

city as organism

new visions for urban life

22nd **ISUF** International Conference | 22-26 september 2015 Rome Italy

edited by
Giuseppe Strappa
Anna Rita Donatella Amato
Antonio Camporeale

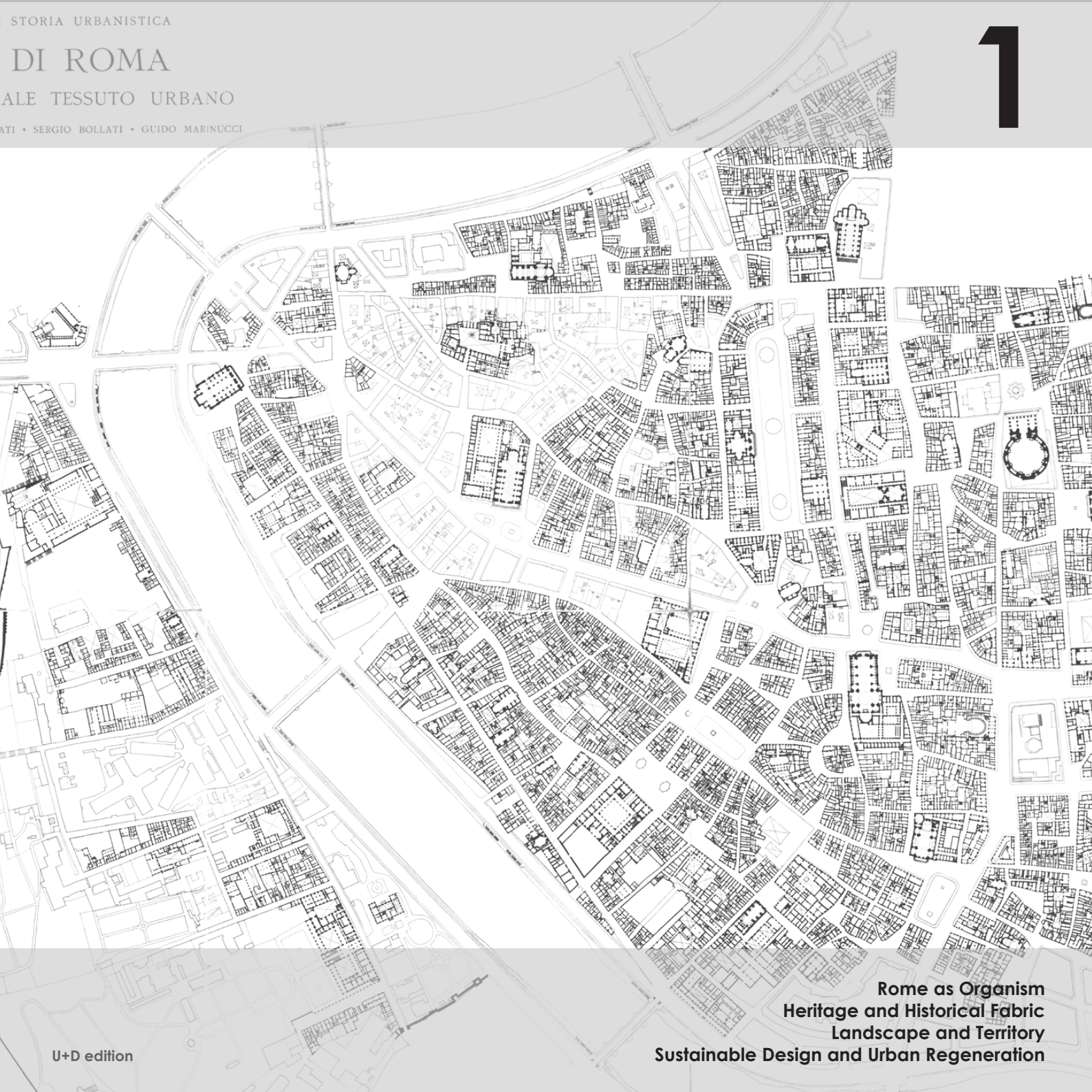
STORIA URBANISTICA

DI ROMA

LALE TESSUTO URBANO

ATI • SERGIO BOLLATI • GUIDO MARINUCCI

1



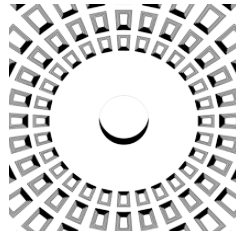
U+D edition

Rome as Organism
Heritage and Historical Fabric
Landscape and Territory
Sustainable Design and Urban Regeneration

city as organism

new visions for urban life

22nd **ISUF** International Conference | 22-26 september 2015 Rome Italy



edited by
Giuseppe Strappa
Anna Rita Donatella Amato
Antonio Camporeale

**Rome as Organism
Heritage and Historical Fabric
Landscape and Territory
Sustainable Design and Urban Regeneration**

1

U+D edition Rome
ISBN 97888941188-1-0
May 2016



SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

ISUF
International Seminar
on Urban Form

isufitaly
International Seminar on Urban Form
Italian Network

DiAP

DiAP

Dipartimento di Architettura e Progetto
https://web.uniroma1.it/dip_diap/



U+D urbanform and design

online journal
<http://www.urbanform.it/>



lpa

Laboratorio di Lettura e Progetto dell'Architettura
via A. Gramsci, 53
<https://web.uniroma1.it/lpa/>



