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THE MOSQUE OF THE TURKISH GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN ANKARA: BREAKING WITH TRADITION

The mosque of the Turkish Grand National Assembly in Ankara, designed by the Turkish father-and-son team of Behruz and Can Çinici, represents a significant departure from the usual conception of mosque architecture, both past and present, in its clear rejection of elements that have traditionally been associated with the mosque (fig. 1): the traditional dome and minaret are absent; the traditionally solid qibla wall is in their design replaced by a glazed surface that opens onto a garden; and the separation between the men's and women's areas in its prayer

hall is represented only by a set of steps that rises to about one meter.¹ These digressions from, or rejections of, past prototypes are most unusual even in a contemporary mosque design. Far from being the result of ignoring the past, however, a study of the mosque reveals a serious analysis of the numerous traditions of mosque architecture. The design also raises questions about the role of a mosque in the legislative complex of a country which, since the 1920's, has had a majority Muslim population, but a secular system of government.²

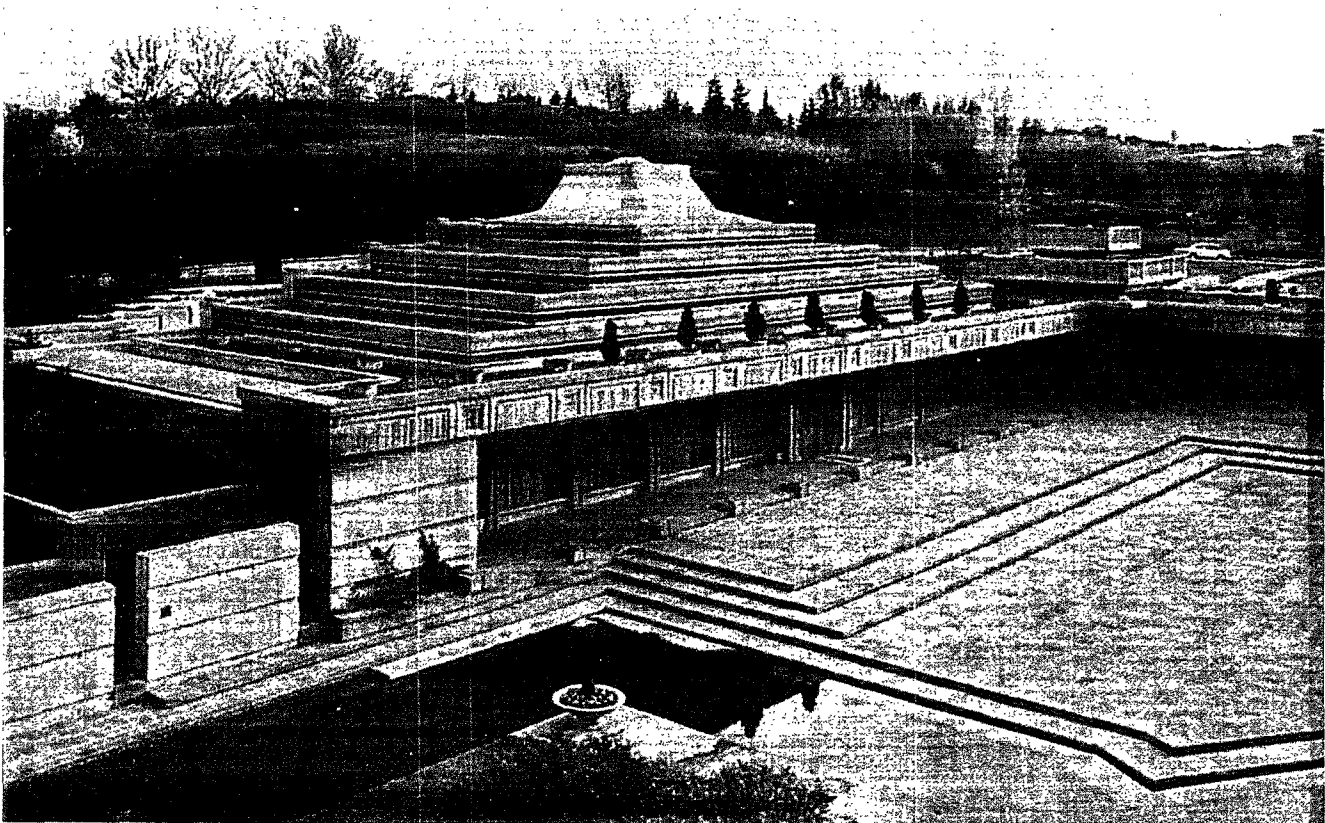


Fig. 1. Ankara. Mosque of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. General view. (Photo: from C. C. Davidson and I. Serageldin, eds., *Architecture Beyond Architecture*, p. 126)

