I

Contemporary architecture is in crisis. This struggling can be oriented to the missing answer of the most important question in architecture: the way of producing and understanding building (Auge 1995, 32). Furthermore, globalization, with all of its positive values, also played an important role in producing a *globalized architecture*, an architecture which could be applied anywhere. It seems that this phenomena distinguished two groups in architectural practice: one which is trying to fight globalization, emphasizing the importance of context and local values, and the other, which negate the importance of context, streaming towards the *global city*, a term presented by Rem Koolhaas. This tension is even more emphasized with the current need of originality demanded from architects, and the necessity to produce something spectacular with each project (Prince - Ramus 2013).

This essay will focus on investigation of applicability of context and its influence on the project (or rather design process). Therefore, I will start from my personal standpoint which acknowledge contextual value as important ingredient in design process, and dwell on the way how to understand true values of it. At the same time, I will try to create a bridge between two already mentioned *disjunctions* of architects. Furthermore, this essay will follow my work on the graduation studio of Public Buildings at TU Delft, using the city of Istanbul to further explain certain claims.

II

In his book *Non Place* Marc Auge introduces a term *Place* and *Non - Place* as a phenomena in contemporary architecture: *If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, than a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non - place* (Auge 1995, 63). Additionally, he attaches notion of *non - place* to buildings such as airports, shopping malls and other buildings which provide artificial reality. Places which are designed in way so they can in same, or similar, form and program organization exist in any city at almost any given location. Entering this building, a user becomes physically detached from surrounding, and his understanding of space and place becomes only defined by the current building. I would further argue that most of contemporary architects who are trying to produce spectacular building, characterizing those buildings as architecture with capital *A,* are actually producing *non place* buildings, no matter how specific form of the building is. However, there are buildings which are at the first sight completely non – contextual in terms of form and scale, but become a strong identity of the given location or the city. This could be seen in the example of Eiffel Tower in Paris (figure 01), or Olympic national stadium in Beijing (figure02), buildings which are strongly embedded in local culture and accepted as national symbols. With that in mind, one may conclude that shape and the form of the building has nothing to do with production of contextual architecture, therefore, accepted *trend* in *contextual* architecture of establishing building with the notion of just nearest surrounding would not be efficient in creating a true localized building, which could be described with a term *place.*

In his essay *Generic City*, Rem Koolhaas stresses the importance of *identity* or *character.* By *striping* down character only thing which is left is The Generic. In terms of architecture, identity is derived from physical substance, such as historical buildings, context and surrounding (Koohaas and Mau 1995, 1248-1264). Furthermore, if we want to design and exist in that surrounding, we have to obey those values, or in case of architecture, we should repeat the given character. However, what will happen when the character is *repeated* in every possible way? Because of the increasing amount of

people and building who have to *share* and *depend* on the original identity, we will surely come into a point in time when the given character has been depleted to the maximum. Koolhaas argues that by liberating from the weight and pressure of *identity* we will be able to create and live in a true generic city. Koolhaas recognized the great danger of miss using and emphasizing the idea of identity (context) which will at the end result in a *caricature city* where a number of characteristics would be main design principle, repeated indefinitely. If the idea of *Generic City* is accepted we will end up on completely different end of the spectrum where originality and innovation will be completely miss used by architects, creating absolutely unique and abstract projects, but almost without the location. Paradoxical thing occurs: by *liberating* ourselves from identity in order to prevent appearance of *caricature city* we will again end up with *caricature*, only a different kind, and of much bigger scale. This city, or world, would be assembled out of either all the same or all the different buildings, where the whole world would be one unique *non – place.* In order to avoid that, only thing we can do is to reinterpret the notion of *character, identity or context* as well as to understand the exact influence it should have on the design process.

III

In order to start thinking in a more abstract way about identity, one has to step away from architecture and built environment and observe identity in a broader way. Therefore, to identify values and discover a new way of identity or character, I will use phenomena of society, trying to describe an experience of one social group. First of all, experiencing a total society cannot be connected to only one given time and space. In order to understand it completely, one has to go back in time, understanding causes and values of certain phenomenon, draw conclusions and only than to apply it to current state and behavior of the given social group. Those most important values are common for almost all members of the society. However, at the same time, each individual member possess a certain characteristics which are non-common for the rest of members, therefore, distinguishing him as a unique phenomenon. Although one may think that it is enough for certain amount of members to share only physical similarities, such as skin color, shape of the eye, in order to form a society, it would be insufficient. They also have to share certain pattern of behavior, thinking, culture and history in order to create a true society. Additionally, in that complex social phenomena, each individual member has to express his own individuality, but also to acknowledge it's belonging to the society as a whole. I would argue that the same logistic could be applied to the world of architecture, where cities would be equalized with the notion of society. Hence, each city is a part of bigger organism, but also is made out of number of smaller entities. If one is to decompose it to the limits, he would end up with an individual building, which could be seen as an individual member of already described society. If a building is to be perceived as part of the city, it would have to be described as a *place.* As already explained should be defined as a relational, historical and with recognizable identity (figure 2). Therefore, an architect should perform an investigation of the given location, but in a much broader way than what is common. That would mean to understand city, to know causes and values of certain phenomena, and not to focus on current appearance of the built environment. I would argue that that kind of superficiality is applied in contemporary contextual design in architecture.