DRACo

Dottorato di Ricerca in Architettura e Costruzione
via A. Gramsci, 53
<https://web.uniroma1.it/dottoratodraco/>

Contacts
email: roma2015@isufitaly.com

Organization

Conference Chair

Giuseppe Strappa, *'Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy*

Scientific Committee

Giovanni Carbonara, *'Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy*
Giancarlo Cataldi, *University of Florence, Italy*
Carlos Dias Coelho, *University of Lisbon, Portugal*
Michael P. Conzen, *University of Chicago, United States*
Anna Maria Giovenale, *'Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy*
Kai Gu, *University of Auckland, New Zealand*
Karl Kropf, *Oxford Brookes University, United Kingdom*
Jean-François Lejeune, *University of Miami, United States*
Renato Masiani, *'Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy*
Vitor Manuel Araujo Oliveira, *University of Porto, Portugal*
Piero Ostilio Rossi, *'Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy*
Ivor Samuels, *University of Birmingham, United Kingdom*
Brenda Case Scheer, *University of Utah, United States*
Giuseppe Strappa, *'Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy*
Jeremy Whitehand, *University of Birmingham, United Kingdom*

Organizing Committee

Anna Rita Donatella Amato, *'Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy*
Alessandro Camiz, *Giulio American University, TRNC*
Paolo Carlotti, *'Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy*
Anna Irene Del Monaco, *'Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy*
Matteo Ieva, *Polytechnic of Bari, Italy*
Marco Maretto, *University of Parma, Italy*
Nicola Marzot, *University of Ferrara, Italy and TU-Delft, The Netherlands*
Dina Nencini, *'Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy*
Giuseppe Strappa, *'Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy*
Fabrizio Toppetti, *'Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy*

Organizing Team

Antonio Camporeale, *'Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy*
Giusi Ciotoli, *'Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy*
Marco Falsetti, *'Sapienza' University of Rome, Italy*

Conference Partners and Sponsors

Isufitaly, Italian Network of Urban Morphology
Arab Gulf Network of Urban Morphology
Chinese Network of Urban Morphology
Polish Network of Urban Morphology
Portuguese-language Network of Urban Morphology
Serbian Network of Urban Morphology
Spanish Network of Urban Morphology
Turkish Network of Urban Morphology
Paesaggio Urbano - Urban Design
Revista de Morfologia Urbana
U+D Urbanform and Design
Urban Morphology

Contents Volume 1

- » Introduction 13
Giuseppe Strappa

Section 1

Plenary Session **15**

- » City as a process. Rome urban form in transformation 17
Giuseppe Strappa
- » A double urban life cycle: the case of Rome 33
Giancarlo Cataldi
- » Studies for an anthropology of the territory. New achievements from Saverio Muratori's archive 43
Nicola Marzot

Section 2

Heritage and Historical Fabric

Historical Urban Fabric **56**

Chair_Pisana Posocco

- » Abandoned villages, from conservation to revitalization 57
Rossella de Cadilhac
- » Learning Process from Historic Urban Fabric of Ula and Adaptation in Akyaka 67
Feray Koca

Modern and Contemporary Design in Historical Cities **76**

Chair_Renato Capozzi | Fabrizio Toppetti

- » The 'consecutio temporum' in the contemporary-historical city design 77
Fabrizio Toppetti
- » Shapes and Layers 87
Kornelia Kissfazekas
- » A Comparative Study on Morphological Evolution of Inner-city Residential Blocks in Tokyo and Beijing 97
Guan Li, Wu Zhouyan, Ariga Takashi
- » Figure follows type. Notes above contemporary project in compact urban fabric 107
Manuela Raitano
- » Chiaramonte Gulfi, an experience of urban morphology 115
Renato Capozzi
- » The post-liberal city of the 19th century as a resource 125
Ida Pirstinger
- » Athens urban transformation 135
Anna Ntonou Efstratiadi
- » The architecture of the city contended between history and contemporary 145
Giovanni Multari

- » New architecture in the ancient city. The typological-procedural approach of Caniggia, Bollati and Vagnetti groups in the competition for the extension of the Chamber of Deputies
Illy Taci, Cristina Tartaglia, Giancarlo Salamone 155
- » Urban Tissues and Masonry Plastic Language. Emanuele and Gianfranco Caniggia's Houses in Via Trinità dei Pellegrini, Rome
Antonio Camporeale 165

