

Contemporary Turkish Architecture

A thematic overview through the work of Eldem, Cansever and Cinici

It is generally accepted that the attempts at modernisation and assertion of cultural identity are the two basic and antagonistic issues facing contemporary Turkish architecture. When approached from a historical perspective, this dilemma has always been an inherent aspect of the cultural life of the Turkish society. In fact, new cultural syntheses which came into being as a result of the encounters of a "latenomadic" community which continuously migrated from the steppes of Central Asia towards the West, with the established culture of the areas where they settled, have always incorporated the dimensions of tradition, modification and innovation. Throughout Turkish history each new cultural form can be reduced not only to the adopted and assimilated culture but each time these contacts also gave birth to new and original forms.

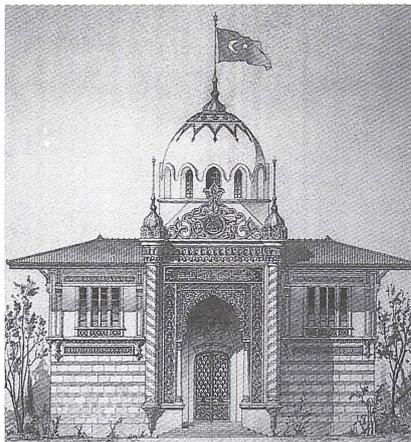
The examples of this cultural synthesis can easily be encountered within the historical cross-section of the Anatolian-Turkish architecture. This architecture includes the oldest forms that date back to the semi-nomadic period of the Turks, and all the specific forms of the social and architectural traditions of the various cultures encountered by the migrating Turks prior to settling in Anatolia; the Persian and Islamic being the most influential ones. Finally, the contact with the rich amalgam resulting from the accumulation of all pre-existing architectural traditions of Anatolia, from the oldest pagan forms to Byzantine typologies enriched this vocabulary and created the high cultural synthesis called classical Ottoman architecture.

From 15th to 17th centuries, the Ottomans introduced all these assimilated traditions and synthetic innovations — from the monumental stone structural tradition to the residential architectural typology known as the Turkish house — to the countries



Above: Ministry of Finance, Ankara (1929) by architect Halim Bey. Photograph: METU.

Below: House designed by Vedad Bey, example of the First Nationalist style.



where they established their sovereignty, which included the Balkans and parts of Europe.

In the 18th century, Eastern Europe was no longer a part of the Ottoman Empire, and due to its technology and economy in expansion, Europe presented a model of progress and success, from which better forms and institutions had to be imported. As a result of this new balance, during late 18th and 19th centuries, new tendencies like the "Turkish Baroque" or "Ottoman Art-Nouveau" came into being in the West-oriented and Levantine areas of the capital city Istanbul. Towards the end of the century, these influences were more observable, covering the residential areas of the town and introducing new patterns such as terrace and apartment houses, and the forms they brought were more clearly Western: all the revivalistic and eclectic for-

mal vocabulary of the late 19th century, with also some "orientalised" variations.

At the end of the century and especially at the beginning of the 20th century, the nationalistic reactions began to take their formal references from classical monumental Ottoman architecture. "Nationalist Architecture" which was pioneered by such architects as Vedad Bey, Kemalettin Bey, by some foreign architects like Vallaury, finally gave birth to the architectural works of the nationalist ideologies in the first architectural attempts of the new republican regime in Ankara.

This new nationalist revival during the first half of the 20th century and especially during the first decade of the Turkish Republic, was the first significant ideological attitude in the field of architecture during the historical struggle for the assertion of a cultural identity. However, the Republican revolution in cultural terms was essentially a movement against Ottoman institutions and the fact of its being inspired from these sources to express a new cultural identity

could be interpreted as a contradiction. On the other hand, Westernisation another important element of the syncretic structure of the young Kemalist ideology, manifested its effect in architecture. Starting by the rebuilding of the new capital Ankara, non-eclectic and non-revivalist, functionalist and international forms began to emerge in the urban areas of Turkey after the 1930's, with the works of some Central European and young Turkish architects. From time to time, just as in the forties, other nationalist-historicist trends were strongly felt; it is not hard to assert that the most influential and lasting trend in Turkish architecture since 1930 was based upon the universal, functional and rational principles which were derived from contemporary Western modernist movements.

The historicist movement of the forties — which is called "The Second Nationalistic Architecture" — differs from the earlier one by the fact that it drew up its sources also from vernacular forms. The most important protagonists of this movement

were Sedad Hakki Eldem and German architect Paul Bonatz, the first one more akin to traditional residential forms, the second one more academic and monumentalistic. However, the elements of these two different vocabularies were also combined in some of the architectural works of this period and they also share some common characteristics related to the use of building materials and technologies: like other contemporary examples encountered in European historicist interpretations, stone covered surfaces were masking reinforced concrete structures in more monumental buildings; while in the vernacular inspired interpretations the same reinforced concrete frames were reproducing the morphology of old wooden Turkish houses.

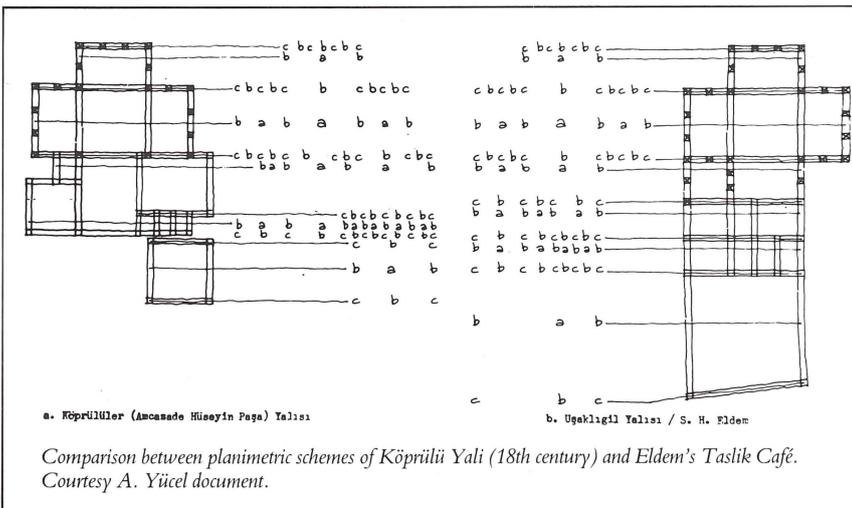
The historicist trend ended in the early fifties and once again the universalist approaches gained momentum. However, from the sixties on, it is easy to observe that issues such as history, tradition and cultural identity once more gained further importance. The "Neo-regionalism" discussions of the 1960's gave birth to some important works which emphasised the overall themes of history, local technology and cultural identity more seriously.

This more recent development will be discussed in detail. However, a general assessment on the significance of historicity in Turkish architecture can be done by basing it on the earlier historical experiences.

