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A Study of Ottoman Narratives on Architecture:

Text, Context and Hermeneutics

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Abstract

A Study of Ottoman Narratives on Architecture: Text, Context and Hermeneutics

This thesis focuses on three unique texts that appeared between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries in the context of Ottoman culture. Historical documents on Islamic architecture are rare and little is known about the architectural practice of the Ottomans, so these texts provide important insights into Ottoman architects and how architecture was evaluated in the Ottoman world. The first text is a group of five documents that date back to the sixteenth century. They comprise memoirs and building lists written in prose and verse which belonged to prominent Ottoman architect Sinan. The second text was written under the influence of the first group of documents and is in a similar format. It comprises a memoir dedicated to Sedefkār Mehmed Aga, who worked as the chief imperial architect in the seventeenth century, and also provides information on architectural terms and makes comparisons between architecture and music. The third text is different from the first two: it is a monograph about the Selimiye Mosque written in prose in the eighteenth century by Dayezāde Mustafa, who was a complete outsider to architecture. While the three texts have quite different historical and thematic contexts their point in common is their rendering of architecture through narratives.

The three texts have a different perspective towards architecture from that of contemporary historiography and have been marginalised for being obscure historical sources that stand between being literary and documentary. The thesis questions this assumption. In order to explore what makes these texts different, the thesis critiques the main approaches to Ottoman architecture by specifically focusing on the case of architect Sinan, who is seen as the representative of classical Ottoman architecture. The texts' difference is marked as evaluating meaning in architecture in general, which affects contemporary interpretations of historical architecture and historical texts from premodern contexts. Historical distance and modern preoccupations trigger crises in such interpretations that usually result in dismissing or appropriating strange and unfamiliar assertions about past mentalities. Hermeneutics is suggested in the thesis as a way to engage with the object of the inquiry to break through barriers to understanding. Hermeneutics works against such dismissals by interrogating our own prejudgments and their implications as well as the object of the interpretation. An interpretation in the hermeneutical sense is elaborated, based on what the texts offer rather than what they fail to fulfil about architecture.

DECLARATION

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the Barr Smith Library of The University of Adelaide, being available for loan and photocopying.

Selen Bahriye Morkoç

Date: ...12/04/2006...

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Both the strengths and the weaknesses of this thesis owe a lot to its being written in Australia. Thanks to this strangely beautiful red land which I have called home for the past four years. Finally, my biggest gratitude goes to my Turkish background, which determined my hardly surpassable prejudices and nurtured my creativity at the same time. I wish to thank those who sometimes enriched, sometimes haunted my memories.

Transliteration

For words commonly used in English literature on Islamic art and architecture I have followed *IJMES (*the *International Journal of Middle East Studies)*. With the hope that this thesis will be read not only by Ottoman specialists, I have used modern Turkish orthography for Ottoman Turkish words, personal names and place names despite the fact that Ottoman Turkish contains a large number of terms originating from Arabic and Persian languages.

Pronunciation of Modern Turkish Letters

C, c j, as in *joke*

Ç, ç ch, as in *chapter*

ğ unvocalised, lengthens the preceding vowel

ı as the pronunciation of 'man' in *Ottoman*

Ö, ö as the 'e' in *term*

Ş, ş sh, as in *shirt*

Ü, ü as the German 'ü' in *Führer*

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Introduction

Language is a prison for thinking reason.
An escape is possible by hermeneutical experience.[1]

This study follows from my long-held fascination and frustration with the question of meaning in historical architecture and with its complexities and problems. Since my early involvement with the history of architecture, I have been puzzled by the fact that contemporary interpretations tend to reconstruct ideal contexts for historical architecture, aiming at fixing architectural meaning with original intentions. Nevertheless, buildings lead their own lives over the course of history and other meanings continue to elude interpretation. Deriving from this earlier experience, this dissertation reflects on the tension between generalising assumptions of meaning in discourses on the built environment and the difficulty of interpreting the particularity of a specific historical context. It proposes that the conceptualisation process abstracts historical architecture into frameworks such as styles and periods, in which deeper research into the historical context is limited. Chronological integrity and comprehensiveness together with aiming at a consistent historical narrative favour some themes and figures of the past over others in historiography. These two basic methodological premises, which are essential in writing architectural history, can thus be limiting when contextual details are downplayed by teleological interpretations.

The relationship between meaning and context in architecture is crucial. Making sense of any phenomenon requires an interrogation into the question of meaning and its ambivalent and elusive nature. What kind of knowledge do we produce in the interpretation of architecture? Does it have a particular claim of its own or is it similar to any other case in which the human mind seeks understanding? Meaning is an ambiguous concept in itself which brings forth the unavoidable question of 'meaning for whom?' and works against overgeneralisations. The answer to this question desires to be 'anybody', which stands for both the society and the

1 Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1975), 363.

individual. However, culture is not homogeneous and an individual never exists in a vacuum.

Hermeneutics as a broad field has been focusing on the question of meaning for a century, with a wider scope covering meaning in human artefacts in all creative affairs since the last four decades of the twentieth century. Taking hermeneutics as its stance of argument, this study aims to express the complexity and richness of parameters used to interpret meaning in architecture through the particular example of Ottoman architecture. The main research question is, *What do Ottoman narratives tell about Ottoman architecture when approached from a hermeneutical perspective?*

Ottoman Narratives on Architecture

The interpretive analysis of the thesis focuses on three particular Ottoman texts on Ottoman architecture written between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries. These include memoirs written for/by prominent Ottoman architect Sinan in the sixteenth century in collaboration with his poet–painter friend Sai Mustafa Çelebi, a treatise written by Cafer Efendi for architect Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa in the seventeenth century and a panegyric treatise written by Dayezāde Mustafa in the eighteenth century on the meanings of a Sinan monument, the Selimiye Mosque. The authors of these texts can hardly be called experts on architecture. However, the authors of the first two texts worked in close collaboration with chief imperial architects of the Ottoman Empire. The first two texts, written for architects in verse and prose, are roughly in line with the *tezkere* genre of Ottoman literature, which was written mostly for poets.[2] However, they are unique examples, ones of their kind within Islamic architecture. The first text, written for Sinan, and the second text, written for Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa, display similarities and easily lend themselves to a comparative analysis. The third text stands apart from these two in its authorship, purpose and theme. The author is a complete outsider to architecture. His purpose in writing in prose was to provide a panegyric monograph on a particular monument rather than on an architect. The only common point it shares with the earlier two is its Ottoman perspective on Ottoman architecture. Being a text

2 İskender Pala, *Divan Edebiyatı* (Istanbul: Ötüken, 1992), 132.

dedicated to revealing the meanings of a religious Ottoman monument, it forms an outstanding ground for an interpretive analysis.

The thesis will refer to these texts with a common definition, as narratives, in order to accentuate their non-standard textual nature as opposed to that of specialist architectural discourses. They are far from exhibiting an epistemologically autonomous architectural theory.[3] As texts, they stand outside official historical evidence of Ottoman architecture such as notebooks related to construction requirements, endowment deeds or judiciary registers. Although closer, they cannot be included in the Ottoman history genre, either. They stand between the genres of documentary and literary texts, exhibiting a sense of comprehensiveness mixed with idiosyncrasy. This study argues that the common point among these three historically and thematically diverse texts is that they reveal historical experience of architecture in the Ottoman context in a narrative format.

For half a century, these narratives have been available in modern Turkish translations and were compiled together in the same volumes, somehow pointing to their historically ambiguous interrelation.[4] They have been cautiously used as historical evidence in comparison with other documents from the same periods. Because they stand outside the limits of rational evaluations of architecture from a modern point of view, it is possible to say that these texts have been dismissed for their marginality and naivety in the historiography of Ottoman architecture. Despite the fact that some of these texts are directly related to the prominent Ottoman architect Sinan, they have been discounted as historical evidence due to their metaphoric expressions of so-called poetic clichés.[5]

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3 Tanyeli mentions the absence of such architectural treatises in the Ottoman context. Uğur Tanyeli, "The Emergence of Modern Time-Consciousness in the Islamic World and the Problematics of Spatial Perception" (paper presented at the ANYTIME, Ankara, Turkey, 1998), 167.

4 For an early translation of Sinan texts into modern Turkish see Rıfkı Melul Meriç, *Mimar Sinan Hayatı, Eseri I: Mimar Sinan Hayatına, Eserlerine Dair Metinler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1965).

5 See Doğan Kuban's preface for Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l- Bünyān ve Tezkiretü'l- Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları)*, ed. Hayati Develi Samih Rifat, Arzu Karamani Pekin (Istanbul: Koç Kültür Sanat, 2002), 7-9. Tümer too, in a recent review, warms not to exaggerate poetic expressions of these texts. Gürhan Tümer, "İki Osmanlı Klasiği: "Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān" Ve "Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye"", *Mimarlık* 40, no. 311 (2003): 61.

The first narrative is dedicated to Sinan and consists of a group of five texts from the sixteenth century similar to each other in format and differ only in their complete or draft status. The five texts are *Adsız Risāle* (Untitled Treatise), *Risāletü'l-Mi'māriyye* (Treatise on Architecture), *Tuḥfetü'l-Mi'mārīn* (Choice Gift of the Architects), *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* (The Record of Construction) and *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* (Record of Buildings). As if to challenge the general acceptance of architectural anonymity in the premodern Islamic context, four of the five texts are memoirs attributed to Sinan together with inventories of buildings he had constructed. The fifth text, *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, is a complete narrative of Sinan's life and buildings.

The second narrative is a seventeenth-century treatise on architect Sedefkār Mehmed, titled *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*. Although written more than half a century later than the Sinan narratives, this text exhibits interesting similarities to them and their influence was explicitly asserted in the text itself.[6] At the same time, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* exhibits interesting differences from earlier Sinan texts. In this text, besides the narrative parts on the architect and architecture in general, some survey information and a glossary of architectural terms are included. Interestingly, there are frequent references to music as well. Although they are interrelated, it is hard to proclaim direct connections between the two narratives. It is more logical to accept each as a unique narrative on architects and architecture, creating its own contextual world.

The building lists included at the end of the four texts on Sinan in the first narrative, and the architectural glossary that forms a substantial part of the second narrative, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*, are not taken into account in interpretation in this thesis. These excluded parts contain important information for ascribing the correct dates of Sinan's buildings and basic information about architecture in the seventeenth-century Ottoman context. However, their inventory features are outside the main concern of this thesis, which involves narratives on architecture and the architects.

6 Efendi Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, ed. Howard Crane (Leiden ; New York: E.J. Brill, 1987), 23.

The first two texts can be classified as having been written for an audience of the high Ottoman bureaucracy. The third text to be examined, *Selimiye Risālesi*, is from the eighteenth-century Ottoman context. It highlights the meanings of one of Sinan's mosques, the Selimiye Mosque. What differentiates this text from the two earlier ones is the historical ambiguity of its author and its audience. Although it seems to have been written with intentions other than architecture in mind, having rich religious references, this text is the only known monograph on an Ottoman monument in the acknowledged part of the Ottoman historical archive. It exhibits interesting details on perceptions about the building from the eighteenth-century points of view of an upper-middle-class Ottoman bureaucrat and his lay audience.

Among the Sinan memoirs in the first narrative, *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* has appeared in English before, but not as a critical edition.[7] For this thesis, critical editions of *Adsız Risāle, Risāletü'l-Mi'māriyye, Tuḥfetü'l-Mi'mārīn, Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* and *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* in English in Howard Crane's forthcoming book are used.[8] Crane's English translation of *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* is consulted for the seventeenth-century narrative.[9] The eighteenth-century treatise on Selimiye Mosque, *Selimiye Risālesi*, has been translated into English for the first time, in this thesis (see Appendix). The translation into English relied on a translation into modern Turkish in comparison with the original manuscript.[10] Such a double check was necessary and it still may not provide a meticulous translation since three different versions of this text await an 'edition critique.' Moreover, the Turkish translator, Zeki Sönmez, omits some important parts in quoting the verses of the Koran and he does not give the unique drawing of the two domes in his translation.[11] These missed points are provided as best as they can be in my translation. My main aim in presenting this translation is to communicate the meaning of the text within the overall contextual

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7 Suphi Saatçi Metin Sözen, ed., *Mimar Sinan and Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* (Istanbul: MTV Publications, 1989).

8 Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*, ed. Howard Crane and Esra Akın (foreword by Gülru Necipoğlu) (Leiden: 2005 (forthcoming)), Meriç, *Mimar Sinan Hayatı, Eseri I: Mimar Sinan Hayatına, Eserlerine Dair Metinler*.

9 Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi`māriyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*.

10 Zeki Sönmez, *Mimar Sinan İle İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler* (Istanbul: Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1988). Dayezāde Mustafa, "Selimiye Camii", in *Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Es'ad Efendi Kitaplığı* (Istanbul: 1741).

11 Sönmez, *Mimar Sinan İle İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler*.

interpretation of the thesis. Thus, the English translation is a ground for the thesis to develop its interpretive arguments as well as allowing English readers to access such an eighteenth-century Ottoman text.

These three texts from three different periods are significant in terms of their premodern Ottoman–Islamic perspectives towards architecture. However, their ambivalent textual features challenge interpretation as they are enmeshed with metaphorical expressions, each being a product of a temporally and intellectually distinct mentality.

Background

The historiography of Ottoman architecture, written through a chronology of different periods and stylistic shifts and progresses unavoidably engages with the historical figure of the architect Sinan, who marked the classical phase of Ottoman architecture with his funerary–religious complexes, built mostly in the Ottoman capital of Istanbul. Scarcity of data, difficulties in accessing and evaluating original historical sources, and the obliteration of the actual physical fabric intensify partial renderings of Ottoman architecture through significant monuments and people. Rather than a history of the built environment covering private and social realms of life alike, the historiography of Ottoman architecture concentrates mainly on these public monuments as architectural symbols of the religio–political sphere. Thus, a history of Ottoman architecture coincides with a history of Sinan's buildings.[12]

Historically significant in himself, Sinan has been a curious topic for art/architecture historians since the late nineteenth century. His architectural prominence extended beyond his historical context, and he is celebrated as an important figure in the modern historiography of architecture. Sinan's historiographic celebration hinges on the concept of 'genius' as a common denominator that worked at two different contextual levels. One of these was the modern Turkish context. In contradiction to the tendency among the nationalist elite of the modern Turkish republic to neglect the Ottoman past, architect Sinan has been privileged and acclaimed in the modern historiography of Turkish architecture

[12] For an example of how Sinan's architecture forms a major part of Ottoman architecture see Godfrey Goodwin, *A History of Ottoman Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1971).

as the epitome of Turkish genius.[13] The second contextual level was the world context, in which Sinan's architecture was compared with Italian Renaissance architecture: both were believed to be based on antique revivalism and shared common cultural roots in the Mediterranean basin.[14] This second level rendered Sinan as a ubiquitous genius like his Renaissance equals, and he somehow emerged as an individual against the anonymity and repressive attitudes of his cultural background.

Rather than shedding light on the past they build on, these processes of celebration embody important clues to the assumptions and prejudices of historiography itself.[15] What is undermined in both approaches is the complexity and richness of the parameters of the actual historical context that could be problematised in various ways. This thesis attempts to make a context-bound reading of Ottoman narratives in order to fill in this gap while negotiating national and international perceptions of Sinan in modern historiography.

Along with this line of abstraction, studies on Ottoman architecture have for long focused mainly on buildings as objects of functional, ideological and aesthetic analyses. Through these assumptions buildings have been evaluated as conventions produced by the recurrence of tradition, if not shaped by Sinan's creative artistic concerns. Studies on the meaning of Ottoman art and architecture are rare. Günkut Akın posits that there has never been a concern of overinterpretation in the historiography of Ottoman architecture in the Turkish context.[16] I further argue that a study based on meaning proposes that functional, ideological and aesthetic criteria are not clearly differentiated categories. In the historical context, these criteria are

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13 Uğur Tanyeli, "Bu Kitap İçin Bir Konum Saptama Denemesi ya da Mitos Kurmaktan Mitos Çözümlemeye Sinan Historiyografisi (Preface), in *Mimar Sinan: Estetik Bir Analiz*, auth. Jale Erzen (Istanbul: Şevki Vanlı Mimarlık Vakfı Yayınları, 1996), 1-3.

14 For such a comparison of Sinan with Italian Renaissance architects see Spiro Kostof, *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 275.

15 Selen Morkoc, "Celebration as a Historiographic Tool: Example of Architect Sinan", Paper presented in *Celebration: 22nd Annual Meeting of SAHANZ* (Society of Architectural Historians Australia & New Zealand), 261-67.

16 Günkut Akın, "Mimarlık Tarihinde Pozitivizmi Aşma Sorunu ve Osmanlı Merkezi Mekan İkonolojisi Bağlamında Edirne Selimiye Camisi'ndeki Müezzin Mahfili", in *Türk Kültüründe Sanat ve Mimari: Klasik Dönem Sanatı ve Mimarlığı Üzerine Denemeler*, ed. G. Tanyeli M. Saçlıoğlu (Istanbul: 1993), 1-3.

intermingled and each affects the determination of the others. Moreover, the attitudes of individuals are manipulated by those of the society and vice versa. Therefore, tradition in the historical context is not a monolithic recurrence but a dynamic entity continuously transforming itself under the guise of constancy.

Biographical memoirs on Sinan have been used in a limited way in the historiography of Ottoman architecture and Sinan. This is the result of the disparity between contemporary assumptions on Sinan and the abstract nature of chronological and stylistic studies on architecture. Preoccupation with Sinan's rationality in the modern sense and his artistic creativity rendered through the secular intentions of a modern artist make the claims of these texts seem out of place and redundant. Therefore, despite the prominence of Sinan in current Ottoman historiography, the historical memoirs attributed to him (four of the five texts in the first narrative) have been marginalised if not used as dubious historical evidence. Furthermore, the two later narratives discussed in this thesis have been doubly marginalised because they make less significant architectural cases for modern historiography.[17]

A recent monograph on Sinan published close to the completion of this thesis convincingly elaborates the above-mentioned concerns about the marginalisation of Sinan's memoirs and how this is closely related to contemporary assumptions about Sinan. Gülru Necipoğlu's *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* is an outstanding attempt to re-contextualise Sinan, together with the influences of Ottoman culture that shaped his architecture. Necipoğlu argues that although Sinan's memoirs have been marginalised or appropriated by current historiography they still work as a motivation for promoting Sinan's continuing global fame.[18] However, according to Necipoğlu, this motivation is topical and does not support the linear historical model of the formal evolution of Sinan's buildings that has been constructed by modern historiography on Ottoman architecture.[19]

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17 Despite his intention to include a few pages on Dayezāde's text in his monograph on the Selimiye Mosque, Kuban is cautious about the status of the text. Doğan Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1997), 153-6.

18 Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 15.

19 Ibid., 15.

In her book Necipoğlu takes a new look at Sinan's architectural style. She maintains that style is not a matter of chronology in Sinan's case but rather a matter of location and patrons' intentions. Thus, she renders architectural production not as a conceptualisation process of the autonomous architect but as a cultural production shaped by institutional, political, social, economic, cultural and aesthetic practices.[20] *Decorum* is the conceptual key in Necipoğlu's approach that elaborates Sinan's religious monuments as different representations of a standardised vocabulary of repetitive canonical forms expressing the status of their patrons.[21] However, she further argues that the concept of *decorum* is not a fixed straightjacket serving to form another monolithic reading of Ottoman architecture. On the contrary, it is subject to changes in circumstances, revealing contingencies and different self-expressions.[22]

Therefore, Necipoğlu's recent book explains the inner logic of Sinan's architecture through contextual details rather than depicting it as existing in a vacuum. In line with this view, she devotes a large amount of space to Sinan's memoirs to sketch his self-image, in contrast to their marginalisation in modern historiography. Necipoğlu's contextual reading of Sinan forms a convincing and encouraging historical background for this thesis.

In addition to elaborating and building on the narratives on Sinan and Necipoğlu's insights into Sinan, this thesis intends to make connections with two different contexts from later periods using the two other texts. In comparison to Necipoğlu's comprehensive historical approach, which has innovative strategies for stylistic evaluations, this thesis is selective in its use of historical data and leaves discussions of style in brackets in order to focus more on architectural meaning. While Necipoğlu creates a consistent historical narrative in a chronological continuum, this thesis attempts to zoom in on different scenes of the past and re-present historical phenomena through shifting characters and objects that are not totally isolated but intertextually related from a hermeneutical point of view.

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20 Ibid., 20.

21 Ibid., 20.

22 Ibid., 21.

Methodology

The methodology of the thesis focuses on making sense of how Ottoman narratives evaluate architecture and the architect. Bearing in mind that many historical buildings, as part of the built environment of the contemporary world, trigger a curiosity to research their background and affiliations with the past, it is possible to argue that the 'sense of otherness' experienced in reading a text of an alien nature and encountering a building of some symbolic charge are similar; the historical situatedness of the text or the building intensifies the 'sense of otherness'. In both cases, understanding meets resistance.

Historical architecture is a special case in terms of the manifestation of meaning where human experience is ambivalent, oscillating between the past and present of individuals and collectives. Most historical buildings stand as the mute beholders of the past in contemporary environments. Whether dissolved into ruins or still in use but having changed their original functions, historical buildings carry the fossils of past experiences and their original intentions are shifted and transformed through the passage of time. Historical buildings thus have their own ways of living, with multivalent meanings which are always in flux. In recent decades, a number of studies using phenomenological and hermeneutical approaches have shifted the focus of the interpretation of architecture to its experiential aspects.

A key concept to be focused on here is 'experience', which has often been exploited, with several ramifications in contemporary discourses on architecture. It is crucial for this study first to sketch the concept of experience in phenomenology and hermeneutics. Husserl was the first to establish the philosophical concept of 'life-world' and related explications about human experience in phenomenology.[23] Since Husserl, experience has been distinguished by two different definitions, as *Erlebnis* (lived experience) and *Erfahrung* (scientific experience). *Erlebnis* signifies the wholeness and intensity of human experiences against scientific abstractions. It has the potential for "revealing and changing one's own life as a whole". *Erfahrung,* on the other hand, either refers to scientific experiments, one confirming the other, or it emphasises negativity in the dialectical or historical sense. In

[23] Robert J. Dostal, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer* (Cambridge Uni. Press, 2002)., 252.

phenomenological and hermeneutical approaches, *Erlebnis* is equated with the term experience.[24]

Following Husserl and Heidegger, Gadamer elaborated on the definition of *Erlebnis* in his hermeneutical evaluations. For him, experience has two different meanings in the human sciences. One implies mastery and the state of being experienced. In this case, the master, although experienced, is without dogmas and is always open to new experiences.[25] The other meaning of experience implies the first clumsiness and failure of apprentices in their way of learning, where the experience is for once and unique.[26] In both cases, experience changes one's knowledge, transforms one's being, and it is impossible to have the same experience twice. In Gadamer's view, experience on the one hand opens the way for freedom of human thinking. On the other hand, it demonstrates the historical existence of human beings through the passage of time; that is, nothing returns. Thus, in the course of history, human beings become aware of their limits of power, or their finiteness, through experience. For Gadamer, "True experience is that of one's own historicality".[27]

Building on the premise that architecture is the embodiment of many human experiences from birth to death, phenomenological approaches concentrate on mental and bodily cognitions and perceptions of architecture. These studies see architecture as a part of the life-world and search for alternative answers to the question of how architecture influences human beings. Norberg-Schulz is one of the earliest authors who related architecture to phenomenology. In his early book *Intentions in Architecture*, he declares the importance of experience in understanding architecture. He sees theory and experience as distinct topics in contrast with each other, the former being stable and the latter being changing and multifarious. But he maintains that theory and experience can help enrich each other without substituting one another.[28] In successive works beginning with the *Genius*

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24 Georgia Warnke, *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition, and Reason*, *Key Contemporary Thinkers (Cambridge, England)* (Cambridge, Oxford: Polity Press in association with B. Blackwell, 1987), 28.

25 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 317-9.

26 Ibid., 317.

27 Ibid., 321.

28 Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Intentions in Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass: M.I.T. Press, 1965), 85-7.

Loci: towards a Phenomenology of Architecture Norberg-Schulz has distinguished phenomenology as the most appropriate theoretical approach that bridges theory and experience, and grasped it as his basic methodology.[29]

Although hermeneutics and phenomenology have different concerns and scopes in the discipline of philosophy, their influences on architectural studies coincide at the point of privileging an intersubjective undertaking of the life-world and notions of human understanding, including that of experience. For more than a century the hermeneutic tradition has been dealing with the methodological problems that are met in overcoming the crisis of understanding during such processes of interpretation. Although not limited to textual interpretation, the methodological assumptions of hermeneutics for long focused mainly on texts. In the 1960s in his seminal work *Truth and Method*, Gadamer introduced hermeneutics as the methodology (without method) of the human sciences in general. In the human sciences data are not detachable from theory:

> meanings in natural sciences are separate from facts. Meanings in human sciences are what constitute facts, for data consists of documents, inscriptions, intentional behaviour, social rules, human artefacts, and the like, and these are inseparable from their meanings for agents.[30]

In other words, Gadamer argued that in human sciences, human beings are both the subjects and the objects of the analyses, and therefore no truth claim can be isolated from one's own historicality. Thus, from Gadamer's perspective, claims of objectivity and universality are to be reviewed bearing in mind the contingency of the horizon of the interpreter as well. According to Gadamer, the disciplines of both architecture and history fall into the category of human sciences.[31]

Gadamer views the study of history from a hermeneutical perspective, presenting a new way of dealing with and understanding historical texts. He sees the wholeness

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29 Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980).

30 Here, it is important to mention that Gadamer came from the German tradition, in which intellectual disciplines were classified under two topics, as human sciences or natural sciences. This is unlike the Anglo–American tradition, which categorised them in the trichotomy of human sciences, natural sciences and social sciences. Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics and Praxis* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 32-35.

31 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 147.

of a historical tradition as an illusion: teleology without a *telos*. All historical works claim universality; however, the historical tradition in itself is fragmentary.[32] Gadamer argues that the split between the historical object and the self-conscious observer cannot be clear cut since history, as the past, continues through the present and the historicality of the historian is always effective in the process. Aside from the naïve assumption of historicism, which tends to reconstruct 'the spirit of the age', Gadamer does not see the time that separates the observer and the historical object 'as a gulf to be bridged'.[33] For him, this time difference should be recognised and differentiated as something fruitful since it is sometimes impossible to recover a dead meaning, and each interpretation is in its own context a new creation of meaning and a new way of seeing the past. Accordingly, both the historicity of understanding and the prejudices of the observer play important roles in the study and writing of history, seen as mutual dialogical engagements with the historical subject. In this dialogue, the standpoint for interpretation becomes the position of the historian, which involves their past existence, experiences and prejudices. An understanding without prejudices, Gadamer suggests, is the unattainable goal of the Enlightenment. One should be aware of one's own prejudices in order to see how they influence one's understanding.[34] In this perspective, Gadamer uses prejudice as a neutral concept that carries both negative and positive meanings, which are open to judgment.

Just as a way of thinking without prejudices is impossible, Gadamer stresses that a standpoint that is beyond any standpoint in dealing with history is illusory. Gadamer conceptualises the historian's position and standpoint as a 'situation' in order to accentuate its boundaries both temporally and spatially.[35] The 'situation' determines the limits and the possibilities of the vision of the observer, which he defines as the 'horizon' for the historian. He writes:

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32 "The ideal of universal history must become a special problem for the historical world view, in as much as the book of history is a fragment that, so far as any particular present time is concerned, breaks of in the dark". Ibid., 175-179.

33 Ibid., 264.

34 "A person who does not accept that he is dominated by prejudices will fail to see what is shown by their light". Ibid., 324.

35 "Gadamer uses the term [horizon] both in a temporal and spatial sense: an horizon is historically formed, and represents the perspective bequeathed us by our past". Adrian Snodgrass, Asian Studies and the Fusion of Horizons, in *Gadamer: Action and Reason conference*, (1991), 37.

> The historical movement of human life consists in the fact that it is never utterly bound to any one standpoint, and hence can never have a truly closed horizon. The horizon is, rather, something into which we move and that moves with us.[36]

Effective engagement is achieved only through what Gadamer calls the 'fusion of horizons', which unites the observer with the object of the historical focus.[37] This fusion of horizons is not a stable moment, as the horizon of the observer changes in time and in various engagements.

Importantly, Gadamer's proposition privileges the object while interrogating the role of the advanced subject. Gadamer's proposition is engaged by many disciplines within the human sciences, especially for reconceptualising methodological issues, which has serious implications for the study of art, architecture and history.

The implications of Gadamer's argument for architecture have been only indirectly referred to in Heideggerian approaches to the built environment.[38] Only a recent work, Lindsay Jones' study *Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, is grounded mainly on Gadamer's hermeneutics although it also displays affiliations with phenomenological interpretations of the built environment. The deviation point of Jones' study from other approaches is that Gadamer's hermeneutics as a methodology is explicitly related to the interpretation of architecture. In the book, Jones proposes a mainly experiential approach to sacred architecture, in contrast to objectivist trends in deciphering the exact message of a symbolic meaning. While such trends undermine the subjectivity of human experience and endeavour to go beyond it, Jones' proposal privileges all kinds of human experiences of a building with the assumption that misunderstandings and misassumptions may embody important implications for scholarship.[39] Jones' privileging of human experience leads to his main attitude towards interpretation of meaning in architecture:

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36 Gadamer, Truth and Method, 271.

37 Ibid., 340.

38 See Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture: Presence, Language, Place* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000). Alberto Perez-Gomez, *Hermeneutics as Architectural Discourse* (Cloud-Cuckoo-Land: International Journal of Architectural Theory, 1997/2) (1997 [cited 27/01/05 2005]); available from http://www.tu-cottbus.de/BTU/Fak2/TheoArch/Wolke/eng/Subjects/972/Perez-Gomez/perez-gomez_t.html.

39 Lindsay Jones, *Monumental Occasions : Reflections on the Eventfulness of Religious Architecture (the Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture)* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Uni. Press, 2000), 29.

"meaning is not a condition or quality of the building, of the thing itself; meaning arises from situations".[40] His challenge to conventional approaches to the history of architecture is that didactic architecture does not always succeed according to the anticipations of its designers, and disparities between first intentions and subsequent receptions always occur.[41]

The attitude of conventional architecture historians differs from Jones' hermeneutic approach in the way it approaches the question of meaning. In contrast to the autonomous renderings of meaning in architecture through architectural history that is framed in styles and periods, the experiential perspective aims to grasp the immediacy, intimacy and complexity of the encounters between human beings and architecture as experienced in real life. Thus, meaning is seen as the outcome of the interaction between human experience and architecture, depending on and shaped by the intentions of the interpreter. It is not fixed to one prioritised period but is multivalent and transforms in time. It suggests that through experience architectural meanings are rendered as multivalent, situational and slippery.[42]

Jones builds a number of paradigms in *Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*. One of them is the 'reception history' of buildings, which proposes distinct protocols for different levels of extracting meaning from architecture. Reception history puts academic interpretations as only one of the many levels of meaning: others include indigenous evaluations of architecture. Jones argues that academic interpretations of architecture by architects, historians of religion and architecture historians prioritise the moment of its creation in the long history of a building. Thus, the first intention of the creator and the patron are privileged as holding the true meaning of a building. However, he argues from a hermeneutical perspective that the moment of creation is only one of the moments of reception in the long career of a building. He holds that each of the moments of reception of a building deserves equal attention in the interpretation process no matter how naïve it may be. Therefore, according to

40 Ibid., 41.
41 Ibid., 94.
42 Ibid., XXVIII.

Jones, the meaning of architecture is multivalent as well as contingent, depending on its receptions by different individuals from distinct backgrounds and periods.[43]

Jones' paradigm is shaped in a quest for alternatives to the textual tyranny of methods in the discipline of the history of religions and he chooses to focus on buildings themselves in order to open up new methodological avenues.[44] In architectural history, exploration of buildings by relying on formal determinisms such as functional typology and artistic style is prevalent. Concrete historical data are generally used to make socio-cultural evaluations of the buildings in order to explain temporal and geographic deviations in attitudes and tastes, and thus also in styles. From such a perspective, experiential aspects of architecture are limited mostly to the original intentions of the artists and their patrons, and social and individual evaluations come second.

Such an approach to the history of architecture has difficulty engaging contextual details; for example, providing limited use of archival material merely as evidence bound to the criteria of rationality and objectivity, and downplaying architectural meaning. Eventually, many cases exhibited in some historical texts can be undermined or not dealt with sufficiently due to their irrelevance to the main concerns of the history of architecture. In order to explore further possibilities in the interpretation of meaning, building on Jones' hermeneutical paradigm, I introduce the three Ottoman narratives as three distinct ways of elaborating the historical experience of architecture.

Approach

Although Jones' methodology is influential in this thesis, his intention to extend the scope of hermeneutics from texts to buildings is paradoxically reversed. However, his insights into architecture reflecting human experience also hold for texts. Both the architecture and the texts of a culture can be considered as its meaningful actions in the way Paul Ricoeur suggests: "we could say that a meaningful action is an action the *importance* of which goes 'beyond' its *relevance* to its initial

43 Ibid., 202-206.
44 Ibid., XXV.

situation".[45] He further maintains that texts not only mirror their time but also project a world of their own.[46] Brian Stock argues similarly that texts and architecture have commonality in expressing cultural values and therefore in embodying meaning. They are both products of mental mechanisms standing in between experience and reality.[47] Therefore, in Jones' terms, ritual–architectural events around Ottoman buildings of the past can be re-read through the texts of the past. Not chronicles or official recordings, but texts that have a narrative quality and perhaps a more inconspicuous and ambivalent objective or ideology provide invaluable sources reflecting the ambiguous nature of experience.

Temporal distance between the buildings and the texts of the past is equally difficult to understand for a contemporary mind. As Stock holds: "We may all agree that 'distanciation' lies at the crossroads of history and human experience".[48] However, hermeneutics endeavours to ease this distance by allowing us to construct possibilities from what is represented as clues about human experience in either historical buildings or historical texts.

Gabriel Piterberg in the introduction to his interpretation of three Ottoman historiographies convincingly suggests an approach that is parallel in its aim to that of this thesis:

> Instead of tediously disputing whether reality may be at all reconstructed and whether language use is a hermetically sealed world of signs… [o]ne may choose to integrate the text and the context, the sources of the past and the world to which they refer, in a coherent interpretive scheme, in one study.[49]

In this vein, texts we have chosen are not simply social or idiosyncratic constructs of their time or of their authors. Standing in between being literary and documentary they are both. They suggest in the course of everyday life through the complexity of experience, that individuality, intentionality and human will are

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45 Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences : Essays on Language, Action, and Interpretation*, trans. John B. Thompson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 207.

46 Ibid., 202-208.

47 Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 98, 133.

48 Ibid., 103.

49 Gabriel Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), 4.

affected by the objectivity of events.[50] They are both what their authors and the commissioners aimed at and they go beyond this intertextually by reflecting contradictions and value judgments of the society and tradition they belong to.

Thus, the approach of the thesis is selective and interpretive in this intertextual context. It intends to bring together insights from historical and theoretical analyses of architecture. Deriving from the marginalisation of Ottoman narratives in recent historiography, the thesis asks these questions: How has Ottoman architecture been conceptualised in current historiographic studies? Why has historiography on Ottoman architecture for a long period found Ottoman narratives marginal or irrelevant to their main concerns? If Ottoman narratives are rendered as different 'reception protocols' for Ottoman architecture from a hermeneutical perspective, what do they tell about architectural experience? What kind of implications does such research have for further studies of Ottoman architecture in particular and premodern architectural contexts in general?

Outline of the Thesis

In order to answer these questions, in Part I, I will aim to represent how architecture is narrated in the three chosen texts and to give information about the architects discussed, the authors of the texts and their basic historical contexts. In Part II, I shall make a critique of current historiography on Ottoman architecture by relying on the prominent figure of the architect Sinan together with how Ottoman narratives were adopted and used in these approaches. Accordingly, historiography on Sinan will be critiqued using three themes organised in chronological order. These are the acclamation of the architect by early Republican historians such as Ahmed Refik and Afet İnan; his rationalisation using Doğan Kuban's influential paradigm and Spiro Kostof's, and specifically Godfrey Goodwin's, introduction of Sinan to world architecture; and more recent interpretive approaches such as Jale Erzen's studies on the aesthetics of Sinan's architecture and Necipoğlu's early works on the context of Sinan.[51] Apart from dealing with historiography on Sinan in general, I will focus

[50] Stock explains how experience is interpreted through intertextuality in medieval Western culture in similar terms. Stock, *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past*, 29.

[51] Ahmet Refik. *Mimar Sinan* (Architect Sinan). Istanbul: Kanaat Library, Amedi Press, 1931. A. Afet İnan. *Mimar Koca Sinan* (Architect Great Sinan). Ankara: Türkiye Emlak Kredi

on interpretations of Selimiye Mosque, a monument built by the architect which is also the theme of one of the three narratives discussed in the thesis.

Next, I will reflect on the nature of Ottoman narratives as historical evidence that is in between being documentary and literary, and provide an overview of orality, literacy and transmission of knowledge through texts in premodern cultures in general. Jones' hermeneutical paradigm for approaching architecture will then be introduced in order to form a new potential ground to interpret Ottoman narratives in relation to architecture. Jones' insights into architecture will be reviewed from the perspective of Gadamer's four basic metaphors of understanding, which are play, dialogue, tradition and effective–historical consciousness. These are strategies used to look at the history of architecture from a hermeneutical perspective. However, they do not come up with ready-made categories to be employed in the Ottoman context. On the contrary, they suggest that the hermeneutical themes are inherent in the narratives themselves, accentuating the uniqueness of the contextual analysis.

In Part III, I will make hermeneutical interpretations based on the themes derived from the narratives. The themes derived from the texts are the experience of architecture, evaluation of architectural material, architecture as a medium of expression and architecture as a textual metaphor. The status of Sinan as an architect will be interpreted using mainly his memoirs, his comparison with architect Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa as they are represented through texts attributed to them, and a comparison of these texts with the Renaissance *vita* genre, which emerged at the same time in a different context. Apart from these, I will elaborate the spatial sensibility as represented in these texts by focusing on metaphors that

Bankası, 1968. Doğan Kuban. "The Style of Sinan's Domed Structures." *Muqarnas: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture* IV (1987): 72-97. Godfrey Goodwin. *A History of Ottoman Architecture*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1971. Jale Erzen "Aesthetics and Aesthesis in Ottoman Art and Architecture." *Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 1 (1991): 1-24. Gülru Necipoğlu. "The Süleymaniye Complex in Istanbul: An Interpretation." *Muqarnas: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture* III (1985): 92-117.

recur in the texts that are related to cosmology, the body and religion together with the ritual–architecture relationship. I will focus on interpretation of the *Selimiye Risālesi* separately due to its different status and subject, although themes of interpretation are parallel. I will approach *Selimiye Risālesi* as author Dayezāde's dialogue with tradition in which he struggles between charging the mosque with extravagant meanings and legitimising his text. Curiously, the common theme of interpretation pursued throughout the two narratives (Sai's and Dayezāde's) is the ancient Byzantine monument Hagia Sophia, seen as an architectural rival of and precedent to the Selimiye Mosque.

In this way, the thesis intends to make a diachronic evaluation through texts from three different periods by tracing their similarities as well as their differences. Synchronic evaluations of the texts will be elaborated using their historical background and comparisons with other contextual details from their own period. Thus, the contextual construction aims to go beyond the particularist tendencies inherent in studying a single building, a single period or a single architect. Similarly, it will aim to avoid universal conclusions through idiosyncratic and context-bound expressions of the texts.

Selecting Ottoman narratives on architecture to discuss the historical experience of architecture within the Ottoman context is a challenging course. First of all, by relying on three major sources it requires a reconstruction of history both in line with and confronting chronological readings. Second, it brings points of view of historically marginal subjects into the core of interpretation.[52] Third, it has to work despite the nature of the narratives standing in between being literary and documentary: history is not literature. Carlo Ginzburg in his approach to history writing encourages us to deal with historically marginal figures when looking at important historical facts and events. He alerts historians that sources are not neutral beholders of the past – they may not have objective claims – but this does not

[52] This open forum is refreshing in comparing monolithic assumptions about Ottoman history and contextual contingencies. İlber Ortaylı. "İdeal 'Osmanlı' Yok (Open Forum by Mehmet Genç, Ekrem Işın, Cornell Fleischer, Mete Tunçay, Hilmi Yavuz and Nuray Mert)". *Cogito: Osmanlılar Özel Sayısı*, no. 11 (1999): 232-59.

necessarily imply that they should be dismissed.[53] At the same time, he argues that the trichotomy of history, rhetoric and proof is a complex relationship that blurs the boundaries between the three.[54]

To sum up, the difficulty in understanding the implications of Ottoman narratives for architecture calls for a hermeneutical exercise in relation to the question of meaning in architecture. Therefore, by analysing these temporally distinct texts as noted perceptions of experience, I propose to elaborate different reception histories of architecture within the Ottoman context. Such a contextual collage and deviation is necessary in order to delve into the context itself as this provides a ground for comparative interpretation between the periods, individuals and social groups included in the overarching terminology of Ottoman history.[55] The significance of this research lies in its history-grounded theoretical approach to the Ottoman context. Tanyeli maintains that literature on Ottoman architecture lacks hermeneutical dissertations.[56] In an earlier paper Necipoğlu indicated that broader conceptual implications of Sinan narratives await evaluation, and she opens up a way into this in her most recent work.[57] James McQuillan urges reflection on Gadamer's insights about prejudice in the criticisms of Ottoman architecture.[58] Piterberg suggests that the overall portrayal of Ottoman history in future studies should be multidimensional through more dialogic and fewer documentary interpretations.[59] This thesis is an attempt to help fill this gap in the literature of

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53 Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), XVII-XIX.

54 Carlo Ginzburg, *History, Rhetoric, and Proof: The Menahem Stern Jerusalem Lectures* (Hanoever and London: University Press of New England, 1999), 25.

55 Jones calls this type of approach de-contexualisation in order to allow re-contexualisation. Jones, *Monumental Occasions: Reflections on the Eventfulness of Religious Architecture (the Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture)*, 179- 80.

56 Tanyeli, "Bu Kitap İçin Bir Konum Saptama Denemesi ya da Mitos Kurmaktan Mitos Çözümlemeye Sinan Historiyografisi (Preface), V.

57 Gülru Necipoğlu, "The Emulation of the Past in Sinan's Imperial Mosques" (paper presented at the *Uluslararası Mimar Sinan Sempozyumu* (International Architect Sinan Symposium), Ankara, 1988), 177. Especially see chapter IV in Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 127-147.

58 James McQuillan, "The Aesthetics of Ottoman Architecture in the Twenty-First Century" (paper presented at the *Oriental-Occidental geography, identity, space: ACSA International Conference*, Istanbul, 2001), 117.

59 Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play*, 186.

Ottoman architecture examined through interpretive paradigms by making a hermeneutical reading of context from the text in favour of architectural meaning.

PART 1

OTTOMAN NARRATIVES ON ARCHITECTURE

Words are the fruit of the garden of meaning.
Words are a life-sustaining stream.
Words that are both meaningful and well-scanned
Charm whosoever hears them.

Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*.

1. The Ottoman Context

Reconstructing the Ottoman context from a contemporary standpoint is a difficult task, not only because the Ottoman Empire was a world significantly different from ours in values and rationality, but also because we tend to be influenced by nationalistic and romantic attachments. The difference that distances us from the premodern Ottoman context can be conceptualised in various ways. In *Imagined Communities* Benedict Anderson explains this difference by contrasting the modern notion of 'national community' with two other types of community: religious and dynastic.[1] Religious communities, he says, define their territories by means of a sacred language and written script. They see themselves "as cosmically central, through the medium of a sacred language linked to a superterrestrial order of power".[2] They believe in the uniqueness of their linguistic medium, which grants them access to the divine truth.[3] Dynastic communities, by contrast, define their territories by kingship. They derive their authority and legitimacy from divinity and consider the populations as subjects rather than citizens.[4] Their societies are organised around monarchs. Religious and dynastic communities, Anderson argues, were interwoven in many premodern examples throughout history. Their conception of temporality, as reflected in their daily practice, is one of the fundamental differences that distinguish them from modern national communities.[5] Viewed from Anderson's perspective, the Ottoman Empire can be seen to have developed its cultural system by drawing on the inner dynamics of its religious and dynastic communities. This is what makes it at once different from and remote to us as a historical context.

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1 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 1991), 12.

2 Ibid., 13.

3 Ibid., 13, 36.

4 Ibid., 19.

5 "Human loyalties were necessarily hierarchical and centripetal because the ruler, like the sacred script, was a node of access to being and inherent in it. This was a conception of temporality in which cosmology and history were indistinguishable, the origins of the world and of men were essentially identical. These ideas rooted human lives firmly in the very nature of things, giving certain meaning to the everyday fatalities of existence (above all death, loss and servitude) and offering, in various ways, redemption from them". Ibid., 36.

From a closer perspective, historian Rıfa'at Ali Abou-El-Haj argues that the modern historiography of the Ottomans is a case in which particularism ought to be received with caution.[6] The writing of Ottoman history has focused largely on the internal dynamics of the empire without much attention to cross-cultural interactions with Western and Eastern civilisations. A cross-cultural perspective would show that similar processes were taking place in distinct states around Europe and Asia. Daniel Goffman similarly argues that while there is an apparent ideological chasm between Christian Europe and the Ottoman Empire, in fact they shared the common point that they both featured religion as the 'great spiritual divide'.[7] One problematic evaluation of the Ottoman state is the conviction that the essential nature of the state has remained unchanged throughout history. Historical texts on 'the order of the universe' *(nizam-ı ālem)* as the unshakeable rule of the world support this view.[8] Historical Ottoman texts consistently seem to express a longing for a distant-desired origin, and this has been interpreted as supporting the essential nature of the state. Nevertheless, a close reading of historical texts themselves verifies that authors were aware of certain changes and criticised them.[9] As both Goffman and Abou-El-Haj convincingly argue, as other societies have been throughout history, Ottoman society was dynamic and fluid in nature.

The Ottomans, one of the Turkish dynasties, came from Central Asia and settled in Anatolia in the twelfth century. They were named after the first ruler, Osman, who reigned from 1299 to 1326.[10] Compared to other Turkish dynasties, the Ottomans were privileged in their geographic and political status, having settled on the border of the Byzantine Empire. After many short wars *(Ghazā)* against the Christians, the Ottomans gradually conquered the Byzantine territories in Anatolia and the Balkans. Between 1362 and 1453, the Ottomans invaded the Byzantine cities of

6 Rifa'at Ali Abou-El-Haj, *Modern Devletin Dogasi: 16.Yuzyildan 18. Yuzyila Osmanli Imparatorlugu [Formation of the Modern State: Ottoman Empire from 16th to 18th-Century]* (Ankara:İmge Kitabevi, 2000), 21.

7 Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 7.

8 Ibid., 21, 30.

9 Abou-El-Haj, *Oktay Ozel, Canay Sahin*, 93.

10 Cemal Kafadar says, "Osman is to the Ottomans what Romulus is to the Romans", pointing not only to the eponymous character of the two figures but also to the parallels between the two empires. Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 1.

Adrianople (Edirne) and Constantinople (Istanbul), which successively became the Ottoman capitals. The conquest of Constantinople in 1453, together with Ottoman domination over other Turkish dynasties in Anatolia, proclaimed the emergence of the Ottoman Empire as a centralised state at its most systematic and radical form. The conquest of Constantinople was an important event that marked a turning point in world history.[11] Goffman accentuates the symbolic fall of Constantinople for Christendom and its significance in bringing power to the Ottoman dynasty.[12] With the further conquest of Arab lands in 1517, the Ottomans established the most powerful Islamic empire.[13]

At the turn of the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was a world power with vast lands extending from the Indian Ocean to central Europe. It enjoyed its most powerful period during the reign of Süleyman I, who is also known in the West as Süleyman the Magnificent. Cemal Kafadar argues that later generations have considered the institutional and cultural parameters of the mid-sixteenth century to be the classical expressions of the Ottoman state.[14] The Ottomans continued to acquire new lands and preach the Islamic worldview up to the eighteenth century, when they became economically and politically dependent on Europe. Although the first signs of decline emerged at the end of the sixteenth century, the Empire lasted until 1923, when the new Turkish Republic was established.[15]

Ottoman rule was based on the sovereignty of the Ottoman family and the legitimacy of Islamic law. Historian Bernard Lewis maintains that the Ottomans adapted medieval Arabic and Persian ethical and political treatises. The Ottoman policies of state and sovereignty can therefore be traced back to Islamic law (*shari'a*).[16] Although the Ottoman sultans articulated a civil law (*kānun*) for the worldly affairs of the state, the *shari'a* remained fundamental and was always

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11 Bernard Lewis, *Istanbul and the Civilization of the Ottoman Empire* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 18. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*, 152.

12 Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*, 52.

13 Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, trans. Colin Imber Norman Itzkowitz (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1973), 3.

14 Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*, 153.

15 Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, 3.

16 Lewis, *Istanbul and the Civilization of the Ottoman Empire*, 36.

referred to for endorsement.[17] The assimilation of Islamic influences led to the formation of a new political regime in the Ottoman context. Niyazi Berkes argues that the most important feature of the Ottoman political regime was its being based on tradition legitimated through religion rather than on religion itself.[18] The tradition involved an absolute divine order that was kept connected to its roots without any changes (*nizam-ı ālem*). Any formation, if restored in its perennial form, could live eternally. The main premise of this worldview was order and balance rather than change and evolution. The legitimacy of the sultanate came from its being viewed as the sword of God. The sacredness and the significance of the sultanate were characteristics that went beyond individual sultans. In such a system, the Ottoman society was divided between the sultan and his family; the military, civil servants and *ulema* (bureaucrats); and the *reāyā*, comprising all Muslim and non-Muslim subjects who paid taxes.[19] Through an assumption of a theoretical Muslim superiority determined by a head-tax and symbolic social restrictions, non-Muslim subjects coexisted in the Ottoman society with other religions and ethnicities.[20] These non-Muslim groups were largely exempt from *shari'a*, and they had justice systems according to their own religion; for example, in the Ottoman Armenian, Greek Orthodox and Jewish communities.[21] Within such an order, it is natural that names and individuals show great diversity to be identified with a particular ideology.

The Ottoman state went through changes throughout its history, although change was not desirable. It is difficult to draw a clear line to separate the modern matters from the traditional within the Ottoman state. The process of modernisation was influenced by factors from centuries before the 1839 administrative reforms. Social change was a multi-layered process that is hard to describe using a progressive

17 Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, 70-71.

18 Niyazi Berkes, *Turkiye'de Cağdaşlasma [Secularism in Turkey]* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları (YKY), 2002), 30

19 Ibid., 31. Halil Inalcik, "The Nature of Traditional Society: Turkey", in *Political Modernisation in Japan and Turkey*, ed. Dankwart A. Rustow Robert E. Ward (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Uni. Press, 1964), 44.

20 Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*, 9.

21 Ibid., 73.

history model.[22] Thus, the birth, rise and decline model is helpful in sketching history in chronological terms but it does not illustrate all the details of an overall picture. The historiographic model of progress, decentralisation and decline explicates the political strength of the Ottoman Empire, but it is not possible to explain all cultural achievements using this schema. As Uğur Tanyeli argues, no historiographic model will help understanding of realities outside its truth claims. Considering criteria other than geographic extension shows that the model is not valid for all areas. For instance, bureaucratic organisations of the state in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were more developed than in the sixteenth century, just as the culture of dwellings and gastronomy got more diverse and detailed over time. Furthermore, technology transfer from the West was not specific to the eighteenth century: such transfers had been taking place since the fifteenth century.[23]

Gülru Necipoğlu posits that, in Süleyman's reign, implications of the universal sovereignty through the office of the caliphate found their expressions in cultural artefacts. Not only did funerary mosque complexes flourish in Istanbul, but also Friday mosques built in newly conquered border cities functioned as 'territory markers' of the empire, and as regal and religious symbols.[24] Pious endowments (*waqıf*) served as part of a codified law of inheritance for aristocratic families while at the same time further pronouncing the sovereignty of the Ottoman state.[25] During Süleyman's reign, aspiration for precision, together with *şeyhülislam* Ebussuud's official enforcement of *sunni* orthodoxy in social practices, informed the hierarchical perception of both society and space.[26] Necipoğlu further maintains that in such a context architecture was a cultural medium of competition among Ottoman sultans and elites.[27]

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22 Suraiya Faroqhi, "Osmanli Tarihini Ararken [Looking for Ottoman History]", *Defter*, no. 20 (1993): 85.

23 Uğur Tanyeli, "Bir Historiyografik Model Olarak Gerileme-Cöküş Ve Osmanlı Mimarlığı Tarihi ", in *Osmanlı Mimarlığının 7 Yüzyılı "Uluslarüstü Bir Miras"*, ed. Afife Batur, Nur Akın, Selcuk Batur (Istanbul: Yem, 1999), 45-46.

24 Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 31.

25 Ibid., 45.

26 Ibid., 38-48.

27 Ibid., 44-5.

Our knowledge of the Ottomans comes mostly from artefacts of Ottoman high culture. But this does not mean that high culture was essentially bound to the elite group and had no influence on other members of the society. Abou-El-Haj purports that, although the most significant institution for acquiring high culture was the Ottoman court, high culture was also accessible through other means depending on the social class of the individual, such as madrasas for the *ulema*, dervish lodges, and the literary social gatherings held at the mansions of high bureaucrats for others.[28] I argue that, apart from direct influences, indirect influences must by and large have shaped the thinking and imagination of the Ottoman people. The Ottoman narratives chosen for this thesis have the potential to recollect such influences.

According to the conventional compartmentalisation of Ottoman history based on geographic extension, the period of the first Sinan texts coincides with the culminating phases of centralisation, whereas the periods of the second and third texts are times of decentralisation, when interest in the Western world was strengthened and attempts were made to adopt technologies and lifestyles from the West. Interestingly, it will be seen that it is hard to read these general historiographic facts from the narratives on architecture.

1.1. The *Tezkere* Genre

Tezkere is an Arabic word derived from the root *zikr* (remembrance), which means either acts of official authorities or biographies written for some professional groups in the Ottoman context.[29] The *tezkere* is a genre of Ottoman court literature (*divan*) that can be translated into English as 'biographical memoirs'. It is written mostly about prominent people in literature – specifically poets – in order to give information about their life and artistic achievements and examples from their work. Generally *tezkeres* have specific titles. The sections are organised either in alphabetic or chronological order. They start with an introduction to the poet, with different details according to the prominence of the person in literature, and then they give selected examples of poems. There are around 30 *tezkeres* surviving from

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28 Abou-El-Haj, *Oktay Ozel, Canay Sahin*, 65.

29 Mustafa Nihat Özön, *Osmanlıca-Türkçe Sözlük* (Istanbul: Inkilap Kitabevi, 1959), 728.

Ottoman literature, the earliest of which is Sehī Bey's *Heşt Behişt* (Eight Heavens).[30]

Biographical texts on Sinan can be included in the *tezkere* genre as their names suggest, but they depart from earlier *tezkeres* of the poets in their length and purpose. They are unique examples of their kind in the field of Islamic architecture.[31] Therefore, they are valuable sources on the training, performance and status of Sinan as well as on how his architecture was received and understood by his contemporaries. A later text from the seventeenth century, Cafer Efendi's treatise on Sinan's student Mehmet Ağa, shows the continuity of the genre, although its scope extends beyond biographical memoirs to include information on geometry and surveying. These two texts are unique examples of premodern writing on Ottoman architects and architecture. They do not attempt to theorise architecture or celebrate traditional canons. Each text creates its own context in accordance with the traits of the architects and the authors. Their appearance in twentieth-century monographs on Sinan and Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa rarely attracted attention in order to compare the two texts.[32]

The *tezkeres* of these two architects demonstrate both literary and documentary features. They communicate through verse and prose within a narrative format. They are descriptive rather than explanatory, idiosyncratic rather than comprehensive. Descriptive and documentary though they may be, these texts present many challenges to art and architecture historians, who have been using them as sources of historical data for decades. The difficulties these texts present lie in the sense of rationality they exhibit, which is somewhat incompatible with that of modern readers. Their historic data hardly meet the tests of scientific rigour and accuracy, yet they exhibit a unique sensibility of architecture that deserves closer

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30 İskender Pala, *Divan Edebiyatı [Divan Literature]* (Istanbul: Ötüken, 1992)., 132. Mustafa İsen, "Tezkilerin Işığında Divan Edebiyatı" (paper presented at the *Beşinci Milletler Arası Türkoloji Kongresi*, Istanbul, 1985), 145. Also see James Stewart-Robinson, "The Tezkere Genre in Islam" *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* XXIII (1964): 57-65.

31 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 127.

32 Gökyay classifies *Risale-i Mimāriyye* in the genealogy of Sinan narratives and points to its significance in this regard. Orhan Şaik Gökyay, "Risale-i Mimāriyye- Mimar Mehmet Ağa-Eserleri", in *Ord. Prof. İsmail Hakkı Uzuncarşılı'ya Armağan*, ed. Oktay Aslanapa (Ankara: Turk Tarih Kurumu, 1988), 113.

attention. In the following sections, the narratives of these texts will be condensed in order to inform the reader about the nature of the expression employed in the texts.

2. Texts on Sinan

In contrast to the anonymity commonly exhibited in Ottoman culture, Sinan stands rather uniquely as a widely celebrated figure. A group of five texts on Sinan has survived from the sixteenth century, giving us glimpses of his life and work. In chronological order these are *Adsız Risāle* (Untitled Treatise), *Risaletü'l-Mi'māriyye* (Treatise on Architecture), *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn* (Choice Gift of the Architects), *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* (The Record of Construction) and *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* (Record of Buildings). The information in the texts indicates that they were written under architect Sinan's close supervision.[33]

The representation of these texts in contemporary literature has a long history in Turkey. *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* and *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye,* two similarly titled treatises on Sinan, were first partially published in the nineteenth century.[34] In 1931, historian Ahmet Refik included *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* in his biography on Sinan.[35] In 1935, the Turkish History Foundation began a research project on Sinan within the scope of a project called 'the baselines of Turkish history', revealing a stimulation of historical consciousness among early republican scholars which I will focus on in detail in the coming pages.[36] In 1939, in his contribution to this project, Rıfkı Melul Meriç presented the first critical editions of *Adsız Risāle, Risaletü'l-Mimāriyye, Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn* and *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye*. But these first critical editions were not published

33 Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*, ed. Howard Crane and Esra Akin (foreword by Gülru Necipoğlu) (Leiden: 2005 (forthcoming)). Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 127.

34 A version of *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* was presented in a volume on Ottoman architecture prepared for the 1873 Vienna Universal Exhibition. Ahmed Cevdet, editor of the newspaper *Ikdām*, published a combined version of *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* and *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* in 1897–98. Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts.*

35 Ahmet Refik, *Mimar Sinan [Architect Sinan]* (Istanbul: Kanaat Library, Amedi Press, 1931).

36 A. Afet İnan, *Mimar Koca Sinan [Architect Great Sinan]* (Ankara: Türkiye Emlak Kredi Bankası, 1968), 5.

until 1965.[37] More than two decades later, in 1988, Zeki Sönmez published these texts in modern Turkish. His incomplete translations, however, did not include the poetry sections nor did they mention which versions of the manuscripts he used in his translations.[38]

Since then, these texts on Sinan have been translated and cited in various studies. In 1989, Suphi Saatçi and Metin Sözen translated *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* into English.[39] And in 2003, Hayati Develi, together with Samih Rıfat and Arzu Karamani, published a critical edition of both *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* and *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye*, wherein he compared five copies of each manuscript, highlighted their differences and assessed their authenticity. Develi's edition compiles the texts in Arabic script, in transliterated Ottoman using Latin script, and in translations into modern Turkish.[40] Howard Crane will soon publish the latest and most complete critical editions of Sinan texts.[41]

Of the five Sinan texts, the first three (*Adsız Risāle, Risaletü'l-Mimāriyye, Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn*) are unfinished drafts which were most probably written relying on Sinan's oral narratives. The last two texts, *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* and *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, were both written in the sixteenth century by the same author and scribe, Sai Mustafa Çelebi. Very little is known about the author.[42] He is mentioned in different directories of Ottoman writers and poets as an eminent painter (*nakkaş*) from Istanbul who was also an accomplished poet and had written a book of verses

37 Rıfkı Melul Meriç, *Mimar Sinan Hayatı, Eseri I: Mimar Sinan Hayatına, Eserlerine Dair Metinler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1965).

38 Zeki Sönmez, *Mimar Sinan İle İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler* (Istanbul: Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1988).

39 Suphi Saatçi Metin Sözen, ed., *Mimar Sinan and Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* (Istanbul: MTV Publications, 1989).

40 Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l- Bünyān ve Tezkiretü'l- Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'in Anıları), [Architect Sinan's Memoirs]*, ed. Hayati Develi Samih Rifat, Arzu Karamani Pekin (Istanbul: Koç Kültür Sanat, 2002).

41 In this thesis, Howard Crane's forthcoming translation is referred to for information, description and quotations from the texts. Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*.

42 Crane maintains that Sai's life and work are mentioned in three contemporary biographical dictionaries – *Gülşen-i Şu'arā* (Rose Garden of the Poets), *Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arā* (Biographical Dictionary of the Poets) and *Zübdetü'l-Eş'ar* (Quintessence of the Poets). Ibid.

(*divan*).[43] Sai was described as possessing a special 'gift for expressing meanings and concepts pictorially'.[44] Franz Babinger in his book on Ottoman writers of history refers to Sai as a famous poet, a painter, an illuminator and a stonemason who died in 1595. Apparently, Sai was Sinan's close friend. Of the two texts he authored, *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* was dedicated to the grand vizier of the time, Siyavuş Pasha.[45] Yet his association with Sinan was not restricted to the authorship of the two biographies; he was also the writer of inscriptions on three of Sinan's buildings: Valide Sultan Public Bath in Cemberlitaş, Ramazan Efendi Mosque in Kocamustafapaşa and Sinan's tomb in Süleymaniye. The poem he inscribed on Sinan's tomb reads as a summary of *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, listing Sinan's major achievements (figure 1).[46]



Figure 1 Inscription on Sinan's tomb (carved by Sai), Istanbul, 2004

43 Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-ī Osmanī*, ed. Nuri Akbayar, 6 vols. (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), 1437.

44 Metin Sözen, ed., *Mimar Sinan and Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, 31.

45 Franz Babinger, *Osmanlı Tarih Yazarları ve Eserleri*, trans. Coşkun Üçok (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1982), 151.

46 O you, who settle for a day or two in life's palace,
The world is not a place of repose for man.
Becoming the architect of Süleyman Khan, this distinguished man
Built him a Friday mosque that is a sign of the highest paradise.
With the Sultan's orders he exerted great effort on water channels,
Like Hızır, he made the water of life flow to the people.
At the [Büyük] Cekmece bridge such a lofty arch did he raise that
Identical it is to the Milky Way in the mirror of Time.
He built more than four hundred lofty masjids,
Creating Friday mosques in eighty places, this divine maestro.
He lived more than a hundred lives, and finally passed away,
May God make his resting-place the garden of Paradise.
Sai the well-wisher said the date of his departure: 'Passed
Away from the world at this time, Sinan
The patron saint of architects, 996 [1587 88]
May old and young offer the Fatiha [Opening Sura] for his soul.
Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 147.

Sai may have contributed to the editing of early drafts of the texts as well. In *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* and *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* he later worked with Sinan to refine the information he had gathered from Sinan's earlier texts into a more literary format. Although the details of Sinan's collaboration with Sai are uncertain, it is certain that Sinan was the architectural authority in the editing of these texts.[47] Therefore, they are invaluable sources of information about Sinan's own perception of his works. Before focusing on the content of these texts, it is important first to review Sinan's life and period.

2.1. Sinan's Life and Period

In modern historiography of the Ottoman Empire, the ethnic background of historical characters is always an issue of debate. Architect Sinan is no exception. It is largely accepted that he was from a Christian family that lived in the Ağırnas village of Kayseri. There are doubts about his ethnic background, however, depending on the way in which historical documents are interpreted. Most early republican historians, under the influence of nationalist connections, considered him to be a Turk. (The same is true for other nations that emerged from the Ottoman rule such as Greeks or Bulgarians.) Some wrongly suggested that he was an Albanian slave who settled in Anatolia as a child.[48] Dismissing irrelevant documents and prejudice-driven early assumptions, Necipoğlu maintains that Sinan was taken from the Karaman region in his early youth by the Ottoman army as a conscripted Christian *(devşirme)* and brought up as a janissary. She further purports that Sinan's ambiguous ethnic background is a result of the racial pluralism of the ruling elite of the empire. As his biographical texts suggest, Sinan's conscious self-image was as a Muslim Ottoman.[49]

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47 Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts.*

48 Konyalı's assumption has recently been proved to be wrong, in Necipoğlu's work. İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı, *Mimar Koca Sinan: Vakfiyeler-Hayır Eserleri-Hayatı-Padişaha Vekaleti-Azadlık Kağıdı-Alım, Satım Hüccetleri* (Istanbul: 1948), 43. Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 129.

49 Sinan's name is mentioned as 'Sinan bin Abdülmennan' in *Tezkiretü'l- Bünyān* and as 'Sinan Ağa İbni Abdurrahman' in his *waqf.* In the inscription on Büyükçekmece Bridge, the only signed construction, his name is written as Yusuf b. Abdullah. Necipoğlu presumes that his full name must have been Yusuf Sinan or Yusuf Sinanüddin. It is known that during the Ottoman period those who were conscripted and who changed their religion to Islam were given names such as Abdullah, Abdurrahman, Abdülmennan which mean 'servant of God'.

The janissaries formed an important part of the Ottoman army. Their education covered more than military skills. The intelligent janissaries were taught at the Enderun School of the palace, whereas others were sent to be educated at auxiliary schools. Throughout Ottoman history, the recruited janissaries enjoyed important jobs in the administration. No freeborn Muslim could become a janissary. Young boys were recruited from Christian villages every five years. Lewis claims that the intentions behind such a system were to harness the energies of non-Muslim communities under the reign of the Ottomans and prevent rebellion, and to protect the unity of the boundaries of the empire.[50] In a recent study Goffman argues that, although national historiographies rendered the system of Ottoman conscription as a way of conscriptees attaining personal fortune through obliteration of their heritage, as the example of Vizier Sokullu shows, conscription did not necessitate strict rejection of birthright.[51]

Conscription *(devşirme)* was different from the slave system and provided opportunities to rise in rank and personal status, to marry and to own property. All possessions, however, remained at the disposal of the sultan. Ranks to which conscriptees could rise included being an infantry soldier of the celebrated Ottoman legions at worst and being a powerful statesman at best.[52] Halil İnalcık argues that in Ottoman society it was seen as a privilege to be a slave of the sultan (*kul*).[53] For example, by the end of the sixteenth century, the status of janissary was popular and the number of janissary schools increased and began to accept freeborn young Muslims as well.[54] The janissaries had affiliations with the Bektashi sect of Sufis, which had *shi'i* inclinations and had developed an understanding of Islam influenced by pagan beliefs. They were therefore regarded with suspicion by the dominant orthodox *sunni*. The history of the Ottomans witnessed a series of

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Yapılar Kitabı, 38, 90. "I, God's humble servant, was conscripted into the garden of Sultan Selim Khan's realm..." Metin Sözen, ed., *Mimar Sinan and Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, 53. Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 129-132.

50 Bernard Lewis, *Istanbul and the Civilization of the Ottoman Empire, The Centers of Civilization Series* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 36.

51 Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*, 68.

52 Ibid., 64- 69.

53 İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, 88.

54 Godfrey Goodwin, *A History of Ottoman Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1971), 198.

janissary rebellions until the janissary organisation was abolished in 1826 in the reign of Mahmud II.[55]

As a janissary, Sinan joined many military campaigns in Europe and Persia. Necipoğlu argues that these campaigns, in which janissaries were also employed in the construction of fortifications, bridges and mosques, formed Sinan's earliest building experiences.[56] During his military career, Sinan rose in rank. He was an infantry soldier and then a technical officer. Military training and experience must have helped Sinan strengthen both his administration and his engineering skills.[57] Later on, and with the help of a puzzling coincidence, he became the chief imperial architect (*ser-mi'mārān-ı hāssa*). His construction and mechanical skills were useful during the military campaigns. During a campaign to Persia, for example, he was asked to build ships to pass over Lake Van, and then to command them to spy on the enemy.[58] And during Süleyman the Magnificent's Karaboğdan campaign he was approached to build a bridge over River Prut. *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* relates that Sinan built the bridge in ten days, which was very much appreciated by the sultan.[59] These instances seem to have revealed his talents to the court and after the death of the previous office holder he was appointed as the chief imperial architect in 1538.[60]

The chief imperial architect was the head of the architects practising in the court ateliers in order to control construction enterprises throughout the empire. There were court ateliers of the various branches of art, which were the makers of the high Ottoman styles. These ateliers were called 'people of the crafts' (*ehl-i hiref*) and were mentioned in registers as stipend receivers (*muhaşere-hārān*). The ateliers' hierarchy included three ranks: novice (*şagird*), foreman (*halīfe*) and master (*üstād*).

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55 Halil İnalcık, ed., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*. (V.2), XXI.

56 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 132.

57 Ibid., 132- 33.

58 Necipoğlu maintains that this episode not only testifies to Sinan as a *mechanicus* (architect–engineer), but it also shows Sinan's skills as a commander and intelligence officer. Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l- Bünyān Ve Tezkiretü'l- Ebniye [Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları], [Architect Sinan's Memoirs]*, 43. Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 133.

59 Ibid., 44.

60 "I am God's humble servant and the thought of abandoning my military career would worry me greatly. However, in the final analysis, I considered that by building many mosques, many of my wishes in this world and in the next would be granted, so I agreed to the proposal". Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*.

The special atelier for architects was called the 'corps of imperial architects' (*mi'mārān-ı hāssa*), and worked at the service of the imperial household.[61] The corps of imperial architects was like an academy of architects, with a special section responsible for the education of young architects. Their training was based on the study of geometry.[62] Architects with Greek and Syrian backgrounds were common.[63]

It is difficult to provide general information about the system of the corps of royal architects because the organisation changed over time. In her recent work, Necipoğlu gives a very detailed account of the corps of royal architects. During Sinan's tenure the corps of royal architects operated in two locations: the royal storehouse at the Topkapı Palace and the chief architect's office at Vefa, near the Old Palace.[64] Necipoğlu notes that in the sixteenth century some trainees in workshops grouped near the storehouse at the left side of the palace's first court were promoted to the corps of royal architects. She also observes that in Sinan's time two official seats of the storehouse were the city prefect (*şehremīni*) and the chief architect (*mi'mārbaşı*). The city prefect was an officer of the imperial council's finance department who also controlled building materials in the storehouse.[65] As we learn from Cafer Efendi's *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*, from time to time Sinan supervised the training of the novices of the palace garden.[66]

Sevgi Aktüre lists the major occupations of the corps of imperial architects as the preparation of buildings and restoration projects, estimating costs and the

61 There were 432 people working in these arts and crafts ateliers: 21 were noted as architects. Halil İnalcık, "Osmanlı Medeniyeti" ve Saray Patronajı", in *Osmanlı Uygarlığı*, ed. Günsel Renda Halil İnalcık (Istanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2002), 26-27.

62 Cafer Efendi's text informs us about the significance of geometry in education in those periods. Efendi Cafer, *Risale-i Mi`mariyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, ed. Howard Crane (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1987), 28- 30. Gülru Necipoğlu, "Plans and Models in 15th and 16th Century Ottoman Architectural Practise", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* XLV, no. 3 (1986): 242.

63 Ibid., 27.

64 Necipoğlu further argues: "These two centres may have originated during Mehmed II's reign, when both palaces were built. The chief architect's office at Vefa was located near the dormitories of the novices … where Sinan himself had received his initial training as a carpenter…" Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 154.

65 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 154.

66 Cafer, *Risale-i Mi`mariyye : An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, 33.

supervision of the construction activities after approval. She interprets the designing and constructing process as following a formal order: first the proposal of a project had to be approved by the Imperial Council of the State (*Divan-ı Hümayun*) and the sultan, and then it was sent back with instructions to the chief architect or the architect responsible for it.[67]

We do not have much information on how the corps of imperial architects worked in design and construction. It is believed that architectural drawings were lost during the unfortunate demolition of the atelier of imperial architects.[68] However, written sources frequently refer to plans and models, as we will encounter in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān, Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* and *Selimiye Risālesi*. Gülru Necipoğlu introduced some of the remaining drawings from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, showing the use of grid-based ground plans and sketchy elevations. These documents generally imply that drawings were not used as final and fixed graphic descriptions of buildings, suggesting that on-site changes were made during the process of construction.[69] Historical sources suggest it was a common practice to present a project to the sultan first through its drawings. This not only suggests that architects used drawings but also that sultans had the skills to decipher these drawings. Account books of the construction of the Süleymaniye reveal that 120 folios of 'Istanbul paper' were used for architectural drawings over a six-year period. Necipoğlu gives more detail from historical sources, leaving no doubt that architectural drawings were commonplace during Sinan's tenure as chief architect.[70]

While still a janissary, Sinan was appointed to the head of the corps of imperial architects from outside. It is clear from the historical documents that his talents in architecture and construction were highly appreciated. Specifically, in the texts that documented his endowment deed (*waqfiyya*), he was praised for being 'the eye of eminent engineers', 'the ornament of the high official builders', 'the master of the

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67 Sevgi Aktüre, "Mimarbaşı Sinan and the Building Policies of the Ottoman State", *A.A.R.P. Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 1, no. 2 (1987): 98. Also see Orhan Erdenen. "Osmanlilar'da Mimarlik Teskilati". *Hayat Tarih Mecmuasi* (1966): 45-52.

68 Necipoğlu, "Plans and Models in 15th and 16th Century Ottoman Architectural Practise", 224.

69 Ibid., 242.

70 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 170-4.

masters of the time', 'the head of best artists of his time', 'the Euclid of all times and this time', 'the architect of the sultans' and 'the teacher of the khans'.[71]

Historical sources suggest that the corps of royal architects was stagnating before Sinan's tenure. The numbers of royal architects decreased dramatically between 1525 and 1534. Necipoğlu asserts in detail that this stagnation explains Sinan's appointment from outside due to his extraordinary talent.[72] Although this guild of architects was in operation from the reign of Bayezıd II (1481–1512), it was during Sinan's leadership that it enjoyed its most efficient times. Under Sinan's guidance the guild completed many construction projects within the boundaries of the empire, with activities ranging from building Friday mosques and waterways to undertaking cost analyses.[73]

The chief architect and the city prefect were together in charge of the water inspector, the stores commissioner and other supply and maintenance functionaries.[74] With Sinan's employment, the status of the architecture corps increased and the role of the chief architect extended to encompass the details of the city administration of Istanbul and many other constructions throughout the empire.[75]

The construction of public buildings outside Istanbul, such as mosques commissioned by rich people, was also under the control of the corps of imperial architects. For such commissions, city architects were stationed in major provincial capitals.[76] In the sixteenth century, roads and sewage systems were built jointly using funds from the state and the private contributions of citizens. Sevgi Aktüre argues that during Sinan's era large-scale construction activities had systematic control processes in place to monitor the efficiency of the labour force, the

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71 "Seçkin mühendislerin gözü", "Kurucular erkanının süsü", "zamane üsdatlarının üstadı", "devrinin en hazık sanatkārlarinin başı", "Zamanların ve asrın Oklidisi", "Mimari Sultanī" and "Muallimi hakanī". Konyalı, *Mimar Koca Sinan: Vakfiyeler-Hayır Eserleri-Hayatı-Padişaha Vekaleti-Azadlık Kağıdı-Alım, Satım Hüccetleri*, 52.

72 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 155.

73 Doğan Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye [Sinan's Art and Selimiye]* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1997), 30- 32.

74 Lewis, *Istanbul and the Civilization of the Ottoman Empire*, 71.

75 Goodwin, *A History of Ottoman Architecture*, 192.

76 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 157.

application of projects and the use of building materials.[77] Necipoğlu further maintains that the emergence of branches of the corps of royal architects in the major provincial cities paralleled the increasing centralisation of the empire during Sultan Süleyman's rule.[78] It is difficult to imagine that Sinan had direct involvement in and control over all the constructions listed in his biographical texts.[79] It is widely accepted that he was involved mainly in projects that were built in or around Istanbul (such as Edirne), while remote constructions must have been determined through plans and models.[80]

Sinan served four successive sultans: Selim I (Yavuz), Süleyman I (Kanunī), Selim II (Sallow Selim) and Murat II.[81] During the reigns of these sultans the Ottoman Empire enjoyed its most powerful times, extending its boundaries in both the East and the West. Financial support from war spoils and the need to legitimate imperial power formed the economic background for Sinan's major works.[82] İnalcık notes that the sultans and rulers of the Ottoman states were always in competition for the patronage of science and arts, like other rulers of the Islamic world, in Iran and Central Asia. He argues that the role of Sultan Süleyman I, who was a keen supporter of the arts and especially poetry, was significant in making his reign the classical period of Ottoman high culture.[83] Stefanos Yerasimos further argues that the choice of the site and the size of the buildings were determined more by the patrons than by Sinan himself. For instance, domes measuring over 15 metres in diameter were restricted to imperial mosques that also included more than one minaret. Mosques built by viziers and other members of the ruling class were considerably smaller. The patron's choice and financial strength were significant in determining where a mosque would be built. The great admirals of the empire, for

77 Aktüre, "Mimarbaşı Sinan and the Building Policies of the Ottoman State",104-105.

78 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 160.

79 Kuban, *Sinan'in Sanatı ve Selimiye [Sinan's Art and Selimiye]*, 35-36.

80 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 161.

81 Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l- Bünyān ve Tezkiretü'l- Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları), [Architect Sinan's Memoirs]*, 40.

