

IMPACT OF SINAN ON TURKISH REVIVALISM

At the end of the 19th century, the Turkish architectural environment displayed different elements, each expressing its own social and cultural values. The evolution of Ottoman taste eclectically reflects a predominance of transposed and revised Western elements. But these are far from "classical" architectural models, by which is meant the Empire's golden age as constituted by Sinan's work. The *Batılilasma Dönemi*, or occidentalization period, started some centuries before, by the 19th century seems to be far from its original premises. Works like the Pertevniyal Valide Sultan Mosque (1871) or the Dolmabahçe Sarayı (1854), evidence the substantial acquisition of occidental patterns proposed here in a disorganic way. Rococo, Neo-Renaissance, Neo-Gothic, Empire and Neoclassical patterns are amalgamated in "solutions" in which the basic features of all the exotic Western currents seem to be represented. Nevertheless, in this framework an intellectual reaction began to develop and it is not without reason that there was a return to the "origins".

In 1873 Montani Efendi demonstrated the more significant aspects of Ottoman architecture at the Vienna exposition, in his book *Usûl-ü Mimar-i Osmanî*. During the 19th century architects tried to abandon a exclusive concentration on private contracts for the Sultan. Selim III had founded in 1801 an imperial engineering college, but the real step forward was the foundation of the Fine Arts Academy (*Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi*), in 1882; this included departments for painting, sculpture and architecture. Imitating the French model, and importing many of its teachers from there, the Academy was an incentive for the rising generation of Turkish architects. And to one of them, Vedat Tek, the Chair of the History of Architecture was offered in 1900.

From 1880 to 1900, foreign architects were attracted to the Ottoman world: D'Aronco, Vallauri, Jachmund, Cuno, Richter and others, who established themselves in Istanbul. There they received important commissions, and promoted the training of a new generation of architects. These students soon departed from their teachings, thereby producing a cultural reaction which, in the light of the social unrest of the time, soon led to the formulation of a national style, the *Millî Üslubu* or *Ulusal üslubu*. Within a few years, this would materialize into a substantial program.

For instance, the influence of Vallauri or of Jachmund can be found in their pupils Vedat

Tek and Kemalettin Bey, the very leaders of the new trend.

The last twenty years of the 19th century witnessed a rapid cultural and political evolution, starting with the promulgation of the first constitution (*İ Mesrutiyet* 1877). The movement *İttihat-i Osmani* after it turned into *İttihat ve Terakki* (Union and Progress) carried out ideological battles in the name of a radical Turkization and a real re-foundation of the Ottoman Empire which was crumbling by this time. In that framework we also find the *Osmanlı Mimar ve Mühendis Cemiyeti*, the Ottoman Assembly of Architects and Engineers, at first administrated by Hülûsi Bey. It was in this context that the architectural Turkization and its development was planned.

A synthesis of this program is found in the words of Ziya Gökalp: "Today, Turkism (*türkçülük*) will inspire a magnificent vitality, which will not be restricted to life, but whose *raison d'être* will be found in the body of social foundations: return to the spoken language, for instance, will be the real vivification of the language. Returning to popular metrics will make the metrics live again.

MIMAR KEMELETTIN



"Returning to popular music will be the real vivification of music.

"Returning to Turkish fiction will produce a new life for Turkish literature.

If one adapts this rule to architecture, even in rooms and halls flooring, or to painting, or to minor guilds too, one will realize a vital aesthetics, shared by all people."

Indeed Kemalettin Bey might be called a protagonist in architecture. He was close to a realistic concreteness which is typical of his whole aesthetic evolution. His return to "origins" chiefly consisted in a meditated new elaboration of Ottoman and Seljuk arts. Ekren Akurgal has underlined that the original principle of the *Millî Üslubu* was not a mere reproduction of previous patterns. For Kemalettin Bey, Sinan's work was an architectural language, his elaboration of this idea overlapped with the development of new technologies at the end of the century.

Kemalettin's style, rightly defined by Goodwin as "puritanical" was an attempt to get rid of the eccentric formulations that were characteristic of the 19th century.

Kemalettin was a pupil of Jachmund, the German architect who participated in the con-

struction of Sirkeci railway station in Istanbul (1889). This building was still saturated with rococo elements, though here adapted to an exotic taste, that may be found in the dichromatism of wall facings, or in the shape of the windows. Such features were a clear reference to Egyptian art, transposed through Balyan's Work.

