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A VERY IMPORTANT FOUNDATION IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC HISTORY OF AYANCIK AND ITS SURROUNDINGS; THE ZINGAL COMPANY (TURKEY)

Cevdet Yılmaz,

Geography Department, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, 19 Mayıs University, Samsun, Turkey.

E-mail: cyilmaz@omu.edu.tr

Abstract

The study area is Ayancık district of Sinop province located, which is in the western part of the North Anatolia, and surrounded by Zindan and Çangal Mountains.

Zingal, named after **Zindan** and **Çangal** forest, is one of the first companies with foreign capital in Republican of Turkey, founded by the Belgians in 1928. The company had been operated by the Belgians for 18 years until it was nationalized in 1945. The company engaged in lumbering in the forest, transporting lumbers to the factory constructed in the center of Ayancık, processing them in the factory and selling finished products in domestic and international markets.

The main goal of the study is present the transportation system which had been established for transporting lumbers from inner parts of the forest to the factory. This long used transportation system, which has been completely destroyed today, was carried out in the following two ways, which we are completely in conformity with the physical geographic conditions:

1. A serial cableway 28 km long was installed between Çangal and Zindan forests and Ayancık lumber factory and this line transported some part of timbers.
2. Some part of the raw material was transferred by railway (dekovil) which was 72 km length and lay in valley floors of Zindan and Çangal mountains and reaching Ayancık lumber factory.

This system worked profitably from the beginning of 1930's to late 1950's by means of steam power when there were no roads or motor vehicles. Thereafter, firstly the aerial cableways was dismantled and then the railway was destroyed because of a huge torrent disaster in 1963. In the following years the old system was not repaired and roads and motorized vehicles replaced the old system.

It can be claimed that the Zingal Company had been successful in meeting the demands of local people and its operation style left deep impacts over the socio-economic history of Ayancık and its neighborhood.

Keywords: Ayancık, North Anatolia, Zindan and Çangal Forests, Zingal Company

INTRODUCTION

The research field is situated in Northern Anatolia, city of Sinop, Ayancık County and its vicinity (*Figure 1*). This region, which constitutes the eastern section of İsfendiyar-Küre Mountains, is rich in forest (*Photo 1*). A company of foreign investment was established in 1928 with a group of Belgians pioneering it in order to manage this rich resource of forest by founding a lumber factory in the district center of Ayancık. The company, which was named after **Zindan** and **Çangal** forests, had managed the said forest, which they had rented from the government for a period of 30 years, for 18 years until 1945 when the two forests were nationalized due to

insufficient management an violation of agreement terms. Main activity field of the company consisted of felling trees in Zindan and Çangal forests, transporting lumbers to the factory founded in the district center of Ayancık and selling the processed lumbers in domestic and international markets.



Photo 1. A view from the rich forest structure of Zindan (left) and Çangal (right) mountains.

The subject of the research is to introduce the transportation system established by The Zingal Company in order to exploit forests in the region, and the effects of the system on the environment. During 1930's, at a time when road transportation was underdeveloped, this transportation system, which was founded to overcome the difficulties brought about by the prevailing physical geographical conditions, and which was supervised by a telephone communication that was considered excellent with respect to its time, was basically made up of four stages. These were;

- The transportation of felled trees by sliding on slopes with manpower and by dragging on flat surfaces with animal power.
- Forming pools in the inner parts of valleys at the places with appropriate slopes. Causing to float in wooden channels filled with water-transported lumbers collected here.
- Transportation through teleferic system (cable railway, aerial railway) installed between Çangal woods and the factory located in the district center of Ayancık.
- Transportation through a dekovil (narrow-gauge railway) installed on valley floor via the branches of Ayancık creek.

The railway, teleferic system and pool system do not exist anymore. The big flood disaster that occurred in the region in 1963 devastated the said systems. During the same years, in parallel with the road construction works in Turkey, road transportation also started in the woods of Ayancık (instead of the repair of the former system). Transportation of lumbers via water channels is still in use within the factory field and the use of man and beast (animal) power is still effectively in prevalence. The lumbers which were transported to the pools, teleferic line and the railway by man and beast power in the past are being transported to the roads which spread through the forest as a web and, these lumbers are loaded upon the trucks to be transported to their destinations.

