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The Rediscovered City: the debate
about type-morphology in the European
context of the 1970s

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ABSTRACT

The recurring use of the motif “return to the city” in European architectural-urbanistic thought in the 1970s was, at different times, affirmed to be a movement associated with the dissemination and evolution of the Italian studies on type-morphology. The intent of this paper is to study the construction and dissemination of this debate in Europe, in the 1970s, by placing the key architects in their specific contexts and exploring how their paths crossed. It focuses, therefore, on the trajectory of people and thought processes, where the goal was to define ways to put ideas into practice, as opposed to taking a historical approach which would afterwards be defined as a purely academic method of research. It also seeks to reveal the possible meanings this debate took on in different cultural environments, as well as its manifestation in the creation of certain leitmotifs.

To this end, the paper studies the main figures involved by inserting them within the architectural culture of their countries and examining the way in which they interpreted the discussions on type-morphology. Following this, it touches on some of the links that enabled interpersonal encounters to take place between these different figures and the strategies of these desired connections. Lastly, it takes stock of some of the finer shades of the debate on type-morphology in the recurring expressions to justify this practice in the 1970s. In other words, it seeks, on the one hand, to identify the solid cores of the debate and, on the other, to highlight and analyze the concepts that were liable to different interpretations. The time frame under study prioritizes the 1970s – a period during which the postulates formulated in Italy in the 1950s resonated more deeply in the architectural culture of the rest of Europe.

Keywords: City; European Architecture of the 1970s; Type-morphology.

Introduction

The way in which a particular idea is presented for discussion in the realm of architectural culture does not involve a phenomenon that is disconnected from the social environment in which it occurs, much less the characters and groups that promote it. When a debate crosses different national borders, it entails the adding of new meanings, as well as the loss and diminishing of others. Often, the combined narratives tend to minimize these contextual differences in favor of building a coherent panorama. The approach taken in this article is the opposite: it deals with a story of fragments, wherein the focus is precisely on the discordant voices in the course of building a debate. From this perspective, it seeks to explore the construction and internationalization of the debate about type-morphology in the European context, in the 1970s.

The recurring use of the motif “return to the city” in the European architectural-urbanistic culture of the 1970s was, at different times, affirmed to be a movement associated with the dissemination and evolution of the Italian studies on type-morphology². Overall, reviews in the English language underscored the existence of two major cultural milieus: the Anglophone – comprised of the U.S. and Britain – and another in relation to the rest of the European countries – referring, in general, only to France, Italy and Belgium³. If, on the one hand, this major differentiation makes it possible to understand the slow development of interest in the relationship between building types and urban form in English-speaking countries¹ – as well as the place that certain figures end up achieving by moving within these two spheres² – on the other, it minimizes the importance of the specific circuits and advantages specific to the heterogeneous context of continental Europe.

Among the reviews on the nature of this debate, there are those which stress its academic aspects, that is, which qualify it as a line of research and investigatory method³ – a trait that perhaps can only be precisely confirmed in the 1980s. However, when these studies emerged, as well as during their development in the 1970s, the indissolubility of the relationship between analysis and design was always found and ratified. The trajectory of these points of view which sought to define paths for putting ideas into practice, rather than define scientific theories⁴, is the precise focus of this study.

1. See, for example: Devillard and Jannière (1977).

2. This is the case of Léon Krier, for example. Cf. Ellin (1996); Samuels (1985).

3. See, in this regard: Samuels (1985); Pereira Costa (2006).

4. It could be suggested that the book “Architecture of the City” was intended by Rossi, in 1966, to be a dissertation on urban theory. However, this is a position which, as noted by Sainz Gutiérrez (2006), the Italian author distances himself from early in the 1970s. In the epilogue of the German edition in 1973, “without one line having been changed in the original text (...), Rossi says: “This book is a *project of architecture*” (SAINZ GUTIÉRREZ, 2006, p. 38, italic emphasis added by the authors).

The objective of this paper, therefore, is to examine the construction and dissemination of this debate in Europe, in the 1970s, by placing the architects involved in their specific contexts. It also seeks to reveal the possible meanings it acquired in its original cultural environments and in international meetings, as well as its manifestation in the building of certain leitmotifs.