Architectural Heritage **176**

Chair_Manuela Raitano | Karsten Ley

- » Transformation and specialization of the historical center of Santiago of Chile: the evolution of the urban fabric around the "Plaza de Armas" square
Pia Marziano 177
- » The Planning Concept of Heritage Buildings at Baluwerti Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia
Nafiah Solikhah Thoha 185
- » Repairing urban fabric with large-panel system buildings - urban redevelopment in historic cities during the last decade of the GDR
Malte Nettekoven 195
- » Four improving strategies for the current historical heritage renovation. Case study of Suzhou Creek, Shanghai
Huang Lu, Li Zhenyu 207
- » Defining Traditional Nigde House Typologies and Their Morphological Language in Ancient Inner Castle Area Nigde-Turkey
Muge Ozkan Ozbek, M. Korcan Ozbek 217
- » Metamorphoses of Venice. The methodological approach by Giuseppe Samonà and Gianugo Polesello to urban design on the fringe of the lagoon city
Angela Fiorelli, Giuliano Valeri 227
- » Tradition as an architectural 'topos': role and interpretation for the contemporary sustainable urban design
Vito De Bellis 237

Modern Architectural Legacy **246**

Chair_Jean-François Lejeune

- » The concept of organism in Louis Kahn's work: why his architecture is still relevant today
Elisabetta Barizza 247
- » The 'Three Block Project': Stasis and Transformation in an Urban Megaform
Kevin James Eugene Murray 257
- » From disintegration to reinterpretation: urban design in Montreal, 1950-2014
*François Racine** 265
- » Rural Tradition and New Architecture. The Schools of Alfredo Lambertucci
Pisana Posocco 277

- » Sacred space in the architecture of Dominikus Böhm (1880-1955). Geometric-functional analysis and structural morphology
Giovanni Carbonara 287
- » Urban Integrations in historical centers during the Post-War Reconstruction. The Provincial Directorate of Posts and Telegraphs of Florence by Giovanni Michelucci
Lorenzo Bagnoli 295
- » Postcards from a Dystopian Como: two unbuilt contextual projects by Giuseppe Terragni
Luca Lanini 307

Section 3

Landscape and Territory

Reading Contemporary Landscape 315

Chair_Rita Occhiuto

- » For a new organic-city
Alessandra Capuano 317
- » Industrial Landscape between Modernity and Tradition: what meanings to accompany change by the project?
Rita Occhiuto, Paul Christian Hautecler 323
- » Territorial Planning: Vitória-ES, a case study
Aline Nogueira Costa, Luciano Muniz Abreu 331
- » Morphological mosaic of Brabant. Towards an evolutionary approach of regional development
Sukanya Krishnamurthy, Pieter Van Weselmael 339
- » Rurbanism/Urbanism/Meganism: toward different disciplines for different scales of human settlements and settlement fringes
Adelaida Del Puerto García 349

Landscapes and Territories 360

Chair_Michael P. Conzen

- » The interpretation of the territory by Saverio Muratori
Silvia Tagliazucchi 361
- » Towards a social-ecological urban morphology: integrating urban form and landscape ecology
Lars Marcus, Meta Berghauser Pont 371
- » Socio-spatial transformations in the tourist coastal region of Ecuador: new ways of life, new urban forms
Ricardo Pozo 379
- » 'La Plata' River (Buenos Aires, Argentina): traces and new territories
Viviana Colella 389
- » The 'Prognoz Platform' based analytical tool and its use for conservation, protection and reproduction of urban forests in the city of Perm
Svetlana Maximova, Piotr Lorens, Didier Vancutsem, Ekaterina Meltcova 397

Urban Landscapes 394**406**

Chair_Pierre Gauthier

- » Typological processes, urban landscape character and development control: the case of Auckland, New Zealand
Xi Zheng 407
- » A 'socio-building' reading of the Valle d'Itria's landscape
Nicola Scardigno 419
- » New forms of the urban space in relation to nature. A didactic experience for the city of Monopoli
Anna Bruna Menghini 429
- » Signage regulation: an overview behind the production of chaotic commercial landscapes in Brazil
Vanessa Casarin, Alina Gonçalves Santiago 437
- » The fading of morphological conformity caused by street upgrading in arterial ribbon. Case study of Beijing Nanluo Guxiang in China
Leilei Song, Feng Song 445
- » Narrating Helsinki's Kalasatama. Narrative Plotting, Genre and Metaphor in Planning New Urban Morphologies
Lieven Ameen 453

Metropolitan Infrastructure**460**

Chair_Alessandra Capuano

- » Atlanta Beltline: Peripheral Interstitial Urbanism
Michael James Carroll 461
- » The Construction of Mountain-river Skeleton Based on Oriental Culture in Bengbu City
Junyan Yang, Ying Tan, Linlin Wang 473

