

# ***TECTONIC EXPRESSIONS IN BRICK ARCHITECTURE***

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## Introduction:

This paper is part of a broader research effort which contributes to the understanding of the term tectonics in the field of architectural design theory. It leads to a general theory of tectonics, which broadens and differentiates the term's comprehension. Preliminarily, I have termed it Framework for Tectonic Thinking (FTT). It provides a mapping of potential tectonic expressions and a vocabulary for their distinction. The FTT is considered to be a conceptual tool of the architect that can be employed in the analysis of buildings, in their conception, and as a trigger for imaginations of tectonic possibilities. In this paper, I will apply the FTT to the analysis of historical and contemporary brick architecture.

## Research question:

Which kinds of brick architecture can be associated with the different tectonic positions in the FTT?

## Research method:

The FTT approaches tectonics in a descriptive and analytic way. It distinguishes three constructional categories (loadbearing construction, conjoining construction, and constructive expression), each with two oppositional poles (loadbearing versus non-loadbearing; solid versus filigree; tectonic versus atectonic respectively). They describe a space of potential tectonic expressions, in which eight—conceptually pure—tectonic expressions can be distinguished:

- textile
  - ceramic
  - stereotomy (stone construction)
  - carpentry
- and their atectonic counter-positions:
- a-textile
  - a-ceramic
  - a-stereotomy
  - a-carpentry

The categories and their polar distinctions are considered to be non-dualistic. They do not imply a value judgement. The expression of loadbearing construction is neither better nor worse than the expression of non-loadbearing construction. The same goes for the each of the poles of conjoining construction and of constructional expression.

The categories and the tectonic expressions that they describe are also considered to be non-essentialist. They do not prescribe ideal types of (a)tectonic expression that should be approximated as close as possible. The categories preferably should be considered as vectors that occur in typical constellations, which can lead to a variety of expressions. Hybrid tectonic expressions are as valuable as pure tectonic expressions.

In this paper, I will apply the descriptive and analytic categories of the FTT to brick architecture.

***THE CONSTRUCTIONAL CATEGORIES SHOULD BE SEEN AS VECTORS THAT EXERT THEIR CONCEPTUAL INFLUENCE ON A SPACE OF POTENTIAL CONSTRUCTIONAL APPEARANCES WHERE TECTONIC FORMS EXPRESS ASPECTS OF LOADBEARING CONSTRUCTION AND CONJOINING CONSTRUCTION, WHILE ATECTONIC FORMS OF APPEARANCE SUPPRESS OR DISSIMULATE ANY REFERENCE TO THESE.***