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Figure 1: Pre-earthquake photograph of Skopje showing Stone Bridge and City Square flanked by two empire-style buildings built between the wars.

Photographed in Skopje City Museum (Jasminka Namicveva, co-ordinator architecture archives). Photograph by Mirjana Lozanovska, 2012.

Kenzo Tange's Forgotten Master Plan for the Reconstruction of Skopje

Mirjana Lozanovksa

Abstract

After the 1963 earthquake, which is said to have destroyed seventy-five per cent of the urban fabric, Skopje, capital city of the Republic of Macedonia (then in Yugoslavia) became a centre of architectural activity. The United Nations held a limited competition for the reconstruction of Skopje, inviting four foreign firms and four Yugoslavian firms to participate. Tange's submission received sixty per cent of the first prize, co-operating with Yugoslav architects to develop the design idea. What can this project tell us about modernism re-inscribed in Japan, and the kinds of internationalism that the United Nations constructed? Japanese Metabolism, of which Tange was a pioneer, heralded Japan as a new centre for innovation in architecture; a new nationalism re-oriented the suffering after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Tange developed and realised in Skopje the striking planning ideas he began in his Tokyo Bay proposal. This article examines Tange's master plan for Skopje. It argues that his key elements, the City Wall and the City Gate, exemplify Tange's drive for a new vision in the context of destruction, and that these remain definitive elements today even in the context of a messy transition from a communist to a capitalist society.

Introduction

Recently, Skopje, the capital city of Macedonia, has attracted attention as a part of a Eurocentric interest in what has been called Balkanology, and particularly from architectural writers of the other ex-Yugoslav republics. The present ideologically driven destruction – perceived as an influx of nationalism exploiting a bizarre kitsch aesthetic – has alarmed the writers.¹ The lament is about the erasure of the Kenzo Tange master plan for the reconstruction of Skopje, and the key architectural works that followed. This was the winning scheme in the international competition for the reconstruction of Skopje, held in 1965, two years after the devastating earthquake that had destroyed seventy-five per cent of the urban fabric of the city.² The Skopje master plan for the city centre was one component in a huge reconstruction project that evolved through a powerful United Nations/Yugoslavian partnership, and involved multinational and multipolar collaborations.

Despite the comprehensive consolidation of data contained in the 400-page United Nations (UN) publication, *Skopje Resurgent*, compellingly written by Derek Senior, a major problem in the study of this project is that there has been limited discussion about it in architectural forums.³ Tange stated that “our

first-hand knowledge, gained in Skopje, of both the difficulties and the fascination of international co-operation should be of value in future urban design projects.”⁴ It has been argued that the significance of the Skopje project lies in several areas: it is of enormous importance as a model for large-scale international urban design and for collaborative multivalent processes; it expressed a particular international and humanitarian solidarity momentarily amending the previous tensions in the United Nations; it generated a unity between the various republics of Yugoslavia and further enhanced their interdependence; and Tange’s key elements, the “City Wall” and the “City Gate”, are exemplary pieces of architecture/urbanism for their combined programmatic and symbolic force.⁵ In many ways the Skopje project points to gaps in the canonical narrative of architecture rather than the minor modernisms that are perceived to have occurred on its sidelines.

This article provides information on the competition, and elaborates on Tange’s Skopje master plan with a focus on his key elements, the City Wall and City Gate. Collaboration and the political momentum are currents that drive the Skopje project, and provide a parallel and interwoven trajectory that are discussed in relation to the development and implementation of the City Wall. Collaboration challenges the mainstream canonical narrative that focuses on the hero architect, and the heroic project. This opposition between collaboration and the heroic gesture is complicated by the Skopje project. The City Wall and City Gate are exemplary due to their monumental and heroic architecture and urbanism. The article elaborates on a critical review of Tange’s efforts to create architecture as a response to destruction and tragedy, and as a means for recovery, and how this perspective can contribute to a discussion on monumentality.

Skopje and the UN Competition Process

The disaster of the Skopje earthquake at 5:17 a.m. on 26 July 1963 resulted in the destruction of the city in just seventeen seconds.⁶ Mobilisation for the reconstruction of Skopje symbolised immense and effective implementation in what has been called a precise Marxist “revolutionary situation” because planning and administration had to keep pace with implementation.⁷ Current studies are developing network theory as a framework for understanding the complex, collaborative and multifaceted nature of large-scale projects under the rubrics of development.⁸ The Eastern European bloc established major organisations that exported architecture and planning towards the development of “Third World” locations. Yugoslavia, central to the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), has a particular position, separated from the Eastern bloc and with its own widespread set of development contracts and exchanges. Due to its non-aligned politics, it was considered more amenable than many developing “Third World” nations. This internationalism proceeded as examples of multipolar support offered to Skopje from more than seventy-five nations and independent

organisations. The Skopje project coincided with the beginning of the period of self-management and democratisation of Yugoslav society, its policy of non-alignment, and the investment in art and architecture throughout Yugoslavia. Under the rule of their charismatic leader, Josip Bros Tito, Yugoslavia enabled more permeable political and cultural boundaries; it became an image of a progressive yet socialist society, and in the mid-1960s, Skopje was its symbol.

The focus on networks is highlighted in the Skopje project. The key figure in the UN operations and in the Skopje project was Ernest Weissmann. Weissmann, a Yugoslavian (Croatian), was appointed Director of Housing, Building and Planning to the UN Bureau of Social Affairs in 1948. While Weissmann's political alliances are not established, his department, as exemplified in the Skopje project, became a platform for exchange between architects and planners across the Cold War divide. Weissmann's agency for establishing productive networks of professional expertise began with his founding of the Zagreb Group as a national branch of the *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM) in 1932.

Weissmann drew in experts, consultants and development teams from both sides of the Cold War, and importantly extended this to Japan and the many nations and organisations aligned with the NAM. The need for a regional planning study and the general plan of the built-up area resulted in the appointment in 1964 of Adolf Ciborowski, leading expert in the reconstruction of Warsaw, as project manager. Very early sketches by the planner Rotival have recently been identified as the significant reference for the reconstruction plans.⁹ Two international planning teams were contracted: Constantinos Doxiadis from Athens was contracted to work on the built-up area; and Polservice, the official Polish Agency from Warsaw, was to prepare the master plan and work as a consultant for the regional plan.¹⁰ Both teams had a significant role in numerous large-scale development projects. There is a paper to be written that details the complicated trajectories of how these figures came to be involved, why, and their impact on the ground in the local context. The competition was one component in a vast and complex series of multipolar operations and collaborations, and in this article the framework of collaboration serves as a ground through which to analyse the competition process and Tange's key elements, the City Wall and City Gate.¹¹

Skopje's long history is richly layered – pre-historic Neolithic times, the Romans (who identifying it as Scupi),¹² Byzantine empires, and other medieval kingdoms – many of which can be seen in the excavated artefacts and layered tracings of archaeological sites, especially on the Kale Fortress Hill that rises above the city. Skopje was settled along the Vardar River and bounded by the Vodno mountains.¹³ Its architectural history above ground includes the Ottoman architecture and meandering cobblestone streets to the north, and a mixture of Beaux-Arts planning to the south. The Kale Fortress Hill, a medieval walled mound rising above the built fabric of modern Skopje, is also to the north. On both

sides of the river key modernist structures – the Macedonian Opera, the university, the Telecommunication building – are embedded within a traditional context and illustrate the diversity of history, customs and cultures that is manifested in the city.

