



Megaron

<https://megaron.yildiz.edu.tr> - <https://megaronjournal.com>
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14744/megaron.2025.34576>

M G A R O N

Article

A critical vocabulary for future architectural criticism based on the peripheral unfocused vision of Sancaklar Mosque, Istanbul

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received: 15 July 2024

Revised: 25 February 2025

Accepted: 27 March 2025

Key words:

Architectural criticism;
haptic experiences; peripheral
unfocused vision; Sancaklar
Mosque; wholeness.

ABSTRACT

This article serves as a platform to invent critical vocabulary for future architectural criticisms, using the Sancaklar Mosque in Istanbul as a compelling case study. The main argument of the article is to show how architects need to understand minimalism in detail. It challenges the use of Minimalism drawing inspiration from Christopher Alexander's paradigms of 'Wholeness'. The study investigates the mosque from various viewpoints, such as ontology, topography, anchoring and emplacement, body and entanglement, temporality and spatiality of time, the cosmogony of light and earth, embodiment, motility, atmosphere, and emotions. The synergistic relationality interprets wholes as dynamic, generative fields sustained by intensive parts that integrally belong to and support the whole. The authors delineate a particular approach to research and criticism based on a 'peripheral unfocused' vision suggested by Ehrenzweig. The study's underlying seminal phenomenological concepts include 'erlebnis', lifeworld, and 'Dasein.' Ultimately, it argues that Minimalism alone is not a sufficient tool for modern architectural aesthetics to render a building effective, but it sustains the synergistic relationality within the whole. It deals with its architecture's sensory, semantic, and corporeal metaphorical qualities and discusses the mosque in the general context of phenomenology. In conclusion this article seeks the "inner language" of Sancaklar Mosque, as Pallasmaa calls it, and finds it in the building's integration with nature, space, people and even the philosophy of its function.

Cite this article as: Gür Ş.Ö., Erkartal P.Ö., Öztürk S.D. (2025). A critical vocabulary for future architectural criticism based on the peripheral unfocused vision of Sancaklar Mosque, Istanbul. Megaron, 20(2), 133-146.

INTRODUCTION

This article contributes significantly to architectural criticism by inventing critical vocabulary for future discussions. The main argument of the article is to show how architects

need to understand holism in detail. It uses the Sancaklar Mosque in Istanbul, a compelling case study, to boldly challenge the prevalent use of "Minimalism" as a tool for practical designs. This challenge is crucial, as it draws inspiration from Christopher Alexander's (2002a; 2002b)

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Published by Yıldız Technical University, İstanbul, Türkiye

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paradigms of 'Wholeness.' The study explores the mosque from various viewpoints, such as ontology, topography, anchoring and emplacement, body and entanglement, temporality and spatiality of time, the cosmogony of light and earth, embodiment, motility, atmosphere, and emotions corresponding to his paradigm of wholeness.

Christopher Alexander's (2002a; 2002b) phenomenological research on space and the creation of space is centered on the concept of 'Wholeness.' In this context, Alexander (2002a; 2002b) distinguishes between two types of relationality: analytic and synergistic. Analytic relationality is characterized by a whole consisting of arbitrary connections, primarily based on typologies and relationships between weak or strong parts. On the other hand, synergistic relationality is the integral whole established by intertwined ties with people, context, and the world. He argues that the integrity provided by the vital bonds formed by man and the world will play a role in strengthening architecture, space, and life. Alexander (1979) and Alexander et al. (1975; 1977; 1985; 2012) devoted their academic life to finding patterns in which the integrity of life is achieved. He wrote, 'Wholeness is a global thing – easy to feel, perhaps, but hard to define. You cannot get a person's portrait right unless you see this underlying integrity... As in architecture, the integrity lies beneath the surface in portraiture, and the truth determines everything' (Alexander, 2002a).

The whole, built on analytic relationality, the most common today, is defined as a system of predefined parts and interconnections. Synergistic relationality desirable for community building, on the other hand, relies upon phenomenological explanations concerning:

- A kinship community
- A grouped gathering in belonging;
- The state of coming together as determined by the elements (separate but related parts) and their relationships.

The integrity built on the above characteristics is the synergistic relationality that Alexander (1979) exalts. A whole with synergistic relationality is an integrated, productive space sustained by constituent belonging rather than separated comprehensive parts. The whole and its parts are intrinsic and interrelated. This essentially indescribable, less visible "ambiance" and "presence" marks the essential characteristic of authentic wholeness for Alexander (1979). What he suggested for communities is equally valid for any building: Synergistic relationality.

Based on this foundation, the field research of this study is guided by the insights of Anton Ehrenzweig (1961), a renowned figure in Modern Art. He posited that artistic conception differs significantly from conscious thought's logical and systematic structure. Creative forms are polyphonic, not confined to a single opinion chain, but

comprising many overlapping or non-overlapping bands. This 'peripheral unfocused' vision, a product of widespread and scattered thinking, challenges our usual thought processes. It also offers a fresh perspective on architectural concept formation, design, and criticism, which we have adopted in our research.

Space cannot be fully experienced without wandering; the experience creates the haptic space (Cansever, 1996; Düzenli, 2005; Düzenli, 2009; Merleau-Ponty, 2002). The moment of deep thinking calls for an unfocused, undifferentiated, and subconscious mode of vision integrating tactile experiences and embodied identifications (Rushdie, 1990; Pallasmaa, 2012). Hence, a subconscious-peripheral vision was adopted in our critical site-seeing: an unfocused, undifferentiated, and subconscious mode of vision fused with integrating tactile experiences and embodied identifications (Figure 1).

In the following sections, Sancaklar Mosque, mosque ontology and the criticism of Sancaklar Mosque (the building type, design approach, space, and place etc.) are explained in detail.

AN INTERLUDE: THE ONTOLOGY OF THE MOSQUE

Some indexes form a group because of common attributes or characteristics rooted in individuals' subconscious. They are termed 'type' in the discipline of architecture. Theories of type are epistemological and discursive and have guided the organization of buildings and towns together. The precursors such as Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy (1755-1849), Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand (1760-1834), and Gottfried Semper (1803-1879) paved the way to today's understanding of type as a model. The term comes from the Greek word "typos," which contains the meanings of "figure, image, form, class," and can be interpreted as the general character determined for a particular entity based on historical rightfulness. They may be the whole project, only a specific feature, a method, or principles (Gür, 2017). This repetition - or sometimes transformation - leads to precedents of design rules to follow (Gür & Durmuş, 2012).

