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International committee for
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of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

**MODERN
ARCHITECTURE
IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

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Open letter to Docomomo members and friends at the Ninth Docomomo conference

Dear all,

Docomomo Journal's current issue dedicated to modern architecture in the Middle East, pairing with the Ninth Docomomo International Conference hosted in Turkey, is indeed of special significance. The issue introduces a set of unexpected encounters involving a fresh new outlook on what Westerners construed or fantasized as "orientalism." Facing the Western world from the Eastern edges of the Mediterranean Sea, these encounters are meant to shed light on another history that is conscious of its millenary relevance and uniqueness; a history of the whole that reiterates itself in the smallest parts, material and immaterial, in stones, in golden fragments, in blue-greenish screens, in distant songs, in its melancholy. But beyond the impressions and notions conveyed by each of these parts is the wish to present a historical account of the efforts carried out by ancient communities to become modern societies, interpreting their founding premises and the present tensions that enduringly strain them.

Docomomo International provides opportunities to articulate alternative social visions for those who inhabit these 'Eastern' regions, rejecting nostalgia, yet forcefully asserting the need for utopia in imagining a better world.

Disenchanted when looking backwards on the degree zero of the 1920-1970s utopias, we are today confronted with the present state of modern architecture and cities, laden with images of change, competition, power, not to mention class, gender and other warfare. These thoughts have also impacted this issue of the Journal; in the complexity they explore, they have created a pattern of cross perspectives and evolving relations.

We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to our guest editors, Elvan Altan Ergut and Belgin Turan Özkaya, and to the authors for their remarkable contributions.

What will remain is that all these social, historical, spatial and architectural relations have generated the conditions to project alternative futures in the present context of globalization. Modernity has remarkably been "other" in its true essence, though the "otherness" of modernisms still belongs to the realm of our investigation. Along with the conference, this issue of the Journal hopes to give voice to that aspiration.

MARISTELLA CASCIATO

Lettre ouverte aux membres et amis de Docomomo présents à la neuvième conférence internationale

Chers amis,

Ce numéro du Docomomo Journal, consacré à l'architecture moderne au Proche-Orient et publié à l'occasion de la neuvième conférence de Docomomo en Turquie, revêt un sens particulier. Rencontre entre un grand nombre de pays, il propose un regard neuf sur ce que l'Occident a interprété ou rêvé comme l'« orientalisme ». Faisant face au monde occidental depuis les rives orientales de la mer méditerranée, ces rencontres visent à illuminer une autre histoire, une histoire consciente de son importance millénaire, de son unicité matérielle et immatérielle, une histoire faite de pierres, de tesselles dorées, d'écrans bleu-gris, de mélodies distantes et empreintes d'une indicible mélancolie. Mais, au-delà de ces évocations fragmentaires, il s'agit également d'illustrer les efforts menés par ces antiques civilisations pour devenir des sociétés modernes, à travers l'interprétation de leurs actes fondateurs et de leurs tensions actuelles, leur rejet de la nostalgie et leur besoin de réaffirmer des utopies pour pouvoir imaginer un monde meilleur.

Tout en posant un regard désenchanté sur le degré zéro des utopies des années 1920-1970, nous sommes aujourd'hui confrontés à l'état actuel de l'architecture moderne de toutes ces villes, bruisantes de changements et d'adaptations, de compétition et de pouvoir, sans mentionner les problèmes de classes, d'identités et de guerre.

Ces réflexions ont également nourri les débats de ce numéro du Docomomo Journal. Elles ont donné lieu, par leur complexité, à un riche ensemble de perspectives croisées et d'évolutions mouvantes.

Un grand merci à nos éditrices invitées, Elvan Altan Ergut et Belgin Turan Özkaya, et à tous les auteurs de ce numéro pour leurs remarquables contributions historiques, spatiales et architecturales qui permettent de projeter des futurs alternatifs dans le contexte actuel de la mondialisation.

La modernité a été remarquablement "autre" dans son essence et nous espérons que, conjointement à la tenue de la conférence Docomomo à Ankara, cette altérité qui participe pleinement de notre discours donnera voix à de nouvelles aspirations.

MARISTELLA CASCIATO

Seyfi Arkan,

President Atatürk's summer residence
in Florya, Istanbul (1934-1936)

Photo by **Franco Panzini**



Making Modernism Modern the Failure of Rehabilitation

THE THERMAL BATH COMPLEX OF SIDI HARAZEM BY ZEVACO

■ AZIZA CHAOUNI

The thermal bath complex of Sidi Harazem, built in 1961 by architect Jean-François Zevaco, is one of the most important pieces of post-colonial modernist architecture in Morocco. The project embodies Zevaco's architectural virtuosity, displaying his unique style that mixes the CIAM's formal concepts,

values. This attitude, coupled with astute real estate speculation, has resulted in the forsaking, vandalizing and destruction of numerous modernist gems.

In such a hostile climate, where the few preservation actions remain localized and the result of private initiative, the rehabilitation of Sidi Harazem by a government-owned consortium, the Caisse de Dépôt et de Gestion, could seem very laudable. However, the approach and methods chosen are quite problematic as they employ a traditional pastiche that blatantly ignores the identity of the thermal complex and disfigures Zevaco's masterpiece. In order to understand the implications of the current renovation we should first focus briefly on the genesis of the project.

After the independence in 1956, the Moroccan government, following its agenda of simultaneously promoting traditional forms of tourism for nationals and attracting foreign visitors, decided to build Western modeled hotels and sanitary facilities for this popular thermal station. In 1958 the Caisse de Dépôt et de Gestion, associated with semi-public groups,³ designated the architect Jean-François Zevaco to conceive the project. By then, Zevaco was an established architect who had already completed private commissions⁴ and important public buildings.⁵ At the beginning of the 1960s, the raw concrete and dynamic formalism of his architecture had often intimidated Zevaco's contemporaries, but its unique inventiveness was praised both by the French architectural press⁶ and by his colleague Ben Mbarek, who described him as "the most original, and, at the same time, the most Moroccan architect



Fig. 1. **Jean-François Zevaco**, Thermal bath complex of Sidi Harazem, swimming pool entry booth with recent additions, first completed 1960

the lyricism of Frank Lloyd Wright, and Moroccan inspirations. Presently however, the efforts made to preserve modern architectural heritage in Morocco are very limited. Initiatives are mainly carried out on the one hand by the association Casamémoire,¹ whose efforts have materialized in privately led renovations, and on the other in the listing by the Ministry of Culture of a few buildings mostly located in Casablanca.² Modernist architecture is very often spurned by Moroccans, who associate it with colonial domination and perceive it as extrinsic to their culture, ignoring its unique aesthetic and mnemonic

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of his time.⁷ Indeed, Zevaco's architecture is unclassifiable: it uses the international style palette in a very personal manner, exploring both the sculptural dimension of forms and the physical conditions of Morocco, especially its light and textures.

In the Sidi Harazem project, Zevaco pursued the investigation of those ideas. The location of the project is adjacent to the fourteenth century shrine dedicated to the patron saint of springs, Sidi Harazem, built 30 km to the east of Fez by the Sultan Abdu El Hassan next to a hot spring rich in magnesium.⁸ During its five centuries of employment, the hot spring interwove therapeutic and sacred attributes to a possible use as a getaway and leisure facility by the city dwellers of Fez.⁹

Zevaco's approach was truly respectful of the site's landscape and spiritual value: the oasis surrounding the saint's mausoleum and the spring were left untouched. He plotted the new complex on a neighboring plateau and focused on the integration of public spaces to the natural landscape. Indeed, the whole project is centered around a large public courtyard, framed by a covered open-air market on one end, and a hotel and thermal fountain on the other. The complex is characterized by the fluidity of its public spaces, which run from the covered market, across the courtyard, under the hotel raised on pilotis, to the thermal fountain that borders the oasis. Zevaco used the variations of topography to shift tectonic planes, generating fountains, stairs, benches, green spaces and reflection pools. Thin channels carrying running water interpenetrate the project, following the circulation paths. The impressive circular swimming pool, protected by a cantilevered roof, is embedded within the rocky landscape, offering beautiful views towards the surrounding hills. Zevaco's effort to integrate the site is evident. Finally, Zevaco demonstrated in this project his outstanding architectural skill.

All elements are subject to innovation: the suspended stairs of the hotel, the market's roof of pyramidal motifs, the V-shaped columns raising the hotel above the ground, the impressive circular cantilever above the pool. All those structural and formal *tours de force* were made possible by the close collaboration between Zevaco and local craftsmen, allowing for affordable custom designs.¹⁰

This collaboration was also embodied in the use of Moroccan decorative motifs in strategic places such as in the thermal fountain. In fact, the fountain displays a subtle combination of styles; it is built in concrete, equipped with modern sanitary devices such as an anti-sliding floor and a gravel drainage system, while the faucets are in traditional yellow copper, and the basin and shaft are lined with *zelliges*.¹¹ Thus, Zevaco's attention to nature and its formal dynamism challenges the international style's precepts, and secures a unique space for his personal voice that was deeply connected to the Moroccan context.

Unfortunately, in an effort to revitalize Sidi Harazem's appeal to tourists, the recent rehabilitation¹² ignored the inherent importance of Zevaco's work, and in effect effaced its very concept and identity. Zevaco's core programmatic idea, the fluidity of public spaces, was annihilated by the fragmentation of the complex. For instance, the central courtyard is now enclosed and reserved to the exclusive clientele of the hotel. Furthermore, two areas, the swimming pool and a courtyard, have been circled and turned into enclosed cafeterias with loud orchestras, whose cacophonous noises pollute the serene atmosphere of the complex. Moreover, key programmatic areas have been left to waste: the open air market is condemned to house pigeon nests,

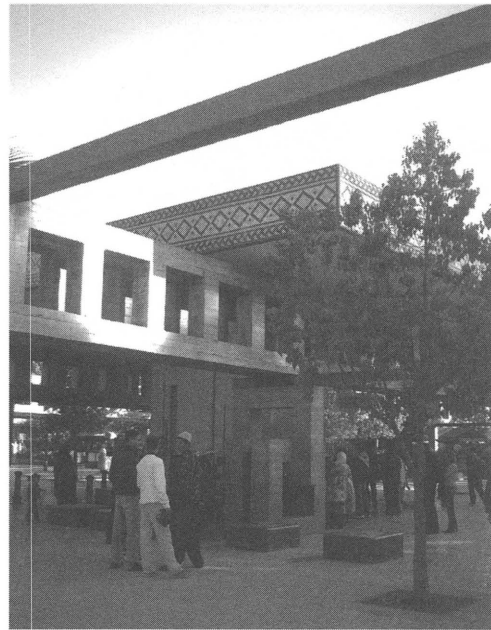


Fig. 2. **Jean-François Zevaco**, Thermal bath complex of Sidi Harazem, drinking fountain courtyard with its roof recently veneered with Moroccan mosaics, first completed 1960

while the swimming pool's locker rooms and showers are totally abandoned and have become a habitat for peacocks.

What is actually most alarming about the recent interventions is the disrespectful manner in which they were implemented. First, the delimitation of spaces is both careless and inconsistent: it comprises bamboo screens, metal wires and concrete walls covered with soda advertisements. Second, additions such as the entrance to the swimming pool¹³ were executed in a neo-Moresque style using green tiles and traditional mosaics, which is completely foreign to Zevaco's vocabulary (figs. 1 and 2). This 'Morocanization' of the architecture extends to the courtyard, where Zevaco's minimal volumes have been veneered with green and blue *zelliges*, and randomly painted bright red or blue (fig. 3). Similarly, the hotel's concrete walls have been covered with engraved wooden panels in Moroccan style both inside and outside (fig. 4).

The rehabilitation and additions could have been completed while respecting Zevaco's programmatic concepts and architectural language, or by completing the parts of the original scheme that



Fig. 3. **Jean-François Zevaco**, Thermal bath complex of Sidi Harazem, pergolas of main courtyard with its stairs recently veneered with Moroccan mosaics, first completed 1960

were never achieved.¹⁴ An honest and integrated rehabilitation, taking the project as a whole, would have been a more strategic way to re-vitalize the complex.

Today, Sidi Harazem has become a ridiculous travesty of its former modernist self. The attitudes that produced it are symptomatic of a larger issue in Morocco: how the country views itself and conceives of the tourist's gaze. Both images converge to define a fictitious national identity that intermingles the past with "thousand and one nights" constructed fantasies. In the process of defining a 'constructed authenticity,' the disregard of masterpieces such as Zevaco's Sidi Harazem denies the very ideas they convey: an inventive architectural language, a subtle integration of landscape and traditional elements,

and a civic minded programmatic conscience. But most importantly it denies a crucial moment of Moroccan architecture when it encompassed its past in "its entirety, rather than the appearance of its past."¹⁵

AZIZA CHAOUNI received her B.A. in structural engineering from Columbia University and her Masters in architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design. She is currently an Appleton Traveling Fellow, affiliated with the Center of Moroccan Studies at Harvard, researching tourist architecture in Morocco and focusing on the 1950s and 1960s. She is also a member of Docomomo Morocco.
aziza_chaouni@hotmail.com

NOTES

1 Casamémoire, an NGO acting for the preservation of Casablanca's architectural heritage was created by Rachid El Andaloussi, who is also the instigator of the provisional Docomomo's Moroccan chapter, born in June 2006.

2 Between 2003 and 2004, the Moroccan Ministry of Culture has listed and protected

47 twentieth century buildings, monuments and gardens, 85 percent of which are located in Casablanca. In 2004, no government led rehabilitation project had ever involved a modern building yet. Private interventions and incentives are the only proponents of such actions.

Information from:
<http://www.minculture.gov.ma/fr/bilan2003-2004.htm>

3 L'Office National du Chemin de Fer, l'Office National Marocain du Tourisme and Maroc Tourisme.

4 Villa Suissa, Casablanca (1947).

5 The Casablanca Aviation Club (1958), the Mohammedia Courthouse (1958), the Rehabilitation Center at Til Mellil (1960), and the Casablanca Convention Center Pavilion (1960).

6 Zevaco featured in the "Young architects of the world" issue of the eminent magazine *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* in April 1957.

7 Mourad Ben Embarek, *A+U, Revue africaine d'architecture et d'urbanisme* 2, 1964: 11.

8 Léon L'Africain, *Description de l'Afrique* (Paris: Editions Leroux, 1898).

9 Mohammed Berriane, *Tourisme national et migrations des loisirs: une étude géographique* (Rabat: Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines, 1990).

10 Michel Ragon and Henri Tastemain, *Jean-François Zevaco* (Paris: Editions Cercle d'Art, 1999).

11 Moroccan mosaics.

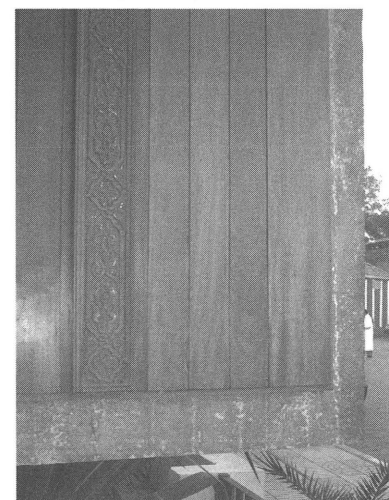
12 The rehabilitation was initiated in January 2004.

13 One wonders why this superfluous entry was built since a perfectly functional entry booth already existed.

14 According to the original master plan, the oasis was meant to be surrounded by public gardens and the thermal complex was supposed to include public facilities such as a school and a small clinic.

15 Thierry Nadau, "La reconstruction d'Agadir," in *Architectures françaises d'Outre-Mer* (Liege: Mardaga, 1992), 163.

Fig. 4. **Jean-François Zevaco**, Thermal bath complex of Sidi Harazem, entrance of the hotel with its concrete walls stairs recently covered with Moroccan traditional carved wood, first completed 1960



The Last Surviving Solarium

Jamnagar, India (1936)

A MODERN EXAMPLE OF TECHNOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

MIKI DESAI

When studying the history of architecture, the year 1880 can be construed as the onset of modernism in India as a result of the very first phase of the railway network and thereby of the (first) collective perception of the country.

The modified sense of distance and speed, as well as the new amenities, initially conflicted and ultimately dialogued with Indian socio-cultural and behavioral aspects. This is where modernism as an 'intent' manifests itself and if the railways can be considered as 'mechanism,' one can ask what the other comparable mechanisms that brought about modernism to were.

A number of buildings of this period are not perceived as having generated change.¹ Crucial questions thus are "How was modernity affected and which buildings brought about the sense of modernity? What were the nature and the effects of change?" Thus buildings that affected the behavioral aspects and core values of a society would be of importance. During the colonial period, physical changes initially occurred in existing settlements by way of inserts, bringing about a new look to the old cities. They were followed by the development of new areas with the help of a new concept,

namely that of living in bungalows grouped in compounds, that gave rise to the planned addition to old cities and thereby to the rise of modern urbanism. Town planning was affected by the changes in physical environment due to the colonial introduction of new institutions and therefore new buildings of civic, judiciary, education, health and recreation facilities. Amenities, services and manufacturing processes are/were rarely considered or qualified as conservation items although some of those special buildings produced modernity in a tacit manner. These examples are crucial in linking

Fig. 1. Jamnagar Solarium, the drum and the turret



© all pictures: Miki Desai



Fig. 2. Jamnagar Solarium, the treatment cabins with pivoting window, the roof and the treatment chairs with lens

the precedents and antecedents that can become the basis for the understanding of the overall human development. One of these examples, the Solarium in Jamnagar in the state of Gujarat in India, is the last surviving type of its kind and is of special interest due to a number of reasons.

"The solarium named after its founder Jam Ranjitsinhji as 'Ranji Institute of Poly Radio Therapy' was established in Jamnagar in 1933 at a cost of rupees six lakhs under the personal supervision of late Dr. Jean Saidman of France, the first inventor of the solarium. After the destruction of two similar solariums in France during the Second World War, this solarium is the only one of its kind in the world . . . It takes a complete round in 60 minutes and in order that the sun's rays fall perpendicular on the patients. The solarium is also equipped with a meteorological observatory to record atmospheric conditions. All types of radiations, X-ray, radium, sun rays and light are utilized at the solarium for the treatment of various diseases like tuberculosis, skin diseases, rheumatism, rickets and other certain types of cancer."²

This unique building is of tremendous interest from the technological, constructional, medical, social and perceptual viewpoints. At first sight the solarium looks like and even acts as a pedestal topped by a machine. It is made of three

different buildings parts. One is the static drum-like building that is octagonal in shape and contains two stories. A huge turret that seems to be floating due to the cantilever on both its ends sits on this static octagonal building. The third part is the basement that contains the heart of the solarium. In a sense, the solarium is a mix of the ordinary, the wondrous and the curious. The two-storied octagonal building is a frame structure with eight wedge-shaped peripheral rooms on each floor that serve as the 'hospital.' These rooms form a case around a circular court shaping a hollow on the inside of the building. The basement of the building stores

the mechanical system. It starts with the floor that is made of a 15 cm. thick steel plate with a 6.1-meter diameter whose periphery has a robust chain (15 cm) connected to a motor that moves the steel floor. On this floor rests a vertically trussed cube supporting the entire core with two more plates of the same diameter. On the upper floor eight pulley rotors at each junction of the octagonal (building) case hold the plate. These rotors have a greasing pump to keep the edge of the plates lubricated. Thus this mobile core—starting from the basement and reaching up to the two upper stories of the top turret—sits in the hollow courtyard-like space of the static octagonal building. The core at ground level and on the first floor consists of a staircase and a lift that go from the ground floor up to the turret. The turret is a 33.3 x 6.48 meters steel box comprising the arrival room where the stair and the lift end, the observatory and the meter room in its center, flanked by five solar treatment rooms (2.25 x 3.70 meters) on each side. These rooms are fitted with motor-driven sofa beds that can be pivoted to face the sunrays at a desired angle. The treatment rooms in the mobile turret have shower facilities and one section of the window as well as the glass roof can be opened by a pulley system

Fig. 3. Jamnagar Solarium, main axle and motor and chain in the basement/machine room bearing the "PECHUR PARIS" inscription



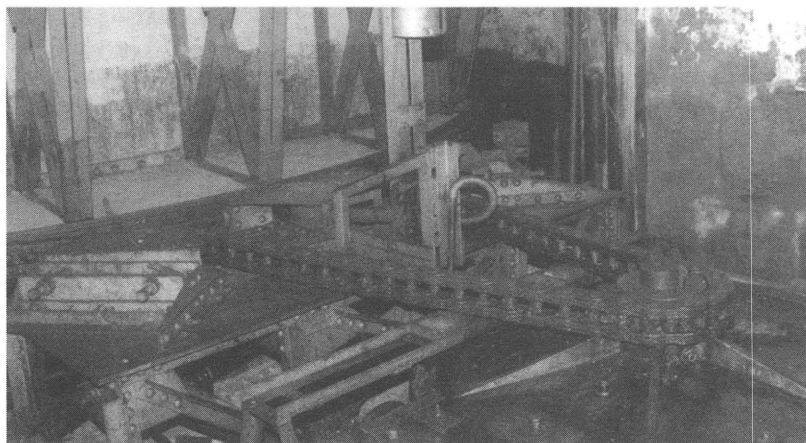


Fig. 4. Jamnagar Solarium, the first circular plate in the basement with vertical trusses supporting the upper plate



Fig. 5. Jamnagar Solarium, the ground floor seen with the rotating circular plate and the cage where the lift and stairs are located

that is incorporated to the structure. The treatment sofas have a cast iron and steel structure fitted with a motor for vertical adjustment and glass plate lenses to control the intensity of the sun. This entire device, starting with the steel plate in the basement and ending up in the turret that rotates by 360 degrees, rests on a single pivot.

In terms of materials, the mobile core consists entirely of steel angles and plates. Angle bars of 90 x 90 mm and 70 x 70 mm sections were used for framing and major trusses while the other sizes were of 70 x 70 mm and 40 x 40 mm. Steel plates were used in order to increase the sections as well as trussing mechanisms for both the vertical and horizontal members. The entire production was implemented thanks to bolts or rivets. The solarium is one of the finest examples of the pre-welding era

in steel construction in the Gujarat state, and perhaps throughout India. The paint is of a quality that has resisted the weather thus far and today the building's condition can be considered good.

A hospital was built in its vicinity, but the solarium today is kept locked and remains unattended to. Its state of preservation is very good for its age. The building and especially the machinery are in decent shape, and in a working condition, with only minimal damage. The machinery is well oiled and greased. But the electric circuit and some of the panels are damaged. The roof and the glasswork need some work. The repair work done in the past is of inferior quality and needs to be reworked and repainted. Detailed damage assessments need to be carried out before taking any actions. Fairly accurate measured

drawings have already been carried out but a revised set of drawings may be required.

This building can be regarded as the quintessence of a functionalist type and testifies to how the Western world considered various diseases and their cure, especially in the context of India where ample sun is available throughout the year. It also reflects the research led by—and the practical orientation of—the Western mind. The medical as well as the architectural professions should consider this building as a landmark building and as a great heritage of the twentieth century modernism much in need of conservation efforts. It will always remain a unique building.

MIKI DESAI has an Masters in architecture from the University of Texas at Austin, USA. He is full professor at the School of Architecture, CEPT, Ahmedabad, India. He was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship in 2000, a Graham Fund, 2005 and a Getty Grant, 2006. He is the co-author of *Architecture and Independence: The Search for Identity: India 1880 to 1980* (New Delhi: 1997, OUP). He is also the author of the exhibition catalogue *Architektur in Gujarat, Indien: Bauernhof, Stadthaus, Palast* (Zurich: The Rietberg Museum, 1990). mmdesai2@yahoo.co.in

NOTES

- 1 See Jon Lang, Madhavi Desai, Miki Desai, *Architecture and Independence the Search For Identity – India 1880 to 1980* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997).
- 2 Trivedi (ed.), *The Gazetteer of India, Gujarat State, Jamnagar District* (Ahmedabad: Government of Gujarat, 1970).

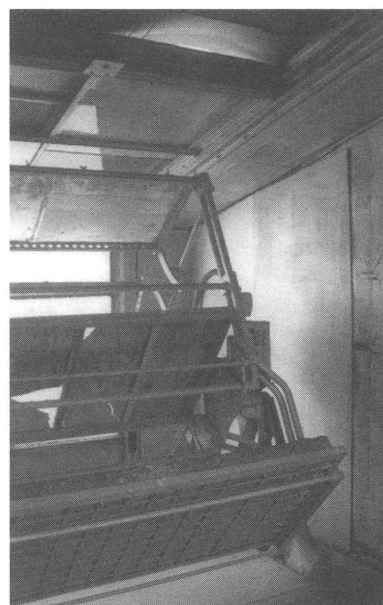


Fig. 6. Jamnagar Solarium, the adjustable treatment chair/sofa fitted with the lens and the red filter

Schwarze Pumpe

A 1950s POWER STATION IN GERMANY

LARS SCHARNHOLZ

In economic and architectural terms, the postwar planning of the Schwarze Pumpe power station emphasizes in an impressive way the socio-economic circumstances surrounding the establishment of the German Democratic Republic and with that the early search for a long-term solution for gaining industrial independence. The endeavor was meant to exemplify the planning and technological skills of the new socialist society. Although in the past the power station was often stigmatized as an industrial GDR juggernaut, what becomes apparent with hindsight and upon closer inspection are both the immense planning effort and the many remarkable innovations that were to be applied in the chemical and coal refining industries on a large technical scale.

On its own, Schwarze Pumpe is an industrial complex as big as a mid-sized city. During the years from 1955 to 1974, 900 hectares were built upon (planning: Georg Bilkenroth). Installations included power stations, briquette factories,

water treatment plants, electrical distribution units, gasworks, workshops, administration buildings, restaurants and buildings for social functions. At the end of the work day people met in clubs, workers' writing circles, amateur theater groups and in various other associations. The *Socialist Future*, a newspaper published by the works, appeared weekly. Carp was kept for the regional fisheries in the water management area, the main division of the gas combine. Schwarze Pumpe was not only a workplace; it was the center of socialization for a whole generation of energy workers.

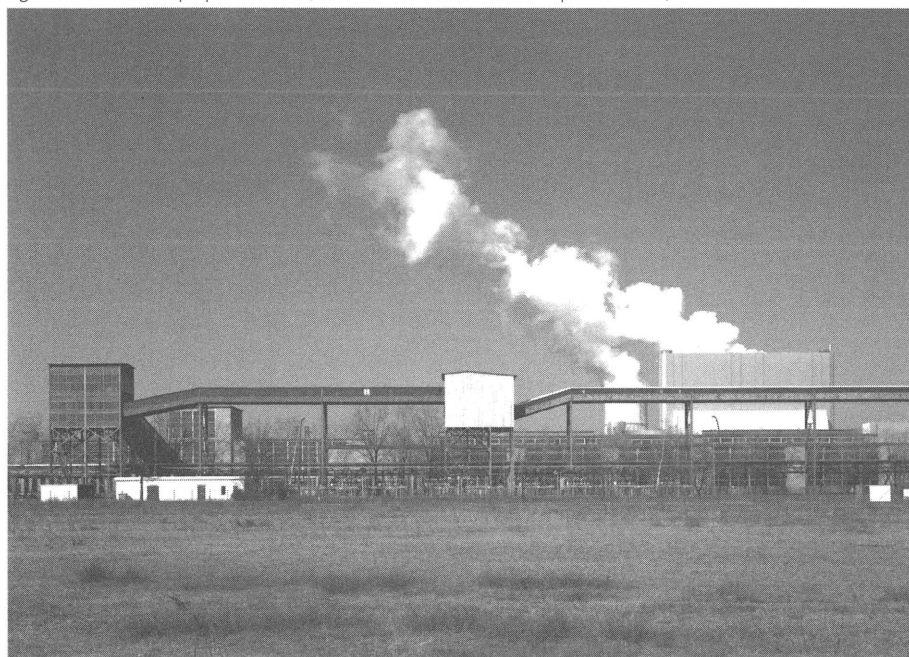
However, the buildup of the large lignite combine shaped not only a workplace and its workers. Schwarze Pumpe also gave shape to the modern industrial architecture of the GDR unlike any other industrial installation in Eastern Germany. The original core structure of the complex is based on a rigid, rationally orthogonal grid of roads, tracks and pipelines. Included are three symmetrically organized

production units, running North to South, each consisting of a power station, briquette factory and coking plant as well as additional technical installations. The roads and pipeline units, also running North to South, were planned at intervals of about 400 meters. The width of the gridlines running from East to West depended on the space requirements of the respective production unit and varied from 20 to 40 meters. The rigidity of the grid and the logic of the production process are reflected in the characteristic silhouette of the works.

The three production units that were constructed step by step, from West to East, illustrate the architectural planning and technical development of the GDR. The architectural design during these construction years is noteworthy because it is distinctly different from the buildings of the 1960s and 1970s. Whereas Stalinist influences of a national-traditional orientation decisively dominate the domestic buildings of postwar architecture, the buildings of Schwarze Pumpe, which date from the 1950s, remain closely connected to the formal functionality of the Weimar period. This is due, in particular, to architect Hermann Eppler who designed the first industrial buildings of Schwarze Pumpe. The attempt to bestow a powerful monumentality upon the buildings becomes apparent, not so much in the appearance of the facades as in the composition of the volumes of the buildings. To this day the clinker brick buildings such as the wet processing unit, the central pump station, the central laboratory and the heating unit testify to the exceptional clarity and rationality of this postwar architecture.

Currently, the works at Schwarze Pumpe are by no means at a standstill. They have undergone construction modifications in recent years and have been tuned to the new requirements of the market. Following the economic and currency union of the two German states in the summer of 1990 came the change from gas combine to

Fig. 1. Schwarze Pumpe power station, Western coalbunker and new power station, 2005



© Lorenz Kienle / INK



Fig. 2. Consultation: preparation for the construction of the pressing unit, 1958

© UMBV GmbH, Revitalization Area East Saxony/ INIK

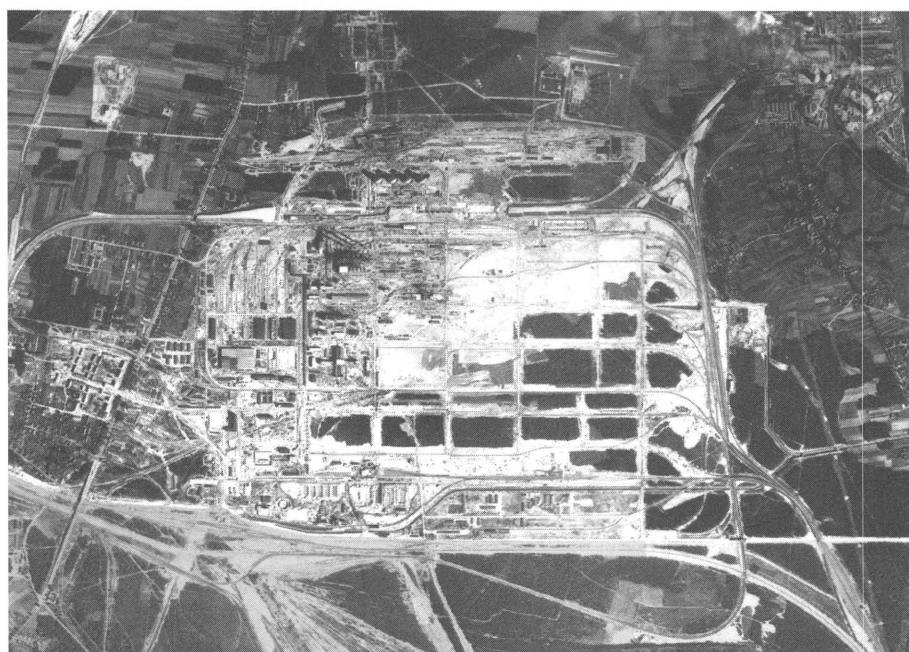


Fig. 3. Schwarze Pumpe, Aerial view: the huge combine

© Source: GMB, Central Archive Schwarze Pumpe/ INIK

independent capital company. In the ensuing years, Schwarze Pumpe was modified and adjusted to market conditions. The coking plant ceased production in 1992 and was demolished. In 1993 a new lignite power station was constructed, which began operating in 1998.

As a result, about 3,500 employees are at present working in more than 80 businesses at the site—a clear sign of timely restructuring. Today, after the first period of modification following the political change, Schwarze Pumpe holds

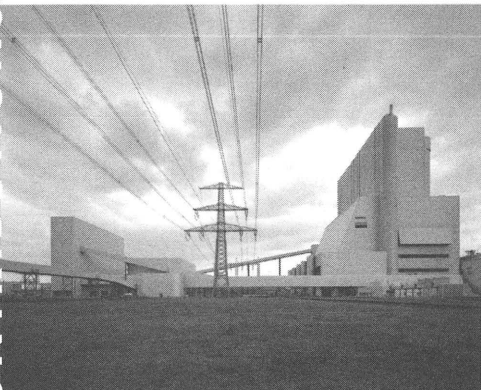
an unexpectedly modern position—between the original construction idea of the GDR and an uncertain future.

Whereas the town of Hoyerswerda—constructed in a monotonous pre-fabricated fashion—has had apparent difficulties processing the consequences of transformation during the phase of structural weakness that the eastern part of Germany has undergone, the industrial complex founded in the 1950s seems to be a robust business despite the difficult market

situation. Following the political and social changes of the early 1990s, a flexible, multi-functional concept of industrial park entirely replaced the original economic programmatic direction towards energy and coal refining.

The concept of modifying an industrial combine to create a modern industrial park has nevertheless implied some loss of the modern architectural heritage of the postwar period. In 1992, the coking plant ceased its production and was demolished, as were other buildings of postwar architecture.

Still missing at Schwarze Pumpe are two fundamental insights. First, it should be recognized that the unique buildings of the 1950s have marked the location. Preserving this unique characteristic will not weaken the site—it will strengthen it. Developers still fear that potential investors might be scared off by planning and design requirements. For instance, critics claim that the categorical preservation of existing buildings could represent a hindrance to development. However, the contrary may be concluded. So far, Schwarze Pumpe has mastered the structural change splendidly while at the same time preserving the essential buildings of postwar modernism. The buildings of the 1950s and 1960s emphasize the qualities of the location, and by referring to recent history they strengthen the industrial park for the future. The second unrealized insight concerns the architectural historians and conservationists confronted with modern buildings of the twentieth century. Still wanting among them is the understanding that the postwar buildings of Eastern Germany deserve a differentiated consideration. Thereby surprising things should come to light, as in the case of Schwarze Pumpe. Whenever the discussion goes beyond the preservation of satellite cities and splendid avenues built in the sugar-baker style, inevitably a very valuable industrial architecture of the postwar era will be encountered.



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Fig. 4. Schwarze Pumpe, new power station at 2005

Against this background, questions finally arise concerning the future treatment of the 1950s industrial architecture at Schwarze Pumpe. The pressure to change the buildings in the industrial park will continue to grow, given the conditions of restricted lignite exploitation, regional economic weakness and a growing supply of raw materials from Central Eastern Europe. In order to guarantee an extensive preservation of postwar architecture under these conditions an agreement must be made to define the treatment on a case-by-case basis.

The goal of the agreement should be to establish a binding list of criteria to be submitted by the company's management, by which the careful modification of Schwarze Pumpe will be pursued with consideration for the buildings of postwar modernism. The goal is not to humbly erect a monument to GDR architecture for eternity, but rather to strengthen the development potential of the location of Schwarze Pumpe for decades to come.

Lars Scharnholtz (born 1969) studied architecture and monument preservation at the Brandenburgische Technische Universität, the Universidad de Valladolid and the University of Washington (Fulbright). From 2000 to 2005 he was project advisor for the International Building Exhibit (IBA). From 2002 to 2005 he was research assistant at the University of Applied Sciences Lausitz in Cottbus. Since 2002 he has been academic director and manager of the Institute for New Industrial Culture, INIK, in Forst (Lausitz) and Wrocław. Lars Scharnholtz teaches at the Europauniversität Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder). In 2005 the Institute for New Industrial Culture published the book Schwarze Pumpe. See www.inik.info



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Fig. 5. Wilhelm-Pieck street in Hoyerswerda before the May 1st celebrations, 1963

Fig. 6. Schwarze Pumpe, conveyor installations, 2005



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Architecture in Cyprus between the 1930s and 1970s

THE SEARCH FOR MODERN HERITAGE

STEFANOS FEREOS AND PETROS PHOKAIDES



Fig. 1. Front facade of the colonial police station in limestone. The rationalistic style is combined with a traditional architectural idiom

The development of modern architecture in Cyprus is connected both with the unstable political conditions and with the absence of architecture schools. Local architecture followed the ups and downs of the political scene and, until recently, was produced by individuals educated and trained abroad, in centers of varied architectural cultures.

The introduction of modern architecture must be placed in the early 1930s when Cypriot society, under British colonial rule since 1878, showed the first signs of a rudimentary political and social organization. After World War II, the strategic military importance of Cyprus in the Eastern Mediterranean increased and, between 1945 and 1960, a program of infrastructure and legislation implemented by the colonial government was the foundation for economic development and urbanization. The first public modern buildings were constructed.

Between 1930 and 1960 Cyprus evolved from colonial status to that

of independent state. After 1960 and for two decades a powerful modernization process took place, introducing the cult of modern in architecture and in every other aspect of social life.

1930-1960: THE *POUROPETRA* PERIOD

In Cyprus the period from 1930 to 1960 was a transitional stage not only for political and social conditions but also for architecture, during which the country moved away from an anonymous vernacular production to take part in international trends. In the 1930s the first qualified Cypriot architects returned after finishing their studies abroad, to introduce the first modern characteristics in the country's architecture. Until then, the majority of architects were foreigners who worked either individually designing schools, churches or houses for the elite, or as employees in the Public Works Department of the British colonial government. In the capital Lefkosia, the main center of architectural production, buildings of a variety

of architectural styles were realized with no single or dominant trend. The limestone or *pouropetra* was used extensively, creating the appearance of continuity with the local historical architecture. Lefkosia's Venetian walls were made of this dark-yellow soft stone, which during this period was used in the construction of 'heteroclite' buildings, from neoclassical schools and bourgeois residences to colonial government police stations (fig. 1) and administration buildings.

From the 1930s onwards cities further developed and the first public buildings were erected along the lines of international modernism. A significant role was played by the architect Polys Michailides in the modernization of architecture during this period. After a short term in Le Corbusier's office in Paris, and collaboration with Thoukidides Valentis¹ in Athens,



Fig. 2. Polys Michailides, Orphanage building, view of the front elevation, Lefkosia, c. 1934

he permanently settled in Cyprus around 1930. The front elevation of the Orphanage building (fig. 2), which he designed in 1935, reflects the transitional nature of the local modern buildings of this period. Limestone is ingeniously combined

with concrete, the new hybrid material that invaded architecture in Cyprus, with an outcome that could ultimately be characterized as local idiom. Initially, limestone was used as a load bearing material, producing massive facings and facade elements, following the stylistic theories of rationalism. In later years, the architectural vocabulary became more pluralistic, and while the concrete elements were increasingly stressed, limestone acquired the purely stylistic role of covering the facade. In this postwar period, during which urbanization intensified and tall apartment and office blocks appeared, concrete frames were introduced, turning walls into mere partitioning panels and thus rendering the load bearing local stone unnecessary.

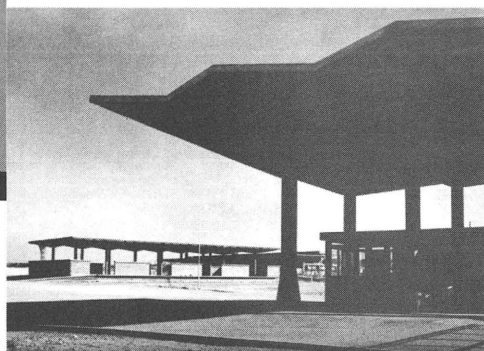


Fig. 4. **Takis Zembylas** and **Diomidis Kythreotis**, entrance of the wholesale market, Lefkosia, c. 1965

1960-1974: DISCOVERING THE CONCRETE FRAME AND MODERN CULTURE

The period between 1960 and 1974 is the first and perhaps the only time when a unified style in architecture emerges; one which reflects the dynamic conjuncture: architects equipped with the enthusiasm of their youth, showing up in the nick of time, when independence ensured the potential for both spiritual and economic development. The newly arrived architects and the ones that were already designing in the modern style produced significant works during this period, which are recorded in a 1966 issue of the Greek architecture magazine *Architektura* (in Greek, *Architektoniki*).² In this



Fig. 3. **Iakovos** and **Andreas Philippou**, Kykkos high school, perspective view, Lefkosia, c. 1960

extensive publication, dedicated to the realized works of Cypriot modernism, one can read the image of a society that moves, works and entertains itself in a modern landscape.

Designed in 1960, the Kykkos high school project for boys and girls (fig. 3) is one of the first buildings

space. A system of sun-protection louvers, patterned as brise-soleils, was facilitated by the standardization which the new material provided. Finally, the exposed concrete on the external surface of the staircase epitomizes both the functionalistic principles of the architecture of this period and the accompanying



Fig. 5. **Iakovos** and **Andreas Philippou**, Koupati showroom and office building, perspective view, Lefkosia, 1961-1965

where the new material, concrete, was applied according to the current international stylistic codes. The young brothers Iakovos and Andreas Philippou, who had studied in Milan and London, used a reinforced concrete frame as a supporting structure, with pilotis enabling easy access to the building, allowing for greater openings and the possibility of a transparent fluid

freedom in facing, in terms of form shaping, plasticity and complexity. This was further explored when the character of the project and the building program enabled the architect to express the new material's capacities, providing wide spanning structures for factories, markets (fig. 4) and stadiums. During this era, the concept of functionalism dominated design

process, from the rational organization of circulations and distribution of program in space to the shaping of building forms. Addressing the design problem of multi-purpose buildings, and in a way interpreting the building legislation codes,³ the ground floor is often shaped in a flexible manner, separated from the upper floors (offices or apartments) that form rectangular prisms. At times the ground floor follows the site's irregular nature, producing twisted and angular shapes, guiding the flow of people around the building; or else it forms a recess allowing the creation of an arcade. Often the first floor is a volume lifted above ground level (*fig. 5*), while the staircase appears as an autonomous element, stressing the functional importance of vertical

Kanthos (*fig. 6*). It is the first house realized in Cyprus with purely modern characteristics: distinct functional division of the sleeping zone from the social functions, use of the pilotis and open plan that bring about the clear distinction of supporting structure and walls, and finally the obvious plasticity of the building. The architect freely shaped the horizontal slabs, often extended in cantilevers and balconies, and he "treat[ed] openings as special transitional zones with the ability to correspond to the special conditions imposed by climate and light."⁴ His interest in the climatic responsiveness of the buildings is manifest in his larger residential projects. Multi-story buildings were designed as large concrete structures consisting of repetitive

and direction of sunlight and treat the elevations accordingly. He rejected the obvious solution of opening the apartments onto the view of the historic center's Venetian walls, in favor of a concrete design strategy that finally produced an unusual form of apartment building.⁵ The use of local material, typologies referring to vernacular housing layouts and the adaptation of buildings to local climatic conditions set Michailides's work in the 'orbit' of a potential 'critical production.' His passion for research and revival of the virtues of traditional architecture in a pure modern language led to a comparison with the Greek architect Aris Konstantinides. This comparison, although it has not been studied in depth, helps to evaluate Michailides's

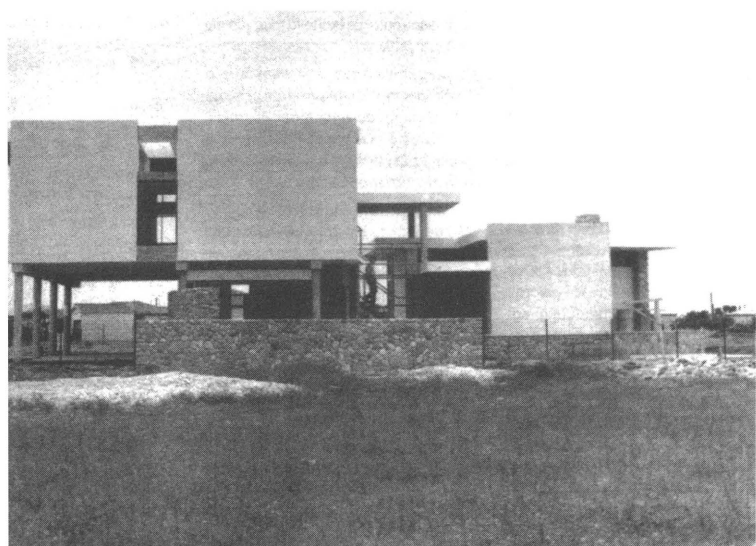


fig. 6. Neoptolemos Michailides, Kanthos residence, West facade, Lefkosia, 1949–1952



Fig. 7. Neoptolemos Michailides, Demetriou apartment building (polykatoikia), view overlooking the Venetian walls of Lefkosia, c. 1965

circulations; it also provides a visual counterweight to the concrete horizontal elements, which in this period were used extensively in the composition of facades.

THE CASE OF NEOPTOLEMOS MICHAILIDES

In this context the work of Neoptolemos Michailides stands out as a paradigmatic example, where the designer's intentions are readable with unprecedented clarity. In 1948, while still an architecture student in Milan, he designed the residence of the painter Theodotos

vertical elements combined with horizontal plates accommodating the program. In an experimental work of structural rationalism, an apartment building in Lefkosia (*fig. 7*), Michailides exposes the concrete-frame construction system, pushing the Dom-ino concept further. The rooftop's construction frame is unfinished, creating a covered terrace that shows the possibility of a future extension. The structural elements and the concrete sun-protection louvers are emphasized, expressing the architect's need to expand the material's use, to control the amount

work and shows that modern Cypriot architecture aspired—like any local architecture—at creating its own symbolic figures.

TRACES OF MODERN LOCALISM

Architects can become symbols of general trends. Likewise, architecture can be read as the symbolic image of a period expressing the circumstances that stimulated its production. Thus, alongside the localism of Michailides, which has come to be seen as an individual phenomenon, what is revealed is



Fig. 8. The modern landscape constructed on Famagusta beach, in the 1970s

also architecture's unintentional local character. The development and prevalence of modern architecture in Cyprus mirrored the modernization process that took place right after the independence, and invaded every aspect of social and individual life. Furthermore, images of modern life were adopted in emulation of the global life-style broadcasted on TV, starting from the 1950s, or in popular magazines and, more significantly yet, the cinema. Examined today, the projected images of this period show society's expectations for up-to-date and modern life styles.

The general architectural developments of this period are based on the colonial legislation of 1943. In the provisions of colonial law "relating to the roads and buildings," there were no restrictions concerning the expression of modern architecture. Conditions for suburban development already existed in Lefkosia, only a few meters from the historical center, and, buttressed by the country's economic situation, facilitated the absorption of modern architecture. The rules of building laws and the freedom provided by new materials were favorable to the development of modern architecture. As a result, architecture mainly produced self-related buildings in an urban context both

loose and unified.

Concrete dominates as the building material during this period. Requiring no initial technical expertise in its application, it was adopted by the non-specialized building industry in Cyprus. The technical know-how subsequently achieved facilitated the construction of large infrastructure such as water dams, while also helping architects involved in projects with bold structures that demonstrated the material's capacities and yielded a type of structural expressionism. The economy of tourism supported by both the state and the private sector began its development during this period. Architects carried out projects for tourist facilities and hotel complexes. The vertical landscape of Famagusta that rose next to the sea became a major destination of local society forming a new kind of public space where vacation and recreation became social phenomena (fig. 8).

In school and church architecture, a number of new modern-style buildings were constructed during this period, bearing witness to the assimilation of modernism by conservative social institutions. Through the new school buildings, modern architecture established its pioneering role as a catalyst of modern education. After finishing his

studies at the École des Beaux-arts in Paris in 1950, Dimitris Thymopoulos returned to Cyprus, and for a decade designed and constructed a significant number of new school buildings, creating a prototype model still applied until recently (fig. 9).

As far as residential architecture is concerned, the modern movement is associated mostly with the middle class. The scale of Cyprus and the small number of architecture firms were propitious to the dissemination of a unified style in housing architecture, found equally in urban and rural areas. Stavros Economou's housing layouts can be identified as perhaps the most common type seen in this period. His architectural language, as observed in his own house (fig. 10), is based on the Villa Savoye model and Corbusian vocabulary. On the ground floor, the building's shape and skin form a recess, revealing its structure and providing a transition from the public street space to the private residence. White stucco covers almost all the elements of the building and, along with the rationally organized plan, indicates the architect's purist intention.

The design of single-family dwellings is one of the main design issues addressed by local architects. In contrast to the vernacular type of housing still built at the time, a new kind of private space and way of life are introduced: the layout's program is reorganized, with public spaces (kitchen, living room) linked to the entrance and distinctly separated from the private spaces (bedrooms, bathroom) which are often housed on a different floor level. The open plan is applied to the ground floor, where free walls distribute the program, and where the transparency achieved by large openings defines the relation with the outdoor spaces. Local culture and traditional architecture play a prominent role in the production of a local style, owing either to the use of local materials or to that of decorative motifs in the interior layouts. The arches which previously

appeared in colonial architecture and later in the work of a minority of architects constitute a direct reference to a local historical and traditional pattern. At the same time, architecture adapts to the local climate, re-interpreting the vernacular architectural solutions of in-between spaces to control climatic conditions. Sun-protection louvers and cantilevers become distinctive features of the local production. Furthermore, the care brought to outdoor spaces and their treatment with vegetation are characteristic of the local culture.

The modern era ended with yet another political break. The 1974 events resulted in a dichotomy henceforth dividing the country and interrupted the development process that had begun in the 1960s.

A psychological barrier emerged, leaving the modern heritage underestimated and hardly researchable. Mechanisms and institutions that could produce knowledge and create conditions for criticism and architectural discourse were absent until recently. With the establishment of new architecture schools in the past few years, a chance is given to scientific research on the questions posed by the work produced until 1974.

At a time when the state sought to promote self-rule, did society participate actively in this modernization process? Was the modern style absorbed consciously as a symbol of progress? Did it really come as break with the past? Who wanted it and why? Was architecture an active contributor or was it simply the background for the 1960s lifestyle as depicted in photographic archives?

STEFANOS FEREOs, born in Nicosia in 1978, studied architecture at the Ethniko Metsovio Polytechnio in Athens, where he completed his Masters dissertation in the field of urbanism (2005). Practising architect, he is also secretary general of Students and Young Architects of the Cyprus Architect Association. stefanos@fereosandassociates.com

PETROS PHOKAIDES, born in Lefkosia in 1978, studied architecture at the National Technical University of Athens (2005) where he is a postgraduate student in 'architecture and space design.' He is a practising architect in Athens. petros.phokaides@gmail.com



Fig. 9. **Dimitris Thymopoulos**, Lykavitos elementary school, one of the first modern schools of Cyprus, Lefkosia, 1955–1957

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NOTES

- 1 Thoukidides Valentis (1908–1982) was a Greek architect, a member of the Greek CIAM team and professor at the Architecture School of the N.T.U. of Athens.
- 2 *Architektoniki* 55, 1966.
- 3 One of the rules of the building legislation

was to use 70% of the site's area on the ground floor, 50% on the first floor and 30% on the upper floors, with no limit for the number of floors or the total height of the building.