The competition was developed by a UN/Yugoslavian committee to address the 2 × 2 kilometre area in the centre of the city. Such competitions, like the international congresses in the late 1950s and 1960s, were shaped by cultural and political diplomacy rather than the agenda for transformation central to the late CIAM.¹⁴ The jury was chaired by Weissmann, the UN Head of Social Affairs, and comprised members representing the UN, Union Internationale des Architectes (UIA), and the Yugoslav Architects Association and Town Planning Federation.¹⁵ Four foreign architecture firms were invited to submit entries: Johannes van den Broek and Jacob Bakema, the Dutch firm known for its leading role in post-war reconstruction especially in Rotterdam; Luigi Piccinato, Italian architect and urban planner, who founded with Bruno Zevi and others the Association for Organic Architecture (APAO); Maurice Rotival, a French planner and professor at Yale University; and Kenzo Tange, significant for his post-war large-scale reconstruction of Japanese cities. Four Yugoslav firms were also invited to submit entries to the competition: Aleksandar Dordevic, from Belgrade (Serbia); Eduard Ravnikar with Studio “Revolution Square” from Ljubljana (Slovenia); Radovan Misčević and Fedor Wenzler (Croatia); and Slavko Brezovski (Macedonia). These were not traditional architectural firms but assemblies of a diverse range of professional experts that could address the complexity of large-scale urban development projects.

On 12 July 1965 the jury announced no clear winner and divided the first prize between Kenzo Tange (sixty per cent) and Misčević & Wenzler (forty per cent). The jury “concluded that there was no one entry which should be the single basis for implementing the reconstruction of the centre of the city of Skopje. Each of the entries contained a variety of promising ideas and proposals.”¹⁶ Tange was asked to co-operate with Misčević & Wenzler from Zagreb. While the responsibility to devise a new plan remained with the Skopje Institute of Town Planning Authority (ITPA), a new international team was established and instructed to draw on the good ideas of all the entries and the recommendations of the jury, and to develop a definitive city-centre plan.¹⁷ This complex decision was aligned with the multipolar structure of the general reconstruction project and emphasised a collaborative approach. Political diplomacy as the initial principle for the jury decision is reiterated by architects involved in the project, stating that there had to be both an international and a Yugoslavian winner.¹⁸ The process of collaboration proved beneficial for the design development of the project and its implementation, and, for example, prevented the demolition of the nineteenth-century Ottoman

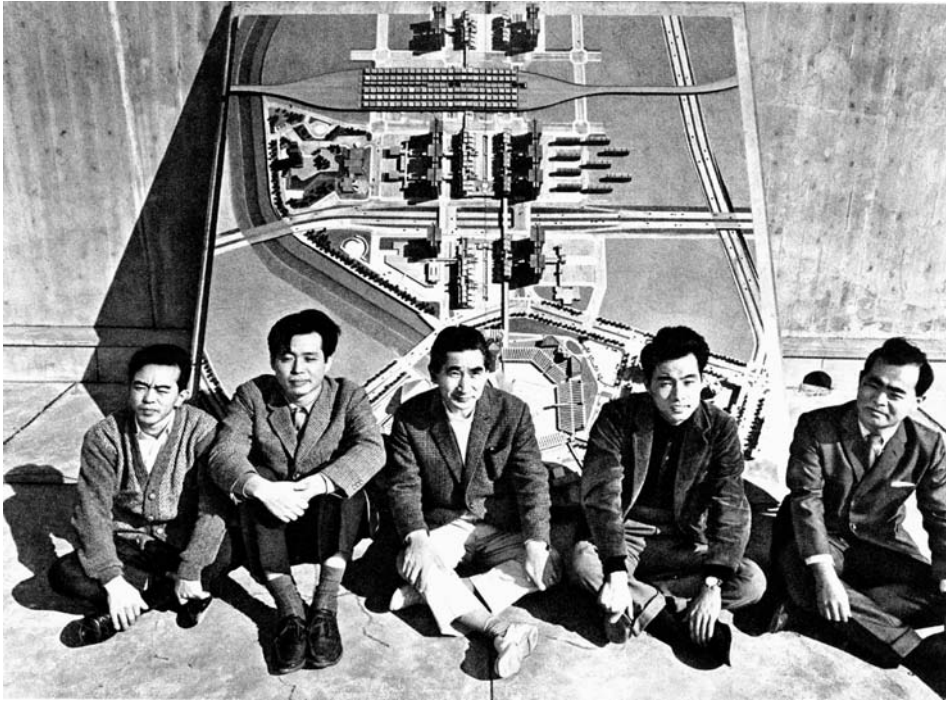


Figure 2: Photograph of the Tange team in front of its competition entry model, Skopje, 1965. Pictured are Tange in the centre and Yamomota on the left (recognised by Mimoza Tomič). The team comprised Tange, Arata Isozaki, Sadao Watanabe and Yoshio Taniguchi.

Printed in Derek Senior, *Skopje Resurgent: The Story of a United Nations Special Fund Town Planning Project* (New York: United Nations, 1970).

Charshija. Yet as will become apparent, Tange emerged as the hero architect even within this staging of collaborative production.

Tange's Skopje Master Plan

The jury found Tange's proposal visionary and exciting but difficult to realise, and was positive about Misčević & Wenzler's proposal which was easy to implement in stages. One of the few articles in which all competition entries are presented argued that it is a misunderstanding that Tange was the winner of the competition, and that Misčević & Wenzler's proposal would be implemented. In contrast, in the same issue a different author argued Tange's proposal was far superior to the other entries, with qualities that exceeded those outlined by the jury.¹⁹ Twenty years later, Živko Popovski, an important architect in Macedonia and a team member of the van den Broek and Bakema entry, emphasised the visionary power of Tange's proposal. He argued that Tange understood the singularity and uniqueness of Skopje, and that his proposal as manifested in the dual concept of City Wall and City Gate captured a transhistorical foundation of architecture as an idea of place.²⁰ Popovski was attending to the symbolic nature of the city and how a reconstructed city can capture the elements of place. The idea