Section 4**Landscape and Territory****Urban Regeneration****483**

Chair_Wowo Ding | Carlo Cecere

- » Practices after a Disaster: Geographical Narratives vs Territorial Dispersion
Lina Maria Calandra 485
- » Seismic vulnerability and urban morphology, tools for urban and building integration
Edoardo Currà, Alessandro D'Amico, Malte Michael Nettekoven 497
- » Exploring collaboration between the Conzenian and configurational approaches to urban morphology
Ye Zhang 509
- » Dramatic Changes in Urban Morphology: Urban Regeneration in Istanbul-Gaziosmanpasa
Yasemin Erkan Yazici, Zeynep Ayse Goksin, Evrim Tore 517
- » The Lost and Gains in Chibi City's Transition. The Reinterpretation of the Deconstruction of Historic Morphology of Chibi Historic City
Yanfei Jia, Yi He 527

» Amor vacui/Amor pleni <i>Carlo Moccia</i>	535
» Exploring Design Approaches for Urban Regeneration of Brown Fields: a Case of Hazaribagh Tannery Area <i>N. M. Esa Abrar Khan, Nabanita Islam, MD. Symum Hasan, Ifat Sultana, MD. Lutfor Rahman</i>	545
» The great dimension housing complexes as a place for urban regeneration <i>Lorenzo Diana, Edoardo Currà, Carlo Cecere</i>	555
» Harmonious or Monotonous: Urban Regeneration and the Form of Contemporary Urban Landscape <i>Mohamed M. Fageir Hussein</i>	565
» Reading Warsaw's complicated urban fabric <i>Aleksander Lupienko</i>	575
» From nature to the city and back: the case of Piazzale Clodio, Rome <i>Rosalba Belibani, Deborah Chiara Lefosse, Eride Caramia</i>	585

Conflicts and Contested Areas **594**

Chair_Nadia Charalambous

» Urban form and social segregation: the case of Mazatlán <i>Vicente Colomer Sendra, Ana Portalés Mañanós, David Urios Mondejar, Juan Colomer Alcácer</i>	595
» Territories of Social (Dis)Order: criminal landscape and spatial dynamics of St. Petersburg 'neighborhoods' <i>Marianna Muravyeva, Alexander Lukoyanov</i>	605
» Jerusalem: Urban Development in the last hundred years between Planned Growth and 'Spontaneous' Adaptations <i>Giuseppe Francesco Rociola</i>	613
» The return of an interest in Typomorphology in South African Urban Design <i>Henri Pierre Comrie</i>	625

Informal Settlements **636**

Chair_Anna Rita Donatella Amato

» Spatial and organization patterns in informal settlements. A morpho-typological approach <i>Oscar Carracedo García-Villalba</i>	637
» Understanding the City as a Whole: An Integrative Analysis of Rio de Janeiro and its Informal Settlements <i>Kimón Krenz, Fani Kostourou, Sophia Psarra, Caue Capille</i>	647
» Reading the form of informal Roma settlements in the light of everyday life <i>Milena Grbic, Olivera Stankovic Grujicic</i>	661
» Informality of sprawl? Morphogenetic evolution in post-socialist Tirana <i>Blerta Dino, Sam Griffiths, Kayvan Karimi</i>	667

Sustainable Design **680**

Chair_Brenda Case Scheer

- » Sustainable Planning Framework: Case Study New Delhi 681
Amit Sarma
- » Ecological pattern mode of landscape city on the basis of habitat networks 693
Ying Tan, Qingshan Yao
- » Mediterranean Cities and Gardens. Structures and Sustainability 703
Giulia Annalinda Neglia
- » Urban Form as an Open-Ended System. Merging Maki's Group-Form With The Design Structure Matrix for a New Methodological Approach to Real Estate Planning 713
Nicola D'Addabbo, Valentino Danilo Matteis

Sustainable Design and Technologies **724**

Chair_Qian Li

- » New Urban Patterns. Adaptations to sun and wind 725
Bengt Sundborg
- » Density and solar radiation in the historical urban fabrics: Colle Oppio neighbourhood's case in Rome 733
Michele Morganti
- » Microclimatic response of urban form in the Mediterranean context 743
Agnese Salvati, Carlo Cecere, Helena Coch
- » Toward an Asian Sustainable Urbanism: A Comparative Study of Model Eco-city Projects in Japan and China 753
Zhongjie Lin
- » Study Planned Economy Based Urban Plot Distribution and Urban Fabric: Casing Center District in Nanjing 765
Lina Zhang, Wowo Ding
- » Evaluation, financing, planning and design of contemporary urban interventions 775
Maria Rosaria Guarini, Nicola D'Addabbo, Marco Locurcio

Introduction

Giuseppe Strappa

"Sapienza" University of Rome

Conference Chair

First of all let me say how happy and glad I am to host an Isuf Conference in Rome, in our Faculty of Architecture of "Sapienza" University.

Since our early Isuf meetings in the Nineties, I always thought that, sooner or later, we had to organize a conference in Rome on Urban Morphology.

We were a few people at that time but since then many years have passed and the number of Isuf members is much increased.

