

eda

Esempi di Architettura

2014, VOL. 1, N. 2

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Aracne editrice int.le S.r.l., Roma, Italia

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EdA, Esempi di Architettura
2014, vol.1, n. 2

Biannual Journal

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ARACNE editrice int.le S.r.l.

www.aracneeditrice.it
info@aracneeditrice.it

via Raffaele Garofalo, 133/A-B
00173 Roma
(06) 93781065

ISBN 978-88-548-7785-6
ISSN 2384-9576 (print)
ISSN 2035-7982 (online)

Indexation

EdA, Esempi di Architettura
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURE AND
ENGINEERING
MIUR E199789
ANVUR - GEV 08 - SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL
Class B (VQR)

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Speciale e per me,
molto importante!
con stile ad awone
Cianella*

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THE CLOISTER OF MONTEOLIVETO IN NAPLES

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Accepted October 23rd, 2014

ABSTRACT

The Monteoliveto monastery complex is an extremely compound urban artifact: located in one of the cores of the historic area of Naples, has been neglected and repeatedly violated in its urban shape and in its function. The massive urban renewal process that involved the whole San Giuseppe - Carità district in the 30's, under the Fascist Government, upset the historic urban fabric of the area. This operation created new spatial conditions and new possible relationships among existing historic buildings and new constructions. The Regie Poste e Telegrafi building, designed in the early 30's and completed in 1936 by architect Giuseppe Vaccaro, would have acted as a mediator between the new Piazza Matteotti (its main front) and the more enclosed space of the Main Cloister, one of the few bits of the monastery to survive the renewal plan. Unfortunately a progressive loss of interest for the cloister as an urban space, combined with the different and often inappropriate functions that came over time, caused the current state of abandonment and decay of the cloister itself and of the areas to both sides of the Poste building. The Urban Design Course held by Professor Giovanni Multari at the Department of Architecture of the University of Naples Federico II investigated, through a process of analysis, research, collective debate and design, the possible solutions to rediscover, reuse and regenerate the extraordinary cloister space.

Keywords: Cloister, Centrality, Crossing.

INTRODUCTION

The architectural project is the outcome of a journey of knowledge, of material and immaterial conditions, of the knowledge of places, of thousands of years of events that tell the history of men through the history of the city. The research was focused on the analytic study of one of the "founding moments" of the city of Naples and its architecture, to draw from this knowledge the tools for a design practice that begins from the ability to outline strategies for urban transformation. Each design process always has an origin, which turns into something else and that has the responsibility to point strategies for the future.

The research that led to the projects for the Monteoliveto Cloister in the Rione Carità of Naples had to deal with an extremely complex urban artifact, a system composed of different architectures from different eras, conceived with different strategies and different functions, that managed to find a peculiar dimension in the urban fabric on the edge of the historic centre.

The Design Workshop course held by professor Giovanni Multari at the Department of Architecture of the University of Naples 'Federico II' investigated the origins, the evolutions and the current form of the Monteoliveto monastery complex, striving to give back to the cloister that long time lost central role in its *insula* and in the surrounding neighbourhood.





Fig.1. Naples, Duca di Noja Map, 1775, San Giuseppe District.

THE STORY OF AN URBAN PROJECT CONTESTED BETWEEN THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY AND NEW STRATEGIES FOR REGENERATION

by Giovanni Multari

The architecture of the city, even with a distance of a many years, comes back as a contemporary and interesting topic of research and teaching: "in all the cities of Europe there are large buildings, building complexes, or aggregates that constitute real parts of the city and whose function is unlikely to be the original. [...] When you visit a monument of this kind you will be surprised by a number of issues that are intimately linked to it. [...] one is struck by the number of functions that a building of this type can hold and how these functions are, so to speak, entirely independent from its form, however, and that it is this form that remains imprinted, that we live and walk and that structures the city. (Rossi 1966)¹. Starting from these considerations, the construction of the Rione Carità, "new centre" of the city, demolished and then rebuilt during the Fascist era, where the extraordinary Regie Poste e Telegrafi building by Giuseppe Vaccaro is located, is an extremely layered urban artifact that even today univocally defines the relationships that contributed to re-build the Italian cities in those two decades.