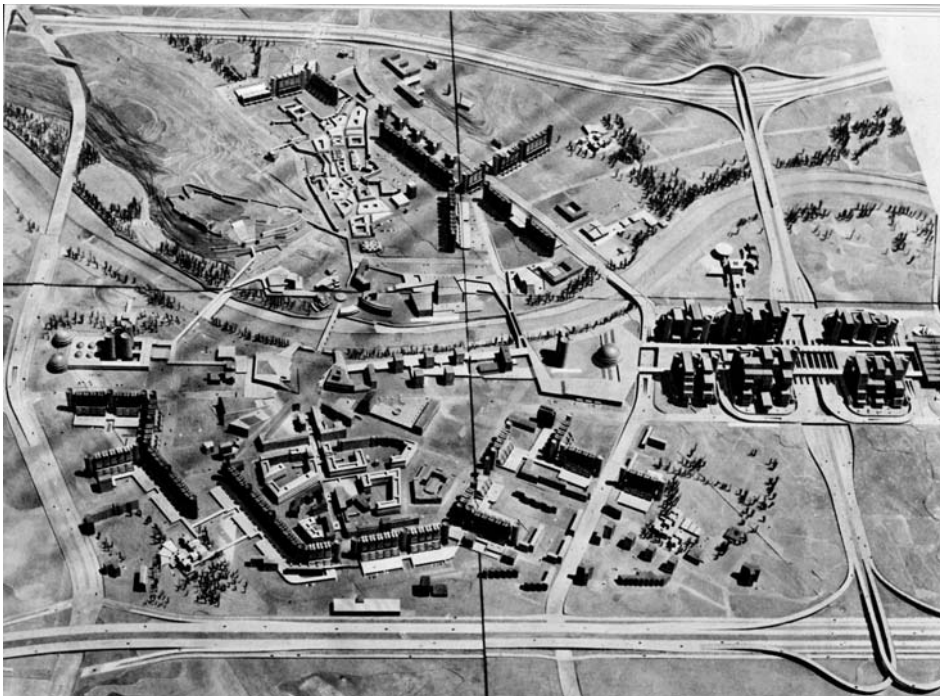


Figure 3: Tange, Competition entry model for master plan of the Skopje city centre, 1965. It illustrates the major and minor ring roads; and the City Wall and City Gate are prominent elements. Printed in Senior, *Skopje Resurgent*.

of place is critical to Tange's approach, and his method of spatial structure and spatial image is developed in critical dialogue with existing elements, especially the Vardar River, the Vodno mountains and the Kale Hill.

Kenzo Tange's master plan for Skopje exemplifies the power and central role of drawing in the production of architecture and its relation to imagination and visionary projection. Robin Evans has argued that the plan is not merely compositional or formal but that imaginative intelligence lies dormant in it.²¹ The process of competitions and judging architectural work on the basis of drawing suggests that the architectural community collectively invests in the interpretation of the plan as a representation of a future physical and social reality. On a square format representing 2×2 kilometres within the central city, the plan is organised around the winding organic form of the Vardar River running east–west across it. The river divides the plan in two: to the north of it, contours of the steep topography of the Kale Fortress Hill and other topography add to this natural and ancient sense of place and civilisation. To the south, linear and abstract arrangements of solid and void produce a modernist image. A faceted and fragmented ring of buildings – the City Wall – giving a powerful shape to the city, inscribes a centralised geometry. Lines in the form of bridges and roads extend

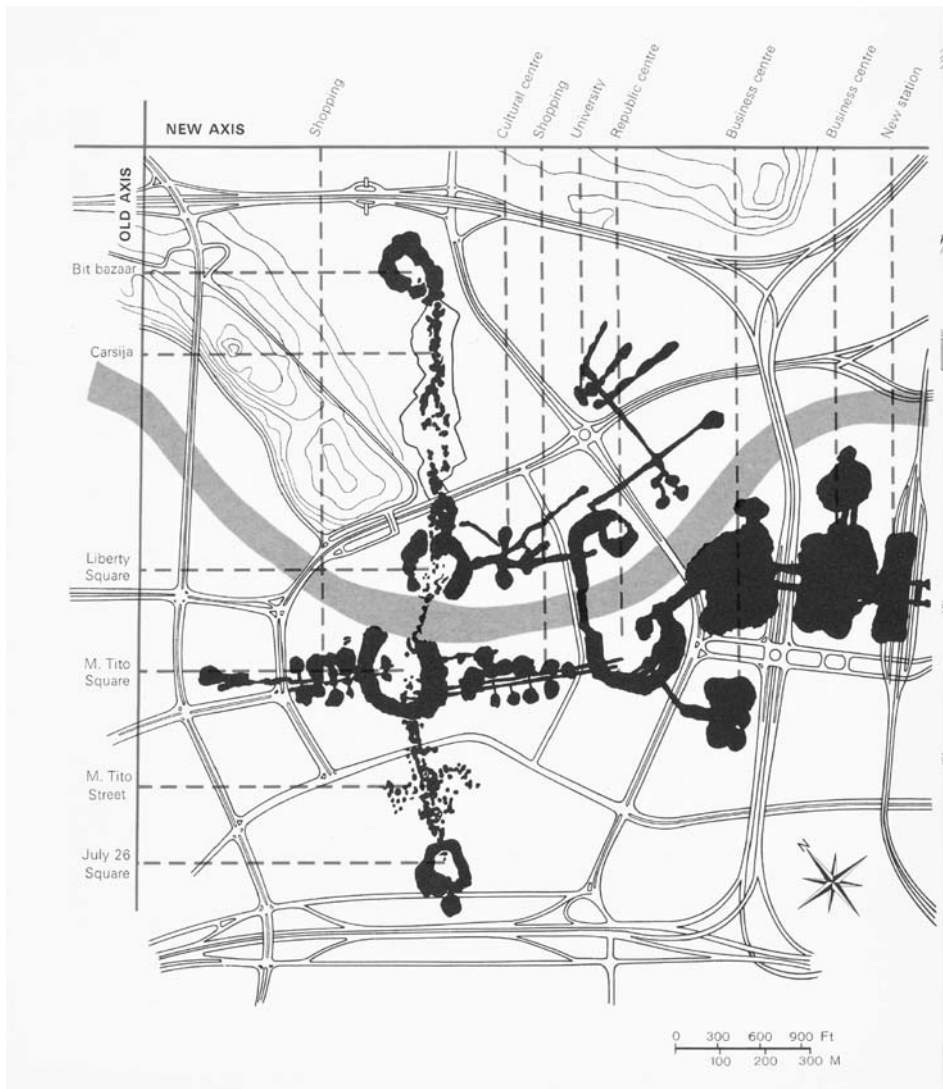


Figure 4: Sketch by Arata Isozaki (member of the Tange team) showing the two axes that organise the spatial structure of the city, drawn for the second phase master plan for the Skopje city centre, 1965.

Printed in Senior, *Skopje Resurgent*.

and complete this geometry on the north side of the river, and also generate numerous ties. Further, the river embankments are flanked by a series of public and civic shapes – cultural, national and educational facilities – which detail the civil character of the river. Radial lines – the pre-earthquake geometry of the urban form – reinforce a central city plaza at the tip of the ancient stone bridge which connects this south side to the meandering streets of the Ottoman Charshija district via a series of lines and junctions.

Tange dismantled the rigidity of a centralised urban geometry and its Eurocentric tradition by introducing a new east–west civic axis. A parallel series of towers inscribing a megastructure form establishes the east–west axis, culminating to the east with the City Gate and extending back towards the city plaza along the quay. The east–west civic axis extends and responds to the proposed urban growth plan towards a linear rather than a centralised urban form. At the city plaza, it is met by a north–south civic axis, the Marshall Tito Boulevard (renamed Macedonia Boulevard after 1994), a pedestrian mall formed by housing blocks with retail space at the ground level. Around the edges of the 2 × 2 kilometre area, north–south and east–west roads inscribe a square outer shape to the plan. A north–south freeway runs through the City Gate. This is the transportation hub organising a complex system of transportation exchange between regional and civic scale. Open spaces and greenery buffer the buildings and civic spaces from the scale and speed of the freeway lines.

