The Kocatepe Mosque Incident
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Kocatepe Mosque and Faisal Mosque by architect Vedat Dalokay

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“Envying Islamabad”

This is the title of an article I came across with during my research, which is written by a resident of the capital city of Ankara, Turkey.¹ The writer begins with a criticism of the capital of the republican Turkey and complains “how it missed the chance to be a model for the world”, also asking “Why Ankara failed to be a (true) Turkish city?” He continues the article with his expressions from a visit to Islamabad and how it should be admired for the architectural endeavour it took down as the capital of modern Pakistan. His admiration for the “successful synthesis” of the modern with the traditional in remarkable buildings of the city increases more when he visits the Faisal Mosque.²

Faisal Mosque constitutes certain significance in the urban history of Ankara. This grand mosque is designed by the internationally renowned Turkish architect Vedat Dalokay, who was the winner of the organised international competition. The story is particularly interesting for the citizens of Ankara, since a “predecessor” of Faisal Mosque’s design was proposed for a national competition in Ankara, twelve years before Islamabad, and won the first prize. Although the construction was under way, the project was going to be abandoned and a new competition would be organised. This competition would be won by a neoclassic colossal landmark that was built in reinforced concrete to look like

² Variant names of the mosque: Shah Faisal Masjid / King Faisal Masjid / King Faysal Mosque / Islamabad Mosque (initial name)
16th century Ottoman stone masonry, and was going to generate discussions among the public, architects and academicians. The “envy” mentioned in the title of the article would be explained as such. And understandably similar feelings are common among Turkish people who appreciate creativity and originality...

But my concerns are not only about regretting a missed chance, a chance to have a contemporary, iconic mosque in my hometown, but also about how such an important story is effaced. The reality of this story evades in time, and it becomes just a fairy tale for the residents of Ankara. It transforms into several variations and being told like an “urban” legend. Even architects or academicians, talk about it as an anecdote of how Dalokay’s modern design was turned over by the “conservatives” and the minarets were made fun of because of their resemblance to missiles. Whatever told gives the feeling of an oversimplification of this architectural incident, overlooking the decades-long socio-political and economical process behind.

Therefore, this thesis is a pursuit after this story, which seeks to develop a comprehensive understanding of this specific incident in the history of contemporary Turkish architecture. It aims to examine the two mosque projects in question as a single design: Two mosques in one, both designed by Vedat Dalokay, and both became first in the respective competitions, failed in the context of Ankara and the made it far away in Islamabad after twelve years. The thesis will follow a comparative method to learn about the history of this incident, examining the similarities and differences between the two cases. It is also of great importance for this approach to examine the actual Kocatepe Mosque in Ankara in its relation to Dalokay’s abandoned design and in the context of Ankara. Beginning from the drastic difference between Dalokay’s design and the actual one, the thesis aims to seek the reasons behind the cancellation of the former in a multifold manner, focusing on social, political and economical aspects as well as religious ones, and aims to develop an understanding of the success of the revised version of this design in the context of Islamabad.
Ankara, Turkey: Kocatepe Mosque

Turkey was a young country in 1940’s, struggling to establish the modernization reforms in the light of the republican revolution, achieved under the leadership of Atatürk, willing to secure its independence. The republican regime was declared in October 29\textsuperscript{th}, 1923, and sixteen days earlier the capital was chosen to be Ankara in October 13\textsuperscript{th}. Ankara had already been the headquarters of the independence war since several years and it was considered as a convenient choice both for its central location in the middle of Anatolia peninsula and its “potential” to be developed as the capital of this new country. This “potential” was found in its convenience as a rather undeveloped urban setting (especially compared to Istanbul which represents the glory of the Ottoman heritage), in which the spatial representations of the aspirations of the country’s founders would be created.\textsuperscript{3} Geographically in the heart of the country, Ankara was also constructed to constitute a model for other Turkish cities; a model to spread the Modernity Project of Turkey nationwide. Following the years of planning, the construction of the new capital was in process under the modernist policies of the new ruling elite and the city developed into two separate centres; the old and the new city.

The old city was Ulus, the historical centre of the town, with its castle dating back to 6\textsuperscript{th} century, old houses surrounding it and the very first administrative buildings of the Turkish republic, such as the first and second national assemblies, built down the hill. On the other hand, Yenisehir,

which literally means “new city”, has been developing as “Ankara’s most celebrated area” in the direction of the expectations of the bureaucrats and bourgeois of the new nation-state since 1925. Later on in 1929 with the implementation of Jansen Plan, this condition of old and new city constituted the basis for the formal development of the city. The master plan of Ankara was proposing a north-south development axis, connecting the old city in the north with the new city in the south.4

Figure 5 Ulus Victory Monument, Uluş (old city), Ankara (source: wowturkey.com).

Figure 6 The Guvenlik Monument, Yenisehir (new city), Ankara, (source: wowturkey.com).

“The Society to Build a Mosque in Yenisehir”

Kemalist reforms were not only transforming the cities but also the society and its institutions, following the War of Independence (1919-1923). Abolition of six hundred years old Ottoman monarchy in November 1st, 1922 was followed by the declaration of modern Turkish Republic on October 29th in 1923. Islamic Caliphate, succession to the political authority of the prophet Muhammed, was abolished in March 3rd, 1924 and soon after in April 18th, 1924, religious courts were abolished as well. One year later in November 1925, sharia, Islamic law and public order, was abolished to secure the conditions of a secular state, which was going to be proclaimed in April 10th 1928.

With the abolition of caliphate, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey established the Presidency of Religious Affairs same year in the constitution. Functioning as an institution attached to the Office of the Prime Minister, Religious Affairs was intended to regulate spiritual life and religious practices in accordance with the secular principles of the republic.

It was in 1944, the vice president of Religious Affairs, together with seventy-two other members, founded “The Society to Build a Mosque in Yenişehir, Ankara.”5 Yenişehir, new city, was developed as a residential district especially for high government or military officers, a “suburb” of bureaucrats, where residents were obtaining their daily needs like shopping from the old city, Ulus. Concerns for the necessity of religious facilities in Yenişehir were kept out of the urban development.


policies of the time. Ulus was also answering the religious needs of the citizens with its historic Hacı Bayram mosque (15th century) and the surrounding facilities. As a low-density, high-bureaucracy residential district which doesn’t have a mosque, Yenişehir was known in public in those days as the city with no temple (mabetsiz şehir). This condition might be claimed to constitute a strong contrast at that point in history with the traditional image of Turkish cities and towns of the Ottoman period, which were usually marked by mosques, most commonly funded by the sultan himself, aristocrats or wealthy statesmen.

1947: The First Competition

Following the initial attempt of founding the organization for the purpose, the first call for projects was done in 1947 but none of the submission was accepted. According to the official jury report there was no project among the fourteen submissions which was “flawless” or “with minor flaws” or “could be implemented with minor revision” that could be given the first prize and therefore it was not given.7

In this first national competition there was still no particular location allocated for such a mosque and the exact details of the requirements are not clear but the details of the report reveals that a mosque complex with a library and quarters was asked for. All the submissions were classical in their style and based on variations of traditional Ottoman themes.8 Yet, none of the entries makes any direct references to particular Ottoman examples, and the second and third prize projects are rather plain, conventional interpretations, which seem to be designed in reinforced concrete (according to the section drawings) eliminating the use of semi-domes on the sides.

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1957: The Second Competition

Still looking for a convenient site, the society is enlarged and renamed “The Association of Building and Support for the Complex of Religious Affairs.” Following the first national elections in 1950, held after the transition to multi-party system in 1946, efforts of the conservative right government, and particularly its Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, helped the allocation of the Kocatepe Hill for this project in 1956. Looking over the whole capital, the selected location was situated on the highest point of Yenişehir, which was then transformed into a middle-class residential district with a more heterogeneous pattern of population, shaped under the influence of socio-political processes of the past decade. Today, the area transformed further and became a business district of previously residential apartment buildings.

The allocation of such a significant location brought the opportunity to build the very first religious landmark in Ankara; young, secular capital of the Republic of Turkey. In many aspects which would be addressed in detail later on, it might be claimed as the first opportunity for a major spatial manifestation of the oppositionary political powers in Turkey.

