

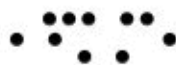


# Giuseppe Terragni

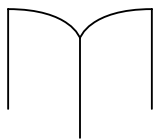
— A Critical Biography

Antonino Saggio

Introductory text by Peter Eisenman







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VOLUME

The Graham Foundation for the Arts and Humanities of Chicago, United States of America, granted funding in 1987 to photographer Dennis Marsico and the Author to conduct studies on the architecture of Giuseppe Terragni. Without this generous support, this monograph would never have seen the light of day.

The Fondazione Giuseppe Terragni of Como provided indispensable assistance for the completion of the monograph and granted the documentary material of which it retains all rights. Special thanks to architect Attilio Terragni.

All the color photos in the volume – except for the few specifically indicated – are by Dennis Marsico, Pittsburgh, United States of America.

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On the cover: Novocomum, central staircase core, photo by Dennis Marsico, Como, November 1987

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# Giuseppe Terragni

— A Critical Biography

Introductory text by **Peter Eisenman**

Presentation by **Francesco Tentori**

Photographs by **Dennis Marsico**

# Acknowledgments

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With the support of the Graham Foundation for the Arts and the Humanities in Chicago, the author undertook the research that finds its culmination here, and of which some previews have been published in Italian and foreign specialized journals.

The photographs documenting the current state of all the buildings are the work of Dennis Marsico, a great American photographer and co-promoter of the Graham's research. His work has helped the author to perceive architecture through the life that unfolds within it.

Some vintage photos of buildings or interiors that are now destroyed have been kindly loaned by the Terragni Foundation in Como, which holds the rights to them. Thanks to the Foundation extend to the passionate work of organization that it has been conducting for years.

The images that 'construct' some of the unrealized projects were digitally created by Mirko Galli in his thesis and by Claudia Mühlhoff, Markus Futterneck, Paolo Della Casa, Cristoph Zimmermann, Corona Feederle, and Prisca Stoppa during two semesters of teaching by the author at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich. The three-dimensional models from which they derive can be studied at the Zurich School of Architecture, whose dean Gerhard Schmitt deserves thanks for the interest and support he has always provided to this research, since its distant beginning at Carnegie-Mellon in Pittsburgh.

A heartfelt thanks to my first readers: Piero Ostilio Rossi of the Department of Architectural and Urban Design at the University 'La Sapienza' and Milena Guarda, my mother. The comments have been valuable and very helpful; the support, decisive. Too numerous are the people who have been close to this work to remember them all. But, even on this occasion, the encouragement of Carlo Melograni has been important.

Donatella and Raffaele, as well as little Caterina, have followed the birth, development, and events related to 'Terragni': they have felt it too, and it is the truth.

Many thanks to Mark Nelson for the careful reading, comments, and revision of the text in English.

The debt to Francesco Tentori is immense, not only for his in-depth reading, comments, and what he has wanted to write here, but because his 'Life and Work of Le Corbusier' has provided a shining example to follow. With the editor of 'L'architettura,' I have the greatest intellectual debt, not only for his numerous and brilliant studies on Terragni.

*To Bruno Zevi, and his titanic contribution to architecture and culture, I dedicate this book.*

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# My Terragni My Italy by Peter Eisenman

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We asked the most indispensable architect of the last half-century, and at the same time the most authoritative on Giuseppe Terragni, “not” to write an introduction to this volume, but instead to give us a text on his deep and wonderful relationship with Giuseppe Terragni and with all of Italian architecture: it is a fascinating journey that has been going on for over sixty years now. Here is the text that Eisenman wrote for this book.



My involvement with Italian Architecture actually began in England in the autumn of 1960. By chance I had been hired to replace Sandy (Colin St. John) Wilson as first year master for a term at Cambridge while Sandy was at Yale as the second Davenport Professor (Jim Stirling had been the first). Sandy was away all of September, October and November, returning in December in time for Christmas. With this in mind he brought me a book titled the *Encyclopedia De La Architecture Nouvelle* written by Alberto Sartoris sometime around the 1940s. In it were stunning black and white photos of three of Giuseppe Terragni's buildings (the Casa del Fascio in Como, the Asilo Infantile also in Como and the Giuliani Frigerio Apartment Block of 1943). In addition there was one by someone I had never heard of, a Cesare Cattaneo. While I vaguely remember hearing of Terragni I had never seen pictures of his buildings and while I had not realized at that moment the impact of what I was seeing, it was certainly something different, so amazingly unique that I have never be able to erase the moment of that discovery. In fact it is possible to say, that my work since that discovery has in part been an attempt to understand why those buildings had such an effect on me.

## 1. CDF

The second introduction I had to Italian architecture followed by several months to July of 1961. I was traveling with Colin Rowe in the first of our two summer jaunts to see Colin Rowe's Europe. We started in my white Volkswagen "Bug" (I drove, and Colin read to me). From Cambridge, we went first through de Stijl and Dutch Modern, down the Rhine to Krefeld, and Mies' Esters and Lange Houses, to Stuttgart and the Weissenhof Siedlung. After Stuttgart we drove to Zurich to spend two days with Bernard Hoesli who had worked with Le Corbusier in Marseille. After showing us around Corbu in Zurich we were taken to the first Movenpick Restaurant, the Swiss fast food alternative to McDonald's. Next day off to Como. My architectural life is marked by this day, before and after Como. As we drove

up to the square in front of the Casa Del Fascio. Colin said I had an epiphany. No Mies, no Corbu, could match what I saw. The pictures in Sartoris, only hinted at the cool whiteness, the assured rationalism, the beyond dialectical, neither expression nor conceptual, it was Italian!

## **2. Palladio**

The next day, after Como, was the Venetian Padana and a trek through Palladian Villas most of which were unoccupied shells at this time without any restauro or entrance fees. My first encounter with Palladio, was at a dusty crossroads just outside the walls of the small town of Montagnana known more for its prosciutto than its Palladio. We pulled up across the street from the Villa Pisani and I was given my marching orders. Colin said he was going to have an aranciata (one made by Recoaro Terme was the beverage of choice in 1961) and I was to go across the street and stand in front of the villa, a quite unprepossessing sight to my naïve eyes at the time, and I was to stay there until I could return to Rowe and tell him about something that I could not see. At the time this assignment made no sense to me at all. I could see the tripartite façade, the location of the windows, the entry, what else was there? The answer is part of what makes the best of Italiana different from other national sensibilities. For what was there in front of my eyes, but not visible, was the trace of a portico, which like a box camera had been pushed into the front façade so that all that remained was a trace outline which existed only in the mind, of a four columnal pedimented roof. It is this conceptual trace I was later to discover was part of what animated, in their incompleteness, some very mundane villas.

## **3. Rome Moretti**

We saw Moretti buildings on both trips, the Casa Girasole in Rome on the first trip and the Complex on Corso Italia in Milano on the second trip in 1962. Both buildings added to the growing feeling that like Palladio and Terragni there were more than two architects that made Italy different. Both the Girasole and Corso Italia represent two radically different takes on the urban in terms of scale and form, takes neither modern nor an incipient post-modern. Moretti, as the first person to write on the parametric predates Patrik Schumacher by over 50 years.

#### 4. Mannerist Painting

Part of Rowe's strategy of learning and teaching involved painting. On our trip down the Italian Peninsula, it was important for us to skip Florence and Bologna, in particular the Uffizi and the Bologna Gallery and see Rome and Roman paintings first. Colin's idea that Roman painting especially up to 1527 and the sack of Rome was the dominant influence which after 1520 was to travel up to Florence and Bologna and the school of painting known as mannerism. We began with Rowe's favorite, Raffaello and his three distinct stylistic periods. When we went to the Vatican I was not allowed to see the Sistine ceiling of Michelangelo, only the Vatican Stanze by Rafael, in particular "Fire in the Borgo" painted by Rafael's assistant Giulio Romano. This was followed by intense exposure to the triumvirate of Pontormo, Bronzino, and Parmigianino, seen in Florence, Bologna, and Lucca.

#### 5. «Spazio»

I believe it was in a book shop in Milano. We had a friendly agreement that we would take turns getting first dibs on whatever we found in a bookshop. It worked well since we were both collecting old Baedeker Guides. What we hadn't figured on was a complete set of «Spazio», all seven numbers. On this particular day I was in the first seat, however it was Colin who found the issues. There ensued a protracted argument which intimately was decided by the rule of law and not personal passion. It revealed many aspects of Moretti previously unknown to me, in particular the building complex on the Corso Italia and the article on Modanatura.

#### 6. «Casabella»

Ever since our stop at the American Academy in Rome I was fascinated by rows of bound magazine and books with white vellum spines, in particular the binding of periodicals. I was determined since our visit to Como to find *vecchie riviste di Casabella, primo della guerra*. We must have stopped in over fifty bookshops in our trip; shops large and small searching for this elusive prey. It was on our last day in Italy, that the seventh and last episode of our first trip happened. We were in Torino and walking in the Glass Galleria. We noticed an elderly man with grey fascist beard sitting in front of a small used book shop. We went through our practiced mantra of "Cercavo vecchie riviste, etc. etc". The man replied

which one, because he said they are heavy. I replied again any number will do. This annoyed the man. He said something to an assistant, who clambered down a wooden ladder to a basement, and after a few minutes produced a tied bundle of about ten magazines in mint condition, which upon close inspection was an entire year of Casabellas from the 1930s. He passed them up to the man with the fascist beard who then asked me if this was what I wanted. I then asked if there were any more, and again he replied “there are many”. In the end I bought them all, over eighty in total, still looking to complete the set.

### **7. Being Italian**

So what is it from Brunelleschi to Rossi that makes Italian architecture different. First of all that difference is not always the same. My concern for Rossi is not the same as my concern for Moretti; my concern for Rainaldi is not the same as it is for Piranesi. Yet there is always the idea of difference. The strand of difference begins not so much with presence as with the presence of absence. And while there is absence in Le Corbusier and Mies, what is it that is Terragni which is not Le Corbusier. It may be the presence of what might be called a metaphysical moment. Not in what something looks like, rather what that something is that is missing, that is incomplete perhaps. It goes back to that first afternoon with Palladio in Montagnana. What it was that I could not see was the trace of an absent portico, a portico that is present as a trace which makes of the physical reality of presence always a question. It is this quality that the Italian has no matter if it is Bramante, Michelangelo, or Palladio or Terragni. It is a quality not found in the same way in any other national or regional work. While there are identifiers, due to climate, material and culture to other regional work, none is conceptualised as Italian. My entire career in architecture has been about finding that missing portico. Without its absence there is only the prosciutto of Montagnana.

New York, September 7, 2022



# Presentation

## by Francesco Tentori

---

Giuseppe Terragni is considered the greatest Italian architect of the first half of the 20th century, although some consider him only as one of the prestigious “literati”<sup>1</sup>. He has been the subject of numerous studies and publications in Italy and internationally, some of which are of significant interest. Among others, the present study owes a debt of gratitude to Ada Francesca Marcianò’s extensive and exhaustive philological construction (1987). However, Saggio is correct in stating that attention has been paid to the debate and cultural events in general rather than to individual “works”. That is why we should be particularly grateful to Laterza Editions for deciding to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Terragni’s death with this new and very original biography by Antonino Saggio, *Giuseppe Terragni: Life and Works* [This refers to the first edition of the book in 1995 as part of the “Grandi Opere” series, which has been reprinted four times until it was completely sold out in the reprint of 2011 author’s note]. The book summarizes Terragni’s work as an architect and analyzes his cultural background, intellectual and political commitment, and the tragic events of his later life, in a unified discourse<sup>2</sup>.

This book presents several novelties even for those who look at books rather than read them: first of all, because the photographs are new and present many never-seen views of the works; secondly, because the most interesting unbuilt projects are brought back to life through the loving three-dimensional reconstruction, carried out by the author and other scholars.

Finally, I believe the vastness of the bibliographic suggestions should be emphasized, always accompanied – and for me it’s a great advantage – by a subjective judgment of value, in the same way that the author uses for individual works.

And I fervently hope that this book will be read and meditated upon, as I believe it is one of the best texts on contemporary Italian architecture that I know of. And I’m not just talking about a monograph on Terragni, but on Italian architecture, because even in the brevity of this text, the general story highlights – step by step – the salient points. In

other words, one can feel that the author's interest – who is primarily an architect, but also a teacher, scholar and author of other noteworthy research and monographs – goes not only to the Como architect, but to the entire design of the Italian cultural construction of those years.

What constitutes originality and the extraordinary preparatory utility (not just for new architects, but for all those who are drawn to the charm of architecture and want to deepen the perceptual nature of that charm); what constitutes the novelty of the Saggio text, I believe can be summarized by recalling the thesis contained in an article by Leonardo Benevolo, which the Author himself mentions in his Preface<sup>3</sup>, a thesis that is appropriate to recall more extensively. This is the essay *La percezione dell'invisibile: piazza San Pietro del Bernini* (“The Perception of the Invisible: St. Peter's Square by Bernini”)<sup>4</sup>. This title is well said: understanding architecture means, little by little, being able to translate – perhaps taking you by the hand from an architect and historian of architecture like Benevolo<sup>5</sup> – its mysterious charm, gaining maturity in what the scholar calls the *La percezione dell'invisibile* (“perception of the invisible”): as happens, indeed, with this extraordinary and unforgettable text on St. Peter's Square, which – however – has an equally memorable preface, with its laconic disillusionment<sup>6</sup>: “the lack of specialized criticism – writes Benevolo – capable of recognising and discussing (“scripting”) the concrete choices of architectural works, has a distant historical origin” that sees – with the twilight of Humanism<sup>7</sup> – the specialist cultures prevail and, with them, the formation, in the second half of the seventeenth century and in the eighteenth century, of a more and more sectorial critical literature on architecture, which is “of literary origin, [and which] comments on works of art and architecture from a non-specialized, technically elementary and” especially, more engaged “in ideological, moral, social, political, philosophical” sense, rather than specifically in the discipline.