The production of a new regional plan and new city-centre master plan can have the effect of erasing both the pre-earthquake town and the memory of it. Skopje became a vital point of visionary experimentation in urban design, regional planning and architecture. Tange has noted that this was assisted by the combination of the *tabula rasa* left in the wake of destruction, and a central socialist government that enabled the resources for realisation of ideological projects.²² *Tabula rasa* is a compelling phenomenon in the history of the discipline as architects have imagined a new city on the clean slate of either physical or cultural erasure. But its sense in design practice is different from its place in critical historiography. In a recent essay, the town planner, Robert Home, basing his information on the UN report,²³ states there was not much of a town prior to reconstruction, and no town planning institute. This contradicts images of pre-earthquake Skopje. Historians, critics and planners of Skopje identify several key dates in its history as a town: 1912 – Skopje under Ottoman rule; 1920s – Skopje under the Serbian Kingdom; 1945 – Skopje as capital of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia in the newly formed federation of republics of Yugoslavia; and 1963 – Skopje destroyed by the earthquake, and the reconstruction of its new order. Additionally, the date of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, 1994, can be added as Skopje has since been undergoing urban transformations as the capital city of the Republic of Macedonia, and shifting from a socialist to a capitalist context. Several master plan drawings, some recording existing urban conditions, others documenting proposals, accompany these dates and suggest that Skopje began earlier than 1965.²⁴

Tange's practice developed the idea of URTEC, a team of urbanists and architects, where specialisation was prevented, and yet where Tange drew in experts – engineers, sociologists, economists, mathematicians – generating an enormous reservoir of knowledge and experience.²⁵ The master plan for Skopje is

significantly placed in a lineage of urban design work in the office of Kenzo Tange Studio. It followed the Plan for Tokyo (1960) which followed the master plan for Hiroshima (1950). The axis, reiterating the linear post-earthquake regional strategy in Skopje, embodies the projected future growth of the city, extending beyond the city centre. Tange's structural approach aimed to transform a closed centripetal urban structure into an open linear one. This is evident in the linear development of social housing beyond the 2×2 kilometre central city area.²⁶ The Skopje linear axis adapts the linear proposal of the Tokyo Bay plan. An aerial image of the Tokyo Bay plan presents projected urban growth in the form of a very strong linear axis bridging Tokyo Bay. In Skopje the linear axis follows the river, instating into the central city the projected east-west urban growth. The Tokyo axis extends into the bay as a series of linear infrastructure elements at right angles to it. The circular geometry of the bay that encompasses this new city is reflected in the powerful circular form of the City Wall in Skopje, which gives the city its shape. In Tokyo Bay, Tange's loop of traffic organisation is proposed to relieve that city of traffic congestion, expected to increase exponentially. This is again adapted in the Skopje plan with the projected minor and major ring roads.

The City Wall and City Gate occur at the interface between architecture and urbanism, and as proto-spaces (not yet detailed architectural buildings) they permit further elaborations and additions of the detail of human inhabitation, as well as changes to architectural form. Tange states:

Our project, based on the preliminary Master Plan and studies compiled by the City of Skopje and collaborated on by the United Nations, manifests a system by which the mechanism of our contemporary society could be transformed into a spatial structure. This structuring system would continue to create the bridge between our ever progressing civilization and the constant factor of humanity.²⁷

Tange found that modernism in the period 1920 to 1960 had a static relation between function and space. In contrast, by emphasising spatial structure and spatial image Tange transforms town planning and urban design into a structural approach. Tange's City Wall and City Gate are dynamic structures that produce a way of operating and being in the city, not static formalist elements. They organise movement (pedestrian and vehicular, individual and collective, local and regional) and cultural sites as three-dimensional structure not two-dimensional zones and areas. The City Wall and City Gate in Skopje are examples of how the functionalist basis of modernism was transcended.

A central question in Tange's work in Skopje is the tension between the architectural expression of strength on the one hand, and the traditions and character of the local urbanism on the other. This is elaborated upon in the following section.

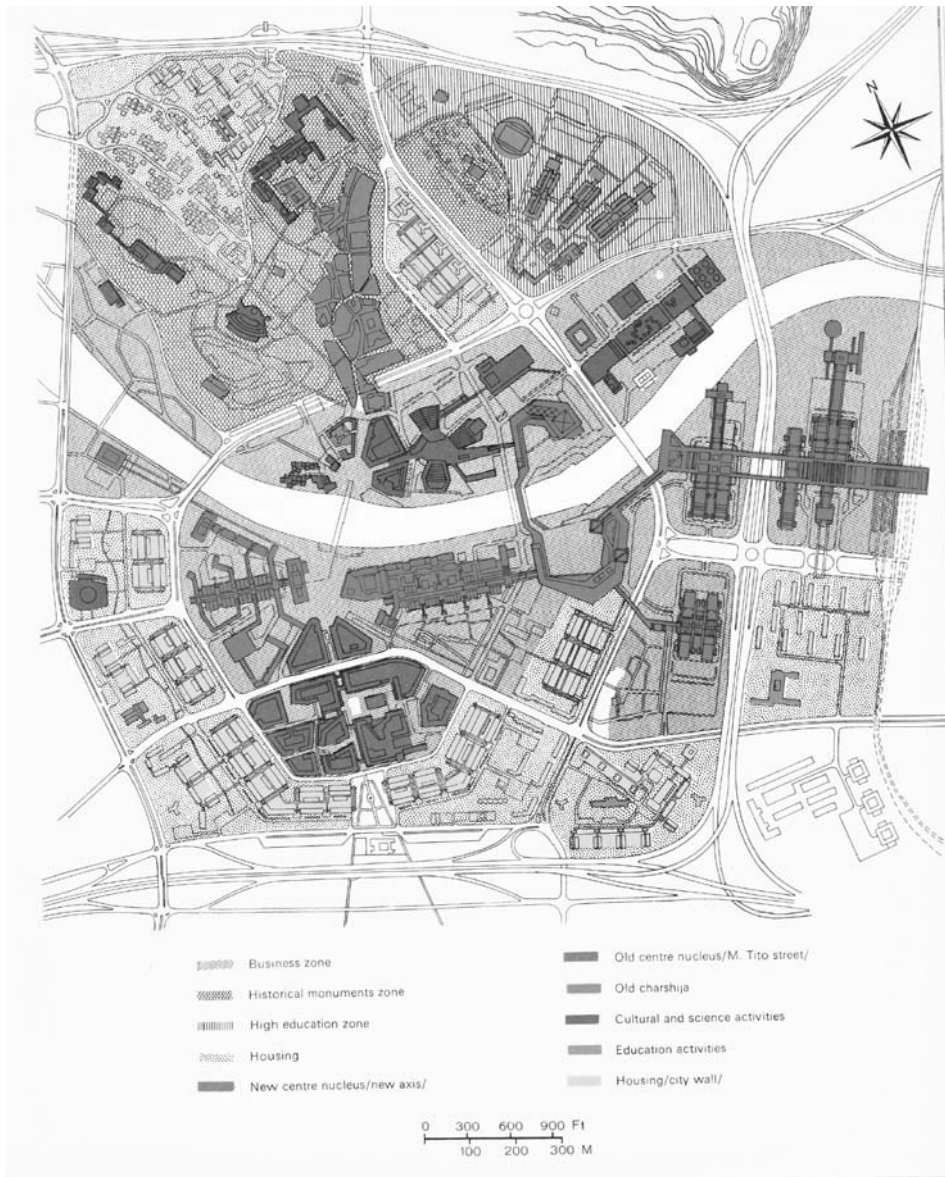


Figure 5: Tange master plan for the reconstruction of Skopje, 1965. It illustrates the Vardar River (winding across the middle), the City Wall (at the bottom left) and the City Gate (middle right).
Printed in Senior, *Skopje Resurgent*.



