The Miracle of Islamic Culture and Architecture

Islam made its first attempt to solve the problem of unification twelve or thirteen centuries ago. In the first centuries after the death of Muhammad it expanded with unprecedented speed, conquering whole continents by the sword. Islam embraced mankind from the Pyrenees to the Himalayas, bringing to those within its sphere of influence a new outlook, a new civilization and a way out of the darkness. Islamic civilization followed in the wake of this great religion, spreading and quickly taking root in the conquered territories.

The areas conquered by Islam enjoyed a social and cultural harmony that encouraged rapid development. Islamic civilization first had to pass from a nomadic to a settled pattern of living. This transition took place over a very short period of time and with an extraordinary effect. It was effected in part by the eclectic attitude of Islam, which sought to assimilate those elements of previous civilizations that would best accord with its own sociocultural structure. Islam itself became the organizing principle in the legal and administrative structure. While the various ethnic, racial and religious groups gave the lands dominated by Islam a heterogeneous character, the civilization that resulted was completely homogeneous.

The arts and architecture were part of this extraordinary development. In a short period and over a huge geographical area, architectural works were built that clearly shared common characteristics. Instead of destroying particular resources and styles of architecture and architecture and an established culture can play an important role in reconciling these people once again. I should like to briefly review previous attempts at this kind of reunification in Turkey and other Muslim countries.
presidential palace, an architectural era came to an end. Around this time the “Cubist” style of central Europe found a foothold in Turkey and dominated the scene for the next fifteen or twenty years. The Turkish cities, particularly Ankara, became a conglomeration of gray flat-roofed buildings, entirely foreign to their environment. Urban planning, again especially in Ankara, developed along lines unsuited both to the ancient character of the town and to local topography. These plans, the products of the aesthetic of Camillo Sitte and the leadership of Jansen, were applied in numerous cities, effectively wiping out their ancient characteristics. New cities were built over the old, a decisive factor in this annihilation. The foundation of a locality named “New City” (Yenisehir) in Ankara did not prevent the destruction of the ancient city by the planners.

During the same period, new towns of exemplary beauty (Fez, Rabat) were being built in North Africa. These cannot be dismissed simply as products of the colonizers, for they are worthy examples. In most cases the ancient city centre (casbah) and the palace areas remained untouched, while a new city was founded in a separate location where it would interfere as little as possible with older settlement areas. In this way the terrible mutilation that took place in Turkey was avoided.

The Turkish House and the National Architectural Style

The Cubist style had a tremendous influence, and over a period of ten or fifteen years it changed the face of our cities. But from 1935 on, a reaction set in. Its origins were in the Academy of Fine Arts (Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi), and its aspiration was to establish a national architectural style. Between 1935 and 1950 it extended its influence over the whole country, until between 1950 and 1955 it was forced to give way to international, particularly American, styles and trends. Until the 1930s, all attempts at a renaissance of or a movement toward a national Turkish architecture had their roots in the tradition of monumental religious buildings. Each new edifice was domed, arched and modeled as the old had been; only proportions and functions were changed. The style was often debased, and a lifeless decor was endlessly repeated. Stations, hotels, office buildings, any structure where a measure of monumentality was found desirable would be padded out with domes. At the same time, the massing of elements intentionally or unintentionally betrayed European Renaissance models. Over the period of seventy years in which the attempt to find a national style continued, Vallaury seemed to be the only one who was able to find his inspiration elsewhere. He found it in domestic architecture, and produced buildings like the Büyük Ada Hotel in Princes Island, Istanbul.

The movement toward a national style began with the discovery of the Turkish house; to avoid mere imitation of the European style, national characteristics were sought in Turkish domestic architecture. Previous attempts at defining a Turkish national style had been inspired by the use of brick and stone arches and domes. But the age of reinforced concrete had now arrived, and world architecture had adapted itself to that material. The Turkish national style had to modernize or, in other words, to be applied to concrete. It had to reject the massive, the weighty and the solemn and embrace the light, transparent, multi-windowed forms that seem to hover above the ground. Attention had to be focused above the ground floor level, as it was in the old Turkish houses perched on stilts above a stone courtyard. The ground floor of the Turkish house was usually no more than an empty space, not used as a living area. The house did not rely on massive walls but on dainty pillars for its support, as did the pilots of Le Corbusier. To me, modern architecture must be judged by the beauty of its structure. Turkish proportions and infill walls could fit into such skeletons.

