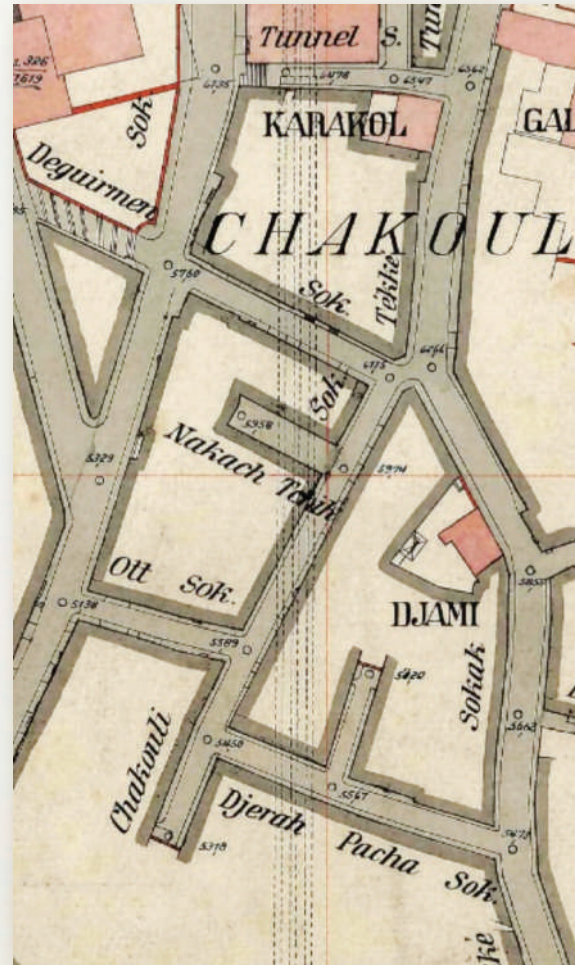
conditions paved the way for the emergence of multi-storey apartments.⁽²¹⁾ The preventive regulations for fires enabled the construction of multi-storeys as an exchange for the use of bricks and stones. The legal developments in the realm of private property enabled landowners to invest in such big enterprises, while the need for residences for tenants who were employed in the commercial center increased the success of such investments.

In fact, it is possible to see stone and bricks houses before the emergence of the apartments as well. However, these houses were designed to accommodate only one family and their servants. On the other hand, living in a multi-storey building represented a transformation in the lifestyle as well. While the traditional houses were built to protect the privacy of the family, the apartments, on the opposite, were to be shared with other people.⁽²²⁾ According to Sedad Hakkı Eldem, the famous Turkish architect, a typical Turkish house had only one storey and even though some houses had



multiple, only one storey constituted the main one and preferably only one family lived in.⁽²³⁾

The multi-storey apartments signified the Western way of life in the Ottoman Empire. Living collectively or in shared houses was considered a sign of poverty by the Ottoman elites in the beginning of the 19th century. However, the cosmopolitan population of the region embraced a new life marked with fashion, comfort, and fanciness. For instance, the census records of Pera, Galata and Tophane in 1885 reveal that 47% of the population were foreigners, while 32% were non-Muslim Ottomans and 21% were Muslims.⁽²⁴⁾ The rapid transformation of the 19th century had transformed the understanding of housing and the luxurious apartments became fashionable among the high-middle class through the end of the 19th century.⁽²⁵⁾ Nevertheless, one should note that the residences of Galata were more modest than Pera in this respect. Many of the block apartments served to the middle income tenants rather than wealthy classes.



The train goes right under the Barnathan Apartments as it is shown in the map. (Alman Mavileri: 1913-1914 : I. Dünya Savaşı Öncesi İstanbul Haritaları / ed. İrfan Dağdelen, İstanbul : İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediye Başkanlığı Kütüphane ve Müzeler Müdürlüğü, 2006.)



Where Does the Barnathan Name Come from?

The apartment blocks, which were peculiar to the end of 19th century, carried the names of their owners. One can identify the names of the apartments through the annual commercial registers of Istanbul. While the non-Muslim landowners had given their family names to their properties, some Muslim landowners were using their first names with the abbreviation 'Mr.' in Turkish 'Bey' since some Muslims did not carry family names. 'Barnathan' is the family name of an Ottoman-Jewish family. Thanks to a nice coincidence, I met the members of the big Barnathan family during this research. While checking a photography website, I saw a comment on a photo of Barnathan Apartments written by Christian Barnathan in which he

