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## TYPE AND CHARACTER IN THE DISCOURSE OF ARCHITECTURE

### ABSTRACT

*Architecture Parlante*: a reiterated late-18<sup>th</sup> century *topos* was that architecture should ‘speak’ in the sense of expressing its purpose or function. However, communicating requires a language, so how are we supposed to understand what architecture is ‘saying’ or trying to ‘say’? Like any other language, it will be largely arbitrary, produced and reproduced on the basis of conventions confirmed and propagated through repetition and custom. The discourse of the classical architectural tradition, in addition to what were named the ‘architectural orders’, operated with ‘type’ and ‘character’ as inherent aspects of any work claiming to be architecture. Although the ‘orders’ were consolidated relatively recently – in Sebastiano Serlio’s *Book IV* published in 1537 – the ‘types’ were already detailed by Vitruvius in *De Architectura*’s extensive taxonomy of temples and detailed description of the theaters distribution. The ‘character’ concept refers to the ancient sense of decorum, which in turn is subsumed to verisimilitude as defined in Aristotle’s *Poetics*. This essay aims to describe the historical and critical fortune of the notions of ‘type’ and ‘character’ within the boundaries of the classical architectural tradition’s disciplinary system.

### KEYWORDS

Type. Character. Decorum. *Architecture Parlante*.

## TIPO Y CARÁCTER EN EL DISCURSO DE LA ARQUITECTURA

### RESUMEN

*Architecture Parlante*: a finales del siglo 18, se insiste en que la Arquitectura debe hablar. Al hablar, lo hace por medio de un lenguaje. Sin embargo, ¿cómo se puede entender lo que dice o quiere decir la Arquitectura? El habla de la Arquitectura, como ocurre en cualquier lenguaje, es en gran medida arbitraria, ya que también se produce y reproduce por medio de convenciones que se confirman y propagan por la repetición y la costumbre. Así, en el discurso de la Arquitectura de extracción clásica, además de los *órdenes arquitectónicos*, operan la inserción tipológica y la afirmación del carácter que deben ser inherentes a toda obra que se declare como Arquitectura. Si la consolidación del elenco de los órdenes es un producto relativamente tardío – pues su fecha es el siglo 16, con *El libro IV de Arquitectura* de Sebastiano Serlio, publicado en 1537 –, los *tipos* ya estaban determinados en el *De Arquitectura* de Vitruvio, que hace una extensa taxonomía del tipo *templo* y describe en detalle la distribución del *teatro*. El concepto de *carácter* se refiere al muy antiguo sentido del decoro, que, a su vez, está subsumido a la noción de verosimilitud, consagrada en la *Poética* de Aristóteles. Este ensayo tiene por objeto describir la amplitud histórica y crítica de los conceptos de *tipo* y *carácter* en los límites del sistema disciplinario que se inscribe en la tradición clásica de la Arquitectura.

### PALABRAS CLAVE

Tipo. Carácter. Decoro. *Architecture Parlante*.

## TIPO E CARÁTER NO DISCURSO DA ARQUITETURA

### RESUMO

*Architecture Parlante*: em fins do século 18, insiste-se no *topos* de que a Arquitetura deve falar. Se fala, fá-lo por meio de uma linguagem. Entretanto como se pode entender o que a Arquitetura diz ou pretende dizer? O falar da Arquitetura, como toda linguagem, é, em larga medida, arbitrário, porquanto ele se produz e reproduz também a partir de convenções que se confirmam e propagam pela reiteração e pelo costume. Assim, no discurso da Arquitetura de extração clássica, além das ditas *ordens arquitetônicas*, operam a inserção tipológica e afirmação do caráter que deve inerir a toda obra que se pleiteie como Arquitetura. Se a consolidação das ordens é produto relativamente tardio – pois data do século 16, com o *Livro IV de Arquitetura* de Sebastiano Serlio, editado em 1537 –, os tipos já estavam discriminados no *De Arquitetura* de Vitruvius, que procede a uma extensa taxonomia do tipo *templo* e descreve com minúcia a distribuição do *teatro*. O conceito de caráter remete à vetusta acepção de *decoro*, que, por sua vez, é subsumida à de *verossimilhança*, consagrada na *Arte Poética* de Aristóteles. Este ensaio procura descrever a fortuna histórica e crítica das noções de *tipo* e de *caráter* nos lindes do sistema disciplinar referido à tradição clássica na Arquitetura.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Tipo. Caráter. Decoro. *Architecture Parlante*.

