

PROMOTING PUBLIC APPRECIATION FOR THE HISTORIC MONUMENT IN ITS LARGER ARCHITECTURAL SETTING: AN EXPERIMENT WITH TURKISH SCHOOLCHILDREN

The approach I shall review to promoting public appreciation of historic monuments and their setting in Turkey may seem a simplistic one. But the problem is far from simple. It is one that concerns us all, but the Turkish case is especially relevant. On the one hand, it contains all the conflicting elements present in Europe, while on the other hand it has many exacerbating factors peculiar to less affluent countries. Thus, it may throw common difficulties into relief while also focussing attention on the special challenge in countries where still undocumented treasures of past civilizations are hanging in the balance.

First, Turkey's fund of architectural and archaeological treasures is outstandingly rich, but the nation is undergoing socio-economic and technological changes which have no parallel in either its own history or the experience of modern Europe. In one generation the pace of these changes and the sudden shift in values directly challenges a cultural heritage of centuries.

Ironically, the danger to historic monuments in Turkey, particularly in urban areas, dates only from modern times. Fascination with the West, and above all its technology, undoubtedly began over a century ago, but its influence was limited. With the founding of the Republic, rejection of the Ottoman heritage became a virtual creed. Monuments such as baths or covered markets, which had performed the same functions for centuries, were neglected or replaced with modern structures; entire historic centres were destroyed to make room for new roads.

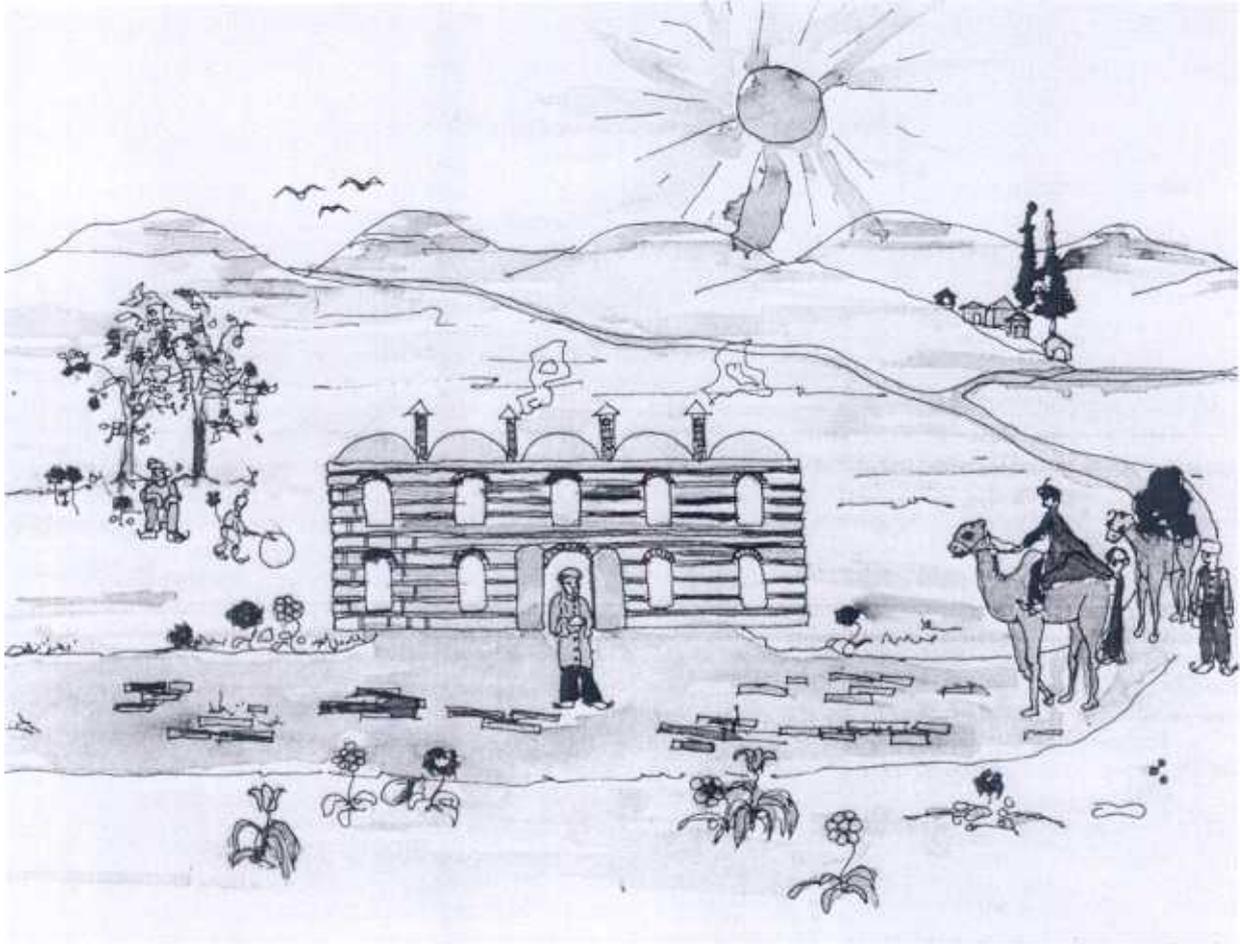
The early search for a national architecture synthesizing Turkish and international styles has given way to an almost indiscriminate adoption of international styles. But the building stands isolated, out of context with its social and architectural surroundings. The student of architecture has few indigenous modern examples to follow. His guides become illustrations in foreign architectural publications where most often there is visible only the single structure detached from its environment. Increasingly we find buildings which are indistinguishable from those going up in Beirut, Europe or America. In this hodge-podge of styles there is little or no attention to local climatic conditions, architectural surroundings, and the functions the structure is to accommodate.