In case of Istanbul, this approach suggests that architect has to look much deeper and in much abstract way that just focusing on the current built environment. Istanbul is a city of many layers and a complex mixture of different phenomena. Therefore, one has to *peal of* each layer, to decompose it. Only than one can understand true values and reasons for certain developments in current time, as well as possible connection between them.

The importance of built environment is acknowledged by Gianfranco Canaggia and Gian Luigi Maffei. In book *Interpreting basic building* they stress the value and potential of existing building, but not just as a built environment but as something much more related to the core of human existence, as extensions of the human species. Importance of building for human, is like the importance of *the shell for the snail, a necessary and integral part of life* (Caniggia and Maffei 2001, 19). However, humans can influence their *shell* and also they need to occupy not only built environment, but also space around it. The importance is placed on the city itself, and its long process of transformation, as well as *understanding it and acknowledging it as an integral to the evolution and development of human life.* (Caniggia and Maffei 2001, 22). Buildings and city are not seen as artificial environment, but rather as a *bridge* between human and nature, where by building humans are able to harmonize that relation. The most comprehensible scale of the structured environment would be a building. According to Caniggia and Maffei, each building could be defined as a subcategory of a *Building type*, where the term type should be seen as a common characteristic or a series of characteristic of any group of buildings (figure 3). However, in this case, a *type* should be understood as something more than just an established episteme of term *typology,* which suggests a predefined shape building could take. The idea of *type* exists in our mind, it is not a physical characteristic of the building. Furthermore, type is not logical fiction, but rater it is a *product of past and present spontaneous consciousness* (Caniggia and Maffei 2001, 53). With the notion of *type* in mind and the way it is formed, a term *typological* process could be introduced. *Typological process express the progressive transformation of the concept of building into a specific place* (Caniggia and Maffei 2001, 243). Hence, as suggested, in order to understand the notion of type or the specific building phenomena, one has to investigate and decompose the whole process of creation of the specific building, to understand creation of the specific phenomena, therefore, to understand *typological process.* With that statement in mind, it is crucial to perceive each building as historic individuation of the much bigger typological process (figure 4). Although each building could be seen as a member of certain *type*, it is at the same time embedded in one single point in time and one single place. In order to understand contemporary *type* one has to examine *typological process* and to trace the stages between the current state and its origins (figure 5). By doing that, reasons and values of the given change will reveal, and *typological process* could be understood as a set of parameters, each with specific value and purpose related to specific urban development. The knowledge of *type* can only be obtained by our observation and interpretation of existing building, hence, from our critical consciousness (Caniggia and Maffei 2001, 75).

Furthermore, one has to be selective when choosing which area and which building to analyze. According to Caniggia and Maffei, there are two types of buildings: *basic building* with essential characteristic conditioned by base types; and *specialized building*, which are so personalized that it does not share many characteristics with the rest of the built environment, often the name of the architect is known (Caniggia and Maffei 2001, 105). I would argue that for understanding *typological process* one has to focus on *basic buildings,* since most of the building experience of the civil area is populated on *base types.*

At the same time, it is crucial to understand that buildings alone are not enough to gain total *episteme* of one area / city. One has to focus on the understanding concept of the coexistence of several buildings, which is *urban tissue* (figure 6). It will be based on formative laws and categories which can be as *typological* as the *building type* itself (Caniggia and Maffei 2001, 118). *Urban tissue* represent a collective organization of several *building types*, where each one of them may possess progressive change throughout the history. As well as the *building type, urban tissue* is also strongly embedded in specific time and place. Furthermore, just like each building could be seen as a part of *urban tissue*, simultaneously, each *urban tissue* can be a member of bigger organization, *urban*

organism (figure 7). Therefore, the role of each building is not only to be the product of its specific typological process, nor to be a member between several buildings, but also it has a strong function in the *reciprocity of functions of any component of an urban organism in its entity* (Caniggia and Maffei 2001, 162). However, this knowledge does not only include a built environment. As Camillo Sitte stated in his book *City planning according to artistic principles* enclosed space is not only space inside the building, but the space around in between of built environment as well.