The preparation type of the critic – estranged from the liveliness of architectural culture and designing to build – prevails over the fundamental topic, which should be architectural construction and its design, instead focusing on sacred historical, chronological, philological, cultural, poetic and polemic problems: all of which, however, should be in the background (as in the present study) and not in the foreground. In other words, an architect with historical interests is needed to understand, first and foremost, the figure and spatiality of a work, its roots in the site, pre-existences, and

the deep nature of choices long matured by designers, to operate transformations in millennial complexes – as is the case with St. Peter’s, but as proposed in the historic centers of many of our cities; as was the case in the time of Bernini and as it still was in the time of Terragni – transformations that can no longer happen, at least in Italy. And this analysis and evaluation work is exactly what Saggio precisely does for Terragni’s significant works. But let’s return to Benevolo’s thesis: “From this second tradition [of literary origin] comes the ‘modern’ [critical] culture of the late 1700s and 1800s [...] that still impacts professional practice and transforms it”. “The movements that, starting in the 1920s, have in common the purpose of leaving modernity as understood [that is: too schematic], must rebuild *ex novo* a criticism relevant to their purpose: that is technically precise, *concrete, analytical, objective*<sup>8</sup> [...] but remain exposed to the opposing speeches of literary and ideological criticism”.

With a short deadline, it may be that the pessimistic conclusion of Benevolo is correct: we remain not only exposed, but often overwhelmed, discouraged, by literary and ideological criticism, which has taken hold in many university contexts.

However, I believe that it is legitimate, for an architect and professor of architecture like myself, to claim a rich Italian tradition of critic-architects and architects with deep historical interests, which originated from Enrico Calandra and was passed down from this Messinian transplanted to Rome, to Giuseppe Samonà, to Luigi Piccinato (and directly to Bruno Zevi, Carlo Melograni, possibly even Leonardo Benevolo and Carlo Aymonino), as well as to Ludovico Quaroni and Saverio Muratori, up to the young author<sup>9</sup> I am talking about.

I cannot but take pleasure in this vitality, and hope that this tradition remains fertile in the future.

From this historical tradition, born in the era of oral teaching<sup>10</sup>, some general histories of architecture were derived, Muratori’s general system<sup>11</sup>, the essayistic outcomes applied to more concrete and limited subjects by Samonà and Quaroni. But general architectural histories, even of a single historical period or movement, even if limited to a region (as vast as Europe, or as small as a single metropolitan area) can provide no more than generic and preliminary information to those studying architecture to become architects, like any encyclopaedia<sup>12</sup>.

I understand – although I do not justify – the current attitude of many students, in whom the interest in design is



strong, and who – ignoring these stories – remain, at least temporarily, tied to the language of a single teacher or, self-taught, go looking for their models in other places, or even among the drawings and illustrations of a particular monograph: even if this may disappoint those who continue to wish for unified languages (as was the dream of the first rationalists). Diversity is – first and foremost, even in architecture – the language of democracy.

From these current school experiences – it is true – a very exciting, but formalistic and shallowly rooted architecture does not generally arise: especially when students “get stuck”, meaning they remain focused on the production of the last thirty to forty years (the era of personal languages), or when they seek far-off historical roots (Alberti, Brunelleschi, Sansovino, etc.), and yet they rush too much to deepen them: and so they limit themselves to robbing, overdoing it, some formal detail (these strange revivals, by the way, began with architects of my generation).

Logically, a formalistic outcome like this can also affect the knowledge of the present monograph, if the reader only looks at the illustrations; and that is why I hoped, earlier, for its careful reading: because this book requires participation, since the problem of Terragni’s projects – having exhausted, in a philological sense, the documentary research of what he left – is instead a completely open problem, from a design point of view: it requires, as I started to do, for architects who study the works of Terragni of which only the sketches or partially the drawings remain.

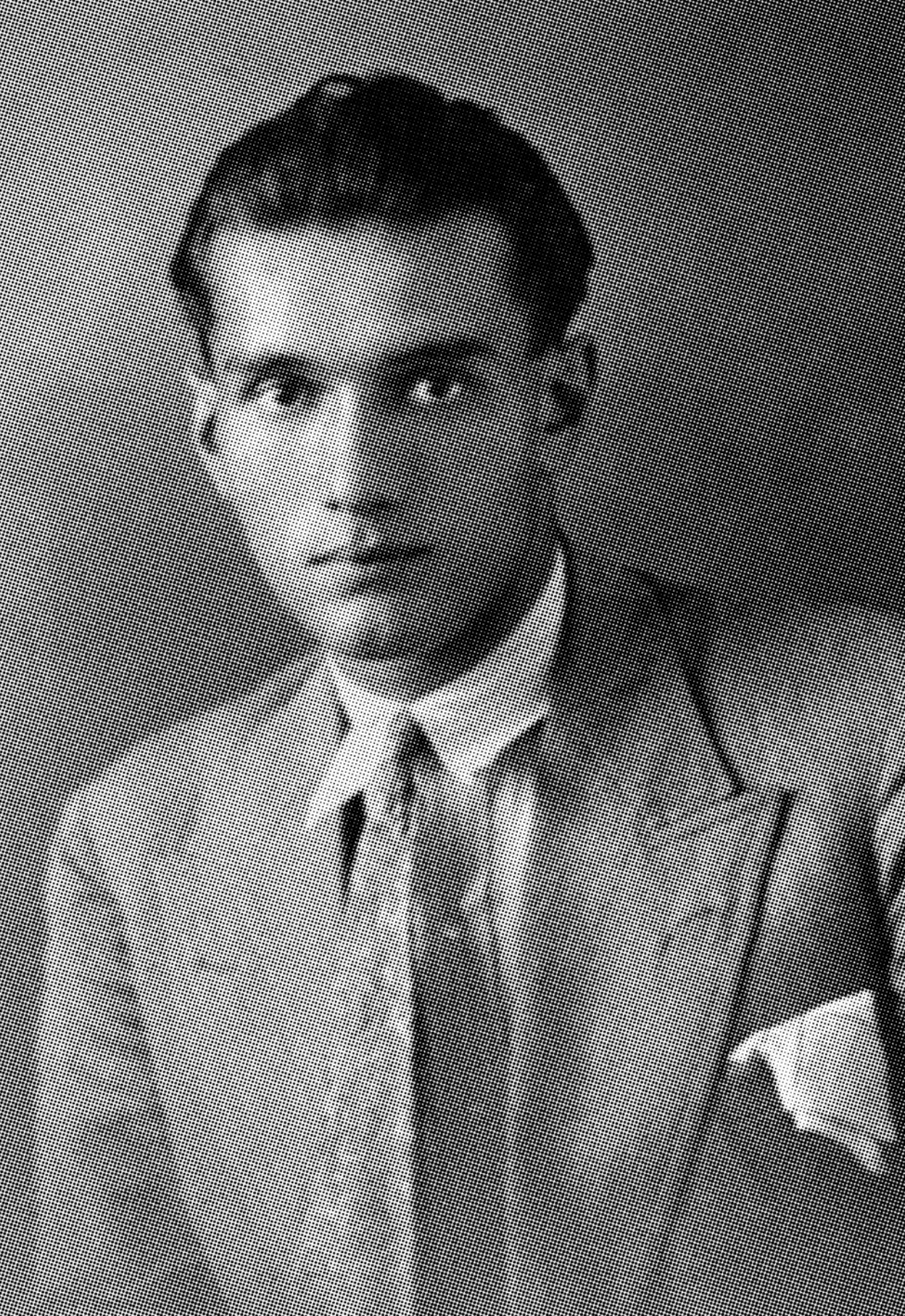
Indeed, if from the outset Saggio recalls Terragni’s vast productivity and points out that this design work is focused on “just over thirteen years of professional life”, it must also be kept in mind that the Como architect, at the end of those thirteen years, was recalled to arms on September 5, 1939, from then on – and thus in the last four years of his life – had sporadic relationships with the studio and with the normal tools required for architectural design. Nonetheless, his sketches, drawn in absolutely emergency conditions, if read attentively by architects, reveal very precise and defined design ideas and, for what they anticipated at least two interventions<sup>13</sup>, at the 1994 Vicenza Conference on Terragni, summer 1994, of the International Center for Andrea Palladio Studies, it can be stated that the evolution of spatial and plastic research, which Saggio provides eloquent evidence for, continued until the end of his life. One final consideration on language: contracted and synthesized

(which was once called “syncopated”) in some points, almost Zevian (cf. the analysis of Sant’Elia Nursery); analytical and relaxed in others. I not only agree with this variable development but, in an era – as I already said – of frail reading vocations, it seems to me that it is right to entrust an important message not to the monotonous, verbose and muddy exegesis of a supposed scientific language or an useless attempt at depersonalization and “objectivity”, but to entrust it, rather, to the language of emotion, participation and life. Others will return to the “poetics”, but let architects be allowed to be passionate about individual works, and to feel that this research is vital, and still continues!

# Notes

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1. See: Bruno Zevi, *Architettura – Concetti di una Controstoria* ("Architecture – Concepts of a Counter-History"), Tascabili Newton, 1994, p. 12.
2. I would suggest as an example to look at the importance the Author gives to a project from the early years, such as the Gas Works, and on the other hand, to the simple numbering of other projects or to the "architect-to-architect" criticisms that he makes towards Terragni for the Casa Rustici (Chapter III paragraph 3).
3. See note 4 to the *Forward*.
4. See: «Casabella» n. 572, October 1990, pp. 54-60.
5. Of course, I can't forget the very successful *Saper vedere l'Architettura* ("Learning to See Architecture") by Bruno Zevi, which, since 1948 (the last edition is from 1993), completed the series of handbooks on the visual arts opened in Italy in 1933 by the equally successful "Saper vedere ("Learning to See") by Matteo Marangoni (transformed into *Come si guarda un quadro* ("How to Look at a Painting"). in 1948. But architecture is so much more complex than other visual arts that a general discourse on it always risks becoming a generic discourse.
6. I can add (but it's not essential in this context) that Benevolo also presents a conclusion, on the modern transformations of St. Peter's, which – contrary to his premise – I do not agree with. Although I can't explain myself analytically here – and therefore in general terms – every architectural intervention, logically, can erase pre-existing elements: this was allowed – according to Benevolo – at the time of Bernini, that is, before the formation of "specialist knowledge". This is no longer allowed, in the context of historic centers, today. I, on the other hand, completely disagree with Benevolo on this.
7. As Benevolo always says, "when artists, writers, and readers were interested in the same problems", they shared the same culture.
8. Italics of the writer.
9. From my age it seems like that, even though his life experience (which I hope is long and fortunate) has already exceeded that of Giuseppe Terragni by a few years. [Tentori wrote this introduction when Saggio was 25 years old *Author's note*].
10. In fact, there are few written testimonies of Enrico Calandra, and unfortunately, the heirs of Stefano Bottari destroyed the letters the letters he wrote (and drew) to Giuseppe Samonà, to which the latter attached great value. Nevertheless, those who were his students remember him not only as the creator of the subject of Distributive Characteristics of Buildings, but also as the only Roman professor who referred to the masters of the modern movement such as Gropius and Le Corbusier. At least, the vast oral lecture by Giuseppe Samonà in various venues is recorded in typescripts.
11. Continued in multiple strands, of which the one I have been able to know better is the research by Gianfranco Caniggia until the treatise outcome (with Gianluigi Maffei), currently unfinished, of the first two books of *Composizione architettonica e tipologia edilizia: La lettura* (1979) ("Architectural Composition and Building Typology: The Reading") and *Il progetto dell'edilizia di base* (1984) ("The Project of Basic Building").
12. For their most profitable and widespread consultation, we must await their "electronic transfer".
13. By Giorgio Ciucci on the project for the Casa del Fascio in Rome Trastevere, and by Armando Dal Fabbro on the project for the Glass Workers' Union at the 1942 Universal Exhibition, also in Rome. Similar reconstructive surveys were conducted as part of the luav design course taught by Professor Francesco Venezia.



# Giuseppe Terragni

— A Critical Biography

# Foreword

—

Terragni is this century's Italian architect to whom the greatest number of pages are dedicated in the most recent architectural histories, whether they embrace a general development (such as Kenneth Frampton's) or focus in detail on the Italian experience (such as Richard Etlin's monumental one or Dennis Doordan's more agile one). Terragni has an extraordinary talent, which was also recognized during his lifetime and allowed him to create the troubled beauty of his masterpieces. But his life work was also the concrete manifestation of the controversies, debates, and ideals of Italian architecture between the two wars; starting in 1926, and in just over thirteen years of professional activity, he contributed to all of the most current themes of the moment: five urban planning plans, six industrial buildings, twenty-three residential projects, ten celebratory or funeral works, eighteen between installations, furnishings, and furniture for mass production, thirty-three public facilities: from church to school, from office building to market. Sixteen projects were carried out, some of which, internationally recognized as masterpieces, have recently been restored or protected by Sovrintendenza dei Monumenti (the government body responsible for the preservation and promotion of the country's cultural heritage).

If the drawings of Antonio Sant'Elia – born in Como in 1888 and fallen at the age of 28 on the front of the First World War – represent the dream of a futurist architecture, Terragni's achievements testify to the rationalist phase of our architecture. Terragni was a more fortunate designer than the other great architect of Como, but in many ways he shared his destiny. The premature death – he was called up at the age of 35 and died at the age of 39 after fighting in the Balkans and Russia – has sublimated a story that could not fail to take on an emblematic meaning for future generations: the perfect testimony, precisely because it was cut off at its peak, of a season in which individual talent was valued in a common battle, even with all the contradictions that have been ruthlessly investigated on several occasions.

In the literature on the architect, the fundamental turning point coincides with the 25th anniversary of his death. In 1968, Bruno Zevi organized a conference in Como and published an issue of his magazine that presented Terragni's entire architectural production for the first time, with a rich collection of illustrations and notes by Renato Pedio. This "Tribute to Terragni" ("Omaggio a Terragni"), the subsequent issue of "L'architettura-cronache e storia" that collects the contributions and testimonies of the conference,

and the publication of the writings edited by Enrico Mantero in 1969, made Terragni's architecture and the importance of his legacy known beyond the circle of scholars.

