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# Power, conflict and negotiation between the agents: an alternative vision for contestation on the public space in the late Ottoman empire

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## ABSTRACT


This article posits the territorial claim and control of the Ottoman government in the city centre by analyzing confrontations and conflicts of the state with the other agents via critical examination of a provincial case in the late nineteenth century. I examine the critical moments in making of public space to understand how the state authority claimed and enlarged its territorial influence during foundation and development of Dedeağaç (Alexandroupolis) port in Edirne province through many agency confrontations. The conflicts between the state and other agents extend from the choice of location for a new port and taxation of the new port neighbourhood to the provision of public works and constitution of an administrative centre. In this context, foundation and growth of Dedeağaç case demonstrate presence of many civic agents in clash with the state and they had to agree on an interim resolution for spatial construction of the town centre. This article aims to provide an alternative ground to examine the agency of the state in the late nineteenth century urban setting. It aims to be more inclusive by revealing the dynamic and substantial role of the other underrepresented agents in making of the cityscape in the late Ottoman Empire.

## KEYWORDS

Ottoman cities in the nineteenth century; East Mediterranean port cities; public space; urban history of Dedeağaç (Alexandroupolis); Ottoman experience of modernization; agents of change; railroad companies

## Introduction: the Ottoman administrative centralization and an alternative narrative on the agency of the state in the nineteenth century city

The gradual centralization of the Ottoman government in the nineteenth century had practical motivations: the first aim was to establish the territorial control of the peripheries to guarantee an efficient taxation system which would become a fundamental financial source for reforms. Its second aim was to restore security across provinces by eliminating the local tax farmers. In this era the attempts to transform the empire into a centralized state necessitated a comprehensive reform of provincial government. The milestone was the issue of the 1864 Provincial Law<sup>1</sup> and its preliminary implementation by establishing a new province (*vilayet*) in contemporary Bulgaria, in the Tuna Province.<sup>2</sup> The governorship of Midhat Pasha was remarkable. As one of the authors of the law, Midhat Pasha encouraged the Sublime Porte (Ottoman government) to spread this new model across the empire after conducting subtle amendments in 1867 and 1871.<sup>3</sup> The new system enabled a

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<sup>1</sup>*Düstur 1. Tertib*, vol. 1, 608–24.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 517–36; Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, 151–7; Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan Sonra*, 41–7; Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, 145, 151–7; Petrov, “Everyday Forms of Compliance,” 732–3.

<sup>3</sup>Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan Sonra*, 101–15; Önen and Reyhan, *Mülkten Ülkeye*, 183–200; Sahara, “The Ottoman City Council,” 31.

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fractally-structured government hierarchy from the province level (*vilâyet*) -the biggest administrative unit- down to the district level (*nâhiye*) -the smallest. This enabled the replication and transition of the structural form of the government from one level to the other. The centralization of the state and introduction of provincial reforms can also be considered, on the one hand, as an immediate response to the rising nationalist local tendencies primarily in the Balkans and then in the other parts of the empire. On the other, it was also a response to colonizing powers which sought to establish political and economic hegemonic territories across the empire.

Although some scholars claim that the new system was inspired by French administrative department system, it is obvious that the Ottoman reformers were the authors of this unique model since they had to consider about some emerging local problems. They were quite careful to establish a balanced system that was less flexible about self-governance and representation of religious groups in the local councils.<sup>4</sup> One remarkable feature of the administrative reform was the establishment of new government institutions at different levels. The introduction of provincial and city councils as governing bodies, which was aimed to be inclusive at the local decision-making level was noteworthy. Recent scholarship has laboured to decipher their records in order to hear the voices of underrepresented groups since these assemblies became a platform of encounter, negotiation and challenges to the government.<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that because of their geographical distribution, limited financial capacity, local patterns of population distribution and lack of trained officials they did not have the expected impact. However, the Ottoman government was able to establish a continuous system of transmitting information from Balkan mountain villages or Anatolian planes to Istanbul, and to create a class of administrative bureaucrats at the end of the century.

Beyond the institutional establishment of the new administrative system, the flow of information from provinces to the capital, and the supervision and control of the government at the peripheries could only be possible by active use of new transportation and communication technologies; hence the Ottomans were quite pragmatic at welcoming the telegraph, railroad, steamship, postal service, and newspapers.<sup>6</sup> These innovations enabled the circulation of knowledge, expertise and intelligence with an unprecedented speed and coverage; it was therefore not a coincidence to observe parallels between the increasing centralization and the adaptation of new technologies towards the end of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the growth of a new administrative system required a greater number of trained staff each year and it provided the officials with a linear career, a regular and rationalized salary system as well as specialized training schools in major provinces.<sup>7</sup>

In the architectural historiography on the late Ottoman cities, the centralization of the state has predominantly been examined in terms of the emergence of new buildings for new institutions and the implementation of state authority in public places. Much scholarship emphasizes the prominent role of state agency.<sup>8</sup> Many authors highlight the residual use of the symbols of power and authority of the state in the public spaces of the Ottoman cities to explain how the state and the sultan himself gradually became more visible in the eyes of the citizens.<sup>9</sup> Actually, the idea of the physical presence

<sup>4</sup>Önen and Reyhan, *Mülkten Ülkeye*, 165–71.

<sup>5</sup>Köksal, "Imperial Center and Local Groups," 107–38; Kechriotis, "Protecting the City's Interest," 207–21; Petrov, "Everyday Forms of Compliance"; Lafi, "Mediterranean Connections"; Sahara, "The Ottoman City Council," 26–50; Vakalis, *Tanzimat in the Province*.

<sup>6</sup>For introduction and detailed interpretation of 1867 and 1871 regulations, see Ortaylı, *Türkiye Teşkilat ve İdare Tarihi*, 428–9; Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History*, 132–65; Bektaş, "The Sultan's Messenger," 669–96. For the intensive use of telegraph for official communication with the provincial governments, see, Kırmızı, *Abdülhamid'in Valileri*, 99–105 and as a general source on Ottoman post, telephone and telegraph history, see Tanrıku, *Türkiye Posta ve Telgraf*.

<sup>7</sup>Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom*, 211–53; Kırmızı, *Abdülhamid'in Valileri*, 123–70.

<sup>8</sup>Acun, "Osmanlı Döneminde," 161–92.

<sup>9</sup>Deringil, "The Invention of Tradition," 3–29; Deringil, "Legitimacy Structures," 345–59; Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 16–43; Karateke, *Padişahım Çok Yaşasın!*; Stephanov, "Sultan Mahmud II (1808–1839)," 129–48; Zürcher, "Kosovo Revisited," 26–39.

of the Sultan in the public spaces and its mediation through imperial ceremonies goes back to the pre-modern era. Since the fifteenth century, the imperial family had sought to organize public events for many reasons: recent scholarship has documented the celebrations religious festivals, circumcision feasts, inaugural rites of the new sultans, which took place in the royal palace (*Saray-ı Hümayûn*), grand mosques, tombs and main arteries of Istanbul in order to reinforce the image of the imperial family and strengthen the sultan's legitimacy in the citizens' eyes during the pre-modern Ottoman era.<sup>10</sup>

Academic inquiry into the nineteenth-century Ottoman state went beyond the tracing of performative symbols of sovereignty as many scholars examined the most noticeable architectural type of the late Ottoman cities: the government houses, which concurrently became one of the focal elements of modern city planning. The design and implementation of new streets leading to the government houses and the new squares around official buildings and patronage of public fountains and public parks marked a conscious effort to increase the visibility of the state in the public sphere.<sup>11</sup> Earlier scholarship often reduced the continuous effort to build up official buildings to a stylistic reading of the changing characteristics of the public space in which many public buildings adopted European monumental scale and façade design styles.<sup>12</sup>

The new built environments brought about new social practices. In other words, the squares and streets around the government houses became the settings for parades, celebrations, demonstrations and commemorations. According to the mainstream urban historiography, these examples illustrated a vision of state agency which gradually amplified its presence by constructing buildings and by exhibiting its symbols in Ottoman cities.

Here, my intention is not to disregard the state's agency in shaping the late Ottoman cities but to suggest an alternative approach to examine its role in a complex actor network. It is about how to challenge the 'omnipotent' image of the state and thus about producing more inclusive scholarship by revealing the dynamic and substantial role of the other underrepresented agents in making of the public spaces. The frame I draw here underlines the significance of writing microhistories to decipher peculiar or eccentric conditions instead of adding a generic piece to the grand narrative of the role of the all-powerful state in shaping the cities. The peculiarities of a microhistory may unveil unforeseen conditions, knotted stories, and multifaceted confrontations between agents, so that they may enrich how we understand transformations to cities. In other words, the range of spatial patterns in the local cityscape, confrontation, conflict, and sometimes collaboration between the agents enable us to better understand the change and the way how the state performed in public spaces. Therefore, I deliberately prefer to push the agency role of the state to a negotiable context but not to neglect its role or to reduce its transformative power. This article claims that despite the fact that the state sought to consolidate its power in the peripheries, including in particular cities, by introducing provincial reforms, it had to negotiate with the local and international agents in order to make spatial changes to urban areas. In most cases the final result was an interim resolution which reflected conflicts of interest between different agents. In this article, the terms agency and agent denote the active authorities, institutions or individuals which have the ability to change or transform public space by utilizing certain devices which have the potential of influencing decision-makers.

<sup>10</sup>Necipoglu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power*; Faroqhi and Öztürkmen, eds., *Celebration, Entertainment and Theater in the Ottoman World*; Şahin, "Staging an Empire"; Tarım Ertuğ, "The Depiction of Ceremonies in Ottoman Miniatures."

<sup>11</sup>Karateke, "Interpreting Monuments," 183–99; Özbek, "Philanthropic Activity," 59–81; Erkmen, *Geç Osmanlı Dünyasında*; Aydın, "Sultan II. Abdülhamit Dönemi," 74–8; Demirel, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid'in Mirası*.

<sup>12</sup>Batur, "Batılılaşma Dönemi," 1038–67; Kuban, *Ottoman Architecture*, 661–72; Ortaylı, "Söyleşi," 3–14.

