

## ALEXANDER VALLAURY'S LATE WORKS ON İZMİR, THESSALONIKI AND EMİNÖNÜ CUSTOMS HOUSES AND NOTES ON THE AGENDA OF OTTOMAN ARCHITECTURE AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

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1. Alexandre Vallauri (1850 – 1921), prominent architect of the late Ottoman empire, received his architectural education in Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris between 1868-1879. His contribution to Ottoman architecture had been both through about fifty buildings, as well as his professorship at the Ottoman Imperial School of Fine Arts for 25 years. He also served in several state commissions for post-earthquake restorations and customs warehouse constructions (Akpolat, 1991).

2. There often is ambiguity about his name. He carried his baptised name "Alexander Vallauri", until the end of 1800s (Baptism Registers). As of 1897, he applied to change his nationality as French, a procedure which lasted until 1899 and consequently he used the name "Alexandre Vallauri", as he will be referred to throughout this paper (Consulat General de France, 1987).

Alexander Vallauri (1), the renowned architect of the late Ottoman era served as the architect of Customs Administration ( or Administration of Indirect Contributions ) from 1889 on (İ..DH 1154-90240), until he left Turkey around 1910 (2). This responsibility, concerning the planning and construction of warehouses and customs facilities, has so far been an overlooked aspect of his long and fruitful career. However, given the giant urban transformation that the Ottoman cities' seafronts experienced then, and considering the importance of the port reorganization in these undertakings, Vallauri's position as the architect of the Customs Administration is significant, in terms of his contribution to that era's major engineering and architectural issue: the reordering and modernization of port-cities. This paper, based on archival material, explores and comments on the construction phases of customs houses in three major Ottoman ports, during which their architect Vallauri had to address some major architectural concerns that were to play a determining role in the evolution of Ottoman architecture at the turn of the century. It also discusses the subsequent changes in Ottoman architecture, as well as the degree to which Vallauri, a foremost representative of Beaux Arts School and eclecticism in Ottoman architecture, could respond, contribute and cope with them.

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF URBAN TRANSFORMATION IN OTTOMAN PORT-CITIES

The Ottoman cities on the eastern Mediterranean coast are known to have undergone comprehensive changes in the second half of the nineteenth century. These changes were predominantly focused on quay and harbor development, which labelled them as port-cities. Hastaoglu-Martinidis (2010) sums up these changes as "ripping open of the limits prescribed by their walls and spreading beyond their traditional nuclei" (Hastaoglu-Martinidis, 2010) and describes the harbors as "focal points defining the guidelines for the expansion of the city" (Hastaoglu-Martinidis, 2010).

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Indeed, first the medieval city-walls were demolished; then quays constructed, often by filling up the zigzag shore to produce a straight coastline. Finally harbors and relevant facilities were constructed and the city seafronts were reorganized to accommodate modern buildings, both for trading and financial services, residential use and recreational facilities. The last, but certainly not least, phase of these urban operations would be the construction of new customs houses and warehouses, designed to meet the needs of heavy international trade and combine the customs services thus far accommodated in disparate and primitive buildings (3).

Both local and international factors triggered these radical transformations. Pertinent government policies can be traced back as early as the 1840s, when architects W.J.Smith (A.MKT 20/10) and G.Fossati (Le Port de Constantinople et un Projet de Quais à Faire, 1848) were asked to present the sultan with new plans for the quays, customshouses and stores along the Golden Horn shores (4). Similarly, the earliest documented attempts to straighten and reorganize the İzmir shoreline to construct new quays, date back to the 1850s (Zandi-Sayek, 2012, 119). No wonder, these were also linked with Ottoman maritime efforts, starting as early as the 1850s, due to the fast adoption of steamships by international fleets, bringing forth the need for modernized harbors (Downes, 2007, 5-6). The internationally accepted importance of maritime trade urged the Ottoman reform efforts to comply with international maritime norms and regulations, so that Ottoman port-cities, especially their seafronts, were to become showcases, demonstrating the Ottoman state's reforms and integration with modern Europe, that was symbolized at the time, by maritime techniques and trade. This also applied to the provincial port-cities, where it was crucial to assert the state's modernity in the eyes of provincial populations in order to firmly establish the government's presence (Downes, 2007, 46). There, of course, were also immediate benefits expected, such as the prevention of smuggling, easy control of the port traffic and security, as well as increasing effectiveness and revenues.

As for international factors, they were effective in the second phase of the port-city evolution; and accelerated it considerably. Tabak associates them mainly with changes in the world system as of 1870 (Tabak, 2009), when Britain no longer had full control over the Ottoman economy and international politics were about the conflicting interests of competitive powers over old dynastic empires losing power. Consequently, the Ottoman port-cities found an advantageous economic position especially over the colonial cities and received foreign capital in spite of the bankruptcy of the Ottoman state in 1875 and prospered (5) (6).

Consequently, in these cosmopolitan port-cities quay, harbor and customs facilities construction, and modernization efforts, as well as railroad construction (7) became a central concern and pressing need, however a lengthy process that spanned a few decades. Hence, from the 1870s on tenders for public works became an arena of competition for European countries and their contracting firms. Expectations were great, despite the limited government resources; so the choice was to realise these infrastructural changes via concessions. The numerous parties involved in these comprehensive and costly public works had varying expectations: On one hand there was the government, contracting firms with capital and know-how, not to forget the demanding presence of Administration of Public Debts and banks; and on the other, the landowners, merchants, local press and labourers. Expropriations and new fares on harbor

3. Customs houses are functional parts of ports and often built in connection to railways or roads, which facilitates transportation of goods. Busy customs houses also include decovol lines (Kaya, 2010).

4. This followed the opening of the Galata Bridge. As is, Baltalimanı Trade Treaty in 1838, as well as post-Tanzimat efforts to participate Concert Européen, necessitated modernization of ports and relevant facilities.

5. According to some views, "maritime towns functioning as hinges between empires, continents, trading blocs and nation states have been a major breeding ground of globalization and played an important role in the emergence of a world economic system", (Driessen, 2005).

6. This commentary on the development of social classes in port-cities shows the degree of their prosperity:

"... the accelerated integration with the international trade, the flourishing of bourgeoisie in these port-cities, and eventually the change in the basically commercial character of this bourgeoisie towards manufacturing to become more independent of the foreign relationships, which also implied the formation of a working class and development of capitalism" (Keyder et al., 1993).

7. The İzmir-Aydın and İzmir-Kasaba railroads were operational by 1866 - (Kütükoğlu, 1979) The connection of Thessaloniki railways with the European railway system and the relevant contracts with the Serbian government were to be achieved in 1887 (I.DH..1035-81494). In May 1890 the Sirkeci Railway station was inaugurated (Ortaylı et al. 2008, 2:81) All three developments triggered the planning of relevant customs houses in respective port-cities.

and customs services aroused protestations among the residents and merchants. As a result, each phase of quay, harbor and customs facilities construction proved to be an area of political and technical dispute. And, the construction of customs houses in major ports were among the most important state commissions, whose planning and construction phases reflected all the architectural discussions specific to their time.

### THE SITUATION IN THE 1890S

In the early 1890s the situation in the three major Ottoman port-cities was as follows: İzmir was the first to reorganize its seafront. Two artificial harbors, a quay, breakwaters, a customs house on one of the breakwaters was completed by Dussaud Freres in 1880 (Zandi-Sayek, 2012, 141). The Thessaloniki quay was completed in 1882, but was inadequate and in 1887 three irades were issued for the construction of a modern harbour and the docks via concessions, which was given to Edmond Bartissol in July 1896 (Kula Say, 2011). İstanbul was the last to embark on port projects. In November 1890, the Porte signed with the Société des Quais, Docks et Entrepôts de Constantinople, a concession agreement of 85 years for the port operations, in return for the completion and reorganization of the quays on both sides of the Golden Horn (Müller-Wiener and Özbek, 1998, 138–139). However, because of the destructive earthquake of July 1894 and problems arising due to weak soil, Eminönü quay would not be finished until 1900 (Müller-Wiener and Özbek, 1998, 140). As for Galata, the first part of its quay and the provisional buildings would be ready by February 1895 (Les Douanes de Galata, 1895).

Vallaury began to work for the Customs in late 1889, when work on quays was completed to a certain degree, but port facilities were yet to be developed (8). Starting with his design for and work on the earlier customs warehouses in Eminönü in 1890s, his major known contributions to the development of Ottoman ports would be İzmir Customs House Annex (1906-1909), Eminönü Customs House (1905-1909) and Thessaloniki Customs House (1907-1912), which were projects subject to long discussions, throughout their separately executed planning, tender and project phases.

The most outstanding aspect of all three projects was that, they were demanded considerable architectural and engineering expertise, due to weak soil and concerns about the solidity of load-bearing structures. By then both the School of Engineering and the Imperial School of Fine Arts had already graduated a number of engineers and architects. Foreign architects, engineers and contractors also contributed greatly to public works. In addition to the two local cement factories and the foundry at Zeytinburnu, there were numerous enthusiastic foreign suppliers. Construction firms such as French Hennebique, German MAN and some Belgian iron and glass producers already had the required experience and competency to undertake such huge public works (B.A.H., 1913) (9). Meanwhile the introduction of reinforced concrete alternative, emphasized the importance of the engineering know-how. All these parties needed to cooperate, but this often aroused a lot of technical discussions about techniques adopted and cost estimates (10).

