

Liminal Spaces of Art between Europe and the Middle East

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Edited by

Ivana Prijatelj Pavičić,
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PREFACE

The complex interactions between Europe and the Middle East have throughout the history been an important source of cultural, scientific, religious, economic, military, and political advances and setbacks that, in many ways, have constantly shaped and reshaped this part of the world. The process has been especially intense in the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean region, but it reaches far beyond regional borders and often has a global character. To perceive and understand the complexity, intensity, and global reach of these interactions, an interdisciplinary research is of key importance. Humanities and social studies, and more specifically studies in art and culture, can often provide an important insight into the nature of many of these interactions. Art, in its myriad manifestations, forms, and aspects, is certainly one of the most authentic, creative, and interesting activities that reflect the complexity of the process. Of course, art not only reflects the social reality but always has a proactive role, affecting the processes in society, defining them and even stimulating new courses of thinking and action. In the context of relations between Europe and the Middle East, a distinct aspect of art attracts the interest of both scholars and art lovers: its liminality. The liminal spaces of art are never only geographic or historical—they are also cultural, intellectual, and ideological, for instance. The liminality of artistic production can express itself in so many forms and facets that it presents an almost inexhaustible body of research and interpretations. In the chapters of this book, the intricacy and variety of artistic responses to the interactions between Europe and the Middle East in different periods are presented through an interdisciplinary approach. Although the authors deal with very different topics, the concept of the liminality of art appears to be a common *fil rouge* of their studies. One can also notice a certain freshness and spontaneity in their approach to the theme, which might (at least partly) be due to the fact that the authors belong to the younger generation of researchers.

The authors of *Europe–Middle East: Liminal Spaces of Art* discuss the art of different time periods, from ancient times to the present, in diverse media and in various countries. The idea of the book is based on the presentations and discussions from the international conference for PhD students and recent PhD graduates, “Crossroads: East and West. Cultural

Contacts, Transfers and Exchange between East and West in the Mediterranean,” which took place in Split, Croatia, in September 2015. The aim of the conference was to bring together young researchers from different fields of the humanities and social sciences to observe, present, and discuss the abovementioned phenomena of interactions in art at the intersection of art history and other disciplines. Although special attention is paid to the geographical regions where Europe and the Middle East have met and interacted throughout their long histories—i.e. the eastern Mediterranean, the south Caucasus, and the Balkans—the topic of the book reaches far beyond this purely geographic frame. As suggested by the title, a special interest addresses the contact zones or liminal and “in-between” spaces of art and culture, characterized by dynamic processes of movement and interchange between various cultural entities in their broadest and most complex sense. The concept of liminality (as presented in the first chapter) originates in the field of psychology and is prominently used in anthropology. It proves useful in other fields of social studies and humanities, and is especially suited to the latest interdisciplinary approaches. The history of the often problematic and tense relationships between East and West in the region of the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean shows, if anything, how inextricably intertwined they are, and how important it is to constantly adjust and improve our methods and approaches in order to understand these complex dynamics better. Studies in art and culture offer an invaluable insight into the East–West relations and also encourage mutual understanding, recognition, and appreciation.

In the first chapter, “At the Crossroads: Methodologies for Liminal Spaces,” Zrinka Blažević examines the concept of liminal spaces on the particularly paradigmatic example of the South Slavic region, which has been marked by multiple examples of cultural hybridization and syncretisms, as well as by conflicts in the long duration between various cultural entities, both European and Middle Eastern alike.

Nikola Bojić shows, in “Diocletian’s Palace in the Post-war Architectural Discourse of Team 10,” the position of Diocletian’s Palace in Split within the post-war architectural discourse, characterized by flexibility, growth, and movement, primarily by examining the work of Dutch architect Jacob Bakema, a member of the international architectural group Team 10.

In the chapter “Exhibition History beyond Western and Eastern Canon Formation: a Methodological Proposal for the Example of the Art Group Zvono,” Sandra Bradvić critically examines the Bosnian and Herzegovinian art group Zvono as an early example of curatorial practice, demonstrating

that exhibition history is an appropriate approach by which to analyse case studies within specific geographic boundaries and a defined time frame without attaching them to an Eastern, Western, or global art history.

Eni Buljubašić deals with how Mediterranean and Balkan identity is articulated and recreated in contemporary Croatian popular culture. The chapter “Mediterranean Circumscribed Identity Dynamics in a Neoklapa Music Video” shows how “neoklapa” music videos can provide a venue for the exploration of complex identity dynamics at the regional (littoral–hinterland Dalmatia) and national (Mediterranean/Western–Balkan/Eastern) levels.

In the next chapter, “Kristaq Sotiri: One World ... and the Other,” Renaud Dorhliac examines the work of American trained Albanian photographer Kristaq Sotiri. Although Sotiri, caught between two spaces and eras, refused in his art to choose one over the other, the technical quality and thematic content of his work stand witness to a period of profound change in the rapid transition from the Ottoman era to the modern Albanian nation state.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Georgia intensified its contact with Western Europe, establishing an anti-Islamic coalition. Although the initial aim remained unrealized and the political development of the country was unaffected, these contacts turned out to be a real inspiration, playing a crucial role in the establishment of modern and postmodern Georgian cultural identity and artistic practices, as is claimed by Eter Edisherashvili and Nino Tsitsishili in “Catholic Christianity and Georgia of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Cultural Reflection.”