*"But what I think is feasible, and what I do, is related to the intelligible. Listen, Phaedrus," he went on to say, "this little temple which I built for Hermes, a few steps from here, if you could know what it means to me! There, where the passer-by sees but an elegant chapel – tis but a tri?e: four columns, a very simple style – there I have enshrined the memory of a bright day in my life. O sweet metamorphosis! This delicate temple, nobody realizes, is the mathematical image of a Corinthian girl whom I loved happily. It reproduces faithfully the proportions that were peculiarly hers. It lives for me! It gives me back what I have given it..."*  
Paul Valéry – *Eupalinos or the Architect*<sup>1</sup>

## EXORDIUM

Architecture informed by the so-called classical tradition is usually deemed as governed by principles and standards largely conceived and established in Antiquity. However, whereas the genesis of resonant considerations and ordered discourses on rules applied to technical skills (*tekhnai*) hark back to the Hellenic age, epigones and developments continued through 19<sup>th</sup> century Romanticism, which claimed self-sufficiency for art and unbounded license for artists, while raising high the banner of abolition of the artistic normative wealth.

Vitruvius' *De Architectura* (On Architecture)<sup>2</sup> prescribes that aspiring architects must promote the interaction between reasoning (*ratiocinatio*), which involves calculation, scrutiny and design, and practice (*fabrica*), mechanically working their materials. The Roman author postulates architecture as the art of construction, but notes that not everything that is built may qualify as such because architecture results from purposeful conception, cogitation and restraint, i.e., the design, planning forward, and formulation of an image as figure-to-be. Starting from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in consonance with the postulations of Leon Battista Alberti, the intellectual and scholarly status conferred on the *arte del disegno*<sup>3</sup> emphasized the chronological precedence – and, in particular, the ontological precedence – of conceiving an idea over materializing it.<sup>4</sup>

The writings of Vitruvius and Alberti and their followers consolidate the 'art of building' as a discipline, i.e., a conceptual and doctrinal corpus of exoteric knowledge that may be registered, and graphically and discursively taught in schools and academic programs, whereas builders' trade secrets and mysteries are to be learned primarily through oral instruction, training, hands-on practice and reiteration in workshops or job sites. Thus, by sharing such high intellectual condition with the other arts, architecture stands shoulder to shoulder with them and shares their entitlement to lucubration concerning the scope and the idiosyncrasies of their distinctive discourses.

According to the architectural doctrines of classicizing mode, drawing or designing thus involves rules for proportionalities, orders, ornaments and compositional elements that are unfailingly governed by guidelines of convenience, conformity and decorum, which hark back to the Aristotelian precept of *verisimilitude*. In his *Poetics*<sup>5</sup>, the Stagirite wrote that in the enactment of a drama, each of the characters on stage should be consistent

in terms of individual characteristics, tribulations and circumstances. Likewise, the choice of the type of column (or pillar), ornamentation, scale and proportions of each part in the whole must be appropriate for the actual character attributed to a particular building.

Just as the drama or ‘tragedy’ format requires dramatic action to orchestrate a unified whole and take place in a certain period during which a plot is developed, peripeteia reached, twists unraveled and catharsis induced in the audience through to a finale or outcome, so too the perfected integrity of the architectural object must be clearly distinguished. In keeping with the requirements of completeness, symmetry, clarity, conciseness and precision as hallmarks of all poetics that aspire to be *classical*, a work must show balanced unity and be set as a whole in accordance with the pondered arrangement of its parts (*taxís*). Only then, it will be apt to confer on a building the delineation that is most appropriate, and decorate it with ornaments and tinsel best suited to its purpose and fate. The proper disposition and distinct elocution of elements prevent barbarisms or solecisms that might overshadow perspicuous apprehension of the scope and character of a building.

The auspicious coming together of constructive being and emergence concurs to the intelligibility of an architectural discourse. Thus, on glimpsing the image of a temple, for instance, an observant and informed viewer may discern both the primacy of the deity to which it is dedicated and the spirit and figure imbuing its keen design (as in the epigraph taken from Paul Valéry). For sure, an attentive viewer and informed user will also understand, and derive pleasure from, the way a building design renders the congruous dimensional relations, properties and qualities of materials and coatings, mouldings, tonal, chromatic and textural arrangements, articulation of cadences and eurhythmics, interplay of fenestrations, volumetrics, orientation and location of the building in the context of site, as well as the chosen order.

