

ARCHITECTURE IN THE MAKING: CONVERSATIONS ON URBAN MORPHOLOGY AND DESIGN

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BOOK REVIEW OF

Salamouni, R., Scardigno, N. and Strappa, G. (2025) Architecture in the Making. Conversations on Urban Morphology and Design. Cham: Springer. ISBN: 978-3-031-86835-1, 163 pages.

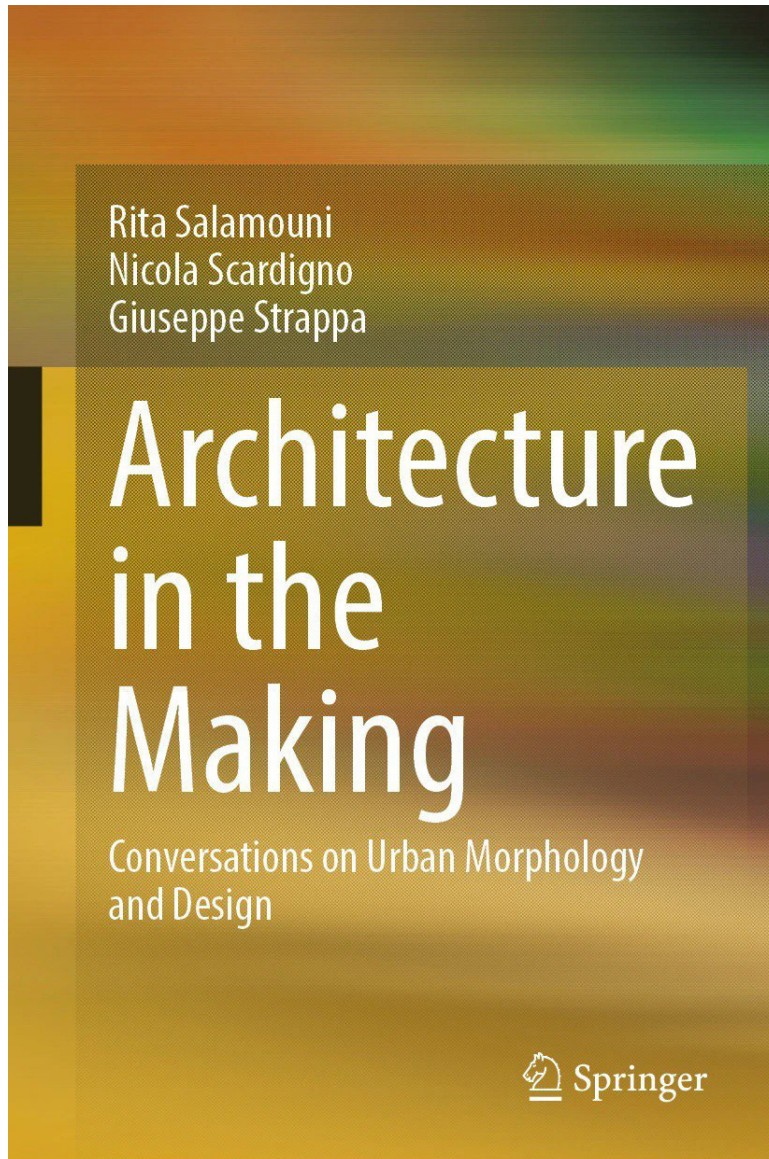


Figure 1. Salamouni, R., Scardigno, N. and Strappa, G. (2025) *Architecture in the Making. Conversations on Urban Morphology and Design*. Book cover.

The book *Architecture in the Making: Conversations on Urban Morphology and Design* presents a treatise on architecture advanced via a systematic dialogue. Primarily a dialogue among Nicola Scardigno, Rita Salamouni, and Giuseppe Strappa, it defines an architectural conceptual framework rooted in the real built world. With nearly four decades architecture research experience, teaching and a practice that bridges theory and interdisciplinary projects, Giuseppe Strappa channels his expertise into this book, providing a distinctive combination of practical and theoretical perspectives.

Mainstream architecture often prioritises the creation of buildings as singular manifestos for the architect's personal style—Strappa offers a radical corrective. He collapses the distinction between analysis and creation, asserting that the act of reading the built environment is not merely a preliminary step but the very substance of the project itself. The au-

thor develops a design method grounded in the theoretical foundations established by Saverio Muratori and Gianfranco Caniggia. However, he evolves their framework through a necessary innovation of their core tenets, expanding his focus to address the complexities of contemporary architectural reality. Making this book a continuous work that develops from groundwork into mature research focused on the humanistic environment and a continuous observation of the transformations happening in the real world. Throughout the book, the author uses a logical chapter progression, moving from foundational methodological principles to broader scales of application and, ultimately, to an expressive synthesis.

