ghost at both feasts? If Art Nouveau’s elevation of the role of ornament is the thread that links it to Deco, its partiality to structural innovation and the exploitation of new materials like metal and glass, together with its moral commitment to social and economic reform, constitute its legacy to modernism, the avatars of which misrepresented its contributions and denigrated its successor. Yet contained within Art Nouveau were seeds that blossomed not only into Art Deco but into its hostile sibling, modernism—and Greenhalgh’s brilliant concluding chapter, “A Strange Death,” puts into perspective these vexing issues. The third piece of the fascinating mosaic that makes up the story of design and architecture in the first part of the twentieth century will be put in place in 2005, when the V&A plans to tackle modernism, providing its own challenges to the simplistic assumptions that often govern consideration of this irresistible topic. Thus a significant segment of architectural and design history from 1890 to World War II will have been illuminated by the curators and researchers attached to this extraordinary institution.

Art Nouveau and Art Deco merit high praise both for their intellectual content and their superb material quality. The illustrations, printed on fine glossy stock, are as dazzlingly evocative of their subjects as they are abundant, and the layout serves the text rather than subverting it. The thorough bibliography is organized into meaningful categories. The twin indices—by name (artist, firm, patron, author) and by subject (including ceramics, Die Jugend [a magazine], decadence, Le Chat Noir [a literary club], streamlining, vacuum cleaners, Zaire/ Democratic Republic of Congo)—make it possible to compare individual essays and obtain their authors’ differing or complementary viewpoints.

The two books reach beyond a narrative of two complex twentieth-century styles to raise questions that have continued resonance. Some historians have yet to acknowledge modern architecture’s debts to Art Nouveau, even though Henry-Russell Hitchcock had presciently enumerated these in his essay for The Museum of Modern Art’s catalogue Art Nouveau: Art and Design at the Turn of the Century (New York, 1959). At least MoMA has purchased examples representing that movement, egged on as early as 1933, astonishingly, by Philip Johnson. But, as Wendy Moonan reported in the New York Times (26 Sept. 2003, E37), the museum does not collect Art Deco. She quoted two curators in the department of architecture and design as follows: “Modern has a certain clarity of purpose. The transparency of ideas is missing from Deco. It’s too decorative” (Paola Antonelli); and “Individual pieces can be pretty gorgeous, but Art Deco is very stylized and hasn’t any ideology” (Peter Reed). These catalogues may open minds and help restore validity to the “decorative” in the arts of design and architecture.

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Notes
1. Benjamin’s text was originally published in English trans. in New Left Review 48 (Mar.–Apr. 1968).

Ali Cengizkan, foreword by Uğur Tanyeli

Modernin Saati. 20. Yüzyılda Modernleşme ve Demokratikleşme Pratığındede Mimarlar, Kamusal Mekan ve Konut Mimarlığı (The Hour of the Modern: Architects, Public Space, and Housing in Modernization and Democratization Practices of the Twentieth Century)

Ankara: Mimarlar Derneği ve Boyut Yayın Grubu, 2002, 263 pp., 49 color and 287 b/w illus. 20,000,000 Turkish liras (paper), ISBN 975-96041-7-5

An excellent piece of scholarship by a Turkish architectural historian, Modernin Saati will convince even the most skeptical readers that a broad international perspective on architecture can be highly rewarding. Although the fact that the book exists only in Turkish limits its accessibility, the historical and methodological rigor it displays merits the attention of a much wider public. At a time when academic interest in the histories of “other modernities” beyond Europe and North America is growing rapidly, these thoughtful and original essays on urban and architectural sites, actors, and struggles of twentieth-century Turkish modernity bring a refreshing local vantage point to the field. They offer a new level of historical detail and a wealth of new knowledge—a view from within that one does not always find in the more general studies or overviews produced in western academic circles. Combining meticulous primary research (often a challenge in inadequate Turkish archives) with the insights of cutting-edge theoretical literature in English on modernity, public space, and collective memory, the essays focus predominantly on the urban history of Ankara, the “mirror of Turkish modernization,” as the author calls it.