The mosque (cami), where Muslims worship collectively, derives from the Arabic root meaning "to reconcile." In the early periods of Islam, no specific building was built for mass worship. However, it is accepted that the first mosque of the Islamic world was the Masjid al-Nabvî, created by Hz. Muhammad in Medina. This earliest example consisted of a courtyard surrounded by mud-brick walls at a human height and rooms along one side where the Prophet and his family would be housed. Initially, a simple pavilion was built on the inside of the northern wall in the direction of Jerusalem, which was converted from Jerusalem to Mecca in 624, and then sat on palm tree poles and consisted of palm branches to protect worshippers from the sun in front of the southern

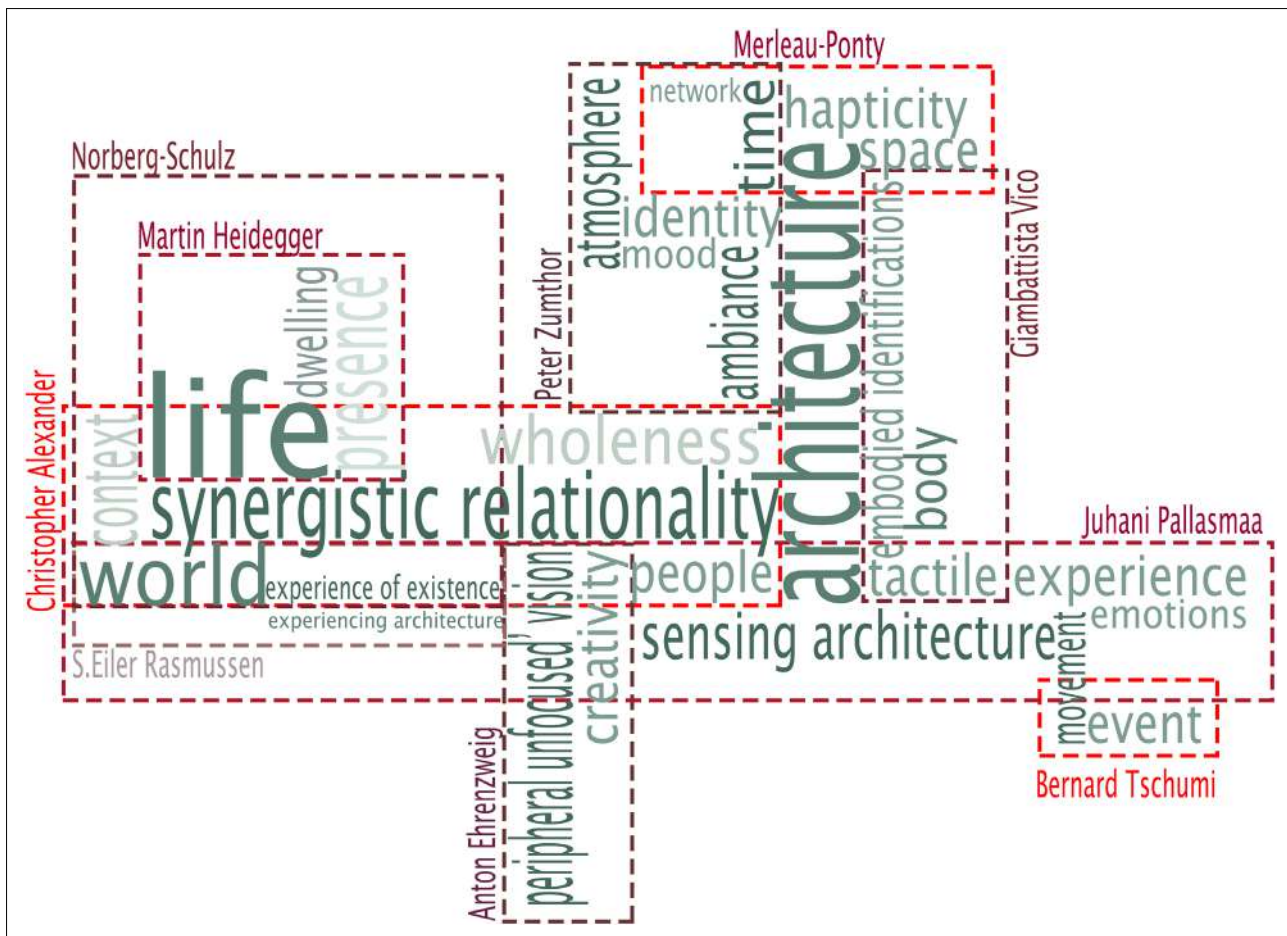


Figure 1. General conceptual map: Terms, relations, architects and philosophers.

wall of the courtyard. Unfortunately, this first mosque lost its original structure due to many repairs and expansions. However, this type, built on purely functional grounds consisting of a mosque with a courtyard in the middle and a cover that sits on the poles, has become a prototype for the mosque architecture that developed after it. The rectangular form was used to keep the first row, considered more sacred in Namaz, as wide as possible (Baltacı, 1985).

The Imperial period (661-749) is full of examples of this type of structure: Umayyad I mosque in Damascus, built in 706, is considered one of the oldest Emevi mosques and has a broad impact on mosque architecture. The typology has also affected later mosques as a characteristic element of the emeritus-era mosque type. Cordoba Grand Mosque (785), Samarra Grand Mosque (846), Ibn Tolun Mosque (879), and Isfahan Masjid Al-Cuma Mosque (1072) are examples of localization of the original typology.

The general typology of Early Anatolia (11th century) mosques is multi-masted and flat-roofed. The thick masonry walls, sparse drain windows, and a single minaret of flat-roofed mosques, supported by wooden poles in some examples and masonry stone feet in others with regional influences, are

the most prominent elements that characterize the structure. The leading examples of Anatolia-based versions of this type are Sivas Grand Mosque, Erzurum Grand Mosque, Konya Aladdin Mosque, etc.