8. As of 1880s, İzmir had the most complete quay and customs house complex, which shortly proved insufficiently small. As for other ports-cities like İstanbul and Thessaloniki, most had quays incomplete and their customs facilities were scattered over numerous small offices and warehouses. Hence comprehensive customs house programs were yet to be introduced in Ottoman ports.

9. *Bétonarmé* bulletin of Hennebique points out that after a difficult beginning, due to hesitation of the administration and the people, with scarce knowledge of this new material, and in spite of the existing unfair rivalry, the fast development of Hennebique system asserted itself in Turkey, thanks to the good will of the ministries and their public works departments, and the education of the native labour, as well as the power of Hennebique's worldwide and unique organisation (B.A.H., 1913)

10. Vallaury had confronted criticisms of engineers as of 1890s, when Jasmund reported negatively about his customs warehouses plans in 12.4.1890 (HR.TO, 533/75). Post 1894 earthquake structural concerns seem to have rendered these criticisms even more severe, as suggested by an official defense letter of Vallaury addressing a series of accusations by engineers (BEO, 1412/105839).



**Figure 1.** 1889 map of İzmir quay by Vitali Polycarpe depicting the customs pier on the righthand side (Polycarpe, 1889)



**Figure 2.** Detail from İzmir map by Ernest Bon dated 1913, showing the Customs House site plan and ground floor plan (Bon, 1913)

### THE İZMİR CUSTOMS HOUSE ANNEX: THE GRAND HALL

In the late 1890s, the increase in the trade and shipping activities of Izmir resulted in considerable congestion at the existing customs house, which had to be enlarged and reorganised to prevent delays (Frangakis-Syrett, 2001) (**Figure 1**). In January 1906, Aziz Bey, the chairman of the Auditors Council was sent to İzmir to inspect the construction of the customs warehouses (İ..RSM. 22- 1323/Z-02) . By June 1906, the project for the İzmir Customs House was prepared by Vallauray (Y..PRK.TNF. 8-54). According to a newspaper column dated 7.7.1906, on the southern part of the port, part of the shore which was 115m long and 50m wide, would be filled and customs buildings would be built on it, according to already prepared plans; and the landfill and building construction project was to be put on sealed tender underbidding (Commerce, Finances, Industrie, 1906a). In June 1907 Mr.Guiffroy, the Director of the İzmir Quay Company, had won the tender (BEO 3068-230079; İ..RSM. 28- 1325/CA-01;BEO 3083-231183) and started the construction along with a reorganisation of the Customs

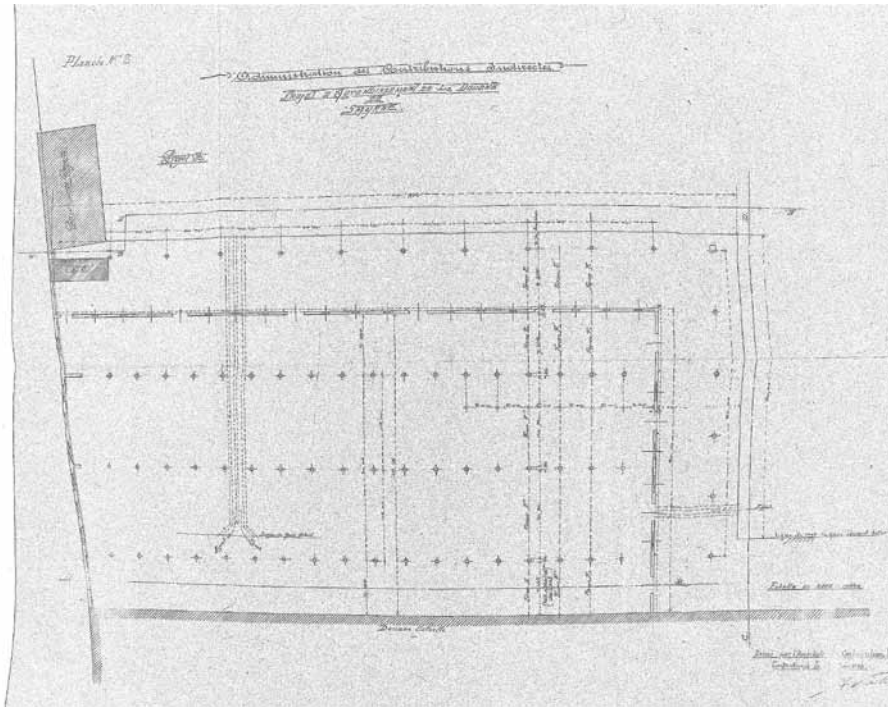


Figure 3. Plan dated 1906 for İzmir Customs House Annex by Vallauray (Y..PRK.ML 27-65)

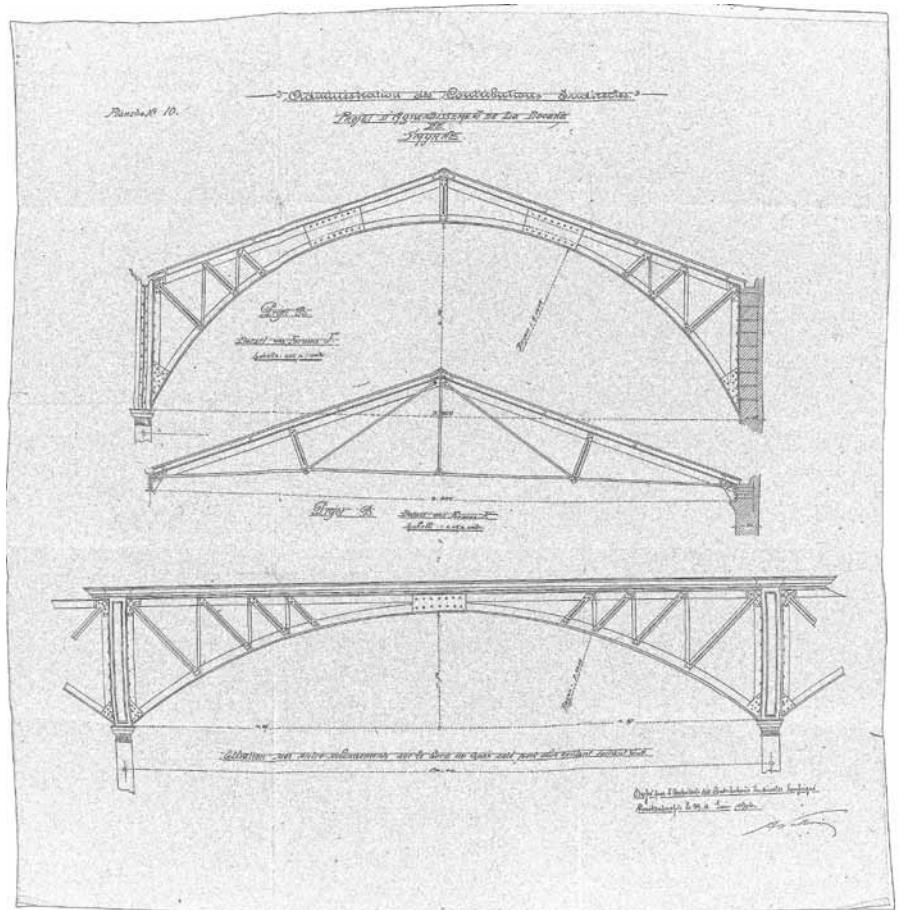
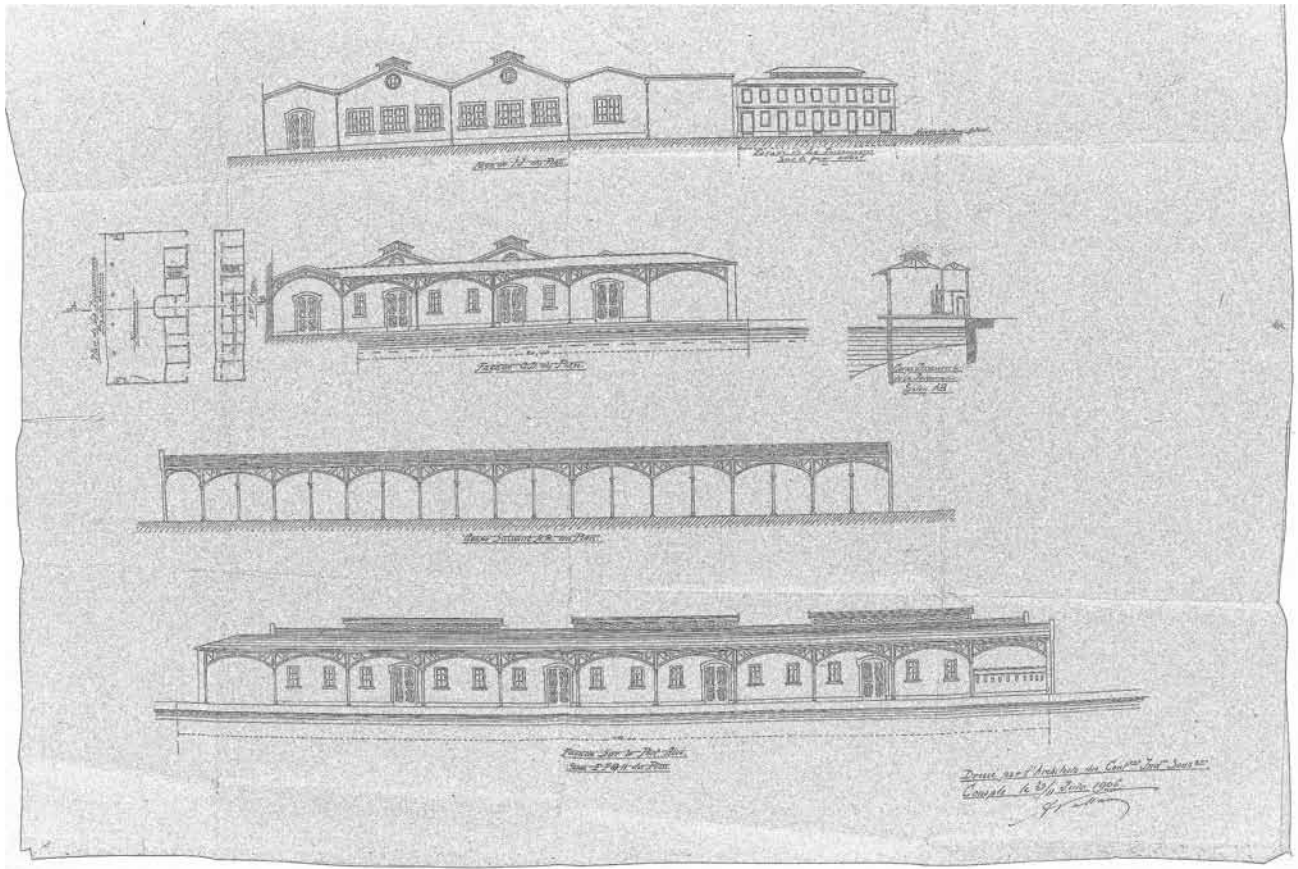