If I go back to the example of Istanbul, two main types of networks are recognized: organic and grid (fig 08). Furthermore, each one of them is based on specific and precise parameters, including relation to topography, where the grid organization is related to flatter topography (fig 09). However, going back to the history and examining the network organization from the scale of historical peninsula, one can conclude that organic street organization was initially preferred, and since the introduction of the traffic in Istanbul, it was transformed in the grid organization wherever it was possible (fig 10). Further investigation will reveal that the main quality of organic street organization is the notion of *public* and *semi – public space* (figure 11), which was present in them, which is completely opposite from the western civilization of that time, where main public space would be *a square* (Kubat 1999, 35). However, with the introduction of the traffic and densification, street gradually lost its importance as a public domain in Istanbul, and the notion of *semi – public space* was introduced in the block itself. If hierarchy of *public space* is defined as the amount the visibility from each point around the space, one can easily develop a method to calculate it (fig 12). Comparing three different block typologies, two from current time, and one historical, it is clear that organization, shape and the outcome of organic network, as well as the built environment inside it, is not something arbitrarily, but a precise and strict manifestation of known values and reasons. I believe that this example emphasized the idea of understanding *building type, urban tissue* and *urban organism* as interconnected, coherent system, rather than individual elements.

However, while examining *typological process* one has to remember the notion of *hybrid,* which would suggest including history of migration into our analysis. As Bhabha suggests, because of the notion of *hybrid*, it is not clear what is national and native (figure 13), therefore, architectural categories of vernacular, regionalist, and nationalist should be taken with certain caution (Bhabha 1997, 125). In case of Istanbul, part of the *typological process* is definitely a courtyard house. Meanwhile, the same typology could be find in Roman and Greek architecture, even in architecture of Egypt previous the time of the Ottoman Empire. Taking this historical spared of certain phenomena will definitely contribute to the *episteme* of the given *type.*

Therefore, one way of preventing banality of contextual analysis in contemporary architecture would be to *extend the scale and increase the depth* of the analysis of the surrounding. By doing that, one will gain more knowledge and understanding, including *hidden* connection between specific urban phenomena, with their values and reasons. Also, expansion of analysis could be introducing socio-spatial parameters (Hillier and Hanson 1989), where relation between architecture and human behavior, as well as culture is examined.

Again, I will use case study to better explain previous claim by examining a well-known type in Muslim history – a mosque. In order to better formulate this argument, case study of mosques will be broaden from Istanbul to all Muslim cities (fig 14). Hence, even though form of the buildings is different, underlying connection could be seen, simultaneously demonstrating notion of *hybrid.*

The most dominant characteristic of all mosques is the dual purpose. The dominant function is religious, as a place of worship, but the second purpose of communal place is also present, and it is manifested in the existence of the courtyard. Further analysis of mosques reveals repetition of other

architectonic elements in all examples: gates, water fountains, niche, pulpit and others (Aazam 2007, 058-03). Additionally, analysis of spatial categories will reveal certain pattern of repetition as well. Aazam suggested classification of all spaces into 7 categories (fig 15). Implementation of *typological process* reveals not only identification of these categories, but also identification of values and relation between them. Thus, gates are always present in two *types*, one connecting the mosque with the surrounding, and one connecting praying space with the courtyard. Next, transition space always has a function of the buffer zone, mostly manifested as an arcade of columns around the courtyard. Prayer area is always constructed with central bay and rows, and this is the main space of the mosque. Besides being the main space of the rituals, it also shares same psychological idea of a place for personal purification. Other elements such as *mihrab* and *minbar*, are always found in proximity to one another, establishing imam's space for praying. Space layout also shows considerable similarities, where the courtyard is always positioned in a way to obtain maximum integration, while other spaces, such as *Imam* are position in a way to separate user as much as possible. This organization suggest existence of highly precise hierarchical organization of spaces within the all mosques.

However, analysis could be further enriched, including socio – spatial notion. On account of that statement, two types of human *movement* could be recognized in all mosques: line of movement and line of prayers who are standing (Aazam 2007, 58-07). Human existence with predicted behavior can be seen as a strong design influence. For instance, position of the prayers is always oriented parallel to *Qibla*. This simple requirement dictates the shape of the open space of the mosque as elongated *Qibla*, with shorter sides, in order to accommodate prayers in most adequate way. In order to provide open space, construction is based on the grid of columns, forming almost perfect grid out of lines of movement in-between columns (fig 16). Additionally, all mosques are characterized with high visibility, as one of the most dominant features. Courtyard, as a common space, is the space with the most amount of visibility, preferred for social interaction. Prayer space, however, in most cases is designed as a *gradient* of visibility, where the maximum amount would be at the entrance (allowing user to orient himself within the mosque), and gradually decline towards individual place for seclusion (fig 17).

These analysis showed that all mosques share similar *underlying* logistic of organization, which is developed as a result of architectural, cultural and religious integration. Case studies include historical shift in a sense that they are all built in different time in history. However, similar logistic of organization suggest presence of strong notion of mosque *type* throughout the Muslim civilization.

