



Ina Macaione

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NATURE CITY

VISIONS
OF NATURE-CITY
IN ITALIAN
ARCHITECTURE

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The book is about the Italian school of architectural and urban design in relation to the phenomenon of urban regeneration, and focuses on the idea of the nature-city, which represents the most original contribution of our research. By reconstructing its educational path from the second half of Twentieth Century, it is developed the thesis aimed at proving how, in the design practice, a new criticality of the relationship with nature could help making clear the specificity of Italian "project culture". The book, addressed to all the young architects interested in this role of criticality of nature-city, ends with an excursus on the design topics that build *visions of nature-city*.



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NATURE CITY

**Visions of Nature-City
in Italian Architecture**

Translated by Valentina Sichenze

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INTRODUCTION

The historical heritage of the city has always been the greatest factor of originality and distinction of the Italian architectural culture in the world. However, the rarity of its great beauty compared to a world that is not so endowed has always represented the weak point of an international commonality of problems too. Since the eighties, the affirmation of the Italian school of restoration for the “great beauty” conservation, has always gone at the same pace with the progressive political isolation of the planning “schools”, which have mainly preferred to rest on the laurels of the heritage of “noble privileges of antiquity”, instead of focusing on the innovative and productive actions and the various creative abilities of the Italian schools of architecture.

Even for the architectural historians, “the past has prevailed over the present” and the only ones left to deal with the difficult and critical interpretation of contemporary world were the designers, who had to divide their own time between the professional practice and the study of the phenomena. This resulted into a consequent slowdown in the processes of overall organization of the Italian affairs in the last thirty years. This is the premise.

Topic

The book is about the Italian school of architectural design facing the phenomenon of urban regeneration, while focusing on the idea of the nature-city which represents the most original contribution of our research, beginning with the formation of the “project culture” in relation to the city, in the second half of the twentieth century.

The issue of urban regeneration, highly topical nowadays, takes on a *new light*, not only because they wanted to compare its configuration in the Italian and European context, which, however, broadens the potential applications in the diversity of the situations. However, also because, perhaps for the first time from such an overlooked angle, it was decided to reconstruct the background of the contributions which have marked one of the best moments of the organized ideas about Italian architecture. By rejecting the provincial support for a different position and instead conducting an investigation on one of the most unheeded sides, maybe even by Italian historiography, but not from an historian point of view.

It is about the *relationship with the nature* that in many Italian architects of the late twentieth century has always been considered very marginal in regard with the centrality of the historical heritage of the city. As a result, the divisions have prevailed over the unity: namely the historical divisions between the different types of inheritance have prevailed over the ability of the most unifying vision of the nature. The consequence was the weakening of the main aim of the “Italian school of architecture” in respect to the world, where the problem of the nature bonds more than the different features of historical geography. In short, in the world where the history splits, the nature unites. However, because of the premises of the book and the subsequent “division” between history and nature, for we are architectural planners we need to cope with it on our own. This is what makes up the thesis of the book.

Thesis

If the relationship with the nature is considered to be crucial and central in the planning, in the reading of the city, the thesis we want to demonstrate is that it becomes an enriching factor that, first of all, is able to reconnect rather than divide the viewpoints starting from the strategic importance of the void space in the city and the architecture, as seen in its

relationship with nature. Further, without neglecting the hypothesis that the formation of new viewpoints, in the sense of nature, can redeem even the richness of the planning positions of the Italian culture, capable of understanding the importance and evolution of that apparent paradox that could be summed up in the phrase “in the ancient legacy of the contemporary”. Maybe, as only from Mies van der Rohe on it has been possible to express. Obviously, if it is true, on the contrary, that the architecture of the Modern Movement in general has rejected the stylistic legacy of the ancient.

However, here this is not what one wants to look into. The relationship with nature in the world is the common key point of the richness of the different positions about the architectural design of the city. Where, among other things, while facing the issues on the crisis of the modern movement, in the very same crisis you also discover new opportunities for making evolutionary changes in the city.

However, these are the right ones, to redeem that separation between the redevelopment of the historic parts of European cities and the peripheral eco-sustainability, which used to prevent the vision of the nature-city to become the center of our attention. Conceiving it as a new possible opportunity to meet by the carriers of civilization of the “accomplished city” and the innovative aspects of an urban regeneration, which is no longer determined solely by the technological visions of eco-sustainability or the historicist of conservation ones.

Focus

As a domino effect, starting from the development of the concept and the ideas of (and on) the *nature-city*, a series of arguments for planning have arisen over the time, and they could substantiate and articulate its scope. Still, they are not to be intended in a generalizable terms of “purity” that is constructive, idealistic and exclusive in nature. In fact, in the discussion of the text, the evolution and diversification of this definition relative to reality should emerge more clear and precise.

Until one discovers a vision which cannot be reduced to small ancient centers, from where our studies pertaining to the end of the last century have also started by comparing about 100 urban centers in Basilicata and in the whole Italy. Neither this vision can be closed in form of the model of the great European “accomplished city” through the end nineteenth century. Today, the conditions requisite for that accomplishment are lacking: namely, the long term of the household residency, compact design of the extension, pollution free nature, the insular mono-centrality of the Power. These fundamental conditions for the accomplishment of the city found a compositional consistency in the liminality of the landscape in which the large size of nature and life were *conceivable through accomplishments*, in direct confrontation with the sedentary humanity and not only compared to the city, but also compared to the world.

As today the definite *topicity* (literally “the condition of having a place”) and the *narrative continuities* of the accomplishment in the solid coexistences representations themselves are lacking, have emerged only those conditions of urban existence that are conceivable through *beginning*. If then it is the beginning, rather than the accomplishment, to govern the way of thinking about the construction of the vision of the nature-city, even the theory of modeling gives way to phenomenological approaches. The vision wherein even the architectural and urban quality is no longer measured on the closure of models, but on the ability of opening and sprouting new possibilities. As a result, in the phenomenology of the nature-city, at a time when the city gets assessed in terms of *birth* and “new beginnings”

of cities, the nature, instead, has to be evaluated by the way the built is accomplished in it, in the extension of the city.

Articulation

The entire first chapter of the book recounts the emergence of thought about the city in the Italian architects. It starts by Aldo Rossi. This is done by focusing more on his latest reflections, rather than on his initial studies on the *architecture of the city*. Therefore, the theme of the void that emerges in some of his architecture is the result of the awareness that the ancient city cannot find accomplishment in the present, where only fragments land. Nevertheless, the very same fragments in others, such as Francesco Venezia, settle on the ground of nature like materials for stripping away. However, just with Aimaro Isola and Roberto Gabetti, the first productive difference appears: from mother earth, “working progress” of nature, something different *emerges*. It is a *nascent place*. A *topicity* that instead, with Ignazio Gardella, is the hard work of planning choices, from which comes out the elegant nature of a typological difference.

At the same time along with Ernesto Nathan Rogers, one takes a decisive step towards understanding that the planning of discovery of architecture requires a method, a *phenomenological method*. Through which “nature” of the work means “coming into the world” in a common experience of the world (from literature to fine art). Incredibly, instead the roads bifurcate and see a new prolific difference. On the one hand, with Antonio Monestiroli, and perhaps already with Giorgio Grassi, the architecture is defined as the “second nature” in the space of a scene that brings to light the reality. While from another angle, Carlo Aymonino supports that architecture is “the urban phenomenon par excellence” of a *manifold* complexity. It is essential to discover by comparing different urban phenomena, for analyzing and planning the city “by parts”. Or by understanding and including in the architecture, as in the case of Ludovico Quaroni, an urban complexity consisting not in “parts of a whole”, but instead in a new urban *Polycentrism*. To deal and to evolve with a *self-critical and inductive compositional method* that Giancarlo De Carlo shall try to extend to the whole planning discipline. By placing the *cultural nature* of the architecture between territory and nature, thus sensing the appropriate scale in which one needs to think about the theme of regeneration.

However, to make a breakthrough decision in the vision of the urban complexity, one needs to look forward to Giovanni Michelucci, who provides guidance on the planning process starting from the nature, or rather as *nascent in nature*, through real “power supply roots” that produce roads of “architecture with nature.”

Perhaps in this context, it could take on a new meaning, as we shall see better, the great insight of Gio Ponti on the representation of the roads of a “mind” *that objectifies itself in the architecture*, by simulating the curves of a brain which thinks of shared experiences. Roads that Carlo Scarpa shall temporalize, by imagining analogies between city and nature in a sort of narrative *architectural writing*. While it will be *Giuseppe Samonà* to express these thoughts on the relationship between city and nature in a new disciplinarian organization of the “town planning-architecture unity” as a point of confluence of different disciplines and knowledge.

Here we come to the crux of the relationship between the city, the nature and the architecture on which many academic routes will split rather than connect, in a way that only the future work of historians will be able to rebuild. On this node, more than ten years ago, we

founded with Armando Sichenze that universal structure which is now called Nature City LAB. In order to experience places, spaces and processes, as measures of the proceeding, in accordance with the indications of Samonà, *from the general (of the nature-city) to the particular (of the architecture) and vice versa*.

Yet, in this process the working group coordinated by *Alberto Samonà*, warns about all the problems, both of social and political nature, of the void that is visible in the detachment and then in the distance that lies between the culture which is deductive of a rationalist architecture and the inductive approach of those who live in the places of the city. One could say that with the Samonà closes the circle of the formation of organized thought of the Italian architects of the city, if just the new attention paid to the ideational process and training of architectural planning did not reveal the double meaning of the word “nature” that encloses the void space which the architects are dealing with.

In other words, at the climax of the second millennium, when modernity dominates with the Reason on the entire historic path of the city, one finally realized the city shaped. While tending to *follow* a general urban pattern in which the parts of the city are located.

In this complex formation process, the one who has the power to urban pattern defines that hierarchy of the positions of the areas relative to the common property, compared to which each part has different qualities and values. In this way, a general design looks after and controls the membership and the subordination of parts of the full/void (increasingly smaller) to the city’s vision of those in power.

Things have been changing in the post world war II period while affirming the new pattern of the city, the chance to be born anywhere. To the city, which is expected to develop according to the plan of its accomplishments, dependent on the only central vision of its perfection, it is contrasted in terms of the growth, other vision central according to which there may be some points of “other nascent city” (the nature-city) within the same territory. In which the settled communities, instead of being observed and dependent on the city conceived by the general plan, look towards their-own to-be-city from the inside of the embryonic state of an *in loco* building of a urban *existenzminimum*, whose degree of autonomy grows in proportion to the services provided for the residences.

In these “nascent cities”, as opposed to the city accomplished, the fundamental qualities are derived from the way in which one plans the presence of nature. From here comes the double meaning of the word “nature.” Nature as “nascence ” of the city is where the minimal elements capable of asserting themselves on the principles of the movement exist. However, the nature is also considered as a set of natural entities capable of *accomplishing the initial idea* of the city by composing itself there. While taking into account the renewable resources, the living phenomena, the natural cycles of rebirth, the forms of existing recycle, the formation of the “eco-natural lungs”, territorial rebalancing and so on.

Having said that the planning must, anyway, be defined from time to time, the relationship with the plan in terms of relations between the “city accomplished” and the *nature-city* must be well described. In a sense, the accomplished city of the historic center descends from a general overview towards the formal breakdown of the city in the deductive analysis of the buildings, emptying themselves, to make room for the play of nature. From another point of view, in the opposite direction to the previous one, the construction as “stone upon stone” progresses together with the housing induction, which proceeds from the specifications of the places towards the aspirations of the city, resulting in the birth of an architecture that comes together with nature and not “in front of” it, as the nature was an object just to contemplate.

This results in a disciplinary jump and a cultural relationship with those who are able to, in turn, break down the new conditions of the nature in places of the plan, by reassembling the architecture while giving a sense to the visions of nature-city. As perhaps Renzo Piano intends to do by talking about an architecture that is built for the new implosive central “nature-city”. As perhaps Cino Zucchi intuites nowadays by letting the building being crossed by a road of nature. As we try to understand when we develop, while *writing architecture*, those decomposed redesigns that later on get reassembled with elements of nature in the idea of the plan of the nature-city.

As perhaps one can understand reading the announcement of the competition for the Italian Pavilion at Expo 2015 in Milan.

Thus, in the second chapter of the book, one thought to study in depth certain themes, resulting from the first part, by focusing on a comparison between the Italian architecture and the architecture of the building in several parts of the world. An analytical comparison is addressed to different conceptions of “becoming of the void” in eight urban buildings of similar size but of different meaning. Thus, leading to the opening-up of the theme of the nature-city to a wider confrontation that has been played in the third chapter.

In this last parte, so, writings have been collected which were mostly taken from the reports from the seminars, conferences, workshops held between 2003 and 2014, in which we had taken part around the world.

These discussions were often carried out in Italy, however, on the international front, as well as they were held in Barcelona, Lexington, Bremen, Freiburg im Breisgau, Prague, Algarve, Guangzhou (Canton), Lisbon, Shanghai, Leiden, wherein these discussions have explored different points of disciplinary views on mutually decided different contexts. This process allowed the maturation in us about the very idea of the nature-city relative to the purpose of the urban regeneration planning, leading us to promote the formation of a school of nature-city in the world. That is the reason for running exchanges with other cities in Matera from 2013. These cities were chosen exactly because of their diversity, such as Palermo, Naples, Rome, Beijing, Shenzhen, Salonika, Bremen, Boston, Dublin, etc.

Purpose

The purpose of this exchange is to build a *shared vision of the nature-city* that starts from a regenerative-resilient identity, and is then divided into different strategies, arising above all from the studies of the ancient nature-city, still visible in small towns and in some Italian villages. In those small villages one recognizes the conditions of existence of what we still define as the city and the knowledge and the choices of civilization, which form the basis of these urban centers, can be reconstructed. Then, experiments of *Urbstourism* were born and the insights on the new housing and living conditions were gained, nevertheless of the “community of landscape”, or of those who have sustained while proceeding from a cultural legacy to be rediscovered in the relationship between architecture and nature-city. In addition this phase of the discussions that took place in the first half of the millennium allows the repositioning of the notion of landscape between the idea of a multi-dimensional city and the opening of a foundational vision among the several nature centers. It also allows rediscovering the importance of phenomenological methods by proceeding from architecture to re-constructive planning in the nature-city, however, until the configuration in the architecture and in its composition, a real *phenomenology of the big in the small*. By outlining a new cultural role of the Italian architect-planner, capable, thanks to the rediscovered legacy

of his school, to grasp the quality of the *multi-scaling of the plan* in the nature-city which in the Italian tradition is presented as a *narrative and a smart road*, where eco-sustainability must necessarily confront in the world with the continuous dislocation of the sites of urban re-generation, due to the intensification of migrations. Even this is a phenomenon and not just an ethnic element. A way to cross between the architecture and civil art, in which the architect is required to plan not only the space but also time, a new generalized condition of living in the contemporary time which raises the question of comparison between different cultures, in the world and in the places. From which emerges the great theme of the *void*, which means “void space” for the architects. Further, for the Italians, it is an obligation to discover the “beauty in the nature-city” in it, which opens a new challenge of the culture of the Italian school for the architecture of the city. Especially when the city reaches the limit of its existence and the construction needs to be defined as *architecture of the limit* in a city of limits. Wherein lay the fundamental questions about resilience.

From here, perhaps it can start the project of a polycentric school of the nature-city in which it may be again possible to “educate in architecture” in time of the widespread sustainability, network and human beings forced to continually reconstruct their identity in a totally unprecedented Way-World.

In this context, the problems of large masses of humanity emerge. First of all, in the weakest and the most neglected areas of the city, the result of hasty achievements, unrelated to the social world and to the awareness of the difference in the concept of infrastructure from the past. This is shown, rather very clearly, in the recovery of the replaced railway of the High Way of New York, or in the *elevated railway Gürtel* in Vienna and acknowledge the green roads as the elements of greatest creative inspiration, which should innovate the cultural aspects of the road as the relevant planning theme of the ecological reconversion and social inclusion.

Language. A lexicon for a “possible world” (Valentina Sichenze)

Umberto Eco once wrote: «In order to understand a text – and even more so in order to translate it – we need to guess what possible world it represents».

A “possible world”, so.

That is exactly what we try to imagine with a great effort of identification each time we want to express the original concept, the one that the author had in his mind when writing, by using a different language. This means choosing a different code shared by a group of people.

In other words, the aim is neither adding nor cutting out something, because chasing an unreal equivalence or a perfect correspondence is risky and wrong.

What a translator is really interested in is the authentic intention, as to say the author’s communication purpose.

Giovanni Michelucci, Pistoia 1891/01/02 - Florence 1980/12/31 || Giò Ponti, Milan 1891/11/18 - Milan 1979/09/16 || Giuseppe Samonà, Palermo 1898/04/08 - Rome 1983/10/31 || Adalberto Libera, Villa Lagarina 1903/07/16 - Rome 1963/03/17 || Ignazio Gardella, Milan 1905/03/30 - Oleggio 1999/03/15 || Carlo Scarpa, Venice 1906/06/02 - Sendai 1978/11/28 || Ernesto Nathan Rogers, Trieste 1909/03/16 - Gardone Riviera 1969/11/07 || Ludovico Quaroni, Rome 1911/03/28 - Rome 1987/07/22 || Giancarlo de Carlo, Genoa 1919/12/12 - Milan 2005/06/04 || Roberto Gabetti, Turin 1925/11/29 - Turin 2000/12/05 || Carlo Aymonino, Rome 1926/07/18 - Rome 2010/07/03 || Aimaro Isola, Turin 1928/01/14 || Aldo Rossi, Milan 1931/05/03 - Milan 1997/09/04 || Paolo Portoghesi, Rome 1931/11/02 || Alberto Samonà, Naples 1932/11/28 - Rome 1993/10/15 || Giorgio Grassi, Milan 1935/10/27 || Manfredo Tafuri, Rome 1935/11/04 - Venice 1994/02/23 || Renzo Piano, Genoa 1937/11/14 || Antonio Monestiroli, Milan 1940/06/10 || Massimo Scolari, Novi Ligure 1943/03/31 || Francesco Venezia, Lauro 1944/09/28 || Cino Zucchi, Milan 1955 || Stefano Boeri, Milan 1956/11/25 || Mario Cucinella, Palermo 1960/08/29

It is more or less like asking for a real Espresso around the world: why it is so hard to get it? Even though every good barman knows that crucial things are the quality of the blend, the roasting type, the amount of water used, together with some special features of the coffee machine, drinking a real Espresso is not simple at all. The thing is that in order to achieve the wished result, that unique taste, that unmistakable aroma, maybe what is needed is something totally different from what people usually use in Italy. Maybe a different amount of water or a different blend is what you really need to get the same result.

This means that in order to achieve the same result not always you can use the same formula. The ‘accuracy’ of a given procedure or the resemblance of a given sequence often seem to lead to very far destinations or simply to an aim which is too ‘different’ from the one we would like to reach.

So the joined commitment of an author and his translator should be to express the very same communication intent in spite of the means.

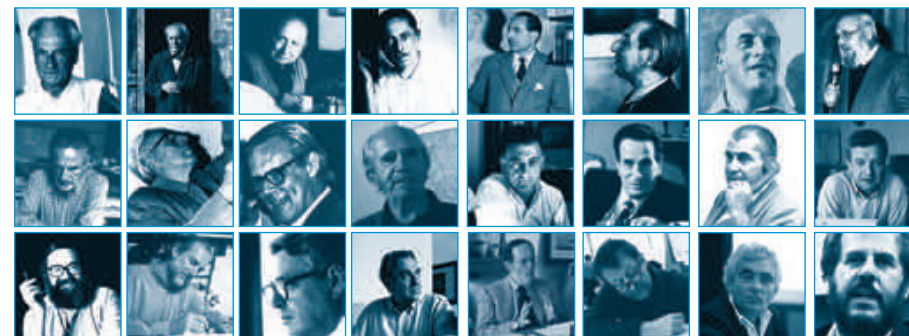
It does not matter if talking about a sign, a verbal code or a visual language; only the result matters. Of course, also the time and the way of telling and receiving the message are key factors.

To this end, it seems vital to identify a lexicon that is ‘typical’ of the author himself mainly because it ‘belongs’ to him and embraces all the meanings and the senses able to fully represent his true intent of expression. Exactly as a dress conveys the personality of the person who wears it.

That is especially needed when talking about a technical terminology that, just as such, could be read and perceived as unique and unalterable. Actually, if it is surely true that a certain amount of words of a technical terminology is irreplaceable, it is also true that even in special sectors languages there is room for flexibility and sense malleability.

For this reason, when the writer of this book asked me to translate it from Italian into English, she also asked me to behave both as a professional translator and as a common reader at the same time. Because she wanted to make the two areas communicate by being permeable.

At last, so, the main aim of such a language is just to make perceivable and clear that “possible world” which the author has in mind. Sharing the ‘passwords’ with the reader.



REQUIREMENTS OF A “SCHOOL OF NATURE- CITY” IN THE ITALIAN THINKING ARCHITECTURE OF OUR TIMES

Chapter 1

NATURE CITY - Visions of Nature-City in Italian Architecture Ina Macaione

Karl Friedrich Schinkel thought that: «Architecture is the continuation of nature in her constructive activity». Today we ask ourselves how could we set a limit to architecture in her accomplishment in the nature.

The purpose of this essay is to portray a background picture, wide but not exhaustive, of the strategic premises of the development of the Italian architectural planning culture, especially of the one strictly connected to living issues, trying to identify some of the preconditions and features useful to outline the current vision of nature-city. It is through the understanding of the so-called “broad city” or *extensive city*, a definition that also embraces the small centres in the open land, and thanks to it, that such a city could more easily gain a *sense* and a quality of architecture.

Still today, every single time we have to face a new planning theme, we go through and read once again all the designs and works of that part of the Italian architectonic culture, which is still able to guide and stimulate us. It is this planning culture, developed since the beginning of the second post-war period, that keeps containing theoretical and didactic indications useful to the contemporary world. The reason lies in its being a *school of thought*, meant as a system of conceptual and operational references, which in its forming process seems to be able to face the complexity of present-day reality. However we need to bring these references back to an overall vision of present times, letting their great endogenous originality arise.

In short, we want to ponder over this priceless legacy in order to identify the real nature of architecture that most closely precedes us, today either roughly mistaken for wrong and mystified interpretations or forgotten and abandoned in a dangerous isolation from any concrete context.

Today’s Italian architecture condition is certainly part and parcel of a wider crisis, which involves also who, unlike us, does not design and is the victim of the interpretations given by the most part of our culture, from our erudite tradition to the contemporary whole sense of the architecture.

Starting from this statement, we want to verify the positive role of the formation of the planning culture and of its problems in the transformations of human physical living space. Such a formation started in the second post-war period and developed all along the 70’s. The reason why we intend to go back to that kind of formation derives from the following four different considerations.

1. It represents the most authentic formation of the Italian planning culture in the middle of the crisis of modernity and it succeeded in acting just at the beginning of the emerging of the postmodern condition and of the dialoguing of the confused fragmented research field of contemporary world. This is a culture that questions about the role of architecture in our society, creating a huge store of interactions between architecture, city and landscape.
2. It is the only one that could clearly define *Italian architecture*, still keeping on making it *identifiable in the world*.
3. It is still very topical because it is the most complete and the richest *theoretical and critical premise* for:

a) the foundation of a school of *planning cultures* aimed at confronting with the practices of thought and action hopes of change, which are strictly connected with the problems of great masses of people;

b) the formation of a school of thought and action in nature-city.

With its variety of approaches, therefore, the Italian planning culture of the 60's and 70's appears as a "thinking formation" of the *project culture* that draws a picture of topics and problems, almost complete, perfectly transmissible and communicable.

Beginning with a wide conceptual picture, this "Italian school" place the formation of the architectonic knowledge into a greater knowledge construction, starting from the *culture of architecture* (and from its believes) and getting to an articulate way of developing *city plans* (views and purposes).

After a short premise talking about the idea of nature-city, we will get on to few synthetic indications about some key-personalities, able to represent a reference point for a net of international relations. To be brief it will not be possible to show the complete picture of all the protagonists who, until now, played the roles of updating, contrasting and counter-pointing needed to test the dimension and the scope of a school of thought dealing with the architecture and city plan.

1. Introduction of the difference between the historic city and the nature-city

First of all, we need to distinguish between a *city-in-the city* from the city we call *nature-city*, the one which grows outside of the fully known city.

The accomplishment of the "city-in-the city", which is mirrored in herself, *within* physical or invisible walls, it leads everybody, starting from the architect himself, to think *within* modernity, in an automatic way, like the most extreme functionalist would do. Here the city is considered such only if it is the human being who has to live it. All the rest - trees, gardens, parks - in the 1800's city for example, is totally subjected to a rigid Cartesian geometry or it is made in a "British style", where the nature is represented so as it was inhabited by human emotions.

But in both cases there are no actions that, arising from the city, manage to go ahead and to successfully accomplish themselves in an *architecture of the nature*, meaning an architectonic space that can really be *inhabitable* by nature and by *others*, different from the "we" already settled in. The "city-in-the city" is the historical city, known till the 1800's, that repeats and rebuilds itself, perfectly compact and always identical to itself. That is to say by conceiving its destiny within its own space, inside an "accomplished model" of accomplishment forms. It focuses on places for an existence between an Origin and a Purpose totally forecast by an "eschatological" age, held by the powers owning their and others time.

A long period, heritable, or at least sufficient to achieve a complete result .

In the mid-twentieth century, in Italy, Giuseppe Samonà, while recognizing the positive value of the "Old " as a "cultural thing", at times of tremendous vitality for the formation of a general consciousness of the culture, was saying, interpreting Le Corbusier, "history done" (that is gone forever), the process of constructing the historical city (the "city-in-the city") clarifying the different positions of the academic culture of the time:

«The reality is that, no matter how hard you try to consider open the process of the ancient city in the new, even figuratively in space and meaning, every day is more and more difficult, particularly among the less skilled in the culture, not to find the instinctive revulsion to any intrusion of current works into the old composition of the city; so even those who pay tribute

to the idea of continuity of the historical process, theorize the possibility of replacing the decaying buildings, and in contrast to the old trait, with volumes equal to those coming from the building of this trait, then when you see, finished, one of the replacement buildings, you find it increasingly ugly and incongruous, with many flaws that they are always trying to use as a justification for their refusal, contrary to the methodological idea of homogeneous inclusion. The same could occur for those who experiment the absolute lack of such problems, as they theorize the necessity of the combination *sic et simpliciter* of modern and ancient works, an approach which they find evil when they see it realized: Zevi, for example.

«For this reasons Pane on one hand, and Zevi on the other, are the most important representatives of these two methods of solving the problem of the new entries in the old town centre. In addition to these and a few other scholars, generally keen conservatives, or critics of modern architectures, while being, as Croce, in a high cultural position worthy of the utmost respect, are blocked by their equivocal position, which manifests itself functionally in a real dichotomy, wishing on one hand, at any cost the preservation of the old, without considering that it is part of a finished process; and on the other hand wishing to prove, no matter what, the relevance of this old style, forcing new ways to use old works not to show discontinuity between these methods and those used in current works. The result of this absolute continuity is the denial of the differences, the need to blur distinctions in compliance with this alleged communion, in this abstraction of the unity».¹

Having a closer look, Samonà notes what could be considered a "deposition" of the planning of the old city, stating that the project of the current city is only possible outside of it, without, again, denying the possibility of using the legacy of the spatial knowledge contained in the Old. A representation of this position will be reflected figuratively, as we will see, in the design for the competition by Samonà for the new offices for the Chamber of Deputies in Rome, 1967.

The *nature-city*, however, is a composition of different *beginnings of a city* that can be accomplished and completed, as a whole, only arriving to the sustainable reconstruction of its original biodiversity, always to be considered open, but resilient compared to the unpredictability, crises and destructive trauma. Therefore, the *nature-city*, as it will be shown in the examples that we have discovered in our studies and will analyze, consists of:

- initial stages and beginnings of cities made of *primary elements* that are never "given" at the beginning and therefore must be discovered from time to time and highlighted in the local phenomena crossed only by design procedures;
- *primary elements* that are not completed in absolute coherence, but overlapping, coming close and getting away (as Jean-Luc Nancy says), because the time is cyclical as the nature or is just "techno-scopic" and always otherwise consumable (as Giò Ponti says);



Giuseppe Samonà, Open competition for the new office building of "Camera dei Deputati", Rome 1967

¹. G. Samonà, *Il futuro dei nuclei antichi della città e l'esperienza urbanistica dell'eterogeneo*, general report made at the VI Inu Conference of Turin, 1957, in G. Samonà, *L'Unità Architettura-Urbanistica. Scritti e progetti 1929-1973*, by Pasquale Lovero, Franco Angeli Editore, Milano, 1975.

- *primary elements* available to additional achievements always different from those, if any, initially forecast, because times, powers, interests, people and technologies change. Thinking to the city in *nascent stages*, always rising again, means not knowing in advance the nature of the architecture of a project, as it was in the past. It is always necessary to have an idea of physical and emotional attraction to conceive something, but the true nature of a work, its real reason of existence is to be discovered in its environmental phenomenon (as Ignazio Gardella says), incubating this birth and then becoming more and more attached to it. So it should be put in brackets (suspended in an epochè) anything that might prevent you from perceiving the authenticity of the news emerging, suspending the judgment, rather the pre-judgment about what should be the “unborn child” in its architectural quality (as claimed by many, from Rogers to Gregotti). A quality to educate, now, in the growth, with the filter of an architectural culture, which values without altering the work. But also the city imagined in growing stages has its own form of “fulfillment”, which is not only a fulfillment in the fullness of itself, but in an environment where to interact, whose “regenerative nature” is not immediately obvious, being mixed with waste, rubble, debris, scrap that, in fulfillment of a waste, can be transformed and recomposed in a new nature. But this cannot happen “naturally”. A will and a cultural project are needed at the same time. The nature-city takes its fulfillment in reuse, reduce, recycling, to reduce and absorb the harmful presence, for example, of carbon oxide. It takes place in the Nature as a whole, first of all, both symbolically as the dissected trunk that inspires the plant of the church on the highway by Giovanni Michelucci, and substantially as all forms of “resilience” that can absorb the traumatic damages caused by the crisis of Modern Times. Starting from the social damages and going to those psychic and industrial.²

But if the city today is not anymore born and done altogether, as should be clear by now, in a single founding project, as it was in the historical foundation cities, or as in the cities anyway closed within a boundary wall, then how can you define the limits of all the nascent stages? What is the breakdown between these city principles and what relations are established between them and with an indeterminate and unpredictable “whole”? And if the definitions of the city, as Aldo Rossi argues, are “the top human thing,” what, how and who can define these nascent cities. The first answer is that this is precisely the task of the architecture. That means: the design processes respond to the method of these hidden definitions. And this task relies in the hands of an initial relationship between the architect and the subjects, sometimes several, promoting these rising states of a town. It then follows that the architecture is not just a purely technical fact, but a culture that appoints the architect as an expert in thinking to the limits in space and time.³ Where the architecture of the city is the limiting part containing, however, other variables, such as the nature that encompasses the “whole” of the city, of which every architecture is basically the part initially responsible for. In other words, the architecture itself is not the aim of the architecture, but the container of other dimensions and strenghts, such as the Humanity, the Life and the World, from the point of view of the architectural project, the nature-city does not take place only in the so-called nature, but also in this “second nature”

². For example one could think about trees and bamboo that are the greatest carbon collectors, and totally free. On the contrary, they give back biomass that is useful to produce, which is wood. We are not only talking about huge, isolated forests, but we are also referring to all that widespread forms of development politics, which keep carbon under control as a vegetable biomass.

³. Cfr. A. Sichenze *Il limite e la città. La qualità del minimum urbano sul limite dell'edificio dalla Grecia antica al tempo della metropoli*, FrancoAngeli, Milano, 1995.

that is the architecture, when it feeds the city itself with those principles relating to these dimensions of larger magnitude. What do we concretely do in our design practices? For a start, we cross phenomena. We walk on roads to be built through the architectural design of buildings that have a sufficient size to represent the beginning of a nature-city. A project for a school, for example, is already of sufficient size. But how is it possible, was asked by the Italian planning culture of the Sixties and Seventies, to be able to put the big which is a city, in a small complex of buildings?⁴ How is it possible, in general, put the Big in the small, to start again? As argued also by Ernesto Nathan Rogers, is not primarily a question of quantity. If the open space of a city is made of streets and squares, you can make fragments of streets and small squares that, however, contain the DNA, the sense of the overall quality of a city. So even in a small area you can find that feel of “the more in the less”. This means that in the “less” of a small space you can search for the meaning of the more for a city. As long as you are able, however, to reveal the qualities of the “more” of the city that the quality promise being there even in a “less”. In the “Less is More”, the famous aphorism of Mies van der Rohe, we see the convergence and internationalization, even today, of most of the Italian planning culture of the Sixties and Seventies. It is the research for a *minimum urban existence* in which the qualities of its being are the qualities of centrality with respect to the surrounding area, of the topological variety, of the human coexistentialism, of the representativeness, of temporality, of the naturalness and the sense of a new beginning and a new departure from the city in a determined area. In this context of “nascent city”, nature plays the role of putting in play the “purity” with which the volume of architecture presents itself in the legacy of the Modern Movement. It is where the project path, expressed by us and controlled through the method of architectural writing, is composed of different phases which are not all describable and representable with the instruments of the discipline of architecture. The first is the ideation phase of the project in which the “phenomenological reduction” to the architecture of the large number of ideas, images, of analytical-deductive and informative materials occurs which crowd the drafting table. This is the conceptualizing phase which is consumed passing among the applications of the cultural concepts inherited in the education in the field, and the conception of the project which is accomplished in a first clear and general abstraction of the envisioned architecture. It is one in which empty spaces must prevail. The sense of erosion, corrosion and weakening applied to the urban identity, known in the studies of historical centers, is transformed into a gain of spatial quality, made more sensitive by the traces of the subtraction of that which is inessential, on a path of loss of material quantity. It follows a creative, inductive phase in which it is necessary to discover, in the details and the increased awareness of materials, the “true constructive nature of the architectural work” within the preliminary conceptual work of the first phase. Indeed - but from whence is this reflection born, and on what does it sustain itself? There are cultural debts to be recognized, which Armando Sichenze has recently wanted to summarize, in specifically discussing the nature-city as a point of arrival, of suspension and of heritage of the Italian culture of the project:

«It is worthwhile to refer to the points of arrival of the research which many architects, almost all academics, have delivered to the world in the form of a master experience that only now appears to us in all its reconstructable richness. The thesis that most simply is put forth is that, if the final points of this “master experience” appeared to diverge, it was

⁴. Cfr. A. Sichenze, *Architettura vs Nichilismo, Mimesis, Udine-Milano 2011.*



Aldo Rossi, Gianni Braghieri, San Cataldo Cemetery, Modena 1971-78

because it was not possible to gather the importance of the double sense of nature which, appearing at the most advanced margins, brought the research elements closer together to each other and to the world, bringing into focus an area which is fertile in convergences and new departures. It is however to be understood not as a tendency to a conforming integration as much as a field of differences which highlights the multiplicity of the aspects of the architectural phenomenon, rendering each of them more comprehensible thanks to the comparison." Let's start from the "nature" of the emptiness. Even today, a central theme of European culture. You could say that the "architecture of the city," with the crisis of the completion of the historic town in the Modern Age, is thinkable only in the experience of a fragment in the emptiness (see Aldo Rossi). Where today perhaps the theme of the emptiness is more important than the fragment itself. Or you could argue that the performance is thought of as a fragment in the nature, first belonging to the earth, from which can emerge only as a 'bare' material, with the memory of a fossil for example (see Francesco Venezia). It just so happens that the "pre-formed" architecture, joining the "mother earth", would take the form of a place of historical and deep traces, a place of development that in the design experience takes the hybrid form of "working progress" of the nature and of the principles of sustainability (see Isola and Gabetti). For two of the founders of the school of Milan (Ignazio Gardella and Ernesto Nathan Rogers) the nature to work with, and to bring to light, is the architecture. To be understood as a phenomenon that occurs in the experience of life and the project. Where in Gardella this is an elegant nature (from *eligere* = to choose) that in the location of the project is manifested as the difference in the type. While in Rogers this is our experience in the world (ranging from the literature to art and philosophy) that should get into the nature of the work, to discover when you taste the same process of the phenomenological method. From here on, takes shape not only the "School of Milan", as it is today defined by Antonio Monestiroli, but also the more complex "magic" of the world which also Monestiroli includes in the reality brought to light in the scene of the architecture of a second nature. Of course it is a "second nature" easier than the "first nature". More important even than the new size and multifold urban complexity that Carlo Aymonino hoped to discover analyzing and designing the "city in parts", meaning the architecture as the top urban phenomenon, basing his theory, among other things, on the comparison of individual urban phenomena. Yet there is also another way to tap into this complexity of the city and the nature. I can think for example to the kind of inductive method of composition - requiring a continuous self-critical exercise - that Ludovico Quaroni verified first in Matera for the design of the village La Martella and then in its various projects of urban polycentricity at different scales. But here we touched on the problem of the open nature of the design architecture", as Giancarlo De Carlo discovered, thinking of the place as the birth and evolution of a process of "urban regeneration", able to relocate between land and nature. Having realized that the nature is not only a matter of form, but also of cultural content. As it was well understood by Giovanni Michelucci planning the streets built with the nature, like the real roots powering a new urban complexity rising in

the nature. Too bad that Michelucci did never collaborate with Giò Ponti, who tried, with the architecture, to build a mind, or even a brain of common experiences, nor with Carlo Scarpa who in the Brion Tomb, "wrote architecture", imagining streets of analogy between the city and the nature. Much of this research would have found a way, as said earlier, to relaunch in a common inheritance if, for example, the urban studies, which characterized the Italian culture, had continued, but in a phenomenological direction, ie focusing on the essential experiences of the architectural phenomenon, in the reality connected with the city and the nature, common to the architects and the people. As Giuseppe Samonà had correctly guessed, indicating in the "City in extension", the most fertile application scope of the urban architecture, as a measure of a process that had to go from the general (of the nature-city) to the particular (of the architecture) and vice versa. Alluding to the research of the twentieth century in both directions, defined in retrospect as a self-critical story of the project for the Theatre of Sciacca. Two directions that, however, in the work of Alberto Samonà, competed on the problematic area of the common experience of emptiness, in the distance opening between the deductive culture, typical of the architectural abstraction, and empirical and inductive cultures of the settled people. From there on, we assisted to a series of changes in the morphological and typological perspectives, which set the nature of the city».⁵ Just moving from that critical compendium can be helpful to reflect on some experiences mentioned in the document to illustrate the potential wealth, yet all projected into a future that perhaps in these streets, after almost half a century, will appear more viable than it was when it was announced among people definitely not able to meet again.

2. Urban planning: taking measure of the heterogeneous nature-city

The architectural work of one man, born toward the end of the 1800s, seems to touch on all of the problematics and central themes of the best of 20th century Italian architecture, which have been addressed at least in part in this essay: Giuseppe Samonà. Moving from theoretical drawings of the "urban architectural unit" to the theme of the void in one of the most beautiful of all Italian projects ever designed for a historical city center: the 1967 design for the parliamentary offices in Montecitorio in Rome, a building that managed to construct an eloquent void, open to public life. Only then to close the circle with nature through his theater in Sciacca. With Samonà, demands for an urban architectural unit in the late Sixties and early Seventies were constantly interacting with philosophical considerations related especially to structuralism, linguistics, and perception theories. In general definitions, the *urban architectural unit* seems to derive in particular from the realization of a unit of the *inhabitative fact* as an analytical expression, and not only, of the elements of the *identifiability of the quality of a city* in its concrete forms, its practices, and the use of land beginning from its history and its identifying habits, its local and collective values. This comes about through the conflicts between continuity and discontinuity, in the attentiveness to the poetics of a *spontaneous architecture* and in the critique of rationalist methodologies; in the analysis of the interactions between different urban phenomena and between these and the goings-on of daily life. The idea, codified as the *expanding city*, finds its origins in the 1957 report to INU:

⁵ A. Sichenze, *Themes and design methods for the School of Materas on the nature-city*, in ProArch (National Association of the teachers of Architectural Planning), *Architecture Documents and Researches series*, 4-5th of October 2013, Turin 2014), publishing in progress.

«[...] At the moment in which buildings are planned for this countryside, then also here will an urban situation be created, one that will be defined by criteria that must allow for those living in such conditions to be no less important than those living in a city. The *urban condition* is thus a discourse of cultural synthesis made particular to the open countryside; this is not yet well-defined, but you can sense within its essence how a situation in which haphazard construction is a phenomenon of constant, present contrast between buildings planned in a manner that is ever more aware of a “city sense” and nature, which has its own formal integrity and which interacts with the buildings themselves. We feel that this planning of the countryside, whose architectonic reality remains urban-based, must take note of the inhabitative character of the areas zoned for construction, identifying therein the greater or lesser scarcity and frequency of buildings and of ways for offering services according to the needs that the degree of urbanization has created. It is therefore still an *urban phenomenon*, and thus it would seem that the cultural current is correct, which remains largely attached to positions of theories of urban planning that run against the current official thematics, and which codifies the idea of a continuous urban space as the future of urban planning praxis, which defines itself in an operability that converges with the new city-territory binomial. This situation is felt with no remains by those who examine the land, giving a clear preference to criteria of economic efficiency, criteria that lead to the formulation of parameters of the various forms of urbanistic interventions with the goal of a productive development that can be reached through efficiency itself. According to these criteria, the territorial expansion in which construction clusters, the verification of a relationship of continuity, in whose organization there is no concept of a *priori* completion, is the most appropriate cultural expression of the integration of buildings and landscape, interacting amongst themselves according to the principles of maximum functionality.

«On the contrary, the cultural elements of an urban planning closer to architecture do not accept the conditions of the nature-city as has just been mentioned, because they maintain that the foundation determined by prevailing ideas of homogeneity and of continuity conferred on the situation is artificial, seeing as how directed observation reveals only its *discontinuity*. [...] These currents, desirous of taking this discontinuity into account, claim that in general, the situations can be grouped together into three distinct morphological conditions: *concentration*, typical of urban realities; complete *decentralization*, typical of the countryside; while the third, in its typical forms of *dissociation*, corresponds to the space in between the other two. These three morphological conditions would express the heterogeneous *situation* of the environment and would indicate the point of departure for defining the field of urban planning interests in a new fashion, but within a synthetic discourse so as to facilitate the exploration of such. The field narrows, therefore, for practical reasons, to these three distinctions and can be analyzed in this manner with the most specific research based on the coherence that in such distinctions takes on the human-environment relationship. Without any doubt, in the analyses of the human-environment relationship and the relations between individual and group, the studies of the process of figurability through which the individual recognizes that the environment has a meaning that he can recognize have taken on great importance recently [...]. If we must accept the situation of meaning created by the public image, it is necessary that this involves a form that has not yet become iconic, but which is intelligible to the urban structure, according to a matrix in which characters of figurability are defined by the experience of the public image as a manifestation of the social situation projected upon the environment [...]. The human-en-

vironment relationship thus has meaning within the totality of the elementary images that express formal units and size. In other words, this is a quantitative relationship and a collective meaning, from which one can extrapolate a form. Formal unit and size create a relationship from which can be generated an image that represents the initial expression of a classification that is capable of giving new formative possibilities to urban planning [...].⁶ From this extract it is obvious how Samonà has distanced himself from the vision of the rigid separation of the *Three Human Establishments* (the agricultural town, the linear industrial city, and the radial-concentric cities of exchange), proposed by his maestro Le Corbusier just after the Second World War. Equally noticeable is the presence of a new terminology (*heterogeneity*, “city sense”, *urban phenomenon*, *continuity/discontinuity*, *contrast*, *morphological conditions*, *figurability/image*, etc.) that will be shared by many architects about whom much will be said. In the following years, Samonà, further investigating the concepts of “context”, “intersection of relational networks”, “correspondence and dependence”, came to understand, along with his son Alberto, that the coming together of an urban planning - conceived as *architectonic multiscale* and an architecture “aware” of having to contribute to a *minimal urban plan* - must be confronted first of all through a continuous process that goes from *the general to the particular and viceversa*. Into this process must come to play a unitary way of thinking, full of creative possibilities, that takes place in a common *writing architecture and urban planning*, even at the level of graphics and lexicon, confronting the problematic of the relationship between figure and background, as can be seen in Carlo Scarpa as well. After all, already in 1971, in an essay published in the journal *Il Mulino* (*An evaluation of the future of cities as a problematic of its relationship with architecture*), he wrote of a “new orientation in morphological research based on the association of systematic contexts of the fundamental signs, which are *point, line, and surface*, bound to one another by relationships of interdependence that ties them by groups of associability or continuity”, alluding to a finality that could go beyond morphological studies. From this picture emerges the importance of *morphology*, as a system of relationships between places, positions, forms, and functions. Here, however, it is necessary to move from the general urban level to the particular level of architecture and viceversa according to the *phenomenological method*, as suggested by E. N. Rogers, that consists in bringing forth *architecture as a part that contains the entirety of the city of which it is a part*. But the final step toward the phenomenological vision of the nature-city was taken by Samonà at the very end of his life, as we shall see at the end of this essay. Today, the *expanding city* is a complicated phenomenon that consists of *surfaces* (agricultural, or formerly-agricultural, or at least of prevailing natural quality), *urban concentrations* (of services, consumption, and production, of prevailing permanent and inhabitative qualities), *communication lines* (of a network of constructions with changing functions and dispersal).

How did morphology and the urban multiscale of the nature-city come about in the *writing* in the void that opens between architecture and urban planning, taking into consideration the use that the resident communities make of the relationship between architecture and nature?