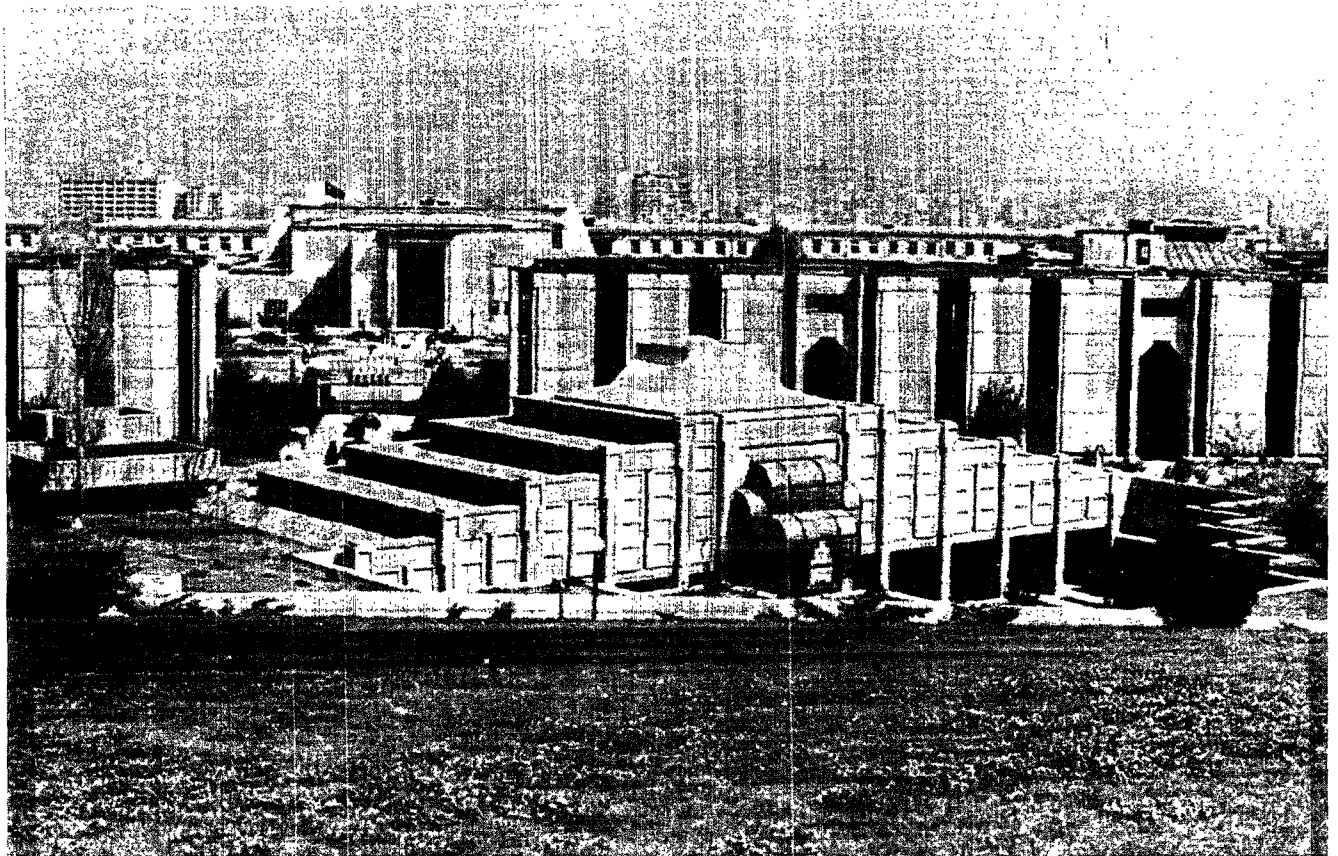


Fig. 2. Ankara. Turkish Grand National Assembly complex. General view: The mosque is located to the south of the complex, and the Public Relations Buildings are located to the north of the mosque. (Photo: from C. C. Davidson and I. Serageldin, eds., *Architecture Beyond Architecture*, p. 128)

On a different level, the mosque also brings up more general architectural problems. By providing a unique and bold departure from the constraints of past prototypes for mosque architecture, it opens up new avenues in the debate about the nature of the relationship between contemporary architectural production in the Muslim world and the various past traditions that collectively form its architectural heritage. A significant part of the debate over the nature of architecture during last five centuries, in the Western world at least, has dealt with the degree and manner in which contemporary production should or should not relate to past prototypes.

The mosque has been given a prominent place in the National Assembly complex, a vast set of buildings in central Ankara occupying an area of about 475,000 square meters (fig. 2).³ The master plan for this parliamentary complex, as well as for most of its

individual buildings, was designed by the Austrian architect Clemens Holzmeister (1886–1983), who lived and practiced architecture in Turkey between 1938 and 1954. He won the competition for the design of the National Assembly complex in 1937. Construction of the complex lasted from 1937 to 1961 (fig. 3),⁴ with a few other buildings, including the mosque, added since.

Holzmeister's design called for a set of imposing structures rigidly composed along an axis that runs almost exactly north-south. In their reliance on axi-ality and symmetry and in their use of toned-down ornamentation, his buildings express the combination of classicism and modernism seen in the works of a number of European architects who practiced during the 1930's. They include the French Auguste Perret (1874–1954) and, even more closely, Italian and German architects such as Marcello Piacentini

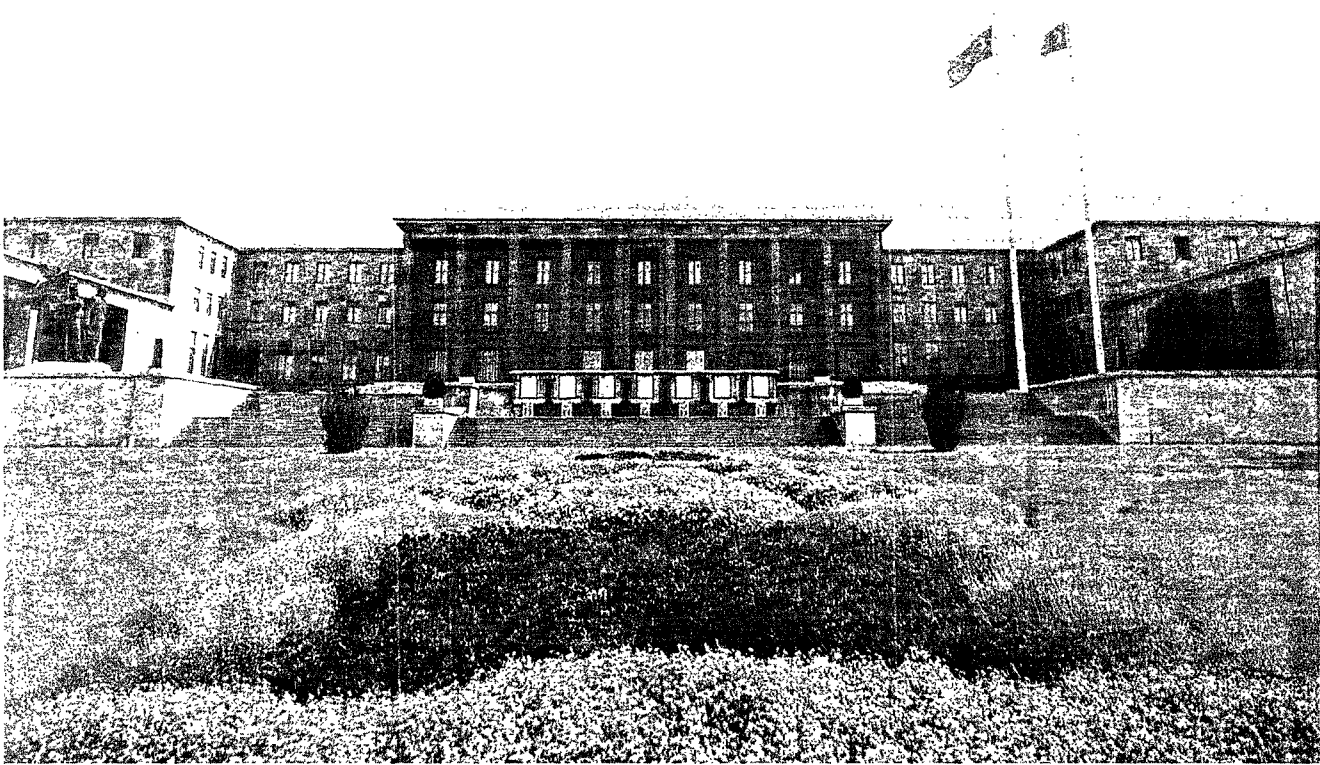


Fig. 3. Ankara. Turkish Grand National Assembly complex. View from the south showing the parliament building of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. (Photo: from *The Turkish Grand National Assembly*, p. 71)

(1881–1960), Giuseppe Pagano (1896–1945), and Albert Speer (1905–81).⁵

In 1978, Behruz Çinici (1932–) had been chosen to build a 14,000-square-meter, four-story complex on the National Assembly site, primarily to accommodate offices for members of parliament. Consequently, by the time he was chosen to design the mosque of the National Assembly in 1985, he was already well acquainted with the National Assembly complex. These first buildings, usually referred to as the Public Relations Buildings, consist of a U-shaped complex with two symmetrically arranged wings, each made up of a series of structures located around a courtyard. The buildings are located along an extension of the north-south axis of the Holzmeister plan and, in their positioning and symmetrical arrangement, provide an element of continuity with Holzmeister's original complex. The architectural character of the Public Relations Buildings, however, is very different from the Holzmeister structures. In contrast to the older buildings, which have smooth polished stone surfaces, Çinici covered most of his complex with rough con-

crete, and where Holzmeister articulated the façades with squarish punched-in windows, Çinici placed his openings in vertical strips that extend up and down the whole height of the buildings.⁶

Çinici, who graduated from Istanbul Technical University in 1954, had had Clemens Holzmeister as one of his teachers there. He also had an established reputation as one of Turkey's important architects after he and his wife, Altug Çinici, won a competition for the design of the Middle East Technical University (METU) campus in Ankara in 1960. Over the next two decades, they designed many of the campus buildings, such as the central library, cafeteria, housing units for faculty, stadium, and numerous academic buildings.