Fig.2. Naples, the Palazzo delle Poste on Via Monteoliveto, Naples, 1936

In this specific case, it offers a special relationship between the historic monastery of Monteoliveto and the insertion of the large modern Poste e Telegrafi building. (Cislaghi 1998)². It is one of the most significant buildings in the back then newly founded Rione Carità, built on the project by Giuseppe Vaccaro: a parabolic façade with a dark base that supports the white marble masses of the upper floors and an apparently independent canopy roof that appears detached from the body of the building. The design is completed by the grand portal on the front, that leads to the hall that hosts the *Statua della Vittoria* by artist Arturo Martini. The facade design is clear, elegant, without pediments and columns. But more generally, the facade of the *Poste e Telegrafi* building insists with a curved shape which manages to keep out of the competition all the other existing buildings. The building presents three different urban fronts, two pre-existing occupied by the cloister and parts of the Caserma Pastrengo, and a third one that was initially intended to host the INA Institute in Piazza Carità. The Poste e Telegrafi building was designed with a sense of urban composition that has subjugated much of the urban fabric in which centre it was located, although preserving the seventeenth-century cloister used as a side entrance. The competition for its construction was announced before the variation to the reclamation plan for the area was even approved. This variant would have changed much of the already urbanized area of the Monteoliveto monastery complex, and would have subverted the ground plan of a large part of the Corsea southwards from Via Toledo with a civic centre, that included the Provincia office building, the Palazzo delle Finanze, the Questura, the Casa del Mutilato and Palazzo Troise. The main curved façade protrudes from the street front on Piazza Matteotti, reconnects to via Armando Diaz and then joins the Santa Maria la Nova insula on Via Monteoliveto, towards Palazzo Gravina and Palazzo Valletta. The block assigned to the Poste e Telegrafi building has several broken boundaries, repeatedly interrupted and resumed especially on the corner of Via Monteoliveto, that hosts a space dedicated to a sixteenth-century loggia. Moreover, the three arches of the former monastery of Sant'Anna dei Lombardi, on the two corresponding access routes to the cloister square, are doubled. The layout of the streets facing the Poste building and the square on its main front have been conformed to the original orography of the area, where the new business centre was designed on the old town by Giuseppe Vaccaro, who was appointed winner of the competition by the Board of Governors of Poste e Telegrafi in May 1930. (Cislaghi 1998)³. The monastery front on via Monteoliveto, without the XVI century façade, became part of the project for the new street towards Sant'Anna dei Lombardi and Palazzo Doria D'angri. The prescriptions of the competition brief were therefore fulfilled: the Poste and Telegrafi building undertakes to build pieces of the new town on the ancient aragonese urban fabric.

The Rione Carità and the Poste e Telegrafi building by Giuseppe Vaccaro are extremely relevant for the link between the processes of transformation and the ancillary relationship that exists between the old and the new, between the existing and the vision that the architectural project needs to put in place. The characteristic of this new centre is, most assuredly, the large building which embraces the two variants of the Rione Carità: the INA building overlooking the homonymous square and the main curved façade that protrudes from the street front on Piazza Matteotti. (Carughi 2006)⁴

The curved façade marks a strong link between the reconstructed spaces of the city, made of renewed urban fronts, public places, existing buildings and new constructions, that give the street the proportions for the construction of the Centre. An architecture that is able to define the dynamics of a broader context, which determines the size of the construction of the new urban centre of Naples.

The Poste e Telegrafi building was built as new, meaning "new" as a value that can contaminate urban dynamics and becomes a reference model for the urban design, for public works, for a renewed idea of public space. An urban project affected by the choices that led to plan and build a new city that, through the enlargement of Via Monteoliveto, the creation of the terrace towards Piazza Matteotti and the definition of a large public space are intertwined with the structure of the old seventeenth-century cloister.

The Monteoliveto complex had a large religious structure made of seven open spaces divided into four cloisters and three gardens. The main rectangular cloister was composed of two orders of vaults supported by seven arches on the smaller side and nine on the larger side.

Tucked away in the city centre, attached to the Poste e Telegrafi building and used as a parking lot by the police and as fortune shelter by the homeless people, the ancient cloister of Monteoliveto, with its space on the front and the small and wonderful loggia saved during the construction of the building, are in an alarming state of decay and abandonment.

The theme is the development of a design strategy that gives this monumental space back to the city, the cloister, even in the general redevelopment of public spaces in this urban sector. Today these areas undergo consistent transformations especially due to the new subway stations, which are undoubtedly a strong relationship between the ancient and the contemporary city. "Emerged spaces" in which the research can define the size and levels of public space.

