



# FIFTY YEARS OF «RASSEGNA DI ARCHITETTURA E URBANISTICA»

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## The Example of This Review

*Carlo Melograni*

During the fifty years separating us from the foundation of *Rassegna* the effects of certain deficiencies of the Italian design culture have been worsening: among these the lack of an urban policy, the gap between exceptional works and ordinary buildings, the tendency to give more importance to theoretical formulas than to real experiences or to formal solutions than to functional contents. These faults have also influenced university teaching. The issue of *Rassegna* dedicated to *The Education of Roman Architects in the Sixties* provides a convincing analysis of the problem.

In the editorial entitled *The Two Schools*, Marcello Rebecchini pointed out the fact that in the architects and civil engineers offices were followed «*opposite* training methods: one too abstract and future-oriented, the other too pragmatic, operational and anchored to the past». He wondered: «why the “synthesis” [...] is so difficult to understand and to achieve?». *Rassegna* has positively tried to overcome such a difficulty with its Scientific Council, composed by planners, designers and historians, engineers or architects, implicitly indicating the target to merge in a single school teachers and students interested in the building construction and in the anthropic environment protection.

## RASSEGNA YESTERDAY AND TODAY

### Forty Years of *Rassegna* 1965-2005

*Marcello Rebecchini*

This essay, written by Marcello Rebecchini in 2005, retraces the first forty years of *Rassegna* review. Since it was just a vehicle for making known the researches of an institute of the Faculty of Engineering of Rome, until 1980, when it set itself the goal of being a cultural national and international reference in architecture and urban planning research, becoming one of the Sapienza University reviews and equipping itself with a Scientific Council composed by some of the most important names of the academic culture, such as Ackerman, Bruschi, Ciucci, Dardi, De Carlo, De Feo, Frommel, Manieri Elia, Millon, Quaroni and Tafuri. Through the history of *Rassegna* and his original approach – based on Croce’s esthetic theory – the essay tells the convulsions of modern thought grappling with the challenge of contemporaneity.

### *Rassegna*: Recent Paths 2005-2015

*Maria Argenti*

Retracing the last ten years of *Rassegna*, the essay analyzes the relationship between the diachronic and interdisciplinary nature of the research and the increasingly forgetful, hyper-sectorial and impatient contemporaneity. The author analyzes the relationship between designers and community, considering the dualism that on one hand suggests the complete identification between the first and

the second, on the other hand leads not to stop at this mutual mirroring in each other, going beyond that. The author supports the importance of not separating research from reality, idea from concreteness, appearance from substance, history from actuality, ethic from design. She points out the difference between being out of fashion (almost a duty for those who do research) or out of time.

In the essay are mentioned some of the special issues of the review: on Ernesto Nathan Rogers, on the architecture of the «reconstruction» in Italy, on the transformation of Rome, on Marcello Piacentini and Franco Albini, on the languages of contemporary architecture, on the dynamic character of the building restoration, on the Brazilian School of São Paulo, on the relationship between creativity, technique and technology.

## Architectural Reviews from 1945 to 1965

*Giorgio Ciucci*

After the fall of Fascism most of the architectural reviews closed. Among them, «Casabella» edited by G. Pagano; «Architettura» by M. Piacentini; «Palladio» by G. Giovannoni. Others survived: «Domus», founded in 1928 by G. Ponti but edited from 1941 to 1944 by M. Bega with M. Bontempelli, G. Pagano and others; «Stile», funded and directed by Ponti from 1941 to 1947; «Urbanistica» by Melis until 1949. A new season starts after the end of the war. In 1945 B. Zevi creates «Metron» (until 1954) and in 1946 (only few issues) «A. Attualità, architettura, abitazione, arte». In the same 1946: «La nuova città» by G. Michelucci, three issues of «Casabella» by F. Albini and G. Palanti, «Domus» now under the direction of E.N. Rogers (but in 1948 Ponti is back), «Comunità» by A. Olivetti (later, in 1949, house organ of the Movimento di Comunità with architects and planners). In 1947 appears «Strutture. Rivista di scienza e arte del costruire», with few issues of a more technical magazine under the direction of C. Cestelli Guidi, A. Libera and P.L. Nervi. In 1949 a new series of «Urbanistica» sponsored and directed by A. Olivetti.

In the Fifties, the debate becomes even more articulated: not only architecture, town planning, housing or technical aspects, but also furniture, industrial design, history, art, criticism. In 1953-54 several new publications appear: «Spazio» by L. Moretti, «Prospettive» by C.E. Rava, «Civiltà delle Macchine» by L. Sinisgalli, «Architettura Cantiere» by L. Guarneri, «Edilizia popolare» by C. Ripamonti, «Stile industria» by A. Rosselli and, once more, «Casabella», now edited by E.N. Rogers who added the word «Continuità» to the original title. Two years later, in 1955, B. Zevi will found «L’architettura. Cronache e storia». In the following decade other new magazines appear, some of them quite luxurious and decisively open to an international panorama, like the milanese «Zodiac» (1957) and «Lotus International» (1963) both edited by B. Alfieri; others more humble, focused on interdisciplinary issues, like «Marcatre» (1963) published in Genoa by the avant-gard Gruppo 63, and «Op. cit.» (1964) edited in Naples by R. De Fusco. In 1965 the School of Engineering of the University of Rome publishes the first issue of «Rassegna dell’Istituto di Architettura e Urbanistica».