For the design of the National Assembly mosque twenty-five years after the design of the METU campus, Behruz Çinici collaborated with his son Can, who like his parents, is an architect. The mosque is located along the site's major north-south axis and acts as a termination point, or "arrow head," for that axis from the south (fig. 4). It is to the south of the Pub-

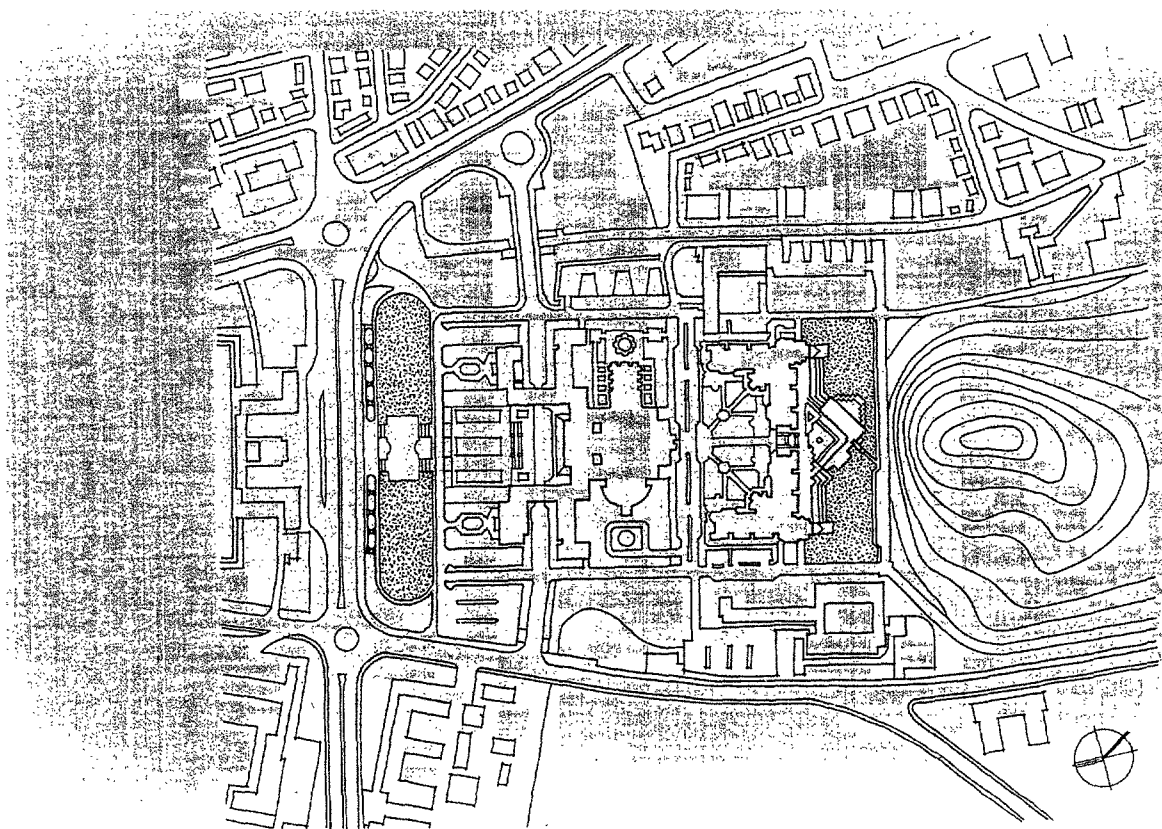


Fig. 4. Ankara. Turkish Grand National Assembly complex. Site plan. (Photo: from C. C. Davidson and I. Serageldin, eds., *Architecture Beyond Architecture*, p. 128)

lic Relations Buildings and is separated from them by a wide pedestrian passageway. As we shall see, the positioning of the mosque in relation to the rest of the complex plays a very important role in helping understand the meanings which can be associated with it.

In plan, the 6,400-square-meter mosque has three main parts (fig. 5). The first is a triangular forecourt; it is followed by a rectangular prayer hall that in turn is followed by a sunken garden. In plan, the garden is in the shape of a stepped pyramid.

The axis of the National Assembly complex is almost north-south, but the qibla direction is south-east; the architects skillfully solved the challenge of reconciling the two by using the triangular forecourt as a connecting hinge. The triangle points south, i.e., along the north-south axis, but the side along which the rectangular prayer hall is located faces the direction of the qibla. A wide pedestrian path separates the triangular forecourt along its longer side from

the Public Relations Buildings (fig. 6). A composition that is made to resemble fragments of a zigzagging wall and a reflecting pool serves in part to separate the forecourt from the path (fig. 7). The mosque's library is located along the forecourt's western portico, and the prayer hall along its southern portico (fig. 8).

The 31×12 -meter prayer hall is rectangular, with its longer side facing the direction of the qibla. Along its two shorter sides are covered passageways that lead to the garden in front of the prayer hall. The imam's office is located in the western passageway, and the ablutions area in the eastern one. The prayer hall can be entered from the front (on the north) or from the sides (figs. 9–10). It is built on two levels, with a difference of about one meter between them. The higher level consists of a relatively narrow strip located along the mosque's northern side and constitutes the women's prayer area. The remaining part of the prayer hall is on the lower level.

