

# THE TRANSNATIONAL MOSQUE

Architecture and Historical Memory  
in the Contemporary Middle East

Kishwar Rizvi



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# The Transnational Mosque

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Architecture and Historical Memory in the Contemporary Middle East

KISHWAR RIZVI

*The University of North Carolina Press   Chapel Hill*





*Publication of this book was supported by grants from the Frederick W. Hilles Publication Fund of Yale University and by the Department of History of Art of Yale University.*

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Jacket illustration: Minarets of the Masjid Imam Husayn, with Burj Khalifa in the background, Dubai, 2015. Photograph by the author.

Frontispiece: Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Mosque, Jerusalem

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Rizvi, Kishwar, author.

The transnational mosque : architecture and historical memory in the contemporary Middle East / Kishwar Rizvi.

pages cm. — (Islamic civilization and Muslim networks)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4696-2116-6 (cloth : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-1-4696-2117-3 (ebook)

1. Mosques. 2. Religious life—Islam. I. Title. II. Series: Islamic civilization & Muslim networks.

BP187.62.R59 2015

297.3'51—dc23

2015017862

To Dirk, Reza, and Yasmin, with my deepest love

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have accrued many debts in writing this book. My family and friends sometimes joined me in my travels across the Middle East and always made coming home a pleasure; colleagues, new and old, generously shared their knowledge and their time. I am grateful to so many people that putting together a list of acknowledgments might be the most daunting part of writing this book.

*The Transnational Mosque* would not have been possible without a grant from the Carnegie Foundation's Scholar's Award, which I received in 2009. I am grateful to Professor Lynn Hunt for nominating me for this award and to Dr. Patricia L. Rosenfield (then director of the Scholars Program) for her guidance and support. The Carnegie Award allowed me a year's sabbatical during which time I was able to begin fieldwork for this book. An Associate Professor Leave and the Director's Award from the MacMillan Center at Yale together also provided me with funds and time to write and travel. Financial support from Yale University's Hilles Publication Fund provided a subvention for the production of this book.

I am grateful for having generous colleagues with whom I have had the pleasure to discuss the book at various stages, including Abbas Amanat, Carol Armstrong, Tim Barringer, Shahzad Bashir, Karla Britton, Craig Buckley, Sheila Canby, Edward Cooke, Iftikhar Dadi, Makram El-Kadi, Finbarr Barry Flood, Frank Griffel, Sandy Isenstadt, David Joselit, Glenn D. Lowry, Alan Mikhail, Robert Nelson, Nasser Rabbat, Tamara Sears, Ian Shapiro, Robert A. M. Stern, Yasser Tabbaa, Lale Uluc, Christopher Wood, and Mimi Yeungpruksawan. Nezar AlSayyad, Houchang Chehabi, and Jamal Elias commented extensively on the manuscript, and I am extremely thankful for their perceptive feedback. Renata Holod spent a long afternoon sharing her thoughts on modern mosques; Bernard Haykel discussed his work on Salafism and helped facilitate my research visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Several students at Yale have been able assistants and, more importantly, engaged participants in my research; I am thankful to Mahdi Sabbagh, Senem Çilingiroğlu, Volkan Doda, Benyameen Gharib, and Selin Unluonen. Parts of this book were presented at the University of Michigan, Hunter College, and the Yale School of Architecture; I am grateful to my colleagues at these institutions, Christiane Gruber, Nebahat Avcioglu, and the organizers of the Yale Architecture Forum, respectively, for giving me the opportunity to get important feedback.

In Damascus, Wael Samhouri and his students made me feel welcome and gave generously of their time; Dr. Hani Murtada of the Sayyida Zaynab shrine met with me and shared important documents related to the shrine's history and future plans. In Beirut, Howayda al-Harithy, Souheir Mabsout, and Zouheir Berjawi helped make connections at Solidere; Azmi Fakhouri met with me and discussed his design of the Muhammad al-Amin Mosque and made available drawings and photographs. Nada al-Nafea was an informative and kind host during my stay in Jeddah, and she introduced me to several architects and urbanists, including Sami Nawar, then director of the Jeddah Historical Area Preservation Department. I am grateful to Samir Belgaumi for being my guide at the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca. I have been traveling to Iran, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates for many years now. I was fortunate to visit the firm of Hassa Mimarlik, in Istanbul, and I am grateful to Celaledin Celik for his help in facilitating my visits. I am also thankful to Hudai Sirri Senalp for sharing images from the firm's archives. I am grateful to Samir al-Shabani of Hegazy for meeting with me in Dubai to discuss the Jumeirah Mosque several years ago, and to Sami Al-Qazzaz (then regional director) of Halcrow for discussing the construction of the Zayed Mosque.

At the University of North Carolina Press, I would like to thank Elaine

Maisner for her support and enthusiasm for this project; the series editors, Carl Ernst and Bruce Lawrence, for seeing its potential; and Kim Bryant, Mary Caviness, Alison Shay, and Christi Stanforth for their attention to detail. I couldn't have asked for a better group to work with.

Friends across the globe have provided sanctuaries, near and far, virtual and real, and I can't thank them enough: Farah Hai Ashoka, Emily Bazelon, Arif Belgaumi, Asim Belgaumi, Ruthy Bennett, Anju Bhagwagar, Michele Cohen, Amin Gulgee, Nasreen Ikram Hussain, Omer Hussain, Elizabeth Hutchinson, Aliya Nasim Jan, Faiza Patel King, Unaizah Moonis, Noa Isaacson Neeman, Steven Nelson, Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen, Ami Potter, Frances Rosenbluth, Paul Sabin, Kim Salerno, and Kirsten Thoft. The late Mohammad Khalifa Bin Hadher was a witness to the profound changes the Gulf region is undergoing; he helped me understand better the complexities of Emirati society. Shirin Haeri and Muhammad-Reza Haeri, my adopted family in Tehran, generously accompanied me on my travels and helped frame many of my views.

My life in New Haven has been filled with dear friends and neighbors. I wish I had the space to thank them all personally—you know who you are.

This book is written in gratitude to my family: Sayeda Habib, Hussain Kazmi, Paul-Mehdi Rizvi, Mahmud Rizvi, Fateima Shaikh; Doreen Rizvi and Helga and Ulrich Bergemann, wonderful parents and grandparents; and Curly Q, writing and running partner extraordinaire. My deepest gratitude goes to my fellow travelers, photographers, critics, and adventurers—Dirk, Reza, and Yasmin—I thank and love you with all my heart.

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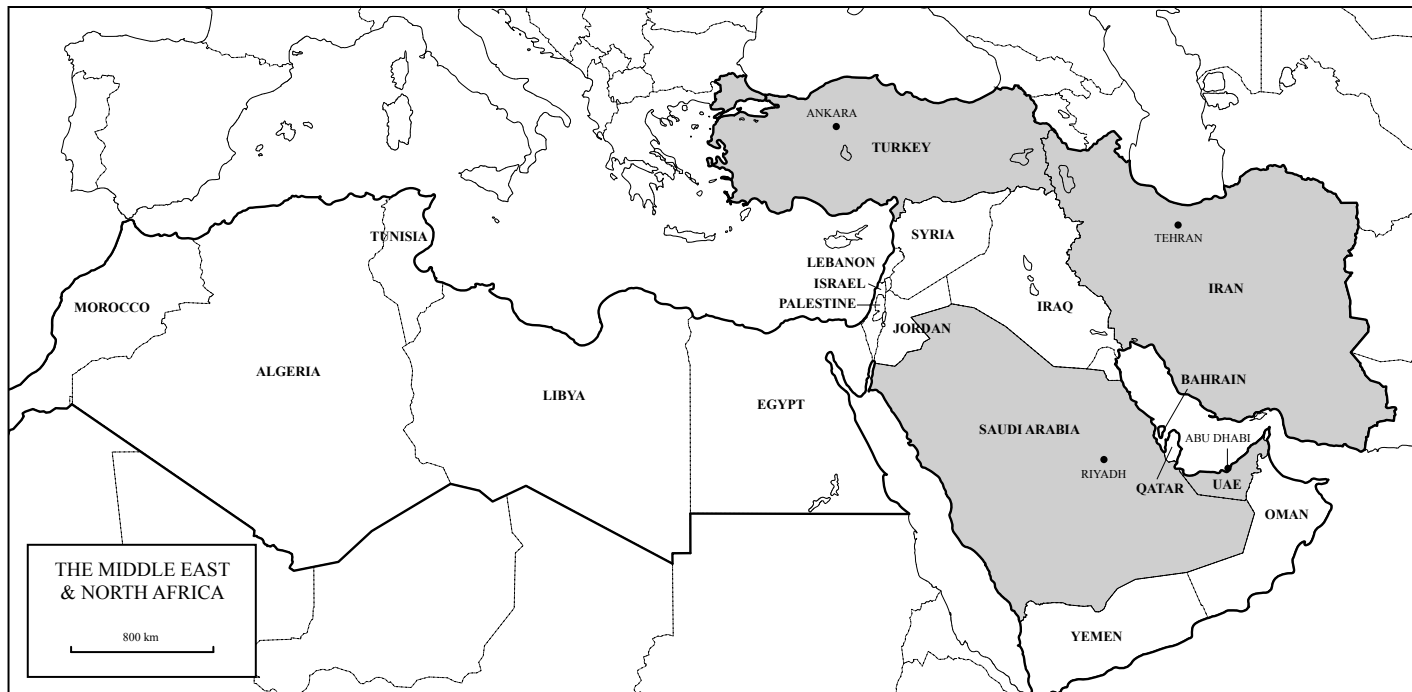
## A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Owing to the regional and linguistic breadth of this book, proper names and phrases have been transliterated according to their popular and/or official usage. For example, the name Muhammad (Arabic) may be rendered Mehmet (Turkish) or Mohammad (Persian). I have attempted to be as consistent as possible, however, according to the transliteration guide provided by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (<http://ijmes.chass.ncsu.edu/docs/WordList.pdf>). Commonly used architectural nomenclature, such as mihrab (niche), muqarnas (stalactite/honeycomb), and iwan (portal), has not been transliterated.



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# The Transnational Mosque



The Symbolic Potential of the Transnational Mosque

*Martyrs' Square in central Beirut is synonymous with the upheavals and wars that have defined Lebanon in particular, and the Middle East in general, over the past one hundred years. Since its renaming in the early years of the twentieth century, the square has been the backdrop to major changes taking place in Beirut, from decolonialization to civil war. The location of the Muhammad al-Amin Mosque is thus not accidental (fig. 1.1). The monumental mosque, with its vast domes and piercing minarets, reflects the intriguing aesthetic and political negotiations that went into its design and patronage. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia provided the funds, and the late prime minister, Rafic Hariri, the governmental impetus; the architect Azmi Fakhouri designed the building with a keen interest in historic preservation and with Istanbul and Cairo on his mind. Together, national and individual agendas coalesced to create a design that is singular, if not unique. The mosque has particular significance to the Lebanese, yet its form is familiar to any tourist who has visited Sharjah, Tokyo, Berlin, or Istanbul in the past decade. Repetitions of form and echoes of the past conjure a history that is at once mutable and ever-present.*



FIGURE I.1.  
Muhammad  
al-Amin Mosque,  
Beirut, completed  
in 2008. Architect,  
Azmi Fakhouri.  
Photograph by  
the author.

*The al-Amin Mosque has a timeless quality, even as it represents the particularities of recent Lebanese history. Before coming to the mosque, visitors stop at the nearby memorial to Hariri, who was assassinated in 2005, three years before the completion of his beloved project (see fig. 2.11). The entrance of the al-Amin Mosque is through tall wooden doors that allow in bright light and a cool breeze floating off the Mediterranean Sea. Two men sit at the threshold engaged in conversation, occasionally making sure that the visitors are properly dressed and appropriately respectful. The soaring domes, colored in muted reds and gold, look like the underside of jellyfish, slowly floating to the top. Outside, the blue domes appear to break the horizon, marking the presence of Sunni Islam in this ancient city. The quiet within the mosque is welcome and strangely unexpected. Mosques are often peaceful spaces, for individual reflection and communal prayer. Yet in the*

*al-Amin Mosque the experiences are heightened, contrasting sharply with the charged atmosphere outside its tall porticoes and doors. The mosque is built on a raised platform connected to the Garden of Forgiveness and overlooking the mausoleum of the mosque's patron, Hariri. To enter the mosque one must cross a busy motorway and large parking lot, a wasteland devastated in the years of unrest that divided Beirut. Nearby, older sanctuaries welcome devotees and tourists; churches dedicated to St. George and St. Elias; Roman baths; and a medieval mosque containing hair believed to have belonged to the Prophet Muhammad. The monuments are connected by the Garden of Forgiveness and the newest haute couture stores marking the Central Business District (CBD). The Ottoman and Mamluk references of the al-Amin Mosque point to a history that is in the process of transformation. It is an insecure history, contested and fragmentary, its unity a mask, like the yellow stone cladding behind which steel girders form the true structure of the building. Thus, while the form of the building refers to the distant past and appears to move beyond geographical and temporal boundaries, the goal of this resurrected imagery is to create a vision for a future defined by religious ideology.*

“The whole earth is a mosque” is a common saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad. Regardless of where Muslims may find themselves, the main requisites to prayer are the ritual ablution and knowledge of the direction toward the Ka’ba in Mecca. Nonetheless, mosques are built as physical manifestations of Islam and continue to serve the needs of diverse communities. In recent decades, mosques have sometimes come to be associated with violence and regarded as sites from which extremist ideologies are disseminated. Two examples come immediately to mind: The Grand Mosque in Mecca was seized in 1979 by a group of dissidents who claimed the apocalyptic arrival of the Mahdi, the divine guide who is believed to inaugurate the Day of Judgment. And in the summer of 2007, the Red Mosque in Islamabad was the scene of a catastrophic showdown between the Pakistani army and the students of the adjacent Jami’a Hafsa Madrasa. In both cases, the mosques, one ancient and the other modern, have become synonymous with a resurgent, if not homogeneous, vision of militant Islam. They also demonstrate the manner in which the concept of historical time was mutated in ways that echoed the fragmented identities and loyalties of those involved in these confrontations—Saudi dissidents in the case of the Grand Mosque, militant students in the case of the Red Mosque.



More recently, mosques have been co-opted by groups such as Daʿish (*al-Dawla al-Islamiyya fi'l Irāq wa al-Shām*), or ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), who appropriate and simultaneously obliterate them. While the focus of this book is on the construction of mosques in the contemporary Middle East, the broader context is important to consider. The book's backdrop thus is the destruction of Shi'i and Sufi shrines, Ahmadi and Kurdish mosques, Bahā'ī temples, and Christian churches. The construction of an Islamic historical consciousness is also shadowed by the erasure of a pre-Islamic past, of the neo-Assyrian and Gandharan empires, of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Judaism.<sup>1</sup>

Events such as those in Mecca and Islamabad seem to suggest an understanding of time as a continuum on a Möbius strip that circles back into itself, not as a linear progression. In such an ideation, the Qur'an is used as a manual of contemporary law and the end of time strangely echoes the mythical beginnings of Islamic history. Ancient practices and institutions are called on to create a new world order through the discourse of religious revivalism enabled by new technologies. Millennialism provided fodder not just for Christians marking the year 2000, but also for several other religious groups that built on the ethos of renewal and change to rethink their own religious identities. Architecture serves as the physical embodiment of this mobility of meaning; the mosque is thus simultaneously a memorial to the past and an aspiration toward what is to come. Additionally, its design and patronage reveal the multiple transnational agents involved, from foreign governments to local associations with international ties.

This book aims to analyze the role of mosques in the construction of Muslim identity through the lens of their political, religious, and architectural history. The emphasis on historical style permeates almost all of the transnational, state-sponsored mosques discussed here. This stylistic accent is not simply an attribute of postmodernity or a cynical reference to the past. Instead, the need to monumentalize different periods of Islamic history capitalizes on the zeitgeist of contemporary Islam, in which backward glances appear to provide direction and serve as inspiration for communities and governments seeking a new vision for the future. The historicism comes at the heels of a revivalist moment in both Islamic and world history, witnessed in the rise of fundamentalist movements from Asia to the Americas, from Christian communities to Hindu ones. It also gains legitimacy through global trends in postmodern architecture, which has revitalized classicism as an antidote to early twentieth-century modernist attitudes toward design and aesthetics.

Transnational mosques, as conceptualized in this study, are buildings built through government sponsorship, both in the home country and abroad, whose architectural design traverses geographic and temporal distances. They are thus state mosques as well as ambassadorial gifts, monumentalizing the political ambitions of their patrons. Their audience is the local user as well as the international community, for whom they represent a particular vision of global Islam. The centers from which this study emanates are located in Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates, yet the architectural examples implicate countries far removed from their borders and as different as Germany and Pakistan.

With an interdisciplinary approach utilizing fieldwork, architectural and photographic documentation, and interviews with architects and patrons, this study interrogates the multiple agents and diverse agendas behind the construction of transnational mosques. Questions of intentionality and agency are crucial to understanding the motivations behind both patronage and historical reference. For this reason I focus on three perspectives—that of the commissioning state, the architect, and the public for whom the mosque is intended. While all angles are not always easily represented or made apparent, they are nonetheless central to this analysis. Our understanding of the practice of architecture is thus transformed through a closer look at political contexts, historical details, and the complex biographies of patrons and designers. Architecture is considered here as an archeology of forms and symbols and an agent in the construction of Islamic identity.

Transnational mosques provide insights into the diverse practices and beliefs of modern Islam and the nature of devotion in the twenty-first century. Their patronage, design, and production serve as important resources for understanding the role of architecture in creating public space as well as disseminating religious ideology. The networks within which contemporary mosques exist are more complex than ever before and need to be studied within their political and historical contexts. Their symbolic meanings and formal relationships, however unique and specific to the Muslim context, also connect them to modern architecture from other religious traditions. Contemporary mosques thus mark the underlying connections, sometimes harmonious and sometimes in conflict, within the modern Middle East in particular, but also the world at large.

In the twentieth century, architectural production in the Middle East, as elsewhere in the developing world, was predicated on emulation and engagement with Western forms of modernism, in which emphasis was laid on projects that furthered the image of statehood, such as educational

and governmental buildings. Seen as derivative of movements in Europe and the United States, this architecture was often considered by scholars to be neither indigenous nor international, belonging neither to Islamic cultural history nor to the history of global modernism. Even less attention has been paid to modern religious architecture, such as mosques, shrines, and community centers, which are dismissed as catering to popular taste and undeserving of intellectual engagement. It is necessary to question these presumptions by studying the nationalist roots of early twentieth-century architecture, as well as the impact of international modernism on the built environment of the Middle East.<sup>2</sup> It is also important to investigate the manner in which such institutions may be viewed as forms of political and social agency.

I assert the heterogeneity of Muslim identity by focusing on distinct mosques and by revealing the complex negotiations that take place within and between nations and communities of belief. Recent scholarship has laid important groundwork for understanding the networks through which these negotiations are implemented.<sup>3</sup> Architectural practice at the turn of the twenty-first century, too, is one of interconnections, predicated on the itinerancy of architects and the global networks of corporate construction firms. Identities and nationalities can provide access, as is the case of the young Lebanese-American-French architect Michel Abboud, whose practice is located in New York, Beirut, and Mexico City and who was commissioned in 2010 to design the Park 51 Islamic Cultural Center and Mosque in lower Manhattan.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the London-based Halcrow Group oversaw the construction of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi. The ability for individuals as well as corporations to move beyond geographic borders and even religious ones speaks to the transnational nature of contemporary architectural culture and the mobility provided by modern technology.

The regional interconnectedness of modern architecture in the Middle East is a subject that has not received the attention it deserves. Most studies focus either on a specific nation or generalize the motivations for all Muslim communities. The study of modern mosques often falls into the latter category and, despite attempts at exhibiting diversity, results in essentialist readings of a pan-Islamic identity. The first comprehensive examination of modern mosques was published in 1997 and divides the subject into categories such as governmental and individual patronage, community and commercial institutions, and sites in Europe and the United States. One of the categories relevant to this study is that of the state mosque, which the authors Renata Holod and Hasan Uddin Khan

define as “a building initiated by the central government and paid for by public funds. It is inevitably conceptualized by a committee with an insistence upon a clearly recognizable image, that is to say explicit in terms of regional, modernist and Islamic references.”<sup>5</sup> This book builds on the foundations laid by that earlier scholarship by focusing on transnational mosques built within and beyond state borders.

In the past forty years, religious identity has come to play an increasingly central role in public discourse. This is evident in the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan, but also throughout the Middle East and South Asia, where Islam is a galvanizing form of sociopolitical expression. New patrons promoting religious ideology as a source of political agency have sponsored wholesale reinterpretations of traditional building types. Similarly, greater emphasis has been laid on institutions that represent and augment Islam, such as mosques, madrasas, and community centers. Contemporary mosques employ tradition as a starting point for their design, but their styles move beyond the simple repetition of form. Not only are older motifs reinterpreted, but the very functions of a mosque are altered in order to respond to social change. A cogent example is the Kocatepe Mosque in Ankara (plate 5), a massive structure with a parking garage and shopping mall in its lower levels, which looks strikingly like Ottoman mosques built in previous centuries. However, here the patron was not a sultan but the populist Welfare Party (Refah Partisi), with its appeal to a broad segment of Turkish society.

Architecture emerges as the repository of historical consciousness, serving as it does to both monumentalize belief and situate it within particular geographic and ideological sites. Although a building like the Kocatepe Mosque may have a singular physical location, it will arguably reference places far removed from Ankara and moments remarkably distant from its date of construction. This mobility marks contemporary architectural practice and subverts ideas of regionalism and nationalist styles that have pervaded the discourse on architecture in the twentieth century. Mosque architecture, in particular, also calls into question the common representation of Islam as a monolithic identity, shared across centuries and continents. Instead, examples of contemporary mosques require contextualization, even as they highlight the transregional and transhistorical trends that define architecture and religion today.

“Trans-” is here used as a prefix connoting the act of moving “across and beyond”—simultaneously—the nation and an ahistorical conception of time. It is meant to evoke a complex, porous set of connections that question geographical and statist boundaries while acknowledging their

centrality in issues of contemporary religion and political ideology. Scholars from various disciplinary backgrounds have addressed the issue of transnational connections in great depth, and their work has served as an important foundation for this book. Arjun Appadurai, for example, has written about the nature of modernity as manifested in synchronous locations in the world and its repercussions on economic and cultural institutions.<sup>6</sup> In *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places*, Ulf Hannerz contemplates the multiple sites from which cosmopolitan culture can be viewed and questions the idea of nationalism at the turn of the millennium.<sup>7</sup> Saskia Sassen has argued for understanding such dynamic processes within the framework of both mobility and fixity.<sup>8</sup> The “mobilities paradigm” is a term coined by Mimi Sheller and John Urry to describe the movement of ideas, people, and art in a manner that is best understood as a series of “fluid interdependencies,” not as separate phenomena.<sup>9</sup> Another way of describing this expanded arena is to think of global fields of operations as participating in a “porous public sphere,” a concept used by Thomas Olesen to describe the circulation of images in the context of a Danish newspaper’s publication of controversial cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad. The rapid circulation and distribution of the images was evidence that the national and transnational are not dialectically opposed, but intimately connected through the availability and mobility of media. “Public spheres undergo important transformations in the process of globalization, but this should not lead us to conclude that they cease to be national. . . . [Indeed,] this public sphere is increasingly porous.” That is to say, “we live in porous publics intimately connected with the world around us.”<sup>10</sup> Whether one refers to the process as “globalization” or “transnational mobility,” new technologies have transformed the conception of one’s place in the world and how it may be represented and memorialized.

Cartoons and images blur national and even linguistic boundaries; similarly, architectural form, from mosques to shopping malls, participates in the circulation of ideas and commodities that depend on global networks of communication and travel.<sup>11</sup> Recent studies on architecture in the Middle East have focused on the nationalist goals of twentieth-century governments and their attempts at appropriating broader international trends.<sup>12</sup> Less attention has been paid to the manner in which regional and transnational movements may have influenced particular choices in architectural design and production. We can address this question by understanding the significance of the forms of iconic mosques and the patronage networks that help sustain and disseminate them.

As current events in the Middle East and North Africa demonstrate, allegiances in the Islamic world are often based on the perception of shared histories of language, ethnicity, and religion. However, the term “Middle East,” while suggesting a category of affiliations, may better be understood as an umbrella under which diverse histories, politics, and religious identities are gathered. It is useful to think of this seeming territorial designation instead as a “geopolitical concept” or a “virtual space” that serves to unite shifting social and political realities.<sup>13</sup> As Michael Ezekiel Gasper writes, “The Middle East belongs to a geographic imaginary that is in part built on the general alignment of contemporary geo-strategic power. Accordingly, it will inextricably accumulate new meaning until some major strategic realignment occurs and the geographical paradigms that have been in place for more than a century give way to something new.”<sup>14</sup> Despite the too-simple discourse of globalization as a boundaryless web of correlations, the reality of the early twenty-first century is that identities—such as “the Middle East” or “the Islamic world”—continue to dictate how people and their governments define themselves.

Architecture, particularly that of mosques, manifests territorial as well as ideological connections by referencing historical periods and building styles and by enabling the rituals of inhabitation that augment the practice of religion. It may be argued that among the most important issues connecting—and, unfortunately, sometimes dividing—the Middle East is religious identity. While this identity is constructed and disseminated through several national and subnational means, four nations represent important and distinct visions for the future of the larger Muslim community and are taking steps to advancing that agenda. Thus Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates serve as the starting points of this study. Through close analyses of their nationalist projects and their patronage of transnational mosques, valuable insights may be gleaned into not only the region’s political geography, but also its architectural landscape. Through their patronage, the dynamic mobility of form and meaning is made manifest. Rather than suggesting any predetermined flow from one to another, the mosques studied here reveal the unexpected and complex interactions between these nations and global communities of belief.

## The Meaning and Significance of the Mosque

The institution of the mosque has changed over the course of the centuries, yet some fundamental aspects have remained the same. The word for mosque, *masjid*, derives from the Arabic word *sajda* (prostration), thus

defining the mosque as a place of prayer and submission. Given the absence of prescribed liturgy in Islamic worship, the mosque is a less formal space than, say, a Catholic church, where the clerical hierarchies often dictate devotional practice. The Muslim is expected to pray five times a day, but the worship can occur in private and in domestic settings.<sup>15</sup> However, the male members of the Muslim community are meant to pray together on Friday afternoons and on holy days, such as Eid al-Fitr.<sup>16</sup> The only stipulation for prayer is cleanliness, for which reason ablution facilities are always provided near or within the mosque precincts. The ritual purification is symbolized as a spiritual one as well; the threshold of mosques is viewed as entrance into a sacred space, and the mosque a “House of God” (*bayt Allāh*). Thus mosques are also places of safety and asylum, and historical records provide several examples of people within them seeking refuge from taxation as well as persecution.<sup>17</sup>

Early Islamic history continues to provide important guidelines for contemporary practice. During the lifetime of the prophet, Muhammad, the mosque was a place of gathering, where the newly formed Muslim community would meet and pray together, forge alliances, and make decisions that affected the entire group. Indeed, the first “mosque” was the house of Muhammad in Medina. The house consisted of an open courtyard around which the private quarters of Muhammad and his wives were arranged, along with a portico where his companions would gather (they came to be known as the *ṣāhib al-ṣafa*, or “people of the portico”).<sup>18</sup> The private and public spaces of the house were separated by curtains and partitions, but it is believed that the women on Muhammad’s family were nonetheless actively involved with the newly formed Muslim community.

One of the walls of Muhammad’s house pronounced the direction to Mecca, or *qibla*, toward which the Muslims prayed to honor the holy structure built by Abraham, the Ka’ba.<sup>19</sup> On the qibla wall of the earliest mosques there was an empty niche or indentation known as the mihrab (fig. I.2). This mark is the only prominent and required architectural feature in a mosque. A second, more ephemeral marker is the *adhān*, or call to prayer, something akin to church bells marking the time of day. In Muslim countries, the *adhān* is proclaimed five times a day, calling believers to fulfill their religious obligation. Although the earliest Muslims declared the *adhān* from the walls or parapets of the mosques, over time a tower was added to the mosque, which served the dual function of an elevated place to call from and also as a physical marker of the mosque itself. Scholars have debated the various functions of the minaret in Islamic societies, interpreting it as a victory stele as well as an urban marker.<sup>20</sup> In addition



FIGURE 1.2. Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun Mosque, Cairo, 1318–35.  
Photograph by Kara Hill, 1989. Courtesy of the MIT libraries, Aga Khan Visual Archive.

to these architectural features, a *minbar* (pulpit) is often located next to the mihrab and takes the form of an elevated seat from which the *imām* (prayer leader) preaches during Friday sermons. Portable objects, such as prayer rugs and lamps, are essential parts of mosques' furnishings and were often gifted by the pious as acts of charity and benevolence. It is important to note that although diverse traditions of mosque design exist throughout the Muslim world, the only requirement is for the building to mark accurately the direction of the Ka'ba and for it to provide enough space for the congregation of believers. For the latter reason, cities historically have had a large open space, or *musallā*, dedicated to large religious gatherings, such as Friday sermons and Eid prayers.

Mosques are places of prayer as well as socialization: Muslims gather there to affirm their belief and participate in communal rituals of devotion. These functions are not restricted to mosques alone, but are also enacted in other religious establishments such as madrasas and commemorative shrines. Indeed, the latter institution in particular has historically been the site of both elite and popular patronage, visited by women and men, the wealthy and the mendicant. Shrines in the Islamic world vary in terms of their attribution and use; that is, they may be dedicated to a holy figure, such as a Shi'i imam or a Sufi shaykh, and may serve a purely com-



memorative function or be part of a larger social organization. In some religious milieus, the shrine acts as the primary space of devotion, overshadowing the mosque entirely. This is certainly the case in Shi'i contexts, where the veneration of the *ahl al-bayt*, or family of the Prophet Muhammad, is monumentalized in their commemorative shrines. Very often these shrines incorporate prayer spaces within them or are linked to a mosque or nearby musallā. Thus in this book I broaden the definition of the transnational mosque to include these other types of devotional spaces, arguing that ultimately the motivations for their patronage overlap and provide important comparative insights.

The role of the mosque as a communal space remains today among its key features and is recognized in its program and design. The mosque may serve the entire city or a small neighborhood; it may be part of a madrasa or a shrine; it may serve a particular sect or may be dedicated to a particular ethnic group. It may be built on land owned by the government, donated by a benefactor, or on land seized by squatters. The socioeconomic and urban issues raised in this book highlight not only the semantic and ideological effects of mosque construction, but also the impact on the communities served as well as those marginalized through the building process.<sup>21</sup> Thus, for instance, the state mosques studied here may claim to represent a nation's history and religious identity; they may also be built on land cleared of minorities or those whose stake to the land may be more tenuous, if no less real.

In diasporic contexts where Muslims may be in the minority, the nomenclature of the mosque has itself changed, as witnessed in the profusion of Islamic community or cultural centers in the United States alone.<sup>22</sup> Several transnational and state mosques in the contemporary Middle East include entertainment and commercial activities, in response to changing demographic and cultural norms. Two examples, discussed in the following chapters, are the Kocatepe Mosque in Ankara, which has at its base a vast shopping mall, and the new Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Mosque in Jerusalem, sponsored by the ruler of Abu Dhabi (see fig. 4.17). When it is completed, the latter will incorporate offices and shops, as well as a library and health clinic, within its six thousand square meters of space. The income from the commercial properties is meant to feed back into the mosque's endowment, or *waqf*, a customary form of economic investment.<sup>23</sup> The relationship between mosques and their endowments was established centuries ago; what is interesting about the contemporary examples studied here is the manner in which they have incorporated modern institutions, such as malls and public libraries, into their

program. Interestingly, while the functions may have been adjusted in order to cohere with changing times, the transnational mosques seldom formally reference modern design; rather, they don the mantle of the past as a cloak that is meant to grant them historical authenticity.

## The National/Transnational Mosque

The architectural design of contemporary mosques is an amalgam of forms, one that merges the past with the present, the traditional with the technological. It is an important resource for the study of social and religious expression and of how a culture defines itself through the act of building. In the medieval and early modern periods, monumental congregational mosques were built as symbols of a ruler's power and imperial authority. In the past century, they have come to be viewed as representations of nationhood and the place of religion in modern society. National mosques are seen as symbols of a country's history and its ideology; they are also meant to communicate the centrality of Islam in the public and private lives of the citizens. Mosques in the contemporary Middle East are built through both local and transnational patronage networks, and their architecture reflects the complex and heterogeneous nature of religious identity in the Islamic world today.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Ottoman (1299–1922) and Qajar (1785–1925) Empires in Turkey and Iran, respectively, came to an end, and toward the second half of the century, European colonialism in the Middle East and North Africa ended as well. The establishment of new nation-states in the region was often based on the ideals of secular government that aimed to install constitutions and parliamentary democracies. In the early years of statehood, governments turned to financial and educational institutions to represent their legitimacy and international standing. Thus banks, courthouses, and schools were built to express the nation and its aspirations. As the buildings make evident, the concept of the nation-state was viewed as equivalent to European- and American-style modernism, both through the types of buildings commissioned and through their architectural style. Foreign architects and planners were conscripted to help design cities and buildings in the emergent Middle East, as elsewhere in the postcolonial context, and the forms they brought with them were reminiscent of their own homelands farther west. When local idioms were incorporated, they were often fragmented and decontextualized through an “elementalist” approach that isolated architectural motifs and recombined them in sometimes incongruous ways.

In the quest for modernity and nationhood (and recognizing the two as intrinsically linked), early twentieth-century states sidelined and sometimes rejected religion, characterizing it as an artifact of the past. In Turkey, for example, constitutions were written up after European models and *shari'a* courts were replaced by secular ones. In other countries, such as Iran, the *shari'a* courts were maintained to adjudicate common law practices, such as marriages and inheritance.<sup>24</sup> Religion was limited to the private realm, even as the majority of the population struggled to adjust to a new world in which traditional forms of knowledge were relegated to the domestic sphere or to institutions that were marginalized by the quest for modernity. Religious buildings, such as mosques, madrasas, and shrines, were not yet the focus of national attention in the early years of the twentieth century. Instead, they were judged for their “age value” and, based on that appraisal, were either neglected or incorporated into the newly established heritage industry.<sup>25</sup> While ample attention was paid to ancient monuments, those from the more recent past—that is, from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—were seldom included in the guidebooks and surveys that would come to define the heritage of the Middle East.<sup>26</sup> Very little scholarship was focused on religious buildings, as though the public practice of Islam was no longer relevant in the modern world.<sup>27</sup> Grand mosques, when given attention as iconic types of Islamic architecture, would represent the “classical” periods, serving as both the religious centers of the city and popular tourist destinations, mostly for foreign visitors. It is these very mosques, codified in the national imaginary as the epitome of a classical past, that would serve as inspiration for the transnational mosques studied here.<sup>28</sup>

Depending on the country and its political leanings at the time, choosing the historical moment for architectural representation was a very self-conscious act. For example, in early twentieth-century Iran, Islamic architecture was seldom given much attention; instead, monuments from the Achaemenid and Sasanian periods (that is, from the sixth century BCE to the seventh century CE) were studied and documented as inspiration for modern buildings (fig. I.3). Since the 1979 revolution, however, mosques and shrines from the Safavid period (1501–1722) especially have come under renewed interest (this period marks Iran’s conversion to Shi’i Islam and is thus of significance to the current theocratic state). Another case of selective preservation is in Cairo, where Fatimid architecture is being renovated not just by governmental agencies, but also by Isma’ili Shi’i Muslims based in Mumbai and Geneva who recognize the monuments of this period as part of their own transnational heritage.<sup>29</sup> In both



FIGURE I.3. Foreign Ministry, Tehran, ca. 1930s. Photograph by the author.

cases, architecture and religious identity are intertwined and provide historical foundations for issues of heritage and preservation and of contemporary design.

Without doubt, monumental mosques have continued to be built throughout the Islamic world over the course of the twentieth century. They include imperial commissions modeled on historical precedent in terms of both form and patronage, as well as structures built to accommodate changing social norms, such as mosques built within universities and government agencies. A good example of the latter is the Parliament Mosque in Ankara, designed by Behruz and Can Çinici and completed in 1990, which is discreetly embedded in a vast parliament complex used by civil officials. A corollary from farther east is provided by the prayer hall of the National Assembly Building in Dhaka, Bangladesh (completed 1983), designed by the American architect Louis Kahn (fig. I.4). Both cases are rare examples of government-sponsored mosques that are modernist in their design. Their architecture makes a very conscious break from traditional forms, no doubt owing to the fact that they are part of larger com-



FIGURE 1.4. National Assembly Building Prayer Hall, Dhaka, completed in 1983. Architect, Louis Kahn. © Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

plexes in which the overall design dictated the form of the mosques as well.

In the second half of the twentieth century, state mosques began to appear as symbols of a nation's links to its Islamic past. Soaring minarets and hemispherical domes dotted the landscape of modern capital cities, from Islamabad to Kuwait City. This period also coincided with the dissemination of state-sponsored mosques built for diasporic communities in Europe. Although mosques have been built in Western Europe since at least the nineteenth century, the idea of an ambassadorial monument denoted a new role for the mosque. Earlier, European governments had themselves sponsored the building of mosques. For example, the Paris Mosque, conceived in 1895 and realized in the 1920s, was "intended to emphasize the close ties that existed between France and its colonies in North Africa, namely Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria."<sup>30</sup> By contrast, the Islamic Center in Washington, DC, was built in 1957 through the patronage of a group of ambassadors from Muslim countries that came together for this project. In addition to serving the expatriate and immigrant Muslim communities in the American capital, the Islamic Center was meant to "promote a better understanding of Islam in a country where the Muslim religion was not well known and as a vehicle by which to improve relations between the United States and the Muslim world."<sup>31</sup> Thus mosques were

incorporated into the rhetoric of nationalism, representing countries as well as communities of belief.

The mosque's status as an imperial symbol has often given way (as monarchies have been replaced by republican governments in the Middle East) to its role as a national emblem, where the ceremonies of state are performed. Weekly Friday prayers as well as important religious holidays are celebrated at the main congregational, or *jami'*, mosques. In several countries today the sermon at the main congregational mosques is approved by and disseminated through a centralized bureaucracy that determines the appropriate content. For example, after particularly contentious international confrontations, the current Iranian government authorizes the sermons to comment on the political situation as well as give religious guidance. This is especially true in the Friday prayers, which until very recently had been held at the converted soccer field of the University of Tehran.<sup>32</sup> Merging the revolutionary ethos of the university, a key player in the mobilization of Iranian youth in the 1970s, with religious zeal, the Islamic Republic of Iran uses the space of the Friday mosque as an important arena for the enactment and establishment of political rhetoric. Whether overtly controlled by ministries of religion or more subtly guided by national legislation, state mosques are important conduits of political and religious ideology, both at home and abroad.

## The Politics of Representation

Mosques participate in the rituals of statecraft by serving as cultural signs with varying vectors of signification. The Jumeirah Mosque in Dubai became a national symbol, adorning five-hundred-dirham currency notes in the United Arab Emirates (fig. I.5). Such a representation immediately situated the image of the mosque within the visual economy of nationhood. Similarly, the massive Akhmad Kadyrov Mosque in central Grozny, Chechnya, was inaugurated on October 16, 2008, not only by the president, Ramzan Kadyrov, but more importantly by his Russian patron, Vladimir Putin, who at the time was Russia's prime minister. The mosque had been commissioned by Kadyrov's father, Akhmet (who was assassinated in 2004), and designed to imitate the Sultan Ahmet Mosque in Istanbul. Images of Putin and Kadyrov flooded the news, the backdrop of the mosque a constant feature of this diplomatic pas de deux (fig. I.6). In a speech fascinating for its unintended irony, Putin is reported to have said, "I think that not only the Chechen people and the Muslims of Chechnya, but also all the Muslims of Russia can be proud of this mosque."

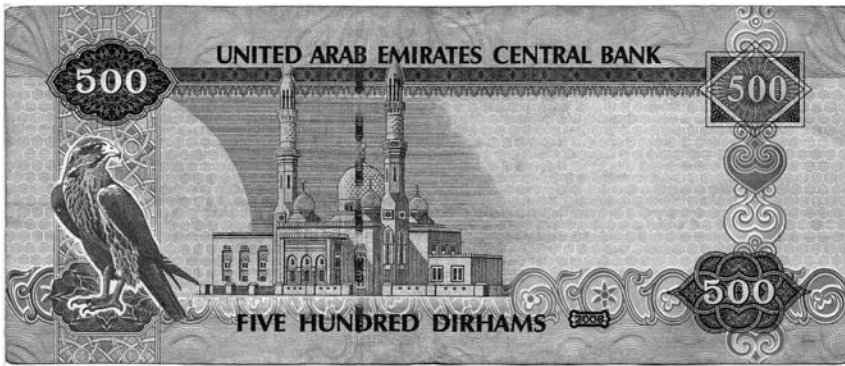


FIGURE 1.5. Jumeirah Mosque Bank Note, Dubai.

This is really a big gift to the whole Muslim world.”<sup>33</sup> Despite the ongoing Islamic resistance to the Moscow-based Kadyrov government, the manner in which Putin asserted the presence of Islam in one of the most contested regions in Europe is remarkable. That this presence is actualized through the physical construction of what was then believed to be the largest mosque in Europe was not unproblematic.

The image of an Ottoman-style mosque on European soil has the potential to conjure up deep-seated fears and anxieties about Islamic expansionism. Although now framed in the language of xenophobia and right-wing conservatism, Europe’s relationships with Muslim empires such as the Ayyubids and Ottomans have their roots in the periods of the Crusades and the early modern Mediterranean world.<sup>34</sup> From travelogues to paintings, representations of the Middle East have both fascinated and terrified their audiences, and religion was central to the construction of difference that fed into them.<sup>35</sup> Ottoman presence in the Balkans and the Near East was made visible in the monumental mosques built throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These buildings, the epitome of the architect Sinan’s inventiveness, were dispersed throughout the conquered territories, which include Belgrade and Budapest.<sup>36</sup> Although modest in size relative to those built in the capital, Istanbul, the mosques were important markers of the radical social and religious transformations wrought by Ottoman expansion.

It would be anachronistic to directly connect the early modern period with the present, or to suggest a continuous, unchanging antagonism between Europe and Turkey. Nonetheless, in the age of digital reproduction and the subsequent dispersal of images, the representation of the mosque has become a vital tool in the language of xenophobia. Recent cases of



FIGURE 1.6. Akhmad Kadyrov Mosque, Grozny, completed in 2008. Russian prime minister Vladimir Putin (center) meets with Chechen president Ramzan Kadyrov (left) in Grozny on October 16, 2008. Alexey Nikolsky/AFP/Getty Images.

anti-Islamic protests have centered around the building of Muslim institutions, be they community centers or mosques. For example, in 2007, the Prä-Koeln Citizens' Movement, an anti-immigrant right-wing organization, gathered thousands of signatures petitioning against the construction of the Cologne Central Mosque (plate 1). Their emblem was the image of an Ottoman mosque within an interdiction circle, or Stop sign, with the mosque crossed out. Similarly, in 2010 a virulent debate raged in New York City over the construction of Park 51 Community Center, incorrectly labeled the "Ground Zero Mosque" by its detractors.<sup>37</sup> Even though the center had not yet been designed, cartoons began circulating on websites supported by groups such as Stop the Islamization of America that showed a traditional Ottoman mosque being constructed on Ground Zero.

One particularly popular image shows an excerpt from a speech by the Turkish prime minister, Recep Erdoğan: "The mosques are our bar-





FIGURE 1.7. Internet meme showing speech by Recep Erdoğan, quoting Ziya Gökalp.

racks, the domes our helmets, the minarets our bayonets, and the faithful our soldiers.”<sup>38</sup> The text is superimposed on the image of an Ottoman mosque, its pointed minarets ominously piercing the night sky (fig. 1.7).<sup>39</sup> The architectural citation of one of the greatest periods of imperial expansion (Islamic or otherwise) makes clear the political undertones. That the image remained anonymous yet has been disseminated widely points to its resonance with a particularly Islamophobic audience. What is even more interesting in both the Cologne and New York cases is that the ultimate designs of the mosque and the cultural center were self-consciously modern. In the Cologne Central Mosque (completed in 2012), minarets and a dome are certainly present, but they are abstracted and bear little resemblance to any historical period. Similarly, the design proposal for the Park 51 Community Center shows a multistory high-rise building whose only reference to Islamic architecture is the manner in which an ornamental skin sheathes the façade.<sup>40</sup> In purposefully avoiding any overt regional or temporal associations, both projects recognize the representational power of mosques, whether built or unrealized.

The political significance of the mosque is clear. As the architectural historian Nasser Rabbat describes it, “Like the agora, the mosque pro-

vided the space of the city where the male population exercised its political rights, particularly on Friday, when the community reconfirmed its allegiance to its leader or withdrew it in vocal responses to a formulaic oath included in the sermon.”<sup>41</sup> That role continues to be central to the transnational mosques considered in this study: in the context of nation and community, on the construction of transregional religious identities, and on the issue of individual practice. In addition, transnational mosques are at once foreign ambassadors and local institutions; they are meant to evoke a distant time and place, but also serve immediate political and communal needs.

### History as Source and Inspiration

The congregational mosques sponsored by national institutions always have a historical reference, often reaching back to particular classical periods of Islamic rule in the Middle East, such as the Umayyads in Syria or the Safavids in Iran. History in such cases is not limited to style, but representative of the deeply divided interpretations of Islam that I contend are at the heart of global politics today. As Nezar AlSayyad writes, “It is true that most fundamentalist movements invoke an invented history to justify their claims, but almost all nationalist movements have done the same. The only difference may be that fundamentalists always invoke an essentialist history based on belief in the inerrancy of a text or texts. Hence they justify a nation of God or a city of God by invoking scriptural truth, while the nation-state invokes only the apparent truth of its own modernity.”<sup>42</sup> The study of transnational mosques demonstrates the tensions between political ideology and public belief, and the sometimes conflicting messages disseminated by governments trying to regulate both. Thus, for example, the Salafist kingdom of Saudi Arabia may eschew memorializing the dead, yet it sponsors mosques in the name of past rulers in foreign countries, such as the Faisal Mosque in Islamabad, which was built to honor the late Saudi ruler Faisal bin Abdul Aziz (d. 1975). The tomb of the Pakistani president Muhammad Zia ul-Haq, a close ally of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, is also located here (see fig. 2.10). Similarly, recognizing the associations of domed shrines and memorials in Mecca and Medina (many of which have been destroyed by the government), the national mosque in the capital, Riyadh, makes little historical reference. Instead, the design relies on an abstracted idea of what local Najdi architecture may be; in this case, the mosque takes the form of a fortification. However, the mosques designed by the Egyptian architect Abdel-Wahed al-Wakil in Jeddah have

domes and elaborate minarets—perhaps more in keeping with the Cairene mosques the architect was familiar with, a style more likely to be acceptable in the older, more cosmopolitan city, than in the capital.

Design, in the context of the most iconic type of Islamic architecture, is an active participant in the making of national culture in the contemporary Middle East, but transnational mosques are also important signifiers of where the fault lines of belief may lie—whether belief in the singularity of religious ideology or of the nationalist project. Indeed, the transnational mosques studied here serve to illustrate the complex and multivalent discourse that revolves around the concept of statehood itself. At the center of this discourse is the issue of historical memory. As the editors of a recent issue of *Public Culture* titled “The Public Life of History” have noted, “The performance of history in the present has suffused public life and the media, and it spills into legal debate and policy formation. In this regard, the role of representational art forms, various genres of performance, and nonacademic nonfiction writing is significant.”<sup>43</sup> Architecture must be included in this list of representational art forms, both as an object of creative expression and as a space of inhabitation, wherein the performance of history is monumentalized and also, literally, enacted through civic and devotional rituals.

Transnational mosques are built with several temporalities in mind. Unlike political regimes and their nationalist rhetoric, which have relatively short lives (and which rely heavily on foundation narratives), these grand mosques often last longer than their patrons and designers. Thus while they are markers of a moment in time, namely, that of their construction, they hold within them the projection of a particular kind of future. This Janus-faced temporality, looking backward and forward simultaneously, describes well the condition of modernity in the contemporary Middle East. Movement between time zones (both synchronically and diachronically, in fact) is sometimes more easily achieved than movement across physical borders, where sovereignty is contested and, in some cases, unachievable. Thus when Paul Virilio writes about the insecurity of history, it has a particular resonance in this part of the world, where the past haunts and defines every fragment of existence: “Today, it is in the order of *time* that this turnaround is being accomplished (a reversal of values), as posteriority is primed to dominate anteriority. Hence the insecurity of History that now complements and completes the insecurity of territorial sovereignty now threatened on all sides—from above by its expansion, and from below, by its regional fragmentation.”<sup>44</sup> Such a theorization may call into question the survival of the nation, yet it also affirms

its centrality to the discourse of contemporary personhood. The transnational mosque, as one of the most potent connections between the citizen and her state, lays bare the paradoxes and discrepancies in how countries in the Middle East frame their identities.

Islam is central to the experience of statehood particularly in the Middle East, but also in other countries throughout Asia and Africa where a majority of the citizens are Muslim. Whether institutionalized within the laws of the country, as in the Islamic Republic of Iran, or tightly controlled by the state, as in Turkey, today religion has reclaimed its place in the public sphere to a degree unprecedented in the early years of the twentieth century. The 1970s were a watershed moment in the history of the Islamic world, bringing the start of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the beginning of the Islamic revolution in Iran. The Iran-Iraq War occupied much of the following decade, which also saw the rise of the Welfare Party in Turkey.

The 1980s inaugurated a period of intensive mosque building throughout the Islamic world. For example, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the forceful leadership of King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz, established a Mosques Project overseen by the Ministry of Hajj and Awqāf (the ministry overseeing the hajj and charitable endowments), “for the development of a contemporary traditional mosque architecture in Saudi Arabia.”<sup>45</sup> At this time the Kingdom also began its global sponsorship of mosques, as a way to expand its political influence and simultaneously disseminate Salafist religious goals. For example, in countries where the Kingdom has sponsored the mosques, the government also appoints the prayer leaders, or imams, and provides the fundamental educational literature (often read as “propaganda”). In such cases, the mosques are extensions of the donor country, sites for propagating ideology, and home to covert political machinations. In many cases the historical style serves as shorthand for ideology; it is a conscious decision undertaken by the builders and patrons of transnational mosques.

## Postmodernity and Architectural Signification

The construction of grand state mosques and their ambassadorial counterparts in the 1980s coincided with the rise of postmodern trends in architecture, giving credibility to their historicist references. Although the term “postmodern” had been in use since at least the beginning of the twentieth century, the concept was most closely associated with the architectural historicism of the latter part of the century, which sought to distinguish itself

from the dogma of high modernism, with its overly abstracted and heroic formalism. Instead, proponents and practitioners of postmodern architecture—such as Robert Venturi, Robert A. M. Stern, and Michael Graves—positioned their work as an antidote to the mechanistic and impersonal architecture of their predecessors. These architects expressed their dissatisfaction with the failed experiments of modernism, and their work falls into “six main traditions that compose the large palette of postmodernism: historicism, straight revivalism, neo-vernacular, ad hoc urbanism, metaphor metaphysical and postmodern space.”<sup>46</sup> A turn toward the cultural context of form, rooted in familiarity and traditionalism, also defined the discussions on postmodern architecture. The themes resonated with architects globally, and several of the designers whose work is studied in this book were either directly or indirectly influenced by postmodernism. Indeed, the prestigious annual Driehaus Prize, which “recognizes a leading practitioner of classical or traditional architecture,” was awarded in 2011 to Robert A. M. Stern for bringing “classicism into the mainstream.”<sup>47</sup> Two years earlier, in 2009, the same prize had been bestowed on Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil, the architect whose mosques for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are directly linked to the Mamluk architecture of El-Wakil’s native Egypt (plate 2). The Driehaus jury praised El-Wakil for his “quest for indigenous architecture, using materials beneath his feet, . . . based on traditional Arab designs and local craftsmanship. It is at once classical, beautiful and sustainable, honoring his heritage both in design and construction techniques, advancing that tradition through his own ideas and ideals.”<sup>48</sup> In this commendation, El-Wakil’s oeuvre seems at once traditional and timeless—a neo-Orientalist characterization that is no doubt unintentional but is telling nonetheless.

Historicism has been an important topic of discussion in architectural discourse, particularly with the rise of postmodernism. Three decades ago, Alan Colquhoun wrote of three interpretations of historicism as they pertain to architecture: “the theory that all sociocultural phenomena are historically determined and that all truths are relative; a concern for the institutions and traditions of the past; the use of historical forms. The word *historicism* therefore can be applied to three quite separate objects: the first is a theory of history; the second, an attitude; and third, an artistic practice.”<sup>49</sup> Criticizing the stylistic choices made by his peers, Colquhoun wrote, “When we revive the past now, we tend to express its most general and trivial connotations; it is merely the ‘pastness’ of the past that is evoked.”<sup>50</sup> Such criticism has also been applied to the revivalist tendencies of mosque architecture. Labeled kitsch, reactionary, and conservative,

they are marginalized in architectural discourse and viewed as unworthy of intellectual engagement. Indeed, few scholars even acknowledge their existence, and the names of the architects are seldom known in elite circles (with the notable exception of El-Wakil).

Nostalgia and theological revivalism are the fundamental motivations for the historical turn in transnational mosques since the 1980s.<sup>51</sup> Historicism in Islamic architecture thus also comes at a time of deep social upheaval and economic possibility. At the same time that oil wealth began to empower the Gulf Arab states, religion was brought to the forefront of political activism, from Iran to Turkey, as mentioned earlier. Popular taste turned toward traditional forms of dress and spatiality. It would be incorrect to call this taste a move toward the “familiar,” as modern forms of architecture are a more likely context for many urban dwellers in the Middle East. Nonetheless, the broadened public sphere (with migrations from the countryside, as in Turkey) allowed for the revival of tradition to be a strong force in social change. This attitude is felt particularly keenly in the post-Soviet Republics, which have emerged from communism to reclaim their (perceived) Islamic heritage, a fact clearly exploited by all four nations studied in this book, whose ambassadorial mosques are being built from Ashgabat to Shymkent.

Alongside theories of postmodernism was that of critical regionalism, which held sway beginning with its introduction by Kenneth Frampton in the early 1980s.<sup>52</sup> Frampton, like others of his generation, turned to architectural phenomenology as a mode of rethinking modernism by focusing on the tectonics and cultural context of architecture. His concepts were quickly appropriated by preservationists, such as the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (a philanthropic institution based in Geneva), even as his ideas were—often wrongly—diffused into a blanket acceptance of all things indigenous. The criticality of his earlier positions remains to be applied to works produced outside the Western hemisphere and is seldom applied to religious buildings, such as mosques.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture began administering the Aga Khan Award for Architecture at the end of the 1970s; the first set of awards was given in 1980. In that decade, several postmodernist architects, such as Robert Venturi and Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil, served on the master jury, and it was not surprising to see mosques in the list of finalists. Without exception, all the mosques were either self-consciously historicist or making heavy references to traditional forms of building. An equal emphasis was paid to historic preservation, a trend that has continued to the present. However, perhaps as a sign of the deeply polarized religious landscape of

the Islamic world today, not a single mosque has made it to the final list since the 1995 cycle, which included Rasem Badran's Great Mosque in Riyadh.<sup>53</sup> Thus even while monumental transnational mosques are being built throughout the Middle East and its ever-expanding sphere of influence, the foremost organization devoted to contemporary architecture in the region scarcely acknowledges their existence. This negligence may be corrected when the cultural and architectural impact of these monuments is recognized. Transnational mosques are changing the social, political, and urban landscapes of the world; understanding the diverse motivations and patronage systems that influence this global phenomenon is crucial to understanding the Middle East today and to influencing its architectural future.

## The Structure of the Book

*The Transnational Mosque* is a study of the Middle East, Islam, globalization, and their relationship to contemporary architectural history. Although recent scholarship has laid solid foundations for it, this book is the first to bring these diverse disciplines together in a comprehensive new interpretation of religion, modernity, and public space. The example of the contemporary mosque, in which both global and local ideologies coalesce, highlights the mutability of religion and politics in the modern day. It also reveals the central role of historical memory in the construction, literally, of the contemporary Middle East and the Islamic world more broadly.

Three primary issues form the basis of my inquiry: The first is a consideration of the way nationalist and religious ideologies are constructed and disseminated through the social and symbolic significance of the mosque. The second pertains to transnational architectural and political networks that serve as conduits for these ideologies, both within a particular country and within its zones of influence. The resulting architecture is representative of intricate negotiations, in which political agenda is merged with popular piety through the rituals of devotion and the act of building. The third aspect of this research is insight into the role of the architects of transnational mosques, as individuals who interpret the needs of both governments and their public. Globally mobile in their education and in their practice, the architects are prime examples of the diverse agents and actors shaping Islam at the turn of the twenty-first century. An important complement to these individuals is the existence of large corporate firms that develop and realize the large-scale projects studied here. Uniting all three issues is the hypothesis that memory and histori-

cism are at the core of contemporary mosque design. The way the past is interpreted and deployed reveals how governments in the Middle East construct their national identities and solidify their regional and global influence. Thus, moving from the scale of individual architects to that of multinational corporations, *The Transnational Mosque* is a study of transnationalism, religious identity, and architectural culture in the contemporary Middle East and beyond.

This book considers nationalist spheres of influence through the example of four countries that are, arguably, at the forefront of Islamic politics and culture today: I discuss how the political ideologies of Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates are disseminated through the construction of monumental mosques throughout the world. Such projects reveal the spheres of influence of these countries; in addition, architecture acts as both gift and ambassador to the recipient nation. The architectural references in the case of Iran and Turkey are clearly based on Safavid and Ottoman precedents, respectively. However, in the case of Saudi Arabia a selective amalgam of earlier Islamic architectural styles comes to stand for a more global vision of Islam at the turn of the twenty-first century. The United Arab Emirates present an important contrast to the previous three examples, as a federation of emirates that are in the process of constructing their own national image. For the Emirates, therefore, the transnational is brought to bear on the local, employing a diverse group of designers as well as architectural styles. In the recent past, the government of Abu Dhabi has begun to export its patronage through the construction of monumental mosques, in sites chosen for their ideological and commercial possibilities.

Local expressions of identity are embedded in architectural design, such as the Kocatepe Mosque mentioned earlier. However, the concept of a “local” architecture is problematic given that historical forms may be co-opted in the service of a nationalism that extends beyond the country’s borders. The focus of the first chapter is the Republic of Turkey, where Ottoman-style mosques have been built with the support of the government in sites as varied as Berlin (Türk Şehitlik Mosque, 1999) and Tokyo (Turkish Mosque and Cultural Center, 2000). While the commissions in Germany and Japan may be viewed as serving immigrant Turkish communities, the Ertuğrul Gazi mosque in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan (1998) calls for a different interpretation. Like other Central Asian republics formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkmenistan is redefining itself in regard to religion and culture. Built by the Islamist government of Turkey, the Ertuğrul Gazi Mosque serves to exemplify the desires of the Istanbul



government to create links to Turkmenistan through the perception of a shared ethnic and religious heritage.

