

TRACKING CONTINUITIES BETWEEN THE MODERN AND  
VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE: COURTYARD IN THE WEST  
MEDITERRANEAN ARCHITECTURE AS A CASE STUDY

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MEDITERRANEAN ARCHITECTURE AS A CASE STUDY**

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## ABSTRACT

### TRACKING CONTINUITIES BETWEEN THE MODERN AND VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE: COURTYARD IN THE WEST MEDITERRANEAN ARCHITECTURE AS A CASE STUDY

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The main aim of this thesis is to search for the possible continuities of a particular spatial organization in the West Mediterranean culture, where the presence of modern and vernacular architecture will be shown to be affecting and integrating into each other. In the first chapter, the structure of the thesis is built upon the term Mediterraneanism. The general background of the region is also given with significant references to two publications; Fernand Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* and Horden & Purcell's *The Corrupting Sea*. Moreover, a general view of the voyage to the Mediterranean in history is briefly drawn to base my personal travel to the West Mediterranean countries. The second chapter of the thesis continues with the research built upon a more ethnographic study related with the voyage and its reflections. The main intent is to perceive the culture in a deeper sense and to reveal how it is connected with the vernacular architecture. In the third chapter, the thesis study tries to transcend the limits of vernacular and trace a continual spatiality in the modern examples of architecture with four case studies from France, Italy, Morocco and Tunisia.

Keywords: Vernacular, Modern, Mediterranean, Regionalism, Courtyard

## ÖZ

### MODERN VE YEREL MİMARLIKTAKİ SÜREKLİLİK ARAYIŞINDA BATI AKDENİZ MİMARLIĞINDA AVLU YAPISI

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Bu tez, Batı Akdeniz kültüründe varolduğu düşünülen belirli mekansal bir organizasyonun devamlılığının arayışına odaklanmaktadır. İzi sürülen bu devamlılığın bölgedeki yerel ve modern mimarlık örneklerinde karşılıklı etkileşim içerisinde birbirlerini dönüştürdükleri düşünülmektedir. Bu noktadan yola çıkan tez üç ana başlığa bölünmüştür. Birinci bölümde, tezin ana iskeleti Akdeniz ve Akdenizlilik kavramı üstünden kurulur. Bu konuda Fernand Braudel'in 2. *Felipe Dönemi'nde Akdeniz ve Akdeniz Dünyası* ve Horden ve Purcell'in "*The Corrupting Sea*" isimli kaynakları detaylı bir karşılaştırma altında incelenerek bölgeye ait genel bir bakış açısı ortaya konulur. Ardından, tarihte Akdeniz'e yolculuk gerçekleştirerek araştırma yapan kişiler incelenir. Tezin ikinci bölümünde ise Batı Akdeniz'da gerçekleştirdiğim kişisel yolculuğum ve onun sonunda ortaya çıkan gözlemlerim sunulur. Bu gözlemler aynı zamanda tezin etnografik alt yapısını da oluşturmaktadır. Buradaki asıl amaç kültürün yerel mimariyle arasındaki etkileşimi algılamak ve bunu ortaya çıkarmaktır. Üçüncü bölüm ise yerel mimaride avlu yapısının ve avlunun yarattığı mekansal organizasyonun izlerini modern mimari örneklerinde aramaktadır. Bu örnekler Fransa, İtalya, Fas ve Tunus'tan seçilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yerellik, Modernizm, Akdeniz Mimarlığı, Bölgeselcilik, Avlu



To My Family

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1.A Seek for a Continuity among Vernacular and Modern in the West Mediterranean

The “White Sea” (*Akdeniz*) for the Turks, “Our sea” (*Mare Nostrum*) for the Romans, the “Great Sea” (*Yam gadol*) for the Jews, the “Middle Sea” (*Mittelmeer*) for the Germans, the “White Middle Sea” (*al-Bahr al-Abyad al-Mutawassit*) for the Arabs and finally the “Sea between the lands”, namely Mediterranean in English and in the romance languages, establish the considerably varied structure of the Mediterranean in its etymologic roots in different languages. In addition to the lingual resources, the Mediterranean has built different vocabulary in the modern literature, such as the “Inner Sea”, the “Encircled Sea”, the “Friendly Sea”, and the “Bitter Sea” referring to the time of Second World War.<sup>1</sup>

In geography, the Mediterranean represents the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, which also comprises different seas in its borders. However, the term is more complex than its geographical definition. In search for continuity among the countries around the Mediterranean, it can easily be realized that, at the first gaze, there are differences between these countries mostly due to the political facts. However, the history and geography have always been the two main common issues when one intends to search for

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<sup>1</sup> Abulafia, D (2011). *The Great Sea: A human history of the Mediterranean*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press. p. xxiii.

continuity among the region. This also results in the questioning of the term itself. Is there an exact terminology that specifies and defines the region in a world where drawing borders is getting difficult? What are the challenges that we face in understanding the West Mediterranean where three continents geographically meet? In a wider sense, what is Mediterranean?



Figure 1.1. The Map of the Mediterranean Sea

Source: Google Earth

The question might have various answers according to responding disciplines such as anthropology, geology, sociology, environmental history, oceanography, or architecture. Each would point to different knowledge in order to end this issue of dispute regarding the distinctiveness of the region. However, it does not necessarily mean to require a definite scale of the argument, on contrary, create different Mediterranean's, each unfolded in different distributions of knowledge. Adrian Lahoud, in his article "The Mediterranean, A New Imaginary" (2013) discusses this variegation as:

"If these epistemic differences were not enough, the temporal scales brought to bear in explaining the Mediterranean range from its distant and somewhat catastrophic geographical formation to the bright flash of recent revolutions. Mediterranean historiography is so rich because it always invites methodological conjecture over the form and resolution of investigation, a continual oscillation

between commonality and diversity, time and space. Rather than seek consensus and strive to resolve this argument once and for all, it is more interesting to simply imagine the Mediterranean as a site of endless epistemological provocation.”<sup>2</sup>

Architecture has also got its inspiration from this “provocation” throughout the history of the Mediterranean. Barry Bergdoll, in his foreword to Jean-François Lejeune and Michelangelo Sabatino’s *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean* (2010), expresses the “Mediterraneanism” throughout its timeline with the words such as “the capacity of the local - usually domestic-vernacular to sustain both discourses of transcendent timelessness and of nationalist specificity, of both rootedness and regionalism and of innocence or freedom from learned and cultured symbolism, of a quest for abstraction and of the search for meaning.”<sup>3</sup>

The vernacular is a triggering word in Bergdoll’s words, which also creates the basis domain of this thesis study, so it is essential to talk briefly about the definition of the word. Bernard Rudofsky, in his influential exhibition and book “*Architecture Without Architects* (1964) at the Museum of Modern Art, defines the vernacular, as the title of his book refers, “non-pedigreed, anonymous, spontaneous, indigenous and rural.”<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Alan Colquhoun, in his essay entitled “Vernacular Classicism”, explains the word with its etymological origin with verna meaning “slave”, which defines vernacular as “a person residing in the house of his master”.<sup>5</sup> He refers the vernacular as “anterior to or untouched by classical theory and practice”.

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<sup>2</sup> Lahoud, A. (2013) “The Mediterranean, A New Imaginary”, *New Geographies*, 5: *The Mediterranean*, edited by Petrov, A. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Bergdoll, B. (2010) “Foreword”. *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identity*, edited by Jean-François Lejeune and Michelangelo Sabatino. New York: Routledge, p. xvi.

<sup>4</sup> Rudofsky, B. (1964) *Architecture Without Architects: A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture*, NY: Doubleday, p.2.

<sup>5</sup> Colquhoun, A. (1987) *Modernity and the Classical Tradition Architectural Essays*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press. pp. 21-31.

Early history of the vernacular, not only in terms of architecture but also art and literature, ranges to the landscape paintings of Nicolas Poussin or Claude Lorrain, while the first studies of vernacular as a structural influence in architecture were made by Karl Friedrich Schinkel who sought an alternative order, “a play between typological regularity and topographic adjustment, between innovation and tradition, between notional symmetry and programmatic accommodation.” These studies were further carried with Ludwig Persius, Friedrich August Stüler, Ludwig Hesse, Friedrich von Arnim, and others during 1830s.<sup>6</sup> The first formations of the traditional Mediterranean house can be seen in their architecture where the classical orders were consciously avoided. Moreover, the vernacular had not been truly referred to the place or the sense of locality until when some particular circumstances and facts, such as the way of living, climate, materiality, social factors or culture, were becomes more of an issue. Then, Bergdoll further develops the idea of vernacularism as it contributes a further development in understanding and forms a more complex historical layering of modernism. As the new century were about to come, this vernacularism of the “Mediterraneanism” would emerge into something that oscillates “between its role as modernism’s other and its foundation myth.”<sup>7</sup>

In his pioneering book, Rudofsky sees architecture as resembling a universal phenomenon and concerned that there is something essential lacking in architecture with the increasing movement of modernization in architecture. On the other hand, relating with modernism and its expression as the New Architecture (Neues Bauen), Josep Lluís Sert also explains the positioning of the term “vernacular” against the functionalist “machine-à-habiter” as it exists in every country in a timeless sense of architecture which is rather vernacular of the lowest class, classified according to the economic means at their

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<sup>6</sup> Bergdoll, B., 2010, op. cit., p. xvi.

<sup>7</sup> Bergdoll, B. (2010) op. cit., p. xviii.

disposal, rather than “in the sense as understood in architecture schools.”<sup>8</sup> As Sert states, the vernacular architecture began to draw attention when public belief of the dependent relationship of culture and materiality with the technological development was losing its popular interest.

Influenced by Rudofsky, this thesis aims to search for the possible continuities in the West Mediterranean culture, where the presence of modern and vernacular architecture will have reflections by affecting and integrating into each other. Here, I would like to continue with two other subsections of this chapter. First, I will draw a comparative analysis of two inventive publications in order to discuss two different approaches to the Mediterranean; Fernand Braudel’s *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II*, and Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell’s *The Corrupting Sea*. In the last subsection of this chapter, I will give a brief about the architects who had a *voyage* to the Mediterranean region, and the way they represented their works afterwards.

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<sup>8</sup> Lejeune, J. & Sabatino, M. (2010) “North Versus South: Introduction”. *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identity*, edited by Jean-François Lejeune and Michelangelo Sabatino. New York: Routledge. p. 5.

## 1.2. Re-reading the Mediterranean through Comparative Analysis of Fernand Braudel and Horden & Purcell

*The best witness to the Mediterranean's  
age-old past is the sea itself.  
This has to be said and said again;  
and the sea has to be seen and seen again.*<sup>9</sup>

The main aim of this chapter is to set the background scene for the region with a comparative analysis of two pioneering publications: Fernand Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II* (1972), and Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell's *The Corrupting Sea* (2000). This comparative analysis of two different publications from two different time era also provides different approaches to the Mediterranean that they both perfectly succeed in their own inventory ways.

Fernand Braudel is one of the significant historians regarding contemporary historiography with his approach to history as a fleeting ground always in motion rather than a solid one. His first publication, *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'Epoque de Philippe II* (1949) (*The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*) also became one of the most influential works regarding the history of the Mediterranean. It not only affected the definition of time in history writing, but also popularized the Annales School of history, founded by Lucien Febvre in the 1920s. Braudel with his colleagues from Annales School changed the way history was written with his three distinguished levels of time. He describes the time in three different levels. The "*longue durée*" defines the time of

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<sup>9</sup> Braudel, F. (2001) *Memory and the mediterranean*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p.3.

geography. The “*moyenne durée*” means the time of social and economic patterns and movements. Finally, the “*courte durée*” is the time of individuals and events.<sup>10</sup>

In his book, Braudel focuses on the Mediterranean World in a time period between the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, the main distinctive reason of this pioneering work is that there had been no such publishing that centers the Mediterranean Sea and its coastlands as the subject of it until Braudel.<sup>11</sup> He chose to concentrate on the sea rather than the human activities that took place on that land. This results in an approach much more regarding the space than the time. He disregards the limitations of the narrative history of the individual experiences, which also results in his own layering system of the history. First base of this layered structure consists of the geography or the environment. Upon that lay the social effects and finally the individuals. Braudel sets his approach to the Mediterranean history with those three separate layers, which will then be creating the main challenge for Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell in 2001.

