

The role of travel in inducing architectural productions seen through a variety of representation systems, scrutinising Turkish architects' journeys to Italy in the postwar era.

# Architects' journeys to Italy and their contribution to architectural culture in postwar-era Turkey

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While studies have investigated the findings and spatial experiences of well-known trips by architects – such as Le Corbusier's *Journey to the East*, or so-called Grand Tours undertaken by European architects in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – this article scrutinises Turkish architects' trips to Italy. It examines their role in producing and disseminating architectural knowledge in Turkey in the postwar era. Most architectural knowledge is created through journeys, exhibitions, magazines, and other forms of representation, as mobilised and disseminated by architectural actors. The practice of architecture has a significant bearing on tacit and personal knowledge, which accumulates through personal experience and practice, but is seldom easily described.

Within architecture, the Grand Tour was often seen as a milestone or 'a transition to adulthood' among the European elite. For most Grand Tourers, Italy was an alluring destination. Even after the Grand Tour, Italy remained a site to learn about architecture, engaging modes of teaching that enabled travelling.<sup>1</sup> The American Academy in Rome (AAR), for example, is one of the institutions that promotes a combination of study and travel for its architecture students.<sup>2</sup> While there have been many studies concerning architectural expeditions by architects from the Global North, Turkish architects' travel experiences and intercultural encounters in Italy have been little studied.<sup>3</sup>

Turkish-Italian architectural knowledge exchanges date back to the thirteenth century. The presence of Italian architects in Turkey during the Ottoman era illustrates how they contributed significantly to the urban identity of Istanbul, for example, until the Italo-Turkish war of 1911.<sup>4</sup> Following that war, the relationship between the two countries was not reconciled until the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. Especially in the 1950s, when many German academics relocated to Turkey after the Second World War, there was also a close affinity between Turkish and German architectural cultures. Most of the literature on intercultural exchange in

Turkish modernist architecture, for example, deals with connections between Turkey and Germany considering the mobility of architectural actors<sup>5</sup> between these two countries.<sup>6</sup> However architecture students and architects increasingly started to visit Italy for study, work, or research after the Second World War, particularly following the 1960s.<sup>7</sup>

Most existing literature around this exchange focuses on Italian architects' contribution to the renewal of Ottoman cities from the eighteenth century onwards and *Art Nouveau* architecture in Turkey.<sup>8</sup> However, various Turkish architects' contributions to architectural culture were shaped by their travels to Italy in the postwar era. Architects' representations of their travels took various forms – such as books, articles, and exhibitions – and they yielded information about Italian architecture for a Turkish architectural audience at a time when travel and access to this knowledge was limited.

## Placing travel in architecture culture

For researchers in the social sciences such as anthropology, research involves physically leaving 'home' and travelling to an unfamiliar setting to gather 'material' from 'the field'.<sup>9</sup> But why and how do architects travel? Esra Akcan's answer to this question is threefold. First comes the 'impulse of the Grand Tour [...] to study the masterpieces of Architecture'. Second is the tendency of architects to record and collect. Third is the never-ending curiosity towards their environment that some architects possess.<sup>10</sup> Certainly, an enhanced sense of perception of one's surroundings is brought about in the architecture discipline by the positive connotations of mobility. During architectural education, the idea of translation is part of architectural production. When visiting a site, architects do not solely observe or listen but also sketch, record, collect, categorise and, most importantly, translate aspects of their observations into forms that can be disseminated. Akcan defines translation as a multidirectional, enriching, and mobile action.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, Ken Friedman describes

the designer as ‘a thinker whose job is to move from thought to action’, and ‘to use expertise without being expert in each field’.<sup>12</sup> This implies that being an architect entails building knowledge across many fields to form the basis for creative action. Therefore, architects tend to approach different disciplines and environments with curiosity, which can ennoble even the simplest everyday activities like travelling. There is often a distinction made between a traveller and a tourist: the traveller-architect is considered – unlike the tourist who follows the guidebook – as a person open to experience space in all its dimensions.<sup>13</sup> A similar sense of immersion, a way of understanding one’s surroundings and being ‘in motion’, is sometimes attributed to the intellectual, the theorist, or the critic. Jane Rendell sees the critic as a travel writer, ‘always going far from home, invited as a guest into someone else’s place’. She attributes a particular sense of curiosity to the ‘traveller’ who is ‘pulled out of the familiar towards the strange, impelled by a desire for transformation – a total immersion in the other – in order to return anew to the self’. This is in contrast to the tourist who is also in motion but remains unchanged.<sup>14</sup>

The ability to become immersed in new environments, and internalise the transformative experience of mobility, has an impact on how architects perceive the modern world, and how they design and shape architectural culture.<sup>15</sup> Visiting a building or setting and then translating that experience into another representation impacts the architect as well as the formation of spaces. Architects interpret, translate, and disseminate observations of their journeys to become part of architectural discourse.