The Principality Era, the early Ottoman Period, and most other 11th-century mosques took over this pattern. While the 19th century partially maintained Anatolian Seljuk mosques, in some examples, it attracted attention as a period when a very original but limited developmental typology emerged. Another typology frequently seen in Bursa and its immediate vicinity has also entered the literature as a “Reverse T planned mosque.” This typology of iwans scattered around a courtyard covered with a dome can be interpreted as a typological experiment with limited development potential, given the point reached by mosque architecture in Ottoman lands. Green Mosque in Bursa is one of the most important examples of this species.

This era's "single unit" mosques have a typology consisting of a square space and a large dome. They are especially noteworthy because they contain a space design that classical Ottoman architects frequently applied and developed in the following years. The technological and typological peak of

Ottoman Mosque architecture is classical age mosques. The most brilliant examples, such as the Selimiye mosque in Edirne and Süleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul, designed by the renowned Mimar Sinan, showcase a four-, six-, or eight-legged “domed gazebo” that sustains a large central dome and side spaces added to it in two, three or four directions according to the need. In this system, the walls are not carriers but divisive elements; plenty of windows can be opened, and the interior is adequately illuminated.

In Turkey, since the 16th century, mosque practice has been based on principles established by architect Sinan and acquired an image shared by society: a hemispherical dome and at least one minaret. Tuluk (1999) examined the evolutionary development of Ottoman Mosques, which large domed covers can characterize in terms of construction techniques, structure, and space syntax, and traced the precedent of this type to the 13th Century Anatolian indoor madrassas and the Great Mosques (Ulucami). The study, which categorizes six types (the dome, minaret, mihrab, pulpit (minbar), kursî -or sermon platform- and courtyard), clearly shows the origin and how the following spatial syntax and structural systems emerged from the prototype. The transition of types, a fascinating journey influenced by social, cultural, and urban evolutions, is a crucial aspect of Ottoman architectural history.

The dome, minaret, mihrab, pulpit (minbar), kursî and courtyard practiced over centuries are considered obligatory elements of mosque design despite their diversity due to socio-cultural differences. The dome represents the celestial, as the sky reflects the infinity of the universe (Gür & Durmuş, 2012). The curves of the dome inspire a sense of the presence of God, leading to meaningful spiritual sensations in those who pray (Karaesmen, 2012). The minaret is a vertical, often cylindrical element used to call to prayer in the early Islamic period. The minarets have emerged and even towered in time to announce the call further. A typical minaret consists of the body, balcony (sherephe), and the coif. Since regional and cultural influences and traditions influenced the minarets, they became an element reflecting society's construction technology and aesthetic taste. Even the number of minarets has a special meaning since they show how glorious the mosque is.

Mihrab is a prayer niche in the southern wall, usually concave and generally heavily decorated. It indicates the direction of qibla- the direction of Namaz (Grabar, 1973). Mihrab is also where the imam, who leads the congregation, prays. However, more important than all, this indicates the Kaaba, a sacred place for Muslims.

Then there is the pulpit (minbar), a staircase, often narrow and enclosed by handrails. In the first years of Islam, the pulpit also served as a political chair (Baltacı, 1985). According to Burckhardt (2009), a canopy shelters the topmost level, representing the spiritual world since the Seljuk period.

Another elevated element is the kursî- or the sermon platform- where the imam goes to preach to the congregation. There may be more than one in some mosques, and there are examples where the pulpit is a sermon platform from time to time. Sermon platforms can be portable or attached to the wall or a structural unit. They consist of the base, the body, the seat, and the railing and reflect the art style trends of their age (Apa, 2008). All these elements comprise the whole, and any design differentiation determines the whole structure- the total architectonics.

The courtyard isolates the mosque from the surrounding structures and the area and adds autonomy. In Classical Ottoman Mosques, the yard is divided into interior and exterior. The exterior courtyard provides the necessary movement space for the geometry of the mosque to be read more quickly and the details of the façade to be noticed. On the other hand, the inner courtyard has a rectangular plan adjacent to the mosque and is surrounded mainly by a semi-open space with a portico (Oral, 1993).

Notably, after the 20th century, the effects of modernization movements led some architects to re-interpret the elements and components of mosques and the indexical relationships. Some architects have deconstructed the well-established relations between signifier and signified. For example, Özçakı (2018) examined how recent experiments handled the dome differently; Akbulut & Erarslan (2017), Akar & Pilehvarian (2019) also classified these re-interpreted mosque designs based on the plan's geometry, roof construction systems, technology and materials, illumination, and the forms of symbolic elements.

These mosques are unique and undoubtedly deviate from the traditional mosque typology. However, what is common to all these exemplified buildings is the presence of historical-traditional parts in one way or another (Figure 2).

The Case: The Sancaklar Mosque, Istanbul

The Sancaklar Foundation demands a mosque project from Emre Arolat Architecture [EAA] and shows the probable site. Designed by EAA and completed in 2011-2013, Sancaklar Mosque is located at Büyükçekmece, one of the outer districts of Istanbul. The building was granted many national and international awards, including the “Project of the Future” prize at the Barcelona World Architecture Festival 2011. In addition, the world's award in the category of religious buildings was given at the Singapore World Architecture Festival in 2013. It was selected for The Religious Building of the Year Award at the ArchDaily in 2015. It won the Building of the Year Award 2018 from the Royal Institute of British Architects RIBA Award for International Excellence.

The building is located on a road separating it from the surrounding gated communities and is positioned on the gentle slope of the valley, overlooking the rural landscape.