In our research, we mainly examined the teleferic line and the railway system, which used to be utilized between the years 1929 and 1963. These two systems are not used anymore. Several publications and studies have been carried out on the field of research (GÖKMENOĞLU 1988, ANADOL 1996, YILMAZ 1997, TIMOR 1999, YILMAZ 2001, KARATAY 2002). However, none of these are directly related with the subject. Therefore, we mainly benefited from the knowledge obtained from the live witnesses who actively worked as administrators and employees during

the period when the system operated and from the old pictures taken in that time (although the dates on which the photos were taken are not known exactly).

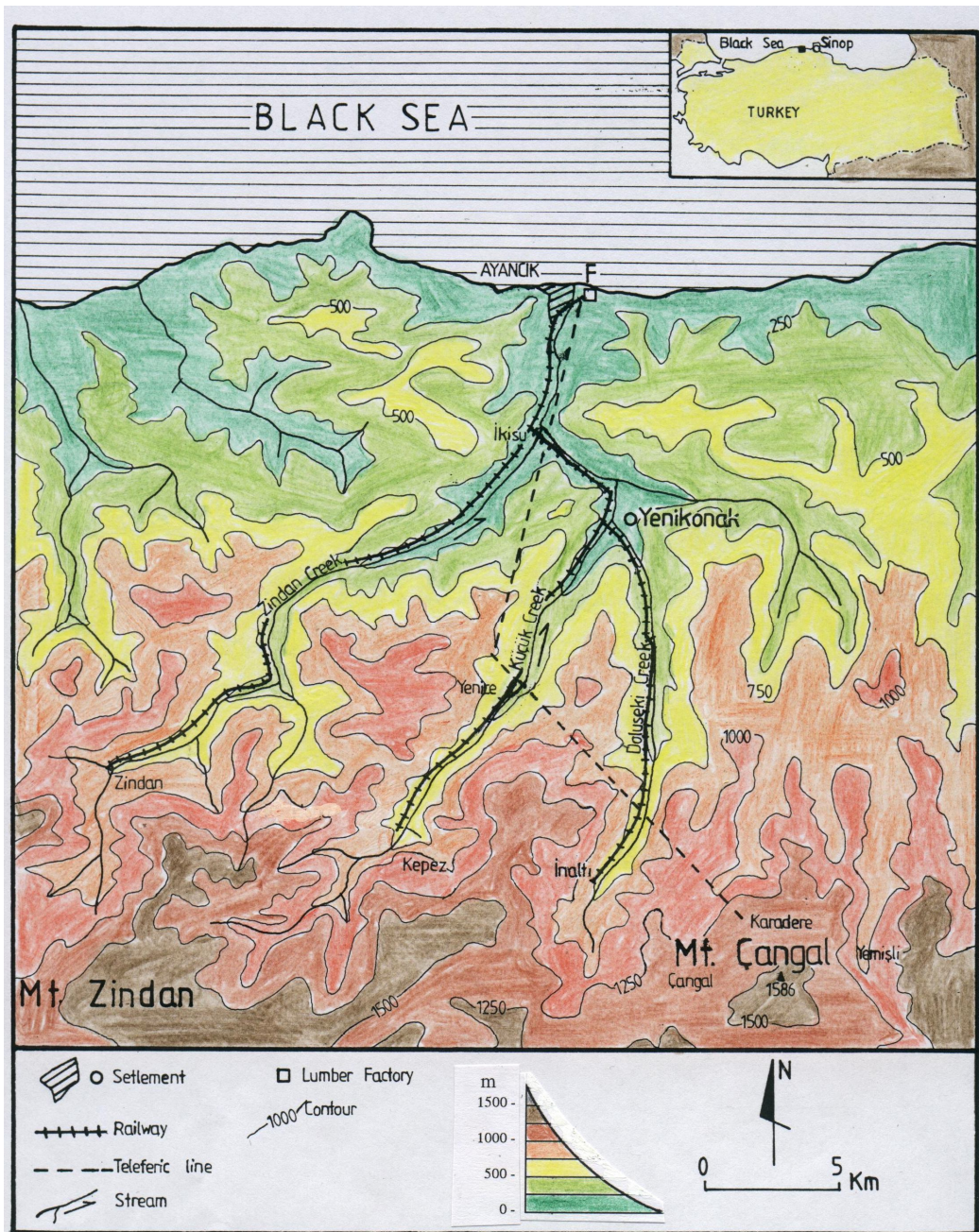


Figure 1. Map of research field, and The Zingal Company transportation system.

