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The Ephemerality between the Scenographic and Monumental Architecture

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Abstract— Architecture is a narrative of places by the settlement of knowledge and human motivation. The built environment offers the space for that representation in each monumental, scenographic or pragmatic singularity. Public spaces provide for the synthesis between meanings and values that determine, or not, the continuity of built heritage. Between architectonic theory and practice, concepts and urban reality, the knowledge spectrum is huge. The ephemeral allows for creativity, but one must not forget about the responsibility of the Sacred, of the way Man related himself to the World. This symbiosis leads us to sustainability because in the process remains the question: What can we do the preserve and make architecture sustainable?

Index Terms— Architecture, Scenographic, Monumental, Sustainability.

I. INTRODUCTION

This template, within an urban environment finds different meanings for architecture which are transported towards conceptual and constructive relations. Throughout this work, which is not intended to be exhaustive or theoretical, we question the values of architecture regarding the relations of monumental visibility to the importance of the ephemeral within an urban context. If, on one hand, we tried to find differences that determine distinct positions in constructions, on the other hand, we also tried to find an evolution of meanings or theoretical relations that became important through out time as a reference or as a factor for transformation. Thus, one of the objectives will be to know the cases and another objective will be to understand the speech incorporated on the concrete reality of architecture.

We might even search to conduct a study on canons and their uses in architectonic forms to equate the composition of forms and their geometry because the study of proportions and geometry in Nature has been used since the days of antiquity, with great projection in Egyptian architecture as we illustrate in Fig. 1.



Fig. 1 – Egyptian Pyramids – Gize

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The pyramids are considered eternal forms by the forms presented and by a composition of stable matter. Within this design, there is also a deep understanding of geometric relationships and building proportions. Obelisks, as we observe in Fig.2 are an evidence of symbolic relations but also for their relations between matter and energy are another example of eternal forms.



Fig.2 – Rural settlement, Duas Igrejas, Northern of Portugal

The same goes for the megalithic monuments and monuments of antiquity such as Solomon’s temple, which was mythological and metaphorical justified by the Bible’s apocalyptic descriptions on the three times of existence. Nevertheless, its influence is wider on religious architecture and the geometric canon was amended with other relations within the same symbolism. The search for the sacred or the invariability of the canons and the variability and plurality in the architecture of the city cannot help pragmatically, the durability of materials and constructive techniques are the support of architectonic forms throughout time, an important branch for a temporal study of durability in architecture. With this situation, we want to study architecture without the boundaries of theoretical disciplines, to better understand the praxis of architecture and the importance of architecture in today’s culture and society.

II. THE SCENOGRAPHIC OF ARCHITECTURE

When we questioned the relations between the meaning of monuments or of sacred buildings and the scenographic or the ephemeral, which becomes transient, appears the recognition of this old interaction between man and his habitat has constituted one of the anchors of architecture linked to a place, a people and a tradition that, together with the physical conditions that surround the place, namely the shape of the territory, the materials, building systems, the definition of the palette of colors that characterizes the architecture, the use and optimization of natural resources determining the importance of the popular root architecture and constitute a further guideline of the research that we are starting now [1].

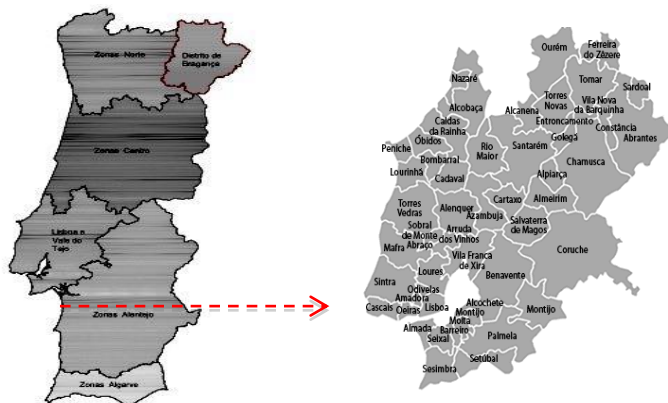


Fig. 3 – Map of Portugal and zoom to Lisbon Region

At the center of such comparison, we will analyze pragmatic realities or the buildings constructed under a predetermined function between the ambiguity and the complexity of the approach, the proposal lies more on the approximation to answers and less on the speculative sense: an approximation performed only through the study of architectures, of architects among other actors, that try to achieve the representativeness of architecture for all and that also try to reinterpret the value of architecture. One intends to study the architecture in the extent of the architect's work and its implications in the durability of architecture and urban visibility for the present and to the future. Within this context, a reading of the public space of Belem is presented. The space is located on the riverside area of the Tagus River, on the south-eastern part of Lisbon in Portugal as we can follow up in Fig. 3.