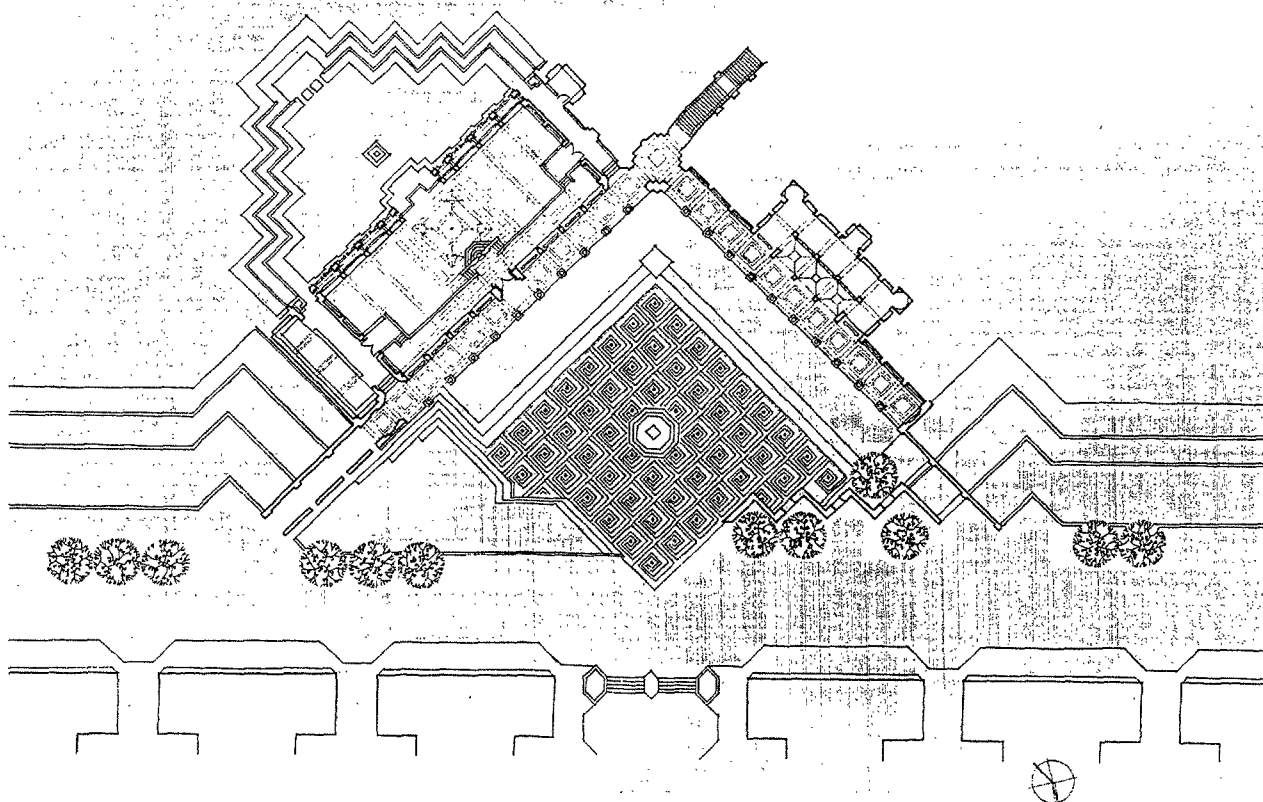


Fig. 5. Ankara. Mosque of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Plan. (Photo: from C. C. Davidson and I. Serageldin, eds., *Architecture Beyond Architecture*, p. 127)

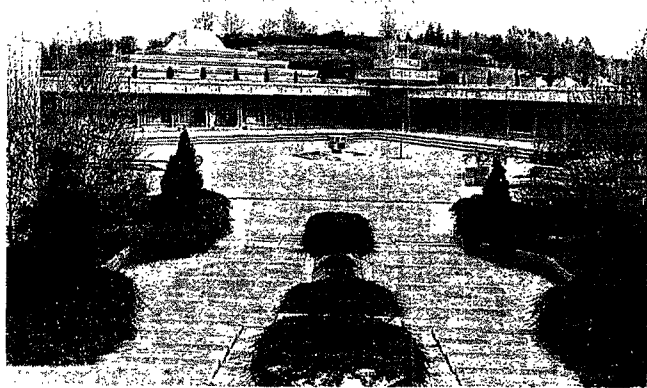


Fig. 6. Ankara. Mosque of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. View of forecourt and pedestrian passageway separating the mosque from the Public Relations Buildings. (Photo: from C. C. Davidson and I. Serageldin, eds., *Architecture Beyond Architecture*, p. 129)

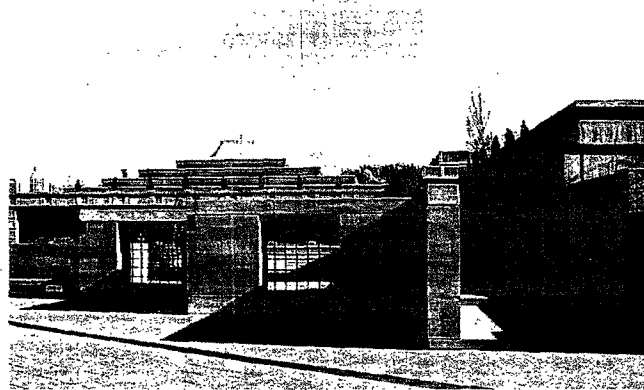


Fig. 7. Ankara. Mosque of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. View of fragmented wall separating the forecourt from the pedestrian passageway. (Photo: from C. C. Davidson and I. Serageldin, eds., *Architecture Beyond Architecture*, p. 131)

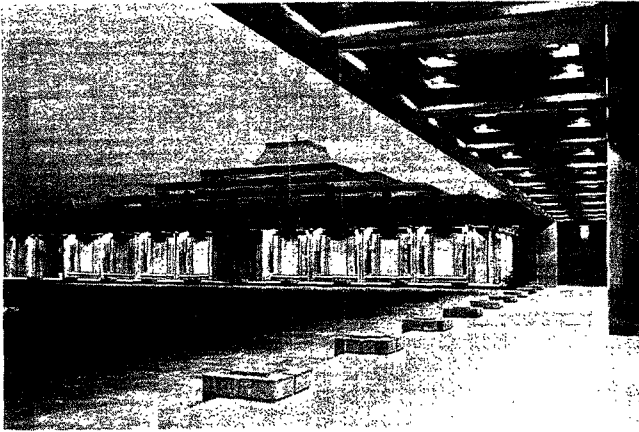


Fig. 8. Ankara. Mosque of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. View of forecourt. (Photo: from C. C. Davidson and I. Serageldin, eds., *Architecture Beyond Architecture*, p. 131)

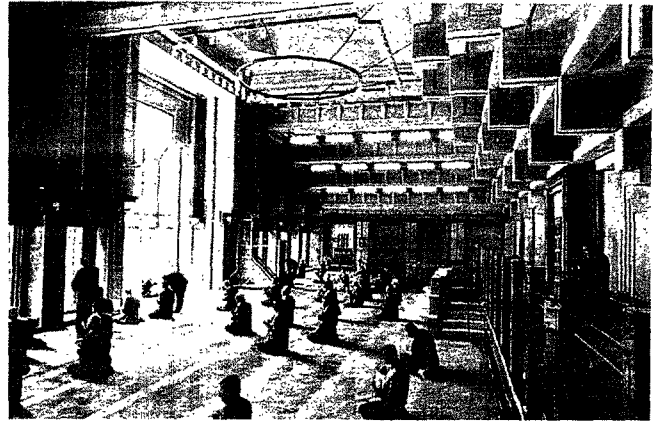


Fig. 9. Ankara. Mosque of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Interior view showing prayer hall with the qibla wall, mihrab, and minbar to the left. (Photo: from C. C. Davidson and I. Serageldin, eds., *Architecture Beyond Architecture*, p. 126)



Fig. 10. Ankara. Mosque of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Interior view showing glass mihrab wall with the sunken garden in the background. (Photo: from C. C. Davidson and I. Serageldin, eds., *Architecture Beyond Architecture*, p. 130)

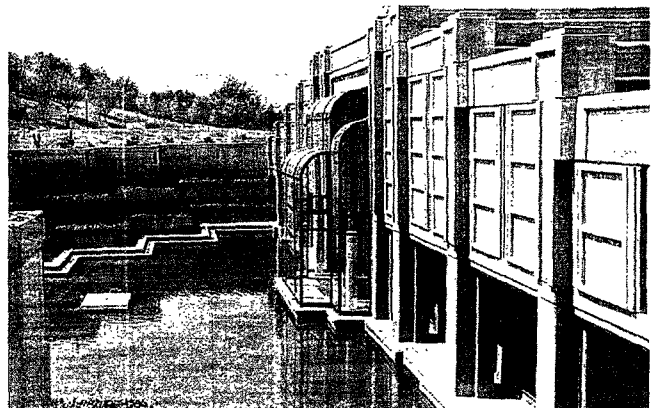


Fig. 11. Ankara. Mosque of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. View of sunken garden. (Photo: from C. C. Davidson and I. Serageldin, eds., *Architecture Beyond Architecture*, p. 129)

The glass qibla wall and mihrab visually open up the prayer hall to the adjacent sunken garden. A pool with a fountain in the center takes up most of the garden. The garden is surrounded by a stepped retaining wall covered with climbing plants (fig. 11).

