

↳ BETWEEN
THE BUILDER
AND THE
ARCHITECT

CURATORIAL
TEAM



[Jean Baptiste Van Mour], Recueil de cent estampes représentant différentes nations du Levant tirées sur les tableaux peints d'après Nature en 1707. et 1708 par les Ordres de Mr. de Ferriol ambassadeur du Roi à la Porte. et gravées en 1712. et 1713 par les soins de M. Le Hay. ce recueil se vend à Paris (Avec privilège du Roi, Paris, 1714). Figure 88. Courtesy of Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation Library.

This dress code, prepared by Flemish artist Jean Baptiste Van Mour in the 18th century at the request of the French ambassador, depicts the figures of the time—the sultan, the courtiers, the clergy, and the local residents of the Ottoman Empire. Among them, one figure, presented as “The Armenian Architect,”¹ stirs a debate that cannot be resolved, among the architectural historians, even today. This is because the wand, held by the person who is the subject of the description, is not a simple wand; it is a construction tool with a mallet on one end and an axe on the other. Therefore, the depicted person is more of a master builder, a *kalfâ*, than the architect figure that Van Mour was familiar with.

1 While Van Mour mentions many ethnic groups in his dress code, he especially stresses that the architects and carpenters of Dersaadet (Istanbul, Ottoman Capital) are of Armenian origin.