



MANFREDO TAFURI: DESDE ESPAÑA, 2 VOLS.

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Published by the Alhambra Board of Trustees, these are the revised and updated versions of the various presentations made at the International Symposium “Manfredo Tafuri: from Spain”, held in Granada in November 2016. The first of the volumes of the work I am going to comment on here is dedicated to these texts, which is completed with a second volume containing the various writings published in Spanish on the Roman historian throughout his life and on the occasion of his early death. Taken together, the two volumes provide an insight into what Tafuri’s conceptual approaches contributed to the formation of a small but select group of Spanish architectural historians in what were crucial years for our architectural culture and, through the work of a younger generation of historians, to an in-depth study of certain aspects of Tafuri’s career.

It is, therefore, a collective work that joins the series of publications which, with the same character, have appeared in recent times: from the set of reflections raised fifteen years after his death in *Manfredo Tafuri, oltre la storia* (2009) to the most recent book of documents of the International Seminar staged in São Paulo in 2015, published under the title *Manfredo Tafuri: seus leitores e suas leituras* (2018), or the volume titled *Lo storico scellerato. Scritti su Manfredo Tafuri* (2019), published by Orazio Carpenzano. The collaborative research project coordinated by Beatriz Colomina at Princeton University between 2013 and 2015 under the title *Radical Pedagogies*, which took the form of seminars, exhibitions and publications, also contributed to placing the figure of the Roman historian in a broader context; its aim was to study in detail the most innovative pedagogical experiences in the field of architecture during the second half of the twentieth century, and Tafuri’s project plays a prominent role here, precisely because it presents a very particular profile that distinguishes it from others.

Furthermore, in this context of growing interest in Tafuri’s legacy, there have also been incursions into the significance of his presence in different geographical areas. I will only mention, because they belong to the same Hispanic cultural trunk, that the same year in which the Alhambra Symposium was held, on the other side of the Atlantic a study day was held almost at the same time, focusing on Tafuri’s visit to Buenos Aires in 1981, and the papers have been compiled in the collective book *Tafuri en Argentina (Tafuri in Argentina)* (2019). From this perspective, one can surely better understand the interest and relevance of the publication of the contributions to the Granada Symposium, especially since Tafuri’s relationship with Spain had not been systematically explored up to that date. They are, therefore, an important starting point for a historical research project that can still be developed further, and at the same time they are a timely and necessary contribution to clarify the extent of the international influence of Tafuri’s teaching, particularly with regard to the two Spanish-speaking countries with which he had the closest personal relationship.

Certainly, in the Spanish case, Tafuri's presence cannot be separated from the close link that our architectural and urban culture established with Italian culture in the final years of Franco's regime and the transition to democracy; a link that was particularly close in the case of Catalan architects. Indeed, Barcelona was the first city the Roman historian visited in 1971, at the invitation of Ignasi Solà-Morales. There were many Italian architects who in one way or another maintained relations with Spain in those critical years when culture was inseparably linked to politics, but perhaps Aldo Rossi and Manfredo Tafuri are among those who had the greatest presence among us. Although with very different approaches, their paths often crossed since they met in the spring of 1963 at the Arezzo course organised by Ludovico Quaroni, who in a way was a reference point for both of them in their formative years.

As could not be otherwise in the case of a figure as multifaceted as Tafuri and with historians from three different generations, some of whom were architects and others not, taking part in his analysis, the questions addressed by the authors in this *Manfredo Tafuri: from Spain* are numerous and, in a certain way, disparate. However, I think that they could be grouped around three main themes, which I will now refer to: 1) the history of Tafuri's relationship with Spain; 2) the reading from Spain of certain arguments raised by Tafuri's work; and 3) the renewal of studies on the figure and thought of Tafuri. I must warn, however, that it is not my intention here to examine each and every one of the contributions that could be considered to fall within these broad themes, but only to illustrate the scope of the issues raised in each theme, pointing to the texts that seem to me to be the most representative. It is an approach that aims to awaken in the interested reader the curiosity to know what each of the authors participating in the volume have to say, as all of them have interesting contributions that deserve consideration.

The authors of three of them (Pérez Escolano, Marías and Tessari) belong to the generation that knew and had contact with Tafuri, while the authors of the other two (García Estévez and Guerrero) belong to a younger generation that has shown a renewed interest in revisiting his relationship with our country.

The particular chronicle that Víctor Pérez Escolano makes of the Roman historian's relations with Spain and with the Hispanic world, takes a detailed look at Tafuri's various trips to our country, naming the Spaniards with whom he met—from Rafael Moneo and Manuel Solà-Morales, who met him in Italy in the 1960s, to the other Solà (Ignasi), Carlos Sambricio and Pérez Escolano himself, who met him in the 1970s through the other Solà (Ignasi), Carlos Sambricio and Pérez Escolano himself, who contacted him in the 1970s, to Fernando Marías and Pedro Galera Andreu, who did so in the 1980s and early 1990s, respectively—and the various Spanish editions of Tafuri's publications. This text is probably the best starting point for understanding the way in which the ideas of the founder of the Venice Institute of Architecture spread in the Spanish-speaking world because of its desire to contextualise each and every one of the episodes that illustrate Tafuri's links with Spain.

