
The city as form and structure: the urban project in Italy from the 1920s to the 1980s

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Abstract. *Since the end of the First World War Italian architecture has had an original and decisive impact on theories and methods of urban planning. The complexity of this impact emerges if one compares the various positions of those who have expressed a clear idea of the city and made careful observations on urban planning through systematic theories or empirical methodologies. Some have assumed as a basis for their research the relation between building typology and urban morphology, while others have emphasized one specific aspect of the city. These various approaches have generated a diversity of project methods and tools. What links all these experiences is the desire to bring the urban question back to the realm of architecture: to bridge the divide between architecture and urbanism as disciplines.*

Key Words: architecture, planning, twentieth-century history, urbanism, Italy

This article seeks to identify and compare the main lines of thought that characterized Italian architecture from the 1920s to the 1980s. An analysis of this period provides a basis for reflections on the cultural context and orientation of contemporary urban planning.

In Italy two lines of research in the field of architecture can be discerned: on the one hand, the Roman School and the work of Saverio Muratori with his physical and process approach to urban morphology; on the other, Aldo Rossi's work and the *Novecento* Milanese culture expressed in a metaphysical approach to the city and a search for the 'ideal' architecture. One is concerned with the 'construction' of the city; the other with its 'composition'. For

Muratori the urban project is a collective process of construction and restoration of the physical structures that go to make up the urban organism, whereas for Rossi it is an act of composition based on the search for ideal and absolute forms. Both Muratori and Rossi sought a controlling order for the complexity of urban phenomena; but for the former such an order was an immanent reality, while for the latter it was the result of a conceptual operation.

In addition to these two lines of research, there have been many related ones which have followed, with varying degrees of independence, similar agendas. Much of the research shares the same interest in urban morphology, to which is assigned a multiplicity of meanings, mirroring different

spatial and aesthetic concepts. In some cases the city is seen as a 'form', that is a simple natural or functional configuration; in others, as a 'figure', that is a complex entity endowed with historico-cultural significance. Sometimes the city is interpreted as a 'structure', that is a system of relations: in this case, the morphological aspect tends to be posited as the result of a modelling process. Sometimes the perceptual dimension of urban phenomena is emphasized: the city is read as a series of images. Thus the elements entering into play in the process of construction-composition of the city are, in turn, form, figure, structure and image. The question of typology, too, may be related to these categories.

The aesthetics of the city: Gustavo Giovannoni

At a time when the functionalist city-machine was at the height of its popularity, Gustavo Giovannoni based his theories on the idea of the city as an organism: a hierarchical space made up of diverse, yet interconnected parts in continuous interaction with the environment and continuously changing. While the Modern Movement attempted to resolve the crisis of the nineteenth-century city by designing ideal models for its replacement, Giovannoni affirmed the importance of the real city. This was not from a standpoint rooted in nostalgia, but reflected his view that the city had an organic quality that had matured with time, and could not be replaced, therefore, by an abstract and controlling rationalism. The problem for him was to rediscover the organic structure beneath the apparent contradictoriness of the real city. The lost unity could be regained by steering urban projects back to the 'art of building the city' – to historical awareness, technical know-how and artistic sensibility. Giovannoni extended the concept of a work of art from the single monument to the city as a whole, in the sense of a collective creation. The lasting quality of buildings was to him valuable both aesthetically and as a historical document.

In his essay *Vecchie città ed edilizia nuova*,¹ Giovannoni faced the problem of how to reconcile the 'life' and 'history' of the city.² Despite their different characteristics, old urban nuclei and new urban sprawls were combined in the formation of a single organism. Thus Giovannoni outlined two different aesthetics for the city, which corresponded to two different living conditions: on the one hand, the modern city, a 'social, cinematic and aesthetic organism', abode of the 'life of movement' and the dynamics of vast road networks; on the other, the 'life of habitation', the static condition of the minutiae of urban fabrics made up of irregular spaces and groupings that recall the theories of Camillo Sitte.³ Giovannoni himself experimented with these in the garden suburbs of Monte Sacro and Garbatella in Rome (Figure 1). The problem of old centres was thus seen as complementary to that of new building fabrics and was considered at the scale of both local and territorial planning.

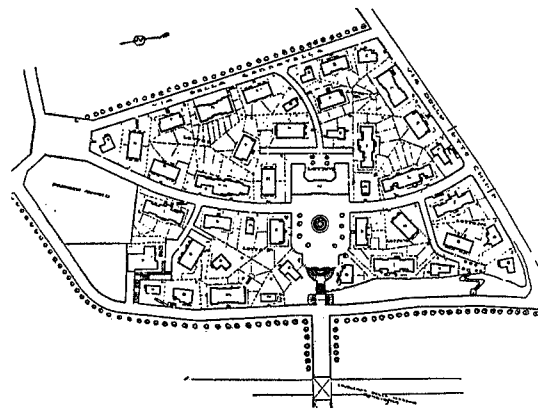


Figure 1. Plan for the Quartiere Garbatella in Rome designed by G. Giovannoni, 1920. Source: Giovannoni, *op. cit.* 137 (note 1).

Giovannoni's solution for the functional adaptation and spatial revaluation of the urban fabric of minor buildings was the method of 'building reduction' (*diradamento edilizio*), an act of cautious demolition and reintegration, which respected the texture of existing fabrics.⁴ Thus urban planning was seen as environmental restoration: a

restoration which preserved historical stratification. Measured drawings of monuments, both great and small, played an important role in Giovannoni's praxis 'in order to have a clear and precise understanding of their type and significance through an analysis of their anatomy, by inverting the course taken by the architect and artificers who designed the organism and modelled its various parts'.⁵ A further role was played by typological analysis of the urban fabric of minor buildings, 'to understand the characteristics of, and reasons for, urban evolution, in order to determine cycles and recycles, to establish principles and laws for the ways in which cities take shape and the various phases of their development'.⁶ These reflections anticipate Muratori's methodology.

