

**Ferran Sagarra i Trias.** *Barcelona ciutat de transició (1848-1868): el projecte urba a través dels treballs de l'arquitecte Miquel Garriga i Roca.* Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1996. 750 pp. \$99, cloth, ISBN 978-84-7283-333-3.

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The fresh publication of Ferran Sagarra's Ph.D. has been due to the award Lluís Domènech i Montaner, offered by the Institut d'Estudis Catalans of Barcelona in 1993. For us, the time between the lecture based on the thesis (1990) and its publication guarantees for the maturation of the ideas developed in it and that is specially relevant for the scope of the themes presented in its pages.

In fact, we are faced with a difficult book in comparison with the panorama of Spanish urban history. We say difficult, in a context, the Spanish one, where the historical study of urban form has always been defined by the observation of the *ensanche de poblacion* (urban extension) as the generic form of growth and urban transformation in the XIXth. century.[1] The contribution of Ferran Sagarra i Trias is centred in a not so well known face of this debate, that has Barcelona as its principal scene.

Exploring the past production of urban space, the author proposes to examine the inner logic of the other projects of urban transformation existing at the time of Cerdà's plan for Barcelona in 1859. Cerdà's plan was the base plan for the articulation of the law of *ensanche de poblaciones* that, since 1864, controlled urban development in Spanish cities. In short, Sagarra examines the 'conditions of possibility' that went on in the construction of alternative visions for the reform and

extension of Barcelona, in a period of interesting intellectual reflection in Europe that saw the birth of modern town planning.

Sagarra does this by surveying the professional activity of Miguel Garriga y Roca (1808-1888), municipal architect of Barcelona during this period. It is important to say that we are not dealing with a biography, either personal or professional of this architect.[2] On the contrary, the professional activity of Garriga y Roca is usefully taken as a vertebral axis of this important chapter for the city's history. Thus, the important point is the topographical work and planning tasks of this architect in the context of the broad urban transformation of XIXth century Barcelona.

The book is organised in three different parts, following the periodization of the title: 1840's, 1850's and 1860's; closely related to formation and professional maturity of Miguel Garriga y Roca. In the first part, the formation of Garriga is linked within the years of the imminent urban transformation of the city. The second part is centred in the construction of the plans that needed this transformation, and the role played by Garriga y Roca in them. That is the establishment of plans for the extension of the city, and the importance of Cerdà's. Finally, in the third part, the interest is focused on the difficult articulation of two con-

trasting views for the urban transformation, embodied in the work of Cerda and Garriga y Roca.

In Barcelona, the big contradictions of nineteenth-century European cities took a morphological importance due to the wall, built up in the XVth. century,[3] and to the military rule that obstructed the housing outside this wall. It is easy to imagine that these conditions affected the necessary urban planning for the territorial growth of a city, that had just begun feel the scope of industrial production.

This is the point of departure for the work of Ferran Sagarra i Trias, and right here are the basis for the contradictions, and interest groups, present in planning the future development of Barcelona. The main differences are in the fact of thinking the city in terms of a capital or an industrial centre articulating Catalan, and in a broad sense, the Spanish geography. This is the context in which Miguel Garriga y Roca grew up professionally, a context where Spanish architects learned a discipline strongly influenced by neo-classicism, at the time that they began to discuss the urban implications of the "utopian" thinking.

In this sense, the French *Revue Generale de l'Architecture et des Travaux Publics*, a means for the diffusion of urban ideas from the disciples of Fourier and Saint-Simon, is central in this process and provoked homologous discussions in architectural journals in Barcelona and Spain (the *Boletín Enciclopedico de Nobles Artes* and the *Boletín Espanol de Arquitectura*). The pages of these journals contributed to both the configuration of a reflexive practice of architecture, and to legitimate the importance of architects for urban transformation. At this point it is important to say that, during these years, Spanish architects were in conflict over their competencies with the new corporation of civil engineers,[4] an element that leads Sagarra to focus on the difficult relations between Miguel Garriga i Roca, and the engineer Ildefonso Cerda, at the time of their work for Barcelona.

The breakdown of the walls, the required step for further transformation, was possible only after difficult administrative procedures between Barcelona's local government and the central government of Spain. This moment was perceived by the local elite as the opportunity to nourish the city with the elements of monumentality and urban beauty characteristic of the major European capital cities. The debate was carried up in the most important civic corporations of the time, while the preliminary work for the establishment of an extension plan for the city went on. The topographical works were entrusted outside the walls to Ildefonso Cerda, and for the urban centre to Miguel Garriga y Roca.