I moved from the Rue de Sèvres to the Rue Franklin and A. Perret was pleased that I had done so. I wished to learn how to leave reinforced concrete bare: that for me was the textbook of the period was the Beaux-Arts Grand Prix de Rome collection. I made a study of the architecture of Le Corbusier both from books and site visits, although there was little to see at the time. The Villa Savoie had not yet been built, and Stein’s house at Garches had only recently been finished. Le Corbusier was working in his studio on the Rue de Sèvres. I visited him often and showed him my drawings. He took an interest in me, and his influence over me was profound. I was fascinated by the Domino project; who would have imagined that I would attempt it forty years later in Libya (though it met with no success)? I was unhappy with only two aspects of Le Corbusier’s work: he did not pay sufficient attention to the reinforced concrete skeleton, and its roofs leaked. I was then, and still am, a devotee of the reinforced concrete skeleton. To me, modern architecture must be judged by the beauty of its structure. Turkish proportions and infill walls could fit into such skeletons.
main point—the beautiful skeleton should be left to speak for itself. I pictured the infill walls coloured, as they were at Ankara, Kastamonu and Amasya. Perret's concrete was colourless. It was moulded, but not "brutal," as it is so often wrongly described today. On the contrary, it was delicate and refined. The surfaces were textured, boucharde as it was known in those days. Time has shown that these surfaces grow old beautifully.

Corbusier's houses were always white, for he made no distinction between framework and wall. His windows were panoramic, the same length as the walls, and horizontal; Perret made his windows vertical, like a standing man. This essential difference in their points of view disturbed me for some time, but in the end I found a solution to which I have always remained faithful. In the traditional Turkish house, windows are arranged in rows of differing vertical and horizontal proportions. In the hall the windows cover the whole wall, forming an unbroken band except for a few bridging elements kept as unobtrusive as possible. I adopted that form. Neither Corbusier nor Perret approved of my idea, though they never said why.

Could modern Turkish architecture follow the same pattern? I tried out this idea two years later in Berlin, producing detailed projects of concrete mosques with and without domes. The skeleton would speak for itself and would be finely textured. Above a certain level the walls would be divided into white concrete sections, in place of the old plaster window frames, while the lower area would be tiled or marbled. I put these early ideas into practice in Libya in a more massive form, using geodesic or faceted forms in place of the halfdome.

In Berlin, I first saw the Frank Lloyd Wright album published by Wasmuth; the "prairie houses," a few of which had already been built, attracted my attention. I believed I had discovered some important elements of the Turkish house of the future in these designs. The long, low lines, the rows of windows, the wide eaves and the shape of the roofs were very much like the Turkish house I had in mind. These romantic, naturalistic houses were far more attractive than the box-like architecture of Le Corbusier. The use of rough-hewn stone and natural wood increased their effectiveness. I was not, at the time, able to detect the difference in quality and intellect between these two styles of architecture. How had Wright arrived at these forms? This question kept me occupied for hours at the Volkskunst Museum. Wright's sources were not in America, but in Asia, and "prairie" was merely a metaphor for the long, low lines. Under the influence of Wright, I designed a project for a series of houses that were exhibited at the Turkish Society in Ankara.

Wright was later to find inspiration in Aztec and Mexican forms to use a new type of concrete. This concrete was also brute, massive and moulded—that is, it was not in a skeleton style. I was to get my first look at this technique in a visit to the Unitarian Church in Oak Park, near Chicago, ten years later in 1938. During my student days I used to visit the American Girls' College in Arnavutköy, where I studied the concrete walls of the building in detail. They had been moulded, using yellow sand, in 1916, but instead of being brute they were deliberately smooth and refined. The walls of the Oak Park church reminded me of the walls of the school in Arnavutköy. The two were worlds apart in architectural taste and decor, but in form and value they were similar. Thirty years later Le Corbusier would discover how to do this with concrete (Marseilles 1960), even though forced by lack of funds to mould it by the most primitive methods.

