The Mediterranean City between Myth and Reality

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Elie Haddad

PREFACE

Why distinguish the Mediterranean cities from other cities? Perhaps because they are the first and oldest and the overlay is thicker and richer. We need to think about them and their nature, their gift as a defense against globalized indifference and the threat of a flat inarticulacy.

[Joseph Rykwert, Byblos, April 2000]

The essays included in this publication constitute a selection of papers presented almost twenty years ago at a conference organized by the Department of Architecture and Design at the Lebanese American University on the theme of the "Mediterranean City between Myth and Reality".

This selection constitutes an important collection of different readings of the Mediterranean City, addressing the question of the validity of this historic model in all its variations throughout history, with archetypes such as Alexandria, Tyre, Byblos, Carthage, Athens, Barcelona or Marseille among others; which has marked the development of civilization for more than two millennia, spreading its influence around the Mediterranean and beyond.

The re-publication of these proceedings comes many years after the date of the conference, yet the issues raised and the opinions expressed still constitute important reflections on the Mediterranean City, at a time when cities face a global challenge that is not only economical or social, but ideological in the sense of putting into question the very notion of the city as a polis, in the old Greek sense of the term as a locus for a political participation.

At the time, three major theoreticians of the city and architecture as a whole, Joseph Rykwert, Luciano Semerani and Benedetto Gravagnuolo; each made a compelling presentation that, in the auratic presence of these authors, takes on a value which can never be recovered in print alone. In addition, two significant essays by Pipo Ciorra and Kevin Mitchell added fuel to the debate on the issues of globalization, boundaries, and the limits of this notion of the traditional city.

Joseph Rykwert eloquently argued for the continued attachment to the ideals of the Mediterranean city, as a last line of defense, perhaps, against the spread of a new colonial form of globalization, a position to a certain extent supported by both Luciano Semerani and Benedetto Gravagnuolo, each of whom projected his own perception of the Mediterranean city, a city of light and shadows, Dionysian pleasures and Apollonian reason for Semerani, a city as an intimate place of surviving mythologies for Gravagnuolo. Kevin Mitchell, on the other hand, recalled the notion of origin in the Greek city, and by this provided another point of reflection on the notion of boundaries, something that the Mediterranean city may still offer, as a model of urbanity in a world drifting towards homogeneity and leveled landscapes.

Pipo Ciorra took an opposite, polemical position arguing instead for the recognition that the Mediterranean city has already been dissolved in the contemporary global culture, a position that is reflected as well by Rem Koolhaas in his various writings. While this counter position may incite us back to a recognition of the reality of the present, as opposed to solely seeking refuge in the myths of the past, it is timely as well to remember Nietzsche's warnings against the fall into the vulgarization of culture, which is what we are witnessing today all over the world.

Joseph Rykwert

The Birth of the Mediterranean City

The city as a lived phenomenon and as concept seems to have been born in the Mediterranean. Like anything that is born it has two parents: a seed needs to be planted in a matrix. That ground, the matrix, was the fertile alluvium both of the Nile valley and of the ground between the Two Rivers which we call Mesopotamia. Migrant populations from the south - from Nubia and the Saharan edges into Egypt, or from the surrounding high grounds of Elam and Iran into Mesopotamia, and almost certainly from the Persian Gulf already organized into food-raising communities - seem to have brought the seed.

Why they migrated is not clear. Climatic changes in the centre of Africa and population movements between the Sahara and the Nile Valley may provide some clues to the creation of the dual Nilotic state. It will not quite help us to understand the Mesopotamian changes - or the rise of the Sumerians - whose part in the process of urbanizing the south of the Tigris/Euphrates delta and the organizing of irrigation was decisive in the formation of settlements.

Many historians favour invasions or migrations as a mechanism to explain cataclysmic social changes. Yet revolutionary developments can occur without any such impact or admixture. We do not know, for instance, how our ancestors spread over the earth; improbable as that may seem, we are homo sapiens sapiens, man doubly wise in all our varieties from Australian Aborigines to Lapland Eskimos. But we have only been doubly wise for a mere fifty thousand years, while for some half a million years before that homo sapiens inhabited the world. Although less wise than us - to go by the label - these ancestors or cousins of ours had brains about 2% more capacious on average than ours - or so we are told by palaeontologists, who called them Neanderthals after one of the first findings of their remains in the valley of the river Neander in the Rhineland. And we, their successors, are identified with a burial cave at Cro-Magnon in the Dordogne, which is still the earliest site in Europe with homo sapiens sapiens remains.

The two species of man seem either to have cohabited for a while, or succeeded each other quickly in this part of the world, on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. Whether by development, by conquest or by interbreeding, our ancestors were left as the only sub-species of humanity throughout the world. Shortly before this change-over, but apparently independently of any racial change, a remarkable alteration occurred in the makeup of humans. What exactly caused it or how it proceeded is not clear. We have learnt about it from evidence that continues to appear about that remote period, and it is primarily about the burial of the dead. Burials have been found here in Lebanon, and in Southern France and in Northern Iran - and some of the earliest of them retrieved so far are accompanied by grave goods and floral offerings. Such practice seems to have been general before 50 000 BC.

This alteration has been taken to imply that those earliest buriers, Neanderthals most probably, had some notion - call it moral, or intentional - about their own existence. Where burial custom originated and whether it did so in several places at once - or was diffused from one centre - is not clear (and probably never will be). Burials are the most obvious remains from remote antiquity, but they tell us little of those beliefs about death and the dead which prompted them and even less about the context and ritual in which they took place. They are often quite elaborate - evidence that they were the work of people who had ritual practices, and therefore a language of action. Language and ritual presuppose the catastrophic realisation that things have meaning - or rather, that everything has meaning.

Les choses, says Claude Lévi Strauss, n'ont pas pu se mettre à signifier progressivement...un passage est effectué d'un stade où rien n'avait un sens, à un autre, où tout en possédait...Autrement dit, au moment où l'Univers entier, d'un seul coup est devenu significatif, il n'en a pas été pour autant mieux connu...

Meaning and therefore language: once meaning can be ascribed to anything, it can be ascribed to everything, and there can be no return to beastly unthinking.
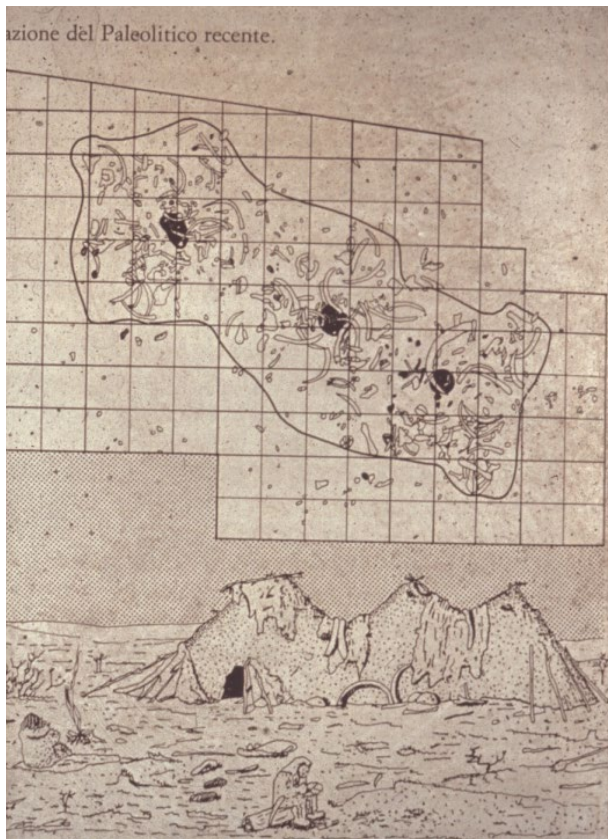
1. Shelter of skins and mammoth tusks near Pushkari in the Ukraine. The darker line circumscribes the outer edge of the shelter, the three dark patches are the 'hearths'. Upper Paleolithic. After A.L. Mongait, Archeology in the USSR, London 1961.

All the techniques and endeavours which we share with animals are continuous and tend to be progressive - as are many skills. Meaning, on the other hand, being inevitably metaphoric, must always have a subject (p means q), and will therefore be discontinuous. Skill and knowledge, the two kinds of human activity, develop concurrently but independently. So the first funerals imply the acquisition of certain mental skills and of language- which also involves a symbolic reading of the world and in turn demands the burial of the dead.

Unlike their earliest ancestors, those burying and those buried had bare skins. Homo probably lost his primate hair-cover soon after he learnt the skill of walking upright. It follows that once they were bare-skinned, our ancestors required shelter and controlled fire. Father Vitruvius relates the antique tradition, which he took over from Lucretius, which associates language and the control of fire with the origin of building. The legend that Vitruvius and Lucretius tell probably took form sometime around three thousand years ago; though building is infinitely older than that, of course. For millennia hunter-gatherers sheltered in caves, on rock ledges, or brushwood shelters such as are still to be found

all over the world. These devices used primary techniques, sometimes little different from that of the higher primates who not only take shelter but also socialise their space, their enclosure.

Even in the earliest burials colouring was used: ochre has been taken to signify blood, and therefore life, in many cultures; and putting red ochre powder with the dead is a custom as old, it seems, as is the practice of burial itself. The use of pigment also led some to the colouring of objects, and painted pebbles may be the earliest 'works of art' to have survived. What has not survived, however, though it surely preceded the decorating of inanimate objects- is body-painting and marking. Neanderthals and the first Cro-Magnons certainly went in for body decorations: we know of the shell and bone necklaces, bracelets and rings from various burials. Even if no tattooed or scarified skin fragments older than about 500 BC have survived, it is fair to surmise from the evidence of paintings and decorated statues that the practice was fairly general. What is more, carved bits of bone and wood, statuettes, and what seem to be ceremonial objects (sometimes called bâtons de commandement or sceptres) have been found in connection with painted caves. Many of them are marked, scratched - apparently rhythmically- and for a century since they were first found and recorded, not much sense was made of them. In 1972 Alexander Marshack published his reading of the marks, and following him many of them have been interpreted as readings of astronomical observations. Some of the biggest of the many objects which have been found in burials as well as in dwellings are elephant and mammoth tusks, which were probably treated as semi-precious objects.

At Pushkari, in the Ukraine, there are remains of a communal dwelling sheltering three fireplaces. This presumably means that at some time the hut was occupied - concurrently or successively - by three families or groups, and many huts of this period have a similar layout. Such long-houses, partly hollowed out of the ground and built up often using mammoth and elephant bones, particularly tusks and ribs, as well as wood and probably covered with animal skins, appear in Eastern and Central Europe at the period of the great frost - about 30,000 BC - when most of Europe north of the Carpathians, most of the British Isles, the Alps and the Caucasus was covered with a thick ice sheet which absorbed so much water that the seas had rather smaller areas than they do now. The ice cap withdrew over the next six or seven millennia and produced the climatic changes I mentioned earlier, but in the meanwhile humanity acquired another skill, closely tied to metaphoric

understanding -representational art.

The huts in the Ukraine that I mentioned seem to have been contemporary with the cave and rock paintings of central France and Northern Spain which we still find astonishing and of which more come to light all the time. They were painted by people who were flaking quite fine flints, but otherwise had fairly rudimentary technical equipment, and this labels their time the old stone age, Palaeolithic. The mammoth-tusk huts and the paintings testify to a state of mind and ambitions independent of such elementary technology.

We know of peoples who have survived as hunter-gatherers into our time and who continue to have a very limited technical horizon: the Pitjantjatara who live in the foothills of the Barrow Range in Central Australia come to mind. They employ spears and spear-throwers, but do not have bows and arrows, nor do they cultivate their food or bake pots or build permanent shelters - though they do make use of quern-stones and digging sticks. On the other hand, they do have bull-roarers, wooden or stone tablets, pierced at one end, and swung on a stick to make a whirring sound, to accompany their ceremonies. When their rituals require it, they paint rocks as well as their skins, and they practice an elementary division of labour in that they have specialists -medicine men, singers, ceremonial experts- to nurture an intellectual-speculative as well as a ritual life for which they also make elaborate, if temporary, enclosures. Had they died out or vanished, their physical remains would have been even thinner than those of some Neanderthal groups.

Such discontinuity between technique and materiality and speculation was demonstrated neatly by the same Lévi-Strauss in his examination of a Bororo village. I have already quoted this in an old publication, but the example still seems valid to me. These Bororo are a hunting and gathering people of the Upper Amazon basin who wear little more than a belt and a penis wrapper normally, though for ceremonial occasions, such as burials or marriages, they deck themselves out in elaborate feather and fur costumes. Their villages, like the one called Kejara, described by Lévi-Strauss, are shoddily built to last only a few years, and when the ground is exhausted, the village which consists of a rectangular men's house in the centre of a rough circle of huts with a dancing ground before it, moves on. In spite of this messy, almost informal appearance, the Bororo consider their villages to be an image of their social order. Firstly, the village is bisected into two moieties, each one consisting of twenty-four huts, articulated as eight groups of three; the geometry of the plan makes this quite explicit. The circle of the enclosure, however, contrasts with the rough rectangle of the men's house. Its conceptual division, as of a cross in a square, is instantly recognisable to the inhabitants. The nomadic Indians of the North American Plains were also wedded to the circle as defining the pattern of their camps. At Little Big Rock in Arkansas, where General Custer was killed with his troops in 1876, three nations, the Sioux with their Cheyenne and Omaha allies, camped in a series of similar circles, and these circles were traditionally arranged in moieties, each with its particular lodges. This 'normal' plan could also be modified for special occasions such as the election of new chiefs. The order is not necessarily readable from the actual view of the camp, yet the wigwams which make it up are themselves circular, of course, and the ordering echoes their shape- almost as if these Indian nations were obeying Alberti's injunction to see the house as a small town and the town as a large house. This kind of ordering may be reproduced in an even more complex form among people whose dwellings may look even shabbier and more disorderly than the Bororo village. The 'Gui and 'Gana Kalahari Bushmen - the last human grouping in whose speech the clicking phoneme has remained from what is assumed to be a primitive linguistic sub-stratum- build villages which are roughly enclosed, and outlined with stones, but which consist of wind shelter-screens rather than huts. Yet they also carry out lengthy initiation ceremonies, for which they construct semi-permanent grounds fenced with stones and thorns to the east of the village, and they edge a path for the dance-procession directed in the same way. You see therefore how insistently the geometry of the circle is used to create a ritual environment and how the ceremony is ordered on the east-west axis in different cultures.

The explicit or even implicit division of the circle will not work in the same way when the ground becomes restricted and the density of the population rises. One of the curious characteristics of the circle - I have referred to it in the case of the Bororo and the Plains-Indian camps- is that it is usually divided into symmetrical moieties and often sub-divided into four, eight or even sixteen sectors. The squaring of the circle is an ancient conundrum, which sometimes becomes an instrument that applies the divisions of the horizon into the four directions familiar to many peoples (the Chinese add the fifth one, up and down). It is used by various kinds of diviners as a token of heaven-instituted world-order. Even at the minuscule scale of tea and coffee cup-divination, the cross in the square is a standard device- but it had a long life in the NWT hieroglyph,

signifying 'town' which maintained the sense of that cosmogram in Egypt into Roman Imperial times.

The bilateral division of the settlement circle - and of the horizon - into its moieties corresponds to that of our own bilateral symmetry, as it does to that of the gender division of the family. It is inherent in our own bodies, as it is in those of our surrogates, the bodies of sacrificial animals. The ways in which these divisions operate vary from people to people. Some Hausas of Northern Nigeria, to take one instance, divide the carcass of a sacrificed sheep between a blood and a milk side, that of the mother and of the father, when celebrating a birth; in another region the sheep is divided between parents (mother front, father hind) and 'specialists' (midwife front, mullah back). The binary division and the jointing of a sacrificial carcass provide a consecrating reminder of the way the settlement was organized. It reflected and incarnated the articulation of the space and the kinship structure of that society. The most famous of such instances was the division of the carcass in Greek sacrifice, in which the fat and bones were offered to the gods while the flesh, appropriately jointed, was for human beings. The division of the world as between sacrificers - that is men - and those to whom sacrifice is made - the gods - was instituted, according to legend, by Prometheus. He had brought fire to men and taught them both language and building. His archetypic institution was the sacrifice of an ox, which he divided by wrapping its bones in the fat, and the meat in the entrails. He gave Zeus a choice between the two packets. Zeus chose the bones and fat (which henceforth became the sacrificial portion of the gods) while the meat and entrails went to man. The choice offered to the god was ambiguous, but the division provides an image of the split between the two classes of being - spiritual and fleshly - who populate the world.

The symmetry of the settlement is not always quite strict of course: the Dogon, who build admirable, complex mud-vaulted and thatch-roofed houses, consider their villages to be beings - or at any rate, bodies - like themselves and so explain their structure as a bisexual one. In the northern part of the village, the men's house (and the smithy associated with it) is read as the head. The main dwelling section is the chest, and the two womens' houses are the hands. South of this are oil-crushing stones and the village altar, representing the female and the male genitals. The ancestral altars in the south are the feet. The descriptions of the androgynous house and village of the Battamaliba who live on the borders of Benin and Togo in West Africa are analogous. The complexity of ideas and stories woven around the buildings - where we know

them - and the organization of the building trades - where it has been recognized and, as in the case of the Battamaliba, analysed - introduce the notion that such specialized work was carried out in many hunter-gatherer societies of the remote past.

