

**Preface to the
Second Italian Edition**

In the years between the first and second editions of this book, several of its themes have been debated and confirmed by material from other studies. The subject of the close tie between the study of the city and architecture has particularly dominated the debate in a large sector of the architectural culture. This confirmation of the direction initiated here has convinced me of the need to make an out-of-print text available again and the usefulness of reissuing this book. However, I think that it would be a mistake, at least for the central part of the book, to attempt to bring it up to date by modifying parts of some chapters or introducing them anew, because to do so would destroy the overall structure of the work and impose a complete face-lift upon it.

The success of this book is attested to by the numerous references made to it, the adoption of some of the terminology it introduced, and—uniquely—the way its title has been widely cited, both appropriately and inappropriately. *The Architecture of the City*, in fact, has a precise meaning worth recalling in as simple a way as possible: to consider the city as architecture means to recognize the importance of architecture as a discipline that has a self-determined autonomy (and thus is not autonomous in an abstract sense), constitutes the major urban artifact within the city, and, through all the processes analyzed in this book, links the past to the present. Architecture so seen is not diminished in terms of its own significance because of its urban architectural context or because a different scale introduces new meanings; on the contrary the meaning of the architecture of the city resides in a focus on the individual project and the way it is structured as an urban artifact.

This study of architecture not only considers and grows out of all of the past, but in it the architectural theories of the Modern Movement have a major place; it is, then, also an evaluation of the Modern Movement's legacy and its significance. In the four years since the first edition of this book, there have been numerous publications, translations, and interpretations of the Modern Movement that testify to the difficulty of evaluating this legacy, but to accept it means to place the available material in a critical context. By now the view of the Modern Movement as a qualitative leap forward or as a moral-political movement has been abandoned by all but a few stubborn retrogrades whose work fails to enhance in any way the patrimony they defend. This book offers a preliminary evaluation of the modern legacy, seeking to find the terms within which it can usefully be accepted.

In rereading this book, there emerges from it as a fundamental problem the question of tendencies and of the relationship between urban analysis and design. These themes are related to each other. Few things better illustrate the poverty of some modern studies of architecture than the explicit assumption (or implicit in the worst cases) that scientific concepts are neutral. Neutrality is a stance that can be taken within a system of concepts or rules; but when the problem is to assign values to these same concepts, neutrality is meaningless. Architecture and architectural theories, like everything else, can only be described according to concepts which are neither absolute nor neutral, and these, depending on their importance, have the potential to modify man's way of seeing profoundly. In architecture problems of knowledge have always been connected to matters of tendency and of choice. An architecture that lacks a tendency has neither a field nor a manner in which to reveal itself. In constructing a theory of architecture, the relationship with history is also one of choice; my introduction and translation of Boullée's essay,¹ published after I wrote this book, exemplifies this.

98 "Capriccio," by Giovanni Antonio Canaletto, 1753-59, depicting Palladio's Basilica of Vicenza, his project for the Ponte di Rialto in Venice, and a partial view of the Palazzo Chiericati. National Gallery, Parma, Italy. "It is easily seen that the painting does not lack boats or gondolas, nor anything else to transport the viewer to Venice; and I know that many Venetians have asked what site in the city it was which they had not yet seen" (F. Algarotti, "Raccolta di lettere sopra la pittura e l'architettura" [Livorno, 1765], vol. LV).

The construction of a more complex rationalism than the schematic one offered by the historiography of modern architecture up to a few years ago entails a confrontation with modern architecture's own tradition, for only in coming to terms with this can a correct relationship with the present be discovered. The absence of a tendency illustrates the gratuitous and ad hoc nature of many studies. The relationship between urban analysis and design is thus an issue that can be resolved only within the framework of a tendency, within a certain system, and not through neutrality. In this respect the example of Hilberseimer's work is significant; his analyses of the city and of the structure of architecture are rigorously interdependent aspects of a general theory of rationalism in architecture. These two terms, analysis and design, seem to me to be coalescing into one fundamental area of study, in which the study of urban artifacts and of form becomes architecture. The rationality of architecture lies precisely in its capacity to be constructed out of a meditation on artifacts over time, with certain elements playing an integrating role in this construction. For the archaeologist and the artist alike, the ruins of a city constitute a starting point for invention, but only at the moment that they can be linked with a precise system, one based on lucid hypotheses which acquire and develop their own validity, do they construct something real. This construction of the real is an act mediated by architecture in its relationship with things and the city, with ideas and history.