wrote that the property belonged to his ancestors. I contacted him through social media and he introduced me to the other members of the Barnathan family. Without their contributions, it would be impossible to finalize this project. They provided me with the migration stories, photos and genealogies of their Ottoman ancestors. Some members of the Barnathan family put me in contact with Francis Wacziarg who was in India back then.⁽²⁶⁾ Francis told me that it was his line of Barnathan family who owned these apartments and he brought me a hand-drawn plan of the Barnathan Apartments on a silk texture when he and his cousins, Jean-Claude and Sylvain Barnathan, visited Istanbul in 2013. I contacted Elliot Barnathan, who lives in the United States, and he



sent me the documents regarding the family's genealogy together with the obituaries of the Barnathan family members. Another family member, Cesar Alfredo Barnathan, from Buenos Aires, explained to me the meaning of Barnathan as 'the Daughter of Prophet Natan'. Jean-Claude Barnathan shared many photos of the family with me as well as the stories of his great-grandparents. Stella Barnathan, who is the only family member residing in Istanbul, told me her own story. These members of the Barnathan family provided me with the information below.

The Barnathan family arrived to the Ottoman Empire in 1492 together with the Sephardim Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition. Based on the obituaries of the deceased members, it is possible to say that the family had a good reputation among the Jewish community in Galata. However, their prominent property was not the Barnathan Apartments. Many people associated this family with their multi-

“According to the annual commercial registers, many members of the family were bankers and commissioners.”

Barnathan (Menahem), agent commissionnaire, représentant des principales maisons manufacturières et industrielles de l'Europe ; spécialités de papiers à cigarettes, etc. Maison Espagnole fondée en 1856 sous la raison Moïse Barnathan pour le commerce en gros des papiers à cigarettes ; en 1891 firme actuelle, Barnathan Han, 35, 36, S.

* Barnathan (Moïse N.), négociant en papiers, allumettes chimiques, prêts sur hypothèques, avances sur marchandises, etc., Barnathan Han, 21, R. Mar-poutchilar, S. et Chekerdji Han, 14, G.

* Barnathan (Nissim), banquier et propriétaire, Barnathan Han, 21, S.

*Annuaire Oriental du
Commerce 1893/94, SALT
Archive, AAO012/695.*

Barnathan (M.), tailleur, Grande Rue de Galata, 157.

* Barnathan (Moïse N.), papier, allumettes Barnathan Han, 21, S.

* Barnathan (Nissim), membre du comité administratif de la société Israélite *Or-Ahaim* à Balata, Barnathan Han, 21, S.

* Barnathan (Sab.), Barnathan Han, 32, S.

*Annuaire Oriental du
Commerce 1892/1893, SALT
Archive, AAO026/232.*



(Photo: El Tiempo Newspaper, 1907. The first part of the obituary that was published for Nissim Barnathan.)

storey office building called ‘Barnathan Han’ in Eminönü which survived until today. Since the family members were dealing with commerce and finance, they also had strong international connections. In the Ottoman Empire, the bankers of Galata who were usually wealthy and well-known families were carrying out the financial activities.⁽²⁷⁾ According to the annual commercial registers, many members of the family were bankers and commissioners. There were some members of the Barnathan family who was dealing with cigarette paper trade as well. For example, Menahem Barnathan was both a commissioner and a merchant representing a cigarette paper company called Maison Espagnole, which was established in 1891 by Moise Barnathan. Moise was a member of the Chamber of Commerce in Istanbul as a merchant and a commissioner. The most well-known member of the Barnathan family, Nissim (b. 1827-d. 1907) was a banker and the owner of the Barnathan Han. He was a leading member of



Balat Or-Ahayim community and a respectable person among the Ottoman Jewish community. In the obituary, published after his death in El Tiempo newspaper on November 22, 1907, it was indicated that Nissim was a leading figure in the Jewish community and the merchants in Istanbul.⁽²⁸⁾