## TYPE

*The model, as understood in the practice of an art, artistic practice, is an object that should be repeated as is; the type, on the contrary, is an object with respect to which each artist can conceive works of art that may have no resemblance to each other.*

QUATREMÈRE DE QUINCY, *Encyclopédie Méthodique – Architecture*.<sup>6</sup>

Along with the ‘orders of architecture’ proclaimed in canonic literature,<sup>7</sup> typology too is a significant component of architectural discourse in the context of works of classical extraction. When distinguishing type from model, 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century architectural scholars were prescribing that a model be strictly followed, whereas a type, having emerged from successive contributions and adjustments over several centuries, is to convey not only generic formal determinants, but also a wide range of alternative combinations and variations.

Since the emergence of architecture as such, boundaries demarcating its specific realm have included a restricted repertoire of edificatory 'types', namely colonnaded temple (for which Vitruvius prescribed a taxonomy), theater, baths, circus, triumphal arch, etc. This acceptance of *typology* is characterized by a set of invariable features that identify a building type. For instance, colonnaded temples with rectangular plans may be embellished with specific accessories, feature several orders and attributes, have different numbers of paired columns on their facade, have single or double peristyles, or yet have their cells configured differently. However, they will in all cases be distinguished by their podium, their colonnade resting on a stylobate and continuous entablature topped by a pair of gables on opposite facades. Despite the existing precedents from the Nile and Mesopotamian regions, this *type* thrived and flourished in archaic times, spread throughout the Hellenic *cosmos* and on to the Latin *orbe*. Following the *Quattrocento*, the type was again taken up by architects bent on restoring the excellence of ancient works, and then praised by experts and artists enthused by the imagined unsurpassable splendor of the sublime age of Hellenism. During the *Settecento*, their work was acclaimed as 'new classical' or 'neoclassical' architecture.

The appropriation of stylemes from one typology into another is quite licit. The erudite Alberti took morphemes and compositional aggregates from imperial victory arches to compose and order his designs of frontispieces for the churches of San Francesco (Malatesta Temple) in Rimini and Sant' Andrea, in Mantua.

Having certain fixed typological parameters does much to facilitate the characterization of each architectural embodiment. New times and different places will usually lead to new additions and adjustments to an original arrangement, and here the *basilica* type is a case in point. In the republican and imperial periods of Rome, basilicas were urban buildings for civic uses. Their oblong walled rectangular areas had colonnades demarcating a central nave and two (or four) lateral aisles. In pagan Antiquity, the *temples* that primarily hosted images of deities to whom they were consecrated held statues, icons and treasures and were used by the augurs for initiation or ritual ceremonies, therefore they were not meant for sectarian congregations. On the other hand, Christian sacraments and rites involve the leading role of the *ecclesia*, or the congregation of believers to worship, attend mass and listen to homily or address. Given these facts, of all the different building *types* found in early Christian Rome, the *basilica* was best suited to their rituals and liturgical practices.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, as a convert to Christianity, Emperor Constantine erected the great basilicas now known as St. Peter in the Vatican, St. John Lateran and St. Paul Outside the Walls. By then, custom had added an apse, a transept and a narthex to the original nave of the basilica type to configure the so-called *Latin cross* plan. Over time, yet more elements were annexed to the original: choir, churchyard, crypt, reliquary niches, ambulatory, radial chapels, pews, canopies, side altars, altarpieces along the sides of transepts etc. Domes, needles, gargoyles, galleries, triforiums and clerestories were also added, along with flying buttresses, buttresses and

pinnacles to shore up ribbed layers. At the height of the Middle Ages, the basilica type with all its scale and grace developed into the light and airy cathedrals erected in *Île de France* as well as in Chartres, Amiens, Paris, Rouen and Reims.