Architects are intriguing examples of the transnationalism in contemporary Islam, as well as in global architectural culture. Take, for example, the Turkish architect Hilmi Şenalp, the principal of a large design and engineering firm based in Istanbul. Şenalp designed the mosques commissioned by the Turkish government in Berlin, Tokyo, and Ashgabat, mentioned earlier. He has also been selected to build the first Turkish mosque in Washington, DC, which will be in the Ottoman Revival style that has come to characterize his buildings. Interestingly, these transnational mosques sponsored by the current government of Turkey appear to equate ethnicity with religious identity. How does Şenalp compare with his compatriot, Vedat Dalokay, who designed the Saudi-sponsored Faisal Mosque in Islamabad (completed in 1986)? Dalokay's building is abstract and less literal in its references to older precedents and actively engages with international architectural modernism. In that manner the Faisal Mosque provides an important alternative to the historicist tendencies that characterize much Islamist discourse, in terms of both architecture and society at large.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia plays an important role in the dissemination of political and religious ideology throughout the Muslim world. The Kingdom, a proponent of the Salafi Sunni doctrine, is legitimized by its guardianship of the holiest sites in Islam, the Ka'ba in Mecca and the holy mosque of the Prophet, Muhammad, in Medina. The government is an active patron of mosque building in Saudi Arabia and has contributed financially to the construction of mosques and Islamic schools around the world. One of the most interesting examples is the Faisal Mosque, which King Faisal gifted to the Pakistani nation. The white marble building is in the form of a pyramidal dome, with four minarets on each of its corners. Although the initial image may appear abstracted, the sources are recognizable as a dome with four pencil-thin minarets, elements of the classical Ottoman style. In an intriguing synthesis of form and meaning, Dalokay associates the Saudi Arabian government with the history of the powerful Ottoman Empire, whereas the mosque itself is a diplomatic gift to an important ally, the young Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

The Muhammad al-Amin Mosque in downtown Beirut may be viewed as similar to the Faisal Mosque; nonetheless, the former is clearly responsive to the political and architectural history of Lebanon. In contrast to the mosque in Islamabad, the al-Amin Mosque (inaugurated in 2008) is a collage of styles with diverse references. In both cases the designs are

inspired by Ottoman history, but what that means in Lebanon is quite different from what it means in Pakistan. In Beirut, a former Ottoman provincial capital, the recuperation of Sunni imperial identity highlights the history of sectarianism that has divided the country, even as it aims to assert the monumental presence of Sunni Islam in the Lebanese capital. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia itself, the issue of religious authority is deeply intertwined with that of imperial legitimacy, and mosque building is viewed as an act of pious proselytization. On the domestic front, architects such as Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil designed mosques in Jeddah and Medina to make clear references to Mamluk architecture, but the Grand Mosque in the capital, Riyadh, eschews historicism in favor of a nativist aesthetic deriving from local Najdi architecture. The relationship of the Kingdom to Islamic history is particularly fraught, given the possible conflict between the country's restrictive policies against commemorative architecture and the cult of kingship that forms the basis of its rule.

Commemoration is at the heart of Muslim practice and is central to the rituals of devotion and nationalism enacted in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Thus the third chapter pertains to Shi'i networks that have moved beyond national boundaries to create new regional zones of influence. These are usually historical sites that grew over time and often involve informal commerce and pilgrimage. For example, the mosque-shrine complex of Sayyida Zaynab in Damascus, believed to have been established in the late seventh century, serves local Shi'i residents as well as the multitude of pilgrims arriving from faraway places such as India and Europe. The mosque, commissioned by the shrine's head custodian, Rida Mourtada, in 1990, resembles sixteenth-century Safavid architecture in its form and decoration, thanks to the generous patronage of the Iranian government (as well as Iranian devotees), which sent craftsmen from Isfahan to execute the intricate tilework on the façade. This example differs from the Turkish and Saudi Arabian examples in that the visitors to the shrine-mosque come from a variety of ethnic and linguistic groups, united not by nationality but by their religious identity. The link between the shrine in Damascus and Shi'i pilgrimage is centuries old. By co-opting the site and constructing a modern mosque there, the Iranian government has acknowledged this historical relationship and attempted to interpret it through a building that brings together a heterogeneous group of Shi'i Muslims. The example of the Sayyida Zaynab Mosque in Damascus requires a reconsideration of the role of governmental authority in relation to informal networks. Architecture here serves as a form of negotiation between politics and local and collective identities.

The stylistic imprimatur of Persianate design and decoration is repeated in mosques and cultural centers commissioned by the Iranian government, even as it restores several Shi'i pilgrimage shrines throughout the Middle East. As such, architecture is branded in reference to both historical precedents and contemporary political allegiances. In the case of the Iranian hospital and mosque in Dubai, architecture may also refer to the resistance of an exilic, expatriate community that opposes the Iranian Republic. The mosque's façade, decorated in the Persianate style mentioned earlier, is a reminder that architectural style can mark competing discourses as well as hegemonic ones. Just as the Islamic Republic is disseminating an aesthetic and religious ideology abroad, at home the architectural typology is reverting to a more normative mode with the wide-scale construction of musallās throughout the country. In Tehran, the Imam Khomeini Musallā is a gigantic monument, simultaneously imitating the Arch of Ctesiphon in Iraq and the great mosques of Isfahan. The first reference is to recent history, namely, the Iran-Iraq War, which ended in 1988, and the second is a marker of the Shi'i ideology asserted in Iran in the sixteenth century. This temporal collapse marks the mutability of religious experience and the ways in which architectural signification is manipulated.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), the focus of the fourth chapter, provides an important contrast and counterpoint to the previous examples. Established in 1971 after gaining independence from Britain, the federation of seven emirates was called on to create a national identity through a different set of paradigms than those at hand for their older neighbors. In the early years of the UAE's existence, British and Egyptian firms played an important role in setting up institutions and government bureaucracies. The Egyptian connection also provided an intellectual armature through its deep history of Arab Islamic monarchical rule, from the Fatimids (909–1171) to the Mamluks (1250–1517). Thus it is not surprising that the first monumental national mosque, with an eye toward local and global recognition, was the Jumeirah Mosque in Dubai, built by a Cairene engineering and construction firm and completed in 1998. Almost a decade later, the majestic Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque was completed in the capital, Abu Dhabi, as part of an effort to make this emirate the region's cultural capital. Both mosques, like their counterparts in other emirates, incorporate outreach programming, aimed at non-Muslim expatriates and tourists, in an attempt to define their vision of a tolerant and progressive Islam.

Mosques in the United Arab Emirates belong to a wider context of architectural patronage undertaken by the ruling elite. Thus they must be viewed as part of an agenda of urbanism and state formation that in-

cludes the construction of museums, malls, and skyscrapers. Technological sophistication is not limited to the world's tallest building (at the time, the Burj Khalifa in Dubai), but extends to the national mosque, with its fiber-optic lighting and state-of-the-art construction methodology. Indeed, architects and artisans were brought from all over the world to fabricate the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, a prime example of the way exotic materials and global expertise can be brought to bear on the construction of a young nation. Yet the power of the UAE is not simply centripetal; like the other powerful nations studied in this book, the UAE aims to increase its influence abroad through the sponsorship of ideologically powerful projects, such as the Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Mosque in Jerusalem. Building in the heart of one of the oldest and most conflicted cities in the Middle East, the ruler of Abu Dhabi has shown his ambition to influence the future of the region.

In the book's epilogue, I turn to networks that transcend and subvert the idea of geographic contingency. Mobility defines these groups, such as the architects and corporations that reinterpret local identities by serving as transnational agents negotiating between diverse political, religious, and social groups. The mosques they construct thus represent the heterogeneity inherent in any cultural enterprise, especially one that aims to define the contemporary Islamic world in general and the Middle East in particular. Examples of mosques built in Muslim countries outside the Middle East, such as Central Asia and the Balkans, point to the significance of an Islamic architectural language that transcends local idioms to help broaden the borders of the so-called Middle East, calling for new nomenclature to better represent the allegiances between diverse countries and communities of faith.

Architecture serves as both a symbol and a mediator between seemingly conflicting concepts, such as technology and traditionalism. Similarly, the monumental mosques studied here point to the tensions that may arise between local agencies and nationalist entities, as well as between individual designers and large corporations. Most interestingly, this book opens up a broader discussion about religion at the beginning of the twenty-first century and questions the idea of Islam as outside modernity. While the focus of the book is on historical memory, it is important to contemplate other modes for thinking about architecture and the place of mosques in contemporary society. Replacing historicism with issues of phenomenology and environmentalism may be equally productive, such that future mosque projects may display their own historical moment rather than evoking an imaginary, and ultimately unattainable, past.



## Turkey and a Neo-Ottoman World Order

### History as Ethno-imperialism

*I arrive at the Türk Şehitlik Mosque on a midweek afternoon. Airplanes thunder overhead; a strange, empty wasteland seems to stretch before me as I walk along the long, deserted avenue. I do not realize on that summer day that airplanes will provide a motif for a study that will traverse the Middle East, Europe, and the United States. The airport looms behind me and, ahead, the old Muslim cemetery; both spaces are unsuitable for inhabitation yet promise transportation to better destinations. A white minaret pokes through the gray sky, followed soon after by an imposing dome, topped with a glinting metallic finial. A bus stop and parked cars obstruct the view through the walls of the Şehitlik Mosque, located directly on the busy Columbiadamm thoroughfare.*

*The area around the mosque is not built up, at least not in any memorable way. Its proximity to the airport makes it an undesirable residential location. The entrance comprises a small gateway with a large green sign announcing the Berlin Türk Şehitlik Camii (The Turkish Martyrs Mosque, Berlin). The courtyard is made up of a small graveyard and a paved area where a Ping-Pong table sits invitingly. Directly in front of the entrance is*

*a low administrative building, and on the left a monumental structure in the form of an Ottoman mosque.*

*The bright white mosque sits serenely under the German sky, marking its presence as a highly charged political and religious symbol. Sited in the direction of Mecca, the plan of the mosque breaks from the urban grid, creating its own orientation. With its slate dome and towering pencil minarets, the mosque resituates the visitor not in the drab Kreuzberg neighborhood of Berlin, but on the sunny hills of Istanbul, reminiscent of the imperial glory of its Ottoman rulers.*

### Diaspora and Turkish Patronage in Germany

The twenty-first century is conceived by the Turkish Republic as its own, in terms of both political influence and economic prosperity. Expanding its global reach from Turkmenistan to Washington, DC, the country serves as a patron, an ally, and a negotiator between diverse religious and ideological spheres. Its diaspora has an important presence in countries such as Germany, and its entrepreneurs and labor forces are helping to develop the industries of several post-Soviet republics in Central Asia. Diplomacy and power are wielded through several means, foremost among them the patronage of cultural institutions. Mosque building, in particular, has been an important tool for the current government, whose Islamist links are a source of pride as well as condemnation in Turkey itself. The neo-Ottoman style of these mosques may be viewed as a reflection of the country's expansionist ambitions, or as the recuperation of a past severed in the secularization movements of the twentieth century. Both interpretations would be correct; however, their significance depends on the specific geographical and nationalist contexts.

The Şehitlik Camii, or Martyrs Mosque, is located in an area of Berlin primarily populated by Turkish immigrant communities (fig. 1.1). The immediate location served as a Muslim cemetery for almost two hundred years prior to the construction of the new mosque. According to the history of the Friedhof neighborhood, the Ottoman intellectual Ali Aziz Efendi had been a guest of the King of Prussia and, on his death in 1798, was buried in a plot of land in Tempelhof.<sup>1</sup> Thus Berlin was the location of Turkish migration from at least the late eighteenth century, when political relations between Berlin and Istanbul had already been established.<sup>2</sup> Turkish guardsmen had been part of the entourage of the Prussian rulers, and it was for them, initially, that the Muslim cemetery and mosque was built, in 1866.<sup>3</sup> The land was enlarged in 1921 to accommodate Turkish sol-



FIGURE 1.1. Türk Şehitlik Mosque, Berlin, completed in 2005.  
Architect, Hilmi Şenalp. Photograph by the author.

diers who had come for treatment to Germany during World War I, when the two countries were allies. The cemetery is now further expanded and contains the graves of not only Turks, but Muslims from all over the world.

The cemetery was originally entered through an ornate gateway and is reminiscent of Andalusian architecture that exemplified the “Moorish” style popularized by Europeans at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> Behind the impressive gateway was an unassuming building that served as a mosque and hall for carrying out ritual activities. The modest space was in keeping with the small population of Turks and Muslims in Berlin at that time.<sup>5</sup> A short minaret was attached to the building, and a small dome rose over the main prayer space. The land was later purchased by the Turkish government, which continues to be the primary patron of the Şehitlik Mosque.

In the second half of the twentieth century the political situation of Berlin changed drastically with the division of the city between East and West Germany. Labor shortages made it necessary for the government to establish programs for short-term workers to move to West Germany (known as the Federal Republic of Germany from 1949 until reunification in 1990). The demographics of the city changed, too, with an influx of migrants from Central and Eastern Europe as well as Asia. In 1961 West Ger-



many signed a labor treaty with Turkey that would bring in guest workers (*Gastarbeiter*) to perform skilled and unskilled labor in its postwar reconstruction. Berlin, due to its bifurcation, was particularly hard pressed for cheap labor, and its Turkish community was among the largest in the country. However, the assumption that the guest workers would eventually leave was misplaced. Over the following decade, until the treaty ended in 1973, Turkish men immigrated to Germany, bringing with them wives, parents, and other family members.<sup>6</sup> The demographic shift was so profound that a 2010 census counted at least 4 million people of Turkish descent living in Germany. Social and economic disparities have made the relationship between Germans and their “guest workers” far from equitable or harmonious, even though Turks have finally been allowed greater rights and—finally—citizenship.

Mosques serving the Turkish community in Germany are overseen by the Religious Affairs Ministry in Turkey itself. The Şehitlik Mosque is funded and overseen by the Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği (DİTİB), or Turkish Islamic Union for Religious Affairs. As the immigrant population in Berlin grew, so too did the need to create an appropriate space of worship for the Turkish-Muslim community. In 1996 DİTİB commissioned a new mosque, to be constructed in the Şehitlik cemetery and designed by the Turkish architect Hilmi Şenalp, known for his neo-Ottoman-style mosques. According to the designer’s website, the foundation stone was laid in 1999 and the mosque was completed in 2005. The building occupies approximately 1,360 square meters (14,639 square feet), and there have been plans to expand the complex to include a cultural center.<sup>7</sup>

The Şehitlik Mosque is in the form of a modestly scaled Ottoman mosque, with a monumental dome flanked by two tall minarets (fig. 1.2).<sup>8</sup> The dome covers the centralized prayer space, its drum perforated by windows to bring in natural light. Semidomes cascade down from the drum, marking the zone of transition from the spherical dome and cubic base. The minarets are in the “pencil” form typical of the Ottoman period, with striations on the sides that accentuate their slender height. An overhanging eave and graceful portico shelter a pair of stairways leading up to the prayer hall. Ornately carved wooden doors remain open at the entrance, their geometric patterns echoing the decorative motifs found inside.

The interior of the mosque contrasts with the solidity and mass of its exterior (fig. 1.3). Here the white paint is highlighted by floral, turquoise wall paintings (replicating the mosaics of Ottoman structures) and ornate epigraphic bands in dark blues and gold. The multiple arches comprising the ceiling structures are framed in *ablaq*-technique red, black, and white

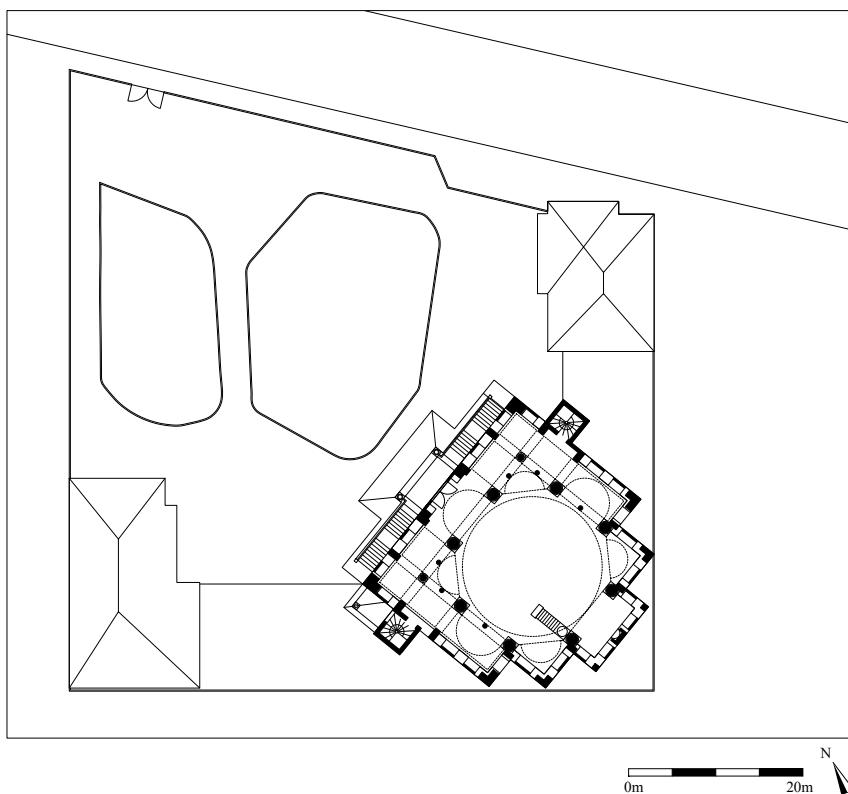


FIGURE 1.2. Schematic plan, Türk Şehitlik Mosque, Berlin. Drawing by Mahdi Sabbagh.

bricks, lending a colorful harmony to the space within. This technique of bichrome masonry was popular in early Islamic architecture and is associated with great mosques from Cordoba to Istanbul. Between the arches are large epigraphic medallions featuring the names of Muhammad and his companions, the proceeding four caliphs of the early Islamic community. White *muqarnas* (stalactite) details on prefabricated stucco replicate the intricate workmanship of Islamic art, as do the luminous colored-glass windows, which add a rich glow to the space within.

The apex of the prayer hall is the domed ceiling, decorated with a colorful medallion in traditional Turkish floral and geometric motifs. The 112th chapter of the Qur'an, the Surah *al-Ikhlās* (Fidelity), is inscribed in the center of the medallion. The short chapter, comprising only four phrases, expresses the foundational aspect of Islamic belief, namely the unity and singularity of Allah.<sup>9</sup> This is not a common verse for inclusion in architectural epigraphy, perhaps owing to its brevity. But in the Şehitlik Mosque



FIGURE 1.3. Interior, Türk Şehitlik Mosque, Berlin. Photograph by the author.

the master calligrapher Hussein Kutlu has magnified it to make it legible from below. The 24-karat gold used in the epigraphy contrasts with the black background on which is placed. The gilding and wall paintings were executed by the master painter (*naqqāsh*) Semih Irtes.<sup>10</sup> Kutlu and Irtes are established artists in Turkey, renowned for their skills in traditional design and rendition, respectively.<sup>11</sup> Their selection for this project points to the significance of the mosque both to the local community and the Turkish government.

The focus of the mosque is the mihrab niche within the qibla wall. On either side of the mihrab are two windows with arched epigraphic panels in Iznik-inspired tilework (plate 3). Just above the mihrab is a gilded panel that reads, “Turn then thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque (*al-masjid al-ḥaram*).” On the qibla wall, above the mihrab, is a band of epigraphy with the last half of the Throne Verse (*Ayat al-Kursī*): “Nor shall they compass aught of His knowledge except as He willeth. His Throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. For He is the Most High, the Supreme (in glory).” The expansive language of the Throne Verse makes it a popular choice in mosques and it holds special meaning when the mosque

is located in a non-Muslim country. On the panels above the windows are verses from the opening chapter of the Qur'an, *al-Fatiḥa* (the Beginning).<sup>12</sup> These, too, are standard verses that would be easily recognizable to those with knowledge of the basic tenets and practices of Islam. As such they serve a broad community of believers, although it is not clear how many of the Turks patronizing the Şehitlik Mosque would be able to read the Arabic script. As part of their educational mission, the mosque administration provides classes in which young children and adults are taught enough classical Arabic that they can read and recite the Qur'an. The epigraphy on the walls, written in a legible and monumental script, serves as an intriguing reminder to the Turkish visitors of their Islamic heritage.

The historical emphasis of the Şehitlik Mosque is not without coincidence. The choice to build a mosque in the style of the Ottomans thus marks both the long presence of Turks in Berlin and the pride that that community has in its imperial heritage. Under the aegis of DİTİB, it is also overlaid with a religio-political identity. The Cologne-based organization was founded in 1984 as an outpost of the Turkish government, mandated to oversee the merging of the Turkish Republic's religious and secularist ideals. DİTİB is thus the patron to numerous mosque construction projects, with a focus on serving the community by educating them about immigrant rights and integration.<sup>13</sup> As is apparent from its website, one of the primary functions of the organization was, and continues to be, the establishment of clubs for activities as diverse as religious education and sports. The website boasts that the organization increased its involvement from 230 associations at its foundation to currently 896, representing more than seventy percent of Muslims in Germany.<sup>14</sup> The clubs and mosques are built in a variety of styles, and are often part of modest neighborhood enclaves (fig. 1.4). The Türk Şehitlik Camii Mosque in Berlin holds pride of place on the website of the DİTİB as an iconic and well-executed example of neo-Ottoman architecture. Its status is second only to that of the new mosque in Cologne that was designed by Paul Böhm and on which construction began in 2008.<sup>15</sup> In the German context, the style stands out as representative of the Şehitlik Mosque's relationship to the Turkish nation, especially when compared to the other well-known mosque in Berlin, the Wilmersdorf (or Berlin) Mosque.

The Berlin Mosque was the first purpose-built mosque in Germany. Its foundation was laid in 1923 by the Indian missionary Maulana Sadr al-Din, and it was inaugurated in 1925 (fig. 1.5). Unlike the Şehitlik Mosque, the Berlin Mosque is located in a gracious residential district known as Wilmersdorf, where the building occupies a corner plot. The design of the



FIGURE 1.4. Neighborhood mosque, Stuttgart. Photograph by the author.

structure reflects the South Asian roots of the Lahore-based Ahmadiyya community, which is among the most active patrons of mosque building in Germany and Europe.<sup>16</sup> Two ninety-foot-tall minarets flank the prayer space, which is capped by a bulbous Mughal-style “onion” dome, referencing Lahore and the Indian subcontinent. The interior is a medley of pastel colors, with orange and yellow walls and sinuous arches framed in white stucco. The architectural forms are themselves treated as ornament, with scalloped arches tipped with floral motifs. In its flamboyance the Berlin Mosque stands in stark contrast to its counterpart on Columbiadamm, pointing to the different types of patronage that were the impetus for each.

The Berlin Mosque and numerous others sponsored by the exilic Ahmadiyya community (which has been seen as heretical in its home country, Pakistan, since 1974, when the government declared the community to be non-Muslim) are markers of the increasing visibility of Muslim immigrant communities in Europe. The mosque’s patrons view its construction not as a confrontation but as a validation of their presence in a formerly foreign land that now serves as home to several generations.<sup>17</sup> The case of the Şehitlik Mosque is different because of its close affiliation with the Turkish government and its role in mediating between the large Turkish immigrant community and its German hosts.



FIGURE 1.5.  
Wilmersdorf  
Mosque, Berlin,  
completed  
ca. 1924.  
Photographer  
Ceddy Fresse,  
Wikimedia  
Commons.

## Islam and the Turkish Republic

In order to get a better sense of the manners in which the Turkish government, through organizations such as DİTİB, represents itself abroad, it is also necessary to understand the issue of modern Islamic identity in Turkey itself. When the Ottoman Empire dissolved in 1918, the region was controlled and subdivided by European authorities. However, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal (d. 1938), a soldier turned ideologue, the Turkish Republic was established in 1923 and modeled after European nations. In 1926 it adopted the Swiss Civil Code and instituted a parliamentary government, the Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (Grand National Assembly). In

addition to a strong emphasis on modernization, Mustafa Kemal, known popularly as Atatürk (Father of the Turkish Nation) after 1934, rejected all things Ottoman, including religious identity. The clergy were brought under the control of the state, and some forms of popular Islam, such as Sufism, were severely curtailed.<sup>18</sup> The concept of *laïcité*, borrowed from the French Republic, came to define the separation of religion from the state, an attitude foreign to the majority of Turks but upheld by Kemalists politicians and the military.<sup>19</sup> The Arabic script was abolished in 1928 and replaced by the Latin alphabet. In addition, women were required to remove their traditional headscarves in governmental spaces. While these two acts—the changing of the script and the female dress codes—may not seem related at first, they mark an important cultural shift in Turkish culture in the early twentieth century. They also point to the changing nature of public spaces and traditional institutions, such as the mosque.

Because Anatolia was considered the heartland of the Turkish Republic, the capital was moved from Istanbul, with its close association with the old Ottoman past, to Ankara. At the end of World War I, Ankara had been the center of Atatürk's revolutionary activities against the European Allies who held control over Istanbul, a cosmopolitan and multiethnic city that would serve as the staging ground for the nationalist movement Atatürk envisioned. With the establishment of the new republic in 1923, Ankara was officially recognized as the capital of the nation, with grand schemes to expand it in the vision of a modern and progressive urban metropolis.

Ankara's infrastructure and governmental institutions were designed by European expatriates, such as Herman Jensen and Clemenz Holzmeister, and construction of the new parliament complex began in 1939. The design was in a pared-down and severe neo-Classical style that would link the new capital with European nationalist architecture.<sup>20</sup> Building for the new complex continued until 1961, but it was not until the 1970s that the government determined the need for a national mosque to serve the parliamentarians and other visitors. That a mosque was not built in the Grand National Assembly for the first five decades after the foundation of the republic is not surprising, given the state's strict co-optation of religion. That one was eventually constructed is less easy to understand. Perhaps the decision was an acknowledgment of the centrality of Islam in the broader public sphere, or perhaps it was a way of rewriting Islamic identity as modern. According to Mohammad al-Asad, it was both: "Placing the mosque in the legislative complex [was] an acknowledgement of the significance of Islam to Turkey, while its design separates Islamic from the country's Ottoman past."<sup>21</sup>

In 1985 the secretary general of the Grand National Assembly, Ertan Cireli, commissioned the architects, Behruz Çinici and his son Can, to design a mosque for the parliament complex designed by Holzmeister. According to Cireli, it was a “project of a mosque constructed in a constitutionally secular country of whose population 90% [*sic*] are Muslim. Furthermore, this is the first official mosque constructed by the State.”<sup>22</sup> The significance of the mosque was clear; it would represent the aspirations of a modern nation whose religious identity was rich, if deeply conflicted in the twentieth century. And the recorded comments by the secretary general and the architects themselves reveal that the mosque’s form would be a contested issue. The first impulse, and one upheld by the conservative and traditionalist branches of the committee, was to replicate an Ottoman-style mosque, with its domed prayer hall and pencil-thin minarets. When the Çinici firm proposed a modernist solution, described below, it was initially met with great resistance. Gone was the dome, replaced by a low, pyramidal structure, with a strong horizontality expressed by the roof and the procession through the building. The minaret was deemed unnecessary in a building located within a complex of other buildings, one where time was marked not by the call to prayer but by a glance at one’s watch. Instead, two flat platforms represented the minaret, where the muezzin could stand, on ceremonial occasions, to recite the *adhān*, or call to prayer. A cypress tree (an Islamic symbol of paradise also associated with the landscape of Istanbul) stands as a physical reminder of the minaret.

The Grand National Assembly Mosque occupies thirteen hundred square meters of a site that totals sixteen thousand square meters.<sup>23</sup> The mosque consists of three main components through which a visitor would process: a forecourt, the main prayer hall, and a sunken garden. All three parts are visually and spatially linked to create a horizontal movement through the space. The boundaries between exteriors and interiors are blurred in the plan, as well as through the use of transparent and reflective surfaces, such as glass and metal. The landscape and architecture coalesce to thus create a uniform and undulating spatial experience (fig. 1.6).

At first glance the mosque appears to be unrelentingly modernist in terms of the design as well as the materials used. However, traditional forms were the starting point for the architects. In his brief to the Aga Khan Awards nominating committee, Behruz Çinici argued that “the prototypical load bearing dome structure, the colonnaded ‘revak’ and the towering minaret have lost most of their formal meaning as well as their functional purposes during our time of intellectual and technological ad-





FIGURE 1.6. Grand National Assembly Mosque, Ankara, completed in 1989. Architects, Can and Behruz Çinici. © Aga Khan Award for Architecture/Reha Günay (photographer).

vances.”<sup>24</sup> The enclosed courtyard typical of Ottoman mosques is “opened to the outside world,” and the centralized prayer hall is “flattened out and extracted through openings in the walls; reaching out into the landscaped terraces and gardens.” The radical move is in the conception of the design itself, which “can be regarded as an ‘exploded’ version of the Classical Scheme [*sic*].”<sup>25</sup> In “exploding” tradition and “exploding” the past, the mosque also dismantles a priori notions of what a mosque can be (fig. 1.7). The design of the Grand National Assembly Mosque calls into question a fundamental aspect of mosque design, namely, its role as a public space where the Muslim community worships together. Reiterating again and again the importance of creating an individualized experience, the architects present a new interpretation for Muslim praxis, clearly mediated through European post-Enlightenment ideals of worship, which emphasized the role of the individual and his or her personal devotion.

Like the minarets implied by the platforms and trees, the mihrab also disappears, replaced by a glass wall (plate 4). Instead of facing an ornamental niche marking the direction to Mecca, one views a transparent alcove beyond which the sunken garden can be seen. Thus the building be-

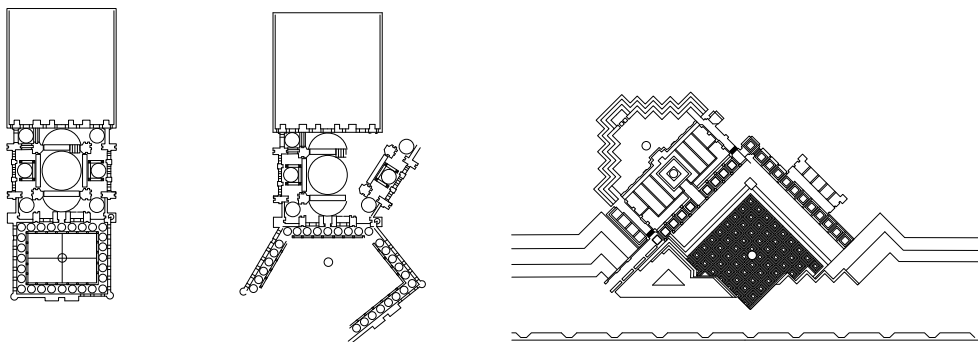


FIGURE 1.7. Architect's schematic, Grand National Assembly Mosque, Ankara.

Drawing by Mahdi Sabbagh.

comes one of absences, not only of a mosque's traditional forms but also of some of its symbolic meanings. Nonetheless, the more esoteric references do remain. For example, beyond the mihrab a bright and verdant garden can be seen, reminding the believer of the paradisaal imagery often utilized in sultanic mosques built by Ottoman rulers. Here the rewards of the afterlife are not limited to the sultan but are possible for even the lowliest of office workers to contemplate. The secret is laid bare for a nation of equals, unlike the strict hierarchical social order of earlier dynasties.

Equally bare are the walls of the Assembly Mosque, which are devoid of exterior ornamentation. In the prayer hall, the names of Allah, Muhammad, and the first four caliphs are written in Arabic in large blue letters on plaques hung on the walls. The writing, far removed from the classical styles of fine calligraphy often utilized in prestigious buildings, appears crude and gives an impression of informal graffiti. Starting from the left side of the mihrab, Qur'anic verses encircle the walls of the prayer room, referring to the sanctified nature of this mosque (fig. 1.8). They read, "The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in Allah and the Last Day, establish regular prayers, and practice regular charity, and fear none (at all) except Allah."<sup>26</sup> On the other side they continue, "O my Lord! Make me one who establishes regular Prayer, and also (raise such) among my offspring O our Lord! And accept Thou my Prayer. O our Lord! Cover (us) with Thy Forgiveness—me, my parents, and (all) Believers, on the Day that the Reckoning will be established!"<sup>27</sup> The style of the calligraphy, although informal, is legible to those who can read the Arabic script. However, legibility is not the primary goal, especially in a country where the national language is not Arabic. Historically, the epigraphy adorning the walls of mosques and other sacred spaces was



FIGURE 1.8. Interior, Grand National Assembly Mosque, Ankara.  
Photograph by Senem Çilingiroğlu.

understandable only to those who could read—or, more specifically, those who could decipher Qur’anic writing. Nonetheless, its talismanic value was never questioned, which is no doubt how it is meant to be “viewed” in contemporary Turkey. Yet the question of the religious significance of Arabic and its place in Turkish society remains. In a new nation that was forced to forget its own handwriting, the erasure is more profound. The limited use of epigraphy in the Assembly Mosque is a potent scarcity, perhaps of history itself. It is a lacuna now being filled by the forceful presence of religion in the public sphere.

### The Mosque of the People

The Assembly Mosque was the first official mosque completed in the new republic, yet its prestige was limited to the architectural and academic circles that interpreted its modernist rejection of tradition as a symbol of the new Turkish state. A more powerful symbol had yet to be built, even though the idea for building such a mosque appeared as early as 1944, with the establishment of the Institution for Mosque Building in Yenişehir.

hir (New Town). The neighborhood chosen for the new mosque lay in the Yenışehir section of Ankara, one of the capital's planned developments. According to the Institution for Mosque Building, the time had come for Ankara to have a mosque that served the growing city and was worthy of the nation's capital. What form that building would take was less obvious. Atatürk's secular republic shunned the idea of combining religion and statehood, yet the new ruler's conservative opponents deemed it imperative that he build a symbolic representative of Turkey's Islamic past.

The Kocatepe Mosque broke ground in 1963 in Ankara, after a 1957 competition that resulted in the selection of a design by Vedat Dalokay and Nejat Tekelioğlu. An earlier competition in 1947 had failed to produce a winning entry.<sup>28</sup> The design submitted by Dalokay and Tekelioğlu was an exciting combination of modernist sensibility and traditional Ottoman form. Dalokay had just returned with an architectural degree from the Sorbonne, having earlier studied at Istanbul Technical University. His design for the Kocatepe Mosque consisted of a domed shell for the prayer hall, a parabolic and modernist take on the domed halls of Ottoman mosques. The minarets were equally abstracted, their balconies and striations removed, replaced by "rocket-like" projections that pierced the air. Although the structure was still clearly recognizable as a mosque, the abstraction was not met with favor. The foundations were torn down and the project was abandoned, under the pretext that the reinforced-concrete shell structure was unsafe.<sup>29</sup>

In 1967 yet another competition was held, in which the winning entry was a precise copy of classical Ottoman mosques designed by the renowned court architect Mimar Sinan (d. 1588). Finally Ankara was to have an imperial edifice, but one whose ambitions exceeded expectation. The project was designed by Hüsrev Tayla and Fatin Uluengin, both of whom shared an architectural training that paid homage to traditional Ottoman architecture. Indeed, Tayla had studied in the art history department of Istanbul University in the 1950s and had a keen interest in Ottoman architecture. The competition had called for "a mosque able to hold a congregation of fifteen thousand; a courtyard able to hold nine thousand people, and offices for the Presidency of Religious Affairs and the Directorate of the Foundation of Religious Affairs."<sup>30</sup> Thus the design had to fulfill the basic requirements of a mosque by including spaces for prayer and ablution, as well as for accommodating the customary rituals of circumcision and death. In addition, new functions were introduced, such as "an auditorium to accommodate six hundred people, a library, a supermarket and a car park to hold eight hundred vehicles."<sup>31</sup>

The mosque was finally completed in 1987, twenty years after Tayla and Uluengin's design had won the competition. Over the course of these two decades, much had changed in the cultural landscape of Turkey, which had witnessed the establishment of an overtly Islam-identified political party in 1970 (the National Order Party of Necmettin Erbakan) and a military coup in 1980. The architectural profession was polarized between those supporting republican values (seen as Western and modern) and those hoping to ally themselves with the populist movement washing over Turkey.<sup>32</sup> With the election of Turgut Özal in 1983, the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi, also established in 1983) came to power with the mandate to produce a Turkish/Islamist synthesis in the public and political arenas and to encourage liberal economic reforms. Islam was reintroduced into the public sphere, and "with the support of the military, the Özal government encouraged the building of mosques and the expansion of religious education. In the 1980s, about 1,500 new mosques were built every year, until by 1988 there was a mosque for every 857 people."<sup>33</sup> Although the Motherland Party was soon replaced by Erbakan's Welfare Party (Refah Partisi), which placed a greater emphasis on economic development and social institutions, the culture of public participation had been altered to include Islam as a defining force in local politics and foreign relations.<sup>34</sup>

The Kocatepe Mosque is considered the largest national mosque in Turkey (plate 5). It sits on a hill in a busy mixed-use neighborhood of Ankara. Owing to its location, the building is a very visible landmark in the city, providing orientation to visitors and locals alike. On a distant hill across the city sits the mausoleum of Atatürk, a modernist structure with a minimalist aesthetic.<sup>35</sup> The stylistic contrast between the two buildings could not be greater, and their significance to the nation is no less contested.<sup>36</sup> For supporters of the Islamist turn in Turkish politics, the mosque represents "a product of twentieth-century technology [merged] with a sixteenth-century sense of beauty." Yet for the mosque's critics, the design is aggressively traditionalist, and the project is viewed as a missed opportunity for the monument to represent Turkey's modernity.<sup>37</sup>

The design of the mosque is inspired, as mentioned earlier, by classical Ottoman mosques of the sixteenth century (fig. 1.9). The form is typical of Sinan's oeuvre, with its centralized dome supported by secondary and tertiary half domes cascading down on the sides. The pyramidal organization accentuates the height of the dome, which is further accentuated by the four towering minarets marking each corner of the foundation plinth. During the Ottoman period the number of minarets on a mosque communicated the status of the patron: only sultans could build large complexes

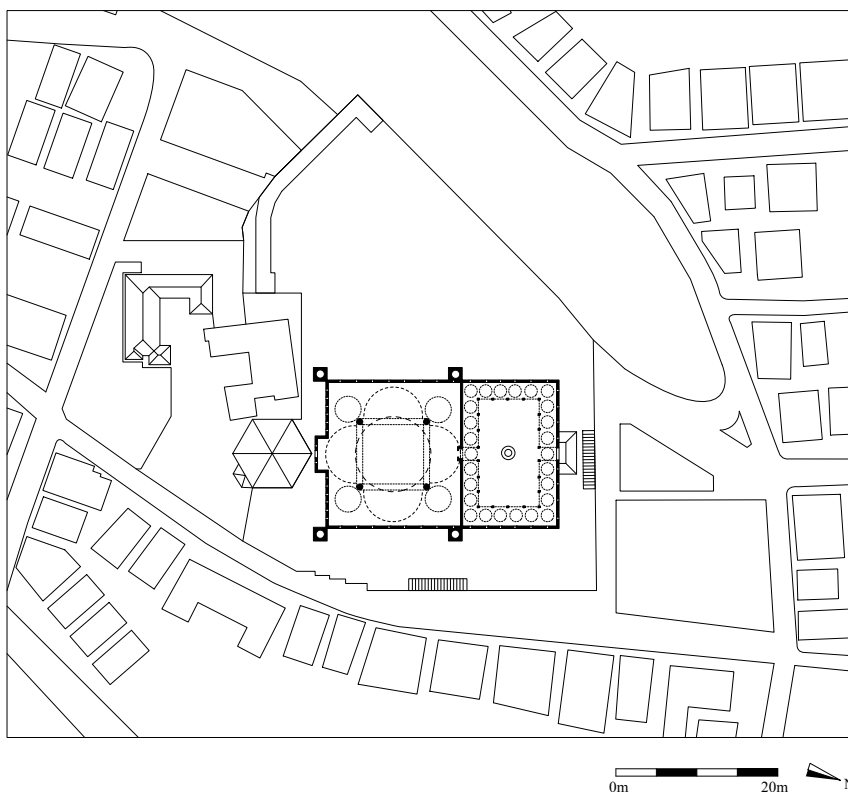


FIGURE 1.9. Schematic plan, Kocatepe Mosque, Ankara, completed in 1989. Architects, Hüsrev Tayla and Fatin Uluengin. Drawing by Mahdi Sabbagh.

with four minarets, the balconies of which would signify the ruler's place in the dynastic order (for example, the mosque of the sixth sultan would have six balconies). Lesser courtiers, like princesses and viziers, were allowed two minarets or one, respectively. The Kocatepe Mosque, which has four minarets with three balconies each, replaces the imperial patronage with a more populist signification. The iconography is subverted, the number of balconies now devoid of meaning.<sup>38</sup> The reinforced concrete of the piers and domes mimics the stone masonry of older models, yet the massive body of the building—built with reinforced concrete—tells of its modern provenance. Thus in both image and materiality the national mosque provides a historical reference yet means something quite different.

The raised plinth masks what lies at the base of the mosque—an auditorium, a huge shopping mall, and a supermarket (also known as a hypermarket, selling everything), which are accessed through a sprawling park-



FIGURE 1.10. Kocatepe commercial strip. Photograph by the author.

ing lot. Next door to the supermarket are large billboards announcing the presence of the Kocatepe Marriage Hall (*nikah salonu*) as well as fast food restaurants (fig. 1.10). A large parking garage accommodates visitors to the mosque, supermarket, and marriage hall and the numerous other shops that are clearly marketed toward the visitors to these establishments. The shops are not expensive or exclusive; most of them sell cheap imported electronics and clothing to a modestly dressed clientele. The juxtaposition of traditional sacrality and modern consumerism is disconcerting: on the one side there are Qur'anic verses adorning the mosque, and on the other side are large billboards signaling the presence of a supermarket, Beğendik Kocatepe.<sup>39</sup>

Encircling the mosque's cornice is an abstracted *kufic* script carved in relief on stone walls. The qibla wall is distinguished by a triangular indent on the exterior that suggests the presence of the mihrab inside, marking the direction to Mecca for passersby outside the mosque (fig. 1.11). Written on the left half of the qibla wall (that is, the starting point of the epigraphy) is "In the name of God, most Gracious, most Merciful. Read: In the name of thy Lord Who createth" (96:1). On the right is a fragment reading, "None will grasp their meaning save the wise" (29:43). The verses extoll the believers toward righteous wisdom and learning, an issue of particular relevance in the capital of the secular republic, where religious



FIGURE 1.11. Detail, Kocatepe Mosque, Ankara. Photograph by the author.

education had been state controlled and restrictive. The corner of the indented mihrab is chamfered, and the flat surface is inscribed with the *shahāda* (testimony), “There is no god but God,” a central tenet of Islam. The didactic nature of the Kocatepe Mosque project is without doubt. Believers are addressed not only in the epigraphy of the structure, but also in the secondary functions associated with the institution, such as the regular Qur’an classes for children and adults.

The mosque has several entrances, from the side streets as well as through the supermarket area and the parking lots. A large, arcaded forecourt precedes the main entrance into the prayer hall. The large space is planned for important religious occasions, such as the annual Eid al-Adha holiday marking Abraham’s sacrifice, when multitudes of worshippers gather here, in the largest mosque in Ankara. Replacing the smaller neighborhood mosques, the Kocatepe serves as the city’s main congregational Friday mosque. The spaces both inside and outside the mosque are thus planned for large groups of worshippers to gather and offer communal prayers.

A large panel above the entrance into the main prayer hall reiterates the sacrality of the threshold. Gilded letters read, “Peace be upon you! Well



have ye done! Enter ye here, to dwell therein" (39:73), a phrase often inscribed on gates and doorways. The prayer hall itself is monumental, with high, soaring ceilings and tall columns supporting the central dome.<sup>40</sup> The columns and walls are painted in a manner that replicates classical Ottoman mosques, just like the exterior. The area below the dome is encircled by three levels of balconies that accommodate restrooms, ablution spaces, and smaller rooms for women and children to gather. Epigraphy encircles the circumference of the domes and the cornices of the prayer hall, as well as the qibla wall and mihrab. From the dome hang large medallions with the names of Allah, Muhammad, and the four caliphs inscribed in large calligraphy. On the qibla wall, there is a tall band of epigraphy, white script on a blue background, that reads, "Know they not that Allah enlarges the provision or restricts it for any He pleases? Verily in this are signs for those who believe! Say: O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (39:52–53). Just above the mihrab, an oft-quoted verse mentioning the sacred mosque in Mecca is inscribed on a panel and rendered in gold paint, similar to the panel above the entrance doorway.<sup>41</sup> On the side walls are similar blue panels, inscribed with the "Beautiful Names" (*al-asmā' al-ḥusnā*) of Allah (plate 6).

One of the important issues to consider in such a densely calligraphic space is that of language and legibility, both literally and conceptually and in terms of both words and architectural form. The epigraphy in the Kocatepe is placed on key locations on the exterior and interior of the mosque; the exterior is in *kufic* style, while the interior tends toward the cursive *thuluth* style. Both renditions are difficult to read, especially the stylized *kufic*. The interiors are covered with calligraphy akin to the epigraphic program of Ottoman mosques, where cornices, qibla walls, and mihrabs are decorated in rich mosaics or painted in bright colors and are almost always embellished by Qur'anic verse or prophetic hadith—thus the reference is clear. Similarly, the architectural language clearly associates the building with Ottoman historical precedents. As one of the early supporters of the design wrote, "Finally, Ankara is to have an Ottoman Mosque!"<sup>42</sup> With the construction of the Kocatepe, that ambition was realized.

The interior of the mosque—providing alcoves for quiet reflection, rooms for children's Qur'an classes, and a large space for communal gathering—contrasts sharply with the loud, commercial areas of the supermarket that most visitors encounter before or after their prayers at the mosque. Indeed, the supermarket, marriage hall, and parking lot in and around the Kocatepe complex speak to the social and urban role of the mosque, whose

primary users are working- and middle-class citizens of Ankara. The contrast is particularly potent when viewed in light of the Grand National Assembly Mosque, with its restricted access and elitist modernity. The collapsing of class difference in the patronage and use of the national mosque has a power of its own. Indeed, the Kocatepe project has an openness that speaks equally of neoliberal capitalism and of a populist historicism that permeates the marketplace of urban life in contemporary Turkey.

### Competing Discourses of the Nation

The Anıtkabir mausoleum of Kemal Atatürk, completed in 1953, sits like a silent sentinel on a hilltop overlooking the capital. Until the construction of the Kocatepe Mosque, the mausoleum was the primary national monument in Ankara.<sup>43</sup> Despite the hill's visibility from several parts of Ankara, the monument is physically isolated from the city, surrounded by large landscaped pathways and a long, processional driveway. The mausoleum itself displays a simple, bare minimalism, reflective of public buildings designed in the austere modernism of early twentieth-century German institutional architecture. Life-size sculpture and towering reliefs adorn the marble and stone courtyard leading to the mausoleum. The figural motifs on the courtyard walls and stairways derive from a combination of socialist imagery and Hittite iconography, one borrowed from European visual culture, the other from Turkey's own pre-Islamic past.

To reach the tomb of Atatürk, the visitor must solemnly ascend a series of stairs under the watchful gaze of guards and soldiers who march past it every hour. The main building is reminiscent of a temple, sacred in its strictly choreographed rituals of statehood (fig. 1.12). Famous aphorisms attributed to Atatürk are written in gold relief on the façade, exhorting citizens toward progress and patriotism. One is of particular significance, originally read on the tenth anniversary of the Republic in 1933: "Ne mutlu Türküm diyene" (How happy is the one who says: I am Turk). The sandstone façade highlights the golden letters as well as the colorful ceiling of the entrance portico, which is rendered in deep red, blue, and gold paint, a palette referencing Turkey's pre-Islamic architecture of ancient temples and Byzantine churches. The interior is flooded by natural light passing through tall, multipaned windows that cast a somber glow. The dark marble cenotaph at the other end of the hall is illuminated by these windows, giving the effect of light emanating from within it. The placement of the cenotaph at the end of the hallway rather than at the center of the mausoleum is an exception to centralized funerary structures, sug-



FIGURE 1.12. Anıtkabir Tomb of Atatürk, Ankara, completed in 1953. Architects, Ahmet Orhan Arda and Emin Onat. Photograph by the author.

gesting a conscious break from Muslim practice. No customary rituals of visitation, such as prayers or ambulation, are allowed inside. Yet Atatürk is forever enshrined in the cult of nationhood, monumentalized in his final resting place.

The mausoleum of Atatürk and the Kocatepe Mosque both participate in the rhetoric of statehood but highlight two very different interpretations of the nation. The construction of the Kocatepe was completed, not coincidentally, at the height of the Islamist turn in Turkish politics, when numerous smaller mosques were also being built throughout the republic. Although some scholars see the upsurge in mosque building as “devoid of aesthetic merit” and as “highly visible political statements of a reclaimed Muslim identity, rather than pragmatic architectural responses to any real need for prayer space,” the rejection of these popular buildings speaks to a political stance taken by these intellectuals and modernist architects.<sup>44</sup> Unable to clearly voice their aesthetic elitism on encountering the changing cultural landscape, most architectural historians find recourse in suggesting that Islamism in the public sphere is antimodern, impractical, or simply unpleasing to the “educated” eye.

# ANKARA



FIGURE 1.13. Ankara city emblem.  
Wikimedia Commons.

The representation of Turkish nationalism is not a static one, as witnessed in the debate about the legitimacy of the Kocatepe Mosque. The emblem of Ankara has also changed over the course of the twentieth century, from the Hittite sun disk at its establishment as the capital to the mosque symbol that replaced it in 1994 (fig. 1.13). The new emblem instituted by the Islamist city government at that time consisted of a drawing of a mosque's domes and two minarets, over which stars illuminate the darkened sky. Below the dome is an abstracted reference to the Atakule tower, which was built over a popular shopping center. The emblem has been interpreted as merging the religious and consumerist tendencies that defined Turkey in the 1990s.<sup>45</sup> The abstracted image of the Ottoman mosque does not refer to the Kocatepe Mosque in particular. Rather, in the manner of nationalist symbols, it refers to an ideal type and an ideal conceptualization of national identity. For the city government, the mosque symbolized Turkey's Islamic history. The mosque would be a symbol of a resurgent Muslim identity not only for the Turkish Republic, but for Turks worldwide, as witnessed in the Berlin Şehitlik Mosque. The identification is not on nationalist grounds alone, but with the assumed concept of Turkic ethnicity. Similarly, the neo-Ottoman mosques that are constructed in the hundreds in Turkey mean quite different things than those built for the diaspora, and certainly those built for an expanded global community with ties to Turkey, whether real or imagined.

## The Royal Architect

One of the most important disseminators of the Republic's Turkish/Islamic/Ottoman identity is the Istanbul-based architect Hilmi Şenalp. In addition to designing the Şehitlik Mosque, Şenalp has been commissioned by the Turkish government to build mosques globally, from Tokyo to Washington, DC. His firm, Hassa Mimarlık (Imperial Architecture), specializes in neo-Ottoman-style architecture, with a special emphasis on religious and community buildings; its headquarters are in Üsküdar, on the Asian side of the Bosphorus.<sup>46</sup> According to its website, the firm's goal is to continue the aesthetic traditions of the past and make them contemporary by taking advantage of modern building technology.<sup>47</sup>

Hilmi Şenalp was born in 1957 in Konya, where he finished his primary and secondary education. He studied architecture and engineering at Istanbul Technical University and the history of architecture and restoration at Yildiz Technical University. He began his practice as an independent architect-developer in 1984, with a short period of teaching at Boğazici University in Istanbul. Hassa Mimarlık offers client services in architecture, engineering, and construction, utilizing modern design methodology and technology. Among the firm's earliest designs was the restoration of the Şeyh Murat Dergah (a Sufi lodge) in Istanbul, linking Şenalp with a popular form of Muslim practice that has gained followers in recent decades.<sup>48</sup> Since the 1980s Islam has gained visibility in various forms of public discourse, from music to theology.<sup>49</sup> It is not coincidental that Şenalp, then a young architect, would be defined by such a cultural shift, and turn to Ottoman architecture as inspiration: the restoration of historical sites and the design of historicist mosques came about at a moment when Turkey was reclaiming its Islamic past.

Hilmi Şenalp characterizes his mosque design as an exploration in cultural continuity. In an interview posted on the website of Hassa Mimarlık, titled "In Light of the Mosque Issue in Turkey: What Should Be the Vision of Culture and Civilization in Turkey?," Şenalp states that the mosque type provides historical continuity for a nation and that it is necessary to study the past to recognize intrinsic "cultural codes."<sup>50</sup> He criticizes the oft-repeated "clash of civilizations" model introduced by Samuel Huntington in 1996 and the Orientalist denigration of Islam.<sup>51</sup> Instead, he celebrates the classical period of Ottoman art and history as the epitome of Turkish civilization (*medeniyet*). The last 250 years, which corresponded to Turkey's westernization, is viewed as a period of decline, a time when the Turks forgot their own roots. "We are obliged to analyze the values of our

past by reading them correctly and understanding them, and benefit from the products of this high civilization. . . . For a future appropriate for our nation, we should strive to work without breaking the chain of tradition. Today, mosque architecture is in a terrible state. If this is a social issue in a country where each year 500–1,000 mosques are being erected, why is it not studied as an individual subject at our universities?” Like other historicists, Şenalp bemoans young architects’ lack of training in conservation or historical preservation. This pedagogical impulse can be seen in the way his firm attracts recent architecture graduates from conservative backgrounds, both men and women.<sup>52</sup>

Şenalp stresses the importance of the past in understanding contemporary Turkish culture. However, as he reiterates in his interviews, the idea of Turkishness goes beyond national and geographic boundaries to include ethnic and religious identity. That identity focuses on the Seljuk to Ottoman periods. To call these dynasties Turkish is of course problematic, given the wide cultural and linguistic disparities between the eleventh-century Seljuks who migrated from Central Asia and the Anatolian tribal consortium of the thirteenth century that gave rise to the Ottoman Empire, not to mention modern-day Turks.<sup>53</sup>

The history of Turkish architecture becomes, in Şenalp’s voice, a nationalist proclamation that distinguishes itself from the earlier paradigm of Kemalist secular republicanism. The Ottoman engineer and architect Sinan is Şenalp’s inspiration, and Sinan’s masterpieces—the Süleymaniye in Istanbul and Selimiye in Edirne—provide Şenalp with models for emulation. In a 2011 interview printed in Turkish Airlines’ in-flight magazine, *Skylife*, the relationship between Şenalp’s governmental patronage and his practice is made clear. According to the writers, “Şenalp, who has put his signature on a number of projects and buildings in Tokyo, Washington D.C., Ashgabat, Dubai, Berlin, Yekaterinburg as well as in Turkey, spearheaded the movement to reinterpret traditional Turkish architecture in light of modern demands.”<sup>54</sup> The name of his firm, Hassa Mimarlık, is itself reminiscent of the language of the Ottoman court system of privilege and imperial patronage.

The architectural idiom developed by Hassa Mimarlık can be attributed to the intellectual history of the world, connecting the writings of the nineteenth-century German poet Goethe and the third-century BCE Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu with those of Sinan in order to suggest that architectural values are timeless and linked through esoteric and philosophic ideals. Taking inspiration from humanist and modernist rhetoric alike, Şenalp explains, “Balance, proportion and geometry are the corner-

stones of our traditional architecture. Man is the measure. . . . Architecture in the end is an art that expresses and embraces the whole. An abstract art that has gone beyond abstraction and become concrete by forming an integrated whole.”<sup>55</sup> Şenalp’s words may sound to some like universalist modernism, but to others they echo the language of popular Sufism.<sup>56</sup> Like similar global religious movements that have moved from the particular to generalist themes, this version of Sufism merges ideas of personhood with devotion in ways that are abstract yet accessible to the modern believer. In fact, Şenalp himself hesitates to use the term “modern” in describing his own practice, seeing it as too closely associated with “Western” values: “With its present meaning and nature, modernity has become the name of the rather materialistic approach of the western civilization toward things; of its way of understanding the world; and of its distorted ontological and intellectual approach to things.”<sup>57</sup>

Şenalp’s earlier projects were for well-to-do clients who commissioned opulent houses based on the traditional wood and stone residential architecture of Istanbul. These structures had been documented in the early twentieth century by Le Corbusier (d. 1965) in his book *Journey to the East* (1911), in which the young Charles Édouard Jeanneret Gris (his name before he started going by Le Corbusier) discovered the clean lines and tectonic purity of Turkish architecture. Similarly, the Turkish architect Sedat Hakki Eldem (d. 1988) rediscovered the indigenous architecture of Turkey and built several buildings in the style of Istanbul’s houses.<sup>58</sup> The connection is not an idle one, as Eldem’s iconic buildings—constructed mostly in the 1930s and 1940s—were part of a nationalist agenda in which indigenous styles represented “pure” Turkishness. What had been seen by Eldem as “modernist” (the pure cubic forms and functionalism) became, in Şenalp’s hands, “traditionalist” and representative of an era uncluttered by modernity.

The houses designed by Şenalp are lavishly appointed, clearly meant to convey the owners’ prosperity (fig. 1.14).<sup>59</sup> The older precedents of urban dwelling had been densely packed into the fabric of the city, but their copies are freestanding and monumental. The houses have large wooden eaves over cubic concrete structures. The second and third stories project outward, like enclosed balconies, and are embellished in such a way as to give the impression of the traditional wooden *köşk* (kiosk). One of the most extravagant was built in 1996 for a client in Saitama, Japan. Photographs on the Hassa website show only the interiors of this house, but they give clear indication of the opulent use of molded and mirrored plasterwork and ornately carved wooden door frames that are evocative of the



FIGURE 1.14. Yaltınças residence. Architect, Hilmi Şenalp.  
Photograph courtesy of the architect.

Ottoman pleasure houses, or *yali*, that dotted the Bosphorus in the nineteenth century.<sup>60</sup> The beautiful chimney in the salon is reveted in colorful Iznik tiles, most likely made on commission in Turkey and reassembled in Japan (fig. 1.15). The building is embellished with authentically copied details of Ottoman architecture, but the pastiche of elements gives the impression that it is as much an Orientalist fantasy as a newly revived Islamic identity.

The revival of craftsmanship is an issue brought up by many architects designing in the historicist mode. Often working with teams of skilled artisans, their oft-stated goal is to preserve the past through architectural decoration while making it accessible to new generations of patrons and users. The mosques become catalogs of styles and techniques, displaying the arts of Islam from ceramics to woodwork. Ottoman decorative arts are particularly popular, as they represent the products of a cultural heritage that spanned several hundred years and encompassed much of the Muslim world, from Egypt to Anatolia. Thus Şenalp presents himself as a preservationist, an educator, a patron, and a privileged servitor working to restore the Turkish nation to its former religious and architectural supremacy.





