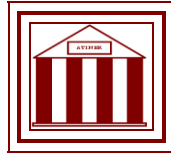


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**Fernando Távora: The Journey as an Instrument
of Experience and Transmission of the
Architectural Discipline**

**Raffaella Maddaluno
Assistant Professor
University of Lisbon
Portugal**

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Athens Institute for Education and Research
8 Valaoritou Street, Kolonaki, 10671 Athens, Greece
Tel: + 30 210 3634210 Fax: + 30 210 3634209 Email: info@atiner.gr URL:
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Fernando Távora:¹ The Journey as an Instrument of Experience and Transmission of the Architectural Discipline

Raffaella Maddaluno

Abstract

For the architect Fernando Távora, master of the “Porto School”, the journey represented part of a methodological progression within his own cultural growth. The journeys themselves were numerous: several trips to Spain, Italy, a trip around Europe in 1949, travelling on the occasion of the CIAM (International Congresses of Modern Architecture). His years of training culminated in a trip around the world in 1960, thanks to a scholarship from the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, which allowed him a four-month trip to the USA, Mexico, Japan, Thailand, Pakistan, Lebanon, Egypt and, finally, Greece. The journey was the medium through which he would mentally and physically build a living relationship, direct, intelligent, without filters of interpretation, with the non-specialist “knowledge” of places and people. He considered the basic principle of “first live, then design” as fundamental to the discipline of a project. During this trip he would write daily, noting the chronology of the events and producing numerous drawings of all the places visited. His journey would come to an end in Athens where finally he reflected on the notion of time and the importance of removing “measurement” at the time of the event. Is there a form of TIME appropriate for transmitting an “architectural lesson”? Is there a practical experience of the journey that the lessons of Fernando Távora have transmitted to those who recognize him as a teacher? The present paper aims to illustrate some of the themes raised in his diary.²

Keywords: Diary, Fernando Távora, Gulbenkian Journey, Memory.

¹ Fernando Távora (Porto 1923 - Matosinhos 2005) graduated in Architecture at the Escola Superior de Belas Artes of Porto in 1952 and became a professor at the same school. He was chairman of the Constitutional Commission of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto where he became a full professor. During his career he participated at numerous international conferences, in particular at the International Conference of Artists - UNESCO and in Venice at the International Congresses of Modern Architecture (CIAM), Hoddesdon, Aix-en-Provence, Dubrovnik and Otterlo. He participated at the “Inquerito da Arquitectura Popular em Portugal”. He produced a number of essays including *O problema da casa Portuguesa* (Lisbon, 1947) and *Da organização do Espaço* (Porto, 1962 and 1982). He consistently combined his academic and professional careers: he was architect for the City of Porto, Consultant for the City of Gaia, Consultant for the Technical Office of the Planning Committee of the North Region and Consultant of the Technical Office of the City of Guimarães. Numerous exhibitions have been held showcasing his work: at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, the Superior School of Fine Arts in Porto, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, the Milan Triennale and the Architecture Biennale. He became a member of CIAM and ODAM, was part of the National Association of Portuguese Architects and the International Union of Architects. He is considered a master of Portuguese architecture and counts Alvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura among his many learners and disciples.

² The present work forms part of a research project funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon entitled “Fernando Távora: a viagem Gulbenkian do 1960”, in collaboration with the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Lisbon.

Introduction

The importance of the journey accompanied the architect Fernando Távora from the very beginning of his architectural training and continued as an element in the development of a method for the evolution and progress of his own cultural growth and advancement of his research towards the end of his life.

The journeys undertaken were various: a few trips to Spain, to Italy, a trip around Europe in 1949 following trips on the occasion of the CIAM. His formative years concluded with a trip around the world, thanks to the subsidization of a scholarship from the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, allowing him, over a period of four months in 1960, to visit countries including the United States, Mexico, Japan (where he participated in the World Design Conference in Tokyo), Thailand, Pakistan, Lebanon, Egypt and, finally, Greece. During this trip around the world he would write a voluminous diary of reflections and drawings.

During this trip, that he would always consider as the most significant of his life, and by far the most fundamental of his training experiences, Távora witnessed the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright and the American architecture of Mies Van der Rohe; he observed and noted the character of the city and the various ways of life of other cultures; in America, he would go in search of new methodological meanings on teaching and the workings of regional authorities. He systematically located and sent books and materials on to his employees in Porto.

