

# Reviews

Two recent books, edited by Attilio Petruccioli, deal with the theme of typologies in different ways: one is more concerned with theory of design, while the other analyzes the XIXth century urban fabric. Both volumes are part of a new series of publications of international symposia held at M.I.T. and sponsored by the Aga Khan Program. This series aims at extending the field of interest from the Islamic World to the Western built landscape, since the intellectual mobility today makes it difficult to circumscribe cultural territories.

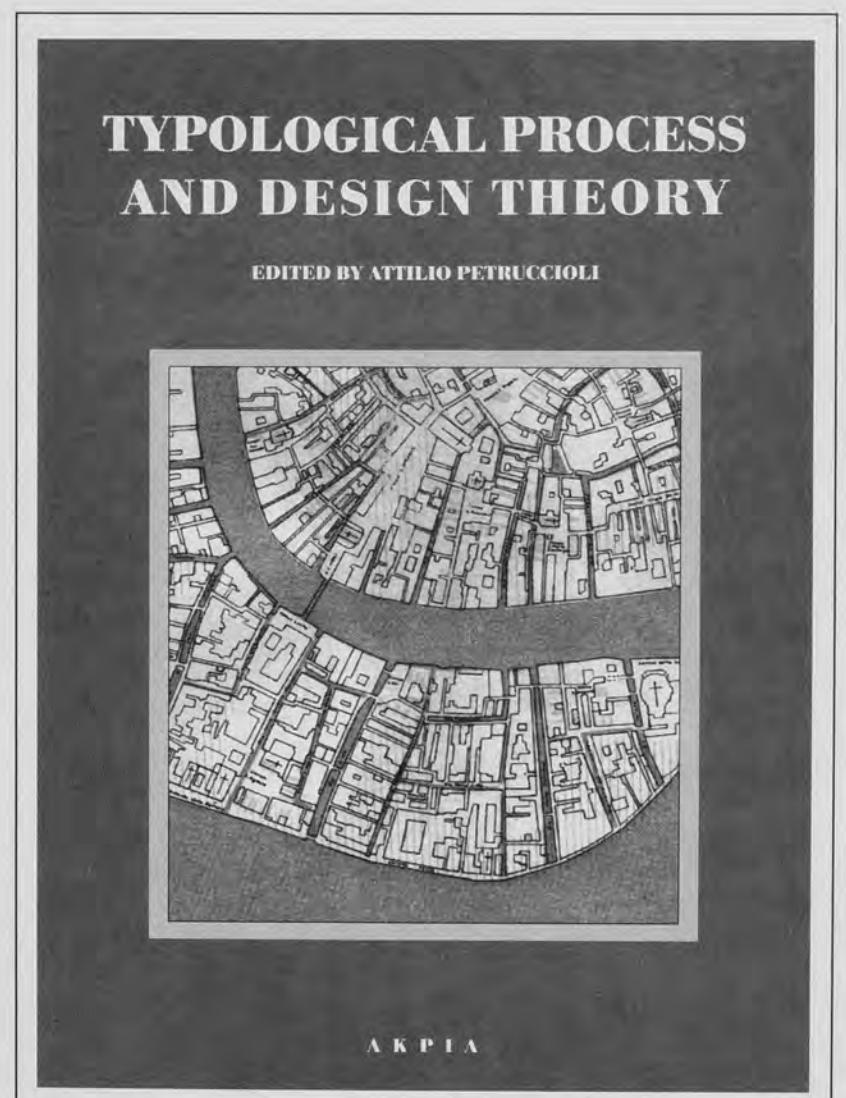
*Typological Process and Design Theory*, is the publication of the proceedings of the international symposium held at MIT, Cambridge, on March 1995. Petruccioli's opening article has the intriguing title "Exoteric-Polytheistic-Fundamentalist Typology. Gleanings in the form of an introduction". Four words that sum up the virulent debate, testifying to the complexity in the field of typological studies. Born in the eighteenth century French Enlightenment with Durand and Boullée, the typological discipline has had a radical rethinking in the 1950s, when three schools in Europe, the Urban Morphology Research Group of the University of Birmingham inspired by Conzen, the Italian School established by Saverio Muratori and the School of Versailles in France, began to elaborate theories for the understanding of the built environment.

The articles of scholars who have contributed to this interesting volume picture the state of art of the present debate, in view of the recent radical changes in the morphology of cities. Peter J. Larkham in "Urban Morphology and Typology in the United Kingdom" verifies Conzen's ideas in suburban areas. Karl S. Kropf extends the concepts of the Italian School to "Typological Zoning". Giancarlo Cataldi and Giuseppe Strappa point out the specific operative attitude of Muratori, raising the question of relationship between analysis and design. Francesco Giovanetti's "Manuale del Recupero" is a coherent application of the idea of critical maintenance to the conservation of architectural heritage in Rome. Maurice Cerasi is critical towards the simplification introduced by the typo-morphological school and believes in the multiple processes of the marking of architecture, observed in

the transformations of the Ottoman house and in other examples. The core of Serge Santelli's paper is the permanence of the concept of type verified in his studies on the North African courtyard house.

The question whether the traditional methodology has applications in the new problems emerging in the contemporary world is raised by Sylvain Malfroy in "Urban Tissue and the Idea of the Urban Morphogenesis".

Anne Vernez Moudon focuses on the changing character of the American suburbs and provides a panoramic synthesis of the research carried on in United States.



*Rethinking XIXth Century City* is the publication of the proceedings of the international symposium held at MIT on April 1996. It deals with the typology of XIXth century bourgeois house and neighborhood, the latest form of urban fabric before its negation by the Modern Movement. Notwithstanding the recent urban growth, the XIXth century fabric is still an important component of the western urban heritage. A fabric that is characterized by the regularity of the network of streets, uniformity of facades in urban blocks and repetition of housing typologies. To understand the economic and aesthetical logic of this fabric is the first step to incorporate the values of the XIXth century city in the present one. The case studies presented by Hidenobu Jinnai, Pierre Pinon, Roy Strickland, K.S. Kropf, Jean Castex and Giuseppe Strappa are keys to the understanding of the city fabric in such complex realities as Tokyo during the Meji period, Istanbul, New York, Westminster, the quarter of the Opera in Paris and the Apulian towns in Italy.

The geographer J.W.R. Whitehand focuses, through a morphogenetic approach, on two important phenomena in English cities: the working class house types and those parts of the cities that urban morphologists refer to as "fringe belts".

Rethinking today the XIXth century city means also to consider the extraordinary popularity of the urban model based on grids and blocks. John Habraken suggests that the successful projects of John Nash in London and Haussman in Paris resulted from "the marriage of innovation (financial and managerial) with tradition (typological)". Forms built to shape the new city "were to a large extent based upon a shared image".

In a similar way, Attilio Petruccioli sustains that the reuse of such concepts as "polarity and antipolarity", adopted to "dictate the rhythm and growth of the preindustrial city" can be helpful in planning the new city and periphery.

The XIXth century grid owes its persistence in the present city to its potential reinterpretation in facing new functional, aesthetical and economical needs. This issue is raised by Julian Beinart in "Form and Application in the XIXth Century City", by Sylvain Malfroy in "The Modern Completion of the XIXth Century Fabric Based on the Grid and Blocks: Case Studies from Industrial Towns in Switzerland" and by Brenda Scheer in "Typology and Urban Design Guidelines: Preserving the City Without Dictating Design".

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