3. The crisis in the accomplishments of the city in modern times. Fragments and traces

The understanding of the evolution of the historical city in terms of presupposed a *priori* ends analyzes the city as a system of urban physicality (houses, squares, roads, monuments, specialized buildings, parks). A system that believes it thinks in terms of “deductions of

accomplishments" within *hierarchizing Cartesian logocentrism*. The term that links the city to a system of spatial and temporal continuity, taking measure of its success, is the idea of *urban fabric* that takes the shape of a relationship located somewhere between construction typology and urban morphology. This is a categorical system that is useful for thinking about architecture as the interpretation of the accomplishment of a model city. It assumes a social relationship with subjects defined in their sharing and their power to make autonomous decisions about the accomplishment and the future of the city.

The crisis of this way of thinking about cities led some Italian architects who had studied within the field of urban studies to recognize the reality of its "historical destruction."

From Aldo Rossi to Francesco Venezia we can trace a trajectory of thought that now seriously reflects upon the architecture of the "city of man" in the conditions of the *time of the crisis of the Modern*, after the "lost civilization" of the historical city.

Aldo Rossi, the most famous Italian architect in the world because of his studies published in 1966 in his manifesto, *The Architecture of the City*, many years later said the following, toward the end of the Eighties, in his *Scientific Autobiography*.

«The lovely illusion of the modern, calming, and moderate movement was shattered under the heavy-handed and concrete crash of bombs: I wasn't searching for what was left as a lost civilization; rather I was looking at a tragic post-war photograph of Berlin where the Brandenburg Gate was placed in a landscape of ruins. Perhaps this was the victory of the avant-garde; not the remnants of the neighborhood of Frankfurt or some Dutch building that blended into a pleasant Napoleon III style landscape. Alone amongst the ruins, all the avant-gardes had triumphed and failed; intangible surrealist landscape, the overlapping of debris, had certainly meant something, even if only destruction. It was not architecture that had been destroyed but the city of man; and what remained certainly had nothing to do with architecture, but it was a symbol, a sign, a sometimes troublesome memory. And so, with an archeological and surgical gaze, I learned to look upon cities. I detested modernist aestheticism like any formalist revival. This is why I stated that the experience of Soviet architecture helped me cast off every petite-bourgeois remnant of modern architecture. A few great architects remained, like Adolf Loos or Mies van der Rohe, who had substantially risen above the illusions of social-democracy».⁷

One could write a whole book just about these sentences, there are so many important details to discuss. But how? Summarizing, and begging pardon for the omissions, it can be said that Rossi recognizes both the end of a way of thinking that had been integrated with the overall accomplishment of the historical city produced by a civilization that no longer existed, and at the same time of the fact that modernism now, in its widest historical meaning, can only be carried out in the (continual) *destruction* of its accomplishment in the overall construction of the city. Of this destruction remains, in the mounds of debris, only the fragments of a lost completeness. And, actually, Rossi goes on to point out:

«It is likely that I love fragments; just as I have always thought that it is a fortunate situation to bump into a person with whom you have cut all ties; it is the familiarity with a fragment of ourselves. But the matter of the fragment is crucial in architecture because maybe only destructions can fully tell an event. Pictures of the cities during the war, section of flats, broken toys. Delfi and Olimpia. This power of using of parts of mechanisms whose general meaning is partially lost has always attract my attention, also from a formal point of view.»⁸

⁶ *Ibidem*

⁷ A. Rossi, *Autobiografia scientifica*, Pratiche editrice, Milano, 1990.



All said, though, Rossi is no nihilist, and so, when he moves from the past to the future, the *fragment makes way for the trace*, that is to say to an architecture of primary elements on which to graft the varying qualities of life in all of its unpredictability, all the way to its most exterminating extremes. After all, the meaning of construction avails itself of few lasting things, which must therefore be carefully calibrated so as to not intrude upon the freedom of the inhabitants. And so:

«When in New York I saw the complete works of Edward Hopper, I understood all this about my architecture: paintings like *Chair Car* or *Four Lane Road* carried me back to the permanence of those timeless miracles, tables forever set for dinner, drinks never to be drunk, things that are nothing but what they are. Thinking about these works, I realize that I am very much interested in things that are always on the edge of actuation, and in the mechanism with which they could be actuated, all the time knowing that another, darker other, inhibits the normal completion of the necessary operations for making something happen. This is related to the problem of freedom; freedom for me also has a translation into my profession [...]. In some of my last projects or ideas for projects I have tried to stop the actuation before it is produced, as if an architect could predict, and in some ways he does predict, the way life unfolds within a house. It is difficult for the interior decorators to understand all this, they are tied to ephemeral things like the drawing of details, the frame, by things that in reality come to be substituted by the life of the house.»⁹

Rossi's architecture is made of things that are nothing but what they are. Beginnings, traces, finished elements that are waiting for that spark of life. Beginnings of cities, nature-spaces that are actuated only within nature. Even a city of the dead, the Cemetery of Modena, is this: «The call for submissions had a motto - 'sky blue' - and now I see these large light-blue sheet metal roofs, so sensitive to the light of day and evening and to the seasons, that one moment it seems to be a deep navy and another a limpid celestial blue. The pink walls overlap with the old Emilian brickwork of the old cemetery, and this too feels the effect of the light, sometimes appearing almost white and sometimes dark pink.»¹⁰

Francesco Venezia, reflecting upon the meaning of an architecture of stripping away, designs and imagines - it is not yet clear to what extent - the future of the architecture of the city as accomplishment of its becoming part of a burial, "extractable" as a material for stripping away, in fact, a fragment that presents itself today, in contrast with past cities, as indecipherable. So that, while the order of cities seems to be undergoing a transformation, reentering the earth, into the order of natural things that are now resistant within nature, but with the memory of a fossil, architecture could enter into play in the nascent state, together with an as yet unknown system, but perhaps ready to lay down a trace of the future and, in this sense, to assume infinite structural forms.

How does one get through the *crisis of accomplishment* of the historical city, still desirous of constructing a *void* capable of waiting for life, in the wearing away of the matter and the material of nature?

4. The issue of the architectonic and urban phenomenology

The crisis of the fulfillment of the city, according to the model of historical cities that survived until the 19th century, provoked a critical reflection on the existence itself of

⁸ *Ibidem.*

⁹ *Ibidem.*

¹⁰ *Ibidem.*

models in the project of architecture and on the necessity, instead, of confronting all of the unpredictability of an *urban phenomenology* that considers the combining of the rigorous logic of construction with the irrationality and the randomness that is typical of change under crisis conditions. Attention was shifted therefore to good practices, extracting from reality "examples, and not models" that intended to modify the social conditions of living in a reality, always changing, that required more complex and articulated responses.

We will focus on those experimental pilot or groundbreaking projects of a new partial vision of the city, seen from clearly determined and delimited points of observation.

Ernesto Nathan Rogers becomes the fundamental reference point for this way of understanding architectural and urban phenomenology. The discourse is wide-ranging and much interlaced with philosophy, especially that of Enzo Paci. One of the most emblematic examples in this sense is the tomb, designed by BBPR in 1957, in the cemetery of Tricarico (Matera). «This is a real threshold that opens just on the edge wall of the cemetery, revealing from the opening the landscape of the Basento valley. Suspending the death of an epoché is the whole phenomenological teaching of Rogers, designed to make architecture a form open and available to life. And so, right there in a small place of death, the greatness of a landscape and of peasant humanity will live a particularly *unlimitedness*.»¹¹

But how does an *epoché*, or suspension of the (pre) judgment, work during a project? The entire natural world is put in brackets through the phenomenological *epoché*: this is constantly "here for us," at close distance? The goal is to shift the focus to the realisation of the phenomenon itself, in order to grasp its true nature, not just the urban and architectural design, but also the social and political focus. In other words, the primacy no longer is with the predefined entities that create the activity of seeing, but with what you have to see in the automatic giving mode. In order to achieve this result we need a change of attitude, summed up in the sentence: "phenomenological reduction" able to move the view from the custom (even scientific) mode, predominant, with which we relate to a large amount of images that run through our mind coming from our relationship with the world, disallowing us to grasp the true nature of the things and the reality.

Daniele Vitale reiterates today, but critically, the importance of the contribution of Rogers in the founding of the school of Milan:

«The method of Rogers was born out of a need for freedom. Arose from the rejection of pre-established positions and stylistic formulas are seen as an obligation and as prisons. Also arose from the refusal of imitation as a way inherent to the project. The imitation was opposed to creativity and individual creativity; the project had to find again its foundation. It must freely recognize the things in history and places its reasons, as well as the architect had to find, within him, his own truth and his own vocation. Must led the student must by the hand in order to discover the tendencies and qualities carried within it, but which were unknown to him. The teachers role was that of a midwife. The work was to design «brought to light» as the midwife brings to light the unborn child. The limit was a limit individualistic. It was not clear that beyond the quality and capabilities of each, each belongs to an experience and a culture, and that no one is given plan out of a shared historical position. It was not clear who always designs through a process of imitation, and that if it is not driven in a conscious way, takes unexpected forms and uncontrolled». In truth, Rogers contemplated this "shared historical position" when he said that it is in the tradition: «The tradition is experience enlarged».

¹¹ From A. Sichenze, *Architettura vs nichilismo, Mimesis, Milano, 2011.*

However, here today, things are more complicated because the tradition is weakened and not recognized, in contrast with the current lifestyle.

On the one hand there are those, like Vitale, who argues that however you are, must always design within a reference frame, well known and carefully explained, even to subject it to criticism, as does for example the group of A. Samona, which we will return. On the other hand there are those who believe that the “historical materials are to” burn”, along with other materials. Gregotti, for example, already in *Il territorio dell'architettura* in 1966, takes the notion of “material,” as if from the beginning that something comes from reports heterogeneously with appearances and with other disciplines (with different technologies) To undo this later material becomes architectural, only undergoing a reductive treatment, burned in the oven just architecture. Maybe keeping, along with what remains of solid, even the ashes with the fire that lies beneath. It is, however, to see whether and how the new architecture is traces of everything that architecture is not.

However, problems arise to defend themselves, and if do not get rid of all of them, from the pre-established conditionings, “Statistical”, or relating to the “cultural politics” (as in the case of Alberto Samonà), which prevent even relating with the use people make of the physical space according to their own aspirations. There is, therefore, a problem to get a disciplinary autonomy still capable of knowing and seeing *the things themselves*, before they become “objects” in the disciplinary apparatus conditioning and exclusionary. The domain independent architecture would be that specific area within which the architect expressed in terms of physical space, a value judgment, starting from the knowledge of their own and other experiences on the problems that are posed by the settled community in accordance with their aspirations and *shared visions*. However, the names of the communities seem to stray far from the tradition of the build and the same “human institutions”. Perhaps this experience binds us together.

What happens in and after the *epoché*, the suspension of the vacuum, to meet other phenomena of nature vision of the city as an expression of value judgments, most shared as possible, in a crisis of subjectivity?

5. The scene of reality: place to “elect” a “second nature”

The most important Italian universities (starting from the studies of urban analysis of Saverio Muratori, Giorgio Grassi, and the *manifesto* of 1966, *L'architettura della città*, by Aldo Rossi) do not accept the hypothesis that there could exist shared categories about reading the city on which to confront the “settled communities”; they rather formulate the thesis in which the whole city can be architecture and the city should be seen and thought from the project site.

However, since made up of places, the architecture is located at different scales, in the city and the landscape, giving a *sense* of the living environment, critically reinterpreting the heritage of pre-existing and expectations of the project. Designer's task is then to understand *the true nature of the architecture in the project environment*.

Ignazio Gardella, one of the major players in the reversal of the sense of the project, (from architecture to the city, and not vice versa) limits the area in the project to the *environment surroundings*, redefining their role in the phenomenological sense.¹² This implies then that a design direction from the place, made aware of his position, shall, in accordance Zermani, the “comment of the landscape”.¹³ The task of the architectural phenomena, in this context, is then to make evident the reasons for considering a building as of *elegant*

nature.¹⁴ Here, Monestiroli is clear when he reminds us of two expressions; here we like to connect, Gardella. Here is the first: «Elegance comes from *eligere* which means, “Choosing.” One must always choose the solution that best suits the purpose»¹⁵.

Then when you want to know how the teacher performs his elegant choice, in a process of phenomenological reduction, here's the second expression: «Every time I start a project I stick always strictly to whatever I am doing and to the reasons for the project itself. Thus, the range of possible movements narrows. Gradually, the prevailing nature of what I am planning».

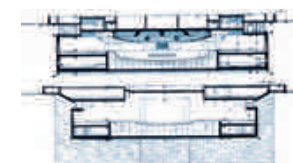
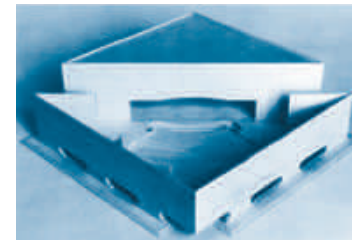
Actually, looking in detail and carefully at some of the work of Gardella (such as the *Teatro Civico di Vicenza -the Civic Theatre of Vicenza-*, the *Casa Borsalino -Borsalino House-* in Alexandria and the *Casa al Parco*

¹² «[...] the environment is defined so first of all, a dwelling place where coagulate the phenomena, where occurs the sensory experience, where you can see traces of the culture and civilization who live and have lived. To this place and history merge, connoting other important values for the design of architecture, the concept of environment in the phenomenological sense. The tradition is, that the presence of experiences: is both the validation of permanent emergencies, both the energy of the mutations; each other and contribute to the development of new effects infinitely active (or rather always active as long as you are willing to fit in the active consciences new phenomenology of the story) [...]». From: E.N. Rogers, *Esperienza dell'architettura*, Skira, Milano, 1997.

¹³ «The place becomes the first element from which the design method begins his investigation. Cultural values related to the life of individuals who are in it, also closely linked to issues of physical nature, coexisting and equally important. The project considers from the beginning, therefore, the physical characteristics, and the nature of pre-existing environmental or anthropogenic, historical or newly formed, on which to base the selection of the correct location in the site. The critical analysis of which, give priority to the resolution of the planning theme, influence the beginning of the process, along with dimensional data. From this founding act is realized immediately the whole system of relations with the other elements of the site. Reports of visual nature, as often happens, from which you select the views and the views, but also to adapt to the realities of the site, its forms and physical characteristics. It is interesting then to measure the architectural achievements of the author in the context of changes in the landscape, urban or otherwise, that characterize the twentieth century. For the many contexts in which the author has to operate during the times of greatest development of urban Italian, one can consider the work of Gardella as feedback on to the landscape». From P. Zermani, *Ignazio Gardella*, Laterza, Roma -Bari, 1991.

¹⁴ A. Monestiroli, *L'architettura secondo Gardella. Intervista a Ignazio Gardella*, Laterza, Roma, 1997.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.



Ignazio Gardella, Open competition for designing Theatre of Vicenza, 1969



Ignazio Gardella, The company houses for Borsalino workers, Alessandria, 1952



Luigi Moretti, Housing, corso Italia, Milan, 1949-55



BBPR, Torre Velasca (Velasca Tower), Milan, 1951-58

-the House at the park- in Milan) we realize that this elegant nature concerns, first of all, to the definition of the limit of a building in that overcoming to contain and express a constitutive typological difference, readable in plants as in the blocks and in the prospectuses. Thus, the architecture expresses the elegance of the liminal difference that constitutes it.

However, introjections constitutive of this typological difference in the work does not seem to be exactly the real reason for building for Antonio Monestiroli, who also is a careful reader Gardella, and interpreter of the "School of Milan".¹⁶ Monestiroli connects the study of the architecture of the city, in search of what is essential: into rationalism, phenomenology, and realism. They are the operative terms of a design concept in which "the end of the architecture is the architecture itself". Here it is, therefore, to break through the appearances and highlight, however, on the scene that the architecture builds, the reality (i.e., the world, nature, humanity, institutions, etc.). They are the life, the deeper reason, and meaning of the buildings, not in their particularity, but in a time and in a more general value, in the wonder of the elementary things. All this requires the scene of an architecture emerging as a "second nature".

«The city - states Monestiroli - is the place of self-knowledge, human values and identity in a culture of living, in order to generate, through this award, that civic pride that makes the inhabitants of a city a collective body. The architecture thus serves to represent the fate of men, must lead any construction to perfection, and to achieve this, we must reflect on the destination of the buildings and the definition of their character.

«To demonstrate this we must take into account the principles of nature and its laws: doing so men will live the architecture of the nature. Therefore, we build from these principles of nature, a second nature that originated from higher principles: those of reason [...]. The terms of reference that are used are always the nature and history: the first in modern times, it is not perfection, but knowledge of an ideal, the second is research within the tradition. As a result, we understand how

¹⁶ In preserving the foundations of a rationalist spirit that you do not want to separate from reality in the making and the search for the truth, Anthony Monestiroli finds greater binding of the "Scuola di Milano" in which talk to each other Ignazio Gardella, Franco Albini "dean of architecture rational, "Ernesto Nathan Rogers, pioneer of a phenomenological method of experience", the intentional irrelevance theory of Giorgio Grassi, with the realism of Aldo Rossi, etc.

the base of each architecture work is that of a double analogy: one with nature that prevents the forms become conventions of the pure, and the one with the story that provides the basic materials for the project. The analogy with nature does not exist unless there is also the one with the story, since the former provides the grounds for the renewal of a formal context, which is based on this tradition in the second».¹⁷ Monestiroli, commenting on a few tracks of Boullé on the character of the work, considered in turn:

«[...] The light and shadows are the laws of nature, the building materials are elements from nature, the men who inhabit the architecture are "their own kind", the relationship of all these things are a second nature, built "according to similar laws but also according to principles that have their origin in the higher reason" (I. Kant, Critica del Giudizio, Bari 1974)».¹⁸

In this "second nature built" takes architecture as the city. However, as groped then, equally stimulating, a reversal: thinking instead about a "second architecture" that to be accomplished in nature that should de-construct itself, stripping himself of all that is still present as a habit of mind, rational but arbitrary, to re-construct in it.

We would expect that during the design process, between the natural and the artificial sphere ball, you create a series of correspondences and dependencies, in order to weave between their destinies of humankind.

6. The complex nature of the accomplishment of the city in architecture

Carlo Aymonino, author of *Origini e sviluppo della città moderna*, released for the first time in 1965, was also commissioner to Intervention on the Old Town of the city of Rome, between 1981 and 1985, as a prominent member of the PCI in a moment of extreme slowness of politics in Italy. When it came to bring the city center to the interests and commitments of the political left, he proposes to intervene in the historical center and in the voids where it was still possible to rethink how to use and enjoy the historic center. Cause of many debates and eventually manages to achieve very little of its programs. In fact, this also reflects the difficulties of existence of a modern culture in a framework of "supervision" to conservation.

¹⁷ From A. Monestiroli, *L'architettura della realtà*, Clup, Milano, 1979

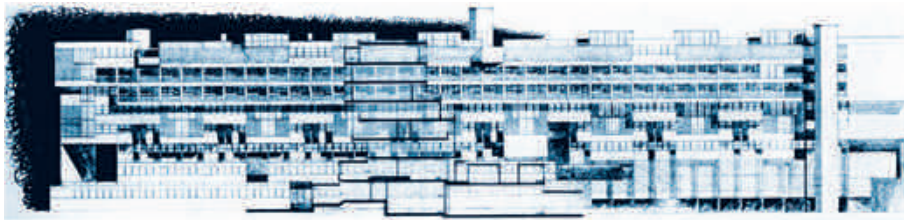
¹⁸ *Ibidem*.



Luigi Moretti, Casa-albergo, Milan 1948-50



Piero Bottoni, Housing, corso Sempione, Milan, 1953-58



Carlo Aymonino, Aldo Rossi, Alessandro De Rossi, Monte Amiata Housing, residential complex in the Gallarate district, Milan 1967-74

In general, Aymonino believes that the city is still conceivable through accomplishments, through complex and conflictive completions, while admitting that in contemporary society can no longer control unit at the architectural level of the city as a whole, develop a theory of the fulfillment of the historic city in a *new urban complexity*. This is the theory analysis and design of *town for parts*, based on the possibility to decompose, in the critical-project, the city exists in complete parts or parts yet to be completed. The architecture is so called to solve a given problem urban 'unfinished', for lack of political choices and decisions. In other words, the "architectural piece must strive to part of the city", i.e. *compose* formally part of the city. It is no coincidence that Aymonino considers "the architecture as an urban phenomenon par excellence", based on the knowledge for comparison of individual urban phenomena. Aymonino uses an analytical method with the laws of the formative and transformative physical constitution of an urban structure, in particular studying the variations of the dialectical relationship between the urban morphology and building typology, to draw the elements of judgment to be used in the project. Therefore, the quality of urban architecture is made to be part of an ongoing process.¹⁹

However, do not simply complete a pre-existing context, as often incorporate them into a new multi-faceted complexity of volumes from the images often fragmentary, designed to be the scene that stimulates the construction of new identities. Where: «The conceptual and architectural connection is assigned to the plot of the intersections of routes and not to an abstract geometric rigor of planovolumetrical boundaries»²⁰.

Aymonino pointed out repeatedly that the *bellezza* of the city comes from the tension to bring the places within "a more complex justification".

It may be useful at this point, by contrast, a generalized comment on Milan by Aldo Rossi, who participated with Aymonino to Gallarate:

«The misery of Milanese architecture is the misery of the ideas of modern architecture; for this in European cities is hard to find islands of preferred stock [...]. In the cases that I consider very positive and pure expressing a consistent line of development of Italian architecture and the cultural climate of Milan, it is clear that the individual building could not redeem a situation so bad; the individual works are thus difficult to detect even in the urban context if their dimensional characteristics are not such as to break it, always the same size that is used as a formal value. In cases of this kind, become dominant works such as the Torre Velasca of BBPR, the complex course of Italy and the house-hotel in Piazza della Repubblica of Luigi Moretti, the housing block of Corso Sempione of Piero Bottoni. These exceptional works of architects such different yet closely related in only valid search of Italian architecture; the critical examination of rationalism, his own passing in a broader view of the city and the type».²¹

¹⁹ C. Aymonino, *Il significato delle città*, Laterza, Bari, 1975

²⁰ C. Conforti, *Carlo Aymonino, l'architettura non è un mito*, Officina, Roma, 1980.

²¹ A. Rossi, *La costruzione della città*, in *Scritti scelti sull'architettura e la città, 1956-1972*, Clup, Milano 1975





Massimo Scolari, The sculpture "Wings" on the Fondamenta della Tana, Venice Biennale, 5th International Architecture Exhibition, 1991



Aldo Rossi, Theater of the World, Venice Biennale, 1st International Architecture Exhibition 1979

is understood as a complex *architectonic phenomenon*. Where, in a city that is *confusingly changing*, the true nature of architecture, which says Samonà "very little is known", it is not

What happened to the analytical reading of the city for parts? What are the new tools and concepts to guide the reading of perhaps the *urban phenomena* emerge for the unspoken aspects of reality which formed the points of view, the partial judgments, the themes that form the urban complexity; meanwhile, to compare, and then to propose to share the social subjects that form parts of the city?

7. Architecture as a measure of distance between deductive autonomy and inductive experience. The nature-city in the crisis of politics subjectivity

The accomplishment of a city, mistress of the past and future history, orders and within the limits of definite places, corresponded exactly with few exceptions, a hierarchical order of social classes impassable. While industrial development and the possible progressions urban bourgeois break the previous order, there is the *problem of distance* between the architectural culture of the old ruling classes and the new established communities, devoid of its own proper constructive culture. The city and the architecture formed on *conservative accomplishment* pre-industrial models do not seem to stretch to the new living conditions of the masses of humanity, demanding *inizialità di città*, some elementary, but at least not exclusionary with respect to a emancipator future.

The problem is dealt with, mainly in southern Italy, first by the group of architects who meet annually in *Seminari di Gibilmanna* 1971 to 1988 on the initiative of Alberto Samonà, author in 1970 of the script *Architettura come misura della città*, in which the city



immediately visible if it is not brought to light during the design itself and as "a formal fact and use together, "belonging to a "new dimension" as unknown. In this context, Samonà says, what should emerge is that *relationship between form and use*, in which architecture can represent the *certain measure of phenomena*, unstable and expressing within them the consciousness of a society. So

«[...] becomes a measure of the urban phenomenon, since the only project in the city can clarify and define the meanings and expressions of a future life which should identify, through convenient spaces, with the major values of the city itself; giving the formal interpretation of new functions and new expressions of life that the use, in the city of course, put in relation to one another; transforming, challenging, highlighting the artifacts that are evidence [...]».²²

After having traced the tracks of disciplinarity in the various components of the educational process of the city Alberto Samonà, who in his academic life, migrates to various Faculty of Architecture, from Rome to Palermo, Naples and Rome again, reflects and discusses the reasons for the distance between the proposed architecture and the aspirations of ordinary people and so on means and ways in which architecture can know the reality to play a constructive role for the city and for the territories. Faces, like no other, the relationship between the disciplinary autonomy of architecture and politics. Move to the attention of the architectural phenomenon by *architectural objects and contexts to the design process*, "de-constructing" the conditions in which the architecture urbanism. Even academic institutions, according to Alberto Samonà, in dealing with architectural planning, must play a role in its cultural context, opening a direct dialogue with the people and institutions, but from specific choices in which "architecture is politics".²³

²² A. Samonà, "Architettura come misura della città", in A. Samonà, *L'ordine dell'Architettura*, il Mulino, Bologna 1970.

²³ «[...] In the new university and the dreaded prospect of a new polytechnic institution Palermo he sees the possibility, for the Faculty of Palermo, to break the isolation academic to play its role in the context of instrumental and cultural belonging. In the same year, in the third Seminar of Gibilmanna submit to questioning a method for the definition of the tools of architectural design with a clear reference to the new theory of architecture and urban Giuseppe unit in an attempt to re-enter the 'architectural process' within the more general 'process of transformation' of reality [...]. However, things do not go in the sense the University expected [...]. Samonà, after an official declaration of willingness to work together to put into practice the role played by the faculty promotes a conference town as a manifestation of the newly opened University to direct dialogue with the people and institutions. Take possession of the instruments and specific means of intervention related to architectural practice means to measure its possibility to impact on the process of transformation of reality, something that can be done necessarily by those who have political power of the transformations, as history shows how architecture is however involved in politics for specific reasons: "much more appropriately as its terms do not depend on it". In this way, the architecture is free from political tasks, which by its nature cannot have, but on the other hand refers to a road, practicable after a definite choice for the formation of a different culture, transformed into the relationship between culture-specific and culture social.

«In this respect, audiovisual unit, which sets up with Manuela Canestrari and Armando Sichenze, drafted in 1975 by the Agnelli Foundation in multimedia laboratories, is a proposal for the teaching given to the faculty of architecture Italian examples of content that has as fifty architectures on the relationship between home and services, arranged in chronological order and discussed in order to demonstrate how a continuity of social demands and architectural solutions affect each other in determining the changes in the contexts of the city». From T. Corvino, *Alberto Samonà docente architetto*, in *Giuseppe e Alberto Samonà 1923-1993. Inventario analitico dei fondi documentari conservati presso l'archivio progetti* [Analytical inventory of documentary sources preserved in the archives projects]. Inventories edited by G. Cortese, T. Corvino e I. Kim), IUAV/AP, Il Poligrafo, Vicenza, 2003.



Strada Novissima, the main exhibition set up at the Corderie dell'Arsenale, Venice Biennale, 1st International Architecture Exhibition 1980

Architecture is politics - for opposing «trends and praticiste theorization that are leading all the technocracy»²⁷, these are the words of Samonà. But what's even more amazing is that the thematic reference is always the relationship of architecture with nature: is «in the 'natural' dimension of living of today's man»²⁸ the first section, and the last image of the closure of all sections, referring to *Les trois etablissements humains* of Le Corbusier, where the real problems are «those choices between a type of urban development, and another, and another between a lodging; choices that involve *great political responsibility* that no longer allow the architect to "do" *cultural politics*, but requires him to "do" culture that is in itself *politic*».²⁹

²⁴ C. Ajroldi notes: «The last year of his teaching in Palermo, at the end of 1976, Samonà brought to fruition a job done with Manuela Canestrari and Armando Sichenze, an audiovisual unit which was later printed in a text published by workshop entitled *La casa nell'esperienza contemporanea*. In this text, you can see the interesting thing that I think characterizes in particular the experience of the final Samonà in Palermo and then will characterize that, I think, in a more direct way, the experience of Naples: the focus almost exclusively on the experience of the Modern Movement's attention on the issues of Housing, leaving a few, very few examples, the role of significant examples of contemporary». From C. Ajroldi, "L'ordine dell'architettura. L'insegnamento di Alberto Samonà a Palermo", in *La mano aperta. Giornata di studio sull'insegnamento di Alberto Samonà*, edited by V. Quilici, G. Longobardi, Dedalo, Roma, 2001.

²⁵ «The path traced enables you to point out some key points of the proposed cultural Alberto Samonà, intended to restore a central role in defining the architecture of the living space:

- an attitude that does not proceed to the empirical pre-built types for generalizing categories;
- the relationship with tradition, which is expressed by the idea of continuity with the history of the city and the idea of quality as harmony;
- the identification of the instruments of the project, through the reading of design processes;
- reading contexts as the ratio between the interests of the people, ways of life and the morphological characteristics of the site;
- regulations as a result of the architectural design process = adaptability of the principles of architectural composition differences expressed by the contexts». In A. Puleo, "Alcuni aspetti della didattica di Alberto Samonà a Napoli: astrazione e concretezza", in *La mano aperta. Giornata di studio sull'insegnamento di Alberto Samonà*, by V. Quilici, G. Longobardi, Dedalo, Roma, 2001.

²⁶ *La casa nella esperienza dell'architettura contemporanea*, edited by A. Samonà, M. Canestrari, A. Sichenze, Officina Edizioni, Roma 1976.

²⁷ From C. Ajroldi, "L'ordine dell'architettura. L'insegnamento di Alberto Samonà a Palermo", in *La mano aperta*, Op. Cit.

²⁸ *La casa nella esperienza dell'architettura contemporanea*, Op. Cit.

In teaching, Samonà pointed out the experience inherited from the Modern Movement²⁴, but selecting *examples and not models*, suitable for the transmission that must now turn to a mass university and a *common architect*. At the end of his trail, well defined for essential points from Annamaria Puleo²⁵, emerges "in hindsight" a particularly significant and of great relevance of the proposed cultural di Alberto Samonà. Appears in the famous text, *La casa nella esperienza dell'architettura contemporanea*²⁶, emphasized in part by Ajroldi when he observes that in the first nine sections of the book is entitled "Architettura e politica" – Architecture and politics - (as a comparison between *quality* of architecture and *quantity* in politics) and the last "Architettura è politica" - Architecture

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The problematic point of application to the reality of these positions could be defined from a drawing by Saul Steinberg, depicting a bourgeois, standing in the abstraction of a geometric cube, which observes a natural environment. Alberto Samonà uses this design to express that:

«[...] it creates, as well, a strong disagreement between the deductive approach of instrumented architecture in the area, located in the city and the interests of the people aside, all of nature induced [...]. The rest on the other hand the common people have always proceeded by induction: from the assumption, that is, of their particular cases examines possible general laws and verifies compliance to localized interests. Today this test mass characterizes the true reality of the transformations and can not lead to a rethink of the methods and instrumentation for analysis and design [...]».³⁰

If the culture of architecture is formed on the knowledge of the phenomena and architectural design, which is a carrier of the architect, and if the cultural role of architecture is to bring out *the actual conditions in which it operates architecture urbanism*, how to induce the company to make responsible choices for the construction of nature-city? Given the crisis of socio-political *subjectivity*, which prevents to define, govern and control *aspects of quantity* that enter into a relationship with the choices quality (on which we measure the nascent states of nature-city).

²⁹ *Ibidem*

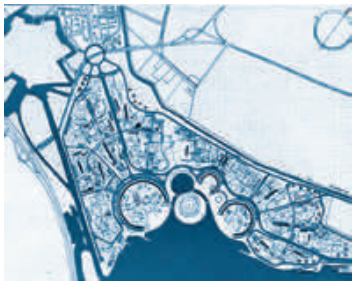
³⁰ Alberto Samonà, "Brevi considerazioni sulla casa per una famiglia. Questione aperta, questione da riportare nella didattica e nella professione", in *La casa unifamiliare come questione di architettura nel rapporto tra cultura specifica e cultura sociale*, *Confronto n. 2/1982*



Giovanni Michelucci, Church of San Giovanni Battista, Campi Bisenzio (Florence), 1960-64



Giovanni Michelucci, Church of San Giovanni Battista, Campi Bisenzio (Florence), 1960-64



Ludovico Quaroni, Open competition for the "Cep Barene di San Giuliano", Venice, 1958



Ludovico Quaroni, Mario Ridolfi, "Tiburtino", Rome, 1950

will begin in favor of technical-disciplinary specialisms accompanied by a more and more pronounced migration abroad. More than thirty years later, in December of 2012, the same Paolo Portoghesi held in Pistoia a *Lectio magistralis* titled *Memory and future in Michelucci's*

³¹ Paolo Portoghesi has recently affirmed on several occasions that it is necessary to turn the page and think of a geo-architecture «we must dethrone the idea of architecture seen only as art, because this way architecture is deprived of its vital nutrients. What I call Geo-Architecture is a discipline that deals with undeniable elements: the need to be allies of the earth, to dialogue and come to terms with nature, not only to save energy, but also to realize the fullness of being».

8. The "nature road" theme

The crisis of the 'accomplished' city model, also subject of major studies by the Italian culture of the twentieth century, got fully manifested in the eighties with the explosion of the city's extension, opening the discussion on the relationship between architecture and urban achievement, nature, landscape and with the characteristics of the empty space. Italian architecture takes off with Massimo Scolari or goes on a journey in the world, floating on water ways with the Theatre of the World by Aldo Rossi (an ephemeral building anchored at the Punta della Dogana between 1979 and 1980). In fact, Italian architecture is preparing to migrate. With the "Strada Novissima," the real planning theme of the famous Biennale of Architecture that followed, directed by Paolo Portoghesi, started a reflection on the so-called postmodern movement. But the Strada Novissima, at the Corderie dell'Arse-nale, rather than being a new concept of road, it was still quite traditional, consisting of twenty items in sequence, expressed in display facades, designed by just as many architects, including Frank O. Gehry Rem Koolhaas, Arata Isozaki, Robert Venturi, Franco Pure, Ricardo Bofil and Christian de Portzamparc. From that moment and within a few years from it a cultural marginalization of common Italian architects

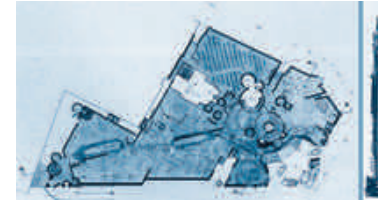
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work. We are exactly at the opposite of the positions described in the previous paragraphs. Here we are not starting from the architecture of the city but rather from the study of the architecture of nature. Rather than getting into the content of the lesson of Portoghesi what seems interesting is the way in which the theme of the urban street re-emerges. One goes from the "presence of the past" to the presence of nature, with the importance that is now attributed to the theme of nature³¹ as the real end purpose of the city. The most important starting point of reference in this regard is Giovanni Michelucci. When he says: «[...] the real relationship with nature is established when the building evokes natural spaces and shapes even if it isn't surrounded by nature; not when it mimics it, or even shapes it [...]». Where evoking it, instead of shaping it, means looking for and imagining the road on which human beings find in the spaces of nature, the deeper reasons of architecture as their own reasons. Even in this case, as in the example of Rossi, it's about seeking the primary elements of architecture that are now, however, renewing themselves in shape and space, regenerating themselves in nature. Michelucci says:

«[...] One day I was climbing to a convent, along a path lined by tall cypresses, next of which there were large meadows. Going up I saw two people, perhaps husband and wife, who had placed a small table and two chairs on the meadow, they had set the table and they were chatting. These two people had discovered the spaces of nature bringing with them the elements of the house. Up ahead a young man was lying on the grass sunbathing; farther away some children were playing. These people became the inhabitants of that space. From them I discovered out how the teaching of space can come from nature, that is what space is really needed by humankind. One sought the shade, the other the sun, someone was playing. These people created the "text" of the real needs of humankind

Ludovico Quaroni, Church for the "Borgo La Martella", Matera 1950-53



Ludovico Quaroni, Open competition for the new office building of "Camera dei Deputati", Rome, 1967



Ludovico Quaroni, "Peep Casilino 23", Rome 1964



[...] We discover this way that the apparent immobility of nature is instead a world that is shaping on the needs of the man who inhabits it [...]».³²

What is observed here is not a shape yet, but it's a direct, physical, practical and emotional relationship, feeling human in the open space of nature. In other lines of reasoning Michelucci discovers that if the city itself is born from nature then the road is the true method (as the etymology of the term teaches us) assuming the shape of the root that nourishes the spatial continuity between city and nature. This way the city is accomplished in nature because the road is the root of its re-generation, because the road teaches the constant physical and biological changing of nature. And biodiversity regenerates. As it can be seen in many early drawings by Michelucci evoking the trail in the woods in space and life flow. «[...] The nature trails - says the teacher - have their own particular life, they were born from the fingerprints, at first timid, left by the transit of man. From these tortuous trails branched off meeting places, parking spots, tents, houses, villages, wonderful cities. But the trail, then become road, it remains the most immediate point of reference between man and nature [...]»³³ In many drawings by Michelucci, particularly in the Roots of the city, one can see the city being born into a system of orthogonality and then accomplished through a maze of only streets that surround spaces by curving and interweaving them, innervating them in the open territory, like as they wished to participate in the life of nature. Therefore trees, humans, pillars and beams all look alike, showing a desire to establish an unbreakable bond between them. By participating almost to a single system of relationships, in which the city is governed by the road which is seen as "DNA and as method" and architecture represents the fate of humankind in nature.

9. Nature of architecture and the city on different scales of polycentricity

Is Ludovico Quaroni who sometimes refers to Michelucci's desire of built architecture, or for other aspects to Giuseppe Samonà to appreciate his way of talking about it, interweaving architecture and city. He was an anti-academic and opposed to any stylistic stability, both in the proposed scales of the Barene of San Giuliano, as well as in projects such as La Martella, in which the landscape is a great invention of the border between humanity, nature and life.

To tell the truth, Quaroni is an architect who, experimentally producing his architecture, in regard to the road, walks and thinks on the road of the East, as at the "origin" of the

³² G. Michelucci, "Abbiamo perso la fiducia in noi stessi e non abbiamo più il senso della storia", in *Giovanni Michelucci intervista sulla nuova città*, iedited by F. Brunetti, Laterza, Roma, 1981.

³³ G. Michelucci, *Affacciato alla finestra*, in *L'Arca*, n. 48/1991

³⁴ Here's how Antonino Terranova reconstructs in short the historical experience of La Martella: «[...] La Martella deals with the American post-war aids, with the formation of the UNRRA and with a sort of demagogy of Western aid to Italy on the one hand, and on the other with the ideology of the social sciences that until then had been opposed in our country clearly both by the right and the left, both by Croce and by Marxism. This ideology comes across through some personalities who come from America along with the American aids, such as Friedman, for example, who suggests the case of Matera like a case study in regard to the general question of the southern farmer settlement, of the "big" (relatively big) farmer "city" of the south. This initiative (which comes from Friedman, the USIS, the UNRRA and then takes the road by Olivetti and INU and at the same time gets the funding for the planning from the National Research Council), already declares in this converging of situations, a way of seeing the planning as the result of a process of knowledge, choices, judgments, collaborations, completely new compared to the figure of the architect-artist [...]». From A: Terranova, "La dialettica del progetto", in *Lezioni di progettazione: 10 maestri dell'architettura italiana*, edited by M. Montuori, Electa, Milano 1988.

city architecture along itineraries of urban planning and society, searching for a shape of the community, also in reference to the Olivetti frequentation. On this road, travelled always in search of new unexpected relationships between dimensions which are distant from each other such as nature, the world, humanity and the more seemingly trivial things, the great charm that still rises from his architecture displays itself, like an unrepeatable project synthesis; in his teachings corresponds to it a way of being a Maieutic and de-building teacher, both in the architectural projects and in the problems from which a project is developed, then reconfiguring all of it the best way possible: problems, beginning needs, place, landscape and building. Maybe this is what Manfredo Tafuri meant when he wrote regarding Quaroni about "ethical", self-critical and therefore justifiably self-referent experimentalism, always taking a new challenge, in new environmental contexts, on new roads. Of course this doesn't mean that in his projects there are no interesting thematic relationships or comebacks of characteristic themes, as it will be discussed later on.

Quaroni's planning reflection on the vision of a city, no longer proposable as a pure replica of the middle-class city, nor as an accomplishment of the historic city, nor as a total modernist break with everything it has represented for humanity over thousands of years, the sense of the city begins with the planning experience of the Borgo La Martella, created in 1951, from the evacuation of the Sassi di Matera (Stones of Matera settlements). La Martella is a very small "nature-city" that is born by the architecture of a (not collective) community center announced by the "architectural theorem" of the church, in which two trivial and common things, a wall and a "house" (the tiny baptistery), are also the two primary elements of the building of both the architecture and the city in Matera, according to Quaroni. The two separate elements, which define the stage of the open space in front of the church, are crossed and joined by the empty space where the inside of the church community meets the space open on the landscape of Matera. The tectonic approach of the building which culminates in the church tower appears to be based on these two elements; the tower is clearly allusive of the "municipality" of the village, emerging over the landscape. This is the reference center of the urban scale from which the fork of the roads, along which farmhouses are built, branches off penetrating into the countryside and into nature. That said, we often wondered how come this unique planning procedure has never been scrutinized and developed; a procedure which first deduces from a general view on the shape of the city the primary elements of its morphology, such as the house and the wall for example, before inductively recovering from these details the general configuration. First that of the church, which is the "collective mind," the monumental emergence, on which the theorematic demonstration of the compositional inductive process concentrates, and subsequently that of the entire village, where the experiential assumption of the process guides in the localized detailing of the urban and building composition. This is why, for Quaroni, La Martella, becomes an opportunity to overcome the decidedly negative populist experience of the Tiburtino in Rome, completely played on the image of the urbanized "village approach," which in Rome was fulfilling itself in the picture of "the land of the baroque" sought after only on the drawing board, while remaining far from a society lacking of any possibility of an actual cultural advancement. La Martella instead allows the experience of a more authentic relationship with reality, certainly challenged by the difficulties of post-war planning, but as part of a group committed to consider the project as the cultural result of a cross-disciplinary historical process of social knowledge and politically responsible choices³⁴. A group of intellectuals who was reasoning on the meaning and value of the community.

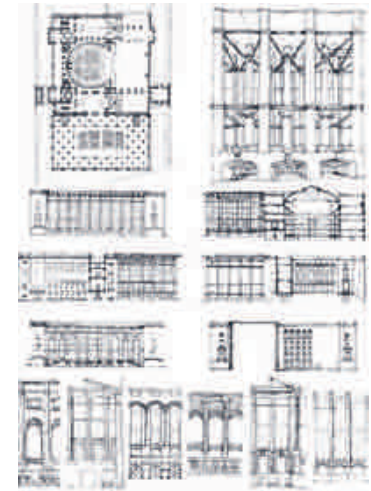


Ludovico Quaroni, Church for the "Borgo La Martella", Matera 1950-53

Getting politically confronted between two different settlement assumptions: that of the scattered houses of the sharecropping and the other one, the winning one, of the centralized village.

In that environment a new figure of architect-urban planner takes shape and is able to culturally grow, even after the experience, going back to self-critically reflect on it, as it happened during an interesting seminar held by Quaroni in Urbino, as guest of Giancarlo De Carlo. Even today, La Martella is still a planning laboratory in which it is a subject of study the way the present inhabitants evaluate the relationship between city and nature, by meeting up in the square in the city center, next to the church designed by Quaroni. In reality, the participation to the cultural experience of La Martella, which is part of the polycentric vision of villages and neighborhoods of the Piccinato plan, is the beginning of Quaroni's reflection on the theme of "polycentrism of the city" which was not only to be

understood in terms of a polycentric city as it will be later in the prospects of the "large dimension" of the Sixties, but also as a multi-scale substance of the architecture itself in the project. Polycentrism also comes from the way of understanding diversity and the difference in a social or scientific community, composed of different disciplinary contributions until it conceives the multi-functional node and it express itself in the conceptual graphics, a way of thinking by multiple identities and by alternatives characterized by a different energy density based on the example of Vasilij Vasil'evič Kandinskij. Here one must look for nature and interact with it. For example, in the preparatory drawings of around 1968, for the project of the Casilino district, besides the disappointing outcome of the project, it is clear that, in the urban design of the large range of multiple centers slightly offset from one other, a methodology that could be defined as follows displays itself: "the phenomenology of alternatives." Where, with a series of small compositional variations, one goes in search of the relationships of the different places and emptying ways to make room for nature. In this phenomenology that "dialectic" between center and polycentricity makes sense, almost like it wished to conclude the experience which began in 1959, with the explosion in the territory of the great semicircles of the Barene of San Giuliano in Mestre. Then reflected and inverted in the implosion that characterizes the intimate polycentricity of the building of 1967, designed in the competition for Montecitorio, (New offices for the Chamber of Deputies in Rome) almost to prove that the big of the new city can get into the small of the historic city.



Ludovico Quaroni, Enlargement of the Opera house, Rome, 1983

10. The architecture dialoguing with the "nature work in progress"

In parallel to the reflection induced by the philosophical, anthropological, semiotic and hermeneutic path that goes from structuralism to post-structuralism and that leads to both a critique of the conditioning structures, the experiences and human behavior as well as to an assumption of a pluralistic and polycentric vision of the city with multiple identities, the space opens up to the landscape, to the participation of the citizens, to



Aimaro Isola, Open competition for the "Sede della Regione Lombardia", Milano, 2003



Aimaro Isola e Roberto Gabetti, Guido Drocco, Enrico Moncaluo, "Museo di Antichità", Turin, 1982-94

to say that when the big enters the small, that is when the size of the landscape comes to small areas of a construction work, a phenomenon of insemination and resurgence occurs, a restitution from small to big that is a birth in the matter, shapes, and positions. It's the result of a long period of gestation in the re-planning reading of a (de)construction of the big from which to take the elements of a (re)construction. Like when you think of DNA. It's a procedure that in the case of the projects of Gabetti and Isola, it's not phenomenologically "reductive" or a suspension of judgment, but it's rather recognizing its association to the mother earth, before drawing from it. In order to accomplish this procedure, in which the processes of knowledge construction are continually aiming at relocating the origin of the objects, an amniotic environment that here is the place is needed.