The National Architectural Style, 1932-1952

In 1932, a seminar on the national architectural style was opened at the Academy of Fine Arts. Its goal was to encourage a new, modern style based on Turkish domestic architecture. It stipulated that the development of the new Turkish style begin with an examination of existing structures, which should then be reconstructed. I was able to continue with my own students the research I had done in Anatolia during my student days. We discovered hitherto unknown and fascinating beauties.

Building projects and construction research ran parallel to the work of the seminar. Between 1935 and 1950 Turkey evolved its new architectural style. Cubist forms lost their appeal and were replaced by buildings with pitched roofs and eaves. The cause of this change was not ideological, but prosaic; nearly all the flat roofs of the Cubist buildings in Ankara leaked, and the terracotta facings came away from the walls. All the roofs had to be replaced, and the Ministry of Public Improvement and Housing stipulated that all new construction must have pitched roofs and eaves. (The same Ministry is now trying, twenty to twenty-five years later, to deal with a second trend toward flat roofs by imposing various specifications, minimum roof angles and the like.)

With the outbreak of the Second World War, iron and cement disappeared from the market and high-rise structures were abandoned in favour of buildings of a few stories. Massive-walled structures replaced reinforced concrete. Nationalism took on a different meaning in Europe, and Germany's influence began to express itself in new forms in Turkey. Bruno Taut, who came to Turkey from Japan, was able to make use of the work done at the Academy seminar in his building for the Faculty of Languages, History and Geography in Ankara. He attempted to impart a Turkish character to his brick and stone walls and was, in my opinion, highly successful.
The Stone Age had begun, with both policy and the economy playing their part in this development. Policy demanded that buildings be built of stone, strong and durable, unlike the frail Cubist buildings of Ankara. The national style was therefore solid and monumental. The presence of Paul Bonatz in Turkey during the period contributed to this outcome, as he was a devotee of stone construction. Many of the bridges over the German autobahns had been built of stone. Between 1940 and 1945, buildings such as the Faculties of Science at Istanbul and Ankara, the Ataturk Mausoleum and many buildings of the Technical Counsellorship were all constructed as massive eaved or pitch-roofed buildings in the national style. In many of the cities of Anatolia these rambling, large-scale structures were well adapted to their surroundings and to the landscape; it cannot be denied that they have weathered well over the thirty years or so since their construction. They have merged completely into their surroundings, and do not seem to have spoiled the ancient character of the Anatolian towns.

In the late 1950s a reaction ended this national architecture. The buildings of the period were regarded as too eclectic, and nationalism was equated with fascism. In any case the Academy had burned down, and the seminar had come to an end. At that time an important design competition for the Istanbul Law Courts was announced. From among the projects submitted, most of them solid stone buildings, a light reinforced concrete design which retained individual and local characteristics was selected. For various reasons the building itself was never completed, but its design was enough to begin a new era, as Turkish architecture sought to express itself through modern techniques and not simply through the past. The concrete skeleton was to remain naked and the infill walls to appear functional. With the building of the Istanbul Hilton Hotel, architecture lost much of its regional character and the trend toward European and more particularly American architecture made its appearance; in the process it became, as every imitation is bound to, an exaggerated version, almost a cartoon of the original. The trend continues; meanwhile, the concepts of architectural function, frame and structure have been overshadowed by constantly changing formalist and mannerist trends. The search for a local Turkish style has become almost obsolete, although the still incomplete Law Courts have been the inspiration for one or two isolated movements and projects.

The Academy's seminar on the national architectural style was revitalized as a Preservation Department. Various schools of technology (the Middle East Technical University, the Istanbul Technical University, the Yildiz School of Architecture and others) are continuing the work started at the Academy forty years ago. Along disciplined and scientific lines, they continue to promote interest in Turkish architecture and the protection of monuments, towns and cities.
New Projects

New construction projects that treat buildings as groups, rather than as individual structures, are evidence that the old idea of the neighbourhood is again gaining validity. Among the most important projects planned along these lines are the constructions at Yıldız and Zeyrek. Houses inspired by old forms have been built, and some of the embassy buildings in Ankara also belong to this group. The Embassy of Pakistan attempts to apply the architectural principles of Islam to the climatic conditions of Ankara, but it cannot be established that the real inspiration for its reinforced concrete vaulting was any particular design by Corbusier.