A. THE MAIN COMPONENTS OF THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

1. Teleferic system (aerial line)

The Zingal Company constructed a teleferic line between Çangal Forest and the factory that the company founded in the district center of Ayancık (Figure 1). This line, which was 28 km long and operated by steam power, was in use for many years (Photo 2). The line had a lumber transport capacity of 200 m³ lumbars at a time and 400 m³ per hour. In the following years, the line between the factory - Yenice was uninstalled in 1953 due to the fact that the railway system was regarded as sufficient. The line between Yenice – Çangal continued to serve in full capacity until 1968. With the introduction of the land transportation to the entire region, this line was also uninstalled in 1968 and it was used in the construction of Bursa–Uludağ teleferic line.



Photo 2. Lumber transportation via teleferic line from Çangal Mountains to Ayancık Lumber Factory in 1930's (ANONYMOUS).

2. Railway system (dekovil line)

The Railway, which reached the woods from the district center of Ayancık and that, was installed on the valley floors in parallel with the branches of Ayancık creek constituted the backbone of the system (*Figure 1*). The line divided into two upon reaching İksu station from the district center of Ayancık. One of the lines ended up in Zindan station after following a course along the valley of Zindan creek. The other line continued until Yenikonak, divided into two there and reached İnaltı and Kepez regions along the branches of the waterway. The total length of the railway was 72 km. In the structure of the system, there were 4 dekovil (light locomotive) and approximately 50 wagons in total. Dekovil wagons were able to carry loads up to a quantity of 10 trucks at each time. The route was always under the risk of flood danger since it passed through deep valley floors. The major stations and log stores were set up at the places where valleys were relatively permitted a certain space (*Photo 3*). The function of the line was to collect the logs that were accumulated in certain stations along the valleys that it crossed using human and animal power, aerial line and pool-channel system and to deliver them to the factory (*Photo 4*).



Photo 3. Zindan creek valley (left). Railway stations were established in the relatively wide places of the valleys (between). There are very few relics of these stations in our time (right).

