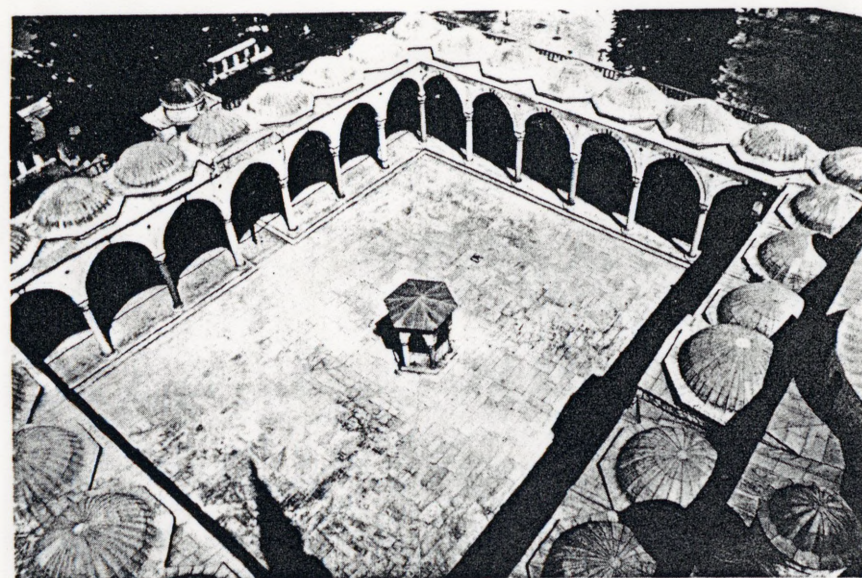


PLATE VI



Istanbul. The courtyard of the Mosque of Ahmet I, requiring 28 marble columns, including Proconnessian and Egyptian granite.

obstructed by local people and it was therefore decreed that no-one might interfere or frustrate him from extracting marble; and the *qāḍī* had to see that transport was paid to deliver the material to the location of the mosque. He was to avoid negligence but also damaging property while the marble was extracted.¹⁰ This order is likely to refer to the columns of Byzantine and even Roman buildings needed for the *madrassa* and hospital colonnades of the complex.

An order for stone from Karamursel would imply that materials were gathered at the depot there from Anatolia, but in 1604 Ahmet I ordered that marble was to be brought directly from Marmara Island for his father's tomb and since the ships sent were late further ships were to be sent there.¹¹ A further order states that the marble still had not reached the architect, Ahmet Dalgiç (or "the Diver"). Ahmet I had continual difficulty in getting his orders obeyed as his troubles over Iznik tile supplies also make plain.¹²

When George Sandys visited the island at the same period he stated that it was "formerly called Proconessus . . . celebrated for the quarries of white marble: and thereof now called Marmara where a number of poor Christian slaves do hew stones for the magnificent mosque which is now building at Constantinople by this sultan."¹³ In 1723 La Mottraye reports that "marble is extracted in large quantities from Pallatia, Marmara, for mosques employing 200 vessels".¹⁴

Lechevalier, however, says that where there were once sizeable towns one now sees nothing but a few miserable Greek villages and a few monasteries,¹⁵ while Texier, 40 years later, states that one exploits blocks of little size, slabs, and tombstones for Constantinople. One detaches the block from the mountain with chisels after which one lifts it from its bed with iron wedges.¹⁶ Today the annual output is 12,000 cubic metres and its cheapness is due to low labour costs and primitive living conditions.¹⁷

III

Their stripping by Ottoman builders and peasants explains the lack of Byzantine monuments in Anatolia, so that a small church near Niğde has a spurious importance. Before the coming of the Saljūqs, cities like Kayseri and Konya had cathedrals and many churches. Inevitably they made way stone by stone for Saljūq hospitals, colleges, and mosques. The Saljūqs, in common with the Armenians, whom they employed among others as builders, had an appreciation of some facets of architecture, yet were blind to others. While the Armenians disregarded symmetry to such a degree that one wonders whether the placing of doors off axis were not deliberate, the Saljūqs were unable to distinguish between capitals and bases, at least not at first, and used none at all if a column fitted without them. It was not, we may be sure, because of that spurious *ḥadīth*, to quote Michael Rogers,¹⁸ that alleges that nothing so much wastes the substance of a believer as architecture.

The *saray* and citadel at Konya were built with care and so was the Ala'ettin mosque, which required a great number of columns of the Byzantine and Roman periods. At Sivas, when we inspect the Gök *madrassa* or the Baruçidi *madrassa*, we also meet with the rough reuse of columns and marble facets, carefully recut when necessary. It should be noted that the Byzantines and the Saljūqs did not use true ashlar like the Greeks but economized by inseting a rubble and mortar core. Neither in Saljūq nor even in Ottoman times, when smooth columns became increasingly hard to find, were segmented or fluted columns reused. Indeed the borrowing of an antique fluted column was so rare that their appearance in the mosque of Ivaz Pasha at Manisa in the 15th century is almost the only occasion.

The worst despoilers of Anatolian antiquities were Western museums such as the Bode in East Berlin, which harbours a great amount of Miletus: so much that Ilyas Bey, who built a mosque at Balat out of the ruined city, or Isa Bey, who quarried the ravished hulk of the church of St. John at Ayasluğ, by contrast behaved with restraint. At both mosques the marble is recut and remodelled in a Syrian manner where necessary.

Already the Beylik period of these mosques presaged the exactitude and engineering skills of the Ottomans, although its beginnings were not auspicious.