Having meticulously observed, measured and noted aged Roman ruins, Brunelleschi used the *basilica* type to design and build the churches of San Lorenzo and Santo Spirito in Florence. However, here the architect no longer adhered to the virtuosity, the preciousness and the exquisite complexity that distinguished the vast Gothic cathedrals. His valor now resided in a determined scrutiny for severe and strict proportional arrangements between measures: the *music*<sup>8</sup> played there concerted to the harmonious 1:2:4 ratio<sup>9</sup> of both horizontal projection and sections. Artists, orators and scholars were ardently yearning to emulate an idealized Antiquity, so the artistic merit of a building was no longer acclaimed in the form of its riches, grandeur or virtuosity: thenceforth, together with coherent and judicious use of stylemes endorsed by their own authoritative antiquity, a building just had to be impeccable and exact, hence beautiful.<sup>10</sup>

Disregarding the resultant liturgical inconveniences, and to substantiate the much sought-after similarity with the perfect symphony believed to have been concerted in the choreography of spheres in the *kosmos*, certain humanists and architects have claimed – in relation to the design of buildings used for worship – a preference for the type known as *central plan temple*: circular, regular (or lobular) polygon, or yet the *Greek cross*<sup>11</sup>, in which the proportions of the built microcosm echo philharmonics of animic cosmic consonance. Hence, for his design of the San Sebastian church in Mantua, Alberti chose a *Greek cross* layout to which he added a portico frontage. The early 16<sup>th</sup> century *tempietto* of St. Peter in Montorio, which Donato Bramante erected in a monastic cloister, exemplifies the recovery of the ancestral *tholos* type of colonnaded circular temple with the addition of balustrade, tambour and dome, revealing unparalleled accuracy.<sup>12</sup> His design for the new St. Peter's Cathedral on Vatican Hill was also based on the *Greek cross* plan. Subsequently, after several incidents and misadventures, the Catholic Pontiff finally put Michelangelo Buonarroti in charge. The central-plan configuration was reintroduced, and later enlarged by Carlo Maderno, who extended the naves towards the foreground, where the main entrance is located, thereby replacing the Latin form.

The primacy of basilica-type dispositions for churches was sanctioned by Counter-Reformation prescriptions as best suited to the offices of the mass, the minister's sermon and the reading of the Holy Scripture. Reiterating the directives issued by the Council of Trent, Pietro Cataneo<sup>13</sup> suggested that the city's main temple be shaped in the form of the cross used for the martyrdom of the Redeemer<sup>14</sup> and that the glory and magnificence of buildings for Christian worship should even outdo the splendid examples of paganism.

However, showing the *pregnanz* of the ancient central-plan type of temple as late as in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the architect Jacques-Germain Soufflot designed and built the church of Saint Geneviève in Paris (now Panthéon), in a *Greek*

cross. This time, he endowed it with portico and columns flagging the church entrance and its front as in Rome's Pantheon.

An exemplary development was Andrea Palladio's *villa* type illustrated in his *I quattro libri dell'architettura*<sup>15</sup>, which spread his ideas to America and Europe. His designs revisit Antiquity and architectural details are amalgamated with new elements (as apertures named after Serlio and combinations of columns and pilasters) in compositions of strictly proportioned height, width and depth. The Palladian *villas* occasionally incorporate stylemes such as colonnaded porticos or domes previously judged appropriate only for reverential public or religious buildings.

The ordering for these villas is marked by meticulously designed operation of harmonic regulating lines that precisely concert the central structure's scale and proportions.<sup>16</sup> On occasion, a symmetrical pair of wings (*barchesse*) is added to house rural activities. Using a restricted set of elements and compositional procedures governed by strict proportions, Palladio operated a refined series of variations and permutations. Besides the *tavole* on which the villa's projection are summarized, his *Four Books on Architecture* added a collection of drawings of ancient and modern buildings that for a long time was used as handbook or guide for its valuable notes on architectural training and practice. Although his villas had been designed for the countryside, their morphemes and compositional arrangements were appropriate and fitting for urban locations too and were often integrated with buildings of different natures and purposes, such as universities, parliaments, courts, palaces and churches.

Giovanni Battista Piranesi, whom Manfredo Tafuri<sup>17</sup> dubbed "the mad architect", produced a design for Campo Marzio in Rome. Showing little concern for the archaeological evidence, he conceived a frenzied and extremely interesting iconographic reconstruction of the city that accumulated and juxtaposed the different typologies that had once been in vogue in the imperial age: circuses, baths, rectangular- or circular-based temples, amphitheaters, the Coliseum, the Pantheon, etc.