In the earlier chapters of his book, Braudel describes the life of the mountain people and how they are connected with others living in a similar nature in terms of the way they build, grow food or trade. He says there are great similarities between different people living in similar mountain conditions even though they live pretty far from each other. On the contrary, they differ from the communities living on the plains and the plateau downhill.

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<sup>10</sup> Vanstiphout, W., “Braudel’s Donkey”, *New Geographies, 5: The Mediterranean*, edited by Petrov, A. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2013, p. 104.

<sup>11</sup> Before Braudel, the term ‘Mediterraneanism’ in literature ranges back to the eighteenth century in Winckelmann’s writings on Greek art where the ‘Mediterranean type’ was depicted as natural people –“lovers of the open air, happy, hospitable, unreflective, their society simple and harmonious”. This version of the Mediterranean can also be found in various European intellectuals such as Goethe, Schiller, Schlegel, Marx, Nietzsche or Burckhardt. See Horden, P. & Purcell, N., *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2000, p. 29.

As Wouter Vanstiphout also favors, that sectional observation of Braudel on the Mediterranean “does a better job of describing the essence and coherence of the region than the often politically defined maps, with zones of influences colored into a flattened representation of geography.”<sup>12</sup> However, space in Braudel’s approach yields its role to a cause-effect relationship in Horden and Purcell.

Horden and Purcell’s book, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* departs from where Braudel stops to the earlier times of the Medieval and Ancient Mediterranean. However, the authors present a more ecological perspective of the Mediterranean as also in their words: “Our task is the investigation of unity in space and continuity over time: these are the prerequisites of a distinctively Mediterranean history.”<sup>13</sup>

*The Corrupting Sea* opens with a simple but essential question: “What is the Mediterranean?” The concept of the region is set around one main question, while Braudel puts it around different specific features where each are specifically defined under similar qualities. As Lahoud says, “they propose that what is common about the Mediterranean is not a quality but a problem.” The problem about how to survive in the region socially, geographically, economically or technically creates the main common feature of the Mediterranean eventually.<sup>14</sup> Horden and Purcell follow a specific problem of survival in different micro-ecologies, and find its tracks that help them relating each one to create a complex network. According to Lahoud, the reason of the twenty years in the writing of *The Corrupting Sea* and the long bibliography of it lies in this process of following the tracks of specific forces. Their

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<sup>12</sup> Braudel, F., *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. Harper & Row, New York, 1972. In Vanstiphout, W. “Braudel’s Donkey”, *New Geographies, 5: The Mediterranean*, edited by Petrov, A., Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2013, p. 104.

<sup>13</sup> Horden, P. & Purcell, N., *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2000, p. 45.

<sup>14</sup> Lahoud, A. “The Mediterranean, A New Imaginary”, *New Geographies, 5: The Mediterranean*, edited by Petrov, A., Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2013, p. 85.

methodology of using a problem as a starting point rather than Braudel's own definition of categories such as “*longue durée, moyenne durée, courte durée,*” provides an emergence of the defined limits from “the concrete network of causes and effects in question”.<sup>15</sup> Horden and Purcell search for a specific problem behind an event, while Braudel searches for structure and category, as for instance, he sees the sea as one of most gathering structure of the Mediterranean:

“The best witness to the Mediterranean's age-old past is the sea itself. This has to be said and said again; and the sea has to be seen and seen again. Simply looking at the Mediterranean cannot of course explain everything about a complicated past created by human agents, with varying doses of calculation, caprice and misadventure. But this is a sea that patiently recreates for us scenes from the past, breathing new life into them, locating them under a sky and in a landscape that we can see with our own eyes, a landscape and sky like those of long ago. A moment's concentration or daydreaming, and that past come back to life.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Lahoud, A. “The Mediterranean, A New Imaginary”, *New Geographies, 5: The Mediterranean*, edited by Petrov, A., Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2013, p. 85.

<sup>16</sup> Braudel, F., *Memory and the Mediterranean*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2001, p.3.

### 1.3. A Voyage to the Mediterranean

*"For our goal was not only the East,  
or rather the east was not only a country and  
something geographical,  
but was the home and the youth of the soul.  
It was everywhere and nowhere;  
it was the union of all times."*

*Hermann Hesse, The Journey to the East (1956)*

This part of the thesis aims to put forth a voyage of the architect for consideration as a means of research methodology and to illustrate how this thesis research was evolved in a way that was based upon my personal voyage to North Africa and South Europe.

Sibel Bozdoğan puts forward the word “journey” as an inspiring metaphor for “opening up of new worlds and visions” especially used by the seventeenth and eighteenth century travelers and authors naming their publications such as *A Voyage Into Levant of Henry Blount* (1636), *The Six Voyages of Jean Baptiste Tavernier* (1677), *A New Voyage to the Levant* (1696).<sup>17</sup> However, a voyage for an architect, an artist or an author has been one of the most essential educations for centuries, beginning with the grand tours to Italy after the Herculaneum and Pompeii’s discovery in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Moreover, in art, the ‘Mediterraneanism’ could be traced to the landscape paintings of Nicolas Poussin or Claude Lorrain. Poussin’s landscape with St. John in Patmos (1640), for instance, represents how peacefulness and rationalism could melt into the landscapes of the Mediterranean.

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<sup>17</sup> Bozdoğan, S., “Journey to the East: Ways of Looking at the Orient and the Question of Representation”. *Journal of Architectural Education*, Vol. 41, No. 4, Taylor & Francis, (1988), p. 38.



Figure 1.2. Landscape with St. John in Patmos by Nicolas Poussin, 1640.

Source: Web. <<http://modernart2013.blogspot.com.tr/2013/04/landscape-with-saint-john-on-patmos.html>>

As stated above in Chapter 1.2., Wolfgang von Goethe was one of the first to reflect the vernacular day life, which was requisite to perceive the classical.<sup>18</sup> In the eighteenth century, the voyages became more concentrated on the local areas or small towns, rather than merely on famous monumental buildings. By the nineteenth century, with the help of writings of William Morris and John Ruskin, vernacular architecture became an influential interest in the voyage to the Mediterranean.<sup>19</sup> However, the first architect who sought

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<sup>18</sup> Guarneri, A. B., “Bernard Rudofsky and The Sublimation of the Vernacular”. *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identity*, edited by Jean-François Lejeune and Michelangelo Sabatino. Routledge, New York, 2010, p. 232.

<sup>19</sup> Guarneri, A.B., “Bernard Rudofsky and The Sublimation of the Vernacular”. *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identity*, edited by Jean-François Lejeune and Michelangelo Sabatino. Routledge, New York, 2010, p. 232.

to find “an alternative order, a play between typological regularity and topographic adjustment, between innovation and tradition, between notional symmetry and programmatic accommodation” was Karl Friedrich Schinkel. His research about the farmhouses in his grand tour to Italy in 1803-1805 also provided a basis for the “romantic classicism”.<sup>20</sup>



Figure 1.3. Farmhouse in Capri, Karl Friedrich Schinkel, 1804, Italy.

Source: Lejeune, J. F., and M. Sabatino, eds. *Modern architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular dialogues and contested identities*. London: Routledge, 2010.

Schinkel was chosen as the inspiring role for Adolf Loos when he had been traveling to Italy several times from 1906 to 1930. His house project designed for the actor Alexander Moissi could be defined as his expression of

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<sup>20</sup> For the creation of a particular villa style and its effects on the Mediterranean vernacular sources, see Bergdoll, B., “Foreword”. *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identity*, edited by Jean-François Lejeune and Michelangelo Sabatino. Routledge, New York, 2010, p. xvi.

the Mediterranean vernacular if one does not search to realize the obvious tracks of the classical. As Benedetto Gravagnuolo claims, for Loos, like Schinkel, the geraniums and the white volumes did not have climatic or regional limits, but rather represented the “modern” epiphany of the eternal present of the classical.”<sup>21</sup>

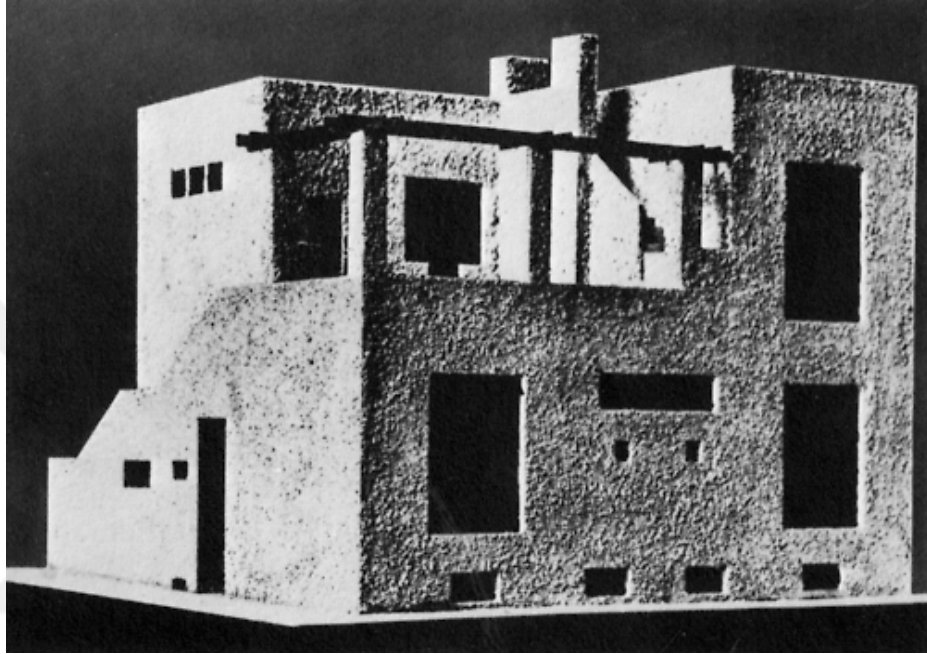


Figure 1.4. Villa Moissi, Adolf Loos, Venice, Italy, 1923

Source: Web. < <http://thecharnelhouse.org/2014/03/17/someone-is-buried-here-adolf-loos-on-architecture-and-death/adolf-loos-villa-moissi-vienna-austria-1923-via-archiveofaffinities/>>

In the twentieth century, Le Corbusier launched a trip to Italy in 1908 and –more importantly- the *Voyage d’Orient* in May 1911 beginning from Berlin, which includes Balkans, Turkey, Greece and Italy. His trip around the Mediterranean Sea formed a series of observations and sketches including his

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<sup>21</sup> Gravagnuolo, B., “From Schinkel to Le Corbusier: The Myth of the Mediterranean in Modern Architecture”. *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identity*, edited by Jean-François Lejeune and Michelangelo Sabatino. Routledge, New York, 2010, p. 22.

second grand tour that took him to North African countries in 1931. However, the reason the *Voyage d'Orient* distinguishes itself from the others is its subjective way of looking at the Orient especially when compared to the seventeenth and eighteenth century travelers and their methodical vision. As Bozdoğan states, he preferred to experience the Orient and his own self in it, rather than merely observe and record it as if it was an object.<sup>22</sup> After Schinkel and his classical expressions, Le Corbusier summarizes his journey in his article, “Confession”, in an unambiguously emotional way as:

“I embarked on a great journey, which was to be decisive, through the countryside and cities of countries still considered unspoilt. From Prague I went down the Danube, I saw the Serbian Balkans, then Rumania, then the Bulgarian Balkans, Adrianople, the Sea of Marmara, Istanbul (and Byzantium), Bursa in Asia. Then Athos. Then Greece. Then the south of Italy and Pompeii. Rome. I saw the grand and eternal monuments, glories of the human spirit. Above all, I succumbed to the irresistible attraction of the Mediterranean. And it was high time, after ten years’ work on German decorative art and architecture. The Turkey of Adrianople, Byzantium, of Santa Sophia or Salonica, the Persia of Bursa, the Parthenon, Pompeii, then the Coliseum. Architecture was revealed to me. Architecture is the magnificent play of forms under the light.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Bozdoğan, S., “Journey to the East: Ways of Looking at the Orient and the Question of Representation”. *Journal of Architectural Education*, Vol. 41, No. 4, Taylor & Francis, (1988), p. 38.

