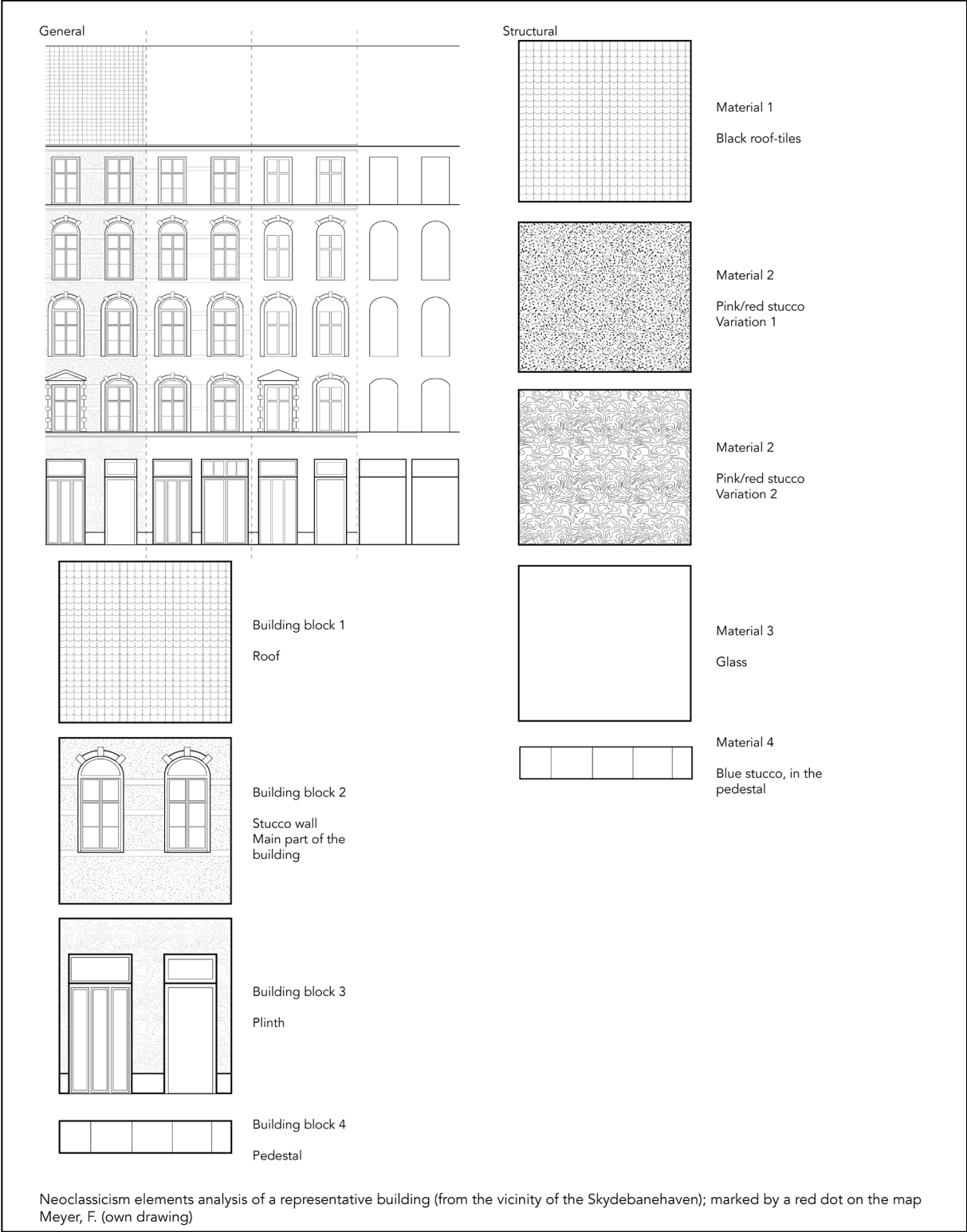


# CLASSIFICATION OF TYPOLOGY

## The relation between the catalogue and typological research

Student  
 Fabrice Meyer (4431286)  
 Chair of Public Building, "Public Condenser"  
 Thesis "A healthy mind in a healthy body"