4 Zinon Sierepeklis, "Routes of Cypriot architecture, after the war," lecture (Lefkosia: 1984).

5 "Everything here has an emphatic sharpness and one could say a stilted indifference for anything conventional. Thus we have an open war with established values, an imposition of the ugly as a legitimate element of the enterprising." Dimitris Filippidis, *Five essays on Aris Konstantinides* (Athens: Libro, 1997).

Fig. 10. **Stavros Economou**, the architect's house, Lefkosia, 1956–1958



Oltarzhevsky and the Soviet Skyscraper

STEPHEN J. KELLEY

Soon after its revolution, the USSR looked for an architectural style that would imbue the Soviet people with pride and awe for communism and their government. Its first years were marked by innovation in many areas including architecture. Architects were occupied with the search for specific forms and ideological meanings which would constitute the elements of a new architectural vocabulary. Traditional forms and concepts were challenged and set aside, if only briefly. Initially very little construction took place due to the civil war and the economic policies of War Communism. By 1921 construction was focused on power, industry, and housing. The New Economic Policy soon replaced War Communism and reconstruction was in full swing by 1925. By 1928 avant-garde architecture began to flower in the Soviet Union.



Fig. 1. Portrait of Vyacheslav Konstantinovich Oltarzhevsky (1880–1966) as a young man



Fig. 2. The Kiev Railway Station was constructed from 1912 to 1917. On this project Oltarzhevsky worked with the great engineering pioneer, V.I. Shukhov (1853–1939) whose name has been given to the Shukhov Tower in South Moscow

During this time of social upheaval appeared Vyacheslav Konstantinovich Oltarzhevsky (fig. 1). An architect and writer, he is now recognized as the founder of the concept of the Soviet skyscraper. Born in Moscow, he received his diploma by 1908 and had visited the Viennese Academy of Arts while it was under the direction of Otto

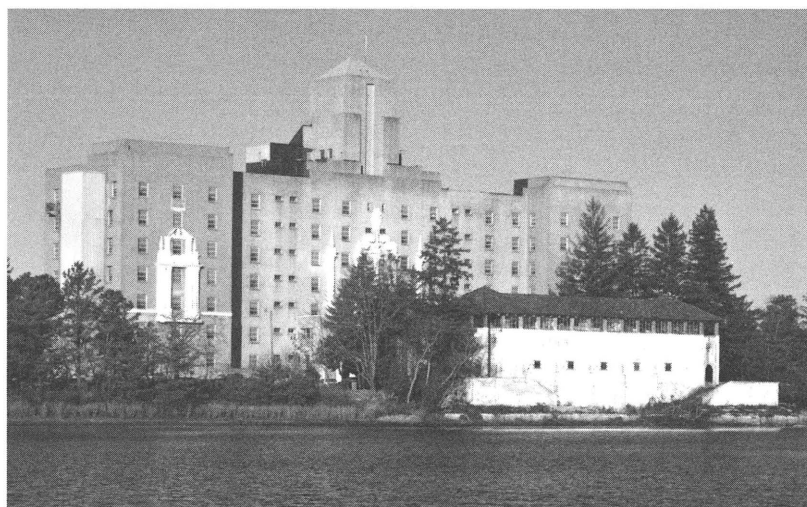


Fig. 3. V.K. Oltarzhevsky, the Royal Pines Hotel. Built as a resort, the hotel failed during the Great Depression. A "speak easy" was reportedly located on its premises which may have been frequented by Al Capone. It is now the Bayview Convalescent Center

Wagner. Upon graduation Oltarzhevsky worked in the Moscow offices of Ivan Rerberg and contributed to the design of the Kiev Railway Station (fig. 2). After military service he became architect to the new Soviet Agricultural Commissariat and in 1922 was an assistant to Aleksei Shchusev in the planning of the All-Russian Agricultural and Handicraft Industries Exhibition, which represented the last collective statement (for a brief period) of advocates of the old architectural values. It was also the first presentation of avant-garde architecture. The Machorka Pavilion, designed by the Constructivist Konstantin Melnikov, was one of the most original structures of the exhibition.

In 1924 Oltarzhevsky went to study building technology in the USA, and this sojourn brought him into contact with the great skyscraper architects of the time. Taking the name Oltar-Jevsky, his cooperation with local design studios led to his involvement with the design of the Royal Pines Hotel in Toms River, New Jersey, the only American project that bears his name (fig. 3). This, and other works, led to his

employment in the office of Helmle, Corbett and Harrison in New York, where he took American professional qualifications (Harvey Wiley Corbett, Oltarzhevsky's friend, was an architect and writer—the vertically expressive Bush Terminal Tower in New York marked Corbett's début as an influential skyscraper designer). During this time he entered the 1928 international competition held by the Pan-American Union for a monument to Columbus at Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and reached the second round.

From 1931 the firm where he was employed was involved in the design of New York's Rockefeller Center in association with Raymond Hood. Hood had begun his career by winning the Chicago Tribune Tower Competition of 1922. What followed were commissions for some of the best known New York skyscrapers of the 1920s and 1930s—the American Radiator, Daily News, and McGraw-Hill Buildings. This was one of the few large building projects in the USA during the Depression (fig. 4). That Oltarzhevsky remained employed at such a prestigious firm, in the context of a desperate economy where 85 percent of USA

architects were unemployed, speaks to his skill and character. During this period, he published his first book, *Contemporary Babylon* (1933)—a collection of his pencil drawings of New York with an introduction by Corbett.

By 1932 Josef Stalin had strengthened his hold over the Communist party, and, as in other realms of art and culture, he manipulated architects as a tool to further establish socialism. His personal tastes dictated the falling out of favor of avant-garde architecture—denounced as Western, elitist, and bourgeois. The aesthetic ideology of the Stalin era—socialist realism—then started emerging, as seen in several high profile projects. The USSR was in need of an edifice to house the Soviet congresses. Architecturally, it was to illustrate the heights—figuratively and literally—that the Soviets could attain. In 1931, architects the world over were invited to submit designs. However, applicants were not given a clear indication as to what style the edifice should take.

Many thought that the capital for the communist seat should reflect the radical break with the past. But the architectural jury comprised of the Party elite chose the eclectic design by Boris Iofan (1891–1976) that looked to styles from the past. Ironically, the design, reaching over 100 stories, resembled the “bourgeois” 1920s American skyscraper. In 1933, at Stalin’s request, an addition was made to this enormous structure: a 92-meter statue of Lenin (fig. 5). The project was problematic from the start. Never to rise out of the ground, the war stopped the work entirely, and the project was eventually abandoned for “technical reasons.” While the Palace of the Soviets was never realized, it became a symbol for the end of the avant-garde and the rise of socialist realism. Another indication of future trends, the avant-garde facade of the prestigious Hotel Moskva was set aside for more traditional forms. According to popular legend, the 1932 Hotel’s asymmetrical

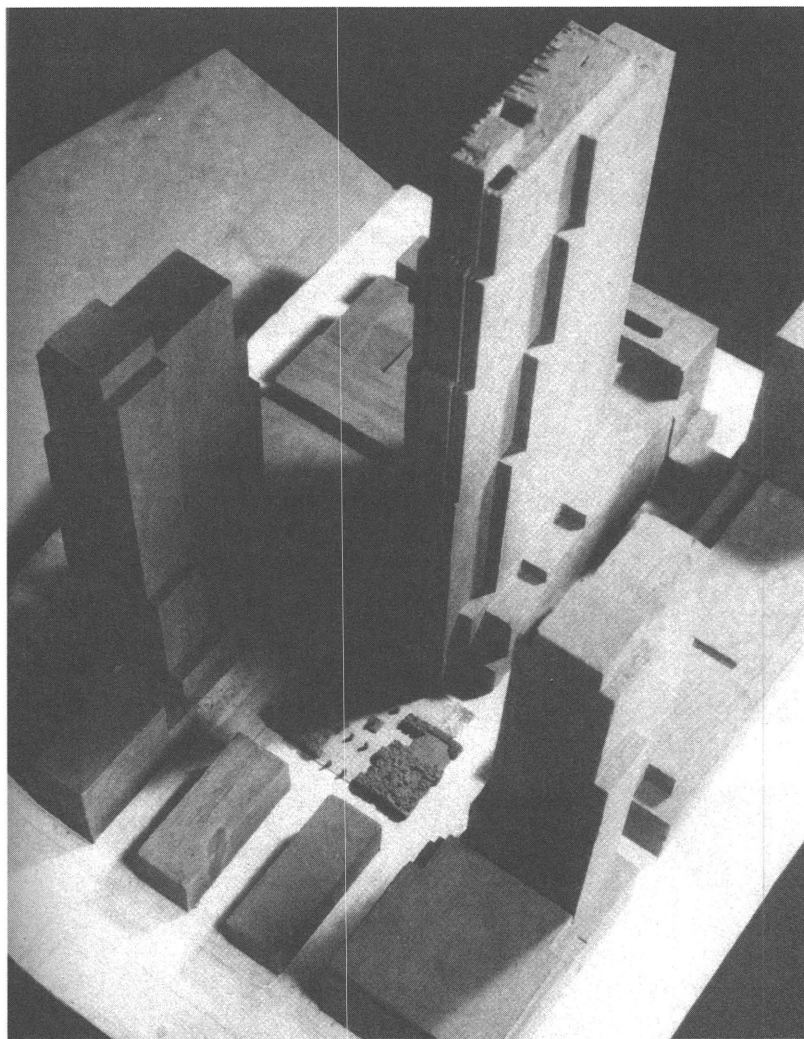


Fig. 4. The centerpiece of Rockefeller Center is the 268-meter RCA Building

facade was a monument to the fear inspired by Stalin. With two facade options presented to him on one elevation drawing, Stalin simply signed the sheet. Because his preference was unclear, timid architect Aleksei Shchusev, Oltarzhevsky’s former boss and colleague, proceeded to build both versions of his re-interpreted classicism (fig. 6). American architect Frank Lloyd Wright was given a tour of the hotel by Shchusev in 1937. When asked through an interpreter what he thought of the massive ensemble, Wright is said to have replied, “It is the ugliest thing I have ever seen!” which was graciously translated as “I am very impressed!”

In that year the Communist Party’s Central Committee passed the resolution outlawing all independent organizations, and architects were forced to form unions where the party could decide what was

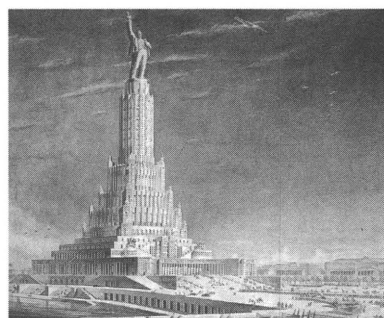


Fig. 5. **Boris Iofan**, final scheme for the Palace of the Soviets. It was not lost on the designers that the Palace would surpass the recently completed Empire State Building and that the Lenin statue would be twice as tall as the Statue of Liberty

© A. Tarkhanov, M. Anikst, and S. Kavtaradze, *Architecture of the Stalin Era* (New York: Rizzoli, 1998)



Fig. 6. **Aleksei Shchusev**, the Hotel Moskva’s schizophrenic facade

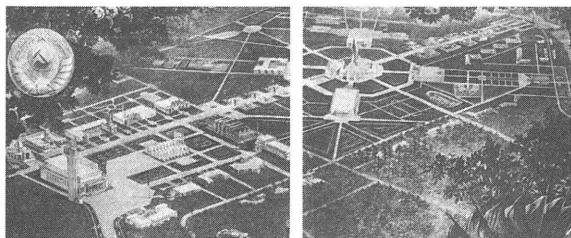


Fig. 7. V.K. Oltarzhevsky's site plan for the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition. Memoirs of colleagues record that when Stalin visited the nearly completed exhibition site he disliked the pavilions that lacked monumentality, grandiosity, and splendor

"fruitful, creative and correct."

By 1933, the Soviet Academy of Architecture was founded, marking the beginning of the "Stalinist" Architecture era.

During these profound changes Oltarzhevsky returned to the USSR, possibly as a result of contact with Iofan who visited the USA in pursuit of expertise for constructing the Palace of Soviets. After his return he won the competition for designing the showground of the All-Union

center of Gulag camps in European USSR. Paradoxically the architect who erected skyscrapers in America was soon designing small one- and two-story houses.

During his exile the project of the huge Palace of Soviets was still being developed. Through available publications Oltarzhevsky studied its design making a thorough and qualified review which he sent to Stalin. It is not known, whether this review influenced the Leader, but in 1943 Oltarzhevsky was released from Vorkuta and returned to Moscow.

After the Soviet triumph over Nazi Germany, Stalin launched an ambitious plan—the *Vysotnye Zdaníye* (High Buildings). Khrushchev quoted Stalin's argument for their erection, "We've won the war and are recognized the world over as the glorious victors. We must be ready for an influx of foreign visitors. What will happen if they walk around Moscow and find no skyscrapers? They will make unfavorable comparisons with capitalist cities." Soviet architects were commissioned to design a series of neo-gothic skyscrapers based on American skyscraper examples of the 1920s. Stalin's idea which was born in the unbuildable Palace of the Soviets was realized in a shorter but no less grand ring of skyscrapers. The buildings were tiered to create a sense of upward movement. Of the eight skyscrapers planned, seven were built—often called the "Seven Sisters."

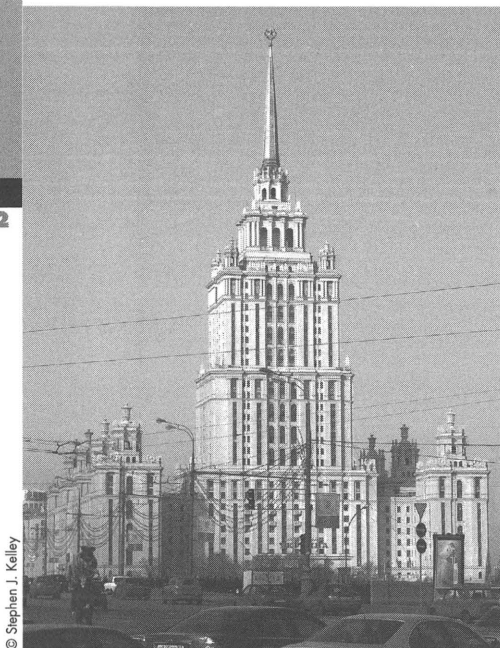
From 1949 Oltarzhevsky was joint architect, with Arkady Mordvinov, of the Hotel Ukraine (fig. 8). In 1953 he was one of the architects, along with H. Posokhin and A. Midoyants, for a skyscraper planned for Vosstaniya Square (fig. 9). Though he may have been

responsible for the overall design of the Hotel Ukraine, the nature of his contribution to this project as well as the others is not certain—he was never completely rehabilitated from the stigma of exile.

It was during this time that he published the book he is best known for, *Stroitel'stvo vysoknykh zdanií v Moskve* (Construction of the High Buildings in Moscow) (Moscow, 1953). In this book he shares his experiences gleaned from ten years as an architect of American skyscrapers, and it is here where his contribution to the realization of the Soviet Skyscraper can be seen.

Oltarzhevsky had spent his career working beside the great architects of the Russian avant-garde and the innovators of the American skyscrapers. He straddled the worlds of these two societies whose governments would officially distrust each other for decades. The Soviet Academy of Architecture was abolished in 1955—two years after Stalin's death—and its abolition marked the end of the Stalinist period. The USSR continued to profit from Oltarzhevsky's expertise until he died at the age of 84.

STEPHEN J. KELLEY, AIA, SE, specializes in the investigation and restoration of historic buildings and monuments. He has expertise in the analysis and conservation of historic building materials and systems, and was consulted on projects in the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and Middle East. skelley@wjie.com



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Fig. 8. V.K. Oltarzhevsky and Arkady Mordvinov, the Hotel Ukraine, which faces northward across the Moskva River at the Russian White House, features a central tower. At Stalin's bidding all of the seven sisters feature a sparkling metallic glass spire

Agricultural Exhibition and was appointed chief architect (fig. 7).

In 1938 Oltarzhevsky fell victim to the Great Purge. Upon visiting the work site, Stalin was greatly displeased by what he saw. He ordered its demolition and reconstruction in a more overtly socialist realist mode. Oltarzhevsky was sent to Vorkuta, the largest

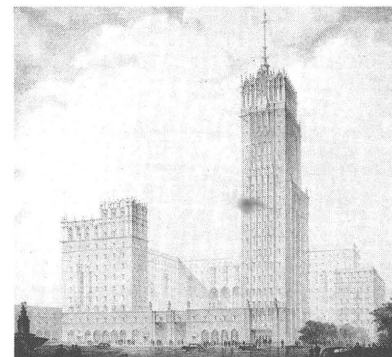


Fig. 9. V.K. Oltarzhevsky's never realized design for the Vosstaniya Square site was markedly different from the Seven Sisters as it featured neither step backs nor central tower, and was reminiscent of the massing at Rockefeller Center

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ELVAN ALTAN ERGUT
BELGİN TURAN ÖZKAYA
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BEYOND TRADITION

■ ELVAN ALTAN ERGUT AND BELGİN TURAN ÖZKAYA

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ON JUNE 13, 2006, while we were working on this issue of *Docomomo Journal*,¹ Docomomo Turkey was shaken by the news of the demolition of the old electricity and gas factory in the capital of Ankara (figs. 1 and 2). The 1928 complex, an example of German industrial architecture of the early twentieth century transplanted to Turkey, was one of the first industrial buildings of the Turkish Republic which had been founded only five years earlier in 1923. The factory was not in use for about two decades but, upon the petition of the Turkish Chamber of Architects, it was registered in 1991 as part of the Republican cultural heritage. Despite the legal decisions in favor of its protection, the building underwent a painful series of disputes among different public institutions for years and was unexpectedly demolished in one night by the Municipality of Greater Ankara.²

THIS WAS NOT THE FIRST INSTANCE of losing a piece of modern architectural heritage in Turkey, and unfortunately it seems that it will not be the last. Significant architectural examples were sacrificed due to economic interests and sheer negligence, as in the astonishing case of Italian architect Raimondo d'Aronco's late nineteenth-century Karaköy Mosque in Istanbul, which was taken apart in order to widen the street during the 1950s urban transformation. Similarly, the Expo'58 Turkish Pavilion in Brussels which, as Sibel Bozdoğan tells us in this issue, was also dismantled to be subsequently rebuilt. Parts of both buildings were later literally lost. Not only such significant buildings but also large portions of urban fabric in cities large or small could not be preserved either. The early twentieth century housing stock of Ankara, for example, is almost completely gone and has been replaced by higher residential and commercial blocks.

INCREASINGLY, STRUGGLES FOR THE PROTECTION of twentieth-century buildings and settlements in Turkey are being led on different fronts by professional institutions and civil organizations. Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go to foster proper public consciousness of the significance of modern architectural heritage and to secure its



AND DEVELOPMENT

conservation against uncontrollable land speculation that also underlies most of the contemporary urban transformation projects. The condition and fate of the modern architectural heritage in other countries in the Middle East is more or less similar to the experience of Turkey, requiring a re-evaluation of conventional understandings about architecture and modernity to improve the situation of these legacies.³

THE HISTORIOGRAPHY ON THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE of the Middle East up until very recently focused on the study of what came to be defined as 'Islamic culture.' This broad paradigm brings together various traditions, localities and temporalities under a totalizing heading that overlooks their differences, and portrays 'Islamic culture' as a frozen tradition in contrast to the progressive modernity of the 'West.' Such a view was complemented by a developmentalist modernization paradigm, which foresaw for the Middle East a process of change based on the 'Western' model. Hence the reductive East/West dichotomy remained intact.

THESE TYPES OF EXPLANATIONS regarding the cultural production of the region are not unrelated to its tormented history in the twentieth century. The basis of what we know as the Middle East today was formed after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I, when new states were founded in the region while many others remained mandates under the British or French rule for decades. "A geographic region that continues to live the 'modernizing' effects of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of the Nation State,"⁴ the Middle East has witnessed the effects of colonialist, imperialist, nationalist and religious ideologies and practices, and experienced lasting power struggles as well as brutal wars over the definition of territories up until today.

THIS ISSUE OF THE *DOCOMOMO JOURNAL* brings together essays that examine twentieth century architecture in the politically charged contexts of different Middle Eastern countries. The essays are either historically located general accounts of modern

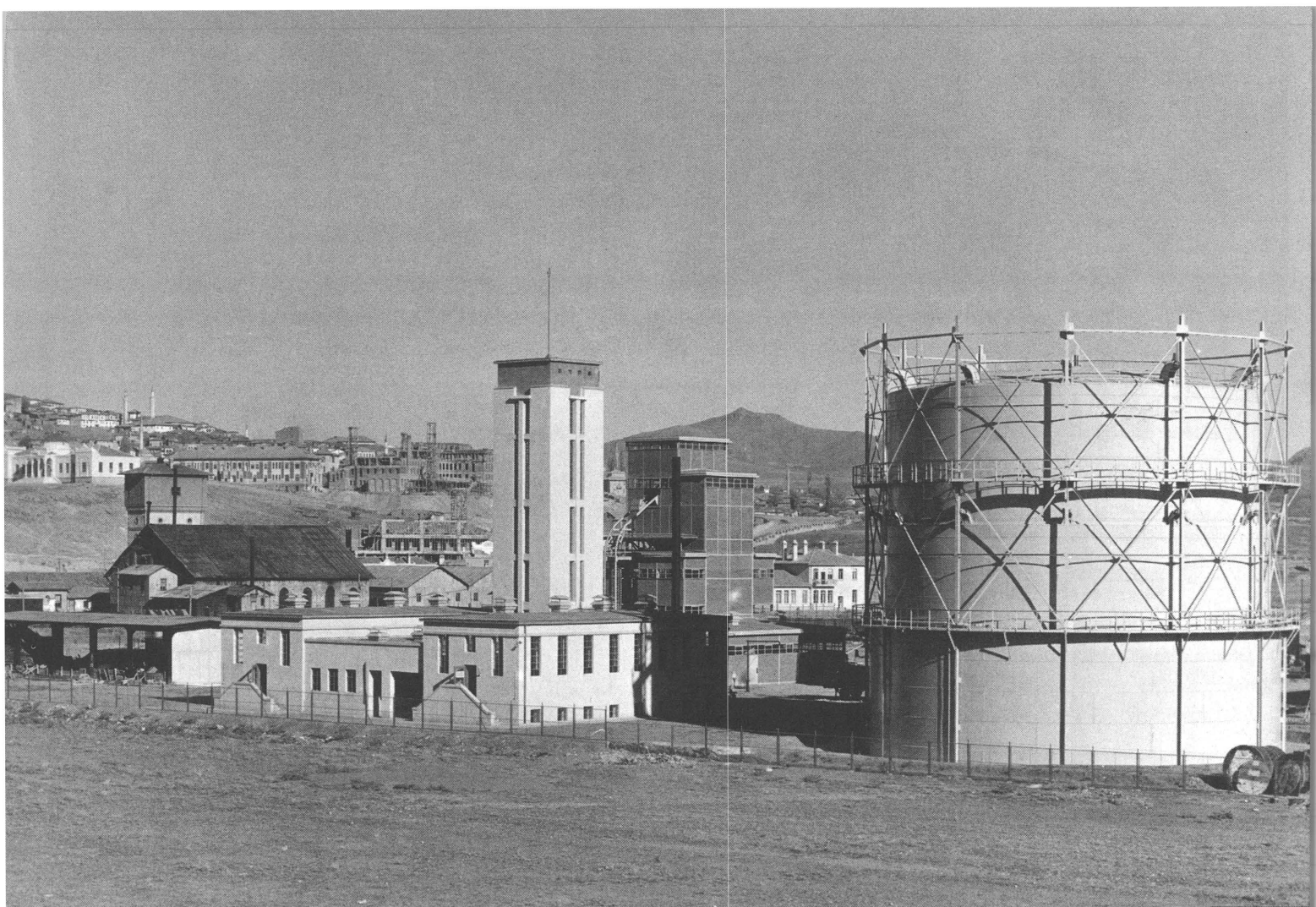
**CE NUMÉRO SPÉCIAL
DU DOCOMOMO JOURNAL
RASSEMBLE DES ÉTUDES
SUR L'ARCHITECTURE
DU XX^{ÈME} SIÈCLE DANS
LES PAYSAGES POLITIQUES
COMPLEXES DU
PROCHE-ORIENT.
À PARTIR DE CONTEXTES
PRÉCIS OU D'ÉTUDES DE CAS
SPÉCIFIQUES, CE DOSSIER
A POUR VOCATION
D'ÉCLAIRER LES TRAITS
SAILLANTS DE LA PRODUCTION
ARCHITECTURALE MODERNE
ET DE SA PROTECTION DANS
LA RÉGION TOUT ENTIÈRE.
LES ARTICLES ICI PRÉSENTÉS
METTENT EN LUMIÈRE
LA COMPLEXITÉ DU
PROCESSUS DE
MODERNISATION,
IMPLIQUANT DE MULTIPLES
CHOIX, INTERACTIONS,
ALLERS-RETOURS ET
INSPIRATIONS CROISÉES,
QUI FORMENT UN ENSEMBLE
BIEN PLUS RICHE, HYBRIDE
ET FÉCOND QUE LE FLUX
À SENS UNIQUE AUQUEL
IL A SOUVENT ÉTÉ RÉSUMÉ.**

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architecture, or detailed analyses of specific architectural cases. As a whole, the dossier does not try to be comprehensive in geographical, historical or thematic terms but highlights a series of salient cases and examples that are effectively representative of modern architectural production and its conservation in the region.

THE AUTHORS GENERALLY DATE the emergence of modern architecture in the region to the twentieth century, without however disregarding the rudimentary beginnings of administrative and technological modernization often coupled with urban transformations of some significant Middle Eastern cities in the late nineteenth century. In the essays the interwar and post-World War II periods appear as critical to understand modernism and architecture. The interwar period was marked by state formation and European influence, when tangible examples of modern architecture and urbanism emerged alongside the still largely prevailing production of regional architecture. The postwar period, on the other hand, is the time when the European mandates ended and the states of the region became sovereign. The major influence was that of the USA in the contemporary cold war atmosphere.⁵ At the time mainstream examples of the postwar 'international style' proliferated, and a pervasive developmentalist world view took hold, which accelerated the transformation of the built environment.

THE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE 'WEST' ARE AT THE CORE OF THE ESSAYS: attuned to the often forgotten nuances under the totalizing concept of the 'West,' they explore the various types of interactions between different Middle Eastern and Western European countries and the USA. The results of such encounters are exemplified predominantly in technological and formal/spatial changes in architectural production. The specific modernist building materials and technologies such as reinforced concrete and glass, the authors argue, were employed often together with local materials such as stone cladding. Similarly, the essays show us that modernist aesthetics and spatiality informed



new architectural products, and that these generally did not draw on the radical forms of the modernist avant-garde but appropriated more moderate versions of an international modernism together with local architectural elements. The interaction with the 'West' is exemplified by the authors not only in the mobilization of technology, forms and ideas but also of people: the ensuing mediated modernisms of the Middle East were also promoted by foreign architects who worked in different parts of the region and local architects who were educated in the 'West.'

THE FORMATION OF A MODERN ENVIRONMENT is related to the rise of architecture as a modern profession as shown by the founding of architectural schools and professional journals. Nonetheless, more than the agency of architects as professionals, state policies appear to have been effective in the changes of the built environment. Contemporary urban and industrial projects realized those quintessentially modern 'types' of buildings, sites and neighborhoods in the form of housing settlements, public places, and infrastructure and transportation facilities, hence creating those "spaces of modernity" that would change the way of life in Middle Eastern countries.⁶ These policies of change were the result of the modernizing approaches conflated with either the 'Western' *mission civilisatrice* or the nationalisms of the newly formed states.

BEHIND SUCH 'MODERNIZING' POLICIES that shaped the Middle East in the last century lies the perennial problem of identity politics, which one cannot overlook in the study of this region's architecture.⁷ This should not however lead to reducing architecture to politics and conceptualizing architectural products as passive reflections of ideologies. Nor should identities be seen as essential and unchanging categories, which would hinder the understanding of the mediated nature of the Middle Eastern or of any cultural/architectural production, for that matter.⁸ As also demonstrated by the essays in this issue, identities have taken to be delimited by the boundaries of the Middle Eastern nation-states since the early twentieth century.⁹ The essays also demonstrate that

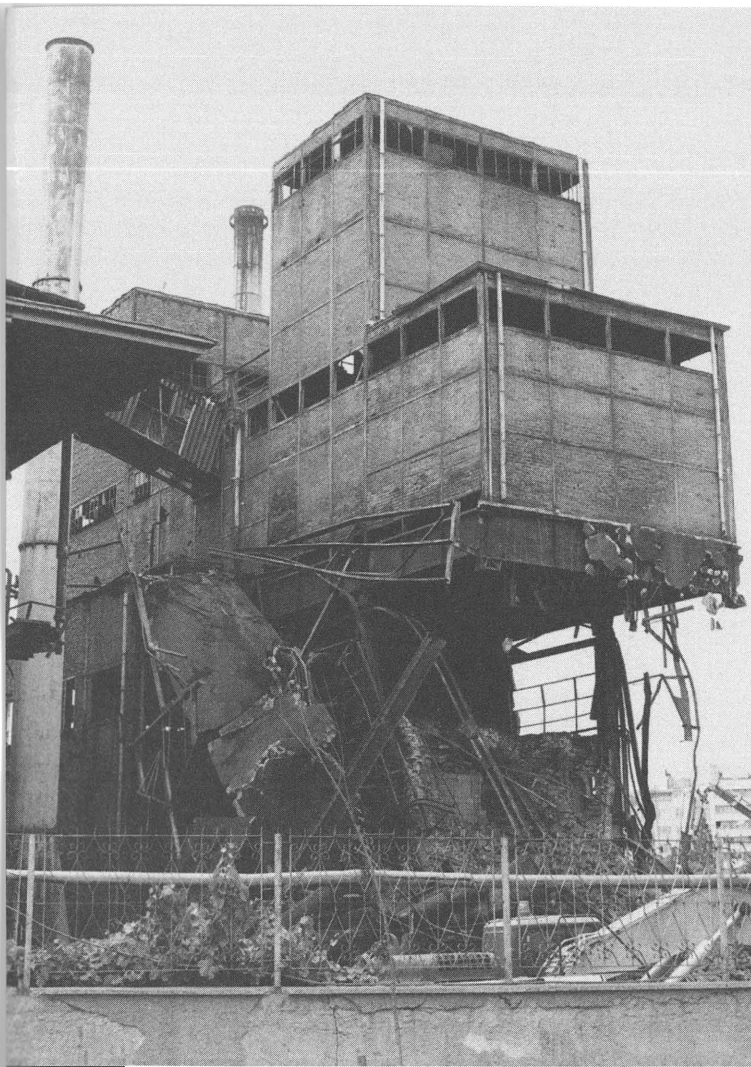


Fig. 2. Electricity and Gas Factory after its demolition on 13 June 2006
© Selçuk Balamir

for the countries scrutinized in this issue the dominant perspective was that of the nation-state rather than 'Islamic culture.' Readings of architecture based on nationalistic classifications that inevitably attribute a putative totality to nations and cultures are far from being useful tools to understand either modernism or architecture. In fact, just like the trope of 'Islamic culture,' the concepts of 'nation,' 'culture,' and 'national culture' for that matter, overlook both the differences within and the similarities among different nation-states and cultures.

IN PARTICULAR, THE FLUCTUATING AND HIGHLY CHARGED BOUNDARIES in this region complicate even further any framework based on national/cultural borders. The history of the encounters between the Middle Eastern and Western countries reveals, on the other hand, the similarly multifaceted and changing definitions of the 'West.' Therefore, instead of solidifying complex realities into reductive and essentializing dichotomies such as the 'traditional culture' of the 'Middle East' versus the 'modernity' of the 'West,' the interest should be in fracturing such consolidated visions that perpetuate the misrecognition of cultural totalities. Vis-à-vis the historical processes of colonialism, nation-building and modernization that have provided settings for inter- and trans-cultural encounters, the aim should be to problematize geographical and historical differences—complex categories that may work in unexpected and ambivalent ways.

IN THIS ISSUE, OUR AIM WAS TO CONTRIBUTE to the broadening of the limits within which modern architectural production has come to be understood.¹⁰ Instead of the cases of Western Europe and North America, which were up until recently seen as the centers of the modernist mainstream, this issue explores a part of those geographies that have hitherto been overlooked in conventional discourses. In-depth studies of such geographies reveal modernism as a process that involves choice, interaction, and indigenous creation rather than a one-way flow in which one party affects the other.

HENCE WE CONTEND THAT WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND MODERNISM in these lands only as either fully internalized or fervently resisted, but rather as variously adopted, mediated and hybridized.¹¹ Nuanced readings that are based on such complicated understandings of both architecture and culture, and that historically and geographically locate their objects of study, may further contribute to the documentation and conservation of the 'spaces of modernity' in the 'Middle East.'

WE HOPE THAT THE ESSAYS in this issue will be a first step—to be developed by others—for the proper assessment of modern architecture in the Middle East in its full variety and intricacy. This should help safeguard the way of life that modernity has created against not only the still-prevailing public ignorance about this heritage but also the never-ending conflicts and 'crises' in the region.

ELVAN ALTAN ERGUT

is an assistant professor and the vice chair at the Department of Architecture, Middle East Technical University, Turkey. She is one of the founding members, and currently the Ankara representative of Docomomo Turkey. She received her BArch and MA in History of Architecture from Middle East Technical University, and Ph.D. in Art History from State University of New York at Binghamton. Her research areas include twentieth-century architecture, architecture in Republican Turkey, and architectural historiography. tomris@metu.edu.tr

BELGİN TURAN ÖZKAYA

is associate professor of architectural history at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara. She received her Ph.D. in History of Architecture and Urbanism from Cornell University. She is also one of the founding members of Docomomo Turkey. She published articles on Ottoman-Venetian relations, historiography and the Italian Tendenza in journals such as *Journal of Architectural Education* and *Harvard Design Magazine*, and in collections such as "After Orientalism." bell@metu.edu.tr

Belgin Turan Özkaya and Elvan Altan Ergut have co-edited with Dana Arnold the volume *Rethinking Architectural Historiography*, Ergut (London: Routledge, 2006).

- 1 We would like to thank Docomomo International for inviting us to edit this issue of the Docomomo Journal. We are especially grateful to Maristella Casciato, Émilie d'Orgeix, Anne-Laure Guillet and Isabelle Kite for their help, understanding and patience during the whole process.
- 2 For further information about the Electricity and Gas Factory in Ankara and about its demolition, see the website of the Ankara branch of the Turkish Chamber of Architects at: www.mimarlarodasiankara.org
- 3 We are aware that the label 'Middle East,' as in 'Near East' and 'Far East,' is the product of a perspective based on a geographical hierarchy with the 'West' as the center. Our use of it is due to the lack of a better denomination for the region at the moment.
- 4 Maya Yahya, "From the Editor: Crossing Boundaries," *MIT Electronic Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (May 2001): web.mit.edu/cis/www/mitejmes/issues/200105/Yahya.htm
- 5 An inspiring work to understand the contemporary American influence on architecture in different parts of the world is Annabel Jane Wharton, *Building the Cold*

War: Hilton International Hotels and Modern Architecture, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

6 Hans Chr. Korsholm and Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen, eds., *Middle Eastern Cities 1900–1950: Public Places and Public Spheres in Transformation* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2001).

7 The Turkish novelist Elif Şafak, whose widely acclaimed literary production draws inspiration from the politically charged problems of this part of the world, reminded us during a TV interview on July 14, 2006 that, "as the natives of these lands, we do not have the luxury of being apolitical."

8 For further discussion on the relation between architecture, politics and cultural identity, see Sibel Bozdoğan, "Architectural History in Professional Education: Reflections on Postcolonial Challenges to the Modern Survey," *Journal of Architectural Education*, 52, 4 (1999): 207–215.

9 For an excellent critique of nationalistic perspectives on Ottoman history, and a convincing argument for the necessity of a new sociology of empire to study Ottoman history, see Tülay Artan,

"Questions of Ottoman Identity and Architectural History," in Dana Arnold, Elvan Altan Ergut and Belgin Turan Özkaya, eds., *Rethinking Architectural Historiography* (London: Routledge, 2006).

10 The IXth International Docomomo Conference, hosted by Turkey in September 27–29, 2006, similarly focused on "Other Modernisms," proceeding "from the consensus that the mainstream historiographic construction of twentieth-century modernism through its canonic texts and buildings has marginalized or suppressed some modern trajectories." For further details about the conference, see: www.docomomo.org.tr

11 For a related discussion on urbanism in the region, see Joe Nasr and Mercedes Volait, eds., *Urbanism: Imported or Exported? Native Aspirations and Foreign Plans* (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2003).

Mediating and Domesticating Modernity in Egypt

UNCOVERING SOME FORGOTTEN PAGES

MERCEDES VOLAIT

Conventional narratives of world architecture devote little attention—if any at all!—to modernism in Egypt, beyond the “invention of vernacular” relentlessly pursued by the talented Hassan Fathy (1900–1989).

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OF LATE RECOGNITION, the work of Hassan bey, and of his disciples, is now passionately discussed in academic circles—along a “modern traditionalism” vs. “alternative modernism” debate,¹ and widely mimicked in Egyptian popular and cultured architecture as a formal language rather than as a sustainable approach adapted to its environment. Yet, it represents but an episode, among others, in the mediation and domestication of architectural modernity in Egypt. There were, indeed, much earlier ones,² and local professionals played a significant role in the process, although modernity in the so-called developing world is commonly attributed primarily to colonial agency.³

EGYPTIAN MODERN ARCHITECTURE can be traced back to the 1870s when ambitious public works (the opening of the Suez Canal,⁴ Cairo’s “Haussmannisation,”⁵ Alexandria’s expansion, etc.), fueled a radical transformation of existing urban landscapes. The effort was partly spurred by a local will to emulate the *Tanzîmât*, the Ottoman Empire’s progressive reforms launched by the Sublime Gate. A ruler with an acknowledged passion for architecture, Khedive Ismâ’îl (r. 1863–1879) embarked on grand schemes in order to demonstrate that his country was “no more part of Africa, but belonged to Europe.”⁶ This eventually led the country to bankruptcy, but launched a process that continued under British rule (1882–1922), a prosperous age for business ventures in Egypt. A vast market for

LES ÉTUDES RÉCENTES ACCORDENT GÉNÉRALEMENT PEU D’INTÉRÊT À L’HISTOIRE DU MODERNISME EN ÉGYPTE, SOUVENT RÉDUIT À « L’INVENTION DU VERNACULAIRE » PAR LE TALENTUEUX ARCHITECTE HASSAN FATHY OU, PLUS RÉCEMMENT, À L’ANALYSE DE L’ŒUVRE DE HASSAN BEY ET DE SES DISCIPLES. POURTANT, CE DERNIER NE REPRÉSENTE QU’UN ÉPISODE DE L’HISTOIRE DE LA MODERNITÉ DANS L’ARCHITECTURE ÉGYPTIENNE OÙ DE NOMBREUX ARCHITECTES ET PROFESSIONNELS LOCAUX ONT OCCUPÉ UNE PLACE PLUS PRÉCOCE ET TOUT AUSSI IMPORTANTE. PARMI EUX, MUSTAFÂ FAHMÎ, DIPLÔMÉ DE L’ÉCOLE SPÉCIALE DES TRAVAUX PUBLICS À PARIS, SAYYID KARIM – ÉGALEMENT CONNU SOUS LE NOM DE SAID KORAYEM –, FORMÉ À LA EIDGENÖSSISCHE TECHNISCHE HOCHSCHULE DE ZÜRICH, AINSI QUE MUSTAFA SHAWQI ET SALAH ZAYTUN, DIPLÔMÉS DE L’ÉCOLE D’ARCHITECTURE DE L’ILLINOIS, ONT PARTICIPÉ À LA CONSTITUTION D’UNE IDENTITÉ ARCHITECTURALE MODERNE DE GRANDE QUALITÉ EN ÉGYPTE

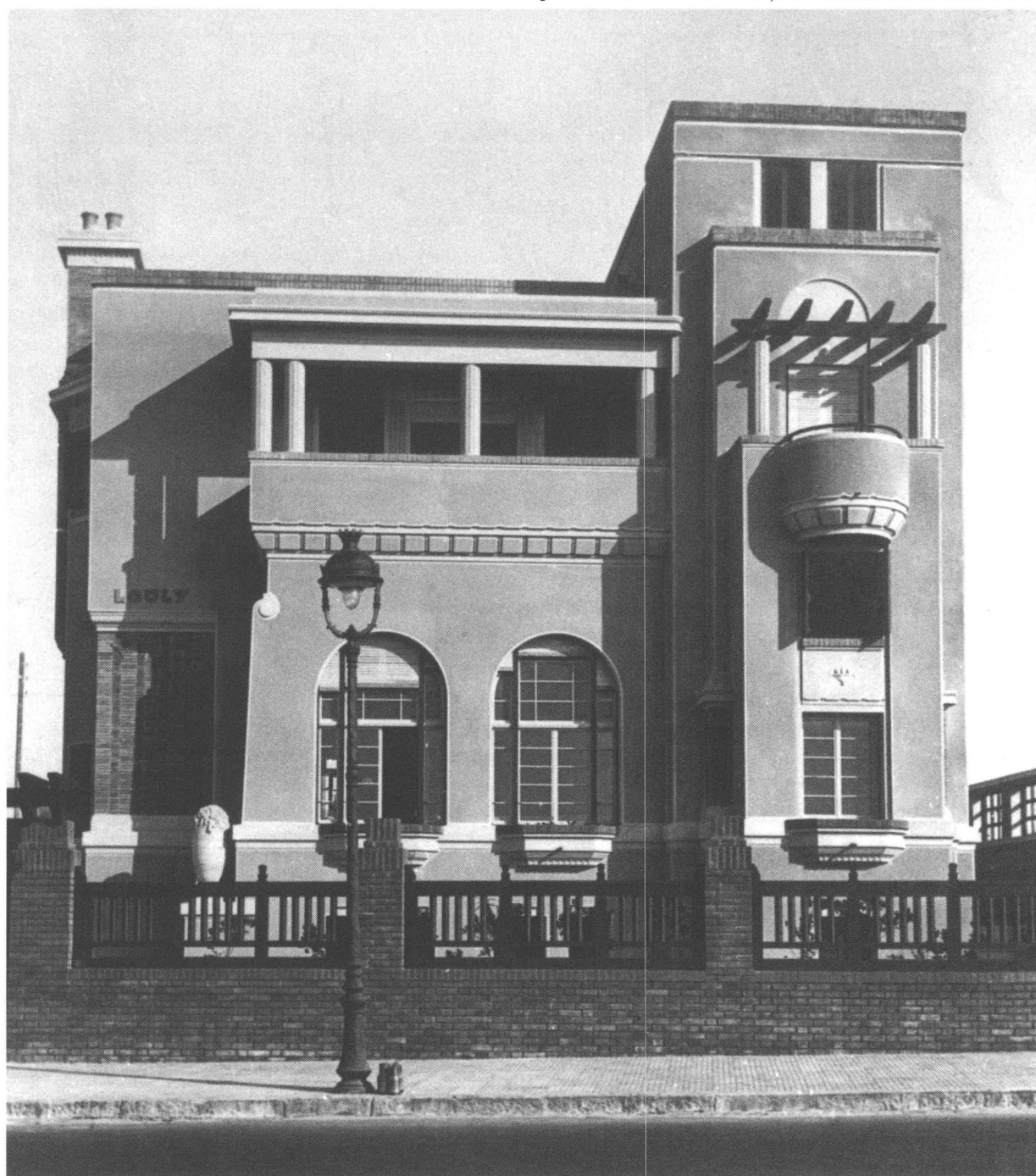
architectural practice materialized. Hundreds of European professionals, of varied talents and origins (many from Mittel Europa), flocked in, but attempts at training architects locally began at about the same time. An architectural department within the School of Engineering or *muhandiskhana* eventually opened in 1887; a similar section developed later at the School of Fine Arts (1908). Through the Educational Missions Abroad program, some graduates achieved further training at government expense in prominent European schools (in Paris,

Liverpool or Zurich), while a number of Egyptian architects acquired an education abroad on their own. In 1917, a Society of Egyptian Architects was formed. The stage was set for the formulation of an indigenous modernity, impacted by varied exposure to the West.⁷

AN EARLY FIGURE and case in point is Mustafâ Fahmî (1886–1972). The acclaimed pioneer of the profession—*al-râ'id al-mi'mâri al-âwwal*⁸—had studied, at family expense, at the École Spéciale des Travaux Publics in Paris, graduating in 1912. In parallel to a successful career at high official level (from the Administration of Royal Palaces to the Head of the Alexandria Municipality, to a ministerial portfolio in

1948), Mustafâ Fahmî did much to connect the emerging Egyptian profession to the international sphere. From 1935 on, he participated in the Réunions Internationales d'Architecture (RIA), a network created in 1932 by Pierre Vago and André Bloc, the founders of the new journal *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, with the view of offering an alternative to the exclusive and dogmatic CIAM. Egyptian architects were thus among the first national delegations to join the International Union of Architects created in 1947 (through the merger of several organizations, including the RIA), where they represented for some years the entire Middle East. They were to lose the role in 1953, when, in the aftermath of the Free Officers' coup in July 1952, the Syndicate of Engineers was ordered

Fig. 1. **Mustafâ Fahmî**, *Villa Louly*, front facade, Alexandria, built in 1931



© private collection / Mercedes Volait



© École des Beaux-Arts, Paris

Fig. 2. **Gaston Rossi**, *Chester Beatty Villa*, Cairo, built in 1930–1935. From *Encyclopédie d'architecture*, 1937

to cease its financial contribution to IUA, and Israel took over the representation of the Middle East at the IUA. Mustafâ Fahmî's architectural work directly echoes the issues and achievements discussed in these circles. RIA's third conference in Prague, in 1935, was devoted to "Current trends in national architectures." At home, the topic was hotly debated since the 1919 uprisings against British tutelage, and resurfaced with renewed strength after the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936. In his official commissions, Fahmî attempted to articulate a national language incorporating references from both the Islamic and Pharaonic heritage of the country, along the lines of Auguste Perret's "structural classicism," of which he was a great admirer.⁹ The series of buildings he designed in 1936–1949 for the Gazîra Fair grounds in Cairo (renovated fifteen years ago to host the National Cultural Center ensemble) are good examples of the sober syncretic formula he achieved, using modular composition and massive volumetry, eventually mixed with art deco stylizations of the Mamluk repertoire—as in his Dâr al-Hikma (Syndicate of Doctors offices, 1941). In contrast, his private architecture is of a purely European modern vein (fig. 1).¹⁰ Another follower of Perret's formalism was Gaston Rossi (1887–1972), who had the chance to work as his assistant on one of the few Egyptian projects of Perret, the Elias Awad Villa in Cairo (1931–1938). Rossi's design for the Chester Beatty villa in Cairo (1930–1935) bears clear testimony to his admiration for the French architect; the house also displays an open-air central courtyard, paved with authentic ancient marble mosaic, a combination of old and new recurrently found in Cairene mansions since the 1870s (fig. 2).

