

# HISTORY APPROACH IN ARCHITECTURAL TRAINING

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To be acquainted with the rules of history as much as possible helps man — or, in a wider sense, society — to make decisions more conscious: the same is true for the relation between the creating architect and the history of architecture. History approach in architecture is based on the comprehensive knowledge of bygone architectural conventions likely of importance for solving actual problems by conscious decisions, pointing out the continuous rebirth of the unity between theory and practice.

Development of history approach in the students during architectural training is likely to be much facilitated by pointing to fundamental rules valid throughout the history of architecture. What are, however, the regular relations in the history of architecture, and their ways of action, to make one sense these basic laws, the goal of education?

In addition to the problem of lecturing on history of architecture at technical universities, the answer is of importance for the concept of research in this special field. The question of revising and, if necessary, modifying the aims and methods of scientific research arises. In possession of an updated, newly evaluated, selected or even completed subject matter in history of architecture, discussion on education problems may be resumed. This will be a large-scale work on principles and practice, and it seems timely to be undertaken. Namely, education opportunities are improved by the invariably satisfactory enhancement, evaluation of fundamental relations, laws by the research in history of architecture. Elaboration of actually primordial principles and methods in research problems, likely to help establishment of regularities underlying a safe history approach in architectural education, seems to be imperative.

As an introduction to this serious task, let me raise some questions I feel worth of discussion upon my past experience, to be illustrated verbally — if you like it — by some practical examples by myself and — to my best knowledge — by some of my Colleagues.

Within the procedure of the development of architecture, the main points setting out the variation trend should be enhanced. The interacting

spheres of architecture could be distinguished according to the functional units of history reflected by architectural ambitions. This division in space and time of architectural tendencies is not absolutely identical to the conventional division of architecture accepted by the experts. The division of architecture according to cultures functionally connected in time and space in the course of history may suit better the historical determination of architectural ambitions than does a stiff time-dependent period system in the framework of politics. Pointing out identities and differences in the succession of interacting architectural spheres established on the basis of functional units of history seems to be more instructive on progress tendencies.

In the framework of considerably determined historical units, the procedure of architectural progress can be dynamically polarized; consideration of actual material and mental-spiritual needs of society permits a sharp distinction between creative activities of declining and ascending cultures. Presentation of the unity of contradictory tendencies helps to understand how architectural progress depends on the history of society, i.e. to definitely explain the driving forces of various architectural tendencies.

During their evolution, these driving forces may exhibit different exigencies towards architecture, obviously delivering data important for establishing the regularities. Namely, development of the relation contained in these architectural exigencies between traditional, conventional, foreign-borne attempts and new ambitions evolving inside the functional unit of history is by no means irrelevant for the subsequent deductions.

A similar importance is due to the coexistence of these exigencies as affected by economical and technical features, facilities, an examination likely to point to relations between history of society and architecture. A deeper insight may be obtained from analyzing the formulation of exigencies in different spheres according to identical aspects. Namely, no doubt, historical conditions are responsible for the domain — space-mass, material-structure, architecture and associated arts — and mode of action of ambitions, either traditional, conventional, foreign-borne, or new, evolving within the given functional unit of history. This information of historical value yields “formulae” permitting to deduce the relation between social tendencies and architectural trends, discerning self-contained rules of an architectural progress directly or indirectly related to the social one.

A complex set of investigations of the sequence of architectural spheres based on functional units of history may yield — last but not least — models for the architectural education on the cycles of actual exigencies, facilities and solutions, not as a pattern but as instructive examples transmitting a history approach for the practicing architect of to-day.

### Summary

Acquaintance with laws of history makes decisions of man, or in a wider sense, of society, a conscious act; the same is true for the relation between history of architecture and architect's activity. One may ask what relations have to be enhanced, what an approach to be developed to achieve this goal in architecture. Exact determination of preferential points marking out the trend of historical changes seems to be fundamental, likely to fit into the frames of actual functional historical units. In the range of each unit, dialectical relation between creative activities of uprising and declining cultures can be analyzed, resulting in "formulae" relating traditional, conventional ambitions, either accepted from abroad, or those evolving inside the functional historical unit, pointing out laws on purport and form of importance. All this helps to establish models of architectural education but not as examples to be followed but to provide an approach to history, instructive for actual creating architects.

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