<sup>23</sup> Le Corbusier, “Confession,” in *The Decorative Art of Today*, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1987, pp.206-207, in French, *L’Art Décoratif d’Aujourd’hui*, Paris, Editions Cres, 1925, pp.210-211. Cited in Gravagnuolo, B., “From Schinkel to Le Corbusier: The Myth of the Mediterranean in Modern Architecture”. *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identity*, edited by Jean-François Lejeune and Michelangelo Sabatino. Routledge, New York, 2010, p. 30.

Bozdoğan remarks that what makes Le Corbusier's *Voyage d'Orient* unique for its time was his state that was free of the encyclopedic vision, free of "stylistic, typological or taxonomic ordering" and free of "prospects of publication and disciplinary recognition."<sup>24</sup> One can sense the emotional view in Le Corbusier's sketches from his voyage rather than them being in much more classical vision like the sketches of art students sent to a traditional grand tour then. Therefore, his way of seeing or observing gave way to more of a way of experiencing or feeling the place, *locus*. One of the elements that helped him lead to such a emotional approach is Le Corbusier's sketches which are fragmented in a way that do not prefer giving all parts of a building fully detailed. On the contrary, he leaves the rest for perception of the individual. Those representations of Le Corbusier's voyage, devoid of total reality, create a sense of unframed reflected vision of his experienced perception.<sup>25</sup> His conclusion from *Voyage d'Orient* gives a clue of this sensuous value of "living memories":

"Why have I undertaken this fruitless task? ... I thought it would be nice to have living memories of this journey. (But) these notes are lifeless: the beauties I have seen always break down under my pen."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Bozdoğan, S., "Journey to the East: Ways of Looking at the Orient and the Question of Representation". *Journal of Architectural Education*, Vol. 41, No. 4, Taylor & Francis, (1988), p. 40.

<sup>25</sup> For an inspiring article about the representations of the Orient and the concept of "enframing" within the Orientalist construct, See Bozdoğan, S., "Journey to the East: Ways of Looking at the Orient and the Question of Representation". *Journal of Architectural Education*, Vol. 41, No. 4, Taylor & Francis, (1988), pp. 38- 40.

<sup>26</sup> Le Corbusier, *Journey to the East*, edited and translated by Zaknic, I. in collaboration with Pertuiset, N., MIT Press, Cambridge, MA 1987, p. 256.

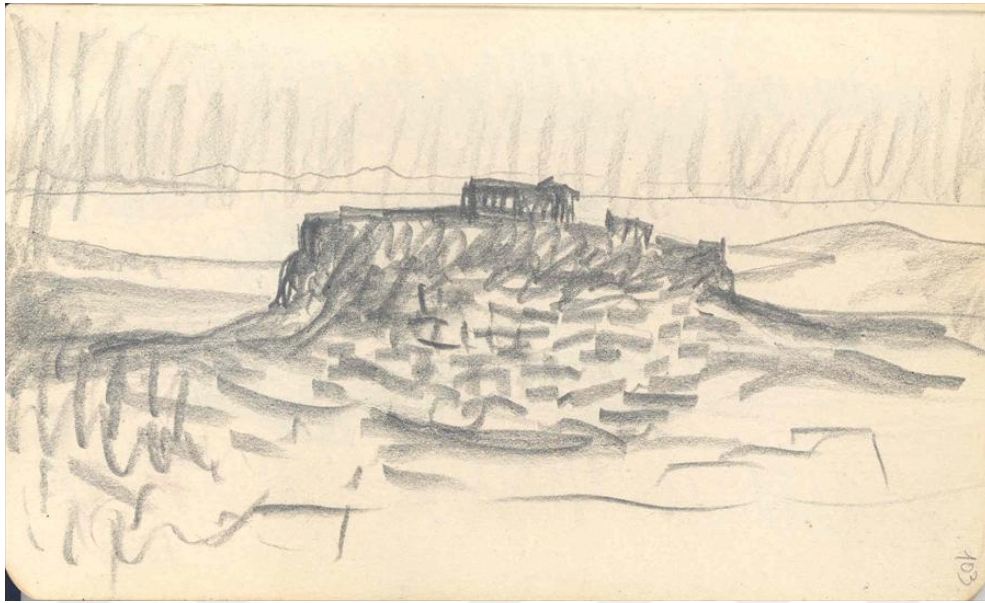


Figure 1.5. Sketch of L'Acropole, Athènes, Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, 1911.

Source: Web. < <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/466474473881102648/>>

The effects of his *Voyage d'Orient* could be traced throughout the life of Le Corbusier and his work. That was undeniably confessed by himself for when his autobiographical notes were found after his death in 1965:

“Along those years I have become a man of everywhere. I have traveled across the continents. Yet, I have only one deep attachments: the Mediterranean. I am the Mediterranean, strongly... Mediterranean, Queen of form and light. Light and space... My recreations, my roots, they must be found in the sea that I have never ceased to like... The sea is movement, and endless horizon.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Le Corbusier, handwritten note transcribed in *Le Corbusier et la Méditerranée*, p.7. Cited in Gravagnuolo, B., “From Schinkel to Le Corbusier: The Myth of the Mediterranean in Modern Architecture”. *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identity*, edited by Jean-François Lejeune and Michelangelo Sabatino. Routledge, New York, 2010, p. 33.

By the time, Louis I. Kahn was also another important figure in experiencing and representing the Mediterranean. His travels to Capri, Positano and Amalfi coast initiated him to produce a series of masterful sketches.



Figure 1.6. Sketch of Positano, Italy, Louis Kahn, 1929.

Source: Lejeune, J. F., and M. Sabatino, eds. *Modern architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular dialogues and contested identities*. London: Routledge, 2010.



Figure 1.7. Photograph of the roofs and chimneys in Oia, Santorini, Bernard Rudofsky, 1929.

Source: Lejeune, J. F., and M. Sabatino, eds. *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular dialogues and contested identities*. London: Routledge, 2010.

Bernard Rudofsky was one of the other travelers who was enthusiastic about the Mediterranean culture. He began to travel with his trip to Bulgaria and Turkey in 1925, and continued with several trips to Italy, and a grand tour including Istanbul and Greece in 1929. He was also one of the architects who refused to develop encyclopedic information, on the contrary gather experiences, stories or new ways of life. His particular interest in a spatial organization of the courtyard in the Mediterranean culture will also be discussed in detail throughout the second chapter of this thesis.

With respect to twentieth century architects' –such as Le Corbusier , Kahn or Rudofsky- pioneering vision within the emphasis of living and representing the voyage in a personal framework, this thesis project also feels the need for a voyage to Mediterranean which would establish the point of origin in the research process and lead the main methodology of the study. The project is delimited with the west part of the Mediterranean because of my personal interest in the region and that the subject requires a constriction to be

able to go deeply into the assertion. Therefore, the voyage takes place in a circled route including, Morocco, Tunisia, Italy and France. This not only helps to create a consistent and measurable analysis of the region, but also creates an oxymoron including two different continents, religions, cultures and traditions, which vary even more when analysis between the countries is the case.





**CHAPTER 2**

**EXPERIENCING THE VERNACULAR DIALOGUES  
THROUGH AN ANALYSIS OF A PARTICULAR STRUCTURE  
OF THE CENTRAL SPACE**

**2.1. A Common Enclosed Spatial Organization: The Courtyard in the  
Mediterranean House**

After the theoretical brief of the “Mediterraneanism” framed in the first chapter, I aim to search for a particular continuity, that can be traced in different works included in my voyage: the courtyard structure in the Mediterranean House. Bernard Rudofsky has been very influential in the research process of this thesis since he was attracted to the “everyday architecture” in the Mediterranean and puts forward the problem of the dwelling that was mostly seen as an inanimate object until then. Therefore, in this chapter, I firstly aim to frame the theoretical background through a perusal of Bernard Rudofsky and his discourse, then to list some of the formal qualifications of the courtyard in the Mediterranean house. The evolutionary phases of a courtyard house ranges back to the Roman *domus* where there was an introverted spatiality with a central space surrounded by the atrium and few connections or openings to the exterior. However, this physical evolutionary phase of the courtyard is not included in this thesis since I aim to focus on its relationship with the domestic life of the dweller.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> For another thesis which explores the physical conception of the courtyard in the Mediterranean region, especially related with the typical Andalusian house,

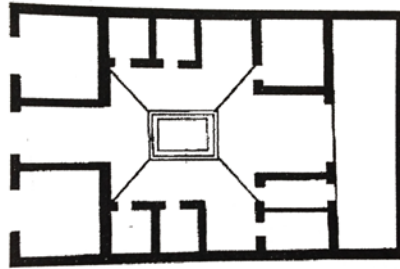
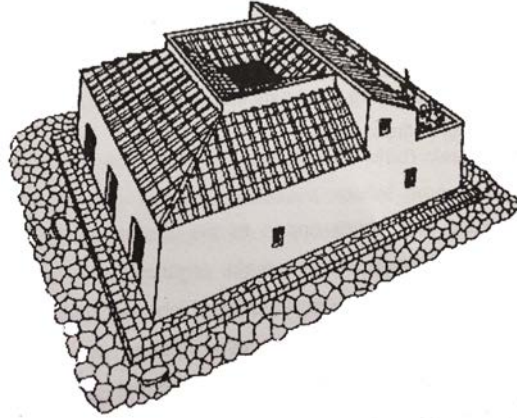


Figure 2.1. The patrician domus of the third century B.C. reconstructed in plan and axonometric.

Source: Göksoy, B., *Tracing Continuities within the Mediterranean Space*, METU Department of Architecture, Ankara, 1999.

According to Rudofsky, one of the main distinctive determinants for a dwelling is its capability of supplying a quality of material life, or as Frank Lloyd Wright puts in words, “the joy of living”.<sup>29</sup> While Gio Ponti, Le

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See Göksoy, B., *Tracing Continuities Within the Mediterranean Space*, METU Department of Architecture, Ankara, 1999.

<sup>29</sup> Guarneri, A. B., “Bernard Rudofsky and The Sublimation of the Vernacular”. *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identity*, edited by Jean-François Lejeune and Michelangelo Sabatino. Routledge, New York, 2010, p. 235.

Corbusier, or other modern critics stated their own perception of the dwelling as a source of quality of life, in the long term, Rudofsky was one pioneering critic of the time, who sought to find the clues of the domestic life without any mechanical approach.

As Andrea Bocco Guarneri states, Bernard Rudofsky sees the courtyard as another variation of “the pure concept of “room” as the fundamental architectonic entity”.<sup>30</sup> Rudofsky sees the walls surrounding a room as the significant determinant quality of the architectural space. However, a space does not have to be enclosed with a roof in order to be defined as a room. This idea of the enclosed spatiality was one of his explorations that led him to the concept of “outdoor room”.<sup>31</sup>

The reason why Rudofsky’s approach to architecture did not care to express a specific formal experimentation is that he prefer to emphasize the dwellers that would fill life into the dwelling, not the architecture itself. As Guarneri says:

“For him, when the occupants do not have to concentrate their energy on the architecture – be it in the form of creative endeavor or of visual distraction – then they can dedicate it to the intensity of their life... The impossibility of simulating a primordial innocence in a modern architectural project did not exclude the possibility to borrow from the vernacular architecture and the frugal way of life of its habitants, a dignity, a reserve, and a wisely controlled naïveté. At the same time, his works made explicit his profound knowledge of traditional Mediterranean architecture: on the one hand, the sublimation of specific formal and constructive elements; on the other, the formulation of specific principles of composition.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Guarneri, A. B., “Bernard Rudofsky and The Sublimation of the Vernacular”. *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identity*, edited by Jean-François Lejeune and Michelangelo Sabatino. Routledge, New York, 2010, p. 236.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 236.

