

**ARCHITECTURAL TYPOLOGY OF  
MESOPOTAMIAN CIVILIZATION FROM  
ANCIENT CULTURAL MYTH**

**KADHIM FATHAL KHALIL**

**UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA  
2013**

**ARCHITECTURAL TYPOLOGY OF  
MESOPOTAMIAN CIVILIZATION FROM  
ANCIENT CULTURAL MYTH**

by

**KADHIM FATHAL KHALIL**

**Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**May 2013**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Endings do not mean anything to me because I am really interested in beginnings. So, I find that existence is the most difficult term I have ever dealt with, in spite of my fondness and interest in philosophy which I began my journey with which since the early stages of my life. When I woke up to find myself fully attached with the passion in philosophy beginning from Socrates until Jacques Derrida. The interest and infatuation drew me to the interest in cultural products, while thinking of the moment of the beginning.

Initially, I would like to express my gratitude, appreciations, thanks, and respect to my fabulous supervisor and the godfather of this study: Professor Dr. Julaihi bin Wahid whose expertise, understanding, and patience, considerably help my postgraduate experience. I appreciate his vast knowledge and skill in many philosophical and architectural areas.

I must also acknowledge all the Malaysian Scientific Institutions that granted me the chance to continue my study here and also would like to thank all the Iraqi Scientific Institutions in general and the Scientific Institutions of Kurdistan specifically that sponsored my study.

Very special thanks goes to my fabulous supervisor's precious family, and appreciations to my father, mother, my brother Adnan and all family members especially for all the support they gave me during the period of my study. I would like to grant my heartiest appreciation and thanks to the asset who lived this with me for every single moment, my wife, the architect-Sulin and her precious family. So as my beautiful flower who bloomed in Malaysia and gave me the feeling of hope and optimism, my daughter - Zara. I also acknowledge The Iraqi Archaeologists and Architects Group , Telar consultative architectural and engineering TCAE Group, Much thanks to all who helped me with this endeavor in Malaysia, Iraq, and Kurdistan, especially Mr. Omar Ismail, also Director General of Scholarships Dr. Govand H. Sherwani, Dr. Maha Hasan, Dr. Zurida Hamid, Dr. Nawzad Sadik, Dr. Ammar Waysi, the architect-Nazik Rashid, Normah Ismail, and Mr. Kovan Amedi.

Kadhim Fathel Khalil

Penang, May 2013

# TIPOLOGI SENI BINA MESOPOTAMIA DARIPADA MITOS BUDAYA PURBA

## ABSTRAK

Beberapa fakta dapat dijelaskan secara subjektif namun sukar untuk dibuktikan secara objektif, situasi ini membuatkan beberapa ahli falsafah sebelum Socrates menyingkir fakta logik dalam menterjemahkan alam fizikal disekeliling mereka. Persoalan diantara subjektif dan objektif adalah daya yang mendorong kita untuk mengekalkan dimensi simbolik budaya dan produk senibina Mesopotamia. Kepentingan persembahan teori senibina adalah berkaitan dengan persekitaran fizikal dan metafizikal yang membentuk identiti budaya kontemporari. Persoalan terkemuka dalam masyarakat senibina kontemporari Mesopotomia di Iraq berkait rapat dengan pembentukan asas identiti budaya dengan mengutarakan kepentingan kajian yang lebih fokus kepada budaya persekitaran Mesopotomia.

Tiada tamadun yang lebih tua dari Mesopotomia, produk budaya dan senibina masyarakat ini telah melepasi ruwang dan denah secara meluas namun sukar untuk menonjolkan diri dan sukar untuk mentafsirkan ekspresi mental disebalik ekspresi kebendaan. Perihal daripada itu kekaburan berlaku berhubung dengan persoalan pokok tentang ilmu ke atas ekspresi senibina.

Kajian ini berputik dengan mengambilkira produk budaya dan senibina yang merupakan sebahagian dari perspektif falsafah. Justeru itu, eksplorasi intelektual senibina prototaip membentuk aras abstrak yang berhubung kait diantara ekspresi mental dan ekspresi senibina. Penyelidikan ini berbentuk fenomena tanpa diketahui, maka metodologi digunakan berasas kepada laluan spesis budaya abstrak.

Perihal dari itu, kajian ini mengadaptasikan teknik analisis struktur dengan mengambilkira akar umbi budaya Mesopotomia untuk memahami ekspresi mental. Ekspresi ini diwakili oleh mitos Mesopotomia yang berpaksi kepada asal usul, penilaian dan organisasi. Kedua, kajian ini mengadaptasikan analisis geometri untuk menentukan struktur ekspresi senibina yang diwakili oleh simbol dalam senibina seperti kuil dan istana.