Aynur Erdogan, in “From the Seven Years' War to the War of Independence: Nicolas Antoine Boulanger's *Recherches sur l'origine du despotisme oriental*,” unravels how French philosophical texts about the Orient, such as Boulanger's work, influenced the way in which Americans understood and made sense of their political independence. Drawing analogies between the crown and the Ottoman Empire or appropriating texts about the Orient were ways in which Revolutionary America renegotiated ideas about despotism, loyalty, and allegiance.

In “The Sacralisation of Islands and the Performative Pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the East Adriatic,” Matko Matija Marušić outlines how the sanctity of the Holy Land was transferred to and perceived or experienced in the Early Modern east Adriatic through two cases in today's Croatian Adriatic: the islands of Daksa near Dubrovnik, and Košljun near Krk. The components used were firmly embedded in the Western Christian perception of Jerusalem and have, once recreated far away from the Holy City, rendered its sanctity present in otherwise physically distant locations.

Anna Sophia Messner examines the European Jewish perception of the Orient in “Visual Constructions of Otherness in Pre-state Palestine and the early State of Israel: A Female Perspective through the Camera.” The chapter centres on often forgotten German-Jewish female photographers who were forced to escape Nazi Germany in the 1930s, and went into exile in Palestine. The photographers applied their knowledge to their new environment both aesthetically and conceptually, thus creating intercultural spaces of negotiation and contact zones between the East and West, tradition and modernity, centre and periphery.

In the next chapter, “Art and Diplomacy: the European Perception of the Ottoman during the Renaissance: Gentile Bellini, Pieter Coecke van Aelst and Nicolas de Nicolay,” Talitha M. G. Schepers deals with the often overlooked contribution of the artistic production of the Venetian Gentile Bellini, the Fleming Pieter Coecke van Aelst, and the Frenchman Nicolas de Nicolay in the development of a sixteenth-century European perception of the Ottoman.

Vera-Simone Schulz, in her case study “Along the Path of the Pine, the Parrot, and the Tortoise: Warburg’s Image Vehicles and the Textile Arts on the Italian Peninsula in a Trans-Mediterranean Perspective,” shows how Jacopo del Cione’s “Madonna dell’Umiltà” can in fact be regarded as an artistic negotiation of the “image” as much as the “vehicle” part of the silk weavings arriving on the Italian peninsula from Iran, Central Asia, and China.

In “Ljubo Karaman ‘On the Paths of Byzantine Characteristics in Art,’ almost sixty Years Later,” Ivana Triva explores the regional form of Byzantine art in the Adriatic, which, besides the Byzantine, also included Western morphology and composition called “Adriobyzantinism.” The emphasis of the chapter is on reinterpreting the previous knowledge from the past fifty years, from the comparative and regional perspective, focusing primarily on Dalmatian art.

Ketevan Tsetskhladze, in “Between East and West: Tbilisi and Georgian Modernism in 1910–30,” demonstrates how modernist and avant-garde movements in Tbilisi, the most important cultural centre in the Caucasus, were, despite their Western European origins, mostly defined by the historically structured, synthetic character of Georgian culture, with its openness and ability to adopt.

In the last chapter of the book, “Protecting Christianity at the Eastern Frontier: On Some Aspects of the Cult and Representation of Saint Katherine and Saint Margaret in Medieval Hungary,” Dorottya Uhrin examines the cult of the virgin saints Katharine and Margaret on the

eastern Hungarian border, and their protecting role against the pagans or heretics attacking from the East.

The fourteen studies included in this book, with their varied points of view and variety of approaches, offer a captivating and fresh look at the complexity of artistic and cultural contacts, transfers, and exchanges between Europe and the Middle East.

—The Editors

CHAPTER ONE

AT THE CROSSROADS: METHODOLOGIES FOR LIMINAL SPACES

ZRINKA BLAŽEVIĆ

Example of the South Slavic Contact Zone

With the rise of postcolonial theories in the 1990s, a new scholarly interest for the contact zones or liminal and “in-between” spaces has emerged, characterized by dynamic processes of movement and interchange between various cultural entities. From the historical perspective, the South Slavic region was the oldest European contact zone between the Middle East, the Aegean seaboard, and Central Europe with a migration axis across the Danubian Line. It was also an intersection of the three distinct civilizational patterns: the Mediterranean, rooted in the Greco-Roman tradition; the Eastern, formed on the basis of the Eurasian cultures; and the Western, marked by a strong German influence (Kaser 2003, 65). As a consequence, the South Slavic liminal zone has always been characterized by paradoxical dynamics of cultural hybridizations and syncretisms, as well as conflicts. These were mostly determined and intertwined by fluctuating and asymmetrical constellations of the political, social, economic, and symbolic powers, making a kind of a network within which cultural forms were selected, transferred, and modified. Furthermore, in the South Slavic cultural sphere, transcultural activity has been simultaneously realized on two levels: vertically, in terms of the creative transfers of European cultural models in the regional cultural domain, and horizontally, as an interactive exchange of cultural patterns between various local (ethno)cultural groups (Blažević 2010, 171). For this reason, the traditional theory of reception focused on processes of the mechanical transmission and adaptation of various cultural elements in a localized context does not seem to be a heuristic model appropriate for

scrutinizing the interactive processes of complex inter and transcultural negotiations that have been taking place at the South Slavic contact zone.

