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Talking to the Eyes by Drawing: Design Representations in the Magazines in the Mid-19th-Century

Roberta Spallone

Abstract

Since the 1840s in Germany, England and France, the architectural magazines, born in the last years of the 18th-century, have been considered a privileged medium for the spread of architectural debate and topicality. Driven by continuous improvements in printing techniques, design representations have increased and been integrated with texts in ever more organic ways, reflecting the need for an ambit in which the respective professional skills are defined. New architectural typologies, materials and construction techniques are shared through drawings that, in the different geographical areas, take on particular features, which are linked to artistic culture, architectural debate and the representation methods developed in the Enlightenment schools and proposed in the coeval treatises.

Keywords: Design drawing, Architecture magazines, Representation methods, Representation techniques, Printing techniques.

Introduction

"Il faut parler aux yeux par le dessin", said Cesar Daly in 1864 on the pages of *Revue générale d'architecture* [Saboya 2001, p.73]. From the 1840s in Germany, England, and France, architecture magazines underwent considerable development. The magazine was an open form to the plurality of debates and experiences, a spreading agent of categories and models in schools, and a rapid and up-to-date transmission medium of professional knowledge that became, at that time, the main pole of the flow of representations.

The essential interlacing of text and figures evolved into an acquisition of importance and space by the figures, favoured by the new reprint techniques that, even when in colour, had reduced costs and time, by the choice of gradually larger formats, and by the interposing of images with the writing.

The rise of the magazine for the communication of architectural topicality

"Les Revues seules ont le loisir de rassembler des séries, de dessiner l'ensemble du mouvement des idées, d'en dégager la signification et d'en faire ressortir les conséquences" [Daly 1861, col.9-10]. The periodical press began to assert itself during the 18th-century, as one of the most effective supports of the so-called reading revolution and its passage from extensive to intensive; mechanization must respond to the needs of this sector through rapid yet inexpensive and high-quality production [Barbier 2004, p. IX]. Nevertheless, magazines dedicated to architecture and the world of construction appeared only at the end of the century, accompanying the stages of the industrial revolution and involving an awareness of the professional figure of the architect.

In the 1840s, an explosion of architectural periodicals occurred. The Institute of British Architects was formed in 1834 and, in 1840, the Société Centrale des Architectes. These magazines assumed the role of constitutive elements of social and professional status and agents of the transmission of categories and models [Barbier 2004, p.VIII].

While architectural activity was emancipated from the patronage of the elites, and new institutions of industrial and urban society took on rapidly growing importance (e.g., municipal companies, banks, businesses, school districts, and government departments) [King 1976, p. 32], the magazine became instrumental to the consolidation of the profession during this phase of modernization and development. The linking of press and architecture confirmed a common desire of publishers and architects to create a communication tool able to convey architectural topicality to a wider audience. Thus, architectural theory had the opportunity to spread through the periodical press, which allowed not only an extended debate but also to make it public and to include remarks by the readers.

Faced with the experimentation of new materials and the evolution of building procedures, the periodicals attempted to fill the gaps and backwardnesses of official teaching. The magazines, especially those whose publication lasted for several years, were characterized by the continuous changes they were subject to, due to contingencies, but even more so by the succession of directors and publishers who often occupied a leading position among the intellectuals of the time (think of figures like Daly, Lance, Godwin and Viollet-Le Duc son).

If the periodicity guaranteed the continuous updating of the information, other transformations concerned the frequency according to which the magazines were printed. Because of the urgency to report the latest findings of the sector, these magazines were published as often as twice per week, with imaginable repercussions on the graphics apparatus [Bouvier 2004, p. 79].

The remarkable spread of these magazines, also internationally, was favoured by the increasingly efficient transport and distribution networks. Hitchcock, in the introduction to the rich bibliography that accompanies the volume *L'architettura dell'Ottocento e del Novecento*, stated that for the study of the Western world's architecture from 1840 onwards, the most valuable sources are professional magazines [Hitchcock 2000, p. 593]. Bouvier observed that the success of the magazine as an agile means of information sharing was linked to that of the image, whose production

considerably increased in the examined period; with the industrialization of the 19th-century press images become the popular media par excellence. Bouvier also highlights the need for studies on architectural representation in magazines [Bouvier 2004, pp. 1-9].

It is also important to mention Bini's study of the Florentine magazine *Ricordi di Architettura* (1878–1900), which is particularly relevant to the rigorous methodological approach [Bini 1990]. Along the same research line, the author researched the design drawing in Turin magazines between the 1870s and early 20th-century [Spallone 2017].

The architecture magazines re-established the connections between architecture and construction and practice and theory, and helped to restore the architect's function as a *maître d'œuvre* through the enhancement of technical drawing [Bouvier 2004, p. 86].