The imagery and any account of the way in which settlements and structures are understood by their inhabitants and their makers are available only in the case of surviving peoples who have maintained traditions of planning and building (which will rarely be committed to writing, but which some of them are willing to share). In the case of dwelling remains of remote antiquity (never mind prehistory) the underlying notional structures can only be inferred from customs and literary records, and these will not necessarily match surviving ruined or buried settlements.

The complex relation between technical advances and intentional endeavour is worth elaborating as I return to our Mediterranean concerns. During the last centuries of the eleventh millennium, the ice sheets, which had been most extensive from the nineteenth to the sixteenth millennia, receded northward, so Britain became separated from France. The Mediterranean coast also seems to have changed shape radically - perhaps because of some breach of the earth bridge at the Pillars of Hercules, the Straits of Gibraltar. What follows is a long period which is sometimes paradoxically called 'the agricultural revolution', during which many peoples round the Iranian and Elamite highlands, as well as in Upper Egypt, developed techniques of cattle-herding and perhaps, already then, of cattle breeding; horses were harnessed and the cultivation of corn begun.

As the density and the population of settlements rose, they attracted envy and rivalry, so the kind of articulated but apparently rather haphazard grouping had to give way to tighter planning and defence walls. The two geometrical figures that allow close packing are the hexagon and the rectangle, the second being the more elastic and amenable. In any case, the division of the circle into moieties implies an axial, even a quadruple division, so that circle and square, as I have already suggested, are not in conflict. Their interplay is important when a new kind of settlement appears in the south of Anatolia and in the Eastern Mediterranean about the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth millennium. Jericho may be the oldest of them to have come to light so far - and it seems to have been quite densely planned and walled for defence or possibly against floods already in the ninth millennium. The earliest Neolithic dwellings were almost all circular, of sun-dried bricks with earthen

2. Moulded 'portrait' over skull from Jericho. Neolithic. After Kathleen M. Kenyon, Archaeology in the Holy Land, London 1970.

floors, but already at the next level, still Neolithic and before the arrival of pottery, the houses are rectangular and some are floored with mats made either of reeds laid parallel and knotted to form a rectangle, or of rushes coiled in a circular pattern. Rebuilt and renewed many times over millennia, the late Bronze Age Canaanite Jericho, destroyed and very effectively cursed by Joshua, is about halfway between our time and the first walled town.

In the first Jericho a new type of burial also appears: skulls are not only separated from the rest of the corpse, but portrait heads are modelled over them in white clay, the eyes inlaid with cowrie shells. Conservation and even worship of the skull separated from the rest of the body is known in many modern hunter-gatherer societies, and seems to have been general in remote antiquity. It was practised widely in Neolithic Canaan but even earlier shells are used to decorate skulls in Mesolithic times, of which one, from Mugh007-el-Wad on Mount Carmel, has a double fan-shaped head-dress made of dentalia.

There seems to be a hiatus after the first Neolithic beginnings in the Eastern Mediterranean, and it is not until some time later, after 7,000 BC that a rather different type of settlement appears on the plain of Konya in southern Turkey. We know more about Çatal Hüyük perhaps than about the others, though its deepest levels have not yet been excavated,

nor has the shape of the whole settlement been revealed. The site seems to have been occupied for some fifteen hundred years, the houses built closely round inner courtyards, with access over the roofs by ladders. The interiors were elaborately painted, sometimes in patterns imitating textiles, and many were decorated with clay moulded over animal skulls. For reasons of which nothing is known, Çatal was abandoned about 5,300 BC for settlements elsewhere on the plain, but during its occupation it had been burnt and repopulated, its houses restored and re-plastered many times. Other settlements in Anatolia also assume a definite shape, such as Haçilar, not far from the modern town of Egredir. On the Iranian highlands, the people named after Tepe Sialk, like some other of their neighbours, built rectangular buildings: both the circle and the rectangle were used as models by the farmers. Sialk was also one of the earliest settlements in which underground irrigation ensured crops of barley and emmer wheat, the ancestors of our corn.

Other settlements on a scale that approach urbanity appear on the Anatolian Plateau, in Syria and Mesopotamia before the fifth millennium, in the area which is known as 'the fertile crescent'. The next two millennia would see the growth of many more villages both in the old agricultural heartlands and in the alluvial valleys, and the development, too, of new and unprecedented structures. We still know very little about the peoples who lived there, their languages and loyalties, but it seems that the settlers in the south, in the delta of the Tigris and Euphrates, were always in contact with people who lived over the mountains of Elam, such as those associated with Tepe Sialk, and others higher up the river valleys, whom we associate with the pottery-makers and builders who lived at Hissar.

Pottery was practised on the Iranian plateau before 6000 BC and the work of Sialk potters was traded early. The wheel came into the potter's use before bronze appeared, and completely circular pots appearl over the Near East by the end of the sixth millennium. From the beginning, pottery was decorated. One form that appears most persistently in Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley and even in China, inside bowls and cups, is the square inscribed in the circle of the vessel. It may be painted or incised, or sometimes merely geometric or made up of simplified figures - human or animal - which often suggest rotation. This quadripartite division becomes a kind of living swastika. It is well known of course that the quadripartite, the 'squared' circle, was a common world picture (witness the NWT hieroglyph which I mentioned earlier), and that it is often divided between favourable and unfavourable,

upper and lower quarters. Apart from their common household role, such bowls could also be used for divination, of a kind which degenerates in our time into coffee and tea-cup reading.

Orientation seems almost obsessional to early builders - and their ability to calculate celestial phenomena astonishing. From the fifth millennium onwards, alignment on the cardinal points is general in Egypt and in Mesopotamia. Even the much rougher megalith builders of Northern Europe went in for quite sophisticated forms of stellar alignment, and various theories have been developed to account for certain features of ancient Egyptian orientation. Most Egyptian funerary buildings were oriented by their sides, while Mesopotamian temples and cities on their corners, and in fact, from Neolithic Sumer to the Neo-Babylonians, all ziggurats, most temples and many cities were so oriented.

The so-called 'White Temple' Eanna at Uruk/ Erech/ Warka and the 'sea-temple' mound of Enki, the water-god of wisdom and law at Eridu/Abu Shahrain, the southernmost Sumerian harbour-town, were perhaps the two earliest of these 'holy mountains'. At Eridu the first temple is built on virgin soil at the outset of the Ubaid period, a simple buttressed square to which an altar-niche was later added. At its high point, it seems to have had a population of about 10 000 inhabitants, but it was stranded by the changing coastline and abandoned by the change of the river bed so that it eventually reverted to village status. Several more temples, ever larger, are built over the same spot, enclosing the original nucleus. At the beginning of the Dynastic period,

the full panelled construction appears, and at a level above that there is a brick platform over which the subsequent levels finally constitute themselves into a ziggurat- a vast and solid brick mass, ascended by ramps, presumably with a shrine of some kind at the summit.

At Warka on the other hand, the White Temple was the highest and the biggest of several shrines at the centre of the city: it was a brick 'mountain', with battered, plastered sides, deeply scored by flutes, while access was by a ramp and by a stairway to the temple of Anu, the sky-god, that crowns a forty-foot high platform. The temple itself is a rectangle of recessed and panelled brick walls with a central hall and 'chapels' on either side, a configuration such as will be found throughout Mesopotamia for the next two millennia. As at Eridu, the White Temple covers the remains of earlier shrines, but they are much more fragmentary. It must have been built in the 'Ubaid or the Protoliterate period. Of other shrines, that of Inana was the most impressive, approached as it was through a portico of nine-foot diameter brick columns, whose mud-plastered exterior was covered with glazed cone facing in a pattern of coloured chevrons- they are the earliest free-standing columns found in Mespotamia so far. The ziggurats which developed quickly from such tentative beginnings and of which every major city had one were truly known as mountains, condensations of earth and its power, and their ascent was a cultual act. A temple which crowned the summit and was called a 'waiting room' is considered by some to have been the location of a

3. The step-pyramid of Djoser, seen from the Heb-Sed 'field'. Photo J. Rykwert
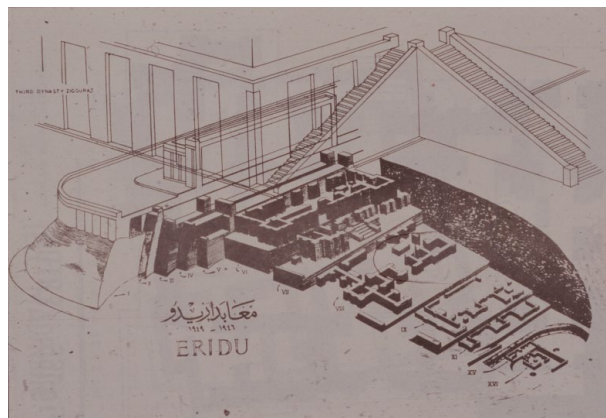
4. The step-pyramid of Djoser, section looking south. 1,2,3 show the original mastaba and its extension. 4 is the first, four-step pyramid; 5, the final six-step one. The tomb chamber, some ninety foot below ground is at 6. Subsidiary burials under the last stage of the mastaba are at 7. 8 is the hypogeum communicating with the burial chamber. 9 (plan only) is the ramp down to the burial, 10 tunnel communicating with the funerary temple, 12 further extension of the hypogeum, 13 & 14 the funerary temple.
After J.-P. Lauer, La Pyramide à Degrés à Saqqara, Cairo 1936-39

hierogamy- though the exact nature of the worship offered has never been clear. In fact Herodotus' description of the temple of Bel in Babylon remains the only eyewitness description of such a shrine: 'in it', he says, 'a great and well-covered couch is laid, and a golden table stands nearby. No image has been set up there, nor does anyone sleep there except one of the women of the place, chosen by the god...' . Some Sumerian documents, such as the account of the wedding of Dumuzi and Inana, suggest that the account is accurate enough:

'In your house on high, in your beloved home
I will come to live
O Nanna up above in your cedar-perfumed mountain...
O Nanna in your mansion of Ur
I will come to live
Lord! In the bed there I also
want to lie down...'

The Sumerian language of such hymns and of the many other documents that have survived became the diplomatic language of many courts from the Anatolian Hittites to the Egyptians. Why it retained its prestige for a thousand years when it was no longer spoken remains a puzzle to linguists, as is its nature, in that it had no obvious connection to any other known language group. The Sumerians considered themselves, as I suggested, immigrants - though it is not clear from where they might have come. Their city-states co-existed with those of the Semitic-speaking Akkadians until their power was overthrown by the empire-builder, Sargon of Akkad (reigned 2371-2316). Thereafter the Semitic-speaking Akkadians, Babylonians and Assyrians dominated Mesopotamia, though they took over Sumerian religious and civil practice, as well as their system of writing.
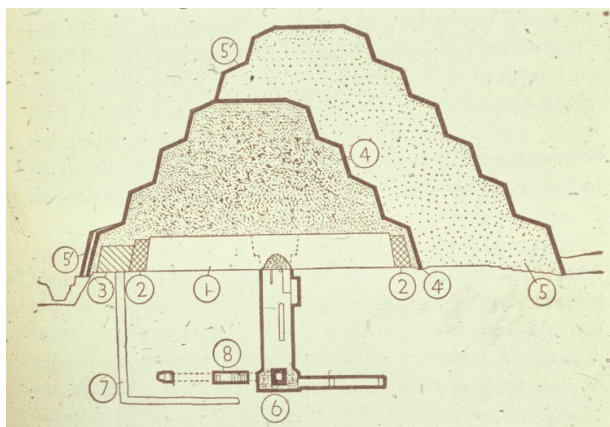
5. *The step-pyramid of Djoser, plan at ground level, but showing the underground constructions. After J.P. Lauer 1936-3.*

Sumerian and later Babylonian and Assyrian towns were built fairly low- there were two and three story houses, so that the ziggurats must have towered above them. Their surface was burnished by the colours of the glazed terracotta such as had been used on that early Inana temple at Warka familiar to us in the reliefs of the Ishtar-gate from Babylon, now in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin. The ziggurats were from their beginning shiny and polychrome and highly figured, but they were often attacked. Sargon attacked that of Ur, while the surface of the even bigger ziggurat at Babylon was deliberately wrecked when it was conquered by Sennacherib in 678 BC- after which Nebuchadnezzar renewed the vast areas of glazed tiles on the walls ands temples which Herodotus described; but it was all finally destroyed by Darius and Xerxes.

The main Sumerian ziggurat-building towns were coastal, Eridu, Erech, even Ur, which built the very biggest ziggurat; to their south lay the moving dunes of desert Arabia, and eastward the estuary marshes where a complex but impermanent form of reed building seems already to have been devised in an even remoter antiquity. It is commemorated in the painted and carved art of the 'Ubaid period, when the whole population of Southern Mesopotamia may not have exceeded 10,000. However that population grew rapidly during the fourth millennium; agricultural and rural settlements coalesced into larger and more complex units by mid-millennium, units we are justified in calling towns. Certainly proto-dynastic Uruk, which at its height had 80 000 inhabitants living at the high density of 200 per acre, would qualify as one nowadays - and that kind of density seems to have been quite usual in Mesopotamia. The first named 'king' of Uruk, Gilgamesh, who is also the hero of the first epic poem ever, is now considered a historical figure who reigned sometime between 2,700 and 2,600 BC, about the time of the third Dynasty in Egypt. Dynastic Ur was probably the biggest city in the world at the time of its third Dynasty, and by then the Sumerians had devised syllabic writing, which was to be the basis of all subsequent record-keeping methods.

The Tigris-Euphrates changes course much more often and deposits much more silt at its mouth than the Nile, but the two river valleys had no obvious direct connection. Yet the building forms -the panelled and recessed construction of Sumerian temples and ziggurats- also appear on Egyptian pre-Dynastic and Old Kingdom buildings. Whether Egyptian hieroglyphs, which initially appear on first-Dynasty monuments, were an emulation of the Sumerian idea or devised independently is still a

disputed matter. What goes for writing goes also for the sacred mountains. Early trade seems to have gone westward: the lapis lazuli which the Egyptians liked so much probably came from the foothills of the Hindukush, while the cylinder seal is another import. There are no signs either of hostile or of diplomatic dealings. The exception is the victory of Naram-Sin's of Akkad over the shadowy Lord Mannu of Magan which has been read as a victory over the Egyptians. 'Magan' certainly has meant Egypt in later documents, and some of Naram-Sin's (2291-2255) surviving booty, such as alabaster vases, looks credibly Egyptian. He would have reigned towards the end of the sixth Dynasty and the fall of the Old Kingdom, but all such evidence remains circumstantial.

In any case, the dry and relatively stable soil of Egypt, unlike the shifting and muddy Mesopotamian alluvium, conserved corpses without any help from embalmers. While tomb-deposits are infrequent and badly preserved in Mesopotamia, they are common and often very well preserved in Egypt - whenever they escaped the attention of grave robbers. As the settlements grew, these tombs became increasingly ambitious. The heap of sand or stones which marked them was formalised in pre-dynastic days into the mound which would be enclosed in a rectangular flat-topped structure - under which the tomb would often be artfully concealed. These tombs were sometimes surrounded by minor burials, and in one case, that of the First-Dynasty Pharaoh Uadji, by a bench into which three hundred horned bull-skulls are moulded. These mastabas (Arabic word for a bench) were built from pre-dynastic times onwards and ended when the two kingdoms of lower and upper Egypt were united - according to semi-legendary history - by Menes the first Pharaoh, grandfather of Uadji, who is identified with the Horus Narmer of some inscriptions and who probably ruled about 3 200 BC. Unlike the Mesopotamian cities and their successor states, whose rulers were divine bailiffs, the Egyptians developed a theology of divine kinship which they maintained into Roman Imperial times, so that even Hadrian could see himself reflected in it.