During his lifetime, even though he was the most well-known rationalist, there were no studies that exceeded the contingent opportunity. Raffaello Giolli traced a beautiful memory after his death. Giuseppe Pagano contributed, alternating confidence and enthusiasm, with heavy reservations and then appreciation. Edoardo Persico, even though he admired his talent, wrote little about it. He commented positively on the Tailor's Shop built in 1930 at the Monza exhibition and the "O" room at the Roman Decennial Exhibition of '22, but later dismissed all of Gruppo 7 in a fierce criticism, attributing to Terragni a fixation with "Mediterranean-ness"<sup>1</sup>. Fillia published Novocomum in his "The New Architecture". Alberto Sartoris, besides being beside him in some debates in the press, included some of his works in various editions of *Gli elementi dell'architettura funzionale* ("The elements of functional architecture"). Pietro Maria Bardi repeatedly defended his work from his journalist's viewpoint, even at the cost of censoring Massimo Bontempelli, an Italian academic and co-director of the same magazine<sup>2</sup>. The magazine "Il Vetro" published his projects after his death. The first monograph on Giuseppe Terragni was published in the aftermath of World War II (1947) by Mario Labò in the series *The Pioneers of the Modern Movement*. Two years later, the city of Como dedicated its first retrospective exhibition to its architect, which was visited and commented on by Le Corbusier.

In 1950, Zevi, in *La Storia dell'architettura moderna* ("The History of Modern Architecture"), focuses on three figures in the Italian story between the two wars: a critic (Persico), a cultural man and designer (Pagano), and Terragni. Zevi does not forget to mention Terragni's and Pagano's strong adherence to fascism. But while Pagano, who disappeared in the Mauthausen concentration camp, promoted the ethical ideals of the new architecture at the center of his action, for Terragni everything is redeemed within the architectural work. The book *Difficoltà politiche dell'architettura in Italia 1920-1940* ("The Political Difficulties of Architecture in Italy 1920-1940") (1953) by Giulia Veronesi is organized in four chapters, following the same structure as the Milan Triennial two years earlier (which remembered his work along with Giolli, Persico, and Pagano).

Overall, the studies of the first phase follow a dual interpretation. The first measures the difficulty of reconciling the



condemnation of the Ventennio (the two decades Mussolini ruled Italy) (and the adherence of modern architects to fascism) with the generally progressive meaning of the modern movement. The second phase focuses on the merit of his work. Labò realizes that Terragni is not only a “pioneer” of the modern, but also an architect who feeds on the Italian figurative climate of the 1930s. Zevi introduces the strong originality of Terragni’s work and highlights the distance of his architecture from that of Le Corbusier, breaking a taboo (that in order to be modern, architecture had to be integratable to international architecture). Re-reading these two texts today is enlightening because some of the interpretive knots are anticipated and will be deepened in the publications for the 25th anniversary of his death that we remembered before.

Since 1968, knowledge of Terragni’s work has spread. In addition to inspiring the Neo-Rationalism of the 1970s (the New York Five and architects from Lombardy or Canton Ticino), several designers have engaged with his architecture, attempting new interpretations based on Noam Chomsky’s Generative Grammar. The most notable studies of this type were carried out by Peter Eisenman on the Casa del Fascio and the Casa Giuliano Frigerio, which deepen the anticipations of Panos Koulermos in 1963, the observations of Reyner Banham and Eisenman’s own doctoral thesis with Colin Rowe in 1963. Furthermore, Terragni’s architecture begins to be studied as a heritage in many schools. For example, Daniele Vitale, along with his essays in Italian, English, and Spanish, publishes interpretative drawings made by his students at the Polytechnic University of Milan using a research procedure also followed in many other faculties around the world.

In 1972, Cesare De Seta’s essay on Italian architectural culture between the two wars was published: a study focused on cultural and architectural positions rather than individual works, but in which Terragni was not set aside despite a very critical evaluation. In the 1976 Venice Biennale exhibition dedicated to Rationalism and Italian architecture (curated by Luciano Patetta and Silvia Danesi), three models of unbuilt projects (Gas Plant, Solution B of the Littorio, Brera Academy) were reconstructed and took a leading role in the exhibition.

In 1980 Zevi published a richly illustrated book in a widely distributed series. The work benefits from the collaboration in iconographic research of Ada Francesca Marcianò, who, continuing to study the work of the Como-based artist,

later published *Giuseppe Terragni Opera completa* ("The Complete Works of Giuseppe Terragni"). This 1987 volume (composed of an introductory essay, introductions to groups of works that are chronologically and thematically close – each presented in a separate record including an in-depth history). The book is also the result of valuable work on Terragni's archive, which in the meantime, with the uncommon, but commendable attention of his heirs, is housed in Como. Not only are several previously unpublished works published, but the chronology, events, and bibliography of each work are summarized: together, a fundamental resource for subsequent studies.

This historical work was followed in 1991 by a book by Thomas Schumacher, *Surface & Symbol: Giuseppe Terragni and the Architecture of Italian Rationalism* translated in Italian as "Giuseppe Terragni: 1904-1943". This is not a monograph, as the Italian title would suggest, but an essay with a thesis (the original title is *Surface and Symbol*) that analyzes Terragni's production from a "post-Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne" perspective. The essay deepens the study of representative buildings such as tombs and monuments and takes up a thesis – anticipated by Vitale in the issue he edited for *Rassegna*, and especially in the chapter by Giorgio Ciucci in the seventh volume of the *History of Italian Art* – that brings Terragni closer to the atmosphere of the 20th century and the classical rules of composition.

In the 1970s and 1980s, monographs on individual buildings were also published, particularly on the Danteum (always by Schumacher), on the Casa del fascio (by Pastore and Ferrario in 1982 and by Artioli in 1989), on the Novocomum (by Cavalleri and Roda in 1988), but also on groups of works. In *Lotus 20*, in addition to a study by Patetta on the Milanese houses, there is an essay by Manfredo Tafuri. Based on the A and B project for the Palazzo del Littorio in Rome, a Pirandellian interpretation of Terragni is developed (between "The subject and the mask"), which anticipates, albeit with different motivations, the split proposed by Schumacher in 1991.

In 1982, an exhibition was held in Rotterdam and in 1983, one was held in Rome. At the same time, two volumes were published (by Fosso-Mantero and Mariano), a monograph was published in German, the magazine *A+U* featured his architectural realization, and a volume about his design work came out (written by Raffaella Crespi). The present author published four essays on single works. Three in Italian, published in Zevi's magazine, and one in English

in Diane Ghirardo's magazine, which was one of the first to disseminate knowledge of Italian architecture from the Twenties in the United States. For the 50th anniversary of his passing, the Superintendence of Milan dedicated a day of study full of testimonies and contributions, and one year later, the Palladio Studies Center in Vicenza and the Terragni Foundation organized a week-long International Seminar coordinated by Ciucci<sup>3</sup>.

Up to now, however, there is still no book that tries to connect Terragni's education and intellectual commitment with his work as an architect in a unified narrative. This is what the "Life and Works" promises. The architecture, in particular, will be analyzed both to grasp its historical and cultural context and to decipher its design structures in an attempt (using Leonardo Benevolo's expression) to write "a script of concrete choices"<sup>4</sup>. The photographic material, largely unpublished and specifically compiled, represents a natural complement to the text as well as many reconstructions of unbuilt projects.

The life and works of an artist flow without following the artificial levees that writers and critics would like to build. But if "the purest temperament of new Italian architecture"<sup>5</sup> described by Giolli becomes just a historically exemplifying case of the ambiguities of fascism; or if it is seen through the preconceived thesis of the schizophrenic split between figurative and symbolic thought and abstract and international ones, the direction and meaning of a life of work and research is lost.

Terragni was one of the first to perceive the dynamic tension derived from Cubism and the deep revolution of transparency. He grasped the aesthetic meaning of less is more, admired Le Corbusier, Mies, Gropius, Mendelsohn. He fought as a cultural man and builder for a new aesthetic, but also for a functional study of systems. He experimented with the technical and expressive outcomes of reinforced concrete.

But the Italian architecture of three thousand years ago is part of its own genetic heritage, like the birch forest or the fjord water for a Nordic. It is *a priori* "congenital and atavistic"<sup>6</sup>. It is both the chiaroscuro of Michelangelo and the ruins of the temple, the rural house or the hut, the city cathedral and its walls, the tower that stands atop the mountain, the aqueduct, the palace. For Terragni, the architect, this heritage is distilled into a tension towards the "Plastic Values" that mark the Italian figurative art of the twenties and thirties and towards the pure volume that reveals architecture as

a built presence. The Villa Bianca or the Novocomum, the House of the Fasces or the Sant'Elia Asylum deform, erode, rotate, explode the primary form, but without nullifying its existence. They are works that cannot be flattened into the International style or reduced to the leaden context of Lombard neoclassicism. They are architectures that are inexplicable outside of Italy, that could not have been born in another cultural context and that, at the same time, are not conceivable without that search for innovation that Terragni derives from his equally deep acceptance of the revolution, both social and constructive and aesthetic at the same time, of the new architecture of the century. Three-dimensional volume and free plans, solid stoniness and transparency, mass and abstraction coexist as dialectical motives that find union, often brilliantly, in his work.

In this difficult, dangerous and arduous research, we understand, in our opinion, his originality. Terragni is at the same time, an avant-garde artist and an Italian architect. These theses have already been partly stated<sup>7</sup>: this study has the task of demonstrating them in the liveliness of the design and intellectual choices.

A. S.

# Notes

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1. The abbreviation "Persico 33" (*Gli architetti italiani*) refers to a publication listed in the bibliography which contains all of the publication's details. To make reading easier, the title of the writing is stated when it is first cited. The volumes mentioned in the Forward belong in the bibliography section.
2. Tentori 90, page 131 (*P.M. Bardi*) provides all the details on the matter. The article "La Casa del Fascio" (Bontempelli 36) will be republished several times, among others, in *Rassegna* 82 (*Giuseppe Terragni 1904/1943*).
3. The proceedings of the Milan Conference *Materiali per comprendere Terragni e il suo tempo* ("Materials for Understanding Terragni and his Time") contained in a pre-catalogue (Artioli 93) were later revised and published with other contributions in Artioli. The conference proceedings from the Vicenza conference ("XIII International Seminar. Giuseppe Terragni") are cited in this text, based on the papers read at the conference, under the abbreviation Vicenza 94. Later, some essays were published in *Giuseppe Terragni opera completa* (*Giuseppe Terragni Complete Works*), edited by Giorgio Ciucci, Electa, Milan 1996 (Ciucci 96). We also note more recent noteworthy contributions that appeared after the first edition of this book, including: Mirko Galli, Claudia Muhlhöff, *Virtual Terragni: CAAD in Historical-Critical Research*, Birkhäuser, Basel 1999; Daniel Libeskind, Paolo Rosselli, Attilio Terragni, *Atlante Terragni architetture costruite*, ("Terragni Architecture Atlas"), Skira Milan 2004; Jeffrey T. Schnapp, *In Cima. Giuseppe Terragni per Margherita Sarfatti. Architetture della Memoria nel '900* ("On Top: Giuseppe Terragni for Margherita Sarfatti. Architectures of Memory in the 1900s"), Marsilio, Venice 2004; *Pietro Lingeri 1894-1968*, edited by Chiara Baglione and Elisabetta Susani, Electa, Milan 2004; Peter Eisenman, *Giuseppe Terragni Transformations Decompositions Critiques*, Quolibet, Macerata 2004; *Giuseppe Terragni a Roma* ("Giuseppe Terragni in Rome"), edited by Flavio Mangione, Luca Ribichini, Attilio Terragni, Prospettive Editions, Rome 2015; Valerio Paolo Mosco, *L'ultima cattedrale*, ("The Last Cathedral"), Sagep Publishers, Genoa 2015; *Quindici anni di vita e di lavoro con l'amico e maestro architetto Giuseppe Terragni* ("Fifteen Years of Life and Work with Friend and Master Architect Giuseppe Terragni"), reprint of Luigi Zuccoli's 1981 volume, introduction and editing by Luca Lanini, Libria, Melfi 2015; Valerio Paolo Mosco and Attilio Terragni, ("Giuseppe Terragni: the war, the end"), Forma, Milan 2020; *Il maestro, l'allievo, l'amico. Lettere di Giuseppe Terragni a Luigi Zuccoli 1940-1943* ("The Master, the Student, the Friend. Letters from Giuseppe Terragni to Luigi Zuccoli 1940-1943"), edited by Giovanni Menna and Luca Lanini, Libria, Melfi 2021; Attilio Terragni, *La luce perfetta dell'incerto: archetipi della forma: da Dante al Danteum* "The Perfect Light of Uncertainty: Forms' Archetypes: from Dante to Danteum", amazon.com, Seattle 2021.
4. Benevolo focuses on the «lack of specialized criticism, capable of recognizing and discussing ("scripting") the concrete choices of architectural works». In his opinion, this lack has a historical reason. In the second half of the 1600, a «criticism of literary origin arises, which comments on works of art and architecture from a non-specialized, technically elementary and committed perspective in terms of ideology, morality, social, political, philosophical: ("advertising") [...this art history] does not assume professional competence in the field of architecture or a technical precision consistent with the design work, but instead a document-based and literary accuracy, curiously unarmed when it comes to concrete physical terrain». (Leonardo Benevolo, *La percezione dell'invisibile: piazza San Pietro del Bernini*, ("La percezione dell'invisibile: Piazza San Pietro del Bernini"), «Casabella» n. 572, October 1990).
5. Giolli 43 *Remembering Giuseppe Terragni, the greatest architect of our generation* ("Ricordo di Giuseppe Terragni, il più grande architetto della nostra generazione").
6. Labò 47 p. 23 (*Giuseppe Terragni*).
7. Labò 47 p. 23 (*Giuseppe Terragni*). «Without looking for nationalistic excuses, indeed, rejecting them, Terragni is recognized as an Italian» (Labò 47, p. 24).  
«At once the most comacine, the most Italian, and the most cosmopolitan of Group 7» (Sartoris 83 p. 15) vital and more aware one, the most Italian of all the dissidents of Group 7.  
«Giuseppe Terragni, an Italian man, desperately striving towards the European dimension». (Pedio 68 p. 134, *Omaggio a Terragni*).