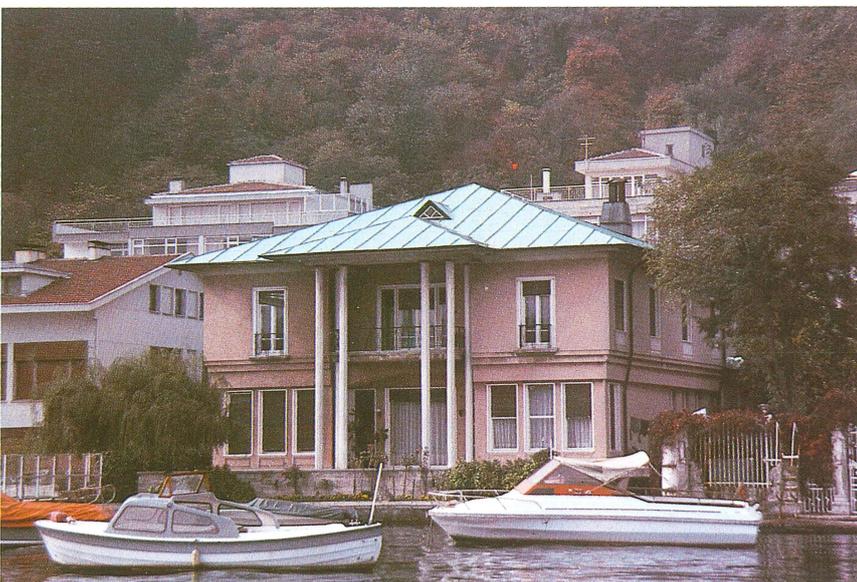
Faced with a broad approach to the concept of historicity, one needs to consider different historic dimensions inherent to the work of any contemporary architect. These dimensions in the present Turkish case are:

- National building traditions: monumental Ottoman, regional-vernacular, old cultures, late Ottoman and 19th century forms etc.
- Ideologies and formal vocabulary of modern architecture, repertory of present architectural production.
- The architect's own work.

In the light of these categories defining a wide historic context, a comparative analysis of the current work of three architects: Sedad Hakki Eldem, Turgut Cansever and Behruz Cinici is significant in the discussion of modern Turkish architecture faced with the problem of history. These three architects do not represent all the present achievements of contemporary Turkish architecture, nor can it be argued that they have many common traits in regard to the historic interpretations each of them has proposed. However, these various interpretations are representative in the way that they illustrate the major approaches which have seriously taken into consideration the problem of history.



Comparison between planimetric schemes of Köprülülük (18th century) and Eldem's Taslık Café. Courtesy A. Yücel document.



Left: Villa at Bebek, Istanbul, by architect Kemal Söylemezoglu.

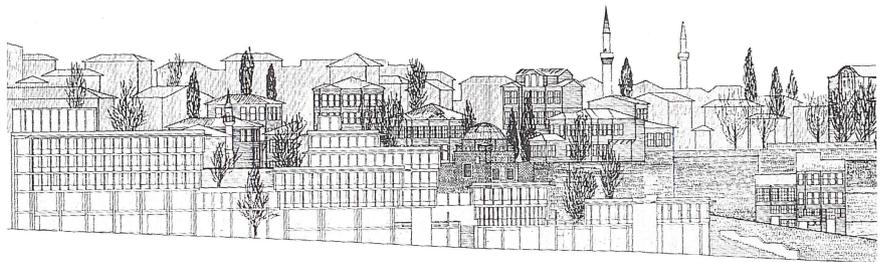
Sedad Hakki Eldem

The prominent place Eldem has in today's Turkish architectural scene derives both from his work as a scholar and as a designer. Eldem has been the first Turkish architect to research systematically the vernacular architectural heritage. This research which began in the early thirties by the so called Seminars on National Architecture held in the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul created a rich archive of regional housing. This knowledge of traditional residential patterns also gave birth to a new consciousness which emphasised the cultural and historical value of vernacular forms besides the already recognised monumental Ottoman tradition. (A few of these studies have been published by Eldem himself.) However, even after the end of the Seminars, similar studies either by Eldem or other younger scholars have continued and produced valuable documentation.

This academic activity is directly reflected in the work of Eldem as an architect. This work is rich and diversified: from the early thirties to the present, Eldem has been a key figure and realised the most continuous architectural production during this period covering half a century. He experienced different tendencies which can be identified during these five decades: The so called "Rationalist Architecture" of the thirties, the following "Second National Style" movement, some internationalist designs, and then his more recent realisations always reflecting a certain historic interpretation. Partly due to his earlier contacts with Le Corbusier and especially Auguste Perret, but also due to his affinity with vernacular typologies and his long career as an architect, all this work created a certain "S.H. Eldem style" which is easy to recognise in all his recent works.

The basic historic reference in Eldem's work has been the old Turkish House: the light timber frame structure of the main floor (or floors) projecting in the solid mass of the ground floor and covered by large edges of the pitched roof; the contrast between the massive block of the stone walls of the lower part and the lightness of the upper block pierced by rows of windows — or galleries on the court facade —; finally some elements like window trellises, composite projecting beams or oblique supports (struts) constitute the morphic elements of this house, while a specific typology based on introversion and differentiation of floor planimetry defines its spatial organisation.

In many of his works, Eldem transposes some of these elements — generally regardless of the difference of functional purpose —, and changes the structural system and materials: His structures are reinforced concrete frames; however, they look lighter, due to the small spans and also due to the differentiation of supporting and in-fill materials. Thus the reinforced concrete is



treated as timber and this metaphoric aesthetic use recalls some Japanese experiences.

In doing this, Eldem feels free to borrow the elements of the traditional vocabulary separately, while keeping some general principle of the volumetric organisation: he feels free to use either the plan scheme of a traditional house type, or an element of it — like a cross or T-shaped central hall — in order to constitute the planimetry of his new building. Or he refers to some volumetric elements independent from the original plan typology they were attached to: such are his small scale houses or apartment house buildings in which completely new planimetric arrangements are combined to more rigid, historically connotative facade treatments.