This article aims to introduce how territorial control was established, expanded and consolidated via state agency in Edirne province, which covers parts of modern Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey at the end of the nineteenth century and in the context of the continuous effort to centralize the state. More specifically, it assesses the encounters and conflicts between the state, international entrepreneurs and representatives of local communities when Edirne's commercial port town, Dedeğaç (Alexandroupolis in Greece) was growing. I examine how the control and use of public space, provision of public works and taxation of buildings became the source of debates among the agents; and I demonstrate the ways in which the state expanded and consolidated its authority through rigorous negotiations with the railroad concessionaire company, which was the founder of the town. Like any other Mediterranean port city, the incidents in the Dedeğaç case display a multifaceted social environment of conflicting benefits. This study involves many agents, including international ones (railroad company, arbitration boards), local ones (citizens of İnöz and Dedeğaç towns, local journalists) and official ones (local governorates at Dedeğaç and Edirne, individual governors, and central state institutions in Istanbul). Furthermore, public space denotes the built environment in the city in which the civic agents exist, perform, confront and conflict in many ways by using their tools to claim and consolidate their physical and economic territories. The state, international railroad entrepreneurs and locals tried to maximize their profits or benefits and the district around the port became the platform where they waged the battle. After examining the particular circumstances in which Dedeğaç was founded, this article poses further questions in order to discuss how the relation network of the agents in Eastern Mediterranean port cities was more complex than they have been understood to date. Therefore, a number of thematic parts will follow the introductory part.

First, to better understand the transformative role of the state in Dedeğaç, it is necessary to apprehend the reciprocal relationship between Edirne and Dedeğaç. The social and economic transformation of Edirne enables us to contextualize the foundation of the town of Dedeğaç in the 1870s.

## **Nineteenth-century Edirne: a city between opportunities and disasters**

From the mid-fifteenth century onwards, Edirne had held an administrative advance over other cities by holding the title of former capital city before the Ottoman capital moved to Istanbul. In the fifteenth century, the old palace in the city centre had been abandoned and a new palace complex was commissioned by Murad II (1421–44 and 1446–51). His successors expanded it by commissioning buildings and, with time, the architectural configuration of the Edirne palace complex increasingly resembled the new one in Istanbul.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, in the seventeenth century, the Ottoman Sultans preferred to reside in Edirne so as to retreat from the political rivalries of Istanbul at the time when the grand viziers of the Köprülü family actively handled official duties, but also to be closer to the battlefields during the long wars with European allies (1683–99). The Ottoman sultans' long period of absence caused insurgencies amongst some of the religious scholars, military officers and statesmen who remained in Istanbul and it was only after the Incidence of Edirne (1703) when Mustafa II (1695–1703) had to abdicate the throne in favour of his nephew Ahmed III (1703–1730) that the new sultan moved the court back to Istanbul after a serious rebellion led by the uneasy officers of Istanbul.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>For a brief history of Edirne Palace Complex, see Özer, *Ottoman Imperial Palace*.

<sup>14</sup>Abou-El-Haj, *The 1703 Rebellion*, 3; Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. 4, 24–45; Öztuna, *Büyük Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. 6, 227–36; For the rivalry between Edirne and Istanbul, see Kunt, "Siyasal Tarih," 50–1.

The grand vizier's palace located on the northwest side of the city centre was used as the residence and administrative office of the highest official. In the fifteenth century, a masonry archive building was erected nearby to secure the registry books.<sup>15</sup> This site was known as *Paşa Kapısı* (Gate of Pasha) demonstrating the centuries-long significance of the place. Edirne was a part of Çirmen *sancak* (district) in Rumelia *eyalet* (state) and the local governor resided in Çirmen town, which is about 20 kilometres away from Edirne.<sup>16</sup> It was in 1818 (h.1233) that the governorship centre transferred from Çirmen to Edirne and the new governor Ali Celâl Pasha was allowed to restore the old *Paşa Kapısı* building and use it as the new government house.<sup>17</sup> This building was also the private resident of the governor. In this period, *Paşa Kapısı* also accommodated the dormitories of cavalry army corps, stables, and the old archive building (*defterhane*).<sup>18</sup> In the nineteenth century the government house was destroyed by fire: first in 1828 and again in 1858.<sup>19</sup> Each time, the building was rebuilt from its foundations. The third building was inaugurated in 1863. It was a two-story building with thirty-nine rooms. To protect the campus from great fires, the dormitories facing the street side were torn down and the plot was surrounded by a continuous wall. In this period, the old archive (*defterhane*) was also replaced by a prison. In 1867, a new building was commissioned nearby the existing one to increase the physical capacity.<sup>20</sup>

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the pace of construction activities increased at the government house site. The additional building of the government house was converted to a courthouse in 1880, then a number of buildings were added to the campus: a building for police and gendarme officers (1888), an archive (1888), a building with thirteen rooms for post and telegram officials (1890), the Civil List building (1901) and Agriculture Bank Branch (1908) were built on the same campus.<sup>21</sup> As mentioned before, the agglomeration of different state offices upon the same site was a remarkable spatial practice for the Ottoman government after years of having temporary rent offices for each in different parts of the city.<sup>22</sup> However, it should be noted that construction activity was mostly an ad hoc initiative depending on the space demand and availability of budget instead of a master plan for the development of the site. Availability of extra space on the campus was probably the main reason for accommodating them on the campus (Figure 1).

Edirne was invaded three times in the long nineteenth century; in 1829 and 1878 by the Russian army and in 1912 by the Bulgarian one, with undesirable consequences for the economy. The retreating borders of the Empire in the Balkans diminished the economic hinterland of Edirne and forced the city to enter into a competition with its new rivals like Filibe (Plovdiv) in Bulgaria at the end of the century. The Treaty of Berlin (1878) marked the birth of Bulgaria as an autonomous principality and constituted an autonomous buffer zone territory, called East Roumelia province, which was soon annexed by a newly-independent Bulgaria. The territorial losses broke the Ottoman trade network and diminished the economic hinterland of Edirne. The new Bulgarian government fostered the development of the ports of Varna and Burgas and triggered the emergence of Plovdiv as a new economic rival in the region against Edirne. These consequences meant that Edirne's local economy suffered a lot

<sup>15</sup>Peremeci, *Edirne Tarihi*, 343–4.

<sup>16</sup>Halaçoğlu, "Çirmen," 341–2.

<sup>17</sup>The Presidential Archives of Turkey Ottoman Archives (OA hereafter) section: OA, HAT. 594/29119 (no date), and Peremeci, *Edirne Tarihi*, 343–4.

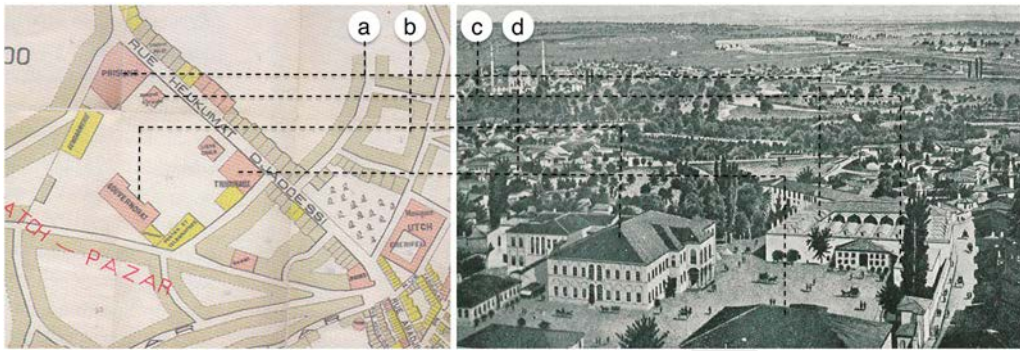
<sup>18</sup>OA, HAT. 595/29167 (08.06.1244 / 16 December 1828). Please note that the first and second dates in parenthesis indicate lunar (*hijri*) and solar (Gregorian) calendar dates consecutively.

<sup>19</sup>Ahmet Badi, *Riyaz-ı Belde-i Edirne*, 386; Peremeci, *Edirne Tarihi*, 344.

<sup>20</sup>Peremeci, *Edirne Tarihi*, 344.

<sup>21</sup>Avcı, *Osmanlı Hükümet Konakları*, 101–7.

<sup>22</sup>Peremeci, *Edirne Tarihi*, 344–7.



**Figure 1.** Edirne Governmental Campus, plan (left) and photograph (right) at the beginning of the twentieth century. Legend: a-Prison, b- Government House, c- Civil List, d- Courthouse. Source: Left: Partial view of 'Plan d'Adri-nople' by Caear Raymond in 1905 Scale 1:1000, right: Author's collection.

and forced the government to promote Dedeğaç as a trade hub against Burgaz (Burgas) and Varna.<sup>23</sup> However, the political and economic consequences in the region saw the rise of these Bulgarian ports against Edirne and Dedeğaç. The new Bulgarian state's interest in the Edirne and Dedeğaç region lasted a long time: partially because of the existing significant Bulgarian population in Edirne province and its expanding economic influence in the Aegean Sea ports. The economic interests fed the new state's expansionist policies and their military attempts to constitute a greater Bulgaria stretching from Dedeğaç to the Varna ports were challenged by their neighbours twice in 1878 and 1913.

For centuries, in addition to land trade routes, a riverine trade route extended towards the Aegean sea coast where the port town of İnöz (Ainos/Enez) served as a trade outlet for imported and exported items from distant ports (Figure 2). The commodities were transported on rafts sailing on the Meriç (Maritza) River throughout year, which provided continuous travel between two points. *İskelebaşı* was the historical location near Edirne, where freights was embarked and disembarked.<sup>24</sup> In the nineteenth century, an emerging problem made the trade activities hard for the local merchants. The accumulation of riverine mud around the İnöz coastal zone reduced the capacity of the old port, so large-tonnage ships were unable to enter the shallow water port. The historian Ahmet Bâdi Efendi recorded how, during his royal visit to Edirne in 1846, the İnöz locals requested Sultan Abdülmecid to issue an order for the levelling of the river bed and clearing and enlargement of the port facilities during his visit. The sultan ordered the local officials to solve the problem but no solution was implemented for almost three decades.<sup>25</sup> Later on, the same project was once more placed on the Ottoman government's agenda when a railroad connection from Edirne to the Aegean coast was set to transfer the commercial traffic on Meriç River to the railroads after granting railroad entrepreneurship rights to build up an iron network in the Ottoman Balkans to stimulate the economic prosperity of the region.