An unusual element in the mosque complex is a staircase which rises from the corner bay where the two porticoes of the forecourt meet. The staircase leads to the mound that hides much of the mosque from the south. In other words, the stair leads to the outside of the mosque complex rather than to a specific point within it. On top of the corner bay are

located what can be described as two balconies of a minaret placed one above the other.

The mosque's three-dimensional composition looks very different from what one would expect from the plan. In the plan, the mosque is prominently located in the overall arrangement of the National Assembly complex at the termination of the complex's major north-south axis. In the third dimension, however, the mosque is a deliberately modest structure. This is partly the result of the manner in which the architects chose to deal with the topography of its site, which rises toward the south. The architects decided

to place the mosque in the rise rather than above it. Consequently, the mosque is hidden on three sides.

The architects continue this approach of integrating the structure into the surrounding topography, rather than dominating it, in their rejection of the traditional dome and minaret, the two architectural elements most commonly associated with a mosque. The dome is discarded in favor of a stepped pyramid, which further emphasizes the treatment of the mosque as an object growing out of the landscape; it is a horizontal object very unlike a dome, which would have been a vertical element.

By choosing to represent the traditional minaret with only two balconies, one on top of the other and very close to ground level, the architects eliminated the minaret shaft and cap, the two vertical elements that more or less define a minaret's essence. The one vague reference they make to verticality is a poplar tree planted next to the two balconies.

In their spatial arrangement, the architects dealt with each of the three major segments—forecourt, prayer hall, and garden—of the mosque in a different way. The forecourt is the least clearly defined space of the three. It lacks a clear edge to mark its boundary with the adjacent pedestrian path that separates it from the Public Relations Buildings. On one side of the forecourt, separation is provided by the zigzagging wall that evokes the idea of a ruin. In another part, the forecourt penetrates the adjacent pedestrian path, and in a third, a reflecting pool provides the separation between the two. As if to emphasize a sense of ambiguity in that space, the architects came up with a very unusual way of treating the two porticoes of the forecourt. The column bases are kept, but the column shafts are eliminated, and the roof of the porticoes is cantilevered from the surrounding buildings instead of resting on the portico columns.

The stepped pyramidal form above the prayer hall interior dominates its spatial character. The central part of the pyramid, where the main dome would traditionally be located, steps up higher than the remaining parts of the roof. The interior spatial composition which the pyramidal roof creates using a set of supporting beams gives a feeling of heaviness that contrasts with the more ethereal effect that would have been provided by a hovering dome. Even the indirect lighting that comes through openings in the stepped formation of the roof does little to lighten that feeling of weight. Although this roof arrange-

ment is a dominating visual feature, much of its dominance is offset by the glass qibla wall which provides a powerful horizontal visual axis. The glazing extends along the lower part of the qibla wall to a height somewhat above eye level, and then almost doubles in height in the area around the mihrab. The arrangement visually links the worshiper and the garden in front of the qibla wall. A minbar designed by the architects is located to the right of the mihrab.

In contrast to the forecourt, the garden is a very clearly defined and enclosed space bound by the qibla wall on one side and retaining walls on the remaining three. The garden extends around the prayer hall, as if embracing it, further emphasizing the relationship between the two.

Surface decoration on the mosque is sparse. Exposed concrete is the primary surface material both outside and in. From the interior, what can be described as abstracted muqarnas forms articulate the central and higher part of the stepped pyramid. Large Kufic ceramic inscriptions are used economically to articulate some of the interior exposed-concrete surfaces. The two shorter sides of the prayer hall are articulated by the words "Allah," "Muhammad," and by the names of the four Orthodox caliphs Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, and 'Ali. A frieze containing Qur'anic inscriptions runs above these calligraphic "shields."⁷

This mosque is obviously very different from what one has come to expect from contemporary mosque architecture, most of which consists of a cubic mass topped by a dome, with one minaret (or more) to one side. As has often been noted, this attachment to conceptions of traditional mosque architecture is not tied to any liturgical requirement, since all that is needed to perform the prayers is a space oriented towards Mecca. One explanation for this prevailing attitude to contemporary mosque design may be that religious behavior is tied to traditions that have evolved over centuries, and in the same way that people believe in the efficacy of inherited traditions, so they believe in the efficacy of inherited architectural forms. As Oleg Grabar has noted, "The argument is, or so it seems, that the historical precedent is valid simply by virtue of being an inheritance, not because what is old is intrinsically good or useful." He then goes on to remark that even "an architect as sensitive and cultivated as the late Hassan Fathy was very critical of Notre Dame du Haut, Le Corbusier's pilgrimage chapel at Ronchamp (1950-54), generally acclaimed as one of the masterpieces of twentieth-century ar-

chitecture, because, he argued, its design departs from the forms traditionally associated with the Latin Church.⁸ The past is known, reassuring, and comfortable; the present is ever-changing and unstable; and the future is unknown. Consequently, the vast majority of mosques, whether competently or incompetently designed, end up as modifications, either simplified or embellished, of a limited number of traditional arrangements.

Only a small number of designs have rejected, or at least avoided, this approach and have attempted to explore new possibilities for mosque design. Two examples—the Sherefudin White Mosque in Visoko, Bosnia-Herzegovina, designed by Zlatko Ugljen (1980; fig. 12), and the entry for the Baghdad State Mosque competition (1982) submitted by the American architect Robert Venturi of the firm Venturi, Rauch, and Scott Brown (figs. 13–14)—deserve brief mention. They are very different: the first is a small mosque in a town of about 30,000 inhabitants; the second was intended as a state mosque capable of accommodating over 40,000 worshipers. They also display very different approaches to mosque design, especially in terms of how they relate to prototypes.

In neither example is the past totally absent—the complete rejection of tradition in mosque design is extremely rare. One example is a place of prayer (*namaz-khaneh*) on the grounds of the Carpet Museum in Tehran, designed by Kamran Diba (1978; fig. 15). In plan this tiny structure consists of two squares, an outer one aligned with the axis of the museum grounds and an inner one aligned with the qibla. In the third dimension, the squares become cubes open to the sky. A vertical slot is located in each of the two cubes, and the two slots are aligned to form a visual axis in the direction of the qibla.⁹

In the Sherefudin White Mosque, we see an attempt to create abstract forms and spaces in which the connection with the past is greatly weakened and almost disappears. For example, although the mosque has no dome, it has what might be called a minaret, though the proportions of this cylindrical element and the articulation of its cap with green metal pipes and steel mesh elements separate its form from any specific historical prototype. Consequently, if it is a minaret, it is a very new type. Inside one can also see historical elements found in most Islamic architectural traditions, such as the mihrab and the minbar, but they are rendered in such an abstract manner as to weaken any connection to specific historical prototypes.¹⁰

The architecture of this mosque can be described as ahistorical and non-representational. It only includes the past in a very general way, and it avoids altogether any references to the architectural heritage of specific regions or periods. It follows the modernist approach of treating architecture as pure forms and spaces in light rather than forms and spaces as that are historically defined or based on past associations and recollections.¹¹ It has often been said to show the influence of Le Corbusier's *Notre Dame du Haut*.¹²