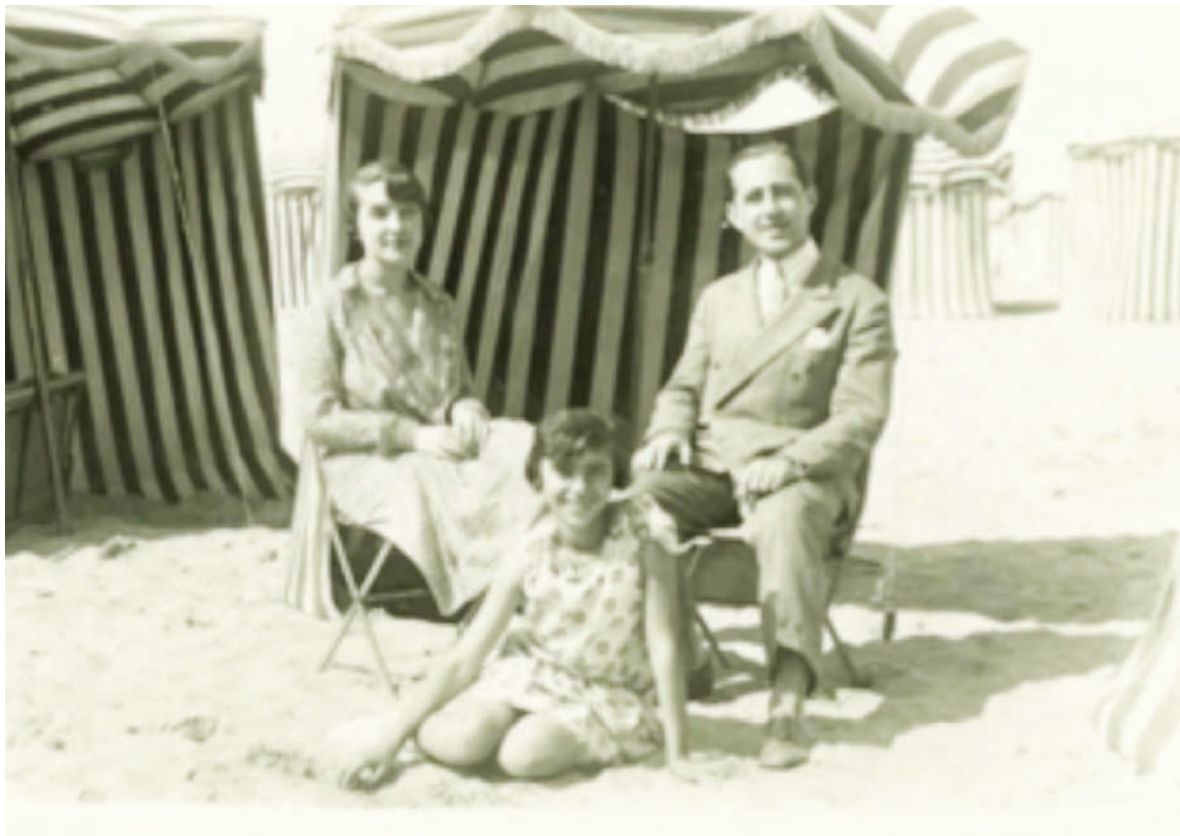
In the obituary, it was asserted that Nissim Barnathan, a resident of Moda, was a tireless person, who ate only once in a day and was known by his open-mindedness despite his religiosity. He sent his sons and nephews to Europe for education and he himself traveled to Europe. He acquired a prominent position among the Jews of Constantinople and particularly among the Rabbis to which the deceased was associated. For over fifty years, he took an active part in the events of the Chief Rabbinate, he was a member of almost all the Councils of the Chief Rabbinate and for twenty-five to thirty years was always among the most active and influential member of the council. Nissim Barnathan had nine children.



Nissim Barnathan and his kids



“ The Barnathan family arrived to the Ottoman Empire in 1492 together with the Sephardim Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition. ”



Louise & Albert and Donna Barnathan



Among them, we have more information on Samuel and Moise Barnathan than the others. Samuel Barnathan (b. 1878-d. 1944) was married to Fanny Profeta (b. 1877- d. 1944). Their kids Albert, Louise and Donna Barnathan were all born in Istanbul. The youngest child, Donna Barnathan was born in 1913, thus, we assume that they were living in the Ottoman Empire until that date. Moreover, Francis Barnathan, who brought me the famous plan of the Barnathan Apartments, was Donna Barnathan's son. Therefore, we assume that the Barnathan Apartments belonged to this line of the Barnathan family. Samuel Barnathan moved to Paris during the First World War. They established a living there together with his wife, Fanny Profeta. Albert, Samuel, and Fanny were killed in Auschwitz by the Nazis in 1944. One of the members of the family that I met, Sylvain Barnathan was Albert's son. Donna Barnathan was married to



Stella and Moise Barnathan



Marcel Wacziarg. Their son Francis was born during the Second World War (in 1942) while Donna and her husband were on a ship in Atlantic escaping from the holocaust.