An exemplary case of 'building reduction' is the Quartiere Rinascimento in Rome, which was, significantly, also chosen by Muratori at the beginning of the 1960s for his students' experimental projects. Restructuring the urban space is achieved essentially through the application of perceptual criteria. The control of vistas, through the use of perspective, guarantees a 'variety of movements and contrasts', while respecting the environmental conditions and artistic atmosphere (proportion, form, colour, etc.) determined by the permanent elements that characterize a given place, above and beyond style and historical period.⁷

An acceptance of the real city, as it has taken shape through time, is also fundamental to Muratori's theories. However Giovannoni, in keeping with Camillo Sitte's thought, selected the city's figures and images – its aesthetics – as both a value and a reference model, whereas Muratori attempted to understand its structure – the logic of its forms.

Forms and figures of the Italian rationalist city

In Italy the experience of the Modern Movement is grafted on to a clearly identifiable urban tradition. The idea of the city as

a form regulated by a pure abstract or functional logic never really took hold in Italian culture, which instead was concerned with the figurative dimension of urban phenomena. The young Rationalists, working within the dialectics of ancient-modern and tradition-innovation, did not totally dismiss the idea of the inherited city.⁸ The pursuit of abstract models and typological studies in a functionalist context was accompanied by attempts to uncover and represent the identity of urban spaces. Although unified projects for new cities, such as Sabaudia, did not envisage the building continuum as a process, they were, nevertheless, articulated around themes such as the *piazza* and the *strada* (Figure 2) – spaces evocative of the forms of a classical tradition, where the figurative dimension as abstract form prevails.

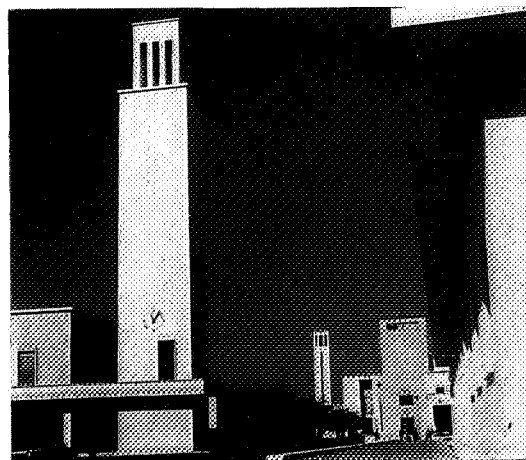


Figure 2. The city of Sabaudia, designed by G. Cancellotti, E. Montuori, L. Piccinato and A. Scalpelli, 1933-34. Source: Danesi, S. and Patetta, L. (eds) (1976) *Il razionalismo e l'architettura in Italia durante il Fascismo* (Electa, Milano) 164.

These figures were taken from history (metaphysics), technology (futurism) and tradition (*spontaneismo*). While the aesthetics of function and movement expressed by the futurist city-machine remained a slogan,⁹ albeit a successful one, the figurative world of metaphysics contributed directly to the elaboration of an idea of the absolute city in which abstract and classical were superimposed.¹⁰ The

convergence with Giovanni Muzio's *Novecentista* research, grafted on to the urban form of a neo-classical Milan, is evident here. According to Giuseppe Pagano, even simple traditional forms – initially created for a functional purpose, and only subsequently becoming figurative – can be a valid guide for modern architecture, as they are transformed back again into abstract forms (Le Corbusier's '*volumes sous la lumière*').¹¹

By the end of the 1930s certain recurrent forms of the functionalist city (such as grid systems and serial repetitions) began to assume an almost figurative role. The grid was used in order to evoke the rigour of Roman town plans, though it was transcribed according to the absolute and homogeneous principles of Cartesian space. The reference to the *domus* fabric, in the project for the 'horizontal city' by Pagano, Diotallevi and Marescotti, which was a model superimposed on Milan, allowed for an inversion of the usual relation in the rationalist city between solid and void, through the application of a dense pattern, while still following the logic of the rationalist city's conformation. This pattern was broken up at certain points in order to accommodate existing monuments (Figure 3).

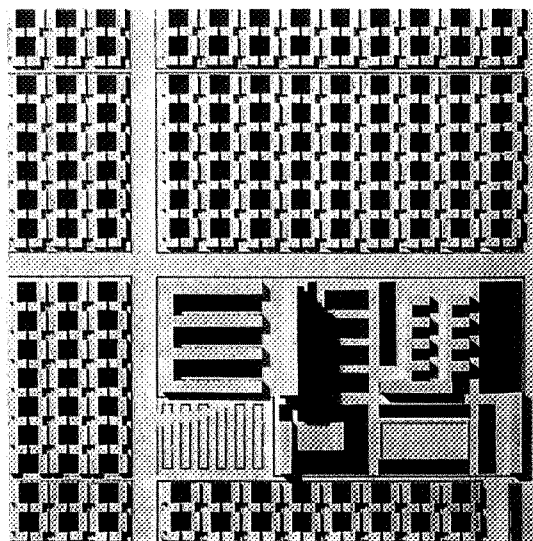


Figure 3. Project for the Horizontal City in Milan, designed by I. Diotallevi, F. Marescotti and G. Pagano, 1940. Source: Danesi and Patetta, *op. cit.* 120 (see Figure 2).