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux made a series of designs for the *barrières* (customs stations and gateways) leading into Paris,<sup>18</sup> for which he appropriated elements taken from other types and compiled a specific *barrière* type as a rhetorical form<sup>19</sup>. Given its commotion, this representation has the aim of persuading, and its genre is epideictic: despite alluding to the past, it refers to the future; it is about the present and teaches by example. His buildings speak to the then current vogue for appreciating the raptures of the noble *sublime* manner. Their upright axial symmetry and lofty implantation sign and symbolize the transition from rough and rugged open country (*rus*) to the boundaries of polished and cautious urbanity (*urbs*).

Demand for new uses consolidated other types of buildings: theaters, concert halls and opera houses, railroad stations (*gares*), exhibition halls, marketplaces (*halles*), warehouses and industrial plants, skyscrapers, galleries (*passages*), department stores (*magazins*), later followed by housing projects or complexes, and airports.

## CHARACTER

*Buildings, like images in painting and sculpture, need each their own physiognomy. That a prison must inspire dread, a ballroom joviality, in clear ... An arsenal should be sturdily rusticated ... A merchant's exchange should be comfortable, without pomp or elegance, sober but and unimposing ... Buildings dedicated to the sciences and the arts require an appearance that is noble without being grave, agreeable but not voluptuous, simple but not austere ... If artists inquire into the nature of each monument, they shall find how to give it its distinctive character, in a way that the common people understand.<sup>20</sup>*

By the end of the *Enlightenment*, architects – who were later to gain the dubious epithet of *revolutionary* – remarked on the need to lend appropriate *character* to their designs. By properly and judiciously using the means and resources of architecture as a discipline to lend *character*<sup>21</sup> to a building, they gauge its genre, suggest its purpose and substantively show its essence. Thus, the physiognomic conception of a structure requires lucid and refined observance of composure, *concinnitas* and *decorum* so that a quick and sharp mind is prompted to clearly and pleasurably apprehend a building's nature and purpose.<sup>22</sup>

Therefore, *decorum* advocates robust and severe buildings that hark back to the discreet Doric order or, in some cases, even the plain Tuscan order. The precept of verisimilitude requires prisons to be rustic and rough to instill fear and respect. A courthouse must be severe and solemn, prompting circumspection and awe. For public palaces to attain the gracious appearance befitting them, they may boast the splendors of a pompous order and galas and sparkles of rare and precious materials. The frugality of cloisters certainly adds to exaltation of faith and pious retreat. Austere monasteries, shrines and chapels must inspire sober modesty and encourage devotion. A market may be cheerfully embellished with Persian or Moorish motifs. Buildings for worship of the dead featured stylemes of Egyptian origin such as pyramids and obelisks, or papyrus and lily morphemes. In such ways some discourses in the dialect of architecture as discipline were articulated, as prescribed by doctrines that prevailed until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Even in the troubled and polemical setting of France under Louis XV and Louis XVI, there were augurs of radical architectures using entirely novel language to oppose baroque and rococo mannerisms and curl form motifs. A taste for the unfading bare and regular elegance of pure solids – with a belief in the regenerative value of geometric rigor and the singularity of the lexical and grammatical standards that it announced – was to be echoed in unadorned 20<sup>th</sup>-century modernism.

In his *Essai sur l'art*, Étienne-Louis Boullée notes that an aspect inherent to architecture consists purely and simply of conception reflected and faithfully represented in sketches, in perspective. Set free from servitude arising from a patron's idiosyncrasies and whims, or from authority's normative restrictions, or from material or static contingencies, a zealous emphasis on pure cogitation in design instigated the faculty of imagination in producing graphic works, with the autonomy needed to produce forms consistent with sought-



after, pondered and appropriate character. In Boullée's words, *our buildings – and our public buildings in particular – should be to some extent poems. The impression they make on us should arouse sensations that are analogous to the building's use.*<sup>23</sup>

Boullée was averse to ornamentation or supplements foreign or unrelated to the disciplinary agenda of the art of building (ornaments, couplets, inscriptions, statues etc.) and in addition to his instigative writings, there is a collection of prints showing visions of Cyclopean buildings that convey an emphatically characteristic proposition. In a public library, the metonymy of an open book is relevant. Honoring the memory of Isaac Newton, Boullée designed a spheroid cenotaph, pure celestial synecdoche, a literally immense space accessed through a long tunnel in the shadows that emerges on the internal central axis to find a huge, brightly illuminated geoid allegorizing Newton's formulation of the geometric principles of optics and discovery of the law of universal gravitation. His plan for the *Metropole*<sup>24</sup> temple is colossal but only the tiniest sliver of the magnitude of the Supreme Being. In prints illustrating *Essai sur l'art*, Boullée often renounces the use of conventional *architectural orders*: his imagery hyperbolizes huge built-masses, celebrates paradoxical light-shadow contrasts (*skiagraphia*) or light and dark, and dramatizes the predominance of solid over void.