FIGURE 1.15. Uzemu residence, Tokyo. Architect, Hilmi Şenalp.  
Photograph courtesy of the architect.

### The Architecture of Diplomacy

Şenalp's design practice reveals the role of architecture in the act of nation building. In the construction of mosques such as the Kocatepe, the country's Muslim identity is viewed through the lens of imperial Ottoman architecture; in projects disseminated abroad, the mosque plays an important role in both domestic policy and international diplomacy. In a 1997 speech, then mayor of Istanbul Recep Erdoğan recited a famous poem, saying, "The mosques are our barracks, the domes our helmets, the minarets our bayonets and the faithful are our army."<sup>61</sup> The poem landed the mayor in prison (for appearing to be too Islamist), even though its original author was the nationalist intellectual Ziya Gökalp, who wrote the poem, titled "The Soldier's Prayer," in 1912. The role of mosques in the Turkish imaginary cannot be overstated, as this example illustrates. But what they meant vis-à-vis Gökalp's nationalism is very different from how Erdoğan would utilize mosque building in the service of an Islamist agenda.<sup>62</sup>

Following the construction of traditional residences for the powerful entrepreneurial classes of Istanbul, Şenalp's architectural practice grew exponentially. His first large-scale international commission was the Ertuğrul Gazi Mosque complex in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. Completed in 1997–98, the mosque was built to serve the large population of Turkish expatriates working to construct the newly independent republic. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union in December 1991, Turkmenistan has sought to align itself with other Muslim countries, particularly Turkey, with whom it shares a “Turkic” identity and Muslim faith.<sup>63</sup> At about the same time, Saparmurat Niyazov, Turkmenistan's “president for life,” visited Turkey and established trade and political allegiances between the two countries. He also looked to Kemalism as a source of inspiration, and to Atatürk as a model of charismatic and authoritarian leadership.<sup>64</sup>

For its part, the Turkish government has seen an economic and political opportunity in the opening up of Central Asia. The citizens of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, for example, speak cognate languages and feel that they share a historical and religious bond with the Sunni-majority Turkey. Watching the “reemergence of Turkish communities from Yugoslavia to Iraq, China, and Siberia,” they commonly repeat that the twenty-first century is that of the Turks, and note with pride that they are part of a diverse world community.<sup>65</sup> In regard to Turkmenistan, the connection is already emphasized in the country's name.

The website of the Turkish Foreign Ministry notes that “Turkey was the first country to recognize the independence of Turkmenistan and to establish an Embassy in Ashgabat.” It continues:

Bound by a common history, language, religion and culture, the two countries and peoples sustain balanced, cooperative and close relations based on the axiom “One Nation, Two States” and mutual respect. Today the cooperation between the two countries encompasses very diverse fields; foreign policy, trade, economy, culture and education being the foremost areas. . . . Turkish businessmen have been contributing to Turkmenistan's development since the early days of independence. About 600 Turkish companies are registered in Turkmenistan. In the last years, Turkmenistan has become the country in Central Asia where Turkish contracting companies overtook the most projects; in 2010 Turkmenistan was ranked first worldwide in this respect. From the independence of Turkmenistan until today, Turkish companies assumed contracting work in the country totaling over 22 billion USD. This figure has exceeded 4 billion USD in 2010 and reached almost 2 billion USD

during the first half of 2011. Apart from the construction sector, the textile sector is another area with active Turkish private engagement. The trade volume between Turkey and Turkmenistan is also rapidly increasing. Close relations between Turkey and Turkmenistan exist in humanitarian fields as well. Each year, numerous Turkmen citizens travel to Turkey for tourism and trade, and thousands of Turkmen students receive university-level education in Turkey. Over 10 thousand Turkish citizens living in Turkmenistan form an important bridge between two brotherly peoples.<sup>66</sup>

Looking beyond the diplomatic and propagandist language of this text, it becomes clear that the Turkish government aims to gain an economic foothold in Turkmenistan. Cultural and religious investments, such as mosques, provide the soft power for these ambitions.

In order to cater to the burgeoning population of its citizens in Ashgabat, the Turkish government established the Ertuğrul Gazi (*ghāzī*) Mosque under the auspices of its Ministry of Religious Affairs. The mosque is named after Ertuğrul (d. 1281), a tribal leader who came with the westward migrations of the Oghuz clan aiding the Seljuks of Rum against the Byzantines.<sup>67</sup> Like his descendants fighting on the edges of the Muslim/Christian empires, Ertuğrul was given the title *ghāzī* (religious warrior).<sup>68</sup> He was the father of Osman I (d. 1326), the eponymous founder of the Ottoman dynasty. Although little is known of Ertuğrul, he is used in this case to represent a connection between current-day Turkmenistan and the Turkish Republic, linking the two through a tenuous historical connection.

A monumental structure, the Ertuğrul Gazi Mosque is designed in the classical Ottoman mode, to replicate the works of Sinan. The dome is supported on large columns and secondary semidomes that frame the sides of the central prayer area. Four tall minarets anchor the whole complex, each with three balconies. With its stone façade and gray-tiled domes, the mosque is an exact replica of those found in Istanbul, thereby creating an uncanny connection between sites separated by over two thousand miles. The traditional architecture of the two regions is also starkly different: stone in Anatolia and Istanbul, brick and mortar in Turkmenistan. What then is the goal of this monumental importation?

Above the entrance portal of the mosque is a plaque on which the *shahāda* is written in large gold letters: “There is no god but God (Allāh), and Muhammad is His messenger.” This phrase is the foundational proclamation of Islam, and its placement at the entrance of the mosque is typical



FIGURE 1.16. Detail, Ertuğrul Gazi Mosque, Ashgabat, completed in 1998. Architect, Hilmi Şenalp. Photograph courtesy of the architect.

of religious monuments (fig. 1.16). On another relief panel, the *bismillāh* (“With the name of God,” the start of all prayers) is written above a bay of windows. Such epigraphic simplicity and directness continues inside, where large phrases of the *shahāda* are rendered in black paint on the walls of the side arcades. During the Soviet era, Russian became the unifying language of the conglomerate of countries that formed the USSR, and in Turkmenistan the Cyrillic script replaced the Arabic one (similar to the establishment of the Latin script in Turkey).<sup>69</sup> Thus the simple and clear writings on the portals and walls of the prayer hall resonate with a public relearning its own religious heritage. More intricate and ornate calligraphy is reserved for the domes, where it functions as a talismanic motif to bless the structure as well as those who worship within it.

The Ertuğrul Gazi mosque complex includes a cultural center consisting of a large auditorium, classrooms, and workshops. This building makes little reference to Ottoman style; rather, its design gestures toward local elements. The plan of the structure, which is otherwise entirely clad in concrete and glass, consists of interlocking octagonal star shapes.

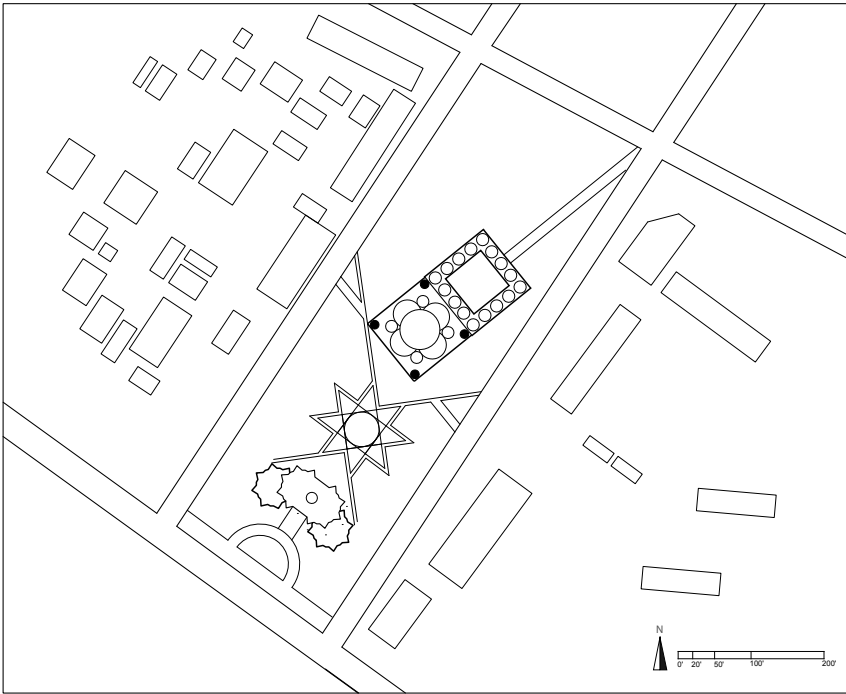


FIGURE 1.17. Schematic plan, Ertuğrul Gazi Mosque, Ashgabat.  
Drawing by Mahdi Sabbagh.

This ornamental motif is locally referred to as the “Seljuk Star,” a symbol that has also been incorporated into the presidential state emblem of Turkmenistan (fig. 1.17). The garden area between the community center and the mosque has a fountain in the center and is landscaped in a way that reiterates the star motif, replicating the complex geometries associated with eastern Islamic art (fig. 1.18). The community center and the mosque together merge the local and global aspirations of the Ertuğrul Gazi mosque complex—connecting the building at once to the patron, namely, the Turkish government, and to the local history of Turkmenistan. The corporate design makes the community center appear simultaneously Western and modern, both goals of the new country. Here the westernization is associated less with Europe than with the Turkish Republic.

The mosque complex has a soup kitchen serving food to the poor, which is typical of charitable institutions of whom such functions were an integral part. The soup kitchen also references the agenda of the old Welfare Party of the 1980s, which gained political ground owing to its social programs targeted toward lower classes and the indigent. The imam of the



FIGURE 1.18. Ertuğrul Gazi Mosque, Ashgabat. Photograph courtesy of the architect.

Ertuğrul Gazi mosque is appointed by the Turkish Ministry of Religious Affairs, thereby assuring that the beliefs of the central government are uniform throughout the Turkish diaspora and its zones of influence. The consistency of the architectural language—neo-Ottoman—similarly reiterates the power of the government, whether catering to its citizens in Berlin or Ashgabat, or inviting new allies in the broader “Turkic” community of nations.

### Conceptualizing the Diaspora

The transnational ambitions of the Turkish government are asserted in its claim that the twenty-first century belongs to the Turkish Islamic Union. This hubris comes at a time when microidentities play an important role in the global framework of race and ethnicity. After the fall of the Soviet Union and the fragmentation that engulfed regions as diverse as Central Asia and the Balkans, what it meant to be a Muslim came into question.

For these countries, history has provided inspiration, even if it has sometimes been applied anachronistically or incorrectly. Several of the new countries have links to the Turkish past as former provinces of the expansive Ottoman Empire (such as Bosnia); some have links that extend even further back, to the Seljuk Turks (such as Turkmenistan). For the Islamists finding their voice in the Turkish Republic, itself coming to terms with its Ottoman-Muslim heritage after a generation of suppressing it, the late 1980s were full of political opportunities. Mosques represented the emergent religious identity; their Ottoman style, the imperial past that linked diverse segments of the Islamic world. However, the style was not limited to Turkish patronage alone, as witnessed in the Faisal Mosque in Pakistan and the al-Amin Mosque in Beirut, both of which were commissioned by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and will be discussed in the following chapter.<sup>70</sup>

Hilmi Şenalp's mosques are a signature of Turkish identity, exported through the diaspora as reminders of the home nation, and built in foreign lands as diplomatic gifts of brotherhood. In Tokyo, Japan, the Tokyo Camii and Turkish Cultural Center, completed in 2000, was originally built in 1938 by immigrants from Kazan (Russia) at the turn of the twentieth century (plate 7). After it was severely damaged in the 1980s, the Turkish government offered to build a new mosque on the land, which was gifted by the Japanese government. Whether the Kazan immigrants can now be identified as Turks is, of course, debatable, but it is an association appropriated by the Turkish Republic. The Japanese/English-language website of the mosque explains, "We have no doubt that [the] Tokyo Camii will be an alternative place of true learning about the religion of Islam, being a frequent place to visit for hundreds of Japanese every day and would contribute to the centenary relations between the Turkish and Japanese people."<sup>71</sup>

Hilmi Şenalp's mosques are built in cooperation with local construction firms—in this case, merging Japanese technology with Turkish craftsmanship. To keep the image of the Turkish neo-Ottoman mosques consistent, the design of the building as well as all interior and exterior epigraphy and ornamentation takes place in the firm's offices in Istanbul. Everything, from tiles to stained glass, is produced in Turkey, shipped internationally, and installed on-site by skilled workers. The Turkish Cultural Center in Tokyo is a veritable museum of traditional arts and crafts: whole rooms have been re-created in the Ottoman style, with tiled fireplaces and ivory-inlaid wooden cabinets. The cataloging of Turkish history through its architecture and artworks speaks of the contemporary obsession with mu-

seum culture. Indeed, the museum aesthetic provides an alternate reading of Hilmi Şenalp's oeuvre, one that brings his practice in closer relationship to the discourse of preservation and classicism initiated by postmodernist architects of the 1980s and 1990s.

## Histories of the New Present

With Turkey's Islamist shift came the increased expression of religious identity within the public sphere. Local mosques have been built throughout the countryside; for example, Ankara and its environs are dotted with metal-clad domes glinting in the sunlight, their minarets piercing the skyline. The style for the new mosques is neo-Ottoman, and it may at first appear that there is a clear connection between these mosques and what has been called neo-Ottomanism in Turkish political culture. However, the situation is much more complex. Indeed, several scholars and politicians alike, including Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, have argued that the current interest in Islamic culture and Ottoman history is not couched in imperialist expansionism, as would be suggested by the term "neo-Ottoman." Instead, what one witnesses through the mosques is an expansion of Turkey's political and economic influence, extending as far as the post-Soviet Republics of Central Asia. The politics of microidentities, based on ethnicity and pseudo-linguistics, forges the connection between multiple worlds that aim to connect to Turkey. Even Arab countries, which once rejected Ottoman dominance in their own quests for nationhood in the early years of the twentieth century, now turn to Turkey as a model for an autonomous Islamic Republic.

The Ministry for Religious Affairs that commissions Hilmi Şenalp's mosques gears the mosques project toward local citizens within Turkey, expatriates working abroad, and fellow Muslims in allied countries. The contemporary reality of multiple citizenships and multinational corporations is presented in these mosques, together with a realization of the diasporic nature of modern Turkish society. Transnational connections in the Muslim world thus are not based simply on religious networks but, as in the case of the neo-Ottoman mosques sponsored by the Turkish government, also on the geopolitical aspirations of the government. For other countries, such as those in the post-Soviet Republics, the neo-Ottoman-style mosques gifted by the Turkish government speak to creating a union based on Turkish Islam. As such, religion comes to both represent the homeland left behind and the forgotten histories now reimagined.





## Global Islam and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

### An Architecture of Assimilation

*The driver is from Kohat, a district in northwest Pakistan known for its green valleys and flowing streams. We meet on the dusty shores of the Red Sea, in Jeddah, and he is surprised and pleased to have a compatriot as his passenger. Unlike foreign workers in other parts of the Arabian Peninsula, who get by on Hindi, Urdu, and English, workers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are expected to learn Arabic, the “language of the Qur’an,” in which the driver is fluent. Still, it is good to speak to a compatriot, and the driver takes pride in telling me about Jeddah, where he has lived for the past twenty years. We visit the waterfront mosques and then, on his recommendation, the old city center. He points out the beautiful nineteenth-century houses and drives through the congested bazaar that surrounds them.*

*Knowing my interest in architecture, the driver brings me to what he considers the most important mosque in the city (which is not his favorite, the Floating Mosque). This is the Amir Juffali Mosque, located in the old city center, on the shores of the lagoon (plate 8). The building has a modest if somber appearance, with an unornamented and whitewashed façade.*

*The minimal fenestration and massive buttressing makes the mosque look empty and impenetrable. The doors are bolted shut; a single minaret rises skyward.*

*The driver explains to me the significance of the monument. The musallā prayer space outside the mosque is not a verdant garden nor a marble pavilion, but an arid expanse of gravel. I am told that this is where public executions take place on Fridays, after the communal afternoon prayers. The custom was revived in the aftermath of 9/11, as a way to deter revolt against the kingdom and to mark the rulers' Islamic credentials.<sup>1</sup> My eyes now don't bother looking for the stylistic merits of the mosque; rather, they search for signs of blood spilled on the musallā. I imagine the plaza filled with thronging crowds, eager to see grotesque spectacles of death and dismemberment. The heat and dust mixes with the babble of a hundred different tongues, each one silenced when the axe falls.*

*I turn my camera toward the imposing Ministry of Foreign Affairs, located directly across from the Juffali Mosque. How ironic that the ministry and the mosque are juxtaposed in such a manner, one a supreme example of global politics and the other paying homage to Saudi customs. Both buildings and the institutions they represent are meant for local and international audiences. As I take the first photograph, the military police officers wave us over. Their angry faces and defensive gestures highlight the tense security situation in the kingdom, with its fears of internal revolt and external terrorism. The photographs of the Foreign Ministry have to be erased, a symbolic gesture of control on the part of the police. Later on, I find several images of the building on the Internet. Turning back to the Juffali Mosque, the buttressed walls and high parapets make even more sense now. The padlocked doors indicate that the fears felt in the kingdom are those of Salafism itself; access to their version of Islam is reserved for a select few.*

## Cosmopolitan Roots

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has a global presence, with particular significance to the 1.6 billion Muslims worldwide.<sup>2</sup> As caretakers of the holy sites of the Ka'ba, in Mecca, and Muhammad's Mosque in Medina, the rulers are in a position to gain the respect and, in some cases, deference of several communities of Muslims worldwide. Oil revenue has provided an additional source of power and authority, one that is wielded to legitimize the kingdom and to expand its influence abroad. Nonetheless, important discrepancies between the visions projected at home and dissemi-



FIGURE 2.1. Floating Mosque, Jeddah, completed in 1995. Photograph by the author.

nated abroad are clearly manifested in the government's sponsorship of religious buildings.<sup>3</sup> The mosque, in particular, has become an object for nation building and for disseminating ideology globally; it also reveals the kingdom's paradoxical relationship with its own past.

Jeddah, an ancient city on the Red Sea, sits at the crossroads of history. It has been a gateway to pilgrims coming to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina for almost two millennia. Until its assimilation into the Saudi kingdom in 1925, the city had been ruled since the sixteenth century by Ottoman governors or their proxies. Commerce defined the city: its vibrant port had been a necessary hub for the exportation and exchange of goods between the Middle East and North Africa. Merchant communities from China and South Africa were based in Jeddah, and pilgrimage caravans from around the Muslim world made it a necessary port of call.

Cosmopolitanism permeates the air in Jeddah, mixed with the cool breezes floating off the Red Sea. Somalis, Pakistanis, and Indonesians mill together at popular tourist destinations, like the Floating Mosque or the old bazaars (fig. 2.1). The pilgrims en route to or from Mecca are con-

spicuous in color-coordinated outfits, being led by their tour operators to religious as well as commercial sites. Their expressions are a combination of exhaustion and curiosity, as they look for bargains and stop for prayer. Jeddans themselves are ethnically and economically diverse, blending in with the immigrants employed to clean the streets, build the highways, and care for the children of the Saudi elite.

Jeddah is home to almost 3 million people. International hotels, restaurants, and malls are popular destinations for young and old, the social norms of segregation and propriety maintained at all times. The old city, *al-balad*, remains the heart of Jeddah, although now it serves more as a tourist and business destination than as a vital residential enclave. Chinese imports and Indian gold are sold in the old bazaar, but true wealth is displayed in the upscale malls and designer stores along the palm-lined Tahlia Street. Yet Jeddah is unlike its eastern Gulf counterparts, Dubai and Abu Dhabi. For millennia the city has served as a trade and pilgrimage center for people and commodities, and that depth of history permeates the culture in terms of its heterodox demographics and relatively relaxed social norms.

The al-Balad area is the repository of Jeddah history; its architecture holds on to the past, like the barnacles arriving on the ships sailing in and out of its port. A prime example of the nineteenth-century architectural heritage of the city is the Bayt Naseef, a multistoried residence of a former governor of Jeddah, Omar Naseef Efendi, who was also a wealthy merchant (fig. 2.2).<sup>4</sup> The building is overseen by the Jeddah Historical Area Preservation Department, a governmental agency with the mandate to restore and preserve the heritage of Balad.<sup>5</sup> The building has become a model of historic preservation in old Jeddah and is showcased as a highlight of the city's cultural past. Indeed, this residence is an elegant reminder of the dense and complex urban morphology that would have typified many early modern cities in the Middle East. The five-storied structure soars upward, its wooden *mashrabiyyā* windows catching the cool breezes off the Red Sea. The building is made of limestone and coral aggregate and reinforced with thick wooden beams. A fantastical vertical path weaves its way through the core of the building, a combination of narrow stairways and broad ramps.

Bayt Naseef represents the flows of people and material culture that passed through Jeddah in the nineteenth century. Like the neem tree that grew outside it and earned it the nickname "House of the Tree," Bayt Naseef is a landmark that has brought together numerous people, from urban planners and young architects to kings and tourists. Its architecture



FIGURE 2.2.  
Bayt Naseef,  
Jeddah.  
Photograph by  
the author.

is a combination of local building practices and the stylistic aspirations of an ambitious governor forging links with more powerful political centers, such as Cairo and Istanbul. The Javanese teak beams that support the building point to links even farther away, in Southeast Asia: material that traveled with pilgrimage caravans and commercial cargo.

In the past few decades al-Balad has become among the most endangered parts of the city. Prostitutes and illegal immigrants from Somalia and Sudan barter along the narrow alleys, squatting in the decrepit remains of once-graceful houses, their windows stripped bare of wood, their decoration denuded and crumbling. Tiny stores selling cheap plastic wares dot the otherwise abandoned quarters; al-Balad does not appear to have many permanent residents anymore. The educated and wealthy elite of



FIGURE 2.3. Amir Juffali Mosque (left) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (right), Jeddah, completed 1986. Architect, Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil. Photograph by the author.

Jeddah bring their guests to view their city's past, bemoaning the lack of parking and the poor infrastructure and the inconvenience of walking in the old city ("Where are the parking lots?" they ask). Every now and again, an international organization will assess the progress made in regard to heritage preservation, and a new view of Bayt Naseef will be added to the front pages of *Destination Jeddah*, the local tourism magazine.

Preeminent Jeddah families, such as those that once lived in al-Balad, commonly sponsor the construction of neighborhood mosques in the city, as exemplified in the numerous private commissions undertaken in the 1980s. The Juffali Mosque was designed by the Egyptian architect Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil, who also designed monumental mosques in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.<sup>6</sup> The mosque was constructed in 1986 in al-Balad, thus near the dense urban fabric of the old city (fig. 2.3). It sits on the main Medina Road, across from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The mosque was commissioned by the Jeddah-based Juffali family, which owns one of the most successful enterprises in the kingdom, namely, E. A.

Juffali and Brothers.<sup>7</sup> The company was founded in 1948, and its portfolio includes electric power utilities, telecommunications, and a successful construction company.

The Juffali Mosque is a prominent landmark owing to its proximity to the city center and location on the al-Arbaeen Lake. In addition, the mosque faces the imposing and well-guarded Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which acts as a provocative architectural counterpoint. The most significant aspect of the mosque, recognized both by locals and visitors to Jeddah, is its role as the site of public executions. On select Friday afternoons, after the midday prayers, hordes of people gather to view the corporal punishment of criminals, meant to deter others from transgression. The spectacles take place in the graveled forecourt of the Juffali Mosque, a few paces from the prayer hall itself. Although photography is strictly prohibited, the site is well-known and inscribed deep in the minds of the residents. The mosque and its forecourt are thus at once communal spaces and governmental agents securing the kingdom's ideology.

Skilled artisans worked alongside manual laborers to build El-Wakil's mosques in Jeddah. According to the architect, "Over two hundred masons ranging from Turkey, Pakistan, Syria, India and Egypt . . . emerged from the on-site training provided to them; over eighty gypsum plasterers were introduced from Morocco to practice their craft and integrate new geometric designs to their well-preserved knowledge of Moroccan patterns."<sup>8</sup> Similarly, carpenters, marble-workers, engineers, and architects were offered the experience of learning about "the techniques and methods of traditional Islamic crafts." This attention to heritage preservation was one expounded by the Aga Khan Foundation, one of the most influential funding agencies in the world, which in 1980 (its inaugural year) awarded El-Wakil its prestigious architecture prize for his Halawa House in Agamy, a resort town near Alexandria, Egypt. Made using traditional masonry techniques, the building was recognized for the importance of master craftsmen in its construction. El-Wakil was thus recognized early on for his emphasis on indigenous style, which he characterized as the most authentic form of Islamic architecture. He was recognized again by the Aga Khan Foundation in 1989 for the design of the Corniche Mosque in Jeddah.<sup>9</sup> In both the Halawa House and the Corniche Mosque, simple materials were reused to create an image of a timeless architectural aesthetic, even as they drew deeply on the traditions of informal Egyptian architecture. In the context of Saudi Arabia, however, the question remained whose heritage was being preserved and what role it could play in the context of nation building.



## The Mosque Strategy

According to a letter El-Wakil submitted to the nominating committee of the Aga Khan Awards for Architecture in March 1988, a Mosques Project was initiated by the Ministry of Hajj and Awqāf (the ministry overseeing the annual hajj pilgrimage to Mecca and charitable endowments) “for the development of a contemporary traditional mosque architecture in Saudi Arabia.”<sup>10</sup> The concept, first envisioned by King Fahd in the early 1980s, was to give shape to a style of Islamic architecture that would build on traditional forms and techniques, while making use of modern building practices.

There is little doubt that King Fahd (r. 1982–2005), like his predecessors, recognized the power and symbolism of mosque architecture, particularly those located in Jeddah and the holy cities. In 1979, the then crown prince, Fahd, was witness to the siege of the Grand Mosque in Mecca. Thousands of militant Saudi jihadists smuggled weapons into the sanctuary on November 20, 1979, which corresponded to Muharram 1, AH 1400 of the Islamic *hijri* calendar. The militants were inspired by a belief in the imminent return of the Mahdi, or messiah, whose arrival would augur the reformation of Islam and the end of time.<sup>11</sup> In their eyes, the Saudi Kingdom was un-Islamic and thus illegitimate and needed to be overthrown, a reflection of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, which overthrew the shah with the goal of establishing a theocratic government.<sup>12</sup> The new Islamic year would thus be marked not with celebration (by Sunnis) or mourning (by Shi'is), but with a symbolic readjustment of ideology.<sup>13</sup> After two weeks of incessant gunfire, and with the aid of French and American counterterrorism efforts, the Saudi government was able to retake the Grand Mosque. The loss of life was devastating, but so too was the loss of confidence in the monarchy's ability to control the diverse ideologies populating the nation.

Since the political alliance between the Salafi scholar Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab and the tribal chief Muhammad Ibn al-Sa'ud in 1744, Saudi ideology has hinged on the integration of religion and rulership. For a regime that had built its legitimacy on the foundations of religion, the path to reasserting authority lay in the dissemination of a redefined and even more powerfully propagated religiosity. The Salafi version of Islam, to which the family of Sa'ud continues to adhere, situates itself on a revivalist tendency that recognizes the beliefs and customs of the early Muslim ancestors, or *salaf*, as the model for just governance.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, there are numerous interpretations of Salafi doctrine, from the jihadist

to the quietist; the kingdom's ideology ranges between the two poles, depending on the political context.<sup>15</sup>

The kingdom promotes an activist agenda outside its borders in order to propagate the Wahhabi version of Salafism, but suppresses dissent within the country itself. That is, the Saudi citizenry is expected to exercise obedience to the rule of Islamic law as established and interpreted by the shaykh al-Islam in Riyadh. The discrepancy between domestic and foreign policy in regard to the prescribed political action results in tensions within the state.<sup>16</sup> King Fahd, on coming to power in 1982, recognized these tensions (as played out in the siege of the Great Mosque and the subsequent rise of Osama bin Laden) and implemented important social programs that supported educational and theological institutions linked with Salafi Islam. Mosques and madrasas became the rallying grounds for groups opposing Israel as well as those fighting in Afghanistan. The Saudi imprint was manifest physically through the construction of hundreds of mosques of varying scales, from the monumental to the modest.

Universalism was at the core of this Islamic expansionism. And while strict racial, ethnic, and sectarian divisions marked Saudi society itself, the belief in a unified Arab and Islamic *umma* (community) drove foreign policy. Nonetheless, a local identity had yet to be formulated—one that recognized the kingdom's particularity while striving for the dissemination of its Salafist ideology. The history of Islam was equated with the history of the kingdom, and institutions linked to the government had to return to that starting point at every juncture. At the same time, an indigenous past was explored through the patronage of archeological fieldwork and the highlighting of regional identities. Architectural design was no different, and King Fahd encouraged the patronage of mosques as a way to both forge Saudi nationalism and disseminate a pan-Islamic ideology abroad.

## The Visual Aesthetic

The Juffali Mosque is inspired by older precedents in Jeddah, such as the al-Hanafi and al-Mimar mosques, built in the nineteenth century (fig. 2.4). Both of these mosques are physically embedded in their urban fabric, unlike the freestanding Juffali Mosque. Nonetheless, their influence on El-Wakil's designs may be seen in the latter's spare lines and modest scale; its whitewashed and unadorned façade; and its single, low minaret. Thus the resemblance is primarily visual. In addition, the urban context is absent in the Juffali Mosque, which is located between the Lagoon and



FIGURE 2.4. Schematic plan, Amir Juffali Mosque, Jeddah. Drawing by Mahdi Sabbagh.

the Medina Road. There are no buildings surrounding it, and the mosque stands like a folly situated harmoniously within the garden-musallā and the water. The Juffali Mosque evokes a nineteenth-century architectural experience: that of Orientalism, in which “Eastern” architecture would be displayed as decontextualized and detached from human inhabitation.<sup>17</sup>

Twentieth-century modernist architects viewed buildings as autonomous and unfettered by historical reference or urban context. Le Corbusier, for example, designed white, sculptural buildings (such as the Chapel of Notre Dame du Haut in Ronchamp, completed in 1954) that were meant to be viewed from all sides and experienced through both their external artifice and their internal use of light and form.<sup>18</sup> Architecture provided the spiritual experience in such buildings, in which the space itself was meant to evoke a sense of the divine. Whether El-Wakil’s mosques elicit such a response is unclear. But they do clearly follow in the modernist tradition of sculptural autonomy that is more alluring from the exterior than the interior. Indeed, a powerful criticism of El-Wakil’s freestanding mosques in Jeddah, especially those along waterfronts, is that they cre-

ate a perceptual distance between the space of worship and the believer. According to the architect himself, they display a certain “pictographic” quality, with a romantic image that may be spoiled if one comes too close. The architecture thus satisfies an aesthetic impulse simply by looking at it; there is little invitation to discover what may lie inside.<sup>19</sup>

The visual power of El-Wakil’s mosques is undeniable. But his highly stylized and poetic architectural quotations are formal exercises replicating images of the past, collages of memories of places more familiar to the pilgrims passing through Jeddah than to its residents. In constructing a collage aesthetic for the Saudi national image, El-Wakil’s designs aimed to give a new nationalist identity to the public space—one that appeared historically rooted, yet fundamentally modern in its sensibilities.

Significant departures from traditional mosque architecture can be seen in the Juffali Mosque. The first, mentioned earlier, is its decontextualization. The second, perhaps even more striking, is its lack of epigraphy. In contrast to the native Egyptian, Mamluk architecture that is often the source of El-Wakil’s work, his mosques in Jeddah have little Qur’anic writing on their walls. For example, the entrance portal of the Juffali Mosque is in the form of a trilobed arch over an enclosed doorway. The lintel above the door, a place often reserved for Qur’anic blessing or foundation inscriptions, is covered with an abstract geometric relief. There are no sacred texts on the exterior of the mosque; instead the walls are pierced by small wooden apertures allowing light but little view, and thick, evenly spaced buttresses. On the side opposite the main entrance there are two small inscriptions, modestly painted in black (fig. 2.5). One couplet reads, “Glory be to Allah and Praise be to Him; Glorified is Allah, the Great” (*subhān Allāh wa bihamdihi; ṣubhān Allāh al-Aẓīm*). A little farther along the wall is another inscription in black paint, a short phrase enclosed in a lozenge-shaped form. It reads, “There is no power nor strength but in Allah” (*lā hawla walā quwata illā billāh*).<sup>20</sup> A third ornamental lozenge simply states, “The Blessings of Muhammad, peace be upon him” (*ṣalla ‘ala Muḥammad*). These are common phrases of worship and not necessarily associated with Salafi practice; indeed, they are often also part of Sufi recitation. The simplicity and informal placement of the epigraphic representation suggest that it may have been added by local worshippers.

The formalist mode, one in which the form of the building takes precedence over other design aspects, like ornament and program, typifies contemporary mosques in Jeddah. In such cases, the image of the building serves to mask, problematically in the case of the Juffali Mosque, what may actually be taking place within and surrounding the building. Some-



FIGURE 2.5. Detail, Amir Juffali Mosque, Jeddah. Photograph by the author.

times the form is an aesthetic trope that satisfies the worshippers' spiritual impulse just by looking from outside, not requiring entry or participation in the rituals of prayer and devotion.

### The National Mosque

The Great Mosque of Riyadh, designed by the Jordanian architect Rasem Badran, was built at a time when the Mosques Project was well under way and several of El-Wakil's mosques had been built in Jeddah and Medina. This project, viewed as the national symbol of the Saudi government and located in the ancestral homeland of the rulers, had a markedly different approach from that taken in Jeddah (fig. 2.6). The patron for the Great Mosque was the Riyadh Development Authority (RDA), not the Hajj and Awqāf Ministry. The RDA coupled the project with the redevelopment of the old city center in order to revitalize the Palace District both architecturally and conceptually. In discussing the Great Mosque in Riyadh, Badran pointed to his firm's reliance on a sympathetic understanding of the local culture; indeed, one of the stipulations of the RDA was that the architect be a practicing Muslim and thus able to share "a common bond of faith and culture."<sup>21</sup> It should be noted that while the government placed great emphasis on hiring a Muslim for the national mosque, it remains



FIGURE 2.6. Great Mosque, Riyadh, completed in 1985. Architect, Rassem Badran.  
© Aga Khan Award for Architecture/Mehmet Karakurt (photographer).

silent on the involvement of foreign multinational firms and architects in the redevelopment of the kingdom's most sacred site, the Ka'ba in Mecca.

In an essay on contemporary Islamic architecture, Badran proposed merging the cultural heritage of a society with modern life through an engagement with local building traditions.<sup>22</sup> The touchstones for Badran were different than those for El-Wakil's mosques in the older cities of Jeddah and Medina. Until its selection as the capital of the House of Sa'ud in 1932, Riyadh had been a small village in the Najd region; its location in the country's interior meant that it had a different architectural language than that of the cities along the Red Sea. Modestly scaled mud-brick and stone structures are the norm in the Najd, built to withstand the harsh desert climate. Rasem Badran designed the great mosque as part of the entire redevelopment project, literally embedding the prayer spaces within a complex urban environment that included a madrasa and shops, arcades and fountains. The purpose of the new mosque, built over the old Qasr al-Hakim Mosque, was to "provide a focus for the city that will at the same time be integrated into the surrounding urban and social fabric, with the help of structures such as shops, public services, and educational

institutions.”<sup>23</sup> In short, the mosque was to resume its place at the center of the city’s religious and communal life.<sup>24</sup>

The Great Mosque, like the surrounding complex of buildings, is monumental, yet restrained. The walls are tall and thick, pierced by small apertures that limit the harsh light of the sun. They give the impression of an inaccessible fortress, an image antithetical to the openness often associated with religious structures such as congregational Friday mosques. Located in the ancestral region of the Saudi family and serving as the primary mosque in the national capital, the Great Mosque would have to cohere most closely to the government’s conservative political ideology. Eschewing the image of domes and minaret that typifies the oeuvre of El-Wakil, Badran’s mosque has a horizontal emphasis and consists of arcades and courtyards. According to the architect, domed structures reference tombs and mausolea—anathema to the Wahhabi faith, which condemns the building of memorials.<sup>25</sup> However, that this association was overlooked by the religious Hajj and Awqāf Ministry in the context of Jeddah speaks to the contradictions between the traditional practices and the new ideology imposed by the government. Apparently, what could be overlooked in the ancient, cosmopolitan city of Jeddah could not be tolerated in the national capital.

A single square minaret rises from the body of the complex. The façade is pierced by small square and triangular openings that restrict the light entering the prayer hall. The entrance is a monumental portal cut into the wall in a deep, angular fashion. The prayer hall consists of columnar arcades that appear to be hybrids of post-and-lintel and brick construction; abstracted, triangular arches are decorated with the ubiquitous triangular apertures, providing continuity between the exterior and interior of the prayer hall. There is no epigraphy on the entrances into the mosque, on the courtyards, or on the building’s interiors, furthering its image of austerity.

The mihrab is alluded to by a tall rectangular cut into the qibla wall, behind which stands a blank wall (fig. 2.7). A lighter-colored treatment of the stone used to clad the interior of the mihrab distinguishes it from the rest of the prayer hall, along with backlighting that lends a glow to the empty space. Once again there is no epigraphy, in striking contrast to the normative placement of Qur’anic verses. In most mosques throughout the Muslim world, the mihrab is the ideal site for the location of the famous Light Verse (Qur’an 24:35) or the Throne Verse (Qur’an 2:225), both of which extol God’s power and benevolence. The former makes reference to God as the light of the universe, which was disseminated through his messenger, the Prophet Muhammad. Often a small mosque lamp is also inscribed in-



FIGURE 2.7. Interior, Great Mosque, Riyadh. © Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

side the mihrab as an indicator of this relationship: that is, Muhammad is the lamp within which the divine light is contained.<sup>26</sup> In the Great Mosque in Riyadh the lighting within the mihrab makes clear the allusion to divine light without the use of Qur'anic texts, at once acknowledging the symbolic importance of light and negating its textual manifestation. Here as elsewhere in the kingdom, technology trumps tradition.

In his discussion of Salafism, Bernard Haykel points to the “hypertextual” nature of this doctrine, with its complete trust in the fundamentals of early Islamic belief in the Qur'an and the Prophet's *sunna* (Islamic custom based on Muhammad's words and deeds).<sup>27</sup> The infallibility and literality of the Qur'an marks Salafism. Thus it is interesting to note the strict absence of Qur'anic texts or hadith in the Great Mosque in Riyadh.<sup>28</sup> Why not physically proclaim the laws of Islam, as codified in the Qur'an, in the most sacred spaces? Why do the Saudi patrons avoid the monumentality of the beautiful words, yet show little restraint when it comes to materiality or technological efficiency? Technological determinism, a belief that technology can fulfill spiritual and aesthetic needs, permeates several aspects of Saudi culture, from building construction to education policies. The high-tech design of the Hajj Terminal in Jeddah by the engineer Fazlur Rahman Khan for Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill (SOM) (1982) is





FIGURE 2.8. Qubbah Mosque, Medina, completed 1989. Architect, Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil. © Aga Khan Award for Architecture/Mohammad Akram (photographer).

a good example. Nonetheless, words—even if from the holy Qur'an—can be dangerous if worshipped for their formal beauty (semantically as well as visually, in the form of calligraphy).

Indeed, the fear is of the monument itself. In the Salafi doctrine that underlies Wahhabism, history is an abstraction—reduced to acts and words—that seldom gives importance to material evidence lest it distract from the purity of belief. Nonetheless, despite their resistance to iconicity, the mosques in Jeddah and Riyadh do architecturally monumentalize certain values. First of all, they are often of a modest scale, like the majority of mosques built in Jeddah, which were commissioned by local patrons and envisioned as neighborhood mosques. Notable exceptions are the congregational mosques, such as the King Saud Mosque in Jeddah, among the largest mosques in the city, and the Qubbah Mosque in Medina (fig. 2.8). The Great Mosque in Riyadh, while built to house a large congregation, is incorporated into the larger urban redevelopment project and appears less ostentatious from its exterior. The Great Mosque is a polemical project that sets the limits of architectural discourse when it comes to national monuments. Located as it is in the heart of the Saudi capital, the mosque required that the architect dispense with ornamentation, epigraphy, and even, to some extent, historical reference. In so doing, Rasem

Badran's project also negates its own typology—the mosque is presented as a state monument, but without the symbolic and aesthetic elements that would be expected from such a large-scale nationalist project.

### “Controlling the Minds of the Believers”

Historical precedent is suppressed and subverted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The mosques in Jeddah are fictional constructions, collages of Cairene architecture as mediated through El-Wakil's romantic regionalism. They have little connection to the architectural traditions of the Hijaz region, yet serve to create a new history for Saudi Arabian architecture that links the kingdom to a powerful Arab dynasty, namely, the great Mamluks of Egypt. In the Najd, another tactic is employed, that of looking for primal connections to the land. Evoking the region's ahistorical building traditions, the architecture of the Great Mosque in Riyadh gives the impression of timelessness and longevity. Both attitudes toward history reveal much about the environment where these projects have been conceived: a political culture in which the past is easily manipulated in the service of political ideology.

A number of factors contribute to the restraint the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has shown in the national mosques projects. Perhaps the biggest issue is that of idolatry. In the early nineteenth century several graves in the Jannat al-Baqi' cemetery in Medina, next to the Prophet Muhammad's Mosque, were razed to the ground by orders of the ruling Saudis. Several other historical sites were also destroyed, such as the tombs of Muhammad's wives and companions and the mosque of his daughter, Fatima.<sup>29</sup> The Saudis were defeated by Ottoman troops in 1818 and several sites were restored, only to be again razed in the next century. Starting in 1932 the new Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which was established with the help of the British Army, unleashed a systematic agenda of destroying holy sites, a policy that has continued to the present day. Several monuments associated with the early history of Islam—particularly those sites revered by Shi'i pilgrims to the region—are consistently demolished or built over. In Mecca, this is done under the pretext of expansion of the Haram area and the building of numerous hotels meant to accommodate the increasing numbers of pilgrims.<sup>30</sup> More recently, the massive Abraj al-Bait Towers that surround the Ka'ba have replaced an eighteenth-century Ottoman fortress; the Turkish culture minister called the demolition of the fortress a “cultural massacre” (plate 9).<sup>31</sup> The disregard for sites that may hold religious and historical significance for other communities—such as Turks

and, more generally, Shi'i Muslims—is a marker of the kingdom's strong ideological convictions.

According to Saudi Wahhabi doctrine, worshipping idols and inanimate objects is strictly forbidden.<sup>32</sup> No object or person, living or dead, may serve as an intercessor between the worshipper and Allah. Thus the commemoration of the dead and monuments built in honor of historical events or persons are seen as heretical expressions that must be discouraged and destroyed. The fear of memorials that can be associated with forbidden practices (such as erecting tombs) is deeply embedded in contemporary Saudi religious ideology. Thus the grand mosques that serve to monumentalize national identity also cause tensions between the kingdom's political rhetoric and the public's systems of belief. That the public in the kingdom is a heterogeneous mix of expatriate employees and a minority ruling class complicates the issue even further.

Saudi mosques employ calligraphy sparingly, if at all, even if the mosques they are modeled after, such as the Mamluk precedents for El-Wakil's designs, are renowned for their creative use of Qur'anic verses and foundation inscriptions. In several historical treatises on calligraphy, Muslim authors have extolled the virtues of beautiful writing, attributing the earliest innovations in Arabic scripts to the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, 'Ali bin abi Tālib.<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, in the context of contemporary Wahhabism, the text becomes an *object* and therefore something to be avoided; namely, that epigraphy, especially beautiful writing, can itself become the focus of undue attention for the worshipper, akin to idolatry. That the Saudi doctrine views epigraphy as an aberration and distraction is remarkable given the Salafi veneration of the holy words and names of God. Thus the semantic value of texts is not enough; their material manifestation is rejected in favor of an austere abstraction.

Beautiful words and objects are not viewed as the "Signs of God" by conservative Salafists, as they are in other Muslim contexts; they are, rather, distractions from true worship.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, some architects teaching and building in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia today regard calligraphy within mosques as unnecessary and antiquated. According to one academic, calligraphy and ornamentation clutter the modern mind, which is already overloaded with images and words. The argument against ornamentation is one familiar to most Saudi architects knowledgeable about early twentieth-century theoretical arguments, such as Adolf Loos's famous essay "Ornament and Crime" (1908), an often-cited polemic extolling the functionalist aesthetic of early twentieth-century modern architecture.<sup>35</sup> Yet they fail to realize that this modernist rejection of ornament

was rooted in a Protestant aesthetic that continues to be deployed in the pared-down minimalism of modern churches, particularly in the United States and Western Europe.<sup>36</sup>

The architects of the mosques in Jeddah and Riyadh would acknowledge their debt to Western modernism and would feel comfortable associating themselves with the genealogy of American and European architecture, yet it is doubtful that they would find the roots of their work in Christian theology. Instead, they—like their patrons and supporters—try to find justification within Islamic tenets, although there is very little to support the claims that mosques should not be monumental or that ornamentation is forbidden. Indeed, the earliest Islamic monuments, such as the Dome of the Rock (completed in 692), which is covered in select verses from the Qur'an, or the Great Mosque of Damascus (completed in 715), which was covered in colorful mosaics depicting verdant urban and pastoral scenes, were compelling precisely because of their architectural and semantic value.<sup>37</sup>

Salafism holds great appeal for modern believers, and its accessibility is also visible in the types of mosques sponsored or supported by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Thanks to the modernist aesthetic, with its unornamented façades and simple geometric forms, the mosques' architecture is direct and uncomplicated. In the case of the mosques in Jeddah, historical references are embedded in the form but do not dominate the structure. The scale of the mosques, especially those commissioned by the Ministry of Hajj and Awqāf and built through the patronage of local elite, speaks to the integral role of mosques in Saudi society. Indeed, the physical and conceptual accessibility are attributes shared by the theological mission of modern Salafism as well. As Bernard Haykel explains, Salafism's appeal is multifaceted, yet clearly articulated. Its central tenet is that "religious knowledge can be acquired easily; to become a scholar is not an impossible feat; and Muslims are endowed with agency, and indeed are duty-bound, to acquire this knowledge for themselves through personal effort."<sup>38</sup> Accessibility and legibility are tropes that factor into the design of mosques patronized by the Saudi leadership, both within the kingdom and beyond its borders.

### Patronage and Propaganda

National mosques provide an important opportunity for states to monumentalize their political identity. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is no different, despite Salafism's rejection of commemorative architecture. In-

deed, the government not only developed a mosque-building project under the aegis of the Ministry of Hajj and Awqāf, but also deemed it necessary to utilize mosques as a way to export their worldview abroad. In his mandate from the ministry, El-Wakil was called upon to design mosques that blended the vernacular with the global to create a universal vision of Islamic architecture. This universal appeal was also sought by the kingdom in its dissemination of a Saudi ideology abroad, as seen in mosques commissioned in Muslim countries within the sphere of Saudi influence, from Pakistan to Lebanon.

At the same time that King Fahd was sponsoring the development of a local mosque idiom in the kingdom, he was also sponsoring proselytization efforts internationally. In a 2004 article, the *Washington Post* reported,

King Fahd issued a directive that “no limits be put on expenditures for the propagation of Islam” according to Nawaf Obaid, a Saudi oil and security analyst. Saudi Arabia now had the money: Its oil revenue had skyrocketed after the 1973 oil embargo. King Fahd used the cash to build mosques, Islamic centers and schools by the thousands around the world. Over the next two decades, the kingdom established 200 Islamic colleges, 210 Islamic centers, 1,500 mosques and 2,000 schools for Muslim children in non-Islamic countries, according to King Fahd’s personal Web site. In 1984, the king built a \$130 million printing plant in Medina devoted to producing Saudi-approved translations of the Koran. By 2000, the kingdom had distributed 138 million copies worldwide.<sup>39</sup>

The distribution of Qur’ans and the construction of mosques are significant forms of legitimizing the government in its role as upholder of the Sunni faith. As the guardian of Mecca and Medina, the kingdom has been entrusted with a sacred duty that gives it authority not only within Saudi Arabia, but throughout the Muslim *umma*.

The focus of the Saudi propagation of the faith (*da‘wa*) is the establishment of a global Islamic identity, one that accords with their Salafist vision. Since the 1960s the rulership of the kingdom has sponsored the construction of mosques in poor Muslim countries. In the past thirty years, their attention has also shifted to countries on the edges of their political influence and those in the middle of internal conflicts, such as Pakistan and Lebanon. Two phases can be easily distinguished: the first, which began in the 1960s and continued until the late 1970s, could be characterized as adhering to the norms of philanthropy and diplomacy. Besides

the smaller mosques and madrasas built in underdeveloped Muslim countries, the Saudi government gave funds toward the building of nationalist monuments, including the renowned Faisal Mosque in Islamabad, Pakistan. Such benevolent diplomacy was seen as a way to increase goodwill for the Saudis and reward political alliances. Upon King Fahd's ascension to the throne, the building of mosques took on a more overtly propagandist message, one that saw the dissemination of a particular Sunni, Salafi brand of Islam. By the 1980s, Saudi-sponsored mosques built outside the kingdom began to take on a particular formal iconography, one inspired by Ottoman architecture yet contextualized through local materials and building styles. Mosques built in non-Muslim countries in Europe and the United States served as important testing grounds for the emergence of a more unified language, one in stark contrast to the structures being built in the kingdom itself: that is, an adaptive abstraction for diaspora Sunni Muslims (of diverse nationalities) and historicism and indigeneity at home in the kingdom.

### Diplomacy through Architecture

Gifted by the late King Faisal al-Saud (d. 1975), the Faisal Mosque was completed in 1985 (fig. 2.9). Building construction began in 1976 and cost approximately 130 million Saudi Arabian riyal (\$35 million).<sup>40</sup> The mosque was to serve as the iconic public monument in the capital city of Pakistan, one of the world's largest Muslim countries.<sup>41</sup> Until the construction of the Faisal Mosque, no major congregational mosque had been built in Islamabad, which had itself only recently, in 1960, replaced Karachi as the national capital. King Faisal approved the plans during a diplomatic visit in 1966, and an international competition, restricted to Muslim architects, was held in 1968.

The winning project was submitted by the Turkish architect Vedat Dalokay, who at the time was based in Ankara. Dalokay's design was an adaptation of an earlier proposal that had won the Kocatepe Mosque competition in 1957, as discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>42</sup> In Ankara his modernist and abstracted interpretation of the classical Ottoman style was ultimately rejected in favor of a more traditional look. For Islamabad, Dalokay proposed a monumental structure with a two-hundred-foot-square plan and four minarets at each corner. The dome no longer had a spherical shape, as in his earlier proposal; it was now a tentlike space-frame structure. Triangular slabs of concrete were assembled in such a

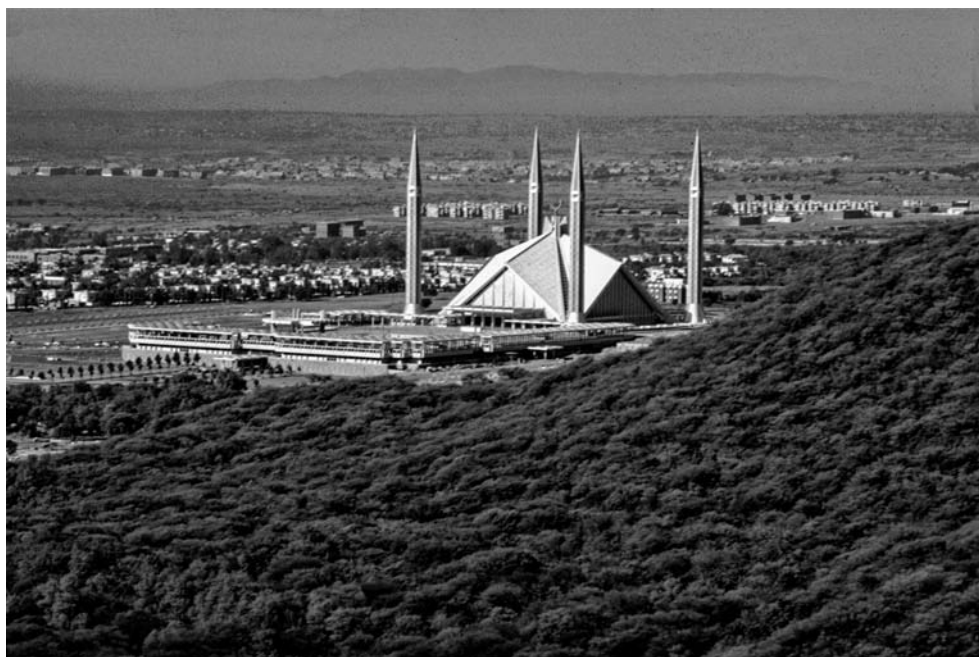


FIGURE 2.9. Faisal Mosque, Islamabad, completed in 1988. Architect, Vedat Dalokay.  
© Aga Khan Award for Architecture. Courtesy of the architect (photographer).

way as to touch at the apex of the main prayer hall, at a height of 132 feet (40 meters). The resultant open space is expansive and designed to hold approximately ten thousand men (a gallery on the side can accommodate fifteen hundred women). The inclusion of the Islamic Research Institute and offices for the International Islamic University added another \$5 million to the construction cost for the Saudi government.<sup>43</sup>

The Faisal Mosque looks like a giant tent with four minarets holding down each of its corners. It is located at the base of the undulating Margalla hills, the white marble contrasting with the green hills, rigid geometry highlighted against a natural backdrop. While the initial image may appear abstracted, the sources are recognizable as a dome with four pencil-thin minarets, elements of the classical Ottoman style. But the tentlike roof structure is more reminiscent of nomadic dwelling, both in the deserts of Saudi Arabia and the mountains of Pakistan. Acknowledging the romantic underpinnings of his design, the architect described the structure as “perfectly in harmony with the eternal image of the tent.”<sup>44</sup> In an intriguing synthesis of form and meaning, Dalokay thus associated the Saudi Arabian government with the history of the powerful Ottoman

Empire, while at the same time creating a nonspecific, ahistorical, and romantic response to the natural landscape of Pakistan.

The interior of the mosque is sparse, if disproportionately large, with epigraphy limited to a few key elements. The qibla wall is covered in rich blue and gold calligraphic tiles designed by Mengü Ertel, a Turkish designer, whereas the mihrab and minbar are freestanding structures embellished by the work of renowned Pakistani artists, such as Ismail Gulgee (d. 2007), who designed the freestanding mihrab located in the main prayer hall (plate 10).<sup>45</sup> The mihrab is detached from the qibla wall and is in the form of an open Qur'an manuscript, whose spine is etched in an elongated "Allah." The fifty-fifth chapter of the Qur'an, Surah *al-Rahmān* (The Merciful), is inscribed in *kufi* script onto the pages of the book. Along the margins, the ninety-nine "Beautiful Names" (*al-asmā' al-husnā*) of Allah are written in intricate, metallic inscriptions.<sup>46</sup> Gulgee was well-known for his masterful use of calligraphic abstraction, to which he lends an expressive, modernist tone. However, for the mihrab he chose not paint, but beaten metal inlay, which gives a restrained but highly reflective material effect.

The minbar for the imam's sermon and the platform for the muezzin (called the *müezzin mahfili* in Ottoman mosques) are also huge, freestanding sculptural objects. The minbar is a simple structure, with a large circular medallion of cut lapis lazuli mosaic that illustrates the Surah *al-Fātiha*, the opening verses of the Qur'an. The large platform of the *müezzin mahfili*, in contrast, is embellished with an immense mural, painted by the expressionist-surrealist painter Syed Sadequain Ahmed Naqvi (d. 1987). Here the calligraphy breaks away from tradition in its disjointed gestural abstraction and highly expressive articulation. The Qur'anic verse reads, "The Believers are but a single Brotherhood" (49:10), an appropriate selection for a monument symbolizing the political allegiances of two Muslim nations. At once breaking from South Asian architectural history, in which mosques are covered in resplendent bands of Qur'anic and poetic epigraphy, and from the Saudi attitudes against objectification, the mihrab and minbar provide an interesting renegotiation between a transnational political agenda and local historical precedent.

General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq is credited with the Wahhabism-inflected Islamization of Pakistan, a legacy that was monumentalized in the Faisal Mosque. The choice of the artists Gulgee and Sadequain, both Shī'i Muslims, highlights the ideological heterogeneity of Islamic identity in Pakistan just thirty years ago. In the aftermath of Zia ul-Haq's military dictatorship in the 1980s (supported by the Saudi government), which has





FIGURE 2.10. Tomb of Zia ul-Haq, Faisal Mosque, Islamabad.  
Photograph by Shehryar Ahmed.

resulted in extreme sectarian violence in the country, such a commission is unimaginable today.<sup>47</sup>

The Faisal Mosque was a diplomatic gift by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to an important ally, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The gift would hold even greater significance in the years following King Faisal's death in 1975, when Pakistan intervened against Russian occupation in neighboring Afghanistan. Resources, in the form of money and weapons, were channeled through Pakistan to repel the Russians and subsequently to advance the political ambitions of the Taliban. The armament was underwritten by several countries, including the United States and Saudi Arabia, as Pakistan attempted to balance their interests and its own. It is of little surprise, then, that one of the staunchest allies and surrogates of the Saudi government, Zia ul-Haq (d. 1988), is buried in a modest tomb on the grounds of the Faisal Mosque (fig. 2.10).<sup>48</sup> That the mosque commemorates both King Faisal and General Zia ul-Haq is ironic, given that

both figures strongly perpetrated a radical, Salafist doctrine, one that vehemently eschews erecting memorials.

### Asserting a Sunni Presence

The political ambitions of the kingdom are complex and far-reaching. One of the regions closest to Saudi interests is that of the Levant, or Bilād al-Shām, which comprises Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, and the Palestinian territories. The Palestinian refugee crisis and its political ramifications have mobilized several Muslim groups, both activist and humanitarian. Competing political allegiances have been formed with these organizations by the more powerful and wealthy countries, such as Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. Often these tensions are actualized in built form, monumentalizing the ties—historical, religious, and political—between the region and the rest of the Muslim world. King Fahd strongly supported the Palestinian cause, seeing it as a mission that could unify all Arabs.