The issue of public space raises the need to construct an argument that keeps existing architectures as general guidance and reference point. The idea is not to "create", but to understand which unexplained possibilities are conveyed by this idea, to allow the progress of knowledge leading to new knowledge within existing systems.



Fig.3. Monteoliveto Complex: the Main Cloister, Naples, 2007.



Fig.4. Monteoliveto Complex: the Main Cloister, Naples, current situation.

In architecture the idea is therefore the theme of the research that points in a direction, a scientific and collective process that belongs to a cultural community and that is explicit and recognizable. Each project is itself developed according to an idea, but the combination of reflections, of the variations of the identity, starting from type, are actually the system of knowledge, in architecture: *the cloister constitutes an architectural idea based on the construction of an arcade system that encompasses and defines a space, regular in shape [...] The arcade marks the relationship of a series of bodies or of different compartments, providing them with an upper unit, so that the body as a whole tends to introversion, and all its parts recreate the integrity of the inner core in which the building is split up and records the passing of everyday life.* (Aris 1990)⁵.

The knowledge process is a cumulative and collective construction that explores places to define the limits and the invariants of change, defines the boundaries to describe the regenerations strategy of such a structured context. In this sense, the idea of working on the cloister of Monteoliveto recognizes the centrality of the historic and layered building and suggests the design of a crossing that reveals the structure of the convent, torn between the old monastic complex and the extraordinary Poste e Telegrafi building.

This research focuses on the design of new layers capable of interacting with the monument and with a more general strategy of intervention, turning it into a public space and a place to discover and rediscover. An architectural proposal that gives the monument back to the city keeping its historical and permanent characters and projects it into the present day as the central place of social and cultural identity of the community it represents.



Fig.5. The Rione Carità, satellite image.

Two integrated interventions: the first aimed to restore a fundamental pedestrian passageway in the city, which would visibly improve the usability of the entire Rione Carità; the second, which aims to offer the city an aggregation point that, at the same time, is intended to raise the awareness of the historical, artistic and cultural heritage of the place. The contemporary intervention in the large cloister is the result of a careful analysis of the complex and, on a larger scale, of the site and context in which it is inserted.

The new intervention must establish clear and precise relationships with the existing building. The project stratifies the existing building becoming a meeting and crossing point, giving value and importance to the historical artifact as a place of public interest and social utility that will help to trigger a process of revitalization of the entire Rione Carità.

A Square of Cultures, capable of stimulating and supporting users, visitors and passers-by, full of activities, an open loggia between the historic city and the Rione Carità, a place of relationships, access to new knowledge about the history and the city itself, in a contemporary fashion vision.

An act of reducing complexity to a few elements, where the place that welcomes the presence of the new joins the old cloister in making operative again and open to the community.

The solution is brought by the desire to rethink the accessibility via Monteoliveto. The current level of the cloister that connects to via Monteoliveto is kept, with the light that shapes the new spaces and filters the long new ramps. A base rooted in the plans of history, a body that defines the empty space, the crowning element that makes the perimeter the scope and vision of architecture.

Architecture is therefore knowledge, and architectural design is an instrument of knowledge, which, as we have seen, has to deal both with general issues, both with the specific issues of architecture. The city is a privileged field of study being itself the place of architecture. Architecture investigates the urban complexity returning a vision based on some specific factors: the relationship between the city and building, the role that certain architectures have in the city, the strategy that each building can implement by affecting a broader context, more than a mere typological reduction.

Despite its foundational importance, it might limit a vision of wider interaction and change. This method, applied to the architectural project, finds an excellent example in the Cloister of Monteoliveto, thanks to its longtime relationship with the Rione Carità: it is a building that survived time and especially the major renewal of the Fascist era, hence becoming more important compared to nearby buildings. The Cloister of Monteoliveto is an absolutely strategic building to regenerate this part of the city, giving directions towards possible transformations.

HISTORY OF AN URBAN PALIMPSEST

by Fabio Mangone

As a fragment of a bygone era cleverly inserted in a modern architectural complex, the cloister of Monteoliveto demonstrates a sensitivity and a special approach that characterize the Italian way to modernity between the 20's and 30's. An ancient fragment well blended into what is rightly considered one of the best architecture produced in Naples in Fascist era, that Poste e Telegrafi building by Giuseppe Vaccaro that made Jean Paul Sartre say it seemed so futuristic that he feared that Napoli could in a short time become a Milan at the seaside (Sartre 2000)⁶. There is no doubt that Vaccaro has managed to make the Cloister an essential element of a well-balanced architectural machine on an urban scale.