The pyramids are the monuments of this theology - smooth and completely inaccessible tombs in which the mummified body of the divinized king was sealed. Their casing was probably polychrome and the capstone which was itself a pyramid was inscribed with invocations to Re and gilded - at least in some cases. The very first one, of Djoser/Netjeri-Khet, the second Pharaoh of the third Dynasty (who ruled 2667-2648 BC) was designed by Imhotep -"Chancellor of Lower Egypt, Second to the King in Upper Egypt' according to legend. Imhotep -

administrator, healer, sculptor, painter and architect - is also known as 'the Egyptian Asklepios': he was divinized by the Ptolemaic Pharaohs who considered him a son of the wise craftsman-god, Ptah. I say 'according to legend' but the base of a statue (most of the statue vanished) found just outside the complex, and almost certainly contemporary with Djoser, labels him also as the designer of that pyramid - which had no precedent. Nothing is known about how the decision to build it was taken. Imhotep first built a large but conventional mastaba for his king, but then it was enclosed - like the Mesopotamian temples at Eridu and Warka - in a four-step structure which could be interpreted as a formalised version of the heap inside the mastaba, taken out and piled over it. In a second stage the number of steps was increased to six and the new pyramid enclosed in a vast monumental court, a limestone construction decorated with coloured ceramic which represented an organisational triumph.
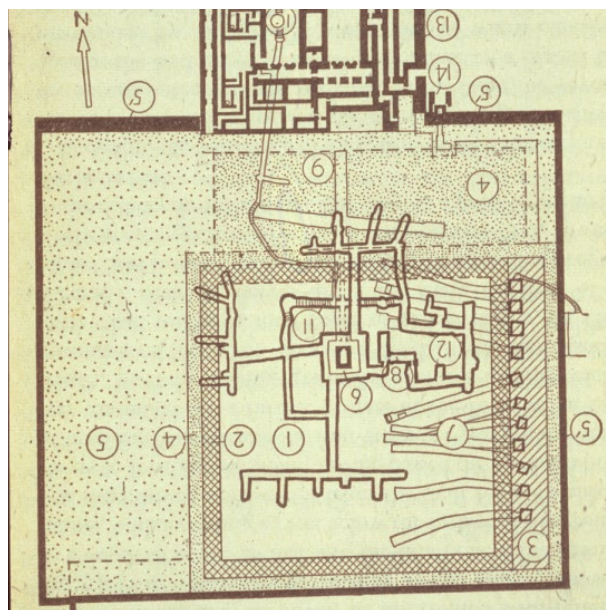
6. Eridu. The 'White Temple' is shown as level I, under the outline of the Third-Dynasty ziggurat which engulfed it. Level XIV was built on virgin soil. After Safar, F., Mustafa, M.A. and Lloyd, S., Eridu. Baghdad, 1981.

After that the major pyramids were all built in lower Egypt during a relatively brief period ending with that of Mycerinus, the penultimate pharaoh of the Fourth Dynasty, who died about 2 500 BC - and who built the smallest of the three great pyramids at Gizeh. Practically all of them were sited on the western bank of the Nile, between Cairo and Dashur, so that the funerary temples could all face eastward, much as the Middle Kingdom Pharaohs had built their eastward tombs on the west bank of the Nile at Thebes - now Karnak/Luxor.

The great pyramid age lasted less than a century and a half, but smaller and rougher pyramids went on being built, such as those of the Nubian kings in the south, or more outlying ones - in Rome itself, where Caius Cestius Epulo built himself a small pyramid by the Ostian gate in the first years of Augustus' reign. The sacred mountains had been great feats of organization and financing, and ostentatious markers, asserting a collective identity by giant construction. In that sense they are paralleled by the megaliths of Northern Europe. At the protodynastic and Old Kingdom time in Egypt, the earliest Neolithic settlers on Maltese islands asserted their possession of them by building 'temples' as anthropomorphic artificial caves of huge stones covered by earthwork mounds: Gigantija on the smaller of the two islands, Gozo, the biggest and one of the earliest ones. The cultural affinities of the Maltese are with Sicily and Sardinia, and perhaps further afield, with the builders of European megaliths, not with the Eastern Mediterranean. They therefore represent a frontier-post of European megalith-building, much as Egypt can be related to an African horizon and Mesopotamia to a Syro-Persian one. They all show how a population with a relatively low technical horizon can organize itself - or be organized - into large and very effective building teams to carry out works of great formal complexity and equally vast expense.

I therefore end my account not with the celebration of a birth, but by presenting you with an equation which seems insoluble because it has too many unknowns. The story I have been telling is of two peoples, both of whom occupy alluvial valleys. They seem to have created analogous devices and forms. Yet, while the idea of pictorial syllabary writing may have originated in Mesopotamia, there is no evidence that any particular sign migrated from Sumerian to Egyptian hieroglyphics. In the same way - while the idea of a sacred mountain may have been first considered by the Sumerians on the Persian Gulf as a way of asserting their newly formulated statehood and the collective world-hypothesis which it enshrined, and been adapted by the Egyptians for a similar purpose, their world hypotheses were quite differently conceived. The Sumerian weather and sky god mated with a motherly but turbulent earth; for the Egyptians, a female sky over-arched her male earth-consort. Inevitably the smooth pyramidal royal tomb which guaranteed the dead king his place between the rays of the sun-god had a different metaphoric context than the Sumerian she-mountain at whose summit the great mother would consummate her marriage with the god of the sky, the wind and the storms.

The further diffusion of the sacred mountain figure-to the Indian sub-continent and over the Silk Route to South-East Asia and to China, and perhaps even to the New World by routes as yet unknown - has provided much material for speculation, some of it more fabulous than historical. Yet the insoluble problem remains: the figure, the archetype I have been considering, however transmitted or mediated, can only become a seed in an intellectual and spiritual soil which can be its matrix.

Luciano Semerani

# DARKNESS AND LIGHT/ APOLLO AND DIONYSUS

The Hymn to Nemesis... Like the work of Anton von Webern, it is an extremely short musical composition, it concentrates a powerful emotion in a very few measures and evokes the imminent danger of Divine vengeance. This is Classical music.

In the Eighteenth and Nineteenth century, the remaining fragments of the music of ancient Greece were better known than the remnants of Greek architecture. And yet what we call classical music, the music of Mozart or Beethoven, i.e. the neo-Classical music, did not attempt to reproduce the sounds, preferring to let this unrepeatable mix of music, dance and poetry remain dormant in antiquity.
If we accept the premise that architecture and the arts in general are basically the reflections of the anxieties, hopes and thoughts which have dominated various periods, we must consider and accept often   ignored issues by those who limit themselves to celebrating classicism and rationality. I am referring to the mythical dimension in Classical

culture, to the Socratic indivisibility between two different but complimentary approaches to the search for truth and the meaning of human existence; that of Apollo and that of Dionysius, and which despite their difference are generally only discussed in terms of the cult of Apollo.

In Classicism, defined as harmony, clarity, order and the search for truth, Dionysus is overlooked. The god of orgasms and orgies, the god who does not lead to wisdom and knowledge is a suppressed god. However, this was not so in ancient times. As intellectuals, as teachers of art and architecture, we must translate our thoughts and proposals into intelligent, rational and transmittable terms. But, this does not cancel our experience as artists, our knowledge of a magic moment, both profound and obscure, which accompanies the creative act. There is a moment when one hears the "flutter of the angel's wings", as the Slovenian architect Jose Plecnik said.
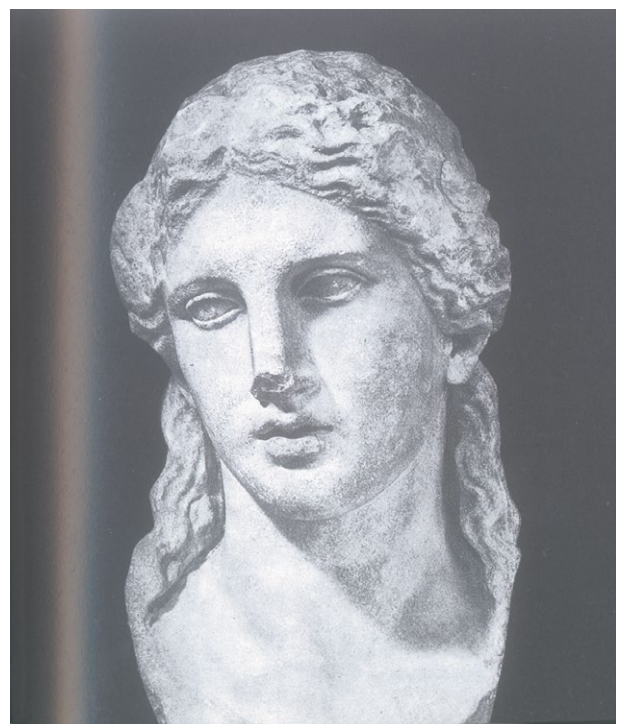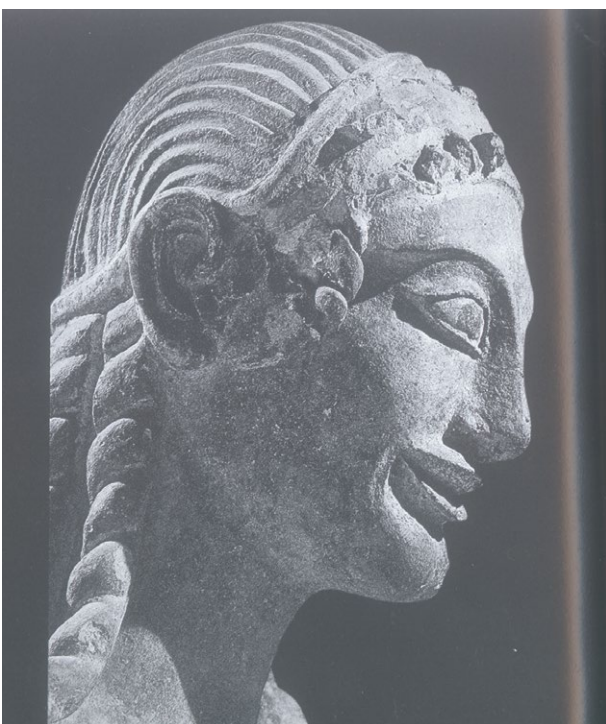
The importance of shadow, not as a necessary counterpart to light, and thus to Apollo, but as a realm to penetrate, to traverse and from which to return, like Orpheus. The shadow is the hidden dimension, which arises through, not only modernism or classicism, but all cultures.

In his purity and clarity, Apollo rules over medicine, music and the other arts, but, and that is important, he rules over prophecy. The knowledge which Apollo permits one to acquire is knowledge obtained through ecstasy. The prophetess, or sibyl, is the medium. Knowledge requires a form of mediation, it passes through obscure layers, and it is granted to those who prepare themselves to attain it, and who are able to host the prophetic spirit. Apollo's calm beauty thus coexists with his oracular function, he is harmony, beauty and serenity, but also ecstasy, revelation, and prophecy. In his Etruscan description, Apollo shows how Mediterranean Classicism is not limited to the Mediterranean area. These divinities come from the East. This Classicism, which for us begins with the architecture and music of Greece, has very remote origins. The figure of Dionysius is not just the pleasure seeking, as a lightly inebriated divinity of popular imagination. Dionysus watches the procession of satyrs and fauns led by Pryapus, with a languorous and feminine and almost jaded air.

The orgiastic experience is a collective one; it leads neither to rational knowledge nor to the possession of those truths so jealously guarded by the gods, but permits one to penetrate into the world of the psyche. It has been said that this languorous and disenchanted look is the same skeptical look of Dr. Freud, when he contemplates the weaknesses of human nature. However, we should emphasize that it is not just human weakness which is explored by Dionysus, but also the strength of interpersonal relationships. Here, knowledge is not the result of individual ecstasy, as with Apollo, but an experience which attains fulfillment within a collective dimension. Orgasm itself is not just sensual joy, but the soul's anguish being dissolved in the calm of the universe. It is the encounter between the self and the Other, and the rediscovery of the totality through imminence. Dionysus is the god of reawakening, of the rebirth of nature, his carriage is covered with vine leaves, his is the moment of reproduction, but also of initiation; the vegetation which adorns the god's carriage denotes what is knowable through the collective psychological experience.

Ancient architecture has never been viewed in its erotic, sensual, magical and illusionary essence. For many years, architectural fragments and skeletons were viewed as complete architectural bodies. Measurements, types and structures replaced reality. The ruin and the cadaver belong to the same world of the dead. On the contrary, ancient architecture, painted and clad with marble was as alive and seductive as the polychrome portrait of a mocking Apollo. Instead of the vitality of forms, it was covered with a veil of nostalgia. The nostalgia for happiness led Neo-Classicism and Romanticism into areas far removed from the Classic.

Johan Winckelmann, who is the father of archaeology in Middle Europe, the discoverer of fragments, and the propagandist of Greek Neo-classicism, confessed in Stendhal, his native town; that he realized the importance of buried things the day he saw his father buried:
"On the day I saw my father being buried, in that moment, I understood that everything that was important was not visible but invisible".
Winckelmann's strange death occurred at the hands of a short and pock-scarred Venetian, Francesco Arcangeli. Winckelmann, the prophet and propagandist of Neo-Classicism, was attracted by ugliness. We must consider the inseparability of beauty and ugliness.
A first explanation can perhaps be found in Aristotle: "When ugliness is harmless, it is ridiculous", he said. But there is a postscript to his observation by another philosopher, Lessing: "When ugliness is harmful, it becomes frightening, and when it is frightening, it becomes majestic." Thus ugliness takes on a powerful fascination.

Nobile, another architect, who studied in Italy and worked in Vienna and Trieste, studied physiognomy. In the same way that he ordered columns and capitals, he created a sort of manual of possible human expressions, from calm to rage. Moods, tones and characters, in terms of type should be studied as much as, if not more than, hieratic expressions. The academy denies the oneiric dimension in Classicism, just as it denies the prophetic dimension in Modernism. The academy fears contamination, which however is at the source of all Renaissance and Mediterranean architecture.

And here, I would like to make one more observation on the Apollonian-Dionysian antithesis, or aporia. The subject of De Chririco's paintings is shadow. It is shadow, much more so than object, figures or memories, which occupies the world of dream. It is in the voyage into darkness that one discovers through.

Now, about purism, Le Corbusier. I would like to

emphasize the eruption of the demonic in his work. It was John Hejduk who suggested to me this thesis. In analyzing the chapel of Ronchamp, few critics have explained the meaning of that imposing break with the previous artistic language which also remains distinct from the monotonous and repetitive works that followed. My thesis is that for Le Corbusier, the encounter with Catholicism is an encounter with the demonic, or at least with witchcraft, the first cousin of the sacred. This machine pour prier is an invention of a magical space full of color, lighting effects, and scenography. We find here the discourse of a protestant who looks at the Catholic Church and its rights as something which owes its popularity and credibility to the miracles and the saints, thereby revealing in contrast to other religions a kinship with magic.

In Le Corbusier's notebooks we find the following annotation: "With this first drawing I have finished the project … on this hilltop, I felt the hills, the valleys, the whole surrounding landscape; and like an ear or seashell or emptied husk, I gathered these secrets."

Le Bateau Blanc was an exhibition that I put together in Paris at Beaubourg. Its phantasmal character, the assembly and disassembly of figures, even the anthropomorphic caricature of a screen propeller seemed to me to be extremely appropriate. The future of the Mediterranean city is inconceivable without contamination.

In conclusion, please do not misinterpret my comments about light and darkness. I was not referring to the light and darkness of the visible world, which would be superficial; but to light and darkness of another kind. I was referring to the light of Apollonian harmony as defined by Plato, and conversely to the emergence of the laws of nature in our unconscious as described by Vico. I believe that the fundamental relationship between Modernism and Classicism in Mediterranean culture is a regeneration which reveals the future which lived in the past as a new form of possible balance of the poles of light and darkness. At the same time the myth of the Mediterranean cities gives a condition in which the architect in some way becomes dead to himself as a man of his time, in a metamorphosis that sees him re-born in his work. Classicism is definitely not a style, Winckelmann is completely wrong when he affirms the contrary. Instead, the Classical, the Modern, as the Modern is based on the hypothesis that it is always possible to formulate a prophesy on the future. The architect passes through the obscurity of human nature in order to lose itself in the depth of the soul, not outside of the self, but within the self.

Anton Webern when asked if his music was classical or modern replied: "When I compose, I do not ask myself whether my music belongs to the past or to the future. I try to create good music, the best I can. For this reason, it is not important to go forward or backward but to go "inward" into the music - nach innen – always further inside."
The architect must go into architecture and into the Mediterranean city to study the specificity of each one, to propose a quality of living at its best, with the help of Apollo, Dionysus, and all the angels and the gods.