The study of these magazines, therefore, requires a parallel investigation of texts and images, as well as an analysis of the evolution of their formal aspect. Indeed, the architectural press offers the reader two distinct parts: the editorial part and the graphic part, which are at the same time independent and inseparable. During the second half of the 19th-century, printing systems were in full development; the rotary presses allowed the production of a growing number of copies and the duplication procedures of the illustrations were perfected, leading to the reproduction of high-quality photographic plates. The teams of engravers and draughtsmen of the various magazines generated a recognizable style that distinguished one from the other.

In this period, there was a profound transformation of the relationship between figuration, theory, and practice of architecture, which concerned both the techniques and graphic codes, of both the content and the status of the image [Picon 1992, p. 153].

The link between architectural theories and the iconographic apparatus of the magazine had obvious influences on the representation techniques. Thus, after 1840, the 19th-century debate on architectural polychromy, fueled by the discovery of colors in classical architecture, reverberated in the application of chromolithography, promoted by the Parisian lithographer Lemercier, which enjoyed great success, and, despite the high costs, expanded in the European press [Spallone 2016, pp. 290-292], and finally, since the 1870s, was gradually replaced by photography. Similarly, the Gothic revival (the main expression of the revivalism that characterized the architectural culture of the time) was expressed in the representation of build-

ings (often with a religious function), with perspectives of picturesque taste.

Aware of the risk of generalizations or, conversely, of partial readings of the phenomenon, given the extent of the field of investigation, it was preferred, here, to discuss the proposed theme through a selection of magazines, consulted in their original form, geographically grouped, and characterized by a long period of publication and a wide international diffusion, in order to construct a plot for more extensive studies and to suggest possible thematic developments of the survey.

Specific readings on thematic lines focusing on the centrality of the drawing could provide deeper insights into aspects such as the representation of new typologies at the service of 19th-century society, new materials, the survey drawing of the ancient buildings (with their specificity and use of color, but also with the stereotomical applications to the vaulted systems) and the design of the decoration that manifests the intertwining of geometry and color.

Germany: the technical representation conquers space

In Germany, the architectural theory was influenced by the recent debate on the style raised by Schinkel and, in the mid-century, was dominated by Semper, who intervened on central themes of contemporary thought: the value of the architectural shape as expression of an idea, the polychromy of ancient architecture, the truth of materials, their constructive meaning and the problem of cladding. Architecture magazines became the scenery for such discussions [Kruft 1987, pp. 60-69].

In the European context, German magazines represent a paradigmatic example of the passage, in the transmission of design models, from the formula and format of the book to those of the magazine.

Indeed, in Germany, we witness the progressive and inevitable abandonment of the page *in-octavo*, in favour of larger formats, which went hand-in-hand with the ever-increasing space dedicated to the drawings, present both intercalated to the text and on separate plates. To this was added a typical aspect of German publishing: at their origins, they used the Gothic characters, while in the mid-19th-century there was a transition to Roman characters, which facilitated the international dissemination of texts.

Architectural education took place in the academies, including the Academy of Berlin, founded in 1799 by David

Gilly on the model of the École Polytechnique and the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Monaco, established in 1808, whose regulation was drafted with the contribution of Schelling. Contemporarily, the Technische Hochschule, the Technische Universität and the Polytechnische Schule, in which civil engineering was taught, were starting to proliferate in Berlin (1770), Karlsruhe (1825), Munich (1827), Dresden (1828) and Stuttgart (1829).

In the middle of the century, the manual of Gustav Adolf Breymann [Breymann 1853] was published, which was divided into three parts dedicated to the construction of (I) stone and masonry; (II) wood; (III) iron; and a further one (IV) various buildings, where the text opens up to technological innovations fully developed in the second half of the century [Tamagno 1993, pp. 119-120].

Breymann's intent was to offer young architects a series of knowledge on the elements and systems used in construction; by delegating their connection and organization to the design experience they would become protagonists in the future, revealing a particularly innovative teaching approach: "design (and therefore architecture) cannot be considered an academic discipline as the science and technology of materials and building elements" [Tamagno 1993, p. 122]. This also prevents the manual from being quickly overcome due to the rapidity of technological innovations. Two long-lasting magazines characterized, among others, the examined period.

Allgemeine Bauzeitung (1836–1918) was published monthly in Wien and directed by architect Förster. This publication used Gothic characters until 1865. The introduction of the first issue expressed the desire to describe and spread modern constructions with texts and drawings [Saboya 1991, p. 70]. The adoption of the *in-quarto* format (21 × 28) resulted in a harmonious inserting of the image into the text, which was articulated on two columns, while the numerous full-page plates took advantage of the greater available space for publishing plans, elevations, sections and details of the projects.

Until 1891, the magazine was flanked by a collection of plates, the *Abbildungen zur Allgemeinen Bauzeitung*, in *in-folio* format (30 × 44), which showed models and building designs of international scope, drawn up by technical drawings in large scales, which allowed an understanding of the technological and decorative features (figs. 1, 2).