To do so, we will first attempt to reinsert the characters in their social environments, that is, determine their contribution to the architectural culture in their own countries and the way in which they assimilated the discussions on type-morphology. Following this, we will focus on some of the links that enabled interpersonal encounters to take place between these different characters. Lastly, we will take stock of some of the finer shades of this debate. In other words, we will point out, on the one hand, what its solid cores were, and on the other, highlight the concepts that were liable to different interpretations. The time frame under study prioritizes the 1970s – a period when the postulates formulated in Italy in the 1950s resonated more deeply in the architectural culture of the rest of Europe.

Characters and places: the trajectories of a debate

Despite the differences that may exist between the emphases of the studies on type-morphology and their reviews, there are some common points that are generally upheld. It is accepted, overall, that they originally date back to the Italian investigations, where the initial phase was motivated by criticism of positivist urbanism, on the part of Giuseppe Samonà⁵, and consolidated through the works of Muratori⁶. The latter, with his extensive survey of the historic city of Venice – published in 1959, under the name “*Studi per un’operante Storia urbana di Venezia*” – was responsible for developing postulates that would become instrumental in the approaches toward type-morphology in the following decades: the definition of the study of the urban fabric as a concrete element for comparing architecture and cities and the assertion that urban structures can only be understood through history.

Removed from the major discussions at the time on the Italian architectural culture, and engaging in activities “restricted to the classroom, without (...) counting on a magazine as a mouthpiece” (PORTOGHESI, 2002, p. 82), Muratori was able to disseminate his studies through his former students. Among the students who attended his studio during his short stay in Venice⁷, was Gianugo

5. Giuseppe Samonà, architect and urbanist, 1898-1983

6. Cf. Paneral et al. (1999); Samuels (1985).

7. Muratori only stayed two years in Venice. In 1954, he returned to Rome, to succeed Foschini in the chair of “Architectural Composition”, during which time he developed a study for Rome similar to the one done in Venice (CATALDI, C., MAFFEI, G. L., VACCARO, P., 2002).

Polesello – a friend of Aldo Rossi and his collaborator during the early years of his career⁸. According to Sainz Gutiérrez (2006), it was through this former student of Muratori's that Rossi came into contact with the typological studies developed in Venice.

Placed within the context of the questioning which took place in Italy from the late 1950s to the early 1960s, insofar as the relevance, or not, of urbanism on the profession of architects – and delineating the position of those who defended the union between these disciplines – the first work in which Rossi analyzes the relationships between urban morphology and building typology was done in Milan, in 1963, coordinated by De Carlo⁹. That same year also marked the beginning of the academic collaboration between Rossi and Aymonino, whose importance was crucial in defining the contours that future type-morphological studies would assume under the *Tendenza*.

This is a period representing only three years during which Aymonino, invited by Samonà to take over Muratori's old course at IUAC, calls Rossi to be his assistant (SAINZ GUTIÉRREZ, 2006). Through this partnership and the studies on the city of Padua, small volumes were published which formed the basis for type-morphological analysis (CASTEX, 1995). However, the collaboration between these architects ended in 1966, when Rossi was hired by the Polytechnic University of Milan, the same year in which *L'Architettura della città* was published – a book that would become one of the most important benchmarks in the review of the Modern Movement.

The publication of the text by Argan “On the Typology of Architecture” in *Architectural Design* magazine, in 1963, is commonly considered the turning point of renewed disciplinary interest in typology¹⁰. However, it was the Plan for the Historic Center of Bologna that revealed, internationally, the potential applications of type-morphological studies. Developed in 1969, under the coordination of Cervellati and Scannavini, this plan soon became the icon and focus of the debates, since it shortened the distance between the political positions of the Italian Communist Party and the architectural postulates of the Venice group¹¹. According to Lucan (2001) and Cohen (1984), the excursions of French students and architects to Bologna were numerous and frequent in the early 1970s, equaling those to the British new towns.

The trips were soon followed by articles on the Bologna planning process in French magazines during the first half of the 1970s, noteworthy among which is the special edition of *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* – of August 1975, No. 180 – dedicated to historic centers. However, Cohen points out that even “before the

8. See, for example, the writings of Rossi in collaboration with Polesello in “Para una Arquitectura de Tendencia” (ROSSI, 1977a).

9. An introductory part of this study can be found in ROSSI (1977a) in the chapter: “Contribución al problema de las relaciones entre tipología constructiva y la morfología urbana”.