AS A GENERAL RULE, Egyptian early modernism developed along the moderate version proposed by the classical modern fashionable in French and British architecture of the 1930s, rather than in line with the radical modern movement. Local taste was more at ease with Mallet-Stevens's or Laprade's architecture¹¹ than with the Bauhaus design or international style; Laprade's magnificent sculpted wall of the Musée des Arts Africains in Paris (1931) was indeed emulated in 1936 at the Giza zoological park in Cairo. An impressive ensemble of ornate art deco villas and flats, together with streamline designs from the 1940s and 1950s, can be still seen in the garden suburb of Heliopolis. A speculative development on a large scale initiated in 1905 by the Belgian magnate Baron Edouard Empain and his local partner, the railway engineer Boghos Nubar, on the outskirts of Cairo, the suburb had soon attracted many newcomers (middle-class Egyptian professionals, but also Lebanese, Palestinian or Armenians in diaspora) and experienced a marked building boom from the 1920s on; it is today a major up-scale residential district of the

Fig. 3. **Sayyid Saad el-Din**, *Villa Khaled* (an "apartment villa"), front facade, Heliopolis, built 1964



© Jean-François Gout / Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, Cairo



Fig. 5. **Sayyid Karîm**, Front façade of Villa Karim, Maadi (Cairo), built in 1950. From *al-'Imara*, 1950

the following years and ceased publication in 1959.¹⁴ The *Dunyâ al-mabani* (World of architecture) venture, an evolutive encyclopedia

presenting projects, from Egypt and abroad, along thematic arrangements (building types, materials, furniture, construction details, etc.), was to be short lived indeed: it started in 1951, but was discontinued in 1955 (fig. 6). The journal edited by Muhammad Hammad and Ahmad Salama under the title *Al-finûn al-mi'mâriyya* (Architectural Arts—*Techniques et Architecture* according to the magazine's preferred translation) in the mid-1950s

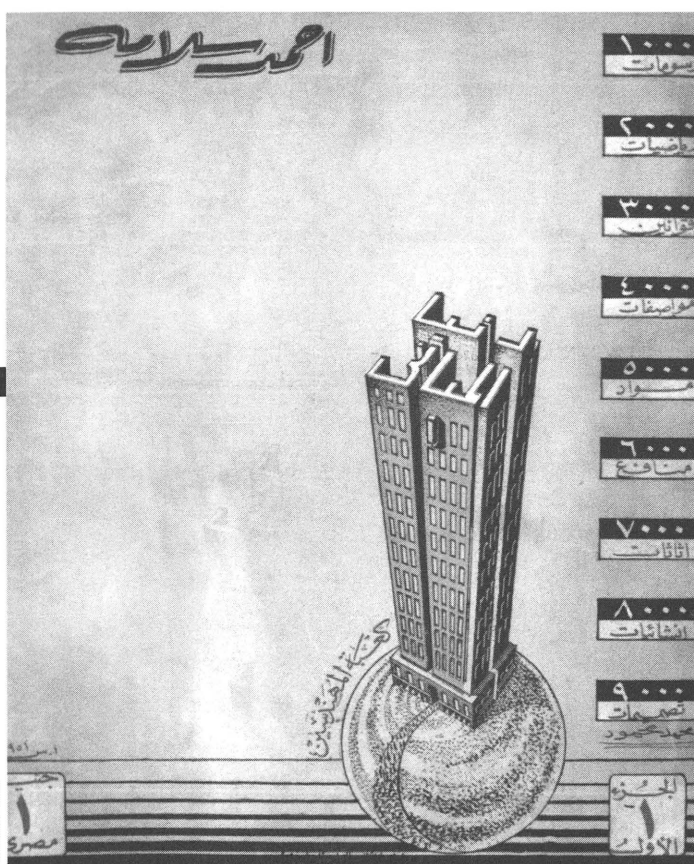


Fig. 6. Cover of first volume of *Dunyâ al-mabani*, 1951

did not succeed in publishing more than three issues. Egyptian architects were to wait until 1981 for a new specialized journal to emerge in their field, *Alam al-Binâ* (The World of construction).¹⁵

BY THE 1950s, the architectural profession in Egypt had grown to over 2,500 members, compared to the 220 fellows in the Society of Egyptian Architects in 1936. Almost no European architects were still practicing in the country, and a major shift of the prevailing built references was occurring: americanism was taking over. Ardent vectors of American modernism include Mustafa

Shawqi and Salah Zaytun, both educated at the Illinois School of Architecture, graduating in 1947. The old Cairo International Airport (1961) is among the many projects they designed as partners. In 1948, Salah Zaytun had been granted a Taliesin fellowship, and had spent a year in close contact with Frank Lloyd Wright's organic architecture and his informal teaching. He acknowledged the experience as deeply impacting.¹⁶ However, the visit of the great architect to Cairo in May 1957, on his way back from Iraq where he had been commissioned the Baghdad Opera House,¹⁷ proved somehow disappointing to his disciples and admirers: Frank Lloyd Wright found the city extremely ugly and expressed concern that a people of so ancient and prestigious civilization, the real inventors of architecture, could have produced such unengaging present urban landscapes.¹⁸

Americanization was not channeled to Egypt only through higher education; corporate architecture did also much for its dissemination. An early milestone was the building of the first Hilton Hotel in Cairo, the Nile Hilton (1957–1959), designed by the specialized firm Welton Beckett and associates, in collaboration with Ali Nour El Din Nassar. Beautifully located, the building features luxurious interior decoration and furniture modelled after the Pharaonic legacy. The project, symbolically replacing the old British barracks that had been evacuated in 1947, had propaganda value; the founder of the company, Conrad N. Hilton (1887–1979), is known to have claimed that his hotels were constructed for profit and for political impact: "An integral part of my dream was to show the countries most exposed to Communism the other side of the coin—the fruits of the free world."¹⁹ It would seem paradoxical today that Hilton's presence in Egypt was in fact highly encouraged by President Gamal Abdel Nasser—at the time, developing non-European alliances was what mattered most. In any case, for the many young local architects employed on the construction site of the sophisticated building, the project offered crucial apprenticeship.²⁰

CORPORATE ARCHITECTURE remains to this day among the few sectors offering good-quality design and fine execution, as exemplified by the World Trade Center (1988) or Conrad International Cairo (1999) by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's London office with Ali Nour El Din Nassar. In contrast, urban landscapes are plagued with third-rate international architecture of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, be they apartment tower or hotel blocks, increasingly large high-tech shopping malls,²¹ intrusive multi-storied parking buildings and cheap public housing schemes, while the urban sprawl of prime cities stemmed the development of countless exclusive compounds, drawing on the American model of the service city, and displaying "Spanish" or "Nubian" style villas with swimming pool and garden, arranged around golf

greens. In city centers, efforts at urban regeneration do exist, waterfronts, public gardens and dilapidated areas being reclaimed in Alexandria and Cairo. Extensive restoration of monuments is being carried out in historical Cairo, under much controversy, the project being heavily criticized for favoring the development of an "open air museum" over the social enhancement of the area. Furthermore, since the late 1990s, recent heritage has received some attention. About a hundred buildings dating from 1880 to 1950 are now protected under the Antiquities Law, measures have been taken to control the demolition of villas, and some modern architecture landmarks are considered as national treasures.²² The famous "Villa Hindoue" (1907–1910) of Baron Empain at Heliopolis, an Indian style concrete extravaganza, designed by Alexandre Marcel with a Hennebique frame, has been acquired by the State, following much media pressure, in the context of the Heliopolis centenary celebrated in 2005, and is awaiting proper restoration (fig. 7). The Aghion Villa (1926–1927) in Alexandria, by Auguste Perret, is on the verge of being similarly acquired, in order to avoid its demolition. Time will tell if these first steps will remain isolated moves, or if they will act as decisive impulses for a larger and lasting recognition of Egyptian modern.

MERCEDES VOLAIT, an architectural historian at the CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), has written extensively on modern architecture and planning in Egypt, and is preparing a monograph on Heliopolis. She managed the "Patrimoines partagés" (mutual heritage) project within the Euromed Heritage program from 2002 to 2005, and currently coordinates the international research network Modern Architecture in the Mediterranean (www.architectures-modernesenmediterranee.net). mercedes.volait@wanadoo.fr

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NOTES

- 1 Malcolm Miles, "Utopias of Mud? Hassan Fathy and Alternative Modernisms," *Space and Culture* 9 (2006): 115–139; see also Leïla el-Wakil, "Hassan Fathy et André Ravéreau: destins croisés," in *André Ravéreau, L'Atelier du désert*, edited by Rémi Baudouï and Philippe Potié (Marseille: Parenthèses, 2003), 75–84.
- 2 Khaled Asfour, "The domestication of knowledge: Cairo at the turn of the century," in *Muqarnas* X (1993): 125–137.
- 3 For a discussion of the issues at stake, see Joe Nasr and Mercedes Volait, eds., *Urbanism—Imported or Exported? Native Aspirations and Foreign Plans* (Chichester: Wiley Academy, 2003).
- 4 For an architectural guide of one of its main urban upshots, see *Port-Saïd, architectures XIXe–XXe siècles*, with texts by Marie-Laure Crosnier Leconte, Naguib Amin and Gamal Ghitani (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2006).
- 5 Mercedes Volait, "Making Cairo Modern (1870–1950): multiple models for a 'European-style' urbanism," in Nasr and Volait, *Urbanism—Imported or Exported?*: 17–50.
- 6 In the very words of the statement he was to make in 1878 to a British representative, see "Discours du khédivé au vice-président de la commission supérieure d'enquête," 28 août 1878 (Cairo National Archives, 'Asr Ismâ'il series, file 51/3).



Fig. 7. **Alexandre Marcel**, *Villa Hindoue* with rearranged garden, Heliopolis, built in 1907–1910

- 7 For an overview, see Mercedes Volait, *Architectes et architectures de l'Égypte moderne (1830–1950): genèse et essor d'une expertise locale* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2005).
- 8 Tawfiq Ahmad 'Abd al-Gawwad, *Misr al-'Imâra fil-qarn al-'ishrin* (Egyptian architecture in the twentieth century) (Cairo: the Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop, 1989): 40.
- 9 Mercedes Volait, "Égypte," in *Encyclopédie Perret*, edited by Joseph Abram, Guy Lambert and Jean-Louis Cohen (Paris: Monum, éditions du Patrimoine, 2002): 357–360.
- 10 For a list of his works, see Mercedes Volait, "Mustafa Fahmy," *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon XXXVI* (Leipzig: SAUR, 2003).
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- 12 Cairo, Archives of the Heliopolis Housing and Development Company, Private constructions, file 910; Letter of Charles Ayrout to Heliopolis Oasis Company, August 16, 1932.
- 13 Claudine Piaton and Mercedes Volait, "L'identification d'un ensemble urbain du XXe siècle en Égypte: Héliopolis, Le Caire," *In Situ* (electronic journal) 3. (http://www4.culture.fr/patrimoines/patrimoine_monumental_et_archeologique/insitu/article.xsp?numero=3&id_article=d2-915)
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The (inter)National of an Uneven Modernity

ARCHITECTURAL POLITICS IN PAHLAVI IRAN

■ TALINN GRIGOR

In September 1946, the editor of the first Iranian architectural journal, Iradj Moshiri, wrote, "The *Architecte* is purely a technological and aesthetic publication, which cannot and does not wish to have the slightest involvement with the world of politics."¹

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IN THE SAME ISSUE, his colleague, leading architect Vartan Hovanessian, articulated the central dilemma of contemporary architecture asking: "Should one imitate the past and recreate the notable works of that era; or should one look towards the future and adapt architectural design to the modern lifestyle?"² Both of these preoccupations—i.e. whether architecture should partake in political discourses and whether it should look back or forward in history for design solutions—epitomized the ideological hinge upon which Iranian modernity at large and its modern architecture in particular rotated and accumulated meaning in the twentieth century. The two statements, more importantly, mirrored contemporary sociopolitical reality despite their anti-political expressions. For, in Pahlavi Iran from 1925 to the Iranian revolution of 1979, the architectural styles selected not only provided the appearance of a certain national progress, but were primarily in the service of the state and the royal court. Modernity itself was an architectural project(ion) that crafted the image of Pahlavi political legitimacy. Selected buildings were seen as models of a thoroughly modernized, utopic Iranian society under the new dynasty. Internally, the architectural profession, practiced at the upper echelon of society, was a total act of politics, which for the sake of its own continued existence and autonomy, disguised itself behind an apolitical veneer of pure aesthetics. Those who designed for the kings and government saw themselves as agents outside the domain of politics. This maneuvering of the architectural profession by leading architects as well as politicians directly

C'EST ENTRE 1925 ET 1979, DURANT LE RÈGNE DES DEUX ROIS PAHLAVI – REZA SHAH ET MOHAMMAD REZA SHAH –, QUE LE VISAGE MODERNE DE L'IRAN S'EST FORMÉ. EN S'ENGAGEANT RÉSOLUMENT EN FAVEUR DE PROGRÈS ÉCONOMIQUES, INDUSTRIELS ET TECHNOLOGIQUES ET EN PLAÇANT L'ARCHITECTURE ET LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES INFRASTRUCTURES AU PREMIER RANG DES PRIORITÉS NATIONALES, LES DEUX DERNIERS MONARQUES IRANIENS ONT ŒUVRÉ POUR LA CRÉATION D'UN NOUVEL ORDRE ARCHITECTURAL ET URBAIN. CET ARTICLE EXPOSE LES DIFFÉRENTES PHASES DE CETTE ÉVOLUTION, DEPUIS L'INSTAURATION D'UN « ORDRE NOUVEAU » DANS LES ANNÉES 1930, EN PASSANT PAR L'INSPIRATION DES STYLES ACHÉMÉNIDES ET SASSANIDES, L'ADAPTATION DU STYLE INTERNATIONAL ET LA CRÉATION MODERNE, JUSQU'AUX DERNIÈRES ŒUVRES RÉALISÉES DURANT LES ANNÉES 1970, JUSTE AVANT LA RÉVOLUTION QUI SECOUA LE PAYS EN 1979.

impacted the very nature of design, stylistic choices, and ideological trends in modern Iran.

The reigns of the two Pahlavi kings, Reza Shah (r. 1925–1941) and Mohammad Reza Shah (r. 1941–1979), were characterized by a resolute commitment to industrial, economic, and infrastructural expansion, invariably pushing architecture to the forefront of the nation-building project. Technological and infrastructural development in administration, justice, economy, education, transportation, and communication were seen as concrete means to modernize Iranian society. However, Reza Shah's commitment to rapid

industrialization was paralleled by an equally steadfast sanction on political growth and liberalization. After 1941, his son sustained a similar policy of absolute control on political discourses. One historian has argued that the widening chasm between economic development and political underdevelopment eventually led to the 1979 revolution that shook the world and ended the

postcolonial history, therefore, the discourse on "modernism and otherness" ought not to be an option. The other does not exist; nor did it in the 1920s Iran.

BY THEN, REZA SHAH had reinforced the "New Order" with three central systems: the modern army, the government bureaucracy, and the court patronage.⁶ Each

Fig. 1. Modernist apartments on New Lalehzar Street, Tehran, c. 1940



monarchical institution in Iran.³ Elsewhere, I have argued that this chasm, this uneven modernity, was best expressed in the official architecture of the Pahlavi state, precisely because buildings and monuments were the principal pictograms of the process of endlessly becoming modern.⁴ The unevenness, as an analytical tool, is not justified by paradigms based outside of Iranian history. For the very concept of the other opens a special place for the West, while relegating all the rest to a secondary category that always refers back to Europe for its definition. Iran's uneven modernity is not vis-à-vis any other entity, but from within its own modernizing histories and agencies; therefore, it cannot be regarded as "other," "unfinished," "marginal," etc.⁵ Those Iranians who distinguished themselves as modern, were, in effect, being fully and centrally modern. At this stage in

of these domains produced an enormous need for new structures. The collective nationalist zeal as well as the king's unrelenting push for industrial growth greatly facilitated extensive construction. This process of industrialization and simultaneous revival of Iran's ancient cultural mores—namely those of the Achaemenids (559–331 B.C.E.) and the Sassanians (A.D. 224–651), defined the stylistic dilemmas faced by his architects. The highly sophisticated political elite, who gathered around Reza Shah and outlined the cultural parameters of his reign, invited a number of Western architects to jumpstart the architectural profession as an autonomous national and secular institution. However, while Western professionals such as German archeologist and architect Ernest Herzfeld, French archeologist and architect André Godard, American art historian and art dealer Arthur

Upham Pope, Russian architect Nikolai Markov, French architect Maxime Siroux and a number of lesser known German architects were deeply influential in shaping Iran's architectural pedagogy and practice, they were by no means dictating the terms of their operations in the highly politicized milieu of the 1930s. Despite the prominent place reserved to them by historians thus far, there exists enough evidence to demonstrate that these men were often at the mercy of local scholars and politicians in their teachings, designs, and excavations.⁷ The local mediation, aesthetic and political alike, was far more dominant.

ACTIVE ALONGSIDE these Westerners were a handful of prolific and ethno-ideologically diverse native professionals: Iranian-Armenian architect and leading figure of architectural practice and philosophy, Vartan Hovannessian (1896–1982); Iranian architect and son of a prominent prime minister, Mohsen Forughi (1907–c. 1984); English educated Iranian architect and a member of the powerful Bakhtiari tribe, Keyqobad Zafar (1910–1987); Iranian architect and member of Tehran's City Council, Ali Sadegh (1908–1987); Iranian architect and editor of the *Architecte*, Iradj Moshiri; Iranian-Armenian architect, Paul Abkar; and German-trained Iranian architect Karim Taherzadeh Behzad. The Armenian architect, born in Istanbul, raised in Tehran, educated in Vienna, working in Paris, and deceased in the United States, Gabriel Guevrekian (1900–1970), while active for only four years in Iran, was appointed by Reza Shah as chief architect of the municipality of Tehran.⁸ As an early affiliate to CIAM and a founding member of *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, Guevrekian was the most important representative of the avant-garde in Iran. Almost all of these young professionals had returned to Iran from Europe in the mid-1930s to join the efforts of the king and his ministers to redesign the nation.

BY THE LATE 1930s, however, they seldom found artistic freedom in the "New Order." For under the often unforgiving gaze of Reza Shah, form and style were segregated along the line of the structure's private or public function. Both Iranian and foreign architects designed public monuments that were thoroughly imbedded in historicism—i.e. in neo-Achaemenid and neo-Sassanian styles—while simultaneously erecting private residential houses, leisure architecture, and military structures that rebelled against any kind of academic and historicist tradition. In state commissions, these men were devoted to the official rhetoric; in private they had license to remain faithful to the architectural discipline and its contemporary global trends. Away from public eyes, they ventured into a range of imported and invented schemes that were distinctly different from the neoclassical architectural vocabulary: from a minimalist art deco in the then

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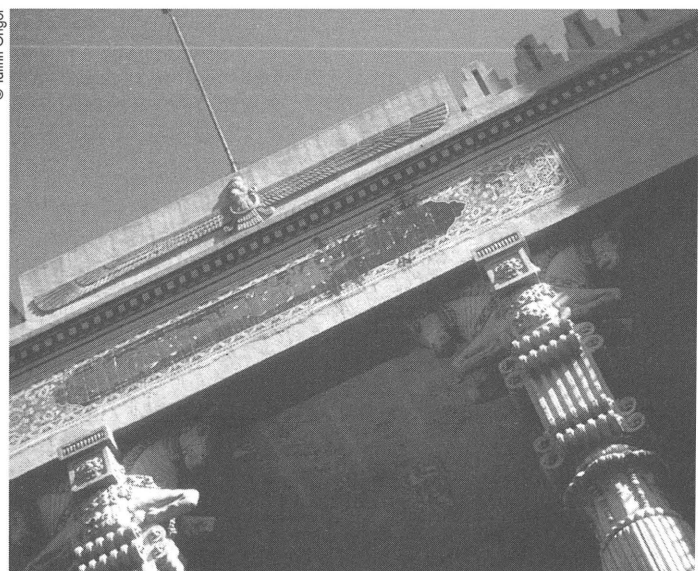


Fig. 2. Tehran Police Headquarters, detail of the main facade, 1933. The inscription, praising Reza Shah, was covered after the 1979 revolution. The image is tilted because it was taken covertly, as it is forbidden to take a photograph of the building

fashionable New Lalehzar Street apartments (fig. 1) to the austere international style villas tucked away in the small suburbs of Northern Tehran. Rarely, if at all, did Achaemenid and Sassanian revivalism find its way to these private commissions. Why were revivalistic proposals reserved to official public monuments, and the avant-garde to the needs of the army, the secular elite, as well as the growing Westernized upper middle class? Perhaps, while the former was perceived as native to the land and its history, the latter was seen as an import from Europe, hence inappropriate for a state that based its rule on anti-colonial narratives.

THE CREATION OF A MODERN CENTRALIZED army, upon which Reza Shah's political career had depended, instigated large-scale projects such as the 1394-kilometer Trans-Iranian Railway that stretched from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf. It not only produced a nationwide surge in construction, but also brought the international style to some of the most remote towns and villages of the country. In large cities, the need for military accessibility into the bazaar and the religious complexes set off major urban renewal projects that often knocked down entire neighborhoods. In the capital city, the king decreed the demolition of one third of the urban fabric. Almost all of the razed structures, including Tehran's fortification and its eleven gates, consisted of the architectural legacy of Qajar kings (r. 1781–1925), the last of whom was ousted by Reza Shah; their destruction signifying a negation of Qajar rule. In their place, the king ordered the rapid erection of a large number of governmental and administrative buildings in impressive neo-Achaemenid or neo-Sassanian street facades: the first national bank (Bank-e Melli, 1935) designed by German architect H. Heinrich, the archeological museum (Muse-ye

Iran Bastan, 1931–1939) designed by Godard; the first public library (c. 1940) proposed by Siroux, the central post-office, the Anushirvan school for girls; the Police Headquarters (1933) (fig. 2), along with a dozen monumental structures to house the newly established ministries. Outside Tehran, in Tus, the modern mausoleum of Ferdawsi (1934), the eleventh-century author of the Book of Kings (*Shahnameh*) was designed and constructed by a team of local and Western architects, including Herzfeld, Godard, and Taherzadeh Behzad.⁹ By the late 1940s and 1950s, Forughi's Faculty of Law at Tehran University and the bazaar branch of the National Bank along with Iranian-Baha'i architect and Dean of

Fig. 3. **Vartan Hovanessian**, street view of *Cinema Metropole* and residential apartments above, Lalehzar Street, Tehran, c. 1935



Tehran University's Faculty of Fine Arts, Houshang Seyhoun's Omar Khayyam Tomb (1959–1963) were the earliest attempt to synthesize Iran's Islamic architectural tradition with the modernist vocabulary.

AMONG THE STRUCTURES that rejected neoclassicism and historicism, and followed the modernist dictates of simple forms, no ornamentation, adoption of glass, use of concrete and steel in construction, and futuristic

aesthetics, were Hovanessian's villas in Northern Tehran for the secular elite together with a palace for Reza Shah on the grounds of Sadabad as well as his School for Orphans (1935). Guevrekian's dozen villas, again in Northern Tehran, and custom-built in modernistic language, included those for Malak-Eslami (1933), Panacki (1934), Siassi (1935) and Khosrowani (1936).¹⁰ The expansion of cities through architecture, furthermore, enabled the state to dismantle and disperse the traditional bureaucratic network of the traditionalist merchants in their bazaar, the *ulama* in their mosques, and the old nobility in their residential quarters. The social efforts resulted in the creation of a modern middle class that defined itself based on a new lifestyle of public leisure. The flourishing of cinemas, clubs, bars, restaurants and parks was a celebration of architectural avant-gardism. Theater buildings loyal to the architectural doctrine of the international style, such as Hovanessian's Cinema Diana on Shah Reza Avenue and Cinema Metropole on Lalehzar Street, were erected as signifiers of the ultimate paradigm of a modern society; one where technology and leisure were housed in explicitly modernistic public, yet informal, architecture (figs. 3 and 4). Similarly, anticipating European tourism to New Iran (*Iran-e Novin*), his Hotel Darband commissioned by Reza Shah and erected on the slopes of Alboz Mountain in Northern Tehran, was "to strike a new note of elegance with its accommodations, restaurant and casino."¹¹ It remained "a favorite of Tehran's high society" until the revolution.¹² In a modernist tone, Guevrekian designed Tehran's Officers' Club as well as the Military School's auditorium for the army. His proposal for the Ministry of Industry (1936) was never realized, supporting my argument that during Reza Shah's ruling period, form was segregated by the line distinguishing the public or the private function of buildings.

Fig. 4. **Vartan Hovanessian**, residential buildings flanked by Cinema Diana, Shah Reza Avenue, Tehran, c. 1935



THE INVASION of Iran by the Allies during World War II and the subsequent political shifts stalled much of the zeal in construction. However, by the early 1960s, Mohammad Reza Shah turned modernity on its head with his White Revolution that reestablished the state's commitment to rapid development. In 1973, the journal *Art and Architecture* reminded Iranian architects that "the King of Kings himself has often said that there should be Iranian solutions to Iranian problems."¹³ This was frequently taken literally. Students and teachers from Tehran University's School of Architecture soon organized trips to the remote villages of the country to sketch "native" architecture. By the early 1970s, "the university saw the birth of Regionalism, cultural sensitivity," heralded Tehran University's Dean and Iranian-Armenian architect Rostom Voskanyan, adding: "Finally, we gave up Formalism . . . [and] began to travel to places like Yazd and Kashan."¹⁴ The Iranian-Canadian architect with a Baha'i religious background, Hosayn Amanat, concurred with Voskanyan, "The beaux-arts approach was architecture as high art and beauty . . . This was abandoned and more emphasis was placed on the social and urban context of projects."¹⁵ The discourse on Iranian architecture had shifted from the international style of the 1930s and the beaux-arts principles of the 1950s to

the aestheticization of Iran's rural architecture. Despite appearances, however, this was not necessarily "going back to authentic prototypes," as it was claimed, but rather yet another modernistic selection of a chosen past; one that could easily fit under the apolitical headings of 'folklore,' 'vernacular,' or 'traditional.' It came as little surprise when the religious sites in Mashhad and Qom were not included in student travel curricula for they were seen as Muslim forms, foreign to Iranian aesthetic ethos. Even then, styles were chosen on the basis of the structure's public or private function.

THE 1960s WORKS by Heydar Ghiaï's, beaux-arts trained Iranian architect and advisor to Mohammad Reza Shah, the Villa Nautica, Villa Cubica, Villa Oceania, and Swan Lake House designed with Mariette Ghiaï, followed the international style principles. So did his leisure and military architecture: Cinema Radio City, Tehran Pars's drive-in cinema and casino, Royal Hilton Hotel, Hilton Resort on the Caspian Sea, the railway stations of Tabriz and Mashhad. However, his proposal for the Iranian House of Senate (1959) in cooperation with Forugh, while modernistic in looks, incorporated a number of revivalist forms and icons. This was an Iranian solution to an Iranian architectural problem. Other notable examples championed by Queen Farah Pahlavi, included projects by Kamran Diba—Iranian architect and cousin of the queen—Jonde-Shapur University (1975), Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (1976), Shushtar New Town in Shushtar (1974–1978); Amanat's Shahyad Aryamehr Monument-Museum (1971–1974); Nader Ardalan's—Iranian architect and the co-author of *The Sense of Unity*—Iran Centre for Management Studies in Tehran (1974); Voskanyan's Holy Cross Chapel on the grounds of Ararat Sport Stadium (1987) (fig. 5). Diba's Prayer House (Namaz-Khaneh, 1978), which was completed in the midst of the Iranian Revolution, embodies the architectural dilemma articulated by Hovanessian decades earlier. A cube-within-a-cube with a slender opening towards Mecca, the Ka'bah-like, unornamented monument of poured concrete, was turned into a storage-room when a roof was added and the openings sealed after the revolution. Twenty-five years later, it has been restored to its original form by none other than the Islamic Republic of Iran (figs. 6 and 7). The (inter)national of an uneven modernity, it seems, has reasserted its own, long-existing modernity.

Fig. 5. **Rostom Voskanyan**, *Holy Cross Chapel*, Ararat Sport Stadium, Northern Tehran, 1987

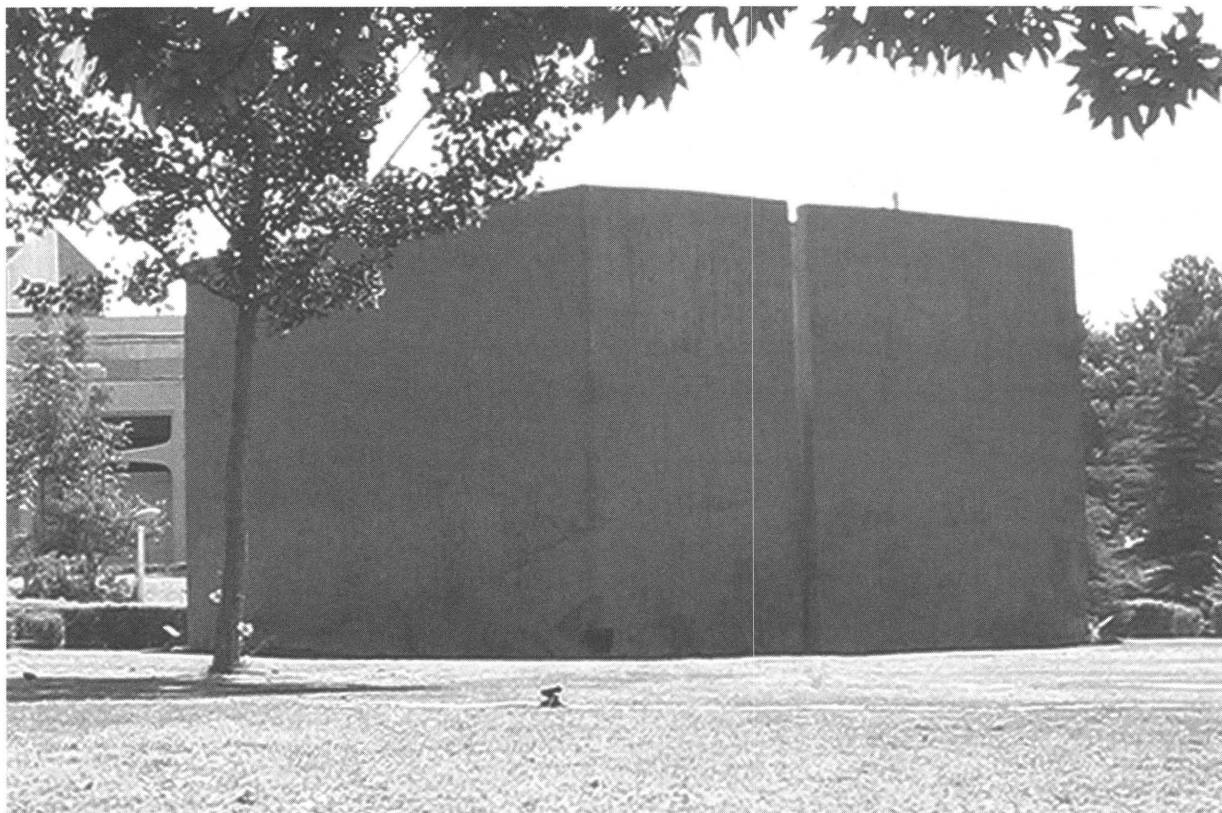


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TALINN GRIGOR (Ph.D., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2005) is an assistant professor at the Art History Department of Florida State University. Her dissertation "Cultivat(ing) Modernities: the Society for National Heritage, Political Propaganda, and Public Architecture in Twentieth-Century Iran" is in the process of revision for publication. She has a forthcoming article in the *Art Bulletin*. tg76@cornell.edu

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Figs. 6 & 7. **Kamran Diba**, the Prayer House after restoration to original form and function, 1978–c. 2005, Tehran

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5 See Marshall Berman, *All that Solid Melts into Air* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988); and Jürgen Habermas's works.

6 Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 136.

7 See Talinn Grigor, "(re)Framing Modernit(ies): American Historians of Iranian Architecture, Phyllis Ackerman and Arthur Pope," *ARRIS* 15 (September 2004): 38–54; and *Ibid.*, "reCultivating 'Good Taste': the early Pahlavi Modernists and their Society for National Heritage," *Journal of Iranian Studies* 37/1 (March 2004): 17–45.

8 Guevrekian was educated in Austria's Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna; see Mina Marefat, "Guevrekian, Gabriel," in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, <http://www.iranica.com/articlenavigation/index.html>

9 For a detailed account of Ferdowsi's mausoleum, see Grigor, *Cultivat(ing) Modernities*, chapter 3.

10 See Gabriel Guevrekian Papers, University Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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12 Cyrus Kadivar, "The General's Widow," *The Iranian* (21 February 2001).

13 "Iran Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow," *Art and Architecture* 18–19 (June–November 1973): 140.

14 Rostom Voskanian, professor and dean at Tehran University's School of Architecture 1964–1980, in an interview recorded by Talinn Grigor, July 31, 2001, Glendale, California.

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Preying for the Villa Namazi

THE UNFORTUNATE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN A MODERN JEWEL AND THE CONTEMPORARY METROPOLIS

■ NADER TEHRANI

It is commonly argued that the Villa Namazi, by the Italian architect Gio Ponti, was designed as part of a trilogy—developed after the Planchart and Arreaza villas.

IT IS INDISPUTABLE that these houses share certain commonalities, but moreover what is interesting about them is the way in which Ponti's authorship is radicalized in the context of modern architecture through their design—remembering that these works were conceived and built well into his mature years as an architect, and that these houses are not so much stepping stones for larger projects but rather rarefied and selective experiments in the ongoing evolution of his work. Maybe equally interesting is the fact that these villas find themselves located in significantly different cultural contexts, geographies, and climates, making their similarities part of a grander scheme, a thesis if you will, while also understanding that the development of certain themes would not have been possible without a nuanced relationship with each respective environment.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE CITY: VILLA NAMAZI IN CONTEXT

The Villa Namazi was designed in the early 1960s and completed in 1964. About a decade after the fall of Mossadegh, these years were characterized by a radical expansion of Tehran, as the Shah's consolidation of power was paralleled by the capital's growth from about 1.3 million to 2.6 million people. Tehran grew northward towards the Alborz mountain range, which served as a geographic limit, its perilous topographies forcing further growth towards the East and West. Regions that were mere villages in the foothills of the Alborz, used as agricultural land in the nineteenth century, were swallowed by Tehran's voracious growth.

IL EST GÉNÉRALEMENT ADMIS QUE LA VILLA NAMAZI FUT CONÇUE PAR GIO PONTI COMME FAISANT PARTIE D'UNE TRILOGIE QUI L'ASSOCIE AUX VILLAS PLANCHART ET ARREAZA. AU-DELÀ DE LEURS CARACTÉRISTIQUES COMMUNES, L'INTÉRÊT DE CES TROIS ŒUVRES RÉSIDE DANS LA MANIÈRE DONT GIO PONTI, QUI LES A CONSTRUITES DANS SA PÉRIODE DE MATURITÉ ARCHITECTURALE, A RADICALISÉ LEUR CONCEPTION. TOUTES TROIS REPRÉSENTENT DES PHASES PRÉCISES, AUTONOMES ET EXPÉRIMENTALES DE L'ŒUVRE DE L'ARCHITECTE, ADAPTÉES DE MANIÈRE FINE ET NUANCÉE À LEURS ENVIRONNEMENTS RESPECTIFS. LA VILLA NAMAZI, CONSTRUITE À TÉHÉRAN ENTRE 1960 ET 1964, EST AUJOURD'HUI MENACÉE PAR LA SPÉCULATION FONCIÈRE. CETTE ŒUVRE DENSE ET SUBTILE, DONT LE PLAN COMPLEXE S'INSPIRE DU RÉSEAU LABYRINTHIQUE DES RUELLES DE LA CAPITALE IRANIENNE, MÉRITE POURTANT D'ÊTRE RÉEXAMINÉE, ET SA VALEUR CULTURELLE D'ÊTRE ENFIN RECONNUE.

By the twentieth century, these villages (Tajrish, Darband, Niavaran, among others) served as a new terrain for the nobility—for palaces, embassies and summer homes. Replete with large walled gardens (bagh), these properties could take advantage of the higher altitudes, the access to mountain water, and the northern breeze as a respite from the heat-consumed summers of Tehran. However, these houses basically adopted past farms or gardens as their plot, without broader planning initiatives with which to be paired. By the 1960s, the stratification of class was calibrated more or less along topographical lines, with the wealthy overlooking the city in the foothills of the Alborz, and the plains to the south of Tehran relegated to the lower class and rapidly expanding worker population. Located on one of the uppermost plots of land, with a vast prospect of the city, the Villa Namazi was conceived in this social and geographic context. At the time of its construction, the northward expansion of the city can be said to have been completed, but

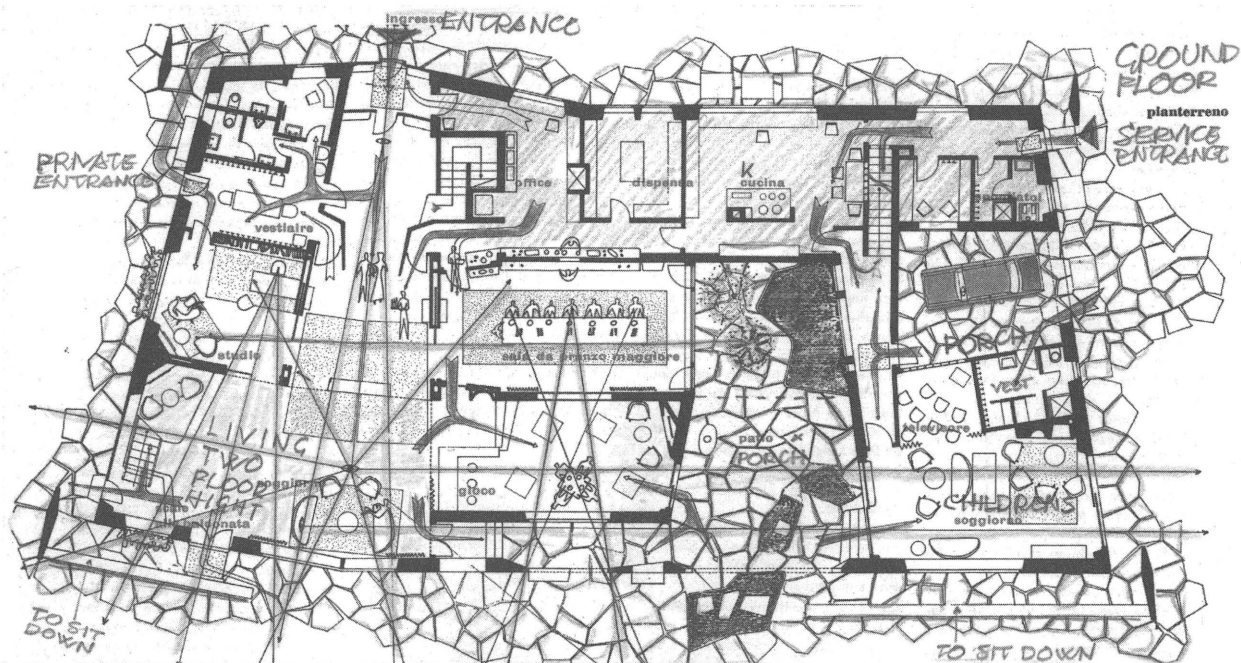
its catastrophic implications—overcrowding, traffic, insufficient infrastructure, and lack of public facilities—were, as of yet, far from evident. Thus, the same prosperity that brought northward expansion to Tehran at the time, is now pressuring it, and threatening the destruction of the Namazi house, albeit through a more complex set of circumstances.

THE 1970s CAME TO AN END with the downfall of the Shah, and the prospects of a certain optimism with the Iranian revolution almost immediately took a downward turn with the eradication of the vast coalition that originally formed the intellectual foundations of the overthrow. In this process, the Khomeini regime and its theocracy inherited the vast planning efforts of the Shah Era. The pre-revolution communication networks, highways, and public projects were eventually completed in the 1990s, giving the new regime a belated

“state-of-the-art” infrastructure with which to grow and govern. It did both, but not before the Iran-Iraq war. In fact, the city continued to grow at an exponential rate despite (or maybe because of) the Iran-Iraq war. As the warfront moved towards and into the urban areas in the border regions, its inhabitants escaped to Tehran for refuge, despite the danger of incoming missiles, bombs, and other aerial attacks that were common in those years. Tehran, being the largest city, also inherited Afghan refugees of a different war to the East, bringing its population to 8.5 million in the late 1980s. In this sense, Tehran was the unlucky recipient of many outside pressures, over which it had little control.

In the arena of governance, Tehran responded with a vote for the now famous—or infamous—Gholamhossein Karbaschi, a reformist mayor who undertook major projects for the city, the results of which remain in dispute. Anecdotally, he is both credited and mocked for





manicuring Tehran's boulevards through the sheer quantity of flowers he planted per year. However, he oversaw significant public projects, further infrastructural works, public parks and greenways, as a response to radicalized pressures on the city. More polemically, he authored the most controversial set of zoning bylaws (or negotiations, as it may be), borrowed from the West: he introduced the concept of the acquisition of air rights as a way of encouraging development within the city. This offered a way of subdividing the gardens in the north of Tehran, developing new land for housing, creating a new tax base, while gaining revenue for the city, its governing bodies, and it is said, some token individuals.

The fundamental problem with this approach was that it was done on a case-by-case scenario, and it was being overlaid on a planimetric base that was almost medieval in certain cases. For instance, village roads that had survived for centuries would now have to take on the traffic of numerous apartment buildings, without further expansion, accommodation for parking or circulatory alternatives. Naturally, the unsystematic way in which air rights were bartered or negotiated exacerbated the real estate hysteria which subsequently overtook the city, making the land value for the upper altitudes surge uncontrollably, and threatening the cultural or environmental value of the gardens, houses, and communities that once populated the district.

The Villa Namazi finds itself at this new point in history where its cultural value may not be able to compete with the value of the land on which it stands. In many ways it is not even a unique story, as history has been witness to many such dilemmas of real estate development as they confront architectural rarities. In this case though, it is not paired with a culture of conservation, and so the house may not even be able to put up a fight. It can only be

granted clemency by the intellectual generosity of its new owners, unless they discover some Faustian deal to develop the site around it, while preserving the building as, say, its club house. Neither so far, has been offered as an alternative, and so we must try to make a case for the house on our own terms, and attempt to define its cultural value.

VILLA NAMAZI: AN INTERPRETATION AND A PROPOSED RESEARCH

Whatever Villa Namazi's fate, this short essay is dedicated to initiating a discourse about this house on which there is little information or scholarship. In what way does the cultural context of this house contribute to its form and materiality? How does it contribute to the history of modern architecture, while evading its clichés and expected tropes? How does the Villa Namazi depart from the "trilogy," and in what way can it be said that the Iranian context, if any, informs Ponti's intellectual project in strategic ways? The answers to these questions may be the topic for a broader scholarly endeavor, but let this be an introduction and a set of hypotheses that can serve to open up the research. Also, before we succumb to its death sentence, let us try to reinvent the house through its re-conceptualization, if only to give it new breath.

THE DEEP PLAN AS MICRO-URBANISM

The deep plan is a device that is shared both by the Planchart and the Namazi Houses, and yet the relationship they offer to their respective sites differs so vastly that their resemblance ends there. While Planchart sits as an object atop a hill, the Namazi House is confined by the strict limits of the tall property walls within which it is set. Thus, if Villa Planchart takes the landscape as its ground and creates an inner sanctum against

the rawness of the Venezuelan nature, Villa Namazi conversely constructs an urban landscape from which to set itself into the labyrinthine walls of the city. Of course, in many ways this is the only option for Ponti, as the landscape of northern Tehran is characterized almost exclusively by walled gardens, and only if he had physically connected the walls of the villa to the perimeter wall could he have made this metaphor literal.

Strangely, Ponti creates in Niavaran a villa that mediates between the traditional courtyard house of inner city Tehran with that of the bucolic villa. Like Villa Planchart, the house draws upon the various lives of the dwelling throughout the day, offering zones for service and for leisure, for work and for play, for nighttime and for daytime. But in the case of Namazi the intricacy of the plan imagines a small urban enclave in which the lives of its inhabitants get played out. Moreover, the deep plan suggests the possibility of an organic relationship with the city and even a suggested strategy for growth, as if anticipating the eventual encroachment that we are witnessing today. So too, the plan imagines and recreates the familiar environmental conditions that overcome the peculiar weather of the region, in the width of its corridors, in its shade, in the possibility of breezes, and in the way that water can be used for natural air conditioning. The deep plan is at once a fragment of the city and the proposal of a new type.

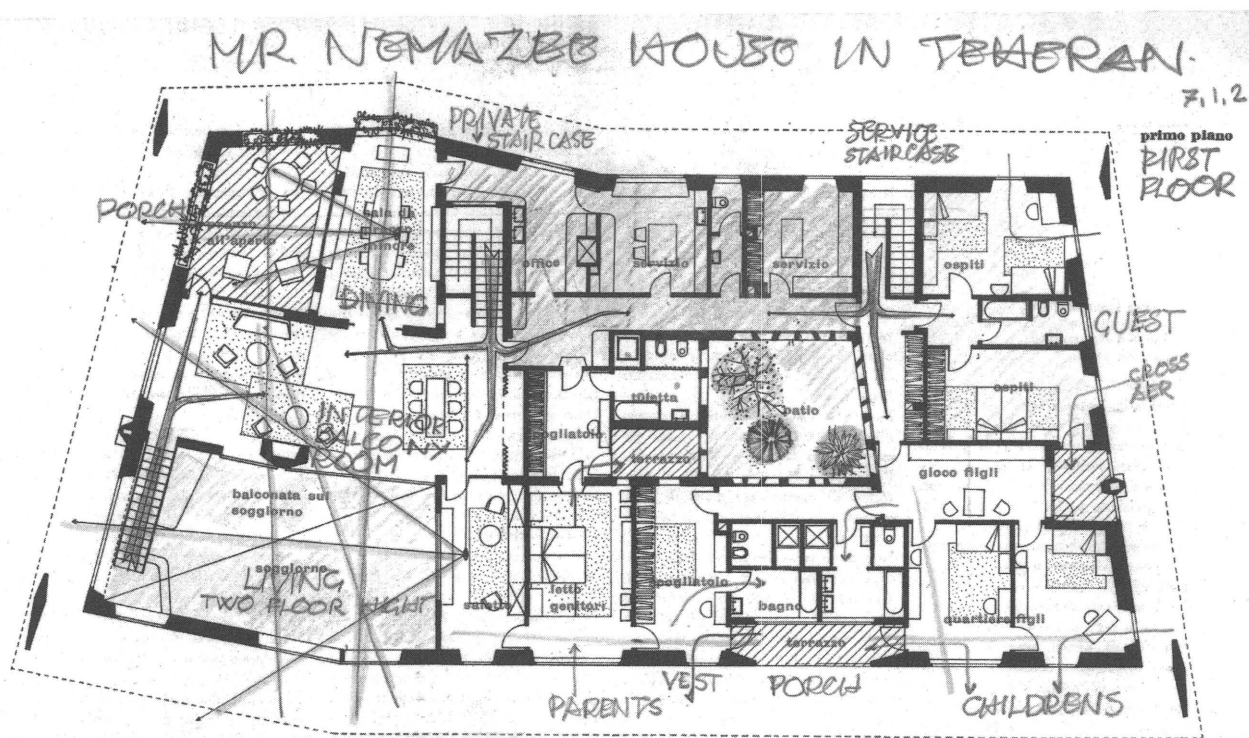
THE PLAN AS OPTICAL FRAME

If the plan of the house is seen as the privileged mode of design, its choreography, orientation, and phenomenology operate in much more complex ways. The plan, as drawn, contains its anticipated inhabitants as registers of

proposed experiences, distinguishing between the public and private domain, and also differentiating between idealized views and individuated moments. So dense is his conception of the plan as a vessel for experience that the optical cones read as a rhythmic calligraphic palimpsest that animates his drawings, something unique to the Ponti of Planchart and Namazi. In turn, the experience of walking through the house reinforces the perspectival bias of its planning, using its canted walls and ceilings as petrified cones of vision, virtually and literally making concrete the relationship between the interiors and exteriors: from the living room to the pool, the verandah to the mountains, the courtyard to the lawn, among other more discrete conditions. If the geography of the site informs the situation of the planning, Ponti's sensibility (or his deep-seated cultural heritage) predisposes him to the perspectivist tradition—in certain moments with panoptic scientism, while in others with a kind of omnipresent subjectivity.

OPPOSITIONS RADICALIZED

Ponti's maturity of the 1960s coincides with a ripe moment in modernism, where the initial invention and theorization of thinness, lightness, and transparency had already been absorbed as vernacular, and in turn become benign. On the one hand the plastic effects of Le Corbusier's reinforced concrete had become part and parcel of an accepted formal play by the 1960s; by this time, the linguistic consistency of his five points had become the received language for an entire generation of new architects—and consequently consumed. On the other hand, Mies's plays of dematerialization, reflection, and spatial slippages had, by then, made their way





into a broader corporate scale, conventionalizing the systemic tautness of the steel construction logic as a vehicle of communication. Ponti's contributions, in contrast to these orthodox canons, are the result of an acknowledgement of the more complex and contradictory possibilities of tectonics—working simultaneously with the thickness of his plans, while alerting the eye to the thinness of modern construction techniques. In this sense, one can argue that Ponti's work anticipates theories that were only uttered later by the likes of Venturi, though adopted and fabricated as an extension of modernism and its formal traits. In his work, there is no discomfort with history and its techniques; typology, perspective, thickness, weight, and many other tropes are adopted without the anxiety of the American scene just a few years later. More than anything, what is remarkable about Ponti is his dissatisfaction concerning the conventional notion of proportionality (of size,

weight, or thickness) in architecture, and at each juncture, his aim is to differentiate mere building from architecture by the radicalization of oppositions: between weight and lightness, between thickness and thinness, and between depth and surface.

SURFACIAL AMBIGUITY

If orthodox modernism thrived on a morality associated with truth—structural integrity, truth to materiality, among other themes—then Ponti advances a heretical position in his development of the surface. Moreover, what is maybe more critical in his obsessions with surface, is that it also sidesteps the superficial indiscretions (and the singular fascination with semantics) of the post-modernists that will arrive on the scene just years later. Simultaneously phenomenal, material, spatial and structural, Ponti's fascination with the surface lies deeper than its outer membrane. It is Ponti's emphasis on ambiguity that

releases his buildings from both limited and singular interpretations: are his buildings carved out of a mass, or conversely, are they layered by thin surfaces to fabricate mass? Are his roofs built on top of his buildings, or are they tethered to them so as not to float away? Ponti repeatedly and systematically eludes singular readings by evoking interpretations that are grounded in incongruent realities of the building, its experience, and its construction's logic. This choice may be as theoretical as it is pragmatic. Confronted with a building industry in Iran that is at once ancient and modern, Ponti exercises the possibility of materializing this simultaneity in the building, down to its details: what should we make of the incongruent relationship between the foundation stone and the 'diamante' wall tiles of the outer walls? On the one hand, the former is weighty, rough, and medieval—extending the ground up the walls, while the latter is taut, systematic and industrially conceived, a modern wink at the surfacial intricacy of Iranian tiling. Of interest is the brutality of their unapologetic juxtaposition, as if to underline the inequities of the two systems of construction. In contrast to the effect of weightlessness and immateriality of the Villa Planchart, the Villa Namazi relishes in the texture of the surface, using its agency to ground the building physically, while recalling techniques that position it culturally. Ponti's collaboration with the likes of Fausto Melotti, among others, is well-documented, and thus his fascination with the surface certainly precedes his work in Iran. It is interesting in this case to reflect on the relationship of his preoccupation with the surface in the context of local construction techniques. For instance, the stone-clad soffit of the house's northwest corner seems to draw from local river beds, a typically common image in Iran, but adopts them in a strange tectonic inversion, as they are suspended in a tent-like tension above the porch; the brutal roughness its material in juxtaposition with the quaintness of its reference makes for a de-familiarization that can only gain maximum traction in the cultural context in which it is to be interpreted. In turn, the precision of the exterior tiling deserves to be seen in the context of tiling as a broader historical craft in Iran. If the problem of the surface were not so paradigmatic in Iranian architecture—its glazing, its intricate geometries, its relationship to form, and its symbolic message—then maybe Ponti's fascination could be interpreted in a more personal light, a mere replication of previous details in a different context; however, given their physical proximity, one wonders what research Ponti may have done, what analogies were at play, and what local techniques he took advantage of as he planned his play on the surface.

A PRAYER

It is the intention of this essay to help initiate a more scholarly interest in this work, or even more ambitiously, to save it. More than anything, it would be the hope of

this effort to inaugurate a cultural dialogue between the forces of planning, historic preservation and policy makers to institute ways of saving works of modern architecture in Iran as part of its cultural heritage. If this dialogue were to begin with the Villa Namazi, Iran would arguably have saved the most prominent example of modernism within its borders. What a sad irony it would be to lose an architectural masterpiece to the policies and initiatives (if not neglect) of a regime whose rituals are so rooted in the house's namesake?

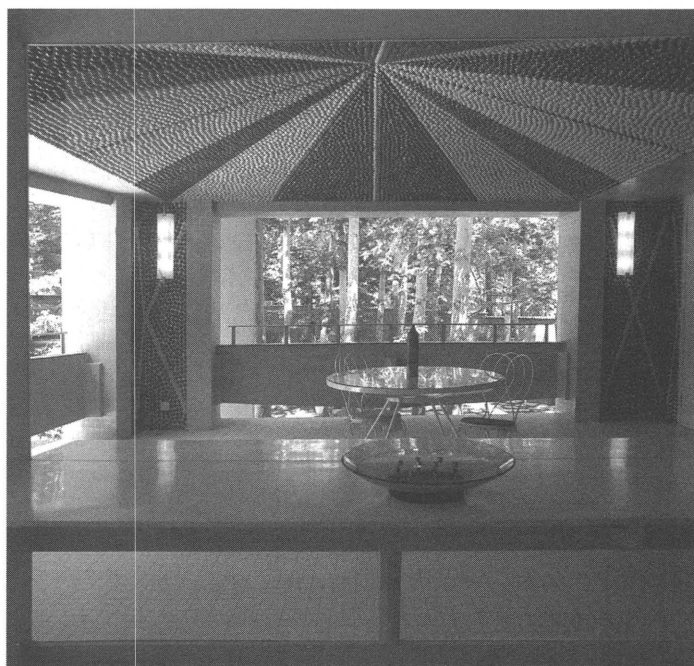
NADER TEHRANI received a BFA and bachelor in architecture from the Rhode Island School of Design and a Masters of architecture in Urban Design from the Harvard Graduate School of Design. An adjunct professor at Harvard Graduate School of Design, he has also taught at M.I.T., the Rhode Island School of Design. As a principal of Office dA, Nader Tehrani has received over eight Progressive Architecture Awards, the Academy Award for Architecture from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Harleston Parker Medal. The built works of Office dA include, among others, the Tongxian Art Center, the RISD Library, the NEU Spiritual Life Center, and the Macallen Building. Nader Tehrani's work at Office dA has been published in Architecture Magazine, Architectural Record, Wallpaper, ID magazine, along with four monographs. nadertehrani@officeda.com

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NOTES

- 1 In other publications, this house is also referred to as "Villa Nemazee."
- 2 Michele Porcu, *Gio Ponti: Tre Ville Inventate* (Milan: Editrice Abitare Segesta, 2003).
- 3 Marco Romanelli, *Gio Ponti: A World* (Milan: Abitare Segesta, 2003).
- 4 Translated from Farsi, "namaz" means "prayer:" hence Namazi, "of the prayer."