# A New Spirit

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## Chapter One

## 1. The beginnings

Giuseppe Ercole Enea Terragni was born on April 18, 1904 in Meda, a small industrial town just 23 kilometers from Milan<sup>1</sup>. He was the youngest of four siblings born to Michele from Como and Emilia Giamminola, who died suddenly when Giuseppe was still young. He had three older brothers: Attilio (1896), who would become an engineer, head of the capital of Lake Como, and senator of the Republic, Alberto, future accountant, and Silvio who died in 1926 in an accident.

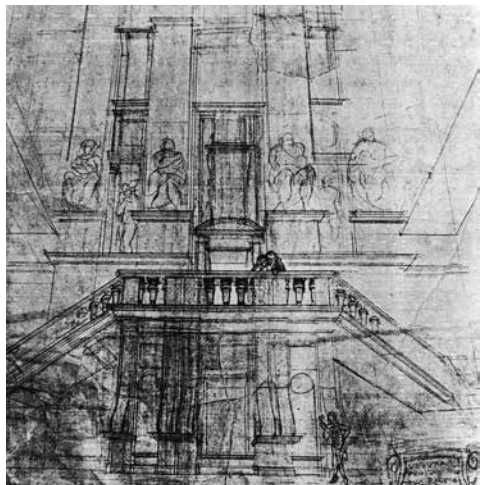
The family returned to Como at the end of 1909. The father, who at the birth of the youngest child had described himself as a foreman, established himself as a building contractor and, at the beginning of the 1920s, bought a beautiful three-story building on a square in the very central Corso Indipendenza. Terragni graduated from the physics-mathematics section of the technical institute (which later became the scientific high school) also attended by the younger Luigi Zuccoli, who would become a devoted friend and inseparable collaborator in the studio.

Terragni was a tall and strong boy: square shoulders “like those of an alpine guide”<sup>2</sup>, black hair and very lively eyes, marked features. With a brisk manner and a deep voice, “Peppino” (Terragni’s nickname) used the local dialect with friends and absorbed from his mother a vocation for drawing and painting.

From his heavy and awkward hands came, to the great surprise of the pencil, which was crudely chopped, a delicate line, a very thin, vibrant and clear thread<sup>3</sup>.

In the autumn of 1921, he enrolled at the School of Architecture of the Polytechnic of Milan, a choice consistent with secondary education, with artistic interests, and above all with the family business, which, through the children and grandchildren of Attilio, would be successfully passed down to future generations. The most important construction in Milan at that time was the central railway station, a monument to heavy rhetoric and fake decoration that rebalanced the weights of national bad taste previously all in favor of the Roman mausoleum for Victor Emmanuel II.

The Polytechnic of Milan, according to those who attended, is also a tired, heavy school full of clichés. In the years that Terragni studied, Gaetano Moretti (a student of the great Camillo Boito who taught the most important



Veduta prospettica della parete. Drawings inspired by Michelangelesque style.

Around 1925.

Terragni produced a series of drawings in which motifs from the Laurentian Library and the Senatorial Palace that he had visited in Florence and Rome in 1925 are mixed. "He too, a young man endowed with enormous energy, succumbs to the influence of the Michelangelesque 'style,' which at school – the previous year – had 'exploded' with Pizzigoni" (Cassi Ramelli 1953).

course in medieval architecture), Piero Portaluppi (refined, intelligent, very friendly but eclectic and frivolous in style), the young Antonio Cassi Ramelli (who will remember him as a student), and the newly graduated Giuseppe Pizzigoni, who, close to Giovanni Muzio, practiced and spread a "Michelangelesque" style that was very popular among young people, all taught at different levels<sup>4</sup>. Terragni visited Rome in 1925, where he studied the ruins, and Florence. At school, he produced a series of drawings inspired by Michelangelo's works that reveal a great mastery of both the overall configuration of

space and the plastic articulations of forms: in one of these drawings, with an unusual perspective choice, he draws an inclined plane view to emphasize the verticality of the environment; in detail, the attention is focused on the interpenetration of decorative elements, volumes, and figures of which he makes the ensemble play with strong chiaroscuro<sup>5</sup>.

The contents of the architecture degree course in Milan (which would only formally adhere to the architecture teaching reform in 1933, although it had partially anticipated some of its characteristics through the coexistence of technical courses – held at the Polytechnic – and art courses – held at the Academy of Brera) were still based on an outdated 19th-century professional role, very far from the technical proficiency and intellectual role that motivated the 1919 reform.

The architecture was then presented to us in the form of studies of the abacus of a Doric rather than Ionic capital, the reconstruction of ancient Roman temples based on texts by Canina or Despuis, and overall based on a series of purely formal and academic knowledge that had no relationship with either the forms of architecture that were being realized at the time (although in a different way from today, and therefore essentially academic) or with the realities of ancient architecture, which was not studied in terms of the structure of the remains of Roman architecture, but simply on the reconstructions that French or German historians had made. How much more incorrect could they be in preparing a young person for culture?<sup>6</sup>

One year is dedicated to the Roman style, the next to the Renaissance, then to the Middle Ages and the Baroque<sup>7</sup>, with



the clear intention of giving the student formal mastery to be used eclectically in different design situations: the architect is still “the one who lays a decoration on the unadorned wall”<sup>8</sup>, constrained to the choice of a few repeated types while the construction aspect is either that of stone, consolidated by centuries of use, or delegated to the engineer.

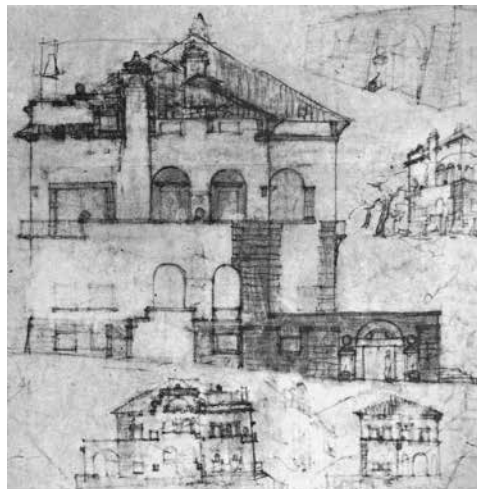
It was a disappointing university experience in terms of technical, aesthetic and functional training that produced a “painful feeling of blindness”<sup>9</sup>, but it must have had some merit: at least from the point of view of self-discipline, since from that school came the top architects of the new generation.

In October 1926, Terragni completed his studies and graduated “in architecture, decoration and perspective, after the triple failure in July due to his intolerance for academic teaching”<sup>10</sup> and the following year he opened a studio with his brother Attilio in Como on the ground floor of the family home. In addition to Zuccoli – who began collaborating in November 1927 and remained until Giuseppe’s death, Ico Parisi, and the owners – the studio included the building expert Antonio Castelli; a draftsman, “named Pedraglio from Brunate”<sup>11</sup>; the elderly surveyor Padovani, who is particularly responsible for the appraisals that Attilio must draft; and the engineer Uslenghi, who focuses on structural studies. Overall, it was a solid infrastructure, extremely important in managing the daily and practical aspect of an architect’s work.

During Terragni’s university years, besides drawings inspired by Michelangelo, he completed a project (Villa Saibene, 1925-1926) that reflects his academic education that was structured through style exercises.

Known materials do not describe a complete project but rather studies and alternatives. While some drawings have a medieval influence, a perspective shows a mix of late Renaissance (broken tympanums) and medieval elements (corbels supporting the roof overhang, asymmetrical placement of the chimney in the rear façade). This mix indicates that the student Terragni was experimenting with the expressive validity of forms and motifs derived from different repertoires.

The professional works known from this period are the competition project for the war memorial in Como (first



**Villa Saibene, Como  
1925-1926.**

Elevation and study sketches. As a student, Terragni experiments with both medieval and late Renaissance styles. This first documented work, whether a commission or a school exercise, reflects the structured academic exercises through applications of historical styles.

stage in 1925, second stage the following year), and two completed projects: the redesign of the first two floors of the Metropole-Suisse hotel's façade in the center of Como (1926-1927) and the war memorial in the town of Erba (1926-1932), a very small town 14 kilometers from the main town of Como.

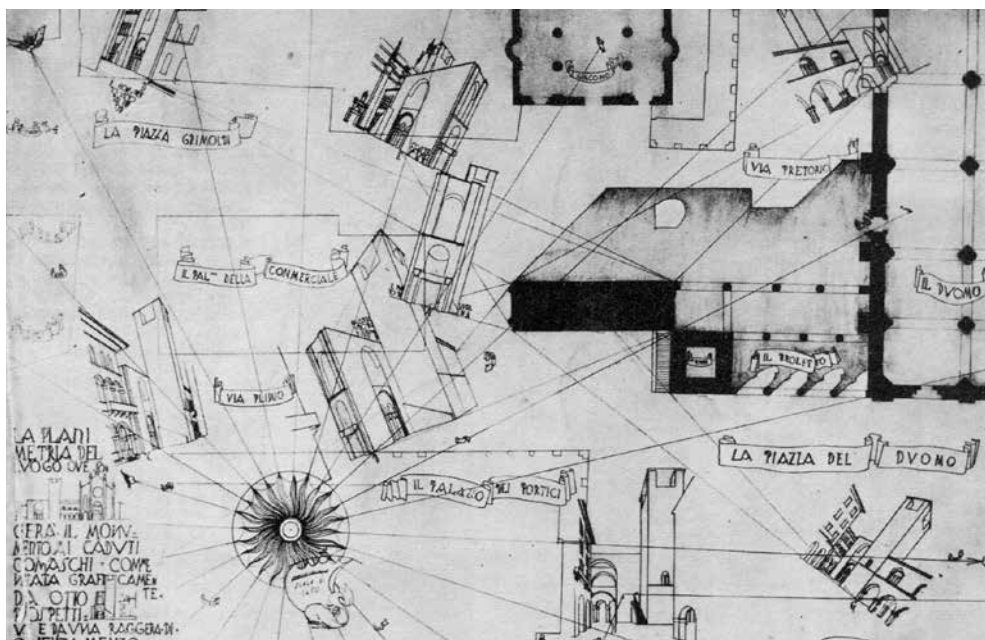
These are experiences that, in a way, extend the school-style exercises (the two competition tests refer to Romanesque and Gothic, the hotel façade presents a Mannerist deformation of orders, the monument in Erba uses the figure of the exedra and the arch), but at the same time they develop motifs that transcend strict academic observance.

34 The façade of the Metropole Hotel, while using a traditional decorative apparatus illuminated only by the iron and glass canopy at the entrance, inaugurates the season of contrasts with the city's ornamental commission for the too marked deformation of the parties. It consists of marble forms powerfully modeled on a sharp chromatic contrast between the beige of the background and the dark green of the first floor<sup>12</sup>.

The competition for the war memorial in Como (the first of many projects he will sign in the 1930s with Pietro Lingeri, ten years older) is to be appreciated first and foremost if compared to the symbolical solutions that saw the light in every Italian city or country in the aftermath of the war<sup>13</sup>.

The bas-reliefs proposed by the sculptors are inserted within a building that presents itself in a dry manner on the outside. The building is contained within two parallel and closely spaced walls, which are joined by a large full-height arch. While the lower parts of the walls accommodate the rooms, the central space under the arch houses (on the first level) the sarcophagus and, on the loggia (a covered exterior gallery) of the first floor, the bas-reliefs. The approach of two slabs to form and contain the celebratory space is the first manifestation of an idea that the architect will use again in his monuments<sup>14</sup>, but the particularly interesting aspect of the project is the urban scene that is created. The elongated volume is attached to the edge of the tower next to the Broletto (the medieval Gothic-style town hall built next to the cathedral) and has the same size as the façade of the Romanesque church of San Giacomo in the back. Through this planimetric choice, a permeable diaphragm is determined that redefines the urban boundaries between the two central city squares.

The project is also illustrated with a series of perspectives – arranged in a dynamic collage – to delineate the insertion



Competition for a Monument to Those Killed in WWI, Como first stage 1925, second stage 1926. With Lingeri and the sculptors Mozzanica (first stage), and Tedeschi (second stage). At the top: Competition board. The artifact creates a permeable diaphragm that redesigns the boundaries between two crucial squares in the city center.

At the bottom: Model view. The celebratory bas-reliefs are contained within a volume carved out by a large arch created by the convergence of two slabs.





**Hotel Metropole-Suisse,  
redesign of the façade  
of the first two floors,  
Como 1926-1927.**

Facade facing the lake.

The project plays on the contrast between two marbles: beige (Creola) for the background and green (Roia) for the first floor. The strong Michelangelesque influence in the solution, especially the quoining used to solve the contact with the ground (not only the string courses), caused conflicts with the city's decorative commission.