TRADITIONAL ROOF/ DOME			
Mosque	Photo	Section	Plan
Divriği Ulucami Sivas- Turkey 13 th century Ahlatlı Hürremşah Single hinged roof	TC. Kültür Portalı	Peker, 2014	Peker, 2014
Green Mosque İznik- Turkey 14 th century Mimar Hacı Musa Single domed	TC. Kültür Portalı	Salt Research	Salt Research
Bursa Ulucami Bursa- Turkey 15 th century Ali Neccar / Hacı İvaz Multi-domed	Haber7, 2020	Pinterest	Okuryazarım, 2017
Süleymaniye Mosque İstanbul- Turkey 16 th century Mimar Sinan Single dome with semi-domes and pendentive	İstanbul.net.tr, 2012	Salt Research	Salt Research
NO DOME			
Kınalıada Mosque İstanbul- Turkey 1964 Başar Acarlı&Turhan Uyaroğlu Slanted roof	Pinterest	Erzen & Balamir, 1996	Erzen & Balamir, 1996
Etimesgut Mosque Ankara- Turkey 1966 Cengiz Bektaş Flat roof	Herek, 2020	Herek, 2020	Herek, 2020
Organize Sanayi Mosque Eskişehir- Turkey 1989 Hayzuran & Doğan Hasol Pyramidal roof	Dünya Camileri, 2012	Oral, 1993	Oral, 1993
TBMM Mosque Ankara- Turkey 1997 Behruz & Can Çinici Ziggurat roof	Arkiv	Arkiv	Arkiv
INTERPRETED DOME			
Marmara İlahiyat Mosque İstanbul- Turkey 1982 Hilmi Şenalp Textured dome	Arkiv	Arkiv	Arkiv
Şakirin Mosque İstanbul- Turkey 2009 Zeynep Fadilloğlu&Hüseyin Tayla Holistıc dome	Pinterest	Erkartal	Pinterest
Yeşil Vadi Mosque İstanbul- Turkey 2010 Adnan Kazmaoğlu Partial dome	Arkiv	Arkiv	Arkiv
Cologne Central Mosque Cologne- Germany 2017 Paul & Gottfried Böhm Integrated dome	BauNetz, 2017	BauNetz, 2017	BauNetz, 2017

Figure 2. The ontology of the mosque (Arkiv (n.d.a); Arkiv (n.d.b); Arkiv (n.d.c); BauNetz (2017); Dünya Camileri (2012); Erkartal (n.d.); Erzen & Balamir (1996); Haber7 (2020); Herek (2020); İstanbul.net.tr (2012); Okuryazarım (2017); Oral (1993); Peker (2014); Pinterest (n.d.a); Pinterest (n.d.b); Pinterest (n.d.c); Salt Research (n.d.a.); Salt Research (n.d.b.); TC Kültür Portalı (n.d.a); TC Kültür Portalı (n.d.b)).

Its design is modest, reminiscent of a primitive shelter. This mosque is designed to foster a direct connection between the individual and their faith, prioritizing substance over form. Its architecture aims to harmonize with the environment, creating the impression that it has always been a part of the landscape.

THE PERIPHERAL UNFOCUSED VISION OF SANC AKLAR MOSQUE

Ehrenzweig (1965) distinguished 'focused vision' and 'subconscious-peripheral vision' while arguing the importance of peripheral vision in the hierarchy of vision. Subliminal studies have also corroborated the superiority of the subconscious vision in scanning the entire field of view. Furthermore, Ehrenzweig (1965) has proved that under the concept of conscious "hemianopsia," the information processing capacity of the nervous system is 20 bits per second. In contrast, the unconscious information processing capacity is over 100 times this. Freud (1968) had previously noted that the human brain unconsciously grasps 1015 times the knowledge it cannot consciously hold (Augusto, 2010).

In his *Scienza Nuova* of 1730, Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Vico had already argued that language, myth, and custom are the metaphorical legacy of the species through self-realization history (Vico, 1968). He emphasized the capacity of the being to experience the environment bodily and the validity of "the notion of corporeal imagination." Vico's concept of the enactment and re-enactment of man through history is corporeal in that the body re-constitutes the world through its tactile appreciation of reality (Frampton, 1995).

Juhani Pallasmaa's 'The Geometry of Feeling: A Look at the Phenomenology of Architecture' (1996) book, *The Geometry of Feeling: A Look at the Phenomenology of Architecture* (1996), which criticizes "the reality of how a building is experienced has been overlooked" and proposes a "basic vocabulary" for defining "primary feelings in architecture." By offering a structure for experiences that unfolds through sequences of movement and relational proximity without predetermining the content, Pallasmaa's perspective provides a more intuitive and fluid complement to structured paradigms, offering a structure for emergent experiences through sequences of movement and relational intimacy without predetermining content. This is why the field was physically scanned and experienced through unconscious-peripheral vision.

The findings are structured under eight categories that correspond to distinct aspects of the architectural experience: site, sense of place, morphology, temporal perception, illumination, semiotics, spatial navigation, and atmospheric quality. The Sancaklar Mosque-Specific

Map below illustrates how the general conceptual framework are applied to the specific architectural analysis of Sancaklar Mosque (Figure 3). Given that Sancaklar Mosque defies typological classification and challenges conventional representations of mosques, the decision was made to deconstruct these headings and prioritize the phenomenological context.

Site: Topography

Buildings invariably exist out of the interplay of three converging factors: the topos, the typos, and the tectonic. Other than the character, the sound of topography lets one connect with experiences (Frampton, 1995). The moment one gets out of the car on the roadside car parking, one steps on the grass. Unlike those designed later, cobblestone collages take the form of tapestries (Figure 4). They do not create a topographic continuum like Pikionis did in the Acropolis. Instead, the tactile appreciation of reality, sensing the texture by foot and hearing the sound produced by footsteps subconsciously ties one to her stages of life, days in one's childhood walking up narrow paths to the village high on a mountain. Steen Eiler Rasmussen (1962) has a remarkable chapter on Hearing Architecture, where he notes the imperceptible acoustic character of the built form. Spatial reflection of sound immediately affects one's psychological response surfacing from experiences.

A single rectangular prism touches the eye: As Vittorio Gregotti (1966) elocutes, 'placing a stone somewhere marks the moment when changes begin.' There is no icon, sign, or symbol of the minarette. It is an allegory of a threshold!

Unlike historical typologies, Sancaklar Mosque has neither a dome nor a recognizable minaret (Figure 5). They are absent, and their absence is so substantial that they become visible by absence. Two rows of stone walls and a tower are insight, and of course, the sky and trees. There is only one Arabic script on the tower: "Allahu Akbar" (God is the greatest). Nothing on earth is superior to God, meaning there is no need for exaggeration, glamour, or ostentation.

Sense of Place: Anchoring and Emplacement

One blends with nature, slowly moving into almost nothingness in awe and reverence. You remember the tree, the texture of stone, the hissing of grass growing in the commissures; while you move down the steps, you can almost hear the whisper of the ground. The sound of the wind accompanies the adhan (ezan). The mosque is still not visible (Figure 6). Architects preferred to carve the slope rather than putting up an ordinary building on the plain land. The mosque is carved into stone like a cave.