### I THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE CATALOGUE AND TYPOLOGY RESEARCH

*“Multiple or divided research methodologies will split the researcher’s attention and even allow inconsistencies to emerge. There is then the possibility for those very inconsistencies to become research questions in themselves, but the results are often muddled and difficult to act upon. A focused research methodology, immersed in a single approach, can often appear to be more thorough as there is greater opportunity for depth of engagement within the scope of a research project. While not allowing multiple facets of a problem to be engaged with, the narrow field allows the researcher to produce results with certainty, and that can be acted upon more easily.” (Lucas, 2016, p.11)*

Architecture is a very complicated topic, with a lot of different influences that can affect the design process, as well as the design itself. This complexity of the topic of architecture is, for instance, demonstrated in the idea that architecture reflects the everyday experiences of people. When combined, all of these experiences can be translated into an appropriate interpretation for the current society. Since society is an ever changing and complex concept, the architecture that reflects this society inherits this complexity as well (Ballantyne, 2005).

Because of this complexity, the idea of “simply doing research” does not work when concerning an architectural topic. Similarly, the sometimes-adopted concept of doing all possible forms of research and employing all research methodologies – in an attempt to gain the most complete picture – can create blurred results as explained in the quote by Lucas (2016) at the start of this chapter.

Yet, we cannot simply leave out research of the design because of this complexity. Architects need research in order to create their buildings. Research is often not only the start of an architectural design, but in many cases also a guiding line through the entire design process. In fact, many people see the relation between research and design as completely intertwined. In this point of view, the research helps to make (and substantiate) design choices. On the other hand, new questions to be researched are becoming clear whilst designing. In this case, the design and research are part of a so called “design cycle”, where both the activities of researching and designing alternate continuously, in order to generate alternative design choices and evaluate them (Hevner, 2007).

Because of the intertwined nature between design and research, as well as the complexity of the architectural research, it is crucial to have an understanding of the different design methodologies and their use. This is not only the case for students, but also for professionals. Not possessing this research methodology knowledge can lead to faulty or muddled research results, which directly impact the design and its quality.

Understanding the impact of design methodology knowledge on my actual ability to design, inspired me to learn about all of the different design methodologies – or at least deepen my knowledge about the methodologies I was already familiar with. Therefore, looking back at all of the lectures, what I found most striking is the range and differences in design methodologies. I was under the assumption that I would have already learned about most of the methodologies (considering I am nearly graduating). I found myself surprised at the amount of information I did not know yet.

This realization, together with the introductory lecture which stated that the MSc title simply means “skilled in the acquisition of (architectural) knowledge”, was most eye opening to me. It also illustrated the necessity to keep learning about methodologies, in order to improve design ability.

On a more pragmatic level, I was very interested in typology research. Graduating on a Public Building studio, I was already busy with mapping large parts of the sites of the assignment. I was creating a catalogue of architectural façade elements (see figure 1). The lecture prompted me to try and find (as well as showcase) typological relationships between elements in this catalogue.

