

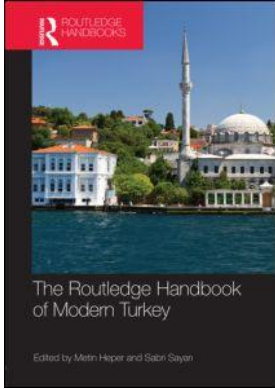
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## THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF MODERN TURKEY

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### Architecture

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# 12

## ARCHITECTURE

*Zeynep Çelik*

### Identity and ideology (1870–1950)

The beginnings of a history of architecture in the Ottoman Empire date from the late nineteenth century and carry political overtones. Intertwined with a search for an imperial image that was modern, distinct, and glorious, the early texts were responses to European discourses that theorized “Islamic” and “Ottoman” art and architecture. They argued for “scientific” rules in Ottoman architecture, paralleling the broader post-Tanzimat agendas.

*Usul-i Mîmari-i Osmâni*, prepared at the imperial command by Victor Marie de Launay, Pietro Montani, and Boghos Efendi Chachian for the 1873 International Exposition in Vienna, called for a “national art,” based on a “renaissance” of Ottoman architecture (de Launay *et al.*, 1873: 7). With the help of drawings, the text explained Ottoman architecture using a vocabulary and a set of rules similar to those developed in European architectural treatises. Its implicit goals were to bring to light the superior qualities of Ottoman architecture, reintroduce its *chefs d’oeuvre*, define its elements and design principles, and ultimately to carve a place for it within the wide spectrum of European architectural styles, hence making it available to contemporary practice (de Launay *et al.*, 1873: 15–17). Léon Parvillée’s *Architecture et décoration turques*, published one year later, followed a similar line, searching for “a reasoned explanation” (*une explication raisonnée*) for the compositional principles of Ottoman architecture. Parvillée presented his geometric analyses of the fifteenth-century monuments of Bursa as correctives to the common characterizations of “Oriental art” as purely a product of fantasy (Parvillée, 1874: 2). Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, the influential rationalist architect and architectural theorist, wrote the introduction to Parvillée’s book and praised him for discovering the role of “cold science” in these artistic products, which on the surface seemed to belong to a world of dreams (Parvillée, 1874: iii–iv).

Viollet-le-Duc’s rationalist approach seems to have found fertile ground in late Ottoman architectural discourse, correlating with the broader Ottoman modernizing project. “Architectural rules” (“*kaide-i mimari*”) became a common term to distinguish good practices. In his early writings, Celal Esad (Arseven), the “first” Ottoman art and architectural historian, relied on the authority of Viollet-le-Duc’s ideas and, defending their universality, attempted to apply them to Ottoman architecture. In an article dating from 1907, titled “Ottoman Architecture,” and largely derived from *Usul*, he argued that the only way to improve Ottoman architecture

was to discover its underlying rules, which could be achieved by first taking careful measurements of major monuments and drawing them to precision. The “fundamental principles” (“*kaide-i esasiye*”) of Ottoman architecture would surface only after analyzing these drawings carefully. As contemporary architects did not investigate and understand the science of architecture, Celal Esad maintained, they made random collages out of the various elements borrowed from Ottoman monuments. This was pure “imitation” and was doomed to remain so until the rules were scientifically discovered (Arseven, 1907). While adapting Viollet-le-Duc’s theoretical perspective, Celal Esad was critical of the Orientalist view, commonly shared by European historians, in which Persian, Arabic, and Ottoman art were indistinguishable. To clarify the distinctions, he wrote a series of articles on the art and architecture of different cultures, comparing and contrasting them to Ottoman architecture (Arseven, 1906).

It is perhaps not surprising that this dual search, one for formal, scientific rules, and the other for an Ottoman architectural identity, led Celal Esad to develop an idiosyncratic and influential position during the early Republican era. As set forth convincingly by Sibel Bozdoğan, while Celal Esad established “the quintessential republican nationalist view of Ottoman and pre-Ottoman Turkish art and architecture,” he also introduced the Turkish audience to the Modern movement of the post-World War I period (Bozdoğan, 2007: 200–1). The main conflict in Celal Esad’s thought bridged the Ottoman and Republican periods: while he remained critical of Orientalist scholarship, he subscribed to Orientalist categories that relied on binary oppositions (such as rational versus sensual and spatial versus decorative) in examining other “non-Western” traditions. He situated Ottoman architecture among the “rational” traditions on the basis of its own “rules” (Bozdoğan, 2007: 203–4).