82 Donald Quataert. Halil İnalcık, ed., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 35-40.

83 İnalcık, ""Osmanlı Medeniyeti" ve Saray Patronajı", 18-21.

instance, had their mosques built in districts inhabited by sailors.[84] As Necipoğlu convincingly proposes, through the concept of *decorum*, Sinan's buildings were influenced by the royal family and Ottoman bureaucrats and represented a mixture of his own creativity and the taste of his patrons at a time of prosperity and dynamic cultural production.[85]

According to his memoirs, Sinan's main reason for accepting the offer to leave his military career and become an architect was his keenness on building mosques so that his name might endure.[86] This early prediction came to be correct. Sinan later became the most celebrated figure in the history of Ottoman art and architecture, and his design norms and aesthetics governed the production of religious building typology long after his death. His mosque designs are still celebrated as the dominant models of Turkish religious architecture, and replicas built in reinforced concrete are still being produced. Doğan Kuban argues that if the Ottoman Empire were to be represented by a single figure, Sinan would be the best candidate.[87]



Figure 2 Sinan's Seal, 1565, Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 127.

Reconstructing Sinan's life and career from today's perspective is not an easy task, as already explained. His seal – 'the Humble and Lowly Sinan' – shows his humble portrayal of himself in accordance with a cliché to express a sense of piety (figure 2).[88] According to his two endowment deeds (*waqfiyya*), dated 1525 and 1537, however, he was a respected, wealthy man who donated to pious foundations (*waqıf*).[89] His date of birth is not

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84 Stephanos Yerasimos, "Sinan and His Patrons: Programme and Location", *A.A.R.P. Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 1, no. 2 (1987): 124, 126, 129.

85 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 115-127.

86 Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*.

87 Doğan Kuban, Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye, 11.

88 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 127.

89 According to the *waqfiyya*, dated 971, after having worked as chief imperial architect for 25 years Sinan owned 23 houses, 34 shops, a mill, a *bostan* (vegetable garden), a boathouse, two ranges, five fountains, three schools and one *masjid*. Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı Ve Selimiye [Sinan's Art and Selimiye]*, 31. İbrahim Ateş, "Vakfiyesinin İhtiva Ettiği Bilgiler Işığında Mimar Sinan", in *Mimarbaşı Koca Sinan Yaşadığı Çağ ve Eserleri* (Istanbul: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1988), 27.

certain but it is generally accepted to be 1490. He is said to have lived more than a hundred years.[90] The date of his death inscribed on the wall of his tomb is 1588. Among the many architects whose names survive in inscriptions, Sinan remained the most prominent figure in the history of Ottoman architecture. His tomb is near the Süleymaniye complex, which he had built and to which details of his endowment deed show how he was connected (figure 3). His endowment deed also testifies to his sense of piety and civic consciousness, in line with the Ottoman mentality he shared.[91]



Figure 3 Sinan's tomb near the Süleymaniye complex, Istanbul, 2004.

Despite the elusiveness of his personal details, Sinan's art has endured throughout history, in his buildings. He introduced new models into mosque typology. From a contemporary perspective, Sinan's professional status oscillates between that of a construction engineer, a craftsman and a master architect. However, it is best for our purpose to see Sinan and appreciate his work from the architectural narratives, especially the *tezkeres* that survived from his own period.

2.2. Early Drafts (*Adsız Risāle, Risaletü'l-Mi'māriyye, Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn*)

The first three biographical texts on Sinan are *Adsız Risale, Risaletü'l-Mi'māriyye* and *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn*. What differentiates them from the other two texts is their sketchy quality. The narrative is in the third person. Necipoğlu presumes that these texts never reached the public eye, as they were found bound together among Sinan's personal papers.[92]

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90 According to *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* he died at age 107. According to Evliya Çelebi he lived for 170 years! Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı Ve Selimiye [Sinan's Art and Selimiye]*, 30.

91 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 151-2.

92 Ibid., 127.

Adsız Risāle (Untitled Treatise) is the oldest of the biographical memoirs on Sinan. The manuscript consists of a brief biography of Sinan, 11 titles of the chapters that would list Sinan's buildings, and a list of 35 bathhouses listed. Since the manuscript does not have a title, with time it acquired the name *Adsız Risāle* (Untitled Treatise) among scholars. It was first published by Meriç and the original manuscript is kept in the Topkapı Palace Library (MS 339).[93]

The *Risāle* does not tell much as a narrative. It is quite short. It starts with a short paragraph of praises for God and the Prophet Muhammad. Later Sinan introduces himself briefly by mentioning the name of his father, the campaigns he joined as a janissary, and the assignments he completed as the chief architect. In concluding he says that the buildings he had built would be listed in 11 chapters and asks for the prayers of those interested in the subject. The types of buildings to be presented in the 11 chapters are noted as Friday mosques *(cāmi'ler)*, masjids *(mesācid)*, madrasas *(medāris)*, hospices *(imāretler)*, hospitals *(darü's-şifā)*, aqueducts *(şu yolı kemerleri)*, bridges *(cisrler)*, palaces *(sarāylar)*, caravanserais *(kārbānsarāylar)*, warehouses *(mahāzin)* and bathhouses *(hammāmlar)*. The incomplete manuscript ends with the names of 35 public baths built by Sinan.[94]

The second draft text, *Risaletü'l-Mi'māriyye* (Treatise on Architecture), is a manuscript of five pages written in the first person. After a more elaborate introduction and an encomium, the text gives the titles of eleven chapters proposed to list Sinan's buildings in the same order as in *Adsız Risāle*. The short introduction starts in the customary manner with the praise of God and the Prophet, but in a more developed expression than in *Adsız Risāle*. God is seen to have covered the clean earth with the greenest dome, and to have created the countryside, the deserts and the ninth sky without architects, masons or columns. The praise to God and the Prophet, in prose, is followed by praise to the Ottoman sultans in verse.[95] The text

93 Meriç, *Mimar Sinan Hayatı, Eseri I: Mimar Sinan Hayatına, Eserlerine Dair Metinler*, 5.

94 Ibid., 5-7. Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*.

95 Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*.

differs in only a few words from the introduction of the third text, *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn*.[96]

Sinan introduces himself as having been conscripted from the city of Karaman and brought to the sublime door of the state (Istanbul) with other conscripted Christian boys. He served in many positions in and outside Istanbul until he was raised to the rank of janissary. As a janissary he joined several campaigns to the East and the West, and after the Karaboğdan campaign he was appointed as the chief architect. As chief architect, he served under the rule of three sultans: Süleyman Khan, Selim II and Murad Khan. Sinan wrote that all buildings – apart from the mosque Sultan Süleyman had had built for his father Selim I soon after he was crowned – were constructed under his supervision. The prose text next describes Sinan's mastery as an architect and mentions specifically one project, the Büyük Çekmece Bridge. Sinan is praised as a wise architect and a mature engineer who had dismantled and raised many columns and joined arches on top of arches. The manuscript continues with the titles of the eleven chapters it is supposed to contain. In a sketchy conclusion to the introduction the aim of writing this *Risale* is stated to be the desire to document extensively the auspicious madrasas and exalted hospices – the other building types to be listed are not mentioned here – that were built by Sinan. It is stated that Sinan shaped these buildings as a present to history using various techniques and great endeavour.[97]

Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn (Choice Gift of the Architects) is the last and the most complete of the early drafts. Its relationship with the two earlier manuscripts of the first group is evident, for it appears to be a completed version of *Adsız Risale* and *Risaletü'l-Mi'māriyye*. The text is now kept in the Topkapı Palace Library (MS 1461/4) in the same manuscript as the other four sixteenth-century texts.[98] This text is similar to *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* in format, consisting of an introductory narrative and an inventory of buildings. Unlike the two latest texts, *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* and

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96 The only surviving copy of the manuscript is kept in the Topkapı Palace Library (MS 1461/4). Meriç, *Mimar Sinan Hayatı, Eseri I: Mimar Sinan Hayatına, Eserlerine Dair Metinler*, 11-2. Celebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*.

97 Ibid.

98 Meriç, *Mimar Sinan Hayatı, Eseri I: Mimar Sinan Hayatına, Eserlerine Dair Metinler*, 15. Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*.

Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye, however, this draft has a unique introduction, and an epilogue after the inventory of buildings. According to the inventory in *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn*, Sinan built 111 Friday mosques for the grandees, 45 masjids, 70 madrasas, hadith and Quran schools, 19 hospices, 3 hospitals, 29 palaces, 8 water channels, 7 bridges, 5 garden villas and pavilions, 39 bathhouses, 6 warehouses and 24 caravanserais, cisterns and stables, a total of 366 buildings.[99]

The inventory of buildings in this manuscript is categorised according to the patron, rather than the location of the buildings, unlike other manuscripts, and lists more buildings than the list in the last draft text, *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* (Record of Buildings). Moreover, Aptullah Kuran points out that this list contains buildings that were built too late for Sinan to have been their architect; for example, the Melek Ahmed Pasha Mosque in Diyarbakır, dated 1590. This indicates, he argues, that the text must have been written after Sinan's death.[100] Other scholars do not support this view, however, because the textual connection between *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn* and the earlier two manuscripts is evident. Besides, the original manuscript was found bound together with the earlier versions.[101] As the construction span is uncertain in many Ottoman buildings, their inscriptions often do not represent exact start and completion dates. In addition, Sinan most probably noted from memory the names of the buildings he wanted mentioned in the texts. It is natural to expect Sinan's memory not to be consistent: he might have remembered more buildings at the time of *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn* than he did at the time of the later *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye*.

The introduction of *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn* starts with praises to God and the Prophet in prose, continues with a verse of praises to the Ottoman sultans, presents a brief biography of Sinan, and ends with a wish that the text become a reference to

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99 Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts.*

100 Aptullah Kuran, *Sinan: The Grand Old Master of Ottoman Architecture* (Washington: Institute of Turkish Studies, 1987), 27.

101 Necipoğlu further argues that these lists may not be taken as exhaustive catalogues of all monuments designed and approved by Sinan, but as what he considered significant among his works. Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l- Bünyān ve Tezkiretü'l- Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları), [Architect Sinan's Memoirs]*, 12. Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts.* Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 136.

Sinan's works in history. The titles of the twelve chapters are then presented. These introductory remarks are roughly the same as those in the earlier *Risaletü'l-Mi'māriyye.*[102]

Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn includes a unique introduction, and an epilogue in which Sinan explains briefly the rules of architecture, his intention to emulate Hagia Sophia, and architectural features he finds remarkable in the mosques he built for Şehzade Mehmed and Süleyman the Magnificent. The curious introductory passage reads as a narrative on the origins of architecture in which Sinan makes reference to Hagia Sophia as the epitome of architectural refinement. In the epilogue, he elaborates on how he takes this architectural refinement further in the implementation of his buildings.[103] Sinan's reflections in these passages will be focused on in detail in Part III.

2.3. *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye*

Although *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* is dated later than *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān,* here it will be studied first, due to its common traits with the three early drafts. Like the earlier drafts, *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* is a brief biographical account of Sinan and a complete list of buildings constructed under his supervision. The buildings are listed under thirteen topics. Under each topic the names of the buildings and their exact numbers are given.[104] The total number is 364.[105] Modern historians have long referred to the inventory in this text as a major historical reference to Sinan's achievements. In addition to being a documentary text with a list of buildings, *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* includes a brief poetic narrative on architecture. The long inventory of buildings contrasts with the metaphoric expressions of the short introduction, which is presented in verse and prose and will be the focus of attention in this thesis.

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102 Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts.*

103 Meriç, *Mimar Sinan Hayatı, Eseri I: Mimar Sinan Hayatına, Eserlerine Dair Metinler*, 21. This part has been translated into English by Necipoğlu, Gülru Necipoğlu, "Challenging the Past: Sinan and the Competitive Discourse of Early-Modern Islamic Architecture", *Muqarnas: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture* X (1993): 172. Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts.*

104 These were Friday mosques (84), masjids (52), madrasas (57), Quran schools (*dār-ı qurrā)* (7), tombs (22), hospices (17), hospitals (3), aqueducts (7), bridges (8), caravanserais (20), palaces (35), warehouses (8), bathhouses (47). Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts.*

105 Ibid.

After opening with praises to God, the Prophet Muhammad and the Ottoman sultans, the text continues with a versified introduction whose aim seems to be to give a summary of Sinan's life. The narrator is Sinan in the first person, although Sai Mustafa Çelebi's name is given as the author and the scribe. The text refers to the creation of the universe, and praises Yavuz Sultan Selim, during whose reign Sinan was conscripted. Next, it begins Sinan's biography by relating the story of his education under the influence of the Hacı Bektaş sect, and then mentioning the important campaigns he joined as a janissary and how he eventually became an architect. His major projects are described briefly, and, except for a water wheel, the projects mentioned here are the same as those described in detail in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*. They are listed in the same order, starting with the Şehzade Mosque and ending with the Selimiye Mosque.

The text then describes the reigns of the four successive sultans Sinan's career spanned. In the verses, Sinan is described as an old, hard-working, honest person, who wished to be remembered by later generations for his good work. The text describes his old body using architectural analogies and poetic imagery. His main concern is depicted as the temporality of world affairs, a reality that made even someone as prosperous as he was unhappy. The reward he wants from the readers is a prayer for religion, as for him religion was the reason that held the palace of earth in balance.[106]

The part in prose seems to be separate from the introductory verse, coming after it, and reiterates its subject in a narrative format. It starts with an anecdote about the creation of the universe, gives praises to God, Prophet Muhammad and the Sultan of the time, Murad III, and then very briefly relates the events of Sinan's life. Before moving on to the lists of buildings, it says that Sinan wrote this peerless *Risāle*, which is called *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye*, on the buildings that he designed and constructed.[107] The curious reflections on architecture in *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn* do not

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106 Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l- Bünyān Ve Tezkiretü'l- Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları), [Architect Sinan's Memoirs]*, 89-94. Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*.

107 Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l- Bünyān Ve Tezkiretü'l- Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları), [Architect Sinan's Memoirs]*, 95-96. Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*.

appear in the later *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye.* However, generally, the narrative parts started in the early drafts and developed in *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* are more refined and intricate in the example of *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān.*

2.4. Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān

Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān is different from the four previously discussed texts on Sinan in that its narrative does not include an inventory of buildings. The text is compiled from Sinan's memoirs from throughout his long career, and includes sections on the major projects he undertook. Thus, *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* is one of the most important historical documents to provide a source of Sinan's own perceptions of his life, work and period. Despite its historical significance, doubts about its accuracy as evidence ruled minds of historians until Necipoğlu's and Crane's most recent works.[108] For example, architecture historian Kuban seems unsure about its genre, since from his point of view it is neither a biography nor an autobiography in the modern sense. However, he admits that, while the text may not meet the expectations of a modern historian looking for details about Sinan's character and identity, it nonetheless remains a unique Ottoman source on premodern modes of architectural thinking and making.[109] This text, a long first-hand narrative on Sinan's architectural journey, has not yet been the subject of an elaborate interpretative study.

Crane differentiates eleven manuscripts of *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān.* He dates the text to latter stages of Sinan's life. The manuscripts have several marginal notes in a different handwriting from that of the scribe, suggesting the possibility that it was edited by Sinan himself.[110] The text is in both verse and prose. Prose governs the flow of the narrative while scattered verses provide expressive strength through

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108 Both Necipoğlu's and Crane's work accentuates the significance of Sinan's memoirs in the historiography of Sinan. Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts.* Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, especially see chapter IV.

109 Preface to Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l- Bünyān Ve Tezkiretü'l- Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları), [Architect Sinan's Memoirs]*, 9.

110 The presumed original version of the manuscript is in the Süleymaniye Library (Hacı Mahmud Effendi bequest, 4911), Istanbul. The manuscript is fifteen pages, 208x153mm, written in the *Divanī Kırması* style. The text is written in black ink, while the headings, the subheadings, some religious references and some idioms are in red. Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts.*

poetic imagery. The major feature of Ottoman Court literature – the pompous use of language by mixing Arabic, Persian and Turkish words and phrases, accessible only to experts of the genre – is limited to the verse parts of the text. The prose parts are written in simpler language.[111] The projects listed in the text include ships, mosques, aqueducts for the water supply of Istanbul, bridges, and a water well for the garden of the Sultan Süleyman.

The text as usual starts with a short account on the creation of the universe and praises to God, the Prophet Mohammed, the four companions of the Prophet (the four caliphs) and the two *shi'i* imams, Hasan and Hüseyin. The sultan of the time, Murat III, is then praised together with his heir, Mehmed Khan (the future sultan), and his grand vizier, Siyavuş Pasha (to whom the manuscript was dedicated). Jale Erzen explains the reason for the common use of such long introductions as the need for legitimation in a context in which the authorities of God and the sultan were unquestionable and absolute.[112]

Sai then explains that he was commissioned by Sinan to write the text. As an old man Sinan desired to have his memoirs written, Sai says, so that his name would be traced in the pages of time and his memories recounted with auspiciousness. In writing the memoirs, Sai humbly begs for forgiveness for his pen's mistakes. In the verses following this part, under the title of 'complaint from the time' he complains about the trend to count the skilled and the innocent as equal within the society.[113] Sai mentions that he has scribed Sinan's memoirs as related by Sinan himself. However, he adds that he uses folk narratives about Sinan's buildings as additional

111 Metin Sözen, ed., *Mimar Sinan and Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, 29.

112 "In the texts on Sinan works, a definite hierarchy of references – first, praises addressed to God, then to the Prophet, then to the Sultan, then to ancestors, and finally the architect in whose name the statements are made – clearly express the need for legitimation. The work of man, no matter how innovative, is engendered in a context already formed and ordered by God". Jale Erzen, "Aesthetics and Aisthesis in Ottoman Art and Architecture", *Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 1 (1991): 6.

113 Here it is difficult to understand whether Sai talks about his own personal experience or Sinan's. This part of the complaint is very curious and difficult to relate to other parts of the text. Necipoğlu suggests that this part may be referring to both Sai and Sinan and it may be an unnoted example of the 'decline discourse' that emerged at the end of the sixteenth century. Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 145.

sources in order to express the exalted qualities of the buildings.[114] This is the only part where the voice of the author Sai is heard clearly separate from Sinan's: in most of the text, although Sai is the author, Sinan speaks to describe his own architectural journey.

As with the previous texts, Sinan's biography tells how he was conscripted and brought up as a janissary. During his long education Sinan chose the building trade and worked under the guidance of his master.[115] Then, he travelled through the Arabic and Persian lands in the sultan's service, where he was influenced by architectural works of distinct regions. He then returned to Istanbul, served important statesmen, became a janissary, and joined the military campaigns to the East and the West.[116]

Sinan became an architect, the text relates, after producing several practical structures for military purposes during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent. Sinan was able to find the most practical solution due to his knowledge of construction.[117] As Sinan's achievements became apparent, the chief imperial architect, Acem Alisi, died and the position became vacant. Vizier Lütfü Pasha, who was impressed by Sinan's skills and talents, proposed him for the important position. Before being appointed, however, the text relates, Sinan was asked whether he would like to change his profession. To everybody's surprise, the text adds, Sinan accepted the offer without hesitation.[118]

The rest of the text focuses on Sinan's major projects, most of which were constructed during the reign of Sultan Süleyman. The projects are described in chronological order, giving details about the events that happened, poetic

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114 Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l- Bünyān Ve Tezkiretü'l- Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları), [Architect Sinan's Memoirs]*, 33-40. Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*.

115 The education of a conscripted child (*devshirme*) covered learning a craft as well as military skills. Lewis, *Istanbul and the Civilization of the Ottoman Empire*, 36.

116 Ibid., 38-41.

117 Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l- Bünyān Ve Tezkiretü'l- Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları), [Architect Sinan's Memoirs]*, 42-45. Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*.

118 He accepted the position believing that becoming an architect would enable him to build mosques that would make him worthy of reward in both worlds. Ibid., 45-46. Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*.

expressions, and construction processes and the budget of each construction. The first project described is the mosque commissioned for Sultan Süleyman's deceased son Mehmed Khan (the Şehzade Mosque). On the sultan's order construction began with building Mehmed Khan's tomb. The stonemasons and building masters gathered and the foundations were laid on an auspicious day and at a blessed hour.[119] The text presents rich poetic images on the mosque, and the gradual emergence of the building during construction is praised and celebrated.[120]

The next project described at length and in detail is the construction of aqueducts to bring water to the fountains of Istanbul. In one of his walks outside the city, the text relates, Sultan Süleyman came across a group of streams in a grassy area. He began to enquire among historians and important statesmen about the water supply of Istanbul since ancient times. He was told that the founder of Constantinople (Yanko bin Madyan, according to the text) encircled the seven mountains of the city with ramparts and built cisterns to collect rainwater from high buildings. Later, another ruler built the aqueducts of Kırkçeşme and brought water from that direction. Upon hearing this, Süleyman called Sinan and ordered him to work on bringing the water of these streams to Istanbul.

Sinan began surveying the land, measuring the heights and depths of the valleys with an aerial scale, and examining the ancient waterways. With his workmen, he worked on channelling and collecting the water. In accordance with the science of engineering (*hendese*), the text explains, they measured the amount of water and carefully noted the results.[121] Sinan then conveyed the results of his survey to the sultan, affirming that there was enough water in the area and that with some restoration the ancient waterways would be ready to re-operate.[122] With the sultan's order, given at an auspicious time and a blessed hour, construction began (figure 4).

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119 Ibid., 47.

120 Ibid., 47-48.

121 The instrument used for measurement is mentioned as a *lüle*, which is a brass pipe used in water distribution systems to measure the flow of water. Ibid., 51.

122 Ibid., 48-49.

Here the text switches to talking about water in a metaphorical sense. The water is likened to the water of life (*ab-ı hayat*) and the flourishing of the meadow with water is likened to the legendary Prophet Hızır, who is known to have drunk the water of life and attained immortality.[123]



Figure 4 Mağlova Aqueduct, Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye*, 122.

The rest of the narrative talks about rumours that were propagated against the project and about Sinan's struggle for its continuation. The public dissatisfaction and suspicion seems to have affected the sultan's attitude and he became hesitant about the project. However, Sinan regained the confidence of the sultan with his logical explanations and the project resumed. He continued the excavation for each of the waterways and the excavation of the old channels and pools.[124] The narrative continues, giving the names and dimensions of different aqueducts and the main pool. These details were adorned with verses from the Koran about water, once again using the analogy of the water of life (*ab-ı hayat*).[125] In the end, the waterways nourished the city of Istanbul, the text affirms, and many fountains were built in the suburbs to distribute the water to the people, poor and rich, young and old, all around the city.[126]

The third project mentioned in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* is the mosque built in Istanbul for Sultan Süleyman Khan (the Süleymaniye Mosque). One morning Sultan Süleyman summoned Sinan to his presence for a consultation regarding a mosque that was to be built in Istanbul. In this meeting, Sinan depicted the general picture of the mosque (*resm*) and the third hill of Istanbul over the old palace remains was

123 Ibid., 51.
124 Ibid., 53-56.
125 Ibid., 57-58.
126 Ibid., 58-60.

selected as the site (a compromise between Sinan and the sultan).[127] Again the foundations were laid with rituals, on an auspicious day and at a blessed hour.

The text describes how, at the start of the construction, special types of marble columns were gathered from different parts of the Ottoman lands. The arrival of the four marble columns to be used in the most important parts of the construction is described in detail. Specific attention is paid to the column brought from the Kıztaşı region of Istanbul that will be elaborated in the third part of the thesis.[128] The text uses rich poetic analogies to describe not only the columns, but also the features of the mosque in general, by focusing on various architectural elements. The common theme of these descriptions is that the mosque is an enjoyable place that touches the soul, and it is a heavenly image (figure 5).[129]



Figure 5 The dome of Süleymaniye Mosque, interior view, Istanbul, 2004.

The rest of the story focuses on the events that took place during the course of construction. When Sultan Süleyman was in Edirne, the text tells, rumours against Sinan were circulating that claimed he was not paying adequate attention to the construction of the mosque. Some fools, the text adds, talked about Sinan's being on the verge of losing his mind for fear that the mosque's dome would not stand firm in the end. Wanting to check for himself, the sultan went to the construction site when Sinan was busy with the installation of the *mihrab* and the *minbar*. He reprimanded Sinan for being busy with other, unnecessary jobs and asked him when the mosque would be completed. Sinan immediately replied, "it will, with the help of God, be

127 Istanbul has seven hills: this has been the subject of many poems and narratives in Ottoman literature.

128 The region referred to as Kiztasi was not very far from the site of Suleymaniye Mosque. Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l- Bünyān Ve Tezkiretü'l- Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları), [Architect Sinan's Memoirs]*, 61, see footnote 3.

129 Ibid., 64- 65.

completed in two months".[130] His answer did not convince the sultan, who, along with the people around him, thought it was impossible to finish in two months. He made other people ask Sinan several times for the exact time needed for completion, and Sinan's answer remained the same: two months. The mosque was completed in two months and its doors were locked. At the opening ceremony, as a gesture to make up for his previous doubts, the sultan handed the key back to Sinan so that he could open the mosque himself.[131]

Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān next describes the construction of a well and a water wheel in the garden of Sultan Süleyman. On one of his excursions in the western side of Istanbul, the sultan visited the garden of his daughter, Mihrümah Sultan.[132] He enjoyed the garden very much and later complained to his chief gardener that his own garden was not as beautiful and fresh. The reason for this, he was told, was the lack of running water. To address the problem, the sultan selected a corner in his garden and ordered a water wheel to be built there. He called Sinan to his presence and sought his opinion. For technical convenience, Sinan selected a corner other than the one the sultan had chosen. The Sultan was obviously not pleased to have made the wrong choice, but Sinan seems to have convinced him. He gathered the servants of the palace and they started to dig until they stuck a well-shaft dating from the time of the unbelievers. Soon after this, the sultan saw the water wheel revolving like the wheel of heaven (*çark-ı felek*) and the water was flowing to the high and low parts of the garden.[133]

The last project Sinan built for Sultan Süleyman was a bridge. In one of his frequent excursions around Istanbul, the sultan visited the Büyük Çekmece region. He saw a ruined bridge from ancient times where people were struggling to access the water, using boats and ships. In order to gain auspiciousness, the narrative relates, he decided to build a new bridge there. He summoned Sinan and enquired about the

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130 Metin Sözen, ed., *Mimar Sinan and Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, 94. Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*.

131 Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l- Bünyān Ve Tezkiretü'l- Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları), [Architect Sinan's Memoirs]*, 70-71.

132 Mihrümah Sultan was Kanuni Sultan Süleyman's daughter and Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha's wife. She was an important female figure in Ottoman history who patronised the construction of Sinan's mosques in Üsküdar and Edirnekapı (in Istanbul). Ibid., 71.

133 Ibid., 72-73.

collapse of the old bridge. Sinan explained that boggy ground and cheap investment were among the reasons. He advised that the new bridge should be built in the sea since the water is shallow and the ground is firm, he drew a plan (*resm*) of it, and presented it to the sultan.[134] With the help of carpenters and stonemasons, Sinan built cofferdams (*sanduka*) like galleons for each of the piers. After emptying the seawater with pumps, strong column piles were driven into the foundations with a pile driver and supporting stones contained by strong iron clamps (*kened*) were placed on top. Finally, they were formed into one solid mass by pouring molten lead in between.[135] In addition to describing the construction process, the text provides several poetic analogies about the bridge, praising its form and grandeur.[136]

The construction of the bridge coincided with Sultan Süleyman's Zigetvar campaign, which turned out to be his last campaign because he died at the battle site. The text in this part dwells on this unfortunate event and on the traits and deeds of the deceased great sultan. His son, Sultan Selim Khan (Selim II), became the new ruler of the state. Among the unfinished constructions left by his father, Sultan Selim showed special interest in and supported the completion of the bridge.[137]

The last project described in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* is the mosque of Sultan Selim Khan (the Selimiye Mosque). Soon after he came to the throne of the state, the text relates, Sultan Selim wanted to build a peerless mosque in the city of Edirne, for which he had extreme love and affection. Sinan responded with a mosque design that would ensure the admiration of the people of Edirne. He designed four minarets around the dome, each with three balconies. Two of the minarets had separate staircases to each of its balconies. The text celebrates the superiority of the mosque over well-known artefacts of the time. The minaret of the previously built Üç Şerefeli Mosque, also in Edirne, was criticised for being thick like a tower, while the new minarets of Selimiye Mosque were slender despite the three separate stairways to each of the balconies (figure 6). The text claims that the dome of Selimiye Mosque was superior to that of Hagia Sophia. With the dome of Selimiye,

134 Ibid., 74-75.
135 Ibid., 75.
136 Ibid., 76.
137 Ibid., 80.

the text says, Sinan surpassed the dimensions of Hagia Sophia by 6 cubits (*zira*) in height and 4 cubits in circumference.[138] The rest of the story of the Selimiye Mosque consists of panegyric verses, which also mention the rise of Murad III to the throne, suggesting the death of Sultan Selim Khan before the completion of the mosque.[139] The text ends with a eulogy to the mosque.

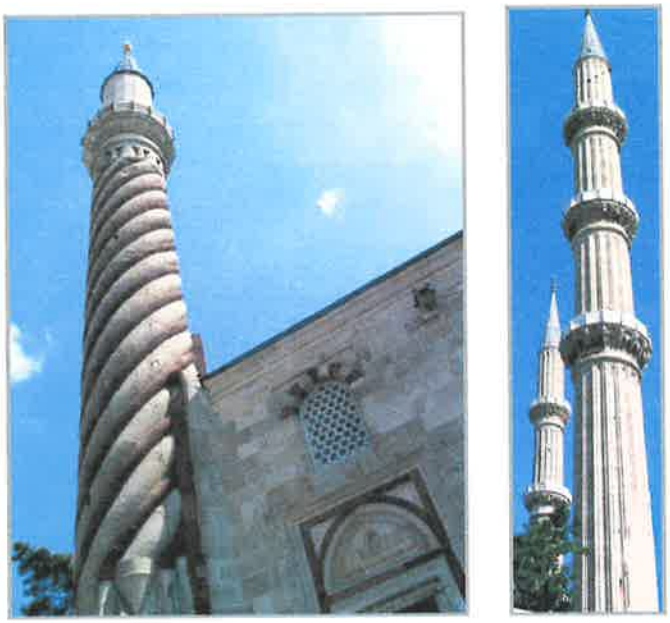


Figure 6 Minarets of Üç Şerefeli (left) and Selimiye (right), Edirne, 2004.

The eulogy to the Selimiye Mosque is full of analogies and metaphors used in many other poems to describe mosques.[140] As the mosque's architect, Sinan is praised in the long eulogy for being a saintly man. He is compared to the Prophet Hızır, who was also believed to be the architect of Hagia Sophia. The mosque is praised as the sublime symbol of Islam and its owner Sultan Selim II is mentioned with many praises.[141]

Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān ends abruptly with the narrative of the Selimiye Mosque, which was Sinan's last major project. Among the texts on Sinan, it is unique as a complete and lengthy narrative. Thus, it calls for an interpretive approach to the architectural meaning it conveys.

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138 Ibid., 81.

139 Ibid., 82.

140 Ibid., 83-84. Several cosmological analogies are also used to liken the mosque to the sun and the signs of the zodiac.

141 Ibid., 85-86.

3. A Text about Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa: *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*

Half a century after Sinan's narrative texts were written, a person by the name Cafer Efendi wrote the *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* (A Treatise on Architecture) for the architect Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa, who was the second chief imperial architect after Sinan and the designer of the Sultan Ahmed complex in Istanbul.[142] Since 1918 this text has been extensively quoted and discussed in many works (in Turkish, French and German) on Turkish and Ottoman architecture. Orhan Şaik Gökyay first translated two-thirds of the text into modern Turkish in 1976. In this publication he regrouped the parts of the text in accordance with their themes.[143] In 1987, Howard Crane published a critical translation of the text in English with a lengthy introduction that remains the most detailed and reliable study of *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*.[144]

3.1. The Author and the Architect

Although written in the light of the earlier Sinan texts, this treatise is more than a biographical memoir *(tezkere)* of Mehmed Ağa, since it contains an extensive list of technical terms in architecture. It also provides some insights into the relationship between architecture and music. Although the influence of the Sinan texts can be traced, the *Risāle* goes beyond being only about architect Mehmed: it is a treatise on architecture in general as well. Jale Erzen claims that the difference between the texts on Sinan and the *Risāle* on Mehmed Ağa marks a step towards writing a discourse on architecture that did not develop by further successors.[145]

Unlike Sai's humble attitude in the texts on Sinan, in many parts of the *Risāle* Cafer Efendi gives the impression of being proud of his work. His writing style is full of exaggerated praises and his poetic expressions are more detailed. Crane argues that

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142 There exists one copy of the manuscript, in Topkapı Palace Museum Library (YY339). This is interpreted as the copy of the actual manuscript which was once noted in courtesy of Ahmed Cevdet but was later lost. However, it is an autographed copy written by the author himself. The text is a narrow rectangle measuring 415x150mm, consisting of 87 folios. Written mainly in black ink, only titles, subtitles and references to the Quran and Hadith were in red ink. Each page has 25 lines in *ta'lik* script. The colophon at the end of the text has the date of completion as 1023 (1614–15). Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, 5.

143 Gökyay, "Risale-i Mi'mariyye-Mimar Mehmet Ağa-Eserleri".

144 Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, 4-5.

145 Erzen, "Aesthetics and Aisthesis in Ottoman Art and Architecture", 3.

"Cafer Efendi cannot be considered as an outstanding literary figure, his poetry is undistinguished, and his mastery of Arabic and Persian is at best imperfect".[146] True, Cafer Efendi was not among the important literary figures of his time and his identity seems contentious. According to the directories of Ottoman writers and poets by Bursalı Mehmed Tahir, he could be the memoir author *(tezkereci)* Cafer İyani, the author of several histories. But Crane is doubtful about this and with reference to Öz and Gökyay's earlier analyses he even contends that Cafer Efendi could have been one of Mehmed's assistants.[147] Yet these doubts about the author do not diminish the significance of the text for Ottoman architecture.

The life of architect Mehmed Ağa is similar to that of Sinan. Like Sinan he was conscripted in his childhood and brought up as a janissary. He was one of the skilled novice boys *(acemioğlan)* who were educated in the palace gardens (*has bahçe*) and was taught a particular craft for imperial service. His choice of craft in the beginning was music, but later on, and with an interesting turn, he began to learn the craft of mother-of-pearl and the science of geometry and architecture. He became Sinan's student and as noted in the *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* Sinan often appreciated his skill. His first commission as an architect was believed (with some historical doubt) to be assigned by Sinan and was to complete the construction of Muradiye Mosque in Manisa.[148] This first assignment is not mentioned in his treatise.

Mehmed assumed several administrative duties before he was appointed as the chief imperial architect, but during this time he seemed to have maintained his connections with architecture and crafts. Before he became the chief imperial architect he worked as water commissioner *(su nazırı)* for eight years. The Sultan Ahmed complex was his most important building; however, he constructed many buildings in Istanbul and elsewhere.[149] Similar to the Sinan texts, the *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* contains blank pages at the end, suggesting an intended inclusion of a

146 Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, 6.

147 Ibid., 5-6.

148 Ibid., 7-8.

149 For example, Gökyay ascribes to Mehmed Ağa a group of masjids and a fountain in different suburbs of Istanbul. Gökyay, "Risale-i Mi'māriyye-Mimar Mehmet Ağa-Eserleri", 172-3.

list of Mehmed Ağa's projects that was not completed. The *Risāle* mentions very few of Mehmed's works in detail, but do describe the restoration of the sanctuaries in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Cafer Efendi briefly relates that Architect Mehmed built numerous great mosques *(cami)*, small mosques (*masjid)*, theological schools *(madrasa)*, public baths (*hamam)*, palaces, pavilions, footways, bridges, fountains and pious foundations *(waqıf)*. The text indicates that Mehmed was involved in more than one project at once. As he was also a master of the craft of mother-of-pearl, Mehmed was said to have presented many gifts that were received with praise by the sultan. The date of his death is uncertain. Crane assumes that he was the chief imperial architect from 1606 to 1623.[150]

3.2. The Seventeenth Century

The seventeenth century is identified with the start of the decentralisation of the Ottoman Empire, which is considered to have taken place between the death of Süleyman the Magnificent in 1566 and the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699. This period is viewed as a weakening of central power, with a succession of poor sultans and the emergence of oppressive local regimes in different provinces. A decline and decadence is evident in conventional approaches to Ottoman history.[151]

Although the early seventeenth century was a period of rebellions throughout the Empire, this view is only true from the perspective of the absolute monarchy not being effective in controlling all its dependants and not being able to extend its geographical boundaries through warfare.[152] However, it is possible to read this turbulent time as a period of complication and advancement of the social structure. Goffman and Abou-El-Haj call this period the 'early modern Ottoman world' and they suggest conceiving of this world as a multifaceted entity rather than as the weakening of a monolithic state that remained essentially unchanged.[153]

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150 Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi`māriyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, 8-14.

151 Douglas A. Howard, "Ottoman Historiography and the Literature of 'Decline' of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", *Journal of Asian History* 22, no. 1 (1988): 52-3.

152 Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*, 123.

153 Ibid., 127. Abou-El-Haj, *Oktay Ozel, Canay Sahin*, 30.

In Ottoman historiography, the theory of decline is closely associated with the interpretations of the Ottoman writers of the period who continued the Near Eastern genre called *nasihatnāme* (advice literature) combined with the regulations regarding traditional Ottoman dynastic law *(kanun)* that were set out by Süleyman the Magnificent. These writers present a critical analysis of Ottoman society, and urge ways to bring justice to the reign.[154] Douglas Howard suggests re-evaluating these writers within the contextual parameters of the time with regard to the theory of decline. He argues that the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were determined by a *kanun* consciousness that makes the obsessions of these authors with law and legitimacy seem natural.[155] He calls for realising the literary and idiosyncratic character of this body of literature before identifying the period with decline.[156] Howard's suggestions are developed by Abou-El-Haj in a more recent study in which he attracted attention to the complex nature of Ottoman history between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.[157]

Historians note that the major public construction activities of the seventeenth century comprised the Sultan Ahmed and Yeni Valide mosques in Istanbul; the Baghdad and Revan kiosks built in the palace compound to commemorate Ottoman–Iranian wars; fortress construction and repairs; construction of roadside khans; and the renovations carried out in Mecca.[158] Two of these, Sultan Ahmed Mosque and the renovation of the *Ka'ba*, are mentioned in *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye.* Sultan Ahmed Mosque is an exception to the Ottoman tradition of building sultanic mosque complexes with the spoils of victorious campaigns. Necipoğlu suggests that Sultan Ahmed I broke with this tradition, with the intention of recapturing the glorious past at a time of economic and political crises, and despite protests from the *ulema.*[159]

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154 Howard, "Ottoman Historiography and the Literature of "Decline" of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", 55-6.

155 Ibid., 58-9.

156 Ibid., 76-7.

157 See Abou-El-Haj, *Oktay Ozel, Canay Sahin.*

158 Halil İnalcık, ed., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire.* (V.2), 460.

159 Gülru Necipoğlu, "The Süleymaniye Complex in Istanbul: An Interpretation", *Muqarnas: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture* III (1985): 113.

Our text, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*, is an example that expresses the complex nature of the field of architecture in the seventeenth century. Compared to *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, which is full of Sinan's struggles in practising architecture in the sixteenth century, a serene nature rules in the narrative of *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* from which it is impossible to read any concern about the theory of decline. Although Cafer Efendi mentions the difficulty of the duties of the imperial architect, he notes from Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa's perspective, that architecture was already a profession with established norms.

3.3. The Risāle-i Mi'māriyye

The text of the *Risāle* consists of 15 chapters. Unlike those in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* the parts are not organised in the chronological order of the major projects of the architect. Instead, each part has a different theme. The first six chapters focus on Mehmed's life, education and traits, and on major projects undertaken by him. The following eight chapters are glossaries and explanations of technical terms related to architecture, in three different languages (Turkish, Persian and Arabic). The last chapter is the benediction that marks the end of the text. Similar to the texts on Sinan, the *Risāle* is written in prose and verse. It is possible to trace a hierarchy in the verses: single couplets (*ebyāt-ı müfred*), short poems (*kıt'a*), lyric poems (*gazel*) and odes (*kaside*).[160]

Like the texts on Sinan, the *Risāle* opens with the narrative of the creation but in a rather long and detailed manner and in prose. The praise of the divine creation, the Prophet Mohammed, his companions and the four caliphs follows in verse and prose. The sultan of the time and his sovereign are then praised, as is the chief architect of the time, who built several projects and endowed the lands of the sultan with honour. The author, Cafer Efendi, introduces himself as being connected to the architect for many years, a connection that gave him the chance to note many discussions on the science of geometry and later organise them as a treatise on the science of geometry.[161]

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160 Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, 18.

161 Ibid., 20-23.

After the introduction each of the fifteen chapters is elaborated. First, Cafer Efendi focuses on the early years of Mehmed's long career in the service of the Ottoman sultans. Mehmed Ağa came from Rum-ili as a janissary recruit and worked as a watchman in the garden of Sultan Süleyman's tomb. Later, he entered the service of the imperial gardens to be educated in one of the crafts. His first encounter was with the art of music, until in one of his dreams he was disturbed by the image of a gypsy band playing assorted instruments and recalling his interest in music. Mehmed asked his teacher about the meaning of this dream, and the teacher told him that music was a gypsy art. The text then provides detailed information about the basic principles and terminology of music as well as some interesting analogies between music and cosmology. Music was seen as an ancient science with complex rules that were systematised by the disciples of the Prophet Solomon and the philosopher Pythagoras.[162]

Not satisfied with his teacher's explanations, Mehmed Ağa sought advice from the *ulema* and the sheikhs. He was advised to leave music, as it was not a pious art.[163] By chance, in one of his walks in the imperial gardens, Mehmed saw the mother-of-pearl workers reading a book on the science of geometry. He became curious and found out that geometry was a noble science that mother-of-pearl workers, craftsmen and architects had to learn. The book provided information about the origin of this science, about the first master of stonemasons and about architects. Unlike music, the science of geometry had strong sacred references and a pious history. The text gives the pious history of the science of geometry according to the book Mehmed had overheard the mother-of-pearl workers reading.[164]

The text continues with a detailed presentation of the technical terms used in the science of geometry as well as those associated with architecture and crafts, tracing their roots and equivalents in different languages. Again, these are presented as part of the book Mehmed Ağa saw the workmen reading in the imperial gardens. Young Mehmed was welcomed into the mother-of-pearl craft group. He then sought the

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162 Ibid., 25-27.

163 In Turkish, the words Cin ve Çingene come from the same roots.

164 Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi`māriyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, 28-30.

opinion of the saint, who advised him that joining this group would enable him to become an architect, build mosques and secure a place in heaven.[165]

Cafer Efendi next focuses on Mehmed's skill in the craft of mother-of-pearl and the art of architecture, and how these skills helped him to rise in rank. Mehmed was Sinan's student for nineteen years, the text relates, and learned many things from him. Mehmed kept rising in status until he became the water commissioner (*su nazırı*) of Istanbul. Years passed, and after Sinan's death he worked with architects Davud Ağa and Dalgıç Mehmed Ağa on the construction of many public buildings.[166] Mehmed was promoted to the post of chief imperial architect in 1606.[167]

The restoration and renovation of major monuments at *hijaz* region that were undertaken by Mehmed are the first of two major projects described in the *Risāle*. The project involved covering the steel braces *(pulādı kuşakları)* of the *Ka'ba* with gold and silver fittings, fixing a golden gutter *(altun oluk)* to the *Ka'ba*, adding a minbar to Makam İbrahim, and fixing pure gold locks and iron window grills on the Prophet Muhammad's tomb (*Ravza-ı Mutahhara*). Here Cafer first presents an account of the *Ka'ba*, listing its ten different names and describing its religious significance.[168] Similarly, the city of the *Ka'ba* had three different names – Mecca, Bekke and Mother of Cities – as stated in the Koran. After giving the names of places around Mecca, the text continues by praising the other holy city, Medina, which houses the tomb of the Prophet.[169]

Cafer Efendi then presents a detailed sacred history of the *Ka'ba*, with reference mainly to the Quran and famous commentaries by al-Suyuti and al-Zamakhshari. According to al-Suyuti, Cafer writes, the *Ka'ba* was the first house of worship, built by the angels before the creation of Adam. Both the *Ka'ba* and its city were thus

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165 Ibid., 32-33.

166 Ibid., 34-37.

167 Ibid., 38-41.

168 He lists ten different names for the *Ka'ba*: the House, the Cube, the Cube of God, the House of God, the Sacred House, the Ancient House, the Prosperous House, the Mosque of the Sanctuary, the Kiblah, and the Building *(Beyt, Beyt Allāh, Ka'ba, Ka'bet, Mescid-I Harām, Beyt al-Harām, Kibla, Beyt-i'Atīk, Beniyye, al-Beyt al-Ma'mur)*. Ibid., 48.

169 Ibid., 47-48.

blessed. According to al-Zamakhshari, the *Ka'ba* was created on water from the water's white foam, and earth was spread beneath it. It was the first house built by Adam when he descended from heaven. The angels told him to perform a pilgrimage to this place as they had done for two thousand years. This first house was called *zurāh* and *Beyt-i Ma'mur*. During Noah's deluge the *Ka'ba* was raised to the fourth heaven. Cafer Efendi gives the sacred history of the *Ka'ba* before and after the birth of Islam in order to accentuate its universal blessedness, before going into details of the major renovations undertaken by Mehmed.[170]

Sultan Murad III, Cafer writes, was told that the *Ka'ba* had almost fallen to pieces. Wanting to support its falling stones, to adorn it with a golden gutter, and to fashion gold and silver fittings to cover the steel braces, the sultan sent Sinan to survey the holy site. Sinan noted that the blessed building needed urgent repairs to fortify its falling stones and to renovate the old water insulation mechanism. Accordingly, he made drawings *(rüsūm)* and presented them to the sultan.[171] However, due to ongoing military campaigns and major opposition from the *ulema*, who believed that such intervention would damage the uniqueness of the sacred building, Sinan's renovation plans were deferred for 25 years.[172]

Then, having seen the structural condition of the *Ka'ba* during his pilgrimage, *Şeyhülislam*, the chief religious official of the time, took on the task of renovation, and Mehmed Ağa was instructed to begin the project. He relied on Sinan's survey drawings and made changes where necessary. After the steel tie rods were articulated, they were covered with gold and silver. The golden gutter was prepared to replace the old one, the high minbar for Makam Abraham was completed, and the golden locks for the tomb of the Prophet were made. All of these items were presented to Sultan Ahmed in a ceremony staged in an open courtyard before they were taken to the site and applied to their proper places.[173] Cafer then notes the dimensions of different buildings in the holy cities, beginning with the *Ka'ba*. After praising the architect, Cafer praises the *Ka'ba* as the splendid abode where

170 Ibid., 49-52.
171 Ibid., 54.
172 Ibid., 56.
173 Ibid., 57.

worshipers meet with God. He ends this chapter by describing the holy city of Medina. Relying on works of different *hadith* scholars, which he calls traditions, he describes the merits of the city and its sacredness, and how untouchable it was.[174]

Cafer then moves on to talk about another important project carried out by Mehmed, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque at At Meydanı, Istanbul. As described by Cafer Efendi, the mosque project was ongoing during the writing of the *Risāle*. The building had reached the height of the lofty noble dome, but the dome had not yet been completed. Cafer was able to see the drawn plan of the mosque and wrote an ode for it called *Esasiyye* in order to express his impression. In this ode several analogies are made between the mosque and nature. Certain parts of the mosque are likened to natural events and things such as a rainbow, a mountain, night or a nightingale. It is curious that even the drawing of the intended mosque generated such rich imagery. From Cafer Efendi's words it seems likely that the ode was presented to the sultan, who appreciated it. Cafer Efendi uses metaphors previously found in Sinan texts, such as the Chinese painter Erjeng in relation to the beauty of ornamentation of the mosque,[175] suggesting that these were poetic clichés commonly used in literature to describe architecture. The ode tells that the site chosen for the mosque was airy and located on an elevated place facing the sea. Yet the ode contains more praises for the sultan than descriptions of the mosque, suggesting other motives for its writing.[176]



Figure 7 Sultan Ahmed Mosque, interior view, Istanbul, 2004.

Cafer continues to describe the mosque (figure 7). It was an enormous edifice with solid foundations and structure. It had six minarets with a total of 14 balconies (identical to the number of Ottoman sultans until then). It could be better

174 Ibid., 62-63.

175 A famous Chinese painter.

176 Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi`māriyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, 65-67.

understood when pondered on for days, months or years.[177] He relates that his visit to the construction site had coincided with the writing of this chapter. By chance, he had come across a skilled musician who was also there to examine the building and both conversed with Mehmed about his past career in music and his preference for architecture. In this part of the *Risāle*, Cafer Efendi uses the opportunity to draw some connections between architecture and music and to show the musician how architecture embodies musical features and more. He compares the sounds of dressing marbles to the sounds of the Sufis and dervishes in ecstasy uttering the name of God. Cafer also makes a series of comparisons between the architectural sounds he had heard at the construction site and musical modes in a curious way which will be elaborated later. In this way, he seeks to justify Mehmed's preference for architecture over music.[178]

Then, Cafer Efendi switches to writing about marbles. He explains that it was necessary for him to write about marbles since Mehmed mentioned them repeatedly when highlighting the relationship between architecture and music. He classifies stones into three types: jewels, marbles and common stones. In quality, he says, marble lies in the middle between the other two types. As the essence of each stone is different, so are their colours. Like the other two types, there are twelve categories of marble. But before describing the categories he describes the colours of marble, giving their names and distinct tones in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. Cafer then describes the twelve types of jewels in accordance with their colours. Some jewels are found in the West, he says, and some in the East. Yet marble is also easily found around Istanbul, he says, and for some people this marble is even more precious than diamonds. Cafer describes in detail the types of marbles he knows in accordance with their colours, giving special attention to the types used in buildings. He gives the names of these types in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, and concludes by naming the twelve types of common stones.[179]

Cafer Efendi continues his *Risāle* with a eulogy for the mosque called the ode on spring (*Bahariyye*). He names the poem after spring, since the writing of it

177 Ibid., 68.
178 Ibid., 68-69.
179 Ibid., 70-72.

coincided with the coming of spring. He says that he saw many gardens and beautiful places heralding the coming of spring but he could only feel the real joy of it within the half-constructed mosque. The eulogy is long and full of rich analogies between spring, nature and architecture. Only Mehmed Ağa was able to imbue the mosque with such splendour, Cafer writes, praising his master.[180]

The rest of the *Risāle* focuses on specific terms used in architecture and geometry. The nature of the text changes from being a narrative to a form of glossary, listing technical terms in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. In chapter ten, while explaining the terms related to the measurement of building sites, Cafer Efendi provides insights into the geographical knowledge of his time. The inhabited parts of the world, he writes, constitute one fourth of the earth and the remaining parts are wastelands. He names seven distinct nationalities: the Greeks, the Turks, the Chinese, the Hindus, the Arabs, the Abyssinians and the Persians. Three of the remaining parts of the earth are limpid sea, and there are seven seas. He also names the surveyors of the inhabited earth, among whom he mentions ancient Sassanian kings such as Efrīdūn al-Satī, the Prophet Solomon and Alexander the Great. He concludes that the geometricians and other learned men calculated the size of the equator and the size of the vertical axis of the earth.[181]

In the fourteenth chapter, Cafer Efendi returns to the subject of music and gives a glossary of the names and features of musical instruments. He says that the science of geometry is crucial in the making of musical instruments. At the end of this chapter he writes verses explaining that the temporality of worldly affairs is just like music and festival in nature.[182]

Unlike *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* has a conclusive ending. Cafer Efendi begins this with a eulogy to architect Mehmed Ağa. Prayers to God, the Prophet and saints come after this in prose. He pays homage to Sinan and briefly recounts his deeds, traits and achievements. He offers prayers to the other two architects before Mehmed Ağa, Davud Ağa and Dalgıç Ahmed Ağa, and to all of

180 Ibid., 76.
181 Ibid., 84.
182 Ibid., 103-104.

these architects altogether including Mehmed Ağa for building the blessed mosques in the lands of Islam.

Cafer Efendi closes with some verses on the originality and the significance of the book itself. The book refers to many other books, he says, and it discusses geometric forms in a new way. It offers new meanings, veiled as they may be by words and writing: he perceives his book as a young maiden engaged to the architect who should be kept from the eyes and improper hands of strangers. The book is a gift from God that opens gates to the garden of wisdom. It is also like 'an excursion spot to mankind'. Finally, Cafer Efendi reminds his readers and himself that worldly affairs are ephemeral, and finishes with the name of God. The verses end with a chronogram with 1023 letters giving the date of the colophon.[183] Like *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* needs to be read with a comparative–interpretive approach to appreciate and evaluate the multiple facets and dimensions of meaning in Ottoman architecture that it reveals.

4. The *Selimiye Risālesi*

The Ottoman tradition of celebrating and writing on architecture continued in the eighteenth century with the appearance of a unique text, the *Selimiye Risālesi*. Although different in format, the text is similar to the earlier *tezkeres* in describing architecture in a narrative form using idiosyncratic expressions. The object of the treatise, as the title indicates, is the Selimiye Mosque, which through the agency of this text became the focus of several legends and narratives.

4.1. The Selimiye Mosque

The Selimiye Mosque was built by Sinan and is one of the outstanding monumental achievements of Ottoman architecture. Unlike its parallels in the Ottoman capital of Istanbul, the Selimiye stands as the unique architectural landmark in the smaller city of Edirne. The city of Edirne has a long history going back to antiquity. First it was a small province called Orestia inside the bend of the River Tunca. The strategic importance of the province attracted the attention of Byzantine Emperor Hadrian,

[183] Ibid., 104-109.

who built the fortress city Hadrianapolis, which was named after him.[184] The city became the second Ottoman capital after Bursa and before Istanbul and it maintained its strategic position, providing access to the military campaigns that targeted Europe and the Balkans. The Ottoman sultans, such as Murat I and Mehmed the Conqueror, built palaces for themselves in the city that no longer exist. Eski Mosque (1444), Üç Şerefeli (1448) and the Bayezıd II Complex (1484) were among several important monuments built in the city before the Selimiye.[185]



Figure 8 Selimiye Mosque, exterior view, Edirne, 2004.

Today, as one accesses the city from the main road connecting Istanbul to Edirne, the Selimiye Mosque is still the first conspicuous monument that looms on the horizon, revealing an elevation with two slim minarets encompassing a large dome. It looks like an artificial mountain dominating the open skyline of the city. As the details of each street with considerably smaller buildings unfold, the sight of the Selimiye Mosque is lost for a while in the intimacy of daily life, only to make a second, surprising appearance with its gigantic scale overwhelming the neighbourhood (figure 8). The courtyard of the mosque is elevated on an artificial platform. Access to the open courtyard is through a vaulted passageway from the covered bazaar that surrounds the mosque, providing a contrast between the monumental and the human scales, the light and the dark, the open and the closed. The covered bazaar is a lively place full of tourist attractions, wherein it is common to see shops named Sinan or Selim. The present structures surrounding the mosque are of course not Sinan's original articulations,

184 Aptullah Kuran, "A Spatial Study of Three Ottoman Captials: Bursa, Edirne, and Istanbul", *Muqarnas: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture* XIII (1996): 118.

185 Ibid., 120.

which used to include a commercial centre (*kapan*) to the south and ten stone houses to the north.[186]



Figure 9 Selimiye Mosque, interior view, Edirne, 2004.

On a hot summer day the interior of the mosque is dim compared to the glare of the open courtyard. The unity of the domed space is overwhelming at first sight; however, the tile ornamentations and the carpets on the floor tend to provide a comforting sense of human scale (figure 9). The dome rests firmly on eight symmetrical piers, creating an overpowering sense of space. Small staircases leading to the upper-level galleries with their low ceilings stand in contrast to the spacious interior. On one side the galleries provide different angles from which to see the details of the dome closely, while on the other, windows with wooden shutters pierce the thick outer walls to let in controlled rays of daylight.

The square platform that functions as the *müezzin mahfili* in the centre of the mosque is a slim point to take shelter in within the gigantic space. A pool lies underneath the platform, which can be accessed by passing through ornamented, wooden corbelled arches on four sides. The pool is octagonal in shape within a square frame made from marble. A little fountain formed by water drops from a goblet-shaped bowl elevated above the pool creates soothing sounds. Drinking cups are tied to the pool, and people frequently come and carefully fill a cup and drink water. The low ceiling above the pool and underneath the *mahfil* is ornamented with intriguing swirling whorl patterns. Around the pool people are listening to an officer telling a story about the mosque:

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186 Behruz Çinici, "The Urban Arrangement of Selimiye Mosque at Edirne", *A.A.R.P. Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 1, no. 2 (1987): 87.

> Once there was a maid who owned a tulip garden on the spot where the mosque stands today. When Architect Sinan wanted this site for the construction of the mosque she opposed the idea at first. Upon his insistence, she agreed to allow the site to be used on the condition that there would be a trace indicating her within the mosque. Therefore Architect Sinan had an upside-down tulip motif inscribed inconspicuously on one of the little marble columns of this *mahfil*.[187]

This narrative about Selimiye Mosque is one of the most popular. Common people visiting the mosque always remember to check the place of the 'upside-down tulip' motif on the marble column (figure 10). Architect Nuran Gülendam says that when the *müezzin mahfili* was closed to visitors for restoration in 1950 she was overwhelmed by the interest of people asking about the condition of this motif. Among the many intricate tulip motifs and patterns of ornamentation throughout the mosque, she could not believe that people were interested mainly in this clumsy and historically obscure motif of an upside-down tulip! (figure 11)[188]

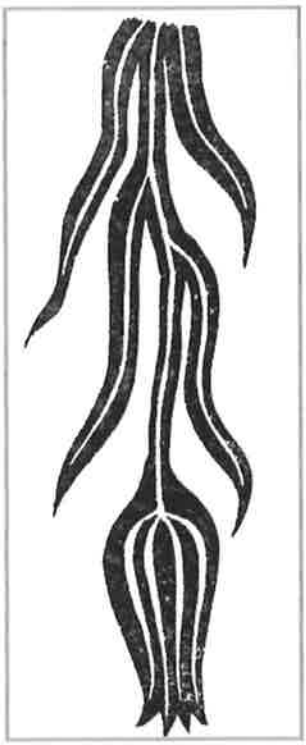


Figure 10 Drawing of the upside-down tulip motif, Araz, "Selimiye Efsaneleri", 21.

Perhaps this story does not have significance of its own other than pointing to the reality that monumental architecture is subject to many interpretations in addition to its official history. If we liken the main history of a monument to a 'text', then such stories form many 'subtexts' in the readings of the monument. Nezihe Araz refers to a series of subtexts related to the Selimiye Mosque and its architect, Sinan. One of these, which she heard from an old harness maker in the 1950s, relates that Sinan laid the foundations of the Selimiye and disappeared for 600 years until he was sure that the foundations had settled firmly. Another, which she heard from a

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187 This account is based on the author's personal impressions from a visit to the site. Edirne, 07/08/2004.

188 Nuran Gülendam, "Selimiye Camii, Müezzinler Mahfili [Selimiye Mosque, the Mahfil of the Muazzins]", in *Mimar Sinan ve Selimiye [Architect Sinan and Selimiye]*, ed. Ender Bilar (Edirne: Türk Kütüphaneciler Derneği, 1994), 32-33.

grandmother, says that Sinan could fly from Edirne to Istanbul in order to maintain all the construction sites he had to deal with including the Selimiye.[189]



Figure 11 Tulip Motif Decoration, Selimiye, Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 252.

These stories illustrate the marvel and awe the monument evokes among the people of Edirne. After an earthquake that once shook Edirne, Araz writes, she was puzzled by the reaction of the people, whose foremost concern was the safety of the Selimiye.[190] An anecdote from the early republic years further illustrates the significance of this monument in the collective psyche of the Turks. When Kemal Atatürk visited Edirne and saw traces of cannonball strokes on the dome covering the *hünkar mahfili*, which were the result of the Balkan War of 1912, he ordered that the damage not be repaired, but rather covered with black mortar so that visible reminders of the unfortunate event remained.[191]

4.2. The Text and the Author[192]

The *Selimiye Risālesi* stands as a unique historical monograph on the Selimiye Mosque.[193] For this reason, it is difficult to situate the text in a broader context.

189 Nezihe Araz, "Selimiye Efsaneleri [Myths of Selimiye]", *Istanbul* 4 (1954): 20-21.

190 Ibid., 20.

191 Karabıyıklı's source is a more recent version of *Selimiye Risālesi*, denoting the significance of the mosque in popular literature. Yusuf Karabıyıklı, *Edirne Tarihi ve Selimiye Camii Efsafi [History of Edirne and Qualities of Selimiye Mosque]* (Istanbul: Latin Press, 1971), 27. For the significance of Selimiye Mosque in popular literature see also K. Altan "Selimiye ve Mimari Manzumeleri (Selimiye and its Architectural Verses)". Arkitekt 7, no. 10-11 (1937): 294-97, Ender Bilar. *Mimar Sinan ve Selimiye Camii* (Architect Sinan and Selimiye Mosque). Edirne: Türk Kütüphaneciler Dernegi Edirne Subesi (Acar Press), 1994 and Talat Gönensay. *Rubailer ve Edirne'deki Selimiye Camii* (Quatrains and Selimiye Mosque in Edirne). Istanbul: Bakış Press, 1960.

192 An introduction to the text itself will be helpful to follow the arguments developed here. See Appendix for the translation.

193 According to Jale Erzen, the *Selimiye Risalesi* is the only remaining Ottoman monograph on a monument in the acknowledged part of the historical archive. The original manuscript is dated 1741 and is kept in the Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi Kitapları, No: 2283. It consists of 30 pages measuring 207X148mm and is written in the *talik* style. The manuscript has three

Since one of the major sources of the text were oral narratives that had endured for centuries, it is possible to infer that the text has contributed to promoting the popular reputation of the mosque. Although the evaluation of the architecture of the mosque by Dayezāde Mustafa, the author of the *Risāle*, seems irrelevant from a contemporary perspective, eighteenth-century author Ayvansarayī in his extensive book on the mosques of Istanbul refers to the *Risāle* when discussing Hagia Sophia: "And some of the tales having to do with the dome [of Aya Sofya] are recounted in detail in a famous treatise on the events surrounding the Sultan Selim Mosque in Edirne".[194] Therefore, the *Risāle* had recognition in its time in relation to debates comparing the domes of Hagia Sophia and Selimiye. With regard to the previous *tezkeres*, written for Sinan, the text builds on and elaborates the statement in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* about the superiority of the dome of Selimiye Mosque over Hagia Sophia's.

Dayezāde states that his main objective in writing the *Risāle* was to highlight interesting sides of the Selimiye Mosque. He also claims that the Selimiye Mosque has a higher and larger dome than that of Hagia Sophia. He mentions that this fact was not known by the people of his period and he devotes himself to discerning the superiority of the Selimiye Mosque over the Hagia Sophia. Although comparison with the Hagia Sophia provides a starting point, the author soon shifts to highlighting the meanings of the mosque and narratives about it.

The thematic flow of the *Selimiye Risālesi* is discursive. As the author states, it took him a long time, working on and off, to complete the text. The text includes a narration of the events of the period that affected and shaped his thoughts. Three distinctive characteristics of the text attract attention. The first is the sources that Dayezāde met, read and was influenced by in his visits to palace libraries. These

other versions, dated 1747, 1769 and 1770. The text is written in prose in black ink, but with religious terms marked with red ink. Jale Erzen, "Interior Space Articulation in Sinan's Mosques" (paper presented at the Uluslararasi Mimar Sinan Sempozyumu (International Architect Sinan Symposium), Ankara, 1988), 315. Sönmez, *Mimar Sinan ile İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler*, 16.

194 In a recent translation into English, Crane holds that this reference is made to the *Selimiye Risalesi* by Dayezāde Mustafa. See footnote 32. Howard Crane, *The Garden of the Mosques: Hafiz Hüseyin Al-Ayvansarayi's Guide to the Muslim Monuments of Ottoman Istanbul, Supplements to Muqarnas* (Leiden, Boston, Koln: Brill, 2000), 8.

sources are mentioned in the text through their listings and quotations and the author's interpretations.

The second distinctive characteristic is the author's thoughts on and evaluations of architecture through the example of the Selimiye. As well as giving his own experiences and thoughts on the building, he refers to other people's reflections and oral narratives. Dayezāde writes about different receptions of the building by different people, evidenced in the conversations at court meetings between Ottoman intellectuals, artisans, religious scholars, foreign ambassadors and ordinary people, and the architect Sinan and the Ottoman sultan Selim II. He introduces these as anecdotes of daily life with no endeavour to conceptualise or formulate abstract conclusions from them. The period of the mosque's origin and the different receptions of the building in his contemporary world are equally important for the author.

The third distinctive characteristic of the text is the sacred references to the meanings of the building through the intermediacy of certain numbers. This preoccupation with numbers indicates a sense of symbolism created by the author. The text concentrates mainly on the dimensions of the mosque and some meanings implied by Architect Sinan in its construction through the agency of numbers. The preoccupation in the text with surpassing Hagia Sophia by giving the dimensions of different parts of Selimiye Mosque – measured several times by different people including the author himself – contrasts with the qualitative analogies discussing the meaning of the mosque. But such contrasts are not seen by the author since he believes that even carrying the results of the measurements written on a piece of paper was a source of charm. Therefore, the measurements do not stand as an achievement in themselves; rather, they are seen to provide a spiritual connection between the mosque and the people. The question of meaning in the text remains awkward from a contemporary perspective within the limits of reason and logic. Details of the text that deal with the meaning of the mosque, as articulated by the author, will be focused on separately in order to highlight problems of understanding.

The presence of the *Selimiye Risālesi* in the Ottoman history of art and architecture is curious, considering its intentions and place in the literature. It is hard to know whether or not the author, Dayezāde Mustafa, had specific knowledge of architecture. Compared to the authors of earlier texts (Sai Mustafa Çelebi and Cafer Efendi), he seems to have been an outsider to the architectural circles of his period. His writing style is also unprofessional. As treasurer-lieutenant of the Rumelian Province, he was a mid-high-class Ottoman bureaucrat working outside Istanbul and, as his *Risāle* indicates, he frequently travelled around the country and joined military campaigns. The information we have about the author is limited to the text of the *Risāle*. The Ottoman biographical dictionaries offer little or no information about him. The biographical source *Sicill-i Osmanī,* which focuses on the palace circles and the servants of the state, mentions one Dayezāde Mustafa, a teacher and the author of *Hadis-i Erbain*. The date of this Dayezāde's death (1739–40), however, is earlier than the date of the text, so he is unlikely to be the author.[195] Franz Babinger in his book on Ottoman history writers mentions Dayezāde Mustafa with reference to the *Selimiye Risālesi*. He says that it is worth including Dayezāde Mustafa in his book because he is the author of the *Risāle*.[196]

Dayezāde remains a little known and perhaps marginal figure in Ottoman history. Being a mid-high-class Ottoman bureaucrat, he expresses in his representations the ways in which architecture was understood and appreciated by both the elite and the lay people in eighteenth-century Istanbul. Despite his lack of eminence, or perhaps because of it, in his text Dayezāde boasts about his own scholarship. For twenty-four years during the reigns of Sultan Ahmed III and Sultan Mahmud I, he boasts, he worked in the libraries, a privilege that was hard to gain. There, he was able to read more than three hundred books on diverse topics, mostly history. His urge for writing seems to have derived from his curiosity and hunger for knowledge, but he could hardly be regarded as an expert scholar in any particular field. He was an author who could speculate on diverse topics, such as the rituals of pilgrimage or the meanings of mosque architecture.

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195 Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanī*, 1163.

196 Babinger, *Osmanlı Tarih Yazarlari ve Eserleri*, 300.

After the customary praises to God, the Prophet and his companions, Dayezāde opens his text by introducing himself briefly. He says that he wrote the text in a simple, understandable language that was easy to read for young and old people.[197]

4.3. The Sources

Dayezāde gives names of assorted books on diverse topics in the *Risāle*. It is interesting to dwell on and compare these sources and his use of them in the text in order to understand his mentality in approaching them. He groups his sources under the distinctions of biography, retaliation, history, Ottoman history, humour, literature and geography. Covering sources from theology to geography, he prefers to call his main topic of interest 'history' in general.

The reason he mentions his studies in palace libraries is to describe his encounter with an interesting statement in Solak-zāde's book of history while he was reading the part on the charitable institutions that existed during the reign of Sultan Selim II. This statement is a direct quotation from Architect Sinan's *Mimarnāme* which claims the superiority of Selimiye Mosque to Hagia Sophia due to its larger dome. Reading a contemporary translation of Solak-zāde's history gives the impression that this alleged quotation is in fact an interpretive and highly selective representation of the original text. The mosque is only one of the artefacts among the bridges, *madrasas* and other mosques built by the sultan and his grand vizier that is mentioned in a praising manner in Solak-zāde's book. When compared with the body of information on other subjects conveyed in the book, references to the Selimiye Mosque are at best marginal, noted with a few lines.[198]

However, Dayezāde is bewildered by the fact that the superiority of the Selimiye to Hagia Sophia as noted by Solak-zāde is not known to many people. He feels obliged to check the authenticity of the statement from Architect Sinan's *Mimarnāme*. He mentions this book he calls *Mimarnāme* as his basic source of direct information about Architect Sinan. This book seems to be a copy of what is

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197 Sönmez argues that the expression and language of the text are not that simple. Sönmez, *Mimar Sinan ile İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler*, 17.

198 Mehmed Hemdemi Solak-zāde, *Solak-zāde Tarihi*, trans. Vahit Cabuk (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1989), 328.

today known as *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* that is held in the Revan room of Topkapı Palace.[199] But a long quote from Sinan that he refers to is not actually included in the available manuscripts of *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*. Although the competition with Hagia Sophia and the dimensions by which the dome of Selimiye surpassed that of Hagia Sophia are noted in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, there is no information on the sultan's dreaming of the Prophet or the use of Cyprus spoils for the construction of the Selimiye Mosque in the way Dayezāde quotes from what he calls *Mimarnāme*. Given that Dayezāde asserts his reason for quoting from Sinan as the need to check the authenticity of the information he had read from another source, the discrepancy between the passage he quotes and the actual source is ironic. It suggests the probable existence of a different version of Sinan's texts that has not survived to the present day, or a difference between contemporary ways of thinking and Dayezāde's about accuracy in quoting other texts.

However, the parts Dayezāde adds to the actual statements from *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* are not overall his own fabrications. For example, the assertion that the construction of the mosque was commanded by the Prophet through the Sultan's dream is also told by Evliya Çelebi and in more detail in his *Seyahatnāme*, written a hundred years earlier. Çelebi explains that the reason for building the Selimiye Mosque in Edirne and not Istanbul was a dream of Selim II in which the Prophet urged him to use the spoils of the Cyprus war for this beneficial construction as he had promised. According to Evliya's narrative, in the dream the Prophet assigned the exact site for the mosque in Edirne and the sultan obeyed his command.[200] Interestingly, Dayezāde does not mention Evliya Çelebi's work among the books he had read at the libraries of the sultans and it is known that Evliya Çelebi was not popular among Ottoman scholars until the nineteenth century.[201] Although they have common motifs of reference, the tone and the implications of the two narratives told by Evliya and Dayezāde are different. While Evliya uses the narrative of the

199 Saatçi and Sözen maintain that the version of the text in Topkapı Palace Library has two titles, the first being *Mi'mārnāme* and the second being *Tezkiretü'l Bünyān*. Metin Sözen, ed., *Mimar Sinan and Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, 22.

200 Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnāme (Rumeli-Solkol ve Edirne)*, ed. İsmet Parmaksızoğlu (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1984), 255-56.

201 Suraiya Faroqhi, *Osmanlı Kültürü ve Gündelik Yaşam: Ortaçağdan Yirminci Yüzyıla [Ottoman Culture and Everyday Life: From Middle Ages to the 20th Century]*, trans. Elif Kılıç (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1997), 217.

sultan's dream to ground the reasoning for building the mosque outside Istanbul, Dayezāde uses it to support his own conviction in his (allegedly) direct quotation from Architect Sinan. It is possible that both Evliya Çelebi and Dayezāde referred to a folk narrative or a legend about the mosque that had been told orally and thus had various interpretations.

Dayezāde's approach to the reading of historical texts deviates from contemporary ways of seeing historical documents as evidence. Rather than quoting with the intention of meticulously conveying what the text says, as we have seen, Dayezāde builds on what he reads in order to make the evidence better support his own argument.

4.4. The Context of *Selimiye Risālesi*

The historical background of the *Selimiye Risālesi* may be divided into two different periods. The first is the sixteenth century, the period mentioned within the text, when Architect Sinan constructed Selimiye Mosque; the second is the eighteenth century, the actual period when the *Risāle* was written.

The first period related to the background of the *Risāle* is the reign of Selim II, when the subject of the text, the Selimiye Mosque, was constructed. Dayezāde refers to this period in relation to his mining of historical texts for information about the Selimiye Mosque. Sultan Selim II ascended the throne immediately after the unfortunate death of his father, Kanuni Sultan Süleyman, on the battlefield before the fortresses of Zigetvar. Although the reign of Selim II has been identified with the start of the decentralisation of Ottoman rule, the role of Selim II in this can be seen as one of the circumstances of that development but not the cause. Quataert maintains that the start of military defeats and the decentralisation of the Empire should be evaluated in relation to developments in Europe beginning in the second half of the sixteenth century. With the rich resources gathered from new lands, followed by more geographical discoveries and technological innovations, the

Western world evolved into the phase of industrialisation, while the Ottoman Empire was late to take on these developments.[202]

In fact, from the fifteenth century technological developments in Europe were always close to the interests of the Ottoman sultans, especially in warfare and defence. İnalcık argues that, by the sixteenth century, the military and naval technologies of the Ottomans were outstanding enough to push back any challenge coming from Europe.[203] However, Tanyeli holds that the reason for the acceleration of the decentralisation process lies in the failure of the Ottoman culture to intensify knowledge and technology transfer. He further argues that the developments in Europe were marked, and flourished through a process of enlightenment – the rise of the paradigm of scientific rationality conventionally referred to as modernity – whereas in the Ottoman context transferred technology and knowledge were simply applied without evaluation and became redundant in time. The Ottoman context had not yet stepped into an epistemologically autonomous process of modernisation.[204]

As the first Sultan after the peak of Ottoman rule and before its decentralisation, Selim II reigned between 1566 and 1574. His short sovereignty has been interpreted as a time when the elements of decline went hand in hand with elements of strength. He was called 'Selim the Sallow' because of his bad reputation for a tendency to indulge in alcohol. It was during his period that women of the court became effective in state government. The long tradition of training Ottoman princes for administrative and military duties in the provinces was abandoned. With Selim II, Ottoman sultans began to be raised in the harem, leaving state government in the hands of grand viziers and harem women. Although he was a weak character in politics, Selim II was a learned man who wrote poems under the nickname 'Selimī',

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202 Donald Quataert, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu 1700-1922 [Ottoman Empire 1700-1922]*, trans. Ayşe Berktay (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000), 74.

203 Halil İnalcık, "Some Remarks on the Ottoman Turkey's Modernization Process" (paper presented at the Transfer of Modern Science and Technology to the Muslim World, Istanbul, 1992), 52.

204 Tanyeli, "Bir Historiyografik Model Olarak Gerileme-Çöküş ve Osmanlı Mimarlığı Tarihi [De-Centralisation and Decline as a Historiographic Model and the History of Ottoman Architecture]" 46.

and continued the court tradition of patronising and promoting many scholars, poets and artists of his time.[205]

Selim II's interest in the arts can be seen in his investment in the construction of the Selimiye Mosque. Besides its evaluation in contemporary approaches to Ottoman architecture history as Sinan's masterpiece, from the historical texts we know that Sinan privileged Selimiye Mosque among his other buildings by claiming that he had surpassed the dome of the Hagia Sophia.[206] As we have seen, this competition with the Hagia Sophia was the basic motive for the writing of the *Risāle*. Selimiye Mosque is the largest dome constructed outside the boundaries of the Ottoman capital Istanbul. Although in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* the location of the mosque is explained by Sultan Selim's affection for the city of Edirne, in the *Selimiye Risālesi* it is argued that its location had been the theme of hot debates throughout history.[207]

The context of the Selimiye Mosque also highlights the status of Selim II as a patron supporting arts and architecture. Correspondence between Sinan and the Sultan in 1572 shows that as a patron Selim II was using his aesthetic decision-making capacity in the shaping of the building and to answer Sinan's questions regarding the decoration and spatial organisation of the mosque and its environment. It is clear from this correspondence that Sinan regularly informed the sultan about the progress of the construction.[208]

One of the significant administrative developments during the reign of Selim II was the French capitulation in 1569, which allowed free passage of French ships into Ottoman waters and ports. Other European states whose ships flew the French flag could also benefit from these privileges. Thus, this agreement intensified the French commercial and political pre-eminence in the Middle East that lasted into modern times.[209] Despite this, Ottoman naval dominance continued during the reign of

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205 Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 175-9.

206 Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l- Bünyān Ve Tezkiretü'l- Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları), [Architect Sinan's Memoirs]*, 81.

207 Ibid., 81.

208 Sönmez, *Mimar Sinan ile İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler*, 129.

209 Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 177.

Selim II. One important achievement was the conquest of Cyprus, which was the last great military success of the Ottomans in the Mediterranean.

