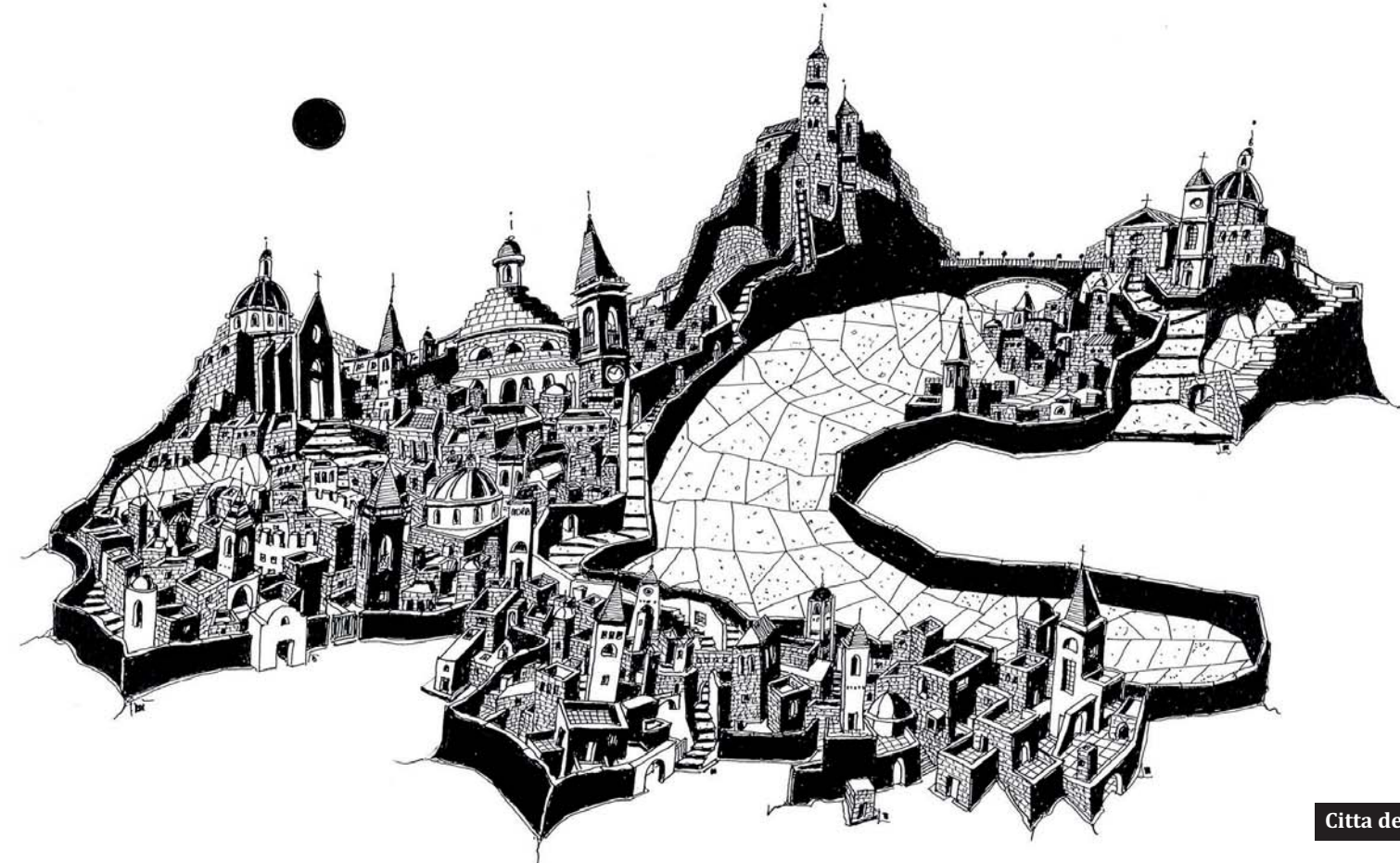




Torre di Babilè

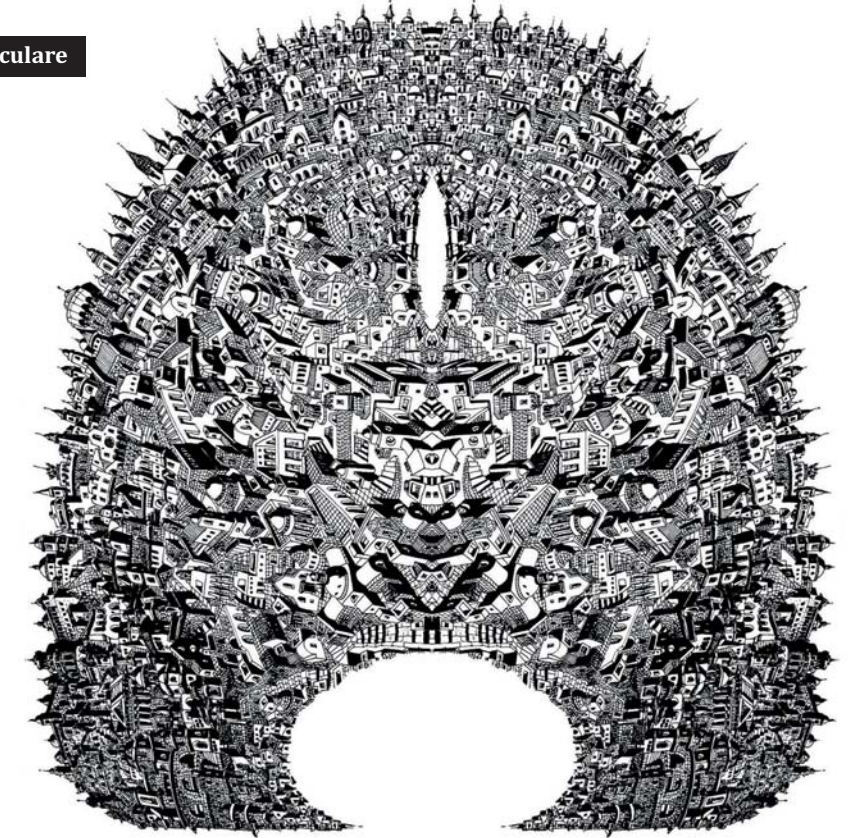


Citta Invisibili



Citta dei Sogni

Citta Speculare



Petra

Mirages of Magic, Rhapsodic worlds



Richard England's portrait by his son Marc

Richard England's latest book is published in Italy by Timia. It is a small, elegant volume of 94 pages which seems to beg you to treat it delicately. It consists largely of his drawings of mythical cities. There is an essay by Marcello Sestito, the director of the series *Collana internazionale di studi e progetti utopici*, to which this work belongs. Prof. England himself has written two essays, one in English, the other in Italian and contributed a poem.

I am publishing here a review by Prof. Mario Pisani which has already appeared in Italy. He is a widely published architect who teaches at the University of Naples II and other institutions.

"It is always a pleasure to receive a packet through the post and, upon removing the wrapping paper to discover its contents. The pleasure is even greater when the latest work of a

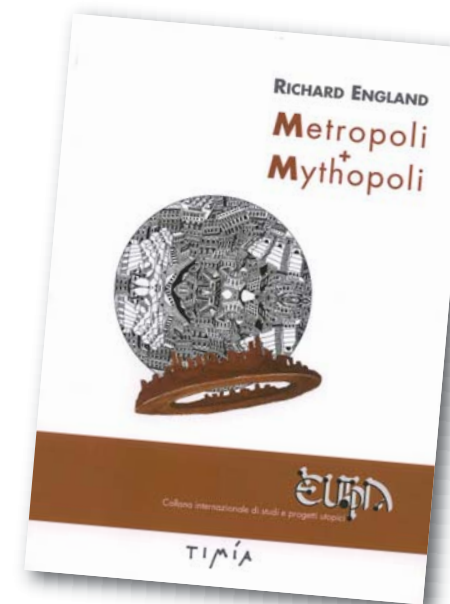
friend, who is renewing an old friendship, appears. The book which arrived in the ambience of Christmas was published in the *Collana internazionale di studi e progetti Utopici* directed by Marcello Sestito, who, in presenting it, brings back a thought of the lamented Eugenio Battisti. 'Utopia is an important game of chess with destiny which always has to be played from the beginning; it can be defined as the project of projects, the great search for novelty and concreteness, the motor which obliges society to find the right solutions, through the rejection of tradition and the courage to experiment.

With these last rites starts a voyage in which we lose ourselves between the pages which alternate between visuals and texts, both equally fascinating.

The visuals show a sort of casbah, closed and silent like so many which appear on the shores of Mare Nostrum where the houses stand densely, next to one another with clear shadows, open onto a piazza in the heart of the urban centre. In the sky a black sun is resplendent. The dedication could not have been better: "Non molti forse lo sanno, ma una volta ho vagato per i sentieri di queste aggrovigliate città, percorrendo le loro miriadi viuzze e imparato la sapiente saggezza della loro tradizione. Come ci sono arrivato e come ho dispiegato i loro codici cosmici, il segreto resta con me".

In fact Richard is ready to reveal the secret and he does it with wisdom. He starts off with Pentadattilo, fascinating drawings executed for a workshop.