About this time the government of Pakistan approached me about a large project, an offer that represented an important mile-

Islamabad, Pakistan. The Shah Faisal Mosque by Vedat Dalokay, using traditional forms in a contemporary context

Photo: V. Dalokay
stone for Turkish architects. Louis Kahn's project at Dacca had embarrassed the government of Pakistan, and the Muslim countries had grown tired of acting as a training ground for foreign architects. I was unable to accept the offer, although I did have subsequent opportunities for carrying out my ideas in Pakistan. In my stead Vedat Dalokay designed a mosque in Islamabad, the first mosque in concrete which is both modern and Islamic. The design is Turkish in origin, with four minarets and a central dome. Its decisive form was not accepted in Ankara, but the structure is now rising in Islamabad. I hope this most modern and most important creation of Islam will soon be completed.

Another smaller though equally important modern mosque is being built at Cenzur in Tripoli. This building is softer in character and more familiar in spirit. Its dome is of concrete, horizontally patterned in a basket weave. I hope that we shall soon see the successful completion of this project as well. Generally speaking, however, contemporary religious architecture which symbolizes Islam is regrettably lacking in quality and aesthetic merit. The fact that it is often planned by outsiders to the traditions is certainly a factor. The mosque at Medina and the Shrine at Mecca, for example, are being rebuilt in an entirely imitative style of architecture which should never have been accepted by the Islamic world. They are a throwback to the past rather than a step forward into the future.

It is quite clear that our capital of Ankara, which was built simultaneously with the Republic, was wrongly planned. The additions and improvements made in other cities at the same time are no longer effective. The appearance of shantytowns in the past fifteen years shows that it is inappropriate to claim any serious town planning or housing projects in Turkey. Housing and urbanization in this country are in a chaotic state. Plenty of academic and scientific establishments in Turkey could supply the skills and facilities necessary for the ordering of this chaos, but all of them run parallel to reality, on different tracks.

In North Africa, and to some extent in Iraq, Pakistan, India and the Far Eastern Muslim countries, establishments of this type were set upon firm foundations; they have been responsible for the completion of many exemplary projects, with standards generally maintained at a high level. This has not been the case in Turkey. The material and technical quality of most Turkish buildings is lower than that in other countries. Our cities are never built to the same high standards, and even the old Turkish houses which we admire so much have failed to stand up to wear and tear as well as have the houses in other Muslim countries. Constructed of wood and sun-baked bricks, many of them are now in ruins. Muslim countries in which stone is the traditional building material have an advantage; their buildings are not likely to disappear unless they are deliberately demolished. On the other hand, in a country such as Iran where the main building materials are brick and baked earth, the situation is even more serious than it is in Turkey, since buildings made of these materials fall into disrepair at the first sign of neglect.
Owing to the increasing importance of oil production in the last ten years, the Muslim countries now have resources at their disposal never before witnessed within their borders. An unprecedented level of building activity in the oil-producing countries of Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Libya is one result of the new wealth. It is increasing in momentum as British architectural and engineering firms are engaged in large-scale projects, joined by well-known American firms and even Bulgarian and Yugoslavian companies. Their work is in the international style accepted by the world. Along with interesting and ambitious projects, one can find tasteless buildings of low quality. One factor common to all is that they remain alien to their surroundings. It may be difficult to create the desired ideal at first, but this should be the aim in urban and domestic planning. After all, man's immediate surroundings are his home, his neighbourhood and his city.

In formulating our goals for the future we must not overlook the work that is already being done by Muslim architects in the Islamic world. Chief among these are Hassan Fathy of Egypt, and Nader Ardalan and the Firoughi D.A.Z. group of Iran. The Iranians, while heroically attempting to carry on the traditions of their own regional architecture, have not been entirely successful in holding themselves aloof from general trends—the names of Sert and particularly of Kahn come to mind. But this view is not necessarily a criticism. Is Le Corbusier not the common inspiration of the Japanese school, whose architects represent the most original regional style of architecture in the world today? Is he not also the father of the modern and simultaneously baroque local architecture now dominant in Brazil? Kenzo Tange, Costa and Niemeyer are all giants in their own right, but they cannot deny the debt they owe Le Corbusier. The new generation in Iran, having left Aalto and Rudolph behind, is currently under the influence of Kahn. It
may be hoped that one day they will shake off his influence, and stand on their own feet.