Coming back to the concept of “outdoor room”, in one of his drawings, a living room including a garden within is depicted with surrounding walls and even a piano inside. The idea of a basic space surrounded with orthogonal high walls challenged and helped him create his own vision of the house. He also connects the concept of “outdoor room” with the Persian language, as he states that “the Persian word *Paradise* means a garden of pleasure surrounded by walls.”<sup>33</sup>

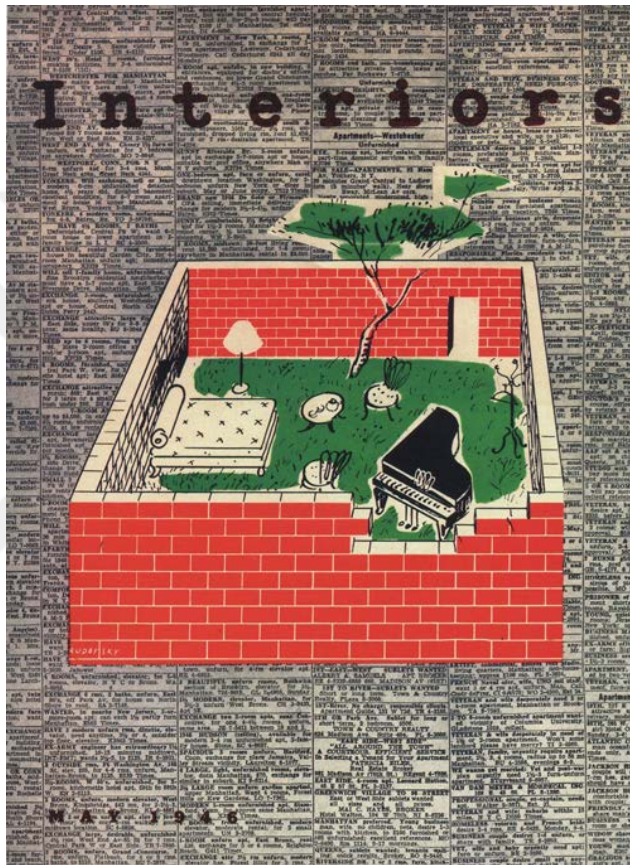


Figure 2.2. Sketch of an “outdoor room”, Bernard Rudofsky, 1946.

Source: Lejeune, J. F., and M. Sabatino, eds. *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular dialogues and contested identities*. London: Routledge, 2010.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 237.

Gaston Bachelard, in his book, *The Poetics of Space*, sees the house as the perfect intermediary for expressing the character, the state of fully being, with an increasing physical sensation.<sup>34</sup> This encouraged Rudofsky to publish his experiences rather than to create informative examples of model houses, and resulted in his search for an architecture extracted out of the limits of theory, and more humanized.<sup>35</sup> After Le Corbusier's concept of a house that is a machine for living, Rudofsky sees the dwelling more as an instrument or living:

“The house as a machine for living ought to be run by a more dependable, more predictable, inmate than man ... Assuming that in the future we shall be able to live the life of humans, the house of man will have to become once more an instrument for living, instead of a machine for living.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Bachelard, G., *The Poetics of Space*, translated by Maria Jolas, Orion Press, New York, 1964.

<sup>35</sup> Guarneri, A. B., “Bernard Rudofsky and The Sublimation of the Vernacular”. *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identity*, edited by Jean-François Lejeune and Michelangelo Sabatino. Routledge, New York, 2010, p. 238.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 245.

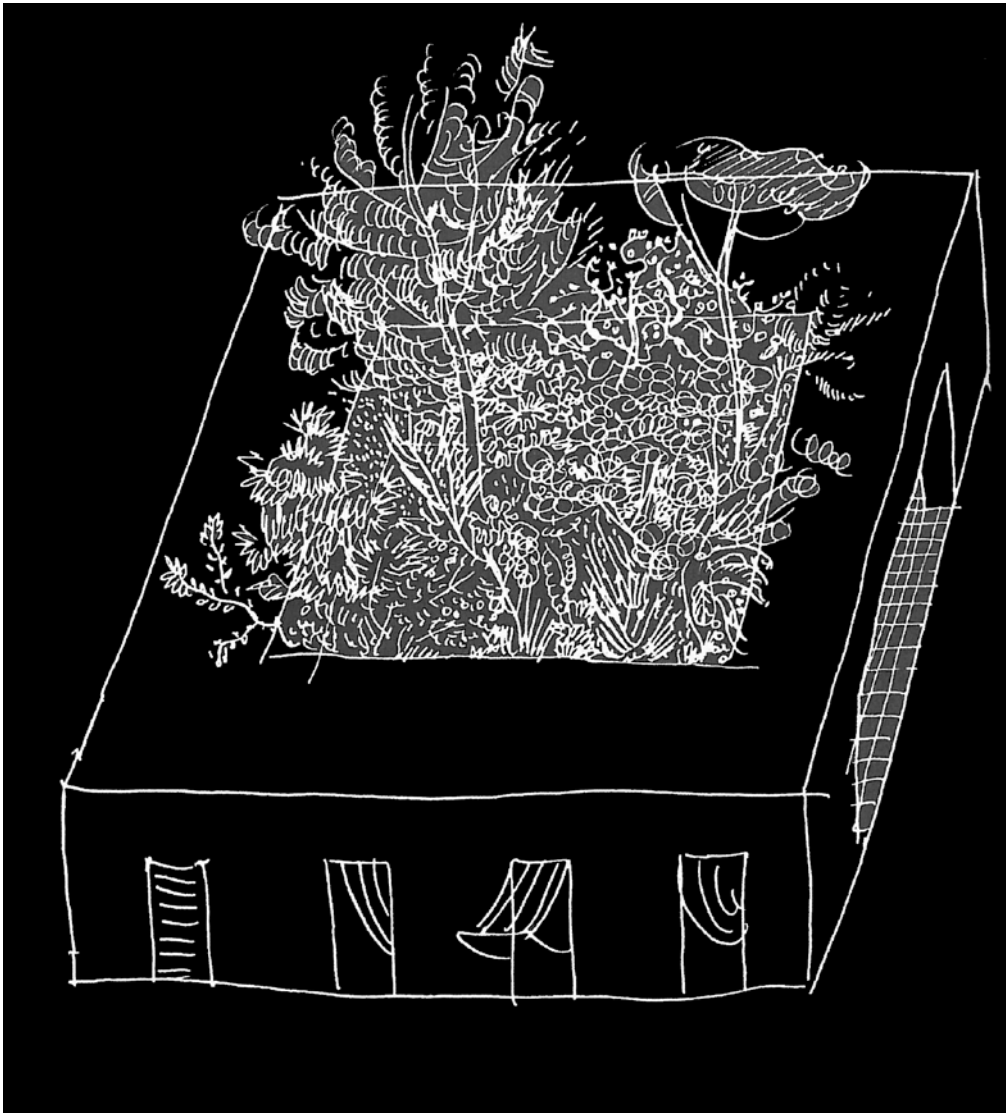


Figure 2.3. Sketch for a patio house, Bernard Rudofsky.

Source: Lejeune, J. F., and M. Sabatino, eds. *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular dialogues and contested identities*. London: Routledge, 2010.



Figure 2.4. Naive perspective of the Procida house, Bernard Rudofsky, 1935.

Source: Lejeune, J. F., and M. Sabatino, eds. *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular dialogues and contested identities*. London: Routledge, 2010.

A courtyard has a vast role not only in a theoretical way but also in a formal architectural way of thinking. The main distinctive moment in the creation of the courtyard is the point where the environment is cut off from the house with surrounding walls. This rupture also creates the unity among the dwellers. Even though this personalized unity and its cosmic value –as Hassan Fathy puts in words- was lost when the one-family house had transformed into the house for multiple families, Attilio Petruccioli says that the courtyard preserves its strong tie to the societies having the power of uniting.<sup>37</sup>

To conclude this section about the different conceptions of the courtyard, I will continue with my voyage to the North African medina to search for the reflections of the courtyard in different perspectives and different places.

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<sup>37</sup> Petruccioli, A., *Bellek Yitiminin Ardından, Akdeniz İslam Kent Dokusunun Öğrettikleri*, YEM Yayın, İstanbul, 2008, p.79.

## **2.2. Observations on the Central Space in the North African Medina**

This chapter aims to put forward the reflections of my personal travels to North Africa including Morocco and Tunisia, where I believe that it is worth searching for the continuities regarding the centrality in the old Medina of the cities. As stated in the chapters above, my voyage was under a great influence of Rudofsky's way of experiencing his travels. Therefore, I did not prefer to search for a particular information while traveling. On the contrary, I especially wanted my experiences throughout my trip to lead the way and reveal its subjective stories.

### **2.2.1. Morocco**

To begin with Morocco, if it would be essential to analyze the traditional Moroccan house in a typological way, three main characteristics are observed throughout my voyage to Morocco which was also valid for Tunisia. Firstly, the house is designed around a central courtyard which is open and lit from above. The longitudinal rooms are arranged accordingly to be accessed from the courtyard and connected with semi-open corridors that again related with the central space. And finally, there are no doors from the rooms opened to the outside of the house, and most of the situations no windows, neither.



Figure 2.5. A photograph of children playing in front of a central park in Casablanca

Source: Author's personal archive



Figure 2.6. A photograph from the top of a house, Chefchaouen, Morocco, where the daylight from the roof is passed to the courtyard of the house.

Source: Author's personal archive

The reflection of this finds itself in the facades with continuous street walls without openings. It is one of the facts that make you lose your way in the medina and not be able to recognize the adjacent houses from each other as, for instance, every traveler experiences in the medina of Fes, like myself.

### **Chefcahouen**

After my first destination, Casablanca, and its colonial reflections, the old city of Chefchaouen was the second stop in my trip, where it was promising regarding to observe the vernacular life. After Casablanca's white, now the time was for Chefchaouen's blue. The walls in the old city were painted mixing with blue and white.



Figure 2.7. Roof of a house in the old city of Chefchaouen.

Source: Author's personal archive



Figure 2.8. A street view from the old city of Chefchaouen.

Source: Author's personal archive



Figure 2.9. Chefchaouen

Source: Author's personal archive

However, the distinguishing feature was not only the color of the city, but also the mysterious atmosphere. It is hard to mention the brightness of the city full of liveliness when Chefchaouen is the case. During all my visits in the medina, I encountered very few local people walking in the streets, and when I could, I had the feeling of revealing someone's secret life. It could be related with the city being very popular in terms of tourism, but it was obviously very secret in terms of the domestic lives of the local people from Chefchaouen.



Figure 2.10. The city view of Chefchaouen from the roof of the pension I was staying.

Source: Author's personal archive



Figure 2.11. A street view in Chefchaouen.

Source: Author's personal archive



Figure 2.12. A street view from Chefchauen.

Source: Author's personal archive

The reason behind this surprisingly introverted day life in Chefchaouen can also be related with the urban fabric of the medina. Since all the houses are attached and it is often impossible to understand the borders of the houses from the street façade, to be able to enter and witness the real social life of the local individuals takes a lot of effort. Even when I dared to talk to a Moroccan man entering his house to get a permission to see the courtyard, he did not respond in a way I imagined, and all I could get to see was a tiny passage from the street opening to the courtyard of the house.



Figure 2.13. The entrance view of a house in Chefchaouen.

Source: Author's personal archive

## Meknes

After Chefchaouen, Meknes was promising to provide the sense of vernacular everyday life that I had been looking for, since the old city was not populated largely by tourists. The houses in the old medina –maybe much more than the Chefchaouen houses– were attached to form a continuous street line so that you can get the sense of being lost if you are walking without any aim or destination. Since it was night when I arrived the city, the streets were solitary, but again the same instinct surrounds the wanderer; the feeling that the main liveliness was hiding inside the houses and perhaps in the courtyards.



Figure 2.14. Square view from the old city of Meknes.

Source: Author's personal archive



Figure 2.15. A street view from Meknes.

Source: Author's personal archive



Figure 2.16. The courtyard of the Mausoleum of Moulay Ismail in Meknes.

Source: Author's personal archive



Figure 2.17. The surrounding walls of the city in Meknes.

Source: Author's personal archive

## Fes

The old medina of Fes –like the other medinas I traveled in Morocco– consists of houses, all attached to each other, even the religious public buildings are a part of this continuing urban structure. That’s the reason of the city being popular with its streets which oblige you to get lost inside.

