Meaning in Western Architecture

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Preface

This is a book about architecture.
Architecture is a concrete phenomenon. It comprises landscapes and settlements, buildings and characterizing articulation. Therefore it is a living reality.
Since remote times architecture has helped man in making his existence meaningful.
With the aid of architecture he has gained a foothold in space and time.
Architecture is therefore concerned with something more than practical needs and economy.
It is concerned with existential meanings.
Existential meanings are derived from natural, human and spiritual phenomena, and are experienced as order and character.
Architecture translates these meanings into spatial forms.
Spatial forms in architecture are neither Euclidean nor Einsteinian.
In architecture spatial form means place, path and domain, that is, the concrete structure of man's environment.
Therefore architecture cannot be satisfactorily described by means of geometrical or semiological concepts.
Architecture ought to be understood in terms of meaningful (symbolic) forms.
As such it is part of the history of existential meanings.
Today man feels an urgent need for a reconquest of architecture as a concrete phenomenon.
The present book is intended as a contribution to gain this end.*

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