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This publication... tells of a long (over time) and difficult (due to its remote sharing and developing mode) research process; it witnesses the need to explore and apply a cross-search methodology to shared themes (by activating an opening of scientific areas); announces research trajectories in line with the contemporary (and with the demands of the calls for tenders and community targets).

Starting from the main topic, the group has deepened its contribution in comparison with the initial MOOC research proposal. Albeit with some previously mentioned difficulties, a mosaic of positions has been built with respect to the general subject / title.

This meaningful confrontation, started from the opportunity to create a research program, proved to be a shared and plural experience for everybody.



Alberto Ulisse

MOOC

STRATEGIES OF POST-DEVELOPMENT

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Some thoughts on the restoration of the existing architectural heritage

Clara Verazzo

In Europe - and especially in Italy - confronting the past is a sort of obligated step for urban planners. Nowadays, the results of restoration are often found inadequate in terms of architectural quality, a process that leads to growing intolerance towards it. This does not necessarily mean that the public interest in the conservation and development of the works of art and architecture is declining. Interventions, although certainly questionable, have now reached an average level that allows comparisons and exchange of experience, and many operations - such as the restoration of frescoes or the treatment of ruins - are assimilated and become shared practice in many countries of the world.

For the results, but above all for the debate that follows, Italy is an important country of reference when evaluating innovations in modern sensibility, as evidenced by the strong contrasts that have animated the sixties and seventies of the twentieth century, an era characterized by great intellectuals and architects. There have been, and there are still, many theoretical positions on the conservation of the monument-document, born with the development of nineteenth-century historiography. In this perspective, the theory proposed by Cesare Brandi has had a considerable resonance in architecture, positing the possibility of recreating the potential unity of the building in restoration through a contemporary intervention that is distinguishable, reversible, and can preserve the original matter. Such position is capable of capturing different solicitations, without prejudice towards modern materials and technologies.

The role of the matter and the documentary value of the architectural work substantiates interventions in which all layers are preserved and presented in their authenticity and contrasts. Following this line, the new intervention refuses camouflage reconstructions and stands as the last stratification of the factory's historical evolutionary process, using the latest techniques for the protection of the materials and their forms of degradation, as in the restoration of the Palazzo della Ragione of Milan (2006).

A different theoretical approach emphasizes the aesthetics of the work of art and directs interventions towards a restoration of the lost formal continuity through mimetic integrations, while ignoring the issue of distinctiveness and reversibility. On this line, I will quote as examples the reconstruction of La Fenice theater in Venice (2004), the Cathedral of Noto (2007), and the Petruzzelli theater in Bari (2008), in which the use of traditional materials and techniques plays a decisive role.

The question of the restoration appears therefore dominated by a tripartite¹ division, which detects substantial stagnation, even though the scene has been enriched with new themes coming from the extension of the protective measures and

restoration interventions to new areas, such as the architecture of the first half of the twentieth century, the villas and gardens, and the landscape.

The most relevant innovations have been introduced by the *Codice dei beni culturali e del paesaggio*² (Code of cultural heritage and landscape), which collects and combines all previous laws on this matter. One of the most controversial discussions regards the distinction between conservation - identified as a way to protect buildings to meet the needs of society and for public purposes - and development, that supports a good knowledge and a better use of such cultural heritage, but also the promotion and support to the interventions, with the involvement of private entities. This differentiation between protection / conservation and development has created many concerns. In facts, it is very hard to clearly distinguish these two moments, on both a theoretical and operational level.

The preservation activity is conducted through coordinated and organised studies, prevention, maintenance and restoration (art. 29, para. 1). The latter is understood as a direct intervention on the asset, thanks to a set of operations aimed at the material integrity and the recovery of such asset, and the protection and transmission of its cultural values. In addition, for properties located in earthquake-prone areas our current legislation states that restoration should also include seismic improvement intervention (art. 29, para. 4).

Preservation actions, managed by the Ministry of cultural assets, activities and tourism through its Superintendence, are significantly decelerated due to slow and complicated bureaucracy regulations that penalize public entities with respect to their private counterpart. A further weakening of public action is evidenced in the amendment to the inalienability principle of public cultural assets, which are now all alienable, except in exceptional cases provided for by law. In addition to this situation, Regional councils had to take over the basic tasks that the Constitution originally attributed to the State and, consequently, to the Ministry and its governmental bodies. Without a precise coordination program, the regions are likely to replace the state. This is the case of the landscape issue³, defined by the Code as an homogeneous part of the territory whose peculiar characteristics are derived from nature, human history or mutual interrelationships, and whose preservation and development is entrusted to the regions. The legislation, however, repeals significant decrees, such as the Galasso decree (Ministerial Decree of 21 September 1984), and actually reduces the action of protection and monitoring carried out by the Ministry and its Superintendents.