Richard Kauffmann

BETWEEN ARCHITECTURAL AND NATIONAL MODERNISMS

ALONA NITZAN-SHIFTAN, MARINA EPSTEIN-PLIOUCHTCH AND TAL ALON-MOZES

In 1938 Julius Posener edited one of the three celebrated issues of *Habinyan* (the Building),¹ dedicated to planning "Villages in Palestine." His editorial identified a new form of Zionist village that illustrated the encounter between two modernist movements, one national—Zionism, the other architectural—modernism.

HIS FAVORITE EXAMPLES were drawn from the œuvre of Richard Kauffmann, a German émigré whose hundred or so realized designs for the so-called "working settlements" epitomized the Zionist landscape since the early 1920s. This perfect match between a modern architect and a modern society should have granted Kauffmann a canonic position among Zionist architects. Yet, neither history nor historiography prove the case: despite his major role within the Jewish community in Mandate Palestine (called in Hebrew the *Yishuv*), Kauffmann was not included in the teams working on Israel's master plan once the state was established in 1948. Moreover, among the numerous publications on modern architecture in Mandate Palestine that flourished since the 1980s, very few were dedicated to his work.

THIS SHORT ESSAY means to investigate this absence. The official architectural historiography offers little help. It tells us of a Zionist movement that arose in the late nineteenth century as a response to anti-Semitism in Europe, aiming at settling the Jewish nation in its ancestral land. The ensuing settler society in Mandate Palestine enabled the rise of a "New Jew" for whom the "New Architecture" provided "a house free of past memories" (Posener 1937, 1). The leaders of both the modern and the Zionist movements were thus simultaneously "creating something out of nothing" (Levin 1994). The hallmark of this "creation" was the collaborative settlements of the *kibbutz* and the *moshav*,² for which Kauffmann's numerous designs of the 1920s and 1930s became a standard.

Yet, at the heart of Kauffmann's rural work lies an uneasy juxtaposition: on the one hand a radical socialist experiment of collaborative settlement that originated in Eastern Europe, and on the other hand an architectural model that was developed in a bourgeois context. Kauffmann acquainted himself with the garden city

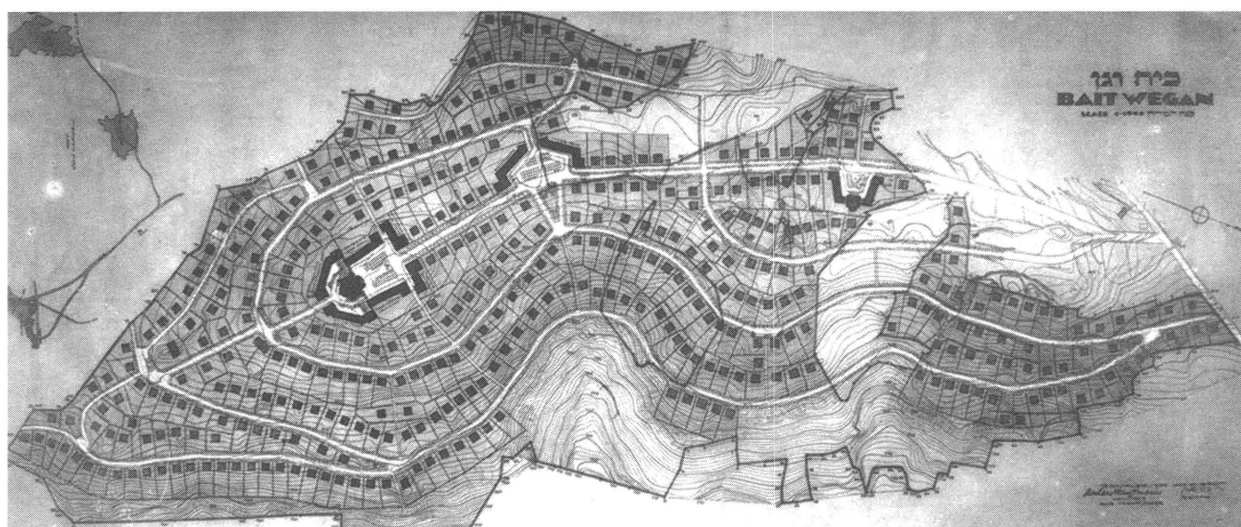
LES CENTAINES D'EXPLOITATIONS AGRICOLES COLLECTIVES CONÇUES PAR RICHARD KAUFFMANN, ARCHITECTE ALLEMAND ÉMIGRÉ EN PALESTINE EN 1920, SYMBOLISENT POUR BEAUCOUP L'ESSENCE DU PAYSAGE SIONISTE. CETTE RECHERCHE D'UNE HARMONIE PARFAITE ENTRE ARCHITECTURE ET SOCIÉTÉ MODERNES AURAIT DU PLACER KAUFFMANN AU PREMIER RANG DES ARCHITECTES SIONISTES. POURTANT, NI L'HISTOIRE NI L'HISTORIOGRAPHIE NE LUI ONT RENDU CET HOMMAGE. EN DÉPIT DE SON RÔLE PRIMORDIAL POUR LA COMMUNAUTÉ ISRAÉLIENNE ÉTABLIE EN PALESTINE DANS LES ANNÉES 1920 ET 1930, IL NE FUT PAS ASSOCIÉ AUX ÉQUIPES D'ARCHITECTES ET D'URBANISTES QUI TRAVAILLÈRENT APRÈS LA CRÉATION DE L'ÉTAT ISRAÉLIEN EN 1948. DE PLUS, DANS LE FLOT DE PUBLICATIONS CONSACRÉES À L'ARCHITECTURE MODERNE DE CETTE PÉRIODE DEPUIS LES ANNÉES 1980, SON TRAVAIL EST À PEINE CITÉ. IL EXPLORE POURTANT LA DÉLICATE JUXTAPOSITION DE L'EXPÉRIMENTATION SOCIALISTE DES HABITATS COLLECTIFS INSPIRÉS D'EUROPE DE L'EST AVEC LE MODÈLE DE VIE BOURGEOIS ET MIDDLE CLASS QU'IL AVAIT CONNU PENDANT SES ÉTUDES.

movement while studying with Theodor Fischer in Munich. According to Winfried Nerdinger, "Fischer was the grandfather of German organic architecture based on region and tradition" (Nerdinger 1994). Such modernism was certainly incompatible with the modernism that was propagated by *Habinyan*, whose agenda for the "New Architecture" was based on a *tabula rasa* ideology and Neue Sachlichkeit modernism.

This incongruity challenges the neat packaging of modernism and Zionism. We therefore suggest examining Kauffmann's ambivalent role in the context of different and often clashing modernisms, the courses of which were shaped by different voices and discontinuities. This work-in-progress examines Kauffmann's work particularly in the context of a momentous transition between two Zionist phases—technocratic and socialist,

WHEN ZIONISM WAS FIRST institutionalized it was a pluralist movement with an elected international leadership, the constitutive federation of which was primarily based in Central Europe and consisted of a German speaking bourgeoisie. Political changes following World War I gradually shifted the center of power to London and Palestine. Eventually, the upheavals of the 1930s gave a new inflection to the different trends in the Zionist movement. Socialist leaders of Eastern European stock gained prominence and succeeded in basing Zionist institutions in Mandate Palestine. On their precepts of Labor Zionism Israel was eventually founded.

Richard Kauffmann (Frankfurt am Main, 1887–Jerusalem, 1958) spent his formative years (1909–1912) at Technische Hochschule in Munich studying under Theodor Fischer, where he was particularly inspired by the garden city idea and its related intellectual climate. Fischer, who taught in Munich between 1909 and 1929, was the tutor of leading modernist masters, such as Bruno Taut, Ernst May, and Hugo Haring as well as Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier, who attended his school and/or atelier for short periods. Kauffmann studied together with Erich Mendelsohn, and later facilitated his working in



Figs. 1, 4, 5 and 6 © Kauffmann, R. "Planning of Jewish Settlements in Palestine." in *The Town Planning Review* XII (2): 93-116. 1926

Kauffmann's career flourished under the institutions of the Zionist Federation, which however were gradually eclipsed by the institutions of Labor Zionism to which Sharon was strongly affiliated. The latter established the state of Israel and granted Sharon primacy in the "history of the winners," as his celebrated autobiography *Kibbutz + Bauhaus* clarifies (Sharon 1976). Accordingly, the modern architecture of the Mandate period was belatedly branded with the oxymoron of "the Bauhaus Style," and

IN 1920 DR. ARTHUR RUPPIN (1876–1943), director of the Settlement Department of the Zionist Executive, invited Kauffmann to join the Yishuv in Palestine. The Zionist creed Kauffmann shared with only a nominal fraction of German Jewry was originally nurtured in academic circles, student organizations and youth movements. It led them to settle in Palestine long before the rise of nazism. In Palestine, Kauffmann became part of the relatively small community of German speaking Jews. Their circle, comprised of physicians, engineers, teachers and

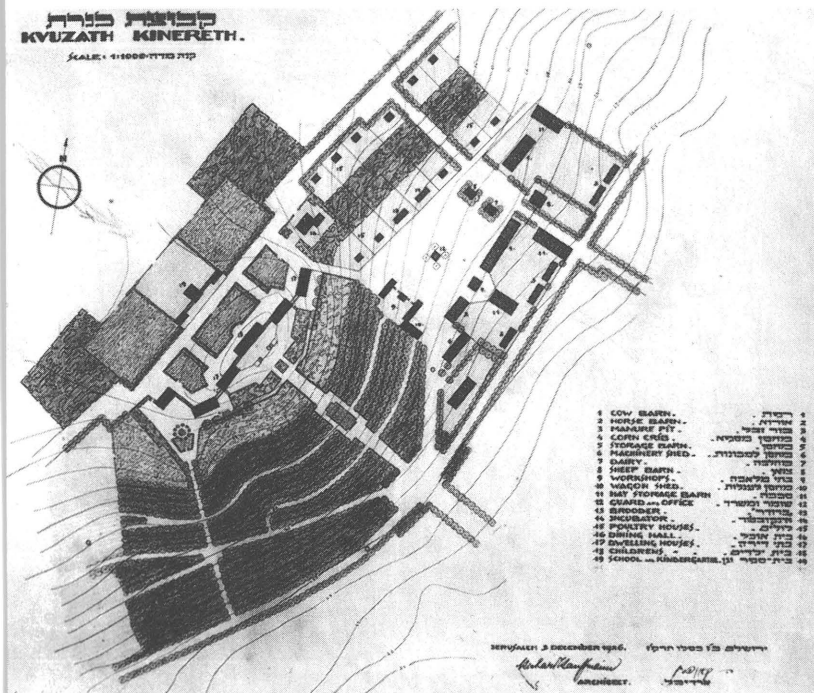


Fig. 2. Richard Kauffmann, plan of Kvuzath Kinereth, Palestine, 1926

lecturers of the newly opened Hebrew university, became the elite of the emerging Jewish community of cosmopolitan Jerusalem (Stone 1997). Members of this circle held prime positions in the Jewish colonization project of Palestine. They brought with them knowledge and experience from other Central European models such as the German colonization of Posen (Reichman & Hasson 1984) and of other countries.⁴ Scholars define this group as Technocrats who used the authority of scientific knowledge as a vehicle for the promotion of their settlement projects. Despite their purely professional involvement, they were thoroughly political. Their idealism was expressed in pragmatic language and their leadership imbued with managerial potency (Penslar 1991). Richard Kauffmann was such a technocrat, whose professional knowledge won him great prestige in the Yishuv. He worked intensively on regional, urban, and village planning, besides architectural and park designs (fig. 1). Working under the Zionist Executive, or as an independent planner for various Zionist agencies, his complete work consisted of 644 projects. Among his 282 projects that were fully or partly executed, almost half (135) were for rural settlements (Adiv 1985). Herein we have focused primarily on his rural design because of its radical social models and its legacy within the Zionist project (fig. 2).

DESCRIBING HIS DESIGN work for rural settlements in the 1926 *Town and Planning Review*, Kauffmann wrote: "The ideal type to be aimed at for a mixed farming settlement would be a semi-centralized one, combining the advantages of the scattered and the collective settlement type, while avoiding its drawbacks as far as possible" (Kauffmann 1926, 108). Neither the American model of rural settlements, nor the traditional European model, seemed to be appropriate for the unique conditions of Palestine. Instead, in his 1938 paper for the Economic Research Institute of the Jewish Agency, Kauffmann defined distinct principles which he applied to almost all his rural settlements (Kauffmann 1938). These laid down the infrastructure for the Zionist settlement project.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS of these principles points to the influence of European models, such as those of Ebenezer Howard, Camillo Sitte, Theodor Fischer, Bruno Taut among others. Kauffmann took the idea of a circular scheme and functional zoning from Howard, as well as the proximity of new settlement to main transportation routes (figs. 3 and 4). He adopted the harmonic topographical layout from Sitte, and from his mentor, Fischer, he absorbed the sensitivity to organic structure that respond to tradition and region. One can easily discern these influences in his principles which also include the idea of making the settlement aesthetically satisfying as a result of its organic and harmonic structure

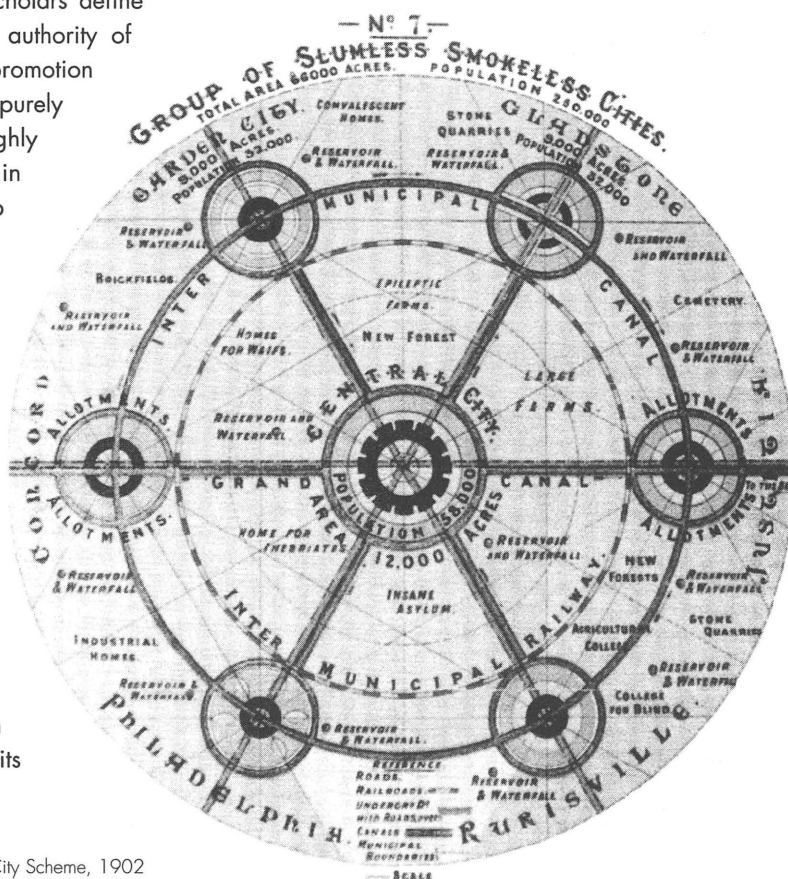


Fig. 3. Ebenezer Howard, Garden City Scheme, 1902

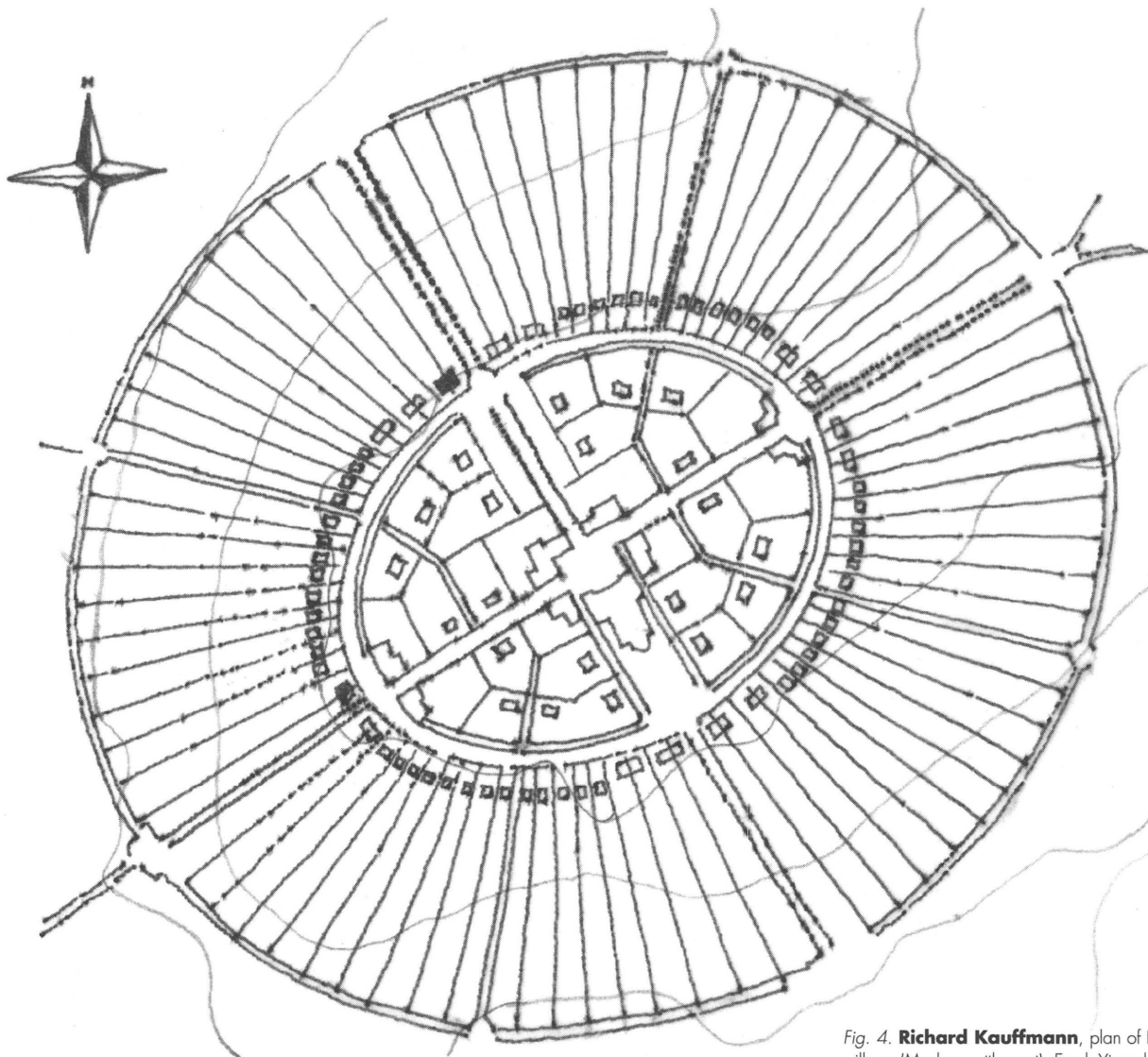


Fig. 4. **Richard Kauffmann**, plan of Nahalal, working village (Moshav settlement), Emek Yizrael, Palestine, 1921

(Kauffmann 1938). Similarly influential was Taut's idea of a "city crown," which for aesthetical and security purposes prescribed the layout of the most important amenities of a settlement on a hilltop (fig. 5). The seminal questions of health and hygiene in matters such as ventilation and drainage, as well as the idea of agriculture as a scientific project, were largely drawn from Howard. Kauffmann visited England in 1922 and became a member of the International Garden Cities Association. A year earlier, he had already devised a pioneering architectural design for Nahalal, the first cooperative settlement in Palestine (fig. 6).

THIS MOSHAV is an excellent example of integrating the aforementioned models to accommodate the radical socialist vision of the settlers—the creation of a new, active and productive way of life based on Eastern European socialist models. Nahalal was designed for a group of settlers in order to create a new communal cooperative community enabling each settler's personal fulfillment at home and in the farm. There Kauffmann adopted the general scheme of Howard based on functional concentric circles. Public functions were

located in the center, while the individual family dwellings were placed in the next circle, after which were the farm buildings, the gardens and finally the fields spread to the outer circle. According to Troen, "although this circular design was rare, it is typical of most Zionist agricultural settlements, in that the community is divided into zones defined by function rather than fragmented into discrete and autonomous family sections" (Troen 2000).

ONE CAN HARDLY overemphasize the importance of Kauffmann's rural designs in the context of Zionist ideology. Since Zionists started implementing settlement in Palestine, the settler society they created consistently favored the village over the city. Imbued with the ideological merits of the non-Diaspora New Jew, and systematically overriding the menacing Palestinian vernacular, the call to move from the city to the village would evolve into an official state slogan and the image of Kauffmann's villages would exemplify the Zionist landscape in numerous representations.

IN THIS CONTEXT it is not surprising that one out of three issues of *Habibyan* was dedicated to villages in Palestine.

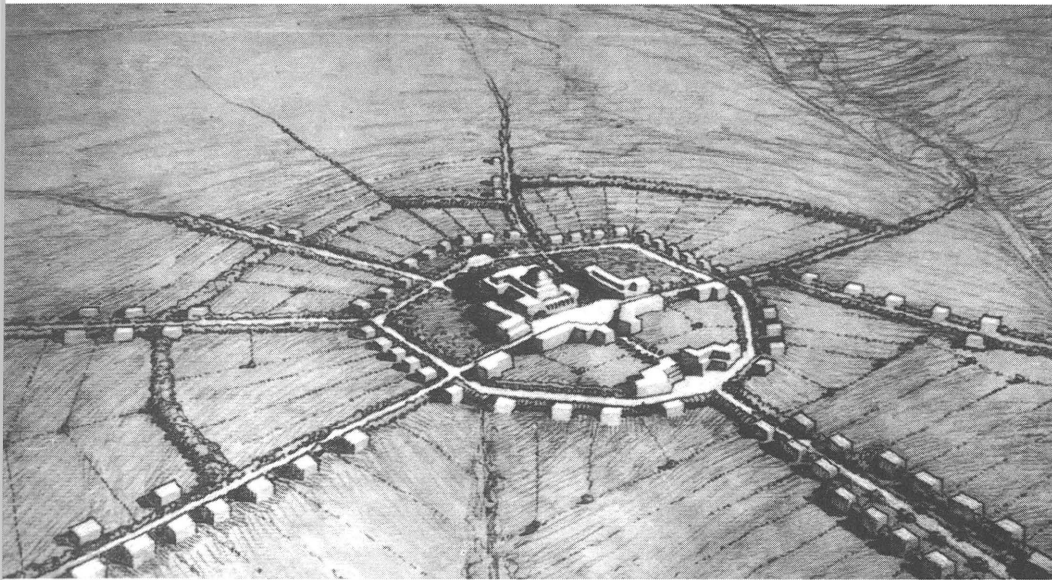


Fig. 5. **Richard Kauffmann**, perspective of Kfar Jecheskiel, Emek Yizrael, Palestine, 1922

But, while Kauffmann tried to create a hybrid of several village types—the ‘Central European’ and the ‘Arab village’—in order to combine their mutual benefits and to avoid their drawbacks (Kauffmann 1938, 22), Posener preferred to read in Kauffmann’s villages an innovative rational product. His editorial carefully distinguishes the new Zionist settlements he promoted from native rural dwelling. Unlike Kauffmann, he argues that “the Arab village does not constitute a model for imitation.” Instead, he compared “our national settlement” to the early Jewish colonies sponsored by the philanthropist Baron Rothschild. While he admitted that the exterior form of the latter, was “more ‘real,’” the productivity of the former reached “record numbers” because it was done “in a modern way” and “based on hypotheses.” According to Posener this village was akin to a scientific experiment which intended to forge something greater than agricultural efficiency—it was a laboratory for transforming the Diaspora Jew into an independent creative bound to a socialist collective force and rejuvenated by the direct connection to the soil.

THIS READING CONCURRED with the triple negation Labor Zionism promoted—of the Diaspora, of the Bourgeoisie and of the Orient (Nitzan-Shifan 1996). Yet, it ignored the formal and picturesque qualities of Kauffmann’s designs. Posener, Sharon and their Tel Aviv *Chug* (Hebrew for “circle”) colleagues respected Kauffmann but appropriated his legacy to their own ends. On the one hand he was the leading modernist when they started practicing. On the other, they treated him as a pioneer whose œuvre was already considered as the heritage of the technocrats who laid down the infrastructure for the Zionist settlement but remained somewhat remote from the social climate of the Yishuv. When *Habinyan’s* issues were published in the 1930s, Labor leaders were taking over the leadership of the

Zionist movement, a momentous shift that eventually led them to establish the state. The corresponding generational shift this young circle of architects opted for was more successful than anticipated—they won the prime positions and commissions for years to come.

In 1968 the planner who seconded Sharon in the state hierarchy wrote a belated obituary on the tenth anniversary of Kauffmann’s death, explaining that “a special gift of Richard Kauffmann was to know how to adjust his design to the particular details of site and topography, never attempting to violate or to disregard them.

This subtlety and genuine respect for the nature of the site seems today—in the age of bulldozers and of a return to more rigid and purely functional patterns of design—to be indeed “romantic” and even exaggerated.” (Brutzkus 1968)

These remarks hint at the incompatibility between Kauffmann’s work and the requirements of the Israeli modernization project. But they also challenge the idea of cooptation of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* modernism in the bureaucratic project of nation-building, however socialist it portrayed itself.

KAUFFMANN’S HERITAGE did not enjoy better fortune in the 1980s, when according to global trends the appreciation of modernism in local architectural culture shifted from a contemporary practice to a style worthy of documentation and preservation. When the Mandate period modernism was gradually constructed as a national style, it addressed a bourgeois society that populated primarily urban centers. Meanwhile the “working settlements,” i.e. the *kibbutz* and *moshav*, underwent financial crisis, and its collective legacy, described by Martin Buber as a “miraculous non-failure,” entered a complicated privatization process. Under these circumstances it could not compete with the contemporary investments in the modern heritage of urban centers. In a society whose main cultural institutions were still headed by the children of Labor Zionists, and architectural scene dominated by the sons of *Habinyan’s* circle, attention was directed to the embarrassingly bourgeois White City of Tel Aviv while the rural legacy and its prime architect have continuously remained overshadowed.

ALONA NITZAN-SHIFAN is an architect and a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning at the Technion, Israel Institute of Technology. She earned her Masters and Ph.D. in the history, theory and criticism of architecture from MIT. She lectures worldwide and widely publishes her work on the politics of architecture,

particularly in Israel and the US. Her research focuses on post-WWII architecture, as well as on questions of historiography, memory, nationalism and globalization. Among her awards and grants are the Mary Davis and Kress Postdoctoral Fellowship at CASVA, the National Gallery, and the Israel Science Foundation grant. alona@tx.technion.ac.il

MARINA EPSTEIN-PLIOUCHTCH, Ph.D. in theory of modern architecture, is an architect and a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning, Technion, Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa. She is head of the Architectural Heritage Research Centre at the Technion. She has received several Israeli architectural prizes and international academic awards. She specializes in twentieth century architecture and urbanism, and is a member of Docomomo Israel and mAAAN (modern Asian Architecture Network). armarina@tx.technion.ac.il

TAL ALON-MOZES, Ph.D. in environmental studies, is a landscape architect and a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning of the Technion, Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa. Head of the Landscape Program at the Technion, she has published on the history of gardens of Israel and its current landscapes. Her scopes of interest are history and theory of gardens and landscapes. artal@tx.technion.ac.il

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NOTES

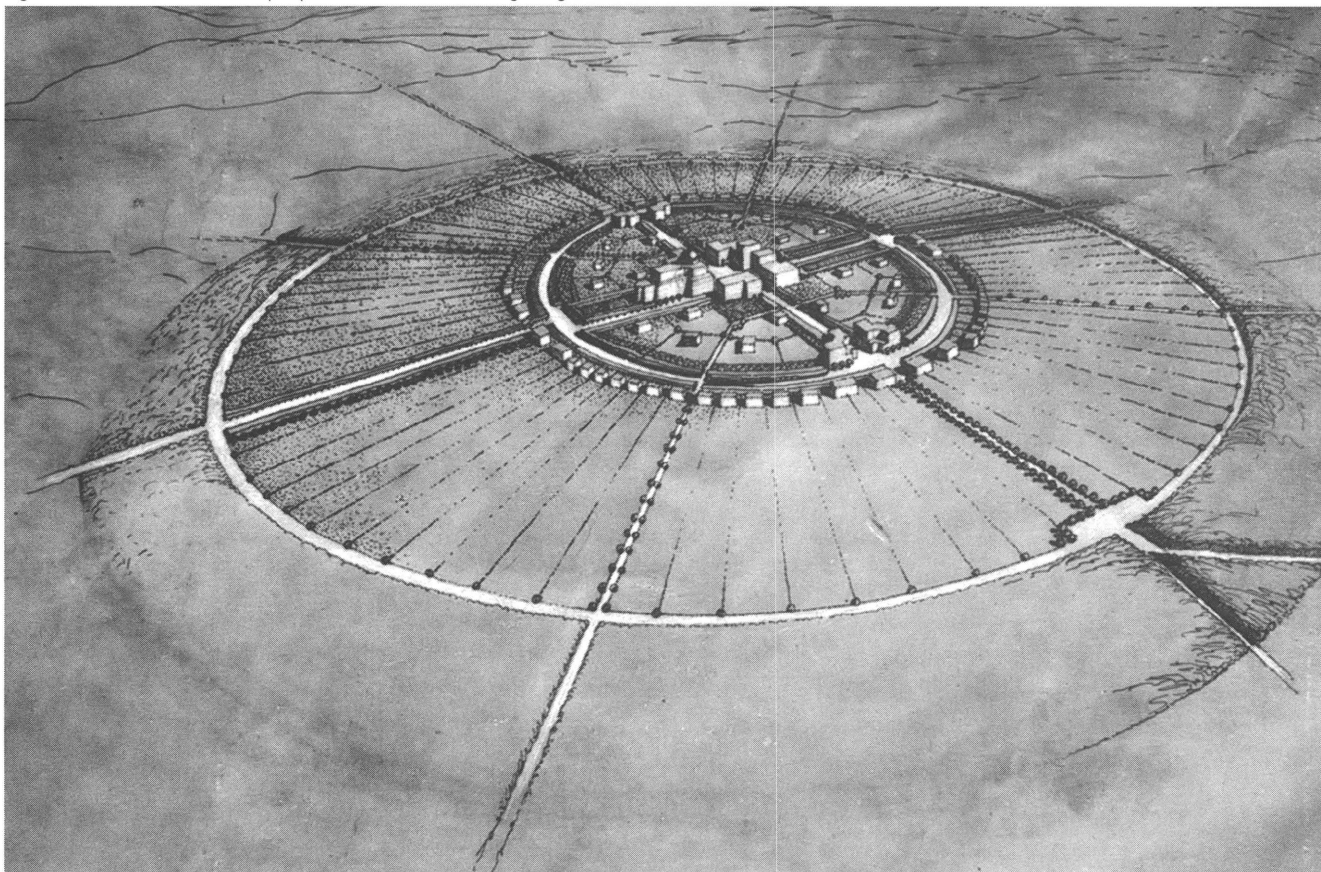
1 *Habinyan* ("the building") was an architecture and town planning magazine which was published by the architects' Circle in the Land of Israel starting in 1937. *Habinyan* focused primarily on housing and Zionist villages.

2 The *kibbutz* is a collective settlement and the *moshav* is a cooperative settlement.

3 The term "technocratic" is borrowed from Penslar (1991). The organic school was associated with Theodor Fischer, the mentor of Kauffmann and Erich Mendelsohn who both practiced in Mandate Palestine. "Neue Sachlichkeit" is usually translated as "the new objectivity" and more precisely as "the new matter-of-factness."

4 Reichman and Hasson show that the colonization process in Palestine prior to World War I was consciously influenced by the pattern developed two decades earlier by the German Colonization Commission in Posen. Furthermore, Otto Warburg, who held a number of executive positions in the World Zionist Organization (WZO), was a member of the Germany Colonial Society. As an expert of the tropical zones he was involved in the German colonization of these areas.

Fig. 6. **Richard Kauffmann**, perspective of Nahalal, working village, Emek Yizrael, Palestine, 1921



Building, Constructing and Exhibiting in Turkey

THE REPUBLICAN PUBLIC WORKS EXHIBITION

■ M. HALUK ZELEF

This article examines the First Republican Public Works Exhibition held in 1944 by the Turkish Ministry of Public Works in Ankara. Although the exhibition is worthy of interest both in terms of the exhibited items and of the debates surrounding the public constructions at that time in Turkey, to this date it has not yet been sufficiently analyzed.

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THE EXHIBITION THAT DISPLAYED the works realized during the first twenty years of the Republic took place in the Ankara exhibition hall between April 10 and May 10, 1944 (*fig. 1*). The number of visitors was about 205,000 which, given that the total population of Ankara was about 225,000 at the time, bears witness to the exhibition's impact. The exhibition traveled to Istanbul and Izmir and there also attracted large crowds. 274,000 people visited the Istanbul exhibition, which everyday drew large crowds until its closing hour at 11 p.m., while the Izmir exhibition attracted 414,000. To reach a wider audience yet, a small post office was established in the exhibition hall for people to send cards and brochures to family and friends in other Turkish cities and abroad. For international acclaim, foreign representatives were entertained by state dignitaries on the premises of the exhibition.¹

THE CONTENT OF THE EXHIBITION

Besides honoring the twentieth year of the Republic, the exhibition can also be considered as the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Ministry of Public Works, which had been in charge of the construction works of the state since 1934. The administrative scheme of the ministry informed the layout of the exhibition, which was organized in five sequential pavilions: (1) Railways and Harbors, (2) Waterworks, (3) Highways and Bridges, (4) Electrification, and (5) Buildings and Construction Works

EN 1944, LA PREMIÈRE "EXPOSITION RÉPUBLICAINE DE TRAVAUX PUBLICS" FUT INAUGURÉE À ANKARA PAR LE MINISTÈRE DES TRAVAUX PUBLICS. ORGANISÉE EN FONCTION DE THÉMATIQUES PRÉCISES, ELLE SE DÉCLINAIT EN DIFFÉRENTS PAVILLONS, CONSACRÉS AUX CHEMINS DE FER ET AUX INSTALLATIONS PORTUAIRES, AUX TRAVAUX HYDRAULIQUES, AUX AUTOROUTES ET AUX PONTS, AUX INSTALLATIONS ÉLECTRIQUES, AUX ÉDIFICES ET TRAVAUX DE CONSTRUCTION AINSI QU'AUX BÂTIMENTS HISTORIQUES. L'ÉVÈNEMENT EUT UN SUCCÈS RETENTISSANT : ON DÉNOMBRA PLUS DE 200 000 VISITEURS À ANKARA ALORS QUE LA VILLE COMPTAIT ALORS 225 000 HABITANTS. NÉANMOINS, MALGRÉ SON IMPORTANCE POUR LA CONNAISSANCE DE L'HISTOIRE DE L'ARCHITECTURE NATIONALE TURQUE, CET ÉVÈNEMENT N'A JAMAIS ÉTÉ ÉTUDIÉ EN DÉTAIL. IL MET POURTANT EN LUMIÈRE LES THÈMES, MODÈLES ET DÉBATS ESTHÉTIQUES ET TECHNIQUES EXISTANT ALORS ENTRE LES ARCHITECTES ET INGÉNIEURS TURCS ET LEURS HOMOLOGUES ÉTRANGERS.

(which was also cited as "State Buildings"). In addition to the pavilions displaying the state's modernization enterprise, there was another pavilion called "Historical Edifices Pavilion," prepared with the help of the General Directorate of the Pious Foundations.²

The number of works and the organization of the exhibition emphasize the ministry's priorities:³ railways seem to be the first and foremost modernizing agent.

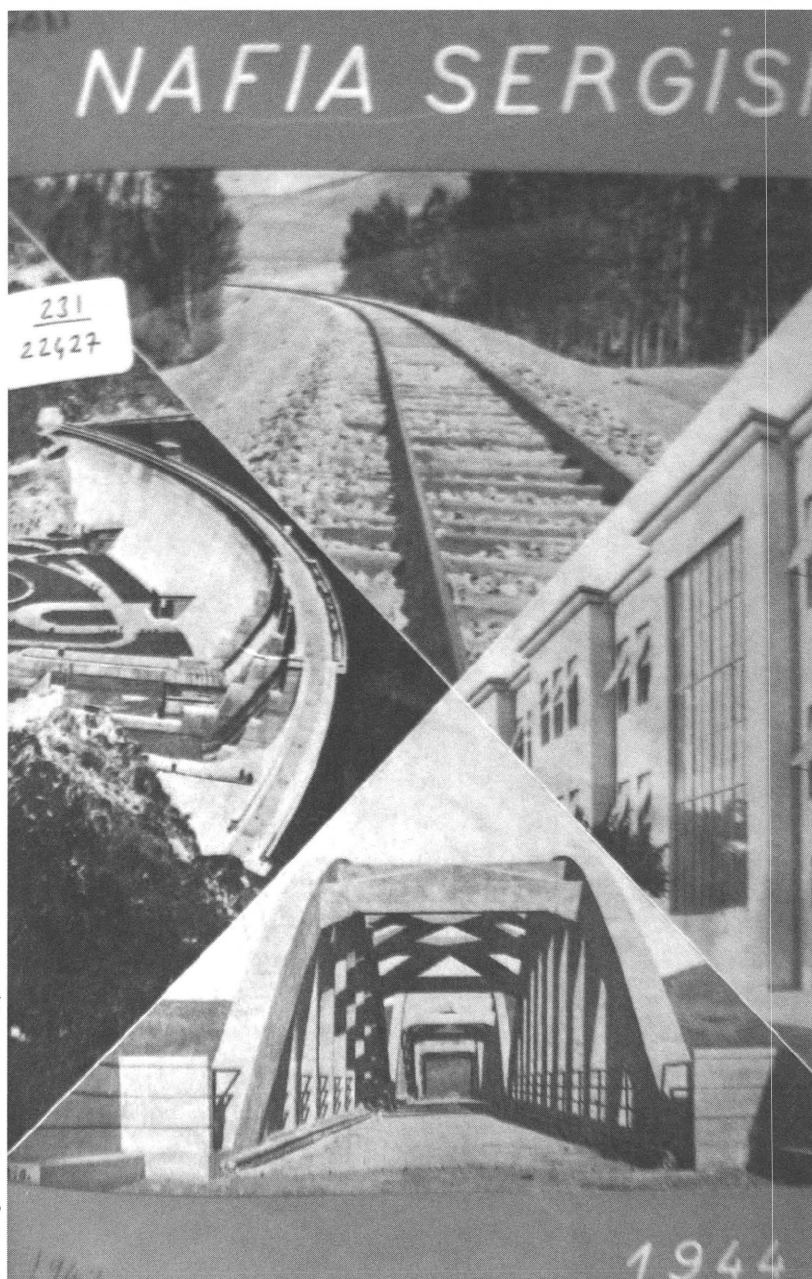


Fig. 1. Cover of the Ministry of Public Works' publication on the 1944 exhibition

THERE WERE BIG MODELS and many drawings of engineering works related to the railways such as bridges and tunnels (fig. 2). These reinforced concrete and iron works represent the technological modernization of the construction sector. The Railways pavilion also included the models of 25 new station buildings to be built on the new arteries, eight of which were in city centers. The most important was the new station for the capital Ankara, built between 1935 and 1937 (fig. 3). The Waterworks section comprised dams, regulators and irrigation projects. Technological progress was also displayed in the Highways and Bridges pavilion where different examples of bowstring, Gerber or arch bridge structures spanning over the rivers in various regions of Anatolia were shown. The Electrification section housed the projects of thermoelectric and hydroelectric power plants of modest dimensions (fig. 4).⁴

THE BUILDINGS and Construction Works pavilion included symbolically significant projects such as the Grand National Assembly (fig. 5), the Youth Park and the Mausoleum of Atatürk (Anıt Kabir) (fig. 6). Clemens Holzmeister and Theo Leveau were the architects of the first two projects; Emin Onat and Orhan Arda of the latter. These projects were under construction at the time, underlining the primacy and modernity of the capital Ankara. On show were some less architecturally significant buildings, but also related to the young Republic's aims in fields of health and education: there were 57 primary schools, five secondary and high schools, eight hospitals and four dispensaries. Even more numerous were local civic buildings: 24 mayoral offices (Vilayet Hükümet Konağı), 26 offices for the head official of a district (Kaza Hükümet Konağı), and 28 houses for such state representatives. Clearly, the new state was trying to mark its presence in the small provinces through administrative and governmental buildings as well as service buildings.

THE NEW REGIME'S PLANNING of everyday life reached beyond the scale of buildings. Examples of the development plans for 120 Anatolian towns were presented in the exhibition, showing the new infrastructure and transportation

systems, new administrative and cultural buildings, parks and sport facilities. The emphasis was on Anatolia while Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, handed down its supremacy to the new capital of the Republic as the number of prestigious buildings planned for Ankara implied. Although Istanbul was somewhat neglected in the first construction phase of the new regime in Turkey, it seems to have caught up later. The exhibition in Istanbul had a pavilion reserved to the Istanbul Municipality where portions of the French architect and town planner Henri Prost's new layouts for the city, from 1936 onwards, were exposed.⁵

Another emphasis was on villages, where more than 80 per cent of the total population in Turkey was living at the time. There were models at 1/500 scale of two villages that can be considered as part of the 'interior colonization' attempts of the Republic, intending to



© Haluk Zalef personal archives

Fig. 2. Postcard, Railways and Harbors pavilion

modernize the physical environment of the rural population. These villages however were far from the ideal village projects published in the architectural press, by architects like Burhan Arif or Abdullah Ziya, which were associated with the secularist enlightenment framework of the Republic.⁶ Unlike such layouts, which for instance did not comprise mosques, the village projects in the exhibition can be considered as traditionalist and 'realist,' and included pitched roof mosques with traditional minarets (fig. 7).

The necessity of new plans for entire villages and buildings emerged owing to the frequent earthquakes. In Turkey, between the 1939 Erzincan earthquake and

1944, almost one major seismic activity occurred every seven months, and approximately 45,000 people were killed. The Ministry of Public Works proved its interest in the issue, and developed "economic and earthquake resistant" dwellings. These pitched roof houses, with their provisions for cattle, carriages and hay storage, utilizing local materials and crafts, and adjusted to the climatic conditions, can be considered as traditionalist. There were also prototype designs for schools and state buildings for the areas prone to earthquakes. The ministry also developed regulations to rationalize the building practices of the people in these areas.

The exhibition was destined to the general public rather than to a particular professional group. Buildings were represented by big models, considered more accessible than professional drawings such as plans, sections and elevations. The exhibition halls were full of such models reaching up to 2.5 meters in length. Visual materials accompanied these sizeable artifacts. Somewhat pedantic aphorisms, charts and graphics about Turkish modernization were also part of the exhibition.

THE EXHIBITION HALL IN ANKARA

Besides the content, the settings of the exhibition also provide clues about the technological, cultural and aesthetical modernization processes in Turkey at the time. The venues of the exhibition in Ankara and Izmir were significant (figs. 8 and 9):⁷ in Ankara it took place in the exhibition hall that had been designed in 1933 by the Turkish architect Şevki Balmumcu after an international competition while the Izmir venue had been designed in 1939 by another Turkish architect, Ferruh Orel, as part

Fig. 3. Şekip Akalın, Ankara Train Station, built in 1937



© METU Faculty of Architecture slides archives

of the International İzmir Fair. Both buildings testified to the dominant modernist aesthetics of 1930s architecture in Turkey.

THESE EXHIBITION buildings were especially designed to inform the public about the achievements of the new Republic. The Ankara venue in particular was a milestone both as a public center of education and propaganda, and as an example of modern architecture. Besides exhibitions portraying the physical transformation of the country—such as Turkish Artists; Health; Agriculture; Ankara, the symbol of Turkish Construction; and Mining, Metallurgy, and Industry—, the Ankara exhibition hall also housed architectural exhibitions such as Atatürk's Mausoleum Competition in 1942, and The New German Architecture and The Architecture of Sport Fields exhibitions in 1943. However, once the icon of modernism, this international style building quickly seemed to be losing its aesthetic value by the mid-1940s, and was then turned into an opera house re-clad in a 'historicist' style. As early as 1944, for the ministry's exhibition, some of the interior spaces were remodeled into a rather 'classicalist' appearance, with the addition of columns and pedestals. Interestingly, with such additions the interior layout was considered in agreement with the golden age of the Ottoman Empire. *Nafia Dergisi*, the ministry's magazine, commented that "architect Sinan's architecture and decoration were applied in the exhibition techniques," which legitimized historicism in parallel with the nationalist atmosphere of the period.⁸

THE IDEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition's function was officially "to publicize the construction works to the public and to inform in detail the citizens about the accomplished works through models, photographs, graphics and charts, and to help them visualize the works planned for the near future."⁹ However the 1944 exhibition went beyond merely conveying data and was infused with the ideological framework of the Turkish Republic. The dictums of Kemal Atatürk, the national hero of the War of Independence and the first president of the Republic, and of the second president İsmet İnönü were exposed on the walls of the honorary hall in the Ankara exhibition hall, emphasizing the importance given by the republican regime to public works and modernization. These statements also appeared in the exhibition's catalog, which claimed that

"the founding stones of the transformation of the devastated country into a thoroughly prosperous one will fascinate the eye everywhere."¹⁰ Thus the exhibition's catalog echoed the devastation of Turkey during World War I and the Independence War, as well as the devastation of Europe during the then ongoing World War II. In spite of the economic troubles due to war, which necessitated the allocation of more than half of the national budget (54%) to military expenses, the exhibition conveyed the message that the Turkish state was still a building nation.

OTHER THAN THE PRINCIPLE of "statism" underlined by the state's primacy in the construction sector and

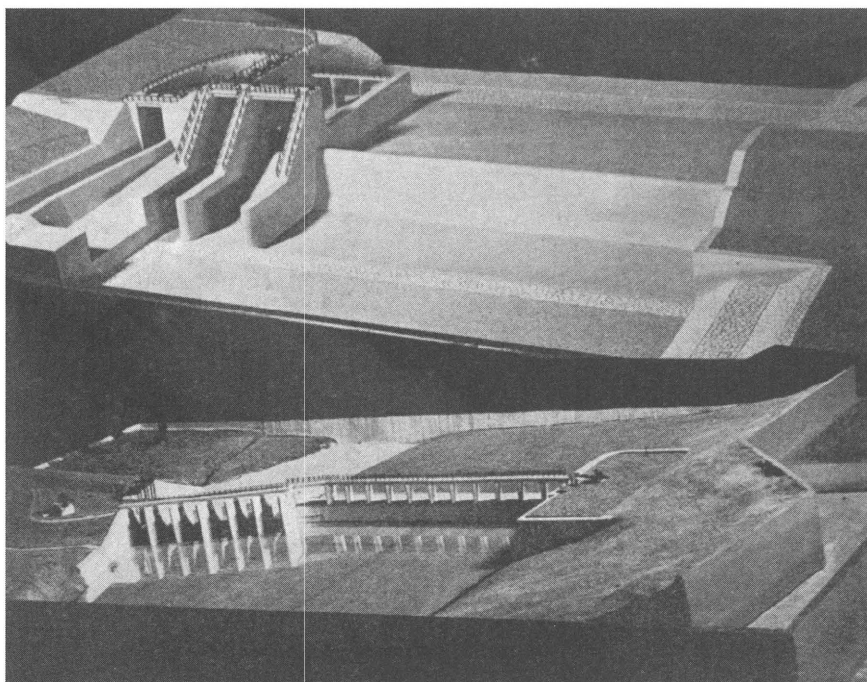


Fig. 4. Models in the Waterworks pavilion

nationalization of facilities run by foreign interests, this exhibition also manifested other dimensions of the ideological precepts of the Turkish state. Nationalism was a dominant motive, hence the catalog's claim that "the Turkish nation is a nation that constructs and builds. Throughout its long history, it has brought roads, public buildings, monuments of civilization to wherever it reached." An even more chauvinistic tone, suggestive of the war atmosphere, was apparent in the opening speech of the Minister of Public Works: "It is a fact recognized worldwide that our great nation has valued construction as much as fighting, and has had great successes in creating immortal monuments all over the lands which our dignified ancestors conquered with their swords." In tune with the contemporary "Turkish history thesis," the sources of such successes were traced back to the ancestors of the nation in Central Asia, who had migrated to every corner of the world where they built eternal monuments, which were "living documents of the



Fig. 5. Model of the Turkish Grand National Assembly: "Any place where Turks reside will be an example of health, hygiene, beauty and modern culture," Kemal Atatürk, 1935

Turkish civilization." In the exhibition, modern techniques in many fields were credited with such Turkish pre-historical origins.¹¹

THE EXHIBITION ambivalently referred to the Ottoman period. The flourishing period of the Empire, namely the sixteenth century, was mentioned with pride and many works in the Historical Edifices Pavilion belonged to that era. The prime minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu opened the exhibition by referring to Sinan, the sixteenth-century chief architect of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, and saluted the "Sinans of the future."¹² The later periods,

Nationhood was meant to be passed on by resorting both to a glorious past as well as to a prosperous future. Beyond being the artifacts of technological progress, the communication, transportation, electrification and irrigation networks on display implied the construction of this nationhood. As Sibel Bozdoğan points out, the contemporary emphasis on these networks underlined Turkish Republic's mental map of new territories after the Ottoman Empire's collapse and the loss of the Balkan and Middle Eastern territories.¹³ In the exhibition, Turkey's new national geography and the services brought to its different areas were depicted in many large scale maps on the walls.