The Contact Zone as a Heterotopia

First of all, discussion should start with the conceptualization of the very term “South Slavic contact zone.” Instead of being a criterion for symbolic inclusion/exclusion, it must be turned into a flexible, dynamic, and relational heuristic concept. This kind of epistemic gesture becomes possible within the “spatial turn” paradigm that promotes critical, multi-perspectival, and self-reflexive thinking about space. For example, from the perspective of the sociology of space, space is not viewed as a static physical given that merely functions as a container, but as a complex social product constantly (re)producing itself in the double act of synthesis and spacing, thus establishing a relational order of material goods and social beings (Löw 2001, 152–61). On the other hand, postmodern geography conceptualizes space as a dynamic network made of the contingent simultaneity of heterogeneous historical trajectories densely interwoven with the asymmetrical relations of power (Massey 2005, 7). This epistemological stance endorses an act of denaturalizing and deontologizing traditional regionalist discourses, which establish and legitimize regional categories through the performative power of discursive objectification (Bourdieu 1991, 223). In that manner, regional discourse can be disclosed in its true nature, as an arbitrary construction and classification practice with the main aim of enabling and facilitating scholarly communication.

On that account, drawing upon Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia—defined as a heterogeneous site capable of juxtaposing several spaces that are in themselves incompatible (Foucault 1986, 25)—I propose a reconceptualization of the South Slavic region. It can be conceived as an interstitial zone of interaction, a space of permeation and overlapping where individual and collective identities have been constantly (re)created in the contingent game of attraction and rejection. If thus conceptualized as a permeable and liminal “in-between space” of civilizational, religious, cultural, economic, and social entangling, with coexistences and transgressions of a long historical duration, the South Slavic heterotopia can be seen as a contested space of the constant (re)figurations of various symbolic and political identities and loyalties. A very functional heuristic tool for describing the “in-between” space in which cultural change occurs is the concept of liminality. According to the widely accepted definition, the liminal zone (of which the South Slavic region represents an

emblematic example) is a transcultural space in which strategies for personal or communal selfhood may be elaborated; a region in which there is a continual process of movement and interchange between different cultural entities (Bhabha 1994, 56). For that reason, the South Slavic cultural identities must not be considered as fixed and homeostatic categories, but as processual phenomena that have been constantly (re)producing themselves in the liminal field of the translational, irreducibly oscillating between stabilization and destabilization, adoption and refusal, identity and difference. Moreover, thanks to the fact that South Slavic relational identities were built upon the principle of reciprocal inclusiveness, a research of the South Slavic heterotopia might provide a valuable insight into the complex construction processes of the multiple ethnic, confessional, professional, class, gender, and other identificational models, together with the forms and strategies of social, political, and cultural interactions, segmentations, and conflicts (Blažević 2009). Therefore, the South Slavic heterotopia, as the space of the (im)possible coexistence of the hybrid social, cultural, political, and economic forms, might render its own geopolitical marginality as a sort of epistemological centrality, especially from the perspective of a heightened interest in the current social and cultural theories of the difference phenomena.

This is in complete accordance with the epistemological trends that are occurring within contemporary border studies. Together with distancing from the traditional conceptualization of the border as a territorial, institutional, and symbolic marker of the sovereignty, distinctiveness, and exclusivity of the nation and state, border studies actively promotes holistic, praxeological, and comparative approaches to the border phenomena (Wilson and Donnan, 2012). In fact, border studies epistemologically defines a border as both a spatial and social phenomenon generated by various material and symbolic discourses and practices (Paasi 2011, 13). Its main ontological feature stems from the semiotic constitution of the term itself, which evokes a position of liminality or the heterotopic possibility of the border to enact both permeability and closure. In that manner, a border can be seen as a product of the paradoxical dialectics of integration in separation, which enhances its immanent strategic potential not only to mark but also to produce restraint and overstepping, coercion, and resistance (van Houtum 2011, 58–9). Accordingly, the South Slavic heterotopia could be thought of as a kind of heterotopic border zone that is generated in the complex dialectics of political, economic, and cultural delimitations and transgressions.

