



ARQUITECTURA Y PAISAJE

transferencias históricas
retos contemporáneos

VOLUMEN I

A B A D A E D I T O R E S

**ARQUITECTURA
Y PAISAJE**
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VOLUMEN I

LECTURAS

Serie **H.^a del Arte y de la Arquitectura**

DIRECTORES Juan Miguel HERNÁNDEZ LEÓN y Juan CALATRAVA

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Coordinadores de la edición

David Arredondo Garrido
Juan Manuel Barrios Rozúa
Emilio Cachorro Fernández
Juan Calatrava Escobar
Ana del Cid Mendoza
Francisco Antonio García Pérez
Agustín Gor Gómez
Bernardino Líndez Vílchez
Juan Carlos Reina Fernández
Marta Rodríguez Iturriaga
María Zurita Elizalde

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Juan Calatrava	

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Heridas de identidad. Terremotos, centros históricos y reconstrucciones entre abandono y regeneración urbana

Damaged Identities. Earthquakes, Historical Centres and Reconstructions Between Abandonment and Urban Regeneration

STEFANO CECAMORE

Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca; stefanocecamore@gmail.com

Abstract

Este aporte delinea una visión general de las reconstrucciones post sísmicas en curso y las promovidas en los últimos cien años a través de la lectura de las estrategias metodológicas, normas y operaciones aplicadas en los centros históricos de la dorsal de los Apeninos.

Las operaciones de deslocalización, demolición, readaptación in situ y reconstrucción integral –diversamente rechazada– plantean problemas complejos en relación con la variación de métodos de la preexistencia y el cumplimiento de las hipótesis teóricas de restauración. Las formas de “protección” y “mejoramiento” sísmico destinadas en el pasado al patrimonio arquitectónico de los centros históricos parecen contradictorias a nivel de resultados operativos y son frecuentemente caracterizadas por el gradual desprendimiento de la obra tradicional.

La valorización calibrada de la cultura material e identitaria de los lugares define un posible horizonte de salvaguardia y desarrollo de asentamientos y contextos ambientales afectados por el “contagio sísmico” que aflige la península centrándose en una compleja, pero no imposible planificación de su futuro desvinculados de las razones de conservación.

The contribution outlines a horizon of the post-seismic reconstructions underway and those promoted in the last one hundred years through the reading of the methodological, normative and operational strategies implemented in the historic centres of the Apennine range. The reconstructing strategies, such as delocalization, demolition, re-proposal onsite, and integral reconstruction -variously declined- pose complex problems in relation to changing approaches to the pre-existence and to adherence to the theoretical assumptions of the restoration. The forms of “safeguard” and “ seismic improvement ” destined in the past to the architectural heritage of historic centres appear contradictory in terms of operating results and are often characterized by the progressive detachment from the traditional construction. The calibrated recovery of the material and identity culture of the places defines a possible horizon of safeguarding and developing settlements and environmental contexts affected by the “seismic contagion” that afflicts the Peninsula focusing the attention on the complex, yet possible, design of their future less distant from the purposes for conservation.

Keywords

Patrimonio arquitectónico, reconstrucción post sísmica, conservación-restauración
Architectural heritage, post-seismic reconstructions, conservation

Introduction

The “Autumn of the Apocalypse” following the seismic contagion spread along the Apennine ridge, foreshadows “a reconstruction work that would require not only technical knowledge that solves the problems of resistance against the forces of nature, but at the same time, an even more arduous, psychological, artistic, and morphological knowledge that gives survivors the comfort of environmental continuity between the novelty and what has been lost, between the values “of collective memory and what needs to be planned”¹. But once again “we immediately clash with the unthinkable abstract and formal inflexibility of a system of rules, codicils, conflicts and skills that halt the vital collective momentum of the emergence, in a sequence of partial and timeless bureaucratic acts”².

The recent seismic events have indeed affected a group of small towns, with a compact urban fabric, characterized “not only by abandonment and neglect (consequences of the phenomenon of depopulation), but above all by the high rate of exposure to risks (seismic, hydrogeological) also due to the absence of preservation of the territory and its settlement structures”³.