The primary preoccupation underlying the eighteen essays (many reprinted from Turkish architectural journals) is “modernity” as a profound historical and philosophical problem—one that different societies experience at different times and paces. Modernity is a sweeping historical force in constant flux, transforming the social, urban, and architectural fabric of all cultures in ways unforeseen by modernizers, colonizers, and social engineers. Taking as a point of departure the crucial but frequently collapsed distinction between modernity (the experience), modernization (the socio-economic process), and modernism (the artistic and cultural expressions), the author draws attention to the time lag between these dimensions of the modern as they have unfolded in Turkey. He writes about the absence of synchrony between “the hour of modernity” and the hours of “modernization” and “modernism,” which he likens to clocks striking at different times. The author uses the double meaning of the Turkish word saat—which signifies both
Carl Christoph Lörcher, urban plan for Ankara, 1924–25

clock and hour—as an evocative metaphor that generates the title, the cover illustration, and the central theme of the book.

Acknowledging Marshall Berman’s now-classic account of the simultaneously liberating and alienating nature of modernity and Hilde Heynen’s elaboration of the same idea through a distinction between the “programmatic” and the “transient” concepts of modernity, Cengizkan argues that discussions of Turkish modernity have been confined so overwhelmingly to the programmatic concept (the Kemalist program or project of modernity) that there is a kind of collective amnesia about its transitory nature—about the fact that a radical and destructive program of modernity inevitably prepares the ground for its own obsolescence, as has happened in Turkey since the 1950s. Collectively, the essays make a compelling plea for recovering the traces of the obliterated layers of modernity and thereby preserving collective memory in a society where the destructiveness of the new has been phenomenal.

The first essay looks at the proliferation of clocktowers in various Turkish cities from the 1880s into the 1930s and analyzes their role in the secularization and democratization of public space. Alluding without any direct reference to Benedict Anderson’s classic discussion of modern nationalism, Cengizkan writes that clocktowers have introduced a sense of shared time and social order in the manner of newspapers in nineteenth-century Europe. The mini-catalogue at the end of the essay is particularly informative. Clocktowers come alive in Cengizkan’s account as a communicative technology integral to late Ottoman/Turkish modernization (comparable to radio in the 1930s or television in the 1970s) rather than as an imported fashion of Westernization.

The next five articles focus on European architects and planners who contributed to the transformation of Ankara into a modern capital in the 1930s. Collectively, the essays make a compelling plea for recovering the traces of the obliterated layers of modernity and thereby preserving collective memory in a society where the destructiveness of the new has been phenomenal.
1920s, is a critique of formal and stylistic explanations of its rise and demise, proposing instead a careful study of the actors, the discourses, the institutions, and the historical events involved. In the fourth article, Cengizkan uncovers the largely neglected history of the Austrian architect Robert Oerley, who worked for the Ministry of Health in Ankara in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Pointing out interesting historical connections to Red Vienna, the author discusses Oerley’s buildings in the political context of Turkey’s republican preference for Austrians—a preference resulting from the shared experience of inheriting disintegrating empires (Ottoman and Hapsburg, respectively). With a wealth of new information, Cengizkan argues that laboratories, hospitals, and other health- and hygiene-related building programs, with their spacious, well-lit, and well-equipped spaces, became the new regime’s showcases of modernity and symbolized the “radical reconstitution of the new” following the republican revolution or “rupture” in Turkish history (91). The last essay in this group traces the long and arduous history of Ankara’s Government Complex and Parliament buildings (from the 1938 design competition to their inauguration in 1961) by another Austrian architect, Clemens Holzmeister. Again reflecting meticulous archival work, the discussion illuminates the idiosyncrasies and struggles of different figures and the discontinuities resulting from shifts in priorities, construction costs, and external political events.