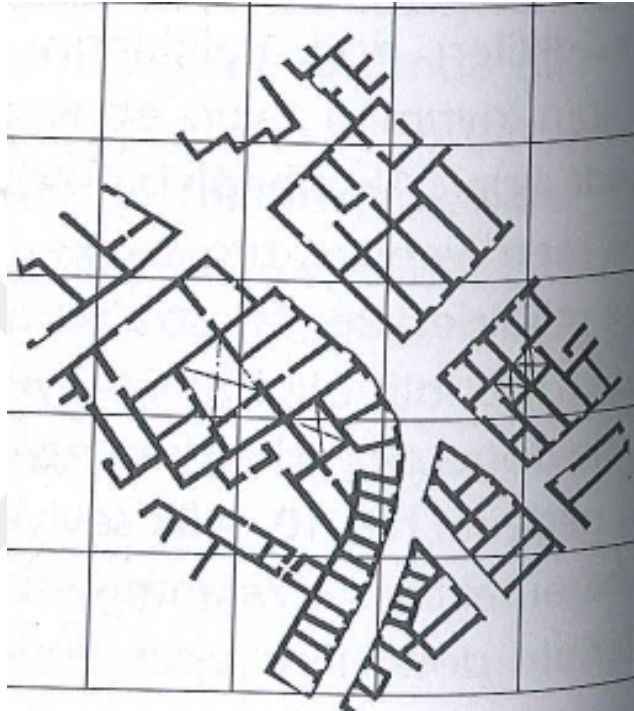


Figure 2.18. A street plan of Fes, Morocco

Source: Petruccioli, A. Bellek yitiminin ardından: Akdeniz İslam kent dokusunun öğrettikleri. İstanbul: Yapı-Endüstri Merkezi Yayınları, 2008.

Fes was more eager to accept the wanderer to the secretly hidden interior. Passing through a narrow street, you can arrive a significant central open space where the light fills in from the roof, with a gentle splash of the water in the middle.

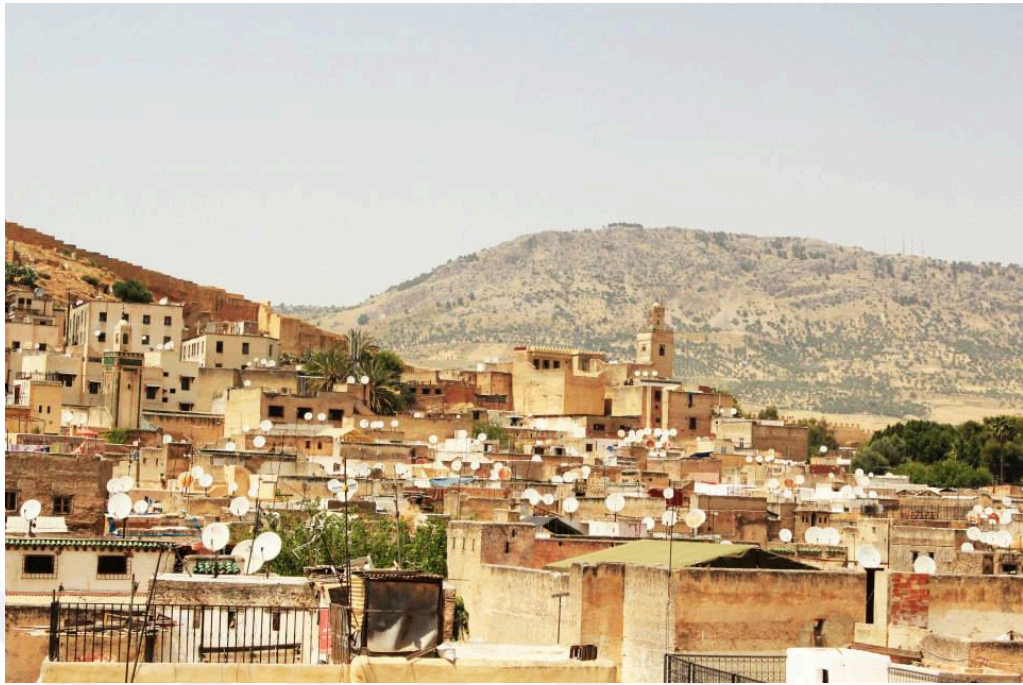


Figure 2.19: A photograph from the terrace of the pension in Fes.  
Source: Author's personal archive



Figure 2.20. A street view of Fes, Morocco  
Source: Author's personal archive



Figure 2.21. A street view of Fes, Morocco

Source: Author's personal archive

### **Atlas Mountains & Merzouga**

As I headed to the south part of the country, the surrounding landscape also changes into a much more terrestrial climate. First, the great Atlas Mountains welcome you with a frightening character with no green area until, you find out that you have already approached to a *Oued* and the surrounding green forest.



Figure 2.22. A photograph from the road to Merzouga

Source: Author's personal archive



Figure 2.23. The landscape with the Atlas Mountains behind.

Source: Author's personal archive



Figure 2.24. A photograph from an *Oued* in the road to Merzouga

Source: Author's personal archive

When I arrived in Merzouga, I met my guide to host me for a night in the desert. He showed me around, and told me about the old water distribution system the city once used. After the water is reached to the water channel source, it is directed into a tiny path and as it follows, it is distributed into different paths which lead to different parts of the neighborhoods.

Then, we set off on a journey towards the desert with the camels and guides – so called *blue men*. The road to the desert settlements is a tough road to follow until you get used to how to ride a camel. After that, you can only enjoy the wind that the peaceful land full with yellow sand and nothing more that surrounds you.



Figure 2.25. The water source and its distribution system in Merzouga

Source: Author's personal archive



Figure 2.26. The desert trip with *blue man*

Source: Author's personal archive



Figure 2.27. Sunrise in the desert  
Source: Author's personal archive

## Marrakech

The last destination of my voyage in Morocco, Marrakech was one of the busiest cities in Africa and also one of the most populated in Morocco. The welcoming famous Jemaa el-Fnaa could be considered as an interpretation of the central open space from a building scale into an urban scale. As in the courtyard of a house, the square is also isolated from the outer streets or squares in a way that it gets difficult as an individual finds him/her excluded from the square. It is somehow hard to find the way back to the square because of the urban fabric full of equally narrow streets and the way they are connected with the square. However, when entered to this enormous square of joyful atmosphere full of tradesmen, snake charmers, dancing boys and musicians playing pipes, tambourines and African drums, it gets impossible to exit easily.



Figure 2.28. Jemaa el-Fnaa in Marrakesh

Source: Web. < <http://www.larevista.ro/pasiune-si-exotism-piata-jemaa-el-fna-din-marrakesh/>>

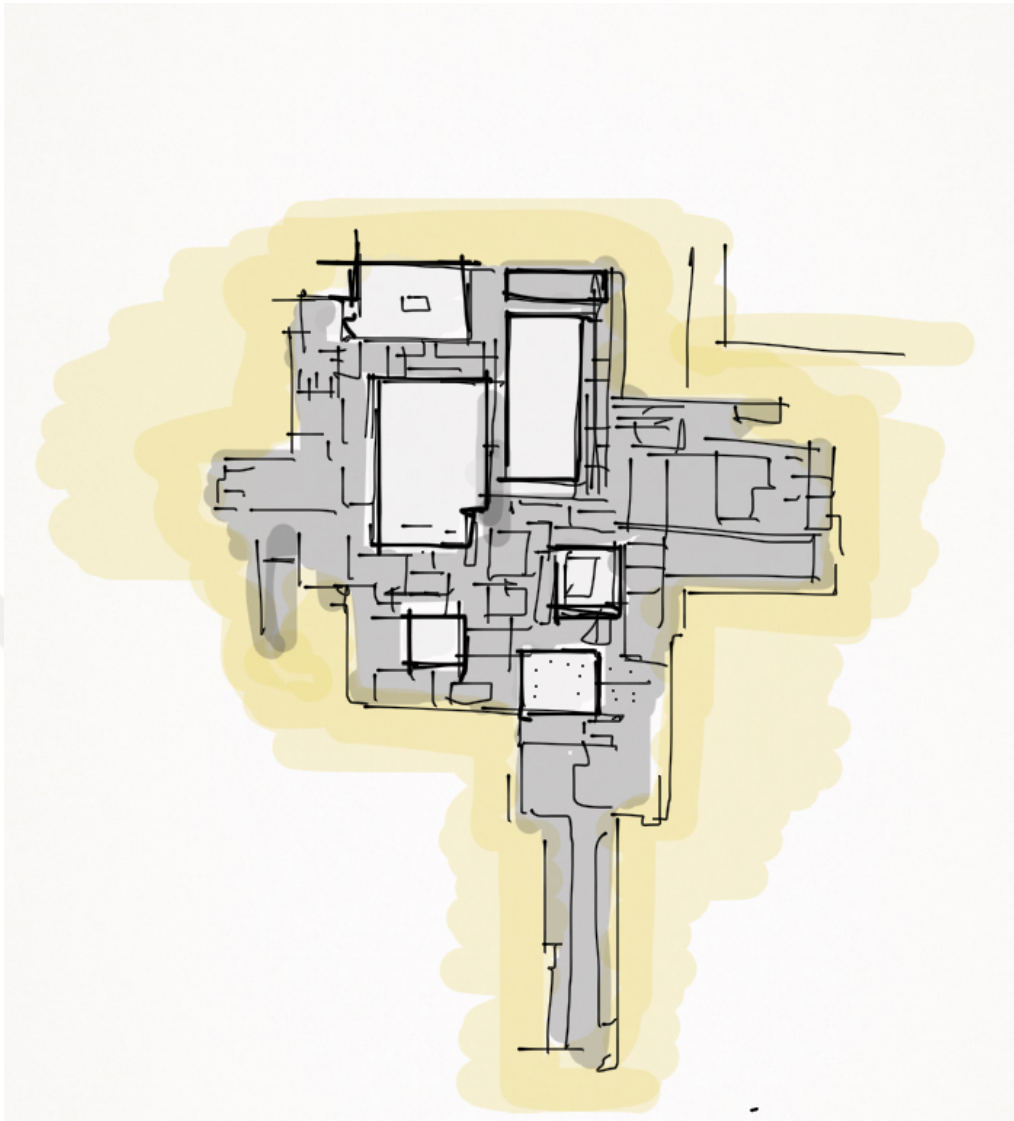


Figure 2.29. A Sketch of Bahia in Marrakesh.

Source: Author's personal archive

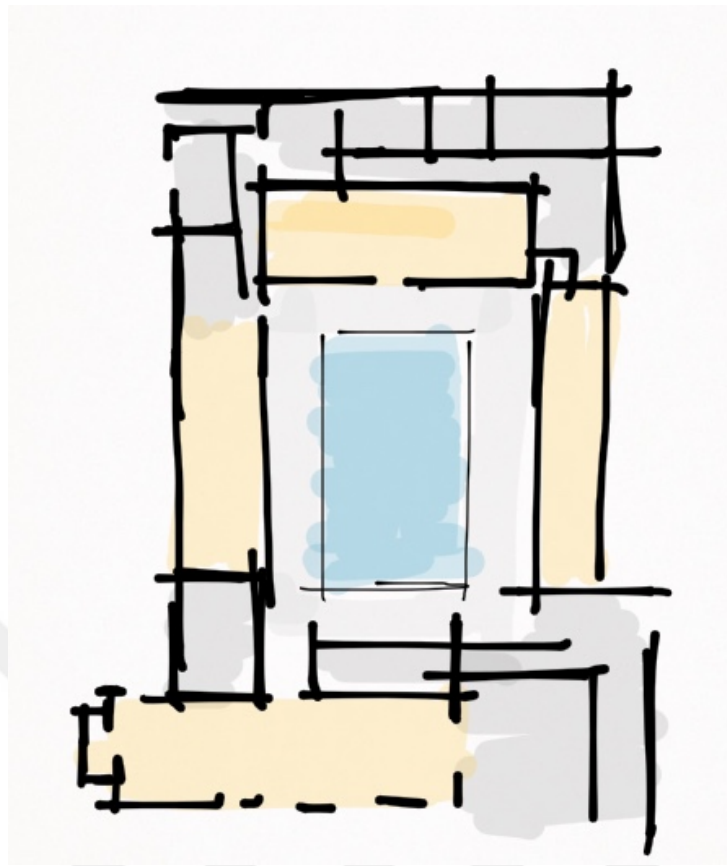


Figure 2.30. A sketch of a mansion in Marrakesh.

Source: Author's personal archive

### 2.2.2. Tunisia

#### Tunis

Landing Tunis from the Mediterranean sea resembles Le Corbusier's idea of approaching a city from far away having an adventure like a ceremony.