The observation, description, and interrogation of the places, become the essential tool to bring out the Big from the place, like a matter of conscience, and to bring out not only traces of history and geography, but also deep traces - through graphic reconstruction of the signs, as well as other known places of the city, with a result that cannot be characterized by the purity of the elements as in the classical rationalism of modernity but by their terrestrial "hybridity"³⁵.

the reflective communities and to the eco-sustainable needs, which then leads to new meditations on the architectural place. Until the transition, in recent times, from place to "non-place" by Marc Augé. While the idea of a city conceivable by completion finally gets depleted, the issue of the new purposes of the project under the conditions of dislocation arise (arisen today by Jack Nancy). But while Ludovico Quaroni, in his architectural and city projects, in order to "contain" or travel through nature with sinuous or circular shapes, shows his wish to replace the term of suburbs itself, because in a polycentric vision the contrast between the center and the suburbs no longer makes sense, someone begins to think of a recognizable density in the varied centrality of places, reflecting on the sense of limit and on the narrative aspects of the architecture in the landscape.

Aimaro Isola, for example, reflects on the limit between city and countryside however overcoming it in the landscape. That is experimenting with it in a planning ability that gradually incorporates it the architecture to be able to constitutively mark it, while exploring the landscape far and wide and in depth. Which means, geographically speaking, in the two horizontal dimensions and "historically", if one can still say so, in a vertical dimension that aspires to penetrate into the depth of the earth and in the "human" one and in the "aerial" one of nature. One can now realize the inadequacy of the terms used (geography, history, psychology, space-nature?). Perhaps it would be better

Then of course the project is there to suggest meanings and unspoken values, although already inscribed in the states of existing things, although potentially present in less obvious forms of the external world. The dialogue with the context therefore occurs through interpretative reading and listening of the different potentials of the site, finding its geographical signs, literature, topographical maps and historical maps. This is the gestation phase. Of course for all this guides in both images and the project are needed.

From this phenomenology of emergence new states should appear in the city to take in nature, through the architecture, exploring new meanings. But above all, to discover new possibilities in the necessary recognition of the principles of sustainability. The size of the intervention itself, which obviously must produce the architectural phenomenon to measure the resources of the place, starting with those of nature. From the heat of the earth, for example, in which the construction is done not only by dematerializing it and by becoming lighter in vacuum and air, but also hanging over it or vice versa melting with the earth itself. But all this now becomes narration as can be seen in this beautiful reading by Paolo Zermani: «[...]Here the heat rather than coming down from the sky - writes Pavese - comes out from under the ground, from the bottom of the vines that seems to have eaten up all greenery to go in the shoot.'

«Already the company's headquarters of the Horse Racing Society of Turin explicitly addresses the issue of the relationship between surface and void, soil and air, proving the entire body as an object suspended between the sky and the earth, looming gravity on the ground, but raised from it as a flap or slightly attached by wires. This relationship appears, in the course of Gabetti and Isola, continually upside down. Now it is the body that is leaning now the land that emerges, that rises.

³⁵ «[...] The land mechanisms that affect Gabetti and Isola reflect the intellectual construction which governs their processes and methods: they turn upside down and wedge in, while materializing it, the concept of transmutation of the soil material that stretches in the building through the cooking process: they are still the cold or wet virgin nature itself, the grass and the vegetation to take on the personality of the construction element introduced time after time in the role of roofing, terrace and living embankment. The alteration of the surface, of the crust which is glued from above and from below, lovingly engraved and covered, involves a concert of items that, however, abandons right away the simplicity of a plowing and of a fertilization of the untouched land to let emerge and include in the process the themes of reproduction. They are selections of disused walled fences (Alba), of road links (Ivrea) and of river banks that are no longer protecting the irrigation, now only protecting the living unit, perhaps born by hybrid and uncertain fertilizations [...]», in *Gabetti e Isola*, by Paolo Zermani, Zanichelli, Bologna, 1989.



Roberto Gabetti e Aimaro Isola, "Sede della Società Ippica Torinese", Nichelino (Turin), 1959-60



Roberto Gabetti e Aimaro Isola, The residential unit called "Talponia", Ivrea, 1969-75

«The glaring examples of this kind of work in progress can be obviously found in Ivrea, in Alba, in the Museum of Antiquities in Turin: once achieved they evoke the idea of a continuous telluric movement based on the confidence in the human attitude towards transformation, which nature seems join to become like a part of its dough, then dried solid body by using air and sun. The roofs, which are increasingly getting wider, held by the possibility of resurgence more than offering support, through supports increasingly slender, are bodies that are always light and suspended and that in relation with the ground seem to have the effect of temporary atmospheric protection, almost like enormous cloths, as those covers in archaeological excavations [...]».³⁶

11. The architect's mind for the big in the small

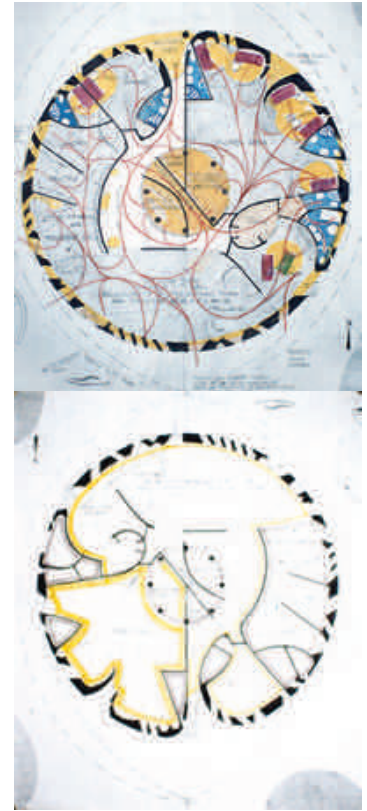
The fact that the city is no longer conceivable in a continuity of achievements, but rather on new ways of thinking-doing-creating of new beginnings of the city, leads to an emancipation from the orthogonal Cartesian coordinates especially when one reflects first on the new complexity of the space that is explored and traversed in all directions and compositional expressions of architecture, even before the city. The curved line and all the other elements involved in the compositional process, for the value of discontinuity of which they are equipped: from the traces to tracks and trajectories, now indicate an opening to a new field of new informed achievements of the city in nature. The result is a complete re-examination of the compositional techniques that now are measured with a changed relationship between architecture and construction in the nature-city, assigning new investigational roles to inventive creativity.

The idea of the road building in nature translates into paths of project research aimed at transcending their technical dimension to come to an achievement of architecture and city, no longer fully in themselves, but in the building of an empty space in nature. In this line of work one can find, since the second half of the twentieth century, a variety of lesser-known architects starting from some very different personalities who often rely predominantly and positively on self-reference images. Proving to partially wishing to free themselves from cognitive conformism a way of understanding of the thinking organized architecture.

Gio Ponti, who was an international professional who stubbornly chose to remain Italian, kept in regard the needs and requirements of those who had to live in his buildings and also the traditional and cultural habits, but always with the intention to involve them in the spectacle of nature. He also believed at the same time that, unlike the progressivity of the technique, destined to disappear because it is consumed by use, architecture is an art that is built over time and within the culture. According to Ponti, architecture can exceed its physical limits and the different functional purposes which may, from time to time, welcome, working together with abstract and disinterested principles and work in a framework of absolute simultaneity of past, present and future. In order to understand this it is necessary to observe one of his most famous drawings: the head of the architect. It accompanies the plan of the never made villa for Daniel Koo in 1969 in Marin County, San Raphael, San Francisco (California), on a hilly area. It shows a thinking brain in which there are various writings including one that says: "Palladio: may the house be like a small city and the city like a big home." The villa is in fact a circular body that alludes to the cerebral cortex, with openings of the outer walls, cut in oblique, wide or thin, in the thickness of the wall. It's covered by a leaf-shaped roof and it is characterized by internal

divisions, straight or convoluted, that close and open by surprise into open spaces and onto paths, often crossing the entire space. By referring to Palladio, Ponti shows that he fully understood the thinking connection between culture and purpose in architecture. That is to say that culture is the greatness of a penetrating mind, thinking, in space, to help the architect in his fundamental duty to put the big in the small. Where the outdoor landscape is big and big is the color of life that is condensed in the materials and the decoration, big, as claimed by Palladio, is the city which enters in the small of a house. The teaching of Rogers, when he explains about the architectural phenomenon, comes back: «After all I don't consider the elements of the phenomenon itself as a separate category, but as a part that contains the whole of which it is part and parcel of»³⁷.

In this happy moment, Gio Ponti succeeds to, as very few manage to do so, summarize the way of thinking about the relationship with nature of Le Corbusier in Ronchamp and that of Mies van der Rohe. This way of writing about architecture to create-thinking the living space, opens up new horizons of nature-city. On the other hand, that image of the brain in villa Koo is the externalization of a mental work that is separating from the individual and it becomes writing-object of the world in which the individual lives, freeing him from the hustle of having to rebuild it from scratch every day. And especially to move forward and start again from an advanced point. The most basic functions are no longer there. As noted by Michel Serres, outside of our body, a world populated by objects, even when they are externalized from our heads, evolves. In that world, in which we think and feel emotions, Ponti seems to say that reality is no longer understandable from only one point of view and by straight lines. But above all, we find the specificity of architecture unlike other externalizations like computers; we come into a relationship with things that are bigger than us. Like nature, for example, that cannot be bypassed as an object and since it's not an extension of our functional objectified, but being always around us, needs to be constantly reconsidered and thought over by us directly and without the mediation of technology.



Gio Ponti, Plan for Daniel Koo House, Marin County, San Raphael, San Francisco (California), 1969

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ E.N. Rogers, "Elogio dell'architettura", in *Lezioni di progettazione. 10 Maestri dell'architettura italiana*, by M. Montuori, Electa, Milano, 1988.



Carlo Scarpa, *The Museum of Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice, 1949-59*

In the Querini Stampalia straying from the most predictable path, goes from the bridge to, as Tafuri sustains, in a “space enigma” and then goes out in the garden. In the Brion Tomb the plot of the story that follows a line that going from one plot to another encounters different points of recollection of defined architectures, but that are not fragments³⁸

³⁸ «[...] What seemed like a multitude of fragments turns out to be a landscape from which references emerge, available to a complex game of recognition and re-composition in a network of possible paths. The only thing is that the threads that guide the paths are feeble, in order to allow an infinite number of constellations. It's therefore more appropriate not to talk - in order to avoid misunderstandings - about a poetry of the “fragment,” according to Scarpa, but rather of a poetry made of “figures.” Figures, not images or clips of nostalgic totality, are the “hermetic icons” we could recognize in Scarpa's architecture. Rella uses the term “figure” to refer to a thought of the “middle kingdom” between the abstraction of the concept and the fullness of the myth, that of the analogy and that of the image; and our use of the same term refers to the same conceptual layer.[...]», M. Tafuri, “Il frammento, la ‘figura’, il gioco, Carlo Scarpa e la cultura architettonica italiana” in *Carlo Scarpa Opera Completa*, edited by F. Dal Co e G. Mazzariol, Electa, Milano, 1984.

³⁹ «[...] Not coincidentally, Scarpa's drawing cautiously uses perspective. Perspective, in fact, involves an expansion of the horizon where the formal decision is placed and it transforms ‘the allusion into historical representation. The story [in fact] is the purpose of perspective.’ The perspective expansion, in other words, hides the danger of opening the way to habit and to the linearity of duration, to the desecration of the instant to which the fragment belongs. The mark of Carlo Scarpa shows the memory and stops the look in the rising moment of the question. In detail it regenerates the space of the moment and determines the acuity of the look. The quality of the fragment gets elucidated in the discontinuity and cannot be done in the ways of the perspective accommodation. The perspective representation is rarely used by Scarpa, and mostly only in the sketches for the construction details, as an analytical instrument indifferent to the scale and to the temporary placement in the drawing of the shapes studied. [...]», F. Dal Co, “Genie ist fleiss, l'architettura di Carlo Scarpa”, in *Carlo Scarpa Opera Completa*, Op. Cit..

12. Writing architecture through roads of nature-city

The themes that emerged so far now come to a singular threshold where the need to put things in order clashes with the risk of reduction and impoverishment that could be the result from a desire to draw conclusions. What we can try to do is to place question marks along a path that can be compared to the mature experience of Carlo Scarpa. He's the Italian architect who, perhaps more than anybody else, was able to explain the plot of the relationship between a thought for the historical city made up of accomplishments in the open space of the extension in the landscape, sometimes overlapping it or intertwining it, with a way of thinking about a city emerging states of nature that we have defined as nature-city. His two works that best represent this way of thinking-doing-creating are the Querini Stampalia Foundation in Venice and the Brion Tomb in San Vito d'Altivole. What associates these two works? The fact of being first of all writing, a way to write architecture. Secondly, since this writing follows certain paths, or even flows along a way of making the road.

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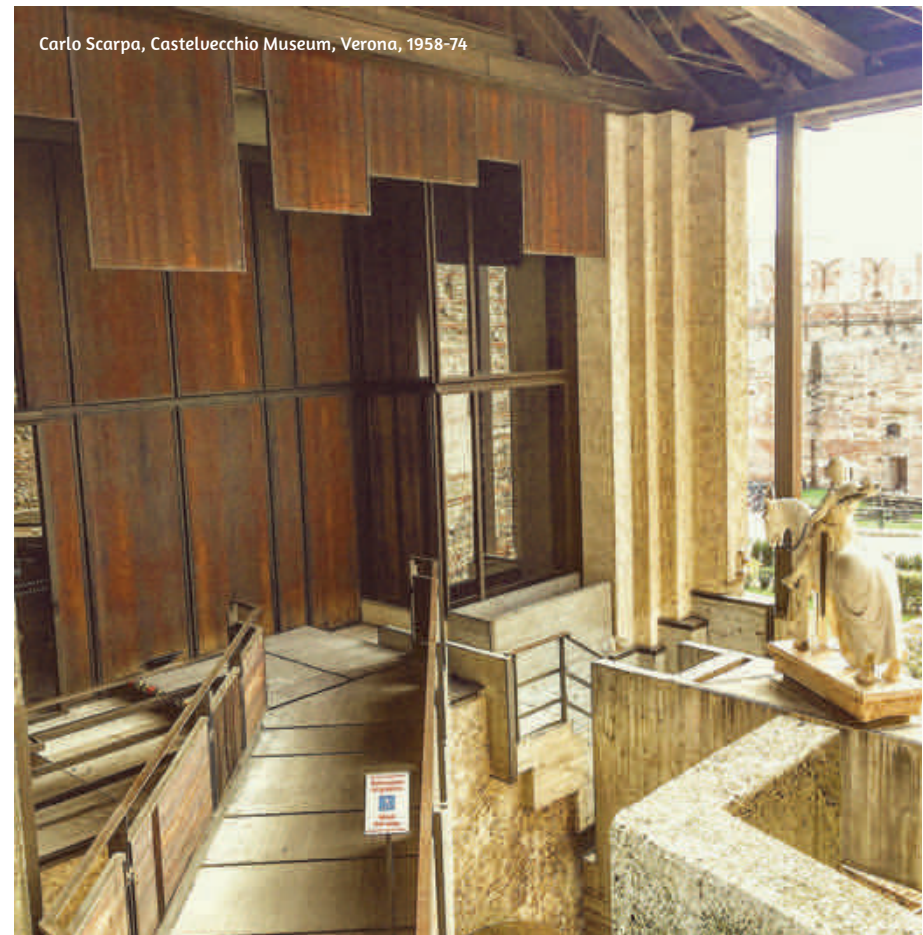
because they don't come from a higher unitary design of achievement.

The road is not linearly finalized, logocentric and prospective,³⁹ as in the Great Story of the city of the accomplished history. It is the concrete, free and emotional expression of a precise mental writing of light, water and matter in the urban space. The writing of a thinking mind that, with many drawings and with difficulty, seizes everything: places, colors, stones. Drawing it just as much from the figures of nature, to fully express it, capturing its formal biodiversity, and from the history of mankind, of the city and of art in the world (from Egypt to Greece, to the Mesoamerican civilizations; from Japan to De Stijl and

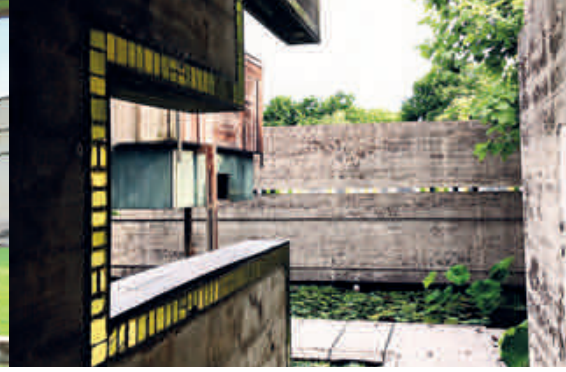
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Carlo Scarpa, *The Museum of Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice, 1949-59*



Carlo Scarpa, *Castelvecchio Museum, Verona, 1958-74*



Carlo Scarpa, The Brion family burial site, Altivole (Treviso), 1969-78



Paul Klee). This writing, which is the architecture of a becoming, is openly travelable along the ways leading art and nature to meet in the channeled water. But with a difference as shown in the Querini Stampalia between the channel of the historic city which hems the front and, beyond the building, the small artistic channel that is born freely in an environment of nature-city where it can be fulfilled in the shapes of a garden. This difference disappears in the Brion tomb where, with Venetian abstraction, the path of the water is outlined in a city, the city of the dead of course. But when you one goes along it, one can find figurative traces and tracks that are associated with other cities experienced by Scarpa, as if the city of the dead was a miniature of “all the cities” of the living who can bring their gifts here, placing them carefully and with the details of a process of discontinuity of time. Where medieval memories can get condensed and live remotely at a distance, from ancient Greece to the East until you reach under the “arcosolium.”

And here, how can we help but thinking that we are

under a Venetian bridge with two gondolas side by side, but where there is no longer the water of life, but only the land of nature? At this point, death and life get mixed up and maybe this is the real concept of the Brion tomb. Especially if we consider its use as it’s described by Giuseppe Mazzariol and Giuseppe Barbieri: «But also for its use, for its use and purpose according to Carlo, this building is a city. He wanted people, especially young people, boys and girls - in the language of Venice especially the children – to come here, walk, sit down under the pagoda, look, chat and think; the Brion to become the public place of the civitas, but a sweet and otiose city of desire»⁴⁰.

But like in any poetic writing is not the syntax what matters, on the contrary, «[...] the syntactic dissolution allows to freely play with the” figures,” allows the rolling of assonant phrases, the emergence of evocations, the opening of associative possibilities for both the planner and the observer [...]»⁴¹

Giuseppe Samonà, People’s Theater Sciacca, 1974

More than anything else in writing what counts is the game of the alternation of presence/absence, full/empty, assertion/suspension. Terms that in Scarpa are disjoint and lie in the inspirations of Paul Klee:

«[...] And yet, - said Tafuri - Klee is something more, for Scarpa, than a cultural and formal reference. Argan already stressed in 1961 that for Klee space and time are not in a logical sequence, so the object is reduced to a meeting of coordinates, a “bright spot in the extension of possible space and time,” also observing that Klee himself reveals how the knowledge of reality precludes Unitary regulations. [...] This is what Scarpa and the Swiss master have in common. The deflections, the interrupted sentences, the “figures” running after one another from work to work, the act of Scarpa of presenting his immense work as a kind of ocean, populated by recognizable elements, but open to an endless deciphering, speak of a time that is always open to possibilities and multiple co-presences and allusions, coagulated in waiting spatial references. The invitation is not to dissolve this plot lacking of centers, in order to participate in the game of multiplication, “to travel” together with the icons that challenge, with their tightness, to abandon one-way streets [...]»⁴².

The result is a new way of conceiving and living the road that in fact is the only urban architecture of time, or perhaps of the times in which interlace, as explained by Tafuri, very different directions of the architectural sense.

In the end, unbelievably, at the Brion Tomb, instead of participating in a way of conceiving the city by achievements we end up thinking of a more lively nature -city of the living beings. Perhaps this is what Scarpa wanted to tell us.

13. Self-criticism writing on architecture-nature-city accomplishment

Quaroni and Samonà seem to share the theme of the proposal done for Montecitorio. Now Samonà works at Sciacca on full volume and Quaroni on the void, taking care of the details of the *Teatro dell’Opera* in Rome in its design, through a phenomenological writing of the variation, before coming to the solution. It’s about thinking of *drawing the particular* that Giuseppe Samonà experienced himself seven years after the contest to the offices of the Chamber of Deputies, with the design of the Theatre of Sciacca. Producing from 1974 to 1983 a series of sketches that redesign the main front of the theatre from the same point of view. About sixteen years after the contest to the offices of the Chamber of Deputies, in 1983, Quaroni designs in Rome the broadening of the *Teatro dell’Opera*, a totally different design from that of the Chamber of Deputies. The new building is a hypostyle Hall of 82 columns resting on

⁴⁰ Giuseppe Mazzariol, Giuseppe Barbieri, *Vita di Carlo Scarpa*, in *Carlo Scarpa Opera Completa*, Op. Cit.

⁴¹ Cfr. Manfredo Tafuri, Op. Cit.

⁴² *Ibidem*

a basement, which houses the entrance to the public and, at the same time, accesses to car parks. A lowered arch system marks the base and increases the momentum of pink granite columns that are ideally filled parts, extolling the verticality of façade, which could have been compromised by the lack of space between the building and the street. The project, which occupies almost the entire lot of enlargement, creates a new “square” for the city. The columns of the new building are arranged in a “quincuncia”, making it dynamic not only the space inside but also, and above all, outside. Therefore, also in this case, «[...] premises and contents of a building are two different space facts, but produced with a unique design and construction operation and intimately connected: the building itself defines the two space systems and puts them in close social and formal report of consistency and congruency», as Quaroni explained in 1977.

Turning now to the drawings of the entrance hall from the Theatre of Sciacca, by Giuseppe Samonà, we will try to comment the latest interview of Giuseppe Samonà, before we leave. It is a critical reflection of extraordinary importance in which it seems that the teacher has largely absorbed many of the themes so far trying to return them by soaking the need to form a “new edge” – in his words – in the relationship with nature. Samonà begins with an introduction on architectural design, intended as a “second language” perceptual in its nature. Also on the language he then returns at the end of the interview:

«[...] The design was for me a very expressive thing, a kind of “second language” that does not need to be translated because it is direct and immediate, you can perceive it, and everything you need first is a synthesis from the outset that we do for ourselves, without resorting to code [...]. The signs that I trace can be understood in its specific meaning by people living either in Lapland or either in a country of southern Africa as well; both, if instead of this sign had the designation of what represents this sign in a language other than their own, fail to know the meaning of the sign: with a Word, do not understand at all and they would need just a translation in their own language to understand and be understood, should find a code (the translator) to understand each other. This is the well-known relationship, the most common, between sign and meaning; When I stand in front of the sign that I create myself, for what I am concerned, it begins to serve me at a time when a number of ideas, which I have pondered in myself, and I write to stop better, may no longer have the ability to be summarised, then I need to find it no longer in a speech conceived and written but in a few signs. For example, in the Theater of Sciacca, the cone, the pyramid and the prismatic interposed element (perhaps too large to be placed) are the three signs that imagined talking with myself, thinking of the theater in relation with the landscape where the theater is located [...].»

After this introduction, where Samonà concludes a fully mental and summarized journey from the general to the particular landscapes of the three volumes that make up the work, and begins a path of ascent, from the particular to the landscape, aimed at contaminating on traces (today we would say de-construct) the three pure geometric units, he explains:

«[...] On the contrary, being a southerner, I am not stimulated by the idea of not having a direct relationship with the natural landscape, and therefore when I'm in a cityscape I always get in context with the idea of contaminating the geometric units of my creation and striving to integrate the architectural elements with the surrounding urban space I destroy therefore the idea of pure prism and I leave only traces within the discontinuous continuity elements that make up my design, in a speech to the urban landscape free from the constraints fixed by the spatial parameters of an ideal unit of architectural form that would remain undetermined, if not supported by an extraordinary creation alternative to concrete situations in which it is inserted.

«Returning to the theater project, the idea was to build it with three volumes that should be precise enough as to reflect the functionality of what was inside, but that, at the same time, had an elegance that would give this work a monumental value from a very own theater; this idea came to me I would say, almost spontaneously, because of my temper, and I've even written it all before tracing the signs. There were signs that the three volumes had been becoming concreted from the culmination of a series of almost perfect prospects for reciprocal control dimensions of which I was sure from the moment they were well defined. What I wasn't sure of were the details of these forms because the abstract purity that had at first was not, in my opinion, in connection with the landscape does not occur naturally, but extremely unnatural places. Therefore, I felt the need to find the tentacles that were cutting and contaminating this purity, and was conferring it more effectively the ground discontinuity. The details that are represented in all my sketches are an effort to find these tentacles, and to work there and then go back to review the overall design and provide better the cone and frustum of the pyramid. The idea of working on the designs that you see depends on whether you are following the first setting, and they relate to the idea that it was gradually formed in me: that this urban scene had to leave the Theater closed, even though it was made of two environments that could penetrate; that I felt the need, with the space of the Theater, to get out of the interior space; and I used the stairs that emerge from the cone to the height of the gallery to find an eloquent gesture of respect from the ground to the gallery itself. Yet I had not a clear idea, in order to find the shape and structure of these external stairs, of how to qualify in an iconologic way the sign of the scales; there was only the need to characterize, with their own shape, the impurity of their particular ground roots, so to relieve the essential and abstract lines of the cone, the pyramid and the prism that sense of detachment from the environment that is just pure volume [...].»⁴³. At this point Samonà refers to what, about Gardella, we defined the “phenomenological reduction effort” to reach the true nature of the work. Citing in addition, critically, that particular moment of suspension of time and space that dates back from the Husserlian epochs (this too, is a subject already dealt with Rogers), here understood as an alternative to idealistic “transcendence the divine”:

«[...] The design began to have its true eloquence when I managed to catch the iconicity with drawings always clearer than the primitive sketches. However, these designs are stripped and naked: they are, therefore, drawings by Samonà, but just mental drawings that I would not want to show to anyone. Mine might be a mistake: this kind of design approach with the design can be a subject of study, because it represents a particular aspect of creation that comes out of something else than the common typology suggests.

«Is the result of constraints that we create the recent and brief tradition of the modern movement; the movement that, in my opinion, has created an intermediate world of extraordinary paradigms thanks to the works of the great masters, who, in addition to their artwork at the highest level, have created a sort of Husserlian epochs, a moment of waiting in which we still live. Their works were the epitome of perfection, of what was supposed to poetically represent the man beyond time and space, the meta-historical man; the biological man who needed so much light, so much green, so much quantity, so many services secured in very precise spaces. Mies van der Rohe, the greatest master of the modern movement has created in the prototype of the Tugendhat villa to a man of means, but the purchaser made a gift

⁴³ G. Samonà, conference-discussion held in Naples on December 9, 1982 in Marina Montuori (edited by), *Lezioni di progettazione: 10 maestri dell'architettura italiana*, Op.Cit.



Carlo Scarpa, The Brion family burial site, Altivole (Treviso), 1969-78



Giuseppe Samonà, People's Theater Sciacca, 1974

because he could not live, knowing that every piece of furniture, every Chair, every context were in absolute positions and only certain movements were allowed to be functional will not impair the overall harmony of each part of the interiors. At that time, some great artists were able to build their absolute paradigms on a boundless faith in materialism of nature, creating a momentary radical alternative to the fideistic situation of those who created architecture having, as a basis for comparison to the quota of history, the absolute transcendence of the divine. We no longer have the sense of the images, the gesture that compares us with God [...]»⁴⁴.

But now Samonà finally enters in the heart of a true alternative, all to be explored from the new relationship of confrontation with nature:

«[...] Today historical materialism has brought new speeches, brought a relationship with nature that was not there before, and then a relationship with landscape that made us break with new meaning into things. This discourse with nature is still to be deeply explored. With the theater of Sciacca, I found myself for the first time in having to deal with nature, which gave me unsuitable and gross suggestions, but they are the first ones that I have done for analysis and synthesis. The shape of the theatre was born from these suggestions had by nature, by the conviction that tomorrow, through a review of the poetry of the sign, according to a different relationship with nature, can form a different world of future architectural spaces. I think we will have to deeply explore, with critical intelligence, our modern sense of identification with an infinite nature and, at the same time, of differentiation from its materiality as individuals within this nature that surrounds us and that, in a sense, determines all our beliefs. But we also feel as being the makers of nature and, at the same time, an elementary part of it.

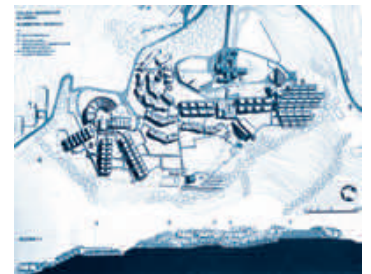
«Today's society has a culture that enables you to get rid of everything: to feel bodies between natural bodies, but with the feeling of returning to be mind, and master it as an expression of power. In the past this feeling, currently widespread, was of a very few ones: probably of men like Leonardo. Already, Bramante's tempietto in San Pietro in Montorio, gives us the extent of almost transcendental fideistic constraints which guided the formation of this architectural masterpiece where the myth of God is the transcendental message of the iconologic set of this little great revolutionary work. Borromini, despite the rather miraculous aspects of his geometric clarity, was always a man straining to its relationship with faith; there was throughout the art of the past with a sense of confrontation with a Christ or an Antichrist, in a moral situation that we lost. We are lay people, we live in an era of lay Catholics, though our artistic discourse is often rather abstract, cold, outside ourselves, or it is a discourse of faith of another kind, merely individual, not a speech that binds us forward to the major community, but that is extremely limited and unable to give us incentives for raising a real and genuine song. This can only come from a new relationship with nature, which we discovered things infinitely large, and to assimilate it again, winning the terrible time of crisis of the industrial revolution, there can be nothing more than a new conscious relationship with it. [...] The theater of Sciacca is unworthy of

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*

this magnitude, I would rather have done an artwork that reflected this new song; but the best part is remained in me only obscurely. To finish the theater there are still two iron scales that you see in some perspectives [...]. These two scales are almost like intestines coming out from inside to go to the outside, and crossed by the people, give the impression of a new relationship between theater and the outside: in all aspects of impure oneness in diversity that people movement causes in things. I felt the need to come up with another way of relationship between the closed Theater and its surroundings [...]»⁴⁵. So here is the need of Samonà to declare a new relationship with nature, admitted with great and honest self criticism (as perhaps only Ludovico Quaroni knew how to do), and not yet succeeded with the Theater of Sciacca to establish this new relationship. Therefore advocates the creation of a new vanguard, however unidentifiable in postmodern:

«[...] Each of us, as an artist, has its own way of interpreting the world aesthetic; is a professional attitude and I haven't been professionally a practical man. Tied to particular recently intellectualisms that I came to want a new avant-garde [...]. The architectural vanguards lived in a poetic, abstract world of pure crystal, a world away from the scorching history of things. This produced a poetic avant-garde which had some great masters, who remained with their thoughts and their works in the line of great models meta-historical, of which there are very tenacious traces in the world of architecture today. Is representative of the so-called postmodern, because the forms were then an expressiveness that transcends the history and remains a paradigm of all time, the few great architects of this recent past were of the Titans who knew lyrical gesture support each principle. After them there has been, or is there still, decay. But if, by architects, we try to create a new relationship with nature, a different relationship in which we feel to be strong in nature, as with our blood, which flows within us, then we'll hear at the same time to overcome it with the understanding that we will reveal facts and natural phenomena with a knowledge that has more ability to disprove it. Then we will hear to be really different from all the other animals which nature suggests its phenomena; then we'll hear of having an intelligence that makes us individuals and able to enjoy the freedom of being physical bodies from all worlds mental compulsion but aware of the ability to assume the task of mental constraints must, when it is necessary to abandon the freedom of the body, which is nature. There is now the possi-

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*



Giancarlo De Carlo, University College, Urbino, 1962-65



Giancarlo De Carlo, Summer camp Enel, Riccione, 1961-63



Giancarlo de Carlo, Villaggio Matteotti district in Terni, 1970-75



Giancarlo De Carlo, Housing, Mazzorbo, Venice, 1979-85

bility of a special dialectic of nature with man, which makes large and small at the same time, promoting all possible comparisons between natural and artificial space in this dialectic art is one of the mental spheres that can most directly indicate the actual size of new relations between natural and artificial space. Around this artistic problem, architecture could have a far-reaching space, into the future. To do this, I think it is necessary to create a new vanguard, predicting from time; It would be nice that in every major city where there is a faculty of architecture if you create a bunch of people willing to work for this to work well, philosophically, as well as critically and artistically, on the problems of new space, as a result of the dialectic relationship between natural and artificial space in the world of our time. Is a search to a new world of architecture, which may be forming from an ever-expanding critical analysis of the problems involved by dialectic nature, like artificiality, as the scenario for a new space of architecture. The postmodern is a way to classify and define the architecture formed after the Sixties, as the aspiration of the dogma of the ideas of the modern movement. The post modern movement is still a current process of the development of dogmatic revisionist architectural architecture formed, with the perfection of the model, between the twenties and thirties and slowly more and more crystallized attitudes pseudo theoretical imperative, in the long period of thirty other. Portoghesi has cleverly outlined the essential features. However, the postmodern, as a general idea of the current architecture is quite general (in its creative manifestations), and not presented with clearly defined policies towards large creative openings in the future [...]. This point of arrival as systematic outlet at functionalism is however to be rejected, as the legitimate refusal of antireality which leads to negative abstractionism, is not associated with a return to the forms of the past: the revival that presents us the generalized performance of projects and postmodern accomplishments, expresses a world of signs, which has an empty interior as all revivals, which were almost always negative; If examined one by one going back in time: everyone has within itself the root of their death. We must be able to become unanchored from this big connection with classical architecture, in this order: according to their interpre-

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tation of our time, can give us another order, an order still mysterious, which may arise from a relationship of synthesis and analysis of man with nature, which must be discovered. The new technology should have this problem as a departure point [...].⁴⁶ The decisive step of this edge shall be fulfilled when passing from a relationship with nature just referred to as something that is outside of us, simple approval but not reports differentials, asking to something else than its materiality: «[...] The nature of today is different, is domesticated, even the highest mountains overrun by skiers. Certain mountains such as the Val di Genova in Trentino are still, in certain respects, the physical state of the Quaternary, but generally the millions of years that have passed have brought, with the increasing presence of man, the reduction in more limited areas of primeval nature; a certain artificiality can be seen everywhere: it is our strength to historicize the nature with diachronic situations in tune with our dynamism. The research of the characteristics of this artificiality will perhaps enable us to grasp the sense of our creative future discourse in the face of this nature which we find today with different intensities of artificiality. We identify both space systems with analytical observation of direct research of natural situations, both with figurative artificial nature creations by artists. The report was so far out of us, or was present only as pure and simple framework end in itself [...]. The other representations in a smaller scale, gradually becoming lower, must build on what we have forgotten, but it is implied and temporarily was not focused, waiting for a critical reasoning about meaning that takes the relationship gradually less and less detailed, as the scale of a map and areas that are part of it [...]. In the past the art created, in a psychological environment of faith, and partly of magic; religion and magic were the basic elements of any art form. Today, more than ever, and certainly in new ways, we see history projected into the future. We are interested to what tells us the present new situations in which man arises in relation to its creator. All creations are projected into a future world where the relationship between man and nature takes comparison parameters, yet to discover, being currently outdated more direct relations and human-specific nature. The power of the man-nature relationship surrendered to the evidence of the results on the ground, in every corner of human labor. A job that has transformed vast territories configuration by diverting rivers, draining swamps, digging up the mountains, cultivating enormous expanses of land before wild state. Is an indicator of human history on Earth, quite different from the relationship of the Earth with the other animals, reports that are not the story in that dynamic, fast-paced and increasingly differentiated human civilization, but they do it for millions of years and for mutual transformations. There have been thousands and thousands of books written on the man-nature relationship in the above described sense; eventually there will be many more written, as a search for historical processes of man on Earth. From architects, it seems necessary to introduce in this critical process, with a way to set this relationship problems, in a creative way of architectural spaces. In this study two methodological approaches are needed: on the one hand, to propose analytical reduction of large synthetic definitions with which we strive to conceptualize the substance of man and nature of future operational propositions in the simplest possible; on the other hand to detect in search of simple proportions, not the uniformity and the similarities, but the differences how to rearrange data to a set of normative behavior, where the creative aspect can find stimuli and new material, in preparing any form of intervention [...]. We contrast to nature with a way of being alive, that is alternative to spontaneity. Today, in certain

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*

aspects of conservative culture, we strive to be more consistent with natural situations that are within us. Ecology is a page of our present culture due to this need for conservation, but his deductions must be reconsidered. In the artistic culture there is now something very different from what we inherited from the classical art to the modern movement, as it is in traditional vestments, still present. Today we strive to find an absolute alternative to classical space heritage, feel that nature is something else, before us, as it is designed for millennial; wonder of nature something different from what we expected for millennial from its materiality. Is a big speech, we are the first to form it and we don't know how long will take the phases of approach and of conquering a new collective consciousness. I flatter myself that our today could be the dawn of speech that there will be tomorrow [...]»⁴⁷. But in order to do this, Samonà observes, we need to find a space suitable for large-scale works of art and abandon the old types:

«[...] It is necessary to deepen in our research projects within a poetic affected by the great issues of our times. Topics that do not find handles with the past immediately before the modern movement [...]. One of the big issues is to be found in our cities a space suitable for large-scale works of art. So far, following the dictates of the functionalist modern movement, we created this space as a neutral sign in which the works of art may be covered by focusing all the attention on them so that the viewer in the space around the artwork has nothing that disturbs the concentration on it. For some years now we think of the falsity of this requirement, there appeared so clear even in the masters who have applied it; many people still falls in this misunderstanding. The artwork, the "great", it must have its own space, which introduce to our perception as a dialectic of our time [...]. The research on my own, even at the University can be something more than research on the House. From the house now we have filled our eyes and does not give us more formal stimuli. From the house we now know what it takes, to us and to our children and our children's children. Then the searches are marginal and will tell us little about what will be the meaning of life in the city. The dwelling must instead become again a fact subsumed by some artistic creative acts of the early outlines of a new horizon of arts, in large space systems that must guide us in future [...]. The old categories should be deleted! If we have a bad thing are the so-called old typologies misreported. The revolution is the first service done, which requires a new approach to the idea of nature and we must be careful with any research that differ from those in the great works of art and their dialectical space. If we observe for one moment the hundred years that have gone before us, we find a revolutionary discourse represented by the architecture of the period and from construction of industrial civilization, along with the typologies which have defined the space systems based on large universes of statistics, by which was born the idea of the average concrete, three feet high and seventy, so each intended use is fine, but not good for someone who is six feet tall, or a meter and sixty-five. I must be high one meter and seventy, in order to correspond to the types that I impose, which is absurd for universes where I am to adjust each task. Instead my house must have the type of sites and human groups which: If I live in England I have to have a kind of home different from those living in the Veneto region, if I live in a different city from the House in the countryside, if I live in Germany, an apartment different from the Italian. The type conceived according to the behavior of the statistical universes deletes every difference and suitable parameters that are good for everyone. With this kind of policy will shape the General Plan of each municipality, Italian legislation enshrined in national law, which grants the same measures in every urban intervention urban space corresponding

to precise destinations of use, thus creating a latent uneasiness that reveals the discontent for forms of intervention in the urban space. The concept of usual types abused by now should be deleted. It proposed a completely new discourse on living, which I think is still immature. Are the major facts, for example those dialectical presentation space of the greatest works of art of a city, to propose as a new Museum destination, or that of new services of different types topologically as an alternative to those of the universalistic typologies [...]»⁴⁸.

Having mentioned the need to reintroduce a "completely new discourse about living", based on the new services required by different types of differentiated, this speech topologically that Alberto Samonà also developed in some of his courses, Giuseppe proposes the theme of "great works of art of a city" as part of a humanity that establishes "new linguistic relationships with nature". Here's how concludes Giuseppe Samonà and we can't help but think of Carlo Scarpa:

«[...] I am convinced that art is a speech that is part of the man and that you always will as a form of communication and language needed. When this form of communication will no longer exist, man will be finished, it will be a mechanism. We struggle so against this industrial civilization, which made the man in two dimensions, not even if such a dimension. We try to find new linguistic relationships with nature and I think this is very important. We try through a contact with nature that by now we know all the way, we own up to abyssal depths, beyond which there is a speech that transcends our intelligence. But within the natural world that we can find language which reports had not imagined existed. The speeches I made are a part of what we might define as starting points for training seminars to deepen these speeches [...]»⁴⁹.

14. The culture between land and nature in urban regeneration

Desired seminars from Samonà in fact there were not, or at least there was an extensive organization throughout the national territory. Culture, nature and territory were not sufficiently related practices from art. But there is no doubt that there are new terms of reference. *Culture and nature* are for example the terms of a line of thought that, unlike some critical habits, can see combined for opposing two verses notable figures of Italian architectural culture, as Giancarlo De Carlo and Renzo Piano. I think the most valuable cultural posi-

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*



Renzo Piano, Richard Rogers,
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1972-77



Renzo Piano Building Workshop,
District "Le Albere", Trento, 2002-13



Renzo Piano Building Workshop,
District "Le Albere", Trento, 2002-13

tion of De Carlo is that you understand, with great anticipation on everyone, the territorial dimension of the city-nature. De Carlo had understood that it was no longer the territory belong to the city, but the other way around, and it was the vacuum contents into the landscape to refocus critical gaze over the city⁵⁰, but separate, with a specialization, the territory from architecture. All of his major projects, a ten-year maturity (the headquarters of the University of Urbino, 1952-60; the colony Marina Enel in Riccione 1961-63; the new village Matteotti in Terni, 1970-75; the residences to Mazzorbo, Venice, 1979-97) are based on the development of the urban void: the road, la piazzetta, the open court. In this sense was highly critical of the modern movement that was just too concentrated, on the buildings. Neglecting even to consider that in a vacuum is something tied deeply with the truth, which is the use of physical space by



Cino Zucchi, Residential Building "Corte verde di Porta Nuova", Milan, 2006-13

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citizens in certain contexts. In short, there is also an anonymous architecture that has a "cultural fit" in those ways you use, where you filed the authentic meaning and truthful that ascribe to things. This argument that even Samonà placed at the center of attention on the morphological city, recognizing in this a "relative autonomy" of architecture. Although De Carlo is more radical by saying: «The truth is that architecture cannot be autonomous, for the simple fact that his first motivation is to match human needs and its first condition is settling in a place»⁵¹. Especially during the 1980s and 1990s, thanks to the magazine he founded, "Space and society", he managed to establish a fully independent focus and research group, which ranks as a major international reference for the various disciplines taking part with architecture. De Carlo who was suspicious toward specialized knowledge, argued that the territory was the array containing the genetic code that should create and maintain a single set cities, landscapes, suburbs, buildings, artifacts, countryside and nature and which the territory should belong to a larger environment-universe, which today we call planet Earth. «So I realized that you couldn't continue to think the country and the suburbs as standalone facts, as consequences of processes that were born and consumed elsewhere. As indeed had believed the modern movement, establishing the unique sequence-building – accommodation – City-District territory. The territory was the result of a chain that you thought you lost interest and quality as they propagated outward. It is not so but, in many cases, exactly the opposite. Because the area has some great qualities as the origin, the primary array, of everything that embodies. There is nothing that is not generated by the territory; so every part is related with other parts and cannot establish with its immediate and deep relations collection; ranging continuously and discoveries

⁵⁰ «In his written 1990s, borrows a Pirandello image of "over-throwing the telescope" to re-frame the issue radically of the relationship between the city and the territory in relation to the ongoing transformations. According to his point of view, in order to address this issue in updated terms requires a reversal of perspective: no longer, therefore, the city, the figure that stands out as an object in the background of a territory by a look that moves from full to empty, but the landscape seen as unstable system of transformations that invokes methods of fluid research-planning itineraries, routes, multi-directional erratic [...]», S. Protasoni, *A partire da Giancarlo De Carlo. Atti del Convegno (Pescara, 2-3 marzo 2006)*, Gangemi Editore, Roma, 2007.

⁵¹ G. De Carlo, *Nelle città del mondo*, Marsilio, Venice, 1995.



Renzo Piano Building Workshop,
MuSe Museum, Trento, 2002-13



Nemesi&Partners, Italian Pavilion at Expo2015, Milan, 2013-15

from time to time when in any part of the territory you are designing. The main reality, we cannot deny, is the territory; not only for its size, but because it is from there that it generates all the cities are bleeding points human interests in the territory. The territory suggests how to fix these points of coagulation [...].⁵² Now that it's back to support the need to design "inclusive" comes in handy for interacting and dynamic balance, between heterogeneous diversity, belonging both to the nature of human cultures in which De Carlo seems already perceive the sense of sustainability, founded on the need to reuse and process (and recycle, we would say today) what already is there somewhere: «[...] what matters more than anything – supports De Carlo-is the set; or rather: the built and the way consist in the built environment. Therefore

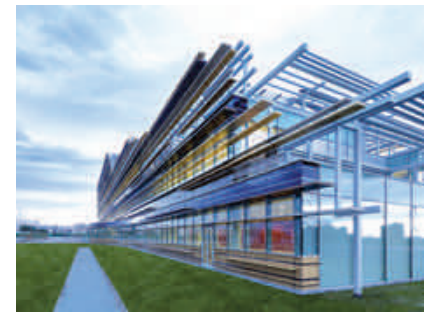
everything needs to be preserved and nothing needs to be preserved; in the sense that on any part you can take action and change, as long as you restore the consistency that governs the collection: bearing in mind that any changes on one side is reflected on all other and

⁵² M. Guccione, A. Vittorini, *Giancarlo De Carlo. Le ragioni dell'architettura*, Electa/opera DARC, Milano, 2005.