In 1957, another national competition organised with jury of fifteen members composed of the representatives of the Prime Minister’s Office, universities and the Chamber of Architects. The jury evaluated thirty-six submissions and decided but agreed on the selection of the joint design by Vedat Dalokay and Nejat Tekeliolu as the winning entry. Different explanations to this decision are given in separate sources. Turkish Religious Affairs explains the decision as it was based on the “applicability” of the proposal among the other entries, whereas academicians address the appreciation of the merits of design “in its modern interpretation of religious architecture” by the jury. Vedat Dalokay


10 Anonymous, The Kocatepe Mosque Complex, 1967-1987, Ankara, and Selim Iluş, Nazif Topçuoğlu, Mimarlık, Idem, 69: The expression quoted is not mentioned in any other source cited in this work. And according to Dalokay, it was selected among 41 entries.

11 Güven Arif Sargin, Idem, 673.
himself refers to the brief of the competition stating “...a contemporary interpretation of Islamic places of worship was required” and explains further “...most of the architects attempted modern experiments.”

The building complex would have a capacity of 2,000 worshippers and include additional buildings to house the Presidency of Religious Affairs and Higher Islamic Institute, a conference room, a museum, 200 vehicle capacity car park, shopping centre, soup-kitchen and polyclinics. Dalokay describes their proposal as a mosque “at the heart of the city” on “a very beautiful green hill” which “does not confound the character of the hill”, respecting the green area as it is defined in the masterplan, occupying the possible minimum area while having the possible maximum capacity of worshippers. The project site was an empty plot of 22,000 m² which functions in that period as an informal recreation area, especially for the children of the district.

Dalokay’s design was based on the traditional Ottoman mosque layout with a dome centred over a non-directional square plan and four minarets in each corner. The dome was designed as a reinforced concrete shell structure, reinterpreting the Ottoman tradition with contemporary design and construction principles, which could span a diameter of 40 meters with no obstructions. In fact the curvature of the shell structure is a catenary rather than a true sphere due to structural principles. The minarets were also stylized interpretations of the typical Turkish minaret, utilizing the potentials of reinforced concrete. The mosque was slightly raised upon the slope of site on a platform and the other buildings of the complex were designed separately, placed around in a park setting.

Figure 10 Digital reconstruction of Dalokay’s non-built design (source: İmdat As, 2002).

Figure 11 Site plan (source: İmdat As, 2002).

12 Selim İltuş, Nazif Topçuoğlu, Mimarlık, İdem, 69.
14 Selim İltuş, Nazif Topçuoğlu, Mimarlık, İdem, 69.
15 K. Kutgün Eyüpşiler, İdem, and Jale Erzen, A. Balamir, İdem, 102.
It seems fair to suggest this “innovative” design stayed loyal in its essence to the basic principles of the centuries-long mosque building tradition of Turkish-Muslim culture. The mosque was designed with a large square central space, covered under a great single-dome, symbolizing the notions of cosmos and Unity. However, utilization of latest technology for this purpose meant the removal of structurally unnecessary traditional architectural elements; such as the smaller half-domes supporting the main dome on the sides and in the corners as well as turrets and other elements. This aspect of Dalokay’s proposal was appreciated by several academicians, emphasizing the honesty of the design ethos in its functional pragmatism and interpretation of symbolism. Today, this is even compared to the mastery of Sinan, suggesting he could possibly develop a similar approach if he would design a mosque in this age.\textsuperscript{17}

However, the elements of Turkish mosque design appeared out of practical necessities in the first place, determined certain symbolic significance throughout history. The symbolic value attained to commonly repeated building elements, such as domes, half-domes, and minarets, imposed certain level of formal determinism over the practice of contemporary mosque design in the twentieth-century.\textsuperscript{18} One important aspect in which Dalokay’s Kocatepe design departs from this formal determinism would be given as the lack of massive surfaces especially in the plain interior space. This rendered the long tradition of rich interior decoration almost obsolete. Furthermore, Dalokay proposed minimal religious decoration in the prayer hall using modern calligraphy, a modern chandelier and other plainly designed functional elements such as the mimbar, mihrab and pulpit. These elements of the design are referred as “modern” here due to their quality of being contemporary interpretations of traditional elements in an approach with more emphasis on their functions rather than ornamentation or decoration.

\textsuperscript{17} K. Kutgün Eyüpgiller, Idem. 
\textsuperscript{18} Jale Erzen, A. Balamir, Idem, 101-103
The Cancellation

Dalokay and Tekelioglu completed the implementation projects in three years and two years later the construction began in 1962. Part of the complex including the presidency offices was completed in one year and the foundations in two years. However, in 1964, the project was abandoned in the foundation phase with the decision of a committee regarding the doubts about the shell structure of the dome. According to explanation of the committee, shell structure was a “new system” which was not “sufficiently experimented yet”. The doubts were concentrated on the durability and endurance and the dome was put into static tests in the laboratories of Middle East Technical University: The result was failure.

In a later interview in 1976, an official of The Association of Building and Support for the Complex of Religious Affairs explains the request for the cancellation of the project appeared out of the concerns in the construction site and there were also rumours about a sports hall in Spain with a similar roof system which collapsed. He adds “an expert from Germany is known to be said the smallest formwork mistake would end as a disaster.”

In regard to the rumours about the sports hall said to be collapsed in Spain, there was a chapel of Felix Candela, Chapel Lomas De Cuernavaca in

21 Selim Iltu, Nazif Topcuoglu, Mimariik, Idem, 68.
Mexico, which collapsed in 1958, during recentering and rebuilt afterwards. Among these reasons Mitchum explains, the development of precast industry seems to be non-relevant, since it was not common at all in Turkey in those years. However, it would be fair to suggest the claim about the expenses is quite relevant in the economic context of sixties’ Turkey, which would be addressed later on in this essay. After all, cast-in-place concrete was the most common practice in Turkey, and this could be said not be changed that much even today. His comments about the “incapability” of architects designing shell structures would be suggested to be relevant if the limited practice of such innovative architecture in Turkey of that period considered. But Dalokay’s experience as an architect should be considered as well since he was already practicing for a long time, won several competitions and prizes, and completed numerous projects successfully.

1967: The Third Competition

Following the cancelation of Dalokay’s contract in 1964, a third competition was organised in the year 1967. Previous capacity of 2,000 people was increased to 20,000 with an extensive enlargement in the programme. This revision in the requirements of the desired mosque complex would now translate into a monumental religious landmark. Together with the other elements in the programme of the building complex, a drastic increase in scale was issued in comparison to the previous competition, and considerably modest proposal of Vedat Dalokay and Nejat Tekelioglu.

22 Christin Holzer and others, “Structural Optimization of Felix Candela’s Chapel Lomas De Cuernavaca”, Fifth International Conference on Thin-Walled Structures, (Brisbane, Australia, 2008).
23 “among the foremost of the small group of engineers who fully understand and appreciate this type of construction” Consulting Engineer Magazine, (February 1958); cited from Milo Ketchum, “Milo Ketchum Archive”.
24 Milo S. Ketchum, What Happened to Shells?
25 When he won the competition, he had 7 (1950-57), when the project was cancelled, he had 14 years of experience (1950-64): Önder Şenyapılı, “Vedat Dalokay’la Konuşma”, Mimarlık, no. 74, (December 1969), 30.
The prize-winning entry of this third and final competition was a joint design by the architects Hüsrev Tayla and Fatih Uluengin. The construction began immediately in October of the same year, in the Holy Night of Mi’raj.\(^{27}\) It was a pseudo sixteenth-century Ottoman style mosque, modelled after the most significant examples of the Ottoman tradition, most of them being in Istanbul and designed by Sinan the Architect. The plan scheme of the design was modelled after Sultan Ahmet (Blue Mosque) by the architect Sedefhar Mehmet Ağa and Şehzade Mosque by Sinan. The minarets and side façades were also modelled after the two most noteworthy achievements of Sinan; Selimiye and Süleymaniye respectively.\(^{28}\) However, Kocatepe was going to be constructed in reinforced concrete, using recent technology, to look like these 16th century masterpieces.

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\(^{28}\) Jale Erzen, A. Balamir, Idem, 111.
While the construction was going on, 5,000 capacity ground floor of the building opened to worshippers in 1969. By the year 1981, the main mosque was complete in its bare structure except other parts of the complex such as the courtyards, conference hall, car park, shopping centre, offices and library. At this stage, funding from the state and public donations began falling short for the expensive interior decoration of the mosque and the process slowed down. Due to the financial difficulties faced, The Association of Building and Support for the Complex of Religious Affairs abolished itself with the decision of the administrative committee and all the property, funds and debts of the mosque complex were transferred to the Turkish Religious Foundation in 1981. Five years later, the main part of the mosque (Harem) opened to public in the holy month of Ramadan. When it was completed the overall budget was above TL 60 million.29 The official opening of the complete complex was made in 1987 with a great ceremony by the prime minister of the period, Turgut Özal. Many representatives from several other Muslim countries were also invited to this event.30 Political aspects of the selection and realization process of Kocatepe Mosque would be addressed later on in detail.