Historians put the exact date of the conquest of Cyprus at 1570–71, as it took at least one year to conquer the island.[210] Thus, although they are close, the start of the construction of the Selimiye Mosque (1568) predates the conquest of Cyprus[211]. However, in *Selimiye Risālesi* it is suggested that the spoils of the war were used for the construction of the mosque. The relationship between the victory in Cyprus and the construction of the Selimiye Mosque using the spoils of the Cyprus war is also mentioned but in more detail in Evliya Çelebi's travelogue.[212] Thus, although not the primary means for the start of the construction of the mosque, as narrated in a legendary manner by both Dayezāde and Evliya, the Cyprus spoils were used for the construction of the mosque, which lasted through the reign of Murad III. With the exception of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, built by Ahmed I, all large religious projects were built after conquests with the strict condition of using war spoils. The Selimiye Mosque marks the last example of this practice before the decentralisation of the Ottoman Empire.[213]

4.5. The Author's Context

The second historical context pertinent to the interpretation of the *Risāle* is the actual time during which it was written, in the mid-eighteenth century. In the *Risāle*, Dayezāde relates his dialogues with people from diverse levels of social life in the first-person narrative form. He talks about gatherings at courts of high state officials and mosque preachers or painters, all of whom he calls 'friends' without distinguishing between them. In addition to this, he includes some folk narratives about the mosque. One of these relates how a mother found a cure for a wound on her son's head by using the water in the pool situated in the Selimiye Mosque. Another tells us about the high interest of foreigners to the Selimiye such as the Russian ambassador who had its picture depicted by an artist at his service. Following the web of these personal relations in the narrative, it is possible to make

210 İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, 41.
211 Necipoğlu, "The Süleymaniye Complex in Istanbul: An Interpretation", 113.
212 Çelebi, *Seyahatnāme (Rumeli-Solkol Ve Edirne)*, 255-56.
213 Necipoğlu, "The Süleymaniye Complex in Istanbul: An Interpretation", 113.

an evaluation of what the Selimiye Mosque meant to people in the eighteenth-century Ottoman context. This will be focused on separately in subsequent parts of the thesis. In this section, a general history of the Ottoman context during the writing of the *Risāle* will be given in order to discern how that context was reflected in the narrative.

A common characteristic of the two sultans during whose reign Dayezāde was able to make his extensive library studies was their interest in promoting the arts, poetry and education. The first, Ahmet III, reigned between 1703 and 1730. He was interested mainly in poetry, painting and calligraphy rather than politics and war. State affairs were in the control of his grand vizier and son-in-law, Damat İbrahim Pasha, while Ahmet III concentrated on entertainment. His reign coincided with the time in Ottoman history called the Tulip Period (1718–30), which was famous for its love of entertainment in palace circles and the partial intellectual enlightenment of the Ottoman elite.[214] The symbol of this period, the tulip, was a passion for Sultan Ahmed III. He was said to have gathered distinct varieties of tulips from far lands in his palace gardens. In mid-April each year tulip festivals that would last two nights were held in the terraced garden below the fourth court of the Topkapı Palace.[215]

The Tulip Period marked new developments in building construction and landscape organisation, extending the limits of the inhabited space of Istanbul. A summer residential palace was built in 1722 in the fashion of the French court, to provide a centre of entertainment for Ahmet III. It was constructed on the right tip of the Golden Horn and named *Sa'dabad* (Place of Happiness) (figure 12). It was surrounded by large gardens, numerous pavilions, statues, baths and fountains. A rectangular artificial lake was built by redirecting the streams of Ali Bey Suyu and Kağıthane Suyu.[216] Later, high Ottoman society and members of the ruling class built similar palaces on the shores of the Bosphorus. Plots of land along the Golden Horn turned into residential centres for the wealthy. Horticultural skills were

214 Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 228, 234.

215 Alan Palmer, *Son Üçyüz Yıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu (Bir Çöküşün Tarihi) [Ottoman Empire in the Last Three hundred Years (History of a Decentralisation)]*, trans. Belkıs Çorakcı Dişbudak (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992), 51.

216 Ibid., 48.

improved. It was a fashion to imitate the sultan by holding garden parties and festivals enriched by the presence of famous poets, musicians and dancers and spending fortunes on cultivating tulips. It is possible to trace an impression of court life of the Tulip Period from the works of the poet Nedim, who was very close to the sultan and a prominent figure of the period. Wealthy people imported Western furniture and clothes.

All these spatial transformations were the outcomes of exchanges with the Western world, especially the French. There was an open interest among the Muslim elite in pleasures of the senses and nature as well as the Western lifestyle.[217] However, the logic of Ottoman palace ceremonies were quite different from that of their French counterparts. For instance, Rousseau's naturalism, which was very popular among the European aristocracy, had no influence on Ottoman ceremonies. One important aspect of eighteenth-century ceremonies that differed from those of the seventeenth century was the increasing privacy and distance of the sultan from the public.[218]

The promotion of luxurious consumption among the Ottoman elite during the Tulip Period has been interpreted as having political implications. According to Quataert, Sultan Ahmed III and his grand vizier, İbrahim Pasha, used this as a means to intensify and legitimate their political power.[219] Similarly, Berkes sees such consumption as a deviation from the original Ottoman ethos formed from religion and holy war (*ghazā*), marking the fading of Ottoman aggression.[220]

As the elites were enjoying a new vision of life in newly designed spaces, problems of the state were debated in the coffee houses of Galata and Istanbul by the public and the janissaries, who had lately become identified with the public.[221] The contrast between the lifestyle of the elite and that of the public had sharpened distinctly. In 1730, a rebellion named after its provoker, 'Patrona Halil', toppled Ahmed III from the throne and killed his statesmen, replacing him with

217 Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 234-235.
218 Faroqhi, "Osmanli Tarihini Ararken [Looking for Ottoman History]", 72.
219 Quataert, *Osmanli Imparatorlugu 1700-1922 [Ottoman Empire 1700-1922]*, 82.
220 Berkes, *Turkiye'de Cagdaslasma [Secularism in Turkey]*, 43.
221 Ibid., 44.

Mahmud I.[222] The Palace of Sa'dabad was demolished by the rebels during the rebellion as a reaction of the public to the new lifestyle of the sultan and the Ottoman elite.[223]



Figure 12 Sadabad shores, c.1900, Quataert, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu 1700-1922*, 230.

Despite such social disparity, the building activity of the Tulip Period was carried to the realm of the public through the restoration of old mosques, *madrasas* and government buildings and the building of new fountains, aqueducts and public gardens.[224]

An important aspect of the Tulip Period was the beginning of the Ottoman intellectual enlightenment, although it was not comparable to the awakening that was to blossom a century later in the Tanzimat period. The entertainment palaces nourished the works of court poets that formed a new genre in classical Ottoman literature. Grand Vizier İbrahim Pasha supported the translation of Arabic and Persian works of the past into Ottoman Turkish as models for new scholars. A few Western works on history, philosophy and astronomy were also translated. There was a rising interest in Western civilisation. Special agents were sent to explore European cities and to give reports of their experiences to the sultan.[225]

Grand Vizier İbrahim Pasha sent Yirmisekiz Mehmet Çelebi and his son Sait Efendi to France as ambassadors to scrutinise French civilisation live and in its totality. Çelebi's reports on the French court, Paris streets, military units, hospitals, schools and observatories demonstrate the multi-dimensionality of these evaluations. His reports on libraries, the presentation of books and the marvels of the printing machine are significant in terms of their influence in the Ottoman context. Such

222 Palmer, *Son Üçyüz Yıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu (Bir Çöküşün Tarihi) [Ottoman Empire in the Last Three hundred Years (History of Decentralisation)]*, 52-53.

223 Faroqhi, "Osmanlı Tarihini Ararken [Looking for Ottoman History]", 72.

224 Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 235.

225 Ibid., 235-236.

reports of ambassadors were used as the basic means of cultural exchange with the Western world.[226]

The influence of the Ottoman ambassadors started a new fashion called *Turquerie* in mid-eighteenth century Europe, beginning in France. The image of the 'frightening Turk' was now obsolete and Turkish motifs appeared in literature, music, theatre and decoration. Luxury consumption goods from Turkey also began to appear in Europe. While an exhibition called *Turquerie* held in Paris in 1911 ultimately legitimated this influence historically,[227] the actual dimensions of the mutual influence between the Occident and the Ottoman world (as the Orient) can be debated.[228]

The printing press was the most important technical innovation of the Tulip Period that was taken from Western examples. A Hungarian convert called İbrahim Müteferrika, together with Ambassador Sait Efendi, established and operated one. Before him Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire printed works in Hebrew, Latin, Greek and Armenian but Ottoman Turks did not use the printing press. In the beginning there had been strong opposition to the printing press from the manuscript scribes, who feared losing their jobs. Eventually, it was agreed that works on subjects other than traditional religious subjects could be printed. Following this decision, books on history, language, geography and geometry, such as Katip Çelebi's *Cihannüma*, were published. A book on geometry and the work of Copernicus were also printed. This was done by İbrahim Müteferrika in an appropriate manner that would not provoke heated debate in religious circles, as had happened in the Western world.[229]

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226 Palmer, *Son Üçyüz Yıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu (Bir Çöküşün Tarihi) [Ottoman Empire in the Last Three hundred Years (History of Decentralisation)]*, 47-48.

227 Günsel Renda, "18. Yüzyılda Yeni İlişkiler: Avrupa'da Turquerie Akımı", in *Osmanlı Uygarlığı*, ed. Günsel Renda Halil İnalcık (Istanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2002), 1107-1109.

228 While the Western world was to tame this influence under the label of Orientalism, as convincingly argued by Peker, "the concept of an intellectually broad interest in the Occident was absurd in the Islamic world… The manners and mores, arts and architecture of the West remained obscure in İstanbul". Ali Uzay Peker, "Western Influences on the Ottoman Empire and Occidentalism in the Architecture of Istanbul", *Eighteenth-Century Life* 26, no. 3 (2002): 157.

229 Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 236-237.

Since the reign of the Anatolian Seljuks, official institutions of the Turkish state had supported and promoted the dominance of Sunni Islam as a strategy to combat the influence of heterodox Islam on the public, and thereby maintain the unity of the state. Continuing the madrasa tradition of the Great Seljuks of Iran, the madrasa was the foundation through which orthodox *ulema* and scribes emerged to be employed in state government. Historians have by and large interpreted that *ulema* and their orthodox attitude of not favouring modern sciences and theories were the basic obstacles in the way to Ottoman enlightenment. [230]

Nevertheless, Quataert reminds us not to entrap Ottoman individuals or groups in a single–constant identity category. He argues that the definitions of individuals and groups were more fluid and permeable in eighteenth-century Ottoman culture than they are today. In the Ottoman context, although religion was one area of differentiation, it was not the only one. Therefore, Quataert maintains, the term *ulema* is ambiguous as a determination because it refers to a very heterogenous group of individuals.[231] From his view, the alleged 'fact' of the resistance of the *ulema* to the printing press must be regarded with cautious qualification. Niyazi Berkes shares Quataert's caution in interpreting the attitude of the *ulema* to progress in technology and science. A historical detail conveyed by Berkes is interesting in this regard: he notes that Şeyhülislam Abdullah Efendi advised İbrahim Müteferrika about two books he believed should be published with the benefit of the printing press.[232] Berkes sees the limited use and the later disappearance of the printing press in the Ottoman context as a result of guild limitations peculiar to the Ottoman administration system rather than opposition from the *ulema*. The printing press was part of an enlightenment process that was very slow, involving only small numbers of people. Due to circumstances such as the lack of technical developments following the establishment of the printing press, difficulty in finding paper and lack of reader demand for new publications, the use of the printing press could not develop.[233]

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230 Ibid., 139.

231 Quataert, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu 1700-1922 [Ottoman Empire 1700-1922]*, 212-213.

232 Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma, [Secularism in Turkey]*, 57.

233 Ibid., 61.

Dayezāde himself was literate in a society where the majority of the Muslim population was illiterate.[234] However, Faroqhi warns us not to underestimate the connections with written culture in Ottoman society. Despite difficulties, learning to read was a matter of personal effort and curiosity not limited to high society. For instance, it was common for suburban schools for children (*sıbyan mektepleri*) to be established through the collective power of the public. *Dergāhs* and the dervish lodges, with their libraries, were good sources of learning for people choosing to join these sects. Sheikhs had important roles in the cultural activities of *dergāhs*: they were responsible for purchasing books and they could invite important writers to dwell in their *dergāhs* for some time. Faroqhi maintains that even at remote places of the Empire the libraries of *dergāhs* could be sources of *divan* (court) literature as well as books of popular culture, operating as intermediaries between two cultural levels.[235] Among the layers of society it is possible to classify Dayezāde as a mid-high-class Ottoman bureaucrat who had an interest in reading and writing. Being an assistant to the Rumelian treasurer, he must have had notable skills in reading and writing in order to perform the bookkeeping duties of his job. His written work was outstanding enough to allow him to access palace libraries. His boastful pride in having seen many original books and manuscripts in palace libraries indicates that printing presses never enjoyed popularity among the public and that books were still hard to access. Printed books were very expensive objects in the eighteenth century; original manuscripts were even more precious.[236]

The discussions on art that took place at social gatherings which Dayezāde relates in his *Risāle* are examples of the themes discussed in the entertainment palaces of the Tulip Period. Meetings where literature works were read orally were commonplace.[237] Moreover, presenting a piece at such gatherings was counted as having it published. A meticulous written copy of the work was given to the patron, who could be the sultan, one of his viziers, the sultan's daughters or other members

234 Quataert, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu 1700-1922 [Ottoman Empire 1700-1922]*, 244.

235 Faroqhi, *Osmanlı Kültürü ve Gündelik Yaşam: Ortaçağdan Yirminci Yüzyıla [Ottoman Culture and Everyday Life: From Middle Ages to the 20th Century]*, 201-208.

236 Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma, [Secularism in Turkey]*, 62.

237 Faroqhi, *Osmanlı Kültürü ve Gündelik Yaşam: Ortaçağdan Yirminci Yüzyıla [Ottoman Culture and Everyday Life: From Middle Ages to the 20th Century]*, 201.

of the ruling class. The patrons gave writers and artists presents in return for their works.[238]

The second sultan mentioned by Dayezāde in his *Risāle* is Mahmud I, who reigned between 1730 and 1754. He made innovations in the structure of the military and dealt with the water supply problems of Istanbul. In addition to these public works, he subsidised İbrahim Müteferrika's printing press and the works of poets and writers. He built a number of public libraries in Istanbul and gathered collections of books and manuscripts from all around the Empire. Paper was in high demand in his time, such that the first paper factory was built in Yalova, on the Anatolian shores of the Marmora Sea, by experts brought from Poland.[239]

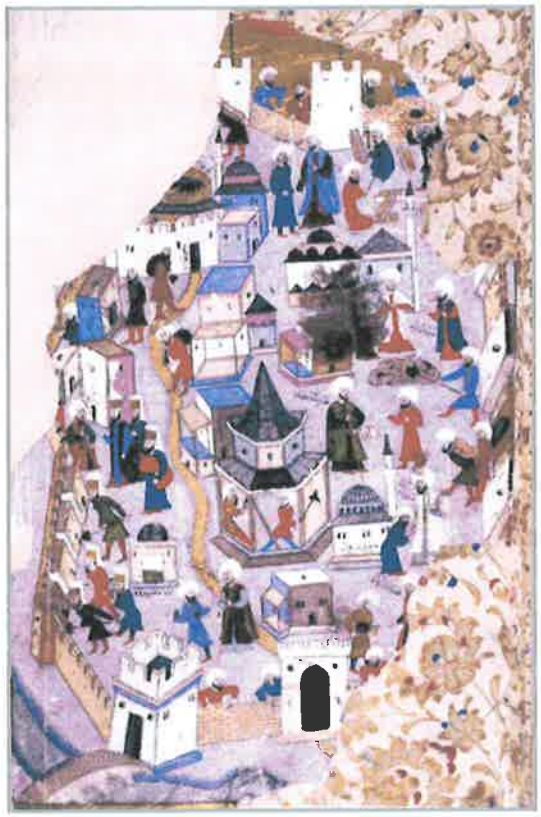


Figure 13 A Miniature Showing Kars Castle, Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 76.

During the reign of Mahmud I, a series of wars with Iran took place. Dayezāde mentions that he was sent by the Sultan to the battlefront at Kars Castle, and started to write the *Risāle* there as a result of boredom when he was among those entrapped in the city castle for 75 days (figure 13). In history books, contemporary historians do not specifically mention Kars Castle as one of the major battle sites. However, depending on the date given by Dayezāde as 1743, it seems likely that this event happened as part of the third series of Iranian wars. The main purpose of the Iranian wars was to maintain the eastern borders of the Empire by eliminating persistent Iranian rebels.[240]

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238 Suraiya Faroqhi, *Osmanlı Tarihi Nasıl İncelenir? [Approaching Ottoman History]*, trans. Zeynep Altok (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999), 210.

239 Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 240, 242.

240 Ibid., 246.

Before they moved to Anatolia, the Turks ruled the Great Seljuks in Iran, where they were influenced by ancient Iranian civilisations, such as the Ahaemenids and Sassanians, in statecraft, settlement, language and culture. Despite these continuing influences, conflicts with Iran were common in Ottoman society, long marked by the controversy between Sunni Islam and Shiite heterodoxy. On the one hand, Persian lands were the lost paradise of the Ottomans and the subject of many literary works; on the other hand, Ottomans constructed their world by deliberately distancing themselves from Iran. As Akın maintains, this is evident in the figure of Sultan Süleyman. As a commander of the state his interest was directed towards the invasion of Western lands such as Belgrade and Vienna, while at the same time he wrote poems using the pen-name Muhibbī that were full of longing and affection for the distant cities of Iran such as Qum or Kashan. Interestingly, in the sixteenth century several nomads migrated to Iran from Anatolia to escape the repression of Sunni orthodoxy.[241] Problems with Iran extended through the eighteenth century and surfaced in the series of wars mentioned above.

After 1747 (and most definitely after the dates of 1769 and 1770, from the colophons of two versions of the *Risāle*) a period of peace and quiet pervaded the Empire. There was no foreign attack during this period, reigned successively by Osman III (1754–57) and Mustafa III (1757–74). Interestingly, most of the reforms of the previous three decades, such as the printing press, disappeared.[242] Until the command of Sultan Abdülhamid I in 1784 for its re-establishment, the activities of the printing press stopped. Similarly, reforms in the military and navy forces were disrupted. The decline of the Empire accelerated in these years when famine and poverty in regions such as Mesopotamia and Egypt increased rebellions among the public.[243]

Apart from these final years of inner struggle, the eighteenth century overall was a period of cultural development. Shaw argues that the political and economic

241 Günkut Akın, "İran, Ölüler Ülkesine Yolculuk [Iran, Journey to the Country of Dead]", *Arredamento Mimarlık* 100+67 (2004): 89.

242 Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 246.

243 After İbrahim Müteferrika's death in 1745 only two volumes of books were published in 11 years. Palmer, *Son Üçyüz Yıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu (Bir Çöküşün Tarihi) [Ottoman Empire in the Last Three hundred Years (History of Decentralisation)]*, 56.

disintegration of the Ottoman Empire was not paralleled in the areas of culture.[244] For example, for centuries literature had two divisions: *divan* literature and folk literature. The former belonged to the court while the latter was the product of the public. *Divan* literature was enmeshed with Persian and Arabic influences in terms of word usage and genres, and it mostly reflected mystic themes relying on poetry. Prose writing was limited to the form of essays (*risāle*) about religion, law and history.[245]

In the eighteenth century, there was an awareness of Turkish identity in *divan* literature that limited the Arabic and Persian influences.[246] Starting with the work of Alauddin Sabit, Turkish words and proverbs entered *divan* literature and puns of daily life were used. During the reign of Ahmet III, Nedim symbolised the new trend of *divan* poets. His verses written in the *aruz* meter reflected the court life of the Tulip Period, with all its exuberance, singing of wine, love, palaces, gardens, illuminated boats, fireworks displays, tulips and musical instruments. These poems were composed spontaneously as they were performed orally at court entertainments. Nedim's song on the *Sa'dabad* is very famous. These lines express the importance of the palace in the poet's life:

> For a while we'll stroll beside the pool, and another while
> Off we'll go to view the palace, moved to marvel by its style;
> Now we'll sing a ballad, now with dainty verse the hours beguile.
> Let us visit Sa'dabad, my swaying Cypress, let us go! 247

Among other authors and poets, Nevizāde Ata'i, Nabi, Seyyid Hüseyin Vehbi and Şeyh Galip were significant at the time.[248] However, the innovations in art, poetry

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244 Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 284.

245 Ibid., 140.

246 Shaw explains this change thus: "While the influence of Iran was not yet wholly forgotten and the *gazel*, the *kaside*, and the *mesnevi* continued to be used, their themes were now more Turkish and less Persian, more practical and direct and less dreamy and mystic, better reflecting local life, customs and ways, with Turkish vocabulary beginning to be used with greater frequency, displacing the Persian words and idioms that had predominated for so long. The typical Turkish form of *şarkı* (song), with its rhythmic pattern of 13 beats, was used to provide lyrics to songs that expressed the feelings, moods, and vocabulary of the people to whom it was addressed". Ibid., 293.

247 *The Penguin Book of Turkish Verse*, ed. Nermin Menemencioğlu (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1978), 113.

248 Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 294-295.

and prose literature were not paralleled in the natural sciences. Traditional Islamic sciences prevailed in the eighteenth century.[249]

Innovative currents in literature extended to historiography as well. In the seventeenth century, Ottoman historiography consisted mainly of chronicles. These chronicles were compiled by Ottoman officials, who brought together the events of their time, relying on oral information, documents and other available sources. Apart from the officials, a position called 'court chronicler' (*vakanüvislik*) was also established. The court chronicler simply noted the daily events of the palace that involved the sultan. Extending this scope, from the second half of the seventeenth century the court historian Naima combined the task of documenting events (*vakayināme*) with interpretive comments and opinions (*nasihatnāme*). Influenced by İbn Khaldun's *Mukaddime*, Naima argued that states went through phases such as self-confidence, security, conventionalism and disintegration. Using such phases, he could situate the events of his own period within a broader context. After him, in the second half of the eighteenth century, Ahmed Resmi continued writing chronicles in the *nasihatnāme* format in which he speculated that the natures of the Muslim and non-Muslim states were similar. He commented on the duties of the sultan in the rule of the state and suggested that peace was an important treasure to maintain the natural boundaries of the state.[250] In the sixteenth century, the language used in the court chronicles was simple Turkish. With time, however, the Ottoman language was used so dominantly that by the eighteenth century only well-educated people could read court chronicles, as they were enmeshed with Arabic and Persian words and phrases.[251]

Faroqhi extends the definition of history writing in the Ottoman world to cover sources other than the official court chronicles. She includes the *nasihat* literature, other chronicles from different provinces, travelogues, biographies and first-person narratives. She argues that these sources were written in accordance with rules that can appear strange to contemporary researchers. We always have the risk of misinterpretation. However, what differentiates history writing from literature is

249 Ibid., 297.
250 Faroqhi, *Osmanlı Tarihi Nasıl İncelenir? [Approaching Ottoman History]*, 220-221.
251 Ibid., 221.

that we are responsible for what we say, being critical towards both our sources and ourselves.[252]

What has been presented in this section is a sketch of the historical background in which *Selimiye Risālesi* was written. It is hard to read the eighteenth century as a period of decline from Dayezāde's text, which does not mention anything about the westernisation process either. As we can read from his text, he sees the world around him from an optimistic premodern perspective, believing (or promoting) the absolute validity of Ottoman power and the Islamic truth. He is similar in this regard to Evliya Çelebi, who does not reflect the crises of the state in the seventeenth century in his travelogue.[253]

252 Ibid., 224-237.

253 Faroqhi interprets Evliya Çelebi's travelogue as optimistic but she is cautious about his professed innocence about the issue of decline of the Empire. Faroqhi, *Osmanlı Kültürü ve Gündelik Yaşam: Ortaçağdan Yirminci Yüzyıla [Ottoman Culture and Everyday Life: From Middle Ages to the 20th Century]*, 87.

PART II

APPROACHES

Say Istanbul and Sinan the Great Architect comes to mind
His ten fingers soaring like mighty plane trees
On the skyline.

Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu

The contemporary use of Ottoman narratives on architecture is complex. Basically, texts on Sinan are used in relation to the historiography on Sinan and his architecture. The text on the architect Sedefkār Mehmed is rarely used as a source of interpretation. In contrast to this first group of texts directly related to prominent architects of the Ottoman Empire, *Selimiye Risālesi* is marginalised as a naïve, premodern evaluation of architecture by an uncertain Ottoman intellectual.[1] The objective of the second part of this thesis is to discern assumptions inherent in the modern historiography of Ottoman architecture and the influences these assumptions have had on the evaluation of Ottoman narratives on architecture, with particular regard to issues of classification, language and interpretation. Discussion of Sinan and the historiography on Sinan forms much of the content of this chapter as all the Ottoman narratives to be dealt with here are directly or indirectly related to Sinan and his architecture. Accordingly, the frameworks and assumptions through which Sinan and his architecture are evaluated influence the interpretation of these texts. Cross-examining these patterns of interpretations, however, I proceed to highlight other possible ways to approach these historical texts. In particular, a hermeneutical understanding of architecture is posited as an alternative approach to the interpretation of architecture in Ottoman narratives.

5. Historiography on Sinan

The historiography on Sinan is important as it reveals the characteristic approaches of established scholarly discourses to Ottoman texts. These approaches draw a problematic framework in which many implications of the texts tend to be marginalised either as inaccurate or as historically irrelevant depending on the intensity of scholarly preoccupation with objectivity. In the following proposition, I will describe and critique these approaches in chronological order, with thematic divisions. The first group of historians examined here aim at an objective writing of history by adopting Western models that were unavoidably marked by the nationalist ideologies of the early republican era of Turkey. In their approach Sinan is rendered as a mythical genius. The second group of historians focus on the

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1 Doğan Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye (Sinan's Art and Selimiye)* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1997), 158.

rational sides of Sinan's architecture within the Turkish–Islamic context, whereas the third group is interested in the place of Sinan in world architecture. In the last section works of scholars who developed an interpretive paradigm to write about Sinan are reviewed together with their recent renewal of interest in Ottoman narratives on architecture.

5.1. Early Republican Historians

Early modern studies on Sinan will be included and examined here from the perspective of the 'Turkish history thesis' promulgated in 1930–31 by the Turkish nationalist leader Kemal Atatürk. First published in 1930, *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* (General Themes of Turkish History) was a major study that accentuated the importance of race in the interpretation of Turkish history.[2] Given the distinct ethnic and religious backgrounds of the different peoples of the Turkish Republic, cultural assimilation relied on the uniting significance of the Turkish language. Accordingly, beginning in the 1930s, a campaign to purify the Turkish language by removing Arabic and Persian words was pursued. This was publicised as the 'sun language theory' in 1936 through several conferences that aimed to set the standard of language spoken by Turkish villagers as pure Turkish.[3] The programs and conferences of the Turkish Foundation of History and the Turkish Foundation of Language went hand in hand, and held that 'language theory mirrored the history thesis'. Etymological and historical studies concurred in the contention that Turks were the oldest race in the world. Studies even claimed that all major world languages descended from Turkish and that major cultures in the world were linked with the Turkish race.[4] So, linguistic and historical studies were determined mainly by and served the legitimation of the politics of nationalism.

The historiography of Sinan began with the modern Turkish history of art, as a key sub-topic of that larger project that was inevitably shaped by its intentions. Uğur Tanyeli maintains that, unlike its Western parallels, the discourse on the history of art and architecture in Turkey emerged in direct relationship with a political thesis:

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2 Soner Çağaştay, "Race, Assimilation and Kemalism: Turkish Nationalism and the Minorities in the 1930s". *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 3 (2004): 87.

3 Ibid., 90-91.

4 Ibid., 91.

"There exists a Turkish nation and its own artistic creations; this reality is ignored by others, therefore, it shall be taught and accepted by everyone".[5]

Tanyeli further argues that, as a result of a late nationalism, the Turkish history of art and architecture was controlled from outside its original field of knowledge as a pragmatic tool to emphasise the existence of a distinct Turkish nation against the reductive orientalist assumption of Western civilisation that the 'East' was a single, stable and amorphous world of Islam. Günkut Akın argues similarly that studies on Turkish art and architecture were marked by the positivist approach of the Turkish history thesis in general, the methods and even the conclusions of which were assigned by the government.[6] These factors nurtured the idea of an autonomous field of Turkish art and architecture influenced by Western models and distanced from its Eastern affiliations. With its living memory of an Empire that once governed many nations, the intelligentsia of the modern Republic of Turkey reconstructed its own historical situation thus: "We are not Western, but we have never been a part of the East, either".[7]

As Tanyeli explains, this particularist approach affected all areas of culture. Its impact on the history of art and architecture was the application of Western frameworks and categories to the Turkish context but without sufficient critique and judgment. The first and most popular of the historiographic categories to be appropriated from the Western model was the myth of the 'genius artist', which found an apparently ideal exemplar in Sinan. In the West, the concept of genius emerged in the Italian Renaissance as an invention of modernity, synchronic with the artists who were qualified as *genius* by their contemporaries. In his famous book on the lives of the artists, Vasari introduced the concept of genius in regard to Michelangelo in particular. For him, Michelangelo was gifted by God's divine

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5 Uğur Tanyeli, "Bu Kitap İçin Bir Konum Saptama Denemesi ya da Mitos Kurmaktan Mitos Çözümlemeye Sinan Historiyografisi (Önsöz)". in *Mimar Sinan: Estetik Bir Analiz (Architect Sinan: An Aesthetic Analysis)*, author Jale Erzen (Istanbul: Şevki Vanlı Mimarlık Vakfı Yayınları, 1996), 1.

6 Günkut Akın, "Mimarlık Tarihinde Pozitivizmi Aşma Sorunu ve Osmanlı Merkezi Mekan İkonolojisi Bağlamında Edirne Selimiye Camisi'ndeki Müezzin Mahfili". in *Türk Kültüründe Sanat ve Mimari: Klasik Dönem Sanatı ve Mimarlığı Üzerine Denemeler*, ed. G. Tanyeli M. Saclıoğlu (Istanbul: 1993), 5.

7 Tanyeli, "Bu Kitap Icin Bir Konum Saptama Denemesi Ya Da Mitos Kurmaktan Mitos Cozumlemeye Sinan Historiyografisi(Onsoz)". II.

inspiration; his genius was manifest in his "supreme expression in all the arts and grandeur in architecture".[8] Later, in the eighteenth-century, Kant's contribution promoted and refined the concept of genius as a separate category that was effective in shaping aesthetic refinement and artistic intentions. Kant argued, "fine art is the art of genius".[9] However, for Tanyeli, the genius quality of Sinan was invented and asserted by twentieth-century Turkish historians. He argues that, although Sinan's importance was recognised throughout Ottoman history, no earlier historical text mentioned him as a genius.[10] Necipoğlu supports Tanyeli's view that Sinan was acclaimed as a national hero in modern Turkey.[11] However, she disagrees with Tanyeli that the perception of Sinan as a genius was entirely a fabrication of twentieth-century historiography. Contrary to what Tanyeli claims, Sinan was a convenient historical figure on which to bestow a genius quality and as Necipoğlu convincingly maintains his self-mythologising autobiographies were influential in directing his future reputation as a genius at the sacrifice of ignoring other factors that shaped his works.[12] A closer look at the concept of 'genius' in Sinan's historical context in comparison and contrast with that in the context of Renaissance artists will be taken up in the third part of this thesis.

What republican historians deducted from Sinan as a historical figure was not in line with the historicising of Sinan himself. Therefore it is not wrong to assume that the acclamation of Sinan as a 'Turkish genius' was an anachronism that glorified the architect as a contemporary figure emerging from the pages of history. Historical texts on Sinan were used and appropriated discursively to support this view. Ahmet Cevdet was the first to make an uncritical translation of *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* with these intentions, a fact mentioned in a preface published in the *Ikdam*

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8 Giorgio Vasari, *Vasari's Lives of the Artists : Biographies of the Most Eminent Architects, Painters, and Sculptors of Italy*, ed. Betty Burroughs (London: Allen & Unwin, 1960), 258, 274, 292.

9 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 1987).

10 Tanyeli, "Bu Kitap Icin Bir Konum Saptama Denemesi Ya Da Mitos Kurmaktan Mitos Cozumlemeye Sinan Historiyografisi(Onsoz)". II-III.

11 She expresses this view in footnote 19. Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 14.

12 Ibid., 15.

gazette in the late nineteenth century.[13] The intention of constructing an identity for Sinan was pursued in several later adaptations of historical Sinan texts. For example, in a pamphlet published in 1931, Ahmet Refik wrote a character for Sinan. In this scenario, Sinan was represented with the awareness of a modern individual that is never mentioned in the actual historical texts.[14] In order to increase the consistency of his fictive scenario, Refik decorated quotations from the texts on Sinan with his own imagination to fill in the missing parts of Sinan's identity. This tendency is illustrated in Refik's description of the view of sixteenth-century Istanbul, dominated by Sinan's buildings:

> In the mornings, when beautiful Istanbul was starting to wake up in pinks with ecstasy, on the elegant minarets showing the delicate emotions of Architect Sinan, tragic notes of Turkish spirit were reflected upon far horizons with a spiritual story... The genius of Architect Sinan even changed the borders of the horizons of Istanbul.[15]

Here Sinan is assumed to have shared the early-republic-period nationalistic consciousness towards his cultural landscape that most probably was not available in the sixteenth century. Fatih Andı compiled an anthology of works on Sinan in Turkish literature, most of which echo the same tone as that in Refik's earlier comments, proclaiming Sinan as the creator of a building tradition which the authors are very keen to call Turkish civilisation.[16]

Such insistence on the modern myth of Sinan as the Turkish genius continued for decades. Even in the 1960s historians such as Afet İnan pursued it. İnan's book dated 1968 exhibits details of this process from the 1930s, when Atatürk established the new Turkish Foundation of History. Also, as Atatürk's adopted daughter, İnan was in the forefront of historians working for the republican establishment who accepted and promoted its ideology wholeheartedly. Thus, her book embodies interesting clues in this regard. For instance, she mentions that the motive for starting the research on Sinan was a newspaper column dated 1935 and written in Sofia that claimed that Sinan was a Bulgarian. It seems likely that such reports

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13 Sai Mustafa Celebi, *Tezkiretü'l Bünyān*, ed. Ahmet Cevdet (Istanbul: İkdam, 1315).

14 Ahmet Refik, *Mimar Sinan (Architect Sinan)* (Istanbul: Kanaat Library, Amedi Press, 1931).

15 Ibid., 43.

16 M. Fatih Andı, *Edebiyatımızda Mimar Sinan (Architect Sinan in Our Literature)* (Ankara, Istanbul: Ministry of Culture, Acar Press, 1989), 114-153.

about Sinan's identity and ethnic background were common in foreign countries at that time. They urged and accelerated the study of Sinan as a historical project to be undertaken by the Turkish Foundation of History. İnan's proposal to start an extensive research program on Sinan was accepted at the meeting of the Foundation in 1935 under Atatürk's leadership. With the influence of the meeting, that night Atatürk commanded that a sculpture of Sinan be built, with a note in Atatürk's own handwriting kept as a memoir to document the fortunate event (figure 14). This was the start of a large project that extended to years and experienced many delays due to circumstances such as World War II. It included extensive research in areas related to Sinan and his work such as measured drawings of all buildings attributed to him, with elevations, sections and plans; documenting his buildings using photographs; analysing his works within the context of the history of world architecture; and the translation of historical texts on him into the modern alphabet. As a part of the project, Sinan's real identity was to be deciphered clearly and his private and official life was to be documented objectively.[17]

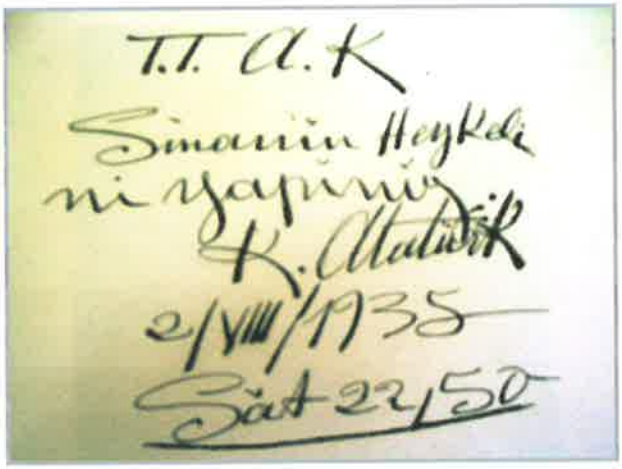


Figure 14 Atatürk's written command to build Sinan's sculpture, 1935, İnan, Mimar Koca Sinan.

The project was prolific and it contributed some important research on Sinan such as the detailed drawings by Ali Saim Ülgen that are still used in current research, Ömer Lütfü Barkan's study on the construction notebooks of the Süleymaniye Complex and Meriç's first critical translation of historical Sinan texts into the modern Turkish alphabet.[18]

From İnan's book it is possible to trace that Turkish historians strived long to legitimate their proposed identity for Sinan and have it accepted by the world, but their success is still doubtful. As part of the project, on 6 August 1935, Sinan's

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17 A. Afet Inan, *Mimar Koca Sinan (Architect Great Sinan)* (Ankara: Turkiye Emlak Kredi Bankası, 1968), 63-64.

18 Ömer Lütfi Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami ve İmareti İnşaatı (1550-1557)*, 2 vols., v. 2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1972). Rıfkı Melul Meriç, *Mimar Sinan Hayatı, Eseri I: Mimar Sinan Hayatına, Eserlerine Dair Metinler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1965).

grave was excavated by a group of Turkish Foundation of History scholars (including İnan) in order to carry out 'scientific research' on his skeleton to further investigate his 'morphological and scientific personality'.[19] Their final determination about Sinan's 'real' identity was illustrated well in a letter to the Victoria and Albert Museum London, where Sinan was exhibited as an artist of Greek origin who lived during the time of the Ottoman Empire. To correct this assumption and to improve the Turkish ethnicity of the architect Turkish historians wrote:

> Sinan was a devshirme from Ağırnas village of Kayseri. This was a Christian village. However, most of these Christians had Turkish names. Since the 10th century several Turkish tribes migrated to Anatolia. Some of these accepted Christianity as their religion. Thus, it can be seen that although he was a conscripted Christian, Sinan belonged to one of these Turkish tribes settled around Kayseri.[20]



This brief statement is interesting for documenting how an ideology could shape claims of objectivity in history writing. Despite these efforts to prove Sinan's Turkish ethnicity, his origin is still an issue of debate. Historical ambiguity and the difficulty of interpreting historical context reflected through documents are two factors that have nurtured the national myth of Sinan until recent times (figures 15- 18).

Figure 15 Sinan's sculpture in front of the Faculty of Letters in the Turkish capital, Ankara (1), 2004.

Nevertheless, the speculative promotion of a Turkish national identity for Sinan blurred the autonomy of

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19 It has been further claimed recently that his skull was taken out for scrutiny in order to prove his Turkish ethnicity. Researchers eventually found out that Sinan was of Turkish origin. However, the skull was not returned to his grave; it was kept in order to be exhibited in a to-be-opened anthropology museum. The information about such a museum is obscure and the skull has now been lost. Akkaya, İlkay. "Kafatası Avcılığı I". 17 April 2000. http://www.ozgurpolitika.org/2000/04/17/hab61b.html>, [accessed 06 January 2005] See also Çağaştay, "Race, Assimilation and Kemalism: Turkish Nationalism and the Minorities in the 1930s". 92.

20 The letter, dated 12 December 1959, was written and signed by A. Saim Ülgen, Şevki Vanlı, Nazir Toğrul and Afet İnan. İnan, *Mimar Koca Sinan (Architect Great Sinan)*, 75-76.

knowledge in the field of the history of art and architecture. Appropriating and building on historical documents were not found problematic in this regard. İnan's dichotomy of writing an official history and a novel about Sinan is another crucial example pointing to this problem. The section of the book she calls 'Sinan's novel' narrates the undocumented part of Sinan's life starting from his birth to the day of his conscription into the Ottoman army at the age of 22. In the narrative, İnan depicts Sinan as a curious child who was brought up by his stonemason grandfather, from whom he learned the first tricks of his future profession. She draws a profile of Sinan, who seemed to exhibit a modern artistic awareness influenced by nature and the artefacts of his environment, such as the picturesque mountain view of Erciyes from his village (which she claims resembled the silhouette of Süleymaniye!) or the Seljuk monuments of the region, which in reality seem to have had no direct influence on Sinan's architectural style.[21]



Figure 16 Sinan's sculpture in front of the Faculty of Letters in the Turkish capital, Ankara (2), 2004.

Although İnan's title for this section alerts the reader that it is fiction rather than a factual account, careless readers may interpret it as historical truth.[22] Her style of interpretation contributed to the intensification of doubts and caution about the need for interpretation in the writing of the history of art and architecture in the Turkish context.

The importance of this narrative section of İnan's book for our argument lies in the dichotomy it creates when compared with the following section, which she calls 'Sinan's official history'.[23] This section consists of direct quotations from historical texts on Sinan and it depicts a historical profile of the architect that is strange for a

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21 Ibid., 11-23.

22 Ibid. In the National Library (Ankara) copy of her book a reader has marked the part called 'Sinan's novel' with several minuses, crosses and exclamation marks, a response that may indicate how seriously the reader took the narrative as historical truth.

23 Ibid., 23-40.

modern understanding of the profession of architecture in that Sinan's military career was enmeshed with his so-called artistic career. Moreover, in the official narrative it is obvious that Sinan was not preoccupied with the concept of genius and artistic awareness. İnan fills this gap with her fabrication of the biographical novel. Thus, the addition of the fictive biographical novel blurs the impact of the official narrative, which might be focused on as historical truth.

Refik and İnan, whose works were published more than thirty years apart, show that Turkish historians appropriated historical texts to support their construction of the national myth of Sinan. They simply saw no problem in the amount of appropriation favouring their own historical propositions rather than the dynamics of the historical context. Compared to these earlier works of Refik and İnan, the following examples mark a developing historiographic consciousness about interpreting the actual historical context.



Figure 17 Sinan and the Selimiye Mosque on an early Turkish banknote, 1982, http://www.banknotes.com

In 1966, Öztuna published a three-part article in a history journal called 'Mimar Sinan'ın Hatıraları I-III' (Architect Sinan's Memoirs) by relying on quotations from *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*. In the introduction he accentuated Sinan as an architect of classical Ottoman architecture who brought many students after him, built many masterpieces and thus marked Ottoman architecture with his genius. In the series Öztuna translated *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* into modern Turkish and gave a different title to each part using Sinan's words; such as 'How I brought the waters of Kırkçeşme ' and 'The Palace Garden of the Sultan'.[24] Although written with the basic assumptions of the above-mentioned historiographic framework, Öztuna's translation is important for he clearly distinguished for the first time his own statements from the historical text and situated the text, its author and the architect within a historical context.

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24 Yılmaz Öztuna, "Mimar Sinan'ın Hatıraları". *Hayat Tarih Mecmuası* (1966): 5-11, Yılmaz Öztuna, "Mimar Sinan'ın Hatıraları 2: Kırkçeşme Sularını Nasıl Getirdim?". *Hayat Tarih Mecmuası* (1966): 42-49, Yılmaz Öztuna, "Mimar Sinan'ın Hatıraları 3: Padişahın Has Bahçesi". *Hayat Tarih Mecmuası* (1966): 49-55.

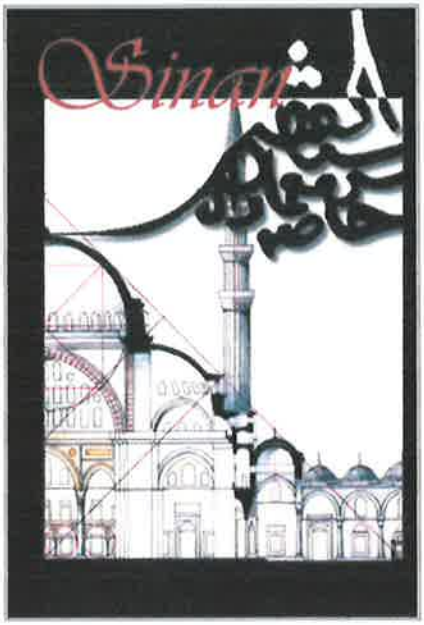


Figure 18 An e-card called 'Respect for Sinan', Çekül, 2000.

Gökyay's more recent article, dated 1987 and titled 'Mimar Sinan'ın Dilinden Hatıralar' (Memoirs from Architect Sinan's Mouth), is similar to Öztuna's in format. Gökyay also relies on *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* as his source and depicts the bringing of water to Istanbul. He also uses the above-mentioned historiographic framework according to which Sinan is the genius of the Turks who emerged from the glorious pages of history. However, the differentiation between the quotations from the text and the author's own words is better defined than in Öztuna's text, suggesting an increasing desire to let the historical document speak for itself. Interestingly, Gökyay sees *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* as the direct source from which knowledge about Sinan might be gathered. However, he expresses his difficulty in deciphering the mysterious expression of the text. Moreover, he maintains that despite the elusive nature of the narrative the text has contemporary significance in that the part on how water was brought to Istanbul through aqueducts built by Sinan is valid for current residents of Istanbul who still use the same source of water.[25]

These different examples show that, until recent times, Sinan was regularly separated from his context through the construction of a national consciousness. Tanyeli in his framework of historiography argues that starting from the 1930s, but explicitly revealed in the 1950s the myth of Sinan as the Turkish genius was transformed and developed into arguments on the rational aspects of his architecture.[26]

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25 Orhan Şaik Gökyay, "Mimar Sinan'ın Dilinden Hatıralar". *Tarih ve Toplum* 8, no. 45 (1987): 152.

26 Tanyeli, "Bu Kitap İçin Bir Konum Saptama Denemesi ya da Mitos Kurmaktan Mitos Çözümlemeye Sinan Historiyografisi (Önsöz)". IV.

5.2. Kuban and Sinan's Rationality

The second phase of the historiography on Sinan pursued the myth of Turkish genius by exploring the modernist intentions that arose from it. With the influence of Doğan Kuban's work, Sinan's rationality has widely been accepted as given by historians who saw Sinan as an architect who had decision-making mechanisms almost like those of a modern architect. In fact, Kuban elaborated the argument for Sinan's rational side that he inherited from the earliest studies of the European professors of the Academy of Fine Arts, founded in 1883. Among them was Vienna-trained Swiss architect Ernst Egli, whose book *Sinan: Der Baumeister Osmanischer Glanzzeit* (1954) stressed the universal values of Sinan's architecture from a modernist perspective by emphasising rationality of the form and functionality of the buildings.[27] Necipoğlu holds that Egli's successor Bruno Taut fitted Sinan's architecture into an explicit modernist narrative in his textbook prepared in 1938 for lectures at the Academy. Taut represented Sinan as the genius of proportion and rational construction who brought the development of domed buildings to its highest level.[28] This line of thought influenced modern Turkish architects such as Sedad Hakkı Eldem to choose Sinan as a role model who was able to achieve a modern sense of balance between form and function. Turkish architecture journals such as *Arkitekt*, *Yapı*, *Mimar* and *Mimarlık* further promoted Sinan as the flagship of the nation's cultural creativity.[29] Aptullah Kuran's influential monograph on Sinan is also in line with Kuban's approach and gives a detailed analysis of Sinan's domed structures in comparison with Islamic, Byzantine, Gothic and Renaissance architecture, and provides chronological and historical details about Sinan.[30] Preoccupation with unconditional objectivity is a driving force of Kuran's monograph.

Kuban's influential paradigm basically proposed Sinan as a rational mind with the intention to rescue him from orientalist and nationalist clichés and ground him in a

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27 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 14.

28 Ibid., 14.

29 Ibid., 14.

30 Aptullah Kuran, *Sinan: The Grand Old Master of Ottoman Architecture* (Washington: Institute of Turkish Studies, 1987). For a brief comparison of Kuban's and Kuran's work see Henry Matthews, "Bringing Ottoman Architecture into the Mainstream". *The Art Book* 7, no. 4 (2000): 16.

historical background.[31] But Kuban insisted on Sinan's modernist rationality and universally appealing style. For him, Sinan had the freedom to experiment on his projects as a priority of his position of chief architect. Accordingly, he depicted Sinan as an empiricist with a progressive bent who always looked for rational solutions to architectural problems, trying a different attitude for each of his projects.[32] He combined historical and social clues of his context and reflected their influence through his products. But, in the final analysis, Kuban proposed that Sinan's architectural creativity was shaped by his own artistic intentions rather than by the intellectual and psychologic parameters of his cultural context.[33]

Therefore, Kuban's work presented a redefinition of the architect, who consciously built by reinterpreting tradition. Tanyeli holds that Kuban's redefinition of Sinan was positivistic and aimed at promoting the idea that modernity was possible in the past, rooted in the dynamics of a society long before the political process of westernisation.[34] Kuban's work on Turkish architecture in general and Sinan in particular was the first and most influential conceptualisation that filled the epistemological gap in the Turkish historiography of architecture. In three important studies of his career, Kuban problematised a Turkish architecture freed from the nationalist ideology of the early republican historians by concentrating on different periods of Turkish history through comparative research. He was the first to proclaim that the history of Turkish art and architecture should be written in comparison to that of other cultures and civilisations. Tanyeli calls Kuban's influential paradigm 'rationalist–positivist': it was a paradigm that systematically grounded each architectural fact on rational reasons waiting there to be deciphered by the historian. Thus, for Kuban, architectural reality could be analysed through the determination of constructional, structural, spatial and social problems. Thus, it

31 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 15.

32 "His [Sinan's] approach to building construction is experimental and emprisist". Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye (Sinan's Art and Selimiye)*, 224.

33 Ibid., 226.

34 Tanyeli, "Bu Kitap İçin Bir Konum Saptama Denemesi ya da Mitos Kurmaktan Mitos Çözümlemeye Sinan Historiyografisi (Önsöz)". IV-V.

was natural for Kuban to exclude iconographic and iconological problems of architecture – promoted for example by Panofsky in the West.[35]

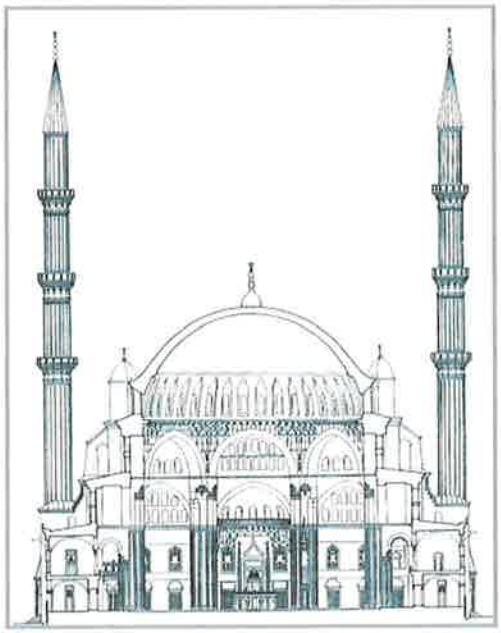


Figure 19 The Selimiye Mosque, the culmination of Sinan's style, according to Kuban

Moreover, Kuban's paradigm of rationality for Sinan supported analyses of Sinan's architecture in a progressive–chronological schema that reduced his works to a religious typology by dwelling mainly on the formal and structural features of his mosques. Thus, Kuban's scenario of Sinan's contribution to Turkish–Islamic architecture at large focused on the centralisation of space in religious architecture. Kuban held that, before Sinan, Turks in Anatolia were already in the process of centralisation in terms of the organisation of religious space. The square base covered by a unique dome has been used in most of the early Ottoman mosques and masjids, unlike their Seljuk predecessors, who built rectangular mosques with multi-roof coverings and supports. The monumental evolution of the centralisation process in architecture went hand in hand with the centralisation of Ottoman power. During the early periods of the Ottoman Empire, the dome as a dominating roof structure had already started to be used in mosques such as Üç Şerefeli in Edirne. Here the tendency to integrate the upper shell with the overall structure was first evident, suggesting the probability of the early influence of Hagia Sophia, before the conquest of Istanbul.[36] Kuban further argues, as did Sinan, that, starting from the Şehzade Mosque and culminating in the Selimiye Mosque, the dome was used as the governing structural element articulated in an organic relationship with other parts of the building (figure 19). To summarise, Kuban puts Sinan's contribution to the centralisation of space

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35 Uğur Tanyeli, "Bir Tarihçi İçin Portre Taslağı". *Arredamento Dekorasyon*, no. 49 (1993): 121.

36 Metin Ahunbay, Zeynep Ahunbay, "Structural Influence of Hagia Sophia on Ottoman Mosque Architecture". in *Hagia Sophia: Form, Structure and Meaning from the Age of Justinian to the Present*, ed. Robert Mark Ahmet Çakmak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 180.

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organisation this way: "In Sinan's work structural simplicity is gained through conceptual change. The domed baldachin replaces the dome as the core of the design".[37]

According to this framework, the shape of the baldachin could vary from a square to an octagon depending on the dimensions of the dome it bore.[38] Half domes, pendentives and clusters of smaller domes accompanied the main large dome in most of the projects. It was assumed that by using half domes and pendentives compositional hierarchy was achieved in three dimensions, the stability of the overall structure was strengthened and the enlargement of the central interior space was provided without spoiling the dominance of the main dome.[39] For Kuban, these were the basic intentions pursued by Architect Sinan in each of his projects. Moreover, Kuban proposed that throughout his career as the chief imperial architect Sinan had the aim of realising the most unified mosque space under the dominance of the most stable domed structure. He sees the Selimiye Mosque as this ultimate achievement and the culmination of Sinan's style. From Kuban's perspective the aesthetic and urban values of architecture were the natural outcomes of the rationalist–progressive mind of the architect and they were determined through the pivot of structural and formal perfection achieved at different scales. [40]

Kuban proposed an attitude for Architect Sinan by accentuating his rationalist side and his quest for modern notions of structural simplicity and efficiency in his buildings. Thus, Sinan's assumed rationalist approach disrupted and alienated him and his work from their context. Kuban's comparison of architecture and other arts in Sinan's period is telling in this regard. For him, unlike the arts of miniature or literature, the architecture of Sinan's period showed unique rational features in which form and structure logically coincided. This difference of architecture was seen as closer to a Mediterranean determination than to an Eastern–Islamic affinity. He claimed the reason for this difference lay in Sinan's individual intentions as an

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37 Doğan Kuban, "The Style of Sinan's Domed Structures". *Muqarnas: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture* IV (1987): 76.

38 Ibid., 77.

39 Ibid., 72-97.

40 See Kuban, *Sinan'in Sanatı ve Selimiye (Sinan's Art and Selimiye)*.

artist, which made him closer to his Renaissance contemporaries than to Ottoman ones.[41]

The above arguments roughly sketched how Sinan was evaluated through Kuban's paradigm. Kuban's widely recognised conceptual framework was grounded on strong reason–end connections in a consistent chronological reading. However, it relied on formal comparisons of architecture in which context came only as a secondary issue. In a recent article on Ottoman architecture and other arts, Akın maintained that such reliance on formal determinations is misguided and sacrifices contextual interpretations. He argues that the crucial point is to interrogate the commonality between the thoughts that govern certain formal articulations rather than the forms themselves. Similar forms may signify different content, as forms in different contexts are not limited to a single content. For instance, Eastern content can coincide with the Western form, giving the illusion of decontextualisation in cultural interpretations of architecture. However, formal similarity is secondary whereas the mentality that shapes formal decisions is the primary consideration.[42]

Therefore, the problematic aspect of Kuban's conceptual framework is the priority given to formal determinism driven from an assumed rationality on Sinan's part. This surfaces in Kuban's evaluation of the question of meaning in Sinan's architecture, which is undertaken as a secondary issue. Meaning in architecture gives priority to contextual interrogations that rely on interpretation of historical phenomena in general. However, Kuban undermines historical evidence that does not fit his assumptions, such as the Sinan texts addressed in the present study. He evaluates these texts in accordance with the extent to which they reflect the truth claims asserted by his own paradigm. Thus, he doubts the direct relationship of these texts with Sinan for they fail to support the (proposed) rational side of the architect. For example, relying on the 'naïve assessment' of architecture in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* and the comparative inaccuracy of some historical and survey information embodied in the text, he doubts the actual involvement of Sinan in its

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41 Ibid., 11.

42 Günkut Akın, "Osmanlı Mimarlığı ile Diğer Sanatlar Arasındaki Farklı Dil Sorunu Üzerine Düşünceler" (paper presented at the *Celal Esad Arseven Anısına Sanat Tarihi Semineri Bildirileri*, Istanbul, 2000), 36-37.

writing. Kuban believes the interpretations in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* may have been author Sai's own fabrications and evaluations, written to praise the architect. To strengthen this view, Kuban claims it was impossible for an architect of Sinan's calibre to incorrectly measure the heights and diameters of the domes of Hagia Sophia and Selimiye, as noted in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*. Therefore, these analyses and statements seem not to belong to Sinan himself.[43]

Kuban's evaluation of the monograph on the Selimiye Mosque is similar. First, he does not see the text as embodying important historical clues. He assesses the text as an example of a limited understanding of the physical environment of the eighteenth-century Ottoman world. Second, he argues that, the authors of Sinan's art could not develop a historical consciousness like that of Procopius, who described Hagia Sophia within the value judgments of its period. He further holds, for example, that in *Selimiye Risālesi* the author Dayezāde Mustafa could not go beyond a number symbolism based on the Koran to describe Sinan's architecture.[44] Given the fact that this work is full of curious evaluations of architecture (although irrational from Kuban's view), Kuban's statements indicate a major problem in his interpretation of these texts such that he dismisses as irrelevant all data that do not fit his rationalist–positivist and secular conceptual framework rather than re-evaluating the truth claims of his own paradigm.

Sinan's assumed rationality as a framework extends beyond Kuban's career and has influenced the work of many historians who still accept it by default. As a result, Turkish historiography on Sinan continues to evaluate the implications of Ottoman narratives on architecture as relatively irrelevant to the field of architectural history. In fact the assumptions of the genius and rationality of Sinan the architect are not limited to the Turkish context. It is possible to find similar approaches in the studies of historians throughout the world. Kuban's and Aptullah Kuran's monographic

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43 Doğan Kuban, Preface to Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān Ve Tezkiretü'l- Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları), (Architect Sinan's Memoirs)*, ed. Hayati Develi Samih Rifat, Arzu Karamani Pekin (Istanbul: Koç Kültür Sanat, 2002), 7-8.

44 Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye (Sinan's Art and Selimiye)*, 11.

works on Sinan have been translated into English and communicated to a wide audience nationally and internationally.[45]

5.3. Sinan and World Architecture

The place of Sinan in world architecture as a historiographic problem is an exemplary case to use as a focus for the self-critical revision of Western historiography to include other civilisations in their picturing of the world. This historiographic revision is an outcome of interrogations into the complex power relations between the powerful and their 'other'. In this case, knowledge is the power according to which an enlightened modern West constructs other civilisations as the opposite.[46] Much has been written and commented on in this hot issue, which will not be dealt with in detail here. However, it must be noted that the historiographic lenses of Orientalism and late Western self-criticism both derive from this framework.

Necipoğlu convincingly argues the inefficiency in Sinan's case of the traditional divide between 'Islamic' and 'Western' architectural history. Sinan's buildings defy the standard classifications of Eurocentric and Islamic by being the product of a cross-cultural context both temporally and geographically. Nineteenth-century orientalist works marginalised Sinan's works since they did not fit into stereotyped definitions of Islamic architecture in which ornamentation is seen to dominate architectonics and an interiorised architecture is stressed, leaving little emphasis on the exterior.[47]

From a strict orientalist perspective Sinan and his architecture can either be passed over as marginal or be exaggerated as a unique case in the history of the amorphous and exotic East. For instance, such a view can easily see Sinan's works as offshoots of Hagia Sophia.[48] As another extreme case, a self-critical view can promote Sinan

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45 Kuran, *Sinan: The Grand Old Master of Ottoman Architecture*. Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye (Sinan's Art and Selimiye)* is the most recent on Sinan.

46 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

47 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 13.

48 Such a view is still valid for some Westerners. Grabar mentions an anecdote in which, at an exhibition on Süleyman the Magnificent in the United States, people thought the picture of Suleymaniye Mosque was of Hagia Sophia. Oleg Grabar, "The Meanings of Sinan's

as a genius who luckily emerged as an individual in a context where individualism was repressed. However, these views do not come as sterile statements in historiographic studies. They can be held successively in the same analysis or their intensity may vary in different studies. In this study, rather than dwelling on the details reflected through these classificatory distinctions, works that give priority to Sinan's context and monographic works on Sinan will be considered briefly in order to reflect particularly on their implications for historical texts on Sinan.

Kostof's *A History of World Architecture: Settings and Rituals* is an important source in terms of extending the boundaries of 'world history' to include 'other' cultures. In the textbook, Kostof mentions Sinan as an Ottoman architect contemporaneous with Renaissance architects who for Kostof referred to a phase of a similar revival in the Ottoman context as an Eastern component of a growing architectural awareness in the Mediterranean world. This view is grounded on the conviction that, with Sinan, the Ottoman world started to interpret the architectural past it had inherited after the conquest of Istanbul with a historical consciousness similar to the rising interest in antiquity in the Italian Renaissance.

Kostof sees the influence of Hagia Sophia on Sinan's mosque typology as the main manifestation of this process. He holds that Sinan continuously re-interpreted the architecture of Hagia Sophia in his own projects. To express the intensity of this influence he calls Hagia Sophia 'Sinan's obsession'. To support this view with historical evidence, he briefly refers to parts of *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* where Sinan's challenge to surpass the dimensions of the dome of Hagia Sophia was noted.[49] Eventually, it is plausible to maintain that Kostof's analysis of Sinan's context relies on rational reasoning that assumes a Renaissance mentality for the architect and that his profile is inevitably drawn from a Western perspective. In Panayiota Pyla's critique of Kostof, although she finds Kostof's textbook fruitful in representing a paradigm shift from traditional Eurocentric texts, she problematises Kostof's comparisons between Ottoman and Renaissance architecture as being

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Architecture" (paper presented at the *Uluslararası Mimar Sinan Sempozyumu*), Ankara, 1988), 276.

49 Spiro Kostof, *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 461.

restricted to formal issues. She further argues that Kostof overlooks the significance of cultural differences that are incommensurable.[50]

However, Grabar finds a similar comparison between Sinan and the Renaissance architects fruitful. He summarises the Mediterranean character of Sinan's architecture historically: the reshaping of Istanbul with the construction of Sinan's buildings preceded and then overlapped the rebuilding of Rome under the leadership of the popes through the works of Bramante, Michelangelo, Sangallo and Bernini. He further argues that two of the three largest metropolises of the Mediterranean were modified in the same period and with similar connections to the Roman past.[51]

These evaluations of the Mediterranean affinity of Sinan's architecture are valuable as they re-present the relationship and hierarchy among world civilisations freed from the Western–Eastern stereotype. They are rigorous introductory arguments in their reference to common antecedents and the stylistic influences of two architectural cultures. Necipoğlu recently elaborated the comparison between Renaissance Italy and Ottoman Istanbul when she introduced an inter-cultural exchange between the two worlds through rich historical sources. Within the context of these contacts and encounters it is favourable to assume counter-influences between constructions in Rome and Istanbul.[52]

However, Papal Rome and Ottoman Istanbul were two different worlds with distinct beliefs, social orders and worldviews. Although they had similar influences from the past and the renewal of the two cities may seem structurally and temporally parallel, past influences were most probably interpreted in diverse ways in two contexts that challenge comparison. The difference resulted from their cultural affiliations and pasts, which were the main determinants of their mental mechanisms. Therefore, contextual analysis is crucial to situate such formal and historical claims in realistic interpretations. Rome and Istanbul were two distinct contexts that had their own socio-cultural dynamics, and the artistic influence of

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50 Panayiota Pyla. "Historicising Pedagogy: A Critique of Kostof's a History of Architecture". *Journal of Architectural Education* 52, no. 4 (1999): 216-218.

51 Grabar, "The Meanings of Sinan's Architecture". 275.

52 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 99.

antiquity may be understood and intensified in various ways only as one of the parameters that shaped the built environment.

Comparative analyses of Sinan's architecture and its Renaissance contemporaries can be fruitful in depicting not only similarities but differences as well. Context-bound historical studies have the potential to reveal these differences. The creation of any artwork or artefact does not happen in a vacuum – there are always influences – but each creation is a new interpretation and similar forms take distinct meanings in different contexts. Ottoman narratives on architecture are invaluable sources to unfold the differences in Sinan's context.

Interest in Sinan's architecture on the part of scholars outside Turkey is high. Goodwin's studies are the most extensive and prominent monographs in this regard. The earliest of these studies is *A History of Ottoman Architecture*, which today is one of the major sources on Ottoman architecture in general, and has a particular emphasis on Sinan (figure 20). In this book Goodwin focuses on Ottoman architecture comparatively using diverse examples from all periods, and Sinan's buildings come to the fore of the discussion. The study has a broad geographical range, covering marginal examples as well as prominent ones. Besides extensive analyses of architecture through sections, elevations, plans and photographs, Goodwin gives important historical details about the mechanisms of architecture as a profession and the social dynamics that shaped construction projects in the Ottoman context, such as the *waqıf* systems of pious foundations. Although added to the main text as appendices, these historical details are crucial in intensifying the Ottoman context.[53] However, Goodwin's work has recently been criticised for being bogged down in detail and missing a broader contextual argument in comparison with sixteenth century Europe.[54]

In a more recent book, Goodwin undertakes the question of meaning in Sinan's architecture. Goodwin's evaluation of meaning is similar to that in approaches influenced by Norberg-Schulz's phenomenological methodology for analysing the

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53 Godfrey Goodwin, *A History of Ottoman Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1971).

54 Matthews, "Bringing Ottoman Architecture into the Mainstream". 16.

built environment in general.[55] This methodology draws on a different framework from the chronology-based historiographic studies, in which the question of meaning in built forms is pursued in the foreground. In this vein, Goodwin's study evaluates Ottoman architecture in general and Sinan's architecture in particular from a contemporary perspective by dwelling on features of architectural elements and spatiality. Accordingly, the titles of the chapters are thematic rather than chronological, and are written on issues such as form, light, architectural elements and interior and exterior space.[56] Besides extensive reflection on space in architecture, comparison of the concept of space in architecture and other arts is mentioned briefly.[57]

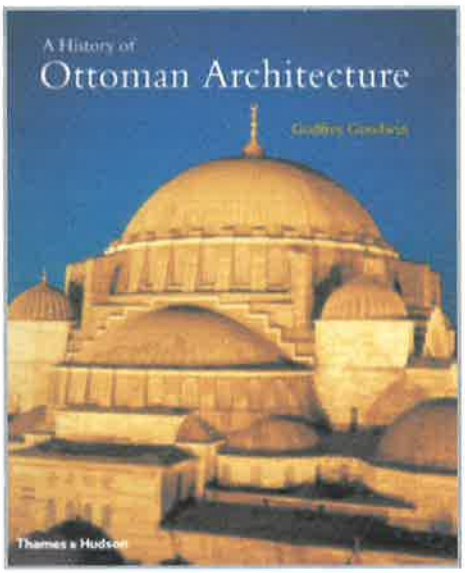


Figure 20 Goodwin's book cover: *A History of Ottoman Architecture*, 1971.

Goodwin's arguments on Sinan as the genius architect are important in revealing a different perspective for the interpretation of Sinan as an individual. On this issue Goodwin wrote that Sinan did not have braggart or idiosyncratic design tendencies that caused him to deviate intentionally from classical Ottoman architecture, as Michelangelo's expressive dispositions had deviated from the High Renaissance into Mannerism. Sinan did not build the structural fancies of an artist, either. But Sinan did seem to have extraordinary creative choices; for example, in façade articulations or means of achieving structural stability. To illustrate with a particular example, for Goodwin, Sinan's design of the minarets of the Selimiye Mosque was a new dimension for which its designer deserved to be called a genius in the real meaning of the concept (figure 21). Likewise, Sinan's

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55 For a phenomenological evaluation of the history of architecture see Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Meaning in Western Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980).

56 Godfrey Goodwin, *Sinan: Ottoman Architecture and Its Values Today* (London: Saqi Books, 1993).

57 Ibid., 87-88.

buildings always contained a margin of structural safety that could save them for ages from any earthquake in a high-risk seismic region such as Istanbul.[58]

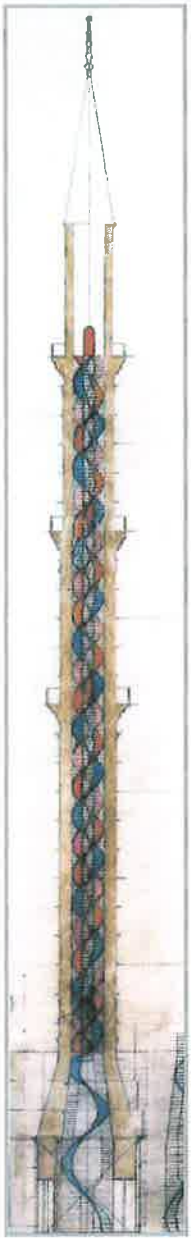


Figure 21 Staircases of the minaret, the Selimiye Mosque, Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye*, 147.

Thus, for Goodwin, although not "taught/thought" through theorisation, and possibly only by instinct or osmosis, Sinan had outstanding knowledge, talent and imagination that was nurtured and expressed throughout his long career. He sees Sinan as the unique representative and the creator of classical Ottoman architecture.[59] Goodwin concludes his reflections by stating that Sinan's genius was larger than both the Turkish nation and Ottoman art and was remarkable in more universal terms. He further maintains that to be understood Sinan should be freed from being a source of national pride, a silhouette or stage set of a single culture; he should be seen as standing along with other great men of the sixteenth century.[60]

Goodwin's reflections show a sensitive consciousness towards Sinan as a historiographic problem to be solved for an architecture historian. His sincere expression of the complexity of the problem seems to contain autobiographical tones. Nevertheless, Goodwin's celebration of Sinan problematically assumes that universality can be defined only in Western terms. His conclusion of glorifying Sinan as the world genius does not offer a solution to our particular concern in that it does not provide contextual details and it seems likely to favour anachronistic evaluations of the architect that are hard to avoid if he is evaluated out of context.[61] The importance of Ottoman narratives related to Sinan comes to the fore in their

58 Ibid., 110-101.

59 Ibid., 111-112.

60 Ibid., 114-115.

61 Selen Morkoc, "Celebration as a Historiographic Tool: Example of Architect Sinan". in *Celebration: XXII Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand*, ed. Andrew Leach and Gill Matthewson (Napier: SAHANZ (Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand), 2005), 261-267.

potential to highlight missing contextual details. The above-mentioned historians have taken these texts as historical evidence of Sinan's life but they have not explored them in depth.

5.4. Interpretive Approaches

Within both Turkish historiography and world historiography it has been found that Sinan's assumed 'rationality' served to separate him from his historical context and helped speculative and isolated readings of his work. Tanyeli in his rather dismissive terminology maintains that Turkish historiography was pragmatically used as an ideological tool in the early Republican Turkish context. In his review of Turkish historiography, he further argues that in the 1980s disintegration of this trend occurred as a result of pervasive critical approaches towards positivist trends in history writing. Therefore, works after the 1980s slowly started to promote history writing for its own sake, thus freeing history from its strict ideological burden. In Turkish historiography this struggle for history's freedom served to foster an understanding of Sinan outside the rigid frameworks of the myth of him as the Turkish genius and his assumed rationality. However, such studies are a minority and this process is continuing the endeavour to unravel Sinan from his mythical bonds.[62]

Necipoğlu in her most recent work accentuates the failure of 'universal' and 'national' paradigms to historically contextualise Sinan's works.[63] Concentration on stylistic analyses based mainly on form, plus ahistorical frameworks of either a secular or a spiritual perspective, played down the religious, socio-political and cultural contexts of Sinan's works both in Turkish scholarship and on a world scale.[64] Decontextualisation of Sinan's work in modern historiography has meant for our specific focus the marginalisation of Ottoman narratives such as texts on Sinan.

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62 Tanyeli, "Bu Kitap İçin Bir Konum Saptama Denemesi ya da Mitos Kurmaktan Mitos Çözümlemeye Sinan Historiyografisi (Önsöz)". V.

63 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 13.

64 Ibid., 15-16.

After the 1980s, historical interrogations and studies of separate features of Sinan's architecture in their own context started to become more prevalent. Examples of such approaches will be elaborated in the following three sub-sections. Interestingly, it will be seen that the interpretative research on Sinan exploits prolific readings of Ottoman narratives on architecture.

5.4.1. The Aesthetics of Sinan's Architecture

Aesthetic evaluation is helpful in engaging with Sinan in an interpretive way that endeavours to take a step forward from mainstream functionalist and structuralist explanations of architecture. The aesthetic approach can be manifold: it can focus on proportions between architectural elements, going beyond the analysis of planimetric abstractions to speculate on three-dimensional space or façade articulations; it can help analyse architecture in relation to other arts of the same historical context both formally and semantically; it can analyse architecture on a number of scales from urban spaces to interior details. Besides this, aesthetic evaluations support contextual analysis of architecture in both its contemporary and historical contexts. For instance, the details of the historical context come to the fore with the basic intention of revealing the aesthetic understanding of architecture in its own period.

Erzen's works on Sinan dwell mainly on the aesthetic principals of his architecture. In her studies Erzen focuses on Sinan from the above-mentioned perspectives. In a rich array of examples, she deals with façade analyses of Sinan's mosques, features of interior spaces, formal articulations and spatial features on different scales. Through these multi-dimensional formal analyses she re-evaluates stylistic and chronological assumptions by focusing on contextual details.[65] Instead of details of these analyses, her interpretations of the aesthetic understanding of Sinan's period will be focused on briefly here.

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65 See Jale Erzen, *Mimar Sinan: Estetik Bir Analiz (Architect Sinan: An Aesthetic Analysis)* (Istanbul: Şevki Vanlı Publications, 1996), and Jale Erzen, "Sinan as Anti-Classicist". in *Muqarnas: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. Oleg Grabar (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988).

Erzen believes architecture beholds the aesthetic and cultural richness of its period. In this vein, she sees Sinan's architecture as demonstrating a deep humanistic consciousness beyond the deterministic interpretations of orthodox Islamic dogma.[66] Erzen gives high value to narratives on Sinan and Ottoman architecture in arguing the aesthetic values of Sinan's historical context. First of all she notes that, although these texts were not theoretical documents on architecture, they somehow mentioned and focused on architecture in a different way and for this reason they deserve particular attention.[67]

For Erzen, Ottoman people avoided theorisation and objectification of the outside world. As a result of this, it is impossible to find theoretical evaluation of architecture in the Ottoman context in particular and the Islamic context in general. However, she argues, this does not mean that they did not have any aesthetic intentions in relation to architecture as part of their environment and daily lives. She qualifies this consciousness as poetic in the Ottoman context and presents Ottoman narratives on architecture as literary manifestations of this poetic attitude.[68] She declares that discourse on art was itself an art in the Ottoman world, created in the form of metaphorical verse or prose. For her, the pervasive conviction that Ottoman architecture did not own a written discourse on architecture and therefore did not reflect upon architecture is problematic because of the current lack of ability to interpret double meanings conveyed in Ottoman literary texts. In this regard, she counts the abundant myths and narratives related to important edifices as discourses on architecture. Erzen holds that the aesthetic understanding of the Ottoman world exhibited in such texts was more at the experiential level and she prefers to call this type of consciousness '*aesthesis*'.[69]

Despite the rarity of written material on architecture, texts on Sinan, his architecture and his student Mehmet Ağa are important in the history of Ottoman architecture.[70]

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66 Erzen, *Mimar Sinan: Estetik Bir Analiz (Architect Sinan: An Aesthetic Analysis)*, 1.

67 Ibid., 23.

68 Ibid., 25-28.

69 Jale Erzen, "Aesthetics and Aisthesis in Ottoman Art and Architecture". *Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 1 (1991): 2.

70 These texts are: Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān and Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye by Sai Mustafa Çelebi (1586 and 1587); Tuhfetü'l Mi'mārīn, Risaletü'l-Mi'māriye, Adsız Risale, Padişahnāme by poet Eyyubi,

Erzen sees these works as a step towards a written discourse which was somehow not developed afterwards. Yet she confirms that these works give a fair idea of how architecture was seen and experienced, what kind of meanings were attached to it, mental attitudes towards it, and aesthetic appreciations of it. The striking characteristics she finds common in Ottoman narratives on architecture are their "spontaneous mixing of poetic, metaphorical, and narrative descriptions with didactic explanations". She calls their style 'experiential' rather than having a theoretical relation to art, because it is possible to find different combinations of written forms in each of them that have been organised simultaneously rather than sticking to a formal canon.[71]

She sees this simultaneous intention, which is free from preconceived formal determinants, as a common feature in the arts of the Ottomans such as music, miniature, architecture and literature. Thus, architecture was not determined by preliminary drawings. Although there are few drawings left from earlier periods since most were destroyed during a fire at the Royal Architectural Workshops in the nineteenth century, from Erzen's point of view the remaining drawings give the clue that they were mainly used and developed or adapted synchronic with construction. Thus, Erzen assumes that drawings in the Ottoman practice of architecture were exceptional and she sees this as the reason for interesting features of Ottoman architecture such as the variety and diversity of detail and the multi-level relationships between architectural elements. The imperfection of symmetry in the details of architectural elements and ornamentation suggests the independence of the construction process from the fixation of drawings. She defines this as a feature of Ottoman arts in general that depended on memory and experience, rather than on the guidance of fixed notations and rules. She differentiates this type of approach as an aesthetic preference.[72]

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and Selimiye Risalesi by Dayezāde Mustafa (1741), and Risale-i Mi'mariyye on Mehmet Ağa. Ibid., 2.

71 Ibid., 3.

72 Ibid., 5.

The position of Sinan as an architect of the sixteenth-century Ottoman world is another theme Erzen frequently traces from Ottoman narratives on Sinan. She qualifies certain aspects of biographical texts written on Sinan thus:

> In the texts on Sinan works, a definite hierarchy of references – first, praises addressed to God, then to the Prophet, then to the Sultan, then to ancestors, and finally the architect in whose name the statements are made – clearly expresses the need for legitimation. The work of man, no matter how innovative, is engendered in a context already formed and ordered by God.[73]

Thus, artistic work and human creations were considered as part of a network of relational meanings that shaped the consciousness of the architect and the artist alike in the Ottoman context. Meaning worked like a stage consciousness in the artistic creation, which Erzen summarises as, "God is watching, as also is the Sultan".[74]

Erzen argues that, as part of this context, such narratives retain an experiential relationship to architecture; they render life intelligible and compact; they represent life like a performance. She holds that the monograph of the *Selimiye Risālesi* is an example of the idea of undertaking architecture as text in an attempt to understand and interpret the building through different dialogues. The text embodies parts that accentuate the experiential quality of architecture, which is valued as a performance. Its qualities are not fixed but multivalent, changing in time and with spatial orientation.[75] However, she does not elaborate clearly what she means by 'undertaking architecture as text', a phrase full of fruitful implications.