*“This is a special trip. It's something of my vision of travel in general (...) but in fact I have been on many trips, both before and after this. But clearly this has influenced me mostly, I had never been on such a well organized trip.”*³

However, during the years of his maturity and an inner peace that followed his trip around the world, Távora continued to use the trip overseas as a praxis in the essential experience for learning, and as a complement to the more general process of cultural development, which is constructed through study, teaching and professional activities. The journey for him became a consistent approach to continuous cultural and emotional renewal, towards the complete formation of both man and architect.

It was crucial, for the poetic side of his character, not to close one's eyes to the reality of the world, not to become isolated, not to sever relations to the outside world. Such attitudes attempted to maintain some order of balance, although well aware of how difficult it is to let time take its course, not barricade oneself behind walls of self-reference, not hindering those influences from the outside which bring about changes in the culture one experiences.

The unique added value that the journey represents for Távora was born from such a notion. The trip is the only, irreplaceable, way to build a living relationship, not only mentally but physically, direct, intelligent but without

³ Raffaella Maddaluno, *Conversation with Távora on his diary* (Porto, 2003).

the subjection of interpretation, with knowledge, a search for a non-specialist knowledge of places and people, considered essential for the discipline of planning according to one of the basic principles of his philosophy: “*first live, then design*”.

For the preparation of material on the occasion of the publication on Távora, I had the opportunity to work in the archive of Távora who had chosen me as a privileged “listener” of his travel diary, which he read over various months during my stay at his studio in Porto, page after page. I had the foresight to record his voice while reading the text as well as his comments and, suddenly, his trip was transformed from not only writing, but sound too, a sound that wavered depending on Távora’s physical and emotional state. There are pages in which his voice is lively and animated, describing the experiences transcribed with a playful enthusiasm; there are other pages in which the weariness of old age does not allow him to maintain the same pace in his reading and the memories were not as easily recalled. Yet in all those memories there is a desire to relive the journey and transmit its importance, always with great force.⁴

Chronology of the Archive of the Gulbenkian Journey

The call for the “*Study Scholarship - Higher Technical Secondary Education: Science, Literature and Art*”, subsequently awarded to Távora, was made by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation on March 19, 1959, and published in the newspaper “O primeiro de Janeiro” on the same day.⁵ The Call Announcement for the award of the scholarship abroad stated in its “Regulations” the conditions to which the scholar must adhere.⁶

Távora applied for the scholarship on April 27, 1959, as demonstrated within a Gulbenkian Foundation document entitled “Bolsas de Estudo no Estrangeiro - Boletim de inscrição” indicating the objectives of his trip and the universities that he intended to visit.⁷

⁴ The critical version of the Gulbenkian Travelogue in Italian is currently in preparation, with live comments made by Távora during his reading. The publication is a collaboration of the present author with Giovanni Leoni and Antonio Esposito.

⁵ A. R. C. Mesquita, *O melhor de dois mundos a viagem do arquiteto Távora aos EUA e Japão - diário 1960* (Master Thesis in Territory and Memory Architecture, figure 5), 29.

⁶ The document stated: “*The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation grants Scholarships for artistic development to graduates of courses of the Fine Arts and Decorative Arts School and to people who, despite not yet in possession of a qualification, make art their profession. (...) d) The Scholarship includes: a) - the contribution of monthly expenses, variable according to the country and locations visited during the placement b) - return travel expenses, by plane in Economy class, by train in 1st class, and by ship in not less than 2nd Class, but whose price does not exceed those of Economy air class (...).*”

⁷ “(...) Country in which the internship is to be carried out: *United States of America*. Course to be followed or scientific area to be studied: *Architecture departments of various Universities and Institutes*. Who will serve as a Reference for your studies? *The professors of the respective departments*. Has this already been agreed with the organisations indicated?: *No*. (...) What is the program of study or work plan to be followed? *Studies of teaching methods of Architecture and Urbanism in the following universities and institutes: Columbia University, Howard University, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Institute of Design*. What period of time is the Scholarship intended to cover?