Hassan Fathy is a different proposition. He seeks his inspiration only in the aesthetic of his own country, using simple native techniques. As a result, it is difficult to place his buildings into any period. What contribution can this style of architecture make? What can it offer on a larger scale? Can it hold its own in an urban setting? Is it really eclectic? Architectural theoreticians may concern themselves with these questions, but Hassan Fathy has opened up new vistas for us and for the Islamic world. His designs may take us back through the centuries, but they are thoroughly regional. Can the label of eclecticism be a bad thing, when compared with the bewildering mannerisms of modern architecture? Fathy has heralded a new era in architecture, with new forms, a new environment and new possibilities. He has the same sources of inspiration and the same wealth of ideas as Kahn and Aalto. I trust that the new generation of Muslim architects will take Fathy's lesson to heart.

Toward the Revitalization of the Islamic Architectural Tradition

We have now reached the third and most important aspect of our subject. Up to this point, much of what I have had to say has been concerned with Turkey and with my personal experience, partly because I know both subjects, especially the latter, very well, but also because the explanations related to my personal experience are intended to give future Muslim architects an idea of what kinds of commitments they will have to make. The chief aim of my fifty years of professional life has been to create a regional architectural style. I have approached the problem from various angles, not all of which have been appropriate or successful. With time I have become even more convinced that internationalism in architecture is not a productive choice. This conviction is indeed one of the reasons for gathering here today. World architecture is in a state of crisis. The various "isms," such as functionalism and internationalism, are no longer valid. We now face a new "ism": regionalism. It should be our aim to realize the claims of regionalism in Islamic society, but how are we to achieve this aim? I would like to direct my attention to this question.

Before attempting to look to the future, and in order to protect ourselves from the influence of alien cultures, we must concern ourselves with our own architectural heritage, reap its fruits and take strength and inspiration from it. Any other approach would be unproductive and would necessarily be swallowed up in the flood of world architecture. We must first gain an understanding of our own individuality, become familiar with the values of our own culture and architecture and learn to love them and be proud of them. Only after structuring the new foundations with the help of knowledge and sensitivity can we design our own new style.

One might ask why it is necessary to look into the past. Why can we not simply look forward? The answer is that Islam's only way into the future is through the past. The greatest achievements of Islam are those of the past; since then we have merely been marking time. It is a regrettable fact that we must first journey into our past and seek our inspiration there. Only then can we venture forward onto new ground. Our first requirement is a solid foundation.

The programme through which the preservation and development of Islamic architectural culture and its leadership in that field can be realized may be summarized as follows: research into the architectural values of our civilization; detailed examination, definition and presentation of these values; the most effective preservation of the values remaining from the past; technological, climatic and sociological research into new architectural possibilities and appropriate experimental work; encouragement in this area by means of competition and reward. The main activities of research, definition and presentation lie in recording and research work, the publication of findings and their presentation at meetings.

The world of Islam first came into contact with the West in the seventh and eighth centuries, during its expansion as a religious and political power. These first contacts had a lasting effect on future relations between the two cultures. In the centuries that followed West-East movement continued, in the form of religious wars and later with journeys of discovery. In the fourteenth century Islam entered Europe through the power of the Ottomans, while in the fifteenth it declined in Spain. Commercial motives as much as political ones led the Westerner to familiarize himself with the East, even though he might remain prejudiced. When in the nineteenth century the West became concerned with tracing its roots, the Aegean-Mediterranean basin and the East were still under the control of Islam. While the West placed the origins of its civilization in the Greek, Hellenistic and Roman past, it also realized it could no longer ignore Eastern and Islamic civilizations.