However, same logistic could be applied to the relation between individual *building type* and its position inside *urban tissue.* As suggested by Caniggia and Maffei this connection could be identified as *type of aggregate*, which implies *a historically self-regulated system - as a rule, changing organically in space and time* (Caniggia and Maffei 2001, 118). Therefore, knowledge of individual *building type* should always be considered with its correspondence within the given *urban tissue.* This does not only imply investigation of relation with physical environment, but also, with *void space* of the city, such as *routes* (how it is connected with the city). In most cases, those should be understood as casual connection in order to identify singular design logistic.

This approach suggest that already explained *type* of mosque should be observed from the perception of the city as well. Phenomenological exploration would reveal that because of the scale and position, the mosque is highly visible and present building in most cases. This has to do with design idea of the mosque as the most public building in each *mahalle.* Nonetheless, mosque is also one of the most secret places, continuing the idea of the religious building. Urban analysis of *building tissue* in fashion of axial maps (fig. 18) reveals that bigger mosques are not easily accessible

from outside spaces, implying that certain level of isolation and segregation is required. Further analysis will show that building adjacent to the mosque (B) are always positioned in specific manner, to block direct communication with surrounding. This design approach is in complete clash of idea of public space (square) in Western Europe, where all adjacent streets leading to the space would be as straight and open as possible (fig. 19).

IV

Caniggia and Maffei suggest investigation of *building type, urban tissue* and *urban organism* as a basic method of understanding *typological process*. This will not only describe a certain built condition of the given area, but also suggest a series of *hidden* relationship and connection between certain urban phenomena, combined with precise rules and values (example of organic organization in Istanbul). However, they also argue for the continuation of the same process as the only way of future development in certain urban area. Though this approach will provide an architect with new level of knowledge and understanding, I would argue that *continuation of the typological process* is not the only possible way of new development. In sake of argument, I will introduce one more postmodern Italian architect, Aldo Rossi, and his idea of *la Citta Analoga,* which suggest understanding of the city as not just physical manifestation, but also it implies a certain level of *imagination* (Rossi 1976). With this in mind, his idea of a city could be seen more as a metaphor (city as a series of collages), rather than just physical reality. Claiming this, he was able to introduce non-architectural parameters in definition of the city, such as: history, politics, economy, and others, all of them crucial for defining certain phenomena. I would further suggest that this notion of *imagination* could be seen as a certain level freedom, where *typological process* could be seen in more abstract way. Therefore, further expanding the idea of *imagination* from understanding the city to way of stepping away of the given toolbox, identified as a *typological process.* Hence, architect would identify values and connection of certain urban phenomena, but he could introduce them in design process in undefined way, where new development could be seen as a complete non related intellectual process, but with more careful investigation, one could start understanding underlying connections in multiple levels. Contemporary architect has to expand time span of his interest, where it would not be possible to work in present condition, but certain level of prediction of future development has to be introduced. Architect should understand certain *building type* from past time, but simultaneously, his design project should be based on future development of the same *type*.

Liberating ourselves from the importance of continuation of *typological process* in already present manner (or condition) is a condition for canceling the claim of Rem Koolhaas that *identity* is limited source of inspiration. If we understand *typological process* as a set of abstract design ideas, which could be interpreted in a non-defined way, *identity* or *character* of the given place becomes inexhaustible source of inspiration. Furthermore, if design process is seen as intellectual activity, this newly gained abstract knowledge becomes important ingredient of conceptual stage of design process. Already explained dual notion of street network in Istanbul, with its unique hybrid notion between organic and grid organization, can thus be seen not only as a step in design development, but as a starting point of conceptualization of the building, introducing familiar but unique elements of the city into a scale of the building.

