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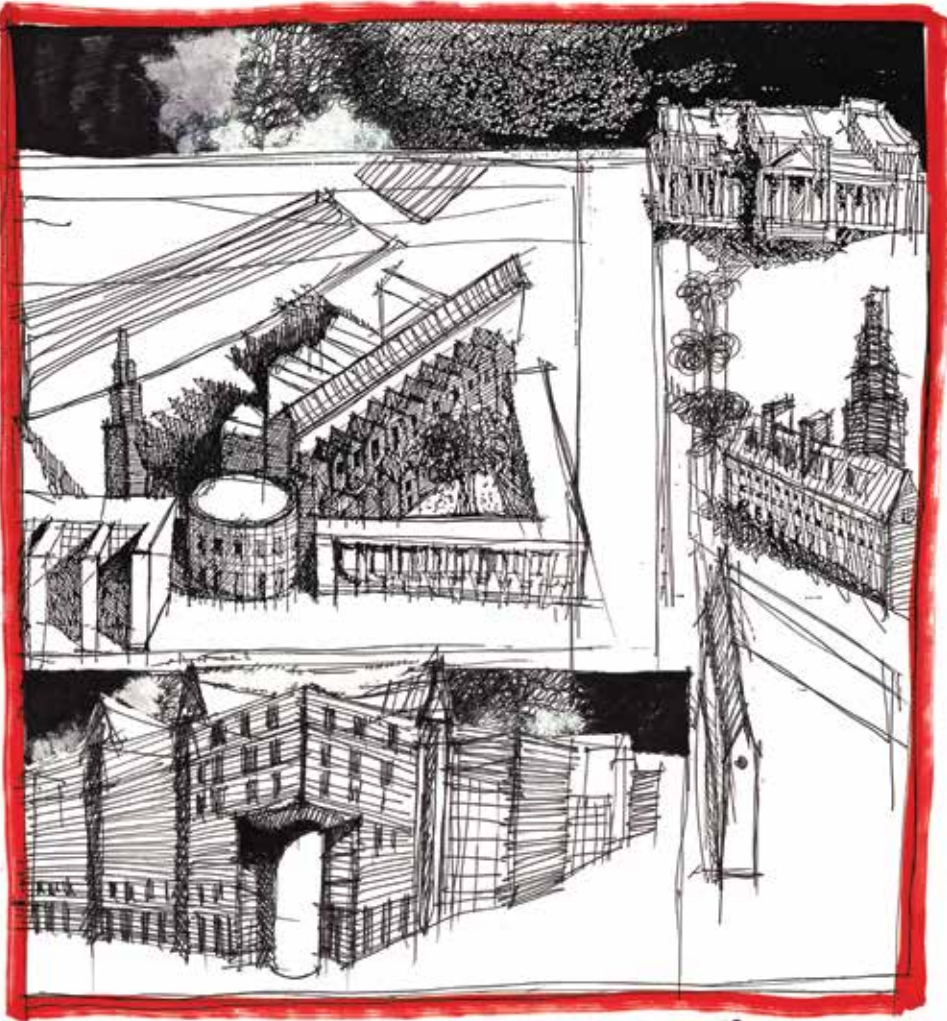
Aldo Rossi, *Study for Berlin*  
(*Deutsches Geschichte Museum a Friedrichstrasse*), 1988, detail  
(MAXXI - Museo Nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Roma,  
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ALDO ROSSI, PERSPECTIVES FROM THE WORLD

ILPOLIGRAFO



# ALDO ROSSI, PERSPECTIVES FROM THE WORLD

## Theory, Teaching, Design & Legacy

edited by  
Marco Bovati, Michele Caja, Martina Landsberger, Angelo Lorenzi  
scientific supervision Adalberto Del Bo