Although architects travel with their own weight of expectations and prior architectural knowledge, physical encounters with the ‘other’ have a deeper effect, especially when looking back to the pre-digital era.<sup>16</sup> By making images and information

widely accessible, the Internet has arguably diminished the explosive effect of encounters during travel, and the need to produce and disseminate knowledge from travelling, because information is now more easily accessible. However this does not make the encounters of digital-era travel any less valuable.

### Evaluation of travel material

This article incorporates data from historical sources obtained through archival research and evaluates case studies through thematic and content analysis.<sup>17</sup> Turkish architects who travelled



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1. Doğan Kuban in Rome, Italy, 1954.
2. Doğan Kuban and Ergün Aksel working in Men Temple, Yalvaç, Turkey while assisting Paolo Verzone, 1953.

to Italy in the postwar era, and produced some kind of representation – sketches, photographs, articles, books – were chosen as case studies. Their representations were analysed for recurring words, drawings, or photographs concerning their travel experience, and for the subjects of their travel, e.g., buildings, settings or architectural actors. In parallel, visual and written archival material was reviewed concerning the spatial, material, and functional characteristics of spaces.

The collection and analysis of travel materials indicate that architects tend to later translate their ‘onsite’ experiences of spaces, through sketches and recordings, into ‘offsite’ representations – such as lectures, articles, books, exhibitions – in order to disseminate the knowledge they gained from their travels. Written archival material was the most useful source for tracing tacit or embodied aspects of their knowledge because the writing process provided distance and time to elaborate thoughts in detail, embracing both thinking and bodily interaction.<sup>18</sup> Re-representing onsite material requires a process of translation: sketches are compiled into a book, visual experiences are converted into text, and photographs are selected as part of an article. Building types, architects, or locations studied were related to the period’s architectural discourse or the architect’s professional career. The architects either produced material that catered to architectural discussions or were urged to share and disseminate new information. In either case, the trips and representations produced from those trips became sources of knowledge in their own right.

### Travel as a learning practice

From a pedagogical perspective, Kay Bea Jones asserts that travelling, when combined with critical inquiry and site-specific engagements, helps architects to form new relations, facilitating the construction of architectural knowledge.<sup>19</sup>

Coincidentally, the selection of architects in this article are, without exception, academics. The reason for this is that academic architects adopt writing, lecturing, and exhibiting – in other words dissemination – as a key basis of their practice. Although visual representations are preferred to writing as a method of expression in architecture, writing was a systematic method of disseminating theory for many architects in the past, from the times of Vitruvius, Alberti, and Serlio. The shock of travel can act as a catalyst for writing. One of the reasons why Le Corbusier’s travels were recurrently studied was because he was a prolific writer who published his experiences.<sup>20</sup> Akcan compared the journeys of Turkish architect Sedat Hakkı Eldem and Le Corbusier to demonstrate that the fluctuation between nomadism and being a migrant formed a primary productive tension in both figures’ work.<sup>21</sup>

According to Jilly Traganou, the fascination with mobility in architecture is rooted in intellectual traditions that connect travelling to the production of knowledge. A belief in the capacity of travel to provide insight, cross-cultural understanding was present in various systems of thought, especially after the Second World War.<sup>22</sup> Academics were influential in establishing cultures of peer-bonding and learning about the architectural history of Turkey through field trips. Prominent Turkish architectural historians Afife Batur and Doğan Kuban were students of Italian architect Paolo Verzone, who taught in Istanbul Technical University (ITU) at the beginning of the 1950s. With Verzone’s support, Kuban went on research trips to Italy to write his graduate theses and he continued with numerous trips to Anatolia while working as Verzone’s assistant [1, 2].

Kuban described his experience as follows: ‘I learned about European Antiquity from books and got to know more about it when I went to Italy. With the other trips, I observed Anatolian



3. Doğan Kuban and his students on a trip to Diyarbakır, 1961.

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4. Harika Söylemezoğlu posing in front of a wall in the city, Italy in the 1950s.

