

TYOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF PALESTINIAN TRADITIONAL COURT HOUSE

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INTRODUCTION

The study attempts to trace the evolution of the Palestinian courtyard house and propose a typological analysis to try to understand and trace the changes in the building type of the houses from the past to the present. Typological analysis as an approach allows us to read, understands, and then learns from history. R.Lewcock, 1988 stresses on the capability of this approach as a useful tool for shaping our future built environment. He says:

‘At any given time the man-made world is inevitably the measure we use to determine the direction of change. Whatever we may think of it, the world around us provides the basis for decisions about the future. We are keenly aware of its deficiencies, but not always so aware of its strengths. From time to time it is wise to pause and consider whether when we change something, we consider what we might be losing. The corollary to this is to look back to see whether what we lost yesterday might , with little effort, be regained’.

Why courtyard types in the Palestinian contemporary houses disappeared? Does the new emerging types reflect the sensitivity to our culture? How does typological analysis help to maintain character of our new settlement while allowing for change? What is type? How can we benefit from it in our case?

All these questions can be discussed through typological framework, which is a systematic collective representation of reality that allows one to make a diagnosis and relate the need for action and the instrument available. Using the typological framework as a reference, one can

go on to choose the operational response for a recognized situation of certain type that are judges likely to produce such typical effect.

TPOLOGY AS A RESEARCH METHOD

Quatremère de Quincy gives a precise definition of an architectural 'type' in his historical dictionary. The word 'type' he says does not present so much an image of something to be copied or imitated exactly.

Thus the notion of the vagueness or the generality of the type which cannot therefore directly affect the building design or their formal quality, also explain its generation quality.

On the other hand A. Petruccioli introduce type as a collective product shared by architect and people at any given time. For him the birth of a type is conditioned by the fact that a series of buildings share an obvious functional and formal analogy among themselves. In the process of comparing or selectively superimposing individual forms for the determination of the type, the identifying characteristics of specific buildings is eliminated and only the common elements remain which then appear in the whole series. type is illustrated as a scheme deduced through a process of distillation from a group of formal variants to a basic form or common scheme.

Topological studies were initiated first as a design tool in the eighteenth century French Enlightenment and were used to counter the break in the historical continuity and the separation in the building process between the designer and the client. The enlightenment generated two ideas that represent two sides of the problem: the functional approach and the formal approach .

Interest in urban Fabric as an object of rigorous study and a tool in design methodology began to emerge toward the end of the nineteenth century. It blossomed in the 1930s , was renewed in the 1950s and led lively to international debate in the mid-1960 that extend through the seventies. Three schools in Europe began to elaborate theories for the understanding of the built environment and the relation between its elements. All of them were rooted in history, but with differences in using the notion of typology. The schools differentiate between the descriptive, analytical, explicate critical and generative types. They are therefore able to separate conceptually the description, analysis and critique of the historical and existing city. They are: the urban Morphology research group of the University of Birmingham inspired by M.R.G. Conzen, the Italian school established by Saverio Muratori, and the school of Versailles in France.

Conzen's approach to typological analysis using small towns of medieval origin in the England in which he developed new concepts. his analysis isolated three basic components of the urban fabric- street, plot, and building. He also introduced an evolutionary perspective into the reading of the plan, intuitively understanding that the growth of the cities does not correspond to an assemblage of pieces.

Muratori theory organized in the crisis of Modern movement, in the need to formulate design and building on different basic principles. In contrast to Conzen, Muratori believes that either

knowledge is systematic or it does not exist at all. His theory is deeply rooted in the post-idealistic philosophy and uses a deductive method that does not accept discontinuities. The method is based on a critical reading of the existing built landscape, on a continuous maintenance of the physical realm, and on formulating a design process able to establish links with history and memory.

For the Italian school the goal of topological/morphological research is to establish a correct formulation of the design process, and in fact Muratori talks of 'Storia Operativa' – operational history -. For the group of geographers at Birmingham the goal of the analysis is to solve the problems of classification for the conservation of the built patrimony; it does not involve design issue at all.

For the French school of Versailles, two important general characteristics differentiate it from the other school: its approach to architecture, one related to the dialectic of urban form and social action , and the second related to the dialectic of modern-non modern. As distinct from the Italian method , here the social component is always first.