ILPOLIGRAFO

Aldo Rossi, one of the most important figures of the last century who determined and characterized the theoretical debate of international architecture, both in the academic and professional fields, died prematurely on September 1997. Translated into many languages, Rossi's *The Architecture of the City* (1966) soon became a reference for world-leading schools of architecture, bringing into focus the urban dimension of architectural design, and the fundamental role of history. In different occasions over the years, such themes have stirred up the debate from different standpoints, opening further lines of inquiry for generations of scholars and academics all over the world. Since the time of the exhibition "Architettura Razionale" at the 1973 Triennale di Milano in which, as a curator, he had called on architects from different and distant places to confront each other, Rossi had shown this propensity to look beyond national borders with interest and curiosity. This volume aims to examine how much Rossi's theoretical and design teaching is still relevant today. For this purpose, forty young national and international scholars and researchers have dealt with the master's theoretical and constructed work, verifying its relevance and useful indications for the contemporary project. The volume, introduced by a theoretical essay, consists of four sections corresponding to four thematic issues: "Theory & Design"; "Teaching & Design"; "International Design Legacy"; "Design". Each chapter presents a theoretical introduction that aims to discuss and summarize the topics covered in the section by offering a possible interpretation of the texts.



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*This book is dedicated to the memory  
of Francisco José Barata Fernandes*

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DIPARTIMENTO DI ARCHITETTURA  
E STUDI URBANI

DIPARTIMENTO DI ARCHITETTURA,  
INGEGNERIA DELLE COSTRUZIONI  
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## THE METHOD OF TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS: ELDEM'S AND ROSSI'S WORK IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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This territory has been seen as a series of urban structures, elements built of city and landscape. Here, architecture must take into consideration the earth, the culture, the conflicts, their permanence, and development.

This initial statement opens the research published by Rossi, Consolascio and Bosshard on the *Construction of the Canton of Ticino territory*<sup>1</sup>. This obviously led the architects in their methodological approach to this research, finding in Sedat Hakkı Eldem's<sup>2</sup> work, and in particular, in the analysis of the Bosphorus landscape, an unexpected analogy. Sedat Eldem (1908-1988) has been the most representative architect of Modern Turkish architecture. Who else could have conversed with the Masters of Modern in Europe and America and, being a son of Ottoman aristocracy, could open a Turkish path to the Modern Movement?

The core of Sedat Eldem's work was the study of the Turkish House. No other person has been as comprehensive, devoted and productive as he was in bringing the traditional Turkish house back to life through his own architectural experience and projects. The essential characteristics of this building type, and its possible variations depending on the site, represent the main trait of Eldem's work and also his main legacy.