Methodologies for Liminal Spaces

In order to examine this reconfigured spatial and cultural “geography” of the South Slavic border zone, it is necessary to construct appropriate heuristic devices, comprising a sort of “methodology for liminal space” (Bjelić 2002). It must not be founded on a static and essentializing identity-thinking but on the dynamic and transgressive “border thinking” that rests on the conflictive intersection of the interior and the exterior, the imperial and colonial, the Eastern and Western (Mignolo 2000, 11). Thus, the future research of the South Slavic liminal zone should be in the sign of translation, both on epistemological (as a strategy of critical reflection) and phenomenological levels. Starting from the presumption that theories are historically and culturally coded practices, translational approaches encourage travelling, i.e. creative transfers and adaptations of theoretical models, heuristic concepts, and methodological procedures between various disciplines in order to incite comparative interchanges, internationalisation, and the deep inner transformation of the theoretical fields of the humanities and social sciences. Although attentive to serious epistemological risks, such as oversimplification and metaphorization, as well as the incommensurability of cultural and theoretical frameworks that this kind of scholarly practice might certainly cause, its proponents always stress the creative and challenging character of travel theory. In their opinion, the main advantages of epistemological hybridization are not only the detection of differences, tensions, and antagonisms between disciplines, local tradition, and scholarly work, but also an increase in the cognitive and interpretative possibilities of the scientific field in general (Neumann and Nünning 2012, 7–15). Besides this, the epistemological hybridization instigates a critical reception of theoretical impulses from other related paradigms concerned with the phenomena of political, economic, and symbolic mediations, transactions, and transformations.

Moreover, the appropriate epistemology for the South Slavic heterotopia should have a transnational character, which would primarily manifest itself in a new approach to the phenomenon of difference. From the transnational perspective, the difference is no longer a despised and always threatening by-product of the not fully homogenized national histories and cultures, but a complex, although not fully graspable, quality, constantly (re)producing itself in the processes of multifold cultural transfers and transitions. In other words, the main cognitive and explanatory aim of transnational epistemology is not the search for inveterated and unique cultural roots, but wandering and intersected cultural routes (Bachmann-Medick 2006). This is in complete accordance

with the epistemological goals of the transnational history, which aims at scrutinizing the “links and flows” of the people, ideas, products, processes, and patterns that operate over, across, through, beyond, above, under, or in-between polities and societies (Saunier 2009).

For these reasons, the main research focus must be on the phenomena of cultural, political, and economic exchanges, transfers, and transactions conditioned by various social, political, and institutional factors, structures, and processes that have been operating within the dynamic field of hierarchical and asymmetrical power relations in the South Slavic region. In this respect, something that can provide useful heuristic tools is the transdifference theory, elaborated by Helmbrecht Breinig and Klaus Lösch. The transdifference theory puts into its epistemic focus the transgressive and non-linear phenomena that transcend a demarcation line of binary opposites, oscillating in the constant processes of their own (re)figurations (Breinig and Lösch 2002; Allolio-Näcke, Kalscheuer, and Manzeschke 2005; Kalscheuer and Allolio-Näcke 2008). From the perspective of transdifference theory, culture is metaphorically conceptualized as a palimpsest designated by the constant processes of the reproduction of the excluded in the acts of its continuous reinscription and overwriting. Furthermore, working simultaneously on theoretical, empirical, and critical levels, the transdifference theory examines the complex procedures of re/de/constructions of individual and collective identities in the socio-historical conditions of mixings and multiple belongings, of which the South Slavic region is the exemplary case. As a matter of fact, transdifferent identities oscillate in the paradoxical but irreducible double dichotomy between the alienated self and appropriated other, thus forming a perplexed relation of the reciprocal inclusiveness.

In regard to the concrete methodological procedures that might ensure epistemic, cognitive, and explanatory “de-bordering,” which inescapably requires the research of “liquid” cultural phenomena such as transfers, exchanges, and entangling within the South Slavic contact zone, I would primarily opt for historical translation studies. Although historical translation studies encompass various approaches, from the theory of cultural exchange to historical network analysis, their common denominator is a presumption that historical processes in general as well as cultural processes in particular should not be conceptualized as unilateral and mechanical transmissions and adaptations of various cultural elements, but as a kind of de-localized translational practice. As a consequence, the only appropriate methodological tool for the interpretative analysis of these highly complex and fluid phenomena are

categories of “de-bordered understanding” sensitive enough to trace the networks, interconnections, and hypertexts of history (Schmale 2012, 33).

Over the last thirty years within the disciplinary field of comparative history, a refined body of research around the concepts of cultural transfer, cultural exchange, cultural diffusion, and cultural translation has been developed (Kaelble 2005). The first impulses for this kind of approach came from Michel Espagne and Michael Werner in the mid-1980s. Aimed at scrutinizing the transfer of elements of a “French National Culture” to Germany and its reception there during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they coined the term “transfers culturels.” Although Espagne, Werner, and their followers maintained their research focus on national cultures, they nevertheless managed to avoid some of the shortcomings of comparative history by contextualizing questions of transfer, reception, and acculturation (Middell 2016).

Under the influence of cultural historian Peter Burke, the concept of cultural exchange has been recently established and become predominant in Anglo-Saxon historiography. Starting from the assumption that cultural reception is not a passive process of handing over the cultural goods, which remain more or less unchanged, Burke has elaborated a theoretical model of cultural exchange in order to explore complex processes of both the adoption and adaptation of cultural artefacts. By interrelating the systemic and individual levels of the cultural exchange process, Burke concludes that it always results in the creation of a new cultural hybrid or a new “cultural order” in general. In his analysis of cultural exchange, Burke accurately takes into account both restricting factors such as hierarchical and asymmetrical power relations and the creative potentials of the imaginative human practice. In addition to this, drawing on the “ecotype” concept by ethnologist Carl von Sydow and the “figuration” model of sociologist Norbert Elias, Burke rightly emphasizes a relative autonomy of the hybrid forms of “local knowledge” that have emerged as a result of the cultural selection process, as well as the dynamic interdependence of the various elements engaged in the cultural interaction (2009, 79–115).

