

Bologna historic city center: an current reading

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Abstract

Nowadays studying the preservation policies of the historic city center of Bologna means not only observing the outcome of a long and well known experimental period, but also assessing the architectural consequences of the whole town and, perhaps, of a larger territorial contest.

As many theories and actions took place and many reputed people have been involved in such experience, this might be a good means to assess the distance between that cultural context and the one we live in. The current city center of Bologna is the outcome of both that experimental period and of the structural changing in the urban community and economy, that cannot be controlled by technicians and administrators. These changing are the local effects of global processes, and they virtually affect the use of urban spaces and their physical aspects. It is by no means useful to consider the historical city center of a Bologna-like city as a warehouse of ancestral qualities that must be preserved, rather than to focus on material and non – material relationships between single part of the whole city and their role on a metropolitan scale. To this regard it could be interesting to highlight the words by Manfredo Tafuri, a bright critic, who a few decades ago, wrote about the experience of Bologna city center plan. Tafuri first recognized the ability of the people involved in it to put into (“political and technical”) practice “the abstract cultural issues” emerged from the Gubbio Conference in 1960. Then he commented the “ambiguous anti – urban features” of the whole experience. If now we can not regard Bologna as a metropolis, this is maybe due to that anti – urban features, which is still strong and spread.