At the first glance, Tunisia differs from Morocco that the labyrinthian streets in Morocco give a way to the streets of Tunisia, which comprise of wider streets in a relatively order way. However, upon leaving the main streets of the medina and getting lost in the back streets, I recalled the feeling of getting lost again.



Figure 2.31. A photograph from the plane before landing the city

Source: Author's personal archive

After a politically active year in 2011, having a revolution of the overthrow of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, the capital city Tunis still had some impacts of it in 2013. However, the old medina was still attracting and not occupied by the armed. Still, I need to underline the fact that it is not easy to enter the domestic life of the local Tunisians, or discover the vernacular.

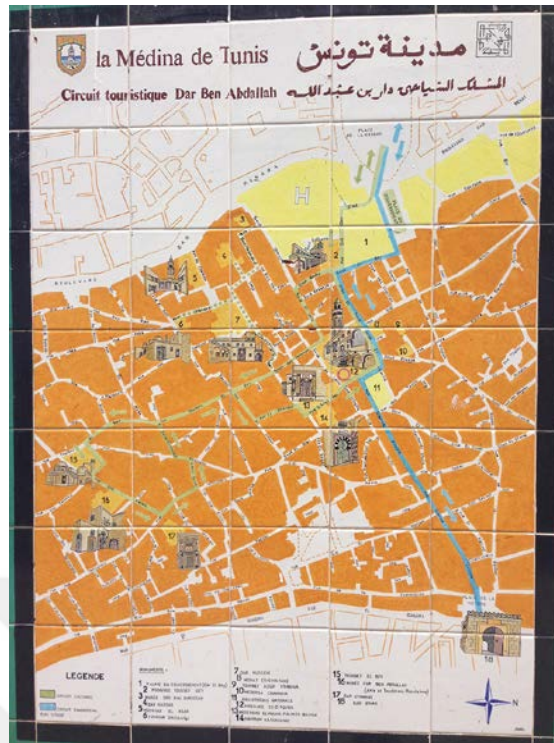


Figure 2.32. A photograph of a medina map of Tunis.

Source: Author's personal archive



Figure 2.33. A street view from Tunis.

Source: Author's personal archive

Tunisian doorways are excessively glittering. When passing through a street, most of the time, I needed to stop to examine the door ornamentations. This affects the walk of the wanderer in the old medina in a way that he/she can easily realize the different buildings adjacent to each other, while in Morocco it was more difficult to understand where a house ends and another begins. I can relate the central open space as courtyard which does not have a leading role like it has in Morocco. All the houses I entered in Morocco had courtyards while Tunis was not that generous.



Figure 2.34. A Tunisian doorway  
Source: Author's personal archive



Figure 2.35. A street view from Tunis.

Source: Author's personal archive



Figure 2.36. A courtyard view from a mansion in Tunis.

Source: Author's personal archive



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **TRACING A FURTHER CONTINUITY THROUGH THE WORKS OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE**

#### **3.1. Analysis of the Selected Case Studies from the Examples of Modern Architecture in France and Italy**

This chapter aims to analyze two case studies selected from the works of modern architecture in France and Italy. The main feature that was sought in these works is the implementation of some vernacular features that were mentioned earlier in this thesis. There are two significant features that I would like to emphasize in those case studies. One is the appreciation of the motional approach in Mediterranean Islamic vernacular, and the other is the semi-open or open central space, the courtyard.

##### **3.1.1. Villa Savoye, Poissy, France**

While traveling in Greece during his *Voyage d'Orient* in 1911, Le Corbusier was impressed by the monumental buildings in the Mount Athos. He was touched with his approach to the monastery at the top of Mount Athos, a winding path to the top, providing “a general feeling of horizontal and vertical” that could be perceived during this continuing climb to the top.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Le Corbusier, *Journey to the East*, edited and translated by Zaknic, I. in collaboration with Pertuiset, N., MIT Press, Cambridge, MA 1987, p. 96.



Figure 3.1. Villa Savoye, Poissy, France

Source: Web. < <http://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/cl/02-195195/14-cosas-que-no-sabias-de-le-corbusier/1288061919-villa-savoye-4>>

His stay in the monastery with the simple architectural locality and its harmony within the nature was very inspiring for Le Corbusier. From his first approach to the Mount Athos to the very last destination in his room, he was feeling the power in this ascending movement which was also a part of this progression. At that moment, he realized the impact of the way he entered and moved ahead towards the place rather than merely the place itself. He puts his feelings in words as; “the singular and noble task of the architect is to open the soul to poetic realms”.<sup>39</sup> He also thanks to the Arab architecture that, he thinks, is the root of that *promenade architecturale*:

“Arab architecture gives us a precious lesson. It is appreciated by walking, by moving, that one sees the order of the architecture developing. It is a principle contrary to that

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<sup>39</sup> Le Corbusier, *Journey to the East*, edited and translated by Zaknic, I. in collaboration with Pertuiset, N., MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1987, p. 193.

of baroque architecture, which is conceived on paper, around a fixed theoretical point. I prefer the lesson of the Arab architecture. In his house it is a question of a real architectural promenade, offering constantly changing views, unexpected, sometimes astonishing.”<sup>40</sup>



Figure 3.2. Ramp in the terrace of Villa Savoye

Source: Web. < <http://www.cea-seminar.blogspot.com.tr/2012/10/living-in-steamship.html> >

Le Corbusier also favors the movement during an approach in an urban scale. As Zeynep Çelik mentions, he approaches the Mediterranean as “moving from distant views to the inner city” with the complete deputy of its nature in the background.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Colomina, B., *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1994, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> Çelik, Z., “Le Corbusier, Orientalism, Colonialism”, *Assemblage*, No. 17, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1992, p. 61.

“We are in Africa... The sea, the chain of Atlas Mountains, the slopes of Kabyle unfold their blue displays. The earth is red. The vegetation consists of palm trees, eucalyptus trees, gum trees, cork oaks, olive trees and fig trees; the perfumes, jasmine and mimosa. From the first plan to the confines of the horizons, the symphony is immanent...”<sup>42</sup>

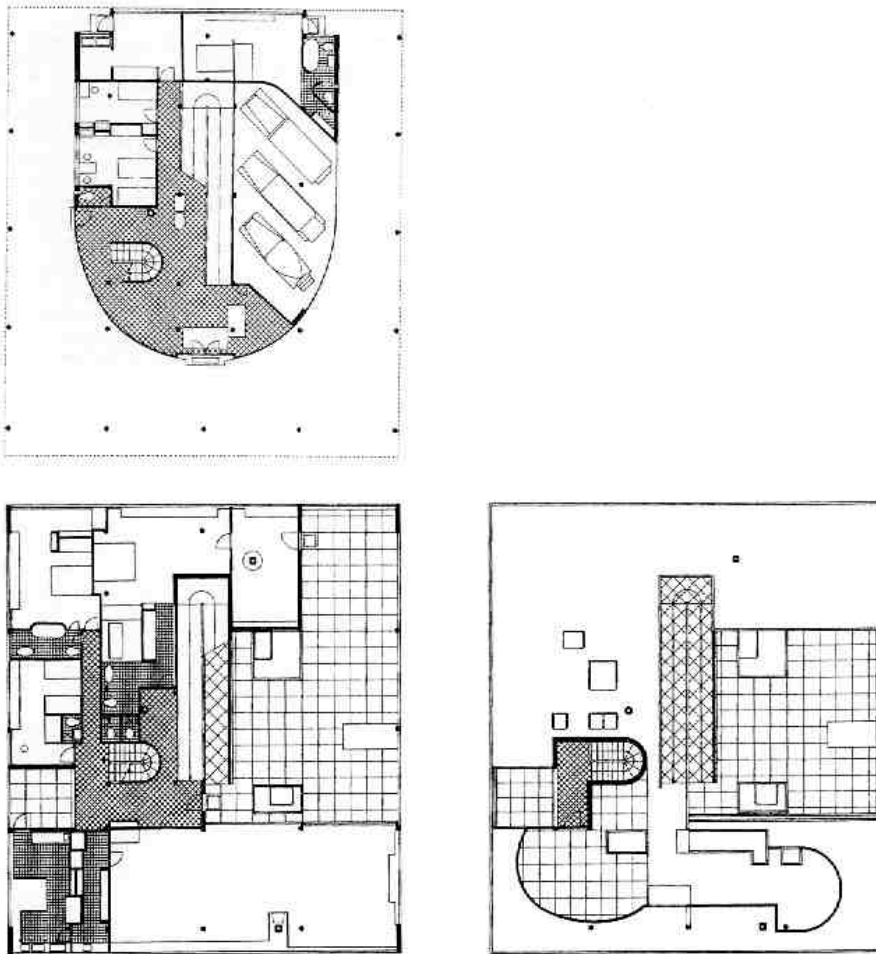


Figure 3.3. Floor plans of Villa Savoye

Source: Web. <<http://cementarium.tumblr.com/post/104067060516/arqyour-life-villa-saboyale-corbusier-poissy>>

Villa Savoye in Poissy, France, is one of the most promising –and major-examples of Le Corbusier because of the accomplished promenade

<sup>42</sup> Çelik, Z., “Le Corbusier, Orientalism, Colonialism”, *Assemblage*, No. 17, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1992, p. 61.

inside the house. The dominant ramp standing right in the center of the house forms a continuous pattern as a movement beginning from the ground floor to the roof of the house. The *jardin suspendu* in the first floor of the house also refers to the typical Mediterranean harmony between the architecture and nature. As one arrives the *jardin suspendu*, he/she feels the urge to be able to see every spot in nature. The villa is somehow both introvert and extrovert.

### 3.1.2. Villa Cernia, Capri, Italy

Luigi Cosenza, who was fascinated by the typological features of the buildings in Capri, Ischia, Procida, and the Sorrentian and Amalfitan coast, was an architect who was after the “ancient simplicity,” relating it with the vernacular characteristics without being lost among those domestic architecture.<sup>43</sup>



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<sup>43</sup> Gravagnuolo, B., “From Schinkel to Le Corbusier: The Myth of the Mediterranean in Modern Architecture”. *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identity*, edited by Jean-François Lejeune and Michelangelo Sabatino. Routledge, New York, 2010, p. 22.

Figure 3.4. Villa Oro, Naples, Italy

Source: Web. < [http://www.luigicosenza.it/doc/opere/img/f012\\_villa\\_oro.htm](http://www.luigicosenza.it/doc/opere/img/f012_villa_oro.htm)>



Figure 3.5. Villa Oro, Naples, Italy

Source: Web. < <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ofhouses/13996567205>>

After designing Villa Oro with Bernard Rudofsky in 1936-37, Villa Cernia, which I believe is more relevant to analyze in this chapter, was built in Anacapri between 1966 and 1967. Even though the documentation of the house is very inadequate, the photographs and the sketched plan of the project was very striking to me to reserve this case study from Italy to it.

The project is located in Anacapri, on a flat topography with surrounding olive trees. Yet, the main distinction of Villa Cernia for me to be chosen as the case study is its spatial organization formed around the welcoming central courtyard. Compared with the traditional Mediterranean courtyard, most of the time hidden from the streets and not in a direct relation with the entrance, Villa Cernia proposes a courtyard that is fully open towards one direction as turning to a welcoming movement.

The site plan of the house easily resembles the sketches of Bernard Rudofsky's conceptual "outdoor room". The rooms of the house are connected with each other in a timid way, while the courtyard provides an outdoor living room of Villa Cernia that gives a potential spatiality which is full of life.