Erzen concludes her reflections on Ottoman narratives on architecture with a reminder that emphasis on the lived experience is the key aesthetic character of the sixteenth-century Ottoman culture. This emphasis supports the free form of narrative and the poetic in the written text rather than abstracting concepts from content such as avoiding fixations in the case of architecture. Thus, she maintains, in terms of *aesthesis*, that artistic creation was performative and a re-creation of tradition, rather than being merely artistic creation, where lived experience was

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73 Ibid., 6.
74 Ibid., 6.
75 Ibid., 9-10.

privileged to theory.[76] Erzen's generic interpretation of Ottoman architecture waits to be re-evaluated from context-bound, in-depth analyses of particular examples.

5.4.2. Interpreting Sinan's Architecture

One crucial way to provide further openings for analysing Sinan's architecture is the interpretative approach. It is common to limit historiographic studies to documenting and architectonically classifying historical buildings. So, a well-documented and well-preserved building would pose no problem for historians. But as Necipoğlu maintains one problem about historical buildings is that of interpretation. Historiographic discourses are interested mainly in the artistic intentions of the architect or the aesthetic choices of the patrons. However, she maintains that cultural evaluation of architecture in its own period should be another theme of curiosity for historians.[77] Her early studies on Sinan are important and exemplary in this regard for privileging an interpretative paradigm of history writing.

Documentary and classificatory methods tell little about cultural evaluation of architecture for they reduce buildings to formal abstractions of rational organisation. Lack of theoretical frameworks in the Ottoman context resulted in seeing Ottoman architecture and Sinan's architecture in particular from these limited perspectives in modern historiography. But lack of theorisation does not mean that architecture did not have cultural associations at that time. As for any artefact created by human beings, architecture in any specific context is the product and determination of a specific culture. For the Ottoman context, Necipoğlu argues, traces of cultural associations that had lost charge over time can be grasped through a number of historical texts such as endowment deeds, inscriptions on buildings, contemporary histories and travel literature. For her, historical texts may provide more insights than just being evidence for they can also embody conceptual and ideological implications about architecture.[78]

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76 Ibid., 21-24.

77 Gülru Necipoğlu, "The Süleymaniye Complex in Istanbul: An Interpretation". *Muqarnas: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture* III (1985): 92.

78 Ibid., 92.

Thus, historical architecture has several layers of meaning that are hard to reveal through one-sided interpretations. In this vein, Necipoğlu proposes different levels of analysis, such as the functional, the connotative, the formal and the literal level. She holds that the connotative level has been given least attention in the historiography of Ottoman architecture.[79] However, it has the potential to further highlight the cultural associations of architecture through popular myths and other written texts.

Focusing on the particular context of the Süleymaniye Complex Necipoğlu gives an example of a connotative analysis in which she refers to parts of *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* as her main textual source supported by other historical documents such as *nasihatnāme* literature and travelogues that refer to the complex. The common points for all these texts, she suggests, are the symbolic analogies of the mosque in cosmological terms, Koranic references and specific references to the theme of paradise. She notes the differences from contemporary architectonic analyses of the mosque and notes culturally significant architectonic elements of the mosque that are mentioned in the historical texts.[80] Thus, she concludes that cultural associations depict interesting undertakings of architecture in detail, and examples share repeated themes of power and legitimation with other levels of meaning mentioned in historical texts.[81]

Necipoğlu's early interpretative studies on Sinan are exemplary in terms of making new approaches to Ottoman narratives on architecture. She maintains that the biographical memoirs on Sinan are the only examples of their kind in Islamic architectural history and the broader conceptual implications of these texts await evaluation.[82] She finds commonalities between the information of these texts and the rising of the individual artist in the Renaissance context. Interestingly, she sees

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79 Ibid., 92.

80 Ibid., 99.

81 Ibid., 111.

82 Gülru Necipoğlu, "The Emulation of the Past in Sinan's Imperial Mosques" (paper presented at the *Uluslararası Mimar Sinan Sempozyumu*, Ankara, 1988), 177.

these biographical texts as reflecting "an acute individualism and pride in his [Sinan's] triumph over the architectural masterpieces of the past".[83]

In her article 'Challenging the Past: Sinan and the Competitive Discourse of Early-Modern Islamic Architecture', using comparative examples from the Renaissance context, Necipoğlu focuses on these biographical texts to reflect further upon Sinan's reception and re-interpretation of past influences in his projects. She suggests that Sinan took up an intense dialogue with the classical heritage of Byzantium, evidenced by his fascination with Hagia Sophia, which is well documented in the biographical texts. As she reads through other texts, this fascination with Hagia Sophia emerges as a common cultural feature of the period. She notes that there was an awareness of different styles of architecture; for example, historian Tursun bey differentiated in his text between styles of buildings such as the Ottoman style and the Persian style. He also wrote that Sultan Mehmed II commanded that his mosque be built in the design of Hagia Sophia. Therefore, deriving from what these sources convey, Necipoğlu argues that Sinan continuously challenged Hagia Sophia as well as Ottoman–Islamic architectural traditions in producing innovation with each new project.[84]

She claims that this challenge to Hagia Sophia is clear from what is transmitted in the biographical memoirs of Sinan. In both *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn* and *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* Hagia Sophia is mentioned as a great building of the past. However, the interpretation of this greatness is almost reduced to the size of its vast dome to be surpassed as the biggest challenge. Interestingly, a different and ambiguous history of Hagia Sophia is also referred to in these texts, claiming that an architect called 'Agnados' had built it. According to Necipoğlu, this frequent reference was based on a popular semi-mythical history of the building promoted in popular texts on Hagia Sophia. This will be elaborated in subsequent sections. This fact demonstrates a different perception of Hagia Sophia in the Ottoman world from its

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83 Gülru Necipoğlu, "Challenging the Past: Sinan and the Competitive Discourse of Early-Modern Islamic Architecture". *Muqarnas: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture* X (1993): 171.

84 Ibid., 171.

actual history.[85] It is also mentioned in *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn* that Sinan achieved a sense of refinement in his buildings which Hagia Sophia lacked, further demonstrating Sinan's interest in competing with Hagia Sophia. Necipoğlu interprets these implications of the biographical memoirs by concluding that Sinan critically revised, edited and distilled outlines of an earlier tradition from the example of Hagia Sophia for creating his own architectural language. To do so, he not only had to challenge Hagia Sophia but he also had to challenge his culture's own architectural tradition to intensify what Hagia Sophia was suggesting to him.[86]

Necipoğlu goes on to argue that Sinan had to regard the intertextuality of architecture throughout his career: "He needed to measure his originality against architectural examples of the past". Furthermore, as noted in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, Sinan challenged some 'Christian architects' who claimed it was impossible for Ottomans to surpass the size of the dome of Hagia Sophia when building the dome of the Selimiye Mosque. For Necipoğlu this statement may refer to the fact that Sinan was aware of the architectural achievements of sixteenth-century Europe just as representations of Süleymaniye were readily available in the West at that time. Thus, the two worlds were not living in vacuums: communication between Europe and the Ottomans was possible through campaigns, trade and travel literature.[87]

In the article Necipoğlu makes an extensive evaluation of Sinan and his architecture using biographical memoirs as her main historical sources. In this she draws a convincing example of how to approach such texts in the interpretation of architecture and the intentions of the architect. However, her definition and use of the concept of intertextuality need to be further elaborated both literally and theoretically. In this vein, her assertion of Sinan's self-criticality and dialectical thinking will be revisited in order to interpret Sinan's attitude towards the past.

In his comparison of written and oral cultures, Ong makes important comments on the concept of intertextuality to highlight differences between the attitudes of the

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85 See Gülru Necipoğlu, "The Life of an Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia after Byzantium". in *Hagia Sophia: Form. Structure and Meaning from the Age of Justinian to the Present*, ed. Ahmet Çakmak Robert Mark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

86 Necipoğlu, "Challenging the Past: Sinan and the Competitive Discourse of Early-Modern Islamic Architecture". 172-173.

87 Ibid., 174-175.

two cultures towards writing and reading. He maintains that intertextuality is a modern issue that refers to a literary or psychological commonplace between texts. According to Ong, originality and creativity are romantic notions of a print culture. Thus, these notions became hard targets in the doctrines of intertextuality. However, avoiding the influence of other texts is alien to manuscript (and oral) cultures:

> Manuscript culture had taken Intertextuality for granted. Still tied to the commonplace of tradition of the oral world, it deliberately created texts out of other texts, borrowing, adapting, sharing the common, originally oral, formulas and themes, even though it worked them up into fresh literary forms impossible without writing... [M]anuscript cultures had few if any anxieties about influence to plague them, and oral cultures had virtually none.[88]

What Ong tells us about manuscript and oral cultures is also relevant to Sinan's context. In the sixteenth-century Ottoman context, Sinan probably had a different attitude towards originality and creativity from that of the modern rhetorical tool of intertextuality, just as did the authors of the historical texts of the period. Necipoğlu's earlier work is boldly elaborated in her recent monograph on Sinan, in which she exploits a number of rich historical sources as well as Sinan texts.[89] Her recent monograph is in line with the approach of this thesis in taking an interpretive paradigm further and will be referred to frequently in the next part.

5.4.3. The Selimiye Mosque: Monument as Collective Memory

Without much emphasis on its ambivalent relationship with power, Selimiye has been interpreted as the finest artistic achievement of Architect Sinan and therefore as the symbol of high art in the Ottoman Empire. Historiography on Sinan distinguishes Selimiye as the peak and the conclusion of his architectural explorations as well as the most glorious architectural piece, which has not been repeated or rivalled since within the Ottoman context.[90]

Thus, Selimiye has been evaluated as a unique work that challenged the evaluation criteria of the history of architecture, such as its architectural origin, originality and context and the continuation of chronology. Such a view renders the architectural

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88 Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London; New York: Methuen, 1982), 133-134.

89 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*.

90 For a recent example of this view see Kuban's monograph. Kuban, *Sinan'in Sanati ve Selimiye (Sinan's Art and Selimiye)*.

origin of the Selimiye Mosque as dubious, for with its octagonal baldachin and dominating dome it is seen as a new structure that differed from Sinan's previous buildings. Therefore, it is characterised as unique and original. Ironically, Goodwin argues that "no building is an island", but Selimiye *is*, since it has not influenced other works built after it.[91] Selimiye is thus seen to disrupt the continuity of the chronology of history, marking a point of peak and a rupture from the past and the future in the context of classical Ottoman architecture. As a result of this conviction of its contextual alienation, Selimiye has been the subject of several anachronistic readings such as seeing it as a universally perfect structure or as the premodern symbol of an aesthetically pure dome.[92] Such evaluations demonstrate problems in engaging with the actual historical context of the building and instead favouring formal analyses to promote the idea of the universality of art and the ubiquity of modernist ideas.

The few architectural references of the Selimiye have been determined with the influence of the biographical narratives on Sinan. For instance, Selimiye is associated with Hagia Sophia as Sinan's challenge to surpass the size of the dome of the latter, as Sinan had claimed, in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, he had done.[93] However, such intentions expressed in the historical narratives are exaggerated in the historiography of the Selimiye to the extent that Sinan has been seen as consciously determined to build a structure that would be exemplary in the history of the world. Kuban claims that Selimiye changed the image of domed buildings in the history of world architecture, with its rational form and structure, with the unity of the dome and its substructure, and with its structural and geometric purity.[94] Similarly, Grabar sees the Selimiye as a logical end to the sequence that began with Justinian's engineers, and perhaps even with Hadrian's in the example of the Pantheon. He argues, "...he [Sinan] brought a certain domical tradition to its logical purity,

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91 Goodwin, *Sinan: Ottoman Architecture and Its Values Today*, 108-109.

92 Grabar, "The Meanings of Sinan's Architecture". 282.

93 Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān ve Tezkiretü'l- Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları), (Architect Sinan's Memoirs)*, 81.

94 Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye (Sinan's Art and Selimiye)*, 41-42.

somewhat in the way in which Cezanne and the Cubists brought a logical end to centuries of mimetic representation".[95]

Other than proclaiming Sinan as the 'world genius' and the Selimiye as 'world artwork', such interpretations do not help us to understand the building in its own socio-cultural context. However, as desired by their owners and builders, monuments have an impact on the people in their own milieu, and these impacts can go beyond and deviate from the original intentions of the artists and the owners. A monument can thus embody and manifest clues to a collective desire that is worth exploring through contextual analyses. The mnemonic character of the Selimiye Mosque can tell us more than its being the expression of high art as Sinan's masterpiece and the symbol of Ottoman power. Akın maintains that, unlike text, which is ideological in nature, reading architecture in socio-cultural contexts will make a contribution to historiography. Therefore, relating it to the socio-cultural circumstances of its period can allow a reading of the Selimiye Mosque that will reflect the culture and society in which it was created.[96]

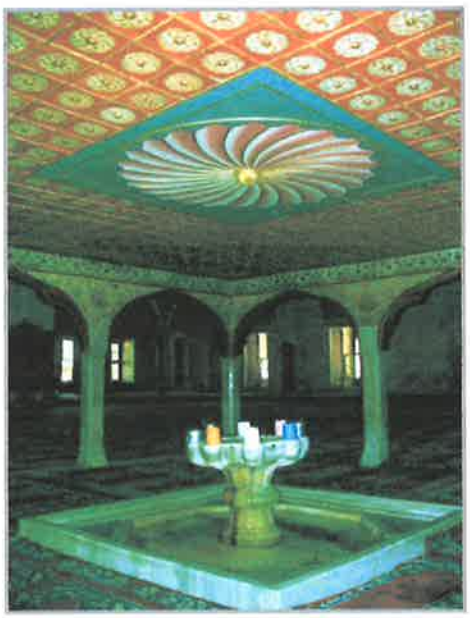


Figure 22 The müezzin mahfili and the pool underneath, Selimiye Mosque, Edirne, 2004.

Such interpretive readings of the monument are rare. Akın's article 'The Müezzin Mahfili and the Pool of the Selimiye Mosque in Edirne' is an important example in this regard. In the article Akın speculates on the bizarre situation of the *müezzin mahfili* in the organisation of the interior space of the mosque. A *müezzin Mahfili* is generally built in mosques to echo the voice of the imam during religious ritual so that it can be heard in the large space by everyone attending the ritual. Thus, in earlier mosques it has usually been articulated inconspicuously into the body of the mosque. However, in the Selimiye, the *müezzin mahfili* is situated in the most

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95 Grabar, "The Meanings of Sinan's Architecture". 282.

96 Günkut Akın, "Doğan Kuban'la "Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye" Adlı Kitabı Üzerine Söyleşi ". *Mimarlik* 35, no. 284 (1998): 28.

conspicuous part of the interior; the centre (figure 22). Moreover, it is built in the form of a square, with a decorated wooden ceiling, and a pool underneath like a structure within a structure. The pool is in the form of an octagon within a square and is adorned by an elevated goblet-shaped drinking bowl in the centre. The ceiling is composed of small squares which divide each side into 24 modules, each having a painted and carved whorl motif in the middle. In the centre of the ceiling, there is a larger painted whorl motif (the wheel of heavens) measuring 8x8 modules, or one-ninth of the whole ceiling. From these careful formal articulations and modulations and its conspicuous positioning, Akın argues that the *müezzin mahfili* of the Selimiye Mosque was intended to have symbolic qualities. Besides this, he sees use of the pool in the centre of the mosque as a symbolic feature rather than a functional one, such that the pool water was probably meant for drinking and not for ablution.[97]

In search of these implications, Akın wrote on the origins of the pool motif in two different major typologies of architecture in the Islamic context, namely the sacred and the royal. From his review of earlier periods of Turkish–Islamic architecture in Anatolia he found that the use of the pool motif inside *zawiyas* and *zawiya* mosques was common where a heterodox interpretation of Islam was promoted by the dervish lodges and Sufi orders. These religious buildings were an alternative to mosques in the rural areas of Anatolia. They served as an intermediary between the Sunni state and the heterodox common population, among whom Shamanist influences of their earlier beliefs were still prevalent. The architectural organisation of these buildings featured two, and sometimes more, centres, one of which usually had a pool in the middle.

With the centralisation of the power of the Ottoman state after the fifteenth century, the use of pools in the interior spaces of mosques slowly decreased and then disappeared and the multicentric space organisation became a unified space organised around a single centre. Thus, Akın concludes that the elimination of the pool in the unified spaces of Ottoman mosques referred to the elimination of a second centre that somehow coincided with the establishment of absolutism and the

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97 Günkut Akın, "The Müezzin Mahfili and Pool of the Selimiye Mosque in Edirne". *Muqarnas: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture* 12 (1995): 64-66.

increasing repression of heterodox beliefs.[98] He gives supporting information to demonstrate the importance of a symbolic pool and a central axis in rituals of the heterodox sects of rural Alevis and Bektashis. Despite the repressive attitudes of the Ottoman state, the Bektashi sect influenced the janissaries of the Ottoman army until they were abolished in 1826.[99]

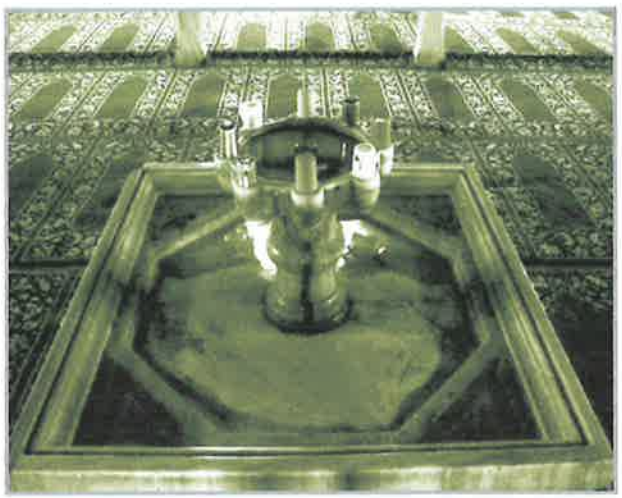


Figure 23 The Pool in the Selimiye Mosque, Edirne, 2004.

The second source Akın chooses to trace the use of the pool motif is royal spaces. It was a long tradition to use the pool motif in royal spaces in pre-Islamic civilisations of the Mongols, Sassanians and Chinese, which influenced the palatial spaces of the Islamic rulers. Ottoman rulers had pools in their palaces, and Mehmed II's octagonal pool in the now-demolished Cihannüma Kiosk of Edirne is a prominent example. Akın argues that the octagonal pool was symbolically related to the image of heaven in the Islamic context, where *hasht behisht* (eight heavens) was frequently used as a palatial type (figure 23).[100]

From his reviews and reflections, Akın interprets the Selimiye Mosque as both victory and homage. For him, the centralisation of religious space in the Ottoman context was not essentially a structural evolution, but an ideological one: "Although it was never put into words, the god–ruler identification was always an ideological requirement with the Ottomans". In such a world order Selimiye was a macrocosm of the Islamic dogma and Ottoman power whereas the *müezzin mahfili* was a microcosm representing an ancient world and its repressed images. It is as if to accentuate this ancient world's loss of power that the Shamanist sacred space was re-used in Selimiye after an absence of 150 years with the re-introduction of the *müezzin mahfili*. As homage, the *müezzin mahfili* was built at a time when three

98 Ibid., 66-70.
99 Ibid., 70-75.
100 Ibid., 75-76.

unsuccessful campaigns of the Ottoman army against the Safavids and its own people had taken place.[101]

Akın's interpretation of the Selimiye is an outstanding example of an approach to the mnemonic qualities of monumental architecture, outside the positivist frameworks of seeing it as a work of art owned by its artist and patron. In relation to the Ottoman narratives on architecture, historiographic approaches that interpret the Selimiye as a monument of power do not find merit in focusing on the monograph of the *Selimiye Risālesi,* for its narrative regarding the mosque falls outside the major focus of their frameworks.[102] Nevertheless, Akın's mnemonic interpretation frequently refers to what was written in the *Selimiye Risālesi* about the *müezzin mahfili.*[103]

To sum up, previous approaches to Ottoman architecture and Sinan have relied mainly on formal analyses. In recent interpretive approaches the emphasis on form and style has been replaced by contextual analyses. This thesis will make a further attempt to make a context-bound reading by relying mainly on Ottoman narratives and how they evaluate Ottoman architecture.

6. Analysing Narratives on Architecture

Ottoman narratives on architecture have been used widely as historical data to comment on Sinan's life, Ottoman architecture in general and the status of the architect in the Ottoman world, and to judge the authenticity of historical facts about architecture. These narratives stand apart from official historical texts of the time such as bureaucratic, legal/religious and historiographic discourses.[104] Their textual character, being between history and literature, poses complexities in approaching them as pure historical evidence or pure works of literature. Kuban

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101 The Safavids promoted Shiite doctrine that featured heterodox tones, as opposed to the Sunni doctrine of the Ottoman State. Ibid., 79.

102 Even in a monograph of 264 pages *Selimiye Risalesi* is passed over lightly in two pages. Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye (Sinan's Art and Selimiye)*, 153-155.

103 Author Dayezāde's remarks in the *Selimiye Risālesi* on the location of the *mahfil* within the mosque as to open disputes is referred to as historical evidence to ground the argument. Akın, "The Müezzin Mahfili and Pool of the Selimiye Mosque in Edirne". 63, 78, 79.

104 Tanyeli generally groups the discourses of the time under these three topics. Uğur Tanyeli, "Osmanlı Saray Kadınlarının Banilik Rolü (16-18. yy.): Görünenin Ardında Ne Var? ". *Milli Saraylar: Tarih, Kultur, Sanat, Mimarlik*, no. 1 (1999): 77.

indicates this complexity in his evaluations of the nature of the architectural knowledge conveyed in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* and *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* when he expresses doubts about whether the narratives belong to Architect Sinan or author Sai.[105]

Narratives have rarely been a major focus of study in terms of understanding their interpretation of architecture in their own historical context. Erzen's previously undertaken article 'Aesthetics and Aesthesis in Ottoman Art and Architecture' is a rare example of an attempt to evaluate Ottoman narratives on architecture. Erzen argues that Ottoman narrative texts retain an experiential relationship to architecture. She holds, in terms of *aesthesis*, that artistic creation was performative.[106] In this way she sees narratives as windows through which glimpses of experiential aspects of architecture in the Ottoman world can be seen. However, as she maintains, the challenge of dealing with the double meanings of the metaphoric expressions in these texts makes them difficult for a contemporary interpreter to access.[107] The difficulty of interpretation emerges from some assumptions about the context of the texts in general.

6.1. Orality and Literacy

It is a hard task to understand these narratives from a contemporary perspective. The first problem arises from the difficulty of maintaining the perception of such premodern texts from a modern point of view. The disparity between modes of thinking was not only a matter of distinction between oral and written cultures, but was also marked by the use of the printing press. Ong argues that the perception of texts changed with the introduction of the printing press, which both reinforced and transformed the effects of writing on thought and expression. For him, manuscript culture in the West remained oral although hand-writing was deeply interiorised until the introduction of the printing press to Europe in the fifteenth century. This is because hearing rather than sight dominated the noetic world and written material was used mainly to serve hearing. In contrast to (hand-written) manuscripts,

105 Doğan Kuban. Preface.Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l- Bünyan ve Tezkiretü'l- Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları), (Architect Sinan's Memoirs)*, 7-9.

106 Erzen, "Aesthetics and Aisthesis in Ottoman Art and Architecture". 8-24.

107 Ibid., 2.

contemporary writing promotes the advance of seeing. It is sight-dominant while manuscripts were memory-dominant. Thus, alphabetic letterpress print organised the space of writing in the service of sight.[108]

Erzen stresses that Ottoman culture was by no means only oral by indicating the common interest in authorship. However, it is possible to call Ottoman culture a manuscript culture and as such it can be considered a derivative of oral culture since Ong's determinations about manuscript culture seem to work for the Ottomans as well: "Manuscript culture had preserved a feeling for a book as a kind of utterance, an occurrence in the course of conversation, rather than as an object". In support of Ong's view, Piterberg accentuates the significance of the effectiveness of oral address in the expressive articulation of Ottoman historiographic texts.[109]

Accordingly, it is difficult to find in manuscripts features such as title pages that give the writing an object status. Because of this manuscripts are usually listed and categorised by their first words.[110] For similar reasons, Ottoman texts are difficult to categorise. Although they have titles, these are in the form of long sentences that reflect the nature of the narrative discursively rather than mere labels. In some cases a manuscript could have more than one title; for example, the Topkapı Revan room copy of *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, which was also called *Mimarnāme*.[111] Different versions of Sinan's narratives illustrate the irregularity of naming. Moreover, the terms *tezkere, risāle* and *menakıb-nāme* could be used to qualify the same text. To illustrate, contemporary approaches group texts on Architect Sinan under the category of *tezkere*, while the seventeenth-century text on architecture by Cafer Efendi calls these early texts on Sinan '*menakıb-nāme*'. Cafer says: "...before this, *menakıb-nāmes* (books of deeds) were written and composed about some of the chief architects..."[112]

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108 Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, 117-119.

109 Gabriel Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), 67.

110 Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, 125.

111 *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān,* Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Revan, No. 1456.

112 Efendi Cafer, *Risale-i Mi'mariyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, ed. Howard Crane (Leiden ; New York: E.J. Brill, 1987), 6.

Another reason for the difficulty in understanding and interpreting these texts is closely related to the change in the transaction of meaning in modern times. As the connection realm between thought and phenomena, concepts belong to the modern mode of thinking. Mary Carruthers argues that the main difference between the premodern and the modern world is that the former was mnemonic while the latter is documentary.[113] This explanation is similar to Ong's in that mnemonic refers to oral culture while documentary refers to literacy. The change in the transaction of meaning from oral culture to literacy and to digital culture is an ongoing process, extending the gap between thought and phenomena. In the sixteenth-century Ottoman context, reliance on memory and oral culture was pervasive both in learning and teaching. In his book on the sciences of the time, Taşköprülü-zāde frequently accentuates the role of hearing in learning science. Referring to historian İbni Kesīr's education he asserts, "He listened to most of his books from Hafız Müzi". He expresses the influence of the same historian by saying "his words were worn on ears like earrings". In Taşköprülü-zāde's book hearing and memorising are the two most repeated intellectual acts, suggesting the importance of orality in scholarship.[114] Therefore, it would not be wrong to assume that facts were distorted through conveyance, affected and reshaped by personal tones. These assumptions call for a review of expectations about literal accuracy.

Coming to the eighteenth century it is interesting to find in the Ottoman context an interest in consulting books. For example, Dayezāde checked the authenticity of a statement he had read from Solak-zāde's history book in Sinan's *Mimarnāme*. It is also interesting that when he presented the information that Selimiye's dome was larger than Hagia Sophia, his friends asked him to show evidence, and when he used Solak-zāde's history book as evidence, they said it was not wise to depend on only one source and asked for further evidence. However, it is difficult to generalise from such an anecdote as even in the eighteenth century Dayezāde referred to oral narratives in writing his *Risāle*.

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113 Mary J. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 8.

114 Tasköprülü-zade, *Mevzuat'ül-Ulüm* (Istanbul: Er-tu, 1975), 208-213.

6.2. Structure, Legitimation and Expression

Another crucial issue is the evaluation of texts in relation to their context. Certain structural and formal articulations of the historical manuscripts may be hard to make sense of from a contemporary point of view because they embody the mental attitudes and conventions of their time. Sam Kinser suggests that the use of paratexts as critical tools to interrogate the nature of a historical text gives clues to how the text is interlaced with its context.[115] While they deserve closer analysis from an expert point of view, it is possible to contend that paratexts in Ottoman narratives on architecture are roughly organised in a common fashion. Sacred references are usually written or underlined in red. Side notes usually accompany the hand-written main text. The titles and subtitles are usually long, sometimes a whole descriptive sentence. The texts without exception begin by addressing God, the Prophet and the ruler of the time, and sometimes other saints, the four caliphs and sons or viziers of the sultans are also mentioned depending on the intentions of the author and the architect. The length of such addressing can vary from a few lines to a few pages. The architect becomes the main subject of the text only after this detailed addressing. Kinser maintains that this type of expression was quite common in premodern writings in the Western context as well, as a result of the author's endeavour to relate his (rarely her) text to an ultimate source, an origin, in order to increase its verbal power. Therefore, he argues, premodern texts were expressive as the author was revealing an ultimate truth, whereas today's texts are communicative as the authors are concentrating on claims of truth.[116]

For the Ottoman context, Erzen and Walter Andrews support the view that this type of addressing was a way of textual legitimation that related the text to the broader context of a world order based on authority and religion.[117] Williams further argues that such patterns of expression are not only formal clichés, but they also express important clues to the interpretation of authority in the Ottoman community. What

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115 Sam Kinser, *Rabelais's Carnival: Text, Context and Metatext* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1990), 17.

116 Ibid., 183.

117 Erzen, "Aesthetics and Aisthesis in Ottoman Art and Architecture". 6. Walter G. Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song: Ottoman Lyric Poetry* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1985), 92.

seems from a contemporary point of view to be over-praising of authority in Ottoman poetry is interpreted by Williams as a poetic formulation that establishes the monarch as an object of affection.[118] Long addressings in the Ottoman narratives on architecture validate this generic view about Ottoman literature.

In narratives, prose and verse are used to support each other in variations. Sometimes the verse reiterates what is said in the prose in a poetic expression as if it promotes multiplicity of readings by following the prose or the verse or both. Most of the texts finish with the date of authorship. It was a common practice to imply the date of authorship by means of a calculation based on the lines of the poetry, written like Cafer Efendi does in the end of the *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*.[119]

The formal conventions on which narratives are based affect their interpretation. However, it is not possible to limit the assertion of the narratives and the purpose behind their authorship to mere literary conventions. Narratives have the explicit intention of expressing Ottoman perception of architects and architecture.

6.3. Texts as Evidence

Ottoman narratives on architecture are from a world that is remote both in time and culture, posing problems for understanding. Therefore, they can easily be dismissed as irrational or historically inaccurate as they are far from the habitual truth claims of contemporary historiographic approaches to Ottoman architecture. Ironically however, they exhibit a window to a world remote in time and they are themselves constructions of that remote time. Despite dangers of misapprehension and misinterpretation they are inevitably consulted as sources of evidence on Ottoman architecture between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.

In relation to narratives on Sinan, a big issue is to reveal to what degree Sinan was involved in their writing. Pointing to numerous side notes and corrections in red ink in the manuscripts, Necipoğlu concludes that Sinan's involvement in the writing was certain. She holds that, as unfinished drafts, the manuscripts testify a process of

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118 Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song: Ottoman Lyric Poetry*, 92.

119 Efendi Cafer, *Risale-i Mi'mariyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, 109.

editing which we have no reason to doubt was done by Sinan himself.[120] Although texts on Sinan relate many details about the life and status of the architect, modern approaches find such information insufficient as concrete historical data. Other historical documents on Sinan such as the two endowment deeds *(waqfiyya)* give further details about his private life and possessions.[121] Another confusing matter is in the nature of the narratives; for example, despite the knowledge that the second group of Sinan texts were penned by Sai, both *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* and *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* are first-person narratives in which Sinan tells about himself. Therefore, there is confusion about persons in the narrative; it is as if the narrative creates its own perspective by flattening Sinan and Sai into a fictive first person who represents Sinan the architect to future generations.

The inventories and glossaries included in the Sinan narratives and Mehmed Ağa's *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* are confusing from quantitative and statistical points of view. First, they contrast with the poetic expression of the narrative parts. Second, their comprehensiveness is contentious. Kuran's detailed analysis of the Sinan narratives shows his frustration at not finding a concrete correspondence between the dates of the narratives and the numbers and dates of the buildings included in each text. The total number of buildings listed is different in each narrative. Some buildings were constructed later than the texts they were listed in, and *Tuḥfetü'l-Mi'mārīn* includes more buildings than *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye*, although its date of authorship was supposedly earlier.[122]

Risāle-i Mi'māriyye written for Architect Mehmed Ağa in the seventeenth century is in accordance with the genre started by Architect Sinan. The *Risāle* is a curious document on architecture, since Mehmed Ağa was not as important a historical figure as Sinan, and this text has not been the topic of extensive research. Except for Crane's translation, it is explicitly mentioned only in a monograph by Zeynep Nayır

120 Necipoğlu, "The Emulation of the Past in Sinan's Imperial Mosques". 177.

121 Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye (Sinan's Art and Selimiye)*, 30.

122 Kuran, *Sinan: The Grand Old Master of Ottoman Architecture*, 27-30. For a more recent and detailed comparison of inventories included in Sinan texts see Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 558- 562.

on the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.[123] In addition to information about the architect, the *Risāle* contributes new information on survey details and a large glossary of architectural terms. Moreover, the text makes comparisons between architecture and music. However, in both presenting information on architecture and relating architecture to music, author Cafer's intentions are discursive rather than informative. Thus, seemingly quantitative details and correspondences are difficult to base on rational grounds from a contemporary point of view. The same problem surfaces in the *Selimiye Risālesi*. The author's preoccupation with numbers in relating the mosque to sacred references is far from explicable through a logical relationship between form and content. Although Kuban admits that the text provides rich material for contemporary researchers in analogy and semantics, as a historian with strong views about Sinan he says:

> This [the text] is clearly the invention of a religious myth, based on the existence of a mosque but without any rational background. This myth has no connection with the fundamentally structural and aesthetic anxieties of Sinan.[124]

In sum, the reasons to undermine Ottoman narratives as sources of evidence on architecture arise from expectations about their informative nature. However, they do convey messages as evidence of their historical context demanding a redefinition of evidence and methodological ways of approaching evidence. Faroqhi includes all literary works, from those written for a limited audience to those written for a large anonymous readership, in the category of historical evidence.[125] This definition poses no problem for our undertaking of Ottoman narratives as historical evidence. However, Faroqhi draws attention to the lack of communication between comparative literature and historiographic studies on the Ottoman context. Therefore, insufficient knowledge about the literary features of some documents, such as books of deeds on saints, for long made historians pursue futile quests for concrete information. Faroqhi urges historians to be careful about using such documents as evidence.[126]

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123 Zeynep Nayır, *Osmanlı Mimarlığında Sultan Ahmet Külliyesi ve Sonrası* (Istanbul: Istanbul Teknik Üniversitesi, Mimarlik Fakültesi, 1975).

124 Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye (Sinan's Art and Selimiye)*, 160-161.

125 Suraiya Faroqhi, *Osmanlı Tarihi Nasıl İncelenir? [Approaching Ottoman History]*, trans. Zeynep Altok (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999), 210.

126 Ibid., 211.

Piterberg further warns about the tyranny of the documentary paradigm of historical knowledge in Ottoman studies, in which texts are evaluated according to their factual or referential quality. She suggests going beyond a rigid hierarchy of sources that gives priority to the informational ones and uses others only as supplementary or sees them as redundant.[127] Thus, expectations of a text being comprehensive and explanatory should be suspended and understanding should become the ultimate aim in order to get different insights from texts.

6.4. Texts as Literature

Ottoman narratives on architecture are all products of literature, although according to some scholars they are not very perfect examples of style and expression.[128] This is seen as a problem that blurs the historical significance of information related to architecture. For example, Kuban sees verses in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* on the Selimiye Mosque as a labyrinth of images that gives almost no information about the mosque.[129] Gürhan Tümer argues that texts on Sinan even lack the value of being manuals on architecture, unlike Vitruvius' *De Architectura* or Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*. The texts on Sinan do not highlight his design and construction techniques and space understanding in a scientific way. For Tümer, these texts are penned within the framework of Ottoman court poetry (*divan*) by using some basic poetry techniques such as analogy (*teşbih*). Accordingly, he believes they are related more to literature than to architecture.[130]

However, it is important to reflect further on how the literary quality of these texts affects their relationship with architecture and history. Historian Cemal Kafadar sees literary sources as important documents of Ottoman socio-cultural history. He maintains that the secondary role of narrative and literary sources is a result of both a preoccupation with concrete data on specific events and a compartmentalisation of

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127 Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play*, 5.

128 Celebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l- Bünyan ve Tezkiretü'l- Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları), (Architect Sinan's Memoirs)*, 8. Efendi Cafer, *Risale-i Mi'mariyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, 7. Zeki Sönmez, *Mimar Sinan İle İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler* (Istanbul: Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1988), 17.

129 Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye (Sinan's Art and Selimiye)*, 158.

130 Gürhan Tümer, "Iki Osmanlı Klasiği: "Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān" ve "Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye"". *Mimarlık* 40, no. 311 (2003): 60-61.

the disciplines of Ottoman history and Ottoman literature.[131] Therefore, it is possible to say that seeing historical merit in Ottoman narratives on architecture is closely related to our conception of history and literature in relation to architecture.

Hayden White argues that the radical opposition of history to literature needs to be revised.[132] History writing is different from the past it reflects upon. History writing builds a past out of what is exhibited through historical documents. Therefore, there is a paradoxical relationship between the analysed past and historical works produced from historical documents: "the more we know about the past, the more difficult it is to generalise about it".[133] In White's view, historical narratives are not different from literature in being a fictive-construction except for the fact that the historian deals with 'real' while the novelist deals with 'imagined' events.[134] From White's perspective, narratives on Ottoman architecture are historical–literary documents that are presentations of the past that are important sources of knowledge. The basic problem of interpretation is not whether knowledge conveyed by them is facts. The problem is to accept that their fictive quality still embodies valuable clues that cannot be undermined as historical data.

Andrews maintains that approaches to Ottoman *divan* poetry are determined by the interpretation of Ottoman culture in general. Ottoman culture no longer exists; there are risks in questioning this culture that arise from the political, cultural and racial beliefs of today. Contemporary criticism of Ottoman *divan* poetry focuses on its being an elite art produced for a very limited audience that had nothing to do with the practices of the everyday. It is rendered as a literature genre that repeated early Persian and Arabic examples with little innovation. Moreover, it is found to be

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131 Cemal Kafadar, "Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul and First-Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature". *Studia Islamica* LXIX (1989): 122. In his more recent work he re-emphasised this: "The transmission of ... narratives over time, place, milieux, and media presents many problems that have not been dealt with. The currently rather sharp boundaries that exist in Turkish studies between historical and literary–historical scholarship must be crossed in order to deal with some important questions that arise from...intricately interrelated body of narratives". Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 64.

132 Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact". in *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding*, ed. Henry Kozicki Robert H. Canary (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 45.

133 Ibid., 43.

134 Ibid., 60-61.

difficult and esoteric. The general tendency of Turkish scholars has been that the 'true' expression of Turkish culture is folk literature as opposed to *divan* literature.[135] Andrews believes that most of these comments are prejudice-driven and unfair. He requests a suspension of belief in order to provide openness for a new perspective. He argues:

> It appears that the Ottoman *divan* poet produced a poetry that is no more Persian than Chaucer's poetry was French or Milton's was Latin or Goethe's was English. *Divan* poetry may have been produced for the elite, but then what 'high culture' poetry is not? As for the 'difficult' or 'esoteric' features of the poetry, they undoubtedly exist, they no more comprise 'the meaning' of the poetry than do many simple and not-at-all esoteric features. After all, in a university classroom Shakespeare may appear quite difficult and esoteric, but it is unlikely that such qualities are what drew crowds to the pit at the Globe Theater.[136]

Thus, he maintains that Ottoman *divan* poetry tells about both the individual and the community. In *divan* poetry two aspects of human experience, which he calls 'historical vision' and 'poetic vision', are interwoven interactively. Although historical vision seems more reliable in referring to the facts, he accentuates the importance of recognising poetic vision as truths of attitudes and the Ottoman interpretation of reality.[137] Therefore, this poetry gives interesting insights about the individual, the community and individuals' perceptions and expressions of shared understanding.[138] The question of to what extent shared understanding was accessible to the non-elite classes of society is a complex one that needs a close exploration of particular sources.

To sum up, how we evaluate the knowledge conveyed in the narratives is shaped by our own understanding and expectations about Ottoman history, literature and architecture in general. Therefore, the interpretation of the Ottoman narratives on architecture first requires a new framework to evaluate Ottoman architecture itself.

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135 Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song: Ottoman Lyric Poetry*, 14-16.

136 Ibid., 17.

137 Ibid., 91-92.

138 Ibid., 186-187. For current perceptions of *divan* literature in Turkey see Nihad Sami Banarlı. "Divan Şiirinde Sosyal Çizgiler". *Hayat Tarih Mecmuası* (1966): 10-14, Murat Belge. "Divan Şiiri Üstüne..". *Hürriyet Gösteri* 2, no. 17 (1982): 72 and İlber Ortaylı. "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Değişimi İçinde Divan Şiiri" *Hürriyet Gösteri* 2, no. 17 (1982): 73-74.

7. Meaning, Hermeneutics and Architecture

> Why do we feel cold when we read Ottoman architecture history? Were these buildings actually this much cold? Are Sinan's or Sedefkār Mehmet Ağa's design processes devoid of the passion in Baki's or Nedim's lines? Is artistic creation merely a cold-blooded fiction? Are architectural productions nothing more than the sum of materials and craftsmanship noted in construction notebooks? Should we be content with the concreteness of data and survey? Does an architecture historian read the texts or the buildings? Does the structure follow meaning or the meaning follow structure? Or else is there no meaning in these buildings? Are they solely structures? As if the prosperous dome in front of the *mihrab* continually thrives and walls and piers cease to carry it: six piers, eight piers, one half dome, two half domes etc. In other words, it is like Lego. Eventually, the Lego must compete. Of course with the Hagia Sophia.[139]

Akın makes these introductory comments in his critique of the positivist paradigm that is prevalent in Turkish historiography on Ottoman architecture. He points to the absence of studies on the meaning of Ottoman architecture. He maintains that seeing a building merely as an object of function or aesthetics is an impediment in the way of studies on meaning, in which buildings should be evaluated in relation to social and cultural phenomena. The positivist paradigm renders Sinan's architecture as functional solutions, based on function and structure and realised by the repetition of traditional forms. However, he holds that positivism allows us partially to see the truth, whereas pragmatism avoids an integral relationship with the object of inquiry.[140] Therefore, the reductionist rationality of positivism, which rejects the togetherness of rationality and symbolism in Ottoman architecture needs revision.[141]

In a more general perspective, Richard Coyne argues that objectivist trends in architecture often promote the Cartesian divide between the object and the subject. The most prominent trend is to see architectural meaning in terms of function. Another is the rendering of architecture as text, as part of a sign or symbol system. Or architecture can be seen as a syntactic object governed by rules of composition. Semantic conceptions such as essentially poetic building, building as spectacle or building as art object are also counted among objectivist trends. The common points

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139 Akın, "Mimarlık Tarihinde Pozitivizmi Aşma Sorunu ve Osmanlı Merkezi Mekan İkonolojisi Bağlamında Edirne Selimiye Camisi'ndeki Müezzin Mahfili". 1.

140 Ibid., 1-3.

141 Ibid., 4.

among these trends are conceptualisation through abstraction and the decontextualisation of the complexity of everyday life.[142]

The main problem in the interpretation of meaning in Ottoman architecture arises from scholarly distancing from the context. The marginalisation of Ottoman narratives is an outcome of this general approach. A recent hermeneutical study on architecture that dissolves the object–subject dichotomy in dealing with meaning in architecture will be introduced as a methodological alternative.

7.1. Hermeneutics: The Relevance of Jones' Study

In his book *Twin City Tales*, historian of religion Lindsay Jones constructs a hermeneutical paradigm to critique the apparent similarity between two Mesoamerican cities: Tula and Chichèn Itzá. He contends that "religio–historical phenomena is always more elusive" in a doubling of meaning within a conjoined familiarity and foreignness. In fact, this is part of the problem of understanding life at large, where the universality of hermeneutical reflection manifests itself.[143] Based on the Heideggerian shift from objectivist to relational understanding, Jones grounds his conceptualisations of religious architecture on Gadamer's hermeneutics in the search for non-objectifying modes of disclosure.[144] Later, he further develops

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142 Richard Coyne, "Inconspicuous Architecture" (paper presented at the *Gadamer, Action and Reason* Conference, 1991), 66-67.

143 Lindsay Jones, *Twin City Tales: A Hermeneutical Reassessment of Tula and Chichen Itza* (Niwot, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 1995), 187.

144 Etymologically, hermeneutics shares a common root with the Greek word *hermeneuein*, which means to interpret or to understand. The roots of the word go back to *Hermes*, the messenger god of the Greeks. *Hermes* as the messenger between other gods has been represented in Greek mythology as the inventor who created meanings through the medium of language. Modern hermeneutics can be described as "the method of interpretation first of text, and secondly of the whole social, historical and psychological world". Although modern hermeneutics heavily relied on the interpretation of texts, Heidegger has transformed hermeneutics from a methodological discipline in to an ontological one. Heidegger's subjectivity is especially important for the interdisciplinary influence of hermeneutics. This subjectivity has been the main theme of Gadamer's hermeneutics, extended to the boundaries of the human sciences, in which architecture and history are included. Hermeneutics has an attitude towards language that is distinct from that of semiology and structuralism, with the conviction that rather than being a mere system of signs, language has an essential relationship with existence. Ibid., 188. Alan D. Schrift Gayle L. Ormiston, *The Hermeneutic Tradition: From Ast to Ricoeur* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1990), 8. Simon Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 172. *Hans-Georg* Gadamer, Truth and Method, (London: Sheed&Ward, 1975), 431-2. For the difference between structuralism and hermeneutics see Thomas Kaehao Seung. *Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.) For an

his conceptualisations on hermeneutics and architecture in general in the *Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture: Experience, Interpretation, Comparison.*[145] He argues:

> Hermeneutical reflection is crisis driven. It arises from the encounter with otherness or strangeness. Hermeneutics is the disciplined exercise of imagination. By the grace of hermeneutics, distant meanings are brought close, the seemingly absurd begins to 'make sense', the strange becomes familiar, and bridges arise between the once and the now.[146]

Jones' arguments have important implications for meaning in architecture in general beyond the context of the history of religions. The strength of his ideas belongs to his creative reading and construction of concepts in relation to Gadamer's hermeneutics regarding the experiential nature of sacred architecture in particular and architecture in general.

The relevance of Jones' proposal to the Ottoman context is evident, although its relationship with Ottoman narratives is indirect. First, being temporally and culturally distant, Ottoman architecture has an elusive context that poses difficulties for understanding. Second, as Ottoman narratives show, meaning in Ottoman architecture was closely related to religion, belonging to a premodern culture in which art and religion were not separate categories. Jones' insights define a new framework to evaluate the perspective of texts towards architecture, first by providing a new perspective on architecture itself. This experiential perspective and the universality of hermeneutical reflection are the agencies that make the connection between Jones' work and the case of Ottoman narratives on architecture legitimate. A critical review of Jones' study will be made in the following four sub-sections with reference to Gadamer's four metaphors for hermeneutics: play,

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ideological critique of Gadamer's approach to language and tradition see Jürgen Habermas. "A Review of Gadamer's Truth and Method". In *Understanding and Social Inquiry*, edited by Thomas A. McCarthy R. Dallmayr, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), 335-63. For the implications of this literature for the interpretation of symbolism in non-Western architecture see Selen Morkoç. "Art History and Architectural Symbolism: A Hermeneutical Critique". *Architectural Theory Review ATR* 8, no. 2 (2003): 122-32.

145 Lindsay Jones, *Monumental Occasions: Reflections on the Eventfulness of Religious Architecture (The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture)* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Uni. Press, 2000). For a review of Jones' work in the context of North America see Williams, Peter W. "Sacred Space in North America". *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (AAR) 72, no. 3 (September 2002): 593-610.

146 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 4.

dialogue, tradition and effective-historical consciousness.[147] Jones respectively associates these metaphors with the experience of architecture, the undertaking of architecture as textual metaphor, the mediative role of architecture in time, and his proposal of reception histories.

7.2. Experience and Architecture: Play

Jones maintains that (religious) architecture is a space of ontological plenitude of meaning.[148] It is simply symbolic in its embodying of multivalent meanings. However, he does not use the word 'symbolic' as something that denotes something else with a single precise referent. On the contrary, by relying on Gadamer's definition of the symbolic, he expresses its ambivalent nature: "Symbolic is best glossed at that which is half-revealed and half-concealed".[149] Jones makes a convincing reading of Gadamer regarding the experience of art as a hermeneutical reflection through which an understanding of symbolic messages is sought. Gadamer's definition of the symbolic covers all art forms including architecture. Gadamer also finds a similarity between aesthetic experience and religious experience.[150] Architecture is both a utilitarian materiality and an embodiment of meaning. From the relationship of architecture with art and the similarity of aesthetic and religious experiences, Jones derives the conclusion that religious architecture specifically constitutes an outstanding illustration of a hermeneutical reflection in which the contrast between utilitarian materiality and richness of

147 Although substantial in the body of this thesis, this four-part review and critique is a condensed form of Jones' extensive first volume, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, together with a focus on Gadamer's *Truth and Method.*

148 Throughout his book Jones uses *religious* (*sacred*) architecture as an elusive term, a building's sacredness is determined only by its symbolic charge. He argues that an elevator or a shopping mall can also be called 'sacred architecture' depending on the intention of the human beholder. [Written communication with Lindsay Jones.] Thus, I suggest that his proposal can be extended to cover architecture in general in the discussion of meaning.

149 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 23.

150 On the sacred nature of art Gadamer says, "A work of art always has something sacred about it. True, a religious work of art or a monument on show in a museum can no longer be desecrated in the same sense as one that has remained in its original place. But this means only that it has in fact already suffered an injury, in that it has become an object in a museum. Obviously this is true not only of religious works of art. We sometimes have the same feeling in an antique shop when the old pieces on sale still have some traces of intimate life about them; it seems somehow scandalous to us, a kind of offence to piety, a profanation. Ultimately every work of art has something about it that protests against profanation". Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 133.

meaning is extreme.[151] Interestingly, in covering different contexts, Jones claims that the notion of the revealment and concealment of symbolism can be traced in any form of sacred architecture, from Greek labyrinths to the prehistoric menhirs of Britain and France. This is a way of comparing different architectures that at once makes lighter the difference between masterfully constructed works and ordinary products. As if to accentuate his position as far from elitist comparisons of stylistic divisions, Jones says, "No built form, however plain, however meticulously planned, is, in principle, exempt from this quality of ontological plenitude".[152]

Ontological plenitude embodies multivalence of meanings in architecture that raises the need to question the concept of experience itself. Objectivist trends in deciphering the exact message of a symbolic meaning are unsympathetic towards accentuating human experience as an evaluation criterion for reading meanings from architecture, as a result of the difficulty of conceptualisation. Generalisations lead to a question of 'whose experience', which makes it hard to achieve a concrete answer. However, Jones admits that misapprehension or misunderstanding of an architectural work may also have important implications. Thus, he proposes that, for example, ritual occasions provide a fruitful ground to explore the implications of human experience as a transformation of being.[153]

This view can be extended to cover all sorts of human habitation in a particular place. For example, geographer Tuan advocates the same idea to evaluate the character of a place. For Tuan, "Human places become vividly real through dramatisation. Identity of a place is achieved by dramatising the aspirations, needs and functional rhythms of personal or group life".[154] Architecture historian Joseph Rykwert aptly defines ritual as, "The rhythmic repetition of communal action".[155] Interestingly, not only religious but all rituals may be evaluated as grounds for

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151 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 24.

152 Ibid., 25.

153 Ibid., 29.

154 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place : The Perspective of Experience.* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), 178.

155 He further states, " 'Man', said Marcel Mauss, in a memorable phrase, 'is the rhythmic animal, socially and individually'. Naturally, such action can't be daily and continuous: It requires privileged points in space and time; central and high places as well as borders and thresholds; lucky (or suitable) days as well as unlucky ones". Joseph Rykwert, *The Necessity of Artifice: Ideas in Architecture*, (London: Academy Editions, 1982), 131.

personal and communal dramatisations through human experience. They involve individual responses as well as communal activities. Jones declares the necessity of dealing with collective rituals as well as the validity of innumerable individuated ritual experiences.[156] Thus, Jones' work is an invitation to search and to observe different ritual–architectural events around a building either from an idiosyncratic or a collective point of view.

Deriving from the importance of rituals to conceptualising human experience in architecture, Jones' inquiry next addresses the possible relationship between academic and indigenous experience of architecture. In contrast to the apparent disparity between them, he sees these two experiential aspects as parts of the universality of hermeneutical reflection.[157] He holds, after Gunn, that interpretation theory in the modern period arises from the urge to understand other minds that are separated either historically or culturally or both. Therefore, concentrating on human experience by problematising it and searching for a fusion of horizons between the interpreter and the interpreted may provide a powerful way of interpretation.[158] As Jones further argues, in this process, "Meaning is not a condition or quality of the building, of the thing itself; meaning arises from situations".[159] Architecture historian Kostof similarly purports, "the way we experience architecture also works against the notion of buildings as fixed objects".[160]

The pioneer of Jones' idea of concentrating on situations rather than buildings is Roman Ingarden, a Polish philosopher who nearly half a century ago argued the futility of locating architectural meaning either in concrete built forms or in human reception of buildings.[161] The building as the physical existence of a work of architecture is not the core of its artistic manifestation. The mental approach to a

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156 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 32.

157 Ibid., 37.

158 With Gadamer's influence, he further states, "Understanding must be conceived as a movement of history, a process or sequence of occasions in which neither the interpreter nor the work of art can be thought of as autonomous parts". Ibid., 37-41.

159 Ibid., 41.

160 Spiro Kostof. *A History of Architecture : Settings and Rituals*, 10.

161 Ingarden, Roman. *Ontology of the Work of Art: The Musical Work, the Picture, the Architectural Work, the Film*. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1989), 257.

building determines its apprehension in different ways. Different approaches to a building are formed by different intentions; for example, the stonemason of a church may perceive that building only as a church when he joins a ceremony in the church. Otherwise, the church is an assembly of construction stones for the mason. Ingarden stresses that this difference between a building (as the real object) and a church is similar to the difference between a piece of cloth and a flag in that, "The cloth is merely the ontic foundation of the flag, without being identical with it". Ceremonies, as in the case of a flag, create a new sense of objectivity for the real object (the building) to be perceived as a church, where the meaning of the building is transformed through the occasion.[162]

As described by Jones and similar to Gadamer's approach, Ingarden underlines the ontological quality of architectural works.[163] For Ingarden, the ontology of the architectural work is the key to understanding its nature, where buildings are only the physical manifestations of the architectural works. Thus, Ingarden argues that, like other forms of art, an architectural work is not a real object:

> The architectural work of art is an ontically relative object, whose ontic relativity is, though, not one-sided. It refers back not only to the creative acts of the architect and the reconstructive acts of the viewer, but also to its ontic foundation in a fully determined real thing shaped in a particular way.[164]

Ingarden further contends that two principal factors govern the ontic foundation of architecture. The first is the objective spatial shape, which stands as the physical existence of architecture and evokes aesthetic sensibilities. The second is a multiplicity of 'aspectual schemata' which concretise in the experience of human beings deriving from different relationships with the actual physical building. The second factor also embodies aesthetic qualifications. The aesthetic qualifications derived from the first factor are general features such as the spatial and formal hierarchies within the overall building while the second factor points to details derived from the experiential perceptions within the building from different views and angles, such as its decorative details.[165]

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162 Ibid., 260.

163 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture,* 41- 42. Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Sheed&Ward, 1975), 140.

164 Roman Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 263.

165 Ibid., 270.

From Ingarden's terminology and reading of an architectural work as a work of art, Jones interprets one of the first clues to his approach to architectural meaning: its being contingent and multivalent.[166] Another influence on Jones' thinking emerges from literary criticism, particularly reader–response theory. He modifies Wolfgang Iser's ideas from literary texts to architecture, ideas that suggest concentrating on the meaning of the text as a product of the reading process.[167] For Iser, neither the psychology of the reader nor the 'objective' meaning of the text alone is sufficient to account for the 'true' meaning of a text; rather, meaning is manifested in the experience of reading through an interaction of the reader and the text.[168] Here, Iser supports Gadamer's idea that a text has an infinitely greater potential than any of its individual realisations.[169]

Coming to architecture, Jones suggests that accentuating multivalent and situational meanings does not stand within the scope of either objectivist or subjectivist tendencies. As a hermeneutical reflection, it is beyond both. He looks for a possibility to interpret architecture in accordance with socio-cultural ambiences, the cosmological orientations of their users, and moreover as particular occasions and apprehensions of buildings as ritual occasions.[170]

Jones' next task in his methodological investigations into sacred architecture is to look for some metaphors that can outstandingly express the interaction between buildings and people. Jones argues that rather than a Husserlian notion of 'pure seeing'; it is (after Gadamer) a dialogical process that relies on metaphors of conversation and play.[171] Jones derives metaphors of conversation and play from Gadamer's interpretation of the human experience of a work of art.[172] As a natural outcome of the universal aspect of hermeneutics, the metaphors of conversation and

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166 Lindsay Jones *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 42.

167 Ibid., 43.

168 Ibid., 43.

169 Ibid., 44. Gadamer, *Truth and Metho*d, 265.

170 To epitomise his argument Jones says that, "Whether deriving this insight from Ingarden, Gadamer, reader–response criticism, or elsewhere, we need to accept the profound ramifications of conceiving of peoples' interactions with architectural works as dynamic, open-ended, interactive processes (or events) in which both buildings and beholders make substantial contributions and both are significantly transformed". Ibid., 45.

171 Ibid., 46.

172 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 91.

play apply to both academics during their interpretation and to non-scholars during their experience of architecture.[173] Thus, mutual conversation and play during interpretation is more productive than the disinterested eye of the visitor to a museum or reading a building like a book.[174] Here, play can easily be interpreted as a non-serious and light metaphor, but as Gadamer and Jones use it, it is on the contrary a rigorous and serious metaphor demanding devotion from the subjects of the play. To illustrate this, Gadamer's definition of play as a metaphor in the experience of a work of art is important:

> If, in connection with the experience of art, we speak of play, this refers neither to the attitude nor even to the state of mind of the creator or of those enjoying the work of art, nor to the freedom of a subjectivity expressed in play, but to the mode of being of the work of art itself.[175]

To complement this statement, he later asserts, "The players are not subjects of play; instead play merely reaches presentation through players".[176] From Gadamer's two statements it can be interpreted that the nature of play exhibits both a mutual relationship between the players and is determined by them. It is in fact an ontological relationship manifested between the play and the players, as can be read from Gadamer's apt expression, "All playing is being played".[177]

Relying on Gadamer's thoughts, in Jones' proposal, the play is convincingly realised between two players: the architectural work on one side and human beings on the other. Architectural work brings into play all of its ontic existence ranging from building materials to its physical structure and other intangible content embodied by the building. Human beings on the other hand are "heavily burdened with expectations, traditions" and their previous experiences.[178] Jones defines the actual occasion of the play as a ritual–architectural event.[179] Deriving from Chang's idea of the intangible content of architecture, he stresses the importance of the ephemeral happenings or play of lights and shadows in the experience and interpretation of architecture. He sums up his thoughts thus: "By shifting the focus

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173 Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 47.
174 Ibid., 46.
175 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 91.
176 Ibid., 92.
177 Ibid., 95.
178 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 48.
179 Ibid., 48.

from the built form per se to the circumstances that arise in relation to that form, the notion of an architectural event thus embraces all the forces and factors".[180] His proposal necessarily requires architectural meaning to be interpreted as a situational event played by the experiencing human subjects and several aspects of the building. Play requires both bodily and mental contributions from human subjects during their experience. David Leatherbarrow similarly differentiates two ways of gaining knowledge during architectural experiences: visual contemplation and bodily comprehension, which are complementary.[181]

To enlighten further the nature of ritual–architectural events Jones elaborates the seriousness of hermeneutic play, relying on Gadamer. He gives Gadamer's example that it is possible to find a play-like character in most serious kinds of social activity, such as ritual or the administration of justice.[182] Ritual, for example, creates its own closed world as a game. Participating in a ritual–architectural event realises a loss of self-control and commitment to the rules of the game in a closed world alternative to the outside reality.[183] In this regard, Jones relates Gadamer's term 'spoilsport' to what Ricoeur calls an 'outsider'.[184] An outsider in search of an unconditional objectivity, according to Ricoeur, may know everything but will understand nothing.[185] Therefore, in a hermeneutical interpretation of architecture, play as a metaphor is more promising than a disinterested outsider position.

Accordingly, scholars are advised to be open to becoming partners in conversations. So, in such a hermeneutical conversation the relationship of indigenous people with architecture as well as architecture itself become the interests of the scholar.[186] To break the outsider position of the explorer, Jones suggests that interpreters, although

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180 Ibid., 50.

181 Leatherbarrow, David. *The Roots of Architectural Invention: Site, Enclosure, Materials.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 218.

182 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 52.

183 Ibid., 53.

184 Ibid., 53.

185 Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, *Trans*. Emerson Buchanan, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 355.

186 Jones accentuates the ontological nature of the conversation thus: "As scholars of architecture we are entering into hermeneutical dialogue, not simply with buildings, but with occasions, which are already hermeneutical dialogues in themselves". Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 56.

foreign, should suspend their disbelief and try to be open to participation in ritual–architectural situations.[187] Thus, it is important to remember again that Jones suggests that meaning in architecture rests upon the interaction between human experience and works of architecture. These meanings are contingent, dialogic and multivalent. He urges an interpretative strategy towards architecture which aims to capture these meanings from situations.[188]

The next step involves some reflections on the other participant in the conversation; that is, architecture. Architecture as the occasion on which the hermeneutical conversation takes place forms the other participant in the dialogue in which the human beholders are also participants in the process of experiencing. Rather than its physical existence, the ontic relativity of architecture plays a significant role in the conversation. The physical reality transforms into different perceptions and visions during the conversation. Jones calls the experiential aspect of architecture a 'mechanism of architecture' that is twofold.[189] He owes his interpretation of this twofold mechanism of architecture to Gadamer's earlier evaluations of the nature of architecture as a work of art.[190] In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer assigns the concept of decoration as mediated by architecture:

> Architecture gives shape to space. Space is what surrounds everything that exists in space. That is why architecture embraces all the other forms of representation: all works of plastic art, all ornament. Moreover, to the representational arts of poetry, music, acting and dancing it gives their place. By embracing all the arts, it everywhere asserts its own perspective. That perspective is: decoration.[191]

Gadamer's use of decoration is in contrast to the reluctance of early modern architecture to use ornamentation. He refutes the Kantian distinction between the work of art and mere decoration.[192] Gadamer classifies both figurative picture and decoration in terms of their representative quality, which at once defies the strict disparity between them.[193] However, Gadamer's concept of decoration is not a

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187 Ibid., 57.

188 Ibid., 58.

189 Ibid., 62.

190 Ibid., 60.

191 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 139.

192 Lindsay Jones, Op. Cit., 63. Gadamer says, "One also sees that the usual distinction between a proper work of art and mere decoration demands revision". Hans-Georg Gadamer, Ibid, 141.

193 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 141.

formal reference but a conceptual one; he defines the perspective of decoration in this way:

> The nature of decoration consists in performing that two-sided mediation; namely to draw attention of the viewer to itself, to satisfy his taste, and then to redirect it away from itself to the greater whole of the context of life which it accompanies.[194]

Gadamer's concept of decoration provides a quite different perspective on architecture from seeing it merely as the object of aesthetic taste. Jones makes an outstanding remark on the nature of Gadamer's concept of decoration. For Jones, Gadamer's proposal assigns to architecture a transformative effect that is not limited to the affirmation of aesthetic taste: it also embodies a novelty that forces the viewers to judge and readjust their tastes.[195]

Therefore, deriving from Gadamer's concept of decoration, Jones' twofold mechanism of architecture is based on experiences of both foreignness and familiarity. To illustrate what he means Jones gives the example of a pilgrim visiting a sacred site. In the first encounter the site allures the pilgrim and transforms his/her being. At the same time it gives a feeling of domesticity (feeling at home) and foreignness (uncanniness).[196] During the ritual, the pilgrim may feel at home and may have a certain feeling of being a human sacrifice as well.[197] The hermeneutical experience of architecture somehow evokes in the pilgrim ambivalent feelings of strangeness and familiarity at the same time. This is a transformative mechanism that operates in all ritual–architectural events where the 'symbolic charge' is high. The process of transformation opens up new challenges and possibilities for human experience. What has previously been taken for granted may soon become strange in the process, or vice versa.[198] Accordingly, the twofold mechanism of architecture evokes significant changes in human understanding,

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194 Ibid., 139.

195 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 63.

196 Freud's reading of Schelling's concept '*unheimlich*' is introductory to current discussions on the nature of the uncanny. Freud, Sigmund. *Art and Literature: Jensen's Gradiva, Leonardo Da Vinci and Other Works*. Translated by James Strachey. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), 339-345.

197 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 64.

198 Ibid., 65.

what Gadamer would call 'an increase of being' that is determined by the interplay of revealment and concealment of its symbolic quality.[199]

This double-sided symbolic quality of architecture can be conceptualised in different ways. Jones prefers to call the twofold mechanism of architecture 'order' and 'variation'. Order at first attracts attention and it is familiar, variation on the contrary is surprising and operates in contrast with order. He further conceptualises order as 'the front half of architecture' and variation as 'the back half of architecture'.[200] The use of front and back halves does not refer to direction in the first place, although they connote orientation. Rather, Jones maintains that their methodological use has a heuristic merit.[201]

The concept of the front half of architecture simply covers the question of allurement and coercion towards participation in a ritual–architectural event. Jones strongly believes that architecture, and particularly sacred architecture, has such an intrinsic power to coerce people to join a hermeneutical dialogue.[202] It is possible to extend this view to cover any architecture with a symbolic charge, such as historic buildings, where the encounter with the building has an impact on the person.

Jones concentrates on factors that determine the process of allurement and how the process itself is lived. Different answers are possible within different disciplines. For example, according to phenomenologists of religion such as Mircea Eliade, the power of allurement towards certain places (and buildings) belongs to the manifestation of the sacred that is already inherent in these sites or buildings (*hierophany*). Religious man desires to live in the revealment of the sacred and elaborates techniques of orientation to consecrate *hierophanies* such as building abodes on such sites. Eliade believes that in this way the agency of the sacred as supernatural power establishes and governs the mechanism.[203] In contrast,

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199 Ibid., 54-65.

200 Ibid., 72.

201 "Order and variation are not halves in the sense of equal parts; but the connotation that each is incomplete or insufficient without the other is completely appropriate. Architectural order and variation are complementary and co-dependent but not necessarily parallel". Ibid., 72.

202 Ibid., 75.

203 Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: San Diego, New York, London, 1987), 11, 28-30. On religious

psychoanalysts prefer to relate the nature of allurement to the historical background and idiosyncratic histories of people, which affect their perspectives towards buildings.[204] Jones suggests that neither of these approaches is necessarily appropriate alone to explicate the nature of allurement hermeneutically, although both can carry important implications. He believes that what creates an attachment or allurement to a building is both self-forgetfulness and self-reconciliation and he supports the idea that these processes start with self-identification. People simply prefer art works according to their perception of similitude.[205] Adapting to certain art works more easily than to others is a result of 'specificity of allurement'. For Jones, styles speak the aesthetic ideologies of specific cultures and one can be allured by the products of one's own culture more easily.[206] In this regard, he relies on Gadamer's notion of continuity in tradition. From the perspective of the hermeneutics of architecture, a search for a universal conception of allurement of architecture freed from the burdens of history and tradition is futile.[207]

Accordingly, Jones further purports, "I must insist that no architecture is universally alluring".[208] History and tradition have decisive roles in the allurement process. But this claim should not be interpreted to mean, for example, that someone foreign to a tradition cannot live a hermeneutical dialogue with a certain architectural work. Different dialogues emerge, although within limited constituencies. For instance, a thirteenth-century building is alluring to the people of its own period and to modern beholders in quite different ways, just as pilgrims and tourists experience an architectural site quite differently. For Jones, in the process of allurement, ritual–architectural events foster cultural commonalities and rituals provide necessary information to trace differences and similarities between people of remote times and

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symbolism see also Mircea Eliade. *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism*. Translated by Philip Mairet. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1991.

204 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 76.

205 He uses Gadamer's terminology to interpret the experience of art here. Ibid., 76-77.

206 Ibid., 81.

207 Ibid., 81. Gadamer accentuates the importance of tradition in hermeneutics but at the same time he declares that the nature of tradition is more ambiguous than it was understood to be from objectivist tendencies during the Enlightenment. Jones' use of style is akin to Gadamer's insights on style: "In fact all cultures have high periods, in which a particular civilisation is marked by special achievements in all fields. Thus the general value concept of the classical becomes via its particular historical fulfilment, again a general historical stylistic concept". Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 242-257.

208 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 81.

places.[209] Although "transactions of meaning within architectural events are legislated by the strictures of history, tradition and sociology", "all virtual meanings" of a superabundant architecture "are not available to all beholders in all circumstances".[210] Phenomenologists, psychoanalysts and sociologists may explicate different facets of the same context while for instance art historians may basically search for the spirit of the age.[211] Thus, Jones convincingly proclaims that neither purely individualistic emphasis nor relying only on collective tradition is sufficient to reveal the process of allurement, but both are important, and they are complementary.[212]

The second component of the twofold mechanism of architecture according to Jones is what he calls the back half of the ritual–architectural situation. With the metaphoric use of the term 'back half', he refers to the surprising, the unpredictable side of architecture in the hermeneutical process.[213] Jones argues that the back half of architecture is crucial in starting the hermeneutical dialogue within a ritual–architectural event by posing surprises and questions that lead towards more productive interrogations, since hermeneutics is crisis-driven. In this way, the back half is important in the transformative process of ritual–architectural events.[214]

In stressing the importance of both order and variation once again, Jones echoes phenomenologist–architectural historian Norberg-Schulz. Schulz, too, draws attention to the complementary role of order and variation in any architectural system. Although Schulz uses the mechanical terms of 'architectural systems' to define the nature of architecture, he maintains in the same fashion as does Jones that an architectural system should be undertaken as a system of probabilities rather than

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209 "Ritual–architectural configuration depends upon a 'sense of ritual', that is, a socially acquired ability which is requisite to appreciate and improvise ritualised activities within a specific context". Ibid., 82.

210 Ibid., 83.

211 Ibid., 83.

212 Ibid., 84-85.

213 If the front half is identified with order and allurement, then the back half is qualified as variation in which conventionality interacts with novelty and the sensation of similitude and difference as two dialectical opposites. Ibid., 87.

214 Ibid., 89.

certainties. For Schulz, a challenge to the audience is always productive in the process of architectural experience, without being overwhelming.[215]

Relying on Norberg-Schulz, Jones further argues that the back half of the architectural situation is more telling about the topics of a hermeneutical conversation and debate than the front half, architectural allurement. This is because the back half of the architectural situation has the potential to open conversations on such diverse topics as divinity, world creation, human purpose, abstract cosmological issues, highly specific socio-political matters and government patterns.[216] Therefore, it is possible to contend that in Jones' twofold conception, the back half of a ritual–architectural event is crucial in governing the process of transacting meanings.[217]

As a last step towards the conclusion of what he calls 'the mechanism of architecture' Jones makes three observations on the transformative potential of architecture. In the first he concentrates on the role of designers in achieving the transformative productivity of architecture.[218] He posits that didactic architecture does not always succeed according to the anticipations of its designers. Even elaborate choreography of a ritual–architectural situation may not ensure the anticipated response during the performance. The superabundance of architecture operates mostly outside the intentions and determinations of the designers. Therefore, when interpreting, scholars should bear in mind that "sometimes in the short run and always in the long run, there is a significant disparity between the planned ritual–architectural agenda and its subsequent reception" by the audience.[219]

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215 Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Intentions in Architecture*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1965), 127.

216 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 90.

217 Jones urges us to realise that the will to enter a hermeneutical dialogue is stimulated by architectural challenge, but its experience is risky and requires further responsibilities on the part of the beholder: "If architecture's success in transacting meaning or disseminating information depends upon the cultivation of some sort of crisis or challenge, then the experience of architecture can be hermeneutically productive only in those cases in which observers are willing to accept the challenge, that is, to make investment and to put themselves at some measure of risk". Ibid., 91.

218 Ibid., 93.

219 Ibid., 94.

The critical issue is how transformation occurs during ritual–architectural events. Jones gives a number of possible answers from different perspectives. Pursuing the Heideggerian tradition, Gadamer suggests that the transformative process in the experience of art and architecture is ontological. From his point of view, the transformation is a double-sided process occurring for both the beholders and the buildings.[220] Another approach is that the transformative nature of the ritual operates in favour of socialisation in order to promote cultural mores and cosmological conventions in communities.[221] A Freudian way of looking may see rituals as psychological discharge methods such as "wish fulfilment, guilt and compensation, or stress reduction".[222] From the perspectives of Marx and especially of Foucault, rituals can be interpreted as the mystification and perpetuation of deep socio-economic configurations of power.[223]



Figure 24 A Ritual–architectural event in Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, 2004.

Parallel to Jones' arguments, Kostof singles out ritual as the poetry of function for he believes that through rituals buildings comment on function.[224] What Jones holds as the common point of these diverse propositions is that in each case ritual is undertaken as a serious transformative phenomenon in both individual and social lives. Jones convincingly maintains that these different approaches should be considered complementary. Ritual has both bodily and intellectually transformative effects on the beholders and it has both social and idiosyncratic implications (figure 24). He believes that the awakening or illuminating realm of experience should not be dispensed with.

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220 Ibid., 95.

221 Jones classifies this type of approach to ritual as Durkheimian. Ibid., 95-96.

222 Ibid., 96.

223 Ibid., 96.

224 Spiro Kostof. *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals*, 19.

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Besides their social implications, ritual–architectural events may help individuals gain self-understanding as well. For example, interpreting Gothic rose windows as didactic surfaces of religion does not exclude considering them also as a 'realm of ethereal bliss' in experiencing their play of light and shadow.[225]

Consequently, from a hermeneutical perspective, the transformative nature of ritual–architectural events can be discussed with a wide focus. For Jones, it is futile to proclaim that any disciplinary assessment can cover all the aspects of ritual–architectural events in the experience of architecture because the ways in which various group of people engage in ritual–architectural events are never uniform. So, an intention of explicating them altogether from a single perspective entails the limitation of homogenising them. Instead of fixing the mechanism of architecture with only one of the determinants, such as a metaphysical, socio-political, religious or pedagogic aspect, accentuating its ontological character is more promising.[226]

Rituals may also have a darker side.[227] However, accepting the reality that the interpretation of architecture may have positive and negative ramifications does not necessarily eliminate the hermeneutical appeal to play. Jones, anyway, favours being a player rather than a spoilsport in the interpretation process.[228] Engaging in architecture in many contexts involves engaging with other cultures and periods. He persuades us to believe that, "the mechanism of [sacred] architecture is the mechanism of human understanding" and that every hermeneutical enterprise towards understanding others in fact "circles back to understanding ourselves".[229]

7.3. Architecture as Textual Metaphor: Dialogue

Architecture offers many challenges to human understanding and the ramifications of a dialogue with architecture demand elaboration. Jones' next task is then to look closely at the special case of architecture as a human creation confined within the dilemma of being both an art object and a tool for everyday life. He asks three

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225 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 96-97.
226 Ibid., 98-99.
227 Ibid., 99.
228 Ibid., 101.
229 Ibid., 102-103.

questions: what makes the special case of architecture and the experience of architecture? how should architecture be used as historical data? and what are the limits and potentials of seeing architecture as text?[230]

It is possible to trace a close connection between architecture as place making and human existence throughout history in many cultures. What distinguishes human-made space from the nests or habitats of other animals is basically that human beings work through created metaphors rather than instinct, and they endeavour to create new norms that can change the routine of their habitat. Tuan states that human beings' spatial ability to create new relationships and to extend the boundaries of their habitat is not present in any other creature.[231] Rykwert proposes the same using different words: the difference between the conception of a task and attaching meaning to it separates the human creation of space from that of other animals.[232] Ingarden maintains that, although many creatures have the ability to build their own habitat, human beings have the potential to perceive and build it by means of abstract geometry.[233]

As a form of creation that is immensely effective in human life, architecture is one of the main actors in everyday life. Although the utilitarian feature of architecture is the most conspicuous, architecture is not merely functional. For Jones, architecture extends beyond its utilitarian function in everyday life towards being transformative, changing habitual routines. It is the uselessness of architecture that is effective in the transformation of habits and this makes architecture a special art

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230 Ibid., 107.

231 Tuan states that, "Nature may be hostile and enigmatic, yet man learns to make sense of it – to extract meaning from it – when such is necessary for his survival". Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: Perspective of Experience*, 77-79.

232 Or, as Le Corbusier proclaims, geometry is the language of mind. Joseph Rykwert, *On Adam's House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History*, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1972), 16, 22.

233 He says, "Nothing is more instructive in this regard that the comparison of the works of human architecture with that of termites or ants: on the one hand, the regularity of the structure, the rationality of the ground plan, the purposiveness of the distribution of the individual rooms and the exterior parts, the symmetry of the structure; on the other hand, the irregularity, the obvious arbitrary distribution of the individual rooms, despite a certain purposiveness, a certain chaos in the whole structure conspicuous to anyone looking at the 'apartment houses' of termites". Roman Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 287-288. Ingarden's view is quite in contrast with Mendelsohn's view of seeing anthills and beehives as prototypes for the city. In fact, Rykwert, too, criticises Mendelsohn's approach as positivist. Joseph Rykwert, *On Adam's House in Paradise*, 19.

type: "If the other arts are enriching addenda to mundane living, architecture is the very stuff of everyone's everyday life".[234] Here it is important to recall Gadamer's concept of decoration for architecture: Gadamer sees architecture as the art that shapes space and embodies all other arts and bodies. Therefore architecture has an impact on everyday life and it asserts its own perspective upon everything. The concept of decoration justifies the idea that architecture is more than a functional tool, by both embodying human life and extending beyond the larger social–spatial context.[235]

Without making an exact distinction between any built form and architecture as high-style art object, it is possible to contend that architecture as an ontological entity is part of everyday life. In this view, a humble house that embodies very special memories of someone's life is as important as monumental architecture in challenging and transforming people's habitual routines.

