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“Every isolated building site on foreign soil is like a ship. Its confined existence, inspires a spiritual discipline, a remoteness, an aura of romance. The site can be almost self-sufficient. It must overcome crises and storms, like the other night, when the Anatolian cyclone unexpectedly fell upon us with thunder, lightning and pouring rain [...].

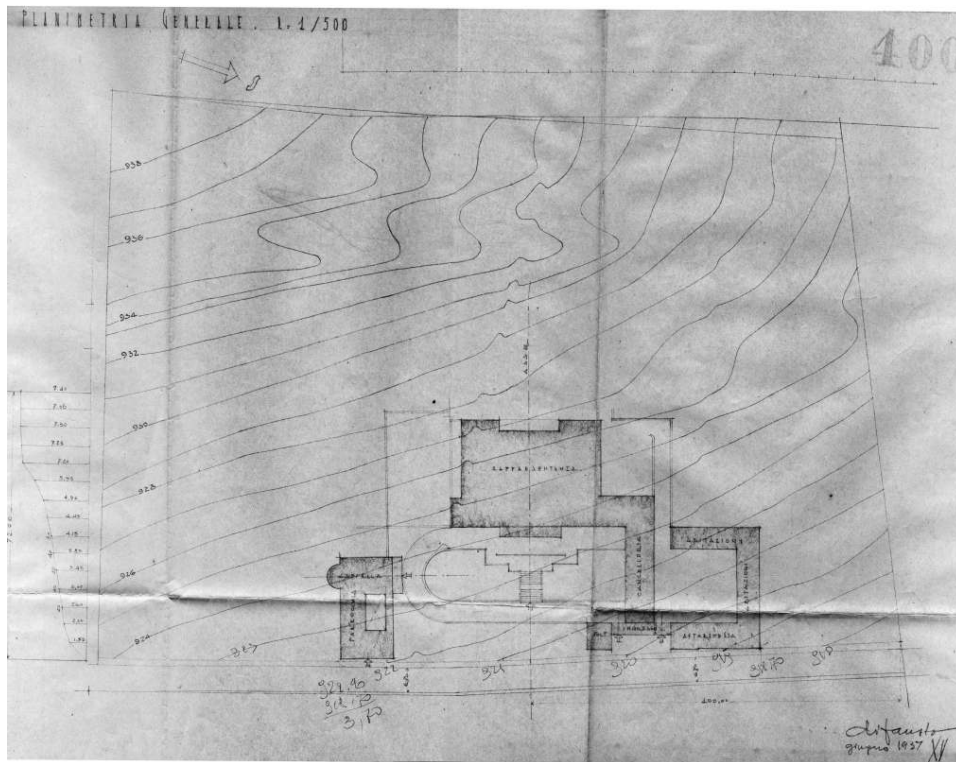
We were all busy with no distinction of rank, as if only the number of arms mattered. In the darkness, some yelled in Lombard, in Friulian, others in Turkish or Bulgarian [...].

We experienced something like a storm or a siege for a Captain.”

- 1 With these words, Paolo Caccia Dominioni began his account of the construction of the new Italian embassy in Ankara. It was published privately in September 1938 and, a month later, in the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera*.¹
- 2 Partly based on his text,² our contribution delves into the intriguing events that led to completion of the embassy complex on the slope of Kavaklıdere hill between 1938 and 1940. Three Italian architects were involved in this project. All three were active in the Levant at the time: Paolo Vietti Violi (1882-1965), Florestano Di Fausto (1890-1965) and Paolo Caccia Dominioni (1896-1992). Clarifying the chronology of works, we argue that the embassy complex should be attributed to Paolo Caccia Dominioni. Initially called upon as a construction manager to implement Di Fausto's project, he realised a “variant” featuring a completely new layout. In doing so, Caccia Dominioni expressed the full significance of representing a country on foreign soil: rather than representing an institution with the tools of rhetoric and symbolism, he mobilized his pragmatic attitude to establish the embryo of a community through the physicality of architecture. His achievement was even more substantial considering the location of the Italian embassy along Gazi Boulevard, where Embassy Row showcased foreign diplomatic missions, and Ankara's growing importance.
- 3 Caccia Dominioni's project fully exploited the landscape potential. Rather than a single group of monumental buildings, he envisaged a variety of structures at different levels of

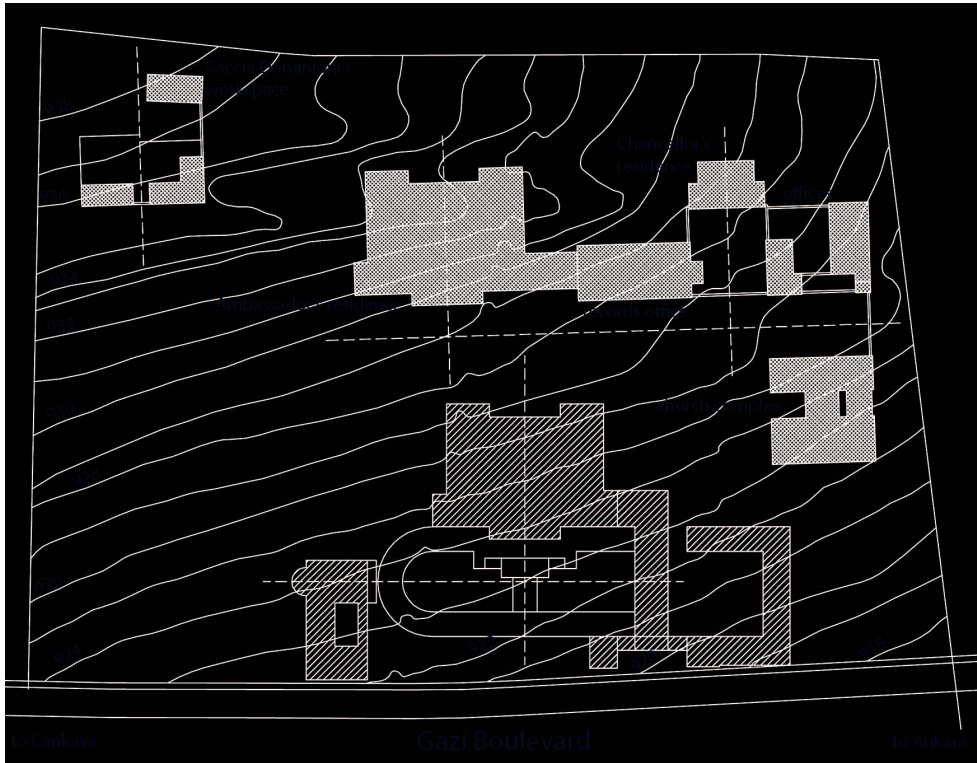
the naturally sloping ground, each dedicated to a specific function, sized and shaped accordingly. Altogether, the embassy looked like a city within the city, an Italy away from Italy to serve as a social-cultural anchor to the local Italian community. This village-like character began to take shape when the embassy was still under construction. Natural and artificial features combined as a setting in its broader sense: a stage where thirty Italians with two hundred workers (almost all Turks from Anatolia) played their parts day by day, sharing exceptional moments—such as critical weather conditions—or getting together for Sunday dinners in the most convivial atmosphere.

