

The Reenactment of Historic Memory and the Ways to Read past Traces through Contemporary Architecture in European Urban Contexts: The Case Study of the Medieval Walls of Naples

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Abstract : Because of their long history, ranging from ancient times to the present day, European cities feature many historical layers, whose single identities are represented by traces surviving in the urban design. However, urban transformations, in particular, the ones that have been produced by the property speculation phenomena of the 20th century, often compromised the readability of these traces, resulting in a loss of the historical identities of the single layers. The purpose of this research is, therefore, a reflection on the theme of the reenactment of the historical memory in the stratified European contexts and on how contemporary architecture can help to reveal past signs of the cities. The research work starts from an analysis of a series of emblematic examples that have already provided an original solution to the described problem, going from the architectural detail scale to the urban and landscape scale. The results of these analyses are then applied to the case study of the city of Naples, as an emblematic example of a stratified city, with an ancient Greek origin; a city where it is possible to read most of the traces of its transformations. Particular consideration is given to the trace of the medieval walls of the city, which a long time ago clearly divided the city itself from the outer fields, and that is no longer readable at the current time. Finally, solutions and methods of intervention are proposed to ensure that the trace of the walls, read as a boundary, can be revealed through the contemporary project.

Keywords : contemporary project, historic memory, historic urban contexts, medieval walls, naples, stratified cities, urban traces

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