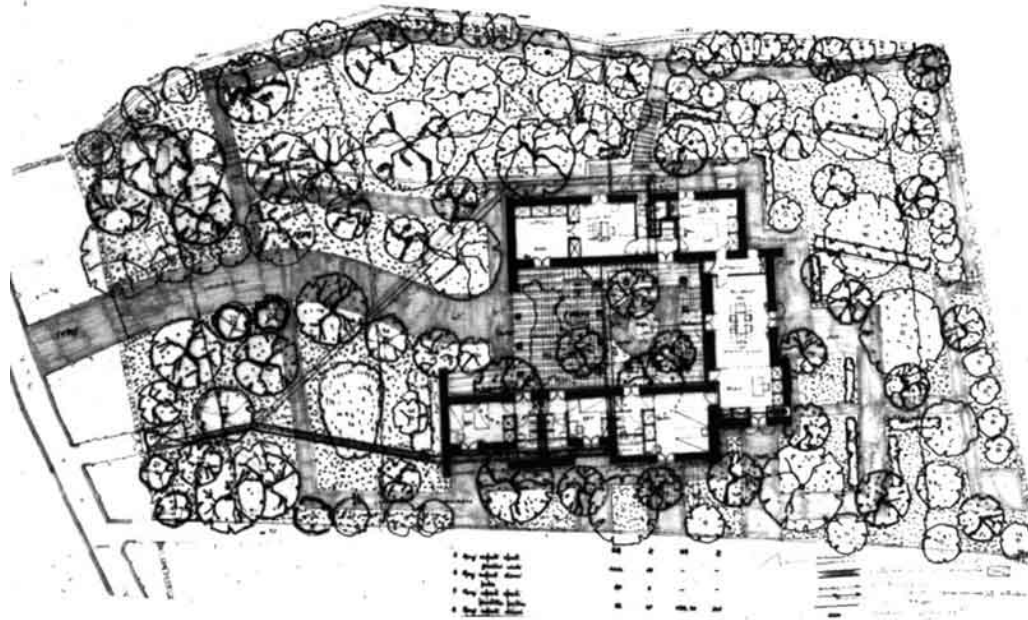


Figure 3.6. Site Plan of Villa Cernia

Source: Web. < [http://na.architetturamoderna.it/index\\_scheda.asp?id=158](http://na.architetturamoderna.it/index_scheda.asp?id=158)>

However, the Mediterraneanism can easily be sensed in a different way with its reference to the Pompeian *impluvium*, which is the central sunken part of the atrium in a *domus*. It is not surprising as far as the architect Luigi Cosenza's special interest in the ancient simplicity is concerned. While using the *domus* as a great source of inspiration, he does not hesitate to use it in a modern way with the white columns in the courtyard having a skylight from the roof.



Figure 3.7. Interior Courtyard and Outer Views of Villa Cemia

Source: Web. <[http://www.luigicosenza.it/doc/opere/img/f113\\_villa\\_cernia.htm](http://www.luigicosenza.it/doc/opere/img/f113_villa_cernia.htm)>

### **3.2. Reflections of the Courtyard from “Medina” to the “New City” in the Selected Case Studies in Morocco and Tunisia**

This chapter puts forth the analysis of two case studies where, I believe, there are traces of the centralized open space in the old Mediterranean medina reflected to the new forms of buildings in the new city in Morocco and Tunisia. They are preferably chosen from the examples built in the new city, rather than the medina, since it is more striking for me to see that shift in time, place and the culture, and to track the continuities between them.

First project is the Courtyard Houses in Agadir, Morocco, where the city was rebuilt after a devastating earthquake in 1960. Jean-François Zevaco from Casablanca was commissioned to design the site, where the main aim was to build a suitable housing for the middle class urbanites, for the climate of Agadir in a reasonable budget. The second project is from Sousse, Tunisia; Andalous Residence designed by Serge Santelli and Cabinet Gerau and completed in 1980. It is not a housing project for the middle class. On the contrary, it is actually an apartment hotel in the Diar el-Andalous resort complex near Sousse. It differs from the courtyard houses in Agadir with its relationship with the natural context of the project. At this point, I believe it is also salutary to analyze each project in comparison with each other. What is clear is that they both provide their references to the traditional Mediterranean architecture.

#### **3.2.1. Courtyard Houses, Agadir, Morocco**

The old city of Agadir was actually destroyed by an earthquake in 1960. As there were very few buildings left as unaffected from the earthquake, the reconstruction of the city had begun, and it continued for about 5 years.

The courtyard houses are a result of this reconstruction progression. The housing complex was designed by an architect from Casablanca; Jean-François Zevaco, and the project was completed in 1965.

There exists seventeen single-storey dwellings which are divided in two different types; Type A including 3 rooms, kitchen and bathroom and Type B consisting of 4 rooms, a kitchen and bathroom. The site is located in 5200 square meters of flat topography.

The main distinctive feature in the project is the orientation of the L-shaped houses and the way they were put together to create the rich layout of each living room and bedroom opening to gardens or patios. The surrounding walls of the courtyard and patios are the height of the house, such that a courtyard could serve as a private garden. Therefore, the relationship between outside and inside is also interpreted in a way the distinction between public and private are treated in an inventive way.



Figure 3.8. Aerial view of the Courtyard Houses, Agadir, Morocco

Source: Web. < <http://www.akdn.org/architecture/project.asp?id=155>>

The longitudinal courtyard in the entrance of the dwellings resembles the ceremonial motion in the Arab architecture, which also influenced Le Corbusier and his architecture as mentioned in Chapter 3.1. The entrance path with the long garden next to it may not promise a flowing movement like the ramp of Villa Savoye. However, the power of the simple geometry does give the sense of a promenade, even though it may be more strict rather than flowing.

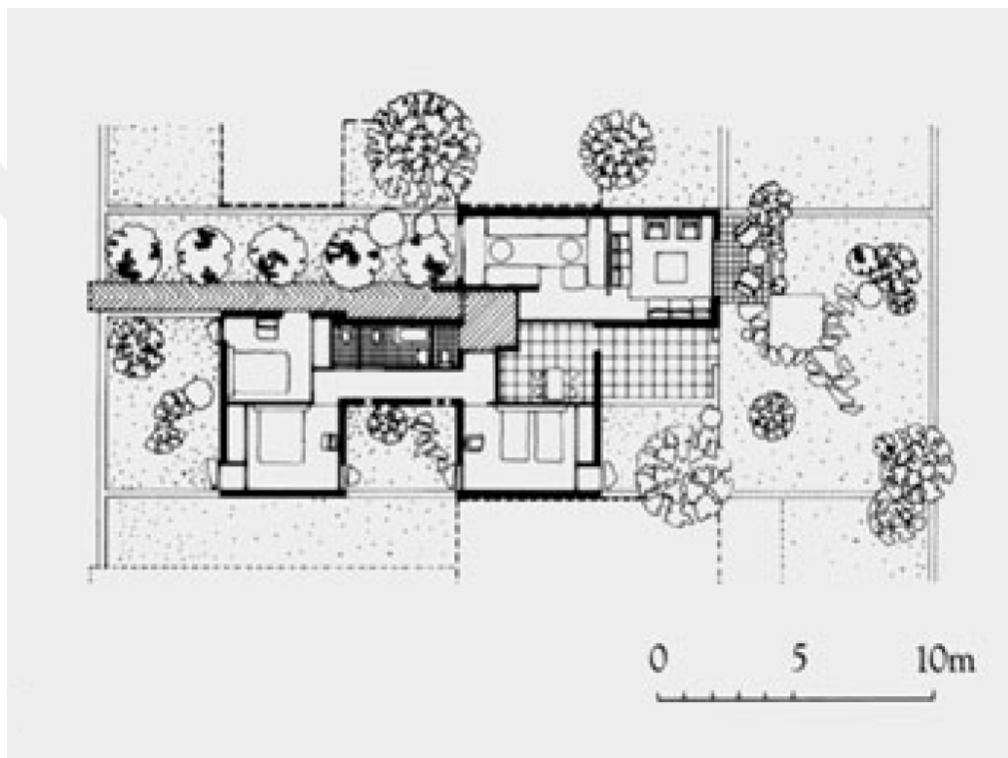


Figure 3.9. A plan of a courtyard house

Source: Web. < <http://www.akdn.org/architecture/project.asp?id=155>>

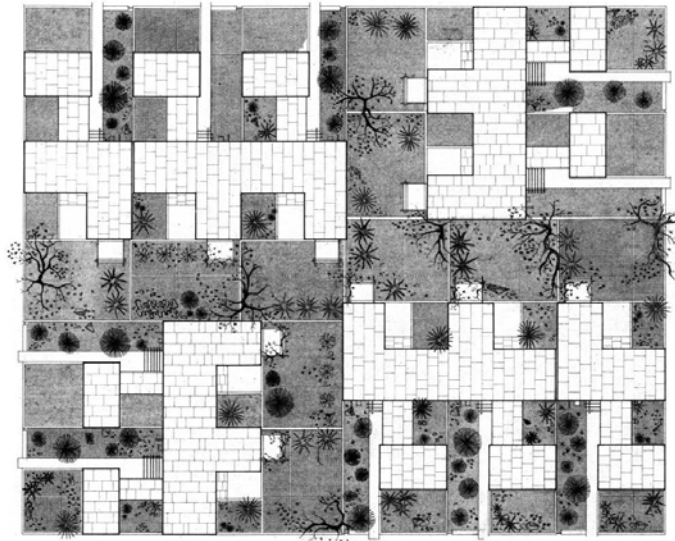


Figure 3.10. Site plan of Courtyard Houses, Block A

Source: Web. < <http://www.akdn.org/architecture/project.asp?id=155>>

The high walls of the gardens and the entrances could also be related with the architects' choice to respect the closure in Muslim Moroccans. The courtyard of the patio that is isolated from the outside can provide a micro-climate for the individual, especially women. That shift from the publicness of an entrance courtyard to a private one could easily be read in accordance with the way of life. In that respect, the architects also concern about the sunlight during different periods of the year with the help of the adjustable shutters.

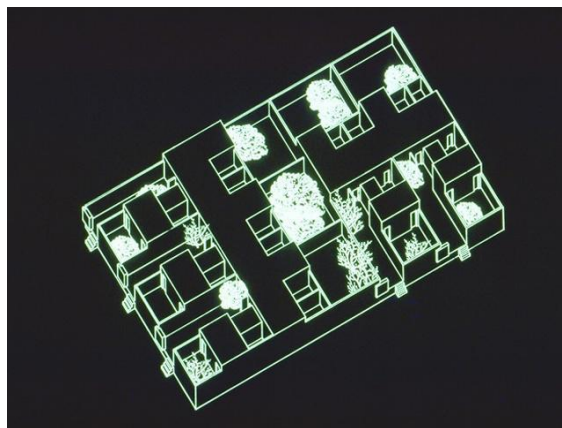


Figure 3.11. Perspective of a unit of courtyard houses

Source: Web. < <http://www.akdn.org/architecture/project.asp?id=155>>

After the entrance courtyard, one leads to the vestibule which also connects to the salon. The salon can also be transformed into a traditional Moroccan salon with benches having the capability to be partitioned. These two partitions can also serve as two different rooms, one of which is open to guests, the other is closed. The main spot in the house is the traditional Moroccan family room, where a lot of events go on. It is located across the kitchen. Finally, there is another bedroom which is for the parents. The shift between the privacy and the publicity of the dwelling and the dweller is deliberately moving in a ceremonial route. As one arrives the heart of the house, it gets the sensation of intimate family life.



Figure 3.12. Entrance courtyard of a house

Source: Web. < <http://www.akdn.org/architecture/project.asp?id=155>>



Figure 3.13. Aerial view of the courtyard houses

Source: Web. < <http://www.akdn.org/architecture/project.asp?id=155>>

The main courtyard of a dwelling may have been turned into a part of the house since it is a Moroccan tradition to cover over or enclose some spaces to incorporate them to the inside.

After winning the Aga Khan award, the project report comes with the reasons for the project significance. As the report indicates:

“Within the context of totally reconstructing an urban environment after a natural cataclysm, the 17 dwellings by Mr. Zevaco demonstrated a sensitive research into dwelling forms suitable to the climate and the lifestyle of the intended users. A non-Muslim, having all of his professional working life in Morocco, Mr. Zevaco has brought his personal experience of the Mediterranean patio house-type to bear on creating a low-rise, low-density habitation adapted to the given programme. The modest way in which the houses turn their back to the street makes them almost imperceptible to the passerby.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Taylor, B., “Courtyard Houses, Agadir, Morocco, Project Brief”, The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1980.



Figure 3.14. A courtyard view of a house

Source: Web. < <http://www.akdn.org/architecture/project.asp?id=155>>

One significance of the courtyard houses is its rooms, each double orientated in order to achieve light and ventilation from two sides of view. In winter, the sun accesses to every room, while in summer, the heat is ventilated from two different sides. This double orientation not only provides environmental ingenuity, but also creates a rich variability in the design of such a project where the vertical approach is limited with only one-storey height.