In interpreting the nature of architecture Jones makes a distinction between architecture as built form and 'architectural allusions', which he elaborates as "thinking with, about and as building".[236] Not merely as built form but also as a metaphor for thinking, architecture has important impacts on the intellectual life of human beings. For instance, architecture as a metaphor operates in many intellectual creations, such as philosophy. The main reason behind this may be architecture's close relationship with human existence. Mark Wigley shows the close relationship of architecture with philosophical thinking throughout the history of Western metaphysics, a relationship that became more evident after the deconstructionist philosophy of Derrida.[237] Wigley mentions how Heidegger attracted specific attention to this issue and that his (Western) philosophical writing features many architectural metaphors, such as dwelling, shelter, abode, proximity and neighbourhood.[238] Architecture's use as metaphor is not confined to Western

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234 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 111.

235 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 138.

236 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 113.

237 Mark Wigley, *The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida's Haunt*, (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England, 1993), 5.

238 "A certain thinking of architecture is central to Heidegger's work. It is not that he simply theorises architecture as such, but that theorising is itself understood in architectural terms...

thinking. It is possible to find many architectural allusions in non-Western cultures as well. In fact, Jones maintains that, in the simplest and humblest forms of dwelling such as the huts of traditional people, it is possible to find traces of cosmological conceptions, symbols or religious meanings. Therefore, even the simplest forms of buildings are not deprived of architectural allusions and no architecture is perceived by its users merely as built structure.[239] Like the two sides of the same coin, the existence of architecture evokes metaphorical conceptions and it is possible to find architectural metaphors in the intellectual works of many cultures.[240]

The interpretation of architecture also subsumes inquiry into the interpretation of the experience of architecture. Gadamer calls architecture "the most statuary of all art forms".[241] Similarly, Ingarden maintains the immovable character of architecture, but he also says that, although architecture is stable and static, its experience is always dynamic, involving different angles and directions, inside and outside.[242] Although immobile, architecture intimately accompanies, enhances and limits life, providing a dynamic stage of experience.

From the changing and transient nature of dynamism in the experience of architecture, Jones postulates that the interpretation of architecture should necessarily rely on the interpretation of events rather than objects. All experiences of architecture are incomplete and impermanent, urging the academic interpreter to attend to the experiences of as many people in as many cultural contexts as possible. He argues that:

> Gothic cathedrals, Egyptian pyramids, and Babylonian ziggurats provide not only a special set of challenges to their indigenous users, but, moreover, a unique set of potentialities and problems for the academic interpreter.[243]

He often directly and indirectly addresses the way in which philosophy repeatedly and insistently describes itself as a kind of architecture". Ibid., 6-7.

239 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 113.

240 Ibid., 115.

241 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 139.

242 "In architecture there is a multiplicity of aspects – in principle, an endless number of them – corresponding to all the possible points around the work from which it can be viewed". Roman Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 267.

243 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 120.

The nature of experience excludes reading architecture as a text, although the textual metaphor has been used for architecture as well as for other human cultural products. Jones maintains that reading architecture as text entails an objectification of meaning which, according to Gadamer's hermeneutical assumption of 'multivalence in meaning', should be avoided. Jones instead suggests a different reading of architecture, using the notion of rituals as architectural events to be read, because reading rituals as texts justifies and supports an abundance of meanings in architecture, with their situational nature, unlike reading buildings *per se*.[244]

This suggestion entails a comparison of action and text. At first sight the former seems discursive whereas the latter is predetermined. In 'Meaningful Action Considered as Text', Paul Ricoeur attracts attention to the difference between written text and discourse. For him, written text is in a way the objectification of the discourse in which the ephemeral nature of the meaning of the discourse is somehow fixed. Ricoeur argues that, just as the meaning of the discourse is fixed and to an extent objectified in the written text, human action can also be fixed and objectified when read as text and in this way it can become the object of the human sciences.[245] Regarding the process of the objectification of meaningful action as text Ricoeur states:

> By this objectification, action is no longer a transaction to which the discourse of action would still belong. It constitutes a delineated pattern that has to be interpreted according to its inner connections... In the same way as the fixation by writing is made possible by a dialectic of intentional exteriorisation immanent in the speech itself, a similar dialectic within the process of transaction prepares detachment of the *meaning* of the action from the *event* of the action.[246]

Based on Ricoeur's insights, Jones holds that reading ritual–architectural events, in which both people and buildings are engaged, is a way of bringing meaningful action into text. Building on Ricoeur's assumptions, he maintains that reading ritual–architectural events is quite different from searching for the mental intentions of the architect: "A building is not itself (like) a text". However, through ritual–architectural events action becomes autonomous and develops its own reality of

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244 Ibid., 126.

245 Paul Ricoeur, "The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text", *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics II*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1991), 144-145.

246 Ibid., 151.

meaning, like a text. Architecture becomes the scene for text-like events, and it is more appropriate to read the text-like occasional events in the life of a building than the building *per se*.[247]

Even though ritual–architectural events may provide a different interpretation of architecture rather than reducing it simply to a text, the implications of textualisation may still remain. The critiques concentrate on the reductionist tendencies in the process of interpreting the reading of other human products as texts. For instance, in the case of architecture, Henri Le Febvre maintains that the nature of space is quite different from that of the text. For Le Febvre, space is created before it is interpreted and as a part of life space is beyond the limits of a text. Therefore any claim to have covered and deciphered the meaning of space in terms of symbols, images or signs connotes a reduction of it to the level of a text. However, on the contrary, space is a texture rather than a text and exhibits a complexity that transcends the limits of language.[248] The following quotation summarises Le Febvre's thoughts on the reduction of space to text in the process of reading meaning:

> A spatial work (monument or architectural project) attains a complexity fundamentally different from the complexity of a text, whether prose or poetry. As I pointed out earlier, what we are concerned with here is not texts but texture. We already know that a texture is made up of a usually rather large space covered by networks or anchors of such webs. The actions of social practise are expressible but not explicable through discourse: they are precisely *acted-* and not *read*. A monumental work, like a musical one, does not have a 'signified' (or 'signifieds'); rather, it has a *horizon of meaning*: a specific or indefinite multiplicity of meanings, a shifting hierarchy in which now one, now another meaning comes momentarily to the fore, by means of – and for the sake of – a particular action".[249]

Therefore, Le Febvre too suggests a multiplicity of meanings in human experience. As Jones admits, the application of textual analogies to the interpretation of the products of illiterate or premodern cultures is not satisfactory: "imagining all of their cultural productions as text-like, we risk distorting their outlook on the world and falsely attributing to them our own preoccupations with writing, alphabets, and

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247 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 127.

248 Henri Lefebvre, "The production of Space (Extracts)", *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, Ed. Neil Leach. (London: Routledge, 1997), 138-140.

249 Ibid., 140.

books".[250] The textual analogy has had a problematic allure in the cultural constructions of 'orientalist' scholarship, for example, as Stephen Cairns has shown in his critique of early Orientalist theories of Indian architecture as the 'stone book' of Indian history.[251] Jones urges interpreters to be more historically concerned, critical and self-critical in interpreting architecture in order to reduce distortions.[252] Therefore, a hermeneutical outlook that is conscious of historical contingencies and critical details may still provide an appropriate ground to interpret architecture as a setting for ritual–architectural events without being imprisoned in the potentialities of a text.

7.4. The Mediative Role of Architecture in Time: Tradition

The interpretation of architecture also entails the interrogation of its use as historical data. Literary data about the history of a society and its norms are always privileged as being more telling and richer than other artefacts in terms of carrying evidential information. In this regard, illiterate cultures and the interpretation of their cultural norms are problematic issues for their interpreters. Even in illiterate cultures, traditional norms are transmitted from one generation to another. What has been widely accepted as collective memory works in a strange way to recall past rituals in these cultures, but mostly people do not have an answer for the details of why such rituals continue to be performed. Where there are literary sources, architecture is generally used as secondary data to interpret history. But, in the absence of primary literary sources, does architecture gain importance in the process of historical interpretation? Jones maintains, "The evidential promise of architecture, particularly as compared to literature, has always been in doubt".[253]

In the process of hermeneutical reflection, making sense of something strange can be assisted by a textual metaphor such as 'reading'. With the influence of semiologic and structuralist strategies over the past two decades, all human activities and products have gained the status of a text to be read, written or

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250 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 130.

251 Stephen Cairns. "The Stone book of Orientalism", in P. Scriver and V. Prakash (eds.) *Colonial Modernities: Building, Dwelling and Architecture in British India and Ceylon* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006 Forthcoming).

252 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 132.

253 Ibid., 122.

deciphered. A prominent example in the discipline of art history that has been influential in dealing with the potential analogies between architecture, philosophy and religion is Erwin Panofsky's seminal study *Gothic Architecture and Scholastic Philosophy*. Although it drives from a speculative socio-cultural connection between architecture and philosophy in the region of the Ile de France, Panofsky's study concentrates on structural similarities between the disciplines, and he rarely makes social or cultural claims that are outside these analogical structural connections.[254] Jones gives examples from the discipline of the history of religions about reading other human products as texts, but he also states that this notion is pervasive in many other interpretative disciplines such as archaeology and art history as well. From this view, Jones argues, "If architecture can be imagined as 'the printing press of all ages', which has already been 'read' by indigenous audiences and can be 're-read' by contemporary scholars, then its worthiness as evidence is immeasurably enhanced".[255]

In studying architectural history, the role of buildings as evidence should be considered in depth along with other historical data to understand the differences and peculiarities of architecture. The use of architecture as historical data is a cross-disciplinary phenomenon that is common in art history, the history of religions, anthropology and cultural studies. In the discourse of art history, the stylistic continuities and gaps among the buildings of an era are interrelated. These stylistic classifications and comparisons form their own sets of historical constructions. Unlike art history, the other disciplines mentioned above position architecture as historical data in relation to other socio-cultural phenomena. In art history the interrogation of meaning necessitates the coming together of stylistic definitions and comparisons with other, cross-disciplinary approaches to architecture.

What makes architecture different from other daily tools and products of a culture is a major question to be asked in order to determine its place in the production history of a culture. Jones' answer to this question is convincing:

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254 Erwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism,* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), 23-57.

255 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 123.

> Where pottery is easily transportable, constantly replaced, and thus exceedingly receptive to change – all characteristics that make pottery the pre-eminent indicator of chronology and patterns of migration or diffusion – a major architectural construction never moves, always outlives its builders, and demands a commitment that cannot afford the levity of a cultural fashion.[256]

Jones makes these comments referring especially to the monumental products of the old ages. He maintains that such monumental products are not very promising in terms of spontaneous, individualistic expressions. Unlike the minor arts, monumental architectural products go beyond the limits of one generation and are more fundamental in representing one culture's common concerns and value judgments.[257]

In contrast to the mainstream presentation of monumental architecture, close examination of the life of a monument can reveal idiosyncratic details. When the chronological line of history zooms to particular points in the past, it is not difficult to find out exceptional and antithetical information, even in the most conspicuous monumental architecture. Anonymous architecture such as vernacular or domestic architecture also has the potential to generate profound clues about the judgments and concerns of a culture. Anonymous architecture tells about the history of a culture in the private realm rather than the social one. The tense relationship between monumental and anonymous architecture should be evaluated as dialectic when dealing with the history of a culture, because each may well embody interesting clues about the other. For instance, Eliade maintains, "Religious architecture took over and developed the cosmological symbolism already present in the structure of primitive habitations".[258]

Rykwert convincingly shows that the idea of a primitive hut or a 'first house' has always had its place in architectural history and theory. This is a conceptual tool rather than archaeological evidence and there are several examples in distinct cultures, which he relates to a human being's understanding of shelter and dwelling. The idea of the first house has several ramifications such as being the shelter of the

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256 Ibid., 138.

257 Ibid., 138.

258 Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 58.

'primitive man' or 'house of God' in many cultures and religions. [259] He has interpreted the quest for the first house in architectural history and theory to be a result of a quest for the origins of architecture:

> The return to the origins is a constant of human development and in this matter architecture conforms to all other human activities. The primitive hut – the home of first man – is therefore no incidental concern of theorists, no casual ingredient of myth and ritual... In the present rethinking of why we build and what we build for, the primitive hut will, I suggest, retain its validity as a reminder of the original and therefore essential meaning of all building for people: that is, of architecture... I believe, therefore, that it will continue to offer a pattern for anyone concerned with building, a primitive hut situated permanently perhaps beyond the reach of the historian or archaeologist, in some place I must call paradise. And paradise is a promise as well as a memory.[260]

As a theoretical tool and historical data, architecture should be seen as rich and profound but also as exhibiting a complex set of relationships with multivalent meanings. Even when architecture embodies multivalent meanings, the indeterminate nature of their manifestation creates methodological challenges for its interpretation. There are two opposite opinions about the nature of architecture as historical data: one claims the superabundant and autonomous qualities of architecture in expressing meaning; the other claims that architecture can be read as semiologic data that simply "stands for something other than itself".[261] Semiologic evaluations can conclude in very tangible results, such as reading architecture as the symbol of divinity, myth, or the power of an institution in a Marxist sense. From such a view, most temples have been interpreted as the large-scale architectures of an elite minority that has little to do "with the character and aspirations of the popular strata of society".[262] Jones maintains that architecture is more difficult to interpret yet promising in meaning than one-sided interpretations.

The fact missed in these claims is that monumental architecture exists in the public realm and still continues to have public beholders in the present. Tuan interrogates the situation of the monuments of the past in the contemporary world. He calls such

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259 To illustrate, he quotes Le Corbusier's words: "Look at a drawing of such a hut in a book on archaeology: here is the plan of a house, the plan of a temple. It is exactly the same attitude as you find in a Pompeian house or in a temple at Luxor... There is no such a thing as a primitive man; there are only primitive means. The idea is constant, potent from the very outset". Joseph Rykwert, *On Adam's House in Paradise*, 13-14.

260 Ibid., 192.

261 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 139.

262 Ibid., 140.

monuments the 'enduring places' of the past and stresses that such places in the contemporary world transcend the limits of their original cultural values and speak to humanity in general.[263] In a similar fashion, Marc Augé stresses that historical monuments are the mediators of history in the present. According to Augé, the notion of monument is crucial in the description of anthropological place. Being expressions of duration and memorial, monuments stand as the beholders of history: "without the monumental illusion before the eyes of the living, history would become a mere abstraction".[264]

The problem with seeing monuments simply as power abstractions arises from seeing historical architecture as the embodiment of a frozen past. Relying on Gadamer, Jones contends that historical buildings are always in a state of newness and transformation and they are not merely the representations of a lost past.[265] Gadamer's view on the subject, like Augé's, accentuates the mediative role of historical monumental architecture between past and present:

> The presence of the great architectural monuments of the past in the modern world and its buildings pose the task of the integration of past and present. Works of architecture do not stand motionless on the shore of the stream of history, but are borne along by it.[266]

Building on Gadamer's views, Jones further argues that even the most durable forms of historical architecture are not only the constructions of their time, carrying the fossils of the past. Historical architecture is necessarily a mediator between past and present and makes them meet in the processes of both experience and interpretation. Writing on historical architecture does not involve simply the reconstruction of the ages that have passed. On the contrary, interpretation of historical architecture is the construction of the author's mind, with its own meanings, evaluations and significances: "In the interpretation of other people's architecture we learn most of all about ourselves".[267]

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263 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, 164.

264 Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. (London; NewYork: Verso, 1995), 60.

265 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 143.

266 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 139.

267 "This, then, is the important and exciting sense in which an old work of architecture is perpetually 'new' without, however, losing contact with its past… To the contrary, precisely because of its superabundance, architecture is able to stay current and to mediate (or to

How could a methodological premise be built upon Gadamer's view of seeing historical architecture as a mediator between past and present? From Gadamer's 'idea of the life of a monument', Jones proposes, 'reception careers' for monuments that can embody significant encounters between architecture and its beholders in the course of history. He believes a diachronic analysis of the life of a monument can capture the anecdotes of what he calls ritual–architectural events (or human–monument hermeneutical conversations).[268]

In such a proposal, where the meanings of history meet with that of the historian in the mediation of historical architecture, the greatest obstacle for Jones is our limitations as interpreters. For instance, most modern interpreters come from literate cultures, ready to decipher abstract codes of words or numbers, but they can fall into the position of being an illiterate in interpreting foreign–remote cultures that work with different mental systems. His solution to overcome this obstacle is to enhance critical information by engaging in as many cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary comparisons as possible.[269] From an architectural history point of view, Jones' insights suggest widening the perspective of evaluating a period, as well as looking deeply into unique historical moments in specific contexts.

7.5. Reception Histories: Effective-Historical Consciousness

The comparison of cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary approaches to architecture is a controversial issue. Comparison may be distorting, flattening and "disrespecting the uniqueness of individual cases".[270] Comparison is closely related to classification, and searches the limits and boundaries of classification. Although mechanised and monotonous reduction of phenomena is always a risk in comparison, the human mind essentially works in an abstractionist way that always operates to classify and compare things. Therefore, Jones proclaims, "The concept of 'unique' is a modern myth; comparison, in some fashion, is unavoidable".[271] One

integrate) the past and the present". Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 145.

268 Ibid., 146.

269 Ibid., 147.

270 Ibid., 150.

271 Ibid., 151.

potential of comparison is that when compared and contrasted between diverse cases phenomena may manifest their nature more effectively than when investigated as isolated cases.

Besides the necessity and the potential of cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary comparisons, Jones emphasises that a comparative dimension of human experience, interpretation and understanding is necessary to achieve what Gadamer calls 'the universality of the hermeneutical reflection'. Thus, as do many life endeavours, the hermeneutics of architecture embraces comparison.[272] A close look at the nature of comparison from basic classification to historiographic openings is crucial.

The history of architecture relies heavily on comparison, ranging from functional typologies to stylistic classifications. Most such works promote neutrality and comprehensiveness, but from a hermeneutical perspective it is impossible to be neutral and such works carry interesting clues about the prejudices and interests of their authors and audiences. The elusive nature of comparative historical works is apparent especially in cross-cultural classifications. Perhaps the most prominent cross-cultural work on the history of world architecture is Sir Banister Fletcher's book *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method for Students, Craftsmen, and Amateurs*.[273] This book has been both influential and criticised for a long time and it has been a forerunner of many later cross-cultural architectural studies.

Jones begins his discussion of the nature of comparative research with Fletcher's prominent example. For him, Fletcher's work aspires to comprehensiveness, with a view of history as a progressive line of developments, and an example of how a natural structure may be adapted to the history of architecture. (The famous 'tree of architecture' at the beginning of Fletcher's book is illustrative in this regard.) In the progressive line of history, Fletcher assumes a strict continuity from ancient Greek architecture through to modern styles of European architecture. By adding the architectural styles of non-European cultures as a weak branch from the thick trunk

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272 Ibid., 151.

273 Sir Banister Fletcher, *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method for Students, Craftsmen, and Amateurs*, (London : Batsford, 1946).

of European architectural styles, Fletcher aims to achieve a complete comprehensive developmental scheme in his work.[274]

To reveal the problem of assuming comprehensiveness in comparative research, Jones uses Foucault as an extreme source in opposition to Fletcher. In *The Order of Things* Foucault proclaims that any essential classification of human creation and social phenomena according to natural or biological categories is distorting and reductionist. Furthermore, for Foucault, any system of classification is arbitrary and relative, therefore is far from being a totality. The establishment of an order, rather than being comprehensive, carries the clues of power configurations.[275] Relying on Foucault, Jones states that as part of human creativity architecture cannot be presented comprehensively in the form of a tree. Fletcher imposes an order in his book rather than discovering an inherent one and this order reveals his and his assumed audiences' mental states as being heavily Eurocentric.[276]

From such a point of view, the reason behind taxonomies becomes more important than classifying according to an order. As Jones maintains, "After Foucault, all categorical arrangements of world architecture appear problematic" and the question of "why it is still significant to classify architectural works" gains importance.[277] In answering this question Jones accentuates the main interest of a discipline. For instance, the approach to sacred architecture of the history of religion and other approaches such as art history or archaeology are quite distinct. In this regard, most archaeological or art historical works rely on comparison of building styles rather than comparison of ritual–architectural events. However, "classification, nearly always, decontextualises and reifies architectural meanings".[278]

The most common classification of architecture relies on organisation in accordance with formal features (plans, elevations etc.). The basic intention of formal

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274 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 155-156.

275 Michel Foucault, *The order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, (London: Routledge, 2002), Chapter 5.

276 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 157.

277 Ibid., 159.

278 Ibid., 160.

classification is to document and categorise diverse forms of architecture rather than explicating the reason behind their diversity.[279] As a result, such classifications become selective and mostly include typical rather than marginal examples. Classifications based on construction techniques and/or building materials form another kind of architectural classification. Especially in the case of historical architecture, such classifications largely disregard ideological and cultural details. However, constructional classifications may be fruitful in revealing the intentions and lifestyles of indigenous builders.[280] Another mainstream organisation of architectural works is done using geographical distinctions such as climate and ecology and their impacts on space. Such groupings ground their formal reasoning on regional physical properties such as the existence of stone or brick, which in a particular place determine the scale and appearance of built forms. Relying merely on geographical distinctions in the comparison of architecture can be similarly distorting in the way it disregards many socio-cultural factors.[281]

Jones argues that making comparisons across time is a more rewarding approach than others in reflecting the diversity of architecture. Not only religious architecture but also most historical architecture can be classified by relying on a time line (such as organisation by the date of construction). Organisation according to time may be established in two ways: synchronic and diachronic. On the one hand, diachronic organisations rely on grouping successive architectural works either from distinct cultures or from the same tradition. Such organisations may fall into the trap of establishing an organic, progressive line of development for history, claiming comprehensiveness, such as does the aforementioned work of Sir Banister Fletcher. It is possible to confuse the concept of chronology with evolution. On the other hand, synchronic organisations have the potential to exhibit similarities and differences among architectural works of the same period. Most comparisons that rely on time embody both diachronic and synchronic features at the same time.[282] In fact, the different means of classification described by Jones are not usually found

279 Ibid., 161.
280 Ibid., 163.
281 Ibid., 164.
282 Ibid., 165-167.

as homogeneous structures. Rather, in many studies they are intertwined.[283] Jones looks for an alternative strategy for comparison that will allow his hermeneutical evaluations of architecture.

Jones contends that in the process of comparison a tendency towards commensuration of similarities or equalities is only a beginning. But not only similarities govern the process: for an effective comparison, as in productive hermeneutical reflection, "sameness and discrepancy are complementary" although "not equivalent". Therefore, effective comparison as a negotiation of both similarity and difference has the potential to reflect the multivalence of meanings in architecture. Jones proposes that four factors should be interrogated in order to accentuate both similarities and differences in the comparison of architecture. These are:

> The indigenous (ritual) experiences of architecture; academic interpretations of single ritual–architectural situations; synchronic, morphologic comparisons of religious architectures from different contexts; and diachronic, historical comparisons of the various architectural events in which a particular work is involved over (and in) time, that is in the composition of comparative ritual–architectural histories.[284]

In the case of sacred architecture, indigenous experiences are usually regarded as outside the interests of academic research. However, superstitions, rumours and other beliefs practised in relation to a building may embody important clues about a society and its religious values. Jones, after Waldman, maintains that as an interpretative act comparison is peculiar not only to academic procedures: "Comparison, whether orchestrated by academics, religious leaders, architects, ritual participants, is, Waldman teaches us, among the most effective means for challenging and rearranging the status quo rather than simply replicating it".[285] Thus, from such a perspective, the indigenous experience and interpretations of architecture gain importance in comparative research. Remembering Gadamer's argument about human experience, it is possible to further state that every experience is in a way a comparison that aims to transform past understandings and

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283 Ibid., 165.

284 Ibid., 171.

285 As a source he relies heavily on Waldman's unpublished work.. Ibid, 173. For further information see Marilyn R. Waldman, *Inviting Prophets and Entertaining Comparisons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

experiences.[286] Experience considered in this regard is always an important aspect of comparative research in architecture.

In the interpretation of architecture, the twofold mechanism of architecture, as proposed by Jones, relying on Gadamer and Ingarden, assumes a front half and a back half for the ritual–architectural events, which are determined by both similarity and difference. Jones further argues that these two metaphorical halves of architecture are also important in making an effective comparison. He maintains that, although we begin to compare architectural works with the seduction of manifested similarities (the front half), the strangeness and difference (the back half) hidden under the veil of similarity make the comparison all the more significant.[287] Such comparisons demonstrate the complex structure of tradition rather than being monolithic, where similarities are pursued and innovations are manifested in the context of many cultures.

Another important point in a comparison based on hermeneutical reflection is to compare individual architectures within more general parallel contexts. Deepening the interpretation of an individual architecture without disregarding a broader perspective reduces the risk of making a superficial evaluation. It also removes the risk of taking that particular architectural work as an isolated case. Therefore both comprehensiveness and particularity of the approach are avoided. Such a comparison is in fact a hermeneutical dialogue between the interpreter and the architectural work, and 'fusion of horizons' in Gadamer's terms is never complete in the dialogue but is always aimed at.[288]

In this vein, the two ways of comparing in a hermeneutical interrogation of architecture postulated by Jones – the synchronic and the diachronic comparison – are complementary rather than contradictory. Synchronic comparison involves analysing individual architectures from different and culturally distinct contexts within the same time period. Jones gives the example of morphological similarity as a criterion for such comparisons. Morphological similarities based on matters of

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286 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 317.

287 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 175.

288 Ibid., 176.

cosmology, mythology, ritual and meaning rather than history provide the necessary connections between diverse cases.[289] The most controversial aspect of synchronic comparisons is that they may be seen as *de*contextual and historically inaccurate or distorting. Jones' justification for using synchronic comparison is that he sees it as a beginning rather than an end in itself. Jones offers synchronic comparisons within an artificial context which he prefers to call 'heuristic' rather than historical. For him, such a *de*contextualisation is crucial in order to recontextualise. Seeing similarities among diverse and distinct cases may help to develop the potential for extending beyond the contextual boundaries during the recontextualisation process.[290] Synchronic comparison as a cross-cultural enterprise among distinct contexts always carries the risk of falling into the traps of essentialism and totalisation. Because of this Jones suggests that we see the synchronic comparative portion of the hermeneutics of architecture as an urge to raise questions rather than to provide explanatory answers.[291]

Jones further contends that a comparison based only on similarities is less convincing than one that departs from similarities and moves into interesting differences. For example, he sees his proposal for synchronic–morphological comparison as complementing diachronic comparisons based on historical conventions: "Synchronic comparison accentuates commonalities across cultural contexts, while the diachronic mode especially accentuates discontinuities over (and in) time". Diachronic comparison involves, for instance, different reception histories in the career of a monument throughout history.[292] It is possible to summarise that Jones' synchronic and diachronic analyses are complementary, in that the synchronic mode works for morphological classifications of abstraction and thematisation while the diachronic mode relies on the historical context. The complementary attitudes of synchronic and diachronic comparisons work in

289 Ibid., 179.

290 Ibid., 179-180.

291 For him, cross-cultural synchronic comparisons may be embraced as "provisional, preliminary and heuristic devices". where "cross-cultural comparison is a point of departure rather than a destination". Ibid., 181.

292 Ibid., 182-185.

opposing directions in the interpretive process, oscillating between similarities and differences.[293]

Eventually, in Jones' complementary propositions of synchronic and diachronic comparisons the former is introductory and exploring while the latter has the intention of drawing conclusions. The layering of such comparisons is crucial in the hermeneutical process. He finally adds that as well as being complementary the two comparisons are sequential.[294]

If history has long been seen as an endeavour to recover the meanings of the past, Jones, after Gadamer and many others, teaches us that meaning is a process rather than an end.[295] Accordingly, from a hermeneutical perspective, process as the succession of receptions of a building gains importance in historiography. Jones proposes that the reception history of a building is the expression of the dialogical relationships between the building and its human participants. Such a proposal, he argues, is sensitive to historical contingencies rather than sticking to abstract categories. For example, it is possible to write the reception history of the Cathedral of Notre Dame, but there can be no reception histories for broad classifications such as French cathedrals. In other words, in writing reception histories it is important to reveal specific contexts rather than generalities. Thus, according to Jones the process of writing reception histories consists of two phases: first, detailing specific reception histories, and second, contextualising the particular case within a broader perspective.[296]

Therefore, a proposal for a particular sequence in a reception history does not form a linear historical line. Jones warns us that we should not perceive a diachronic historical perspective as a linear formation. On the contrary, he argues, diachronic

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293 Jones convincingly explicates this: "Thus, in synchronic comparison, the surprise or sense of discovery usually comes in moving past 'superficial differences' to point out what are regarded as 'significant similarities', while, by contrast, the sense that one has reached a rewarding conclusion via diachronic comparison usually entails 'significant differences' where one was first lulled by 'superficial similarities'". He further argues, "That is to say, where synchronic comparison is overwhelmingly a hermeneutic of retrieval and replenishment, the composition of comparative architectural reception histories also entails recovery but with a much intensified measure of suspicion". Ibid., 184.

294 Ibid., 186.

295 "Meaning is an effect that is experienced, not a message that must be found". Ibid., 188-189.

296 Ibid., 190-191.

and synchronic analyses have a more organic relationship in forming architectural reception histories. A diachronic analysis correlates the historical phenomena in synchronic cross-sections. Each cross-section referring to myriad of human–architecture hermeneutical conversations (in ritual–architectural events) underlies the multivalence of the 'reception career' of a building. Each of the synchronic cross-sections exhibits rich details which are hard to estimate from the homogenising horizon of the distanced, linear line of history.[297]

In writing reception histories for buildings, another methodological concern is how to deal with the conceptualisation of human experience. Rather than exhibiting a progressive structure, the reception career of a building instead consists of unexpected distinct events occurring in different eras. The most common solution to resist this ambiguity is to explore meaning as embedded in the creative intentions of the architect or the patron of the building. From such a point of view, the object (building) serves as the conveyor of an artistic message to the beholder and misapprehensions or misunderstandings are conventionally avoided by favouring a particular origin. But Jones explains that deviations from the original intended meaning of architecture always occur in the reception career of a building. If favouring of a building's origin is avoided in any interpretation, then multivalence of meaning in architecture becomes an opportunity rather than an obstacle.[298] The reappropriation of monuments in different ages is an outstanding example of such deviations from the original intentions of their creators.[299]

Interestingly, Jones does not totally eliminate the aspiration to reach the original intention from his proposal for reception histories. He denotes it as only one of the possibilities in transacting meaning from the reception career of a building that does not have any privilege among other possibilities, such as considering the

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297 Ibid., 191.

298 Ibid., 191-194.

299 "The sometimes creative, sometimes naïve, sometimes vulgar deviations from the anticipated usages and apprehensions of buildings, which are too often neglected, must then be included within our interpretive and historiographic gaze not simply because they are quaint or eccentric (though they are sometimes that), but because those usually unselfconscious deviations afford us our best view – that is, our most empirically accurate view – into non-consensual, idiosyncratic, messy, and inconsistent ways in which religious buildings are actually used and apprehended". Ibid., 194-195.

apprehensions of architects, aristocrats, priests, heretics, adults and children, novelists and historians, dilettantes and scholars, or tourists.[300] Thus, focusing on different occasions blurs the strict boundaries between academic and indigenous apprehensions of buildings, and qualifications such as 'high–low' or 'correct–wrong' apprehensions become more fluid. This brings to mind the question of whether such reception histories could claim to be comprehensive and inclusive. Jones' answer to this question is that, "Completeness in that sense is not a realistic or even desirable goal".[301] On the contrary, he maintains:

> Like biographies, which always deliver only highly abridged accounts of actual, multidimensional, and intricately complex human lives, hermeneutically productive and critical ritual–architectural reception histories will, of necessity, in every case be highly selective and thus decidedly incomplete.[302]

Therefore, the criteria for deciding what to include in the selective reception history of a building rely much on the intentions and the cultural, academic or personal prejudices of the researcher. In order to be open to interpreting multivalence of meaning in a ritual–architectural event, the researcher may bring examples from diverse audiences. Jones names five different groups called 'protocols of architectural apprehension' to exemplify a few among the many. These are: the initial intentions of designers and ritual choreographers; the manifold ritual experiences of indigenous users of architecture; revalorative uses by 'outsiders'; academic interpretations of the architecture; and more personal, self-critical reflections on our own hermeneutical involvements with the architecture.[303]

Moreover, it is crucial to differentiate between the realm of ideas and the realm of events (or lived experience) in writing the reception history of a building.[304] Indigenous apprehensions involve so-called native or primitive audiences participating in ritual–architectural events. Such participants live a sort of devotion towards the ritual–architectural events determined by 'immediacy of belief', which Ricoeur terms 'first naïveté'.[305] Their apprehension is a mode of hermeneutical

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300 Ibid., 196-197.

301 Ibid., 197-198.

302 Ibid., 198.

303 Ibid., 200.

304 Ibid., 201.

305 Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, Trans. Emerson Buchanan, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 351-353.

reflection – although not analytical – which relies on sustaining continuing myths, cosmologies and religious beliefs in order to give meaning to their own lives.[306] Within the category of revalorative uses of sacred architecture, Jones includes the apprehensions of outsiders, who are travellers, non-believers, artists, poets or political exploiters. Although they may have quite different views towards ritual–architectural events, their apprehensions produce a different level of meaning and are therefore important.[307]

Academic interpretations form another side of the protocols of architectural apprehension. They have the intention that Jones addresses as the opposite to indigenous apprehensions. Rather than a mode of devotion, academic interpreters try to achieve a mode of objectivity towards ritual–architectural events. Jones suggests undertaking such interpretations as 'objectifiable moments' in the reception history of a sacred building. Academics from different disciplines may have different apprehensions with different ramifications. From such a perspective, early academic studies of a building may be regarded as a part of the reception history of the building.[308]

Finally, the apprehensions of the author towards ritual–architectural events should also be included in the reception histories of architecture. The prevalent objective of distancing the self in research should be set aside in order to raise an opportunity for adding our own apprehensions to the reception history. Jones suggests that such an autobiographical flavour encourages self-criticism, with the awareness that the selective reception history of our research is necessarily an outcome of our own prejudices.[309]

7.6. Implications for Ottoman Narratives

Jones' hermeneutical paradigm is fruitful in approaching different perceptions of architecture that are hard to frame through mainstream approaches to architectural

306 Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, 202-203.
307 Ibid., 204.
308 Ibid., 206.
309 Ibid., 207-208.

history.[310] Thus, Jones' evaluations of the situational quality of meaning in architecture are helpful in suspending contemporary judgments in order to open avenues to understand how narratives represent Ottoman architecture, much of which still stands as monuments in the contemporary world. For instance, to use Jones' terminology, the Selimiye Mosque is an architecture that is continually self-creating through encounters with people from different backgrounds and periods. In the reception history of Ottoman architecture, the hermeneutical perspective renders the Ottoman narratives examined here as having different reception protocols of monuments for different audiences. Dayezāde's text on the Selimiye Mosque is a hermeneutical conversation from an indigenous point of view rendered in 'immediacy of belief', whereas the texts on the two Ottoman architects (Sinan and Sedefkār Mehmed) are more distanced, addressed to an elite audience, and have connections with the original intentions of the architects and the patrons.

Jones' hermeneutical approach helps us engage with Ottoman narratives in a number of possible ways. The experience of architecture through the metaphor of play extends the scope of approaching architecture from a merely aesthetic and functional angle. This helps us to legitimately ground the views of the authors rather than ignoring their work as bizarre or irrational writings about architecture. Taking architecture as a textual metaphor allows the legitimation of narratives as different readings of architecture in which a particular dialogue with the buildings is established. The mediative role of architecture in time expresses the complexity of approaching tradition not as a static entity but as a dynamic one wherein architecture endures and recollects the different apprehensions of different periods. Jones' insights on synchronic and diachronic recontextualisation of historiography make it legitimate for us to compare three temporally distinct texts as historical cross-sections for continuities and ruptures between them. Finally, reception histories as a hermeneutic way of reconstructing history open up an effective way of

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310 This hardship, I believe, is due to the ambiguous nature of experience. To illustrate, Le Corbusier's notes on his journey to the East are hard to interpret from the orientalist perspective of an East–West dichotomy. The notes embody unique details about a young artist's encounter with the 'other' within the immediacy of his experience. What he perceives on his attendance at an evening religious ceremony in an Istanbul mosque (expressed by him as 'extreme melancholy and sadness') can convincingly be conceptualised as a hermeneutical reflection from Jones' point of view. Le Corbusier. "The Mosques". *Oppositions* 18 (1980): 92-99. Zaknic, Ivan. "Le Corbusier's Eastern Journey". *Oppositions* 18 (1980): 87-91.

engaging with the past where claims of comprehensiveness and attaining historical truth are limited by the horizon of the interpreter and the object of the interpretation. The interpretations of Ottoman narratives in the next part are developed through Jones' insights.

PART III

THE CONTEXT: INTERPRETING OTTOMAN NARRATIVES

What endures in this dome is but a pleasant echo.

Baki

8. Layers of Meaning

Lindsay Jones offers an extensive framework in three parts to explore the meaning of what he calls 'ritual–architectural priorities' in (sacred) architecture. The first part is architecture as orientation. This embodies the rules according to which a building is established, such as building a microcosm of the universe, celestial bodies or phenomena, and abstract principles and standardised rules. The second part is architecture as commemoration. This elaborates references to divinity, sacred history, politics and ancestors. The third part of Jones' framework is architecture as ritual context. In this, a building is related to ritual–architectural events through stage performance, contemplation, propitiation and sanctuary.[1] In this thesis, Jones' framework is not adopted to provide a rigid typological division for comparative analysis between the texts. Rather, the topics of each part of the framework are taken as flexible suggestions that are helpful in pursuing thematic comparative analysis of the patterns of expression that recur throughout the texts.

Ottoman narratives focus on architecture through several layers of meaning in which architecture is related to different circumstances. From a hermeneutical perspective, their diversity can be conceptualised only through the agency of experience. Here the grouping of the texts into two, as in Parts I and II of the thesis, will be kept. Accordingly, the texts on the architects Sinan and Sedefkār Mehmed, which belong to the *tezkere* genre, will be focused on first, followed separately by the interpretation of the *Selimiye Risālesi*. There are a number of common themes among the *tezkeres* through which the meaning of architecture can be traced.

8.1. Architecture as Occasion

The nature of the narration in each of the first group of narratives needs particular attention in terms of how it sees architecture. *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* provides the most elaborate example among the five texts on Sinan. The narratives do not talk directly about architecture as we understand it today, as a fixed determined project. What is striking about the narratives is that architecture was understood as part of

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1 Lindsay Jones, *Twin City Tales: A Hermeneutical Reassessment of Tula and Chichen Itza* (Niwot, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 1995), 211.

intermingling events occurring around it. Many practical difficulties the architect had faced, such as meeting the deadline, gathering workmen and craftsmen, suffering from rumours and convincing the sultan, are described at length in the text. In fact, it is possible to say that the text focuses mainly on such events.

The part in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* with the title 'The Qualities of the Mosque that Sultan Süleyman Khan had Built in the City of Istanbul, which was Received with Care and Pride by the People' illustrates important aspects in this regard. It starts with the depiction of the incentive behind building the mosque as the idea that had entered the blessed heart of the Ottoman Sultan Süleyman. One morning Sultan Süleyman summoned Architect Sinan to his presence to discuss the mosque to be built in Istanbul. In this first meeting, the general picture of the mosque was depicted and the site was determined, which was a compromise between the wishes of architect and the sultan. It was decided that it would be built on the third hill of Istanbul over the old palace remains.[2] At an 'auspicious day, blessed hour', the foundations were laid, sacrificial rams were slain, and alms and presents were given to the poor and deserving people to consecrate the start of the construction. Next, the narrative focuses on the transportation of marbles to the construction site, the strength and beauty of its dome, the difficulties and rumours Architect Sinan encountered during the construction process, the opening ceremony of the mosque and finally the total budget of the construction.[3] This logical flow is more or less the same in each part of the text, dwelling on different constructions, but they are of quite different lengths depending on the interest and importance of the events that were associated with each project.

In this part, the long description of how special types of marble columns were gathered from different parts of the lands under Ottoman rule is interesting in terms of how it deals with architecture. The arrival of four columns to be used in the most important parts of the construction is described in detail. Among the four columns,

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2 Like Rome, Istanbul is built on seven hills (*Cezire-i Heft Cebel*), and this has been the subject of many poems and narratives.

3 Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies: A Critical Edition of Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*, ed. Howard Crane and Esra Akın (foreword by Gülru Necipoğlu) (Leiden: 2005 (forthcoming)). Suphi Saatçi Metin Sözen, ed., *Mimar Sinan and Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* (Istanbul: MTV Publications, 1989), 84-98.

particular emphasis is given to the one brought from the Kıztaşı region[4] because of its physical features, curious story and eventful transportation to the site. It resembled a minaret, "the Tree of Happiness in Paradise's garden *(Tubā)* and was a monolith hewn from a single piece of marble". According to the story, a maiden had set it up during the time of the unbelievers. Couplets in the text elaborate the imagery of the column as resembling the axis of the revolving sky erected under unsupported skies, and its creator as resembling the hero Ferhad who, according to the legend, challenged mountains. The grandeur of the single-piece marble column was depicted as a challenge for its transportation and articulation:

> In sum, upon the imperial command of the padishah, refuge of the universe, we erected the masts of great galleons and built a strong scaffolding story by story. And we collected massive lighter cables in one place and bound them with hawsers thick as a man's body to iron pulley blocks. And, in the place where it stood, we firmly bound the entire shaft of the abovementioned column with galley masts, and attached those ships' cables thick as a man's body to the steel blocks in two places. And in many places we set up powerful capstans and treadmills like the wheel of heaven. Many thousand novices (*acemioğlan*) entered the treadmill, and thousands of the demons of Solomon from among the Frankish prisoners shouted, 'Heave ho!' for good luck and attached a strong reserve [cable] to the abovementioned cables. And, when, with [shouts of] 'God! God!' they uprooted the abovementioned column that was like the axis of the celestial sphere, sparks were scattered from the blocks like lightning. [But] that massive cable could not bear [the strain] and snapped like a cannon [shot], scattering about [fragments] like cotton thrown from the bow of a cotton fluffer. As a result, it was caught by the reserve [cable] that had been prepared. With [shouts of] 'God! God!' [the column] was, thanks to the imperial good fortune, lowered without difficulty, and sacrifices were made and favours bestowed on the needy. Then, the demons of Solomon mounted [the column] on boat chocks and brought it to the noble building. By order of the shah the excess [of the column] was cut down, and it became uniform with the other columns.[5]

The other three columns were collected from Alexandria, Ba'albek, and the Topkapı Palace. Although some of them came from distant places overseas, their transportation is not described in as much detail as the one brought from the Kıztaşı region of Istanbul. However, each was marked as resembling "a stately cypress of the garden of the faith".[6]

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4 The region referred to as Kıztaşı was a suburb of Istanbul, not very far from the site of Süleymaniye Mosque. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān ve Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları), (Architect Sinan's Memoirs)*, ed. Hayati Develi Samih Rifat, Arzu Karamani Pekin (Istanbul: Koç Kültür Sanat, 2002), 61, see footnote 3.

5 Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

6 Ibid.

This long description about only one of the four important marble columns of the mosque seems out of place and from a contemporary view can be regarded as not needing to occupy such a lengthy space in the body of the text. Its contentious interpretations as historical information make it all the more awkward. Necipoğlu maintains that these columns are the four red granite columns that help to support the lateral arches between the piers of the main dome (figure 25).[7] Historical documents published by Barkan include references to imperial orders for the transportation of the marbles from the places mentioned by Sai, and they support Necipoğlu's claim.[8] However, Michael Rogers thinks that assuming that the red granite columns are the four columns referred to in Sai's and Barkan's texts is problematic: "the orders published by Barkan show the Ottoman administration at its most efficient, but not at its most imaginative" ... "Why go to the difficulty of matching four separate columns when the transport of four identical columns or at least two pairs would have saved so much trouble?"[9] Necipoğlu responds to this with: "the time-consuming operation of searching out and transporting the columns, whether they were used or not, also shows considerable imagination", contrary to what Rogers says: "few people need know the source of the columns actually used in Süleymaniye". The answer may lie in Süleyman's desire to acquire columns with distinct royal connotations even if their visual features were identical.[10]

Here the main concern is not whether the information conveyed by Sai is accurate as a historical fact. Be it absurd, as Rogers claims, or accepted as a connotation of the royal indulgence of the sultan, as Necipoğlu argues, this incident is a curious case for which a contemporary normative understanding of the Süleymaniye Mosque cannot ground the occasion conveyed by Sai on a rational basis. Searching for the validity and legitimacy of such an occasion, however, is an important task that will open the barriers of understanding.

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7 Gülru Necipoğlu, "The Süleymaniye Complex in Istanbul: An Interpretation", *Muqarnas: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture* III (1985): 104.

8 Ömer Lütfü Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami ve İmareti İnşaatı (1550-1557)*, 2 Vols. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1972), 13-24.

9 J. Michael Rogers, "The State and the Arts in Ottoman Turkey", Part I, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 14 (1981): 77-78.

10 Necipoğlu, "The Süleymaniye Complex in Istanbul: An Interpretation", 104.

From the hermeneutic perspective to which Jones introduces us, building on Gadamer, the encounter with Sai's account of the transportation of the columns confronts us with a hermeneutical crisis. As if to justify the universality of hermeneutical reflection that renders all claims of universality irrelevant,[11] Ottoman narratives see architecture as occasional within the enmeshed set of human experiences that embody different acts, rituals, opinions and events in and around it. The barrier of understanding breaks down if we approach the text with an experiential perspective that sees architecture as an occasion rather than an object.



Figure 25 Two of the four marble columns, Süleymaniye Mosque, Istanbul, 2004.

The example of the marble column is telling in this regard. The detailed description of the transportation process in the text accentuates its priority. From the description, it is possible to claim that the transportation of columns to the site and their special selection were as important as their use in the construction of the building. The stories of the transportation and the background of each marble column make them different from each other although they are visually identical. The occasion is narrated in a theatrical manner in the text, which thus exhibits a different sensibility to the act of building, suggesting that architecture as occasion may have been more important than the physical existence of the building from a sixteenth-century Ottoman point of view.

The occasional features of architecture are further accentuated throughout the description of the Süleymaniye Mosque in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān.* For example, the ivory and ebony of the pulpit, with their deep colour contrast and shiny and glossy

11 "The ideal of universal history must become a special problem for the historical world view, in as much as the book of history is a fragment that, so far as any particular present time is concerned, breaks off in the dark". Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 175.

material qualities, are marked in the imagery as morning and evening.[12] In a similar fashion, the coloured glass of the windows is expressed using a number of metaphors that refer to their changing appearance during the day: when they were lit by the rays of the sun, mostly in springtime, they became ornate rose beds. Or the multicoloured rays they projected played in light like the colours of a chameleon.[13] Moreover, other projects by Sinan included in the text, such as the Büyük Çekmece Bridge, are qualified using similar expressions. The reflection of the arches of the bridge upon water is seen as reminiscent of the shape of the Arabic letter '*nūn*'.[14] Among the group of texts on Sinan, *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn* describes Şehzade Mosque in a similar way. Among the features of this mosque worth mentioning, the sublime flow of water from its *şadırvan* has first priority in the text, followed by a description of the flows from seventeen other fountains situated in the courtyard of the mosque.[15]

Such understanding of architecture as an occasion rather than a physical entity is evident in the narratives throughout the Sinan texts, especially *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, as well as in Ottoman narratives from later periods. A century after *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, in *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*, Cafer Efendi devotes a chapter to a description of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, built by the architect Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa. The feature Cafer Efendi differentiates as notable about the building is similar to the case discussed above. Here Cafer Efendi too, points frequently to architecture as occasion. When writing about the conditions necessary for understanding the magnificent mosque, he argues that, besides having knowledge about the science of geometry, one has to ponder for hours, months and years to "comprehend in what various ways its various designs and interlocking decorations were put together".[16]

Drawing on Architect Mehmed's previous musical career, Cafer Efendi compares music and architecture while writing the chapter about the mosque. The relationship

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12 Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l- Bünyān ve Tezkiretü'l- Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları), (Architect Sinan's Memoirs)*, 64.

13 Ibid., 64. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

14 Ibid., 76.

15 Ibid. Zeki Sönmez, *Mimar Sinan İle İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler* (Istanbul: Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1988), 95.

16 Efendi Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, ed. Howard Crane (Leiden ; New York: E.J. Brill, 1987), 68.

he describes sounds quite awkward for one who is looking for a structural relationship between architecture and music:

> You related that previously the Aga (Architect Mehmed) took a fancy to the science of music. Now we have seen the science of music in its entirety in the building of this noble mosque. When looking at this noble building I saw twelve types of marble. From each marble a different sound or type of melodic mode is produced. From the types of sounds of the twelve marbles I observed in the same manner twelve modes. And some of the craftsmen wield their picks very gently. Their pitch is like Yegāh. And some wield them harder than this. Their pitch is like Dügāh. And some wield them harder than this. Their pitch is like Segāh. And some wield their picks very forcefully. Their pitch is like Çargāh. And I have observed in this the four derivative modes [*şu'be*]. And when looking at the noble mosque I encountered seven foremen [*mu'temed*]. And they would ceaselessly walk around the building and enjoin craftsmen, saying, each in a different sort of voice, 'Work you!' And I observed in their voices the seven secondary modes [*āvāze*]. And these twelve types of marbles must first be identified. Then they must be polished. [Inherent] in each of them there is a different sort of sound and tone. And I observed the twenty-four derivative modes [*terkīb*] in them. Do not all these elements which I have described pertain to the science of music?"[17]

The relationship Cafer Efendi constructs between architecture and musical modes sounds reasonable only if, again, architecture (or music) is evaluated in the context of an occasion. When envisaged within the experience of Cafer Efendi's visit to the construction site, it is not awkward for him to have experienced a musical sense in the sounds created by the working stonemasons. His visit coincided with the coming of spring after the cold days of an Istanbul winter. This visit to the site was surely an inspirational experience for him at a time when he watched "the flowers of the garden and meadow, numberless grassy plots, and water margins and thousands upon thousands of great gardens", but still complained, "the bud of pleasure did not open in any space or place", until he encountered the half-constructed building and recited his spring (*Bahariyye)* eulogy with joy and delight in celebration of its impression on him.[18]

Considering architecture as an occasion as exhibited in the examples in the *tezkere* texts underpins an aesthetic consciousness rendered as the immediacy of daily life that is not so different from enjoying a beautiful tree or flower. This attitude

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17 Yegāh, Dügāh, Segāh and Çargāh are Ottoman terms used for the pitches D, A, B, and C respectively. Ibid., 68-69.

18 Ibid., 72.

towards architecture seems common in both text groups of the *tezkere* genre from the distinct periods of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Moreover, the Ottoman approach to the act of building as an occasion is apparent in other historical examples. For instance, Mustafa Āli recounts that the building of the seven towers of Kars Castle by a group of workmen was accompanied by the energising military music of drums and pipes, which turned the act of building into a fun competition where each group tried to outdo the others.[19] A Spanish galley slave nicknamed Pedro wrote in his memoirs that at the construction site of the grand admiral Sinan Pasha's palace 200 foremen harmonically supervised 1500 skilled masters and there was no sign of confusion at the construction site.[20]

8.2. Marbles: Materiality and Meaning

Besides suggesting the idea of architecture as occasion, the example of four marble columns described above has further implications for the meaning and materiality of architecture, where product is not separate from process and form is not separate from meaning. At any rate, the expressions used in Sai's text indicate the importance of the four marble columns within the construction whether or not they were actually used in the building. There is no reason to think that these columns were not used as four load-bearing pillars to support the main dome and, as confirmed empirically from today's view, that they are identical pieces of red granite. However, it is hard to understand the rationale behind Sai's narrative of the columns as distinct from each other despite their physical similarity unless it is accepted that Sai's case exhibits a different sense of understanding from a contemporary one towards the materiality of architecture.

In addition to the four marble columns, the marbles of the Süleymaniye Mosque are also noted in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* as world famous, each type having been brought from a different region. The text narrates, according to the historians, that most of these are the marbles that were left over from the construction of Belkıs Palace of the Prophet Süleyman. The white marbles were quarried from Marmora Island and

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19 Cited in Gülru Necipoglu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 76.

20 Cited in Ibid., 162-163.

the green ones were brought from Arabia. The porphyry rosettes and lozenges – peerless in the world – were said to be precious pearls from unknown ores.[21] The gathering of special marbles from earlier buildings for the construction of Hagia Sophia is similarly accentuated in *Diegesis* (Narration), a ninth-century Byzantine text that was particularly influential in the Ottoman world after the conquest of Istanbul. According to this text, the collection of marbles for the construction of Hagia Sophia took seven-and-a-half years and, as in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, the marbles were noted to have royal and sacred connotations.[22] Far beyond referring to the scarcity of marble quarries, in both texts the collection of marbles as a building event has acute semantic significance.

Therefore, the story of the origin and gathering of these marbles being at least as important as their typology and visuality, as in the case of the four marble columns, suggests a distinct sensitivity towards their materiality that sees their diversity not solely as a derivative of their appearance. With such an assumption the lengthy description in the text of the gathering the Kıztaşı column makes sense and the apparent absurdity of bringing four identical marbles from four remote places is resolved. The narrative undertakes the marble columns of the mosque not as a mere heap of stones, as we are inclined to understand construction material today. It takes rather a relational attitude towards materiality that is not shaped by calculative abstractions. To illustrate, four marble columns are seen meaningful by referring to images of religion and power:

> This well-proportioned mosque became a *Ka'ba*.
> Its four columns became [like] the Four Friends.
> The House of Islam on four pillars
> Was strengthened by the Four Friends.[23]

Thus, the four columns are important in the semantic assertion of the mosque as the 'house of God.' The mosque is likened to the *Ka'ba*, which is frequently called *beytullah* (house of God), according to Islam the most sanctified place on earth. The

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21 Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı (Mimar Sinan'in Anıları)* , 63. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

22 Cyril Mango, "Byzantine Writers on the Fabric of Hagia Sophia", in *Hagia Sophia: Form, Structure and Meaning from the Age of Justinian to the Present*, ed. Robert Mark, Ahmet Çakmak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 45-46.

23 Here the four friends are the four caliphs Ebubekir, Omar, Osman and Ali. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

narrative suggests seeing beyond both materiality and formal identification. While it is hard to grasp a resemblance between the architectural features of the *Ka'ba* and Süleymaniye Mosque by relying on formal analysis, the context of four columns carrying the main dome in Sai's narrative highlights the relevance of such a comparison through metaphors.

Dwelling on this example, I do not argue that the meaning of architecture was related only to religion and power in the narrative. On the contrary meaning is multivalent: the columns like any other architectural component of the building acquire meaning by referring to higher levels of reality that are related to divinity, and this can have several reflections such as religion, power, the beauty of nature, or didactic anecdotes from popular myths. The marbles of the Süleymaniye Mosque trigger rich imagery throughout the text:

> The waves of its marble always used to
> Allude to the surge of the sea of beauty.[24]

In a similar vein, in *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* Cafer Efendi constructs his lengthy comments on architecture and music quoted above starting from the 12 types of marble used in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. He sees the twelve types of marble as responding in twelve different ways to the hammers of the stonemasons. Going beyond materiality he perceives twelve modes of music from their voices. Surprisingly, he sees a different tone inherently hidden in each of them and likens them to twenty-four derivative modes of music. Within these poetic expressions Cafer Efendi gives the clue of transacting multivalent meanings from the materiality of marble. Later, he writes about all types of marble in the world known to him, describing their physical features in detail in a definitive manner, in contrast to his poetic beginning.[25] However, not satisfied that these explanations are sufficient he ends his chapter with a eulogy to the mosque in which he chants:

> What intricate art! What fine decorations!
> What unique bejewelled marbles!

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24 Ibid.

25 Efendi Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*, ed. Howard Crane (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1987), 70-72.

There is no defect in the symbolism of the building,
When one assays it on the scale of reason.[26]

8.3. The Kıztaşı Event as an Architectural and Engineering Feat

The narrative of the transportation of the Kıztaşı column in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* can be read as prescriptive praise for an architectural and engineering feat. From a sixteenth-century point of view, carrying an ancient, semi-precious column from one place to another in one piece was a big event not only for the Ottomans but also for the people of the Italian Renaissance. It required technical equipment, and human collaboration and administration as well as an audience to watch and appreciate the difficulty of the task. The passage on the column is an example of such an event, with its long description addressing these criteria. This passage from *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* has a logical and contextual similarity to those in a contemporary Italian book on the obelisks of Rome.

Pope Leo X started construction of St Peter's Basilica through the involvement the architect Bramante and later Michelangelo as the most magnificent cathedral in all Christendom. Later, Pope Sixtus V took on the management of the construction. It was planned that the obelisk behind the sacristy of the new St Peter's would be moved from the place where it had stood since the time of Caesar to where it would be included in the urban fabric of the cathedral. This was a symbolic intervention to reclaim a pagan past and bring it under Christian dominion.[27] Engineer and architect Domenico Fontana took on the task of transportation, having devised the most promising action plan from among various proposals. Fontana published his plans in a book called *Della Transportatione dell Obelisco Vaticano* in 1590.[28] Thanks to Fontana's book and drawings we can learn the difficulty of moving the obelisk 250 metres with the technical capacity of sixteenth-century Rome. The scaffolding, the ropes to carry the weight in a uniformly distributed way, and the manual force of 800 men working in rhythmic collaboration to move the obelisk to its new position

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26 Ibid., 74.

27 Bern Dibner, *Moving the Obelisks* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press, 1970), 20-21. Also see Anthony Grafton. "The Obelisks' Tale". *New Republic* 217, no. 21 (1997): 38-42.

28 Ibid., 24-25.

are among the important matters described by Fontana. Including preparations the task extended well beyond a mere day's work (figure 26).[29]

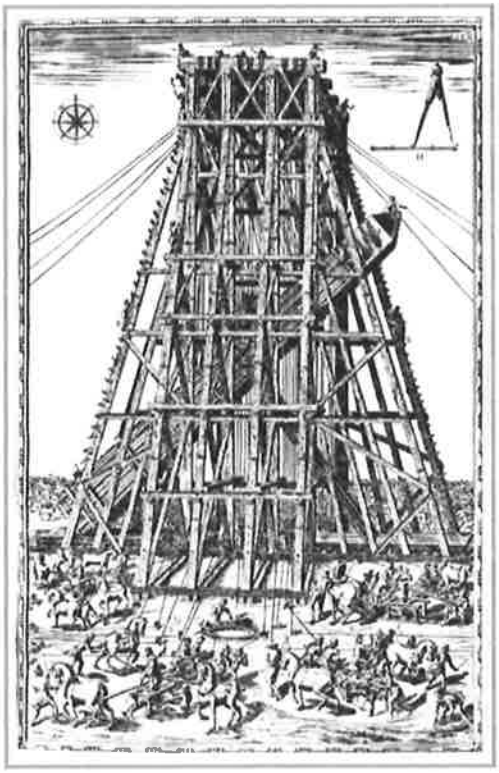


Figure 26 The scaffolding prepared by Fontana, Dibner, *Moving the Obelisks*, 35.

Apart from careful calculations and arrangements, we learn from Fontana how the task itself was an architectural and engineering performance started by a trumpet signal and watched by the public. Division of the workforce was planned carefully and food was distributed to the workmen in order to prevent rebellion among them. The penalty for making an unwanted noise during the performance was severe punishment or even death. The day before the scheduled operation was spent in devotion and prayer. Then, the next morning on a nice spring Rome day the operation commenced. Uprooting the obelisk and lowering it ready for transportation took a day's work. Moving and raising it in its proper place took a further four days.[30] With all the prior arrangements the task took Fontana a year to accomplish after the sanctioning of the proposal in 1586. When the obelisk was put in its new place, "the joy of the great crowd and the holiday atmosphere of the occasion gave rise to spontaneous jubilation", following which rewards were showered upon Fontana.[31]

Faroqhi and Necipoğlu have drawn attention to the similarity between Fontana's task and the anecdote in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* about the transportation of the Kıztaşı column. Faroqhi argues that in both contexts the technical possibilities under the

29 Ibid., 28-30.
30 Ibid., 30-37.
31 Ibid., 40-41.

sultan's and the pope's power were accentuated.[32] Necipoğlu notes how the spectacle value of the tasks is recorded in the textual accounts of both occasions as public celebrations of engineering and architectural feats.[33] If we remember the anecdote in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān,* Sinan narrates that first he built a strong multi-layered scaffolding from large ship timber frames. Then, along with his crew (as the account is written in the first person plural), he arranged the pulleys and thick ropes in order to tie the body of the column. With human force, the pulleys strained the ropes, and as the column rose, lightning-like flames were seen through the pulleys. Some of the ropes could not bear the heat and strain and collapsed. However, additional ones were ready to take on the weight. The column was placed in the scaffolding, and the occasion was celebrated as the column was carried to the construction site.[34] Although the same degree of detail is not given as in Fontana's feat, the anecdote gives a clear view of how the task was undertaken. Apart from communicating the Ottoman technique of carrying a colossal column in one piece from one place to another, the anecdote is in line with the mentality of the period, across Renaissance Italy and the Ottoman world, which loaded meaning upon the tasks of building as architectural events.

We gather from historical sources that the collection and transportation of marbles was an important role played by the architectural profession in the Ottoman context. For example, regarding the construction of Süleymaniye, many of the architects were sent to collect antique marbles between 1550 and 1553. They were responsible for locating and marking (*nişan*) suitable marbles and preparing detailed catalogues with stone samples (*nümūne*), numbers, dimensions and transportation costs.[35]

As we have seen from the example of transporting the marble column, the hermeneutical perspective helps us to recover the distance and strangeness of

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32 Suraiya Faroqhi, *Osmanlı Kültürü ve Gündelik Yaşam: Ortaçağdan Yirminci Yüzyıla [Ottoman Culture and Everyday Life: From Middle Ages to the 20th Century]*, trans. Elif Kılıç (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1997), 159.

33 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 142.

34 Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

35 Cited in Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 156. Also see Stefanos Yerasimos, "1-16. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Mimarları: Bir Prosopografya Denemesi", in *Afife Batur'a Armağan: Mimarlık ve Sanat Tarihi Yazıları*, ed. Mazlum Ağır, and Cephanecigil (Istanbul: Literatür Yayıncılık, 2005), 39.

expression in the Ottoman narratives. In the following five sub-sections of this part of the thesis, different interpretations of more general themes pursued through the narratives will be elaborated.

8.4. Architecture and Music

Architecture, music and science are quite distinct disciplines from a contemporary perspective. However, throughout the narrative of *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* music, in addition to architecture, is a persistent theme and both disciplines are referred to as sciences. Apart from describing music as architect Sedefkār Mehmed's past career, which he left to become an architect, author Cafer Efendi also makes interesting analogies between architecture and music in general.[36] As discussed earlier in a different argument, the relationship between music and architecture is not a structural one reflected through numbers and proportions but rather an occasional one. However, it is important to further explore under what circumstances Cafer Efendi compares architecture with music and why he passionately champions architecture over music.

A sixteenth-century book on the sciences, *Mevzuat'ül Ulūm*, includes music (*musikī*) as a science. The science of music is categorised under the mathematical (*riyāzī*) sciences together with geometry (*hendese*), astrology (*he'yet*) and arithmetic (*adet*). Mathematical sciences are described as focusing on the abstracted realm rather than the physical realm. The science of music covers both creating rhythmic and harmonic sounds and crafting musical instruments. The benefit of the science of music is noted as its effect on the self. Thus, it is noted as being used to cure sick people and excite warriors.[37]

In contrast to music, architecture is not included as a main science category in the book, but it is included in more than one subcategory under the main category of geometry (*hendese*). One of these subcategories is construction (*ukūd-ı ebniyye*), which covers different constructional aspects from the statics to the aesthetics of buildings. Building castles, bridges, arches, waterways, water wells and beautiful

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36 Efendi Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*, ed. Howard Crane, 68.

37 Taşköprülü-zāde, *Mevzuat'ül-Ulüm* (Istanbul: Er-tu, 1975), 302-304.

mansions are all listed as part of this science.[38] In another subcategory, architecture is also related to the science of levelling (*mesāhā*) and the science of gravity and survey (*ağırlık ve ölçme*). Regarding the science of gravity and survey in relation to architecture, it is specifically emphasised that this science is not implemented according to written handbooks but is calculated and measured by engineers (*mühendis*) in accordance with the weight and type of the construction material.[39] Thus, in the sixteenth-century book on the sciences music is seen as a distinct abstract category of mental creation whereas the practical side of architecture is accentuated.

Risāle-i Mi'māriyye gives informative accounts of both music and architecture through definitions and terminology, their comprehensiveness unique for their own integration. Moreover, the *Risāle* gives mythic–historical origins of both music and architecture. It is Pythagoras, the text says, who discovered, arranged and classified the rhythmic patterns of music from the sound of the waves crashing on the sea shore 2643 years ago in the time of the Prophet Solomon.[40] The specificity of the number 2643 amazes a contemporary reader given the fact that historical origin is mixed with myth. Curious analogies are made between music and cosmology. The twelve modes of music, for example, are compared to the twelve constellations of the zodiac; the four derivative modes of music are compared to the four elements; and the seven derivative modes of music are related to the seven planets.[41]

According to the mentioned book of geometry narrated as being read by a youth in the imperial gardens, the master of architects and stonemasons was the Prophet Seth, son of Adam and Eve. He first built the *Ka'ba* from clay and marble on the spot of its heavenly prototype (*Beyt al-Ma'mūr*), which was once on earth but was later exalted back to the Seventh Heaven. After the deluge, the Prophet Noah and

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38 Ibid., 305.

39 Ibid., 306-308.

40 Efendi Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*, ed. Howard Crane, 27.

41 The twelve constellations are named Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces; the twelve modes of music are given as Rāst, 'Irāk, Isfahān, Zīrefkend, Büzürg, Şernegūle, Rehāvī, Hüseynī, Hicāz, Būselik, Nevā and 'Uşşāk; the four elements referred to are fire, air, water and earth; and the four derivative modes of music are noted as Yegāh, Dügāh, Segāh and Çārgāh. The seven planets referred to are Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury and the Moon, while the seven derivative modes are noted as Kūşt, Nevrūz, Selmek, Şehnāz, Māye, Gerdāniyye and Hisār. Ibid., 25-27.

the Prophet Abraham rebuilt the *Ka'ba* on the same spot. Accordingly, the book says that the first masters of stonemasons and architects were the Prophet Seth, the Prophet Abraham and the Prophet Noah, who built or rebuilt the *Ka'ba*. Apart from this information, the science of geometry (*hendese*), however, is noted as being based on the oral teachings of the Prophet Enoch. But it is claimed that it was Pythagoras who later collected these teachings and produced a book on the science of geometry and mathematics.[42] Then, Cafer Efendi switches to giving explanations about the etymology of geometrical and architectural terminology. He describes basic geometric forms as proliferating from the basic forms of the perfect circle, half circle, an arc less than a half circle, an arc more than a half circle, and the triangle. However, he does not mention an analogy of these forms with cosmological bodies in the way he does for the science of music.[43]

Cafer Efendi's detailed accounts of architecture and music deserve wider comparative research that is outside the aim of this thesis. However, it is possible to speculate on two main reasons for Cafer's comparison of architecture with music throughout the narrative. The first, explicitly stated by him, is the contextual relationship that is Sedefkār Mehmed's interest in both of them. The second reason can be related to Cafer's denouncing of music and proclaiming the superiority of architecture in the context of seventeenth-century Ottoman culture.[44] Cafer Efendi's denouncing of music can roughly be interpreted as deriving from his *sunni* inclinations but this lack of interest in music is not supported by the main trend of his time. His religious deliberation and caution about music is quite in contrast with the assertions of Evliya Çelebi in his seventeenth-century travelogue, which was synchronic with Cafer's text, in which he proudly shows his wide knowledge about

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42 Cafer Efendi refers to mythic–historical sources with exact dates in relation to the prophets, which he calls the traditions of Ibn'Abbās, a scholar from first generation of Muslims, and a book on world history called *Behcet al-Tevārīh*, written by Ottoman historian Şükrullāh ibn Şihāb al-Dīn Ahmed. Ibid., 28-30.

43 Ibid., 30-32.

44 Even though he starts and concludes the narrative with discussion on the science of music, Cafer still mentions music with religious cautions and parables in his conclusion. Ibid., 102.

types of musical instruments gained as a result of his friendly conversations with musicians of the period.[45]

Literary historian Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar notes that the main form of creativity in Ottoman culture had shifted from architecture to music towards the end of the seventeenth century.[46] Evliya Çelebi's comfortable style of writing in relation to music despite religious restrictions implies the popularity of music at this time. Necipoğlu convincingly posits the weakening influence from the seventeenth century onwards of the royal corps of architects in controlling monumental projects, which were starting to be commissioned from talented Greek or Armenian architects instead. The corruption of the corps of royal architects continued until it was re-formed into an imperial school of military engineering in 1795.[47] In his travelogue, Evliya Çelebi states that the corps of royal architects was capable of building a mosque like Hagia Sophia or a castle like Istanbul. However, with regard to their actual activities, he mentions only their strict control of housing codes and a ban on illegal housing within the city, achieved through their horse-riding stewards (*kethüdā*).[48] Thus, Cafer Efendi's comparison of architecture with music made two decades earlier may reflect a desire to refashion architecture as superior to music, as a response to the social situation of the architectural profession at that time.

8.5. Religious Truth versus Architectural Truth

In the fifth chapter of his text on architecture, Cafer Efendi gives details about the renovations made in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina that were significant from a pious Muslim's point of view.[49] As much as focusing on the renovations, this chapter also reads as a sacred history of the *Ka'ba* and the holy cities. By referring to Al-Suyuti's prominent traditional text, Cafer Efendi makes several statements about the *Ka'ba* and its universal blessedness, such as its possession of divine grace endowed with *baraka*.[50] He identifies some of the other signs that justify the

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45 Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Celebi Seyahatnamesi İkinci Kitap*, trans. Zuhuri Danışman (Istanbul: Özaydın Matbaası, 1971), 268-269.

46 Cited in Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 157.

47 Ibid., 157.

48 Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi İkinci Kitap*, 256.

49 Efendi Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*, ed. Howard Crane, 11.

50 Ibid., 49.

blessedness of the *Ka'ba* such as even animals worshiping it, people with evil intentions towards it being perished or its embodiment of the footprints of the Prophet Abraham. Then, he mentions the religious duty of able Muslims with economic means to set out on pilgrimage to it. After Noah's flood, Cafer writes, Abraham built the *Ka'ba* on the site God had already designated for it. With God's will, a cloud cast a shadow on the Earth, revealing this blessed spot. Abraham built the *Ka'ba* on that spot to the exact size of the shadow using the stones of five mountains. Archangel Gabriel brought the black stone from heaven: it was white jacinth first, but then turned black when a menstruating woman unknowingly touched it. The *Ka'ba* has since been demolished and rebuilt many times in the course of history (figure 27).[51]

However, in Muslims' generic perception the Ka'ba is primordial and untouched. Thus, following this historical account, Cafer wrote about how Ottoman sultans' intentions to renovate the sacred building were postponed by opposition from the *ulema*. More than two decades before Cafer wrote these lines, in his visit to the holy site, Architect Sinan had noted the predicament of the building. He is even said to have prepared drawings of a brace to fortify the structure. However, upon Sinan's return to Istanbul, in line with social norms, the Sultan asked the opinion of the *ulema* before starting the project. Most of the *ulema* reacted to Sinan's proposal with the conviction that the *Ka'ba* was the blessed house, manifesting the perfection of its creator, and for this reason it would be unwise to touch it. Moreover, it was the most significant among God's beloved objects and had endured with His ultimate power. Therefore, they believed it was not propitious to violate the old form of the *Ka'ba* with any new interventions.[52]

In contrast to these reactions from the *ulema*, twenty-five years later, on his pilgrimage to Mecca, *şeyhülislam* Sun'allāh saw that the walls of the *Ka'ba* were more inclined here and there. He realised the urgent need to renovate the building by improving its structure. Upon many rhetorical deliberations that Cafer conveys in his narrative, he reversed the previous claims about the untouchable autonomy of the building by giving the final verdict that it would be appropriate to fasten a brace

51 Ibid., 52.
52 Ibid., 53-55.

to the pleasant waist of the blessed building. Thus, as the new chief imperial architect, Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa inherited Sinan's previously sealed and protected plans in order to consult them regarding the width, height and length of the building. Then, as Cafer notes, he laid out the columns and the beams of the brace together with the golden rainspout, the high *minbar* for the *Makām* of the Prophet Abraham and the three non-ferrous golden locks for the Tomb of the Prophet.[53]



Figure 27 A miniature showing first renovations of the *Ka'ba, Shahnāma-i Salīm Khān*, c.1581, watercolour on paper. Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 169.

Thus, through these testimonies, Cafer Efendi related a historical event in which architectural truth contradicted the religious truth. The physical situation of the *Ka'ba* ceased to endure in the course of history while the blessed building – as part of the ahistorical religious narrative – was semantically strong as ever. In order to act according to the reality of the day, a compromise between the religious and architectural truth was made by *şeyhülislam* Sun'allāh using a 'gift' metaphor (the waist/brace analogy), and the project prepared a quarter of a century earlier by Sinan was realised by architect Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa. This historical event further shows how different historical contexts are helpful in elaborating the lifespan of an architectural monument which is in fact in continuous transformation. Of course, this architectural event of 'gifts' prepared for the *Ka'ba* was first enacted in Istanbul in a pompous state ritual before they were transported to the holy site. About this particular occasion Cafer relates:

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53 Ibid., 56. Although Cafer Efendi does not mention the details of how Mehmed Ağa used Sinan's earlier drawings, court historian Naīmā asserts that despite the fact that he was knowledgeable and capable of renovating the *Ka'ba*, upon the command of the Ottoman administration, Mehmed Ağa was asked to implement exactly what Sinan had earlier prepared. Naīmā further maintains that Mehmed Ağa not only prepared the project, but he also travelled to the Harem region to oversee the renovation on site. Cited in Orhan Şaik Gökyay, "Risāle-i Mi'māriyye- Mimar Mehmet Ağa-Eserleri", in *Ord. Prof. İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı'ya Armağan*, ed. Oktay Aslanapa (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1988), 153-4. Source: Naīmā (II, 104 v).

> After all these, having been completed, were prepared and ready, they were taken to the pleasant open country outside the Edirne Gate known as the Davud Pasha Çiftliği so that His Majesty the fortunate Padishah, the shadow of God, refuge of the world, could see how excellently these fine, esteemed gifts and nobly made works were fashioned, and how charming and agreeable each of them was. They [the braces] were set up on the four perpendiculars that had been fixed in the ground. Saying, 'These were made for the two noble sanctuaries and they go to those two blessed places', the great viziers and illustrious ministers of state, and His Excellency *Şeyhülislam*, and the great sheikhs, and the *kadıasker* [chief military judge] and other *ulema* and learned persons and professors and teachers and the foreign ambassadors, in all more than a hundred thousand persons, made ready to honour them.[54]

8.6. Architectural Rituals

Assmann maintains that myths and rituals reveal the meaning of truth claims that are transferred to subsequent generations through respect and conservation that keep meanings alive.[55] In this vein, rituals have an important social role in Ottoman culture. Relating to architecture, rituals can be grouped into different categories, such as rituals choreographed by/in/around/across architecture, everyday rituals around monuments, rituals at the start of construction, and the act of building itself as part of the ritual. Ottoman narratives on architecture give interesting scenes from such architectural rituals which will be enriched with other historical information from their context.

The funerary mosque complexes of Istanbul, concentrated in the three townships of the walled city, were linked together by courtly processions held on state occasions. It was a custom for the sultan to visit the royal tombs of his ancestors one by one during these processions. These occasions, marked by the architectural landmarks, were charged with symbolic significance for the city community. Necipoğlu maintains that consecutive visits to the ancestral tombs together with a visit paid to the city's patron saint, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (a martyred companion of Prophet Muhammad), were symbolic links between the present and the dynastic and mythical Islamic past. This way collective memory was revisited and glorified and

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54 Efendi Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*, ed. Howard Crane, 57.