Kocatepe mosque complex has a total capacity of 15,000 worshippers: 9,000 in the Harem and masjid sections, 6,000 in the courtyards. 56 square meters prayer hall is closed on top with a 48.5 meter high dome, 25.5 meters in diameter. The square plan has four 88 meter-high minarets in the corners, in which the balconies are accessible both with stairs and elevators. Complete interior decoration of the mosque is made in classical Ottoman style. Certain elements are modernized, such as the complete lighting system, while certain ones are kept true to the tradition of handmade, such as the single piece carpet of the prayer hall which is designed on the basis of historic figures disappearing today.31

Kocatepe Mosque in its Physical Context

The white artificial stone cladding over the concrete walls of Kocatepe distinguishes it from the models of the past it adapts. But a more drastic difference catches the attention as one approaches the mosque from the Mihhatpaşa Street in the north: The massive platform this mosque raised upon. Buried in the slope of the hill, the platform includes other facilities of the building complex such as the auditorium, administrative offices, shopping centre and car park. Main approach to the mosque is properly from north, as it is in the Ottoman tradition. However, in Kocatepe one faces with the impenetrable facade of the shopping centre as they approach the mosque, rather than an inviting courtyard like the ones in Ottoman examples. A narrow, dark staircase on the left of the illuminated, busy entrance of the shopping centre welcomes the visitors. The shopping centre that occupies the platform presently was the first department-store ever in the capital city, when it was opened in the eighties. 25,000 square meters of shopping area and 800 cars capacity parking area would give an idea of the size of this commercial function inhabiting below the religious monument.32

In its physical context, Kocatepe has quite different implications compared to the Ottoman tradition. It is not only raised on a massive platform which is not easily accessible either physically or visually, but it is also surrounded by busy traffic that is uninviting for the public. Under the platform, a busy double-lane road links the two business districts of Ankara; Kızılay and Tunalı. The orientation of the mosque complex towards the Mecca (kiblah) direction provides ample visibility from the main approach of Mihhatpaşa street coming down the hill. But the blocking height of the platform manipulates the main access for worshippers to the south. Such issues of approaching the mosque from the kiblah wall are addressed by academicians as one of the basic problems in the twentieth century mosque architecture of Turkey.33 In Ottoman tradition, the location and accessibility of the mosque was a major concern and should be treated carefully to avoid such problems, considering the public space character of the complex, which would function like a gathering place, a piazza, a park with its courtyard and other facilities in its setting.34

However in the case Kocatepe, even the large additional courtyard on the side fails to be inviting since it is not accessible from the sides due to the road it covers underneath. It should be mentioned that the intention of surrounding the mosque complex with a green-belt in the first place was turned down later on, and also the Higher Islamic institute removed from the program.35

Kocatepe is still the largest state national mosque built in the Republic of Turkey. Although it is quite popular among conservative politicians and certain portions of the public, it is also subject to harsh criticism in professional circles. Turkish Religious Affairs praises the mosque as a unification of “16th-century aesthetics and 20th-century technology.”36 On the other hand professional criticism mainly focuses on its "denial of the spirit

32 Information retrieved from the website of the department store: http://www.begendik.com.tr/magazalar/kocatepe.html (accessed on 07.03.2009)

33 K. Kutgün Eyüpgiller, Idem.
34 Selim İltuş, Nazif Topçuoğlu, Mimarlık, Idem, 69.
of the age” and staying “far from utilizing the potentials of new technology”, ending up “with a meagre dome.” It is further explained by the architects that “major public demand” for such a large-scale religious building was in the direction of a “traditional image” and it was “risky” to neglect this with proposing a novel mosque.37

Figure 21 Kocatepe Mosque, satellite view (source: Google Earth).

Figure 22 View of Kocatepe Mosque from the main access direction showing the shopping centre underneath. (source: www.mimarizm.com)

Figure 23 The “close” relationship of Kocatepe Mosque with its surrounding urban fabric (source: Bora Ulutaş on www.panoramio.com).

37 Jale Erzen, A. Balamir, Idem, 110.
Figure 24 Kocatepe Mosque in the urban fabric of Yenisehir (source: burbur on www.flickr.com)

Figure 25 Interior of Kocatepe Mosque, showing the “elephant feet” modeled after Sultan Ahmet mosque in Istanbul (source: Sr. Samolo on www.flickr.com)
Islamabad, Pakistan: Faisal Mosque

After eighty-nine years of British rule, Pakistan won its independence in 1947, following the partition of India. Independence was won as a political achievement of the Pakistan Movement for a Muslim State led by Muhammed Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League. In opposition to Mohandas Gandhi’s espousal of Hindu values for the independence of South-Asian people, Jinnah believed in constitutional struggle as the best means. Jinnah was also opposing Gandhi’s support of the Khilafat movement, criticising it as “religious zealotry”, which was a political campaign to influence the British government and to prevent the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire in regard to the important role of the Sultan as the Caliph, the political successor to the prophet, for the Islamic world.38 As the chances of a strong union between the Hindu and Muslim populations of India grew smaller, Jinnah leaded the struggle of the recognition of Indian Muslims against Hindu domination.39 Therefore the independence struggle of Pakistan was based on religion rather than the notion nationalism and nine years later in 1956, Pakistan was officially going to be declared as an Islamic Republic.40

In the beginning Karachi was the capital, but soon after the military regime decided to move the capital to a new location where the country could be administered away from the influences of a sprawling commercial port city. With these purposes a commission headed by the Chief of

40 Önder Şenyapılı, Mimarlık, Idem, 30.
Staff of the Army General Mohammad Yahya Khan and advised by the urban planner Constantinos Doxiadis and the chief co-ordinating architect Sir Robert Matthew, decided on the Potwar plateau near Rawalpindi, on the foot of the great Margalla Hills (the foothills of the Hamalayas) in the year 1959. An influential Greek architect and urban planner of the period, Constantinos Doxiadis was responsible for the masterplan of the new capital. The masterplan was defined by the four major highways and the natural border of the hills, and organised as a grid plan of different sectors.

A Grand National Mosque was proposed as a part of the administrative sector of the city, on a land of 175,000 m². The site was located at the foot of the Margalla Hills and right at the end of a main approach road, which provided an ideal setting for a landmark in the new capital, visible from kilometres away.

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42 Anonymous, Islamabad the Capital of Pakistan - Constantinos A. Doxiadis.
1969, International Islamabad Mosque Competition

The impetus of building the Grand National Mosque that was inscribed in the master plan came in the year 1966, when King Faisal of Saudi Arabia was on an official visit to Islamabad. King Faisal was an active architectural patron and financed a number of other major projects around the world including the Islamic Centre and Mosque in Rome and the Islamic Cultural Foundation Mosque in Switzerland. During this visit, the king agreed on financing this mosque as a gift to Pakistani people. The Grand National Mosque was going to be named as King Faisal Mosque, after his assassination in 1975.

An international competition, open to Muslim architects only, organised in 1969 by the Capital Development Authority with the sponsorship of the International Union of Architects (UIA). Forty-three entries from seventeen Muslim countries were evaluated by an international jury of five (appointed by UIA), whose members were Samir Abu Bakr Ghaffar from Saudi Arabia, Aptullah Kuran from Turkey, Philip Khouri from Lebanon, Mazharul Islam from East Pakistan and General K. M. Sheikh as the Chairman of the Capital Development Authority. Nine out of the forty-three entries were from Turkey.

Two principle prerequisites of the project brief were monumentality and modernity, in which an extraordinary size for a mosque with a main prayer hall of 9,000 square meters, together with a courtyard of 36,000 and a garden of 45,000 were required. To give an idea how extraordinary this figures are for a mosque, it would be helpful to mention that Selimiye Mosque by Sinan, which is considered as a significant building achievement for its period, has a main prayer hall of 1,620m² and an interior of 2,475 m² in total.