A reconstruction moved between “the unbearable lightness of *how it was, where it was*”⁴, Amatrice’s *tabula rasa* scenario and the procedures that “with a pitiful play of words” are defined as “a controlled dismantling”⁵ including “the spectrum of the delocalization and final neglect of Gibellina”⁶.

The controversial aspects of the Reconstruction

Over sixty billion euros of damages, six hundred and fifty victims and a great amount of structures with a significant value as to the architectural, historical, artistic and landscape aspects damaged during the seismic events at the beginning of the century in Italy⁷ is yet another demonstration of “how the earthquake played the role of a detector, or if you wish, a detonator, dramatically aggravating the problems connected to the fragility of the urban structure”⁸. As clearly described by Andrea Emiliani four years after the earthquake that hit Friuli, the violence of the earthquakes creates an acute and immediate process that is

¹ Paolo Portoghesi, “The Autumn of the Apocalypse”, *Abitare la Terra* 48, Anno XVII (2018): 3.

² Marco Dezzi Bardesci, “Paolo Belardi. Macerie Prime: ricostruire luoghi, ricostruire identità”, *Ananke* 87 (2019).

³ Francesco Defilippis, Anna Bruna Menghini, “Sicurezza e Identità. La ricerca di modelli insediativi per la ricostruzione post-sisma”, *Ricerche di storia dell’Arte* 122, (2017): 11.

⁴ Rossella Moioli “L’insostenibile leggerezza del dov’era com’era”, *Ananke* 87 (2019).

⁵ Carlo Birrozzi, “Come era, dove era: la ricostruzione di una identità”, in *Dopo il terremoto...come agire?*, ed. by Francesco Giovannetti, Miche Zampilli (Rome: TrE-Press, 2018), 85.

⁶ Francesco Giovannetti, “Dopo il terremoto...come agire?”, *Ricerche di storia dell’Arte* 122, (2017): 52.

⁷ Roberto De Marco, “Terremoti disastrosi e città storica tra prevenzione e ricostruzione”, in *Il diritto alla città storica*, ed. by Maria Pia Guermandi, Umberto D’Angelo (Rome: Associazione Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, 2018), 111.

⁸ Antonio Ghirelli, “Saluto”, in *Proposte per la Ricostruzione*, ed. by Eduardo Caianiello (Naples: Adriano Gallina editore, 1981), 2.

inherent in the nature of the emergences that construct the urban network in the small and big centres of the peninsula.

The acceleration of the events forced by the earthquakes imposed on the cultural heritage of Central Italy and the undefined and contradictory scenario of the reconstruction in progress bring back in the foreground unsolved issues, as the constant lack of an *ordinary culture* and the certainty of the reiteration of the earthquakes amplified by the absence of prevention in time of peace, and they risk to nullifying the progresses recently made in the methodological and operational field.

The recent past century witnessed, in a period of time of one hundred years which is to be considered relatively short compared to the “long-lasting”⁹ building phenomena of the traditional construction, theoretic and practical experimentations that through the grief-stricken scenario of the post-earthquake reconstructions made of abandonments, demolitions, on-site plans, restorations and delocalization initially sanctioned the separation between *structure* and *architecture*, fuelling the crisis and the debate between conservation and restoration to establish a possible and rightful reconciliation in the innovative knowledge and operational practices of the buildings and of their stratifications. The post-seismic reconstructions, from the Calabro-Messina earthquake in 1908 to the one that struck L’Aquila in 2009, although lacking homogeneity and contradiction of the approaches used, have contributed to the progress of the concept of vulnerability, to the organization of the methods of analysis and conception of the architectural emergences and of the widespread construction, to the re-evaluation of the pre-modern building techniques, to the old/new dialogue, to the research of a mediation between innovation and tradition, between safety and identity and to the organization of a normative projected towards the conservation of the existing ones.

The Calabro-Messina earthquake in 1908 “alters irreversibly the historical features of the two towns erasing the important architectural events and entire artistic seasons”¹⁰ tracing the boundary between the technical breakthrough of the use of the reinforced concrete and the parallel interest towards the traditional construction viewed from the structural and anti-seismic point.