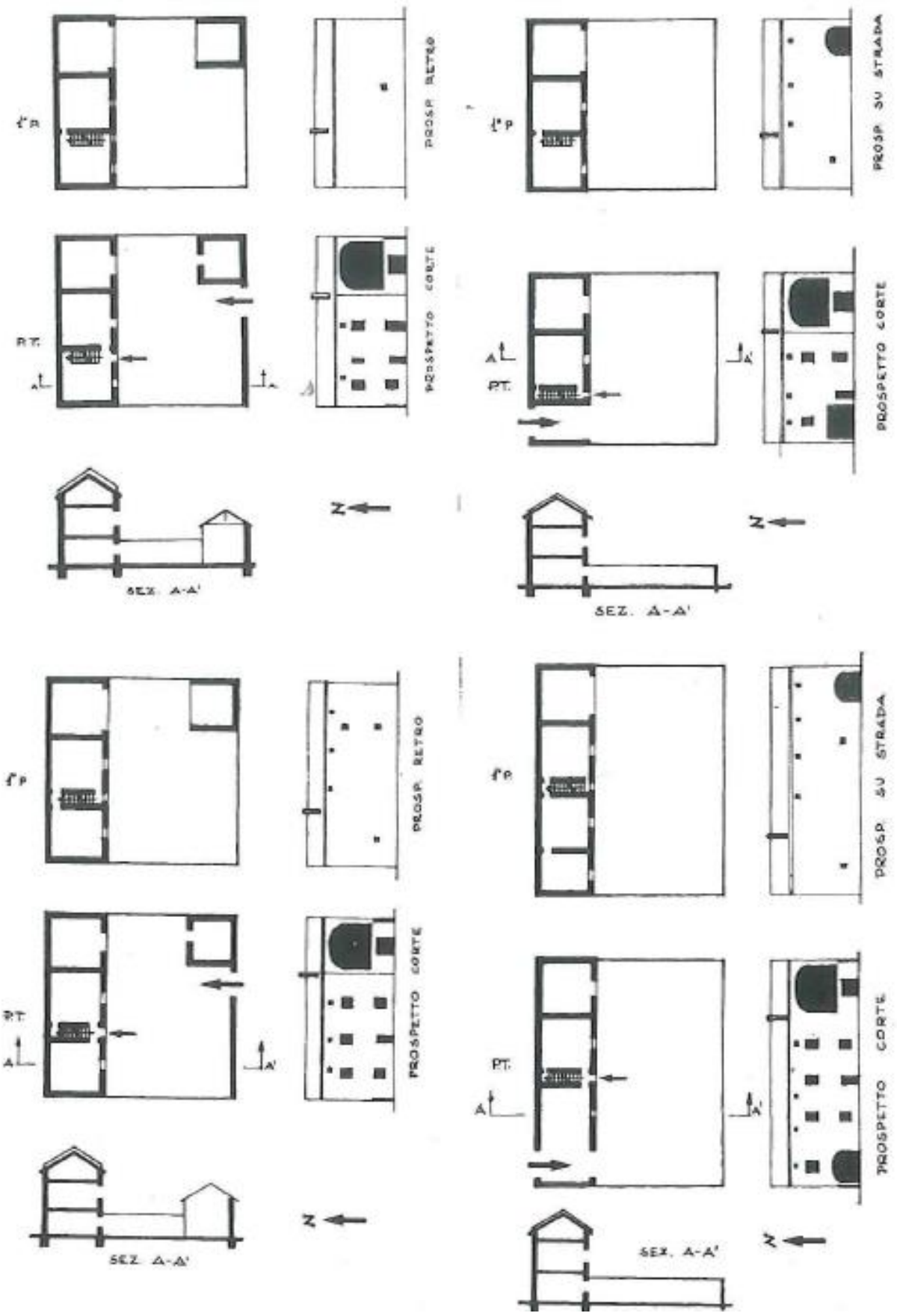

Figure 2 Synchronic variants due to specific sun-facing of courtyard houses, in their particular version with monocellular depth and without a portico characteristic of southern Piedmont.