### **3.2.1. Residence Andalous, Sousse, Tunisia**

Serge Santelli and Cabinet Gerau's project, Residence Andalous, completed in 1981, differs from the Courtyard Houses in Agadir regarding its level of complexity, the context and architects' responses to the functional requirements. Sousse is a port city of Tunisia on the southern coastline. Even though it is a relatively large city in Tunisia, the project site is not positioned in a very central location, rather embedded in the deserted nature with a 300

meters distance from the sea. As a convenient design solution architects designed the Residence Andalous introverted so that the building creates its own environment.

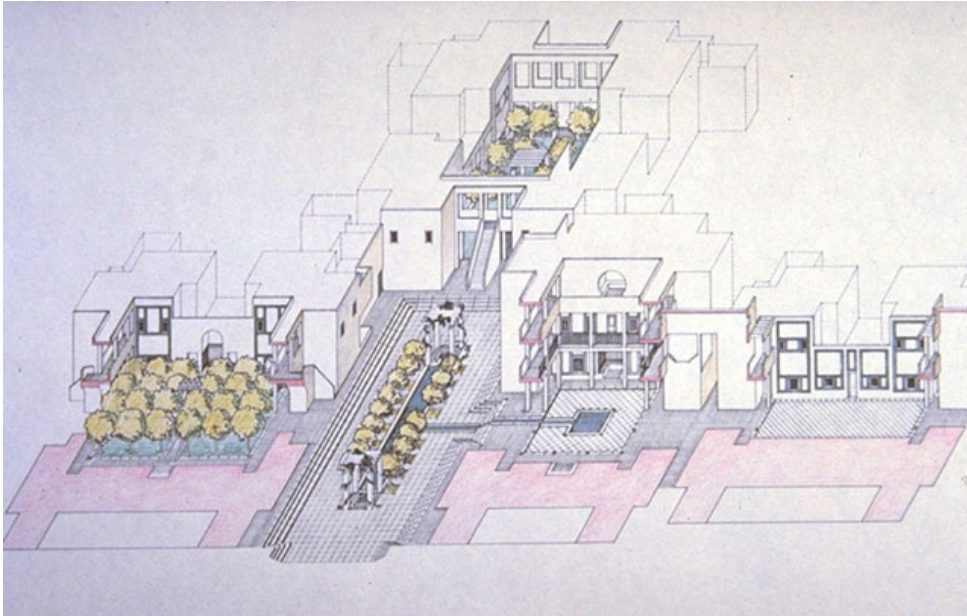


Figure 3.15. Perspective drawing of Andalous Residence, Sousse, Tunisia

Source: Web. < <http://www.akdn.org/architecture/project.asp?id=310>>



Figure 3.16. Andalous Residence

Source: Web. < <http://www.akdn.org/architecture/project.asp?id=310>>

The building offers two axes with the main one including the courtyards, and a second axis remaining open. The Residence Andalous creates a different spatiality that consist the verticality which the courtyard houses avoid. The courtyards and the surrounding residences do not exceed the height of a three-storey building, which helps the architects design different variations on the volumetric spaces of the courtyards.

Here, the traditional ornamentation or decoration of the Tunisian architecture is excluded from the design of the building. On the contrary, very simple surface patterns and voids demonstrate the architects' modern approach.

The courtyards are well paved and full of plants, each resembling a private garden, where the water is an inevitable feature. The pergolas and the outer galleries in the courtyards are also the responses to the climate requirements in the project. Moreover, every passage that connects one courtyard to another is relatively narrow and without exception, different than each other.

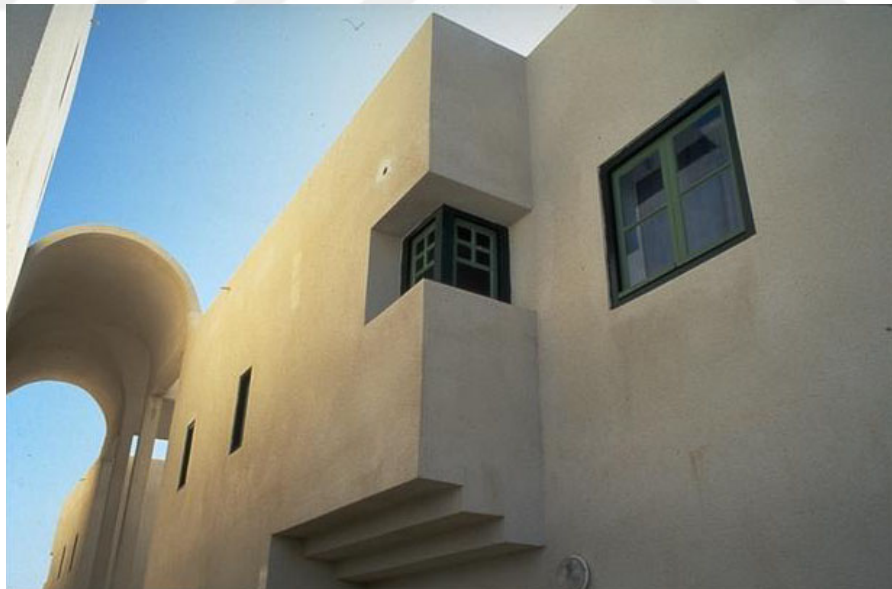


Figure 3.17. Andalous Residence

Source: Web. < <http://www.akdn.org/architecture/project.asp?id=310>>



Figure 3.18. The main courtyard of Andalous Residence

Source: Web. < <http://www.akdn.org/architecture/project.asp?id=310>>

The architects' approach the use of the courtyards is mentioned in Sentelli's own words as:

“Our project tries to develop traditional and Tunisian typologies. When I talk about typologies, I am talking about space. For example, I believe that a building that does not have a courtyard is not really a Muslim building. When looking at the traditional typologies in Tunisia, all the buildings have a courtyard. So, the courtyard is a fundamental Tunisian architectural space. Because it belongs to this Muslim tradition of indoor architecture, it is in the courtyard that you will find the ornaments, the decorations, and the major rooms. We tried to include some rooms which would have traditional shapes. In long rooms, iwans were used. These niches are found in Morocco and in Egypt. We tried to use the gardens that are typical of the interior landscape of Muslim architecture. We also tried to use local products and craftsmanship in our projects. It is awful to import ceramic tiles to a country where

there are fantastic local ceramics. We tried to be as close as possible to traditional building types.”<sup>45</sup>



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<sup>45</sup> Santelli, S. “On Creativity, Imagination, and the Design Process”, p. 231.



## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

Throughout this thesis study, I aimed to achieve multifarious goals. However, the main motivation for me was to be able to get close to the varied sensations the Mediterranean region holds within and to share the close feelings that other explorers of the region throughout the history have experienced. I tried to exclude myself from the encyclopedic information to free my thoughts – like Le Corbusier or Bernard Rudofsky – in order to fully focus on experiencing the *locus*. This emulation to those enthusiastic travelers has truly motivated me during my own *voyage* to the North African countries.

The region of the Mediterranean plays a significant role in the realization of the particular region in determining the house structure and spatiality. Here, my introduction regarding the relationship between the modern and the vernacular becomes specifically relevant, since throughout its history the vernacular emerged from the need to exclude the classical theory, rather than to emphasize some circumstances related with the way of living, climate, materiality, social factor or culture, all of which actually based on the land the built form lies. Moreover, vernacularism began to be associated with modernism in a way that its roots deepen to a more complex historical layering. Upon this base of the relationship between the vernacular and the modern, I was determined to trace the continuities in the vernacular and seek its further reflections in the modern examples.

Another major interest in my study was the historical background of the region. I hereby aimed to achieve a cross reading on two pioneering publications: Fernand Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II* (1972) and Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell's *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (2000). Even

though these publications belong to different time eras, their different approaches to the same subject form a relevant re-reading of the Mediterranean. The main distinction between these two publications is the way they approach to the unity of the Mediterranean. For instance, Braudel gives preference to the place than the human activities. He disregards the narrative history of the individual information; on the contrary he values the inanimate objects like the sea as the main formation of the unity among the region, while individual comes as the last feature in his own layering system of the history.

On the other hand, Horden and Purcell prefer to answer a basic but essential question: “What is the Mediterranean?” Their response to this question is not in a form of different layers, consisting of defined similar qualities like Braudel did. They rather value the existence of the problem about how to survive in the region as socially, geographically, economically or technically, because of its ability to form a network of causes and effects. They seek for a specific problem behind an event, while Braudel looks for a structure and category.

Back to my personal voyage, Bernard Rudofsky has been an influential role throughout my study. His interest in experiencing stories or new ways of life, rather than developing typological ordering, also motivated me about experiencing and observing through my own personal point of view during my travel. To be able to go into detail, I delimited my subject with the west part of the Mediterranean. Therefore, the thesis study concentrates on the route including; Morocco, Tunisia, Italy and France. Four countries from two continents also helped me form the main organization of my thesis in accordance with the case studies.

During my travels, I was impressed with the introverted organization of the houses in the old vernacular settlements, which put me in a position to trace this continuing character in other cities and countries. The structure of the houses that is formed around a centralized open space – courtyard – and its enormous spatiality was the trigger for the rest of my study. The cross

relationship between the inside and outside of the house is also where the publicness and privacy oppose to each other. As one enters a courtyard from the street, the publicness evolves into the semi-private or private. This relationship between the outdoor and indoor was also analyzed in Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye in the third chapter.

Furthermore, according to the dweller, the courtyard is where the pure spatiality supposes to exist and the joy of life is experienced. The courtyard creates a rupture of the interior from outside, which hereby forms its own environment and creates the unity among the dwellers and gives them a free space to fill in with life.

My observations on the central space in the North African medina also put forth the powerful urban fabric of the *medina*, the old city. The reflections of the houses with courtyards, adjacent to each other, find their forms as the continuous streets where the entrances to the houses are rare or, most of the time, hidden with narrow passages. This easily makes one lose his/her way in the medina but at the same time creates a motion when passing through a street. In the former chapters, I tried to relate this movement in the old Mediterranean medina with Le Corbusier's conception of the movement when approaching a place, or in the ramp of the Villa Savoye.

After presenting my personal observations on the central spatiality in the North African medina, two case studies from France and Italy are analyzed in a relation to the vernacular spatiality of Morocco or Tunisia. First, Villa Savoye from Poissy, France, was analyzed to express the relationship between the motion concept of the traditional Mediterranean urban and Le Corbusier's movement ceremony in Villa Savoye. Then, Villa Cernia from Capri comes as an important example of a house with a courtyard, which also has bonding references to the Pompeian *impluvium*.

Furthermore, I continued to search for the traces of the courtyard as the spatial organization in the selected two case studies from Morocco and Tunisia. My aim was to mention how the courtyard in the medina has affected the new

city formations. Courtyard Houses in Agadir, Morocco was the first to consider showing a successful example of the courtyard interpretation. The architect of the project, Zevaco put the L- shaped houses in a way that each one makes use of the climate. Moreover, the rich spatiality of the project is also provided with each room double oriented. I also believe the longitudinal courtyard at the entrance of the houses may have the influences of a promenade similar to Le Corbusier's, but not in a flowing way, rather more strict.

On the other hand, Residence Andalous in Sousse, Tunisia differs from the courtyard houses in the level of complexity and the context. However, the use of the courtyard as a tool for the building to make itself introvert is very similar, maybe in a more typological way related with the traditional Tunisian typologies.

The studied cases show the reflections of different features and in different micro-regions. However, to belong to one main land, the Mediterranean, the central spatiality provided a sufficient track as a meaningful direct influence. It was basically this continuity of the central spatiality that I had been looking for in the region. As mentioned earlier, all of these observations rely on my personal voyage. Therefore, at the end, this thesis study tries to create an oxymoron with a theoretical background and the semi-ethnographic thoughts of my experiences from the Mediterranean. I hereby believe that this thesis study displays a network of different relations, reflections or references regarding the "Mediterraneanism" since the region itself are a network of various complexities. One can only express his/her own vision of the Mediterranean, rather than talk about a single, particular Mediterranean. Thus, this thesis study will stay as the reflection of my own Mediterranean.

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