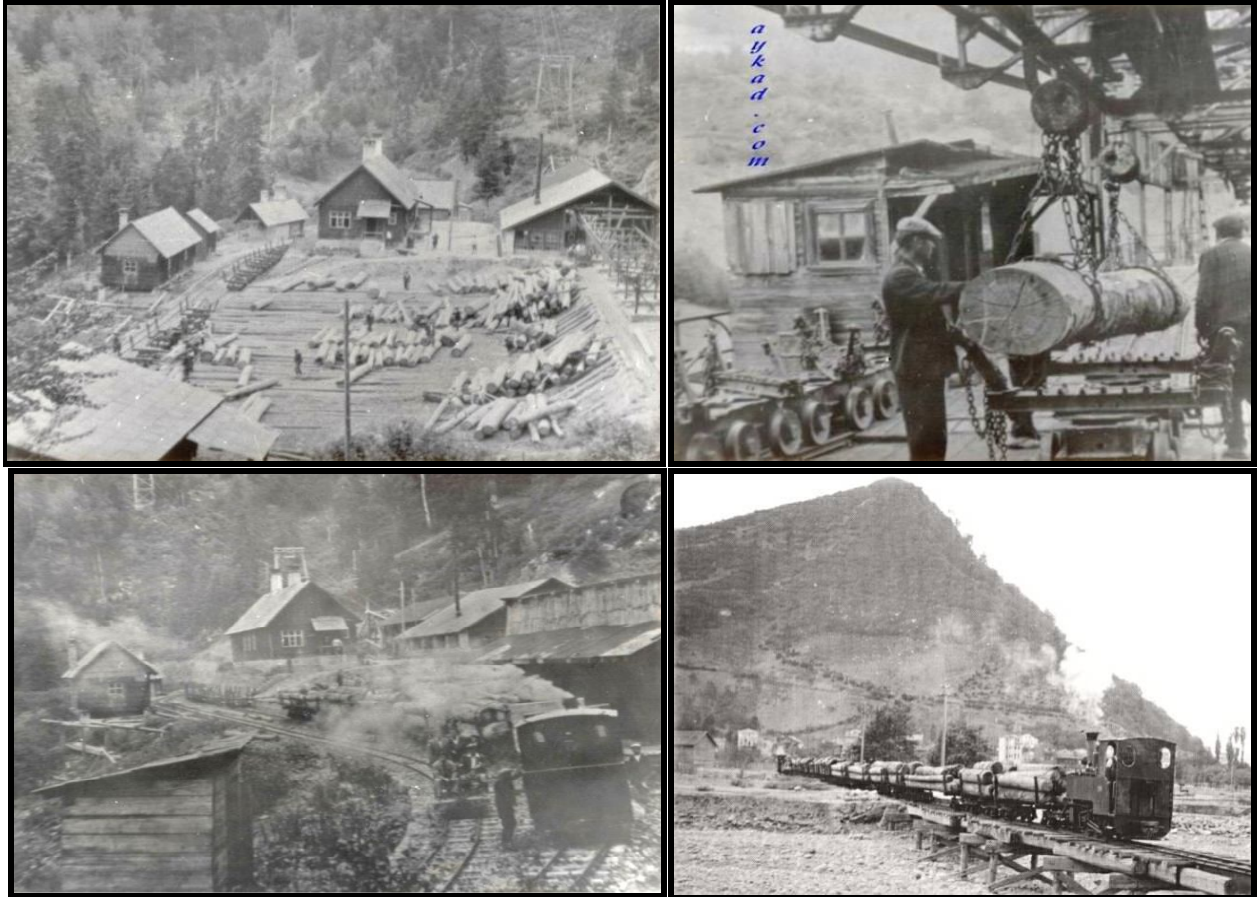


Photo 4. Transporting to the factory the logs transferred from Çangal woods through the aerial line and then loaded to drevil wagons (ANONYMOUS).

The railway line was also used for the transportation of workers and administrative staff between the forest and the factory, transportation of local people from district center to villages and transportation of patients to hospital (*Photo 5*). Other than the light railway wagons, there was a drezen (*Fr. Draisinne*) used by administrative personnel and also several vagonet (small railway wagons, small coach). The railway had a single line at all routes. As a precaution against any possibility of accident, the movement of the Light Railway wagons between the stations was controlled by a telephone communication system



Photo 5. Administrative personnel on drezen (left), passengers waiting for train at the platform (between) (ANONYMOUS) and a first aid wagon (right).

3. Pool and channel system

In İnalıtı and Zindan valleys, some pools were built at the places where the railway ended due to slope fractures. Accordingly, there were 4 pools in İnalıtı and 2 in Zindan. The logs transferred

from the inner parts of the forest using man and animal power were gathered in the pools before transported to the railway station by floating them in some wooden channels filled with water. In fact, this system was not preferred much as the logs could be damaged due to some impacts inside the channel. This system was also destroyed as a result of the destruction of the railway system. However, the channel system implemented inside the forest is still in use in the area of the factory today (*Photo 6*).