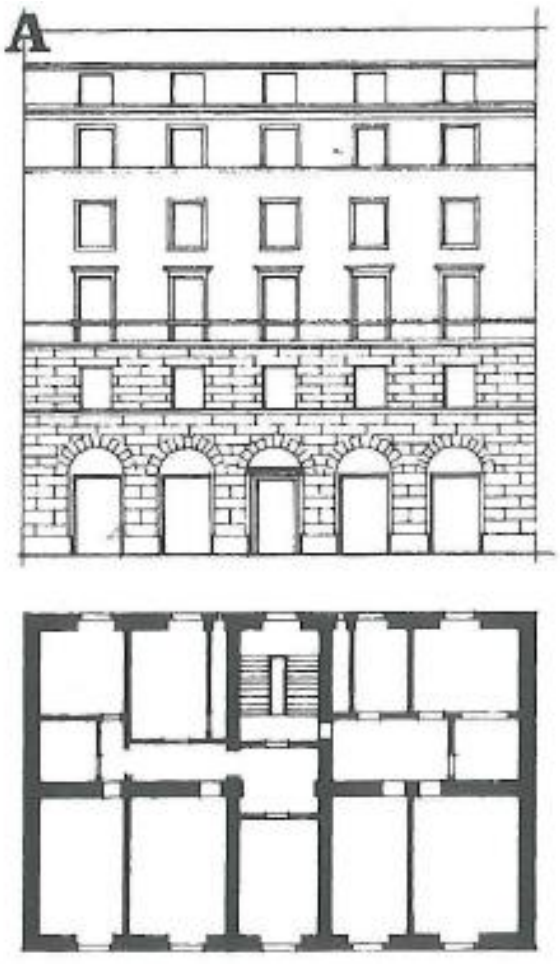

Figure 3 A: Late 19"' Century Roman in-line house

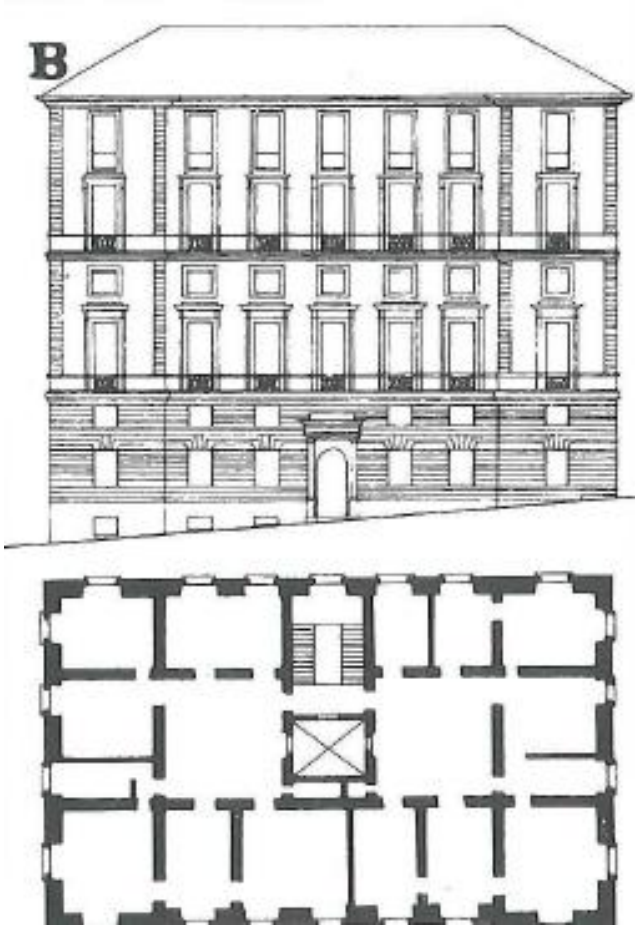

Figure 3 B: mid-19 Century Genoese in-line house*

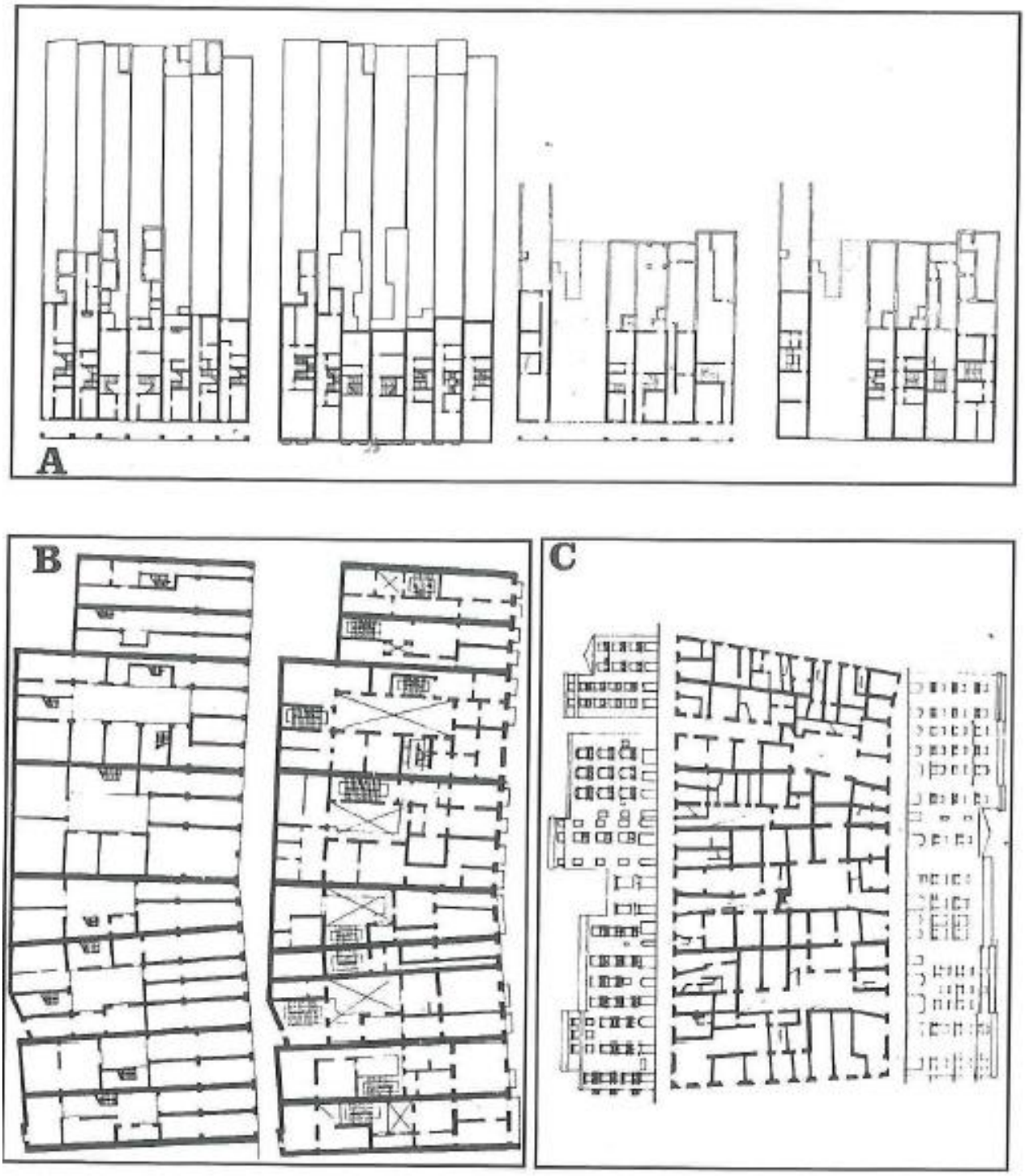

Figure 4 A : Padua, row types with lengthened lots in Borgo Santa Croce and via Savonarola (ratio 1:1,600). B: Naples, courtyard houses originating f r om the permanence ofthe "domus" type (ratio 1:1,600). C : Palermo, pseudo-row houses originating f r om previous "domus" type insular lots