Social changes are also important in bringing about the demise of whole quarters and many monuments. Until the twentieth century, Turkish cities functioned much as they had since Byzantine times. With the structural changes inherent in modernization, the physical pattern of cities altered. Traditionally, cities had been composed of units or districts that were administratively self-governing and characterized by the primary social relationships associated with small settlements. As identification with the district disappeared and anonymity increased this system languished; consequently, so did the monuments. Rather than reorienting the existing system or proposing an innovative solution, modern city-planners simply stamped Western patterns on the Anatolian landscape. Like the architects, the planners adopted these patterns with little or no direct experience of living in such an environment. The preservation of old quarters or an individual monument within contemporary surroundings can be achieved. The two are not mutually exclusive. A creative compromise between restorer and planner is feasible where the juxtaposition of new and old can be tasteful, vibrant and functional.

But first there must be a general awareness, sensitivity, and respect for both contemporary and ancient surroundings as an integral whole. The people who live in these areas must be able to demand this quality of their architects and city-planners. Moreover, students must grow up with such exposure if they are to become competent architects.

If we cannot establish such communication I see little hope for government efforts at preserving historic quarters to have wide or long-lasting impact. Only if the people who live and work in these quarters take pride in them can they be properly maintained. Only if they themselves try to stave off demolition can we preserve a few more of these areas.

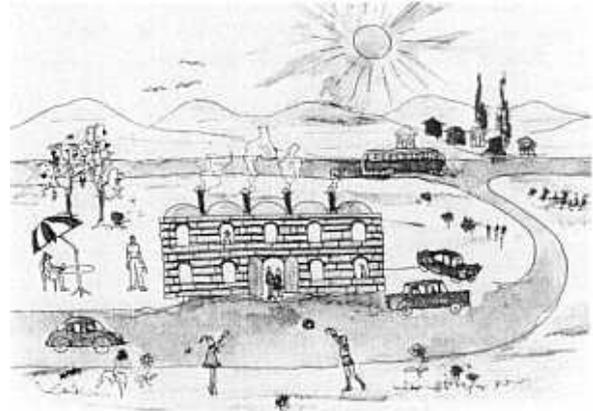
All of us in the profession find that we can communicate such ideas to each other with some degree of satisfaction; we already are conversant with these basic notions and have a common vocabulary of sorts. It is unlikely, however, that an illiterate peasant or a primary school child who has recently moved from a village to squatter housing in a metropolitan area could make head or tail out of what we say at our meetings.