Even the fields of interest and scientific methods have proliferated and the meaning of the term "urban morphology" now applies to many schools of thought, sometimes quite dissimilar from those of the founders, but certainly useful to the progress of "discipline."

To our field of interest it was actually recognized the status of discipline, whose roots do not belong only to the schools of cultural geography and building typology, but also acknowledged the different influences of scholars of the city form such as Christofer Alexander, Colin Rowe, Kevin Lynch.

For our conference we had about 700 submissions by Urban Morphology scholars belonging to different schools from all over the world. It is noteworthy that most of submissions came from countries rapidly changing, a sign that Isuf has become an association of actual reference in studies on urban transformation.

Each Isuf Conference had its peculiar character linked to the specificities of the place that hosts it.

I think that an Isuf Conference in Rome has two special reasons.

The first is that Rome is a true text of Urban Morphology, not only for its monumental and archaeological part, but mainly for its urban fabric that have been transformed over centuries. This also explains the presence here of numerous colleagues interested to heritage and interventions inside the historical fabrics.

Not by chance, is involved in this conference Daniela Esposito, the Director of the School of Restoration in Rome, one of the most prestigious institutions in the field in Europe. Moreover, as Jeremy Whithand has written in the last edition of our Journal, the matter merit high priority on the Isuf agenda, as the contribution of UM studies in the various Heritage Organizations has been meager in recent years.

The second reason is that this school of Valle Giulia hosted the birth of one of the schools of thought on which (along with the conzenian one) was founded Isuf. A school with a long tradition, born in the '30s with scholars such as Giovannoni and Milani, and continued by Calandra, Muratori, Caniggia and many others. A tradition which we try to continue with an open mind and by experimenting in new ways.

A last point. In organizing the structure of this conference we faced the problem of collecting many different contributions within, as far as possible, homogeneous sessions. As for any conference proposing an "oriented" theme, we had to deal with the answers of ap-

plicants and often with some very specific papers that it was not always possible to place in entirely consistent sessions. We preferred to anyway accept these contributions, giving up, in some cases, an ideal coherence of the sessions and preferring, instead, to include the most valuable materials proposed for the Urban Morphology disciplinary debate.

In opening this Conference I feel obliged to thank the Vicar Rector of Sapienza, Renato Masiani, The Dean of the Faculty Annamaria Giovenale, the Director of the Department of Architectural Design Piero Ostilio Rossi. All of them have strongly encouraged this project.

A special thanks is due to professors and students of our Draco PhD School.

They have actually coordinated, helped, and concretely supported the initiative.

Chair_Rita Occhiuto
Faculté d'Architecture, Université de Liège, Belgium
Co-Chair_Maesoomah Arabi
Draco PhD School, "Sapienza" University of Rome, via A. Gramsci, 53, 00197,
Rome, Italy

Reading Contemporary Landscape

Landscapes and Territories

Urban Landscapes

Metropolitan Infrastructure

For a new organic-city

Alessandra Capuano

DiAP Department of Architecture and design, "Sapienza" University of Rome, 53 A, via Gramsci, 00197, Rome, Italy

Keywords: cities, landscape, urban morphology, organic city

Abstract

Organic= deriving from living matter; relating to a bodily organ; fit together as part of the whole

In his investigation of Europe's architectural identity and crisis, V. Gregotti tries to examine the reasons of this condition and the material circumstances in which nowadays architects act. Among the mentioned causes the lack of thoughtful consideration towards the themes of transformation of the existing fabric instead of fostering the city expansion; the proliferation of specializations and the confining of the profession of the architect in the role of an image maker for the marketing; the rise of comprehensible environmental preoccupations acting as an ideological guise deprived of content. To these we have to add the lack of interest of the politics to take into account the longue durée of the territorial transformation. As a result our cities and architecture are designed through a careful attention in answering numerous building codes regulations as well as strict environmental controls and all sorts of bureaucratic responses, lacking instead the principal goal that is the capacity of "crafting the city". In his more recent contribution regarding the sublime in our time, Gregotti regards the landscape as a recently recuperated concept capable of nurturing a cultural collective idea of settlement. Yet landscape cannot be confused with sustainable and ecological practices, that per se cannot guarantee design excellence. The reference towards the geographical and historical nature of the landscape implies the acknowledgement of an overall character collectively recognizable in terms of scale, imaginary, memory, morphology. The paper aims at analyzing modern and contemporary urban design case studies with the goal of understanding the new urban design morphologies and principles and to highlight what we can understand as new organic-city. The urban is the site of complex relationships and successful projects are those who accomplish disciplinary knowledge together with sustainable and innovative challenges.

317

Organic= deriving from living matter; relating to a bodily organ; fit together as part of the whole.