The monthly *Zeitschrift für Bauwesen* (1851–1931), born under the direction of Hoffmann and published in Berlin by Ernst & Korn, used the *in-quarto* format (27 × 35) on two columns, with interspersed or full-page figures, and

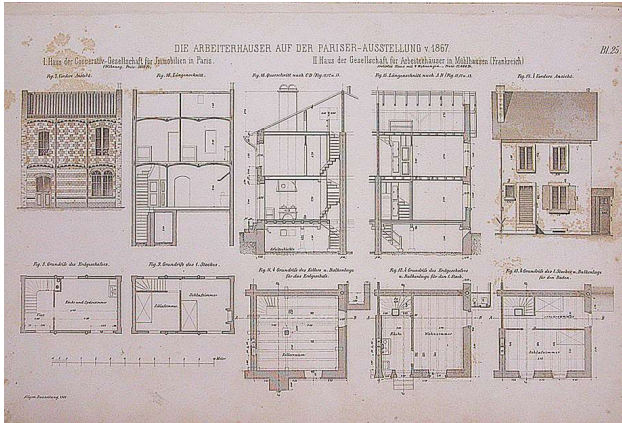


Fig. 1. Models of workers' houses at Paris exhibition in 1867, in *Abbildungen zur Allgemeinen Bauzeitung* 1868, pl. 25.

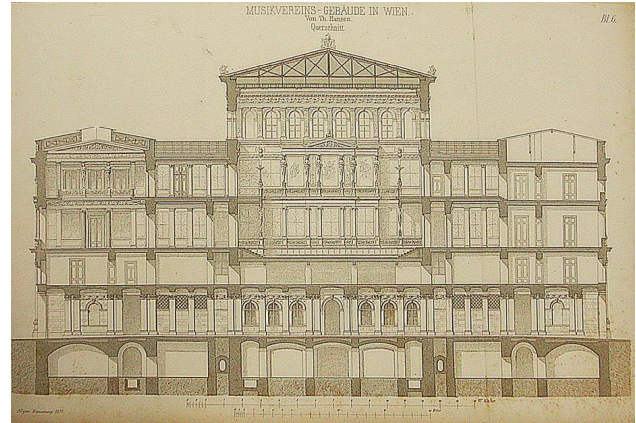


Fig. 2. Von Th. Hansen, Musikvereins-Gebäude in Wien, in *Abbildungen zur Allgemeinen Bauzeitung* 1870, pl. 6.

published the complementary collection of drawings. The *Atlas zur Zeitschrift für Bauwesen*, in *in-folio* format (32 × 46), was initially reproduced with lithographic technique and then with heliographic technique. In this magazine, the architectural theme, intertwined with engineering slant projects (e.g., hydraulic, mechanical), which often developed together with physical-technical checks.

In the *Atlas*, there were examples of dwellings (urban and rural) and public typologies (e.g., churches, mills, barracks, courts and galleries), but also bridges and canals (mostly national, while the foreign models were mostly French). Each building was developed on several plates, in dimensioned orthographic projections, often related to each other, and even at different scales, up to the details. Particularly interesting is the emphasis placed on the relationship between building and environment, solved both with contextualized plans that reveal an accurate use of the cartographic conventions of the time, both with detailed perspective views. The chiaroscuro technical drawings are accompanied by some chromolithographs of great pictorial quality (fig. 3).

England: the picturesque drawing affirms itself

In England, while the architectural debate focused on revivalism, with particular attention to the Gothic, and a series of architectural manuals and dictionaries revealed a

technologically very progressive attitude [Kruft 1987, p. 79-113], between the 1930s and 1980s, at least 70 magazines dedicated to architecture and construction were born. *The civil engineer and architect's journal* (1837–1868), founded by William Laxton, was a monthly magazine in the *in-quarto* format (21 × 29), with the text on two columns, in which some line drawings were inserted.

To the initial main engineering-oriented approach, a new focus on the buildings in phase of design and historical ones followed. The latter were mainly of worship, and had monumental character: in this case, the focus was on restorations, also testified by the drawings included in the text, especially façades and perspectives. Furthermore, full-page plates obtained from engravings of high artistic quality appeared, illustrating surveys and projects, in which the building envelope is emphasized through the representation of elevations and perspectives, with in-depth details on the decorations (fig. 4).

The weekly *The Builder* (1842–1966), was directed by George Godwin (an architect and surveyor) from 1844. For about 40 years, from 1844 to 1883, the magazine was the most important in England, right in the period when architecture became a profession [Pevsner 1992, p. 79], and Godwin was recognized as the most influential editor of his time.