Figure 6: The City Wall in its context of urban fabric. View of Skopje from Kale Fortress Hill.
Photograph by Mirjana Lozanovska, 2007.

Scale and Monumentality: The City Wall

The City Wall and City Gate are described as “things” within Tange’s design philosophy: things that can be seen, felt and experienced and that give form and shape to urban space. They may be thought about as image-objects. Strength is expressed as a colossal scale and massive bulk, heavy materials and structure. Such presence and gravity represents a response to disaster with an agenda to instil hope and courage for recovery and renewal. Due to the late-1960s interest in tradition, identity and human scale in architecture the Metabolist and Megastructure movements have been critically overlooked and perceived as the opposite trend. Tange’s City Wall and City Gate bring this tension between scale and humanity to the foreground. The City Wall and City Gate exemplify Tange’s creative force as an heroic architectural gesture – powerful ideas and realisations in architecture – that have produced an image of Skopje towards a renewed identity. His creative force is not, however, without its ongoing struggles, conflicts and pursuits.

The City Wall is an urban boundary that forms a ring around the central city. In its conceptual phase this comprised high-rise apartment buildings (fifteen to sixteen floors) arranged at obtuse angles, in the form of a faceted geometry. The city wall constructs a framework for the city: firstly as three-dimensional physical structure, secondly as image and representation of the city, and thirdly as a story

about the city. It stages a visual dialogue with the medieval city wall of the Kale Fortress rising on the other side of the Vardar River and thereby contributes to what is called a “history of ideas”. The city constituted by a wall is an idea in architecture that, like Laugier’s primitive hut, is constituted by a lineage of thought over a longer period of time. It generates a narrative history of the city that links it to defence and settlement.

The City Wall is an optimistic object. Its construction and inhabitation present an image of recovery and strength in the face of catastrophe and suffering. Tange’s City Wall refers to the Kale Fortress, but transcends the medieval reference of battle and defence against an enemy. Unlike the massive stone Kale Fortress wall, the City Wall is a wall of housing, and comprises apartment buildings. The idea of defence and protection is transformed into a structure for living. The wall is infused with a dynamic programme. The City Wall does not act like a fortress city, rather it is a structure organised around human dwelling and human interaction. Interactivity of humans in relation to one another, and in relation to architecture – covered spaces, doors, lobbies, pathways, parks and shops – engender a different idea about city and wall. This idea is about human use, but also about humanity as an inscription in the face of disaster. It is not so much that human beings are defended but that humanity is the line of defence. Humanity is related to housing and a collective coexistence. It defends itself as a co-operative social-spatial structure. The City Wall is not a non-functional monument but an inhabited spatial structure that attains symbolic value as an urban inscription. Tange’s City Wall propels the medieval idea into the late twentieth-century idiom of modernity; hope and optimism in the face of uncontrolled disaster, but one that is always aware of its fragility and vulnerability.

Tange’s work is popularly associated with the Megastructure movement but the sense and texture of Japanese Metabolism adds a different layer and perspective to the literature by Banham.²⁸ Tange and Kisho Kurokawa speak simultaneously about the devastation of World War II and the immense urban growth and advance of technology when explaining Metabolism. Tange’s “vital force of the masses” is not referring to quantity but the capacity to reinvent a nation after devastation.²⁹ The Peace Memorial Museum of Hiroshima (1950) was his first articulation in the master plan and also the first large-scale, post-war public building in Japan. Tange’s direct confrontation with the immense tragedy and suffering of Hiroshima, which he describes as “mass-human”, presented him with the greatest challenge of an architect.³⁰ In his 1960 book on Tange, Robin Boyd elaborates that “the task for Tange was to build a functioning building, not a piece of sculpture, yet a building which could not remain aloof from the emotional stresses inherent in the scheme... any kind of aestheticism... would have been intolerably out of key.”³¹ Boyd notes the dormant yet potent and dignified strength in the building, an unforced anonymity that restrains from overstatement. Tange

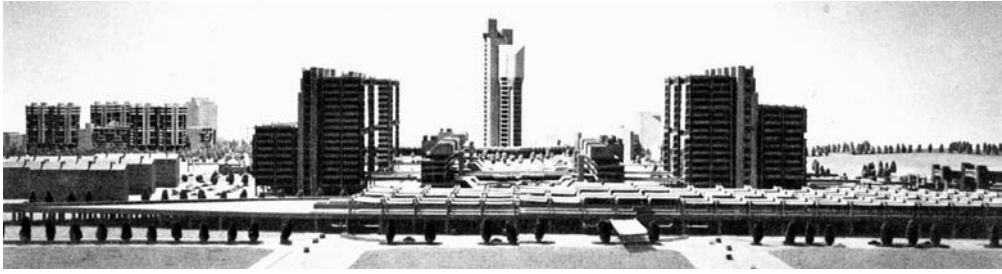


Figure 7: Tange, Competition entry model showing City Wall; view from the east through the City Gate towards the Republican centre.

Printed in Senior, *Skopje Resurgent*.

was a prolific reader and writer, and a disciplined scholar of architecture and its history, equally from the West as from Japan and the East. The maturity and power of his work is a result of an artistic struggle between “great incompatibilities”.³²

In *Japan-ness in Architecture*, Arata Isozaki examines how modernism’s entry into Japan was a battle fought through and against Japanese aesthetic traditions and ethos.³³ Isozaki was central to Tange’s team on the Skopje project. He places Tange at the centre of the debates around the *Yayoi–Jomon* dichotomy, referring to two contradictory phases in ancient Japanese cultural history. *Yayoi* refers to an era of ancient Japanese pottery and utensils known for their sophisticated beauty, and *Jomon* to an older period of Japanese pottery, the dynamic beauty of which was rediscovered. But Isozaki emphasises that the rediscovery and promotion of this raw aesthetic was a strategic stance, firstly, against American imperialism/modernism which favoured the Japonica of Yayoi, and secondly, addressing the aristocratic/peasant division of Japanese society, which also favoured the Yayoi.

Isozaki argues that Tange’s natural affinity to Yayoi was expressed in the Hiroshima memorial as its reference was to the Katsura Palace, Kyoto. Tange’s sharp shift to Jomon is explained as part of his intuitive agency to preserve Japan-ness and construct Japan as a nation state. But Tange launched his own version of the dialectic and later reinterpreted the Katsura Palace, arguing it was both Yayoi and Jomon, and that such a destructive collision led to creative intensity.³⁴ Tange’s Hiroshima is more Yayoiesque, but it also stages a tension between its transparent quality and the raw mass of the concrete columns and scale of the structure.