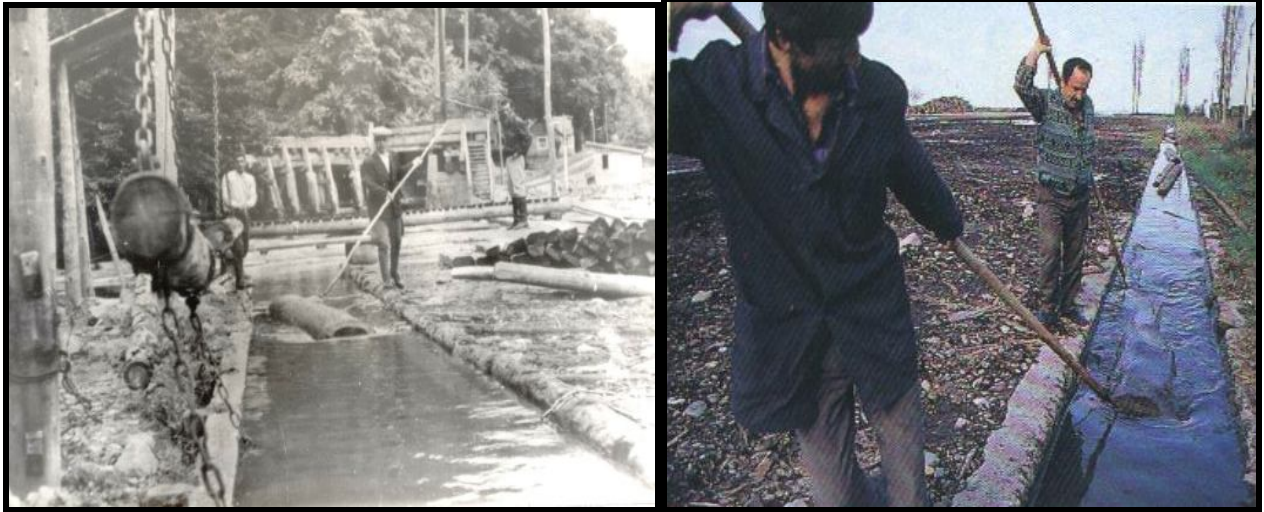


Photo 6. Transportation of the logs by floating them in the channels filled up with water in 1930's (left) (ANONYMOUS). This method is still used in the area of the factory today (right) (ANADOL 1996).

The logs that reach the factory by all these mentioned ways were processed in the factory and several types of lumber were manufactured. Afterwards, these lumbers were exported to domestic and international markets as finished goods. Due to the intensive demand between 1930 and 1963 when the factory operated most actively, little boats queued in front of the steel quay of the factory (*Photo 7*). In the period when the road did not exist, the only transportation means was sea. The factory that employed average 500 people was the most important workplace of the district center of Ayancık.

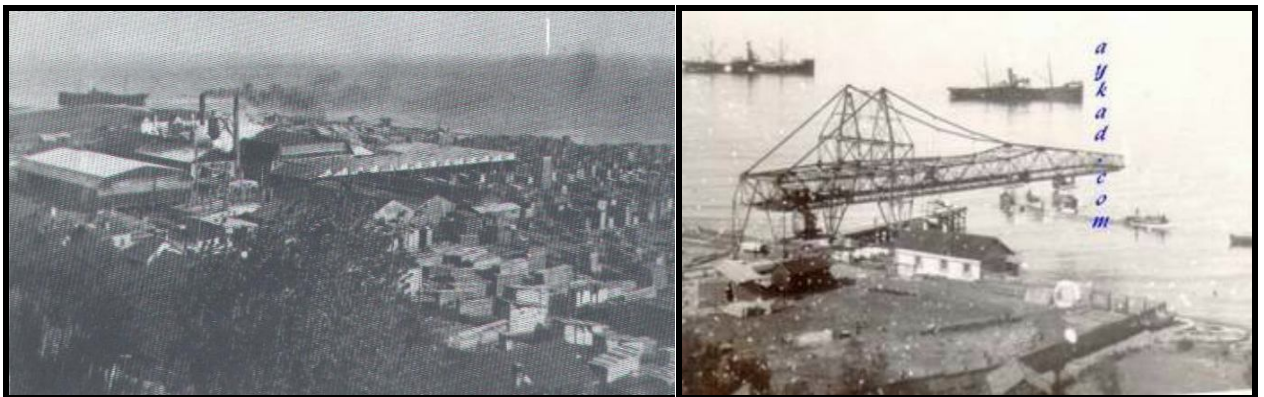


Photo 7. Process of logs in the factory (left) and disposal via sea (right) (ANONYMOUS).

B. COLLAPSE OF THE SYSTEM

The big flood disaster that occurred in 1963 destroyed the railway system that had been installed in the valley floor (*Photo 8*). The system was not repaired again and as a result, the aerial line remained out of service. The system was operated profitably in the time when the road

transportation of Turkey did not exist. However it was necessary to load, unload or stack the logs 7 or 8 times during the transportation from the place where the trees were felled to the factory, which increased the cost. Therefore, a change to road transportation in the forest was intended even before the flood disaster. This is the main reason for not repairing the railway system after the flood and for transition to road transportation. Accordingly, Ayancık has been the first place where the first road network inside forest was installed in the fastest way in Turkey after the flood (*Photo 9*). The logs, which had been transported to the pools, teleferic and railway stations by man and animal power, were now transported via road transport. By this way, logs loaded from the sideways of roads to trucks were transported to warehouses or factory by only one loading process (*Photo 10*).