The book also contains other contributions that take us deeper into specific aspects of this relationship. Thus, the text by Carolina García Estévez focuses on Tafuri's presence in Barcelona, where other figures who were also fundamental to the development of this relationship appear, including Pep Quetglas, Josep M. Rovira, Juan José Lahuerta and Beatriz Colomina. Rovira, Juan José Lahuerta and Beatriz Colomina, whose subsequent presence in the United States reinforced the role played by the Roman historian on the other side of the Atlantic, starting with his visit to Princeton in 1974, invited by the Argentinian Diana Agrest to take part in the course on practice, theory and politics in architecture, with a lecture later published in the magazine *Oppositions*. For his part, Salvador Guerrero analyses the impact of Tafuri's ideas on the teaching of architectural history in Spanish schools in the 1970s, especially in Barcelona, Madrid and Seville. Based on the relative openness to other ways of seeing of what he considers to be the leading intellectuals of that time in Spanish academia—Sostres in Barcelona, Chueca

Goitia in Madrid and Bonet Correa in Seville—, he explains how the renewal of historical research was brought about by those of us who were “followers” of Tafuri.

Fernando Marías, who, of those who studied the history of art in the Faculties of History, was surely the most receptive to the approaches of the Roman historian, makes an enlightening analysis of *Teorías e historia de la arquitectura*, one of his “most clear-sighted works”, in that in it Marías finds “*in nuce* many of the themes and epistemological trajectories that the author would follow in the following years”. However, it was not this work that found the greatest echo among Hispanic readers, which is why the rest of the text is devoted to trying to explain this “disappointing reception among us”, which does not seem to be attributable to Tafuri’s writing, but rather to the lack of understanding of his discourse by both Spanish architects and historians. To illustrate this, Marías resorts to the harsh criticism published by Tomás Llorens—and included in the second volume of these documents—, where the Valencian art historian describes Tafuri’s consideration of the avant-garde as “falsifying and demagogic”.

In addition, Cristiano Tessari’s contribution allows us to follow Spain’s ambivalent reception of Tafuri’s theses on Renaissance architecture, from humanism to mannerism—or perhaps the other way around, since, as Pérez Escolano reminds us, Tafuri makes his first incursions into Spanish architecture in his book on mannerism (1966), which is prior to the one on humanism (1969)—. On the basis of this last book, published in Spanish in 1978, Tessari notes the scant attention paid by Spanish historiography to his methodological approaches, despite the fact that they had been made explicit in an article translated the previous year by the journal *Arquitectura* of the Madrid Society of Architects. But in general, with honourable exceptions, neither architects, focused on an operational use of history, nor historians, more interested in iconological or linguistic research, have been able to assess and develop his approaches.

As part of the following theme, which I have brought together under the—deliberately ambiguous—heading of the Spanish view of certain issues raised by Tafuri’s work, it is worth considering, on the one hand, the texts that deal with problems of Spanish architecture from the perspective of the Roman historian, especially in relation to his studies on the Renaissance (Galera Andreu) and, on the other, a set of essays that seek to relocate, from a broad perspective, certain issues on which Tafuri worked at one time or another in his career. These include mannerism, urban history and modern narrative (Rovira, García Vázquez, Calatrava), or certain intellectual references in his work (Pizza).

Tafuri’s interest in certain episodes of Spanish Renaissance architecture is well known, illustrating his conviction that in order to understand certain historical junctures it was as important to study what was happening in the centre as what was happening on the periphery, fostering a duly “polycentric” research, as Pancho Liernur rightly explains in his contribution, which deals precisely with analysing the meaning of this constant centre-periphery tension in the Roman historian’s work. It was precisely this interest that led Tafuri to suggest to Cristiano Tessari, then a student in Venice, the figure of Andrés de Vandelvira as the subject of his degree dissertation. This is the focus of Pedro Galera Andreu’s contribution, which re-examines the Tafurian discourse on the experimentalism of certain Spanish architects considered to be disciples or followers of Siloe, particularly Vandelvira. The work of the architect from Jaén is revisited here in constant dialogue with Tafuri, who constantly endeavoured to contribute to the renewal of studies on Spanish architecture in the fifteenth century; suffice it to recall his study of the palace of Charles V in the Alhambra, in which he sought to respond to the theses put forward by Rosenthal in the book he dedicated to the famous Renaissance monument in Granada.

Josep M. Rovira’s text returns to Tafuri’s seminal book on Mannerism to see in it the origin of what came later. Accordingly, he rereads Tafuri’s work as a whole from this perspective, showing the comings and goings present in his career that seem to revolve around this moment in the second half of the

fifteenth century as one of those “particular moments or singular cases that assume a critical value that is decisive for the understanding of entire cultural circles”. His attention to the sharp contrasts present in the society that produced architectures such as the Giulio Romano convinced him that, in spite of everything, in the consideration of that great cultural cycle there were important keys that he failed to make explicit. Premature death prevented him from doing so, so that “his beloved Baldassare Peruzzi, his definitive synthesis of Jacopo Sansovino, his settling of scores with the overrated Andrea Palladio, the pending work with Giuliano da Sangallo, the deepened appreciation of Sebastiano Serlio, the possibilities of a Michele Sanmichelli and the exact aspirations of Jacopo da Vignola could not be”.