Following his participation in the Call, Távora learnt of his successful application through a letter from the Foundation as seen in a document from the Gulbenkian archives dated September 17, 1959.⁸

Initially, the scholarship requested was to cover a period of four months in order to visit the United States. However, a letter in the Gulbenkian archive in Lisbon shows that Távora had also received an invitation to attend the World Design Conference (WoDeCo), to be held in Tokyo from May 11 to 17, 1960. In a letter sent to the Board of Directors of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation dated November 26, 1959 Távora asks whether his departure may be postponed; for professional reasons and because he considers the modernity of the theme of the Congress of great interest, and believes it is essential that Portugal should be represented in an event of such international importance.⁹

A further document, again from the Gulbenkian archive, *Payment Authorization No. 2/60 - BA*, dated January 15, 1960 on behalf of the Director of the Fine Arts Service, Maria José de Mendonça, demonstrates the awarding of an increase in the scholarship thus enabling Távora to travel to Tokyo in order to attend the WoDeCo World Design Congress. A second document entitled “*Despacho exarado pelo senhor presidente em 15/1/60*”. Permission to travel to Japan was granted by the director on the basis that participation

Four months. (...) What is the desired start date of the Scholarship? To be agreed following successful application. (...) What work projects are foreseen following the conclusion of the Scholarship?: Teaching and freelance practitioner. References (who may assist in formulating a judgment as to the scientific and moral suitability of the candidate): School of Fine Arts of Porto, General Directorate of Urban Services, the Porto, Matosinhos and Gaia Council, Port Administration of Douro and Leixões”. Document present in the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation archive.

⁸ “*Ref. No. 1030/BAM/59. Dear Sir, We are pleased to inform you that the Board of Directors of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has approved the granting of a Scholarship abroad for a four-month period to begin during the current year. The scholarship is intended, as indicated, for the study of teaching methods of Architecture and Urbanism in the United States, in the Universities and Institutes identified in your application. The sum of the Scholarship granted is 9,000 scudi (nine thousand scudi) per month, increased by 4,500 scudi (four thousand five hundred scudi) for return travel to the United States (Lisbon/New York/Lisbon). (...)The Fine Arts Service Director, Maria José de Mendonça*”. Document present in the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation archive.

⁹ “*Dear Sirs, (...) Firstly, in terms of the start date of the scholarship, I would like, due to reasons relating both to my professional affairs and to the need to organize the trip with as much attention as possible, to delay its commencement to mid-January 1960. The second aspect relates to the fact that, following my application to the Foundation, I received an invitation as a member of the CIAM (International Congresses of Modern Architecture), to participate in the World Design Conference (WoDeCo), to be held in Tokyo from 11 to 17 May 1960. I believe it right to communicate the great interest that this international conference presents both in terms of the modernity of the theme and the quality of the organization as already proved by documents already received, as well as, I should underline, the interest that, in a certain sense, would arise from a national standpoint with our country being represented at the conference. Considering that my scholarship would run from the middle of January 1960, I venture to submit the notion of including my participation in the conference mentioned above. Thank you once again for the grant awarded to me and your attention to the two aspects raised above. My best regards.*” Document present in the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation archive.

by a Foundation fellow in such an international event would bestow importance and prestige upon the organisation.¹⁰

The journey thus took on a far greater scale and began to be seen as a trip around the world.

Travel as an Experience of Architecture

The above subheading can be analyzed by breaking it down into three component parts and analyzing the three words that make up its sense.

TRAVEL: Various ideas of travel exist. There is an idea of travel that goes beyond the space and time actually travelled with the intention of locating something that seems to have been lost or unjustly removed along the way. The territory to be explored along such a pathway is that of consciousness, individual if we consider the artist as an individual, collective if we consider a wider audience. The work of art is the same subject that travels, a stranger to the place being visited. It is the romantic traveller, who is not seeking a “cultural pilgrimage”, who does not proceed by analyzing the landscape or comparing it according to a timely verification with the ancient text. No pleasure is found in the recognition or non-recognition of the distance from it: the objective of the journey is the perpetration of an individual dream where the imagination takes the place of reality.¹¹ (A fundamental condition for this type of travel is SOLITUDE. “*A new country, a natural landscape, unknown customs, are a spectacle for four men, but for one man alone, an achievement*”. *A solitary triumph over everyday things, of places far away in space and time, over the multiplication of meanings, over myths and stories: an achievement over time.*”¹²

“Where are you going?” asks the Novalis novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, “Always towards HOME” is the answer. A notion of travel exists as the ETERNAL RETURN, which brings with it a constant sense of tragedy. The journey is thus experienced as the tragedy of return, like that of Aeneas and Dido, or of contemporary culture with its inexorable loss of the centre. It is an endless journey that inevitably leads to the fear of return, which results in delaying, for as long as possible, the moment in which you must return home and mature an awareness that everything will have changed. It is the great dilemma that accompanies ULYSSES throughout his journey. At the base of these two concepts the ancient question is expressed as to whether a life journey can be understood in the classical sense of remaining true to yourself, or whether it can be considered as a continuing sign of the impossibility of stemming the continuous mutation of the self, the loss of a centre, of identity,

