



# Architectural Images and Values in Banknote Design: Turkish Republic E1. Emission Group<sup>1</sup>

Elif SÜYÜK MAKAKLI<sup>1,\*</sup>, Betül OZAR<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 0000-0002-5045-927X, FMV Işık University, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, Department of Architecture

<sup>2</sup> 0000-0003-1245-0044, FMV Işık University, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, Department of Interior Architecture

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## Abstract

Banknotes are more than just a tool for economic exchange; they also represent the identity and shared ideals of the country they belong to. The elements used in banknote designs are a part of social values rather than aesthetic or visual features. The main design elements are images, color tones, flags, signatures, and various security codes. The designs symbolize the common values shared by societies and also their future goals. From ancient times to the present, banknotes featuring images of architectural structures have been popular. The images used are either pictures or abstractions of architectural structures. Abstractions often have broader meanings and symbolic connotations.

Including the E9 emission group that is still used today, a total of 9 emission groups have been printed since the date of the Republic of Türkiye. The study focuses on the E1 Emission Group, the first banknotes of the Republic. It uses the descriptive analysis method to investigate the architectural, social, and cultural meanings of the architectural images on these banknotes. In addition to the functional and spatial characteristics of the architectural structures, their social, cultural, and historical meanings were evaluated with their periods' political and social atmosphere. The study reveals that banknotes are not only an economic tool but also a reflection of spatial and cultural values. The architectural images used on banknotes in the examined period emphasize common values, ideals and reflect the Republic's ideology and the period's spirit.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The use of physical money has a long history that dates back thousands of years. The predictions that the use of cash and paper money would decline have not yet materialized, despite a significant reduction in usage. States have minted and disseminated money as a symbol of sovereignty since the first coins were produced by the Lydian monarchy, which ruled over Anatolia in the sixth century BC. "Commodity currencies," which are essentially gold and silver coins with a circulation value equal to the metal from which they are made, have been supplanted by "banknotes" as a result of governmental funding requirements [1].

Hobsbawm defined money as the 'most universal form of public imagery' [2]. Depending on the symbolic meanings its design features hold, money conveys various messages [3]. The use of money to produce social identity and nation-state ideology has been the subject of several studies across various academic fields. Pointon focused on the relation between the money and nationalism [4]. Hewitt, V. H., & Keyworth, J. M. examined the British banknote design [5]. Penrose, J., & Cumming, C. researched on the banknote iconography [6].

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\* Corresponding author: elif.suyuk@isikun.edu.tr

Since the foundation of the Turkish Republic, banknotes of 24 different denominations in nine emission groups have been put into circulation. All of the banknotes in the first six emission groups and some of the Seventh Emission Group were removed from circulation at different dates and lost their value at the end of the ten-year statute of limitations. There are different studies in the literature about banknotes printed in the Republic of Türkiye. Demir, T. worked on political and ideological analyses of the currencies of the Republic Period [7]. Pekşen, A. examined the visual structure of banknotes graphically and ideologically [8]. Yılmaz, M. and Temizkan, M. evaluated the banknotes using the semiotic analysis method [9]. Altun, E. researched the political and ideological features of the banknotes of the Republic Period [10]. Karlı, İ., & Dondurucu, Z. examined the relationship between money and the process of nation identity construction in the early period [11]. Öksüz M., examined the reflection to the press of printing the first banknotes [12]. This study focuses on the E1 Emission Group, the first banknotes of the Republic of Türkiye. It analyzes the architectural, social, and cultural meanings of the architectural images on banknotes using the descriptive analysis method. In addition to the functional and structural meanings, their social, cultural, and historical meanings were evaluated together with the political and social atmosphere of their periods.

The design features of a banknote are determined by its graphical language, layout, size, color, pattern, signature, security, and printing techniques. The selected images stand for both the societies' shared ideals and aspirations for the future. The use of architectural structures as images on banknotes has been widely preferred from historical times to the present day. In addition to the images of monumental buildings, which are symbols of the cultural values that form the society, some architectural images are also preferred due to their abstract meanings.

This study, which deals with architectural images on banknotes, emphasizes that spatial representations are not limited to architecture or design disciplines, but are also related to different academic fields such as cultural studies, history, and sociology.