In Lebanon, King Fahd's mediation during the Lebanese Civil War (1975–90) resulted in his support of the industrialist-turned-prime minister Rafic Hariri and the construction of the Muhammad al-Amin (Muhammad the Honest) Mosque in downtown Beirut (fig. 2.11). The two acts—namely, support for Hariri and the construction of the mosque—may appear on the surface to be dissimilar but, on closer inspection, represent an agenda of forwarding the cause of Sunni Muslims in Lebanon through political influence and religious symbolism. The mosque may have also been conceived as a response to the increasing presence of Christian missionaries and their places of study and worship that dominated the city in the late nineteenth century, such as the large Saint George Maronite Cathedral, which had been consecrated in 1894. By 1933, several prominent Sunni Muslim families mobilized the funds to establish an endowment and ruling for the construction of a new mosque in the city center. According to official documents in the *Dār al Fatwa*, the main Sunni authority in Lebanon, the mosque's history goes back to the early years of the twentieth century. The site had once been occupied by the shrine (*zāwiya*) of a man known as Abu Nasr, but was to be converted to a mosque representing the Sunni community.<sup>49</sup>

Plans for the al-Amin Mosque had been drawn up in the 1970s, but its design and construction did not begin in earnest until the end of the Lebanese Civil War (fig. 2.12). The project was supported by the powerful industrialist Hariri, who had made his fortune in the construction in-



FIGURE 2.11. Muhammad al-Amin Mosque, Beirut, completed in 2008.  
Architect, Azmi Fakhouri. Photograph by the author.

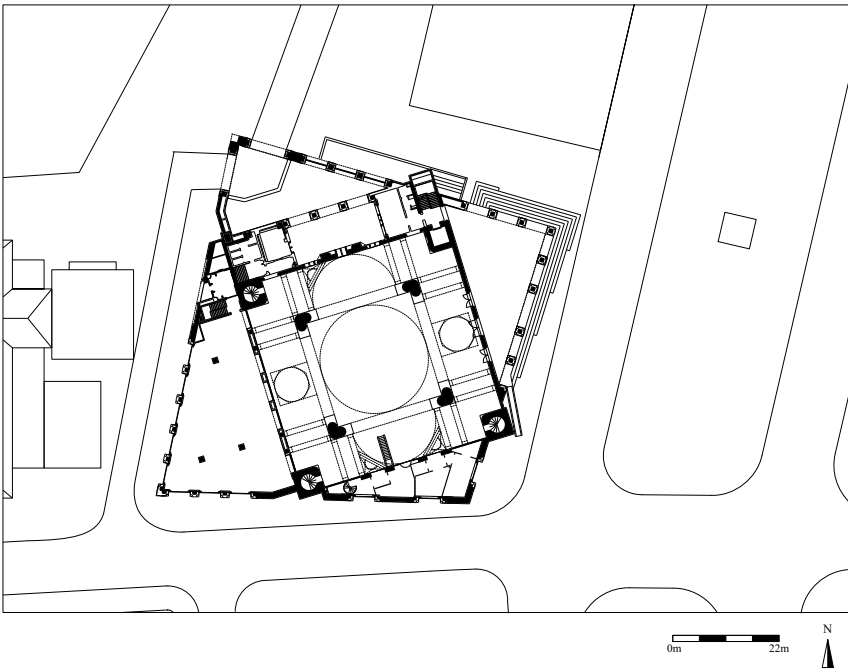


FIGURE 2.12. Plan, Muhammad al-Amin Mosque, Beirut. Drawing by Mahdi Sabbagh.



PLATE 1. Prä-Koeln  
anti-mosque symbol.



PLATE 2. King Saud Mosque, Jeddah, completed in 1988. Architect, Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil. © Aga Khan Trust for Culture. Courtesy of the architect (photographer).



PLATE 3. Interior, Türk Şehitlik Mosque, Berlin, completed in 2005. Architect, Hilmi Şenalp. Photograph by the author.



PLATE 4. Interior, Grand National Assembly Mosque, Ankara, completed in 1989. Architects, Can and Behruz Çinici. Photograph by Senem Çilingiroğlu.





PLATE 5. Kocatepe Mosque, Ankara, completed in 1989. Architects, Hüsrev Tayla and Fatin Uluengin. Photograph by the author.

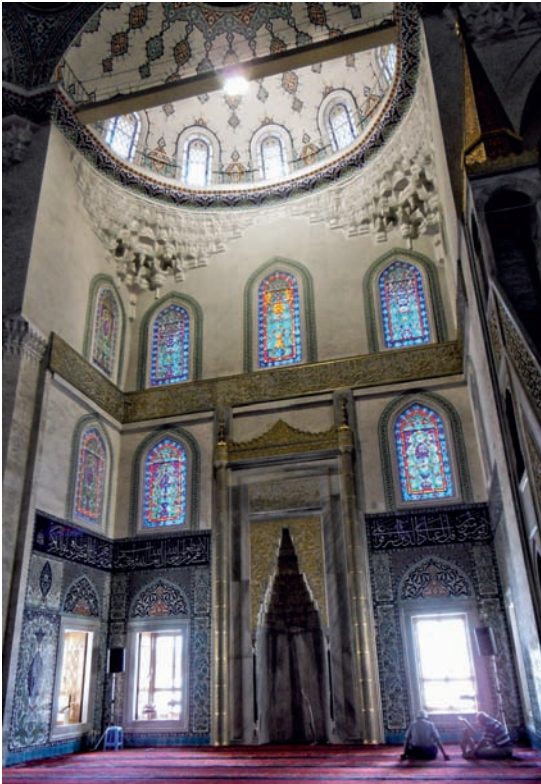


PLATE 6. Interior,  
Kocatepe Mosque, Ankara.  
Photograph by the author.



PLATE 7. Tokyo Camii and  
Turkish Cultural Center,  
Tokyo, Japan, completed  
in 2000. Architect, Hilmi  
Şenalp. Photograph  
courtesy of the architect.



PLATE 8. Amir Juffali Mosque, Jeddah, completed 1986.  
Architect, Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil. Photograph by the author.



PLATE 9. View of  
the Ka'ba in Mecca,  
with the Abraj al-Bait  
Towers in the rear.  
Photograph by the  
author.





PLATE 10. Interior, Faisal Mosque, Islamabad, completed in 1988. Architect, Vedat Dalokay. Photograph by Asfendyar Ahmed.



PLATE 11. Maronite Church of St. George and Muhammad al-Amin Mosque, Beirut. Photograph by the author.





PLATE 12. Interior, Muhammad al-Amin Mosque, Beirut, completed in 2008. Architect, Azmi Fakhouri. Photograph by the author.



PLATE 13. Mosque and Islamic Cultural Center, Rome, completed in 1988. Architect, Paolo Portoghesi. © Aga Khan Award for Architecture/Aldo Ippoliti (photographer).



PLATE 14. Interior, Shrine of Sayyida Ruqayya, Damascus.  
Photograph by the author.



PLATE 15.  
Husayniyeh Ershad,  
Tehran. Photograph  
by the author.





PLATE 16. Jamkaran Mosque and Shrine, Jamkaran. Photograph by the author.



PLATE 17. Shrine of Sayyida Zaynab, Damascus. Photograph by the author.





PLATE 18. Detail, Shrine of Sayyida Ruqayya, Damascus.  
Photograph by the author.



PLATE 19.  
Saadiyat Island,  
Abu Dhabi.  
Photograph by  
Andrew Ruff.



PLATE 20. Jumeirah Mosque, Dubai, completed in 1992.  
Architect, Hegazy Engineering Consultancy. Photograph by  
the author.





PLATE 21. Interior, Jumeirah Mosque, Dubai. Photograph by Farah Hai Ashoka.



PLATE 22. Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Abu Dhabi, completed in 2007.  
Architect, Halcrow Group Architectural Practice. Photograph by the author.

PLATE 23. Sheikh Zayed  
Grand Mosque, Abu Dhabi.  
© Aga Khan Award for  
Architecture/Halcrow  
International Partnership  
(photographer).

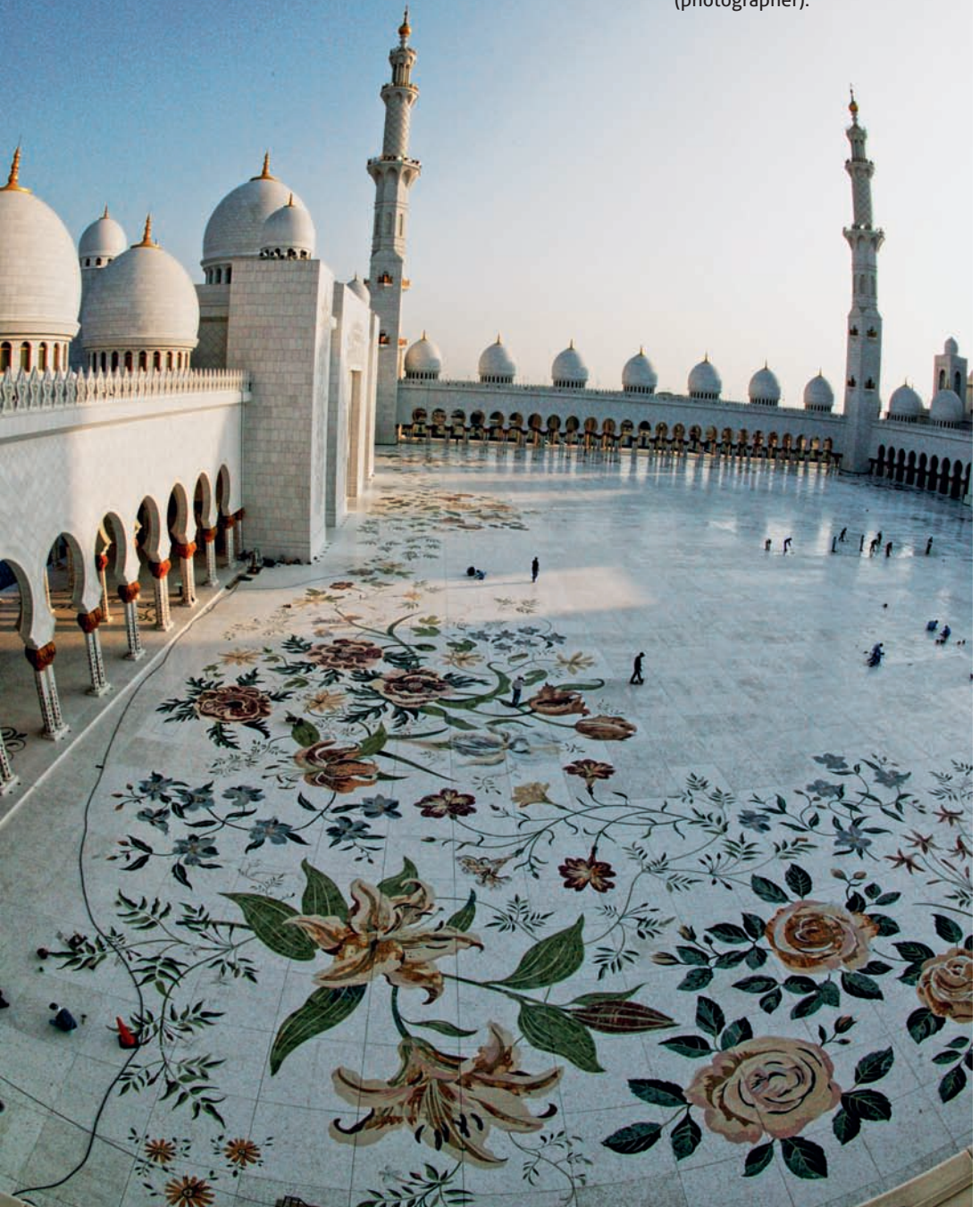




PLATE 24. Khalifa bin Zayed  
Al Nahyan Mosque, Jerusalem,  
ca. 2013. Photograph by Mahdi  
Sabbagh.



PLATE 25. Villa Hasan 'Abd al-Razik, Cairo, 1943. Architect, Hassan Fathy.  
© Aga Khan Trust for Culture/Gary Otte (photographer).

dustry during his long residency in Saudi Arabia (he had established his company, Saudi Oger, in 1978). Because of that connection he enjoyed the support of the royal family, for whom he had served as special envoy to Lebanon during the peace negotiations. His efforts were rewarded when he became prime minister of Lebanon in 1992, with a mandate from King Fahd to negotiate between the multiple factions in Lebanon (Shi'i, Sunni, Christian), and with his own vision to rebuild Beirut.<sup>50</sup> The reconstruction of the city was undertaken with the professional services of multinational construction firms, such as Bechtel Corporation, based in the United States, and Dar al-Handasah, based in Beirut.<sup>51</sup> In 1994 a Lebanese joint-stock venture, Solidere, was also established to oversee the development of downtown Beirut's Central Business District (CBD), which had been almost eradicated during the civil war.<sup>52</sup> The al-Amin Mosque was integral to the reconstruction plans of the CBD master plan and was envisioned as part of the urban revitalization of downtown Beirut.

With the financial support of Hariri and the billionaire Saudi prince al-Walid bin Talal, the foundation of the al-Amin Mosque was laid in 2003. Hariri and the grand mufti of Beirut, Muhammad Rashid Qabani, poured cement into the foundations, marking the cooperation between the state and the Sunni leadership of the city. Land had been bought around the original site and older buildings demolished to make room for the new and enlarged complex, which would occupy almost four thousand square meters.<sup>53</sup> Hariri's local construction company, Oger Liban, was contracted to oversee the building, as were numerous other professionals and an international crew of managers and craftsmen. The construction was completed in 2008, at a cost of almost \$30 million. Unfortunately, Hariri was not alive to celebrate the mosque's inauguration, as he was assassinated in February 2005. Instead, church bells rang out alongside prayers from the many mosques of Beirut, as the prime minister's body was processed to Martyrs' Square and laid to rest in a tomb outside the foundations of his beloved al-Amin Mosque (fig. 2.13).

Azmi Fakhouri, a young architect and engineer from a prominent Sunni Beirut family, was chosen as the designer of the al-Amin Mosque. The commission was "a dream come true" for the architect, who saw the construction as a religious duty and a civic obligation.<sup>54</sup> The primary brief was for the building to be monumental and a successful negotiation between the client, the donors, and the developer, Solidere. Fakhouri had previously designed funerary mosques for other members of the Hariri family in Saida (Sidon) (fig. 2.14). These mosques served as demonstrations of the



FIGURE 2.13. Tomb of Rafic Hariri, Beirut. Photograph by the author.



FIGURE 2.14. Al-Haj Baha' al-Din Hariri, Sidon. Architect, Azmi Fakhouri. Photograph courtesy of the architect.

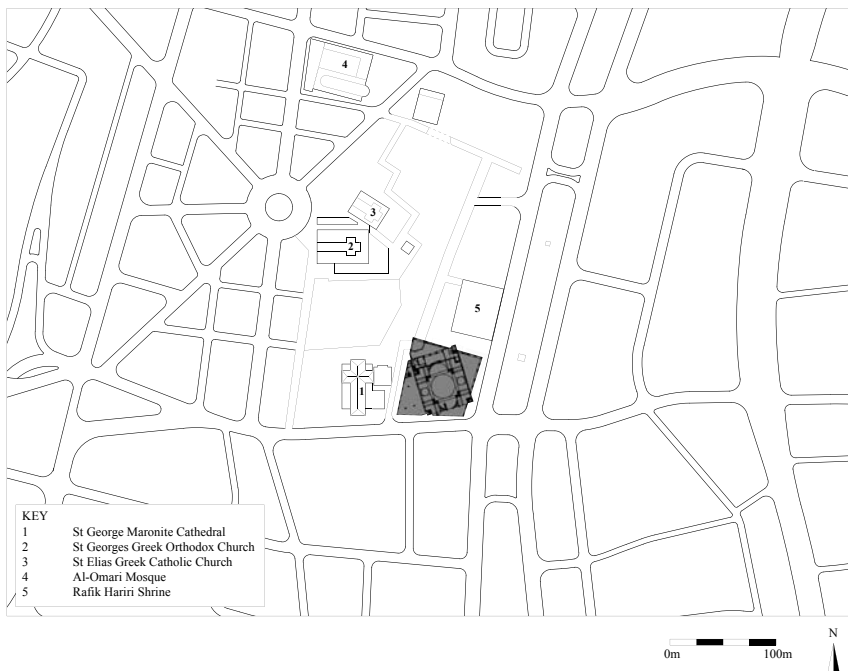


FIGURE 2.15. Site plan, Muhammad al-Amin Mosque, Beirut. Drawing by Mahdi Sabbagh.

family's piety as well as its deep ties to the community. They are relatively modest structures, especially in comparison with the al-Amin Mosque in Beirut. In a recent interview, Fakhouri characterized himself as a student of architectural history, drawing inspiration from master builders such as the Ottoman architect Sinan and the contemporary architect Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil. Fakhouri saw the lack of interest in history in the architectural programs of elite universities in Beirut as a "crisis," one that had dissociated young designers from their own cultural contexts.<sup>55</sup> His practice, by contrast, attempted to remedy this state of disjunction by turning toward the past for inspiration. As noted in the previous chapter, Hilmi Şenalp expressed a similar sentiment about attempting to recuperate historical form.

The al-Amin Mosque is located in the heart of downtown Beirut, at the edge of Martyrs' Square and adjacent to the Maronite Church of St. George (plate 11). Around the corner are the St. Georges Greek Orthodox Church and the St. Elias Greek Catholic Church, and a few blocks away is the Al-Omari Mosque, a twelfth-century monument that was restored as part of the urban reconstruction. The site of the al-Amin Mosque is thus

highly charged, and the building of a Sunni mosque in one of the most multiconfessional cities in the Middle East was not without purpose (fig. 2.15). Fakhouri's design drew inspiration from Ottoman architecture, at once a reminder of the earlier rulers of the Levant and a nod to a culture renowned for its architectural history. The Sultan Ahmet Mosque in Istanbul was one of its main inspirations, which Fakhouri adapted to the Lebanese context. The Ottoman mosque was built in 1616 and is known as the Blue Mosque because of the Iznik tiles that adorn the interior of the prayer hall. The al-Amin Mosque, with its dome and pencil-thin minarets, references the Sultan Ahmet Mosque formally, but the blue tiles are on its exterior rather than its interior and, even there, limited to the dome (which in the Ottoman case, would have been reveted in lead). Half domes cascade down from the central hemisphere as they do in classical Ottoman architecture; however, they are covered in bright blue tiles, not in the traditional lead or copper plates.

Because the mosque sits on a plinth, it looms above the CBD and is visible from several parts of the city. The exterior is composed of a yellow-ochre stone and thus adheres to local architectural style. However, according to the architect, none of the quarries in Lebanon could guarantee a consistent production of this stone, so the material was brought from quarries near Riyadh, in Saudi Arabia (through the commercial expertise of Saudi Oger). The stone was carved by South Asian craftsmen from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India, where the art of stone carving is still maintained. A particular achievement of the stone carvers, according to the architect, was the muqarnas column capitals, whose geometric virtuosity is based on Turkish and Egyptian models.<sup>56</sup>

Qur'anic verses adorn the interior and exterior surfaces of the mosque, designed by Sheikh Uthman Taha, a Syrian-born master calligrapher practicing in Saudi Arabia (plate 12).<sup>57</sup> A large epigraphic frieze encircles the mosque, starting at its entrance. On a raised carving highlighted in white, the title of the mosque reads, "Mosque of the seal of the prophets and messengers, Muhammad, may Allah honor him and grant him peace."<sup>58</sup> The prophet's name is enlarged and clearly visible thanks to the simple calligraphy and the white rendition. The mosque's dedication to Muhammad continues with the Surah *Ya Sin*, a chapter that is considered the "heart" of the Qur'an and relates specifically to the Prophet. The opening verses address Muhammad's prophecy and his position as the messenger, as well as key themes from the Qur'an, such as God's omnipotence.<sup>59</sup> These passages are well-known to Muslim believers, and on the al-Amin Mosque, in their clearly inscribed Arabic script, are easy to read. They were chosen



FIGURE 2.16. Interior, Muhammad al-Amin Mosque, Beirut. Photograph by the author.

by the architect and calligrapher under the guidance of the grand mufti, Rashid Qabbani.<sup>60</sup>

The significance of extolling the prophet of Islam as a unifying figure in the center of a city divided between different sects of Muslims and Christians cannot be overstated. It is interesting to note that the al-Amin Mosque is adjacent to the Maronite Church of St. George, the two buildings personifying two distinct religious figures. The dedication of the mosque can be interpreted in several ways.<sup>61</sup> The first may be that Muhammad's authority is undisputable for both Shi'i and Sunni Muslims, and the mosque could be a monument unifying the two communities. Second, a connection is made with Saudi Arabia, which is the home of the original mosque of the prophet, the Masjid al-Nabawī, in Medina. The kingdom is also home to the mosque's major donors, the Saudi royalty and several members of the Hariri family. A less tangible, if not improbable, association is with the Christian community that prays in the Greek Orthodox, Armenian, Maronite, evangelical, and Catholic churches in the vicinity of the al-Amin Mosque, thus also locating Muhammad among the older saints and prophets.

The interior of the mosque continues the Ottoman models of resplen-



dently ornamental decoration in hues of deep orange and dark blue. The painting and gilding was undertaken by the Lebanese decorating firm The Art of Mosques, which had also been commissioned in 2004 to decorate the Baha' al-Din Hariri mosque in Saida. The main prayer hall is open and expansive, with second-floor mezzanine balconies for women (fig. 2.16). The interior is designed to hold three thousand worshippers, with space allocated for about eight hundred women.<sup>62</sup> The qibla wall is decorated in blue and white tiles, in the style of Iznik ceramics that typify classical Ottoman architecture. Above the mihrab is a large, rectangular panel—also in blue and white ceramic tile—inscribed with a Qur'anic verse that reads, “Now shall We turn thee to a *Qiblah* that shall please thee. Turn then thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque.”<sup>63</sup> This verse is not uncommon in the context of mosque interiors, especially mihrab decorations. An equally appropriate (and ubiquitous) verse is chosen for the dome's apex, which is richly painted and gilded. Here the Throne Verse (*Ayat al-Kursī*, Qur'an 2:255) is beautifully rendered in clear, if intricate, calligraphy, which is easily visible from the prayer hall and mezzanines. The verse addresses the sovereignty of Allah, who is characterized as the holder of supreme authority over the heavens and the earth. Additional Qur'anic verses encircle the prayer hall and are framed in calligraphic medallions in the transition zones between the dome and the supporting columns, creating a didactic and polyvalent space within the mosque. The off-white walls serve to mute the rich colors and the gilded decoration, giving a sense of harmony to the whole.

The al-Amin Mosque has a monumental presence; the area around it remains to be fully developed, but the mosque has gained the status of a landmark in Beirut. The interior gives a sense of quiet amid the chaotic city being rebuilt around the mosque and Martyrs' Square. The mosque design was altered to accommodate the requirements made by the different groups invested in the neighborhood's reconstruction, such as Solidere. Thus the area of the mosque adjacent to the Garden of Forgiveness and the Church of St. George was opened up by the inclusion of an esplanade that provides passage between these two sites.<sup>64</sup> The mosque was conceived as a form of negotiation between the Sunni government of Rafic Hariri and the demands for reconstruction brought to bear by multiple powerful constituencies that are part of Beirut. The Saudi connection may not be overtly expressed in the architectural form, but it is made visible in the patronage of the building and its close association with the Hariri family.

## Diplomacy East and West

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been an important sponsor of mosque building throughout the Muslim world, from the 1960s until the present day. According to a website dedicated to King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz sponsored by the Saudi Arabian Market Information Resource, the late king believed strongly in propagating Salafi Islam globally.<sup>65</sup> He focused on promoting religious and social institutions; his efforts ranged from supporting mosques and madrasas worldwide to publishing and distributing copies of the Qur'an. New mosques were built and money was given to existing ones, in Muslim countries as diverse as Indonesia and Bosnia. In non-Muslim contexts, mosques have been built through Saudi funding in European cities like Rome as well as American ones like Culver City, California. In all such cases, the mosques are responsive to their individual contexts in terms of design and materiality; like the Islamic Cultural Center in Rome, however, they are "a neutral expression of pan-Islamism, in that [they] represent[s] an attempt to employ an architectural style that will be accessible to all Muslims, regardless of their geographical origins."<sup>66</sup> In Europe and the United States, where Muslims make up a diverse, if often prominent, minority, the kingdom has provided major funding for religious institutions, often called Islamic Cultural Centers rather than mosques, that serve multiple purposes, from education and outreach to devotion and proselytization. The ambiguous name may be one chosen by the community to avoid either signaling a singular function of the building or drawing attention to a religious community not entirely at home.

One of the best-known European mosques is the Mosque and Islamic Cultural Center of Rome (fig. 2.17). After an international competition initiated in 1972 by the ambassadors of all the Muslim countries represented in Rome, the construction was begun in 1984 and completed in 1995.<sup>67</sup> Until that time, there had not been a main congregational mosque in that city, despite increased immigration, particularly from North African countries. The competition resulted in a joint award to the Iraqi architect Sami Mousawi and the Italians Paolo Portoghesi and Vittorio Gigliotti. According to the brief submitted by the architectural team to the 1998 Aga Khan Award, the goal of the mosque and cultural center was "to combine in one place religious, recreational and cultural activities and it should provide a link between the historical pattern of the city of Rome and the expression of the Islamic way of life to all visitors."<sup>68</sup> The completed floor area was 29,915 square meters, and the building cost the Saudi government 59 billion Italian lire (approximately \$36.2 million at the time, although the



FIGURE 2.17. Interior, Mosque and Islamic Cultural Center, Rome, completed in 1988. Architect, Paolo Portoghesi. © Aga Khan Award for Architecture. Courtesy of the architect (photographer).

website dedicated to King Fahd cites the cost to the kingdom as \$50 million). The mosque is recognized as one of the most prominent examples of postmodern architecture, built by Portoghesi, one of the best-known advocates of architectural classicism. The structure is a combination of severe orthogonal lines and organic forms, the former in the case of the façade and the latter in the case of the interior columns, which are in the shape of trees whose undulating branches hold up the ceiling (plate 13). In a lecture he gave in 1991, Portoghesi declared, “There is no better symbol with which to express the diversity inherent in the unity of Islam. The roots, trunk, branches and leaves of the tree, like the various countries in which Islam prevails, are all different, and yet work together as a complete organism.”<sup>69</sup> The essentialism of this statement is clearly problematic, but it is also indicative of the power of Saudi universalism, which is reductive and thus, interestingly enough, adaptive to different contexts.

The patronage of mosques in Western contexts is different than that in Muslim countries, serving at once to cater to a diverse Muslim diaspora and also mark the presence of a minority religion. The need to be both inclusive and assimilative increases in the current climate of anti-Muslim

sentiment, especially in European cities. Toward that end, King Fahd also established chairs in Islamic studies at institutions such as Harvard University and the University of London, as well as funding research programs (e.g., the Institute of the History of Arab and Islamic Science in Frankfurt, Germany, and a similar program at Georgetown University, in Washington, DC).

King Fahd's patronage in the late 1970s set a benchmark for the ensuing leadership. His mosque-building agenda extended not only to Pakistan, but also to Africa and Southeast Asia. Mosques such as the Islamic Center in Tokyo and the King Abdul Aziz Mosque in Tunisia adhere to local design idioms, defining charity combined with diplomacy, with the goal of forging political and ideological alliances. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has often espoused a pan-Islamic agenda, an interesting deviation from the pan-Arab rhetoric that galvanized the Middle East in the mid-twentieth century, especially under the leadership of Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser.<sup>70</sup> The popularity of global Salafism is thus monumentalized in the transnational mosques that mark its presence in almost all quarters of the world.

### An Iconography of Belief

National mosques, such as Faisal Mosque in Islamabad and the Muhammad al-Amin Mosque in Beirut, share several common features even though they are separated by two decades and several thousand miles. The most important aspect of these two projects is their location. Both Pakistan and Lebanon represent important aspects of Saudi Arabian influence in terms of the kingdom's propagation of Salafi Sunni Islam. The global aspirations of the kingdom were already evinced in the 1960s with King Faisal's diplomatic visits to several Muslim countries, and his promises to support their nationalist agendas. Both Pakistan and Lebanon were strategic locations for the global reach of the kingdom. The 1970s were crucial decades for the Saudi government to assert its influence, through King Fahd's political agendas to curtail the influence of jihadists within the kingdom and that of revolutionaries inspired by the Iranian Revolution, such as those who seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca. Instead, the kingdom branded its own version of Sunni jihad, one that would be enacted in the 1980s on the borderlands of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and in the 1990s in Bosnia and Chechnya. Lebanon, implicated as it is in the Israel-Palestine conflict, was also an obvious choice for the expansion of Saudi influence and support. The al-Amin Mosque in Beirut thus monumen-

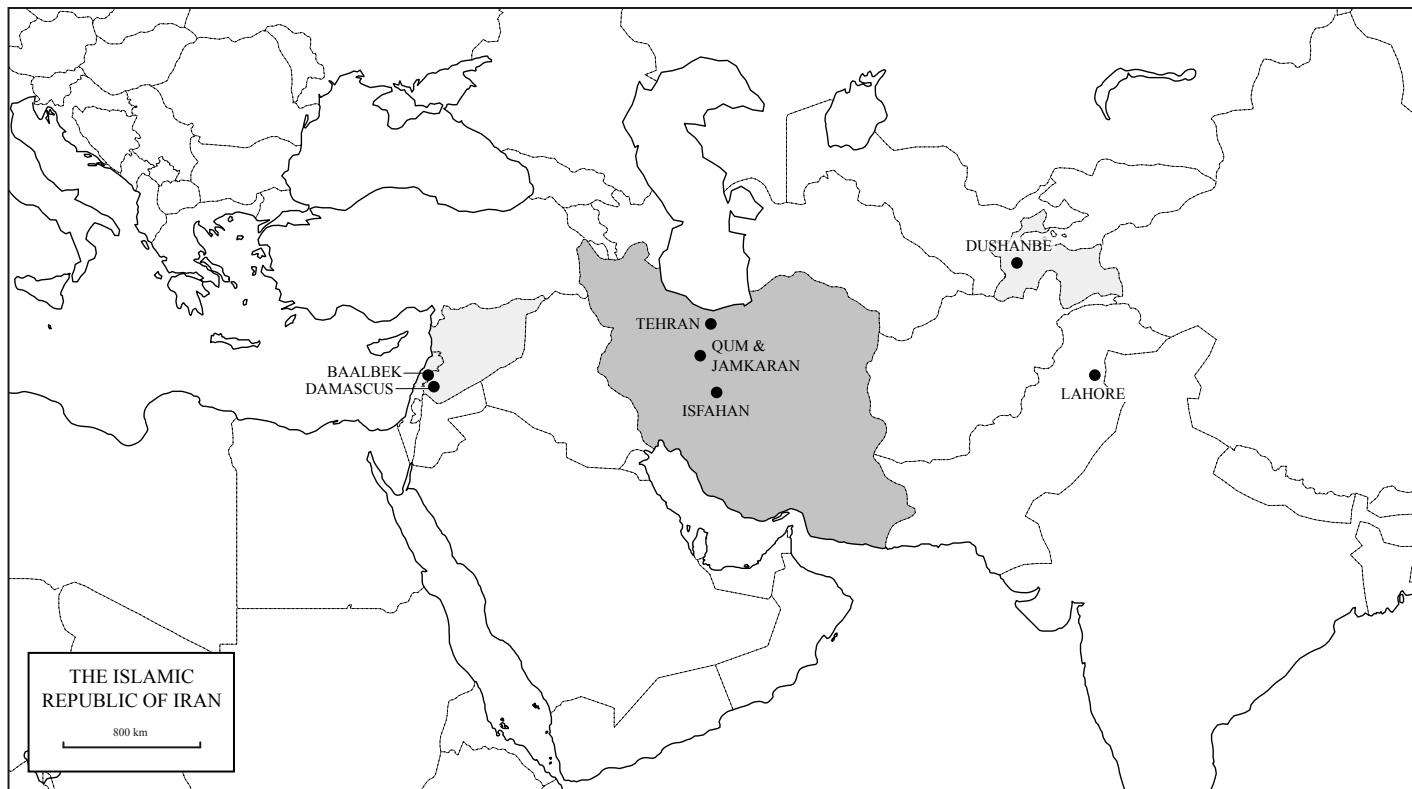
talized Islam's presence in the region and the presence of a unified Sunni Arab front against the Hizbullah in southern Beirut, who were supported by the Shi'i and Alawite governments of Iran and Syria, respectively.

The striking formal resemblance between the Faisal and al-Amin Mosques is their shared referencing of Ottoman architecture. While contemporaneous mosques in Jeddah and Riyadh refer to Cairene and indigenous Najdi models, those built outside the kingdom present very different visions of a unified Islamic caliphate. By harking back, in their very different ways, to the epitomes of Ottoman Turkish culture, the domed mosques of sixteenth-century Istanbul, the architects and patrons of the Faisal and al-Amin Mosques revise Islamic history in a complex manner. Both Pakistan and Lebanon were carved out arbitrarily by European colonial authorities in the twentieth century and had to look both within and outward to find their national identity as a way to unify their diverse populations (in both cases comprising non-Muslims as well as sects within Islam). The Saudi perspective gives another reading to the use of Ottoman architecture—at his ascension, King Fahd changed his title to the keeper of the holy mosques in Mecca and Medina, a clear reference to the title assumed by the Ottoman sultans after the conquest of the Hijaz in the sixteenth century. In choosing the classical style of the longest-ruling and most powerful Muslim empire, the kingdom also attempts to gain political and ideological legitimacy at home and abroad.

The historical slippage is fascinating. Equally fascinating is the manner in which postmodern attitudes toward history are actualized into the built form itself. Whereas the Faisal Mosque, a design originally presented for the Kocatepe Mosque in Ankara, is a modernist abstraction of the Ottoman style, the al-Amin Mosque in Beirut attempts a closer simulation, actually replicating the Sultan Ahmet Mosque's form. Both structures are technologically sophisticated, but whereas the Faisal Mosque celebrates its materials and modern engineering, the al-Amin Mosque masks them.

The grand mosques in the capital cities of Beirut and Islamabad are also indicators of populist trends, certainly in the case of Pakistan, where mosques funded by the kingdom or the Salafist groups it supports are ubiquitous. Their green domes, of varying sizes and amid different neighborhoods, dot the urban and rural landscapes. The inspiration is, with little doubt, the Prophet's Mosque (al-Masjid al-Nabawī) in Medina, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The green dome of the second holiest edifice in Islam is replicated in form, and the sermons given within reiterate the presence of Saudi patronage. Ironically, the Grand Mosque in Riyadh lacks a dome itself, more closely adhering to the Salafist fear of idolatry,

in which the building of memorial structures is viewed as a sign of heresy. Thus while the patronage of the kingdom creates a particular architectural idiom abroad, the same is not allowed at home. These two faces of the kingdom, like the many other covert and overt negotiations the rulers undertake to promote their imperial and national visions, are dependent on particular ideological and political contexts.



## Iran and Shi'i Pilgrimage Networks

### A Postrevolutionary Ideology

*Sounds echo from the mirrored ceilings, the polychrome tiles, the gold and silver grills. The chanted melodies reach high registers and suddenly lower into the hum of communal prayer. The women's clothing swishes against the carpeted floors, the air filled with the smells of incense and perfume. The space dazzles the senses—the eyes, in particular, are filled with light reflecting off the colorful surfaces, decorated in traditional Iranian mosaics and glasswork. The focus of the pilgrimage is the tomb of Ruqayya, Imam Husayn's infant daughter, who died soon after her father's martyrdom in the fields of Karbala. Women comprise the majority of visitors to the shrine. In one corner, Iraqi women sit in a circle and beat their chests loudly, while in another, a large group of Pakistani women sing remorseful marthiyah dirges. They are dressed in hijab, burqas, and chadors; they have come from Toronto, Quetta, and Shiraz. The multilingual gatherings are familiar to transnational Shi'i networks, which share a common devotion to the ahl al-bayt, or family of the Prophet Muhammad, the descendants of his daughter, Fatima, and his son-in-law, Ali.*



*The Persianate style of Sayyida Ruqayya's interior is similar to that of mosques and shrines in Iran (plate 14). It provides a striking contrast to the old city of Damascus, with its ancient monuments to Roman, Christian, and Umayyad history. Although the building's exterior blends into the fabric of the old bazaar, its entrance is like a portal into another time and place. This stylistic dislocation unites Shi'i mosques and shrines across the world, spreading along pilgrimage routes, carrying a familiar architectural language.*

*In Damascus the shrines and mosques devoted to the ahl al-bayt are ubiquitous, much like the Iraqi refugees threatening to overrun the city. When I visited the city in December 2010, the tensions between Sunni and Shi'i Muslims were palpable. The two communities coexisted, but there was little trust between them. The clearest division was in how boundaries were established and how religious territories were seldom transgressed. Thus when my Sunni colleagues joined me to visit the Bab al-Saghir cemetery (where a number of the martyrs of Karbala are buried), they stood back in apprehension, as though watching something at once exotic and fear-inducing. Sectarian distrust runs deep in many Muslim communities, but in Damascus the tension was palpable. It would come to fruition in early 2011 with the beginning of the Syrian Civil War.*

## The History of Shi'ism and the Centrality of Shrines

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 sent ripples across the Middle East, threatening to destabilize regimes from Saudi Arabia to Pakistan. Indeed, it was the primary reasons behind the Mosques Project initiated by King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, whose patronage at the time was selectively chosen to counter the influence of Iran. Shi'ism has always had a transnational mobility, passing through shrine networks and being disseminated through pilgrimage manuals. The ideology behind the Iranian Revolution was formulated in the seminaries and sanctuaries in Iraq and Iran, reconnecting the ancient histories of the two nations. More than thirty years later, the theocratic state has adjusted to the realities of government; the revolution has been domesticated. At home, Iran builds massive prayer spaces, musallā, whereas abroad it asserts its exclusivism through an architectural style that is "Persian," a recognizable *lingua persica*.

Architectural style and typology serve to unite a global Shi'i diaspora, of which Iran has positioned itself as the ideological home. It is viewed by many as the center of Shi'i political and religious belief, exporting its vision for theocratic rule across the Muslim world. Although present-day

Iraq, Syria, and Saudi Arabia are the historical *loci originali* of Shi'ism, Persianate cultural and, by extension, architectural forms have come to define contemporary Shi'i identity.

Shi'ism is represented by a schism in early Islamic history.<sup>1</sup> Supporters of Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, wanted their candidate to succeed the Prophet and lead the Muslim community, but instead one of his companions, Abu Bakr, was selected.<sup>2</sup> 'Ali would be the fourth caliph and the first Shi'i imam, or leader. Within Shi'ism there are different interpretations of succession and authority. According to Twelver Shi'i belief (which I will refer to as Shi'i, as it represents the majority of Shi'i Muslims), eleven of Imam 'Ali's sons and heirs would succeed him, with Muhammad Mahdi (The Guide) going into occultation in 941. For some medieval Shi'i theologians the absent imam was believed to be the only rightful leader of Friday prayer, thus they rejected the need for communal devotions or the construction of large congregational mosques. Nonetheless, Shi'i rulers, such as the Safavids, built monumental Friday mosques in their capitals, with the justifications provided by the clerical elite.

The main focuses of Shi'i devotion are the memorials of the imams, as well as those of their sons and daughters (*imāmzādeh*). The regions of Iran, Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria are the traditional sites of Shi'i mythopoetic memory, with numerous tombs of the ahl al-bayt and their descendants scattered from Najaf to Damascus, with the exception of the Jannat al-Baqi' cemetery, which is in Medina, Saudi Arabia. Like mosques, shrines are sacred precincts; a devotee must enter them in a state of spiritual and physical purity. Also, as with mosques, people pray and make vows and gift generous endowments for their upkeep.<sup>3</sup> Shrines of the Shi'i Imams are popular pilgrimage sites and attract visitors from all over the world.

The culture of Shi'ism is centered on the charismatic authority of the imams, who serve as intercessors as well as role models. Their birth and death anniversaries form a large part of the ritual calendar, commemorated by visitation, prayer, public gatherings, charitable acts, and other forms of pious devotion. The shrines were the center of Shi'i belief in the medieval period, serving to monumentalize the beliefs of a community often on the margins of imperial authority. At this time, some Shi'i thinkers denied the legitimacy of the Friday prayer sermon in the absence of the rightfully chosen imam, Mahdi. This theological position was altered in the sixteenth century with the advent of the Safavids in Iran. Shi'ism was thus merged with imperial power, and exceptions were provided by clerics from the traditional centers in Iraq and Jabal 'Āmil for the construction of Friday mosques.<sup>4</sup>

Shrines served as the primary centers of socioreligious enactment; however, they did not replace the traditional role of the mosque. Safavid rulers began to codify shrine architecture in the form of courtyard-based, four-*iwān* structures with the *ḥaram* (sanctuary) behind the main portal.<sup>5</sup> Additional spaces include halls for prayer and recitation as well as burial spaces for luminaries. The basic plan of the shrines was also reflected in the grand mosques built by Shah 'Abbas I, especially in the imperial capital, Isfahan. Thus while shrines and mosques are functionally very distinct spaces, the architectural boundaries are not as clear; for example, mosques can house tombs, just as shrines often have spaces dedicated to communal prayer. In the Iranian case, the boundaries are even more mutable, given the centrality of commemoration in Shi'i rituals and theology.

The patronage of Shi'i shrines occurs in ways that also transcend political and sectarian boundaries.<sup>6</sup> In the early modern period, Shah Isma'il, the founder of the Safavid dynasty, financed the reconstruction of the shrine of Imam 'Ali in Najaf, and subsequent Safavid rulers often sent money to the holy shrines to have them refurbished. Even under Ottoman rule Shi'i pilgrims were seldom prevented from visiting or being buried in the nearby cemeteries. Indeed, the pilgrimage industry was an important source of trade and commerce, along with the exchange of ideas and customs. Indian merchants were among the biggest patrons of the shrines, donating gilded *zarīḥs* and regularly sending monetary support.

Pilgrimage to cities such as Ardabil, Mashhad, and Qum was encouraged by Safavid rulers through the building of roads and bridges, caravanserais and inns.<sup>7</sup> The shrines of their Shi'i and Sufi ancestors were venerated and given lavish attention. However, the cult of Sufi saints diminished over time, their commemoratives replaced by the proliferation of the shrines of *imāmzādeh*. The Ottomans had possession over the cities of Iraq (for example, in Baghdad, Najaf, Karbala, and Kufa) where the main Shi'i shrines are located. The shrine of the eighth imam, Ali Rida (Reza), in Mashhad, in the northeast province of Khorasan, is the only one in Iran. The tomb of his sister, Fatima Ma'suma, is located in Qum, about 150 kilometers southwest of Tehran. Both shrines are important pilgrimage sites, but with the presence of several madrasas, Qum has also gained fame as a key center for Shi'i theology.<sup>8</sup>

The shrine commemorates Fatima Ma'suma (The Innocent) and is a popular destination on the transnational pilgrimage network. In the sixteenth century the shrine was expanded and embellished on orders of the Safavid royal family, particularly the women; by the start of the seventeenth century, it became a popular burial ground for the Safavid shahs



FIGURE 3.1. Shrine of Fatima Ma'suma, Qum. Photograph by the author.

themselves. The main shrine precinct consists of the haram tomb chamber, which contains a grilled enclosure with the cenotaph of the *imām-zādā*. Surrounding the haram, with walls covered in mosaic tiles and a mirrored dome ceiling, are ancillary halls and rooms for prayer and recitation. Most prominent among the spaces in the shrine are the tombs of later Safavid shahs that were constructed in the seventeenth centuries.<sup>9</sup> The exterior spaces of the shrine comprise spacious courtyards that are entered through tall iwans. The gilded dome rises over all the buildings, a common feature of the great Shi'i shrines in Iraq and Iran. Qajar rulers in the nineteenth century refurbished them in a recognizably Iranian style, one that puts great emphasis on ornately tiled, tall, porticos (*tālār*), and opulent mirrored ceilings. The mirror-work on the interiors was an innovation of the Qajar period (1785–1925), in which the traditional muqarnas ceiling, previously made in stucco or glazed tile, was now reveted in mirrored fragments (fig. 3.1). The effect is one of infinite space and airiness, which can sometimes also be experienced as visual disorientation.

As an important center of commerce as well as theology, the city of

Qum was often the site of political conflict, most visibly during the Pahlavi regime (1925–79). For example, during a period marked by the founder Reza Shah's social reforms—which included the unveiling of women—the shrine of Fatima Ma'suma was shaken by protests against a visit in 1928 by the queen and her companions, who were deemed inappropriately covered. According to Houchang Chehabi, “Reza Shah drove to Qom [*sic*] from Tehran, entered the shrine with his boots on, and personally manhandled a number of seminarians and clerics, and had the cleric who had criticized the queen whipped.”<sup>10</sup> Thus the shrine was desecrated and the imperial, Pahlavi order asserted. Such conflict was not restricted to Qum, but also played out in other religious institutions, such as mosques. One notable event took place in 1935: the forcible removal of women's veils led to a bloody confrontation between the government and clerics in the Mosque of Gawhar Shad in the holy city of Mashhad.<sup>11</sup>

In the latter part of the twentieth century, the shrine of Fatima Ma'suma was closely associated with Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (d. 1989), the ideologue of the Iranian Revolution. The seminary and mosque attached to the shrine served as a rallying ground for intellectuals from the right and left of the ideological spectrum condemning the Pahlavi regime. In 1963, Ayatollah Khomeini gave a series of sermons critical of the shah at the Fayziyya Madrasa in Qum, which ultimately led to Khomeini's arrest and exile. A decade later, the madrasa was once again the site of student protests, this time in anticipation of his return.<sup>12</sup> The shrine of Fatima Ma'suma thus became an important symbol of a revolution that would transform Iran into an Islamic Republic, led not by kings but by clerics.

In posters and billboards propagating the revolutionary message, the city of Qum and its shrine are used to represent the aspirations of the Iranian people.<sup>13</sup> One poster shows the silhouette of a man against a mostly green background, a silhouette of a flying dove overhead (fig. 3.2).<sup>14</sup> In the foreground the man's large cupped hands are raised in a gesture of prayer. From his bloodied wrist rises a tall red tulip, the bulb of which conceals his face, behind which flutters a green banner. Inscribed in the flower is “Allah,” written in green, the emblem of the Islamic Republic.<sup>15</sup> The shrine of Fatima Ma'suma, with its distinct entrance portico-iwan and golden dome, is inscribed on the figure's right side. On his left are the faces of thousands of protesters carrying banners, one of which reads, “Khomeini is the guide.” The images of protesting masses and the shrine of Fatima Ma'suma recall the popular uprisings in Qum that led up to the revolution. The portrait of Ayatollah Khomeini is situated where the soldier/martyr's heart would be, citing the ayatollah as the inspiration for this movement.

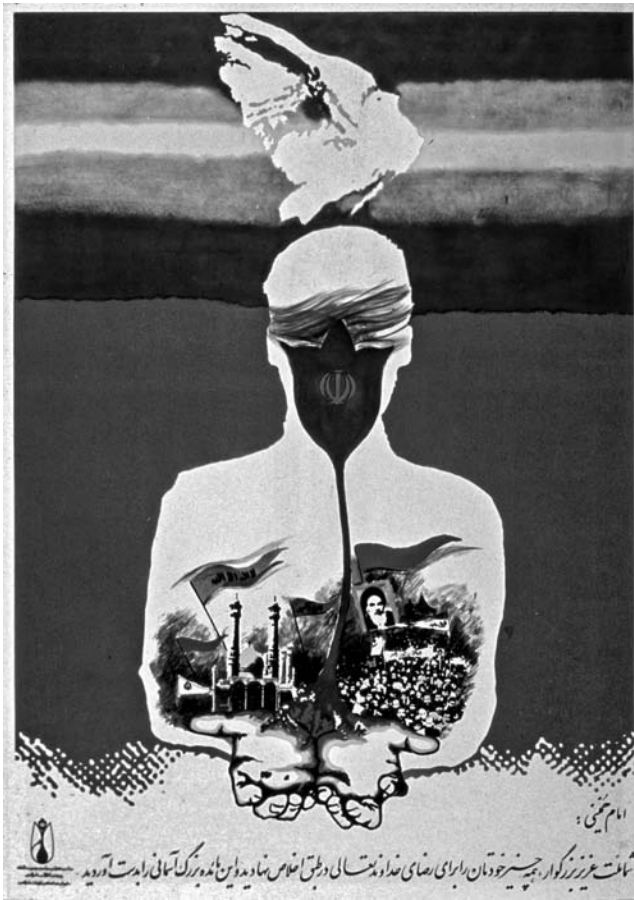


FIGURE 3.2.  
Poster from *The Graphic Art of the Islamic Republic* (*Hunar-i girāfik dar inqilāb-i islāmī*) (Tehran, 1985).

It is thus of little surprise that the tomb of Khomeini, under construction since 1989, is in the form of a Shi'i shrine, its golden dome echoing those in Qum and Karbala.<sup>16</sup>

### Alternate Sites, Other Religiosity

During the years leading up to the Islamic Revolution of 1979, mosques and shrines were not the only sites of religious and political mobilization. One of the most important institutions was the Husayniyeh Ershad, a popular gathering place in Tehran. *Husayniyeh* were traditionally congregational sites for the commemoration of Imam Husayn and his martyrdom at Karbala. Events would be scheduled during Muharram, but also on significant birth and death anniversaries of the imams. Such institu-

tions, often patronized and supported locally, are quite common in Iranian cities and villages and in several parts of South Asia and the Gulf that have large Shi'i communities. The Husayniyeh Ershad was established in Tehran in the 1960s as a response to what was seen as the degradation of cultural and religious identity in Iran. It was founded through the patronage of prominent lawyers and financiers, in addition to Ayatollah Morteza Motahhari, one of the leading ideologues of the Iranian Revolution.<sup>17</sup> The sociologist and intellectual Ali Shariati was appointed the director of the institution in 1967 and gave many influential lectures well into the following decade. According to Shariati, the purpose of the Husayniyeh Ershad was to guide Muslim intellectuals toward social justice, using Imam Husayn as a model of righteous resistance against imperial power.<sup>18</sup>

Shariati's reform movement suggested a return to what he perceived as the spirit of protest that underpinned Shi'ism. He referred to Imam Husayn and his mother, Fatima (the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad), as the ideals of humanity and perfect role models for the modern world. Influenced equally by Frantz Fanon and Islamic philosophy, Shariati's blend of modernism and revivalism appealed to a wide swath of Iranians alienated by the Pahlavi regime.<sup>19</sup> After his unexplained death in London in 1977, Shariati was laid to rest in the Sayyida Zaynab shrine in Damascus.<sup>20</sup>

A blend of modernity and traditionalism defines much of the architectural production of the era preceding the Iranian Revolution. The Husayniyeh Ershad is an excellent example of how historical reference proved to be a foundational aspect of this movement (plate 15). The building was constructed two years after the establishment of the Husayniyeh Ershad Research and Educational Institute, in 1967, in one of the fastest-growing and fashionable districts in northern Tehran. The location was purposely removed from the clerical influence in southern Tehran to attract more diverse supporters for its reformist agenda.<sup>21</sup> Some scholars have interpreted the use of traditional decoration and building type as a way for reformists to avoid censure by the Pahlavi regime.<sup>22</sup> Others have noted that the builders were mandated to use only local, Iranian materials, although no expense was spared so that they would be of the highest quality. In addition to the lecture hall, library, and mosque, the Husayniyeh boasted that it would be the first such site in Iran with closed-circuit television, "to ensure that speakers could be seen from all parts of the complex and that women would be encouraged to attend the events."<sup>23</sup>

The plan of the Husayniyeh Ershad is a truncated square, above which a tall drum rises, supporting an equally lofty dome.<sup>24</sup> The façade is clad in light-colored bricks, with particular emphasis laid on the entrance portal,

drum and dome, which are clad in elaborate polychrome tiles. In addition to Qur'anic verses and hadith, Persian poems and aphorisms adorn the façade. The dome is embellished with monumental calligraphy; at the top is the prayer "God is Great" (*Allāh akbar*), below which is the profession of faith, "There is no God but Allah" (*Lā ilāha ilā Allāh*). The two phrases ring the circumference of the dome and are written in a geometric *kufic* style. Below them are Arabic and Persian aphorisms, written in a large and clear script. These texts refer to the primary function of the Husayniyeh Ershad, namely the commemoration of the ahl al-bayt and the education of those who enter. Whereas the prayers are a common feature of Iranian religious architecture, the aphorisms are not; they serve here as billboards and propagandist signage. The texts also convey a sense of the charismatic authority at the core of Shi'ism. This authority would permeate several institutions, from the University of Tehran to the Mosque of Jamkaran.

### Tehran, the Modern Capital

Even though shrines such as those of Imam Reza and Fatima Ma'suma remain at the core of Shi'i devotion in Iran, their significance is not at the cost of congregational mosques. Thus whereas shrines are viewed as the repository of the deep history of Shi'ism, mosques are part of the landscape of a normative Muslim ritual practice. Mosques are incorporated into the national imaginary in ways that the shrines cannot be, as they reach audiences both within and outside Iran. Mosques were important sites for the mobilization of social movements, acting as the public square where grievances could be aired and alliances forged, particularly in the capital.

Tehran was chosen in 1785 as the capital of Iran by its new ruler, Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar (d. 1797). There was little development until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when new types of buildings and functions were introduced. Schools and universities were modeled after European educational institutions, supplanting more traditional forms of knowledge, such as theological colleges, or madrasas. At this time Tehran evolved into a vibrant metropolis, with power in the hands of both the commercial and the clerical elite. The complex relationships between these two sectors of society, referred to as the "mosque and the bazaar," is one that has continued until the present day.<sup>25</sup>

The Masjid-i Shah (now known as the Masjid-i Imam) was built in 1808, during the reign of the subsequent ruler, Fath 'Ali Shah Qajar (d. 1834).<sup>26</sup> Embedded in the Tehran bazaar, the building is a prime example of the close relationship between mosques and commercial urban spaces. In



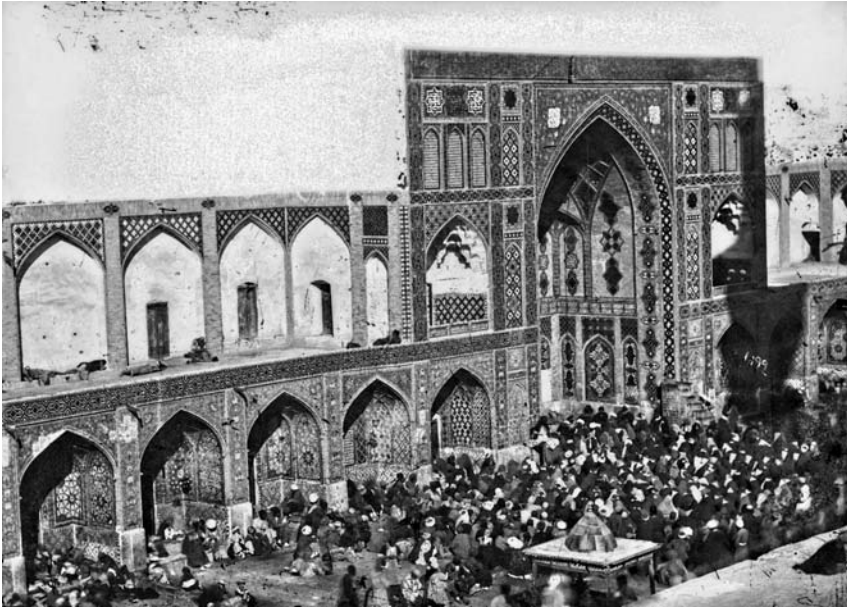


FIGURE 3.3. Masjid-i Sipahsālār, Tehran. Antoin Sevruguin Photographs, Myron Bement Smith Collection, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Gift of Katherine Dennis Smith, 1973–85.

this case, the mosque is entered through a plaza that once housed iron-mongery and other shops. Minarets were not included in the original plan of early Qajar buildings, and those of the Masjid-i Shah were added several years later, in 1890, on orders of Nāsir al-Din Shah.<sup>27</sup> The prototype of a courtyard-centered mosque continued, “with a deep vaulted recess with a stalactite muqarnas set within a rectangular frame of varying proportions,” a typology that had been common since the medieval periods.<sup>28</sup>

The Masjid-i Sipahsālār, by contrast, was a more majestic building; it was commissioned in 1866 by Mirza Muhammad Khan (Sipahsālār), the minister of war and chief minister under Nasir al-Din Shah.<sup>29</sup> In addition to the main prayer spaces, there was a madrasa, a hospital, and a library. The unusual construction of eight minarets (four attached to the south or qibla iwan) points to the aspirations of the minister; the patronage of religious architecture was a fundamental form of marking social status as well as political prestige. The two-storied arcade meant that the courtyard was a vibrant space, divided into residential and communal functions (fig. 3.3). The clock tower iterates the importance of keeping time, for prayer as well as for commercial activities. The forecourt and courtyard were designated

for commercial transactions between merchants and consumers, the latter including women as well as men. Historical photographs from the early years of the twentieth century show diverse activities taking place, from quiet meditation and prayer to large gatherings of vendors and buyers.

The mosque remained the center of public life in Iran in the nineteenth century, despite the decrease in its construction.<sup>30</sup> During the early years of the Pahlavi regime, new institutions such as banks and universities took precedence in terms of imperial patronage, nonetheless, “because there were few civil intermediary institutions between the state and the people, the public began turning to the mosques as the only safe places to express any sort of dissidence.”<sup>31</sup> As Tehran’s population grew, the need for neighborhood mosques increased. Each mosque was associated with a certain cadre of society. For example, “the Masjid-i Shah was associated with the silversmiths, jewelers, and goldsmiths; Masjid-i Mirza Musa with clothes merchants; Masjid-i Hajj Azizollah with the spice, sugar, and tea guild, as well as the haberdashers guild.”<sup>32</sup> These local mosques served as spaces for the daily practice of religion, as places of socialization, and as institutions mediating between the state and its urban populace. Reza Pahlavi recognized the significance of maintaining religious establishments in the face of rapid modernization.<sup>33</sup> Participating in Muharram ceremonies from early on in his years as a commander, the shah would take part in rituals at the main mosques of Tehran.<sup>34</sup> Theological institutions, including shrines, husayniyeh, and madrasas, also played an important role in social movements at this time, serving the commercial and religious sectors as well as the public at large.<sup>35</sup>

## Mosques and the Revolution

Shrines and husayniyeh were important sites for the mobilization of popular sentiment during the Iranian Revolution. They were often privately endowed and thus distanced from state control. Their informal structure and openness allowed for more programmatic flexibility, such that they were available for educational purposes and sermons by clerics and also open to the general public. In the 1960s and 1970s, another important aspect of the shrines and husayniyeh was that they were accessible to women, who proved to be active agents in the ensuing revolution.