10. Cf. Ellin (1996) and Nesbitt (2006).

11. See, in this regard: Cohen (1984).

ideas of the Italian theorists were published in journals or studies, they were crystallized in the classroom and in teaching exercises” (COHEN, 1984).

The incorporation of the Italian theories into the practices of the studios occurred in the specific context of the reforms in the teaching of architecture in France, which until 1968 took place in the School of Fine Arts. The initial foundations of the reform were disclosed in 1963 (cf. Lucan, 2001), but the demonstrations in May 1968 accelerated this process: at the end of that same year, the elimination of the “Architecture” department of the School of Fine Arts was decreed and the independent “Pedagogical Units” were created which would be responsible for teaching this discipline¹². Experimentation would take place in these newly created Pedagogical Units (UP), not only with the theories coming out of Venice and Milan, but also those stemming from Louis Kahn and sociology¹³.

Organized by Bernard Huet, Devillers and Laisney, UP8 would be among those schools. Despite its recent institutionalization, the group which put it together drafted its formation in 1966, when Bernard Huet returned from his stay in the United States – during which time he was a student of Kahn’s – and created a studio that was initially independent from the School of Fine Arts, called “Collégial 1”¹⁴. The interest in urban sociology and the dissemination of Henri Lefebvre’s studies in Nanterre¹⁵ carved out an important role for urban issues during the years of the foundation of UP8 (COHEN, 1984). Within this context, the experience of Bologna emerged as the key for reconciling politics and architecture.

If, however, the combination of the Italian works, urban sociology and the teachings of Kahn generally characterized the initial pedagogical approach at UP8, it was the work of Bernard Huet, as editor of the magazine *Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*, from 1974 to 1977, which would broaden the scope of the debates in which the faculty was engaging. The first issue under his supervision generated, according to Cohen (1984), a turning point in the French architectural culture. In going to *Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* (AA), Huet amplified the knowledge about the Italian authors¹⁶ in France and gradually established exchanges between these two countries. In this context, the publication of special AA issues – such as “Italie 75” – would be simply one among the many testimonies of this exchange network¹⁷. Although this cultural exchange might, at first, seem uneven, French contributions would soon also surface in Italian magazines – Grumbach, for example, started officially collaborating with *Lotus* in 1978.

12. See: Lucan (2001) and Portoghesi (2002).

13. Montes, F. Interview with the author in December 2011.

14. See: Lucan (2001) and Portoghesi (2002).

15. We’re referring here to the investigation that Lefebvre coordinated from 1966 to 1973 on housing projects in Nanterre, whose initial findings were published in 1967 in *Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*, No.132.

16. The book “Architecture of the City” was only translated into French in 1981, but this did not prevent it becoming known before that date.

17. Regarding these exchanges, see: Cohen (1984).

Despite the importance of the discussion fostered by Bernard Huet and his group – and the international attention it received due to being published in *Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* – it was at the Pedagogical Unit in Versailles (UP3) that the first research would be conducted on type-morphology and which would extend beyond French borders. The studies carried out by the Panerai and Castex group which resulted in the books *Formes Urbaines: de l’îlot à la Barre* and *Principes d’Analyse Urbaine*, both published in 1975, would be considered, according to Manuel de Solà-Morales (2001), as the “cornerstone” of the approach to the city, from the architectural standpoint.

Another French school that would become involved in the so-called “Return to the City” was UP 6, organized by the group of Grumbach, Montes and Castro. According to Montes (2011), this was the UP that was the most political during the first years of its operation. The close ties to May 1968 were crucial for postulating the absence of design in the initial stages of architectural education. However, this initial orientation was revised by the aforementioned professors in the following years, and the return to design was proposed, linked to the “Return to the City” (MONTES, 2011). Together, UP6, UP8 and UP3 would establish exchanges with professionals and institutions in other European countries.

Noteworthy among those formed during the 1970s are the ones with the La Cambre School of Architecture (in Brussels) and the movement fomented by the direct involvement of Maurice Culot and Léon Krier – the so-called “Anti-Industrial Resistance”. The differences between the French debate on the “Return to the City” and the Brussels resistance movement are acute and not to be minimized. However, the proximity afforded by the same language and Culot’s propagandistic activities through *Archives d’Architecture Moderne (AAM)*¹⁸ enabled contacts and exchanges to be established in the academic community. Throughout the 1970s, Huet, Devillers, Montes, Panerai and Castex went to Brussels, on different occasions, to sit on the boards for evaluating works in La Cambre¹⁹ – times during which they also associated with Scolari and Léon Krier.

