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MATRIXES OF TRADITION IN THE WORK OF RENZO PIANO

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ings themselves, as well as the settlement fabric. The buildings which are revived and regained with the interest and meanings of the new occupants are cultural artifacts in a dynamic process of transformation, which is worth being studied to understand alternating approaches and practices in the transfer of tradition.

MATRIXES OF TRADITION IN THE WORK OF RENZO PIANO *Giamila Quattrone and Consuelo Nava*

Present advances in science and technology are contributing to the homologation of socio-cultural identities and the built environment. In particular, designs based on functional zoning and the widespread use of industrial materials and construction techniques have resulted in the standardization of living spaces and their social and environmental degradation and delegitimization.

Interrogating tradition in present architectural practice seems a viable strategy for the creation of socially and culturally legitimized living spaces. Interrogating tradition means being inspired by its paradigmatic lesson of environmentally and culturally appropriate built form, which communicates meaning and results from man-environment interplay.

By identifying the matrixes of tradition through theoretical reflections and analyses of case studies, this paper shows how a critical reinterpretation of traditional cultures, architectural typologies, and technologies is a crucial strategy in the design of sustainable built form.

The first part of the paper interprets tradition in relation to design practices oriented toward environmental and energy efficiency. It adopts an "explorative" approach through an examination of selected works by Renzo Piano. These provide a multilevel technological and environmental interpretation of tradition: form and language; technical creativity in the service of energy and resource saving; integration of traditional with innovative materials; design and construction conceived as a permanent workshop.

In particular, tradition is read in relation to spatial patterns affected by dwelling modes and place, as layered in traditional settlement patterns and built forms. It is also seen as a reinterpretation of historical practices and archetypes, providing cues for the design of innovative passive systems. Finally, tradition is read as a reclamation of workmanlike construction as the most appropriate way to give accurate directions, from design to construction.

The second part of the paper looks at tradition as a design parameter for a contemporary critical-regionalist architecture. According to an analytical-interpretational methodology, devised to study the regionalist features of architectural work, tradition falls within the scope of "Environmental Regionalism," "Technological Regionalism," and "Typomorphological Regionalism."

With reference to these facets of regionalism, this reading interrogates tradition in terms of the combination of craft with manufacture, traditional with industrial materials, and in terms of architectural typologies as built expressions of a community's settlement and dwelling patterns. Selected works by Renzo Piano are presented as case studies of this critical reading.

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Meredith Feike
Louisiana State University, U.S.A.

THE FABRICATION OF TRADITION: THE RAMMED-EARTH REVIVAL IN BRITAIN, 1905–1925

Mark Swenarton

Rammed earth, or *pisé de terre*, is widely regarded as one of, if not the, most traditional methods of building. In Britain, rammed earth is not an indigenous method of building, yet Britain became famous for the revival of rammed earth in the early twentieth century. Backed by the British government, the rammed-earth revival involved not just books and publications (notably Clough Williams-Ellis, *Cottage Building in Cob, Pisé, Chalk and Clay*, 1919) but also practical building (the Amesbury settlement, 1920–22). Together, this output of theory and practice still forms the benchmark for those working in rammed earth (P. Walker et al., *Rammed Earth: Design and Construction Guidelines*, 2005, p.5).

However traditional the method, the rammed-earth revival of 1905–25 came about not as the result of traditional factors, but