# Notes

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1. "In front of me (...) appeared Terragni Michele, 41 years old, Master Carpenter, residing in Meda, who declared that at 23 o'clock (...) in the house located in Meda, via Solferino, his wife, Emilia Giamminola, a housewife, gave birth to a child. (...) Witnesses Boga Battista, 42 years old courier, and Luigi Bardelli, 34 years old". From the birth certificate of the municipality of Meda. Reproduced in Cajani 87 (*Terragni "Brianzolo" involuntary*). From this research it also emerges that the family moved to Meda in 1895, coming from Como, and announced their return to Como on November 1, 1909.
2. "Radice 49, page 27 (*Portrait of Giuseppe Terragni*)" Radice 49 p. 27.
3. *ibidem* This passage describes the early life and artistic pursuits of Giuseppe Terragni, who as a boy studied the violin and was interested in caricatures and engravings. In his later years, he became involved in advertising graphics, sculpture, and most notably painting. He was appointed as the Trustee of the Fine Arts Syndicate of Como. His work as a painter has been discussed in a thesis by Emilia Terragni, which was later reflected in the book *"Terragni als Maler"* by Terragni Em 91. The sources Zuccoli 81, p. 10 and Sartori/Di Salvo 89, p. 154 also provide information on Terragni's role in the "Como Group", an Italian Rationalism pole.
4. On Pizzigoni, see Etlin 91, p. 206-207 (*Modernism in Italian Architecture*). On the influence of Michelangelo's architecture (of which the thirty-year-old Muzio had given clear evidence in the Ca Bruta of '22), Cassi Ramelli argues that Terragni "suffered the influence of the Michelangelesque style, which had 'exploded' at school the year before with Pizzigoni" (Antonio Cassi Ramelli, *Memory of Terragni as a student*, (1953) cited by Marcianò 87 p. 17 – *Giuseppe Terragni Complete Works*, 1925-1943). On Portaluppi, see Guglielmo Bilancioni, *Aeditalia* by Piero Portaluppi, Città studi, Milan 1993. On the general climate of the school, useful to see S. O. Chan Magomedov, *Moisej Ginzburg*, with a preface by V. Quilci, Franco Angeli, Milan 1976, since the Constructivist architect of the Narkomfin attended the Milan School in the mid-1910s. On Muzio and again on the general climate of the school, see Ornella Selvafolta, *The School of Architecture at the Polytechnic of Milan in the years of Muzio's training*, in Muzio, *The Architecture of Giovanni Muzio*, (edited by Sergio Boidi), Abitare Segesta Catalogues, Milan 1995 with extensive specific bibliography.
5. "He studied Michelangelo thoroughly at the time, perhaps due to a similar plastic and spatial sensitivity. He felt the large surfaces, shapes, and relief with the force of his own character: the sculpted design had Michelangelesque perspectives and power; the figure was intertwined with architecture, as an architect. Sometimes he added small human figures at the last moment, almost as a joke and ridicule of his own work, as if to make up for the academism betrayed by these studies". (Bottoni 68 p. 6).
6. Bottoni 69 p. 9.
7. See Cassi Ramelli 53 Schumacher 91 p. 62 (*Surface and Symbol: Giuseppe Terragni and the Architecture of Italian Rationalism*), dates the project to 1926 and cites it as the "first professional commission", but does not provide supporting evidence for the one-year delay in the date compared to that proposed by Marcianò 87.
8. Alberto Calza Bini, Speech for the inauguration of the academic year 1932-1933 at the S.S. of Architecture in Florence. "L'Architettura" March 1933 (reported by Compagnin 76). Calza Bini criticizes the 19th century division of various aspects of the discipline.
9. "Today, when everything is so renewed, certain methods of study, so far removed from the needs of current problems, and especially a dogmatic imposition of fixed schemes (because consecrated by false custom or confirmed by examples that it would be preferable to forget), produce a painful feeling of blindness". (Gruppo 7a – *Architettura (III) Impreparazione-Incomprensione-Pregiudizi* – "Inadequacy-Misunderstanding-Prejudices" – in Cennamo 73 p. 56 (*Materiali per l'analisi dell'architettura moderna, La Prima esposizione Italiana di Architettura Razionale* – "Materials for the Analysis of Modern Architecture, The First Italian Exhibition of Rational Architecture").
10. Figini 69 p. 8.
11. Zuccoli 81 p. 21, from which we have paraphrased the other information.
12. The Michelangelesque echoes of the project are adjacent to those of Giovanni Muzio's

Ca' Brutta and, according to a recent assessment, determine 'one of the most beautiful achievements of the 20th century Decorative art' (Etlin 91 p. 220).

**13.** Cresti 76 provides an interesting repertoire in his volume (*Architecture and Fascism*).

The area for the war memorial in Como was later moved from the city center to the lake-side. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti proposed that the memorial be built based on a design by Antonio Sant'Elia. Despite the hypotheses and designs that Terragni will produce starting in 1931 to translate the design of an electric power plant into a monument, he was assigned to complete the already established construction and to create the interior spaces of the monument. (See Godoli 83 – *Futurism* – and Alberto Longatti's report in Vicenza 94).

**14.** In the Monument to Reclamation and in the first proposal for the "Monument to the Fallen" in the new location on the Long Lake of Como. The idea of the two slabs as the figurative base of the monument is certainly an unorthodox theme, so much so that the project is presented in the local press through photos that never show the side view (Cfr. Schumacher 91 p. 61).

**15.** GT "Proposal for modifications to the City of Como Master Plan made by a group of friends and art lovers" "La Provincia di Como", November 10, 1927 in Mantero 69 (*Giuseppe Terragni e la città del razionalismo italiano* "Giuseppe Terragni and the city of Italian rationalism") but also quoted and discussed with new graphics by Etlin 91 p. 122-123. The same author also focuses on Giovannoni's theories, taking up what had already been noted in *Architecture* 68 p. 12. These theories were certainly well known by the Como architect Federico Frigerio, who a few years earlier had developed an urban plan that was later taken up by Lingeri and Terragni, as highlighted by Guido Zucconi's report in Vicenza 94. (Many years later, Terragni turned to Frigerio to support the conservation action of the Casa Vietti in La Cortesella. Mantero 69 p. 45 reports Frigerio's reply of February 13, 1939, which reveals the character's grace and makes a reference to the now distant events of the Competition of 1925-1926). The proposal by Terragni and Lingeri received a tie for first prize in the first stage, but in the second stage, the victory was given to the group of Mario Asnago and Claudio Vender. The story did not end there and we will return to it later.

**16.** GT letter dated May 26, 1932, to Bardi, which can be found on page 22 of the book by Marcianò (1987).

**17.** Gruppo 7a in Cennamo 73 p. 39.

**18.** "It was a book by Le Corbusier titled *Vers une Architecture* that opened our eyes. It

arrived through friends from Paris. I showed it to my fellow townspeople Pollini and Melotti from Rovereto. Pollini was already studying architecture in Milan with Figini. They fell in love with the book so much that they almost memorized it. It was truly an opening for us!" (Belli, 87 p. 17 – Le Corbusier, Italy and the Gruppo 7). This text is a summary of the more extensive *Origins and Developments of "the Gruppo 7"*, from 1959. The volume is: Le Corbusier, "Vers une Architecture", Paris, 1923 (Le Corbusier 23). The importance of the volume is also discussed by Bottoni 69 p. 9, who instead attributes the "discovery" of the book to Rava (see note 34).

**19.** Research on Frette and Rava has been carried out mainly at the Faculty of Architecture in Venice, under the coordination of Ciucci (see Ciucci 89, p. 72-73 – *Architects and Fascism*). On the formation of groups as a cultural organization tool, see also Etlin 91.

**20.** Belli 87 p. 17.

**21.** In reality, the term, like many others, was attributed different meanings at different times. It is interesting to note, for example, that with "rationality" and "rationalism", architects intended to distinguish themselves "from other attempts that originated from sought-after innovations outside of reality". (referring to Futurism and especially to Filia's Neofuturism). "Rational architecture – as we see it – finds harmonies, rhythms, symmetries in the new construction schemes, in the characteristics of the materials, and in the perfect correspondence to the needs for which the building is intended". (G. Minnucci and A. Libera, *Prima Esposizione Italiana di Architettura Razionale, Introduzione all'Esposizione*, ("First Italian Exhibition of Rational Architecture, Introduction to the Exhibition2), De Alberti, Rome 1928, p. 6. The quotation is taken from Mariani 89 – *Razionalismo e architettura moderna, storia di una polemica* "Rationalism and Modern Architecture, the history of a debate" – which comments on it extensively on p. 95).

**22.** A well-documented essay on the subject remains that of Loredana Compagnin and Maria Luisa Mazzola, *The Birth of Architecture High Schools in Italy* (Compagnin 76). As is known, in Italy the architectural profession was born in the 1920s following the formation of the first Architecture High School in Rome. (The high school was formed with Decree No. 2593 of October 31, 1919, which abolished the higher course of architecture at the Fine Arts Academies and the Architecture Section of the Polytechnics. The school was inaugurated in Rome on December 18, 1920, in a provisional location.) The initiative was taken by a group of intellectuals, led by Gustavo Giovannoni, who

aimed for a synthesis between the positivist tradition of the late 19th century and the historicist culture that was still alive in our country. The aim was to form a design professional who was at the same time an artist, a technician, and a man of culture: his task was to provide projects that responded in a unified manner to the needs of society, as the division of tasks (construction on one hand, decoration on the other) was a legacy of a pre-industrial work and duties phase. The secular permanence of construction methods and the formal repetitiveness of a few representative buildings were gradually being replaced here too with the acceleration of technology, the discovery of new materials, and the need for new functional programs. A society based on increasingly high productions no longer had a place for separate figures, but tended towards a "unification of knowledge".

The School combined the scientific and technical expertise of the Polytechnics with the compositional and artistic expertise of the Academies, but was characterized by two new areas of study: the history of architecture (increasingly taught by architect-professionals rather than general art historians, as it was meant to lead to the ability to participate in restoration), and above all, urban planning. Rather than a collateral appendix, as it still is in many faculties abroad, urban planning became essential in the education of the new professional in Italy. Furthermore, the underlying ideas in the study plan were reinforced by the development of legislation, which provided, among the first in the world, a continuity of planning from the regional to the detailed planning scale (Urban Planning Law of 1942). These innovative trends and the idea of the comprehensive architect that summarized them in a formula pervaded Italian culture in the Twenties (see Ciucci 89) and influenced Terragni from his earliest work, although, as we have remembered, his training was strictly academic. In particular, the Faculty of Architecture in Milan was founded only on October 26, 1933, with President Gaetano Moretti, following the transformation of the Architecture Section of the Polytechnic. At the time of Terragni, the artistic and historical subjects were still followed at the Brera Academy.

**23.** Gruppo 7a in Cennamo 73 p. 41.

**24.** "The brave act of making the first note of the "Gruppo 7" public was carried out by Tommaso Sillani, who had been running the "Rassegna Italiana" magazine for many years, a magazine with non-spectacular sales. It was a kind of "Nuova Antologia" for friends, very dignified, almost composed, I would say, where men of good writing and excellent culture

wrote their literary and scientific exercises. In short, a less suitable place could not be found to place a bomb!" (Belli 87, p. 18).

**25.** Gruppo 7 in Cennamo 73. (The subsequent quotes in the text without further reference in the footer refer to this essay which will be published the following month).

**26.** "The monumental primitivism of the Picassos, the Hellenistic mystery of the Metaphysicians, the magical realism of the latest Germans". (Gruppo 7d Cennamo 73 p. 65)

**27.** Belli 87 p. 18.

**28.** "His father was a builder, he was not an architect because at the time there was no degree in architecture, but he possessed something similar to a building expert title: he built houses designed by himself. So Terragni was born, so to speak, amidst mortar and scaffolding". (Radice 86 p. 116 Interview to a Maugeri in – *Chi è Mario Radice?*).

**29.** Carlo Emilio Rava, *Prelude to Nine Years of Lived Architecture 1926 IV - 1935 XIII*, Rome 1935, cited by Ciucci 89 p. 70. Rava claims substantial authorship of the first and last writings on *Rassegna Italiana*. "Rava deserves the fundamental credit of bringing his deep knowledge of the entire European cultural movement, especially of a literary nature – he was a great admirer of Gide, French poets, etc. – into the realm of our school at that time and incorporating this element, which was obviously foreign to pure architectural culture, as a supplementary aspect of an architect's general education. I remember that he was the first – Pollini and Figini, who were witnesses, can then say – to bring "Vers une Architecture" into our school. I believe it can be said that it was around that book and from that book that the modern architectural movement in Italy practically arose. Because the clarifications and elements that Le Corbusier brought represented a factor of wide fulfillment of the young people's generic ideals, a factor that is still indispensable today". (Bottoni. 69 p. 9). Rava's role as "captain" of Gruppo 7 is also confirmed by Sartoris 89 p. 60, who recalls that he met Terragni in the latter's rich Milanese house ("the butlers received me with white gloves"). Finally, it is Persico himself who recognizes Rava's not insignificant role, openly polemizing on his thesis of Mediterraneanity (see Persico 33a). Terragni wrote to Zuccoli from the Russian front that the adjective "rational" to define the new architecture was "modesty aside, I chose it as the emblem of the battles of the "Gruppo 7" back in 1926". (GT, "Letter to Zuccoli of January 24, 1942", excerpted in Mantero 69 p. 31). Terragni writes in the draft of the letter to the director of "Case d'Oggi" in January 1939 in Mantero 69 p. 172. a picture of

the Italian architectural events and the role of the different protagonists.

**30.** "The only noticeable gaps in this updated culture are the ignorance of Loos' puritan denial and the much more serious and uncompensated one of Wright's articulated plan". (Labò 47 p. 8).

**31.** Gruppo 7c (*Architettura (III) Im-preparazione-Incomprensione-Pregiudizi* "Inadequacy-Misunderstanding-Prejudices").

**32.** Persico 33 in Veronesi 64, Mariani 77. Cresti has recently fully developed the critique of Group 7: "A rationalism that, due to its fragile conceptual foundations and its superficial adherence to European functionalism, concerned itself from the outset (in the form of the 'manifesto' of 'Group 7') with seeking a compromise with classical tradition and the Mediterranean vocation; a rationalism that, as a formalistic language detached from real problems, never went beyond the characteristics and substance of a 'banner' to be waved in the battle for the updating of taste. It is no coincidence that Vinicio Paladini wrote in 1933 ['Quadrante' no. 3, July 1933, p. 36 'Bourgeoisification of Rationalism'] that 'the whole broad problem of architecture as a social fact has never been addressed with the decision and depth that such a question would require.' The experience of Italian rationalism was thus lived superficially and in an improvised manner, claiming to achieve the goal of a new style by attempting to coexist the crude pseudo-revolutionary postulates of Futurist derivation with the polemical Le Corbusier slogans, the 20th-century transcriptions of classicism with the suggestions offered by advanced construction technologies. The fact that the rationalist problematic remained superficial is demonstrated by the fact that, in the hope of redeeming itself from a subordinate position strongly marked by imitative conditions, 'Group 7' proposed, in order to 'satisfy Italian aesthetics,' to reintroduce, within the framework of an epidermal compositional process, the factor of 'symmetry' (required 'by the classical substratum that is within us'), as 'a game of compensations that balances the various parts,' as 'a sure guarantee of independence,' and also as 'a profound reason for originality,' to counter the 'foreign influence' of absolute 'asymmetry,' characterizing contemporary German and Dutch architectures, from which, however, 'very remarkable resources and interesting results' could be drawn." (Cresti 86, pp. 206-208. The quotes are from the fourth article of Group 7).