¹⁰ “I grant the proposal of a complementary scholarship as I recognize the importance of a Scholar from the Foundation travelling to Japan, a country in which I also recognize the progress in the domain of architecture. This visit to Tokyo will in no way prejudice the work that the fellow intends to carry out in North America, or the duration of his stay in that country. The fellow is required, on their return to Portugal, to fulfil an engagement with the Foundation in the realization of two conferences, in Lisbon and in Porto, illustrating the results of his studies”. Document present in the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation archive.

¹¹ A. Corbin, *Le territoire du vide. The Occident et le désir du rivage* (Paris, 1988), 1750-1840.

¹² S. Fera, *Aldo Rossi, rielaborazioni: viaggio e palinsesto* (Milan, Lotus, no. 68, 1991), 73.

the danger and the desire to become another. THIS IS CIRCULAR TRAVEL as opposed to LINEAR TRAVEL. “The traveller flows ever onward, he does not carry himself, his entire self in his progress, but each time annihilates his entire previous identity and throws it away.”¹³

During the journey, a foreigner among foreigners, we learn at the great school of humility, which teaches the limits of our mental schemes and forces the destruction of the tools with which we have built the paraphernalia for continuous daily recitation. You learn the great sense of BEING NO-ONE.

Experience

When considering the notion of the *journey*, our thoughts somehow wander towards the sea and its epic stories. Those who learn to travel by sea learn to break free from the obsession of having to re-confirm their identity. When someone narrates the story of their journey, they also depict something of the life world to which they belong.¹⁴

There are two ways of relating to travel, or of relating to his travels, in terms of the experience of Távora. “Listen”, to his travels, listen to him talk of travel or physically share with him the experience of the journey. Távora taught Theory of Architecture for many years at the Faculty of Porto, and one of the constants of his lectures was recounting to his students what he had seen during his travels, adopting in his stories not a chronological sequence but a mixture of memories ordered according to the teaching needs of the moment. Excavations in Athens were thus approached by referring to his visit to ruins in Italy, or the experience of European landscapes complemented with a description of the spoken nature of Wright's Taliesin. His stories often continued beyond the classroom, recounting tales across the desks of his atelier to his staff, or during trips with friends. I noted from the interviews that there are many memories of his colleagues and old students associated with Távora's travels. In these cases, where experience is transmitted through a “story”, those who “listen” use their imagination as a learning tool, while the teller uses MEMORY. The concept of memory comes from ANAMNESIS meaning REMINISCENCE. It is an active function that begins with a multitude of sensations and develops towards a UNITY, understood through thought. Bringing images to mind comes from a tradition with a psychological connotation that defines memory as IMAGINATION with the connotation of TIME. Anamnesis literally means to bring images to mind.

The MEMORY (Mnéme) is, on the contrary, a passive function, the storing of the sensation experienced in the present, physically recording the sensation. Anamnesis is therefore to revive this sensation following the interval of a period of time. It refers, therefore, to the Platonic idea that LEARNING is REMEMBERING, the process of KNOWING does not come only from the experience, but from remembering the experience.

Aldo Rossi in his “scientific autobiography” noted that he had begun writing the first notes of his autobiography 10 years ago; for fear that should

¹³ C. Magris, *L'infinito viaggiare* (Milan: Mondadori, 2005).

¹⁴ Ibid.

he write them too late, they may have already been transformed into memories. There is a fear of the excessive reworking of events. Távora wrote his diary every day, noting every event with a journalistic wealth, every issue, every name, with a self-discipline that seemed not to want to leave space to time for revision. Távora feared the “distant memory”, and wanted an ordering of the data available in order to make it simpler and the task of transmission more objective. It should not be overlooked that the objective of the Távora diary was a final report that the Gulbenkian Foundation required as a condition of the scholarship.¹⁵ This therefore represented a special journey, conditioned by the task to be accomplished. However, the amount of data and events recalled are so great that he would never write a final summary report of his experiences, instead finding excuses in abundance for the postponing of his final work for the Gulbenkian despite their constant reminders.¹⁶ He instead

¹⁵ Point 1 of paragraph III of the Regulations required the Fellow to document, through the drafting of a report, the activities carried out during the period of study. This report would never be delivered.