The debate about an urban restructuring project for this area, the San Giuseppe district, went on for ages. Back in 1789 Vincenzo Ruffo pointed out the inadequacy of the urban design of the Largo della Carità where he dreamed of putting a modern court, with an adequate façade to give the public square a civic image.

Once the goods of the suppressed monasteries had been confiscated, including those of the monastery of Monteoliveto, the purpose of Milizia was adopted by Napoleon's loyalists. In 1810 a project for a court building on this footprint was approved, but nothing came of it. (Mangone 2011)⁷.

The no longer impassable walls of the convent allowed the open air and covered spaces to be turned into public spaces hosting administrative, judicial and military functions. Above all, a market was housed in a columned structure built in 1811 on a project by Stefano Gasse in the former Giardino degli Olivetani. (Buccaro 1992)⁸.

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, as part of the more general plan of Risanamento - that brought to the gutting of the slums in the Pendino District to create the Rettifilo and in the Santa Brigida District to create the new Galleria Umberto I - the Carità-San Giuseppe District (and therefore the Monteoliveto Complex) was also included in the reclamation plan. Some different ideas (Quaglia-Benvenuti 1888; Galdieri-Vinale 1888; Della Rocca 1890, Laudiero-Vinale-Galdieri 1890) agreed not to preserve the convent of Olivetans, and therefore the cloister neither (Mangone 2010)⁹. When, however, the unrealized plan is reconsidered in the twenties, a new sensibility pervades the relationship between old and new in the city.



Fig.6. The Palazzo della Posta and the 17th century cloister, aerial view.



Fig.7. The Palazzo della Posta and the 17th century cloister, aerial view.

If until 1928 there had been alternate hypothesis of reclamation of the area which included the complete demolition of the convent, or vice versa, the full preservation of the complex limiting interventions to neighbouring areas, the late 20's variation to the reclamation plan pushed for the preservation only of the Cloister and the church, in the centre of the large insula between Piazza Carità and via Monteoliveto. Almost like a refreshed memory of the "inner square" formed by the market that was up and running until a few decades before, the cloister - intended as a pedestrian space and central point of crossing - becomes a fixed point

of a general plan that will be defined by different architectures, some of which selected through a competition. (Cislaghi 1998)¹⁰. In the specific nature of the new/old relationship, the Neapolitan plan investigates two typical issues of Italian architecture in the Fascist era, although not very frequent: the creation of small and fascinating areas dedicated to pedestrians, as it happens for example with the Dante Memorial area in Ravenna; the potential of the cloister arcade as a filter and as an element of an open and viable architectural promenade, e.g. the Ricci Oddi Museum in Piacenza by Giulio Arata (Mangone 1993)¹¹.

It is a starting point for the 1928 competition for the new Poste e Telegrafi building, completed in two stages: most competitors - Aschieri & Giobbe, Canino, Titta & Capezzuoli, Vaccaro - filled up the area of intervention, combining new offices to the cloister which becomes in some measure the rear façade. Only Alessandro Limongelli, in his entry for the second stage, imagines the arcades as a transparent frame for the new apsis of his Poste e Telegrafi building. When it's up to Vaccaro to actually design and build the new Poste e Telegrafi building, he had to review his competition proposals in terms of more modern lines: in this phase the regeneration of the cloister was more of an obligation than a creative idea.

However, with his acknowledged mastery (Carughi 2006)¹², Vaccaro was able to seamlessly integrate it into his antique/new dialogue, which also includes the relocation of the loggia, in the fascinating modern version of the theme of diatonism/duotone, in the careful study of heights and footpaths.

After very interesting experiences of use of this urban space - including the outdoor cinema from decades ago - the cloister is now driven back into decay, and reduced to a shabby parking by those who had to free it from degradation. But nowadays the theme is not only a mere preservation of the fragment, as re-use, new functions and new meaning - even with contemporary gestures - of an area with a lot of potential. Under the wise guidance of Giovanni Multari, the young students were able to take up the challenge: the theme of the cloister has become that of the relationship among new, ancient and contemporary.