In his investigation of Europe's architectural identity and contemporary crisis, Vittorio Gregotti¹ tries to examine the reasons of the current critical condition and the material circumstances in which nowadays architects act. Among the mentioned causes the lack of thoughtful consideration towards the themes of transformation of the existing fabric instead of fostering the city expansion; the proliferation of specializations and the confining of the profession of the architect in the role of an image maker for the marketing; the rise of comprehensible environmental preoccupations acting as an ideological guise deprived of content. To these we have to add the lack of interest of the politics to take into account the *longue durée* of the territorial transformation. As a result our cities and architecture are designed paying a careful attention in answering numerous building codes regulations as well as strict environmental controls and all sorts of other bureaucratic responses, lacking instead the principal goal that is the capacity of "*crafting the city*".

In his more recent contribution regarding the *sublime* in our time², Gregotti regards the landscape as a recently recuperated concept capable of nurturing a cultural collective idea of settlement. Yet landscape cannot be confused with sustainable and ecological practices that per se cannot guarantee design excellence. The reference towards the geographical and historical nature of the landscape implies the acknowledgement of an overall character, collectively recognizable in terms of scale, imaginary, memory, and morphology.

318

Although Europe is not deficient of virtuous and successful recent examples of city enhancement, such as the largely well-known cases of Barcelona, Hamburg, Copenhagen, Lyon, Marseille and some others, the situation in Italy is not as encouraging. In Italy we can count on single interesting new buildings that have been built in the last ten or twenty years, but examples of efficacious and valuable urban requalification are rare. One could think that this corresponds to a lack of urban transformations tout-court. Instead, at a closer glimpse, we realize that Italy is experiencing a quick and heavy soil consumption, since in 2014 the built environment occupies 21.000 km² corresponding in percentage to the 7% of its territory, that is almost three times more the quantity engaged in the Fifties, estimated in 8.100 km² equivalent to the 2,7% of the total land³. My preoccupation in the evaluation of the problem though, is not merely quantitative, but qualitative. What percentage of these transformations can be regarded as the creation of interesting conurbations and creative growth or renovations, and what fraction of it is instead merely banal and conventional development or worse, even environmental devastation? Unfortunately I don't know the answer in terms of percentage, but I am afraid the results are completely pending towards a predictable and conventional design practice, mostly subjugated to the developers' imperatives and the answering to codes, completely left to the market's priorities with no quality obligations imposed by local governments.

If we ask around what makes a good neighborhood, or a good city, apart from the obvious things like having a low crime rate and good schools, one of the most important factors is the quality of space. The place where we live has an important contribution to our well-being. The urban theorist Richard Florida has affirmed in an interview⁴ that most psychologists and behavioral economists have said that the two things that make us happy in life are work that we can identify with and that we find challenging, and having great social relationships. Florida thinks that the community we live in happens to be "that incredibly important third part of that triangle of human happiness".

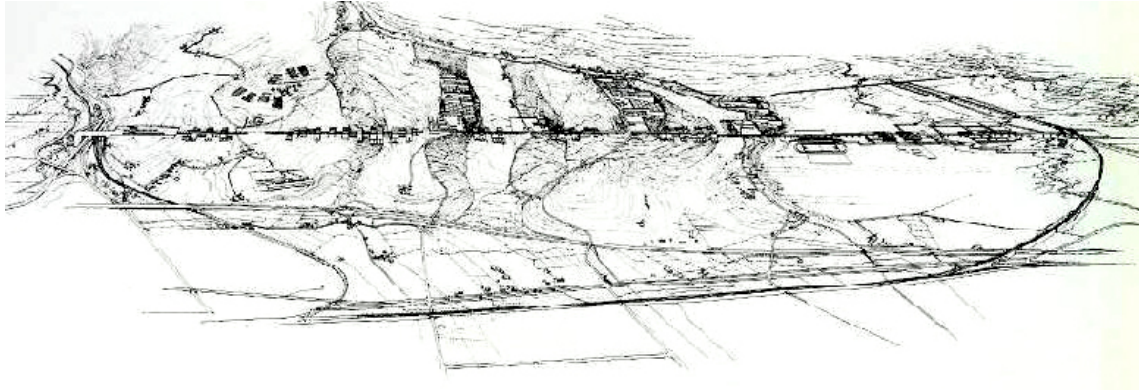
¹V. Gregotti, *Identità e crisi dell'architettura europea*, Torino, Einaudi, 1999.

²V. Gregotti, *Il sublime al tempo del contemporaneo*, Torino, Einaudi, 2013.

³ISPRA (istituto superiore per la ricerca ambientale) *Il consumo di suolo in Italia*, Edizione 2015.

⁴Interview to Richard Florida by A. Price in <http://magazine.good.is/articles/you-are-where-you-live-what-makes-a-perfect-neighborhood>.

Figure 1. Vittorio Gregotti, University of Calabria, Cosenza, 1973-79. Bird's eye view of the winning project in the competition for a new university of Calabria. The new structure is rooted in the geographical features of the site (a large hilly area that extends down from the Paolan mountain chain towards the Crati river valley).