To conclude: the three schools of typomorphology offer an intellectually challenging framework for thinking about the built landscape within the historical context of the city. Debates about the typomorphology in the three schools illuminate the use of type in design theory. The schools differentiate between the descriptive, analytical, explicate critical and generative types. They are therefore able to separate conceptually the description the description, analysis and critique of the historical and existing city from the projection of the future city they can learn to know the built landscape, to explain it and to theorize about its production without worrying about its future design.

EVOLUTION OF THE COURTYARD TYPE

This paper is an attempt for applying topological analysis on built form in Palestine. Typological analysis could be an instrumental tool to learn from the architecture of the past, trying to understand the space-form languages characteristics of the locality and build on them is one way to respond with sensitivity to the existing world and one way of providing reassuring continuities in a world of frequently irrational , accelerating changes.

Three types of house were identified in this study: the courtyard type, the central hall, and the apartment type. The courtyard type was the traditional type that has been used in Palestine till the end of the 19th century. This type is based on a central plan with inward solution; rooms are organized around the courtyard. This courtyard is usually located in a central position near the entrance of the building. It provides the houses with a comfortable internal environment, providing calm and air during the long, hot dry weather. Within the courtyard, women were able to move freely without any fear of being seen by the neighbors. Around this courtyard many rooms of different uses are gathered; a guestroom, bedrooms, and a utility room, which includes a kitchen, and storage space. Every room has a single door opening into the courtyards. Usually the availability of these specialized rooms depends on the economical situation of the house owner, but they are normally in large houses and buildings. The rooms are of a

sufficiently large size to accommodate nuclear families within each of them. In this vaulted construction larger rooms have a higher ceiling than small ones.

The second type is central hall type, which is essentially a development of the central courtyard type as result of transition from an open central courtyard into covered one. This type is found in the fringe of the historic cities and it was affected by the Turkish and colonial influences. The third type is the contemporary, which is still used today, and it comes into two categories as a detached single house or an apartment building.

The need to distinguish rates of change in the structure of a building is observed for these types to see which one evolve according to a continuous process, and which one emerge as a result of a partial break. For example changes occurred in the courtyard type was at two level. One, which is the hall type considered as evolution or some call it adaptation of the original type of the house. This adaptation happens according to the quality embed in the type as response to changes. Adaptation as defined by Cataldi does not only mean observance of or a passive defense against nature, but continuously evolving space implying the addition of new buildings, so long as they fit in with the building heritage. So we can consider that hall type maintain the continuity of the past form. On the other hand we can call the other kind of changes happen in the courtyard considered as densification. In this case many spaces have been added inside the courtyards to be used by the residents to meet their need of extra spaces mainly services, such as kitchen or Bathrooms. These added spaces affect the visual quality and the spatial character of the courtyard.

Given this view, it is necessary to reevaluate the expectation associated with the generative power of type. Seen as instrument of transformation more than formation in its proper sense, the plan, or the project, necessarily involves the substratum into which it is set and therefore necessarily engage with the 'past'. The rational character of the project changes and is susceptible to a dialectic: rationality does not necessarily reside more in the fact of using a logic dissociated from existing conditions, establishing an importable eternal order than it does in the capacity to make use of the nature of the context of an intervention in a way that knit it more successfully into the flow of history.

The object does not register the passage of time in a homogeneous fashion at every level of order in its structure. It is possible for change to occur at the level of architectural details without alternations at the level of the disposition of rooms and construction. Likewise, it is possible for a house to be added as a part in a more complex composition and still impose its dimensional characteristics and requirement for light and orientation. Thus in the flow of history any built object (a house or several houses together) tends to be subject to a partial conditioning from previous forms and to have a partial influence on the form of successive interventions. This dialectical interconnection of form in time between forming and formed suggests the hypothesis of a morphogenesis of built form. This means that, in the production and configuration of a built object, everything does not originate in the will and freedom of creator; the process also involves non-intentional elements.

CONCLUSION

We can say that using an approach that takes into consideration the types of the past might be of great value. It can produce conceptual tools and make architectural language richer. It is important to realize that the continuity is not linear. The architect should search for the truth and not be distracted by illusion. This requires a total vision of the environment and not just partial solutions to its problems at every scale.

One needs to identify the values of a city within the unity of its diversity (specificity), we cannot look for a single value for the whole city- even if it existed, and it would be in continuous change. The values of a city are associated with its capacity to regenerate itself in forms that permit its citizens to identify a line of continuity between past, present and future. This is the process of urban transformation, aiming to maintain a creative process of regeneration of diversity within the context of the communication and unity of the community.

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