While the cultural transfer research primarily concentrates on the processes of exchange that primarily goes in one direction, the cultural exchange paradigm emphasizes the multidirectional and adaptive nature of the cultural transfer. In other words, these exchange processes, which involve the mediation of texts, discourses, media, and material practices, presuppose interactive and complex inter and transcultural negotiations within various translational scenarios. They are determined both by the asymmetrical constellations of real and symbolic power, and the creative

potential of the human agency. Besides, both structuremes and culturemes, i.e. the material and cultural instances of coherence engaged in multiple translational processes, are not considered fixed and homeostatic categories linked with one another in a linear way. On the contrary, they are seen as nodal phenomena that form clusters in which various entities rooted in particular spaces can be recognized as a time-specific encoding of material and historical relationships (Schmale 2012, 28–32).

Along similar epistemological lines, German cultural historian Johannes Helmuth created the concept of cultural diffusion in order to heuristically describe the interactive, agonal, and polyphonic character of the process of humanist cultural exchange. Since the concept of cultural diffusion as a heuristic metaphor is more neutral than the concepts of cultural transfer and exchange, it might convincingly describe the dynamic, multilateral, and multimedial character of the processes of cultural translation, taking into account disparate and even conflicting receptive interests. On the other hand, the concept of cultural diffusion is sensitive enough to the forms of cultural hybridizations, emulations, and syncretisms that followed the functional modifications of cultural elements within the process of humanist “transculturation,” which simultaneously manifests itself in the temporal and spatial domains (Helmuth 2002).

Alongside the concepts of cultural transfer, cultural exchange, and cultural diffusion, the entangled history provides a fruitful research platform for the transcultural phenomena as well. Critically distancing itself from the mononational cognitive and explanatory framework, which still predominates within the historical science, entangled history aims at exploring various kinds of interrelations and transactions between different regions, and even continents. It is mostly propagated and practiced by the historians Sidney Wilfred Mintz, Shalini Randeria and Sebastian Conrad. Although the entangled history paradigm is mostly inspired by postcolonial theory, it is not only focused on various economic, cultural, social, and institutional processes of transfer from the metropole to the colonies instigated by the hegemonic asymmetry of power, but also vice versa, which seriously undermines the explanatory potential of traditional unilateral theories of modernization and globalization (Conrad and Randeria 2002).

The newest approach among the “relational” historical paradigms is the *histoire croisée*, whose theoretical and methodological platform has recently been elaborated by French historians Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann. Its main aim is to investigate the relational, active, and dissymmetrical character of intercrossings from the perspective of “double hermeneutics,” in which both objects of analysis and

epistemological standpoint are created through intercrossing interactions. Through its analytical and interpretative procedures, *histoire croisée* endeavours to detect the dynamics and modalities of transformations of elements, which are engaged in the multiplex and multidirectional processes of intercrossings as well as their final results. They rest on the principle of pragmatic induction, which postulates the necessity of a triple contextualization—of analytical objects, analytical categories, and the relationship between the researcher and the researched phenomenon. To achieve its highly placed goal, *histoire croisée* has been developing a sophisticated methodological toolbox that urges the constant adjustment of the analytical (microhistorical and macrohistorical) levels and temporal (synchrony and diachrony) schemes to the dynamics of the analytical and interpretative process itself. This means that, within the research paradigm of *histoire croisée*, intercrossing is assumed in the double, epistemological, and phenomenological sense, i.e. it is conceptualized as an interactive principle, which reflects both the dynamics of historical research and the logics of the interactions of related analytical objects (Werner and Zimmermann 2006).

While other branches of historical translation studies are mainly focused on exploring the contingencies of the spatial migration of material objects and textual and visual semiotic systems, historical network analysis aims at scrutinizing the structural and functional features of dynamic social networks. It examines the motivations, expectations, and goals of the tactical and strategic practices of particular actors, their complex relationship within the network, and the transformational potential of the networks themselves (Düring and Keyserlingk 2013, 7–32; Lemercier 2012, 16–41). Following the new epistemological and methodological trends in contemporary historical science that self-consciously merge sociological and culturalist approaches in order to overcome the binary opposition of intentional agency and structural determination, historical network analysis explores the dynamic configuration of social relationships that shape the scope of the agency of historical actors under certain political, economic, and social circumstances. Aside from individuals, various formal and informal organizations, such as families, households, guilds, intellectual circles, and political cliques, can also be structured as networks. Their relationship is determined by material, symbolic, practical, or emotional interest and/or support. Seeking to perform a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the complex and nodal nature of historical agency, this branch of historical research takes into account four interdependent factors: the influence of social structures being socially embedded, the personal qualities of the

historical actors themselves, and the influences of spatial and temporal change (Boyer 2008, 54–7). In order to scrutinize its research object on the micro, meso, and macrohistorical levels, historical network analysis on the one hand focuses on the formal (e.g. size of the network, the frequency of contacts, and the spatial distance between members) and functional features of a particular network, and, on the other, on the status of various networks within the broader socio-historical context (Hollstein 2006, 14).