Mosques were the domain of the clerical elite, who formed key alliances with other reform groups against the Pahlavi regime, which was seen as promoting rapid westernization at the cost of Islamic values. As Yitzhak Nakash writes, “The impulse to redress historic wrong is important in

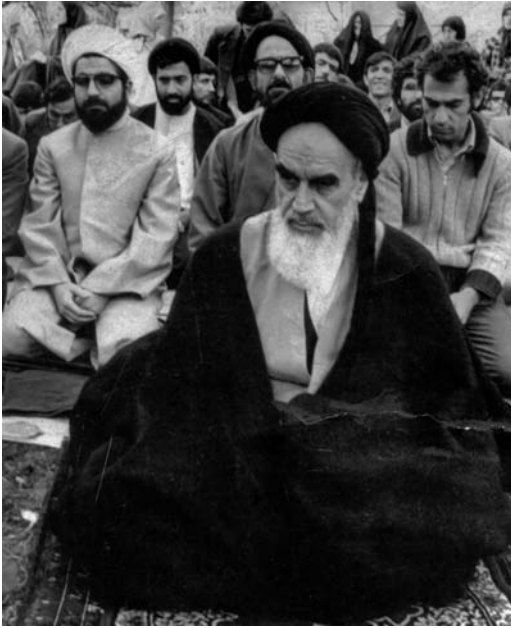


FIGURE 3.4. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, leading prayer in Paris, 1978. Mojtaba Salimi / Creative Commons.

distinguishing Shi'ism from Sunnism. But more critical in explaining why Shi'is could lead a reform today is the special relationship between clerics and followers in Shi'i Islam. . . . For well over a century, Shi'i clerics have led many of the movements advocating constitutionalism, parliamentary rule, and just governance in the Middle East."<sup>36</sup> Iranian clerics have set the standard for reform movements since the nineteenth century, gaining support and sometimes opposition from the seminaries in Iraq. Thus it was not surprising that mosques, alongside shrines and seminaries, were key institutions in the political transformation that took place in 1979.

During the early years of the Iranian Revolution, several mosques were favored for political demonstration, where major clerics controlled the Friday sermons, despite severe persecution by the Pahlavi regime. In 1978, Ayatollah Khomeini called for the congregational mosques to refuse the celebration of Eid prayers, and instead to hold massive gatherings in public spaces.<sup>37</sup> Propaganda images from the period after Khomeini's return to Iran and the fall of the Pahlavi regime show large crowds in the streets and courtyards of mosques and shrines. They also show Ayatollah Khomeini leading prayers or addressing large crowds during Friday sermons (fig. 3.4).

Religious institutions were not the only focus of reformist enthusiasm. Much of the revolutionary rhetoric since the time of Ali Shariati's lectures at the Husayniyeh Ershad had been directed toward attracting Ira-

nian youth. The University of Tehran, in particular, had a history of student activism and was viewed as one of the most important platforms for social change. Established in 1934 under the aegis of Reza Shah, the university became coeducational by 1937, upholding its progressive ideals for universal education. At the time of the revolution, students were mobilized to act as extensions of the new theocratic state.<sup>38</sup> The entrance to the University of Tehran became a symbol of the popular uprising when the shah's army opened fire on students at its gates and then, after the revolution, when pro-Khomeini factions attacked those deemed to be opposed to their vision for a theocratic state.<sup>39</sup> In 1980, the government ordered that all university campuses be purged of opposition forces to instill in the students a new, Islamic political consciousness. The students' reeducation would entail the closing of all universities for three years, during which time the faculty and curriculum were to be transformed to cohere with the cultural revolution under way.

The University of Tehran is located in the heart of the city and plays a central role in Iranian public life. After the revolution, the campus and surrounding avenues became rallying grounds where political leaders gave public lectures and prominent clerics delivered the Friday sermon. The soccer field / stadium just within the gates of the university was repurposed as a prayer hall because it could accommodate large crowds. Indeed, the first Friday prayer after the revolution took place in the stadium on July 27, 1979, and was led by the prominent cleric Ayatollah Taleqani. In appointing a new leader for the weekly congregation, Ayatollah Khomeini wrote, "Friday Prayer, an exhibition of socio-political power of Islam, must be held gloriously and filled with more content. Our nation should not regard Friday Prayer as an ordinary prayer. With its associated glory, Friday Prayer is today a strong backing for our nascent movement and a powerful contributor to the progress of our Islamic Revolution."<sup>40</sup> The "scientific cradle of the country" thus became the ideological one as well, represented by the mass gatherings for the Friday sermons, especially during the Iran-Iraq War (1980–88). The sermons at the Friday prayers addressed both domestic and external issues of relevance to the Islamic Republic.<sup>41</sup>

The Friday prayer congregation was a weekly ritual, where Iranians from diverse backgrounds could gather in support of the revolution. The sanctions imposed on Iran by Western nations augmented Iranians' disenfranchisement and created a common opponent to struggle against. "There are typically three sermons on Fridays, the first and second are traditionally about historical or mundane matters, how to be a good parent, the need for hygiene, so forth. Politics is normally reserved for the third

*khotbe* [sermon].”<sup>42</sup> The third sermon is also the most popular, drawing diverse worshippers in the largest crowds.

The institution of prayer is, for obvious reasons, highly codified and politicized in a theocratic state. Following the precedent set by Khomeini before his death, “[Ali Khamenei] controls the mosques and appoints all Friday-prayer leaders. Each week, the prayer headquarters in Tehran (which are controlled by Khamenei) dictate the contents of sermons throughout Iran. Seminaries have historically been independent of the government, but Khamenei extended his influence over them by increasing their funding from the state. In a break with tradition, he determines who can be a high-ranking jurist with the authority to interpret Islam’s foundational texts.”<sup>43</sup> The performance of prayer is not an isolated event; it must be considered in the broader spectrum of theological enactments, from writing of laws to debating foreign policy.<sup>44</sup> Thus the staging of the Friday prayer was an essential need and given great significance by the revolution’s ideologues.

The Iranian government has constructed new musallā mosques in several cities of Iran, from Qum (*musallā-yi namāz-i jum‘-yi Qum*) to Isfahan and smaller sites in between.<sup>45</sup> The need for large public prayer spaces coincides with the population boom after the Iran-Iraq War, along with an emphasis on massive displays of public religiosity. For the historian, this emphasis on mosque building is reminiscent of the early seventeenth century, when Iran was first converted to Shi‘ism by the Safavid shahs. In the first decades of the empire, mosque building was not emphasized, but with the advent of Shah ‘Abbas the first monumental congregational mosque was constructed in Isfahan.<sup>46</sup> Several reasons have been presented for the delay in establishing these iconic monuments, from a proclivity toward shrine worship to a reluctance to build Friday mosques in the absence of the twelfth Shi‘i Imam, as mentioned earlier. Shah ‘Abbas’s mosque-building agenda was a way of “reeducating” the Iranian populace, which until the advent of the Safavids had been primarily Sunni. It was also a response to the vociferous polemics hurled by their Ottoman rivals, who characterized the Safavids as heretical for not praying on Fridays. Thus a normative Islamic identity was established by the shah and his clerics, one that changed not only Iranian politics, but also Shi‘ism itself.<sup>47</sup> The Iranian Revolution almost four hundred years later was equally transformative, with an agenda to reorient the nation toward a particular Shi‘i worldview. The new musallās provide spaces for the staging of nationalist ceremonial and for disseminating the government’s agenda through the Friday sermons.<sup>48</sup>

## Ayatollah Khomeini Grand (Tehran) Musallā

The University of Tehran's stadium continues to be a vital symbol of Iran's popular uprising against imperial authority. But Ayatollah Khomeini and his advisers had never expected the soccer stadium to be a permanent prayer space. According to an official website of the government-sponsored Iran Documentation Center, "In response to the request of Friday Imams of Tehran, Imam Khomeini ordered construction of Tehran Mosalla [*sic*] saying, 'Considering legal and religious aspects of aforementioned lot, I agree with proposal of Ayatollahs Khamenei and Rafsanjani. . . . [The] simplicity of Mosalla must remind us of simplicity of worship places of Muslims in early Islam, and so glamor of mosques of American Islam must be avoided. [May] God approve the efforts of all sponsors of mosque construction.'" <sup>49</sup> Ironically, the Tehran Musallā is far from simple or modest, pointing to the tensions between the historical ideals of the Islamic Revolution and the global aspirations of its current leaders.

Enrollment data for the University of Tehran reveals that the number of students in higher education increased eightfold from the beginning of the revolution (1979) to the end of the Iran-Iraq War (1988). <sup>50</sup> That trend has not diminished since, which may explain the more practical reasons for shifting the Friday prayers from the university to the musallā, which can accommodate thousands of people. But there were also more important political and symbolic reasons for the relocation.

The Imam Khomeini Grand (Tehran) Musallā was planned, as mentioned earlier, during the lifetime of the revolutionary leader whose name it carries. <sup>51</sup> It stands in the vast Abbasabad neighborhood in northern Tehran, a relatively modern segment of the city. A huge parcel of land was dedicated to the musallā to accommodate an open prayer ground as well as more secular functions, such as exhibitions and trade fairs. The Tehran Municipality had commissioned the United Kingdom-based construction management firm CLA Urban "to provide structural and services design expertise. [CLA Urban] provided expertise advice in the structural movements of the towers, large scale air conditioning units and sound proofing from the underground trains." The renderings on their website and on the large billboard located outside the construction site show a sprawling complex demarcated by at least three vast avenues (fig. 3.5). <sup>52</sup> The rectangular site measures approximately 1.5 square kilometers, with two dedicated subway stops (Musallā and Shahid Beheshti). Although the complex includes a number of ancillary buildings, such as libraries and convention centers, the most significant structure is the mosque, the site's *raison*

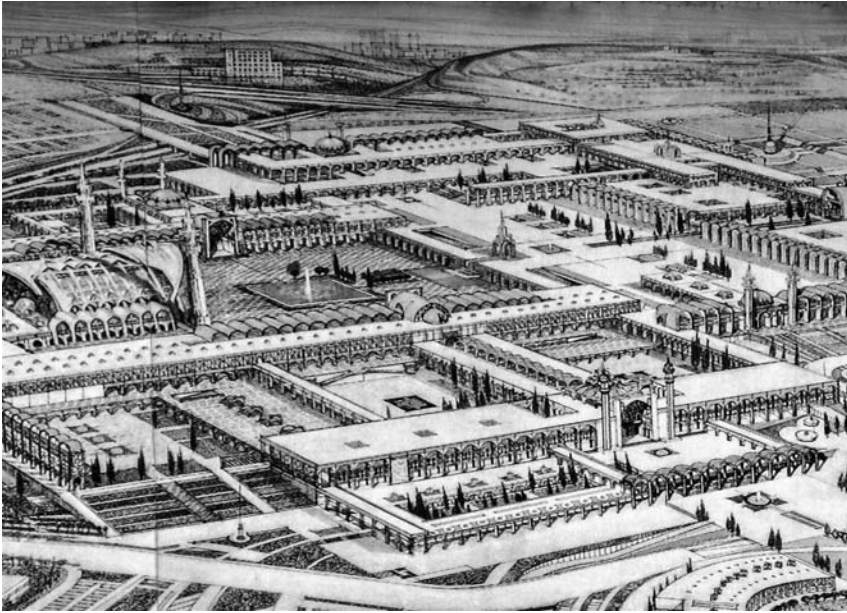


FIGURE 3.5. Billboard outside Ayatollah Khomeini Grand Musallā, Tehran.

d'être. According to the publicity disseminated by the initial designers, the entire complex is expected to take more than \$1 billion to complete, not including the neighboring transportation and commercial development that it necessitates.<sup>53</sup>

The Musallā complex takes the shape of a courtyard-centered mosque with several ancillary courtyards radiating off the primary prayer hall (fig. 3.6). The iwans, traditional architectural forms, are here hugely out of scale with their surroundings. The mosque's iwans appear to imitate the Taq-i Kisra, or Arch of Ctesiphon (fig. 3.7), which was built for the Sasanian king Khusraw Anushirvan (r. 531–79). The reference is an intriguing one, given that the Arch of Ctesiphon is now in Iraq and harks back to Iran's pre-Islamic past. The main prayer hall is in the form of a massive parabolic arch and, owing to its vastness, is also reminiscent of an airplane hangar (fig. 3.8). The mosque is thus a fascinating amalgam of historicism and gigantism aimed at both Iranians and a global audience.

The Musallā Mosque remains under construction, but several buildings within the complex have been completed and are used to house book fairs and other public events. In the past ten years, the grounds of the Imam Khomeini Musallā have been utilized for Eid al-Fitr prayer, but it was not until February 1, 2013, that Friday prayers were offered outside

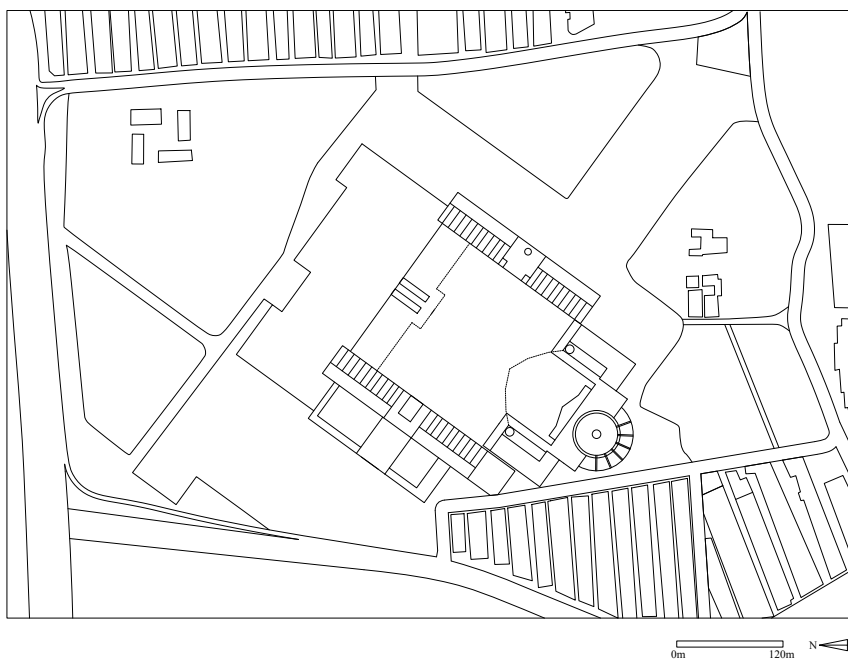


FIGURE 3.6. Schematic plan, Ayatollah Khomeini Grand Musallā, Tehran.  
Drawing by Mahdi Sabbagh.

the University of Tehran.<sup>54</sup> The government-sponsored Fars News Agency reported at the time that “there are several entrance gates to the prayer ground and worshippers took different routes, including metro stations and other streets, to arrive in Mosalla [*sic*] to hold their prayers after two decades of patience and waiting.” A visitor recalled, “When I entered Mosalla [*sic*] from the metro entrance, I saw transportation facilities for worshippers to take them to the prayer ground. Some were rushing to the prayer ground and some who were in groups were talking with each other and having fun on their way to the ground. There were others who took pictures in order to register their presence in the site for the first Friday prayer and keep the memory of the day alive.”<sup>55</sup> In the national imaginary, as described by official news sources, the musallā represents the culmination of Iran’s religious and political destiny. In reaching backward, the design thus seamlessly merges Iran’s ancient and Islamic history with its revolution and modernity.

The interior of the Musallā Mosque is a large open space of approximately ten thousand square meters (fig. 3.9). The vast expanse is uninterrupted, with columns and piers relegated to the periphery of the space.



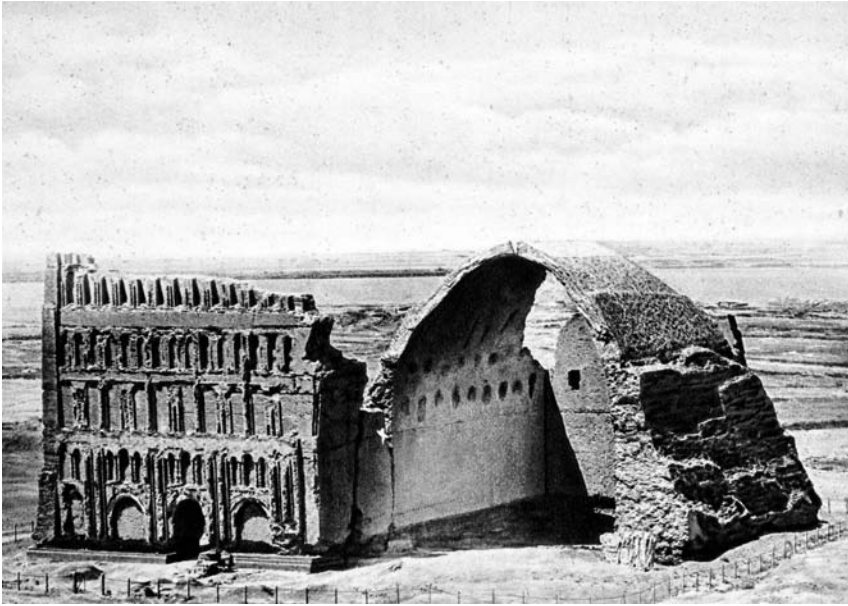


FIGURE 3.7. Arch of Ctesiphon, Iraq. Britannica. Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.



FIGURE 3.8. Ayatollah Khomeini Grand Musallā, Tehran, ca. 2013. Photograph by the author.

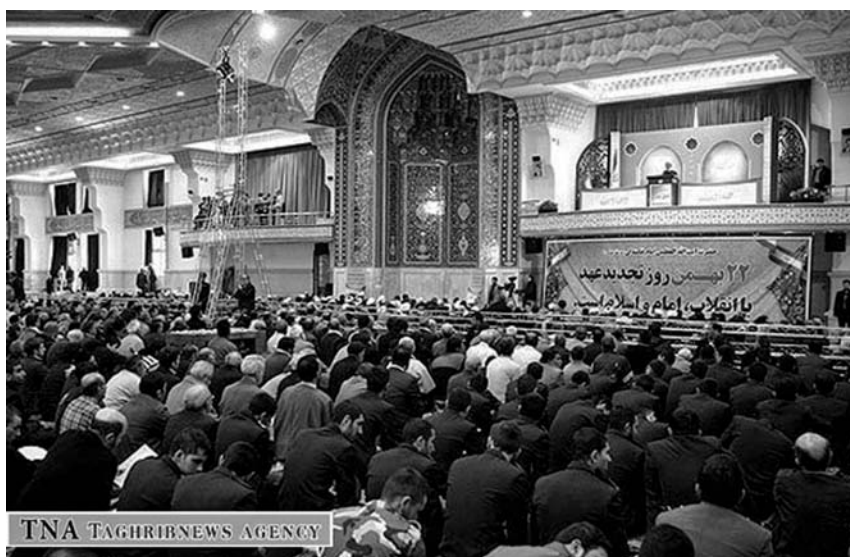


FIGURE 3.9. Interior, Ayatollah Khomeini Grand Musallā, Tehran. Taghrib News Agency.

The ceiling is a prefabricated structure punctuated in places to create intricate floral and stellate patterns that bring ocular, vertical light into an otherwise horizontal space. Domed spaces also break the horizontality of the space, creating a complicated tesseration on the surfaces of the ceiling. White muqarnas modulation is interspersed with blue mosaic patterns, both referencing the historical precedents of Iranian architecture. Thus while it is unlikely that the decorative elements are made from the traditional plaster and tile, they give an *impression* of a solid materiality.

Dark blue calligraphic bands are inscribed with white Qur'anic verses and inserted in the cornices, piers, and balconies of the prayer hall. But the focus of the space is the monumental mihrab. In its design and articulation the mihrab is composed of intricately assembled tile mosaics, reminiscent of Timurid and Safavid masterpieces. Indeed, the craftsmanship of traditional forms is clearly not at the cost of the technological virtuosity that has gone into creating the massive space. For the Iranian government, historical architecture serves as an important “brand” and cultural signifier.

The minbar, or pulpit, consists of a large balcony built on the side of the mihrab. Balconies on the second floor are reserved for women to participate in the Friday congregation, an architectural feature that often distinguishes the Iranian mosque from its contemporaries in other Muslim countries. Although women are still not allowed to pray alongside men, in the Musallā Mosque they are not relegated to closed rooms behind walls.

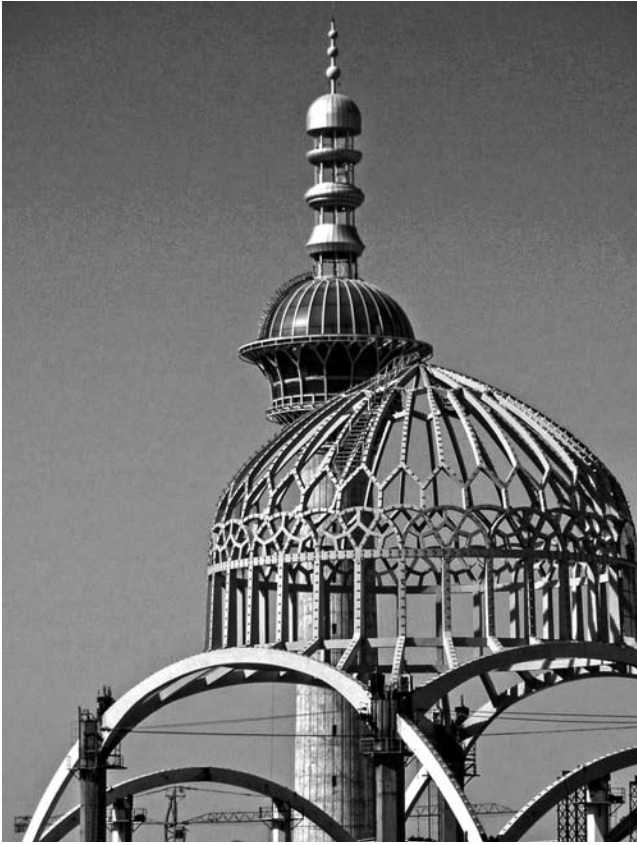


FIGURE 3.10.  
Isfahan Musallā,  
Takht-i Fulad.  
Panoramio—  
IPAAT.

Rather, while screened from the majority of men present, women have relatively more access to the rituals of prayer enacted in the space. The visibility of women worshippers has an important ideological foundation.

A number of grand-scale musallās have been built in Iran in the past few decades, among which is the monumental Isfahan Musallā in the Takht-i Fulad cemetery in southern Isfahan (fig. 3.10). The plan of the structure is a rectangle whose three sides consist of domical arcades. The fourth side is the main prayer hall, with its monumental dome. Tall minarets made of reinforced concrete rise from the corners. The pinnacles are in the shape of satellite towers, making them appear both traditional and modern.

Similar to the one in Tehran, the Isfahan Musallā is a large-scale and modern structure. Parametric design, using the most advanced technological innovations, is utilized in a way that brings historical precedent into focus.<sup>56</sup> Thus the domes are created from steel bands and then clad with tempered architectural glass, giving the impression of a delicate

screen of floral design.<sup>57</sup> The main dome has a traditional Iranian form, but it is not made of brick or covered with polychrome tiles; instead, it is left as a shell, its inner structure visible. The courtyard is covered by a series of covered circular lattices that create patterns of light and shade. Seen from above, they cast shadows that appear to multiply and complicate their geometric designs.

The issue of contemporary Iranian architecture, especially its emphasis on mosque building, would be incomplete without consideration of external, regional influences. As noted in previous chapters, the trend for constructing mosques is one shared by Iran's powerful neighbors in Turkey and Saudi Arabia, both of which have appropriated the institution as a way of creating ideological alliances as well as spreading their vision of Islam. Although the Iranian mosques are catering to local populations, the design of the Ayatollah Khomeini Grand Musallā is clearly in dialogue with nationalist mosques being constructed throughout the Islamic world. The Gulf region may also exert an oblique pressure, with its emphasis on monumentality and uniqueness. Indeed, in Iranian popular media, the minarets of the Musallā Mosque are noted for their height, and the prayer spaces are represented as being among the largest in the world. The language of superlatives is certainly not new: architectural one-upmanship defines the field of contemporary architecture in the Middle East, thus there is little reason to assume that the construction of mosques should not also be subject to it. Indeed, the scale and expense of the Musallā Mosque, when it is finally completed, will be justified as much through international recognition as through local validation.

### Spaces of Messianic Authority

Photos published in newspapers and magazines show throngs of people rushing to the Ayatollah Khomeini Grand Musallā on Eid or congregating there for the first Friday sermon. Images of masses of people united in a common religious and nationalist movement are common in the visual rhetoric of postrevolutionary Iran. Architecture serves as an important backdrop both for political demonstrations and rallies and for state rituals and religious ceremonial.<sup>58</sup> Just as the University of Tehran and its stadium / prayer hall have served as the stage for protest movements, the Musallā Mosque is now the site of nationalist staging—not of protest, but of unity.

The tomb of the revolution's ideologue perhaps more than any other site exemplifies the politico-religious underpinnings of the Islamic Republic.



FIGURE 3.11. Tomb of Ayatollah Khomeini, Tehran, ca. 2013.  
Architect, Muhammad Tehrani. Photograph by the author.

Designed by the architect Mohammad Tehrani after Ayatollah Khomeini's death in 1989, the tomb remains under construction — not unlike the idea of the Iranian state itself (fig. 3.11). The tomb is located midway along the north–south highway connecting Tehran to Qum, which is home to the shrine of Fatima Ma'suma. The structure comprises four minarets and a golden dome raised on a drum. The gilded dome and minarets imitate the shrines of Shi'i Imams from Mashhad to Damascus, yet the spatial and material articulation is radically different. The mausoleum is a long, single-story, shedlike structure with a tightly controlled entrance foyer. The roof and columns are built of prefabricated metal elements, allowing an open expanse similar to that in the Musallā Mosque. The interior is now carved up into small subsections owing to security and gender segregation, but the focus of the space is Khomeini's cenotaph, enclosed behind metal grills. Above the burial chamber is a brightly illuminated and mirrored muqarnas dome, with large stained-glass windows depicting red tulips painted on the drum. The abstract imagery of the tulips, a symbol

of martyrdom in modern Iran, is a departure from the usual Qur'anic calligraphy and geometric decoration that usually adorns such spaces.<sup>59</sup> The abstracted tulips are meant to represent the revolution that brought the Islamic Republic to fruition and the sacrifices made on the battlefields of the Iran-Iraq War.

Martyrology is a key foundation of Shi'ism, with its focus on the lives and deaths of the imams and their progeny. Shrines built to commemorate these figures are important sites of pilgrimage and remembrance and have traditionally served as gathering spaces for diverse communities of Shi'i Muslims.<sup>60</sup> Shi'i history is reenacted in the rituals that take place at the shrines, recited in the sermons emanating from the pulpits, and made manifest through the act of building itself. In Iran, the shrines of Imam Reza in Mashhad and of his sister, Fatima Ma'suma, in Qum are the epitome of religious architecture. Although the tombs of Imam 'Ali in Najaf and of Imam Husayn in Karbala are arguably of greater religious significance, the Iranian shrines have come to model a particular architectural type. The Safavid period, which brought about the conversion of Iran to Shi'ism, provides the stylistic clues for understanding the forms that Shi'i shrines have taken over the course of the twentieth century.

The Iranian shrines in Qum and Mashhad have served as inspiration for the codification of a distinct architectural language for transnational Shi'i shrines, not only here but also in Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon. With their golden domes, imposing portals, and tall minarets, they have become iconic structures of the cult of Shi'i holy figures. The style is not confined to form alone, but extends to a material aesthetic that lays emphasis on Iranian craftsmanship, particularly that associated with Isfahan. Floral and geometric motifs, rendered in polychrome mosaic and glazed tiles, unify the monuments. Owing to their popularity, the shrines are in a constant state of embellishment and renovation. Unfortunately, this popularity also marks them as easy targets for sectarian violence, as witnessed most recently in Syria and Iraq. Thus while the shrines' symbolic power unifies the diverse communities of Shi'i Islam, it also singles these monuments out for desecration and destruction.

Charismatic leadership has coupled with millennial and messianic impulses to bring about profound changes throughout the Islamic world in general, but particularly in Iran. The years 1978–79 corresponded with the Islamic date 1400, and for many the success of the Islamic Revolution has been attributed to this auspicious coincidence that mobilized Shi'i communities worldwide. The return of the twelfth imam, Muhammad Mahdi, is thus anticipated with great fervor. As David Cook writes,

Probably the most visible manifestation of the resurgence of Shiite messianism is the recent development of the cult of Jamkaran. Located a short distance from the holy city of Qom, the mosque of Jamkaran was identified in the tenth century as the site where the Mahdi was located, or could be communicated with. Until very recently (15 years ago) the mosque built there was quite unassuming, and the cult associated with it was local. However, presumably as a result of the revival of interest in al-Mahdi, the mosque has been vastly expanded, and now covers a territory of at least 20–25 acres.<sup>61</sup>

In the early 1980s Khomeini attempted to suppress the messianic fervor that accompanied the Islamic Revolution, yet by the mid-1990s the Jamkaran Mosque complex had been enlarged, with hotels and restaurants welcoming the increasing number of pilgrims. Since the 2005 inauguration of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (governed 2005–13), the government has generously funded further renovations and the paving of roads and massive parking lots to accommodate the visitors.<sup>62</sup>

The mosque-shrine has become so popular that President Ahmadinejad allocated \$17 million for the refurbishment and expansion of the Jamkaran Mosque. He also signed public “pacts” with the imam as a way of augmenting his government’s legitimacy to rule.<sup>63</sup> The Jamkaran Mosque has evolved into an important center for publishing and the distribution of pamphlets, commentaries, and diverse media propagating belief in the Mahdi. In addition, the mosque itself has become an important platform where conservative clerics give sermons on topics ranging from politics to eschatology.<sup>64</sup> Nearby, there are two wells where pilgrims pray and make vows, and drop coins and money, in hopes of wish fulfillment. Tuesdays are deemed particularly auspicious, based on the belief that the imam’s charisma is strongest on that day of the week. The messianic return of Imam Mahdi permeates the culture, and the ethos of anticipation has launched several grand projects, from the Imam Khomeini Grand Muṣallā to the Jamkaran Mosque.

The Jamkaran Mosque is one of the most interesting examples of a hybrid institution: its architecture reflects well its multiple functions (fig. 3.12). The complex is located outside Qum, in a newly expanding suburban area. A large parking lot is available for pilgrims and visitors, not unlike the area outside the tomb of Ayatollah Khomeini, which is in the other direction. Although the area around Jamkaran is sparse at present, this sector will likely soon merge with the main metropolitan area of Qum, as the land is bought up for commercial and hospitality use.

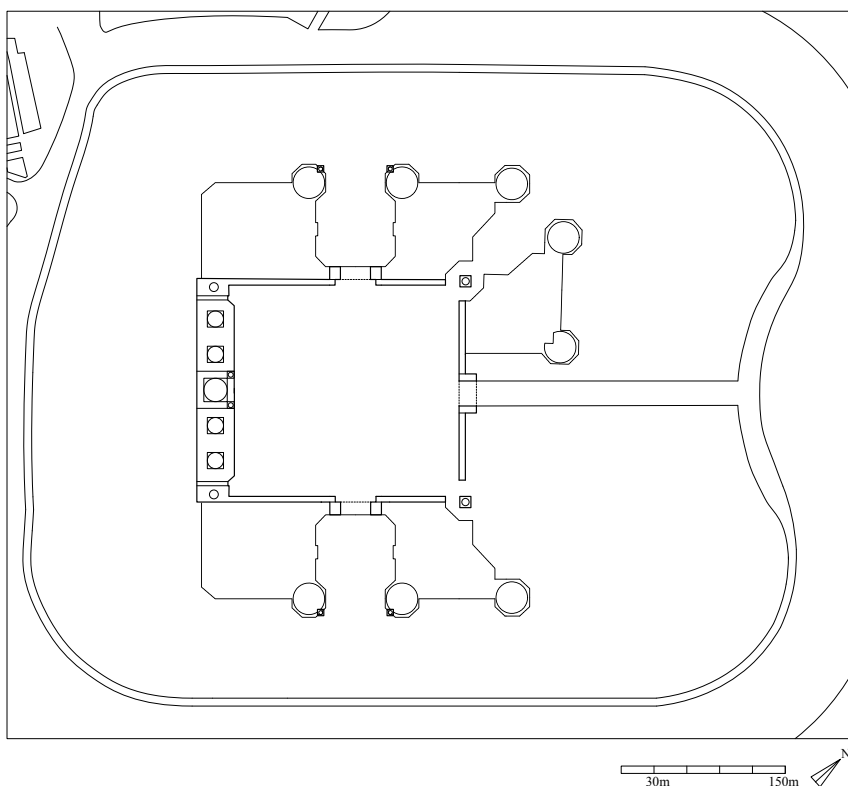


FIGURE 3.12. Schematic plan, Jamkaran Mosque and Shrine, Jamkaran.  
Drawing by Mahdi Sabbagh.

The main entrance is reminiscent of the gateway into University of Tehran's stadium mosque, with its flattened, modernist archway. Two large, free-standing minarets are located at the corners of the entrance threshold. The courtyard is without precedent in its vast openness; it has three sides consisting of low arcaded walkways, and there are two secondary entrances perpendicular to the main one. Two smaller minarets stand at these entrances. The qibla façade consists of an ornately tiled main doorway and two minarets before a beautiful turquoise dome. Behind all of the four secondary portals are smaller domes, painted in simple green. The large turquoise dome is beautifully decorated in geometric and calligraphic motifs, including the phrase "Lā illāha ilā Allāh" (There is no God but Allah) in large yellow-gold *kufic* calligraphy. Behind these letters, in smaller script, is "Muhamad al-rasūl Allāh, 'Alī walī Allāh" (Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, 'Ali is the friend of Allah), the standard Shī'i declaration of belief (plate 16). Below these calligraphic medallions are smaller



cartouches, extolling the Imam Mahdi. The main doorway is decorated in intricate mosaic tiles in vibrant lapis lazuli and turquoise and framed by eight white medallions inscribed with the names and attributes of the family and descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. At the apex of the arch is a larger medallion exhorting the pilgrims to enter a place of peace and safety. The textual program reflects Jamkaran's commemorative role. The prayers in the medallions are not unlike those uttered by pilgrims, who evoke the holy names as they reach different stages of their devotions.

The decorative program continues on the interior of the mosque, where glazed tiles alternate with plain ones to create complex geometric and floral patterns. The primary mihrab stands directly under the main dome, which is supported by eight fluted columns reminiscent of the eight circular columns supporting the dome over the cenotaph of Aya-tollah Khomeini. The roof of the dome is divided into twelve segments in alternating beige and brown, each of which contains calligraphic lozenges inscribed with blessings and the names of the imams. Qur'anic verses encircle the base of the dome, where the most clearly legible inscription is in white script on a dark blue background (fig. 3.13), Surah *Al-Ādiyāt* (The Chargers), which reads,

By the (Steeds) that run, with panting (breath), And strike sparks of fire, And push home the charge in the morning, And raise the dust in clouds the while, And penetrate forthwith into the midst (of the foe) en masse. Truly Man is, to his Lord, ungrateful; And to that (fact) he bears witness (by his deeds); And violent is he in his love of wealth. Does he not know when that which is in the graves is Scattered abroad? And that which is (locked up) in (human) breasts is made manifest? That their Lord had been well-acquainted with them, (even to) that Day?<sup>65</sup>

The oracular verses of Surah *Al-Ādiyāt* represent well the popular belief in Imam Mahdi's eminent return, when truth will be made manifest. The messianism is reiterated within the building as well as on the multiple calligraphic inscriptions on the mosque's façade and domes, where the names of the imams are repeatedly evoked. The mosque is paradoxical in its very intimate function: it is a shrine, where individual wishes and vows are made, yet its size and opulence point to a grander vision—the Ahmadinejad government's overtly messianic rhetoric and its emphasis on Mahdism.<sup>66</sup> How the new government of Hassan Rouhani (elected in August 2013), a purported pragmatist and moderate, will change the fortunes of Jamkaran—if at all—remains to be seen.

The architecture of the Jamkaran Mosque reaches into the past for



FIGURE 3.13.  
Interior, Jamkaran  
Mosque and  
Shrine, Jamkaran.  
Photograph by  
the author.

inspiration, yet the motivations for the design are deeply rooted in the present geopolitical realities of Iran. The building's decorative style derives inspiration from Safavid architecture, but the massive courtyard and the massing of the central dome and four secondary domes along a single façade are quite uncommon. Traditional Iranian architecture has a bipolar symmetry, with four iwans in which the primary qibla iwan may be larger. The front-loaded qibla façade and wide-open courtyard remind the architectural historian of the Badshahi (Imperial) Mosque in Lahore, Pakistan, one of the largest mosques from the early modern period (fig. 3.14). In addition, the large courtyard space seems unnecessary given the presence of a musallā mosque in Qum. The imagery seems thus to be directed to the vastly diverse pilgrimage network that passes through Qum, much of it comprising South Asians from India and Pakistan. The Jamkaran Mosque is without doubt a hybrid structure, at once a mosque and a shrine, responding to local political ideology while also catering to an international

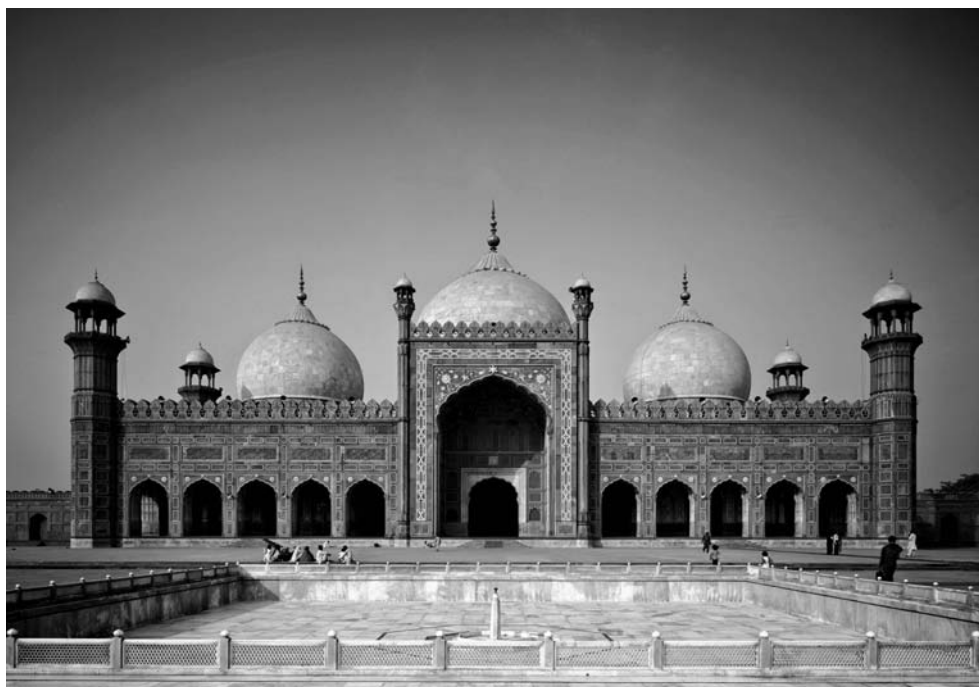


FIGURE 3.14. Badshahi Mosque, Lahore. © Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme/Christian Richters (photographer).

pilgrimage network. It is this complexity that drives the transnational sponsorship of architecture undertaken by the Iranian government, which builds on the shrine/mosque type that Jamkaran and other recent monuments represent.

### The Princess of Damascus

Shi'i identity has never been contained by national or imperial borders. Even in the sixteenth century, Iran's religious influence extended deep into Ottoman Turkey and Mughal India. It was manifested not only theologically, but also through ritual and cultural performance. Without suggesting a seamless continuity, it is nonetheless important to note both the historical mobility of Shi'i practice and its unifying function. Except in Iran during the Buyid and Safavid periods, Shi'i communities have been minorities under Sunni rule. Thus they have developed transregional networks that center on rituals of pilgrimage and visitation to holy sites. As mentioned earlier, the major shrines of Shi'i imams are in Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Medina, but the tombs of their progeny can also be found in Lebanon,

Afghanistan, and Central Asia. Several sites are associated with the footprints of 'Ali, and even now tombs are being built to mark the places where Imam Husayn's head was laid to rest or his blood was spilled.<sup>67</sup>

Iran has assumed the mantle of representing Shi'i political ideology around the world. With its national identity officially defined by its religious ideology, Iran stands out as the representative Shi'i nation, a status the Islamic Republic has embraced. Political alliances have been forged on this basis, especially with the 'Alawite kingdom of Syria and the Hizbullah factions in Lebanon.<sup>68</sup> Regionalism has also played an important role in how Iran's influence has extended beyond its border, toward the Caspian Sea as well as the post-Soviet Republics.<sup>69</sup>

While the trend in contemporary Iran is for the construction of musallā mosques, the Islamic Republic has appropriated Shi'i shrines as its mode of transnational influence. Unlike Saudi Arabia and Turkey, which build grand Friday mosques globally, the Iranian government sponsors the construction and renovation of commemorative structures associated with the ahl al-bayt.<sup>70</sup> However, recent reconstructions do feature large congregational spaces for prayer, a reminder that internal trends have been exported to other contexts and other countries.

Holy sites in Syria have been the main focus of Iranian patronage since the years of the Iran-Iraq War (that is, since the 1980s). Because of the contested political allegiances in Iraq since 2003, Syria has been deemed more accessible—and amenable—to Iranian interventions. The head of Imam Husayn is believed to be buried in Aleppo, and that shrine is of utmost importance to Shi'i pilgrims. In Damascus, the great shrines of Sayyida Zaynab and Sayyida Ruqayya are the primary focus of Shi'i devotion, in addition to the shrine commemorating Imam Husayn's head in the Umayyad Great Mosque (where it rested before being moved to Aleppo). Additionally, the Bab al-Saghir cemetery is the burial ground of several prominent figures, such as Umm Kulthum, the daughter of Fatima and Imam 'Ali, as well as Bilal b. Rabah, the companion of Muhammad and the first muezzin to call out the *adhān*. This cemetery, like the greater shrines, became the focus of Iranian patronage with the strategic alliance between the Islamic Republic and the 'Alawite-dominated government of Hafiz al-Asad and, since 2000, that of his son, Bashar al-Asad. Since the Syrian Civil War, they have also become the target of sectarian violence.

As Paulo Pinto writes,

During the 1980s, the strategic alliance between Syria and Iran gave a political dimension to the creation and/or affirmation of the Shi'i identity of holy places in Syria. Therefore, the Syrian government in part-

nership with the Islamic Republic of Iran started to appropriate and transform these sites, making them pilgrimage shrines with a clear Shi'i character. The tomb of Sayda [*sic*] Zaynab was the first religious site associated with the Shi'i sacred history in Syria to be appropriated by the state. In 1979, the shrine of Sayda Zaynab and an area of three hundred thousand square meters surrounding it were expropriated by the Syrian state. The Iranian government sponsored the building of the new mosque-mausoleum complex, which was placed under the administration of a Syrian-Iranian society.<sup>71</sup>

The shrine of Sayyida Zaynab is the most significant Shi'i sanctuary in Syria and has particular significance for women devotees (plate 17). The shrine commemorates Sayyida Zaynab bint 'Ali (d. ca. 684), a daughter of Fatima and 'Ali, and the sister of Imams Hasan and Husayn. Zaynab had joined Husayn's entourage to Kufa when the group was besieged and brutally massacred in Karbala. Husayn's young son, 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, and his sister, Zaynab, were among the survivors, who were marched to Damascus to be presented at the court of the Umayyad ruler Yazid. In the chronicles and commentaries that narrate those events, Zaynab is portrayed as a strong and righteous figure, one who stood up to Yazid and spoke for her community. Zaynab is often considered the recorder of the events of Karbala, as her nephew was just a baby at the time. The gendered dimension of Zaynab's intervention and her significance to contemporary Shi'i identity has been pointed out by recent scholars.<sup>72</sup> Less attention has been paid to her commemorative shrine, which remains one of the least studied architectural monuments.<sup>73</sup>

The shrine of Sayyida Zaynab lies about ten kilometers south of Damascus, in an area that has become an extended suburb of the city. The Sayyida Zaynab neighborhood is home to a diverse population, primarily Shi'i communities, including large populations of Iraqi Shi'i who have moved to Damascus. Like other such popular pilgrimage destinations, the shrine is surrounded by amenities associated with the tourist trade, from hotels and rest houses to shops selling souvenirs and famed Damascene sweets. Moneychangers, translators, and prayer guides cater to their multilingual and international clientele that passes through the gates of Sayyida Zaynab's shrine. Several factors have contributed to the shrine's expanded popularity in recent decades, including "religious sanction of donations to fund its development, the building of secondary sites related to Zaynab's family, and the publication of emotionally charged biographies that ground Zaynab's experiences in Damascus."<sup>74</sup> A fourth factor is the shrine's architectural expansion and renovation, which serves as a monu-

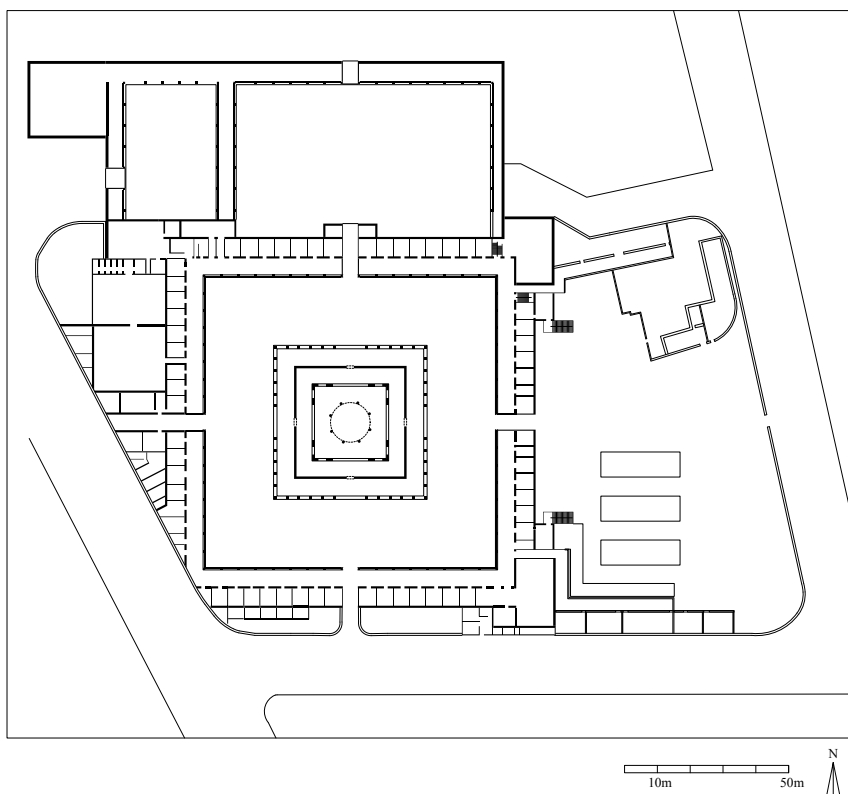


FIGURE 3.15. Schematic plan, Shrine of Sayyida Zaynab, Damascus.

Drawing by Mahdi Sabbagh.

mental reminder of the profound changes in the use and perception of this institution.

There is more than one entrance into the shrine precincts, which covers an area exceeding seventeen thousand square meters (fig. 3.15) and is flanked by large parking lots. The haram sanctuary of Sayyida Zaynab is in the center of an open courtyard. Surrounding it, in the rooms and halls forming the courtyard's periphery, are the offices of the *mutawalli*, or custodian of the shrine, as well as the offices of the donation collectors and religious services. Beyond one of the arcades is a library and lecture hall that includes spaces for research and study. According to dedicatory plaques, the Research and Reading Room was built and renovated in 1993 by the generosity of al-Hajj Fahd Dayekh, an Iranian benefactor who is also credited with the haram area's tiling and mirror-work.

The recent *mutawalli* of the Sayyida Zaynab shrine, Dr. Hani Murtada, is a renowned pediatrician who has held several prominent positions, such

as dean of the Faculty of Medicine, the chancellor of Damascus University, and minister of higher of education. The renovation and expansion of the Sayyida Zaynab shrine was undertaken by his brother, the previous mutawallī, Rida Murtada, a civil engineer and prominent businessman. The Murtada family professes a long and illustrious association with the shrine, members of the family have served as its custodians since at least the Ottoman period.<sup>75</sup> Both Rida and Hani Murtada set up a charitable clinic at the site in the 1960s and also invested in and supervised the building of a hotel on land provided by the shrine. The Murtada family also set up the financial and administrative procedures that govern the projects and investments and have been the driving force behind the shrine's development. Several members of the family have been educated abroad, and the younger generation continues to maintain close ties to the shrine establishment. The social and religious prestige allows them relative freedoms and the ability to negotiate between local and transnational authorities.

Many of the donations to the shrine come from notable Iranian and South Asian families, such as the Habibs, prominent bankers from Pakistan, who constructed the silver grill surrounding the haram in the mid-twentieth century. The website maintained by the shrine authorities also lists recent benefactors, including wealthy Damascene families as well as Iranians. The list shows that several important renovations have been undertaken in the past forty years, such as the covering of the dome with new gold-plated copper and the retiling of the minarets and the main courtyard.<sup>76</sup> That several of the donors are Iranian is not a surprise, nor is the fact that the architecture and epigraphy clearly show their association.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, on the main entrance into the haram sanctuary is a beautiful floral cartouche that names the donor, "the late Hasan Haydari," who gifted the mosaic tiling surrounding the holy precinct (in Persian, *kāshī-kārī bar itrāf-i bārgāh*), i.e., in the courtyard and the façades of the haram. Haydari was from Isfahan, as were the craftsmen who completed the work.<sup>78</sup>

The close involvement of the Iranian government is acknowledged by the shrine's custodians and is made explicit in its architectural style. Since the early 1980s, with the opening of the Iranian Cultural Center in Damascus—the largest one of its kind in the Middle East—the Iranian government has sponsored several events at the center as well as at the shrine, marking "the strong diplomatic relationship between Syria and Iran."<sup>79</sup> In 1995 a Persian language center was opened near the shrine of Sayyida Zaynab, and in 2002 a train route was established between Tehran and Damascus that has been greatly beneficial for pilgrimage and commercial exchange.<sup>80</sup> Currently, Iran is providing important military and diplo-

matic support to the Asad regime and protecting common religious and political ideologies.

The Iranian government supports this shrine not simply because it commemorates a member of the *ahl al-bayt*, but because the figure is Sayyida Zaynab, who is characterized as an upholder of justice in the face of tyranny. She holds particular significance in the context of the Iranian Revolution, which was seen as a popular uprising against insidious imperial authority. Zaynab was viewed as the model of the ideal woman, powerful and fundamental to the Islamic cause. A poster from the early years of the revolution exemplifies the duality of references and the overlapping historical memory and contemporary politics (fig. 3.16). Zaynab, shown as an enlarged silhouette, raises her fist powerfully to strike a crown. The top half of her white body is in striking contrast to the black background; the lower half is filled with the faces and raised fists of women protestors. As Hamid Dabashi and Peter Chelkowski have noted, the smashed crown could be Yazid's or that of Reza Shah, and the procession of women could be at a Muharram gathering or a protest march.<sup>81</sup> Women's mobilization and support was fundamental to the Iranian Revolution and the subsequent war against Iraq. It is thus not surprising that the shrine of Sayyida Zaynab would be among the most important transnational architectural institutions patronized by the Islamic Republic.

The primary focus of the shrine complex is the haram, which is at the center of the courtyard. The entire space is covered in neo-Safavid style decoration, with colorful tile mosaics in floral patterns and calligraphy, designed in the popular *thuluth* script. Surrounding the haram is the entire verse Surah *al-Insān* (Man):

Has there not been over Man a long period of Time, when he was nothing—(not even) mentioned? Verily We created Man from a drop of mingled sperm, in order to try him: so We gave him (the gifts), of Hearing and Sight. We showed him the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will). For the Rejecters We have prepared Chains, Yokes, and a Blazing Fire. As to the Righteous, they shall drink of a Cup (of Wine) mixed with Kafur; A Fountain where the Devotees of Allah do drink, making it flow in unstinted abundance. . . . And celebrate the name of thy Lord morning and evening And part of the night, prostrate thyself to Him; and glorify Him a long night through. As to these, they love the fleeting life, and put away behind them a Day (that will be) hard. It is We Who created them, and We have made their joints strong; but, when We will, We can substitute the like of them by a complete



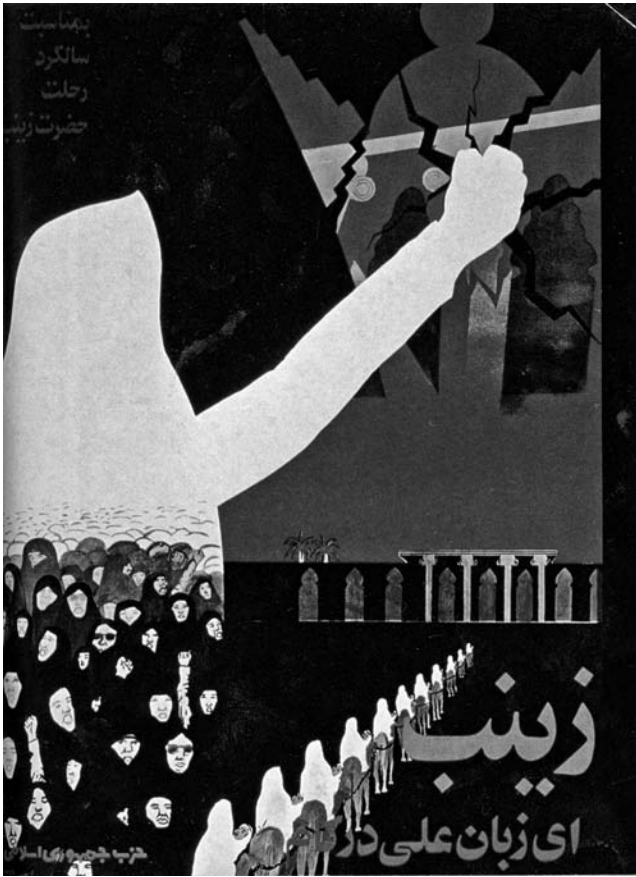


FIGURE 3.16.  
Revolutionary  
poster showing  
Zaynab b. Husayn.  
From Chelkowski  
and Dabashi,  
*Staging a  
Revolution*.

change. This is an admonition: whosoever will, let him take a (straight) Path to his Lord. But ye will not, except as Allah wills; for Allah is full of Knowledge and Wisdom. He will admit to His Mercy Whom He will; but the wrongdoers—for them has He prepared a grievous Penalty.<sup>82</sup>

The eschatological themes central to this chapter are suitable for a commemorative site such as the Shrine of Sayyida Zaynab. But in its reference to “the Righteous” the verse has also been associated with the ahl al-bayt in some Shi’i interpretations.

The Qur’anic verses are complemented by hadith and aphorisms in both Persian and Arabic. Prayers to Sayyida Zaynab and the other ahl al-bayt are written on panels and medallions covering the walls and minarets. Above one of the entrances into the haram is a cartouche with the Qur’anic verse “And Allah only wishes to remove all abomination from you, ye Members of the Family [ahl al-bayt], and to make you pure and



FIGURE 3.17. Detail, Shrine of Sayyida Zaynab, Damascus. Photograph by the author.

spotless” (fig. 3.17).<sup>83</sup> Evocations of the ahl al-bayt continue within the sanctuary itself: prayers on the columns supporting the dome ask Sayyida Zaynab to intercede for the pilgrims in paradise. Given their location on the entrance and interiors of the shrine and their succinct message, these prayers point to the ultimate goal of the pilgrimage to the shrine: salvation and a peaceful afterlife.<sup>84</sup>

The haram’s plan is relatively simple, consisting of a series of concentric rectangles centered on the circular domed area where the tomb of Sayyida Zaynab is enclosed by a silver grill. An arcaded portico leads into the haram area, which is covered in spectacular colored mosaics. The light blue and white palette, sometimes supplemented by other pastel hues, gives the domed interior an ethereal brightness. The columns holding up the dome soar to the ceiling, seeming to disappear in the effusion of mirror-work that greets the eyes of the visitor looking upward. The dome is covered in colorful mosaics and mirrored glass, with a massive chandelier descending down to the tomb. The mirror-work is reminiscent of its Iranian antecedents, thus contributing to a transnational Iranian visual and architectural iconography.

The books and pamphlets issued by the Sayyida Zaynab publications department chart the development of the vast complex since its humble beginnings as a modest freestanding structure in the early twentieth century.<sup>85</sup> The names and photographs of notable visitors—like the assassi-

nated Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto (d. 2007), and the former Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad—are listed alongside several local and international donors. The publications also show, perhaps for fund-raising purposes, plans for the future development and expansion of the shrine. Among the projects is the expansion of the courtyard by forty-one hundred square meters by widening the passages to the west and covering the courtyard, similar to the retractable roof already built at the Sayyida Ruqayya shrine in the old city of Damascus.

A large open musallā to the north of the main courtyard serves for Friday prayers and special occasions. “Notably, there are no Shiʿi mosques in Sayyida Zaynab aside from the *musallā* or prayer hall that is part of the shrine’s complex. Since the *musallā* was built and funded by the Iranian government, it may be of no surprise that Friday sermons and prayers at Zaynab’s shrine are held in the name of the Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Khameneʿi (Khomeini’s successor). Khameneʿi, in turn, uses this privilege in order to claim sole legitimate religious authority over all Twelver Shiʿa, to be *walī ʿamr al-muslimīn*, patron of the affairs of (all) Muslims.”<sup>86</sup> With the help of the Iranian government, the Murtada family hoped to build an even larger musallā to accommodate thousands of visitors. South of the current shrine complex, they had proposed to build a complex covering forty-five hundred square meters that would consist of libraries, baths, and an underground garage, at a cost of \$4 million.

The hotels and other amenities surrounding the shrine of Sayyida Zaynab are not unique; rather, they reflect the types of grand-scale projects undertaken at pilgrimage destinations throughout the Islamic world, from Mashhad in Iran to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. Indeed, the commodification of ritual practice at these sites links them to broader transnational trends in other world religions. What is unexpected, however, is the merging of architectural and regional typologies. The recent trend for building vast musallās in the Islamic Republic is clearly derived from a local need for large prayer spaces where the revolutionary spirit can be kept alive. What ideological gain is garnered from exportation to Syria, or to a community that has a different historical point of reference, remains to be seen.

### An Incision into the Urban Context

The shrine and mosque of Sayyida Ruqayya is an explicit example of the transnational aesthetic of the pan-Shiʿism extolled by the Iranian government. The site commemorates Ruqayya, a daughter of Imam Husayn, who was imprisoned after the massacre in Karbala. She died a short while later

in Damascus, at the age of four, thereby adding a heartbreaking coda to the tragedy. The shrine of Sayyida Ruqayya is located in the city's central district, not far from the Great Umayyad Mosque, where the head of Husayn is believed to have rested. The site of the shrine is old, but its current manifestation is not; the building is new and employs very modern technology. The style of the building is out of place in the context of the old suq, with its ancient Roman and Umayyad architecture. By contrast, the shrine looks like a Safavid tomb on the inside, creating a rather disjunctive spatial and temporal experience.

