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Editorial

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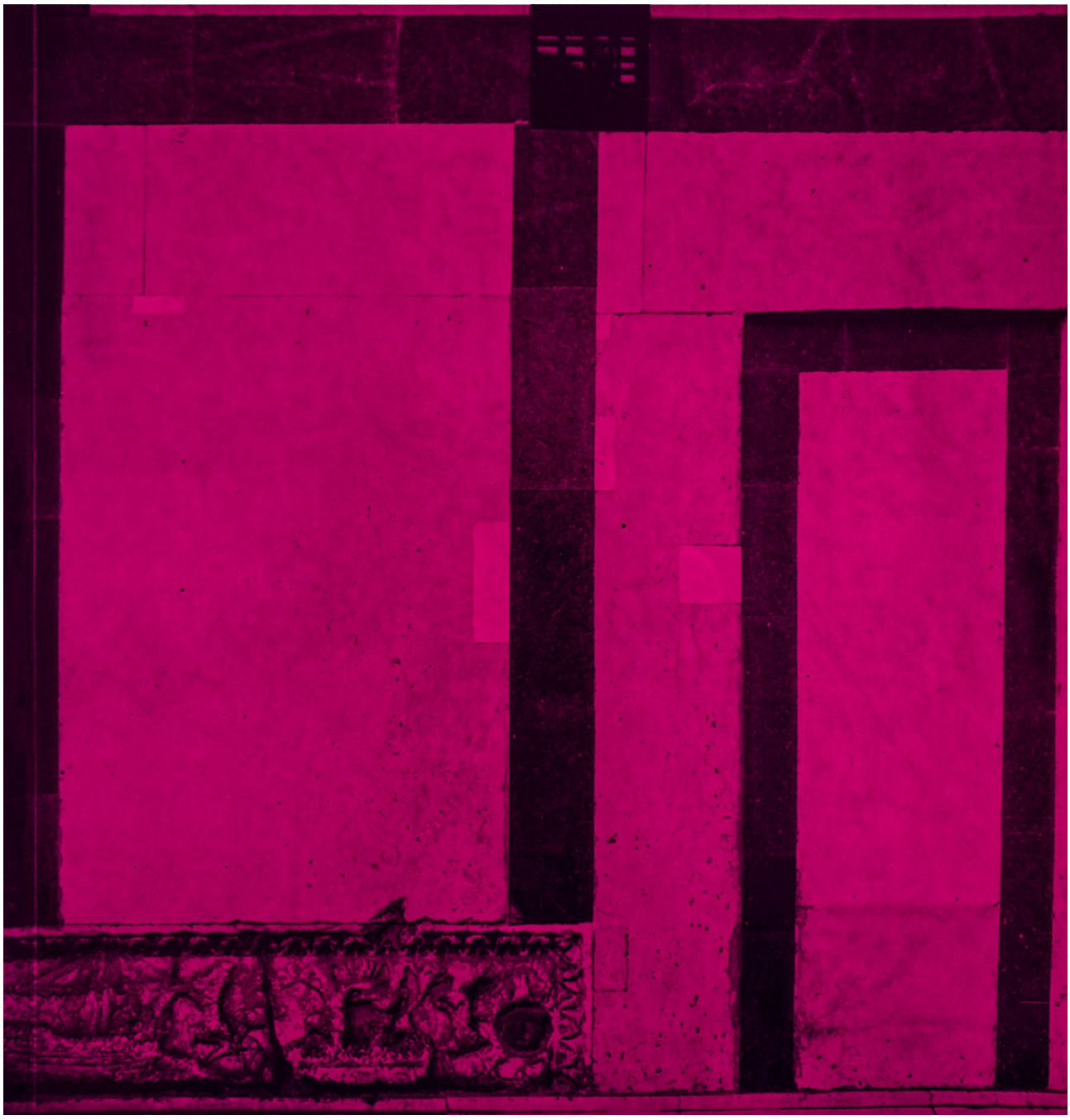
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Issue 14 of *HPA – Histories of Postwar Architecture* shares the results of the call published in summer 2023 for the international conference "The Churches and the City: European experiences between the 1950s and the 1960s," held in Bologna on 7 and 8 March 2024. Nearly fifty years after the first "National Congress of Sacred Architecture," organised in Bologna in September 1955 by Cardinal Giacomo Lercaro, the theme of architectural and liturgical reform is still fully relevant today, and remains the subject of in-depth study and research involving scholars from various disciplines. That first meeting, at which planners, representatives of public and private institutions, art historians, and academics from Italy and many other countries, both European and non-European, came to Bologna, was followed by many other opportunities for discussion. The journeys of the young architects and the exchange of materials concerning the projects of new churches and works of art that were built at the same time were the subject of exhibitions and publications in dozens of magazines, thus giving great visibility to the theme of modern churches. This theme turned out to be of great interest especially for a new generation of professionals with compositional results that certainly anticipated many of the contents later confirmed at the Second Vatican Council.