Linked to militant left-wing activities in Belgium, the “Anti-Industrial Resistance” in a feat widely publicized by AAM magazine succeeded in mobilizing the inhabitants of the neighborhood of Marolles, in Brussels, against the urban renewal being proposed by the municipality – an episode known as the “Battle of Marolles”, in 1969. This movement was based on the study of type-morphology relationships in order to denounce the destruction, promoted by capitalist expansion, of the physical and social aspects that characterized the urban fabric formed before the industrial revolution (BAREY, 1980). For architects committed to this movement there were only two possible alternatives: either urban resistance to slow down the process of destruction, or developing a theoretical construct that would provide strategic support to the former (CU-

18. We’re referring to both the publishing house and magazine counterpart. About the Anti-Industrial Resistance and its activities, see: Souza (2005)

19. Information found in Ellin (1996), confirmed in an interview of the author with Fernando Montes (2011).

LOT and KRIER, 1978). Léon Krier – Professor at the Architectural Association from 1974 to 1977 – was affiliated with the Anti-Industrial Resistance throughout the 1970s, via his frequent visits to the La Cambre School. During these visits, Krier participated directly in the development of the so-called “counter-projects” – intervention proposals, as alternatives to those of the municipality in order to encourage the engagement of the local population.

Despite there not being an agreement on the political aspects of their proposals²⁰, the ideas of the Krier brothers were, over the 1970s and early 1980s, often linked²¹. While moving between Stuttgart, Vienna and Lausanne those years, Rob Krier did not get involved politically in a very evident or radical way – although it is possible to detect within the pages of *Stadtraum* a certain “Italian-style romantically-Marxist influence” (ROWE, 1981). His work only reveals a “controlled and channeled indignation via the publication of an encyclopedia on urban spaces” (ROWE, 1981, p. 8).

Even prior to the construction of the debate on type-morphology, the constant dialogue between Spain and Italy in the post-Second World War period – and, more specifically, between Milan and Catalonia – also enabled the Italian studies to flourish on Spanish soil in the late 1960s. The first translation of the book “The Architecture of the City” by Rossi, for example, was in Spanish, published by GG, in 1971, and prepared by Salvador Tarragó.

The repercussions of the Italian discussions served as the basis for many of the criticisms that were leveled against the “polygons” (SAINZ GUTIÉRREZ, 2006) – the name given to the Spanish housing developments that were cut off from the urban fabric. In this regard, the most scathing criticism came from Bohigas and Tusquets.

If, on the one hand, the criticism of the polygons provided a propitious forum for embracing Rossian ideas among Catalan architects, on the other, the actual Spanish contribution to this debate was through the Barcelona Laboratory of Urbanism (LUB), in the person of Manuel de Solà-Morales, its coordinator since 1968. Upon taking over, that same year, the urbanism course at the School of Architecture of Barcelona, Solà-Morales undertook the project of teaching an “urbanism for architects” – a phrase that would come to characterize the interest in type-morphology in Spain. In pursuit of disciplinary specificity, the LUB was responsible for the first translations into Spanish of texts by Gregotti, Rossi and Aymonino (SAINZ GUTIÉRREZ, 2006). However, unlike those works, the ones developed by the LUB placed greater emphasis on urban form as a process and on the contribution of infrastructure networks (cf. SOLÀ-MORALES, 1997).

To complete our journey, we still need to discuss Kleihues – coordinator of the Neubau of the IBA – and Ungers. According to Passaro, at the end of the 1970s,

20. Rob Krier did not share Leon's proposal for an anti-capitalist ideological project.

21. See, for example: Portoghesi (2002) and Grumbach (1976).

“along with Oswald Mathias Ungers, Kleihues is considered a central figure in the German milieu, with respect to the more operational criticism of urban planning during the post-Second World War period” (PASSARO, 2002, p. 45).

In the context of the end of the international debate on post-war Germany, these two architects were responsible for the first points of contact that enabled exchanges beyond German borders. Kleihues established his first contact with Rossi, Colin Rowe and Frampton, in the late 1960s, which resulted in his inclusion in the Milan Triennale of 1973 and the publication of some of his designs during the following years in *Casabella* and *Controspazio* (PASSARO, 2002). Ungers, in turn, whose activities and career were primarily academic, was responsible for curating the first Architecture Exhibition of Dortmund, in 1976, which displayed works of Aldo van Eyck, Hans Hollein, Isozaki, Charles Moore, Aldo Rossi, Oswald Mathias Ungers, James Stirling and Robert Venturi (PASSARO, 2002).