The euphoric memory¹ brings back the anxiety of the earliest believers who hid in caves or cave-like structures to worship. They walk in herds wearing hoods with you,

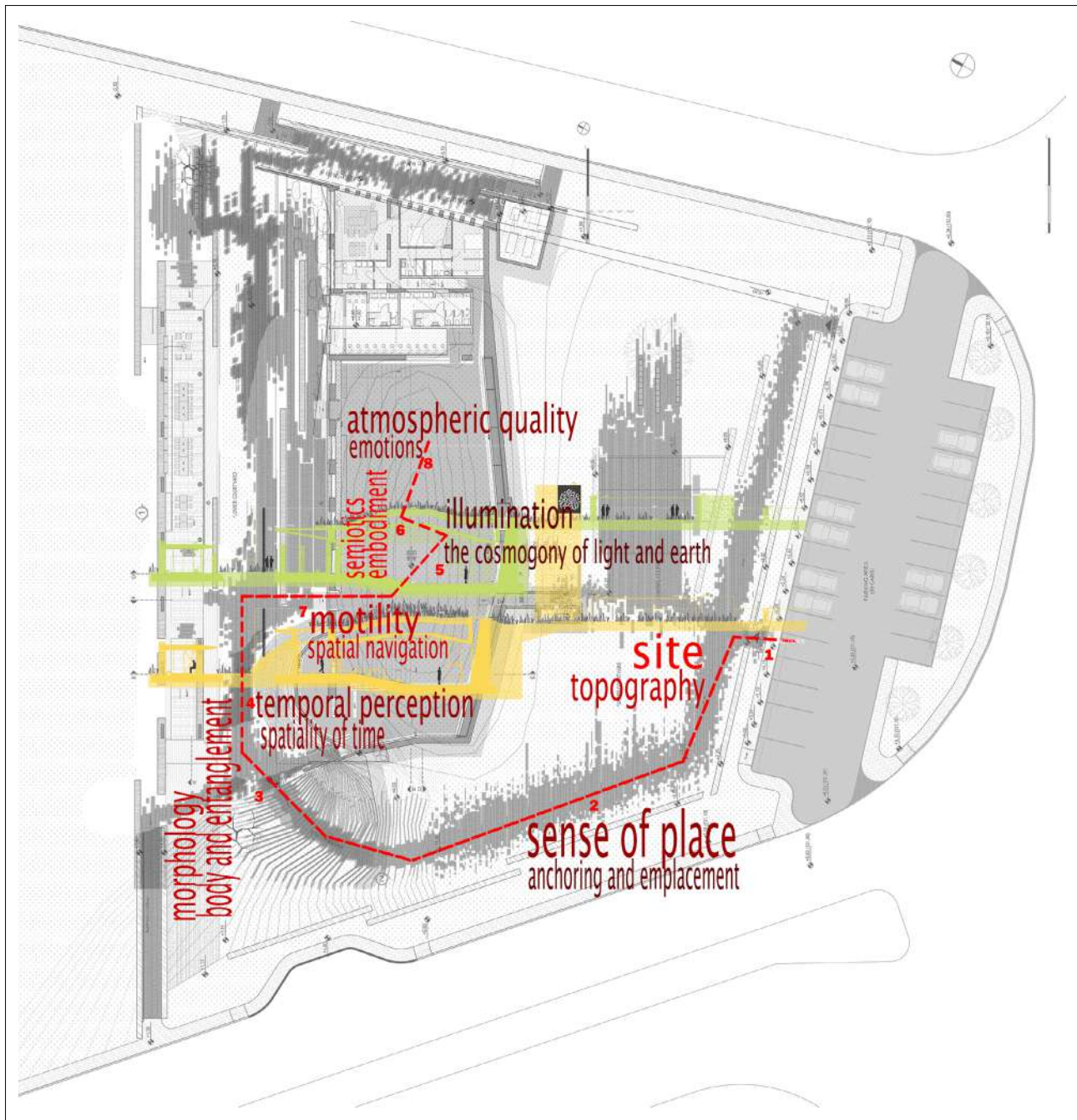


Figure 3. The Sancaklar Mosque-specific map.

as in Rome, Jerusalem, Cappadocia, and even at the Virgin Mary Monastery in Trabzon-Turkey. Silent as stone in astonishment and abstentions, you walk down the stairs ponderously, spellbound.

The mosque is still invisible under the slope. It is anchored into solid rock. The body of the building belongs here. The place and space have become such that it is impossible to separate them anymore. It cannot be moved elsewhere, and it cannot be rooted elsewhere. There is no form, no architecture. There is only one place (Figure 7).

Kengo Kuma (2009)'s words come to mind: My ultimate aim is to "erase" architecture because I believe a building should become one with its surroundings. And "all that I see is within reach of my gaze," says Merleau-Ponty (2006). Peter Zumthor (2010) corroborates, 'Certain buildings' presence has something secret about it. They seem to be there, and we do not pay any particular attention to them. However, it is virtually impossible to imagine where they stand without them. These buildings appear to be anchored firmly in the ground.



Figure 4. The first sight of Sancaklar Mosque (Photo by the authors).



Figure 5. The courtyard of Sancaklar Mosque and the minaret (Photo by the authors).

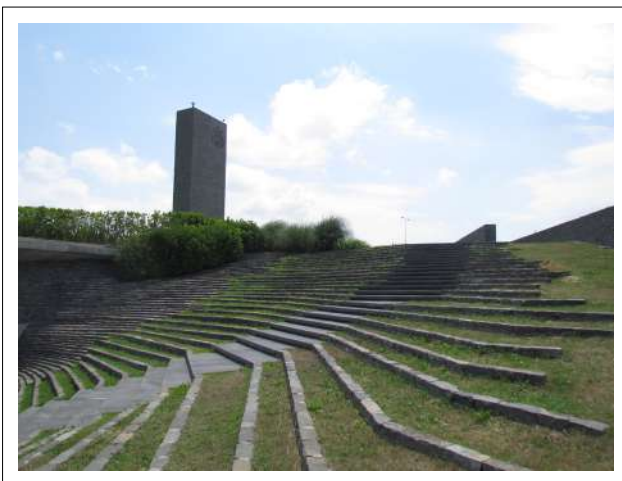


Figure 6. The courtyard of Sancaklar Mosque (Photo by the authors).