Although not strictly belonging to the field of restoration and conservation, there have been some interesting experiences related to interventions designed within historical contexts, which have always attracted public participation. The inclusion of a new building seems commonly acceptable if taking place within a context that is subservient to the work of art to be preserved. If the pre-existing construction becomes merely a starting point or is overridden by modern construction, the project receives less and less approval. Criticism increases in the case of historical centers, seen as consolidated contexts inhabited by the community.

A first aspect that characterizes the actions of contemporary urban planners is their behaviour during the survey phase. Many projects seem to lack specific historical surveys or other specialized information. Oftentimes, they seem not to use

profitably the results obtained by laboratory tests. This immediately emphasizes a self-referential element in the nature of modern planning, a feature that makes the dialogue with the surrounding historical context even more problematic. This is what emerges in some interventions - the so-called shell mode⁴, a tendency to preserve only the outer casing of the ancient artifact, working on the internal volumes. Let's think of Massimiliano Fuksas's interventions at Antiquarium Tuscolano and on the Aldobrandini stables in Frascati, or of the reutilization of former Eridania sugar factory in Parma, transformed into an auditorium by Renzo Piano. In these examples, the dialectic between past and present is reduced to a mere coexistence relationship, in which pre-existence is used and often manipulated to emphasize the new project in a historic context, avoiding explicit contrasts with the administrations and with the public opinion.

In the contemporary scene, we should mention the interest in the intervention on ruins, displayed with a clear educational purpose. Paths and routes are designed with a modern language and made distinguishable from the old settings. This approach is common in archaeological sites, but also in the arrangement of monumental buildings. In the hospital of Santa Maria della Scala in Siena, turned into an archaeological museum, the paths designed by Guido Canali are made of lightweight materials, while the various pre-existing structures have been left in their discontinuity, exhibited as traces of the passage of time. The intervention does not try to mend the wounds and contradictions of history, but supports reading and understanding instead⁵.

On this line we also find the reflections around the theme of *spolia*, where the appreciation for the value of the ruin is enhanced by the contrast with modern materials and forms, as in Gibellina Museum, in former Di Lorenzo palace by Francesco Venezia⁶ or in the church of Santa Maria del Gesu in Modica, by Emanuele Fidone⁷. This attitude can be noticed in many recent projects, such as the Cultural Center Escuelas Pías de Lavapiés in Madrid, José Ignacio Linazasoro, where the architect makes the difficult decision to preserve the eighteenth-century backbone, taking inspiration from the exposed walls and some fragments of plaster⁸.

A different attitudes towards ruins can be found in the work by Pier Luigi Cervellati, who in the former Oratorio dei Filippini (Oratory of Saint Phillip) in Bologna reproduces a palimpsest in which the pre-existing eighteenth-century architecture, the ravages of the Second World war II and post-war reconstruction by Alfredo Barbacci intersect, without figurative correspondences.

The scenario that we have tried to describe does not enable conclusions, nor does it exhaust the attempt to summarize the various aspects of restoration; the theme of restoration is so charged with meanings and nuances that it still needs to be analyzed and further investigated.

1. For an in-depth perspective on the theme of restoration, see M.P. Sette, *Il restauro in architettura*, Turin, Utet, 2001.
2. D. Lgs. 22 January 2004, no. 42, published in Gazzetta Ufficiale no. 45, 24 February 2004. The code has then been modified according to different legislative decrees. Last update: D.L. 31 May 2014, no. 83.
3. S. Settis, *Paesaggio costituzione cemento. La battaglia per l'ambiente contro il degrado civile*, Turin, Einaudi, 2010.
4. See C. Varagnoli, *Edifici da edifici: la ricezione del passato nell'architettura italiana 1990-2000*, in "L'industria delle costruzioni", no. 368, November-December 2002, pp. 4-15.
5. For further research, see the monograph dedicated to Guido Canali in "Costruire in laterizio", no. 87, May-June 2002.
6. F. Venezia, *L'architettura, gli scritti, la critica*, Milan, Electa, 1998.
7. E. Fidone, B. Messina, *Restauro del convento di Santa Maria del Gesù, Modica*, in A. Cornoldi, M. Rapposelli (edited by), *Emanuele Fidone, Vincenzo Latina, Bruno Messina. Restauri Iblei*, Padova, Il Poligrafico, 2007, pp. 88-115.
8. J. I. Linazasoro, *Evocando la Ruina. Sombras y Texturas*, Centro Cultural en Lavapiés, Madrid, Madrid, A.G. Grupo, 2004.

Fig. 1 Modica (Rg), the church of Santa Maria del Gesù, the new structure turned with laminated wood arches, evokes the original baroque spatiality.

Fig. 2 Madrid, Cultural Center Escuelas Pías de Lavapiés, the plaster fragments and the walls in view of the eighteenth-century bearing structure dialogue with the new lamellar wood roofing structure.