5. A photograph of a narrow street in Italy taken by Kemali Söylemezoğlu in the 1950s.



Antiquity and Medieval Byzantine-Christian structures.<sup>23</sup> Kuban emphasised the importance of comparison as a means of interpretation. Through ‘seeing with his own eyes’ in Italy, he compared Ottoman buildings with European, and especially Renaissance structures in his theses.<sup>24</sup> For him, there was nothing ‘more natural than studying the Renaissance when one is in Rome’.<sup>25</sup> Similar to Robert Venturi, whose study tour at the AAR was so influential that it became decisive to his design approach and view of architectural history,<sup>26</sup> Kuban became acquainted with the concept of conservation during his stay in Italy, contributing to the systematisation of conservation theory when he returned to Turkey.<sup>27</sup>

Kuban came to appreciate travelling (especially in Europe), writing, teaching, and translating as integral elements of his building of self. While he was teaching (1960–74), he organised many faculty-funded trips to Anatolia with his students [3]. These, in turn, inspired one of his books, *Impressions from Anatolian Trips: A Western Anatolian Trip* (1962). Despite the difficulties of transportation and accommodation in 1960s Turkey, Kuban commented on the positive, exciting, and bonding effects of these travels as well as their role in forming his fondness of Anatolia. In the Foreword of the book, Kuban framed culture as an entity that can only be understood in its environment, writing indeed that architecture students best acquire knowledge necessary for their formation through travel.<sup>28</sup>

His ideas not only designated culture as a spatial phenomenon, but also glorified the architect who made the effort to travel. As an academic, Kuban believed that collecting documents for future studies and archives was the major achievement to be gained from travel.

### Building a repertoire through travel

In the context of Turkey, experience of travel was not always initiated by education, but almost always had the aspect of ‘collecting’ – for the purpose of educational dissemination – at its core. Here, the term ‘collecting’ is used expansively to refer to the idea of forming an individual repertoire through curiosity and a receptiveness to one’s surroundings. Margitta Buchert coins the term ‘individual repertoire’ as something ubiquitous to all architects who develop skills through experience, travel, socialising, and the intense perception of onsite observations.<sup>29</sup> Kemali and Harika Söylemezoğlu’s photographs from their trip to Italy in the 1950s substantiated the idea of maintaining a never-ending curiosity towards their environment as architects. Moving around the city with only a limited number of expensive films for their 35mm analogue camera, the Söylemezoğlus chose to depict the city in a remotely touristic way by photographing extraordinarily large stones [4], narrow streets [5], and urban textures among other subjects.

Here, it is worth noting that the possession of a camera had an immense effect on how architects

formed a repertoire during their travels. Even an avid draftsman such as Kemali Söylemezoğlu, who preferred recording his trips through sketches and personal notes ‘instead of taking photographs because sketching helped make the visited spaces more memorable’ [6], started keenly taking photographs after buying a camera in the 1950s.<sup>30</sup> For many academic architects in the pre-digital age, the reproducibility and durability of a photograph became desirable for use as part of a class or lecture.

In addition to recording spaces through sketching, notes, and photographs, encounters with people and forming new acquaintances were major contributions to an architect’s repertoire. In his report to ITU Architecture Faculty in 1953, Nezhil Eldem emphasised the contributions of his encounters and experiences in Italy as a vital part of his practice, where he worked with Gio Ponti and met Bruno Zevi.<sup>31</sup> Italy was effectively rediscovered by certain Turkish architects in the 1960s, for example through Bruno Zevi’s book *Saper Vedere L’architettura* (1948). This book was translated

from French by Bülent Özer, and a summary was published in *Mimarlık ve Sanat [Architecture and Art]* magazine in 1961. Zevi had previously been invited to give lectures at ITU in 1954–5.