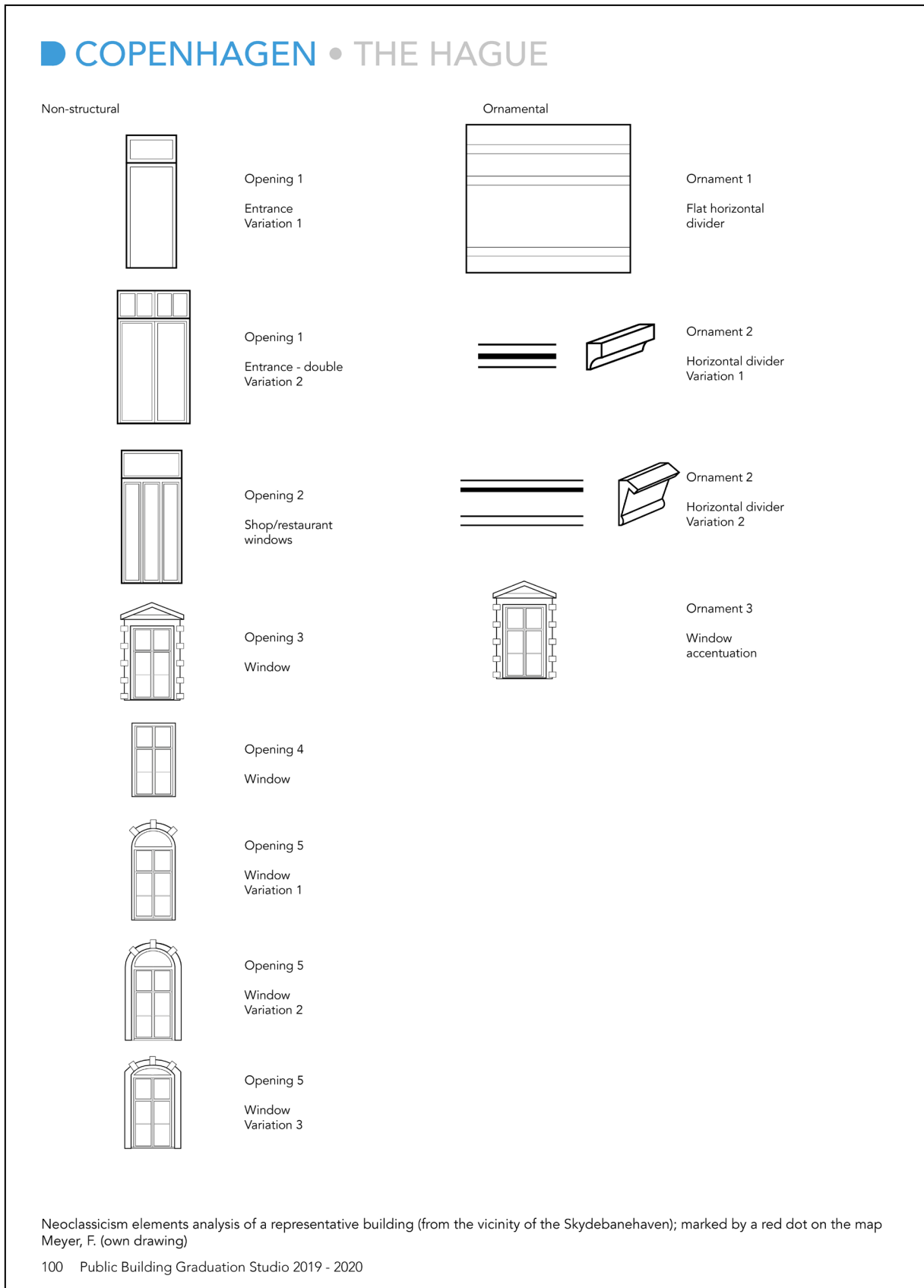


Figure 1, an example page of the created catalogue (Meyer, 2019)

## CLASSIFICATION OF TYPOLOGY

Having created these typological conclusions also made me very curious about the relationship between the catalogue and typology research. If I would not have drawn certain typological conclusions, the catalogue would probably not have been very useful to the other students. Simultaneously, if I wouldn't have made the catalogue, I personally would not have been able to create some of the typological conclusions.

Yet, having read the literature suggested for the lecture, there seemed to be a divide in the appreciation and usefulness of the catalogue. Some of the literature even implied a distaste for it. This inspired the research question of this essay: "How are typology research and the catalogue related?"

## II CLASSIFICATION VS TYPOLOGY & PRAXEOLOGY VS THYMOLOGY

The attempt to place architecture in a scientific light has been present for a very long time in the architectural tradition. There were, and still are, a wide variety of theories and techniques to try and achieve this. The classification of architecture is one of these techniques. Even though classification has been done in architecture for a very long time, it became prevalent during the eighteenth century, when classification became an important technique in other fields. Key figures of this architectural classification were Durand and Le Roy. Both published influential books where certain parts of architecture were classified (Madrazo, 1994).

The main aim of this classification, was to be able to recognize general principles about architecture by having an overview of multiple separate cases. These principles are typological principles, that are meant to help understand architecture and to make the actual design process simpler. Having these architectural typological links means that one does not necessarily have to start from a blank slate for a design, but that some general principles, such as organization or geometry, are already known to the designer (Crowe, 1984).