Figure 1: Florestano Di Fausto, Italian Embassy at Ankara, site plan 1:500, June 1937.



Source: Caccia Dominioni family archive.

Figure 2: Comparison between Di Fausto's and Caccia Dominioni's (darker) layout of the Italian Embassy at Ankara.



SOURCE: DRAWING BY A. SCARAMUZZI.

Paolo Caccia Dominioni's early trajectory

- 4 In Italy, Paolo Caccia Dominioni is famous for his military career, particularly for having fought at El Alamein in November 1942.³ Count Paolo was born, in 1896, into one of the most prestigious noble families of Lombardy. From 1888 to 1931, his father, Carlo, was Ambassador to many countries, including Egypt, the Ottoman Empire, Tunisia and Greece. Paolo, travelling extensively with his father, was exposed to a wide range of cultures (he learned German, French, English and Arabic), and also experienced the daily life of an embassy.
- 5 In 1913, Paolo Caccia Dominioni entered the Faculty of Engineering at Politecnico di Milano. Two years later, when Italy joined World War I, he registered as a volunteer. In November 1915, he attended the Turin Academy of Artillery and Engineering. In February 1920, he re-entered Politecnico, obtaining a degree in Engineering in 1922. That same year he moved to Cairo and, in 1924, started collaboration with the contracting company run by Austrian engineer Walther Stross. In Egypt Paolo Caccia Dominioni worked as an architect and an engineer, two parallel careers both bearing witness to his anti-academic approach and authentic passion for site work. He travelled extensively across the country to survey major building sites, which often became the subject of his vivid descriptions and fine panoramic views,⁴ some portraying major hydraulic works undertaken by the Egyptian Government to allow perennial irrigation.

- 6 The Italian architectural journal *Domus* reported seventy civil and industrial buildings built by Caccia Dominioni in Egypt, Nubia and Syria from 1923 to 1931.⁵ Before 1931, Caccia Dominioni travelled to Mesopotamia to study large-scale hydraulic works on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers near Baghdad.⁶ In 1931, he undertook a topographical survey of Tripolitania. In May 1933, he was in Beirut, where he found a Roman marble kiosk near Place de l'Étoile.⁷ In August 1933, Caccia Dominioni was again in Baghdad, and corresponding with *Corriere della Sera* about the incidents between the Assyrians and the Iraqis.⁸ In 1935, he led a reconnaissance mission in Sudan.

The new Italian embassy from Istanbul to Ankara

- 7 Paolo Caccia Dominioni introduced the Italian Embassy in Ankara as a building with precedents, due to the complicated circumstances that led to its establishment.
- 8 The first stone of the new Italian Embassy in Turkey was laid at Istanbul on 24 March 1911. This was a grand building designed by Enrico Bovio in the Maçka neighbourhood.⁹ A few months later, the site closed due to the outbreak of the Italian-Turkish war in Libya, reopening again after the peace of October 1912. After World War I, Italy inherited from Austria *Palazzo di Venezia*, the former Embassy of Venice at Istanbul. Works at Maçka were therefore suspended indefinitely.
- 9 Four years later, in 1923, the Kemalist revolution moved the capital to Ankara. As opposed to multi-cultural Istanbul, Ankara was the city of the future, a vital part of the Kemalist modernization project, one of the vehicles for the transition from the empire to a nation state. The town-planning scheme by Hermann Jansen made a clear distinction between the preexisting city with its citadel and traditional wooden houses, and modern Ankara at its feet rising along wide boulevards, open spaces and green belts. The new city center¹⁰ lay at the intersection of two major roads, Istasyon Avenue and Gazi Boulevard, each attracting different land-use zones. Gazi Boulevard, the road to Çankaya, where Atatürk established his official residence in 1921, was 40-meters wide. It would be lined by new State buildings and reach out to the “diplomatic district” (later to be known as Embassy Row).
- 10 In the early days of the new republican capital, foreign delegations were housed in sleeping cars at the railway station.¹¹ At the start of 1926, however, the Soviet embassy made its appearance along Gazi Boulevard, soon to be followed by the German embassy, inaugurated in December 1928 in the presence of Atatürk himself. Both buildings—the first featuring an ultramodern-industrial appearance, the second a replica of President Paul Von Hindenburg's manor house—looked like a manifesto.
- “While the Germans reminded their European neighbours that despite their temporary marginalization, they shared the same geography and cultural traditions, the Soviets announced a break with the bourgeois-aristocratic traditions of the continent. The Soviet embassy, a representative export of a short-lived visionary utopianism, was an unmistakable attempt to assert a new revolutionary identity.”¹²
- 11 As foreign embassies moved from Istanbul to Ankara on land granted by the Turkish government, Gazi Boulevard became the scene of fierce architectural rivalry. Each diplomatic mission was seen by the country concerned as an opportunity to express its identity and ambitions in the international arena. Whether evoking the past or a distant mother country, or else conveying an idea of modernity, buildings along Gazi Boulevard

aimed at achieving a monumental effect for the widest possible understanding. The making of Embassy Row was, in effect, a register of both international and domestic politics, bearing witness to international realignments in interwar Europe, while emphasising Atatürk's role within Ankara's overall layout.¹³

- 12 For its new diplomatic representation, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs diverted to Ankara the financial resources formerly allocated to Istanbul. In 1927, Italy acquired a tract of land on the slope of Kavaklıdere hill along Gazi Boulevard. In 1935, Paolo Vietti Violi¹⁴ produced the first project for the Italian embassy, which he envisaged as a compact courtyard building halfway along the plot and surrounded by formal-style gardens. Ancillary buildings lined the perimeter of the area, whereas the church adjoined Gazi Boulevard.
- 13 In 1935, however, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs called upon Florestano Di Fausto for the same project. He had been working as a consultant for the Ministry since 1921, designing or transforming many Italian embassies and institutions abroad, while working extensively in Libya and the Dodecanese.¹⁵ Di Fausto had met Paolo Caccia Dominioni on the sites of the Italian embassies in Tunis (1924-1930) and Cairo (1926-1930)¹⁶ and, possibly, recommended Caccia Dominioni for the position of work supervisor at Ankara. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs offered the job to Caccia Dominioni in February 1935, but works did not start due to the Second Italian-Ethiopian war (1935-1936).¹⁷ In autumn 1937, Caccia Dominioni was again offered the same position.
- 14 Di Fausto's drawing of the Italian embassy's main elevation (February 1935) shows a composition of masses linked by a common basement line: auxiliary units were below it, and the main representative buildings were above it. Two drawings by Di Fausto (June 1937), among the holdings of the Caccia Dominioni archive, show alternative layouts: both concentrated the entire building complex along Gazi Boulevard, leaving most of the land at the back. One option consisted in placing the church complex and Records Office on opposite sides of the main courtyard; the other instead gathered all functional units around a side courtyard directly accessed from the boulevard. This latter concept was eventually developed by Caccia Dominioni.