CRITICAL READING

by András Pálffy

Contrast is the force that shapes the majority of Naples, it can be found in the city in different scales and at different levels of perception. The different layers of the city (intended both as a physical artifact and as a system of social and economic structures) embody a unique situation in the whole world, expressed through the coexistence of buildings of different ages - and every single monument is exceptional for some reason - with public spaces, with monastic cloisters and courtyards that are followed by a sequence that never fails to surprise. Naples is indeed a compendium of different lifestyles, social classes and their architectural forms that blend so naturally it is impossible to focus on a single and isolated historical artifact, since it is a sum of perfectly equal parts. The museum quality of Naples's historic buildings is nearly always secondary to their primary use, which ruthlessly integrates them into the city's everyday life.

What therefore characterizes the city is a specific type of polarity and heterogeneity deriving from the variously organized structures of social and economic functionality: while having an impressive historic presence, Naples does not conceive of itself as a museum.

The classical monument is not a valid concept in Naples; the mere notion is alien to her. In its place are the complex processes that transform difference and contrast into the visible vitality that has come to characterize the city's tradition and history.

The historical dimension of this development is best described by quoting from Adorno's essay "On Tradition": "Against the verdict of obsolescence stands the awareness of the substance of that which renews it." (Adorno 1958)¹³.

Hence what we are talking about is a permanent process, which has formed the Neapolitan cityscape essentially and very visibly, and continues to do so today. The city's foundational urban fabric remained intact, although every era left his mark on it. Within this urban fabric the roads define the road sections with spatial arrangements focused on the sequence of places. A character of identity that persists and characterizes the different urban parts of the city, also in relation to the different ideas of the city which shaped them in time.

This is what happened to the Rione Carità, a civic centre built in the 30's on the edge of the ancient city, where the uniformity of the streets is opposed to a varied sequence of spaces, where often, as in the case of the cloister of Monteoliveto, narrow passageways open the vision of extraordinary public spaces.

Walking through the streets around the great project by Giuseppe Vaccaro, the eyes catch these narrow and high glimmers of light guiding the views towards extraordinary openings: a cloister as a place of great architectural beauty, art, landscape.

The Neapolitan cloisters are the witness of the centrality of religious life from the 13th century to the modern age. Since the 16th century they became much larger than in other urban contexts, with dimensions that relate more to proper public spaces than to private places. The cloister of Santa Chiara for example, is almost as large as the Plaza Mayor in Madrid. In this sense, although the artifacts may change during the course of the story, both themselves and the meaning they had in the past are part of the present and aspire to a conscious contemporary.