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b



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Fig. 1. - A children's story book; *The Little Caravanserai*, by Dalga Necati.

a) First page, showing the caravan stopping at the Caravanserai.

b) Another page, restorers photographing and examining the building.

c) Illustration of children playing in front of the caravanserai after restoration.

If asked, we would find it difficult to express in simple words and concepts within his frame of reference the ideas we discuss.

Over most of the world, modernization for the general public has meant first and foremost acquiring the physical comforts and habits of the West while rejecting traditional life styles. Most magazines, newspapers, films and schoolbooks in Turkey show people living in apartment houses, watching television, and driving cars on wide highways. These are the models to be imitated. Only a small proportion of the population in fact lives this way. Yet living in an old house overlooking a small winding street near a square with a mosque implies backwardness for most. All media encourage children to strive for the former pattern, and to reject or feel dissatisfied with the latter.

To think otherwise may seem to fly against the course of reason and history. I had, however, a number of experiences to make me think that public attitudes could be moulded and latent ones brought into action. Children seemed to be an important key.

The village museums to be found in many one-room village schools drove home to me the impact a grade school teacher can have on a whole community. These small museums have evolved as teachers encouraged their pupils to be proud of their village, protect their ancient monuments, and bring to the museum anything ancient they might find. In these schoolyards one may find statuary and architectural ornament worthy of any museum and in the schoolhouse one may come across crucial clues for the archaeologist to sites in the area. This is a remarkable achievement when one remembers that the international black market in antiquities has reached into every corner of Turkey. These same villagers are well aware that one modest piece could bring more than their annual income if turned over to a dealer.

I therefore set graduate architects the task of translating the concepts they had been studying in my post-graduate course in the Theory of Restoration into forms understandable to children of different ages in Turkey. One goal was instruction, the other was to come up with some projects that could be implemented. The students were free to select any medium they thought effective. They were instructed that this was not simply an academic exercise to be done *in vacuo*. It was to be practical, given the cost and administrative constraints in Turkey. The students were to test their ideas on classes of children from varied socio-economic backgrounds. In developing their approaches they also worked with a professor of child psychology at the university, learning about the colour preferences, spatial understanding, and manual dexterity of children at different ages.

In retrospect the experiment has produced innovative work, some of which will actually be used in schools. A children's story, *The Little Caravanserai*, written and illustrated by one of these students, is going to be printed under the auspices of the Bank of Pious

ESKİ ESERLERİ CAZİP HALE SOKMAL
DİKKAT BAŞKA YÖNE ÇEKİLMESİN



a

ESKİ OLAN HER ŞEY!



ÖZEL BİR İKİKAT GÖSTERMELİYİZ

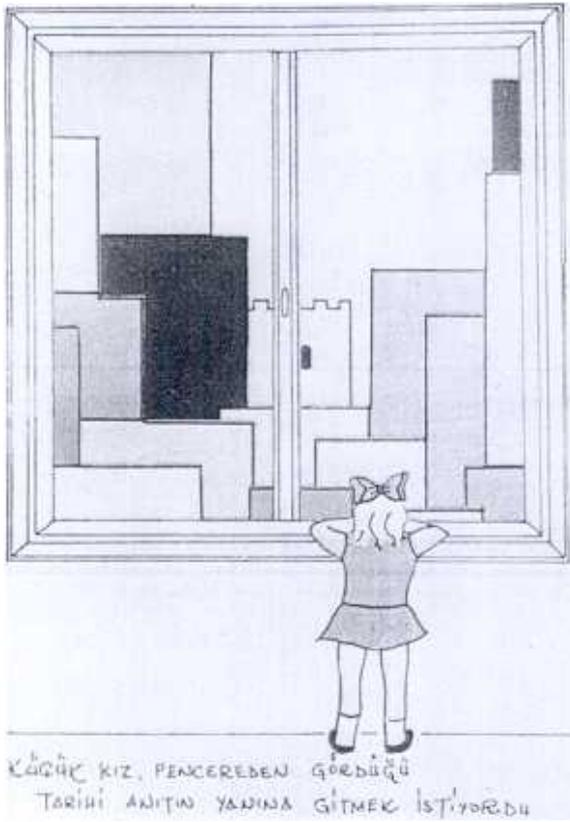


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Fig. 2. - Use of cartoons as the medium of expression, by Puna Orbay.

