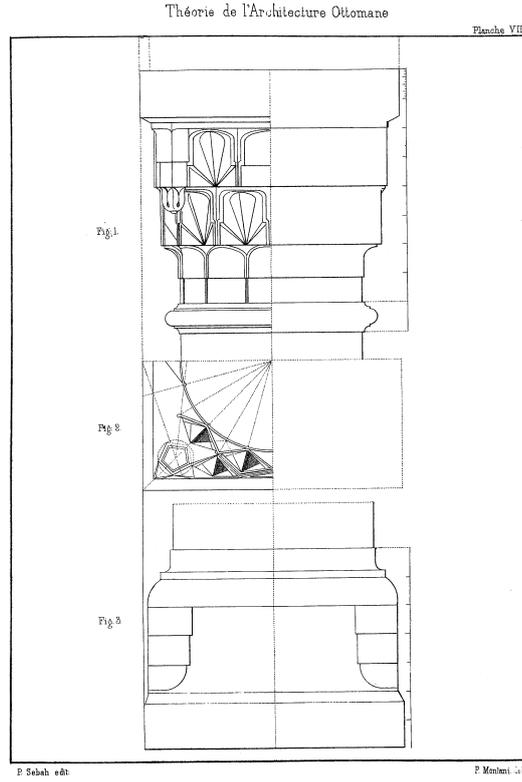


↳ MEASURE
AS A
MANIPULATIVE
THRESHOLD

SERAP
DURMUŞ
ÖZTÜRK

Architecture¹² as² Measure⁷
Ölçü⁴ Olarak⁶ Mimarlık⁸



In *Usûl-i Mîmârî-i Osmanî*, this visual is titled as "Mücevheri Mimari Method according to the style of Mimar Sinan." Source: Edhem Paşa, I. (1873) *Usûl-i Mîmârî-i Osmânî, Osmanlı Mîmarîsî*, ed. İ. Ovalıoğlu, R. Gündoğdu, C. Ekici, E.F. Önal (2010) Camlica Publishing, Istanbul, p. 79. (Page 8, Plan VIII, Figure 1-2-3).

Usûl-i Mîmârî-i Osmanî [Ottoman Architecture], a catalogue compiled for the 1873 Vienna World's Fair, is probably one of the earliest answers to the question of whether a different imagination is possible for the theory and practice of architecture.¹ This naïve attempt right at the beginning of the manuscript is attributed to the Ottoman Empire's goal to introduce itself to the West and Sultan Abdulaziz's endeavors in that regard. However, this account is not entirely true. It is clear that *Usûl-i Mîmârî-i Osmanî* is an effective rhetoric activity, or in fact, a manipulation within the theory of architecture. This manipulation can be easily seen through the architectural unit of measure and the descriptions of Ottoman styles of architecture – types [of measures and styles] that would not be mentioned in any other book. In other words, while trying to relay information, the attempt is to present a perfect perception of architecture through architectural elements and ornaments. In short, the catalogue tries to systematize and engraft – and thus convince its reader in favour of – the triangular pillar order, which was believed to be adopted by the Ottoman Empire against the Doric-Ionic-Corinthian order.²

To be more precise, *Usûl-i Mîmârî-i Osmanî*, which defines architecture in literary and visual terms within the vocabulary of the 19th century, provides documentation of architectural structures in line with the ideological context of the time by offering insights into the topics of 'measure' and 'style'.³ In that

1 Usûl-i Mîmârî-i Osmanî was prepared by a team headed by İbrahim Edhem Paşa, the minister of public works who was tasked by the Ottoman administration for the exhibition. The exhibition committee consisted of Armenian painter Bogos Şaşıyan, French artist Eugène Maillard, Marie De Launay, and Pierre Montani. Compiled in three separate languages, namely Ottoman, French and German, *Usûl-i Mîmârî-i Osmanî* is composed of 13 chapters, presenting a total of 8 works; 4 mosques, 2 fountains, and 2 tombs. The book contains 188 drawings, 14 of which are in colour.

2 Then again, it is not possible to find examples of this pillar order in every monumental structure. However, all architectural works in the book have been selected with this consideration in mind.

3 Durmuş, S. (2014) *Mimarlık Düşüncesinin Retorik İnşası: Usûl-i Mîmârî-i Osmanî* [Rhetorical Construction of

respect, the book shapes its information about construction styles under three titles: Mahrûrî, Müstevî, Mücevherî.⁴ These styles, situated above and beyond the styles of 'other' nations,⁵ are defined as 'ideal'. The drawing in the featured image is of a Mücevherî style, describing the relationship between the column heading and plinth in accordance with the definition of 'architectural unit of measure.' Located to the right of the image and theoretically idealized by the book, the architectural unit of measure defines column headings by dividing them up into nine equal pieces based on the measure of width, and then dividing each piece again into four.⁶

As can also be understood from this example, *Usûl-i Mi'mârî-i Osmanî*, which focuses on the systematization and elaboration of architectural knowledge and documentation, constitutes an important threshold in shaping architectural historiography that succeeds it, in terms of an aspiration to reach perfection, obedience to the past, a resistance against disidentification and degenerateness, and a connection formed with the West. This threshold is an important breaking point that paves the way for a certain discourse on the perpetuity⁷ and linearity of history to be established within architectural theory in Turkey. In short, this form of historiography, which is proposed by taking the relationship between measure and style as a universal conception, becomes the starting point of a manipulation that still affects contemporary theories of architecture.

Architectural Thought: *Usûl-i Mi'mârî-i Osmanî*], unpublished PhD thesis, KTÜ, Trabzon.

4 According to the definitions in *Usûl-i Mi'mârî-i Osmanî*, the Mahrûrî (Conical) style features bossages as ornaments. The Müstevî (Planar) style only allows for exterior ornaments. The bossages used as ornaments are thinner and filled with carved bosses in the Mücevherî style (Launay et al, 1873, p. 14-15).

5 In *Usûl-i Mi'mârî-i Osmanî*, 'other' refers to Greek, Arabic, and Egyptian methods of architecture. See Launay et al, 1873, p. 14-17.

6 Launay, M., Montani, P., Edhem Pasha. (1873). *Usul-i Mi'mari-i Osmani / L'architecture ottomane / Die ottomanische Baukunst*, Imprimerie et lithographie centrales, Istanbul, p. 9-10.

7 De Landa, M. (2005). *Çizgisel Olmayan Tarih [A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History]*, trans. Ebru Kılıç, Metis Yayınları, Istanbul.

About the author

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