BENEDETTO GRAVAGNUOLO

NEA-POLIS AND THE LABYRINTH ANCIENT MYTHS AND URBAN COMPLEXITIES
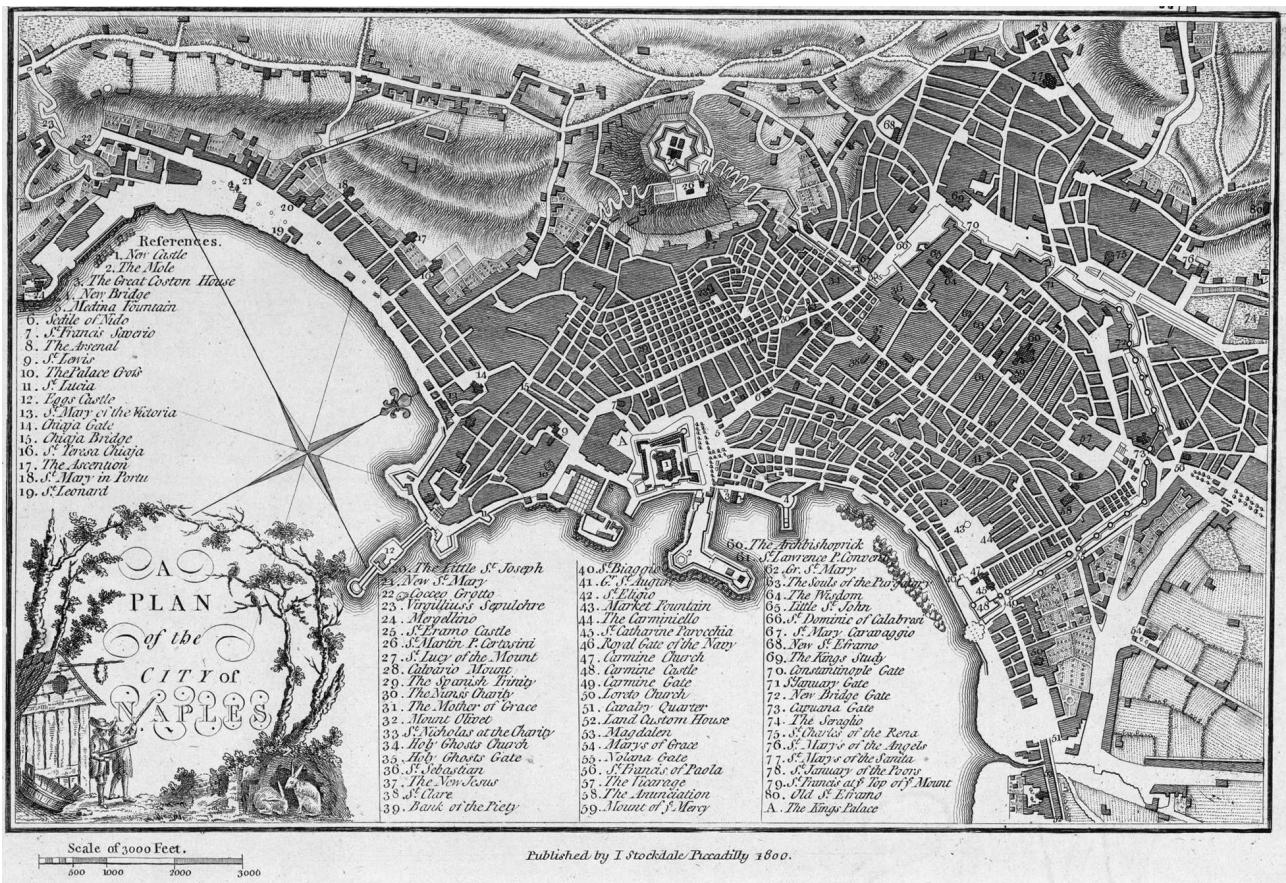
At first I was resolved to speak French, a language phonetically closer to my mother tongue. I know I cannot speak English that well. Mostly I know my pronunciation is not elegant enough for this noble language. I come from the south of Italy, our phonetics are rather different. But yet, the thought of speaking in an American University induced me to choose the English language, because of the respect I have for this Atlantic land and trusting in the tolerance – I hope – that the Americans and you, the Lebanese, will show for the mistakes of pronunciation and syntax that a foreigner makes.

Tolerance: this is the very crucial word in our time. I'll come straight to the point.

" Qu'est-ce la Méditerranée ? Mille choses à la fois. Non pas un paysage, mais d'innombrables paysages. Non pas une mer, mais une succession de mers. Non pas une civilisation, mais des civilisations entassées les unes sur les autres. Voyager en Méditerranée, c'est trouver le monde romain au Liban, la préhistoire en Sardaigne, les villes grecques en Sicile, la présence arabe en Espagne, l'Islam turc en Yougoslavie.

C'est plonger au profond des siècles, jusqu'aux constructions mégalithiques de Malte ou aux pyramides d'Egypte. C'est rencontrer de très vieilles choses, encore vivants, qui côtoient l'ultramoderne : à côté de la barque du pêcheur, qui est encore celle d'Ulysse, le chalutier dévastateur des fonds marins ou les énormes pétroliers. C'est tout à la fois s'immerger dans l'archaïsme des mondes insulaires et s'étonner devant l'extrême jeunesse de très vieilles villes, ouvertes à tous les vents de la culture et du profit, et qui, depuis des siècles, surveillent et mangent la mer ".

My apologies for this long quotation by Fernand Braudel. I could have tried to paraphrase his concept, but I wouldn't be able to make – with such simple words, the complexity of the Mediterranean subject clear.

It is dramatically hard indeed to disentangle, from a historiographical point of view, the tangle of events and civilizations, which settled down, interlaced and blended on the shores of this very ancient basin of exchanges.

The first question we should ask is whether there is or not a "Mediterranean dwelling tradition". And –if so– how recognizable it is within the historic sphere. And, lastly, what bequest distillable from the heritage of a millenary past it is possible to preserve and eventually revalue in the scenery of culture nowadays.

It is not easy indeed to answer these questions; yet we can try, reducing the subject matter to its schematic essence.

Well then, it is undeniable that the Mare Nostrum –re-echoing the ancient Roman denomination– represented the privileged basin of commercial trade and the primary scene of military conflicts for many centuries: it was, consequently, a crucial way for the transmission of different cultures. The etymon itself of the early medieval place-name medium-terrarium refers directly to the image of a water hollow circumscribed, along the whole periplus, by those then considered the lands of the world per antonomasia: Africa, Asia, Europe. Water acting as spatial interval and, at the same time, as physical interconnection: in a word, as medium.

Navigation had already spread during the Neolithic age, from the east coasts, interweaving a net of reciprocal commercial exchanges between Egypt, Crete, Phoenicia and Anatolia right from the third Century in this developed area. On the shores of this sea flourished very ancient civilizations (Egyptian, Hebraic, Phoenician, Cretan-Mycenaean, Greek…) and on its waves sailed the "thalassocracy" of the first empires (Carthaginian, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Islamic). Many similarities of climate, traditions, linguistic morphemes and even ethnical traits can be found along the coasts of the lands facing the Mediterranean Sea. And, among the different anthropological phenomenologies, the one recording and retaining the most the signs of this international exchange is architecture.

But let's be careful: not the "learned" architecture, rather the "anonymous" one, expression of cyclical and choral building techniques, approved by a common dwelling culture sedimented through the centuries.

It is commonplace to believe that the Ottoman Conquest of Byzantium (1453) and –even more – the discovery of America (1492) have marked the beginning of the Mediterranean civilization's inexorable historic decline. Sure, the inrush of a new mental continent into the waves of history was dramatic. Nonetheless – if we just think it over – it was something good for our people. The discovery of a new world threw the Aristotelian vision of the universe in crisis and set off the heresies. Atlantis, perhaps, has never existed. But Plato in his Dialogues – Timaeus and Critias – described it, only – let me suppose – to insinuate, in peoples' minds, the suspicion that over the Pillars of Hercules there was another world.

Many centuries later, Columbus –through an egg– discovered the Americas. The opening of new oceanic routes (expanded during the Fifteenth century by the Portuguese, long before the discovery of the "new world", in particular by Henry "the navigator") drove the adventure of European navigation towards the circumnavigation of the whole globe in search of the most remote and exotic universes.

This way the Mediterranean Sea lost –definitively– in the cartographic representations of the "new science", even before in everyone's imagination, the privilege of being the mental barycenter of the earth. Yet, as we can read in Fernand Braudel's monumental and well documented historiographic study *La Mediterranée et le monde mediterranéen à l'epoque de Philippe II,* the waters of the Mare Nostrum would still be crossed by a close net of European shipping businesses, military conflicts and both commercial and cultural exchanges during the whole Fifteenth century and even later. The vitality of the Mediterranean would be such a subject of interest as to involve –directly or indirectly– not only the lands directly facing the Mediterranean – Spain, France, Italy and others– but even the most powerful states of continental and non-continental Europe. It was an interest –moreover- destined to increase during the following centuries.

I am sorry that I cannot dwell on this matter. Yet, as a concrete example of this situation, we can consider

the opening of the Suez Canal –inaugurated on the 17th of August 1869– which created a beneficial opening into the Mediterranean basin womb.

In order to comprehend the encounter between the Western ideal of democracy with the Arabian tribal traditions, I would suggest to watch once again Lawrence of Arabia.

Thus, once the legitimacy of the Mediterranean civilization concept is acknowledged as object of historiographic analysis, it must still be questioned whether and to what extent the said civilizations show some common traits.

What seems to be crucial in this matter is the contribution of the Annales School. It stands to reason that, during centuries, there have been deep technical and social transformations, but –in the face of the methodological acquisitions of the renewed historiographic school founded by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre in 1929– it appears still undeniable that a close congruence in the "phases" of the transformation within different "historical ambits" cannot really be found: economic, political, social, religious, artistic structures and so on. In other words –as Fernand Braudel clearly explained in the volume we have already mentioned– besides an "évenementielle" history ("ultra sensitive" by definition, recording the "short, quick and nervous fluctuations") besides a "structural" history (changing slower), there is even a "longue durée" history: "the one dealing with the human being and with his relationship to the environment".

The construction of the architectonic and urban space responds to profound necessities, deep-rooted in the humus of multi-secular cultures and as such, not modifiable according to the "évenementielle" rapidity of the so-called technological progress. The principle of the "longue durée" then proves particularly suitable to explain the true meaning of architecture: a sphere of knowledge which keeps within its own disciplinary corpus traits of permanency opposed to others of faster variation. In spite of the sudden fluctuation of political, social, economical and technological events, the history of architecture and of Mediterranean cities has shown, during time, a slow and sinusoidal evolution, not reducible to the naive formulae of "linear" progress. But be careful: the "longue durée" must not be misinterpreted as a sort of immobility of the forms during the course of time. In spite of the existence of a "common history" of exchanges, in spite of the similarities of climate, in spite of the permanence of analogous building traditions, in a word: in spite of everything, the architectonic areas that have grown up on the Mediterranean coasts have developed according to the different and specific qualities of the places, including the very

context of different environmental conditions and of anthropological reminiscences every place keeps, undergoing moreover estimable changes during the course of time. This very plurality of cultures is the historical heritage's most precious bequest and it would be pretty senseless if we tried to level it in the "globalization" and in the "common market" homologating new idolatry.

We must make a distinction – from a critical point of view – between the idea of "cosmopolitanism" –understood as a dialogue among different civilizations– and that of "internationalism" –which aims to reduce diversity into one sole model– in this way misunderstanding the true meaning of the illuminist ideal of "egalitarianism". Thus, it is not from the past that the identity of "Mediterraneity" as a sunny and harmonious common international civilization can be drawn. On the one hand, the kaleidoscopic co-existence of different populations has represented, in a historic sense, an extraordinary wealth of interlacements among cultures, races and different idioms, on the other hand it has been the cause of several racial conflicts and religious crusades which –even recently– flooded the land and the sea with blood. Changing the plurality of cultures into a peaceful confrontation of "differences" is not the historical heritage's innocuous bequest but rather the desirable goal of a civilized common will.

Sailing the blue waters of the Mediterranean sea, blinded by the intensity of light reflected from ever moving waves, we can consciously give free course to the nostalgia and lend our ears to the shells' resonant hollow. Lend our ears to the sirens' deceiving song, lyrically turning the past into an idyll. But if –as Ulysses did– we stay tied to the poles of reason, we cannot just let ourselves be deceived by a mythological reading of the ancient world and, even less, by the promises of a happy return to the motherland, lost in the wreck of classical civilizations. Out of metaphor, the historical analysis of the cities facing the Mediterranean sea must know how to recognize –in my opinion, with critical distance– the complexity of urban phenomenologies, methodologically telling the ancient myths' ambition of harmony from the labyrinth of the real growing process of the cities themselves, marked, usually, by a conflict of the "parts".

Moreover –as Joseph Rykwert has shown in his brilliant work *The Idea of a Town*– the myths conceal, in their legends, seductive enigmas. To comprehend the profound values that are at the origin of the city, we must always keep in mind the ineluctability of the hard fight between order and chaos, harmony and conflict or –if we prefer a geometry metaphor– between sphere and labyrinth.

The city originated, in the mythical imagination,

from the sacrifice of the brother. Not only in the Bible Cain founded the first city after having murdered Abel, but Romulus too, in the Latin-Etruscan legend, sheds on the earth the blood of his brother Remus to consecrate Rome's sulcus primigenius, marked out with the plough.

The phobia of chaos, of the wild forest -which is outside and inside us- where reason can get lost, mixes in the ancestral unconscious with the fear of the brother's children revenge. It was this very fear –for many centuries– to induce men to raise high and cyclopean masonry to defend the abstract layout's delicate founding geometry of the new city. Only in a later historical phase, the solar myth of Anphyonis, the Poet who –thanks to his irresistibly seducing Music– helps men to raise Thebes' walls in the harmony of the balanced measures and of the perfect eurhythmic, comes to dispel the darkness of Cain's tragedy. It is not by chance that –in the Greek tale– Anphyonis is associated with his brother Orpheus, who plays the flute to appease the beasts. It is acknowledged that Plato, Aristotle and other Greek philosophers would define the Polis as the place par excellence of the birth and growth of Civilization, opposing it to countryside and barbarity. And this idea will stay –held in the phoneme of the language- in Rome's culture until our days: civitas and civilitas have a common etymology.

According to this theoretical presupposition, the city is ideally understood as a specular reflection of the universe's perfect harmony. Homo faber knows he cannot reach the Divine Balance with the poverty of his means, but –yet– with the signs' elegance, he aims to reach the epiphany of the poetic dwelling: "Dichterisch wohnt der Mensch". [Heidegger]

Moreover, not only in ancient Greece, but already in the first urban areas in Mesopotamia in the third century B.C., then even in the Nile valley and along the Mediterranean eastern coasts, the city was ideally conceived according to the abstract lines of a rational geometry. The will of reflecting the idealized cosmic harmony in the urban microcosm represents, in a certain sense, not only an architectonic principle from which the logic and the constructive techniques of the city descend, rather a common religious belief.

In the first book of his *De Architectura,* Vitruvius with masterly clearness states the criteria and the rules dealing with the foundation of a city, re-echoing the theories of Deinokrates, of Hippodamus of Miletus, and other Hellenistic writers, inferred in turn from the oldest Egyptian and Asian rituals concerning the foundation of towns. Thus we can draw –with sufficient historical trustworthiness– the settling principles widespread in the classical age during the Roman domination of the Mediterranean area, as for example the choice of a place dear to the gods and exposed to the winds, or the definition of the fortification walls' building techniques and the hierarchy of the urban layout, conceived as the harmonic crossover of hinges and decumans with, in the middle, the symbolic forum. In the archaic myths the foundation of the cities was often ascribed to a divinity or to a hero buried in the middle of the themenos, and this proves the sacral value the ancients ascribed to these urban geometries, although this was contrasted by the facts and often forgotten by later urban evolutions. As I cannot venture in the gnosiologic Odyssey in search of the seducing analogies and differences peculiar to the many places of the Mediterranean, I will try to expound, in this synthesis, the dialectic between the primary will of Harmony and the inescapable complexity of the urban labyrinth, choosing, as an example, my very own city, Nea-Polis, founded by the Greeks about two thousand five hundred years ago.

The sacral essence of the foundation principles was well known to the Greeks who -as they founded Nea-polis- chose a place of great importance both for its orographical qualities and, at the same time, for the plentifulness of its natural allegories: a fertile plain, rich in woods, placed between two (magical) volcanic phenomena, protected northwards by mountainous heights similar to stone shields erected against cold winds, but open southwards to the sea's blue hemicycle, with a natural landing by the river Sebeto's mouth. Eastwards the sun rises behind Vesuvio's enigmatic cone and, westwards it seems to set just in Averno's water circle, just where in Campi Phlegraei -that earth burning with sulfur vapors- the fluid initiatory way discloses itself to the descent towards the infernal chthonic divinities.

The establishment of the new city was traced out with geometrical rigor, exemplary for the harmonic balancing of metrical relationships, properly calibrated according to the place and articulated on a neat orthogonal network of hinges and decumans. Yet it would be a mistake to read such technical perfection as a will of absolute rationality. On the contrary, right since its origin, the city of the logos was wrapped in the labyrinthine spirals of the myth.

"The Ancients –wrote Italo Calvino– represented the spirit of the city, with that much of vagueness and that much of preciseness, this operation requires; evoking the names of the gods who had presided at its foundation: names corresponding to environmental elements' personifications such as a water-course, a structure of the ground and a vegetal species, meant to grant its persistence as image through

all the following transformations, both as aesthetic shape and as symbol of the ideal society. A city can go through catastrophes and middle-ages, can see different races following one upon the other in its houses, can see its houses changing, stone by stone, but must – at the right moment – under different shapes, find again its gods".

Naples has metaphorically transfigured the meaning of its foundation in the myth of Partenope, inferred from an older cult of the mermaid, deep-seated in the pre-existent city of Palepoli. As in other legends, different allegorical meanings have blended and mingled with esoteric enigmas during the course of time, giving birth to a semantic entanglement, which is indeed very hard to disentangle from a scientific point of view.

Yet we can try the hermeneutics of the myths, because –as Carl Gustav Jung and Kàroly Kerényi suggested– under the apparent naiveté of the tales, are hidden profound anthropological values of everybody's oneric sphere.