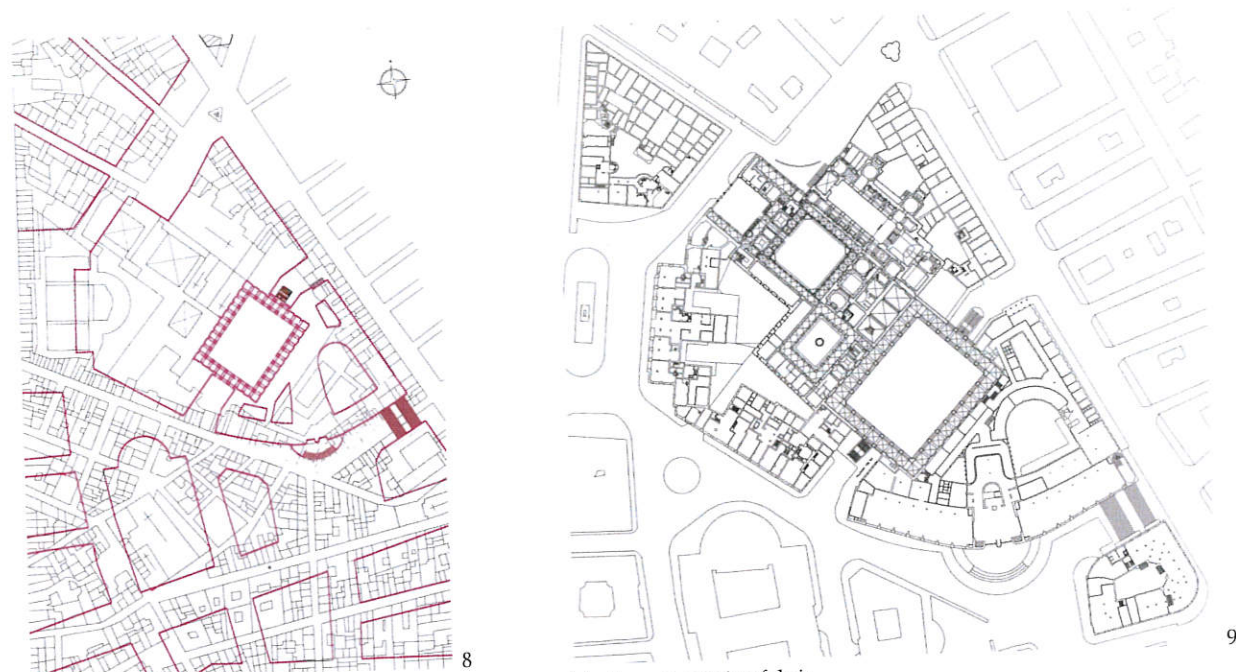


Fig.8. Naples, Rione Carità, the new urban layout compared to the pre-existing fabric.
Fig.9. The Poste e Telegrafi building and the Monteoliveto complex, general plan.

The rules for the architectural renovation of the cloister of Monteoliveto are written into the fabric of the historic city, in the dialectic and in the complementarity between streets, squares, courtyards and cloisters, and cannot be separated from the relationship between architecture and city life.

The research and design work on the cloister had the purpose of giving back a monumental complex to the public space, turning it into a place of crossing and new centrality for a significant urban area – deeply transformed by the actions of the Fascist era – that acts as a reconnection to the ancient fabric of the city.

Its layers are determined by the different uses that have taken place over time giving rise to a spectrum of extremely vivid contradictory forms of existence that tend to thrive in confined spaces surrounding the core of the ancient city. Likewise, the projects developed read the monument through the activation of new layers that reconnect the cloister to the city by placing functions that can give back a social role to this space.

The use of "private" spaces for public purposes will once again reflect the principle of contrast, which not only permeates Naples as an urban body in its entirety, but instills it to the isolated objects in its interior, making them the protagonists of a possible regeneration process.

URBAN RENEWAL AND HISTORICAL BUILDINGS: A TOPIC IN THE TOPIC

by Ugo Carughi

The research led by the Urban Design Course held by Professor Giovanni Multari in the Department of Architecture of the University of Naples Federico II can be related to the architectural debate developed, at least, since the second half of the last century. Its innovative aspects are determined by the consistent changes introduced in recent years by the development of the Metro network. This improvement can be found not only in the change of the urban patterns of the involved locations, but in many different aspects: how the reasons and the urgencies of this interventions had their way on the ideological resistance to change; in the way especially historical spaces have been lived and considered as elements of a network that, in shortening the distances of the territorial dimension, implies that time voids space, while in the urban dimension of the single building sites where archaeological finds from different eras are uncovered only a few inches from each other, it's space that voids time. The constant renewal of the ways of living and looking at the city and its historical and artistic heritage is, indeed, a necessary way to maintain and strengthen its identity. While any product sees his value increased according to the changes that progressively update its appearance and performance, its mechanisms and places of production, the values of an archaeological find or ancient building are much higher as these artifacts remain faithful to their own identity and place in which they were found or for which they were made. What changes is not, therefore, their concrete material, but the way, the spirit, the ever changing "taste" with which they have been looked at and used, and we look at them and use them today. Therein lies their actual update and their intrinsic nature of being chameleonic and always contemporary. Being "contemporary" does not mark the birth certificate of a work, but it expresses the ability to constantly renew its message. This statement is derived by the economic side of the question, and thus also applies to this matter.

In urban and architectural terms this may result in the inevitable transformations of the city, a place of spatial and functional relationships within which the various elements can maintain their identity on condition to update roles and functions. This is right the main topic for the analysis and renovation projects of Monteoliveto Main Cloister. Here, the specific issue is the rehabilitation of the covered walk in a context marked by a new idea of the city that in the early 30's led to a radical urban renewal with the creation of some of the most important works of those years, recently enhanced by the Toledo Metro station. The cloister renovation required to combine the 'centrality' of a space that acts as a bridge between the Monteoliveto insula and the Poste e Telegrafi by Giuseppe Vaccaro and Gino Franzì to a crosswalk that would connect via Monteoliveto to via Cesare Battisti; moreover, the functional, spatial and relational renewal of the basement level is a topic in the topic. Among the proposed solutions, some clearly have an impact on the cloister space and its historical features, with vertical connection ramps or new volumes that inevitably fragment the rectangular space, upsetting its natural symmetry; other solutions manage to retain an idea of centrality, making the space crossable and, at the same time, making this connection visible from outside the cloister. All solutions show how a problem set at the urban scale inevitably has consequences at the architectural scale, how one of the most important aspects in a project is the dimension of the intervention together with the concatenation of the hierarchical relationships between the components of such a layered urban fabric.