ARCHITECTS' VIEWS ON THE EXHIBITION

Comments and criticisms in the magazine *Arkitekt* reveal the contemporary architects' evaluation of the exhibition as well as their views on the activities of the Ministry of Public Works.¹⁴ In these texts it is possible to trace the modernization attempts of the architectural profession in Turkey.

Despite the positive criticism in the popular press, where the nationalist pride concerning the realization of the works by "our engineers, our capital and our labor" was the main theme, architects had reservations. They did not totally agree with the critique construing the exhibition as being "not an arbitrary collection of the construction works, but the sign of the revolution in the (political) system and culture,"¹⁵ and complained about the lack of a guiding principle regarding the architectural works in the exhibition. Zeki Sayar, the editor of *Arkitekt*, stated the profession's hope that the government would extend the architect's role in public works, acknowledging their



Fig. 6. Model of the Mausoleum of Atatürk: "One day my mortal body will turn into dust but the Turkish Republic will stand forever," Kemal Atatürk

© T.C. Nafia Vekaleli Nafia Dergisi, Birinci teğrin 1944, 11/2

however, particularly the nineteenth century, were portrayed as times of indifference and neglect for Anatolia, and many graphics and charts in the exhibition favorably compared the achievements of the republican era with the former Ottoman rule. For example, the catalog asserted that more than the total sum of the bridges and about three times the amount of roads inherited from the Ottoman times were realized in just twenty years time by the Republic.

creative capacity and limiting the number of foreigners in architectural practice.¹⁶

There is a certain discrepancy between the buildings as shown in the exhibition and their description in *Arkitekt*. While the magazine published buildings together with the names of the architects, the exhibition catalog focused on the costs and quantities of the works. A similar attitude prevailed in *Nafia Dergisi* where rather than individual architects the costs were also of prime importance. The substitution of the architect as a creative artist by the anonymous technician was partly an outcome of the organization of the design process of the buildings exhibited, whose architects were mostly employees in the Ministry of Public Works. Although the historiography of Turkish architecture¹⁷ and the contemporary magazine *Arkitekt* mentioned Şekip Akalın, Bedri Uçar and Recai Akçay amongst the crucial architects of the 1930s and 1940s, buildings designed by them and included in the exhibition, namely the Ankara Train Station, the Ministry of Transportation, and the Faculty of Law, appeared in the exhibition catalog without being credited to these names (fig. 10). Anonymity and disregard for the individuality of the architects of the public works were apparent in the prototypical projects developed for different functions and different regions of Turkey. In this regard architecture was treated like engineering works, which were most often considered as impersonal, rational and pragmatic constructions whose models could be applied in numerous locations, rather than as unique and creative artistic production.

IN HIS ANALYSIS of the exhibition Sayar stressed the fact that he was not entitled to comment on the construction of infrastructures (bridges, dams, harbors, etc.), his focus being on the Buildings and Construction Works pavilion. He suggested that engineers should comment on the former and architects on the latter. This seems to be a strategy to elude the practice of engineers as designers of buildings, and thereby to define a field for the professional practice of Turkish architects.¹⁸ Furthermore he was critical of the works of architects in the Buildings and Construction Works. He insinuated that most of these works were the products of foreign architects,¹⁹ and extended his nationalistic criticism to all the buildings and city plans designed by the ministry by claiming that, although some of these were designed by local architects, they were still built under the influence of foreigners. However, Sayar's main argument was that the exhibition lacked a guiding principle, which should have been the creation of a "national architecture" and a "national urbanism."²⁰ According to him, another theme which was not sufficiently developed was the representation of state sovereignty and authority by official buildings. Sayar, by pointing out the American and British state buildings, argued that the official

buildings in Turkey should stay away from the cubist and internationalist attitudes in architecture. Actually, other than a few examples such as the Ankara State Airways building (fig. 11), symbolic state buildings shown in the exhibition such as Atatürk's Mausoleum, the National Assembly or the Ministries of Justice and Transportation, were hardly examples of the modernist architecture of abstract geometries, flat roofs, and large glass surfaces. They carried the influences of the neoclassical attitudes prevailing at that time, with rather symmetrical disposition of volumes, monumental facades and stone claddings.²¹ Architecture in Turkey would develop with these neoclassical leanings and the period from the late 1930s until the 1950s would later be acknowledged by historians as the period of the "second national style."

COMPARED TO the Civic Building pavilion, Sayar considered the ministry more successful in the fields of railways, motorways, electrification, etc., in terms of long term planning, strategies and targeting. Similar criticism was uttered by many other articles in the magazine. The ministry was accused of not employing enough architects in the provinces in order to control architectural production both in terms of construction and aesthetics.²² The organization of the ministry's central design office was criticized, and it was suggested that its capacities should be expanded in order to fulfill the entire country's needs, including the countryside.

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Fig. 7. Buildings for model villages in earthquake zones



© T.C. Nafia Vakfı Nafia Dergisi, Birinci Sayı 1944, 11/2

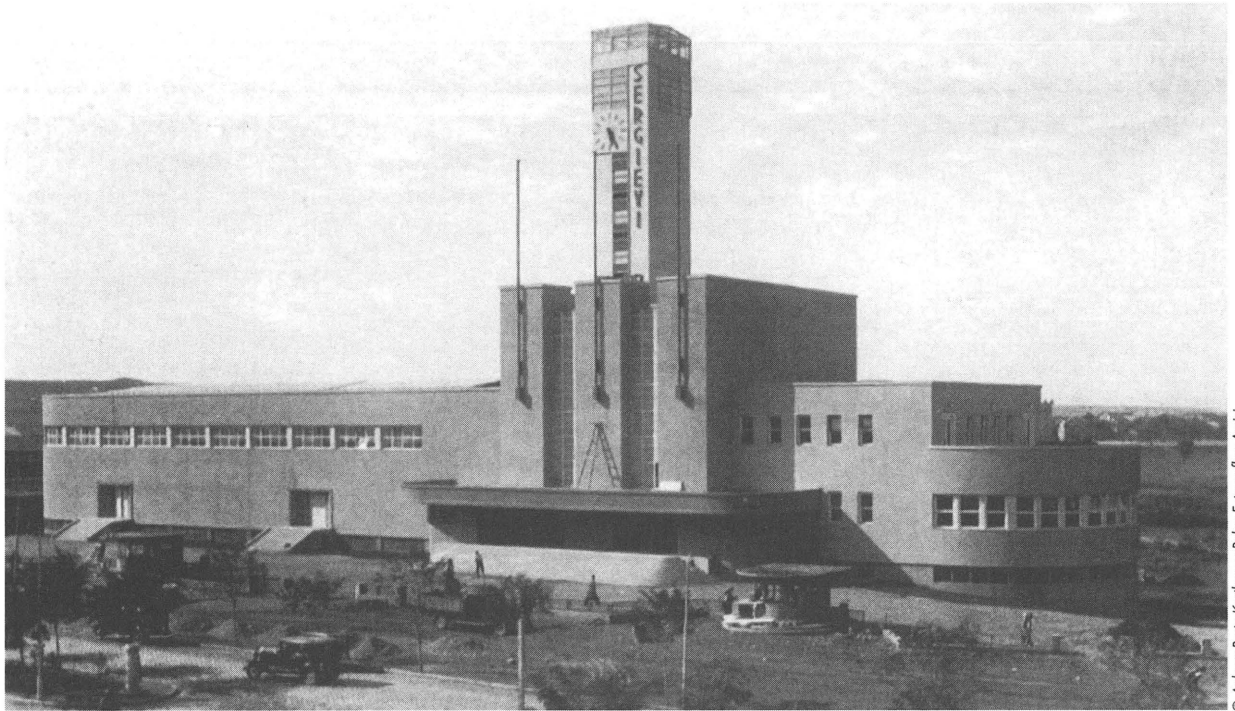


Fig. 8. **Şevki Balmumcu**, Exhibition Hall in Ankara, built in 1933

THE FIRST Republican Public Works Exhibition and its reviews occurred when World War II was coming to an end. Partly, they addressed the expected postwar building boom and tried to persuade the public that the relatively slowed down construction works would resume after the end of war. In fact, the Ministry of Public Works would still play an important role in Turkey after the war as a major employer in the construction sector; and architects would still complain about the ministry even though the Chamber of Architects, the institutional body protecting architects' rights, was established in the early 1950s, and despite the fact that the private sector became an active patron as well. Although the exhibition was known as the first of its kind, there is no record of others following in the postwar years. If there had been, however, they would have displayed postwar

transformations in the economic, technological and social fields which turned out to be rather different from the interwar years. Transformations would also occur in the aesthetic realm, and buildings of a more international modern style, which prevailed after the 1950s, would have dominated such an exhibition.

M. HALUK ZELEF received his B.Arch degree from the Middle East Technical University (METU) in Architecture. He holds a post-graduate degree from the History and Theory program of the graduate school of Architectural Association (AA) in London. His Ph.D. dissertation, "A Research on the Representation of Turkish National Identity: Buildings Abroad," was completed in 2003. Since then he has presented papers at many international conferences and is currently in the process of publishing them. His academic interests include identity discourse in Turkish architecture, and representations of nationality and gender identity. He presently teaches architectural design at the Department of Architecture, METU. Besides his undertakings in academic research and teaching, he is also a practicing architect. zelef@arch.metu.edu.tr

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- HOLOD, RENATA, AND AHMET EVİN, eds. *Modern Turkish Architecture*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984.

NOTES

- 1 *Nafia Sergisi*, the Ministry of Public Works magazine, wrote that the foreign press and the representatives of foreign states visited the exhibition several times and that they "expressed their admiration and appreciations of these superior technical achievements in the memorial book of the exhibition." It is also claimed that foreign newspapers wrote many positive articles on the exhibition. "Cumhuriyet Nafia Sergisi 1944," *T.C. Nafia Vekaleti Nafia Dergisi*, Birinci teşrin 1944, 11/2, 236-239.
- 2 *Cumhuriyet Nafia Sergisi* (Istanbul: Recep Ulusoglu Basimevi). See also *Nafia Sergisi 1944*, T.C. Nafia Vekaleti Neşriyatı Series 5, no: 13 and 14.
- 3 Although iron, steel, coal, weaving and sugar industrial complexes

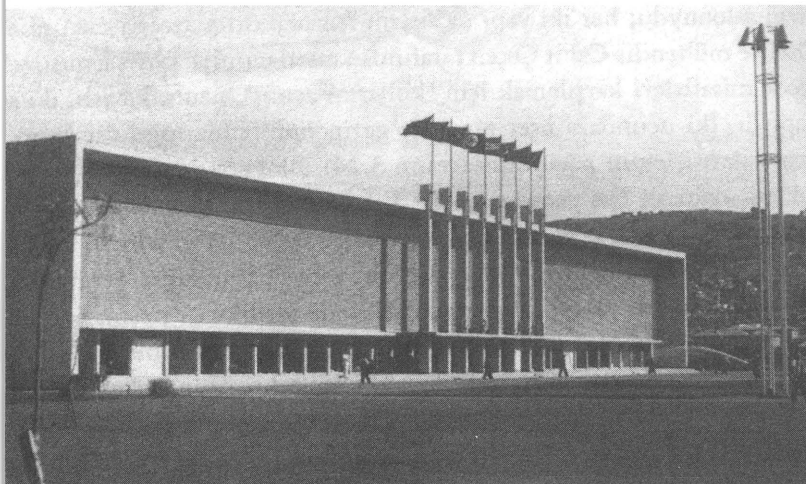


Fig. 9. **Ferruh Orel**, Exhibition Palace in İzmir, built in 1939

© Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2001)

were established in the 1930s, such factories and other production plants were not exhibited as they were not under the control of the Ministry of Public Works. These industrialization projects, planned as settlements including housing and services for the workers, offer interesting case studies of the modernization endeavors in Turkey.

4 Ankara Electricity and Gas Factory, which was recently demolished as mentioned in the introduction to this Docomomo issue by Elvan Altan Ergut and Belgin Turan Özkaya, was also proudly exposed in this section as the new capital city's energy provider.

5 The exhibition catalog in Istanbul describes the municipality section in a reserved language, underlining the weight of the central state: "Our municipality is well aware of the fact that it is a daring venture to add an Istanbul pavilion to the (main) exhibition displaying magnificent works in their full grandeur . . . it is known that the attempts concerning the development of Istanbul are very recent . . . In this regard nobody will compare these works [in Istanbul], achieved in a brief period of 4-5 years in the difficult war circumstances, with the great works of our ministry." *Cumhuriyet Nafia Sergisi Temmuz 1944* (Istanbul: Cumhuriyet Matbaası): 29.

6 For the colonization of the countryside and the settlement projects of architects, see Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2001), 97-105; and Ali Cengizkan, *Mübadele Konut ve Yerleşimler* (Ankara: ODTÜ-Arkadaş, 2004).

7 In Istanbul, the exhibition was organized in the halls of the Galatasaray High School.

8 "Cumhuriyet Nafia Sergisi 1944," T.C. Nafia Vekaleti Nafia Dergisi, Birinci teşrin 1944, 11/2, 249.

9 "21nci Cumhuriyet yılında Nafia," Ibid., unpaginated.

10 The exhibition catalog emphasizes the fact that Atatürk's dictum was asserted even before Republic's proclamation and became a guiding principle for the building of the new country.

11 "The Turkish nation has learned how to master water and utilize it in pre-historic times, since it has realized immortal facilities and edifices, which support modern techniques in water works. Channels and dams collecting water for irrigation are the most important works that were invented by our ancestors . . . However in Anatolia our country has not demonstrated an equal success." *Nafia Sergisi 1944*, T.C. Nafia Vekaleti Neşriyatı Series 5, no: 13.

12 Architect Sinan was a cult figure in the public and the professional circles. Atatürk ordered his statue to be erected. "Salute to the Sinans of tomorrow" were also the Mayor's word for the exhibition's opening ceremony in Istanbul, during which the Minister of Public Works also declared: "I am sure that our associates working in the field of architecture and engineering will succeed as their forefathers, great Sinans." The Union of Turkish Engineers and Architects (Türk Yüksek Mühendisleri ve Mimarları Birlikleri) organized an exhibition devoted to Sinan in the exhibition hall of the ministry just before the 1944 exhibition.

13 Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2001), 119.

14 *Arkitekt*, which was first published in 1931, was the first architectural magazine of Republican Turkey.

15 Falih Rifki Atay, a contemporary literary figure and intellectual, claimed this in "Bir sergi bir Yıldönümü," *Ulus*, April 10, 1944. Atay in many instances supported the employment of foreign architects to design state buildings and was criticized for this attitude by Turkish architects.

16 Zeki Sayar, "Nafia Sergisi Münasebetiyle," *Arkitekt* 34, 1944, 51,

70. Sayar also wrote another article criticizing the Municipality's pavilion in the Istanbul exhibition, and expressed his wish that the preliminary studies on social, health, financial and economic issues would guide the French urbanist Prost. Zeki Sayar, "Belediye Sergisinden Beklediklerimiz," *Arkitekt* 4-5, 1944, 101, 109.

17 Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2001), and Renata Holod and Ahmet Evin, eds., *Modern Turkish Architecture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984) can be referred to as the English sources on the topic.

18 In an interview Sayar pointed out that the number of architects were 1/4 of the number of engineers at the time. Ünalın mentions that architects were known as the "little" (lesser) brothers of engineers. Çetin Ünalın, *Cumhuriyet Mimarlığının Kuruluşu ve Kuruluşması Sürecinde Türk Mimarlar Cemiyetinden Mimarlar Derneği 1927ye*. (Ankara: Mas Matbaacılık, 2002): 52.

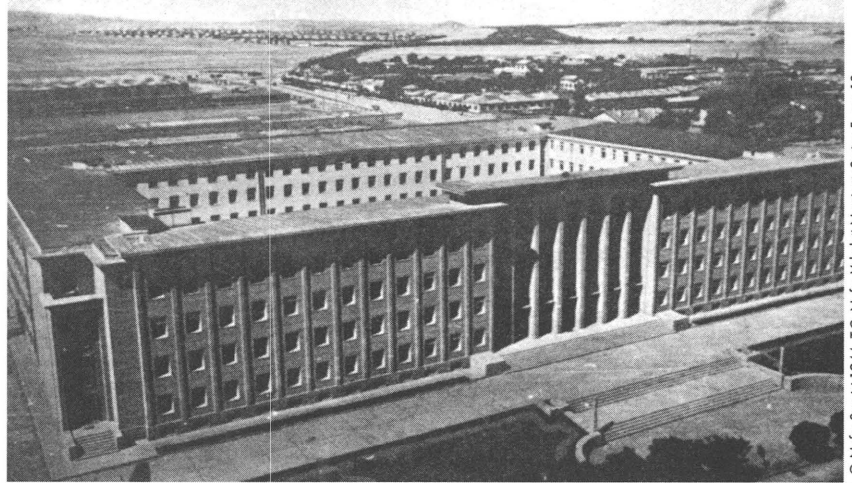


Fig. 10. Bedri Uçar, the Ministry of Transportation, built in 1941

19 Although their authors were not mentioned in the exhibition catalog, other than the aforementioned National Assembly Hall by Clemens Holzmeister and the Youth Park by Theo Leveau, the High School in Trabzon by Bruno Taut and the Consulate in Salonica by Gros, the buildings in the exhibition were known to have been designed by Turkish architects.

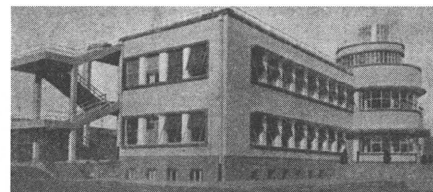
20 According to the 1934 law, one of the duties of the ministry was to "control and implement the style of Turkish architecture." For a history of the ministry, see Y. Mutlu, *Bayındırlık Bakanlığı Tarihi* (Ankara: 2005). Despite the claims of official state representatives, Sayar still considered that the ministry could not have achieved this task.

21 This approach was already noticeable in the New German Architecture exhibition which took place in the same Ankara exhibition hall in 1943 and was highly appraised by the critics. German Architect Paul Bonatz, whose works were displayed in this exhibition, would then become a very important figure of the Turkish scene, supporting nationalist and classicist tendencies in the 1940s.

22 Zeki Sayar, "İmar Politikamızı Kuralım ve Teşkilatlandıralım," *Arkitekt*, 1941, 11-12; Zeki Sayar, "Yapı İşlerimizin Bugünkü Durumu," *Arkitekt*, 1943, 7-8; Zeki Sayar, "Bir Yapı ve İmar Politikamız var mıdır?" *Arkitekt*, 1943, 137-138; Zeki Sayar, "Biz Ne Yapıyoruz?" *Arkitekt*, 1943, 141-142; Zeki Sayar, "Resmi Yapılarımızın Hali," *Arkitekt*, 1944, 7-8; Abidin Mortaş, "Hükümet Konakları," *Arkitekt*, 1944, 11-12; Zeki Sayar, "Mimarlık Politikamız," *Arkitekt*, 1946, 1-2.



Fig. 11. Ankara State Airways building, built in 1938



© Nafia Sergisi 1944, T.C. Nafia Vekaleti Neşriyatı Series 5, no: 13

A Lost Icon of Turkish Modernism

EXPO'58 PAVILION IN BRUSSELS¹

■ SIBEL BOZDOĞAN

In its August 1958 special issue on Brussels Expo'58 the *Architectural Review* remarked that the Exhibition had "less to contribute to the evolution of modernism than to repeat its already widely accepted aesthetic formulas, especially smooth expanses of glass, buildings raised on stilts, exposed metal frames and stairs without risers."²

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WHILE THIS IS A FAIRLY ACCURATE DESCRIPTION of many national pavilions in the Expo, including Turkey's, the boredom with modernism that is implicit in the quote does not reflect the sentiments that accompanied the making of the Turkish Pavilion. For many modernizing and/or de-colonizing countries outside or on the margins of Europe, Turkey included, what the *Architectural Review* characterized as a formulaic, "over-utilized glass-box-curtain-wall theme," was in fact an exciting novelty—a liberating aesthetic expression of democracy, development and modernity in the post-World War II world.

THE TURKISH PAVILION, a variation on the "glass-box curtain-wall theme" embodied precisely such feelings of optimism pervasive in Turkish architecture and politics at the time (*fig. 1*). It was the first major deployment of international style modernism to project Turkey's newfound sense of belonging in an international community of modern (read "Western") nations under the Democrat Party government that came to power in 1950. After World War II and owing to her strategic importance for the American policies of containing communism and Soviet expansion during the cold war, Turkey was included in the Marshall Plan and admitted to NATO in 1952. Western governmental and private agencies poured generous packages of development aid and technical assistance into the country and leading social scientists heralded Turkey as one of the most successful models of a universally defined process of modernization, better known as the "modernization theory."³ Today few people would harbor any illusions that as a predominantly Muslim country, Turkey's admission to the "Western club" was for anything other than geopolitical reasons. Nonetheless, in the euphoric

DANS SON NUMÉRO SPÉCIAL PUBLIÉ EN AOÛT 1958 SUR L'EXPOSITION DE BRUXELLES, LE MAGAZINE *ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW* RELÈVE QUE L'EXPOSITION A « MOINS CONTRIBUÉ À L'ÉVOLUTION DU MODERNISME QUE RÉPÉTÉ DES FORMULES ESTHÉTIQUES DÉJÀ LARGEMENT ACCEPTÉES, TELS LES LARGES PANS DE VERRE, LES ÉDIFICES SUR PILOTIS ET LES STRUCTURES MÉTALLIQUES ». ALORS QUE CETTE APPRÉCIATION DÉCRIT DE MANIÈRE RAISONNABLEMENT HONNÊTE DE NOMBREUX PAVILLONS NATIONAUX DE L'EXPOSITION – DONT CELUI DE LA TURQUIE –, L'ENNUI IMPLICITE QUE GÉNÈRE LE MODERNISME À CETTE ÉPOQUE NE REFLÈTE POURTANT PAS L'ENTHOUSIASME QUI A ACCOMPAGNÉ LA RÉALISATION DU PAVILLON TURC. POUR DE NOMBREUX PAYS EN VOIE DE MODERNISATION OU DE DÉCOLONISATION, TELLE LA TURQUIE, CE QUE LE JOURNAL *ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW* CARACTÉRISE PROSAÏQUEMENT DE « THÈME ÉPUISÉ DE LA BOÎTE DE VERRE ET DU MUR-RIDEAU » EST EN FAIT UNE NOUVEAUTÉ EXCITANTE, UNE EXPRESSION LIBÉRATRICE, SYMBOLE DE LA DÉMOCRATIE, DU DÉVELOPPEMENT ET DE LA MODERNITÉ PROPRES À LA PÉRIODE DE L'APRÈS-GUERRE.

1950s, these developments reinforced the nation's foundational self-identification with the Western world, and Brussels Expo'58 was perceived as a perfect venue to celebrate this. The official agreement for Turkey's participation was signed on 17 September 1955. An inter-ministerial committee was charged with coordinating the preparations and Munis Faik Ozansoy (1911–1975), former Director of Foreign Commerce and a prominent poet, was appointed "General Commissar" for the Expo.⁴ In terms of scale and cost of the operation, and of the prestige attached to it, Expo'58 was an unprecedented undertaking, and the government was determined to



Fig. 1. **Utarit İzgi, Muhlis Türkmen, Hamdi Şensoy and İlhan Türegün**, the Turkish Pavilion in Expo'58, Brussels

make this ambitious enterprise a glowing success. A national architectural competition was organized in 1956 and the winning project by Utarit İzgi (1920–2003) and his three colleagues Muhlis Türkmen, Hamdi Şensoy and İlhan Türegün was selected to represent Turkey. Construction was contracted to the Belgian firm *Bâtiments & Ponts de Bruxelles* and ground was broken with an official ceremony on September 26, 1957.

A SHOWCASE OF MODERNISM

The pristine modernist aesthetic of the Pavilion distinguished it not only from the more overtly “oriental” iconographies of other non-Western pavilions in the Expo (such as those of Iran, with a high portico derived from the traditional *talar* motif of Safavid architecture, or of Thailand, a gilded temple on a podium), but also from similarly literal reconstructions of “national” forms that



Fig. 2. Construction photograph of the Pavilion showing the modular steel-frame structure

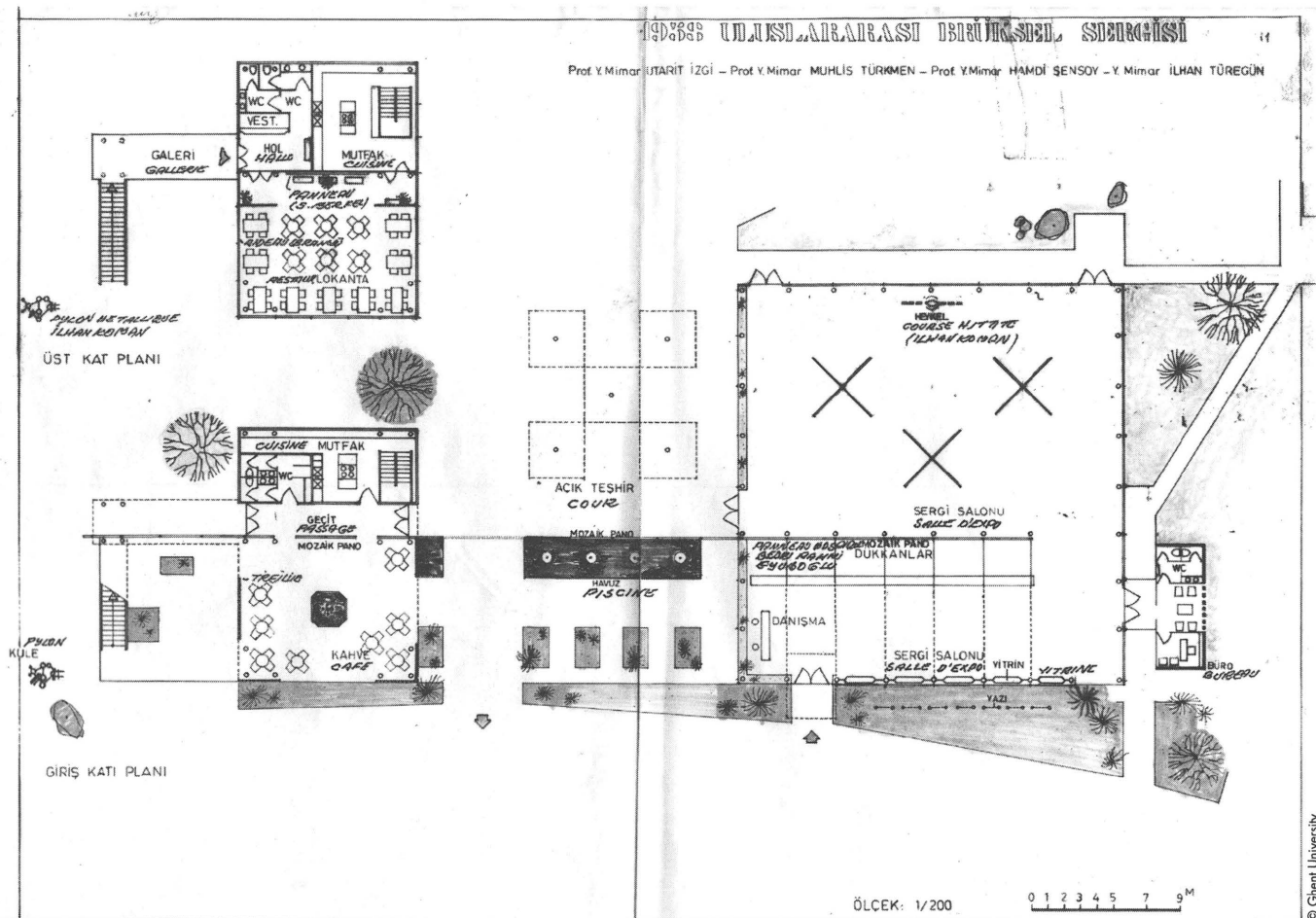


Fig. 3a. Floor plans of the Pavilion

had represented Turkey in earlier international exhibitions (such as Sedat Hakkı Eldem's design for the 1939 New York Exhibition, an ornate replica of a traditional Ottoman residential pavilion). Located on a 2,100 m² lot between the pavilions of Monaco and Great Britain in the undulating and beautifully landscaped grounds of the Foreign Section, the project consisted of two separate buildings (fig. 1).

The exhibition pavilion was "a simple cube of glass curtain-walling supported on a charmingly elegant and unobtrusive steel frame" as the *Architectural Review* put it. The restaurant was a smaller building, raised on stilts above the open café underneath, its form and color subtly evoking traditional timber-frame Ottoman/Turkish houses. The two were connected by a 50 m long wall covered with a mosaic mural by the prominent Turkish artist Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu (1913–1975). A 30 m high metal tower or "vertical spatio-dynamic pylon" designed by the Turkish sculptor İlhan Koman (1923–1986) served as landmark at the bottom the open stairs leading to the restaurant. With the intention of reassembling the Pavilion in a public park in Istanbul after the Expo, it was designed as a lightweight prefabricated/dismountable system of curtain walling supported by slender steel columns (fig. 2). The "curtain" or cladding to be draped over the structure was made of modular panels of plate glass and oxidized aluminum for the exhibition

pavilion, and of teak wood for the restaurant, held by a light frame of steel tubing sheathed in aluminum.

CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHS of the Turkish Pavilion show a light, airy and festive building committed to both the aesthetics of modernism (plain, geometric forms in an orthogonal layout) and its ethics (clear expression of materials and the modular structural system on the exterior). The plan is a simple, abstract composition: two squares, one larger (the exhibition hall) than the other (the restaurant/café), with a straight-line (the mosaic wall) connecting/cutting through them and complemented by a sophisticated volumetric composition of interpenetrating planes in 3D (figs. 3a and 3b). Yet, far from being an abstract aesthetic exercise in modernist composition, the Pavilion gives shape to remarkable sensorial qualities, taking the visitor through the entire scheme along a succession/hierarchy of different spaces (low and high, open and enclosed, light and dark) and of different textures (glass, polished aluminum, teak wood, colored pieces of stone mosaic, water and landscape elements). All of these experiences were woven around the mosaic wall that runs through the entire scheme like a backbone, with occasional openings for passage in either direction (fig. 4).

The main exhibition pavilion is an eloquent statement on the quintessential modernist theme of transparency, both

"literal" and "phenomenal."⁵ Enchanting visual effects and intricate play of reflections are created by the glass-box, revealing its contents to the onlooker through a series of parallel planes: the glass skin, the mosaic wall behind it, the display panels hanging inside the space, etc. (fig. 5) The continuous plane of the mosaic wall penetrating the glass skin also creates ambiguous reflections that both assert and negate the separation between inside and outside. The small open plaza in front of the mosaic wall between the two buildings was landscaped with flowerbeds and a reflecting pool, giving access to the open café tucked under the restaurant, screened off from the street with wooden latticework. At the far end of the mosaic wall beyond the café, open stairs lead visitors to the restaurant on the upper level (fig. 6a).

IT IS TEMPTING for many commentators to read the design of the Turkish Pavilion in terms of a duality between tradition and modernity—i.e. between the 'traditional' echoes of the Turkish restaurant/café and the modernist glass-box of the exhibition pavilion respectively. The raising of the restaurant floor on stilts,

continuity with these precedents formally and (in the case of the Taşlık Café) functionally, the Expo'58 restaurant departs from them in conspicuous ways that highlight the ambiguity of its relationship to tradition. Not only does it have a flat roof, that unmistakable sign of canonic modernism, but it has a simple square plan—an open restaurant floor (fig. 7a), unlike the eyvans (projecting bays) of both precedents, with their T or cross-shaped central spaces (fig. 7b).

ART-ARCHITECTURE SYNTHESIS

In his illustrated textbook on architecture, Utarit İzgi writes that the relationship between art and architecture is fundamental to the discipline, from the cave paintings of Altamira to the integration of artwork in modern buildings of the twentieth century by artists such as Miro, Rivera, Picasso, Noguchi and Calder. He adds: "Such collaboration not only adds to the quality of the building but also enriches both the artist and the architect in positive and creative ways . . . compelling the architect to think of space as a potential setting for art and encouraging the artists to innovate with their materials

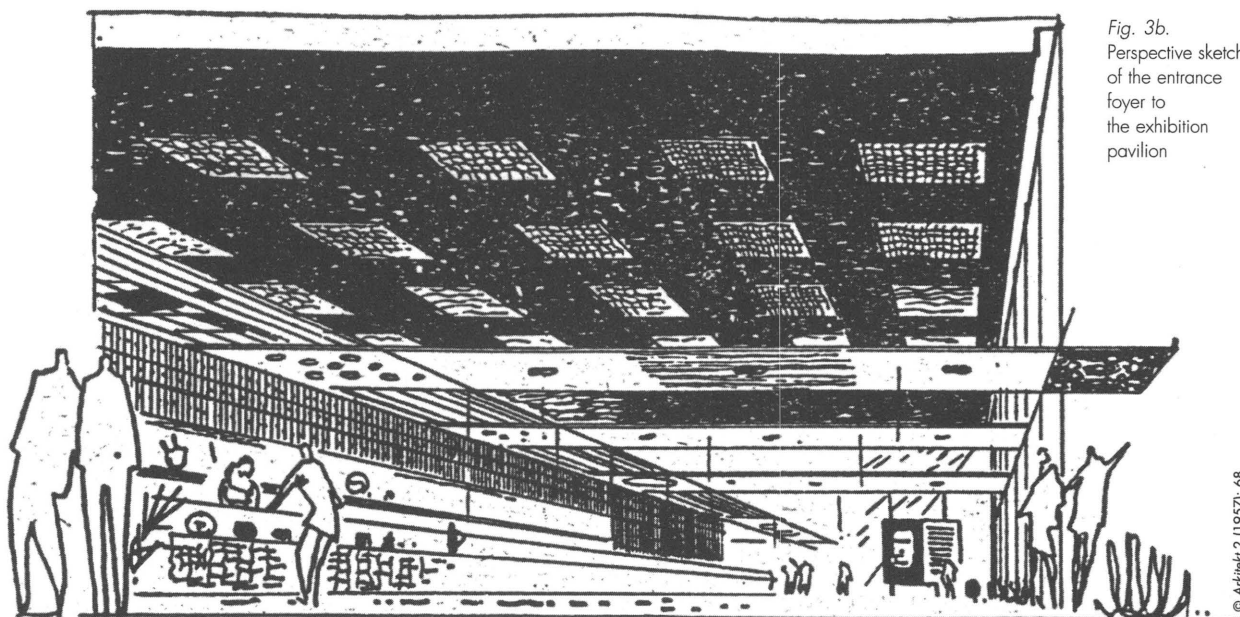


Fig. 3b.
Perspective sketch
of the entrance
foyer to
the exhibition
pavilion

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© Aktürk 2 (1957): 68

the legibility of the modular frame on the facade, the horizontal band of modular windows, the teak wood lattice-screens, the pivoting wooden shutters and the reddish ochre color of the wood panels are the most conspicuous allusions to the traditional timber-frame Ottoman/Turkish house.⁶ Two specific precedents immediately come to mind. The first is the oldest surviving timber-frame *yalı* of Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa on the Asian side of the Bosphorus in Istanbul (1689);⁷ the second is the canonic 'national style' building that, deriving from the former, Sedat Hakkı Eldem's Taşlık Café, was perched on a hill on the opposite side of the Bosphorus (1948) (fig. 6b). Yet, while suggesting

and techniques for a better fit with the architectural setting."⁸ For İzgi, the large mosaic wall panels are simply the modern reincarnation of the tile decoration on the walls of Ottoman buildings.⁹ In other words, modernism need not be a negation of tradition, but is rather a continuous process of interpreting tradition in modern terms, materials and techniques.

THE EXPO'58 Pavilion stands out as an important international manifestation of this collaborative idea. Like İzgi, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu was a vocal proponent of art-architecture synthesis, with a strong conviction that "in the modern world, the art of painting can only be redeemed



Fig. 4. Opening through the mosaic wall connecting the courtyard to the front of the Pavilion

by joining forces with the art of construction—by ‘nailing’ the painting into the wall.”¹⁰ His mosaic panels for the Pavilion covered a total area of 227 m² on both sides of the 50 m x 2.20 m wall that constituted the central “anchoring” element of the design. Composed of 200 individual panels, each 50 cm wide, the wall incorporated

highly stylized motifs from Anatolian Turkish folklore, culture and landscape arranged in a continuous visual narrative (fig. 8). Eyüboğlu and his assistants prepared the stone and glass mosaics on paper and then cast them in cement in Istanbul before taking them to Brussels.¹¹ During the Expo, the wall became one of the highlights of the Turkish pavilion, earning Eyüboğlu a prestigious gold medal as well as an international reputation as the designer of large mosaic murals.¹²

ALTHOUGH RECEIVING most of the limelight, Eyüboğlu was not the only artist who contributed to the design of the Turkish Pavilion. Equally significant was the 30 m high “vertical spatio-dynamic pylon” of İlhan Koman, another internationally renowned Turkish artist (figs. 1 and 6a). Conceived as a loose bundle of slender steel tubes to which abstract mobile pieces of aluminum and plastic were attached, the pylon served as a landmark at the southern end of the scheme. In addition to these architecturally prominent elements (the mosaic wall and the pylon), the design of the restaurant/café incorporated the work of other accomplished Turkish artists. A mural painting by Sabri Berkel decorated the entrance to the restaurant; the cups and saucers to be used in the café were commissioned to the foremost ceramic artist Füreyâ Koral and tile work for tables was designed by Namık

Fig. 5. Transparency of the exhibition pavilion



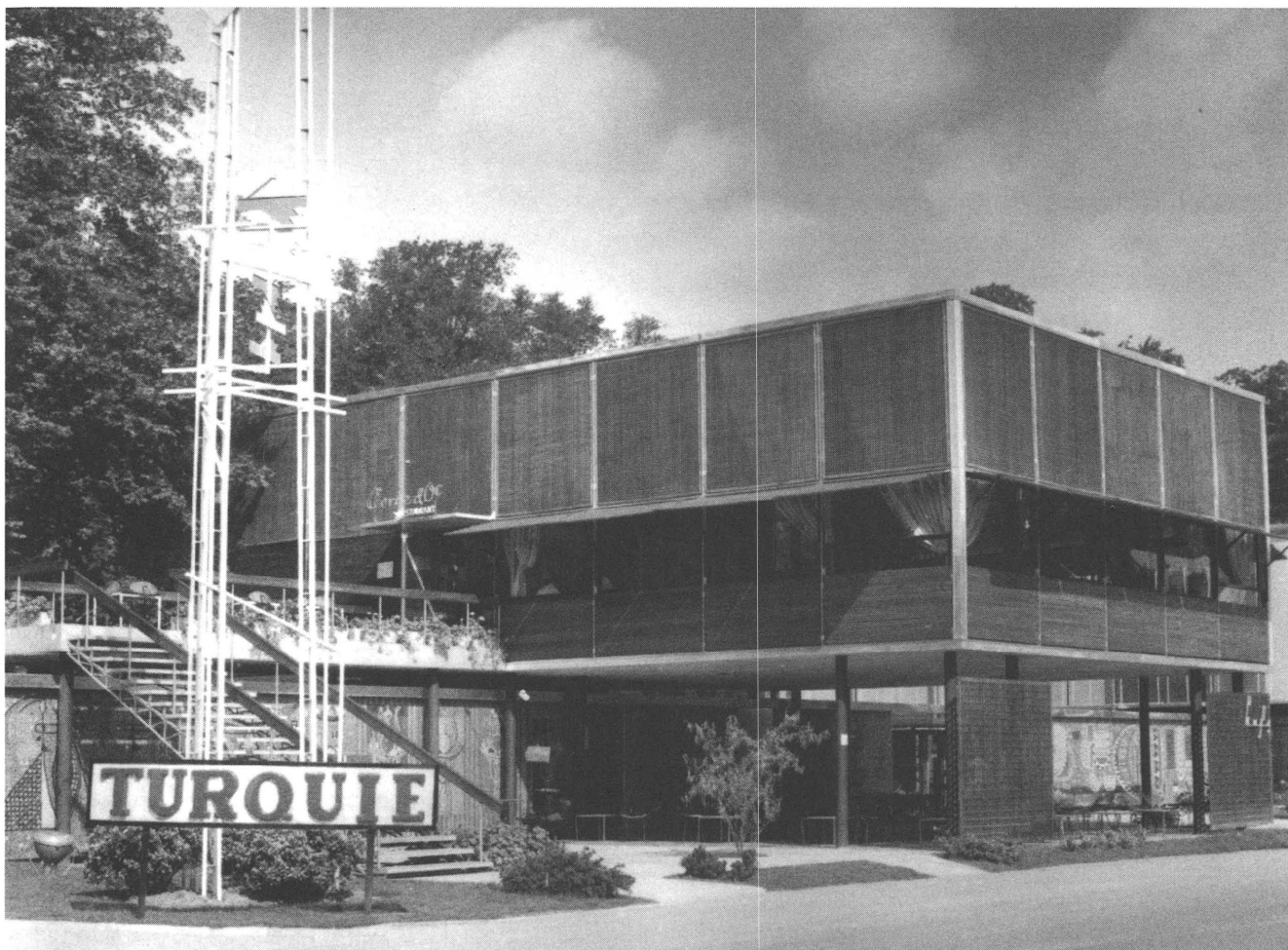


Fig. 6a. View from the street of the restaurant/café of the Pavilion

Bayık.¹³ Beyond the Pavilion itself, two paintings by Zeki Faik İzer and Cevat Dereli were selected for the 50 Years of Modern Art exhibition, a major event in conjunction with Expo'58 featuring works by such modern masters as Léger, Braque, Picasso, Chagall, Klee, Miró and Van Gogh.¹⁴ The collective presence of Turkey's most prominent modernist painters, sculptors and ceramic artists in Brussels Expo'58 illustrates the extent to which the Turkish cultural establishment perceived the Expo as a unique opportunity to display the existence and strength of a modern Turkish art and thereby, to challenge the pervasive orientalist tendency in the West to identify Turkish art exclusively with Ottoman miniature paintings, calligraphy and tile work.

REPRESENTING THE NATION

That an entire International Section of Expo'58 was devoted to the pavilions of supra national institutions (the UN, the Council of Europe, OEEC, ECSC, etc.), underscores the prevailing internationalist mood of the post-WWII world—one that was in stark contrast to the nationalisms of the interwar period. Yet, the 'internationalism' of the 1950s (not to be confused with the more recent phenomenon of globalization) was still based on the primacy of the nation-state: the nation-state was still the primary source of sovereignty, the primary

agent of modernization and the primary object of popular allegiance.¹⁵ It was an 'inter-national' world, which, by definition, consisted of distinct nation-states, all of which had strong commitments to what they perceived to be their exclusive national identities. The national pavilions in the Foreign Section of Expo'58 were expected to be showcases of these distinct national identities in the comparative (and competitive) context of an international fair.

NOTHING ILLUSTRATES the complex negotiations between the emerging internationalism of the world and the deeply entrenched nationalism of the Turkish state than the Turkish Pavilion and the exhibited objects within. The restaurant's subtle allusions to the Turkish house notwithstanding, the overall statement of the architectural design was overwhelmingly modernist: the aesthetic and structural concerns of modernism had clear primacy over matters of identity and iconography. Hence, the task of representing Turkish culture was delegated to the contents of the building rather than the container. Whereas the container symbolized the new internationalism of the 1950s, its contents reproduced the official republican constructions of Turkish history and identity as laid out in the 1930s.¹⁶ Celebrating/advertising the uniqueness of Turkey as "the cross-road of cultures and civilizations"



Fig. 6b. **Sedad Hakki Eldem**,
Taslik Café, Istanbul, built 1948

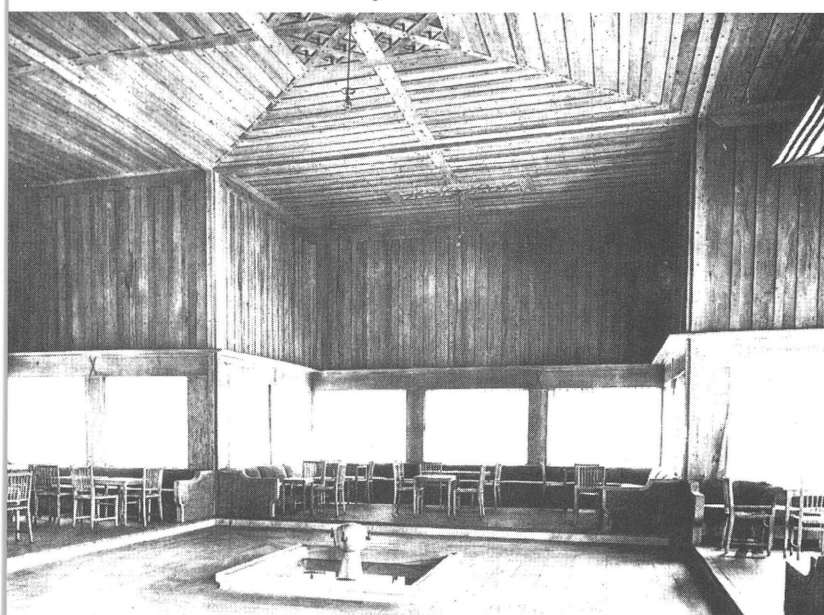
fill the space with exhibits.¹⁷ Photographs taken during the exhibition show that the minimalism and spaciousness of the building were frequently obscured by what seem like an overcrowded "oriental bazaar" (fig. 9b). A large wall relief of Atatürk's head was prominently placed on the end wall of the entrance foyer, reminding the visitor that the cult of the national hero was as strong in this period of multi-party democracy as it was during the authoritarian regime of the early Republic.

THE EXHIBITS continued in the courtyard where a small kiosk displayed Turkish ceramic plates, glassware, sweets, wines, liquor and cigarettes (fig. 4). The decoration, detailing and use of the courtyard, the restaurant and the café employed a certain degree of deliberate orientalism that is endemic to official Turkish self-representation vis a vis foreign audiences, visitors and tourists, at least since the great exhibitions of the nineteenth century. Flowerbeds were planted with the traditional flowers of

throughout history, the exhibition included archaeological treasures of ancient Anatolia and objects representative of the country's Ottoman-Islamic heritage (fig. 9a). Conflicts were frequent between the architects, who tried to maintain the clarity of the space and the visibility of the structure, and government representatives who wanted to

Ottoman gardens and floral decoration: tulip, rose and carnation. In the café, hostesses dressed in colorful national costumes served traditional Turkish coffee in small demitasse cups. In the restaurant, exotically called "Corne d'Or," delicacies of traditional Turkish cuisine were served, becoming immensely popular with the Expo visitors and earning a prestigious second place in the ranking of participating culinary cultures. On the "day of the nations" special festivities were organized, including folkloric dances and performances by the Ottoman Janissary Band that drew large crowds to the plaza in front of the Pavilion (fig. 10). The juxtaposition of Pavilion's "internationalist glass-box" with Turkey's quintessential nationalist show, the Ottoman Janissary Band gives a glimpse of the dilemmas of post-imperial identity that are still pervasive in modern Turkey today.

Fig. 7a. Interior view of the Turkish Restaurant at the Pavilion



A TRAGIC LOSS

When the fair closed, the Turkish Pavilion was dismantled and the panels of glass and teak wood, aluminum frames and the mosaic wall panels of Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu were transported to Istanbul by train. They were given over to Istanbul Municipality for eventual re-construction—a plan that was never realized, partly owing to the dramatic events leading to the military coup of 1960, but largely due to what Ali Cengizkan aptly



Fig. 7b. Taslik Café, interior view, Istanbul

calls the "culture of destruction" endemic to official Turkish modernization.¹⁸ Atila Alpöge, a consultant for the Istanbul Municipality during the 1970s, writes that all the components brought back from Brussels were deposited in the grounds of Gülhane park near Sirkeci railway station, exposed to the effects of sun, rain and theft.¹⁹ He mentions that some of the specially-manufactured thick glass panels were apparently cut to make tabletops for the municipality offices and possibly that others, still in their aluminum frames, were used to cover the maintenance pools of the municipal garages in Edirnekapi, Istanbul. Of the award-winning mosaic wall panels of Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, 160 were sent to Cyprus for an exhibition and were never recovered; 19 were used as facing for the maintenance pools and the remaining 21 were entirely lost. Alpöge's personal crusade to recover whatever was left of the Pavilion itself was brought to an unsuccessful halt with the military coup of 1980. Thus, a very successful building by all accounts—one that deserves a far more prominent place in the historiography of modern Turkish architecture than it has so far received—was tragically abandoned to neglect, oblivion and eventual loss.

SİBEL BOZDOĞAN holds a professional degree in architecture from the Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey (1976) and a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania (1983). She has taught architectural history and theory courses at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (1986–1991), MIT (1991–1999) and the GSD/Harvard University (2000–current) and has served as the Director of Liberal Studies at the Boston Architectural Center (2004–2006). Her interests range from cross-cultural histories of modern architecture in Europe, the USA, Mediterranean and the Middle East to critical investigations of technology, modernity and national identity as they have informed the culture and production of architecture in Turkey and across the globe. She has published articles on these topics, has co-authored a monograph on the Turkish architect Sedad Hakki Eldem (1987) and co-edited an interdisciplinary volume, *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1997). Her *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001) has won the 2002 Alice Davis Hitchcock Award of the Society of Architectural Historians and the Köprülü Book Prize of the Turkish Studies Association. sibelb@rcn.com

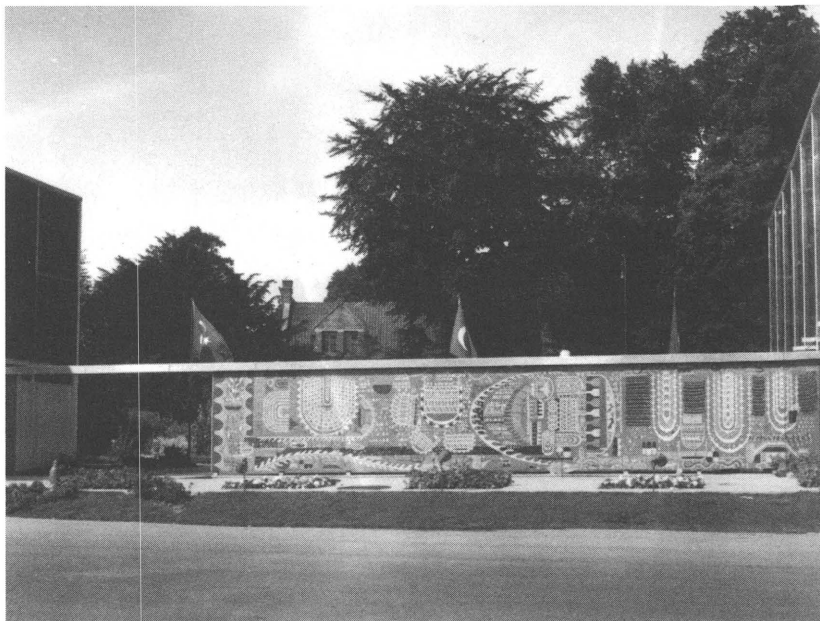


Fig. 8. The mosaic wall by artist Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu in the Pavilion

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NOTES

1 A longer version of this essay was published in Rika Devos and Mil DeKoonig, eds., *The Architecture of Expo'58* (Brussels: Dexia/Mercatorfonds, 2006), in Dutch and French. I thank the editors and the publishers for the permission to submit this shorter version to *Docomomo Journal*. Some of the photographs and documentation of the Turkish Pavilion used in this essay were collected by the Ghent University team and I thank Rika Devos for making them available to me. I also wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Burhan Doğançay, prominent Turkish artist, for allowing me to use photographs from his personal album of the 1958 Expo.