Fig. 4 – View of West Public Space of Belem Tower



Fig. 5 – View of East Public Space of Belem Tower

In this space as we can observe in Fig. 4 and Fig. 5 we will try to find the reasons behind it and its first constructions. As distinctive constructive realities in time, until today, we will also frame differences in meaning, starting from the dichotomy in the search for holy experiences and the pragmatic reasons that determine positions within the territory. On the other hand, the importance of the ephemeral or the scenographic within the realities known as permanent on the urban context are very valuable in the sustainability of the cities and Architecture. This context will be the support basis to find the intentions that the project has towards the city and the conscience architects have of past realities and the proposals presented to continue in the city as an urban space. In this sense and in the future, the relations established with the design, even if relatively distinct within each place, must be aware of their, even if ephemeral, representation and of the influence of each action that transforms architecture.

III. THE MONUMENTAL OF ARCHITECTURE

The Monumental aspect has a greater urban visibility, having a greater responsibility in durability relations and being more resistant to change. For Heidegger [2] these imprints imprinted on the territory are a natural extension of the human being, being able in certain circumstances to give to the place a dimension of metaphysical presence, since the symbolic values of the communities rural relations are intimately linked to the collective notion of space, communion and participation, and the relationship between man and geographical space has been processed from the primitive communities through symbolic processes. This notion was taken up by Aldo Rossi [3] when he came in defense of the symbolic dimension of urban space abandoned by the functionalist city model and by Norbert Shultz [4] associating the concept of genius loci with the notion of permanent type in the spatial configurations of a place, taken as a mode of construction of memory referenced when inhabiting a given cultural situation.

Notwithstanding, monumental buildings are sometimes articulated with new constructions and these relations call for a thorough analysis towards the responsibility of linking past values that had the intention of perpetuating cultural and identity relations. The scenographic releases architecture from this perpetual responsibility, but adds complexity to meanings and readings as we drawn in the image of Fig.6. The pragmatic seems shallow in meaning, but it is also important as a basis for activities and as the underlying frame of all human material materialization capabilities. Sometimes, architecture is considered to be anonymous, with no historical value, alienated from the situations that are repeated in quantity throughout the cities; nevertheless, it always presents more of the cultural values of the places and also calls for careful analyses of the design and alteration proposals. In this sense and

within an urban context, architecture has distinctive readings and, from that assumption, this study was born.

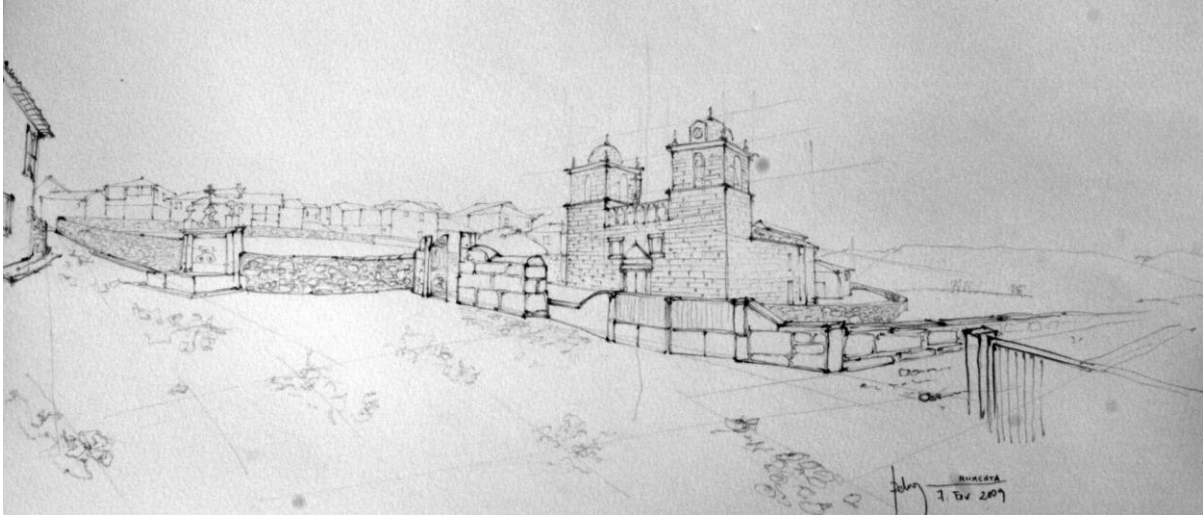


Fig. 6 – Perspective of the Public Space of the main Church in Moimenta, Northern of Portugal

Even if this work is presented as a study of a place and of existing or pre-existing architectures, we also intended to situate relations with new objects being built and that will be built, opening the place to new possibilities and needs. Our ambition was, thus, not reducing to the finite knowledge of one particular place and of its forms in the beginning of our research, but bearing in mind that this study might be essential to background important issues in architecture.

In supposedly developed culture and society the priority of progress is no longer essential so we must have the conscious that we are inserted within a western culture which is motivated towards globalization and, despite several contradictions which are originated for a conjunction of necessarily pluralist ideals, we value world heritage and preserve the identity of places as we shown in the diversity of images presented in this paper. History and forms from the past have an added value, but the forms of the present should be treated with the same care. The defense and conservation of heritage has a growing importance internationally, whether by its cultural value or by the justification of sustainable development, environment or social cohesion. The city reality does not always present this theoretical implementation and the city is the perfect example where nothing is preserved and everything is transformed.