A difficult start

- 15 Caccia Dominioni first reached Ankara in January 1938, stopping on his way to visit Bovio's unfinished building at Maçka, which he praised for its Italian purity "at a time of relentless architectures and tulip style."¹⁸ There he also found pieces of furniture, instruments, prints, stairs, shelves, and tripods, which he eventually decided to carry with him.
- 16 Caccia Dominioni's early photographs show the Ankara site as a vast tract of land with Hussein Gazi Mountain in the background. Nearby, were the embassies of France, Germany, Hungary, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, whose "visionary utopianism" did not in the least impress Caccia Dominioni.¹⁹

Figure 3: Paolo Caccia Dominioni, Ankara's diplomatic quarter, spring 1938.



SOURCE: CACCIA DOMINIONI FAMILY ARCHIVE.

- 17 In a letter dated 1 February 1938, he mentioned his first visit to the site, specifying that he would finalize his programme only after meeting Vietti Violi.²⁰ A few days later, he informed the Italian Ambassador at Ankara Carlo Galli that Lequio (Franco Lequio, General of Personnel of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and Di Fausto had approved his idea of moving the church down the slope, so that its access would be independent from that of other buildings.²¹ Caccia Dominioni was working tirelessly in anticipation of Di Fausto's return from Tripoli, in view of sending to Ankara all the information needed to start excavations. Being unable to supervise the works personally, Di Fausto entrusted total responsibility for the Ankara site to Caccia Dominioni, who could only rely on a few preliminary drawings.

The site

- 18 The site of the Italian embassy was almost rectangular and characterized by a diagonally sloping ground, with a gradient of 20 metres. This topography made Di Fausto's scheme rather inappropriate. Because of Italy's economic constraints²²—and Di Fausto's many commitments—works at Ankara did not start until April. On returning to Ankara in April 1938, Caccia Dominioni found out that, for local circumstances, Di Fausto's project had to be changed.²³ As a reaction, he threw himself into drawing and surveying, sketching and taking photographs. Construction started with the first masonry building, a small structure intended as an office with basic accommodation for himself on the upper floor.

²⁴

“We arranged Bovio's furniture, pinned up working diagrams, Piranesi prints, portraits of our elderly, kids, sweethearts; we arranged our hasty beds with bright Kurdish blankets. Drawings and drawings. An almost mystical emotion when our

first whitewashed sheet on Bovio's dusty table replaced that of 1914 yellowed and gracefully sketched with a patient ornamental motif.²⁵

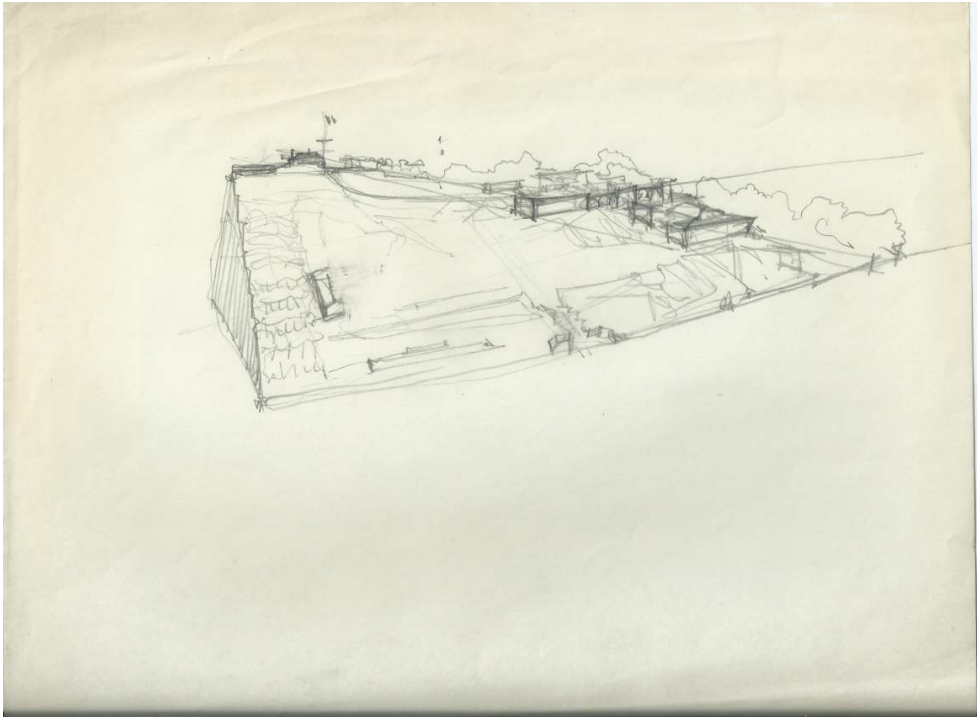
Figure 4: Paolo Caccia Dominioni working at the Ankara site.



SOURCE: CACCIA DOMINIONI FAMILY ARCHIVE.

- 19 Having supervised large building sites ever since the earliest stages of his career, Caccia Dominioni had thorough experience in setting up a self-sufficient temporary settlement making the most of all available resources. From his military experience, he had certainly learned to exploit topography, gaining a full understanding of the physical features of a given site. Caccia Dominioni's office provided a makeshift hub for Italian architects, engineers and builders. From there, they could check the entire area at a glance, organizing workers' daily tasks. The symbolic role of this small building, crudely furnished with some of Caccia Dominioni's favorite possessions (now in his studio at Nerviano, Lombardy, Italy) was marked by the presence of the Italian flag, and sealed by official visitors such as Vittorio Beonio Brocchieri, a journalist, and aviator, who had fought with Caccia Dominioni in the Ethiopian War.

Figure 5: Paolo Caccia Dominioni sketch of the slope with the first buildings (undated).



SOURCE: CACCIA DOMINIONI FAMILY ARCHIVE.

Figure 6: Paolo Caccia Dominioni, sketch of the first buildings under construction (undated).



SOURCE: CACCIA DOMINIONI FAMILY ARCHIVE.

- 20 After the site office, Caccia Dominioni set up cabins for workers, a food storage, and an area to mix concrete. Some workers had their families with them, and many had come from Friuli and from Nerviano, Caccia Dominioni's birthplace. At this initial stage, the building site was indeed a self-sufficient Italian settlement away from Italy. As works

progressed, particularly after construction of the church, this village-like character began to take shape. Caccia Dominioni focused his attention on the general layout and on how best to arrange ancillary buildings. These were a variety of structures, each dedicated to a specific activity, sized and shaped accordingly. In fact, building activity was to start from the Record Office, the church complex, the gatehouse and garage, whose modified layout needed an approval. Caccia Dominioni would return to Ankara only on approval of his variant, to undertake a contract for construction of the foundations and of the first buildings.

- 21 While developing Di Fausto's project, Caccia Dominioni had to run the day-to-day operations of the building site, taking care of its financial management, hiring and looking after workers, maintaining official relations with Italian and Turkish authorities, and supervising the supply of materials. Di Fausto's drawings arrived rarely and mostly incomplete.

Works in progress

- 22 After the Italian Ambassador Carlo Galli formally approved Caccia Dominioni's variant, the first stone of the church was laid on 22 May 1938, blessed by Monsignor Roncalli, Apostolic Delegate (later Pope John XXIII). Only three weeks later, Caccia Dominioni informed Ambassador Galli that the first floor masonry of the Records Office were almost complete, and the church and garage roofs were under construction. Masonry work for the Vice-Ambassador's first-floor residence had begun. The masonry on the ground floor had been completed at the Chancellor's Residence. In the meantime, walls and pillars of the entrance were taking shape. He had ordered windows and other supplies, studied the electrical layout and an estimated quote for the heating and plumbing systems. Finally, he had purchased at a very good price high-performance insulating material (Héraclite) from the nearby French embassy. In reply, Ambassador Galli sent Caccia Dominioni some drawings of the embassy project by Vietti Violi.