## **2. THE 1. EMISSION GROUPS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE**

After more than 600 hundred years-old Ottoman dynasty lost its power, the country was occupied and the establishment of a new regime based on the concept of national sovereignty took place in 1923, at the end of a heavy and difficult four-year War of Independence. Between 1923 and 1938, several decisions were made to achieve complete independence and progress in all spheres, which altered the military, political, and social structure, amid economic conditions that wars and losses had damaged. The primary objectives included swift economic development, accelerated dissemination of beneficial knowledge and technology, and consequently, the attainment of parity with developed nations. The foundation for the Turkish Republic was laid by the profound shift in the concept of sovereignty that occurred with the beginning of the War of Independence resistance movement in Anatolia, namely the recognition that sovereignty is a national asset. The Turkish Grand National Assembly decided, that Ankara would serve as the capital and epicenter of the War of Independence since it was where the assembly was founded. When the Republic was declared, maintaining a stable monetary policy was seen as a prerequisite for independence and was associated with the printing of banknotes; however, this process required time [13].

During the Ottoman Empire, "Kaime-i Nakdiye-i Mutebere", which means "Paper Substitute for Money", was put into circulation by Sultan Abdülmecit in 1840. Rather than being "banknotes", these are "interest-bearing debt securities" or "treasury bills". Kaimes were made by hand in the early periods and each one was stamped with an official seal. But since paper money was so easily counterfeited, kaimes started to be printed in the printing house in 1842 as a result of the decline in public confidence in it [1].

In 1863, the Ottoman Empire gave the privilege of issuing paper money to the Ottoman Bank, which was established with joint British and French capital, for 30 years. However, after the Ottoman Bank rejected the government's request for advance payments and printing banknotes during the First World War, the

Ottoman Empire issued a different banknote under the name of "Evrak-ı Nakdiye" in return for the gold and German Treasury bills in its treasury, starting from 1915. These banknotes remained in circulation until the end of 1927, as money could not be printed in the first years of the Republic. The New Republic, which continued to use the coins and paper money of the Ottoman Empire, first printed and put into circulation its coins and then its own paper money. The currencies used in the empire were gradually removed from the market [13].

Printing of First Emission (E1) Group paper money, the first banknotes of the Republic of Türkiye was realized by the decision of a commission chaired by the then Minister of Finance Abdülhalik Renda. As a result of a 9-month study; This banknote group, consisting of denominations of 1, 5, 10, 50, 100, 500, and 1,000 lira, was printed in relief on watermarked papers by the British company Thomas De La Rue in 1927 [1].

Ölçer classified the paper money of the Republican Era into four important groups;

1. Paper money with Arabic script,
2. Paper money with Atatürk's picture and new Turkish letters (Latin alphabet) printed during Atatürk's lifetime,
3. Paper money with İnönü picture printed during İsmet İnönü's Presidency,
4. Paper money with Atatürk picture issued after 1951, after the transition to multi-party political life [14].

The main texts of these banknotes, which were printed before the Alphabet Revolution, were written in Arabic script and the denomination values were written in French.

### 3.PRINTING PROCESS AND DESIGN FEATURES OF THE 1. EMISSION GROUPS

The printing, design, and exchange of new paper money were carried out by The Cash Documents Commission consisting of bank representatives under the chairmanship of a person appointed by the Ministry of Finance. Çankırı deputy Mustafa Abdülhalik Renda was appointed as the chairman of the commission. During the commission sessions, decisions were made regarding the size, value, and quantity of money to be printed. The images that will be printed on banknotes as well as the printing plant have been selected. The procedures for printing and exchanging banknotes were then finished [1,12].

In the first statements made by the commission, it was decided that the images and frames of the banknotes would be determined through a competition, but subsequently, the construction of the pictures and frames was carried out without opening a competition. It was given to the painter Ali Sami Boyar, who also illustrated the first stamps of the Republic. Ali Sami Bey depicted a portrait of Mustafa Kemal Pasha and the Sakarya River as a landscape and arrangement around it. After examining Ali Sami Bey's paintings and frames, the commission chose to use Mustafa Kemal Pasha's image on banknotes valued at 100, 500, and 1000 liras; a symbol representing the Republic will be used on banknotes valued at 1, 5, and 500 liras [12, 15].