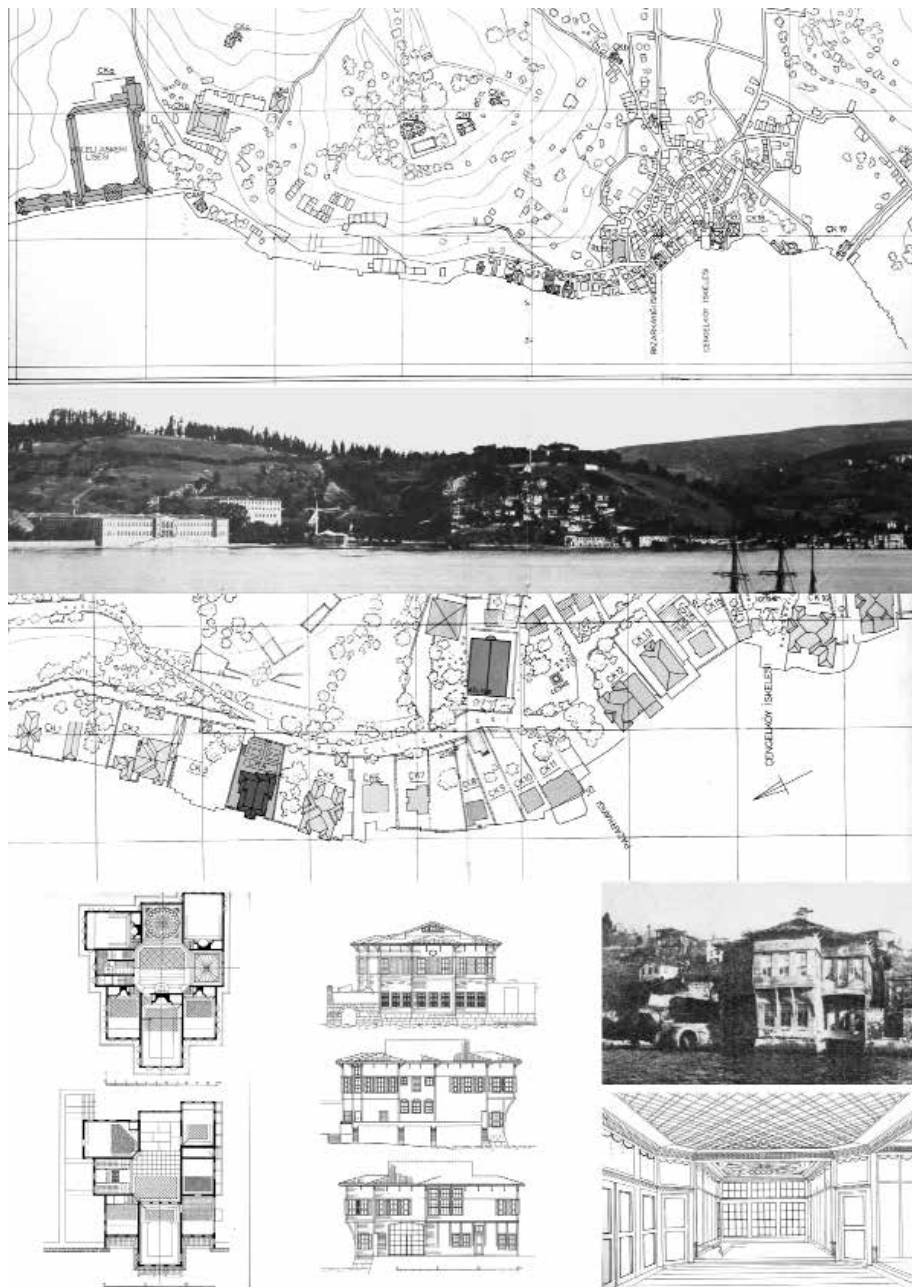
It should be noted that the analysis of Rossi and his colleagues succeeded by several years Eldem's studies on the urban landscape of the Bosphorus, but the method, in particular that of the typological analysis preparatory to the project, has, as we shall see, strong similarities.

The historical reasons for these similarities are to be found in the adoption by Eldem and the Istanbul Academy of Fine Arts of the so-called "European method of representation"<sup>3</sup> during the National Architecture Seminars. Until then in Turkey, architecture education had followed old academic rules and promoted adherence to oriental neo-Ottoman forms; the Turkish house type had not been studied because the analysis of national architecture in Turkey had been confined to monuments and public buildings. Furthermore, Eldem maintained that, due to the lack of upkeep and care, these buildings were soon to disappear, and for this reason "the study of civil Turkish

<sup>1</sup> A. Rossi et al., *La costruzione del territorio. Uno studio sul del Canton Ticino* (1979). Milano: Clup, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> S. Acciai, *Sedat Hakkı Eldem, an aristocratic architect and more*. Florence: Firenze University Press, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> E. Akcan, *Architecture in translation - Germany, Turkey, & the modern house*. Durham (NC) - London: Duke University Press, 2012, p. 233.