The first three prizes were all given to Turkish architects: First prize to Vedat Dalokay, second prize to Buğent Özer, Cengiz Eren and Öner Tokcan and third prize to Nihat D. Binal. Dalokay’s proposal was chosen with a four to one majority of the jury. A later record of jury’s comment explains: “The classical approach of formal mosque architecture is blended in this project with modern forms and technology. The simplicity of the general layout… is appreciated.” However, several revisions were recommended as well so that the project would “…more strictly conform to modernist paradigm …and all ‘traditional’ references be eliminated.” On the other hand, both the second and third prize projects were proposing more radical schemes, especially in their roof forms, together with interpretations of Ottoman-style minarets. Beyond site development and landscaping, plan organisation and circulation, structures, and design elements, further criteria adopted by the jury were “carrying basic design ideas to their local structural and architectural conclusions” and “fitting the contemporary planning and design ideals of the modern city of Islamabad.” Conservatives criticised the jury’s decision pointing out that Dalokay’s design was

44 Renata Holod and others, Idem, 76 and 273.
45 Neelum Naz, Idem, 58.
48 Renata Holod and others, Idem, 76-77.
51 Renata Holod and others, Idem, 259.
52 Kamil Khan Mumtaz, Idem, 188.
“rejecting the rich mosque heritage of Pakistan.” However, such criticisms were rather silenced when the mosque was completed and opened to public due to its “awe-inspiring scale, form and silhouette.”\(^{53}\)

This time, departing from the Muslim tradition of dome, Vedat Dalokay was proposing a tent-like concrete shell structure, which was indeed a variation/revision of his earlier winning proposal for Kocatepe in 1957.\(^{54}\) However the figures were quite different between the two designs: Kocatepe Mosque had a capacity of 2,000 worshippers where in Faisal Mosque it was around 150,000 in the initial proposal. The concrete shell dome of Kocatepe was covering a span of approximately 40 meters, while the concrete shell tent of Faisal was covering a span of 90.\(^{55}\)

The initial brief was calling for a prayer hall alone, but the Islamic Research Institute offices were added to the programme in 1970 and additions were made to provide sufficient space for the faculties of the International Islamic University in 1982. Such additions increased the originally allocated area more than double and quadrupled the budget, but did not affect the design of the main prayer hall.\(^{56}\) Implementation projects were prepared in three years, and were completed in 1973. Separation of East and West Pakistan between 1970-78, Indo-Pakistani war of 1971, assassination of King Faisal and the political and military crises in the country postponed the initiation of construction till 1978.\(^{57}\) The building complex could only be completed in 1986 and with a total cost over US$40 million. The initial estimated cost was US$10 million (approximately TL 100 million) in 1966.\(^{58}\) When it was finally going to be completed in 1986, Faisal Mosque would be one of the largest mosques in the world with a capacity up to 200,000 worshippers, and

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54 Renata Holod and others, Idem, 76.
56 Renata Holod and others, Idem, 77.
57 Anonymous, Mimarlık, Idem.
most probably the only one in a rather “modern” style.59

The site allocated by the master plan of Doxiadis positions the mosque at the end of the city’s main approach road, out of the urban fabric, surrounded by nature. The road defining the southern boundary of the site and the northern end of the urban fabric is interestingly oriented towards Mecca, in contrast to the grid system. Therefore the mosque is not a “central integrated feature of the urban fabric” differing from the traditional Ottoman examples.60

In a 1969 interview, Dalokay describes his design intentions in detail, beginning with an emphasis on the significance of Pakistan’s independence struggle, which he explains as based on the notion of religion and not nationalism. It seems fair to suggest, he is referring to the history of Turkish nation’s independence process in this comparison. Dalokay states his initial interpretation of the competition was that this mosque intended to be a work of architecture, which the state of Pakistan would bequeath to the future generations of the nation and therefore should represent the religious roots of Pakistan’s independence as a monument. In regard to this point, he explains further: “Mosques are merely symbols of ruling powers. (Muslim) public can worship anywhere. However, ruling groups/governments desire to symbolize their power. Süleymaniye is built with this purpose. (However) Süleymaniye becomes a centre of science and culture in the hands of Sinan. The building blends with the public life. (But) they don’t want the Islamabad mosque to be a cultural centre. They want a building which can accommodate big ceremonies; ceremonies that can serve up to 150-200 thousand people.”61

According to Dalokay’s own comments, the design “directly uses” all the traditional features of a mosque, just like in his Kocatepe proposal, such as the centric square plan, mimbar, mihrab, pulpit, women’s prayer gallery, last parish place, minarets, porticoed courtyard and the place to wash the dead, together with calligraphic decoration and a grand chandelier, all under the unity of a single structural element. The only new element he introduces is a huge golden crescent facing the

59 Renata Holod and others, Idem, 77.
60 Renata Holod and others, Idem, 77.
61 Önder Şenyapılı, Mimarlık, Idem.
axis of the main approach road, which he aims to attain a new symbolic value to it. Crescents were only used at the top of the domes and minarets in the past. He emphasizes that, this element which represents political power of Islam and faith as well as the martyr spirits, could be bought to a stronger position in the composition of a contemporary mosque. Later on, it was going to be eliminated in the directions of jury’s criticisms. According to the Pakistani architect Kamil Khan Mumtaz, jury’s suggestions to eliminate such few references to traditional elements were to complete the buildings “conformity to the international style.” Further decisions of redesigning the canopy, reducing the diversity of materials to a minimum and expression of the structure both internally and externally were taken to strengthen the modern character of the building.63

In addition, Dalokay himself criticises his design in several aspects; one of the most interesting being the incoherence of the four minarets with the mountains in the background. He explains they are placed in each corner due to the significant symbolic value they bear but he would rather prefer to have only two minarets, which would achieve a better composition in more harmony with its surroundings.64

In the case of Faisal Mosque, the identity of the young Islamic Pakistani state was calling forth such “modernity” in the image of this monument, consciously avoiding the vernacular regardless of the criticisms of conservatives.65 Taking the date of the competition into account, it might be suggested here that such sentiments were rooted in the pan-Islamic foundations of the state, which were strongly counted on by its founders to bring together the Indian Muslims apart from their vast cultural and geographic differences.66 In this aspect Dalokay’s design was possible to be considered avoiding nationalistic allusions and rather arousing aspiration for a united future. Yet, his concept was certainly referring Islam with Ottoman symbolism, but only in its “most victorious terms” that was “undefeated, untouched...” Its architectural merits and consistency with the socio-political and economical paradigms of its context brought significant recognition to this work of Dalokay, which is considered by most as a “milestone in contemporary architecture of the Islamic world.” In Faisal Mosque, Vedat Dalokay “designed a building that has come to be regarded

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62 Önder Şenypadı, Mimarlık, İdem, 30.
63 Kamil Khan Mumtaz, İdem, 190.
64 Önder Şenypadı, Mimarlık, İdem, 30.
65 Renata Holod and others, İdem, 80.
66 “But they failed; even a fervent Islamic spirit could not prevail against geography. Mounting tensions led to the civil war of 1970-71 and to East Pakistan’s declaration of independence as the state of Bangladesh.” Daniel Pipes, In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power, (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 153. However, under the leadership of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto after the war, his beliefs in pan-Islamic unity might provide further explanation for the continuity of such sentiments in Pakistan, at least till the introduction of sharia in 1979.
as a symbol of the city in much the same way as the Opera House has done in Sydney and as, in an earlier tour de force of engineering, the Eiffel Tower did in Paris.”

“The architect seems to be suggesting that the worshipper contemplate the space itself, achieved through the use of modern technology, as a way of communing with God.” Academicians Renata Holod and Hasan-Uddin Khan emphasize Dalokay’s “success” in his architectural aspirations even further, addressing his “ability to use materials with great skill and create desired effects.”

From Dome to Tent

In the official report submitted to the competition, Dalokay explains the source of his inspiration for the form of the tent shell as the Margalla Hills in the background. His desire was to achieve a sense of harmony between the form of the mosque projecting on the hills and their tectonics, while referencing to the tent forms in Pakistan traditions. However, in another study he is credited to have mentioned Ka’aba (the “cube” in Mecca; the House of Allah) as his source of inspiration for the form, which might be found in the imaginary cube the geometry of the mosque constitutes. Furthermore, Dalokay’s studies of the “evolution” of the form, depicts an architectural approach coherent with the strong tradition of pure geometry in Muslim art.

However, it should also be emphasized at this point that, the obvious difference between his Kocatepe and Faisal designs suggests there would also be major concerns of applicability behind the idea of the tent. The “narrative” Dalokay develops might be coherent in the context of Islamabad competition but as the jury and several academicians emphasizes, the appreciated merits of design are rather found in its reinterpretation of formal mosque building tradition in the latest architectural means. Therefore, it seems fair to suggest that this new tent form he develops serves the purpose of revising/modifying his Kocatepe design in the best possible means for realization, while preserving its basic principles. It might also be found in his own words: “The structure of the shell covering the prayer hall does not create any problems to be solved or any suspicion.”