2 "Special Issue: The Brussels Exhibition," *Architectural Review* 124/739 (August 1958): 75–76.

3 Especially in Daniel Lerner's classic study *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1962), and in Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).

4 Information from "La Section Turque à l'Exposition de Bruxelles 1958," September 22, 1957, Archives of Federal Government Service Economy Fund "Expo 58," preliminary number 1.231.201.010.

5 As articulated in the seminal article by Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky, "Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal," in *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays*, (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1982), 159–183.

6 That the designers of the Pavilion are all students/colleagues of Sedad Hakki Eldem at the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul reinforces this connection to the "Turkish house paradigm" initiated by Eldem at the Academy in the 1930s and continued in subsequent decades as one distinct current of Turkish modernism.



Fig. 9a. Inside the exhibition pavilion: wall relief and Hittite "sun course" sculpture by İlhan Koman



Fig. 9b. Inside the exhibition pavilion: clutter of exhibits undermining the spaciousness and pristine structure of the building

7 "Yalı" is an elaborate water-side mansion along the edges of the Bosphorus a distinct type of Ottoman house at least since the sixteenth century. A major published source on the "yalı"s of Istanbul is Sedat Hakkı Eldem, *Boğaziçi Anıları* (Reminiscences of the Bosphorous), (Istanbul: Alarko Kültür Yayınları, 1979) in addition to his numerous monographs on individual "yalı"s.

8 Utarit İzgi, *Mimarlıkta Süreç: Kavramlar, İlişkiler* (Process in Architecture: Concepts, Relationships) (Istanbul: Yapı Endüstri Merkezi Yayınları, 1999): 214–221.

9 İzgi, *Mimarlıkta Süreç*, 110.

10 Quoted in Turan Erol, *Günümüz Türk Resminin Oluşum Sürecinde Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu* (Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu in the making of contemporary Turkish art) (Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1984): 115–116.

11 The team included Eren Eyüboğlu, the wife of the artist who is an accomplished artist herself, an assistant, two Academy students and two craftsmen specialized in plastering and walling techniques. Quoted in Erol, *Günümüz Türk Resminin Oluşum Sürecinde Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu*, 114–115.

12 A year later, Eyüboğlu would complete a 14 m x 50 m mosaic panel for the restaurant of the NATO building in the Palais de Chaillot, Paris (1955–1959), with the Turkish architect Abdurrahman Hancı as the interior designer.

13 Information from "Le Pavillon de la Turquie à l'exposition universelle de Bruxelles 1958," unidentified, undated photocopy from the archives of architect Utarit İzgi.

14 "Landscape" (1956) by Cevat Dereli and "Music" (1947) by Zeki Faik İzer were the two Turkish paintings in the exhibition. "50 Years of Modern Art, April 17th–July 21st 1958," *Universal & International Fair, Brussels 1958* (pamphlet listing the selected artwork, Fogg Museum of Art Library, Harvard University).

15 That the Colonial Section, traditionally the exotic highlight of "great exhibitions" since the nineteenth century, had shrunk to only two pavilions (of Belgian Congo and Ruanda Urindi) was an additional reminder of the ongoing decolonization process, which added an ever-increasing number of new nation-states to an increasingly interconnected world.

16 See Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation-Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001): 240–303.

17 Interview with Burhan Doğançay, artist and director of exhibitions for the Expo'58, April 21, 2004.

18 Ali Cengizkan, "Bedri Rahmi'nin Bilinmeyen bir Mozaikçi: Mimarlık ve Duvar Resmi," in *Modernin Saati* (Ankara: Mimarlar Derneği & Boyut Yayınları, 2002): 237.

19 Atilla Alpöge, "Bedri Rahmiler Ne Oldu?" *Cumhuriyet Dergi* 651 (13 September 1998): 8–9.

Fig. 10. Performance of the Ottoman Janissary band in front of the Pavilion



Rebuilding Iraq

1955–58

MODERNIST HOUSING, NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS, AND GLOBAL AMBITIONS

PANAYIOTA PYLA

Among the grand modernization programs that shaped the socio-spatial landscapes of post-World War II Middle East, the national program of Iraq stood out for its ambition and intensity.¹ To the eyes of Western development experts that flooded the region, Iraq provided an unusually favorable ground for modernization, because of its low population density, abundant water supply, large tracts of fallow land, and most important, its oil reserves that promised to meet the country's capital requirements for the foreseeable future.²

SEEN AS AN IMPORTANT Middle Eastern bastion against communism, Iraq was given abundant Western support for development, with the hope that it would not replicate the experience of Egypt, where a 1952 revolt brought to power Gamal Abdel Nasser with his Soviet-allied policies.³ For similar reasons, the increasingly unpopular Iraqi government, which operated under Hashimite Kings installed by the British in 1921, was eager to advance socioeconomic reform, hoping to weld the young nation together and secure social stability.

WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT IN 1950 of the "Iraq Development Board," a quasi-governmental body, an accelerated program was implemented to advance the modernizing agendas of the State and its foreign advisors. Chaired by Iraq's premier himself and supported by British and American consultants, the Iraq Development Board had at its disposal the lion's share of the oil revenues (which increased dramatically in the early 1950s as foreign ownership of the Iraqi petroleum diminished), and it initially focused on agricultural and industrial growth, by funding the construction of dams, irrigation and drainage systems, power plants, bridges, roads, and factories.⁴ By the middle of the 1950s, however, the Development Board was also increasing its attention to shaping physical environment. One of its strategies was to invite famous Western architects (including Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, Alvar Aalto, and Frank Lloyd Wright among others) to design public buildings particularly in Baghdad, the administrative

PARMI LES GRANDES ENTREPRISES DE MODERNISATION QUI ONT TRANSFORMÉ LE PAYSAGE DU PROCHE-ORIENT APRÈS LA SECONDE GUERRE MONDIALE, LE PROGRAMME NATIONAL IRAKIEN S'ILLUSTRE PAR SON AMBITION ET SON INTENSITÉ. AUX YEUX DES EXPERTS OCCIDENTAUX QUI FURENT MANDATÉS EN GRAND NOMBRE DANS LA RÉGION, L'IRAK REPRÉSENTAIT UN TERRAIN PARTICULIÈREMENT FAVORABLE À LA MODERNISATION, NOTAMMENT GRÂCE À LA FAIBLE DENSITÉ DE SA POPULATION, SES ABONDANTES RESSOURCES EN EAU, SES NOMBREUSES TERRES EN FRICHE ET, BIEN PLUS ENCORE, SES LARGES RÉSERVES DE PÉTROLE. OUTRE DE FRÉQUENTES INVITATIONS FAITES À DES ARCHITECTES RECONNUS TELS WALTER GROPIUS, LE CORBUSIER, ALVAR AALTO ET FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, L'AGENCE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT NATIONAL IRAKIENNE FIT ÉGALEMENT APPEL EN 1955 À L'URBANISTE GREC DOXIADIS POUR ÉLABORER UN PROGRAMME UNIQUE DE RÉFORME URBAINE À L'ÉCHELLE DU PAYS.

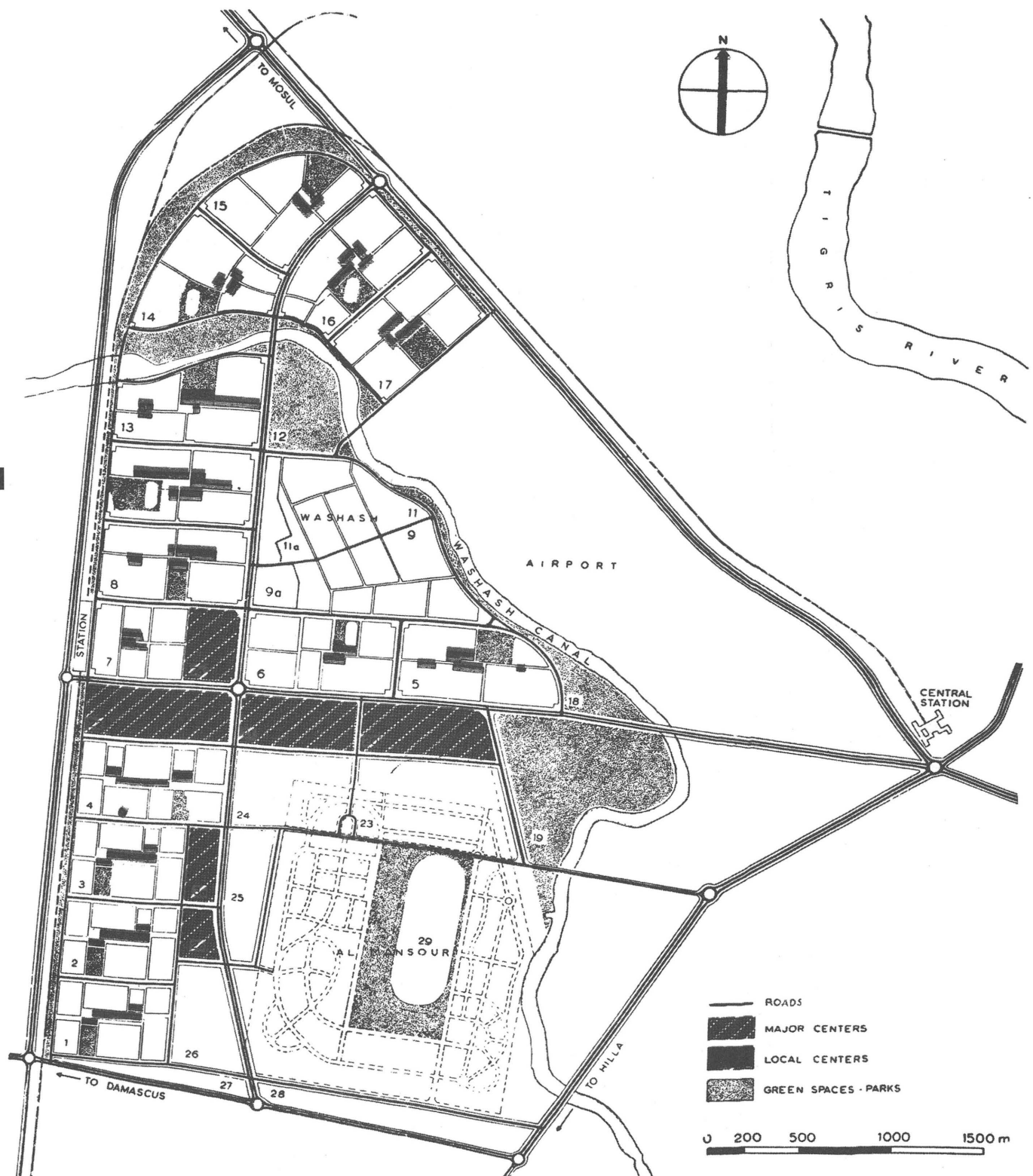
center of the new nation and a magnet for new business. Charged with introducing modern architecture as both a symbol and an instrument of modernization, these architects turned the Iraqi capital into a site of ambitious modernist experimentation.⁵

A second important strategy for shaping the physical environment focused not on individual built forms by world famous signature-designers, but instead on mass housing, town and country planning, and community development. Several Western consultants proposed plans for urban and rural areas to facilitate the spreading

of the population around the land and help locate workers (especially for oil production) where needed.⁶ Housing, in particular, was given special importance because it was increasingly recognized as a means to reach out to the wider public which was "becoming impatient for more visible signs of progress than the

Board has been able to show."⁷ The need for gestures of reform appeared particularly urgent, because some government circles were beginning to see "uncomfortably obvious" parallels between Iraq and Czarist Russia, and were nervously hoping to secure the regime's future.⁸ With this urgent desire to improve housing, the Iraq

Fig. 1. **Doxiadis Associates**, Plan for Model Community, West Baghdad, 1958



© C.A. Doxiadis, *Dynapolis: The City of the Future* (Athens: Doxiadis Associates, 1960)

Development Board once again sought to align its nation-building aspirations with the social and formal agenda of modern architecture and urbanism. This essay investigates the role of mass housing projects within the larger modernization program of Iraq. It focuses on the work of the Athens-based firm, Doxiadis Associates, which was solicited by the Iraq Development Board in 1955 to outline a comprehensive housing program for the entire country. It examines, in particular, one of the firm's first projects, the model community for West Baghdad. Moving from general planning principles to the design of specific housing units and public squares, the essay demonstrates how Doxiadis's conceptions of social reform and regional particularity became intertwined with the Iraqi regime's aspirations to assert a young nation's modernity and nurture pride among its citizens. Ultimately, these reflections on mass housing add another perspective to recent studies on modern architecture in Iraq, which primarily examine civic buildings in Baghdad.⁹

DOXIADIS AND THE IRAQ DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Constantinos Doxiadis, who during the late 1940s had administered the Marshal Plan aid to Greece, was well known among international development circles, and he secured the commission in Iraq after the recommendation of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.¹⁰ His Greek background made him free of "an imperialist stigma" and distinguished him from most other Western consultants, advisers, and technicians that were streaming into Iraq.¹¹ What made him even more appealing to the Iraq Development Board was his planning approach of "Ekistics," which emphasized a rational and scientific version of architecture and endowed his proposals with an apolitical authority. Defined as "the science of human settlements," Ekistics rejected the earlier modernist emphasis on individual artistic expression, and—drawing on post-WWII architectural debates in Europe that challenged mechanistic views of functionalism—it emphasized the role of architecture as a container of multiple human needs, meant to encompass physical and economic, as well as social and psychological needs. Ekistics' claims to comprehensiveness and scientific detachment opportunely obscured its ideological

leanings, which were largely aligned with the agenda of international development institutions to restructure the so-called underdeveloped countries of the globe according to the paradigm of the industrialized West. In fact, Doxiadis's standard claim was that his clients were simply the "common people" of any society, "communist and capitalist alike."¹² From the perspective of the Iraq Development Board, such claims to apolitical neutrality conveniently concealed the anticommunist fears and pro-Western alliances that motivated the board's own modernizing agenda.

ANOTHER EQUALLY important reason for Doxiadis's appeal was that, even as he claimed to apply scientific truths with transnational validity, he promised to make his interventions amenable to local cultural preferences. By conducting exhaustive surveys and research programs

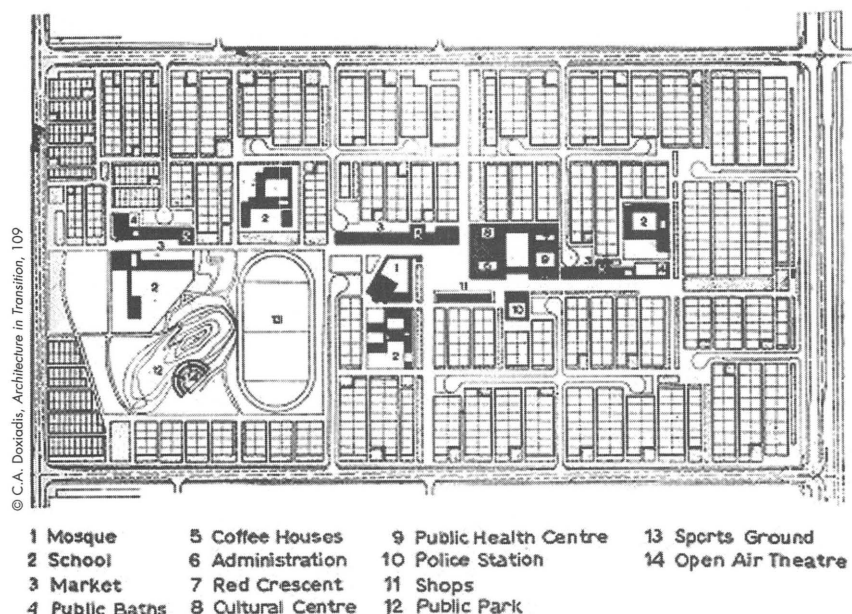


Fig. 2. Doxiadis Associates, Plan of Community Sector, West Baghdad, 1955-1958



Fig. 3. Doxiadis Associates, Model of Community Sector, West Baghdad, 1955-1958

on each situation's needs and potentials, Ekistics promised to overcome the homogenizing, and ultimately Eurocentric, preoccupations of other modernist approaches.¹³ His dual claims to a scientific legitimacy and cultural sensitivity constituted the right combination for the Iraq Development Board, whose eagerness in providing architectural symbols of a modern state was inextricably linked with a desire to champion a shared ideal of national identity and pride.

MODEL COMMUNITY IN WEST BAGHDAD

Doxiadis's initial charge in 1955 was to create a national five-year plan for the improvement of housing conditions throughout the country, and his firm began with projects in Mosul, Kirkuk, Mussayib, and Baghdad. One of his firm's first housing experiments was a model community in the Western part of the Iraqi capital, in an area enclosed by the roads to Damascus on the south and to Mosul on the east (*fig. 1*). The "Western Baghdad Development Scheme" was to house a population of 100,000, either through government-funded housing, or through self-help housing.¹⁴ The scheme comprised different "community sectors" of 7 to 10 thousand people, and each sector provided for administrative, social, educational, health and other community buildings, shopping centers, green areas, coffee houses and mosques. Echoing the social and functionalist logic of the "neighborhood units" of postwar British New Towns, the plan provided key social facilities within walking distance, favoring pedestrian movement (*figs. 2 and 3*).

Doxiadis Associates' logic of functional separation extended to the system of social ordering. Each community sector of Western Baghdad was broken down into smaller socio-spatial units arranged hierarchically. The smallest, called "community class I," was constituted by ten to twenty families of similar income. A group of three to seven such communities made a community "class II," also having a homogenous economic status. House types also corresponded to the income-based hierarchy, each promising to provide the basics of sanitation and safety. The hierarchical logic continued: an agglomeration of class II communities plus an elementary school was designated as a community "class III." Class III communities of different income groups, plus a market, shops, a teahouse and a mosque, could constitute a community "class IV," namely the "community sector" of 7 to 10 thousand.¹⁵ Doxiadis Associates' overall plan for West Baghdad was actually a plan for a community class V (combining a group of sectors class IV), which was imagined as part of an even larger future urban and regional network.

Doxiadis contextualized his abstractions of "scales" and "hierarchies" by arguing that the smaller, class I, II, and III communities corresponded to sizes found in Iraqi towns and villages.¹⁶ The larger scales, then, were justified as

new phenomena necessitated by advanced transportation and communication technologies. These multiple scales aimed at the efficient ordering of the city, and also meant to dictate the organization of social groups. The smallest homogeneous residential communities were supposed to then interact among them (on a "class III" level and beyond) in a controlled intermixing of social classes that would gradually develop a "social balance amongst the several classes of the citizens."¹⁷ This was Doxiadis Associates' attempt at social engineering, in tune with the Iraqi regime's campaign to eliminate sectarian and tribal divisions. Doxiadis Associates' proposals, however, avoided any specific reflection on the city's intricate tribal, nomadic, ethnic, and other social formations that created tight communities inside the city, and entirely overlooked recent radical demographic changes in the

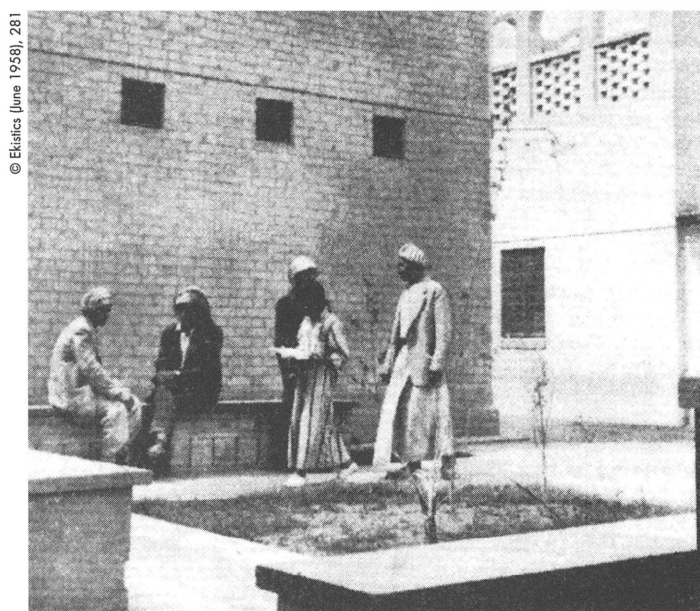


Fig. 4. Doxiadis Associates, Gossip Square, Baghdad, 1958

city (such as the influx of highly diverse rural population from North and South). Confident as they were that social, economic, racial and ethnic inequalities could be dealt away with by benevolent technocrats, the firm's proposals were confined to vague references to a "proper" grouping amongst different communities that would allegedly create "a healthy community spirit."¹⁸ A look at the plan can give an insight into what "proper" grouping of social groups actually meant: middle class housing was usually inserted between upper and lower income neighborhoods, as though to prevent direct contact between opposite sides of the economic spectrum. Some residential sectors were even separated with "green spaces" that acted as soft barriers between classes. In short, the proposed design strategies had more to do with an administrative ordering of the society, than with any vision of social equity. Such preoccupations with the rational ordering of both the urban fabric and the

society, understood more in visual and aesthetic terms, was typical of twentieth century high modernist urbanism and its grand visions for the rational engineering of social life.¹⁹ The irony in Doxiadis's particular case is that he systematically framed Ekistics as an anti-stylistic approach that de-emphasized aesthetics in favor of addressing basic human needs.

LOCAL PARTICULARITY IN MASS HOUSING

Certain gestures within the overall plan attempted to accommodate local social habits and formal vocabularies, as though to insert local character into the rational methodology of housing. One such gesture was

rural Arab knew in his ancestral home."²¹ The article went even further, conferring Doxiadis Associates' interventions with an anticommunist spin! By nurturing a strong sense of community, the article argued, the new housing opposed the "void and loneliness" felt in other, unsuccessful urban environments, which were threatening to make urban dwellers "overly susceptible to conversion by Communist agents."²² In other words: the desire for harmony and community spirit was intimately tied to the anxieties of the cold war.

The "gossip square" was accompanied by a few other gestures, such as the inclusion of hamams and mosques in each sector or the occasional covered market with a roof shape reminiscent of traditional souqs. Such

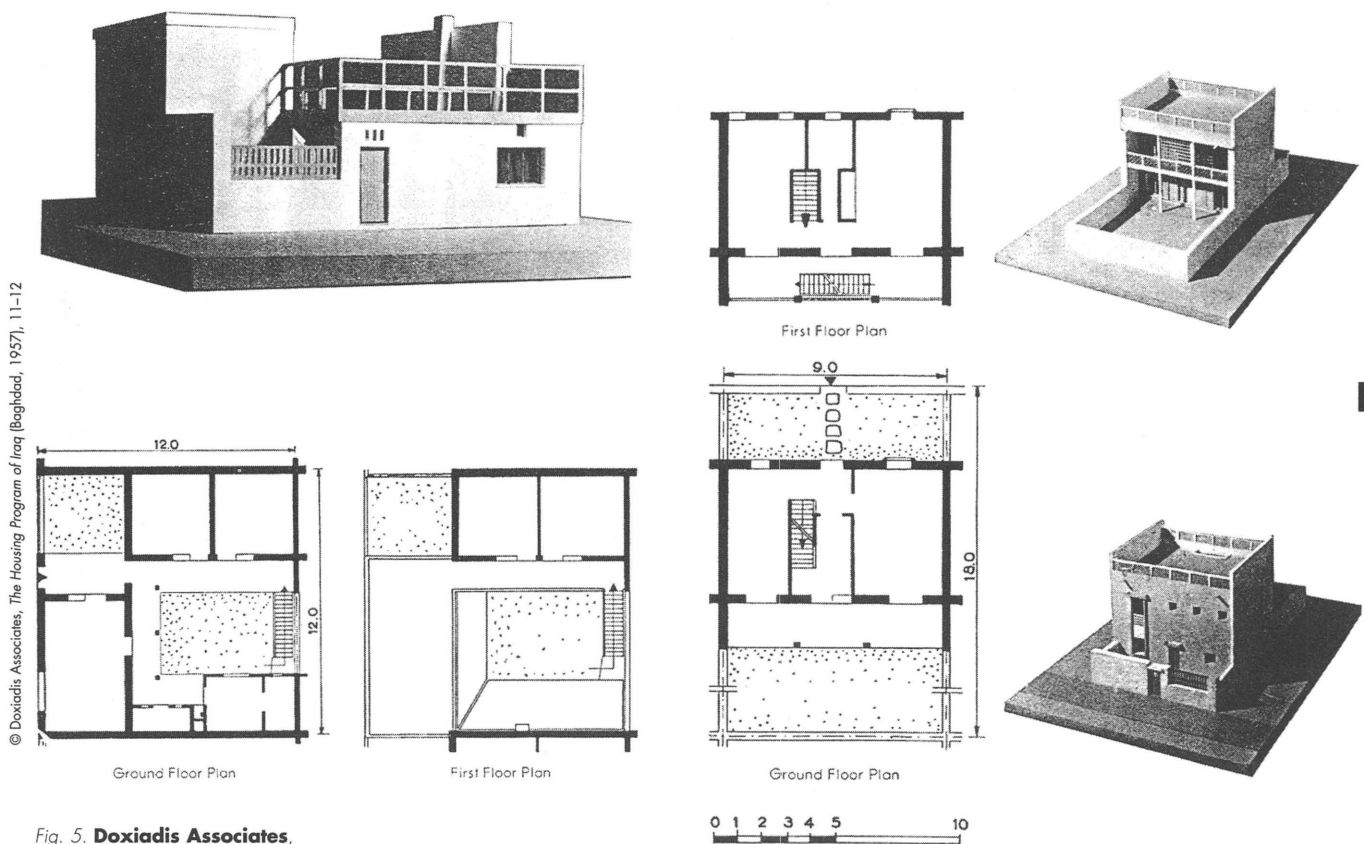


Fig. 5. Doxiadis Associates,
House Types, West Baghdad, 1955-1956

the introduction of the so-called "gossip square" for each group of ten to fifteen attached houses that was to serve as "a modern substitute for the traditional gathering places of tribal life" and to facilitate the transformation of the village dweller into an urban dweller (fig. 4).²⁰ Overlooking the deep-rooted orientalist biases implied in the name, the firm embraced the "gossip square" as an element that demonstrated its cultural sensitivity, and indeed, the strategy was effective in attracting favorable press. *The New York Times* referred to the gossip square to illustrate how Doxiadis's housing in Baghdad compared favorably to other modernist interventions, by reproducing "the close family and tribal relationship the

gestures, however, were still overpowered by the modular functional plan, and ultimately spoke more for orientalist nostalgias than for any profound understanding of Iraq's public life, the intense heterogeneity of its society, or its aspirations to modernity. A similar criticism could be extended to Doxiadis Associates' exhaustive studies of local climate and formal vocabularies. Climatic conditions were treated abstractly in terms of solar exposures, wind patterns, and rainfall data, never really becoming an integral part of material choices, spatial conceptions, or larger design sensibilities. Doxiadis Associates may have recognized the open-air courtyard and colonnaded upper gallery as typical of the region's residential architecture,

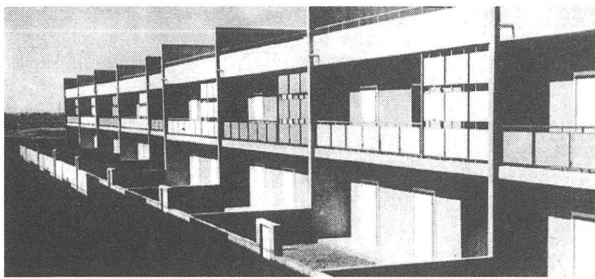


Fig. 6. **Doxiadis Associates**, Upper income housing, West Baghdad, 1955–1958

© Doxiadis Associates, "Iraq Housing Program" Doxiadis Associates Pamphlet No 5, September 1959

but the firm's own reinterpretations in its standardized "house types" pushed courtyards to the side or to the back of each unit, thereby doing away with any of its climatic benefits and secluded qualities (figs. 5 and 6).²³ Similarly, Doxiadis Associates' attempts to reinterpret wooden window screens with reinforced concrete produced larger patterns of openings that were not nearly as effective in increasing ventilation, in softening sunlight, or in providing a sense of privacy.

This is why, despite all the research and experimentation, Doxiadis Associates' housing units unfavorably compared to the old city's mud huts with movable roofs, in terms of their microclimate.²⁴ All in all, courtyards and screens were compartmentalized into elements that could be utilized in mass production. What ultimately prevailed was an aesthetic imperative of standardization (fig. 7), which left little opportunity to contemplate a more cultured conception of the human subject, or to conceive of development itself as a cultural process tied to the locale.

DESPITE THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT'S attempts at securing political stability, a military coup in July 1958 led by General Abd al-Karim al-Qasim brought about the brutal deposition of the Hashimite monarchy and its replacement by a revolutionary republic with socialist leanings. New national modernization plans were characterized by a more overtly anti-Western spirit, and under these circumstances, Doxiadis Associates' commission was cancelled in May 1959, leaving the Athens-based firm out of the new building boom of Baghdad in the following decade.²⁵ By the time they left, however, Doxiadis Associates had completed the construction of hundreds of units, (in Baghdad, and elsewhere), that would become the precedent for many of the firm's future projects.²⁶

FROM TODAY'S perspective, it is certainly easy to dismiss Doxiadis's technocratic optimism that oversimplified the complexities of the urban environment, by assuming that communities and sub-communities could hierarchically fit into each other, and by jumping too precipitously onto a notion of social and economic harmony of parts and wholes. One will have to concede,

nonetheless, that for all its pitfalls, Doxiadis's interventions attempted to contemplate the dilemmas of Iraq's post-imperialist identity in ways that perhaps compare favorably to rigid appropriations of local heritage—see, for example, Frank Lloyd Wright's orientaling references to *Tales From a Thousand and One Nights*, or the later Ba'ath regime's populist distortions of the country's cultural heritage.²⁷ Despite its flaws, Doxiadis Associates' proposal significantly endorsed the role of post-WWII modern architecture in the messy realities of postcolonial nationhood. And, in fact, because of the ironies of his intervention, Doxiadis's tactics of physical and social restructuring gain an altogether new relevance today, when new strategies for reconstruction and nation-building in Iraq are being debated all over again.

PANAYIOTA PYLA is assistant professor of architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and her research and teaching focus on the intertwined discourses of modern architecture, environmentalism, and development. Her most recent writings include, "Hassan Fathy Revisited: Postwar Discourses on Science, Development, and Vernacular Architecture," *Journal of Architectural Education* 60:1 (2006); and a forthcoming edited volume called *Landscapes of Development: The Impact of Modernization Discourses on the Physical Environment of the Eastern Mediterranean*. She received her bachelor of architecture with an AIA Gold Medal from Rensselaer, and her masters, with an Outstanding Graduating Student Award, along with her Ph.D. in architectural history and theory, from MIT. pyla@uiuc.edu

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NOTES

- 1 Iraq was described as "a country which finds itself suddenly propelled on a tremendous program of expansion and development" in Ellen Jawdat, "The New Architecture in Iraq," *Architectural Design* 27 (March 1957): 79–80 (quotation on 79). See also Waldo Bowman, "Iraq's Operation Bootstrap: A Modern Mesopotamia is Molded," *Engineering News-Record* (December 12, 1957): 34–54, which argues that "No similarly complete program for an underdeveloped country is underway anywhere else in the world" (quotation on 35).
- 2 Fahim Qubain, *The Reconstruction of Iraq: 1950–57* (New York: Praeger, 1958), x; and Bowman, "Iraq's Operation Bootstrap." The particularity of Iraq's modernization potential—as seen by US experts specifically—is also mentioned in the recent article by Joseph Siry, "Wright's Baghdad Opera House and Gammage Auditorium: In Search of Regional Modernity," *Art Bulletin* (June 2005): 365–311.
- 3 "Development in Iraq: Special Survey." *The Economist* (June 22, 1957): 14 pages supplement after p. 1076.
- 4 For the Iraq Development Board's funding and activities at the time see Qubain, *The Reconstruction of Iraq*, vii–xi; Ishan Fethi, "Contemporary Architecture in Baghdad," *Process Architecture* (May 1985): 112–132; and Kathleen Langley, *The Industrialization of Iraq* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1961).
- 5 Le Corbusier was invited to design a mammoth sports stadium, Walter Gropius with The Architects Collaborative, to design a

university campus, Alvar Aalto to design a civic center, Frank Lloyd Wright to design an Opera House, among others. For Western coverage of these projects at that time see *Christian Science Monitor*, "Architects Build Modern Baghdad," Second Section (April 2, 1958). For a more recent overview of the modernization of Baghdad at that time, see Nicolai Ouroussoff, "In Search of Baghdad," *The Los Angeles Times* (December 14–16, 2003). Current scholarship has begun to examine these projects in greater depth. See no. 9 below.

6 Raglan Squire, ed., "Architecture in the Middle East," *Architectural Design* 27 (March 1957): 72–108.

7 Bowman, "Iraq's Operation Bootstrap," 34. The importance of housing was initially emphasized by the British consultant Lord Arthur Salter, in his 1955 report to the Iraq Development Board, *The Development of Iraq: A Plan of Action*. Similar arguments were also made in *The Economist*, "Development in Iraq: Special Survey" mentioned above.

8 Qubain, *The Reconstruction of Iraq*, 31.

9 Recent important studies of modern architecture in Baghdad include Siry, "Wright's Baghdad Opera House and Gammage Auditorium," 2005; Neil Levine, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 383–404; Mina Marefat, "Wright's Baghdad," in Anthony Alofsin, ed., *Frank Lloyd Wright: Europe and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 184–213; Göran Schildt, *Alvar Aalto. The Complete Catalogue of Architecture, Design and Art* (New York: Rizzoli, 1994).

10 For the IBRD's role in Iraq see "International Bank for Reconstruction and Development," *The Economic Development of Iraq*,

(Washington, DC, 1952); and Kadhim Al-Eyd, *Oil Revenues and Accelerated Growth* (New York: Praeger, 1979).

11 As Floyd Ratchford, the American development consultant who collaborated with Doxiadis in Iraq, would put it, Doxiadis "represents something new on the international 'technical assistance' scene."

A later *New Yorker* article would explain Doxiadis's success as follows: "Doxiadis has the sort of European abilities that are needed—he is up on the latest planning techniques, and he runs his firm with Northern (or, 'Western') efficiency—but, being a Greek, he is free of the imperialist stigma. . ." Christopher Rand, "The Ekistic World," *The New Yorker* (1963): 53.

12 Doxiadis, "The Science of Ekistics," *Architektoniki* 3:13 (1959): 9–72 (quotation on 13).

13 Ibid.

14 Doxiadis Associates, "Report on the Development of Baghdad: Detailed and Integrated Design of Western Baghdad," Document Dox-QA 88, 1958 [Doxiadis Archive].

15 "The National Housing Program of Iraq," *Architektoniki* 13 (January–February 1959): 42–46.

16 Doxiadis, "Architecture, Planning and Ekistics: Abstract of the Third Part of a Lecture Series Given at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Spring 1957," *Ekistics* 7:42 (April 1959): 293–296.

17 Doxiadis Associates, "Iraq Housing Program" *Doxiadis Associates Pamphlet* no. 5, September 1959.

18 Ibid.

19 The pitfalls of High Modernist urbanism and its technocratic utopianism are insightfully exposed in James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

20 *The New York Times*, "Tribal housing in Iraq," May 14, 1958.

21 Ibid. For other examples of positive reception of Doxiadis's Baghdad project see B.S. Saini "Housing in the Hot and Arid Tropics," *Design* 5 (August 1961), 18–24; and Ezra Ehrenhrantz and Ogden Tanner, "The Remarkable Dr. Doxiadis," *Architectural Forum* 114: 5 (May 1961), 112–116.

22 Ibid.

23 See for example: Fathy, Deimezis, Kyriou & Marinos, "Thermal Comfort," Doxiadis Associates R-GA 108, April 15, 1958, 1–2 [Fathy Archives]; and Doxiadis Associates, "A Regional Development Program for Greater Mussayib, Iraq, 1958," *Ekistics* 6:36 (October 1958), 149–186.

24 John Gulick, "Baghdad: Portrait of a City in Physical and Cultural Change," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 33, 4 (1967): 246–255 (esp. p. 252).

25 In the 1960s local firms took on a huge volume of work, and after the creation of the first school of architecture in Iraq in 1959, the number of local professionals grew dramatically.

26 A summary of the buildings that were completed appears in Doxiadis Associates, "Progress of the Housing Program," *Monthly Report* 46, Document Prepared for the Government of the Republic of Iraq (Athens, May 1959). Also see Gulick, 1967, 253.

27 For Wright's notions of regionalism see Siry, "Wright's Baghdad Opera House and Gammage Auditorium," and Levine, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright*, 1996. For reflections on Saddam Hussein's interventions in the 1980s, see William Brantley, "The Search for Baghdad," *Urban Land* 63 (2004): 49–55.

© C.A. Doxiadis, *Architecture in Transition*, 117



Fig. 7. Doxiadis Associates, Low income housing, West Baghdad, 1958

Bauhaus in Baghdad

WALTER GROPIUS MASTER PROJECT FOR BAGHDAD UNIVERSITY

■ MINA MAREFAT

In 1953 at a large Chicago luncheon celebrating Walter Gropius's seventieth birthday, Mies van der Rohe made a rare speech that assessed the man and his work: "I do not need to tell you that Gropius is one of the great architects of our times, as well as the greatest educator in our field, you know that, too. But what I want to say, and what you may not know, is that he was always a gallant fighter in the never-ending battle for new ideas."¹

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IN THE HISTORY of twentieth century architecture the stature of Walter Gropius looms large worldwide. A seminal figure and a key player among the pioneers of modern architecture, he achieved the profession's highest recognition, both in Europe and in America. Few can dispute his indelible impact on architectural education and practice. In Europe he changed design education with the creation of the Bauhaus, and when he immigrated to America in 1937 to teach at Harvard he quietly transformed architectural education throughout the rest of the world and influenced generations of architects as both an educator and a practitioner.² Gropius's biggest architectural commission, and in some ways his most influential project, however, was not in Europe and America; it was in the Middle East.

Ironically, his impact on the development of contemporary modern architecture—the spreading of an international modernist idiom—in the non-Western world is generally overlooked.³ The reference for modern architecture was mostly limited to Europe and North America, as exemplified in the case of The International Style: Architecture Since 1922 exhibition in 1932 by Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The ideas of modern architecture were systematically spread by CIAM meetings but in practice the widespread application of modern architecture in the Middle East occurred after World War II, with opportunities for building specifically made possible by newly found money coming from oil exploitation. The Bauhaus type of education would emerge as the predominant form of architectural

FIGURE PRÉPONDERANTE PARMI LES PIONNIERS DU STYLE INTERNATIONAL, WALTER GROPIUS OBTINT RAPIDEMENT UNE RECONNAISSANCE MONDIALE. PEU D'ARCHITECTES PEUVENT SE TARGUER D'AVOIR EU UNE INFLUENCE AUSSI IMPORTANTE SUR LA FORMATION ET LA PRATIQUE ARCHITECTURALES : EN EUROPE, IL RÉUSSIT À CHANGER L'ENSEIGNEMENT DU DESIGN AVEC L'INTRODUCTION DU BAUHAUS ET, LORSQU'IL IMMIGRA AUX ÉTATS-UNIS EN 1937 POUR OCCUPER UN POSTE À HARVARD, IL TRANSFORMA PROFONDÉMENT ET SANS HEURTS LES PRATIQUES D'ENSEIGNEMENT DE L'ARCHITECTURE, INFLUENÇANT AINSI DES GÉNÉRATIONS D'ARCHITECTES À LA FOIS EN TANT QU'ÉDUCATEUR ET PRATICIEN. POURTANT, SA PLUS IMPORTANTE COMMANDE ET, DANS BIEN DES SENS, LA PLUS INFLUENTE POUR SA CARRIÈRE N'A PAS ÉTÉ EN EUROPE NI EN AMÉRIQUE MAIS AU PROCHE-ORIENT LORSQUE SON AGENCE FUT CHARGÉE EN 1957 DE RÉALISER L'UNIVERSITÉ DE BAGDAD.

pedagogy, replacing the beaux-arts system in the few instances where there was an architectural school already in place.⁴

GROPIUS'S PROJECT IN IRAQ constitutes what I have called his quintessential 'master project' in which he would carry out the totality of his ideas about modern architecture. In short, Baghdad University became like the "Gropius handbook," providing the opportunity to promote his Bauhaus ideas in a broader way and to a new part of the world (*fig. 1*). Today, the project offers the opportunity to reassess the impact of modern architecture in a wider international arena. The newly oil-rich Iraq



Fig. 1. **The Architects Collaborative**, *University of Baghdad*, perspective view towards the main auditorium to the right and the faculty tower to the left. Drawing by Helmut Jacoby

© Francis Leeb Library, Harvard Design School

of the 1950s created a unique architectural experiment on a world scale, when it invited world famous architects from around the world to design the city's key buildings in its capital.

GROPIUS RECEIVED THE COMMISSION to design the University of Baghdad in 1957. It would remain the largest commission he and his firm, The Architects Collaborative (TAC), would receive during his lifetime.⁵ The project would continue for the rest of his life and long after his death. The significance of Baghdad University is two-fold. It embodies all the tenets of Gropius: in his words, "My idea of the architect as a coordinator—whose business it is to unify the various formal, technical, social and economic problems that arise in connection with building." Baghdad and the Middle East would be a clean slate for his Bauhaus values. Secondly it became Iraq's symbolic entrance into the community of modern nations, a lynchpin in the new sense of identity that was part of the nationalizing process for an independent Iraq. It reveals Gropius's mastery as the coordinator of a "teamwork" design process amidst military coups and political upheavals. Beyond its association with Gropius, Baghdad University as a project opened the way for other architects to follow his paradigm; the generation of younger architects

from the West as well as outside the West was eager to be part of the New Architecture he was propagating. In an unprecedented way, Baghdad in the late 1950s became a unique architectural playground for the world's greatest designers. Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, Alvar Aalto, and Gio Ponti, were among the illustrious names that in addition to Gropius were invited to offer their design ideas, but none would succeed at the level that Gropius did. In Iraq, as in many other parts of the Middle East, ultimately it would be politics that would adversely impact the destiny of building and development projects; Baghdad University would in this case be a lucky exception. Wright had translated a simple commission to design an Opera House into an exuberant cultural island resort for Greater Baghdad with a magnificent array of domes, ziggurats, bridges, and boulevards, including museums, a university, and parks.⁶ Alvar Aalto was given the commission for a museum but neither Wright nor Aalto would construct the buildings they envisioned for Baghdad, and their ideas would forever remain on paper. Le Corbusier's sports complex was finally completed in 1980 under the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein; Gio Ponti's office building, which introduced to Iraq the cutting edge skyscraper ideas he had explored in Milan, suffered damage in 2003 during the war with the USA. Neither Ponti nor Le Corbusier



© photograph by Rifat Chadirji, given to Mina Marafat

Fig. 2. **Ellen and Nizar Jawdat** c. 1950s (n.d.). The young graduates of Harvard who had returned to Iraq after studying with Gropius would be instrumental in securing the university project for him

were able to expand their projects as Gropius did, nor were they able to influence the local developments as fundamentally. None of the architects had the inside connections to Iraq that Gropius was lucky to have. Thus among all the international giants it was Gropius who would succeed in setting a new architectural tone for Iraq, and as a result, for the rest of the Middle East and even beyond.

By 1957 Gropius had already been in America for twenty years, serving most of these years at Harvard's Graduate School of Design as a teacher and administrator. He had begun his practice in Europe where his first independent building for the Fagus Shoe Factory (1911) gained him instant fame; but it was the founding of the Bauhaus, a holistic design school and a modern alternative and new paradigm, that challenged the long-standing hold of the academies of architectural education that would become his lasting legacy.⁷ He left Germany as Nazism was rising and after a short stay in London, was able to influence the field of architectural education even more broadly from the USA.

THAT ONE OF HIS STUDENTS would be the source of a major project is not surprising. In this case, the project came to him via two students, a married couple: Nizar and Ellen Jawdat (fig. 2).⁸ Nizar Ali Jawdat started his studies at the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1943; he was the son of Iraq's ambassador in

Washington. By the time Nizar graduated in 1946, he had befriended Gropius and a married fellow student Ellen Bovey.⁹ The couple returned to Iraq where they began their architectural career at a time when Iraq was about to embark on its ambitious building program. In 1957, Nizar's father, Ali Jawdat, was serving as prime minister under the Hashemite rule of young King Faisal II. The twenty three-year old king was the second ruler of the newly independent kingdom of Iraq, a country established after the demise of the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of World War I.¹⁰ It was first a British mandate and the influence of the British was ever present within Iraq, under the political sphere of British influence, not just in politics, but beyond it as well.¹¹ After all, it was the British who masterminded the formation of Iraq into a kingdom, selecting as its ruler Faisal I from Jordan. When oil was discovered in 1927, the destiny of Iraq was forever transformed. In 1950, with an increase of disposable oil revenue, Iraq embarked on an extraordinary path toward development, creating a Development Board charged with the implementation of projects for modernization. Its purpose was "to make use of expert knowledge" and "avoid being misled by conflicting opinions."

Nizar and Ellen Jawdat belonged to the educated elite of young practitioners who used their position in support of Iraq's ambitious and progressive development plan. They banded together with other young architects who shared

their modernist vision; given their positions and family connections they successfully convinced the Iraqi Development Board to broaden their choice for the project architects by bringing to Iraq world famous figures. The Jawdat's idealism and passion for modernism was shared by other young Iraqi architects of their generation including Mohammad Makkiya and Rifat Chadirji, both trained in the West. Needless to say, the young Iraqi architects were eager to break the British monopoly over the building industry and to end the cycle that had continued for years under British rule. British firms had built most of the construction from the early 1920s and most of the built structures were in the tradition of the colonial (beaux-arts) architecture prevalent in all European colonies. In 1956 the British firm, Minoprio, Spencely, and Macfarlane, were preparing Baghdad's new master plan (fig. 3).¹² It was the document that would determine not just the new institutional needs, but also the location for new buildings, including the new university.

GROPIUS'S FRIENDSHIP with the Jawdat would prove most profitable to him. On his way to Japan in 1954, Gropius made his first journey to Baghdad to visit with the Jawdat at Ellen's behest. From Ellen's letter to him dated October 3, 1954, it is clear that he had a most successful visit, energizing his students to lobby on his behalf. The letter is also helpful in revealing the intellectual thirst prevailing among the elite and educated in newly developing countries such as Iraq in the 1950s. It also testifies to Gropius's astute diplomacy and his intrinsic ability to sell his ideas.

"I CAN'T TELL YOU what a boost to our spirits your few days with us were. Not only we, but everybody who met you reacted in the same way—we felt as though a large window had opened. Nizar and I, of course, had the extra pleasure of bringing back fine memories, but for all of us your visit brought such a wealth of new ideas, wise advice, and most of all a calm optimism, that we must find some way of reviving the experience.

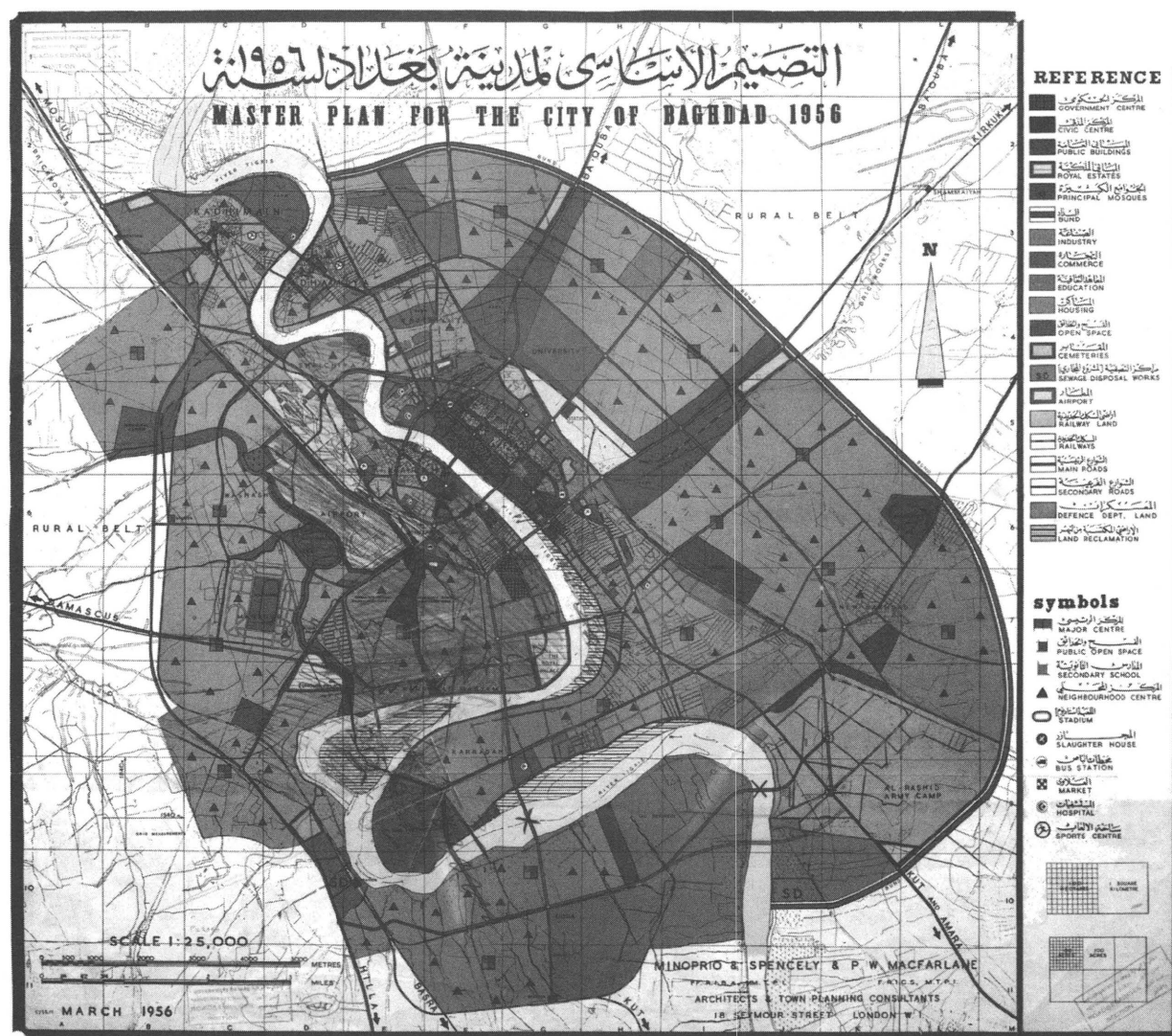


Fig. 3. Minoprio, Spencely and M.P. McFarlane, *Baghdad Master Plan*, dated 1956. The location of the university was on 500 acres on the river's main bend, a peninsula south of the city in an irrigated grove of trees across the island Wright had secured for the Opera House

MOST OF US HERE IN IRAQ eventually come to suffer from a kind of regional disease of the mind. I suppose it is partly the fault of the endless desert surrounding us, which cuts us off from the world of ideas. Our educated young people are dulled by the constant effort of maintaining what seems such an elementary standard of decent living, as well as by the never ending struggle for moral survival in a complex half-primitive, half civilized society. Very little energy is left over for constructive planning and building (let alone relaxing). The sweeping optimism of most visitors from the West (following their first shock of horror) strikes an almost profane note on our jaded minds. So it was indeed refreshing to watch your instinctive understanding of the situation, in no way minimizing the problems, yet not being overwhelmed by them. We are more than ever convinced that we must find some way for you to make your contribution to this country, for in addition to the architectural contribution, there is that immeasurable added dividend."¹³

revenues. For Iraq this was an unprecedented and rapid modernization program. Funds had suddenly quadrupled (reaching 1.4 billion dollars) and in a commendable process, the Development Board put the money into development projects and orchestrated the country's rapid reconstruction. The commission for the university was perhaps the most important of all the Development Board architectural projects given to foreign architects owing not only to its broad scope and number of buildings but also because it would constitute the most essential of buildings. In comparison to other architects, Gropius would not only have inside connections that would help him steer through unfamiliar bureaucracies but also because educational institutions would be crucial to emerging countries such as Iraq who wanted to modernize and forge their own identity.