After I wrote this book and from the concepts I postulated in it, I outlined the hypothesis of the *analogous city*, in which I attempted to deal with theoretical questions concerning design in architecture. In particular I elaborated a compositional procedure that is based on certain fundamental artifacts in the urban reality around which other artifacts are constituted within the framework of an analogous system. To illustrate this concept I gave the example of Canaletto's fantasy view of Venice, a *capriccio* in which Palladio's projects for the Ponte di Rialto, the Basilica of Vicenza, and the Palazzo Chiericati are set next to each other and described as if the painter were rendering an urban scene he had actually observed. These three Palladian monuments, none of which are actually in Venice (one is a project; the other two are in Vicenza), nevertheless constitute an *analogous* Venice formed of specific elements associated with the history of both architecture and the city. The geographical transposition of the monuments within the painting constitutes a city that we recognize, even though it is a place of purely architectural references. This example enabled me to demonstrate how a logical-formal operation could be translated into a design method and then into a hypothesis for a theory of architectural design in which the elements were preestablished and formally defined, but where the significance that sprung forth at the end of the operation was the authentic, unforeseen, and original meaning of the work.

Certain parts of this book touch on matters which remain to be developed further but which are quite important for a complete panorama of architectural studies. These include the theory of permanences and the meaning of monuments, the concept of *locus*, the evolution of urban artifacts, and the value that architecture as the physical structure of institutions gives to a place. Other questions treated here in a systematic way for the first time—such as building typology and urban morphology, or the issue of classification in architecture—have subsequently been amplified by important contributions which now must be taken into account.

The appeal in the introduction to this book for further analytical material on cities—and thus for more authentic knowledge of the greatest possible variety of

urban situations, thereby providing some necessary background on the specific architectural construction of the city—still holds. The available material is still too fragmentary for us to proceed safely; on the basis of the elements that such analytical material could furnish, we might possibly have to revise our theory, little by little altering our hypotheses on the basis of new facts. Monographs of this type are necessary because it is above all through them that we can respond to the questions of urban analysis in a complete way. The urban configuration is a system where questions of topography and land ownership, of regulations, class struggles, and the idea of architecture tend slowly toward a single, precise construction, and every general theory must always be measured against this. In recent years some studies have been conducted in this domain, and I know that their publication has provided useful reference material.

Another issue raised in this book, one which also has been taken up recently in a different way and has produced interesting material for my own theses, is that of functionalism. The critique I make in this book is of a naive functionalism that oversimplifies reality and humiliates fantasy and liberty, especially when it is used either as a compositional tool—as is commonly the case in our schools—or as a standard zoning practice. Over the years I have pursued this critique, for example in my introduction to Boullée's essay, where I attempted to propose a vision of rationalism as an alternative to the functionalist position. The critique of functionalism must be considered a new theory of architectural composition and a basic principle for urban analysis. However, the rejection of naive functionalism does not mean the rejection of the concept of function in its most proper meaning. In other words, as I point out in this book, the concept of function must be used in an algebraic sense, by which I mean that values are knowable only as functions of one another, and that between functions and form there are more complex connections than the linear ones of cause and effect, which are belied by reality.

Finally, for the various welcomes this book has been given, I must thank all those who have reviewed, discussed, studied, and lingered over different aspects of it. The reviews by Carlo Aymonino, Giorgio Grassi, and Vittorio Gregotti² particularly interested me, especially because these authors, from different points of view, focused on the relationship this book establishes with architecture and in particular with the theoretical foundations of my own projects and teaching. As much for their authority as for the new elements they introduce, these essays could constitute part of the present work. I also thank Manfredo Tafuri, who, in his considerations on modern architectural theories, has placed the themes of this book into a larger framework of architectural phenomena, evaluating my writing and my designs as a total work of architecture.³ Beyond the favorable judgments of these writers, the sense of their recognition has been most important to me, coming as it did during one of the most difficult and solitary periods of my architectural work. A particular thanks to Salvador Tarragó Cid for his translation of the book into Spanish and for the long introductory essay he wrote for the Spanish edition.⁴

December 1969