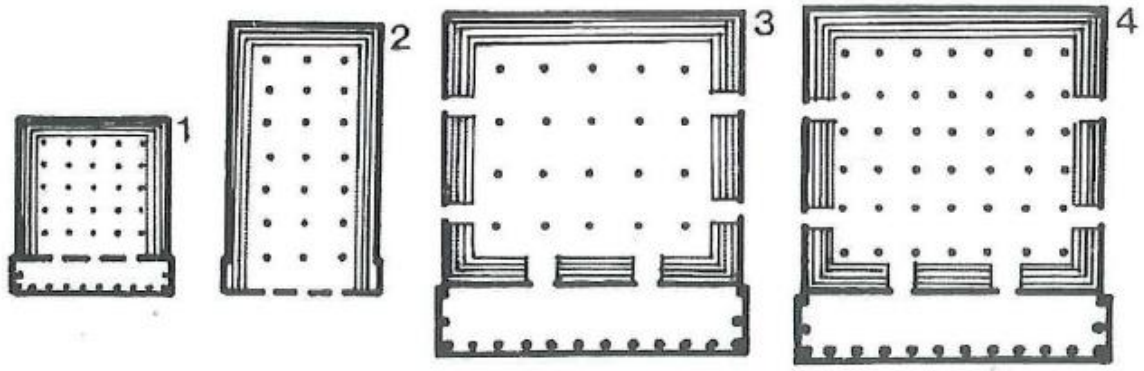

Figure 5 Eleusi, progressive development of Telesterio. Plans 1, 2 and 4 testify the subsequent doubling system: 3 is Ictino's lan implemented in 4. In the f i e ld of speciahzed building, similaiiy to basic building, types that have subsequently been doubled are widely diffused.

Figure 6 Florence, prevalently building tissue A: San Frediano quarter and B: Santa Crocce quater