A few centuries ago, the Western world's thirst for knowledge led it to explore the East and show an interest in Islamic architecture. The academic standards of those times cannot, of course, be compared with those of the present day. The difficulties encountered by Western scholars in their examination of the artistic worlds of Islam...
must not be overlooked; they have still not been entirely overcome. In spite of this, the architecture of Islam has been a subject of interest and research in the West for at least the past 150 years. The earliest works of importance in this field are the albums of Egyptian and Persian architecture published by Pascal Coste in the 1830s. Even earlier than this, scholars under the patronage of Napoleon recorded Egyptian houses, though this work had no scholarly motives and did not amount to anything of importance. We owe our knowledge of the Istanbul of 190 years ago to the interest and efforts of the architect Melling. Flandin undertook similar work in Turkey and Iran, drawing the many palaces of Isfahan. Texier must also be remembered.

In the present century, much invaluable work has been done in the Islamic world by talented scholars such as Herzfeld, Franz, Cunningham, Creswell, Gabriel, Pope, Goddard, Reuter and La Roche. Although Bannister Fletcher treated what he calls Saracenic and prehistoric Islamic architecture with a certain flippancy, this attitude has been changed somewhat in the most recent edition of his book. Seljuk and Ottoman architecture are now being allowed to take their deserved place in the Islamic scene. If it were not for the tremendous work carried out by C. Gurli in Istanbul, Edirne and Damascus, and the wealth of his publications, these architectural styles would have remained unappreciated.

With the widespread use of drawings and coloured photographs in the last few years, many works of interest have been produced which seek to present the Islamic world not only from a scholarly, but also from an aesthetic and human angle. Photographic reproductions have opened new vistas. The West has made full use of these opportunities to study the world of Islam and to express its own views.

The most recent developments have added to the available information. Recent publications on the architecture of Islam, whether books or articles in academic, or just as importantly, in professional magazines, contain these investigations. An example are the articles on Isfahan or Aleppo by Cantacuzino in the Architectural Review. Research of this kind is to be encouraged, and it should be undertaken more frequently by native architects and academics. Organized efforts must be remembered along with the work of individuals. Western organizations have founded archeological institutes in the Middle East, in Muslim countries and in their own countries to promote interest and research in the Muslim world.

In countries that were formerly part of the Islamic world, buildings built under various Muslim dynasties have been preserved and made the subject of published research. The Soviet Union has been particularly active on this front. To date, however, none of these countries has shown the commitment to conservation and preservation evident in the smaller states of Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece. Whether the efforts of these establishments are adequate for unbiased study and presentation of Islamic civilization is a matter worthy of discussion. It cannot be said that increasing interest in this field of study has led to any clear-cut achievement. The most telling factor in the attainment of this goal will certainly be the success of Islam in presenting itself to the West—rather than the success of the West in understanding Islam—and in its being able to make certain facts about itself accepted, although they may lead to controversies.

Are we still an amorphous society on which foreigners carry out research? When will we begin to analyze ourselves and present the results of our work to our people, and to those who share our religious beliefs, before presenting them to the world? How much longer is the Islamic world prepared to remain aloof from the activity going on around it? The research that is being carried out at the moment should be seen as experimental. I prefer to speak of the situation in Turkey with which I am familiar. Besides the movement toward a national architectural style at the Academy, which after all is forty-five years old, five universities now offer preservation and restoration courses and three other institutes are concerned with these subjects. The work done by these establishments will eventually be published. One of their activities is research in specific localities, which will no doubt arouse interest when available in print. It is to be hoped that this work will be followed by activities on a larger scale.

The scope of such activities in Egypt and Iran cannot be defined with any certainty, but the Iranian publication Art and Architecture is a useful source of information. A satisfactory level of cooperation between our countries has not yet been established, however, we hope that the Aga Khan Foundation will open the way to greater cooperation.

The Muslim countries have remained indifferent for too long to their own architectural heritage. It is as if Islam believed it unnecessary to preserve old buildings in their original state. The attitude that complete renewal is preferable to preservation is particularly apparent where houses and cities are concerned. Quite apart from the business of reconstructing abandoned buildings left to decay, no one has thought to preserve them through drawings and photographs. Cities, for instance Jiddah and even Mecca and Medina, are being ruined in the name of modernization. The old streets and houses have been annihilated, replaced by ugly piles of concrete. Not a trace of the beautiful wooden mashrabiya balconies of Jiddah remains.