In order to unravel how this classification (in the form of the catalogue) is related to typology research, a historical analysis is conducted in this essay. This historical analysis is a literature study, which aims to uncover the different contexts and connections of classification and typology research throughout time. This is done to get an understanding of the different relations and acquire the ability to position myself within this framework.

This literature study analyses documentations and analytical writings, as well as case studies of the used methods. Because of the nature of the research, the research is an etic research, which aims to find out connections between classification and typology research, as well as their contextual backgrounds. Therefore, the research conducted in this paper is an interdisciplinary research done within the frameworks of praxeology and thymology.

Praxeology was originally an economic framework for research. In most cases, praxeology is interpreted as the science about the logic of human actions (Gunning, 2005). Yet, this does not necessarily relate to physical actions. A more accurate way of interpreting praxeology is: the science which searches for similarities of methods in many different domains of action. In this definition, not only physical actions are intended. Strategies in order to accomplish a task also count as actions. For instance, the strategy an artist can use, in order to create a painting – his end goal. Therefore, the methods used to understand a building – classification and typology research –, and how these methods are interwoven are part of the praxeology framework.

Yet, it will be difficult to truly understand why certain positions are occupied throughout history by simply looking at the (dis)connection between the catalogue and typology research. In order to take an educated position, it is also crucial to understand why there is a certain (dis)connection in a specific context. This is where the thymology framework comes in. Thymology is the science that tries to couple an understanding to the praxeology field (Block, 2012).

Usually, praxeology would not be seen together with the idea of thymology. Regardless of whether these methodological frameworks intermingle in reality, the praxeological framework was seen on its

## CLASSIFICATION OF TYPOLOGY

own. Yet, quite recently, there has been a shift in the ideology of praxeology. The methodology which will be used for this essay, the so called thymology enhanced praxeology, is a relatively new occurrence which aims to combine praxeology with the context awareness of thymology (Don and Storr, 2011).

### III THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CLASSIFICATION AND TYPOLOGY

The classification of (elements of) architecture has been part of architecture for a very long time. The first usage of classification, and the first hint at typological analysis, can be found in the oldest architecture book known to this day: *De architectura* by Vitruvius. In *De architectura*, Vitruvius describes different facets of architecture in a couple of volumes. In one of these volumes, Vitruvius showcases a collection of different temples with their organizational structures. In order to showcase these temples, he uses a certain systematic way to order them, he used a classification. By creating this classification, he strongly hints at a way to create floorplans for the temples. Even though there are no literal – typological – conclusions drawn from this classification, the implication of this overarching conclusion is a strong hint to a typological analysis and conclusion of the created classification (Tzonis, Lefaivre, 1999).

Vitruvius used the classification in order to further analyze what overarching rulesets and coherences the classified buildings have. Even though he does not literally draw typological conclusions, he very much implies this methodological kind of analysis.

Even though classification, and probably typological analysis, have been part of architecture for quite some time, it faded into the background after Vitruvius' first exploration of the research methodology.

An architect, named Julien-David Leroy was the first to gather a renewed interest in classification within architecture. Leroy published the book: "Les ruines" around 1750. In the book he wanted to correct misinterpretations of Greek monuments by non-architectural observers. To do this, he applied two research methodologies. One methodology he called the historical methodology, and one he called the architectural methodology (Kisacky, 2001).

His historical approach considered the buildings within their context. Yet, his architectural approach separated all of the different elements, only considering the comparison between the different elements and buildings, rather than their context. He achieved this architectural approach by creating a catalogue, where the different elements and monuments were classified in order to be compared (Kisacky, 2001).

Leroy created, and used, this catalogue as his end-tool. The catalogue was his way of being able to see discrepancies in interpretations of Greek monuments. He was able to critically reflect on writings of for instance Vitruvius, and he was able to construct a general evolution of building form. Therefore, Leroy did not go further than this layer of information.

Around a decennium later, Durand continued the idea of the classification of architecture by the creation of another catalogue. Durand created his well-known book "Précis of the lectures on architecture", where he discussed and showcased this catalogue. As mentioned before, the actual aim of the creation of this catalogue, was to be able to recognize typological principles in order to help in the design process (Crowe, 1984).