From 1854 to 1860, the year in which Cerda's regular plan for Barcelona, was finally approved, the debate about the planning of the city's transformation grew in intensity, and soon was known as *la batalla por el ensanche* (the battle for the extension).[5] The key for understanding this process was the fact that the local government had not promoted Cerda's work. Then, in 1859, when the idea of the achievement of an alternative for the Cerda's plan was practically impossible, the local government started a public contest to have new ideas about the extension of the city. From these, the City Council would choose the project that would be carried out. In 1860, after political problems, the municipality applied Cerda's plan, instead of Antonio Rovira y Trias'.

The basis for this confrontation was due to the fact that the plan supported by the central government was not concerned with important points in the local agenda for the urban extension. In short, the opposition to Cerda's project, was organised through the lack of attention that he paid to urban beauty and monumentality, and to the fact that he privileged an urban growth with a strong "egalitarian" character, that is, without a clear social division of urban space. Dealing with this complicated matter, Ferran Sagarra i Trias has underlined the important contribution

of Miguel Garriga y Roca, centring the polemic around the importance of the harbour and the railways, not only in the broad articulation of the territory, but also in the value of new central situations in the different extension plans.

Thus the plan of Antonio Rovira y Trias represented the city, planned from the local perspective, and in which Miguel Garriga y Roca played a central role defining it as the municipal architect. The idea of city presented in this plan could be followed through the theory of the most advanced architectural works of the time. Sagarra i Trias has especially showed the influence of Leonce Reynaud's *Traite d'Architecture* (1858) in the historical and processual reading that Antonio Rovira y Trias gave to the city's growth.

As we see, the existing city is another of the important points related to the new central situation. For the author it is clear that one of the central interests of the local government were the articulation between the "old" and the "new" city. Again Cerda's plan didn't give any effective answer to this question. For the municipal corporation, the extension of the city was understood as a mean for the rebuilding of great parts of the "old" city. The topographical map of the inner city by Miguel Garriga y Roca became, since then, a key element for the rethinking of Cerda's plan with the view of the pre-existing urban reality.

What Sagarra i Trias intends to highlight, is the importance of Barcelona in the second half of the nineteenth-century, as a laboratory for the first theoretical synthesis of modern urbanism. The theoretical contribution of Ildefonso Cerda,[6] partially realised in the well known *Ensanche* of Barcelona, had to interact with another theoretical model of the time, represented in this context by Antonio Rovira y Trias and Miguel Garriga y Roca. That model was promoted in France, and especially in Paris, by Cesar Daly through the pages of the *Revue Generale de l'Architecture*, and shared with Reynaud's *Traite* an organic and historicist reading of urban space. Both are impor-

tant elements in the works of these architects that contributed to the urban transformation of Barcelona.

The topographical map of Garriga that implied a plan for the reform of the inner city, is read by Ferran Sagarra as a way to modify Cerda's plan to suit the local interests, and related to the correction of the new central situation. In this sense we must understand the famous boulevards, made by Garriga y Roca, for Barcelona. Their final destiny is located in the ambiguous spaces of the historical alternatives, that every time rise from oblivion to show us that we live in only one, of so many possible worlds.

#### Notes:

[1]. For a general discussion on this topic, see the classic work of Manuel de Sola-Morales. *Los ensanches (I): el ensanche de Barcelona*, Barcelona: Laboratorio de Urbanismo, 1978. A recent approach can be found in the Ph.D. of Laurent Coudroy de Lille, *L'ensanche de poblacion en Espagne: invention d'une pratique d'aménagement urbain (1840-1890)*, Paris, Université de Paris X-Nanterre, 1994.

[2]. For this kind of work see the Ph.D. of Gloria Camarero Gomez, *Aspectos de la arquitectura en Barcelona durante el siglo XIX: Miguel Garriga i Roca, 1808-1888*, Barcelona, Universitat de Barcelona, Facultat de Geografia i Historia, 1989.

[3]. See the work of Albert Garcia i Espuche i Manuel Guardia i Bassols, *Espai i societat a la Barcelona pre-industrial*, Barcelona, Edicions de la Magrana, 1986.

[4]. Especially see the work of Antonio Bonet Correa et al, *La polemica ingenieros-arquitectos en España. Siglo XIX*, Madrid, Colegio de Ingenieros de Caminos, Canales y Puertos, Ed. Turner, 1985.

[5]. The social and political complexity of the points in this debate can be found, among others, in Ramon Grau. "Las batallas por el ensanche" in Ramon Grau et al, *Exposicion Universal de*

*Barcelona. Libro del centenario (1888-1988)*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona-L'ÒAvenc, 1988.

[6]. The theoretical ideas of Ildefonso Cerda are published in facsimile edition: *Teoria general de la urbanizacion y aplicacion de sus principios y doctrinas a la reforma y ensanche de Barcelona* (3 vols.) Madrid, Instituto de Estudios Ficales, 1968-1971; and *Teoria de la construccion de las ciudades. Cerda y Barcelona* (vol.1) Madrid, Ministerio para las Administraciones Publicas-Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1991.

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