III - Obligations of the Fellow.

The Fellow has the following obligations:

1. *Produce a report to document his activities as a Fellow, possibly with photographic documentation of the work carried out during the internship. In the event that the Fellow has chosen an artistic counsellor for his studies, he shall attach to the report a description of the same, demonstrating their commitment;*
2. *Request permission from the Foundation to interrupt the internship or leave the country in which it is being carried out;*
3. *Not to change either the objective, or the work plan without the authorization of the Foundation; the request for any such change must be duly justified;*
4. *Not accept other scholarships during the period of the scholarship of the Foundation;*
5. *(...) The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation reserves the right to withdraw the scholarship should the Fellow not fulfil the obligations assumed”.*

A. R. C. Mesquita, *O melhor de dois mundos a viagem do arquitecto Távora aos EUA e Japão - diário 1960*, figure 8, 35-36.

¹⁶ On June 7, 1961, Távora received a letter from the Foundation soliciting the aforementioned final report which had still not been presented. It read:

“Dearest Távora, we apologize, but for bureaucratic reasons we inform you that it would be extremely convenient that we resolve the issue to which your scholarship is bound... your report”. (Ibid, Note 366, 203). An undated paper manuscript exists, addressed to a person whose links with the Gulbenkian Foundation are unclear, in which Távora apologizes for the delay and attempts to explain his reasons. It reads: “Sr. Dantas (?). Our mutual friend, Maestro Carlos Ramos, has urged me to deliver my travel report as soon as possible, and expressed his concerns for my not having yet done so. First of all, I would like to offer my apologies and then communicate that after numerous doubts, I think I have managed to identify a suitable scheme for my report and that at this moment I am developing the various points of such a scheme. The fact of not being an “easy” writer (or with easy writing) should be added to the difficulty of having to condense so many of the things seen and considered in these four months and, once again, the fact that the time of my absence has complicated my professional life to such an extent that today I am still suffering the consequences and I therefore do not have enough time to dedicate myself with all the intensity that the report would require. I can, however, assure you of two things: the first is that the report will be delivered; the second is that this report will not make me feel ashamed in front of the Foundation who so generously awarded me the scholarship”. Ana Mesquita in her thesis reveals the existence in the Távora archive, before it was transferred to its present location at the Fundação Marques da Silva, of around forty A4 pages in which Távora attempts to structure his report, organized into chapters, and that while generally incomplete, they provide clues as to how a possible final report of the trip could have

lived this particular journey with a strong sense of persuasion, possessing a sense of one's life in the present, the will to live the moment, every moment, not just those seen as privileged or exceptional. Every appointment, every means of transport, each address is gathered in his experience with the same desire to record the presence, perhaps for fear of losing them in a subsequent revision of memory.

What is his attitude during his travels and how does he approach his journey? This question raises the legitimate issue of whether there exists a practice of the experience of travelling in architecture? What is the entire journey of gestures to be travelled? Through a reading of the pages of the diary there is a sense that an encoded protocol of those specific attitudes that may be assumed during the experience of travel is perhaps possible.

WATCH: meaning to direct one's gaze in order to see something and that implies a physical relationship with phenomenal reality. All the pictures of the trip are entitled to be part of the experience of Távora's scenario. His visual interest is directed indiscriminately to any element that is part of this new reality, from everyday objects, buildings and, especially, people. It is the first step of the learning process that Távora implements.

SEE: meaning to understand reality through one's eyes, a voluntary consequence of the first gesture. To pose questions, favouring a more careful analysis, is already a next step operated by Távora. He almost always does so in the presence of elements that must be used for study, or for a subsequent transfer to students. He selects, from a crowded reality of signs, the beginnings of cognitive paths that will lead to the next step.

OBSERVE: from the Latin ob ("before") + servare ("to keep") = consider carefully. Universities, courses, architects, which are considered essential experiences, form part of this further selective step. Therefore, through writing, he would devote more time to these selected experiences, dedicating additional space to describing them in the written pages of the diary, in his hotel room, where each evening spent during his journey he would write up his daily report.

REPRESENT: meaning submit again. It is the privileged moment of the drawing. He produced a considerable amount of drawings from his travels. This suspended time was necessary for some of his experiences that could not only be left to the written word. An architect comes equipped with a formulary of signs, difficult to decode into phrases or words that belong to the field of literature. Architects are always ready to carry out the gesture of putting pencil to paper.