The other son, Moise Barnathan (b. 1853-d. 1935) was married to Stella Behar (who was born in Istanbul just like Moise) and they moved to Nice in the early 1900s. Stella Barnathan, the only living granddaughter of Moise, told me that her father Vitalie Haim

Barnathan and her mother Rachel Profeta were living in Turkey until 1926. Vitalie Haim Barnathan was working in Bank Francais de Orient in Karaköy. He was also dealing with pharmaceuticals. The family left Turkey when Stella Barnathan was 4 years old. They moved to Nice where Doctor Leon Barnathan, son of Moise and Stella's uncle, was already living. During the Second World War, Vitalie Haim was taken to a concentration camp. His wife Rachel and Stella



The office of Dr. Leon Barnathan - Nice, France



Barnathan could escape to Istanbul in 1942. Stella Barnathan told that her family was never concerned about tracing their old properties in Istanbul. When I interviewed her in her house in Arnavutköy, she knew only about the offices in Eminönü and had no idea about the Barnathan Apartments.

Grandfather Nissim had another son carrying the same name (b. 1879- d. 1944) who moved to Paris through the end of the 19th century. Jean-Claude Barnathan was his grandson. In the obituaries, which were written after the deceased members of the Barnathan family, we see that many members of the family visited Europe for education purposes and many others established commercial networks within Europe. This great family migrated to other countries from Ottoman Empire and spread out across different continents and in time lost their ties with their relatives. Some of those who did not migrate to France went to the United States or

Brazil. Some members of the family left Istanbul even before the First World War.⁽²⁹⁾ It is possible to see the names of the last members who stayed in Istanbul through obituaries in the late 1920s. One of them was Jacques Barnathan who died in 1923 in Pera. Apart from the year of his death and his address in Şahkulu Street, no further information was available.

Although the Barnathan family owned the Barnathan Apartments in Beyoğlu, many members of this family preferred to live in Kadıköy, Moda. There were only two Barnathans who were registered in Barnathan Apartments with their abbreviations ‘Sal.’ and ‘Y.’ until 1909. However, we could not figure out who these people were. Francis told me that these two members could have been low-income members of the family. Indeed, it was very uncommon that the apartment owners in Galata and Pera living in these estates. Such apartments served for the purpose of income-generating.



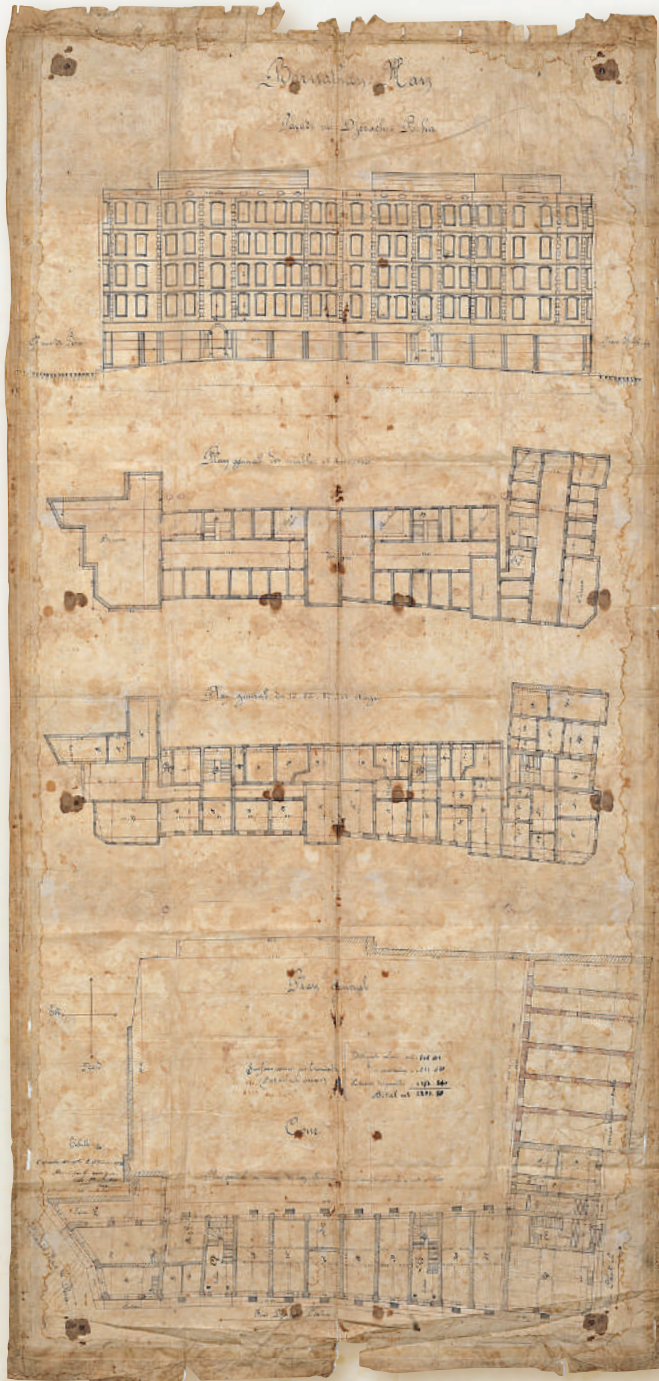
The Architectural Characteristics of the Barnathan Apartments