Furthermore, he mentions serious concerns about he cannot truly comprehend the effect/atmosphere the tent form would have in the end due to its great size. Some concerns about departing from a more direct reinterpretation of

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67 Renata Holod and others, Idem, 80.
68 Renata Holod and others, Idem, 80.
69 Önder Şenyapılı, Mimarlık, Idem, 30.
71 Renata Holod and others, Idem, 79.
the much experienced dome form, due to the
issues of applicability, might be found in these
words.

Although the numerical figures demonstrate a vast
difference between the requirements of the two
competitions as well as their socio-political and
physical contexts, in his “revision” Dalokay seems
to achieve not to compromise from his ideals as an
architect. Acknowledging the differences, the
similarities between these two designs reveals an
insight to Dalokay’s conception of mosque, and
how it was a continuous process rather than just a
collection of final products.
The Architect: Vedat Dalokay

Vedat Dalokay was not only a significant architectural figure in the history of Turkey but he was also influential in Pakistan with his contributions to the nation’s production of space. He actively practiced as an architect for almost forty years in Turkey, in Pakistan and several other countries around the world. His education would be claimed to have played significant role in his architectural career, especially his PhD studies in Sorbonne and professional experience in August Perret’s and Le Corbusier’s offices between the years 1951 and 1956. During this period he was going to be highly influenced, especially from Le Corbusier, adopting principles of rationalism and order. He would later refer to him as “his hero”, comparing him to Ataturk and Sinan, for dreaming of future, great goals and beauty; and realizing them. Through the examination of his mosque designs, it is possible to suggest he was uncompromisingly idealist in his architectural approach and loyal to the spirit of modernism and its essence, in his own interpretation.

For ordinary Turkish people on the other hand, he was rather known as a politician; versatile in his personality, and having a manifold social identity. He pursued an active political career in various duties such as the president of Ankara Section of the Chamber of Architects (1966-67), secretary-general of the central office of the chamber (1968), and as the major of Ankara (1973-77). Moreover, his artistic aspects were publicly recognized in his efforts of beautifying the city of Ankara, and the child books he wrote.

The year Dalokay selected as the major of the capital, with a vote rate of %62, was significant in many aspects regarding the strong representation of the socialist movement in Turkey, which was going to be considered as a breakpoint in the socio-political history of the country later on. His recognized achievements both as an architect and administrator, together with his long term commitment to the left-wing Republican Peoples’ Party since fifties, brought him to a strong position for the elections. During his four year duty, he was commonly recognized and publicly sympathized due to his ethical, socialist and humanitarian approach in numerous issues and in the projects he initiated. Most of the projects developed during his administration, such as the subway, social housing programmes and various others, would be influential for a long term even after his mayoralty. However, his “active” personality was also the main reason behind the problems he had with the conservatives, central government, and even his own party, which led to sensational events several times.

Among the many “things” he left behind in Ankara, today two of them are of significant importance to the socio-political context of Turkey, and to the scope of this essay: the Hittite Sun statue and the Hittite Sun emblem of the capital. The statue erected on the Sıhhiye square was an oversize replica of a bronze solar disc, paying respect to the earliest civilizations lived in Anatolia. "It may be

73 Burcu Suzan, The Architect: "Vedat Dalokay" as a Social Agent, (Ankara: The Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences of Middle East Technical University, 2008), 182.
75 Burcu Suzan, Idem, 35.
76 Burcu Suzan, Idem.
77 Burcu Suzan, Idem.
regarded as the expression of the existing values and the visions of the city that had been commonly embraced and accepted. According to Dalokay, the Hittite Monument designed by Nusret Suman was representing the multilayered cultural history of Turkey whereas for the governor and some critics, it was an idol and a cult figure.”  

The change of this emblem by the future conservative major to another one with the silhouette of the Kocatepe Mosque was going to generate enormous public debate. The significance of the existing Kocatepe Mosque in this aspect will be addressed later on.

Outside Turkey, Vedat Dalokay had several opportunities to realize his ideas as well, and he gained significant recognition with his architecture, generally in the Muslim world, and specifically in Pakistan. Together with several other Turkish architects, he is claimed to have “greatly contributed in shaping the national architecture of Pakistan”, especially with his Faisal Mosque in Islamabad and Summit Minar in Lahore. “Though there can be variations in the individual judgments, there is a consensus in Pakistan that his architecture has an overwhelming appeal and invokes long lasting impressions.”

Vedat Dalokay’s forty years long highly active and multifold career renders it difficult to be addressed in every aspect and therefore kept out of the scope of this work. However, an overview of his career provides a better insight to this architect’s ideals; his motivations and aspirations; maybe even his “ideology”; and therefore would contribute to a better understanding of his Kocatepe and Faisal Mosque designs and the significance of this architectural incident in the history of Turkey. To truly comprehend his works subjected to this thesis, the intricate socio-political and economical paradigm of Turkey, and its influence on Vedat Dalokay as an architect, would be taken into account.

78 Burcu Suzan, Idem, 130.
79 Neelum Naz, Idem, 53 and 72.
80 Two extensive studies referenced in this work examine the versatile aspects of Vedat Dalokay’s career in detail: Burcu Suzan, Idem, and Neelum Naz, Idem.
The Paradigm

Turkey's Modernity Project initiated at the dusk of the Ottoman Empire has been continuously creating significant complications, not only within the country but also internationally, which might be briefly explained as the “schizophrenic” state or the identity crisis of this “young” nation.81 The significance of the cancelled Kocatepe Mosque in the history of Ankara, have been emphasized up to this point. The “story” in the beginning raises several intriguing questions as one gets deeper in it. If Dalokay already won the Kocatepe competition and even the construction initiated, why would the project be abandoned and the foundations would be torn out with dynamites? If the concerns of applicability and endurance were the main reasons, why would not the winner architect asked to revise his project? If the novelty of the design was a concern for the public, why this explanation would be ignored, or implicitly denied, by the officials?82

The context(s) of this story would be examined; an understanding of the paradigm of Ankara as well as Islamabad should be sought. The main focus however, would be kept on Ankara in the scope of this work, as Islamabad was briefly addressed previously, in relevant aspects.

The similarities and differences between these two paradigms are thought to be vital in developing a comprehensive understanding of the architectural incident in question. The structural/economical, socio-political and religious underpinnings of the story would be examined respectively.

Structural/Economical Underpinnings

As mentioned before, the reason behind abandoning the Kocatepe Mosque project of Vedat Dalokay is given as the failure of the thin shell concrete structure of the “catenary” dome in the laboratory tests. It was interesting because this aspect of the design does not seem to constitute a significant problem till the point foundations were complete in 1964. Between 1957 and 1960 the implementation projects were prepared and it was a two year break before the actual construction began in 1962. Two years were spent during the initial construction phase as the foundations and some other parts of the building complex were built. However any further details could not be found in the sources about the laboratory tests in question. And interestingly, this incident is not specifically addressed by the academicians in most of the sources cited here but rather briefly put forward by the officials of Turkish Religious Affairs.

However, there seems to be no doubt this test took place and the report was a negative one in the end. The cancelation decision is taken by a

81 Güven Arif Sargin, Idem, and, Numan Cebeci, Mimarizm, Idem.
82 Selim İtuş, Nazif Topcuoğlu, Mimarlık, Idem, 68.
committee of the foundation holding the property rights of the project, regarding the “novelty” of the concrete shell systems in general and the lack of experimentation and experience with this new technology.\(^8\) As referenced previously, engineer Milo Ketchum addresses several problematic aspects regarding the concrete shell technology and their decreasing popularity at the end of the sixties. Two important aspects relevant to the case of Kocatepe might be referred as the high expenses of this new system and the architect’s capabilities in designing such structures.

It should be taken into account that the later design to be realized was built with the mostly preferred constructional system in Turkey, which was and still is, cast-in-place concrete. This technology might be thought to require lesser financial resources and qualified professionals as well as workers. It might help to consider the approximate overall cost of TL60 million of the built Kocatepe Mosque of 20,000 capacity, as estimated in 1976 eleven years before its completion, to TL100 million cost of the Faisal Mosque with at least 150,000 capacity as estimated in 1966. As explained in detail the budget of Faisal Mosque was in the end at least quadrupled by 1986 when it was completed, both due to major enlargements and additions made in the programme and the financial and economic instabilities of the crisis period.\(^8\)

Despite the lack of dependable information, several sources suggest, in the end Kocatepe Mosque was completed with an overall cost far higher than the estimation.\(^8\) As a common case in the Turkish construction industry and mosque projects, it might be suggested to be due to the characteristics of the financing of the project. The mosques are most commonly built by “mosque building (and maintenance) foundations” in Turkey, which is simply funded by philanthropy and/or public donations. In the specific case of Kocatepe, the project’s public recognition and political significance in its period (to be addressed later on in detail) provided great benefits to financing. Kocatepe was financed with public donations and the rent income of the foundation’s donated properties in part, together with donations from other Muslim countries; such as Suudi Arabia and Libya. But major support came from the national treasury via official “helps” by the government.