Giuseppe Terragni's project for the restructuring of the Quartiere Cortesella critically reinterprets the persistence of the plan by simulating a process of stratification: the layout of Roman Como determines the position of long, narrow buildings taken from the functionalist city, the serial repetition of which breaks into the contextual structure, thereby setting up a tension between the two (Figure 4).

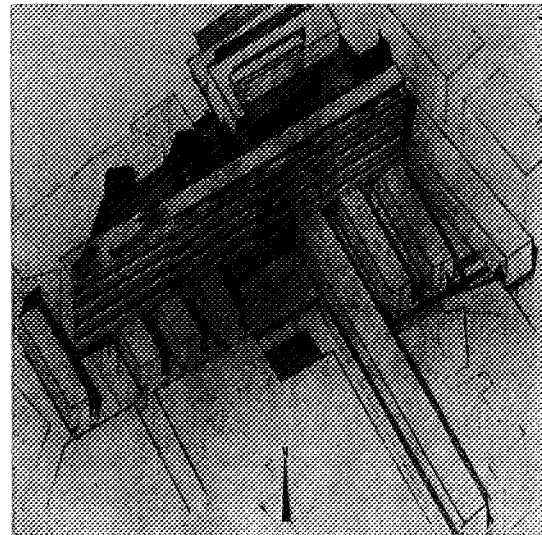


Figure 4. Project for the reconstruction of the Quartiere Cortesella in Como, designed by G. Terragni and C. Cattaneo, 1938-40.

Source: Ciucci, G. (ed) (1996) *Giuseppe Terragni. Opera completa* (Electa, Milano) 519.

Both of these projects are based on a dialectic between a new concept of the city and the historical city, which is expressed through a proposal to reconstruct the ancient layout as a kind of palimpsest, through the use of figures from the traditional Mediterranean dwelling, and the exhibition of fragments of the historical city as isolated objects.

The city as identity: the neo-realist experience

From the mid-1940s, Italian architecture sought to forge the tools necessary for a post-war reconstruction. On the one hand,

Milanese culture expressed its continuity with the Modern Movement through the foundation, in 1947, of the *Movimento Studi per l'Architettura* as well as through the work carried out by Diotallevi and Marescotti on typology and production innovation.¹² On the other, Roman culture sought references to affirm its continuity with the Modern Movement, initiated by, amongst others, the *Associazione per l'Architettura Organica* founded by Bruno Zevi, and attempted a codification of traditional building techniques through the publication of the *Manuale dell'Architetto* edited by Mario Ridolfi.¹³ These were two antithetical yet complementary activities. Diotallevi and Marescotti's manual sought to assimilate the forms inherited from functionalism, turning them into recognizable figures, while Ridolfi's manual took figures from traditional building and deprived them of their historical and cultural connotations, thus turning them into objective technical forms.

Once the peremptory declarations of the manifesto plans had been abandoned, the projects elaborated for INA Casa¹⁴ after the Second World War sprang from a profound aspiration to reality, particularly in the Roman milieu. The architect assumed the self-appointed social role of satisfying the spiritual and material needs 'of the real man and not some abstract being' and of giving form to local identities.¹⁵ The task of setting up relations with the existing city was entrusted to the sociological disciplines and to the formula of 'neighbourhood units'. The suggestions furnished by INA Casa prompted the architects to refer to the scale and episodic character of small urban nuclei.

The image of the old village became a constant point of reference. The Quartiere Tiburtino in Rome, on which Ludovico Quaroni and Mario Ridolfi collaborated, is exemplary in this sense. The identity of place was entrusted mainly to the reinterpretation of a popular vocabulary. Figures taken from local traditions were used in the attempt at a literal recovery of their meaning.

Yet it soon became clear that a formal imitation of the layout of the spontaneous

city generated an artificial naturalness: it was merely a spurious search for typologies. In reality, the reference type was still that of the atypical and atemporal cell inherited from studies on *Existenzminimum*, while the aggregative logic was still that of the mechanically additive logic of functionalism, even though a variety of plans and a greater volumetric articulation were sought. The independence of buildings and open spaces, which characterized the functionalist city, was reconfirmed: the volumes containing the residential function and the zones of movement generated residual spaces which were difficult to control architecturally. The new neighbourhoods were presented, moreover, as self-sufficient units, and not as the result of a process: they were microcosms isolated from their surroundings.

There was an attempt to overcome these limitations in the Quartiere Tuscolano in Rome. The main building, designed by Muratori, is situated on the edge of the neighbourhood and the angular shape of its plan hints at its urban role. Moreover, Adalberto Libera's housing unit, deriving from rationalist studies on the horizontal city, was an attempt to experiment with the continuity of urban fabrics, even though the unit, which was proposed as a space in itself, had no direct relation to its surroundings (Figure 5).

The idea of a project for urban fabrics did not find its full resolution in these experiences, since in a later phase of INA Casa's activity (1956-62) there was a move towards more compact urban layouts and reproducible patterns, while courtyard plans replaced more informal ground plans. Quaroni's Quartiere San Giusto in Prato, built in 1957, symbolizes this. In this period there were also experiments in the opposite direction: new urban projects were concentrated on a few large and simple signs that seem to negate the notion of an urban fabric. Luigi Carlo Daneri's Quartiere Forte Quezzi in Genoa takes Le Corbusier's Plan Obus as a reference: complex linear buildings, containing both residences and services,

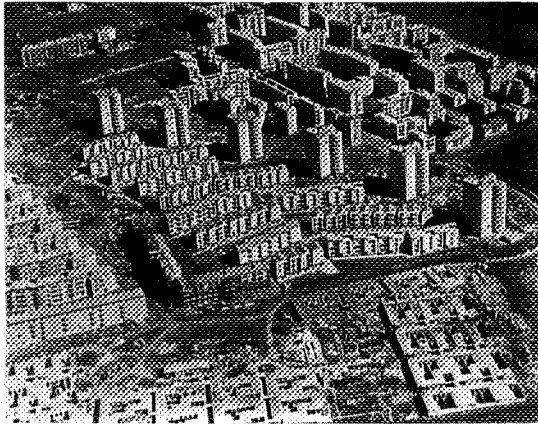


Figure 5. Design for the Quartiere Tuscolano, Rome, 1950-54, by M. De Renzi, S. Muratori, L. Cambellotti, G. Perugini, D. Tassotti and L. Vagnetti (centre), and A. Libera (right).