Figure 4. Detail drawings dated 1906 for the iron trusses in İzmir Customs House Annex by Vallauray (Y..PRK.TNF. 8-54)



**Figure 5.** Section drawings dated 1906 for İzmir Customs House Annex by Vallauray (Y..PRK.TNF. 8-54)

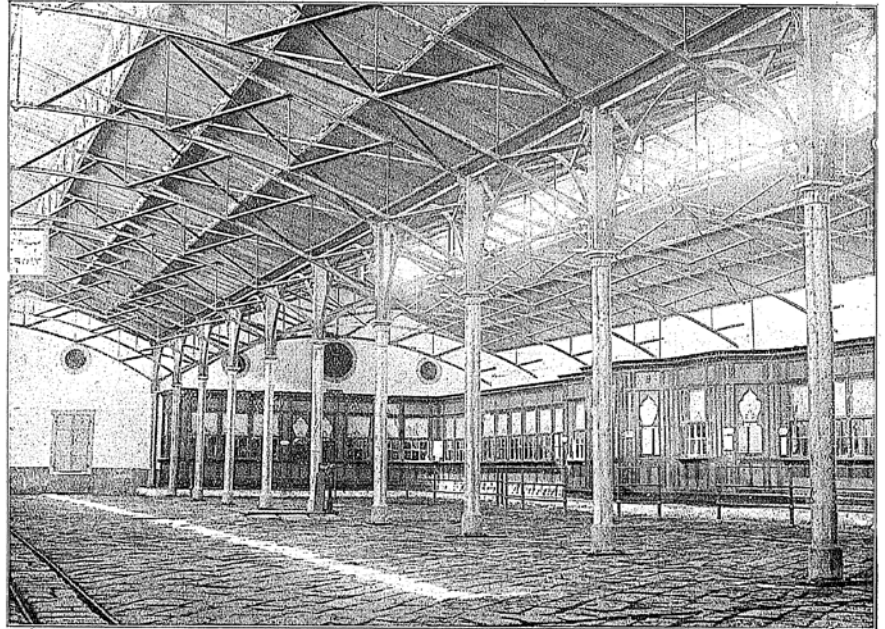
services (Frangakis-Syrett,2001). An official document dated 4.7.1908 is about the need to accelerate the construction of the İzmir Customs House Annex (BEO 3350-251178). The new customs buildings were completed by 1909 and the customs services in Izmir could finally respond to the exigencies of this port (Frangakis-Syrett,2001) (**Figure 2**).

The plans prepared by Vallauray can be examined in detail from the blueprints found in the Ottoman archives (Y..PRK.TNF. 8-54; Y..PRK.ML 27-65) (**Figure 3**, **Figure 4**, **Figure 5**). Photographs from the first Customs Annual prove that these plans had indeed been implemented (Umur-u Tahriyeye Dairesi, 1914,97,113) (**Figure 6**). This building was recently restored as the Konak Pier Shopping Mall. Its restoration report presents us with some details, pertaining to its iron structure produced by a Belgian firm (Matu Mimarlık, 1996). This calls to mind the unrealised iron and glass structure that Vallauray and d'Aronco had designed for the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul and the famous Belgian iron and glass producers, Société Centrale Belge de Construction de Haïne St-Pierre and Baume et Merpent invited for its tender (Le Grand Bazar, 1895). After this and the cast-iron structure proposition for the former customs warehouses in Eminönü in 1890, against which Jasmund had considerable objections especially from the point of view of its not being fireproof, İzmir customs houses is a third iron structure proposition by Vallauray (11).

#### 11. According to Jasmund :

".. considering the fire incidents and the new building practices in Europe, it is a big mistake in terms of fire protection, to build the outer walls with iron. Even fire assurance cannot be made for such a building. The architect's view that the four-storey building could be solid if carried by cast iron pillars, is simply superstitious. Outer shell should be built in stone or brick and the inner walls about 20-30m apart should again be built using a fireproof material" (HR.TO 533-75).

The plan is simple; a spacious hall, carried by three rows of 18 cast iron pillars each (**Figure 3**). They support four types of iron roof trusses, three of which are detailed on the available project (**Figure 4**); whereas the fourth can be seen on the photos provided in the Customs Annual (Umur-u



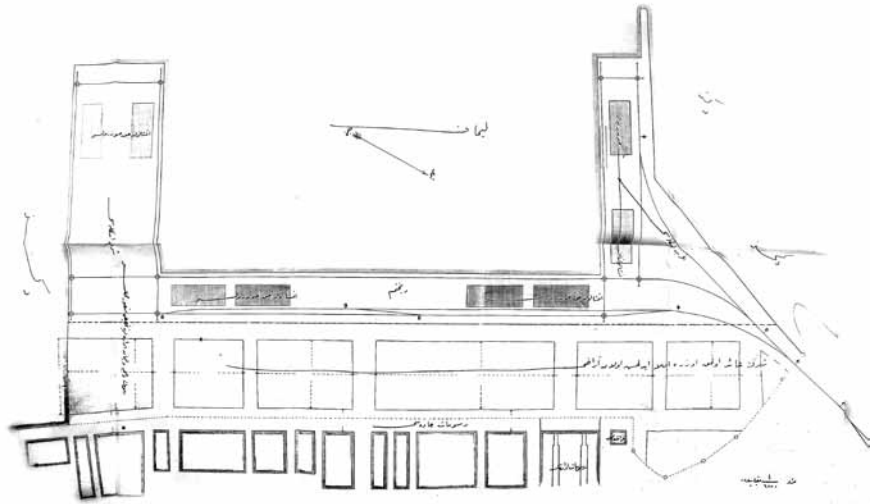
**Figure 6.** İzmir Customs House Grand Hall photograph depicting the offices and the verification hall (Umur-u Tahriye Dairesi, 1914)