Therefore, rather than simply using the technique offered by Leroy, Durand expanded on the idea and the usage of the catalogue. To him, it was not the goal but simply a tool which would allow him to discover a completely new – and overarching – layer of information.

During the time of Leroy, classification was not only gaining attention within the field of architecture. Karl Marx introduced the principle within the social and societal field. Within the communistic ideology of Marx, he divided the society in different classes. In an ideal case, the new society would be a

## CLASSIFICATION OF TYPOLOGY

classless society, where everyone was equal (Kerr, 1969). But, in order to get to such a classless society, first the classes of the workers and capitalists had to become nationwide classes, in order to eradicate all social divisions within the society. The class conflicts that would take place, could be seen as opportunities to correct historical processes and create a revolution to end exploitation between men (Bendix, 1974).

So, even though Marx did not concern himself with research methodologies such as typology research, he did use classification in his ideology. Even more so, he saw classification not as an end goal but thought of classification as a tool in order to set his next step for society in motion.

Coinciding with Marx' ideology was the article "Type", by Quatremère de Quincy. This article has ever since been one of the most important articles for the Italian discussion of typology research. In this article, Quatremère makes a distinction between type and model (Oechslin, 1986). He defines type as something that should be repeated as is, and model as something designers can use as inspiration without creating the same end result. This distinction between type and model once more opened up the discussion about typology (Anderson, 1982).

By making this distinction, it became clear that Quatremère saw cataloging the types, only as part of the research. The creation of the catalogue was only a way to find out what the models are. For Quatremère, typology was never about simplification or standardization. It was always about a link between historical context and the systematic analysis that typology could offer. It was always more than just classification or just historical research (Anderson, 1982).

Since the discussion about typology has been re-opened, a couple of theories have been formed. In modern-day literature, there seems to be a dichotomy in the function of the catalogue for typological research. This dichotomy can be expressed in the following two ideas.

The first idea, as proposed by Jeffrey Kipnis, states that the diagrams in a catalogue are the basis for typology. Typology would not exist without the creation of these diagrams, and therefore typology would not exist without the creation of a catalogue (Cassarà, Eisenman, 2006).

The second idea is the view that the diagrams in a catalogue are simply instruments in order to showcase relationships. Diagrams showcase possible connections between type and model. Therefore, the catalogue is simply a visualization tool to showcase typological connections and conclusions (Jacoby, 2015).

## IV POSITIONING

Even though there are many different interpretations of classification and its connection with typology research throughout the years, there seems to be an overarching trend. This trend is the idea that classification is not the end-goal itself. It is a means to achieve a different goal, where the creation of a catalogue allows for this alternative goal to be achieved.

The only exception to this trend, is in the case of Leroy. He uses the catalogue as an end-goal itself, yet this is only possible since he does not need to achieve a different level of information through the catalogue. In his case, the showcase of the different types is enough for him to achieve his purpose.

What is also evident throughout the different interpretations of the catalogue, is that there needs to be a connection between the systematic aspect of the catalogue and the historical/contextual aspect of the research. This is most evident in the ideology of Quatremère, but is also present in the other interpretations within the field of architecture. It is never about the complete detachment of the elements from their context.

Considering this, I personally find it strange that the catalogue and typology research are not often considered in their relative time (of use). After all, as Einstein already argued, both space and time are inseparably connected. When we consider anything, we should consider both the space, as

## CLASSIFICATION OF TYPOLOGY

well as the time of this thing or event (Kennedy, 2014). Linking back to the catalogue and typology research it is often considered for what purpose they are used, but not when they should be used.

Therefore, I would like to propose a new lens through which to see the connection between the catalogue and typology research. I propose to see them as a roadmap to create an architectural design. This means that both the catalogue, as well as typology research, should be seen as steps in order to obtain information to create an architectural design.

I personally reject the position of Kipnis, that typology only exists because of the catalogue. In my opinion the catalogue does not create typological relations, it is simply a way to find and showcase the relations that are already present. Therefore, I agree more with the idea of Jacoby who also argues that classification is the tool to showcase typological connections.