The relationship of Republican (and, to a lesser degree, late Ottoman) political ideologies to the discourse of art and architectural history is the topic of a special issue of *Muqarnas* (24, 2007), edited by Bozdoğan and Gülru Necipoğlu and titled “History and Ideology: Architectural Heritage of the ‘Lands of Rum’.” Analyzing the key texts in terms of their engagement with ideological movements, the volume makes a groundbreaking contribution to the historiography of the field and hence serves as an indispensable reference concerning the trends that have dominated the debates in this area since the late nineteenth century. The crucial term in the title, the “Lands of Rum” (loosely referring to the Eastern Roman domains), questions the dynastic and nationalist paradigms by not using the words “Ottoman” and “Turkish,” and through this choice, conveys at the outset the critical position of the authors toward these categories. Nevertheless, as pointed out by Cemal Kafadar, the concept of “Rum,” a premodern notion of identity, is not proposed to correct the “excesses of nationalisms” and does not aim to define a new Europeanized identity for “Turks-as-Romans.” Rather, it is used for its potential to assist in understanding “selfhood in the plural environments that we study” (Kafadar, 2007: 20).

In a chapter in *Muqarnas* 24 that scrutinizes the ideological foundations of the academic discipline that defined the characteristics of a specifically “Turkish art,” Oya Pancaroğlu focuses on the “Turkishness” attributed to the Seljuk period (defined as extending from the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 to the Ottoman conquest of Istanbul in 1453), at the expense of all other cultures that existed in Anatolia during the medieval era. The scholars who developed a “Turkish art” category within the general field of art history were Josef Strzygowski, Heinrich Glück, and Ernest Diez, all belonging to the Vienna School of art history. Glück’s 1917 essay “*Türkische Kunst*” associated the absorption of various traditions to create a certain architectural monumentality (distinguished, for example, by domes) with a “Turkish national spirit.” Strzygowski challenged the privileged position given to Greco-Roman art by advocating the primacy of Northern (Aryan) art, enriched by the movement of nomadic peoples from the northern parts of Central Asia. He expounded his thesis through the comparison of archetypes,

interlaced with a race-based argument. Published in *Türkiyat Mecmuası* in an expanded version as “Türkler ve Orta Asya Sanatı Meselesi” (Turks and the Question of Central Asian Art) in 1926–27, the article now linked the origins of “Turkish” art to Central Asia. The same volume also included Glück’s article, “Türk San’atının Dünyadaki Mevkii” (The Place of Turkish Art in the World), which attributed the origins of “Turkish” art to the Hittites and Sumerians and its brilliance to “a great racial unity.” The 1964 textbook by Glück’s disciple Diez, *Türk Sanatı: Başlangıcından Günümüze Kadar* (Turkish Art: From its Beginnings to Today), translated by Turkish art historian Oktay Aslanapa, diverged from the earlier race-related accounts, while continuing to make a case for the Anatolian roots of “Turkish” art. According to Pancaroğlu, the arguments put forward by the art historians of the Viennese school offered a grand narrative regarding the formation of Turkish art that was supported by local art historians, most prominently by Aslanapa and Celal Esad (Pancaroğlu, 2007: 67–77).

