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A typological study to guide the rebirth of Palermo Historical Centre

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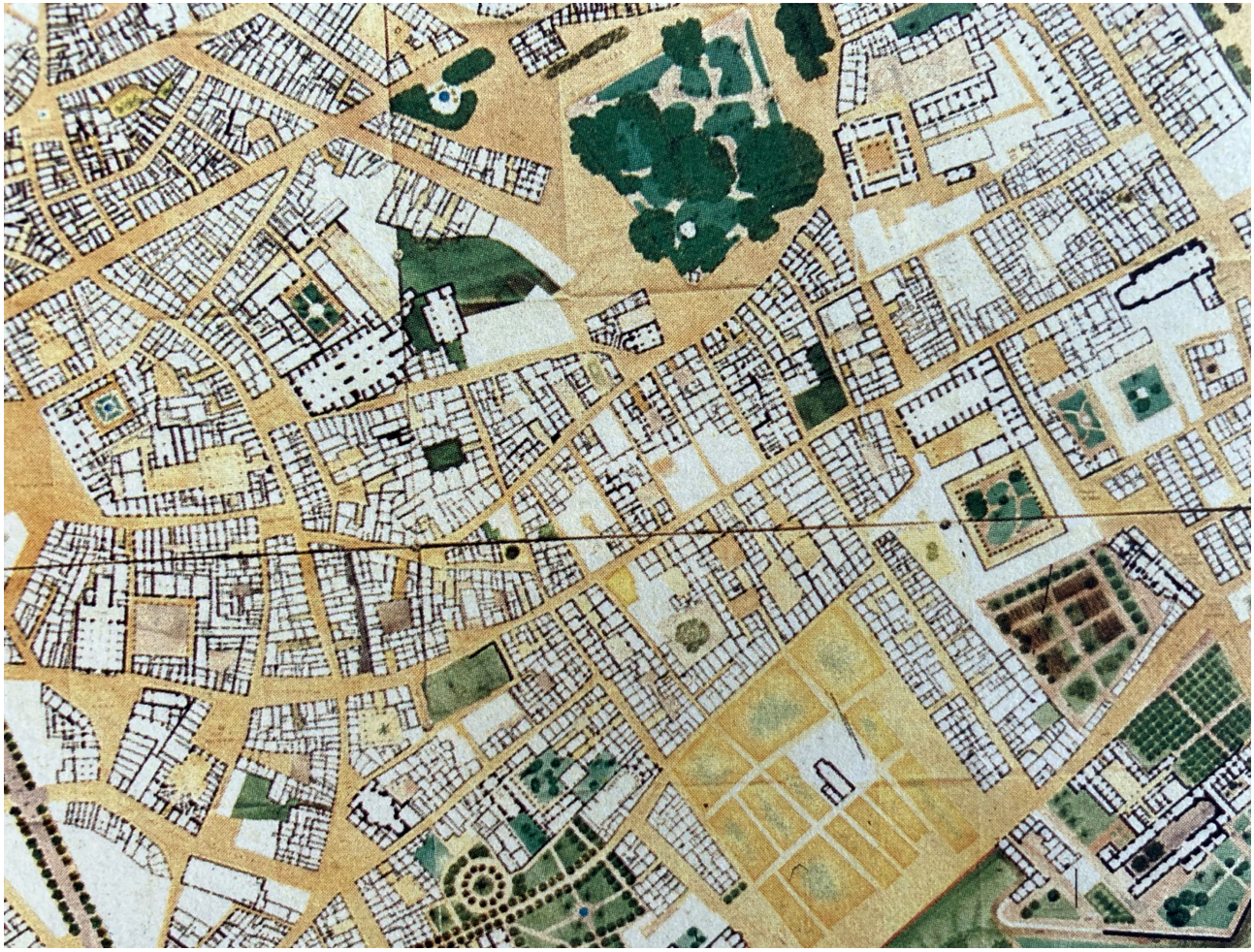
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Pier Luigi Cervellati (1936), *PPE Piano Particolareggiato Esecutivo* [Detailed Master Plan]. *Ground Floor and Open Spaces*,Board 10/13 of the PRG Piano Regolatore Generale [General Master Plan], Palermo 1989.



A typological study to guide the rebirth of Palermo Historical Center

Riccardo Biondi

The typological map *Ground floors and open spaces* is the thirteenth of fourteen boards attached to the *Executive Plan for the Restoration of the Historical Center of Palermo* within the general urban plan commissioned in 1988 by the new city council to Leonardo Benevolo, Italo Insolera and Pier Luigi Cervellati. Cervellati was in charge to develop an urban tool for the rebirth of a depopulated and decaying area, victim of forty years of negligence and speculation by precedent administrations[1].
Informed by the study of the cadastral maps from the 19th and 20th centuries and by direct survey of the area, the only ground floor interiors in board 13 are the buildings of the preindustrial historical city, leaving empty spots for the buildings of the alternative city – the first City Masterplan of 1895 – and the city in conflict – the City Masterplan of 1962. This filter bases the prescriptive rules for the typological and philological restoration, presented in board 14, on a fabrication of history that overlooks fifty years of city development to search for the identity of Palermo in a representation of one of its past times[2].

Unquestionably needing restoration, the historical center was given a plan that aimed at a new touristic vocation for Palermo[3] and its economic rebirth as a city museum[4].

The plan ultimately encountered operational challenges on several fronts, including the architects' difficulty in managing existing structures, unforeseen procedural hurdles, and emerging economic demands that changed the nature of the building type[5]. Therefore, the experience of the *Executive Plan for the Historical Center* serves as invaluable analytical material for developing a well-grounded understanding of the current relationship between the historical and the modern city.

Notes

1. Comune di Palermo, *PPE Centro Storico*, Relazione Generale, 1989.

2. M. Ricci, *Natura della città e forma del piano: l'identità delle regole*, Officina Edizioni, Roma 1983.

3. P.L. Cervellati, A. Angelillo, *Luci ed ombre del PRG di Palermo*, Casabella, 1995, pp. 45-47.

4. P.L. Cervellati, *La Città Bella. Il recupero dell'ambiente urbano*, il Mulino, Bologna 1991.

5. R. Prescia, *Restauri a Palermo: architettura e città come stratificazione*, Kalòs, Palermo 2012.