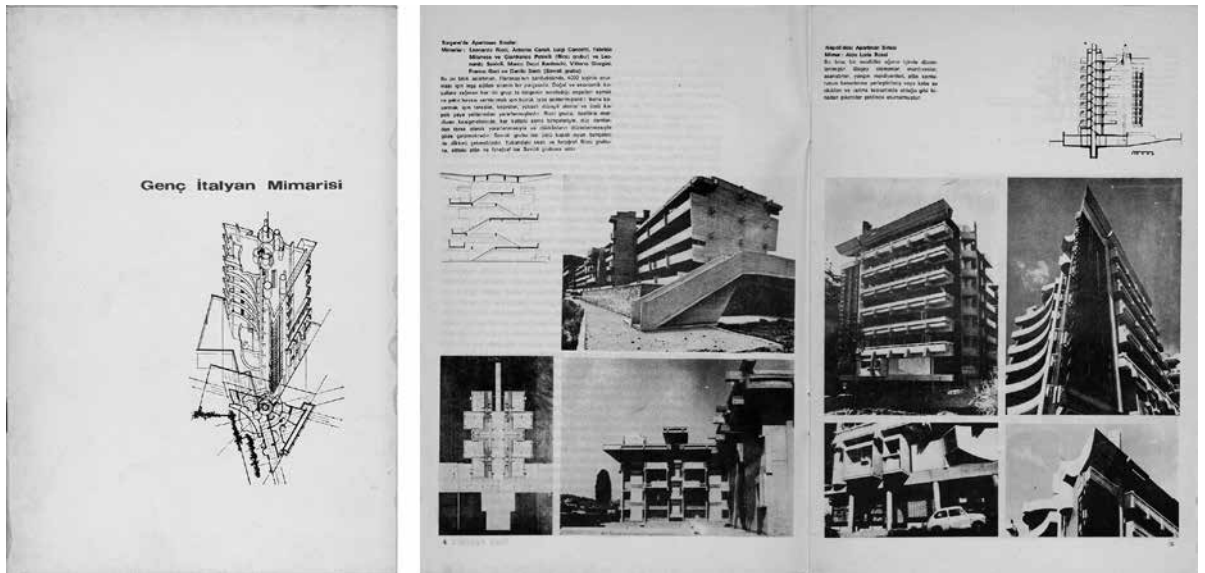
The knowledge that Eldem gained in Italy laid the foundation for his doctoral thesis entitled *Modern Architecture and Italy* (1954). This was a time in Turkey, until the 1960s, when architectural production was mainly defined by practice, accompanied by very little intellectual production through architectural history and critical writing. In his docent thesis, Eldem emphasised the effects of fascism, nationalism, and rationalism on architectural production in Italy through examples of modernism and futurism.<sup>32</sup> His analyses indicate an understanding of architectural production as an act bound by politics.<sup>33</sup> In an article about Zevi, Eldem remarked how he objected to seeing architecture as a branch of fine arts, but viewed it instead saw as the temporal design of voids.<sup>34</sup>

While Eldem was expressing interest in everyday buildings in the 1950s, the popular architectural discourse in Turkey revolved around Ottoman and folk landmarks.<sup>35</sup> Eldem’s sensibility towards, and ability to combine, different materials, understanding of total design incorporating furniture and objects, as well as his approach to the design of dwellings, bears similarities to Italian architects such as Franco Albini, Carlo Scarpa, and Vittoriano Vigano who regarded design as a notion that facilitated technology, aesthetics, and the functionality of details in everyday life. Eldem’s lecture slides (with titles such as ‘Motors and Machinery’, ‘Vehicles’,



6. Kemali Söylemezoğlu’s sketch of St Marco Square, Venice, 1948. 7. Thumbnails of Nezhil Eldem’s lecture slides.





‘Structures’, and ‘Automobiles’) [7] emphasised design values he shared with these architects.<sup>36</sup>

Eldem’s interest in Italian design, consolidated by his travels, continued throughout his life. He influenced a growing interest in modern Italian architecture among a wider audience in Turkey.<sup>37</sup> This resulted in, for example, the *Young Italian Architecture* exhibition held at ITU in 1973 for which Eldem gave a speech, moderated a session, and designed a poster.<sup>38</sup> The editor of the exhibition booklet [8], Pino Parente, defined the exhibition’s mission as showcasing contemporary Italian architecture that incorporated elements of ‘anti-design’ and craft, and aimed to produce efficient structures.<sup>39</sup> It is unknown who translated Parente’s introduction or the texts in the booklet, but it is quite possible that Eldem was the translator. There was a continuation of design language from the bold graphic expression of the booklet to the typography of the poster, which demonstrated an understanding of total design in Italian architectural discourse. The large quantity of housing examples shown reflected Eldem’s own interests, the urgency of dwelling construction in that period, and the possibility of turning to Italy for references in *modernist* design instead of its more typical images of classical and historical architecture.

Zevi’s redefinition of architecture as an ‘interior space’ that is lived in, moved in, and around – and his suggestion that buildings did not only enclose a space within but also defined an ‘urban interior’ – disrupted an assumed hierarchy of decorative exteriors over interiors in Turkey.<sup>40</sup> The architect viewed architecture, and especially organic architecture (to use the term coined by Frank Lloyd Wright), as a living setting, suggesting that individuals were capable of forming space through perception and movement. The Mediterranean, because of its seemingly organic urban settlements, offered a suitable setting for Turkish architects to explore Zevi’s ideas.