Figure 7: Paolo Caccia Dominioni, excavation works for the church (building A) and the Records' Office (building B).



SOURCE: CACCIA DOMINIONI FAMILY ARCHIVE.

- 23 In a private letter addressed to a friend (or a relative), Caccia Dominioni expressed all his discontent: hired for two working seasons, he had disengaged from regular commitments and consultancy at Cairo Mixed Tribunals. His working period was to end in September, with works hardly completed, for reasons beyond his responsibility. A six-month delay in receiving di Fausto's drawings, a seven-month delay in paying for timber supply, and a four-month postponement in the implementation of the technological systems, had disrupted the building schedule. On May 31, 1939, Caccia Dominioni openly expressed his disappointment to the General Director of Staff of the Italian Embassies.

"It is very difficult for a navigator to embark on a journey without knowing the destination, for an author to write a book without having decided on the subject, or for a judge to try a case without having studied, however briefly, the crucial facts.

Thus, it is equally difficult for a builder to erect a building without having even the slightest idea of which features will distinguish it from any other building around the world. Houses do not rise spontaneously from the ground as is the case with asparagus, ants and the scent of spring, as some—perhaps misled by a superficial consideration of the subject—may unfortunately believe.

In this particular case the writer—whose duty it is to build, in a capital city, the palace representing a country dear to him, a building deserving of some prestige—has received but a dozen drawings, practically useless due to their being executed with hasty negligence in just a few hours. Furthermore, details are missing and no description is given on works to be executed, a description for which no exquisite literary skill is required, just the necessary elements to enable us continue works. These documents have been requested by every means, month after month, with no result, despite written assurances that they would be produced."

- 24 Di Fausto replied to Caccia Dominioni as late as 16 August, when his contract was about to expire. Finally, he promised to hasten all decisions about the Ankara site, and congratulated Caccia Dominioni for the progress of works.

- 25 At Ankara, thirty Italians with 200 workers—almost all Anatolian Turks—were working at full capacity. In a few months, the Records Office, two villas, two garages, the belvedere, five houses, the conference hall, the church, the boiler room and the gatehouse appeared in a row on Kavaklıdere hill, arousing the admiration of the passers-by.

Figure 8: Paolo Caccia Dominioni, Christmas card portraying the progress of works in December 1938, before construction of the Ambassador's Residence.



SOURCE: CACCIA DOMINIONI FAMILY ARCHIVE.

Caccia Dominioni's "variant"

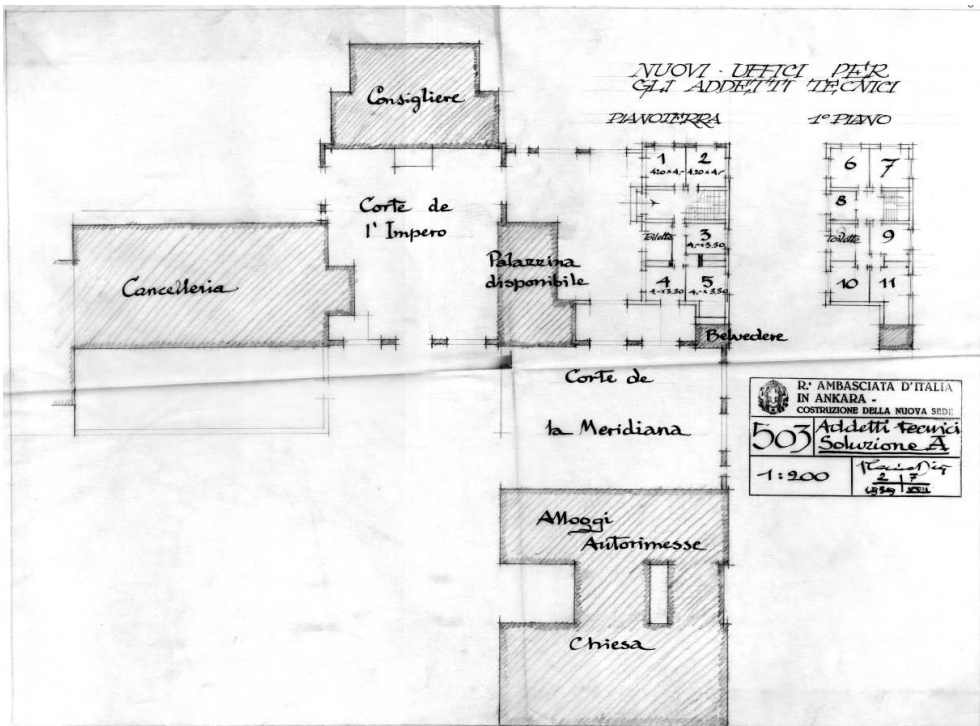
- 26 Considering the troubled history of this site, Caccia Dominioni's role should be reassessed. He acted not only as the construction manager, but also as the author of a "variant" which introduced a completely new layout. His project resulted from a keen ability to observe the potential of the landscape, exploiting the many opportunities provided by a sloping ground to sort out different types of paths while achieving a scenic effect. Caccia Dominioni's inclination towards a simplified architectural language²⁶ resulted in an architectural complex expressing a domestic atmosphere, only partly contradicted by the Ambassador's Residence, still reminiscent of Di Fausto's design.
- 27 By comparing Di Fausto's and Caccia Dominioni's layouts, we can identify the many improvements introduced. Di Fausto had concentrated the embassy complex at the eastern limit of the plot along Gazi Boulevard, intercepting the slope from level 919 m to level 927 m. Leaving most of the land in the back, this layout featured a single entrance along the axis of symmetry of the Ambassador's Residence. Caccia Dominioni instead proposed a more articulated scheme, intercepting the slope from level 922 m to level 938. Exploiting a gradient of 14 metres, he clustered buildings around a system of interconnected courtyards, defining a constellation of gathering areas and a hierarchy of paths specifically assigned for different purposes (cars, ordinary visitors, special guests).
- 28 After Caccia Dominioni's office and the temporary shacks for the Italian workers and their families, the church was the first structure to be built. Then came the offices, the houses for officials and employees, and the garages and technical equipment: seven buildings in all. The embassy looked like a small village whose buildings were linked by arches and arcades.²⁷

Figure 9: Paolo Caccia Dominioni, sketch of the church complex.