In the oldest version of the myth, Partenope was a hybrid of human kindness and animal wildness: the face of a "virgin" young girl and the body of a bird (and not of a fish, as in the later and more famous legend). According to the legend, the winged virgin was the daughter (together with her two sisters Ligea and Leucosia) of the river-god Acheloo and of mother-earth Persephone. In the chrysalis of this fantasy, a forest of symbols is held which refers to nature's primary elements: sky, earth, water and underworld. But there's more. Leading her life among the rocks and the woods along the sea coasts, Partenope had been trying in vain to seduce Ulysses, giving him –through the sweetness of her singing– the deception of the delighted return to the motherland (in another apologue we read that she meant to inebriate him with her melody and then drag him with her claws in Persephone's hellish womb). Refused by the "hero of knowledge" who was moved by the wind of an unrestrained will of new experiences, the mermaid committed suicide, throwing herself from the highest point of a rock (katapontismòs), and her body dragged by the waves was stocked among the cliffs of the Neapolitan gulf. In the ancient myth Partenope's body was buried in Megaride, the landing islet of the old Palepolis, even though in later narratives the virgin's grave was transferred inside the walls of Neapolis, according to the widespread belief of the foundation rites. The exact location of the grave remains uncertain. Some sources point out to a cave beneath the present church of San Giovanni Maggiore, but other sources place it at the very heart of the new city, that is to say in a naos within the ancient walls (fifth century

B.C.) which became later the base of the Dioscuri temple (first century A.D). This is the temple which overlooked the scenery of the agora, namely the forum with its impressive hexastyle pronaos, two Corinthian columns of which still remain, set in the beautiful Eighteenth century facade of the present church of San Paolo Maggiore.

But the most suggestive tale is the one describing the mermaid's metamorphosis into the very morphology of the landscape, laid along the arch of the gulf, with her "head" leaning eastwards on the height of Capodimonte, her "body" surrounded by the walls of the city and her "foot" (or tail) facing west, dipping into the sea, appearing on the surface in Piedigrotta, in the hilly promontory of Posillipo. The rite of the city's foundation dissolves, this way, in the cult of landscape. You know what a deep love the Greeks felt for nature and their attitude towards a poetic transfiguration of the ùóis (fusis) in the lines of the building process. Just think about the metaphor of the column as stone translation of the trunk of a tree.

Thus it is surely not superfluous to question the reasons which induced this sea population to dig – ever since the first settlements– caves and cuniculi in the darkness of the subsoil to raise then –with the some material withdrawn from the hypogean cavities– the temples dedicated to the solar divinities of Olympus.

It will be the tuff –with its warm yellow color and its tactile roughness– to imprint the primary material stamp to the building culture of the place, which will remain during the centuries as a sort of metahistorical image: the malleable stone of the supposed cave of the Sybil in Cuma, of the cave at the foot of the Monte di Dio dedicated to a very old solar cult, of the Piscina Mirabilis in Bacoli (enlarged in roman times) and of the hypogean cavities in the Eumenidi and Virgin's valleys, re-utilized by the Christians as catacombs hidden among ancient sepulchers many centuries later. Besides reasons of practical nature, which induced people to carry out stone caves, military cuniculi, water tanks and other kinds of technical works, the mystical reasons must not be neglected.

"The Greek knowledge" –as Giorgio Colli would say– conveyed both by Dionysian and Apollonian cults, shows a "hermaphrodite" sensibility based on an ambiguous osmosis between opposite items: between life and death, joy and sorrow, light and shadow, Eros and cruelty, ecstasy and fury, female and male. In the myth of the Sibyls itself –which shows several analogies with the mermaids as, for example, that both are supposed to be "virgin"– the darkness of the cave is closely connected (by

antithesis) to the brightness of Apollo's ray, which cannot penetrate the penumbra of the cave's mazes. The Cumae Sibyl (as well as Daphne who, in Delphi, turned into a laurel tree to escape Apollo's attempts) refused the love of the sun god, receiving nonetheless the oracle talent, strengthened by a millenary longevity. Hidden in the darkness, the old virgin entrusted her prophecies to words she wrote with her teeth on laurel leaves, letting them then to be scattered by the wind.

The bequest of this ancestral oneric substratum will remain during centuries, returning in different epiphanies: similar, but never the same. As an example I would quote the analogical stratification of mystery rites that historically followed one upon another along the "Cocceo Crypt". It is an exemplary gallery of high Roman engineering, dug between the third and the second century B.C., at the foot of the hill of Posillipo to link, in more linear way, the civitas neapolitana with the Campi Phlegraei. Yet, since the beginning, the fanciful aberrations of the solar cult –practiced, since remotes times, in a cave existing before the gallery– mixed with logical planning.

In the Satyricon, Petronio placed in this very cuniculus the orgiastic myths dedicated to Priapo. Even more trustworthy is the hypothesis that rites dedicated to the god Mitra have been practiced there, confirmed by Capaccio as he states that in fifteenth century a tombstone dedicated to the god Mitra was found "in media crypta pausilypana". Very meaningful is even the analysis of the city of logos, that is to say the research into the basic principles and the building rules of the nuova polis' urban structure.

Geometric principles soon reflected on the regular rural layouts, until they reached the harmony of the centauratio during the Roman age. Between 1489 and 1493 Fra Giacomo da Verona, an "extremely learned monk", Humanist of great prestige and translator of Vitruvius's De Architettura, spent four years in Naples at the court of Alfonso II of Aragon with the purpose of verifying the urban principles described in De Architettura's liber primus (paragraphs 5,6,7). Naples was indeed the only city in Italy founded on a rigorous and geometrical urban layout.

The other main subject –protracting during the centuries– was the relationships between the city and the sea. It is not a mere chance that to welcome the travelers in the port a statue of the mermaid was erected, an èternel fèminin, with her plentiful gushing breasts in a fountain designed by Domenico Fontana at the end of the XVI century, on a street, S. Maria del Pilar, which he himself had leveled and paved to connect the Molo Grande and the Molo Piccolo.

Besides the phantasmagorias, it is a matter of fact that the port has represented the privileged entrance to the city for many centuries, the place par excellence for the encounter of different people and languages. This "limit" (limes) urban section –a big square on the water, with its long landing wharves stretched out like stone arms among the waves- has dominated the Parthenopean historical iconography. Indeed, it is just from the sea that Naples was painted in the beautiful Tavola Strozzi, the first reliable representation of Naples' urban structure, the occasion of which was the triumphal return of the Aragon fleet after the victorious naval battle in Ischia against Giovanni D'Angiò on the 12th of July 1465.

Thus, in the modern age, the port was still considered as a representative place, the "face" per antonomasia of the city, to the design of which architects and engineers have dedicated imaginative skills, not limiting themselves to solve problems of technical nature, rather making the wharves even more precious with statues, fountains, towers, portals and scenographic constructions. In its metamorphosis this facade was developed together with historical building processes as the image reflected in the water of the city, as in a game of reciprocal reflections.

Only in recent times this symbiosis has been interrupted with a rigid Customs barrier taking its place, preventing the direct contact between the population and the gulf, even along the most ancient tract of urban coast: thus we can justify Ortese's metaphor as she says that "the sea doesn't wash Naples any longer".

Still in Eighteenth century views –and in particular in Antonio Joli's painting "Neaples from the port"– the wharf appears swarming with people walking along the seaside, with the passing of coaches along the well paved landing wharf in the background of big ships at moorage, while the octagonal baroque fountain –with its perspective of the avenue leading to St Giacomo's church at the foot of Vomero's green hill, surmounted by St. Elmo Castel's tufaceous mass– shows the main ways to the city.

Not indulging in a pathetic nostalgia for past times, it must still be questioned what the historical reasons have been that have led to the present "detachment" between Naples and its port. Why have they come to be two autonomous entities, one indifferent from the other? And, at last, what remains today –in the so deeply changed image of the city– of a millenary past of stories and myths? At very first sight, nothing or quite nothing at all. The city has turned into a wide labyrinth where reason can loose its bearings unless it chooses to follow

Ariadne's fil rouge. Only the beauty of nature has survived the assaults of bad building industry and bad town planning.

It is not a chance that the souvenir image par excellence of Naples –that is to say the greeting postcard– doesn't show, as a symbol of the city, a significant building as, for example, the Tour Eiffel in Paris or Big Ben in London. Naples' tourist postcard shows, still today, the pine trees standing out in foreground in the scenery of the gulf's waters, moved by the wind, and overlooked, in the background, by the great mass of the fuming Vesuvio.

Thus we must ask: is it possible to put together –as in a puzzle– the thousand smithereens into which the imago urbis bequeathed from the past has been broken? Or should we perhaps forever give up trying to re-establish a harmonic relationship between building industry and nature? Should we resign ourselves to the advent of a modernity which, proceeding with faster and faster acceleration, could irreversibly cancel –through a technological process– every single trace of the past?

I really don't think so. Personally I think technique is the highest achievement of human intelligence. Nonetheless, technique is nothing but an instrument that culture must use with great mastery. Consequently, I am not afraid of a fated technological future where there would no longer be any quality and respect for the environment. And that is the crucial subject matter of the discussion nowadays. We must side on one or the other side of the barricade. We must choose whether to stay on the side of those who believe in the chance of an anthropological reformation of architecture and urban planning or, on the contrary, on the side of those who accept and want to increase the soulless leveling of the All is Baseness homologating globalization?

Let's go back then to our subject: Naples, my beautiful sea-city. It is my personal opinion that foreign visitors have played a very important role in making us understand the profound value of our history. Looking at our places with "different" eyes –that is to say: eyes that weren't "inured" to our landscapes– they could see this way what escaped the inattentive look of the city's inhabitants, exhausted by the harshess of everyday life. Among the several foreigners who visited our city I will remember here only some of them.

First of all Wolfgang Goethe who, in a letter addressed to his friend Humboldt, stated that he had caught with more immediacy than by reading so many Homeric books, the most authentic essence of the ancient Greek civilization by visiting the peasant houses along the slopes of the Vesuvio and the Pompeian ruins which survived the wreck of the classical age.

Then Karl Friedrich Schinkel who came to Naples for the first time in 1803 and managed later to transplant, in the rigid German climate, the chilliness of the pergolas and the elegance of the white Mediterranean houses.

And still Josef Maria Hoffmann who dedicated some unforgettable pages to the architecture of the Island of Capri –published in March 1897 in the review "Der Architekt"– exalting the absolute simplicity of the rural houses' pure volumes.

And lastly Walter Benjamin who caught the similitude between the "porosity" typical of the Tufa stone and the "porosity" of the urban structure, drawing in this way one of the most figurative images of Naples in the essay he wrote together with his friend Asja Lacis and published in the "Frankfurter Zeitung" in 1925.

In recent times the School of Architecture in Naples has invited architects from different countries to engage in the crucial planning subjects within Naples' urban re-qualification. I am referring in particular to the "Projects for Naples" of 1987. Among the most interesting planning proposals I would like to remember the project for the Water-front developed, with masterly poetic fascination, by Carlo Aymonio, Aldo Rossi, Alvaro Siza and others. Also very meaningful has been the exhibition with the title "Underneath Naples: Ideas for the underground city" (1988), based on the fascination of that kind of architecture achieved through "subtractions", digging into the womb of the city caves and hypogean architectures.

I just cannot conclude this short contribution without remembering the importance of Le Corbusier, who came for the first time to Naples on the 10th of October 1910. He visited the streets and the squares of the city. He caught with his camera –a Cupido 80– the lights and shadows on the facade of the Chiesa del Gesù. Then he traveled to Pompei, going on his first Voyage d'Orient. To this voyage he dedicated his first manuscript, which, by the irony of fate, was the last book published by Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, born in la Chaux-de-Fond on the 6th of October 1887.

Few days before dying he had noted in the Cabanon cave in Cape Martin these words:

Au cours des années, je suis devenu un homme de partout. J'ai voyagé à travers les continents. Je n'ai qu'une attache profonde: la Méditerranée.
Je suis Méditerranéen, très fortement.
Méditerranée, reine de formes et de lumière.
La Lumière et l'Espace…
*La Mer c'est mouvement, horizon sans fin.*

KEVIN MITCHELL

THE REALITY OF MYTH
AN ESSAY ON THE ORIGIN
OF THE GRIDIRON PLAN
IN ANCIENT ATHENS

The distinctive gridiron plan that guided Hippodamus in the rebuilding of the Ionian settlement of Miletus is well known. Previous claims that the gridiron plan was the "invention" of the ancient Greeks have been refuted and it is clear that the orthogonal street-plan attributed to Hippodamus in ancient literature did not originate in Greece. Alfred Burns, in a paper entitled "Hippodamus and the Planned City," claimed that scholars have misinterpreted Aristotle's statement that the Milesian "invented the rectangular city plan" and that, "the invention that Aristotle ascribes to Hippodamus is a functional masterplan allocating in advance the area of the city for various needs."(1) The argument is reinforced by David Lewis, who has written, "It now seems that his [Hippodamus] main innovation there [the Piraeus] was, not the grid-system of streets with which modern scholars have associated him, but which is certainly older, the concepts of nemésis and diaresis, the systematic allocation of different parts of an area for different purposes."(2)

Why did Hippodamus adopt the gridiron plan to formalize the spatial relationships that resulted in the strict allocation of different parts of an area for different purposes? The literature suggests that the grid system was the physical manifestation of culturally determined customs governing the treatment of the spaces of settlement throughout the ancient Greek-speaking world. To illuminate the connection between the contributions of Hippodamus and the culture that gave rise to them, this essay will examine how the concept of nemésis (distribution or allocation) and a corresponding conception of the boundary were related to the values held and the norms followed in ancient Athenian society.

Throughout the epic works attributed to Homer, a number of references are made to the concept of nemésis. They suggest that the boundary protected
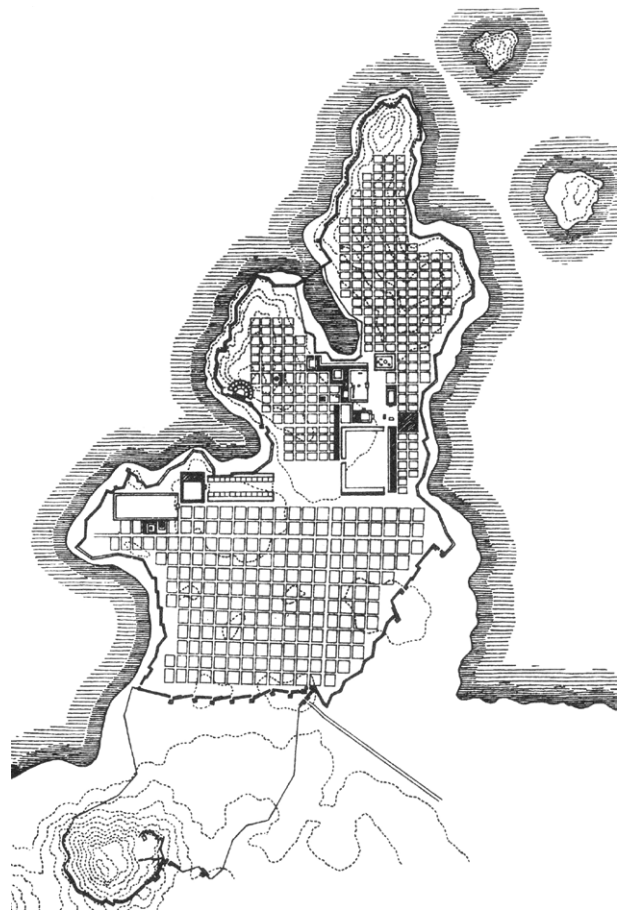
Reconstructed plan of Miletus
(Armin von Gerkan. Griechische
Städtanlagen. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1924)

assets that had been subject to distribution or allocation, whether it was the distribution of household property within the household (oikos) or the distribution of public and private property within the village or town. (3) Given the reliance on agricultural production for sustenance and survival, the protection of arable land through the maintenance of boundaries was paramount and

the failure to preserve holdings would have left households vulnerable.(4) The private property of the oikos (the fields and their yields), not only provided sustenance that ensured self-sufficiency but, as a result of the constitutional reforms of Solon after 594 B.C., land holdings also became the basis for political participation.

Ancient literature suggests that the concern for locating the exact limits of property arose from conflicts concerning grazing ground and fields that were bound to occur in societies relying on pastures for feeding livestock and lands for agricultural production.(5) The sanctity of the boundary was definitively pronounced in The Laws of Plato, which dates from the fourth century B.C., "No man shall disturb the boundary stones of his neighbor, whether fellow citizen or foreigner, in the conviction that this would be "moving the immovable" in the crudest sense. Far better that a man should want to try to move the biggest stone that does not mark a boundary, than a small one separating friend's land from foe's, and established by an oath sworn to the gods."(6)

In ancient Athens, literary sources reveal that the boundary was conceived as a means of preserving holdings that had been subject to distribution or allocation. In the following passage from The Illiad, Homer presents the image of a common field that has been subject to division: "But as two men with measuring-rods in hand strive about the landmark stones in a common field, and in a narrow space contend each for his equal share."(7) Distribution implies a limitation and, in this case, there is a limited amount of cultivable land: "in a narrow space" the men "contend" for their "equal share," or that which has been allocated to them. The men measure from landmark stones to establish boundaries. And they "strive" to locate the boundaries properly, for the boundary preserves the property that will ultimately sustain their households. Without the yields that the property provided, dependence on outside sources would be necessary. This would have represented not only potential starvation but also a threat to social status; according to Aristotle, the self-sufficiency necessary to ensure the preservation of the household was the "chief object" for which it existed.