Architecture: Athens 9-12 June 1960

The last part of the Gulbenkian journey is dedicated to the city of Athens. It is the city from which he would catch the plane to go home on 12 June 1960. This is the conclusion; it is a time of rest and a time to recognize in Greek culture similarities in behaviour and customs. It is a prelude to feeling at home; it is the recognition of the common Mediterranean roots to which Portugal, although geographically in the Atlantic, belongs. In one of the pages

looked. Being a rough draft, there are various modifications and revisions of perspectives with respect to the notes written within the Diary.

of the diary, specifically Thursday June 9, Távora, after visiting the Agora, is encouraged by recognizing similarities between some aspects of Athenian culture (a restaurant, people, etc.) and Portuguese culture. It is as if he recognized a thread common to the whole of the Mediterranean and its Lusitanian people, a musical language that finally allows him to breathe a sigh of relief and feel at home after five months of wandering.

Conversing and Strolling

In Athens he recognizes, with consoling relief, the unavoidable necessity to devote the necessary space to time; it is here that he recognizes the quality of Mediterranean culture in terms of “conversation”, free from utility or the pragmatism of an objective. He visits the Stoa of Attalos and appreciates its restoration, carried out with criteria and without the intention of making old something which is not. He focuses on the evident social aspect of such spaces, which allowed citizens to walk and talk and learn to converse, sheltered from the sun and the rain. Such considerations were further heightened in the context of his previous experience in the USA where the time to walk and talk or talk and walk did not exist and where, rather, the practical purpose, utility and focus on business rendered discussion supercilious and self-absorbed.

Growth of Experience/Accumulation of Experience

He recognises Greek culture as capable of reaching the highest point prior to perfection, through the repeated, stubborn will to improve technique, in terms of the relationship with place, yet making small changes in form to a single theme, thus accompanying them in a straight line through the experience of architecture. He religiously follows the entire pathway leading to the Panatenee, studying the site in terms of its views, slopes and relationships, right up towards the Thiseon. He recognizes the same evolutionary path between the Thiseon and the Parthenon as exists in the relationship between the 1st and 2nd Lake Shore phases of Mies. Távora describes a “growth of experience” which is nowadays often restricted by the obligatory compliance to technical programs, but mainly limited by the increasingly widespread notion that repetition is synonymous with low-level creativity. A growth of experience, according to Távora, leads to an accumulation of experience, i.e. the control and ever more perfect management of every phase and detail of the creative process, such as the process that took place in Greek culture in the production of ceramics and sacred spaces.

Great Greatness of the Past

Yet this experience for him, an educated man, is far from easy. The experience of beauty is seldom complete, but is deducible, perceptible in various fragments that exist in place. He recognizes such limits in the case of the Acropolis, where he says that, after going back and forth, he saw a lot yet understood very little, partly due to fact the relationship established with

the ruins is not necessarily immediate and partly due to the greatness and beauty of some places not always being evident.

He then reiterates, repeats the program, revives, revises, elaborates, returns to places in the hope of generating new insights into this ancient eternal beauty. He returns to the Acropolis and Agora, reviews the Stoa, visits the museum, retraces spatial relations and historical reconstructions. He visits the Acropolis under the light of a full moon, which he says softens the landscape and sharpened thought. He concludes his visit to Athens by writing:

(...) After the museum I had lunch and returned to the area of the Acropolis.¹⁷ I wandered until around ten in the evening. I reached the temple of Jupiter, I saw Hadrian's Gate and the Acropolis at dusk. At ten o'clock I went up to the Pnyx hill and at 10.30 the Son et Lumière began. [...] The Pnyx dominates the Acropolis landscape with wisdom. The spectacle, with rare dignity and grandeur, evokes the glories of Greece and the Panathenaic procession. And more, Pericles and the victory at Marathon. Then the fire of the Acropolis at the hands of the Persians and the victory in the sea at Salamis. Everything revolves around the period of the apogee between Pericles and Themistocles. The Acropolis acquires a new value with artificial lighting and the texts and music are beautiful. Great greatness of the past ...”¹⁸ (Saturday, 11 June).