The ostensible prescience of this short but extremely vital and rich chapter in the history of contemporary architecture may explain, in part, its enduring appeal among architectural and art historians as well as scholars from aligned disciplines. The short-lived but influential period led to the construction of a conspicuous number of buildings that we could define as "experimental" in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany and many other geographical contexts. Key themes of interest include avant-garde parish complexes' volumetric composition and language, and the simpler details that distinguish their design and image; the particular relationship between architecture and the works of art inserted inside, and the collaboration that developed between architects and artists involved in the project; and, no less significantly, the relationship of buildings of worship with the context understood as a "neighbourhood" and other urban aggregates.

Today, nearly half a century after their realisation, these architectures pose important new questions about their restoration, maintenance, and the cultural value they have now and will be able to convey in the future as symbols of the modern movement. No less considerable are the questions and aspects that these works still have today on a social level, especially in the face of worrying patterns of marginalisation and under-use; these projects were conceived at a time when the participation of the faithful in the ecclesiastical and secular activity of the parish communities which they served was undoubtedly more alive and well established.

Fundamental to ensuring a new, or at least different, critical interpretation, and broadening the historical framework relating to these works, are undoubtedly the archives from whose investigation unpublished results have emerged in terms of both written sources and graphic and iconographic materials. We therefore believe that each of the essays published herein responds to various

themes, among those mentioned above, while also introducing more specific issues particular to each of the cases examined. The essays address a wide range of concerns, spanning from constructive and compositional interpretation to social and historical analysis, and from the criticalities detectable today to the interventions that have modified or altered these architectures.

The essays published in this issue thus propose different readings and in-depth studies that each tell a story of this decisive period in their own terms. The first four texts constitute different models of interpretation with respect to what happened in as many European geographical realities. Andrea Longhi proposes a critical update on the recent historiography of the articulate and complex situation in Italy after the Second World War up to the Second Vatican Council. This is followed by Spain, and in particular what happened in Vigo, during the years of the episcopate of José Delicado Baeza in the essay authored by Esteban Fernández Cobián and Marta Vilas Rodrígues. On the other hand, the contribution of the MRAR – Portuguese Religious Art Renovation Movement with the association between architects, artists and historians is the subject of João Alves da Cunha's essay, while Herman van Bergeijk's essay focuses on the projects presented in the competition for a new Dutch Protestant church in which young designers such as Aldo van Eyck and Herman Hertzberger participated before becoming famous masters of architecture in the second half of the 20th century.

The next contributions unravel, again in European contexts, stories or facts centred on a specific architectural work or designer. From Germany, Anna Kloke presents us with the case of the ecumenical centre of Scharnhorst-Ost in Dortmund and the peculiarities of the spaces conceived from the outset as multifunctional and the conversion they have recently undergone. Also from Germany, Ozlem Balci-Ozturk and Oya Senyurt examine the design of three churches and the application of Brutalist language in 1960s Berlin. From Spain, Alba Arboix-Alió and Josep Maria Pons-Poblet introduce the study of urban peculiarities and the relationship between churches and public space in Barcelona in the 1950s and 1960s, while from neighbouring Portugal, João Luís Marques discusses the peculiarities of the design of religious buildings in the north of the country by architect Fernando Távora. Finally, from England, Lorenzo Grieco interrogates the compositional characteristics and urban relations of two Anglican churches designed by Martin Purdy, while Kate Jordan illustrates the potential and reasons behind recent restoration work carried out in some historic English churches.

In connection with the different international realities mentioned here, the two contributions included in the central section of the journal examine various journals focussed mainly on architecture and religious art, whose significance to the story of 20th-century Christian architecture is recognised broadly by critics and scholars. The in-depth study on periodicals from Belgium and France by Chiara Kuijpers, Femke Van der Meulen, Sven Sterken and Stephanie Van de Voorde is followed by the equally rich analysis of a number of Italian magazines

by Laura Lazzaroni.

Finally, from Italy come the contributions included in the third part of the issue. The third section opens with Bologna, with an analysis of the relationship between modern architecture and Cardinal Giacomo Lercaro authored by Giovanni Bellucci, and the monographic analysis by Sofia Singler on one of the best-known Bolognese churches commissioned by Lercaro, designed by Alvar Aalto in Riola di Vergato. Martina Ulbar and Giorgio Nepote Vesin investigate the projects in the city of Ivrea and the links Adriano Olivetti had with various architects. Patrizia Montuori and Stefano Mais, in turn, present two unpublished case studies resulting from recent studies in various archives in Maremma and Fucino, the projects of architect Carlo Boccianti and the case of the San'Elia district in Cagliari. The 'atypical' contribution made by the Neapolitan architect Marcello Canino to some projects of religious buildings in Campania is the subject of the essay by Riccardo Serraglio, while Angeliki Bara has studied some of the churches designed by Gio Ponti and Rosa Maria Marta Caruso has proposed research on some of architect Enzo Fortuna's works in Sicily.

Closing the issue, in the Visual section, is the presentation of a recent project by the firm corvino+multari, described by one of its designers, architect Giovanni Multari, and realised in Dresano in Lombardy. It serves as an effective conclusion that illustrates how the specific typological theme of churches and parish centres, despite many difficulties, is still topical and the object of attention by patrons and planners alike.