**33.** Belli 89 p. 20. The social commitment of young rationalists is not as negligible as it has been said many times. Etlin 91 lists a long

series of projects aimed at social issues on pages 226-229.

**34.** Cannistraro 93 p. 360 (with Sullivan, *Margherita Sarfatti*).

**35.** "When Roberto Papini was asked with selecting the most representative architects of the 'modern' Italian style for the 1927 Stuttgart housing exhibition, he carefully paired Sant'Elia with Sartori for Turin, the Gruppo 7 for Milan, the Gruppo Aschieri consisting of Alberto Calza Bini, Moisè Tufaroli, Alfio Susini, Innocenzo Sabatini, and Adalberto Libera for Rome, Duilio Torres and Brenno Del Giudice for Venice. A curious but not entirely inconsistent choice that the following year was widely reconfirmed within the wider landscape presented at the 1st Italian Exhibition of Rational Architecture". (Ciucci 89 p. 46).

**36.** Giuseppe Terragni will travel to Stuttgart at the end of October, perhaps independently, as his presence is not mentioned in the writings of Libera and Pollini. The dates, itineraries, drawings, and photographs of Terragni's trips were presented by Elisabetta Terragni in Vicenza 94 and the subsequent publication "The Architecture Trips of Giuseppe Terragni" in Ciucci 1996. There are very few opportunities – as Radice has noted several times – and it would be interesting to compare them with the refined travels of Rava. In fact, Terragni has very little first-hand knowledge of modern architecture, apart from German buildings (definitely from Stuttgart and Berlin, where he will travel in 1931, but perhaps also from other cities). However, he makes extraordinary use of the information and suggestions he gathers.

**37.** Cfr. Polin 89 p. 55 (Libera e il Gruppo 7).

**38.** "The role of Libera in amplifying the insights of Italian Rationalism is indeed central: while it is true that the theoretical, design, and self-promotional bases had already been laid before his membership, Libera's actions in Rome, in contact with political, cultural, and union centers, made Gruppo 7 take a significant leap, paving the way for institutional listening to the demands of young rationalists, and their expansion into a national movement, a prelude to the founding of Miar". (Polin 89 p. 55).

**39.** Riccardo Mariani highlights interesting documents about the bureaucratic process – and some linguistic compromises – made by Libera to obtain necessary official endorsements (Mariani 89 p. 93). Giorgio Ciucci discusses the various components of the exhibition. In particular, he focuses on the role of Luigi Piccinato as the only one at that time capable of embracing the theme of the city and urban planning (Ciucci 89 p. 93).

**40.** Reference: *Catalog of the 1st Italian Exhibition of Rational Architecture*, De Alberti,



Rome 1928. For the projects, see also Cennamo 73. On the Monza exhibition which was later transferred to Milan, see Polin 82 (*La Triennale di Milano*). In 1976, the project was displayed as further evidence of its importance in the Venice Biennale exhibition curated by Danesi and Patetta. Photos of the reconstructed model are published in the exhibition catalog curated by the organizers of the show, see Patetta 76 (*Rationalism and Architecture in Italy during Fascism*).

**41.** Luigi Figini and Gino Pollini exhibited a garage for 500 cars, a leisure center, and an and a promotional structure for a factory producing insulators; Guido Frette exhibited an exhibition pavilion and a type of Italian row house; Silvio Larco and Carlo Rava presented a hotel project, a newspaper headquarters, an office building, and various row houses with different surfaces and social purposes, just like Adalberto Libera who also exhibited a small hotel project, various pavilions, a terrace system, a cinema, and an entrance structure.

**42.** The self-censorship is significant. Through the choice of projects to be displayed, what was already supported in writing is reaffirmed in fact. ("We really wouldn't want to hide or deny an evolution. Indeed, it is precisely the fact that a certain *trend was experimented* with, that gives us the right to abandon it, recognizing its uselessness". Gruppo 7c in Cennamo 73 p. 59). The third work, displayed by Terragni only through drawings, is the Novocomum, which will be discussed later. We will not dwell on the project for a Tube Foundry: the decomposition of functions into different volumes allows a free articulation for different masses of the program, but there are no design elements that differentiate the proposal from others that were circulating at the exhibition, except for what is known Zevi 80 (Giuseppe Terragni) regarding the Futurist inspiration of the graphics.

**43.** See Minnucci 26 (*L'architettura e l'estetica degli edifici industriali* "The architecture and aesthetics of industrial buildings") discussed in De Seta 78. The Terragni studio was subscribed to the main Italian magazines (including of course "Architettura") and some foreign ones, as documented by Antonio Albertini's report in Vicenza 94 and later published under the title «La biblioteca di Giuseppe Terragni» (The Library of Giuseppe Terragni) in Ciucci 96.

**44.** Minnucci 26 p. 492. The intellectual tightrope that Minnucci is forced to use on the magazine – which contained the adjective "decorative" even in the headline – edited Giovannoni and Piacentini is clearly revealed in the cited passage.

**45.** "The Gas Works was not born as a result of Terragni's initiative, but following studies done by his friend, engineer Gianni Verga, son of the owner of the Como Gas plant, who had been studying the ideal plant for the production of gas for a city of 100,000 inhabitants for some time. Friends and study companions, Verga invited Terragni to translate his studies into an executive project. Thus was born the distribution in the plant and in the volumes of the departments constituting the plant, the coal depot, the cock, the furnaces, the various warehouses, and the offices" (Zuccoli 81 p. 17). Then, "the project for the new location of the plant was born on a level of realism incomparable to the demonstration school character of other projects and even the pipe foundry, a characteristic of the 'buildability' certainly loved by the young Terragni" (Polin, 82b - *Il superomismo di Terragni giovane* "The young Terragni's superman ideal and the consequent heroic ideal").

**46.** Gruppo 7a in Cennamo 73 p. 39.

**47.** This is what Mariani recalls on page 132 of Mariani 90. (*Sartoris razionalista europeo*).

**48.** In 1931, these publications on the Novocomum will be followed by those on "Architettura", "Il Lavoro fascista", and "La Technique des Travaux". Complete bibliographic references on the Novocomum, as for all projects, are in Marcianò 87. Extracts of articles by Giuseppe Pagano (*I descends of modern architecture, A proposal for a new construction in Como*, "La casa bella", March 27, 1930) and Luigi Figini (A house, "Nature", no. 1, January 1930) are contained in Rassegna 82. See also Cavalleri 88 and Roda (*Novocomum, Casa d'abitazione 2* Novocomum, Residential House)".

**49.** On the Gualino Palace, see Antonino Saggio, *L'opera di Giuseppe Pagano tra politica e architettura, Un vero transatlantico. Il Novocomum di Terragni*, "The Work of Giuseppe Pagano between politics and architecture", Dedalo, Bari 1984 p. 38-40. The Gualino-Novocomum parallelism, mentioned in that text, structures the first part of Antonino Saggio, "A true transatlantic. The Novocomum by Terragni", "L'architettura – cronache e storia", no. 398 December 1988. The same parallelism is made its own by Schumacher 91. It should also be remembered that in the Rome exhibition of the Miar in '31, which we will discuss later, the Gualino Palace and the Novocomum are displayed together and become, along with the pavilion later demolished at the IV Exhibition in Monza (*La casa elettrica di Figini e Pollini* "The electric house of Figini and Pollini" Polin 82c), the most characteristic realizations of Italian rationalism, since neither the Capponi, Cancellotti or Piccinato palaces, nor the houses

of Adolfo dell'Acqua and Enrico Griffini, nor Pagano's pavilions for the 1928 Turin exhibition, represent substantial examples of the new architecture.

50. Mazzucchelli, 47 (*Pagano Architetto*).

51. *Una Commissione per giudicare il "Transatlantico" di Campo Garibaldi*, ("A Commission to judge the 'Transatlantic' in Campo Garibaldi"), "La Provincia di Como", December 19, 1929 in Marciànò, 87 page 296.

52. G. Pagano, *Lettera aperta a S.E. il Ministro dell'educazione*, «La Casa Bella», n. 33, September 1930.

53. "GT's Letter to the Acting Commissioner of the Comune of Como, 1929, can be found in Marciànò 87 p. 296. In a separate letter, Terragni writes, "Once the Novocomum rental house was completed, the first realization of modern architecture in Italy, the expected chorus of protests broke out; the local newspaper, always neutral on matters of art, intervened with a meager article, while some took advantage of the ignorance of the masses. (...) The conclusion is that the case of Como was brought to the forefront of the national art scene, sparking the first controversy on rational architecture. At that moment, none of the local figures felt the duty to raise a voice of defense". (GT, letter to the Prefect of Como dated January 4, 1934, in *Architettura* 68).

54. Indeed, if I recall my personal experiences and the discussions raised in Turin for that Gualino administration building built exactly ten years ago, I must convince myself that a great journey has been made. Those 'bell' windows, that structural simplicity that then seemed an insult and a vituperation to good baroque traditions are now a usual standard" (G. Pagano, *Chi si ferma è perduto*, "Who stops is lost," *Casabella-Costruzioni*), no. 128, August 1938 in Pagano 86).

55. Figini 30.

56. Enrico A. Griffini, *Palazzo per uffici- Gruppo Gualino*, «La casa bella», n.32, August 1930.

57. Cfr. Vitale 82 (*Lo scavo analitico. Astrazione e formalismo nell'architettura di Giuseppe Terragni* "The Analytical Excavation. Abstraction and Formalism in Giuseppe Terragni's Architecture").

58. Pagano 30.

59. Cfr. Anonymous, *Dell'architettura razionale*, "On Rational Architecture", "Dedalo", no. 11, 1931. On Sartoris's project for a theater in Sion as a possible source, see Doordan 89 (*Building Modern Italy. Italian Architecture 1914-1936*). Nearly all authors who have dealt with Terragni, from Etlin 91 to Schumacher 91, from Zuccoli 81 to Mariano 83, speak of the possible sources. Some additional observations will be

added (cfr. note 71), but they will not surpass the curiosity of a footnote.

60. Objects "shaped by the same modern spirit, which clearly demonstrate the effort made to create the functional form of today's architecture" (Bohuslav Fuchs letter to Sartoris, February 11, 1937). Quoted by GT in "Useful Comparisons: Who is Plagiarizing?" "La sera", March 16, 1937.

61. The functional description derives from a synthesis – in my opinion plausible – between the indications given in the plan by Terragni, and those that are not coincident given by Polin 82b and Mantero 84.

62. Just think of James Stirling's University of Leicester. This observation, already evident from a simple comparison of the forms, has been confirmed by a conversation with Lucio Barbera in which Stirling himself emphasized the inspiration of the Gas Works for his building in Leicester.

63. The treatment of the walls of the parallelepiped containing the tower in the carved corner seems to suggest a continuous glass panel – reminiscent of the Fagus – delimited by horizontal bands similar to solutions adopted by Fahrenkamp.

64. Certainly, on the suggestion of Terragni, Sartoris, intervening in support of his friend against the accusations of plagiarism of the Casa del Fascio, will publish a photo of the model of the Gas Works as proof that the architect was working on the theme of the frame (or loggia, as they called it) since 1927. Cfr. Sartoris 37.

65. The elimination of the bow-window at the entrance, which was included in the perspective presented at the Rome exhibition, can certainly be traced back to these reflections. 'A semi-cylindrical body of Mendelsohnian matrix interrupted the horizontality of the parallelepiped, then emphasized its three-dimensional strength by expanding on the upper terrace. Later, it was eliminated to avoid a symmetrical layout along the 63.50 meter long façade (ca 208 feet) above all, to prioritize the carved corners, where glass cylinders are nested, bitten at the second floor, leaving the fifth suspended in the void.' (Zevi 80). The dividers of the balconies belonging to different apartments, which could have been elements to create a strong vertical rhythm, are treated in the lightest way possible: opaque glass plates supported by thin profiles replace the wall partitions of previous solutions, which were accompanied by a vertical partition on the short sides of the building.

66. Terragni certainly knew at least the building of Mendelsohn for the Berliner Tageblatt from 1921-1923, published by Minnucci 26

on page 571. The connection with Golossov's proposals, disputed by Zuccoli 81, does not so much relate to the contemporaneous Zuyev Club to the Novocomum, but to previous projects. (See the competition project of the Arcos Society in Moscow in 1924 in Vieri Quilici, *Il costruttivismo*, Laterza, Rome-Bari 1991 p. 63-65). The covering of marble tiles (the "spaccatello") overlaid on the building in the 1950s by Zuccoli to eliminate infiltrations, and used by Terragni in the Casa del fascio in Lissone and then in the Giuliani-Frigerio, reduced the effect of plasticity of the volume on the second floor, which instead was emphasized by the plaster treatment. Also on the issue of the corner, despite appreciating the elements of novelty raised, in light of what has been noted, Vitale's analysis does not grasp

the full meaning of the solution; "The rounded or marked corners due to the presence of the bow-window, constitute a relatively frequent solution in urban construction between the 1800s and 1900s, as evidenced by the same building adjacent to the Novocomum, by architect Caranchini. Terragni's corners are nothing more than a modified and violently exacerbated reapplication of this solution". (Vitale 82).