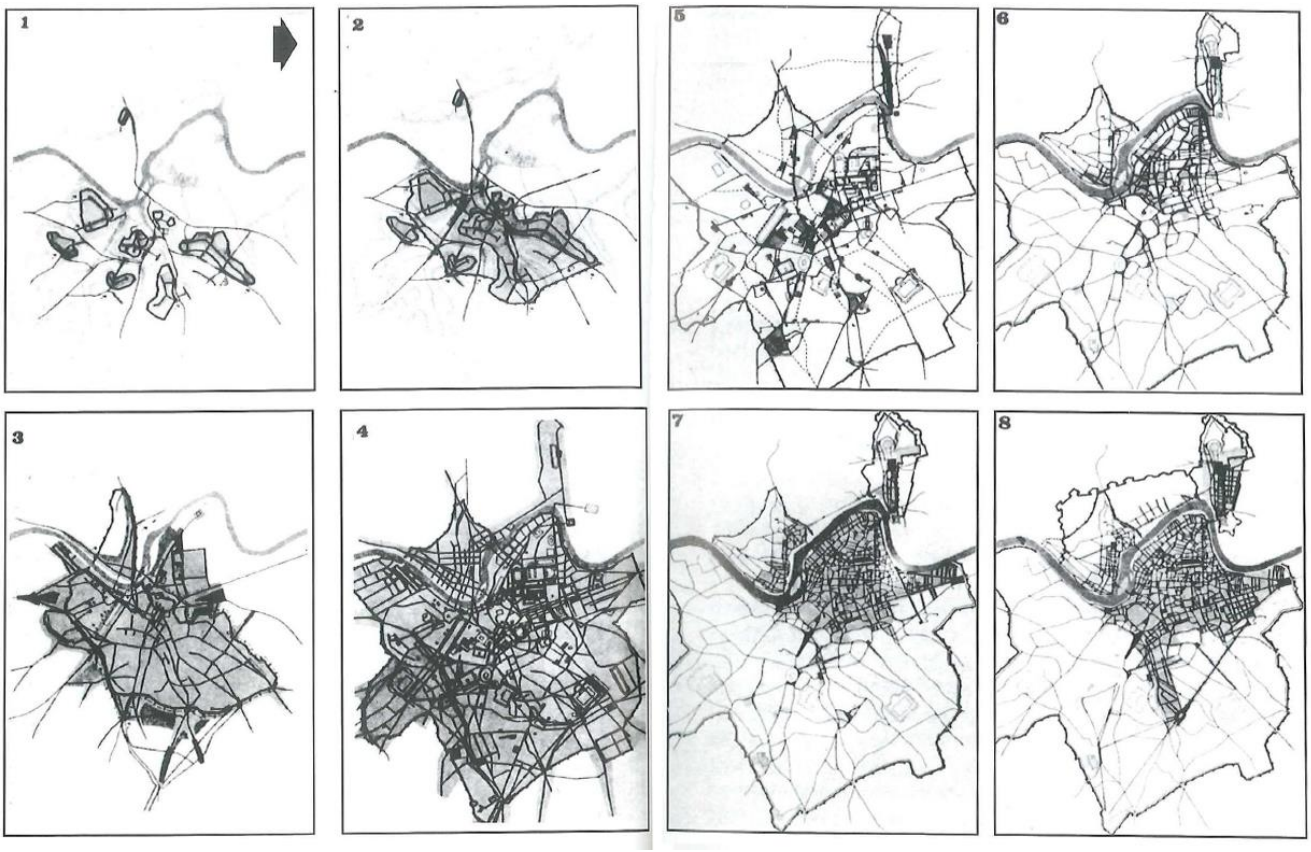

Figure 7 Rome: developments of its urban organism. 1) 8th Century B.C. partial groupings of hill settlements; 2) 6th-5th Centuries B.C. synthesis in urban organism; 3) 1st Century B.C. expansion of the Parade Ground and in routes leading to Silla's era; 4) 3rd-4th Centuries A.D. after imperial expansion, the metropolis is repolarized establishing several sub-centres; 5) 9th Century A.D. breaking up of the unitary structure into centres scattered throughout the territory; 6) 14th-15th Century its rebuilding into a Parade Group connects pre-existing centres in a renewed cityscape; 7) early 16th century the city expands from the Tiber loop by means of the Tridente plan of piazza del Popolo and is repolarized with the tracing of the first break - through axes; 8) 17th-18th Centuries restructuring through axes

Image Sources

Figure 01 – http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d8/Eiffel_Tower_Day_Sept._2005_(10).jpg

Figure 02 - Caniggia, Gianfranco, and Luigi Maffei. 2001. *Interpreting Basic Buildings.* Florence: Alinea editrice srl. Page 114

Figure 03 - Caniggia, Gianfranco, and Luigi Maffei. 2001. *Interpreting Basic Buildings.* Florence: Alinea editrice srl. Page 84

Figure 04 - Caniggia, Gianfranco, and Luigi Maffei. 2001. *Interpreting Basic Buildings.* Florence: Alinea editrice srl. Page 100

Figure 05 - Caniggia, Gianfranco, and Luigi Maffei. 2001. *Interpreting Basic Buildings.* Florence: Alinea editrice srl. Page 111

Figure 06 - Caniggia, Gianfranco, and Luigi Maffei. 2001. *Interpreting Basic Buildings.* Florence: Alinea editrice srl. Page 128

Figure 07 - Caniggia, Gianfranco, and Luigi Maffei. 2001. *Interpreting Basic Buildings.* Florence: Alinea editrice srl.Page 100

Figure 08 – Own Illustration

Figure 09 - Own Illustration

Figure 10 – Own Illustration

Figure 11 – Own Illustration

Figure 12 – Own Illustration

Figure 13 - Caniggia, Gianfranco, and Luigi Maffei. 2001. *Interpreting Basic Buildings.* Florence: Alinea editrice srl. Page 109

Figure 14 - Aazam, Ziad. 2007. *The social logic of the mosque.* the Welsh School of Architecture, Page 58-03

Figure 15 - Aazam, Ziad. 2007. *The social logic of the mosque.* the Welsh School of Architecture, Page 58-04

Figure 16 – Aazam, Ziad. 2007. *The social logic of the mosque.* the Welsh School of Architecture, Page 58 - 08

Figure 17 – Aazam, Ziad. 2007. *The social logic of the mosque.* the Welsh School of Architecture, Page 58-10

Figure 18 – Own Illusstration

Figure 19 - Caniggia, Gianfranco, and Luigi Maffei. 2001. *Interpreting Basic Buildings.* Florence: Alinea editrice srl. Page 149