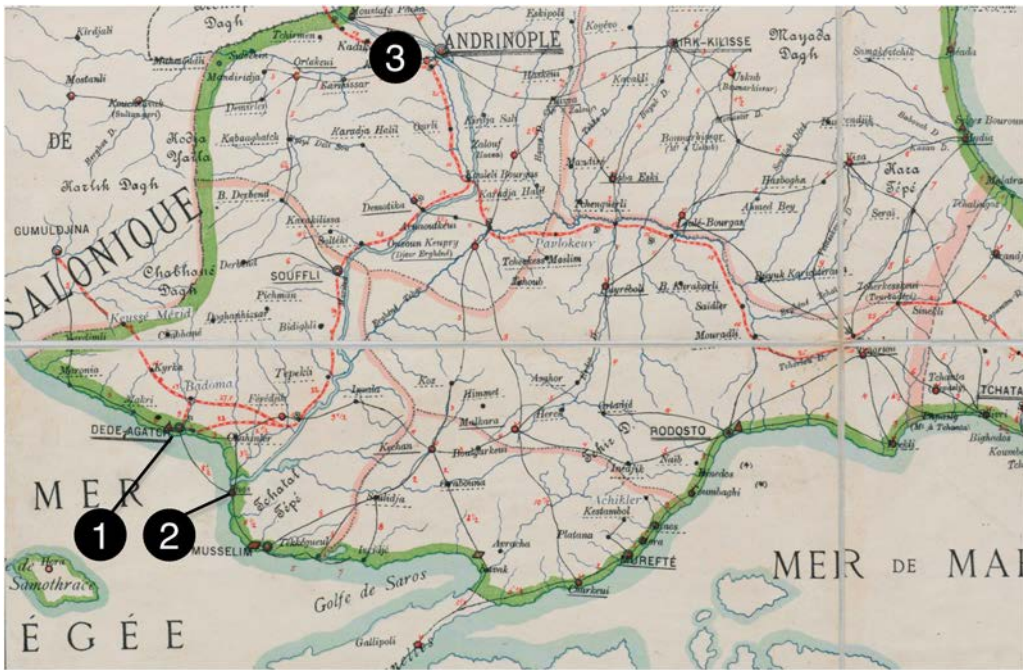
### The oriental railroads company and the question of extending the line to the Aegean sea coast

The Ottoman government was aware of the advantages of railroad technology and its potential for the greater territorial integration of the sparsely populated, multi-ethnic and polyglot empire. After

<sup>23</sup>Palairat, *The Balkan Economies*; Glenny, *The Balkans 1804–1999*, 168–78.

<sup>24</sup>Emecen, "Tarih Koridorlarında," 67.

<sup>25</sup>Ahmet Badi, *Riyaz-ı Belde-i Edirne*, 384.



**Figure 2.** Map of Edirne province and Meriç River Valley and Surrounding Towns. Legend: (1) Dedeağaç, (2) İnöz, (3) Edirne. Source: 'Nazaret d'Adrinople' Scale: 1:750,000, Salt Research Center Collection / Istanbul. Edited by the author.

building short railroad lines connecting Mediterranean and Black Sea ports with their economic hinterlands in the 1850s and 1860s, the Ottoman government ambitiously sought to create a railroad network throughout the Ottoman Balkans, which would provide military and economic benefits to the empire. In 1869, after three failed attempts, the sultan issued an imperial decree for the concession of construction of, and exploitation rights for, a railroad network of more than 2000 kilometres: a main line stretching from Istanbul to the Austrian frontier and with branches to the ports of Selanik (Thessaloniki) and İnöz on the Aegean Sea and the port of Burgaz (Burgas) on the Black Sea. Many prominent cities such as Edirne, Filibe (Plovdiv), Sofya (Sofia), Üsküb (Skopje) could be connected by rail. The government assured a kilometric guarantee of 22,000 francs for 99 years, which would be paid by the government and the operation company.<sup>26</sup> Due to limited capital and expertise, the provision of many modern public works, including railroads, trams, ports, street lighting, provision of drinking water and electricity by means of private entrepreneurship became a common practice in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire. In general, the international concessionaires and their local partners were granted some economic guarantees to secure their investments for a certain period depending on the financial risk that they burdened. In this case, the concessionaire, Baron Maurice de Hirsch of Paris, set up a construction (*Société Impériale des Chemins de Fer de la Turquie d'Europe*) and an operation company (*Société Générale pour l'Exploitation des Chemins de Fer Orientaux*) in 1870. He appointed Wilhelm von Pressel from the South Austrian Railroads company as the chief engineer, hired many other engineers for land survey and project development and found subcontractors for the execution of different sections of the network.

<sup>26</sup>*Actes de la Concession*, 5–13.

By 1872 the company had already started to construct almost one half of the proposed network. In 1872, an important change dramatically affected the future of the construction works. The concessionaire asked for serious amendments to the convention. The most noticeable one was about the changing roles of the concessionaire and the government. Baron Hirsch sought to separate the construction and operation works by gradually eliminating the former. Therefore, in the new scheme, the Ottoman government became the owner and main contractor of the lines and the Operation Company would be the tenant of the government and project developer thereafter.<sup>27</sup> The new contract also obliged the Operation Company to develop technical projects and specifications for the port of Dedeağaç and the Ottoman government became responsible for developing Dedeağaç's ports and quays. The government was also obliged to spend five million francs on this investment following its inspection and approval of the Operation Company's project. The government had to start the siteworks within a year after the inspection and official approval of the company's projects. The convention also included new ports in Selanik (Thessaloniki) and Varna. The government was obliged to pay 2.5 million francs for each project.<sup>28</sup>

The amendments became the source of conflict between the parties. In a short time, many disputes arose between the parties about the technical aspects and finances of the project. In most of the cases, a reasonable resolution was beyond reach and the relationship between the parties was defined by a lack of trust. On the one hand, the Ottoman government accused the concessionaire company of poor-quality construction in some sections of the line even though they were paid well. On the other hand, the operation company accused the government of adjourning the obligations of the convention and not taking necessary actions as required. For the resolution of disputes, the parties decided to call for international independent arbitration boards.

Here it should be noted that in the second half of 1870s, the Ottoman state had to face two serious questions concerning financial and political frontiers. The government had to issue loans to construct the obliged conditions of the convention, in a period when the Ottoman treasury almost went bankrupt. Secondly, the insurgence conditions in Bosnia and Bulgaria and the outbreak of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–78 made conditions worse. During the war, the port of Dedeağaç was captured by the Russian army which also plundered railroad workshops and looted cars and technical equipment.<sup>29</sup> However, after the signing of the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, the Ottomans regained their authority in the region.

In the Dedeağaç context, the disparity between the agents significantly affected the development of the town in the following decades. The elucidation of some of the critical sequences of long-lasting conflicts reveals how the territorial influence competition shaped the development of this town. In order to explain the consequence of the conflicts among agents I introduce four themes to demonstrate different phases of conflict of power in the public space. Each theme enables the examination of the encounter of state with other local or international agents.

### **A dilemma: to expand or destroy the new port**

The railroad construction company surveyors, who were working on drafting the route from Edirne to the port of İnöz on the Aegean Sea reported that the building of a terminus at İnöz might not be profitable for the company. Due to its proximity to the Meriç River and the level of alluvial

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<sup>27</sup>Articles #1, #2 and #3 addresses the general frame. See, *Actes de la Concession*, 5–6.

<sup>28</sup>Article 12 of *Convention d'Exploitation*. See *Actes de la Concession des Chemins de Fer*, 50–1.

<sup>29</sup>OA, Y.PRK.AJZ 2/31 (25.11.1295 / 20 November 1878) and HR.SYS 1232/12 (14.02.1296 / 7 February 1879).

accumulation, the port would soon become non-operational, unless the mud on the seabed was cleared off and the port area enlarged to make it ready for large-scale service. The company therefore asked the government to amend the route of the Edirne – Aegean Sea branch and the place of the terminus. They sought to shift the terminus station from İnöz to Dedeağaç, around 15 kilometres west of the former, but unlike in İnöz, there was not a permanent settlement in Dedeağaç at that time. The Ministry of Public Works assigned the inspection of the old and new port areas to a special commission, and based on the positive report favouring Dedeağaç over İnöz, the company received the official approval with an imperial decree in 1870.<sup>30</sup>

Here, one may ask why the company decided to build a new port at a deserted area instead of clearing and enlarging the one in İnöz, which possessed a noteworthy merchant population. The company was eager to own a high capacity port and storage facilities to increase their revenues. However, the necessary operations for the rehabilitation of the existing port in İnöz would cost more and would take longer to realize. However, in Dedeağaç there was no physical obstacle impeding the construction of a new port and railroad terminus. Based on the expropriation maps of the company, a long strip of land on the Dedeağaç coastline was assigned to the company to build up railroad and port facilities. This region had already been registered by Sultan Bayezid II (1481–1512) as a pious endowment (*vakıf*) to provide revenue for endowment's investments of charity and public infrastructure. Later on, it was partially registered as state owned (*mir'i*) land, and property of Civil List (*Hazine-i Mahsusa*) due to the reverting of the endowment system in the empire.<sup>31</sup>

This unexpected alteration was severely criticized by Istanbul's newspapers, which were pessimistic about the future of the new location. For instance, an author proposed a third alternative such as Gelibolu after explaining why Dedeağaç would be an inappropriate choice.<sup>32</sup> In the meantime, the locals of İnöz published articles in Istanbul newspapers to galvanise public opinion about the benefits of terminating the railroad at İnöz and rehabilitating the old port facilities. For instance, a well-known Greek teacher, N.G. Hatzopoulos, wrote a report in *Neologos*, a weekly Greek newspaper published in Istanbul, – as the representative of the people of İnöz- and praised his town, which had been of historical significance since antiquity, and claimed that the port of İnöz port was the most suitable place in the region: a natural harbour and a convenient place for the traders. To support his arguments, he referred to the reports of the French engineer, Poirell, who was sent by the Sublime Porte (the Ottoman Government) for the technical inspection of the port in 1847. The author also described the Dedeağaç region as '*Yaban Yeri*', a deserted, inhospitable region which was exposed to southern winds, lacking drinking water and close to a marshy area which would foster malaria.<sup>33</sup> On 8 June 1872, there was another article published in the same newspaper, which described Dedeağaç as a harrowing place and if the concessionaire company would build a new port there, then the expected profit would never be assured in the future. The same article reported that a few weeks earlier nine ships had been wrecked near Dedeağaç in a heavy storm with the loss of all crew.<sup>34</sup> The attacks of the inhabitants of İnöz on Dedeağaç did not stop as several articles published in the same newspaper in the following weeks show.