Despite assuming similar roles as mediators between the international debate and the German architectural culture of the 1970s, both Ungers and Kleihues embraced the debate on type-morphology in different ways. While for the first morphology represents only one of his architectural research themes, which “enables seemingly irreconcilable opposites to be united” (UNGERS, 1983) through the principle of transformation; for the second, that point of reference serves as the foundation for his criticism of urban planning disconnected from architecture and the proposition of the “rediscovery of the history of the city as a design precondition” and the existing design as the constant basis for future interventions (PASSARO, 2002).

(Dis)Encounters

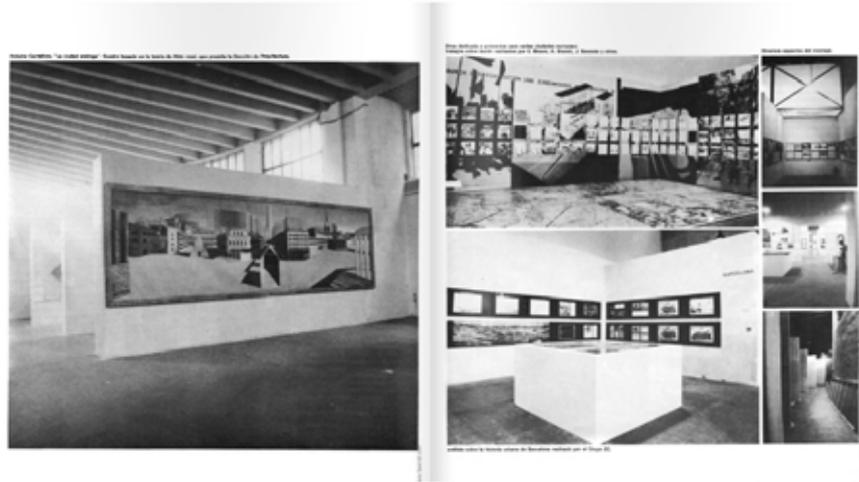
Despite the considerable physical distance between the local debates described above, attempts to recognize and confirm common international traits were placed on the agenda during the early 1970s. This practice would continue throughout the decade, in a series of events that sought to establish connections.

The first was the International Architecture Exhibition, organized by Aldo Rossi, as part of the XV Milan Triennale of 1973, which would become known by the name of the book that framed it: *Architettura Razionale*.

Figure 1

Registration of the photographs of the architecture exhibition organized by Aldo Rossi at the XV Milan Triennale of 1973, spread in 2C Magazine, No.2, 1975.

Source: Photo from the author



Recognizing the importance and usefulness of exhibitions in the architectural culture, efforts were made to replicate the effects of previous Milan Triennales²² through the exhibition of designs “closely linked to the city, which confront urban problems using design” (ROSSI, 1979, p. 20). Under this perspective, it was possible to accommodate architects as distinct as Aldo Rossi, Massimo Scolari, Enzo Bonfanti, James Stirling, Ungers, Venturi, Rob and Léon Krier, the so-called New York Five – Peter Eisenman, Michael Graves, Charles Gwathmey, John Hejduk and Richard Meier – and others (cf. GRUMBACH, 1976). Rossi said at the time that the architecture section of the Triennale was “the hallmark of a new situation that had over time been maturing in Europe and the world, and that enabled (...) certain positions to be established” (ROSSI, 1975, p. 12).