Source: A.A.V.V. (1952) *L'INA-Casa al IV Congresso nazionale di Urbanistica* (Venezia).

are laid out according to the topography of the site (Figure 6).

The city as environment: Ernesto Nathan Rogers

In the 1950s Italian architectural debate concentrated on the relation between existing environments and new architecture. Even though, in the work of Rogers, Franco Albini and Ignazio Gardella, there was a refusal to pose the problem in stylistic terms, adaptation to the environment was seen as a matter of form, and discussion often took place in an allusive language filtered through the legacy of the Modern Movement (Figure 7). Key figures and evocative images were isolated from their context and underwent a transfiguration. Existing environments and new projects were seen as the opposite poles of a dialectic, in which a tension was set up based on the interaction between memory and invention.

Diametrically opposed to Rogers's method of 'taking one case at a time', Muratori linked the problem of environment to that of type, as the only approach which could guarantee a spatial-temporal continuity for the city. His approach was put to the test in the early 1950s in the Ente Nazionale di

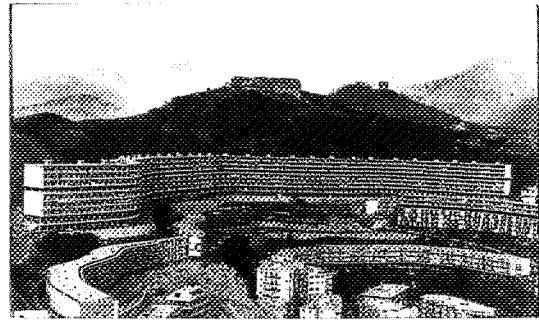


Figure 6. Quartiere Forte Quezzi, Genoa, 1958, designed by L.C. Daneri (with E. Fuselli, C. Andreani, R. Morozzo della Rocca, M. Pateri, G. Pulitzer and A. Sibilla).

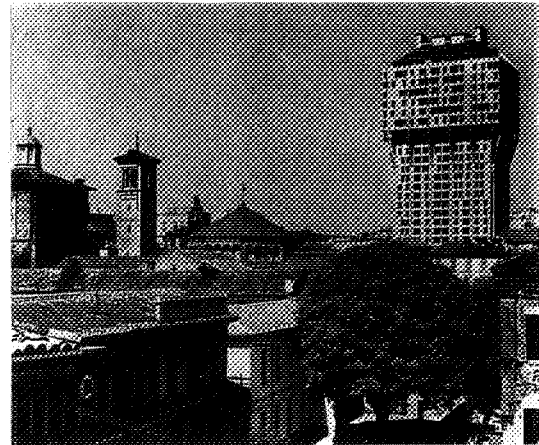


Figure 7. Design for Torre Velasca, Milan, 1954-58, by Studio BPR (L. Barbiano di Belgioioso, E. Peressutti and E.N. Rogers).

Source: Rogers, *op. cit.* 289 (note 16).

Previdenza ed Assicurazione Sociale office building in Bologna, and the headquarters of the Christian Democratic Party in Rome, which represented attempts to re-transcribe the environmental features typical of the two cities, while respecting the functional and structural rationale of the architectonic organism. Muratori referred to the structure of a context rather than to its 'atmosphere', the somewhat vague term often used by Rogers.¹⁶

The city as a structure in process: Saverio Muratori

The city was, for Muratori, a figure whose structure had to be understood, and this

'structure in process' would itself be used in his projects, as well as in those of the Muratorian School (including Gianfranco Caniggia), as a figure full of significance. The attention to the real city, which in the 1950s was translated into the intellectual creation of a simulated reality, itself part of the legacy of the avant-garde, prompted Muratori to search for logical principles, type laws of a historical, environmental nature that governed the apparent arbitrariness of urban and architectural phenomena. This inclusive rationalism of the complexity of the real city could only be understood through a historical vision of urban phenomena.

Muratori came to realize, especially in his *Studi per una operante storia urbana di Roma*, that the city was a living organism in a state of perpetual transformation, which contained within itself the capacity for change.¹⁷ Each project captured a moment in this transformation of reality. It was by viewing cities in this way that Muratori became aware of the mutual determination of building type, urban fabric and plan.

In Muratorian theory, type is both a synthesizing concept *a priori* and a real organism, linked to a specific time, or historical moment, and place. Type is an internal structure that unites disparate elements, an 'energetic, dynamic nexus that reveals the way in which one part stands in relation to another'.¹⁸ Type is the generating principle of a process, a 'forming form' (*forma formante*) which changes while remaining itself.¹⁹ Type is, moreover, a collective creation and expression. Whereas the type elaborated by the Modern Movement was a functional scheme, for Muratori it was a synthesis of the constructive and functional aspects of architecture: it spoke a language and contained the code of its own transformations. Type also contained within itself the logic of aggregation, and thus the potential to organize the building fabric of which it was both matrix and module.