55 Jan Assmann, *Kültürel Bellek: Eski Yüksek Kültürlerde Yazı, Hatırlama ve Politik Kimlik*, trans. Ayşe Tekin (Istanbul: Ayrıntı, 1997), 60.

before a campaign the sultan was able to gather collective *baraka* from his religious and dynastic ancestors that would give him hope for victory.[56]

The monumental mosques of the sultans were also used for specific prayers for victory when the sultans were on campaign. For example, when Sultan Süleyman was away for the Safavid campaign of 1553, prayers for victory were held on Mondays and Thursdays in successive sultanic mosques. Specific parts selected from the Koran were recited in these prayers.[57] As Necipoğlu describes, another ritual practice held in the funerary mosque complexes was the melodic chanting of the call to prayer from minarets by a chorus of *müezzins* who also practised special chants on special festive occasions such as Fridays, the announcement of the birth or death of a royal family member, the sacred month of Ramadan, two religious festivals, four holy nights, and victory celebrations.[58]

The sultanic mosques of Istanbul were sources of urban pride for both foreign people and the population of Istanbul. Rituals and temporary decorations helped vitalise the monumental architecture, whose features can be captured only from historical sources. Necipoğlu notes that these mosques were proudly displayed to foreign dignitaries of the time through special tours. On festive occasions, oil lamps were suspended on cords between the minarets and polychromatic effects were created by pouring coloured water under the layer of oil. Special forms such as the crescent and the full moon were created by these oil lamps. Words displayed included the names of the sultans together with their successful campaigns.[59]

The inauguration ceremonies of sultanic mosques as well as other significant architectural events were important occasions where the royal family was accompanied by religious scholars, court officials, and foreign diplomats who were ready to present gifts from foreign rulers.[60] Such ceremonies served the multiple purposes of promoting peace among dynasties and empowering the Ottoman sultan. It is not surprising then that in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* Sinan proudly conveyed how the

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56 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 66.
57 Ibid., 66.
58 Ibid., 67.
59 Ibid., 67.
60 Ibid., 67.

honour of opening the door of the Süleymaniye Mosque was given to him by Sultan Süleyman.[61]

Although today they are deprived of their ritual significance, most of the mosques in Istanbul show evidence that their patrons attempted to leave their personal marks on these monuments. For instance, the cannons captured by Kılıç Ali Pasha during the conquest of Goletta in Tunisia were displayed in front of his mosque. Gilded finials decorating the pinnacles of domes from time to time served as emblems of the patrons' identities, such as sun disks alluding to one patron's name, Şemsi (pertaining to the sun). Necipoğlu calls these 'memory markers' that helped pursue the patrons' connection with their monuments in collective memory.[62]

Not unlike today, monumental Friday mosques were not often frequented by women. This was largely due to a concern for women's security in public, where they had little place of action. Monumental mosque projects patronised by women of the royal family were exceptions to this generalisation, showing that these women were capable of financing the most expensive and prestigious building type available.[63]

In *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, narratives about all the projects indicate that construction was initiated through specific rituals such as sacrificing animals and distributing alms and gifts to the poor. For the starting day of construction a specific phrase is repeatedly used: that construction commences at an 'auspicious day, blessed hour'.[64] Rather than being merely a rhetorical device this repetition points to the emphasis given to the specific determination of the date. Regarding the construction of the Süleymaniye Mosque, historian Celalzade asserts that Sinan first "prepared the plan and design (*resm ve tarh*) of the mosque according to an esteemed and agreeable manner". Following this, Sinan traced the plan with stakes and ropes on the levelled ground in the presence of the sultan and engineers dug the foundations. The sultan's second visit to the site was made at an auspicious time determined by

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61 Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı (Mimar Sinan'in Anilari)*, 70. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

62 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 68.

63 Ibid. 70.

64 Celebi, *Yapılar Kitabı (Mimar Sinan'in Anilari)*, 47, 52, 61. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

the astrologers, and an initiation ceremony was held in the presence of the sultan, his court and religious dignitaries. In accordance with tradition, animals were sacrificed and alms were distributed. The grand mufti Ebussuud initiated the construction by placing the cornerstone of the mihrab "with his blessed hands".[65] Celalzade's more elaborate account explicitly suggests that specific dates were selected for the start of construction in accordance with astrological and cosmological references. The anecdote relating that the first stone to be laid was the cornerstone of the mihrab and that it was put in place by the highest religious authority of the state further attests to the significance given to sacred Islamic references such as orientation towards the *Ka'ba* and endowment with *baraka*, as practised in a sixteenth-century Ottoman scene.[66]

İbrahim Hakkı Uzunçarşılı and Gökyay note that similar rituals took place in the construction of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, built by Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa in the seventeenth century. They maintain that on an 'auspicious day' (the ninth Thursday of the month *Receb*) the places of the four walls, the mihrab, the columns and the *mahfil* were determined on site in accordance with the plan Mehmed Ağa had prepared. The sultan not only watched the construction scene from a makeshift kiosk, but he also participated in the digging of the foundations. The preparation of the foundations took more than a month, during which animals were sacrificed, several banquets were held and alms were given to the poor.[67]

Finally, the act of building was seen as a ritual in itself. Cafer Efendi's experience related above, in which he related how he saw musical sense in the construction of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque during his visit is a case in point. Apart from this, meaning charged to the act of building (as part of life at large) is evident through its representation in guild processions and circumcision festivities from different periods. The miniature album of *Sūrnāme*, representing a procession of circumcision festivities in 1582 depicts royal architects walking in groups, each holding an axe in his hand (figure 28). In the same album, a model of the

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65 Cited in Necipoglu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 171.

66 Annemarie Schimmel, *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 54-55.

67 İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. 3 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1954), 554. Gökyay, "Risāle-i Mi'māriyye-Mimar Mehmet Ağa-Eserleri", 161.

Süleymaniye Mosque is depicted being carried by a group of men. Inside the model, a person was situated to sing loud praises to God, the Prophet Muhammad, the four caliphs and the Ottoman dynasty.[68]

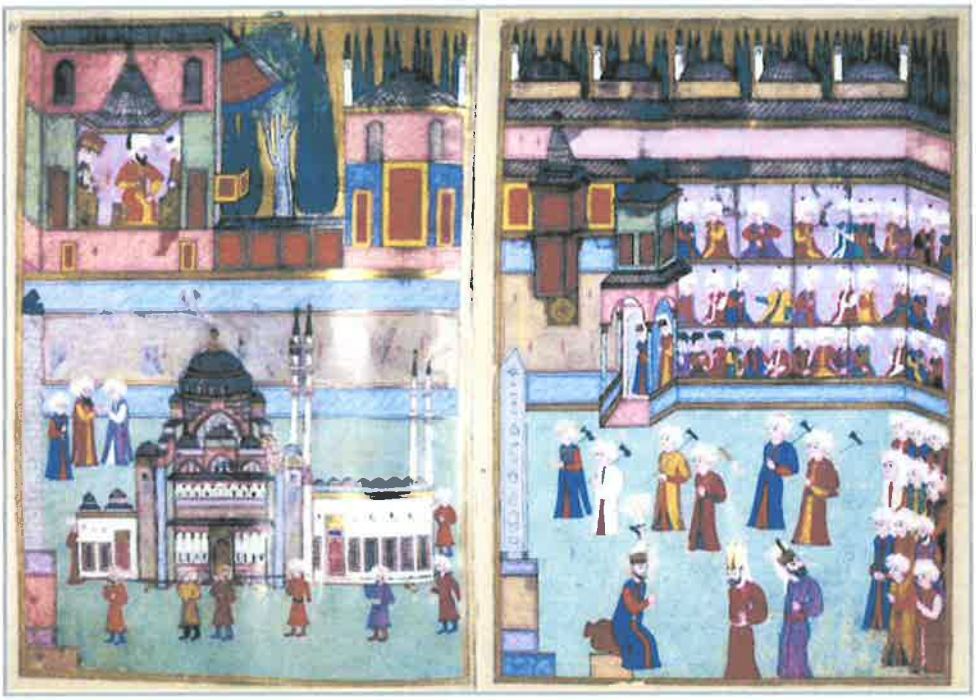


Figure 28 A parade of the architects in a circumcision festival, c.1582, watercolour on paper from *Sūrnāme* by İntizami. Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 162.

9. Remembering Sinan

Although it does not coincide with the expectations of modern historiography on Sinan, the close relationship of the narratives with the intentions of the architect and his own context is evident. The aim that governs the first and second texts on Sinan reaches its most refined expression – a narration of the architectural adventure of the architect – in the fourth text, *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, and the most refined list of buildings constructed under his supervision is in the last (fifth) text, *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye*. The texts clearly mark Sinan's intention to leave a record about himself for future generations by claiming the authorship of his buildings. For example, author Sai conveys Sinan's commission for him to write the memoir *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*:

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68 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 161. Nurhan Atasoy, *Surname-i Humayun: Düğün Kitabı* (Istanbul: Koçbank, 1997), 62-63.

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> The reason for the composition of the agreeable book and fair ornament [that is like] a black-veiled beauty is this: One day, the chief of the fortunate padishah's architects, Sinan son of Abdülmennan, having become a weak old man and wishing his name and reputation to endure on the pages of time, asked this brokenhearted servant without protector, the humble Sai, to record his conversation in verse and prose so that he be remembered with prayers and blessings.[69]

As first-person narratives, *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* and the earlier texts support an individual awareness that has often been identified with Western Enlightenment. Nevertheless, it exhibits a quite different profile of Sinan from that constructed by modern historiography (figure 29).[70] Sinan's sense of individualism fluctuates between hubris and humility. Despite his extraordinary architectural skills Sinan is exhibited as a humble practitioner throughout the memoir. He was referred to with several praising phrases in the historical sources of his time and later periods and the memoir texts clearly celebrate him in this manner.[71] These qualifications are not mere rhetorical devices and deserve closer examination to explore how Sinan was celebrated in the Ottoman context.



Figure 29 A miniature depicting Sinan, c.1579, *Süleymannāme*. Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 15.

In his memoirs, and especially in the most refined version, *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, Sinan is depicted as fully devoted to his duties assigned by the Ottoman state. His personality has been shaped mainly by his responsibility to God and the Ottoman sultan. Sinan belongs to a world in which an unshakable world order was desired through piety rather than notions of progress or evolution in the modern sense.

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69 Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

70 Suraiya Faroqhi, *Osmanlı Tarihi Nasıl İncelenir? [Approaching Ottoman History]*, 229.

71 For instance Cafer Efendi calls Sinan, "*ser-i mühendisan-ı cihān*" (chief of the world's engineers). İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı, *Mimar Koca Sinan: Vakfiyeler-Hayır Eserleri-Hayatı-Padişaha Vekaleti-Azadlık Kağıdı-Alım, Satım Hüccetleri* (Istanbul: 1948), 52. Efendi Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*, ed. Howard Crane, 8.

Thus, he is portrayed as an individual from a world where free will was directed by obedience to authority. However, as a normal outcome of the complexity of life he could still maintain a distinct sense of individualism under these circumstances that shaped the clarity of his mind despite the many practical difficulties he faced. In Sinan's sense of individualism artistic awareness was paramount. Those who read *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* find it difficult to differentiate between Sinan the artist, Sinan the architect and Sinan the engineer. Sinan is rather a master who performed all these roles in his architectural productions. In the text Sinan calls himself a humble craftsman and metaphorically describes his process of education in this way:



I was eager and aspired to the carpenter's trade. I became a steadfast compass in the master's service and kept an eye on the centre and the orbit (*merkez ü medār*). Later, like a [moving] compass drawing a circumference, I longed to move to [other] lands. For a time, I traversed the Arab and Persian lands in the service of the sultan and acquired a sought-after bit [of wisdom] from the crenellation of every *iwan* and a provision [of knowledge] from every ruined dervish lodge.[72]

Figure 30 Sinan's signature on Büyükçekmece Bridge, Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 132.

Though shaped within the norms of poetic expression, these statements seem not far from sincerity. Education from his master in a sedentary lifestyle in his youth, and his travels during his military career in adulthood, both served to improve his knowledge of buildings through practice and analysis. The compass metaphor in the quote above ingeniously refers to the inseparability of practice and the visual experience of the architectural examples he had encountered in different geographies, in Sinan's determination to increase his insight into what he called the 'builder's trade'.

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72 Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

In *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* architectural production is always undertaken for the sake of being useful. Art for art's sake would have been an alien understanding for Sinan. He built aqueducts in order to serve the people of Istanbul. He accepted the position of architect in order to earn beneficence in both worlds by building mosques for prayers. And he served the Sultan mainly as the owner of the state and the representative of the Islamic religion. He did not claim to be the owner of his buildings more than they belonged to the collectives. Moreover, he could decide on their destruction by himself in situations where the power of authority is in danger as in the anecdote about the most-admired bridge built on foreign soils during a campaign narrated in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*.[73]

Therefore, Sinan was not an artist in the modern meaning of the word, creating art for art's sake, nor was he a ubiquitous rational mind somehow having emerged against the anonymity of his historical context. His profile is clearly formed by the inputs of his own historical context as narrated in the memoirs. His sense of individualism was equipped with a sincere sense of piety that for a long time has been ignored in modern interpretations of Sinan. As for the rationality of the architect in dealing with space and form or achieving structural simplicity, it is certain from the texts that Sinan did not have a sense of undertaking form and space as separate categories. For him the building was a whole, starting from the foundations and ending with the closing of the dome. This is evident in seeing in the memoir different building typologies such as mosques or bridges depicted in the same fashion, one after the other (figure 30).[74]

Another recurring theme in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* that highlights Sinan's position as the chief imperial architect is his complaints about not being understood because of his extraordinary skills. In the narrative, skill is not a matter of pride; on the contrary, it is seen as an impediment to having the support of the people. Most of the time Sinan's decision-making skills were a step forward from those of his patrons and other people around him. In his projects he often pushed forward an innovative idea that was not at first supported by the authorities or the public. At first, his projects sounded unbelievable and controversial to ordinary people.

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73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

Therefore, people created rumours about the uncertainty of finding water pipes outside Istanbul or they urged the sultan to doubt that the dome of his new mosque would stay firm. However, in each of the projects narrated, Sinan was the winner in the end.[75] Given the fact that the main audience of the original manuscript of *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* was high Ottoman bureaucracy, the sincerity of expression in relating the social difficulties Sinan had faced is astonishing. He had to endure a web of rumours circulating in public and palace circles that always ended up affecting Sultan Süleyman's decisions. In several instances Sinan persuaded Sultan Süleyman to an opinion opposite the one he had first supported. As Faroqhi ironically maintains, if his memory is not misrepresenting the old architect, the assertions in the text suggest that Sinan was an extraordinarily strong personality who could convince the viziers and sultans for whom he worked, rather than an anonymous craftsman under their domination.[76] In more general terms Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz maintain that conflict between the artist and the society as represented in biographies in fact serve to accentuate the artist's superiority.[77]

However, Sinan's achievements are noted in a manner that balances hubris. For instance, the text frequently qualifies Sinan as the ant of the sultan.[78] The relationship between Sinan the architect and the Ottoman Sultan Süleyman was not simply a loser–winner or repressed–powerful one. The strength of the threat is in direct proportion to the reward of achievement in the end. The more Sinan suffered in the process, the greater was his reward. The reward was not only money and promotion but also honour, as Sinan received an *ihsan hilatı* (a benefaction robe) and other gifts upon completion of major projects.[79] To further demonstrate this, it is helpful to revisit an anecdote in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān.* After Sinan had spent two hectic months of hard work and stress to finish Süleymaniye Mosque in order to

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75 Ibid.

76 Faroqhi, *Osmanlı Tarihi Nasıl İncelenir? [Approaching Ottoman History]* , 230.

77 Otto Kurz Ernst Kris, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1979), 103.

78 While Sinan is compared with an ant, Sultan Süleyman is metaphorically related to the Prophet Solomon, who had the ability to talk to animals. Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları),* 41, 50, 51. Also see Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

79 Ibid., 56. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

meet the challenge of the sultan and the public,[80] in the opening ceremony the Sultan handed him the key to unlock the door, saying: "Come my worthy one. You are the one who deserves to open with purity, sincerity, and prayer the house of God that you have built".[81]

From his memoirs, it is obvious that genius as a concept to define the liberal creativeness of individual caprices had no relevance to Sinan's historical context. But Sinan's extraordinary achievements and celebration in his own time and throughout history have tempted more recent historians to qualify him as a genius who was not understood or appreciated enough in his own historical context. The problem is not whether this is a right or a wrong attitude. The problem rather lies in the fact that a proposed profile of Sinan beyond his time and place does not help the historian engage with Sinan's historical context to unfold interpretations of his productions. In taking the artist as a sociological concept, Kris and Kurz argue that the reaction of the society to the artist and its effects upon the artist are inextricably intertwined. They further observe that the growing wish to attach the name of a master to his/her work indicates the perception of art as an independent area of creative achievement.[82] In this sense, Sinan is perceived in his memoirs as an artist of his cultural context.

To illustrate, anecdotes noted in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* construct Sinan's self-image through fashioning his rise in social rank and architectural achievement. The anecdote narrating Sinan's construction of a bridge in a military campaign and his success in the construction makes it clear that these endeavours paved the way for his rise to the rank of chief imperial architect. This anecdote typifies the abrupt rise possible in an artist's social standing, as posited by Kris and Kurz. Kris and Kurz suggest that anecdotes noted in artists' biographies usually convey something significant about their hero. Regardless of their historical accuracy, these anecdotes serve to provide a deeper insight into the personality of the artist.[83]

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80 This response is very intentional if we remember Sinan's words: "God, be He exalted, willing, I shall complete it in two months and inscribe my name on the page of time". Ibid.

81 Ibid.

82 Ernst Kris Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist*, 1-4.

83 Ibid., 11-17.

The disparity between the assumptions of current historiography and what a text such as the historical memoir *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* suggests calls for a revision of truth claims in modern historiography in evaluating the identities and mental mechanisms of historical figures such as Sinan. Similarly, tracing formal changes in architecture is misleading unless it is endorsed by modes of thinking in the actual historical context. Sinan's architecture may seem at first glance to confirm certain criteria such as modern rationality or artistic genius, but these assumptions have no value in relating to Sinan himself as long as they cannot be validated in his own period. In positing this critique, my aim is not to privilege texts on Sinan as the true profile of Sinan compared to the modern historiography on Sinan. On the contrary, from the beginning it is important to accept that narratives such as *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* create their own filter of reality. However, they are closer than modern texts to the intention of how Sinan himself wanted to be seen and remembered by future generations and how the author Sai, as explicated in the text, reflected this in accordance with Sinan's will. In addition to reflecting Sinan's self-image filtered through Sai's editing, and regardless of their historical accuracy, Sai's referral to popular narratives in depicting Sinan helps him to map Sinan's personality as perceived in his own society.[84] To accept texts on Sinan as evidence of history but not as the ultimate historical truth that transparently reflects historical facts helps us enter into a dialogue with the text itself. This is a way of re-affirming and re-reading such texts as sources on Architect Sinan that defy their ironic marginalisation and anachronistic appropriation by current historiography. As historian Carlo Ginzburg says, "Sources are not as transparent as positivists believe or they are not as blurring as sceptics hold. If anything we should compare them to distorting mirrors".[85] Historical truth may not appear as clear as we expect it to be but this does not necessarily devalue the information embodied in any historical source.

The following interpretations will focus on a comparison of Sinan first with the later Ottoman architect Mehmed, as they are both represented through texts written for them, and then with artists and architects of Renaissance Italy, in order to

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84 See *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

85 Carlo Ginzburg, *History, Rhetoric, and Proof: The Menahem Stern Jerusalem Lectures* (Hanoever and London: University Press of New England, 1999), 25.

ground texts on Sinan in a wider literature. This will help us avoid reading Sinan through an anachronistic concept of genius or, alternatively, dismissing him as an anti-modern mind.

9.1. A Comparison between Sinan and Mehmed

Reading across the texts, it is fruitful to make a comparison between how the authors write about the architects Sinan and Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa. A rough review reveals a difference between the relationship between Sinan and Sai Mustafa, and that of Mehmed Ağa and Cafer Efendi. Being of a similar age and belonging to the same high bureaucratic class helps author Sai to identify himself easily with Architect Sinan. In contrast to this, author Cafer Efendi exhibits a novice–master relationship with Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa. His expression in *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* points to the author's deep admiration of the architect. Thus, *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* depicts an alive and familiar Architect Sinan whereas in *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa is kept at a distance, and is difficult for contemporary readers and perhaps even for the author himself to access.

Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān and the other texts on Sinan contain brief but clear and important information about the architect's religious affiliations. Having a janissary education from a young age, Sinan says, he was brought up under the influence of the Bektashi order. The Bektashi order was the largest popular sect in the Ottoman world.[86] It was established on the teachings of dervish Hacı Bektaş Veli, promoting a heterodox belief based on incarnation thought (*vahdet-i mevcūd*) inherited from the *abdals* of Rum. This type of unification with God was quite in contrast with the unattainable God concept (*masiva*) of the *sunni* orthodoxy of the Ottoman state.[87] However, janissary soldiers embraced the Bektashi order as their official sect for more than three centuries.[88] Pointing to the affinity of the Bektashi order with Christian mysticism, Goodwin argues that the popularity of the sect among

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86 Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Tasavvuf, Sufiler ve Tarikatlar, Tekkeler", in *Osmanlı Uygarlığı*, ed. Günsel Renda Halil İnalcık (Istanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2002), 271. Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 74.

87 Ocak, "Tasavvuf, Sufiler ve Tarikatlar, Tekkeler", 280.

88 Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*, 74.

conscripted Christian youth was normal.[89] In fact, the relationship between the janissaries and the Bektashi order exemplified the early privilege the Bektashi order was given by the Ottoman state to counterbalance heterodox and orthodox tendencies among the public that had existed since the reign of Beyazıd II.[90] However, the relationship between the Bektashi order and the Ottoman state did not follow a clear line. Nor was the dose of heterodoxy in Bektashi thought constant or the line between heterodoxy and orthodoxy clear cut.[91] What we do know is that the decorum and rituals of the janissary corps were deeply influenced by Bektashi symbols and motifs.[92]

In line with this symbolic influence, the virtues of imams Hasan and Hüseyin were praised in a separate part of *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, in addition to praises to the Prophet and his four companions (the four caliphs). Together with this, the following quatrain in the text, commemorating Hasan and Hüseyin, martyrs of Kerbelā war, seems to point to the heterodox inclination of the Bektashi influence.

> Each spring, the green plants Hasan's
> Passing from life's pleasures announce.
> And the tulips the wronged Hüseyin's
> Bloody shirt incarnate.[93]

John K. Birge notes that every year in the month of *muharrem* Bektashi dervishes joined Shiites in remembering and commemorating the death of Hüseyin and the early injustice done to Ali and his family in having the caliphate taken from them.[94] The information of this brief part implies an inclination towards Bektashi thought.

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89 Godfrey Goodwin, *A History of Ottoman Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1971), 454.

90 Suraiya Faroqhi, *Çatışma, Uzlaşma ve Uzun Dönemli Beka: Bektaşi Düzeni ve Osmanlı Devleti (on Altıncı ve on Yedinci Yüzyıllar)* (1999 cited 21/03/2005); available from http://www.hbektas.gazi.edu.tr/12Faroqi.htm.

91 Ibid., (cited 21/03/2005). Ahmet Kuyaş, "Ortaçağ Anadolusu ve Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kuruluşu Üzerine: Cemal Kafadar İle Söyleşi", *Cogito: Osmanlılar Özel Sayısı*, no. 11 (1999): 70.

92 Osman Eğri, *Yeniceri Ocağının Manevi Eğitimi ve Bektaşilik* (Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi, 2002 cited 21/03/2005); available from http://www.hbektas.gazi.edu.tr/24.%20dergi/EGRI.htm.

93 Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

94 John Kingsley Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes* (London: Luzac & Co., 1937), 13.

Nevertheless, Necipoğlu posits that Sinan's statements in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* refer to the symbolic initiation of the janissary corps into the Bektashi order rather than to his personal affiliation with the order. She further argues that the connection between the Bektashi order and the janissary corps was only nominal given the fact that the State's *sunni* orthodoxy was dominant by the sixteenth century. Sinan's personal endowment deed (*waqfiyya*) clearly reads as a manual for orthodox worship and shows Sinan's strong *sunni* inclinations.[95] The glorification of Ali, Hasan and Hüseyin was not uncommon among Ottoman artefacts, as we read in the above-quoted poem in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*. Grand Vizier Semiz Ali Pasha's fountain on the Haliç shores also bears an inscription praising Hasan and Hüseyin in a similar way.[96] Therefore, the poem together with the Bektashi mention suggests that the opposition between heterodox and orthodox doctrines was not discriminatory and antithetical to the symbolic expression and images of daily life.

In the seventeenth-century *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*, Mehmed Ağa's *sunni* religious inclinations are stated in the line in the introductory verse in which Cafer wrote, "And peace be upon the four Orthodox Caliphs!", and in the lines following in which he accentuates the significance of 'true holy law' and 'pure religion'.[97] Architect Mehmed Ağa was depicted as a very pious man throughout the text. Cafer Efendi devotes an entire chapter to a description of the architect's good deeds. Mehmed's doubts about music and his choice of architecture over music further point to the orthodox influences upon his thought; however, comments about the science of music throughout the text mark an ambivalent attitude towards the legitimacy of music itself in the seventeenth-century Ottoman world. According to the text, Mehmed Ağa went to a Halvetī[98] sheikh, Vişne Mehmed Efendi, one of the renowned *ulema* of the seventeenth century, to have his dream about music

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95 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 152.

96 Written communication with Gülru Necipoğlu. However, author Affan Egemen insists that the inscription on the fountain is not readable. See Affan Egemen, *Istanbul'un Çeşme ve Sebilleri: resimleri ve kitabeleri ile 1165 çeşme ve sebil.* (Istanbul: Arıtan Yayınevi, 1993), 10-12.

97 Efendi Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*, ed. Howard Crane, 22.

98 The Halvetī order was established between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries by Ahī Yusuf Halvetī. It lacked a centralised structure and in time divided into branches. Ocak, "Tasavvuf, Sufiler Ve Tarikatlar, Tekkeler", 276.

interpreted.[99] His consultations with the sheikh resulted in his renunciation of music and selection of architecture as a pious art form.[100]

Unlike Sinan, where Mehmed Ağa came from and his date of conscription as a janissary recruit remain obscure.[101] However, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* gives anecdotes about Architect Sinan and his relationship with Architect Mehmed. Cafer notes that Sinan joined the Muhammad, master of the imperial gardens, from time to time to teach the science of geometry and the art of architecture. In these lectures, he encouraged Mehmed to prepare gifts of mother-of-pearl for Sultan Murad III in order to be promoted to a higher post. Mehmed followed his master's advice and presented the sultan with a lectern and a bow case, and each time his rank rose due to the ingenious artistry of his gifts.[102] Compared to Sinan, Mehmed's interest and skill were focused on the art of mother-of-pearl, which gave him the nickname *Sedefkār* (mother-of-pearl master) among other architects. In contrast to Sinan's military background, Mehmed Ağa served for a long time in different administration posts while at the same time continuing his work in mother-of-pearl. As Crane puts it: "His official career was characterised by appointment in the vast and complex Ottoman bureaucracy to a variety of offices, more often than not having little to do with his formal training".[103]

The prideful tone of the *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* and the comparatively simpler tone of *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* are interestingly in contrast. Someone ignorant of the historical significance of the two architects might suppose the Architect Mehmed was more influential than Architect Sinan in Ottoman cultural history. This difference seems to result from the aims of each text. With *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* Sinan wanted to leave a record of his architectural works whereas in *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* Cafer Efendi aimed to portray Architect Mehmed's qualities and attributes more than his architectural achievements.[104] *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* and *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* present us with profiles of two architects from the Ottoman world. In the case of Sinan, we

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99 Efendi Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*, ed. Howard Crane, 28.
100 Ibid., 29.
101 Ibid., 11.
102 Ibid., 13.
103 Ibid., 14.
104 Ibid., 14.

revisit our prejudgments of the architect through the assertions of the texts whereas in the case of Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa we gather details about an Ottoman architect and gain his acquaintance rather than his historical significance through the existence of the text itself.

9.2. The Concept of Genius in Sinan's Context and in the Italian Renaissance

The basic parameter that differentiates Renaissance architectural culture from that of the rest of the world at the time is that it established an independent discipline of architecture in both theory and practice through treatise and *disegno*. The rise in interest among Italian humanists in a national identity triggered a revival of interest in antiquity through orders adapted from Vitruvius (by Alberti and later Filarete) in order to express Italian nationalism as well as Christian morality and civic decorum.[105] Unlike in Sinan's context, architectural treatises in the Renaissance formed a literature that described the established norms used to compare and judge buildings. This awareness was connected with a rise in the status of the profession of architecture in the Renaissance such that the architect became superior over the mason and the craftsman.[106] Although the Renaissance was not a homogeneous process throughout, changing geographically and temporally, the teleological reading of Italian Renaissance art and architecture as logical reason–end connections configured around the discourse of humanism accentuated its particular importance in the emergence of modernity. A telling example that helps trace this reading is the discourse on Alberti.

The first and perhaps most influential treatise on Vitruvius was Alberti's *De re Aedificatoria* (1450).[107] Choay stresses the inaugural character of Alberti's treatise, which undertook the built world in its totality as a project to be realised.[108] Both Lefaivre and Choay accentuate Alberti's conceptual revolution, which reconfigured

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105 Vaughan Hart, "Introduction: 'Paper Palaces' from Alberti to Scamozzi", in *Paper Palaces: The Rise of the Renaissance Architectural Treatise*, ed. Peter Hicks, Vaughan Hart (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1998), 6.

106 Ibid., 3, 14.

107 Filarete, di Giorgio, Serlio, Vignola and Palladio were significant among other treatise writers of the Renaissance. Ibid., 2, 7.

108 Francoise Choay, *The Rule and the Model: On the Theory of Architecture and Urbanism*, ed. Denise Bratton (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1997), 15.

architectural knowledge and reasoning. Although Alberti's work on architecture follows the line introduced by Vitruvius, unlike Vitruvius, who relied on the authority of his precedents, Alberti judged the role of precedent in design and thus caused a major epistemic rupture within Western culture where assembling and transmitting knowledge gave way to conceptual concerns.[109] In this vein, Lefaivre calls Alberti 'the first modern'.[110]

However, Alberti's rejection of authority did not end up in total relativism in his architectural thinking. Alberti did not deny relativity but he constrained it with the concept of *concinnitas*, which meant bringing together heterogeneous elements into a harmonic whole.[111] Lefaivre sees Alberti's ideas on architecture as part of his humanist side that believed in the establishment of a civic society based on reasoned discourse, and a republic where people were motivated to be useful to each other and where educated humanists could educate the society.[112]

Two significant contributions that Alberti made to Renaissance art and architecture were his elaborations of the concepts of perspective and urbanism. Following Dürer, Van Eyck and Brunelleschi, Alberti changed the perception of space with his rational systematisation of perspective.[113] Furthermore, by coinciding the centric point of a painting with the centric ray in the pyramid of vision, Alberti united the actual space of the spectators with that of the painting.[114] Rykwert and Choay see Alberti as the true ancestor of urbanism for his concept of edification covered

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109 Ibid, Liane Lefaivre, *Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili: Re-Cognising the Architectural Body in the Early Italian Renaissance* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1997), 3.

110 She maintains, "Alberti's great innovation in *De re aedificatoria* was to have elevated a new way of reasoning associated with his formula of creativity into a theory of modernity. Alberti broke the Vitruvian model of reasoning, based on the authority of precedents as the ultimate backing in a reasoning process. For the first time, architectural thinking was freed from the arbitrary weight of authority of antique precedent and open to critical inquiry. Leon Battista Alberti is, historically speaking, the first modern". Lefaivre, *Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 173.

111 Ibid., 174.

112 Regarding Alberti's ideological inclinations Lefaivre gives this as an example: "The map of Rome he [Alberti] draws up in his *Descriptio urbis Romae* is revealing of his sympathies. At the centre he places not the Vatican but the Campidoglio, the seat of the ancient senate and a powerful symbol for Rome's republicans". Ibid., 175, 176.

113 Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, trans. Christopher S. Wood (New York, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Zone Books, MIT Press, 1991), 63.

114 Lefaivre, *Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 124, 126.

systematisations of both buildings and city scales through abstraction and systematisation not unlike those of perspective.[115]

Although the architectural treatise has no counterpart in Sinan's context, literature that stands outside the theoretical and practical ambitions of this genre, such as biographies and autobiographies written by or for architects, displays similar attitudes to those in the Sinan texts. The half-naïve, anti-Albertian attitude of such texts gives important clues about the heterogeneity of thought prevalent in the Renaissance, but still mixed with piety and religious reasoning.[116]

The Renaissance concept of genius (*ingegnio*) was taken up as part of the humanist context with its cult of antique revival and the undertaking of the built world as an object through geometric, iconic and spatial investigations, as illustrated by Alberti's prominent example.[117] Since the Renaissance, the concept of genius has widely been related to the essential originality in artistic creation, after Kant, and especially after Hegel's elaboration of his aesthetic theory that used Kant's previous argument on the concept.[118] Architectural production based on the creative inputs of a supposed genius constructs itself against imitation, which is a process of learning based on tradition.[119] Thus, in contemporary historiography and aesthetic theories it is believed that the genius creates the unprecedented by challenging tradition. Imitation and creation are seen as binary opposites with clear demarcations. Rykwert suggests revisiting this distinction in order to focus on the interplay between imitation and creation.[120] Such a possibility will exploit the concept of genius as used in the Renaissance and Ottoman contexts freed from its contemporary resonance.

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115 Choay, *The Rule and the Model*, 54. Joseph Rykwert, "Theory as Rhetoric: Leon Battista Alberti in Theory and Practice", in *Paper Palaces: The Rise of the Renaissance Architectural Treatise*, ed. Peter Hicks Vaughan Hart (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1998), 50.

116 Manetti's life of Brunelleschi has been interpreted as anti-Albertian. Antonio di Tuccio Manetti, *The Life of Brunelleschi*, trans. Catherine Enggass (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1970), 32.

117 Choay, *The Rule and the Model*, 36.

118 Joseph Rykwert, *The Dancing Column: On Order in Architecture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: The MIT Press, 1996), 386.

119 Ibid., 386-387.

120 Ibid., 387.

Thus, a brief comparison of Sinan's memoirs with those of Renaissance artists is helpful to understand Sinan's self-image. Sinan's memoirs are in line with the *vita* genre of the Italian Renaissance; for example, memoirs written earlier by Condivi for Michelangelo (1553) or by Manetti for Brunelleschi (the 1480s).[121] Necipoğlu sees a parallel rise in interest towards architecture in the Renaissance and Ottoman worlds, where elite patrons promoted their public image through buildings and artworks. This parallel rise in interest in both contexts led to a rise in the status of the architectural profession in both contexts.[122] In this line, Sinan was similar to his Renaissance contemporaries in having God-given architectural skills (divine maestro (*azīz-i kārdān*)).

The adjectives of praise used for Sinan are not unlike those used for Renaissance artists and architects. To illustrate, Alberti's autobiography is full of self-pride: he praises his own diverse skills, from gymnastic feats and horse riding to music and painting, with extravagant analogies.[123] He was qualified by Aliotti, a colleague in the papal court, as "extremely learned, eloquent, by nature ingenuous and liberal, an honour to Florence and Italy, in whom a marvellous, divine and omnipotent genius and a sound judgment of many things ought to be praised and admired".[124] Manetti writes of Brunelleschi, "His genius and intellect (*ingiegnio et inteletto*) were proclaimed everywhere".[125]

Sinan's contemporaries as well as later Ottoman authors praised Sinan with similar qualifications. For instance, in an imperial decree of Selim II Sinan was referred to by the sultan as the leader of grandees and nobles.[126] In *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, Sai

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121 See Ascanio Condivi, *The Life of Michelangelo*, trans. Alice Sedgwick Wohl (Oxford: Phaidon Press Limited, 1976) and Manetti, *The Life of Brunelleschi*.

122 Therefore, in order to highlight similarities in the concept of genius in the Renaissance and Ottoman worlds she holds, "The exalted self-image projected in Sinan's autobiographies echoes the lives of Italian artists and architects, with their notion of the artwork as a material trace of its maker's mental powers of invention. The term 'divine' (*divino*), used for Brunelleschi and Michelangelo, is also applied to Sinan by his biographer, who is intent on advertising the chief architect's God-given genius: 'divine maestro' ('*azīz-i kārdān*), 'divine architect' (*mi'mār-ı mübārek*)".Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 135.

123 Lefaivre, *Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 150.

124 Cited in Lefaivre. Ibid., 167

125 Manetti, *The Life of Brunelleschi*, 76.

126 Sönmez, *Mimar Sinan İle İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler*, 131.

compares Sinan's achievements with those of mythical figures like Ferhad, who because of his love for Shirin carved a canal through Mount Bisutun, or with those of Hızır (Khidr), who was a miraculous saint.[127] In describing the projects of Sultan Süleyman around 1563, before *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* had been written, Eyyubi proclaims that, "God has given him [Sinan] the power of sanctity manifested in miracles (*kerāmet*), endowing his soul with rare spiritual states (*özge hālāt*)". For Eyyubi, Sinan was a philosopher of his age comparable to Aristo.[128] Celalzade Mustafa makes comparable but even more ecstatic claims regarding Sinan:

> Üstad Sinan, who is excellent and perfect in the sciences of architecture, and a superior engineer in the laying of foundations, and an expert in building Friday mosques and masjids that serve to strengthen the perpetuity of merit, the perfect architect with blessed fingertips and wisdom in august matters, the first among the chiefs of expert and famous builders, incomparable in this age in terms of intelligence, who is unique and rare among his peers in all times and ages.[129]

Compared to *vita* examples written for Michelangelo and Brunelleschi, Sinan's memoirs do not tell much about the architect as a person. In Condivi's account we read about Michelangelo's capricious manner towards popes, his artistic aspirations and interests and even, towards the end of the biography, a detailed description of his physical appearance.[130] Manetti talks about as many details of Brunellecshi's merits as he can gather, from his interest in and experiments with perspective, to his scrutiny of antique monuments, to the difficulties he faced in constructing his projects.[131] While Manetti and Condivi render Brunelleschi and Michelangelo as real personalities distanced from the authors and the readers alike, most of the time Sai talks on behalf of Sinan or transparently conveys Sinan's message by writing directly in the first person.

One major feature of the biographical narratives on both Sinan and Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa is the value attached to piety.[132] In each of his projects Sinan mentions his devotion to God and God's help. Even at times of distress such as in

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127 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 141. Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı(Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları)*, 55, 84. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

128 Cited in Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 146.

129 Cited in Ibid., 146.

130 Condivi, *The Life of Michelangelo*, 108.

131 Manetti, *The Life of Brunelleschi*.

132 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 139.

the tight deadline for building the Süleymaniye Mosque he believed he managed to keep his spirits up with the guidance of God as one who knew his capacity and abilities better than he did himself.[133] This line of thinking is quite in contrast with renderings of the architect in modern historiography, through secular narratives of rationality and creativity. However, it is not so different when compared to the *vita* of Brunelleschi and even Michelangelo. Manetti conveys Brunelleschi's dome of Santa Maria del Fiore could not be realised first of all without the blessings and assistance of God.[134] In writing Michelangelo's biography Condivi addresses the Holy Father before he addresses the readers and calls the pope the prince of Christianity before he calls Michelangelo the prince of *disegno*.[135] Therefore, the line between piety and rationality is not clear even in Renaissance Italy. Moreover, piety and rationality are not seen as opposites in the Ottoman context, where Sinan was no exception.

The common topos employed in the three distinct biographies is that of the misunderstood genius protagonist who struggles to pursue his projects within a web of envious rivals who generally lack sufficient skills and understanding to cope with the artists.[136] Necipoğlu maintains that, with their elaborate first-person narratives, Sinan's memoirs depart marginally from the short *tezkere* texts written for poets, and have no precedent in the Islamic world.[137] Whether informed and influenced by earlier Renaissance *vita* texts or not, similarities between them mark the closeness of intention uttered by Sai and Sinan as "leaving a mark in history", and by Condivi and Manetti to intensify their masters' fame.[138] These highly speculative and panegyric texts worked to mystify their subjects with their claims of authorship and originality.

Thus, the narrative parts in the sixteenth-century Sinan texts mark his sense of individualism. In addition to this, Necipoğlu convincingly argues that the building

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133 Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı(Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları)*, 67. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

134 Manetti, *The Life of Brunelleschi*, 90.

135 Condivi, *The Life of Michelangelo*, 1.

136 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 137.

137 Ibid., 137.

138 Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı(Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları)*, 39. Manetti, *The Life of Brunelleschi*, 34. Condivi, *The Life of Michelangelo*, 108-109.

lists at the end of four of the texts further mark Sinan's anxiety throughout the editing process to claim authorship of his buildings. In these lists Sinan included projects in far locations of the Empire that he did not directly participate in constructing. For Necipoğlu, these lists provide evidence of Sinan's conceptualisation process:

> By claiming authorship of essentially collaborative works, realised with the mediation of royal architects based in Istanbul or stationed in provincial cities, he stressed his role in conceptualising their design. This is not unlike the Italian Renaissance notion of *disegno* as a cerebral pursuit rooted in the power of judgment and transcending the execution of a building: a mental abstraction relatively separate from its material manifestation.[139]

For most of the projects included in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* Sinan mentions a process of drawing (*resm*) before construction, through which a consensus with the sultan was achieved before implementation.[140] We do not have enough information on the relationship of theory and practice in Sinan's case for making assumptions. The integrity and consistency of articulation among building elements in Sinan's works called for his deductionist approach to design. But Kuban interprets the lack of theoretical evidence as in Renaissance architectural treatises as Sinan's empirical approach to design.[141] However, although Necipoğlu maintains that the lack of theorisation of architecture contrasts with the interest in architectural production in Ottoman high culture, she also holds that this does not justify claiming that Sinan's architecture essentially lacked a theoretical basis or that his patrons were architecturally illiterate. Rather, she relates the lack of treatises to the nature of architectural training and production, which was confined largely to the workshops of the corps of royal architects directed by Sinan, and where rivalry and competition were not as strong as in the Italian Renaissance.[142]

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139 Sixteenth-century buildings, unlike earlier ones, mostly lack inscriptions stating the name of their architects or decorators. This supports the existence of a collaborative attitude towards authorship in architecture. Necipoğlu sees the lists of buildings included in his memoir texts as Sinan's claim for authorship. Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 135.

140 Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

141 Doğan Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye (Sinan's Art and Selimiye)* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1997), 235-238.

142 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 147.

After all, it is unreasonable to expect similar outcomes and attitudes from the discourses of different cultures. Neither similarities nor discrepancies indicate that they are completely incomparable or that one is inferior to the other. Sinan's central domed structures and the centrally designed Italian Renaissance buildings were similar in form. It is improbable that they were created in a vacuum. We know that the two worlds (Renaissance Rome and Ottoman Istanbul) were in closer contact than is usually assumed.[143] Necipoğlu posits that it is not impossible to imagine that Palladio and Sinan were informed of each other's works as two contemporaries producing similar designs.[144] After the conquest of Buda in 1526, a Latin manuscript copy of Vitruvius' *De Architectura* was available in Sultan Süleyman's imperial library. European renegades employed as architects or naval engineers in the Ottoman court and imperial arsenal were probably another important source of knowledge transmission in addition to ambassadors and tradesmen. Therefore, we can propose that Sinan might easily have accessed architectural treatises of the Italian Renaissance.[145]

Rather than multiplying the historical justifications for the interaction between the Ottoman world and Renaissance Italy that Necipoğlu convincingly provides, it is fruitful to ask to what degree Sinan was open to the influence of his Renaissance contemporaries from a hermeneutical point of view. Before dealing with the details of Sinan's approach to architecture it is important to think further about the influence of architectural treatises in the early Renaissance and the sixteenth century. Perez-Gomez and Pelletier separate the fatalist attitude towards building of a medieval master mason from the attitude of an architect with the lack of foreknowledge of the mason.[146] However, they argue that the break between the Renaissance and the Middle Ages was not abrupt. In the early Renaissance, architecture was still perceived as a ritual act of construction where architects continued to emulate the order of the heavens. Although in the fifteenth century, architecture started to be undertaken as a liberal art of orthogonal drawings,

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143 Deborah Howard, *Venice and the East: The Impact of the Islamic World on Venetian Architecture 1100-1500* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), XII.

144 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 101.

145 Ibid., 102.

146 Louise Pelletier, Alberto Perez-Gomez, *Architectural Representation and the Perspectival Hinge* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: The MIT Press, 1997), 8.

architectural drawings were not taken as mere media that would be unambiguously transcribed into buildings.[147]

Therefore, reading the consciousness of the Italian Renaissance using contemporary expectations about modernity is problematic. Modernity was a process rather than a flash of lightning that changed people's assumptions about the world all at once and as a whole. Sinan's intentions were 'modern' in a particular Ottoman sense of the term that clearly distinguishes him from a medieval stonemason, with his anxiety for recognised authorship and the retrospective account of his career, as we read through Ottoman narratives on architecture. However, if the term 'modern' echoes an essential affinity with change and progress in the Western sense of enlightenment,[148] then it is better to focus on the originality of Sinan's work by freeing interpretations from the limiting implications of the term.

In order to imagine the dynamics of Sinan's architectural production that made him different from a medieval craftsman, it is important to consider his attitude towards the past, tradition and innovation as opposed to the antique revival of Renaissance Italy. However, it is important first to focus on the Ottoman mentality towards history, tradition and innovation, where Sinan's mentality was shaped and influenced.

10. The Mythification of History

> According to historians, the legends of ancient times ran as follows: In the old days, when Yanko bin Madyan, founder of this city was engaged in its building, he enclosed seven hills with its walls and named it 'The City of Seven Hills'.[149]

Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān relates the history of Constantinople City when Sultan Süleyman consulted historians of the time to learn more about ancient waterways. Here, what is referred to as the assertion of the historians is in fact a mythical account created by the Ottomans about the construction of pre-Byzantine

147 Ibid., 9.

148 Tanyeli claims Sinan definitely lacked such a "modern" consciousness. Uğur Tanyeli, "Klasik Osmanlı Dünyasında Değişim, Yenilik ve "Eskilik" Üretimi: Bir Grup Sinan Türbesi Üzerinden Okuma", in *Afife Batur'a Armağan: Mimarlık ve Sanat Tarihi Yazıları*, ed. Mazlum, Ağır, and Cephanecigil (Istanbul: 2005), 25.

149 Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

Constantinople that has little to do with the recorded history of the city.[150] Such references to mythical accounts as history are prevalent throughout Ottoman narratives and other historical sources of the time and deserve closer attention to interpret the historical understanding of Ottoman culture.

Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, a sixteenth-century Habsburg envoy to Sultan Süleyman, noted, "Turks have no idea of chronology and dates, and make a wonderful mixture of epochs and history".[151] Kafadar maintains that this thought was still prevalent in early twentieth-century historiography on Ottoman culture, in that authors were cautious about distinguishing fact from fiction in sources of Ottoman historiography.[152] This famous quote from Busbecq also attracted the attention of Tanyeli, who commented that the indifference towards historical accuracy in the Ottoman world was due not to innocence but rather to a conscious choice. He suggested that Ottoman historical consciousness worked to obliterate the origin of facts and objects they had adopted from the past in a way that he describes as 'mythical importation of the past into the present' (*geçmişin bugüne mitik ithali*). Tanyeli sees this type of attitude towards history as counter-historicist, in contrast to the revival of antiquity in the Italian Renaissance.[153] However, to be counter-historicist, Ottoman culture first needed to have a definition for historicism *per se*, which seems far from their main concern. Rather than looking at history as a chronological continuity in the strict Western sense, it is more fruitful to rely on the more universal concept of 'cultural memory' to understand the Ottoman attitude towards the past. Jan Assmann argues that cultural memory is a universal fact that helps reconstruct the past through collective remembrance, in contrast to the social perception of history as continuity. Collective remembrance feeds upon tradition

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150 For instance, Yanko bin Madyan was an imaginary ruler created in the first Ottoman legend about the foundation of Constantinople City before Byzantine rule. Stefanos Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri [the Legends of Constantinople and Hagia Sophia]*, trans. Şirin Tekeli, 3 ed. (Istanbul: Iletisim, 1998), 63.

151 Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, *The Life and Letters of Ogier Ghiselin De Busbecq*, ed. F.H. Blackburne Daniell Charles Thornton Forster (London: C.K. Paul, 1881), 149.

152 Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 33.

153 Uğur Tanyeli, "Sinan ve Antik Dünyanın Mirası (Sinan and the Legacy of the Antique World)" (paper presented at the *Uluslararası Mimar Sinan Sempozyumu* (International Architect Sinan Symposium), Ankara, 1988), 96-97.

and communication but is not essentially determined and fixed by them.[154] For cultural memory what matters is the remembered past as it surfaces in daily life and rituals, which in this way transform themselves into myth rather than historical facts. From this view, myths are figures of remembrance.[155]

Therefore, remembrance through reconstructed myths is not limited to Ottoman culture. Historical references made in the Sinan texts and the generic Ottoman understanding of history are in line with what Assmann calls 'cultural remembrance', achieved through the mythification of history, and such attitudes were also common in so-called high civilisations of the past such as Egypt and even Greece. For example, not unlike Vitruvius, Alberti relates the commonplace lack of agreement among ancient authorities about the cultural aspects of architecture such as ascribing the origins of temples.[156]

10.1. Hagia Sophia Looms Large

The Byzantine monument Hagia Sophia had an enormous significance for Ottoman culture that transformed its semantics dramatically after the conquest of Istanbul by Mehmed the Conqueror in 1453. This semantic inversion is documented through a rich number of sources in Ottoman literature and historiography and deserves attention in order to understand the reception of Hagia Sophia by Ottoman culture before discussing its influence on Sinan as represented through the Ottoman narratives. Necipoğlu posits that, after serving as the patriarchal symbol of Eastern Christendom for nearly a millennium, Hagia Sophia was transformed into the foremost imperial mosque of Ottoman Istanbul.[157]

In fact, Hagia Sophia was a motivation for Ottoman sultans even before the conquest of Istanbul. Historian Tursun Bey declares that Sultan Mehmed II's awe

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154 Assmann, *Kültürel Bellek: Eski Yüksek Kültürlerde Yazı, Hatırlama ve Politik Kimlik.*, 28, 34, 36, 44-45.

155 Ibid., 55-56.

156 Lefaivre, *Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 172.

157 Gülru Necipoğlu, "The Life of an Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia after Byzantium", in *Hagia Sophia: Form. Structure and Meaning from the Age of Justinian to the Present*, ed. Ahmet Çakmak Robert Mark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 195. For a Byzantine history of Hagia Sophia see Rowland J Mainstone. *Hagia Sophia: Architecture, Structure and Liturgy of Justinian's Great Church*. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988).

and admiration for the building after the conquest of Constantinople led him to command that the building be repaired and turned into his royal mosque. During this first transformation, Hagia Sophia was kept in its original form except for the change of direction of worship to the *Ka'ba*.[158] However, the change in meaning was significant compared to the physical change. Ottoman culture constructed a mythical account of Hagia Sophia to intensify the meaning of the long-existing monument and make it their own.

Sultan Mehmed II ordered a group of Greek and European scholars and religious men to write the history of Constantinople and its rulers of the past who had left these remarkable monuments. Among a number of Byzantine *ekphrasis* on Hagia Sophia, including Procopius' *De aedificiis*,[159] a popular ninth-century anonymous narrative, *Diegesis peri tes Hagias Sophias* (Narrative Concerning Hagia Sophia), found resonance with the sultan and his selected historians.[160] Yerasimos reads the new Ottoman version of this ancient Byzantine text in relation to Mehmed II's imperial ambitions. He argues that Sultan Mehmed II had the history of Constantinople rewritten rather than learning the actual history. Thus, the original text went through serious additions and distortions to achieve the Ottoman version. In this new reading, the history of the city and Hagia Sophia was separated from the Byzantine past and Hagia Sophia gained mythical features by being attributed to mythical rulers and heroes.[161] In the Ottoman tradition, soon after the death of Sultan Mehmed II, more versions of the text were produced and incorporated into newly written chronicles of the late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries.[162] Thus, Necipoğlu maintains that history and myth were intermingled in an attempt to relate Constantinople and Hagia Sophia to a pre-Christian mythical past and an Islamic present.[163]

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158 Necipoğlu, "The Life of an Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia after Byzantium", 197.

159 Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972), XI.

160 Necipoğlu, "The Life of an Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia after Byzantium", 198.

161 Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri,* 8-9.

162 Necipoğlu, "The Life of an Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia after Byzantium", 198-199.

163 Ibid., 199.

Cyril Mango purports that *Diegesis* dates back to before ca. 989 and was incorporated into the compilation known as *Patria*. The original Byzantine text was translated into Latin, early Russian, Turkish, Persian and Modern Greek and is still narrated even on popular tours to Hagia Sophia.[164] The text already showed mythical features, which perhaps makes it so popular and influential. It narrates the construction story of Hagia Sophia, starting from the collection of second-hand marbles from all the provinces of the Empire and continuing with the expropriation of the site, which was allegedly occupied by a house owned by widow Anna. The previous Constantinian church was ignored, or left out of the anonymous narrative.[165]

The narrative gives the name of the chief architect as Ignatius. Nevertheless, he was more of a technical man than an architect, as the plan of the church was revealed by God through an angel entering the emperor's dream. When the structure reached the second gallery, the emperor ran out of money and was helped again by the angel, who showed him the location of a treasure. According to the text the angels were at work throughout the construction of Hagia Sophia. They even determined the number of windows in the apse as three in accordance with the Christian trinity doctrine. Then the narrative gives details such as the number of workmen, how much they were paid, the size of the foundations, the amount of gold used and the special light-weight bricks brought from Rhodes to build the arches and the dome. The interior decoration of the church is described in detail, such as the ambo, the relics, the plate, the lamps and the obscure fountain of the atrium. 320,000 pounds of gold having been spent, the church was opened through a ceremony at which Emperor Justinian proclaimed he had surpassed Solomon![166]

However, the glory lasted only seventeen years, as did the dome of Hagia Sophia. The text relates that the dome collapsed, crushing the precious ambo but not touching the four main arches carrying it. The following emperor, Justin II, asked Ignatius why this had happened and the architect explained that three factors were responsible: the dome was too tall, the scaffolding was removed too early and the

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164 Mango, "Byzantine Writers on the Fabric of Hagia Sophia", 45.
165 Ibid., 46-47.
166 Ibid., 48.

foundations were shattered as careless workers threw timber frames on the floor. Eventually, the dome was rebuilt with extreme care and calculations. When the scaffoldings were removed the church was filled with five cubits of water so that timber pieces thrown down could float and did not shatter the foundations.[167]

Diegesis found high resonance in Ottoman culture but with major changes in the narrative. Yerasimos compares different Ottoman versions of *Diegesis*, from translations commissioned by Mehmed II to more popular versions and noted significant changes in the flow of the narrative. He interprets these different versions from a perspective of imperial ideology, according to which the changes in the narrative flow championed imperial ideology in Mehmed II's early versions but criticised in later, more popular versions.[168] The basic difference from the Byzantine version that is common to all Ottoman versions of *Diegesis* is the lessening of the Christian–Byzantine connection. According to the Ottoman versions, Constantinople was founded by a ruler called Yanko bin Madyan, who also built Hagia Sophia. Yanko bin Madyan is an imaginary character in a myth related to the foundation of Constantinople created in the Ottoman versions. He allegedly predates Byzas, the founder of the Byzantine Empire. Thus, even Greek historical sources do not support that Yanko bin Madyan existed. In none of the sources before the fifteenth century is Yanko bin Madyan ever mentioned. However, Mesopotamian and Eastern Christian sources assert that before Byzas founded Constantinople there existed a city called Nikomedya. This name was transformed into Yankomadya in the first Ottoman version of the narrative *Dürr-i Meknun*, where it is also stated that the city was founded by Yanko bin Madyan, who was a descendant of the Persian emperor Shaddad.[169]

Through reconstructed narratives, Ottoman versions wrote the history of the city in a cyclical scheme of universal cosmography in which just rulers were followed by unjust ones who were cursed and their deeds and foundations destroyed by natural disasters as a result of God's punishment for their indulgences.

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167 Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents*, 101-102.

168 Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri*, 7-11.

169 Ibid., 63-67. Necipoğlu, "The Life of an Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia after Byzantium", 199.

Constantinople was significant for Muslims. Several early Arab attempts to conquer the city were unsuccessful and Prophet Muhammad's hadith, "They will conquer Constantinople. Hail to the Prince and the army to whom this is granted", provided the Islamic legitimacy underlying Mehmed II's victory. This Islamic pre-connection with the city influenced the perception of Hagia Sophia as a mosque in the Ottoman versions of the *Diegesis.* In Ottoman versions, the angel was replaced with God's immortal messenger Hızır (Elias), who entered Justinian's dream to inform him about the divinely inspired plan for a church he was asked to build to symbolise the power of Christianity over paganism following his suppression of a pagan revolt. Then, the rulers of the seven climes were asked to contribute to the construction. Ottoman versions claim that the half-dome above the apse of Hagia Sophia had collapsed with the birth of Prophet Muhammad, along with other churches and Sassanian monuments such as the Arch of Chosroes. Without the Prophet's consecration via a Byzantine emissary it was not possible to rebuild Hagia Sophia. Evliya Çelebi's version of the narrative argues that the new dome was held in place with the Prophet's miracle: a special mortar was prepared using sand from Mecca, *Zamzam* water of the *Ka'ba* and the Prophet's saliva.[170] The Islamic connection developed further with the story of a saint, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (one of the Prophet's companions), who withdrew his siege of Constantinople on the condition that he was let pray in Hagia Sophia. He was convinced that, as in the prophecy of Muhammad, Hagia Sophia would eventually become a mosque and those who prayed in it would go to paradise. Eventually, he was martyred by the Byzantines and buried outside the city walls. After the conquest of Constantinople, Mehmed II miraculously discovered and rebuilt Al-Ansari's tomb, which later became a sacred ritual site for Ottoman sultans, where they ascended the throne.[171]

The ingenious connection with the Islamic past served to legitimate the conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque in the fifteenth century. An anonymous version of the *Diegesis* relates the Islamic significance of Hagia Sophia to Prophet Muhammad's *miraj* experience. According to this version, when he ascended to heaven, the Prophet saw a place *(makām)* in the sixth garden of heaven *(firdevs)*

170 Necipoglu, "The Life of an Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia after Byzantium", 200.
171 Ibid., 200.

with forty ruby columns and assorted fountains, ornamented inside and outside with emeralds, turquoise, silver and crystals. He was bewildered by its beauty, and the angel Gabriel told him that it was called *cami ül-kübra* (grand mosque) and was built by God for Muhammad's community. An example *(misal)* of this building, according to this anonymous version, was located in a city surrounded by water on three sides called the city of Constantin (that is, Hagia Sophia) and that praying in that building would become the lot of Muslims.[172]

In many sixteenth-century sources Hagia Sophia is mentioned as the second *Ka'ba*, for the poor who could not afford the pilgrimage to Mecca.[173] The building was very significant in Ottoman sources from later centuries as well, such as the Ottoman narratives included in this thesis. Like a snowball the *Diegesis* thrived and grew through narratives and quotations. Moreover, it both evolved and was influenced by the orality that shaped Ottoman collective memory. Necipoğlu maintains that regal aspects of the first translations, by Mehmed II, changed into sacred ones through new traditions of Muslim popular piety: "The mosque that had been Ottomanised by Mehmed II thus took a much longer time to Islamise".[174]

Hagia Sophia was important to Christians even after the conquest of Istanbul and its popularity extends to the tourist visits of today. An early fifteenth-century map of Constantinople drawn by Cristoforo Boundelmonti denies the transformation of the city under Ottoman rule; for example, the Ottoman minarets added to Hagia Sophia are not included in this map (figure 31) whereas an Ottoman version of the same map does include the minarets.[175] This detail suggests an ongoing competitive ownership claim upon the monument by the two cultures. After a visit to early Renaissance Rome the Byzantine scholar Manuel Chrysolaras, in a letter to the Byzantine emperor Manuel II in 1411, declared of Hagia Sophia: "nothing like it ever was, or ever would be, built by man".[176]

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172 Cited in Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri*, 252.

173 Necipoğlu, "The Life of an Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia after Byzantium", 201.

174 Ibid., 202.

175 Cited in Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 90-91.

176 Cited in Ibid., 90.

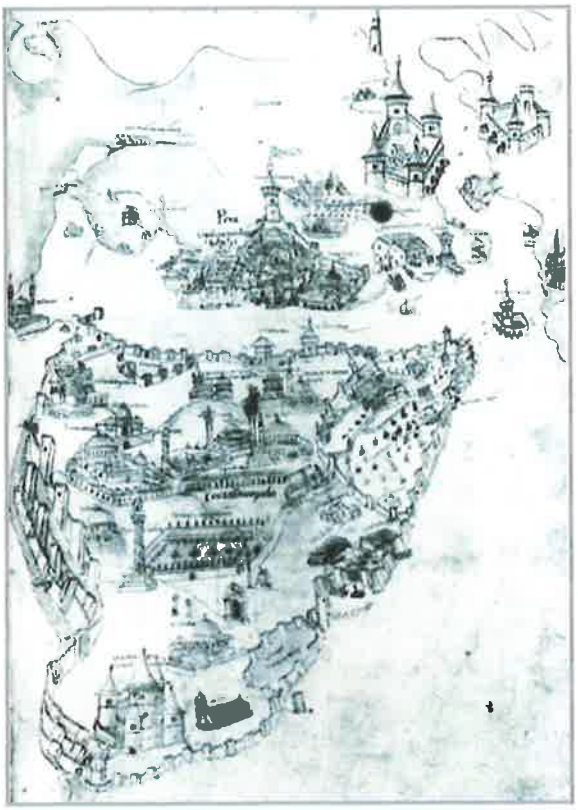


Figure 31 Cristoforo Buondelmonti, map of Constantinople showing Hagia Sophia without minarets c.1481, ink drawing. Necipoğlu, Age of Sinan, 92.

10.2. Sinan's Precedents and Hagia Sophia

The existence of Hagia Sophia was an ultimate challenge for the emerging architects of the Ottoman Empire. The significance of Hagia Sophia to the Ottoman audience and their reception of it is understandable given the circulating literature about the monument. The questions of how and when the architect entered into the picture are important in terms of relating the general context to Sinan. Comparison and competition with Hagia Sophia are a recurrent theme in texts on Sinan and the story comes to a turning point in the eighteenth-century narrative, *Selimiye Risālesi*. In one of the first group of Sinan memoirs, a poem goes like this:

> If there were no architect to build the world,
> A wall could not be made of stone alone.[177]

Premodern legends about prominent monuments repeat the topos of their architects being murdered as a result of their outstanding achievements. An addition made to the *Diegesis* in the tenth century elaborates the narrative by stating that after the construction of the dome of Hagia Sophia, architect Ignatius was killed by Justin, who feared that the architect would be chosen as the new ruler by the people of Constantinople.[178] Other reasons to eliminate the architect included not letting him create another masterpiece which would surpass Hagia Sophia. There is a similar Eastern legend about Greek architect Sinimmar, who built the legendary palace Khawarnaq under Lakhmid chief Nu'man's commission in the Lakhmid capital

177 See *Risāletü'l-Mi'māriyye*, Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

178 Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri*, 153.

Hira, in Southern Iraq. Sinimmar was killed afterwards so that he could not build a rival to the legendary palace.[179] As Crane mentions, among the pre-Islamic Arab poets, Khawarnaq was regarded as one of the wonders of the world and later became a metaphor for splendour and architectural ingenuity.[180] In an encomium in the Sinan texts, the architect's skills are compared to Sinimmar's through the metaphor of Khawarnaq:

> If [the palace of] Havernak (Khawarnaq) was the wonder of the age,
> He [Sinan] like Havernak many mansions built.[181]

Yerasimos interprets the topos of the murdered architect in relation to ideology. In this topos the architect is an uncanny person who has the power to create the unprecedented. Architect and emperor do not confront each other alone. The trinity of the emperor, the architect and God together build the temple. Thus, eliminating the architect temporarily secures the God–emperor relationship in premodern imperialist ideology. However, for Yerasimos, in anti-imperialist ideology (popular narratives) the architect is almost like a half-sacred subject, while the emperor is cursed forever with torment and God takes the temple by clearing it from the sin of the emperor.[182]

This topos turns into reality in the story of Mehmed II and his architect Atik Sinan (Sinan's namesake), who allegedly suffered the wrath of the sultan. Atik Sinan was commissioned to build Fatih Mosque, Mehmed II's imperial mosque, in Istanbul as the symbolic part of the sultan's large *madrasa* complex. The mosque had a plan similar to that of Hagia Sophia, with a large dome accompanied by a single half dome covering the *mihrab* area. It was opened for prayers in 1468.[183] The reason behind the alleged murder of the architect is contentious due to the ambiguity of dates and sources; however, Yerasimos links the murder to Sultan Mehmed II's

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179 Gülru Necipoğlu, "An Outline of Shifting Paradigms in the Palatial Architecture of the Pre-Modern Islamic World", *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): 4.

180 Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

181 See *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārin*. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

182 Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri*, 153. In a more general sense, Kris and Kurz argue that architects who end their lives upon the completion of their works and the dual characterisation of architects as both admirable and dangerous are common motifs of mythology across cultures. Ernst Kris, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist*, 85, 90.

183 Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri*, 159.

competition with Hagia Sophia. He maintains that Mehmed II may have forced the architect and workmen beyond their capacity and the technical availability of the time to surpass Hagia Sophia's dome size and height. At 26m in diameter the dome of the Fatih Mosque did not surpass that of Hagia Sophia, which is larger than 31m in diameter. Anonymous historical source *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman* relates that the punishment of the architect was either because he took a bribe or because he shortened two columns that carried the main dome.[184] The inscription on the tombstone of the architect mentions him as "martyred after the evening prayer in the dark prison at the seaside".[185] Necipoğlu maintains that Atik Sinan was beaten to death in prison. She argues that one of the reasons for his punishment may have been the high cost of construction.[186]

The ambiguous story behind Mehmed II's architect, Atik Sinan, is implied more than once in Sinan's memoirs. As Necipoğlu posits: "Critical texts in which Hagia Sophia's looming presence overshadows Ottoman attempts at building monumental mosques informed Sinan's autobiographies".[187] While mentioning the shortening of two marble columns to be used in the Süleymaniye Mosque in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān,* Sinan specifically utters the confirmation of the sultan first: "By order of the shah, the excess [of the column] was cut down, and it became uniform with the other columns".[188] In another circumstance, when Sinan allegedly slowed down the construction of the Süleymaniye, the sultan urged him on by reminding him of the predicament of Atik Sinan: "Why do you not attend to this Friday mosque of mine and [instead] waste time on unimportant things? Is not the example of my forefather Sultan Mehmed Khan's architect sufficient for you?"[189] Therefore, as we read through his memoirs we learn that architects preceding Sinan suffered a great deal because of their skills or their incapacity to cope with imperial/religious projects. Sinan accompanies the story of his professional situation by poetically or historically referring to these architects not only to demonstrate how he felt close to them but also, and more, to mention that he was glorious over them.

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184 Ibid., 158.
185 Ibid., 156.
186 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 137.
187 Ibid., 137.
188 See *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.
189 Ibid.

For Assmann, the role of space and place in cultural memory is crucial.[190] When it is understood how the existence of Hagia Sophia preoccupied the minds of Ottoman sultans in reshaping the urban fabric of Istanbul, it is easy to understand its being the persistent background of each project undertaken by Sinan. In the history of Ottoman architecture, Sinan was legendary and called the grand architect (*koca*), perhaps because he challenged and claimed to surpass Hagia Sophia. In the final part of *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, when writing on the Selimiye Mosque Sinan says:

> And one [reason] the people of the world said [such a construction] was beyond human capability was because no dome as large as that of Hagia Sophia had been built in the lands of Islam. [Thus] those who passed for architects among the sinning unbelievers used to say, 'We have scored a victory over the Muslims.' Their statements in accord with their perversely false views to the effect that, 'The construction of a dome such as that is very difficult. Were it possible to build one like it, they [the Muslims] would have done it,' pained and endured in the heart of this humble servant. I exerted myself in the construction of the abovementioned Friday mosque, and, with the help of God, the Lord, the Judge, showed my capabilities during the reign of Sultan Selim Khan, and made this exalted dome to exceed that one by six cubits (*zira*) in height and by four cubits (*zira*) in circumference.[191]

Sinan was not comfortable about rumours about Hagia Sophia's superiority; as the text suggests, and he gave an answer to this challenge with Selimiye, a theme that will be elaborated later. But, was it only size that mattered for Sinan to surpass Hagia Sophia? What were the dynamics that affected Sinan's dialogue with the ancient monument?

10.3. Sinan's Dialogue with Hagia Sophia

Lefaivre convincingly argues that the mind of an individual is formed through a dialogue with the mentality of the culture it belongs to. The heritage of preconceived categories of what Gadamer might have called 'tradition' assigns the tenacious patterns of thought.[192] Therefore, the proposal that Sinan's artistic inclinations were outside and contrary to the Ottoman context is impossible. What Sinan produced by the example of his works is an outcome of his cultural context as much as it was his own creation. Ottoman mentality was based on an Islamic faith

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190 Assmann, *Kültürel Bellek*, 43.

191 See *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

192 Lefaivre, *Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 181. See Gadamer on tradition Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1975), 324.

that "normatively at least condemn[s] change (*bida'*)". Thus, for the Ottoman sultans, complying with the *Shariah* meant scrutinising every innovation through the doctrines of Islam.[193] Tanyeli argues that this resistance to change and keeping the order of the society in its most innate and originally rooted form was acute in the worldview of the Ottoman society.[194] However, change in any society is inescapable. Especially for the Ottomans after the conquest of Istanbul, accelerated change determined the architectural production that served to legitimate the power of the state and the religion.[195]

Sinan alludes to his assimilation of previous architectural examples in a few words in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* while he talks about his education.[196] However, as opposed to the other texts, which were more about the buildings and their construction than the architect himself, in *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn* (The Choice Gift of the Architects) he explains his vision of architecture in a touching, elaborate passage:

> It is obvious and proven to men of intelligence and wisdom and persons of understanding and vision that building with water and clay being an auspicious art, the Children of Adam felt an aversion to mountains and caves and from the beginning were inclined to cities and villages. And because of the civilized nature of human beings, many types of buildings were invented day-by-day, and refinement increased. Not a moment was lost by those striving to leave a memorial and, in fact, a building such as Hagia Sophia, which is without equal in the world, was built in fourteen years through the effort of an architect named Agnados [Ignatius]. But a few years after its completion, the flat dome collapsed. And, in histories, it is set forth that it was rebuilt by the abovementioned architect–engineer (*mimār–mühendis*) with various apologies. In like manner, your slave, Sinan of Kayseri has also suffered many troubles during the completion of each building. No doubt, with the help of God, all of these [buildings] came into existence due to the auspicious government and lofty patronage of the kingdom-conquering Ottoman dynasty and the bountiful sincerity of our heart. In short, there is no art more difficult than architecture, and whosoever is engaged in this estimable calling must, to begin with, be righteous and pious. He should not begin to lay the foundations if the building site is not firm, and when he sets out to lay out the foundations he should take great care that his work be free from defect and he reaches the firm ground. And, in proportion to the abundance or paucity of piers, columns, and buttresses, he should close up the domes and half domes that are on top of them, and bind the arches together in an agreeable manner, without carelessness. And he should not

193 Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*, 8.

194 Tanyeli, "Klasik Osmanlı Dünyasında Değişim, Yenilik ve "Eskilik" Üretimi", 28.

195 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 6.

196 "I learned an edge from each raised *iwan*", Sinan says, "and a piece of knowledge from each ruined dervish lodge" in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*. Çelebi, *Yapilar Kitabı (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları)*, 41.

> hurry in important matters but should endure in accord with the import of the saying 'Patience brings one victory!', in order that, with God's help, he find divine guidance for the immortality of his work. And in this there is no doubt![197]

This introduction, Necipoğlu argues, gives invaluable insights about Sinan's architectural concerns. For instance, by acknowledging the failure of Hagia Sophia's dome, Sinan informs us about the stability of his own structures.[198] In the epilogue of the same text, the architect continues his insights on architecture in terms of stylistic concerns:

> To the engineers of the age and overseers of auspicious monuments it is manifest and apparent that although [formerly] buildings constructed in the style of Hagia Sophia did not possess elegance, this servant of yours perfected the noble Friday mosque of Şehzade Sultan Mehmed – may God illumine his tomb – which was the model for the noble building complex [and mosque] of His Majesty Sultan Süleyman Khan – may he rest in peace. Subsequently, in this lofty edifice [the Süleymaniye complex] various beautiful works of art were created, each of which took form with elegance.[199]

Here Sinan proclaims that he had achieved a stylistic refinement among Ottoman buildings by emulating Hagia Sophia. Therefore, he did not create an architectural language from scratch but he emulated Hagia Sophia through the references of the Ottoman works built before him. As the text suggests, he explicates the originality of his buildings by comparing them with the examples of the past. He starts his architectural journey of a dialogue with Hagia Sophia with the Şehzade Mosque and reaches a peak with Sultan Süleyman's complex.[200] The fact that Sinan does not mention the Selimiye Mosque in *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn* is striking when it is remembered that Selimiye is seen by modern historiography as Sinan's foremost architectural achievement. Necipoğlu relates the reason to Süleymaniye's exceptional situation in the Ottoman capital, Istanbul, but this also may suggest that Sinan did not perceive his buildings within the chronological progress assumed by contemporary historians.[201] In the epilogue Sinan continues to express the

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197 See *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn*. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

198 Gülru Necipoğlu, "Challenging the Past: Sinan and the Competitive Discourse of Early-Modern Islamic Architecture", *Muqarnas: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture* X (1993): 172.

199 See *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārin*. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

200 Necipoğlu, "Challenging the Past: Sinan and the Competitive Discourse of Early-Modern Islamic Architecture", 173.

201 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 138.

uniqueness of features of the Süleymaniye Mosque that are exemplary in terms of what the architect saw as distinguished in his own building:

> To begin with, in addition to the lofty flow and unique style of the courtyard fountain (*şadırvan*), in truth, spouts were placed in its four corners for the dispensing of water. And for ablution, seventeen fountain spouts were made to flow in the buttresses on each of the two sides of the noble Friday mosque, and each of them appeared matchless. And doorways were opened from the minarets around the noble dome and several small, upper domes were provided for connoisseurs of works. Such artistry had not previously been accomplished by any master. And the balconies of the four mentioned minarets, being ten [in number], indicate that the patron of the edifice, that is, the shah of shahs of Solomon-like majesty, was the tenth vanquisher of kingdoms of the Ottoman dynasty. And choice marbles were repeatedly carved and cut until the unique style of its mihrab and minbar attained perfection. And pulpits with small marble columns were built in the corners and four great columns, each worth the world's tribute, were raised and consolidated between the piers (*fil pāyeler*). And each of the other marble columns outside and around it were dragged and set in place in accord with the science of statics. And although the preparation of its domes and half domes was work [fit] for demons, thanks be to God, all of them were feasible for humankind. And while water was flowing, the water channel experts in our corps continually inspected the subterranean conduits (*kārīzler*) in order to mend their breaks. Four hundred master workmen (*ser ulaq*) were procured for this work. And other unmentioned [works] are [even] superior to these examples. And God knows and judges what is true.[202]

The features of his building that Sinan singles out, such as the number of balconies on the minarets, are described with expression common to all the narratives focused on in the thesis which will be dealt with separately later. Sinan mentions some of the innovations he achieved, such as giving access to the minarets from the main interior space of the mosque (thus implying the spatial integration of the minarets and the body of the mosque), accompanying main dome with half domes and smaller domes, the fountains of the mosque, the subterranean structure that occupied four hundred workmen and of course the building's structural stability.

Thus, Sinan starts his text on architecture with an origin narrative, quickly arrives at Hagia Sophia, explains his innovative achievement in style and statics starting from the Şehzade Mosque, and concludes by giving the example of his most extraordinary work, the Süleymaniye Mosque. These are the words of an architect fully conscious of his past references and present achievements. What differentiates Sinan from his Renaissance contemporaries is the absence of a theoretical concern

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202 See *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn*. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

about architecture. Hart differentiates the basic principle of Italian Renaissance architectural practice from that of earlier Gothic practice as an evolution from the priority of geometrical principles as recorded by Euclid to the priority given to those of proportion as recorded by Vitruvius.[203] This conspicuous Vitruvian shift is the basic factor that came to differentiate Renaissance architecture from Ottoman architecture during the tenure of Sinan, who was called the Euclid of his time.[204]

The origin narrative at the beginning of *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn* and the origin narrative conveyed by Manetti in Brunelleschi's biography lend themselves to comparison. Manetti writes:

> The art of building in the aforementioned style had its beginnings, like all styles, in very humble and crude things, good only for escaping the cold, heat, wind and rain, since the early tribes had huts and houses of rough wood covered with boughs and dried grass such as nature provided; or they were made of earth and of dry stone walls or of stones with earth instead of mortar. From these, they progressed to bitumen, which was provided by nature in certain lands. Since it was not available everywhere, men gradually sharpened their wits by experimenting over a long period. Thus, they discovered lime by means of fire…[205]

This narrative in Manetti's text goes on, until material progress is achieved in cut stone and then the narrative shifts to a discussion of style. Secular/temple ornament is among the phrases mentioned when he writes elaborately on Greece. Manetti differentiates Greek architecture from the buildings of Asia, which according to him were very crude, undefined and unordered. He mentions measurement tools that helped create proportion. Then he gives examples of Greek temples such as that of Diana at Ephesus and mentions the shift of architectural attraction from Greece to Rome. Rome was threatened by Barbarian tribes such as the Vandals, Goths, Lombards and Huns and so was architectural elegance. His long narrative ends with an account of Charlemagne's buildings, whose German style gained strength and their influence lasted until the time of Brunelleschi.[206]

Both origin narratives imply the idea of progress in architecture. However, in Sinan's brief account, the progress from cave to Hagia Sophia is cut short compared

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203 Hart, "Introduction: 'Paper Palaces' from Alberti to Scamozzi",5.

204 Konyalı, *Mimar Koca Sinan: Vakfiyeler-Hayır Eserleri-Hayatı*, 52.

205 Manetti, *The Life of Brunelleschi*, 56.

206 Ibid., 56-62.

to Manetti's, which is a typical Vitruvian origin narrative of Western architecture that was repeated in much more elaborate manner in treatises such as Alberti's.[207] Whereas the Renaissance example gives an account of architectural progress from a Western perspective, proclaiming the different as the 'other', Sinan's narrative embraces Hagia Sophia, makes it a part of the narrative's own history, and defines its architectural refinement in line with Ottoman tradition, which transforms the whole semantics of the monument. A distinct idea of progress and innovation constructs Sinan's dialogue with Hagia Sophia. He does not base his architectural precedent on the architectural treatise. Instead, he creates a less abstract and more intimate relationship by relying on the building itself. In Sinan's architectural production the Euclidian notion of geometry guides his structural articulation where proportion is an outcome rather than an aim.

11. Text and Metaphor

In the following subsections the prevalent use of architecture as a textual metaphor throughout the architect *tezkeres* will be explored. These metaphors include perception of Sinan's body as architecture, architecture as a cosmological metaphor, spatial sensibility as exploited by the texts, and how architecture is expressed through literary metaphors within the texts. The question of who the literary expressions belong to (the architects or the editors of the texts) does not blur the conspicuous use of architecture as a textural metaphor. Deriving from earlier arguments, I accept the obvious role of both Sinan and Architect Sedefkār Mehmed in the creation of these texts. Moreover, the texts create their own world of reality that transcends both the architects and the editors in referring to a cultural commonplace. Therefore, in the following subsections this cultural commonplace is explored through the example of the narratives.