Boullée's contemporary Ledoux also designed a smoke-filled cannon foundry, a model town for the Chaux saltworks, and a series of modular buildings metaphorizing the occupation of the proprietor or the purpose of the building: homes for loggers, forest rangers, writers, currency dealers, art merchants, river guards, theater, necropolis, prison, hunting lodge, residence (*oikema*), temple of conciliation (*pacifère*), a cube-like structure (*panarétéon*) etc.

As with the elocution of the rhetorical oration, so the elegant and decorous *actio* of the architectural discourse has the purpose to move, instruct and please.<sup>25</sup> Aiming to prevent any misleading dichotomy between being and resembling in the design of the built work with Boullée's designs as well as, Ledoux's and some of their contemporaries show more emphasis, spirit and extension in their logocentric postulation of the constitution of the *architecture parlante*.

It is trusted that the intentioned choice of order and intercolumniation, typological definition, affinity between ornaments and proportionality, coalescence of parts, moldings and eurythmic motion, appropriate articulation of restraints and dimensions, convenient combination of properties and qualities of materials and coverings, pertinent use of ornaments and rustication, luminous and tonal harmony between surfaces as well as their chromatic and textural arrangement, flawless orientation and positioning in the context of topology and site, are disciplinary resources that the knowledge of the architect mobilizes to teach erudite and shrewd observers about the evocations and sentiments to be prompted by the idealized work and by the nature, adequacy, purpose and character of its building system. In their own way too, the magnificence, exquisiteness and scale of an artistic conception enunciate the ductile diction of oratorical genres: soft, intermediate or loud. Corroborating ancestral bonds to the most elevated algebras of Music, as well as the most noble art of speech and

silence (Rhetoric), the sagacious ingenuity of the art of building is surely instructing while being moving and pleasurable too.

So in the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the rise and fall of the ancient aspiration of bringing together architecture and the arts of discourse are witnessed. In the early years of the next century, in his lessons at the Napoleonic École Polytechnique, Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand professed a sequential and progressive compositional procedure that was refractory to all transcendence. Based on a kind of *ars combinatoria*, it crafted simply conjugating components by addition, subtraction, repetition, rotation or intersection. It also abjured any resort to established typologies and supports their banning while posing a circumscribed archetypal taxonomy of strictly morphological lineage: cubic or cylindrical buildings, bi- or tripartite solids, permutations of square-based prisms with double squares, winged pavilions, colonnades with or without exedras etc., always regulated and ordered following strict modulations, indistinctly applicable to various genres of buildings. Being thus bereft of specific signs distinguishing them or any aspects of their own to characterize them, particular figurations may be indiscernible when used for residential buildings, courts, hospitals, churches, schools, barracks, detention facilities etc. – thus refuting a specific dialectal discourse of architecture celebrated for centuries as parameter for judgment and morphological paradigm for design procedures in Western architecture.

Then, the 19<sup>th</sup> century ushered in a new dawn for the arts proclaimed as romantic and rejecting any utilitarian basis for *artistic precepts*. But not even historicisms of Romanesque origin spurned the notion of architectural conceptions expressing character depending on the sensations with which a building had most affinity. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, imagination was producing scenarios, decorations and compositions thematizing sublime, picturesque, majestic, solemn, singular and other sensations in perspectives and designs that official art academies and annual or biennial salons lauded and disseminated. Visions, caprices and appropriations of all sorts were quick to emerge on this scene reflecting trends such as primitive, Moorish, archaic, medievalist, orientalist, etc. *Classical* architecture's aspiration to the poetics of symbol, scale and proportion was discarded in favor of prosaic literality of citations and pastiches.