⁵³ De Carlo, *Nelle città del mondo*, Op. Cit.



to re-establish the consistency it may be necessary to make adjustments that involve them all».⁵³ Turning now to Renzo Piano I believe the first gain knowledge that gives us his unique experience is the realization that the regeneration is not just about physical space, but also its social and cultural function, referring not only to the living, in the sense of the physical and moral well-being of the citizen in the most fascinating mergers with nature, but also a broader cultural dimension on which we play many destinies. Maybe even Alberto and Giuseppe Samonà, when supported in different ways in the urban project, must share from not but by the services, whose centrality to rethink the case, were not far removed from the central dimension, cultural and artistic role, which Piano attributed to the idea of "service." Piano began to take on culture and cultural projects at a young age with the design of the Pompidou Center. From reflection on primary experience are born many projects centered on the theme of culture and information, aim as meeting places in order to fertilize and strengthen the role of the city. Thing that happens by opening the exchange, to share and to the extraordinary emotions of his being in a place, where the architecture captures the light that conveys the need to recognize each other in a certain place. As is the case in the neighborhood "The Albere of Trent," regeneration of the former Michelin in contact with a 5-hectare park, where



Mario Cucinella Architects MC A, 3M Italia Headquarters, Milan, 2005-10



Stefano Boeri, Vertical Forest, residential towers, Milan 2009-14

they are surrounded by shops, cultural spaces, residences and offices. A real “town” of the nature-city, built on the principle of the 3 R’s (reduce, reuse, recycling) starting from a plot of roads, nature and recyclable and renewable energy, to reduce energy consumption (roughly a third of that required to maintain a traditional house).

15. Italian architecture in the world today, discovering the nature

The Albere neighborhood in Trento is bordered by the *MuSe*, the science museum, a micro-landscape of alternations between “artificial hills” that take energy from the ground (with eight probes getting to 100 meters depth) and “natural funnels” that collect rain-water and intercept the sun’s energy with photovoltaic panels. Hence it seems the *MuSe* talk with Mount Bondone almost assuming the color of the light. In fact, one of the fundamental principles of the architecture by Piano is the relationship with the existing when confronted with ancient tracks, “sightings and locations of memory” with alignments and angles. But it is one aspect that mostly seems to characterize the work of Piano. It is joining the light and the responsibility of energy and regeneration of a place. Therefore it seems that every place has its own light, its biodiversity and its own emptiness that, for example, in the *MuSe* characterizes the central space where suspended are not only birds but also other animals such as bisons and whales. This is where the idea of an imploding urban design is certainly clear. Piano argues that:

«[...] The towns cannot continue eating territories. Today, the growth must be understood in the light of the reuse of trapped areas. It is necessary for the city to grow via implosion and not via explosion. This means trying to complete the cities in themselves [...]. There are two ways to grow a city: the first is sustainable, ie via implosion, building on existing buildings, the latter is untenable, ie via explosion [...]. The city has to continue building on itself today as it always has done over time; a continuous renewal, in full compliance with the existing and the memory, that does not lead the city to die or survive as museums in the image and likeness of a disposable mass tourism but that push a living in the modern world serving the physical and moral wellness of citizens. This is how we would once again take back the lessons from the past, from a distant past, free from the pharisee romantic vision of the city, behind which barely hides the logic of profit. The paradox is before our eyes in everyday living in the city and the territory, in an increasingly evident contrast between a false attention to the history and the memory of the city and the apparent carelessness in the way we design and build the new: as if the city was elsewhere [...]»⁵⁴.

We close with Piano mentioning a commentary critical of Piano, delivered on the occasion of the inauguration, in late 2013, of his project for the expansion of the *Kimbell Art Museum* in Fort Worth, Texas:

«[...] The beauty through art - that is the art of writing, music, painting - is a very strong emotion because it has to do with the depths of our being, with the desires. The art and beauty make people more curious, more articulate. The buildings of the culture, such as museums, make cities better and are small miracles. The art changes the world, even if it does it in small steps. I want to emphasize, as while in this country - the United States and Texas in particular - the beauty can be felt in flashes, flashes that are taken as anchor of salvation which we cling to, in Italy the beauty is so extraordinarily widespread that has become addictive, people living it with distraction, without realizing it [...]».

⁵⁴ Interview in L. Rosato, *La città negata. Identità e modificazione*, Franco Angeli, Milan, 2008.



Or even can happen, as in *The great beauty*, Sorrentino's film awarded the Oscar, that the great beauty of Rome contrasts with the evanescence of the Culture.

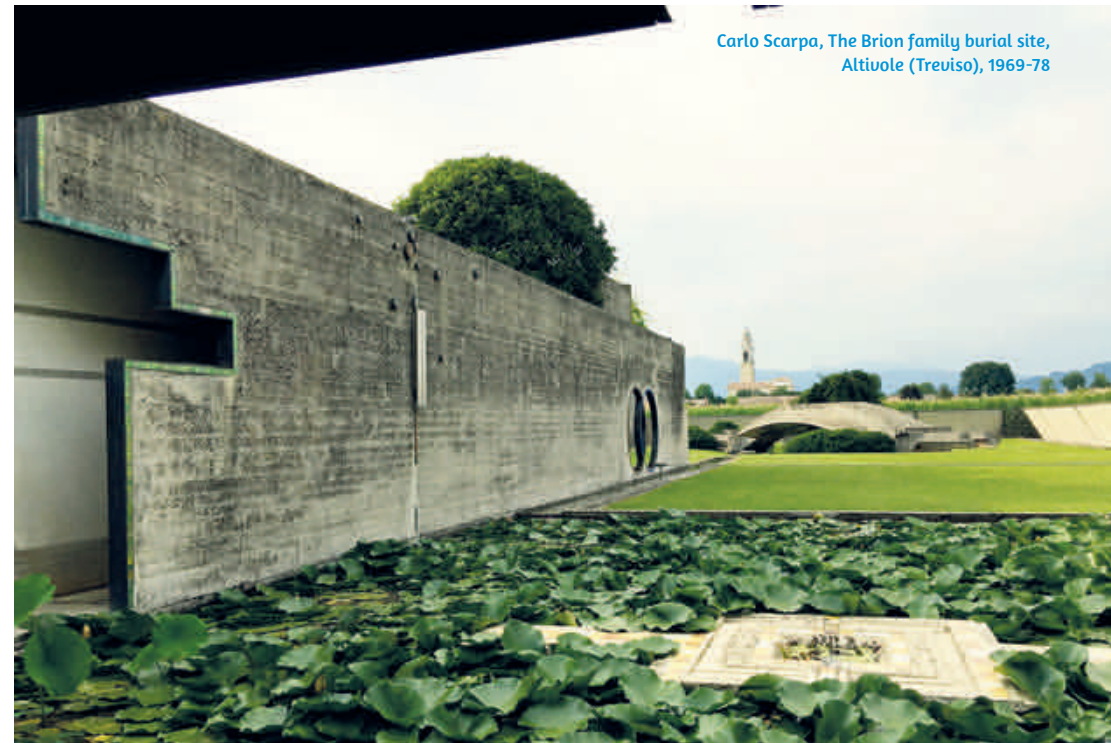
But today the Italian architecture, along with the culture, is close to a turning point in the decisive direction towards the nature. We analyze, for example, the creative idea and the guidelines of the Italian Pavilion of EXPO 2015, at the base of architectural projects. The concept that drives the metaphor of the pavilion in its becoming architectural image is very representative and iconic. Pointing to a protected area that helps projects and talents to "sprout". The reference icon is the Tree of Life, feminine expression of Nature, "mother" of all things, a symbol of the generating forces of the living. The central icon of the Pavilion "organizes space according to a 'full' distribution of content and subject areas. A symbol whose roots can also branch out into an "horizontal" reading, linking the various spaces, especially in the area dedicated to the Regions. A concept in its entirety that engineers, artists and designers are called upon to interpret freely in materials, shapes, sizes, and technology. An "architectural object" or an installation, aimed at lasting in the collective memory». According to the guidelines, «the Italian Pavilion will be designed as an innovative space, unusual, surprising, unique. A 'transparent' space, which should be able to converse with the surrounding environment. Which changes its appearance during the day. Which breathes and lives, as if it were itself a living organism. A point of reference for entrepreneurs and researchers, capable of renewing the concept of 'Italian excellence' of the know-how and the Made in Italy. A symbol of the new covenant between the country and its territory, no longer understood in a purely scenic, but as a lever of transformation and growth». The key elements of the project are:

1. *Transparency* - Glass, crystals, photosensitive materials. Materials with a metaphorical and conceptual meaning (to look beyond their environment, to interact with the world, to be transparent...).
2. *Energy* - Energy as life instrument and a half, as an engine of transformation, as a light in the night. In a sign of respect for the environment and compatibility.
3. *Water* - An element strongly linked to the identity of Milan and the themes of the Expo, symbol of existence, birth, regeneration, the Earth's resources, and also the ability to "reflect the sky".
4. *Nature* - Element at the center of our future. The scenario from which we come and towards the which we shall converge.
5. *Technology* - A look at the making. Expression of the identity of this country. A challenge. An opportunity. The Italian Palace, which will remain as a permanent artifact, is seen in the landscape making the Expo site, defined by the image of the master plan, focused on a Cardo-Decuman enriched by a variety and multiplicity of forms and temporary buildings, which could then be removed and reused by subsequent relocation in the public spaces of the city at the end of the exhibition. This aspect of the project, probably suggested by the support of internationally renowned architects who have helped the program, such as Stefano Boeri, Ricky Burdett and Jacques Herzog, is very attractive. The main reason is because it transforms the role of the "nature-city" of the Expo from a simple expo to a laboratory of urban regeneration. I hope that as the Piazza Italia is located at the intersection of the two axes of the site, to identify the place where Italy meets the World symbolically, also temporary artifacts to be removed, will be relocated in the peripheral areas of the city. Maybe to meet the world and make that urban incentive that in other cities like Matera, should guide the urban regeneration. Many architects from different generations are now directing the horizon

of the nature-city, from Cino Zucchi to Mario Cucinella. Zucchi then designed a residential building in Porta Nuova in Milan, where finally the green courtyard of the Milanese tradition turns into a green road that crosses the block, where the open construction of modernity is related with the construction of the compact historic city. With obvious references to the admission of Zucchi, to the house in the park and via Marchiondi (Gardella), the building in via Quadronno (Mangiarotti and Perassutti), in Via Massena (Caccia Dominioni). And this is how the post-war Italian architecture evolves into a sustainable density today.

We reached the end of our excursion. How to conclude?

The *urban regeneration* is now driving each new architectural complex that has the size needed to show a new way to revive the city, using starting points, wherever they create the opportunity. The nature-city, in this regard, is connected to a vision of the city which we relate to the principles of the town. Here the word "principle" has the double meaning of "beginning" of a city from any point of the territory and of "initial assumption" on which rests the spatial and environmental quality of the urban regeneration that includes the presence of the nature. These make a given place architecturally recognizable as a "urban fact", capable of fulfilling a general validity arising from an overall vision on the construction of the city. The "urban fact" in the today's nature-city no longer has the feature of permanence and repetition and indeed requires a diversity of life forms that cannot be programmed and that is phenomenologically discovered from time to time. What is certain is the fact that the unsustainable use of the land forces the reuse and redevelopment of existing built airspace, reducing the consumption of natural resources and the emptiness, the recycling of materials. These actions will substantiate the mission of the urban fact and will allow that spread of regeneration realized over time in the nature-city, starting from new feelings reminiscent of the medical techniques of acupuncture. In the constellation that we have drawn so far, a very extensive "geography" of young Italian architects ranks highly.



Carlo Scarpa, *The Brion family burial site*,
Altivole (Treviso), 1969-78

FOCUS THROUGH COMPARISONS ON THE BECOMING OF THE VOID IN THE BUILDING

by Ina Macaione and Armando Sichenze

Chapter 2

Focus per confronti sul divenire del vuoto nell'edificio Ina Macaione e Armando Sichenze

The *thing* that people “feel” the most and that power structures do not want (or cannot?) understand today is space. Better yet: void space, in its public nature. And the *thing* that people ask the architect most of the time is to create a *space of sense*. Not a space that has its own meaning, but precisely that *space-(void)-of meaning* as a possibility for life.

This which, in any other discipline, is ordinarily an unacceptable paradox, is for architecture the challenge of our times that most closely resembles the way of being in the human world. This conviction, which until just a few years ago seemed to be relegated to the plane of philosophical discourse has now become within the purvey of almost everyone.

This is the most interesting discovery that we believe to have made in recent years. In particular, on the occasion of the *EX.0_cambiamenti di stato [EX.0_changes of state]*¹ exhibition, which, 10 years after September 11, took up a “missing debate” on the relationship of human beings and architecture with the *junk* and the *trash* that surrounds them. Inspired, then, by *EX.0*, they tried to reconstruct a genealogy of the design *processes-thoughts* in which *void space* reaches the *threshold of the people* and of changes in state. Later, we will attempt a “theory” of case studies from Louis Kahn, Adalberto Libera, Tadao Ando, Giuseppe Terragni, Toyo Ito, and Odile Decq.

This, in brief, is the way in which, after starting from a hypothesis, the present essay has struck its course. *EX.0* exhibition is an experiment on the becoming public of the vision of space, *from small to large scale*. The exhibition was born from a design exercise by students in the department of architecture in Matera, who recovered objects, temporarily pardoned from the trash heap, to exercise their minds in the observation of the phenomenon of space - in the age of sustaina-

¹ The exhibition, curated by Ina Macaione and Marta Ragozzino and held at the *Museum of Medieval and Modern Art of Basilicata*, opened in the *Palazzo Lanfranchi* in Matera in February-March 2012, came out of a small exercise, called *Zero*, undertaken in the Department of Architecture UsB (2011-12 academic year), in the course on *Architecture and architectonic composition*, second year (Prof. Luca Lanini) and fourth year (Prof. Ina Macaione). The idea was inspired by a similar experience at the University of Evora, discovered during the Workshop of Design at Villa Viçosa in Portugal, in which many students and faculty from Matera participated in the summer of 2011.



Antonello da Messina, *Saint Jerome in his Study*, 1474-75, National Gallery, London



Louis I. Kahn, *Philip Exeter Library*, Exeter, New Hampshire, 1967-72



Louis I. Kahn, Philip Exeter Library, Exeter, New Hampshire, 1967-72

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bility - in the shift in scale of changes of state. The exhibition was unexpectedly successful, thanks in part to the growing participation of the citizens of Matera, even children from the elementary schools. The meticulous observation of the most hidden spatial nature of that which is considered *junk, cast offs, natural waste, unhealthy refuse, or scraps of all kinds* set forth a public debate on the necessity of a new way of looking at space, hidden like a latent resource, in the scraps, in nothing, or in the little that surrounds us and is so close at hand.

At the same time, given the recurrence and the similarity of many spatial visions of the objects to some of the most famous architectural projects in the world, which could not have been previously known by the average person or by children, the need came forth to teach, in brief, the history of the conception of space in the 20th century, in a way that was comparable, focusing on a reduced number of emblematic works.

A significant study along these lines was undertaken by the authors of this essay already in 1995. Ina Macaione compared the enunciated typologies in order to then examine the way in which, against the background of a matrix vision of the full/void parts of an office, the "part" of the *empty space* can take on a *central role* of "epistemological breakage" compared to the original plans, "including it in a wider complexity, of which it still has a limited structural idea."²

The "*re-writing*" during the project, revealed itself to be the best method for discovering - and this is the new element - the *diverse nature* of the void in the work, in so far as it is an *opening* into complexity. This, however, compared to elsewhere, had to make reference to the cultural intrinsic of *limit-space*, looking also toward a new "construction of knowledge" in the relationship between architecture and design. In this new opening of meaning, the definition of the form of the void showed itself as a threshold for welcoming the greatness of reality, as related to landscape and nature, as well as to the city.

In previous and successive studies³ we have been able to put together sufficient premises in order to try to indicate a phenomenology of the cultural alternative of design. A taste of this is outlined in six different ways of giving meaning to the vision of space in an urban building. Observing six architectonic works, constructed over the space of eighty years (1932, 1936, 1972, 1984, 2001, 2010), which are mutually comparable in terms of their genre and their scale, one fully notes the way in which it is precisely the different *nature* of the void that becomes the real object of the architectonic design, and which determines the first *fundamental meaning* of the entire *paradigm* of the construction of each work. Leaving the detailed discussion of this discourse to our other studies⁴, we here will summarize the relevant features of the *different nature of space*.

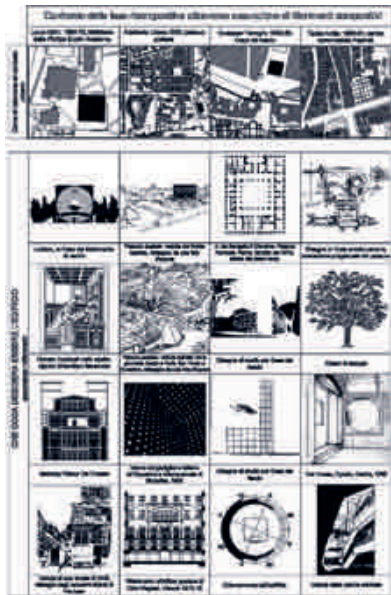
² Ina Macaione, *Dall'architettura al progetto, costruzioni di conoscenza nel rapporto con la natura*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2004.

³ For example, Armando Sichenze: *Il limite e la città, la qualità del minimum urbano sul limite dell'edificio dalla Grecia antica al tempo della metropoli*, FrancoAngeli, Milano, 1995.

⁴ *Ibidem*



Giuseppe Terragni, "Casa del Fascio", Como, 1932-36



Antonello da Messina's *Saint Jerome in His Study*, I believe, is the fundamental cultural reference that guided the design of Louis Kahn in the way he designed the *Philip Exeter Library* (Exeter, New Hampshire, USA, 1967-72). We recall that *Saint Jerome in His Study* presents a space constructed within the logic of a building that is figured from a Gothic portal that frames (in both senses of the word) the "boxing in" of three different kinds of interior space, following the sequence: place-emptiness-landscape. *Saint Jerome in His Study* is the reference of *Form* that presents itself in the creative process of the Exeter Library when Kahn asked himself "what does [a library building] want to be," making visible to the mind the spatial phenomenon of reading. In this reference, the architect accepts the *threshold* of the formal limit (which directs the creation) in the relationship between *silence and light*, successively *spatialized* by the architectonic *Order*, which has the task of distinguishing one (spatial) existence from another. Here's how Kahn describes, in this sense, the phenomenon: «[...] One could say that from light to silence, from silence to light, there must be a threshold, and when you understand that, you feel that, well then, that's inspiration».⁵ This movement "from ... to" is that which we define as *spatialization*. Even within *Saint Jerome in His Study* the same game is at hand, but here, in architecture, the *Order spatializes the discourse* in three fundamental parts of this threshold: the location of the reading desks in relationship to external light, the book stacks in the half-light, and, in the centre, the large void of *interior light*. Here four large circular windows mark the traces of a transit-absence, of largeness (the spherical nature of the world or of being?) in smallness, indicating the *way of being in the world* of the library. The empty space absolutely dominates the logo centrism with which the Great Narrative of the work is constructed, taking on a *metaphysical* nature, reassuring, balanced, definitive, and predictably certain.

It should be said that when Kahn writes "A man with a book is moving toward the light. This is how a library begins. [...] the reading desks are a niche that can represent the principle of the spatial order of its structure"⁶, he takes the idea of the design as an *inspiring event* of a human being in a circumscribed, *empty space*. *This is the beginning of an ontological spatialization that,*

Ina Macaione, *Comparative analysis*, 2004

⁵ *Ibidem*

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repeated over and over throughout history, becomes a human institution, marking, moreover, the relationship between being-there and one of its architectures. But between the individual space of reading and the void, metaphysical public space, there is a difference of "worlds" that are not directly comparable. Despite everything, emptiness has a metaphysical *meaning*. To move from one to the other, from silence to the "common" light of the central void, requires crossing through the half-light of the repository of knowledge arranged on the bookshelves.

In the example of the *Casa del Fascio* [Fascist House] in Como by Giuseppe Terragni in 1932, on the other hand, where the identity of the building becomes a *language*, we witness a genuine *formal elaboration* of void, beginning from one of its *double natures*. In one sense, this is created through the elongation of the interior space into the exterior-piazza. In an opposite sense, the void *absorbs*, or rather reduces to an abstract structural scale, the urban layout of Como. Both with the *big size* of the city and with the small scale of its ratio, the building reproduces the phenomenon of contrast between fullness and emptiness. In its architecture, the *three-dimensional Order* of the space can emerge, loud and clear, within which the exterior-interior being of the facade can spatialize itself. Where, then, the consequent *co-penetration* of the void with the full reveals *the ambiguous being* that is precisely that of language, as much the city's as the building's, producing, in the moment of the creation of both, the result of a *stratification* of the double meaning of the openings and closings of space.

Adalberto Libera, in the *Post Office* on Via Marmarata in Rome, in 1932, carries out another elaboration, this time *symbolic*, of the void; which, as in many of his other projects, is first of all, as Quilici⁷ explains, the enveloping "maternal" principle that one associates with the paternal principle of the hierarchical Order between parts - "between geometric figures of wholeness". Here as well, the architecture of the postal building is a "large 'container' of emblematic messages", within which "elementary iconic materials, significant objects and citations" become ordered, coming as they do, naturally, from the city. The building, then, in its breaking apart, is the limit-symbol (in the Greek sense of σύμβολον (*súmbolon*), from the verb

⁶ *Ibidem*

⁷ Vieri Quilici, *Adalberto Libera l'architettura come ideale*, Officina edizioni, Roma, 1981.



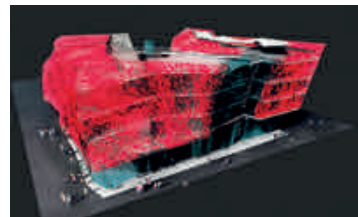
Adalberto Libera, Mario de Renzi, *Post Office, Rome 1933-34*



Tadao Ando, *Festival, Naha Okinawa, 1984*



Toyo Ito, Sendai Media Center, 1998-2000



Odile Decq, Red Lace, Novoli, Florence 2004

the emptiness of the public space there is no silence, but the clash of different perceptions that overlap and interfere with one another form new "figures" in the light-shadow sense.

symbollo, "putting together") designating the scenic origin of one of the two halves of an "amphitheatre" - from the verb *θεαομαι* (*théaomai*), "to look toward") opening toward the other half (in the Testaccio neighborhood). The volumetric limits, defining the maternal enveloping of the void, attribute a *representative* function (the "being in the place of") of the city to the bodies *placed on view in the space-limit* of the design. The bodies, formally discontinuous, are now capable of representing the heterogeneity that gives richness to the dimensions of the city. The big enters the small through the *symbolic* representation of the public sphere in the space limit. The meaning of the void is played out on the public stage.

Tadao Ando designed the commercial structure known as *Festival* (1984) in Naha, in the Okinawa Prefecture, *formulating the emptying out* of a cube. From this is born the great three-dimensional scene of an empty space, though delimited by a wall-like material, itself partially emptied. The initial result is of a space-limit that is filtered by light. "Only in the void," says Ando, "can you find what is truly essential. The reality of a room, for example, should be sought out in the empty space formed by the ceiling and the walls, and not in the ceiling and the walls per se. The void is omnipotent because it contains everything". The building is like an enormous room in which we can find a grid made of reinforced concrete that coincides at the edge with the "skin" of the envelope - partially riddled with holes - and expresses the *abstract order*, ever present, that spatializes the whole. This building reaches out to the sensitivity of a human body, but it still cannot feel that which it does not see, as Ando would wish it to be when, gazing upon a wall, he speaks of a "premonition" about what is to be found behind it. In any event, the "skin" of of the building allows for the passage of light and air in order to better adjust to the climate. The idea is that of a public square, crossed by a labyrinthine walkway which gradually rises to the terminal space of an open courtyard in which a banyan tree has been planted, native to Okinawa. "[...] The light that filters," says Ando, "through the pattern of cement blocks and the shadow cast by the banyan tree collide, giving birth to an interior complexity." In

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Thus the space-limit that springs forth from the emptying of the initial cubic limit brings about an interplay of the *threshold* of the formal limit that here, as in the tradition of Japanese architecture, expresses itself between *light and darkness*.

While the void in Ando contains and dominates everything while being substantially inert around things and "among" them (though without a centre, and vibrant with natural light), including the labyrinthine walkway, the empty space of Toyo Ito *changes nature* and becomes *active subject* (though this word is no longer adequate) with respect to the "objects" that by dematerializing themselves become electronic *screens* which aspire to interact fluidly with humans, like living nature. In the *Sendai Mediatheque* (2001), a large transparent cube with 50-meter sides, the seven floors vary on the inside in terms of height and use, "floating" between the supports of a "forest" of seven "fluctuating seaweeds" that contain shafts for elevators and emergency stairwells and the utility systems. These trellises bring together and channel, like bamboo, all of the "vital" flows, not only of air, light, and heat, but also electricity and data. So does the space, spacing itself in between these flows and the human beings, present itself as a *process that is sensitive* to the experience of contact with the energy of the void. Ito here has given a *limit-space*, a limit that makes itself space. But a space that is dense with "nano-physicality", of multiple and "con-fusing" energies and that nevertheless tends to never become stabilized, and where one does not begin, as in the previous example, from a given space, or rather from a space *to be emptied* in order to reveal a limit, making room for a *space-limit*, or rather for a space that settles itself into a physical limit.

Between the two almost opposing examples of the two Japanese architects Ando and Ito, there are many other positions of various types that we could consider of the "mixed" or "composite" variety, all the way to the extreme case of the "*relook*". These re-dressings, while frequently amaze for the extreme disinterest with which they are undertaken, should be placed under close examination for their likely increasing success, especially in situations that are particularly limited and resistant to any real transformation. A very debatable result, though nonetheless of high quality, can be seen in the residential (and commercial, on the ground floor) building H26, from 2006-2010, by the dark-punk lady of Breton, Odile Decq, in the new neighborhood of Novoli in Florence. Decq begins from a canonical form: the typical U-shaped structure of a small building serviced by landings and gangways, but then submits it to de-axis-ing and unbalancing ordeals which strip it into two different structural orien-



Odile Decq, MACRO Contemporary Art Museum, Rome 2001-10

tations of apartment blocks, then inclines the leafy courtyard down toward the park. Decq then begins to slice through the exterior perimeters of the floors in order to create a *curtain wall* or to transform the limits themselves into terraces and loggias of varying spatial articulations, enveloped in the variously transparent manner of a vegetative “wall” that, to the south, filters the sunlight, making use of a surrounding chain-mail support structure of steel wires. The other, north-facing walls are, on the other hand, covered with modular aluminum panels. Decq is convinced that the rigidity of building code norms should be “inventively” circumvented and wrapped up in new *look* not of superficial decor but of the space that can be re-appropriated from the limits of a building. She believes that she can destabilize the form of the void through the inclination of walls and that this helps to make a leap into a different dimension and to better perceive that which is observable.

In conclusion, the void that sets itself up in the field relative to the *theory of works* that we have chosen in advance here does not exist in a vacuum. There is always a human being, somewhere.

A being that enters the space between thresholds, between metaphysical light and silence (as with Kahn), or between light and darkness (as with Ando), or even between one flow and another, between a more complex natural flow and a flowing into information (like Ito), or between a rigid perpendicularity and a vegetative limit such as Odile Decq. It is a being, this human, that perceives, that feels, and that thinks, that has a body that is more or less sensitive for moving about amongst other equally sensitive bodies: opaque, emitting, or transparent, voluminous or discreet. A *being*, though, that you do not notice if there is no architecture. A being that notices itself not in front of a mirror, but because there is an architecture. A *being* that *moves in space*, after all. But which *is also moved through space* by the physical presence of the architecture that, moreover, by making us think and by creating sensations and emotions within us, enters into that other space that resides within us. And here, naturally, the problems and the wonder of it all begins.

In this space there are physical *presences* that *enunciate* it in a three-dimensional order, one that is even abstract and pointlike, as in Terragni, Ando, and Ito. The latter, all the same, in more recent works has made use almost exclusively of enveloping continuous forms. While, generally today, to the pointlike can be added an articulation which itself is more or less discontinuous and endowed with form. This discontinuity enunciates the space by *spatializing* it statically even when physical objects present themselves as screens. But it is here that the *empty space* comes into play, the Great Truth that is a competitor of presences, because within them the human being would not only be *free* to move, but also an importuned “object”. But between these full objects and the empty space, conflict may arise.

Suspending judgment on the necessity of this conflict, let us return to our six works to observe that while Kahn, Libera, and Ando work on the delimitation of a given space (the space-limit), Terragni, Ito, and Decq intervene on the spatialization of the material limit (the limit-space). Summarizing, we can claim that the elaboration of the empty space is *ontological* in Kahn, *formal* in Terragni, *symbolic* in Libera, arrives via an *emptying-out* in Ando and via a *fluidification* in Ito, *while it is vegetalized* in Decq.

This theory of examples and of different tools for producing empty space, seen holistically, helps us describe a public space that in reality sometimes presents itself in a manner quite different from the past, because multiple sensibilities get mixed or assembled therein. What still escapes us, however, as we return to *EX.0* exhibition, about which we spoke at this beginning of this essay, is the presence within existing public spaces of a growing world of

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debris and trash that is still waiting to be, if not accepted, at least seen as the condition for the beginning of existence.

Much architecture considered avant-garde in the Nineties, beyond that of the attempts of ennobling theory, in the moment of its construction came to think more about the composition of the debris around spaces than anything else. Faced with the image of the rubble from September 11, 2001, the discussion of empty space found it hard to find the real locations of cultural comparison that could live up to the times and events. Not a single design proposal of the area emptied of the towers was able to configure that void as a convincing *waiting for meaning* in the direction of spaces for life, humanity, nature, and world, while history continues in the unknown direction that we call “modernity.”

A phenomenon of the *space on a global scale* exists, though of an as yet under-examined nature, which tries to summarize itself in *the changes of state of modernity*, from the solid state, to the liquid (as theorized by Bauman), presaging even a gaseous state. But the central problem in the relationship between the *global space and the local scraps*, which has been in play ever since September 11, cannot yet be seen, as a problem, nor sufficiently worked out. The hypothesis of a culture of the limit, in the architectonic field, as we have seen in this short sample of compared examples above, is unable to assert itself on a sufficient scale. It will require finding institutional locations and thematic fields in order to make a production of culture around the “right to space” more possible, especially in terms of public space. The problem can be confronted, debated, and elaborated, for now, only under exceptional conditions and in particular places.



Toyo Ito, Sendai Media Center, 1998-2000

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THE VISION OF THE (RE)GENERATIVE NATURE-CITY

Chapter 3

INTRODUCTION

New York 2014_Nature-City Heterotopies¹

At the beginning of the third millennium, the present education of the architects in Italy, if we compare it with the one that Italian universities could provide till the Seventies, on the one hand looks well structured in the *school of architectural restoration*, but, on the other hand, it also looks bewildered in the fields of *architectural planning*. In the academic sector, the latter is affected by a progressive cutting up and shattering of an organised thinking about the relationship between the architecture and the city into hundreds of personalistic positions. All these views are the evidence of the crises of that very same *Italian planning school* which could gain many prestigious international honours.

It is hard to conjecture that a change of course could just come from the main university centres of greatest cultural dissolution, where, by the way, we are witnessing an increasing isolation, even from a professional viewpoint, of all the people who are most interested in the unsustainability of the current development models in the field of the city growth. New orientations in the *project culture* can arise only in those side-lined geographic areas that are less controlled by the centres of power and therefore are freer both in the research and in the international exchanges.

Currently, in the South of Italy, the discussion about the need of organising an education and a learning path for the architects is beginning. This new education of the architects should be able to make them develop the right tools needed to understand both the great cultural potentialities of the urban heritage of some regions as Basilicata and the emerging issues concerning sustainability, in the relationship between the building and urban project and the nature.

Being able to 'read' *the cultural potentialities of the urban heritage* as well as *the emerging issues concerning sustainability* should not necessarily imply a curb, a compromise or a threshold, which is impossible to cross, and that only within its boundaries one can work concretely.

The real meaning of such an effort should be, thus, to overcome the in order to generate new resources.

This is the reason why in the next chapter we preferred to group together some of the main essays and speeches published and held worldwide according to their contents and topics, instead of using a chronological clustering.

In order to better understand, I will quote some of the main parts of a lecture that Armando Sichenze is currently drafting and that is meant for the New York 2015 seminar addressed to Italian architects abroad:

«[...] Until now, we have described our research on the meaning of sustainability that was already included in the matrix of the ancient city in Europe, and specifically in the Mediterranean, which we define as the 'nature-city.' But what has become of the nature-city in our era? We now say that since there is no longer any logocentric utopia delineated on the city horizon, coinciding with a single Origin, we live in discontinuity, limits, and thresholds. It is said that mankind's work is groundless. Living is no longer permanently definable, but must be constantly reinterpreted. Although they take shape with very diverse and

¹ Some of the essays and speeches contained in this chapter, which were already published and given in the past fifteen years, were translated again and reviewed by Valentina Sichenze in 2014.



Armando Sichenze, Ina Macaione, Works Concepts

changeable features, cities, landscapes, worlds and nature nevertheless present common problems. For example, today cities develop so differently in each of their locations and report some of their biggest problems as being in relationship with nature. This is why we say that cities are 'nature-cities.' It is a play on words: both in the most intuitive sense of nature's (re)generative qualities in the face of our concerns regarding climate change, and in the sense of the 'nascent city' in a manifold array of locations. Therefore, the urban entity (however it is referred to: hamlet, village, neighbourhood, town, city, metropolis, etc.) is no longer attributable to a single design source, but to a city that is continuously 'born' different; to be treated as a composition of many diverse beginnings, even 'coping with little'. In comparison to an already-existing urban entity, all of these 'take-offs' and emergences, including those that are (re)generative, are more widely recognizable in the city that slowly arises due to small contributions from the start. Here then, it is by now presumed that a heterotopia of the nature-city unfolds over the horizon; not a single utopian field of vision separated from reality and thus theoretically pre-established, but instead it is a field to be rediscovered again and again in 'places' that have the power to juxtapose seemingly incompatible spaces. In order to explain their new historical origins, M. Foucault used examples like holiday villages, cruise liners, museums, cemeteries, hospitals, festivals, and mirrors. But what is more heterotopic today than the city, especially in its "interscalarity"? If then, in urban discontinuity differential spaces are opened; the problem for us architectural designers is having to define the scale of the intervention. 'Scale' means dimension; size. But size means many things. First of all, one can see in it the sense of this dimension changing each time in a different manner. We can confirm that a sense of scale exists; that is, dimension and size possess their own sense that is bestowed upon them by architecture. In the scale of our 'City Projects,' where more urban parts intervene connected by a common infrastructural and narrative thread while separated by spatial distance, the problem of heterotopia in the nature-city will not be solved by separating the city from nature, but instead by trying whenever possible to integrate

¹ Scrivere architettura. Multiscalarità e progetto/Writing architecture multiscale and design/表述建筑学与构建空间, con A. Sichenze, Franco Angeli Milano, 2013, 2° ed. in b/n 2014

them or sensibly superimpose them. Behold, a sense; even when distance would favour a 'zoning separation' [...].

The following writing perfectly clarifies and explains the conceptual framework and basis we are referring to:

«In our 'City Projects' we tend to create either an infrastructure connecting design works made in several areas of the same city or a city model or, as well, an urban scale unitary plan, which sometimes can be repropounded with some variations, in analogous situations. They are not projects of entire cities, even though it could seem so for *Eudossia* and *Alétheia*, which keep anyway their utopian tension as a whole, but that tension is the one typical of projects conceived for a particular city connected to one another by a 'system perspective', within a design phenomenology that learns how to establish a relationship between the nature and the city. The projects showed in the text aim at a city-nature idea meant as the one of a 'city of our times', which, from our point of view, is a city able to survive, a resilient city in which, thanks to architectonic and urban projects too, places of a potential restart become available. Therefore, we are talking about an idea of city which is in contrast with the contemporary city, that is the city of the 'technical reproducibility's age', whose crisis has already reached its apex. This never-ending city is characterized, maybe irreparably, by the detachment from earth concreteness, by the vanishing of the house and community void space stable identities, by the reduction of the number of habitable places, by the extinguishing of cultural heritages and nature (re)generation long times, by the dissipation of cultural exchange and life richness, by the dissolving of the completeness of a world which goes through a centre, by the disappearance of the silences through which it tells a landscape in the representation of a great connecting ecosystem (called God by many people). «As a result, today we act in the difficult reality of our time space, which opens to the chance of a new project often only after traumatic events, as the reconstruction after a catastrophe or the need to rehabilitate dismantled polluting systems or to reorganize and to requalify areas generated by abusiveness or utmost poverty. From here we need to rethink about sustainable ways of acting and new city images. It is starting from the crises, from the ongoing solutions, that the search for new ideas on architecture features in the contemporary city becomes possible for designers; from a phenomenological point of view, these features emerge from the fundamental topics about urban areas intervention which are strongly discussed by realities, during special historical periods, when pushed by certain designing problems. In order to act and work on these several urban areas intervention themes and on the architectonic ideas of void space redefinition within a sustainability framework, we make use of the 10R mnemonic articulation: *Reduction, Recycling, Reuse, Renovation, Restoration and Redevelop, (Re)generation* with reference not only to nature, but also to civilization, *Requalification*, referred to a new way of conceiving urban quality in the identification processes, even of dismantled areas and systems that become recognizable again as essential parts of the landscape, *Remoulding*, referred to experimental reference systems, *Reconvert*, mainly referred ecological practices, *Restart* referred to the chance of designing 'new' city starts.

«To sum up, through a system of aware and ethically responsible designing actions of the *make-thinking-creating*, we rely on operations of Renovation, Reuse and Recycling, in a context of Restarting and (re)generation, expressed at several different scales of intervention, on the nature-city horizon. We use this expression to recap and condense what we believe is the idea of our times city, concerning a vision - u-topically unthinkable in its

wholeness (in an absolute continuity of origin and destiny) - which is made of many cities' beginnings, arising in many urban sites, rethought and redesigned together with nature. In order to exemplify, let's analyse some of the projects. *Eudossia* and *Aletheia* show two cities remoulding that combine respectively with the (re)generation and the revaluation. In *Attraversamenti metropolitani*, we trace out an idea of city's ecological reconversion defined through the requalification of crossing streets connecting blocks and complex buildings. The same could be said for *Ecumene di Canton*, where, in particular, is described an area crossed by a green road; in this area, an entire block is replaced by a composition of small pedestrian paths that allow a greater ventilation and a better exposure to the sun.

So, the nature-city project reveals as a project of a city that *returns to life* in little, without proposing again urban corridors, but suggesting real streets and small public squares, or green textures, as you can clearly see in Bagnoli's reconstruction.

In most recent projects, the relationship between Requalification and (re)generation prevails. In many cases, like Potenza, Matera, Tricarico and Teramo, the design interventions, different and, sometimes, even very distant to each other (but always concerning the same city), tend to create a *narrative representation* that shifts the centre of the action from the city to the urban landscape. In these cases, it looks easier to regain a space of shared interests and a new connection between public and private dimensions. The projects aim at finding a new system of opportunities, completeness, skills and answers, which is able to connect different projects to the same and only intervention strategy in the city. Both in urban texture and in green spaces, within an ideal model, these narrative and (re)generative paths just make comparable several different interventions, which are either mutually linked or modified in many parts or places of the city. There are examples in which this idea of intervention connects to a typological theme, as it happens, for instance, in *Palazzini*, where the proposal of replacing the small buildings (*palazzini*), which are typical of some parts of a city like Rome, has the purpose of requalifying, basing the work upon a thematic variation of *urban minimum* suggested by each new type. To conclude, all these projects, facing the intervention building themes within the city, develop not only by following the single direction of the Centre as the place of greatest concentration of interests and urban relations, but also through a bilateral comparison established, on the one side, with the natural atmosphere (light, climate, big natural entities) typical of certain cities and, on the other side, with the outline of routes, traces and tracks, where - to a different extent - the interweaving of the 10 city's fundamental conditions of being appears: *domesticity, naturality, insularity, centrality, topicity, coexistentiality, temporality, initiality, landscapes e representativeness*. These are the conditions of the phenomic appearance of everything that makes the city great, as the connecting richness recognisable as an urban quality factor».²

² I. Macaione, A. Sichenze, *Scrivere architettura. Multiscalarità e progetto/Writing architecture multiscale and design/表述建筑学与构建空间*, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2013.

NATURE-CITY PHENOMENOLOGY

1. Lexington 2004 | Nature-Cities in Basilicata region³

Ina Macaione, Armando Sichenze

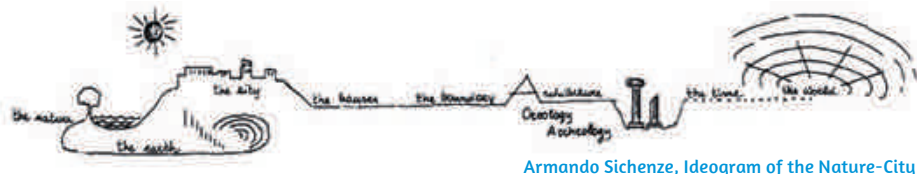
Nature-City does not mean *city = nature*, but a city that does not ignore nature and uses its distinction from nature in order to behave and develop with the awareness of the fact that natural resources can run out. The nature and the city interact and combine together to set their own 'well-known' limits.

The false belief, mainly typical of the last century, in the unlimited growth of cities into a 'boundless' metropolises has resulted into a city that tends to ignore nature. Abandoning nature, it automatically moved into the world of artificial production. This meant that industrial production and consumerism chaotically invaded the city and, most significantly, those areas where the city borders on surrounding nature, known as expansion areas. The crisis of topicality and the need to set limits - which once not only visually united and separated the city and nature, but also allowed needs to be quantified in terms of size, location, and substance - had various negative consequences. But we are now experiencing a crisis of presence in cities that are constantly under threat of being lost in a metropolitan world, which is anything but certain and which is developing into a crisis in the co-existence of the city, nature and world in general, as people are tormented by the precarious nature of existence. Learning to recognise nature-cities will not just help us plan how they can be saved, it will also allow us to set new horizons for the Mediterranean future, while making some clear distinctions.

We have the Mediterranean nature-cities providing us with our main paradigms of the tourist city, such as Alberobello, Capri, Positano, Sorrento, Taormina, Erice, Ravello, Santorini in Greece, Tinos in the Cyclades, etc. Then there are the rest of the world's nature-cities providing the criteria and models for sustainable planning, as the old fortified 'pink city' of Jaipur, widely-known for the Jai Singh Observatory and the new Vidyadhar Nagar in Rajasthan; the amazing 'Manhattan in the desert': Shibam in the Hadramaut Valley; the 'city of a Thousand and One Night', San'a in the Yemen; the 'city of wind': Hyderabad Sind in Pakistan; 'the city of domes': Sedjan in Iran; the 'sun-shadow city' of Pueblo Bonito (in New Mexico), New Baris (in the Kharga oasis), and Gournia Village (in Egypt), etc.

There are also considerably less well-known places accounting for most nature-cities. For instance, the small towns and villages along the coast, up in the mountains or on inland hills, which will be examined in this book and certainly deserve mentioning for their own specific qualities and morphological rules as epitomised in what I have called a fish-shaped layout, particularly evident in Forenza, Acerenza, Pietragalla, Oliveto Lucano, Rotondella, Ruoti, S. Martino d'Agri, Pomarico, Tolve, Tricarico, Irsina, Chiaromonte, S. Mauro Forte, and Guardia Perticara. This clearly shows up the distinct presence of the nucleus which vouches for the town/village stability, in direct relation with the presence of nature and tangential presence of the square-node, joined to roads belonging to next realm of city life. The square-node clearly and precisely is the limit separating the presence of the most

³ I. Macaione, A. Sichenze, excerpt from the conference held on the 18th-19th of November 2004 in USA at the invitation of Professors Richard Levine and David Biagi, heads of the Centre for the Sustainable City of the Faculty of Architecture of Kentucky University. As an outcome, with the collaboration of Professor R. Levine, a seminary of cultural exchange between UsB and UK was arranged. Main topic: the relationship between *management and sustainable city*.



Armando Sichenze, Ideogram of the Nature-City

representative and stabilising nucleus of the city from what the outside world (natural and planetary) brings into the city presence, clearly defined in terms of events and things (the market, the fair, the festival, etc.) clearly representing an encounter or confrontation with an objective external presence.

The fish-shaped layout, often featuring the presence of a main road, is particularly interesting if compared, on one hand, with the paradigm of an ancient Greek acropolis-agera and, on the other, with the paradigm of a walled Medieval hill city with an outside village built-up around the market square outside the gates. The final expansion stage, often still in progress, of a confused mixture of city, outside world, and nature, known as metropolitan ruralism, then needs to be added on to this basic layout.

When I began studying the city for the purposes of architectural design in the mid-seventies, somebody gave me one of the first editions of Italo Calvino's *Le città invisibili* [The invisible cities].

Calvino, who is exclusively a story-teller, has no problem in stating: 'There are no recognisable cities in 3. They are all imaginary cities; I have given them all women's names'. The interesting thing about Calvino's cities is the following: they tell made-up stories that seem real. On the contrary, the cities I look at in this book are real, though they seem unreal. Strangely, these little centres of human life are often more intriguing than made-up cities, even though they have been made by history.

Going back to nature-cities, we can say that when they include elements of market-cities, a protective ingredient of priority importance is added to their definition, and this is the way it is with nature-cities when they become visible to nature along with their inhabitants. But we need to go ahead carefully. Becoming visible to nature in the city does not mean looking invisible by blending into nature, it really means being flown by nature and time flow in order to benefit from them without mixing into them; as if a city architecture had always been there and in contact with nature.