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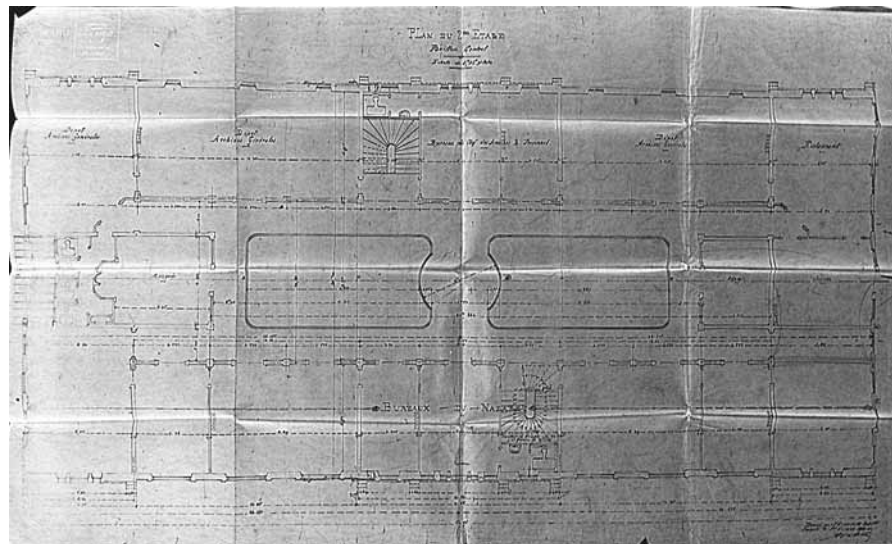
Tahriye Dairesi, 1914, 97,113) (**Figure 6**). The drawings also depict the connection details with the supporting pillars and walls, which suggest that the outer walls were either reinforced concrete or iron structure covered up in a manteau of cement, a detail also denoted in the report of the recent restitution (Matu Mimarlık, 1996) and possibly a precaution against fire. The building was surrounded on two sides by wide quays, partly covered by a roof supported by a similar iron pillar-truss structure (**Figure 5**). The hall was functionally divided into separate parts by the use of light, oriental-looking, wooden units serving as offices (photographical evidence). On the roof of the widest two trusses in the middle, were a series of three openings; implemented using decovil rail profiles (Matu Mimarlık, 1996). The Grand Hall did not have a detailed ornamental program. The simple capitals on iron pillars, some crescent-star designs on trusses, and the transversal grids on the windowpanes of the roof openings comprise the ornamental vocabulary. This is a purely functional annex complementing the existing stone customs house on the pier, but also a confident implementation of cast iron structure by Vallauray.

### THE THESSALONIKI CUSTOMS HOUSE

The Thessaloniki harbor land-fill and piers were already realised by 28.6.1902 (A. AMD 884-27) (**Figure 7**). By 1903, the harbor was almost fully operational and the contract with Edmund Bartissol was renewed for a further 40 years. Shortly afterwards, in January 1905, official demands were made for a new, central customs building that would accommodate the scattered customs services. The correspondence with Bartissol in November 1907, reveals that there were doubts as to whether the ground near the docks could support the load of the monumental building proposed. An official demand dated May 1908 suggests a re-evaluation of the Thessaloniki Customs House project by the firm that had undertaken the construction of the Customs House in Istanbul, as the estimates by local and central customs authorities produced different figures. That



**Figure 7.** Site plan dated 1902 for Thessaloniki Port, depicting the completed quay and the piers (A. AMD 884-27)



**Figure 8.** The second floor plan of Thessaloniki Customs House on 1911 dated drawings by Vallauray (BAH-3-1910-08813).

firm was Hennebique, specialized in reinforced concrete solutions. The Hennebique archives let us access the original plans of the building by Vallauray (Kula Say, 2011) in two sets, one dated 1908 and the other 1911. In May 1910, Vallauray's project was accepted as safe enough to be built on the docks. However, since it would be built using the new reinforced concrete technology, or the *ciment-armé* method, as it is often referred to, the project was to be put on sealed tender underbidding among technically capable candidates. But the architect of the Ministry of Foundations, Kemaleddin Bey, put a reserve on this decision, saying that even this choice of technology would not assure this heavy building's safety and robustness. Elie Modiano, then a young engineer and a concessioner of Hennebique systems, won the tender (BEO 3745-280833). His correspondence with Hennebique headquarters, as well as its concessioner in İstanbul, M.George, illustrates his efforts to produce an optimal solution particularly for the foundations (BAH-3-1910-08813). However, his success might have also been due to his strong relations and the financial guarantees he presented, given the fact that he came from an élite Thessaloniki family and



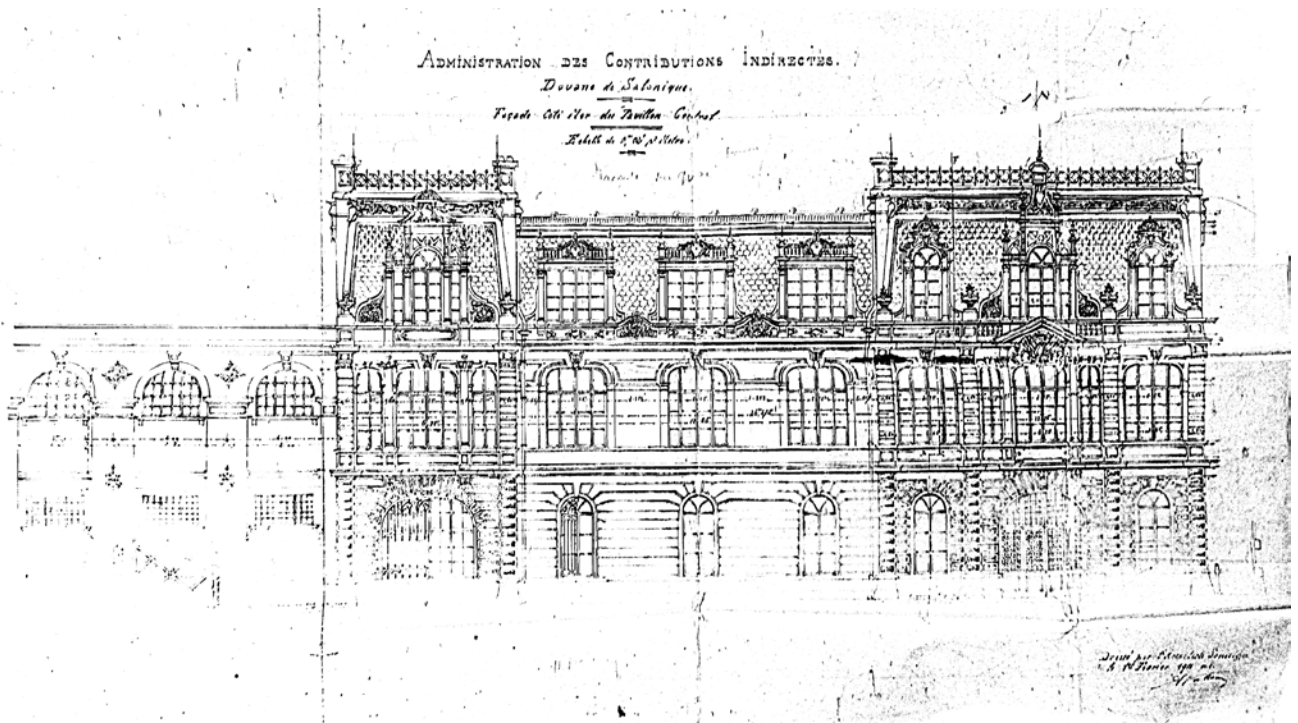


Figure 9. The seafront elevation of Thessaloniki Customs House on 1911 dated drawings by Vallauray (BAH-3-1910-08813).

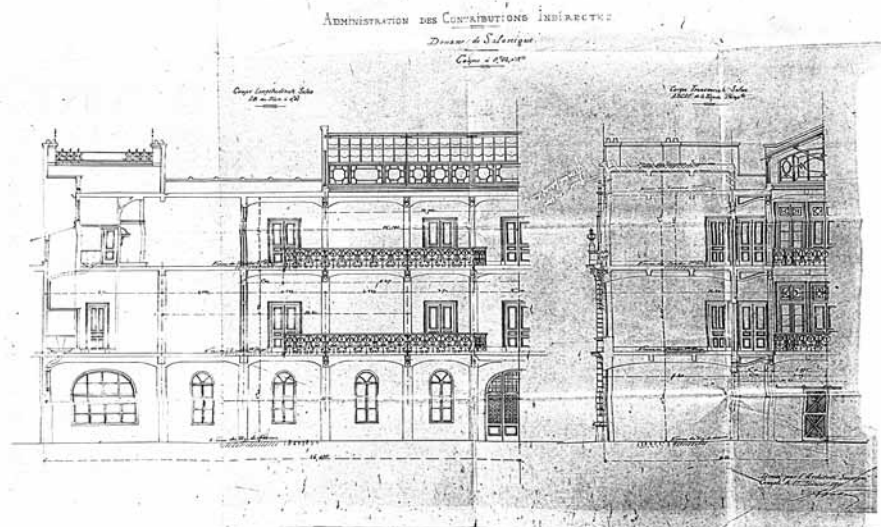


Figure 10. The section drawings of Thessaloniki Customs House on 1911 dated drawings by Vallauray (BAH-3-1910-08813).

his relative Léon Modiano was an administrator of the Société Ottomane du Port de Salonique and for some time the banker of its concessioner Edmond Bartissol (*Lettre de Salonique*, 1907) (12). The final elevations arrived in the first quarter of 1911 and new application plans were ready by May 1911. All the correspondence and other content of the Hennebique files, show that the plans, façades and architectural project were by Vallauray (Figure 8, Figure 9, Figure 10), static calculations by Hennebique and application project, building work and supervision by Modiano and partly George (BAH-3-1910-08813; Kula Say, 2011). The building phase of the Thessaloniki Customs House lasted well until 1914. The building, having survived the great fire in 1917 and the German invasion in the 1940s, is now partially used as a passenger terminal.