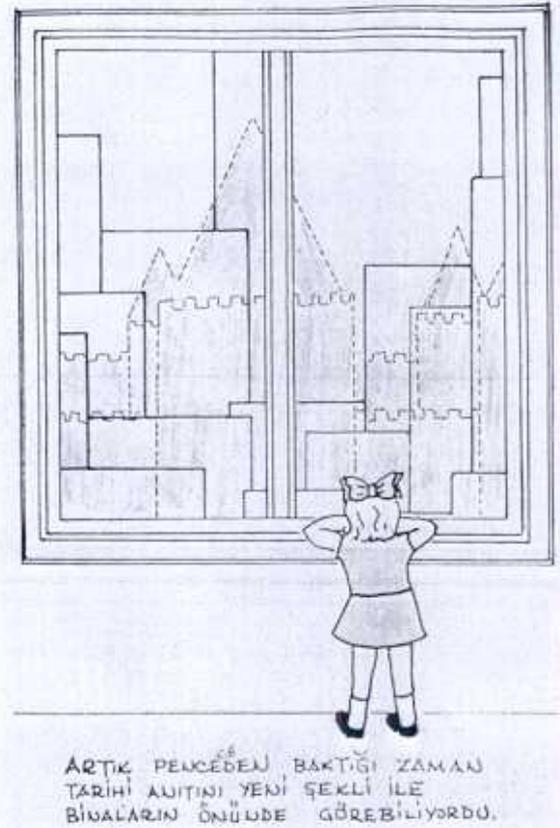
a) "Ancient Monuments should be made attractive so that attention will not be directed elsewhere".

b) "We should show special care for all old things."



a

Fig. 3. - A three-dimensional story; An approach to the complex urban environment, by Puna Orbay.



b

a) First page shows an ancient fortress behind the large modern structures.
b) At the last page the ancient fortress emerges from obscurity.

Endowments. It will be distributed to 750,000 primary school children.

Caravanserais, familiar to many children in Turkey, were once a major unit of the Seljuk and Ottoman overland transport system (fig. 1a). As structures they are virtually complete and thus easy for a child to visualize in a restored condition. In most instances they have been abandoned, serving now as a local stable or storehouse. The author clearly suggests how a changed transport network and technology may have thrust them into obscurity (fig. 1b). Her approach encompasses both restoration and refunctioning, where the ancient monument and modern system serve to complement each other (fig. 1c).

Another approach geared to slightly older children uses cartoons as the medium for expression. Each one draws on a situation familiar to all young Turks, but forces them to look at it from a new angle or to see the lesson through antithesis. Two caught the eye of many readers. The first (fig. 2a) bears the caption, "Ancient monuments should be made attractive so that attention will not be directed elsewhere". The other, while deal-

ing with museum displays, has broader import for all things of historic value (fig. 2b). "We should show special care for all old things."

One story also focusses on a typical Turkish house of the 19th century, presumably abandoned by its owners in favour of a modern apartment. The illustrations show how even so-called modern people can find an old house beautiful. Since the majority of Turkey's population lives in similar houses, this story is especially successful at showing there can be a common meeting point and mutual respect.

The more complex urban environment was creatively handled in a three-dimensional story (fig. 3a). The layout is constructed in such a way as to allow the child to see through from the first to the last page. The structures on each individual page form part of the total urban environment. Gradually an ancient fortress emerges from obscurity behind the larger modern structures as the child turns each page (fig. 3b).