They are dedicated to Edward Lear, that versatile English traveller who, on 25th July 1847 began his



"tour" on foot in Reggio Calabria and concluded it on 5 September. When he ended his tour he left admirable descriptions of the countryside and the towns visited and above all those of Calabria which had invaded his heart. It is not a coincidence that England's text is dense with references, a testament of his love of literature for authors from Campanella to Plato, from Cicero to Tolkien, from Calvino to Borges and many others. His title *Miraggi di Magia* is a reference to those described by personalities who possess a 'nail biting' fantasy alternating with the illusion which creates enchantment. Richard England has the ability to surprise us, one page after another, placing the right quotation, on this voyage which we don't want to end, I am thinking of that of John W. Burgan, the English documentary director and writer posted on the magnificent façade of EL Khasneh, the treasury of a pharaoh.

We have seen it several times together with Kamel Mahadin

the Jordanian architect, prefect of the region. Petra, that masterpiece, capital of the Natabei, shows us how realistically architecture can become petrified music. The path, after the massive architecture of Egypt and the spectacle of Greece, cannot but transport us back to Italy, upon which destiny bestowed the gift of beauty, as Byron maintained. Richard England, in his second homeland, so much loved, like bel canto, which he learned from his grandmother, when a child, discovered that "the urban landscapes together with their vertiginous hilly towns, sometimes even surpassed the magic of any imaginary city, drawn or described."

This isn't a case that Richard England will return to Italy because here is "where the stones carve the shadows, forge the light, carve dreams." It is here that he completed his studies not only in architecture but also as an artist, like the great personalities of the Renaissance. In that extraordinary studio which Milan was in the '60s, in the studio of Giò Ponti, with his friend Cesare Casati.

The little volume that I wish to recommend truly represents some sort of song where words and images are founded together to continue to bewitch making us believe how important it is to satisfy not only the thirst of the eyes but above all that of the spirit, called to new life, after being hit by this horrible year."

Mario Pisani

(Translated from the Italian by Marie Benoit)



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The winner of the
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Wilma Plaehn
393, Ic-Citranja, Flt. 3, Marsaskala

The winner will be informed by phone
Congratulations