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## EDITORIAL

### Towards a “circular economy” of knowledge

The fourth issue of the journal *Ædificare*, dedicated to the re-use of construction materials, comes to light just a few months after the government announced a series of measures geared at leaving behind the “throwaway” mentality and entering a “circular economy”. For the past ten years or so, there has been a proliferation of measures directed at recycling demolition materials. In 2007, commitment 257 of the Grenelle Environment Forum provided for the “implementation of an economic instrument to encourage the prevention of the production of waste from building and public works and its recycling”. Three years later, a new article (L541-14-1) was added to the Environmental Code, making it compulsory to develop a management plan for construction waste, the jurisdiction of which rested with the General Councils and, for Paris, with the Île-de-France region.

The depletion of resources and the accumulation of waste make the question of re-use more relevant than ever. There are countless events and publications dedicated to this issue. Last spring, the *Maison de l'Architecture* of the Île-de-France and the Regional Council of the Order of Architects encouraged practitioners to “reflect on the practices and consequences of the re-use of materials for an architecture and living environment in the service of a circular, social, solidarity economy”. At the same time, the *Confédération Construction Wallonne*, the Cluster Eco-Construction, and their cross-border partners organised a conference on the topic “Architecture and Recycled Materials”.

The questions raised during these events concern the creation of a “channel of reuse” on an individual building scale, the types of materials to be salvaged, and the development of new building models. Experimental buildings constructed with materials from other constructions are becoming increasingly numerous. In 2016, during COP 21, Parisians could admire a parallelepipedic *Pavillon* on the parvis of

the Hôtel de Ville, presented like a model of the circular economy, which included 180 doors from a housing rehabilitation operation. More recently, at an exhibition held in Paris dedicated to the architect Junya Ishigami (*Freeing Architecture*, Fondation Cartier, 30 March to 9 September 2018), visitors could observe a residence for the elderly in Tohoku (Japan) made up of around forty wooden houses from different parts of the island, reassembled to give substance to the institution. The old wooden structures were primarily used on account of their aesthetic and memory value, rather than for economic and environmental reasons.

It is doubtless no coincidence that, alongside these projects and reflections, archaeological and historical studies on old practices of re-use are also burgeoning. This issue coordinated by Philippe Bernardi and Maxime L'Héritier, follows on from a series of publications that reflect more broadly on re-use practices from antiquity to the early 20th century, be it in relation to visible materials or, more recently, non-visible materials included in brickwork.

Re-using construction materials from demolitions is not a contemporary invention; it is a very old, well-documented practice that varies depending on the production context. This issue also demonstrates that the questions archaeologists and historians deal with are not so far removed from the ones building specialists ask themselves nowadays: how can the “channel” or chain of re-use be organised? How do demolition and recycling fit together? Is there a regulatory or legal framework for these practices? What materials are salvaged? What role – functional, economic, symbolic, aesthetic – do they play?

We hope that the “materials” presented in this issue might be re-used by contemporary building specialists. One of the objectives of the journal *Ædificare* is to work towards the institution of a “circular economy” of knowledge between historians and practitioners. We are aware that in order to promote such a dialogue, the journal needs to give practitioners a greater say, which means seeking them out. We plan to introduce an “Interview” column soon, to reach out to them.

This is worth stressing: the records presented in this issue include a wealth of illustrations. Aware of the importance of visual representations in the History of Construction, the journal's editorial board were eager to increase the quality of the images. Since issue no. 3, these have been in colour, and we hope this effort by Éditions Garnier will continue.

We wish to take this opportunity to remind readers that one of the objectives of the journal is to promote the work of early-stage researchers. As well as publishing articles, *Ædificare* aims to assemble reviews of dissertations, theses, or 'habilitation' accreditations to supervise research on the History of Construction, from different countries. We invite our French and foreign colleagues to send us résumés or reviews of such works, either individual or grouped by theme.

Valérie NÈGRE