11.1. Sinan's Body as Architecture

Lefaivre accentuates the universality of the body metaphor across cultures: "The body appears in an incredible number of guises and roles: as gendered, ungendered,

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207 Necipoğlu points briefly to the similarity between Sinan's narrative and Renaissance texts. Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 138.

healed, mechanical, divine, transparent, coprophilic, homoerotic, maternal".[208] For her, the body is not only a physical reality but at the same time it is also a metaphoric paradigm that shapes mentality.[209] In the classical Western tradition, the body is related to architectural embodiment, referencing the human body for proportional and figurative authority. The Vitruvian man enclosed in a square and a circle has been referred to as the connection of human body to architectural beauty.[210] Vidler argues that, "in Vitruvian and Renaissance theory, the body is directly projected onto the building, which both stands for it and represents its ideal perfection".[211] Indra McEwen critiques the Romanocentricity of Vitruvius' text and its ahistorical use as a 'master narrative' in architectural historiography to delineate universal rules for architecture where she asks the question 'whose architecture?' For her, the body of Vitruvius' text is a representation of the body of Roman architecture in Augustus' reign, which is essentially context-bound.[212]

Discussion about the body in premodern Islamic architecture is rare. It is uncommon in Islamic culture to refer to 'body' as a concrete metaphor to guide the proportions of a building. The anti-iconic attitude of Islam in which the body of God is inconceivable to human beings would appear to explain this lack of interest. However, we do come across the distinct use of the body metaphor in relation to architecture in Ottoman narratives.

In line with the proposed universality of the body metaphor freed from its Vitruvian implications, in *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye,* Sinan draws curious analogies between his own body and architecture. It is important to look at these analogies to unravel Sinan's perception of architecture, body and the world:

> Becoming the master (*pir*) of this transitory dervish convent (the world),
> I lived to see the reigns of four padishahs.
> I looked upon all creation as a lesson,
> And completely understood there is no permanence.
> I laid the foundations of many buildings.

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208 Lefaivre, *Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 187, 189.

209 Ibid., 197.

210 Indra Kagis McEwen, *Vitruvius: Writing the Body of Architecture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2004), 12.

211 Anthony Vidler, "The Building in Pain: The Body and Architecture in Post-Modern Culture", *AA files: annals of the Architectural Association School of Architecture*, no. 19 (1990): 3-4.

212 McEwen, *Vitruvius: Writing the Body of Architecture*, 301.

[Doomed to] annihilation, man does not endure.
The pavilion of my body began to crumble.
I suffered pain in its fetters.
The sorrows of fortune my beard turned gray.
My body trembles from fear of God.
Think not that my bended form is an arch.
It is a bridge of passage to grief and sorrow.
Brother, in order to pass to the next world,
To this vault of fate's pavilion I bowed my head.
Thanks be to God that I am a man who performs well!
In my art, I am upright and firm.
This is my wish: from men of skill,
When they these couplets consider,
May they pray to the pillar of the Faith,
With which the pavilion of the world stands.
And let them remember me too with blessings.
Making joyful my saddened heart.[213]

In these verses, Sinan compares his old body to a pavilion close to collapse. His bent back reminded those who saw him of an arch but he urges them not to be mistaken but to comprehend that his back is in fact a bridge to sadness. Sinan uses architectural terms as metaphors to describe his situation of being-in-the-world. Thus, he does not use the body as a metaphor to define architecture, but he uses architecture as a metaphor to qualify the state of his body. His body is like a structure within a structure; because of the vault of fate's pavilion, which in fact keeps the embodied pavilion of the world upright, his body is bent to fit into them. As the human body grows old, the triple-shelled structure of the pavilion(s) of existence becomes claustrophobic. Thus, the transience of the world is the transience of his own body's pavilion, which is the source of his grief and sadness. Nevertheless, his body is also a bridge to the next world, trembling from the fear of God. In the world of transience, Sinan's body weakens; however, it is in fact in the phase of transition to the next world. What desolates him seems to be the human claim to permanence, which becomes ironic in old age. However, Sinan's consolation is his architectural works, through which he keeps his body still upright and firm. They are his body's permanence and communication with future generations, whom he asks for blessing. Between the lines of these verses, Sinan makes an ingenious architectural expression of corporeal existence from an Islamic

213 See *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye*.. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

perspective. Therefore, the opacity of the text from Sai's poetic pen (un)veils Sinan's architectural thinking about the world and his own existence.

11.2. Architecture as Cosmological Metaphor

The figure of God as the architect of the universe first appeared in Babylonian texts. Kris and Kurz further note that the perception of heaven as an iron vault is common among ancient Indians, Greeks and Germanic people.[214] In Ottoman narratives regarding the architects, we come across a distinct variation of these universally shared motifs. The prefaces of both the group of texts on Sinan and the text on Sedefkār Mehmed open with praises to divine creation according to Islam. Necipoğlu sees these openings in Sinan's narratives as being in line with the 'humanist' ethos, in which human beings are exalted as perfect creations mirroring God's perfect existence. Furthermore, she links the preface of Sinan's autobiographical narratives with his endowment deed, which opens in a similar fashion.[215]

The preface of *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* starts with these words:

> Thanks and praise to that Creator of the foundation of the seven stories [of the heavenly spheres] and incomparable glory to that Builder of the heavenly canopy of nine vaults, who, in this workshop of water and earth, without level or compass, fashioned the private palace of Adam's body, which is the pavilion of the heart and soul, and rendered delightful the mosque of the hearts [of humankind] with the adornment of virtue.[216]

This passage from the text illustrates that architectural metaphors are used to express divine creation. God is the greatest architect and Adam's body is God's private palace. Architectural terms common in Ottoman architecture such as pavilion (*köşk*) and mosque are used in such expressions. The architectural metaphors continue to qualify divine creation in the following metaphysical verses:

> He constructed Adam's body.
> The eye became the window of the pavilion of the body.
> And inscription[s] became its eyebrows.[217]

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214 Kris and Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist*, 53.

215 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 146.

216 See *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* in Sai Mustafa Çelebi. *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

217 See *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

The praise continues by naming the first Prophet Muhammad, as the builder of the *Ka'ba*. It then praises the Prophet's four companions –the first, Abu Bakr, is praised as the mihrab and the sacred stone of the *Ka'ba*; the second, Omar, as the minbar of the mosque of justice and equity or the brick-maker of the wall of pure faith; the third companion, Othman, is praised as the tribune (*mahfil*) of the mosque of grace and beauty or the ornament of the religion's firmament; and the fourth, Ali, as the gate of the city of learning and knowledge.[218] Thus, the Prophet and his four companions are linked to architectural metaphors in the narrative in both the prose and verse sections, alluding to a conscious use that exploits important building elements in Islamic architecture such as the mihrab, minbar, tribune (*mahfil*), gate, dome (firmament) and ornament, and the city. The type of building or element shifts from the sacred *Ka'ba* to a mosque, a mud-brick wall, an ornamented roof, a pavilion and a mansion.[219] Of course, these metaphors do not suggest a hidden code or a template for fixedly relating architecture to cosmology but, as their consistent use of architectural terms shows, they are not randomly applied poetic expressions either. Their scattered use in verse and prose suggests a flexible structuring accentuating the multivalence of meaning.

The more elaborate and longer preface of the later text, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*, first gives a detailed account in prose of creation. The flexibly structured use of architectural metaphors both in verse and prose in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* gives way to a reference to God as the Divine Architect in a few concentrated couplets in this longer preface:

> What is this exalted mosque and retreat for witnessing?
> What is this lofty vault and lamp ornament?
> What is this bright window, what is this luminous taper?
> What is this wonderful creation, and what is this beauteous form?
> What is this vault of heaven, and what is this surface of the world?
> What is this lofty arch, and what is this great pavilion?
> What is this? Who made such an edifice
> Without drawings and without mathematics and without analogy?[220]

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218 Ibid.

219 Ibid.

220 Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi`māriyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, 19-20.

Though they do not extend to the whole passage as in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, these couplets praising Divine Creation are replete with architectural metaphors of the mosque and its parts such as the vault, arch, window, pavilion and lamp. The poetic atmosphere compares the vault of heaven with a lofty arch and the surface of the world with a great pavilion. Together they form the mosque of existence in which the bright window and the lamp ornament multiply the appearance of formal beauty created in the utmost perfect order that is achieved without a precedent.

The prefaces of *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* and *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* are distinct examples in the Islamic context of architectural metaphors enmeshed in poetic expressions. Necipoğlu argues that there is an implied parallel in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* between the Divine Architect and the human agent Sinan, whose domed mosques are like microcosmic representations of the universe. The same can be interpreted for Cafer's text, in which Sedefkār Mehmed is presented with the influence of the earlier Sinan autobiographies. Apart from this contextual relationship, these introductory narratives refer to the understanding of art as the expression of wisdom in premodern Islam. Samer Akkach maintains that for premodern Muslim thinking knowledge of the cosmic order was essential to achieving harmony in everyday life and artefacts. Free will and human production were not isolated from God's higher orders of reality.[221]

Thus, by opening the narratives with attributions to God's creations and the representatives of religion in the world, the meaning of the texts is legitimated through commonsense from an Islamic perspective. However, at the contextual level, the architectural metaphors used in the narratives create an original reconstruction of the cosmos through architectural references and terms. This reconstructive approach gives way to a chronological narrative when the Ottoman sultans are introduced before the architects and then the narrative flows into a description of the events elaborated in each of the texts. Therefore, the themes open up slowly in the narratives, from the pre-ordered to the accidental, from cosmology to history. The consistent use of architectural metaphors in these prefaces shows

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221 Samer Akkach, "Aspects of the Traditional Islamic Philosophy of Art", *The Islamic Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (1993): 45, 58. Akkach developed these ideas in his latest publication. Samer Akkach, *Cosmology and Architecture in Premodern Islam: An Architectural Reading of Mystical Ideas*, *Suny Series in Islam* (New York: State University of New York, 2005).

that they are not taken up as overall cosmological clichés embedded in the texts to pursue a conventional form of writing. Although they do not talk directly about architecture as physical building, they are certainly arranged through an architectural consciousness that is unique to premodern Islam.

11.3. Spatial Sensibility[222]

Regarding the seventeenth-century *sohbetnāme* text that Kafadar interprets, he posits, "there is no third dimension in any of these narratives, no obvious distance between the narrator and the narrated self".[223] For him, these narratives render a world similar to an Ottoman miniaturist's depiction of figures in a flat and neatly contoured composition. As the miniaturist draws human figures not as characters but as types in accordance with their social functions, narratives represent their protagonists in a similar intention.[224]

Kafadar's comments on Ottoman *sohbetnāme* narratives are helpful in looking at the spatial sensibility of the Ottoman narratives on architecture. Apart from focusing on architecture, being narratives these texts themselves articulate a spatial sensibility. Regarding the *tezkeres* on the architects, Erzen argues that the narrative is significant in two ways: first it places the protagonist among mythical/historical/religious figures of the culture, then it brings out intimate scenes from everyday life. Thus, the narratives aim not only at legitimacy but also at representing experiential aspects of life.[225]

In comparing Ottoman narratives with the art of miniature, Erzen holds that they are not only similar in their themes and forms but also in their intentions by being experiential. Like the texts, the miniatures are theatrical, surprising and rendered in immediacy. She further argues that the miniature is like a stage without depth and

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222 I adapt this concept from Akkach. He perceives spatial sensibility: "as an untheorised and unaesthetised predilection or bias" that "mediates between layered cosmological, geographical, and bodily conceptions and spatial ordering" in premodern thinking. Akkach, *Cosmology and Architecture in Premodern Islam: An Architectural Reading of Mystical Ideas*, XVII.

223 Cemal Kafadar, "Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul and First-Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature", *Studia Islamica* LXIX (1989): 138.

224 Ibid., 147.

225 Jale Erzen, "Aesthetics and Aisthesis in Ottoman Art and Architecture", *Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 1 (1991): 8.

distance, with everything depicted on the surface of the picture plane. The point of view of the audience is immediate and equal at all points of the miniature, without hierarchy or sequence. Thus, the space of miniatures unfolds itself as an equally articulated plane of experience.[226] Therefore, in both Ottoman narratives and miniatures in general, we confront a spatial sensibility without perspective, just like the absence of theoretical approaches to architecture.

In the Western context, Pelletier and Perez-Gomez suggest that perspective is a hinge for cultural representation.[227] As Panofsky posits, the Renaissance achieved the abstraction of the psycho-physiological structure of space into an infinite extension of mathematical space. He purports that the evolution from aggregate space to systematic space was not only representational but also mental.[228] Panofsky sees the history of perspective as a triumph of human control over the represented phenomena through distancing and objectification.[229]

Basic features of perspectival representation, such as assigning the space from a particular viewpoint by distance, depth and hierarchy, allowing the audience to see only particular aspects of the represented world while being part of that world in a projected-imagined space during perception,[230] are irrelevant for the spatial sensibility of the Ottoman miniatures and narratives alike. Thus, Ottoman narratives like miniatures render space in an inter-subjective relationship between the audience and the represented phenomena rather than in an object–subject distinction. Framing and distancing are not their concerns.

A miniature–text comparison is fruitful in understanding Ottoman attitudes towards narrative and visual representation. However, making antithetical distinctions such as type vs character does not capture the detailed features of either narratives in representing their architects. As Necipoğlu explains, the Ottoman sense of identity shows premodern features amalgamating the group and the individual. Like miniatures, with their the same-fashioned faces of individuals, sixteenth-century

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226 Ibid., 10-11.

227 Alberto Perez-Gomez, *Architectural Representation and the Perspectival Hinge*, 17.

228 Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, 63-65.

229 Ibid., 67.

230 Ibid., 60-61.

Ottoman costume albums form another pictorial genre which features unindividualised types, in this case differentiated only by their costume and headgear, which refers to their social rank and occupation.[231] Nevertheless, the intention to accentuate the architects as individuals in the Ottoman narratives on architecture represents them closer to being characters than types. For example, in Cafer Efendi's narrative, architect Sedefkār Mehmed is represented by his traits. The author made an enormous effort to depict the architect with all his merits, from his skills, strength and generosity to his piety.[232] Intimate details from the lives of the protagonists in the narratives are also in contrast with the general view of seeing them only as types rather than characters. To illustrate, in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* and *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye*, Sinan gives glimpses of his psychological state, such as being stressed by the deadline of a project or being sad when he gets close to death, which represents him as a real personality.[233] Regarding the tight deadline to complete Süleymaniye Mosque and his hurry, Sinan says: "...not stopping for an hour or a moment, night and day, I rotated around the centre and pivot of the dome with an iron staff like a compass [needle]".[234]

In addition to representing their protagonists as closer to characters than to types, both *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* and *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye* depict their spaces with particular qualities. The space of *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* is different from that of *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*. Istanbul is predominant in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, which is narrated through daily events such as construction processes, the sultan's excursions and the opening ceremonies of mosques.[235] Or particular places in the narrative gain significance through events such as the transportation of the famous ancient column from the Kıztaşı region. Similarly, from Sedefkār Mehmed's education narrative we can get the impression of an occasion at the royal ateliers of the Topkapı Palace' where students practise, meet each other and their masters, or join rituals or chats.

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231 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 123.

232 Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, 25.

233 See *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* and *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye*. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

234 *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān. Ibid.*

235 For a contemporary evaluation of sixteenth-century Istanbul and Süleymaniye mosque see Doğan Kuban. "Suleymaniye and 16th Century Istanbul". Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre 1-2 (1987): 62-69.

Indeed, we are informed that they hold competitions and bids among themselves. The occasion of the construction of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque is told by Cafer Efendi with an animated narrative for expressing not only the occasion but also his own experience of it.[236]

What is difficult to understand about the Ottoman narratives from a contemporary point of view is the abrupt articulation of the experiential (such as the occasion of construction) with normative passages (such as the divine creation narrative, the budget of the construction or the glossaries of terms on architecture), just as it is common to see that the picture is cut or grows outside the frame in some Ottoman miniatures. This seems not because of miscalculated naivety but rather it seems intentional, because the spatial sensibility of the Ottoman narratives is to express the multifarious and surprising qualities of reality as shaped through the agency of the author rather than its logical theorisation or limited framing. Therefore, the experiential is prioritised over the abstracted, and inter-subjectification is prioritised over objectification, so that comprehensiveness and prescription do not overrule the flow of the narratives.

11.4. Architecture as Expression

In premodern texts related to architecture, buildings are sources of awe and amazement and are subjected to animated expressions through examples worldwide. For example, they can act in a benevolent way in what Lefaivre calls architecture as 'the marvellous body'; for example, the palace of the Great Kahn, which Marco Polo relates was capable of controlling its own environment by keeping rain and clouds at bay and having the sun shine above it constantly! Or stones of a church can be noted as having healing properties.[237] Another premodern perception of architecture according to Lefaivre is seeing a building as the embodiment of the divine through the diffusion of light, parts of the building referring to entities, and human examples related to God or directly God himself.[238]

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236 Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi`māriyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, 28, 68.

237 Cited in Lefaivre. Lefaivre, *Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 220.

238 Ibid., 228-231.

Ancient precious and semi-precious stones used in constructions form another common theme in premodern and early modern texts related to architecture throughout world literature. Upon the capture of Constantinople by his fellow chevaliers of the Fourth Crusade, in his 1216 account, Robert of Claris expresses his allurement by the columns of Hagia Sophia. He was startled by the fact that each column of the church was of jasper or porphyry, not to mention the silver columns.[239] In *De re Aedificatoria* Alberti describes the marbles in Emperor Nero's temple in a similar fashion: "rare and exquisite stone such as, for example, the marble of which the Emperor Nero reportedly built the temple of Fortune in the Golden House, pure, white, and translucent, so that even when all the doors were closed, light seemed to be trapped inside". In general, the significance of material in the architectural space in distinct pre and early modern texts perpetuates through the value of the material and the value of the craftsmanship.[240]

Lefaivre argues that experience of marvellous architectural bodies evokes strangeness and novelty in the authors of the texts. Building as the divine body forms a perfect analogy for the divine, similarly to be admired. She sees these architectural understandings not as opposed to the rationality of Renaissance humanism but as steps towards it.[241] She further maintains that the world of Islam has been a great inspiration for the premodern Western description of buildings as bodies luminously dressed with precious materials such as marble or gold. To name a few influential sources, she mentions the *Ladder of Muhammad*, whose translation from Arabic was very popular in thirteenth-century Europe, and the tales of *A Thousand and One Nights*.[242]

Through their literary expression, Ottoman narratives on architecture richly reflect this amazement with architecture as hybrid combinations of the marvellous and the divine. The construction of the Şehzade Mosque is narrated in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* through poetic metaphors in which its domes are likened to the sublime bubbles of the sea of beauty, its arches are compared to the rainbow in the sky, and the marble

239 Cited in Lefaivre, Ibid., 215.
240 Cited in Lefaivre, Ibid., 161.
241 Ibid., 217-224.
242 Ibid., 217-219.

columns in the courtyard are described as cypress trees with the faces of gazing lovers.[243] The mosque is perceived as having the power to revitalise people with its air and water: it is indeed seen as the exalted heavens.[244]

Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān continues to use rich analogies to describe the features of the Süleymaniye Mosque. The arches of the mosque are described as touching the soul when they are seen as the eyebrows of a beauty.[245] The textures of the marbles are likened to the waves of the sea of beauty; the sofas are promoted as places fit for those seeking joy; the glasses are perceived to act as mirrors reflecting the universe. The ornamented doors of ivory and ebony with mother-of-pearl inlays are compared to the pages of an Erjeng album,[246] and they are mentioned as being admired and appreciated by the elites of the time as well as common people. The pulpit recalling the memory of a great master is described as throwing shadow onto the skies. The domes of the mosque are seen as being adorned like the bubbles of the sea of beauty; the largest dome is compared to the sky and its gold-glazed crescent to the glowing of the sun. The appearance of the main dome and its four minarets is perceived as reminiscent of the Prophet Mohammed and his four companions. And the peerless embroidered glasses are described as recalling the wings of Archangel Gabriel. The crimson, ultramarine and copper-green colours of the floor decorations are praised, and the embroideries and decorations of the inscriptions throughout the mosque are so highly valued that only discerning eyes can admire their beauty. The narrative tells that when the beautiful dome was finally in place and the construction of the other parts was completed, the phrase 'God keeps the heavens and earth' was inscribed on the dome, and several other soul-catching inscriptions were carved on the doors. The mosque is eventually epitomised as a delightful place like heaven.[247]

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243 Necipoğlu notes that it was common to plant four cypresses around the ablution fountain of the forecourt in fifteenth and early sixteenth-century Ottoman mosques, which was a paradisiacal feature. Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 84.

244 Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları)*, 47-48.

245 Ibid., 63.

246 Erjeng is a Chinese decorator. Ibid., 64.

247 Ibid., 64-65.

Symbolic descriptions of architecture as a marvellous and divine body continue throughout *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān.* For example, the revolving water wheel built for Sultan Süleyman is compared to the wheel of heavens (*çark-ı felek*).[248] Several analogies are related about the Büyük Çekmece Bridge: the bridge is described as a way to the sea, its arches are seen as resembling a rainbow in the sky, and its tall body is perceived as extending far between the depths of the sea and the sky (figure 32). It is also described as a tall beautiful human with eyebrows like bows; its arches are compared to the skies, which stay firm without support. Even human manners are attributed to the bridge where it is seen as being very generous by allowing people to pass over it![249]



Figure 32 Büyükçekmece Bridge in *Shahnāma-i Salīm Khān*, c.1581, watercolour on paper. Necipoğlu, Age of Sinan, 72.

Poetic descriptions of Selimiye Mosque occupy a large space before *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* ends. The analogy between the domes of the mosque and the bubbles of the sea of beauty, and the comparison between the marble columns of the courtyard and the cypress trees are repeated. The eulogy to the mosque starts with marvelling at its beauty. The mosque is likened to the *Ka'ba* and the *Masjid-i Aqsa* in its holiness. It is also compared to the legendary kiosk (*Beyt-i Ma'mur*) in the sixth garden of heaven.[250] The dome is described as being parallel to the highest level of the sky, yet a watchful eye would also see it as an example of the whole nine-layered sky. Moreover, the dome is likened to a round mirror hung on the sky (in the Milky Way) to reflect the world. It is seen as like a gift from the last layer of the skies. The four minarets are compared to the four companions of the Prophet, with their crescents alluding to the Prophet's light. And they are semantically linked to the

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248 Ibid., 72-73.

249 Ibid., 76.

250 *Beyt-i Ma'mur* is a kiosk in *Firdevs* Heaven (the sixth garden of heaven) that descended to earth with the Prophet Adam but rose back to the heavens after the deluge. Ibid., 83. *Beyt-i Ma'mur*, meaning glorious house, is also used to refer to the *Ka'ba*. Mustafa Nihat Özön, *Osmanlıca-Türkçe Sözlük* (Istanbul: Inkılap Kitabevi, 1959), 429.

four columns of the house of Islam, while the dome among them is perceived as a knowing sheikh. By their extreme height the minarets are exaggerated to reach the level of angels. The golden crescents on the minarets and the dome are seen as throwing light upon people as if the moon is reflecting the light of the sun. The *müezzins* are compared to nightingales with their call to prayer. A couple of cosmological analogies are used to compare the mosque with the sun and the signs of the zodiac. Furthermore, the mosque as a whole is rendered as a rose garden.[251]

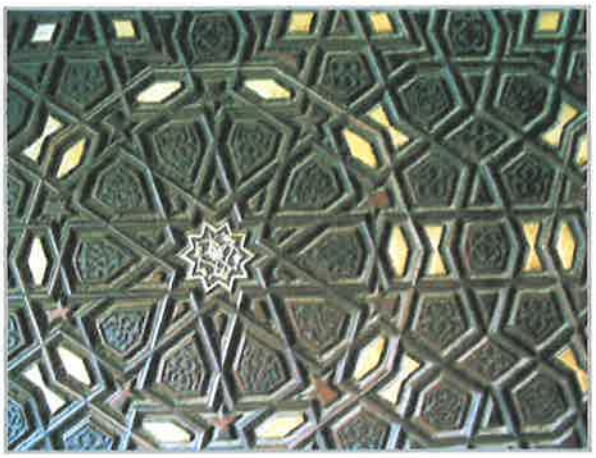


Figure 33 Selimiye Mosque, wooden door detail, Edirne, 2004.

As Selimiye's architect, Sinan is praised for being a saintly man with miraculous skills in the long eulogy in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*. He is compared to Hızır, who was believed to have conveyed the plan of Hagia Sophia to the Emperor Justinian in the Ottoman versions of *Diegesis*. Then the important elements of the mosque are praised through analogies in which each corner of the mosque is likened to a corner of the garden of heaven. The inscriptions of the mosque are valued as embroideries, reminiscent of spring and the river of *selsebil* (figure 33). The eight doors of the mosque (a rose garden) are compared to the doors of heaven, which will welcome those looking for God's blessing. After praising the mihrab, the minbar, the arches, the marbles, the chandeliers, and the mirrors of the interior, the text describes the courtyard of the mosque. The *şadırvan*, the arches and their iron beams are among the architectural elements of the courtyard that are mentioned. Furthermore, in its peerless general appearance the mosque is seen to attract people to itself like the holy *Ka'ba*. It is mentioned as a landmark in the city of Edirne in comparison with its natural landmarks: if the River Tunca is perceived as the face of the city, then Selimiye Mosque deserves to be the crown of the city. The mosque is noted as the sultan's gift to the people of Edirne,

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251 The love of the nightingale for the rose is a repeated metaphor in Ottoman court (*divan)* literature. Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı(Architect Sinan's Memoirs)*, 83-84.

which is received with happiness. Sublime as it is, being the ultimate power of the Ottoman sultan, the mosque is also celebrated for its ability to intimidate enemies of the state and the religion. The eulogy ends with a wish for the endurance of the mosque for eternity.[252]

The celebrative architectural expressions in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* find parallels in *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*, such as the eulogy on the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. Here, the mosque is compared to a rose garden around which nightingales and other birds wander, prostrating (*secde*) the unity of God (*tevhid*). It is also seen as parallel to the *Ka'ba* in attracting people. It is noted to give pleasure to the human soul with its peerless golden dome. Its lights and ornamentation are likened to the image of God and the heavens. With its six minarets it is perceived as an original *müsedde* (a poem genre) with six lines, the meaning of the lines alluding to the mansion of heaven. Each of the minarets is celebrated as the pivot of the wheel of fortune, or as denoting an axis of the noble place and the blessed centre. The number of their balconies is mentioned as equal to the number of Ottoman sultans until then.[253] The entire artifice is differentiated as a symbol.[254] It is claimed to be unique among mosques built in stone and brick. Its dome is compared to the moon and the sun, with blue tiles on its sides in the interior, making it the eye of fortune in the world. The dome is seen as a mountain on the sea shore (referring to its silhouette from the sea) and the small accompanying domes are once again noted as reminiscent of the bubbles of the sea of pleasure. The analogies continue, likening the mosque to the text of 'pure verse' or the 'suspended seven odes'.[255] Finally, Architect Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa is praised as imbuing the mosque with splendour by his architectural skills.[256]

These expressions undertake architecture as a marvellous and divine body that is worth celebrating through metaphors and analogies. They repeat the basic poetic

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[252] Ibid., 85-86.

[253] A similar analogy is repeated in *Tuhfetü'l-Mi'mārīn*. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

[254] Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi`māriyye : An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, 74.

[255] Suspended-seven odes: a group of seven long pre-Islamic Arabic poems, according to the legend hung from the door of the *Ka'ba*. Ibid., 73-76.

[256] Ibid., 76.

terminology of Ottoman court (*divan*) literature; however, they are not mere poetic clichés. They give us invaluable glimpses of the cultural values attached to architecture at that time. Hence, they discursively sketch which aspects of architecture are worth celebrating in the Ottoman context. Moreover, the poetic imagery used in these expressions suggests an amalgamation of Eastern Islamic cultural influences with Byzantine ones (that is, Turco–Persian and Arabic literature with Byzantine *ekphrasis*).[257] Necipoğlu posits that they are part of a widely shared discourse, having parallel descriptions of architecture by Ottoman historians, poets, travellers and *waqfiyya* (endowment deed) writers.[258]

Repeated metaphors and analogies, such as comparing the number of minarets with the number of Ottoman Sultans, or perceiving the mosque as a rose garden or as paradise, further allude to a widely shared vocabulary to qualify architecture. Repeated imagery can be grouped as being cosmological, religious, mythic–historical and ideological, with none being predominant in the narratives. The image of paradise is depicted through various metaphors to qualify the whole building and parts of it alike, semantically relating architecture to cosmology. The image of the sublime reproduced through metaphors of power semantically relates architecture to the legitimacy of both Islamic religion and the Ottoman dynasty. Mythic–historical references allow architectural meaning to be grounded in tradition. In the analogies, one part of the building such as the dome is interpreted as having more than one meaning, such as being the golden sun or several layers of the sky at the same time, suggesting a multivalence of architectural meaning which is not seen as fixed. The buildings are noted by their inside and outside appearance from different points of view. The details of an architectural element such as the colourful stained glasses of Süleymaniye Mosque are mentioned elaborately as is the overall impression of the buildings. Views from the sea or Selimiye's dominance of the cityscape of Edirne further allude to the urban significance of the buildings.

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257 Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents,* Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, XI, 146.

258 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire,* 146.

This overview and interpretation does not determine that cultural valuation of architecture was equally transparent to all parts of the society. Nor does it try to be comprehensive in order to determine a symbolic formula for the architectural meanings conveyed by the narratives. It is true that Ottoman narratives on architecture were written mainly for the high Ottoman bureaucracy; however, this does not mean that they were limited to this audience. Oral tradition was influential enough to disseminate architectural meanings through several layers of the society through multifarious transformations, as we shall see in the case of the *Selimiye Risālesi*, an upper middle-class Ottoman bureaucrat's account of the Selimiye Mosque.

12. The *Selimiye Risālesi*: A Protocol of Reception

The Selimiye narrative departs from the earlier texts in a number of ways. It is written in prose rather than in verse and prose; it has the purpose of highlighting a building rather than the achievements of an architect; it is the latest (being written in the eighteenth century) among the three groups of narratives; and it was written by a non-expert in architecture. Apart from these basic differences, the Selimiye narrative is also different from the *tezkeres* in its literary expression, which I will focus on later.

The Selimiye narrative is a protocol of the reception of architecture from an eighteenth-century Ottoman point of view. It is not only the author's account of the building: it also conveys a number of other people's perceptions. The basic problem in interpreting Dayezāde's narrative is the mental distance between him and contemporary readers.[259] This section will focus on contextualising his narrative despite this mental distance.

In a panegyric form, author Dayezāde shows his amazement at the Selimiye Mosque. First he aims to celebrate its superiority over Hagia Sophia, which still ruled the memories of the people he encountered. Then, he gives us the process by which he wrote and edited the text over time. As a nice coincidence with his

259 Kafadar mentions the problem of mental distance in his interpretation of a seventeenth-century diary. Kafadar, "Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul and First-Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature", 145.

previous interest in the building, he was at one stage appointed to Edirne in his official job, and thus had the chance to scrutinise the Selimiye in closer detail. Keeping his promise to his friend Hassa Ağa Ahmed Efendi he then started writing nice analogies of the features of the building. Later, seeing how these analogies were welcomed by a number of people, he used his spare time in Kars Castle when it was under siege to write more analogies and to combine them in a small book with his previous explorations of the building and its history.

The existence of Dayezāde's narrative denotes a rising interest in the Selimiye Mosque in the eighteenth century. The account of the Russian ambassador who visited the building with his painter and got him to draw it is important in terms of alluding to a rivalry between the Ottoman world and the West, and to Selimiye's significance in representing the refinement of Ottoman culture for foreigners in such a context.

Painter Nakkaş Ahmed Çelebi's experience with the Selimiye Mosque as noted in the narrative represents him as a self-educated aesthete willing to explore the building far from the pragmatics of everyday life, except for the fact that he is noted as having given frequent talks on his amazement at the building. He turned the experiential challenge of the monument into an obsession. In line with our previous discussion on undertaking architecture as occasion, here, Nakkaş Ahmed Çelebi sees architecture as an existence of becoming rather than a fixed entity. The expectation of contingencies in each of the experiential moments puts him in the position of an admirer who never gets tired of searching for new abundance of meaning. His interest in the building is refreshed with each new experience. What seems a monotonous repetition to an outsider is rendered as the joy of discovery for him, suggesting that the Selimiye Mosque as occasion intensified the richness of his experience. This anecdote has historical significance only to point to the general fact of ambiguity of architectural meaning and how it came to preoccupy the human mind throughout history.

Dayezāde presents more examples of the interest of people in the building, such as the Edirne judge (*Kadı*), Nevizāde Efendi, who assigned the *müezzins* of the mosque to measure the minarets, the dome and the length and width of the interior space. He noted these measurements in a notebook not only to show it to other

interested people but also to carry it as a source of charm to bring him fortune. Dayezāde got these measurements from the *Kadı* and proudly presents them in his own text, and then follows with his own measurements of the building.[260] This preoccupation with numbers and the naïve belief in their magical power later boost his rich analogies based on numbers.

Religious doctrines on practical life are mixed with superstition, forming a different understanding of piety. The story of the mother and the wounded son is a typical example of the premodern topos of healing. Dayezāde notes that it was a common practice for people of the time to consult for healing purposes sacred places in the city, one of which was the interior pool of the Selimiye Mosque, where in the narrative the mother cures her son's wound.

Dayezāde does not feel satisfied relating only the receptions of his contemporaneous people. He also finds it necessary to convey popular stories about the building and its architect. Interestingly, all of these stories are related to the original intention of Architect Sinan from the time of the mosque's implementation. These popular narratives will be seen as not-unlikely themes on architecture rather than as mere historical truth. They all work to celebrate Architect Sinan and his skills as well as the Selimiye Mosque. The first one narrates Selim II's desire to have a solid golden minbar built in the mosque and Sinan's persuading him not to build it. This narrative compares the ingenious craftsmanship of the mosque with its material value and with Sinan's alleged insight the superiority of the former is realised.

The second popular narrative is about Sinan and a small boy who thinks one of the minarets of the mosque is crooked. Sinan listened to the child's claim and then pretended that he had the minaret straightened using mounting ropes. Although this act seemed to belie the child's perception through pretence, Dayezāde boasts that Sinan's assistants did not comprehend the trick and got angry with him for believing a child's claim rather than in their quality of workmanship. Sinan wisely explained to them why this pretence had been necessary in order to protect the good

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260 Kuban maintains that Dayezāde's measurements are roughly accurate, suggesting that he really did a kind of survey of the building. Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye (Sinan's Art and Selimiye)*, 160.

reputation of his building in the society. This narrative is astonishingly similar to a communication noted by Vasari between Michelangelo and Soderini. When Michelangelo's sculpture David was placed in the Piazza de' Signori, Piero Soderini, the Gonfalonier of Florence, was very pleased to see it in the proposed place; however, he commented that the nose was too short. Vasari notes that, although Michelangelo knew that the angle from which Soderini was scrutinising the sculpture was not a good one to view the head, he climbed up the scaffolding with a chisel and a little loose marble dust in his hands. He pretended to tap on the chisel and he let the marble dust drift down. When he came down, Soderini was pleased with the result.[261] The resemblance between Dayezāde's and Vasari's accounts not only praises Sinan's and Michelangelo's ingenuity in pursuing their artistic decisions, but it also marks an acute contextual difference. Whereas Michelangelo challenged a political authority in Renaissance Italy, Sinan challenged public opinion in the sixteenth-century Ottoman context.

The last popular narrative is the most interesting of the three. It is about Sinan's conversation with one of his assistants about his architectural piece, which was close to completion. He watched the mosque emerging with a single dominant dome from an angle and felt unsatisfied with the appearance of the single predominant dome. However, with the clever suggestion of his assistant using a rapidly produced model, he decided to add a small turret on top of each of the eight piers that carried the main dome so that a more balanced appearance could be achieved. This narrative is significant about the use of drawings and models in Ottoman architectural practice, a topic previously taken up by Necipoğlu.[262]

The receptions of the mosque by different people written about by Dayezāde are not significant for being concrete historical data. What is significant about them is their capacity to paint an almost miniature-like speculative scene of the kind of attributes common people would ascribe to an imperial mosque built two centuries earlier.

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261 Vasari further notes, "Michelangelo came down, not without compassion for those who wish to appear good judges in matters about which they know nothing". Giorgio Vasari, *Vasari's Lives of the Artists: Biographies of the Most Eminent Architects, Painters, and Sculptors of Italy*, ed. Betty Burroughs (London: Allen & Unwin, 1960), 262.

262 Gülru Necipoğlu, "Plans and Models in 15th and 16th Century Ottoman Architectural Practise", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* XLV, no. 3 (1986): 240.

Overall the text reads as a premodern pious Muslim's point of view. It shows how religious doctrines were transformed in practical life into social beliefs and manners. The text is also important to enable one to argue that common people did endeavour to transact meaning from architecture rather than being totally illiterate or disinterested. Naïve they might have been, but the meanings they transacted were not formed in a vacuum. They were shaped, with some distortion, by cultural inputs from all layers of society.

It is impossible to decipher clearly Dayezāde's intentions in penning the narrative. His preoccupation with numbers and his sense of piety mixed with superstition seem quite irrational from our point of view, posing a real hermeneutical crisis. Here Dayezāde's account of the Selimiye will be taken up using two arguments. The first is its place in the larger Ottoman discourse on the Hagia Sophia vs Selimiye debate. The second is the argument about the particular mentality with which Dayezāde deciphers architectural meaning. Both of these arguments derive from Dayezāde's dual aims, first to write a narrative to promote the special nature of the Selimiye Mosque, and second to highlight the aspects of the building he thought were unique.

12.1. Selimiye Rivals Hagia Sophia

Yerasimos purports that the Ottoman preoccupation with Hagia Sophia came to a turning point with the construction of the Selimiye Mosque. He further argues that Sultan Selim II lacked the military and imperial ambitions that his father, Süleyman the Magnificent, had. As soon as he ascended the throne, Selim II started building his own imperial mosque. His main strength was Architect Sinan at the peak of his career.[263]

Selimiye's foundations were laid in 1569, just before the Cyprus campaign (1570-71). According to the reports of European visitors, tribute money from Cyprus was used for the mosque's construction and endowment.[264] Sinan's famous claim in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* that the dome of Selimiye surpassed the dome of Hagia Sophia

263 Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri*, 256.

264 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 65.

triggered a rivalry between the two monuments that lasted for centuries, and this rivalry implied but did not explicitly proclaim the glory of Selimiye. Dayezāde's narrative can historically be grounded in this context and, at least according to Ayvansarayi's eighteenth-century text, it was believed to have put an end to the Hagia Sophia–Selimiye debate.[265]

In current literature, the Hagia Sophia–Selimiye debate still surfaces as an ambiguous historical topic, and Dayezāde's Selimiye narrative is generally perceived as an obscure historical source, as shown in Part II. Interestingly, Necipoğlu argues that what we today interpret as only competition between the two domes was also a 'cross-fertilisation' that consecrated the Selimiye as a holy sanctuary by underscoring its formal and semantic affiliations with the Hagia Sophia.[266] In the following subsections, the debate will be interpreted from three different perspectives in order to accentuate the complexity of the historical parameters: the first is Sultan Selim II's perspective, the second is Sinan's point of view, and the third is Dayezāde's dialogue with tradition.

12.1.1. Sultan Selim II's Perspective

Selimiye is the only imperial mosque built outside the boundaries of the Ottoman capital, Istanbul. The reason for its being built in Edirne and not Istanbul is a contested historiographic issue. The choice of Edirne is related to Sultan Selim II's affection for this border city which was the capital of the empire before the conquest of Constantinople.[267] Another reason often put forward is the lack of convenient space in Istanbul, which was already replete with sultanic mosques. However, Yerasimos does not find either of these reasons convincing. He believes the sultan's affection for Edirne was not greater than that of his ancestors, who used to come to the city for vacations. There were earlier mosque complexes in Edirne, and Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II built his famous palace in the centre of the city. Yerasimos argues that, for the Ottoman collective psyche, Edirne was the symbolic

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265 Howard Crane, *The Garden of the Mosques: Hafiz Huseyin Al-Ayvansarayi's Guide to the Muslim Monuments of Ottoman Istanbul, Supplements to Muqarnas* (Leiden, Boston, Koln: Brill, 2000), 8.

266 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 241.

267 *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

opposite to Constantinople.[268] Moreover, he argues that the claim of lack of space in Istanbul is not logical given the fact that later imperial mosques, such as Sultan Ahmed's and Yeni Cami, were built there. Yerasimos maintains that the main reason Selimiye was built in Edirne had to do with the competition with Hagia Sophia. For him, the attempt to surpass Hagia Sophia needed to take place in another city, remote from Hagia Sophia.[269]

Necipoğlu relates the history of Edirne and Selimiye from a different point of view. She maintains that visitors from Europe would first encounter Edirne and grand Selimiye on their way to Istanbul, and again at the last stop on their way back. She demonstrates the significance of the city for Sultan Selim II by informing us that, in addition to hunting and vacations, for the first year after he ascended the throne he stayed in Edirne and even accepted ambassadors here. As she shows through historical sources, the sultan had real affection for the city, whose inhabitants loyally supported his candidacy for the throne while, as lieutenant-governor there between 1548 and 1550, he protected the Western frontier of the empire. After such an occasion, Sultan Selim II wanted to have his own mosque built in this city, and he also assigned Sinan to add windows to the Old Mosque (Eski Cami) in the same city.

The collection of building materials for the mosque coincided with campaign preparations for Cyprus in 1568 and 1569.[270] The *bailo* Marcantonio Barbaro informed the Venetian Senate in April 1569 that Sultan Selim II had decided to spend the winter in Edirne that year not only because of his affection for the city but also because he was planning to build his '*superbissima Moschea*' there.[271] Despite these convincing reasons, one might still ask why Selim II did not continue the tradition of his ancestors by building his imperial mosque in Istanbul. Necipoğlu suggests that the main reason was that Selim II did not conquer Cyprus with his own sword, unlike his ancestors.[272]

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268 Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri*, 222-223.
269 Ibid., 258.
270 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 239
271 Cited in Ibid., 240.
272 Ibid., 66.

Sultan Selim II's relationship with Edirne and the Selimiye Mosque is quite unique and yet ambiguous. He commissioned the largest dome in Ottoman architectural history but had it built outside the capital, Istanbul. Moreover, he was the only sultan who was not buried in his own imperial mosque complex. Before seeing the opening ceremony of the Selimiye Mosque, he died unexpectedly. In accordance with his will, he was buried in a tomb built after his death next to the Hagia Sophia. Necipoğlu posits that few dependencies of the Selimiye Mosque suggest that the mosque was from the beginning conceived as a non-funerary sultanic mosque without a grand complex.[273] Referring to the analogies in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* with the Dome of the Rock (*Masjid-i Aqsa*), Necipoğlu accentuates the commemorative quality of the mosque with its octagonal domed baldachin, which, with its centralised scheme, is conceptually close to that of the Dome of the Rock.[274]

Apart from commissioning Sinan to construct the Selimiye, in 1573, Sultan Selim II also took on the task of renovating the Hagia Sophia by proposing to clear its surroundings for the purpose of consolidation, strengthen its buttresses and complement its two minarets with another two, with the desire to turn the Friday mosque into his own funerary mosque.[275] Other alterations included the addition of two madrasas named after himself, and his mausoleum.

Because of Selim II's untimely death the two madrasas were not completed, but his son Murad III oversaw the construction of the two new minarets and Selim II's mausoleum.[276] Ottoman historian Selānikī mentions the Selimiye first among the sultan's deeds, with praise and a poem denoting its date of construction, followed by a longer description of the sultan's process of renovating the Hagia Sophia.[277] In contrast to Selānikī, Ottoman historian Solak-zāde does not mention the renovation

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273 Ibid., 244.

274 Dependencies in a typical mosque complex would include public buildings with different functions such as *madrasa*, public bath, public kitchens etc. Ibid., 247.

275 Ibid., 112.

276 Necipoğlu, "The Life of an Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia after Byzantium", 208.

277 Mustafa Efendi Selānikī, *Tarih-i Selaniki (971-1003/1563-1595)*, ed. Mehmet İpşirli, 2 vs., v.1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989), 95-96.

of the Hagia Sophia, but he emphasises the Selimiye by referring to the autobiographical narratives on Sinan.[278]



Figure 34 A drawing showing Sultan Selim II's tomb near Hagia Sophia, anonymous Austrian artist, c.1570s, watercolour on paper. Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 113.

The very fact that Sultan Selim II was buried next to Hagia Sophia, which was also named 'Selimiye', further implies his acclaiming of the more ancient monument as his imperial mosque along with the Selimiye.

12.1.2. Sinan's Perspective

Necipoğlu sees the Selimiye as "a timeless testament to Sinan's creative genius", through which Sinan boldly reclaimed the Romano–Byzantine and Islamic roots of Ottoman architectural tradition, and even made an implied reference to contemporary Italian Renaissance architecture.[279] She does not relate the Selimiye only to the Hagia Sophia, but also to other precedents. Along with Hagia Sophia and the debates on the dome competition,[280] Necipoğlu names a number of possible precedents that Sinan may have emulated with the Selimiye. One of them is Uljaytu, the fourteenth-century Ilkhanid imperial mausoleum in Sultaniye, which Sinan encountered in 1534. This mausoleum, with its 25m (diameter) octagonal dome, was the largest in the Islamic world. Another possible precedent is the sixth-century church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus in Istanbul, which was converted into a mosque in early sixteenth century and today is known as the 'small Hagia Sophia'. The octagonal central scheme of this church – featuring eight free-standing columns and a projecting apse – may

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278 Mehmed Hemdemi Solak-zāde, *Solak-zāde Tarihi*, trans. Vahit Çabuk (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1989), 328.

279 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 256.

280 For the significance of the dome in Sinan's architecture see I. H. Güngör. "The Dome in Sinan's Work". *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 1, no. 2 (1987): 156-167.

have influenced Sinan.[281] In addition to these precedents, Necipoğlu also sees a novel structural dynamism and plasticity in Selimiye's façade articulation that departs from Sinan's earlier projects. She speculates that in this Sinan may have indirectly responded to St Peter's Basilica in Rome, and that this may be yet another answer to the 'infidel architects' that Sinan mentions in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*. She conjectures that Etienne Dupérac's engravings of the basilica, made in 1569 and which were intended for export, may have reached Sinan, who was preparing for the construction of the Selimiye Mosque at around the same time.[282] In the cross-cultural traffic between the West and the Ottoman world, the two projects striving to surpass two monuments of the past (the Pantheon in Rome and Hagia Sophia in Istanbul) must have had more prominence than we can imagine today.

Our focus is not on architectural origins and styles. However, this reference to Necipoğlu's analysis demonstrates a deeper contextualisation of Sinan's statement in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, in which he proclaims:

> I exerted myself in the construction of the abovementioned Friday mosque, and, with the help of God, the Lord, the Judge, showed my capabilities during the reign of Sultan Selim Khan, and made this exalted dome [Selimiye] to exceed that one [Hagia Sophia] by six cubits (*zirā*) in height and by four cubits (*zirā*) in circumference.[283]

However, rather than concentrating on the further implications of Sinan's statement, most of the previous literature is concerned with issues related to size. Sinan's proclamation that he had surpassed Hagia Sophia's dome by six cubits (*zira*) in height and four cubits (*zira*) in circumference turns out not to be true in the light of more recent measurements. Disappointed with the incorrect declaration of numbers in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*, Kuban even doubts the direct relationship of the text to Sinan, because he believes an architect of Sinan's calibre could not make such a mistake.[284] The possibility of exaggeration does not even enter Kuban's mind, since this is against his own conception of Sinan as preoccupied with rationality and empiricism.

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281 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 246, 248.

282 Ibid., 103.

283 *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

284 See the preface to Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı(Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları)*, 8.

A hasty interpretation depending on reason and logic suggests that Sinan was boasting about his achievements in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*. But it is also possible that his criteria for measurement and accuracy were quite different from ours. Hasan Kuruyazıcı suggests that someone who is after the exact dimensions of Selimiye's dome today will be puzzled by different measurements in different books. He explains the difficulty of measuring the dome with the equipment and techniques of the time, whether using a theodolite or a tape measure. He also stresses the importance of considering margins of error, which can dramatically affect the overall measurement.[285]

Alpay Özdural, on the other hand, accentuates the discrepancy of what Sinan called 'zira' and the 'cubit' or 'ell' of today. We learn from his article that Ottoman astrologer and mathematician İbn Ma'ruf (1520–85) measured the circumference of the dome of Hagia Sophia around the same time as Sinan was busy with the construction of the Selimiye Mosque and the renovations of the Hagia Sophia. He suggests that Sinan's aim of surpassing the dome of the Hagia Sophia must have given İbn Ma'ruf a legitimate opportunity to scrutinise Hagia Sophia closely. Özdural posits that İbn Ma'ruf's unit of measurement, which is called zira in Arabic and arşın in Turkish, measured 73.4cm. As Sinan and İbn Ma'ruf are likely to have used the same measurement unit, the 2.4cm difference between Sinan's zira and the contemporary understanding of one zira being 75.8cm may be one of the reasons for the discrepancy of measurement in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*.[286] However, the shorter measurement unit achieves only a slight decrease in the discrepancy and does not change the result of the overall modulation.

Necipoğlu suggests yet another reason for the inaccuracy of Sinan's measurement. She suggests that Sinan may have been referring to the curvature of the dome's

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285 Hasan Kuruyazıcı, "Edirne Selimiye Camisi'nin Kubbe Boyutları" *Tarih ve Toplum* 20, no. 120 (1993): 344-347.

286 In *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*, Cafer Efendi gives two types of measurement units used in Ottoman Istanbul as the common cubit (*'āmme arşunı*), used by merchants, and the builder's cubit (*bennā arşunı*), used in the builder's trade. Özdural takes his speculation further by claiming that Sinan might have used different units for the measurement of Hagia Sophia and the construction of the Selimiye. Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, 76-84. Alpay Özdural, "Sinan's Arşın: A Survey of Ottoman Architectural Metrology", *Muqarnas: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture* XV (1998): 102-106.

profile rather than the diameter. If the height is measured from the base of the dome rather than from the ground, then with its taller apex Selimiye's dome measures more than the flatter dome of Hagia Sophia (figure 35). As she gathers from Evliya Çelebi's notes, the dome was commonly perceived as separate from the lower structure.[287]

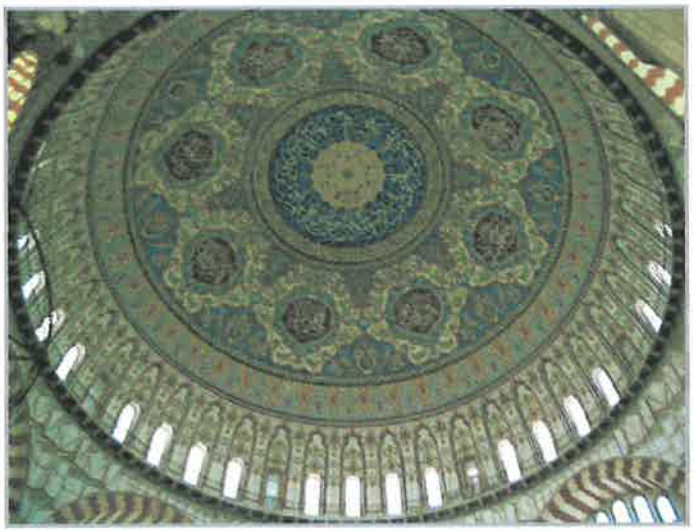


Figure 35 The dome of the Selimiye Mosque, Edirne, 2004.

None of the contemporary speculations validates Sinan's statement. However, they suggest that we should reconsider contemporary norms of quantification self-consciously, as opposed to accepting or rejecting a historical claim propounded four centuries ago. The incorrectness of Sinan's claim does not make the Selimiye Mosque inferior to the Hagia Sophia on any artistic or architectural criterion. This modern obsession with size may allude to socio-cultural traumas and prejudices that shape our expectations of monumental architecture of any origin (figure 36).



Figure 36 The marble base in Hagia Sophia giving the height and diameter of the dome, Istanbul, 2004.

In the Ottoman context, Selimiye was significant for Sinan. According to the archival register records, he was awarded the gold-and-silver brocade robe of honour upon its foundation ceremony on 12 April

287 Selimiye's diameter measures more or less the same on average as Hagia Sophia's. Necipoğlu gives the following dimensions: the diameter of Selimiye's dome measures 31.22m whereas Hagia Sophia's elliptical diameter changes from 30.9m to 31.8m. Selimiye's height is lower (42.5m) than that of Hagia Sophia (55.6m). Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 144-145.

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1569.[288] In Necipoğlu's apt terms, Selimiye was the background through which Sinan fought his own artistic battle (*ghaza*).[289] Yerasimos argues that with the Selimiye the historical figure of the architect overwhelmed by the paradox of a thousand years was finally set free with the example of Sinan, who also freed the temple itself by turning it into a human work.[290] However, Ottoman people continued to build myths out of histories, as Sinan was turned into a half-mythical creature by future generations,[291] and Selimiye's semantic conversions into God's temple through popular piety continued well into the eighteenth century, as we will see with Dayezāde's narrative.

12.1.3. Dayezāde Mustafa's Dialogue with Tradition

Dayezāde's anecdote about Selim II's dream, in which the Prophet Muhammad assigned the site of the Selimiye Mosque, not only covers up previous historical debates about the selection of the building's location, but also increases the sanctity and religious uniqueness of the mosque.[292] This way, just like the topos in Ottoman versions of *Diegesis* in which Hızır tells Emperor Justinian about the plan of Hagia Sophia, the highest religious agency selected Selimiye's location, as it would be impossible to imagine its plan being determined outside Architect Sinan's authority. The dream anecdote is a repeated topos not only in popular Ottoman versions of *Diegesis* but also in a fifteenth-century text on the mythical history of Edirne. This text relates that the Prophet appeared to Amir Süleyman (the son of Bayezid I) and commanded him to construct the Old Mosque (Eski Cami) with booty from holy wars.[293]

Thus, through the widespread dream anecdote, Dayezāde creates his own legitimation influenced by earlier texts and popular piety to promote the significance of the Selimiye Mosque. Dayezāde further emphasises the sanctity of

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288 Cited in Ibid., 240.

289 Ibid., 246.

290 Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri*, 260.

291 For myths related with Sinan and Selimiye see Nezihe Araz, "Selimiye Efsaneleri (Myths of Selimiye)", *Istanbul* 4 (1954): 20-22.

292 Evliya Çelebi also mentions the dream anecdote in his travelogue as a reason for the selection of Edirne as the location of the mosque. Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname (Rumeli-Solkol ve Edirne)*, ed. İsmet Parmaksızoğlu (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1984), 256.

293 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 241.

the mosque by cautiously referring to a popular rumour which maintained that during the excavation for the foundations a rock was found, which was used to determine the width and length of the mosque. While lessening Sinan's impact on the determination of the form, the rumour works to strengthen the sacred connotations of the building by implying similarities between the Dome of the Rock and its sacred rock. This way, it connects the building to an Islamic past far earlier than the Ottoman context.

Convinced of the religious specificity of the building, Dayezāde sees a divine sign in every component of the mosque. By dwelling on these in detail, he creates a reading of the Selimiye not as a homogeneous spatial entity but as the embodiment of heterogeneous stations (*makām*) in space for recollecting religious messages and mythical accounts. Perceiving Hagia Sophia as such a heterogeneous space of stations is prevalent in Ottoman folklore. Süheyl Ünver mentions nineteen different stations (*makām*) in Hagia Sophia, which according to the Ottoman tradition are attributed to the prophets and saints. These stations have not only commemorative qualities but also ecstatic ones where people endeavour to perform rituals to achieve their wishes or cure their sickness.[294] Dayezāde's approach is in line with this folklore, extended it to the context of the Selimiye. Among the holy memorial stations (*makām*) of Edirne,[295] Evliya Çelebi notes the spot under the spherical pendant that hangs from the centre of the dome of the Selimiye, which was allegedly built out of lime mortar mixed with Prophet Muhammad's saliva and Meccan earth. Evliya Çelebi believes that Sinan removed this famous miraculous mortar from Hagia Sophia's dome and used it in Selimiye's. Evliya defines the sacredness of this spot as "a powerful site of vision (*nazargāh*) frequented by those

294 These nineteen stations are Müselleme, Eyüb Sultan, Caliph Omar, Harun Reşit, Battal Ghazi, Sheikh Maksud, Prophet Süleyman, İskender-i Zülkarneyn, Hızır, Forty saints (*Kırklar*), Havariyyun, Ak Şemseddin, Sweating Pillar (*terler direk*), Grand Gate Legend (built from the wood of Noah's ark), Hagia Sophia Well, Golden Ball Myth (*altın top*), Cold Window Station (*soğuk pencere makāmı*), Sevens Station (*yediler makāmı*) and the Cradle of Jesus. A. Süheyl Ünver, "Ayasofya Türk Efsaneleri Hakkında", *Türk Folklor Araştırmaları [Featured Edition]* (1949): 5-6.

295 Schimmel claims that the purpose of *makām* is memorial: "in cases when a famous person's burial place is unknown, or when Muslims want to gain some of his baraka in their own village or town, they erect a *makām*, a memorial". Schimmel, *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam*, 55.

cognizant of mysteries".[296] It seems that this information was not available to Dayezāde, which he would enthusiastically have articulated into his own assertions about the connection of the Prophet Muhammad with the Selimiye Mosque.

These religious specifications construct Selimiye Mosque as the semantic rival and affiliate of the Hagia Sophia in popular piety. In all the conversations with his friends that Dayezāde conveys, people still perceived Hagia Sophia as the ultimate symbol of sacred architecture within the Ottoman tradition. This makes Dayezāde stress Sinan's declaration in his autobiographies that he had surpassed the dome of Hagia Sophia with that of Selimiye. The debate regarding the size of the dome grew from being a historical truth noted in historical sources to a 'conversation piece' still preoccupying the minds of the people of the eighteenth-century Ottoman world.



Figure 37 Dayezāde's depiction of the two domes, *Selimiye Risālesi*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul, (1741), 2283: 11

Dayezāde formulates his own proposal regarding this size competition. One of the people in Dayezāde's conversation group said that he himself once measured both the domes by rolling a rope around each, and they measured exactly the same. Dayezāde replied that the reason for this was that Hagia Sophia's dome is elliptical while Selimiye's is circular. He writes that he further demonstrated his point with drawings executed in accordance with the rules of geometry (*hendese*), and he includes in *Selimiye Risālesi* a refined version of these, drawn with a pair of compasses (figure 37).

Dayezāde gets the point right that Hagia Sophia's circumference is elliptical but it is difficult to understand the inner consistency of his drawings in the manuscript. He

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296 Cited in Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 241.

draws the domes of the Selimiye and the Hagia Sophia in a similar fashion, using two circles sharing the same centre. The distance between the two circles is larger in Selimiye's schema than in the Hagia Sophia's. Dayezāde refers to the inner circles in both schemas as 'exemplary that its layer is equal' (*Tabakası müsavī olduğuna misāl*). He labels the outer circles of both drawings as, 'width of the layer' (*Tabakasının vü'sāti*). The literal translation of the word '*tabaka*' into English is 'layer'. However, it is difficult to understand what he refers to by 'layer,' and whether the difference in the dome thickness between the two schemas really denotes any proportional anxiety at all. Dayezāde may have drawn these two drawings on separate pages of the manuscript in their approximate dimensions and roughly referred to the material thickness of the two dome shells, with the conviction that he was representing a circle in the first one and an ellipse in the second. His meticulous drawings, consisting of many marked compass points joined with small arcs suggests, whether he is up to something by accentuating the difference in the thickness of the dome shells, or whether he does it from lack of experience, that he uses his ability to the limit in realising these drawings.

From the same century in another source, we come across a similar dome representation from a non-expert's point of view. In his massive *Marifetnāme* (Book of Gnosis), İbrahim Hakkı of Erzurum includes an image of Sheikh İsmail Tillovī Fakirullah's house in the chapter he devotes to his mentor. While the representation style of this drawing deserves separate research, it is relevant here to state that the dome of the sheikh's cell (meditation room) is depicted in the same fashion as those in Dayezāde's schemas, employing two circles sharing the same centre.[297] Not unlike İbrahim Hakkı's drawing, Dayezāde's naïve schemas have not attracted any attention from art/architecture historians before.[298] Perhaps they are architecturally significant only for pointing to a common man's endeavour to understand a piece of architecture in his own way. Nevertheless, from an ideological perspective, they serve to epitomise the Selimiye as equally monumental and significant as the Hagia Sophia if not superior to it.

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297 Erzurumlu İbrahim Hakkı, *Marifetnāme*, trans. Hüsnü Kılıç Durali Yılmaz (Istanbul: Çelik Yayınları, 1981), 880.

298 Sönmez passes over these sketches in his Turkish translation. Sönmez, *Mimar Sinan İle İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler*.

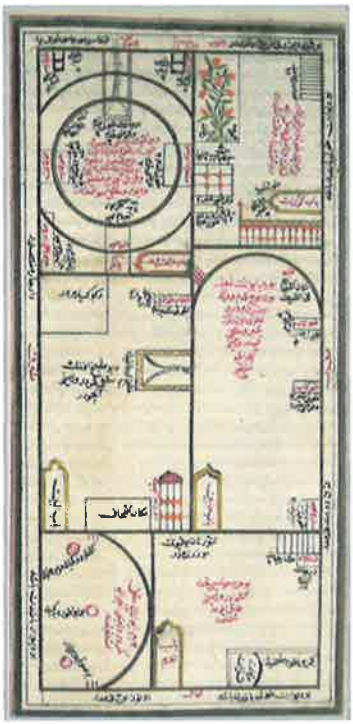


Figure 38 Ibrahim Hakkı's depiction of his sheikh's house, *Marifetnāme*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi (Yazma ve Bağışlar), 2263: 258

12.2. Fabricating Meaning

The second argument used here to analyse Dayezāde's account of the Selimiye involves his approach to architectural meaning. Meaning in *Selimiye Risālesi* is heavily grounded on the sacredness of the building, and is made evident through religious analogies written discursively. This makes it hard to understand from a contemporary perspective. Rather than continuing ignorance, a new attitude is required to interpret the notion of sacred architecture in the Ottoman context. In the context of the Italian Renaissance, Kris and Kurz purport that artists were aware of contemporary thinking about the divine proportions with which God created the universe and human beings.[299] With a similar approach to Architect Sinan, Dayezāde aims to decipher Sinan's first intentions. However, these intentions were so overwhelming and perhaps inaccessible for Dayezāde that he copes with them by increasing the possibilities of meaning. Meaning is undertaken as a divine inspiration that can only be felt, contemplated or realised with the will of God. Meaning works through a series of analogies and correspondences *implied* by the architect and allegedly deciphered by the author. The architect alludes to meaning; he does not determine or fix it. Although author Dayezāde is interested in the original meanings of the mosque he does not see them as fixed either. Each analogy he makes has several correspondences. Thus, meaning is multivalent; it is a probability rather than something fixed.

The starting point for Dayezāde is the different architectural elements of the mosque. These usually correspond to a chapter from the Koran, the sayings of the Prophet, daily proverbs or the manners of religious practice in daily life. In some analogies there is more than one semantic level and a direct correspondence

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299 Kris and Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist*, 94.

between the target and the source, such as a comparison between the two taps of the *şadırvan* and the two fountains in paradise, or a comparison between the dome and the Throne of God. Nevertheless, through the mediation of numbers, interesting analogies are made between phenomena at different semantic levels, such as the doors of the mosque and the nine signs sent to Moses to warn the Pharaoh. The sometimes bizarre analogies can relate the situation of an architectural element to the meaning of a statement or a daily proverb. Dayezāde's playing with numbers of selected architectural elements implies an interest in number symbolism. There is frequent concentration on certain numbers that seem to embody symbolic values; for example, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 40, 700, 999 and 1000.[300]

Dayezāde starts his analogies in the courtyard of the mosque and proceeds through the interior. The succession of the analogies gives clues about his wandering in and around the building noting the number of architectural elements he finds significant to mention. A rough review of the text illustrates that doors, water elements, the dome(s), the load-bearing piers carrying the main dome and the columns on the two sides of the mihrab, the *müezzin mahfili* and the pool underneath, the minarets, the minaret balconies, windows and oil lamps are noted. The references of the analogies Dayezāde makes throughout the text are religious, mainly quoting verses of the Koran or the *hadith*. The common point of all of the analogies is that in each of them a tangible entity (parts of the building) corresponds to a transcendental entity or a meaningful statement related to religious practice. Therefore there is an ontological hierarchy between the source and the target in most of the analogies. Formal features of the building are only the starting point for Dayezāde, they are not in themselves a manifestation or realisation of *meaning* but they refer or allude to something *meaningful*.

12.2.1. Meaning: Analogy and Correspondence

Necipoğlu defines Dayezāde's narrative as "pondering the forms of the Selimiye as a kind of spiritual revelation, engaging in an interpretive exercise of unrestrained

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300 For information on number symbolism in different cultures see Butler, Christopher. *Number Symbolism*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970. It is hard to find any resonance in the generic assertions in this book and Dayezāde's idiosyncratic approach to numbers.

freedom".[301] Dayezāde's analogies seem to be relevant to recent cosmological interpretations of Islamic architecture based on perennial rules that were pervasive throughout premodern societies. This view sees numbers and figures as symbols of the archetypal world that are the keys to understanding the structure of the cosmos. It derives from the conviction that cosmology plays an important role in the life and productions of traditional societies in general. Thus, in premodern societies cosmos and cosmology are seen as the agencies that govern the dominant roles of tradition and religion and, accordingly, understanding of the cosmos is crucial in providing an understanding of the products of such societies. From this view, human beings and all human creations such as architecture are connected to and form a small part of the bigger cosmos.[302]

The context of the Islamic cosmos comprises hierarchical levels of existence that are ontologically related under the main theme of the principle of the unity of God, combining monotheistic thought with the Pythagorean–Platonic tradition. Analogical correspondences through symbols such as geometric forms and numbers are mediatory in relating man-made environments to the higher levels of ontological existence. Akkach differentiates the analogical functioning of the premodern mentality from that of modern scientific thinking in this way: "Religious analogies, however, differ from scientific analogies in that the latter occur on the same level of reality, whereas the former occur on different levels". He maintains that, unlike induction and deduction, which rely on analysis and rational thinking, the acquisition of knowledge by analogical thinking relies mainly on contemplation and intuition.[303]

Akkach attracts attention to the unique notion of symbolism in premodern analogical thinking in the Islamic context. He builds on the fact that the meaning and the actual use of the word 'ayah' in the Arabic language are different – the word literally means 'mark' or 'sign', but it is used mostly to refer to Koranic

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301 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 256.

302 Stated in the preface by Seyyid Hüseyin Nasr. Nader Ardalan and Laleh Bakhtiar. *The Sense of Unity; the Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture*, Publications of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 9. (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1973), XII.

303 Samer Akkach, "Analogy and Symbolism: An Approach to the Study of Traditional Islamic Architecture", *The Islamic Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (1992): 85.

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verses. He maintains that the words 'sign' and 'symbol' do not have separate counterparts in the Arabic language and the Koran uses the term 'ayah' to cover all created things as symbols: "We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within themselves until it will be manifest unto them that it is the Truth."[304] Akkach argues that symbols are not seen as the outcomes of expediency or convention; rather, they are perceived as divine revelations. Such a point of view sees Islam as a form of knowledge that is capable of telling about things beyond the grasp of the rational mind; however the mediation of sensible examples is needed to make spiritual realities graspable by human comprehension. For this reason, Islam deals with the sensible world as a system of symbols that refer to archetypes or higher levels of reality. Thus, human creations consisting of numbers, lines, shapes and colours serve for the expression of this symbolism, and therefore so do the sciences, crafts and architecture. [305] Akkach gives a number of interesting references to traditional literature on religious sciences, metaphysics and cosmology that highlight interesting analogies from premodern Islamic context, such as Gazali's analogy between an architect and God as the creator of the universe.[306]

The interpretation of symbolism based on Islamic cosmology in different historical contexts is a contested issue.[307] In the Ottoman context there are a large number of sources containing interpretations of the cosmos based on religious references, and this has several ramifications. It is impossible to talk about a clear distinction between the natural and religious sciences as an expected outcome of the premodern mode of thinking. Even in books claiming a scientific point of view such as astronomical sources or encyclopaedic types of books it is not uncommon to come across parts on celestial creatures, heaven or thoughts and references to the

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304 Here Akkach explains that the word 'portent' is rendered as 'ayat', which means symbols. In some English translations of the Quran the word 'sign' is used instead of 'portent', indicating confusion among the words, signs and symbols used in different translations. Ibid., 87, 94. *The Koran, H.M. Prostration, XLI,* 53.

305 Ibid., 86.

306 Gazali states, "As an architect draws *(yusawwir)* all parts of a house in whiteness, and then brings them out into existence according to the exemplar *(nuskhah)*, so likewise Creator *(fatir)* of heaven and earth wrote the [archetypal] copy of the world from its beginning to its end on the Guarded Tablet *(al-lawh al-mahfuz)* and then brought it out into existence according to that exemplar". Ibid., 89.

307 For a critique of the literature on the symbolism of Islamic architecture see Akkach, *Cosmology and Architecture in Premodern Islam: An Architectural Reading of Mystical Ideas*, 4-13.

manifestation of the divine.[308] İbrahim Hakkı's encyclopaedic work, *Mārifetnāme*, is a rather late example of such sources that is contemporaneous with the *Selimiye Risālesi*.[309] The logical dichotomy in this book between the introductory part on Islamic cosmology and references to Copernicus' cosmos schema have been a puzzling theme for contemporary scholars.[310]

Akkach grounds the cosmological references in the earlier Ottoman narratives regarding Architects Sinan and Mehmed in the popular narrative of the creation that also formed the starting point for many Islamic chronicles. In this vein, there is a connection between the Ottoman narratives on the architects and the *Selimiye Risālesi*. While the openings of Sinan's autobiographical texts and Mehmed's *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye*, give cosmological accounts of the creation and the structure of the universe, Akkach argues, "*Selimiye Risālesi* includes many references to the correspondences between a [sacred] building and the cosmos".[311]

As Akkach purports for premodern Islamic sources in general, the approach to the cosmos rendered in these texts does not suggest a fixed theoretical connection between the cosmos and architecture. The analogical reasoning behind Dayezāde's number symbolism is evidence of idiosyncrasy rather than a theoretical concern. From a book written in the sixteenth century by Taşköprülü-zāde on the definition of the sciences, we learn that there had been many branches of so-called sciences based on numbers and number symbolism.[312] However, Dayezāde's familiarity with mentioned literature is uncertain. All these sources whether read or gained through the transmission of oral culture are somehow filtered and distorted by the author Dayezāde in his text.[313] Such distortion is what makes his text unique and original.

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308 A. Adnan Adıvar, *Osmanlı Türklerinde İlim*, 6 ed. (Istanbul: Remzi, 2000), 29.

309 Hakkı, *Marifetnāme*.

310 Adıvar, *Osmanlı Türklerinde İlim*, 186. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, "Introduction of Western Science to the Ottoman World: A Case Study of Modern Astronomy (1660-1860)" (paper presented at the Transfer of Modern Science and Technology to the Muslim World, Istanbul, 1992), 87.

311 Akkach, *Cosmology and Architecture in Premodern Islam: An Architectural Reading of Mystical Ideas*, 4.

312 Taşköprülü-zāde, *Mevzuatü'l-Ulüm*, 303, 745, 921.

313 Ginzburg talks about a similar (fruitful) distortion in elaborating the relationship between Miller Menocchio's cosmos and its official historical context. Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese*

12.2.2. Numbers as Metaphors

Numbers serve to map Dayezāde's knowledge and relate to different parts of the building in the immediacy of his experience. Disparate references and expressions he recalls come together in ways that would otherwise be unthinkable. This idiosyncratic attitude does not lend itself to a semiological analysis between the signifier and the signified as previously tried by Kuban, because Dayezāde is not aware of a transparent structural relationship between the signifier and the signified.[314] I argue rather that Dayezāde uses numbers as metaphors that link architectural elements to the meaning targets he aims at through analogical reasoning.

Analogical reasoning makes connections between the source and the target in a mental leap by bringing together two otherwise incomparable phenomena.[315] Metaphor is a legitimate tool used to enlarge the mental leap. For example, when we say, 'Socrates is a lion', we bring together two otherwise incomparable words, Socrates and lion, as the source and the target. The statement is economical in words but rich in meaning to define Socrates' braveness through the metaphor of the lion.[316] Therefore, when Dayezāde compares the nine doors of the courtyard with the number nine in one of the chapters of the Koran, he makes a huge mental leap to relate the target to the source in a similar manner, using the number nine as the metaphor to bridge the gap of meaning. Nevertheless, the abstract nature of numbers used as metaphors to convey architectural meaning in his approach surfaces as a problem for our understanding.

Let's compare this with metaphorical expressions from the earliest group of texts. For example, when an analogy is made in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* between the stained glass of the windows of the Süleymaniye Mosque and the wings of Archangel Gabriel, there is an equally huge mental leap in relating a building element to a metaphysical phenomenon. However, four hundred years later, we can still

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and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), XIV.

314 Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye*, 159-162.

315 Paul Thagard and Keith J. Holyoak, *Mental Leaps: Analogy in Creative Thought* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: The MIT Press, 1995), 7.

316 Ibid., 217.

understand the implied meaning. It is not impossible to imagine that the change of sunlight as it passes through the coloured glass of the windows in a sacred space may recall the wings of an angel. So this analogy communicates its meaning to us across centuries. However, Dayezāde's analogy comparing metaphorical numbers with a chapter from the Koran that includes the same number ceases to be convincingly comparable. This is why Dayezāde's intention to make analogies seems to be 'fabricating meaning' rather than communicating it.

Even though we know that his meanings are fabricated, Dayezāde's number metaphors tantalise our curiosity in a mystical way when he keeps the meaning at bay. As a natural outcome of using numbers as metaphors, implicitness and ambiguity doubly reign the text.[317] He ingeniously increases the implications and ambiguities of meaning by relating one architectural element to more than a single analogical reasoning. Thus, the twelve balconies of the minarets can mean both twelve Muslim imams and twelve months of a year, and Dayezāde believes that Architect Sinan may have alluded to even more analogies when he designed the mosque, and he himself is capable of capturing some of these as they are unveiled with the help of God in his mental exercise. Therefore, his fabrication of meaning suggests that Dayezāde perceives the Selimiye Mosque as a stone manifesto replete with meaning that is waiting to be deciphered by him.

12.2.3. Textual Legitimation

Dayezāde's fabrication of meaning is grounded mainly on religious doctrines and practices, which he shows as the basic reason for the significance of his work. In this way, he believes his text works to promote Selimiye Mosque and its uniqueness in Ottoman culture over Hagia Sophia. His fabrication of meaning through metaphorical numbers in fact rests on a convention of traditional expressions that he inherits from earlier texts such as *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān* and many other implicit references such as Ottoman versions of *Diegesis*, both in new editions and through the oral tradition. This attitude is similar to his referencing of historical sources. For example, none of the autobiographical narratives on Sinan available to our

317 Lefaivre gives implicitness and ambiguity as basic features of metaphor in her reading of Aristotle's *On rhetoric*. Lefaivre, *Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 191.

knowledge include Sultan Selim II's dream anecdote in the way Dayezāde includes it. Dayezāde's inclusion of the dream anecdote is an intermingling of Evliya Çelebi's earlier version[318] and his own addition, in order to make stronger the sanctity of the building.

Dayezāde follows a similar logical path in utilising a widely shared discourse on architecture to build his own analogies. For example, he refers to the basic Islamic doctrine of the unity of God in explaining the reason for Sinan's building a roofless *şadırvan* in the centre of the courtyard of Selimiye. To explain the meaning of this *şadırvan* he also refers to a *hadith* that draws a resemblance between death and a drink that everyone will taste. Furthermore, he thinks that the *şadırvan* is also referring to the *havz-ı kawsar*, which according to religious doctrine will be located in the arena before the gates of heaven on the day of resurrection. In this example, he combines a religious doctrine with the traditional topos of the pool and an incidental mention of a *hadith* that he recollects. When writing about the pool located inside the mosque under the *müezzin mahfili*, Dayezāde repeats the pool topos (*havz-ı kawsar*) but replaces the other two analogies with more themes of sacred water, such as *ab-ı hayat* (the water of life), for which Alexander the Great desperately searched, or *zamzam-ī şerif*, which Muslim pilgrims drink when they go to the holy city of Mecca. In addition to these analogies, he does not forget to mention the story of the mother and the wounded son in order to strengthen the healing quality of water with his own popular stories. Therefore, Dayezāde is certainly aware of a literary tradition of expressing architecture. However, for some reason he considers it necessary to add his own interpretations to these qualifications, which turns his text into a narrative marked by his own experience.

He continues to use direct analogies for building elements, such as comparing the eight pillars carrying the dome to the eight angels carrying God's throne, the centrally situated *müezzin mahfili* indicating the centre of the earth, and the four minarets pointing to the four directions of east, west, south and north. The twelve balconies of the minarets – as in the previously discussed earlier Ottoman narratives – are seen to have symbolic connotations. However, unlike the previous authors, Sai

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318 Çelebi, *Seyahatnāme (Rumeli-Solkol ve Edirne)*, 256.

and Cafer, Dayezāde does not relate them to the number of Ottoman sultans. Instead, he relates them to a number of religious and cosmological references such as the twelve imams, the twelve rules of reading the Koran, the twelve months of the year and the twelve signs of the zodiac. Without doubt these analogies exhibit a microcosmic perception of the mosque as a perfect reflection of the macrocosmic order. In a similar vein, the dominant dome is related to the dominance of Islam among other belief systems, whereas its collective appearance with the four half domes or the four minarets repeatedly recalls the Prophet and his four companions or the five pillars of Islam. Here, in line with the earlier Ottoman narratives, Dayezāde also makes a poetic comparison between the dome and the four minarets surrounding it and the scene of sunrise behind cypress trees.[319] The direct analogies end with the oil lamp hanging by chains from the centre of the dome, which is compared to the legendary chain that descended from the sky in the time of the Prophet David. Other direct analogies relate themes of popular piety from religious practice to proverbs and legends, such as an analogy between the forty windows of the mosque and the forty dervishes (*kırklar*). Regarding the optical illusion of seeing four minarets as two from afar, Dayezāde refers to a popular narrative also repeatedly noted by authors Mehmed Aşık, Evliya Çelebi and Dimitri Cantemir.[320] However, not only does he refer to the optical illusion but he also connects it with the obligation that ritual prayer requires four cycles for sedentary people and only two cycles for travellers. He even notes that from some angles it is possible to see the minarets as three, and compares this with the obligatory cycles of daily ritual prayer.