Children often acquire a greater feeling for space, can express their reactions to their environment and order monuments in their surroundings, when they are given

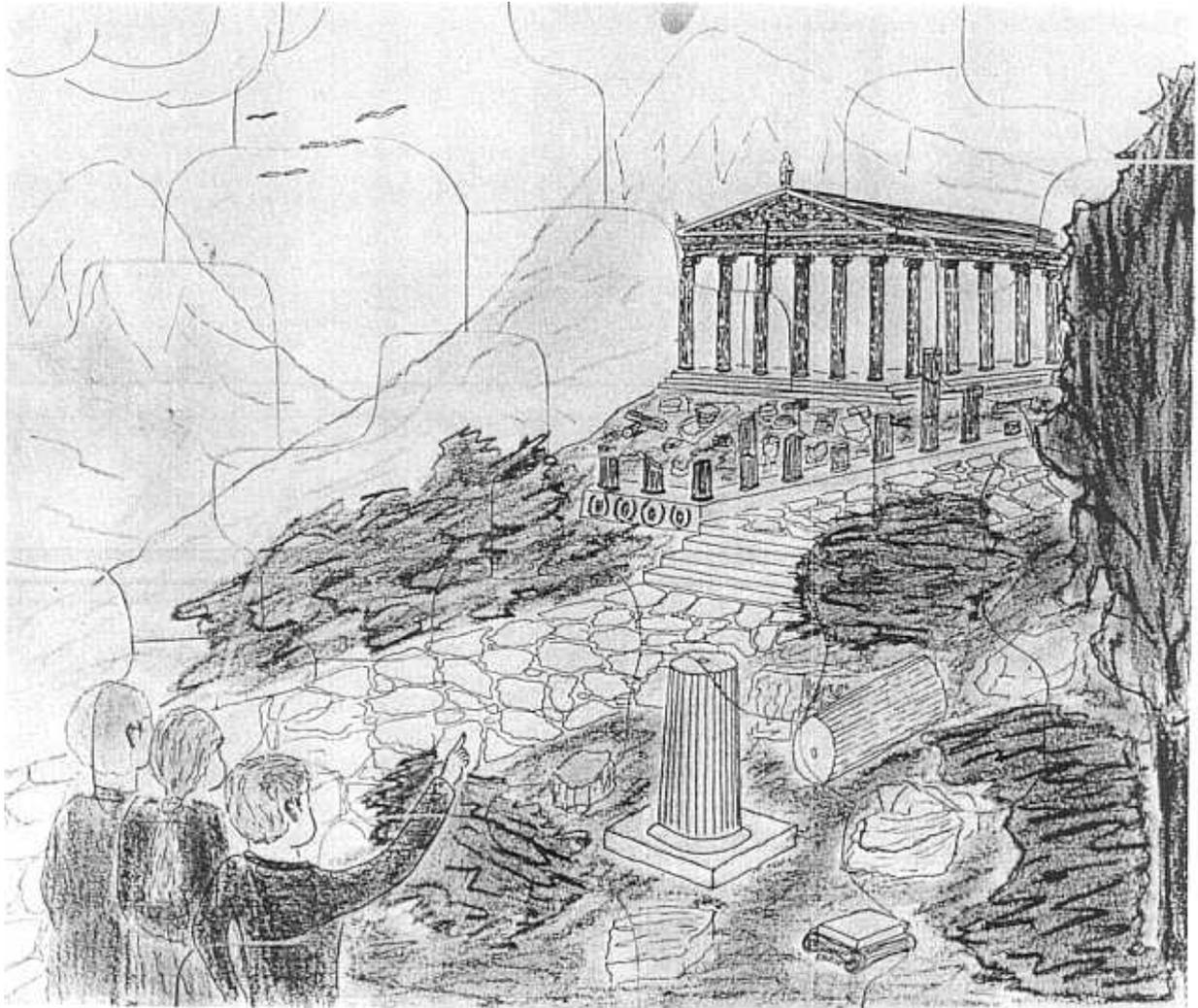


Fig. 4. - Puzzles give the freedom of working with hands. An ancient temple by Hüsni Öğuzsoy.

the freedom of working with their hands. With this in mind some students developed puzzles (fig. 4). A construction set, however, proved the overwhelming favorite among children. This set combines ancient building forms with a visual and instructional manual. The use of the manual is optional, but in itself is of particular interest. Since the concept could easily be modified for use in other national school systems, it is worth describing in some detail.