However, I would argue that the idea of Jacoby is not completely true either. Jacoby focusses very strongly on the idea that classification is only a way to showcase typological connections. I would argue that it is also a way to discover these connections. This is very much in line with the way that Vitruvius and Durand used the catalogue. They used the catalogue to discover connections which would have been too obscure to see without it, which is also one of the main uses of the catalogue in my personal experience.

In my proposition to view typology research and the catalogue from a time lens, these positions would also be accounted for. The classification as a tool to uncover typological connections, could be seen as a step prior to typological connections, which enables the researcher to find typological connections. It is not always necessary to take this step in order to find typological connections, yet it makes finding more obscure and complicated connections much easier.

Considering typology research and the catalogue from a time angle could also shed some light on the question whether typology research quenches creativity in design. By seeing it simply as a step within the design process to gain additional knowledge or focus, it would suggest the goal for which typology research is applied determines whether it is conducive to creativity or not. (Personally, and commonly on the TU Delft, typology research is seen as a further design tool and therefore does not quench creativity.)

I would also position myself in a similar way concerning the issue raised in the lecture (by Robert Alexander Gorny), about the creation of different typological approaches to architecture. As presented in the lecture, the creation of an approach as "space syntax" raises the question which kinds of typological approaches we use to design, and what kind of catalogue or classification this needs.

I would again propose to see this as a timeline. The catalogue is the step that leads to the uncovering of typological approaches. Therefore, typological approaches can only be uncovered, and found, by creating a catalogue and from there trying to see overarching connections and patterns. When creating a new typological approach, usually the catalogue precedes the approach, instead of a previously created approach for which a custom catalogue is created to fit the new approach.

To answer the initial research question of this essay: "How are typology research and the catalogue related?", I am proposing to see this relation in a new light. By looking at the relation from the viewpoint of a timeline, one can see the relationship as steps that can be taken consecutively in order to achieve a further end-goal – in this case, the creation of an architectural design.

## CLASSIFICATION OF TYPOLOGY

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

#### REFERENCES (APA)

- Anderson, S. (January 01, 1982). Types and Conventions in Time: Toward a History for the Duration and Change of Artifacts. *Perspecta*, 18, 108.
- Bendix, R. (1974). *Inequality and social structure: A comparison of Marx and Weber*. Berkeley, Calif: Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California.
- Block, W. E. (September 17, 2012). Thymology, Praxeology, Demand Curves, Giffen Goods and Diminishing Marginal Utility. *Studia Humana*, 2, 3-11.
- Cassarà, S., & Eisenman, P. (2006). *Peter Eisenman: Feints*. Milan: Skira.
- Crowe, N. (October 01, 1984). Studies in Typology. *Journal of Architectural Education (1984-)*, 38, 1, 10-13.
- Don, L., & Storr, V. H. (January 07, 2011). Distinction or dichotomy: Rethinking the line between thymology and praxeology. *The Review of Austrian Economics*, 24, 2, 213-233.
- Gunning, J. P. (July 01, 2005). How to be a Value-Free Advocate of Laissez Faire. Ludwig von Mises's Solution. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 64, 3, 901-918.
- Hevner, A. R. (January 01, 2007). The Three Cycle View of Design Science Research. *Scandinavian Journal of Information Systems*, 19, 2, 87-92.
- Jacoby, S. (January 01, 2015). Type versus typology Introduction. *Journal of Architecture*, 20, 6, 931-937.
- Kennedy, J. B. (2014). *Space, Time and Einstein: An Introduction*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.
- Kerr, C. (1969). *Marshall, Marx and modern times: The multi-dimensional society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kisacky, J. (January 01, 2001). History and science: Julien-David Leroy's dualistic method of architectural history. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians / Society of Architectural Historians*, 260-289.
- Lucas, R. (2016). *Research Methods for Architecture*.
- Madrazo, L. (September 01, 1994). Durand and the Science of Architecture. *Journal of Architectural Education (1984-)*, 48, 1, 12-24.
- Oechslin, W. (October 01, 1986). Premises for the Resumption of the Discussion of Typology. *Assemblage*, 1, 36.
- Tzonis, A., & Lefaivre, L. (1999). *Classical architecture: The poetics of order*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.