

Book reviews

Kurrer, K.-E.: **Geschichte der Baustatik: Auf der Suche nach dem Gleichgewicht**

2nd, completely revised edition,
Ernst & Sohn, Berlin, 2015

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A symphony. My head's in a whirl. Too many ideas in one go. Impressions, feelings. All at once and in concentrated form. Such a reaction is usually only brought about by art, and music in particular. Very confusing. I have to pinch myself, take a look once again at the cover of this truly majestic book to make sure. No, no doubt about it, the main word is *Baustatik* [theory of structures, ed.]. For goodness' sake, what's

wrong with me? Another one of those ideas that won't let me rest. But let's start at the beginning, to get things straight in my mind.

I had heard that our esteemed colleague Kurrer had been working on "his" subject once again – and not too superficially either. And that was enough to get me curious. Had I not already had the pleasure of, to put it bluntly, "devouring" the first edition of his book on the theory of structures? And now here was the second. Okay then, let's have it.

Just the first glance told me that this was not just a quick makeover in order to sell the book for a second time in a new guise. No. The new subtitle *Suche nach dem Gleichgewicht* [searching for equilibrium, ed.] by itself and the much greater effort required to lift the book betrayed the fact that, once again, plenty of brainpower had gone into this. My appetite for knowledge had not only been whetted – no, I was already slaving at the mouth before I'd even turned the first page! And now the last of the 1164 pages has been read and I am well and truly satiated.

One idea occurs again and again in the great commotion. That, and exactly that, is missing on a large scale: A vivid, comprehensible, perceptive and infectious examination of one of the fundamental tools of our profession – its development within the context of history and society. Subjective and interpretive when it comes to the influences of the respective society on the development of structural analysis, but also vice versa, of course. Never before have I felt so at one with equilibrium, been almost able to grasp it, even though, strictly speaking, it hardly exists.

Besides the comprehensive, new examination of earthworks theory, which in its early years was certainly very closely tied to the theory of structures, I really enjoyed the multitude of new brief biographies of renowned representatives of our craft.

Therefore, dear Dr. Kurrer, I would like to thank you most heartily for the immense meritoriousness of this comprehensive presentation, but especially for the comprehensibility and tangibility of one of the main themes of our wonderful profession. And to all of you associated with this and, even more so, those of you who are simply curious to find out just what theory of structures is all about, I very much hope that you will experience just as many entertaining, emotive and exciting hours of reading as I did.

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Bertram Kühn