From 1900 architects began to realise Bey's original intention to create a national architecture. But at this time architects also closely studied *Art Nouveau* and the most characteristic developments of Western architecture.

Kemalettin's work may be divided in two fundamental groups: one formed by religious buildings (mainly mosques and mausoleums), and the other *vakifhaneler*, schools and residences.

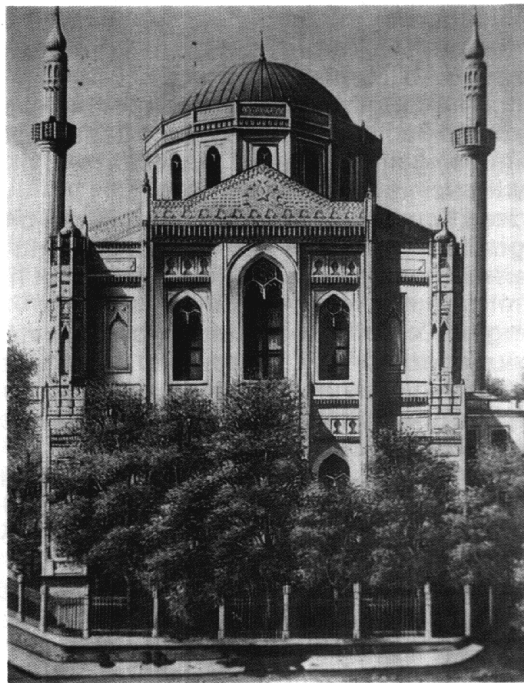
The acquisition of Sinan's lesson appears with greater evidence in the first buildings, though in his later works it is still alive, chiefly in architectonic details rather than in building-structure, which was now rationalized according to different functional criterions. In the first mausoleum realized by Kemalettin for the mortal remains of the hero