The examined banknotes possess consistent and balanced color tones on both their front and back sides. French and Arabic scripts, numbers, motifs, and ornaments were used as a common feature. According to Keş and Turgut, the calligraphy and motifs of the banknotes are a continuation of the traditional Ottoman period kaimes [16]. The meanings of the architectural images used in the banknote shed light on the spirit and ideals of the period. The architectural images used in these banknotes, which were produced after difficult processes, emphasize the common past and cultural values in a social sense (Figure 1).



BANKNOTE UNIT	OBVERSE SIDE	REVERSE SIDE
Emission Group, In 1 Series, One Turkish Lira (90x166 mm)	House of Parliament, Citadel of Ankara, a ploughing farmer	Former Building of Prime Ministry
Emission Group, In 1 Series, Five Turkish Lira (94x170 mm)	The Citadel of Ankara, a grey-wolf and the House of Parliament	A bridge in Ankara
Emission Group, In 1 Series, Ten Turkish Lira (99x175 mm)	The Citadel of Ankara and a grey-wolf	The Citadel of Ankara
Emission Group, In 1 Series, Fifty Turkish Lira (98x185 mm)	A portrait of Atatürk on the right, and a pattern on the center	A view from Afyon
Emission Group, In 1 Series, One Hundred Turkish Lira (112 x 189 mm)	A portrait of Atatürk on the right, and a pattern on the left	A view of a village
Emission Group, In 1 Series, Five Hundred Turkish Lira (120 x 194 mm)	A portrait of Atatürk on the right, the picture of Gökmedrese in Sivas on the left	A view from Sivas
Emission Group, In 1 Series, One Thousand Turkish Lira (124 x 201 mm)	A portrait of Atatürk	A view from the railroad to Sakarya

*Figure 1. Design Features of the 1. Emission Group*

#### 4.EVALUATION OF THE IMAGES USED ON THE BANKNOTES

##### 4.1. 1. Emission 1. Series 1 Turkish Lira

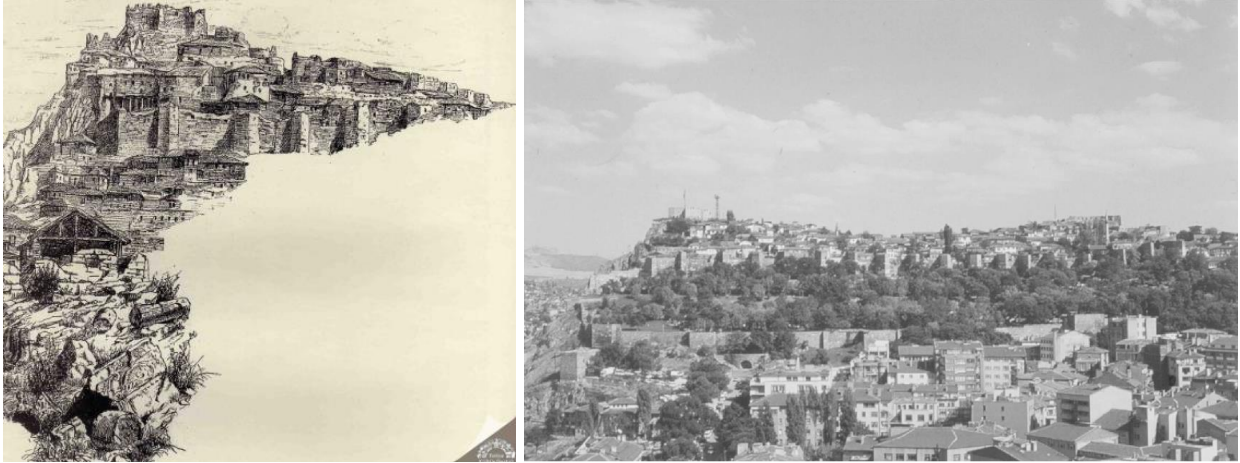
On the front of the banknote (Figure 2), the Parliament Building, Ankara Castle, and a peasant plowing with a plow and a picture of Ankara's former Prime Ministry building at the back.



*Figure 2. 1. Emission 1. Series 1 Turkish Lira banknote front and back*

Declaring Ankara as the capital instead of Istanbul, which has served as the seat of empires for ages, is seen as a bold and revolutionary move that reflects the desire to build a solid ideological foundation for the nation-state. As soon as it was designated as the capital city, the required development work was initiated to make room for all governmental agencies, general directorates, and embassies.