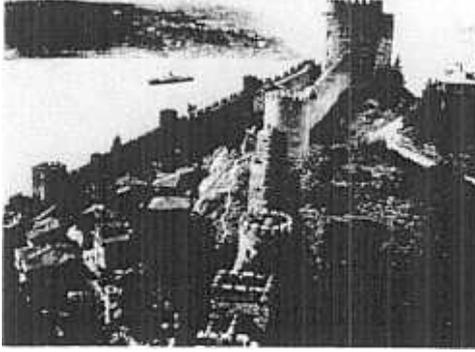
The page below selected from the manual (fig. 5a), like all the other pages, juxtaposes a photograph of the particular type of monument with a drawing of the form as contained in the building set. Pieces, construction problems, and vocabulary are accessible to even a

three-year old. Adults, however, proved just as eager to work with the set as children. The set contains many additional pieces so that the users may innovate beyond the manual (fig. 5b). Since each of the structures illustrated requires only a small part of the set, the child is encouraged to express the monument in a larger setting. The fortress (fig. 5c) usually sets the initial parameters for a more intricate layout. We were surprised to find very small children ordering such complexes. The understanding of the contemporary survival of structures from very different cultures and periods is built from each Turkish child's daily experience.

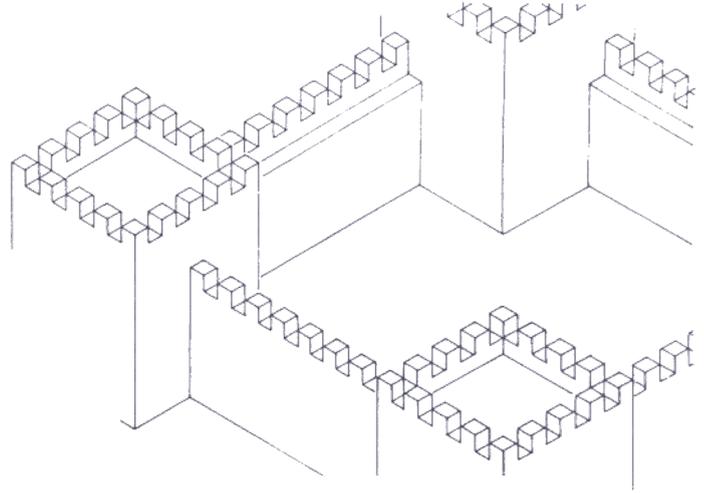
To watch children exploring and enjoying their his-

a

KALE



1



TARİH BOYUNCA ÇEŞİTLİ
ULUSLAR TARAFINDAN
DÜŞMANLARINA KARŞI
SAVUNMA AMACI İLE
YAPILMIŞTIR. TÜRKİYE 'NİN
HEMEN HER ŞEHRİNDE
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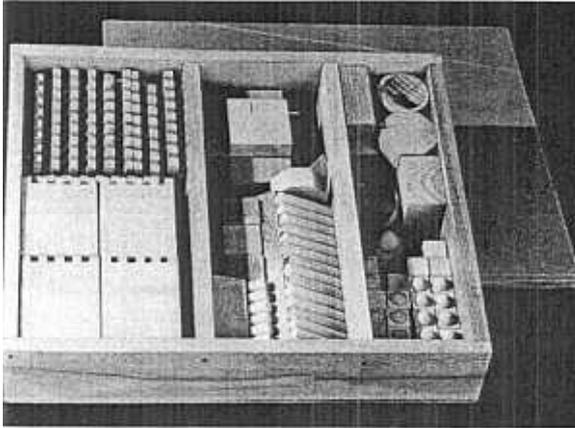
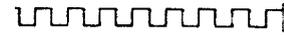
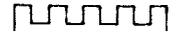
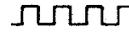


Fig. 5. - A construction set which combines ancient buildings forms with a visual and instructional manual by Tevfik Alpdoğan.

a) A page from the manual; it juxtaposes a photograph of the particular type of monument with a drawing of the form as contained in the building set.