Tange develops a tension/synthesis between a destructive/constructive drive as a part of the artist/architect’s creativity, bringing into the equation Western notions of subjectivity. This can be perceived in the extended structure of the dichotomy explained by Isozaki: “On the one hand, the sophisticated, tranquil transparency of Yayoiesque/Apollonian/aristocratic/platform housing On the



Figure 8: The City Wall inscribing the boundary of the city centre.
Photograph by Mirjana Lozanovska, 2007.

other, the dynamic opacity of the Jomonesque/Dionysian/populist/pit dwelling, which coincided with the Japanese version of European brutalism.³⁵

In the midst of the work on war-devastated cities in Japan, Tange senses intuitively that the Jomon primitive life force is essential for urban recovery and national dignity. By appropriating it he becomes the heroic architect.³⁶ The artistic creative force of Hiroshima, passing via the visionary Tokyo Bay project, is translated into a master plan for the city of Skopje. Tange retained the services of earthquake specialists, Kiyoshi Muto and Toshihiko Hisada, and his team included Arata Isozaki, Sadao Watanabe and Yoshio Taniguchi.³⁷ The leap to the huge scale and Jomon nature of the Tokyo project suggests two contradictory internal drives. First, the primal immensity once identified with nature is now translated into an urban strategy; and second, a huge scale in response to destruction, whether this be a nuclear holocaust, urban growth or an earthquake, symbolically represents a belief and will to go into the future while not guaranteeing survival. However, the City Wall is also an everyday structure, and its potential is realised through the interactivity of the inhabitants. In this way, the urbanism of Tange's master plan is animated with architectural significance.

The City Wall and City Gate are strong architectural elements that articulate the city. Monumental emotions of disaster, survival and future are embedded in Tange's idea of "structuring". He has considered that people do not want weakness in buildings, and that they yearn for a more eternal, durable and yet dynamic feeling, and has suggested that within this strong architecture, as within the

people, there is a hidden or dormant energy, and that architects “have to give image to the people’s desires”.³⁸ Tange’s approach may be understood as a response to a profound sense of loss and the renewal of humanity, the necessity for people to propel forward into the future, rather than lose strength in the face of destruction. The scale and language of the two key elements, City Wall and City Gate, might be described as super-strong, excessive of the concrete massing familiar to other modernist projects. But it has enabled an enduring monumental presence that until recently has continued to structure the urban space of the city of Skopje.

Collaboration and Realisation of the City Wall

In the first stage, the buildings comprising the City Wall were extra-large, high-rise structures with abutting cylindrical vertical shafts serving as entry markers (two shafts for entrance to the housing quarter) and circulation points. It comprised rows of vertical residences, trapezoid shape in section. It is very unclear to what extent the concept was accepted. The authorities working with Tange embraced both the City Wall and City Gate as concept and symbol, but the scale of the buildings was seen to be problematic. In the second phase of the Skopje project (November 1965–January 1966), Tange’s team, which included Isozaki, Taniguchi and Watanabe, collaborated with Misčevik & Wenzler from Zagreb, Tomovski from the Skopje Town Planning Institute (ITPA), Brezovski (the Macedonian entrant), a traffic consultant from Polservice, the agency from Warsaw with land use and construction expertise, other foreign and local consultants, and included fourteen staff from the Skopje ITPA.³⁹ While working on this second stage of the city-centre plan, the team lived in the “baraki” (army barracks) in Skopje, and Tange travelled to Skopje regularly.

Collaboration and research into housing typology led to alterations to the City Wall, so that by the third stage the structure of the buildings as they inscribe an urban geometry was preserved, but the architectural language, scale and formation of the individual buildings was altered. Two form types were developed: a twenty-four-metre terrace-house-style apartment building, complementing the height of existing residential buildings; and high-rise apartment blocks, arranged in groups to form the edges of the linear housing. Tange also developed a green area around the outside of the City Wall, connecting with the main city green belt and the park by the river, proposing that it would contain three primary schools. Integral to Tange’s focus on mobility was the proposal that the first-floor outside of the City Wall would accommodate a car pool service to serve City Wall dwellers, enabling the inside of the City Wall to be totally off-limits to vehicular traffic.⁴⁰

The City Wall was developed architecturally from Tange’s third phase documents, including tower blocks (GF + M + 12) and horizontal blocks



Figure 9: The City Wall, showing protruding bay windows and architectural construction expression. Photograph by Mirjana Lozanovska, 2007.

(GF + M + 6). In 1966, a team of Macedonian architects translated the master plan and architectural massing ideas into various structures, and the firm of Ćyrik, Malenkova, Kosevska, Bogačev, Serafimovski, and Simoski developed the most interesting horizontal linear configurations which follow the geometry of the faceted urban ring. An expressive Metabolism/Brutalism is evident in the service ends to this linear development. A refined composition divides the housing forms vertically, into three-bay, reinforced concrete frame structures, with reinforced

concrete structural cores for vertical communication;⁴¹ and horizontally, into a base, middle and upper band producing an appearance of capping. The white tile and terracotta wall surfaces counter the weight of the structure and give it more shimmer. Similarities with Aldo Rossi's housing work can be perceived in the reinvention of the modernist language, deviating from the Megastructure aesthetic, and more literally in the square windows at the top of the building, which differentiate it from the original Tange composition of horizontal banding. The City Wall is a unique and innovative structure. Its urban gesture takes inspiration from projects such as Le Corbusier's Bay of Algiers into materialisation, and its architectural sophistication has combined the communal qualities of Ralph Erskine's Byker Wall with the restraint and seriousness of Rossi's Gallarate, and yet it precedes both.

The people of Skopje and Macedonia know the City Wall as "Gradski Zid". The archived articles from the daily newspapers of the day, especially *Nova Makedonija*, illustrate the publicity of the project, its discussion and debate amongst the inhabitants of the city.⁴² The project was followed in detail and was represented professionally such that an informed level of discussion was produced. Media played an important role in the reconstruction process, as it presented new ideas and plans, framing how the inhabitants perceived, experienced and envisaged their new city. Grcheva has argued that Tange received royal treatment, and was greeted by authorities and citizens as the architect-creator of the new city.⁴³ This was partially construed by organised parading of Tange in a limousine accompanied by motorbikes, a protocol deployed for state officials. Tange received honorary citizenship, and in 1968 an Order of the Yugoslavian Star for his work in Skopje.⁴⁴

Criticism of the realisation of Gradski Zid has come from the architectural and planning community. Korobar has summed up their argument: that its intention to produce a pedestrian zone does not make sense of its geometry that borders with vehicular traffic; that it lacks a cohesive architectural expression because it was designed by various architects; and that it has become a socially elitist block.⁴⁵ Architects working at the time state that a negative attitude amongst the professional community in general surrounded Tange's master plan, producing a divided position between the urban authorities and citizens, and the professional community.⁴⁶ An analysis of the plan reveals that Tange's vehicular route through the centre of the CBD has not been implemented. It is argued that this was due to cost because it was intended to be an underground tunnel. The real traffic congestion in Skopje is a result of several unimplemented routes, such that the final planning does not achieve a loop as intended.