Sayyida Ruqayya, like other monuments related to the ahl al-bayt in Syria, has also been the focus of patronage by the Iranian government. According to recent scholarship, the Iranians had wanted to rebuild the old shrine since as early as 1975, but a large-scale renovation was not undertaken until 1986, about the same time the Iranian Cultural Center was opened in Damascus.<sup>87</sup> Delegations were sent from Iran to begin purchasing land in the neighborhood of al-ʿImāra “to negotiate buying land and property from the residents around the tomb. This was fully and directly financed by the Iranian government, in cooperation with the Syrian Ministry of Awqāf and amid voices of concern from the Syrian Department of Antiquities.”<sup>88</sup> The tensions between the Antiquities Department and the Ministry of Awqāf represented the conflicting views between a conservationist perspective and a developmental model that purportedly responds to the needs of the users. The increased pilgrimage would certainly bring economic prosperity to the local inhabitants, but at the cost of an “authentic” past. The antagonism also highlights the deep sectarian schisms and innate suspicions between the local communities of belief—Sunni, Shiʿi, and Alawite. The insertion of a foreign agent, Iran, did not help ease those tensions.

The entrance to the Sayyida Ruqayya shrine is located within the old bazaar and comprises a series of setbacks allowing for the building to unfold spatially, and gradually, in accordance to its urban context (fig. 3.18). A light-colored stone wall faces the street, and blue bands with gold inscriptions weave along the top of the structure. At the main entrance is the *Ayat al-Kawthar*, “To thee have We granted the Fount (Of Abundance). Therefore to thy Lord turn in Prayer and Sacrifice. For he who hateth thee He will be cut off (from Future Hope).”<sup>89</sup> Whereas these verses referencing the paradisaal river al-Kawthar, appear appropriate for the entrance into any commemorative structure, other verses within the building have clearer reference to Shiʿi themes, such as those referring to the ahl al-bayt, which read, “And stay quietly in your houses, and make not a dazzling



FIGURE 3.18. Entrance, Shrine of Sayyida Ruqayya, Damascus. Photograph by the author.

display, like that of the former Times of Ignorance; and establish regular Prayer, and give regular Charity; and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah only wishes to remove all abomination from you, ye Members of the Family, and to make you pure and spotless" (33:33).<sup>90</sup> The exterior texts, like the façade itself, aim instead to blend into the surrounding. The interior presents a different semantic experience.

Pilgrims enter a covered causeway and pass through a series of courtyards to reach the haram. One of the innovations of this building, completed in 2006, is its reliance on technology. The first courtyard is covered by a sophisticated retractable roof, which is opened and closed according to the season (fig. 3.19).<sup>91</sup> The courtyard itself is composed of paired columns supporting keel arches, interestingly reminiscent of the Sayyida Ruqayya shrine in Cairo.<sup>92</sup> The retractable roof has served as inspiration for the expansion of the Sayyida Zaynab shrine as well, as noted above, the construction of which will reportedly cost over \$5 million.

The Iranian government, which sponsored the entire project, has spared little cost on the opulence of the interior, where intricate tiled mo-



FIGURE 3.19. Courtyard, Shrine of Sayyida Ruqayya, Damascus.  
Photograph by the author.

saics display floral and geometric patterns similar to those on the mosques and shrines of Safavid Iran (plate 18). The shrine is thus a strange amalgam of Iranian, Egyptian, and Damascene architectural style, a grand collage. The polyvalent nature of the Sayyida Ruqayya shrine is made even more apparent in the mixture of Qur'anic verses, Shi'i hadith, and Persian poetry that covers the interiors. The poetry addresses the *zā'irīn* (pilgrims) who are visiting this holy abode.

The inscription program is clearly meant to be didactic. As Yasser Tabbaa writes,

Whereas the Qur'anic verses have both a pan-Islamic sense and a specifically Shi'ite intent, the Hadith selection at the Sayyida Ruqayya and other Syrian Shi'ite shrines is exclusively Shi'ite. In fact, rarely does one come across such clear and emphatic assertions of the basic tenets of Twelver Shiism, assertions that are made more forceful by the eye-level location of these inscriptions and their easily legible calligraphic style. Surrounding the courtyard and the shrine like icons in an Orthodox church, these calligraphic medallions emphasize the perennial concepts of Imami Shi'ism, including the God-given legitimacy of the *ahl*

*al-bayt* and their special role as the safeguards of Islam. Others specify the exact number and order of the twelve Shi'i imams. While still others emphasize the concepts of *walā'*, the special relationship of association between 'Ali and God. Those around the courtyard largely focus on the spiritual merits of Ruqayya.<sup>93</sup>

The texts are carefully chosen to convey the message of a pan-Shi'i reverence of the ahl al-bayt, and their resting places.

Following the typology of Shi'i shrines, the sanctuary comprises a resplendent grilled *zariḥ* below an ornately decorated tiled dome. The space is divided by a tall gilded screen, which provides gender separation. Kite-arches, like those associated with Timurid architecture, cover the transition to the drum of the dome, which is adorned with the mirror-work that has come to typify Shi'i shrines in Iran and its zones of influence. Two popular Qur'anic verses are chosen for the penultimate space of the shrine: the Throne Verse, or *Ayat al-Kursī* (2:225), which encircles the drum, and the Surah *al-Nūr* (The Light, 24:1-64), which is written in the dome's transition zone.<sup>94</sup> Hallways flanking the courtyards are covered in ornate mosaic tile designs, the architectural features highlighted by mirrored glass. Despite the use of clearly expensive material and highly skilled craftsmanship, the atmosphere is far from elitist; the shrine caters to a wide social strata of pilgrims and patrons. The architectural style thus accentuates the links between diverse Shi'i pilgrimage networks through recognizable symbols.

## The Contested Landscape

The Iranian government has chosen to express its patronage and global presence in many different ways. In Damascus, as discussed above, shrines related to the ahl al-bayt have been renovated, using a wide range of architectural design strategies. For example, the Sayyida Zaynab shrine coheres both on the exterior and interior with an Iranian, neo-Safavid style that links it with the great Shi'i shrines of Mashhad, Karbala, and Najaf, with their tiled decoration, lofty portals, and gilded domes. By contrast, the shrine of Sayyida Ruqayya and the tombs of the martyrs of Karbala at the Bab al-Saghir cemetery are more understated in their exterior articulation of stone masonry façades and the limited use of polychrome epigraphy. The interiors, however, are unabashedly "Iranian," with gilded screens and mirrored glass.

It may appear anachronistic to call particular materials or motifs "Ira-

nian” when they can be seen in historic architecture from eastern Anatolia to western India. Certain motifs, such as the mirrored glasswork used in ceiling decoration, has a distinctly nineteenth-century Qajar provenance; other motifs are less geographically contingent. Nonetheless, in the twentieth century they were co-opted by the nationalist language of a “Persian” cultural heritage that was expansive and comprehensive.<sup>95</sup> Twentieth-century nationalists exhibited works of art and architecture under this civilizational rubric, which continues to be presented as an authentic indigenous style. Indeed, it appears that the pilgrims and visitors to the shrines, like the sites’ custodians, are aware that the architecture has a very particular “look”—the Iranian influence is clearly recognized, as many pilgrims have also traveled to the shrines of Imam Reza and Fatima Ma’suma in Iran. This recognition also extends to a system of Iranian Shi’i ritual practices, an authority clearly sought by the Islamic Republic.

In Syria, sharp political divisions have fueled sectarian tensions that today are erupting in extreme violence. In neighboring Iraq, where the demographics are also complex, Shi’i shrines have been the target of bombings and suicide attacks. It is important to note that these shrines are singled out for destruction by Sunni factions in Iraq with the Salafist justification that shrine worship is akin to idolatry. Such a justification is not limited to Shi’i edifices alone, as recent attacks on Sufi shrines in Pakistan have shown.<sup>96</sup> However, the close connection between the Shi’i shrines and Iranian patronage adds another dimension to the distrust and antagonism, which is represented as a primitivist and “Arab” objection to Iranian forms of religiosity, or a hypernationalism that sees Iran’s presence as a threat to the national integrity of Iraq or Syria. An entirely new dimension is added by the current presence of Da’ish, or ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), which aims to reconfigure national boundaries entirely, with the aim of establishing a new Islamic caliphate.

The case of Lebanon makes clear the contested nature of the sacred—and thus political—landscape of the Middle East in particular, and the Islamic world in general. The Iranian government has sponsored large-scale renovations in the Bekaa Valley, including the shrine of Sayyida Khawla bint Husayn, a daughter of Imam Husayn, whose tomb is located in Baalbek. The building, an anomaly in the area, is entirely covered in polychrome tile mosaics, with inscriptions in Arabic and Persian (fig. 3.20). Two large panels over separate entrances into the buildings read, “With the blessing of the Leader of all Muslims, Ayatollah Imam Ali Khamenei.” The panels also acknowledge the assistance of his deputy (*wakil*) Imam Shaykh Muhammad Yazbek, and give the date AH 1416 (1995 CE).





FIGURE 3.20.  
Mosque and  
Shrine of Sayyida  
Khawla, Baalbek.  
Photograph by  
Unaizah Moonis.

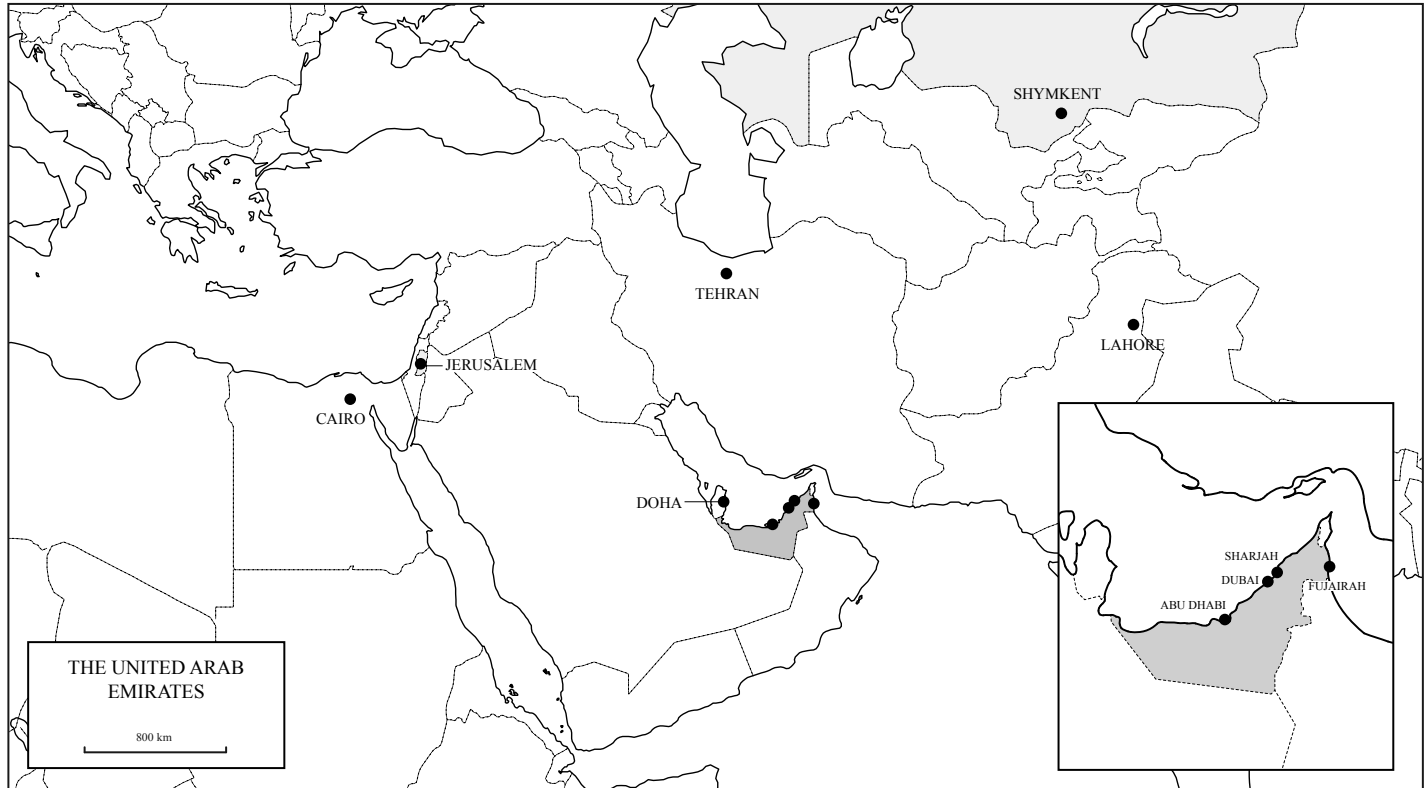
Tall minarets rise from the entrance gates, covered in turquoise-colored tiles with dark blue inscriptions praising God and the ahl al-bayt. The haram is covered by a beautiful turquoise dome that contrasts sharply with the stone structures surrounding the Sayyida Khawla shrine. Inside, the shrine is typical of the Persianate aesthetic, with its mosaicked walls and mirrored ceilings. The grilled *zarīḥ* surrounds the cenotaph of Sayyida Khawla, while a gilded screen separates the women's and men's spaces.

The architectural references of the Sayyida Khawla shrine are clearly intentional, but this building is not the only import into the context of Lebanon. Equally striking is the Muhammad al-Amin Mosque in central Beirut, analyzed in chapter 2. The neo-Ottoman style and Mamluk detailing employed by Azmi Fakhouri are intended to re-create a historical past that appeals to the mosque's Sunni patrons. Whereas an argument can be made that the neo-Ottoman style is appropriate in a country once ruled from Istanbul, the architectural reference does not build on local

traditions. That Safavid and Ottoman architectural styles are deployed in Lebanon as historical signifiers underscores the complex systems of identity that form the postcolonial Middle East, fractured as it was in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, sometimes arbitrarily. The divisions continue, albeit with other purposes in mind, cleaving not through language or ethnicity, but through sectarianism. Thus the Lebanese monuments make evident the broader trends in the Middle East, fragmenting the region into powerful and conflicting zones of influence.

Iran is not the only patron of Shi'i shrines and institutions. As the diversity of pilgrims and the enactment of their rituals makes evident, the practice of commemoration is far from homogenous. Recent scholarship has shown the heavy investment of the Bohra Isma'ili community in the refurbishing of the shrines' interiors.<sup>97</sup> In 1992 the community commissioned *zarihs* and *magsūras* to be made in Karachi, Pakistan, for the shrine commemorating the head of Husayn in Damascus. Gifts to the shrines of the ahl al-bayt in Syria "feature architectural elements mimicking Fatimid building in Cairo, thus establishing a visual link with the Fatimids," the tenth-century Shi'i dynasty that ruled over Egypt.<sup>98</sup> They also highlight another pilgrimage network, that of Isma'ili communities, linking the Shi'i shrines with holy sites in Egypt as well as Central Asia. The diversity of pilgrims and the multiplicity of their cultural associations may well be the reason for the longevity and ongoing popularity of these commemorative shrines, even in the face of constant violence. That they now incorporate large prayer halls and musallās into the expansions speaks also to their inherent flexibility as well as to extra-Shi'i, indeed global, trends in the practice of Islam.

In theocratic Iran, building musallā mosques has become common practice. From Tehran to Isfahan, large open tracts of land have been incorporated into prayer spaces, meant to reflect the growing religiosity of the population born after the Islamic Revolution. However, just as the Tehran Musallā hosts book fairs and exhibitions and its design references the pre-Islamic period as well as the Safavid era, the heterogeneity of functions within these institutions points simultaneously to their flexibility and their ultimate fragility. But whereas mosques cannot be destroyed, they can simply be forgotten; these new monuments, through their audacious size and complex designs, cannot be ignored, but they can become irrelevant. Just as the Iranian government captures the power of the transnational Shi'i shrine network, it appears to lose its religious authority at home, building mammoth structures such as the Tehran Musallā in an attempt to reignite the dissipating revolutionary zeal.



## Grand Mosques in the United Arab Emirates

### Domesticating the Transnational

*A strange anachronism appears in the desolate landscape of boutiques and beach resorts along the Persian Gulf. Opposite the first five-star hotel on the beachfront and across the street from the home-goods store, a sandstone dome rises above the banyan and palm trees, its traditionalism in stark contrast with the others' commercialism. The Jumeirah Mosque is located across the street from The One, the home fashion store in one of the main tourist hubs of the city (fig. 4.1). The mosque, seemingly anomalous here, has become iconic. But it is far from the sole architectural attraction in the city, competing with several monuments that may be seen as representative of this thriving emirate, such as the Burj Khalifa, currently the world's tallest skyscraper, and the Dubai Mall, one of the world's largest enclosed shopping malls. The Jumeirah Mosque is also no longer the national mosque of the Emirates; its image was once reproduced on currency notes and postal stamps, but now the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Abu Dhabi has that honor. Yet the Dubai mosque reveals an intimacy and historical specificity that the latter lacks.*



FIGURE 4.1. Jumeirah Mosque, Dubai, completed in 1992. Architect, Hegazy Engineering Consultancy. Photograph by the author.

*The Jumeirah Mosque has two faces, one for the tourists and the other for the local residents who come to pray there. One side is on a busy road framed by palm trees, presenting a perfect photo opportunity. The other side is preceded by a parking lot, its shady portico sheltering the entrance into a modest prayer hall. The doors are opened to specific publics at specific times of the day, but otherwise they remain closed—not unlike the closely guarded image of Dubai itself. The signs on the plaques at the tourist entrance are in Arabic and English, but the texts are not translations of each other; rather, as with the political culture of the United Arab Emirates, meaning is manipulated based on the audience. What the Emiratis see when they view the beautiful Jumeirah Mosque is not the same as what expatriate Australians see; in both cases, it seems, the monument is meant to represent not simply Islam, but rather a fabricated sense of this city and the residents' and visitors' presence within it.*

## Oil Wealth and New National Narratives

The United Arab Emirates is a collection of tribal consortiums that united to share economic and political authority over a region previously controlled by the British Empire. The Persian Gulf was a contested territory, laid claim to first by the Portuguese in the early part of the sixteenth century and then by the Ottomans, who controlled it until the nineteenth century. In the late nineteenth century, the Trucial Sheikhdoms, as they were then called, made a treaty with the British, whose concessions helped the sheikhs maintain economic prosperity, much of which was centered on trade and the pearling industry. The Trucial Sheikhdoms had close relationships with their neighbors, Iran and Saudi Arabia, with whom they maintained cultural and religious ties.

Oil was discovered in the Gulf States in the 1950s, by which time Britain's role in the region had also been formalized. "Until December 1971, the seven Sheikhdoms were linked to Great Britain by a series of treaties, the oldest dating back to 1820, whereby Britain exercised responsibility for the conduct of the Sheikhdoms' foreign relations and ensured their observance of the engagements they had entered into over the years to respect the maritime truce and to abstain from piracy and slave-trading. It was generally accepted that an implicit reciprocal obligation devolved upon Britain from these engagements to defend the Trucial Sheikhdoms against their enemies."<sup>1</sup> By 1968, however, Britain determined to end its obligations, and the Trucial Sheikhdoms were released to form their own federation. In 1971, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were formed, comprising Dubai, Sharjah, Ras al-Khaimah, Fujairah, Ajman, Umm al-Quwain, and—the capital of the federation—Abu Dhabi.

The UAE, as the name implies, is a monarchical federation, in which the leader of Abu Dhabi, currently Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, is the president, and the ruler of Dubai, currently Sheikh Muhammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum, is the prime minister. Each of the emirates has a distinct dynastic history, yet all are linked through shared economic and political interests. Abu Dhabi is second in population, after Dubai, but serves as the capital owing to its wealth and diplomatic significance. This city-state is also the more conservative of the two emirates, known more for its economic stability than its exuberance. Whereas high-rises and malls characterize Dubai, Abu Dhabi articulates its influence through its banks and government agencies—and, in the future, its museums. The cityscape is low-rise, and the central business districts maintain a mixed-use density.

Large-scale development plans are under way throughout the UAE

under the aegis of multinational architectural and construction management firms. Among the internationally renowned projects is Masdar City in Abu Dhabi, “a new master-planned urban settlement alleged to become the paradigm of sustainability, a carbon-neutral eco-city that is intended to be in balance with local ecosystems.”<sup>2</sup> Masdar City was planned by Sir Norman Foster, who was commissioned in 2007 by Masdar–Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company to design a master plan for the new city. On its website, the project is described as “an emerging global clean-technology cluster located in what aims to be one of the world’s most sustainable urban developments powered by renewable energy. Located about 17km from downtown Abu Dhabi, Masdar will eventually be home to companies, researchers, and academics from across the globe, creating an international hub for companies and organizations focused on renewable energy and clean technologies. Inspired by the architecture and urban planning of traditional Arab cities, Masdar City incorporates narrow streets; the shading of windows, exterior walls and walkways; thick-walled buildings; courtyards and wind towers; vegetation and a generally walkable city.”<sup>3</sup> The convergence of technology with tradition is undefined, yet crucial to the manner in which urban and architectural designs are represented in Abu Dhabi in particular, and in the UAE in general.

Saadiyat (Happiness) Island is one of the Abu Dhabi Tourism Development and Investment Company’s most ambitious flagship projects. “Occupying 27 square kilometres the entire project is due for completion by 2020 and is created around an eco-sensitive philosophy with a special low density masterplan. A premier island destination as well as a modern, integrated residential community, Saadiyat will eventually be home to an estimated 160,000 residents with a full complement of leisure and tourism facilities, as well as civic and cultural amenities.”<sup>4</sup> The jewels in the crown of Saadiyat Island are museums designed to bring art from around the world to Abu Dhabi, turning the UAE into a global cultural center (plate 19). The three primary institutions are franchises of well-established European and American institutions: the Guggenheim Museum Abu Dhabi, the Louvre Abu Dhabi, and the Zayed National Museum, which is linked to London’s British Museum. Each museum has been designed by an architect native to the country of the original museum—Frank Gehry, Jean Nouvel, and Sir Norman Foster, respectively.<sup>5</sup> In addition to the museums, Saadiyat Island hosts the campus of New York University Abu Dhabi, as well as entertainment ventures such as Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, “the world’s largest indoor theme park.”

The museums are all located on the waterfront of Saadiyat Island, and

each interprets the UAE's culture differently, from considering the region as a *tabula rasa*, in the case of Frank Gehry, to constructing an Orientalist fantasy, in the case of the Louvre Abu Dhabi.<sup>6</sup> Sir Norman Foster's approach views the region through a primitivist lens, using the climate and natural environment "to transform a hostile, barren, desert environment," looking at the "architecture without architects" inspired by "indigenous" peoples. His design is very modern and "forward looking" and aims to create, as the architect puts it, a "there there," giving a perspective to a place that appears to the outsider, the European or American architect, not to have a context.<sup>7</sup> This perception is, without doubt, questionable and problematic, indicative of a neo-Orientalist attitude that treats the UAE as a timeless and placeless entity. The transnational mosques sponsored by the government are an attempt at rectifying this characterization by emphasizing an indigenous historical narrative, albeit one that is borrowed erroneously from other religious and geographical contexts.

A regional game of one-upmanship takes the form of patronizing educational and cultural institutions that vie for global recognition. For example, the State of Qatar has invested heavily in attracting universities, such as Cornell and University College London, through the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development. In addition, the rulers have founded the Museum of Islamic Art and the Mathaf Museum of Modern Arab Art, both located in Doha. Education City and the new museums are often highlighted by the international media, but the government of Qatar takes equally seriously its role within the region's religio-cultural landscape. Thus Doha is also home to the Al-Jazeera news network, which is owned by the ruling family and has attained an important status not only in the Middle East—its primary market—but also worldwide. Similarly, Qatar has used its considerable financial leverage to play an active role in regional politics, with regard to issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the rise of Islamic extremism in Syria and Iraq. The state mosque in Doha, dedicated to the founder of the Wahhabi doctrine supported by the ruling Al Thani family, is an impressive structure, monumentalizing the conservative spirit of Qatar (fig. 4.2). The Imam Muhammad bin Abd Al-Wahhab Grand Mosque is fortresslike in its enormous footprint and its lack of fenestration or ornamentation. Covered in a sand-colored plaster, the massive walls are buttressed on the corners, presenting an impenetrable façade. Exclusivity and security are prime concerns in Doha, which is ideologically closer to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia yet attempts to align itself to its Emirati neighbors through cultural and national practices. The museum-mosque relationship is one





FIGURE 4.2. Imam Muhammad bin Abd Al-Wahhab Grand Mosque, completed in 2011. Photograph by the author.

that requires more scrutiny, representing as it does the cultural practices of the Gulf Arab states, as exemplified currently by Qatar and the Emirates.

### Creating Indigenous Histories

The planning and design of Saadiyat Island provide important clues to the manner in which Abu Dhabi aims to situate itself within a global context. It also highlights the omission of a deeper architectural or intellectual history, at least on the part of the foreigners commissioned to help design future projects. One reason may be that Emirati society, as a minority within its own country, remains inaccessible to outsiders.<sup>8</sup> As a tribal society on the edges of great empires, the UAE's historical record is different from that of its neighbors; for example, there are few court chronicles, endowment deeds, or large monuments commemorating the reigns of great rulers. Instead, architectural history is preserved in modest fortresses and mosques dotting the hillsides on caravan routes and alongside desert highways. It is also preserved through oral recitations of poetry and tribal lore, as collected in the oral history archives exhibited at the Qasr al Hosn Palace Museum. Such memorialization requires different modes of analysis and sometimes falls short in comparison with more

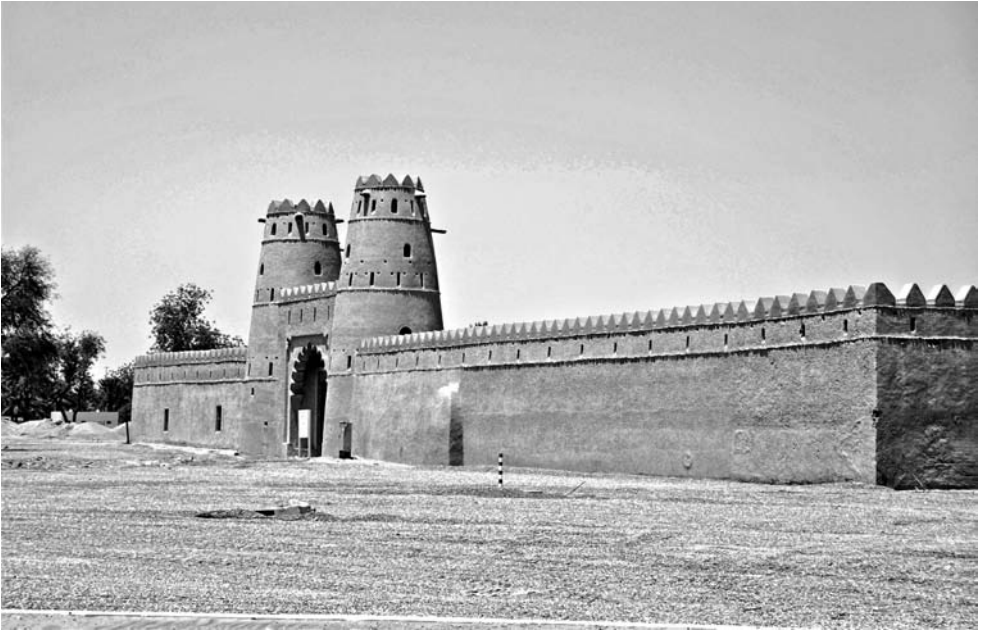


FIGURE 4.3. Al-Jahili Fort, al-Ain. © Aga Khan Award for Architecture/  
Roswag & Jankowski Architekten (photographer).

established forms of imperial and political commemoration. Nonetheless, oral traditions are preserved even as architectural monuments are called upon to create new histories.

Given the diversity of ethnic and tribal alliances that make up the United Arab Emirates, the idea of a national identity is complicated by the need to conform to collective historical and cultural norms. Inventing new traditions (such as camel racing) and juxtaposing them against older cultural practices (such as poetry recitation), the government aims to create a nationalist narrative that is seemingly unique to the UAE.<sup>9</sup> A series of new archeological sites recently excavated in Abu Dhabi establish a pre-historic narrative; in addition, two forts have also been renovated, including the Al-Jahili Fort, built in 1891 in the central city of al-Ain (fig. 4.3). Meant to protect the palm groves and mountain passes against thievery, the fort had served as the residence of the local governor. According to the Abu Dhabi Tourism Board, “The fort has been carefully restored and now houses a permanent exhibition of the work of British adventurer Sir Wilfred Thesiger.”<sup>10</sup> Such repurposing is the norm when it comes to the few extant historical monuments in the UAE, as seen in the conversion of the al-Fahidi Fort in Dubai, constructed in 1799.<sup>11</sup> The fort is believed to



FIGURE 4.4. Al Bidya Mosque, Fujairah. Photograph by the author.

be the oldest extant building in the city, built in defense against neighboring tribes. Originally the residence of the ruling Al Maktoum family when they moved from Abu Dhabi to Dubai in 1833, the al-Fahidi Fort was designated a historic monument and then, in 1971, was converted to the Dubai Museum.<sup>12</sup>

The conversion of archeological sites into parks and of military encampments into museums may provide historical vignettes for the UAE, but not a continuum. That narrative is provided by a different type of public monument, the mosque, which serves to define an Islamic past above all else. Yet the nature of that past has proven to be rather diverse as viewed in the heterogeneity of mosque designs in the Emirates. A few examples of historic architecture do exist, such as the Al Bidya Mosque in Fujairah, which is believed to be the earliest mosque in the UAE, having been built between 1450 and 1670 (fig. 4.4).<sup>13</sup> The mosque is a simple mud-

brick structure of modest size, with four concentric domelike structures comprising the unusual roof structure. The domes are in striking contrast with local building practices of this region, which are characterized by mud-brick walls and palm-thatched roofs. The mosque's roof articulation is reminiscent of early Islamic architecture in western India, such as that found in Gujarat, and speaks of the tremendous cross-pollination that marks the Gulf region.<sup>14</sup>

The idea of cross-pollination is often repeated in the rhetoric of Emirati society and made clear in the cultural and commercial institutions established by the government, even as ethnic and tribal alliances are reaffirmed in Emirati social practices. A telling example is the Ibn Battuta Mall on the outskirts of Dubai. The mall is themed on the itinerary of Ibn Battuta (1304–77), a Moroccan writer who documented his famous travels from North Africa to China, including Spain, Iran, and India. The Mall celebrates the medieval traveler by dedicating different geographic themes for the sprawling building's six sections, which represent the architecture of Andalusia, Tunisia, Egypt, Iran, India, and China.<sup>15</sup> The design is interestingly reflected in the diversity of clientele passing through. However, access is restricted to those deemed socially and economically acceptable.

Each emirate has developed a distinct ideological identity, yet together they project an image of openness and opportunity. Tourism has come to play an important part, with both Dubai and Abu Dhabi investing heavily in cultural and economic developments that move the UAE away from its oil-based market. Toward that end, international arts festivals and sporting events have been brought to the region, from the Sharjah Biennale to the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships, which is part of the ATP world tour. The belief is that the world arrives at the shores of these Persian Gulf emirates and transforms them into global cities, inviting people to share in a unique and superlative experience. Thus, unlike other countries in the Middle East, which export their ideology, the UAE conveys the image of its own embedded transnationalism, one predicated on the malleability of the national image.

The phenomenal changes in the Emirates over the last forty years are difficult to ignore. The transformation of the urban environment from dusty fishing villages to shiny high-rise cities highlights the importance given to corporate culture, with its heavy reliance on European and American forms of capital generation. Nonetheless, the Emirates remain a deeply traditionalist society, often at odds with the values espoused in its propagation of entertainment tourism. The majority of locals are Sunni Muslims, and the government adheres to the Maliki school of jurispru-



FIGURE 4.5. Iranian Hospital and Imam Husayn Mosque. Photograph by the author.

dence. The cities are thus dotted with mosques, the urban landscape punctuated with domes and minarets. The multinational and multiethnic nature of Dubai, for example, contributes to a varied religious environment. Churches and Hindu temples are not easily found, but there is a certain amount of tolerance toward the practice of religion, even if the spaces are expected to be understated and almost invisible. Mosques, on the other hand, can be seen in every neighborhood, ranging from the modestly scaled to the monumental.

Each neighborhood of Dubai has a local mosque; many have been privately financed with government subsidy.<sup>16</sup> The design and location of each mosques reflect the constituency for whom it was built. For example, the Iranian Hospital and Imam Husayn Mosque are in the al-Bada neighborhood, one of the city's oldest areas (fig. 4.5). The two buildings are adjacent to each other, reveted in brick and tilework. The mosque, even more than the hospital, gives the impression of being directly imported from Iran, its minarets and dome embellished with intricate mosaics reminiscent of Safavid architecture. Nearby is the Iranian Consulate, with majestic gateways meant to evoke the Qajar architecture of Tehran.

The Grand Mosque (*Masjid būr Dubaī al-Kabīr*) stands near the historic al-Fahidi Fort in the old Bur Dubai section of the city (fig. 4.6). It was rebuilt in the 1990s by orders of the Dubai municipal government



FIGURE 4.6. Grand Mosque, Dubai. Photograph by the author.

over the site of an old mosque believed to have been built there in 1900. The Grand Mosque serves as the main congregational mosque of the city, with a capacity to hold more than one thousand worshippers. It is a sand-colored rectangular structure, with nine large and forty-five small domes over the prayer hall and with the tallest minaret (thus far) in Dubai. The façade is simple, echoing the stone walls of the nearby fort, with a natural mud coating and crenellated walls. The low domes are barely visible from the street, in keeping with the restrained nature of the building; ornate concrete grills above doors and windows are the only decorative elements on the entrance and qibla walls. There is no epigraphy on the walls, except for a large and visible panel above the main entrance, declaring the foundational Muslim statement, “Lā ilāhā ilā Allāh Muhammad rasūl Allāh” (There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah). The simple yet direct exhortation is in keeping with the simplicity of the neighborhood, where laborers and shopkeepers flock to the mosque at prayer times. The interior is a modestly sized open space, with square columns holding up the small domes that comprise the ceiling. The grilled openings bring in a filtered light that plays along the cool cream-colored walls and carpets, complementing the light cast by the chandeliers. The



FIGURE 4.7. Bastakiyya Mosque, Dubai, completed in 1992. Architect, Hegazy Engineering Consultancy. Photograph by the author.

Grand Mosque fills to capacity during Friday prayers as well as on holy days and holidays.

Not far from the al-Fahidi neighborhood is the Bastakiyya Mosque, which is in the eponymous historic district near the Dubai Creek. The district is among the oldest in Dubai, with its close-set stone and mud-brick residences and towering wind-catchers (fig. 4.7). The mosque is an understated single-story structure, but its dome is ornately decorated in plasterwork, which gives the structure a festive air. The dome is massive for the size of the building and, with its buntinglike design, looks like a royal crown. A single minaret rises next to it like a scepter. The mosque is entered through a small courtyard and an arcaded portico that leads into the prayer space. A library and reading room are adjacent to the prayer



FIGURE 4.8. Detail, Bastakiyya Mosque, Dubai. Photograph by the author.

hall. *Jali* screens of carved stone are the only decoration on the building, which is devoid of epigraphic script. A silver plaque at the entrance gives the names of the builders and the date of the mosque's construction (fig. 4.8). It reads, in Arabic, “Tasmīm wa ishrāf, al-muhandisān al-istishārīyān, ‘Abd al-Mu‘izz Husayn wa Muhammad al-Mahdi Higāzī, al-Qahirā, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, 1413/1992” (design and supervision by the engineers and consultants, Abd al-Mu‘izz Husayn and Muhammad al-Mahdi Hegazy, Cairo, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, 1413/1992). Hegazy Engineering Consultancy is a Cairo-based architectural and engineering firm with offices in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, who are also credited with building the renowned Jumeirah Mosque. While the latter is clearly inspired by the designers’ Egyptian roots, the Bastakiyya Mosque is a more modern and eclectic building—almost placeless. The South Asian references seen in the *jali* screens and dome are an interesting choice, reflecting the fact that much of the current Muslim population in the area comprises Pakistani, Indian, and Bangladeshi workers.

In the capital of the UAE, Abu Dhabi, mosques were traditionally of a similarly modest scale that responded to the needs of a particular neighborhood. The pared-down aesthetic seen in many is that of a simple white-washed monument with a single dome, or sometimes a set of small domes, and minarets. The monumentality, when called for, appears in the number





FIGURE 4.9. Sultan Mosque, Abu Dhabi. Photograph by Colonel Edward Wilson, ca. 1962. Courtesy of the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage.

of domes and arcades and the height of the minarets. Historical photographs of Dubai show the Sultan Mosque, located on the waterfront of the Bateen neighborhood, again a South Asian influence, with a rectangular plan surrounding a small courtyard. Three domes mark the interior prayer space, the central one larger than the other two (fig. 4.9). Tall arcades open onto the waterfront, bringing in fresh air and a view. The domes and roofs are encircled by crenellation, which, like the plan layout consisting of three domes over the prayer hall, is clearly inspired by Mughal architecture. The South Asian reference is not surprising, given that the earliest immigrant workers after the oil boom of the 1970s were of Pakistani, Indian, and Bangladeshi descent. They were (and continue to be) contract workers, arriving without family and for long periods of time, and working under difficult conditions. The mosques provided a sense of community in the absence of other social services or affordable entertainment.

## Architecture as Negotiation

While a great majority of workers in the UAE are of South Asian descent and Muslim (especially the high- and low-skilled laborers), Europeans, Australians, and Americans make up a significant percentage of the expatriate population, particularly in higher management positions. For these expatriates, trying to negotiate life in a Muslim country, albeit one modeling itself on some form of Western progress, can be challenging. Keeping track of local customs can also be daunting for foreigners, regardless of nationality, given that each emirate has its own set of rules. For example, Abu Dhabi strictly enforces Islamic mores, such as prohibiting the consumption of alcohol; in Dubai, by contrast, alcohol is served and sold publicly, but similar restrictions are enforced regarding clothing and gender segregation. Despite such differences, the Emirates together promote the country as an Islamic state, albeit one with an open mind regarding foreign visitors and workers. The issue of religious tolerance, especially the relationship between Islam and Christianity, is one constantly reiterated in public discourse. The rulers of Abu Dhabi have often donated land for the construction of churches (fig. 4.10) and have also actively worked to preserve a recently discovered ancient Nestorian Christian monument.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, Islam is clearly the dominant religion, and its presence is made visible through such activities as the government's patronage and construction of mosques.

National mosques have traditionally been seen as symbols of a country's historical past and ideological present. They are meant to communicate the centrality of Islam in the public and private lives of the citizens. In the UAE the practice of religion is complicated by the fact that the Emirati citizens comprise about 20 percent of the population of the country.<sup>18</sup> Thus the didacticism is directed toward the citizens as well as the expatriates, both Muslim and non-Muslim. The government thus aims to educate the population on its vision of Islam, one that is open and tolerant.<sup>19</sup> Tribal culture, with its emphasis on loyalty and hospitality, is consistently repeated by governmental agencies not only in regard to boosting tourism but also in presenting Islam as an open and welcoming religion.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, strict boundaries are drawn between those recognized as legitimate citizens of the Emirates and those merely residing there, whether corporate heads or petty laborers.

Select mosques are chosen to represent Islam to non-Muslim visitors who want to learn about the religion. In Abu Dhabi, the Friday sermons are given in English at the Maryam bint Sultan Mosque in the al-Bateen



FIGURE 4.10. Interior, St. Andrews Church, Abu Dhabi. Photograph by Andrea Cho. Courtesy of the St. Andrews Church Authority, Abu Dhabi.

neighborhood and cater to the polyglot Muslim and non-Muslim community. The mosque, named after a princess of the Al Nahyan family, is a single-domed structure with two minarets at its entrance. The low dome and relatively simple minarets belie the outreach of this institution, which is among the most visible religious centers in the UAE. The subject of the Friday sermons ranges from interpretations of Qur'anic verses to understanding the basic tenets of Islam, such as prayer and charity. Audio files are reproduced on the host website, UAEKhutba.com (literally "UAE Sermon"), which also includes videos and articles from authors around the world.<sup>21</sup> The sermons are given by English-speaking clerics, some of whom are converts to Islam, such as Jihad Hashim Brown, "an American Muslim jurist and theologian currently serving as an academic advisor in Abu Dhabi, UAE," whose previous ministry was at the New Brunswick Islamic Center in the United States.<sup>22</sup> In the sermons given in the Maryam bint Sultan Mosque (and in others collected on the website), the rhetoric is of a progressive and tolerant Islam, one that shirks away from extremism and moves toward addressing the everyday concerns of Muslims, such as childrearing and microfinance.

The question remains who is the target audience of such rhetoric, especially when delivered in English and not the native Arabic language. In a modest mosque such as Maryam bint Sultan, the assumption may be that these sermons are meant for South Asian and other Arab Muslims, as a way to unify their religious experience. But for the majority of laborers and expatriate workers, English would not be an accessible language and would certainly not be one they would use to express their religious beliefs.

It is as though the audience is an external one, perhaps Muslims in Europe or the United States who may be drawn to the language of inclusivity espoused by the English-language sermons.

The issue of educating anglophone clients and partners about Islam through the means of a palatable rhetoric and imagery appears to be a prime prerogative of the United Arab Emirates government. For example, the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding (SMCCU) in Dubai

was established under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum in 1998. Located in a traditional Wind Tower House in the heart of the historic Al Fahidi District in Bur Dubai, the centre offers a range of enrichment activities through its award winning programmes. Operating under the centre's philosophy and motto "Open Doors, Open Minds," the SMCCU strives to raise awareness and demystify the local culture, customs and religion of the United Arab Emirates. With an overall objective to improve cross-cultural understanding and communication between locals and guests, visiting and residing across the UAE, we invite you to learn more about the local culture in Dubai.<sup>23</sup>

This statement appears to be written by a public relations firm for the SMCCU and contains little by way of theological instruction. Neither does it address its Muslims users, but rather reaches out to an unidentified "guest" who may be encountering Islam for the first time.

The center organizes Heritage Tours in Dubai as well as programs and events to raise cultural awareness. It had first been housed in the Jumeirah Mosque but is now located in the Bastakiyya neighborhood, one of the remaining historic sites in Dubai. Nonetheless, the mosque remains central to the goals of the SMCCU and admits tourists regularly, for a fee, to tours and educational programs. The Jumeirah Mosque (fig. 4.11), the only one in Dubai open to non-Muslims, thus serves as a museum not of objects, but of the Islamic heritage of the Emirates, and the stated goal is to "remove barriers between people of different nationalities and raise awareness of the local culture, customs and religion of the United Arab Emirates."<sup>24</sup> Once again, the statement reads like a brochure prepared by a public relations firm, reaching out to foreign investors even as it appears to be educating its own citizens.

The mosque represents what may be the only view of Islam many tourists in Dubai may get, given the segregated social spheres. In its willingness



FIGURE 4.11.  
Interior, Jumeirah  
Mosque, Dubai.  
Photograph by  
the author.

to engage—or at least invite—a conversation with people of other faiths, the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding presents a moderate version of Islam, perhaps as a corrective to the more common images of regional violence that have come to dominate the media. The mosque’s location in the upscale Jumeirah neighborhood, with its exclusive hotels and beaches, raises the possibility that the building is as much a landmark and tourist destination as an educational center. Yet that is also in keeping with the broader goals of the United Arab Emirates, which has invested in culture and entertainment as an economic alternative to its oil wealth.

The newly opened Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Center is located in the capital, Abu Dhabi. The center is part of the Ministry for Presidential Affairs and was established to commemorate the legacy of the founder, Sheikh Zayed, who died in 2004, and forward his vision to “enhance cross

cultural communication and introduce the Center as a cultural tourism destination.” According to the website, “Throughout his life-time, Zayed adopted a tolerant version of pure Islamic faith far from fanaticism or extremism. Zayed’s piousness and purity strengthened his relationship with God, the Almighty. . . . Giving priority to moral values, Sheikh Zayed believed that developing a culture of tolerance is a project which deserves attention and concern like any other great initiative. To him, tolerance is the evidence of a nation’s vitality and proof of its ability to achieve more advancement and progress.”<sup>25</sup> The language of nation building thus looks outward, at new investors in and visitors to the Emirates. This emphasis underlies the broader agenda of cultural tourism that permeates the newer projects undertaken in Abu Dhabi, such as the Saadiyat Island museums. The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Center must be seen alongside these grand projects, which strive to situate the UAE on a transnational stage.

On March 10, 2013, the Finnish prime minister, Jyrki Katainen, was brought to the mosque as part of a diplomatic tour. In the statement he issued, Katainen “commended the cultural and civilizational role the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque plays in promoting the cherished legacy of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.” He characterized the mosque as an iconic institution, one ideal “for promoting Islamic architecture and arts . . . [and] the bright civilized image of the UAE to other people of the world.”<sup>26</sup> Thus the role of the mosque as a representative of the UAE and as a tourist destination are merged in a way that is clearly outward looking and simultaneously invites engagement.

The concept of architectural diplomacy has been explored in previous chapters and is often seen in buildings built outside the home country, their style and monumentality marking the presence of a particular nation or ideology. Thus buildings sponsored by the Turkish or Iranian governments in allied countries often carry with them a historical and architectural reference reminiscent of the patron. Yet in the United Arab Emirates, something else appears to be happening: mosque building has become a way for the world to engage with the Emirates on their own soil. The mosques and associated cultural centers are often aimed at outsiders, but in this case the “outsiders” are the majority and reside within the country itself.

Religion, in the context of national mosques and their attendant Islamic cultural centers, is not disseminated globally, but utilized for internal educational purposes. However, given that a large part of the audience comprises expatriates, the transnational implications are significant.

In presenting the United Arab Emirates as a tolerant and religiously open society, foreign workers and investors are invited to a different version of the Middle East than that represented in popular media. Indeed, the UAE is establishing itself as an alternative to its war-riven and politically unstable neighbors, some of whose wealthy citizens flock to its shores in search of respite and asylum. Interestingly, just as the skyscrapers in Dubai and the museums in Abu Dhabi draw inspiration from modernist trends elsewhere in the world, the national mosques are inspired by the histories of other nations. The transnational in this context is an appropriative action, one centripetally collapsing time and geography to create representations for a new nation.

### The Jumeirah Mosque and the Egyptian Connection

The demand for skilled and unskilled labor following the discovery of oil in the Gulf region caused massive migrations from highly populated Arab countries, such as Yemen and Egypt. South Asians would soon follow as the increase in construction and urbanization transformed once sparsely populated fishing villages into thriving cities.<sup>27</sup> Egyptian engineers, teachers, doctors, and administrators were among the first wave of immigrants to the UAE, bringing with them important expertise, and also a sense of historical legitimacy. At present, Egyptians form the largest noncitizen Arab population in the Gulf, and their presence is marked in both obvious and intangible ways.<sup>28</sup>

Egypt is often the recipient of generous aid from its oil-rich neighbors, but its return contribution goes beyond paid labor. The great Arab Muslim dynasties, such as the Fatimids and Mamluks, are important sources of pride for the region at large, providing an important contrast to the cultural dominance of non-Arab Turkey and Iran. Indeed, as the center of the Arab Spring, Egyptian politics continues to influence the region, even though the political upheaval in its aftermath is a cause of great concern for the monarchies in the Gulf. In July 2013, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates together pledged more than \$8 billion in aid to the Egyptian government that has replaced the government of Mohamed Morsi, the Islamist president with ties to the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>29</sup> This generosity was centered on the recognition of Egypt's role at the center of Arab intellectual history and the fear that the 2011 uprisings in Tahrir Square in Cairo could have a domino effect in the Gulf as well.<sup>30</sup> Thus while culture, in the form of architectural style, is imported into the United Arab Emirates, political influence is exported out.



FIGURE 4.12. Umm al-Sultan Shab'an Mosque and Madrasa, Cairo, 1368–69.  
© Aga Khan Trust for Culture/Adrien Buchet (photographer).

The best-known mosque in Dubai remains the Jumeirah Mosque, a prominent city landmark (plate 20).<sup>31</sup> It was commissioned by the ruler of Dubai at the time, Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, and built by the Egyptian construction company Hegazy Engineering Consultancy in 1979. A foundation panel at the entrance attributes the construction to the engineers Abd al-Mu'izz Husayn and Muhammad al-Mahdi Hegazy, Cairo, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, dated 1413/1996.<sup>32</sup> The mosque is located between the old financial center and the upscale Jumeirah neighborhood, which is known for its exclusive beach resorts and shopping centers. The building is clad in yellow-pink sandstone, with two tall minarets and a prominent dome. Calligraphic panels are inserted over doorways and windows, whereas the ornamental carving on the minarets and dome is abstracted and geometric. The forms are reminiscent of medieval Mamluk architecture, with its intricate, patterned stone carvings (fig. 4.12).

The selection of Hegazy Engineering Consultancy for the design and construction of the Jumeirah Mosque raises several important issues. First, during the twentieth century Egyptian teachers, doctors, and engineers were at the forefront of developing the infrastructure of the UAE.



Second, as mentioned earlier, Egypt is recognized throughout the Arab Middle East as an intellectual and ideological center. Islamic law and theology have been codified at the Al-Azhar Mosque and Madrasa for almost a millennium, but more recently the country was the ideological center of Arab nationalism, a movement spearheaded in Egypt by Prime Minister Gamal Abdel Nasser (in office 1956–70). The Mamluk Empire based in Cairo has particular meaning for the new rulers in the Gulf, who see in these Arab conquerors the precursors to Ottoman and European rule over the region.

Although according to the English version of the Dubai City website the Jumeirah Mosque is built “in the medieval Fatimid tradition,” the Arabic-language plaque onsite does not mention any stylistic affinities.<sup>33</sup> According to the engineer in charge of the construction, the reason for this omission is that the Fatimids represent a Shi‘i dynasty, something that would be problematic in the staunchly Sunni emirate.<sup>34</sup> The audiences for the Arabic and English commentary are different, but difficult to define. The sparse presence of Emiratis in public spaces such as the Jumeirah Mosque means that the Arabic commentary is most likely also meant for expatriate Arab and Muslim visitors.

The epigraphy of the mosque consists of common prayers written in a clear and legible script accessible to anyone able to read Arabic, Persian, or Urdu, namely the numerous Arabs, Iranians, and Pakistanis who call Dubai their home. There are two primary entrances to the mosque, one facing the busy Jumeirah Road and the other facing a parking lot in a quiet neighborhood. Worshippers enter the mosque through the latter entrance, which is also where the epigraphy is most prominent. Above the doorways is a panel with a Qur’anic verse written in bright green paint (fig. 4.13). It reads, “The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in Allah and the Last Day, establish regular prayers, and practice regular charity, and fear none (at all) except Allah. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance” (Surah *al-Tawba*, 9:18). The verse is one to be expected on a mosque, given its didactic nature extolling Muslims to care for their spaces of worship, pray regularly, and give alms. The verse that precedes it, however, which is not inscribed here, gives a better idea about the contexts of the Jumeirah Mosque: “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 works of such bear no fruit: in Fire shall they dwell.”<sup>35</sup> The message of these verses is clear—the mosque is a place for Muslims, and it is their responsibility to protect and guard it from nonbelievers. Indeed, the interior of the prayer hall is



FIGURE 4.13. Entrance detail, Jumeirah Mosque, Dubai. Photograph by the author.

adorned with Surah *al-Fath* (Victory, Qur'an 48), which begins, "Verily We have granted thee a manifest Victory," and continues to reiterate the power of Allah and of Islam (plate 21). Historically, this verse is found in contexts where state and theological powers are merged, to signal the overlay of divine and earthly authority. Its use in the context of a national symbol is thus appropriate.

The Jumeirah Mosque serves as a national symbol as well as a religious institution. The mosque was proudly displayed in the five-hundred-dirham currency notes, as well as on stamps and publicity related to Dubai. It was originally home to the previously mentioned Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding, which organizes tours at the mosque aimed at "promoting cultural understanding and first-hand experience as an insight to the Islamic religion."<sup>36</sup> Guides are allowed to bring tourists to the mosque when it is not being used for prayer rituals; at these times, the doors of the Jumeirah Mosque are opened to non-Muslims. Several mosques in Dubai and neighboring Sharjah copy the Mamluk style of the Jumeirah Mosque, sometimes in identical fashion, yet the cultural aspect is limited to the original, as mosques in much of the Emirates remain inaccessible to non-Muslims.

The Jumeirah Mosque references history not only as a conceptual term, but also as an aesthetic style that merges belief with identity. The mosque is an ideal type for disseminating religious values and framing them historically through the use of stylistic references. The way the Jumeirah Mosque monumentalizes its references through precise quotation points to the patrons' recognition of history and verisimilitude as potent resources in creating a national imaginary. In this case, architecture provides an archeology of forms: buildings act as repositories of knowledge that refer to specific historical events as well as geographical locations. The past signifies a location defined by a particular understanding of "Arab" identity that emphasizes imperial and monarchial authority.

The Mamluk inspiration of the Jumeirah Mosque points to the empathetic relations between the UAE and Egypt. Yet the mosque is not the only visible marker of that relationship. The man behind the design and implementation of the infrastructure of the capital, Abu Dhabi, was Abdel Rahman Makhoulf, an Egyptian urban planner. Makhoulf, a graduate of Cairo University and the University of Munich, was a designer and an academic before he became a consultant at the United Nations and helped plan the urban development of Jeddah, in Saudi Arabia.<sup>37</sup> In 1968 he was invited by the late Sheikh Zayed Al Nahyan to establish the Department of City Planning in Abu Dhabi and design the master plan for the capital of the newly founded UAE (in 1971). Makhoulf's planning strategy was to merge the lessons from modern postwar German reconstruction with the historical vibrancy of the traditional dwellings in the region. Alongside implementing the gridded roadways of Abu Dhabi, he redesigned the traditional suq in al-Ain to "encapsulate the Sheikh's vision, which was for the shops to become spaces for Emiratis to develop creativity, sources of income and contribute to a burgeoning commercial economy."<sup>38</sup> In appreciation of his services, Sheikh Zayed awarded Makhoulf citizenship in the UAE, with its attendant benefits—which is a very rare honor.

Makhoulf was the recipient of the Abu Dhabi Award in 2009 for his leadership of the Department of City Planning and his involvement in numerous planning initiatives in the Emirate. He was also involved, until recently, "in a number of high profile projects including the surroundings of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque, the courthouse in the city of Abu Dhabi and the old central market in the city of Al Ain."<sup>39</sup> Such recognition for an Egyptian national seems singular, but the deep involvement of Egyptians in the development of the United Arab Emirates is not. Interestingly, Makhoulf's imprint is not visible in the most prestigious mosque project in Abu

Dhabi itself, the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Center, which looks to other architectural histories for inspiration.

### A Cosmopolitan Aesthetic: The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque

Sheikh Zayed Al Nahyan was the visionary behind the many successes of the United Arab Emirates. As the ruler pushing most clearly for a federation in 1971, after the Trucial States were no longer under British administration, Sheikh Zayed served as the president of the UAE until his death. Abu Dhabi had already started exporting oil since the early 1960s, but it was under the aegis of the Emirates that Sheikh Zayed was able to truly envision a national ideal, one that could be channeled into building infrastructure as well as a robust foreign policy based on trade and commerce. As Andrea Rugh noted, “Sheikh Zayed ruled largely by tribal tradition, adapting practices pragmatically to address modern exigencies. His relationships with his sons, family, extended relatives, and non-kin members were all dictated by the tribal values he placed great stock in.”<sup>40</sup> Thus tribal identities were merged with the exigencies of nationhood, monumentalized in a manner that merged seemingly paradoxical goals into a complex rulership that acknowledged the presence of outsiders while maintaining familial allegiances. Sheikh Zayed established a system of familial authority based on oil-financed wealth distribution, and thereby also establishing what has been characterized as a benevolent allocative state. Similarly generous are the public charities that are utilized by the royal family to further their vision of Islamic religious ideology.<sup>41</sup>

National identity for Sheikh Zayed was predicated on a need to accommodate foreigners, whether they were British petroleum engineers or Pakistani laborers. Thus while the public rhetoric of Abu Dhabi and the UAE is to emphasize indigenous forms of governance, historical evidence points to a context that has always been about negotiations and interaction. This cosmopolitanism (the positive reinterpretation of a colonial past) was often underscored by Sheikh Zayed, who recognized early in his reign the importance of establishing a social network that was open and tolerant of other cultures and religions, if not always their political ideologies.<sup>42</sup>

The government propagates the message that the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque “introduces a vision of tolerance rooted in the traditions of the golden Islamic era. Traditions based on respect and exchange of ideas for the enrichment of human life and history. Additionally, the mosque aims

to serve as a platform to enhance culture and knowledge in Abu Dhabi and the surrounding region through organizing a variety of activities seeking to promote a culture of tolerance, love, rationality and mutual dialogue.”<sup>43</sup> Once again the rhetoric (in English and Arabic) is aimed toward the foreigner who may be considering settling in the UAE, or the multinational organization trying to gain a foothold in this wealthy market.