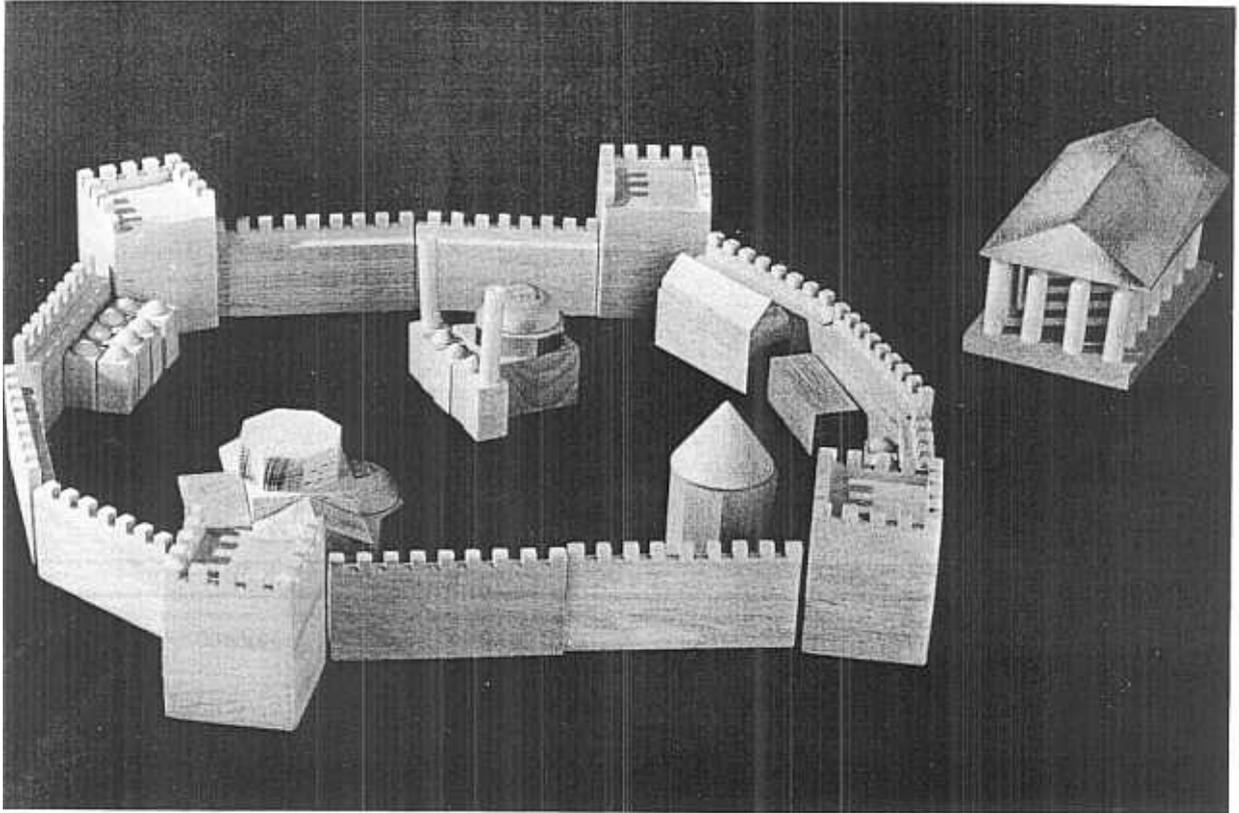
b) Set contains many additional pieces so that the users may innovate beyond manual.

c) The fortress usually sets the initial parameters for a more intricate layout.

b

torical environment made us see the fund of latent appreciation and support we have for the future. The test is to move these experiments from the university to the schoolhouses. In Turkey some educators are eager to try. With the publication and distribution of *The Little Caravanserai* we shall be able to evaluate our premises. There will be no overnight miracles. Building action on new attitudes may be a slow process, but it is a sound one.