12. The first stone of the building was laid in August 1910 with a ceremony, which the Ministry of Finance Cavit Bey expressly participated. The newspaper reported that the buildings would be constructed with perfect knowledge of science of architecture; that nothing would be left to chance, everything had been planned to overcome difficulties and the result would be a model architecture (*Lettre de Salonique*, 1910)



**Figure 11.** The seafront view of the Thessaloniki Customs House (Telonio, Seafront, 1977).

*Telonio*, as it is today referred to, by Thessaloniki citizens, is a monumental building, extending 200m along the sea (**Figure 11**). It is a five-part building symmetrical in plan and elevation. The interior organization of the central pavillon accomodates several rectangular spaces organized around the central atrium. Curved bridges cross this atrium along the entrance axis to link the galleries surrounding the atrium on both floors (**Figure 8**). Based on the 1911 Vallauray section drawings, the interior of the central pavillon must have once been dominated by the cast iron and glass superstructure of this atrium, as well as forged iron banisters (**Figure 9**, **Figure 10**). The glass panes on the roof and some of the interior doors had geometric designs which could be stained glass. The consoles supporting the galleries' pillars were also probably forged iron.

**Figure 12.** The streetside view of the Thessaloniki Customs House.

The façades of different nature reflect the different functionality and hierarchy of different parts of the building. The central pavillon façade is



designed in a Renaissance palace scheme (**Figure 12**); with the rusticated entrance floor; the ornate piano nobile and the attic, each separated by paned corniches. The building has a steep roof with gables and banisters on top. The entrance axis and the two ends are vertically emphasized by three slightly heightened blocks where the ornamentation is denser and verticality is promoted with the aid of three-storey-high pilasters. Basket-handle arches are preferred for the main doors and the first floor openings, whereas others are circular. The ornamental vocabulary of the first floor includes stylised ionic-like as well as corinthian capitals, acanthes, volutes, and a triangular fronton bearing an armoire that replaced the original Ottoman sultan's monogram over the main entrance, whereas the attic floor façade is differentiated with *oeil-de-boeuf* windows, fircones and sea-shell motif on the streetside and is more ornate on the seafront with an elaborate corniche, foliage designs, catrouches, ionic capitalled pilasters, volutes and pompous vases complementing its rectangular gable windows. Two parts flanking the central pavillon are two-storeyed with modest elevations (**Figure 11**). Finally, the parts on the extremes (**Figure 11**) have lateral elevations very similar to warehouse parts, but their front and rear façades follow the three-storeyed Renaissance palace schema.

### EMİNÖNÜ CUSTOMS HOUSE

On 15.6.1899, a commission was formed for the acceptance of the finished part of the Istanbul docks (Y..PRK.BŞK 59-91). As for the old customs warehouses damaged by earthquake and quay construction, there were discussions about their replacement or restoration, where Vallauray had to defend himself against several technical reports prepared by engineers Franca, Prodramos and Kemaleddin as well as the architect d'Aronco (**13**). The Goad map dated 1904 showing the new quay in use, proves that the old customs houses near the Hidayet Mosque were still there, along with some wooden structures used for customs services on the new quay (Dağdelen, 2007, 6) (**Figure 13**).

It was not until July 1905, that the Docks company submitted plans for the replacement of the old and provisionary customs warehouses on both the Galata and Eminönü sides of the Golden Horn (DUIT 33-1). The Eminönü plan (**Figure 14**), suggested partial expropriation and reorganization of the blocks accommodating the old customs warehouses; placed a new customs house on the new landfill, with an 8m wide street on the shore and another street of 12m width on the inner side. The Pervititch map dated 1940, shows that (**Figure 15**), this site plan and street schema had indeed been implemented (Pervititch and Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2000, 145–146). However, the 1905 plan was followed by a series of discussions, as to what method should be used for the construction of the new customs houses. Apparently, the Quay Company was in close contact with the Hennebique firm in Paris (BAH-76-IFA-1229; BAH-76-IFA-1162) (**14**). For the Eminönü side, there are three files including correspondence between company engineer Saboreaux and Hennebique as well as original and blueprint drawings of the proposed building. In his letter dated 31.3.1906, Saboreaux detailed the distribution plans approved by the Superior Council in its session on 28.3.1906, but also explained the council's decision that the replacement of stonework by reinforced concrete was incompetent and against the concession agreement. Saboreaux was worried about this opposition and asked Hennebique to supply documents proving the reinforced concrete's reliability, such as project examples

13. Vallauray stated that if, his original plans with iron for both the interior load bearing structure and the outer shell of the building, had not been changed due to Jasmund's intervention in 1890, the building could have carried more load and would have been more robust. He brought forth some propositions for rehabilitation of the buildings and remarked that not until the works for the docks were complete, could the buildings be considered safe; so he proposed that some provisionary, light, wooden structures be built on the newlandfill of the quay to serve as warehouses (BEO 1412-105839).

14. Archives include a Quay Company project file dated 14.12.1905 for Galata customs house, bearing the signature of Saboreaux, the company's engineer, and its February 1906 dated reinforced concrete project by Hennebique (BAH-76-IFA-1180)

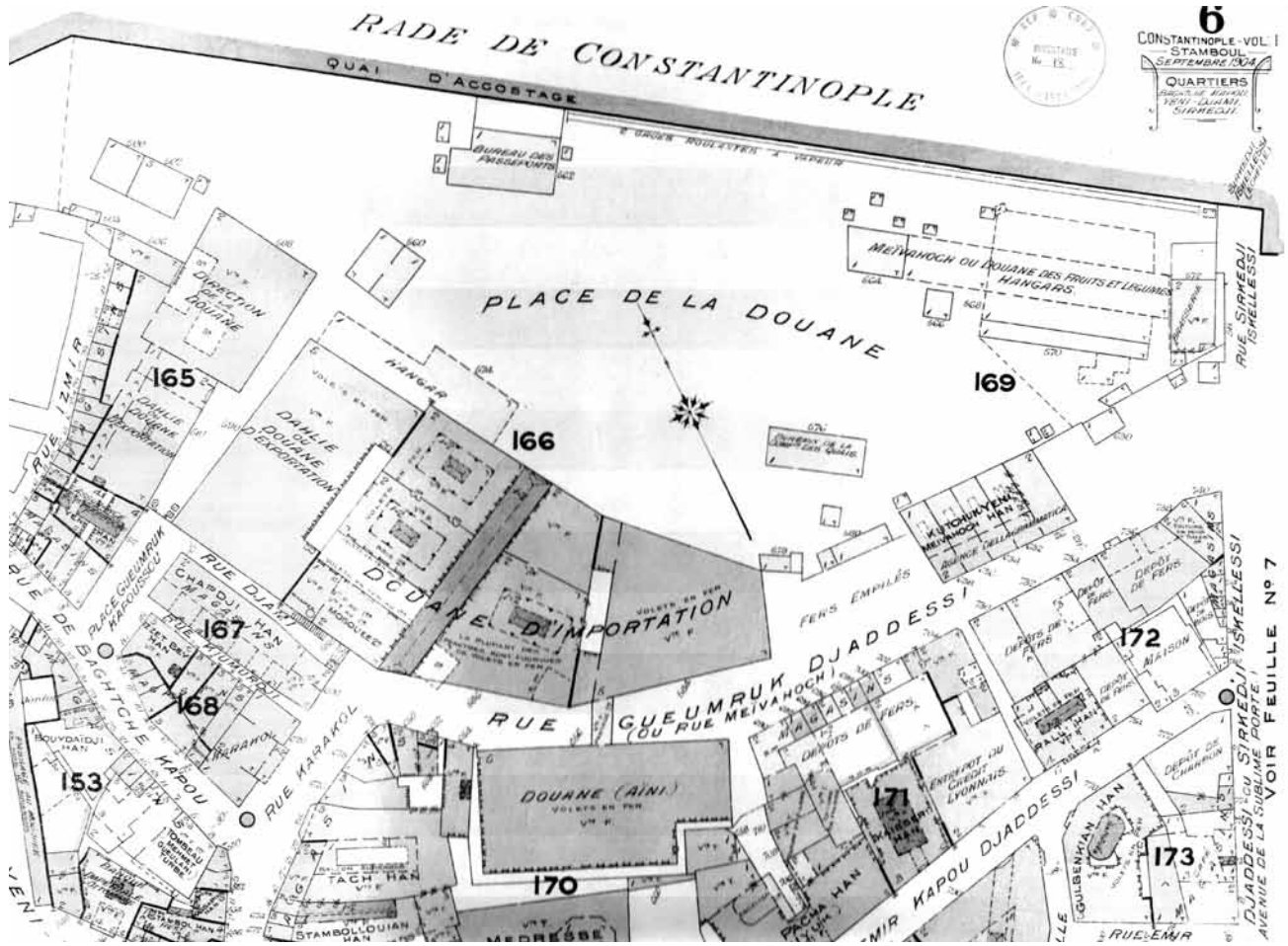


Figure 13. Eminönü Customs Square, as it appears on the 1904 Goad map (Dağdelen, 2007, 6).