Photo 8. The flood that occurred in 1963 destroyed the all transportation system from the Zindan and Çangal forests to the district center of Ayancık (ANONYMOUS).



Photo 9. After the flood, a network of roads was installed in the forests (left) (ANONYMOUS) and the old rails were used for constructing the bridges (right).



Photo 10. The logs which had previously been transported to the in the valley stations using man and animal power (left) (KARATAY, 2002) are today carried to the sideways of the roads in the forests that were constructed after the flood of 1963, and then, they are transported to the warehouses by one single loading process (between and right).

CONCLUSION

Ayancik, which had been a small village in the first years of the Republic of Turkey, experienced an extraordinarily rapid change and development after the installation of a forest management system by The Zingal Company (*Photo 11 and 12*). The influence of the foreigners was felt in the district promptly and as a consequence, besides the modern education atmosphere that was allowing the local and foreign children to study in the same classes, sports like tennis, basketball, volleyball, football, and equitation were practiced in an advanced level in early thirties. People easily and quickly accommodated to the new ways of dressing and life style that the Republic presented (*Photo 13*). Some foreign architectural elements besides the stone covered wooden houses started to appear (*Photo 14*). The company had turned the mills of the villagers resided in the inner parts of the valley into hydroelectric centrals and thus Ayancik achieved to be one of the first places that was able to use electricity using the power sources of the factory and the peripheral villages. With the inspiration of the old pool that was founded in the forest, Akgöl appeared as one of the most attractive sightseeing places of Sinop (*Photo 15*). Today, from the railway which had been the core of this system, there remains only a dekovil that was sent to the Rahmi Koc Industry Museum in Istanbul after exhibited in the district center of Ayancik for a while (*Photo 16*).



Photo11. The old and new Ayancik center, which showed a great development by the effect of The Zingal Company.



Photo 12. The Lumber Factory, which once occupied more than half of the total surface area of Ayancik center lost its importance in time and finally it, was privatized in 1996 but it never experienced its former state.

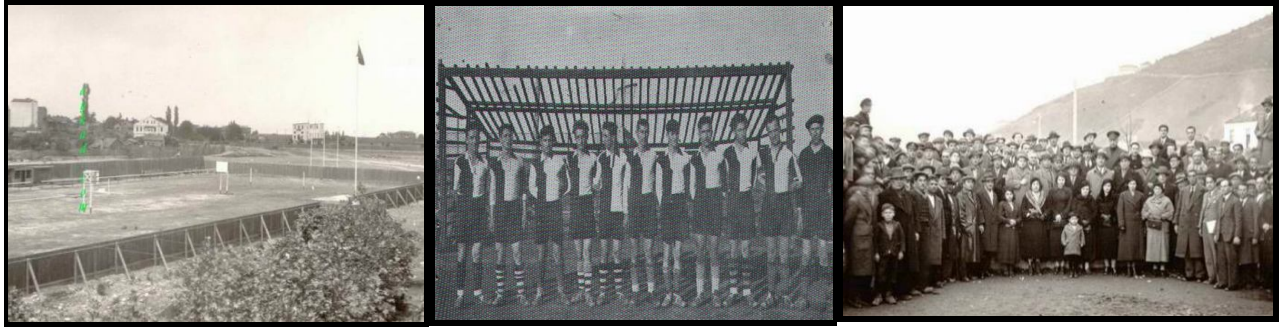


Photo 13. Sports activities in Ayancık in the thirties: Tennis, basketball and volleyball grounds, goal nets made of laths, and women & men with modern clothes in the inauguration of the Ayancık Halkevi (Public Education Center) in 1936 (ANONYMOUS).



Photo 14. Traditional stone and shingle covered wooden buildings and management buildings constructed by Belgians at Zindan valley in area of Ayancık.



Photo 15. A mill, which was used for lighting the buildings by generation of hydroelectricity (left) and Akgöl founded with the inspiration of the pool system.



Photo 16. The old dekovil that served to the district for a long lime was exhibited in Ayancık for a while before transported to Istanbul Rahmi Koç Museum and it is awaiting its visitors today

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