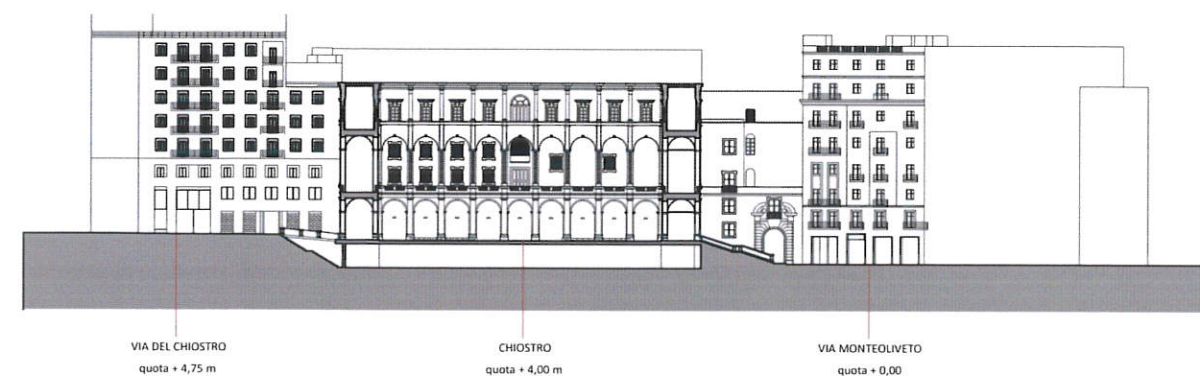


Fig.10. The Poste e Telegrafi building and the Monteoliveto complex, cross section.

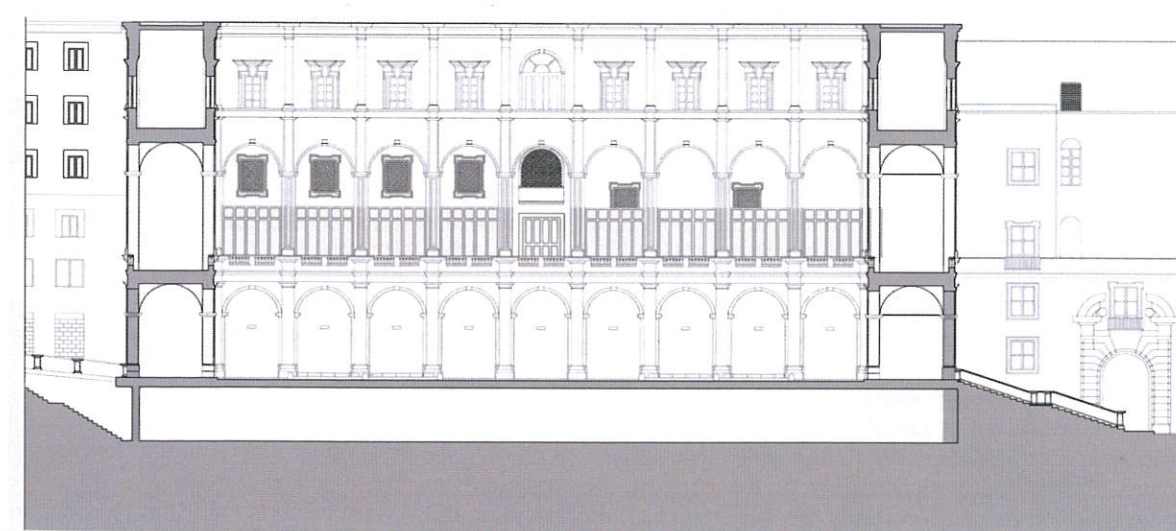


Fig.11. The Poste e Telegrafi building and the Monteoliveto complex, current situation cross section.