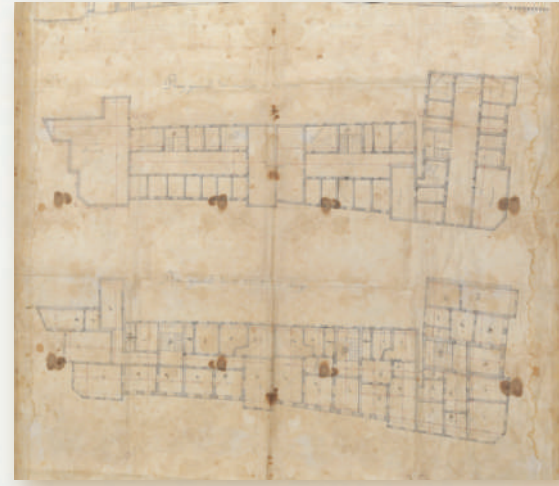
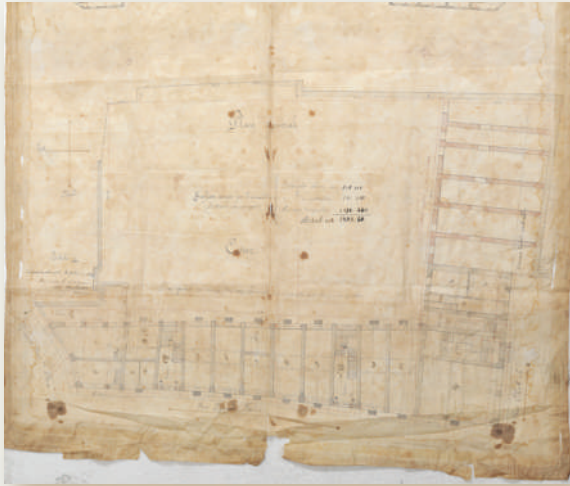
Charles Maruletto signed the building plan with the title of 'ingénieur'.

It is possible to see the initial spatial design of the Barnathan Apartments in the hand drawn plan. The grandson of Samuel Barnathan, Francis, told me that his mother (Donna) paid special

attention to preserving this plan and entrusted it to Francis. The plan is dated back to February 15, 1896, which indicates that almost half of the apartment blocks had been completed



“It is possible to see the initial spatial design of the Barnathan Apartments in the hand drawn plan on a silk texture dated back to February 15, 1896. According to this plan, the apartments would have four main entrances but the one on the Şahkulu impasse was not constructed yet.”



The plan shows the third part of the block as under construction. The upper parts of the building were planned as terrace and laundry space.

on that day. It also enables us to understand the changes that took place in time on the blocks. For instance, according to this plan, the apartments would have four main entrances but today only three of them are being used. The gate on the Grand Rue de Pera most probably opened into a backyard. The plan shows the building with four-storey, a roof and a basement whereas today there is an additional top floor on the roof. Some parts were still under

construction when this plan was drawn such as the entrance, which opens to Şahkulu impasse. The apartments have two units on each floor. Designed as a block settlement, the first two blocks were constructed in 1892 and 1893 respectively. The third block, which is closer to the impasse, was constructed subsequently.

Besides the Gregorian dates of construction, the years corresponding to the Jewish calendar were also engraved on the gates. Charles



“The Barnathan Apartments is a representative example of neoclassical architecture. This style was inspired by the classical Ancient Greece and Roman architecture and reinterpreted in the 18th and the 19th centuries.”

Maruletto signed the plan with the title of ‘ingénieur’.⁽³⁰⁾ It is possible to argue that he was the architect of the apartments.

The upper parts of the building were constructed as terrace and laundry space. Each unit had five rooms with 3.40 meters high ceilings reflecting the typical architectural style of the time.

The Barnathan Apartments is a representative example of neoclassical architecture. This style was inspired

by the revival of classical Ancient Greece and Roman architecture. The usage of marbles and castings beside the magnificent front façade carry the motives from these styles. The classical ancient architecture was reinterpreted in the 18th and 19th centuries especially inspired by the republican ideals after the declaration of independence in the United States and the French Revolution. The monumental government buildings were built through the reinterpretation of grand



“The Barnathan Apartments is a typical neoclassical building carrying some Baroque details.”