The magazine introduced innovations that were inspired by the *Revue générale de l'Architecture*, which was found-

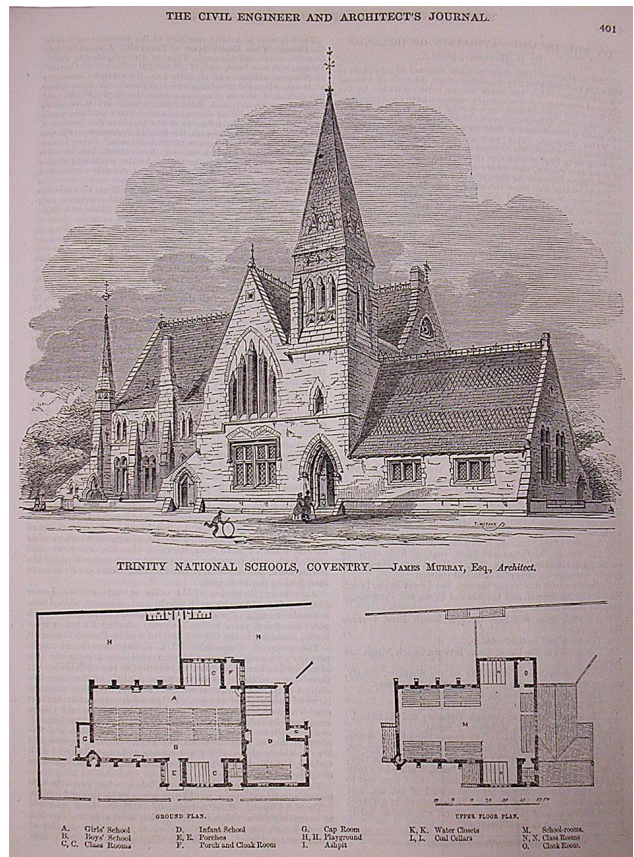
Fig. 3. Example of a façade on the new Maximilianstrasse in Munich, in *Zeitschrift für Bauwesen* 1855, pl. 22.

Fig. 4. Murray, *Schools in Coventry*, in *The civil engineer and architect's journal*, vol. XVII, 1854, p. 401.

ed 2 years earlier. These innovations included the breakdown on three columns of the text in the *in-quarto* page (22 × 33), in which the interspersed figures were freely arranged, even by bleeding from one column to another. Furthermore, two high-quality illustrated pages printed on the same paper were introduced. The same social project of the respective directors was also shared by the two magazines, aimed at improving the living conditions of the lower classes through the study and publication of numerous examples of houses for the working class (fig. 5).

The full-page plates represented designs of buildings drawn in small-scale plans with typical graphics standards of the typological representation and perspective views of exteriors and interiors, generally having an elevated point-of-view compared to the human-eye view. While the technical drawings were simple and linear, the perspective representations researched for pictorial effects by rendering of the volumes through the chiaroscuro and the insertion of human figures (fig. 6).

The architect (1869–1968) was founded in London and was published in-quarto (23 × 33) on two columns, with 16 pages and two full-page plates at the end of each issue, which soon doubled. This weekly publication often hosted the debate on the education and profession of the architect, considered the main interlocutor, together with the civil engineer and the builder. In the presentation of the magazine, Smith (the director) anticipated that the illustrations would be chosen according to their practical utility and would be produced by lithography or carved by the best engravers. From the iconographic point-of-view, the magazine initially moved along the same patterns as *The Builder* and *The Building News*, although with the printing of contemporary designs' external perspectives, of picturesque taste. Later, were published also in-scale plans and sections of buildings (e.g., productive) whose technological systems took on particular significance, in connection with the new interest in health engineering. This topic, in the weekly publication, had a dedicated part of the text, accompanied by overall axonometric views (fig. 7).



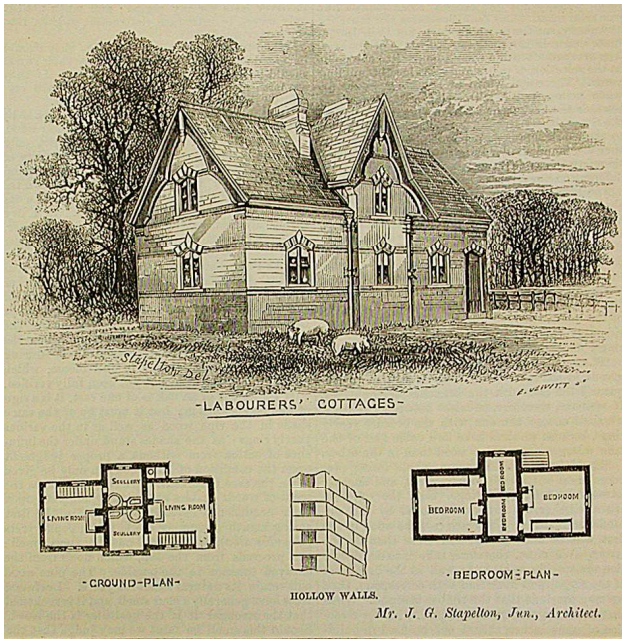


Fig. 5. Stapelton, *Labourers' cottages*, in *The builder*, 21 feb 1863, p. 131.

