

## **Every building is a Tower of Babel in need of a Translator**

Zvi Hecker, November 2005

I like to call the Spiral a "Levantine work, which comes to describe and to focus upon my own cultural ties and some very broad sense of belonging. In certain way, I am pointing to my own architectural preferences, and to my choice of tradition, a choice which is the sole privilege of an artist. It is for us, through our own work, to find out the nature of the tradition we seem to belong to. The chosen tradition might become irrelevant with time and doesn't have to match the physical- territory we live in, but certainly becomes inseparable from our work. After all, the Mediterranean was for L.C. only an ideal, a white dream, rather than everyday reality, or his ancestor heritage.

The "Orientalism" of Delacroix and the "primitivism" of Gauguin are also of their own making.

The Levantine tradition, or rather what I call by this name, is for me, an amalgam of many cultures of different origins, sometimes as far apart from each other as could be the magnificent structures of Sinan, and the unassuming vernacular architecture of the local Arab village. On the one hand, highly sophisticated, structurally daring and mathematically precise achievement of the individual genius, and on the other hand the accumulative experience of generations of native master builders.

The Spiral, in a strange way reflects both of the diametrically opposing poles of the "Levantine tradition", its earthly concrete materialism and its sublime sense of intellectual perfection. Both elements have been expanded considerably due to the rather unusual way the building has been realized under my direct supervision and active participation in its construction.

My personal working on the scaffoldings does not mean however that I have been seeking to revive the role of an architect as a medieval-artisan-craftsman. I would rather describe the nature of my work on the Spiral-, as an attempt to interpretive-translate my design intentions into the language of materials and changing possibilities of realization.

Architecture, being a result of an accumulative effort of many different people and professions along an extensive period of time is in my opinion a chain of many different interlocking languages. With the progress of the design and its construction, each of this language has to be translated from one to other, to unable understanding between the builders of the tower of Babel. So, the initial idea has to be first "translate" into visual sketches, than into preliminary drawings, models working drawings, structural calculations, specifications, methods of construction, details etc.. The quality of the final result depends very much on the quality of the translation from one language to the other. It is not surprising that with the today architect detachment from the realization of his work, the final results are usually a weak echo of his original intentions.

By working directly on the site, I became an expert linguist, translating instantly my own intentions, at any given moment. The truthfulness of my translation has not been limited by my own preconceptions, but examined E/new in relation to the overall idea of the design and its usefulness to the building itself. In these open handed conditions, new thoughts were allowed to proof their raison d'être, instead of being out rightly, suppressed and rejected.