So in essence a neighborhood is not just a set of individuals, but a set of relationships.... And the relationships are fluid. Some are longstanding and some you can plug into and play. And the places that enable those relationships to form are the places that do better.

So the relational qualities are the most important reason why grand part of the human beings live in cities and also the main reason that makes a good neighborhood. How can we enable in the neighborhood these relationships to occur? Being an architect, I think that form, the shape of the space, is not a secondary issue, even if not the only one. Functional answers are also needed to craft space and to create relationships. The city needs in fact to be useful to the lodging of people and to the organization of work, to the problems of garbage and waste, to the issues of water supply and drainage, to the distribution and production of food, to the mobility of people, to well-being and recreation, and so on. Modernist urbanism has fixed standards, believing that quantities could solve the problem. As a result all our governments are concerned with standards, in order to reach certain quantitative levels. But quantities are not necessarily adequate to create relations. Policies and guidelines fix our standards, but no document is engaged with recognizing the problem of relationships and form, because form cannot be established a-priori as a ready-made tool. Form, of course, could also be informal, could also be irregular or unbalanced. But not because of its crooked shape would be necessarily bad, nor it would be good if it is regular and symmetric. I think that a good form depends on the place, and has to do also with relations. What relations we want to establish with the surroundings, with the city, with the past. To think through form means to give an order to space. Implies to contribute to the crafting of the city. Quantities call for policies, qualities need projects. Projects cannot take into consideration only the problem of the form, of the morphology, but certainly the shape would be part of the project. Form is not only about the built environment, but concerns also the voids, the negative space, the space that is used as public space or that is a left over in the city fabric. So if we have to craft the city we have to think how to design buildings for residents and offices, for public and commercial edifices, but we have also to organize streets and mobility, to design opens spaces and parks, together with the organization of services such as waste or water. Yet all of these tasks are not merely functional problems. They have an impact on the form of the city. They have an impact on our future. The way these areas are built induces the establishment of relations among the urban parts. The interactions have an influence at the metropolitan scale of the city or even at the regional one, but they have an effect also at the human scale, so it is important that details would be studied. This means that the urban project needs to be multi-scalar, shouldn't be only functional and responding to quantitative standards, requests to be sensitive to environmental issue, and above all needs to be relational.

Figure 2. SWA group (Sasaki and Walker Associates), Anning River New South Town, 2008-2010. Bird's eye view of a new district for 95,000 people in Miyi County, China. The firm works in the mainstream of Ecological Urbanism with deep appreciation for nature and natural systems and a strong commitment to design that synthesizes aesthetics and sustainability.



320

These relational qualities are what I believe can be regarded as “organic”. If we search in the dictionary⁵ for the meaning of the word *Organic*, it has three main significances: 1. Deriving from living matter; 2. Relating to a bodily organ; 3. Fit together as part of the whole. So “organic” is something that refers to living things and it is something that is cohesive, well combined. If we want our cities and our neighborhoods to be lively places they need to encourage flow and exchange, relations among the parts, and these relations need to be solid, well organized and interrelated. We have to create relations at all levels: among the different parts of the city, between built and non-built spaces, between disciplines, because to craft the city we need many specializations, and expert knowledge needs to dialogue. Our society is based on movement, exchange, physical and immaterial flows. The urban body, like any living matter made of blood, dies if there is not flow. Communication, relationships, connections and associations, these are the important things for the city. Communication intended not in its superficial way, but as the most profound way of exchange. The main reason why cities are grown based on trade. And to make those issues to work well in a project we need to make thoughtful combinations. Which is the essence of the architectural profession. We put together different parts, we design and combine different elements. We make a composition.

In the introduction to his recent book, Giuseppe Strappa discusses the worn-out term “organic”, reminding us its excessive use in the architectural discipline, concluding that

⁵Oxford dictionary for the English and Dizionario Treccani for the Italian.

it is a noble adjective, but vague and elusive⁶. He chooses to use instead "process" to explain the specific quality of architecture in the making. So a project for Strappa is a process that has arrived to a temporary conclusion, waiting to be continued. His main focus for the discussion regards the masonry architecture as paradigm of solidarity between the components that determine the shape of the building. What interests him is not necessarily the material in which a building is built, but the fact that there is an organic unity, a cohesion among the parts, since the stability of the construction, the distribution of space, the expression of architecture form a whole. I have nothing in contrary to masonry buildings, and I fully agree that the Mediterranean tradition has not expired and still has things to say for the transformation of the contemporary environment. And I really appreciate most of the architectural examples examined in the essay. Yet I believe that the quality of single buildings is not enough to make an interesting city. They end up to be at best interesting fragments, isolated elements in a collapsed contemporary urban landscape. Their cultural affiliation to the place, their exemplification of simple and cohesive (organic!) design process is certainly an interesting element of resistance to the processes of globalization, in that same sense that Frampton introduced in 1984 to the attention of the architectural debate with the notion of Critical Regionalism. However where Frampton had introduced certain equilibrium between global culture and rooted culture to take shelter from a nostalgic attitude, the proposal of Strappa to remain allied to the plastic masonry architecture seems to me a strict and anachronistic challenge, not supported by the real cultural processes that our territories are experimenting. The loss of crafting tradition of the workforce, the enormous mingling of populations induced by the phenomenon of immigration that has taken biblical proportions nowadays, the discover of new construction materials that are more economic and easy to produce, all call for the necessity to accept a certain evolution of the building technics and therefore of the architectural language. What we can hope, and this together with what has stated more recently Frampton⁷ - and I believe also Strappa would agree - is that architecture continues to promote an ethic demand capable, according to the words of the British historian, of contrasting and giving an alternative model to the dissolute project of Americanizing the entire world, conducted by the hegemonic power of the "universal" western civilization.