8. Pages from the booklet of the *Young Italian Architecture* exhibition catalogue, 1973.

### Design knowledge through travel to urban settings

Especially among Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University (MSFAU) members, Italy was a recurrent destination for learning about and sketching historical buildings and humanistic environments.<sup>41</sup> In an interview, Haydar Karabey suggested that MSFAU architecture staff were interested in dilapidated spaces and the Mediterranean region, having a ‘romantic and artistic’ way of approaching the built environment.<sup>42</sup> This aligns with historical accounts of architectural expeditions from the eighteenth century, idealising Italy, which stemmed from orientalist and romantic ideas about ruin, nature, and preservation.<sup>43</sup> Although, by the 1950s and 1960s, the zeal for such antiquarianism had declined, it gave way to another idealisation of the Mediterranean: as the location for modernist vernacular design.<sup>44</sup>

The idea of ‘Mediterranean modern’ became a reference for regional modernist aesthetics, especially within Turkey.<sup>45</sup> In that sense, trips to Italy provided an opportunity for intellectual inquiry into concepts of sensible and human-scale environments. Karabey wrote that ‘even’ a figure such as Turkish architect and academic Orhan Şahinler, known for his modernist approach and brutalist designs, would travel around Italy and produce a research and sketchbook entitled *A Study on Medieval City Squares and Neighbourhoods in Central Italy* (1964).

Şahinler initially visited and became fascinated by Italy in 1955 [9]. Later, in 1962, he revisited on a state scholarship, publishing a resulting book in 1964. Şahinler analysed the squares of Perugia, Assisi, Spoleto, Siena, and San Gimignano through numerous photographs and sketches, and

presented geographical and historical details he believed necessary for lively urban spaces [10]. Şahinler repeatedly addressed the importance of squares as spaces for urban inhabitants to spend leisure time and to interact socially, understanding the positive effects of durable, artisanal, and well-kept materials and good light on the social longevity and liveliness of these spaces. ‘At certain times of the day and especially at night’, he wrote, ‘the movement of people, vehicles and light gives a strong sense of liveliness, charm and a functioning

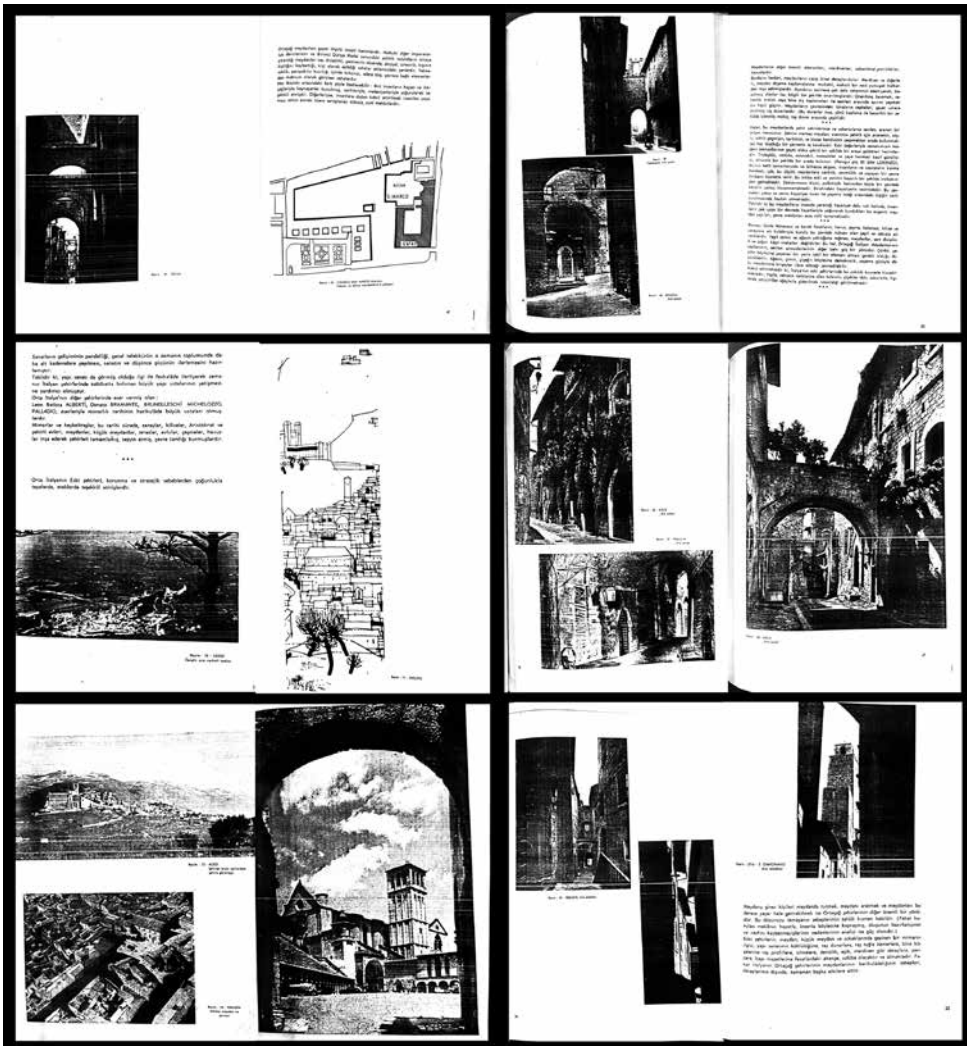
environment to this proportionate space.’<sup>46</sup>