Nationalist interpretations of architecture dominated the early Republican era and culminated in an intriguing narrative that grew up around the architect Sinan, crystallizing the ideological dimension of art historical discourse at the time. Necipoğlu calls the phenomenon the “Turkification of Sinan” and explores its genesis and development in another important article in *Muqamas* 24. She analyzes the controversy centered on the assumed impact of Hagia Sophia on Sinan’s architecture (and Ottoman architecture in general) and the counterclaim positing its linear development from Anatolian Seljuk and early Ottoman traditions—the latter based on Mehmed Aga-Oğlu’s interpretations from 1926, further articulated by Glück in “Türk San’atının Dünyadaki Mevkii.” Arseven adopted the same perspective in categorizing Sinan’s architecture as the “classical style” of the “Ottoman Turks,” the term evoking the European “high style,” characterized by its rational rules. Necipoğlu takes us through the works of the French architectural historian Albert-Louis Gabriel and Turkish historian Fuad Köprülü, the former demonstrating that Sinan’s works embody “national traditions and constitute an integral part of the Turkish patrimony,” and the latter hailing Sinan as “our great national architect” in the 1930s. Paralleling this discourse was the debate on Sinan’s ethnicity, which focused on whether he was of Christian origin or not, and culminated in the absurd act—ordered by the Turkish History Society—of exhuming his body from his tomb in 1935 so that his skull could be measured (Necipoğlu, 2007: 158–67).

Arguments regarding racial associations lost their fervor in the altered political climate of the 1950s, but, as Necipoğlu argues, the canonization of Sinan endured. The specialist literature of this period, for example Ernst Egli’s *Sinan* (Egli, 1954), underlined the Turkishness of Sinan’s architecture and linked it to the “cube-and-dome combination in Anatolian Seljuk architecture.” The prominent architectural historian Doğan Kuban’s (1954) first book, *Osmanlı Dini Mimarisinde İç Mekân Teşekkülü: Rönesansla Bir Mukayese* (Formation of Inner Space in Ottoman Religious Architecture: A Comparison with the Renaissance), established a marked distance from both the European bias of seeing Ottoman architecture as simply derived from Hagia Sophia, and the nationalist perspective linking it to ancient Asiatic traditions. Kuban characterized “classical” Ottoman architecture as an “Anatolian-Turkish synthesis stamped by an early modern Mediterranean spirit.” Despite this new approach, Kuban’s emphasis on the differences between Renaissance and Ottoman monuments still bore traces of the long search for national identity, according to Necipoğlu (2007: 158–83).

### Theses and surveys (1950–80)

In the changing political climate of the 1950s, the drive for ideological readings of architecture was gradually weakened, if not entirely erased. During this time, due in large part to new

promotion requirements in the academic system that required doctoral degrees in technical fields (including architecture), a series of narrowly focused studies produced by the new cohort of doctoral candidates emerged from the Istanbul Technical University (İTÜ) School of Architecture. Almost without exception, these relatively short theses, published by İTÜ, looked at the architectural heritage of Turkey. They concentrated on certain regions and certain building types and, if lacking in theoretical ambition, nonetheless coalesced into a valuable repository of data. Produced by architects, they offered a wealth of visual documentation, most importantly architectural drawings based on measurements taken on-site. The topics included surveys of historic structures, for example, hospitals (Bulak, 1950), fountains (Tokay, 1951), markets (Özdeş, 1953), baths (Aru, 1949), and graves (Saraçoğlu, 1950). The focus could also be on one building type at a particular time period or by a particular architect: for example, Sinan's bridges (Bozkurt, 1952). Diverging from the usual survey method in search of deeper historic associations and meanings, Kemalettin Hakkı Söylemezoğlu took his study beyond the national boundaries of Turkey and looked at Ottoman mosques with reference to the earliest mosques (for example, the Great Mosque of Damascus), while Kuban interpreted the eighteenth-century Ottoman "Baroque" as a "decadent" movement developed under heavy European influence, and provided a comparative perspective on Ottoman mosques and Renaissance architecture (Söylemezoğlu, 1954; Kuban, 1958).

A privileged theme was the "Turkish" house in Anatolia, already discussed by Celal Esad in *Türk San'atı* (Turkish Art, 1928), with examples drawn from cities such as Bursa and Edirne, and endorsed by Gabriel in 1938 as a potential source of ideas for contemporary Turkish architects (Bozdoğan, 2007: 212–13). The 1950s witnessed a proliferation of monographic studies of residential architecture, examined regionally: in Ankara (Kömürçüoğlu, 1950), Konya (Berk, 1951), Diyarbakır (Erginbaş, 1953), and Kütahya (Eser, 1955). One volume among them challenged the well-established and geographically based format by using a synthetic approach: Sedat Hakkı Eldem's exploration of the plan types of Turkish houses (Eldem, 1954). Arguably the best-known modern Turkish architect, Eldem's goal was to make the "traditional" house a design tool for modern Turkish residential buildings. Bozdoğan rightfully attributes the importance of this book to its classification of house plans according to typologies, developed in terms of the location and configuration of the central hall (*sofa*) (Bozdoğan, 2007: 213).