Robert Venturi's entry for the Baghdad State Mosque competition, in stark contrast to the Sherefudin White Mosque, shows the presence of the past in strong and specific terms. In fact, the design can be viewed as a set of extensive and carefully thought-out references to a variety of traditions of mosque architecture. However, far from attempting to duplicate prototypes, Venturi seems to use them as stepping stones from which to skip over them to reach new formal and symbolic arrangements. A strong connection with the past is established, but that past is viewed not as static, but as a link in a chain of continuous evolution.¹³

Venturi's interpretation of a given historical element consequently involves an intricate process that combines copying, abstracting, displacing, combining with other elements, and radically altering its scale. In the final result, the prototype is significantly changed, although some visual link with it is maintained. In the case of Venturi's entry for the Baghdad State Mosque competition, the design involves an extensive analysis of the history of mosque architecture. In plan, Venturi uses the hypostyle type connected with early mosque architecture, especially in Arab lands. Instead of having the arcades of the hypostyle hall rest on columns, however, he removes the columns and suspends the arches from the ceiling. The removal of the columns allows the worshipers an uninterrupted view of the vast prayer hall, while the suspended arches articulate the hall into small bays that relate more effectively to the human scale. As the architectural historian Vincent Scully remarked, although the columns are removed, "every column is somehow present, a ghostly company miraculously phantomized."¹⁴

Also interesting is Venturi's treatment of the mosque's large double-shelled dome with a diameter of over 50 meters. Muqarnas units articulate both the interior and exterior shells. The exterior muqarnas



Fig. 12. Visoko, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Sherefudin White Mosque. General view. (Photo: from Sherban Cantacuzino, ed., *Architecture in Continuity*, p. 107)

treatment shows the influence of a diverse group of prototypes such as the Imam Dur in Samarra (1085–86), the Madrasa al-Nuriyya al-Kubra in Damascus (begun in 1172), and the early-seventeenth-century Ali Kapu in Isfahan. Elements from these prototypes are combined in Venturi's large dome, but their scale

is highly exaggerated, and Venturi places this large dome not over the prayer hall, as is usually the case, but over the courtyard, his rationale being that there it could provide the courtyard area with much needed shade. In the prayer hall, he uses a much smaller dome in front of the mihrab as is customary in hypo-

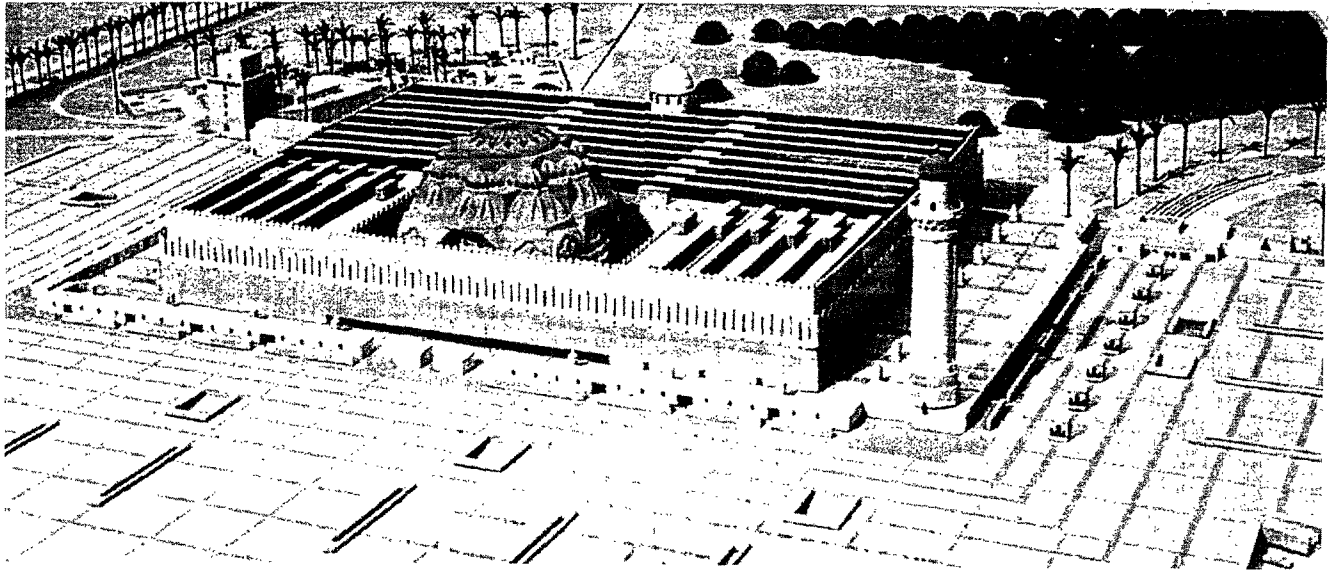


Fig. 13: Baghdad State Mosque competition. Entry by Robert Venturi. General view of model. (Photo: from "Regenerative Approaches to Mosque Design," *Mimar* 11 [1984], p. 50)

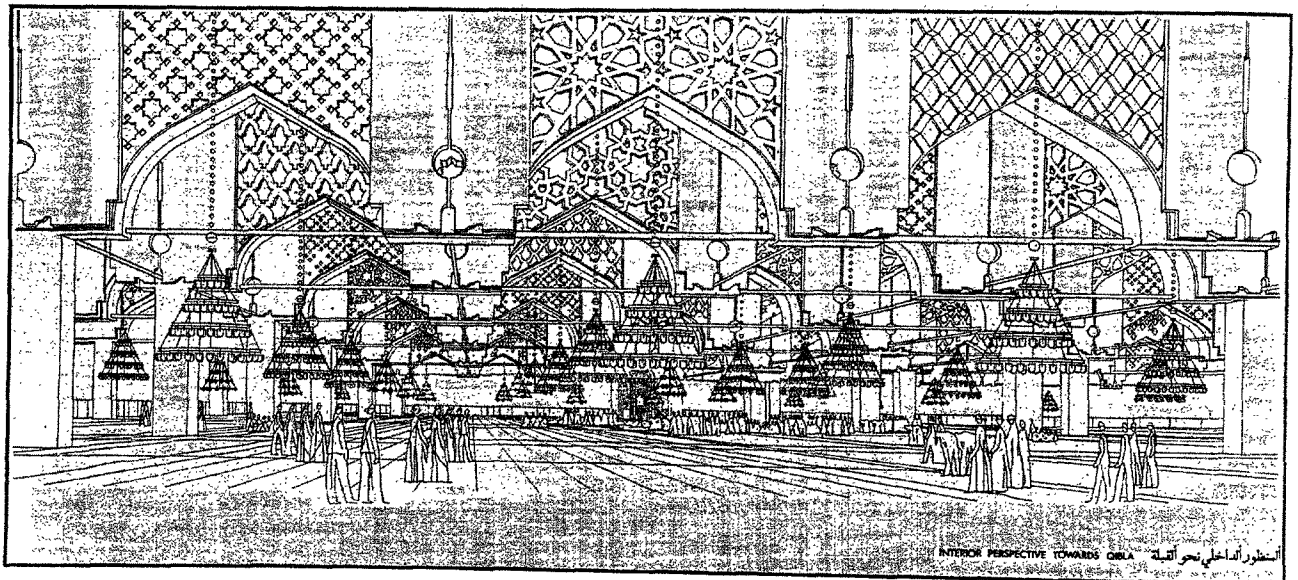


Fig. 14. Baghdad State Mosque competition. Entry by Robert Venturi. View of prayer hall. (Drawing: from Christopher Mead, ed., *The Architecture of Robert Venturi*, fig. 47)



Fig. 15. Tehran. *Namez-khaneh*, Carpet Museum. General view. (Photo: from Hasan-Uddin Khan, "An Overview of Contemporary Mosques," in *The Mosque*, ed. Frishman and Khan, p. 262)

style mosques. As for the overall arrangement of forms, Venturi deliberately presents his design as a cubic mass articulated by a large dome with a minaret at the side, thus acknowledging contemporary expectations of how a mosque should appear.