Difference in the Light of Affirmative Relationality

To conclude, it must be emphasized that all branches of historical translation studies start from the comparable epistemological stance, which might be dubbed the affirmative relationality. This means that difference is no longer conceptualized as involving a binary opposition or relation structured by inherent negativity, but as a relation of inclusive and mutually constitutive terms (Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2012, 129). Only in that manner can a cultural and civilizational crossroads such as the South Slavic contact zone desist from being a fearful place of imminent cultural contagion and become a prolific incubator of cultural creativity and novelty.

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CHAPTER TWO

DIOCLETIAN'S PALACE IN THE ARCHITECTURAL DISCOURSE OF TEAM 10

NIKOLA BOJIĆ

Introduction

CIAM (Congres International d'Arhitecture Moderne 1928–1959) was an international group of architects and a series of meetings and conferences that formulated the modernist architectural agenda. Initiated as an avant-garde movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, CIAM embraced the industrial logic of design and developed rationalist urban planning as its theoretical and methodological platform. After the Second World War, the social and political image of the world changed and a young generation of architects started to criticize the CIAM approach, advocating for more socially sensitive and human centred architecture and urbanism. The disagreement between the generations became obvious during the CIAM 9 in Aix-en-Provence (1953), where architects Alison and Peter Smithson from England, Aldo van Eyck and Jacob Bakema from the Netherlands, and Georges Candilis and Shadrach Woods from France agreed that, after two decades of architectural theory and practice, enough time had passed to be able to claim that "life just falls through the net of the four modernist functions" (Smithson 1991, 42). These architects gathered together in a group called Team 10 to point their criticism towards a functionalist zoning of CIAM, but also at the impacts it had had in many European cities after the war. Team 10 aimed to develop new urban models based on social relations and interactions across various spatial scales and architectural typologies. They looked for flexible structures that could function on the architectural and urban levels at the same time and constantly adjust to the dynamic of human needs.

Inspiration for the new urban models often came from the cultural surroundings that were not directly influenced by the rapid modernization. Aldo van Eyck (1918–99) travelled to Western Africa to study the architecture and everyday spatial rituals of the Dogon people, while his student, the Dutch architect Piet Blom (1934–99), developed architectural structures informed by the Kasbah, the historic centre of an Arabic city. Other Team 10 members travelled to European cities with a long urban tradition, searching for architectural models that could support and further improve their spatial concepts (Valena, Avermaete and Vrachliotis 2011, 116).

The pursuit of new urban models inspired Jacob Bakema (1914–81), one of the most influential members of Team 10, to visit Diocletian's Palace in Split in 1961.¹ Built as a residential estate for a retired Emperor Diocletian at the turn of the fourth century AD, the palace became the monumental core of the city. The coexistence of different historical layers within a single structure sustained the continuity of life over seventeen centuries, and served as the main argument to include Diocletian's Palace on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1979. This was also the main reason for Bakema's visit. He analysed the place as a structural embodiment of new architectural and urban principles, carefully documented and explained in a series of plans, sketches, and photos published in the article "Contemporary City for Three Million Inhabitants" in the Dutch architectural magazine *Forum* (Bakema 1962).

This article is the focal point of this paper. Within this issue of *Forum*, the palace was presented as a reaction to Le Corbusier's seminal project from 1922, which in many ways shaped the logic of the modern city. Also, through this article, Diocletian's Palace became a prominent reference point for many others who circulated within the group during the early 1960s. From the pool of diverse spatial theories, concepts and inspiring models emerged the structuralist architectural approach and a new typology called "mat building."

Diocletian's Palace as a Point of Rupture and a String of Continuity

The final schism between two generations of architects happened during the CIAM 10 in Dubrovnik in 1956. This was the first conference directly influenced by the young group, now officially known as Team 10, and by Bakema personally, since he was chosen as conference coordinator. Evident ruptures between generations accelerated the discussion about the reorganization of CIAM, and this continued to unfold until the last CIAM

meeting in Otterlo in 1959, organized and mainly attended by the Team 10 members. The attendants at Otterlo decided that the, “CIAM name would not be used any more in relation to the future activities of its participants” (Sert et al. 1961, 5). This meeting marked the end of the vibrant and influential historical trajectory of CIAM (Mumford 2002). Bakema had a very important role in these events—he was not only one of the founders, but also the *spiritus movens* of the Team 10, and the responsible person mentioned in a letter sent by the CIAM founders to Team 10 as a reaction to the “disturbing Otterlo events” (Sert et al. 1961, 5). Signed by Sigfried Giedion (1888–1968), Josep Lluís Sert (1902–83), Walter Gropius (1883–1969), and Le Corbusier (1887–1965), the letter expressed dissatisfaction with the unexpected termination of CIAM and a concern that the decision had been manipulated by “minority group of Team 10” (Sert et al. 1961, 5). Even though Le Corbusier’s name appeared among the four signatures, his attitude towards the new movement was slightly different from the other CIAM founders. First, he did not show up in Dubrovnik and instead sent a letter saying that the young generation is “in the know” and their predecessors are not, and that they are no longer subject to the direct impact of the situation (Smithson 1960, 176). Also, after the Otterlo meeting, Team 10 published a book distributed among the participants and founding members. Le Corbusier responded with an even more intriguing letter (Le Corbusier 1961, 74–5) published in 1962 in the second volume of *Forum*.²