1. The case study of *Çengelköy*, drawing composed by Serena Acciai  
 (from S.H. Eldem, *Bogazici yalilari, Rumeli yakasi - Anadolu yakasi [The yalis of the Bosphorus - european side and anatolian side]*, Istanbul, Vehbi Koç Vakfı, 1993-1994, pp. 152-155, 161-162, 164-165)

architecture had become a question of maximum urgency”<sup>4</sup>. These specific objectives were pursued at the “Seminars on the National Architectural Style” at the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul<sup>5</sup>, which were instituted in 1932 thanks to the joint efforts of Ernst Egli and Sedad Eldem<sup>6</sup>. These seminars had the merit of forming a generation of architects that were aware of the architectural value of the traditional Turkish house. Eldem’s pupils such as Turgut Cansever (1921–2009) and Nezih Eldem (1921–2005) were strongly influenced in their architectural work by this academic training. This pioneering experience ended at the Academy when a fire destroyed the entire building in 1948.

The foundations for the comparison with Rossi’s subsequent work, were laid in the evolution towards a more logical and systematic method in the research (compared to the purely aesthetic Beaux-Arts approach, that had characterized the work of the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul).

When I arrived in Turkey at the beginning of my PhD research<sup>7</sup>, before even “meeting” the many architectural works of Eldem that still characterize the city of Istanbul, I came across his monumental publications. Each of his books appear as a story, like a large catalogue of architecture, where project design is the main tool of cognitive investigation. These books can be seen almost as bricks of an ideal construction for which the architect waits for all his life and, which runs parallel to his professional commitment.

A typological research on the Turkish-Ottoman house was at the heart of the projects of Sedad Eldem: the houses found in Anatolia, those found on the Bosphorus as well as the plans of Bosphorus’ gardens, all served as “a building material for his design research”. Eldem’s books are made of technical drawings, plans and sections, but end up being stories where the technical aspects shine through the *raison d’être* of a place, its culture and its time. At first glance they appear as an immense typological *regesto* of houses, gardens, and constructive technologies: after a more attentive analysis one can see that the shared characteristic of these books is that they are “project reconstructions”. There is always a design element in Eldem’s books, and it is because of this that the historical reliability of these works has often been questioned.

This coming and going between “reconstruction” and “design” is congenial, if we believe that the project is not only a continuous conscious sequence of choices, but also a precise adherence to a world of forms, to other projects that have come before. Eldem’s architectural solutions generally offer logical answers to a specific problem. As architects we are united to those who have preceded us. In order to understand, we can only take into our hands the measures, the spaces, the profiles of a landscape and the anthropological notions that space and the living habits of these buildings tell us.

<sup>4</sup> S.H. Eldem, “Eski bir Türk evi [An ancient Turkish house]”. *Mimar*, vol. 3, 39, March 1934, pp. 80–81, <http://dergi.mo.org.tr/dergiler/2/13/53.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Eldem himself referred to this experience using the same wording. See S.H. Eldem, “Toward a Local Idiom: A Summary History of Contemporary Architecture in Turkey”. In *Conservation as Cultural Survival*, edited by R. Holod. Philadelphia (PA): Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1980, p. 91.

<sup>6</sup> See S. Bozdoğan, E. Akcan, *Turkey: Modern Architectures in History*. London: Reaktion Books, 2012, p. 98 (Modern architectures in history).

<sup>7</sup> S. Acciai, *Byzantium, Constantinople, Istanbul: fragments of generous ideas. The case-study of Sedad Hakkı Eldem*. PhD Dissertation, University of Florence, Department of Architecture, May 2012.

The work on the Canton of Ticino also has a strong design value, and the analysis of Rossi and colleagues has become a preparatory phase prior to the research work, namely the book of Agazzi, Goetz, Prati and Ranc<sup>8</sup>.

All Rossi's research on the Canton of Ticino presents itself as a whole large project in which architects try to reconsider, in a modern context, the meaning and use of abandoned buildings. In fact, this area of Switzerland, not unlike other Alpine valleys, had witnessed a progressive abandonment of land; this phenomenon raised the need to know and reinterpret the territory and its artifacts.