The İTÜ School of Architecture, with Kuban as the charismatic director of its Department of Architectural History and Historic Preservation from 1958 to 1993, continued to be the main academic platform for scholarship in the field. While some of the work continued along the lines established in the 1950s, others delved into new areas, in accord with Kuban's positivist and rationalist approach. Kuban's doctoral students produced typological analyses, for example of elementary schools (Özgönül, 1968), *medreses* (Sözen, 1970), and Sufi complexes (Doğan, 1977); monographs on individual architects (Yavuz, 1981) and single buildings (Nayır, 1975); detailed examinations of architectural elements such as the arch (Batur, 1974) or the *muqarnas* (Ödekan, 1977); and studies of stylistic searches (Arel, 1975) and urban forms (Aktüre, 1978). In rare cases, the Roman and Byzantine architecture of Anatolia constituted the field of inquiry (Aran, 1971; Anabolu, 1969).

Outside this context, historical surveys continued to present major monuments according to linear development models (Kuran, 1969). Publications in English, notably well-illustrated volumes by Ulya Vogt-Göknil, Aptullah Kuran, and Godfrey Goodwin, followed the same lines, introducing Ottoman monuments to audiences outside Turkey (Vogt-Göknil, 1966; Kuran, 1968; Goodwin, 1967). Semavi Eyice, a lone figure in the field of Byzantine architecture in Turkey, produced nuanced studies, for example on late Byzantine architecture (Eyice, 1963). His guidebook to Istanbul is an annotated and scholarly catalog to the architecture of the

city that goes far beyond the obvious canonical works (Eyice, 1955). One of the most significant works of scholarship during this period was by the great Ottoman historian Ömer Lütfi Barkan, who opened a new window onto the architectural practices of the sixteenth century with a scrupulous examination of the construction site and process of the Süleymaniye mosque complex in Istanbul using accounting records (Barkan, 1973).

### New directions (1980–2010)

The 1980s marked profound transformations in the discipline of architectural history: making it more universal and inclusive, embracing different cultures and regions, going beyond the canonical themes and periods, integrating cities, landscapes, and ordinary buildings into the discourse, and giving rise to interdisciplinary and theoretical interpretations. In this intellectually rich and adventurous atmosphere, fixed centers were replaced by shifting ones, and cross-cultural readings became increasingly meaningful. Spiro Kostof's *A History of Architecture* served as a catalyst. Conceptualized as a textbook, Kostof's work presented case studies in their social, cultural, economic, and physical contexts and interwove architecture from different parts of the world into the narrative. In one chapter, he discussed the architecture of the Roman Empire together with that of contemporaneous Parthian Persia, India, and China; in another, he compared Cairo and Florence to expand the concept of the late medieval city. Most famously, he paired Istanbul and Venice, arguing for a "Turkish renaissance" and drawing attention to the parallels in the works of Sinan and Palladio (Kostof, 1985).

If Kostof's book paved the way for the entry of Ottoman architecture into the curricula of the English-speaking world, the proliferation of focused scholarship on different aspects of the Ottoman/Turkish context, situated in dialogue with other cultures, turned it into a lively discussion platform that offered much to the new debates in the field. This wave of publications is dominated by those in English, for better or for worse the lingua franca of contemporary scholarship. The place Ottoman/Turkish architectural history occupies in the international architectural culture is attested to by the Society of Architectural Historians awards given to five books on the subject (Necipoğlu, 1995; Bozdoğan, 2001; Watenpaugh, 2004; Çelik, 2008; Kafesçioğlu, 2009).