Şahinler went on to explain the effects of materials such as tile cladding or the use of large stones in creating and ‘completing’ tasteful spaces and atmospheres. His descriptions of urban connections, material integrity, and light show that his ‘brutalist approach’ was not in opposition to his visits to Italy, as Karabey suggests. On the contrary, Şahinler seemed to perceive his environment according to the same brutalist sensibility that focused on material quality, durability, and ‘honesty’ to create simple and socially functional spaces. An expanded version of his 1964 book was published as *Medieval Cities of Central Italy* (2012), in which he re-emphasised the sophistication, durability, and well-designed details specific to medieval cities, along with their ‘charming, mystical, mysterious and unique’ characteristics.<sup>47</sup>

Şahinler formed a unique design language in between modernist and postmodernist aesthetics, belonging to a generation of academic architects who taught at the university and professionally practiced architecture, viewing environments through both a practical and pedagogical lens. He did not see modernism as an antidote to history, as Karabey has implied. Rather, his autonomous search for knowledge, accompanied by the bodily experience of



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9. Orhan Şahinler in Rome, Italy, 1955.

10. Pages from Orhan Şahinler's book *A Study on Medieval City Squares and Neighbourhoods in Central Italy* (1964).

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11. Pages from Muhlis Türkmen's book *Drawings from Italy* (1982).

spaces, could transform easily into teaching or design knowledge, similar to architects like Le Corbusier who developed a vocabulary of forms through his experiences of travel in the Mediterranean and 'the Orient' as a young architect.<sup>48</sup>

Especially in the second half of the twentieth century, influenced for example by Aldo Rossi and Colin Rowe, Italy regained a central position in investigating a vocabulary of forms that constitute the city.<sup>49</sup> Rossi's description of the city as a living entity that builds collective memory over time through layers, architectural elements, and buildings echoes Şahinler's writing.<sup>50</sup> Şahinler argued that architects needed to understand why Italy was so frequently visited in order to understand the liveliness of urban spaces.<sup>51</sup>

The resulting dual depiction of Italian cities as both 'works-of-art' and sites of modern development seemed to enter Turkish architectural discourse after the wars, perhaps explaining why MSFAU academic Muhlis Türkmen chose to publish a travel book of sketches of classical Italian architecture following his trip to Italy in 1980. Türkmen's book is illustrated with elaborate drawings that display his incredible attention to detail. He begins his book thus: 'We have to admit that there is a lifelong learning for architects and artists, and the need is fulfilled to some extent through domestic and international travels.'<sup>52</sup> Türkmen's book about the architect's travel experiences was disseminated widely in Turkish architectural discourse. Indeed, some of Türkmen's Italian sketches were used in the 2014 edition of Şahinler's book. Like Şahinler, Türkmen was interested in key elements constituting lively urban squares, such as statues, columns, chimneys, and buildings, as well as animals and humans [11].

### Focusing on Mediterranean housing design

The accounts of various trips illustrate how, along with the liveliness of urban spaces, interest in

housing, modern dwelling, and related policy implementations in other countries grew among Turkish architects in the postwar era. By the end of the nineteenth century, informal architecture had become assumed to communicate significance, and thus new travel routes emerged for the study of vernacular architecture.<sup>53</sup> This was a time when housing policy changed in Turkey in an attempt to handle a massive influx of immigrants from rural areas to the cities especially between the 1950s and 1970s.<sup>54</sup> Housing design, vernacular patterns and urban settings of the Mediterranean thus became dominant themes. Indeed, studying vernacular architecture as a precedent for functionalist and modernist typology became common for architects from both Turkey and Italy, and the study of vernacular housing typologies continued in both countries into the twenty-first century.<sup>55</sup>

Muammer Onat became interested in housing design and Ina-Casa after his trip to Italy. Ina-Casa was a postwar housing programme constructing over 350,000 units in two phases in Italy (1949–56 and 1956–63). According to Onat's travel companion Tamer Başoğlu, after visiting a friend who lived in a social housing estate on the outskirts of Rome in 1960, Onat became intrigued and spent the following six months researching Ina-Casa.<sup>56</sup> Onat never published his research findings. However, he compiled a book draft, as well as class notes, based on his experiences.<sup>57</sup> These notes describe the importance of variation in dwelling design to adapt to the different needs of every individual.