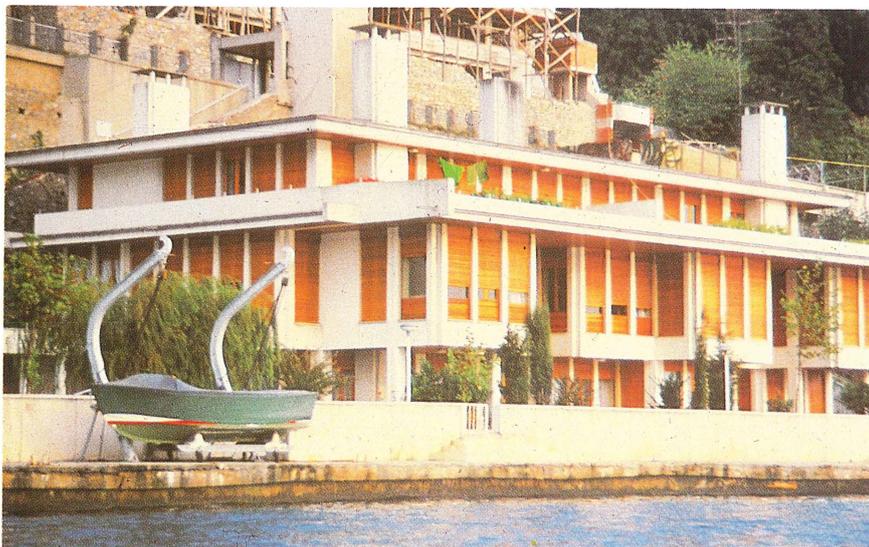
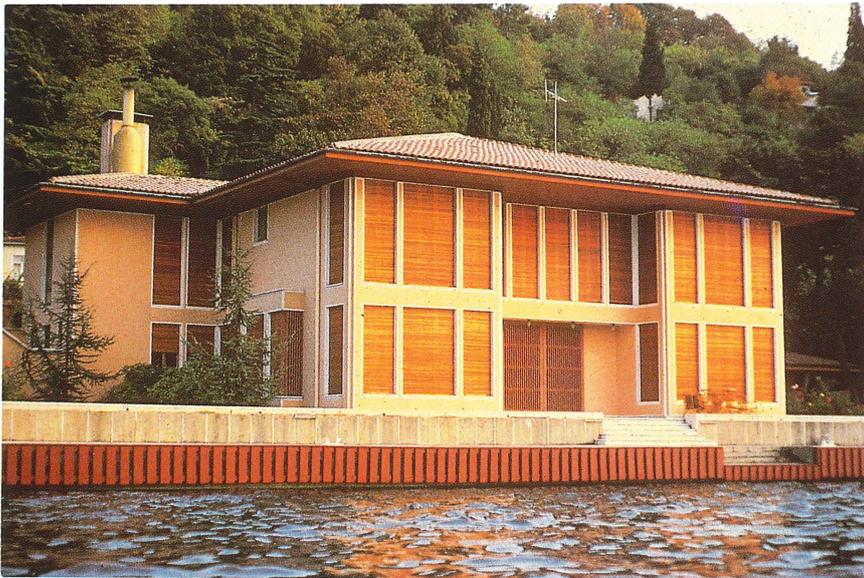
Another important factor is the general predilection of the architect for symmetry, especially in facades. He reaches this by the modulation of facade columns and the repetition of window frames. In Eldem's architecture, the use of the window is a compromise between an Auguste Perret's vertical order and the horizontal window frames of some Le Corbusier buildings. And to achieve this, the architect again refers to the horizontal repetition of vertical frames, according to the vernacular example of the Turkish house.

The forms, typologies, elements or organisation principles the architect borrows from either the vernacular or —

Top and above: Social Security Complex, Zeyrek, Istanbul (1962-64). Photograph courtesy of and drawing by S. H. Eldem.

sometimes — the monumental vocabulary are always architectonically reinterpreted and changed according to the new building material he uses. Thus, eaves of pitched roofs become tiny horizontal lines of projecting flat roofs; "hanging" or simple intermediate columns are added to the supporting ones and the modulation of the whole comes closer to the rhythm of the wooden structure, venetian blinds are used instead of *mushrabiya* trellises etc. And these forms, elements and materials are simple: few and more durable building materials are always preferred. The aging of his buildings has always been an important problem for Eldem; and he didn't want to fight with complicated constructive solutions. He prefers them to be the most durable possible, and the best possible looking while aging.

Despite all these "variations on vernacular themes", Eldem can not be considered as an interpreter of regionalism in architecture. First, because he has almost exclusively built in the old and new capital cities: Istanbul and Ankara. But more particularly, because the Turkish house he refers to is an idealised type of this vernacular tradition: the highest examples of the tradition, generally the rich mansions of the imperial capital or the *yali's* of Bosphorus. Thus, the "reminiscences of



Bosphorus” he documented in his publications are re-created in his buildings.

With a few exceptions, they all are isolated buildings: private houses (*yali*'s), embassies, some office or public buildings. Despite that the architect expresses his will of creating housing groups, complexes (referring to the *kulliya* principle), his only experiences in this category have been a housing group in Istanbul: the Yıldız complex, and the more successful Sosyal Sigortalar Complex (the Social Security Building). In this latter example, located in the historical Zeyrek district of Istanbul, Eldem has proposed an extension of the neighbouring residential quarter. The building complex reproduces the basic pattern of the urban residential aggregate, with small blocks articulated around narrow open spaces: streets, by-passes and squares. The blocks of different levels each repeat common facade elements: rows of vertical windows modulated by small concrete columns, tiny edge profiles, an atomised small-scale impression, accentuated by the use of geometrically ornamented panels on the surfaces. This architecture stands in between the spatial morphology of a spontaneously grown historic Istanbul quarter and the rigid architectural discipline of an Auguste Perret classicism.

It is worth insisting on the term “classicism”, when speaking about Eldem’s architecture. Except in his Social Security Complex, in which more importance is accorded to the environment and scale, Eldem subjects a given, seldom historical form, to a clinical architectonic analysis. The basic typology and the context-free syntax remain unchanged, while a new tectonic order is reconstituted by the use of new materials and the influence of the new usage and the reinterpreted aesthetics. But a more important feature is the consideration of the building as a static object: that is, these buildings only exist per se; and this “being-there” is what confers an inherent monumentality to them. Idealised morphologies, very often associated to symmetrical arrangements, the isolated lay-out locations, the simplicity and durable aspect of constructive features contribute to this fact. And these realisations, houses, embassies become classic, not only because of their forms and historic connotations; but merely because they are, independently of their real size — monumental and a temporal.

This rational, schematicised, classic and somewhat aristocratic, architectonic interpretation of vernacular archetypes is the first answer given to the question raised by history in Turkish architecture.

Left, top: Sıyer Yali, Istanbul (1966-67). Photograph: Afife Batur.

Centre: Koc Yali, Anadolihisari, Istanbul.

Left: Bayramoğlu Yali, Kandilli, Istanbul (1969-74). Photographs: A. Yücel.

Turgut Cansever

The second answer is more philosophical and intellectually more elaborated. It is proposed by the work of Turgut Cansever. Cansever has been far less productive than Eldem; however, he has built a wide range of building types: museums, public buildings, housing, education and industrial buildings. In each case Cansever questions the ontological and semantic links between the functional purpose of his building, its urban relations, the technological implications of its "tectonics" — in the architect's terms — with relation to an implicit omnipresence of history. The semantics related to historicity in architecture have for Cansever a metaphysical significance. In his words "they derive from the unity of forces and the commandments of being (which) determine existence and its continuity". He calls the communicative ways of this existence and continuity "ornamentality" and tries to materialise this semantic interpretation either by expressing the functional parts, or constructive elements of his buildings, or by emphasising his formal — historic — references. Thus his buildings present an intellectual discourse full of connotations which are not very far from recalling the functionality of architectonic parts as it was intended in new brutalist ethics or Kahn's hierarchical concept of parts and wholes and space. Is the ornamentality concept not another term of expressing the answer to the question of 'what a building wants to be'?