**67.** Mario Labò wrote "projecting top like a prow" (Labò 47). Given his direct participation in the events of the 1930s – he was one of the exhibitors at Miar in '31 – it could be that the observation was common among those in the know.

**68.** Le Corbusier, Preface to the 1928 edition of *Vers une architecture* (Le Corbusier 23).

**69.** Le Corbusier 23 p. XLII.

# Novocomum



















# Design Dangerously

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## Chapter two

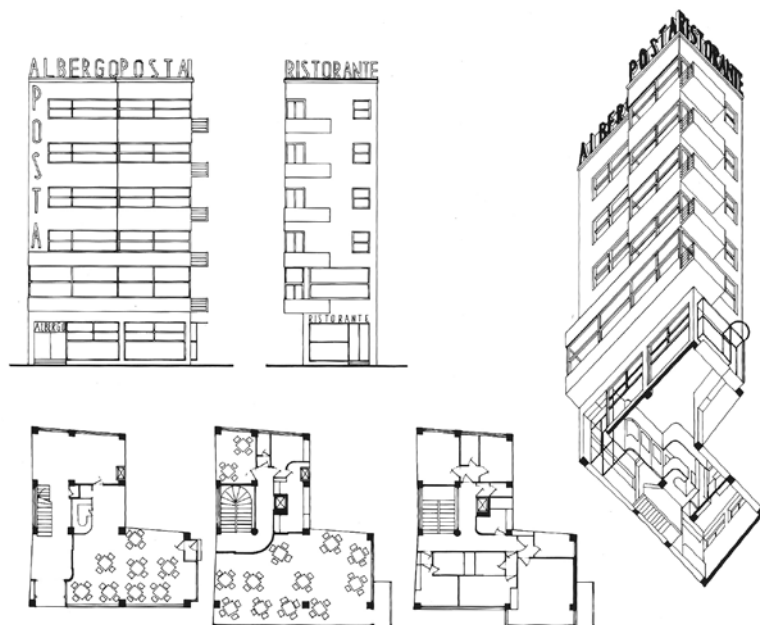
## 1 The Exhibition of Miar in '31: Fascism, State, and Architecture

The events related to the construction of the Novocomum have been recalled on many occasions: the fake design in a style drawn by Zuccoli and presented to deceive the architectural commission, the scandal when the scaffolding was removed, the judgment of a new commission that, with the support of the influential professor Piero Portaluppi, resulted in the victory of the very young architect.

After the completion of the building, Terragni – who in '29 had to fulfill his military service duties – worked on several other proposals for Como. The project for a seaplane base, the Posta hotel (an exhausting episode in which he attempted, unsuccessfully, to create a cantilever à la Mendelsohn), three funerary chapels (Ortelli, Stecchini, Pirovano), various interior designs within the Novocomum itself, and several shops, of which the most important is the Vitrum (1930): a sleek exterior (treated as a minimal composition of squares and rectangles in light marble under the portico in front of the cathedral and industrial materials like Eternit – is a brand name that originally referred to a type of asbestos-cement product – on the other side) and, above all, the interiors that develop the theme of glass transparency against the opacity of wooden and marble panels on a grid of slender iron columns. It had a great influence on the artists who saw it: not by chance, the work is mentioned

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**Albergo Posta, Como 1930-1935. Preliminary project from 1931. Rejected.**

The project ultimately built in Piazza Volta is the result of increasingly disappointing modifications for the architect. The only trace of the many studies, polemically exhibited at the 2nd MIAR (Italian Movement for Rational Architecture) exhibition in Rome in 1931, remains the presence of large windows in the construction.

# Headmaster in Milan

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## Chapter Three

## 1. In the capital of the new architecture

The year 1933, in which the construction of Casa del Fascio begins, is an important year in the events of the new Italian architecture because it consolidates the process of absorbing young rationalists that began the previous year. The “defeated” of Miar, Piccinato, Minnucci, and Libera, for example, emerge as winners: one in the competition for the new city of Sabaudia in the Pontine countryside; the second as the “secretary of the director and chief architect”<sup>1</sup> for the construction of the university city at Castro Pretorio in Rome, while Libera asserts himself in the competition for the post office on the Aventine (designed together with the Rami-affiliated De Renzi, a testament to a reconciliation in deeds rather than in proclamations). Two other post office projects in the capital are entrusted to Giuseppe Samonà and Mario Ridolfi, who produce restrained, functional, and anti-rhetorical architectures.

Throughout Italy, projects on behalf of party associations, such as the Ordine nazionale balilla by Renato Ricci<sup>2</sup>, marine and mountain colonies, assignments for schools, or party structures, are increasingly entrusted to rationalists. But it is above all the outcome of the important competition for the station of Florence – for which Bardi’s controversy led to the decision to announce a national competition<sup>3</sup> – that becomes the symbol of a new situation. The project of Giovanni Michelucci’s group, with its decidedly modern aspects, arouses scandal (leading to a debate in the Chamber of Deputies).

In all these cases, Marcello Piacentini plays a decisive role (often as a commissioner in juries) who seems to have embraced many of the theses of architectural renewal, giving rationalists (Pagano, Libera, Michelucci, Capponi, and above all Minnucci) design assignments for the university city of Rome, for which he outlined the overall plan and designed the most representative buildings.

In this atmosphere of hope for the opening of new spaces, Terragni decides to take a new direction in his activity. Having closed the experience of Miar, started the hall for the tenth anniversary, but excluded from the Roman university<sup>4</sup>, he feels the risk of being cut off from the contemporary cultural and intellectual battle and of finding himself confined within the walls of Como. Terragni – «ignaro maestro comacino»<sup>5</sup> and «uomo della provincia italiana»<sup>6</sup> (“unaware maestro from Como” and “provincial Italian man”. – seeks a context that keeps him culturally and intellectually active

# Beyond Rationalism

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## Chapter Four



## 1. Current Architecture “versus” Exceptional Architecture

The Casa Rustici becomes a source of deep bitterness for Terragni when, in an editorial in 1937, “Casabella” publishes an assessment of the latest experiences in Italian architecture. Recall that Giuseppe Pagano, a fellow activist in the Miar exhibition of ‘31, had enthusiastically praised the Novocomum. Regarding Rustici, he focuses instead on the “intellectualistic concern” and criticizes the “structural role for decorative purposes that is resolved at the expense of the unity of the work”. This is a severe censure that introduces a well-known but crucial criticism of the Casa del Fascio, where we will read about “the desire to become a leader with some unexpected and unthinkable invention”<sup>1</sup>.

Professional competitions and divergences in design approach and the understanding of the architect’s role in society on the other are the concomitant reasons for the attack. It is surprising from the outside because Rustici, along with three of the Milanese houses, had already received positive reviews in “Casabella”, and Terragni was aligned with Pagano on the same positions, even in the field of public housing and urban planning<sup>2</sup>.

The Como Master Plan – won with the CM8 group and presented by Terragni in advance at CIAM – is a serious effort to predict the city’s growth based on data that, a novelty in 1934, is painstakingly collected and analyzed. There is no formalism (Pagano called them “cut-out lace”) in this master plan but a development of the city open to the surrounding territory and region<sup>3</sup>. For the old town, various points apply thinning techniques that Terragni had already studied in the twenties, emphasizing the need for “urgent and radical redevelopment” of the unhealthy neighborhoods of Cortesella, Macello Vecchio, and Via Vitani. Instead of massive demolitions promoted in other Italian cities or even more radical solutions proposed by Le Corbusier for Paris, the designers indicate, with surgical precision, corrections and partial expansions of existing road locations. However, these have an exclusive character of “internal roadways” (neither for crossing nor monumentality). Simultaneously, an external ring road around the city wall is proposed<sup>4</sup>. The urban planning project immediately following these criticisms – the residential satellite district of Rebbio on the outskirts of Como in 1938 – moves in the same spirit and the same time period as the green proposal for Milan by Pagano’s group. The popular houses built on Via Anzani the

# The Broken Glass

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## Chapter Five

## 1. Clouds over Italy

The optimism and confidence fueled by the hopes of the new African “Empire” in Italy in 1936 begin to darken the following year. The involvement alongside Hitler in the Spanish Civil War initiates a tragic chain of events that will directly involve Terragni as well. The year 1937, when the first press campaigns against Jews begin, is professionally bitter for him: he is entangled in a disheartening accusation of plagiarism for the Casa del Fascio and must fight to preserve its integrity against various propagandistic embellishments. At the same time, he is accused of formalism in “Casabella”. He participates in the second phase of the project for the Palazzo del Littorio, as previously mentioned, and another solution, academic and Roman, is chosen. In architecture, it is the year of the hybrid pavilion by Piacentini, Pagano, and Valle in Paris, but above all, the moment when competitions are launched for the Universal Exposition of Rome, scheduled for 1942 – twenty years after Mussolini took power – in a marshy area of about 400 hectares between the center and the coastal town of Ostia.

The urban plan takes the form of a large pentagon symmetrically crossed by a road axis that symbolically begins at Piazza Venezia and, after passing through the archaeological zone, connects the capital to its Mediterranean “destiny”. The eight-lane urban axis is bridged in the exhibition area by a huge arch (not realized), surrounded by monumental hemicycles and marked at the center of its development by the inevitable obelisk. The exhibition area, intended to be transformed into a model neighborhood, is organized orthogonally to the new axis with a series of symmetrical arms, each terminated by a building that closes its perspective.

The ascendance of this scheme had led to the marginalization of Piccinato and Pagano, Vietti, and Ettore Rossi from the group of designers, with Marcello Piacentini firmly establishing himself as the undisputed hegemon of the destinies of Italian architecture, having supported it.

The selected solution for the most imposing building operation of the regime reveals all the marginality of the debates and controversies that the Italian modern architects still lingered on. From this moment on, and with increasing clarity in the following years, it becomes evident that fascist building policy is certainly not the oligarchic and enlightened one advocated by Bardi, Pagano’s social approach, or even the promotion of young talents promoted by Renato Ricci for the Opera Nazionale Balilla. The prevalent

# WORKS

For easy reference to existing catalogs, each entry is accompanied, as appropriate, by the abbreviation 'm' followed by the page number (See Marcianò 87, which provides detailed information and specific bibliography for each project), the abbreviation 'c' followed by the illustration number (See Crespi 86, the production as object designers), the abbreviation 'em' followed by the page number (See Mantero 69, anthology of writings), and the abbreviation 'gc' (See Ciucci 96, which is the final edition of Terragni's complete works and provides an exhaustive essay for each project). The list excludes projects for which only a few sketches are preserved, projects or realizations known from third parties but for which no graphic representation exists, the entirety of the graphic and pictorial work, and private letters. The organization of the projects ('from the spoon to the city') aims to provide an immediate perception of the field of interests investigated by Terragni.

## BUILDINGS AND PROJECTS BY TERRAGNI

### 104 Exhibition and furnishing setups, design 100-102 objects

- Furnishing – Federation of farmers in Novocomum with Swiveling coat rack, umbrella stand coat rack, Armchair, Magazine rack (Arredi per la federazione agricoltori nel Novocomum con: appendiabiti girevole, appendiabiti-portaombrelli, poltroncina, portariviste) Como 1929. [m297, c1-3, 6-7, gc328] *Built*
- Furnishing – Library of the Cazzamalli apartment in Novocomum (Arredi per la biblioteca di casa Cazzamalli nel Novocomum), Como 1929 ca [m297, c99-100 gc329]
- Furnishing Mantovani Ladies' Hair Salon Hair (Negozio di parrucchieria Mantovani con poltroncina, Como 1929-1930. [m298, c62, gc342] *Built*
- *Modern tailoring, Lobby, and model room with armchair.* (Sartoria moderna, Vestibolo e sala modelli con poltrona), IV Triennale, Monza 1930 [m298, c4, gc344] *Built*
- *Mazzeletti Shop window display* (Allestimento vetrina Mazzeletti), Como 1930 [gc350]
- *Vitrum Shop* (Negozio Vitrum), Como 1930 [m299, c68-78, gc337]. *Built*
- *Pirovano religious furnishings* (Arredi sacri Pirovano), Como 1930-1931 [m299 c81]. *Built*
- *Hall 'O', Exhibition of the Tenth Anniversary of the Fascist Revolution* (Sala «O», Mostra del decennale della rivoluzione fascista), Roma 1932 [m304, c85-89, gc382]. With Arrigotti (historical consultant). *Built*
- *Arrangement of Dr. De Tommasi's dental office* (Sistemazione studio dentistico dottor De Tommasi), Milano [m310, c84, gc370]
- *Lamp for a drawing table* (Lampada per tavolo da disegno), 1933 ca. [m309, c19, gc366]. *Built*
- *Office furniture for the Casa del fascio with: Lariana chair, Benita armchair, meeting table* (Mobili da ufficio per la Casa del fascio con: sedia Lariana, poltrona Benita, tavolo delle riunioni) 1933-1935. [m311, c12-18, 21-26, 27, gc367] *Built*
- *Armchair in metal tubing and table for the entrance of the Rustici house* (Poltroncina in tubo metallico e tavolo per la portineria di casa Rustici), [m311, c31] 1933-1935. *Built*
- *Furniture of the Ghiringhelli home-studio in the building of the same name* (Arredo della casa-studio Ghiringhelli nell'omonimo edificio), Milano 1933 [m311 c101]. With Lingeri. *Built*
- *Concierge room and mailbox* (Locale portineria e cassetta delle lettere), Casa Rustici-Comolli (1934-1935). With Lingeri. *Built*
- *Scagno Chair* (Sedia Scagno), 1935 [m319, c8-11, gc474]. *Built* in 1972 by Zanotta Spa.
- *Desk projects* (Progetti di scrivanie) [c34-39], 1934-1936 ca
- *Hall of Motorboating, Rowing, and Sailing, 2nd Sports Exhibition* (Sala della motonautica, del canottaggio e della vela, II mostra dello sport), Milano 1935 [m315, gc469]. With Lingeri. De Amicis, Radice (painters). *Built*
- *Principal's office, doctor's office, classrooms in Sant'Elia kindergarten with: desks, small chairs, coat racks, handles* (Ufficio direttrice, ufficio del medico, aule nell'asilo Sant'Elia con: banchi,

sedioline, appendiabiti, maniglie) [m320, c41-53]. *Built*

- *Furniture for the Stecchini house with: vanity unit and master bedroom.*(Arredo casa Stecchini con: mobile toletta e camera padronale), Como 1936-1937 [m319, c96-97, gc500]. With Parisi *Built*
- *New Campari Coffee-Restaurant* (Caffè-ristorante Nuovo Campari), Milano 1938-1939 [m321, gc528]. With Lingeri, Sartoris
- *Furniture for the house of Umberto Bernasconi* (Mobili per casa Umberto Bernasconi) [m318, c54gc1939]