The current fields of research run on the tracks of the “decisive dividing line with the traditional restoration techniques in favour of the trusted reinforced concrete”¹¹ and of the “modern seismology” gained in the “technical awareness of the traditional masonry carried out to the highest standards destined for the mitigation of the risk of the seismic damage”¹². The earthquake that struck on 28 December 1908 marks the entrance of the State as guarantor and plays the main role in the Reconstruction, including the development of the procedure for the seismic classification in the national territory.

⁹ Claudio Varagnoli, *La costruzione tradizionale in Abruzzo. Fonti materiali e tecniche costruttive dalla fine del Medioevo all'Ottocento* (Rome: Gangemi, 2008), 13.

¹⁰ Simonetta Valtieri, *28 dicembre 1908* (Rome: Clear, 2008).

¹¹ Valentina Russo, “Catastrofi, patrimonio costruito e restauro: l'intervento sull'esistente e i riflessi della storia”, in *Storia dell'Arte e Catastrofi. Spazio, tempi, società*, ed. by Carmen Belmonte, Elisabetta Scirocco, Gerhard Wolf (Venice: Marsilio, 2019), 153-170.

¹² Antonio Pugliano “La ricostruzione del Patrimonio immateriale nei luoghi danneggiati dai terremoti”, *Ricerche di storia dell'Arte* 122, (2017): 27.

The control of the provisions undertaken by the scientific community and by the government is carried out to promote cognitive and informative studies of the building heritage struck by the earthquake and the nomination of the investigation commissions and sub-commissions in charge of drafting indications and technical standards for the reconstruction.

The studies conducted highlighted in a short time the existence and the conspicuous seismic resistance of few buildings which derived from the building typologies promoted in the kingdom of Naples by the Bourbon government from the late XVIII century as the *case baraccate* and “framed buildings” which were damaged but did not undergo total collapses.

The technical regulations initially conceived to guide the reconstruction through rules based on the general principles of the good construction practice and on the update and language of the building tradition in an optimized key in terms of the seismic resistance, suddenly change towards the release and spread of the nascent reinforced concrete technique brought about by the definition of specific theories and calculation systems. The success and the increasing use of the new technology is mainly given thanks to the solutions imposed by the legislation in the construction of the foundations and the elevations that find a common denominator in the framed configurations of the structures¹³.

On the whole, the reconstruction work eludes any conservative approach to pre-existences summarily perceived as ruins and therefore be removed and used to fill the voids in the soil made by the earthquake; even architectural emergencies such as the cathedral of Messina, “despite some timid appeals for its conservation in the form of ruin”¹⁴, agree upon the trend of the period in the selection of parts belonging to the past and completely reconstruct the building connecting it to the forms of the prevalent phases or to those considered to be more symbolic.

The cathedral of Messina clearly outlines the profile of re-construction dynamics starting from the initial purposes of safeguarding the still-standing wall structures through grafts and metal hoops and resulting in the construction of closed frames in reinforced concrete completely independent of the ancient walls forewent to the new structure.

Practice is reflected in the theory with the outlining of a factual science of consolidation which is clearly distinct from the architectural methodology and now appearing as an autonomous discipline compared to the art of construction. The solution of continuity between construction and architecture will have definitely been formalized in Italy, after the Second World War, materializing with substitutions, hybridizations, and makes of sophistications that are sometimes necessary and at times predictable, especially in the earthquake-stricken town centres, among the satisfaction of the new safety and adjustment parameters.

The indefiniteness that yet another time distinguishes the universe of the historical centres including all the aspects, from the assimilation of the current concept of cultural heritage to the difficulty of sharing the appropriate interpretations and discernment of the material

¹³ Alessia Piazza, *Storia del consolidamento dalla seconda metà dell'ottocento alla prima metà del novecento* (Rome: Aracne, 2011).

¹⁴ Annunzia Maria Oteri, *Rovine* (Rome: Argos, 2009), 41.

and non-material components and the related operating modes in the environmental and urban fabric. This highlights how numerous open questions in the context of post-seismic reconstructions in the twentieth century have reached the new century without finding a solution and, actually, envisaging new problems in relation to the safeguarding of their identity.