Necipoğlu played a principal role in reinterpreting the "classical" period of Ottoman architecture, based on extensive research drawn from a wide range of hitherto untapped sources. In *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power*, she examined the architecture of the Topkapı Palace as the setting for expressions of imperial power, protocol, and social codes (Necipoğlu, 1991). In *The Age of Sinan* (Necipoğlu, 2005) she traced the impact of Sinan's patrons, ranging from sultans to viziers, provincial governors, merchants, and, most interestingly, mothers, wives, and daughters of sultans, on his architecture—the latter theme, women's patronage, having been opened up earlier by Ülkü Bates (1993). *The Topkapı Scroll*, an informed discussion on architectural drawings in the Islamic world, reconsidered "Islamic" architecture from the perspective of its use of geometry, once again presenting fresh insights into historical practices of the profession (Necipoğlu, 1995).

Among the scholars currently working on Ottoman architecture, Çiğdem Kafesçioğlu, Lucienne Thys-Şenocak, Shirine Hamadeh, and Heghnar Watenpaugh support their provocative arguments with solid interdisciplinary research. Focusing on Constantinople's transition to Istanbul, Kafesçioğlu linked the building of the conquered city to the building of the empire and sifted the interventions in the urban fabric through the screens of politics, ideology, and religion (Kafesçioğlu, 2009). Taking up the subject of female patronage in the seventeenth century, Thys-Şenocak showed how architecture was used for self-representation by royal

women, as well as for serving as an expression of the court itself (Thys-Şenocak, 2007). Moving away from Istanbul, Watenpaugh studied the engraving of Ottoman power onto the city of Aleppo during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, providing an account of the state's capitalization of the physical environment in constructing an imperial image and in solidifying political authority in the Arab provinces (Watenpaugh, 2004). Hamadeh looked at the eighteenth-century transformations of Istanbul and its architecture, which were stimulated by the new ideas of the age. Her attention to the way in which the novel spaces were received and experienced at the time (based on diverse sources, including poetry) gives the book a unique and lively flavor (Hamadeh, 2007). Tülay Artan's dissertation is the first study of Istanbul's eighteenth-century architectural period to be based on a wealth of primary sources (Artan, 1988). Taken together, these works have not only extended the study of Ottoman architecture beyond the sixteenth century, but also brought within their purview urban forms, connecting the scale of the building to that of the city.

Not considered worthy of attention due to its hybrid (sometimes bluntly referred to as “degenerate”) character, the nineteenth century had been largely neglected until the 1980s, a situation that echoed the concurrent state of affairs in European and North American scholarship. At this time, the emerging drive to question established norms and canons allowed for the broadening of the discipline of architectural history to embrace the nineteenth century. In effect, the huge investments made in architecture and in cities during the struggle to achieve modernity, and the sheer quantity and range of available materials (textual and visual) quickly turned this epoch into a highly popular and lively area of inquiry. Moreover, following the “invention” of photography in 1839, the built heritage of the century could be documented in ways not possible for the earlier periods.

Among the Ottoman cities, Istanbul got the lion's share of scholarly attention, and was studied from different angles. For example, the present author traced the “remaking” of the city, considering administrative initiatives, the transformations of street networks, the introduction of modern transportation systems, the ambitious (if unimplemented) projects to redefine the capital's image, the pluralism of the architectural landscape, and the beginnings of the development of a theoretical discourse (Çelik, 1986). Steven Rosenthal wrote on municipal reform in Galata (Rosenthal, 1980). To give a further idea of the range of perspectives, Turgut Saner examined a style, Orientalism, whereas Diana Barillari looked at an architect, Raimondo D'Aranco, and his idiosyncratic use of the art nouveau (Saner, 1998; Barillari, 1995). Wendy Shaw looked at the Ottoman capital through the unique lens provided by the emergence of a new cultural institution and its architectural manifestation: the museum. She drew attention to the links between this building type and the search for a modern imperial identity and image, at the same time casting new light on cross-cultural dialogues and the agencies involved (Shaw, 2003).