DOLMABAHCE SARAI AT ISTANBUL



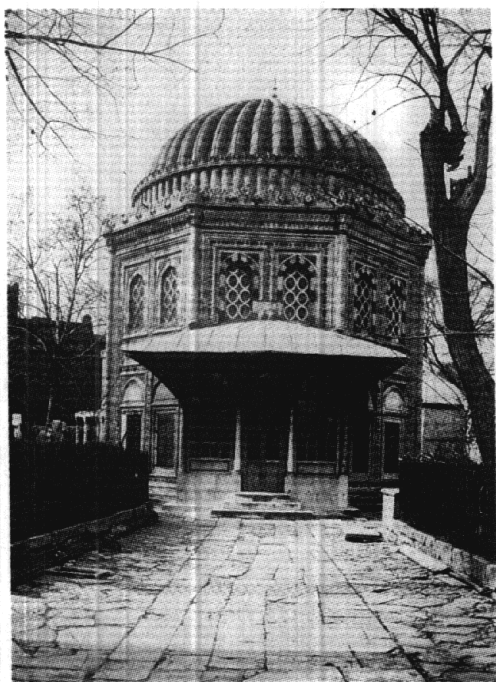


THE DOLMABAHCÉ CAMI ON THE BOSPHORUS



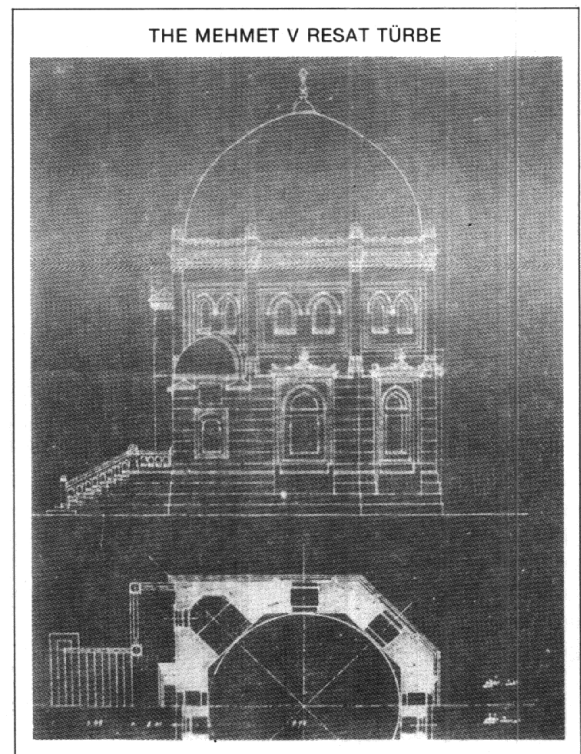
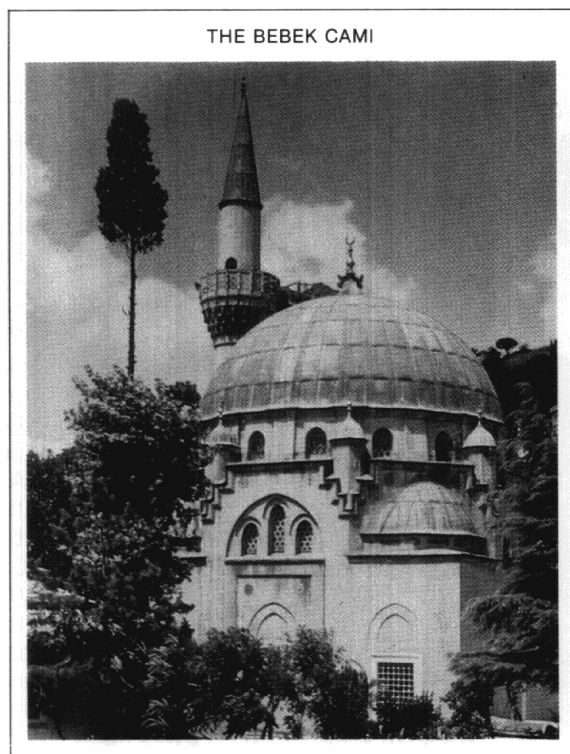
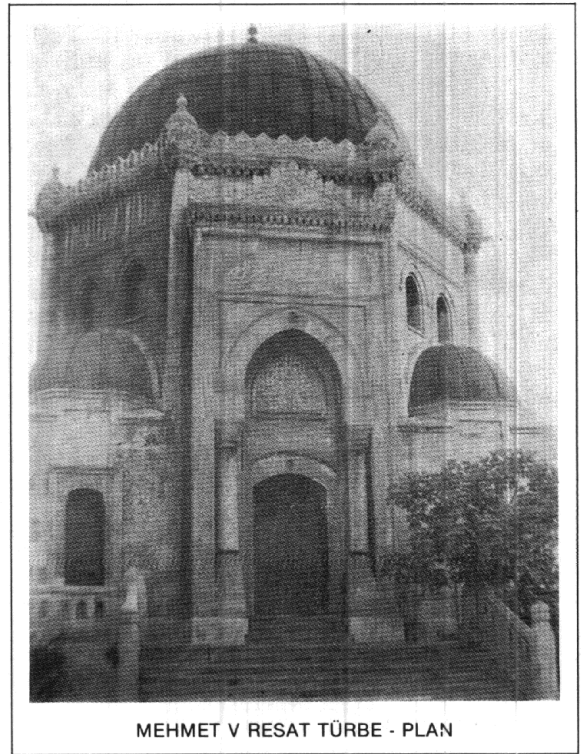
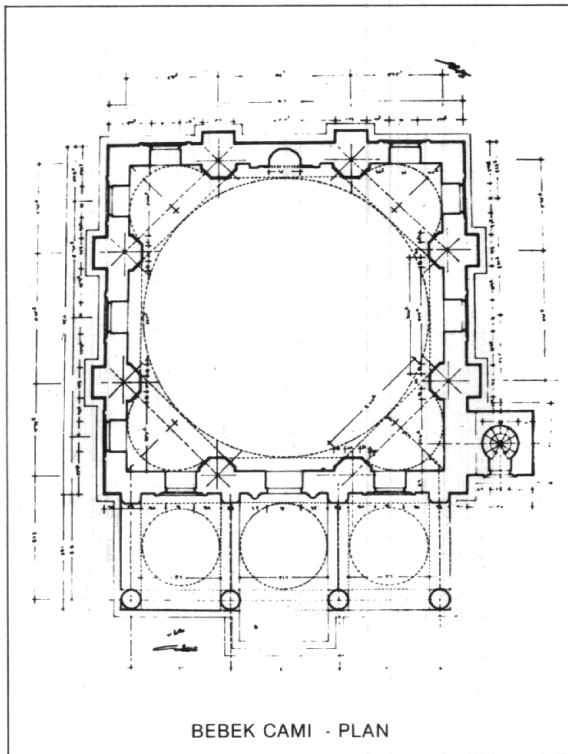
PERTEVNIYAL VALIDE SULTAN