The economic model and housing design of Ina-Casa, characterised by low cost, simple technology, and proximity to traditional housing production,



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12. One of the Ina-Casa settlements, Tiburtino, shortly after its construction, 1952.

13. Bird's eye view of apartment clusters, courtyard, and streets in OR-AN, 1970.



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attracted several other Turkish architects' interests.<sup>58</sup> For example, architect academic Muzaffer Sudalı wrote a book on Ina-Casa in 1968 after research trips to Italy in 1962. In his book, Sudalı described the housing crisis in Turkey, suggesting Ina-Casa as a model to address unemployment, solidarity, and equal rights to the city.<sup>59</sup> Architects were not interested in Ina-Casa solely for its efficiency, but also for its modern design and success in providing humane environments.<sup>60</sup> In one of the most discussed Ina-Casa neighbourhoods, Tiburtino [12], rural architectural models were used to enhance a sense of community through design.<sup>61</sup>

Similar to Ina-Casa, but smaller in scale – initially aiming to house 30,000 people in approximately 10,000 units – OR-AN was the first mass housing project in Ankara, Turkey. OR-AN (Orta Anadolu, Central Anatolia in English) Mass Housing Company was privately established in 1968. It was committed to providing and a

'beautiful living environment' to low- and middle-income groups through modern construction technologies, 'properly filling the voids within the city'.<sup>62</sup> The project's architect Şevki Vanlı was another enthusiast of Italy.<sup>63</sup> He was keen to present Italian architecture to a Turkish architectural audience, believing writing to be an integral part of architectural culture.<sup>64</sup> In his texts, Vanlı celebrated 'modern interpretations of traditional Mediterranean architecture',<sup>65</sup> and promoted equal rights to use, live in, and benefit from the city among all its citizens.<sup>66</sup>

In an attempt to put Vanlı's social aspirations into practice and build a community through architecture, OR-AN included a soft pattern of small housing blocks.<sup>67</sup> The blocks were entered from – in Vanlı's words – 'Anatolian streets', accompanied by plenty of human-scale open spaces and large green areas [13].<sup>68</sup> These ideas resembled the modernist reinterpretation of 'rural purity' in the Ina-Casa settlements. However,

OR-AN could not fulfil Vanlı's ideals for a more just society and environment, leading to his early resignation from the project, which was completed later with many changes. Indeed, the discrepancy between Vanlı's ideals and architectural repertoire, which was formed through his education in Italy, represented the tension between the assumptions and realities of each design project.<sup>69</sup>

In the 1970s, the direct association of Mediterranean architecture with humane environments, and thus a 'better' way of organising space, necessitated more expeditions and led to their romanticisation. Ersen Gürsel's research trip to Spain in 1966–7 enhanced his interests in Mediterranean vernacular architecture and his 'thinking about the relationship between human and place'.<sup>70</sup> As Gürsel emphasised, one 'had to see the everyday routines in these lively environments in person'.<sup>71</sup> According to Nihal Coşkun, Gürsel explored Zevi's ideas of the Mediterranean built environment as providing 'interior' spaces within urban exteriors, connecting to the architectural discourse of the 1960s focused on voids, connections, streets, and 'the in-between'.<sup>72</sup> When asked about his travels, Gürsel celebrated the vitality of street life in hilltop cities in Italy, Morocco and Turkey, emphasising the similarity of the streets in these locations as spaces for encounter and sharing.<sup>73</sup>

Enis Kortan was similarly impressed by Mediterranean urban texture. He described his two-month-long journey (which was, in his words, 'similar to Corbusier's *Journey to the East* but in the reversed direction')<sup>74</sup> as follows:

*Finally, I was in a serene and humanist environment which made me feel at home, on the warm shores of blue Mediterranean which consisted of white two-storey human scale houses, where fisherman displayed their nets and maintained their boats, the villages were comprised of natural stone clad narrow streets and small squares.*<sup>75</sup>