Nature-cities are usually called rural towns or villages, mentally locating them between nature and self-reproductive, introverted urban life, or in other words between the landscape and the country.

Certain factors can blur our view of nature-cities.

While some people are beginning to take a fresh look at these towns and villages, usually found up in the mountains, with a view to exploiting their potential in brand new ways - including different relations between planning and action - others, often local inhabitants, simply fail to recognise these resources. Some are so naturally there before our very eyes that we actually fail to notice them: this is the case regarding the city interaction with nature. Not just the ground, wood, sun, wind, rain, countryside, silence, and time; as well as these natural resources even architecture and humanity itself are sometimes so deeply embedded in the built environment that they are taken for granted, escaping our notice and failing to be appreciated even by locals themselves, remaining invisible sources of well-being.

Carlo Levi's book *Cristo si è fermato ad Eboli* [Christ stopped at Eboli] does not portray Basilicata as it is today, since virtually nobody is now forced to live in such 'intimate' relation with nature. Similarly, the customs (chants, magic formulas, spells) tales, games, music, and celebrations, part of which were collected together and documented by Ernesto De Martino in autumn 1952, according to what was described as a 'life cycle' from the cradle to the grave (pregnancy, birth, marriage, and death), are now also things of the past.

Actually, Basilicata's ethnic-anthropological rather than economic resources have not disappeared altogether, they have just been 'shut away' in museums, confined to ritual celebrations, festivals and fairs, artistic events and processions and old souvenir photographs, combining with other archaeological, literary, artistic, and culinary resources to form the Great Bed of the nature-city.

Magic is still alive, too. In fact, now that it is confined to a number of carefully organised sects, it is more dangerous than ever as it takes on the connotations of mere superstition rather than providing explanations of how old peasant communities, basically sharing some behavioural patterns, interact with nature.

In some way, the assets deposited in this Great Bed are still there for tourists to see, but they have been taken away from local inhabitants as a 'world of natural and spiritual' resources, blurring their view of these physical nature-cities. There is something else that occasionally blurs our view of nature-cities. A whole bundle of physical elements this time, layers of superstructures covering old city centres, which do not so much belong to authentic modernity as a strange form of hybridisation and magical confusion, which I can only describe as metropolitan ruralism. The same we find on a large scale in most parts of the vast suburbs of major Italian cities, something to which most youngsters living in these suburbs conform in their dress, make-up, and cut and colour of their hair. The hybrid nature of metropolitan ruralism results from trying to both react to the need to adapt to 'modernity' and consumer society and, at the same time, to cater for popular taste and 'sauvage' local traditions.

These are all the elements we need to portray the current states of affairs in Basilicata's nature-cities. Summing up, a nature-city might be described as the kind of city, typical of the Mediterranean area, that starts to take on definite morphological shape from the late first millennium onwards, recovering thousand-year-old Mediterranean living conditions and developing a sense of measure and limit in relation to the lack or abundance of natural resources. This sense of the limit or boundary between the city and nature shaped and guided the idea of settling in the countryside, making proper use of the land, woodlands, water, and controlling solar and wind power.

Unlike cities in Central Europe, the key aspect of well-being for nature-cities is not the growth of market economies and efficient means of production, both of which happen to be present, but the need to constantly, directly measure up to nature, for better or worse. The presence of the nature in the city necessarily means both using local resources in a favourable climate, and, as in the case of Basilicata, facing up to such potentially destabilising effects as earthquakes, hydro-geological instability, and fires. The civilisations that grew up in nature-cities inevitably developed a certain mentality due to being forced to come to terms with a precarious existence, owing to the way they interact with nature, delays in the de-feudalisation process, and the slowness with which people took control of their lives, running the risk of getting lost in a chaotic world. This explains why, for instance, both religion and magic became cultural resources capable of providing a stable, reassuring solution to the precarious nature of life.

The economic/production climate in nature-cities in Basilicata is gradually being shaped around a rather slow recovery from the failures associated with industrialisation and attempts to set ecological-tourist conversion processes under way. The nature-city still exists in a certain sense in Basilicata, but it is buried in this 'bed' of artistic, architectural, archaeological, ethnic-anthropological, natural, and urban resources. This research project has gradually drawn these 'invisible cities' out of the dust, fragments, and waste of a pseudo form of modernity that hangs over them and hides them from view, at the same time offering a glimpse of a Mediterranean Bed of huge proportions on which, among other things, our hopes for the future now lie. The extraction of natural/cultural resources, hopes, and plans from this bed is an operation that needs to be carried out with suitable care and method.

Fortunately, we have long since abandoned research models analysing the city in terms of wasting non-renewable resources. This is of fundamental importance if we want world peace. Consequently we have started employing such terms as Urban-tourism, sustainable planning, eco-architecture, and the hotel-city. Compatible ideas and methods that adopt a critical approach to the city to create a 21st century civilisation which, bearing in mind future generations, can at least ensure our natural resources are still around in the future.

Well, now; it should be pointed out that the prevailing view of the metropolis is not able to achieve this goal. At last people are beginning to open their eyes and see or select things that do not consume too much energy, opting for sources which are pacific, discrete, subtle, light, recyclable, visible to both nature and human nature. Observed from above and at a distance, these landscapes look quite inanimate and cities stand out like carefully defined objects, revealing an aspect of their form to which people inhabiting them are quite oblivious. These are urban concretions, 'city fossils'. They emerge from geological and woodlands formations through the at times rather confused traces of the first inhabitants to furnish themselves with a proper structure or 'whole mineral and urban shell'. Looking from above, we can see their liminal nature, in a mass of water, huge rocks and/or forests, geological ramparts, and those communities that played such a key part in creating a Mediterranean urban civilisation whose connotations are anything but Eurocentric.

Their arrival, which had a great evolutionary impact at the start of the second millennium, marked the end of the reign of animals and primitive human beings. The evolution of these forms of settlement, which lasted thousands of years, laid the foundations for our own evolution.

These 'city fossils' now appear in all sorts of forms: oval, radial, concentric, tapering, fanned, chequered, butterfly-shaped, horseshoe-shaped, fish-shaped etc., more abundant and varied than in Central Europe. It is, therefore, likely that a genealogical study of the types of settlements found in Mediterranean civilisation will provide a more comprehensive picture of urban developments than a corresponding analysis carried out for Central Europe, and not vice-versa.

Until recently we thought we knew all about the bond holding between these civilisations and the cities of our era. Our analysis was based on the extrovert nature of bourgeois trade and the rebirth of the city, drawing, for instance, on Pirenne's readings of the situation.

We are no longer so sure, since we now realise that the city can have a second evolutionary nature which is self-sufficient, protective, (re)generative, and endogenous, and more aware of how it borders on nature. Perhaps it is just this that needs to be reviewed and re-assessed. These settlements, which look like fossil-cities from above, hold the key to understanding the rebirth of the city in the 21st century.

We established some guidelines for exploring the Great Bekd of natural, cultural, and urban resources that also take into account the secret forms of cities viewed from above. They sometimes draw on architecture to show how a boundary, fracture or difference can sometimes serve as a limit therefore losing their negative meaning.

The 'familiar boundaries' to architecture are climatic, orographic, topographic, natural, administrative and economic, protective or military, landscape-related, ethnic, or monumental. Limits which are defined at every point of the city by carefully-gauged building strategies and different levels of condensation for various limits. Even those entities which we call rivers and banks, woodlands and lakes, mountain crests and watersheds, fences around fields and gardens, moving lines of shadows, precipices and faults, the outlines of houses and monuments, roads and ramps, and city walls, are all boundaries and places with different energy levels, whose limits have always been grasped by culture. One of the several reasons why we define towns located in what is still predominantly a natural landscape as nature-cities is the fact that their urban nature still tells us something about the boundaries of nature, where the built environment is still partly the product of an awareness of the inevitable differences and boundaries emerging from (carefully gauged) interaction between entities found in the city and nature.

In a world in which the stressful city-life model rules and even the inhabitants of unsustainably more developed areas lead lives of almost startling precariousness, these outmoded nature-cities are turning into what we might call dams. And while technology takes care of what used to be their problems, they actually contain the *reservoir* of resources required for a better quality of life in contact with nature».

2. Naples 2001 | Tourism and Architecture of Nature-City⁴

Armando Sichenze

Almost every day, throughout the world, entire cities disappear from the radar of official 'economies' and go into stand by.

Some are totally ruined; others enter a state of lethargy or hibernation. As a message in a bottle they just hope that one day an economic and ecological science of the future will be able to understand them and, most of all, to take care of them, bringing them back to life. Slowly nature covers everything with earth and vegetation, crumbling here and preserving there. Now and then, with the help of archaeologists, an alliance with nature is established and the it's all up to men. But usually the so-called Minor Italian Cities based in the South of Italy are depopulated, has grown old, are neglected and, sometimes even deserted. Even the situation can remain unchanged for years, yet to the eyes of a tourist, tired of the metropolis, they appear as Large Storages for the future, containing a cultural inheritance still synthesisable in a sustainable project. They remain as such for a long period. But eventually someone discovers them as targets of curiosity and touristic destinations, for a possible (re)generation able to connect men and things as part and parcel of nature and world. This could happen starting from a kind of mythical form that builds the world around them, sometimes being the mere result of a creation. More than ten years ago, the authors of this article realised that these cities cut off from

⁴ Excerpt from the report in English - not published in the Italian records - in A.Sichenze, *Turismo: architetture della città-natura*, in VV. AA., *Turismo sociale turismo della persona, Atti della convention internazionale di turismo sociale per il terzo millennio*, Editoriale Aesse, Napoli, 2001.

time and place were on the verge of becoming touristic destinations. But is a tourism of a different kind we are talking about: a tourism that, after a probationary period, took the name of *Urbstourism*, the nature-city tourism in the world.

They discovered then that just in the cities with a lack of programmes for the survival and the development of future generations the real rhythm of their existence slowed down till one could almost hear it stopping. Incredibly this scenario offered the perfect context for giving back to people what is known as 'human time'. This condition makes it possible to walk on foot, thus satisfying some primary needs and finding the time to feel the air, the wind, the sun and the shade, and totally recapturing both a physical and a psychological relationship with nature.

This 'initial stage' also began to attract architects cause it contained something intrinsic perfectly in line with the stirrings of every new project or city.

In brief, one can say that the *nature-city* can be defined as such because its relationship with nature is based on the foundations of its existence and wealth, first and foremost in its physical conformation.

In nature we can find some recognizable natural entities (such as rivers, lakes, the sea, woods, countryside, parks, mountains and high ground). Together with at least one of the just mentioned natural entities, one can find a human settlement. Both the given natural entity and the settlement co-exist together, and evolve together.

The denominations expressing the experiences of 'diffused receptivity' are different: Country Hotel, Hotel Village, House Hotel and Diffused Hotel, Residence, Country House, Bed & Breakfast, Farm tourisms (Agriturismo), Rural Tourism, Cultural & Park Tourism, *Urbstourism*, City Hotel, City Network.

Only seldom, however, do these experiences manage to have an actual bearing on the relations between operators, tourists, host population, elements and wealth of nature, environment and culture, in such a way as to give shape to a tourism ecosystem able to have self-control and to convey each specific strategy as an intrinsic value of the existence of the city.

Today there are few experiences that reach such a fullness. Among these, the main example is represented by the city of Matera.

3. Potenza 2001 | Urbstourism and the Mediterranean Nature-City⁵

Armando Sichenze

[...] Our work, following the *Lisbon Strategy*, has been using the *nature-city* concept in understanding the input coming from elderly, women, children, and handicapped people in terms of considering their own 'pace', a slow and rhythmic tread, in the creation of a *slow city*. But where is the *slow city* today? We can only find it in a natural environment, which is typified by a slow (re)generative time of nature. This time have to be discovered and respected during architectural design and restoration.

Our research started fifteen years ago in order to face the problems that, on one a hand, involve whole towns together with their well-being measures in the world - their houses, their monuments, their human values, and their scientific traditions. They are disappearing from the sight of official economies and they are going in stand by. On the

⁵ Excerpt from the report in English *The nature-city as an economic and social resource in the new European context*, conference proceedings of the Conference of the same title held by the European Community Education and Culture D.G., Potenza, 2001. Potenza-Osuna (Spain) twinning, with the participation of Bitez Turchia, National Library, September 2001.

other hand these problems make evident the inadequacy of economical and managerial culture, which has not yet learned to be ecological, cultural and tourist economy, other than only projectual.

Our research is developing in the Basilicata region (in the South of Italy), which, because of its size and characteristics, may be used as an *open laboratory*. So in a short time we carried out researches on the *nature-city* and on a number of other issues, starting from the *urbstourism* as a main tool of sustainable tourism. *Urbstourism* is to be considered, actually, the way through which a community is aware of the landscape, living of a first and original points of view, and can thus offer hospitality and tourism in the nature-city world. *Urbstourism* is a discovery practice of the importance of hardly accessible cities slow and (re)generative times. These cities are often made of little stairs or inaccessible areas, winding roads, unexpected passages, enclosures and places inaccessible to cars.

Still today these cities, which somebody thinks are uncomfortable cities, are beginning to represent a reference point for others. A path leading to a new life. A life that requires to slow down, to stop in an 'out of ordinary' life.

Our first step, in order to save these beautiful villages and towns that, standing on top of hills, are also *territorial presidium*, was to *understand* that their chances of development lay in *endogenous economical, social and cultural resources, already existing but still unused*, and that it was necessary to study strategies to organize these resources in order to achieve social and economical sustainability.

Before going on with our paper we have to be more explicit: we believe that scientific side of architecture is very important only if science means to discover new connections between all the nature-city phenomena, the highest and most complex processes that civilization produced during thousand years of time. And this is a priceless 'product' because it is the true result of time [...].



4. Freiburg im Breisgau 2006 | About Mediterranean Nature-City⁶

Ina Macaione, Armando Sichenze

In this paper we will describe the *nature-city world* as an alternative to built environment aridity, which wraps up 'cities' conceived only as files of objects.

Today *nature-city* is more than a mere sum of objects.

Perhaps, in order to understand it, it is easier feeling it than knowing it completely. We live in a *nature-city* in an immanent way instead of in a metaphysical one. We are fully conscious of belonging to a bigger thing: the world. This is a body of stimulating issues and of living and producing ways with millenary histories and troubles.

But this 'living body' with its large size could even run away if we do not find specific situations able to make it comprehensible thanks to their coagulating strengths. In these places we discover when and in which way - and sometimes also why - city and nature, acquainting to each other, develop a *well being* condition which comes from connecting rather than opposing. Where we understand this higher value of composition *nature-city* architecture takes place. Here the city goes beyond its own limits entering the limits of nature, which deserve a deep respect. This architecture is both a place of knowledge building and an arithmetic point of integration, an approach, a contact and a consistence. Architecture, explaining this world, suggests points of view that city and nature share in a common *structural* 'space' through which scale jumps come true increasing their value.

In this sense architecture describes itself as a practice of knowledge creation that understand the limits between destruction and construction, which makes comprehensible the relationship between city and nature in terms of problems, distances, differences, integrations, richness and goods. Architecture point of view and perception allow this way of reading and understanding most of the city several aspects, because architecture is one of the few disciplines able to keep the object dealing with matters strictly related and connected to the knowledge of itself. In the city each human being goes beyond himself. And not only in civil institutions and services, but also in small human institutions, which are based on perpetuating traditions, in minor places, etc. As we said the city is the highest and most complex product which civilization managed to produce. In particular, unlike other products, a little city has an higher degree of complexity because it can satisfy a lot of needs, and not only cultural needs which require representative systems able to combine urban, anthropological, cultural, artistic, material and immaterial resources. In its social way being in contact with its own inner state and with the world, the city includes its existing law. This law is a law balancing introversion-preservation and extroversion-opening to the world. For example, we experience this law when visiting a city as tourists. And so tourism is the culture of civilization. When we are tourists we understand and absorb the *Law of city and civilization*.

The complex of buildings and places of the city institutionalizes the city law in a way that is perceived distinctive by everyone. Today 'tourist society' (cultural way connecting natives and guests in tourist phenomenon) is heavily attracted by human institutions rather than monuments, which are important, in any case, because they defend memory and symbols of our millenary civilization. This kind of small city we define 'nature-city' flourishes in the Mediterranean area and it attracts because its places and typical products take part in an institutionalized transmission of a human life quality full of dignity, which seems to defend

⁶ Study meeting with municipality, urban planning board, about: *Similarities and differences between Continental and Mediterranean Europe nature-cities*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 2006

us from the risks and the doubts of a world 'without peace'. First of all it defends us from the '(de)structuring strategies' of the hyper-technological civilization from which we get both innovation, as extension and development of human skills, and stress, acceleration of time, trauma due to continuous change of life style. Today the development of technics brings some apparently incurable discrepancies, but our own old roots manage to keep them into sustainable limits, especially when we are able to discover in the Mediterranean area some civilization advantages, arising from far-off times and tradition, which represent our immunologic heritage: composing elements common both to city and to civilization.

But what are *nature-cities*? First of all they are ancient city cores surrounded by nature: blue sky, countryside and woods, and there is always an archaeological site nearby.

In the last fifteen years, as they were not useful to industrialization, several small urban centres have not undergone urban uprooting and disintegration processes. This is why Mediterranean Europe still have *Great Nature-Cities Beds*, that have been gradually made in years thanks to civilizations, exactly as landscape patrimonies have been made year after year thanks to nature and human beings, not only accumulating a cultural wealth but also a *temporal* and *natural* one. To sum up, the *nature-city* is called so because its relationship with nature, together with the complexity of adaptation to human civilization, is the basis of its very existence and richness. This is clear in its physical structure: in origin there can be a dominant natural entity (like a river, a lake, the sea, a forest, a mountain or a ravine). Together with one or more of these strong natural entities we can find an inhabited centre.

Then both the entity and the centre will evolve together side by side.

Therefore the nature-city is a resource able to combine city wealth and complexity (diversity) of nature: a *Bank of Natural Capitals and Urban Civilization Stock*, a sort of past and future memory-bank. An alternative culture relay, a reserve of flexible ways of life able to suit new situations without having to overcome ecological and economic sustainability limits set by conditions of civilization and nature.

In our opinion the *nature-city* is the *entity* that, starting from an urban centre, expands itself, assuming the form of a *polycentrism*. The very same *process* can be identified in several periods during history including, the 2nd century B.C. in Greece, during emperor Adriano's reign in Villa Adriana in Tivoli, in Berlin during the 1920's, in Le Corbusier Unités d'Habitations plan and in the Chandigarh project, as well as in the German *Siedlungen*. Not taking into account standard languages and styles, the same structure can also be found not only on a smaller scale in Basilicata but also in several Italian territories, as well as in entire world regions too. Analysing several settlement types of different size, in various geographical locations and with different ages, it can be outlined that the *nature-city* conditions also exist in the metropolis where they become even more interesting. This is one of the most original features of this study. The *nature-city* is an object of consciousness using straight, instinctive and recurring perceptions. This finding is to be considered a *cultural good* itself. It is a historical and social process [...].



Armando Sichenze, *Nature-City regeneration strategies*

PARADIGM AND PROJECT OF THE NATURE-CITY

5. Barcelona 2003 | A (re)generative-resilient strategy⁷

Armando Sichenze

The nature-city

I will talk about ancient and modern existence forms, in the Mediterranean and European hilly areas: what I usually call 'nature-city'. First of all they are ancient city cores surrounded by nature: blue sky, countryside and woods, there is always an archaeological site nearby. In the last fifteen years, as they were not useful to industrialization, several small urban centres have not undergone urban uprooting and disintegration processes. This is why Mediterranean Europe still have *Great Nature-Cities Beds*, that have been gradually made in years thanks to civilizations, exactly as landscape patrimonies have been made year after year thanks to nature and human beings, not only accumulating a cultural wealth but also a *temporal* and *natural* one.

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Changing from a traditional to a net economy, as to say from a value concept based on general shortage to one cast into opportunities born to help relationships, with no geographical limits, all of a sudden resource patrimonies cognitive aspects of nature-city would totally revive, provided that it was opportunely treated.

This would produce extraordinary chain effects.

Think that deeply inside we hold immense resources, they usually sleep but they come to life when we are and we act in places of civilization and nature able to reactivate them inside and around us: in our mind, body, space and time. Starting from here comes the chance to explore an integrative association method of an activity and place network, considering one or more cities.

Now millions of people could certainly live in very small towns experiencing less isolation hardships compared to the past, thanks to telematics development.

The world of nature-city as Mediterranean globalisation and connection

Before representing the future nature-city in an ecological project, planning its productive context, it is necessary to introduce the nature-city. Describe it for what it is. Then recognise it as a constitutive part of one of the first historical globalisations.

Braudel describes the evolution of city civilization in a net connection system, mapping it in that huge 'lake' that is the Mediterranean sea; where, on the coast border, all the cities are well connected, creating equal opportunities of relationships and exchanges.

Is this globalisation, the one of small inland-based cities, still to change from a shortage economy to equal relationship opportunities of a net one?

If we recognise the nature-city as a constitutive part of the Mediterranean world, we have to admit that it is similar to a great interconnection field between civilization and nature.

⁷ A. Sichenze, *Connecting Architectures, in-between heritage and ecological reconversion: the nature-city strategy, in Biennial of towns & town planners in Europe, Barcelona 2003*;

This is a shame, as we know that very little is visible of a field (layer), its richness is hidden and we would have to consider sustainability problems to dig out resources. When we wrote about *urbstourism* (= tourism in the world of nature-city), we had talked a lot of 'digging resources out', running risks and cultural tools to face them up. We know that there is a real 'cultural emergency', as many centres, some of them very beautiful, are depopulating and the greatest do not seem to be able to culturally use their own endogenous resources, neither to promote projects.

Therefore it has been necessary to face these problems in a language and subject context that concretely talks of economics, incomes and jobs. This has meant 'tourism'. At the same time, it has been necessary to research and 'write' about small towns analysing the common morphology of this Great Bed. It has been necessary to lead everything back to a basic research, in common with more subjects, as a range of discoveries, recoveries and scientific principles on long-lasting civilization forms; always bearing in mind that these civilization forms problematically projected into a geographical coplanarity made of contemporaneity and coexistences. After a long period of studies, the World of nature-city and its main Law have come out of the Great Bed.

It is a cyclical and (re)generative nature law, particularly valid for the Mediterranean civilization, as we have already scientifically proved, using a conceptual network made of 10 recognisable categories, tested in 200 small towns (in the Basilicata, Calabria, Molise, Campania and Abruzzo regions, as well as in Apulia, Sicily, Tuscany and the Marches). At present, we would like to test other European areas, starting from Spain, then Portugal, France and Greece.

We are not saying to admire the nature-city as a mere 'place in the landscape' but to consider it as the main cognitive resource for people operating in the built environment and, besides the fundamental formative Law, trying to know the theories applied to interpret it in order to make:

1. the city 'readable', within the objectification process of institutions and human faculties in architecture;
2. the constitutive limits of urban civilization understandable, within the city;
3. the actual netlike interactions visible among forms (structures) and processes (flows and events);
4. the actual ecological productive contexts be structured and filterable, integrating the World of the nature-city.

In this process system, constitutive laws, networks and productive contexts, the world of the actual nature-city is perfectly representable as a precious knowledge resource. Even if it is well-known that many hilly villages tower like crowned heads on defeated bodies.

The nature-city planning strategy

Part of the inhabitants of these countries tries to stay there not because of a sustainable idea of self-development, more because they get financial support, as the building and agricultural economy is no longer able to update, and renovation plans do not help (they were born after earthquakes due to an emergency situation). Therefore when the reconstruction went to an end, several young people left. They firstly went down to the valley looking for industry they had heard of quite a lot, but they found no-longer-in-use plants of an industrial development that had never taken root, being based on exogenous resources and productive contexts. Then, little by little, they went up the peninsula. This way, whole

countries, their well-being criterions, houses, monuments, human and collective institutions, scientific and cultural traditions, fade away from culture and protection of their own inhabitants, basically they fade away from the nature-city world itself.

Ten years ago this situation was already predictable, thus it was necessary to think of a new strategy, based on an endogenous idea of development. Many years have been wasted to demonstrate the feasibility of this idea and win local resistance. Later on, EU cosponsored the *Urbstourism* (re)generation Net research that set up *LaMuP-Dapit* department (at University of Basilicata) beginning to put into practice nature-city strategy.

It is a planning strategy related to a 'cultural niche position' about a great phenomenon (we are talking of several examples of nature-cities).

Today the project of nature-city is limited but complete, defining itself in all the operational connections: from basic research, to reference models, intervention methods, technological structures, training and news; all elements with a their own defined planning role.

We will now try to describe the distinctive features of this strategy.

First of all it is necessary to distinguish the role of the 'idea' from that of the strategy. The guideline (the nature-city) points out the 'feasible quid' of the planning object. For many aspects the strategy of a project is a development program defined by recurrent choices in applications and clarification aimed at specific goals. These have to be functional to the achievement of a global result.

After all, choosing the right means to pursue the global aim (models and methods) means giving substance to the idea of nature-city having lots of impact force to transform a determined area.

Therefore the strategy shows not only the impact ways for interventions and the planning scenario to promote it in the concrete application area, but also the opportunities of relationship, coherent with an idea made accessible by a network economy in a vast area, for example the Mediterranean one.

This vast but complete horizon called 'world' has to be referred to the global aim that gave concreteness to the development relationships in a broad geographical connection, in a certain area.

For example, considering nature-city enhancement, the recurrent global aim represents the (measurable) evolution of traditional sectors (building and agriculture) through the integration or tourist reconversion, ecological innovation and offered opportunities of a network economy. It is still an evolution applied to all the positive aspects of nature-city; the union of farm holidays and *urbstourism* (tourism in the world of nature-city) with ecological production interprets this evolution in a planning point of view.

Of course we do not pursue a military aim, but still we talk of a typical 'strategy' characterized by several conflicting aspects as it has to assert a planning idea and so meets hindrances and troubles contrasting its action that have to overcome and solved.

I will now try to develop some salient considerations about the most original strategy characters of the nature-city (N.C.S.).

Firstly it is a development strategy of what it is already there, on the spot, and it is not fairly valorised. However, only considering endogenous resources is not enough; it is crucial in order to value the potential entrepreneurial evolution and rarity of those resources. Here comes a splitting of the operational coordination starting from a double planning interpretation based on a SWOT Analysis (SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) that isolates a critical stage and key-concepts of the development situation

referring to a certain area. The coordination refers to two connection systems among tools (interventions) and targets.

The first one uses two of the SWOT analysis points (opportunity and threats) for they take into account 'what is outside', posed by the market within which they operate and defines short-term goals in an optimistic view of a positive planning result within a network economy which tends to redefine the partnership strategies, not forgetting the planning difficulties due to the uncertainty of legislative tools, submitted to a continuous revision. Also considering what helps confusion and uncertainty that also inevitably leads to a process of building and establishing alliances for the fragile local development, exposed to normative circumstances. This is why a double strategy level has been made.

The second part mainly uses the other two SWOT Analysis points (strength and weakness) and defines little survival long-term aims, allowing to gain an insight into the strengths and weaknesses typical of the 'product', which is the nature-city itself, in a pessimistic view of civilization life during the XXI century. This scenery is not considered by the action strategy, but the main problem is the long time value it gets in case of death point living conditions, that is its added and induced value. The Basilicata region is a significant example of a nature-city Great Bed, a paradigm of an historical culture very close to sustainability limits. The Basilicata region is a mine of resources and human institutions. Therefore the N.C.S. is a two-stage strategy: one based on the innovation, the other one on the selection of long-lasting endogenous resources. It is necessary to look for a connection among the two development paths. For instance, from a managerial point of view, the N.C.S. follows a (re)generative, irregular and flexible logic, as the resources need time to suit changes and (re)generate, while facilities follow bio-climatic logics and sustainability limits. Thus, the N.C.S. is a (re)generative-resilient (self-reliant) strategy.

As regards to basic underlying strategy choices, it can be said that they are made of several aims that:

1. Reactivate the relationship between city and countryside (areas of rural development) within a tourism context.
2. Reproduce the relationship between architectures of nature-city and the human and collective institutions.
3. Reconvert the sectors together with networks, to sustainability and tourism.
4. Strengthen the ecological line within sustainable constructions.

Nature-city program and connection tools

Now it may be useful to summarise what we have said up to now.

We started from the hypothesis that the Mediterranean nature-city is rich in constitutive relationships between civilization and nature; then we pointed out the important problem about 'extraction' criteria from a real sustainable development point of view. We have underlined the necessity to 're-read' the nature-city within an ecological project. Only this type of project allows endogenous and intrinsically constitutive resources of the nature-city to evolve and have a future in a network economy. From a clear plan we can have a positive planning strategy to make the nature-city develop, at the same time gathering the opportunities of a network economy.

I will now mention useful planning tools to go from the city analysis to its re-conversion and ecological (re)generation, to notably reduce the uncertainty of planning processes.

It has been already said that leading choices (making the whole strategy) make the idea

clear, fixing specific goals able to achieve the global one. These choices show how to act, using tools directly connected to the purposes. In a network economy there is a very important component of our epoch. In order to understand it, it has to be filtered using a suitable elaboration and discussion, also to understand how to carry it out and what to know about it. If network economy developed the inter-operativeness, overcoming interdisciplinary ambiguities, no doubts that our epoch would be a lot better than the others. In such case, the execution quality would be inevitably affected by technical (and not only technological) and scientific organisation able to make inter-operativeness field become effective, thanks to network economy, towards shared quality aims. Only considering innovation would not be enough to get concrete and long-lasting results, especially in 'Obiettivo 1' regions. These are the reasons why N.C.S. is supported by LaMuP, a Multimedia and Planning Laboratory with a co-ordination inter-operativeness program called 'Architecture and nature-city', that supplies reading paradigms for nature-city, models and methods to go from the analyses to the projects and setting and pointing out possible paths and announcing solutions. The program is made of the followings sections:

1. *Mediterranean nature-city*: this is the basic research that allows to deeply know an endogenous potential resource starting from the paradigm of nature-city constitutive and constructive aspects, in the Mediterranean area. This is the section where the main force-ideas come from, better the tools to recognise and anticipate leading strength points to get from well-being and the development of a determined area, rediscovering it in the traditional world of nature-city. After all, only starting from a common constitutive base it is possible to consider an economic and ecological connective relationship strategy among global and local.

2. *Polipolis*: it is a multimedia model that makes the local-virtual network explorable, integrating civilization and nature resources. It is an explorative, inter-connective and inter-operative model which allows to understand how the city works in connection with nature (countryside, woods and etc.), in a polycentric net, a geographical landscape and ecological resource networks. This model mainly helps the information and event flows to go across a multi-reticular structure installed on 10 existence 'channels' (*centrality, domesticity, naturalness, insularity, initiality, topicity, coexistentiality, time deepness, landscapeness, representativeness*) and then meets in city junctions and landscape, ecological, archaeological, anthropological and etc. places. The opportunity system of a connective relation between force-ideas and global objective of an area where the leading strategy choices are qualified in specific aims, it comes from the mentioned model.

3. *Eudossia*: it is the planning model of the city ecological transformation. It is unique of its kind (in Europe). *Eudossia* studies the reproduction ways of the city and allows a multi-scalar, multi-thematic and multi-aim representation of alternative planning phenomenology in ecological re-conversion processes of the built environment and the city to make nature and culture conditions. *Eudossia* takes into considerations 'co-evolutions' of building-nature-city in various sceneries of nature-city where the different possible general architecture connections are defined and they show the development of past and future nature-city. This ecological architecture hosts the logical connections of nexus conditions linking reproduction process parts and phases of the urban phenomenon. For instance main aims are divided into functional targets, beyond main aims and dependent ones.

4. *Ecological Bank of Architecture*: it is the bank of architectural planning models. Architecture was not born to demolish but to build the physical boundaries in which human

and natural beings should decorously live. Architecture can add knowledge to ecology: This knowledge comes from critical awareness of constitutive and constructive limits and orders for the living concept today. An ecological and urban (re)generation will make buildings be constitutive parts of a vast nature and culture ecosystem. Within architecture of nature-cities, there are deposited, 'reified' and institutionalised, several human knowledge forms that have relieved human beings from being in relationship with nature. These architectural knowledge concepts are very important for the nature-city strategy; once they are in a development bank, it extremely reduces time, uncertainties and risks of a sustainable planning.

5. *Urbstourism*: it is the tourism of nature-city. It has several roles (an economic engine, knowledge-enjoyment method of nature-city, quality (re)generation model to create a city-inn and etc.). The idea of a new well-being way of the nature-city is enriched by a knowledge and integration resource method, which (in summer tests) discovers a new life style in the civilization of the XXI century that works as an 'immune system' for it. Within the nature-city's strategy the *urbstourism* re-establishes the connections between native population and foreigners, making them recognise the small human and collective institutions of nature-city.

Examples in the Basilicata region. Architecture and Park of the nature-city

These tools are used to locally carry out Agenda 21 and (re)generate small towns with tourist intentions (city-inn), creating a virtuous economic (re)generation circle of endogenous resource value, a sort of chain-innovation for different sectors. Recently it has helped to set out a PIT (Territorial Integrated Plan), for 22 cities of the Vulture-Alto Bradano area in the Basilicata region, providing it with the strategy of the nature-city and depicting the



Armando Sichenze, *Eudossia, EcologicalBank of Architecture*

core project (a bigger project) for the PIT, called park of the nature-city; finally it will plan a leading modelling of ecological interconnection architectures among countryside, city and woods according to a particular master plan of two close cities. Therefore a unique nature-city strategy is meant to connect different planning levels, from the project to architecture. As there is not much time, we will talk about this latter planning level, also because it contains the greatest innovative elements compared to the so-called 'negotiated planning'. Usually in Italy and in the south of Italy, for years, architecture has not succeeded in communicating with the planning. Here instead, humbly tiptoeing in and out the conducting environment, it concretely works, promotes strategies and connecting networks, inspires entrepreneurial projects and above all it proposes itself as a key function in the ecological (re)generation relationship system between towns and countryside. Of course modelling and methodological tools have been essential for the strategy, but also nature-cities of the Basilicata region revealed roles and meanings of architecture that elsewhere were replaced by building products in doubtful taste, far away from the epoch and places needs. Crossing the nature-city and the countryside is as we could enter another world. Not that of a movie set, nor an archaic or metaphysical one, not even the Neapolitan or Bari big suburbs, with a vital but confused turgidity, vulnerable, mostly demoted, deeply altered and invaded by the industrial culture waste and simulacra. There the copiousness of technical innovation never arrived. Actually something 'landed' there, a sort of residual quality of modernity product, 'handled' in a superficial and rough way due to a not familiar with simplicity decorative taste. That originally preserved world in environmental and constitutive architectural features does not exist anymore; the one we could look at, in black and white postcards of fifty years ago. Actually it is a very interesting phenomenon: in Basilicata region there is a Mediterranean 'solidified' world that has changed a lot and in a peculiar way: it has become a mere architectonic and urban construction, losing its authentic decoration, but in depth preserving the aesthetical sense of the architectural relationship between city and nature. This world comes up from the earth instead of the sea, and the feedback is a very different Mediterranean hinterland image from the bathing one. Here architecture has a time and human dimension that comes from the countryside and the city, where people have to directly and harshly deal with nature, through fair and foul. To face earthquakes, landslides, wind strength and snow weight, lacks and various other adversities, these settlements could not rely on the technology prodigious progress that had however covered the outskirts with the opaque dust of products whose quality did not come from planning and settling processes. This was the weak point of the 'industrial project', but it became a point of strength in the 'ecological project'. At present the nature-city rediscovers an alternative to decayed technology in architecture, but it is ready to welcome a network economy. Only architecture has given certainties, its depths, the size, the solid solidarity of houses close to each other, the openings always compared to the landscape of country and woods, loved and feared. It is still able to reassure, facing the inevitable risks of inconstancies peculiar to new technologies. This solid architecture has been able to face up nature hostility coming to terms with it, got ready using few means, from a bio-climatic point of view. This architecture deeply keeps the nature-city constitutive law, in all its harsh reality.

The architectonic stratification, made of time resistance, assimilation mixed to resilience, kept its own way to be and become a nature-city, more than any other thing substantiating the city print, depicting it in its strategic junctions and urban minimum features.

If this were true, still we would not be facing an authentically preserved world in its environmental and constitutive architecture characteristics. We would find instead the construction strictly speaking that, even if it relates to the constitutive architecture features, it stops and keeps them close to the pure tectonics. We are in front of things and built houses of little essential representation, few monuments, much nature and a rural architecture that presents the relationship with the countryside as a limit. But indeed it presents rather than representing. Starting from the connection between things and houses, we find not only the most ancient network of little 'introvert' towns but open to the world, also the connective relation to what is beyond the modernity itself; in the middle of the 21st century, in today's nature-cities: in a European ecological world.

Differently than we expected, in Basilicata region, architecture is both constitutive part and 'atrophy' of the nature-city, however a new possible junction structure between patrimony of the nature-city and sustainable project.

In this situation, a new idea of nature-city's Park plays a fundamental role, it innovates the (re)generative relationship functions between city and countryside.

The Park is meant to be an ecosystem pivot of the nature-city, or better an explorable connective system between city and nature.

Together, architecture and ecology knowledge organize orders and limits of this system, they together cooperate to understand the way to make the relationship among activities, built environment and natural systems, work.

The methodical-scientific ways of nature-city's reproduction started years ago thanks to canonical references (Vitruvio, Palladio, Schinkel, Wright, Le Corbusier, Aalto, Mies van der Rohe are some examples) consolidated in the analysis of small hilly city in relationship with the countryside; at present it takes into consideration first scientific then technological progress, now available.

In the last fifty years, within the countryside and nature, the changing process of culture conditions assembled in the ancient city has produced very little quality results and several problems, thus the phenomenon had to be resolved into its components and then intervene in the re-constitutive relationship of the nature-city, when it had to be recomposed.

In the decomposition-recomposition process (studied in *Eudossia* laboratory) several (re) generation elements and functions of the nature-city intervene; both at a negotiated planning level and ecological and architectural project.

Considering symbolic architectural elements of the nature-city within a Park, the inter-connective system centrality does not come from the ancient compact city anymore, but from full-of-nature voids, of that ecological connection to the nature and network economy where the value conception of built environment is completely modified (on the other hand we have to admit that the idea of a Park is already coming to a head in a city conceived by modern architecture).

How does architecture deal with ecological principles in a common ecosystem?

Architecture of the park can suit the leading choices of a nature-city strategy developing a connective role between inheritance and innovation, specifying its aims.

Every architectural park project has to define the nature-city within a proper ecological existenzminimum, expressing a constitutive (sustainable) relationship limit between the Mediterranean millennial culture and nature. This happens in two connected ways.

Every building product or complex has to take a re-constitutive component to the park, of nature-city's human institution culture, evoking the world of city nature, but its modern



Armando Sichenze, Ina Macaione, "Alétheia", Masterplan and planiolumetric plan of the nature-city touristic park in Forenza (Potenza), 2002-2005.

1 Metábasis - 2 Workers' House 1 - 3 Apollon - 4 Artemide - 5 Eugonos Cave - 6 Transumanza Cave - 7 Agorà - 8 Phronesis - 9 Oak - 10 Themis - 11 Kratos - 12 Ippotroféion - 13 Minerva - 14 Kore - 15 Little Bridge - 16 Eumenidi - 17 Villa-Oikos - 18 Canto Cave - 19 Swimmingpool - 20 Thiasos - 21 Oikoumene - 22 Urbs - 23 Ergon - 24 Zoé - 25 Wood Bulwark - 26 Otium - 27 Eleutheria - 28 Tower - 29 Aporía - 30 Paideia - 31 Çarden - 32 Briganti Cave - 33 Koinon - 34 Oromena - 35 Orizein - 36 Aperion - 37 Europa - 38 Areté - 39 House - 40 Bu-topia - 41 Banditore Cave - 42 Eudaimonía Axis - 43 Nomos - 44 Workers' House 3 - 45 Cave - 46 Ippon - Coaching - 47 Meriston - 48 West - 49 Timos - 50 Çea Cave - 51 Tyche - 52 Mythos - 53 Eidos Axis - 54 Phisis - 55 Trip Cave - 56 Agon

version. Secondly, before doing any architectural work, we should wonder about ecosystem and its function in that determined Park junction. The Park is composed of several ecosystems where human beings are in a close relation among themselves and built-up environment. As we know the ecological systems are open structures, but not a hundred per cent able to self-organise and control themselves.

In these ecosystems where there is architecture, it plays a very important role in defining the existence level of the ecological system. It contributes to the order of things and phenomena, bringing the measure and defining the sustainable limits between necessary-compatible construction and destruction.

In conclusion, within the general ecosystem of the park core, architectural ideas ecologically compete for their own survival, to live in limited spaces. They want to be architectures of the limit, define ecosystem existence, therefore being ecology 'of design' themselves. This way, every self-regulated ecosystem considerably depends on modality and quantity of activity and built-up work, to compare with ecological concepts, such as 'environmental mosaic', 'resiliency', 'sustainability', 'biodiversity', 'productivity' and etc. The self-organisation level also depends on ecological system connection forms and constitutive characters, present elements, trends, existence forms that involve 'equilibrium', 'stability', 'preservation', 'selection', 'adaptation', 'complexity', 'marginality' and etc. concepts.

Here, the park architecture value is estimated within an ecological project.

6. Praha 2007 | The nature-city 10 categories paradigm

A. Sichenze, I. Macaione, M. R. A. Piro, M. Lavecchia, C. A. Fosci, M. I. Insetti

The strategy for the (re)generation of the nature-city and the problems that people have to face and solve. The nature-city 10 categories paradigm

Now that we are showing the results we achieved and that we are planning new collaborations with some Eastern Europe countries on sustainability issues, we should consider the difficulties that we had to face very carefully, together with the troubles everyone has to face trying to solve the cultural heritage and the sustainability problems.

In almost all of the challenging areas with many social and cultural difficulties, as for example southern Italy, a cultural opposition arises from the political sphere every time the concept of cultural heritage is brought up when talking about *unsustainable development*. This problem should not be underestimated since a *sustainable* development is achieved only when we also guarantee a *democratic participation* to the development too, in addition to answering present-day needs without spoiling the future and keeping always alive all the conditions necessary for the (re)generation of natural resources.

This democratic participation has to be able to carry out a plan of cooperation of several urban centres for the sustainable development of an area.

Each local administrator, though, could not fully understand the need of participation in the sustainability paradigm, sometimes because lacking of a special knowledge, and so opposed the realization of the *agenda XXI* and the creation of a real network of different municipalities.

⁸ Excerpt from *Cultural heritage to sustainability: architecture and the nature-city*, A. Sichenze, M. Lavecchia, M.R.A. Piro, C. Fosci, M.I. Insetti, in *Proceedings of the 7th European Conference 'Sauveur' Safeguarded Cultural Heritage Understanding & Viability for the Enlarged Europe*, ITAM-ARCCHIP Centre of Excellence, Prague, 2007.

In other words, the 'language' of sustainability is still to be fully understood by most of the professionals and experts too. In order to overcome these communication hindrances we had to carry on a hard work of cultural elaboration, which we organized into three phases.

Phase 1: keywords

We looked for the right *keywords*, which had to be the less technical as possible in order to help to deeply understand and easily approached all the complex phenomena linked to sustainability. First of all, we tried to create a link between the language of cultural heritage and the one of the development sustainability.

Phase 2: 10 categories paradigm

We had, then, to *match* the ecological quality elements, such as the mutual dependence, the diversification, the complexity, the cyclic nature of processes and streams of information, the contextual conditions, etc., with the human experience and the cultural heritage (notions of knowledge, culture, value, richness genealogy, learning ability, etc.); thus we created a *paradigm* of 10 categories (*centrality, domesticity, naturalness, insularity, initiality, topicity, coexistentiality, time deepness, landscapeness, representativeness*) of communication for the most simple eco-cultural urban phenomena. We selected ten words and neologisms that everybody will be able to understand, even those who does not have any technical knowledge of the subject and, for this reason, could be easily scared and could slow our progress. We also wanted to point out the ten features that make each city unique. These features coincide with this *10 categories paradigm*.