France: the versatile drawing becomes an integral part of the magazine

In France, the disruptive influence of the Enlightenment thought, which had found its most significant systematization in the mid-18th century in the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and d'Alembert, had important reverberations on the scope of the art of building and its teaching, followed by a profound instance of rationality, a century after [Griseri, Gabetti 1973, p. 5].

The new Enlightenment schools founded in Paris, the *École Polytechnique* (1794) and the *Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers* (1798), flanked the pre-existent engineering schools, the *École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées* (1747) and the *École du Génie de Mézières* (1748), and those of an academic nature, the *Académie Royale d'Architecture*, reconstituted within the *Institut de France* in 1796, and the *École Spéciale d'Architecture*, from 1806, as a section of the *École des Beaux-Arts*.

From the early 19th-century, in such institutions, teachers such as Rondelet and Durand, through the writing of manuals, linked the educational opportunity to the process of reviewing the projectual disciplines that, in France, "proceeds aiming at scientific rationality while the educational institutions play an important role as a link between theoretical research and the operative scope" [Ramazzotti 1984, p. 12]. These teachers were convinced of the importance of providing students with general principles, rather than examples of the various types of buildings: therefore, their texts affirmed their distance and complementarity with respect to the first French magazines. In particular, Durand's radicalism was expressed through the proposal of a combinatorial logic according to horizontal and vertical projections that connected the architectural composition to the representation of the design by plan and elevation, from which the watercolour and the chiaroscuro were banned [Durand 1809].

The birth of architectural publishing in France occurred at the beginning of the century, with the *Journal des Bâtiments civils et des arts* (1800–1810). An inventory undertaken in the mid-20th century counted 265 titles between that date and 1914 [Lipstadt, Lemoine 1985]; a subsequent study identified 341 titles [Saboya 2001, p. 68].

The rivalry between the professions of architect and engineer, also in terms of conquering the market, is an essential component in the historical interpretation of the period and seems to have arisen concurrently with the growth of the magazines [Lipstadt 1980, p. 371].

Until 1839, French magazines were mainly dedicated to engineers, while from 1830 onwards, those of architecture began to spread competitively.

The *Revue générale de l'architecture et des travaux publics* (1840–1890), considered the archetype of modern architecture magazines [Saboya 2002, p. 330], was founded and directed by César Daly. This monthly magazine was the first example in which the drawings of projects, realized or not, were an integral part of a magazine.

The director, who from the beginning said he wanted to address to the readers' desire to see the written descriptions replaced by drawings [Daly 1842, p. 1], was the artífex of a significant formal renewal: the *in-quarto* format (24 × 36) allowed the publication of large-sized plates that, thanks to the engraving technique on steel (imported from England), were of great precision and allowed great runs without alteration of the lines. Furthermore, the distribution of the text in two columns allowed the insertion

Fig. 6. Barry, Floral hall - Covent Garden, in *The builder* 11 feb. 1860, p. 89.

Fig. 7. The Plough Brewery in London, in *The architect*, Jan 23, 1869.