This work would have been more relevant, if Rossi had had, as happened to Sedad Eldem<sup>9</sup>, numerous opportunities to use the knowledge of the territory he analyzed. In this regard, however, it is necessary to mention the work of Bruno Reichlin & Fabio Reinhart<sup>10</sup> and in particular the *Casa Tonini* in Torricella.

Of all the immense research Eldem did on the Turkish house<sup>11</sup>, a real thesaurus of experiences, the work on the Bosphorus landscape is the best to be compared to the work of Rossi.

According to Eldem, life on the Bosphorus, and, consequently the architectural culture of its landscape are an Ottoman creation. From the time of Sultan Abdül Hamid I, the rich Ottoman bourgeoisie lived for some periods of the year in large wooden dwellings on the water – *yalis*<sup>12</sup> – mostly during summer. The Bosphorus was the Ottoman holiday resort and these residences or *séjour d'été* were summer houses built for the wealthy families of the Ottoman aristocracy. Generally made of wood, the *yalis* were a type of building that are found in very different places such as Amasya in Anatolia, Plovdiv in Bulgaria or again Thessaloniki in Greece. Previously, the Bosphorus landscape was characterized by sporadic fishing villages, some monasteries, mostly abandoned, and some ancient ruins such as the extraordinary Byzantine towers in *Anadolu Kavağı*<sup>13</sup>, right at the entrance to the Black Sea. In a few decades, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Bosphorus became a heavily anthropic landscape. At that time the *yalis* formed an uninterrupted row of buildings on both banks, with the exception of small green spaces, consisting of fascinating small squares on the coast or large lawns in public parks located at the entrance of a river.

<sup>8</sup> G. Agazzi et al., *Pratica e Rappresentazione dello Spazio Urbano*. Lugano: Fondazione Ticino nostro, 1979.

<sup>9</sup> As example of this practice see S. Acciai, "Sedad Hakkı Eldem e il Bosforo, il progetto per la riva di Kuruçesme". In *Milano Marittima 100, paesaggi e architetture per il turismo balneare*, conference proceedings (Milano Marittima, Palazzo dei Congressi, 25-26 ottobre 2012), edited by V. Orioli. Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2012, pp. 101-104.

<sup>10</sup> See L. Ortelli, "Architettura nel Cantone Ticino, Da Tendenze alla condizione contemporanea", *archi*, 6, 2017, pp. 25-29, <https://www.espazium.ch/architetturanel-cantone-ticino>

<sup>11</sup> In particular see his multi-volume encyclopedia on the Turkish house: S.H. Eldem, *Türk Evi, Osmanlı Dönemi, (Turkish Houses Ottoman, Period I, II, III)*. Istanbul: Taç Vakfı yayını, 1984, 1986, 1987.

<sup>12</sup> For a precise definition of the word *yalı*, see: T. Artan, *Architecture as a Theatre of Life: Profile of the Eighteenth Century Bosphorus*. PhD Dissertation, MIT, Department of Architecture, 1989, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> Anadolu Kavağı is a small and picturesque fishing village close to the Black Sea, on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus.

Sedad Eldem has always drawn and photographed this landscape, and his work should also be considered an extraordinary testimony of the characteristics of a territory before it disappeared forever<sup>14</sup>. What is fantastic about the production of Sedad Eldem is that this architect has been the greatest voice and reference for the representation, knowledge and design of this strait of sea between Europe and Asia for over 40 years.

In Eldem's two books on the *yalis* along the Bosphorus<sup>15</sup>, he always uses the same method of representation for each village, thus making each case a study of equal value. This method is a constant feature of Eldem's publications. Every case study includes an aerial photo, the plan of the site with the cadastral boundaries of the individual properties, the main roads, the densest areas (*mahalle*<sup>16</sup>) drawn through the cadastral parcels, and the *yalis* represented with the roof plan. One can also find the extension of the gardens and the main tree-lined areas. He also attaches in detail, the elevations from large vintage photographs taken from the other side of the narrow channel of the Bosphorus or from the top of the hill, historical documents, drawings, and engravings that show the development of a building over time.