New and different pathways were thus opened up. From them, each in their own time and manner, there arose both the maudlin inclinations of Romantic volitions and the positively operative intentions proclaimed in avant-garde programs and manifestos written by self-proclaimed *constructivist* artists. Both vilified the formula of the academies and the modes and traditions handed down from the age-old Art of Rhetoric. Both deliberately spurned any consolidated prescriptions or norms in the realm of the arts.<sup>26</sup> However, another aspect to be considered is that 15<sup>th</sup>-and 16<sup>th</sup>-century scholars and architects gained lexical and syntactic knowledge from their close-read exegesis of ancient authors and scrutiny of vestiges surviving from Greek and Roman antiquity, thus helping to explain the rigorous articulation of architecture practiced in Western culture for many centuries. It also explains the butt of rejection and anathemas that permeate the aims and propositions of avant-garde programs and manifestos that have proliferated since then.<sup>27</sup>

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Eupalinos or the Architect". In: *The Collected Works of Paul Valéry: Dialogues*. Stewart, S.W. (trans.). Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971, p.82. *Mais ce que je pense est faisable; et ce que je fais se rapporte à l'intelligible... Et puis... Écoute, Phèdre (me disait-il encore), ce petit temple que j'ai bâti pour Hermès, à quelques pas d'ici, si tu savais ce qu'il est pour moi! ? Où le passant ne voit qu'une élégant chapelle, ? c'est peu de chose: quatre colonnes, un style très simple, ? j'ai mis le souvenir d'un clair jour de ma vie. Ô douce méthamorphose! Ce temple délicat, nul ne le sait, est l'image mathématique d'une fille de Corinthe, que j'ai heureusement aimée. Il en reproduit fidèlement les proportions particulières. Il vit pour moi! Il me rend ce que lui ai donné...* (VALÉRY, P. *Eupalinos ou o arquiteto*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora 34, 1996, p. 52-53.)
- <sup>2</sup> VITRUVIUS. *Ten Books on Architecture*. Rowland, Ingrid D. (trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001
- <sup>3</sup> On January 13, 1563, advised by artist and art historian Giorgio Vasari, Cosimo de Medici founded Accademia e Compagnia dell'Arte del Disegno for the study and practice of painting, sculpture and architecture.
- <sup>4</sup> Indeed, by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, some saw architecture as primarily conceptual, unlike the materiality of building.
- <sup>5</sup> ARISTOTLE *Poetics*. Kenny, Anthony (introd. and trans.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- <sup>6</sup> A.C. Quatremère de Quincy, "Type" (1825). Wilder, Anthony Wilder, (introd. and trans.) *Oppositions 8* (Spring 1977), p. 147-50. *Le modele, entendu dans l'exécution pratique de l'art, est un objet qu'on doit répéter tel qu'il est; Le type est, au contraire, un objet d'après lequel chacun peut concevoir des ouvrages qui ne se ressembleroient pas entre eux.* (QUATREMÈRE DE QUINCY, A. C. *type entry*, In: *Encyclopédie Methodique – Architecture*. Liège: Panckouke, 1825.)
- <sup>7</sup> Book IV of Sebastiano Serlio's *Architecture* published in Venice in 1537 was the first to mention and illustrate architecture's five orders (Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and Composite), including modular ratios for column heights, to be subsequently confirmed by Vignola, Scamozzi, Palladio etc. SERLIO, Sebastiano. *Regole generali di architettura sopra le cinque manieri degli edifici, cioè Toscano, Dorico, Jonico, Corintio e Composito con gli esempi delle antichità, che per la maggior parte concordano con la dottrina di Vitruvio*. Venice, 1537.
- <sup>8</sup> In response to Matteo (de' Pasti) critique of the measures of the pillars for the new enclosure, Alberti advised him to follow the design and keep to the model for the new building "you see where the measures and proportions of the pillars come from: whatever you change will jar with all that music. (ALBERTI, L. B. *Letter of 18 November (1454) to Matteo de' Pasti*. New York: Pierpont Morgan Library. Translated for this edition) In: LOEWEN, Andrea Buchidid. *Lux Pulc hritudinis: sobre beleza e ornamento em Leon Battista Alberti*. Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra / Annablume, 2013, nota 3, p. 157.)
- <sup>9</sup> Interval corresponding to octaves on the diatonic scale.
- <sup>10</sup> Following a Hellenistic notion reiterated in Alberti's writings, complete congruence between the notions of beauty and perfection was posited, "beauty is concinnitas in exact proportion of all parts of the whole to which they belong, so that nothing may be added or subtracted, or changed without earning reproach." (ALBERTI, Leon Battista. *Da arte edificatória*. Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2011, p. 377. Translated for this edition.
- <sup>11</sup> The *Greek cross* design was governed by biaxial symmetry, with four arms (or naves) of equal extension. They are therefore members of the category of *central plan* buildings.
- <sup>12</sup> The *tempietto* is an eminent example of emulation of ancient works: it shows similitude and at the same time surpasses the building emulated. The inclusion of its plan, section and elevation in Serlio and Palladio's treatises indicate that, for the contemporary the merits of this architecture are equal to those of the ancient or even exceed them.
- <sup>13</sup> CATANEO, Pietro. *I quattro primi libri di architettura di Pietro Cataneo Senes*. Veneza, 1554, III, 1, fol. 35 v.