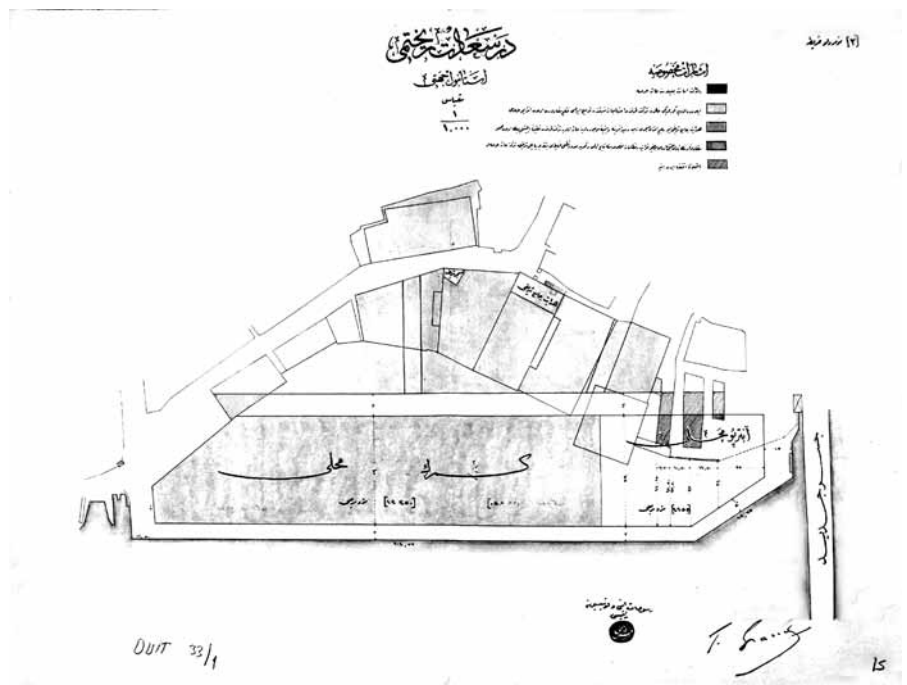
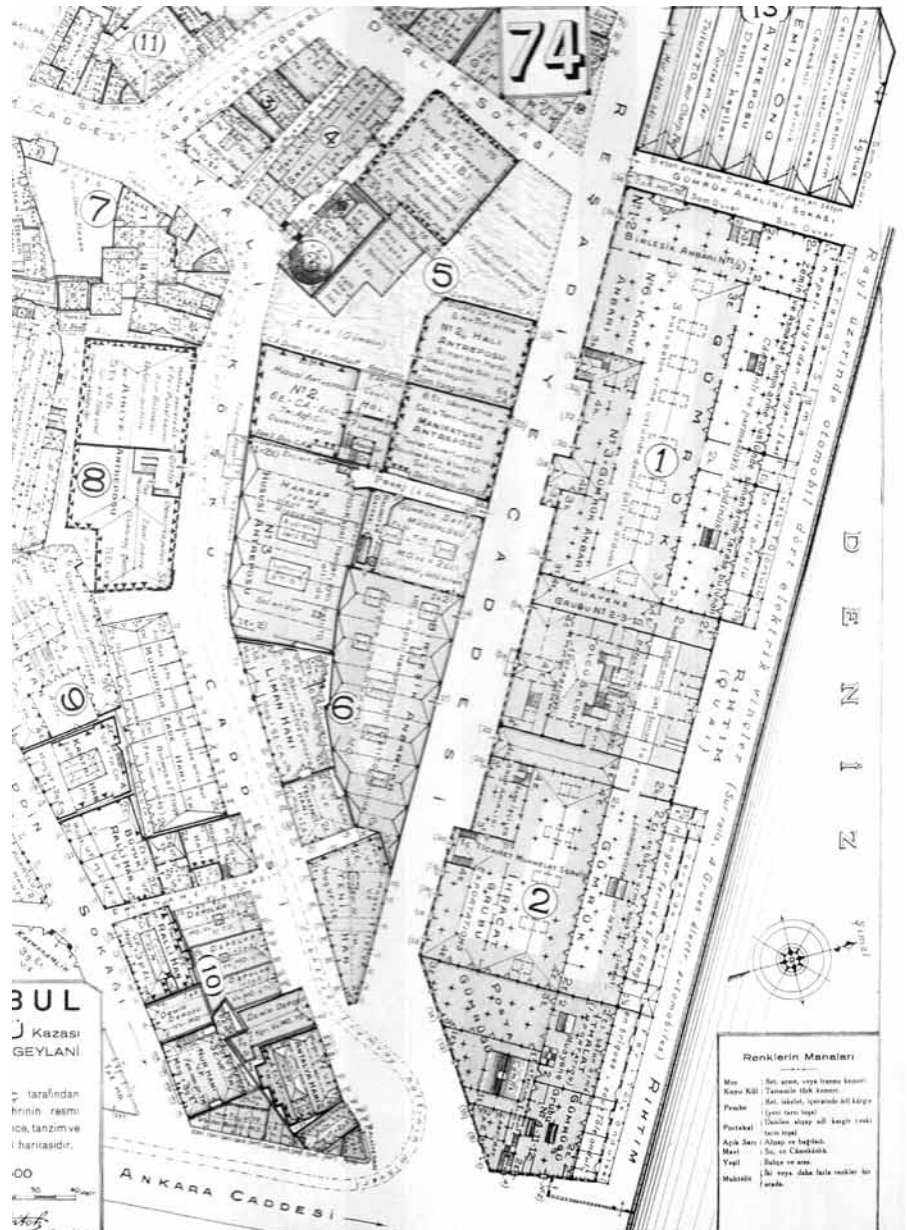


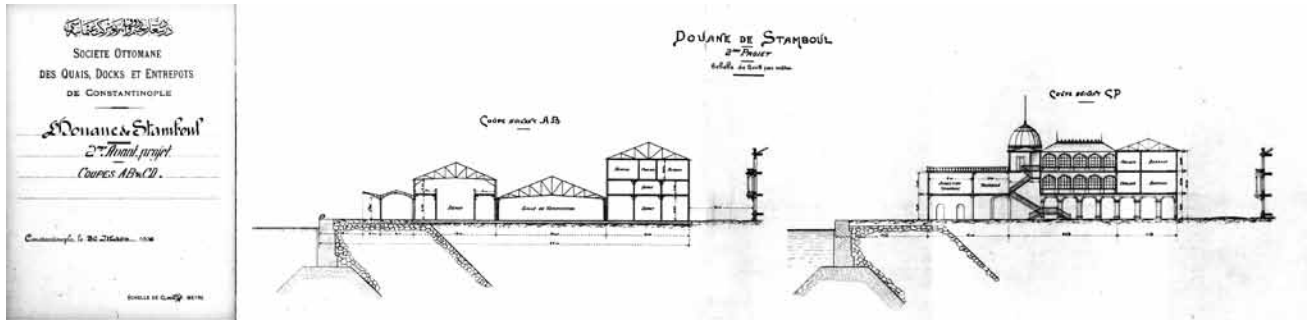
Figure 14. Constantinople Docks and Quays Company proposition undersigned by Granat, for Eminönü Customs House site plan and a reorganization of the surrounding area dated 1905 (DUIT 33-1).



**Figure 15.** The ground floor plan of Eminönü Customs House on 1940 dated Pervititch insurance map (Pervititch and Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2000, 145).

realised on similar weak soil. He wrote that “...it was extremely difficult to make them understand that it was a monolithic construction” (BAH-76-IFA-1180).

However he also noted that, soon, reinforced concrete would be of great use in Istanbul and expressed his enthusiasm to be the concessioner of Hennebique systems in Istanbul. Saboreaux also enclosed the confirmed project for the Eminönü customs house (BAH-76-IFA-1180) (**Figure 16**), covering a closed area of 12000 m<sup>2</sup> and asked for a reinforced concrete project for this building. The reply to this letter from Hennebique was written on April 5th 1906 with required references and an exemplar of a concession contract. Consequently, a correspondence file of the Ministry of Commerce and Public Works dated 17.6.1906 (Y..PRK.TNF 8-56), details discussions about whether the new customs house should be constructed in reinforced concrete or not. It is denoted that the architect of the Customs



**Figure 16.** The section drawings of Eminönü Customs House project sent to Hennebique by Constantinople Docks and Quays Company in 1906 (BAH-76-IFA-1180).

Administration, Mr. Vallauray, reported reinforced concrete to be 100% more economic for the foundations and 30% for the other parts, as compared to stonework, and that the Quay Company who was doubted of having built a weak quay, inapt to support heavy loads, suggested use of this very new and unapproved reinforced concrete method only as it was cheaper. The Quay Company thus accused of violating the contract, defended the robustness of their work on the quays and, stating that they did not agree with the cost prediction of Vallauray, submitted their own calculations and figures.