The best examples of this architecture are two designs in Ankara, the Turkish Historical Society building — in collaboration with Ertur Yener, and the Atatürk Commemorial Cultural Centre (which was not built).

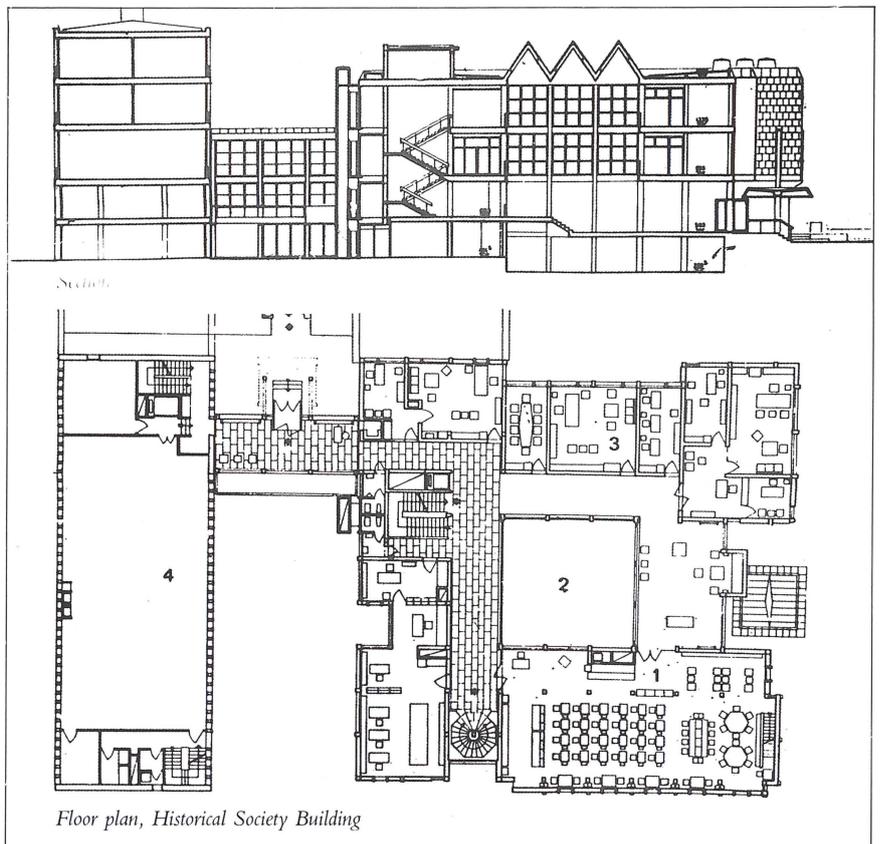
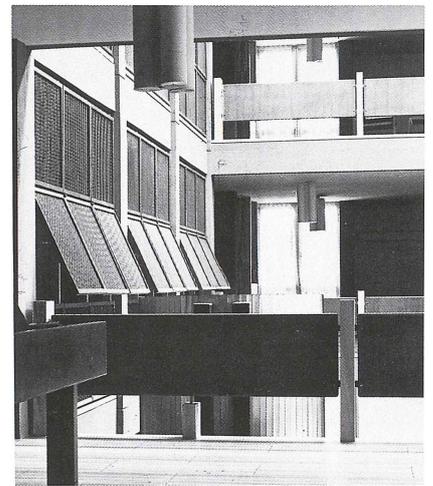
From the exterior, the Historical Society Building has a defensive character, a heavy fortress paradoxically with an overhang on pilotis. All the interior spaces and activities are grouped around a three-storey covered atrium; the scheme thus refers to the Ottoman *medrese*. Carefully controlled light is a very important element in this introverted spatial order; since the central space is treated as the counterpart of an outer, urban space: a square, with all the activities concentrated around it. Light becomes an architectonic element, received by roof lanterns and distributed through interior *kafeses*, *mushrabiya* trellises (another metaphoric use of a traditional facade element). The roof lanterns accentuate the fortress image, and unavoidably, the reference is made to the imposing Ankara fortress located not far from the building. Surrounding forms, mainly the monumental Faculty of Language, Geography and History by Bruno Taut are also acknowledged in the choice of the materials: reddish Ankara stone in the heavy mass of the cantilevered upper walls and painted raw cement



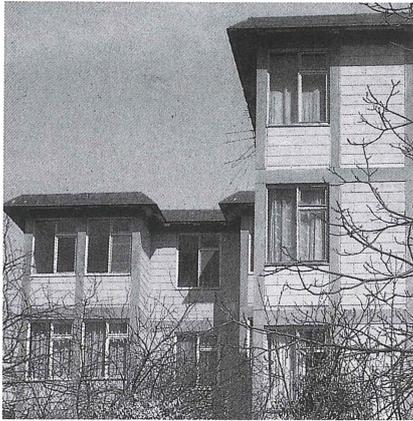
Above: Karatepe Open Air Museum. Photograph: R. Günay.

Below: Historical Society Building, general view. Photograph: A. Yücel.

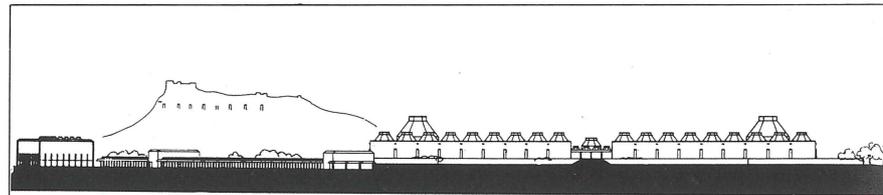
Right: Historical Society Building, interior. Photograph: R. Günay.



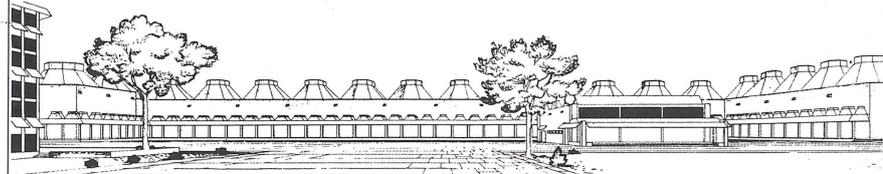
Floor plan, Historical Society Building



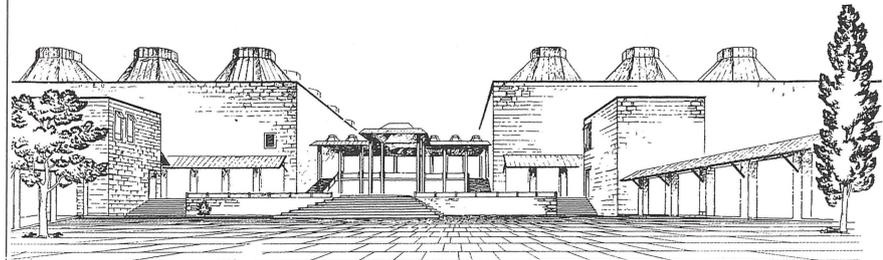
Above: Apartment house, Ciftehavuzlar, Istanbul. Photograph courtesy of the architect.