The distance, which can be sometimes unbridgeable, between the purpose and the outcomes of the reconstructions and requirements of conservation is embodied in the expression of compromise defining the contradictions: the “necessary restorations”.

“The ‘necessary restorations’ is intended as a set of interventions carried out to manage the damages resulted from the cultural and architectural heritage following the natural events of an exceptional nature (...) These are restorations set from the exceptionality and severity of the events and usually more serious than foreseen when talking about the simple conservation ... and generally characterized by their transformations to the requests of the conservation”¹⁵. “The necessary restorations had prevailing motivations and were justified to be restored according to the principle of ‘where it was, as it was’ (*dove’era com’era*), however if the ‘where it was’ was partly true, the ‘as it was’ was unlikely and approximative, both in the imitation and in the building plant”¹⁶.

“Where it was, as it was”, “restoration”, “imitation”, “reconstruction”, are terms that explain the actual extent of the building dynamics put in place after the earthquakes in Belice (1968), Friuli (1976) and Irpinia-Basilicata (1980) mainly aimed at the recovery of the image rather than the recovery of the material of the pre-existences, which find justification in the word “necessary” rather than “necessity” which needs are “intended in the literal sense of the term, compelled because imposed by the exceptional fact and not because needed nor necessary - as a normal phase of life - by the architectural or urban asset”. “The obvious need for the recovery of life (...) buildings and historical centres, reduced to a state of ruin or damage that exceeds 50% of the original structures through a widespread reconstruction or, more rarely, through modern uprooted solutions”¹⁷; “a set of solutions that are in truth confusing and inhomogeneous, whose good fates come from local facts rather than from a true and common cultural method” which underlines: “the total acceptance of the restoring style in Friuli, new foundations or partial reconstructions in Sicily and Campania; and a single case of a conservation in situ” in Sant’Angelo dei Lombardi.

The central idea of the reconstruction in Belice is basically that of the complete transfer of the emergences or the construction of new expansions adjacent to the damaged centres.

The operational choices were made rather hastily without considering the awareness of the real conditions of the building heritage that survived the earthquake. The absence of a common and shared culture of conservation for the minor urban fabric, workload which

¹⁵ Manuela Mattone, “Il restauro di necessità”, in *Il monumento e la sua conservazione*, ed. by Emanuela Romeo (Turin: Celid, 2015), 137-142.

¹⁶ Maria Grazia Vinardi, “Il restauro di necessità: danni di guerra a Torino”, in *Memoria e Restauro dell’Architettura*, ed. by Mario Dalla Costa, Giovanni Carbonara (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2005), 306.

¹⁷ Salvatore Boscarino “Il restasuro di necessità” in Boscarino, Prescia, *Il restauro di Necessità...*, 13.

was taken over by the municipal and regional administrations, subjected it either to undergo a radical change in the aesthetic and structure or to be abandoned.

The assessment of the seismic and hydrogeological vulnerability of the original sites leads to the overall redevelopment outside the consolidated contexts with new and isolated building development. The result of the strategies carried out, “duplication” and “ex novo emergences” combined with the oversizing designs of infrastructural networks, entails an interruption in the centuries-old equilibrium at an environmental and landscape level and a sense of estrangement¹⁸ that translates “restoration” into “unauthorized necessity”¹⁹.

An ill-considered and incoherent legislation, substantially inadequate for the management of the remains and the protection of the historical and architectural heritage, entailing the irreversible loss of most of the monumental buildings which were forced, where not abandoned or demolished, to a complete change of the context.

The emblematic case of the relocation of the Gibellina is more of a procedure of appearance rather than a real economic development, an open field for celebrity architects where the population is practically deported pursuant the abandonment of the historical centre “which was carried out with the blessing of a cultural elite not totally disinterested”²⁰. This is the overall judgment made twenty years after the earthquake associating the Reconstruction in the valley of Belice which is still in progress with the other reconstructions that have been recently undertaken, that is, in Friuli and in Irpinia. However, “if the landscape in Friuli appears today ‘as it was where it was’”, it no longer bears its history. “If you carefully look you will see the differences which are evident”²¹. The buildings in Friuli are coated earthquake-proof boxes, rented to visitors, while the owners have moved to more comfortable single-family homes scattered in the recent making of urban areas.