Figure 7. The stone path (Photo by the authors).

The infinite path (Figure 8) runs between two rows of buildings with incomprehensible functions. On the right side is the mosque and other facilities like ablution space, etc. On the left side are the civic buildings, such as the library, seminar rooms, and studios for children. At the end of the path rests the stones of musalla (coffin rest). It stands there like a knot, implying and reminding us that worldly and non-worldly acts should be weighed and judged regarding morality and ethics before the end arrives. Whether a limit or a threshold leaves a question mark in the beholder's brain, a tree between the stones of musalla is visible in the distance, and one cannot help but think: which one is designed?

The eye lingers on the vast horizons of the valley. It is foggy. As Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi (1959) says: "Everything is an obstacle, a cover, to see the self of God. Because one cannot bear to see God without a cover."

Morphology: Body and Entanglement

It is hidden under the vast canopy (Figure 9). It is quiet, calm, and humble. There is no need to be resplendent; it has no traditional decorations, and there is only the texture and color of the stone. It stands to the right of a long, thin courtyard that reaches the horizon. There is a stone bench and a library under another wide canopy opposite. This



Figure 8. The second courtyard (Photo by the authors).



Figure 9. The mosque and the minaret (Photo by the authors).

courtyard, similar to life, combines worldly and spiritual matters. It can even be called secular. So can the material and the ecclesiastical co-habit.

It is nothing to be baffled; religious buildings have coexisted with secular buildings since eternity. Between namaz times, people could sit, read, and talk in the courts of mosques; they were social spaces. However, the religious and the secular never seemed so confusingly alike. Sancaklar Mosque equally blesses them by confronting and uniting



Figure 10. The inside of the Sancaklar Mosque (Photo by the authors).

them in the same narrow court. There is neither forbidding nor prohibition.

Temporal Perception: Temporality and Spatiality of Time

Like its outside, the inside is modest (Figures 10 and Figure 11). The carpet has the same soft tone of color as the walls. There is almost no color. No tiles, no gilding. There is only one inscription on the black granite wall, and the endless light licks the qibla wall (Figure 12a, 12b). This light illuminates the darkness. All bodies turn towards the light

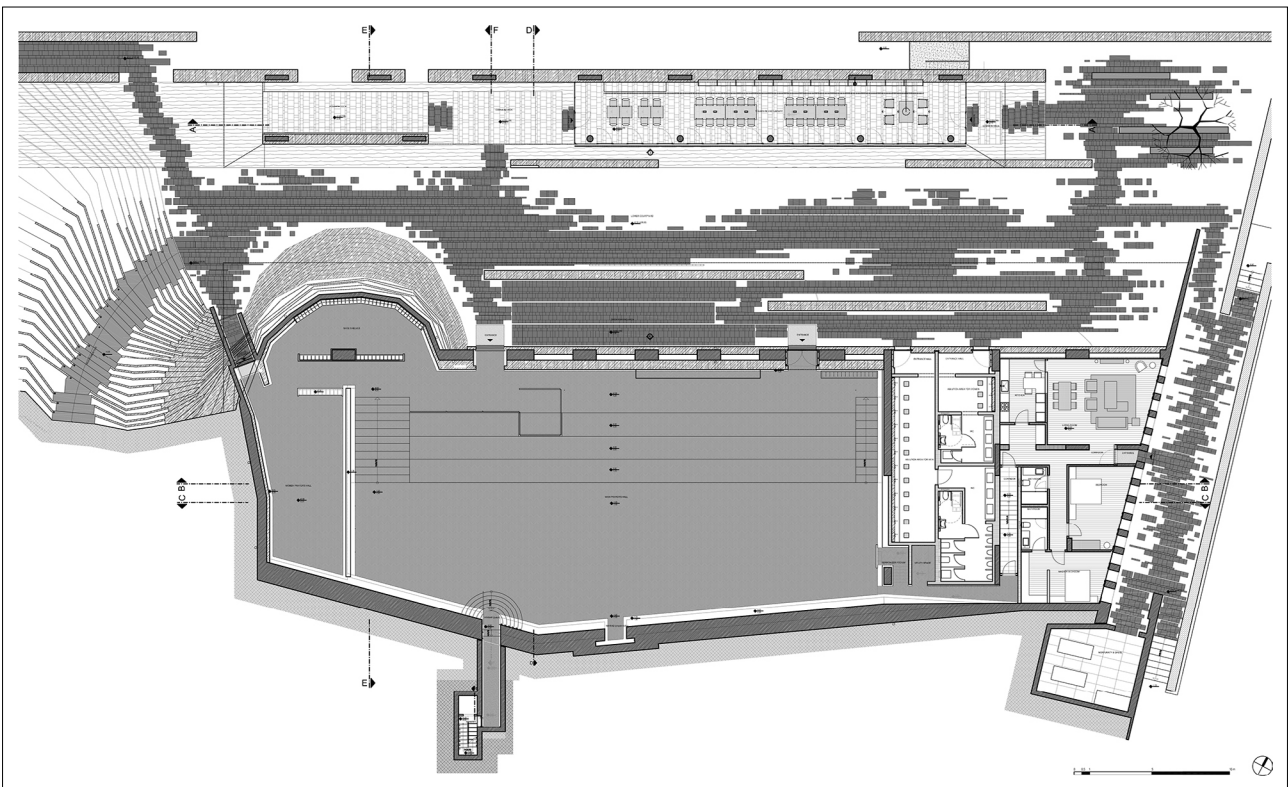


Figure 11. The plan of the Sancaklar Mosque (Copyright: EAA).

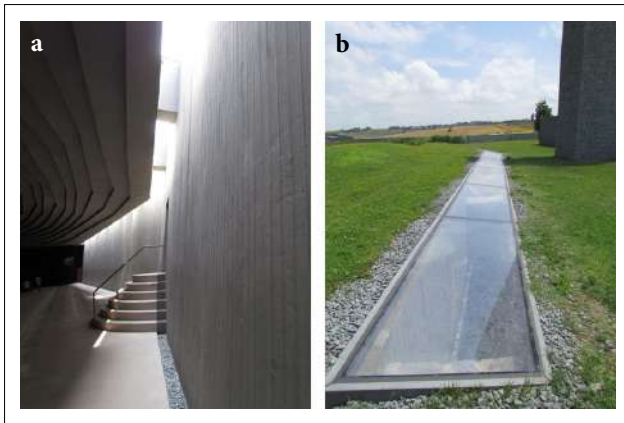


Figure 12. (a, b) The light from the skylight illuminates the Qibla wall (Photo by the authors).

while preaching. Prostrate there. This light guides the body and quietly calls to it. On the black granite wall shone the calligraphy of Mehmed Özçay. Silhouettes of praying bodies and the light of the qibla wall reflect from the granite.