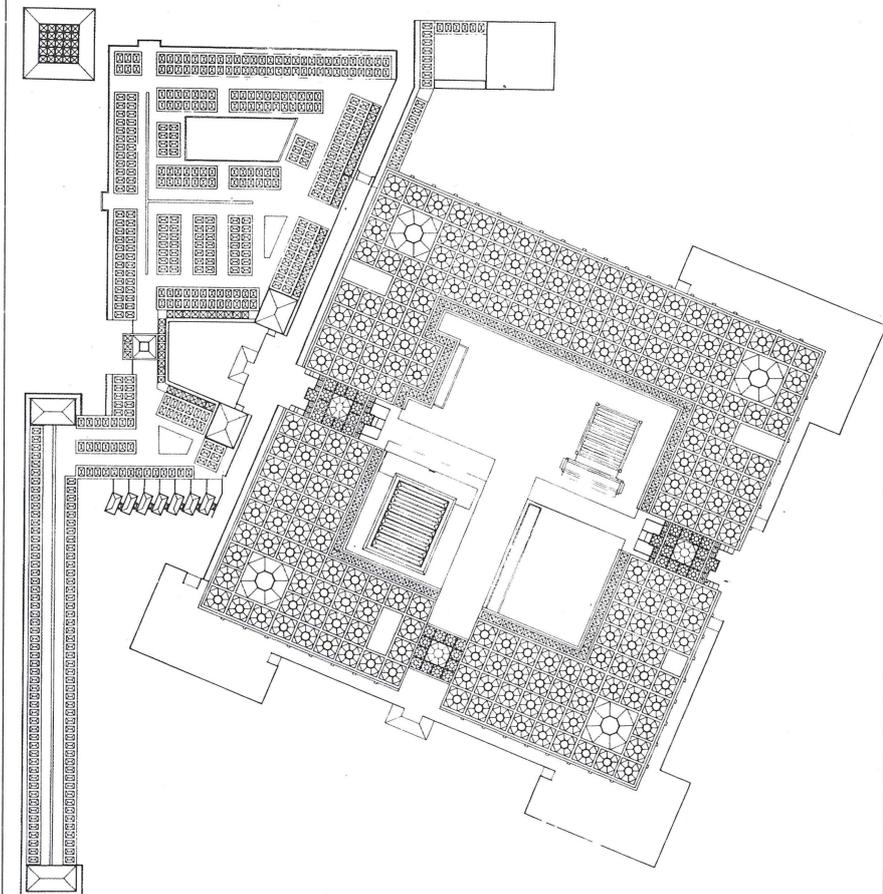
Section



Perspective



Perspective



Plan, Atatürk Commemorial Cultural Centre

in lower structural elements. These elements are projected into the facade and support the heavy mass “like the fingers of a hand”. One can argue that in this building designed to shelter the historical research activities of the Turkish Republic, the architects have proposed a spatial order full of behavioural, environmental and historical connotations, using an ornamented, metaphoric vocabulary, organised around a basic, introverted archetypal syntax. Their building “talks” about architecture and history through its architectonics. And far from being a simple artifact, the architecture thus becomes a discourse.

Later on, Cansever pursued the same approach to an extreme in his proposal for the Atatürk Commemorial Cultural Center in Ankara. In this project, a more complex and dissonant syntax is established, by the use of a diversity of references: Anatolian and Ottoman subcultures, Iranian schemes, his own work, and once again a critical reference to the city of Ankara by proposing an imposing horizontal element as a response to the piecemeal urban fabric of the existing town. Thus, not only the formal elements but the entire scheme becomes “ornamented by connotative references.”

Cansever has been associated with the new-regionalism discussions of the early sixties and like Eldem’s designs, some forms he has produced have subsequently been widely adopted by other architects. The best example is the eaves of the reinforced concrete structures he built in his Karatepe Open Air Museum for providing an *in-situ* shelter for the Post-Hittite archeological site. Like Eldem’s tiny roof edges, this eave form is a derivation of traditional roof forms, interpreted according to the new building material: the reinforced concrete.

This reinterpretation according to a new material is not limited to one specific constructive element. In each new project, Cansever tried to introduce a new building technology: a rationalised traditional techni-

que, an *in-situ* semi-industrial method, a new use of some local building material etc., and attempted to create his "ornamented" aesthetics in accordance with this technology. These attempts have not necessarily been always successful, and in most cases they could not be completely implemented. However, they fit with the architect's general approach to the architectonic and semantic problem he raises.

Despite his involvement in the regionalist discourse and despite his reknown which associates his name to regionalism, the architecture of Cansever cannot merely be recognised as regionalist. The answers he gives are more general, because the questions he raises are general in essence. The eave edges experienced for the first time in the Karatepe Museum were not an element of the local architecture, nor were regional the connotations made in the Atatürk Cultural Center. These questions about history, about the very purpose of the buildings' parts and elements, about expression and significance of forms are universal; but the answers given always remain within a certain historical framework. And in this philosophical context, not only the abstract form is considered, but also the space and its existential meanings are discussed. The unity or diversity of these references have no prime importance, since the resulting configuration is' unique.

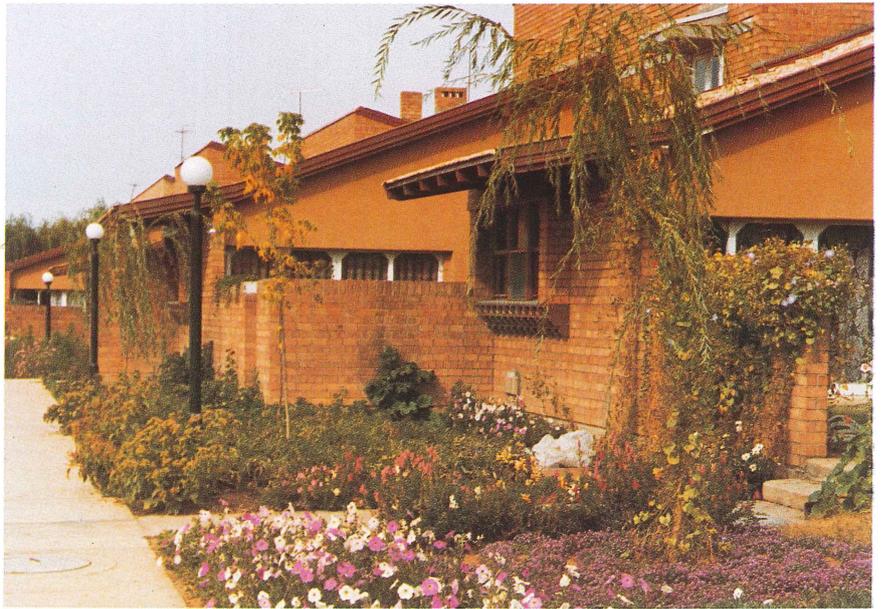
Behruz Cinici

The younger and most prolific of the three architects discussed here, has been — in collaboration with his wife Altug — the designer of the first and largest new university campus in Ankara, and many other buildings.

