



POLITECNICO
MILANO 1863

DIPARTIMENTO DI ARCHITETTURA
E STUDI URBANI
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE
AND URBAN STUDIES

Il volume raccoglie i contributi scritti dai relatori che hanno partecipato al ciclo di conferenze *Spazi pubblici e luoghi condivisi. Progetti architettonici per le città europee*, ideato da Guya Bertelli e coordinato da Pasquale Mei. Il *symposium* è stato promosso dal Dipartimento di Architettura e Studi Urbani (DAStU) e le conferenze hanno avuto luogo, tra il 2012 e il 2013, presso la sede centrale del Politecnico di Milano e presso il Campus Arata del Polo Territoriale di Piacenza.

Pasquale Mei, Architetto e Dottore di Ricerca (PhD) in Progettazione Architettonica e Urbana. Svolge attività didattica e di ricerca come Assegnista presso il Politecnico di Milano.

The publication collects contributions by the lecturers in the series of conference *Public spaces and shared places. Architectural projects for the European cities* created by Guya Bertelli and coordinated by Pasquale Mei. The *symposium* was sponsored by the Department of Architecture and Urban studies (DAStU) and the conferences have been organized in 2012 and 2013 at Politecnico di Milano, Campus Leonardo, and at Arata Campus, in the Territorial Campus of Piacenza.

Pasquale Mei, Architect and Researcher (PhD in Architectural and Urban Design). He carries out teaching and research activities at the Politecnico di Milano.

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Pasquale Mei

Spazi pubblici e luoghi condivisi

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Progetti architettonici per le città europee

Pasquale Mei

Public spaces and sharing places

Architectural design for the european cities

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SPAZI PUBBLICI E LUOGHI CONDIVISI
progetti architettonici per le città europee

Pasquale Mei, Politecnico di Milano, Dipartimento di Architettura e Studi Urbani (DASIU)

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Projects of urban regeneration in France

Grand Lyon 2010 and Euroméditerranée

Pasquale Mei

Hervé Dubois and Gilles Novarina have interpreted the theme of the meetings's series Public Spaces and Shared Places, declined it in relation to the specific cases of Marseille and Lyon. Hervé Dubois - architect and professor at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture of Marseille and Paris Val de Seine - dealt with the theme of the different forms through which the city of Marseille has inhabited the landscape, thanks to its peculiar geographical condition.

Gilles Novarina instead - urban planner, professor at the Institut d'Urbanisme de Grenoble and member of the Laboratoire PACTE Territoires - treated the strategies at global scale, the processes and the practices adopted by the city of Lyon for the regeneration of its public spaces: from spatial planning to sustainable urban development, up to the architectural design scale.

Marseille and Lyon are two cities strongly characterized from their relationship with geography and water, that interweaves their story. Marseille, a city of Greek foundation, overlooking the Mediterranean Sea in the Gulf of Lion a few kilometers east of the Rhone delta, the same river that crosses and configures the spatial and morphological structure of the city of Lyon, placed inside one of largest natural regions of France: the Rhône-Alpes.

The Rhône, the river from which the valley crossed by it takes its name, structures at geographical scale in a rhythmical way the sequence of cities that have developed over time along its valley: Valence, Montélimar, Orange, Avignon, Arles. The valley, location for the highway infrastructure (A-7), is both a valuable directress of exchanges and a meeting and cultural exchange place between the Mediterranean and the Middle European culture.

Despite their diversity - Marseille of Greek foundation and Lyon of Roman foundation; sea city the first one, and river city the second one - they have a distinctive character that unites and connotes them: the specific relationship that their urban structure establishes with the place. Geography, as a descriptive discipline, "doesn't build proposals, it's, so to say, a science of the spatial present"¹; (it) determines that background condition necessary for the construction of the anthropogeographic landscape, essential for the recognition of the urban figures that draw the two cities. Marseille - like many other cities of Greek foundation - is characterized by a strong relationship with the landscape, looking as an amphitheater that looks towards the sea turning its back to France, as well as its own inhabitants say, with all its political implications this has resulted in the course of history. The



peculiar geographical connotation of Lyon is sanctioned instead by the confluence of the Saône in the Rhône in correspondence with the Presqu'île. The hilly system which surrounds the city contributes to articulate a spatial sequence between the horizontal plane of the city and the vertical natural background.

Marseille is instead a city strongly marked both by its coastline, and thus by its relationship with the maritime landscape characterized by several landings that have developed over time, and by the 'territorial space' of environmental systems that define the geographical limits of its hinterland. This double natural system, defined by the coastline and inland hills, is strongly influenced by the presence of infrastructures within it. Marseille is historically the exchange center of goods between different peoples and cultures of the Mediterranean sea, by means of its ports that define the degree of porosity of the boundary between the water and the land, the city and the sea. A boundary line, that of the coast, that in some places enters the mainland defining real squares of water as the ancient port. In 1995 the city began to implement a large urban and infrastructural transformation through *Euroméditerranée* project (operation repeated in 2007 with *Euroméditerranée 2*) to face the operative modern logics of the port areas.

Common goal of the two transformations has been to transform Marseille simultaneously in the new centrality to the entire Mediterranean basin and new gateway to Europe.

Lyon represents, due to the policies implemented from the 90', an emblematic case in which the project of public space becomes relevant for transformations to a larger scale. The Administration of Lyon has indeed focused itself on urban design understood as a project of connecting spaces and relationships between different parts of the city and as a tool able to govern, even before the individual architectural project, a shared culture of public space. This precise intention gave life to the *Grand Lyon* project in 2010, which tried to implement a shared project strategy, aiming for continuity of the public space of the city and maintaining a high quality standard for all interventions, even for the materials chosen, leading Lyon to be taken as the main reference for the public space project.

Marseille and Lyon are thus two different examples of intervention on public spaces of contemporary European city united by a reflection on the special relationship with the geography and marked by common goals to achieve, even if with complementary methodologies.

Notes

01 Gregotti V., *Il territorio dell'architettura*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2008, p. 61.