In Islamic philosophy, Being connects to God through the material, organic, intellectual, and spiritual layers. In this essential sense, establish multi-layered relations with truth, each of which may have multiple meanings. Therefore, the human being is in a constant process of virtual movement-in space/time. Architecture is a discipline that designs a composition to encompass relations between the being and the truth. The flexible, meaningfully lit corporeal space resolves Islam's space/time concepts. The building guide of the Renaissance relies on Brunellechi's perspective based on man standing on a fixed point-unmoving, therefore missing all the other points available to him. Cansever (1996) is holistic and values a moving man's experiences and memories over the static—Cansever allies with living.

Illumination: Light and Earth

The space is so plain and simple. Neither the pulpit nor the

mihrab is customary. Here, the mihrab is a simple hollow. The low ceiling, instead of a celestial dome, wraps the body. The top reflects the slope, indicating that the dark, quiet, and peaceful roof is earth. Earth roof cosmogonically refers to the dwelling. According to Pallasmaa (2012), "The timeless task of architecture is to create embodied and lived existential metaphors that concretize and structure our being in the world." 'Historical settings connect us directly with time and the past,' says Pallasmaa (2016b), explaining that the combination of layers such as style, use, and activity has comfortably placed us in the continuity of life for centuries.

This feeling creates the set of references that awaken the memories and experiential knowledge encoded centuries ago into people's subconscious—for example, culture and belief. For example, filtered light gives a sense of peace and solitude (Figure 13) instead of the small windows maintaining privacy on the civic block, cave-like structure, the humble mihrab, and silence slow down the world's experience and create an understanding of the continuum of time. Here, we remember all sacred places, starting with the first place of worship.

Semiotics: Embodiment

Human beings need to know and feel anchored to the world and time. Therefore, they struggle to create spaces that indicate the essence of existence since the beginning. Architecture is an intermediary object at the interphase, as a bridge that connects the inner world of the self with the outer world (Norberg-Schulz, 1980). As Merleau-Ponty (2002) also emphasized, humans realize their standing in these networks. Pallasmaa (2018) underlines this existential sense and conceives architecture as a concrete experience of existence and identity.

The Sancaklar Mosque, with its unique design, encapsulates the individual's essence, evoking a sense of being a part of the universe. The distinctive shape of the ceiling, the tactile floor cover, the smooth, organically formed threads, and

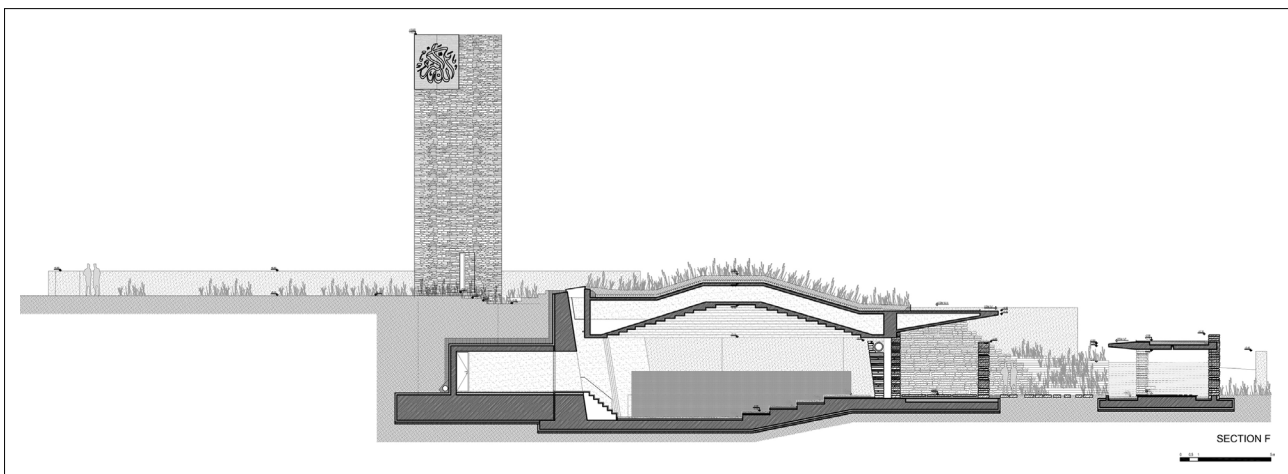


Figure 13. The section of the Sancaklar Mosque (Copyright: EAA).

the bright, narrow light of the top flashing on the pulpit upon entry all contribute to this unique experience.

The Sancaklar Mosque, beyond being a physical structure, is a living testament to the spiritual and existential essence of a place of worship. It offers a sensory journey like no other, where the earth, the landscape, daylight, water, a swallow's nest, and children's laughter blend harmoniously to create an enchanting atmosphere. The architectural elements, such as stonewalls, low ceilings, dimness, achromatic colors, the light illuminating the qibla wall, broad stairs descending towards the qibla, and silence, all resonate with the very essence of existence, beckoning you to immerse yourself in its unique ambiance.

Spatial Navigation: Motility

Through movement, we establish multi-layered connections with truth, each of which may hold multiple meanings. Human-made structures that define a place in space are conceived by looking upward and downward and experiencing the interiors. Any architectural exploration is only possible by tracing the movement and observing people walking in and around. The experience of a moving individual is a sequence of activities, pauses, viewpoints, and his cognitive recall of past interactions with spaces.

Sancaklar Mosque encourages the body to have undreamed flows and excitement. Body and consciousness creatively lead the being towards unexpected and unpredictable behavior and activities. During this process, man perceives form connections and turns toward space. Husserl (1983)'s concept of intentionality comes to the fore. He re-apprehends the space, and vectors aid in disposal. Although Bernard Tschumi (2000) is a distinguished mentor who proposed to foresee possible events, he was unsuccessful in his Columbia University Student Union, where it was impossible to perform a concert. At the mosque, a child bored with the lectures of the hodja may even play football (Figure 14).