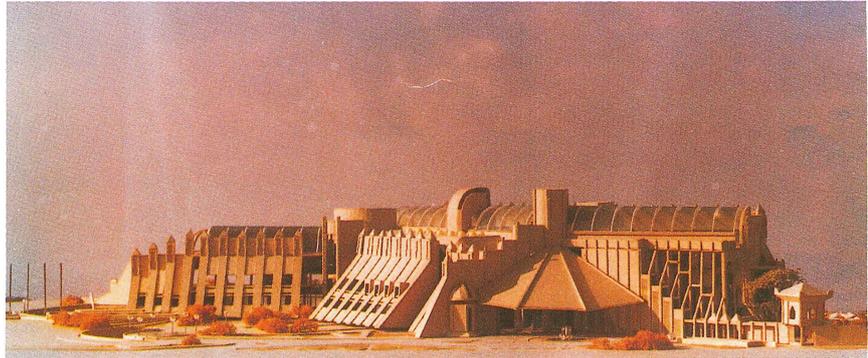
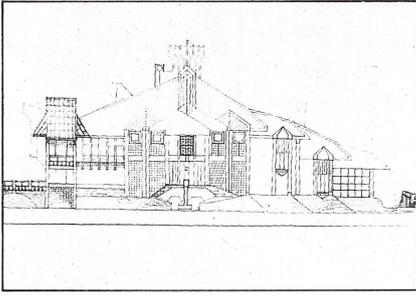
In the Middle East Technical University (mentioned above) which is one of his earliest works, the Cinicis gathered many contemporary Western inspirations. In its more than ten years of construction, Behruz and Altug Cinici built on amalgam of forms borrowed from different sources: Japan, Aalto, Bakema, Rudolph and finally Anatolian culture were brought together, interpreted and recomposed in the light of some general brutalist approach.

The raw materials: brick and especially exposed reinforced concrete are the unifying element with some general lay-out principles such as the articulated small block schemes organised along the focal element of the complex, the spine or Academic Alley.

The *collage* aspect of the whole is also observable in the separate buildings: a uni-



Right, top: M.E.T.U. Faculty Housing.
 Right, centre: Conum 1000 Evler Housing Group.
 Right: Apartment unit, Güllük Summer Village, Bodrum.
 Photographs courtesy of B. Cinici.



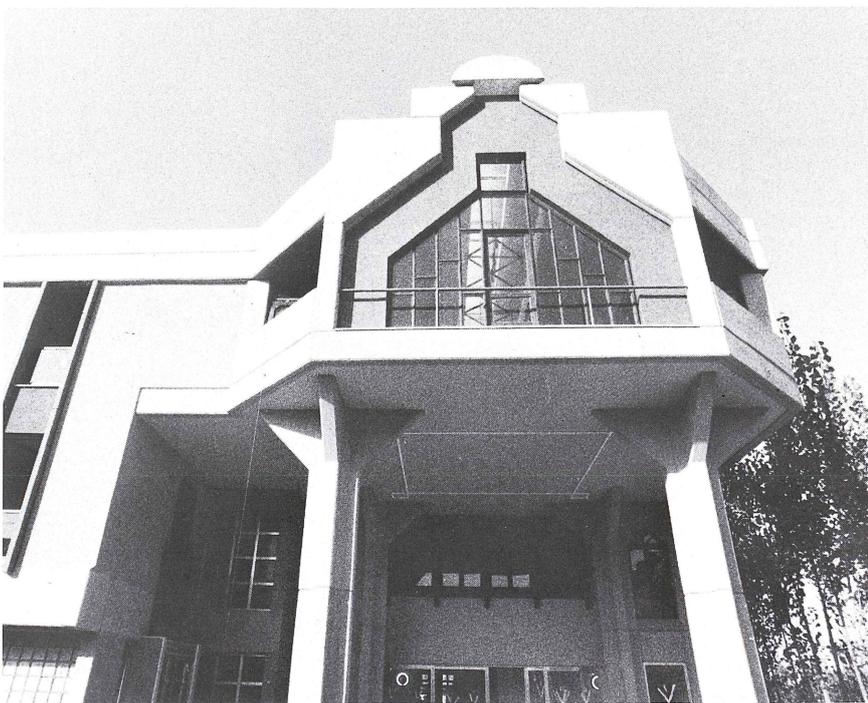
Above: Sketch for a house in Yalova, Istanbul.
Above, right: Model for Army Hotel, Tripoli.
Right: National Assembly Annex Building, Ankara, detail.
Right, below: Iranian Primary School, Ankara.
Sketch and photographs courtesy B. Cinici.

que traditional element; an arch with an old shaped wooden door in it, is placed on the Western facade of the Faculty of Architecture building, and not repeated which reflects the influence of the new Japanese architecture. The Faculty Housing blocks reflect Scandinavian inspirations with their soft-brick architecture and horizontal volumetry and are associated with Central Anatolian timber window and door frames and hedgehog eave shapes.

In their later works the Cinicis proved to be more sensitive to local forms, regardless to the origin and actual use of them. Mediterranean or Seljuk arches, vernacular elements, courtyard schemes, combined with *art-déco* or other nineteenth century vocabulary, or other local references in the projects for North-Africa.

In all these formal interpretations, the architect, who starts from either context-related or arbitrary references, uses these elements in a series of formal configurations. The form is neither used *tel-quel* — as it is the case in some pseudo-vernacular designs — nor intentionally re-semanticised — as done by Cansever — but remodeled in itself; and this remodeling operation is not made according to a strict academic architectonic discipline, as it was in the architecture of Eldem. Consequently, the result is a rich, somewhat fantastic deformation of the initial form. The Güllük summer resort units, the Iranian School in Ankara, some private house projects and the project of Army Hotel and Yacht Club to be built in Tripoli are the best examples of this attitude. The Public Relation Offices building of the Turkish National Assembly in which he tries to realise his formal interpretations by the use of high technology building systems is the best example of this tendency.

Thus, if formal classical discipline based exclusively on the highest tradition of the Ottoman house defines what historicity means for Eldem; a philosophical attitude questioning the meaning of all possible historical issues is the starting point for Cansever. And for the Cinicis, such an en-



larged historical perspective is only a repertory from which isolated elements are to be taken, and are made the subject of a combinatory process. What defines the final product is no more the initial reference, but associations and the rich fantasy of the architect. Thus, from morphic canons and metaphysical thought we arrive to the sovereignty of form and imagination.