For the researchers, who study the urban histories of the nineteenth-century Ottoman cities, it is mostly hard to hear the opinion of the ordinary local people because of the lack of intermediaries to amplify their concerns on a country-wide scale despite the fact that they were the principal victims of

<sup>30</sup>OA, İ.DH. 613/ 42770 (29.03.1287 / 29 June 1870).

<sup>31</sup>OA, DH.MKT 1791/2 (28.04.1308 / 11 December 1890).

<sup>32</sup>*The Levant Herald*, 15 June 1870 and 11 January 1871.

<sup>33</sup>Hatzopoulos, "κατ' εντολήν και."

<sup>34</sup>*Neologos* (Neologos), 8 June 1872.

the urban reforms or changes. In this case, the people of İnoz seem to provide a relatively distinctive case thanks to their strong connections with the Greek community of Istanbul. Furthermore, their arguments were also supported by the eyewitnesses who wrote about the region. They expressed similar concerns about the future of the proposed Dedeğaç location. For instance, the British commander William J.L. Wharton who was surveying in the region in 1872 wrote:

The town stands on low ground covered with trees to the westward and clear of the marshy ground environing the mouth of the Maritza, but apparently is not far enough, as it has been up to the present time most unhealthy, fever and ague of a bad type having been prevalent. It consists at present (November 1872) solely of the station and the railway buildings, and the houses and huts of the officials and workmen ... Water is only produced from wells in summer, and is not good; facilities for watering a ship exist ... There is no protection from the south-west winds, which occasionally blow with great violence, and cause a heavy sea.<sup>35</sup>

The local correspondent of *The Levant Herald* in Edirne shared the latter's opinion and wrote 'Dedeğaç is a very bad spot to choose as a sea-board railway station ... and I ask in vain who is to make it; who is to supply the millions necessary to do so?'<sup>36</sup> In addition to publications which sought to sway the public opinion, İnoz citizens and their diaspora in Istanbul insisted on the revision of the decision about the terminus station on the coast for a long time. They submitted petitions (*istidânâme*) to the Edirne government by addressing the same issues. The Provincial Council (*vilâyet meclis-i ûmûmisi*) forwarded their petitions to the Council of State (*Şûrâ-yı Devlet*) in order to echo the disappointment of the local people based in Istanbul, even though they knew that the Provincial Council's approval could not be reversed.<sup>37</sup> Thus the locals did not make any progress.

In the meantime, the construction company set up the necessary technical and administrative buildings for passenger and freight service and to ease the construction work they filled the sea bed in order to construct a mole that could immediately carry transport construction materials from the coast to the interior. The 149-kilometre line between Edirne and Dedeğaç was inaugurated in the summer of 1872, in less than two years, thanks to the ease of construction around the Meriç River valley. In Dedeğaç, according to the company's plan, the railroad station complex was located on the east side of the port and the company extended the track to the port area so as to provide direct access between the port and the merchandise station. In addition to passenger and merchandise stations, there were maintenance and repair workshops, warehouses, apartments for the staff and administrative offices on the site (Figure 3).

In accordance with the requirements of the amended convention, the operation company hired a French engineer, Hilarion Pascal, a famous specialist, to design of harbours and quays in Dedeğaç and prepare specifications for the railroad company along with Varna and Selanik ports.<sup>38</sup> He was the inspector-general of Bridges and Roads Directorate of France and former chief engineer of the port of Marseille.<sup>39</sup> The company submitted Pascal's project to the Ministry of Public Works (*Nafîâ Nezâreti*) in 1875 and then the ministry forwarded it to Grand Vizier's office (*Sadâret*). The office sent an ordinance to the Ministry of Public Works to prepare cost estimation books and technical specifications to make a tender (*münâkasa*)<sup>40</sup> to assign the construction task to a reliable contractor

<sup>35</sup>Wharton, "Archipelago-Coast of Roumelia," 157–8. The phrase in parenthesis is my insertion.

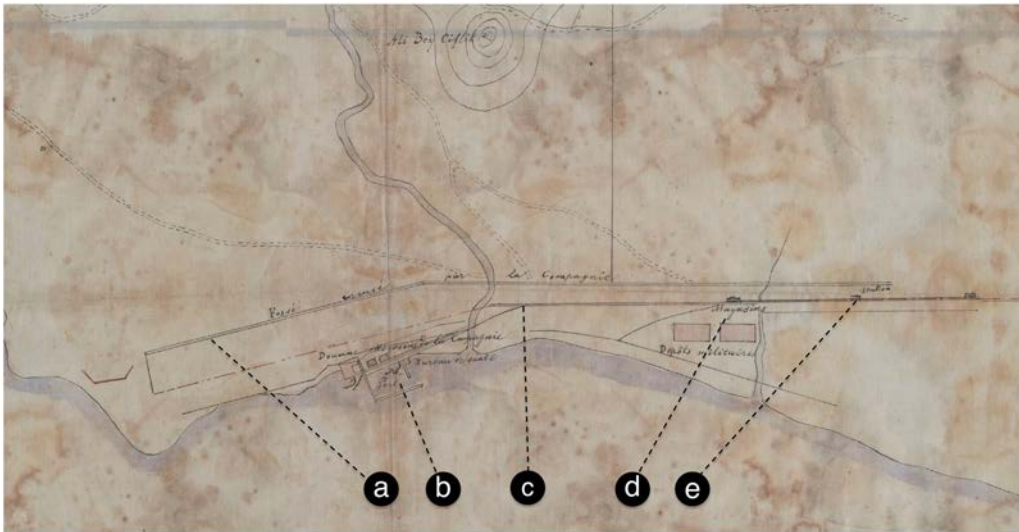
<sup>36</sup>*The Levant Herald*, 25 January 1871.

<sup>37</sup>OA; ŞD. 1906/52 (10.04.1288 / 29 June 1871), ŞD.1908/49 (18.10.1290 / 9 December 1873) and ŞD. 2283/12 (05.11.1292 / 3 December 1875).

<sup>38</sup>*Les Chemins de Fer*, 30.

<sup>39</sup>Hastaoglu-Martiniadis, "The Building of Istanbul Docks," 88–9.

<sup>40</sup>Şenyurt, *Osmanlı Mimarlık Örgütlenmesinde*, 117–32.



**Figure 3.** Dedeağaç Port Facilities and the neighbourhood around. Legend: a- Border of the company territory b- Port and customs, b-railroad line, d- Warehouses e- Station. Source: OA, HRT\_h 2083. 'Plan de Dedeagadje' No date, scale 1:10,000. Edited by the author.

(*mûtemed müteâhhid*) and then submit the documents back.<sup>41</sup> The ministry submitted the required materials along with a drafted letter to the operation company requesting the postponing of the deadline because it was almost impossible to meet the deadline of the construction start date.<sup>42</sup>

In the early years immediately after the inauguration of the railroad service, a permanent settlement emerged near the port. Traders from İnöz and other surrounding towns moved to Dedeağaç to establish their new businesses. When they showed up and demanded plots to construct their shops and residences, the company eagerly welcomed them. The company engineers drafted an orthogonal layout for the assigned land, divided the immense strip of land running parallel to the coast into plots and sold or rented each plot to the newcomers. The commercial neighbourhood, which accommodated the shops, warehouses and first settlers' houses were located on the northern side of the small port.<sup>43</sup> The company expected to operate a great harbour area in which the cereals and mines of the eastern Rumelia region would be shipped to the export markets. This would make their investment more profitable. In the meantime, the company persistently asked the Ottoman government to act regarding the amended convention conditions and build up the port and quays in Dedeağaç immediately. However, there was no visible proof that these plans were realized.

At this stage, even though there was not an explicit rejection, the Ottoman government was reluctant to change its plans. Although there were several phases of correspondence between state offices about making tender to find a reliable contractor for the construction of the port and quays, the town had an ambivalent status in the agenda of the bureaucrats. Apparently, it is important to note that the propaganda of İnöz people seemed to have an impact at the central government level. Correspondence between the Government of Edirne and the Assembly of Ministers (*Meclis-i Mahsûs*) in

<sup>41</sup>OA, A;MKT.MHM 455/54 (02.04.1290 / 30 April 1873).

<sup>42</sup>OA, A;MKT.MHM 458/37 (13.05.1290 / 9 July 1873).

<sup>43</sup>Yerolympos, *Between East and West*, 128–32.

Istanbul demonstrates the central government's reservations.<sup>44</sup> Briefly, the Edirne governorate demanded the appointment of a district governor (*kaymakam*) to Dedeğaç as well as the establishment of a military base with sixty infantry and cavalry soldiers (*piyade ve süvari 60 nefer-i zabıta*) to provide the security and basic administrative functions in the port area by reminding its strategic importance after the arrival of railroads (*Dedeğaç mevkiinin demiryolu münasebetiyle hasıl ettiği ehemmiyetten dolayı*). However, the Assembly rejected this petition by stating that the town would be abandoned soon because of its poor physical condition (*Dedeğaç denilen mahâllin vehâmet-i havası iktizâsınca*) and that the port facilities would soon be established elsewhere; it was therefore not necessary to establish a district (*kaza*) government in the port area. In reply, the Edirne governor asked to find at least a temporary solution for administrative and security problems before the fate of the port was clarified. The assembly issued an interim solution by appointing an administrative official (*müdür*) with a monthly salary of 1500 piasters (*kuruş*) and a scribe (*katib*) with a monthly salary of 250 piasters and 25 solders to the town, which definitely intended to make the new settlement a commune (*nâhiye*) of low-ranking administrative status. Therefore, at that time the central government showed no sign of encouraging the development of Dedeğaç as a local trade hub. The official correspondence between the Railroad operation company and the Sublime Porte went on but, ultimately, it was fruitless.