¹⁷ Along with the diary manuscript which Távora produced during the trip, two sketch pads exist of the places visited. The drawings are full of descriptions and directions and become a parallel testimony and of equal importance to the written narratives of the diary. Captions from these drawings are reported; in particular two referring to places visited in Athens, in order to better understand the experience of Távora in these places before his return to Portugal.

Drawing 19 - Notebook B. (*Drawings of Athena Parthenos with a human face in the Acropolis Museum with annotations*).

“*Athena Parthenos*”, a copy of the statue located in the Parthenon. “Cold” work of the II century BC 1/10 of the original. Marble. Found in Athens, close to the ancient Varvakeion. Acropolis museum, June 11, 1960.

It should be noted that this figure is within the temple; no light except that which comes from the door; coated with gold and ivory; with lateral galleries which increase in size (the locations where the columns of the gallery are placed and their basic diameter are still visible (*sectional drawing of the temple with the statue*); interestingly, the Parthenon had two scales: a large external sculpture, located on the highest point of the Acropolis to crown the sacred peak, the other internal, within a room, with architectural space, sacred, closed, mysterious, organized with the intention of providing dignity and size to a figure; while the exterior has value in itself in terms of the landscape and of the other buildings, the interior is built for the statue.

¹⁸ **Drawing 20.** (*Drawing on the back of drawing sheet 19 of the Acropolis, with annotations*). Stoa of Attalos; Erechtheion; Parthenon; Holy Apostles; Propylaea; Nike; Areopagus; Temple of Hephaestus; Lineage of the mountains; Roman Agora (behind the Stoa of Attalos); The Panathenaic path. Greek Agorà. Note the valley where the Agorà rests (the relationship between the here) Agorà (and there) Acropolis, as opposed to the height of the Acropolis; the two delicate notes in the profile: Nike and the Erechtheion; the strong notes Propylaia and Parthenon. The Parthenon is clearly visible here, but from point A of the Panathenaic path is no longer visible, only to reappear after passing the Propylaea. The Parthenon is located as a kind of mountain crown, the tiara of the rock. Athens, June 11, 1960.

Transmission

It is clear that all of these concepts relating to the form of experiencing reality and the way in which this experience becomes part of our consciousness are related to the theme of TIME. A “measured” TIME, “fixed” to an event, and “lost” or “forgotten” TIME of the memory of that event. Távora created two categories of time, a BEFORE and an AFTER. There is the time that he imprisons in the pages of his diary which is measured, which is made up of numbers, names, dates. It seems that he intends to communicate that the architectural discipline is transmitted through “measured”, “solid” time. Aldo Rossi in his diary, for example, does the opposite and it seems that the “pages have lost their numbers”. Yet when the experiences begin to become memories in his stories, in his lectures, in his didactic drawings, time thus takes the liberty of the imprisonment of MEASUREMENT, and is lost, is diluted in an unchangeable impossibility of returning to the codified rules of history.

Does a more appropriate form of time exist to “transmit” a “lesson of architecture”? All of this leads us to reflect on the theme of the transmission of the architectural discipline, on the most appropriate forms to teach or learn. What does being a MASTER in architecture mean? We could assume two forms recognized as defining its meaning. One involves masters “imitating” a model: in this case the teacher is simply a transmission “channel” bringing a wisdom that somehow does not belong. Alternatively, the other involves being a master by becoming an “example”: in this case the transmission takes place through “showing”, showing by doing or showing by saying. Távora’s travel may fall into this form of transmission. In the Gulbenkian journey Távora plays a dual role: as a learner (when visiting the US University) but with the aim of teaching others what he has learned.

Conclusions

Alvaro Siza, one of the best-known students of Távora as well as one of the most renowned Portuguese architects on the international scene, dedicated the following to his teacher, in relation to travel and the importance of learning while travelling: “I travelled with Fernando Távora during these years, with perseverance. The first trips were to the Palácio Atlântico Studio, or Av. Duque de Loulé, or the School of Fine Arts. Through his words and through his actions, I and the others were aware of everything he had visited: every last detail of Le Corbusier meticulously described, the Great Pyramid of Giza, the Temple of Sounion, the grave of Frank Lloyd Wright... through these stories I learned to appreciate architecture: while I learned architecture, later in life, the trips became real and the experience shared. And still they continue. Except for age, nothing has changed.”¹⁹

¹⁹ Rey Pichel, X. M. Pereda and F. P. Távora, *Debuxos de viaxe/proxectos* (La Coruña: C.O.A.G. Exhibition Catalogue, 2002), 27.

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