

Urban Morphology and Design

Joint research perspectives and methodological comparison: Italy,
Spain

edited by

Paolo Carlotti
Alessandro Camiz
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Morfología Urbana - Prospettive di ricerca congiunte e confronto metodologico
Perspectivas de investigación conjunta, comparación de metodologías

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Morfologia Urbana

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Paolo Carloti, Alessandro Camiz, Carmen Díez

Editors's note

10 An enduring tradition supports urban morphology studies. As written in the proceedings of the 24 ISUF congresses, it is the work of hundreds of researchers who, in various parts of the world, have sought to find in the shape of the city and in the forms of the built environment, the necessary and useful information for the development of a significantly contemporary and historically congruent architectural and urban project. The Artimino meeting has tried to lay the foundations for a joint reflection willing to overcome the local resistances to innovation that often arise in the development of a discipline. By proposing a dialogue between the Italian and Spanish schools who share the same cultural Mediterranean area, the meeting compared different contributions, in sight of a new disciplinary definition within the urban morphology studies. The contributions adhere to the architectural design discipline, within a cultural area made of architectures and cities, which have always been measured with an environment and a landscape particularly suitable for a strongly masonry building wisdom. In Spain there are particularly interesting outcomes in the field of the built architectures, while an academic speculation on the survey tools seems to characterize the Italian school. The proceedings collected in this volume are the result of researches developed in the field of urban planning and architectural design based on urban morphology studies.

Urban morphology is indeed a very wide discipline, gathering researchers in different fields, coming from different cultures and countries. Within this large group of researchers we can find indeed different approaches to the study of urban form. On one side of the ridge we can find the understanding of the past as a premise for future transformations, on the other side a more speculative approach may be found, not necessarily finalised to the design process. The purpose of the Conference held in Medicean villa at Artimino, and hence of this volume collecting the papers therein presented, was to outline an Italian-Spanish *liaison* within a geography, or to better say a typology of the different approaches to the study of urban morphology. The Spanish and the Italian contributions here published are all connected not only by a common Latin *substratum* characterised by the prevalence of masonry over carpentry, but also by a design oriented methodology. This approach could be considered reductive, claiming that the more attention is given to the project, the less focus will be on the understanding of the built form. We should consider though that the built form is the result of a project itself, or to better say, the result of a series of diachronically superimposed projects. In a way, if we consider the

urban form as the outcome of the action of human civilisation, and therefore a designed form, it is necessary to have a design oriented approach to fully understand it. This does not imply that it is not possible to read the urban form without a design oriented approach, but that understanding can help the process indeed. The comparison of the different Spanish and Italian researches herein illustrated, brings forward not only a deeply rooted common ground for future joint researches in Urban Morphology but also, more in general, a *κοινη διαλεκτος* in the fields of architectural and urban design. Therefore we believe that the initiative launched at Artimino by Giancarlo Cataldi should be repeated yearly, eventually once in Italy and once in Spain, so to continue and develop in the future this fertile cultural exchange.

The existence of a specifically 'Latin' culture of urbanism, which differs from the Anglo Saxon planning tradition, has been pointed out by scholars of the stature of Anthony Sutcliffe or Michael Hebbert. Anglo Saxon's 'planning' deals with economic and political issues, whereas Latin European 'urbanism' stresses design strategies, plans, projects and urban forms. Historiography shows many common features in Italian and Spanish approach to urbanism, such as the proximity in both countries, in the origin of the discipline, to the *École Française d'Urbanisme* (EFU) and later to the *Städtebau*. Looking at plans and projects of the 1930s and 1940s in Italy and Spain, it is not difficult to recognize important confluences, despite their contrasting political situations. And during the 1950s, we find similarities in the so-called foundational legislation. Relevant planning histories in both countries have been written by planners with professional responsibilities in public administration, providing a perspective very close to 'real urbanism', that gives an interesting overview of these decades of consolidated *urbanismo* and *urbanistica*. The idea of the city as a cultural creation sensitive to the value of history began to gain ground from the 1960s onward, particularly in Italy. New concepts of urban morphology and building typologies were developed at the Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia (IUAV), with the important contribution of Saverio Muratori (1960) and Aldo Rossi (1966). In Spain, some urban projects from the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s showed a particular care for the existing city, as can be seen in the works of some architects interested in urban forms and the historic dimension of the city. Some of the projects of Rafael Moneo and Manuel Solá Morales, for example, anticipated the emergence of the so-called *proyecto urbano* (urban project), a concept that was in the 1980s an important contribution to the international crisis of the urban culture.

The various lines of research about urban morphology presented in Artimino's meeting and published in this issue highlight the proximity of the research topics that are currently being developed in Italy and in Spain. Urban morphology, thus, as a conducting wire that helps both countries to weave common arguments in an international context.

Da Artimino, prospettive di ricerca congiunta

Giancarlo CATALDI

ISUF International - President

La práctica urbanística y arquitectónica, debe mejorarse, profundizando en la lectura de la configuración morfológica del espacio urbano a lo largo de la historia" / "Occorre migliorare la pratica urbanistica e architettonica, approfondendo la lettura della configurazione morfológica dello spazio urbano nel corso della storia"

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Per dare un senso ai lavori di questa giornata, può essere utile cominciare con questa dichiarazione programmatica tratta dall'atto costitutivo dell'Isuf-Hispánico (Isuf-H, 2016). Vi sono espresse con chiarezza le ragioni disciplinari della Morfologia urbana, dalle quali ci attendiamo possano scaturire le nuove prospettive di ricerca congiunta.

A tali prospettive sono per altri versi legate alcune riflessioni introduttive su Artimino, il 'luogo' che ospita il nostro incontro (Fig. 1). Ci troviamo infatti dove sorgeva un'antica città, la cui 'forma' può essere oggi solo immaginata sulla base dell'unico 'indizio' ancora in qualche modo operante a scala territoriale (Fig. 2). I due percorsi ortogonali a metà del crinale tra la villa Medicea e il borgo medievale costituivano infatti, presumibilmente, la croce di fondazione della città etrusca, il centro rituale del mundus: pratica finalizzata al tracciamento dei due fondamentali sistemi di orientamento della città antica, quello virtuale celeste e quello reale terrestre. Quest'ultimo impostato sui due percorsi ortogonali, dal cui centro sacrale di osservazione è ancora oggi possibile ammirare uno dei paesaggi più belli della Toscana.

Per chi non le ha vissute, può essere utile accennare poi brevemente alle circostanze che hanno portato alla fondazione inter-disciplinare della Morfologia Urbana. Che nasce intorno alla metà degli anni Novanta a Losanna a seguito dell'incontro tra due scuole provenienti da due discipline diverse. Fondate da un architetto Saverio Muratori (1910-1973) (Fig. 3) e da un geografo M.R.G. Conzen (1907-2000) (Fig. 4), della stessa generazione, che avevano indipendentemente l'uno dall'altro elaborato, fin dai primi anni Sessanta, due metodi d'indagine urbana con numerose analogie, sia teoriche che metodologiche, che meritavano di essere confrontate e approfondite in maniera congiunta dai loro allievi. Entrambe le scuole concordavano sullo studio