Cengizkan makes one of his most original contributions in “Istanbul Fındıklı Elementary School 13,” a fascinating exploration of the obscure history of a modern school building in Istanbul erected in 1931–34 by Georges Debès, a Frenchman who was teaching at the engineering school (today Yildiz Technical University). Cengizkan abandoned his initial instinct to attribute the building to Rob Mallet-Stevens, who is known to have designed a distillery in Istanbul in 1930, rendering the first section outlining that architect’s work, ideas, and contributions to interwar modernism unconnected to the rest of the essay. Yet the detailed analysis of the volumetric composition, constructional details, and site plan of this largely forgotten (though extant) building reveals a representative example of the principles of the modern movement—especially “breaking the box” (Mallet-Stevens) and the “five points” (Le Corbusier)—while simultaneously illustrating modernism’s capacity to respond to local context, in this case the surrounding topography and view toward the Bosphorus.

A group of articles and interviews focuses on Ankara after 1950, bringing to light other little-known episodes of the city’s urban history, from a low-density cooperative housing experiment (Kavacik Subay Evleri) to a particular apartment block in Ankara (Cinnah 19) that testifies to the internationalization of Turkish architectural culture after 1950. Built in 1958–60 as cooperative housing for a group of urban, professional families (including that of the architect, Nejat Ersin), Cinnah 19 consists of a large rectangular slab raised on pilotis, which is divided into a uniform grid of twelve duplex apartments and features a swimming pool and public areas on the roof. The conspicuous influence of Le Corbusier’s Unité d’Habitation in Marseille (1947–52), as well as of Lucio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer, and Edward Durrell Stone, is confirmed by the interview with the architect that follows the essay on Cinnah 19. Rather than looking at the building simply as an imitation of prevailing international trends, Cengizkan convincingly treats it as the product of an “internalized modernism” (177)—one that illustrates how good architecture moves “from the utopic to the real,” taking risks, making compromises but also challenging the status quo and opening up new debates (179). The following piece, on the 1957 master plan of Ankara, supplemented by an interview with the planner, Nihat Yücel, touches on all the core problems of the city’s planning in the twentieth century, especially that of political power directing urban development according to speculative and revenue-oriented interests. The central idea that Cengizkan sparks through this discussion is that even when unrealized or only partly implemented, successive urban plans leave deep imprints on the physical fabric of the city and on the planning experience of the main protagonists—a kind of collective knowledge that should be carefully preserved.

While the remaining essays have diverse topics, they all reinforce the point that the experience of Turkish modernity, a radically transformative encounter with the new, also entails profound loss and alienation. A previously unpublished text on the fate of old Ankara’s vineyard and orchard houses (bağevleri) reads as a kind of eulogy to precapitalist connectedness between man and nature. Cengizkan looks at these traditional houses, which he documents in an illustrated mini-catalogue, as material evidence of times when patterns of seasonal living and the cycles of production and reproduction were reflected in the spatial arrangement of houses. Similarly, “The Bathroom as Object of Alienation” traces the evolution of the design and use of bathrooms in Turkish culture and argues that their traditional functional and social logic were lost after the early 1950s when they became objects of consumption—the standardized wet spaces (islak mekan) of equally standardized apartments. Although few would disagree with Cengizkan’s critical observations, especially his call for more spacious, naturally lit bathrooms with high ceilings and balconies, at times his nostalgic tone, as in his regret for the disappearance of “the boiling laundry cauldrons in the courtyard” or of “exercising naked in front of the bathroom window” (152), leads one to wonder if an exclusive emphasis on alienation does not contradict his own premises regarding the ambivalence of modernity. That his quest throughout the book is not for a return to tradition but for preserving the traces of change in the interests of defining a better and more thoughtful modernity occasionally gets lost in such poetically expressed lamentations about the penetration of
capitalism and consumer culture in modern Turkish society. The same can be said of a short essay interpreting the propaganda film Modern Migrants, which was screened in 1953 by the United States Information Service in Turkey. A close reading of the film forms the basis for a critique of the fetishization and popularization of technology and an exposition of the alienating effects of universal, rather than local, solutions to such problems as migration and the control of nature. A more nuanced text focuses on the new concept of architectural decoration in the 1950s, which applied industrialized and standardized building materials and facade elements to a number of fixed apartment typologies. Citing a 1952 article by Frederick Gibberd, “Expression in Modern Architecture,” and illustrating the point with examples from housing blocks in Turkey, Cengizkan argues that once the dwelling became a standardized commodity rather than the individualized expression of particular lifestyles and personalities, all that was left to architectural invention were small variations on the vocabulary of modern decoration, such as facade compositions, perforated screens, and balcony design.