The mosque of the National Assembly shows a combination of the two approaches. Like the Sherefudin White Mosque, it represents an attempt at creating an ahistorical abstract space for performing the act of prayer. However, unlike the Sherefudin White Mosque, this ahistoricism is not achieved through neglecting the past, but through an extensive dialogue with it, a dialogue, which, interestingly enough, aims at achieving a rupture with that past.

As with Venturi's entry for the Baghdad State Mosque competition, the design of the National Assembly mosque incorporates an extensive analysis of past architectural prototypes. However, the purpose behind the analysis is different. Venturi's goal is to develop connections with prototypes in a manner that transcends simple mimesis and creates an evolutionary relationship with them. In the case of the National Assembly mosque, this extensive analysis of the past seems more a prerequisite for breaking with that past than an attempt aimed at establishing a relationship of continuity with it.

Of course, in some cases, solutions from the past are used. Reconciling the north-south axis connecting the various parts of the National Assembly com-

plex with the direction of the qibla through the use of the hinge arrangement is a variation on a solution that builders have used in the Islamic world for centuries. The earliest surviving example is in the Fatimid al-Aqmar mosque in Cairo (1125), and that solution was later beautifully and skillfully developed in a variety of architectural traditions, most notably those of the Mamluks and the Safavids. But in most aspects of the design of the National Assembly mosque, one can see references to the past which seem to emphasize their distance from the present rather than their usefulness to it. For example, the architects accept the arrangement of rectangular forecourt and prayer hall common in Ottoman mosques, among others, but cut the forecourt in half along one of the diagonals, and keep only the triangular half adjacent to the prayer hall. Here we see what can be identified as a process of fragmenting the past and maintaining only some remnants. This is connected to the idea of treating the past as a ruin, further emphasizing its distance from the present, as in the fragment of a wall which the architects placed between the forecourt and the pedestrian path separating it from the Public Relations Buildings. In the porticoes of the forecourt, the removal of the shafts, but not the bases, of the columns is also reminiscent of Venturi's design for Baghdad, where he removes the entire column and suspends the arches from the ceiling. The Çinicis refer to the past in their design of the forecourt, but, through the changes they introduce, also emphasize the distance of their design from that past.

This approach is also evident in the architects' removal of the minaret and transformation of the dome. The idea of a shell covering the central part of the prayer hall is maintained, but instead of the traditionally shaped dome (whether flat, as with Ottoman prototypes, or pointed, as with Mamluk or Safavid ones) the stepped pyramid the architects incorporate seems to have a closer formal relationship to the pre-Columbian architecture of Central America than to that of the Islamic world.

For the interior, the architects allude to the Ottoman formula of placing large medallions written in a flowing cursive script, containing the words "Allah" and "Muhammad" and the names of the four Orthodox caliphs, just below the main dome in areas such as the spandrels of the arches. However, instead of placing the words in medallions, the Çinicis had them written in ceramics and placed directly on the walls

of the prayer hall. The writing is brought down closer to eye level than would be the case in a traditional Ottoman mosque, and the inscription is written in Kufic, which harmonizes more effectively with a modernist aesthetic than cursive would, because of its reliance on simple geometry, straight lines, and right angles.

The most important changes to traditional mosque design that the architects introduce relate to the spatial treatment of the prayer hall. Here, they have significantly modified the manner in which the worshiper interacts with the prayer space. The traditional visual separation between the men's and women's areas is done away with. Customarily the women's prayer area has been placed behind a screen in the back of the prayer hall or on a second-floor balcony. In the National Assembly mosque there is no such visual separation—the women's prayer area is placed at the back of the prayer hall near the main entrance and is separated from the men's area only by a difference in level of about one meter and by a low balustrade.

The most radical change the architects introduced is the opening up of the qibla wall and the placement of a sunken garden in front of it. This arrangement is a new development in mosque architecture.¹⁵ It establishes a more interactive relationship between the worshiper and nature, represented by the sunken garden. A further connection can be made between this integration of the prayer hall and the garden, on the one hand, and Sufi thought, on the other. As Annemarie Schimmel has already noted, the Sufis very early began to ponder the relationship of man and nature, and soon discovered a basic parallel between man's behavior and the state of the garden. "Did not even the Koran prove the possibility of man's resurrection by examples taken from nature? As the dead earth will be resurrected in spring, adorned with lovely green leaves and flowers, so will the dead bones turned to dust quicken again at Judgment Day."¹⁶

The stair that leads from the corner bay of the forecourt's portico can be viewed as an extension of this Sufi theme. It does not lead to a particular point, but, on the contrary, appears to lead nowhere. It would not be too farfetched to view it as an architectural reference to the idea of infinity.

How the architects dealt with the paradoxical situation of designing a mosque in the legislative complex of a secular country with a Muslim population can be seen in how it is represented in plan and as a

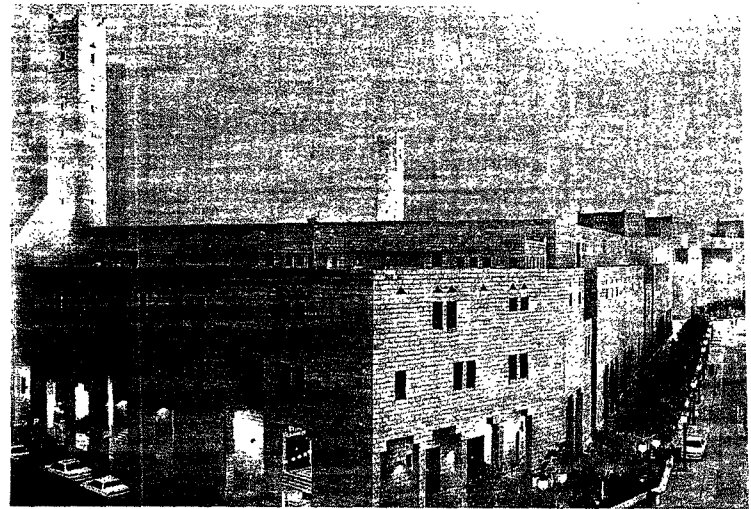


Fig. 16: Riyadh. Great Mosque of Riyadh. General view. (Photo: from C. C. Davidson and I. Serageldin, eds., *Architecture Beyond Architecture*, p. 37)

three-dimensional composition. On the site plan of the National Assembly complex the mosque occupies the prime position terminating the axis connecting the buildings of the complex. As a three-dimensional composition, it is surprisingly modest, even self-effacing, integrated as the structure is with the surrounding landscape—the mosque even seems to hide inside it. The pyramidal arrangement of the roof also serves to give the impression of an organic form growing out of the ground. In this way the mosque is both given a prominent position in the complex and kept from dominating it. By rejecting the model of the traditional Ottoman mosque, the architects also emphasize the break with Turkey's Ottoman past signaled by the founding of the secularist Turkish republic in 1923. Placing the mosque in the country's legislative complex is an acknowledgment of the significance of Islam to Turkey, while its design separates Islam from the country's Ottoman past.