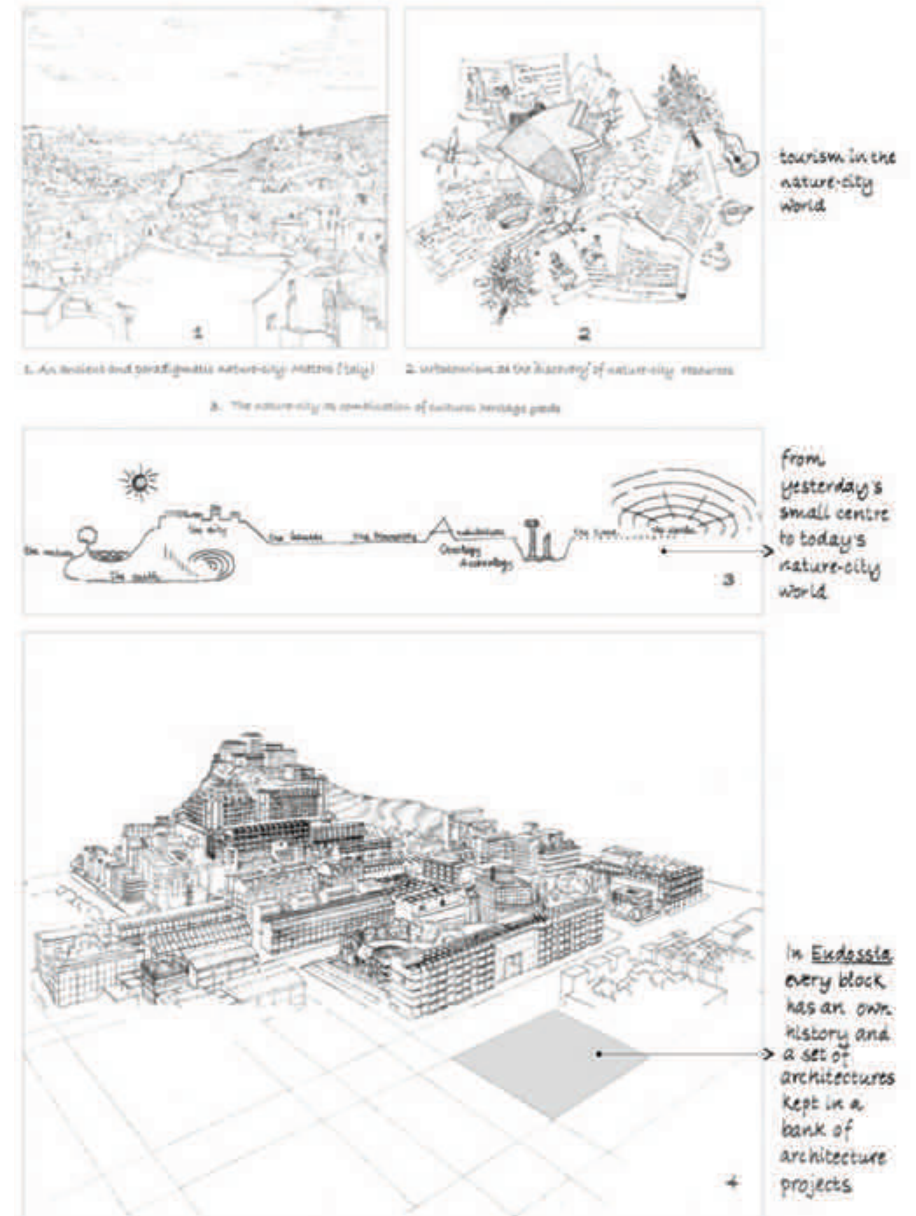
Centrality - The *Centrality* is the condition of *maximum crossing* of a multitude of beings and events through one or more centres. It is where *multiplicative syntheses* are put into practice, where we go from one to many. In *Centrality* places, it seems that everything *goes and comes back*. In *Centrality* we overcome *equivalence limits* and we enter the area where community flow and meeting chances reach their apex. As an example we could mention either a main street or a square.

Domesticity - The *Domesticity* is the repeated condition of *belonging to the house* (the cohabitation under the same roof that protects common things) of beings coming from the fragmentary external world that tends to gather together making *long-lasting and steady (ständigheit) identities*. The culture of human domestic institutions is the explication of *Domesticity*. In *Domesticity* human beings *re-build* themselves and find again the *limits immanence* of those things that, being soft, ductile, flexible, defenceless, can be closer without intimidating them, as in a peaceful world.

Naturalness - The *Naturalness* is the extended condition of *being an ingredient* of life (re) generation in relation with nature, mainly referred to climate, geography, living creatures bodies and to the extent of the resources that make the natural substratum, which tends to (re)generate within a certain period of time. *Naturalness* finds its expression in the (re) generation of the living urban culture. In *Naturalness* human beings try to overcome their (re)generative isolation limits, becoming part of the complex relationships of *the living*. The connection with a big natural entity (wood, sea, river, lake, ravine, mountain, etc.) can strongly typify the city *Naturalness*.

Insularity - The *Insularity* is the recurring condition of spatial inclusiveness in collective *self-sufficiencies* that begins in ordering *parts* in space and shapes the geography of the rules and immanent laws of belonging to the world. Thus self-sufficiency limits and the

need of going beyond occur. The sea, the desert, the burnt lands, the deep woods, the starry sky, every fixed, big expanse wraps the city either fertilizing it or isolating it. *Insularity* comes into being within routes that either connect or divide parts.



Initiality - The *Initiality* is the renewable condition of *reproduction* or *restarting* of the city, in some of its places, for a civilization and a culture (re)generation.

Topicity - The *Topicity* is the diffuse condition of *reciprocity*, of the mutual approaching of beings in small spaces.

There is something that magnetizes the language of approaching, that 'gathers together' and invites to stop, conveying a kind of *well-being*. *Topicity*, that is not a global qualitative aspect, is defined by *city's quantum* that, in their diffusion, determines a recurring topic feature.

Coexistentiality - The *Coexistentiality* is the concurrent condition of richness of multiplicity, of exchange and of receiving what, as a foreigner, is expected. Through *Coexistentiality*, the dimension of *being with*, we create world.

Coexistentiality is the system of limits in which we overcome ethnic impoverishment and we put into practice a broad concept of biodiversity, of cultures as well.

Time Deepness - The *Time deepness* is the condition, conferred to things, to have the time to fully exist. In *Time Deepness* human beings attempt to go beyond the frenzied and inhuman condition of the current acceleration which leads them to *do just for doing*, in order to conquer, instead, a space-time expansion going beyond present time limits, into the past and into the future, looking for permanencies. Archaeological sites, graveyards, museums and parks are some of the places in which the city offers the collective chance for such an overcoming.

Landscapeness - *Landscapeness* is the condition in which the look opens to overall values. In the institutional places of sightseeing - the belvederes - the city gazes to throw itself ahead, and looks at itself in order to go over the immediacy.

Thus the city's opening enters the landscape, here intended as that aesthetic frame in which the value of the whole (houses, nature, centres and streets) overcomes the sum of its parts.

Representativeness - *Representativeness* is the participation to a world's representation. It is a shared representation because it involves an object, the entity or person who is representing it and their reciprocal positions.

This, in the city, is a network of points of view and values (places and place quality), a net of connections that starts from the monuments.

Phase 3: the ten categories and their ecological targets

In order to move on to the next step we started from I. Sachs's saying that «a city should be considered as an ecosystem with its own potential of latent resources, poorly used or unused, or wasted».

So the application of our paradigm, as a means for discovering latent resources in many cities, towns and small villages, lead us to develop a strategy that was at the same time cultural, ecological and economical that did not sever the *local* sphere from the *global* one. The key aspects of this strategy are based on the correspondence between each of the ten categories and their *ecological objectives*, as we can explain in the next sections.

Centrality - *Centrality* is connected to the need to control the flow of substance-energy that goes through the centre, the quantity and intensity of the interactions between the parts of the whole and the elements.

Domesticity - *Domesticity* is connected to the need to ease the stability of *feeble strengths* (attention, love, for example), looking for a deeper re-balance of traveller's energies that we find in the *inhabiting*; improving the interactions and the exchange flows between the inside and the outside that make the *house-city* belonging self-reliant through time.

Naturalness - *Naturalness* is connected to the need to make the relation between the living creatures easier, to the need to (re)generate and stimulate self-reliance (and the ability to recover from impacts and damage) of the eco-systems and of the natural *ingredients*: animals, vegetation and human beings.

Insularity - *Insularity* is connected to the need to mark the borders of the habitat, leaving the negativeness out.

Initiality - *Initiality* is connected to the need to help the new reconversions and restarts of the different parts of the city, (re)generating their natural and cultural resources.

Topicity - *Topicity* is connected to the need to multiply the *slow-spots*, and actions aimed to reduce the impacts on the ecosystems.

Coexistentiality - *Coexistentiality* is connected to the need to overcome the *difference* as a hindrance to coexistence, in order to improve the quality of life.

Time Deepness - *Time Deepness* is connected to the need to discover the latent resources and the co-evolution of different life-times, even of slower ones.

Landscapeness - *Landscapeness* is connected to the need to create a number of view-spots (but also points of view), all looking one to each other, creating a network able to convey a complete image of the view, which overcomes the sum of its parts.

Representativeness - *Finally*, *Representativeness* is connected to the need to understand the whole narrative frame by which each particular place described through its own cultural heritage and its own ability to show itself.

How to transfer our discoveries to enlarged Europe

We had, in order to give the project a future, to develop the concept of *nature-city* into a frame of high ecological and economical sensitivity, placing it between the heritage of the concepts of civilization and nature and the ecological conversion process.

From this point of view, all the different (re)generation and safeguard techniques would become much more effective if all the single operations in which these techniques are used could find the chance to interact between each other. This can also lead to a mutual valorisation of all the cultural and natural entities of ecological system.

With the progressive enlargement of the European Community the innovative aspect of our research becomes more important; this power of innovation lies in the building of the *nature-city cultural heritage*, which could be easier to make by using the adequate tools for spreading the knowledge.

The first two tools we invented are an exploratory model of the polycentric nature-city in the geographical context and ecological network of resources, the *Polipolis*, and a new kind of cultural tourism, the *Urbstourism*.

Both consist in ways of discovery of nature and *in* nature. Both explore the dimension of the journey as the *discovery of a new world*: the world of the nature-city.

This *new world* is made of people, places, events and products that *create world*.

Polipolis is referred to the polycentric nature-city, it is the model (prototype) of a new multimedia way of connecting things and the technical-symbolical instruments to ecological issue. It allows us to travel in a network of nature-cities, discovering hidden phenomena, between real and virtual, through the deepest mental territories and epistemic stratifications, drowned and hidden in today's life.

We need it to draw the geography of cultural heritage, to discover some areas to study single organizing systems (joint to ten channels of ten categories paradigm), to find *discovery*

domesticity



insularity



co-existentiality



landscapeness



centrality



initiality



time deepness



naturalness



topicity/topicality



representativeness



places. These are knots of cities, of landscape, of ecological, archaeological, human, ecosystem places and of ecosystems of goods and activities. *Urbstourism*, the nature-city world tourism, could be seen as a particular type of rural tourism (*the countermelody of rural tourism*): as the latter is used to let people know the rural world resources, *urbstourism* can be used to underline the nature-city sources of wellbeing.

First of all, it could be used as a practice of direct, instinctive experience, which makes the nature-city accessible to everyone as a cultural and environmental heritage *capital*. The original aspect of *urbstourism* is that it is able to connect the strong feeling of discovering a new world to the surprise of the discovery of the unknown potential of each human being that emerges when he comes in contact with this new world. Thus begins a whole process of discovery of latent potentials and abilities, the nature-city *know-how*, which is the real resource of cultural heritage and which has the important ecological task of giving back a real *human time* to everyday's life. This is found by living for a while in the city-inn, through which the recovery of the abandoned parts of the ancient nature-cities is carried on, reconverting them into a new, sustainable lifestyle that people can experience in their holidays and in their travels.

So the *Urbstourism* becomes an *economic engine*, able to start the nature-city recovery process where the centre development had been abandoned due to the lack of an adequate economy. From here comes also a new vision of local systems: they are now able to evolve the old economical activities (agriculture and building trade, both in deep crisis) into an ecological conversion of a nature-city in which *urbstourism*, now seen as an economy of tourism and of ecological buildings, connects the enjoying of the cultural and environmental goods to the recovery and the new, sustainable building of the city-inn.

A lot of these reconversions, though, were carried out by designers and economists who were not ready for real sustainability yet. It is useful to keep in mind that the city-inn, in order to survive, must contain the knowledge resources and the latent potential know-how that give it the ability to protect and keep its own local resources, using them in an interactive, (re)generative way and reconnecting them to the renewable sources. What is necessary, then, is a sort of *ecosystem* of the nature-city, able to save energy and reduce wastes, to recover from impacts and to learn to repair the damage they cause, to self-heal and to adapt to unpredicted errors, to grow and evolve, to (re)generate time.

In this frame our work, following the *Lisbon Strategy*, has been using the nature-city concept in combining economic, social and environmental aspects in order to create social cohesion and to give back a prior important role to the elderly, women and children.

The nature-city requires in fact, because of its characteristics, the conception of time that comes from the (re)generation of life, which is typical of women; it recovers the wisdom of the elderly, with their slow life rhythm and it helps the sensitivity towards nature that only children and young generations can truly express.

The last tool we want to introduce in order to pursue this *sustainability strategy* is a *designing laboratory for new nature-cities*, which works anticipating the urban ecosystem scenario. This scenario can be seen by introducing in abandoned old villages or in large unsustainable cities, policentral areas or complexes in order to (re)generate conditions for the existence of the nature-city and to give these conditions, in a cultural and environmental heritage, to the next generations.

The laboratory accomplish this task through a variable model of urban scenario, named *Eudossia*, in which the architecture of buildings and of nature synthesize the nature-city characteristics in every single spot of the area, using the ten (re)generative tools presented above. We can conclude, closing a cycle of an evolutive spiral, that the task architecture has in projecting the new conditions for the nature-city, is to discover in which way every different time a specific cultural heritage can assume a (re)generative function, combining with the guarantee of the environment's future.

The origin of all this is in the experience of the *archaeological parks*, of the *Ecomuseums* and of the *open museums*, but today we are trying to bring this experience forward, as we decided to try to explain through our participation in the 2003 Barcelona Biennial. This group of new *products* and projecting tools created a number of integrated applications, above all in Basilicata, where architecture is culture, environment and tourism. It is possible to use the same concepts, the same working categories and (re)generation strategies in order to help the enlargement of Europe, wherever there are the conditions, even if partial conditions, for the existence of the nature-city, and wherever there is a will of (re)generation.

Social and economical impact of our results and possible outcomes

The results of our research produced *impacts* both in Basilicata region (*Sassi di Matera*⁹, *Acerenza-Forenza in Vulture AltoBradano*, Potenza University - with a number of new courses and masters-, etc.) and in other Italian regions (Liguria region: Cinque Terre; Puglia region: Gravina in Puglia; Sicily: Treno.DOC; etc.).

We are furthermore designing and creating some ecological architecture prototypes with no polluting emissions by using bio-construction techniques.

These projects, on which we are still working, are examples of new buildings, of old buildings recovery and renovation of modern ones, and represent a discrete variety of possible users of the nature-city.

We want to study a range of solutions for the different today's society lifestyles. These solutions can range from mini-apartments (only 24 square metres) to small ecological villages. It is only by going back to designing houses, though, that we can establish a relationship with the inhabitants of a certain area, a relationship that is a central feature in the sustainability culture and that is difficult to find in other projects.

Even the issue of energy saving, which is now the pivotal aim of all our efforts, linked to a new vision of cultural heritage, will only gain an incisive international importance when architects will focus their studies on solving the problems concerning the new demands of great masses of humanity.

7. Bologna 2008 | Strategic planning options for today's nature-city¹⁰

Armando Sichenze, Ina Macaione, Maria Italia Insetti

Our study of *nature-city (re)generation ability* began in the second half of the Nineties with the studies on *urbstourism*. These studies concerned sustainable tourism and were carried out throughout Italy with many different results. They are currently generating a great deal of interest. Reference can be made to our reports presented at the 7th (1997) and at the 12th (2003) Italian Tourism Report, at the Biennial of Barcelona (2003) as well as at the 1st International Meeting *Matera nature-city* (2005), in the preliminary acts of the 1st International Meeting on the *nature-city*. The concept of the *nature-city* implies matching sustainable tourism to the problems of cultural goods, on the one hand, as well as to the environment and housing matters, on the other.

⁹ *Sassi di Matera* [from now on referred to as 'Sassi of Matera'] literally means 'Stones of Matera' and UNESCO Committee inscribed the site on the World Heritage List in 1993.

¹⁰ A. Sichenze, I. Macaione, M. I. Insetti, *The discovery of the nature-city and the (re)generative strategies in Sustainable Tourism II*, edited by C.A. Brebbia, F.D. Pineda, WIT Press, Southampton, Boston, 2006.

Our first nature-city strategy focussed on the *Sassi* of Matera. At the beginning of the Fifties, Matera was an old, deserted Italian town. It was then declared part of the Unesco World Heritage, many of its buildings have now been restored. This first strategy is therefore closely linked to the entrepreneurial idea of the '*city-inn*', set within both a natural-archaeological park as well as an urban centre.

Along with this strategy, we suggest a further two (re)generative ideas. The first focuses on the network of '*city-inn park*', projects in large countryside-city areas, orientated towards increasing the complexity value as well as the variety of the ecosystems. The second, based on metropolitan areas, aims at creating '*large parks*' of high (re)generative density, with an example being the *shore-park* (*seafront-park* or *sea-garden-park*).

The 7th Italian Tourism Report and the creation of the Urbstourism and City-Inn formula

The problems of sustainable tourism can be discussed from several different points of view. The macroscopic problem of the unbearable of urban mass tourism is not an ideal start. Whereas the idea that nature has its own laws of sustainability through its *work and beauty* is, with it being almost impossible to define the *sustainable city*. In contrast, many sustainability conditions can be described through the *nature-city Principles*.

A group of researchers, guided by Prof. A. Sichenze, has been working on a project for nearly ten years in the Basilicata region in the south of Italy. It is a relatively simple study with the aim of analysing and preserving the so-called '*Minor Italian cities*'¹¹, which have an intrinsic sustainability. *Minor Italian cities* can be considered to be those small Italian towns/villages, set in the Apennine mountains, surrounded by nature, in which there are conditions of sustainability but at the same time are falling into decay and are currently depopulated.

Entire villages along with wellbeing criteria, houses, monuments, human and collective institutions, scientific and cultural traditions, disappear not only from culture as well as from the protection of their own inhabitants, but also from the world of the *nature-city*. Being that this context was predicted ten years ago, a new strategy was needed, based on an endogenous idea of development. Many years have been wasted not only in demonstrating the feasibility of this idea but also to winning over local resistances. It was therefore necessary to conceive a probationary study based on Prof. Sichenze's earlier *culture of limit* theories in a sustainable city (Sichenze). This study was carried out in the Basilicata region in 1996, with the results being published in the 7th Italian Tourism Report.¹²

A group of relatively unknown small sized towns of Basilicata was used as a sample. The initial results showed that the *Urbstourism and City-inn* formula could be applied, with the tourist (re)generation of buildings being possible, subsequently creating a lasting activity on the tourist market if certain conditions were present. The most important conditions included a strong innovation connected to sustainability, with particular reference to the creation of a new form of tourism far removed from the traditional, conventional and crowded one currently existing as well as the planning of a special, particular type of hospitality that requires houses, landscapes and *co-existentiality: more landscape than city and more houses than inns*.

Urbstourism, otherwise known as 'nature-city world tourism', could be seen as a particular type of rural tourism. Rural tourism takes advantage of the resources readily available in

¹¹ R.S. Levine, *The Medieval Montenero Borgo rescue as a Sustainable Village and an example for Agritop Umbria, Agritop Umbria, Todi, 1993.*

¹² M. Lavecchia, I. Macaione and A. Sichenze, *I prodotti-mercato: l'urbstourismo. Rapporto sul turismo italiano*. Settima edizione, Turistica-Mercury Srl, Firenze, 1997

the country. *Urbstourism* identifies and develops most of the wellbeing resources of the *nature-city* *nature-city*, revealing them through a *discovery practice* thus becoming part of a cultural and environmental heritage.

Urbstourism triggers off a hidden knowledge process, included in the know-how of the *nature-city*, the *true gift* of cultural heritage. The knowledge process has its own *ecological* task, to give *time* back to everyday human life.

This can be achieved by giving people the possibility to spend their holidays in (re)generated places, ancient nature-cities now known as *city-inns*. By doing so, *Urbstourism* not only becomes an economic engine, capable of starting the (re)generative processes within the *nature-city*, but also a way of transforming traditional economic activities (building trade and agriculture) into a tourist and bio-construction economy.

In a *competitive world*, the *city-inn* has to have knowledge of its own resources and know-how of hidden potentialities in order to preserve itself as well as the complexity of its own resources. The *city-inn* could be therefore defined as a *nature-city* ecosystem, with the aim of saving energy as well as reduce the production of waste materials.

Similar to a biological ecosystem, the *city-inn* has to learn how to absorb negative impacts, in order to 'cure and mend' itself, as well as sustain unexpected events, to (re)generate natural resources and 'time'.

Research originality: from the study of Italian small towns to the discovery of the nature-city worldwide

The *nature-city* world is much larger than the mere existence of ancient urban centres set in the Apennines. The definition of *nature-city* does not refer only to depopulating medieval hill-structure settlements but also to the complex combination of an old town centre, a large natural entity (woods, seas, rivers, lakes, mountains, parks), archaeological sites and areas of ecological conversion. The *nature-city* is the *entity* that, starting from an urban centre, spreads itself, assuming the form of a *polycentrism*.

The very same *process* can be identified in several periods in the past history including, the 2nd century B.C. in Greece, during the emperor Adriano's reign in Villa Adriana in Tivoli, in Berlin during the 1920's, in Le Corbusier Unités d'Habitations plan and the Chandigarh project, as well as in the German Siedlungen. Not taking into account standard languages and styles, the same structure can also be found not only on a smaller scale in Basilicata but also in several Italian territories, as well as in entire world regions too.

Analysing several settlement types of different dimensions, in various geographical locations and with different ages, it can be seen that the *nature-city* conditions also exist in the metropolis where they become even more interesting. This is one of the most original features of this study.

To sum up, *nature-city* is so called because its relationship with nature and civilization is the basis of its existence, and in particular of its physical structure. In its initial structure, there is a strong, dominant natural entity (a river, a lake, the sea, a forest, a mountain or a gorge, etc.) and an inhabited centre closely linked to this natural element. Then both the entity and the centre will evolve together. The elements of ecological quality (the mutual dependence, the diversification, the complexity, the cyclic nature of processes and streams of information, the contextual conditions, for example) are then combined with human experience and cultural heritage (notions of knowledge, culture, value, richness genealogy, learning ability, etc.).

A *paradigm of 10 categories* has been drawn up (*centrality, domesticity, naturalness, insularity, initiality, topicity, coexistentiality, time deepness, landscapeness, representativeness*) in order to communicate, understand and narrate the inner characteristics of the *nature-city*, from both economic and cultural perspectives. The *nature-city* can then be divided into two distinct and consequential phases. The first refers to the *nature-city* as an object of consciousness using direct, instinctive and recurring perceptions. This discovery is a *cultural good* in itself. It is a historical and social process, as highlighted by the restoration of the *Sassi* of Matera.

In the second stage, the discovery of the *nature-city* becomes the discovery of a wider event, linked to the consciousness, analysis, description and construction of its applications. The discovery value is coherently preserved in its own lasting abilities and its own (re)generating tools.



Matera Sassi

The strategy of the nature-city tourist ecosystem

When referring to sustainable tourism, a tourist ecosystem can be defined as a connection between the tourists, tour operators, inhabitants and natural capitals. Therefore, as an ecosystem, the subject of this study has its own ordered and rational structure, as well as functions of an inner relationship and outer exchanges, with it requiring all these in order to reach an ever-new balance.

Unfortunately tourist and complex urban ecosystems need technical and bureaucratic controls of their own capacity, with self-reliant instruments therefore being needed.

The *sustainable strategy of development* aims at developing the (re)generating conditions of the *nature-city*, human institution and nature, through the precise planning of analysis, actions and controls based on sustainable principles.

At the 5th Biennial of Towns & Town Planners in Europe¹³, a general strategy was proposed by this research group, in which several tools are used to (re)generate small towns with tourist intentions (*city-inn*) creating a virtuous economic (re)generation circle of endogenous resources value, a type of chain-innovation for different sectors that is used to strengthen the ecological line within sustainable buildings.

The strategy of the *nature-city* development is limited but complete, defining itself in all the operational connections, from basic research, to reference models, intervention methods, technological structures, training and news. All the elements with a defined planning of their own called *nature-city world*.

The tourist demand of this world had to be studied in order to try to understand if it is possible to live in such a world.

In the 12th *Italian Tourism Report*¹⁴ this research group studied the balance of every tourist experience regarding widespread hospitality and how to operate in the *nature-city* world. These experiences are called: *Town-inn*, *House-inn*, *Charming house*, *Country house*¹⁵ or *Bed & Breakfast*, *Rural Tourism*, *Cultural Goods Tourism*, *Park Tourism*, *Urbstourism*, *City-inn* and *City-Network*.

Certain cities and sites, far from usual destinations, can evoke a *world*, not only the *nature-city* world, suitable for the above-mentioned kinds of tourism and receptivity (Newsweek, 22nd of July, 2002).

The difficulties connected to these forms of tourism were easily perceived, which, along with industrialization in southern Italy, risked failing due to wrong political strategies.

Every single type of *nature-city* tourist hospitality currently lacks any form of normative rules and coordination. In particular, the *whole tourist ecosystem* is lacking a liaison network, of which the basic nodes can be considered: cultural goods, environment, tourism and ecology. Several ideas regarding the *nature-city* restoration with tourist intention can therefore be proposed.

These proposals result from direct experience and were developed with the consciousness that two distinct levels of action are needed. The first one is aimed at satisfying specific economic groups interests. It would require a relationship with strong political and economical power on either side, which is normally used for any type of cultural plan in order to gain only the funding, thus emptying the *nature-city* world of its real meaning as well as of its most innovative aspects. The second one, characterized by a *weaker force* and longer, slower actions, is aimed at a cultural project and has to be able to survive on lesser means, using only the territory cultural and natural capital.

The second level of this strategy is the most important for the *nature-city* project. It has to teach the city how to mend the damage done by the first level.

The most original aspect of this strategy is that it is coordinated in two different but contemporary scenarios, an optimistic one, based on the XXI century civilization, in which the politics and the economies of the new strategies succeed in a political plan and a net economy. The other is a pessimistic one, a plan 'B', trying to acquire minimum targets in order to survive in protracted periods of time. According to this scenario, a (re)generating-resilient

¹³ A. Sichenze, *Connecting Architectures, in-between heritage and ecological reconversion: the strategy of nature-city*, 5th Biennial of towns & town planners in Europe, Barcellona, 2003.

¹⁴ M. Lavecchia, I. Macaione e A. Sichenze, *Rapporto sul turismo italiano. Dodicesima edizione in Il turismo delle città-natura*, Turistica-Mercury Srl, Firenze, 2003.

¹⁵ G. Dall'Ara, P. Marongiu, *Rapporto sul turismo italiano. Dodicesima edizione in Report sul fenomeno dell'albergo diffuso in Italia*, Turistica-Mercury Srl, Firenze, 2003.

strategy reveals itself in two directions. One of technological innovation and image-change, the other of selection of the endogenous ecological and bio-building resources of the territory, which have to help during the difficult moments in the development of the city. Are there any examples of this kind of strategy being successful that could be used as a practical reference?

Matera: the nature-city (re)generating strategy through the City-inn

The most interesting example of this (re)generating strategy is the environmental and architectural rescue of the *Sassi* of Matera. This can describe several phases of the *nature-city* (re)generation. Matera is in fact being (re)generated into a new form of housing, through the creation of new cultural places as well as widespread hospitality. These ways of (re)generating, combined with the environment, the archaeology and the city structure, give origin to a *City-Inn*, where *Urbstourism* can be applied, in other words, tourism in the *nature-city world*.

Matera can be considered to be one of the most representative examples of a city where tourism is very close to an idea of sustainable development depending on inner factors linked to both buildings and nature. Matera succeeded due to it changing the destiny of a dying city by remaining a *nature-city*. It is now a symbol. How many cities in the world have been (re)generated in their nature as well as in civilization? A lot of cities have been rebuilt, for example those bombed or theatres of natural disasters. But which city has been able to recover from the shame of its history, and how? Only Berlin has done so much!

The (re)generation processes of Matera and Berlin were obviously based on different circumstances. The subhuman life conditions present in the historical centre of Matera in the *Sassi*, in opposition with an extraordinary human and environmental landscape. From the early Fifties, Matera has demonstrated to have an ecosystem of its own. A self-reliant structure, with (re)generative functions and the ability to make exchanges with the outside world. This paper can not describe how Matera and the *Sassi* became part of the UNESCO world heritage but can only summarize the discoveries of Matera strategy. First of all, the *city of the Sassi* has all the (re)generating functions that are required of the objectives of a sustainability strategy and that restrain (and contain) the limits, as well as the limits of integrity. For this reason the houses, which are the basic entities of a city, have been (re)generated through the contact with both the depth of the earth and the openness of the landscape, so that the *value of the whole* overcomes the sum of its parts.

The accommodation facilities, in this process, turned into *residential domesticity*, as an expression of care and adjustment toward the stability of human institutions in traditions. The resulting *city-inn* is a complex system of diffused accommodation facilities (bed & breakfast, five stars hotels, beautiful mansions, etc.), and of places of knowledge and tastes belonging to a new *taste economy*. This *city-inn* realizes a *topicity of slow-spots* (which encourage people to stop), rich of ethnic, eco-cultural and gastronomic varieties continuously (re)generating and creating a world, connecting the different habitats of the *insularity* of which a city is made up of. These places work in the city as connective tools of scenarios of the *insularity*. Domesticity thus becomes the engine for *co-existentiality*, increasing possibilities and life styles, uncovering inner resources and encouraging external (foreign) exchanges, all typical features of the city own nature.

In Matera, the variety of tourist offers and housing is matched to the historical urban centre as bio-diversity is to the *gorge*, which is the *natural historical centre* of the city. Among

these two centres the operators of exchanges in the ecosystem of the nature-city can be found: the birds (hawks, buzzards, swallows, doves, etc.). They make the environment alive and increase the (re)generating ability of the *landscapeness*.

Eyesight can be used as a *coup d'oeil* to search the *whole* of the landscape, in order to build a net of visibility between the seven known view-spots as well as other, hidden, ones. Through this *coup d'oeil* the city discloses *time deepness*, showing its archaeological sites, ruins, museums, parks, in wider visions of the historical dimension, in which everyone in the city can participate.

The narrative culture therefore (re)generates itself and becomes *representativeness*.

The *nature-city* of Matera has of inner tourist sustainability due to the existence of an archaeological naturalistic park (the Murge), as well as its architectural stratilogicity and urban landscape. These basic parts are so closely tied together that they are inclined at a deeper mutual connection, at times completing each other, while at others limiting each other.

Other Examples of the nature-city (re)generating strategy: the archipelago strategy and the immersion strategy

The *archipelago* strategy comes from the idea that the whole tourist ecosystem is comparable with a net where the nodes are towns and small cities and the network is the mutual exchange connection. These nodes are like *praesidia* (islands) of *insularity*. The force of this strategy is the creation of a *park-system* of resources and reciprocity that can restrain the negativity and allow inner resources to increase in their value.



“Casa Cava”, Matera

The vision of the (re)generative nature-city Ina Maccaione

The vision of the (re)generative nature-city Ina Maccaione

This strategy is aimed at creating *cities*, not villages, with their own services and cultural richness. It also aims at multiplying the relations between the city and its countryside as a form of *policentrism*.

The experience of a journey into a network of cities proposed by *Urbstourism*, is more typical of a *traveller* rather than of a tourist, of someone moved by the spirit of searching, someone who wants to find and explore a new possibility of connections between rare goods, activities, ecosystems sometimes distant, but all with the same *brand image* in common.

In the strategy of the network, where products and services are not near to hand, in order to have the positive effect of the *nature-city* brand on the sale of every good belonging to the same concept of eco-sustainability, all the single centres, as nodes of the net, need to function together as an ecosystem.

In this ecosystem the single urban-rural centres have to be limited in their potential, while they have to give more value to each other, and not only to their products, therefore creating what can be called an *insular world*. In a *nature-city* network, the (re)generating structure, linking the archipelago to its inner world as well as to the external one, is a *Park*, based on the idea of a self-sustainable connected ecosystem.

This theory, proposed at the *7th EC Conference* requires the support of a narrative system capable of showing the *nature-city* cultural heritage.

The eco-museum is a narrative system application and any further development of it is a *nature-city* tourist park, called *Alétheia*, with the archipelago strategy being tested in an *open laboratory*.

The third (re)generative strategy of the *nature-city*, known as the *immersion* strategy, is not a discovery-strategy, it is aimed at finding a sustainability based on a cultural and environmental heritage already existing within the territory.

It is the ecological conversion of an area typified by a highly unbearable urban situation, and it is aimed at creating a natural wellness island in which to be completely immersed, run, swim or just lie in the sun. Some clear examples are natural parks, that can be found in great cities such as Berlin, New York, Rome, Washington, Chicago, Boston, Varanasi, or more recent seafront rescues of cities like Salerno and Palermo, in the South of Italy.



District of Rieselhof, Freiburg, 1980-2000



Atelier Dreiseitl, READ-Gruppe, Solar City, Linz, 1998-2006



Tengbom Arkitekter, District of Hammarby Sjöstad, Stoccolm, 1993-2015



MVRDV, Hagen Island Housing, Ypenburg, 2000-03

Work is currently being carried out on this third strategy in a seashore-park project, characterized by a tourist ecosystem typical of a *nature-city* with architectural, ecological and bioclimatic nodes.

The principles of the three strategies can be summarized as follows: in the *City-Inn* strategy (Matera, *nature-city* strategy) there is the economic idea of a new concentration and integration between housing and tourist accommodation facilities.

In the *archipelago* strategy, there is the idea of a network of *places, products and activities (services)*, referring to a polycentric network that helps the transformation.

Finally, in the *immersion* strategy, there is a new typical centrality of (re)generating flows, supported by bio-building innovation.

The first one seems to be the winning strategy when considering that Matera evolved from an 'unlikely city' as claimed by F.S. Nitti said to a 'farther city'. A symposium was held in Matera in 2005 relating to this concept, (Matera, *nature-city*), in which the paradigmatic evolution of Matera from *rural culture capital* to *nature-city capital* in the world was discussed. The archipelago strategy seems to be the most interesting economic strategy if it could manage to overcome local pride and individualism as well as successfully reform current economic policy. The immersion strategy is the most diffused one, being successfully applied to urban areas, but not really satisfying the needs of the countryside.

The (re)generating strategy objective-functions of the nature-city

Following the first results, a more critical analysis is required. In order to reach a deeper sustainability, the three strategies should be combined, using the *nature-city's* own functional ways. The study of these functional ways was particularly difficult, especially to theorize and communicate to the scientific community, with it being summarised in the *paradigm of ten categories of the nature-city existence forms and identity features*, showed in Prague. The basic *objective-functions* of the *nature-city* strategies are now described.

First of all, *nature-city* has to have an *attractive force*, including the possibility to build. While contemporarily demonstrating a *rare flow centrality* that leads to the ecologic reconversion of productions and spreads the sustainable use of resources.

As a consequence, in all accommodation facilities should be established a domestic lifestyle by which the *traveller* might feel the so-called *feeble strengths* (care, love, for example), possibly perceiving *domesticity* as an element of confidence, looking for a deeper re-balance of his own energies. This way of travelling shows the evidence of a self-sustainable relationship between *the house* and *the nature-city* (in the world and in time).

In the *nature-city*, the relationship with the environmental elements (the sun, the wind, the rain, etc.) and with a recognizable natural entity (the wood, the sea, the river, the lake, the gorge, the mountain, etc.) is identified with *the naturalness*, which fosters the 'enjoying' of *Global Common Goods*.

The tourist ecosystem of the *nature-city* is an *island between islands*, an *insularity*.

Finally, if a city has a continuous will of *going beyond*, an everlasting wish of overcoming the limits, then it is a *nature-city*. In opposition there is the *spread-city* - decline of the *market-city* - in which disordered and unlimited phenomena rule.

The *nature-city* has to be *disclosed* rather than *built*.

Today, cities are *spread-cities* with all their negative features, so there is a need for the (re)generation and re-conversion of the city in the *nature-city* through the disclosure of its potential of becoming a *nature-city* again (as they were at the time of their foundation). At

the same time, human masses, bombed by a disordered, uncontrollable, *aggressive strength*, need the attraction for the *nature-city feeble strength*.

The *nature-city* contains the strategic idea of a cultural heritage, which gives back a *human time* to people, in order to disclose the cultural heritage of every *nature-city*.

This discovery is traceable in museums, in *time use policy* (in particular for women), in slow-place projects and in holiday time.

Therefore the *nature-city* is a resource capable of combining the city wealth and complexity (diversity) with nature. *A Bank of Natural Capitals and Urban Civilization Stock*. A past and future memory bank.

In the second half of the last century, starting from the sustainability idea as a future guarantee, Architectures of the *nature-city* have deposits of human knowledge forms that allow human beings to be in contact with nature.

Past culture could therefore be handed down by the environment only if there will be a safeguard of the *future of the environment*.

8. Algarve 2008 | Eco-sustainability (dis)location¹⁶

Armando Sichenze, Ina Maccaione, Maria Italia Insetti

This paper deals with the problem and experiences of 'ecological heterogenesis of the ends', within an architectural context, by defining the forty year old trajectory of the ecological approach to architecture in a partial and critical balance based on the main results achieved. It results being a context of successes and deficiencies from which a decisive step towards a phenomenological architectural practice of eco-sustainability can be taken, through tests on both the scale of the *nature-city* as well as 'residential (dis)location'. The paper deals with these new experiences in order to show the visions of projects and initial realisations. This research deals with the description of a phenomenological approach to design by two new procedures of direct union in relation with the beauty of sense of limit in architecture. Where the sense of limit is extended both to the availability of the resources and the concept of balance of the ecosystem in which architectures are immersed.

Introduction

Following about forty years of planning and applications, *eco-sustainability* has decisively become an *intentional* part of architectural design and testing of new areas and urban parks aimed at the idea of the sustainable city (e.g. *Vauban* and *Rieselfeld*, Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany; *Solar City*, Linz, Austria; *Hammarby Sjöstad*, Stockholm, Sweden; *119 Houses on Hagen Island*, Ypenburg, Holland; *Benny Farm Reconversion*, Montreal, Canada).

There are no projects relating to entire *eco-cities*, with only China having planned 400. From the organisation of numerous exhibitions dedicated to bioconstructions as well as the study of publicising the sector, it is clearly evident that Europe has a large pool of techniques, regulations and tests of various types capable of finally overcoming the old idea of sustainability, going beyond the objectives set in Kyoto.

However, even though we are now finally equipped with everything, both technologically and administratively, required to establish a productive culture of bio-constructions, we realise

¹⁶ A. Sichenze, I. Maccaione, M.I. Insetti, *The (dis)location of composition: Architecture and Eco-sustainability*, in *Eco Architecture II*, edited by G. Broadbent, C.A. Brebbia, WIT Press, Ashurst Lodge, Ashurst, Southampton 2008, *Eco Architecture II Conference, Algarve, Portugal, 2008*.

that along with an evident global political and managerial delay, there is also a cultural one. It is both in the participation of the population and society, with the causes having been studied at international conferences¹⁷, as well as the training of architects and town-planners who cannot define the normal procedures of a 'sustainable situation', on the scale of both places as well as a 'global ecology, connecting local and global'.¹⁸

There are many interconnected reasons for these delays, but they can essentially be traced back to the problem that phenomenological philosophy had already dealt with in depth, while in Italy, which is connected to architectural experience.

If the world of ecological representation, also scientific, and production creates languages, pre-constructed judgements and partial visions of separate aspects of things, of all the things, including natural things, means that even ecological science cannot escape their specific difficulty.

They are therefore based on 'structures that connect', e.g. eco-systems. In reality, they are applied through *objects*.

However, even though they collect, capture and calculate single relations with the natural world, they paradoxically separate them from these and any other objects, disconnecting everything. Therefore every *object* of the bio-construction is added to the others without interconnecting or integrating them into a whole environment.

When faced with this difficulty, architecture adopts a phenomenological-design approach which 'suspends the judgement (*epoché*) on the sustainability offered as a scientific *fact*. It proposes a return to the ecological phenomenon as a lived world.

All that we know about ecology and sustainability starts from our experience of the world in which ecology is only a secondary experience, without this direct relationship with the things and the world, all our 'scientific bio-constructions' mean nothing.

Our existence and behaviours towards the natural resources *sustain* the world as well as *sustainability* itself. It is therefore a *return to the same things* as well as the same phenomena of nature within the city.

It implies, as asserted by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, that 'returning to this world anterior to the knowledge of which knowledge always *talks about*, and in relation to which every scientific determination is abstract, significant and dependant as the geography in relation to the landscape in which we originally learnt what a forest, a field and a river are'.¹⁹ These things are themselves 'pre-objective and anti-predictive'.

It therefore means not using the scientific, ecological and bio-building knowledge, which we now have, but simply not giving them as acquired. On the other, it implies a return to a world distant in time, the *original* experience is considered to be *behind* today's world and in reference to the *appearance of the sense* of those things today.

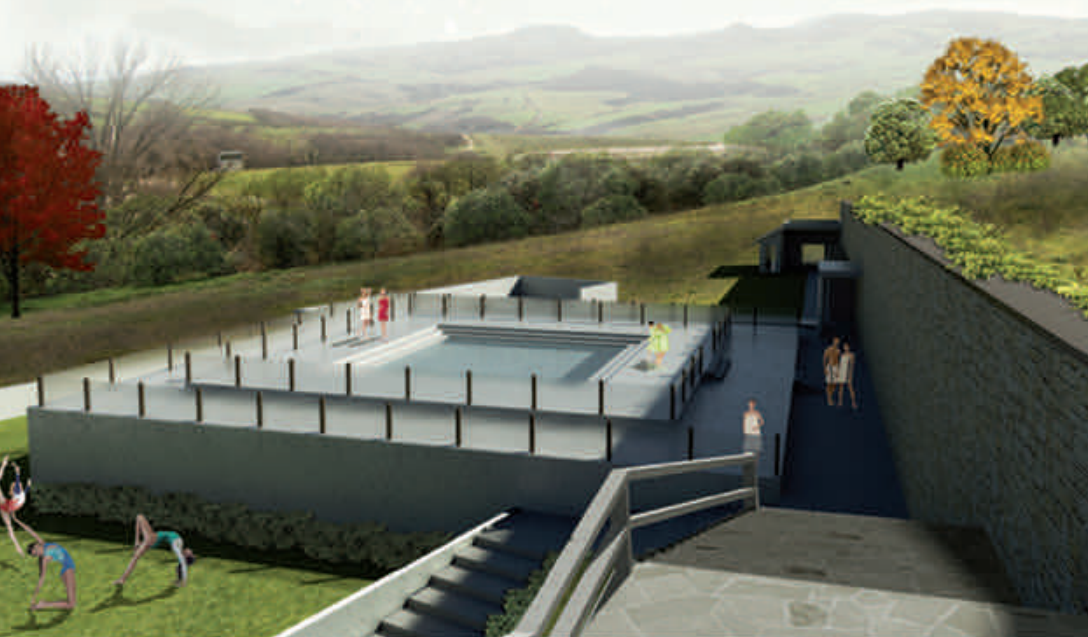
The world, in a phenomenological sense, is not the being in a pure state but 'the sense which transpires from and to the intersection of my experiences as well as those of others, thanks to the grafting of one to the other. It is therefore inseparable from subjectivity and

¹⁷ International conferences such as: A. Sichenze, I. Macaione and Insetti, M.I., *The discovery of the nature-city and the (re)generative strategies. Sustainable Tourism II*, eds. C.A. Brebbia & F.D. Pineda, WIT Press, Southampton and Boston, 2006; A. Sichenze, I. Macaione, M. Lavecchia, M.R.A. Piro, C.A. Fosci, *From cultural heritage to sustainability: architecture and the nature-city. Proceedings of the 7th European Conference 'SAUVEUR' SAFEGUARDED CULTURAL HERITAGE Understanding & Viability for the Enlarged Europe, vol. I-Papers*, ITAM-ARCCHIP Centre of Excellence, Praga, 2007.

¹⁸ M.I. Insetti, *Book abstract and possibile elaboration of the research. Architettura e Management della cittàanatura*, eds. I. Macaione, FrancoAngeli, Milan, 2007.

¹⁹ Merleau-Ponty, M. *Fenomenologia della percezione*, Studi Bompiani, Milano, 2003.





Armando Sichenze, Ina Macaione, Marisa Lavecchia, Annibale Telesca, Projects for a complex of swimming pools, gymnasium and wellness centres within Aletheia masterplan in the countryside around Forenza

inter-subjectivity, which realises their unity through the revival of my past experiences through my present experiences, through the experiences of others in mine'.²⁰

Two new procedures of direct union have been proposed upon which techno-science and ecology have based debates, theories and calculations of the constructed environment 1) genetic phenomenology, in other words the 'discovery with awe' of existing nature-cities and 2) constructive phenomenology, the designing of a new nature-city today, as the 'ecological (dis)location' of an architecture which creates in every part the initial relations and the physical conditions of existence of its 'world of life'.

An *essential idea of the eco-sustainability* of development is therefore becoming part of the design and realisation procedures of architecture, which in paying attention to the 'slow signs of what escapes every calculation' recognises in itself all that is not an expected and usable object, in the relation with nature. It can still create awe. However, not in the sense of the star architects. Instead.

An architecture stupefies in which being beautiful is both the sense of the limit, extended to the availability of the resources of the ecosystem in which it is immersed.

An architecture stupefies in which, in *the transcending way, in a dislocating way, in the city, it (re)generates* without stress the relation with nature, renewing the resources.

An architecture stupefies in which the world of life, passing through the objects produced by ecological industry of sustainability, rediscovers the traces of the things included in an original *ecological complexity* which is never already in departure. And this should never reveal itself, allow itself to be seen, apart from by itself, but in the sense of ecological richness in which 'everything is connected to everything'.

In this sense, there is no 'eco-architecture'.

There are architectures which, every time in their work, still allow manifestations of itself the ecological complexity of the (re)generation of the nature-city, in relation with a new (always new) *sense of the limit* which can be transcended only in a constant (dis)location process.

Architectural planning between place and non-place: Alethèia

We carried out a project which is to be considered a real 'experience' by designing a park known as *Alethèia* (Masterplan of the park project *Alétheia* coordinated by A. Sichenze within C.A. Fosci, M.I. Insetti, G. Izzi, M.R.A. Piro. Projects supervised by: A. Sichenze, M. Lavecchia, I. Macaione, E. Micelli, A.M. Puleo, A. Telesca, V. Telesca with specialised degree thesis by S. Gramegna, M.I. Insetti, C. Miroballi, F. Romano).

It is worth highlighting the project only for the reason that it assumes the exceptional nature of an essay written aside the architectural works of art.

What it tells of the project however it does not say, and therefore has to be anticipated, is the fact that the tourist route through the park is conceived as a continual *transcendence* of the limits of the experience from one place to another of the nature-city: from the entrance to the exit, designing a spatialisation in time (where what space tends to substitute time) in the search of 'where and how to be' (ecological in the future of the world), in a continual *dislocating* experience. However, what it wants to dislocate here is the experience itself of the order of an eco-sustainable world of the nature-city, heterogeneous with the aim of bio-climatic strategies and never carried out by itself, continually re-adjusted with respect to new relations of reciprocity between the places that it constitutes along the route.