- <sup>14</sup> In those times of fierce schismatic clashes, the imaginary of anthropomorphic and anthropometric perfection no longer referred to the body of Adam - modeled by the Creator in his own image and likeness - but came to be associated with that of Christ on Calvary.
- <sup>15</sup> PALLADIO, Andrea *The Four Books on Architecture*. Tavernor, R. and Schofield, R. (trans.). Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997, 472 p.
- <sup>16</sup> In a lucid essay, Colin Rowe suggests that Le Corbusier's white villas of the 1920s use elements and proportions taken from Palladio's villas. Particularly *Ville a Garches* and *Ville Savoye*. (ROWE, Colin. *Las matemáticas de la vivienda ideal*. In: *Manierismo y arquitectura moderna y otros ensayos*. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1978.)
- <sup>17</sup> TAFURI, Manfredo. *La esfera y el laberinto: vanguardias y Arquitectura – de Piranesi a los años 70*. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1984. Particularly the chapter: “*El arquitecto loco*”: *Giovanni Battista Piranesi, La heterotopia y el viaje*.
- <sup>18</sup> Frederick the Great, of Prussia, was a contemporary of Louis XVI. He also built a series of gateways for Berlin, of which only the *Brandenburg Gate* (designed by Carl Gotthard Langhans in 1789) remains.
- <sup>19</sup> Rhetoric was also the destruction of most of them (together with the hated Bastille prison) as spurious symbols of the *Ancien Régime* fostered by the fury of mob rule during the terror years of the Great Revolution.
- <sup>20</sup> MILIZIA, Francesco. *Dizionario delle belle arti del disegno*. (1722 edition, I, p. 166) apud LEFAIVRE, L. and Tzonis, A. *The Emergence of Modern Architecture: A Documentary History, from 1000 to 1810*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004, p. 465.
- <sup>21</sup> “*To give a building character is to make judicious use of every means of producing no other sensations than those related to the subject.*” (BOULLÉE, E. L. *Architecture, Essay on Art*. Rosenau, H. (ed. and annot.), Da Vallée, S. (trans.). Accessed at <http://designspeculum.com/Historyweb/boulléetreatise.pdf> 188 p.
- <sup>22</sup> “*decorum (bienséance) leads to truth and necessarily preserves the artist from all that is alien, since it shows him the true place of that which is sublime, grandiose, simple, and elegant: perfection alone may lead to excellence in Art*” [Translated for this edition] (BLONDEL, Jacques-François. *Cours d'Architecture*. T. 1, p. 389-90, note K, apud: SZAMBIEN, Werner. *Symétrie goût caractère*. Paris: Picard, 1986, p. 96.)
- <sup>23</sup> BOULLÉE, E. L. Op. cit, p. 47-48.
- <sup>24</sup> Metropolitan church.
- <sup>25</sup> “*As the rhetorician orders elements of discourse by dispositio, the architect distributes the elements of building in composition. The feelings that a work ought to arouse in viewers arise from the character of its composition. Endowed with intelligence and legibility, architecture as discipline lays claim to discourse, architecture parlante, and the informed spirit comprehends the building in its type for the convenience of the arrangement of its elements. “Speaking architecture”, however is careful not to be degenerate, barbaric, loquacious, or cacophonous. Like the other arts, architecture is guided by rationality and thus contributes to comprehension, refines the senses, ennobles the feelings, enhances taste and moderates manners.*” (AZEVEDO, Ricardo Marques de. *Metrópole: abstração*. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2006, p. 99. Translated for this edition.)
- <sup>26</sup> For modernisms of constructivist leanings in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, programmatic, social and technical demands overlap, or even suppress stylistic aspirations and formal pretensions. For many of its proselytes with their deliberately narrow focus, dogma and architectural literature are seen as not only idle but harmful too.
- <sup>27</sup> By mirroring, however, an exact opposite may at times become merely an inversion of identical.

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