An aerial photograph or Google Earth map reveals the clarity of Tange's City Wall as image. The architectural languages of the various architects using similar materials and aesthetic references appear like variations on a theme, providing



Figure 10: Skopje model of the design after the second phase collaborative development; it is known as the 9th Project. In the foreground is the Kale Hill and the major ring road that crosses the Vardar River and then emerges from a tunnel. This was not executed.

richness and diversity in contrast to the stereotypical communist housing blocks. The jutting balconies of the third phase, inspired by traditional house sections in which upper levels hang over the street, are reinterpreted giving individuality and intimacy to each apartment, and a spaciousness internally. A very vibrant pedestrian zone is evident between the city centre and Gradski Zid, and between the blocks in the green areas activated by shops, cafés and offices on the ground level. The third seems a valid criticism, but a different elitism has arisen with the end of communist Yugoslavia. Gradski Zid is desirable rather than elitist housing because it has set a high standard of design and construction, and its proximity to services and city culture is unrivalled. Everyone in Skopje to this day refers to Gradski Zid as a symbol of their city.

In the third phase of the Skopje project, members who would be on the ground in Skopje during construction participated in Tange's team towards the developed plans – a Japanese/Macedonian/Yugoslav collaboration.⁴⁷ This collaboration, along with the multipolar teams of experts drawn from many parts of the world, left a legacy of architectural and construction quality. Numerous local (and European) architects were influenced by Tange's work directly and indirectly, and the built work that followed is testimony to the significance and creative power of architecture and of Tange's master plan in Skopje.⁴⁸

Conclusion: Place and Architecture

Tange has stated that Skopje can be like any other city, and that the spaces that have resulted from his approach are “both general and something distinctively of the citizens of Skopje.”⁴⁹ The jury noted Tange's understanding of the three historical morphologies of the city: the Kale Fortress (a hill of archaeological and pre-historical layers of history); the Charshija district (an area of small cobblestone winding streets, artisan workshops, inns and coffee shops developed during the Ottoman period); and the Marshal Tito district to the south of the river (comprising early twentieth-century buildings and post-World War II developments). Tange was critical of the version of regionalism appearing at the time in the cracks of modernism.⁵⁰ He is known for his scholarship on the Ise Shrine and the Katsura Palace, but his approach is to understand the spatial structure of the architecture.⁵¹ He argued that the mere fact of regional differences could not in and of itself generate creative work.⁵² This reflection alludes to the power of architecture in recovering the meaning of a city, and in giving it a new order that communicates the potential “vital city” to the citizens.⁵³ The idea of spatial structure and spatial image are exemplified in the multifaceted geometry of a City Wall, in the visual prominence of a city gate, and in the organisation of the two axes. These are principles and strategies that can be reciprocated in other locations. In Skopje, these particular sets of structures emerge directly and

indirectly from the existing patterns, and accentuate dimensions of the local context, enabling their reciprocity with the local culture.

Skopje presents alternative, if not radical and transcultural exchanges that mix up the dominant maps: Japanese-East and ex-Yugoslavia-communist – but also Polish, Greek, the various federal states of Yugoslavia, as well as numerous expert contributions from other nations, aid organisations, and individuals.⁵⁴ Skopje does not fall neatly within the matrix of interests in architectural history and theory – Eurocentric inter-war and post-war, postmodern, or postcolonial. The Skopje project exceeded the CIAM approach, was not aligned with the ethos of Team 10 that developed after the collapse of CIAM, nor a part of the critical culture that emerged in the 1960s. It preserved a utopian vision related to social recovery and a renewed future, exemplified in Tange's vision of resilient scale, bold urban shape, and an enduring image of the city, but modified this through collaboration.

The City Wall, or as the inhabitants know it, Gradski Zid, has a regional/local value and relevance, and presents a monumental gesture that is innovative at a canonical level. It is of its time and timeless. The City Wall and City Gate have been affirmative and restorative elements referred to by the authorities as a way to enable the inhabitants to perceive their new city. In this sense the Skopje project is exemplary of a rewriting of the history of modern architecture. Including major but forgotten projects around the world produces a different topography of architectural practice. We have to question critically how transnational collaborative exchanges of modernity have altered scenes of architectural practice, and how this challenges our understanding of architectural culture in the 1960s.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

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NOTES

1. The term Balkanology preserves a structural divide between Europe and the Balkans. See Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). For present discussions see Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss, "Skopje Scomparirà" [Skopje will disappear], *Abitare* 504 (July–August 2010): 82–95; Vladimir Kulic, "East? West? Or Both? Foreign Perceptions of Architecture in Socialist Yugoslavia," *Journal of Architecture* 14, no. 1 (2009): 129–47; Maximillian Hartmouth and Ines Tolic, "Turkish Coffee and Beton Brut: An Architectural Portrait of Skopje," *EAHN Newsletter* 4 (2010): 22–36. See also Swiss Architecture Museum, SAM Balkanology series of conferences and exhibitions, <http://www.sam-basel.org/home.html>.