The decorations on the windows near to the gate had baroque and rococo relief of laurel wreaths with roses in the middle.



The ones on the top of the entrance had grapes, roses, flowers and curvy leaves.



columns in Ancient Greek style in neoclassic.⁽³¹⁾

In the main entrances, we see the columns installed with the two sides of the gates. The jambs were decorated with rose motives and grape bunches symbolizing fertility. Furthermore,

as a characteristic of the neoclassical style, each storey was decorated with a different relief. The ornaments on the windows are all different from each other in Barnathan Apartments. Some of them are flowers and leaves, while others had more complex themes. The ones on the



The relief was decorated with seashells, flowers, and knots.



The stairs were made of Marmara marble while landings were made of Italian Carrara stone.



windows near to the gate had baroque and rococo relief of laurel wreaths with roses in the middle.

The ones on the top of the entrance had grapes, roses, flowers and curvy leaves. The relief was decorated with seashells, flowers, and knots.

The inner parts of the building look less sophisticated. The stairs were made of Marmara marble while landings were made of Italian Carrara stone.

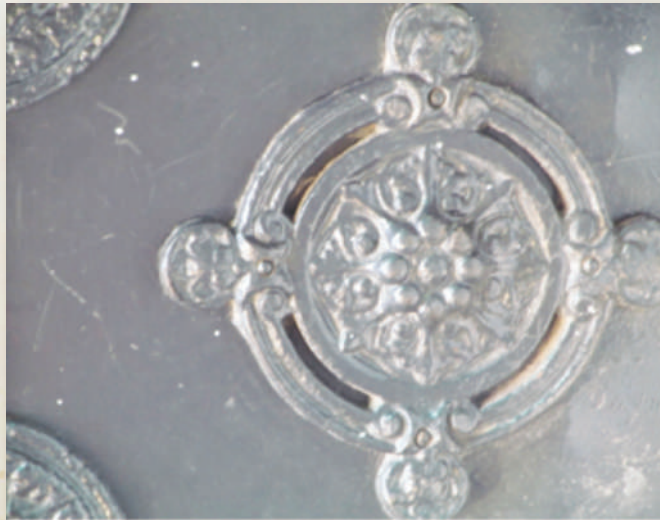
On the other hand, the handrails are a composition of complex figures.

One façade of the Barnathan Apartments is located on the famous Grand Rue de Pera. Since it was one

the most important streets of Istanbul, this façade had a more elaborate appearance thanks to the use of stone.

On the contrary, the decorations of the rear façade were made of plaster instead of stone.

One of the most distinguishing features of the Barnathan Apartments are the iron balconies. These balconies are similar to the French style in shape; they lack the concrete pavements and they are completely segregated from the façade. Many of the neoclassical apartments in Istanbul have integrated balconies to the façade with concrete pavements.



*A detail from
Barnathan gate*



“ One of the most distinguishing features of the Barnathan Apartments are the balconies. These balconies do represent the typical French balconies, but different from the other apartments in Istanbul which had step-out balconies. Having a segregated balcony from the façade is quite exceptional in Pera.”





The First Residents and Neighbors of the Barnathan Apartments

The first tenants of the Barnathan Apartments were only eight people residing in the first block because the other blocks had not completed yet. Based on the commercial registers, we assume that these tenants were among the professionals who were employed in different fields in Galata.

As mentioned before, living in an apartment reflected a more temporary settlement. Therefore, the tenants were those of who had been working in the financial centers of Galata dealing with commerce or banking. There were also tenants who were employed in the well-known railway

*In 1892, the date
when the first block
was completed,
we see only eight
tenants were
registered.
Annuaire Oriental
du Commerce,
SALT Archives,
AAO012, 1893-94.*

Maison Barnathan.

1. Friedmann (J. R.), miroitier.
2. Farraggi (S.), médecin.
3. Hefter (A.), caissier de la maison Fratelli Goldenberg.
4. Gueron (J.), banquier.
5. Carlmann (J.), de la maison Carlmann et Blumberg.
6. Benbassat (N.), céréales.
7. Aftalion (B.), banquier.
8. Sellinger (Adolphe), employé aux chemins de fer orientaux.