Dengan ini, masyarakat Mesopotomia mengetengahkan geometri sebagai teknik untuk menghasilkan produk tanpa mengambilkira kaedah matematik yang komplikated. Hasil dari kajian ini, kesimpulan boleh dijelaskan seperti berikut:

Pertama, pembentukan mitos Mesopotomia merupakan roh yang mendominasi kesemua produk budaya yang terhasil dari idea kolektif spesis budaya dan senibina. Justeru itu, struktur mental dan ekspresi senibina diintegrasikan dalam tamadun Mesopotomia sebagai sebahagian dari keseluruhan; awam dan persendirian; masa dan lompang; yang terdapat pada pandangan manusia termasuk perkara-perkara tersebut.

- Asal usul perhubungan diantara manusia dengan alam semesta
- Rentetan perhubungan diantara suci dan tidak suci
- Putik perhubungan diantara kebendaan dan bukan kebendaan yang merupakan dogma metafizikal untuk percantuman kewujudan sumber.

Kedua asas komprehensif dalam teori senibina seharusnya dibentuk dalam perspektif budaya dimana produk budaya dan senibina dihubungi oleh :

- Semangat jangka waktu dan spesis budaya yang dapat dikenali berasaskan konsep prototaip senibina.
- Prototaip senibina adalah konsep budaya untuk menjelaskan pemikiran kebudayaan dan kepercayaan disebalik budaya dan produk senibina.
- Produk budaya dan senibina dipengaruhi oleh konsep falsafah yang diwakili oleh budaya yang unggul dimana produk ini kekal sepanjang masa.

# ARCHITECTURAL TYPOLOGY OF MESOPOTAMIAN CIVILIZATION FROM ANCIENT CULTURAL MYTH

## ABSTRACT

Some facts can be easily inferred subjectively but difficult to prove objectively, thus causing the philosophers who came before Socrates to deviate from logic in interpreting the nature of the physical world around them. The dialectic between subjectivity and objectivity is the force that motivated us to restore the symbolic dimensions of Mesopotamian cultural and architectural products. The most important theoretical presentations of architecture are those that deal with the metaphysical and physical environments, which together form the contemporary cultural identity. The most important dialectics in contemporary architectural society in Mesopotamia–Iraq are related to the importance of formulating the basis of cultural identity by highlighting the importance of studies that focus on the Mesopotamian cultural environment.

No civilization is older than Mesopotamia, and the cultural and architectural products of this society have extended spatially and temporally but are incapable of speaking for themselves, which lends difficulty to understanding the interpretations of the mental expressions that stand behind the material expressions. As a result, a kind of ambiguity exists about the nature of knowledge relative to its origin in terms of the reflection of mental expressions on architectural expressions.

This study sets off from a consideration of cultural and architectural products as part of the philosophical perspective. Therefore, the intellectual exploration of the architectural prototype appears to be the abstract level that is connected to mental expressions on one hand and architectural expressions on the other. The inquiry is phenomenologically unknown; thus, a methodological inquiry was applied by based on the path of formation comprising the spirit of the age and the path of abstraction comprising the cultural species.

Thus, this study first adopted the structural analysis method considering the nature of the Mesopotamian cultural core to identify the structure of its mental expressions. Such expressions are represented by myth of creation in Mesopotamia, which is based on the structure of origin, evaluation, and organization. Second, this study adopted the geometrical analysis method to determine the structure of the architectural expressions, which are represented by symbolic architecture, temples, and palaces in Mesopotamia based on the structure of the whole–part, public–private, and mass–void.

Thus, the man of Mesopotamia found geometry to be the optimal method to form his product without resorting to the use of complicated mathematical calculations. The following conclusions can be drawn:

First: The Mesopotamian myth of creation is the primary soul dominating all cultural products, as represented by the idea of the collective cultural and architectural species. Thus, the structures of mental and architectural expressions are integrated in Mesopotamian civilization, where the whole–part, public–private, and mass–void relationships reflect the man’s view toward the following points:

- Origin of relationship between himself and the universe;
- Sequence of the relationship between the holy and unholy; and
- Nature of the relationship between the material and immaterial, which became a metaphysical dogma for the unity of the existence source.

Second: A comprehensive base for architectural theory should be constructed within the cultural perspective, where:

- Cultural and architectural products connected with the spirit of the age and the cultural species can be identified based on the concept of architectural prototype;
- Architectural prototype is a cultural concept for expressing the cultural thoughts and beliefs behind the cultural and architectural product, which will remain in effect in the future; and
- Cultural and architectural products are affected by the philosophical concept represented by the supreme cultural ideal, which make these products constant across space and time.