Such aspects of the financing of a Grand National Mosque project render the process rather instable in terms of money. In the end, Kocatepe Mosque was not modest in any aspect, including its budget, and it was never intended to be, as it is also clearly expressed by the officials of the foundation.\(^8\) Therefore, the possible high costs of the proposed shell system and its necessary revision might be considered as affordable expenditures once financial figures are taken into account, which might be suggested to render this official report rather as a simple “excuse”. However, being based on instable financial resources would have also required the reduction of initial risks to minimum. This aspect of the issue maybe constitutes one of the most significant differences between the case of Kocatepe and Faisal mosques, where the latter

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85 Selim İltuş, Nazif Topcuoğlu, Mimarlık, Idem, 69.
was rather securely financed since the initiation of the project.

The second aspect emphasized by Milo Ketchum requires attention in the case of Kocatepe as well. The proposal of Vedat Dalokay was quite modest in comparison to the realized project. As he explains in detail, a minimum of disturbance in its environment with maximum functionality and capacity was intended. Overall scale was approximately ten times smaller than the realized Kocatepe project (capacity of 2,000 to 20,000). However, the single shell covering the mosque was running over a span of 40 meters, which could be considered as an easy span for a shell structure but also extraordinary, and maybe unnecessary, once the rather modest space it provides underneath is taken into consideration. The effort required to realize this design, and achieve the intended architectural quality, might be considered to be out of balance with the requirements of the commission, in functional and financial aspects.

Architect seems to be possible to be criticised regarding this aspect of his design, but the requirements of the project, that was going to be modified drastically later on, and the jury’s appreciation should be considered as well, so that such criticisms are not irrelevant. It should also be emphasised that one year before the completion of the realised Kocatepe Mosque, Dalokay was able to prove his capabilities as a designer in Islamabad: “Monumentality and modernity, two of the prerequisites in the project brief, are provided by the virtuoso-like display of the very latest in contemporary structural techniques, especially in the folded concrete plates...” However, this second design was certainly modified and revised in most aspects, and possibly was more coherent with the requirements and expectations in Islamabad.

Departing from the idealistic character of Vedat Dalokay, we can conclude at this point he was quite conscious (and also experienced enough) in proposing such a “novel” form and the complications it would create. But as a matter of fact, his ideals and aspirations could not overcome the intricacy of the socio-political underpinnings behind these economical issues regarding the cancelation of Kocatepe Mosque project.


88 Mosque and the modern world p.79 renata holod and hasan-uddin khan
Socio-political Underpinnings

“Parallel to the reforms of Turkey's initial politics, and in relation to the republicans’ restructuring processes, a similar mode of organization, developing amid conservative power groups and creating their social and spatial enclaves since the early 1930s, was always on modern Turkey's agenda. In particular, after Turkey's transition to a multiparty system in 1946, and then the national election in 1950, the conservative power block enjoyed major success and consequently the Kemalist Inkilap (revolution) finally came to a partial end...”

The above photograph shows two major landmarks of the capital city of Ankara. On the right, Anitkabir (memorial-tomb) (1941-53); the mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the modern Republic of Turkey. On the left, Kocatepe Mosque (1967-87); the Grand National mosque initiated and completed by the Turkish Religious Foundation; the first religious monument to be erected in the modern cityscape of Ankara. The photograph was taken in 2007 by a photographer of the state news agency Anadolu Ajansi, and generated some public discussion, since these two landmarks are quite distant from each other, and it is very uncommon to see them side by side.

Such discussions among public are quite common in Turkey, since a state of conflicting dual identity, “schizophrenia”, is constant in the short history of the country. And this specific photograph, documents most evidently the significant manifestation of this paradox in space: The paradox of ‘modernists versus traditionalists’, ‘secular versus religious’. This paradox manifests itself today in every aspect of social life, in ever-growing divisions among the society, most commonly in the form of ‘us and them’ polarization.

Inscribed by its founders, Turkey is a secular, republican state, as secured in its constitution with the fourth article stating that this “shall not be amended, nor shall their amendment be proposed”. In addition, the constitution defines the national identity saying whoever is connected to Turkish Republic with citizenship ties is Turkish, regardless of their religion and race.

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90 “Urban-scale operations since the 1950s, a significant conservative breakthrough as a result of global liberalism and populism, however, have overwhelmed the secular state's organized forgetting, and have increasingly demobilized the capital city's modernist collective memory into conservatively schizophrenic experiences.” Güven Arif Sargin, Idem, 659.
91 Article 88 of the first constitution (1924), gives an extensive definition of Turkish citizenship. In the current constitution, other articles mentioned above are as follows:
“Article 1: Form of the State c.I. The Turkish state is a Republic.
Article 2: Characteristics of the Republic c.I. The Republic of Turkey is a democratic, secular and social state governed by the rule of law; bearing in mind the concepts of public peace, national solidarity and justice; respecting human rights; loyal to the nationalism of Atatürk, and based on the fundamental tenets set forth in the Preamble.

89 Güven Arif Sargin, Idem, 661.
However, almost 30 years later, the Democratic Party (DP) who won the first three elections with a majority after the transition to a multi-party system, would claim “Turkey is an Islamic country” and despite the secularity of its state, Muslims constitute the majority of it.\textsuperscript{92} For the first elections in 1950, the leader of DP, Adnan Menderes, campaigned for legalizing the Arabic \textit{adhan} again, the Islamic call to prayer made from the minarets of a mosque, which had been done in Turkish language since 1932.\textsuperscript{93} Among the very diverse languages and their dialects spoken in Turkey, such as Turkish (official), Kurdish, Dimli (or Zaza), Azeri, Kabardian and Gagauz, Arabic has never been a common one, even during Ottoman times.\textsuperscript{94} But the “religious” characteristics of the Ottoman Empire, and the vast geography they conquered, rendered Arabic and Persian influential for the bureaucratic and intellectual classes, even if the public was not able to understand them.\textsuperscript{95} In the Turkish \textit{adhan}, which had been called for eighteen years and without loud speakers, even the name of God, \textit{Allah}, was translated as \textit{Tanrı}, which generated harsh criticisms since Arabic was the liturgical language of Islam.\textsuperscript{96} For fundamentalists, this reform of Ataturk would constitute an evidence of how the reformists were infidels. As soon as Adnan Menderes took power, he would legalize Arabic call of \textit{adhan}, and since then the Turkish one is abandoned.

However, the decade between 1950 and 1960 was not only marked by the evident duality among the nation, but also with the transition from statist policies to liberalism.\textsuperscript{97} Conservative government’s liberal economic policies and support for private enterprise brought them significant popularity among the public while directing the country towards insolvency with the growing dependence on import. Later on, Turgut Özal would take these economic policies further by introducing privatization, which was going to enable more goods to be available to public, greatly based on imports.

\textsuperscript{92} Selim Iltu, "Nazif Topcuoglu, Mimarlik, Idem, 67. According to CIA’s \textit{The World Factbook}, Turkish population is 99.8% Muslim (mostly Sunni), 0.2% other religions (mostly Christians and Jews).

\textsuperscript{93} Emre Kongar, Aydinlanma: Türkçe Ezan’ın Öyküsü.

\textsuperscript{94} CIA’s \textit{The World Factbook}.

\textsuperscript{95} “Ottoman Turkish ... is the variety of the Turkish language that was used as the administrative and literary language of the Ottoman Empire. It contains extensive borrowings from Arabic and Persian languages and was written in a variant of the Arabic script. As a result of this process, Ottoman Turkish was largely unintelligible to the less-educated members of society.” M. Glenny, The Balkans - Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers, 1804-1999, (Penguin, New York 2001), 99.

\textsuperscript{96} Emre Kongar, Aydinlanma: Türkçe Ezan’ın Öyküsü, and, Behruz Genc, “Dinde bir devrimin geçirmemesi, caminin kare tabanı, merkezi ve yuvarlak kubbeli olarak sürmesinin nedenidir." Mimarizm, (March 7th, 2008).