Perched on a rocky hill above Bent Creek (also known as Hatip Stream), Ankara Castle is ideally situated for defense (Figure 3). The castle's initial construction, which is believed to have taken place during the Galatians' period in the second century BC, is unknown. Ankara stone and various materials were used in its construction. With 42 towers, the inner castle was constructed in the seventh century by the Byzantines. Alaaddin Keykubad, the Seljuk Sultan, restored the castle in 1227. Later, under the reign of Sultan II Keykavus, further improvements were constructed in 1249. The Hisar Gate bears an inscription from the Ilkhanids, dating back to 1330.



**Figure 3.** Ankara Castle, (Edmund Naumann. *Von Goldnen Horn zu den Quellen des Euphrat. München, Leipzig, 1893* (On the Left, *Türkiye Kültür Portalı*). View of Ankara Castle with city silhouette, Erendil & Ulusoy, 2002 (On the Right)[17].

During the Ottoman period, the walls were repaired again in 1832. Inside the castle, which is inhabited today, there are old Ankara houses built after the 17th century, the Alaaddin Mosque dating back to the 12th century, and historical fountains and shops [18].

The image of the old prime ministry building in Ankara (the first prime ministerial building, the Ministry of Finance) is a part of the process of legitimizing Ankara as the new capital. Turkish Republic's centralism, power, and national identity are reflected [8]. In the image of the building used on the back of the banknote, the building form is perceived together with its exterior spaces from a certain distance. First Prime Ministry Building - It is one of the first buildings of the Early Republic Period. The Old Ministry of Finance Building is located in Ulus, in Vilâyet Square. The Redif Barracks, built during the Ottoman period, was located on the site of the building. The unusable barracks were demolished and the Ministry of Finance Building was built in its place. The Provincial Park and the Governorship Building are located east of the building, and İş Bank is in the south. The Ministry of Finance Building, built in 1925, is the first ministry building of the Republic period. The Architect of the building is Yahya Ahmet and the Engineer is İrfan. The building, which was also used as the Prime Ministry for a period, has survived to the present day with additions made in 1927 and after the 1950s. The work, which was built during the First National Architecture Period, is considered a living witness and one of the symbolic structures of the period. Until recently, no mass intervention was made, and largely preserved its originality. The restoration of the building was completed in 2017 and is currently used as the Rectorate Building by Ankara Social Sciences University (Figure 4) [19].



**Figure 4.** The Old Prime Ministry Building in Ankara, Salt Research, Ülgen Family Archive (on the left); <https://www.asbu.edu.tr/tr/genel-bilgi> (on the right)[19]

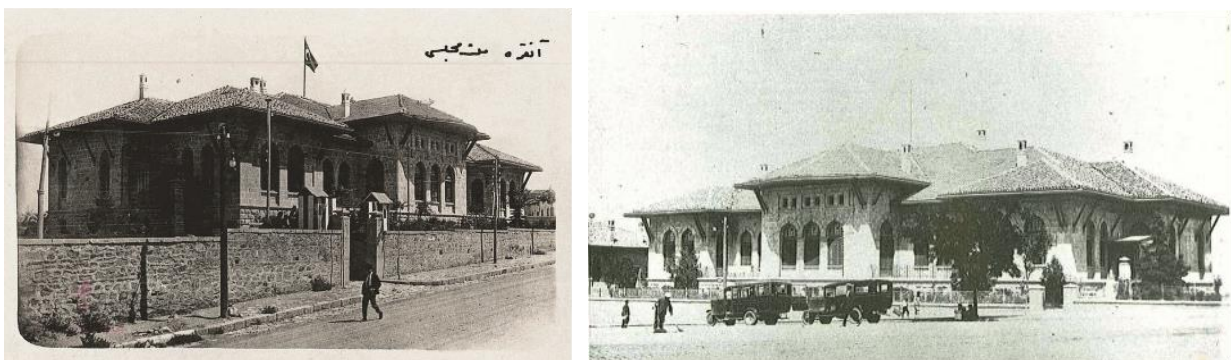
#### 4.2. 1. Emission 1. Series 5 Turkish Liras

Ankara Castle, a gray wolf, and the parliament building are depicted on the front and a picture of a bridge from Ankara is at the back (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** 1. Emission 1. Series 5 Turkish Lira banknote front and back