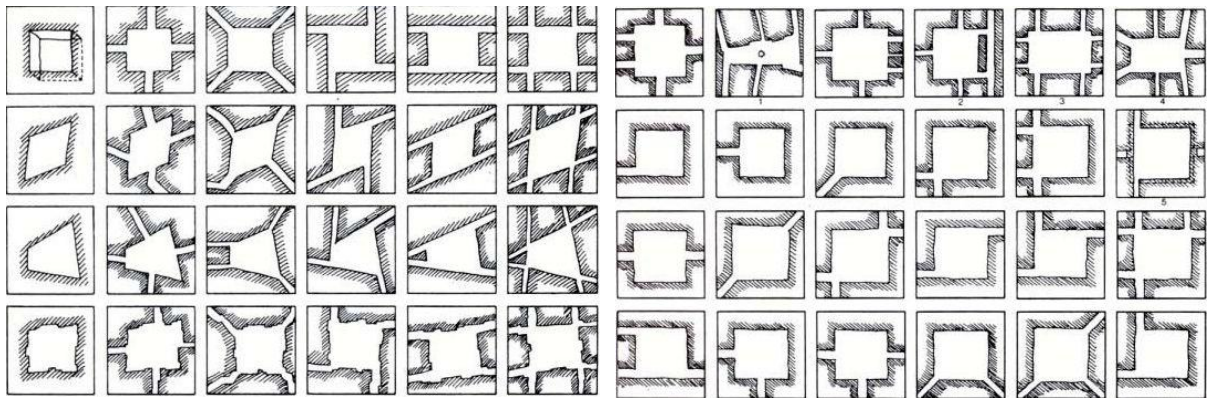


Fig. 7 – Study of Public Space by Rob Krier

A return to the past or to the use of forms from the past has a cultural and knowledge value; it also demonstrates a concern towards the sustainability of places, a crucial factor in the deceleration of the planet's physical alterations,



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which may have disastrous consequence to mankind. By appreciating buildings from the past, which include a vast part of city constructions, we appreciate the preservation of culture and past generations. In this sense, it is quit essential to reflect on rehabilitation, on the reuse of the entire constructed heritage and in qualifying urban spaces as we observe in the sketch of Rob Krier [5] illustrated in Fig. 7. It is equally important to contribute towards the enrichment of knowledge within the project area, because in the future new architectures will be those currently being projected and they will become, as a consequence, new heritage. Within this dichotomy, one knows that plenty will be necessarily transformed. Therefore, much of what belongs to the past will “die” and many of the current construction will not live a long life.

IV. THE PUBLIC SPACE AND SUSTAINABILITY

If cities are in constant mutation, the city and the public space might be transformed, over the course of a few decades, and no traces will endure of previous forms as we can reflect analyzing Fig. 8. On the other hand, they seem museum-like, serving a new industry: tourism. going from the dichotomy between preservation and alteration, one questions the factors that determine the survival of architecture. One thinks on the survival of unique architectonic elements in a singular analysis, or the cities in a plural analysis. The new demands of mankind increase the consumption of available resources that one uses in constant permanence our habitat and architecture as we exemplify in Fig. 9. To reconcile the capacity of these new demands with the complexity of an inherited history is a constant past and present challenge and that will endure forever and will create risk factors for the destruction of natural and built landscapes.



Fig. 8 – Circles of human action



Fig. 9 – The natural and humanized landscape

Much of the past is only preserved as a consumption matter, the interest for monuments or historical centres are not lifestyles, but rather a characteristic of current society. The architecture of past times is not always fully grasped and between the preservation, one often questions the issue of its continuity in time, of the changes it may contemplate or the predetermined ephemerality. The issue here is much more related to the conscience of the importance of architecture. Between the responsibilities towards preservation as a vital factor for the architecture’s conservation, but also related to the differentiation of architecture bearing in mind the monumental or the pragmatic. From initial relation of the projects’ genesis and options built in existing works, one approaches the continuity of architecture, assuming the differentiation of architecture in the urban context that determines differences in continuity. Throughout the times, this framing has been altered and new theories have added exponential value to pre-existing architecture.

V. CONCLUSION

In the 20th century the idea of heritage began to include historical monuments, historical cities and it was connected with place and environment. When we rethink the purpose of preservation, one may think of physical conservation, in a possible restoration of a materiality, maintaining the past in the present. One conserves history to retain cultural and social values but the cultural and social values is different from those in the past. All epochs’ result from the capacity to answer to cultural requests and the ways in which societies reinterpret the possibilities of the forms and space they present. Currently, we are living between the perplexities of the defense of a more or less historical heritage, within a society where conspicuous consumption is also revealed in the architecture. In this



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theme we will move forward to our ongoing research that is supported in the public space, the sustainability and the circular economy. We strongly believe that the future of architecture is going thru the process of the understanding that the monumental architecture changed his paradigm to the concept of Ephemeral.

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