Over the last hundred years, countless architectural and artistic treasures have been irretrievably lost. Survey and study of these buildings are new developments. Such studies had not been entirely lacking in earlier times, but again they have been carried out for the most part by non-Muslims. Evaluation and classification have also been carried out by foreigners. We must not forget that the work of these foreign researchers, archeologists and architects, which we now take such great pleasure in criticizing, was carried out until only a few years ago under conditions of extreme difficulty. They were sometimes unable even to enter the buildings they were studying, or were forced to resort to guile to gain entry. I am eternally grateful for their efforts.

The aim of our research work should undoubtedly be to convey to future generations an idea of the nature of the cultural values of Islam. Much work has already been done in many of the Islamic countries by both foreigners and native scholars, and
by research institutes attached to universities and academies. Most of this work has been concerned with monumental architecture, a much smaller proportion with regional, domestic and urban architectural history.

The first and most important work of the Aga Khan Foundation will be to collect, evaluate and publish the results of this research. This will require the establishment of a centre so that disorganized and diffuse elements may be gathered into a whole, and a unity of aim and method can be achieved.

This centre, while involving itself with the classification of work already undertaken, could also begin its own classification work. The European Council, an international body, follows a systematic policy of conservation of its cultural heritage which has been agreed upon by all its members. Our centre could attempt to develop a similar intergovernmental policy for the three-continent world of Islam. Inventories could then be made, using a common methodology which would provide categories for single monuments, group monuments and sites. Apart from that, scholarly research could be carried out on the subject of the Muslim town. This institute would of course work in close cooperation with other individuals and establishments concerned with the same areas of study. Work might be facilitated by the foundation of a library, the donation of research scholarships and the provision of necessary tools and materials. The institute should also be responsible for the publication of the results of research work. Publications might be in the form of journals dealing with different aspects of the work and individual monographs in various Eastern and Western languages.

Research and promotion work must be coordinated. The Muslim countries should remain in the closest possible contact with one another. Research centres should be set up, and their work closely integrated. They should have a library of publications dealing with the work already carried out in the Muslim countries. The first ones might be located in Lahore, Cairo, Tehran and Istanbul to be joined in the future by others in Indonesia, North Africa and Russia.

Research must cover, first of all, the functional buildings of Islam. Since mosques and tombs have up to now been the only category to receive attention, comparatively speaking one could say that they have been sufficiently studied. The results of research on them have also been published. They will, of course, require more detailed examination in the future, but they may be deemed of secondary importance at the present time. Urban domestic architecture must hold the primary place. This subject, so far neglected, promises to yield great artistic and cultural treasures. After local investigation and research are completed, it will be possible to classify and synthesize the results and determine the effects of climate, materials, environment and types of inhabitant.

Conservation work should also be undertaken by these bodies. Progress reports can be presented at occasional meetings, and the results of completed work published immediately; a flow of architectural ideas within the Muslim world will thus be maintained. In addition to these various activities, a periodical journal or newsletter dealing with survey, recording and restoration work throughout the Islamic world should be produced at the central institute. Experience gained in the construction of modern buildings could also be made generally available through publication, so that all countries will be able to benefit from the experience of others. The publication of a second periodical for this purpose would be desirable.

The terrible destruction and demolition unfortunately prevalent in Muslim countries at present must stop. A policy that includes the foundation of establishments concerned with conservation and the initiation of various pilot projects in all countries concerned must be implemented. The importance of conservation must be instilled in the Muslim mind and made to comply with religious beliefs. Exhibitions and museums must be opened. The financial support of all the countries concerned must be sought, and all should be allowed to benefit from the existence of our oil-producing friends.