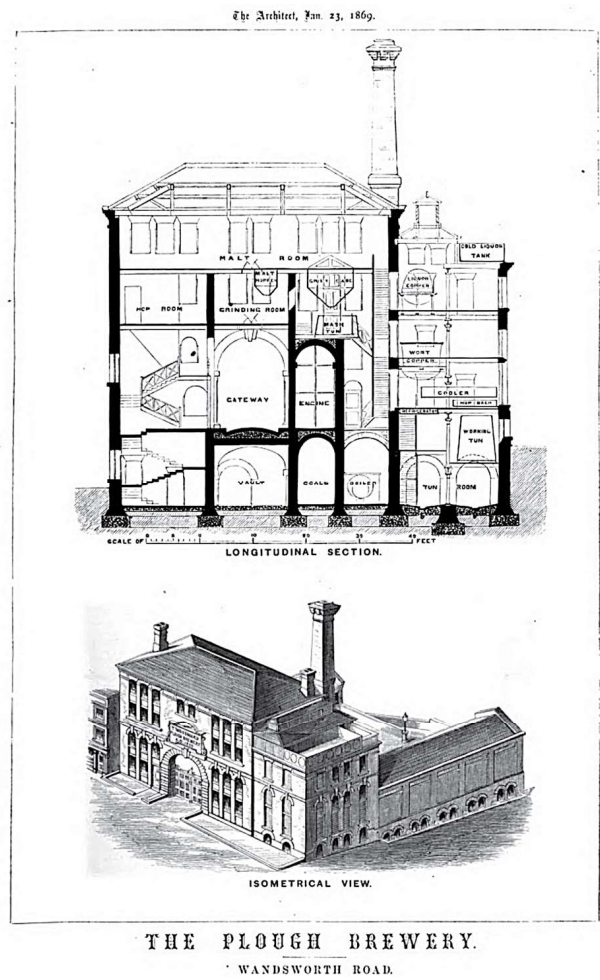
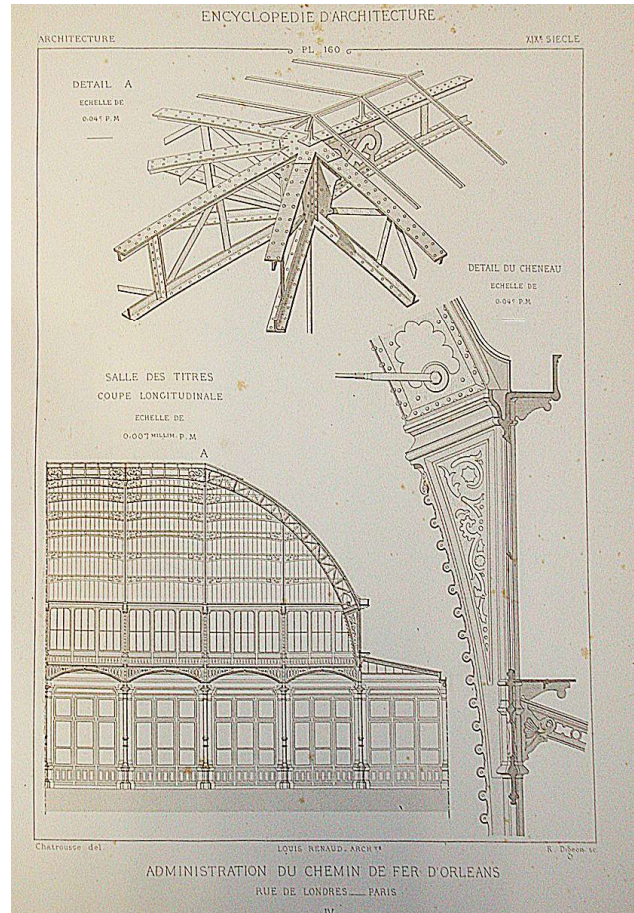
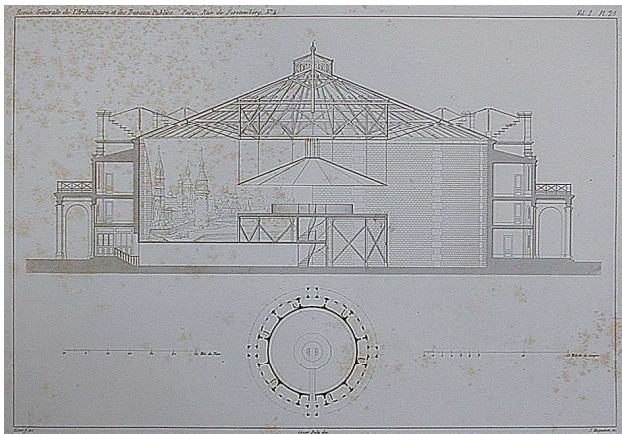


Fig. 8. Hittorff, Panorama at Champs Élysées, in *Revue générale de l'architecture et des travaux publics* 1841, vol. II, pl. 28.

Fig. 9. Renaud, Hall of the headquarter of Compagnie du Chemin de fer de Paris à Orléans, in *Encyclopedie d'architecture* 1872, tav. 160.



of xylographies interspersed in the discourse, which often represented plans and elevations of buildings of the past, technological details and technical installations. To these were added the chromolithographies, introduced since the first issues, which returned the colour of ancient architecture, flooring, decorations and wall paintings. Daly hosted proposals by young architects and pioneers of the shaping potentialities of iron architecture, such as Baltard, Garnier, Hittorff and Labrouste. Daly was hostile to the teaching of the *École des Beaux-Arts*, privileged ordinary residential architectures, medium-sized settlements, new 19th-century typologies and eclectic projects.

The theme of urban residence, with reference to European capitals, was also developed through collections of plans typologically represented in a manner not unlike the contemporary treatise by Reynaud [Reynaud 1850]. In the plates of the *Revue générale* we witness an interesting attempt to standardize the scale reductions of drawing and to use standard scales for each type of representation. Thus, plans were typically printed in 1:200 scale, elevations and sections in 1:100, profiles in 1:100 or 1:50, and window frames in 1:40 (fig. 8). This standardization facilitated the reading and rapid use by professionals and students.

Under the impulse of the *Revue générale*, the periodicals in France were multiplied, taking up the formula of Daly: the adoption of the format *in-quarto*, the text on two columns interspersed by the illustrations, and the plates collected at the end of each issue.

In 1850, Calliat, architect and skilled draughtsman, founded the *Encyclopédie d'architecture* (1850–1892) with the publisher Bance. The magazine consisted of a collection of *in-quarto* plates (27 × 35) that responded to the purpose of spreading a wide and continuously updated repertoire of what happened in the art of building using monographic

insights on current and past cases [Bouvier 2004, p. 33]. Since 1851, Calliat, responsible for the plates, was flanked by Lance, who was responsible for editing the texts, with the aim of creating a significant harmony and coherence between text and image.