Athenian precedents

Although ancient Athens was not subject to systematic planning, the application of the concept of nemésis is evident within the town, both in the major divisions of space (agora, acropolis, areas for housing) and the allocation of minor areas within them (e.g., religious precincts, market areas, etc.). The agora at Athens developed sporadically and was not subject to a pre-conceived plan but nevertheless formed a cohesive space with well-defined and easily locatable boundaries. (8) The following lines are from Aristophanes' The Acharians. Dikaepolis, the aptly named main character, seized control and immediately pronounced the norms governing the agora:

These are the boundaries of my market-place; / And here may all the Peloponnesian folk, / Megarians and Boeotians, freely trade / Selling to me, but Lamachus may not. / And these three thongs, of Leprous make, I set / As market-clerks, elected by the lot. / Within these bounds may no informer come, / Or any other syco-Phasian man.(9)

The boundaries of the agora at Athens were clearly acknowledged by perirrhanteria (lustral basins) and horoi (boundary stones) uncovered during archeological excavations. Boundary stones located boundaries that were, like those of the countryside, protected by both the gods and law like. In Plato's ideal polis, "If a man obeys the law [relating to boundaries] he will escape its penalties, but if he holds it in contempt he is liable to two punishments, the first at the hands of the gods, the second under the law."(10)

A variety of activities took place in the agora, as the following passage from Athenaeus indicates, "Again, as Eybulus has said in The Happy Woman: "In one and the same place you will find all kinds of things for sale together at Athens; figs, policemen, grapes, turnips, pears, apples, witnesses, roses, medlars, haggis, honeycomb, chick-peas, lawsuits, beestings, curds, myrtle-berries, ballot boxes, iris, roast lamb, waterclocks, laws, indictments."(11) Although these functions were distributed within the agora, Aristotle insisted on a more complete division. In the Politics, he prescribed a functional separation with strict boundaries:

It is convenient that below this site [for housing] should be laid out an agora of the kind customary in Thessaly which they call the free agora, that is, one which has to be kept clear of all merchandise and into which no farmer or artisan may intrude unless summoned by the magistrates...The agora for merchandise must be different from the free agora, and in another place; it must have a site convenient for the collection there of all the goods sent from the seaport and from the country...those that deal with the control of the markets and with what is termed policing the city, should have buildings adjacent to an

agora or some public place of resort, and such a place is the neighbourhood of the business agora, for we assign the upper agora as the place in which to spend leisure, and this one for necessary business.(12)

Just as within the household, goods were subject to spatial separation in the agora, "For we know, I take it, that the city as a whole has ten thousand times as much of everything as we have; and yet you may order any sort of servant to buy something in the market and to bring it home, and he will be at no loss; every one of them is bound to know where he should go to get the article. Now the only reason for this is that everything is kept in a fixed place."(13) This led to a practice in Athens of naming the areas for the goods that were sold there. In Euripides' Medea, a slave speaks of having gone to 'the draughts'. The Scholia accompanying this passage states, "Going to "the draughts"; (this expression is used) since they called places after things in them; here the author calls the places frequented by the gamblers "draughts"; just as opson and "perfume" means the places where these commodities are customarily found."(14) Plato, prescribing the law of sale and exchange in the ideal polis of Magnesia, placed strict controls to ensure that unlike goods were kept to separate distinctly defined areas.(15) He stated, "When one person makes an exchange with another by buying or selling, the transfer must be made by handing over the article in the appointed part of the market place (and nowhere else)."(16) If exchange occured in any place other than that appointed for the sale of the item, then the rules and regulations protecting commercial activity were no longer applicable.

Religious activities took place in the many shrines and temples located throughout Athens. Shrines and temples formed smaller precincts with clearly defined boundaries, either in the form of boundary stones or enclosing walls. R.E. Wycherley, in the following passage from How the Greeks Built Cities, differentiated between the temple and the shrine, emphasizing the significance of the boundary for the latter:

'Temple' and 'shrine' are very far from being synonyms. The handsome peripteral temples which we think of as characteristically Greek were luxuries possessed by only a few outstanding shrines amongst all the hundreds which were found in any large city. All that was necessary to make a shrine was that a piece of ground or a natural or artificial object should be dedicated to a deity. To preserve the place inviolate the limits had to be defined by simple marks or boundary stones, or more effectively by a

fence or wall, making an enclosure. If the cult was to be regularly carried on, an altar was necessary. Altar and boundary were the essentials...(17)

The religious precincts and the agora were regarded as public space. And, just as the boundaries were clearly defined in areas allocated for public use, so were the boundaries between private space and public space in the town. Unlike Pireaus and the later colonies that were subject to land division in housing areas according to an orthogonal grid, an irregular street network developed in Athens. Philostratus, in his comparison to a city in India, revealed the organization of the residential district at Athens, "I have already described the way in which the city is walled, but they say that it was divided up into narrow streets in the same irregular manner as Athens."(18) Although irregular, the walls that defined the space of the street formed clear and distinct boundaries and strictly governed both in terms of their encroachment onto the 'public property' of the road, both at ground level and above. In the Athenian Constitution, Aristotle wrote that there were ten 'City Controllers' in Athens and that they were charged to, "...prevent the construction of buildings encroaching on and balconies overhanging the roads, of overhead conduits with an overflow into the road, and of windows opening outward on to the road."(19)

It is perhaps this order that prompted Plato to prescribe the following for his utopian project. Although against the use of fortification walls, he stated, "However, if men are to have a city wall at all, the private houses should be constructed right from the foundations so that the whole city forms in effect a single wall; that is, all the houses should be easy to defend because they present to the street a regular and unbroken front."(20) While Plato did not prescribe a system for arranging private residences, except that they be grouped in a circular manner around the area containing the shrines, Aristotle gave more careful consideration to the way in which housing should be organized. For safety, he advocated an organic pattern, arguing that it created obstacles for foreign troops garrisoned in the city and made it difficult for them to flee if attacked. In contrast, he stated, "The disposition of private dwellings is considered more pleasant and useful for other activities if it involves straight rows in the newer manner of Hippodamus."(21) He goes on to tell the reader that Hippodamus, "...invented the division of cities into blocks and cut up Piraeus."(22) In the following section, the theories attributed to Hippodamus will be explored via their application in the plan for Pireaus and Miletus.

The "Hippodamian Plan"

As established in the introduction, scholars have argued that Aristotle's statement that Hippodamus "invented the division of cities into blocks" has been subject to misinterpretation and the actual contribution was likely the application of the concept of nemésis, or the functional allocation of the land and its population. This claim is reinforced in the following passage from the Politics:

His [Hippodamus'] system was for a city with a population of ten thousand, divided into three classes; for he made one class of artisans, one of farmers, and the third the class that fought for the state in war and was the armed class. He divided the land into three parts, one sacred, one public and one private.(23)

Aristotle also attributed the planning of the area known as Piraeus to Hippodamus, and this is supported by both archaeological and literary evidence. Reconstruction of the town plan reveals that the land was divided according to a gridiron. While Athens experienced 'organic growth',(24) Pireaus was subject to the systematic planning principles attributed to Hippodamus. After the Persian Wars, the strategic importance of Pireaus increased. It was enclosed and connected to Athens via a series of long walls to ensure that the main town would not be severed from the harbor during attack, "At about this time [461 B.C.] the Athenians began to build their two long walls down to the sea, one to Phalerum and one to Pireaus."(25) During this rebuilding effort the harbor town was distributed into precincts and land divided according to a gridiron. Whereas the spaces within the upper town of Athens were allocated for different purposes, the lack of a regular spatial ordering system denied the possibility of land distribution according to a consistently applied method of organization. In contrast, Pireaus represented a synthesis of the functional allocation of space and the use of the gridiron. David Lewis, in Public Property in the City, listed a series of inscriptions from recovered horoi that reveal the application of nemésis and the enforcement of the boundary. The outer boundaries of Pireaus were clearly marked, "up to the road the asty has been assigned" (IG i2 893 = i 1111), as were the boundaries for a sacred area, "up to this road is the assignment of Mounichia "(IG i2 894 = i3 1113). Other horoi marked public areas (IG i2 887 = i3 1101) and the trading area of the agora (IG i2 890 = i3 1104). According to Lewis, "Two texts (i2 892 + SEG x 380 = i3 1109, 1110) proclaim apo tesde tes

hodo to pros tó limenos pas demosion esti, "from this road on the harbor side everything is public". It is sufficiently clear that, in the planning of Pireaus, the designation of public property was of major importance. At a guess, the point of thus designating it in the case of the last area was at least as much a matter of preventing private encroachment as reserving it for state use...It should be further noted that, as far as I can see, the area between the road and the harbor as Pireaus is the only piece of public land in Attica not designated by function."(26)

While Pireaus provides an example of the application of the theories of Hippodamus at Athens, it is perhaps useful to briefly examine other examples of "Hippodamian" towns. Fortunately, a great deal of attention has been focused on reconstructing plans from those Greek settlements said to have been influenced by the theories of Hippodamus. The use of the gridiron was not limited to the Piraeus and Miletus, as evidenced by the reconstructions of Olynthus and Rhodes (both attributed to Hippodamus, although perhaps erroneously). Olynthus, founded in 432 B.C and later destroyed in 348, was based on a rectangular grid that was varied to fit the terrain. A series of major (between five and seven meters wide) and minor streets (five meters wide) resulted in blocks measuring approximately 35 meters wide and 86 meters wide. While the orthogonal grid is a common, its use was not limited to the so called "Hippodamian" plans but had been used elsewhere since the latter part of the sixth century B.C.. The use of the grid was particularly prevalent in Ionia and archeologists have uncovered evidence that a grid plan was used to organize the center of the upper city at the Miletian colony of Olbia.

Subject to almost complete destruction by the Persians in 494 B.C. and subsequently rebuilt according to the theories attributed to Hippodamus, the town of Miletus offers what is perhaps the most comprehensive and cohesive example of their application. Certainly the most striking feature of the plan is the clear division of the town into separate and clearly defined zones allocated for trade, civic functions, religious activities and housing. The reconstructed plan also reveals an adherence to an orthogonal grid in the areas allocated for housing. (27) The grid is clearly employed to ensure equal and regular distribution of land in these areas. Where necessary, it defers to the natural landscape, the fortification wall, and the functions located within the town center. Although the civic and religious buildings are organized in accordance with the orientation of the grid, these areas take precedence. In all cases, the boundary has become

regularized and applied as part of a consistently applied ordering system.

The reconstructed plans of Pireaus and Miletus reveal a refined and considered application of the concept of nemésis. The gridiron represents a formal device that allowed a systematic approach to the definition of the boundary and, in turn, effectively located and preserved the spaces that had been allocated for use within the town.

Conclusion

In spite of the development of geometrical principles often attributed to Thales, another native of Miletus, the Greeks did not develop formalized systems such as those that would characterize later Roman town planning. Although ancient Greek sources contain traces of general rules in the form of prescriptions for the organization of space at the urban scale, the ancient Athenians never achieved an "ideal" town configuration. The lack of standardization according to a pre-conceived model does not allow a series of verifiable rules to emerge. As a result, one must supplement the reconstructed plans is with some understanding of the treatment of physical space at all scales.

Inherent in the premise of this paper is that the treatment of space is determined by the cultural and social structures. As stated in the introduction, this work proceeds from the hypothesis that the theoretical approach to town planning attributed to Hippodamus was a codification of culturally determined customs governing the spaces of settlement throughout the Greek world.

Nemésis, and the boundary that preserved the allocation, allowed the distribution to be measured which, at least conceptually, ensured equality and, therefore, order. These were values upon which Athenian culture was based. Perhaps nowhere is this stated more clearly than in Plutarch's account of the ruler Solon. During an absence from Athens, the population was split into factions, one of which was led by Peisistratus, who was known to be skilled in the art of deception. His skill was such that, "Even those virtues which nature had denied him were imitated by him so successfully that he won more confidence than those who actually possessed them. He was thought to be a cautious and order-loving man, one that prized equality above all things, and would take it ill if anyone disturbed the existing order and attempted a change."(28)

Literary sources indicate that the concept of nemésis and a corresponding concern for the boundary were determinants in the treatment of urban space in the ancient Greek world. These determinants resulted from and were sustained by the values and norms expressed in ancient Athenian sources. Rather than imposing a new order, the gridiron plan served to formalize spatial relationships that previously existed but were not subject to a comprehensive planning strategy. While Hippodamus certainly cannot be credited with "inventing" the gridiron plan, he should be acknowledged for recognizing that this strategy represented a clear physical manifestation of culturally determined customs expressed in myths and in reality.

Notes

1 Alfred Burns. "Hippodamus and the Planned City." Historia, 25 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1976) p. 415.
2 David Lewis. "Public Property in the City" appearing in The Greek City from Homer to Alexander. Oswyn Murray and Simon Price, eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) p. 250.
3 With regard to household property, the boundary preserved property by clearly demarcating limits that ensured order. This is clearly stated by Xenophon in Oeconomicus, his treatise on household management. This work articulated two conceptions of the boundary: as a physical construct and as a space of separation. In relation to the former, Xenophon stated, "If I want a type of disorder, I think of the farmer who has stored barley, wheat and pulse in one bin; and then when he wants a bannock or a loaf or a pudding, must pick out the grain instead of finding it separate and ready for use." (Xenophon. Oeconomicus. tr. E.C. Marchant (London: William Heinemann, 1968) Book VIII, 9.) Addressing the boundary as a space of separation, Xenophon wrote, "There is nothing, in short, that does not gain in beauty when set out in order. For each set looks like a troop of utensils, and the space between each set is beautiful to see, when each set is kept clear of it, just as a troop of dancers about the altar is a beautiful spectacle in itself, and the free space looks beautiful and unencumbered." (Xenophon. Oeconomicus. tr. E.C. Marchant (London: William Heinemann, 1968) Book VIII, 20.)
4 In a dialogue from Plato, land was referred to as a "fundamental" and it was revealed that any legislative effort to redistribute land was met with strong opposition. The character representing the Athenian point of view stated, "Suppose a legal code is being framed and someone adopts the policy of a change in the ownership of land and a cancellation of debts, because he sees that this is the only way

in which equality can be satisfactorily achieved. 'Hands off fundamentals' is the slogan everybody uses to attack a legislator who tries to bring that kind of reform and his policy of land-redistribution and remission of debts earns him only curses."(Plato. The Laws. tr. Trevor J. Saunders (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin books Ltd., 1972) 684)

5 With regard to the members of the ancient Greek population that were involved in agriculture, J.K. Davies has written, "...we can be virtually certain, by analogy with other pre-industrial societies, that well over half, perhaps even 90 percent, of the adult population (slave, free, man or woman) will have been engaged in agriculture." (J.K. Davies. Democracy and Classical Greece (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993) p. 10). See also Robin Osborne. Classical Landscape with Figures (London: George Philip, 1987).

6 Plato. The Laws. tr. Trevor J. Saunders (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972) 842-3.

7 Homer. The Illiad. tr. A.T. Murray (London: William Heinemann, 1971) Book XII, 419-20.

8 The boundaries of the agora were also strictly enforced in cases where a new area was designated. A surviving deme decree illustrates that a citizen named Leukios provided a public gift in the form of funds to construct a new agora. Three men were chosen to "define the space of the agora" and charged to ensure that no one encroached upon the area "within the markers", "Gods. Theodelos moved; resolved by the Sounians, with good fortune, whereas Leukios is giving to the demesmen (the means) to make an agora, choose at once three men, who will define the space of the agora with Leukios at no less than two plethra in one direction, or than one plethron in the other direction, so that there shall be plenty of room for the Sounians and anyone else who wishes to use the agora, since the present one has become crowded. To build over it is not permitted, neither for the demarch nor for anyone else within the markers. The demarch is to inscribe this decree on a stone pillar, in collaboration with Leukios, and set it up in the agora." (IG ii2 1180 as translated by J.K. Davies. Democracy and Classical Greece (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993) p 225-6).

9 Aristophanes. The Acharnians. tr. Benjamin B. Rogers (London: William Heinemann, 1967) ll 719-27.

10 Plato. The Laws. tr. Trevor J. Saunders (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1970) 843.

11 Athenaeus. The Deipnosophists. tr. Charles Burton Gulick (London: William Heinemann, 1970) Book XIV, 640 b-c.

12 Aristotle. Politics. tr. H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann, 1950) Book VII, 11.2-3.

13 Xenophon. Oeconomicus. tr. E.C. Marchant (London: William Heinemann, 1968) Book VIII, 22.

14 Schol. Euripides. Medea. tr. A.S. Way (London: William Heinemann, 1967) 68. In the area that served as the agora in Athens, boundary stones have been unearthed which clearly define areas reserved for certain trading activities.

15 For the control placed on goods at Athens, see Aristotle. Athenian Constitution. tr. H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann, 1971) LI.1

16 Plato. The Laws. tr. Trevor J. Saunders (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1970) 916.

17 R.E. Wycherley. How the Greeks Built Cities (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd., 1962) p. 89. The temples of Athens were concentrated on, or in close proximity to, the Acropolis. Within the boundaries of the Acropolis, space was further allocated into precincts for the various temples. Anthony Krieses has written that, "Even the outwardly conceived temple was enclosed by the sacred precinct." (Anthony Kriesis. Greek Town Building (Athens: The National Technical University of Athens, 1965) p 94, n 5). This premise is defended by G.P. Stephens who has argued that the western part of the Acropolis was planned along with the Propylea as a forecourt to the Parthenon. He argued that the forecourt defining the precinct was almost square and partially enclosed with walls (See G.P. Stephens. "The Periclean Entrance Court to the Acropolis" appearing in Hesperia, V, 1936.) .