Muratori dealt systematically with an urban fabric project for the first time in his plans for the expansion of the Quartiere Magliana in Rome (Figure 8). He felt that he

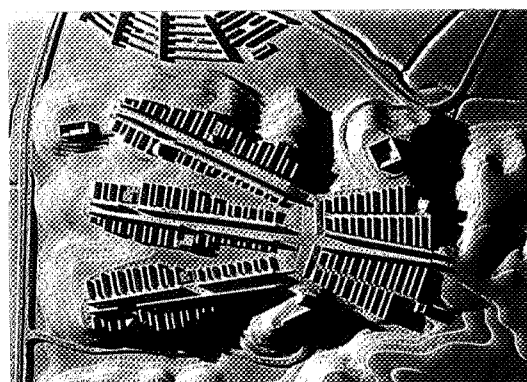


Figure 8. Plan for expansion of INA Casa development at Magliana, Rome, 1957, by S. Muratori (with R. Bollati, S. Bollati, G. Figus, G. Marinucci and G. Mazzocca).

Source: Cataldi, G. (ed.) (1984) *Saverio Muratori architetto, 1910-1973. Il pensiero e l'opera* (Alinea, Firenze) 79.

had not dealt satisfactorily with the problem in his earlier projects for other INA Casa neighbourhoods. On this occasion, however, he used open, expanding plans, capable of generating a building continuum. Moreover, he linked urban plan to landscape; a link consisting not only in a simple adaptation of building to topography, but also in the recognition of typical land forms (for example, promontories, ridges and valleys) accompanied by forms, or modes, of human intervention which were themselves typical.

Two years later, the competition for the Barene di San Giuliano in Mestre (Venice) became an occasion for the major exponents of contemporary Italian architecture to compare and exchange ideas. Muratori's project was articulated in three successive solutions, which corresponded to different moments in the evolution of the Venetian urban fabric, itself characterized by increasing levels of organicity (Figure 9). It represented a redesign of the city's process of formation, and crystallized the most significant phases of this process. The projects of the 1960s for the restructuring (*riammagliamento*) of the Quartiere Tor di Nona in Rome, elaborated in Muratori's courses on Architectural Design at the Faculty of Architecture in Rome, are exemplary in this sense.²⁰

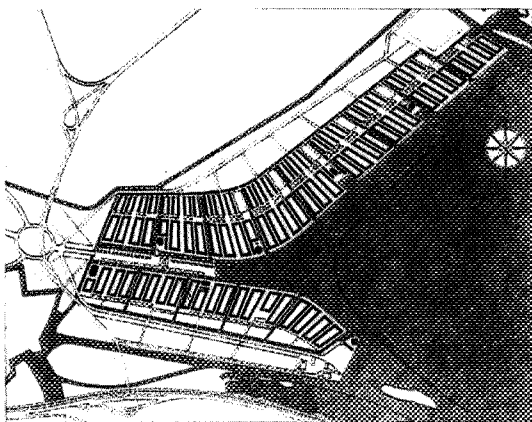


Figure 9. Design for the Barene di San Giuliano in Mestre: Estuario III, 1959, by S. Muratori (with R. Bollati, S. Bollati, G. Figus, P. Mareto, G. Marinucci and G. Mazzocca). Source: Cataldi, *op. cit.* 102 (see Figure 8).

Giovannoni's empirical praxis was replaced by a method of gradual replanning based on a careful reading of existing structures. With the aid of documentary sources, it was possible in this way to recreate critically the typological processes of spontaneous urban development in order to arrive at the urban project in an almost deterministic way. Even the students' projects for the expansion of the Quartiere Centocelle in Rome represent an extension of the dynamics of the consolidated city in terms of new buildings, and abandon the logic of Giovannoni's 'double aesthetic'. The constituent parts are generated by a process that traces the logic of how the earlier city was formed.²¹

More recently the issue of the 'non-dialectical passage from an analysis of type to the project', raised by various scholars, has become the pretext for a total rejection of Muratori's theories.²² Yet the true dimension of Muratori's 'reading' takes on a different meaning if seen within the context of the architect's whole theoretical system. The project is considered as the revelation of potential already present in the real city. It thus assumes the character of a cognitive act rather than a fresh creation.

Open forms and images of the city: Ludovico Quaroni

The 1960s were characterized in Italy by a search for urban models on a large scale. The object of research everywhere became the city-territory.²³ In an attempt to overcome the dualism of urbanism and architecture, macro-buildings on a territorial scale were designed. Architects, as creators of spatial events and special buildings as isolated objects, had lost the ability to measure themselves against either the building continuum or the environment. The references for the projects were either forms representative of a functional dimension (for example, the urban project for Tokyo by Kenzo Tange) or the new figurative bias of Louis Kahn (as in his plan for Philadelphia), based on a vision of history as a patrimony of symbolic forms and malleable images.

Quaroni's work, without having the monolithic character of Muratori's, nevertheless shows a specific interest in urban morphology. While for Muratori an overall control of urban planning and the various stages of its realization were both guaranteed by the use of type, Quaroni preferred the practice of town design. The urban project is design on a large scale. The urban layout is indicative of an idea-form and transforms the socio-economic model into a system of figurative relations. It is only this search for a communicative form for urban space that is able to overcome abstract, functionalist zoning. 'Figurative planning', as it was called, ensured a three-dimensional vision of the city as a whole, while leaving indeterminate the form of the individual parts. The plan-process was a design guide that established a relational system between the various parts and stages of development. Its aim was to guarantee a formal unity in the multiple projects that make up the city through time.