MAISON BARNATHAN <i>Porte A.</i>	
1.	Friedmann (J. R.), miroitier.
2.	Galeb (I.), médecin.
3.	Levi (M.), empl. chez Orosdi.
»	Asséo (E.), employé.
5.	Behmoiras (J.), caissier chez Benbassat S. Présenté et C ^{ie} .
»	Behmoiras (J.), empl. à la banque imp. ottomane.
6.	Behar Ebeoglou, négociant.
7.	Aftalion (B.), banquier.
8.	Ragalsky (J.), opticien.
<i>Odabachi</i> : Ohanessian (Gaspard).	
<i>Porte B.</i>	
1.	Franklin (E. J.), commiss.
2.	Friedmann (E.), commissionn.
3.	Barnathan (Sal.), propriétaire.
4.	Aftalion (B.), empl. aux chem. de fer orientaux.
5.	Friedmann (J.), »
6.	Bercovitch (Bev.), commissionn.
7.	Levenson (I.), empl. aux chem. de fer orientaux.
8.	Carmona (S.), »
<i>Odabachi</i> : Mechionatchi (I.).	
<i>Porte C.</i>	
1.	Marco (V ^{ve}), rentière.
2.	Rosenthal (V ^{ve}), »
3.	Barnathan (Y.), propriétaire.
4.	Betaï (I.), commissionnaire.
5.	Zevitch (F.), propriétaire.
6.	Scaoutcho (N.), administrateur de ce han.
7.	Pelogi (J.), professeur d'italien.
8.	Alfandari (B.), cristaux.
<i>Odabachi</i> : Bedrossian (Artin).	

*Annuaire Oriental du Commerce,
SALT Archives, AAO02800825, 1898.*

“All the residents of the Barnathan Apartments were tenants who were professionals working around Galata. While the Istanbulites already had their own estates, living in an apartment was more for the temporary settlers. Therefore, the first residents were those who work in the new financial centers of Galata as merchants, bankers or employees of the newly founded companies such as Chemins de fer Orientaux.”



“The commercial records show that two Barnathans were registered as landowners starting from 1898. In that year, the construction of all the blocks was completed.”

company, Chemins de fer Orientaux. It is possible to argue that these employees from different institutions constituted the new middle class of the Ottoman Empire. The employees of the Ottoman Bank, doctors, moneychangers and merchants were among the first residents. All these residents were either Levantines or non-Muslim Ottomans. Although

they were tenants in the building, they lived there for quite long. Also, there were housekeepers in each block. The commercial records show that two Barnathans were registered as landowners starting from 1898. In that year, the construction of all the blocks was completed. Back at the time in Cerrahpaşa Alley (today Tımarcı Street), there



According to the insurance map of 1906, there was a woodshed and a wine house on the Cerrahpaşa Alley. The map indicates small row houses going through all along the Grand Rue de Pera. (Charles Goad, İstanbul Sigorta Haritaları, ed. İrfan Dağdelen, İstanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kütüphane ve Müzeler Müdürlüğü , 2007).

were cafes, wine houses along with shoe shops and tailors. In the opposite of this alley, there is a small alley called Marangoz (meaning Carpenter) Impasse, which still carries this name after the traditional carpenter shops. As indicated on the map, there was a coal store on the Grand Rue de Pera. The entrance floors of the apartments were designed as stores and shops. According to insurance map of 1906, there was a woodshed and a wine house on the alley. The map indicates small row houses going through all along the Grand Rue de Pera.

The nearby apartments in the area were built relatively later than the Barnathan. For instance, there were the Apartments of Mehmed Bey and Apartments Robert in the same alley. The one in the opposite of Barnathan building was constructed in 1907, while the 1906 map shows this place as a house destroyed by the fire.



Barnathan from Past to Present

The Barnathan Apartments constitutes a good case to observe the property transfers and the changes in the ethnic composition of Beyoğlu since the end of the 19th century. The apartments, which originally belonged to a Jewish family, had different owners in time. The non-Muslim residents of the apartment left the country (the Ottoman Empire and then the Turkish Republic) and moved away consequently. It is my contention that the Barnathans who owned this property left the country at the beginning of the First World War. The last record of the commercial annuals before the war was published in 1913 and the name of the apartments was still Barnathan in that year. Since we do not have the records on the commercial activities during the war,

we assume that the shares of the Barnathan Apartments were divided between different holders during these years. These holders, based on their surnames, were either of Jewish or Greek origin. According to the annual commerce records of the year 1921, which is the first one published after the war, some parts of the apartments were recorded as ‘Appartements Vlahioti Antoine’.⁽³²⁾ Therefore, in these seven years, it is arguable that the property was transferred to another holder. Today the Barnathan Apartments have an unknown holder named Eleni the daughter of T. Diyonis. Apart from her name, I could not find any further information in the files available at the Land Register Directorate of Beyoğlu during this research. I assemble the evidence and