### Celebratory or funerary buildings

- Monument to Those Killed in World War I (WWI), first stage competition (Monumento ai caduti, concorso di primo grado), Como 1925 [m294]. With Lingeri. Mozzanica (scultore)
- Monument to Those Killed in WWI, first stage competition (Monumento ai caduti, concorso di secondo grado), Como 1926 [m294 gc297]. With Lingeri. Tedeschi (scultore)
- Monument to Those Killed in WWI in Erba (Monumento ai caduti di Erba), Erba Incino 1926-1932 [m295 gc307]. *Built*
- Pirovano funeral chapel (Edicola funeraria Pirovano), Como 1928-1931 [m299 gc323]. *Built*
- Ortelli Chapel (Cappella Ortelli) [C] (now Pozzi-Simeoni), interior, Cernobbio 1929-1930 [m298, gc331]. *Built*
- Stecchini funeral chapel (Edicola funeraria Stecchini), Como 1930-1931 [m299, gc351]. *Built*
- Monument to Those Killed in XXI (Monumento ai caduti), Como 1931-1933 [m302, gc356]. *Built*
- Land Reclamation Monument (Monumento alla bonifica integrale), SI 1932 [m303, gc375]
- Monument for Roberto Sarfatti (five versions) (Monumento a Roberto Sarfatti), Col d'Echele, Verona 1932-1938 [m314, gc445]. *Built*
- Mambretti funeral chapel (two versions) (Edicola funeraria Mambretti), Como 1937-1938 [m314, 509]

### Industrial or service buildings

- Pipe Foundry (Fonderia di tubi), Como 1927 [m295 gc311]
- Gas Works (Officina per la produzione del gas), Como 1927 [m295 gc313]
- Motion picture Production Studios (Stabilimenti cinematografici), Milano 1928 [m297 gc326]
- Ghislanzoni Seaplane Hangar (Idroscalo Ghislanzoni), Como 1930-1931 [m300, gc355]
- Airport (Aeroporto), Como 1933-1936 [m318, gc452]
- Utensil factory for Tavolazzi and Fumagalli (expansion) (Stabilimento Tavolazzi e Fumagalli), Missaglia, Como. 1938-1939 [m327, gc561]. With A. Terragni
- Standardized Service Station (Stazione di servizio standardizzata), SI 1940 ca [m331, gc615]

### Residential Buildings

- Villa Saibene, Como 1925-1926 [m294]
- Novocomum, apartment building (Novocomum, edificio per appartamenti), Como 1927-1929 [m295 gc315]. *Built*
- Villa with Pier (Villa con darsena), SI 1932 [m303, gc377]
- Artist's House on a Lake, V Triennale, (Casa di vacanze sul lago per l'artista), Milano 1933 [m310, gc409]. With Cereghini, Dell'Acqua, Giussani, Lingeri, Mantero, Ortelli, Ponci. Radice e Nizzoli (pittori). *Built and subsequently dismantled*
- Villa Lempicka, Brienno, Como 1933 [m310, gc408]
- Rustici Apartment House (Casa Rustici, edificio per appartamenti), Milano 1933-1935 [m311, gc434]. With Lingeri. *Built*
- Ghiringhelli Apartment House (Casa Ghiringhelli, edificio per appartamenti), Milano 1933 [m311, gc429]. With Lingeri. *Built*
- Toninello Apartment House (Casa Toninello, edificio per appartamenti), Milano 1933 [m311, gc432]. With Lingeri. *Built*
- Lavezzari Apartment House (Casa Lavezzari, edificio per appartamenti), Milano 1934-1935 [m314, gc465]. With Lingeri. *Built*
- Rustici-Comolli Apartment House (Casa Rustici-Comolli, edificio per appartamenti),

- Milano 1934-1935 [m315, gc467]. With Lingeri. *Built*
- Pedraglio Apartment House (Casa Pedraglio, edificio per appartamenti), Como 1935-1937 [m316, gc471]. *Built*
  - Villa for the Flower-Grower Amedeo Bianchi (Villa per il floricoltore Bianchi A), Rebbio, Como 1935 [m319]
  - Villa on a Lake (Villa sul lago), SI 1936 [m319, gc496]
  - House with two apartments for B. Bianchi (Villa con due appartamenti per il floricoltore Bianchi B), Rebbio, Como 1936-1937 [m319, gc476]
  - Villa for the Flower-Grower Amedeo Bianchi (Villa per il floricoltore Bianchi), Rebbio, Como 1936-1937 [m319, ]. *Built*
  - Villa Bianca, Seveso 1936-1937 [m319, gc503]. *Built*
  - Villa, Portofino 1936-1938 [m321, gc576]
  - Building, studio, Milano 1937-1938 [m324]
  - Low Cost Housing (Case popolari), Como 1938-1939 [m326, gc578]. With Sartoris. *Built*
  - Stepped-Section Housing (Casa a gradoni), Como 1938-1940 ca [m328, gc525]
  - Conservation of the Casa Vietti in the Cortesella quarter (Conservazione e inserimento di casa Vietti alla Cortesella), Como 1938-1940 [m329, gc603]
  - Giuliani-Frigerio Apartment House (Casa Giuliani Frigerio, edificio per appartamenti), Como 1939-42 [m330, gc585]. *Built*
  - Building intended for Colonia (Edificio destinato a Colonia), studio, SI 1940 ca [m331, gc613]
  - Cathedral in Reinforced Concrete (Cattedrale in cemento armato), SI 1932 [m303, gc372]
  - Central Covered Market, tender competition (Mercato coperto, concorso appalto), Como 1932 [m304, gc381]. With A. Terragni
  - School building, competition (Edificio scolastico, concorso), Lecco, Malpensata-Maddalene, 1932 [m305, gc379]. With Cereghini
  - Casa del fascio, Como 1932-1936 [m300, gc391]. *Built*
  - Palazzo littorio A, first stage competition (Palazzo littorio A, concorso di primo grado), Roma 1934 [m312, gc437]. With Carminati, Lingeri, Saliva, Vietti. Nizzoli e Sironi (pittori). Bertolini (consulenza statica)
  - Palazzo littorio B, first stage competition (Palazzo littorio B, concorso di primo grado), Roma 1934 [m312, gc437]. With Carminati, Lingeri, Saliva, Vietti. Nizzoli e Sironi (pittori). Bertolini (consulenza statica)
  - School buildings, competition (Edifici scolastici, concorso), Busto Arsizio 1934 [m313, gc443]. With Mosca, Prandina
  - Academic Building for the Brera Art Academy A (Accademia di Brera A, nuova sede), Milano 1935 [m317]. With Lingeri, Figini, Pollini
  - Cantonal Library (Biblioteca cantonale, concorso), Lugano 1936 [m319, gc493]. With Lingeri
  - Academic Building for the Brera Art Academy B (Accademia di Brera B, nuova sede), Milano 1936 [m317]. With Lingeri, Figini, Pollini
  - Sant'Elia Nursery School (Asilo infantile Sant'Elia), Como 1934 A, 1935 B, 1936 C [m320, gc371]. With A. Terragni
  - Sant'Elia Nursery School (Asilo infantile Sant'Elia), Como 1936-1937. [m320, gc453]. *Built*
  - Palazzo Littorio, competition, second stage (Palazzo Littorio, concorso di secondo grado), Roma 1937 [m322, gc515]. With Carminati, Lingeri, Saliva, Vietti. Nizzoli, Sironi (pittori)
  - Congress and Reception Hall, competition, first phase (Palazzo dei ricevimenti e dei congressi, concorso di primo grado), E42, Roma, 1937 [m322 gc530]. With Lingeri, Cattaneo
  - Congress and Reception Hall, competition, second phase (Palazzo dei ricevimenti e dei
- Public Buildings**
- Metropole-Suisse Hotel, redesign of the façade's first two floors (Albergo Metropole-Suisse, ridisegno della facciata dei primi due piani), Como 1926-1927 [m295 gc303]. *Built*
  - Casa del fascio, Como 1928 [m300, gc391]
  - Chalet with a Tennis Court (Chalet per un campo da tennis), Olgiate comasco 1928 [m296 gc327]
  - Major Hospital, competition (Ospedale maggiore, concorso), Milano 1929 [m297, gc301– di incerta attribuzione a GT]. With (?) Lingeri e A. Terragni
  - Posta Hotel (Albergo Posta), Como 1930-1935, six variants [m301, gc335]. *Built*
  - Nursery School (Asilo a Como), Como 1932 [m320] With A. Terragni

congressi, concorso di secondo grado), E42, Roma, 1937-1938 [m322, gc530]. With Lingeri, Cattaneo

- Danteum, Roma 1938 [m325, gc565]. With Lingeri. Sironi (pittore)
- Casa del fascio, Lissone 1938-1939 [m327, gc545]. With Carminati. *Built*
- Academic Building for the Brera Art Academy C (Accademia di Brera C), Milano 1939 [m317, gc483]. With Lingeri, Figini, Pollini
- Silk Trades University (Università della seta), Como 1938-1940ca [m328, gc553]
- Mass Theatre (Teatro di Massa), studi, SI 1939-1940 [m330, gc622]
- Cinema (Cinema teatro), studi, SI 1940 [m330, gc612]
- Casa del fascio di Trastevere, Roma 1940 [m330, gc595]
- Palace of Glass (Palazzo del vetro), studies, E42, Roma, 1940 [m330, gc608]
- Pavilion at the Exhibit of the State Railways (Padiglione alla mostra delle ferrovie di stato), studies, E42 Roma, 1940 [m331, gc611]
- Exhibition (Esposizione), studies, Lissone 1940 [m331, gc614]
- Partially covered stadium (Stadio parzialmente coperto), studies, SI 1941 [m331, gc617]
- Cathedral (Cattedrale), SI 1943 [m331, gc618]

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- Plan of Como, competition (Piano regolatore, concorso), Como 1934 [m312, CM8, gc415 e gc419]. With Bottoni, Dodi, Giussani, Lingeri, Pucci, Uslenghi e Cattaneo. Approved (*Approvato*).
- Modern Colonial City (Città coloniale moderna), 1935-1936 [m316, gc415 e gc473]
- Milan Trade Fair, competition (Nuova fiera campionaria, concorso), Milano 1938 [m325, gc542]. With Bottoni, Lingeri, Mucchi, Pucci
- Satellite workers quarter (Quartiere operaio satellite), Rebbio-Como 1938. [m325, gc555]. With Sartoris
- Cavour Square, renovation, (Piazza Cavour, restructuring), Como 1938-1940 ca. [m328]
- Cortesella District, Renovation, (Quartiere Cortesella, Ristrutturazione), Como 1938-1940 [m328, gc519]. With Cattaneo

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- Gruppo 7a – Gruppo 7 (Castagnoli, Figini, Frette, Larco, Pollini, Rava, Terragni), *Architettura I* (Architecture I), «La Rassegna Italiana», December 1926 (em57)
- Gruppo 7b – G7, *Architettura II. Gli Stranieri*. (Architecture II. The Foreigners), «La Rassegna Italiana», February 1927 (em64)
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- Marmi, Il Vetro (Marbles, The Glass), bozze per il «Il Giornale d'Italia», 1938 (em151, em152)
- *Discorso ai comaschi* (Speech to the people of Como), «L'Ambrosiano», March 1, 1940 (em45)

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- With Cereghini, Dell'Acqua, Lingeri, *La polemica dell'architettura razionale. La risposta degli architetti di Como a S.E. Piacentini* (The Controversy of Rational Architecture: The Response of Como's Architects to His Excellency Piacentini), «Il lavoro fascista», May 14, 1931. (Cennamo 76 p. 310)
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- *Casa sul lago per l'artista* (A house by the lake for the artist), «Casabella», n. 66, June 1933
  - *Como*, relazione al IV Ciam (Como, report for the IV CIAM), July 1933 (em115)
  - *Gli architetti di Como alla V Triennale relazione sulla Casa per un artista sul Lago* (The architects from Como at the V Triennale: Report on the House for an Artist by the Lake), «Quadrante», August 1933
  - With Carminati, Lingeri, Saliva, Vietti. Nizzoli e Sironi (pittori), *Concorso per il Palazzo Littorio a Roma e della Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista in via dell'Impero a Roma* (Competition for the Palazzo Littorio in Rome and the Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution on Via dell'Impero in Rome), Milano Modiano 1934 (em122)
  - CM8, Relazione al progetto di concorso per il Piano Regolatore di Como (Report on the competition project for the Master Plan of Como), Como 1934 in (em117)
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  - With Lingeri e Cattaneo, Relazione al concorso di primo grado per il Palazzo dei Ricevimenti e delle Feste all'E42" (Report on the first-level competition for the Palace of Receptions and Celebrations), 1938 (em145)
  - With Lingeri, Relazione sul Danteum (Report on the Danteum) (in Schumacher 80)
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  - Gruppo 7, *Risposta alla lettera di Marziano Bernardi* (Reply to the letter from Marziano Bernardi), «La Rassegna Italiana», May 1927 (in Patetta 72 p. 137)
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  - Bozza Lettera al Direttore (Draft Letter to the Director), «La Sera», January 25, 1937 (em165)
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  - *Parliamo un po' male di ... Garibaldi* (Let's speak a bit poorly of ... Garibaldi), «La Rassegna di Architettura», April 1937
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