18 Philostratus. The Life of Apollonius of Tyana. tr. F.C. Conybeare (London: William Heinemann, 1969) Book II, 23.

19 Aristotle. Athenian Constitution. tr. H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann, 1971) 50.2.

20 Plato. The Laws. tr. Trevor J. Saunders (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1970) 779.

21 Aristotle. Politics. tr. H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann, 1972) 1267b.

22 ibid.

23 Aristotle. The Politics. tr. H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann, 1972) 1267 b.

24 The term 'organic growth' is borrowed from A.E.J. Morris. For further discussion and examples of the application the term, see A.E.J. Morris. History of Urban Form Before the Industrial Revolutions (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1994) p 10, n 41.

25 Thucydides. History of the Peloponnesian War (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972) Book I, 107.

26 David Lewis. *"Public Property in the City"* appearing in Oswyn Murray and Simon Price (eds). *The Greek City from Homer to Alexander* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) p 251.

27 See Ferdinando Castaglioni. *Orthogonal Town Planning in Antiquity.* tr. Victor Caliandro (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1971) and J.B. Ward-Perkins. *Cities of Ancient Greece and Italy: Planning in Classical Antiquity* (New York: George Braziller, 1974).

28 Plutarch. *"Solon"*. *Plutarch's Lives.* tr. Bernadotte Perrin (London: William Heinemann, 1993) XXX, 1.

PIPPO CIORRA

FROM THE "MEDITERRANEAN CITY" TO "THE CITY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN"

I – Mediterraneity, modernity, adriatic-city

In the 20th century the idea of "Mediterraneity", beyond the myth, has often represented a critical passe partout, generally evoked when the dispute between classicists and modernists or, even more, between different tendencies within the Modernist grew pretty too hard. When the CIAM group seemed about to break off, or when Corbusier's "plastic" research seemed to be formally distant and ideologically incompatible with Gropius and the German's scientific spirit, the 'good guys' used to appeal to the idea of a Mediterranean architecture or city as a common and undeniable root, mother of any modernity. Likewise – just think about the dispute over Italian rationalism – the "Mediterranean spirit" returned over and over as a crucial argument to appease the polemics between those who defended the vernacular, and those who backed functionalist internationalism. Again within the frame of Italian history, more recently, people resorted to the most aulic version of the Mediterranean spirit to find an ideal leitmotiv joining "rational" classicism and the most "Doric" modernity, a sort of Apollineo-Dionisiac connection allowing the breeze of the Parthenon's white stones and the many Acropolis lost along the Mediterranean coasts to be extended, via Schinkel, to the works of Libera, Mies and Le Corbusier. This very last approach to the Mediterranean subject has evidently grown stronger and stronger in most recent times. As the utopian tension and ideological construction of the modern movement were slacking, different groups of European architecture were in fact feeling the strong necessity to restore their historic perspective, which was supposed to be less idealistic and "progressive" than the one that modernism had fed. The renewed interest for those "less" western architectonic cultures was

somehow implicit in the postmodernist conception and grew factual through a strong attention towards architectonic traditions of extra-European countries facing the Mediterranean as Maghreb or Asia Minor, "Islamic" Spain and Egypt – which moreover represents an an acknowledged fatherland of Mediterranean literature. From Alexandria to Beirut, physically and conceptually, the step is short. And Beirut represents today an extremely appropriate site to discuss the origins and permanence of the architectonic and urban "Mediterraneity" myth vs the more specifically contemporary idea of Mediterranean metropolis. What in fact should be openly discussed is just the possibility of still applying the Mediterranean myth. I don't mean in historiographical terms – which have been used even too flexibly – rather within the context of a discussion, as for the one over contemporary architecture, which seems to be no longer in need of unifying critical devices and historical-ideological schemes which let us all feel part of a sole and progressive movement.

2- Mediterranean City – Contemporary City

The Myth of a Mediterranean Identity concerning Architecture and the idea of town, friable in its very nature, is today passing through a crisis for two glaring reasons. On the one hand, we have the hyper-global perspective spreading one sole pan-metropolitan (or post-metropolitan) model and presenting the towns of the whole world as if they were all suffering from the same sprawl virus. The "Design" (or rather "undesign")of this urban, or post-urban, space obviously owes very little to the peculiarity of the specific site and its geographical conditions and quite a lot to the connections between infrastructure and exchange poles, to the

hyper-communication, to the flows of immigrating and transiting populations, to the demystification of the modernist concept of "dwelling" and residential quarters. A Mediterranean – contemporary town, then, the nature of which we can much better penetrate reading Rem Koolhaas' essays about the "generic town" rather than through Joseph Rykwert's continual call to the specific common origins and the idea of the Mediterraneity as a philosopher's stone of modern architecture.

On the other hand, we find the renewed strength of local identities, asserting itself as necessary and vital counter-balance to those processes of globalization and making it very hard to rely on such a vague and omni-comprehensive concept as that of "Mediterranean Identity."

Thus it makes very little sense indeed to talk about the idea of the "Mediterranean City" if we don't put this concept in relation to these and other matters peculiar to urban and metropolitan phenomena inside and outside the Mediterranean area currently and finally altering the very nature of the traditional characters: density, centrality, dimension, social articulation and "public" space etc. One of the first consequences of the contemporary urban state is namely the weakening of large unifying identity concepts, suspended between history and utopia, and in particular those associated with Mediterraneity. As a matter of fact, the permanence of the language allow us to refer somehow to a Mediterranean literature, as it has been already mentioned, or to a Mediterranean music, today enjoying great favour. This could hardly be said about architecture, as those very peculiar relations between shapes and sites, buildings and nature, density and rarefaction, once allowing us to identify a Mediterranean area, seem to have grown very hard to isolate within overwhelming contemporary spaces.

More than that, we can probably affirm that it is exactly the observation and study of the urban "continuum" spreading along the coasts of the "Mar Mediterraneo" that urges us to abandon the idea of "Mediterranean City" in favor of a "City of the Mediterranean", both less abstract and more physically determined. Where the first paradigm (the "Mediterranean City") stands for a cultural identity, tied to a more generic geographical condition (a specific latitude and climate, a specific relationship between land, sea and urban culture), but valid in Spain as much as in some areas of Asia or of Central America. The second instead (the "City of the Mediterranean") is the possible name for the site specific "endless" urbanization that has recently occupied European coasts from Gibraltar to Croatia and Greece, already overflowing towards Morocco on the west side and Turkey, Syria and Lebanon on the east side. In this view the cities sitting on the Mediterranean coasts now deriving their identity less and less from being the seaside terminal (harbours, infrastructure of defense and movement, nature, therapy, leisure, season holidays) of continental urban regions, and more from being a section of the endless coastal city, an infinite waterfront very self-referential but also very sensitive to local phenomena, both physical and social.

3- The Adriatic City

If we just take a look at several Italian cities, Mediterranean par excellence and lying in most cases along the coast, we find one of the "clearest" examples of that jarring overlap of the new urban "territory" upon the Mediterranean landscape. In order to point out some aspects of these subjects and to give a contribution to the formulation of new description and intervention devices, I would like to appeal to a very specific case study of the Italian coast, the Middle-Adriatic case. Which is very specific of the Mediterranean condition, but at the same time far away from the all Mediterranean stereotypes.

The "regional" architecture of Romagna, Marche and Abruzzi – hemmed in by Venetian, Romanic and then Apulian Baroque influence and distant both from Corbusier's and Aalto's cahiers and from nineteenth century travellers' – faces the sea being in fact "inland" architecture. Apart from some Spanish fortress or some spin tower, what we find on the Adriatic coast are still the shapes of Urbino and Senigallia strongholds, of Aragonese citadels of Abruzzi, of the infinite web of houses, farm-houses and brick-walled forts dotting the landscapes of these regions for hundreds of kilometers. Few "volumes in the light" and few smooth and sensual surfaces, as if the Adriatic Koiné so many talked about, from writer Claudio Margis to architects like Gianugo Polesello, had nothing to do with Mediterranean tradition. And if it's true, as Catalans use to say, namely that modernity is deeply Mediterranean, IT MAY EXPLAIN why the Adriatic coasts have been so far disregarded by modern architecture. The absence of which, in this region, is only contradicted by rare and sporadic masterpieces: some seaside settlement, a Church by Libera pulled down during the 20s and 30s, a Church by Quaroni and little more during the 50s – in two of the most creative periods for Italian Architecture.

The Three Landscapes

Nonetheless today the Italian Adriatic "strip" assumes a new and particular interest. Besides receiving impetuses and tensions from the Dalmatian side, the region has turned into one of the most typical among Italian contemporary mega-cities and therefore a critical case for those who want to focus both on the local and global new urban phenomena. The infinite urban waterfront connect south Romagna, Marche and Abruzzi, as an outcome of economic, social and touristic phenomena, shows all the features of contemporary dispersed urbanism, based on infrastructure networks and single-family houses, shopping/ leisure malls and historic centers as "museums", generic industrial sheds sitting on agricultural plots, suburban neighbouroods working both as permanent residences and as summer-houses.

Compared to other national large metropolitan areas, all suffering pretty much in the same way from the diseases of contemporary post-urbanism, the Adriatic coast shows such a rich and evident stratification of problems and historical, architectural, urban and landscape matters, to become – on the one hand – an utmost meaningful case study leading us to the general re-formulation of the disciplines investigating both urban contemporary matters and those concerning the "environmental project". On the other hand the Adriatic-city is also a specific and typical example of sites marked by the presence of the coast and by a peculiar configuration of local natural and historical-urban landscapes. It becomes a particular and interesting case of Mediterranean identity. What makes this context such an interesting site is the palpable presence, in their inner strength and clarity, of the three grand topographies representing, during the course of time, the flesh and blood of contemporary landscapes and revealing a neat and unmistakable image of the ongoing transformation of time and space.

The first of these topographies is obviously the "natural" one, where valleys and hilly ridges perpendicular to the coast alternate in a web smoothly following the whole coastal trait along the 300 km area, shaping the territory as a proper backbone. The second is the urban historical structure – archeological, medieval, Renaissance, XVIII Century – perfectly organizing this area until a few decades ago. The Adriatic network of historical settlements is actually based on a double layout. One the one hand we find the urban "comb", lying along the major valleys, where we find a certain number of important ports, about 40 km away from one another, and a certain number of inland cities, about 25 km away from their ports, ancient centres of military and political power, protecting the main communication routes. On the other hand we the "widespread" and ubiquitous net of fortified urban centres built from Medieval times onwards, shaping the landscape and occupying the peak of every hill. The third and most complex topography, overflowing with brutal neutrality the former, is that of the metropolitan and never-ending contemporary city, uninterrupted and totally unconcerned both about the layout of the landscapeand the urban historical structure, ruled by new infrastructures and by the transformations within the yielding tissue. The temporal and economic process stays the same. Yet, compared to other Italian and European megacities, each of the three landscapes still keeps a clear and characteristic identity within the "rational chaos" representing our lives and activities'background, both from the most general and global points of view and in the fragments' local stratification.

The "Mediterranean" interest of the phenomenon must be traced in the cities' location along the coasts, in the acknowledgement that the coast represents both the sole limit to the development of the "never-ending" city and the theatre of some interesting edge-conditions of infrastructures, permanent and temporary residences, production and entertainment places. Moreover, the coastal towns dramatically show the deconstruction of the concept of "city-centre" and of the relevant hierarchies on which most of modern urban and architectonic doctrine is based.

The idea of "centrality" – watered already down in the numerous specialized centers'web from XIV Century onwards – represents today its visible and factual splitting in the superimposition of the pre-existing network of coastal and hilly cities and the new uprooted centralities, created by railways, highways and superhighway tracks, by the position of main junctions and access roads, by the development of ports. The drawing of a hypothetical "Nolli's map" on a cross-section of this territory, along one of the grand urbanized valleys, would reveal in details, for instance, the complex articulation of public spaces which are in need of a language and a doctrine able to set a possible co-existence between historical "piazzas" and commercial malls, megastores and urban arcades, cathedrals and sheds. Architectures, in a word, forcing, or rather helping us, to re-define – as we said at the very beginning – in a contemporary language, some crucial concepts as those of scale, monumentality, urbanity, relationship between design and function.

The Adriatic Laboratory

The Adriatic landscape, thus, seems to be a source of information and a crucial case to explain two fundamental purposes of this discussion. On the one hand, its consolidated lack of concern about mythical Mediterraneity shows how fragile these identifiers prove if considered as unifying canons, and how ambiguous is their role of historical-critical passe partout if compared to the supremacy of local identities. On the other hand, its infinite waterfront and its historical and morphological specific characters bestow a very precise identity – Mediterranean because "coastal" – to the "generic" contemporary city. This way leads us to the need of searching new description devices, recognizing new taxonomies, improving planning instruments and topics. The mere superficial observation of this territory clearly shows how those consolidated academic principles – dialectically based upon the differences between city and suburbia, residence and services, residential quarters and industrial areas, town and countryside – have proved totally insufficient to face transformation forms and phases of this territory. A territory, by the way, which reveals an undeniable capability of fulfilling the requirements of its inhabitants and an extraordinary disposition to give vent to that feverish economic vitality which best characterized the society dwelling in this area during the last decades. At the same time, we must acknowledge it pays heed neither to the architectonic quality, nor to the issue of public space, thus putting into a crisis the role of architecture itself in contemporary society. This problematic gap between the actual efficiency – economic, social, political – of this territory and its absolute hostility to any issue of quality of space, care for the landscape, ambition to contemporary artistic and architectonic search, together with its topographic richness, historic patrimony, seem to allow us to consider the Adriatic territory as a crucial architectonic and disciplinary laboratory.

4- the "urban" structure

Once we identified both the "Adriatic" segment of the greater metropolis of the Mediterranean and the main layers of its body we've to start working on the search of the "architectural" elements that rule its life and growth.
What we're looking for are actually the architectural devices which connect the large XXL scale (or better "no scale" of the geographic system and landmarks to the local pre-existing urbanization, based on the traditional physical sequence of monuments, axis,

"piazzas", neighbourhoods, waterfronts etc. The framing idea, in this case, is that the traditional architectural and urban tools we use to design the modification of those spaces are of no use in the case of the "extended" metropolis. Besides traditional town-planning, apparently as useless and ineffective, what we're now looking for, thus, are new "type of spaces", new tools, new approaches to design which would allow us to understand and modify urban structures that are NOT based on physical continuity. Through analysis and innovative investigation (photography, data analusis, thematic mapping) we came to define a series of "system of spaces" (since they generally don't enjoy physical continuity we could call them "networks") which overlap on the Adriatic territorycreating a very definite urban condition. I will introduce this series of networks through some critical examples:

■ Infrastructures for people and good transportation (roads, railways, highways, ports, airports etc.) This the only "continuous" network and in fact the only realistic mean for "founding" a city nowadays. It is the spine of this urban territory and corresponds, for more than three hundred km, to the motorway A14, to the railway tracks, and to the rhythmic sequence of highways connecting the coastline with the inner areas of the region. Once the place for the representation of pure and fast movement, infrastructures are today the ultimate urban structure and at the same time the contemporary "urban scene" for the gigantic windows of the showrooms, mega-signs and hyperbuildings trying to capture the attention (and therefore the attitude to consumption) of the highway user. The same is true for ports and airports, where the relation between infrastructure and urban transformation gets just a bit more sophisticated. A new operational base for Ryan Air (Ancona has one) or a new line of ferry-boats to Croatia and Greece have today a wider and deeper impact on the territory than a local master plan.

■ The sequence of river parks
The urbanization of the Adriatic territory is essentially "designed" by a series of major river valleys, running transversely to the sea, where we find the most important cities. The valleys have worked as a strong attractor for cities and infrastructure, finally "guiding" the invasion of the sprawl. This calls now for a new role for them. On one side they have to be "preserved", as "natural" sites and scenarios threatened by the quest of "industrial" areas. On the other they have to be treated as 30 km long "urban" parks, with facilities for people who live,

work and have fun in the infinite number of mini-cities leaning towards the rivers.

■ Industrial areas

If we draw a map of the industrial areas in the "Adriatic city" we will have a clear picture of how contemporary urbanization is redesigning the entire landscape. More than that, if to the existing industrial areas we add all the dismissed sites we will be able to identify the critical areas for the future development and transformation of this land. Industrial sheds and storage buildings are today the largest and most "understated" share of "new" buildings. A cultural and technical commitment to improve the quality of these buildings would imply a better approach to architectural expression, technology, innovation and possibly a better balance between those who produce goods and income for this land, those who inhabit it and those who have the responsibility to rule it. In this view, the "dismissed" industrial sites stand then as a great opportunity for the requalification of urbanized areas, for a new approach to public space, for developing a strategy for a network of cultural sites.

■ Spaces for culture and art

The three regions facing the "medioadriatico" have both an immense heritage of history and culture and a lively contemporary production of art, theatre, cultural events. The map (in this case a real potential network) of "cultural" sites – ancient and modern – reveal to us a further layer of critical importance, strictly connected to the economic development of the areas, to the fluxus of tourism, to the role of the region will have in the larger map of European identities. This is also the layer where architecture is called to perform its best and most creative, in order to produce images and spaces as strong and memorable as the preexisting ones.