Epilogue: historicism and historicity

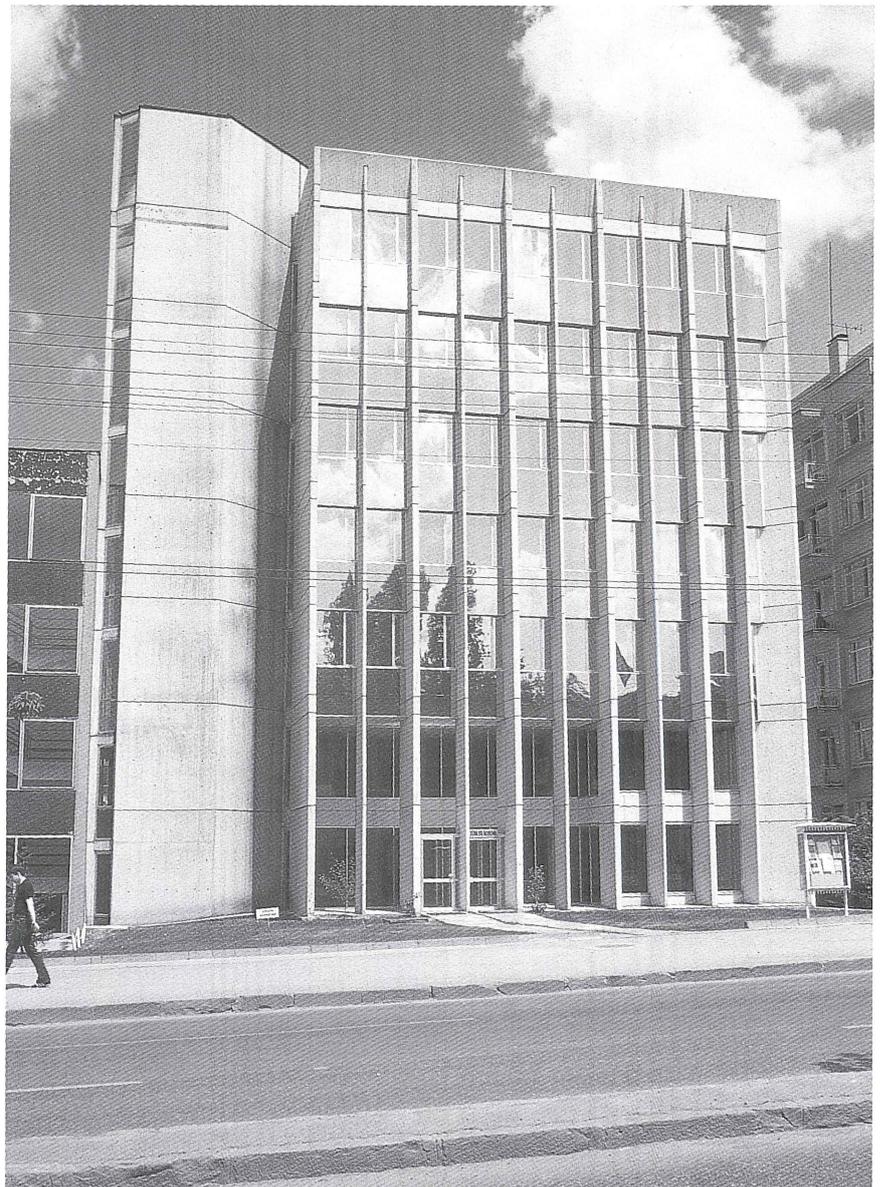
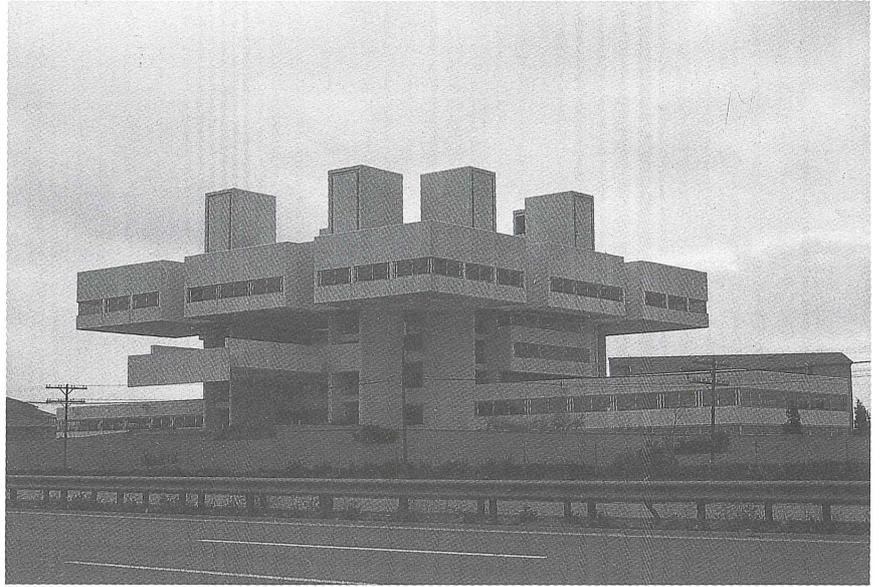
“Now, these days, a dancing-boy has been sent to the republic, to our city: Traditional arts. It’s the word of the mollahs. That they give zero value to modern art because it confronts them with their presence so out of tune with the times and especially their opposition to poetry, is a proposition which could keep one laughing for a lifetime, and is at once contrary to the natural flow of change through the dialectic process ...

In these lands, ... according to the principle that form changes but content does not, good art, modern art, surely in any case makes its references subtly and openly to all the values of the past, if they are values. Because those who live in the village of the blind have dreams of settling up dervish orders in opposition to the wrong Western clubs and of themselves becoming sheikhs without having done any penitance, they are unable to comprehend their contemporaries ...

*Yes, open up Orient, open up! The Orient should open up, the Orient will open up, of course. But a venerable Mediterranean ancestor says both to the notables and to the literati, that those who go too far East, due to the facts of geography, fall into the West. The opposite of this is also true.”**

In contemporary Turkish Literature, especially in poetry in which a rich tradition exists, after more than twenty years of constructivism, dada, surrealism, abstract formalism and obscurantism, there was a return to realism, often combined with some allusions to traditional forms, even to the rejected Ottoman high tradition: namely the *Divan* (Imperial Court) poetry. Even the quotation above, taken from Ayhan’s *Ortodoksluklar* (Orthodoxies, 1972) is full of historic connotations, and remain largely inspired in style and imagery by the complex heritage of Istanbul folk culture.