The first meeting of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) on April 23, 1920, was held in the building located in Ulus Square. It was originally erected in 1915 for the Committee of Union and Progress. Up until October 18, 1924, the building—which is regarded as one of the early examples of the "First National Architecture" style in the capital—served as a parliament (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Turkish Grand National Assembly 1st Parliament Building. (In the image on the left, "Ankara National Assembly" is written in Ottoman Turkish. <https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/>)[20]

In 1961, it was converted into a museum and opened as the "Turkish Grand National Assembly Museum" to the public. It was reopened as the War of Independence Museum on April 23, 1981, following

renovations to the collection and exhibition halls. The museum features artifacts from the years of the Republic's proclamation and the War of Independence.

The building was designed in 1916 by the Evkaf (Foundations Administration) architect Salim Bey, upon the order of Enver Pasha, to be used as a club building by the Party of Union and Progress. Mahmut Şevket (Esental) Bey, the Party of Union and Progress's representative in Ankara at the time, was tasked with carrying out the project. Military architect Hasip Bey was assigned the project construction work when he was serving in the Corps. Hasip Bey successfully completed the masonry part of the building, but the roof and other sections were left unfinished due to the ongoing war and material shortage. When it was decided to open the Grand National Assembly of Turkey on April 23, 1920, it was seen that there was no building in Ankara with the necessary size and equipment to hold the Assembly. It was therefore decided to use the Union and Progress Party Club Building, whose construction was incomplete, as the Parliament Building, and to entrust the task of repairing and finishing the building to Necati Bey (who was later elected Bursa Deputy for the 1st Term). The building was constructed from pink-purple dyed local andesite stone, known as Ankara stone, and is among the first examples of the First National Architectural Period Style in Ankara. It was completed with tiles brought from the homes of the citizens of Ankara, as well as the Numune School in Ulucanlar (now Cumhuriyet Primary School). The building housed the Turkish Grand National Assembly from 23 April 1920 until 15 October 1924. Later, during the same period, it served as the Republican People's Party headquarters and briefly hosted the Law School. After being moved to the Ministry of Education (formerly the Ministry of National Education) in 1952, work on converting it into a museum started in 1957, and on April 23, 1961, it was opened to the public under the name "Grand National Assembly Museum" (Figure 7) [20].



*Figure 7. Grand National Assembly (T.R. Ministry of Culture and Tourism).*

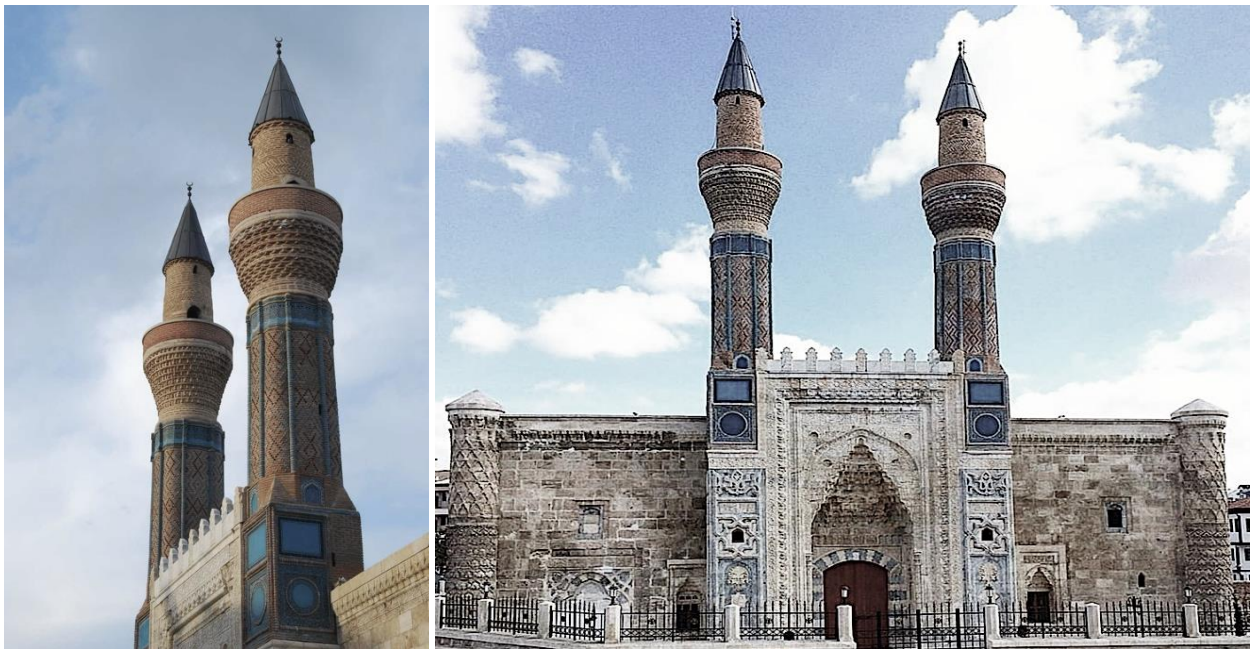
#### **4.3. 1. Emission 1. Series 500 Turkish Liras**