### Claiming space for the administrative buildings

The notion of state office was a modern phenomenon for the Ottomans. For centuries, it was mostly the public part (*selamlık*) of city *kadı's* (judge and governor) mansion (*konak*) where many official meetings and works were conducted.<sup>45</sup> Quite pragmatically, the existence of new specialized buildings was possible only after new social practices were adopted by the city. However, even after the introduction of new institutions, existing spatial practices were not given up immediately: the coexistence of official spaces near the private quarters in governor's mansions went on for a long time. In other words, 'European style' monumental government houses were generally the final stage of several spatial trials. From the beginning of the provincial reforms, the administrative services had been delivered in the most practically feasible way. Local private mansions therefore housed these official units for decades and government institutions moved from one place to another across the city to rent a better or more affordable offices. Besides, due to the practical reasons, these local administrative units were scattered throughout the city as there was no agenda to centralize them in a single monumental building. Furthermore, when the state offices owned their own building, it was also possible to demolish the earlier edifice and replace it with a newer one. It was mostly in the reign of sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1909), when the local state offices had their permanent places in the city and, where available, they were housed together in a single building. In this period government buildings became a prominent typological feature of the city. Even though the new buildings had monumental facades, this spatial shift did not bring about a stylistic or an official common taste across the empire. There was no eternal 'empire style' of Ottoman administrative offices.<sup>46</sup> Without doubt, local building planners and master builders were pragmatic, but they were also comfortable adopting different formal qualities and with blending these with eclectic styles within the same building.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup>OA, İ.MMS 50/2192 (11.11.1291 / 29 December 1874).

<sup>45</sup>Göyünç, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde," 77–88; Ortaylı, *Hukuk ve İdare Adamı*.

<sup>46</sup>Kuban, *Ottoman Architecture*, 605–8; Ödekan, "Ampir Üslubu," 257–9; Batur, "Oryantalist Mimari," 148–9; Saner, *19. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Mimarlığında*.

<sup>47</sup>Yenişehirlioğlu, "Continuity and Change," 74.

The Ottoman government recognized the impracticability of establishing an alternative port in the region following a number of incidents which occurred during and after the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–78. The Ottoman Balkan railroad was seized in several places and the port and station of Dedeğaç were captured by the Russian army. Consequently, the government understood the necessity of railroads around Dedeğaç that would defend the territory from Edirne to İstanbul.

In this context, the town's administrative rank was promoted in order to clearly signal the change in Ottoman policy towards Dedeğaç's role. In 1880 (h.1297) it became a borough (*kaza*) centre and soon after, in 1884 (h.1301), the administrative structure of Edirne province altered. Dimetoka *sancak* (district) was abolished and, and Dedeğaç *sancak* was constituted. In addition, a local governor (*mutasarrıf*) was appointed.<sup>48</sup> These administrative promotions brought about a long-neglected closer examination of the work that had been carried out by the railroad company in Dedeğaç. Thereafter, the cityscape would become the stage of conflict between the Ottoman government and the concessionaire company.

Previously, the administrative official (*müdür*) of the town had worked in a temporary house by paying an annual rent of 6000 piasters (*kuruş*). However, the administrative promotion of the town increased the number of offices and officials in service and it became necessary for the local government to build a dedicated government building from scratch (*müceddeden bir hükümet dâiresi inşa olunmak üzere*). The engineers of Edirne drafted a project with an estimated cost of 62,000 piasters. The request and the technical drawings were examined by the Council of State (*Şura-yı Devlet*). According to the records, the local government formulated to balance costs by demolishing the old government house in Makri town -the former district centre- and by selling the plot of land it had stood on in an auction. The former included free transfer of the available building materials to Dedeğaç for construction purposes. In addition, the cash money, about 10,000 piasters, which remained from the temporary Russian government (during 1877–78 invasion) would be used. Further, the three-year annual rent payment of 18,000 piaster would be added to the construction budget in order to cover the estimated cost. The official correspondence reveals some spatial details of the new building. It was to be located on a state-owned plot (*mir'i*) near the prison and the mosque (*kaza-i mezkûrede vâki cami-i şerife ile hapishâne arasında kâin mir'i arsasına*) and would possess seven or eight rooms (*yedi sekiz odaya müştekil olarak*) to accommodate government and municipality officials (*hükümet-i mâhalli dâire-i mülkiye ve belediyesine istâab-ı kâfi*) on the ground floor level, which would be also enlarged by adding another floor on the top (*üstüne bir kat daha binâ inşasına müsait tâhtani olarak*). The decision of the Council underlined the significance of its robustness and solemnity and was, in addition, attentive to budget saving (*metânet ve rezânetinde rikkât ve kâide-i tasarrufiyeye riâyet edilmesi*).<sup>49</sup>

A few years later, when Dedeğaç became a *sancak* (district) centre, the government in Edirne put the construction of a larger government house into their agenda. This time, the petition sent to İstanbul explained the necessity of a new building by highlighting the increasing importance of Dedeğaç. The construction costs would be covered by the local government by reserving 1300 Ottoman gold (*lira*) for this project from the provincial budget. An additional revenue of 80 gold lira would be added later by selling the plot of the former office. The new building would be located on an empty plot of 10,000 m<sup>2</sup>, which the railroad company bestowed for free. The estimated value of the acquired plot was about 80 gold Ottoman liras. The central space, between the new building, and the mosque and prison would be intentionally left empty in order to use it as a public park

<sup>48</sup>OA, İŞD. 69/4091 (11.10.1301 / 3 August 1884); *Edirne Salnamesi*, 871–83.

<sup>49</sup>OA, ŞD. 1910–28 (09.06.1297 / 19 May 1880).

in the future. (... *meccânen alınan arsa on bin metro murabba' olub bunun cüz'ü âzamı hükümet konağı için bağçe ittihaz olunacağı ...*)<sup>50</sup> As discussed below, the official designation of a public park in the middle of state offices is of considerable noteworthiness. On the one hand, it reflected the public authority's vision and desire to provide recreational areas for the citizens; on the other hand, it demonstrated a reciprocal display case for both the state authority and the ordinary people in the public space. Located to the south of the prison and the mosque, this new plot was strategically important for the government. For years, as previously explained, the government had no opportunity to build near the shore since the government assigned to the company a large strip of land stretching from the railroad station at the east to the western end of the town. This meant that any economic activity, including the construction works were under the provision of the company in this zone. The acquisition of this plot enabled the government direct access to the coastline. As discussed in the next section, access was sometimes possible after negotiations between the parties and arbitration of commissions. As the official documents reveal, the new government house could not be erected immediately and remained untouched until 1890, when the ground-breaking ceremony coincided with the jubilee day of sultan Abdülhamid II. As usual, the enthusiasm celebrations were expressed by the local government in the minute report sent to Istanbul.<sup>51</sup> For such projects, the typical method of commission was to call for a tender (*münakasa*) that would identify the lowest bid. If there was no bid lower than the estimated price, then the local government would constitute a temporary commission to realize the project. In general, the members were chosen from well-respected people of the town. Most of the public buildings were commissioned by this method in Dedeğaç, and the government house was completed in less than a year.<sup>52</sup>

Before the government house's inauguration, many other state offices had already popped up in the administrative complex. In 1888 the Edirne government sent the Dedeğaç governorship's petition for the construction of an archive building that would secure official documents to Istanbul. It outlined the risks of storing documents in temporary rent houses. The local government decided to build the archive in the administrative complex to in order to make it accessible by the government house. The estimated value was 13,225 piasters and it was again executed by a local building commission.<sup>53</sup> In the same year, police and gendarme office was implemented by another commission for an estimated price of 74,792 piasters.<sup>54</sup> In 1891 the post and telegram office moved the civic centre from their rent house to the new building.<sup>55</sup> The courthouse was the last building completed in the administrative centre. Like the previous buildings, the local government argued that proximity to other state offices was an advantage for lobbying the central government.<sup>56</sup> In brief, after the inauguration of the courthouse, the entire building block was allocated to different offices and the physical configuration of these units recalls the architectural formation in Edirne administrative complex (Figure 4).

Considering their parallel execution (1880s–1890s) the similar campus layout of buildings was not a coincidence. Both complexes were designed by the engineer officials in Edirne and the outcome was the transfer of local know-how from centre to periphery by repeating a similar physical configuration on a smaller scale. The same technical staff were appointed to prepare tender documents, cost estimations and petitions. These official practices therefore enabled the constitution of institutional

<sup>50</sup>OA, Y.A.Res 19/51(27.05.1300 / 5 April 1883).

<sup>51</sup>OA, DH.MKT. 1726/47 (08.10.1307 / 28 May 1890).

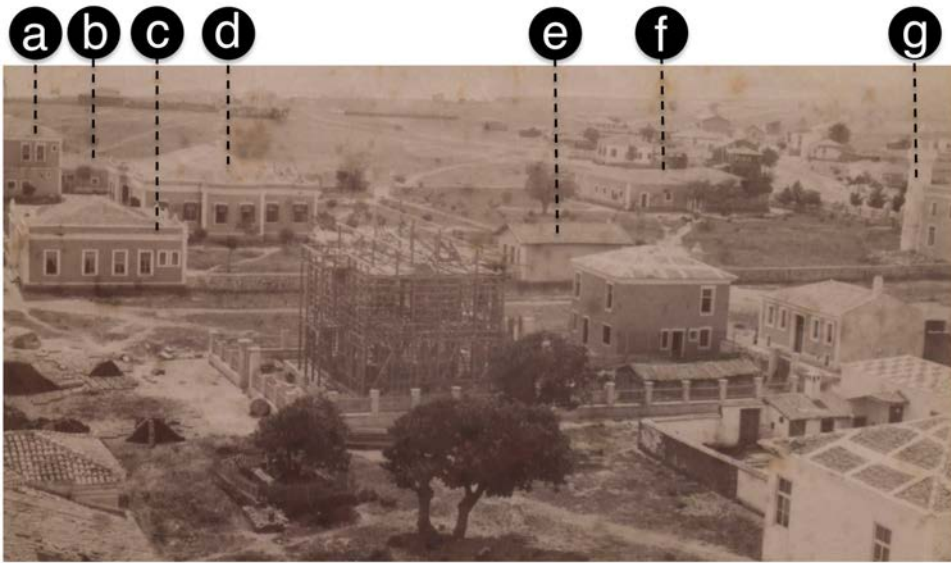
<sup>52</sup>OA, DH.MKT 1826/47, (28.08.1308 / 28 April 1891).