This book seems to me very well done and in excellent spirit. I am very happy to see the course of action taken by the people in Otterlo. Each generation must take responsibilities when its time comes. (author’s translation)

The machine-typed message was supplemented by a hand drawing of two *modulor* figures—one standing on the shoulders of the other (see Fig. 2.1 below). The shoulder of one figure is marked with the line and the year 1958, while the bottom line is marked with the year 1928. Between 1928 (CIAM’s foundation) and 1958 (the year before its termination) is written “30 years of work.” The latter year is accompanied with Sir Isaac Newton’s quote: “If I have been able to see further, it was only because I stood on the shoulders of giants.” On the left side, Le Corbusier drew a simple, linear “mechanism” folded under the pressure of the rising “1958” with the inscription “le emmerdeurs” [“jerks”]. On the upper part of the drawing, the *modulor* figure holds the flag with the inscription “verite” [“the truth”] and strives towards the sun. In the upper left is an inscription: “‘OUR’ future.”

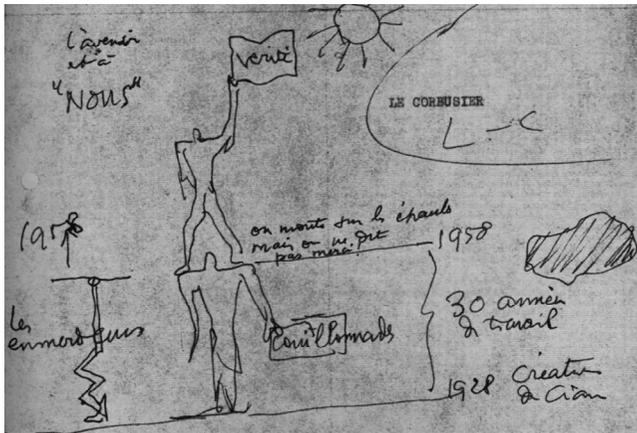


Fig. 2.1. Le Corbusier, sketch from the letter to Karl Krämer (1961). Source: Bakema (1962, 73)

This important letter was surprisingly overlooked. It was briefly mentioned in the book *Structuralism Reloaded* published in 2011, but without deeper insight or necessary contextualization (Valena, Avermaete and Vrachliotis 2011, 135). Through this letter, Le Corbusier claimed his prominent position within both eras of modern architectural history—as a key founder of the modern movement and a part of the emerging future, as we will see in the final part of this paper. However, the context in which the letter was published is as interesting as its content. Sandwiched between the Dutch and English versions of Bakema’s article on Diocletian’s Palace, it was used to propel a fruitful post-war architectural discourse between Le Corbusier and the young generation of architects. It is important to note that *Forum* magazine served as an unofficial publication of Team 10, and that this particular issue was edited by Jacob Bakema.

The letter and the article were confronted as two historical points representing two different urban models. This tension becomes obvious after reading the title of Bakema’s 1962 article. “An Emperor’s House at Split became a Town for 3000 People” represented an ideological counterpoint to Le Corbusier’s iconic project *Ville contemporaine de trois millions d’habitants* [“Contemporary City for Three Million Inhabitants”] exhibited exactly forty years earlier in 1922 at the Salon d’Automne in Paris.

At first glance, the juxtaposition of the two structures is almost ironic. Unlike Diocletian’s Palace, Le Corbusier’s contemporary city was a megalomaniacal urban vision organized into four zones. Sixty floor-tall cruciform towers positioned in the centre of the plan marked the business

and administrative zone of the city. The high-rise centre was surrounded by residential blocks with terraces and inner courtyards arranged in linear patterns. The residential zone was extended with the housing blocks for workers at the far ends of the plan, while parks and gardens were situated in-between and around the blocks (the recreation zone). They were completely separated from the automobile traffic (the traffic zone). Massive diagonal highways connected with the grid of roads, underlining the absolute dominancy of the car in the life of the modern city. This spatial arrangement predicted extremely high density and centralization. The contemporary city is Le Corbusier's first comprehensive urban plan that became one of the fundamental layouts for the development of CIAM discussions on urbanism (Le Corbusier and Etchells 1987). However, until the post-war period, visions of this scale and logic existed only as the discursive practice of CIAM. After the Second World War, the CIAM approach entered both academia and planning offices, leaving a significant mark on the way cities are thought about, planned, and built. In post-war Europe, which suffered from major damages and was going through a massive population influx in its cities, rational planning offered a fast and affordable solution for urban revival and growth. There is hardly a city in Europe that went through the post-war urban development without being influenced by CIAM discourse (Le Normand 2014, 14–5). Faced with the crisis of housing followed by many economic and social pressures, the outcomes of the post-war planning were often not so plausible. Alienation, health issues, and social segregation are just some of the effects caused by the conditions in the new, concrete neighbourhoods.³

Published on the fortieth anniversary of Le Corbusier's seminal project, Bakema's article was an antithesis to the functionalist zoning logic and an alternative to the cold and technocratic post-war urbanism. For Bakema, the palace was a model of the flexible structural framework, an urban generator of social interactions and an opportunity for citizens to take part in changing the "infills" of the structure according to their needs and habits. Bakema recognized three important principles that made this model successful for such a long time: growth, flexibility, and movement (Bakema 1962, 45–71).