This documentation is then sustained by project reconstructions where information has been lost in the course of history. These reconstructions show "how a particular structure of the shore could have been" based on analogous considerations in relationship with the site.

Another essential contribution to the description of this territory is his book on Turkish gardens<sup>17</sup> where the Bosphorus, as the "custodian" of many examples of Turkish gardens, plays a fundamental role in defining these spaces.

The garden is analyzed exactly like the house; through the analysis of each element that forms this complex architecture: boundary walls, niches, basins, types of walls, decorations, underground spaces, (such as *serdab* and *hamman*), types of paving, and water reservoirs. Furthermore, to better describe the diffusion of this organization of nature and the green spaces related to the Turkish house, Eldem investigates the origins and boundaries of these gardens beyond geographical limits.

Coming back to the work on the Canton of Ticino we see how it collects architectural surveys in plan and elevation of entire settlements, documenting historical development during the so-called "industrial revolution"; this analysis is integrated with brief systematic geographical indications, statistical data, collection of photographic and iconographic material and the translation, in extracts, of the well-known text on the rural dwelling in the upper Ticino valleys by Jakob Hunziker<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> To this end see S.H. Eldem, *Köçeoğlu yalıstı Bebek (Le yalı de Köçeoğlu à Bebek)*. Bogaziçi: Istanbul yayını, 1977.

<sup>15</sup> S.H. Eldem, *Bogazici yalilari, Rumeli yakasi - Anadolu yakasi (The yalis of the Bosphorus - european side and anatolian side)*. Istanbul: Vehbi Koç Vakfı, 1993-1994.

<sup>16</sup> *Mahalle*: Arabic word adopted in modern Turkish and translated as district, neighborhood, area.

<sup>17</sup> S.H. Eldem, *Türk Bahçeleri (Turkish Gardens)*. Istanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı yayını, 1976.

<sup>18</sup> J. Hunziker, *Das Schweizerhaus nach seinen landschaftlichen Formen und seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung*. Aarau: H.R. Sauerländer, 1900.



The fundamental difference between the two research types analyzed in this paper lie in the fact that Rossi and his colleagues found themselves in front of a territory that, as Luca Ortelli wrote<sup>19</sup>: “has always been a province for economic and political reasons since its inclusion in the Helvetic Confederation but also previously. Its history is a story of struggles and poverty of a land’ on the edge of the empire”.

By using typological analysis one can see how architecture, human creation par excellence, is re-identified with the objects of use: the tools, and the ways of daily life throughout time.

The Canton of Ticino represented a way of living that was not organized by a sophisticated idea of landscape design, as was the case for the Bosphorus. In fact, Rossi’s group had to deal with the various types of buildings that had, over time, contributed to the adjustment of man to this land, and vice versa.

Thus, one can see examples of the tower house, the double house, the double room with two deep compartments, and the house with corridor. As well as the settlements with isolated houses, with row houses, or the houses with courtyards. From the single building to the settlement, this analysis highlights the elements of the territory: the rules of the various building types, the discontinuities of routes, and topography.