Monographic studies on other nineteenth-century Ottoman cities and architecture have asked questions regarding modernity, new forms of governance, and the concept of empire in association with built environments. *The Empire in the City*, a collection of essays, edited by Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber, centered around case studies (including Beirut, Damascus, Baghdad, and Sana) touching on the themes of political and ideological discourse, patronage, administrative reform, Ottoman-European and center-periphery relations, as well as challenges to Ottoman authority (Hanssen *et al.*, 2002). In a similar framework, Hanssen's monograph linked the physical urban transformations of Beirut to administrative reforms, inserted local actors, who negotiate and challenge, into the modernization projects imposed from above, and wove everyday life into the spaces of the city (Hanssen, 2005). Stefan Weber documented approximately 1,000 buildings in Damascus and presented the specific response of the city to Ottoman modernity by investigating private and public spaces in relation to

changing lifestyles (Weber, 2010). Jean-Luc Arnaud's case study also documented changes to the urban and architectural fabric of Damascus, but on the basis of cartographic analyses (Arnaud, 2006). The present author contributed to this growing literature with a comparative study of Ottoman cities in the Arab provinces and French colonial cities in the Maghrib, examining their place within the scope of empire-building strategies (Çelik, 2008).

Physical contexts have proven to be productive venues for exploring the complexities of late Ottoman history, as witnessed by the integration of architectural subjects into scholarship that deals primarily with political, social, and cultural issues. For example, the architecture of schools featured prominently in Benjamin Fortna's book on educational reforms during the late Ottoman period (Fortna, 2000). In her revisionist analysis of late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century transformations of Jerusalem, which complements Eurocentric explanations from the Ottoman perspective, Yasemin Avcı established revealing connections to built forms (Avcı, 2004). Urban fabrics and buildings served as useful tools in Meropi Anastasiadou's examination of the multiethnic society of Salonika in the nineteenth century, as well as in Mark Mazover's treatment of the same topic over the span of five centuries (Anastasiadou, 1997; Mazover, 2004). Suraiya Faroqhi focused on public and private spaces in her study of Ottoman social culture and the daily life of ordinary citizens (Faroqhi, 2005).

Finally, architecture and architectural culture enabled a nuanced understanding of the nation-building agendas of the early Republican period. İnci Aslanoğlu's pioneering work may have shied away from sociopolitical interpretations, but it provided a valuable repertory of public and residential buildings between 1923 and 1938 (Aslanoğlu, 1980). A volume edited by Renata Holod and Ahmet Evin complicated the implications of modern architecture in Turkey by framing it with questions concerning national identity, democracy, pluralism, and sociocultural changes (Holod and Evin, 1984). The authoritative book on the topic is Sibel Bozdoğan's *Modernism and Nation Building*. With meticulous attention to public buildings that represented the nation-state (such as municipal palaces, "people's houses," and schools) and residential architecture that addressed the needs and requirements of a "modern" lifestyle, Bozdoğan drew a comprehensive picture, presented within the context of the concurrent political, historical, ideological, and cultural developments (Bozdoğan, 2001).

The twentieth century has inspired much recent scholarship by architectural historians. Rethinking the dialogue between German and early Republican architecture (especially domestic architecture), Esra Akcan demystified exaggerated notions of "otherness" and "difference" (Akcan, 2009). In a series of fascinating essays, Ali Cengizkan examined the work of foreign architects (such as Bruno Taut and Robert Oerley) in Turkey, and looked at buildings ranging from government headquarters to clock towers, elementary schools, and cooperative housing complexes from the 1920s to the 1960s (Cengizkan, 2002). Uğur Tanyeli studied the "everyday" construction practices applied to Istanbul residential buildings, whose architecture is dictated by developers and contractors. He thus subverted the debates on modernity by underlining the important contribution of anonymous, if powerful, actors to the shaping of the "métropole" (Tanyeli, 2005).

Architectural history of the past three decades points to a move away from focusing on monumental masterworks and creating hierarchies of architectural worth, toward understanding environments in their entirety and valorizing the ordinary. Sinan's hagiography is deconstructed; the "classic" period of Ottoman architecture is submitted to alternative readings from the viewpoints of patronage, reception, ideology, and power; cities at the margins of the empire are brought into the heart of the debate; and humble buildings become topics of intense and rigorous study. While architectural historians continue to display agility in formalistic readings, their interests have turned to the meanings behind the forms; their mastery over visual and



spatial dimensions allows them to use built forms as primary documents, hence broadening their archival repertory. Considering the work in progress, which includes many dissertations, it may be safe to suggest that architectural historians will push the boundaries of the discipline methodologically, theoretically, and content-wise, at the same time as they increasingly direct their research toward ordinary buildings and everyday spaces.

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