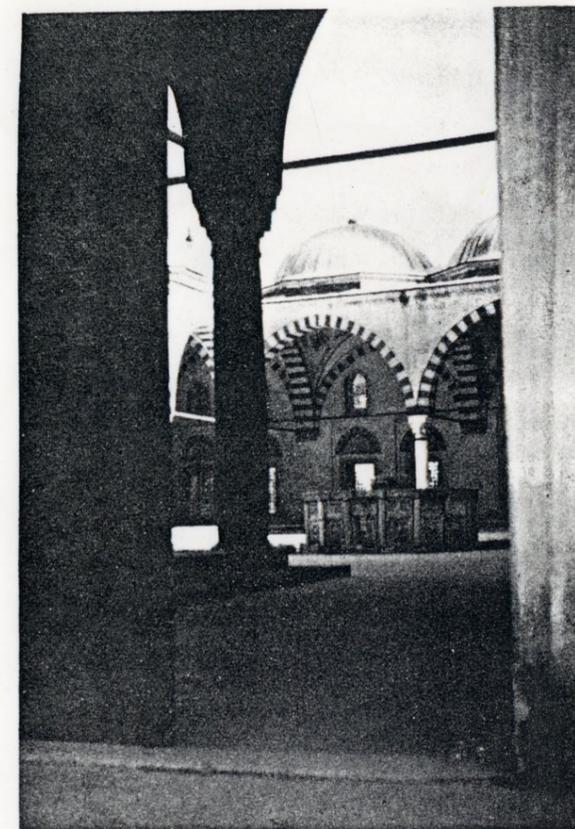




Marmara Island (Proconessus). Quarrying tools.

criminal labour by Christians and Muslims alike – which is why the population was Greek until recent times.

After the Ottoman conquest, columns as such were no longer shaped until the 18th century, for the quantity of Byzantine columns available obviated the need to preserve such a skill, although the segmental facets of the enormous piers of the mosque of Sultan Ahmet were, in a sense, an exception. The quarry was employed cutting blocks to be sliced into thin revetments or pavement or to be carved into the standard stalactite or lozenge capitals of the Ottomans. The techniques have altered little down to the present day. Formerly small holes were bored into the quarry face with the aid of water and sand until the block broke from the bedrock. The historic tools included picks, some of which were chisel-ended, jumpers, which nowadays are driven into the stone to make holes for blasting charges, masons' points, and lifting dogs or scissors. Instead of being dragged, the rough-cut blocks now go down to the quay by lorry and thence to the next bay where there is a factory with one engine to drive the four cutting machines, each armed with 50 saws. These cut a block into 50 slabs in six days. Sand is still filtered into the groove to eat into the marble and water to cool the blade just as when the work was done by hand. Unlike the Greeks and Byzantines, the Ottoman masons appear to have finished their work on the building site just



Edirne. Courtyard of the Mosque of Selim II.

as the Saljūqs did before them.⁸ I have watched a young mason start on a roughly chalked block and copy a stalactite capital in less than a week in the Tabhane court of the Süleymaniye complex.

Because Marmara Island was a quarantine station, we have numerous references to the quarries throughout Ottoman times and this paper is but a traveller's tale to add to a long list. Ahmet Refik quotes an order in council for marble that has been shipped to Ereğli to be taken to Edirne for use in the great mosque of Selim II there⁹ and a more elaborate order for the mosque of the Atık Valide at Üsküdar in 1570. This order to the *Qāḍī* of Iznik and Sapunca states that some buildings contain marble in his district. The intendent of the mosque had been