Another interesting example is found in music. The modern Turkish music is poliphonic and based on Western canons. Its history is very recent, it dates back to the republic (1920s) and the adoption of this completely new aesthetics is a consequence of the modernisation attempts of the young Kemalist republic. However, this polipho-



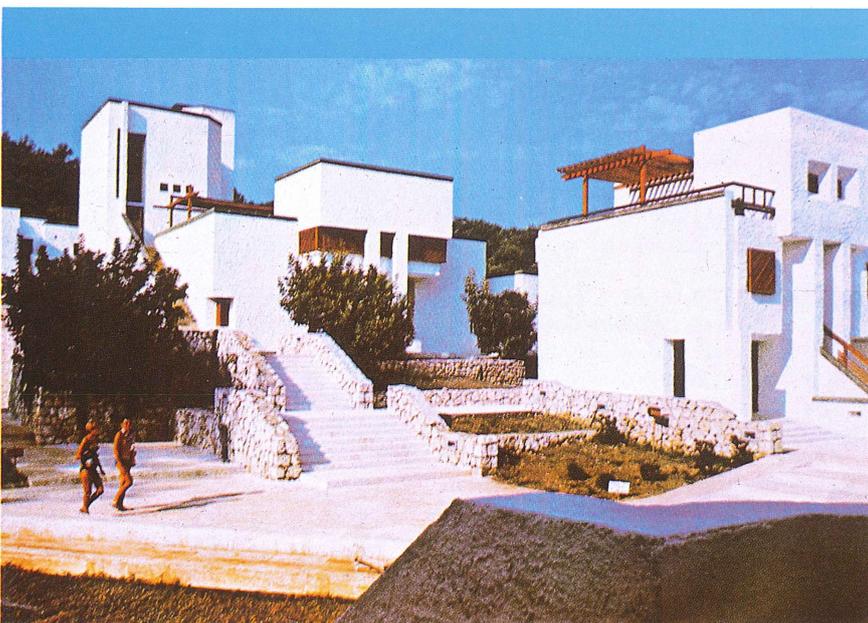
**From the poem “Ölümin arkasından konuşmak” (Post-mortem talks) by Ece Ayhan in: Ortodoksluklar, translated by Alan Duben.*

*Right, above: Tercüman Newspaper Building, Istanbul, by Günay Cilingiroglu, Muhlis Tunca.
Right: Turkish Linguistic Society Building, Ankara, by Cengiz Bektaş.*



Above: Bodrum Summer Vacation Village by EPA Group.

Left: Kemer Vacation Village by Tuncay Cavdar with Giovanni brothers.



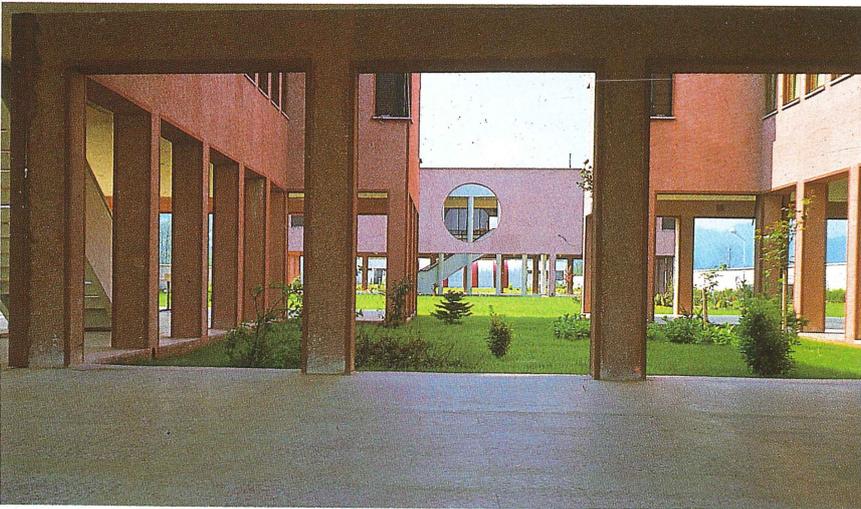
nic music has generally followed Bela Bartok's or Zoltan Kodaly's aesthetics and in inspiration it has associated with old folkloric themes. Nowadays, not only the formerly rejected classic Ottoman music is rehabilitated, poliphonic composers also refer to it.

The pluralistic cross-cultural phenomenon is a general one and as it was argued at the beginning, for the Turkish culture this fact is deeply encrusted in the history. A categoric refutation either of this pluralism — as it was argued in some nostalgic nationalist movements —, or of this historic dimension — which has been the Oedipus complex of the modernistic utopia — is no more possible.

This, by no means signifies that historicism is the real way. All forms of historicism are also exclusive and reductive, thus



Left and below: Sagra Residence and guest house in Ordu by Mehmet Konuralp with Salih Sağlam.



opposed to pluralism and even the history itself.

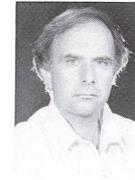
The attempts of the architects discussed above are only some proposals formulated in order to deal with the cultural dimensions history imposes to any present form generation problem in a pluralistic context. There are other possible answers without falling neither into a categoric refutation of history, nor a complete *pastiche*.

In the recent works of many Turkish architects these other possible answers can be found. From the works of the architects Günay Cilingiroglu and Muhlis Tunca in which an audacious post-brutalist disintegration of the mass is associated with some morphological references to old archetypal schemes (especially in their structurally and climatically hyper-affluent Tercüman newspaper building) to the Turkish Linguistic Society building of Cengiz Bektas in which very implicit, slight references either to traditional or contemporary designs are recognisable, a series of generally modernistic designs also share a symbiotic life with the presence of the past. And from the more explicit neo-vernacular forms of the EPA Group and especially of Ersen Gürsel in their resort centres in the Mediterranean to the more sophisticated in-

terpretation in the Kemer Summer Village of Tuncay Cavdar and Giovanninis, the deal with old and present regional architectonic subcultures becomes more and more a challenge for many contemporary Turkish architects. Finally, far more implicit interpretations are made, such as in the Sagra residence of Mehmet Konuralp on the Black Sea coast, in which a very general regional scheme on *pilotis* is associated to a somewhat late-modern aesthetics.

The projects of the younger generation of Turkish architects show that they do not resign to question history. However, the field is not fully explored: the 19th century still remains a dilemma and a challenge. It has for many years been refuted both in the West and in Turkey and its merits are recognised only in a few recent conservation projects. The plurality of the world's current architectural research is not deeply reflected in either architectural education or practice.

A long way is still to be traversed and some synthesis to be achieved in order to avoid the vicious circle of writing endlessly a palimpsest which reduces the historicity inherent in every architectural phenomenon to the mediocrity of already known interpretations.



This article, by Atilla Yücel was developed from two earlier texts by the author: "Anatolian-Turkish Architectural Tradition and Modern Turkish Architecture", published in the weekly *Newspot* in Ankara (1 Oct. 1982), and "Pluralism takes command: Turkish architectural scene from the sixties to the present (1960-1980)" in *Contemporary Turkish Architecture*, ed. R. Holod and A. Evin, the Pennsylvania Univ. Press, 1983.

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