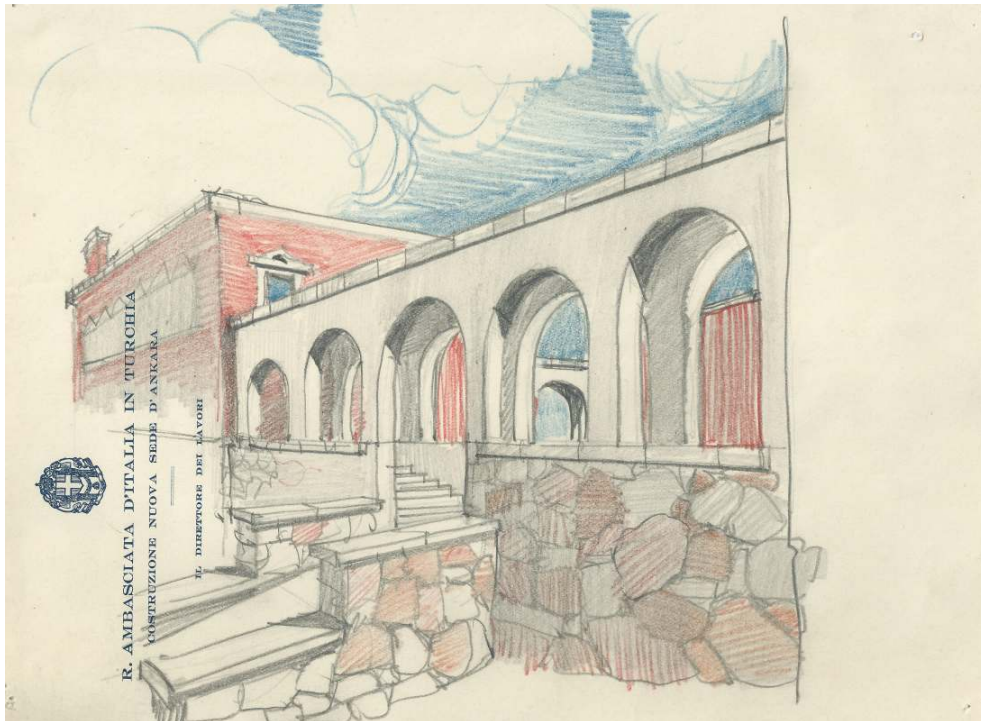
SOURCE: CACCIA DOMINIONI FAMILY ARCHIVE.

Figure 10: Paolo Caccia Dominioni, Corte dell'Impero and Corte della Meridiana, 2 July 1939.



SOURCE: CACCIA DOMINIONI FAMILY ARCHIVE.

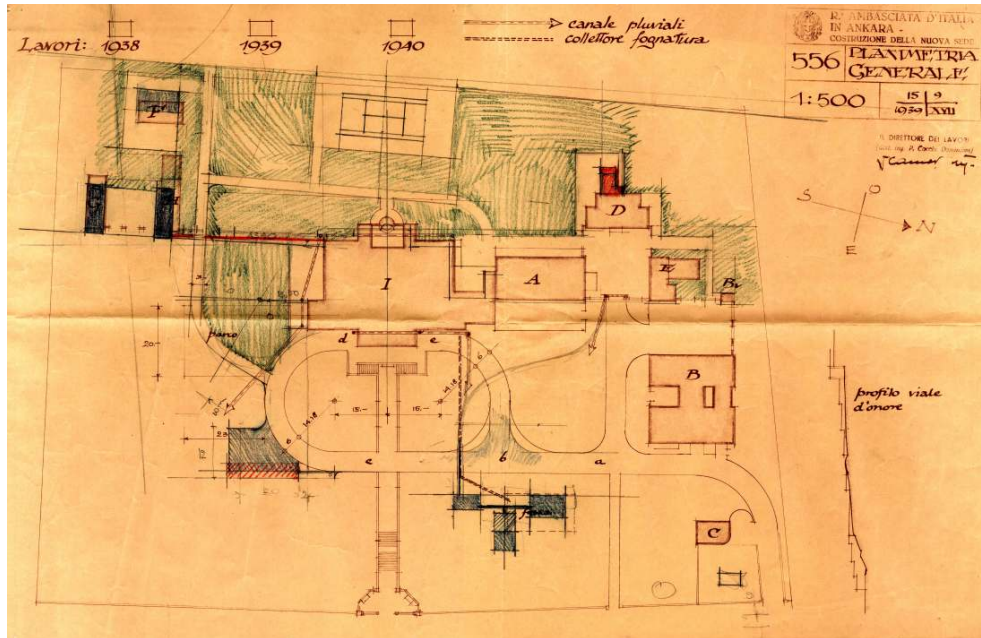
Figure 11: Paolo Caccia Dominioni, the arcaded entrance to Corte dell'Impero.



SOURCE: CACCIA DOMINIONI FAMILY ARCHIVE.

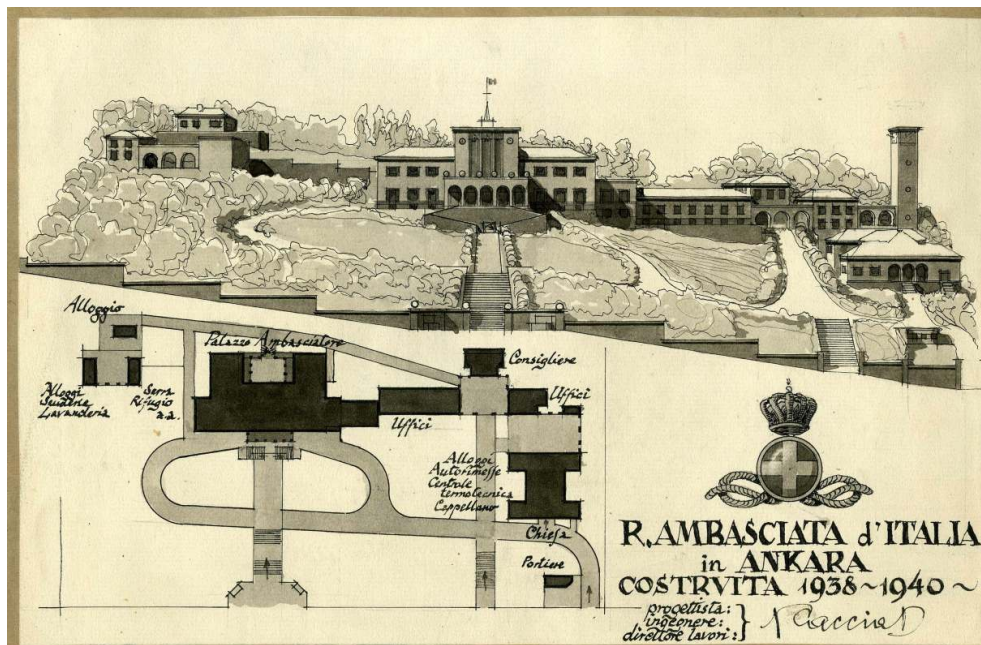
- 29 On Sundays or religious celebrations, ordinary visitors would find the church very close to the entrance (922 m) on their right. Behind the church was Corte della Meridiana (926) with its slender tower. On normal working days, ordinary visitors would continue towards Corte dell'Impero (928 m) to reach the Records Office and the Chancellor's Residence (930). This sequence of buildings and open spaces was to provide a functional and symbolic core for the local Italian community. High-ranking politicians and special guests would use instead the main entrance in front of the Ambassador's Residence, climbing up a gradient of 9 metres (from 921 to 930). The uppermost cluster (938) included functional buildings: stables, laundry, heating equipment, and the "alloggio" originally used by Paolo Caccia Dominioni as a house and workspace.

Figure 12: Paolo Caccia Dominioni, site plan, 15 September 1939.



SOURCE: CACCIA DOMINIONI FAMILY ARCHIVE.