Since then, the magazine was in explicit competition with the *Revue générale* for the exclusivity of projects [Saboya 2002, p. 332] and proposed a wide repertoire of plates, one for every two pages of text.

The magazine affirmed itself as the richest in quality plates of its time, with reduced selling prices [Bouvier 2004, pp. 72-73].

Fig. 10. Lheureux, *College Saint-Barbe in Paris*, in *Encyclopédie d'architecture* 1872, pl. 849-850.

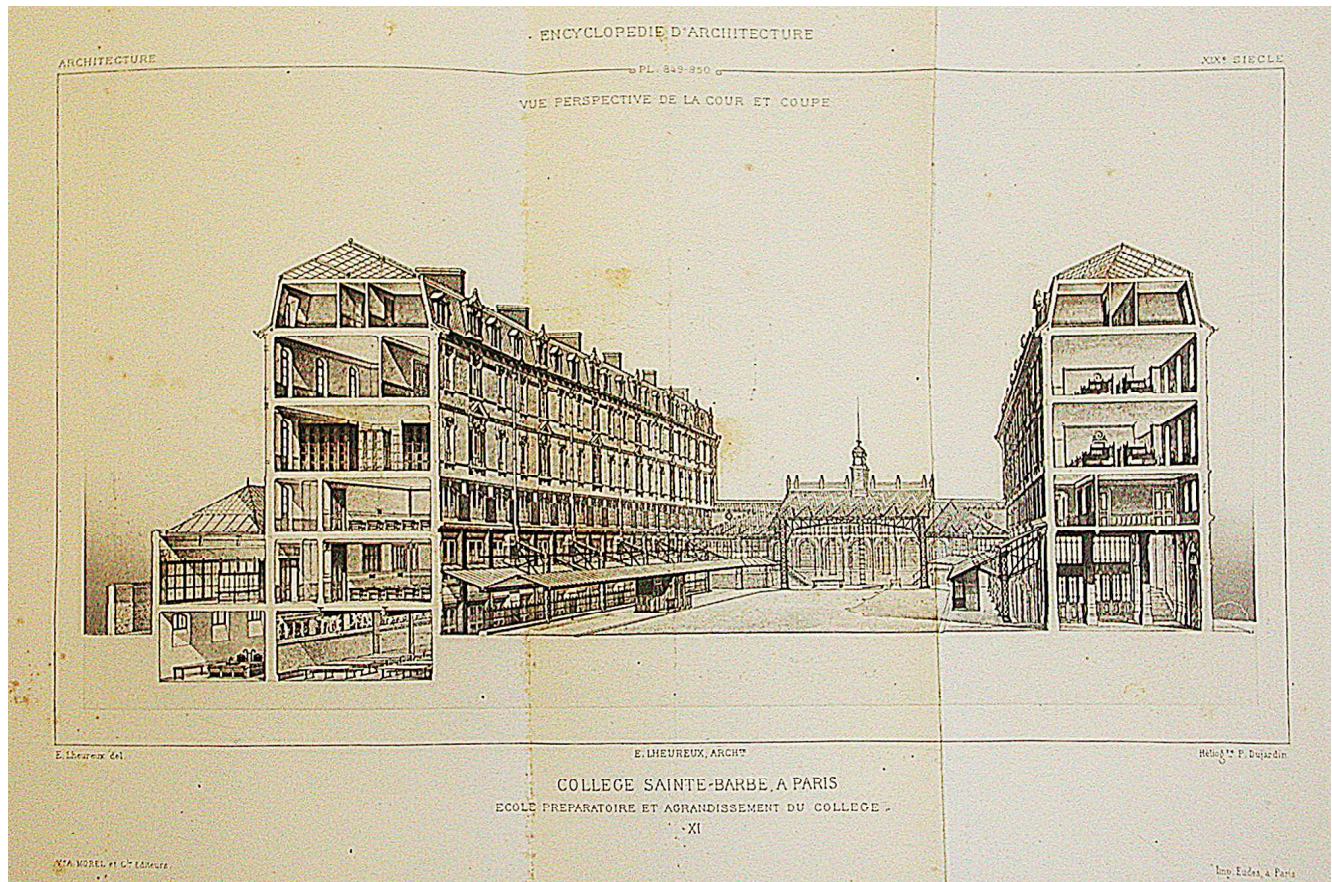
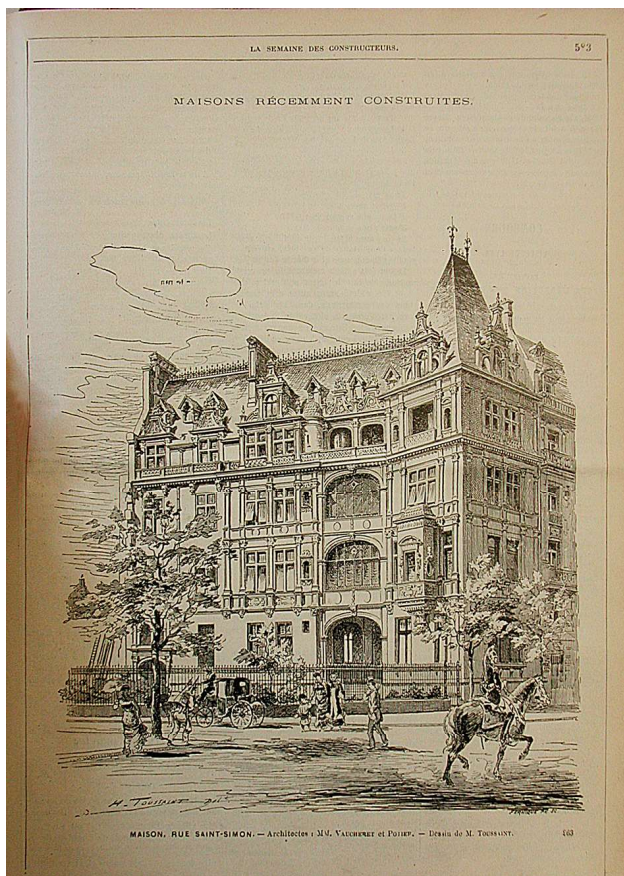