SEHZADE MEHMET TÜRBE



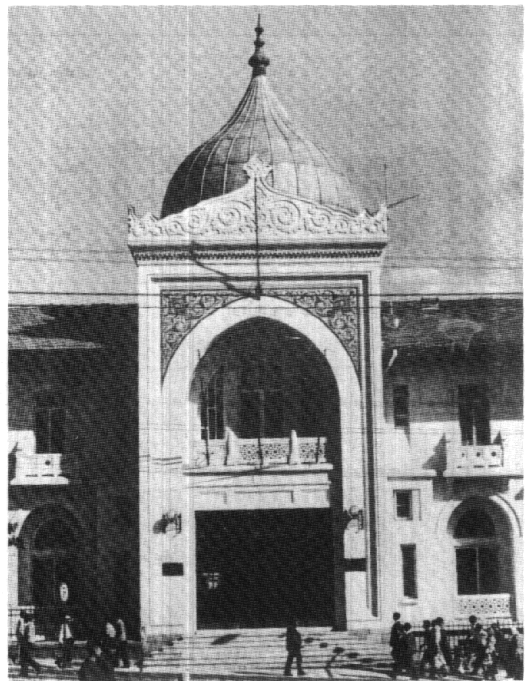
TÜRBE OF MAHMUT II





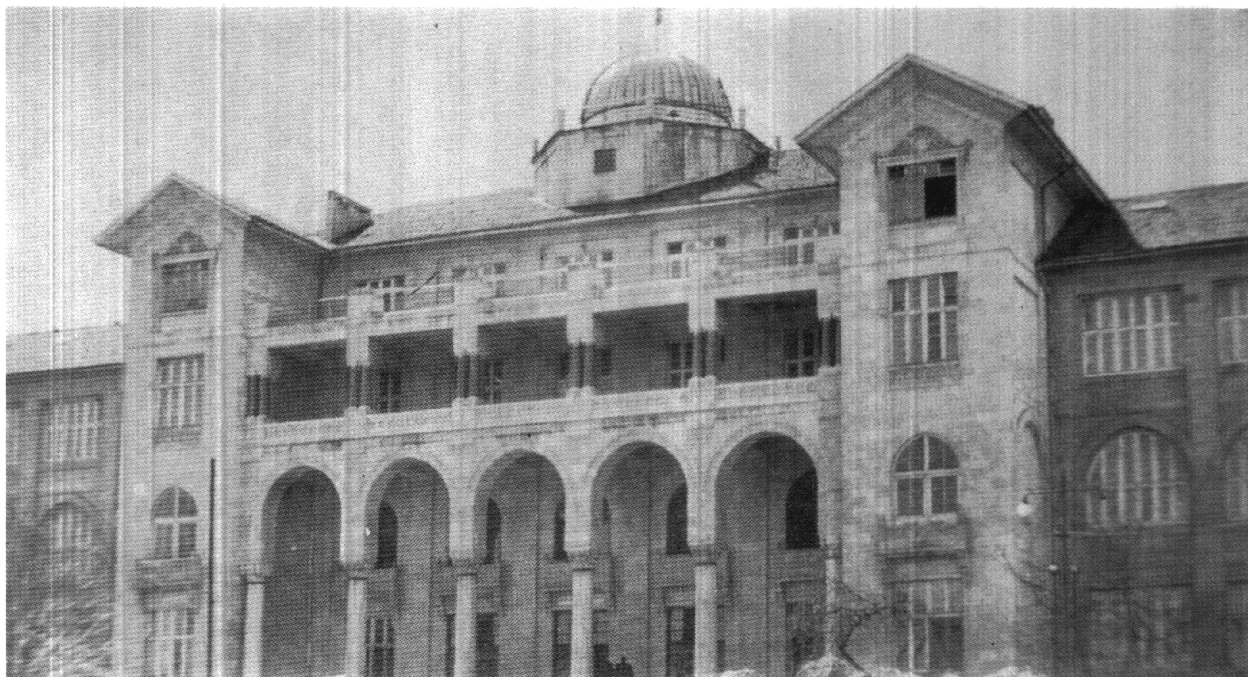


THE BIRINCI VAKIF HANI AT EMINÖNÜ



THE VAKIF AT ANKARA

THE MILLI EGITIM ENSTITÜSÜ AT ANKARA



Gazi Osman Pasha (1901-2), evidences the very popular style under Abdülhamit II: the external appearance recalls previous architect's work, chiefly in the ornamental design.