Quaroni's project for the Barene di San Giuliano in Mestre was a precursor of town design (Figure 10). The part of the city designed by Quaroni stood in contrast to

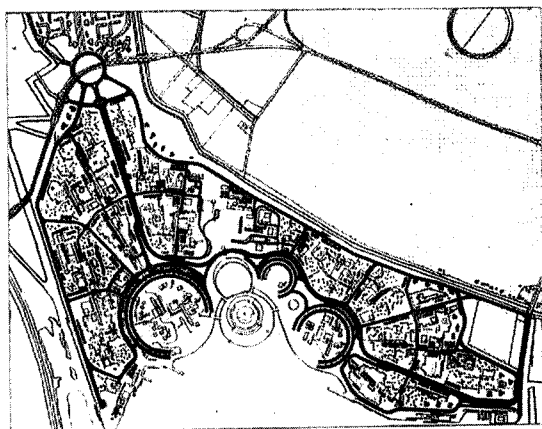


Figure 10. Design for the Barene di San Giuliano in Mestre, 1959, by L. Quaroni (with M. Boschetti, A. De Carlo, G. Esposito, L. Giovannini, A. Liviadotti, L. Menozzi, T. Musho and A. Polizzi). Source: Quaroni, *op. cit.* 245 (note 24).

Muratori's work by openly declaring its difference from the historical city, which became a spectacle to contemplate from a distance. The project was based on the dialectical relation between the most visually prominent elements (the hemicycles) and the residential fabric, which evoked the image of Venetian *campielli* (little squares).

In *La torre di Babele*, published nearly 10 years later, with an introduction, significantly, by Rossi, Quaroni adduces the ancient city as a cultural and figurative reference for the present, exemplified in its contours and in the dialectic between monument and continuous fabric.²⁴ Planning must come about through the recovery of mnemonic images which the city has produced through time.

The city as architecture: Aldo Rossi

Following the debate over large-scale urban models, since the late 1960s Italian architecture has mainly adopted the typomorphological approach as the basis for its theoretical and practical research. There has been widespread recognition that the link between architecture and the city has become the means of defending the former's disciplinary autonomy.

Rossi employs the 'hypothesis of the city

as manufactured, as a work of architecture and engineering which has grown with time'.²⁵ Unlike Muratori's theories, which identify an almost predetermined development in the city, Rossi emphasizes the invention of the city through time. The 'idea of self' which the city preserves in its collective memory – rather than the Muratorian analysis of its physical structures – is of fundamental importance for the architectural project. Monuments, signs of the collective will expressed through the principles of architecture, stand for primary elements, fixed points in the dynamics of the city and, at the same time, are both generators and aggregative nuclei within urban form. These 'primary elements' are counterpoised by 'residential areas', homogeneous parts in continual transformation.²⁶ Although this distinction is, in some ways, analogous to Muratori's between building continuum and monument, unlike Rossi, Muratori identified a complementary relation, indeed a genetic link, between the two.

In response to the process and material nature of Muratorian type, Rossi counterpoises a concept of type as a logical statement which precedes form and is indifferent to material and function. Type is 'the very idea of architecture, that which is closest to its essence'.²⁷ It is a repository of both individual and collective memory, a figure with multiple meanings. Rossi's work is directed towards the identification of the primary elements of action, immutable principles, archetypes and meta-historical invariables.

Rossi's theories are imbued with that process of dissolution which began with the Enlightenment – a constant point of reference for him – a historical period which elaborated a concept of type in response to the crisis of identity of the architectural organism and sanctioned the separation between its formal, constructive and functional elements. Rossi combines his search for the logical and historically consolidated relations between the form of the city and building type with a personal and autobiographical project based on the indeterminacy of analogical thought.²⁸

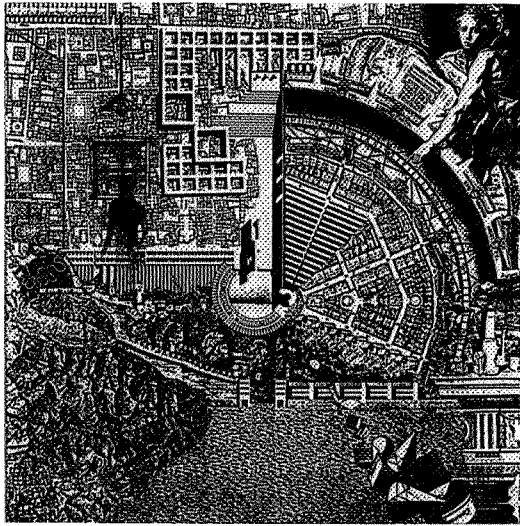


Figure 11. *La città analoga*, 1976, by A. Rossi. Drawing exhibited at the Biennale di Venezia. Source: *Lotus* (1976) 13, 4.

Thus he elaborates the concept of the 'analogous city' as a place of collective memory, an ideal space, a setting where there is a logical-formal transposition of material taken from the real city and from history (Figure 11). Rossi's theories are translated into representative spaces populated by a desiccated architecture, whose distant paternity is to be found in metaphysical or surrealist imagery. Even though communicative 'figures' replace abstract, avant-garde 'forms', the compositional process which gives life to an architecture of the city is still the analytical method of the Modern Movement. Hence Rossi's figures are used as self-referential fragments of a system devoid of meaning.²⁹

Architecture as urban metaphor: Carlo Aymonino

The Quartiere Gallarate in Milan, built at the beginning of the 1970s, offers a good point of contrast between the work of Rossi and Aymonino. These have different connotations, despite their common matrix (Figures 12 and 13). Aymonino attempted to re-establish the relation between building type and urban morphology in assimilating functionalist notions of type.³⁰ Gallarate is