Mosques are a central component of urban life in Abu Dhabi and are used to mark the Al Nahyan family’s legitimacy to rule the conservative Muslim consortium that is the UAE. According to Christopher Davidson, since the first oil boom the simplest way for the government to promote Islam “has been to build mosques and pay the salaries of all *ulema* or preachers. With several mosques on each street and—in theory—with mosques within walking distance from all national males in the emirate, Abu Dhabi has eclipsed even Saudi Arabia in this regard.” Davidson also mentions that during Sheikh Zayed’s lifetime several prominent clerics and theologians have been regularly invited to Abu Dhabi, to give sermons and lectures during Ramadan and to participate in public debates. The trend has been continued by his successor, Sheikh Khalifa.<sup>44</sup>

The plan for a national mosque commemorating the supreme ruler of Abu Dhabi was already under way during the lifetime of Sheikh Zayed himself but was not realized until 2007. The initial design competition was held in 1987 and a winner selected in 1989. The architect of the first phase of the construction was the Syrian designer Yusef Abdelki, and the consulting firm Halcrow International Partnerships took over design management after 2001 (fig. 4.14).<sup>45</sup> The client of the project was the Department of Municipal Affairs, which employed more than thirty contractors and hundreds of skilled artisans; materials used included mosaic from Italy and India, Iznik tiles from Turkey, and handwoven carpets from Iran.<sup>46</sup>

The power to source material from the world over is a trope reminiscent of early modern chronicles of the miraculous discovery of marble quarried when the Suleymaniyye Mosque was built in Istanbul and the Masjid-i Shah was constructed in Isfahan by the great rulers Sultan Suleyman and Shah ‘Abbas, respectively. The marble for the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque was sourced from manufacturers in Greece, Italy, India, and China, a point often noted in publications issued by the mosque’s administrators, who list the final cost of the building at over \$800 million. Thus the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque becomes situated squarely in the continuum of Islamic history and may be viewed as a modern interpretation of the great imperial mosques of the past. Furthering the charismatic relationship between patron and building, Sheikh Zayed’s tomb is located

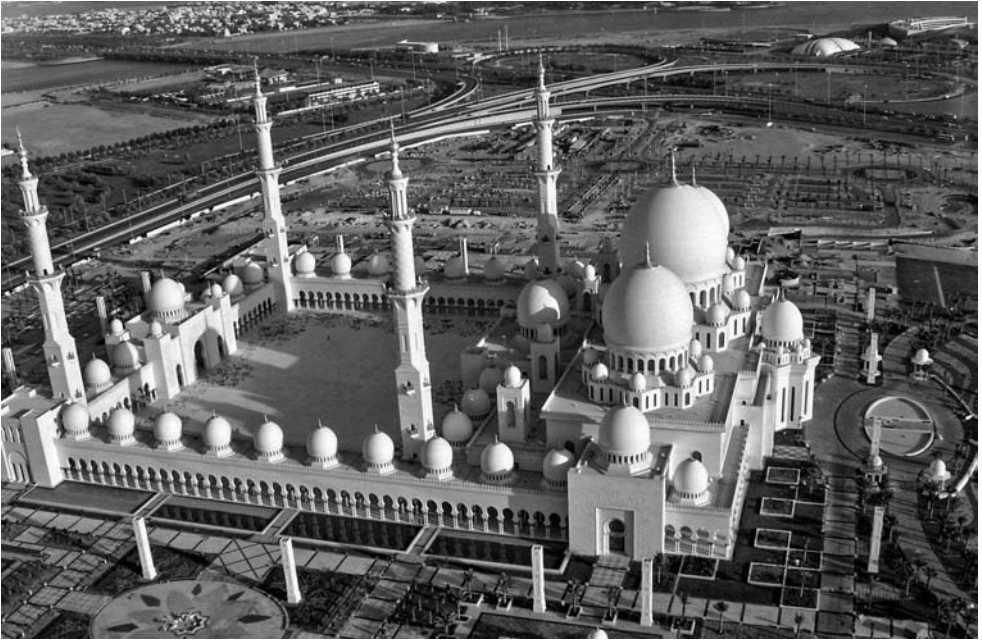


FIGURE 4.14. Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Abu Dhabi, completed in 2007. Architect, Halcrow Group Architectural Practice. © Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

on the northern side of the mosque, a modest structure with three domes from which the voices of Qur'an reciters emanate continuously.

The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Center is off the main highway approach from Dubai. Now located on a small hill overlooking the city, the mosque will one day occupy the center of a large metropolitan area. It is built on a large open site of approximately 550,000 square meters, with a ground floor area of 22,412 square meters. The plan is relatively simple, consisting of a large rectangular courtyard space with open arcades on three sides and a prayer hall in the qibla direction (fig. 4.15). The Badshahi Mosque in Lahore—the largest in South Asia—appears to be an inspiration. Unlike its iteration in Jamkaran, where the form is covered in polychrome tiles, the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque is covered in pure white marble.

There are three primary domes over the prayer hall, the central one larger than the other two. Another large dome covers the entrance foyer leading into the mosque. Seventy-eight smaller domes cover the pathways and arcades, each topped with a gold-enameled finial. The lightness of the building is reiterated by the way the domes sit on drums pierced with

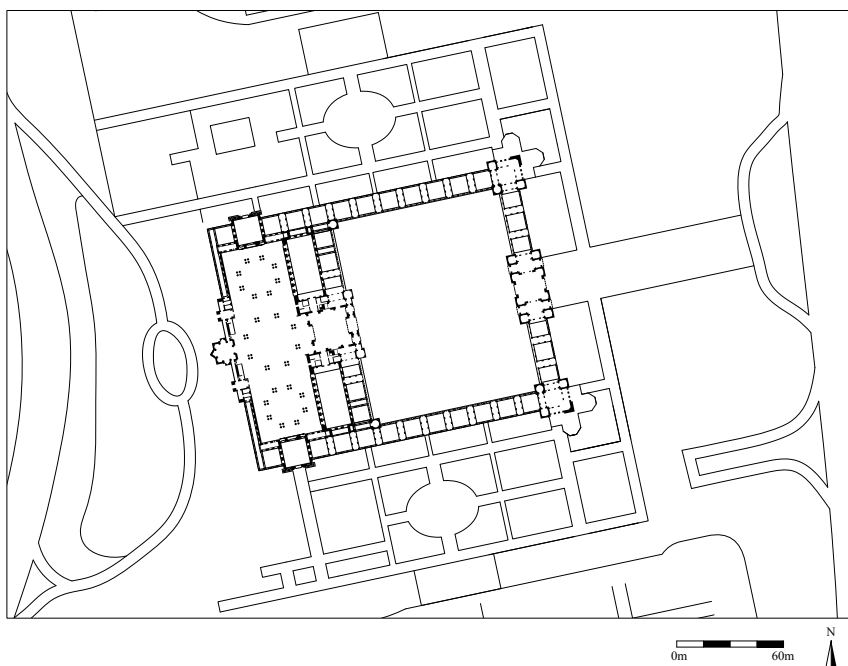


FIGURE 4.15. Schematic plan, Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Abu Dhabi.  
Drawing by Mahdi Sabbagh.

arched openings, giving the impression that they are floating above the structure.

According to Halcrow, the mosque is “built to accommodate up to 9,000 worshippers internally and 40,000 worshippers at peak times” in the courtyards and along the arcades. In terms of design, the consultants acknowledge the medley of styles and influences that appear to have gone into the design. They write, “The late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan envisioned a place of worship that Muslims from all parts of the world would be able to identify with. Materials and architectural concepts were sourced from all corners of the globe to complete this landmark structure. . . . The design of the project has been based on a wide-scale study of the majority of the most famous and historic mosque edifices throughout Islamic history. . . . Aspiration to any single Islamic style of architecture was rejected as an objective, because it is incompatible with cultural diversity.”<sup>47</sup> The mosque was envisioned as a “world landmark for Abu Dhabi and for the people of the United Arab Emirates” and a “major tourist attraction for both Muslims and non-Muslims.” In addition to being “a place for prayer and contemplation,” the associated center would provide

“education about Islam to both Muslims and non-Muslims.”<sup>48</sup> This brief description, provided by Halcrow to the Aga Khan Awards committee, presents the design as an amalgam of historical forms brought together to convey a message of Islamic cultural unity as well as art historical diversity.

The entire structure is made of reinforced concrete and is clad in white marble to give an impression of a luminous, cloudlike building. The courtyard is entered through a white, domed gateway, above which is a complex epigraphic panel that reads, “The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in Allah and the Last Day, establish regular prayers, and practice regular charity, and fear none (at all) except Allah. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance” (Surah *al-Tawba*, 9:18). The same phrase was written at the entrance to the Jumeirah Mosque in Dubai, but there the epigraphy was easily read, as opposed to the complex abstraction of the texts on the Sheikh Zayed Mosque. The column capitals are gilded and ornate and take the form of palm fronds, referencing the desert context of the United Arab Emirates (plate 22). The palm tree motif is very commonly deployed, from corporate hotels to imperial insignia. Such a visual quotation is not unproblematic, reducing Abu Dhabi to a primitivist and geographically contingent entity.

Four tall minarets anchor the corners of the courtyard, their plan changing from a square base to an octagon, to a circle, and, finally, to balconies at the pinnacle. The transition zones and finials are once again gilded with gold, serving as the primary decorative accent on the minarets. One of the penultimate balconies is an interesting pastiche—eight circular columns with square capitals surround a square core (fig. 4.16). The detail does not reference any Islamic building; rather, it gives the impression of an Italianate folly. The incongruity of the minarets’ design is carried one step further: the third floor of the north minaret is designated as the mosque’s library, a most unusual and unprecedented function. The symbolic value of establishing a library in a minaret is interesting, making the mosque a beacon that calls not just to prayer, but to the search for knowledge.<sup>49</sup>

The courtyard measures eighteen thousand square meters and is inlaid with marble mosaics and terrazzo, materials that are often utilized on the floors of mosques; marble is cool to the touch and thus an apt material in hot climates, such as that of Abu Dhabi. However, instead of floral or geometric designs derived from traditional Islamic architecture, the floor is based on a watercolor painting by the British artist Kevin Dean, in collaboration with the Milanese firm Fantini Mosaici (plate 23).<sup>50</sup> Dean is a





FIGURE 4.16. Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Abu Dhabi. Photograph by the author.

watercolorist whose floral designs are deployed on wallpapers and textiles, as well as on architectural murals. Besides the government of the United Arab Emirates, his clients include the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC, and the Natural History Museum in London, as well as retail chains such as Gap and Marks and Spencer. The mosaics give the impression of being a painting, the soft and sensuous curves of flowers and the translucency of watercolor all captured in the hard stones. The feeling of a verdant garden is captured in the intertwining tendrils and multi-hued leaves and flowers that wind their way across the courtyard. The paradisaical theme, often mentioned in regard to devotional and funerary Islamic architecture, is successfully conveyed and is also carried through in the wall paintings and lighting motifs on the interiors. Dean was an inspired choice; in his ability to move between scales as well as materials, his work is evocative of the master craftsmen who designed the great works of Islamic art and architecture, from carpet designs to books and buildings.

Flanking the main haram vestibule are two open prayers halls on the north and south and a main prayer hall that is large and ornately decorated. All three spaces are decorated with Dean's floral patterns, the flowers and leaves sinuously creeping up the walls. The main prayer hall is an exuberance of color and light. Eight clusters of columns (each cluster composed of four columns) hold up the domes. The transitions into each space are in the form of a horseshoe arch, modeled on the architecture of al-Andalus, Spain. As mentioned in the mosque's publicity materials, Sheikh Zayed intended for the mosque to remind the believers of the "golden age" of Islamic history, in this case Umayyad Spain (tenth and eleventh centuries), which was epitomized by the spirit of conviviality and tolerance.

Indirect lighting washes over the columns, as does light through the grilled opening in the drums of the domes. The "world's largest" chandelier, made of Swarovski crystals and colored glass, descends into the central space, where the "world's largest" handwoven Persian carpet covers the floors of the prayer hall. The extravagance of the interiors, made explicit through the precious and expensive materials used, overwhelms and calls into question the mosque's functional simplicity. Thus while the mosque has a simple white profile, the use of exquisite marble (as opposed to simple whitewash paint), crystal chandeliers, and silken carpets gives the impression of imperial wealth and splendor.

The latest building technology has been used in the construction of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque. The massive central dome is raised about forty-five meters above the ground, supported by a five-meter-deep ring beam. The smaller domes are constructed of a type of sprayed-on concrete, whereas the intricate grills that perforate the dome and lighten the structure are made of glass-reinforced concrete. Perhaps the most striking use of technology is in the interior and exterior lighting, designed by the British firm Speirs and Major. The qibla wall glows with "end-emitting fibre" that "illuminates a gold-mesh curtain concealed behind the 99 inscribed names of Allah, while side glow fibres reveal the organic forms of vine fronds." The fiber-optic technology is used in several panels within the prayer halls, making the walls seem to pulse with light (fig. 4.17). But perhaps the most innovative use of light is on the exterior, where lighting is adjusted according to the time of day and the religious calendar. Deriving inspiration from the Islamic lunar calendar, the moon and its changing cycles defined the way light became a vibrant design element. According to the designers,



FIGURE 4.17.  
Sheikh Zayed  
Grand Mosque,  
Abu Dhabi.  
Photograph by  
the author.

A poetic look was created for the mosque, based on the image of a full moon with wisps of cloud moving across its face. The building alters character as the lunar cycle progresses, bathed in cool white light at the full moon, but shifting colour every two evenings, and growing gradually bluer as the moon wanes. On the fourteenth evening the mosque is lit in deepest blue to signify darkness—yet the viewer is never able to perceive the building changing from one colour to the next. . . . Technically complex, the scheme involves hidden projectors which create the impression of clouds drifting from the direction of Mecca, slowly wrapping around the minarets and domes and across the surface of the mosque.<sup>51</sup>

The projectors are cleverly hidden in tall piers that surround the building like protective totems.

The ability of the government of Abu Dhabi to harness a global work-

force and gather materials and technological expertise from the ends of the earth transforms the mosque project into a miraculous global event. The building is a purposeful collage of what the designers regard as the epitomes of Islamic architecture, moving beyond history and geography. Thus they are as comfortable quoting eighth-century Umayyad and seventeenth-century Mughal architecture as they are employing British painters and Italian mosaicists. The cosmopolitan attitude toward design exhibited here is in contrast to the Jumeirah Mosque in Dubai, with its singular Egyptian references. The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Center adheres more closely to Sheikh Zayed's vision of the UAE as a complex social experiment, hosting people from all over the world. This vision also serves to give the rigid hierarchical economic and political structure a positive perspective, despite the disparities faced by the UAE's less privileged residents.

### Global Ambitions, at Home and Abroad

The global influence of the United Arab Emirates is undeniable, whether it is judged in terms of regional politics or popular entertainment. Whereas neither the defining consumer capitalism nor the mall culture typified by Dubai, for example, has originated in the UAE, they have come to be closely associated with the country. However, to think of Dubai as just a commercial Mecca or of Abu Dhabi as the latest purveyor of cultural tourism would be incorrect. The emirates exert their influence through multiple other means as well. Until recently, the focus of Gulf countries such as the UAE (and Qatar and Saudi Arabia) was on internal development, bringing the infrastructure of their own countries on par with the rest of the world. Over the past two decades, their vision has turned outward as they implement their broader economic and ideological agendas for the region. Oil has certainly been one extremely important source of influence, but so too has the UAE's latest goal of disseminating religious ideology. Toward the latter goal, transnational mosques have served as important ambassadors to reify this ideology and to mark the Emirates' increasing influence in regional politics.

The Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation is a charitable organization established by the ruler of the United Arab Emirates in 2007 to "pioneer initiatives in the service of humanity," focusing on education, health, and emergency assistance. In 2010, the foundation provided aid to thirty-eight countries around the world, including twelve Arab countries, thirteen Asian, four African, and eight European, as well as Australia.<sup>52</sup>



FIGURE 4.18.  
Khalifa bin Zayed  
Al Nahyan Mosque,  
Jerusalem, ca.  
2013. Photograph  
by Mahdi Sabbagh.

Within the UAE, the foundation provides housing and free meals, especially during the holy month of Ramadan; in other countries, its charitable involvement is more diverse, from sending hundreds of tons of dates during Ramadan to constructing clinics and educational facilities.

Mosques are among the newer institutions patronized by the United Arab Emirates, and one particularly notable project is the Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Mosque in Jerusalem (fig. 4.18). Construction of the mosque began at the end of 2006, on a hillside overlooking the third holiest site in Islam, the Haram al-Sharif, where the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque are located. According to the director general of the foundation at the time of its inception, Salim Obaid Al Dhaheri, the new mosque would confirm the “Islamic identity of the holy city of Jerusalem.”<sup>53</sup> The director of endowments (Jerusalem Awqāf) noted that “this is the Arab-Muslim project next to al-Aqsa Mosque in terms of size. It is great evidence that Arabs and Muslims take Jerusalem seriously to safeguard its Islamic legacy and identity.”<sup>54</sup> The political rhetoric is clear; as the most contested site in the contemporary Middle East, Jerusalem plays a central role in pan-Muslim ideology, from Iran to Tunisia.

According to news reports and the foundation's website, the recently opened Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Mosque would be the second largest mosque in Jerusalem, after the al-Aqsa Mosque (built originally in 715), and would accommodate over six thousand worshippers in an area covering six thousand square meters.<sup>55</sup> The mosque would also include a public library, health center, and commercial facilities that would help offset the running expenses of the other services.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, four of the mosque's six levels are dedicated to retail facilities that will generate income for the endowment (plate 24). The lower two floors are the mosque itself; the first floor serves as a prayer space for men, and the second floor for women. With nine domes and two tall minarets casting a shadow across the massive site, the mosque's presence is hard to ignore. By building a monumental mosque in the heart of Jerusalem, the Abu Dhabi-based foundation has chosen to situate itself in the center of one of the most contentious issues of the day—that of Palestinian statehood. Recognizing the future of Jerusalem as a central concern for Muslims the world over, the small emirate has chosen to use its considerable wealth to emphasize Muslim presence in Jerusalem.

The foundation has also spent about \$55 million on aid and development projects in Shymkent, located in the most populous part of Kazakhstan, its southern province. The Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Mosque was inaugurated in June 2013, after three years of construction and a cost of approximately \$12 million (fig. 4.19). In addition to the mosque, the foundation has also built a new hospital and maternity ward, which was inaugurated at the same time. According to the foundation's website, the project "is aimed at promoting the human and spiritual values sought by the Foundation" and building strong ties between the UAE and Kazakhstan.<sup>57</sup> The mosque is built on an area of eight thousand square meters and includes a separate women's prayer space, accommodation for the imam, and a public library.<sup>58</sup> The mosque, which can accommodate up to six thousand people, is a massive structure, highly visible in the open plains of Shymkent, the third largest city in Kazakhstan. The four tall minarets rise to a height of thirty-one meters, and the dome is almost forty meters tall. The style of the building is enigmatic, drawing inspiration both from medieval Islamic architecture and what may be considered local idioms. The dome, for example, is a tentlike structure draped over the main prayer hall, its white roof capped by a small hemispherical dome. The unusual profile of the dome may be referencing the more eastern roots of Shymkent, a city founded in the twelfth century as a stop on the famous Silk Route.

Kazakhstan is poised to be among the top producers of petroleum,



FIGURE 4.19. Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Mosque, Shymkent.  
Photograph by Vita86. Wikimedia Commons.

alongside other minerals, such as uranium, copper, gold, and diamonds. The charitable gifts given by the foundation may be viewed as the cementing of political allegiances between wealthy nations. By developing a relationship with the newly liberated Kazakhstan, the UAE can seek to influence the country's rediscovery of its Islamic roots. Unlike the neo-Ottoman language deployed by the Ertuğrul Gazi Mosque in neighboring Turkmenistan, the Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Mosque is a strange hybrid of ambiguous styles, an amalgam of 1970s futurism and populism. This ambiguity is, of course, quickly put to rest with the naming of the building after the ruler of Abu Dhabi and its ongoing support through a fixed endowment administered by the foundation.

A public library is located in the center of the mosques in both Jerusalem and Shymkent—an inclusion that deserves some attention. The library may at once be seen as part of the educational mandate of the Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation; in the Kazakh case, it may also be seen as a perfect pulpit from which to proselytize Islam to a population emerging from communism. Visibility is gained not through function alone, but through the sheer monumentality of the mosques, which are massive structures with tall minarets and high domes. The UAE's global influence is witnessed by the way other developing countries try to achieve

the “Dubai effect” in terms of consumer capitalism and tourism. In the last few decades the central government in Abu Dhabi has also sought to extend its authority through charitable and religious donations, as the previous examples make evident.

The Emirates are seeking—each in its own way—to develop a national narrative both as individual monarchies and as a united federation. In tribal societies such as these, knowledge was traditionally disseminated orally, yet the modern need for documentary evidence is now felt as a way to insert oneself into the narrative of nations. Thus the Emirates commission publications, as well as buildings, to assert a particular kind of presence. Precedents are sought from a range of subjects, from tribal allegiances to the history of Islam in the broader region. The latter is a particularly fluid commodity, and inspiration is sought from a diverse set of geographical and temporal sites, as seen in the grand national mosques in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

The ambivalence in how history is evoked is most apparent in Sharjah, the cultural capital of the UAE. Sharjah is recognized as the most Wahhabi and conservative of the Emirates, with a prohibition on the consumption of alcohol and strict laws of gender segregation. Nonetheless, under the leadership of the ruler, Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, the city-state has also distinguished itself through its numerous higher education facilities and arts institutions. The Sharjah Biennial, for example, has attained international acclaim as an important arts venue with a focus on regional artists.

Sharjah is also home to more than six hundred mosques, three hundred of which are prominently located in the heart of the capital city. In a recent newspaper article, three of the city’s most “magnificent” mosques were highlighted, including the King Faisal Mosque and the Al Noor Mosque, both of which demonstrate the diverse goals of religious education in this emirate (fig. 4.20).<sup>59</sup> They also reveal distinct attitudes toward architectural style and its signification. The King Faisal Mosque was, as the name suggests, a gift of King Faisal bin Abdul Aziz Al al-Saud, the deceased ruler of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and was completed in 1987 (fig. 4.21). It will be remembered that the King Faisal Mosque in Islamabad was also a gift by the kingdom to an ally nation.

Like mosques in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the King Faisal Mosque is utilized for the dissemination of religious instruction, especially during Ramadan, when a diverse group of Muslims gather to hear sermons and lectures after sunset. Subjects covered include the study of hadith (the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad), *fiqh* (jurisprudence), and *‘aqida*





FIGURE 4.20. Locations of Sharjah mosques. Drawing by Mahdi Sabbagh.

(doctrine), the fundamentals of Islamic belief and practice.<sup>60</sup> The first two floors are dedicated to the main prayer hall, which can hold up to seventeen thousand worshippers; the women's prayer spaces are located in the basement. The mosque also houses the Sharjah Department of Islamic Affairs and Endowments, as well as the Sharjah International Charitable Organization.<sup>61</sup> The mosque is popular with residents, both Emirati and expatriate, who appreciate the emphasis on an authentic practice. The building is massive, with a footprint of approximately twelve thousand square meters. Its design is functional, with the dome and two minarets tacked onto an unadorned rectangular block. Besides these elements and the arched openings, the mosque could easily be mistaken for a convention center or a fancy parking garage. The mosque is thus distinguished more by its monumental size than by its architectural merits.

The Al Noor Mosque is also an imperial commission, but its architectural references is more easily identified than that of the King Faisal



FIGURE 4.21. King Faisal Mosque, Sharjah, completed in 1987. Photograph by the author.

Mosque (fig. 4.22). As noted by the patrons and visitors, the mosque is a copy of the Sultan Ahmet, or “Blue Mosque,” as it is popularly known, in Istanbul. The Ottoman reference is not ideological but aesthetic: the Blue Mosque is recognized the world over as one of the finest examples of mosque architecture, and its relationship with the longest monarchy in Islamic history adds to its significance.<sup>62</sup> The Al Noor Mosque was commissioned by Sheikha Jawaher bint Muhammad Al Qasimi, the wife of the ruler of Sharjah.<sup>63</sup> The building was designed by a local architect, Mahmud Ali Khalifa, of the firm Architectural Academic, and completed in 2005. Capable of holding over two thousand people, the mosque is not as large as the King Faisal Mosque, nor is it as popular. Nonetheless, it was selected as the home for the Sharjah Center for Cultural Communication, an organization whose mission includes “creating a greater understanding and awareness of the religion of Islam . . . [and] sharing our national identity and cultural traditions of the UAE with the expatriate community and visitors to Sharjah.”<sup>64</sup> Toward that goal, the mosque is open to tourists on a weekly basis, offering classes on Emirati culture and information sessions to help answer questions about Islam.



FIGURE 4.22. Al Noor Mosque, Sharjah, completed in 2007. Photograph by the author.

Acknowledging the need to introduce, if not integrate, the expatriate, non-Muslim community to the religion of the Emirates, the Al Noor Mosque follows in the example set by the Jumeirah Mosque in Dubai and continued by the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Abu Dhabi, both of which are linked to governmental organizations with the stated goal of facilitating cultural understanding. Once again, architecture serves as a conduit for nation building as well as negotiation. The diverse stylistic choices, utilizing references from India to Turkey, point to a deep cultural ambivalence. Although internationally acclaimed artists are brought to Sharjah to show their work, and famous “starchitects” are commissioned to build monumental skyscrapers and museums in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, mosque architecture in the UAE has not garnered the same attention. The Sheikh Zayed Mosque is perhaps the closest national mosque, yet its design is presented as elemental—that is, it is an assembly of forms and materials, pulled together at great governmental expense. The “global” is presented as a conceptual term in its design, which is not only stylistically diverse but

also brings together artists and craftsmen from all over the world. In order to make itself viable on the transnational arena, the UAE brings the world to the Gulf. Now, however, the wealthy nation is starting to assert its ideological agenda outward, through the patronage and construction of monumental transnational mosques in other countries chosen both for their sympathetic political vision and for their compatible economic agendas.

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## EPILOGUE The Mutability of History

History provides both the ideas that are in need of criticism and the material out of which this criticism is forged. An architecture that is constantly aware of its own history, but constantly critical of the seductions of history, is what we should aim for today.

—Alan Colquhoun, "Three Kinds of Historicism"

Transnational mosques actively engage with their public and its interpretation of history. Differing in context and motivation, they nonetheless serve as key representations of the role historical consciousness plays within religious and political discourse. Nations within the Middle East have increasingly turned to religious history as a source of legitimation and self-representation. This is obviously true for the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; the latter assumes the role (often contested) of the protector of traditional Islam and the holy lands of Mecca and Medina.<sup>1</sup> Republican Turkey is currently ruled by an Islamist prime minister, and the first democratically elected government of Egypt (2012–14) had ties to the Muslim Brotherhood. And in April 2013 Da'ish (also known as ISIS, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) was established as a transnational caliphate professing to unite all of Sunni Islam under its reactionary agenda. The turn toward religion as a political force is certainly not unique to the contemporary period; since the twentieth cen-

tury—and, in the case of Saudi Arabia, the eighteenth century—religious movements in the Middle East have often provided the impetus for political action. However, these movements were usually couched in the rhetoric of nationalism and, to a certain extent, marginalized in favor of more overtly secular ideologies. The histories of the Middle East, as exemplified in this book by the Republic of Turkey, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the United Arab Emirates, are complex and diverse. Yet for these four countries, the patronage and construction of state and transnational mosques has been a crucial part of their nation-building agenda. The mosques have also been an important resource: they allow these countries to disseminate their vision of Islam through the most fundamental Muslim institution. With the building of ambassadorial mosques, the donor countries reward allied nations and aim to influence their political and religious ideology. In commissioning state mosques in their own capital cities, the monuments become recondite interpretations of the nation's self-expression.

The mosques discussed in this book are monuments meant to symbolically embody the political and religious ideologies of the governments that have built them. However, mosque building can be equally viewed as a site of contestation and conflict. For example, the Imam Husayn Mosque in Dubai represents the theocratic state across the Persian Gulf as well as the exilic Iranian community that now calls the UAE its home. Similarly, the recent controversy over the construction of the Çamlıca Mosque in Istanbul (on the highest hill on the Asian side of the city) reveals deep tensions between nationalists in Turkey. On the one hand, the community of Çamlıca views the neo-Ottoman mosque as a sign of its inclusion within the rhetoric of a new Islamist Turkey; on the other hand, there are those who see it as reactionary, in terms of both its architectural design and what it symbolizes politically.

Although state-sponsored mosques in the contemporary Middle East are conceived as symbols of the nation's self-representation at a particular historical moment, the way they are used and understood is far from homogeneous. Thus a comparison between the Kocatepe Mosque in Ankara and the Khomeini Musallā in Tehran would yield two different attitudes toward populism and state-sponsored religion. The massive Khomeini Musallā remains incomplete and heavily guarded, accessible only by government decree and on specially sanctioned occasions. By contrast, the Kocatepe Mosque has embedded within it, literally, a set of functions that make it a thriving institution, from a supermarket and wedding salons, to Qur'an classes for children and adults. This mosque thus presents itself as

open and within reach even as it validates the intersection of religion and populism at the core of the current regime.

The conceptualization of the state within its broader spheres of influence is revealed through the patronage and construction of transnational, “ambassadorial” mosques. They are indicative of the very different ways that countries in the contemporary Middle East situate themselves within regional and global networks. Thus the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s patronage is mutable and assimilative, such that the message of Salafism is disseminated through mosques—often designated as cultural centers in the United States—whose design is not formally fixed but changes according to the local context. By contrast, the Iranian government disseminates a signature neo-Safavid style, sometimes implemented by craftsman from Isfahan or other centers of skilled artisanship within Iran. Overlaying its imprint on centuries-old pilgrimage networks, the Islamic Republic has assumed the mantle of Shi’i authority through its patronage of education centers, shrines, and mosques. All four of the countries studied in this book have attempted to stake their claim in the post-Soviet Republics, even as they begin exploring ways of also connecting with Muslim communities in Africa and Southeast Asia.

The complex interplay of political and religious ideologies is at the core of contemporary discourse in the Middle East. As the examples of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia make evident, theocratic governments utilize the construction of national mosques in order to validate themselves, locally and internationally. Similarly, they reify the interconnected histories of the region, as typified by the Shi’i pilgrimage networks that provide the conduit for Iranian propaganda. Mosques and shrines prove to be central to the mobility of communities and their belief. For the Turkish Republic, mobility also characterizes its citizens; thus the country has undertaken large-scale mosque projects for the diaspora residing in locations as diverse as Germany and Turkmenistan. The transnational mosques thus provide a sense of belonging, whether through national, ethnic, or religious identities.

Historical form is imbued with contemporary meaning, signifying a past simultaneously indigenized and appropriated. Thus when an Ottoman-style mosque appears in Europe or Central Asia, one is left to wonder if the ambitions of the great Sultan Suleyman (The Lawgiver) have finally come to fruition or if the mosques are an iteration of the Miniaturk Miniature Park in Istanbul, with its replicas of well-known architectural and cultural monuments displayed in an architectural theme park (fig. E.1).<sup>2</sup> Similarly, when Persian craftsmanship unites Shi’i shrines from Mashhad to Bei-





FIGURE E.1. Hagia Sophia, Miniaturk Miniature Park, Istanbul, 2013.  
Photograph by Selin Unluonen.

rut, the experience of entering them is uncanny and unsettling, as though one were constantly reappearing in the same space, regardless of the hundreds of kilometers separating these sites. Temporal and geographical disjunction defines the architectural design of contemporary transregional mosques; it is part of their powerful signification but also, in terms of architectural design, part of their weakness.

The mosques analyzed in this book rely heavily on architectural detailing, from the conceptualization of the project to its articulation. Thus, in the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi, the diverse styles of Islamic architecture are faithfully reproduced, from the Mughal domes to the minarets, “combining Mamluk, Ottoman and Fatimid styles” in order to “fuse the wide and diverse Islamic world into one summation of art and beauty.”<sup>3</sup> The idea of creating a catalog of Islamic architecture is deeply embedded in this project and is meant to reflect the heterogeneous nature of Emirati society itself. Similarly, the materials are sourced from several places in the world: the marbles, for example, were quarried in Greece, India, Italy, and China. Here the effect is to highlight not only Abu Dhabi’s multiculturalism but also its economic wealth. Repeating a trope already

established in the medieval and early modern periods, in which historians documented the miraculous appearance of quarries and the ability of the ruler to have precious stones brought from the far reaches of the empire, the patrons of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque effectively remind its visitors that the endeavor is a blessed one and the ruler who undertakes it is divinely sanctioned. History is evoked, albeit in strange and uncanny ways.

## Architects and the Rhetoric of Postmodernity

The aggregation of forms and materials comes in addition to the accumulation of architectural expertise. This book is populated with the names of designers and architects, some well-known and others less so. Thus overlaid on narratives of national histories are individual biographies; the motivations of architectural self-expression are no less intricate and no more geographically stable. History is deployed by these architects as a style, as a personal reverie, and as a mode of identity formation. A leading proponent of historicism is the Egyptian architect Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil, who has built several mosques in Saudi Arabia. His pared-down aesthetic references Mamluk architecture yet moves beyond national or regional specificity.<sup>4</sup> In fact, El-Wakil's mosques have come to represent the revisionist direction in the architecture of the Islamic world, one that is essentialist yet complex, much like the Salafism espoused by his patron, the Saudi government.

El-Wakil is the graduate of Ain-Shams University in Cairo and also taught there, in the Department of Architecture, from 1965 to 1970. During his years at Ain-Shams El-Wakil became enchanted with the writings of the nineteenth-century architectural critic John Ruskin, whose emphasis on imbuing Gothic style with a moral imperative was influential for several twentieth-century architects. The connection between historical and religious revival and architecture was not lost on El-Wakil. In the late 1960s, he began an apprenticeship with the renowned Egyptian architect and planner Hassan Fathy (1900–1989), who at the time was developing his theories for social urbanism and the revival of indigenous architecture (plate 25).

Islamic architecture would remain a touchstone for El-Wakil throughout his career, even as his practice moved from Cairo to the United Kingdom. As the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia gained unprecedented oil wealth, El-Wakil was employed by the rulers as well as members of the ruling elite to build mosques. Thus by 1989, at the peak of King Fahd's Mosques

Project, he had completed eleven projects, from the large congregational mosques of King Saud and Qiblatayn (in Jeddah and Medina, respectively), to the smaller, private commissions along the waterfront in Jeddah. Recent scholars have criticized the way El-Wakil liberally borrows from historical mosques; indeed, according to one critic the sources are as varied as the Great Mosque in Isfahan and the Ashrafiyya Mosque in Ta'iz, Yemen.<sup>5</sup> In this consistent reorganization of forms that once identified the particularities of an empire or a faith, El-Wakil's work appears at first glance both essentialist and Orientalist, in that context and history are removed, reducing the Middle East to a timeless and placeless entity. However, in whitewashing away all ornamentation and decorative detailing, El-Wakil's mosques appear profoundly modern; reductive and formal, they owe as much to Le Corbusier as to Sinan.

Placing himself within the lineage of Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil is the Lebanese architect Azmi Fakhouri, designer of the Muhammad al-Amin Mosque in Beirut.<sup>6</sup> Like El-Wakil, Fakhouri views himself as an avid student of Islamic architecture and a proponent of historicism, especially in the context of contemporary mosques. Knowledge about style and technique, for Fakhouri, is learned through the act of building itself, mediated through the skill of artisans and craftsmen. He graduated in 1981 from the Beirut Arab University, with a bachelor's degree in architecture, and is currently the project architect for Oger Liban, the Lebanese branch of Saudi Oger Ltd., a multinational construction, facilities management, telecommunication, and utilities business owned by the Hariri family.<sup>7</sup> According to Fakhouri, the al-Amin Mosque, patronized by the charismatic Lebanese prime minister Rafic Hariri, was built through complex negotiations between the client, Oger Liban, and Solidere (the building authority overseeing the reconstruction of downtown Beirut at the time). The primary mandate given to the architect by all parties was to ensure the historicity and monumentality of the al-Amin Mosque, thus reflecting Hariri's vision.<sup>8</sup>

Fakhouri's mosque has easily recognizable historical references even as it defies regional associations. It has been compared most often with the Blue Mosque in Istanbul owing to its blue dome, even though the Sultan Ahmet Mosque (the correct designation) is named for the blue and white ceramic tiles on its interior. The slippage of word and reality is not unlike the misquotations that often occur when a language is being newly used. Although Lebanon was certainly once part of the Ottoman Empire, the style of the al-Amin Mosque appears an anomaly in terms of scale as well as materiality. In fact, the yellow sandstone covering the façade was

quarried not in Lebanon or even in the region, but brought from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The criticism of the al-Amin Mosque has been that its monumental scale and imperial aesthetic are foreign to the city of Beirut, even though the designer is himself a native. Indeed, like the imported façade, the mosque demonstrates the transnational sources of influence that define power and religion in Lebanon today.

Azmi Fakhouri's emphasis on historicism is born out of what the architect sees as a crisis in architectural education in the Middle East, one in which students and educators turn more toward Euro-American trends than regional architectural history. Architects such as Fakhouri view themselves as marginalized from the academy, master architects of an art of building soon to be forgotten. Indeed, few students of architecture in the Middle East turn toward historic preservation, which is often seen as under the purview of governmental or international agencies. Although they are the heirs to great civilizations, architects such as Fakhouri argue, most modern architects have forgotten their cultural heritage and have little way of accessing it. The preservationist spirit is a powerful one. It is a reflection of more general attitudes within Islam, wherein a return to an idealized period of history is represented by the popular Salafist belief propagated by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

For the Turkish architect Hilmi Şenalp, ethnicity and nationalism are equally important reasons for a return to Ottoman architecture. However, the design is couched in the language of Turkish-Muslim identity as represented during the Ottoman period. In an interview given to *SkyLife*, the magazine of the national Turkish Airlines, Şenalp stated, "The mosque is the heart of our civilization, Turkish-Islamic civilization." This view is shared by Şenalp's powerful patron, President Recep Erdoğan, who has commissioned the architect to design several neo-Ottoman mosques throughout the world. In 2012, Erdoğan, then prime minister, inaugurated the Mimar Sinan Mosque, saying that although there were several imperial Ottoman mosques on the European side of Istanbul, there wasn't such a *selatin* (imperial) monument on the Asian side (fig. E.2).<sup>9</sup> Thus a new monumental mosque, with a massive dome and four minarets towering to a height of forty-two meters, was built to accommodate ten thousand worshippers. Appropriating the role of the benevolent sultan, Erdoğan also mimicked the rituals of sovereignty enacted by the Ottomans by gifting miniature models of the mosque to visiting dignitaries, such as the president of Gabon, Ali Bongo Ondimba, and the Speaker of the Iraqi National Parliament at the time, Osama Nujaifi. Recognizing the significance of the event, the Gabonese president said, "The great Turkish nation



FIGURE E.2. Prime Minister Recep Erdoğan at the Mimar Sinan Mosque, Istanbul, 2012. Photograph by Anadolu Agency/Getty Images.

has led us throughout history. Turkey will continue to enlighten the world today as it has done so in the past.”<sup>10</sup> The resurgence of a nativist identity is thus coupled with the political ambition to influence the region far beyond Turkey’s geographical borders, and mosque building has proven to be an important resource in asserting an aesthetically and ideologically powerful global presence.

Architects such as Hilmi Şenalp, Azmi Fakhouri, and Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil view themselves as agents in the revival of cultural heritage, even as each reacts distinctly to the different political strategies of his patrons. Whether speaking about a shared Islamic culture or writing about a nationalist identity, the architects move fluidly between the heterodoxies of contemporary architectural practice. That they are themselves Turkish, Lebanese, and Egyptian, respectively, lends authority to their vision, formed as it might be from their own experiences as residents of Istanbul, Beirut, and Cairo. This authority is particular to the contemporary emphasis on mosque building, in which indigenous knowledge is accepted as a valued resource.<sup>11</sup>



FIGURE E.3. Fatima Al-Sulty Mosque, Doha, completed in 1985. Architect, Helmut Borchardt. © Aga Khan Award for Architecture. Courtesy of the architect (photographer).

In the earlier years of the twentieth century, designers of national monuments were often European and commissioned to build modern structures such as museums and universities. Following in their footsteps is one such figure, Helmut Borchardt, a German architect who was hired by the emir of Qatar, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al Thani, to build mosques in his kingdom at a time when mosque building had become a popular form of patronage among the Gulf States. Recalling his first meetings with the sheikh in Munich, Borchardt writes about bringing the sheikh to a small German town, Rothenburg, to show him the pride the residents of the town took in their past. That the Qataris had a different conception of their history came as a surprise to Borchardt, who writes of how ancient monuments were destroyed in order to make room for new ones.<sup>12</sup> For the German architect, Qatar was a *tabula rasa* on which he could build any style of mosque, regardless of precedent. The three modest mosques that he designed for Doha in the 1980s are, indeed, pastiches of old and new references as well as traditional and modern forms. They are as placeless and timeless as he had intended them to be (fig. E.3).<sup>13</sup> The relationship of foreign architects such as Borchardt to the patron's country is necessarily different than that of a local architect. Even Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil brought with him references of his own homeland, build-

ing in Jeddah and Medina memories of Egypt. For Borchardt, his memory sources were Orientalist fantasies in Indian movies, fairy tales, and *One Thousand and One Nights*.<sup>14</sup> That these illusory spaces were welcomed by his Qatari patrons speaks to the disjunctive narratives that are part of the national imaginary in several postcolonial contexts, both in the Middle East and elsewhere.

## A Corporate Modernity

The transnational mosques studied in this book are of unprecedented architectural complexity in terms of design and execution. Their form may appear straightforward, but their massive scale and multifaceted programming demand diverse technical skills and expertise. In order to achieve the results expected by the patrons, multinational construction management companies have been brought in to oversee the building process, from the procurement of raw materials to the selection of lighting designers. This is definitely the case for monumental state mosques, such as the Tehran Musallā, the Muhammad al-Amin Mosque, and the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque. Whereas the case of the Tehran Musallā remains shrouded in some mystery, the construction management of the latter two was more obvious. The al-Amin Mosque, for example, was begun during the lifetime of Rafic Hariri and its construction undertaken by Oger Liban, his family enterprise. More than thirty-five different subcontractors were involved in this project, with obvious economic gain envisioned for the Hariri family.

Halcrow Engineering Consultancy, a London-based firm with over ninety offices worldwide, is a prime example of the multi-disciplinary expertise needed to accomplish the goals of creating a superlative monument. According to the firm's website, it undertakes projects from the pre-preplanning stage "through to delivery and on-going maintenance and management."<sup>15</sup> In Abu Dhabi, the firm has projects that range from building new runways at the International Airport to developing the al-Bateen Wharf and Marina. The firm was also the primary construction supervisor of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque. Halcrow acted as a liaison between the numerous designers, craftsmen, and contractors who were called in to create a remarkably complex monument. For example, lighting designers Speirs and Major Associates worked alongside traditional Indian craftsmen carving imported Italian marble. A collage of architectural elements and historical references, the mosque nonetheless serves as a national monument, one whose existence would not be possible without the skills of a multinational construction company.

Halcrow was established in 1868 in the United Kingdom as an engineering company specializing in ports and railways. Very soon thereafter, the company took on a broader mandate and started consulting globally. Halcrow has been in the United Arab Emirates since the mid-twentieth century, working in conjunction with the British government to support oil production and exploration in the Gulf region. As Halcrow's website explains, "The company played a major role in the development of the Gulf states and in the 1960s and 70s were the consulting engineers for major projects such as Port Rashid and Jebel Ali Port in Dubai and the Ports of Jeddah and Jubail in Saudi Arabia."<sup>16</sup> Thus the relationship of Halcrow with the United Arab Emirates is long-standing, and its ability to interpret the needs of the UAE government is unquestionable. Despite a recent characterization by an American presidential candidate, corporations are *not* people,<sup>17</sup> yet they do bring with them ideologies of their own—namely, corporate capitalism—and gain legitimacy through their own narratives of production. In the case of Halcrow, that narrative is of a multinational firm which, alongside the British government, has been a key ally and developer of the UAE. This narrative affects the work of architecture precisely in the hyperprofessionalization of the construction of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque and the subsequent placelessness of the mosque itself. The corporate aesthetic is clearly visible in the mosque, with its expensive materials yet its lack of singular expression.

### Weathering and Historical Contingency

Multiple narratives coalesce in the context of the transnational mosque, sometimes competing for authority, and no single narrative is static or immutable. Indeed, as a closer look at the monuments discussed makes clear, the significance of each mosque changes according to political and social transformations in the broader public realm. Take, for example, the Faisal Mosque in Islamabad, based on Vedat Dalokay's design for the Kocatepe Mosque in Ankara. The translation of the national context also brought a shift in the mosque's meaning. Rejected in the Turkish capital, where it was deemed too abstract, the mosque was hailed in Pakistan for its architectural references to the Ottoman Empire. It was also recognized as an acknowledgment of the Islamic Republic's powerful ally, Saudi Arabia's King Faisal, who gifted the mosque to the capital city. At the time of its construction, the Faisal Mosque was hailed as a celebratory project, the epitome of President Zia ul-Haq's close relationship with the kingdom. Millions of dollars were spent, and the country's greatest living sculptor



at the time, Muhammad Ismail Gulgee, was commissioned to design the mihrab and calligraphy. It also serves as the final resting place of Zia ul-Haq, who died in 1988 when the airplane he was flying in exploded. The relationship between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continues to be strong, but it is no longer without criticism. The Faisal Mosque symbolizes Pakistan's political and economic dependency on Saudi largesse, and the gift is now viewed as a harbinger of a deeply flawed alliance.

What emerges from an analysis of the Faisal Mosque is that its meaning is far from stable, and while the monument may be geographically fixed, its meaning is in constant flux. Such is the nature of all the monuments considered here, captured as they are in particular moments in time. In general, this study has paid attention to the context of their construction by looking at issues of design and patronage. A complementary study would consider the changes of the buildings over time—their weathering, as it were. Alongside changes to the physical infrastructure, such as expansions and embellishments, such a study would look at changes in access (for women, for example), patronage, and urban impact. Weathering, thus, is not only a physical aspect of architecture but also a metaphorical one, signaling the intrinsic—if sometimes unanticipated—transformations that take place over time.

Historical contingency is a foundation of architecture, rooted as it is in the temporalities of its production. Transnational mosques are excellent examples of that contingency but also of the mutability of the historical narrative when applied to nationalist agendas. Indeed, it is the unwavering belief in the power of historical memory that drives transnational mosques, whether sponsored by the Turkish Republic or the United Arab Emirates. With what temporal and stylistic references that memory is constructed, and for whom, is as heterogeneous as the suburbs of Berlin and the plains of Shymkent, respectively, where these governments have gifted their monumental mosques. What the host nation receives is an architectural iconography imbued with references to patrons far away, and shared aspirations (or at the least expectations) for the future. Thus with the neo-Ottoman design of the Ertuğrul Gazi Mosque in Ashgabad, the architect, Hilmi Şenalp, and his client, the Turkish government, aimed to evoke a relationship at once ancient and essential; modern-day Turks assert an ethno-linguistic origin in Central Asia, and post-Soviet Republics, such as Turkmenistan, look to Western Asia for a way to rejuvenate their Islamic heritage, long suppressed under communism. The symbiotic, if divergent, motivations behind the deployment of the neo-Ottoman iconography point to the broader transnational connections that extend the

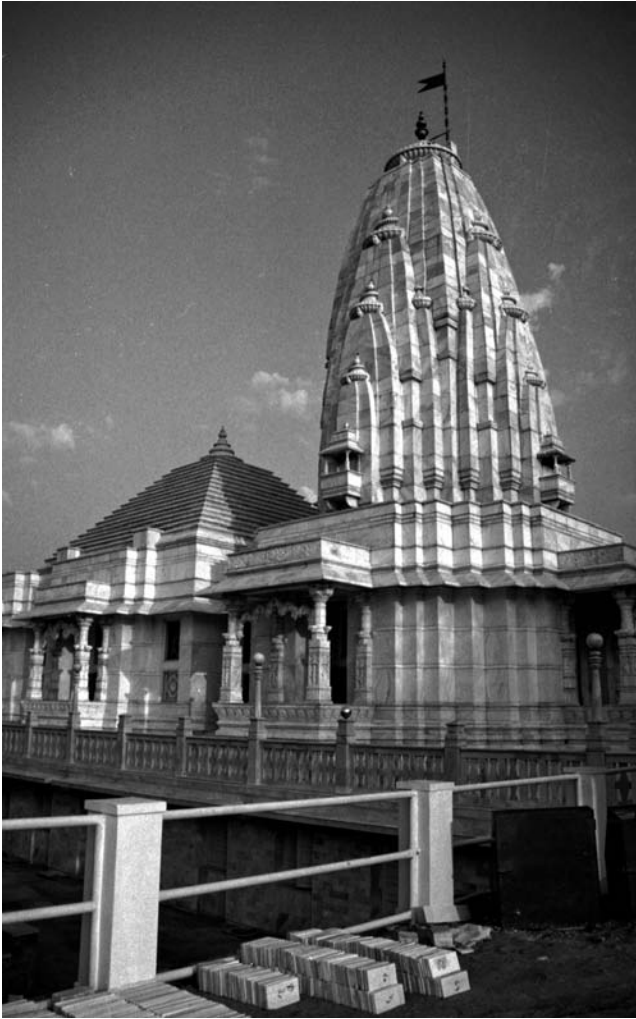


FIGURE E.4.  
Birla Temple,  
Jaipur, completed  
in 1985.  
Photograph by  
Tamara Sears.

Middle East beyond its traditional borders. They also expand the connections between communities of Muslim belief.

The intersection of architecture, religion, and politics is a crucial focus of analysis in studying transnational mosques. Religion is the mortar that binds the institution of the mosque to its antecedents and also connects it synchronically to other devotional sites, Islamic and otherwise. Thus the global resurgence of Hindu nationalism, as seen in the prevalence of temple building (fig. E.4); the presence of Christian fundamentalist movements in the United States and their megachurches; and the nationalist appropriation of Islam and the construction of transnational mosques

emanating from the Middle East may be viewed as symptomatic of a twenty-first-century global imaginary that has turned to religious identity as a form of political agency. In contrast to economic and social systems, such as capitalism and communism, that have fallen short of solving questions of poverty and human rights, among other goals laid out by early twentieth-century ideologues, religion promises salvation not only in this world but also in the afterlife. The future projection is essential to understanding the motivations behind the current enthusiasm for mosque building, on the scale of individual belief as well as nationalist aspirations. Building is similarly an art of optimism, assuming its own longevity and historical relevance. Transnational mosques, with their varied historical references, are thus physical reminders of the past and yet intrinsically forward-oriented.

The architectural implications of the historical turn in contemporary mosque building are profound, shedding light on design trends and political motivation that move beyond the Middle East. As discussed in this book, the reasons for rejecting the modernist abstraction that defined institutional architecture of the mid-twentieth century in favor of the literal copying of “classical” forms are varied. The stylistic choices for the design of transnational mosques referenced indigenous architecture in some cases (such as the Grand Mosque in Riyadh) or imperial patronage in others (such as the neo-Ottoman style of Şenalp’s mosques). In both cases, architectural style was viewed as an expression of national identity, regardless of whether the mosque was built within the sponsoring state or gifted to another country. The fluidity of meaning is indicative of an attitude toward the past that construes it as a tangible and reproducible commodity. The often direct reproduction of an architectural monument, or at least its image, is thus an indicator of a belief in the reproducibility of the social and political ideals associated with a particular moment in time. As the architectural theorist and historian Alan Colquhoun noted in 1983, in the context of postmodern classicism in Euro-American architecture, “classicism cannot be identified objectively with any particular content or ideology, but . . . rather it is an architectural tradition capable of attracting a host of different and contradictory meanings within the same broad cultural environment.”<sup>18</sup> Transnational mosques built over the past thirty years are certainly proof of “the profound eclecticism of modern culture, in which different cultural paradigms exist side by side at different levels of discourse.”<sup>19</sup> Thus the historical allusions may in one context refer to a particular nation’s nativism and in another context to a belief in universal Islamic identity. The location of the reference is in constant motion, unstable yet porous.

The backward glance cast by the patrons and builders of transnational mosques in the 1980s was acceptable within a broader discourse on postmodern architecture, whose goal it was to “bring existing symbols and expressive forms, understood and accepted by broad segments of the population, into the realm of architecture.”<sup>20</sup> Advocates of architectural classicism included Michael Graves and Robert Stern in the United States, and Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil in the Middle East. The latter’s work gained an intellectual currency which, coupled with the nationalist goals of his patrons, legitimized the historicism that would define transnational mosques at the end of the twentieth century.

Just as a return to religious fundamentals may appear to some as ideologically limited, an architectural style based on replication may be interpreted as unimaginative. Indeed, transnational mosques are seldom included in the larger discourse on contemporary architecture and are viewed by local architects as derivative and anti-intellectual. This critique is valid, but is sometimes equally reactionary. Contemporary architecture, as designed by famous architects and displayed in glossy magazines, can appear equally superficial, more involved with hermeneutics than with ritual and use. Therefore asserting the relationship between religion and contemporary architecture further complicates traditional discourses in architectural history, which privilege formalism or abstraction at the cost of social and phenomenological concerns. One of the central tenets of modern architecture has been its social relevance and its ability to engage with diverse publics, a goal sometimes forgotten by the builders of transnational mosques as well as by their critics.

Invented ceremonies can alter forever the history of countries and regions. In the case of the Middle East, they have been typified by the modern commemoration of the Jewish Revolt in Masada against the Romans of 66 CE and the celebration of the twenty-five hundredth anniversary of the foundation of the Persian state by Cyrus the Great.<sup>21</sup> The national rhetoric (of Israel and Iran, respectively) that was the impetus for these events would define—at least for a while—the way the countries viewed their ideological inheritance. Similarly, architectural commemoration and monumentalization can be fictional, altering the way in which people interpret the past and inhabit the present. Take, for example, the tomb of the Ayatollah Khomeini, the ideologue of the Iranian Revolution. The ayatollah had requested to be buried in the Behesht-i Zahra cemetery on the outskirts of Tehran, where the martyrs of the Iran-Iraq War were interred. He was subsequently buried on the edges of the cemetery, but instead of a modest tomb, the government built a giant shrine to mark the semidivine



FIGURE E.5. Bhong Mosque, Bhong, completed ca. 1982. © Aga Khan Award for Architecture/Jacques Betant (photographer).

status the leader of the revolution had achieved. At its inauguration in 1989 and the following decade, the shrine of Khomeini became a popular pilgrimage site, taking its place with the centuries-old pantheon of Shi'i shrines in Iran, Iraq, and Syria.<sup>22</sup> Even more recently, the ubiquitous construction of large musallās for Friday and Eid prayers has shifted the focus of Iranian public piety from shrines to mosques, thereby also signaling the need for the Shi'i state to conform to the fundamental rituals of Islamic devotion.

Architecture, especially that of religious institutions such as mosques, is an indicator of social change and can profoundly shape how people conceive of their place in the world. While this book has focused on state-sponsored transnational mosques, it is also important to be aware of more modest examples of privately funded or locally supported mosques that turn away from grand nationalist narratives. Two significant examples are the Bhong Mosque (fig. E.5), which was flamboyantly renovated in 1982 by a local landlord of a small village in Pakistan, and Sherefudin's White Mosque (fig. E.6), built in 1985 for a local community in Visoko, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Both buildings are responsive to the tastes and needs



FIGURE E.6. Sherefudin's White Mosque, Visoko, completed in 1980.  
Architect, Zlatko Ugljen. © Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

of the clients, whether in the abundant use of polychrome tiles and pastiche motifs in the Bhong Mosque, or in the modest scale and modernist articulation of the White Mosque, designed by Sherban Cantacuzino.<sup>23</sup> The latter monument is of particular interest, not only because of its geographical context at the edges of the Islamic world, but also for the aesthetic choices made by the designer. Resisting the typical historicist image, the architect chose to reference modern classics instead, such as Le Corbusier's Ronchamp Cathedral, with its sculptural forms and reinterpretation of the stock elements of church architecture. In the White Mosque, the mihrab is a simple rectangular cut in the qibla wall, embellished only by a wooden hood. There are no domes, and the minaret is abstracted to the extent that it appears simultaneously to be a wind-catcher and a lighthouse. Yet the scale and simplicity give the mosque an expression of deep spirituality, doing what architecture can do best—speak to the essentials of human inhabitation.

Architectural history, theory, and design cannot be studied through categories of typology or geography alone. Neither can modernism and postmodernism be viewed simply as stylistic choices or ideological polari-

ties. As the architectural theorist Anthony Vidler writes, “To think as a modernist, would be to think of history as an active and profoundly disturbing force; to take history on its own terms; realistically or idealistically to tangle with history and wrestle it into shape. It would be, indeed, to think historically.”<sup>24</sup> The transnational mosques examined in this book are important indicators of trends in architecture, politics, and Islam at the turn of the twenty-first century. Nonetheless, these buildings can be criticized for falling short of engaging with their historical moment. The future of religion, as well as architecture, lies in the ability to “wrestle history into shape,” which requires an understanding of the important issues of the present—environmental stewardship, economic and political inequalities, and the place of the individual within a hyperconnected world. A truly modern transnational architecture, of mosques in particular, would gain relevance by envisioning a future where historical agency was distributed among varied publics and communities of belief. Thus history would be not simply a stylistic choice but a provocative enabler, creating a new discourse for Islam in the twenty-first century.

## Introduction

1. On the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas, see Flood, "Between Cult and Culture," and Elias, "The Taliban, Bamiyan, and Revisionist Iconoclasm."
2. Rizvi and Isenstadt, *Modernism and the Middle East*; Rizvi, "Religious Icon and National Symbol."
3. Cooke and Lawrence, *Muslim Networks from Hajj to Hip Hop*.
4. The program has since been changed. The current proposal calls for condominiums and a museum of Islamic art, the latter to be designed by the French architect Jean Nouvel.
5. Holod and Khan, *Mosque and the Modern World*, 63.
6. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*.
7. Hannerz, *Transnational Connections*.
8. Sassen, "Spatialities and Temporalities of the Global."
9. Sheller and Urry, "The New Mobilities Paradigm," 212. Scholars have previously acknowledged that globalization has to be seen through the transnational lens (Hannerz, *Transnational Connections*); its enactment is dynamic and contingent and takes



place within zones of both fixity and mobility (Sassen, "Spatialities and Temporalities of the Global").

10. Olesen, "The Porous Public and the Transnational Dialectic."

11. Guggenheim and Söderström, introduction to *Re-shaping Cities*.

12. A notable example is the work of Bozdogan, *Modernism and Nation Building*. See also Grigor, *Building Iran*. Several such studies are collected in Rizvi and Isenstadt, *Modernism and the Middle East*. A recent analysis on the subject of architecture and nationalism is Kusno, "Rethinking the Nation."

13. The terms are borrowed from Amanat, "Is There a Middle East?"

14. Gasper, "There Is a Middle East," 240.

15. Shi'i Muslims pray three times a day, combining the two afternoon and two evening prayers.

16. The Eid al-Fitr (Festival of the Breaking of the Fast) marks the end of the month of fasting, Ramadan. Eid al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice) is a celebration of the prophet Abraham's willing sacrifice of his youngest son, Isma'il. Muslims emulate the miraculous event in which Isma'il was replaced, according to belief, with a lamb. For the Eid al-Fitr, see E. Mittwoch, "Īd al-Fitr," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W. P. Heinrichs, Brill Online, [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/i-d-al-fit-r-SIM\\_3473](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/i-d-al-fit-r-SIM_3473) (accessed August 3, 2013).

17. On the issue of asylum and sanctuary, see Calmard, "Bast," in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/bast-sanctuary-asylum#article-tags-overlay> (accessed July 25, 2014).

18. For the etymology, early history, architectural history, and general information see "Masjdīd," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed., ed. M. Th. Houtsma, T. W. Arnold, R. Basset, and R. Hartmann, Brill Online, [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/masdj-id-COM\\_0155](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/masdj-id-COM_0155) (accessed August 3, 2013).

19. Before Muhammad's migration to Medina in 622, the Muslims prayed in the direction of Jerusalem, recognized already at that time as the spiritual home of the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam).

20. A notable example is Bloom, *Minaret, Symbol of Islam*.

21. A few recent anthropological studies have focused on the tensions and negotiations undertaken in the building of neighborhood mosques. See, for example, Khan, "Mosque Construction or the Violence of the Ordinary," and Hull, "Uncivil Politics and the Appropriation of Planning in Islamabad."

22. On the issue of mosques in the United States, see Khalidi, "Import, Adapt, Innovate."

23. Mosques and other religious institutions, such as madrasas and shrines, are often supported through *waqf* endowment, which is made in perpetuity. Whereas earlier these were administered by *shari'a* courts, most endowments are now overseen by the Ministry of Awqaf, which is a government agency.