Figure 14. A child inside the mosque, bored with the teachings of Hodja, is playing football (Photo by the authors).

Atmospheric Quality: Atmosphere and Emotions

The atmosphere defines the milieu that wraps and caresses the being. It contains invisible but felt moods (Heidegger, 1962) or feelings (Bille et al., 2015) that help to understand and appreciate the place. According to Zumthor (2006), the atmosphere touches the individual's soul and "speaks to the emotional perception." Pallasmaa (2016a) also argues that the atmosphere reaches us through entangled sources. Before describing it, we feel it; "the experience of atmosphere or mood is thus predominantly an emotive, pre-reflective mode of experience" (2016a: 133), meaning that it transmits from space to man and from man to space.

Sancaklar Mosque has a calm and serene atmosphere where the interplay of light, silence and materials enhances a sense of peace and spirituality. Soft light filters through the skylight, emphasizing the direction in which everyone turns. The enveloping height of the ceiling merges with the image of a cave, challenging an overwhelming sacredness. The acoustics amplify the soft murmur of prayers. Whispered speech, slow movements and the reverential gestures of worship add to the solemnity. The simplicity of the space, its intimacy and silence empty the mind, inviting reflection, introspection and a sense of oneness with the sacred purpose of worship. There is an intangible but palpable energy that inspires awe, peace and even catharsis, connecting the prayers to something greater than themselves.

CONCLUSION: BACK TO THE SYNERGISTIC RELATIONALITY

The unfocused perception adopted in this approach prompted a different way of viewing architectural objects and criticism. While the perception of space as a static one since the Renaissance had caused us to see architectural space as a definite Gestalt, the unconscious vision independent from Gestalt enabled us to see other qualities of space such as ontology, topography, anchoring, and emplacement, body and entanglement, temporality and spatiality of time, the cosmogony of earth and light, embodiment, motility, atmosphere, and emotions.

All these discoveries ultimately lead us back to Christopher Alexander and his concept of 'wholeness.' As Alexander (1979; 2002a; 2002b) rightly argued, there are two contrasting ways of understanding wholeness: analytic relationality and synergistic relationality. The synergistic relationality of space, summarized under several headings above, relies not solely upon the analytical relationality of building form and environment but on the intricate interrelatedness of elements and qualities. Alexander (2004; 2005) was concerned with creating communal solid spaces that could transform the space into a place. The synergistic relationality of the aspects of space was his focus. This paper focused on the integral whole

established by intertwined ties with people, context, and the world. Certain phenomenological concepts and specific architectural articulation of the building's site, components, elements, materials, and objects emerged from the peripheral unfocused vision of the Sancaklar Mosque. They are discussed above under semi-arbitrary titles.

In considering architecture's role in human experience, it becomes clear that its essence extends beyond visual aesthetics to embody multi-sensory engagement. The integration of tactile qualities moves architecture from being merely observed to being actively felt, inviting users to connect deeply with the built environment. This tactile emphasis does not stand in isolation but works in harmony with the spatial, material, and environmental dimensions of design, fostering a sense of unity and belonging. Ultimately, architecture achieves wholeness when it resonates with all senses, enabling us to experience its presence as both intimate and encompassing—a true embodiment of human connection and place.

Tactility is being aware of people, bodies, environment, and technology. The phenomena it contains include memory, layers of memory, mental landscapes, empathy, all emotions, all senses, abstraction of nature and geometry (proportions, forms, tension of surfaces), levels of infinity, the energy of the horizon, horizontality, the power of sacred light and shadow, the sublime light and the sense of heaven, cosmic light, dramatic winter light, warm august light, texture and light, hidden existences, imagination, contemplation and imagination, states of being related to water (containment, inhaling, pouring, sharing, tracking); space expressions (such as flexible, accessible, original, rare, unconventional, innovative, dreaming).

Tactility requires superior synthesis and transformation ability, the power to determine society's demands, sensitivity, and inner enlightenment similar to beliefs. As for the materials used, using natural and unnatural together is common. In addition to experimenting with stone and wood, it is possible to evaluate new materials of brankton, steel, and even PVC origin for this purpose. The important thing is not the choice of material but how the material is used.

To comprehend "wholeness through tactility" in architectural criticism, one must probe the relationship among site selection, material appropriateness, structural harmony, and sensory resonance. However, the paradigms proposed in this study, which draw upon Christopher Alexander's prescriptive pattern language, reveal a potential limitation. While the "synergistic relationality of elements of space" provides a structured framework, it appears overly directive compared to Ehrenzweig's intuitive, non-linear peripheral vision. This contrast raises questions about how criticism can balance a systematic approach with intuitive, experiential insights.

Emphasizing the dialogue between architecture and the human being, from the approach to the building to the

relationship with the landscape seen through the building's window, this structure is one of many alternatives that demonstrate the impact on human consciousness of the sensory and emotional experience offered by architecture, which is not only a physical structure. For the same purpose, this article seeks the "inner language" of Sancaklar Mosque, as Pallasmaa calls it, and finds it in the building's integration with nature, space, people and even the philosophy of its function.

In essence, the richness of architecture lies in its relationship to human and spatial ontologies. Phenomenological critiques must therefore recognize how architectural wholeness is achieved via the union of its spatial elements—articulating forms, emphasizing tactile interactions, and promoting profound engagement. The success of the Sancaklar Mosque, as explored in this study, lies in its embodiment of "wholeness through tactility"—a principle that envelops physical, sensory, and emotional dimensions while negotiating between structured paradigms and intuitive depths.

In conclusion, phenomenological critics should consider the above paradigms and internalize the synergistic relationality of all these paradigmatic details. One must decipher how these relationships affect integrity and Alexandrian wholeness. This mosque's success is "wholeness through tactility".

NOTES

¹An automatic memory retrieval process engaged when a specific, proximal cue interacts with information stored in memory. The recovered product of that interaction can either be the result of a strategic memory search, or it could act as fuel for subsequent strategic retrieval processes.

ETHICS: There are no ethical issues with the publication of this manuscript.

PEER-REVIEW: Externally peer-reviewed.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE: The authors declared that this study has received no financial support.

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