## A Magazine as a Laboratory

*Franco Purini*

*Rassegna* has been – during fifty years – an important instrument of debate on landscape, city, architecture and restoration. The theoretical and historical criticism of these themes gradually widened its horizon from Italian to international culture. Initially focused on teaching issues, *Rassegna* chose from the very beginning not to be a trend magazine but an analysis and interpretation tool of what was happening within the disciplinary debate. Despite this choice, which might appear a simplistic one, its position was neither neutral nor interested in the mere information. During the four seasons identified in the directions of Giuseppe Nicolosi, Federico Gorio, Marcello Rebecchini and Maria Argenti, its interests always focused on how the «tradition of the new» – understood in its broadest sense and authenticity – could find its expression. Its main goal became therefore an accurate and constant criticism of theories, movements and protagonists of architecture and urbanism, in order to build a continuous dialogue with social and cultural ideals that inspired the beginnings of modern architecture.

### **Rassegna: International References**

*Alessandra Muntoni*

*Rassegna* was born as an the Italian magazine, in an Italian University, setting from the beginning issues concerning Italian architecture and Italian cities, just in order to understand their cultural difficulties. Precisely for this it was clear to the directors and editors of *Rassegna* that it was necessary to go beyond the context of our country, whereas a strictly comparison with works and ideas of the most important international trends could serve to enrich and improve Italian architecture and urbanism. For this reason a wide range of articles written by historians and critics – not only members of the editorial staff – has been dedicated to the protagonists of contemporary architecture all over the world. This essay analyzes the international references chosen in fifty years of *Rassegna*, starting from the article of Benevolo about Le Corbusier in the occasion of his death, 1965, up to the spreading of a growing interest on current trends in architecture.

### **Rassegna Cultural Line Through Its Headings and Its Monographic Issues**

*Umberto De Martino*

The essay describes the beginnings (in 1965) and the early years of *Rassegna* expressing the scientific and disciplinary interests within the Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning. Through the publication of some historical documents, the author analyzes the original purposes of the review outlining a picture of the cultural and scientific life in the Institute. The success of the magazine is highlighted referring not only to the quality of the writings but also to their coming from different academic and cultural areas. The essay retraces the development of the different headings which had articulated the journal in its first years, demonstrating the validity of the initial setting over the time. And underline how – not secondarily – the success of the magazine was even due to the leading role of the editorial staff.

## THE SCHOOLS OF ENGINEERING, ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN PLANNING, AN OPEN MATTER

### **Engineering and Art in the School of Architecture of Rome**

*Lucio Valerio Barbera*

Within a few years, exactly in 2019, a century will be passed from the founding of the High School of Architecture of Rome which was the model of all the Italian Schools of Architecture that followed from 1926. However, in the last decades what survived of that academic model has been substantially de-structured by a series of governmental reforms.

All around us suggests that the architect, as conceived or understood in history, may not have an academic and professional citizenship in the near future. Therefore, it is the time in which we must apply the spirit of the project – from analysis to synthesis, with science and passion – to the future identity of the architect, or rather to the future of the *architectures* and the *cities*. A highly educated and enlightened group of engineers with a deep sense of History and the Historic City essentially dominated the model of the Italian Schools of Architecture established in 1919 by Gustavo Giovannoni. Thus, during the first forty years the School of Architecture of Rome became the natural home of the great Italian designer-engineers as Pierluigi Nervi or Sergio Musmeci. Only at the early Sixties, with the teaching of Ludovico Quaroni, the sense of Architecture as an artistic activity became dominant in the School, especially in relation with the conception of the City as the supreme architectural organism.

Today, the metamorphosis of the metropolis, the ever rising success of the communication technology as a herald and a tool for implementing a still unknown, but exciting idea of «city», impose afresh a profound and realistic consideration of the Future and of the identity of the Architect in it.

### **Convergences and Divergences: Notes on the Training of Engineers and Architects at the Polytechnic of Milan in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century**

*Ornella Selvafolta*

The article analyzes some aspects of the engineers and architects education at the Politecnico of Milan from the foundation (1863) to the early twentieth century. Its aim is to highlight not only the cultural conflicts between the two fields, but also the convergence and mutual exchange, based on the overall educational strategies of the Polytechnic, the articulation of the training curricula, the role of professors active in both courses of study. Such approach will be progressively revised because of the growing specialization of the design culture, leading in the early twentieth century to an increasingly marked separation between the training of architects and engineers in order to distinguish and better enhance the values of both. This process led to a gradual revision of the school of architecture, for long the most «weak» and the least attended by students, although the only one in Italy until 1915 to give legally the title of «Civil Architect». Its reformulation echoed the increasing complexity of the design culture and the challenge of balancing «technique and art» which has historically characterized the Milan polytechnic education.