As these examples illustrate, the Mediterranean became, among Turkish architects, a reference for humanistic environments, and a sense of formalism, that was considered innate to that physical and cultural realm. Although they did not exoticise Italy in the same way as the Western gaze, they still assumed that the West represented progress and that travelling there was thus an attribution of the 'civilised' architect.<sup>76</sup> Turkish architects focused on similarities between the two Mediterranean countries and saw Italy as a successful precedent and

model for modern architecture and urban design. New contributions to the literature challenge this positioning of Mediterranean architecture as an entity with shared modern design characteristics, however, while imagining the postwar interest in the Mediterranean vernacular as an intellectual refuge.<sup>77</sup> Even today, Turkish architects turn to Mediterranean architectural models to find humane and sustainable ways to design environments.

## Conclusion

For Turkish architects, Italy's built environment had a propensity for humanism that characterised Mediterranean urban and residential space. Either by visiting destinations in Italy or adopting travelling as a practice for learning, Turkish architects became familiar with, and inspired by, Italy – developing a localised form of modern architecture in Turkey. For the architects discussed in this article, travelling was a method to learn about the environment and architectural history, to build an individual repertoire of visual depictions and bodily experiences, as well as to explore specific topics such as housing and urban design. The architects achieved such aims by testing their curiosity, observing and recording their environment, exploring new spaces, forming new acquaintances and, most importantly, translating their travel experiences into different forms of representation.

Architects internalised and chose to represent their travel experiences through drawings, photography, articles, and books. Their mobility, and the translation of their observations following their travels, helped to further architectural knowledge. As travel triggered production, either in verbal or written form, the dissemination of ideas created and sustained flux in architecture culture. When architects translated their 'onsite' travel materials into 'offsite' materials, their travelling process became visible, and intellectually and visually traceable. In addition, architects were able to implement the design knowledge that they gained from their travels through lectures and lessons, and by designing projects.

The potency of travel in architecture can be seen in continuing practices of site visits, excursions, and travelling scholarships. While travellers now know much more about their destinations prior to travelling due to technology's effects, arguably diminishing the element of surprise and the 'need' to visit a particular place, travel nevertheless remains a generative component of architectural practice.

## Notes

- 1 Denise Costanzo, 'Travel, Architects, and the Postwar "Grand Tour"', *University of Toronto Art Journal*, 1 (2008).
- 2 AAR was founded in 1894 – followed by other 'academies' in different cities in Europe – for American students to gain insight and

knowledge of history through visiting Europe.

- 3 See *Blickwendungen: Architektenreisen Nach Italien in Moderne und Gegenwart*, ed. by Kai Kappel and Erik Wegerhoff (Munich: Hirmer, 2019); Giovanna Ceserani, Giorgio Cavaglia, Nicole Coleman, Thea De Armond, Sarah

Murray, Molly Taylor-Poleskey, 'British Travelers in Eighteenth-Century Italy: The Grand Tour and the Profession of Architecture', *The American Historical Review*, 122 (2017), 425–50; Mustafa Kemal Baran, 'Travelling/Writing/Drawing: Karl Friedrich Schinkel's Architectural Journey to Italy (1824)'

- (unpublished Master's thesis, METU, 2011); Paola Tosolini, 'Other Itineraries: Modern Architects on Countryside Roads', *Journal of Architecture*, 4 (2008), 427–51.
- 4 Paolo Girardelli and Ezio Godoli, 'Introduction', in *Italian Architects and Builders in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Design Across Borders* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), pp. vii–xvi.
  - 5 By architectural actors, the authors refer to the group of people who work in the field of architecture, as architects, theorists, or academics
  - 6 See: Esra Akcan, *Architecture in Translation: Germany, Turkey and the Modern House* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012); Bernd Nicolai, *Modern ve Sürgün* (Ankara: Mimarlar Odası Yayınları, 2011); Burcu Dogramaci, *Kulturtransfer und nationale Identität: Deutschsprachige Architekten, Stadtplaner und Bildhauer in der Türkei nach 1927* (Berlin: Gebr Mann Verlag, 2008).
  - 7 Uğur Tanyeli, 'İtalyan, Türkler ve Mimarlık', in *Osmanlı Mekanının Peşinde Sınırşımı Metinleri* (İstanbul: Akın Nalça, 2015), pp. 99, 110.
  - 8 See *İstanbul'daki İtalyan İzi*, ed. by Burçak Evren (İstanbul: Ferrol, 2008).
  - 9 James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 58.
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### Competing interests

The authors declare none.

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