2. The International Board of Consultants (IBC), formed by the Yugoslav government and the United Nations, made two recommendations at its first meeting in March 1964: first, to develop a regional plan, and second, to establish an international competition for the city centre.
3. Derek Senior, *Skopje Resurgent: The Story of a United Nations Special Fund Town Planning Project* (New York: United Nations, 1970); Institute of Town Planning and Architecture, Skopje, *Skopje: Summary of the Report on the Master Plan 8* (Skopje: Institute of Town Planning and Architecture, October 1965); Ines Tolic, *Dopo il Terremoto: La Politica della Ricsotruzione Neglianni della Guerra Fredda a Skopje* (Venice: Edizioni Diabisis, 2011).
4. Kenzo Tange, "From Architecture to Urban Design," *Japan Architect* (May 1967): 27.
5. Udo Kultermann, *Kenzo Tange, 1946–1969* (Zurich: Verlag für Architektur Artemis, 1970); Zhongjie Lin, "City as Process: Tange Kenzo and the Japanese Urban Utopias 1959–1970" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2006), 267–75; Sarah Deyong, "Planetary Habitat: The Origins of a Phantom Movement," *Journal of Architecture* 6, no. 2 (2001): 113–28; Tihomir Arsovski, *Скопје Урбанизам и Архитектура 1945–1985* [Skopje: Urbanism and Architecture 1945–1985] (: Kniga III, Union of City of Skopje, 1989).
6. Robert Home, "Reconstructing Skopje, Macedonia after the 1963 Earthquake: The Master Plan Forty Years On," *Papers in Land Management* 7 (Cambridge and Chelmsford: Anglia Ruskin University, 2007); Ian Davis, "Skopje Rebuilt: Reconstruction Following the 1963 Earthquake," *Architectural Design* 45 (November 1975): 660–63.
7. Jack Fisher, "The Reconstruction of Skopje," *American Institute of Planners Journal* 30 (February 1964): 46.
8. Tom Avermaete, "Coda: The Reflexivity of Cold War Architectural Modernism," *Journal of Architecture* 17, no. 3 (2012): 475–77.
9. Interview with Mimoza Tomič, and Rafel Vlukovski, two architects who had worked on the Skopje reconstruction project at Skopje Institute of Town Planning Authority (Skopje ITPA), stated the significance of Rotival's sketches (June 2012).
10. Kiro Škartov and Trajko Stojkov, "Reconstruction and Construction of Skopje after the Catastrophe July 26, 1963 Earthquake," *Edlizia Popolare. Skopje: Reconstruction and Development 1963/1985* 187, special issue (November–December 1985): 4. Doxiadis was represented through *Ekistics*, a journal with a focus on the science of human settlements. Polservice was the official Polish Agency for the supply of professional services in the field of land use and construction.
11. Mirjana Lozanovska, "The Intriguing and Forgotten Exchanges in the Master Plan for the Reconstruction of Skopje," in Hilde Heynen and Janina Gosseye, eds., *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference of the European Architectural History Network, KVAB, Paleis der Acadamiën, Brussels, Belgium, 31st May–3rd June 2012* (Brussels: European Architectural History Network, 2012), 436–41.
12. "Official Portal of City of Skopje," City of Skopje, accessed May 28, 2012, <http://www.skopje.gov.mk/EN/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabindex=0&tabid=46>. The official website for the City of Skopje has a detailed and scholarly summary of its history. Unfortunately it does not detail the impact on the city of the Serbian Kingdom in the period 1913–39.
13. Until the recent changes for the Skopje Vision 2014, contemporary Skopje may have been interpreted through the "City of Possible Worlds", which received a commendation at the 2006 Venice Biennale. Its authors Minas Bakalčev & Mitko Hadži Pulja (MBMHP) explore the same 2 × 2 km area as Tange, and propose how disparate fragments might be perceived as a series of co-existing worlds.
14. Miles Glendinning, "Cold-War Conciliation: International Architectural Congresses in the Late 1950s and Early 1960s," *Journal of Architecture* 14, no. 2 (2009): 197–217.
15. Senior, *Skopje Resurgent*, 365.
16. Senior, *Skopje Resurgent*, 370.
17. Kenzo Tange, "Recollections: Architect Kenzo Tange," *Japan Architect* (6 September 1985): 6–15.
18. Individual discussions with Mimoza Tomič, and Rafel Vlukovski, June 2012.
19. L. M. Boschini, "Il concorso per il centro di Skopje," *Casabella* 30, no. 307 (July 1966): 24–26; and M. Mitrovic, "La eliopolis di Tange," *Casabella* 30, no. 307 (July 1966): 26–27. See also the special issue, "The Replanning of Skopje, Yugoslavia," *Arhitektura Urbanizam* 7, no. 39 (1966) 7–28, for a discussion and representation of all the competition entries.

20. Živko Popovski, "Die Stadt, die in Spiel war... oder ein Fall der Kontinuität," *Architekt* 11 (November 1986): 478–81; Mirjana Lozanovska, "Tange's Masterplan for the Reconstruction of Skopje: An Exception to Familiar Exchanges," in Julia Gatley, ed., *Cultural Crossroads: Proceedings of the 26th International SAHANZ Conference, University of Auckland, New Zealand, 30 June–2 July* (Auckland: Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand, 2009), 1–20; and Arsovski, *Скопје Урбанизам и Архитектура 1945–1985*.
21. Robin Evans, "Translations from Drawing to Building," *AA Files* 12 (1986): 3–18.
22. Lin, "City as Process," 273.
23. Home, "Reconstructing Skopje," 7.
24. Minas Bakalcev, "Principles of the Formation of Housing Entities in the Example of Skopje" (master's diss. (Arch), SS. Kiril and Methodius University, Skopje, 1991) [in Serbo-Croatian].
25. Tange was associated with the CIAM; he speaks of the crucial eighth conference in 1951 (meeting Le Corbusier, Gropius, and Gideon). While critical of the static nature of its agenda for the formation of a new and universal architecture, he was adamant that he did not want it dismantled and did not agree with Team 10's role in its collapse. Kultermann, *Kenzo Tange 1946–1969*, 8.
26. Arsovski, *Скопје Урбанизам и Архитектура 1945–1985*, 46.
27. Tange, "From Architecture to Urban Design," 33.
28. Reyner Banham, *Megastructure: Urban Futures of the Recent Past* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1976).
29. Kenzo Tange, "Lineage of Urban Design," *Japan Architect* 46 (September 1971): 18.
30. Robin Boyd, *Kenzo Tange* (New York: Braziller, 1962), 10.
31. Boyd, *Kenzo Tange*, 10.
32. Boyd, *Kenzo Tange*, 10.
33. Arata Isozaki, *Japan-Ness in Architecture*, trans. S. Kohso, ed. D. Stewart (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006): 23–33.
34. Isozaki, *Japan-ness in Architecture*, 247–69.
35. Isozaki, *Japan-ness in Architecture*, 45.
36. Tange, "Lineage of Urban Design," 18.
37. Kultermann, *Kenzo Tange, 1946–1969*, 262; Udo Kultermann, *Kenzo Tange* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1989), 209.
38. Udo Kultermann, *New Architecture in Japan* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967), 9.
39. Kenzo Tange Team, "Skopje Urban Plan 1965," *Japan Architect* 130 (May 1967): 44.
40. Kenzo Tange Team, "Skopje Urban Plan 1965," 61.
41. Georgi Konstantinovski, "Typology of Typified Residential Construction in Skopje," *Edlizia Popolare. Skopje: Reconstruction and Development 1963/1985* 187, special issue (November–December 1985): xxii.
42. Nova Makedonija. See Leonora Grcheva, "Reshaping the Skopje City Centre as a National Agenda: Skopje 1965 vs. Skopje 2014," (master's diss. Human Settlements, Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, 2011), 34–47.
43. Grcheva, "Reshaping the Skopje City Centre," 45.
44. Kultermann, *Kenzo Tange*, 8.
45. Vlatko Korobar, "The Skopje Plan and the Crisis in Urbanism of the Sixties," *ARSHIN: Architecture, Urbanism, Design* 1 (1995): 20–21; Ian Davis, "Skopje Rebuilt," 660–63; and Suzana Milevska, "Not Quite Bare Life: Ruins of Representation," *Beyond Culture: The Politics of Translation*, accessed January 14, 2009, <http://translate.eipcp.net/transversal/1206/milevska/en>.
46. Tomič, and Vlukovski interview, June 2012.
47. Tange, "From Architecture to Urban Design," 44–47.
48. This is evident in the Telecommunications Building by Janko Konstantinov, the new campus of the SS. Kiril and Methodius University (1974) by Marko Mušič, the National Hydraulic Institute (1972) by Krsto Todorovski, and the Bank complex (1970) by R. Lalovik and O. Papeš. See Georgi Konstantinovski, *Graditelite vo Makedonija XVIII–XX vek*, vol. 2 (Skopje: Tabernakul, 2004).

49. Tange, "From Architecture to Urban Design," 31
50. Tange, "From Architecture to Urban Design," 31.
51. Tange, "Lineage of Urban Design," 19. In his study of vernacular housing he developed the design theory of typification of space and form as a way of understanding the qualitative process of change and distillation within the vernacular.
52. Kultermann, *Kenzo Tange, 1946–1969*, 9.
53. Tange, "From Architecture to Urban Design," 31.
54. Lozanovska, "The Intriguing and Forgotten Exchanges," 436–41.