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Call for Papers

International Conference *The architects and the travels to the East, mid-18th Century - 1960s*

Granada, Alhambra, May 23-24, 2024



Le Corbusier, view of Istanbul and Pera, 1911. Published in Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow and its Planning* (London: Rodker, 1929), 79.

Organizing institution



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Call for Papers

International Conference *The architects and the travels to the East, mid-18th Century - 1960s*

Within the general topic of the architect's travels, the question of traveling to the East emerges as a well-defined chapter. There is a wide range of themes and problems within this concept, since the very idea of the "East" has always been imbued with a mythical component that goes far beyond any specific geographical location. If at some moments in history it could be said *ex Oriente lux*, at other times that evanescent and poorly-known territory was, above all, the location of an Ottoman Empire that represented the idea of "oriental despotism".

It is from the second half of the 18th century that the possibility of directly knowing the reality of the Eastern Mediterranean began to open up. The travelers of the Enlightenment (Stuart and Revett, Julien-David Le Roy, etc.) sought above all the confrontation with a long-unknown Greek architecture.

The 19th century gave way to a different view of the East: a mythologized one in which the paradigm was Islamic architecture, in the context of that great movement of ideas known as "Orientalism". Owen Jones' travels show us that the "East" could be found in Egypt, in Greece or in Constantinople, but also in Granada (at this time the Alhambra was the main receptacle of Orientalist fascination) or in Venice.

The end of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century marked a radical change in the "East" for architects. On the one hand, professional journeys increased within the framework of the colonial cultural system. On the other hand, many architects began to search in the East, not for the fascinating world of the Arabian Nights, but for arguments to think about contemporary architecture in the West. In 1911, Le Corbusier's *voyage d'Orient* was a turning point in this sense. And the idea of the "East" was also expanded by a completely modern interest in Japan (Frank Lloyd Wright, Bruno Taut, Charlotte Perriand), after the first Japonism of the second half of the nineteenth century. This opens up the big question of the role of the East in the imaginary of the "Modern Movement".

Finally, after 1945, new layers were added to this palimpsest. Professional travels multiplied, with episodes as famous as those of Le Corbusier in India or Louis Kahn in Pakistan. But, in addition, the study of non-European architectural cultures played an essential role in the process of questioning the Modern Movement in the 1950s and 1960s (to give just one example, Jørn Utzon's trip to Morocco).

The range of questions surrounding architects' travels to the East is, as can be seen, very broad and covers, over some two hundred years, an important evolution for the history of contemporary architecture. Although there are numerous monographic studies on this subject, it seems convenient to think about it from a global perspective, and this is the purpose of this Conference.

Abstract submission

Abstract (2500 characters maximum, spaces included) + **short author biography** (500 characters maximum, spaces included)

Deadline: 14:00 h (GMT+1) January 31, 2024, email address: viajes.arquitectos@gmail.com

Notification of abstract acceptance or rejection: February 28, 2024

Organizing institution

Universidad de Granada

Collaborating institutions

Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife

Asociación de Historiadores de la Arquitectura y el Urbanismo (AhAU)

Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de la Universidad de Granada

Grupo de Investigación *Arquitectura y cultura contemporánea* (HUM813), Universidad de Granada

Languages

The official languages of the Conference are Spanish, French, Italian and English.

Location

Alhambra, Palace of Charles V Conference Room

Direction and scientific coordination

Juan Calatrava, Universidad de Granada

David Arredondo, Universidad de Granada

Carlos Plaza, Universidad de Sevilla

Eduardo Prieto, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid

Organizing committee

Marta Rodríguez Iturriaga, Universidad de Granada

Juan Carlos Reina, Universidad de Granada

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Owen Jones and Jules Gourey, *Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Details of the Alhambra*, vol. II, Plate L (London, 1845). Private collection.

The Conference is part of the cycle of **international meetings** called:

Los viajes del arquitecto. Circuitos y traslados culturales por el Mediterráneo y más allá (XVIII-XX siglos)

I viaggi dell'architetto. Itinerari e transfers culturali nel Mediterraneo e altrove (XVIII-XX secolo)

Les voyages de l'architecte. Circuits et transferts à travers la Méditerranée et au-delà (XVIIIe-XXe siècles)

The Architect's Journeys. Travels and Transfers across the Mediterranean and Beyond (XVIIIth-XXth Centuries)

The cycle of international meetings (2023-2026) aims to deconstruct any univocal interpretation of the idea of travel, and to highlight the multiplicity of its modalities and interpretations and the transfers produced by it, material and immaterial, through the links established with history, human geography, contexts –in the broadest sense of the term– and the places visited. During the period from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth century, the travels of architects in the Mediterranean and beyond must be read and relocated within the wider context of the problem of confrontation with otherness and of the way in which the notion of identity of places is defined by their perceptions and representations from an external point of view.

Scientific coordination of the international meetings cycle

Antonio Brucculeri, AHTTEP/AUSser, ENSA Paris-La Villette HESAM Université (FR)
Massimiliano Savorra, Università di Pavia (IT)

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