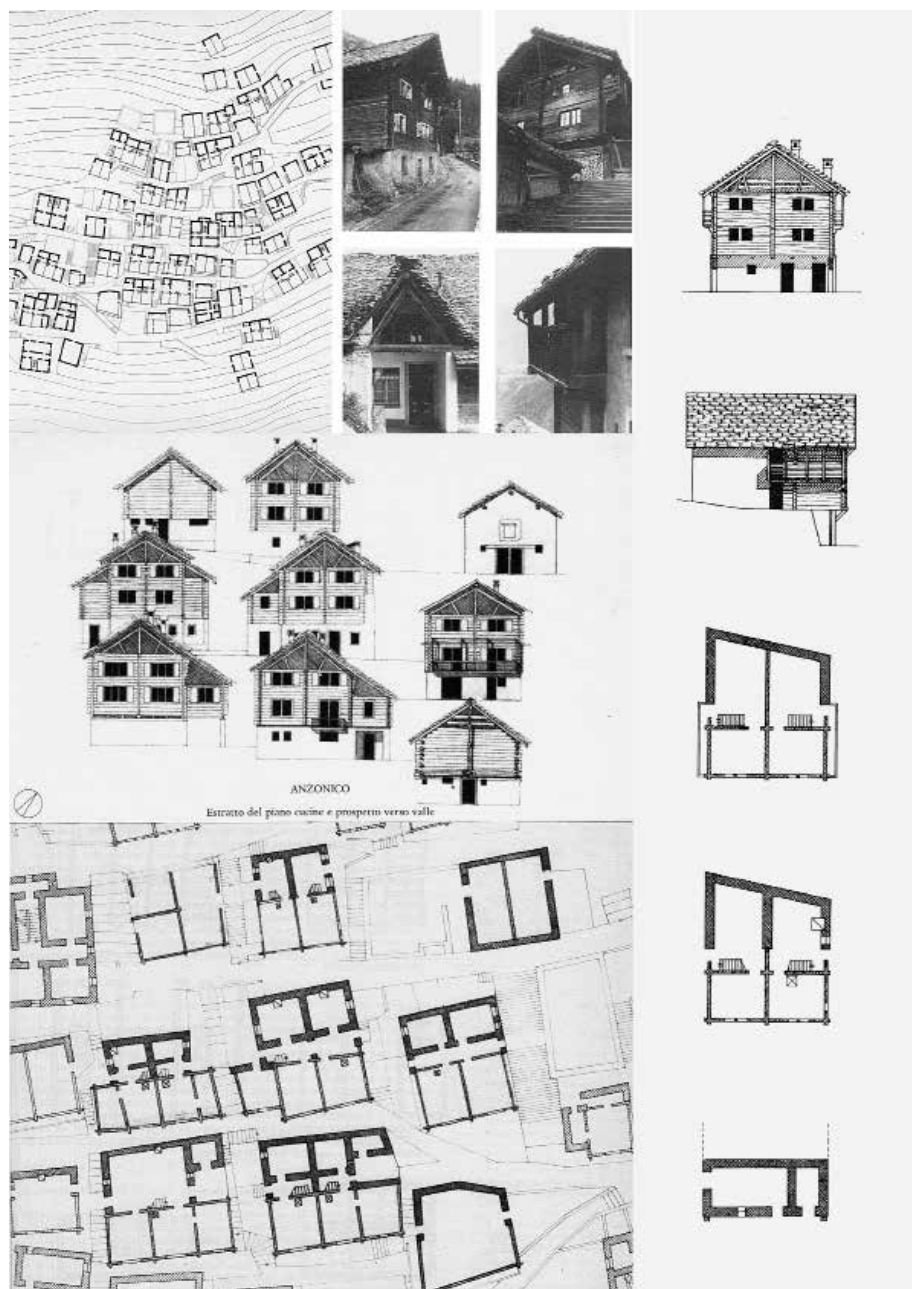
Sedad Eldem instead, analyzing the landscape of the Bosphorus, which as we have seen was formed on the basis of a very different situation, found himself analyzing the *yahs*, the millennial type of the Anatolian house<sup>20</sup> in its declination on the sea.

Another difference between these two works is the anthropological and cultural<sup>21</sup> attention that Rossi and his colleagues put in their analysis. Sedad Eldem on the other hand, focused more on the compositional aspects and on the value of architecture itself as an expression of the Ottoman-Turkish culture. Instead, the Bosphorus settlements have peculiarities linked to the ethnic groups that first occupied them. What Rossi calls “the constitutive imprint”, i.e. those elaborate forms imposed on the territory in the constitutive age and which leave indelible marks on it, were not taken into consideration by Sedad Eldem; or rather, the cultural-ethnic component of these settlements was not considered by Eldem. For example, the Albanian village of *Arnavutköy* on the Bosphorus was a place where the *yahs* were simple fishermen’s houses arranged in rows along the shore, very different from the elongated floor plans of the Ottoman aristocracy. The function, not contemplative but linked instead to everyday work and the ethnic component, had in this case changed the house typology. This important aspect, even perhaps for the *Zeitgeist* of his time, has not been contemplated in Eldem’s work on the Bosphorus.