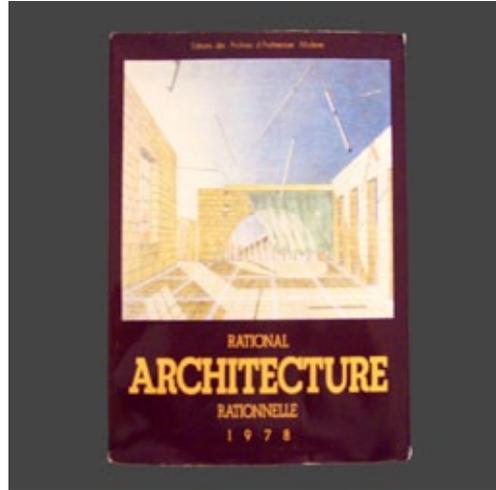
This same strategy would be repeated and broadened, only two years later, in another context. We are referring to the Rational Architecture exhibition, organized by Léon Krier in London, in 1975. The resumption of the Italian exhibition in a London context was certainly not for disinterested motives; through it, the intent was to affirm the existence of a movement. As Ellin claims, “when neo-rationalism migrated to northern Europe, its urbanistic components were involved in the Movement for the Reconstruction of the European City” (ELLIN, 1996, p. 27). In this exhibition, therefore, the following were presented as representatives of one single movement: Aymonino, Rossi, Scolari, Stirling, Ungers, Koolhaas, Zenghelis, Kleihues, Huet, Montes, Grassi, Gregotti, Léon Krier, Rob Krier, Perez de Arce, Portzamparc and Manuel Solà-Morales, among others.

22. In the text, Rossi highlights the role the V, VI and VII Triennales of Milan played in Italian rationalist architecture (ROSSI, 1979).

Figure 2

Cover of the bilingual catalogue *Rational Architecture/Architecture Rationnelle*, published in 1978 by AAM, for the homonymous exhibition held in London, in 1975

Source: Photo from the author

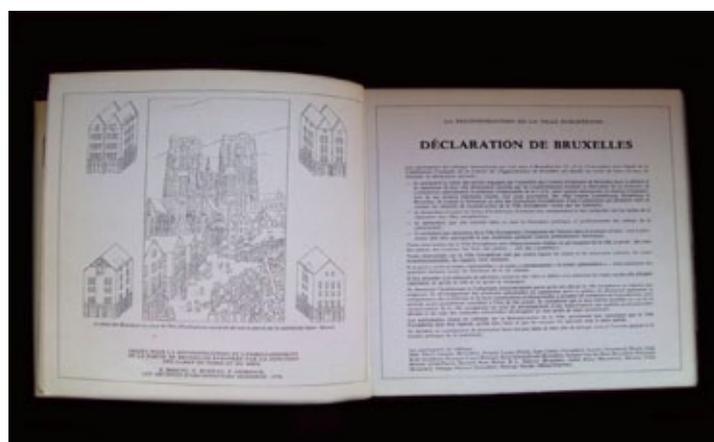


In the text he wrote for the exhibition catalog, Léon Krier sought to explain the criteria for the inclusion of new architects in the exhibition and the exclusion of others. This entailed selecting designs representative of a “new architectural movement, a new critical approach with respect to the renewal of the European City” (KRIER, 1978, p. 34). For this reason, architects such as Venturi and the New York Five were excluded who, according to the curator, would “confuse the major themes heralded by Rational Architecture” (KRIER, 1978, p. 34). Regarding the architectural designs presented in the exhibition, Krier said that they reflected the same “thoughts about the city, its use and social content” as well as a common concern for the “re-creation of the public space” (KRIER, 1978, p. 35). In the introduction to the catalog, Robert Delevoy – then director of the La Cambre School of Architecture – sought to broaden the context of the Brussels movement to other countries on the continent: “the future will only be proclaimed in the past that has been lost” and typology will be the instrument for its recovery (DELEVOY, 1978, p. 8).

Figure 3

Publication of the Brussels Declaration in the book *Propos sur la reconstruction de la ville européenne: Déclaration de Bruxelles*, organized by Barey and published in 1980 by AAM, in reference to the Colloquium “The Reconstruction of the European City”

Source: Photo from the author



As an extension of this attempt to affirm an international movement, the School of La Cambre organized a colloquium in 1978, entitled “The Reconstruction of the European City”. Attending the event – apart from Léon Krier, Culot and Delevoy – were architects from France, Belgium, Spain and Italy who had already established contact with this school during the 1970s²³. The final outcome of this colloquium was the signing of the “Brussels Declaration” in which the signatories declared their support for the urban resistance in Brussels and ratified, among other things, the need to retake the traditional public spaces of the European city (BAREY, 1980).

Aldo Rossi, in turn, together with Tarragó, three years after the XV Triennale, organized the first International Architecture Seminar in Compostela (SIAC) – held in October 1976. This event brought together Spanish architects and others such as Rossi, Aymonino, Vitale, Ungers, Keihues, Stirling and Siza. The debate focused on the possibilities of intervention in historic European cities, with Santiago de Compostela serving as an example for speculation via projects developed during the event. In this seminar, efforts were made to establish a link with the architecture exhibition of the XV Triennale of Milan through a section devoted to projecting footage of that event. In his introductory lecture for the event, Rossi highlighted that the theoretical foundations shared by the majority of the attendees included the analytical study of the city and the study of typology “as the core basis for overall decision-making in a design” (Rossi, 1977b, p. 15).

