

Paola Rizzi\*

## HIC SUNT LEONES

## HIC SUNT LEONES

Po traktatach i podręcznikach rolę metod projektowych przejęły plany i manifesty. Naukowy charakter jest podstawą każdego teoretyzowania i jest ściśle powiązany z analizą. Jednakże, z biegiem czasu, zaczęto utożsamiać analizę z procesem projektowym, tymczasem jest ona częścią projektu. Naszą reakcją na jego złożoność były sztywne struktury poznawcze, które z elastyczności procesu wyewoluowały w protokoły, katalogi, listy i karty... i których już nie potrafimy kontrolować.

*Słowa kluczowe: traktaty, teoria urbanistyki*

After treatises and handbooks it was a turn of maps and manifestos to become a design method. A scientific nature is the basic attribute of any theorization and it is closely associated with analysis. In the course of time, however, analysis started to be identified **as** a design process while it is a **part** of a design. Our reaction on its complexity was the rigidity of cognitive structures which crystallized from the fluidity of the process into protocols, catalogues, lists, charters... that we do not control anymore.

*Keywords: treaties, theory of urban planning*

The first Latin version of Ptolemy's *Geography* was published in Vicenza in 1475. This edition was titled *Cosmography* and was deprived of maps which appeared in the 1477's edition, printed in Bologna. In 1486 in Rome, the first edition of Vitruvian *De Architectura* was published by Giovanni Sulpizio da Veroli. Sulpizio imagined his edition as a work to be completed – this is why the page margins were left for comments and drawings. He invited each reader to *help us in making this book as complete and true to this author as possible*. Denis Cosgrove noticed that the fact of publishing these two treatises simultaneously wasn't accidental:

*The idea of a spatial structure governed by geometry but concealed below the level of appearance seemed to offer to both cosmographers and architects a conceptual grid for experience, observation, and technique. But contradictions between conceptions and experience affected the ways that such order could be made visible in printed images. As the two texts moved out of the exclusive control of humanists and into a wider world of practice, so they followed somewhat parallel paths, from authoritative source of ancient-and thus of privileged-scientific knowledge, through attempts to harmonize the ideal measures they proposed with empirically observed, often instru-*

\* Rizzi Paola, prof. dr urb., Università degli Studi di Sassari, Facoltà di Architettura.

*mentally recorded form. To more critical treatment of their claims [1].*

The Ptolomy's *Geography* and Vitruvius' *De Architettura* are handbooks that intend to be the technical ones: *classifying, recording, and mapping places on the one hand; engineering, planning, and building places on the other*. From the universe scale, to the local one.

The final scope is to explain the nature of science – of either the description of world or architecture. The aim of this essay is not to compare and examine these treatises carefully, as they apply to two different disciplines. But from the point of view of an urban planner, it seems quite significant that two works on controlling the planning feasibility – of either architectural or geographical space – started to circulate at the same time, both deprived of figures. According to the first users, maps and columns were the supplement of the text and, now lost, shall be restored. It seems more precise to restore a map using numerical *tabulae* rather than approximate linear reproduction.

What is probably lost in the course of time that passed since the various versions of Alberti's and Serlio's manuals, is the Vitruvian incipit:

*Architectura autem constat ex ordinatione, qua graece taxis dicitur, et ex dispositione, hanc autem Graeci diathesin vocitant, et eurythmia et symmetria et decore et distributione quae graece oeconomia dicitur.*

Unfortunately, this disciplinary wealth is to be lost due to the emphasis attributed to the picture: with Palladio and Ortelius. Analyzing two incunabula: *Fasciculus Temporum* or *Sepplementum Chronicarum* – by comparing various edition since 1473 to those of 16<sup>th</sup> century – a passage from icons to proportional plans and views can be seen. The principle according to which urban images contained in these incunabula were nothing but a set of architectural elements – buildings, churches, palaces and fortifica-

tions, undifferentiated and for that not corresponding to any criteria of the described cities 'objective representation' – is denied in the city icons' classification: their assignment to the textual description follows precise criteria. This description – which first was the main reference – keeps its form but loses its significance in comparison with its representation that now prevails right up to occupy the entire page. But, in the last 16<sup>th</sup> century edition, the text was no more illustrated; there were only small icons of the cities left as the head letters [2].

It gives some suggestions on the use of pictures to explore, but certainly shows a separation between 'descriptive' text and 'scientifically' drawn map, therefore – design:

*What we call design in architecture is only that which puts information into building, what is in the mind, the composition of elements. A distinction must also be made between existence and presence. Presence is measurable. As soon as a painting, as soon as a work of architecture is made it becomes measurable; but existence is only in the mind and it is fundamentally unmeasurable. While a work is being constructed it is almost completely measurable, once the work is finished it is fundamentally unmeasurable [3].*

Due to the development of printing as well as the ability of movement and exchanges, a golden age for the treatises production begun. Their diffusion consolidated various theorizations on the guide line to the ideal design. It was the time of the utopias: they started with descriptive treaties and moved towards the 'manifestos' on the construction of the ideal space. *Therefore, there is no need for the urban prefigurations or images connected with reality but for the new economic and urban ideology to be seek [4].* It is the basis that – if Jacobs and Appleyard, in the introduction to *Toward an urban design manifesto* (1987) are basing their work on the review of two manifestos of modern urban planning: *Athens Charter* and *Garden cities of tomorrow* by Howard

Venice, a photo from the Lorenzo Cotti's archives, Locarno. Unknown author  
Wenecja, zdjęcie ze zbiorów Lorenzo Cottiego, Locarno. Autor nieznany



– lasts till the present day. The only difference they found is the one of density and typology. Separation of pedestrian and rotary motion infrastructure, superblocks, internal common spaces, dwellings separated from the streets and, last but not least, the central ownership of land are actually common principles. While the most important and significant difference is that *at least as they have evolved, is in density and building type (...) buildings tend to be island, big or small. They could be placed anywhere. Form the outside perspective, the buildings like the work of art it was intended to be, sits where it can be seen and admired in full* [5]. Whereas the garden city is not a city, it rather recalls a suburb, also because the emphasis is placed on the garden, not on the city.