Diocletian's Palace: a Model of Urban Growth, Flexibility, and Movement

At the beginning of the fourth century, Diocletian's Palace was functioning as a hybrid structure—it was a monumental imperial estate built as a *castrum* (Roman military camp) but with textile production facilities, as

one of the recent studies showed (Belamarić 2009). The flexibility of the Roman structure was the focus of Bakema's interest. His article was not a historical study but an attempt to analyse and present the palace as a structural paradigm enabling and supporting a broad spectrum of architectural forms and functions, and above all facilitating human interaction over the centuries.⁴ The continuity of urban life transformed the Emperor's house in an urban structure, and this concept of "building-as-city" was a prime interest for Bakema, but also a reaction of many other Team 10 members to the functionalism and zoning rigidity of CIAM. Bakema's article should be observed as a carefully constructed spatial collage of photographs, plans, and sketches of different situations and architectural elements that reflect the three principles in his focus.

The street—the principle of flexibility

Bakema opened his visual narrative by juxtaposing an ideal reconstruction of the palace by Ernest Hebrard in 1912 and its aerial photo taken after the Second World War. An obvious contrast was a reflection of the building-as-city hypothesis expressed in the title of Bakema's article. On the following pages, Bakema presented the ground plans from different historic eras in order to analyse the street as an element that preserved circulation paths within the initial structure (see Fig. 2.2 below).

As opposed to Le Corbusier's vision of the city dominated by highways, Bakema brought narrow streets to the fore as a prime structural element that articulates the evolution of both built surroundings and social interactions. The concept of the street had a prominent role in the discourse of Team 10. Alison and Peter Smithson argued in their early works that the street connects different spatial scales, from a house to the city, and serves as a generator of social association (Smithson 1960, 176). The street was also important in the work of Shadrach Woods (1923–73), another Team 10 architect who used the street as the base of stem—a linear structural element that enabled the movement and growth of urban agglomerations. Stem presented for Woods a spatial trace of long duration that catalysed changes but remained unchanged (Woods 1962, 44–8). The Dutch architectural historian Tom Avermaete wrote that "the analytical and conceptual interest in the perennial character of urban traces that characterized the work of many Team 10 contributors led to a specific understanding of urban design" (Avermaete 2003, 247). Belgian architectural historian and theoretician Geert Bekaert (1928–2016) in 1970 addressed this specific understanding as, "the realized impossibility which the whole generation was looking for—a structured anarchy" (1970, 443).

According to Bekaert, the palace in Split became a, “model for the future environment ... recognizable form-making structure, the individual freedom and originality that not only permits, but also encourages and guarantees” (1970, 443). Bekaert’s text was published in *Streven*, a Belgian magazine for cultural and social affairs that spread the structural concepts of the palace within the broader circle influenced by the Dutch section of Team 10.

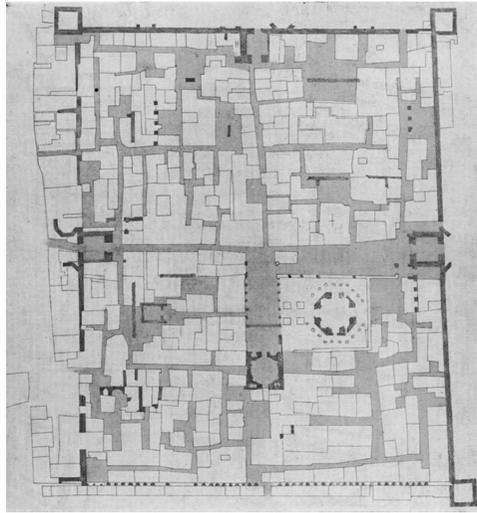


Fig. 2.2. Ground plan of Diocletian’s Palace, nineteenth century. Source: Bakema (1962, 50)

Wall—the principle of growth

Bakema analysed Roman walls as a fixed infrastructural framework that enabled growth and change through the active engagement of citizens. He recognized massive Roman arches as skeletons that can embrace new buildings and functions (see Fig. 2.3 below). One of his drawings in this section shows a projection of a new dwelling unit attached to the vacancy in front of a three-storey vaulted Roman wall that remains the same to this day. Bakema speculated about a concrete version of this wall with heating, water, and cooling infrastructure installed. This was supposed to enable the easy connection of a new dwelling unit to the existing wall infrastructure, and to give future dwellers an opportunity to change each unit according to their demands. An attempt to provide a participatory