## **Total Architects, Baumeister and Bricoleurs in Rome, Milan and Turin Schools of Architecture**

*Elvio Mangano*

The text draws a parallel between the Milan, Rome and Turin Schools of architecture starting from the relationship between engineering and architecture. Camillo Boito is the starting point of the Milan School of architecture: his cultural passion on the style issue was decisive to describe the direction that he gave to the School. The subsequent contributions of Rogers and of the architects close to Persico and later Rossi and Cannella, can be brought along this way; on the other side, only in recent years the School has tried to reestablish the teaching of architecture through *Baumeister's* matrices. The Rome School has instead its origin in the historical connection among architecture, construction and environment, which is the very same connection aimed by the *total architect* designed by Giovannoni. Finally Turin. Here, the vanishing point of his positivist culture is considered to be deeply experimental, meaning that its truest dimension is reached only beyond the manuals' knowledge, in an area closer to the *bricoleur*: Carlo Mollino is the representative figure of that.

## **Between Urbanism and Architecture**

*Elio Piroddi*

The author evokes the genesis of the meaning of Urbanism according to the opinion of the two main leaders Giovanni Astengo and Bruno Zevi; one conceives Urbanism as an independent science, distinct from architecture, that studies and plans cities and territories; the other asserts the total conceptual coincidence between the two disciplines. The essay retraces the historical relationship between Urbanism and Architecture, from Alberti's metaphor of the city as a «big house», until the birth of modern Urbanism as a large complex project where the city-metropolis is a hybrid of architecture and urban planning in which the morphology is always dominant. In the contemporaneity Urbanism lives two type of splitting: the first between utopia (Ville Contemporaine) and good practice of urban design (Amsterdam), the second between «city compliant», based on the principles and techniques of good use of urban space but without a solid morphology, and «generic city», controlled by the market and the marketing of the product. The author states the thesis that in this historic period is the urban project that can retrieve the morphological size promoting the quality of media production to the level of architecture. It is not unlikely to happen more easily in the current period of transition from growth to renewal, from the «disintegration of the urban space» (Astengo was the first to write about it) to its reconstruction in the frame of a new landscape.

## **Building Construction Between Engineering and Architecture**

*Sergio Poretti*

The essay focuses on the theme of the building construction as treated in «Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica» in the different phases of its life, considering that the review was born and grew up in the Faculty of Engineering at Sapienza

University of Rome and, at the same time, it welcomed many protagonists of architectural debate.

In the first period, when Giuseppe Nicolosi was the editor, the construction was considered as an intrinsic and inseparable aspect of the architectural design. Later, in the Seventies and Eighties, when in Italy the industrialization process of the construction developed, the debate about technology found very little space inside the review. Since the Nineties, the relationship between architecture and construction was mainly faced in a historical perspective and various monographic issues were dedicated both to ancient or modern architecture and to structural engineering.

## **Rassegna and the Teaching of the History of Architecture in the Faculties of Engineering**

*Flaminio Lucchini*

Starting from the beginning of Sixties, the essay traces the evolution of the Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning which, through the publication of *Rassegna*, has entered into the debate on various topics: the designer's role compared to public commissions, the architectural language and its relation to history, the unity or separation between architecture and urban planning, the contents regarding the different scales of architectural design. The author's point of view is that of a former student who had as referring teachers Giuseppe Nicolosi and Mario Manieri Elia, Federico Gorio and Vittorio De Feo. Of the last, the most «heretic» one, the author became assistant and then temporary supply teacher of History of Architecture. Lucchini also opens a window on the new university degree course of Building Engineering-Architecture and on the cultural climate inside the *Tor Vergata* Second University Engineering Faculty, where the Building Construction has acquired a central role.

## **Notes for a Comparison Between Schools: Bauhaus, Rome High School of Architecture and Architectural Association**

*Anna Irene Del Monaco*

The parallel lives of the School of Architecture of Rome and the Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar reveal some stringent timing coincidences that make the comparison mainly full of symmetrical oppositions. Tentatively a more interesting comparison may be proposed between the School of Architecture of Rome and the Architectural Association in London (AA). Coincidences: the date of birth of AA is 1852, the promulgation of the Casati Law is in 1859. Symmetrical oppositions: in northern Italy the cultural competition between the Napoleonic Empire and Austria has deeply implanted in our country the conviction that it's up to the State to define and protect the professional activities and to ensure the relevant practice; England liberal culture grants the arts with a total self-regulation in which successful professionals play a decisive role, not rarely as master. In Italy very soon arose the conflict between institutions, i.e. between the Higher Technical Institutes and the Art Academies, or else engineers and architects; in other words between Science and Art. In England immediately arose the conflict between Profession and Art, i.e. between economic interests and the freedom of expression. The symmetries and the very important divergences between Rome and London Schools of Architecture is traced until the end of the Thirties as a first trace of a research that might be developed in the future.