\textsuperscript{97} Güven Arif Sargin, Idem, 659.
Kocatepe Mosque was going to be opened during his prime ministry, and instead of the shops proposed in the initial programme, the platform would then house the very first department-store of Ankara. However, as the officials of the foundation explain in the 1976 interview, the shops proposed in the initial programme (approximately 80 in total) were intended to sell touristic souvenirs, religious books and similar goods which would provide income to the foundation and not be “in contradiction” with the mosque.98 Although such shops for rent were common for mosques in the imperial context of Ottomans, they were always subordinate to the religious character of the mosque and supportive of the public life it generates, rather than intending to develop private capital.

The completed mosque and shopping complex might be suggested to be the manifestation of such conservative and liberal policies in space: The biggest state national mosque with the biggest shopping centre underneath. An adaptation of Ottoman heritage with a well preserved image of their best remembered memories was raised upon the economic “desires” of the new conservative power groups. The significant image of this building complex demonstrates the “identity” promoted to Turkish people since fifties at its best, not only by national politicians but also by global political and economical actors of power. Furthermore, this coupling of mosque and shopping-centre would constitute a model for the rest of the country in the following decades.

"Along with national policies, the era of the Reagan-Thatcher coalition had a tremendous impact on world politics, and the use of Islam as an antilleft instrument was part of global transformations. Particularly, supporting the pro-Islamic governments since the Soviet-Afghan War, 1979-89, the ‘Green Belt Theory’ (as it is today known) was of primary importance to the United States and its Western allies in order to control the Soviet’s expansion in the South. And, consequently, Turkey had its share of Islamisist political groups that were empowered as part of a larger perspective.”99

This role given to Turkey was easily grasped by the conservatives since it was giving total power back to them as the global paradigm required an Islamic country, fully involved in the free-market economy. Therefore, the erection of Kocatepe Mosque, together with other urban transformations underway, such as demographic shifts and spreading squatter settlements (gecekondu districts), constituted a sharp contrast with the capital envisioned by the republican reformists. Ankara, which was built as the spatial manifestation of Turkey’s Modernity Project with its monuments and public spaces, was now experiencing a great shift in its modes of production of space, within this liberal conservative paradigm.

As the paradox grew further, social unrest and political tension increased in the nation, and Turkey had the first coup d’état of its history in May 27th, 1960. A group of Turkish army officers took over the DP government accused with non-secular activities; they judged and executed the Prime Minister Adnan Menderes. Later on Turkey would have three more military interventions (in 1971,

98 Selim İtuş, Nazif Topçuoglu, Mimarlık, Idem, 68.

1980 and 1997 respectively) as the reiteration of contradictions among the society; especially between the Kemalists and Islamists, and under the growing influence of Marxists.

In his 1976 interview, Vedat Dalokay states, the cancelation decision of his proposal for Kocatepe Mosque was more political in contrast to what was officially explained by the Turkish Religious Foundation. He explains: “In the years following 1960 coup d'état, especially in the time of coalition governments that AP (Justice Party) took part, the administrators of the foundation were taken over with an election. Most groups which hold the control of the foundation later on did not like our project. Suggesting the minarets resemble missiles, calculations of the dome could not be done and these kind of reasons, they changed the project; dynamited the foundations.”

According to the extensive research made on the case of Kocatepe Mosque by Selim İltuş, Nazif Topçuoğlu, which the interview mentioned above was taken from, there is significant difference between the outcomes of the two competitions in question. While the abandoned project was suggesting a contemporary, unorthodox interpretation, emphasising function and integration in the urban fabric, the one to be realised was suggesting “a symbol of Islam, an eternal monument in the capital of Turkey”, departing from the concerns in Dalokay’s proposal. According to this study, such aspirations of conservatives become evident in the publications of their donation brochures where they refer to verses from Quran:

“It is not for such as join gods with Allah, to visit or maintain the mosques of Allah while they witness against their own souls to infidelity. ...The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in Allah and the Last Day, establish regular prayers, and practise regular charity, and fear none (at all) except Allah. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance.”

Such implicit statements might look rather moderate in the context of this paper, but it should be taken into consideration that highly popular DP and other conservative governments replaced by coup d’êtats, were publicly known to adopt an anti-Kemalist ideology, and provoke a fear of “losing religion” or “forgetting Allah” among the public: “...the view that the Kemalist Inkilap and its single-party regime constantly erased prerepublican memories, and, accordingly, that the Turkish people’s traditional identities were carefully confiscated by the secular elite, were the very core of their (conservatives) criticisms.”

It seems fair to suggest at this point, the image of a novel, contemporary mosque was not acceptable for such a way of thinking.

The transformation of the secular and modernist image of Ankara under the actions of conservative power groups is explicitly manifested in the new emblem of the city introduced by the major Melih Gökçek. He has been on duty for four successive periods, selected from there different conservative parties respectively (last two from AKP), and introduced a new emblem for the city in 1999

101 Quotation from the Quran, Al-Tawba sura (Repentance, Dispensation) 17-18, on Kocatepe Mosque donation brochure. Selim İltuş, Nazif Topçuoğlu, Mimariik, İdem, 70. English translation from: www.usc.edu
without any valid background study or explanation. This would generate serious discussions and later on 2005 decision would officially be cancelled by the court. However the emblem composed of the silhouette of Kocatepe Mosque is still in use by the municipality today.

While the construction of the Kocatepe Mosque was underway, which would be made the emblem of the capital later on, an official of The Association of Building and Support for the Complex of Religious Affairs answers to the question if the construction workers have a union or not as follows: “There is no union. Because these are only political formations. A holy place like this does not have anything to do with politics. We are in the effort of staying away from politics in the most sensitive way.”

Such a way of thinking, might provide an insight to how privileged positions could be obtained in the context of Turkey by sentimentalization of people’s beliefs: How power could be possessed and exercised.

103 Selim İtuş, Nazif Topçuoglu, Mimarlık, İdem, 68.
Religious Underpinnings

Architectural zeal for creating religious places in the spirit of the modern age is often got stuck in the space production mechanisms of the Turkish society. Interpretation of domes, minarets, or plan schemes, which were born out of functional necessities in the first place and gained symbolic values over the centuries, constitutes difficult issues in contemporary practice today. According to Abdi Güzer, “the relationship between the religious building and the environment” would be evaluated over three articles: “monumentality and symbolism, being a tool of identity and memory, and centrality.” 104 The inquiry of this relationship would be said to constitute the core of discussions regarding contemporary mosque architecture. There seems to be different positions taken in the production of mosques today: Interpreting the mosque as an architectural element in its physical context, concerned with the practical needs of its community and the spiritual needs of the individual, or interpreting it as a symbolic or monumental element; a tool of memory, identity, power and politics. However, besides their distinction, these two positions seems to be non-separate in the context of Ottoman Empire, and possibly in other Muslim societies of the past, where religion, politics, economy and daily life were domains blended in coherence; defined within each other.

Behruz Çinici, as one of the most renowned architects of Turkey and the one who designed maybe the most controversial mosque ever, states that the reason behind the continuation of bad examples of conventional mosques today, is the missed revolution in religion. 105 He explains the necessities that gave their form to the mosques of the past are not relevant today. “The heights of minarets were dimensioned according to the distance that the voice of a müezzin (prayer caller) could reach in the past. Therefore, old Turkish towns were meaningful in this scale. Namely, human voice – not loud speaker voice.”

In his particular position, parallel with Vedat Dalokay but possibly more radical, Çinici emphasises the point that religion should be studied and understood in its essence; its core philosophy should be reached and grasped. And in the core of Islam, one would find the Unity of man and Allah, the “love” for becoming one as the esoteric tendency of Tasavvuf (Sufism) seeks. For such architects focusing on the individual and spiritual aspects of a mosque, the purity of Islam constitutes the core of their inspiration. They believe, if understood and represented properly in space, this would lead the worshipper to spiritual upliftment, “enlightenment”; especially the young people. 106 The will to lead their society to a better future might be suggested to be evident in the idealism of such architectural positions.

104 Behruz Çinici, Mimarizm, Idem.
105 Behruz Çinici, Mimarizm, Idem.
It was during the history of Muslim cultures, and architecture of the contemporary Mosque should represent the spirit of its age in its best, as it refers as “the paradise place”.

As the most commonly referenced figure from the past in the scope of mosque discussions, both by the modernists and conservatives, it should be mentioned that Sinan the Architect was a Sufi himself belonging to the Bektashi order. As the figure who took the Ottoman monumental architecture to its climax, the influence of his thinking over Vedat Dalokay, and also Behruz Çinici, is evident in the works of these contemporary architects.