24. The case in Iran has changed since the 1979 Revolution, in that *shari'a* has been integrated into the civil law codes.

25. The issue of "age-value" was first introduced by the nineteenth-century art histo-

rian Alois Riegl. For a recent examination of his writings and their relationship to conservation, see Arrhenius, "The Cult of Age in Mass-Society." There are several articles on the development of the heritage industry in the Middle East, notably, that by Altinyildiz, "The Architectural Heritage of Istanbul and the Ideology of Preservation"; see also Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities*.

26. The relative absence of late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century monuments is evidenced by general surveys of Islamic art, which tend to end with the advent of European colonialism.

27. Such ideation is not limited to the Islamic case alone; it can be seen in other cultural contexts as well. In surveys of modern architecture, church building is not recognized as a genre unto itself, but viewed as a digression or an aberration when undertaken by influential architects. Thus although architects such as Le Corbusier and Eero Saarinen built churches, these projects are often characterized as experimental or anomalous. Interestingly, a number of monographs were composed in the nineteenth century on the subject of "modern" churches, such as Tress, *Modern Churches*. More recent publications tend to aggregate modern churches in survey form, such as Yates, *Liturgical Space*. This is also the case in the case of Qajar Iran, as seen in Ritter, *Moscheen und Madrasabauten in Iran, 1785–1848*.

28. The classical styles were codified in art historical texts, such as those by Arthur Upham Pope, A. C. Creswell, and others. See Isenstadt and Rizvi, *Modernism and the Middle East*, 9–12.

29. There are two branches of Ismaʿīli Islam, both also known as "Sevener" Shīʿi (Nizari and Bohri), in distinction from the majority of Shīʿi, who are known as "Twelvers" because they venerate the twelve Shīʿi imams. Both sects recognize the authority of the sixth imam, Jaffer al-Sadiq, but they divide regarding veneration of his descendants. See Amir-Moezzi, "Shīʿite Doctrine," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/shiite-doctrine> (accessed April 9, 2012).

30. Holod and Khan, *Mosque and the Modern World*, 228.

31. Ibid., 233.

32. Recently the Friday prayers have been held at the Khomeini Musallā, in Abbasabad. This massive prayer space is still under construction.

33. "Putin Visits Mammoth Grozny Mosque," *Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty*, October 16, 2008, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Putin\\_Visits\\_Mammoth\\_Grozny\\_Mosque/1330491.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Putin_Visits_Mammoth_Grozny_Mosque/1330491.html) (accessed August 6, 2013).

34. The literature on the subject of encounters is too vast to tabulate here. For a recent example, see Schülting, Müller, and Hertel, *Early Modern Encounters with the Islamic East*.

35. Rizvi, "Persian Pictures."

36. On Sinan's oeuvre, see Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*.

37. The project was conceived by Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, an Egyptian-born cleric, and Sharif el-Gamal, an Egyptian-American real estate developer who wanted to build a community center in downtown Manhattan.

38. For several such cartoons criticizing the project, see "Some Thoughts on the Ground Zero Mosque," posted August 13, 2012, <http://www.crethiplethi.com/some>

-thoughts-on-the-ground-zero-mosque/usa/2010/. The original writer was the early twentieth-century nationalist Ziya Gökalp, and the poem is titled “The Soldier’s Prayer” (1912). Reproduced in White, “Islam and Politics in Contemporary Turkey.”

39. For a detailed discussion of Park 51 Community Center, see Rizvi, “Transnational Architecture, Ethics, and the Reification of History.”

40. According to the architect who designed the proposal, Michel Abboud, the prayer area will be located in the basement area of the building and has not yet been designed.

41. Rabbat, “The Arab Revolution Takes Back the Public Space.”

42. AlSayyad, “The Fundamentalist City?,” 8.

43. Attwood, Chakrabarty, and Lomnitz, “The Public Life of History.”

44. Virilio, “The Insecurity of History,” 72.

45. Abd el-Wahed El-Wakil, “Report on the Nomination of the Mosques of Saudi Arabia,” [http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site\\_id=773](http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site_id=773) (accessed June 25, 2012). See also Steele, “The New Traditionalists.”

46. Mallgrave and Goodman, “Postmodernism and Critical Regionalism,” 93.

47. Kamin, “Notre Dame Awards Classical Driehaus Prize to Robert A. M. Stern,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 14, 2010, [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2010-12-14/entertainment/chi-notre-dame-driehaus-architect-robert-stern-121410\\_1\\_richard-h-driehaus-prize-classical-architecture-pritzker-architecture-prize](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2010-12-14/entertainment/chi-notre-dame-driehaus-architect-robert-stern-121410_1_richard-h-driehaus-prize-classical-architecture-pritzker-architecture-prize) (accessed August 11, 2013).

48. “Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil,” Driehaus Prize website, <http://architecture.nd.edu/about/driehaus-prize/recipient/abdel-wahed-el-wakil/> (accessed August 11, 2013).

49. Colquhoun, “Three Kinds of Historicism,” 202.

50. *Ibid.*, 208.

51. Architecturally, the movement echoes the Gothic Revivals of the nineteenth century in the United Kingdom, led by theorists and architects such as A. W. Pugin and John Ruskin. For the connections between them, see Hill, “Pugin and Ruskin.”

52. Frampton, “Prospects for a Critical Regionalism.” For a succinct explanation, see Otero-Pailos, “Architectural Phenomenology and the Rise of Postmodernism,” 147.

53. “Aga Khan Award for Architecture,” Aga Khan Development Network website, <http://www.akdn.org/architecture/default.asp> (accessed August 12, 2013).

## Chapter One

1. Şehitlik Camii website, <http://www.sehitlik-camii.de/pi4/index.html> (accessed April 10, 2012).

2. Esposito and Burgat, *Modernizing Islam*, 232.

3. Nielsen, *Muslims in Western Europe*, 2.

4. The issue of Orientalist mosques in Europe has been discussed widely; a recent talk by Ulrich Marzolph concentrated on the German case. Marzolph, “Coffeehouses, Public Baths, and Mosques.”

5. Şehitlik Camii website.

6. Ewing, “Living Islam in the Diaspora.”

7. Şehitlik Camii website.

8. On the iconography of the minarets, see Necipoğlu, “Dynastic Imprints on the Cityscape.”

9. Qur’an 112: “Say: He is Allah the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him.” Quran Explorer Online, trans. Yusuf Ali, <http://www.quranexplorer.com/quran/> (accessed October 3, 2013).

10. Şehitlik Camii website.

11. They are also credited with designing and painting the interiors of the Sabancı Central Mosque in Adana, Turkey. <http://beautifulmosques.com/?p=1291> (accessed August 15, 2012).

12. Qur’an 2:144 (“Turn then thy face”); Qur’an 2:255 (“Nor shall they compass”); Qur’an 1:1–7 (“Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, The Beneficent, the Merciful. Owner of the Day of Judgment, Thee (alone) we worship; Thee (alone) we ask for help. Show us the straight path, The path of those whom Thou hast favoured. Not (the path) of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray”). Quran Explorer Online, trans. Yusuf Ali (accessed October 3, 2013).

13. White, “Islam and Politics in Contemporary Turkey.”

14. Website of DİTİB, Türkisch-Islamische Union der Anstalt für Religion e.V, <http://www.DİTİB.de/default.php?id=5&lang=de> (accessed October 3, 2013).

15. The Cologne Mosque has been partially open since 2013, with accommodation for Friday prayers and special occasions.

16. Sedgwick, *Saints and Sons*. The community is building a number of mosques in Germany, most notably the Heinersdorf Mosque, designed by the Pakistani-German architect Mubashara Ilyas (2008).

17. For a comparative study in the Dutch context, see Roose, *The Architectural Representation of Islam*.

18. On the history of this period, see Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*.

19. White, “Islam and Politics in Contemporary Turkey,” 357.

20. Bozdoğan, “Art and Architecture in Modern Turkey,” 435. Bozdoğan calls this style the “Ankara Cubic” in reference to a nationalist modern style that exemplified this period.

21. Al-Asad, “The Mosque of the Turkish Grand National Assembly in Ankara,” 166.

22. “Client’s Record of Grand National Assembly Mosque,” *Aga Khan Award for Architecture* (1995 cycle), [http://archnet.org/library/files/one-file.jsp?file\\_id=1086](http://archnet.org/library/files/one-file.jsp?file_id=1086) (accessed August 20, 2012).

23. “Architect’s Record of Grand National Assembly Mosque,” *Aga Khan Award for Architecture* (1995 cycle), [http://archnet.org/library/files/one-file.jsp?file\\_id=1086](http://archnet.org/library/files/one-file.jsp?file_id=1086) (accessed August 20, 2012), 4.

24. “Architect’s Record of Grand National Assembly Mosque,” *Aga Khan Award for Architecture* (1995 cycle); [http://archnet.org/library/files/one-file.jsp?file\\_id=1086](http://archnet.org/library/files/one-file.jsp?file_id=1086) (accessed August 20, 2012), 2.

25. Ibid., 3.

26. On the left of the mihrab, the prayer starts with bismillāh and Qur’an 9:18.

27. Qur’an 14:40–41 starts on the opposite side. Quran Explorer Online, trans. Yusuf Ali (accessed October 3, 2013).

28. Erzen and Balamir, "Kocatepe Mosque, Ankara," 109.
29. Ibid., 109. According to other commentators, the project was abandoned for political reasons. Ersan, "Secularism, Islamism, Emblemata," 72.
30. Erzen and Balamir, "Kocatepe Mosque, Ankara," 109.
31. Ibid., 109.
32. A useful analysis of these dynamics, in the context of the Kocatepe Mosque, is presented in Bozdogan and Akcan, *Turkey*.
33. White, "Islam and Politics in Contemporary Turkey," 363.
34. Ibid., 369.
35. Wilson, "Representing National Identity and Memory in the Mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk."
36. For an anthropological analysis of these two buildings, see Meeker, "Once There Was, Once There Wasn't."
37. An evaluation from the Foundation of Religious Affairs of Turkey is cited in Erzen and Balamir, "Kocatepe Mosque, Ankara," 110.
38. For the iconography and symbolism of Ottoman mosques, see Necipoğlu, "Dynastic Imprints on the Cityscape."
39. The supermarket chain belongs to a conservative, Kayseri-based family.
40. The exact dimensions lend credence to this observation: the dome is forty-five meters high and twenty-five meters in diameter; the mihrab is ten meters. Erzen and Balamir, "Kocatepe Mosque, Ankara," 110.
41. It reads, "Turn then thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque," a verse from Surah 2:144. Quran Explorer Online, trans. Yusuf Ali (accessed October 3, 2013).
42. Erzen and Balamir, "Kocatepe Mosque, Ankara," 111.
43. For a recent study of the mausoleum, see Wilson, "Representing National Identity and Memory in the Mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk."
44. Bozdogan, "Art and Architecture in Modern Turkey," 457.
45. Ersan, "Secularism, Islamism, Emblemata," 76, 80; White, "Islam and Politics in Contemporary Turkey," 367.
46. The term *hassa mimarlık* is a reference to the Ottoman period, when *hassa* would refer to the imperial domains and household. It is no longer used in that manner in modern Turkish.
47. "Hassa Mimarlık Hakkında," Hassa Mimarlık website, <http://www.hassa.com/hakkimizda> (in English, "About Us," Hassa Mimarlık website, <http://www.hassa.com/en/about-us> (accessed October 4, 2013)).
48. In Turkey, the practice of Sufism was banned for much of the twentieth century, and old orders, like the Halveti and Mevlevi, survived only through dissimulation and secrecy.
49. "The Islamist movement of the 1980s encompassed a variety of ideological positions. There was a liberal, prodemocratic movement composed of conservative pragmatists willing to work within the system. There also were a small number of Islamic activists who aimed to replace the secular state with one based on Islamic law." White, "Islam and Politics in Contemporary Turkey," 365.
50. "Kirkambar," Hassa Mimarlık website, <http://www.hassa.com.tr/makale.php?id=52> (accessed October 8, 2012). The revised title is "Türk ve İslam Dünyası'nın Kültür

ve medeniyet vizyonu ne olmalıdır?,” <http://www.hassa.com/tr/kirkambar/yazi/turk-ve-islam-dunyasinin-kultur-ve-medeniyet-vizyonu-ne-olmalidir> (accessed April 10, 2015).

51. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. For a selection of responses to Huntington, see Rashid, *The Clash of Civilizations?*

52. One indicator of the traditionalist outlook of the young architects Şenalp hires is that all the women working in the firm wear hijabs, which is becoming more common in Istanbul.

53. Kafadar, “A Rome of One’s Own.”

54. Hasan Mert Kaya, “Traditional Turkish Architecture and th3 Myst3ry of Numb3r8,” *Skylife*, <http://www.turkishairlines.com/it-it/skylife/2011/january/articles/traditional-turkish-architecture-and-th3-myst3ry-of-numb3r8.aspx> (accessed July 31, 2012). The article that follows in the same issue is titled “Istanbul, Capital of the World,” no doubt in recognition of Istanbul’s status as the 2010 European capital of culture.

55. Ibid.

56. There are several studies on modern Sufism in Turkey and its relationship to modernity and the state. See, for example, Silverstein, “Disciplines of Presence in Modern Turkey.”

57. “About Hassa Architecture,” Hassa Mimarlik website, <http://www.hassa.com/en/our-philosophy-our-architectural-approach> (accessed July 31, 2014).

58. Bozdoğan, Özkan, and Yenal, *Sedad Eldem*.

59. It is interesting to note that Şenalp’s patrons are men with strong conservative credentials: for example, Mustafa Birim, founding member of the Mevlevi Foundation in Istanbul, and Selçuk Berkşan, president of the Cultural and Charitable Foundation in Çamlıca.

60. Çelik, *Displaying the Orient*.

61. White, “Islam and Politics in Contemporary Turkey.”

62. Erdoğan has been the prime minister of Turkey since 2003 and has been an active patron of mosque building. His emphasis on the Ottoman character of Turkish culture landed his government in a confrontation with citizens of Istanbul more recently, when Taksim Park was slated to be demolished so that an Ottoman-era barracks could be reconstructed.

63. Rowe, “Cultural Muslims,” 153.

64. Denison, “The Art of the Impossible,” 1175.

65. Fuller, “Turkey’s New Eastern Orientation,” 45. Tajikistan, by contrast, is more closely aligned to Afghanistan, with which it shares languages and culture.

66. “Relations between Turkey and Turkmenistan,” Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-turkmenistan.en.mfa> (accessed October 25, 2012).

67. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 13.

68. Lindner, “Anatolia, 1300–1451.”

69. Rowe, “Cultural Muslims,” 144.

70. Local governments, such as that of Kazakhstan, have also tapped into the Ottoman style, linking themselves to their perceived cognates.

71. Tokyo Camii and Turkish Cultural Center, <http://www.tokyocamii.org/publicViews/home> (accessed October 29, 2012).

## Chapter Two

1. In 2013 there were seventy-nine public executions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Rick Gladston, "Saudi Arabia: Executions Draw Rebukes," *New York Times*, August 21, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/22/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-executions-draw-rebukes.html> (accessed September 5, 2014). According to human rights groups, there has been a surge in such executions, with nineteen in the month of August alone. The crimes range from murder and drug smuggling to sorcery. "Rights Group Says Surge in Saudi Beheadings," *Al-Jazeera*, August 21, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/08/rights-groups-says-surge-saudi-beheadings-20148211414761155.html> (accessed September 5, 2014).

2. "Religion and Public Life," Pew Research Center. <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-muslim/> (accessed June 25, 2013).

3. Al-Rasheed, "The Minaret and the Palace."

4. I was given a tour of the building by Sami Nawar, then director of the Jeddah Historical Area Preservation Department, in May 2012.

5. For a recent account of these policies, see Alkhamis, "Emerging Voices of Heritage Preservation in AlBalad, Jeddah."

6. Al-Asad, "The Mosques of Abdel Wahed El-Wakil."

7. Ali Juffali is cited as the client in the Client Records submitted to the Aga Khan Foundation. "Client's Record of Juffali Mosque," Aga Khan Award for Architecture, <http://archnet.org/publications/824> (accessed June 25, 2012).

8. El-Wakil, "Report on the Nomination of the Mosques of Saudi Arabia," submitted to the Aga Khan Awards Office, dated March 30, 1988. This and other supporting documents can be found at [http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site\\_id=773](http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site_id=773) (accessed June 25, 2012).

9. "Aga Khan Award for Architecture," Aga Khan Development Network, <http://www.akdn.org/architecture/default.asp> (accessed October 11, 2013).

10. El-Wakil, "Report on the Nomination of the Mosques of Saudi Arabia," [http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site\\_id=773](http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site_id=773) (accessed June 25, 2012).

11. The organizer of the group was Juhaïman Ibn Saïf al-Otaïba, a former member of the National Guard and the Otaïba tribe; his brother-in-law, Muhammad Bin Abdullah al-Quraishi, a theology student, was declared the awaited messiah, or Mahdi. Paul, "Insurrection at Mecca," 4.

12. An insightful analysis of the manner in which the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia bred the ideology of internal obedience and external revolution is given in Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*. The Grand Mosque in Mecca had been the site of an earlier insurrection, in 1931, when the Ikhwan brotherhood had risen against the House of Saud. Then, too, a violent standoff ended in the reasserting of the status quo.

13. Muharram is celebrated by the majority of Sunni Muslims as the beginning of the Islamic calendar. However, for the Shi'i the first ten days of the month commemo-

rate the martyrdom of Imam Husayn, the grandson of the prophet, Muhammad, in Karbala (Iraq), in 680 CE.

14. "Salafis are first and foremost religious and social reformers who are engaged in creating and reproducing particular forms of authority and identity, both personal and communal." Haykel, "On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action," 34.

15. Ibid., 48–49. See also Wiktorowicz, "The Salafi Movement."

16. On this issue, see Al-Rasheed, "The Local and the Global in Salafi-Jihadi Discourse."

17. The classic book on Orientalist architecture and the complexities of colonial representation is Çelik, *Displaying the Orient*.

18. See also Eero Saarinen's MIT Chapel, completed in 1955.

19. This powerful observation was also made by Engineer Fahd, whom I met in Jeddah and whose work on mosque designs is awaiting publication.

20. This phrase does not seem to be Qur'anic, according to Hanna Kassis, *Concordance of the Quran*, Oxford Islamic Studies Online, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/book/islam-0520043278/islam-0520043278-div2-7>.

21. Badran, "Historical References and Contemporary Design," 156.

22. Ibid., 149.

23. Ibid., 156.

24. In reality, it appears that the primary users of the mosque are South Asian expatriates and members of the *mabāḥith*, the Saudi secret police, whose offices are in the neighborhood.

25. Badran, "Historical References and Contemporary Design," 159.

26. Khoury, "The Mihrab Image."

27. Haykel, "On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action," 45.

28. This restraint is also evident in the mosques of El-Wakil in Jeddah, but to a lesser degree.

29. Noyes, *The Politics of Iconoclasm*, 75–79; Ahmed, "The Destruction of Holy Sites in Mecca and Madina," *Islamic Magazine* 15 (2006), <http://islamicmagazine.com/?p=424> (accessed July 9, 2012).

30. On a website devoted to the vision of Sheikh Fahd the argument for expansion is that it has historical precedent: "The tradition of expanding the Holy Mosque dates back to 638 AD when the increasing number of conversions to Islam led the second Caliph Umar bin al-Khattab to develop the site. When King Abdul-Aziz established the modern Saudi State, one of his primary concerns, like that of the early Caliphs, was his role in overseeing the well-being of the pilgrims undertaking the annual Hajj. Aware that the Holy Mosque could not support the growing numbers of worshippers, he initiated a refurbishment and expansion program." "Expansion of the Holy Mosque of Mecca," King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz website, <http://www.kingfahdbinabdulaziz.com/main/h100.htm> (accessed July 9, 2012).

31. Cited in Noyes, *The Politics of Iconoclasm*, 174.

32. Blair and Bloom, "Iconoclasm," *The Grove Encyclopedia of Islamic Art and Architecture*, <http://www.oxford-islamicart.com/entry?entry=t276.e410> (accessed July 9, 2012). For the art historical context, see Flood, "Between Cult and Culture."



33. The classic study of Islamic calligraphy within its cultural contexts remains that by Anne-Marie Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*. Several authors have also written about the significance of monumental epigraphy, such as Bierman, *Writing Signs*.

34. This issue was brought up by several of the architects and academics I interviewed in Jeddah in 2012.

35. Loos, *Ornament and Crime*.

36. For an overview, see Yates, *Liturgical Space*, and Siry, “Frank Lloyd Wright’s Annie M. Pfeiffer Chapel for Florida Southern College.”

37. Grabar, *The Dome of the Rock*.

38. Haykel, “On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action,” 45.

39. David B. Ottaway, “U.S. Eyes Money Trails of Saudi-Backed Charities,” *Washington Post*, August 19, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409742516?accountid=15172>.

40. “King Faisal Mosque in Islamabad,” King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz website, <http://www.kingfahdbinabdulaziz.com/main/m4201.htm> (accessed August 10, 2012).

41. Islamabad was established as the capital of Pakistan in 1967 (after the original capital, Karachi, was deemed strategically unsafe). The Greek urban planner, Konstantinos Doxiádes, was given the task of planning the city, while major civic institutions were designed by renowned architects such as Edward Durell Stone and Gio Ponti. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Islamabad,” <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/295631/Islamabad> (accessed July 12, 2012).

42. Holod and Khan, *Mosque and the Modern World*, 76.

43. *Ibid.*, 77.

44. *Ibid.*

45. *Ibid.*, 79.

46. Nasim, “Decorative Elements of the Faisal Mosque, Islamabad,” 87.

47. An interesting consideration of the Islamization and sectarianism that were prevalent during this period may be found in Ahmad, “The Crescent and the Sword.”

48. *Ibid.*

49. The history of the mosque has been culled from documents from the Dār al-Fatwa in Beirut. See Vloeberghs, “The Genesis of a Mosque.”

50. *Ibid.*, 7.

51. A number of recent essays and books have been devoted to the issue of Beirut’s urban reconstruction. Notable among them are Al-Harithy, *Lessons in Post-war Reconstruction*; Fawaz, “Beirut”; and Rowe and Sarkis, *Projecting Beirut*.

52. For the company profile, see Solidere, [www.solidere.com](http://www.solidere.com) (accessed July 12, 2012). See also Makdisi, “Laying Claim to Beirut,” and Makdisi, “Reconstructing History in Central Beirut.”

53. Al-Walid donated \$2 million in 2001 to purchase land for expanding the mosque. Vloeberghs, “The Genesis of a Mosque,” 13. In a later news article, al-Nahar noted that the cost of the project had not been made public, but estimated that it was around \$20 million. *Al-Nahār*, October 4, 2003.

54. Interview with Azmi Fakhouri, Beirut, December 17, 2010.

55. *Ibid.*

56. Ibid. According to Fakhouri, Abdel-Wahel El-Wakil himself commended the design of the capitals.

57. Ibid.; Vloeberghs, "The Genesis of a Mosque," 15.

58. "Masjid khātim al-anbiyā wal mursalīn, Muhammad, ṣalla Allāhu 'alay-hi wa-salam."

59. Qur'an 36: "Ya Sīn. By the Qur'an, full of Wisdom. Thou art indeed one of the messengers. On a Straight Way. It is a Revelation sent down by (Him) the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful." Quran Explorer Online, trans. Yusaf Ali, <http://www.quranexplorer.com/quran/> (accessed July 12, 2012).

60. Interview with Azmi Fakhouri, December 17, 2010.

61. Most mosques are dedicated to rulers and other powerful patrons. Often they will be associated with a holy figure, such as a mystic or theologian. The majority of monumental mosques are simply known as the Friday, or congregational, mosque of a particular town.

62. Vloeberghs, "The Genesis of a Mosque," 15.

63. The full text of Qur'an 2:144 reads: "We see the turning of thy [Muhammad's] face (for guidance) to the heavens; now shall We turn thee to a *Qiblah* that shall please thee. Turn then thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque; wherever ye are turn your faces in that direction. The people of the book know well that that is the truth from their Lord nor is Allah unmindful of what they do." Quran Explorer Online, trans. Yusaf Ali (accessed July 10, 2012).

64. Details also provided in Vloeberghs, "The Genesis of a Mosque," 16.

65. "King Fahd and Support of Islam," King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz website, <http://www.kingfahdbinabdulaziz.com/main/m.htm>.

66. Holod and Khan, *Mosque and the Modern World*, 248.

67. "1998 Architect's Record," *Aga Khan Award for Architecture*. [http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site\\_id=1074](http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site_id=1074) (accessed July 10, 2012). See also Steele, "The New Mosque and Islamic Cultural Center in Rome."

68. "1998 Architect's Record," 2.

69. Steele, "The New Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre in Rome," 18.

70. For an overview, see Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*.

### Chapter Three

1. W. Madelung, "Shī'a," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W. P. Heinrichs, Brill Online, [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/shia-SIM\\_6920](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/shia-SIM_6920) (accessed April 24, 2013).

2. For a recent study on the early caliphate, see El-Hibri, *Parable and Politics in Early Islamic History*.

3. Rizvi, "Mosques and Commemorative Shrines."

4. Several scholars have written about the conversion of Iran from Sunni to Shī'i Islam during the Safavid period. See, for example, Abisaab, *Converting Persia*.

5. An *iwan* is a portal or monumental, often arched, gateway. In Persianate mosque architecture, iwans lead into the structure and also face onto the interior courtyard.

6. The stark exception is to those Shi'i shrines that were in Medina. The Baqi' cemetery was destroyed by the Saudi Arabian rulers in 1926.

7. Rizvi, "Architecture and the Representations of Kingship during the Reign of the Safavid Shah Abbas I."

8. Since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, Iraqi seminaries have regained their traditional significance. On Qum, see Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet*; Mervin, "Les Autorités religieuses dans le chiisme duodécimain contemporain."

9. Rizvi, "Sites of Pilgrimage and Objects of Devotion."

10. Chehabi, "Staging the Emperor's New Clothes," 213.

11. Arjomand, *Turban for the Crown*, 82. The area around the Gawharshad Mosque and the Shrine of Imam Reza was razed in the 1960s, and the bazaar was replaced with a massive ring-road meant to facilitate traffic and cut the complex off from the rest of the city. See Ecochard, "La Rénovation du centre de Mashad," and "Architect's Archives: Michel Ecochard," Archnet, <http://archnet.org/collections/29>.

12. Kurzman, "The Qum Protests and the Coming of the Iranian Revolution, 1975 and 1978." On the Fayziyya Madrasa, see Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet*.

13. Moghadam, "The Revolution and the Regime," 421.

14. Abulfazl, *Graphic Art of the Islamic Revolution*.

15. The banner, tulip, and "Allah" represent the holy struggle of the faceless soldier; the bleeding dove represents his martyrdom. Analysis of the tulip is given in Fischer and Abedi, *Debating Muslims*. On the posters see Keshmirshakan, "Discourses on Post-revolutionary Iranian Art."

16. This analysis was first presented in Rizvi, "Religious Icon and National Symbol."

17. d'Hellencourt, "L'Hosseynieh Ershad," 333.

18. Ibid., 336.

19. Ali Shariati is the subject of several studies, most recently that by Chatterjee, *Ali Shari'ati and the Shaping of Political Islam in Iran*; for his relationship to the Husayniyeh Ershad, see Aghaie, *Martyrs of Karbala*, 101–2.

20. Kramer, *Arab Awakening and Islamic Revival*, 203.

21. Chehabi, *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism*, 204.

22. d'Hellencourt, "L'Hosseynieh Ershad," 334.

23. Chehabi, *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism*, 203.

24. Interestingly, the form is suggested of Safavid commemorative structures, such as those of Khwaja Rabi' near Mashhad and Amin Al-din Jibra'il in Kalkhoran, in northeastern and northwestern Iran, respectively. On their historical significance, see Rizvi, *Safavid Dynastic Shrine*, 159–85.

25. Amanat, "In Between the Madrasa and the Marketplace"; Keshavarzian, "Regime Loyalty and Bazari Representation under the Islamic Republic."

26. Like several postrevolutionary monuments, its name has now been changed to reflect the current regime's ideological foundations. It is named the Masjid-I Imam Khomeini.

27. Scarce, "The Arts of the 18th–20th Centuries," 912.

28. Ibid., 913.

29. "Masjid-i Sipahsālār," Archives, Manuscripts, and Photographs Collection of the Smithsonian Institution Research Information System (SIRIS), <http://sir-is-archives>

.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=13670H206L176.27233&profile=all&source=-!siarchives&view=subscriptionssummary&uri=full=3100001~!308984~!1&ri=1&aspect=subtab157&menu=search&ipp=20&spp=20&staffonly=&term=sipahsalar+tehran&index=.GW&uindex=&aspect=subtab157&menu=search&ri=1 (accessed August 10, 2012).

30. Ettehadieh, "Patterns in Urban Development."

31. Cole, *Sacred Space and Holy War*, 11.

32. Aghaie, *Martyrs of Karbala*, 69.

33. Perhaps a more appropriate characterization would be "westernization." In the early twentieth century many newly formed republics conflated modernization and westernization, a point that was heavily criticized by both religious and secular intellectuals in Iran.

34. Aghaie, *Martyrs of Karbala*, 50–51.

35. *Takīyeh* and *husayniyeh* derive from earlier Sufi institutions of communal living and gathering. They were incorporated into Shi'i rituals and became important sites for *ta'ziyeh* mourning during Muharram. Chelkowski, *Taziyyeh, Ritual and Drama in Iran and Eternal Performance*.

36. Nakash, *Reaching for Power*, 5–6.

37. Misbani, Sadri, and Salimi, *Naqsh-i masājid va dānishgāhhā dar pīrūzī-yi inqilāb-i Islāmī (The Role of Mosques and Universities in the Victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran)*, 56.

38. Famously, in November 1979, Islamist students occupied the American Embassy in Tehran and took fifty-two hostages. Mashayekhi, "The Revival of the Student Movement in Post-revolutionary Iran," 291.

39. Arjomand, *Turban for the Crown*, 116.

40. Iran Documentation Center, "The First Friday Prayer after the Islamic Revolution," <http://www.irdc.ir/en/calendar/363/default.aspx> (accessed May 9, 2013).

41. "The Imam of the prayer usually carries a rifle as a symbol of resistance against Satan and also the evils of the world, giving the message of standing against the world tyrants and oppressors even in the prayer clothing." "Behind the Rows of Friday Prayers in Tehran," *Dream of Iran* (blog), <http://dreamofiran.com/behind-the-rows-of-a-friday-prayer-in-tehran/> (accessed May 13, 2013).

42. For an intriguing account of a Friday sermon during the 2009 Iranian election cycle, see M. Shane, "Tehran Dispatch: A Different Kind of Friday Prayers," *Salon*, July 21, 2009, [http://www.salon.com/2009/07/21/tehran\\_dispatch/](http://www.salon.com/2009/07/21/tehran_dispatch/) (accessed May 13, 2013).

43. Ganji, "The Latter-Day Sultan," 54.

44. On a recent Friday sermon at the University of Tehran regarding Bahrain and Palestine, see Imran Khan, "Inside Friday Prayer in Tehran," *Al-Jazeera*, May 18, 2012, <http://blogs.aljazeera.com/blog/middle-east/inside-friday-prayer-tehran> (accessed May 13, 2013).

45. For example, there are also musallā mosques in Kerman and Hamadan.

46. This was the Masjid-i Shah, completed in 1618. Its soaring minarets, resplendent domes, and a profusion of mosaic tiles covering virtually every surface of the building typify early modern Iranian architecture.

47. Rizvi, "The Suggestive Portrait of Shah 'Abbas."

48. As mentioned earlier, the sermons are coordinated: each mosque in the state must follow the Friday sermon issued in Tehran.
49. Iran Documentation Center, "The First Friday Prayer after the Islamic Revolution," <http://www.irdc.ir/en/calendar/363/default.aspx> (accessed May 9, 2013).
50. Mashayekhi, "The Revival of the Student Movement in Post-revolutionary Iran," 287.
51. Ayatollah Khomeini's designation as an "imam" is controversial, but now common among the populace.
52. According to the Ian Calder, the principal at CLA Urban, the firm is no longer working on the Musallā project. Personal communication, May 27, 2013.
53. For the consultants' renditions, see <http://www.claurban.com/index.php/welcome/portfolio>.
54. These prayers marked the end of the month of fasting, Ramadan.
55. "First Friday Prayers at Imam Khomeini (RA) Prayer Ground," Tehran Municipality website, <http://en.tehran.ir/default.aspx?tabid=77&ArticleId=1142> (accessed May 15, 2013). The prayer leader was Hojatoleslam Sadighi. "First Friday Prayer out of Tehran University Lead [sic] by Hojatoleslam Kazem Sedighi Held in Abbas Abad," LenzIran, February 2, 2013, <http://www.lenziran.com/2013/02/first-friday-prayer-out-of-tehran-university-lead-by-hojatoleslam-kazem-sedighi-held-in-abbas-abad/> (accessed May, 20, 2013).
56. Mahdaveinejad et al., "Development of Intelligent Pattern for Modeling a Parametric Program for Public Space (Case Study: Isfahan, Musallā, Iran)."
57. Provided by IGP Glass, an Isfahan-based architectural and industrial glass manufacturer and installer. "Gallery," IGP Glass website, <http://igpglass.ir/gallery.htm> (accessed May 20, 2013).
58. For example, on the death of respected clerics, the funeral procession often leaves Tehran from the Masjid-i Sepahsalar and makes its way to Qum or Ray for final burial rites. Such was the case in January 2013, when the Grand Ayatollah Agha Mojtaba Tehrani was laid to rest at the shrine of Shaykh Abdul Azim in Ray.
59. Rizvi, "Religious Icon and National Symbol."
60. Shrines are not limited to Shi'i figures, but are also built to commemorate Sufis, Sunni theologians, and other popular figures. For a comparative perspective from the early modern period, see Rizvi, "Mosques and Commemorative Shrines."
61. Cook, "Waiting for the Twelfth Imam," 140.
62. Calmard, "Jamkarān," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/jamkaran> (accessed October 2, 2014).
63. Maghen, "Occultation in 'Perpetuum,'" 234.
64. For example, (Ayatollah) Mesbah e-Yazdi discusses subjects related to eschatology such as in a speech delivered in 2004 at the Jamkaran Mosque itself and entitled "The Explanation of the Concept of 'Anticipating Deliverance.'" Ibid., 253.
65. Qur'an 100, Quran Explorer Online, trans. Yusuf Ali, <http://www.quranexplorer.com/quran/> (accessed October 2, 2014).
66. Nabavi, *Iran*.
67. Pinto, "Pilgrimage, Commodities, and Religious Objectification," 112.

68. At the time of this writing, the civil war in Syria continues unabated, with little indication of a final solution.

69. Herzig, "Regionalism, Iran and Central Asia." See also Nasr, "When the Shiites Rise."

70. A recent dissertation touches on some of these issues: El Sandouby, "The Dynamics of Making Shrines for the Family of the Prophet."

71. Pinto, "Pilgrimage, Commodities, and Religious Objectification," 113.

72. See, for example, Shirazi, "The Daughters of Karbala"; Hyder, "Sayyedah Zaynab"; and Szanto, "Sayyida Zaynab in the State of Exception."

73. See Zimney, "History in the Making."

74. Ibid., 703.

75. According to family records, the association is even longer, at least eight hundred years.

76. Maqām Sayyida Zaynab website, <http://zainabshrine-damas.org/all/viewProject.php?id=10> (accessed May 29, 2013).

77. The patrons include "Hajj Mehdi Behbehani, Imam Hussein Burujerdi, Imam Abu al-Hasan al-Musawi Isfahani, Hojatolleslam Ali al-Husseini al-Shirazi, Imam Kadhim Shariatmadari, Hojatolleslam Younis Ardebili." Maqām Sayyida Zaynab website, <http://zainabshrine-damas.org/cms/viewPage.php?id=106> (accessed May 29, 2013).

78. Personal communication with Dr. Hani Murtada, December 2010.

79. Von Maltzahn, "Iran's Cultural Diplomacy," 215.

80. On the language center, see Von Maltzahn, "The Case of Iranian Cultural Diplomacy in Syria," 47; on the train route, see El Sandouby, "The Dynamics of Making Shrines for the Family of the Prophet," 130.

81. Chelkowski and Dabashi, *Staging a Revolution*, 162. See p. 163 for a reproduction of the poster.

82. Qur'an 76:1–31, Quran Explorer Online, trans. Yusaf Ali (accessed October 2, 2014).

83. This is one of two verses in the Qur'an where the ahl al-bayt are mentioned. Al Ahzab, Qur'an 33:33, Quran Explorer Online, trans. Yusaf Ali (accessed October 2, 2014).

84. They read, "yā Zaynab, ashfa' ilā fī al-jannat."

85. See, for example, the quarterly journal *Al-Mawsem*, "a magazine for archeology and tradition" (English heading) published by the Maktab al-Malkiyya of the Kufa Academy in Holland.

86. Szanto, "Sayyida Zaynab in the State of Exception," 290.

87. The most extensive recent study of the Sayyida Ruqayya is that of Yasser Tabbaa, "Invented Pieties." See also El Sandouby, "The Dynamics of Making Shrines for the Family of the Prophet," 131.

88. El Sandouby, "The Places of Ahl al-Bayt in Bilad al-Sham," 687.

89. Qur'an 108:1–3, Quran Explorer Online, trans. Yusaf Ali (accessed October 2, 2014).

90. Similar verses are included in the shrine of Sayyida Zaynab.

91. This is perhaps the inspiration for the retractable roof proposed by the custodians of the Sayyida Zaynab shrine.
92. For the Cairene monument, a Fatimid structure, see Williams, "The Cult of 'Alid Saints in the Fatimid Monuments of Cairo Part II."
93. Tabbaa, "Invented Pieties," 109.
94. Ibid., 100.
95. Rizvi, "Art History and the Nation."
96. For example, the July 2010 attacks at the shrine of Data Ganj Baksh in Lahore and the October 2010 attack at the Shah Abdullah Ghazi shrine in Karachi. Both attacks are attributed to the extremist Sunni groups, which espouse a Salafist worldview.
97. For more on the Bohra community, see Azim Nanji and Zulfikar Hirji, "Isma'īlism xvi. Modern Isma'īli Communities," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ismailism-xvi-modern-ismaili-communities> (accessed June 3, 2013).
98. El Sandouby, "The Places of Ahl al-Bayt in Bilad al-Sham," 689.

## Chapter Four

1. J. B. Kelly, "al-Imārāt al-'Arabiyya al-Muttaḥida," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W. P. Heinrichs, Brill Online, [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-ima-ra-t-al-arabiyya-al-muttah-ida-SIM\\_8697](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-ima-ra-t-al-arabiyya-al-muttah-ida-SIM_8697) (accessed June 12, 2013).
2. Cugurullo, "The Business of Utopia."
3. "Masdar Development," Foster + Partners website, <http://www.fosterandpartners.com/projects/masdar-development/> (accessed June 13, 2013).
4. Tourism Development and Investment Company website, [http://78.31.106.173/Projects/Saadiyat\\_Island/Overview.aspx](http://78.31.106.173/Projects/Saadiyat_Island/Overview.aspx) (accessed June 13, 2013). This original website is no longer extant. It has been replaced by "Saadiyat Overview," Tourism Development and Investment Company (TDIC) website, <http://www.tdic.ae/project/saadiyat/Pages/index.aspx> (accessed April 11, 2015). This website gives the same information, with the exception that the estimated residential occupation is now 145,000 people.
5. The fourth museum was the Maritime Museum designed by the Iraqi-born British architect Zaha Hadid, but its construction is currently on hold.
6. In an interview for the *New York Times*, Gehry notes, "I had no context to work with," effectively negating any possibility of native culture. "Blueprints for the Middle East," *New York Times* website, [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/11/27/arts/design/museums.html?\\_r=0#gehry](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/11/27/arts/design/museums.html?_r=0#gehry) (accessed June 13, 2013).
7. "Blueprints for the Middle East," *New York Times* website. <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/11/27/arts/design/museums.html#foster> (accessed June 13, 2013).
8. Several intellectuals have complained about the alienation of the youth from tribal norms and mores. On the issue of nostalgia, see Kanna, "The Vanished Village."
9. On the issue of "invented traditions," see Khalaf, "Poetics and Politics of Newly Invented Traditions in the Gulf."
10. "Al-Jahili Fort," Visit Abu Dhabi website, <http://visitabudhabi.ae/en/what.to.see/culture.and.heritage/al.jahili.fort.aspx> (accessed June 14, 2013).

11. Kay and Zandi, *Architectural Heritage of the Gulf*, 82; Boussaa, "A Future to the Past," 127.
12. Rizvi, "Dubai, Anyplace."
13. Eugene Harnan, "Oldest UAE Mosque Holds Onto Its Secrets," *The Nation*, August 21, 2011, <http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/oldest-uae-mosque-holds-onto-its-secrets> (accessed June 14, 2013); "Al-Bidya Mosque," <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5665/> (accessed June 14, 2013).
14. This is evinced in the so-called Tomb of Isma'il in Bhadresvar. See Alfieri, *Islamic Architecture of the Indian Subcontinent*, 106, 107.
15. Rizvi, "Dubai, Anyplace."
16. A brief overview of Sheikh Rashid's patronage is given in Kay, "Richness of Style in UAE Mosques."
17. Davidson, *Abu Dhabi*, 136. Interestingly, less is publicized about the patronage of Hindu sites, although the practitioners of that religion have a sizable presence in the Emirates.
18. Information on and for citizens can be found on the Abu Dhabi e-Government portal, [https://www.abudhabi.ae/egovPoolPortal\\_WAR/appmanager/ADeGP/Citizen?\\_nfpb=true&\\_pageLabel=P3000130241204212839465&did=150258&lang=en](https://www.abudhabi.ae/egovPoolPortal_WAR/appmanager/ADeGP/Citizen?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=P3000130241204212839465&did=150258&lang=en) (accessed June 24, 2013).
19. Whether the Emiratis themselves practice such an ideology is not clear, given the Salafi influence in much of the region.
20. "The United Arab Emirates is home to a rich cultural heritage that has been strongly influenced by the resourcefulness of its people who exploited the harsh environment of the region to the limit. This resilience, in the face of extreme hardship, was supported by society's tribal structure, which has bound peoples together since successive waves of migration, beginning over 2,500 years ago, brought Arab tribes to the region. The varied terrain that these peoples inhabited, i.e. desert, oasis, mountains and coast, dictated the traditional lifestyles that evolved over the centuries. Under an age-old social structure each family was traditionally bound by obligations of mutual assistance to his immediate relatives and to the tribe as a whole. Among the tribe an individual's selfless hospitality was the source of his honour and pride. A common religion, Islam, also provided the cement that held the society together." UAE Interact, <http://www.uaeinteract.com/>. See also the official portal of the government of Dubai, <http://dubai.ae/en/pages/default.aspx>; and the official portal of the government of Abu Dhabi, [https://www.abudhabi.ae/egovPoolPortal\\_WAR/appmanager/ADeGP/Citizen?\\_nfpb=true&\\_pageLabel=P3000130241204212839465&did=150258&lang=en](https://www.abudhabi.ae/egovPoolPortal_WAR/appmanager/ADeGP/Citizen?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=P3000130241204212839465&did=150258&lang=en) (both accessed June 24, 2013).
21. UAEKhutba website, <http://www.uaekhutba.com> (accessed June 24, 2013).
22. "Friday Khutbah with Shaykh Jihad Hashim Brown," Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/events/125951590834568/>. Sheikh Brown was employed in 2010 as a senior academic adviser at the Tabah Foundation, in Abu Dhabi; "Sh. Jihad Brown Moving to a New Position in Tabah," Tabah Foundation website, [http://www.tabahfoundation.org/en/news/view\\_article/?id=30](http://www.tabahfoundation.org/en/news/view_article/?id=30) (accessed June 24, 2013).
23. "About Us," Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Centre for Cultural Understanding website, <http://www.cultures.ae/aboutus.php> (accessed June 25, 2013).



24. Ibid.
25. "Sheikh Zayed and the Grand Mosque," Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Center website, <http://www.szgmc.ae/en/sheikh-zayed-and-grand-mosque> (accessed June 30, 2013).
26. "Finnish PM Hails Zayed Grand Mosque as a Cultural Promoter," March 10, 2013, Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Center website, [http://www.szgmc.ae/en/news-detail/finnish\\_pm\\_hails\\_zayed\\_grand\\_mosque\\_as\\_a\\_cultural\\_promoter-52](http://www.szgmc.ae/en/news-detail/finnish_pm_hails_zayed_grand_mosque_as_a_cultural_promoter-52) (accessed June 26, 2013).
27. Thiollet, "Migration as Diplomacy."
28. "Upbeat Egyptian Expatriates Vote in First Free Presidential Elections," Gulf News website, <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/uae/community-reports/upbeat-egyptian-expatriates-vote-in-first-free-presidential-elections-1.1021717> (accessed June 29, 2013).
29. A commentary writes of the distrust felt by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates against the Muslim Brotherhood. As the *New York Times* reports, they have "sought to restore the old, authoritarian order, fearful that Islamist movements and calls for democracy would destabilize their own nations." Robert F. Worth, "Egypt Is Arena for Influence of Arab Rivals: Two Rich Gulf Nations Pledge \$8 Million," *New York Times*, July 10, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/10/world/middleeast/aid-to-egypt-from-saudis-and-emiratis-is-part-of-struggle-with-qatar-for-influence.html?pagewanted=all&r=0> (accessed August 22, 2013).
30. Egyptian politics have played an important part in the emirates since at least the 1950s, when supporters of Gamal Abdel Nasser asserted Arab nationalism and socialism as foundations for change in the Gulf. Davidson, *Dubai*, 42.
31. This analysis of the Jumeirah Mosque was also published in Rizvi, "Dubai, Anyplace."
32. Hegazy Engineering Consultancy were also responsible for another iconic mosque in Dubai, the Bastakiya Mosque in Bur Dubai. Unlike the Jumeirah Mosque, the Bastakiya Mosque is a pastiche of styles and references, in keeping with other heterogeneous and privately funded mosques throughout the Emirates.
33. "What to See in Dubai," Government of Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, [http://www.dubaicity.com/What\\_to\\_see\\_in\\_dubai/Jumeirah-Mosque.htm](http://www.dubaicity.com/What_to_see_in_dubai/Jumeirah-Mosque.htm) (accessed November 22, 2012). This is the official city guide.
34. Interview with the general manager, Samir al-Shabani, in December 2008. That the engineer designing and building the mosque himself conflates two very different styles and periods is surprising, yet not completely unexpected, given the lack of awareness most architects and designers have of architectural history in many developing countries.
35. Qur'an 17–18. Quran Explorer Online, trans. Yusaf Ali, <http://www.quranexplorer.com/quran/> (accessed November 22, 2012).
36. "What to See in Dubai," Government of Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, [http://www.dubaicity.com/What\\_to\\_see\\_in\\_dubai/Jumeirah-Mosque.htm](http://www.dubaicity.com/What_to_see_in_dubai/Jumeirah-Mosque.htm) (accessed November 22, 2012).
37. A biographical interview was published in the Cairo-based *Al-Ahram Weekly*.

See Fayza Hassan, "Abdel-Rahman Makhoulf: A Passion for Order," *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*, December 20–26, 2001, <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/565/profile.htm> (accessed June 29, 2013). It is unfortunate that so little has been published on this pivotal figure. See also the recent interview by Reisz, "Plans the Earth Swallows: An Interview with Abdulrahman Makhoulf."

38. Rami Alshami, "Souq in UAE," <http://www.english.globalarabnetwork.com/200908272396/Culture/souq-in-uae-market-forces.html> (accessed June 29, 2013).

39. "Dr. Abdul Rahman Hassanein Makhoulf," Abu Dhabi Awards website, <http://www.abudhabiawards.ae/en/recipients/2009/dr-abdul-rahman-hassanein-makhoulf/> (accessed June 29, 2013).

40. Rugh, *The Political Culture of Leadership in the United Arab Emirates*, 94–95.

41. Davidson, *Abu Dhabi*, 122.

42. The government of Abu Dhabi, like that of the entire UAE, functions as a benevolent but absolutist state, with supreme power held by the ruling families. Thus even as I write of close ties with Egypt, recent news points to the threat presumed by the Muslim Brotherhood's incursions into the intellectual and political scene. Such incursions have quickly been effectively repressed. See report by Haneen Dajani, "UAE Muslim Brotherhood Trial: 30 Referred to Top Court," *National Online*, June 19, 2013, <http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/courts/uae-muslim-brotherhood-trial-30-referred-to-top-court> (accessed June 30, 2013).

43. "Message of the Mosque," Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Center website, <http://www.szgmc.ae/en/message-of-the-mosque> (accessed July 1, 2013).

44. Davidson, *Abu Dhabi*, 135–36.

45. Halcrow was the engineering consultant on the project since 2001, but when a disagreement broke out between the client and architect, they were employed as the designer as well. "There are numerous architects and artisans responsible for the architectural design of the Mosque. Halcrow were in fact the main project consultant responsible for some architectural and structural design, the review and coordination of designs by other architects, artisans and consultants as well as the construction supervision of all elements of the project." Interview with Sami al-Qazzaz, Halcrow Regional Director, Abu Dhabi, November 20, 2009.

46. These statistics are from the Architect's Record of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 2010 Awards Cycle, [http://archnet.org/library/files/one-file.jsp?file\\_id=3353](http://archnet.org/library/files/one-file.jsp?file_id=3353) (accessed July 1, 2013).

47. *Ibid.*, 5.

48. *Ibid.*, 8.

49. The website reads, "Easily accessible, visible from afar, and distinguished for exceptional architectural aesthetics, the library communicates symbolically the high appreciation Islam bestows upon seekers of knowledge, science and scholarship, and the honoring of learning as a light toward truth, goodwill and beauty." "About the Library," Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Center website, <http://www.szgmc.ae/en/about-the-library> (accessed July 3, 2013).

50. "Other areas within the mosque he designed include the main entrance floors and walls, plus south and north entrance floors, in collaboration with Spatium Archi-

fects, Milan also four external archways decorated in white marble relief.” “Architectural Design and Murals,” Kevin Dean’s website, <http://www.kevindean.co.uk/murals.html> (accessed July 2, 2013).

51. “Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan Mosque, Qibla Wall,” Speirs and Major website, [http://www.speirsandmajor.com/work/architecture/sheikh\\_zayed\\_mosque/](http://www.speirsandmajor.com/work/architecture/sheikh_zayed_mosque/) (accessed July 3, 2013).

52. “Achievements 2010,” Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation website, <http://www.khalifafoundation.ae/new/index.php?module=news&nid=431&catid=57> (accessed July 6, 2013).

53. “Construction of Sheikh Khalifa Mosque in Jerusalem Launched,” *Daily Star Lebanon*, December 28, 2006, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Business/Middle-East/Dec/28/Construction-of-Sheikh-Khalifa-mosque-in-Jerusalem-launched.ashx#axzzzYNT17nm6> (accessed July 7, 2013).

54. “Khalifa bin Zayed Mosque in Jerusalem Set to Become Islamic Landmark,” *UAE Interact*, August 10, 2008, [http://www.uaeinteract.com/docs/Khalifa\\_bin\\_Zayed\\_Mosque\\_in\\_Jerusalem\\_set\\_to\\_become\\_Islamic\\_landmark/32306.htm](http://www.uaeinteract.com/docs/Khalifa_bin_Zayed_Mosque_in_Jerusalem_set_to_become_Islamic_landmark/32306.htm) (accessed July 7, 2013).

55. The opening of the mosque was announced in the Ramallah City journal on November 9, 2014. “Iftitāḥ masjid al-shaykh khailifa bin zāyed al-akbar fī falastīn bad al-aqṣa,” *Madinat Ramallah*, <http://www.ramallah.city/archives/2942> (accessed November 10, 2014). I’d like to thank Mahdi Sabbagh for bringing this article to my attention.

56. “Khalifa bin Zayed Mosque in Jerusalem Nears Completion,” *Khaleej Times*, April 11, 2011, [http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?xfile=/data/theuae/2011/April/theuae\\_Apr11296.xml&section=theuae](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?xfile=/data/theuae/2011/April/theuae_Apr11296.xml&section=theuae) (accessed July 7, 2013).

57. “Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation Implements a Mosque Project in Kazakhstan,” Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation website, <http://www.khalifafoundation.ae/new/index.php?module=news&nid=361&catid=69&language=1> (accessed July 7, 2013).

58. “Khalifa Mosque, Hospital Opened in Kazakhstan,” *Khaleej Times*, June 2, 2013, [http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?xfile=data/nationgeneral/2013/June/nationgeneral\\_June29.xml&section=nationgeneral](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?xfile=data/nationgeneral/2013/June/nationgeneral_June29.xml&section=nationgeneral) (accessed July 7, 2013).

59. “About Sharjah: Magnificent Mosques,” *Khaleej Times*, August 11, 2012, [http://www.khaleejtimes.com/nation/inside.asp?section=todayevent&xfile=/data/todayevent/2012/August/todayevent\\_August11.xml](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/nation/inside.asp?section=todayevent&xfile=/data/todayevent/2012/August/todayevent_August11.xml) (accessed July 9, 2013).

60. Ibid.

61. Yasin Kakande, “Sharjah’s Mosque Where the Faithful Can Listen and Learn,” *The National*, August 11, 2011, <http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/sharjahs-mosque-where-the-faithful-can-listen-and-learn> (accessed July 9, 2013).

62. This association has been evoked in several mosques studied in this book, but in each case the message is quite distinct.

63. Several Ottoman mosques were commissioned by the queen mothers and other women of the royal family. Sheikha Jawaher’s patronage falls under a similar rubric of familial piety.

64. "About Us," Sharjah Center for Cultural Communication website, <http://www.shjculture.com/en/2/about-us.aspx#.Ud2LykFln2Y> (accessed July 10, 2013).

## Epilogue

1. The issue of historical revival in the case of these two countries has been studied in recent publications such as Rajaei, *Islamism and Modernism*, and Haykel, "On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action."

2. On Suleyman, see Veinstein, *Soliman le magnifique et son temps*. On Miniaturk, see Tureli, "Modeling Citizenship in Turkey's Miniature Park." The nationalist goals of the park, opened in 2001 and inaugurated by Recep Erdoğan in 2003, are clear. The website of Miniaturk states, "The park contains 120 models done in 1/25th scale. 57 of the structures are from Istanbul, 51 are from Anatolia, and 12 are from the Ottoman territories that today lie outside of Turkey. . . . Special attention was paid to include every civilization that ruled in and around Anatolia and left their marks. Miniaturk traces a 3,000-year history from Antiquity to Byzantium, from Seljuks to the Ottoman Empire and into the present day." Miniaturk website, <http://www.miniaturk.com.tr/en/category.php?id=1> (accessed September 22, 2013).

3. "General Architecture," Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Center website, <http://www.szgmc.ae/en/general-architecture> (accessed September 6, 2013).

4. Making more literal use of Cairene architecture is the oeuvre of the Egyptian construction firm Hegazy Engineering Consultants, whose Jumeirah Mosque is one of Dubai's iconic architectural monuments.

5. Al-Asad, "The Mosques of Abdel Wahed El-Wakil," 34.

6. Speaking with great pride about El-Wakil's visit to the mosque, Fakhouri recounted that the design and execution of the squinches on the column capitals so impressed El-Wakil that he thought it impossible for them to have been constructed in Beirut. Interview with Azmi Fakhouri, December 16, 2010.

7. The current CEO is Saad-Eddine Rafic Al-Hariri. "Overview," Saudi Oger website, [http://www.saudioger.com/overview\\_key.html](http://www.saudioger.com/overview_key.html) (accessed September 8, 2013).

8. Interview with Azmi Fakhouri, Beirut, December 16, 2010.

9. "PM Erdoğan Opens Major Mosque and Stunning Example of Ottoman Architecture," *Sabah English*, July 21, 2012, <http://english.sabah.com.tr/National/2012/07/21/pm-erdogan-opens-major-mosque-and-example-of-ottoman-architecture> (accessed September 10, 2013).

10. Ibid.

11. This is not the case in the UAE and Qatar, where the grand projects, such as museums, have been awarded to European and American firms.

12. Borchardt, "Moscheen in den Sand gebaut," 272–73. He writes that the older monuments remind him of the poverty the Qataris faced before the discovery of oil. Borchardt's statements are problematic and indicative of a certain Orientalist mindset. Nonetheless, they do provide insights into how the German architect responded to the Qatari context.

13. They can be seen in his anthology cited above as well as on the "Helmut Bor-

cherdt,” Archnet.org website, <http://archnet.org/sites/561> (accessed September 13, 2013). However, it was difficult to locate them on a recent (March 2014) visit to Doha.

14. Borchardt, “Moscheen in den Sand gebaut,” 275–76.

15. “Clients,” Halcrow Group website, <http://www.halcrow.com/Clients/> (accessed September 14, 2013).

16. “Who We Are,” Halcrow Group website, <http://www.halcrow.com/Who-we-are/History/> (accessed September 14, 2013). Halcrow was acquired by the Colorado-based engineering consultancy CH2M Hill in 2011. See “CH2M Hill to Acquire Halcrow for \$230m,” *Financial Times*, September 26, 2011, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/3ce7bf5e-e82f-11e0-9fc7-00144feab49a.html#axzz3X6QPnhJq> (accessed April 11, 2015).

17. “Corporations are people, my friend . . . of course they are.” Presidential candidate Mitt Romney at the Iowa State Fair, August 11, 2011, “Mitt Romney: ‘Corporations Are People,’” Politico.com, <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0811/61111.html> (accessed September 14, 2013).

18. Colquhoun, “Classicism and Ideology,” 227.

19. Ibid.

20. “Editorial,” *Harvard Architecture Review* 1 (Spring 1980): 6. Also cited in Mallgrave and Goodman, *An Introduction to Architectural Theory, 1968 to the Present*, 92.

21. In Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 52, these two events are noted as irrevocably altering the history of the Middle East.

22. Until as recently as January 2013, the tomb remained under construction, its interior now a drab reminder of its original exuberance. For a description and analysis of the architecture, see Rizvi, “Religious Icon and National Symbol.”

23. Both buildings were recipients of Aga Khan Awards for Architecture, although the Bhong Mosque caused a great deal of controversy. For more information, see Taylor, “Reflections on the 1986 Aga Khan Awards for Architecture,” <http://archnet.org/system/publications/contents/3972/original/DPT0535.pdf?1384777896> (accessed October 23, 2013).

24. He continues, “To think as a postmodernist, by contrast, would be to ignore everything that makes history history, and selectively to pick and choose whatever authorizing sign fits the moment. History is used and abused in postmodernism; it is feared and confronted in modernism.” Vidler, *Histories of the Immediate Present*, 193.

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