Figure 4

Cover of the publication *Proyecto y Ciudad Histórica*, organized by Tarragó and Beramendi in 1977, resulting from the 1st International Architecture Seminar of Compostela, held in 1976



23. With respect to this colloquium, see: Barey (1980).

The reflections through the project on the specific nature of a “European city” would also be nurtured by the exhibition “*Roma Interrotta*”, organized in 1977 by *Incontri Internazionali D’Arte*. European and American architects – Piero Sartogo, Constantino Dardi, Grumbach, Stirling, Romaldo Giurgola, Venturi, Rowe, Graves, Léon Krier, Rossi and Robert Krier – were invited to the exhibition to develop intervention hypotheses for the city of Rome as represented in the Gianbatista Nolli plan of 1748 (SARTOGO, 1979). Through the work on Nolli’s drawings, the exhibition had a twofold objective: to provide a critical examination of the process of change in the urban fabric, as well as seek options for the city and its historic center (SARTOGO, 1979). The result of the exhibition is described by Argan as a “set of adventures, fantastic research on the urban core of Rome” (cf. SARTOGO, 1979).

“Reconstructions” and “Cities within Cities”

Generally, it can be noted that certain concepts and postulates are reaffirmed during these meetings – type definitions by Quatremère de Quincy or Durand and some assertions resulting from the studies of Muratori and Aymonino, for example. There are discordant opinions, however, when it comes to establishing guidelines for putting things into practice. Some leitmotifs will now be proposed which, despite being repeated in different contexts, vary substantially in their meanings. Following this, we will examine two of these which are representative of these discordances: the concepts of “reconstruction of the city” and “cities within cities”.

The phrase “reconstruction of the city”, as well as some of its variants, such as “recomposition of the city”²⁴, was widely used in Europe between 1970 and 1980. Within this context, reconstructing meant opposing a series of recent demolitions – which were, at the time, frequent in different European cities – to make way for urban renewal. The anguish of the public in the face of destruction of areas from the past gave rise to the organization of different grassroots movements that were opposed to this type of intervention²⁵. The use of the term “reconstruction” in the 1970s and 1980s, therefore, resonated within the membership of these movements.

On the other hand, the use of the word “reconstruction” also evoked the Bologna plan which, in promoting the restoration of the historic center, proposed interventions in some blocks based on the repetition of building types identified in the survey that preceded it. Nearly a decade after this plan, Cervellati wrote in *Casabella*: “The historic center does not interest us because it is beautiful or old, but because (...) it represents the model, the example that should

24. Recurrent expression in Spanish urban plans and projects in the 1980s (cf. SAINZ GUTIÉRREZ, 2006).

25. Such as, the so-called Battle of Marolles, in 1969, in Brussels, or the movements organized by architecture students to stop works in Berlin, in the 1960s (cf. PASSARO, 2002).

be followed for modifying, demolishing and reconstructing the emerging city” (CERVALLATTI, 1977, p. 11).

Despite these possible common motives for its use, there was never a clear-cut definition for the so-called “reconstruction”: different groups employed it with their own connotations. We will examine three that presented precise definitions: the “reconstruction of the European city,” professed by Léon Krier and Culot; “critical reconstruction” formulated by Kleihues, during the organization of the IBA; and lastly the “reconstruction of the city” advocated by Bohigas, also in the mid-1980s.

In the catalog for the aforementioned exhibition “Rational Architecture”, Léon Krier drafted one of the first conceptions about “the reconstruction of the city”. It was, at the time, a vague alternative to the destruction of cities resulting from major renovations: “It can be said that during the postwar years, European cities were physically and socially destroyed more than in any other period of their history, including the two World Wars” (KRIER, 1978, p. 34). The strategy for achieving this reconstruction would become clearer and more incisive in following publications, which would define it as the exact imitation of urban and architectural forms of the city of the eighteenth century (CULOT and KRIER, 1978). The “reconstruction of the European city” was understood as part of a broader proposal that was incompatible with the capitalist system. It negated, therefore, everything that had occurred since the Industrial Revolution, and advocated a definite return to the past.