The book presents architecture and the built environment as an organism, shaped by intrinsic processes of formation and transformation. This concept of “formative architecture,” summarized in the book’s title *Architecture in the Making* (Fig. 1), is developed through a logical sequence and narration. The author treats the built reality as a living organism, expanding this understanding to the territorial scale to reinforce the idea that city and landscape alike are products of evolutionary processes.

By observing architectural phenomena through a lens free of prior judgement, Strappa uses an interrogative method of uncovering an interpretive framework where architecture is defined by its own formation. A progression that he expresses to be deeply humanistic; rather than a mere mechanical tool, he views it as a living element integrated into the social fabric. The book introduces fundamental concepts, including principles defined as “formativity” and “generativity”, to provide a systematic method for understanding the evolving architecture and the transforming built environment. To substantiate these concepts, over twenty projects and research studies are deployed to elucidate the practical application of the proposed methodology. Notable examples include projects that demonstrate his key morphological concepts, such as the extension of the Terni Cemetery project in Italy, the renovation of Piazza Mastai in Rome, and the transformation of the urban park at the former Transandina Station. By presenting these alongside global interventions subject to critical debate, Strappa demonstrates how his methodology navigates the tension between building restoration and contemporary demand.

In a departure from the prevailing trend of signature-driven architecture, the author positions the architect as a disciplined participant within the architectural life cycle—a system defined by continuous transformation rather than static

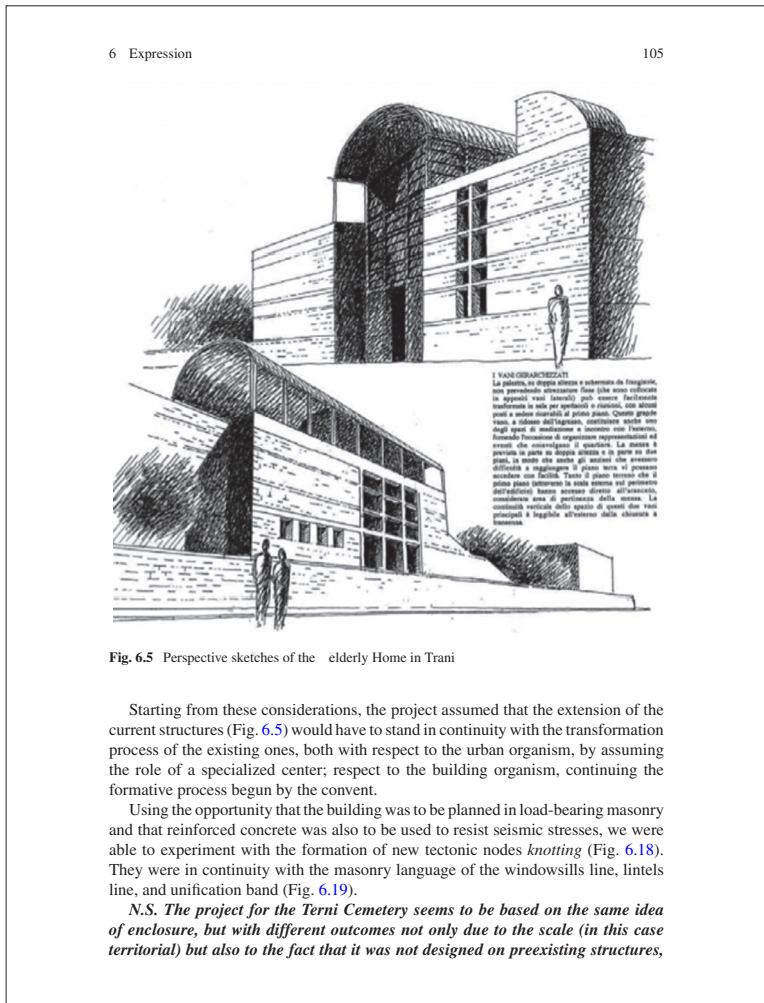


Figure 2. Layout page.

completion. He rejects the romanticised notion of design as a purely subjective projection of individual authorship, advocating instead for an ethical practice rooted in responsibility and structural congruence. By adopting this rigorous methodology, the architect ensures their intervention is not a self-referential anomaly but a coherent contribution to the ongoing evolution of the built environment.

Ultimately, the book brings a human-centred approach where architecture is a civic art, which contends that architectural knowledge is not a static relic but a living body of wisdom that must be perpetually re-appropriated to meet shifting historical exigencies. By aligning foundational principles with the specificities of the present, Strappa recasts tradition as a fertile catalyst for contemporary design. It is through this constant act of translation that architecture maintains its vitality, leveraging historical depth as a rigorous, active framework for the complexities of the modern landscape.