321

This attention towards the ethic dimension seems to raise interest in the contemporary architectural debate since the 2016 Venice Biennale will take distance from the architecture of the spectacle, to give strength to "several battles that need to be won and several frontiers that need to be expanded in order to improve the quality of the built environment and consequently people's quality of life" as stated by Alejandro Aravena, its future curator. Brand architecture is often auto referential and anti-urban in the sense that is not related to the context in which is inserted. This lack of relationship acts at all levels, physical and social. It is architecture preoccupied of its own image and the message it wants to communicate, and in some cases succeeds in transmitting this influence. It can certainly act as a symbolic landmark of the established economic power. But rarely becomes an improvement for the city in the sense of enhancing and upgrading its relational capacity. We cannot say though that many of the brand architecture buildings are interesting pieces of architecture per se, but what is missing is the attitude towards the city – one that is not dependent on the compositional or typological approach. This is why I believe that buildings are certainly an important part of the city, but they are not enough to "craft the city". The city needs to be a network, in order to reinforce and renovate its main relational character. So, to me it is less important if a building is made of opaque masonry instead of transparent plastic, since what I am looking for is the interaction between the building and the open spaces, the collaboration between private and public realms, the communication between different cultures, the possibility of having in the city the benefits of exchange and access to the different potentials that are offered.

⁶G. Strappa, *L'architettura come processo. Il mondo plastico murario in divenire*, Franco Angeli, Milano 2014, pag. 9.

⁷K. Frampton "Verso un'architettura agonistica" in *Domus* 972, settembre 2013.

This to me is the most important meaning I can attribute to the word “organic”. Being part of the whole means to connect, signifies to communicate, and indicates the importance of fluidity to be lively, which represents the best condition of “deriving from living matter”.

This is the reason why in the last years I have stepped forward towards landscape. And I am particularly interested in all those practices that understand landscape as a condition for acting on the city or on the territory undertaking complex relations at the physical, economic, political, social and cultural level. I believe that this complexity has to be traversed at all scales and disciplines because it is only the ability to have a strategic regard that gives sense to the things. Things are not necessarily good or bad per se, but in relation to others. So the landscape regard permits to understand strategies at a larger perspective. Permits to create the framework within which single projects can fit, single buildings can match. There is a tradition of this approach in the Italian architectural practice of the urban design in the Sixties and Seventies, when with birds-eye view perspectives architects were representing the territory, to understand the relationships established by the new intervention with the context. The approach had that interesting strategic regard which takes into account the problems of the *longue durée* of the urban transformations. Yet, this regard nowadays seems to be a little bit too much concentrated on compositional responses.

This look has found more recently new nourishment in the group of architects engaged with the manifesto of the Ecological Urbanism⁸ undertaken by the Harvard School research group. The concern for the environment, for a strategic approach at all scales and disciplines, but at the same time the interest for design excellence and design thinking, not only as important added value to the crafting of the city, but as main direction and control of the territorial transformations, is for me an interesting response to the relational problems of the metropolises and the need of a *new organic-city*. As David Harvey wrote in his recent book *Rebel Cities*: “the question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from the question of what kind of people we want to be, what kinds of social relations we seek, what relations to nature we cherish, what style of life we desire, what aesthetic values we hold. The right to the city is, therefore, far more than a right of individual or group access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change and reinvent the city more after our hearts’ desire”⁹.

322

References

- Gregotti, V. (1999) *Identità e crisi dell'architettura europea* (Torino, Einaudi).
- Harvey, D. (2010) *Rebel cities. From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (Verso, London- New York).
- Mostafavi, M., with Doherty, G. (ed.) (2010) *Ecological Urbanism* (Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Lars Muller Publishers).
- Frampton, K. (2013) “Verso un'architettura agonistica”, in *Domus* 972, september.
- Gregotti, V. (2013) *Il sublime al tempo del contemporaneo* (Torino, Einaudi).

⁸*Ecological Urbanism*, edited by M. Mostafavi, with G. Doherty, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Lars Muller Publishers, 2010.

⁹D. Harvey, *Rebel cities. From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*, Verso, London- New York, pag. 4.