The last two essays, concerning the neglect, loss, destruction, or simple obliteration of specific architectural artworks, urban fragments, inscriptions, and green areas, are powerful indictments of insensitivity to Turkey's collective past, implicating politicians, bureaucrats, academics, and the general public. They underscore the author's primary message, that the preservation of traces that give historicity, uniqueness, and comprehensiveness to cities and transfer these values to future generations is an urgent task. With solid scholarship supporting each text, and the well-written prose of an author who is also a published poet, the book is itself an important step in that direction. Extensively illustrated and thoroughly footnoted, it makes a major contribution to the study of modern architecture in Turkey—and by example, to studies of other modernisms elsewhere. Methodologically, the publication raises standards of scholarship through rigorous archival work and the use of interviews as historical documentation. In terms of theory, it brings a new level of complexity to studies of Turkish modernity, especially in the way the discussion moves beyond official top-down accounts of modernity toward its less visible manifestation in everyday life through lesser-known figures—a kind of bottom-up view. Above all, through the example of Turkey, the volume captures the two overlapping feelings that accompany the study of modernity in general: the "joy of discovery" as well as a "profound sense of loss and melancholy" (9). Let us hope that Modernin Saati will appear in English soon for the benefit of an international audience.

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Notes
1. Ankara is the primary focus of the author's scholarly work. His new book on Carl Christoph Lörcher's 1924-25 urban plan of the city is in press.
3. Regarding the symposium and exhibition on Clemens Holzmeister's work, which took place in Ankara and Istanbul with support from the Turkish and Austrian governments. The proceedings of the symposium are in press. For a review of the show, see JSAH 62 (Dec. 2003), 512-13.
4. These propaganda films were extensions of the so-called modernization theory, an academic rationalization of American economic, political, and military interests across the globe during the cold war. The theory departed from a basic dichotomy between modernity and tradition, presenting the former as an unambiguous blessing and the latter as an obstacle to its realization. Turkey was heralded as one of the most successful models of a universally defined process of modernization, especially in Daniel Lerner, The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East (New York, 1962). Although modernization theory has been extensively and convincingly criticized, now that all its institutional and intellectual premises have been dismantled globally, there is a certain amount of nostalgia for the constructive energy and optimism it provided for the emerging nations of the postcolonial world in the aftermath of World War II.

Building Practices

Andor Gomme
Smith of Warwick: Francis Smith, Architect and Master-builder

Although their architectural legacy is less complicated than that of the royal decorators the Craces, the Smiths of Warwick represent three generations of master builders: Francis the elder, a bricklayer in Wolverhampton; his sons Richard, a carpenter, William, a bricklayer, and Francis II, a mason; and, finally, the latter's son William II, who inherited his father's business. Francis II (1672-1738), who outshines his father, brothers, and son, provides an alternative architectural context to that defined by James Gibbs, Christopher Wren, and other well-known, often-studied English architects. His career began when builder-architects and their clients were reaching beyond provincial vernacular to achieve more metropolitan or continental results. Francis probably referred to Domenico de Rossi's Studio d'architettura civile (Rome, 1702-31) and Gibbs's Rules for Drawing the Several Parts of Architecture (London, 1732) for inspiration, as well as other contemporary pattern books, which were more likely owned by his clients than himself. Accordingly, Francis shifted from Thomas Archer to Gibbs as the more "potent" (73) influence, despite his characteristic houses being aptly labeled Baroque rather than classical. He was a late arrival to Palladianism because, as author Andor Gomme contends, he understood and followed taste but avoided intellectual commitment, freeing himself from the rigidity of that style until the final decade of his career.

The ambiguity of the book under discussion is apparent from the start. The title, Smith of Warwick, refers to an architectural manner, a family of builders, and an individual, yet the sub-