Cevat ERDER.



C

RESUME

En ce qui concerne son patrimoine monumental et l'attitude de sa population à l'égard de celui-ci, la Turquie rencontre non seulement les mêmes difficultés que les pays d'Europe, mais aussi de nombreux problèmes semblables à ceux des pays moins favorisés. Le rejet systématique, dès la proclamation de la République, de l'ensemble de l'héritage ottoman, a provoqué une rupture de la tradition nationale en architecture et il est pratiquement impossible, aujourd'hui, d'intégrer les monuments anciens du pays dans l'environnement urbain moderne, dépourvu d'individualité et, même, peu adapté au climat et aux nécessités pratiques. L'urbanisme à l'occidentale a achevé de détruire les communautés locales, et la population, sollicitée par des mass media qui prônent exclusivement un confort matériel hors de la portée de la grande ma-

jeurité, a perdu tout sens de la valeur de son environnement traditionnel.

Des instituteurs de campagne ont tenté de remonter le courant en créant, notamment, des musées de village où sont conservés des trésors archéologiques locaux et dont les paysans connaissent parfaitement le prix au marché noir. L'auteur, vivement frappé par ce genre de phénomène, et convaincu de l'importance capitale du rôle de l'école primaire, a cherché de nouveaux moyens d'atteindre les enfants. Il décrit ici une expérience menée auprès des jeunes architectes fréquentant ses cours de restauration, auxquels il avait donné pour tâche d'inventer et d'expérimenter des matériels pédagogiques adaptés aux conditions socio-économiques du pays. Dans les divers jeux et publications proposés par les élèves figuraient notamment un jeu de construction, très apprécié des enfants, ainsi qu'un livre illustré racontant l'histoire d'une restauration; ce dernier, édité à 750.000 exemplaires, va être remis à titre expérimental aux enfants des écoles primaires.

Fig. 1. - Images extraites du livre pour enfants de Dalga Necati : « Le Petit Caravansérail » :

- a) *Une caravane d'autrefois fait halte au caravansérail.*
- b) *Des restaurateurs étudient et photographient le bâtiment en ruines.*
- c) *Des enfants jouent devant le caravansérail restauré.*

Fig. 2. - Deux des dessins humoristiques proposés par Puna Orbay comme moyen d'atteindre le jeune lecteur :

- a) *« Les monuments historiques doivent être rendus attrayants pour éviter que l'attention ne soit détournée ailleurs. »*
- b) *« Toute chose ancienne doit être traitée avec un soin particulier. »*

Fig. 3. - Tentative d'aborder le problème de l'insertion des monuments dans l'environnement urbain : une histoire racontée en images à trois dimensions, par Puna Orbay.

- a) *Page 1 : La vieille forteresse se cache derrière de grands immeubles modernes.*

b) *Dernière page du livre : la forteresse renaît, sortant de l'obscurité.*

Fig. 4. - Exploitation du puzzle pour permettre aux mains de travailler sans contrainte : représentation d'un temple antique par Hüsni Oğuzsoy.

Fig. 5. - Jeu de construction dont les éléments empruntent des formes anciennes, accompagné d'un manuel d'instructions illustré (Tevfik Alpdoğan) :

- a) *Une page extraite du manuel. On y voit, côte à côte, une photo d'un monument véritable et un dessin représentant ce même type de monument tel que le jeu permet de le construire.*
- b) *Les diverses pièces que comporte le jeu. On voit que l'enfant peut inventer toutes sortes de constructions autres que celles suggérées par le manuel.*
- c) *Forteresse servant de cadre à partir duquel l'enfant peut développer un ensemble beaucoup plus complexe. C'est la base de départ habituelle.*