

Structural Analysis and Evolution of 18th Century Ottoman Imperial Mosques (1750-1799) in Comparison with the Classical Period Examples

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Abstract : 18th century which is the period of 'change' in the Ottoman Empire, affects the architecture as well, where the Classical period is left behind, architecture is differentiated in the form language. This change is especially noticeable in monumental buildings and thus manifested itself in the mosques. But, is it possible to talk about the structural context of the 'change' which has been occurred in decoration? The aim of this study is to investigate the changes and classical relations of the 18th century mosques through plan schedules and structure systems. This study focuses on the monumental mosques constructed during the reign of the three sultans who ruled in the second half of the century (Mustafa the 3rd 1757-1774, Abdülhamid the 1st 1774-1789 and Selim the 3rd). According to their construction years these are 'Ayazma, Laleli, Zeyneb Sultan, Fatih, Beylerbeyi, Şebsefa Kadın, Eyüb Sultan, Mihrişah Valide Sultan and Üsküdar-Selimiye' mosques. As a plan scheme, four mosques have a square or close to a rectangular square scheme, while the others have a rectangle scheme and showing the longitudinal development of the mihrab axis. This situation is widespread throughout the period. In addition to the longitudinal development plan, which is the general characteristic of the 18th century mosques, the use of the classical plan schemes continued in the same direction. Spatialization of the mihrab area was applied to the five mosques while other mosques were applied as niches on the wall surface. This situation is widespread in the period of the second half of the century. In the classical period, the lodges may be located at the back of the mosques interior, not interfering with the main worship area. In the period, the lodges were withdrawn from the main worship area. They are separated from the main interior with their own structural and covering systems. The plans seem to be formed as a result of the addition of lodge parts to the northern part of the Classical period mosques. The 18th century mosques are the constructions where the change of the architectural language and style can be observed easily. This change and the break from the classical period manifest themselves quickly in the structural elements, wall surface decorations, pencil work designs, small scale decor elements, motifs. The speed and intensity of change in the decor does not occur the same as in structural context. The mosque construction rules from the traditional and classical era still continues in the century. While some mosque structures have a plan which is inherited from the classical successor, some of were constructed with the same classical period rules. Nonetheless, the location and transformation of the lodges, which are affecting the interior design, are noteworthy. They provide a significant transition on the way to the new language of the mosque design that will be experienced in the next century. It is intended to draw attention to the structural evolution of the 18th century Ottoman architecture through the royal mosques within the scope of this conference.

Keywords : mosque structure, Ottoman architecture, structural evolution, 18th century architecture

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