Figure 13: Paolo Caccia Dominioni, site plan and elevation along Gazi Boulevard (undated).

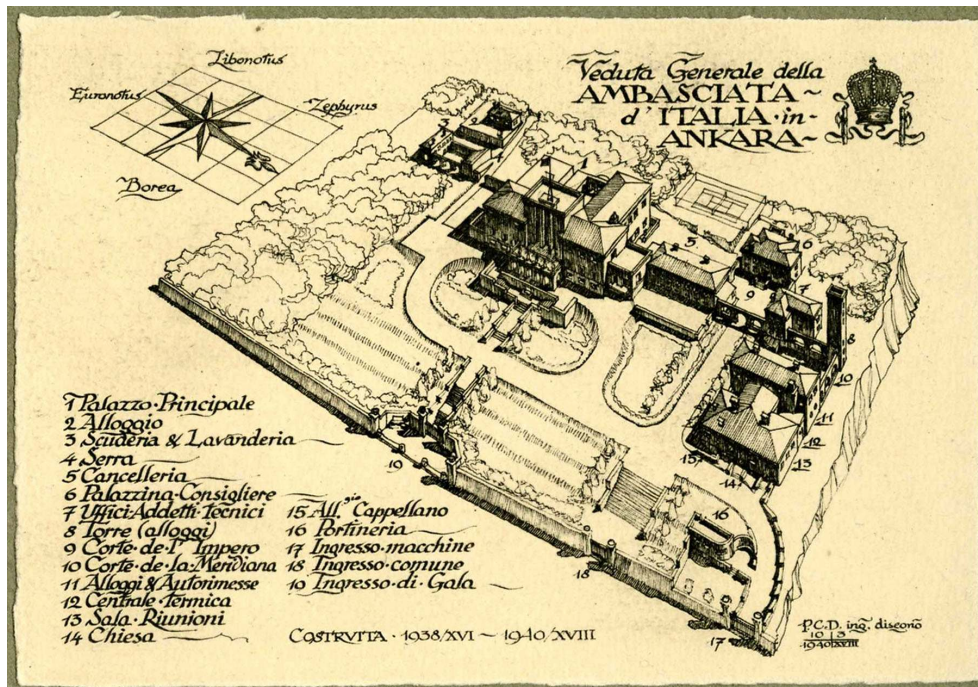


SOURCE: CACCIA DOMINIONI FAMILY ARCHIVE.

30 Rather than a single group of monumental buildings, Caccia Dominioni envisaged a variety of structures, each dedicated to a specific function, sized and shaped accordingly: some more domestic, others more dignified, all linked by arcaded paths. The only concession to Di Fausto's rhetorical style was the Ambassador's Residence with its access stairs and arcaded entrance. Atop the arcade, a towering volume arose: the giant basement for the Italian flag.

- 31 Living together in a small, self-sufficient settlement, the Italians who worked on site (some emigrated due to poverty or political problems) named it “Villaggio Italia,” a definition still in use to the present time. This Italian microcosm along Gazi Boulevard also included gardens, parks and sports grounds. As conceived by Paolo Caccia Dominioni, the Embassy was far more than an administrative or representative quarter. In a modern reinterpretation of the legation as a “city within a city”—so common for foreign legations in the Levant—the embassy became a place where the local Italian community could come together and develop a renewed feeling of national belonging.
- 32 The layout of the Italian Embassy at Ankara may help us understand Caccia Dominioni's pragmatic attitude, devoid of any rhetoric or eagerness to find a place in the contemporary architectural debate. Thanks to his exceptional training and life experiences (including on the battlefields), he fully understood the need for an architect to orchestrate the different stages of the project, from conception to final implementation. Furthermore, he showed a profound awareness of the civil meaning of his work.

Figure 14: Paolo Caccia Dominioni, general view of the Embassy complex, 10 March 1940.



SOURCE: CACCIA DOMINIONI FAMILY ARCHIVE.

Figure 15: Paolo Caccia Dominioni, interior of the church.



SOURCE: CACCIA DOMINIONI FAMILY ARCHIVE.

A concluding snapshot

- 33 Paolo Caccia Dominioni himself concluded his description of the Ankara site with a convivial scene, almost a metaphor for his building program: more of a community settlement than an official institution.

“On Sunday evenings, all Italian workers gather at the top of the hill, under the flag. The sun reaches the horizon and disappears. [...] The spell of the moment insinuates into our hearts like wind rustling into new leaves. We fall into a nostalgic mood (perhaps even too fervent), thinking of what we left behind to run against time, in the clang of other sites, smoke of trains, ships, beautiful battles.

Down in the valley below us, is a tiny little house in the woods from where, unexpectedly, a loud speaker of immense volume is playing. Are they listening Italian opera in our honour? ‘Oh Marcello help me’ We hear from the cottage. ‘What happened?’ ‘Rodolfo is abandoning me.’ resounds through the valleys.

We are all sitting outdoors around a makeshift table. Like every Sunday, they bring us polenta and a jug of Chianti. Hard faces of our people, proud, furrowed by fatigue, golden in the sun.

‘Oh, Mimì go back home for heaven’s sake,’ Marcello begs in the little house.

Silvio de Cillia and Giovanni Dorigo recall to us tell us of the 212 Alpine company many years ago, when they were together in the Tagliamento unit, one as a lieutenant, the other as sergeant major. Arturo Bottinelli and Lorenzo Peresson tell us how bad it was in some fiery and frosty Asian regions. Carlo Pedetti speaks of Argonne, Silvio Avamini of the Sciré, Romeo Veronese of the Two Palms and the Sei Busi. Rodolfo, at the bottom of the valley, says that Mimì is the flower of the greenhouse.

We will not hear Musetta accusing Marcello of being a dauber. Because now we begin singing all together: ‘Do not touch me, I am a weak virgin of love.’