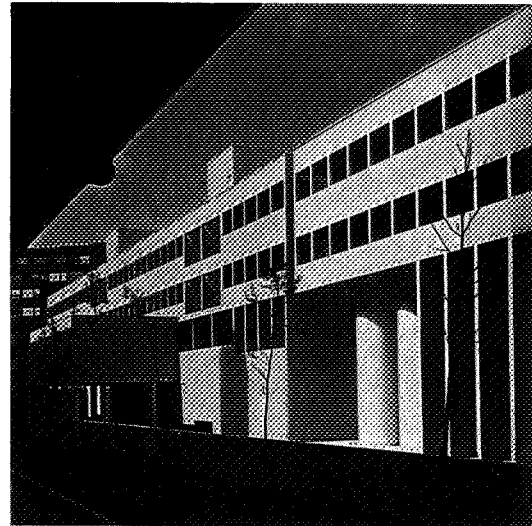


Figure 12. Residential building of the complex 'Monte Amiata' in the Quartiere Gallarate, Milan, 1969-70, designed by A. Rossi.

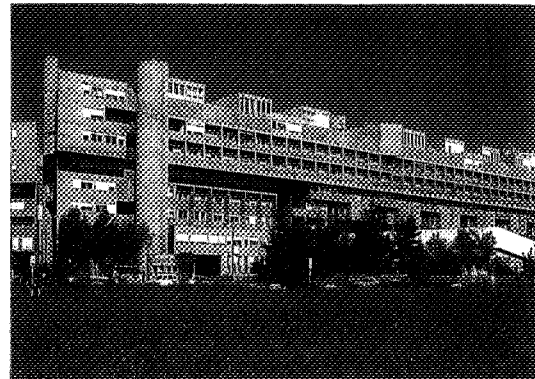


Figure 13. Housing complex 'Monte Amiata' in the Quartiere Gallarate, Milan, 1967-73, designed by C. Aymonino (with M. Aymonino, A. De Rossi and S. Messarè).

architecture on a large scale providing a programmed disorder as an imitation of urban complexity. Aymonino adopted a complex system of relations which integrated residential and service areas. Using a 'dovetail' method, he arranged housing types of different sizes within a series of grid systems. Yet Aymonino's architecture rejects its own absoluteness through deformations and lacerations, in contrast to Rossi's austere and silent buildings. It even welcomes signs from the Modern Movement: the forms of the functionalist city become figures that are historically and culturally connoted, and are

worth quoting, even within a now fragmented system.

The city as a place: Vittorio Gregotti

Even after the great utopias had been abandoned, at the end of the 1960s there was still an interest in the territorial scale of architecture. The work carried out by Vittorio Gregotti on this scale was no longer based on abstract models superimposed on reality, but was a reinterpretation and retranscription of reality. Great signs devoid of structural emphasis, which characterize the mega-buildings of the 1960s, punctuate the landscape and acquire a sense of relation to it. Landscape is put on a par with architecture, indeed becomes architecture.

In an attempt to give an aesthetic value to the anthropo-geographic landscape, Gregotti stresses the figurative quality of both natural and man-made forms (following Kevin Lynch's studies and structuralist theory).³¹ Identifying a 'settlement principle' – an expression of the deeper structure of the site as well as of its more harmonious and historically consolidated modes of transformation (for example, division into centuries, terracing, enclosures and dikes) – becomes the project matrix: for example, in the blocks of the Quartiere Zen in Palermo and the 'dikes' at Cefalù (Figure 14). Gregotti proposes a synchronic approach to both natural and artificial landscape figures by putting them on the same level, in contrast to Muratori's diachronic approach.

In the 1980s the themes of the real city re-emerged, particularly in the reuse and revaluation of suburbs and slums, as actual places endowed with a potent specificity. Context, continuity and respect for existing structures are all themes dealt with in the architectural review *Casabella*, directed by Gregotti since 1982. Belonging to a tradition, a culture, a place – a notion which is 'progressively opposed to the idea of a *tabula rasa*, a fresh start, an isolated object, an infinitely and arbitrarily divisible space'³² – comes about through a process of modification: the 'transformation introduced into the

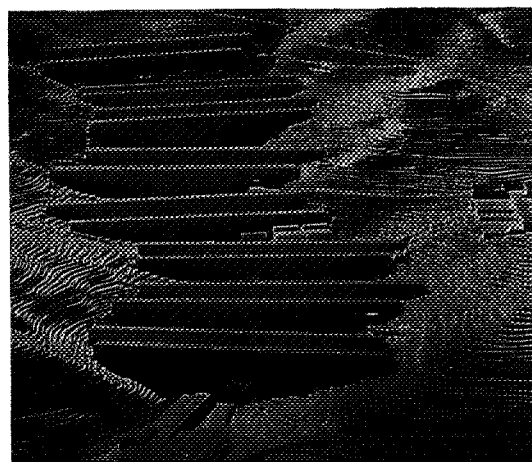


Figure 14. Project for a residential zone in Cefalù (Palermo), 1974-76, by Gregotti Associati. Source: Gregotti, *op. cit.* (note 32).

whole system by the replacement of one of its parts', which 'reveals the awareness of being part of an existing whole'.³³

It is along the general lines outlined in this article that contemporary experience is taking shape, far from the absolute certainties of the Modern Movement. The search is for a fruitful compromise between the major systems of thought and the complexity of reality.