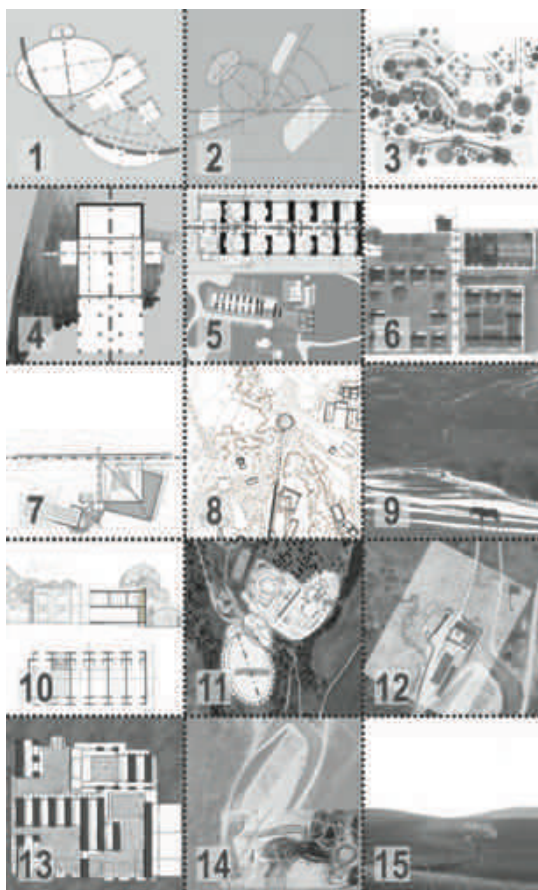
At the end of this journey of the search of a uncovered sustainability, lived and tested, it

²⁰ Ibidem

can be asked whether it is still possible to live differently, living an eco-sustainable also subjected to a continual (dis)location (see also Benoît Goetz, *La (dis)location, Architecture et philosophie*, Editions de la Passion: Paris, 2001). Then returning to the unsustainable city, it is possible to imagine that whether an eco-sustainable rehabilitation can be carried out, this can not occur in such a discontinuous and dislocating process.



The integrative structural connections acting within the inside of the dynamics of the park. Form the top: the TISSUE type, the JOINT type and the FASTENED ZIP type.



The human experience of life in a nature-city made by the host as well as the visitor of the aforementioned park begins at the *Entrance*, passing through the *confining limits* of the park, a winding wall which accompanies the visitor until entering a hypogean structure, the *Door of the falcon (1)*, which opens south and looks over the park from above. It is a project which depends on the welcoming culture of the woman as well as the sense of a rocky architecture which takes full advantage of the bio-climatic advantages of all that is within land. The hypogean space is therefore presented as all involving, soft, fluent, well-looked after, ready to welcome *either one or the other*. The origins of richness are represented in this place, seen in the multiple diversity of the visitors, the guests and the figures which are all united again in the park: the circle, the ellipsis, the cross and the sinusoid.

The second step induces the visitor to abandon their vehicles, upon passing through the *Archipelago 1 (3)*, a discontinuous system of parking areas, which try to hide themselves among the small hills, trees and shrubs. In this way, while on road level, slightly sloping, the vehicular impact is reduced, breaking it up in part, while at the level of the hills, the trees with their thick leafy branches create a continual eco-vegetation. There are open sites on the insular areas where small groups of people can be with each in order to either display works of art or start an eco-museum which will eventually be developed throughout the park as well as inside the grottos.

Then you enter the bowels of the land, in the *Symposium (2)*: the collective space par excellence in which banquets, shows, conferences, cultural and artistic meetings, dances are held, where the guest has a collective experience associated to the representation. In the architecture of this construction the plurality of the various ways of 'being' of the people as well as the points of view, in the representation of the world, is set immediately under the ground, reducing the architectural impact with the landscape, while several other elements emerge in the sunlight. Re-conquering the light, ascending towards a sacred panorama, the *Annunciation (4)*, from where in a sense a much wider panoramic view can be seen and being, in the other, seen from afar by many other places within the park.

The visitor subsequently reaches the *Hamlet (5)*, a round area, based on the rehabilitation of a row of houses, integrated with new constructions which includes a space nearby where a rural-urban experience can be had, in contact with the traditions of the nature-city, in other words the (re)generation of the body, in close contact with water (present in the areas of rural architecture of water, known as *Gymnasium (7)*, with a *swimming pool, gym -and beauty-farm-, stoà*. The area should deal with the problem of reducing the maximum impact, in a delicate point for the equilibrium of the park, in which all the elements should be considered and contained. The various pools have long looked for the most suitable position, dimension and character, finally aligning with the slope, with the solar orientation and the scenes of the landscape, with the fruits of the land as well as the gastronomy of the nature-city. The visitor can either relax on the terrace or feast in the *Banquet Hall*, either staying only for a meal or having a particular residential experience in the ecological houses of the *Hamlet* or *Island 1 (6)*, where there are several different types of accommodation, including that of maximum individuality in contact with the landscape.

The maximum aspiration of civil insularity of a millenarian culture of nature is expressed here, inspired by monasticism, proposed and revisited within a modern context. The project is conceived taking into consideration the volumetric and highly consistent nature of architecture in Basilicata, which relies on noteworthy masonry, re-proposed within a bioclimatic context, in constructive devices, known as *thickness walls*. These are 'nature containers' (water, earth,

sun, ecological plants) which intertwine the tissue of a type of *micro-urbanistic* ecology. From the hamlet, the visitor can walk as far as the *Agorà of the market* (8), a place of *re-departure* and *initiality* of a city which (re)generates itself, becoming enriched with things arriving from the outside, coming from the 'knowledge-taste' of the productive context of its territory as well as through the opening of the relations of the world with other Nature-Cities, in which we learn of other ways of knowledge and *how to live* on its own territories of nature. The tourist appreciates the multiple products of the world of the nature-city.

Above the ridge, there is the '*City of horses*' (9), which cannot be visited but can be seen from a distance. Passing through the '*Green Way*', a linear eco-vegetative and hydro-morphological system, the visitor then continues the walk until reaching the small road-side hamlet of *Thiasos* (10). A complex created as a prestigious residence for cavaliers and *clubhouse*, where a selection of society and products of the nature-city meet: craftsmanship, music, *club*, and places for engaged and married couples.

The *wedding tower*, the last building of the road-side hamlet, looks over *Archipelago 2* (11), the centre of the park. *Archipelago 2* is dedicated to the representation of peace and sustainability, as well as the freedom of nature. It is made up of three very close 'islands', where in the recent past horse races were held.

The areas, on different levels, belong to a unique system. They have now been recuperated and destined to leisure activities. The first, *Apeiron*, the typical open space of a park, is dedicated to leisure activities for everyone.

The second island, *Paideia*, *the city for the young*, is a park, a leisure-ecological park, dedicated to *games of peace* to (re)generate the nature-city.

The third island, *Eleutheria*, subject of an eco-vegetative rehabilitation, situated on the highest level, is a mini wood, also dedicated to leisure activities, in preparation of the experience to be carried out in the *Big Wood*.

Having re-conquered freedom, beyond this centre-limit the park offers three more areas of built environments, which, in addition to the functions of service and residence, proposes three themes for reflection. *Agon* (14), the last 'island' of the archipelago, a small stadium for horse-jumping contests, with all the required services, proposes the theme of *competition*. *Island 2* (13), the small ecological hotel, surrounded by the memory of a typical architecture of the Country-City, on the model of the Charterhouse, ready to dialogue with a ruin re-assigned to a 'postal-station' and which proposes the theme of the relationship with nature as well as the ruins of history, in the *horse-journey*.

Whereas in *Meriston* (12), a space of 'supplies' for the future which is the basis for a Hostel, young people can have the experience of the *frontier*, where everything is possible, but with the knowledge that the future is strewn with ruins.

Finally, there is the *Remetiri* (15) sculpture: taking its measurements from the same in the journey for the search for the truth which helps to live on the scale of the nature-city, signifying that after the experience, we have to look at ourselves in order to understand where we are, in relation to the places visited and the discovery of the *truth* which helps live.

It is only on this scale that every individual can overcome his own limits.

In conclusion, it is worth highlighting that the integrative structural connections acting within the inside of the dynamics of the park are characterised by the following three types: the *TISSUE* type, which tends to propose itself as a *resistant to form complex*, in which the whole sustains a unique form of interconnection and the elements, almost identity, are worth the prototypical quality which sustains it; the *JOINT* type, which is configured as a *composition*

between parts with different characteristics in the which the ideas of everyone tends to be absorbed by every single part which carries out a different role from the others; finally the *FASTENED ZIP* type, which can consists of *repeated and different elements set out linearly* and is suitable in the rehabilitation of the existing.

It is also worth noting that the constitutive elements of each type act in function of the constituent relation not only between the component parts but also among the latter and everything.

9. Reggio Calabria 2008 | The plural city in the historical city centres of the nature²¹

«According to Walter Benjamin, any historical age is marked out by a different idea of city. As in an old fairy tales book, the city I discovered studying 131 towns in Basilicata, seemed to be typified most by nature then by history.

Later I understood that I had discovered a variable *condition of existence* that we can find somewhere else too: in Rome, in Canton, in Berlin, in Bangalore or in Los Angeles. In these cities human beings can think differently about nature according to their own way of being and becoming. And becoming different. *Nowadays cities are nature-cities*. Any existing or conceived city tends to reach the freedom inherent with this status. And freedom starts

²¹ A. Sichenze, *La città plurale nei centri storici della natura*, in AA.VV., *Instant book – IV Forum internazionale di studio Le città del Mediterraneo*, Lirici Editore, Reggio Calabria, 2008. New translation by V. Sichenze with the tit. *The plural city in the historical city centres of the nature*, 2014.



Armando Sichenze, Ina Maccaione,
Detached house in Potenza

when any place in the city can begin to be free. This wish of freedom, today, goes along with the conscious awareness that the future of the planet is at risk and our future with it. Therefore if a city can arise anywhere, inside itself or even outside, then it is necessary that anywhere it tries to *grow and synchronize with nature and world*.

But we still have to learn to think (re)generation of cities as a new relation between the city, that offers the richness of its *historical complexity*, and the nature, that suggests us the *time we need for this (re)generation*.

Complexity and time

Now we have revealed, with a bit of overconfidence, the fundamental secret of sustainability. If sustainability is something that involves the whole planet, if the 'beauty of sustainability' is still to be discovered in terms of humanity and life, then nature-city is always and anyway the 'big' of sustainability we need to learn how to include in the 'small' of our measures to make them more human and civil.

When I discovered nature-city, as a variable condition, I understood, or better I believe I understood, that in geography, in history and in itself, the city springs out (and sprang) many times. It arises with architecture and in different relationships with nature, sometimes together with some worries coming from its existing time .



Armando Sichenze, "LandscapeWay", Potenza city's forerunner projects for greenway system 2009

1 Waterfront - 2 Mundaneum - 3 Long Slope - 4 Resilience Park - 5 Pantano - 6 Sant'Antonio La Macchia - 7 Pallaretamo - 8 Rossellino - 9 Le Quattro Ville - 10 Observatory - 11 Phenomenon Fence - 12 Laboratory of Nature - 13 Nature Fence - 14 Regeneration Fence - 15 Recycle Fence - 16 Cycle Fence - 17 Foucault Center - 18 Media Centre - 19 Limen Sponge - 20 Parco Gate - 21 Viewpoint

But the city arises to go beyond itself. This kind of city is really lacking in this: giving up a part of quantity in exchange for the quality deriving from its 'going beyond'. But we already understood this more than thirty years ago, when we wrote a book about the house in contemporary architecture together with Alberto Samonà and Manuela Canestrari. From that time till today two new, extreme phenomena occurred: somewhere in the world new cities of incredible extension sprung up in a good relation with nature, and, just thanks to this relation, somewhere else some depopulated cities came to a new life, (re)generating themselves.

I will explain it better.

Any kind of settlement, even the most 'distant from the city'- a good example could be the Los Angeles described by Jean-Luc Nancy who raise this 'distance' at the level of the most free and *disclosed and evolved* form of life, is still comparable to this overall idea of city-nature. By his paradigm we can also compare the opposite case of Matera, a city which is impossible to '*disclose and evolve*', an ensemble of beginnings of cities, that, as if they were many Moebius strips, never unfold although they are constantly immersed in spatially fixed elements of biologic and flowing becoming (sun, land, wind, etc.). I mean, any city, even the most historical in the world - Rome, the city where I come from, comes into my mind - is now historically free.

And this can be because it is not History, with its long time, its certainties, its prisons and exclusions, that supports the idea of the city, but 'the natural is'. And by this I'm not going to talk about 'nature' as it was an entity. Neither 'the natural', today, means just water, wind, sun, etc. like in the most naïves views. Today we sale the wind.

Society, culture, economy and even criminality have become 'natural', without any given and predictable forms, as it in Z. Bauman's *liquid modernity*. And it is just in this *natural condition* a new idea of city takes shape, an idea that it is full of worries about the unsustainable implication of liquidity. Knowing not how to find the shape of water as architects we imitate philosophers and we get along trying to sail waters, saying we are on a trip and we don't know where we are going to. But the truth is that we are still stuck in the same place. We can only realise that, for better or for worse, the city of our age is a nature-city: a city that is both so wonderfully nature-harmonized and so liquid and cynically primitive like it is, for example, in some latest fashion architectures. However, in my opinion, in different times and spaces, the *nature-city* is not the whole city but just the parts of it in which we can totally or partially find the *phenomena of its evolution in its origination and in its (re)generation*.

A city can spring out in any part at the same time, as it is for 'cities of foundation', or it can compose, in the very same area, in different places and times, in many beginnings of cities. Evidently we are talking about beginnings of nature-cities, which is the only real hope for our planet to survive. I end this introduction by saying that today the city becomes a city-nature not only when, penetrating in cultivated nature breaks it out to create a new landscape, but also when nature, crossing the city, breaks, divides, limits or permeates the city in order to (re)generate it. But this phenomenon that now addresses the (re)generation of metropolises and megalopolises in the world, composing them and making them plural, in Italy does not take place with enough consciousness and, above all, doesn't give the cultural result it could give in view of the high urban quality of old towns it starts from. I mean that there is a period in the story of the great Italian tradition of studies about the city that is still not totally accomplished. This period is that one of the transition from

the study of old cities to the study of old nature-city, which involves the study of the way phenomena about the existence of a city (those that make it a city) evolve crossing the ordinary city, country or what it's left of nature in a scattered city.

I believe that many people involved, maybe without a real intention, hinder this transition preventing it. On one side there are demanding scholars of old cities, restorers and nearly all historians of cities, who don't give enough attention to nature and to the growing importance it has in the wishes and the problems of mankind. On the other side there are nearly all of the landscape architects, environmentalist and ecologist who believe we can defend nature without studying cities and not only the old cities. In the middle we found designers of new buildings, technologists, building process economists and anyone who believes that, in order to practice their own professions, they can do without both urban culture and mere attention to nature.

In my opinion an extreme complication both in urban analysis and in environmental analysis has taken away too much time from the effort of creating architecture that, just from the plan, gives importance to city and to nature. Since ten among the main masters such as Quaroni, Ridolfi, Samonà, Gardella, Rogers, Isola, Cosenza, Scarpa, Musmeci, Gregotti, have disappeared, Italian school of architecture has never more succeeded to understand the new way of being of the city architecture of our time, losing the huge legacy of knowledge about urban phenomena which where cumulated in old cities and in the suburb that began to cross the open territory.

Differently the setting up of urban parks, which cross great megalopolises, shows a new condition of architecture in nature-city. In our plans of park-city, *landscapeway*, *archo-greenway*, in studies about insular towns and other kind of cities, we can perceive new planning phenomena of architecture due to the fact that some parts of the city move towards the nature or because, vice versa, essentially natural ecosystems cross the city. For example our study and plan on *LandscapeWay* in Potenza is about a nature-city that changes, whereas a natural landscape which crosses the city shows to architecture the places for a new *historical centre of nature* that, differently from the historical centre we use to know, displaces a plurality of places built for this crossing²². Anyone of them receives one of the ten phenomena that can make the old city identifiable (*domesticity*, *naturality*, *insularity*, *centrality*, *topicity*, *coexistentiality*, *temporality*, *initiality*, *landscapes e representativeness*) to let it be crossed by nature and give it back to a plural city as its own new beginning order, from a phenomenological point of view, at its nascent status. In a *methodological* way of looking at it, first of all we need to establish an *eco-minimum* of this order of magnitude: a pedestrian route at the minimal wideness but related with ecological and urban conditions that crosses, touches or shows while it enlarges itself. In architecture this means a careful work on material, constitutional and minimal limits of any constructing act. *Going beyond them* will be, above all, a symbolic act. This could be done by finding a metaphor to transfer in an immaterial way the *big* – as to say the city, the nature, the landscape, the world - into the *small* environment we create thanks to the presence of our body that moves in the space.

The fundamental idea, as you can see, is very simple. It consists in a way of connection, with hypothetical forks, among all the parks meant to be an ecological route in evolution.

²² *Landscapeway – Masterplan for the prefiguration of the green areas reconnection system in the provision of a park for the (re)generation of Potenza city. Enhancement through projects forerunning the city-nature*, client: Municipality of Potenza, 2009.

The concept of evolution implies a *concatenation* of the DNA of the park distinguishing it by 'stretches with hereditary traces' different from the total route. The route is made of *tracts and trajectories*. The first connect horizontally identity making segments and go through 'dilation areas' of different kind, dimension and specialization, organised according to two (dis)locations systems: the *big and the small archipelago*. The latter consist in vertical discontinuous *entities*, in view of each other that, mainly at nighttime, convey messages in the space around, alluding to a modern nature-city of nets.

To nature and to these trajectories has been assigned the *continuity of the park*, which goes through the *discontinuity of green islands of archipelago*. From the analysis of the composition of the route, during its environmental crossing, it results that, while natural elements need maintenance and substitution, in order to give *nature* time for the necessary (re)generation required by sustainability, artificial elements, on the contrary, introduced to make the area usable as a park, are planned with the same logic of *acupuncture*, in fact correspondences between areas and tools are detected, in order to reintroduce, coherently with ecology, the relationships previously cut off between physical elements (both already existing elements and planned ones) and visions (through scenes) of the DNA of the park based on the concept of '*historical centre of nature*'. This action is carried out considering all the implication due to people expectations, so as to retrain off-centre areas that can't be compared with the historical centre of the city. Also in this case, we looked for *eco-symbols* and we entrusted few minimum threshold elements (artificial and natural elements) with the task of interpreting the physical eco-vegetative ecology of places, and correlating them with a symbolical configurations of places and spaces. These configurations have the role



to transfer to nature the feeling, and just the feeling, of the rich complexity of relations caused by the centre of the of the historical buildings of the city. This absolutely *original and innovative* concept of 'historical nature-city centre' in the international panorama, is meant to be the main feature of 'landscape way' and requires it to be completed by the passing of time and not to be a nature (and city) of 'foundation' that springs in any of its determined and foreshadowed elements all at once.

This *idea's brand*, which characterises, even in its look, the originality of the nature-city of Potenza, takes its shape through tracts and islands, according to a *method and a participatory strategy* the success of which we will be able to estimate only by passing of time in a *range* that goes from a minimum of intervention (just enough to trace the elementary outline of the *Greenway*) according to a concept of *ecomimum*, and the maximum of planning valued by analysing thirty plans, which have the aim to protect parks and gardens by qualifying in relation with different activities. Such plans have been catalogued by a list of predictable themes chosen on the base of a worldwide experiences, beginning from an early classification of park population: families, sportsmen, week users (elderly persons, physically disables, children, etc.) tourist, schoolchildren, scholar of nature and phenomenon, etc.

Through planning themes, the 'things' of the park will eventually become shared with the people that will discuss about them and use them in order to identify themselves and become a real 'nature-city landscape population' ».

AN IDEA FOR A SCHOOL OF NATURE-CITY

10. Leiden 2014 | For an International School of Nature-city²³

Armando Sichenze

The reports that follow are part of a series of design experiences in which the relationship between architecture and city, which featured the most significant lines of research of the Italian School of the project, even though divergent in the past, are currently evolving into a new School of the project, in which it is decisive the theme of the emptiness, that has a major importance also in Eastern cultures.

According to this new approach of the disciplines of the project, nature takes on a new centrality. This means that the thought of the *limit in architecture*, as a result of the analysis that goes down from the city to the building, has an opposite correspondence (from the particular to the general) in the *translimitation* that occurs through a sensible *void-making* in the built.

To explain briefly this architectural phenomenon, we need to refer to the theoretical framework of this new school.

The *Italian School of nature-city*, proposed and established twenty years ago together with Professor Ina Macaione, has been developed along two parallel lines of research, that have resulted in a fruitful interchange.

The first concerns the comparative reading of about 150 cities in the Mediterranean Europe, especially of the region of Basilicata, among whom Matera, where over the millennia has

²³ From the report of L. Pavia, V. Autilio, M.I. Insetti, A. Sichenze, *Cities at the Limit, Cities of the Limit: Phenomenal Dynamics Underway in Asian Urban Centres*, Asian Cities: Architecture, Theory and Practice, convened by Dr Gregory Bracken, Sixth Annual IAS-TU Delft Seminar, 9th May 2014 (being published)



Projects for ChangHuaYuan in Guangzhou (China)
Images from I. Macaione, A. Sichenze, *Scrivere architettura. Multiscalarità e progetto/Writing architecture multiscale and design/表述建筑学与构建空间*, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2013

been taking place a close comparison between western and eastern cultures. This reading is useful to discover the conditions of existence of the urban qualities through which a settlement recognizes itself as a city.

The second study, longer and more difficult than the first, concerns the reinterpretation of the thinking about the city of the Italian architects in the late twentieth century.

The two lines of research have in common the focus on the ten categories of the architectural design of the city (domesticity, centrality, naturalness, insularity, initiality, *topicity*, co-existentiality, time deepness, *landscapeness*, representativeness), which will be discussed shortly.

It is worth dwelling briefly on this second search. Because it is less well known outside of Italy and because contemporary historians have overlooked the topic of the *relationship between city and nature*, that is today strategic for the vision of the future of the city in the world, in this era of sustainability. Namely of what during the act of building *sustains*, against nihilism, nature, city, life, the landscape, humanity, the world and the mind. We can start from Aldo Rossi, the Italian architect most famous in the world in the eighties of the twentieth century. Focusing more on his latest reflections than on his initial studies on the *architecture of the city*. That is when we understand the category perhaps most important for the existence of the city in Modernity. This is the *iniziality*. This quality, from Aldo Rossi to Antonio Monestiroli, depends on the theme of the *vacuum*, to which comes the ancient city when it becomes modern. Aimaro Isola and Roberto Gabetti were able to catch in the city, better than others, the category of *topicity*. Seen, however, as a *nascent place* from the mother earth in the 'working progress' of the nature. Ignazio Gardella also contributed in a very interesting way to help people to understand the *topicity*. Considering, however, the theme of the housing according to an idea of *domesticity* that, in the modernity, can be rediscovered from time to time in the nature of a typological difference as a result of the hard work linked to a choice. A lifestyle choice, first, that with Ernesto Nathan Rogers discovers a *phenomenological method* into the project process. And above all, the most appropriate way to deal with that way of being of the city, which is its own representation, recognizing itself in common, experiences. Where 'nature' of the work means 'to be born' in a common experience of the world (from literature to art). Talking about common experience, Carlo Aymonino argues that architecture is 'the urban phenomenon *par excellence*'. Phenomenon of a *multifold* complexity in which, in modernity, is expressed the *insularity* of parts of the city. The urban islands, however, according to Ludovico Quaroni are not just neighbourhoods and 'parts of a whole', but *centralities* that in modernity give rise to an urban *polycentrism* of different sizes. In such spread centralities, to Giancarlo De Carlo, the urban quality depends on the *co-existentiality* of the citizens to be discovered through an inductive participation in the project. In Italy a large series of examples arose about the creation of these centralities. Coming till to today, with a way of thinking similar to ours on the phenomenon of the nature-city that Renzo Piano defines: 'implosive centrality' of the city.

But the first to grasp the current *naturalness* of the city, as *rising in nature*, through architecture, was Giovanni Michelucci, who began to think of *roads* of 'Architecture with nature'. Streets of a 'mind' that, with Gio Ponti, literally *materializes* in architecture.

Other paths will become the subject of a *temporalisation* with Carlo Scarpa who, in the Brion tomb for example, imagines similarities between city and nature in the narration of the experience of *writing architecture*, without words. While it will be *Giuseppe Samonà*

to express this *mind* thinking the relationship between city, nature and architecture in a new disciplinary organization of the 'unity architecture-urbanism', on which we measure today the urban quality of *landscapeness*. That is thinkable in architecture according to what we call 'Method Samonà', proceeding *from the general (of the city) to the particular (of architecture) and vice versa*.

Based on this method, which allows you to discover in every project an urban *esistenza-minimum* of the nature, we founded the LaMuP with Ina Maccaione about 15 years ago. This university laboratory for urban (re)generation today takes office in Matera with the name of *Nature-City_Lab*. It inherits the Italian school of the project, as just described, and is currently working at the foundation of a School of *nature-city in the world*. Where the 'Method Samonà' is applied.

Where, however, for each specific intervention of the construction, from the general guidelines of the city (according to the ten quality measures indicated by the Italian masters) you can follow to the understanding of that particular contribution containable in the discovery of a new *nascent state* of it. Seen as an opportunity for (re)generation, restricted to a particular urban area. And since every architectural project, at a given point in the set, has the mission to include *nature in this new nascent state*, residents and developers learn the mission of a 'becoming city' that is done and fulfilled in nature. It can be said, then, that the nature-city is the one which, descending from a general level, it gradually breaks down in the details of its existence. To open up to what reassembles it inductively, in the opposite direction: going from the particular to a general biodiversity. Made visible by a concrete sustainability. That is by who look at the size of the city from the particular perspective of what, concretely supporting nature, also supports life, humanity, the landscape and the world.

Applying this method in our project for ChangHua Yuan Community, a residential district of the city of Guangzhou (China), in the rising from the particular to the general, biodiversity appears as a phenomenon in the differences of sense respect to the existing. These differences express themselves by gaining *blanks built*, but full of sensitivity for footpaths. On the other hand, the idea of *FareStrada* [GoingDeep] rather than simply building a square (an *agorà*), is to (re)generate 'piecewise' the peripheral areas of the city. This is the slogan that sums up the most shared purposes of the missions of several young architects, not only Italian, who believe in a *vision of nature-city*. To tell the truth, we are talking about a cultural movement born in 2013 in Matera and Palermo, which is now creating a polycentric network of cities worldwide.

The issues on which we are currently debating are made of: 1) strategic scenarios, 2) creative paths, 3) resiliences, 4) the theme of void, 5) roads of migration, 6) (re)generation housing, 7) smart green streets.

The concept of *FareStrada* is really hard to translate into English using just few words, mainly because it brings together different senses. Among the firsts there is the perception of a cultural movement that finds out (phenomenologically) rules and horizons which are not defined *a priori*, but are discovered, opened and revealed throughout the making of sharing paths of experiences. And this 'road' divides and unites, in its narrative development, the long time of the *nature-city* with the very short times of the *smart city*.

11. Bremen-Berlin 2005 | The planning labs of the nature-city²⁴

Ina Macaione, Armando Sichenze

Introduction: our research

I would like to introduce two interesting issues upon which we could found the culture exchanges that, in our opinion, should be able to revitalize the new universities structures that are going to be set up in Basilicata region. Actually, we are talking about a five-years Faculty of Architecture and about an international Ph.D. (research doctorate) which is going to deal with the relationship between architecture and the city throughout phenomenological designing methods.

The first issue concerns a research laboratory which is already working and which is aimed at connecting the 'reading' of the city with new tools and planning methods focussed on the unsustainability problems related to the current economic development, both social and environmental ones.

The second issue concerns the great appeal tied to the scientific interest arisen by the city of Matera, when looked at not only on the surface, but studied in depth. In fact Matera is the city of the south of Italy that will house the academic structures mentioned above.

LaMuP and the study section of nature-city

The *Nature-City Strategy (N-CS)* is supported by LaMuP, a Multimedia and Planning Laboratory with a co-ordination inter-operativeness program called 'Architecture and nature-city', that supplies reading paradigms for nature-city, models and methods to go from the analyses to the projects and setting and pointing out possible paths and announcing solutions. The program is made of the followings sections:

Mediterranean nature-city. This is the basic research that allows to deeply know an *endogenous potential resource* starting from the paradigm of nature-city's constitutive and constructive aspects, in the Mediterranean area. This is the section where the main *force-ideas* come from, better the tools to recognize and anticipate *leading strength points* to get from well-being and the development of a determined area, rediscovering it in the traditional world of nature-city. After all, only starting from a common constitutive base it is possible to consider an economic and ecological connective relationship strategy among global and local;

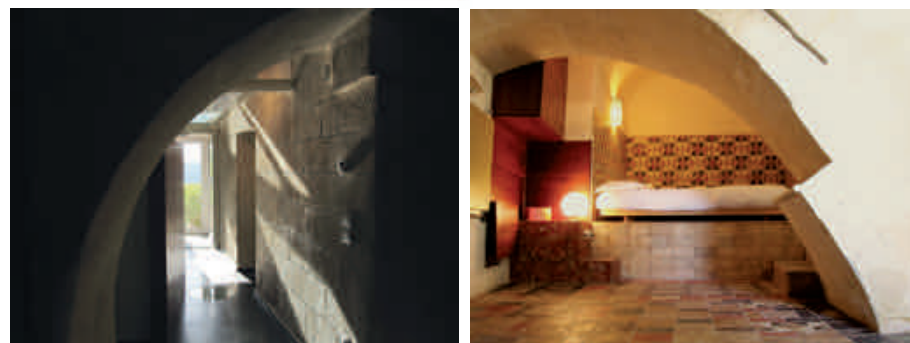
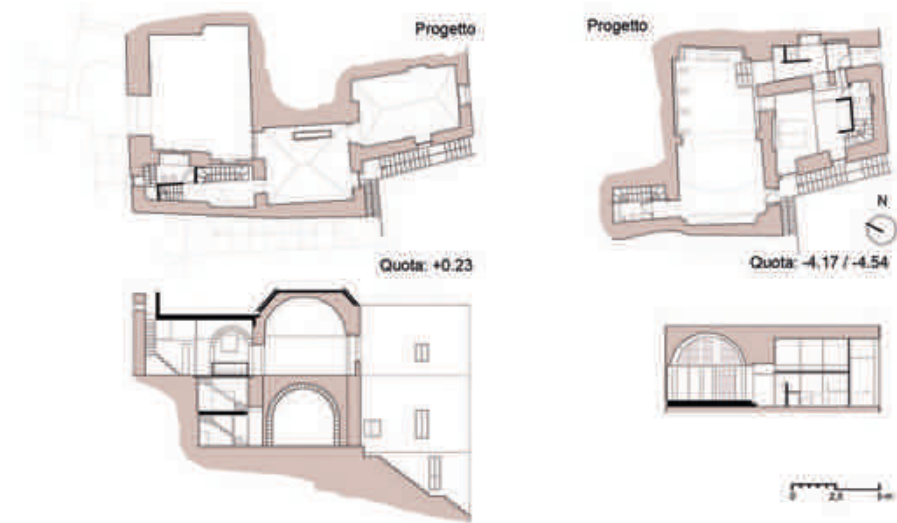
Polipolis. It is a *multimedia model* that makes the local-virtual network explorable, integrating civilization and nature resources. It is an explorative, inter-connective and inter-operative model to understand how the city works in connection with nature (countryside, woods and etc.), in a polycentric net, a geographical landscape and ecological resource networks. This model mainly helps the information and event flows to go across a *multi-reticular structure* installed on the 10 existence 'channels' (domesticity, centrality, naturalness, insularity, initiality, *topicity*, co-existentiality, time deepness, *landscapeness*, representativeness) and then meet in city junctions and landscape, ecological, archaeological, anthropological and etc. places. The opportunity system of a connective relation between force-ideas and global objective of an area where the leading strategy choices are qualified in specific aims, it comes from the mentioned model;

²⁴ *The New Life of Landscape Communities* in A. Sichenze, I. Macaione, *Urbstourism and nature-city*, outline for work meeting with Clemens Bonnén, dean of the Department of Architecture of Bremen, regarding research planning on architecture and the nature-city, on behalf of the LaMuP-Dapit, for the period 2006-2010, Berlin, 7th May 2005.

Eudossia. It is the *planning model* of the city-park and country-city ecological transformation. *Eudossia studies the re-production ways* of the city and allows a multi-scalar, multi-thematic and multi-aim representation of alternative planning phenomenology in ecological *re-conversion processes* of the built environment and the city to make nature and culture conditions. *Eudossia* takes into considerations 'co-evolutions' of *building-na-*



Armando Sichenze, Ina Macaione, "description" of Matera, 2014



Armando Sichenze, Ina Macaione, Renovation of a house in Sassi, Matera 2007-08

ture-city in various scenarios of nature-city where the different possible general architecture connections are defined and they show the development of past and future nature-city. This ecological architecture hosts the logical connections of nexus conditions linking reproduction process parts and phases of the urban phenomenon. For instance main aims are divided into functional objectives, above main aims and dependent ones, after main aims. *Alétheia*. It is the second planning model of the city ecological transformation. It studies the re-production ways of the city, different from historical city, starting from individualization of subjected structurality. As *Eudossia*, *Alétheia* takes into considerations 'co-evolutions' of building-nature-city in various scenarios of nature-city with particular attention to relationship with nature. In particular by *Alétheia* we can study integrative structural connections acting in operation of composition processes not only between parts of constitutive elements of every single type but also between these parts and the whole; *Ecological Bank of Architecture*. It is the bank of architectural planning models. Architecture was not born to destroy but to build the physical boundaries in which human and natural

The vision of the (re)generative nature-city Ina Macaione

The vision of the (re)generative nature-city Ina Macaione

beings should decorously live. Architecture can add knowledge to ecology. This knowledge comes from critical awareness of constitutive and constructive limits and orders for the living concept today. An ecological and urban (re)generation will make buildings be constitutive parts of a vast nature and culture ecosystem. Within architecture of nature-cities, there are deposited, 'reified' and institutionalised, several human knowledge forms that have relieved human beings from being in relationship with nature. These architectural knowledge concepts are very important for the strategy of nature-city; once they are in a development bank, it enormously reduces time, uncertainties and risks of a sustainable planning.

Urbstourism. It is the tourism of nature-city. It has several roles (an economic engine, knowledge-enjoyment method of nature-city, quality (re)generation model to create a city-inn and etc.). The idea of a new well-being way of the nature-city is enriched by a *knowledge and integration resource method* which (in summer tests) discovers a new life style in the civilization of the XXI century that works as an 'immune system' for it. Within the nature-city's strategy the urbstourism re-establishes the connections between native population and foreigners, making them recognise the small human and collective institutions of nature-city.

Matera: the nature-city (re)generating strategy through the City-inn

The discovery value is coherently preserved in its own lasting abilities and its own (re)generating tools. An exemplary case-study is represented by the old area of Matera (called *Sassi*, which means 'stones') nature-city where a landscape community lives as resident and as guest without suffering styles and exogenous patterns. In this society the idea of ecology still able to grasp and to increase the value of the existing world is taking shape. vits parts are made of architectures. These are always new beginnings of the city, which don't ever have end in themselves. Besides when we try to observe the *Sassi* in a *coup d'oeil* we understand that the beginnings of nature-city have their end only if we consider the nature of the *gravine* and of the *Murge*. This is the *arcanum* of the *Sassi* and it is a gift: the architecture lesson Matera gives to architects.

As we previously said, the most interesting example of nature-city (re)generating strategy is the environmental and architectural rescue of the *Sassi of Matera*. This can describe several phases of the nature-city (re)generation. Matera is in fact being (re)generated into a new form of housing, through the creation of new cultural places as well as widespread hospitality. These ways of (re)generating, combined with the environment, the archaeology and the city structure, give origin to a *City-Inn*, where *Urbstourism* can be applied.

Matera can be considered to be one of the most representative examples of a city where tourism is very close to an idea of sustainable development depending on inner factors linked to both buildings and nature. Matera succeeded due to it changing the destiny of a dying city by remaining a nature-city. It is now a symbol. How many cities in the world have been (re)generated in their nature as well as in civilization? A lot of cities have been reconstructed, for example those bombed or theatres of natural disasters.

In the historical centre of Matera, in the *Sassi*, subhuman life conditions coexist in opposition with an extraordinary human and environmental landscape. From the early Fifties, Matera has demonstrated to have an ecosystem of its own. A self-reliant structure, with (re)generative functions and the ability to make exchanges with the outside world.

The city of the *Sassi* has all the (re)generating functions that are required of the objectives of a sustainability strategy and that restrain (and contain) the limits, as well as the limits

of integrity. For this reason the houses, which are the basic entities of a city, have been (re)generated through the contact with both the depth of the earth and the openness of the landscape, so that the *value of the whole* overcomes the sum of its parts.

The accommodation facilities, in this process, turned into *residential domesticity*, as an expression of care and adjustment toward the stability of human institutions in traditions. The resulting *city-inn* is a complex system of diffused accommodation facilities (bed & breakfast, five stars hotels, beautiful mansions, etc...), and of places of knowledge and tastes belonging to a new *taste economy*. This *city-inn* realizes a *topicity of slow-spots* (which encourage people to stop), rich of ethnic, eco-cultural and gastronomic varieties continuously (re)generating and creating a world, connecting the different habitats of the *insularity* of which a city is made up of. These places work in the city as connective tools of scenarios of the *insularity*. Domesticity thus becomes the engine for *co-existentiality*, increasing possibilities and life styles, uncovering inner resources and encouraging external (foreign) exchanges, all typical features of the city's own nature.

In Matera, the variety of tourist offers and housing is matched to the historical urban centre as bio-diversity is to the *gorge*, which is the *natural historical centre* of the city. Among these two centres the operators of exchanges in the ecosystem of the nature-city can be found: the birds (hawks, buzzards, swallows, doves, etc.). They make the environment alive and increase the (re)generating ability of the *landscapeness*.

Eyesight can be used as a *coup d'oeil* to search the *whole* of the landscape, in order to build a net of visibility between the seven known view-spots as well as other, hidden, ones. Through this *coup d'oeil* the city discloses *time deepness*, showing its archaeological sites, ruins, museums, parks, in wider visions of the historical dimension, in which everyone in the city can participate. The narrative culture therefore (re)generates itself and becomes *representativeness*.

Liwan Lake Park, Guangzhou



The *nature-city* of Matera is in possession of inner tourist sustainability due to the existence of an archaeological naturalistic park (the Murge), as well as its architectural stratilogicity and urban landscape. These basic parts are so closely tied together that they are inclined at a deeper mutual connection, at times completing each other, while at others limiting each other.

Other Examples of the nature-city (re)generating strategy: the archipelago strategy and the immersion strategy

Along with this strategy, a further two (re)generative ideas are shown. The first one, we could define it as the *archipelago* strategy, comes from the idea that the whole tourist ecosystem is comparable with a net where the nodes are towns and small cities and the network is the mutual exchange connection. These nodes are like *praesidia* (islands) of *insularity*. The force of this strategy is the realization of a *park-system* of resources and reciprocity that can contain the negativity and allow inner resources to increase in their value. This strategy, as the city-inn strategy, is aimed at creating *cities*, not villages, with their own services and cultural richness. It also aims at multiplying the relations between the city and its countryside as a form of *polycentrism*.

The third (re)generative strategy of the *nature-city*, known as the *immersion* strategy, is not a discovery-strategy, it is aimed at finding a sustainability based on a cultural and environmental heritage already existing within the territory. It is the ecological conversion of an area characterised by a highly unbearable urban situation, and it is aimed at creating a natural wellness island in which to be completely immersed, run, swim or just lie in the sun. Some clear examples are natural parks that can be found in great cities such as Berlin, New York, Rome, Washington, Chicago, Boston, Varanasi or more recent seafront rescues of cities like Salerno and Palermo, in the South of Italy.

Work is currently being carried out on this third strategy in a seashore-park project, characterized by a tourist ecosystem typical of a *nature-city* with architectural, ecological and bioclimatic nodes.

The principles of the three strategies can be summarized as follows. In the *City-Inn* strategy (Matera, *nature-city* strategy) there is the economic idea of a new concentration and integration between housing and tourist accommodation facilities.

In the *archipelago* strategy there is the idea of a network of *places, products and activities (services)*, referring to a polycentric network that helps the change.

In the *immersion* strategy, there is a new typical centrality of (re)generating flows, supported by bio-building innovation.

The first one seems to be the winning strategy when considering that Matera evolved from an '*unlikely city*', as Nitti said, to a '*farther city*'. A symposium was held in Matera in 2005 relating to this concept, (Matera, *nature-city*), in which the paradigmatic evolution of Matera from *rural culture capital* to *nature-city capital* in the world was discussed.

The archipelago strategy seems to be the most interesting economic strategy if it could manage to overcome local pride and individualism as well as successfully reform current economic policy.

The immersion strategy is the most diffused one, being successfully applied to urban areas, but not really satisfying the needs of the countryside.

In the setting of these strategies a *landscapist community* is emerging. It expresses a culture of cultural and environmental goods heritage. This society – and this is the most

significant aspect – *goes on exchanging* an own landscape without suffering styles and exogenous patterns. In this society the idea of ecology still able to grasp and to increase the value of the existing world is taking shape.

12. Guangzhou 2009 | The Italian School of Nature-city in China²⁵

Ina Macaione, Armando Sichenze

Collaboration

Since May 2010 Architect Vera Autilio, Architect Marianna Calia, Engineer Maria Italia Insetti, PhD students in *Architecture and Urban Phenomenology* of Faculty of Architecture (University of Basilicata) have been living in Guangzhou. They are currently working in collaboration with the Architect Wang Jian (Guangzhou Urban Planning & Research Centre) on both the city of Guangzhou and the three designated areas (*ChangHua Yuan community, GuangFu South Road and HuangPu village*) and, more specifically, the area of ChangHua Yuan community (a case-study of their PhD thesis). The collaboration, therefore, is already on the go, and, is involving two undergraduates students in architecture at the SCUT (*South China University of Technology*), Lee Tianhang (李天航) e Zhao Tingke (赵庭珂) as included in Item 1. of Matera Card.

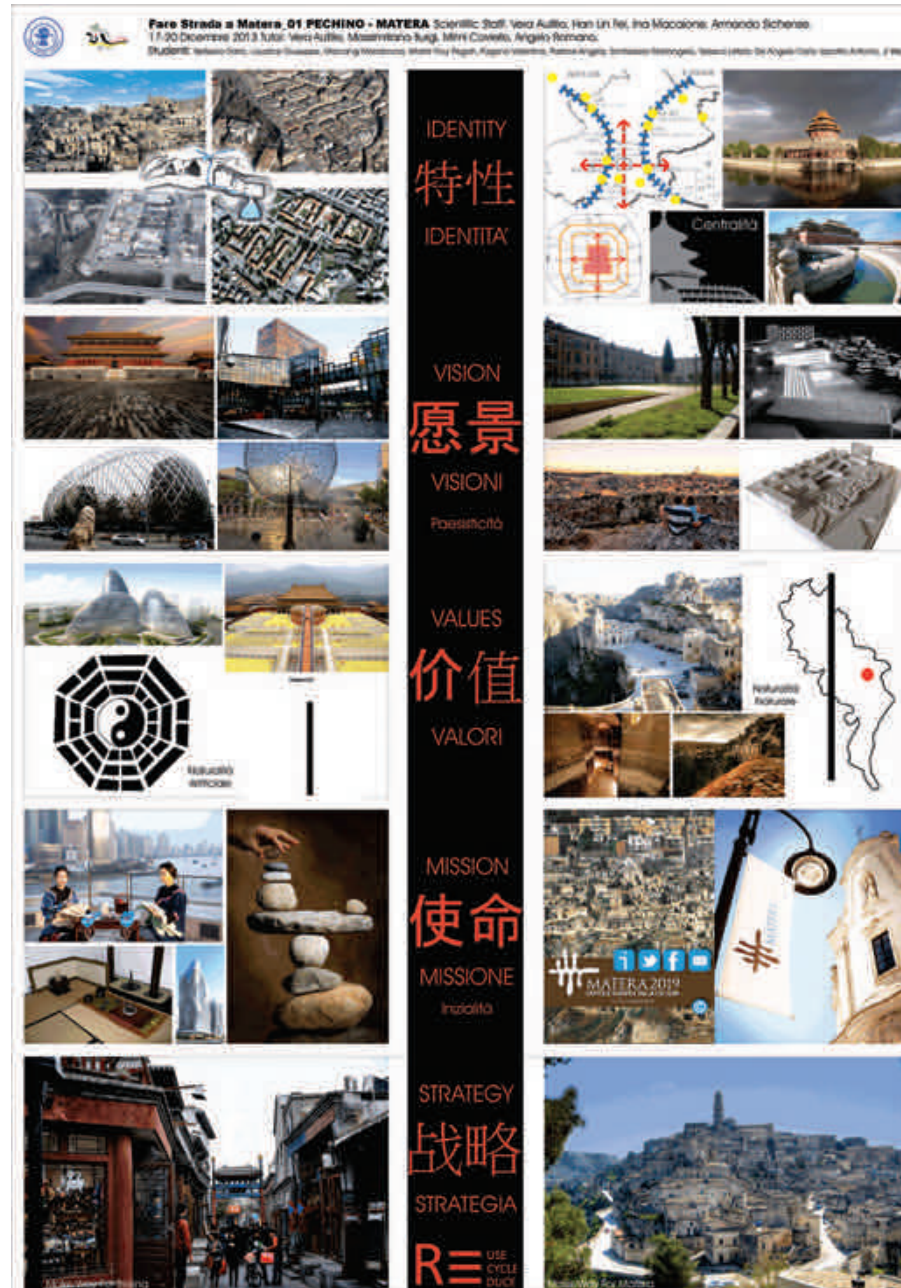
Working schedule and programme organisation

The studied urban areas of re-evaluation consist in 'build-ups', 'complexes' of closed and open (external) areas, in all of which there are older and more recent buildings. These are, in all, often decaying, unsustainable and not sufficiently evaluated as old, modern and natural. The planning main aim (measurable in terms of expected results), in each intervention area and in reference to such a group (old-natural-modern) will be to find a linking *Concept*, which will be able to transform a list into a multiplication where the value of the entire entity will be higher than the sum of each single element. By showing the link between what already exists and what is totally new, between the old and the modern, between the past and the future, the concept will give a new value of *relationship originality* to the richness of different elements of the built environment within a sustainability framework. This unique feature, which is so important in retelling the history of Guangzhou, will attract tourism and investors. Basically, this concept will be applied mainly to new buildings, replacing the old ruins.