Kleihues who manifested himself in favor of plurality in his design for the “critical reconstruction” of Berlin could not have been more at odds with Krier who defended imitating the past. The German architect proposed, therefore, the coexistence and experimentation of different architects on the common basis of recovering the historical city design; the pursuit of a dialogue between the traditional and the modern. Thus, Kleihues’ approach prioritized definitions for insertion in the urban structure and placed lesser importance on “experimentation on the basis of the individual architectural object” (PASSARO, 2002, p. 45).

Bohigas’ concept of “reconstruction of the city” would be explained more clearly in his book, *Reconstrucción de Barcelona*, whose first edition was in 1985. From his perspective, this leitmotiv assumes a more generic nature: it involves the reconstruction of the city by parts which, linked to each other, would form an urban continuity (BOHIGAS, 1992), that is, a contrary approach to that which characterized the “polygons”. The “city made by parts” would aim, therefore, to recover the meaning of collective spaces and their relation to the overall structure and hierarchy²⁶.

By opting for this more open definition, Bohigas, however, endeavored to typify it as a widespread trend in European planning: “The return to the idea of street,

26. Bohigas, O. op. cit. 1992.

plaza and urban garden defined with architectural language and a land occupation project (...) represents a major effort toward more enlightened planning" (BOHIGAS, 1992, p. 11). Years later, Bohigas would incorporate the neighborhood-scale emphasis in the "reconstruction of Barcelona" within the socio-political context of Spain after the end of Franco's dictatorship. This would correspond, therefore, to a "political meaning and (...) the creation of instruments for administrative decentralization" (BOHIGAS, 1999, p. 240).

The emphasis on the neighborhood as the scale of intervention was not, however, limited to the Spanish post-Franco period; it also was the foundation for understanding the "city within the city" concept. One of its definitions was presented during the *Sommerakademie* of architecture held in Berlin by Cornell University in 1977. Introduced and discussed by Ungers, Rem Koolhaas, Peter Riemann, Hans Kollhof and Arthur Ovaska, the "city within a city" that they proposed was a concept to be studied for the planning of Berlin as a city-archipelago (UNGERS et al., 1978). A pluralist design was proposed, in which Berlin was treated "as a federation of individual cities with different structures, organized on the basis of a deliberately antithetical logic" (UNGERS et al., 1978, p. 86), as a system of autonomous architectural islands separated by lakes and forests.

Unlike the definition of "city within a city" formulated at the *Sommerakademie*, Léon Krier's concept was opposed to the idea of plurality. Krier's "city within the city"²⁷ would correspond to the neighborhoods of consolidated European cities and serve as the foundation for the "reconstruction of the city". The characteristics of these neighborhoods, according to Krier, would be verifiable through type-morphology analysis. However, in his definition of the characteristics of the European neighborhood, Krier ended up verging on the parameters of the Neighborhood Unit (cf. SOUZA, 2006). Like the latter, his concept would have: defined maximum sizes in terms of population and area, with comfortable distances for taking a stroll, periodic local urban activities and boundaries established by avenues where activities are concentrated "which could overcrowd or overload a simple neighborhood" (KRIER, 1978).

Final considerations

Through this text, it can be noted that the discussion about type-morphology – which was disseminated by several European countries primarily during the 1970s – was interpreted in different ways. In this regard, despite different attempts to establish movements or create international connections during the first years of the decade, the main figures involved cannot be treated as representatives of one homogeneous group. In the interpretation of this debate by

27. The text "The City within the City" by Krier was originally published in the magazine A+U, in November 1977 – the month before *Sommerakademie* – and republished, afterwards, in the Rational Architecture catalog.

the local architectural cultures, different meanings arise ranging from: reviews of the teaching of architecture, affirmations of a new approach to urbanism, opposition to the capitalist system and, even, the simple idea of opening up to international debate.

Although some key concepts – derived from the original Italian studies, as well as manuals from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries – were continually repeated, the way in which they were implemented in guidelines for putting them into practice differ significantly and is revealed in the dissonance among the connotations of their leitmotifs. Although terms like “city within the city” or “reconstruction of the city” were widely used in discourses to justify the practice, the design idea they advocated can vary from one extreme to another according to the hand of whoever drafted it. In the definitions of these leitmotifs, few resonances remain in the way the European city was represented and in the idea of loss of some of its distinctive features.

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