■ The "market street"

One more homogenous (and in this case continuous) "ecology" running along the whole length of the Adriatic cities is that of the infinite "main street" of hybrid buildings (production, housing, commercial, leisure etc.) created far away from the city centers on the two "banks" aside the state 16 road. In Europe this is a brand new urban issue, very different in scale and phenomenology from the North American archetype, so far totally uninvestigated by the design disciplines.

■ The housing issue

We generally agree that the overall tendency in housing is towards "individual urbanism", i.e. the "sprawl" attitude to single family houses finally shared by most urbanized countries. Nevertheless we all know we cannot realistically think to give each family space and land for a "detached" house, we have to challenge our discipline to develop housing types which can at the same time respond to the quest for individuality and identity coming from the individual user and allow the community the realistic rate of economy of space and resources that comes with "collective" housing. Besides, there are still cases, within "the city of Mediterranean", of cities with high rates of growth (for example in Greece, Albania, Lebanon). Those situations cannot obviously be faced only through the deregulated sprawl attitude: on the contrary there we find a urgent need for innovative approaches to collective and low-income housing. Contemporary architecture culture should be able to give a valuable, creative and innovative contribution to the solution of these problems.

There are of course other issues (or layers, if we want to be consistent with our premises), as the "beach", considered as a neverending site for public and leisure space, or the "natural parks" running parallel to the coast on the Appennini, or the generic touristic structures. Nonetheless we think the "layers" we listed are the most important and enough to display our approach, which consider the Adriatic segment of the Mediterranean city as a whole and tries to "decompose" it into single spatial elements (networks, systems) that can be studied and "modified" through design. The difference compared to a more traditional approach to urban studies is that most of those elements (and as a whole the contemporary city) do not imply physical continuity and visual relationship.

Mediterranean City

Debate Panel: Pipo Ciorra, Benedetto Gravagnuolo, Kevin Mitchell, Joseph Rykwert, Luciano Semerani.

The following section is a transcript of the debate that followed the presentations at the symposium. It has been transliterated from audio tapes and edited for clarity.

Question

In discussing the Mediterranean City between myth and reality, we heard some stories about myth, and some about reality, where does the in-between stand?

P. Ciorra

In the presentation of Luciano Semerani, I could see an intimate attempt to answer this question. Semerani clearly says that Myth can survive in the reality of our world of Mediterranean architecture. I must say that I always hated this concept of Mediterranean, it is one of those tools in the history of architecture used to keep together Gropius and the Miro House by Sert in the islands, it's been misused to keep together Modernity and Tradition, to keep together things that are impossible to keep together. I feel a little uneasy towards this concept, and especially the term.

My personal position was clear. There are two different questions: I think the question on the discussion of Myth and Reality finds a perfect answer in Semerani's presentation: Architecture is architecture, to us as moderns; Rolling Stones are as classical as Webern.

At the same time there is a discussion about the Mediterranean city, not about the Mediterranean poetic approach to architecture. In that sense there is a real question: is the Mediterranean myth of any use to us in imagining, doing strategies, studying tools and instruments? My personal answer is generally no, the condition and the specificity of the Mediterranean city is dissolved and melting into a different condition which will be specific again but will be different from anything that we have in our discipline until now...

I have been to the Solidere area in Beirut this morning. The Solidere area is going to be colonized in the name of foundation by the colonizing water with a new piece of city, and the failure of this strategy is already obvious in the models and the images of what is happening there. This idea of building volumes in the light, building masses, colonizing space by solid elements is a losing strategy. May be the Barcelona example is more interesting in this sense. May be we have to consider voids as more important than solids. May be we have to take a little distance from mythopoetic aspects of considering the Mediterranean City, and collect some dust and dirt and see what we can do in this condition.

B. Gravagnuolo

It is true what you said. We spoke in very different ways about the reality. I listened carefully to the first presentation by Joseph Rykwert on the origins of the city and the mythology of origins. Then I listened to the intellectual devastation by our friend Pipo Ciorra, who made the apology of the real, i.e. he took reality and said: we should not be nostalgic, we should open our eyes to reality and understand that the reality of today is not mythological and can not be.

I tried in my intervention to make a discourse on the mythology at the origin of my city, Naples, and the possibility today of finding again something of the history and memory of that city. So I say, reality is now the labyrinth, not chaos. Chaos cannot be understood, the labyrinth is more complex, but we can go through it by following the red thread of Ariadne, i.e. with an idea, as Ariadne is reason.

I think Luciano Semerani is correct when he says that Greek mythology can become actual again, but not as a question of style. Winckelmann was wrong to turn Classicism into a dead language. This is not a question of Classicism as a language, as a style, a form. We must accept the idea of Metamorphosis, i.e. that mythology today is not the same as in the XIX Century or in the Middle Ages or in Greek or Roman time. It is the mythology

of our epoch. We can be classical in our epoch or not classical, but the question remains the same: to find again in our reality the red thread of Ariadne, the red thread of Classicism.

P. Ciorra

Only one thing Benedetto: I do not believe in this counter position between those who believe in myth and harmony as the defenders of the city basis, and those who want to get their hands dirty as the instruments of super capitalism. Most of the time, myth and classicism, as you can see in Beirut, are instruments of developers, and I want to remind you of Barialto, or the project of Aldo Rossi which you showed, which is wonderful, but which is the wrong approach of using myth, to colonize, to apply the rules of super capitalism. I think taking notice of the real being of the city, of the real things that make the city today does not mean to approve them, but it means that we have to learn new tools and new instruments, to put a virus into it that would defend people's rights to public space, to find quality in the city. What we can never do, is to counter-pose an ideal model of a mythical space to the real one, because the real one will always win, and the mythical will be used to create neighborhoods that can not survive.

J. Rykwert

I thought everybody would be talking about it so I never mentioned the matter, but we are all here, and this includes all of us perhaps, except Kevin Mitchell, who comes from the West Coast, we are all provincials, we live in the provinces of the great empire whose capital is on Manhattan Island, and which plants, like the Venetian empire used to put the two columns with St Georges on one and St. Marc's lion on the other; it plants Kentucky Fried Chicken and Mc Donalds, and all these other appurtenances of the empire, the great commercial empire, because, as Roberto Calasso said: "When the United States decided it was an empire, it realized it was a limited company".
So that is the empire in which we live, and therefore in that vast empire which has as one of its postulates that space is infinitely available; yes the western frontier has finally been reached, but actually in between the western frontier and Manhattan there are vast stretches which are empty. Europe is not like that, nor is Asia, nor is China. So in fact, the lead this empire gives is inapplicable to our situation, and this is where it is Kevin, oddly enough, coming from that capital, who reminded us of the importance

of boundaries, which is really sustained as a most important idea in Mediterranean cities, and without which I think we really can't get on. Another thing we must remember: the most capital turning-over industry in our world is tourism, and according to an NGO, which recently published a report, the most corrupt industry is building. The two concepts are not unrelated. This is the reality in which we live, and this is the reality in which we talk about the Mediterranean city, and this is why we in the provinces must sustain this myth in a world which is imposing on us a way of life which not all of us accept with pleasure.

L. Semerani

Last week, I asked one of my students in Venice, what type of house he was a drawing, and he said: a house to sell. This was the end of a school that studied typology and morphology as elements of our academic, scientific research. Well I think we are in an American school, in an American world, and I think that the main problem in our time is to remember the message of an American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. He said that architecture should give pleasure to man. It is not difficult to follow this message. But I think without this, outside of this, there is no art, no architecture, and I think no life. May be I did not speak clearly about Winckelmann. Winckelmann emphasized the pleasure of abstract intelligence, the aesthetic pleasure, to complete the fragments by imagination. He spoke about the torso of the Belvedere, and he said that it is interesting to complete this unfinished sculpture by the imagination. As I said before, an academic approach is to emphasize the structural types: the Souk, the Venetian palace, the Roman Theater. I think those ways of thinking are not completely wrong. A deeper approach to the complexity of the Mediterranean city has to consider also the ugliness. This is what I have to say in Beirut. Beirut is a very bad city now, not only theaters, not only history, not only Phoenician traditions: it is a very big city made of buildings to sell. Those things are for us to have in our approach as elements of our reality, to consider ugliness as part of our reality, and to mix it with pleasure. [...] I think that it is impossible for an architect to speak about a house without an idea of the city, an idea of the lives of people. I used the opposition of Apollonian and Dionysian to clarify the complexity of our selves. I think that polytheism is better than monotheism to clarify the complexity of our selves.

J. Rykwert

Ugliness is not something we need to look for, it is all around us; it is Beauty that is actually rare. And I don't think that beauty and ugliness is Apollo versus Dionysus. They are after all sometimes the same person, if they are not the same person; they rule over the same place at different seasons, so they are alternating, they are very alike in surprising ways, although they seem to be opposites. And the thing to remember about Dionysus, that Heraclites pointed out, is that he is really Hades, that he is really Death, so I am not quite as comfortable with Dionysus perhaps as Luciano. But to turn back to the problem of ugliness and beauty in what we do, I think beauty is a word of which architects are very very shy. You can talk about an old building which is beautiful, or a building 30 or 40 years old as beautiful, at the limit, but to say that you yourself are trying to do something beautiful, you may talk about aesthetics, but we have no way of talking about how to make a beautiful building, it is something that our language as architects has somehow omitted, and that is why in a sense we also don't have a professional ethic.

P. Ciorra

I live in a country where architects have drawn hundreds, thousands of boundaries. And every time that architects have drawn boundaries, people have just crossed one step after it and said: we don't care about these boundaries, we go on. And it's not because of the influence of the American way of life, even though I love Mc Donalds and Hollywood movies. It is not the architect who traces boundaries. If the architect has the capability, the skill to find a way to create a relation with society, then they can agree on the idea of a boundary. I doubt it, because boundaries today are immaterial. What's a boundary? Where is the end of a community, which is spread all over the world but at the same time is very tight? Also the role of the architect today, you can see from the ugliness, ugliness is built everywhere, in Italy you can find 95% of the ugliness is built without the signature of an architect behind it. There is also a discussion around this, in Luciano's talk as well, which is: is our job getting closer to art, and further away from society, from the structure of the society? Are we going to give up our structural role, probably to exchange it by ecology? I am scared of this, I hate nostalgias, I hate nostalgias for order and harmony, for the possible harmony that we will never achieve. Is the architect the one who has the right, the skill and the power to draw those boundaries?

K. Mitchell

I do not have the answers, but I waited for this discussion, because I am somehow twice removed from the Mediterranean City. I am once removed because I don't live in a Mediterranean City, I don't originate in a Mediterranean City. I am twice removed because I now live in the Middle East; I am on the other side of the world. I will attempt to draw a connection between these concepts of myth and reality, by saying that what makes myth viable is the fact that it is shared. A myth exists because it is shared by a culture, it is common. We understand the value of myth, we understand it through the re-telling, and therefore it gains value and it is through the sharing that it gains value. That is the situation of myth. The situation of reality is that we have very little to share anymore. I will take the place I live in now, Sharjah, which is probably an extreme example in that case. Not only is there very little shared among the culture as a whole, but you also find a situation that has been accelerated there, a situation in which the grandparents grew up in one world, the grandchildren have another. Even within the nuclear family, do you have these splits, so you can't talk about one reality anymore. You can talk about the reality of the grandparents and the reality of the grandchildren. Those realities are very different. Not only has there been a destruction of the myth, but a destruction of the reality.

Question

Once upon a time, we had beautiful Mediterranean cities, from North to South. Now we can only see an extension of ugliness. I ask Professor Semerani, where did the gods go, when these architects created simply buildings taking over nature?

L. Semerani

My idea is based on experience. I don't speak for other architects. I know that when I do a project, a project for a university, I think of the university as a castle; or when I do a project for a house, I think of this house as a living house, a happy house. I try to communicate by images, the materials, the elements of the project, with the language of architecture; I communicate an idea of the world. I give an idea. I try to give an idea. It is impossible for me not to use some images, some metaphor, some elements of the language of architecture, of composition, elements as in music, as in poetry, with ambiguities, with complexities. It is not a political project, not as clear as a philosophical construction; but you know also that even science and philosophy

are not so clear in their goals and methodologies. I think that the architect is a person who contributes to the building of the world, and I think that we have many difficulties, but we have to fight.

Question

The Mediterranean is infinitely larger than the Adriatic or the Aegean. What is so unique to the Mediterranean basin as a large body of water? Is there a common ethos among all these people? Is there something that connects Mediterranean people?

B. Gravagnuolo

I have already said that there is not a unique Mediterranean landscape, there are many Mediterranean landscapes. But it is true that there is something that distinguishes the Mediterranean from the Atlantic. But it is not possible to answer with one identity, because it's not true that there is a single Mediterranean identity now. Identity is the history of all the relations and places. Beirut is not the same as Naples or Barcelona. We should not simplify too much the question of a Mediterranean identity.

Question

This is a question to Joseph Rykwert. In one of your books, The Idea of a Town, I believe, you said that the main attributes of a city are the topography and the public monuments. It took me time to understand the idea of monuments. I understood to some extent that these monuments represented the gods who protected the city. So between the idea of protection, supposed or real security, is there a relation between the idea of protection, security, related to the Divine and the idea of beauty?

J. Rykwert

I think that a city cannot be called beautiful, in the same sense that a single building can be called beautiful. Cities are much more complex entities, they arise over a long period, grow over a long period, transform, change. It's a question connected to what's specific to the Mediterranean. All what I can say is that the Mediterranean came first, and therefore the overlay is thicker. In that sense the city is something which inevitably has to suffer overlays. That is why it is not a work of art in the same sense a picture, a sculpture or a poem is a work of art. It is a collective entity in which a society represents itself. I want to insist on this. So if we don't like our cities, which represent our society, it means that we

have something we have to say about our society. There is a constant flow between the social fabric and the physical fabric, a constant interchange and interplay. That interplay is the sort of thing that Pipo Ciorra has just been talking about; that you may put boundaries but no one will take any notice, because in the social fabric there is no respect for that kind of asocial convention.

We are in a society in which myth is a different sort of thing than it was for our grandparents and our great grandparents. I am not quite sure about how to describe the myth of our society, but it is the myth which is represented in our cities. One of the problems that we all know about, actually you are lucky in the Easter Mediterranean, is that criminality is not very high. But in very many cities around the Mediterranean and all over the world, criminality is rising, related to urban anomie. Of course, Marx, Durkheim, and others have talked about this, there is nothing new about this phenomenon, and that in itself is related to the question raised. We want of our cities to tell us something about who we are and where we are. Our cities cannot do that if they have no center and no boundary. The city exists in the boundary between the center, which is the institution, which is the public realm, which is where society knows itself to be a society, and the boundary where it says beyond here there is another rule. May be it is the rule of the food producer who cannot quite operate in the same way within the town. But unless the city can offer that, we can accept anomie to rise and to increase, and that will have consequences where perhaps crises will finally force some sort of realization that this is not an infinitely reproducible proposition.

Maroun Daccache

Postscript

The city is everywhere. We no longer live the city, but in its territory. The very possibility of fixing limits to the city appears today problematic. The city has been reduced to its technical and administrative components. Its borders are a mere artifice (Cacciari). The territory is structured by a geography of events, a realization of connections that cross an hybrid landscape. The limit of the space is marked only by the border which the net of communications has reached. The events which make up the territory are products of the decisions of commercial interests. They are located without considering the traditional notions of urbanity. The exchanges between city center and suburbs happens arbitrarily on the basis of mercantile and speculative logics. In other terms the territory of the contemporary city denies every possibility of place. The complexity of planning in a Mediterranean city, or of producing projects today, can be explained by different causes, above all information technology, not as a form of development for the project, but as a change of relation between "time" and "place". The modern city, which was conceived as a whole of educational, economical, and functional elements for a society, gave to the project the legitimacy of belonging in an urban context. The history of the project was the history of the city, that is the history of different forms of organizing the urban space.

Today, the contemporary components of the city-territory are defined according to the demands of the global market and to speculative situations which structure the territory. They become objects linked to the evolution of information technology with the new role of architecture as an event rather than as an urban component. The dimension of the 'Time − Place' is substituted by the virtual dimension of the work.

The architecture of the city, at this point, is distorted by the invasion of new inhabitants, the "mass tourists", the "nomads" who represent the new figure on the territory (Virilio). The historical centers have become an urban scenography, a kind of nostalgia rather than a historic reality, since the evolution of technology has transformed the typology and functions of their buildings.

The end of the relationship between type and morphology indicates the loss of "time" in relation to "place". Practically it is the failure of the city as an educational institution for social and communitarian values.

The end of the "function" implies the revision of the project in relation to the new equipments of the territory, since the evolution of our life is transformed by new technologies.

In globalization, the "collective memory" which shares in the development of the city has been substituted by the "individual memory" that controls only the territory. There is no doubt that the territory where we live is a radical challenge to any traditional form of communitarian life.

The future of the Mediterranean City between "Myth" and "Reality" will remain in question in a society where everyone is in movement, where the definition of culture has inevitably become something ambiguous and where nomads are the new inhabitants of the territory.