<sup>19</sup> L. Ortelli, *Architettura nel Cantone Ticino*, cit., p. 25.

<sup>20</sup> S.H. Eldem, “La maison turque”, unpublished text prepared for *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*, 1948, transcribed from the original typewritten by S. Acciai and C. Paluszek. See also S. Acciai, “La casa ottomana e il savoir vivre, introduzione a Sedad Hakki Eldem”. *Firenze Architettura*, 1, 2012, pp. 94-101, <https://issuu.com/dida-unifi/docs/fa2012-1>

<sup>21</sup> Hunziker himself, starting from a linguistic approach, came to a clearly anthropological point of view, even if guided by issues of nationality and race proper to his time. Despite this, Hunziker’s research already produced a definition of the cultural identities present in this territory.



2. The case study of Anzonico, drawing composed by Serena Acciai  
 (from A. Rossi et al., *La costruzione del territorio. Uno studio sul del Canton Ticino*,  
 Milano, Clup, 1998, pp. 105, 117, 307, 309)

The similar methodological approach of Rossi and Eldem on “the architecture of the city” has naturally also had an impact on the works of these architects.

Aldo Rossi wrote that in the construction of the city there are “urban facts” to be considered as references: “If we see the city as an architecture composed of different components, those are mainly the residence and the primary elements”<sup>22</sup>. Monuments are, therefore, considered as more stable landmarks and the residential fabric is understood as a living area.

These categories, which one can usually adopt in the structure of a city, in the particular case of Istanbul are only partially valid and need some refinement: the city of Istanbul as we see it now is the result of a complex urban and cultural transformation. Yes, the Ottoman city is made up of monuments and areas of residence, but the relationship between these elements is different here. The Ottoman city monuments are not isolated from the rest of the areas. They differ from the residential buildings in the use of stone instead of wood.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century history of Istanbul urban development (often not respecting the identity of the Ottoman city) is comparable to that of some great European cities for which Aldo Rossi’s analysis had been written. Eldem’s work dates back precisely to this period in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when in Istanbul there was an attempt to change the face of the city following the canons of the Western world. Eldem was intimately involved in the city’s architectural and urban history and memory, and worked for Istanbul through those elements that Rossi says constitute a city’s architecture: monuments and houses. Eldem’s architecture remains today, in various parts of the city, an interpretation of the image of the era, and of the society that Eldem wanted to be made available to the majority of the population.

Daniele Vitale<sup>23</sup> wrote that the analytical studies in the field of architecture that have been widely disseminated in Italian the schools of architecture since the 1960s are an attempt to redefine the foundations of the discipline, and to move away from the dryness of functionalism. In this regard, as we have seen, the work of Rossi in the Canton of Ticino is a fundamental example.

Even today in the schools of architecture it is taught that “analysis is already a project” but this valid affirmation is rarely examined in depth. Examples such as the work of Sedad Eldem on the Turkish-Ottoman house and the Bosphorus, as well as the work of Rossi and his colleagues, should be used to show students “how” the analysis is already project. This is necessary in order to help them understand the fundamental importance of this practice for the development of a project that is coherent with sites, history and anthropological component of every residential settlement.

<sup>22</sup> A. Rossi, *L'architettura della città* (1978). Torino: Città Studi Edizioni, 2006, p. 112.

<sup>23</sup> D. Vitale, “Presentazione all’edizione italiana”. In A. Rossi *et al.*, *La costruzione del territorio. Uno studio sul del Canton Ticino*, cit., p. XIII.

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