Acknowledgement

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Notes

1. Giovannoni, G. (1931) *Vecchie città ed edilizia nuova* (Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, Torino).
2. A theme that Saverio Muratori was to develop in the 1950s. See Muratori, S. (1950) 'Vita e storia delle città', *Rassegna critica d'architettura* 11-12, 3-52.
3. Giovannoni, *op. cit.*, 95 (note 1).
4. Giovannoni, G. (1913) 'Vecchie città ed edilizia nuova. Il quartiere del Rinascimento in Roma', *Nuova Antologia* 995, 449-72; *idem* (1913), 'Il diradamento edilizio dei vecchi centri. Il quartiere della Rinascenza in Roma', *Nuova Antologia* 997, 53-76.
5. Giovannoni, G. (1921) 'L'architettura italiana

- nella storia e nella vita', Inaugural lecture for the new Scuola Superiore d'Architettura in Rome, *Conferenze e Prolusioni* 2, 17-23.
6. Giovannoni, G. (1933) 'Nuovi sviluppi dell'urbanistica in Italia', *Atti della XXI riunione della Società Italiana per il Progresso delle Scienze* (Rome, 9-15 October 1932) 1, 43-55.
 7. Giovannoni, G. (1925) 'L'ambiente dei monumenti', *Questioni di architettura nella storia e nella vita* (Società Editrice d'Arte Illustrata, Roma) 171-95.
 8. See the manifestos drawn up in 1926-27 by the young rationalists of *Gruppo 7* (G. Figini, G. Frette, S. Larco, G. Pollini, C.E. Rava, G. Terragni, A. Libera). Cf. *Gruppo 7* (1926) 'Architettura', *Rassegna Italiana* 103, 849-55; *idem* (1927) 'Architettura IV. Una nuova epoca arcaica', *Rassegna Italiana* 108, 467-72.
 9. See Sant'Elia, A. (1914) 'L'architettura futurista. Manifesto', *Lacerba* II, 15, 228-31.
 10. See Giorgio De Chirico's paintings and the review of the figurative arts *Valori Plastici*, which contains the theoretical formula of metaphysical painting.
 11. Pagano, G. and Daniel, G. (1936) *Architettura rurale Italiana* (Ulrico Hoepli, Milano) 6.
 12. Diotallevi, I. and Marescotti, F. (1948) *Il problema sociale costruttivo ed economico dell'abitazione* (Poligono, Milano).
 13. Ridolfi, M., Fiorentino, M., Zevi, B., Calcaprina, C. and Cardelli, A. (1946) *Manuale dell'architetto* (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche and United States Information Service, Roma).
 14. In 1949, as part of the Istituto Nazionale delle Assicurazioni, INA Casa was set up to provide for the construction of housing for government workers.
 15. INA Casa (1949) *Suggerimenti, norme e schemi per la elaborazione e presentazione dei progetti. Bandi di concorso*, fasc. 1, reprinted in Beretta Anguissola, L. (ed.) (1963) *I 14 anni del Piano INA Casa* (Staderini, Roma) 410.
 16. Rogers, E.N. (1958) *Esperienza dell'architettura* (Giulino Einaudi, Torino).
 17. Muratori, S. (1959) *Studi per una operante storia urbana di Venezia* (Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, Roma); Muratori, S., Bollati, R., Bollati, S. and Marinucci, G. (1963) *Studi per una operante storia urbana di Roma* (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Roma).
 18. See Muratori, S. (1946) 'I caratteri degli edifici', in Marinucci, G. (ed.) (1980) *Saggi di metodo nell'impostazione dello studio dell'architettura* (Centro Studi di Storia Urbanistica, Roma) 304-5.
 19. Muratori, S. (1963) *Architettura e civiltà in crisi* (Centro Studi di Storia Urbanistica, Roma) 124. See Caniggia, G. (1969), entries 'Tipizzazione', 'Tipo', in *Dizionario Enciclopedico di Architettura e Urbanistica* (Istituto Editoriale Romano, Roma) vol. 4, 207-10.
 20. See Bollati, S., Caniggia, G., Giannini, S. and Marinucci, G. (1963) *Esperienze operative sul tessuto urbano di Roma* (Centro Studi di Storia Urbanistica-Istituto di Metodologia Architettonica, Roma).
 21. *Ibid.*
 22. Tafuri, M. (1986) *Storia dell'architettura italiana. 1944-1985* (Einaudi, Torino) 80.
 23. See Quaroni, L. (1962) 'Verso la città-regione?', paper presented to the Seminar 'La nuova dimensione della città. La città-regione', Stresa, 1962, reprinted in Terranova, A. (ed.) (1981) *La città fisica* (Laterza, Roma) 137-44; Piccinato, G., Quilici, V. and Tafuri, M. (1962) 'La città territorio, verso una nuova dimensione', *Casabella* 270, 16-18.
 24. Quaroni, L. (1967) *La torre di Babele* (Marsilio, Padova).
 25. Rossi, A. (1966) *L'architettura della città* (Marsilio, Padova).
 26. *Ibid.*, Ch. 2.
 27. Rossi, A. (1966) 'Tipologia, manualistica e architettura', in Aymonino, C., Cristofoli, C., Fabbri, G. and Rossi, A., *Rapporti tra morfologia urbana e tipologia edilizia* (Cooperativa Libreria Universitaria di Venezia, Venezia).
 28. Rossi, A. (1981) *A scientific autobiography* (MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.).
 29. Bonfanti, E. (1970) 'Elementi e costruzione. Note sull'architettura di Aldo Rossi', *Controspazio* 10, 19-24.
 30. Aymonino, C. (1966) 'La formazione di un moderno concetto di tipologia edilizia', and 'Problemi di morfologia urbana', in Aymonino *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 13-66 (note 27).
 31. Gregotti, V. (1966) *Il territorio dell'architettura* (Feltrinelli, Milano).
 32. Gregotti, V. (1986) *Questioni di architettura* (Einaudi, Torino) 78-84.
 33. *Ibid.*, 19-21.