The treatises' success generates something that Luigi Firpo, talking about Renaissance, defined as the "story of town planning on paper rather than on stone". Somehow, a sort of prescriptive ideology is spread, something that blocked – on either theoretical or practical level – the alternative ways of town planning before.

After treatises and handbooks it is turn of maps and manifestos to become a design method. This is how the issue of the method returns, an issue which in the 60' and 70' was complex and well articulated and which concerned together architecture, city and planning. A scientific nature is the basic attribute of any theorization when the method conditions arise. It is associated with analysis: *When theorists are engaging in design they always bring with themselves the philosophy and the practice of analyzing in a process of a scientific character* [6].

In the course of time, however, analysis has started to be identified **as** a design process while it is a **part** of a design. One of the analysis' axioms is the complexity, but it has become to be a sort of giddiness as well. Our reaction was – presumed – rigidity of cognitive structures which had crystallized from the

fluidity of the process into protocols, catalogues, lists, charters... which we do not control anymore. The pretentiousness of the omnicomprehensive model decline brings us back to the origins of the project methods. If a human being is a part of a system, that system never represents concisely formulated problems. Because of this highest level of unpredictability, we don't need to search for the new methods of problem solving but for the new approaches to the problems, between political choices and design processes. It is (...) *the freedom of full consciousness of the present, of what we are becoming, the right to build our houses and our cities in participation with all citizens. To design means to know 'for whom', 'where', using what 'means' in what 'time', to have 'proper' houses in 'proper' place on 'proper' cost and on 'proper' time. (...) The city is a house for one and countless men* [7].

Project organization as a page on which to comment, discuss, build and decide: in other words, the basis of the project but also a departure point for redefining it. Each kind of knowledge will not just create a piece of a universal puzzle which, once put together, will provide a reference map for planning and town planning, but more – a domino effect, with new possible routes being mapped out each time by the different combinations.

Utilitas, firmitas and venustas appeared in the emblem of a school that once was influential on architecture and urban planning. A school that came into being in a city *par excellence: Venice is more a city than any other city that has ever existed; no other place was that much built by man. Not: designed, based on a drawing which is defining some functions and their constructive response a priori and risking a collapse into an abstraction, i.e. an immobilization of time. They are not only the urban and architectural structures that may become abstract when the connection between form and function is neglected. They may be also projects that are trying to be functional*

on purpose if those functions which they are trying to depend on are assumed as invariant or typical at least. "Forms" connected to them can be nothing but rhetorical, in a broad sense. [They can be a subject of sophisticated and precious comments but] they are hardly useful for living. And it is not even enough

to notice that Venice is the city that is born, that is growing, is being built, is forming, and on the degree of beginning the Venetian community that will last for centuries arises. It is so obvious that nearly useless to say. I really do not know what the city of Venice was like at the beginning [8].

## PRZYPISY

- [1] D. Cosgrove, *Ptolemy and Vitruvius: spatial representation in the sixteenth-century texts and commentaries* [in:] A. Picon, A. Ponte (eds.), *Architecture and the science*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York 2003.
- [2] P. Rizzi, *1479–1581 Genealogia dell'immagine cartografica della città veneta: Padova, Treviso, Verona, Vicenza*, IUAV, Venezia 1987–1988.
- [3] L. Kahn, a lecture held on March the 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1971 in Venice [in:] *Proposizioni sulla città*, G. Mazzariol (ed.), Neri Pozza, Vicenza 1976.
- [4] G. Mazzariol, *Premessa*, *ibidem*.
- [5] A. Jacobs, D. Appleyard, *Toward an Urban Design Manifesto* [in:] *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 1987.
- [6] A. Rosselli, *Premessa* [in:] A. Rosselli (ed.), *I metodi del Design*, CLUP, Milano 1973.
- [7] F. Marescotti, *Relazione di Franco Marescotti alla mostra*

"Università e città" organizzata a Catania nel marzo 1978 [in:] *Quaderno dell'Istituto Dipartimentale di Architettura ed Urbanistica Università di Catania* n.9, Vito Cavallotto Editore, Catania 1979.

[8] S. Bettini, a lecture held on October the 15<sup>th</sup>, 1973 in Venice [in:] *Proposizioni sulla città*, G. Mazzariol (ed.), *op. cit.*

## BIBLIOGRAFIA

- Mazzariol G., *Proposizioni sulla città*, Neri Pozza, Vicenza 1976.
- Picon A., Ponte A. (eds.), *Architecture and the science*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York 2003.
- Rizzi P., *1479–1581 Genealogia dell'immagine cartografica della città veneta: Padova, Treviso, Verona, Vicenza*, IUAV, Venezia 1987–1988.
- Rosselli A. (ed.), *I metodi del Design*, CLUP, Milano 1973.