Furthermore, it is discussed by Vedat Dalokay that “Islam does not designate the form of the place of worship.” Also emphasised by other architects and academicians, a consensus exists on this should praise Allah in the novelty of its thinking (design). In Vedat Dalokay’s words: “The artist to sing the türkü (Turkish folk song) of the glory of God, should take this road with the most advanced and audacious ideas of the age in his field. He should benefit the most advanced technological resources and should create.”

108 Önder Şenaplı, Mimarlık, Idem, 32.
109 “As a Sufi belonging to Bektasi order, Mimar Sinan dictated his mystical approaches about the Mosque to his poet-painter friend Mustafa Sai Celebi. The Tezkiret-i-Bunyan, written toward the end of Sinan’s life by Sai Celebi, includes a detailed mystical and religious description of the Suleymaniya. The Descriptions are full of mystical and cosmological terms and references to Sufism (Tasavvuf). For examples, the Tezkiret-i-Buldan likens the mosque’s huge dome and satellites to Getnini and celestial orbits “the earth challenges the sky... with a dome that is even higher than paradise.” The fountain at the center of the marble courtyard is compared to Kawthar, the water basin in paradise into which the celestial rivers flow. The Tezkire compares the whole building to paradise, an analogy conveyed in the mosque's inscriptions, as well as in Sai’s inscription of Sinan’s tomb, north of the Suleymaniye, which calls the Suleymaniye mosque a “symbol of paradise.”” Semih Ceyhan, The Mystical Dimensions of Suleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul.
111 Önder Şenaplı, Mimarlık, Idem, 30.
issue.\textsuperscript{112} Therefore, the discussion rather focuses on the question of the symbolic value of architectural traditions in Muslim countries. However, the intricacy of the issue might be suggested to lie in the confusion of defining architecture on the basis of religion. “Islamic Architecture” would be defined as the architecture inscribed in basic Islamic sources as Quran or hadiths, or “Inspired by Islamic religious thought and practice”. “Muslim Architecture” on the other hand, might be said to refer to the architecture produced by Muslim people and associated with their societies.\textsuperscript{113} Therefore, in the history of the Muslim world, different societies had been able to produce original architectures, under the influence of their particular culture, geography and interaction with other cultures. This represents a continuous process of progress within the glory of past ages.\textsuperscript{114}

Indeed, the dome, as a significantly important element of this process, has its origin in the Roman civilization and introduced to Muslim cultures as their geography expanded. Maybe, it is most evident in the example of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul.

In the particular case of Ottoman culture, dome is used to cover a non-directional centric space with the structural supports pushed as far as possible to the boundaries of it. In Vedat Dalokay’s words; “The individual in these places, mostly, under the influence of the main dome, and mesmerizing collective great space. The individual left nondirectional and hesitant, would afterwards direct to qibla.”\textsuperscript{115} Therefore, Dalokay’s position could be explained as interpreting the essence of space defined in a mosque as a centric one, as non-obstructed as possible, covered under the unity of a single element, creating a sense of Unity and praising God in its grandeur. In addition, this position adopts the view that, such aspirations should be sought within the spirit of the age, which could only then lead to progress, as it happened in the past during the acclaimed periods in the history of Muslim cultures.

As mentioned previously, Dalokay stays quite loyal to the plan and compositional schemes of Ottoman mosques in his approach, and seeks originality in the plain use of the most advanced contemporary techniques. Minarets would be said to be the most problematic elements in his approach in their “uselessness”. However, he expresses his consciousness in using four minarets, both for Kocatepe and Faisal designs, emphasising the importance of the shared symbolic value minarets gained during the history of Muslim cultures.\textsuperscript{116}

The intricacy of the issue might be found in the two different interpretations of Islam religion by the architects whose work subjected to this thesis and by the politicians who exercised power on their practice: Religion as an individual matter between God and man, and religion as a socio-political phenomenon, which might become a political tool of power. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, it should be considered that these two interpretations are not necessarily exclusive, and possibly were in coherence in the Muslim societies.

\textsuperscript{112} Behruz Cınici, Mimarizm, İdem - Numan Çebeci, Mimarizm, İdem - K. Kutgüm Eyüpgiller, İdem - Doğan Kuban, Mimarlık, İdem - Kamil Khan Muntaz, İdem, 191.
\textsuperscript{113} Numan Çebeci, Mimarizm, İdem, and, Kamil Khan Muntaz, İdem, 191.
\textsuperscript{114} Doğan Kuban, Mimarlık, İdem.
\textsuperscript{115} Doğan Kuban, Mimarlık, İdem, and, Önder Şenyapılı, Mimarlık, İdem, 30.
\textsuperscript{116} Önder Şenyapılı, Mimarlık, İdem, 31.
of the past. The essence of Islam aims to direct the individual to live a good life, seeks moral and spiritual upliftment and aims Unity with Allah, as well as its teachings promote a body of administrative rules to regulate social life, formed within the social paradigm of the period it was born in. Acknowledging the evolution of Muslim societies living according to Islam’s teachings during the 1400 years history of their cultures, would provide a better insight to the intricacy of the incident examined in this work.

Sinan created his masterpieces in a different socio-political paradigm. In his time, the individual and spiritual aspects of Islam were integral to the political domain, and therefore to the social order, which were defined within the religion itself; an empire. Therefore mosques in the past were not subjected to the paradox of individual belief versus political power in those societies, where politics and religion were not separate spheres. In the present paradigm however, the fragmentation, or redefinition, of political, economic and religious spheres creates contradictions that are still not resolved.

The mosque, contemporary or conventional, in its essence is a political symbol, a power tool, as well as a spiritual space for the individual in today’s context. Therefore, interpretation, or developing narratives of these places of worship only from a spiritual and/or individual perspective, as Vedat Dalokay and other Turkish architects, who designed moderately or radically novel mosques, might render such approaches insufficient. However it is also evident in Dalokay’s strong references to the Ottoman heritage and symbolism that he is conscious of this; but also uncompromising of his ideals as an architect.
Conclusion: Capabilities of Creative Thinking

The effacing story of the cancelled Kocatepe design, keeps unfolding as one pursues it further. The inquiry of this incident reveals further links with the economical, political and religious spheres of the Turkish society, beyond the physical attributes of the projects as artefacts. The buildings subjected to this work, even the cancelled one, are manifestations of the social paradigms which “created” them. In this sense, the cancelled project is found to be important, at the least, as much as the realized ones.

The cancellation decision is no longer surprising once the social paradigm of the period is examined. And again, the differences between the cases of Islamabad and Ankara, helps to understand how the revised design of Dalokay could be realized in another context; which might be said to be more convenient. It should be emphasised that, the revision mentioned here was an extensive one in many aspects. But it was also minor in the essence of the design; in its interpretation of the “spirit” of a mosque.

What is built instead of Dalokay’s proposal in Ankara, is not only the product of a different way of architectural thinking, but also a different ideology. As the production of space in Turkey has been under the control of political parties in power, any shift in the ruling ideology was consequently a shift in the urban development of Ankara: Within the socio-political and economical paradigm, it would mean a metamorphosis for the capital in its evolution process. Therefore, the realized Kocatepe Mosque is not only a landmark for the capital, but it is a landmark for the modern Turkish society; its transformation process; which manifests its contradictions and creates confrontation in space.

However, Dalokay’s proposal could have certain similar effects if it was realized. The novel image of the mosque proposed to the Turkish society, would be considered alien to the common citizen who was struggling to adopt the modernization reforms. In this sense, his proposal might be considered as a break point in the history of Modernist Turkish architecture, which was significantly more successful in the production of state buildings and public spaces, within the statist political paradigm of previous decades.

What would be said to conclude is; modern Turkish society, since its foundation in 1923, is experiencing a continuous process of rapid transformation, which could not reach a level of stability yet. The Kocatepe incident examined here depicts a particular instance in this process. As this process continues, the paradigm in Turkey transforms; consequently the space produced. A recent example is the Şakirin Mosque designed by Hüsrev Tayla; the architect of Kocatepe Mosque. His interpretation of the dome in this design ironically reminds the one of Dalokay in his cancelled project. The architect who thought it was “risky” to propose a novel mosque fifty years ago, is now choosing to follow a different approach in his eighties.117

The influence of a cancelled project is significant in this particular case. I believe, it demonstrates the capabilities of creative thinking and how it can be influential within the society; even though it stays in the form of ideas. In this aspect, the incident of

117 Jale Erzen, A. Balamir, Idem, 110.
Kocatepe Mosque has been considerably influential in Turkish society’s production of space, with the originality and boldness of Dalokay’s design.

Figure 45 Şakirin Mosque (2006-2009), architect: Hüsrev Tayla (source: Benno Thoma on www.npr.org)


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