*Today the only sign left from the name Barnathan is the
'Barnathan Han' inscription on the second gate.*



claim that Vlahioti Antoine and the last known heir of the apartment, Eleni the daughter of Diyonis might be related. I searched the archives of Cumhuriyet newspaper and found out that a certain Diyonis A. Vlahioti who was a factory owner fled from Turkey due to his debts on March 26, 1935. Based on the information that I collected from the Land Register Directorate of Beyoğlu, the shares of the Barnathan Apartments were bought by two lawyers, Halil Arda and Hamit Karaorman, starting from the 1930s from various holders. The first sale dates back to 1932. There were 24 shares when they started to invest there. The existence of numerous shares might be a consequence of marriage and inheritance reasons. In the land registers, we see that Konstantinos Siskidi owned many of these shares. I searched his name in the newspaper archives and found out that he was among the founder members of a ship agency organization in Istanbul.

⁽³³⁾ Another biggest shareholder was

Dimitri Voridis. In their files, I saw that Siskidi and Voridis appeared before the authorities together and witnessed the sales. Because of this, I believe they were related either due to family ties or financial interests. The remaining shares were sold at auction. The ones who testified for these sales were the Turkish tenants lived in the apartment. Hamit and Halil Bey bought the remaining shares through endowments and court auction until the 1960s. In the end, there were 30 shares, of which 15 belonged to Hamit Karaorman, and 14 to Halil Ethem Arda. Only one share remained unsold, the share of Eleni the daughter of T. Diyonis. Beginning from the 60s, the Barnathan Apartments were divided between Halil and Hamit and came to be known as Halil Hamit Apartments. While in an inheritance document in 1968 the property was referred only as Hamit Apartments, the 2003 Earthquake Insurance showed it as ‘Halil Hamit Apartments’. The second block, relatively in a later period, was



known as Demir Apartment as well. Today, the only sign left from the name Barnathan is the engraved 'Barnathan Han' inscription on the second gate. The tenants of the apartments were

from different ethnic origins until the 1960s. I interviewed Gülen Tutaş, who lived in the apartment for 65 years as a tenant. Gülen Hanım's parents got married in the 1940s and rented





a flat in the Barnathan Apartments. Her mother was of Greek origin while her father was a Turkish man. She heard earlier that the property originally belonged to Greek people, however, she recalled Hamit and Halil Bey more than the previous owners. Unfortunately, she had no information about Barnathans or the Jewish holders of the apartments. She said that the old tenants were more permanent in the apartment and she had never seen the owners. The tenants were handing the amount of the rent to the housekeepers who were residing in the entrance flat. She told that fifty years ago, the

tenants were mainly of Jewish and Greek origin. Gülen Hanım witnessed the historical moments when the non-Muslims felt insecure in Turkey and consequently left the country. She witnessed the Events of 6-7 September 1955 when a group of looters attacked the non-Muslims and their properties in Beyoğlu with nationalist motives during the Cyprus crisis with Greece. Gülen Hanım remembers those moments when the masses were plundering the goods of non-Muslims' shops in the streets. She added that the Greek owner of the grocery shop in the opposite sheltered in their

“The Barnathan Apartments is a monumental building that witnessed more than 120 years of history of Galata and Beyoğlu. Through this single building, one can read the transformation of Beyoğlu since the late 19th century with regard to property, ethnic composition, lifestyle, and architecture.”



flat during these events. The Events of 6-7 September 1955 constituted a reason for non-Muslims to flee other countries. However, especially the year 1964 marked the turning point for the departure of the Greek population of Galata and Beyoğlu. In the 1930s, an agreement between Greece and Turkey called 'Trade and Sea Transportation Agreement' was signed in the atmosphere of Turkish-Greek friendship allowing Greeks to live in Turkey with their Greek passports. There were almost 12,000 as such together with their families who were Turkish citizens of Greek origin. Turkey revised the agreement during the Cyprus crisis in 1964 and agreed to deport them. Many Greeks besides the Turkish citizens of Greek origin left the country together with them, for a total amount of 30,000 people. Gülen Hanım told that all of her Greek neighbors left the apartment during this period.

After the death of Halil Bey in 1966 and Hamit Bey in 1967, the



apartments were divided between seven heirs. The tenants continued to reside in the apartment. Some of the flats were used as offices while the ground floors were used as shops by carpenters, smiths, chipboard workshops and stationers.

The Barnathan Apartments is a monumental building that witnessed more than 120 years of history of Galata and Beyoğlu. Through this single building, one can read the transformation of Beyoğlu since the late 19th century with regard to property, ethnic composition, lifestyle, and architecture.



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