Finally, in October 1906 the government decided that new customs houses should be built in reinforced concrete, according to plans agreed upon by the Quay Company and the Customs Administration (Commerce, Finances, Industrie, 1906b). The new customs house on the Eminönü side would sit on an area of 7000m<sup>2</sup>; it would have a 300m long façade; whereas the Galata side would occupy 13000m<sup>2</sup> with a 184m façade. Both would be placed 8m from the quay. However, discussions about cost prediction were not yet resolved (MV 114-52); Vallauray calculated it as 8-9 liras/m<sup>2</sup> and the quay company pronounced it as 10,5 liras/m<sup>2</sup>. In November the two parties agreed to form a new commission, which was to finalize the cost estimates for reinforced concrete and compare it to those for stonework. The commission was made up of Serviçin Efendi, Hulusi Bey, Miralay Edhem, Kaymakam Cevat, architect of the Army Kemal Bey and Vallauray. Probably the conflict was finally resolved by Hennebique, for an official demand dated 11.5.1908, recommended cooperation with the firm having already undertaken the construction of the Customs House in Istanbul, for the re-evaluation of the Thessaloniki Customs House; which is known to be later built with Hennebique systems (BEO 3309-248148). The customs building in Eminönü was finally inaugurated in late October 1909 (*L'inauguration de L'entrepot Douanier*, 1909), shortly before the opening of the Haydarpaşa station. Both Saboreaux and Vallauray assisted to the opening ceremony.

This customs building in Eminönü appears as a 'concrete building of the new style' in Pervititch maps (**Figure 15**); moreover, the interior distribution of the building generally conforms to plans in the Hennebique archives. So it was probably built under Hennebique license and its engineer was Saboreaux (15). As for its architectural design, though undersigned plans are yet to be revealed, Vallauray's contribution is most evident for two reasons: First the real façade of the building is very different from that on Hennebique plans and has instead a striking resemblance to that of the Thessaloniki Customs House, which is a design by Vallauray (**Figure 17**). Secondly Vallauray's salary increase demand dated

15. However this building is not listed in the *Bétonarmé* magazine of the firm as one of the buildings, Hennebique realised in Turkey until 1912 (B.A.H., 1913).



**Figure 17.** The seafront view of the Eminönü Customs House (D-DAI-IST-R26459).

16. In the 1950s, Eminönü Customs House would be demolished for the reorganization of the Eminönü Square (Paket Postanesi de Yıkılacak, 1956). A 1957 photograph shows it partly demolished (**Figure 18**) (D-DAI-IST-R32769). The building persisted until 1966 (1966 Aerial View of Eminönü, 1966) and later totally destroyed. Hence our visual experience of the building is limited by archive material.

**Figure 18.** Detail from photograph of Eminönü in 1957 (D-DAI-IST-R32769).

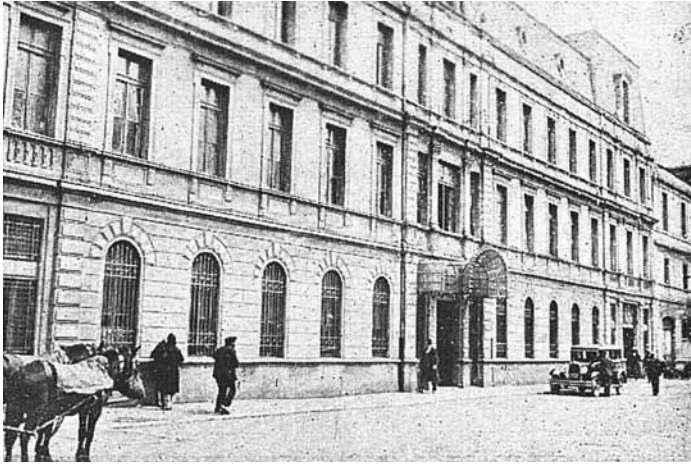
**Figure 19.** The aerial photograph of Eminönü taken in 1918 (1918 Aerial View of Eminönü, 1918).

2.8.1908 and the official response to it, show that he was responsible for the construction of this building according to its plans (ŞD 603-16).

As seen in the 1918 aerial view of Eminönü (1918 Aerial View of Eminönü, 1918) (**Figure 19**), as well as on Pervititch maps, where we are presented with a detailed entrance floor plan, the Hennebique version of the building's plan was basically unchanged except for a reorganization of the entrance hall and the main staircase. The terraces and the block heights on these section drawings were applied, but elevations and the superstructure were changed. The building was organized in three parts, each with separate atriums covered with partly glass roofs borne by cast-iron structures. The vast terraces on the first floor all along the building overlooked Istanbul port. It was a very well lit building with many windows and windowpanes as also specified on the Pervititch map (16).

It is noteworthy that the orientalist elevations found in the Hennebique files, probably suggested by Saboreaux were not implemented. Though Vallauray is known to have realised many buildings with a wide range of





**Figure 20.** The streetside view of the Eminönü Customs House (Hamdi, 1929, 134).



**Figure 21.** The entrance hall and stairs of the Eminönü Customs House (D-DAI-IST-R26458).

local or oriental historical references in the near past, here he employed instead a façade organization, superstructure and ornamental vocabulary very similar to those of the Thessaloniki Customs House (D-DAI-IST-R26459) (**Figure 17**). This mostly neoclassical nature of the seafront was repeated on other façades as well (Hamdi, 1929, 134) (**Figure 20**). As such, the political colors of the day ranging from panislamism to nationalism can be said to accommodate a completely occidental looking building placed in the port of the capital city, quite in conflict with the classical Istanbul panorama behind it. An interior photo depicts its entrance floor and the main staircase (D-DAI-IST-R26458) (**Figure 21**). The iron-cast structure carrying the glass roof and the glass panes on the roof also resemble *Telonio*. In general, the ornamentation vocabulary here follows that on the exterior, except for the use of some elements such as stone banisters with star shaped perforations or some very depressed arches.

## EVALUATION

The construction processes in port-cities in evolution, apparently demanded the cooperative work of many architects, engineers and contractors, in order to overcome technical difficulties and implement modern technology, while also lowering the building costs. Use of the newly introduced reinforced concrete in place of traditional stone was one prevailing issue. Static problems in parallel with the earthquake threats, as well as fire resistancy issues caused lengthy discussions about the choice of material and construction method. Also the positioning of new harbor facilities, especially their relation to railroad services, was an important issue. Among all these technical concerns, there were, no wonder, conflicting interests and consequently the raised voices of the various parties involved in these major public works, as well. Finally, the visual character of the new constructions had to comply with the new and modern Ottoman city image. These discussions, constituting a serious challenge for architects and engineers and showing the scope of demands that they had to satisfy in their projects, also present us with a snapshot of the turn of the century Ottoman architectural atmosphere. And, these demands and the accompanying political and economic developments were soon to enforce considerable changes in Ottoman architecture. Customs houses, which were planned as the last phases and complementary facilities of comprehensive dock and port infrastructure



17. These were probably an extension of what European architects already experienced, following great political, social, urban and technological transformations. To these changes, that aroused, a few decades ago, Ecole des Beaux Arts had responded with eclecticism in architecture (Epron, 1997). So Vallauray's education in Paris Ecole des Beaux Arts and experience must have gained him a relevant prevision, enabling him to respond to the political, technical and stylistic demands over architectural practice.

18. Several articles in Levant Herald newspaper between 1904-1910 show that Vallauray cooperated with Anatolian Railways Company.

19. Vallauray may have been influenced by the prevalent neoclassical scheme for customs houses as in Bordeaux Customs House. Custom House had also been Rome competition subject in Ecole des Beaux Arts (Guédy, 1899). Moreover, 1907 graduation project subject for Ottoman Imperial School of Fine Arts students was a customs house for Istanbul port (Thalasso, 1907).

projects, addressed all these pre-1909 concerns. Additionally, their location on the seafront and their size gained these buildings a significance as the showcase of their cities, and in consequence a high visibility of their architectural styles.

Vallauray's known efforts for these three major Ottoman custom houses depict his professional attitude, against the challenges faced commonly by the architects of the period (17). The political dimension of this attitude was critical in that there were several parties' demands to accommodate. Vallauray worked for the government, and realised many buildings for Abdulhamid II. But he also cooperated with foreign firms and concession holding companies. Aside his strong relations with the francophone community and firms, he also worked with Germans (18). Due to the private commissions he realised, his position at the Imperial School of Fine Arts, not to forget his relations with the freemasons and the Italian community, he must have had a wide network of politically powerful persons and institutions, and he must have been able to respond to the expectations of each party to a considerable degree.

Historical and stylistic issues seem to have caused the least of discussions. All custom houses in question display European façades, and offer an occidental image. This deliberate choice of Vallauray, was no wonder in alignment with the government's preferences, for he did not bother to create double face buildings as he did with the Ottoman Bank building, or to use the orientalist style he had employed for the Hidayet Mosque two decades before. These customs houses with rather neoclassical façades are eclectic buildings, following the basic compositional rules of Beaux Arts architecture, with the addition of a free employment, in the interiors, of some architectural elements bearing local historical or Art Nouveau references. Last but not least to note is the French touch on the Thessaloniki and Eminönü customs houses, especially apparent via the roof organization (19). This liberal architectural conduct is noteworthy in that, neither the panislamism policy nor the rising nationalistic trend of the era imposed buildings with dominantly local or historical references, though things must have changed considerably after the 1909 revolution.