Juan Calatrava, for his part, makes a full reading of Tafuri’s contribution to the crisis of that canonical version of the history of the architecture of the Modern Movement constructed by Giedion or Pevsner, but also those carried out in the Italian context by Zevi or Benevolo. The need to consider certain episodes that had been overlooked and to construct a narrative that was not linear, but attentive to the multiplicity of trajectories and approaches that make up the “modern”, while integrating the architectural with the urban and the territorial, would lead Tafuri to examine experiences such as that of Red Vienna or the American city, before setting out, with Francesco Dal Co, his own overview of the complex and diverse modern journey, in the volume *Contemporary Architecture*. This fragmentary and plural character of modernity would be even more palpable in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, which opens with an introduction containing the most precise exposition of the Roman historian’s “historical project”.

In a sense, Carlos García Vázquez’s contribution complements Calatrava’s by placing Tafuri’s writings in the context of the issues debated in the field of urban history in the 1960s and 1970s: quantitative *vs.* qualitative, multidisciplinary *vs.* disciplinary autonomy, scientific *vs.* ideological. Tafuri’s stance, which did not identify with any of the dominant points of view in those debates, led him to defend history as a tool for problematising and criticising processes, renouncing the idea of “transforming an urban reality that he considered irreversible” and opting for “negative thinking”, in which García Vázquez sees one of the most controversial aspects of Tafuri’s work. For his part, Antonio Pizza explores the role possibly played by certain intellectuals considered to be of reference for the Roman historian—including philosophers such as F. Nietzsche, M. Foucault and W. Benjamin, or historians such as M. Bloch and L. Febvre—in the construction of Tafuri’s critical discourse, which moves “on a knife edge between distance and involvement. Here lies—in Tafuri’s words—the *fruitful uncertainty* of analysis itself, its interminable character, its always having to return to the material examined and, at the same time, to itself”.

Finally, a third group of contributions can be distinguished that show the relevance and interest Tafuri’s work has maintained over time. I am referring to the contributions of the younger generation involved in the book, which focus on lesser known aspects or on which new light is shed by the perspective from which they are presented; they correspond to the texts by Plaza, Fernández-Santos and León Casero.

Carlos Plaza’s suggestive study focuses on the young Tafuri, who has not yet decided to abandon his professional practice as an architect to devote himself to the history of architecture; more specifically, it deals with his relationship with Italia Nostra, the association created in the early 1950s to promote the protection of heritage. After examining his participation in the debates on three central issues of those years—the revision of Rome’s General Plan, the defence of public green spaces and the question of history centres—he focuses on the latter, which, in passing, illustrates his participation in the operation to destroy Saverio Muratori, whose teaching at the Faculty of Architecture in Rome was considered deeply retrograde, “the enemy of modern architecture”, as Zevi wrote. This rejection of his didactic approaches, based on ahistorical philosophy, did not prevent Tafuri from later showing a certain appreciation for his morphogenetic studies of the historical city, as Plaza notes in his text.

Jorge Fernández-Santos focuses on a somewhat overlooked aspect of Tafuri's work which, nevertheless, seems to us to be of singular importance: his studies on Baroque architecture and on Borromini in particular. Tafuri placed the architect from Ticino between Alberti and Piranesi, assigning him a key place from the perspective of the contemporary issues that were being waged in the 1960s. Fernández-Santos's main merit lies in his effort to situate the Roman historian's works on Borromini in the cultural and political context in which they were produced. Jorge León Casero's contribution, on the other hand, attempts to bring to the present the as yet undeveloped potential of Tafuri's work, in particular the political aspect of his work as a historian. An aspect that has been denied by the Anglo-Saxon reception of Tafuri in what the professor from the University of Zaragoza interprets as an "eclipse of politics"; something that also had its particular Spanish version in the aforementioned critique by Llorens. In this sense, the reappearance of such a reading of Tafuri's position in the writings of Andrés Carretero leads León Casero to claim the need to renew a radical critique of certain versions of current participatory urbanism.

The volume is completed by a transcript of a 1992 television interview with Tafuri by journalist Giusi Boni for Italian Swiss television. It is a document of great interest to know Tafuri's point of view in relation to his research on the so-called "Renaissance"—a word which, used in the sense in which art historians normally coin the term, he did not share and which, consequently, he used "ironically"—as well as certain personal circumstances of a biographical nature. This is joined by a second volume that opens with a careful bibliography of writings by and about Tafuri, prepared by the editors. It also includes, as already mentioned, the publication of the texts on the Roman historian that have appeared in Spanish. On the whole, although a number of more than authoritative voices are missing from this vision of Tafuri from Spain, the work is an essential reference for anyone who wants to learn about Tafuri's relationship with our country and to delve deeper into it. Although the publication of these documents has been delayed due to various problems, the wait has been well worth it.