<sup>53</sup>OA, İ.Ş.D. 92/5452 (20.11.1305 / 29 July 1888).

<sup>54</sup>OA, İ.DH. 1084/85088 (19.09.1305 / 30 May 1888).

<sup>55</sup>OA, İ.Ş.D. 111/6683, (15.04.1309 / 18 November 1891).

<sup>56</sup>OA, İ.AZN. 12/16 (25.02.1312 / 28 August 1894).



**Figure 4.** The view of the Administrative complex at an earlier stage. Legend: a-Gendarme Office, b-Archive, c-Post & Telegram Office, d-Government House e-Shop, f-Prison, g-Mosque. Source: Istanbul University Library, Rare Materials Collection, item # 90624/006. Edited by the author.

traditions at peripheries. Furthermore, the administrative campus formation provided a practical solution for officials when there was an available state-owned plot large enough to accommodate all official functions on the same site.

There are two important remarks to address concerning the general characteristics of the Dedeağaç administrative campus. It is important to note that the spatial formation of the Edirne and Dedeağaç administrative campuses reflects a rational approach to Ottoman urban planning. However, due to the lack of sufficient space for establishing administrative campus in the core of many old cities, various administrative services had to be offered in different buildings scattered around the city centre; and few substantial administrative campuses were formed. Among these cases, the Kastamonu civic centre built around an urban square at the beginning of the twentieth century is significant.<sup>57</sup>

In Dedeağaç, the archives are in silence about the availability of drawings of buildings in the administrative complex. Based on the availability of other visual materials, I would argue that they were small functional units whose planimetric layouts reflect the efficient provision of the required spaces as it was addressed in many other official buildings of the era. Similar to contemporary buildings, special attention was shown to the design of the front façade of the governor house and courthouse. Their symmetrical plan and façade organization emphasize the central location of the main entrance of the buildings, and which became a common pattern for official buildings all around the empire.

Finally, the only remaining unimplemented task was to transform the bare court in the middle of the offices to a public park. Here, a new individual, a state agent came to the fore. Ebubekir Hâzım (Tepeyran) Bey, the governor of Dedeağaç between 1896 and 1899, was the pioneer and an active

<sup>57</sup>Eyüpgiller, *Kastamonu*.

participant in the project from the conceptual stage through to the implementation phases. To document his role as a public official, he prepared a portfolio to demonstrate how the space once looked and how it was transformed during his service. If we trust his memoirs, he was somewhat disappointed to witness the poor physical condition of the courtyard at the start of his after he was appointed to the town. He invited three engineers, two from railroad companies, and one from the department of public works and asked them to draft their landscape design proposals for the site. None of the drafts satisfied him so he drafted a plan drawing himself. He described his observations of visitors' walking patterns, consideration of the location of the complex entrance gates and allocation of foot paths following existing routes and short cuts. He also sought to leave the remaining space for trees and flower beds. He inserted a circular pool in the middle of his proposed design. Allegedly, he presented his draft to three engineers and received their appreciation. The site-works were undertaken by prisoners, initially for a small daily fee, but this was later unwaged labour as the budget drained<sup>58</sup> (Figure 5).

The park became a popular place in the city and Hâzım Bey became the proud recipient of foreign visitors' appreciation. He recorded how one of the French military officers who worked for French embassy in Istanbul visited the town during his service and so appreciated the park that he described it a miraculous garden (*le jardin miraculeux*).<sup>59</sup> An Ottoman journalist, Hasan Pertev, who wrote for *Mûtâlâ* -a periodical of Selanik- visited the town twice during his appointment and described the park to his readers as a neat and uniform place with a charming character (*gayet muntazâm ve dilgûşâ*).<sup>60</sup> In another article, he praised the governor Hâzım Bey and described his virtuous role as a man of arts, sciences and progress in the delivery of public works<sup>61</sup> (Figure 6). The Dedeğaç case portrays Hâzım Bey as a distinguished governor who was eager to initiate the realization of public work projects. However, it should be noted that he was not unique as an official, rather, he was among the last generation of an Ottoman administrative circle which included many similar figures serving in different provinces of the empire. Following the Midhat Pasha example, this class can be characterized by their diligence and their industrious efforts to implement public works. In many provinces, the governors-general served for relatively longer periods in the last part of the Hamidian era and they were promoted by their experience, proficiency in foreign languages and were, in most cases, recipients of official training in special schools.<sup>62</sup>

### **Taxation and provision of the public services in the Dedeğaç port neighbourhood**

The emergence and consolidation of state authority in Dedeğaç also enabled the state to monitor economic activities closely and to question the territorial and economic activities of the Railroad Operation Company other than railroad service. When the government acquired a substantially sized plot near the coastline and set out to build up administrative buildings, the long-running question regarding the status of the port district and the construction of port and quays saw no progress. The Ottoman government argued that the company held a vast territory on the Dedeğaç coastline which was mostly misused by selling plots to third parties. For the government account, there were still many empty plots which were previously owned by the state (*miri* status) or registered by the Civil List and that the company should immediately cede to the government. However, the

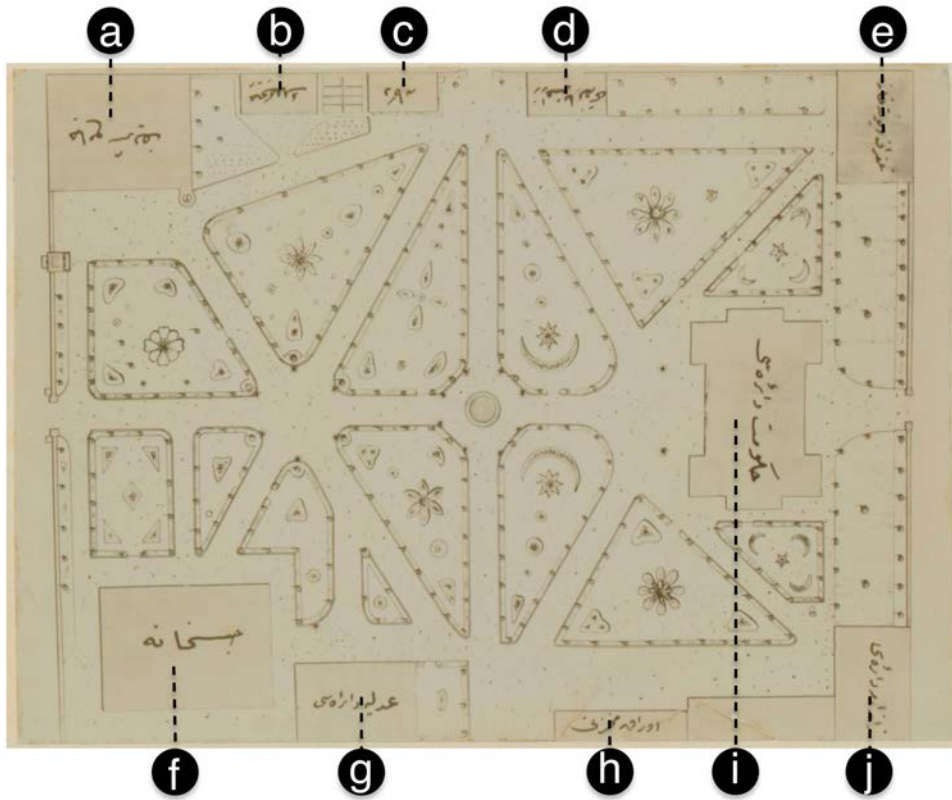
<sup>58</sup>Hazım Bey, "Memuriyet Hatıraları-15: Dedeğaç," 4046.

<sup>59</sup>Hazım Bey, "Memuriyet Hatıraları," 4046.

<sup>60</sup>Hasan Pertev, "Dedeğaç'tan Mektub," 8.

<sup>61</sup>Hasan Pertev, "Selanik - Dedeğaç Hattı," 7.

<sup>62</sup>Kırmızı, *Abdülhamid'in Valileri*, 66-8.



**Figure 5.** Landscape Drawing of the Public Park drawn by Governor Hazim Bey. Legend: a- Mosque, b-Flower shop, c- Shop, d-Agriculture Bank Office, e-Post & Telgraph Office, f-Prison, g-Courthouse, h-Archive, i- Government House, j- Gendarme Office. Source: Istanbul University Library, rare materials collection, item #90581/008. Edited by the author.

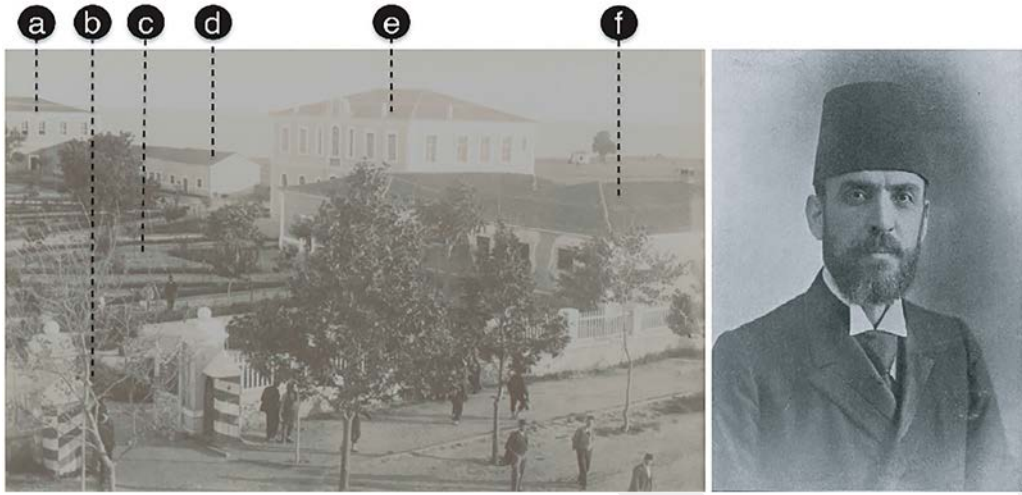
Operation Company accused the government of failing to meet the obligations of the 1872 convention, leading to significant annual loss of profits. As the company saw it, the recent government claims were groundless, and had been made primarily to hide the former's failing responsibilities.<sup>63</sup>

The government criticized the status of the Dedeağaç port district where the state had no control or supervisory powers over economic activities, and considered it as the violation of its right to levy a tax on economic activities in its area of sovereignty.<sup>64</sup> Besides, the government had no right to provide public works in the port district, where most of the commercial activities were conducted. In brief, Dedeağaç was divided into two realms of sovereignty. The main axis of the town, *Hamidiye* Street, which followed an east – west axis, was the borderline between these zones. The area between the coast and the street was in the company's territorial control and the government had no control or supervision over this district except over the newly acquired government complex plot. The northern side of the street was the zone, where the government performed its supervision and control.<sup>65</sup> In contrast to the government's arguments, the company stated that the port district was

<sup>63</sup>*Demandes no 1–22 de la Compagnie d'Exploitation*, 4, 8, 15, 90.

