The building cycle of the “built environment”

Announced and planned over 20 years ago by Cresme (1997 Report), the “wave of recovery/redevelopment”, has found its growth defining a curve strongly influenced by the tormented economic cycles happened during the last two decades.

It has been said that, for example, this “wave of recovery/redevelopment” has been increased by the economic crisis – the investment in maintenance and recovery presents few risks - so that the peak of the curve of investments in recovery overlaps with that one of the crisis born in 2008.

In this way, we can glimpse a first sign of growth in construction investments and, according to Cresme, a new building cycle, only now as it seems that we are moving out from the crisis. This new cycle has been defined of the “built environment” and it is led by the growth of investments in new buildings.

However, it is clear that the field of recovery now constitutes over 70% of investments in the construction sector, and it will remain the most important market for many years, event if it also changes in relation to endogenous factors such as tax bonuses.

It is in this context that we see as most of the essays published here, relating to the Colloqui.A.Te 2018 Conference in Cagliari, are dedicated to historical buildings: historical centres, important monuments, modern heritage, social housing, are all object of researches that from different points of view and with different approaches explore the technical and cultural modalities to deal profitably with their recovery and adaptation to the performances or to the features required by the current legislation or by the contemporary ways of life.
If we try to select keywords, we find that from diagnostics to the life cycle, from seismic vulnerability to emergency, from circular building to smart city, the research on the field of the ICAR10 seems to be focused on the most current and debated problems.

Areas and themes pursue objectives announced by Horizon 2020 and identified by Gulli at the Colloqui A.Te 2015 in Bologna, as the most significant “needs of contemporary society”: economic sustainability, the well-being of the individual, the intelligence of things, which coincides, at the Italian level with the preservation of the cultural heritage, the portion of historical buildings of high quality.

Nevertheless, in my opinion we can preview a partially new phenomenon for this community, which shows a positive tendency towards the existing built, by means of the knowledge, the processes of sharing and participation to the history and to the qualities of architectures, sites, cities.

A sort of approach towards the belonging as a way for solving problems, an alternative to the forms of possession - which transforms for use and are more traditional in the lower ICARs - and of adaptation - which want to stay close to the present, even if changing itself, as it happens for some higher ICARs.

So, this is indeed our position in the middle of the ICARs, that was at the centre of Sanna’s reflections during the Colloqui A.Te 2014 in Naples, and that emerges from the essays published in 2019 by TEMA, a journal progressively strategic in an era where co-operation is becoming the most effective way of developing research and the multidisciplinary paradigm should be updated.

In 2018, the annual Colloqui A.Te. meeting, organized by the Association Ar.Tec., Scientific society of the Scientific Disciplinary Sector ICAR 10, was held at the University of Cagliari on the theme Circular building between Recovery / Requalification and Renewal / Urban and Architectural Regeneration, and was divided, as usual, on the Building Heritage, Building Design and Techniques, Building Performance focuses. This issue of the TEMA magazine, and the number 1 - Vol.5 of 2019, contains a selection of the speeches presented at the Cagliari Conference.

Paolo Sanjust
Editor