Similar to this tomb is the one destined to Ahmed Cevad Pasha, near Fatih's mosque in Istanbul. Nevertheless in these two examples one can observe the return to *muqarnas* in capitals and finishings. But the mausoleum which mostly reflects Kemalettin's maturity is that dedicated to Mehmet V Resat, the penultimate Ottoman Sultan.

In this *türbe* one finds more than a quotation of Sinan: it is a reposition: clearly the subject is the mausoleum of the Sehzade Mehmet but also that of Süleyman himself even if to a lesser extent.

Like the mausoleum of Sehzade Mehmet the building is on two floors with a hexagonal base. It has a double ogival arch window at the second floor on every facade. The decoration of the crown on the top of the building is very different from the characteristic decoration of the Valide Sultan Cami's Neogothics. In the Mehmet V Resat mausoleum the dome looks very similar to the Süleymaniye's, omitting the ribs appearing in the *türbe* of Sehzade Mehmet.

The building evidences the differences from previous trends, neoclassical mausoleums like the one dedicated to Mahmut II by Garabet Balyan (1840): one can appreciate how Sinan determined a "puristic" renaissance of architectural style and language.

This spirit, even if mediated by other Ottoman and Seljuqid elements is also found in the mosques built in Istanbul by Kemalettin. In particular, the Kuloglu Camii, in Bostanci, the Bebek Camii, and the Amine hatun Camii, in Bakirköy, all three erected around 1913.

Here his basic model is the Firuz Aga Camii (1490).

The differences from his model, however, are evident in the shape of *harim* block showing in its stepped gable clear analogies with Sinan's Mihrimah's mosque. Analogous to late works by Sinan (like Mesih Pasha Cami, Azapkapi Camii in Galata or the Selimiye itself) are the eight turrets surrounding the dome in the mosques of Bebek and Bakirköy. One must remember that Ottoman classicism is recovered also by reutilizing ancient materials. Independently of the use of stones and marbles in the monuments, there is a return to the decoration style of Iznik by reproducing it on Kütahya's tiles.

In the same way, calligraphy is recovered by

the advent of a new type of kufic which characterizes the epigraphic bands in glazed tiles on many buildings of the first Nationalist period.

In the other buildings of Kemalettin, the Ottoman look is embodied in the new functional objectives that the buildings must satisfy. It is not by chance that they show facades incorporating more and the more sinanian elements in the characteristic aspects of Turkish "Popular" architecture, such as the *saçak* (or large eaves roof) or the *cumba*, a kind of bowwindow typical of Turkish architecture.

Classicism is evident in decorative elements such as capitals — *muqarnas*-shaped or *türk-üçgeni* shaped — found in the Gazi Eğitim *enstitüsü* or in the VI *vakıfhané* in Ankara. Also typically Ottoman are the ogival arch windows appearing on the facades of all buildings and giving them a particularly sober character. Kemalettin can be considered the last exponent of Ottoman architecture and the first of Nationalistic architecture. This radical change unavoidably passed through a reinterpretation of Sinan's work and the classical period so eloquently represented by him.

Vedat Tek followed a different drummer.

His work, still that of a master of the *Millî Üslubu*, was not inspired by the classical period.

Rather than a "puristic" search for Turkish elements, it is a matter of embodying it in ornamental patterns of an architecture, tightly linked to previous tradition.

The need for linguistic purity characterizing Kemalettin is again overwhelmed by Western influences.

The ideas of Kemalettin were not isolated. His biographer, Sedat Çetintas, did the survey of the Sehzade Camii that was presented in 1939 in Chicago. In the wake of Nationalistic thinking Ali Saim Ülgen restored the mosque and the *küllîye* of the Süleymaniye. Vasfi Egli, the author of the Sisli mosque (1945-53), can be considered a late follower of the Nationalistic style. The mosque of Hocatepe in Ankara, is sometimes held to be unrelated to the spirit of Kemalettin, but it is a reposition of the Nationalistic style having nothing to do with contemporary Turkish architecture. In fact, in the 1930's completely different choices were made: nonetheless Kemalettin and his "return" to the past was the original premise for these new directions.

Michele Bernardini