The technical challenge Vallauray confronted seems to be of the most pressing nature: the use of new technology, basically a choice between the adoption of reinforced concrete or cast iron structures. All the previously explained details, based on primary sources, and regarding the construction and production phases of the customs houses point to this fact. Based on the evidence presented above, he seems to be closer to the implementation of cast iron structures than that of reinforced concrete; and some reservation against this rather new and unreliable technology is felt in his attitude. Apart from this, Vallauray is also known to have been sharply criticised by engineers about his heavy designs and out-of-place usage of iron structures. However, he seems to have defended his point, for most of these heavy designs, if not all iron structures, were realised. However the increasing popularity of reinforced concrete and the growing need to cooperate with engineers must have become the dominant trend in parallel with the deteriorating economic condition, for reinforced concrete soon proved to be more cost effective than stone. As is, with the exception of the Thessaloniki and Eminönü customs houses, where he forcedly cooperated with engineers, Vallauray had not been a very active user of the Hennebique systems, then holding a monopoly of reinforced concrete know-how. This firm's bulletin in 1913, covering implementations in Turkey, does not refer

20. Vallauray probably was not affected by the government decision to unemploy Italian originated people, for he already was a French subject by then and Union and Progress Party demanded Vallauray's services for the restoration of the parliament building as late as 1910 ( DH..İD 83-1/4 ).

21. In addition, from 1909 on, his circle contracted considerably. Many foreigners left the country, like Zonaro the famous artist, as well as Raimundo D'Aronco the Italian architect, whom he closely cooperated. His old assistant Bello died in 1909 and Osman Hamdi Bey, who was his supporter from the very start, followed Bello in early 1910.

to his name as an implementer of their technology, unlike many of his peers and his old students (B.A.H., 1913).

Needless to say, the customs house projects also correspond with the final years of Vallauray's career. After changing his nationality to French and marrying a French lady in 1901, he did not leave for Grasse on the French Riviera until 1909 (Consulat General de France, 1987; Vallauray, 2013). His naturalization was probably after his deliberate efforts of many years, although his departure was sudden, but probably with no coincidental timing, for 1909, marked changing times for the Ottoman empire (20). The new constitution, the take over of the Union and Progress Party and rising nationalism meant the end of foreign capital inflow, and in consequence the slowing down of public works, hence a contraction of the construction market. What flourished, in spite of these hard times, were the first National Trend in Architecture in terms of style and the fast adoption of reinforced concrete as a building technology. So that was how Ottoman architecture and the construction business responded to the post-1909 political conditions and survived the economic crisis.

Unlike many of his colleagues, Vallauray does not seem to have become part of these trends. He favored iron and glass structures over reinforced concrete, in choice of building technology. He did not comply totally with the First Nationalistic Trend neither, a surprising choice, given the fact that he had already been accumulating a vocabulary of local historical references which would later be observed to be heavily adopted by architects of the nationalistic trend. Vallauray preferred to continue comprising local and European references, no doubt due to his French affiliations: an attitude that might be assessed as eclecticism of Ottoman architecture rather than the historicist/revivalist nature of the nationalistic trend. This unalignment with the preferred technology and style of the period might have rendered Vallauray rather inadventagous compared to his numerous rivals competing to get new commissions (21). Consequently, all these could account for his decision to retire early and leave, when he was still at the peak.

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#### **SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

- BOA: Priministry Ottoman Archives, Istanbul  
 CAA: Le Centre d'Archives d'Architecture du XXe siècle, Paris  
 DAI: German Archaeological Institute Archives, Istanbul

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Anahtar Sözcükler: Vallauray, liman kentleri; Hennebique; geç Osmanlı mimarlığı; gümrük binası.

## ALEXANDRE VALLAURY'NİN İZMİR, SELANİK VE EMİNÖNÜ GÜMRÜK BİNALARINA İLİŞKİN ÇALIŞMALARI VE YÜZYIL DÖNÜŞÜNDE OSMANLI MİMARLIĞININ GÜNDEMİNE DAİR NOTLAR

Ondokuzuncu yüzyılın ikinci yarısında deniz kıyısı Osmanlı kentlerinde öncelikle rıhtım, liman ve gümrük tesislerinin inşası ve deniz kıyılarının yeniden düzenlenmesi ile kente modern yaşamın gerekliliklerine uygun yapıların kazandırılmasını içeren büyük değişimler yaşanmıştır. İmtiyaz karşılığı yaptırılan liman ve gümrük inşaatları ihaleleri, hem yerli, hem Avrupalı kişi ve şirketlerin ciddi rekabetine sahne olmaktadır. Öte yandan yirminci yüzyıl başı Osmanlı mimarlığında, gerek 1890'lardan itibaren bina yapım süreçlerinde ortaya çıkan mimar-mühendis çekişmesi, gerekse 1894 İstanbul depremi sonrası yoğunlaşan strüktürde sağlamlık arayışları özellikle etkili olmuştur. Geç Osmanlı mimarlığının tanınmış mimarı Alexander Vallauray, 1889-1910 arasında Rüsumat (Gümrükler) Emaneti mimarlığı görevini yürüttüğünden, dönemin mimarlık ve mühendislik gündeminin başlıca konusu olan liman kentlerinin yeniden örgütlenmesi ve modernleşmesi projelerinde kilit bir konumdaydı. Bu makalede, Vallauray'nin meslek yaşamının son döneminde, üzerinde çalıştığı İzmir Gümrük Binası ek salonu (1906-1909) ile Eminönü (1905-1909) ve Selanik (1907-1912) gümrük binalarının yapım süreçleri, arşiv belgeleri ve alan çalışmalarının ışığında incelenip tanıtılmıştır. Üç önemli kentin rıhtım ve liman altyapı projelerinin son aşaması olarak planlanan bu binalar, yetersiz gümrük hizmetlerini yeni ve modern tesislerle geliştirme ihtiyacı içinde ve büyük masraflarla girilmiş işlerdir. Endüstri yapıları gibi çok sayıda mekanik aksam ile hacim ve ağırlık olarak yüksek depolama kapasitesi içermeleri gerektiğinden strüktür, altyapı ve donanım bakımından yeni teknolojinin kullanılması istenen tesislerdir. Kıyıda zayıf zeminde olmaları ve büyük boyutları nedeniyle bazı özel strüktürel zorluklar içeren, mimar-mühendis işbirliğini gerektiren projelerdir. Ayrıca deniz kıyısında ve kentlerin vitrini konumunda olduklarından mimari tarzları önem taşımaktadır. Tüm bu nedenlerle, bu yapılar ve uzun tartışmalara konu olan yapım süreçleri, değişimin eşliğindeki 1909 öncesi Osmanlı mimarlığının gündemini yansıtır niteliktedir.

Bu binalardan en az tartışmaya konu olan İzmir Gümrüğü ek salonu, denizden doldurulan alan üstünde, Vallauray imzalı çizimlerde ayrıntılarını görebildiğimiz dökme demir strüktür ile inşa edilmiştir. 1890'larda Eminönü'nde dökme demir olarak inşa etmek istediği antrepolar için Jasmund'un sert muhalefeti karşısında değişiklik yapmak zorunda kalan Vallauray'ni, burada kendinden emin bir dökme demir strüktür uygulaması söz konusudur. Selanik Gümrüğü'nün ise, tasarım işleri Vallauray, uygulama ve statik işleri, Fransız Hennebique betonarme firmasının temsilcisi, Selanikli genç mühendis Elie Modiano tarafından yapılmıştır. Rıhtımın, bu ağır binayı taşıyabilmesi için özel bir temel sistemi kullanılmış, bina betonarme olarak inşa edilmiştir. Benzer şekilde, Eminönü Gümrüğü için de, imtiyaz sahibi şirketin mühendisi Saboreaux'nun talebiyle, Hennebique firması betonarme projesi üretmiştir. Fakat burada betonarme kararı güçlülük ve imtiyaz sahibi şirketin ısrarlı çabası, Hennebique'in desteğiyle verilebilmiştir. Çok benzeyen Eminönü ve Selanik Gümrükleri, Rönesans saray mimarisi benzeri bir cephe düzeni içerisinde neoklasik bezeme programına sahip ve tamamen batılı etki yaratan yapılardır.

Sözkonusu gümrük binalarının kullanıcı talepleri ve parasal kaynak, teknolojik gereksinimler ve mimari tarza dair tartışmalar eşliğinde gerçekleştirilen yapım süreçleri, 1909 öncesinde Osmanlı mimarlık ortamının başlıca gündem maddelerini ve dönemin bellibaşlı mimari kişiliklerinden Vallaurý'nin bu konulardaki tutumunu ortaya koymaktadır. İkinci Meşrutiyet ile birlikte gerek yabancı sermayenin çekilip inşaat piyasasının daralması, gerekse milliyetçilik akımının yükselişi bu resme yeni etkenler katacaktır. Osmanlı mimarlığı bu yeni koşullara 1. Milli Mimari Akımı ve hızlı şekilde benimsenen betonarme teknolojisi ile uyum sağlarken, Vallaurý'nin bu yeni teknoloji ve tarza belli bir mesafede durduğu gözlemlenmektedir.

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