We were so loud that they turned off the loudspeaker in the little house.”²⁸

NOTES

1. Paolo CACCIA DOMINIONI, *Resurrezione e ardore di un cantiere in terra lontana*, Ankara, Summer 1938 [printed and illustrated for the wedding of Riccardo Trionfi and Barbara Caccia Dominioni, Nerviano 22 September 1938]; Paolo CACCIA DOMINIONI, “Il cantiere magico,” *Corriere della Sera*, 25 October 1938, p. 3.
2. We collected additional information on visits to Ankara, and particularly at the Caccia Dominioni family archive, where we found letters, sketches, full drawings (some by Florestano Di Fausto) and photographs of the Italian Embassy at various stages of construction.
3. Only just recently, his work as an engineer and architect has attracted increasing scholarly work. See Maria Concetta MIGLIACCIO, “Caccia Dominioni, Paolo,” in Ezio GODOLI and Milva GIACOMELLI (eds.), *Architetti e ingegneri italiani dal Levante al Maghreb, 1848-1945: repertorio biografico, bibliografico e archivistico*, Florence: Maschietto Editore, 2005, p. 109-113; Armando SCARAMUZZI, “The Egypt of Paolo Caccia Dominioni,” in Ezio GODOLI and Milva GIACOMELLI (eds.), *Italian Architects and Engineers in Egypt from the Nineteenth to the Twentyfirst Century=Italian architects and engineers in Egypt from the nineteenth to twentyfirst century*, Exhibition Catalogue (Alexandria, Biblioteca Alessandrina, 24 October-25 November 2008), Florence: Maschietto Editore, 2008, p. 184-195; Armando SCARAMUZZI, “Le ‘Grand tour’ de Paolo Caccia Dominioni,” in Silvia FINZI, Milva GIACOMELLI, Ezio GODOLI and Ahmed SAADAOUI (eds.), *Architectures et architectes italiens au Maghreb: actes du colloque international tenu aux Archives nationales de Tunisie, Tunis, 10-12 décembre 2009*, Florence: Polistampa, 2011 (Les chemins de l’architecture italienne dans le monde), p. 144-149; Ezio GODOLI, “De la philanthropie à l’engagement officiel. Les constructions italiennes dans l’isthme,” in Claudine PIATON (ed.), *L’Isthme & l’Égypte. Au temps de la Compagnie universelle du canal maritime de Suez (1858-1956)*, Cairo: IFAO, 2016, p. 48-82; Cristina PALLINI, “Architecture of Engineers: Paolo Caccia Dominioni before El Alamein (1924-1938),” in Milva GIACOMELLI, Ezio GODOLI and Ulisse TRAMONTI (eds.) *Italian Architectural and Artistic Heritage in Egypt. Documentation & Safeguard: proceedings of the first international seminar, Cairo, Italian Culture Institute, November 28th, 2015, Alexandria, El Horya Ibedaa Center, November 30th, December 1st, 2015*, Arcidosso (Grosseto): Effigi Edizioni, 2017 (Italian architectural and artistic heritage in mediterranean countries. Documentation and preservation), p. 199-217.
4. Paolo CACCIA DOMINIONI, *Diario di Bordo*, Caccia Dominioni family archive.
5. “Sei costruzioni progettate e costruite in Egitto dell’Arch. Paolo Caccia Dominioni,” *Domus*, no. 43, 1931, p. 65-69.
6. *Ibid.*
7. See Paolo CACCIA DOMINIONI, “Importanti vestigia romane scoperte a Beirut,” *Corriere della Sera*, 20 June 1933.
8. *Il Giornale d’Oriente*, 10 September 1933 and Paolo CACCIA DOMINIONI, “Le sanguinose giornate sul Tigri. Le Migrazioni degli Assiri - Saccheggi a danno dei Musulmani - Centinaia di cristiani massacrati per rappresaglia,” *Corriere della Sera*, 29 August 1933; *Id.*, “Il conflitto Assiro-Irakiano. L’accampamento della sventura,” *Corriere della Sera*, 6 September 1933.

9. Maria Concetta MIGLIACCIO, "Bovio, Enrico," in Ezio GODOLI, Milva GIACOMELLI (eds.), *Architetti e ingegneri italiani dal Levante al Maghreb*, op. cit. (note 3), p. 90. See also "La nuova Ambasciata d'Italia a Costantinopoli," *La Rassegna Italiana*, vol. 16, no. 3-4, 1911, p. 49-50.
10. The centre of modern Ankara eventually evolved into Gençlik Park (Youth Park), the place par excellence for future collective projections. See Sibel BOZDOĞAN, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic*, Seattle, WA; London: University of Washington Press, 2001 (Studies in modernity and national identity). Zeynep KEZER, "The making of Early republican Ankara," *Architectural Design*, vol. 80, no. 1, 2010, p. 40-45. Vilma HASTAOĞLU-MARTINIDIS, "Urban Aesthetics and National Identity: the Refashioning of Eastern Mediterranean Cities between 1900 and 1940," *Planning Perspectives*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2011, p. 153-182. Müge AKKAR ERKAN, "'Evolving' or 'lost' identity of a historic public space? The tale of Gençlik Park in Ankara," *Journal of Urban Design*, vol. 22, no. 4, 2017, p. 520-543.
11. Paolo CACCIA DOMINIONI, *Resurrezione e ardore di un cantiere in terra lontana*, op. cit. (note 1).
12. Emily GUNZBURGER MAKAS and Tanja DAMLJANOVIC CONLEY (eds.), *Capital Cities in the Aftermath of Empires: Planning in Central and Southeastern Europe*, London; New York, NY: Routledge, 2010, p. 136.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 137.
14. Maria Concetta MIGLIACCIO, "Vietti Violi, Paolo," in Ezio GODOLI and Milva GIACOMELLI (eds.), *Architetti e ingegneri italiani dal Levante al Maghreb*, op. cit. (note 3), p. 348-350. An expert in sport facilities, Vietti Violi realised 19 Mayıs Stadium (1934-1936) at Ankara's Gençlik Park.
15. Maria Concetta MIGLIACCIO, "Di Fausto, Florestano," in Ezio GODOLI, Milva GIACOMELLI (eds.), *Architetti e ingegneri italiani dal Levante al Maghreb*, op. cit. (note 3), p. 143-174.
16. In Tunis, Caccia Dominioni was the son of the Ambassador, while in Cairo he was works supervisor. See Giuseppe MIANO, "F. Di Fausto, M. Bega et la Regia Legazione d'Italia au Caire," in Mercedes VOLAIT (ed.), *Le Caire-Alexandrie. Architectures européennes*, Cairo: IFAO-CEDEJ, 2001, p. 57-63.
17. Paolo Caccia Dominioni fought in East Africa with the rank of Major.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Caccia Dominioni branded the Soviet embassy as "the caricature of a workshop designed by an epileptic," cfr. Paolo CACCIA DOMINIONI, *Resurrezione e ardore di un cantiere in terra lontana*, op. cit. (note 1).
20. Most probably, Caccia Dominioni consulted Vietti Violi as an expert on the local context.
21. "Lequio e Di Fausto hanno approvatissimo lo schema studiato con Lei. Di Fausto ha anzi proposto, per ragioni architettoniche d'assieme, e per andare incontro alle Sue idee, di spostare in avanti la cappella, cosicché il pubblico di questa sarà ancora più isolato dagli altri edifici".
22. Partly due to the military campaigns in East Africa (1936-1941).
23. Paolo CACCIA DOMINIONI, *Resurrezione e ardore di un cantiere in terra lontana*, op. cit. (note 1).
24. Caccia Dominioni had a similar approach at El Alamein, where he started by building simple triangular structure visible from afar, which later he equipped with a kitchen, a garage, a bathroom, additional sleeping quarters and an office. Armando SCARAMUZZI, "The Egypt of Paolo Caccia Dominioni," in Ezio GODOLI and Milva GIACOMELLI (eds.), *Italian Architects and Engineers in Egypt from the Nineteenth to the Twentyfirst Century*, op. cit. (note 3).
25. Paolo CACCIA DOMINIONI, *Resurrezione e ardore di un cantiere in terra lontana*, op. cit. (note 1).
26. Paolo CACCIA DOMINIONI, "Egitto sul tardo Ottocento" [Egypt in the late nineteenth century], Cairo, 23 July 1928, in *Diario di Bordo*, p. 35-37.
27. Edmondo LEONE, *Nato in Turchia ricordi di un'infanzia trascorsa ad Ankara e ad Istanbul*, Artiglio prezioso, [S.], 2004.
28. Paolo CACCIA DOMINIONI, *Resurrezione e ardore di un cantiere in terra lontana*, op. cit. (note 1).