The preservation and restoration of those buildings left to us is a subject of the utmost importance. Complete indifference to the pitiless demolition of old buildings is still a feature of the Muslim countries. Europeans generally take pride in their old buildings and cities and are anxious to preserve them; they even try to reconstruct buildings destroyed in wartime. Here the situation is quite different. Countries lose buildings and whole cities without a war even having been fought, simply because the people have no respect for the past and because new buildings are carelessly built. The same situation exists on the ecological front: the natural world is being destroyed by a growing population, trees are lost and the desert encroaches. This state of affairs is a source of increasing anxiety to particular segments of the population. Conservation courses, institutes, societies and foundations are being set up to combat the decay. But the common people, engaged in the business of living, are unaware of the importance of these activities. It will take time to teach them that love of and pride in one's country can be exercised in everyday life and not merely on the battlefield. It can only be hoped that during this time the country will at least be able to retain the beauties and treasures left to it. The situation in Turkey is repeated in different forms and degrees of intensity throughout the world of Islam. In some places conservation is more readily accepted; in some the work of demolition goes ahead fast and furiously, with no apparent regret for the treasures which are sent into oblivion.

It is high time the idea of conservation was impressed upon the Islamic mind. This could perhaps be undertaken first on a small scale and using isolated examples. We must not forget that new life must be injected into those buildings and areas to be preserved. This life must somehow recreate itself, or the point of preservation will be lost and sooner or later will become superfluous. Projects of this sort have been undertaken in Turkey, but they are still at the planning stage. A foundation has also been set up for the purpose of conservation, but the social structure of the country and the indifference of its people have prevented any results. I must stress, however, that the problem cannot be solved by the creation of dead buildings and museums.

In the Balkan countries, in contrast, both the patriotism of the people and the nature of the regime have allowed conservation
work to go forward on a large scale and with a great measure of success. Many cities have been included in conservation programmes, and many districts have been nationalized. At the same time they have been kept filled with life and have not been allowed to become mere dead museums. I am very pleased to say that the cities and buildings being preserved are among the most beautiful of our Ottoman heritage.

The following are proposals concerning the work to be undertaken after the still extant architectural works have been identified: the reformation of the system of contracting for new buildings; close socio-technological cooperation among the countries of Islam; assurance that the best interests of Islam are served, even where alien architects are at work; assurance that a large part of the income from oil is used for the reclamation and support of the areas that do not normally benefit from this income; encouragement of investment in those areas; rewarding from time to time those who produce outstanding work; presentation of the aims, activities and ideas of Islam to the rest of the world; definitions of the forward-looking attitude of Islam and encouragement of this attitude.

Governments are, up to a point, already involved in the organization and promotion of such programmes. However, the problem has overreached the bounds of merely national programming and has become international in scope. Its importance requires the prompt formulation of an international policy by an independent, flexible, unbureaucratic and unbiased—in other words, an Islamic—body.

It is not enough merely to examine the cultural values of Islam's past. We must also be able to convey the achievements of the past to the future, and this only becomes possible when the results of research into the past are evaluated, developed and reinterpreted. Types and sizes of settlements, their administration, building techniques, choice and utilization of materials are all areas of regional architectural study which must be carefully considered and evaluated, so that their results can be used in actual building projects.

The Aga Khan Foundation can perform an important role in promoting coordination between nations, responsible ministries and other bodies in their work of development; this will include the study of traditional examples and their adaptation to modern technology, to local materials and the local work force. While the Muslim countries are in various stages of development on these fronts, a common factor is that all, from the economic point of view, are "developing" countries.

The extremely high gross national product in some of them is related to the income from oil. The oil-rich Muslim countries are certainly the most active in construction work, though this work is unfortunately carried out for the most part by foreigners. The buildings that emerge may be status symbols and a source of pride to future generations, as the cultural heritage of the past has been, but they are unacceptable as monuments and are alien to the cultures and technologies of the countries in which they stand.

How long will the Muslim countries of the twentieth century be content to remain part of an Islamic culture based solely on the criterion of economic power? Islamic civilization is not the possession of one, or even a few countries. It should be, as it was in the past, a common mode of thought and expression and a harmonious whole. The question is one of a common cultural policy: it is regrettable that it has not yet been dealt with either by an individual nation or an international organization. This is where the importance of the Foundation lies. Without doubt the task will be a difficult one, but it is essential that it be undertaken on an international level by an unbiased, non-political body. Only then will regional and sociocultural differences cease to present problems.