Fig. 11. Vaucheret e Poiief, House in rue Saint-Simon, in *Semaine des Constructeurs* 1882, p. 503.



The *Encyclopédie d'architecture* dealt with the theory, the history of techniques and innovative technologies, making these interests converge in didactic plates. The architectural representations covered more roles: some reinforced the links between architecture and technique, others, between architecture and construction.

The technical plates insisted on the construction details approaching those present in engineering magazines, such as the *Nouvelles annales de la construction* (1855–1925) and showed that the architect was involved in the project from conception to execution and, consequently, must master all of the technical aspects of the realization.

In the first 12 years of publication, following graphic choices that connected to the didactic setting of the École Polytechnique and, in particular, to the teachings of Durand, the magazine privileged a technical representation, rigorous and aimed at execution. The drawings were based on the Monge's projections (sections, plans, elevations) that brought them closer to the world of engineering and manifested the intention to aim at the practical aspect of construction [Bouvier 2004, pp. 84-86]. Nevertheless, also airy perspective sections appeared, which provided information on the technological system (fig. 9) together with the image of the spatiality of the building (fig. 10). In this period, the published projects range from new typologies, such as department stores and current issues (e.g., school buildings).

The plates offered general and detailed views using appropriate scales of reduction that allowed the handling of the illustrations. The scale prevailing in the drawings was 1:200, while the reproduction was made by copper engraving. This magazine was not printed between 1863 and 1871, but reappeared in 1872 under the direction of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc son, who considerably reduced the number of plates.

In 1876, more than 30 years after the launch of the *Revue générale*, Daly promoted a new magazine, the *Semaine des Constructeurs* (1876–1898), whose frequency required the rapid production of full-page drawings (24 × 34), initially limited to one or two per issue, and those included in the three-column text. Full-page drawings were generally perspective views illustrative of contemporary Parisian buildings, animated by scenes of everyday life, reproduced on the same low-weight paper of the text, similar to postcards of the time. Only occasionally, to facilitate the comprehension of the details, there were linear technical drawings of the whole of the constructive

feature, printed in 1:100 scale. With the passing of the years, the illustrations increased, preserving the interest in technical drawing at standardized scales, together with pictorial drawing (fig. 11), and welcoming photography in the late 1980s.

Conclusions

The overview of the drawings in European periodical publishing in the mid-19th-century, briefly outlined here, offers much food for thought.

Various nuances characterize the magazines and their iconographic apparatus in the three countries from where the phenomenon appears to be driven, Germany, England and France, among which we must recognize the leading role of French publishing, but also a transnational capacity to transpose theoretical instances, formal choices and innovations in printing techniques.

The constitution of new educational systems inspired by the Enlightenment for training in the art of building,

the determination of roles and professional duties distinguished between architects and engineers, the rapid development and innovation of construction techniques related to the use of new materials and the new typologies, attentive to the needs of 19th-century urban society, contribute to determining dynamic scenarios, in which magazines offer themselves as an ideal place for gathering, exchanging and disseminating knowledge and experience. The drawing gradually conquers space, establishing itself as a language sensitive to both the influences of contemporary architectural thought and the graphic conventions proposed in the schools and in the manuals. The magazines, emancipating themselves from the format of the book, welcome drawings and schemes, first in a separate form as atlases or full-page plates, then integrating them in the columns and between the written pages, to become, in some cases, an album of plates accompanied by descriptions. The drawing progressively imposed itself as a *medium* for the transmission of the most up-to-date design knowledge, useful and necessary in both training and the profession.

Author

Roberta Spallone, Department of Architecture and Design, Polytechnic University of Turin, roberta.spallone@polito.it

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