GROPIUS HAD TO WAIT for the Baghdad masterplan that was under preparation to determine the location for

82

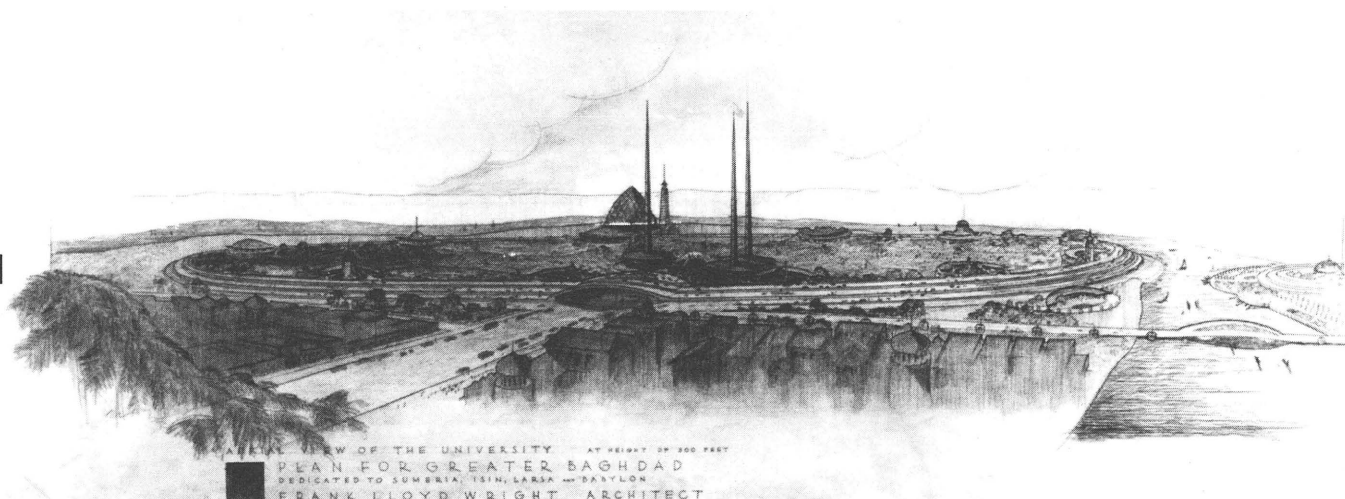


Fig. 4. Frank Lloyd Wright, Plan for Greater Baghdad, view of the university

THE JAWDATS were working behind the scenes to bring Gropius to Iraq and introduce him to key decision makers well before 1957; their efforts ensured that he would be among the first Western architects to be considered for one of Iraq's development projects.¹⁴

"We are awaiting the arrival of your photographs and documents and will do the most we can with them. The King returns from England in a month, and I hope that he will be in a receptive frame of mind. Nizar visited him in the North a few weeks after you left, and he expressed the keenest interest."

It would not have been difficult for Nizar to have direct contact with the young Faisal II as his father was the prime minister, a connection that would have served him well within the Development Board as well. Charged with the task of building the country's infrastructure in its first five-year plan, the Board had succeeded in making dramatic headway with dams, roads, ports, etc., in an accelerated building program made possible by oil

the new university and the Jawdats knew they faced severe competition from British interests in the project. Finally in 1957 he received the commission that transformed his architectural office into the large corporate firm that would change the nature of international practice. Gropius and TAC would define the program, formulate the university's teaching principles, design the first master plan and its subsequent iterations, and construct numerous individual buildings in a long-term relationship that would weather two assassinations and four changes of government.

WITH THE ADVANTAGE of having inside help to assist him in constructing a foolproof contract that ensured payment despite the Development Board's poor reputation in such matters, Gropius's first task was to draw up the program and the overall master plan. Using his signature "teamwork" methodology, Gropius oversaw the development of the master plan without ever putting

Fig. 5. **The Architects Collaborative,** *University of Baghdad Master Plan*, the flat site was interrupted only by 10-ft high dikes and large groves of palm trees that determined the central building complex

THE UNIVERSITY OF BAGHDAD MASTER PLAN



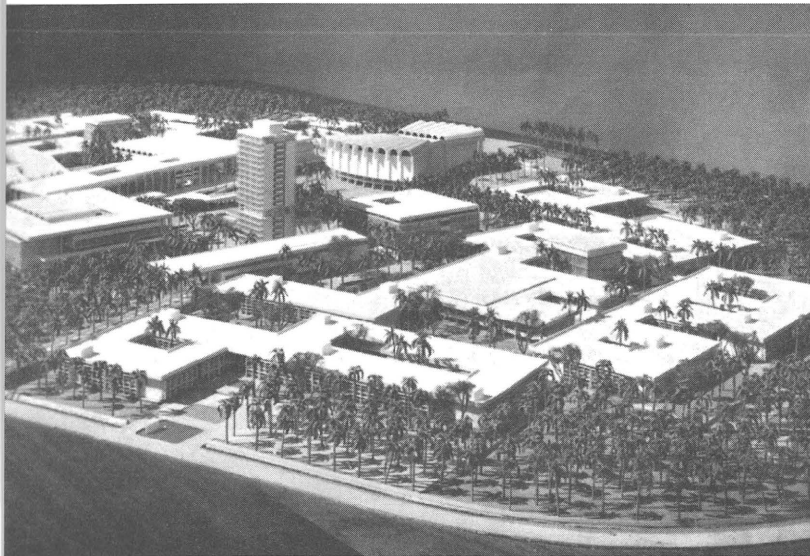
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pencil to paper himself. As one of the young designers charged with initiating the design concept, Morse Payne would describe Gropius's role as a thoughtful "coordinator" who allowed others to design "in the spirit of his ideas."¹⁵ The weekly review sessions were "pin-ups" in the conference room where collaborators would gather to discuss the progress made, not unlike the juries Gropius would arrange during his teaching tenure at Harvard. Gropius was very considerate and apparently had the inherent "gift" of bringing out the best among his team members and collaborators. Payne admits that he never saw Gropius draw.¹⁶ Gropius, according to TAC major player John Harkness, "took a very active role as a design critic during the master planning and preliminary design phases."¹⁷ Unlike many of the TAC main collaborators, Payne had not been a Harvard student but was working for TAC as a young graduate of the Boston Architectural Society. He was among the many postwar veterans who had sought to pursue their education, and he found the academic beaux-arts system still prevalent throughout most of the architectural schools unappealing.

Payne, who authored the master plan, confessed that he "stumbled upon the concept by accident," when he took notice of the existing garden retaining walls on the site as his inspiration. The 1956 Master Plan for Baghdad designated two alternatives for the site of the university project, the first being southeast of the city on the road to Ba'quba and the second south of the city at a prominent bend of the river Tigris. It was the latter site, the large peninsula with its date groves and long river frontage known as Karradah and initially reserved for open space that was selected, even though at the time it was farther away from the city. H. Morse Payne was aware that Wright had selected the island directly across the peninsula for his Opera House and cultural center. In fact Wright had even provided the design for a university campus on the Karrada peninsula when he presented his designs for the plans for Greater Baghdad, which he completed and published in May 1958 (fig. 4).¹⁸ Wright's design for the campus was circular with each of the ten faculties lining the perimeter of the campus; its

center, with palm trees and natural landscape, was reserved for a green common interrupted only by the tall communication towers.¹⁹

"WE WOULD HAVE BLITZED THE SITE," according to Payne, in other words cut all the trees and prepared a clean slate and designed an orthogonal plan, were it not for the fact that Payne's "tortured configuration" incorporated many of the trees already there (fig. 5).²⁰ "It was a stroke of luck and Gropius was supportive," Payne commented concerning the evolution of the plan in an organic manner.²¹ Payne was able to communicate his ideas in expressive thumbnail sketches that brought life to the design. At the same time, another TAC team member, Margaret (Peggy) Eskeridge, a young architect married to TAC team member Robert Eskeridge, realized the overall three dimensional model as the design was developing (fig. 6). For the final presentations TAC hired the well-known architectural renderer Helmut Jacoby, but it was the design process using the strong drawing skills



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Fig. 6. **The Architects Collaborative, University of Baghdad Master Plan**, the model showed the components of study spaces, colleges were not separate buildings but shared spaces for a flexible arrangement of use

of his young designer that allowed the project to proceed through its weekly rounds of discussions in the conference room. Gropius's "design-by-crit" method was flexible enough to promote the ideas presented by "the second-tier" members of the firm, among whom H. Morse Payne identified himself.²² Of the main TAC members, it was Louis McMillen who was most directly involved in the contractual discussions, traveled to Baghdad, and had indirect involvement in the design. Nevertheless, to the outside world and certainly to the client, it was Gropius, of course, who would be credited as the architect for the project.

Architectural Record summarized the significance of the project: "The chance to plan such a complex organism from the very beginning doesn't often come to the architect, but in this instance the government of Iraq had the wisdom to give the opportunity to a firm uniquely prepared for it. For the Architects Collaborative International, Baghdad University is a problem whose scope demands the system of collaboration among equals, which is part of the foundation upon which the firm is built. For Gropius, the firm's founder, Baghdad is an ideal project. To an architect and teacher long dedicated to the principle that members of the profession must play the broadest possible role in the pursuit of a better life for mankind, the total design of a university is a goal achieved."²³

Gropius was charged with not just the physical design of a campus for 12,000 students on 500 acres of land but also with defining the education philosophy for the new university. "The problem is how can we avoid that too much Americanism comes here, and still give Iraq a school that will help conquer the illiteracy problem and train all kinds of leaders to use the country's wealth wisely."²⁴ But rather than look to the past and dwell upon the cultural traditions of the region as Wright had done

so enthusiastically that he dedicated his designs to "Isin, Larsa, and Babylon," Gropius took on a more practical approach. Climate control dominated much of the architectural treatment. "That hot wind is our main problem," and Gropius encouraged the use of courtyards and so it was that the existing trees and canals along the site were incorporated. Roof overhangs ("eyebrows" as Gropius called them) over window openings, louvers, grills, and the white concrete "umbrella" roofs were used to deflect sunlight. To these he added sprinklers turned upward to cool the air above by evaporation.²⁵

Concrete was the main construction material alongside brick because it was locally available and inexpensive; "to give dramatic accent in the silhouette" according to Gropius, shell construction for vaults and domes were added.²⁶ "The interrelationship of the individual buildings and the landscaped open spaces with their water fountains between them as well as the shadow effects from the strong sunlight obtained by cantilevers and undercuts, will cause a significant rhythm. This rhythm tends to express the meaning of "universitas," which is 'wholeness,' offering the creative setting for a full, integrated life of the students."

THE UNIVERSITY WAS TO INCLUDE three schools: arts and sciences, engineering, and education with shared classrooms for all, an administrative building, a 2,000 seat auditorium, a mosque for up to 700 people, a library for 300,000 books, housing for faculty and dormitories for 4,000 students. The initial plan was to have low-rise buildings along a scattered campus with nothing over three stories as part of Gropius's philosophy of a "more human scale." His proposal was to "break down the scale of dormitories first into groups of 300 students for large activities such as intramural spots, then further into housing groups of 30 and 40 students."

"Particular stress has been laid throughout this study on the greatest possible flexibility of the organizational system as well as of the physical plant itself."²⁷ And Gropius himself abided by the same concept of flexibility he was advocating. When the military commander General Kassem took control of Iraq after assassinating the young King Faisal II on July 14, 1958, he demanded a high-rise tower on the campus, one that he could see from his palace window (fig. 7). Gropius had quietly continued his work on the master plan even after the military coup as his contract had ensured him monthly payment.²⁸ He met with Kassem, often with machine gun-wielding soldiers present, and the 20-story Faculty Office Tower was one of the first buildings to be constructed, as was the 80-foot arch known as the "Open Mind," which served as the symbolic entrance to the university (fig. 8). The new president of the Republic of Iraq gave priority to the execution of the project just as the Prime Minister had done under the kingdom's rule.²⁹ Gropius's plan easily accommodated the symbolic monumentality now

required by the new government and when Kassem was himself assassinated, the new leadership was also able to insert its own identity. As Islamic ideals began to emerge, a new and isolated self-contained women's college was designed to the far north of the site, called Tahrir College.

Baghdad University and Walter Gropius's modernist tenets became the paradigm for the progressive image so anxiously sought for during the post-WWII era by the non-Western world. Modern architecture only spread internationally beyond Europe and North America after World War II, after there was disposable oil revenue at hand. The Gropius or Bauhaus version was to be triumphant then and his Baghdad University would become the dominant standard. To the Iraqis, Gropius's ideas and flexible organization were politically suited to their desire of being part of the modern and technological world. Gropius's university project emerged as perhaps the most influential case made for the dissemination of architectural modernism outside Europe and North America at a time when Western ideas were embraced. Its influence across the region was formative and wide-ranging, not just in terms of its modern architectural lexicon, but because of the ideas it embodied.

In the vanguard of this transformation, Gropius's Bauhaus-style Baghdad University became the standard. Iraqis accepted Gropius's buildings as a worthy symbol of their country's introduction to the modern world stage because it provided an aura of technological advancement and modernity. Baghdad University was the "New Architecture," Gropius had promised and the "bridge uniting opposite poles of thought."³⁰

MINA MAREFAT, director of the Cities Project and president of Design Research Inc in Washington DC, teaches at Catholic University and was formerly the Rockefeller Fellow at the Library of Congress. Her MIT dissertation "Building to Power: Tehran 1921–1941" that constitutes the first serious research on pioneers of the modern movement in Iran is being expanded and published, as is her book on Frank Lloyd Wright's Baghdad Legacy. designresearch@starpower.net

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NOTES

1 Sigfried Giedion, *Walter Gropius, Work and Teamwork* (Reinhold Publishing Corporation: New York, 1954), 17. Giedion was asked to write this book in preparation for the Grand Prix d'Architecture, which was granted for the first time in 1954 with Gropius as the first recipient of the "Sao Paulo Prize." Giedion would remain one of Gropius's chief propagandists. Mies was known as "ever-silent" and his tribute to Gropius was one of many by his famous contemporaries on this and many other occasions honoring Gropius during his lifetime.

2 Walter Gropius (1883–1969) was born in Berlin and studied architecture in Munich, worked in Peter Behrens's office in Berlin from 1908–1910 before opening his own office. His early work,



Fig. 7. **The Architects Collaborative**, University of Baghdad, the Faculty Office Tower and administration building which was added to the otherwise low-rise campus, in compliance with General Kassem's wishes to see the university from his window. It was one of the first buildings to be constructed

including the Fagus Factory (begun in 1911 in Alfeld), was designed in collaboration with Adolf Meyer, with whom he worked until 1925. In 1925–1926 he designed the new Bauhaus buildings in Dessau. When the Nazis took power, Gropius left Germany and spent the years between 1934 and 1937 in London sharing an office with Maxwell Frye. In 1938 he left England for Cambridge, Massachusetts, when he received an invitation from Harvard University to join the faculty of architecture and became head of the architecture department in 1938. For a comprehensive biography see: Reginald R. Isaacs, *Walter Gropius Der Mensch und sein Werk*. Vol. 1 (Berlin: Mann, 1983) and Vol. 2 (Berlin: Mann, 1984), an abridged version in English by the same author, *Gropius, An Illustrated Biography of the Creator of the Bauhaus* (Boston, Toronto, London: Little Brown and Company, 1991).

3 The present study is part of a larger research project that includes an in depth analysis of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright in Baghdad, first published in summarized form in *Frank Lloyd Wright, Europe and Beyond* (University of California Press: Berkeley California, 1999); see also Mina Marefat, "Baghdad Dans les Années 50, Les Dessins de Frank Lloyd Wright," *Beaux Arts Magazine* (October 2003): 68–73.

4 This is particularly the case in Iran where the creation of Tehran University took place two decades earlier than that of Baghdad. See Mina Marefat, "Building to Power: The Architecture of Tehran, 1921–1941" (Ph.D. dissertation, MIT, 1988); "The Protagonists who Shaped Modern Tehran," in *Téhéran, Capitale Bicentenaire*, Chahrayar Adle and Bernard Hourcade editors (Paris: Centre National de Recherche Scientifique, 1992): 95–125; "Tehran, Modern and Islamic," *Harvard Design Magazine* (Winter/Spring 1997): 42–45. Iran's encounter with modernity is the subject of more than two decades of my research, which began with original surveys and documentation to explore the impact of new ideas from the West on the architecture of Iran.

5 With the closure of TAC, the Walter Gropius and TAC archives are

now scattered in a number of libraries and museums. See also John C. Harkness, ed., *The Walter Gropius Archive*, vol. 4, 1945–1969, *The Works of The Architects Collaborative* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1991): 189–205.

6 See note no. 3 for references. Baghdad in the 1950s is the subject of an international panel organized by Mina Marefat and Magnus Bernhardsson, to be presented at the Middle East Studies Association, November 2006.

7 The Fagus Boot-Last Factory at Alfeld-an-der-Leine, 1911 designed in collaboration with Adolf Meyer became the poster architecture for the Bauhaus "New Architecture," which Gropius would promote for the rest of his life.

8 I am grateful to Ellen and Nizar Jawdat as well as to Rifat Chadirji and Mohammad Makkiyya, whose personal stories have shed much light on Baghdad's unique architectural experiment.

9 Ellen, who was married during the time she was at Harvard, would divorce and marry Nizar Jawdat. She would remain in touch with Walter and Ise Gropius throughout their lives.

10 The creation or invention of Iraq is the subject of many recent books including Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

11 Magnus Bernhardsson presents a compelling case on the use of archaeology in the politics of nationhood and the role of the British in *Reclaiming a Plundered Past: Archaeology and Nation Building in Modern Iraq* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2005).

12 It is likely that a copy of this master plan was given to each of the architects; Frank Lloyd Wright made his first sketches directly onto a printed copy; a copy is also held in the Le Corbusier archives at the Fondation Le Corbusier in Paris.

13 Letter from Ellen Jawdat to both of the Gropius, dated October 3, 1954; from the Collections of the Houghton Library, manuscripts and unpublished letters from the Gropius file.

14 This fact is supported by both Ellen and Nizar Jawdat during interviews from 1997 to present; John Harkness credits the Jawdats for the Baghdad commission, see *The Walter Gropius Archives*, vol. 4, 1945–1969 (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1969), 189. The Gropius-Jawdat friendship is well documented by the

correspondence between Ellen Jawdat to both Ise and Walter Gropius from the 1950s through the 1960s.

15 I am grateful to H. Morse Payne for his interviews (July 2006) with me and for the insight he shared about Gropius as an architect and for explaining the daily workings and methods of TAC.

16 Ibid.

17 John Harkness, "The University of Baghdad, Baghdad, Iraq."

18 Published in May issue of *Architectural Forum*, a very popular professional journal, it is very likely that Gropius and all his team members had seen the designs.

19 Wright knew that Gropius had been selected to design the university but King Faisal's reactions to his ideas during his trip to Baghdad had given him sufficient encouragement to expand his project to incorporate the university.

20 Interview by Mina Marefat with H. Morse Payne, July 2006.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 "Planning the University of Baghdad," *Architectural Record* (February 1961): 108.

24 "Planning a University," *The Christian Science Monitor* (April 2, 1958).

25 Ibid.

26 Walter Gropius, "University of Baghdad," *Architectural Record* (April 1959): 148.

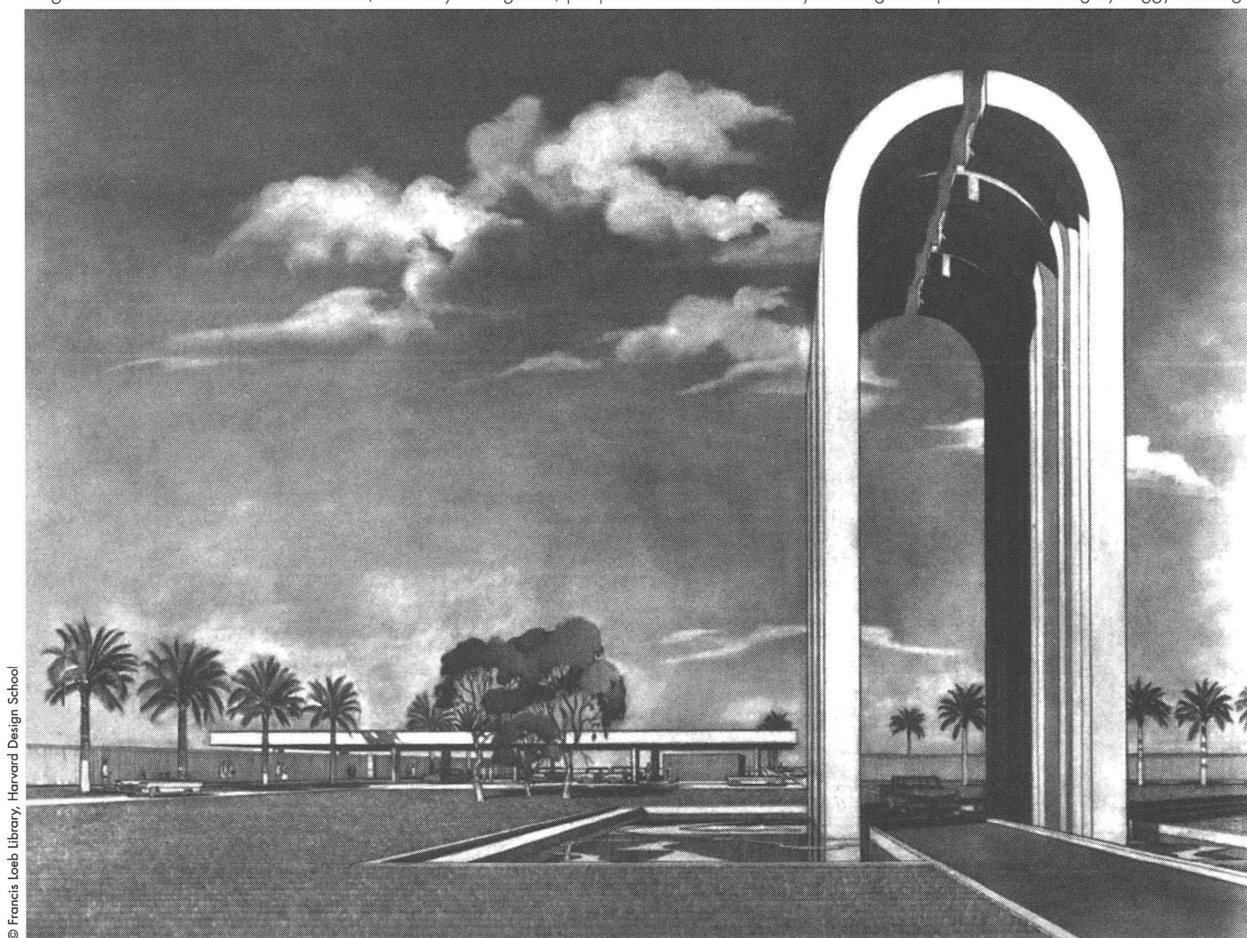
27 Ibid.

28 Gropius's contract was written with good advice from Nizar Jawdat and when the payments were initially delayed the Jawdats were "not kind" to their colleagues at the Development Board and made sure it would not happen again. Wright had not been so lucky and never received compensation for work he had presented to the King despite years of efforts and litigation by his successor firm. Correspondence between Ellen Jawdat and the Gropiuses, from the Collections of the Houghton Library, manuscripts and unpublished letters from the Gropius file.

29 The building featured prominently in the *Bulletin of the Republic of Iraq* published in 1961: 5–11.

30 Walter Gropius, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1965): 23.

Fig. 8. **The Architects Collaborative**, University of Baghdad, perspective of the monument symbolizing the Open Mind. Drawing by Peggy Eskeridge



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Lithic Modernity

JORDAN'S ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY

NABIL ABU-DAYYEH AND ALI ABU-GHANIMEH

Any visitor to Jordan, particularly to the capital city Amman, cannot help but remark on the characteristic use of stone as a predominant building material. The aesthetic rules of design have therefore mostly been conditioned by this lithicism, a characteristic quality that is deeply rooted in the architecture of modern Jordan. This lithicism often creates difficulties for designers who always need to reconcile the aesthetics required by the nature of two materials and building technologies: stone on one hand, and reinforced concrete on the other.

AT BEST, THE RESULT is a kind of hybrid modernity, a "lithic modernity" which characterizes the better works of architecture in Jordan. Aside from the millenary craft of stone construction, the roots of this modern phenomenon can be traced back to the late Ottoman period (late nineteenth century), followed by the experience of the British Mandate period (1921–1946), right into the post-independence period (1946) and beyond.

THE LATE OTTOMAN PERIOD: STONE BUILDING CRAFT SUPPLANTED

The construction of the Hijaz railroad that was destined to link Istanbul to Mecca was one of the most complex administrative and engineering tasks undertaken by the Ottoman government in the late nineteenth century. The supervision of construction was entrusted to one body, the Damascus Central Commission, and eventually to one man, its head engineer, Heinrich Meissner (Pasha). Meissner, a German railroad engineer, trained in Dresden and Vienna, and the veteran of several railroad works built by foreign companies in the Ottoman Empire, instructed his staff that, wherever feasible, bridges should be built of stone, not iron, to allow for easier repairs by an Ottoman railroad repair crew that would not be familiar with iron bridges. In order to have Muslims available who could handle construction in the Hijaz, an area inaccessible to Christians, the construction administration hired Italian stonemasons to train one and one-half companies of troops in the building of small station buildings and culverts.¹

This "modern" expertise in stone construction supplanted an ancient tradition of stone construction that can be seen in the physical urban fabric of ancient Middle-Eastern cities such as Damascus and Jerusalem, and almost all minor cities and towns across the Levant. The massive and rusticated look of the stonework evident in many of the

TOUT VISITEUR QUI SÉJOURNE EN JORDANIE, ET EN PARTICULIER DANS SA CAPITALE AMMAN, EST FRAPPÉ PAR L'UTILISATION INTENSIVE DE LA PIERRE. CETTE ARCHITECTURE FORTEMENT LITHIQUE, CARACTÉRISTIQUE DE LA MODERNITÉ JORDANIENNE, A PARFOIS ÉTÉ DIFFICILE À INTERPRÉTER POUR LES CONCEPTEURS MODERNES, QUI ONT EU À CONCILIER LES DIFFÉRENCES STRUCTURELLES ET TECHNIQUES DE LA PIERRE ET DU BÉTON ARMÉ. IL EN RÉSULTE UNE MODERNITÉ HYBRIDE ET « LITHIQUE » QUI CARACTÉRISE LES MEILLEURES RÉALISATIONS ARCHITECTURALES EN JORDANIE. CETTE ARCHITECTURE, DONT LES RACINES REMONTENT À LA FIN DE L'ÈRE OTTOMANE, A ÉTÉ PRATiquÉE DURANT TOUT LE MANDAT BRITANNIQUE (1921-1946) AINSI QU'APRÈS L'INDÉPENDANCE.

surviving rural train stations is reminiscent of the construction technique traditional in Italian middle-size towns (*fig. 1*). This type of rusticated construction, introduced in station buildings and stone bridges, was to become a permanent element of Amman's lithic architectural legacy seen in many noteworthy buildings today.

THE MANDATE PERIOD: COLONIAL REGIONAL MODERNISM

For twenty-five years (1921–1946), Jordan was known as the Emirate of Transjordan under the British Mandate. The general conceptions that guided colonial thinking on administration and development also conditioned aesthetic preferences, and eventually shaped colonial imagery, including the medium of architecture. Thus, in India, the rising preservationist preoccupation with indigenous cultures after the revolt of 1857 inspired localizing gestures in British architecture, that previously was predominantly classicist and expressive of British authority, a "colonial regionalism" as it may be called.²



Fig. 1. Qatraneh station, the 'rural' type of Hijaz railroad stations

LIKEWISE in Transjordan, official colonial architecture was characterized by a kind of regionalized modernity with an air of serene lithic classicism that seems to follow the recommendations of Geoffrey Scott's *Architecture of Humanism*, first published in 1914. Scott saw the use of stone in modern buildings as an indicator that modern construction is not simply and solely about the use of new materials. He believed that the widespread use of marble, travertine, and limestone facing in modern design shows that "the idea [of using only new materials], while current in theory, is often [for good reasons] disregarded in practice."³

A SMALL NUMBER OF BUILDINGS were built by the British Mandate Authority in Jordan, most notably the Chief British Representative's (CBR) residence designed by Austen St. Barbe Harrison (fig. 2).⁴ It exemplifies the colonial regionalist approach, a formula meant to balance the requisites of the mandate to modernize and develop what were considered underdeveloped nations, and the pragmatic approach towards local governance based on a more sympathetic approach towards local culture. The house therefore is a hybrid; a fine geometric interplay of cubic masses characterized by the severe simplicity of the exterior, dressed in plain smooth surfaces of local stone, trying to balance the dual representational functions, that is, of simultaneously being modern and regional.

The modernity of the design is somewhat concealed by features such as the arched main entrance, the loggia opening onto the back garden, the cross-vaulted garden pavilion, and the symmetrical organization of the plan, but is noticeable in the clean and clear outlines of the masses and plain surfaces forming the bulk of the house. This modern colonial and regional architectural style characterized most of the works carried out by the mandatory Public Works Department (PWD) where Harrison had served for a period of fifteen years (1922–1937) as chief architect.⁵

Aside from the PWD works, public buildings were of much varied character ranging between state mosques

to missionary hospitals and churches, hotels, and private residences, none exhibiting much modernity, except for one building that perhaps deserves the designation as the first modern villa in Amman, and for that matter in Jordan. In the 1940s, inhabitants of Amman often referred to the Villa as the White Palace, "al-Dar al-Beida,"⁶ also known as "Qasr Nahida," Nahida being the third wife of King Abdullah I (fig. 3). The designation "White" is perhaps due to the white plastered surfaces of its rounded hovering reinforced concrete balconies, and its white stone facing. The villa or small palace was commissioned by the King in 1942 but its authorship is veiled with ambiguity, all that is known being that he was a foreign architect coming from Palestine.⁷

The White Palace was consciously designed as a modern building, with all the details and functions comprehensively thought through. It is composed of two stories joined by a grand staircase; the ground floor was devoted to formal receptions, casual entertaining and dining, while the first floor was designed as sleeping quarters for family and attendants.

The house has a reinforced concrete skeleton structure with several attached pilasters evident at the corners of rooms, and walls 40-cm thick. As for the roof, a concrete slab was reinforced with a steel mesh.

The designer deliberately regionalized the modernity of the house. This is evident in the use of stone rather than plaster finish for the exterior of the house, a feature that contributed to its relatively good condition at present. The concrete finish was done with utmost care and very meticulously. Although plastering was limited to the rounded overhangs over the balcony, the smooth texture and the extent of cantilevering proved the designer to be quite familiar with that technology.

MODERN JORDAN: LITHIC MODERNITY

Jordan became independent in 1946 but it was not until the 1950s that the first generation of Jordanian architects with university training, mostly graduates from Cairo University (then called King Fuad I University), began their practice. From that period, however, the sole marker for the kind of mainstream international style modernism is a hospital fittingly draped in white-washed concrete finish. It recently closed its doors and today stands, with an uncertain fate, overlooking a new grand project of urban rebuilding and redevelopment on a nearby 35-hectare site, part of a new urban development strategy of massive-scale investment and redevelopment promoted by King Abdullah II since his coming to the throne in 1999. Its architect, an Italian architect at the time working in Jerusalem but whose exact identity is as yet unknown, seemed committed to the modernist approach towards hospital design. The hospital's triangular geometry is composed of three extended wings pin wheeling around a central vertical circulation core containing three elevators and a circular staircase set

within a cylinder that can be seen emerging from the middle of the composition high above the roofs of the adjacent wings. Sun-breakers create the rhythm of the exterior elevations, and the whole is supported on 56 round wet columns in turn supported on pile foundations. Nonetheless, the architect seemed mindful of Jordan's legacy of lithic modernity as he employed masonry construction, square-cut stone pieces of light reddish color for the majority of the walls that formed the adjacent nurses' lodging, and for a small nursing school, without however failing to emphasize its reinforced concrete structure apparent in the exposed white-washed plastered roof slabs and smaller details (fig. 4).

IN AMMAN—unlike Baghdad of the 1950s where modernism took a big step towards mainstream modernism with projects such as Le Corbusier's formerly "Saddam Stadium," or The Architects' Collaborative (TAC) design for Baghdad University Campus and its buildings—Cairo academicians transplanted in their Jordanians pupils a taste for a regionalized or homegrown modernism of Frank Lloyd Wright style, putting great emphasis on the juxtaposition of horizontal cantilevers and massive and rustic vertical stone walls. This became the dominant aesthetics of the multitude of designs produced by the first group of university trained Jordanian architects from the 1950s into the early 1970s. Meanwhile, Amman had narrowly missed being endowed with a master's design, that for the American Embassy in Amman by José Luis Sert, a design not altogether different in character from his design for the American Embassy in Baghdad (fig. 5).⁸

Jordanian architects were mainly responsible for the production of a large variety of "modern" residential designs while larger public buildings continued to be designed by foreign designers, with mainly modernistic designs, such as the Jordan Insurance Company HQ building designed by the Lebanese architect Khalil



Fig. 2. The CBR residence, rear elevation, 1924–1925

Khoury in 1961, the international style building of Hotel Jordan Intercontinental erected in 1958, Al-Hussein Sport's City comprising a large modern concrete stadium and large festival Hall (late 1960s), the Royal Cultural Center by Halcrow & Partners (1970s), and Kenzo Tange's Jordan University of Science and Technology (then named Yarmouk University) Campus in Irbid (late 1970s) (fig. 6). The 1980s, however, witnessed a retreat from these modernistic leanings towards a more traditionalist revivalist architecture, then in tune with postmodern trends in the USA and Europe. Most importantly, the 1990s witnessed the construction of a large number of tall buildings, mainly hotels, in anticipation of a greater role for tourism in the regional and local economy after the signing of a peace treaty with Israel in 1994. Only very few of those buildings have made a significant addition to the architecture of the city, with much surrounding controversy nonetheless (fig. 7).

More than anything, however, the closing decade of the century was marked by the change of scale of



Fig. 3. The White Palace, the main entrance and the cantilevering balconies



Fig. 4. **Benicci & Company**, *Mouasher Hospital*, Amman, ca. 1959

architectural projects and the expanding dimension of architectural and engineering firms, creating new challenges for local architectural practice. This occurred as a new generation of Jordanian architects was coming of age, a generation who had behind it more than half a century of local architectural practice, as well as substantial exposure to architectural production worldwide and in many cases considerable international experience.

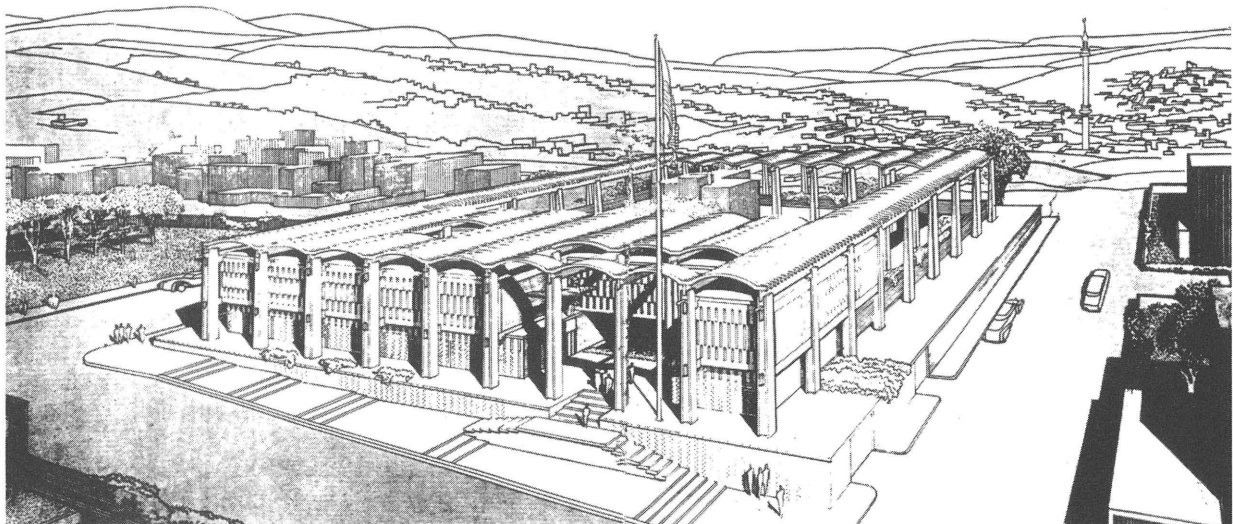
TODAY, Jordan is entering a new era of large-scale investment in real-estate projects on a scale previously unknown locally, mainly in Amman, the capital, and in Aqaba, seat of the Aqaba (duty-free) Special Economic Zone. Jordan's legacy of lithic modernity is often exploited, rather superficially, in dreamlike visions devised for mass consumption. Undoubtedly, these projects make building technologies advance and increase choices concerning materials and technology, but often they are also threatening with their wholesale and often thoughtless adaptation of Jordan's lithic architectural heritage through its replication on a massive scale for mass consumption purposes.

THE GOOD NEWS, HOWEVER, is that an increasing number of projects designed by some of the more sentient Jordanian architects are paying tribute to Amman's true legacy of lithic modernity in their innovative re-interpretation of that heritage, creating a kind of hybrid modernity that is quite promising. This development is happening at the intermediate scale, neither of gigantic high-investment projects, nor at the domestic scale, but of commercial buildings that form a sizeable percentage of Amman's built areas, mostly at the level of medium-size office buildings (fig. 8). It is a trend that has yet to affect the design of other public buildings with the same intensity and quality; this is a matter that can only be hoped for in the near future.

POSTSCRIPT

Britain is notorious in the historiography of modernism for the reluctance and suspicion with which it welcomed modern architecture during the its peak decades, at a period that almost coincides with the British Mandate over Jordan. British conservative attitudes towards early twentieth century modernism are reflected in Geoffrey Scott's *Architecture of Humanism*. For Scott the basis for appreciation of architecture is the classical anthropomorphic and anthropocentric vision of the relationship between "man and his world," which is the basic humanizing act. Its components are: mass, space, line, and coherence. He wrote: "Architecture, simply and immediately perceived, is a combination, revealed through light and shade, of spaces, of masses, and of lines."⁹ Ironically, his formula comes very close to the works of the masters of the modern movement such as Le Corbusier,¹⁰ a matter that justifies the use of the designation "modern;" but it is a modernity conditioned by the use of stone; hence, "lithic modernity." In a few years the notion will have been with us for almost a century, but its potential has not yet been fully exploited.

Fig. 5. **José Luis Sert**, proposal for the US Embassy in Amman, 1954



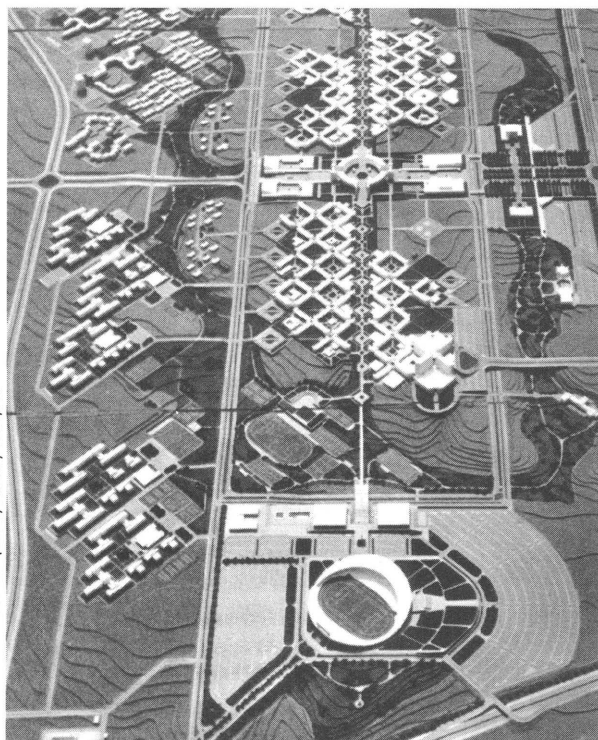


Fig. 6. **Kenzo Tange**, the campus of the University of Science and Technology, model Irbid, late 1970s

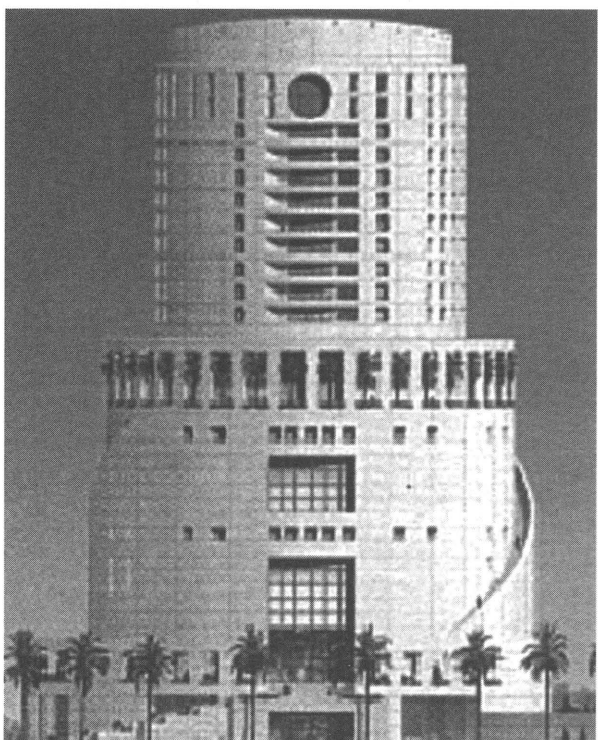


Fig. 7. **Martinet Architecture** (France), Le Royal Hotel, Amman, 1998

NABIL ABU-DAYYEH is associate professor of history and theory of architecture at the University of Jordan. He received his M.Sc. and Ph.D. in architectural history and theory from the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of the Arabic textbook for the history and theory of Western architecture used in several universities in Jordan and abroad, and numerous articles about the architecture and planning in Jordan, particularly of its capital city, Amman. nabudayye@ju.edu.jo

ALI ABU-GHANIMEH is associate professor of history and theory of architecture at the University of Jordan. He received his Ph.D. in architectural history and theory from the University of Rome (La Sapienza). He is the author of a monograph on the celebrated works of the Jordanian architect Jafar Toukan, and numerous articles about Jordanian architecture. aabughanimeh@yahoo.com

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Fig. 8. **Bilal Hammad**, Jordan-Kuwait Bank HQ, design drawing by the architect, Amman, 2000

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NOTES

- 1 William Ochsenswald, *The Hijaz Railroad* (Virginia, USA: The University Press of Virginia, 1980).
- 2 Ron Fuchs and Gilbert Herbert, "Representing Mandatory Palestine, Austen St. Barbe Harrison and the Representational Buildings of the British Mandate in Palestine 1922-37," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain* 43 (2000): 281-333.
- 3 Geoffrey Scott, *Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* (first published 1914; republished New York: W.W. Norton, 1976).
- 4 Austen St. Barbe-Harrison (1893, Kent-1976, Athens).
- 5 Ron Fuchs, "Public Works in the Holy Land: Government Buildings under the British Mandate in Palestine, 1917-48," in *Twentieth Century Architecture and Its Histories*, *Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain*, edited by L. Campbell (London: Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain, 2000): 275-306.
- 6 The designation "White Palace," however, was so popular with Ammani residents in the 1930s and 1940s that several buildings were known by this name.
- 7 It is a documented fact that a Jewish contractor named Muller won the bid for the construction of the CBR residence, so the connections to Jewish Palestine, by then already a stronghold of modernism and reinforced concrete construction, is plausible. On the other hand, by the 1940s a significant number of Arabs had received formal university training in a number of Western countries, mainly, l'Ecole d'Ingénieurs de Marseille, Technische Hochschule in Berlin, Loughborough College in Leicestershire, England, Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston, University of Michigan, in addition to Robert College in Istanbul, the University of Istanbul, and the Ecole Française d'Ingénieurs de Beyrouth, and were working at different times for the PWD in Transjordan.
- 8 Samuel Isenstadt, "Faith in a Better Future: José Luis Sert's American Embassy in Baghdad," *Journal of Architectural Education* (JAE) 50, 3 (1997): 172-188.
- 9 Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 157.
- 10 Colin Rowe, "The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa," first published in the *Architectural Review*, 1947, republished in *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1990): 1-27.

Danger Alert

ON LEBANESE MODERN ARCHITECTURE

HABIB SAYAH

Modern Lebanese architecture is related to global modernism in different ways. In the first place, it was influenced by several pioneer currents of modern architecture during the years of the French Mandate (1919–1943), the most important influence coming from French architect August Perret.

LEBANESE ARCHITECT Antoun Tabet, who was trained in Perret's office, gave shape to his ideas when he built the St Georges Hotel in Beirut with French architects Poirrier, Bordes and Lotte in 1931. Secondly, modern Lebanese architecture was related to the international style, especially from the 1950s to the 1960s, through Lebanese architects who had studied abroad, such as Bahjat Abdunour, Farid Trad, Salah & Fawzi Itani, Ilyas Murr, Mardirios Altounian and others (USA, France, etc.), and foreign architects who worked in Lebanon during these years: Oscar Niemeyer, Michel Écochard, André Wogensky, Edward Stone, Alvar Aalto, Alfred Roth, Karol Shayer, and others. The international style which was already spreading around the world before World War II via the CIAM and the writings of Hitchcock and Johnson in the 1930s, arrived to the Lebanese shore in the late 1940s. Thirdly, Lebanese modern architecture was influenced by the postmodernist movement from 1970 to the end of 1990s.¹ Despite the war that devastated Lebanon between 1975 and 1990, several architectural examples of postmodernism can still be found.

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF LEBANON after the war, and especially of the city center of Beirut, is in everyone's mind today. When discussing Lebanon, it is the reconstruction project that focuses all the attention. Although modern architecture exists in the city center of Beirut, it is considered less important than "traditional architecture" which, even with a hasty and sometimes superficial reflection concerning its restoration, prevails in the reconstruction project. However, modern Lebanese architecture reflects the true image of the country during the twentieth century, above all of its capital Beirut. The purpose of our article is to show the particularity of this architecture, especially from the 1950s and 1960s. Then, we suggest examining a case study of the restoration of a specific modern building (Starco) during the country's reconstruction in the 1990s. Last but not least, this article would like to highlight the tremendous

L'ARCHITECTURE MODERNE AU LIBAN A CONNU DIVERSES INFLUENCES DES ANNÉES 1920 À NOS JOURS, DU RATIONALISME CONSTRUCTIF DE PERRET, EN PASSANT PAR LES IDÉES DU BAUHAUS, JUSQU'À L'ADOPTION DU STYLE INTERNATIONAL DANS LES ANNÉES 1950-1960. OSCAR NIEMEYER, ANDRÉ WOGENSKY, MICHEL ÉCOCHARD, EDWARD STONE, ET BEAUCOUP D'AUTRES ONT MARQUÉ LE PAYSAGE URBAIN DU PAYS. CEPENDANT, LE CONTEXTE ET LA CULTURE CONSTRUCTIVE LOCALE ONT INFLUENCÉ CETTE ARCHITECTURE. LA SOCIÉTÉ LIBANAISE A EN EFFET ABSORBÉ L'APPORT ARCHITECTURAL OCCIDENTAL EN "LIBANISANT" LES DÉTAILS ET LES MATÉRIAUX DE CONSTRUCTION. EN OUTRE, LA LÉGISLATION SUR LE GABARIT DES IMMEUBLES A DONNÉ LIEU À DE NOUVELLES APPLICATIONS DES THÉORIES URBAINES DE L'ARCHITECTURE MODERNE.

will of the Lebanese society to stand up on its feet again after every war afflicting the country. Written while the 2006 war on Lebanon is just finishing, leaving a large part of the country once more in shambles, we also consider this article as a 'warning' sign reminding us all that Lebanon was crucial in the development of modern architecture in the Middle East.