Since it received an Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1995, the mosque of the Turkish National Assembly in Ankara has become known to a wider audience. This particular set of Aga Khan Awards also directed attention to a number of other issues relating to the design of the contemporary mosque since, of its twelve winning projects, two—the National Assembly mosque and the Great Mosque of Riyadh, designed by the Jordanian architect Rasem Badran

(completed in 1992; fig. 16)—were mosques, each showing very different approaches to mosque design. The National Assembly mosque represents an ahistorical and abstract spiritual religious space. The Great Mosque of Riyadh, on the other hand, is characterized by a relatively faithful adherence to a traditional architectural vocabulary—in this case, that of the central Arabian region of Najd. It is, of course, more than merely a replica of the prototypes on which it is based. It introduces a monumental scale and relates to the surrounding urban fabric in ways unknown to traditional Najdi architecture. Still, it provides an appropriate example of what can be referred to as Najdi revival.¹⁷ In spite of the two very different methods represented by these two mosques, they are similar in the clarity, and even purity, with which each method is carried out. In its own way, each structure clarifies an approach that can be utilized for the design of the modern mosque and that is lacking in most contemporary mosque architecture, which more often than not simply mixes an eclectic array of historical elements with a few modern ones. The results suggest that the development of viable contemporary approaches to the design of the mosque is a process that remains in its infancy.

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NOTES

1. For information concerning the National Assembly mosque, see Cynthia C. Davidson and Ismail Serageldin, eds., *Architecture Beyond Architecture: Creativity and Social Transformations in Islamic Cultures: The 1995 Aga Khan Award for Architecture* (Geneva: The Aga Khan Award for Architecture; London: Academy Editions, 1995), pp. 124–31; Jale Erzen and Aydan Balamir, “The Parliament Mosque, Ankara”, in Ismail Serageldin and James Steele, eds., *Architecture of the Contemporary Mosque* (London: Academy Editions, 1996), pp. 104–7; and Renata Holod and Hasan-Uddin Khan, *The Mosque and the Modern World: Architects, Patrons and Designs since the 1950s* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), pp. 100–5. This mosque was a recipient of the 1995 Aga Khan Award for Architecture, and I served as a reviewer of the mosque for the Award.
2. The coming of the Islamist Rafah party to power in 1996 has obviously challenged the secularism of the Turkish state, although the outcome of this challenge remains to be seen. These recent developments, however, fall beyond the scope of this study.
3. Concerning the National Assembly complex, see *The Turkish Grand National Assembly* (Ankara: Publications of the TGNA Culture, Art and Publication Board, 1994); and Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 97–103.
4. For additional information about Clemens Holzmeister and his work, see *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, s.v. “Holzmeister, Clemens,” and the *Thames and Hudson Encyclopaedia of 20th-Century Architecture*, s.v. “Holzmeister, Clemens.”
5. For additional information concerning Holzmeister’s work in Ankara, see Afife Batur, “To Be Modern: Search for a Republican Architecture,” in Renata Holod and Ahmet Evin, eds., *Modern Turkish Architecture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), pp. 78 f. Concerning general architectural developments in Europe during the 1930’s, see Leonardo Benevolo, *History of Modern Architecture*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1977), pp. 540–628.
6. For more information on Behruz Çinici and his works, see *Tasarım* 57 (n.d.). This issue of the journal is devoted to Çinici and includes an English summary. Concerning the relationship between Çinici and Holzmeister, see Behruz Çinici and Ayşegül Çinici, *Mimarlık Tarihi Ders Notları, 1951–1952*, ITU (Istanbul: İyi Matbaa, 1995). This book consists of the notes that Behruz Çinici took as a student in a class on the history of architecture which Holzmeister taught at Istanbul Technical University in 1951–52; it also includes an English summary.
7. The Kufic inscriptions were designed and executed by Hasan Çelebi of Mimar Sinan University in Istanbul. This information was provided by the architects (letter to the author, February 10, 1998).
8. Oleg Grabar, “The Mosque in Islamic Society Today,” in Martin Frishman and Hasan-Uddin Khan, eds., *The Mosque: History, Architectural Development and Regional Diversity* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), p. 243.
9. Concerning this structure, see Hasan-Uddin Khan, “An Overview of Contemporary Mosques,” in Frishman and Khan, eds., *The Mosque*, p. 262; and Holod and Khan, *The Mosque and the Modern World*, pp. 159–60.
10. Concerning the Sherefudin White Mosque, see Sherban Cantacuzino, ed., *Architecture in Continuity: Building in the Islamic World Today* (New York: Aperture, for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1985), pp. 102–9; Holod and Khan, *The Mosque and the Modern World*, pp. 196–201.
11. For a short but insightful discussion of the tension between historicism and modernity in architecture, see Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1977), pp. 104–5.
12. See Khan, “Overview of Contemporary Mosques,” p. 252; Holod and Khan, *The Mosque and the Modern World*, p. 201.
13. Concerning Venturi’s entry for the Baghdad State Mosque Competition, see “Regenerative Approaches to Mosque Design, Competition for State Mosque, Baghdad,” *Mimar* 11 (1984): 44–63. Stanislaus von Moos, *Venturi, Rauch, and Scott Brown: Buildings and Projects* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), pp. 198–201; Mohammad al-Asad, “The Modern State Mosque in the Eastern Arab World: 1828–1985,” Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1990, pp. 139–59; and Khan and Holod, *The Mosque and the Modern World*, pp. 89–90.
14. Vincent Scully, “Robert Venturi’s Gentle Architecture,” in Christopher Mead, ed., *The Architecture of Robert Venturi* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), p. 33.

15. Another contemporary mosque in which sizable glass areas are introduced in the qibla wall is the King Faisal Mosque in Islamabad, designed by the Turkish architect Vedat Dalakoy and completed in 1986. It is interesting to compare the two in terms of opening the walls of the prayer hall to the outside world. The results of incorporating glazed surfaces differ in the two mosques. In the Islamabad mosque, the glazing is not limited to the qibla wall, but extends to include the mosque's remaining exterior walls, and the glazed surfaces open up views of the surrounding natural landscape. In the Ankara mosque the glazed qibla wall opens onto a clearly defined sunken garden which was designed by the architect as an entity separate from the surrounding natural landscape but integral to the mosque complex. For additional information concerning the King Faisal mosque, see Holod and Khan, eds., *The Mosque and the Modern World*, pp. 76-80. I am grateful to the outside reader of this article for pointing out the connection between the two mosques.
16. Annemarie Schimmel, "The Celestial Garden in Islam," in Elisabeth B. MacDougall and Richard Ettinghausen, eds., *The Islamic Garden*, Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture, vol. 4 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 26, quoted in Elizabeth B. Moynihan, *Paradise as a Garden in Persia and Mughal India* (New York: George Braziller, 1979), pp. 43-44.
17. Concerning the Great Mosque of Riyadh, see Davidson and Serageldin, eds., *Architecture Beyond Architecture*, pp. 84-93; al-Asad, "The Modern State Mosque," pp. 173-96; Holod and Khan, *The Mosque and the Modern World*, pp. 132-34.