There is an image of Sivas Gök Medrese and Atatürk on the front and a view of the city of Sivas is on the back (Figure 8).



**Figure 8. 1. Emission 1. Series 500 Turkish Liras front and back**

Gök Medrese in Sivas is one of the most important buildings where Turkish architecture and decorative art can be seen together and was built during the Anatolian Seljuk period (Figure 9). From the inscriptions in various parts of the building, it is understood that it was built in 1271, during the reign of III.Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev. The marble stone gate of Gök Medrese has a rich appearance that allows the play of light and shadow to be experienced. The building has a two-story plan with an open courtyard and four iwans. The building, which is known to have served as a madrasah where religious sciences were studied since the date it was built, was converted into a museum in 1926 [21].



**Figure 9. Gök Medrese in Sivas (Sivas İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü <https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr>).**

## 5. CONCLUSION

The Cash Documents Commission carried out 9 months of meticulous work to print, design, and exchange the First Emission (E1) Group paper money. This banknote group, consisting of denominations of 1, 5, 10, 50, 100, 500, and 1,000 lira, was printed in 1927. Portraits, paintings, engravings, and calligraphy were employed in addition to illumination motifs. The design is dominated by the representation language created with the era's technological capabilities. The same colors were used on the front and back of all banknotes. As the value of the banknotes increased, so did their size in millimeters, the ornamentation and motifs were Islamic and Ottoman. The desire to launch a competition for 1st Emission group banknote designs was expressed but did not materialize. This quest can be interpreted as a signal of the goal of democratization.



The banknotes' emphasis on Ankara as the capital was accomplished by incorporating Ankara Castle which defined the city. Ankara Castle, in addition to its context of being in the new capital of the Republic, can be interpreted as a reference to the historical layers, roots, and experiences of the city by surviving throughout the ages. Since cities are defined by their built and natural environments, the castle silhouette that symbolizes the city is a symbol of the intertwined cultural richness that has lived in these lands for hundreds of years. The representation of the resistance in the center of Anatolia, the image of the peasant as the hero of the struggle and the master of the nation, underlines the importance given to the people. The images of the cities of Afyon and Sivas chosen outside Ankara are symbols of their importance in the War of Independence and the importance given to Anatolia. The Sakarya railway line was assessed as a sign of progress toward development. The buildings used on a single building scale stand out as the Parliament Building and the former Prime Ministry - Ministry of Finance building, which reflects the ideology of the Republic and the spirit of the period. The use of the Parliament building is because it is functionally a symbol of national sovereignty. Both buildings are considered as the 1st National Architectural movement and although they lost their original functions, they have been re-functioned and survived until today. The facade image of Sivas Gökmedrese is represented as both the symbol of the city and an important historical and cultural heritage element of the Seljuk period. It was determined that the architectural images used on banknotes during the examined period, while conveying social memory and history, emphasized common values and ideals and reflected the ideology of the republic and the spirit of the period.

From history to the present, architecture symbolizes different values with its physical features, function, proportion, and location. Architecture, beyond just meeting spatial needs, consists of layers that contain different social, political, cultural, and historical meanings. This study, which deals with the architectural images on the Republic of Turkey 1st Emission banknotes, emphasizes that spatial representations are not limited to only architecture or design disciplines, but are also related to different academic fields such as cultural studies, history, and sociology.

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