Apart from these direct analogies between the elements of the building and certain numbers referring to religious/cosmological phenomena with the same number, Dayezāde also makes indirect analogies that are difficult to understand in terms of the relationship between the target and the source. For example, he starts from the five doors of the mosque, which he relates to five things that spoil ritual ablution and prayer, then names these five things with the conviction that since they threaten the purity of an individual at religious ritual, they may damage the building as well.

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319 The poetic imagery of the cypress tree is also used in *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān*. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Sinan's Autobiographies*, ed. Crane and Akın.

320 Cited in Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 255.

In another instance, he relates the three separate staircases in two of the minarets as six, with an implied link to Sinan's determination to finish the mosque within six years.[321] This way, from the target to the source, the aim of reading meaning changes from understanding the significance of the five doors of the mosque to stating the significance of cleanliness in religious ritual. The same is true for examples in which he relates building parts to a chapter from the Koran; for example, he compares the nine doors of the courtyard of the mosque with the number nine in the Chapter of the Ant in the Koran, which refers to the nine signs sent to the Pharaoh. He then mentions the nine signs one by one.

In these analogies, meaning is in continuos transformation. Once the architectural elements trigger an analogy in Dayezāde's mind, the aim of deciphering the architectural meanings intended by Architect Sinan turns into the aim of speculating on meaning itself. There are extreme moments when Dayezāde seems to lose the point totally. For instance, he aims to decipher the meaning of the 1000 windows of the mosque but then realises there are in fact only 999 windows since one of them is allegedly fixed. So, he claims that the reason for this is the profundity of pronouncing 999 over pronouncing 1000 in everyday conversation! Here, rather than referring to the exact number of windows in the mosque, Dayezāde seems to be using a rhetorical device common in Islamic tradition to qualify an infinite number, amount or plentifulness.[322] Apart from architecture historian Kuban's urging us towards an incorrect declaration of 999 as the exact number of windows of the mosque,[323] this shows Dayezāde's flexibility in not only choosing building elements as sources but also in selecting targets for fabricating his analogies. Conveying the overall impression of the mosque with plenty of windows is more important for Dayezāde than to quantify the number of windows. Thus, the looseness of causality in his narrative rhetorically expresses that he is after architectural meaning in his own casual way as a result of his allurement by the Selimiye Mosque.

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321 Lokman maintains that the foundations of the mosque were laid "at an auspicious time determined by astrologers, reaching completion within six years". Cited in Ibid., 241.

322 Just like the infinite number of tales in '1001 Nights.' Schimmel, *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam*, 82.

323 See footnote 49 in Kuban, *Sinan'ın Sanatı ve Selimiye*, 160.

Dayezāde's text will be read in connection with his walking steps through the mosque, for it seems likely that he saw different elements from particular standpoints and then wrote about them. His perspective is not the disinterested point of view of an objectifying subject (figure 39). Rather, his dialogue with the Selimiye Mosque can be seen as intersubjective. When perceived in this manner, it is not awkward for him to relate the meaning of the mosque to chapters from the Koran and examples of *hadith* literature, because, as Necipoğlu shows, the Selimiye Mosque has a rich epigraphic program focusing on themes such as the uniqueness of Islam, the Last Judgment and the unity of God, linked to verses from the Koran and the *hadith*.[324] Therefore, gazing at the wondrous inscriptions that were not always easy to read, and being enmeshed in geometrical and vegetal motifs here and there, he must have got his first inspiration for references for fabricating meaning from the building itself.

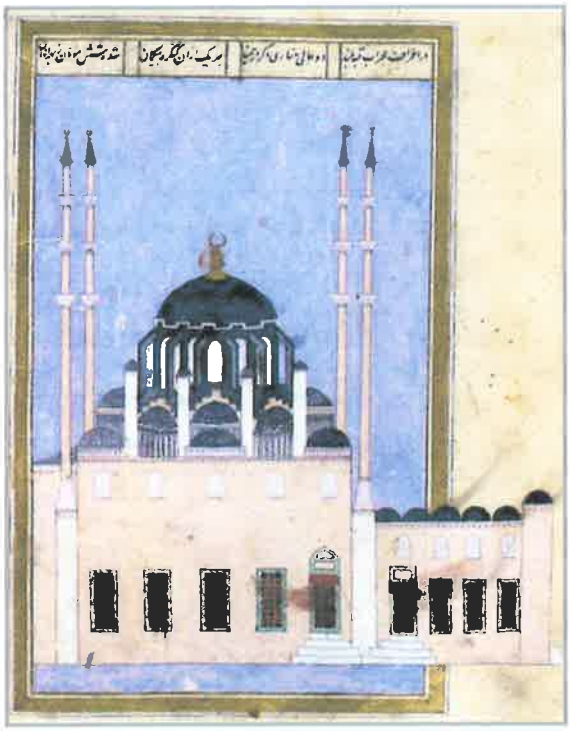


Figure 39 This miniature interprets the mosque in a similar fashion to Dayezāde's text with regards to realism. Selimiye Mosque as depicted in *Shahnāma-i Salīm Khān*, c.1581, watercolour on paper. Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 144.

Although it is replete with numbers, Dayezāde's text also has a casual structure, and it is difficult to propose it as a historical source that deciphers the exact codes of a mystical number symbolism that was prevalent in the Ottoman context.[325] However, the numbers Dayezāde exploits are in line with the sacred numbers of the Islamic religion in general. These include the number of one referring to unity; the number five, referring to the five pillars of Islam and the five

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324 Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, 252-254.

325 There are contemporary studies on the mystical modulation of Sinan mosques. See Atilla Arpat, "Sinan Camilerinde Kutsal (Mistik) Boyutlar ve Modüler Düzen (Sacred (Mystic) Dimensions and Modular Order in Sinan Mosques)", *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları* 28 (1984): 1-28 and Mehmet Suat Bergil. "Sinan'in Mimarlik Yoluyla Mitos Uygulamasi". *Arkeoloji ve Sanat 14*, no. 56-57 (1992): 18-30.

daily ritual prayers; God's creation of the world in six days; eight angels carrying the divine throne, and the eight gates of heaven; twelve, the number of zodiacal signs and the twelve imams of *Shia*, between whom and the signs of the zodiac mysterious relations were established; and the number forty, the age of maturity and the number of the legendary forty saints (*kırklar*).[326] All have resonance in his narrative. Thus, Dayezāde's narrative is significant in conveying to contemporary researchers the reception of a prominent imperial mosque in the eighteenth-century Ottoman context through sacred references as interpreted by an upper-middle class person.

Tanyeli accentuates the impossibility of conceiving architectural meaning in the Ottoman world (and in premodern cultures in general) as single-layered signifiers within a literal transparency like the contemporary advertisements of the media.[327] Architectural meaning communicates through implications. From the three groups of narratives explored in this thesis, Dayezāde's is the closest to unveiling the reception of architecture by a lay audience. Thus, by his analogies, Dayezāde shows that, through basic number symbolism, basic religious/cosmological references were understandable for an upper-middle class Ottoman bureaucrat and apparently also for his lay audience. However, his deciphering of architectural meanings suggests multivalence and fluidity through allusions rather than objectification and comprehensiveness. Moreover, it is important to remember the limited spread of literacy and the predominance of orality in Dayezāde's period. As Piterberg suggests, the act of reading aloud was a major socio-cultural feature in the Ottoman context.[328] When Dayezāde's text is perceived as designed to be read and listened to by groups, then his panegyric account of the Selimiye may have also searched the possibility of being an impressive oral address through the acquaintance with numbers and sacred references.

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326 Schimmel, *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam*, 76-83.

327 Tanyeli, "Klasik Osmanlı Dünyasında Değişim, Yenilik ve "Eskilik" Üretimi", 33.

328 Gabriel Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), 67.

Conclusion

Being that can be understood is language.[1]

A close examination of the five sixteenth-century autobiographical narratives on Sinan helped us to re-evaluate him as a historical figure in relation to his representation in modern historiography and in comparison with his Italian Renaissance contemporaries. It has been found that, more than shedding light upon the past they purport to interpret, the celebrative discourses on Sinan offer important clues about the assumptions and prejudices of historiography itself. As much as his artistic intentions are celebrated, the predominant representations of Sinan, both as a paragon of national pride and as a world genius, tend to militate against a richer contextual understanding of his works. Sinan's example in the larger picture of architectural historiography suggests that the relationship between the actuality of the historical context and the use of prescriptive concepts such as genius in historical interpretation is fragile. Interpretation of the narratives on Sinan unveiled how he saw his self-image and his own architectural products as part of his historical context.[2] These possibilities suggest that the way he approached architecture and life at large was in line with his own cultural context rather than opposing it.

Compared to Sinan's memoirs, the seventeenth-century text on architect Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa is more on architecture than about the architect. It is exemplary in introducing an architect who was a less prominent figure in Ottoman history and who is not of much interest to contemporary historiography. Moreover, the narrative helps us gain glimpses of cultural concerns that were valid at the time, such as discussion of architecture and music, architectural rituals, and the reconciliation of architectural truth with religious dogma in the renovations of the *Ka'ba*.

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1 Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Sheed&Ward, 1975), 474.

2 See the section Remembering Sinan in Part III of this thesis.

While they have these thematic distinctions, both the narratives on Sinan and the text on architect Sedefkār Mehmed Ağa have similar attitudes towards the evaluation of architectural meaning. The first of these attitudes is the perception of architecture as part of occasions rather than as an abstract autonomous entity in itself. What is represented in these texts is relational interest in architecture rather than the isolation of architecture from its spatio-temporal reality. The emphasis on architecture as occasion in both groups of texts half a century apart reveals the importance of ritual in assigning meaning to cultural artefacts including architecture. Second, both groups of texts depict architecture through similar metaphorical expressions and they show a parallel spatial sensibility towards outlining their contexts with intimacy rather than having a clearly defined distant perspective between the narrator and the narrated. Other common traits among the two texts include cosmological backdrops, legitimating expressions praising the rulers and high administrators of the time, and coming to discussion of the architect and the architectural scene only after these introductory remarks. Another common point in these texts is a different approach to history, which I call the 'mythification of history'. The continuously transforming meaning charged to Hagia Sophia in the Ottoman context, which separated the ancient monument from its actual Byzantine historical context, is a significant example of how history was blended with myth in Ottoman mentality to create an imagined Islamic retrospect for the building.

The third text, the eighteenth-century *Selimiye Risālesi*, has not been a very attractive topic for contemporary historians in search of a specialist discourse that theorises architecture. On first impression, it seems to talk about anything outside the concerns of the architectural profession and practice. However, upon closer scrutiny, it can be singled out as a historically significant piece in tracing the still-relevant debates related to competition between Hagia Sophia and Selimiye in the Ottoman–Turkish context. Moreover, the text is exemplary in relating a mundane perspective towards Ottoman architecture. What the author has written is problematised as a dialogue with tradition. From this view, Dayezāde's account provides a different perspective, or 'reception history', of Selimiye Mosque from an eighteenth-century point of view as opposed, for instance, to historically more prominent points of view such as those of Sinan and Sultan Selim II. Dayezāde's text also suggests a closer perspective on how religious dogma entered daily life

and intermingled with superstitions in religious practice. Idiosyncratic as this may be, it reveals Dayezāde's bizarre fabrication of meaning through metaphorical numbers as yet another trend in charging architecture with meaning. Whereas in the earlier narratives, regarding the architects, architectural meaning is inherent in occasions, in Dayezāde's extreme case architectural meaning is overwhelmed by the probabilities he gathers on the occasion and arbitrarily plays with.

Analysis of the three groups of texts examined in this thesis shows that the main reason for their marginalisation by modern historiography is their claim that there is truth in value judgments. Divergence in criteria denoting architectural significance and empirical accuracy seems to result from the difference of truth claims purported in the narratives. Moreover, passages related to religion and power blur the objectives of these texts from a contemporary point of view. Accentuation of religion and praising authority is antithetical to reasoning based on rationality and therefore to an analytical evaluation of architecture. However, a comparative reading of the three texts examined in depth in this thesis shows that in the Ottoman context rationality and religion are not seen as opposites and the relationship with authority is not thought of as a matter of concern for textual autonomy. On the contrary, the accentuation of authority through flattering expressions intensifies the textural legitimation. Thus, religious thinking is taken as an essential part of rationalising any human production including architecture, and legitimation through an emphasis on authority increases the significance of the texts for their own contexts.

This thesis is intended to contribute to the paradigm shift towards interpretation in recent studies in Ottoman historiography. A hermeneutical approach helps interpretation to be outlined freed from the separate categories of ideology and aesthetics, which are the prevalent interpretive strategies of architectural historiography. As these categories do not come clearly differentiated in the context of life, by embracing the whole context, hermeneutics engages with both without necessarily prioritising one over the other. The hermeneutical approach applied to a contextual interpretation of the three texts examined here has significant implications for further research on architecture in the Ottoman context and premodern architecture in general.

The wider Ottoman literature shares similarities with these texts in rendering meaning in architecture. Examples include Evliya Çelebi's massive seventeenth-century travelogue and the accounts of similar travellers, *Şehrengiz* literature (urban thrillers) on major Ottoman cities, collections of Ottoman court poetry (*divan*) including the poetry of the Ottoman sultans, and the rich literature related to popular piety such as hagiographies. If interpretation is enabled beyond the confines of purely empirical analyses searching for acute historical or statistical accuracy, such as ascribing correct dates or measurements of buildings and giving objective formal descriptions of the physical environment, these historical sources provide invaluable evidence for extracting meanings of architecture and the cultural landscape as evaluated by the different historical mentalities in Ottoman culture.

The hermeneutical approach proposed by Jones helped me to engage with the contextual details of the Ottoman narratives. If we remember Ingarden's conception of the ontic foundation of architecture governed by two factors (the objective spatial shape and the aspectual schemata), the aesthetic evaluation of the Ottoman narratives falls into the second factor, embodying experiential details rather than abstracted aesthetic sensibilities such as form or hierarchy. Thus, a pure notion of seeing does not explain the aesthetic sensibility exhibited in the Ottoman narratives. Their aesthetic sensibility is more approachable through Gadamer's notion of play, in which the objective is not to deduce principles regarding architecture from an outsider's point of view, but to pursue the play for nothing more than its own aim.

Furthermore, using Jones' conception of the front and back halves of architectural mechanisms, the praise of Selimiye noted in the narratives, full of awe and inspiration, results from its front half, and in Jones' terminology, triggers allurement. The back half of the Selimiye is the arguments in the narratives related to its comparison with the Hagia Sophia. These praises and debates about the Selimiye in fact reflect people's appreciation, concerns and suspicions rather than its architectural superiority or inferiority.

Without the continued existence of Ottoman monuments, these Ottoman narratives would be less significant for us. Each from a different point in time, they each give a different perception of these monuments, bridging the temporal distance between the original construction of the monuments and today. However, relating them to

one another and to our contemporary assumptions of how things were then, we transform our understanding of Ottoman architecture through this diachronic reading. Thus, from Jones' hermeneutical perspective, each narrative works as different reception histories.[3] Through contextual details they challenge homogenising comprehensive assumptions about Ottoman architecture without suggesting a new comprehensive framework.

Consequently, this thesis witnesses that hermeneutics provides an opening to overcome the shortcomings of objectivist obsessions. Through the assumption of the universality of hermeneutical reflection, it helps the interpreter to engage effectively with premodern contexts in which object–subject dichotomy and theoretical distantiation are not yet available. Hermeneutics suggests the inseparability of theory and practice in the interpretation of premodern architecture. Gadamer has shown that approaching historical artefacts with the prejudices of today does not allow us to ask the right sort of questions in engaging with the historical context.[4] This is not to suggest a romantic or historicist reconstruction of the past, either. The distance between the interpreter and the context is undeniable, but it can be taken as a fruitful diagnostic. What Gadamer calls effective-historical consciousness involves the historian, the object of the inquiry and the temporal distance between the two. Therefore, the conclusive interpretations in Part III of this thesis are not once-and-for-all facts self-contained by the three historical narratives. Nor do they reveal a fixed symbolism at the surface level of structural analysis by consuming all possibilities of interpretation. Rather, they constitute the semantic field in which direct-meaning attribution is implicitly inherent.[5] Thus, they are possible 'value-oriented interpretations'[6] rendered from the horizon of the author testing her own prejudices in an encounter with the past.

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3 For example, *Selimiye Risālesi* is exemplary and, as Jones suggests, architecture is beyond being a tool even for lay people.

4 Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics and Praxis* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 132.

5 Josef Bleicher, *Contemporary Hermeneutics: Hermeneutics as Method, Philosophy, and Critique* (London ; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 226-227.

6 Ibid., 66, 112.

APPENDIX

THE TRANSLATION OF THE *SELİMİYE RİSĀLESİ*

In the name of God, and with the help of God, the most merciful and the most compassionate, who makes us find the truth. Thanks to the Lord of the universe; may prayers and greetings be with our exalted Prophet Muhammad together with his companions, all the prophets, all the saints, and all those dependent on them until the day of resurrection.

I, the poorest of the poor and the weakest of the weak, Dayezāde Mustafa, who always remembers God and who is known as the Rumelian Province Treasurer lieutenant[1], wishes to begin the subject of this book in this way: Just as it is indicated in the hadith "tell them as much as their minds are capable of," I endeavoured to prepare this book as a simple work, far from rhetoric, understandable by all, so that it would not diminish the enthusiasm for reading of the young and the old. Yet just as I begin, I wished the book to attain a rare value like a newly blossomed bud in order to fulfil its purpose.

Between 1130 and 1154, according to the dates marked from the migration of our Prophet, I worked on the precious books in the libraries of deceased Sultan Ahmed Khan at the third hall of the palace *(Han-ı Salis' Enderun-u Hümayūn*[2]*)* and our master Mahmud Khan Excellency's at the Entrance hall *(Revan*[3]*)*. I focused my attention on this field by reading the rare history books I found in the palace. From the biographies I read *Siyer-i İbni Hişam*, *Siyer-i Halebī*; from the retaliations *(kısas)* I read *Kısas-ı İmam-ı Kesir*, *Kısas'la Kur'an lil-Salebī* and *Arais-i Talebi*; from the history books I read *Miret-uz Zaman*, İbni Cevzī, İbni Khaldun, İbni Hallekan's *Tarih-i Kebir* and *Tarih-i Sagir*, *Tarih-i Avnī*, *Tarih-i Dehebī*, *Tarih-i İbni Asakir*, *Tarih-i İbni Kesir*, *Tarih-i Humeyse*, *Tarih-i üns-ül Celil* and *Bedayi-ül Zühūr*, *Tarih-i Mirhvānd*. From the books on Ottoman history I studied *Tarih-i Karaman-ī*, *Tarih-i Cenaī* and *Müneccimbaşı Ahmet Efendi Tarihi* that is translated into Turkish by the eloquent poet Nedim. I also read books such as Ali Çelebi's *Kühn-ül Ahbar*, *Hodja History*, *Mecmua-il tevarih*, *Naima's History* and its extension *Tarih-i Rāsid*, Küçük Çelebizâde Asım's history, Katip Çelebi's *Nuhbet-ut Tevarih* and *Takvim-ut Tevarih*, İbni Esir's *Acaib-ul Mahlūkat*, İmam Safdi's *Acaib-i Mahlūkat*, *Nişk-ul Ezhar*, *Haridet-ül Acaib* and *Haritat-ül Acaib*. From humour and literature I went over *Nüzhet-ül Mecalis, Nüzhet-ül ūdeba, Netayic-ül Fünūn, Dürr-ü Meknūn, Rebiü-l Ebrar-ı Zamahşerī, Revza-i Kasım*. From geography I studied many works, mainly Katip Çelebi's *Cihānnumā, Coğrafya-yı Kebir*

1 *Rumeli Eyaleti Defterdar Kethüdası.*

2 The above-mentioned Sultan is Ahmed III, and the library is at the third hall of the Topkapı Palace. Zeki Sönmez, *Mimar Sinan İle İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler* (Istanbul: Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1988), 101.

3 The above-mentioned Sultan is Mahmud I. Ibid., 101.

and New World, Tuhfet ül-Kibar together with many other works, which he was not able to include in his books since he had not seen them.

With the favour of God the Almighty and within the mentioned period, I read and benefited from more than 300 volumes of beautiful books of history, which I found in the libraries of the Ottoman Sultans. I also had the opportunity to see many miscellaneous books, such as *Tarih-i Taberī, Altıparmak Tarihi, Envar-ül Aşıkin, Fütūh-u Sam, Mısır Tarihi, Fezail-i Ciharyar-i Güzin, Riyaz-ün Nasra fi Fedail-ül Aşra,* books in verse and prose, such as *Şahnāme, Hamzanāme, Kahramannāme, Firuznāme, Bihmannāme, Feahe Ba'del-Sidde, Elfülleyle, Şadi and Gam, Makr-u Zenan, Süleymannāme, Iskendernāme, Ferhad and Şirin, Tahir and Zühre, Vamık and Azra, Süleyman Shah's Stories*. Following the saying, "Science is ahead of everything in the world," and the exalted God's command, "Are those who know and those who do not know considered the same?", I read all of them.

While I was reading the history book of Solak-zāde, the part about the charitable institutions during the reign of Sultan Selim the Sallow (Selim II), the story of Sultan Selim's mosque (Selimiye) in Edirne attracted my attention. In this book, in a quotation from Sinan the Architect's *Mimarnāme,* these words were written: "The circumference of the dome of Sultan Selim mosque in Edirne is built 4 cubits *(zira)*[4] larger than that of Hagia Sophia, and its apex is constructed 2 cubits higher." Although it was recorded as such, I found it astonishing that this fact was not known by many prominent people of the time. I checked the authenticity of the statement from Sinan's book myself. The following is what Sinan says in his book:

One day, the great architect Sinan asked for permission to speak in the presence of Sultan Selim. He said: "Up until now, I completed the construction of many rare works of architecture. I even built a mosque, whose dome rests on two arches, for your father Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, may God's grace be upon him and heaven be his abode. With these works, I surpassed the masters that came before me and those who will come after me, in the category of mosque architecture where there are no free-standing columns supporting the dome. This is because the masters before this humble servant could not succeed in this art. In my aged heart, however, there lies an intention of building a mosque

4 *Zira* is an Arabic word that refers to arşın in Turkish and cubit or ell in English. There are different types of *zira* as *āmme zira, bennā zira, bez zira* used in Ottoman architecture. Efendi Cafer, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, ed. Howard Crane (Leiden ; New York: E.J. Brill, 1987), see appendix. One *zira* measures 75.8 cm in metric system. Sai Mustafa Çelebi, *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l-Bünyān ve Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye (Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları), (Architect Sinan's Memoirs)*, ed. Hayati Develi Samih Rifat, Arzu Karamani Pekin (Istanbul: Koç Kültür Sanat, 2002), 56.

for you, our exalted Sultan, and of making its dome larger than that of Hagia Sophia. In this way, I want to put an end to the ridiculing words of the infidels. They are saying that 'truly, there is no limit to the power and might of the great Ottoman state, yet they are still unable to build a mosque with a dome as large as that of Hagia Sophia. If they were able to do it, surely by now they would have done it in one of those mosques already commissioned by their Sultans.' I am perished by their false claims and most likely those words are offending all Muslims. A share of the embarrassment especially falls onto our exalted Sultan. About the same time I was uttering these words Sultan Selim, to my surprise, received lots of assets from the spoils of war in Cyprus whose value was unimaginably high. After my words, a religious urge appeared in our Sultan, who is the sanctuary of the people of the world. On the twenty-seventh day of the month of *Sefer-ül hayr*, 972[5], he ordered with might and happiness: 'Go Sinan! Build for me a mosque wherever you like and with a dome larger than the dome of Hagia Sophia. I will not spare my wealth and you do not spare your zealous efforts. As you wish and as I wish, carry out the construction of a faultless mosque.' After this decree, I left his exalted presence and went out relieved. In order to fulfil the decree, I personally walked everywhere with careful thoughts and sometimes in a state of helplessness and dizziness. But I could not find a suitable place to build the mosque I wanted. In the meantime, Sultan Selim, to my surprise, saw in a dream one night the pride of the universe, our Prophet Muhammad, ordering him to build the mosque in Edirne in the place where the remains of the old palace stood. After he woke up, he immediately summoned me to his presence. The owner of the state commanded thus: 'Sinan, tonight, thanks to God and thanks to Him again, I saw our exalted Prophet in my dream. He ordered me to build the mosque that we wanted to build on the remains of the old palace. Surely everyone knows the saying as reported by Enas bin Malik that our Prophet said, "whoever sees me in a dream has really seen me, because Satan cannot embody me." Just as the Sultan was shedding tears with joy, he commanded me to build the mosque at the place indicated in his dream. With the indication of the Prophet of God and the decree of the Sultan, I started the construction of the mosque on the mentioned site and it was complete in six years. The foundations were laid in 976[6] and the building was completed in 982[7]. As I planned and in order to end the mocking of the unbelievers, the dome of the mosque was made 4 cubits larger in circumference and 2 cubits higher in height than that of Hagia Sophia. I thank God that until this age I was able to learn all the tricks of my trade while working at Cihangir mosque, Şehzade mosque, Sultan Selim

5 1564 CE

6 1568 CE

7 1574 CE

mosque, Edirnekapı Mihrümah mosque, Topkapı Şehid (Kara) Ahmet Pasha mosque and his Excellency Sultan Süleyman's–peace be upon him— Süleymaniye mosque in Istanbul. And by adapting many delicate techniques I became a master. In the end, as ornamenting a jewel, I applied all the wonders of the trade that I kept in the depths of my soul at the construction of this mosque during the last moments of my life."

Since the building of this mosque was ordered by the Sultan of the universe and the Prophet of God, truly, there are wisdom and merits in its construction and no doubt it has several features that make it superior to other mosques. For example, viewed from the cardinal directions the four minarets appear as if they are only two.[8] Each minaret has three grooves *(yiv)* and three *müezins* can climb up from three different ways toward each groove without meeting each other. In addition, building nine doors to the courtyard of the mosque, constructing a *şadırvan*[9] without a roof,[10] carrying the large dome on eight pillars, hanging chandeliers on the sides of the dome, structuring the *mahfil*[11] in the middle, all indicate that it was built with sublime signs. It even advanced mastery, intuition and comparison criteria of those with high evaluation skills in the field of building practice; enlightening their mental intelligibility, imagination and architectural knowledge like the sun. People who come to see this great mosque are still unable to find imperfections in it even after close and detailed examination. But a prominent person from Istanbul claimed to have found an imperfection. When he was asked what the fault was, his reply was: "The only fault in this mosque is that it is in Edirne rather than in Istanbul." A similar incident was also noted during the visit of Sultan Mustafa to Edirne. At the council of the grand vizier Amcazade Hüseyin Pasha, conversations led to conversations and the subject came to the mosque of Sultan Selim. Its perfection was stressed several times and it was praised as being the most beautiful and sublime sanctuary on earth. Then Amcazade Hüseyin Pasha asked the council: "Does not this mosque have any imperfection?" First, Defterdar Efendi answered: "If it had six minarets like the mosque of Sultan Ahmed it would have been grander. This is an imperfection." Then Çavuşbaşı Ağa said: "The only imperfection is building the *mahfil*

8 Through a projection in the side of the paper (*derkenar*) it is noted "(the minarets) being seen as two while in reality being four saves from evil eye." Sönmez, *Mimar Sinan İle İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler*, 104.

9 Fountain for ablution mostly situated in the centre of the courtyards in mosque architecture.

10 Through a projection in the side of the paper these are noted: "two minarets with three grooves and three ways to each of them", "The sadirvan is without roof", "Outer doors are nine," "The start of construction of the mosque is 976, and the finish is 982." Sönmez, *Mimar Sinan İle İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler*, 104.

11 A small elevated area in the mosque for *müezzin* – person calling to the prayer and assisting the imam.

in the middle." Their answers were not approved by Amcazade Hüseyin Pasha so Başkapıkulu Ağa put forward this: "This mosque should have had another section for women and a courtyard in the direction of Mecca. I guess this is an imperfection." This reply was not approved by either and the turn came to Rami Pasha. Due to the grand vizier being from Istanbul, Rami Pasha said: "My sultan, the imperfection that I, your servant, found in this mosque was its being built in this old capital city of Edirne rather than in Istanbul, the largest city of the Ottoman Empire." For these words he received many compliments from the vizier Hüseyin Pasha. His answer is a humorous example of the appropriateness of the proverb: "the most beautiful work is the one that is done by producing thought." In the end, they came to the point that they were content with such imperfection because it showed that the Selimiye Mosque was perfect. In fact, the masters of the past and the present together with all intellectuals accept the perfection of this mosque without doubt. In addition, due to this mosque being prominent among the Christian states, the ambassador of Russia, during his visit to Edirne did not go to his mansion until he visited the mosque. When he was asked for the reason, he replied: "In our country a lot of things are told about this mosque. I wanted to compare the real structure with what I heard and had been told personally about its measurements. I saw that the things that were told about it were true with no exaggeration. So I requested the painter in my service to make a drawing of it, which I will show to my king." This incident is not a rumour; I have investigated its authenticity. In conclusion, incidents like these show that the mosque is peerless.

I would also like to relate another incident that I heard from my saintly friend Hafız Ebubekir Efendi whose words I trust. A person called Nakkaş Ahmed Çelebi, who was a master in his branch of art of decorations, was in love with the Selimiye mosque and its ornamentation as if he was in love with a beloved. With his heart and soul, not only did he spend his time during the five prayers exploring and watching the mosque, but also the rest of his life and work time. In fact during the evenings, whilst meeting with his friends he would say: "My fellow friends, all thanks to Allah, I discovered another delicate art in the Selimiye mosque today and it was impossible to come across such detail in any other mosque." Truly, this person maintained his habit until his death. Everyday, he used to go to the Selimiye mosque, walk around every nook and cranny and be delighted by discovering some new beauty each time. Sometimes, while looking right and left standing in the middle of the mosque he used to find assorted masterstrokes, or while walking slowly in the courtyard in one of the four directions he used to discover a brand-new skill. In the evenings, he used to convey the things he saw to his friends in every detail. The life of this

person was spent in this way, talking about his love, may God's mercy and grace be upon him.

Another lover of the Selimiye mosque is Nev'izade Efendi. When he was the Judge[12] of the City of Edirne, he asked one of the *müezzins,* Hezarfen Kurşuncu Hacı Ibrahim, to measure the minarets, the dome, and the length and width of the Selimiye mosque and noted these dimensions in a notebook for good luck, and to show them to those who might be interested. After this incident, I met Hezarfen Çelebi and asked for these details in an appropriate manner. The old and exalted man wrote the details I requested with neat handwriting and sent it via the preacher Mehmed Efendi. The information he sent me contained the following details: "The length of the four minarets is 90 cubits with architect cubits *(benna zira);*[13] the length of the conical hats is 14 cubits; and the length of the crescents is 2.5 cubits. The foundations under the soil measure 30 cubits each. Thus, the total height of each minaret is 136.5 cubits. Each minaret has three balconies and the distance between them is 16 cubits. The dimensions of the minaret balconies are demonstrated in the circumference of the *şadırvan*, so there is no need to note it again. Those who are curious can measure the circumference of the *şadırvan*, and will find out the answer to their curiosity. The circumference of the minarets is 18 cubits." Now let us turn to the dome. The circumference is 130.5 cubits and the height of its crescent is 7.5 cubits. There are 40 windows on the rim of the dome and 680 chandeliers around the dome with a total number of 3788 oil-lamps that lighten the interior of the mosque. Each of them point to many analogies and holiness. With the permission of Allah they will be stated and explained in detail. I, too, measured the width and depth of the mosque interior with my own steps. With the hope of bringing luck I am recording them here. The exact diameter of the dome, that is, the length of a straight line from one side to the other is 132 feet *(kadem).*[14] The sofas on the left and right sides are 17 feet each. Thus, the width of the mosque interior is 166 feet. The sofa in front of the mihrab is 37 feet. The sofas in the direction of the *şadırvan* are 17 feet each. In conclusion, the depth of the mosque's interior measures 186 feet. The dome has been built on 8 arches. The span of each arch is 35 feet. The span between two columns is 16 feet. These measurements are in accordance with my

12 *Kadı* in Turkish.

13 68.22 metres. One bennā zira is undertaken as 75.8cm. Sönmez, *Mimar Sinan İle İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler*, 106.

14 *Kadem* refers to *ayak* in Turkish and 'foot' in English. Calculations by Sönmez are misleading since he undertakes *kadem* as *adım* in Turkish and 'pace' in English rather than 'foot' (*ayak*). Cafer Efendi, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, see appendix.

Selen Korkoc

own foot; this should be noted especially in order to avoid confusion. We want respectful friends to remember this humble servant of God with praise and to honour our soul with prayers.

Researching and bearing such difficulty may be seen as dealing with unnecessary matters. But the real reason for writing this book is this. One day I was chatting with my loyal friends at my house. While I was talking to one of the imperial ağas *(Enderun-u Humāyūn Hassa Ağası)* Ahmet Efendi who had interest in history, was learned and humorous, the subject came to the features and structure of Hagia Sophia. While talking about the features and donors of this building—as the proverb says: "word is the gift of the word"[15]—he praised the size and strength of its dome and claimed it was the best on earth. He tended to draw conclusions based on the information he gained from reason and citations. Stressing his point further,[16] he finally concluded that it was peerless and unique on the Ottoman soils. While arguing along this line, I said to him: "As you may know the deceased architect Sinan built a mosque for Sultan Selim II in Edirne, the dome of which is larger than that of Hagia Sophia. In fact, the circumference of the dome is 4 cubits larger and the apex of the dome is 2 cubits higher." After saying this all those in the meeting said that these claims required rigorous evidence. As the saying goes, "the one about to drown hangs on to anything," so I looked at my right and left in search of support. I examined the faces one by one; not a single person was on my side. After a couple of minutes, bewildered as I was, I started thinking and remembered the history of Solak-zāde. I pointed to the relevant parts in this book for them to read. In spite of this, they still resisted and maintained their doubts. Since the evidence I pointed out to them was from one source only, they argued that information provided by one writer only could not be trusted. I was helpless and disappointed. In order to prove my point and to show them that they were wrong, I made my way to the library of our Sultan located at the *Revan* room. From the library I brought the deceased architect Sinan's work, *Mimarnāme*, and reviewed it several times in order to gain extensive information. I found that the subject we discussed was also mentioned in detail with revealing statements by Sinan himself. I showed my friends the document and asked them whether this was enough as evidence of my claim. But they still did not believe me, as the saying goes: "the miracle of sheikh efendi is narrated *(menkul)* apart from himself." While I was thinking of a way to persuade them, the *müezzin* Dervish Mehmed, who has a pleasant voice and manner, listened to the matter and said to me: "My sultan! We

15 This saying literally means conversation leads to conversation.

16 Here he uses the proverb "*bin dereden su getirmek*," which means to force things forward with excessive effort.

Sabancı Herbar

also once argued this subject with a couple of our friends. In the end things went according to the saying: "If *halep* is there, *arşın* is here."[17] So I climbed the dome of Hagia Sophia with a rope, rolled it around the dome and then cut it at the length of the circumference. Then I took the same rope to the Selimiye mosque and rolled it around its dome. They were exactly the same size; they were equal, not one bit less or more. They were definitely the same." In reply I said: "Although you have no knowledge of the science of geometry and the techniques of architecture, your explanation matches the saying: "fear from the farsightedness of the believer." I believe the explanation of this situation is that the dome of Hagia Sophia is elliptical and the dome of Selimiye mosque is circular. The reason for your equal measurements may be this. Otherwise, the dome of the Selimiye is certainly larger as stated explicitly in Solakzāde's history and architect Sinan's *Mimarnāme*. After this and in order to support my argument, I drew the appropriate shape in accordance with the rules of geometry and showed it to him. Upon seeing the shape he was convinced and speechless, as the saying goes: "Silence comes from acknowledgement." I have drawn them once more with a pair of compasses and included them here in order to demonstrate my point.

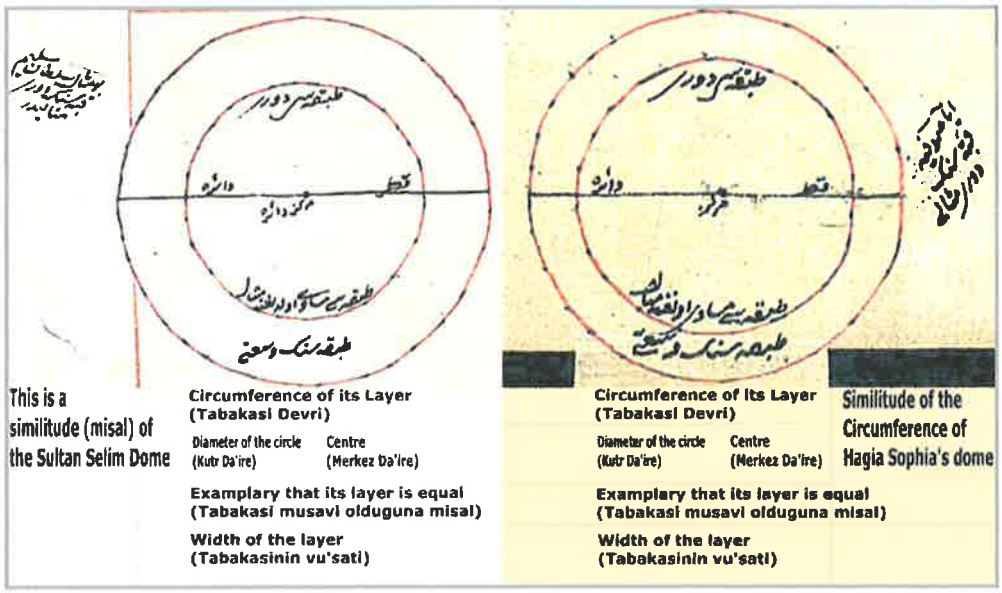


Figure 40 Dayezāde's drawing and its translation, *Selimiye Risālesi,* Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul, (1741), 2283: 11.

Frankly, these drawings astonished many of those who supported the opposite view. This situation has led to numerous arguments beyond explanation; however, my point of view began to be accepted by many. After one or two years had passed since this incident, I was appointed to the position of the lieutenant of the European Province Treasury and had to go

17 A Turkish saying which connotes challenge and confrontation.

Selen Morkoç

to Edirne. In the meantime, my above-mentioned friend, Ahmed Efendi from İskilip, asked me to properly measure the dimensions of the dome of the Selimiye mosque and to determine its other features. Once I reached Edirne, I went to the great mosque and after the prayer I walked all around it. As I saw all of its parts I could not help saying: "well done to architect Sinan and to his splendid piece of work." Remembering my friend's request, I measured the dome of the Selimiye mosque both from inside and outside in accordance with rules of geometry. While making these investigations, I began to write him a letter with nice analogies and phrases and, before sending it to him as a guide, I finished the letter with the profound meaning of the verse: "what we need is only clarity." Later on, I found out that this letter also reached the hands of our exalted Sultan and that he read it all. A matter about the Selimiye mosque that is still in dispute among many people, however, is the positioning of the *müezzin mahfili* in the middle of the mosque. The reason for this may be related to the *hadith*: "the auspicious of all works is the one that is done in moderation," or it may have been done intentionally to provoke debate about its positioning in a faulty place in such a perfect mosque. But following the saying, "to behave controversially is not auspicious," and since the majority accepts that this mosque is complete and perfect, to oppose the majority is without doubt the biggest fault. And in line with the saying "to dispraise the non-existent," it is indeed not right to ascribe imperfection to this peerless mosque.

Let us return to our main subject. I completed writing the letter I mentioned above, and as I was making the last corrections and adding details, one of my friends, the second *imam* of the Selimiye mosque Ak Ahmed Efendi, with whom we used to always discuss the matters of the day, honoured our house. He saw the letter and inquired what it was about and the reason for writing it. Instead of explaining it to him I suggested that I could read it. I read all the parts on the portal and the *mihrab* of the mosque. When I came to the section with the interesting analogies about the features of the Selimiye mosque, I could see that he was really enjoying what I was reading to him. He then joyfully requested from me to write down these analogies on a piece of paper. In reply I changed the topic saying that there is no doubt that there are even better meanings and analogies than the ones I have tried to discover. Later on, he repeated his request and I used my forgetfulness as an excuse, but he maintained his insistence throughout our conversations.

In 1156,[18] when the *Kızılbaş*[19] invaded the castle of Kars, I was appointed to go to that region by the order of the Sultan. We stayed in the castle under invasion for 75 days,

[18] 1743 CE

Selen Morkoç

probably as a result of our sins. In keeping with the saying "it is necessary to be awake in war," the enemy did not give a chance, night and day. As they showed off in the war arena in rebellion as if they were victorious, the soldiers of Islam, too, went out and battled heroically with pious effort. They used to disband and rest when weariness and boredom struck. Since I do not like wasting time, I recorded what happened in the war word by word and started to write a history book known as *Şerrül-Vesvesi Fi Hayli't-Tahmasi.* During this time of agony and battle I managed to write another piece called the *Selimiye.* This work might be seen as useless from certain points of view, as the *hadith*[20] says: "to leave empty talk for one is one of Islam's beauties." But since it is full of many verses and blessed *hadith* as well as worldly things, I believe that it is crystal clear as "the sun in the mid day," and that this work is related to both this and the next world. It has the characteristics and beauty to appeal to the high opinionated academics. How nice is the utterance in the saying "look at what is said not who is saying it," or in the couplet:

> Look at the word and do not envy its owner
> Pearls and jewels are acceptable from anyone.[21]

My wish from God, the Forgiver and the real Owner of possessions, is to lead those who read, carry, and reproduce this book to the goals of their material and spiritual world, amen. Prayers and greetings be with the saints, and the Master of the Senders[22], amen.

Now, let us turn to our main objective which is highlighting the interesting aspects of the Selimiye mosque in Edirne. I, the humble servant, was only able to discover the metaphors that Architect Sinan (may he rest in peace) aimed at during the construction and establishment of this mosque through the help of God. With the divine light that fell into my heart, the meanings I discovered filtered through me as I made reference to them.

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19 Kızılbaş: Literally 'redhead.' Extreme, Shiite sect of Safiyyal-Din of Ardabil which influenced Turcomans during the second half of the 15th century. The Kızılbaş movement came to be known as the expression of Turcoman opposition to the Ottoman administration. They always maintained close contacts with Shiite Iran. Most of Mahmud I's reign was devoted to a series of wars with Iran. This war Dayezâde mentions is one of those. Dayezâde uses the term *Kızılbaş* loosely to point to the religious difference between the Ottoman state and Shiite Iran that is of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, trans. Colin Imber Norman Itzkowitz (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1973), 194-196. Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976-77), 243.

20 Prophet Muhammad's sayings.

21 *'Kavle bak kailine etme nazar*

Alınır kimden olsa ol dürr-ü güher'

Sönmez, *Mimar Sinan İle İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler*, 109. It means the virtue of 'good word' is inherent in the word itself and not dependent upon its owner.

22 Here he refers to Prophet Muhammad.

Consequently, I was successfully able to transcend other people by thinking in a way nobody had succeeded before and I become distinguished among people. Thanks to the gifts of the God.

The reason behind my being able to discover in detail these comprehensive meanings that Sinan aimed at through their revelation in my heart, can only be explained with reference to the fact that "only God knows the unattainable."

The aim of building 9 doors into the courtyard is to correspond with the verse in the chapter of the Ant that says: "And there were in the city nine persons who made mischief in the land and reformed not" (XXVII:48).[23] Or to correspond with the verse in the chapter of the Ant that says: "And put thy hand into the bosom of thy robe, it will come forth white but unhurt. (This will be one) among nine tokens unto Pharaoh and his people. Lo! They were ever evil-living folk" (XXVII:12). Now, with the thought of the necessity let us record these nine signs one by one as noted by the excellency of the commentators Kadı Beydavī: the first is the dawn, the second is the flood, the third is the locusts, the fourth is the vermin, the fifth is the frog, the sixth is the blood, the seventh is the intense scream *(tame)*, the eighth is *cerib*[24] and the ninth is the famine of the harvest. Maybe this is related to the principle that nine things do not spoil the ritual ablution of beginners. The first is laughter outside prayer, the second is touching one's genital organs, the third is kissing, the fourth is shaking hands, the fifth is starting a job naked, the sixth is veiling oneself, the seventh is polluting oneself by the dirt of the dead, the eighth is carrying a corpse, and the ninth is burying the dead. Perhaps it implies that human beings come to the world after the completion of nine months. Possibly it may also mark that people who study Indian numerals and the forerunners of their studies construct all their calculations upon the number nine. Or it might be a reference to architect Sinan's saying: "I have built this mosque by passing through the nine circles of destiny." The deceased architect Sinan served for three sultans of the great Ottoman Empire. Main history books record that Kanuni Sultan Süleyman commanded him to build the most appropriate building for his son Sultan Selim. So, when he got old and weak, he might have declared he experienced many difficulties and controversies throughout his long life.[25] Or he might have meant that this

23 All references to the Koran are based on Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* (London: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930).

24 The meaning of this word could not be deciphered.

25 Here Dayezāde uses the Turkish proverb "Adım çıktı dokuza inmez sekize."Zeki Sonmez, *Mimar Sinan İle İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler* (Istanbul: Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1988), 110.

Sabri Merkez

was the ninth great mosque he built in his career during his mature period. Or it may be linked to the verse in the chapter of the Children of Israel: "And verily We gave unto Moses nine tokens, clear proofs (of Allah's Sovereignty)" (XVII: 101). The nine miracles given to dignify Moses were these: first was the baton, the second was the white-glowing hand, the third was locusts, the fourth was the ants, the fifth was the frogs, the sixth was the blood, the seventh was the spouting of water out of a stone, the eight was the rise of the sea, the ninth was the echoing voice from Mount Torah. Most probably, Sinan pointed to these miracles as well. The aim of building three doors to the courtyard of the *şadırvan* is to point to what God mentioned in the chapter of Hūd: "Enjoy life in your dwelling place three days! This is a threat that will not be belied"(XI: 65). Maybe he referred to and alluded to what God-most high uttered in the chapter of Women: "Be faithful to Allah and his prophet and fear from three things."[26] Perhaps he pointed to the verse in the chapter of The Troops: "He created you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, in a threefold gloom" (XXXIX: 6). Or to the three obligatory rituals: first is the two cycles of the Morning Prayer, second is the night prayer,[27] and third is the pilgrimage. They may also refer to the three things that cannot be postponed: first is praying in due time, second is burying the dead in due time, and third is appointing an *imam* when there is a congregation. They might refer to the types of prayers that God refuses to accept for three reasons. The prayer of an *imam* who guides an evil tribe, the prayer of one unwilling to pray, and the prayer of one joining the congregation with doubt. Or to the three conditions God prescribes for the completeness of one's worship. First is leaving one mosque to another, second is leaving the mosque for battle, and third is leaving the mosque for pilgrimage. They could allude to the three desirable things: to hurry for the fast-breaking meal of Ramadan, to delay the meal before dawn during Ramadan… Or to the three obligations put on each Muslim: to make the ritual ablution of the whole body on Fridays, to use a *misvak,*[28] and to clean one's self. They may signify the three things that must take place for the prayer to be complete: to make the ritual ablution thoroughly, to align the rows orderly, and to obey the *imam* carefully. Or he might have most probably indicated that faith progresses through three levels: blind faith, certain faith and tested faith. Or to remind that faith is the sum of these three things. Or to allude to the three elements of fear, hope and love that are necessary for man's belief in God. Perhaps architect Sinan wanted to show

26 This quotation from Chapter Women is ambiguous in terms of its exact verse number.

27 *Vitr*

28 A wooden toothbrush. It is widely accepted in *sunna* that Prophet Mohammed used a *misvak* to clean his teeth.

Selen Morkoç

that he completed the mosque with the help of the *three*.[29] Or he wanted to indicate that the least of the many is number three. Or it is implied that "Play of God is three." The aim of building the single, goblet-bowl-like *(fağfuri kaseye benzeyen)*, roofless *şadırvan* in the middle of the courtyard is to reflect the verse in the chapter of Women, "Allah is only One God," (IV:171) or the *hadith,* "There is no God but Allah. He is unique, and He is without associate." Or by resembling the *şadırvan* to a bowl he might have meant, "death is a drink, everyone will drink it," in order to warn men who are unaware. Or he might have alluded to and indicated the *havz-ı kawsar* that has been assigned to the Prophet Muhammad Mustafa, and will be located in the arena before the gates of Paradise on the day of resurrection.

The deceased architect Sinan also manifested some original discoveries through allusions and metaphors in the additional spaces of this mosque, but we will not mention them here in order not to make the book too lengthy. Nevertheless, the aim of building five doors only for the mosque is to attribute to the five unknowns in the chapter of Luqmān: "Lo! Allah! With Him is the knowledge of the Hour. He sendeth down the rain, and knoweth that which is in the wombs. No soul knoweth what it will earn to-morrow, and no soul knoweth in what land it will die. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware" (XXI:34). Or to identify the five pillars upon which Islam was established: testifying that God is the one and the only God and that the Prophet Mohammad is His messenger, praying, giving the obligatory alms, pilgrimage, and fasting. Or to point to the *hadith*: "God the Exalted for the first time ever made the five times prayer be obligatory upon my community and among their deeds *(amel)* He excelled the five times prayer. He will first and foremost ask them the five times prayer." Or they might ascribe to the five nights when no prayer is rejected: the first night of the month of Receb, the fifteenth night of Şaban, Friday night, and the night of the feast of Ramadan and feast of sacrifice. Or they might refer to those who do five good deeds in a day and are recorded as the residents of heaven. Perhaps he pointed to the five elements, the absence of which from the faith of a believer disqualify them from being fully submitted to God. These include accepting all that comes from God, seeking for God's compliance, trusting God, and being patient during calamities.[30] They might also indicate the reduction of the daily prayers commanded by God from 50 to 5 times a day through the mediation of the Prophet Moses on the night of the *miraj*. Or they are to imply that the religious duty of praying five times a day is to be held in this mosque. Or they are thought to point to those five things

29 *'Üçler'* in Turkish.

30 Although he mentions five things Dayezāde elaborates four of them. In a side note five things which spoil ritual ablution and prayer was written in Arabic. Sönmez, *Mimar Sinan İle İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler*, 112.

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that in sum spoil the ritual ablution and prayer, and consequently may damage the building as well. First is laughing, second is leaning one's back against the wall or the column and sleeping, third is becoming adolescent[31], fourth is fainting, and fifth is to pollute one's self on purpose. Maybe he also alluded to and indicated the Prophet Abraham's building of the Ka'ba in the middle of the five mountains with the command of God-most high, who also assigned the Ka'ba as the direction toward which the five prayers are orientated, so that the believers can achieve as many good deeds as the number of the mountains. Or he pointed to the fact that God-most high has created human beings with five fingers and five toes.

The point of building two taps on the right and the left inside the entrance of the *şadırvan* courtyard's door is to include the meaning of the verse: "Wherein are two fountains flowing," from the chapter of The Beneficient (LV:50). Hence they point to the two fountains in God-most high's paradise through attribution. Or they may be an allusion to the verse: "when those who disbelieve drove him forth, the second of two; when they two were in the cave" in the chapter of Repentance (IX:40).[32] He might also have pointed to the verse: "Say (O Muhammad, unto the idolaters): Disbelieve ye verily in Him Who created the earth in two Days, and ascribe ye unto Him rivals? He (and none else) is the Lord of the Worlds." in the chapter of *Fusilat* (XLI:9). Or he alluded to and indicated the verse in the chapter The Believer: "They say: Our Lord! Twice hast Thou made us die, and twice hast Thou made us live. Now we confess our sins. Is there any way to go out?" (XL:11). Maybe he also referred to the verse: "Divorce must be pronounced twice and then (a woman) must be retained in honour or released in kindness," in the chapter, The Cow (II: 229). They might also ascribe to the *hadith*: "I fear from two things that my people may do after me. The first is not to believe in destiny, the second is to confirm fortune-telling through stars." Or the *hadith*: "One who is a martyr has two beneficences" may also have been intended. Or they were intended to express that faith is grounded on two things, or to emphasise the mother's and father's rights since Adam and Eve; or to indicate the saying: "who does not well behave to his parents is trained by night and day." In fact the deceased Aziz Efendi said this in *Gülşen-i Niyaz*:

> As your parents ceased to do so
> May night and day discipline you.[33]

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31 This expression implies sexual desire.

32 The command of God to İbrahim to build a house is written in Arabic as a side note. In another side note it is written 'fountains of the door.' Ibid., 113.

33 *"Çünkü itmemiş sieni ebevan*
Bari te'dib eylesun melevan." Sönmez, *Mimar Sinan İle İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler*, 113.

Sultan Korkut

The purpose of setting the great dome upon eight pillars is to be in accordance with the wisdom of the verse: "And the angels will be on the two sides thereof, and eight will uphold the Throne of their Lord that day," from the chapter of The Reality (LXIX:17). Thus, it alludes to the command of eight angels carrying the dome of the sky *(gökkubbe)* upon their shoulders. Or he might have alluded to the verse: "He created you from one being (Adam), then from that (being) He made its mate (Eve); and He hath provided you of cattle eight kinds" in the chapter of The Troops (XXXIX:6). Maybe he might have implied the eight requirements of ritual prayer that need to be remembered by Muslims, who continuously come to the mosque and pray with the congregation. Or it indicates that paradise is created at eight levels by God-most high or that paradise has eight doors.

The aim of building the *müezzin mahfili*[34] in the middle of the mosque is to point to the *hadith*: "the auspicious of all works is the one that is done in moderation." Or he might have indicated that this point is the centre of the earth. Maybe Sinan wanted to express in this way that this mosque was without doubt the most sublime mosque. The reason for him building its *mahfil* in the middle and in the form of a square is to indicate that this mosque is peerless not only in Istanbul but also in all the occupied places on earth. The purpose for grounding the mentioned *mahfil* on twelve columns is to reflect the verse: "And when Moses sought asked for water for his people, and We said: Smite with thy staff the rock. And there gushed out therefrom twelve springs (so that) each tribe knew their drinking-place." in the chapter of The Cow (II:60). Or he alluded to the verse in the chapter of The Table Spread: "Allah made a covenant of old with the Children of Israel, and We raised among them twelve chieftains," (V:12) or he desired to reflect the verse in the chapter of The Heights: "We divided them into twelve tribes, nations; and We inspired Moses, when his people asked him for water, saying: Smite with thy staff the rock! And there gushed forth there-from twelve springs" (VII: 160). Perhaps in this way he also wanted to mark the alternation of night and day, each measuring twelve hours. The intention of building the *şadırvan*[35] like a goblet-bowl *(fağfurī kase)* under the *mahfil* is to indicate and allude to the *hawz-ı kawsar* that God-most high placed in the middle of Paradise for Mohammed. Or it carries the meaning of the line: "If you want to drink come and drink, this is the water of life *(ab-ı hayat)*." Placing it here implies and alludes to that the water of life, which

This is a couplet about good manners and education. It means if someone does not obey his/her parents' advice, then he or she is obliged to be trained by punishment to learn good manners.

34 Platform for the person who repeats the preaching of the *imam* in large mosques.

35 Here he refers to the pool under the *müezzin* mahfili, in the centre of the mosque.

Selen Morkoç

Iskender-i Zülkarneyn[36] could not find regardless of his long search bearing great difficulties, is actually in the mosque. Thank God that this water still flows and has been proven to be beneficial. In fact, we have identified that the water in two places in our city is a cure for the sick. The first of these is the *şadırvan* under the *müezzin mahfili* in the mosque of Sultan Selim and the second is the water situated under the *müezzin mahfili* of the Kesire mosque (converted from a church) which has been built by Sultan Yıldırım Bayezid Khan. The Muslim pilgrims, too, are in perfect consensus that this water is the same as the *zamzam-ī şerif*[37] with its cleanliness and purity. Some people even tell weird and bizarre stories about this matter. But without doubt true knowledge is only with God-most high. It is possible to say many more things on this topic but in order not to delve into details it is necessary to keep the story short. Yet the barber of Sultan Mahmud Efendi and imperial ağa *(hassa ağa)* Bosnavī Ahmed Ağa did tell me a related incident. When he was a child, an incurable wound was opened in his head. His mother could not get any results from medical and surgical remedies. One day she held his hand and took him to the mosque of Sultan Selim, took off the wick in the wound in front of the *şadırvan,* and washed clean its periphery with the water. His wound was closed and he spent the night in this state. The next day, when he opened his eyes he saw that nothing remained from the wound. He deliberately showed me the mark of the wound, which he carried from that day until now. Certainly, God is powerful to do everything.

Let us return again to the interior of the mosque and the four columns positioned on the left and right sides of the mihrab. The aim of building these four adjacent white marble columns and the balcony-like four podiums is to point to the verse in the chapter of The Cow: "Those who forswear their wives must wait four months" (II:226). Or he pointed to the verse again in the chapter of The Cow: "And when Abraham said (unto his Lord): My Lord! Show me how Thou givest life to the dead', He said: Dost thou not believe?' Abraham said: Yea, but (I ask) in order that my heart may be at ease. (His Lord) said: Take four of the birds and cause them to incline unto thee; then place a part of them on each hill, then call them, they will come to thee in haste. And know that Allah is Mighty, Wise" (II:260). Or Sinan wanted them to allude to and to indicate the verse in the chapter of *Fusilat*: "He placed therein firm hills rising above it, and blessed it and measured therein its sustenance in four Days, alike for (all) who ask;" (XLI:10). Or he desired to attribute to the four people worthy of praise and who were close to the Prophet of the universe, Muhammad, and who later became caliphs one after the other. Or he wanted to highlight

36 Alexander the Great.

37 Water that comes out from a fountain next to *Ka'ba* in Mecca.

Selim Morkoç

the four traits that are necessary in our contemporary sheikhs and efendis; the crying essence (self), endless words, a self-conscious face and eyes tinged with kohl.[38] The aim of building this mosque with a unique dome and not surrounding it with smaller domes like other mosques is to indicate the saying: "the Truth has come, and false hood has vanished." Through this Islam is compared to the unique dome whereas the other religions are compared to the smaller domes. Perhaps through this he also represented how the earth and the seas being created under the one unique dome. Maybe in this fashion he wanted to express that on the surface of the earth there is no similar or rival to the Selimiye mosque. Hence it is indicated and alluded to that in the eye of other religions and nations as well as all Muslims, it is a 'one in a million' piece of architectural work that is unique. The four half domes[39] built near the large dome is to ensure that this mosque lasts until the doomsday with all its beauty. However the overall appearance of the minarets with the large dome is poetically expressed as a rising sun around the cypress trees. Moreover, it can also be connected with the *hadith*: "Islam has been built upon five things," referring to the five pillars of Islam. Or he might have also indicated the shelter of the earth being our Prophet and his four companions Ebū Bekir Sıddık, Ömer Faruk, Osman-ı Nureyn and Ali el-Murtaza.[40]

The purpose of constructing forty windows around the large dome is to imply and refer to the verse in the chapter of The Cow: "And when We did appoint for Moses forty nights" (II:51). Or to refer to the verse in the chapter of The Heights: "And We did appoint for Moses thirty nights (of solitude), and added to them ten," (VII:142). Or to refer to the verse in the chapter of The Table Spread: "(Their Lord) said: For this the land will surely be forbidden them for forty years" (V:26). It can also be linked with the assertion made in the chapter of The Wind-Curved Sand Hills about man reaching maturity at the age of forty: "when he attaineth full strength, and reacheth forty years" (XLVI:15). Or he could be pointing to the following *hadiths*: "forty neighbour houses," "from the community the mothers of forty men could not be saved. Forty men prayed for them and God forgave them (their mothers)," and "the dream of the believer is one of the forty pieces of prophethood." Through this he also could have wanted to highlight that God-most high put the crown and garment of prophecy on Muhammad only after he reached the age of forty. So he expressed that human beings reach maturity at the age of forty. Furthermore, the Prophet and God's

38 Here Dayezāde uses rhyme between the words '*öz, söz, yüz, göz*' in Turkish which mean 'essence, word, face and eye' in English. Perhaps he is giving clues about the fashionable male image of his time.

39 *Nim.*

40 The four caliphs: Ebu Bakr, Omar, Othman and Ali.

Sabancı Mimarlık

beloved commanded that "the dervishes are forty men and forty women. When all of the men die God makes their abode transformed. And when the women die God makes their abode transformed as well,"[41] hence this may be alluded to as well. The approximately seven hundred oil-lamps that are hang around the large dome in two rows are depicted as a wave and can point to the *hadith*: "each of the beautiful deeds of the sons of Adam is evaluated between ten and seven hundred." Or he might have compared them to the highest layer of the skies[42] being illuminated with an oil-lamp lightened with the divine light. Hanging a unique brightly lighted oil-lamp with the chains from the dome unto the *müezzin mahfili* in the middle of the mosque interior also has a purpose. The purpose is related to the *müezzins'* climbing the *mahfil* day and night to convey their wishes to God-most high and ask for His forgiveness. It also refers to the miracle that occurred during the time of the Prophet David, which was the descent of a chain from the sky unto the earth in order to differentiate between God *(Haq)* and False *(Batıl)*. Again the two rows of oil-lamps that are hung around the large dome and the single oil-lamp in the middle of the large dome is to imply and refer to the verse in the chapter of Yā sīn: "We sent unto them twain, and they denied them both, so We reinforced them with a third," (XXXVI:14). The meaning behind the three rows of oil-lamps, hanging around the peripheral circle of the large dome inside the mosque like a wave, is to reflect the people that come to the mosque with faith and pray in congregational rows. It also resembles the Muslim pilgrims who go to the Ka'ba during the pilgrimage season, may God-most high honour us with seeing it, and their circumambulation of the noble house *(Beyt-i Şerif)*.[43] The thousand windows that exist in this mosque refer first to the verse in the chapter of The Prostration: "He directeth the ordinance from the heaven unto the earth; then it ascendeth unto Him in a Day, whereof the measure is a thousand years of that ye reckon" (XXXII:5). They also point to the verse in the chapter of Bakara: "And thou wilt find them greediest of mankind for life and greedier than the idolaters. (Each) one of them would to be allowed to live a thousand years. And to live (a thousand years) would by no means remove him from the doom. Allah is Seer of what they do" (II:96). Or they are to imply the number of names in the saying: "There are a thousand names to qualify God and a thousand names for the Prophet." Perhaps with this number of windows architect Sinan wanted to say that the possibility of building such a perfect mosque and peerless building is one in a thousand. And the reason for fixing one of

41 Here Dayezāde quotes the phrase *"tebdil-i mekān"* which refers to the death of saintly people as their migration to Heaven.

42 Sönmez puts a note here indicating the highest layer of skies as the ninth. Sönmez, *Mimar Sinan İle İlgili Tarihi Yazmalar-Belgeler*, 116.

43 'Honoured-House' *(Ka'ba)*.

the windows while leaving the other nine hundred and ninety nine open is to make the number unequal to that of the names of God-most high and the Prophet. If there were a thousand windows people would have easily said: "it has a thousand windows." Whereas with the nine hundred and ninety-nine windows, people would say in a heavy manner: "it has nine hundred and ninety-nine windows." This way the building would gain more honour and fame in popular conversations.

The aim of building four minarets for the mosque is to allude to and point to the command in the chapter on Repentance "Travel freely in the land four months, and know that ye cannot escape Allah and that Allah will confound the disbelievers" (IX:2). Or by putting four minarets on the four sides of the mosque, architect Sinan could have seen the mosque as the *qıbla*[44] of the earth. Maybe he also indicates that only one fourth of the earth is residential. Perhaps he points out that the earth has four directions: east, west, north and south. Maybe he wanted to signify that human beings are composed of four elements; or that in the creation of mankind there are four humours. He might have represented the four books that were sent to man: the Torah, the Psalms, the Bible, and the Koran. The four minarets, each complemented with three balconies, make a total of twelve balconies. This construction reflects the command in the chapter of Tevbe: "The number of the months with Allah is twelve months by Allah's ordinance in the day that He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are sacred" (IX:36). Thus, it is indicated that a year consists of twelve months, four of which are forbidden *(haram)* months.[45] Or architect Sinan was indicating that the founders of the main sects were twelve glorious individuals, only four of which remained. Or he was indicating that the Koran was read in accordance with twelve rules. Or he was indicating that the four minarets point to the four seasons, in which three months are summer, three months are fall, three months are winter, and three months are spring. Hence one year corresponds with the twelve signs of the zodiac where each of four seasons embodies three signs of the zodiac. And with an elegant expression, he implied and indicated that like the lasting of the four seasons until eternity, the four sects as the poles of the religion will last until doomsday. Or the deceased Sinan compared the mosque to a finishing year, its four minarets to the four seasons, and this way he implied that a year is twelve months. The wisdom of building the two of the minarets with three stairways and complementing their overall number into six with an artistic manner is to refer to the verses in the chapter of Hūd and the chapter of Iron: "And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days" (XI:7, LVII:4). Or he refers to the verse in the chapter of Jonah: "Lo!

44 Direction of worship to the *Ka'ba*.

45 According to Islam these months are *Zilkade, Zilhicce, Muharrem, Recep*.

Selen Markoç

your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days," (X:4). Or he refers to the verse in the chapter of Qāf: "And verily We created the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, in six Days, and naught of weariness touched Us" (L:38). Or he refers to the *hadith*: "It is certain that God sees six things unpleasant for you: to turn away from the prayer, to disvalue one's goodness, to say bad words while fasting, to laugh at the cemetery, to enter the mosques in a *dirty state*[46], and to enter someone else's dwelling without permission." Or he referred to the six signs of the doomsday as stated in the *hadith*: "Do your good deeds before six things: before the sun rises from the west, the smoke, the fearsome beast *(dabbetü'l-arz*[47]*)*, the false messiah *(deccal*[48]*)*, and the general command." Or it was pointed in convenience with the belief that "we cannot entitle God the Exalted like an object. Moreover, God is free from six directions." Furthermore, it is in connection with the six principles the believers have and act according to. Or he indicated that the authentic traditions that belonged to the exalted Prophet were compiled mainly by six of his companions.[49] And, as we have stated at the beginning of this manuscript, by subtracting the finishing date of the construction of the mosque, *Fazl-ı Yezdan* (982), from the beginning date of the construction; *Fazlullah* (976), he indicated that the construction period of the mosque would be six years. The number of stairs in each of the minarets being 366 feet *(kadem),* means without doubt that each stairway refers to a year. Our comparison here conforms in reality to the saying: "who cannot go beyond making up a subsequent reason for something that has already happened. But, who attempts to do something that has been done before will be regretful." As known, the deceased architect Sinan had spent his remaining years of his life in the construction of this mosque, so he had become everyone's master and the chief of all sciences. In this respect, he would have known the exact amount of time the construction was going to take. So without doubt from the beginning architect Sinan implied and indicated this meaning. The aim of building the minarets in accordance with the science of geometry, and in this way making the people of Edirne see them as four minarets while the visitors of the city coming from outside as two, is to reflect the facts that are in the verses of Koran. It is an indication to the fact that God-most high prescribed four cycles[50] of the five obligatory prayers for the residents, whereas

46 This means without ritual ablution of the whole body.

47 According to Islam, it is believed to be an unknown creature that will come out of the earth close to the day of resurrection.

48 A person leading non-belief against believers.

49 *Sahabe*: People who were from the first believers of Islam in the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad.

50 The parts of the prayer repeated consecutively.

he prescribed only two obligatory cycles for visitors and travellers. In fact, the virtuous words of Omar İbn al-Khattab is an indication of this: "Without doubt, God the Exalted, upon the request of our Prophet, made four cycles of prayer obligatory to the residents while two cycles of prayer obligatory for the visitors." The purpose of showing the number of minarets as three from certain angles while they are four in reality is that the evening and night prayers,[51] which is three cycles, are for both the residents and the visitors. Or it refers to the verse in the chapter of Repentance: "And to the three also (did He turn in mercy) who were left behind," (IX:118).[52] Or architect Sinan might be referring to the verse in the chapter of The Event: "And ye will be three kinds"[53] (LVI:7). Or he was referring to the *hadith*: "ask permission three times until you are permitted or else return back." The aim of showing the minarets as two, three or four from certain directions is to imply and indicate the verse in the chapter of Women: "And if ye fear that ye will not deal fairly by the orphans, marry of the women, who seem good to you, two or three or four" (IV:3). Or architect Sinan might be referring to the verse in the chapter of The Angels: "Praise be to Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, who appointeth the angels messengers having wings two, three and four." (XXXV:1). The aim of building two *madrasas* in the direction of the *kıbla* of the mosque and on the right and left sides of the mihrab axis is to imply the verse in the chapter of Fusilat: "Then He ordained them seven heavens in two Days" (XLI:12). Or he wanted to compare this mosque to a sultan who sits with all his grandeur on the ground and has his two viziers on his two sides.

All the implications, indications and analogies written in this book are strong conclusions driven from the Koran and *hadith*. All thanks be to God for all the inspirational richness he has given me. I would especially like to state that while writing this piece which I started in order to gain prayers of auspiciousness, I kept its language as simple as I could in order to win everyone's approval. My plea from friends who read this is to correct any pen mistakes or inappropriate metaphors which might exist and forgive me. The main reason for any of my faults is that I started writing the draft of this work at the castle of Kars in 1156[54] when it was under siege, with the fear of death. I took a break from writing in the beginning of the month of Muharrem in 1162[55] because of campaigns. In 1162, with the help of God-

51 *Vitr.*

52 These three people were those who were left behind after the war of Tebük (Kāb İbni Malik, Hilal İbni Ümeyye, Müare İbni Rebi'i).

53 To refer to the human beings making three rows in doomsday according to Islam.

54 1743 A.D.

55 1748 A.D.

Selim Hoştoc

most high, and in order to fulfil my pilgrimage duty, I started my journey to visit the Ka'ba. In the meantime I noticed that there was no specific book on the rituals of Pilgrimage. Soon after beautiful feelings swelled like clouds inside of me and with the help of God, in a small amount of time, I started to write a guidebook for the pilgrimage which I called *Cami'ül Menāsık li'r-Ragibi'n-Nāsık.* While I was ceaselessly refining this piece of work night and day a few of my friends came for a visit. As the saying goes: "the most beautiful word is the auspicious one." Our talk for a moment came to the subject of the Selimiye. In order to share my happiness with them regarding the topic I read to them some parts of what I had written before. After listening to me they insisted that I should make a fair copy of what I had written. I wanted some time from them and ended up editing my draft copy in accordance with their insistence, hence, the truth of the saying, "too much insistence will turn the tide," was once more revealed. Moreover, the saying, "whoever wants to find something out will do so and whoever knocks at a door in order to enter will enter,"[56] also reflected its meaning in our work. Without doubt God does not have to explicate his virtues and merits in any way. I think I ventured into writing this work with the hope of it being a reason for an auspicious prayer. May God's mercy and grace be upon my friends who encouraged me to write this work and the deceased architect Sinan and especially Sultan Selim bin Sultan Süleyman. May God grant all of them a place in the heaven of *firdevs*, amen.

In the following parts of the book a place has been given to condense some of the stories told among the people about the features of the mosque. One of these that were told goes like this. The deceased Sultan Selim ordered the deceased architect Sinan to build the entire minbar of this mosque from gold. And Sinan the architect replied: "My Sultan! There is no one in this world that does not have an attraction toward gold. In a short amount of time, they will take a knife in their hands and destroy the minbar. Moreover they will make it as if it was never built. This is because there are many people in this world who will tinge the eye with kohl. But, with the permission and command of my sultan I will build a minbar for this mosque in which the artistic value will be more than the value of a golden minbar." Truly, it is really impossible to describe the minbar that the deceased architect Sinan built in this mosque with his artistic power and money expenditure. Actually, without doubt those elegant and wise individuals who look at the minbar with fairness, will find countless arts and masteries if they looked at it not only once but a thousand times. In conclusion, it is certain that they will remember the *hadith*: "what the eye cannot see and the ear cannot hear." The wisdom and the reason behind the dome of this mosque being larger than the

56 A saying to express the significance of 'first intention' in an act.

Sultan Markaz

dome of Hagia Sophia mosque is related to it being built with the signal and the command of the Prophet. However this situation has already been mentioned with all its details and explained in the beginning of our book. There is also a story told about the minarets of the mosque. On the day of the completion of the building, a little child asked the deceased great architect Sinan a question in front of everyone: "Father! This minaret is built crooked. Why did you make it crooked?" The deceased great architect Sinan without being stubborn and with all his maturity, foreseeing and intelligence said to the child: "Come near son! Which one is the crooked minaret you are talking about?" The child pointed to one of the minarets with his hand. Sinan immediately ordered his assistants to bring ropes and has them fastened to that minaret and made them pretend as though they were pulling it. From time to time he did not neglect asking the child: "Is it straightened son?" After a while, when the child said: "O Father, the minaret is now straightened," he stopped the work and sent the child away and gave him some money. After watching this weird and interesting situation carefully, Sinan's assistants said: "Our Sultan! We have come to the highest level by working in guidance of masters for a long time. We thought that we had improved our knowledge and skills while we were working for you as well. However, without taking any measurements, your acceptance of the crookedness of the minaret upon the words of a little child wounded us deeply." That person whose intelligence and conversation are beautiful answered: "In this world, there are many people who easily show envy and, in spite of showing irresponsible jealousy, they can not differentiate the sieve from the wrap. If we did not take a precaution now, the reputation of this minaret would have remained as the 'crooked minaret.' Then our labour for this minaret and the mosque would have been wasted. Afterward, even though you try to prove that this minaret is not crooked through measurement, people will continue to claim that the 'minds' measure is the eyes' balance.' So the name of this minaret would have remained as 'crooked minaret' until doomsday. By fastening the ropes and pulling the minaret, however, I cut the tongues of the enemies and those who can easily be jealous. With a little extra effort we have been saved from the great damage they would have given us." Such a smart answer without doubt can only be given by skilful individuals. The architecture of this mosque cannot be compared with other mosques. For instance, to make modifications to some parts of this mosque does not necessarily need the levelling of the ground. Whereas when modifications need to be made to the courtyard of other mosques, it is necessary to cover the courtyard with stones. The ground of the Selimiye mosque is already formed from stones in order to accomplish successful work. As stated in the beginning of our book, the foundations that provide strength to the minarets are thirty cubits each. This fact can allude to an idea about the issue of the foundations of the mosque. In fact, an old rumour has it that a very beautiful brick

Selin Meriç

bazaar *(arasta*[57]*)* with a smaller bazaar *(arasta)* and their adjacent brick fruit shops were built in order to provide a retaining wall for the western side of the mosque. Truly, this seems logical to the mind. This mosque was actually built on a hill. There is another rumour like this, but as the saying goes, "Only God knows the unknown." Since the place of the mosque was determined by the exalted Prophet, during the excavation of the foundations a rock came out which was equal to the width and length of the mosque. So the mosque was built on this rock and due to the existence of this rock, no other building could be built near the mosque. According to another rumour told from mouth to mouth, the deceased architect Sinan wanted to see the dome of the mosque from the directions of *'Saray Hamamı'* and *'Saathane'* after completing its construction. However, when he looked at it for some time, as in Nasreddin Hodja's saying, "I invented the snow halvah but I did not like it," he felt that the dome was excessively large and that he lost the beauty of the mosque by building it with a single dome. The deceased architect Sinan then plunged into a deep contemplation about how to add some beauty to the mosque which he no longer liked at all. In the meantime one of his assistants came to him and said: "My Sultan! I can see you are distressed. I am wondering what the cause may be. If you find it appropriate I would like to know." Sinan the architect heaved a profound sigh and said: "I did not obey the rule of 'first thinking and then doing' and I deceived the master of the earth, our Sultan. I incited him to make the dome of this mosque larger than that of Hagia Sophia. Finally, I was able to build a building in accordance with my desire and a dome that I had thought of. But I now see that the large dome that I designed in reality is not as beautiful as I thought it would be." His assistant being a discerning person then suggested the following to him: "This dome sits on eight columns. If cells which are covered with small domes are built amongst the columns, the ugliness of the dome will be gone and a quite different beauty will appear." A large plan was immediately drawn up in accordance with the proposed idea. Ultimately, they saw that the dome became so beautiful that it could not be described by words and writing. Afterwards, they adjoin the small domes they drew to the building and completed the construction in a short amount of time. It was very difficult to describe the beauty these small domes had added to the main dome. In fact, those who come and leave from the four directions first see the two minarets and the main dome that adjoins with these small domes. And according to a rumour, the heights of the minarets are the same length of the courtyard in all four directions. It is said that if each of these minarets were laid horizontally onto the ground in their positions and were measured together, they would be the same measurement as the overall length of the courtyard of the mosque. Lots of arts

57 The market place consisting of the group of same artisans.

Sidon Mortos

have been applied to this mosque, in which each part has been carefully measured and in addition many analogies and implications have been masterfully implied. May God not keep his mercy and grace away from those who look at this mosque with fairness and prayer, and from the writer of this book. In this book, the lecture chair *(kürsī),* the raised platform for the sultan *(mahfil-i hümāyun)*, outer prayer area *(musallā),* the number of taps, the house of the mosque guard *(kayyımhāne)*, the height of the mosque from the ground, the minbar, and other additional topics should have also been dealt with. However it was not possible to do so. May God keep his mercy and grace upon us.

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