THE PARTICULARITY OF LEBANESE MODERN ARCHITECTURE

According to George Arbid, during the country's reconstruction: the Lebanese war encourages "some degree of rupture with the past,"² and the particularity of modernism in Lebanon was largely ignored, despite the fact that modernism provided Lebanon with many answers and solutions concerning its urban problems and contributed to the development of its infrastructure. Unfortunately, Lebanese society continues to believe that modern buildings are just constructions and not an architectural heritage to be preserved. Recently however, there has been a shift in public opinion and some members of Lebanese society suggested reconsidering



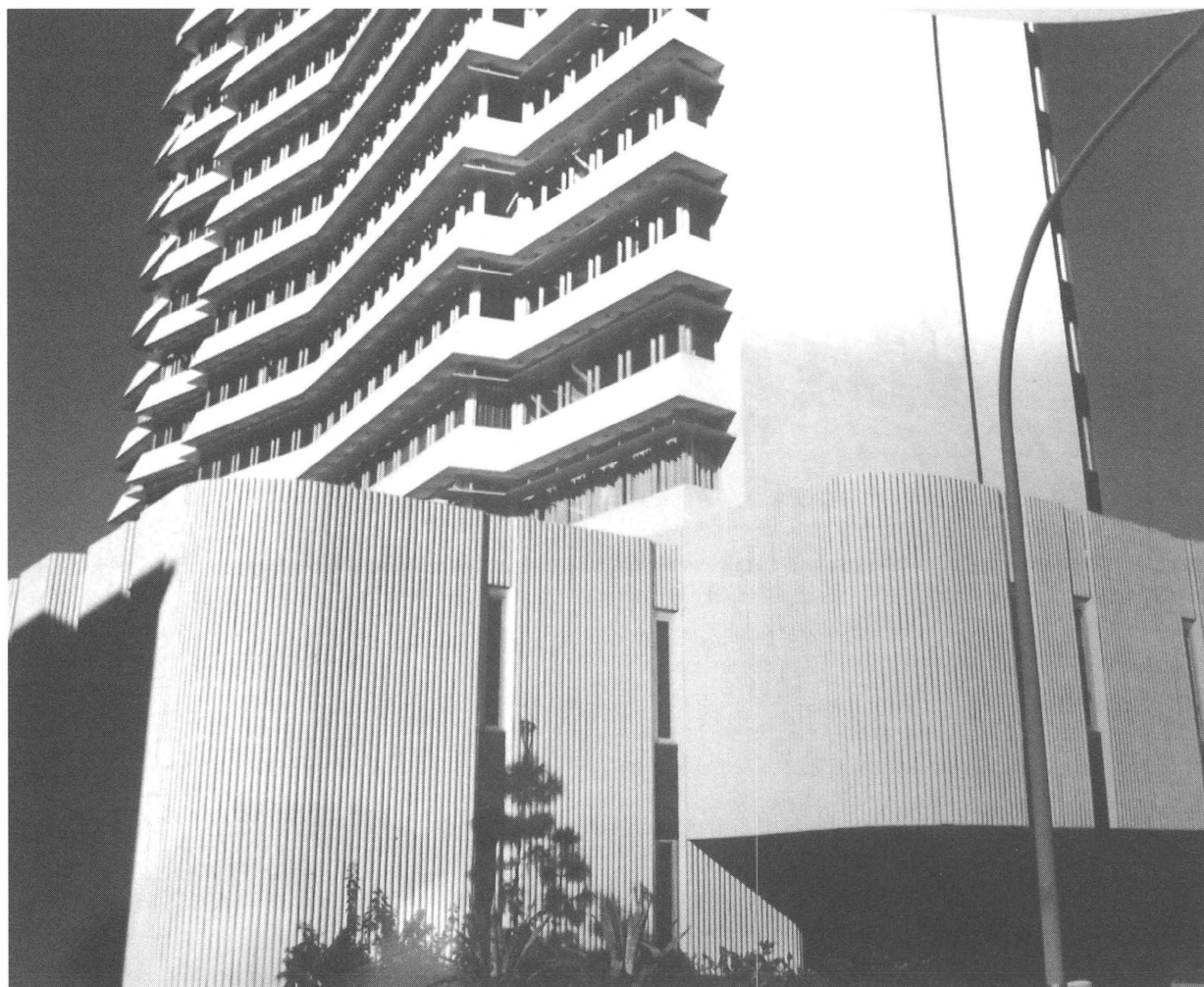
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Fig. 1. **Antoun Tabet, Poirrier, Bordes and Lotte**, *St George Hotel*, 1931

modern architecture as worthy of being studied and protected. Seminars organized around the reconstruction topics mentioned modern architecture as an alternative example for what new Lebanese architecture should be today. Moreover, several articles and publications have been written on modernism in Lebanon to draw the Lebanese society's attention to the issues of its preservation.

ONE OF THE MAJOR EVENTS in the history of modern architecture in Lebanon was the implementation of a new construction law in 1952, pushing promoters to invest in the building sector. This change and the Lebanese promptness in incorporating new trends in architecture encouraged a large number to build high-rise international style buildings. At the beginning of the 1950s the first curtain wall was built by Polish architect Karol Schayer in Hamra Street, the new neighborhood in Beirut. During that period, concrete pillars replaced load-bearing walls inherited from traditional architecture. Cantilevered balconies and canopies appeared in large numbers owing to reinforced concrete structures. But local climatic considerations were also taken into account: in order to simultaneously preserve the transparency between the interior and the exterior, and protect the interior from the sun, sun-breaking elements were implemented on the facade. This was a specific character of local modern architecture. Exterior finishing was also particular. Housing projects for instance had exterior walls rendered in many colors. While curtain walls with brise-soleils using the customary new materials such as stainless steel and aluminum usually characterized office buildings, an important number of modern buildings were also built with stone cladding.

Fig. 2. **Alfred Roth and Alvar Aalto**, *Sabbagh Bank Centre*, built in 1967



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THE CENTRE URBAIN STARCO AND THE LEBANESE WAY OF CREATING MODERNISM

The 1990s restoration of a modern building conveys the Lebanese society's awareness of its modern architecture: the "Centre Urbain Starco," built in 1955–1962, represents Lebanon's then advanced position among Arab countries in the business and services fields.

In 1955, Rachid and Mohsen Beydoun⁶ commissioned the Swiss architectural firm Addor & Julliard to design in the heart of Beirut a business and shopping center reflecting their modern way of life and their progressive image in business. The architectural program consisted in mixing two functions: the two ground floors were allocated to shops and public spaces, and the upper levels of the tower to offices. The ground floor level was designed so as to reflect the structure of the old souks (bazaar) of Beirut combined with the functionality of modern malls designed in Western countries. Small shops with mezzanines were aligned on an artificial street leading toward the building like a public space. In this way, the independent shops could be rented easily. The space in-between was remodelled for the user's comfort by adding mechanical stairs and lifts, and clear signage. Moreover, the architects endeavoured to contribute to the development of the urban fabric in this area of the city: by using the ground's slope, they created two ground floor stories and linked the upper part of the quarter to the lower one. This urban project thus linked the hotel district next to Starco with to the city center.

TECHNICALLY, Starco is a fully air-conditioned building clad with stainless steel and a glass curtain wall. The double-glazed windows, manufactured by a Lebanese firm, rotate vertically and the planning grid is completely modular for maximum flexibility. The electrical and communication core system branched off between the counter-ceiling and the ceiling layers, with the same

DESPITE THE FACT that the skyline of the city would become distinctly heterogeneous, the 'gabarit' law (the building outline law), which was widely applied, implies that the further from the street limit the building is, the higher it can be. People reacted positively to this rule and saw its potential to transform their environment into a more urban and complex one. New architecture represented the country's progress and development. As Hasan-Uddin Khan wrote in his article on Lebanon, "the most pluralistic city in the Middle East is Beirut. It acted as the commercial and recreational center of the region and epitomized progress..."⁴

SEVERAL BUILDINGS realized in the 1950s–1960s characterize this period: the Beirut International Airport, which was built in 1948–1954 by André Lecomte, embodies the openness of Lebanon to the world. The Tripoli Fair, designed by Oscar Niemeyer in 1963–1974, is an international scale project that deserves conservation for its urban, architectural and historical value. Among the many schools, hospitals, governmental buildings and religious structures realized in the 1950s–1960s by famous architects many buildings are noteworthy: the Collège Protestant, realized by Michel Écochard in Beirut in 1953–1957, reminiscent of Le Corbusier's modern theories; the Defense Ministry complex built in 1962, by Wogensky and Hindié,⁵ whose protected public space emulates traditional architecture thanks to a modern mushroom structure; finally, the Phoenicia Hotel realized in 1954–1962 by Edward Durell Stone with Lebanese architects Rudolphe Elias and Ferdinand Dagher, characterized by its protruding canopy on the top and symbolizing the important position of Lebanon on the regional tourism scale.

Fig. 4. **Oscar Niemeyer**, *The Tripoli Fair*, 1963–1974



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modular flexibility as for the cellular offices. Heat pumps provide heating and cooling drawn from the ground water table. Nothing like this had ever been built before in Lebanon or even in Middle Eastern countries. Starco became the 'model' for modern buildings in Beirut together with the Gefinor Centre and Sabbagh Bank Centre, built in 1967 by Alfred Roth and Alvar Aalto.

THE STARCO REFURBISHMENT PROJECT IN 1992-1994

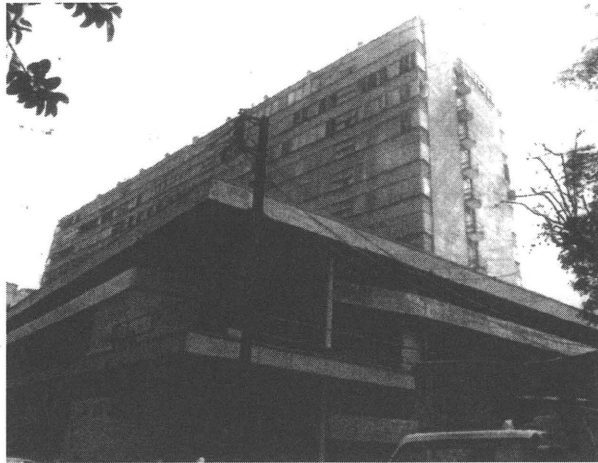
At the beginning of the 1990s, after the Lebanese war, the Beydoun family, owner of Starco, decided to reconstruct the building. Imad Beydoun, Rachid Beydoun's son, invited mechanical engineer Rice, who had designed Starco's heating and cooling system, back to Lebanon to repair the machines. Beydoun wanted to preserve the extant original parts of the building and to update them to contemporary standards. He traveled to Eastern Europe and bought the same original Detopak⁷

create organizations with the capacity to draw attention to the value of modernism in Lebanon. Establishing Docomomo Lebanon is a significant step in that direction.

HABIB SAYAH is an architect and architectural historian specialized in the history of modern architecture in Lebanon. He is presently working on his Ph.D. dissertation focusing on the 1950s architecture in Beirut. His last publications include "Construire à distance: le centre urbain Starco à Beyrouth construit par Addor et Julliard dans les années 1950-1960" in *Matières* (2006: 114-120) and "Les deux visages de la restauration" in *Déco Magazine* (2002: 90-94).

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Figs. 5 & 6. Swiss architectural firm **Addor & Julliard**, Centre Starco, 1955-1962. Before and after restoration in 1990

cladding for the building. Beirut Central district's new construction law of the 1990s would have allowed for more built surface on the parcel of land where Starco stands, but Beydoun wanted to preserve the center without adding extra floors. His personal conviction still is that Starco represents a pioneer international style project in Lebanon. Its value is not merely economical but also historical, architectural and certainly urban. Unfortunately, preserving materiality is not enough: the new town-planning laws do not respect the urban contribution of such buildings, so that before flattering Beydoun for having 'saved' Starco, tremendous work still needs to be done to preserve the urban fabric and to change the construction law.

Because modern architecture in Lebanon contains the beginning of a solution for the country's current problems, an effort for the memory of this architecture needs to be done. This should consist in the modernization of construction laws and the preservation of its heritage. In the same way as for traditional heritage, it is important to

NOTES

- 1 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Philip Johnson, *The International Style* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1966).
- 2 Lebanese architect George Arbid, professor at the American University of Beirut, is a specialist of Lebanese modern architecture and a member of Docomomo.
- 3 George Arbid, *Pierre el-Khoury. Architecture 1959-1999* (Paris: Le Moniteur, 2000), 6.
- 4 Kenneth Frampton, Khan Hasan-Uddin, *World architecture 1900-2000: A critical mosaic. The Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), XXXIV.
- 5 Wogensky and Hindié also built the Hilton Hotel with its circular terrace restaurant.
- 6 The Beydoun family was very well known in Beirut in the 1950s-1960s. They were open to the Western world and were especially linked to Switzerland because of its banking facilities.
- 7 Detopak is a trademark for glass cladding. It can be used in several colors as in the Starco building.

VAN NELLE: MONUMENT IN PROGRESS

Upon completion in 1930, the Van Nelle Factory, designed by Brinkman and Van der Vlugt, was recognized nationally and internationally as one of the most remarkable examples of modern architecture and of the 'Nieuwe Bouwen' or functionalism in the Netherlands. Lessons learned in the United States about production, construction, life safety and fire prevention were applied to the design of a new factory for the Van Nelle firm, a prime provider of coffee, tea and tobacco in the Netherlands (the brand still exists but is, like Douwe Egberts, the other venerable name in the coffee, tea and tobacco industry in the Netherlands, owned by the Sara Lee Corporation). Developed not only as a statement of modern production efficiency and architectural design, the building reflected also, in many different ways, the economic, technical, social, and cultural ideas of the time. It is this unique combination

of architectural innovation, technical advances and social responsibility that makes the building still such an important structure today. In the recent restoration and the on-going adaptive use much of that original spirit has been maintained. This coffee, tea and tobacco factory has been transformed into a 'design factory' where different design disciplines and design related industries can work together and share facilities. What is so remarkable about the use and design is that it has recaptured visually and intellectually some of the original inspiration and aspiration.

The story of Van Nelle's original design and construction together with the restoration saga have been extensively documented, exhaustively researched and is chronicled in the new book *Van Nelle: Monument in Progress*, published in 2005 by Van Hef Publishers in Rotterdam. The title is descriptive in more than

one way. Whereas the complex without a doubt is a 'monument' of the past, its restoration is still in progress with sections being adapted as tenants sign up. However, the complex and its restoration process are also a monument of a different sort, that is, of how a model of how a monument of the recent past can be safeguarded by bundling the financial resources of the private marketplace with regulatory agencies, adding the creative energies of the design industry. The resulting public-private partnership was to a large part responsible for the successful conclusion.

After announcing its intention to close the factory complex, the Sara Lee Corporation worked closely with the Dutch Monument Service and other agencies as well as private developer teams to establish a structure and funding stream that would allow a self-funded gradual restoration of the major elements of the factory complex. The building was ultimately turned over by Sara Lee to a new partnership, which is responsible for the operation, leasing and continued restoration and sympathetic development of the site. While the title *Van Nelle: Monument in Progress* suggests that much work remains to be done, a great deal has already been accomplished.

The book does not have one but many authors and is a compilation of chapters and sections written by the historians, preservationists, architects and developers that played a role in the project. Each chapter has been divided into subsections, often the work of different authors, and includes the history of the Van Nelle company, the role of its leadership, particularly Kees van der Leeuw, in the design and philosophical underpinnings of the original design, the history of the design and construction, and finally the design and conversion process. Among the many authors are several Docomomo members. For instance, Marieke Kuipers, who for many years has been active



in the ISC/Registers, describes in detail the survey work done by the Dutch Conservation Service in close cooperation with the Sara Lee Company, and the considerations in the designation process. Wessel de Jonge, a practicing architect and a founding member of Docomomo International and for many years its secretary general, details the design and restoration process. Of great interest are also the sections on the original interior design and steel tube furniture, manufactured by the W.H. Gispen Company, are of great interest. Because of the importance of color in the original interior design, extensive on-site and laboratory research was conducted, which is described in great detail by Mariël Polman, another Docomomo member.

Two sections are of particular note. Kees van der Leeuw, who was the director at the time of the design and construction of the original complex and whose family was the founder of Van Nelle at the end of the eighteenth century, played an exemplary role in the design and construction. Not only did he bring his observations of American factory construction to the process—like many of his contemporaries he visited the Ford plants in River Rouge and the offices of the architecture and engineering firms of Albert Kahn and Lockwood Green—he also brought his personal philosophies and vision of the world to the design process. Van der Leeuw, the same person who commissioned Neutra to design the VDL house—hence the initials VDL—was a remarkable man and his ideas about manufacturing as well as his theosophical beliefs and social views permeated many of the original design decisions. As a result the design and quality of the interiors of the work spaces were carefully considered and the complex has various amenities ranging from a nursery to athletic facilities.

The second section of the book that is particularly noteworthy is by Wessel de Jonge. The description of



the programming and design process for the adaptive use in more detail—the chapter “Continuity and Change in the Architecture of Van Nelle” contains contributions by several others—makes it possible to understand how not only the aesthetics and beauty of the original design are preserved but also how some of the social and community values have been incorporated back into the program of the ‘design factory.’ Wessel de Jonge not only directed the overall restoration and designed particular spaces, including his own office in the complex, but also formulated the architectural guidelines for future tenants. As in many buildings of the time with limited mechanical and electrical services and no concealed spaces, it is difficult to accommodate newer and expanded systems. This problem has been solved admirably both by recognizing the ‘grid’ of the original building and by applying sound ‘green’ and energy conservation principles.

The adaptive use of the Van Nelle factory is a remarkable project. Differing from Renzo Piano’s Lingotto project in Turin, where the original factory is a skeleton structure supporting new and not necessarily related development, the reuse of the Van Nelle factory has made every effort to respect and restore the original structure, while simultaneously providing a new life. All this makes

Van Nelle: Monument in Progress an important book. It gives for the first time a detailed history of the development of the original design and construction of a building that is important not only as the basis for the restoration but also as architectural history.

The book is also significant because it provides a detailed description of the design and real estate development process that may serve if not as an example then certainly as an inspiration. Too often the buildings of the recent past are dismissed as temporal or out of date. However, here is an example of a building and its restoration that both architecturally and philosophically prove that premise wrong. It is appropriate that the building has been nominated for the Unesco World Heritage List.

THEODORE PRUDON, chair,
Docomomo US.

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EXHIBITING AND PUBLISHING MODERNISMS

One of the MoMo events of the year in Britain was the Modernism: Designing a New World exhibition held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London from April to July 2006 together with the publication of the bulky but impressive catalogue/book of the same name edited by the exhibition's curator Christopher Wilk.

The book is a thoughtful, wide-ranging and useful addition to the growing literature on the modern movement in the arts of the period from 1914 to 1939, although somewhat thin on the German pre-Bauhaus period and perhaps too overly emphatic on the Russian and Soviet avant-garde. The Dutch hardly get a look in either the exhibition or the catalogue.

Modernism: Designing a New World (London: V & A Publications, 2006; £45.00) explores a number of topics from an international perspective, including 'Regionalism' in an essay by Tim Benton on 'Modernism and Nature' and by

David Crowley on 'National Modernisms.' The book illustrates most of the 400 objects that were shown in the exhibition although it cannot convey the unique atmosphere created at the show itself, which relied heavily on fascinating film clips, contemporary sourced documents and sound tapes placed in a wonderfully designed setting by architect Eva Jiricna, spoilt only by the split up nature of the V and A's exhibition spaces.

The succinct captions that prefaced each section were also a useful introduction to the objects displayed, which ranged from the drawings of Le Corbusier's Stein House to a reconstruction of the original Frankfurt Kitchen by Margarete Schütte-Lihotsky.

The contributors to the catalogue were not part of the exhibition team. They are Britain based art historians with particular interests in various aspects of the interwar modernism and therefore the coverage is much wider than architecture. In some ways it contains a strange mixture or insightful and meandering essays related to a compendium of object descriptions. It sets out defining and justifying the use of the word "modernism" in a rather obsessive

way, and unlike Docomomo, suggests that "Modernism in the designed world may be a thing of the past. Some may admire it for its social goals and aesthetic achievements while others regard as malevolent force." See what I mean?

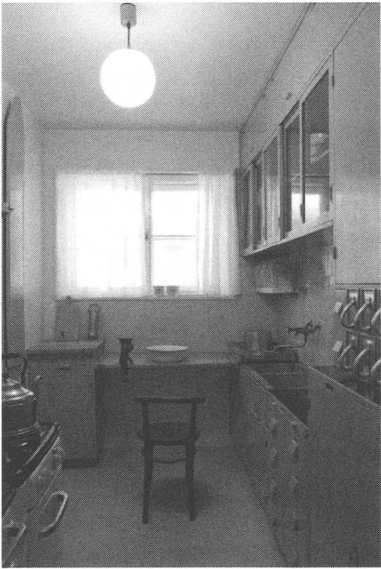
Modernism, it appears, still remains problematical despite the attempts by Curtis, Smithson, Zevi, Banham, Frampton, Jencks and others to define the term within a range of related, inter-connected 'modern movements.'

The term "modernism" was hardly used in the literature of the time in the way it is today, but kept closely to the idea of European functionalist theories associated with *Zweck* and *Kultur*. Surprisingly therefore, modernism did not appear in the pages of El Lissitzky and Arp's *The isms of Art*, a first edition of which was prominently placed in the exhibition. Thus implied at least a broader basis for the multivalent 'modernism' under discussion, including the exploratory work of expressionists, such as Bruno Taut's Glass Pavilion Model (Cologne, 1914), Mendelsohn's early dynamic sketches and Mies's Berlin glass tower when the modern was seen

The gallery layout in the Modernism exhibition was designed by the architect Eva Jiricna, *Modernism: Designing a New World* exhibition, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 2006



© the Victoria and Albert Museum, London 2006



The Frankfurt Kitchen, the Modernism: Designing a New World exhibition, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 2006

as an adventure of forms and ideas rather than "a belief that design and technology could transform society." The opening exhibits in the show stressed the overriding importance of the fact that "the Russian Revolution offered a model for an entirely new society" which hardly prefaced adequately the more general issues raised by the show. The notable exceptions were those objects and pictures that showed what was going in Prague, Berlin, Frankfurt and Rotterdam at the same time and indeed at the Dessau Bauhaus, which was seen as the epicenter of interwar modernism. The CIAM movement was however somewhat marginalized despite the wonderful photographs of buildings of the period from the encyclopedic Alberto Sartoris collection, Lausanne.

The Modernism exhibition was a spectacular event, skillfully designed by Eva Jiricna. It provided a broad sweep across a spectrum of subjects and carefully assembled images, documents and models.

The information in the captions to each section were particularly well done. The content was strengthened by a selection of contemporary film clips and a cache of photographs blown up from the Alberto Sartoris archives, Lausanne.

The photos formed the backbone of the exhibition which did attract a sizeable audience but far less

than the earlier Art Deco exhibition in the same space. The exhibition hardly warranted the boast as the "biggest show of modernism ever shown," particularly to those of us who were involved in the organization and content of the huge Council of Europe exhibition *Tendenzen der Zwanziger Jahre*, held in Berlin 1977, which remains the most comprehensive exhibition ever assembled on the modern movement. Be that as it may, the V and A exhibition proved that the general public are genuinely interested in the multifarious nature of twentieth century modernism and will undoubtedly continue to discuss its finer details. But I would hate to see this simply confined to a hand selling group of art historians.

As architects we conceive of a building, develop our ideas about it, construct and finish it on site for a client. Then, lo and behold, a critic emerges (often an architectural 'historian') with an intense interest in some particular aspect of the project, stating what is virtuous about it, how it should have been done or where it has gone wrong. It is so often a fairy story that emerges as a justification of a viewpoint on the part of the documentarian. On the other hand of course, the judgment of whether an architectural work is great or not is not entirely the prerogative of the designer. There is a real need for the two creative disciplines to come together more often. In Docomomo we are at least able to offer that platform.

Concrete architecture

Over the last few years there has been a growing interest in Le Corbusier's Indian projects. A number of publications have emerged seeking, on the one hand, to display the work in its pristine fineness and original state, as in the publication of Lucien Hervé's catalogue for an exhibition of his photographs in Germany in 2002, which included his evocative images of Le Corbusier's buildings in India, taken when they visited the country together. On the other hand, there are publications more

up to date and relevant today to the issues of preservation and conservation of Le Corbusier's buildings: *Corbusier's Concrete: Challenges of Conserving Modern Heritage* (Chandigarh: Chandigarh Perspectives, 2005), which was edited with an introduction by Kiran Joshi was published as the result of a seminar held in Chandigarh on the Conservation of Le Corbusier's Work in Concrete, in February 2002. The seminar was held in collaboration with the Le Corbusier Foundation, Paris, and funded by Chandigarh Perspectives, who in turn were responsible for this well produced paperback publication. It provides a series of contributions on attitudes to, and techniques for, the uses and repair of reinforced concrete. It adds information to our knowledge of modern concrete architecture—as is specifically demonstrated in Le Corbusier's work in India—but without reference to the wider scientific and practical knowledge base that has been growing up on the approaches to the conservation of this tricky material. It is a useful addition to that literature to which may also be added the equally useful publication by David Bennett on contemporary uses of concrete: *The Art of Pre-cast Concrete: Colour Texture Experiment* published this year by Birkhäuser. This new book complements and extends *Concrete Architecture: Tone Texture Form* (2001), his earlier publication by the same publishers, available in both English and German. In these books, by one of the British concrete industry's leading experts, the technical issues and the selected practical results are wrapped up in each time.

DENNIS SHARP, joint chair, Docomomo UK.

Christopher Wilk, ed., *Modernism: Designing a New World* (London: V & A Publications, 2006).

Kiran Joshi, dir., *Corbusier's Concrete: Challenges of Conserving Modern Heritage*, (Chandigarh: Chandigarh Perspectives, 2005).

David Bennett, *The Art of Pre-cast Concrete: Colour Texture Expression* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2005).

HARRY SEIDLER
(1923–2006)



Harry Seidler, who died in March 2006, was a key figure in the acceptance of an international modern architecture in Australia. In 1948 after what was intended to be a brief visit to supervise the design of his parents' house in Turramurra, NSW, Harry stayed in the country. The Rose Seidler House was acquired by the National Houses Trust in 1988; his second Rose House followed in 1949–1950 and was the first of houses to be featured in the August 1956 issue of *The Architectural Review*.

Since then Harry's work included projects, buildings and developments of a consistently high quality not only in Australia but also in the USA, Hong Kong, France, Brazil, and Austria.

Born the second son of a prosperous Viennese family in 1923 Harry received his early broad education at the Wasagymnasium studying the arts, sciences and classical languages... In his youth he was a fine looking and scholarly boy

with an athletic interest in skiing and biking as well as in traveling. But the bright future he had looked forward to was soon threatened by external events.

It was not a good time for any enterprising Jewish family to be in Vienna and, with the Anschluss, life proved very difficult for the Seidlers. Fortunately, Harry's older brother Marcel—a talented photographer—was already in London and he received Harry in England when he arrived after a horrendous journey from Austria on a boat train in England in 1938 as part of the Kindertransport program. Harry was thrown into the upper class world of Cambridge society, staying in the family home of Lady Edith MacAlister, widow of a former chancellor of Glasgow University and her sister Anne—a fellow Quaker—both of whom were young Harry's sponsors. In three months the sixteen year old had learned enough English to enroll on a course of building

studies. Soon afterwards, with the outbreak of World War II, he was declared an "alien" and deported to the Isle of Man. Among a talented group of professional architects, musicians, and other artists, he wrote keep a diary, a unique documentary record of life in the Camp, which was published in English in 1986 in Sydney. In the diary he recorded that October 4, 1941 was: "the greatest day of my life... The day of my release." The day when Harry took off to Canada.

A few weeks later—still only eighteen—Harry enjoyed the irony of donning a Canadian army officer's uniform in the university cadet corps as he began his architectural training at the University of Manitoba. He gained a first class degree in 1946 and won a scholarship to the Harvard Graduate School, where he joined Walter Gropius's Master Class. There he met

a number of his contemporaries including I.M. Pei, Paul Rudolph, Harry Cobb, Ulrich Franzen and the Canadian John Parkin.

At Harvard, Gropius introduced him to his Bauhaus colleague and acolyte Marcel Breuer who was to employ him in his New York office on the design of the architect's own house at New Canaan.

This formative period was further strengthened by a training course—on Gropius's recommendation—at Black Mountain College under Josef Albers. Harry learned from Albers "more about visual perception than at any architecture school . . . Albers made us think through spatial-visual problems . . . around and through objects by settling puzzling tasks [and] exploring phenomena of vision."

This experience, short as it was, led to a lifetime's collaboration with visual artists including Frank Stella and Alexander Calder.

In 1947 Harry's parents left Vienna to go to Australia, making a short side visit to New York. There they invited the young architect and his brother Marcel to join them in Australia. Marcel agreed but Harry declined. Nevertheless, once his parents had settled down in the new country he was invited to design their new home, an opportunity not to be turned down. In Australia he chose the house plot and designed the house. He opened his first office in Sydney the following year.

In 1948, before leaving for Australia and excited by the bold, sensuously curved projects he had seen published by Oscar Niemeyer, Harry traveled to Rio, working for a time in Niemeyer's office. The Rose Seidler House is the epitome of the new Australian modern domestic architecture and it was soon followed by a succession of innovative domestic designs in Sydney suburbs and

Harry Seidler, *Rose Seidler House*, Turramurra, New South Wales, Australia, 1948-1950



© Robin Boyd, Australia's home, 1952

eventually a house at Killara, NSW, for his own family. Each house design, he wrote in *World Architecture*, was "a framework on which to hang very different and potentially changing images . . . modern architecture could never be a style per se. It must remain in constant flux, responding not only to regional differences and social demands but also reflecting the changing visual language and the ever-expanding wealth of technological means."

Harry, as the size of his commissions and office grew, was seen to be restating such principles in an urban context with ambitious projects such as Australia Square, Sydney (1962–1968), the MLC Centre, Sydney (1971) and the Hong Kong Club—located on the same square as Foster's HSBC building—a masterful work with a Wrightian interior.

For Harry, the future of the Australian city was a huge contemporary architectural challenge but one hemmed in by bureaucracy and "amazing and arbitrary rules," including design codes and density restrictions, which he claimed were "contrary to the 'fundamental freedom of action . . . for the advancement and development of architecture.'" There were to be many conflicts for him with the authorities—whom he described as "arbiters of taste, imposing a dictatorship over the language of form."

It seems amazing therefore that he was able to achieve as much as he did. In 1986–1987 for example, his office had five major projects either on site or in project form in different Australian cities. They were working on commercial buildings in Melbourne (Westpac), Brisbane (Landmark), Perth (QV1) and Sydney (Casino and Hotel, Darling Harbour) as well as an extension to his Milsons point offices, where staff numbers had increased to a maximum of 42 people.

In his tall buildings in Australia Harry moved away from the upturned functional cube by replacing the rectangular Bauhaus

style building with shapelier curved sun protected facades, many of them creating a special local atmosphere through thoughtful landscaping and enhanced views. Opting for tall, high density buildings soon brought Harry into conflicts and controversies about local, national and international issues. It seems such controversies were an essential part of Harry's professional life. They reinforced his conviction on the continuity and regional reinterpretation of modernist principles but also sharpened him up for a combative approach to architecture in a conservative country nervous of change. He fully supported Jørn Utzon after his dismissal from the Sydney Opera House project and perhaps not surprisingly took up arms in a stance in the 1970s—shared with his lecture audiences throughout the world—against the spurious historicist notions of post-modernism and those he referred to as the anti-rationalists. In attacking the American post-modernist architect Michael Graves in a submission to the New York Landmark Commission, Seidler was reported in one newspaper to have said that post-modernism was equivalent to "architectural AIDS."

His public architecture was a fusion of space, form and structure, which is probably best seen in the building he collaborated on with Pier Luigi Nervi. With the design of the fine Australian Embassy in Paris (1973–1974), Harry felt he had demonstrated "structural forms and technical means." See *The Architectural Review* (October 1978, 210–224).

Throughout his professional life, Seidler received many honors including an Honorary Fellowship from the American Institute of Architects, the Gold Medal of the City of Vienna (1990), the Royal Australian Institute of Architects Gold Medal (1976) and the RIBA Royal Gold Medal (1996). In 1971 he was granted an OBE despite the fact that he was a staunch Republican.

The phrase "master architect" is a term often used to describe the

work of those with somewhat limited talent in a profession that demands knowledge, enterprise and skill. In Harry Seidler's case—his work appeared in an Australian series on master architects—it is an appropriate term. It signifies a unique architectural capacity which Harry demonstrated in his many projects: he combined the art and techniques of architecture to a full appreciation of the formalism and structural clarity associated with pioneer Viennese Masters Wagner, Hoffman, Olbrich and Loos with whom he shared the commitment to a truly modern architecture and urbanism. In the 1990s Harry was able to repay his respect to these origins with a fine and dramatic estate of social housing at Wohnpark Neue Donau, Austria. Talking to a few of us in London at the time of his eightieth birthday, he expressed great pleasure at having been invited back to his home city as a free man and of course as an internationally acclaimed architect. His housing scheme in Vienna is among his most successful projects. It is a lasting tribute to his ideas of a modern, socially committed and ecologically sound architecture.

Harry is survived by his architect wife Penelope and their two children. Harry Seidler AC, OBE, Architect (b. 25 June 1923, Vienna – d. 8 March 2006, Sydney)

This is a revised version of an obituary that was first published in The Independent newspaper, London on March 12, 2006 and subsequently in the May issue of The Architectural Review.

DENNIS SHARP is joint chair of Docomomo UK.
dsharp@sharpparchitects.co.uk

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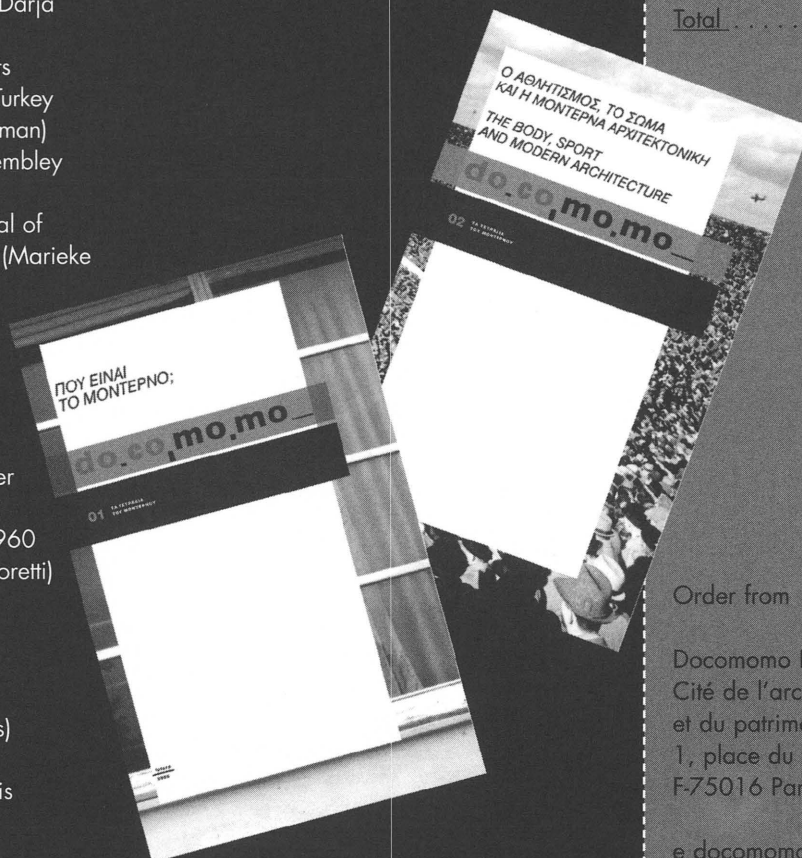
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Kasteelpark Arenberg 1
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p 32-16-329609
f 32-16-321984
e inge.bertels@asro.kuleuven.ac.be
e tourni@central.ntua.gr

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Eden City 17
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p 32-2-2198115
f 32-2-2198115

e olaw@sol.dk
e ola.wedebrunn@karch.dk

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f 03 8344 5532
e hlewi@unimelb.edu.au

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Ola Wedebrunn, coordinator
e ola.wedebrunn@karch.dk

CHAPTERS

All coordinators of the Docomomo chapters are kindly requested to report incorrect or incomplete addresses.

Argentina

Argentine Docomomo working party
Mabel M. Scarone, coordinator
University of Buenos Aires
Faculty of Architecture
Juramento 2161 - 3° "C"
P.O. Box Casilla Correo 3881
1000 Buenos Aires
p 54-11-47 972514/823654
f 54-11-47972514
e docomomo@arg.net.ar
w www.fadu.uba.ar/docomomo

Australia

Docomomo Australia
Scott Robertson, president
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Louise Cox, treasurer
David West, secretary
GPO Box 161
Sydney NSW 2001
p 61-2-9439 7779
f 61-2-9439 7775
e .. docomomoAustralia@yahoo.com.au
w www.docomomoaustralia.com.au

Austria

Austrian Docomomo working party
Friedmund Hueber, chair
Ute Georgeacopol, secretary
c/o Ludwig Boltzmann DAB
Institut für Denkmalpflege und
archäologische Bauforschung
Am Heumarkt 19
1030 Wien
p 43-1-7132632
f 43-1-7136018
e georgeac@mail.zserv.tuwien.ac.at
e ute.georgeacopol@aon.at

Belgium

Docomomo Belgium
Luc Verpoest, coordinator
Kasteelpark Arenberg 1
B-3001 Heverlee

p 32-16-321361
f 32-16-321984
e luc.verpoest@asro.kuleuven.ac.be
w www.docomomo.be

Brazil

Brazilian Docomomo working party
Hugo Segawa, coordinator
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Mirthes Baffi, treasurer
Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo
Universidade de São Paulo
Rua do Lago 876
05508-080 São Paulo SP
p 55-11-5531 7853
f 55-11-5531 7853
e docomomo@sc.usp.br
e-newsletter: DOCO-MEMOS

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Docomomo Bulgarian working party
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Georgi Georgiev, treasurer
Centre for Architectural Studies
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Bl. 1, Acad. Georgi Bonchev Str.
1113 Sofia
e iokimovp@yahoo.com
e parp@gea.uni-sofia.bg

Canada-British Columbia

Docomomo British Columbia
Robert Lemon, chair
Marco D'Agostini, coordinator
City of Vancouver
Planning Department
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1V4
p 1-604-8737056
f 1-604-8737060
e marco_dagostini@city.vancouver.bc.ca

Canada-Ontario

Docomomo Ontario
James Ashby, coordinator
Suite 214, 300 Powell Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5T3
p 1-613-2313949
e jashby@mnsi.net
periodical: Docomomo Ontario News

Canada-Quebec

Docomomo Québec
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Richard Lafontaine, treasurer
École de design
Université du Québec à Montréal
Case postale 8888 succ. Centre-ville
Montréal, Québec H3C 3P8
p 1-514-987 3000 #3866
f 1-514-987 7717
e sophie_mankowski@hotmail.com
e docomomo@er.uqam.ca
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Chilean Docomomo working party
Horacio Torrent, chair
Maximiano Atria, secretary
Prog. de Magister en Arquitectura
Pontificia Univ. Católica de Chile
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p 56-2-6865601
f 56-2-2328805
e info@docomomo.cl
w www.docomomo.cl

Croatia

Croatian Docomomo working group
Aleksander Laslo, coordinator
c/o Gradski zavod za zastitu i obnovu
spomenika kulture
Kuseviceva 2
10000 Zagreb
p 385-1-6101976
f 385-1-6101968

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Docomomo Cuba
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17 esq. H, Vedado
La Habana
Cuba 10400
p 537-202 5907/9091
e choy@cubarte.cult.cu
e eluis@cubarte.cult.cu

Czech Republic

Czech Docomomo group
Vladimír Slapeta, chair
Jakub Kyncl, secretary
Brno University of Technology
Faculty of Architecture
Porčí 5
635 00 Brno
p 420-503 197 470
f 420-541 210 037
e jakub.kyncl@seznam.cz

Denmark

Danish Docomomo working party
Ola Wedebrunn, chair
Marianne Ibler, vice chair
The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts
School of Architecture
Philip de Langes allé 10
1435 København K
p 45-32-68 6000/6229
f 45-32-686206
e ola.wedebrunn@karch.dk
w www.docomomo-dk.dk

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Benigno Filomeno #6
Penthouse Norte
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f 1-809-6872686
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Estonia

Docomomo Estonia
Epp Lankots, chair
Triin Ojari, secretary
Estonian Academy of Arts
Institute of Art History
Tartu mnt 1

Tallinn EE 10045

p 372-6267325
f 372-6267328
e epp@artun.ee
e triin.ojari@neti.ee

Finland

Docomomo Suomi Finland ry
Hanni Sipponen, chair
p 358 50 378 53 85
Satu Taivaskallio, secretary
p 358 (0) 9 856 75 143
Alvar Aalto Foundation
Tiilimäki 20
00330 Helsinki
f 358-9-485119
e secretary@docomomo-fi.com
w www.docomomo-fi.com

France

Docomomo France
Claude Loupiac, chair
Jacqueline Bayon, vice chair
Sorbonne Institut d'art
3, rue Michelet
75006 Paris
p 33-1-45 84 79 76
f 33-1-45 84 79 76
e claude.loupiac@wanadoo.fr
w http://archi.fr/DOCOMOMO-FR

Germany

Docomomo Germany
Monika Markgraf, chair
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Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau
Gropiusallee 38
06846 Dessau
p 49-340-6508-211
f 49-340-6508-218
e docomomo@bauhaus-dessau.de
w www.docomomo.de

Greece

Greek Docomomo working party
Panayotis Tournikiotis, chair
Neohellenic Architecture Archives
Benaki Museum
138, Pireos & Andronikou street
118 54 Athens
p 030 2103453674 #105
e tourni@central.ntua.gr

Hungary

Hungarian Docomomo working party
Pál Ritók, chair
Hungarian Museum of Architecture
Mokus utca 20
1136 Budapest
p 36-4540099
f 36-3672686
e ritokpal@freemail.hu

Iberia

Fundacion Docomomo Ibérico
Juan Torres Alemán, chair
Carlos Guimarães, vice-chair
Lluís Hortet i Previ, director
Susana Landrove, secretary technical
Laura Arenas, secretary general
Provença 318 pal 2B
08037 Barcelona
Spain
p 34 932151011

f 34 934883685
e fundacion@docomomoiberico.com
w www.docomomoiberico.com

Ireland

Irish Docomomo working party
Shane O'Toole, coordinator
8 Merrion Square, Dublin 2
p 353-507 40133
f 353-507 40153
w archeire.com/docomomo

Israel

Israeli Docomomo working party
Arie Sivan, coordinator
Department of Interior Design
Colman Academic Studies
7 Yitzhak Rabin Blvd.
Rishon LeZion 75190
p 972-3-9634395
f 972-3-9634393
e ariesi@st.colman.ac.il

Italy

Italian Docomomo working party
Sergio Poretti, chair
University of Rome Tor Vergata
Faculty of Engineering
Via della Ricerca Scientifica, s.n.c.
00133 Roma
p 39-06-7259 7031/7067
f 39-06-72597005
e poretti@ing.uniroma2.it
www.roma2.infn.it/DOCOMOMO/do
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Japan

Docomomo Japan
Hiroyuki Suzuki, chair
Hiroyasu Fujioka, coordinator
Tokyo Institute of Technology
Department of Architecture
Faculty of Engineering
2-12-1 Ookayama, Meguro-ku
Tokyo 152-8552
p 81-3-5734 3166
f 81-3-5734 2815
e fujioka@o.cc.titech.ac.jp

Korea

Docomomo Korea
Professor Kim, Jung-Shin, chairman
School of Architecture, Dankook University
p 82-2-709-2539
e kjsdk@dankook.ac.kr
Yi, Seung-Gu, secretary
140-714, #147, Hannam-ro,
Yongsan-gu, Seoul
Dankook Univ. School of Architecture,
Room 610
p 82-2-709-2539
e webmaster@docomomo-korea.org

Latvia

Latvian Docomomo working party
Janis Krastins, coordinator
Riga Technical University
Fac. of Architecture and Urban Planning
Azenes iela 16
1048 Riga
p 371-7089256
f 371-7089130
e krastins@bf.rtu.lv

Lithuania

Lithuanian Docomomo working party
Morta Bauziene, coordinator
Lithuanian Museum of Architecture
Mykolas Street 9
2001 Vilnius

p 370-2-610456
f 370-2-222191

Mexico

Docomomo Mexico
Sara Topelson de Grinberg, chair
Louise Noelle de Mereles, vice-chair
Alejandro Aguilera, secretary
Lourdes Cruz, treasurer
Sierra Mazapil #135
Lomas de Chapultepec
México, D.F.C.P. 11000
p 5255-5596 5597/5013
f 5255-5596 4046
e stopelson@yahoo.com
http://servidor.esteticas.unam.mx:16080/
/Docomomo/

The Netherlands

Stichting Docomomo Nederland
Janneke Bierman, chair
Hielkje Zijlstra, secretary
TU Delft, Faculteit Bouwkunde
Berlageweg 1
Kabinet 2.04
2628 CR Delft
p 31-15-2783977
f 31-15-2788750
e info@docomomo.nl
w www.docomomo.nl
periodical: *Nieuwsbrief Docomomo
Nederland*

New Zealand

Docomomo New Zealand
Michael Findlay, coordinator
Heather Bauchop, coordinator
PO Box 5467
Dunedin
p 64-3-4727115 (XH)
e michael@design.otago.ac.nz

Norway

Docomomo Norway
Perann Sylvia Stokke, chair
Ingvar Strom Torjuul, secretary
Arne Jørgen Rønningen, treasurer
c/o Villa Stenersen
Tuengen Allé 10 C
0374 Oslo
e docomomo@docomomo.no
w www.docomomo.no

Panama

Docomomo Panama
Eduardo Tejeira Davis, coordinator
Apdo. 0823-00190
Panamá
p 507 263 7451
e urbio@pananet.com
e etejeira@cwpanama.net

Poland

Docomomo Poland
Jadwiga Urbanik, coordinator
Muzeum Architektury
ul. Bernardyn'ska 5
50-156 Wrocław
p 48-71-3433675

f 48-71-3446577
e docomomo@ma.wroc.pl
e jadwiga.urbanik@pwr.wroc.pl

Portugal: see Iberia**Romania**

Romanian Docomomo working party
Peter Derer, chair
Christian Bracacescu, secretary

Russia**DOCOMOMO RUSSIA**

Russian Docomomo working party
Boris M. Kirikov, chair
Committee of the State Control
Re-use and Protection of the Historical
and Cultural Monuments of
St. Petersburg
Lomonosov sq.1
19011 St. Petersburg
p 7-812-3122072
f 7-812-1104245
e makogon2000@mail.ru
Ivan Nevzgodine, secretary
Hooikade 11
2627 AB Delft
The Netherlands
p 31-15-2784529
f 31-15-2784291
e i.nevzgodine@bk.tudelft.nl

DOCOMOMO UR-SIB

Lyudmilla I. Tokmeninova, chair
Ural Modern Movement Centre
Museum of the History of Architecture
and Industrial Technic of Ural
Gor'kogo 4-a
Ekaterinburg 620219
p 7-34-32-519735
f 7-34-32-519532
e dtokmeninova@yandex.ru

Scotland

Docomomo Scottish National Group
Clive Fenton, coordinator
19/2 Downfield Place
Edinburgh E11 2EJ
e clivefenton@yahoo.co.uk
Adam Stanners, secretary
adam.stanners@smithdesignassociates.co.uk
David Whitham, treasurer
p 44-131-449 3070
e david@docosng.abel.co.uk
periodical: *Docomomo SNG Report*

Slovakia

Slovak Docomomo working party
Henrieta Moravcikova, chair
Institute of construction and architecture
Slovak Academy of Sciences
Dubravska cesta 9
845 03 Bratislava
p 421 2 59309230
f 421 2 54773548
e moravcikova@savba.sk

Slovenia

Docomomo Slovenija
Natasa Koselj, coordinator
Salendrova 4
1000 Ljubljana
p 386-1-5181515/31-532185
f 386-1-4256112

e docomomoslovenija@yahoo.com

Spain: see Iberia**Sweden**

Swedish Docomomo working party
Claes Caldenby, coordinator
Arkitektens teori och historia
Chalmers Tekniska Högskola
41296 Göteborg
p 46-31-7722332
f 46-31-7722461
e caldenby@arch.chalmers.se
e vicki.wenander@restaurator.com
w arch.chalmers.se/docomomo

Switzerland

Docomomo Suisse / Docomomo
Svizzera / Docomomo Schweiz
Bruno Reichlin, chair
Franz Graf, vice-chair
Nicola Navone, Ufficio A 1.02
Accademia di Architettura
Archivio del Moderno
Via Lavazzari 2
CH-6850 Mendrisio
p 41-22-379 0753/0944
f 41-22-379 0950
e docomomo@archi.unige.ch
www.unige.ch/ia/associations/
DOCOMOMO

Turkey

Docomomo Turkey
Yıldız Salman, coordinator
Nilüfer Baturayoglu Yoney, coordinator
Istanbul Technical University
Faculty of Architecture
Takisla, Taksim
80191 Istanbul
p 90-212-2931300/2287
f 90-212-2514895
e docomomo_turkey@yahoo.com
w docomomo.org.tr

United Kingdom

Docomomo UK working party
Dennis Sharp, joint chair
James Dunnett, joint chair
Philip Boyle, coordinator
Clinton Greyn, secretary
Ken Hawkings, treasurer
77 Cowcross Street
London EC1M 6EJ
p 44-20-74907243
f 44-1223-311166
e docomomo_uk@yahoo.com
periodical: *Docomomo UK Newsletter*

United States of America

Docomomo US
Theodore H.M. Prudon, president
Gunny Harboe, vice-president
Laura Culberson, treasurer
Jorge Otero-Pailos, secretary
P.O. Box 23097
New York, New York 10023
p 1-718-6244304
f 1-212-8742843
e docomomo@docomomo-us.org
w www.docomomo-us.org
periodical: *Docomomo US Bulletin*

contribute to the next journal

Journal 36 is scheduled for March 2007.

It will be a special issue on Docomomo International's register on buildings and sites of the modern movement. It will present the work accomplished during the last years by all chapters around the world. Authors who consider contributing to this edition are kindly invited to contact Inge Bertels as fast as possible inge.bertels@asro.kuleuven.be

The issue will be coordinated by Docomomo International Specialist Committee on Registers.

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EDITORS

Maristella Casciato
Émilie d'Orgeix

GUEST EDITORS

Elvan Altan Ergut
Belgin Turan Özkaya

ENGLISH EDITING

Isabelle Kite

**COORDINATION
AND PRODUCTION**

Émilie d'Orgeix
Anne-Laure Guillet

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Agathe Desombre
Mathieu Chevalier

ORIGINAL COVER DESIGN

Kees Ruyter, Amsterdam

PRINTING

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Ankara

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For information concerning
membership, contact:

Docomomo International
Secretariat
Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine
Palais de Chaillot
1, place du Trocadéro
F-75016 Paris
p33 (0)1 58 51 52 65
f33 (0)1 58 51 52 20
edocomomo@citechailot.org
wdocomomo.com

Bank account
Docomomo International
Bank: HSBC Odéon (Paris)
Iban: FR76 3005 6000 7000 7055
1759 036
Bic: CCFFRFRPP

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Docomomo International is a non-profit organization
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sites and neighbourhoods of the **M**odern **M**ovement.

It aims at:

- Bringing the significance of the architecture of the modern movement to the attention of the public, the public authorities, the professionals and the educational community.
- Identifying and promoting the surveying of the the modern movement's works.
- Fostering and disseminating the development of appropriate techniques and methods of conservation.
- Opposing destruction and disfigurement of significant works.
- Attracting funding for documentation and conservation.
- Exploring and developing the knowledge of the modern movement.

In the future, Docomomo International intends on extending its field of actions to new territories, to establish new partnerships with institutions, organizations and NGOs active in the area of modern architecture, to develop and publish the international register, and to enlarge the scope of its activities in the realm of research, documentation and education.