<sup>64</sup>"15<sup>me</sup> Réclamation du Gouvernement Imperial" in *Arbitrage entre le Gouvernement Imperial Ottoman*. For the taxation question of pious foundation (*vakıf*) lands in Dedeağaç, OA, DH.MKT. 1791/2 (28.04.1308 / 11 December 1890).

<sup>65</sup>Hazim Bey, "Memuriyet Hatıraları," 4133–4.



**Figure 6.** Left: Dedeâğaç Administrative Complex after Landscape Design, Right: Portrait of Hazım Bey. Legend: Gendarmerie Office, b-Entrance Gate, c- Public Park, d- Archive, e- Courthouse, f- Prison. Source: Left: Istanbul University Library, rare materials collection, item #90581/016, Edited by the author; Right: Portrait of Hazım Bey as the governor general of Beyrut (Beirut) Province, *Şehbal* 49, 2.

occupied by shops, warehouses and the residences of local merchants who sought premises in which to set up their businesses. Because of this their presence in the port district should be considered as an integral part of the railroad and port services. In addition, the company questioned the government's change in attitude by claiming that the financial accounts of the operation company were approved by the government annually and that rent revenues had been included regularly in the annual reports for many years.<sup>66</sup>

In 1887, an arbitration commission was set up by the parties and they met to negotiate the return of unused lands and taxation of buildings in the port district. They examined the base maps and cadastral records in Dedeâğaç and many other stations. During these sessions, the state employed two major strategies: the return of the empty plots to the state and the generation of revenue from the occupied plots. The commission redefined boundaries of the company execution zones at each station and documented them by drafting site plans for approval.<sup>67</sup> According to the arbitration commission decision issued in 1888, the company was liable to pay only for the revenues of the lands registered by the Civil List (*Hazine-i Hassa*), whose total area was 21,680 m<sup>2</sup> in total. The parties would share the total revenue as follows: 45% of the annual revenue went to the Ottoman government and 55% to the Railroad Operation Company. The annual rent per square metre was set between 0.75 and 1.60 franc and the company would pay 9539 francs annually in total to the government. Later, the Ottoman government claimed an extra area of 1628 m<sup>2</sup> as registry of the Civil List, therefore the total area and annual revenue reached 23,308 m<sup>2</sup> and 10,255 francs respectively by 1893.<sup>68</sup>

The construction of port of Dedeâğaç and its quays once more became a political issue for the Ottoman government in the 1890s. In the meantime, Baron Hirsch sold his shares in the company to an international consortium headed by Deutsche Bank in 1890.<sup>69</sup> Then, a second company started

<sup>66</sup>*Demandes no 1-22 de la Compagnie d'Exploitation*, 89.

<sup>67</sup>For Dedeâğaç, OA, Y.PRK.TNF 2/7 (19.04.1304 / 15 January 1887).

<sup>68</sup>*Demandes no 1-22 de la Compagnie d'Exploitation*, 90.

<sup>69</sup>Engin, *Rumeli Demiryolları*, 196.

to run services to Dedeğaç after the inauguration of the Selanik (Thessaloniki) -Dedeğaç railroad, -the Junction Line-, in 1896.<sup>70</sup> In the new era the parties came closer to a resolution for the construction of the port and quays. In 1891 the Operation Company approached to the Ottoman government to meet the obligations regarding the issue and the government asked the company to submit a new draft project for examination. The company commissioned a quick draft that it submitted to the government while the existing one drafted in 1873 was still on the table.<sup>71</sup> The Ministry of Public Works constituted a commission to examine the technical drawings and specifications in 1893 (Figure 7). The new project covered the construction of two moles to provide secure shelter for ships, the construction of two cereal hangars, the deepening of the sea bed to enable larger ships to access the port and, lastly, the diversion of the Podima streambed to an area outside of the port area.

The company sent a letter of protest in July 1894 to the government since they could not receive an official approval. The government faced a dilemma: it believed in the benefits of a large port for the economic development of the region. However, they argued that the proposed schemes would only provide benefit for the interests of the Operation Company. After receiving the advice of the Ministry of Commerce and Public Works consultants, the government decided to dismiss the protest of the Operation Company considering the decisions of the international arbitration board in 1888.<sup>72</sup> Thereafter, the company submitted a newer proposal. The latter stipulated that the construction would be executed by the company and the government would finance the cost of the project. Even though the Ministry of Public Works approved the new scheme, the imperial decree would not be made Dedeğaç.<sup>73</sup> The lack of trust in the Operation Company made the government consider assigning the construction project to another reliable contractor, a third party agent, so that the railroad and port services would be provided by different companies.<sup>74</sup> However, this plan was not followed through. Meanwhile, the negotiations with new entrepreneurs turned the tide at the other ports: the construction of the port of Istanbul was commissioned by Marius Michel in 1891 and the port of Selanik was commissioned by the *Société de Construction du Port de Salonique* founded by a French entrepreneur, Edmund Bartissol, in 1896.<sup>75</sup> It should be noted that Selanik had to operate under the same conditions as the Railroad company and the government, and the government preferred Selanik over Dedeğaç when it came to policy changes. As Hâzım Bey argued, the ports of Istanbul and Selanik were priorities for the government and the expansion of the port of Dedeğaç would cause extra competition among the concessionaires.<sup>76</sup> As a consequence, the Dedeğaç port project remained intact until the town was abandoned by the Ottoman government in 1912. However, the port of Selanik was completed shortly before the outbreak of the Balkan Wars (1912–1913).<sup>77</sup>

## Consolidating State Authority and the Use and Distribution of Public Space

The arbitration commission of 1888 also settled the transfer of about 50,000 m<sup>2</sup> of empty land on the western side of the administrative complex from the company to the government. For years, the government did nothing to develop this valuable land along the coastline. In 1897, during Hazım Bey's

<sup>70</sup>Gounaris, *Steam over Macedonia*, 57; Young, *Corps de Droit Ottoman*, 104–8.

<sup>71</sup>*Demandes no 1–22 de la Compagnie d'Exploitation*, 8.

<sup>72</sup>OA, Y.PRK.HR 19/61(25.02.1312 / 28 August 1894).

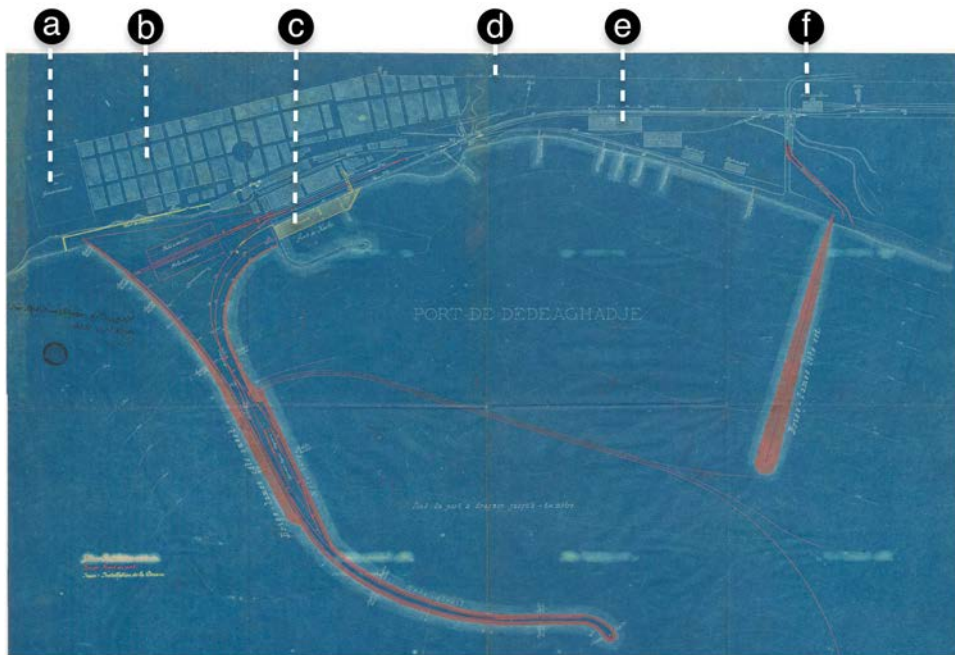
<sup>73</sup>*Demandes no 1–22 de la Compagnie d'Exploitation*, 8 and OA; Y.PRK.HR 19/61, (25.02.1312 / 28 August 1894) and İ. HUS. 30/1312, (16.04.1312 / 17 October 1894).

<sup>74</sup>MV. 87/49 (20.11.1313/ 3 May 1896) and BEO 719/53915 (06.07.1313 / 23 December 1895).

<sup>75</sup>Hastaoglou-Martinidis, "The Building of Istanbul Docks," 87, 90.

<sup>76</sup>Hazım Bey, "Memuriyet Hatıraları," 4133.

<sup>77</sup>Hastaoglou-Martinidis, "The Cartography of Harbor Construction," 78–99.