The Faculty of Architecture of the University of Basilicata (A. Sichenze, N. Cardinale, A. Conte, A. Colonna, M. Laterza, Ina Macaione together with V. Autilio, M. Calia and M.I. Insetti) is working in *ChangHua Yuan community*.

It is located within a residential area of Liwan District in the southwest of the centre. The ask for intervention comes from the municipal district of GUP&RC and it requires a restoration of a traditional plan that has to be integrated with an (re)generation and requalification one, which should also include the building replacement, at the same time.

²⁵ I.Macaione, A. Sichenze, excerpt from the technical report of the 'Memorandum of Understanding of the Urban Quality Sector' for the regeneration of the ChangHua Yuan Community and of the Huang Pu Village of the city of Guangzhou between the Guangzhou Urban Planning & Research Centre (GUP&RC) and the National Conference of the Deans of the Faculty of Architecture (South Mediterranean Platform: University of Basilicata, University Federico II of Naples, Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria, II University of Naples_Aversa).



The starting phase of the study (understanding and getting to know the area through photos, analytical and cognitive drawings) used the 10 phenomena of existence of the nature-city (A. Sichenze).

The city of Guangzhou, which lies on the Zhu Jiang (Pearl River), has a strong and clear insularity. In this context we can define each constituent island of city as the relationship between an identity nature and a local nature more extroverted and addressed to the outside world.

The area is part of a sampling of insularity in which each 'island' shows a different level and a different intake at different developmental levels of permissible innovation. In this frame six different types of urban aggregates (low compact residential towers, skyscrapers and towers, residential compact cartons, laminated self-sufficient residential buildings with green space in the foot shed built villages and cities) are found. To which urban countryside must be added.

The area under investigation is in the sampling of the scattered built up one; the present building patrimony can be subdivided into five different types of buildings: colonial villas characterized from a good aesthetic quality (of age comprised between 1912 and 1970), multi-family housing with the forehead road tight and the blind side much deep one in the lot and from the different characteristics aesthetic (datable around 1950/1970), recent single-family housing much with low aesthetic quality (of age comprised between 1980 and today), multi-storey residential buildings, generally of insufficient aesthetic quality (of age comprised between 1980 and today) and then public buildings (from 1950 today). From a methodological point of view we are working on a parallel multiscalarity between urban level and architectural design on a side, and with an approach correlated between both the bio-climatic and eco-vegetative points of view and the landscape one from the other. The strategic aim of the proposal is the understanding that the requalification of the city, compared to the eco-sustainability problems, consists in discovering just new initial states of nature-city using genealogic and phenomenological methods.

The designing experience arises and develops with the clear intent to assume a 'prototypical' meaning. This means that it should have a flexibility that can allow it to be applied even in other areas of the city with similar features (other nature-cities).

The study has oriented different choices, – without putting nothing before the phase of structural restoration of the buildings whereby necessary – those which have lead to the Guangzhou method included, following the next three main directions:

1. Identification of the crucial things: *eco-symbols* and *representativeness_restoration of the streets for representative and eco-symbolic purposes*. Here the design is about the requalification of fronts of most interesting buildings, removing various building superfetations that dim the aesthetic quality that also are present in different way in the area, and the contemporary restoration of the relative inner within;
2. *Landscape 'introjection' requalification* of open outside places with the purpose of bringing in some pedestrian landscapes. This operation, very much involving *landscapeness*, implies the creation of a green path that reaches the point of maximum *representativeness* in the only public space of the neighbourhood used by the inhabitants for social purposes on the south margin of the same area as an edge.
3. *Going beyond and sustainability_building restoration for the sustainability of the inner median terminals of the lots*. The operation consists, whereby possible, in the demolition of the backs of the buildings (above all those having longitudinal development) in order to guarantee a better ventilation and a consequent reorganization of the inner atmospheres and, at the same time, to allow the permeability – even a pedestrian one - of the compact and otherwise not much ventilated blocks.



To these steps of the Guangzhou method, then, correspond also interventions aimed at increasing the main services within the area. In particular we are referring to the planning of a parking silos characterized by the highest flexibility. This feature is going to make it possible for it, in the future, to face a different using ways, preserving though both its own sustainability features and its own aesthetic qualities.

Study areas

GuangFu south road (the area of the textile wholesalers in the Liwan District): Carlo Manzo Delegate of the Dean of Architecture of Aversa;

ChangHua Yuan community (the area of the upper middle-class in the Liwan District): Armando Sichenze, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture of Matera;

HuangPu village: Francesca Fatta, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture of Reggio Calabria
The appointed coordinator of the Platform is Francesca Fatta, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture of Reggio Calabria.

The South-Mediterranean Platform will take part to the Forum, which will be organized from Chinese partners. The previewed elaborated ones are cards of plan eventually accompanied from some concept or scenes guide of advance of some plan pilot already characterized.

As we previously said, the collaboration with Chinese students in China is already started thanks to the presence of Lee Tianhang and Zhao Tingke, the two graduates in Architecture of the South China University of Technology that, at the moment, are working with arch. Wang Jian, who is abroad tutor of the three PhD students in *ARCHITECTURE and Urban Phenomenology* of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of the Studies of the Basilicata.

The collaboration with Chinese students in Italy is not, instead, still active.

1. Background-frame of Guangzhou with urban typology
2. The area read through photos, analytical and cognitive drawings: Buildings classification in ChangHua Yuan community; Single houses, Colonial Villas, plurifamiliar houses, multi-storey residential buildings, public buildings, business activity, good aesthetic quality, of insufficient aesthetic quality, to demolish, to be retrained, good conservation
3. Suspension from background

13. Beijing 2014 | Regenerating Hutong-Siheyuan²⁶

Ina Macaione, Armando Sichenze

Our project starts from the programs of the Nature-City_LAB'-DICEM-Matera, including workshops, lectures and site visits related to the laboratories of urban (re)generation shared with the council within the strategic plan of the city and with some guidelines for the application of Matera as Capital of Culture 2019 and with the workshop 'Making Road to Matera' where Matera prepares to become the hub of an international collaboration and design workshops on the urban (re)generation. The project intends to show the results of a series of training and research activities with the Jiaotong University of Beijing, inaugurated within the workshop 'Making road Matera-Beijing', held in Matera

²⁶ From the working programme for the organization of the design workshop 'Urban Visions, strategic images in constructing new worlds', scientific coordination of A. Sichenze, Han Lin Fei, I. Macaione, V. Autilio, JiaoTong University, Beijing 2nd-14th July 2014. The workshop was part of the series of workshops of the nature-city LAB'-DICEM_Unibas Matera 'FareStrada', coordinated by A. Sichenze, I. Macaione, October 2013-December 2014

from the 17th to the 20th December 2013. The latest design workshop was held from the 2nd to 12th July 2014 and involved a group of teachers, young researchers and students at the University of Basilicata, in Beijing in the workshop 'Urban Visions, strategic images in constructing new worlds', organized by prof. Han Fei Lin, of the School of Architecture and Design at Jiao Tong University and from the PhD Vera Autilio. The general objective of the work between the two schools of Architecture, Matera and Beijing, is the understanding of the phenomena of the great changes in the cities and the construction of possible scenarios in the future. In particular, in China, there is uncertainty about the fate of the big cities, especially those of new foundation, and more on sustainability issues. Currently Beijing, the international showcase for the entire People's Republic, is affected by a 'socio-spatial' transition of great political-administrative interest. Interesting studies on these issues have recently been carried out by Chen Fei, who analyses - from the history of the urban Beijing - with great attention to the urban plot correlating social and anthropological themes, and by Han Lin Fei who goes deeper, starting from study of the latest achievements in the Chinese capital, on the issues of the relationship between architecture and public space. In both studies, it should be noted - between the lines - the approach between the existing and the history. We do not believe it is only 'revisionism' - as evidenced by the many television series of historical settings and costumes that flood the Chinese broadcasters - because of the effort that the Chinese company, all characterized by a pragmatic cultural attitude, is doing to 'build' a new point of view of the relationship with their millennial past, to the prospects for the future. This processing will undoubtedly be very different from the Western world, but we believe that the results will have a major influence also beyond the East. So on that basis it was decided, after the first workshop and comparison between two physically very different urban realities, Matera and Beijing, which took place in the first half of December of 2013 in the city of the *Sassi*, to focus the second design workshop - held in the first half of July 2014 in Beijing - on two central themes. The first theme was the major junctions on the road intersections, which take place on several levels and are also often intermodal poles for large urban complexity, sometimes unsolved even from a point of view of ease of living the spaces. The other theme, the most interesting for us, was the fate of the last pieces of Hutong characterized by the residential type, very fragmented today, of the Siheyuan. These have in common with the history of the *Sassi* of Matera the fractionation, the forced assignment and a residential use beyond the space capabilities. With the subsequent occupation of the courts through inconsistent accretions with hygienic and life conditions impossible and reminiscent of the descriptions of Levi about the *Sassi* of Matera. After the big change in the mid-80s of last century in the Chinese economic policy, it was chosen, to respond to the growing housing needs, to replace the low-density constructions of the hutongs with high-density housing, destroying much of the historic fabric in Beijing. In other respects, today we recognize the value, not only historical, but especially environmental and aesthetic of Siheyuan. But the theme of urban (re)generation of these parts has difficulty being faced socially and politically by the ruling class of the municipalities. Beijing today begins to 'look' at the problems of the exploitation of the 'last hutong,' citing a famous book by Gregotti. We hope that something similar will happen in Matera, thanks to the international comparison, urged by a small group of local intellectuals, starting from the mid-70s, and was able to start the process of development which has meant that now the 'shaming' city is a World

Heritage Site. This is the programme proposed to the Chinese colleagues, which takes place in three phases, and is being implemented.

Step A Reading the city-nature of Hutong-Siheyuan in Beijing through a conceptual map consists of 10 concepts of recognition of the urban qualities of a city, built-in 3 keywords of urban (re)generation as a function of the vision of a nature-city/smart-city.

Step B Proposal for a sustainable way of improving *sustainability*. That is what (re)generates in living and architecture in relation to nature, *sustaining* life, humanity, city, landscape, world and thought to have a vision of the future of the city-nature.

In support of the proposal will be referred to: 1. *FareStrada*. program of the foundation of the school of the nature city in the world. starting from the conditions of the italian school of architecture of the city. 2. critical evaluations of all project participants (68) in the architectural competition for the Milan Expo 2015, totally focused on the theme of sustainability. The evaluation of the project coherence compared to the concept of the competition for the Expo was formalized in 5 groups depending on the quality level.

Group A: Coherence with the concept. A 'vision of nature' enters the architectural detail and re-writes the composition of the spaces of the palace, and opens up the processes of urban (re)generation.

Group B: Coherence with the concept. An 'idea of nature and landscape' enters the architectural detail, but it does *not re-writes* the composition of the spaces of the palace opens up the processes of urban (re)generation.

Group C: The strong typological-structural cartesian prevalence of the '*image of the palace*' is disconnected from the re-writing of the architectural details and limited to varied composition of the interior spaces. This prevents the project writing from being traced back incisively on the redefinition of the outer building to raise awareness of the most biodiversity of nature.

Group D: A renewed enveloping composition, inspired by a partial view of nature (only liquid or only rocky, or simply dull, etc.) is separated from the variable composition of the interior spaces. This prevents the project write to come down to the scale of the architectural details, recomposing and articulating especially, significantly, the narrative of biodiversity (re)generative spaces minors.

Group E: The volumetric decomposition of the 'type of the Palace' does not learn to be sensitive and to feed in an interesting way in the relationship with nature.

Step C Proposal for a design method to relate architecture and the city.

We refer to 'Samonà's Method' proceeding *from the general (the city) to the particular (architecture) and the opposite*. The method has been revised to make it easier and faster, grafting the *conceptual map* of the (re)generation of the city-nature. This vision guides the process of decomposition into elements of Hutong-Siheyuan to accommodate, in architectural details, directions (re)generating. These came from the new relationship with the nature, induced by new and different ways of living up to our own times. The project process will be through writing methods illustrated in the book: I. Macaione, A. Sichenze, *Scrivere architettura. Multiscalarità e progetto/ Writing architecture multiscale and design/ 表述建筑学与构建空间*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

14. Shanghai 2013 | Eight questions about resilience²⁷

Maria Italia Insetti, Vera Autilio

Topic _ Housing and community development _ urban planning. Resilient Policies in a city Purpose: Identification of reading and measuring phenomena for the resilience of cities, before a critical event may occur; intervention and management policies addressed to keep a "resilient habit".

What is resilience in urbanity fields of interest?

Europe and the world are currently experiencing one of the most serious economic crises ever occurred and architecture knowledge is one of the most involved, on several fronts, in this precarious situation. In fact, if on the one hand, today, very few interventions from scratch concerning architectural works and interventions to re-generation and/or reconstruction and renewal are increasingly rare because of the impossibility of payments, it is true, on the other hand, that architecture is one of the few disciplines that is better able to respond to the precariousness of the moment.

So, alongside the impossibility of building there is a need which was identified by several parties, to ensure that the cities themselves become laboratories of collective experiments in which all citizens are called to participate actively creating opportunities for self-directed life and job.

But what is the city that has these capabilities?

In our research, a city that meets this requirement is a *nature-city*. A city that, as Sichenze explains, is com-posed by the principles of town; a city that possesses within itself the germ of the "new beginning" and hence a vital character that, beyond the difficulties of surviving the moment, allows to resist the devastating impacts that are putting a strain on the world's urban economy.

How does resilience manifest itself and how to measure it?

To measure the resilience of an urban reality or identify valid indicators that can help the researcher in this task is fairly complex and articulated and passes to the consideration of aspects really varied and far between that take into account numerous features livability of a city. Resorting once again to a definition of a biological nature, you might say that architecture, especially in a city, it is systemic as an organization that tends to be "autopoietic". This definition merges with that of resilience: it is once again the identification of a system that has an affinity with the biological and looking to the city as an organism that can grow and eventually collapse or answer, in a burst of life, to a traumatic moment.

Are there phenomena through which we can read and measure resilience?

What conditions must be met in order for a city can be defined *nature-city*?

We use once again the work of research and study by the group "Architecture and Nature-City" to find out that there are 10 urban phenomena of reading that also allow us to assess the degree of resilience of a city.

They are Naturalness (linked to the nature), Landscapeness (linked fo the earth), Representativeness (linked to the city), Domesticity (linked to the house), insularity (linked to the boundary), Co-Existentiality (linked to ecology) , Topicity (linked to archeology

topicity), Time Deepness (linked to Time), Centrality (linked to the world), Initiality (linked to phenomena).

The key feature of sustainability is *resource efficiency*, for which a solution could be the principle of using without possessing applied to each type of artifact (buildings, roads, vehicles, offices and people); the important thing is knowing how and where to find it.

Sustainability also means creating structures to get people back in control situations (from their origin to the impact they may have), and not to keep them under control with technology. And sustainability is also declined for a sensitivity to context, to relationships, to the consequences of our every action. So attention to *ethics* and *responsibility*. This plays a key role the *reasoned designing* that entails:

1. to think in advance about the consequences of our actions design with great attention to natural systems, industrial, cultural, etc.;
2. to consider the flows of matter and energy, carefully, in the different systems that we develop;
3. to give priority to human activities and not only to consider living beings as “factors” within a process;
4. to design by providing “real values” to users, absolutely not people with systems;
5. to treat the “content” as something to be created, to be transformed, not as a thing to sell;
6. to treat the environment, time, cultural differences, like positive values;
7. to focus on services, not on things not to invade the planet of unnecessary items.²⁸

Therefore we need a culture based on a sense of community and connectivity that is, at the same time, fun, challenging and responsible following four fundamental principles:

- _ to eliminate the concept of waste (any waste of a cycle must become raw material for another cycle, just as happens in ecosystems);
- _ to reduce the transportation and distribution of goods;
- _ to involve as many people as possible while consuming less raw materials;
- _ to use of natural energy flows.²⁹

To all this we must add a strong desire to make a “cultural shift” characterized by the lightness and the ability to not only think of possession as to the proper use of the goods and/or services.³⁰

Emerges, then, the relationship with the resilience: resilient is a city that respects its identity complexity (almost oxymoronic combination), making sure that each process that involves both sustainable in the versions that we have given above.

What is the role of communities identity?

Communities identity plays a fundamental role to build the resilience of an urban reality. This has been widely proven by the last experiences of cities under disaster, among them the earthquake of L'Aquila can be taken as an example.

So the question to address is not how much the identity strength of a community contributes to the phase of recovering, but how to build it before a negative event may occur. From this point of view the citizens must be taken into account, and with them their capability of having an identity as urban dwellers.

²⁸ J. Thackara, *In the bubble*, cit., p. 19

²⁹ J. Thackara, *In the bubble*, cit., p. 24 e cfr. Hannover Principles by William McDonough in W. McDonough, *The Hannover principles: Desing for sustainability*.

³⁰ J. Thackara, *In the bubble*, cit., p. 26.

The action to build this identity can be re assumed into three kinds, all of them contributing to form what today we call the open government model:

- building love for the city
- involving people in city management
- involving people in decision making

The criticality in this definition is that we often deal with a community made by temporary residents, commuters, immigrants, that can be more hardly involved in the process of city making.

What plan and what management in a situation of uncertainty?

We define resiliency not only as the property of recovering from an unpredictable event but also an innate capability of find new resources to react against a negative situation that can last for a long time, as the economic recession has showed us possible. It is several years that, due to the general economic conditions, we are now acting in a situation of uncertainty, this is valid for the markets and the politics as well. As depicted by the Law and Social Scientist C. Sebol³¹, who was one of the first in addressing performance issues from the industrial production theory to the government politics, the vertical rigid organization model typical of the modern western democracies, and their institutions, was to be replaced by an experimental continuous learning one, just like it had been done by the innovative enterprises.³²

It can be described as a continuous learning experience, because the responsible person doesn't have to choose the right procedures without knowing the result, but he is responsible for the result without knowing in advance which is the way to reach it. Exporting this to the planning field, we can find few points of reflection:

From the management point of view it is necessary to choose an organizational system that favors the independence and responsibility of the people, in a continuous learning and applying circles, where the result and not the process are evaluated.

From the planning tools points of view we should use the most flexible tool possible (e.g. strategical territorial development plans) and define both the principles and the non physical objective of the planning, giving then a “scaffolding” set of tools through which rich them. (this shift has been particularly relevant for the urban planning in Italy, a country that used to have a very strict “architecture” of interdependent different type of plans).

Which is the relationship between a resilient city and a smart one?

There is a double entendres in the definition of the smart city, one focuses on the digital infrastructure that makes possible the “light connectivity” of the system, the other one contains the definition of smart people, meaning people informed and willing to be involved into the decision making process. From the resiliency point of view, the second definition is the one that turns a smart city into a resilient one, considering the urban infrastructures (both light and built) weaker in a time of crises.

³¹ C. Sabel, *Experimentalist Governance in the European Union, Towards A New Architecture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

³² Summarizing it, the experimental model is made of autonomous units that, instead of following a preset compound of habits, procedures, take their own decision based on the experimented conditions and their own judgment. The result instead of the completion of a series of predefined practices is evaluated.

What's the right balance between exogenous and endogenous element in a resilient city?

Identity and new technologies are both important to build resiliency. The approach can be re-assumed into the place based one to the development of territories.

In its independent report F. Barca³³ (former Ministry of Cohesion Policy of Italian Republic) describes a model for the territorial development (economic and social) that contains the definition of a resilient community. This approach sees in the conflict between endogenous (local society) and exogenous (know how, technologies) elements the possibility to produce innovation, starting by social equality.

This is crucial for our discussion because enhancing the human and social capital is one of the actions that can bring to a resilient community. It is again the quality of the people that determines the result, in particular considering their role. So while the local people care about the city they are living in more than extraneous do, their capability of being smart and having a set of light tools, instead of a pedantic series of procedures, makes them able to solve a situation of uncertainty, even producing innovation.

15. Leiden 2014 | Rethinking city architecture³⁴

Enrico Anello, Ina Macaione

A beginning

In our speech on the idea of the city we will try to define the boundaries or outline as much as possible the description of a theory of the Idea of the City.

What are the safest guidance systems when you want to intervene and re-think a study or contribute to the advancement of a theory? Possibly useful in this reasoning can be my practice and observation, common to those dedicated to architecture (understood in all of its forms). Nature that is inherent to urban transformations such as nature inherent to the historical evolution leads to thinking beyond the immediate and tangible, so you have to imagine a space in pause as well as a void for interpretation.

A real approach to the study that I want to accomplish will be stimulated by various factors that include the digital age as well as the nature of the simplest truths carved in the furrows of studies conducted among the people. Within these interstitial spaces cities grow and live a daily helpless assault to their identity to their name and their history.

'But the city does not tell of its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, over the railing of the stairs, in the antennae of the lightning rods, the flagpoles, each segment striped once again by scratches, serrations, notches, squiggles'. So Calvino describes what can be defined as 'the light of memory' in describing one of his invisible cities.

Like red and green dots on the ramifications of a neurone that turns on due to the effect of a memory I build and knit a new memory and the present of a larger project, spreading wider on the links of these story lines to discover new regions of an evolutionary thought. Fibre bundles that pass through emotions, light and other aspects of chronological time and place are the first condition of architecture and thus the most difficult.

³³ F. Barca *An agenda for a reformed cohesion policy*, Report prepared for the European Commission, 2010

³⁴ Report 'Re-thinking the Architecture of the City within the Traces of the Urban Facts, Asian Cities: Architecture, Theory and Practice' by Dr Gregory Bracken, Sixth Annual IAS-TU Delft Seminar, 9th May 2014 (being published)

To recognise and recognising ourselves are a condition that Aldo Rossi feeds from memory and from the specific and whose union is granted a knowledge of their own individuality and of the opposite.

We are looking for a possible escape route in this stream of consciousness and I imagine intersecting lines and objects that are suspended in a non-place almost like in the movie 'TRON' in which the Cartesian space collides with other striking dimensions and at the same time reconciling my images to a more reassuring monumental scenarios.

Between domes and ancient walls I perfection my approach that seeks the mass as a base but at the same time feeds the need for an alternative architectural narrative. Perhaps this is the sense in which an architect is needed in any place and context he has to work on: he is called on to stimulate sensors and perceptions.

Listening to chaos and silence simultaneously, perceiving the real dynamics and interconnections, and to respond to the many uncertainties that arise in a project.

The guidance systems vary from one part of the world changing from culture to culture and from landscape to landscape.

We intend to continue my talk knitting it as a fabric of traces considering the city as described by Eisenman: «The city as a biological organism that must continue to change and can only be understood through traces, memories, real and alleged signs of its past and its unexpressed future».

This is the language on which we will focus for a real study of the problems of Asia, through a process designed to identify in them the opportunity for a new way of thinking that will focus on inclusiveness and participation without prejudices for the development of a methodology that makes a proactive growth.

The usability of the city

Research is everywhere. Asia is the design workshop of the world. Architects incite action, they design cities and they deal with infinite data. Numbers, statistics and market analysis are the elements of a continuously growing data mining that capitalises its content on the experiences and the routes of a reality that find in the Asian cities veritable open laboratories under the sky. For Aristotele art is the ability to create truth with reflection and Gregotti interprets this sense of imagination and reflection in their on-going exchange through which it can still be build new pieces of reality so that our world of experiences can be modified and made richer. It is however questionable whether this freedom to build new pieces of reality is really the right and historically valid way, if we intend these pieces as those through which the community can recognise itself in history, projecting onto such architectures meanings and memories, or recognising the nature of urban facts as a complex structure where these pieces of the city are seen as 'works of art'.

It is therefore advisable to introduce a concept of usability born within the Web but which is closely related to that of general usability that has begun to spread in the 60's. It was then that people started to talk about cognitive ergonomics, the science that studies human interactions with the environment in relation to its physical and cognitive constraints.

Can we therefore speak of the city's usability as the effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction with which the interaction takes place between man and the 'city' tool?

The term does not refer to an intrinsic characteristic of the tool, as the usability problem arises when the model of the designer (or his ideas regarding the functionality of the product, transferred on the design of the product itself) does not coincide with the model

of the end user (the idea of the product and of its functioning as perceived by the user). The degree of usability rises proportionally to the convergence of two models (the designer model and the user model).

Innovation is nothing new in architecture, but has taken hold as a structured practice in which architects have sought tools to grasp the volatility of markets and climates, and to capture phantom traces of neoliberal governance and mobile populations.

To approach a research applied in architecture means using questioning techniques and examining their ethical position in order to stimulate ideas for their potential of attraction, pushing such research to experimenting the real problem of the autonomy of the question.

The image-market

For Gregotti «the relationship between image and consciousness is now a distant background and almost always forgotten when in the common language of architects, there has been a talk of an image and its construction and communication as a priority objective of architectural design, even as a parameter for judging the quality of the project.

We must first of all note that the source of this attitude is to be found in the notion of market rather than that of consciousness; or rather the subject of the image is captured in its aspect of representation and communication rather than in that of his attempts of foundation.

[...] There are those who have theorised that the problem of art and architecture thus, can be reconciled today only through the restitution of communication and image, and thus no longer exists, in the strict sense, neither real, nor as experience, but only as an infinite and independent interpretation of the media».

Like peeling an onion, cities should be discovered through the many factors that may constitute identity or in some way what of this is returned to individuals who live it by developing our perception of the environment through the alteration of the physical form and through external process of inner knowledge.

The urban layers that we are used to live in, collide between a real urbanism and a subaltern urbanism in which we can identify and observe the processes of interaction between two natures that are in constant collision. This happens between urban processes of inclusion and development of unnatural processes of overlapping superimposition, as guided by mere speculation and economic factors.

Therefore I fully agree with the formulation of an image of the city that exists somewhere between the purely natural and an exquisitely artificial realm.

Asian cities, exposed every day to global capitalism, transform the nature of their previous colonial cities in postcolonial globalised city, they are an example of what Leslie Sklair identifies as a city that darkens the lives and living of the poor.

Therefore, we are witnessing the production of iconicity dictated by corporate sectors of politics and bureaucracy that incite iconicity in terms of form and symbolism searching for meaning in the pure aesthetic alignment of the cultural ideology of consumerism.

The product of these convective movements that pass through the layers of a grey atmosphere in continuous expansion and contamination is a cold geometry, it is a monumental character without memory and without specific (place and time).

The place is a pretext for expressing the *hic et nunc*, the desire for attractiveness of higher social classes and business in the hope of realising what Sklair defines the attraction of national and international tourist trade (business -tourism) such as fairs, conferences, sports and other events.

«[...] How is it possible to preserve to the imagination the time to unfold and to swing, to think that small displacement limit and sense that it is capable through work, to learn about different things in the world?

This does not mean that the imagination needs to be cultivated in the darkness of the real world, but rather that its activity remains important and transformative precisely because it is able to re-examine the hierarchies and the nature of the materials of the real world, re-discuss the constitutive reasons of the image – market».

Understanding the city means to grasp the individuality determined by its own monuments in which its inhabitants will recognise themselves.

Because buildings are the elements that make up the city, they should be moments and simultaneously part of a whole.

The concept of monument, be it a building, a park- a - way, a water front can be combined to a precise meaning which is the image of an architecture that recovers the tradition of the place, the memory that is highly anchored to the context and that transposes the synthesis of these elements in a contemporary language so that the new design of the city is both a sign of the political community and witness of the work of man and his values.

Intending monumentality in architecture what W. J. Curtis defines a quality not necessarily related to the size, but to the intensity of its expression.

Only the consciousness and collective intentionality build the monument, they project onto an object a system of meanings and memories.

As architects we can only build projects and material things that are able to show up such a high level of integrity, of tension, of subtlety and depth of connections, of invention as to be worthy of becoming, through history, monuments.

Vibration through affinity

The urban facts that Rossi calls 'lacerations within a certain order', and above all as something that is and not as something that keeps the shapes, are tracks on which to search this order. Rudolph Arnheim advises to focus on what looks similar and how much it is dissimilar and on what mutually corresponds or instead is segregated in itself.

What is needed is the creative interpretation of the complexities and contradictions of contemporary life by creating buildings and places that have an identity and that can build the character of the place. Like Rossi says sites are stronger than people, because the fixed scene is stronger than human history.

Buildings not as islands, but part of an archipelago of architecture and public spaces that communicate with each other through an exchange of vertical and horizontal relationships where man can find a dimension of physical contact with environment and material.

In fact, Lynch talks about a strategic link and a mental frame of the external physical world, which is called 'environmental image' or - actually - an emotional practice that is helpful to the individual. For him, the city is a construction in space, as in architecture, but at a larger-scale and over longer time-spans.

He considers a pleasant and beautiful urban environment as an exception or even an impossibility. However, people adapt to the circumstances and extract the identity and structure from the material that they have on one hand. That is the reason why urban design is an art whose temporal sequences are subverted, interrupted abandoned. For Lynch image is the aggregation of all the stimuli.

Likewise, we can imagine a part of a city, large or small, consisting of primary architec-

tural elements that contain all the expressive power needed to transform the dreams and aspirations of a changing society. They leave a urban imprint and mark a social path, which is an expression of culture and universal values.

Cross phenomena - The nature-city

What are the goals we set in front of our immediate future and how we plan to assimilate, process and return the vast and endless information for which we are the major actors and passive observers in a territory of concepts that speak languages not heard? Market - architecture - design - memory - research – metabolism. Urban (re)generation is therefore understood as an organic process, the paradigm of the city - nature containment and computing, as birth is repeated over time, it has plenty of action to create urban environments that are respectful of diversity, while managing to hold together civilisation, spirit and nature.

Today, crossing the phenomenon of resilience is therefore a necessary element for a sustainable development, acting first on the organisational and management models of urban events. A resilient city is an urban system that not only adapts to climate change (including global warming) that in recent decades makes cities increasingly more vulnerable. Even more dramatic consequences and rocketing costs are encountered in a city that is modified constructing social, economic and environmental new answers enabling it to withstand the stresses of the environment in the long run and history.

Based on these assumptions and considering the nature-city as a composition of several of the early beginnings of a city, it has been chosen to express sustainable redevelopment as a set of interventions to restore an urban quality according to the model of the City-Nature whose regrowth is smart, sustainable and inclusive, presenting a set of assets and conditions that are really capable of offering social and territorial cohesion.

The research on the nature-city, since recent years carried out by Sichenze and Macaione, allows to define the city as something that exists between the natural and the artificial, which is subject to culture and therefore of permanence and memory, in which architectural space is defined from physical limits. It can change the sense of scale through the openings of the eye and mind over living realities. It follows then that architecture is not just a purely technical, but a culture that identifies the architect as an expert that defines the limit in space and time.

For Sichenze and Macaione openings are the true cultural dimensions of the space size that projects into reality, in which the multi-scale will therefore be the basis for the city nature manifesting itself through the phenomenon of architecture at different scales of living and where the architecture of the city is the limiting part, that however, containing other variables, such as the nature that encompasses the 'whole' of the city, to which all architecture is physically part of the initial charge. The city nature is a matter of complexity of relationships with nature and wealth.

Thus a belief is born on the certainty that this setting allows to define the city Nature as the city that contains the limits of nature and of a city that could build a research whose constant (re)generation aptitude of an architectural route, a project and a vision of the city is based on a shared information system, contemplating the possibility of an open design and a laboratory for the specific topics for the creation of a platform trans - regional between western academies and eastern academies useful for a new culture of the city and on the reinterpretation of the spatiality of conventional city.

Prerequisites for an Italian School of Architecture and nature-city

One last elucidation deserves to be made. 'Nature-city' is a vision through which the city of Matera is currently comparing itself to many other cities in the world. Within the fluidity of society these days, this is causing the emergence of a new mission for an Italian school of Architectural Design.

On the mobile horizon of a nature-city, the cultural heritage of the most significant Italian Architects of the last fifteen years acquires new meanings. These fifteen years include names such as: Aldo Rossi, Francesco Venezia, Aimaro Isola e Roberto Gabetti, Ignazio Gardella, Ernesto Natan Rogers, Antonio Monestiroli, Antonio Grassi, Carlo Aymonino, Ludovico Quaroni, Giancarlo De Carlo, Giovanni Michelucci, Giò Ponti, Carlo Scarpa, Giuseppe and Alberto Samonà, Vittorio Gregotti, Renzo Piano e Cino Zucchi.

As is clear from the recent results for Expo 2015 in Milan, the Italian School of design is finally free from cartesian constraints and the 'Conservative weight of history' that subordinated the present to the past and able to take up its new role in the world of design. A renewed focus on the relation between design and nature has pushed along new avenues of experience the ability to read the city that had characterised Italian architecture in its better days. For example, one can once again adopt the paradigm of urban qualities that questioned every building in its contextual role and contribution to the city it is part of. The city (re) generates itself through its relation with nature.

Thus, all the fundamental relationships within a project (ten of them as identified by Macaione-Sichenze) through which the architecture of a single building establishes a nature-city link, guide us and help us to understand and judge every phenomenological aspect of the design process.

This is clearly described and exemplified in the book *Scrivere architettura. Multiscalarità e progetto/Writing architecture multiscale and design/表述建筑学与构建空间*, written by I. Macaione and A. Sichenze.

For further reference also see *Casabella n. 831*, November 2013.

16. Matera 2014 | FareStrada [GoingDeep]³⁵

Ina Macaione, Armando Sichenze

The European Capital of Culture is a city designated by the European Union, which for a one-year period has the chance to showcase its cultural life and development.

Several European cities have used this period to completely transform their cultural ground, and their international visibility.

The European City of Culture was launched on the 13th of June 1985 by the Council of Ministers (on the initiative of Melina Mercouri) with the aim of bringing together the European citizens.

Since then, the initiative has been extremely popular among Europeans. It represents a growing cultural and socio-economic impact and an attraction for many visitors.

In 1999, the European City of Culture was renamed European Capital of Culture and since then is funded through the program 'Culture 2000'.

³⁵ From the programme of the series of design workshops of the Nature-cityLAB_DICEM and of the being founded *Scuola Policentrica di Città-Natura [Polytechnic School of nature-city] Matera/Palermo/Roma/Bremen/Beijing/Brema/Dublin/Thessaloniki*, October 2013-December 2014

The European Parliament and the Council decision of the 25th of May 1999 integrated this event into the community framework and introduced a new selection procedure for the capitals of the period 2005-2019. Each member of the EU will have the opportunity to host the Capital.

With the Decision 1622/2006/EC the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union published the list of the countries that will host the 'European Capital of Culture': it was decided that in 2019, and again in 2033, this title would be awarded to an Italian city (after Florence 1986, Bologna 2000 and Genoa 2004).

The European Capital of Culture: how is selected and what are the advantages

The title will then be assigned to the city which has passed the selection carried out by the European Commission in conjunction with the Italian Government starting in 2012.

Specifically, the selection process involves the following procedure:

- End of 2012: the Italian government will launch the event
- 2013: the Italian cities involved will have 10 months to submit an outline proposal
- End-2013: a jury composed by 6 experts selected by the Italian Government and 7 experts chosen by the European institutions (European Commission, European Parliament, European Council of Ministers and the Committee of the Regions) will select a short list of suitable cities
- 2014: the pre-selected cities will present the full proposal
- End of 2014, the jury will recommend a city as European Capital of Culture and this recommendation will be notified by the Italian Government to the European institutions
- May 2015: EU Council of Ministers officially designate the European Capital of Culture
- 2015-2019: the preparation of the schedule of the European Capital of Culture

Which are the features of a European Capital of Culture?

A city is designated Capital not just for what it is or for what it has done. But also for what it is expected to do.

The innovative nature of the event and, in this context, the space intended for contemporary cultural forms are crucial features. Moreover should be highly considered the ability to foster creativity by involving local personalities such as European or international. The program should be supported through a cultural dynamism, which enhances the identity of the places developing innovative cultural products.

The 'European dimension' of the application should be highlighted.

In other words, the most important questions should be: what Matera and its territory can tell other cities in Europe? And what the Lucan cultural realities can share with European ones.

For example the development of creative projects responding to the challenges that Europe faces: smart growth (integrated urban planning of a city of culture and knowledge able to combine economic development, culture, creativity and digital technologies), sustainable growth (joining creativity to technologies for production and energy efficiency, or the consideration of scarce environmental resources) and inclusive growth (promotion of intercultural dialogue - since the changes taking place in the Mediterranean basin - and social inclusion).

We need to involve the city and the citizens. A European Capital of Culture should be attractive (able to catalyse the local and national population, but also foreign tourists) and active (involving the entire city, region and more distant places).

The city should be encouraged to develop a program with lasting effects that can be fit into the long-term growth of the city itself. It should not be just an ephemeral outburst of cultural events. For example, cities are asked to build projects and long-term cooperation, featured by economic and organizational sustainability. The event will be an opportunity to change or to consolidate and develop cultural activities in the city.

Why Matera 2019?

The city of Matera is an excellent candidate to strive to represent the European Culture in 2019. Since the Fifties onwards, Matera has been an important place for experimentation, innovation, attraction of great filmmakers and artists, but also a fruitful hybridization between personality and external resources. Matera was the first city in the Southern Italy to be named a UNESCO World Heritage Site; becoming, especially thanks to great efforts, one of the main art cities to visit. Despite this and the implementation of some major restoration work, his enormous cultural potential has not been correctly valued yet. Culture - divided into its different areas and souls - is one of the driving force of Matera and Basilicata.

The size of Matera leads to consider the possibility of defining new typological models for the city: we hope that the experience in Matera will become an example to the world as a new cultural model of design, enjoy, describe cities of small and medium size.

The aims of the application and the synergies with other local policies

The aims of the Application can be listed as follows:

- 1) Matera as a place where to live and to produce culture, innovation, good practices
- 2) Consolidate Matera as a tourist destination
- 3) Certify the innovative role of the Basilicata region
- 4) Increase the role of the Southern Italy as a socio-economic cultural centre
- 5) Cross culture and technology
- 6) Attract new private investments
- 7) Increase the number of inhabitants in *Sassi* of Matera

One of the specific aims for the city development, in addition to the merely cultural issue, is tuning a series of punctual actions with a medium-term vision of the whole territory involved.

This aims are pursued by: planning policies (with the creation of new cultural centrality that make a widespread perception of culture as the value of the whole community), policies for sustainable mobility (that connect these different developing places), educational policies (able to leverage on the school and the university as a driver for new creativity, both in the humanities and technical-scientific context).

Workshops: FareStrada Matera [GoingDeep Matera] - Laboratory for urban (re)generation

Within this context characterized by a series of initiatives and events sponsored by the city of Matera we want to create an international working group for the establishment of a polycentric School. The result to achieve is create, through this new centre of cultural aggregation, a collaborative network of people and cities that want to share experiences related to project workshops for urban (re)generation.

The project is developed in collaboration with the Foundation 'Le Monacelle', located inside the *Sassi* of Matera, one of the most fascinating landmark of the city. The Foundation would represent the logistical and instrumental reference of the workshops activities that took place in Matera, within September 2013 and September 2014.

The Architect Antonella Ambrosecchia, general manager of the Foundation, has appointed Professor Architect Armando Sichenze, of the University of Basilicata, to coordinate a section that deals with 'Architecture and City.' This section is part of a broader framework consisting of parallel units - divided by themes. Each unit still comply with the general ideas of cultural development, but it is autonomous in training courses, on time and in organizational rules.

The section 'Architecture and City' intends the polycentric school as the centrepiece of cities and a multiplicity of architectural cultures that meet in Matera: a great place to research new possibilities for urban (re)generation, on which different communities (local, urban, scientific) compare.

The meeting and the connection between cultural systems can be founded on seven key issues that are at the base of this research. These ideas will be the common thread underlying all the activities and all the cultural initiatives.

Key Images

Presentation and processing of key images, concerning the 'construction of the world' in changing contexts, and the visions of the future in urban (re)generation through architectures of rising part of cities.

World, Scenario, Nihilism, Vision, Mission, Multi-centrality, Change, Sustainability, nature-city, Europe, Inclusion, Communication, Network

Creative Paths

Presentation and discussion of creative design processes, that illustrate the phenomenon of architectural ideation, through a comparison of the graphical architecture representation with images of constructed spaces, referred to (re)generative and resilient aspects of the crisis.

Mind, Free thought, Support, Show schedule, Reading, Writing/Re-writing, Transcription, Score, Phenomenon, Art, Storytelling, Science, Aphorism, DNA

Resilience

Mies van der Rohe said: 'God is in the detail'. It is about designing the scale of detail consistent in the (re)use, (re)cycling, reduce, starting from a sample of general projects and exemplary.

Nature, Life, Time, Climate, Energy, Bio-diversity, Eco-sustainability, Flexibility, Culture, Memory, Cognitive reserve, Self-learning, Metabolism, Metamorphosis, Hybridization, Grafting, (re)generation, Recycling, Repair, Reboot

The Void

From painting to literature and sciences, the void has become a key theme. From simple abstract theme it can be put into practice in the design of the void, such as sensitive space, even in projects and existing environments;

City, Mind, Space, Solitude, Waiting, Void, Full, Crossing, Latency, Energy, Sensitivity, Heterogeneity, Phenomenon, Acupuncture, Art, Quantum physics

Streets of Migration

The street as a theme is strongly linked to the new concept of intelligent infrastructure. These fragmented segments, inserted in spaces of lacking urbanity, can function as urban (re)generating injection that leads to new sensibilities, weaves and exchanges.

Life, Humanity, Topic, Coexistence, Travel, Road, Crossing, Itinerary, Pilgrimage, Nomadism, Experience, Meeting of culture, Community-World, Storytelling, Sense

(Re)generation Housing

The rich and different housing typologies of Matera will start a new ground for an inclusive social housing, even in the smallest spaces and not expansionist scenarios. The aim is to meet the needs of economically weaker consumers.

Humanity, Living, Domestic, Life, Topic, Existence, Multi-identity, Redevelopment, Revitalization, Ecominimum, Co-housing, 'Open house'

Smart Green Roads

The designing purpose is the 'entrusted and intelligent green', i.e. the activation of pathways telling a story of intertwined nature with the context. The road from barrier becomes intelligent border, helped by an active participation, in the discovery of new cultural values of collective welfare. Landscape, limits, boundaries, crossing, smart-green-infrastructure, intermodal, live-mandated green, tracks-blueprints-paths, urban links, suburban, synapses

List of workshops

Workshop_00. Introduction.

Speeches of Dennis Frenchman, Urban design at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Boston, and Giandomenico Amendola, Matera 9th October 2014.

Workshop_01. Beijing-Matera.

Speeches of Professor Han Lin Fei, Jao Tong, University, Ferdinando Mirizzi, Director of Dicem, Vera Autilio, PhD Architecture and Urban Phenomenology, Mimi Coviello, PhD Architecture and Urban Phenomenology, Angelo Romano PhD, Architect Massimiliano Burgi, students of the course of Architecture Dicem and students of the School of Architecture and Design of Jao Tong, University, Beijing, Matera 17th/20th of December 2013

Workshop_02. Matera-Community.

Speeches of the following associations: La Scaletta, Zetema Foundation, Study Centre Carlo Levi, Lega Ambiente, Minerva Scienze, Le Monacelle Foundation, Matera 24th/30th of January 2014.

Workshop_03. Experiencing a new involvement conceived as an interweaving of 'local' and 'world' (L. Rizzo, G. Sileo, G. Verga and B. Croce of Palermo schools, *FareStrada Palermo* [GoingDeep Palermo] Commission, *Bene Collettivo* [Collective Good] Commission, *Addio Pizzo* Commission, The places of the spring Association, GHOST Projects, *Mare memoria viva* [See alive memory, Saint Clare Association, Mandala Association, Palermo 25th/28th of February 2014.

Workshop_04. Roma-Matera.

Speeches of G. Longobardi, RomaTre, L. Acito, A. Nicoletti, L. Belgrano, L. rota, students of the faculties of Architecture of Roma and Matera, 26th/28th of March 2014

Workshop_05. (Re)generating the square.

With the teachers and the students of Bramante school, Plesso di Piazza Olmi Matera, with some city associations, and with students of the Faculty of Architecture of Matera, April/May 2014.

Workshop_06. Matera-Thessaloniki.

Speeches of Alexandra Alexopoulou, Maria Dousi, Nikolaos Kalogirou, Malamatenia Scaltsa, Maria Tratsela, George Synefakis, Fani Vavili of the Aristotele University of Thessaloniki, Cristos Xiloyannis Dicem Unibas.

Workshop_07. Matera – Dublin.

Speeches of Manfredi Anello, Conor Moran, John Parker ABK Architects and School of Architecture, University College Dublin, Matera 4th/6th of June 2014

Workshop_07. In the South of the World. The nature-city between resilience and (re)generation With eCo living and AKO, 24th/27th of June 2014.

Workshop_08. Urban Visions, strategic images in building new worlds.

Speeches of Han Lin Fei, Jao Tong University of Beijing, Che Fei CU-Office, Iliaria Bernardi, Vera Autilio, Eugenia Murialdo, Beijing 2nd/12th of July 2014.



Carlo Scarpa, Palazzo Steri, 1972-78, Palermo

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