The crisis of the residence underlines once again how the satisfaction of the psychological need of a community to re-build its own identity has taken the way of a “hypothetical conservation” in the historical centres, more focused on the image, on the care of the external and scenography aspects of the historical urban fabrics and less diligent on preserving the consistency of the areas, not only the physical consistency of the material, but above all, that of the society that formed them.

“It is known, that the first constructions restored in Friuli were those that were used for manufacturing” and “in 1978 the employment levels in the area hit by the earthquake exceeded those prior to the earthquake [...] giving substance to the slogan ‘reconstruction and development’”²².

¹⁸ Fabrizio De Cesaris, “Tecniche costruttive tradizionali e strategie per l'intervento pre/post sismico”, in *Dopo il terremoto... come agire?* ed. by Francesco Giovannetti, Michele Zampilli (Rome: TrE-Press, 2018): 140.

¹⁹ Giuseppe Claudio Infranca, *Il restauro di necessità. La valle del Belice* (Rome: Gangemi, 1993), 23.

²⁰ Riccardo Dalla Negra, “Eventi eccezionali e principi conservativi: il terremoto emiliano”, *Materiali e Strutture. Problemi di Conservazione* 1-2, (2012): 29-42.

²¹ Cristina Imbroglini, “Fifty years of reconstruction”, *Abitare la Terra* 48, Anno XVII (2018): 30-33.

²² Sergio Pratali Maffei, “Aporie e antinomie della ricostruzione. 10 citazioni (doppiamente) imperfette”, in *Ricostruire la Memoria*, ed. by Corrado Azzolino, Giovanni Carbonara (Udine: Forum, 2016), 139-152.

The focus in Friuli was on the productive transformation, necessary to ward off the dispersion of the people. Belice was approached differently: landscape was irreparably affected. Friuli wanted to bring about the rebirth which usually follows the dynamics of the resettlement in the historical centres and restitution of the image.

In the example, considered to this day the perfect model of the reconstruction of the original places and urban planning implemented through a systemic reconstruction project and well-defined notional and operational guidelines, there have been some errors: in assessing. “Having thought to go directly ‘from the tents to the houses’”, and the widespread operations of *anastylosis* aimed at satisfying the seismic adjustment parameters which confer, in the mimesis of modern structures and materials, a lack of attention towards the traditional building techniques and the recovery of the materials which are usually used as “old fragments” placed on the surfaces, are some of them.

Overall, the reconstruction in Friuli is set within a logic thesis, excluding rare exceptions, to restore all that had been lost in the previous earthquakes, without contrasting judgements related in particular to the event of the historical centre of Venzone and its cathedral; “a magnificent philological reconstruction”²³. “A particular version of the philological and scientific restoration method prevails, where the reference to anastylosis is allowed by the possible recovery of a large part of the material that collapsed [...] With specific respect to the Cathedral of Venzone, the reasons for a philological reconstruction of the opera are supported through the meticulous recovery of most of its fragments and findings”²⁴.

Nonetheless, in a historical perspective of forty years that have already passed by, the reconstruction of Friuli assumes connotations of “virtuosity”²⁵ and can be taken as a model of efficiency, in relation to the actions of the local community and the region, with respect to the waste of the resources, the inappropriateness of the choices and the damage of the built heritage and landscape made in Belice and Irpinia.

The Restoration space

The acceleration of the events imposed by the earthquakes, or more generally by any catastrophic event, to the dynamics of emergences giving shape and identity to the historical centres, and to the delicate equilibrium underlying any reality stratified over time, requires a profound reflection on the discipline of restoration in relation to the results of the reconstructions of the past and the role it should adhere to in the ongoing processes. Working on the legacy of the past means interacting with the memory of places; a memory that is neither static nor contemplative, but active, imaginative, the result of constant changes of a slow but continuous evolution, shaken by earthquakes that impose new abrupt and destructive transformations.