**Figure 7.** Dedeağaç Port and Quays Project submitted to the Ministry of Public Works. Legend: a- Administrative complex, b-port district, c- Existing port facilities, d- company territory border, e- new warehouses, f- Existing rail-road facilities. Source: OA, PLK\_p no.5623, edited by the author.

service, the Dedeağaç governorate sent a petition to Edirne, which was then forwarded to İstanbul, expressing the plans of the local government about the empty land and clarifying how the empty land would be developed by various projects.<sup>78</sup> According to this plan, the acquired area would be used to run many public services in the town. The area would be divided into the following parcels:

- 6000 m<sup>2</sup> to construct a high school (*idâdi*) and primary schools for boys and girls.
- 4640 m<sup>2</sup> to construct real estates as an income for the mosque, which required revenue for its maintenance and repair.
- Approximately 18,000 m<sup>2</sup> reserved for the municipality to assign in order to generate revenues to maintain the hospital for the poor (*gurebâ hastahânesi*).
- 20,883 m<sup>2</sup> to develop a new neighbourhood based on a site plan and consequently called *Hami-diye* after the imperial consent of Sultan Abdülhamid II.

The final article of the proposal was eye-catching: the governorate planned to sell each building plot in a large building block by auction, from which it estimated to make a revenue of 200,000 piasters. It would be divided as follows:

- 40,000 piasters to construct primary schools for boys and girls.
- 80,000 piasters to spend on the construction of real estate to finance the maintenance of primary schools and the mosque.

<sup>78</sup>OA; Y.A.RES. 89/28 (20.05.1315 / 17 October 1897).

- 40,000 piasters to construct the new barracks in Dedeğaç.
- 40,000 piasters to construct the drinking water pipeline.

In spite of its efforts, the imperial decree was not be received immediately therefore the governor-ate sent another petition to Istanbul via Edirne<sup>79</sup> and after months of delay, the imperial decree was issued in February 1900<sup>80</sup> (Figure 8).

This case reveals several particular themes about how the administrative issues were handled in a provincial centre. First, the governments in Dedeğaç and Edirne were in close contact and persistent about realizing the project for three years. Secondly, the local government and municipality were deprived of financial sources to run some basic public works. The diligent local officials therefore sought to receive extra funds by creating new opportunities. Here, the local government was able to raise money by selling plots at a valuable location in the town centre and in accordance with the urban regulations, the execution of the new neighbourhood project was dependent on an approved site plan. Here, it is remarkable to note that most of the public works which were once conveyed by either the pious endowment (*vakıf*) institutions or various civic governance bodies in many provinces in the pre-modern Ottoman city, were gradually handled by the local administrative bodies after the decades-long corruption of the old system. The nineteenth-century reforms can be understood as an encounter and challenge between the old regime institutions and the newer ones and between the central and peripheral forces.<sup>81</sup> However, the financial sources of the new municipalities or governments were not as wealthy and multifarious as the ancient regime institutions. They therefore had to make their own opportunities to increase revenue. In this context, the planning and development of residential and commercial lots and the amassing of a substantial sum to compensate many public projects became a safe and profitable method for many local administrators.

The emphasis on developing a new neighbourhood in accordance with a master plan addressed the general spatial characteristics of Dedeğaç in terms of modern town planning implementation in the Tanzimat era. Since its inception, Dedeğaç had displayed different spatial qualities from many other Ottoman towns. While amongst other contemporary cities saw the coexistence of old and new districts that were easily identifiable on maps, in Dedeğaç the city was laid out on an orthogonal plan in the port district and the rest of the town alike. The rational orthogonal urban layout became widespread in many Ottoman cities since the beginning of the nineteenth century. From the beginning of the nineteenth century the Ottoman provincial officials used the iron-grid form either for planning new neighbourhoods established at the outskirts of cities or to redevelop areas destroyed by fire. The iron-grid layout of the neighbourhood constituted the nucleus of the further settlement, and when the town expanded in the following decades, the visual and physical axes were preserved. However, it is important to note that the plan did not take into account the physical characteristics of each building lot meaning that the neighbouring residential or commercial units had ad hoc physical conditions. The arrival of the second line in 1896 connecting Dedeğaç to Selanik (Thessaloniki), known as the junction line, and the attachment of the new line to the existing one defined the physical extremities of the town at the northern side until the end of Ottoman rule. The physical characteristics of the planned town were noteworthy amongst its contemporaries. For instance, the local government was proud of the town's outlook. In the yearbook (*salnâme*) of 1901–02, the town centre was described as:<sup>82</sup>

<sup>79</sup>OA, Y.A.RES 98/79 (23.11.1316 / 4 April 1899).

<sup>80</sup>OA, İ.DH 1372/19 (05.10.1317 / 6 February 1900).

<sup>81</sup>Lafi, "The Ottoman Municipal Reforms," 449–50; Lafi, "Mediterranean Connections."

<sup>82</sup>*Edirne Salname*, 1019.



**Figure 8.** The Land divided by the government to fulfil public services and gain revenue. Legend: a- Port District, b- Administrative Complex, c- High School plot, d- Reserved for Municipality, e- Real Estates. Source: Based on Map of Alexandroupolis (1931) stored in the archive of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, edited by the author.

... Dedeğaç is a small and elegant town lying at 120 km southwest of Edirne near Aegean Sea coast and at the junction of Oriental and Selanik Railways. 25–30 years ago, it was consisted of a few temporary, poor shacks and huts. Today it has grown to be a town of 944 houses, 276 shops, a government office complemented by various official facilities, a barrack, two mosques, four schools (including one high school), three churches, a public hospital, a mole, a lighthouse, twelve public fountains, numerous hotels and clubs and it has neat streets as well. Day by day it is increasing the prosperity granted by the sultan his highness.

The town's distinguishing physical features were also observed and reported by its visitors. Journalist Hasan Pertev of *Mütalâa* depicted the general features of the town in 1897 by stressing the progress it had made in the last decades:<sup>83</sup>

The town of Dedeğaç was only a small port until thirty years ago ... Later on, the increasing importance of this place necessitated its transformation into a town. Gradually, people settled here and the town physically expanded and acquired its current state of perfection. The streets are very wide like those in great cities and its spatial division is based on scientific principles. The buildings look mature and are built on same architectural style and the general image of the town reflects works of prosperity and progress ... The recent railroad connection to Selanik has increased the number of visitors of the town so that the hotels of the town are always crowded.

## Conclusion

The number of publications, which reveal the agency of non-state agents in major regional centres and Mediterranean port cities have been increasing in the last two decades<sup>84</sup> and they provide insights into better understandings of the ways in which these agents confronted and negotiated

<sup>83</sup>Hasan Pertev, "Selanik – Dedeğaç Hattı," 6.

<sup>84</sup>For instance, Zandi-Sayek, *Ottoman Izmir*; Weber, *Damascus Ottoman Modernity*; Anastasiadou, *Salonique, 1830–1912*; Eldem, Masters, and Goffman, *The Ottoman City*; Kolluoğlu and Toksöz, eds., *Cities of the Mediterranean*; Freitag et al., *The City in the Ottoman Empire*. Uğur Tanyeli briefly addresses different ways how the civic actors became visible in the late ottoman cities, see Tanyeli, "Kentin Aktörleri Kim?" 393–400.

with each other. This enables the readers to understand the intertwined web of agency relations during a period in which cities witnessed unprecedented levels of physical and social change. However, it is important to note that for secondary ports and many minor inland cities the effort remained limited.<sup>85</sup> The existence of other agents has not yet been examined thoroughly enough in existing city histories. Challenges to the omnipotent state narrative have not yet been very well established. In this context, the interrelated stories based on several agency roles that I have introduced here capture an image of the dynamic and multifaceted web of relations. They also highlight how each agent defined, expanded and fortified their territories in Dedeğaç's town centre. In this narrative, many agents such as the railroad concessionaires and their engineers, people of the towns of İnöz and Dedeğaç; governorates and their diligent governors and official technicians, ministries and higher councils of Istanbul come interact across in this context so as to introduce an alternative perspective on understandings of the transformative role of the state in urban historiographies. Thus, the Dedeğaç case suggests that the state's 'omnipotent' authority is questionable and that each transformative action in the cityscape could only be realized after a complex web of confrontations. Each case can only be defined after close examination of the positions of each agent.

In this respect this investigation introduces Dedeğaç as a local case-study which helps us to understand the complex relations of agents of change. It contributes to the growing body of literature on Mediterranean port cities which provides alternative visions of particular economic, cultural and social dynamics of these cities in the nineteenth century. Secondly, this case-study enables us to estimate the level and the mechanisms of centralization in the Ottoman provincial administration at the turn of the twentieth century. As demonstrated, even the construction of a simple administrative building required the preparation of a set of documents by the local experts and their examination by the ministry offices and higher councils of Istanbul as well as the official approval by the sultan. The local government had almost no space for its own initiative on the issues I have introduced here. However, the rigidity and hierarchical linearity of the processual steps do not indicate a political determinism in decision making. Rather, this article demonstrates that the state is an agent of change whose acts and decisions can be characterized by indeterminism and contextuality. Therefore, there is not a single and linear path to define the position of the state in shaping of the development of Dedeğaç. The decisions were pragmatic and always open to change depending on changing priorities.

On a provincial scale, the Dedeğaç case demonstrates a mutual relationship between the town governorate and the provincial governorate in Edirne. There was a practical reason for this: being the source of technical expertise and know-how, the provincial centre held great control over smaller centres. At least in the Dedeğaç context it also helped to measure up the level of pragmatism and local dependence through technical practices.

The academic studies of the Mediterranean port cities in the nineteenth century are flourishing and I believe that by deciphering the new archival materials or reframing the existing ones within different settings, the same agent network in Dedeğaç can be remapped through further research. The themes and perspectives I use here will also benefit understandings of the growth of many other Eastern Mediterranean cities in the late nineteenth century. In this respect, references to a variety of archival sources, the discovery of new agents and close examination of microhistories will release the Ottoman urban historiography from stereotypical approaches and invented myths about the nineteenth century context.

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<sup>85</sup>Toksöz, *Nomads, Migrants and Cotton*; Yenişehirlioğlu, Özveren, and Ünlü, eds., *Eastern Mediterranean Port Cities*.

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