ABSTRACTS

Based on research carried out at the Caccia Dominioni family archive, this contribution tells the intriguing story of the Italian Embassy at Ankara (1938-1940), a project involving Paolo Vietti Violi (1882-1965), Florestano di Fausto (1890-1965) and Paolo Caccia Dominioni (1896-1992). The main point of our paper is assessing Caccia Dominioni's role, from a construction manager to the author of a "variant" which actually introduced a completely new layout. He was working at the site from April 1938 to 1940, running day-to-day operations, taking care of the financial management, hiring and looking after workers, maintaining official relations with Italian and Turkish authorities, supervising the supply of materials, and developing Di Fausto's drawings, which arrived rarely and mostly incomplete. Caccia Dominioni's "variant" introduced a completely new layout, resulting from a thorough understanding of the landscape potential, fully exploiting the opportunities provided by the diagonally sloping ground. Rather than a single group of monumental buildings, Caccia Dominioni envisaged a variety of structures, each dedicated to a specific function, sized and shaped accordingly. Altogether, the Embassy looked like a village, a "city within a city" so common for foreign legations in the Levant.

Fondé sur une recherche menée dans les archives privées de la famille Caccia Dominoni, cet article retrace l'histoire de l'ambassade d'Italie à Ankara (1938-1940), projet qui a impliqué Paolo Vietti Violi (1882-1965), Florestano di Fausto (1890-1965) et Paolo Caccia Dominioni (1896-1992). L'argument principal de cette contribution est l'affirmation du rôle de Caccia Dominioni, depuis la direction des travaux jusqu'à la proposition d'une « variante » qui a en fait introduit une disposition complètement nouvelle. Actif sur le chantier d'avril 1938 à 1940, il dirigea les opérations quotidiennes, assura la direction financière, le recrutement et la direction des ouvriers, le maintien des relations officielles avec les autorités italiennes et turques, la surveillance de l'approvisionnement en matériaux, et la mise au point des dessins de Di Fausto qui arrivaient difficilement et étaient souvent inachevés. La « variante » de Caccia Dominioni introduisit un schéma complètement différent, résultant d'une compréhension profonde du potentiel fourni par le paysage, en exploitant à fond les opportunités de la pente en diagonale du terrain. Plutôt qu'un simple ensemble de bâtiments monumentaux, l'architecte a projeté une variété de structures, chacune avec une fonction spécifique et avec des dimensions et des formes en conséquence. Finalement, l'ambassade a l'apparence d'une « ville dans la ville », si habituelle aux légations étrangères au Levant.

Basado en una investigación llevada a cabo en los archivos privados de la familia Caccia Dominoni, este artículo reconstruye la historia de la embajada de Italia en Ankara (1938-1940), proyecto en el que están implicados los arquitectos Paolo Vietti Violi (1882-1965), Florestano di Fausto (1890-1965) y Luigi Caccia Dominioni (1896-1992). El asunto principal de esta contribución se ocupa de la puesta en valor del papel de Caccia Dominioni, desde la dirección de la obra hasta la propuesta de una "variante" introduciendo de hecho una disposición completamente nueva. Activo sobre el terreno desde abril de 1938 hasta 1940, Dominioni dirigió las operaciones cotidianas asegurando la dirección financiera, la contratación y dirección de los obreros, el mantenimiento de las relaciones oficiales con las autoridades italianas y turcas, la vigilancia del suministro de materiales así como la puesta a punto de las trazas de Di Fausto que llegaban con

dificultad y con frecuencia estaban inacabadas. La "variante" de Caccia Dominioni introduce un esquema completamente diferente, resultado de una comprensión profunda del potencial que ofrecía el paisaje, explotando a fondo las oportunidades de la pendiente en diagonal del terreno. Más que un simple conjunto de edificios monumentales, el arquitecto proyecta una variedad de estructuras, cada una con una función específica, con dimensiones y formas consecuentes. Finalmente, la embajada tiene la apariencia de una ciudad dentro de la ciudad, tan habitual en las legaciones extranjeras del Levante.

Gestützt auf Recherchen im Archiv der Familie Caccia Dominioni erläutert dieser Beitrag die seltsame Geschichte der italienischen Botschaft in Ankara (1938-1940), ein Projekt, an dem Paolo Vietti Violi (1882-1965), Florestano di Fausto (1890-1965) und Paolo Caccia Dominioni (1896-1992) beteiligt waren. Im Blickpunkt unseres Artikels steht die Rolle Caccia Dominionis, der vom Bauleiter zum Urheber einer architektonischen „Variante“ wurde, die in Wirklichkeit eine völlig neue Gestaltung nach sich zog. Er arbeitete von April 1938 bis 1940 auf der Baustelle, wo er für alltägliche Belange zuständig war, die Finanzen verwaltete, Arbeiter einstellte und betreute, offizielle Beziehungen zu italienischen und türkischen Autoritäten unterhielt, für Materialnachschub sorgte und Di Faustos Zeichnungen ausarbeitete, die nur spärlich und meist unvollständig eintrafen. Caccia Dominionis „Variante“ führte einen komplett neuen Grundriss ein, der von einem tiefen Verständnis für das Potenzial der Landschaft zeugt und die Möglichkeiten des diagonal abfallenden Grundstücks voll ausschöpft. Caccia Dominioni erwog anstelle eines einzelnen Ensemble von Monumentalbauten eine Vielzahl von Gebäuden, die jeweils einer spezifischen Funktion zugeordnet waren, die sie in Größe und Form entsprachen. Die Gesamterscheinung der Botschaft war die eines Dorfes, einer „Stadt in der Stadt“, wie sie für auswärtige Gesandtschaften in der Levante typisch ist.

Questo contributo, basato sulle ricerche effettuate presso l'archivio familiare Caccia Dominioni, racconta l'affascinante storia dell'ambasciata di Ankara (1938-1940), un progetto che ha visti coinvolti Paolo Vietti Violi (1882-1965), Florestano di Fausto (1890-1965) e Paolo Caccia Dominioni (1896-1992). Il cardine della nostra ricerca è la valutazione del ruolo di Caccia Dominioni che passò da direttore di costruzione ad autore di una "variante" che introdusse un layout completamente nuovo. Lavorò sul sito dall'aprile 1938 al 1940, gestendo le operazioni quotidiane, occupandosi della gestione finanziaria, dei lavoratori-dei quali effettuava lui stesso le assunzioni-mantenendo i rapporti ufficiali con le autorità italiane e turche, verificando la fornitura di materiali e completando i disegni di Di Fausto, che arrivavano di rado e per lo più incompleti. La "variante" di Caccia Dominioni ha introdotto un layout completamente nuovo, frutto di una conoscenza approfondita del potenziale paesaggistico, che sfrutta appieno le opportunità offerte dal terreno in pendenza diagonale. Piuttosto che un singolo gruppo di edifici monumentali, Caccia Dominioni ha immaginato una moltitudine di strutture, ciascuna dedicata a una funzione specifica, con dimensioni e forme modellate di conseguenza. Nel complesso l'ambasciata sembrava un villaggio, una "città nella città", il che era piuttosto comune per le rappresentanze straniere nel Levante.

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