²³ Giovanni Carbonara, “Conclusioni”, in Azzolino, Carbonara, *Ricostruire la Memoria...*, 248.

²⁴ Francesco La Regina, *La Regola la Materia la Forma. Il cantiere del costruito storico e la questione del metodo* (Florence: Altralinea, 2019).

²⁵ Marisa Dalai Emiliani, “Venzone ‘com’era e dov’era’ da eresia a modello”, in Azzolino, Carbonara, *Ricostruire la Memoria...*, 95-104.

Preservation and healing means understanding and speaking the language inherited from the past, transforming it, reusing it without any conservatism, avoiding exhibiting as a piece of a museum, that is, the denial of conservation, of the active and creative memory which is the only one that allows us to preserve, to truly save something²⁶.

To understand and reuse the language of the past it is necessary to recover the aptitude to listening, establish a relationship with the heritage of the past where the interest can be either the objective of the meanings or the subjective of the sense; and the “defence and value of the sense ... is never in the absolute preservation of the existing: a sense that does not change constantly losing every communicative tension, sanitizing the dialogue and hence making the intervention unnecessary”.

“A sense that does not conform solely to the values or solely to the functions but both; and the project must demonstrate the necessity for the conservation of life, and not for the *tout court* conservation that, as to Ruskin, is the conservation of death. Conservation of life is the confirmation of the memories but also proposal of new life as happens when grafting a new plant (...) grafting as ‘Insertion and not as addition’”²⁷.

Therefore, conserving means planning “the necessity of adding to re-activate a function, which is the main component for the life span of a building. The addition (or integration) of any entity implies the establishment of a dialogue with the old, based on the continuity by adhesion or by contrast (...) However, for any contemporary intervention in historical ambiances the ability to start a dialogue by awakening the respective identities, is today, a decisive condition of the project”²⁸.

It is therefore essential when projecting “to consider the ‘problem of the other’”, developing “an interpretative approach, which disconnects itself from the level of mere knowledge of quantitative data and reaches the understanding of the architectural structure, which is read in its reality as an object distinct from the architect’s awareness”²⁹.

²⁶ Massimo Cacciari in *Il restauro tra identità e autenticità*, ed. by Giuseppe Cristinelli, Vittorio Foramitti (Venice: Marsilio, 2000), 11-16.

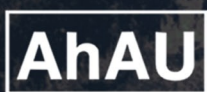
²⁷ Mario Manieri Elia, “Il nuovo nell’esistente: un ‘innesto’ possibile”, in *Manutenzione e recupero nella città storica*, ed. by Alessandra Centroni (Rome: Gangemi, 2004), 11.

²⁸ Sara Di Resta, *Le ‘Forme’ della conservazione* (Rome: Gangemi, 2016).

²⁹ Claudio Varagnoli “Edifici da edifici: la ricreazione del passato nell’architettura italiana, 1900-2000”, *Industria delle costruzioni* 368, (2002).

El paisaje es hoy un tema crucial en el debate arquitectónico, urbanístico, artístico, territorial, político, ecológico y antropológico. En la pregunta sobre qué es un paisaje se entrecruzan muchas de las grandes cuestiones que tienen que ver con la construcción y con la percepción de nuestro entorno, en un momento determinado por una crisis global que convierte a la mirada sobre nuestro hábitat en un asunto marcado por la urgencia. La centralidad del paisaje en la cultura contemporánea es un fenómeno tan reconocido que ha dado lugar a elaboraciones teóricas específicas tendentes a dar cuenta del mismo. Está claro que hoy las cuestiones relacionadas con el paisaje, en su sentido más amplio, constituyen uno de los núcleos conceptuales en los que en mayor medida se entrecruzan naturaleza, cultura, historia y contemporaneidad.

La complejidad y variedad de temas que el paisaje convoca solo puede abordarse desde una mirada transversal y desde la complementariedad de diferentes saberes y disciplinas. Tal fue el objetivo que se propuso el Congreso Internacional *Arquitectura y paisaje: transferencias históricas, retos contemporáneos*, celebrado en Granada del 26 al 28 de enero de 2022, cuyas aportaciones se recogen en el presente volumen.



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