A CONTEMPORARY URBAN FORM

by Ferruccio Izzo

Contemporary architecture, nowadays, no longer seems able to give physical expression in our cities to the collective aspirations nor to those of our society. At most, it can decorate cities through some outstanding moments of creative adventure, often making sure that the virtual has more influence of the physical and the desire to surprise replaces its symbolic potential.

Going back to take care of the historic city and plan its regeneration lets us deal with an immense richness of experience and knowledge collected during centuries of civilization. This collection reflects architecture's capacity to act in continuity and in accordance with the place and with the habits and aspirations of those who inhabit it. It thus gives us the opportunity to reconsider the ancient task of architecture: to organize and orchestrate the space of the public image in a culturally significant way. Planning in the historic city and for its perpetuation means, in the first place, to identify its characters and its basic elements, the related usage issues and practices, the ways in which its built tissue and its spaces have complied in time while continuing to be an expression and representation of his community. The aim is to track down that hidden substrate and to absorb it, adapt it and regenerate it, to layer it with new materials, customs, rituals and forms in a continuous mutual exchange of quality and dimension between worlds and eras, transforming events, potentials and opportunities in a great treasure for the city and for contemporary architecture. The cloister of Monteoliveto, stretched between the Regie Poste e Telegrafi Building by Giuseppe Vaccaro and the ancient Convent Complex, opens interesting visions for our times, based on a comparison with the values, ideas and memories that its spaces and its architecture represent. This search for values and quality in architecture led to a deep and true immersion in the architectural reality of the neighbourhood rebuilt during the Fascist era, the Rione Carità of Naples. It offered an intense contemplation of architecture and the city, of those reciprocal and vital relationships with the life of a community. At the same time, it highlighted the need to "open" and "to re-live" this particular space in order, firstly, to provide continuity and value to the public space. The subject of public space is, in the city of Naples, an exemplary extraordinary evidence of how the beauty of nature, the stratification of places and the richness of the culture have always had to deal with the contradictions and conflicts, more or less violent, of our society.



Fig.12. Naples, Rione Carità, public spaces and urban relationships.

The "re-discovery" of the cloister of Monteoliveto proves to be a resource for the contemporary, preserving wealth and identity of this place through a possible continuation of that troubled but wonderful transformation process which has ensured its vitality over time.

Bearing in mind, through the great power of the words by Ernesto Nathan Rogers, that "*the ancient works have meaning today until they are able to resonate through our voice; so, outside from history and from a no less abstract idealism, broken the conventional boundaries, we examine the architectural phenomenon in its being: in its historical concreteness*" (Rogers 1954)¹⁴. The understanding of the structure of this place has been achieved through a diversified approach which required not only the reasoning but also intuition and sensitivity. It is based on research and design and on the available projects and studies from the 30's made for the competition won by Vaccaro, which allowed the construction of the beautiful Poste e Telegrafi building.

The physical structure of the Cloister proved to be full of strongly topical conditions and meanings. The built environment establishes the aesthetics and the idea of a city in a specific historical moment, presenting its own specific authenticity that gives this part of the city a particular value by recognizing the signs, actions and thoughts of a still current modernity. The urban structure and the strong physical presence of the architecture of the fascist era who built the Rione Carità, civic centre of the city between the two World Wars, are such that it always required to seek an equilibrium between the single architectures and the whole urban body, assuming a form of dependence between the physical and cultural aspects of the city.

An old building as the Cloister, preserved in the modern heart of Naples, is so tied to its context and the urban system in which it is inserted to make the issues of its centrality and its crossing - which give relevance to its

typology and its urban form - immediately clear. The measures and constitutive proportions of the Cloister govern the relationships of the different parts to each other and in relation to the whole, and have never been fully obliterated by the use which has impaired its fruition in the last years. A regeneration of architecture, starting from its principles and reasons needs to become a *modus operandi* that is more than necessary to avoid sterile, inconsistent, artificial inventions, no longer made by men for the man. The Cloister shows us with an evidence of his own the importance of the dialectic between continuity and transformation: to renew starting from what's left.

THE ROLE OF ECONOMICS IN THE DESIGNING PROCESS

by Francesca Ferretti

The economic feasibility of a new building project is mainly represented by its construction and maintenance costs. The project of a new building arises from a market (or social) demand; therefore the designing process starts with a set of constraints regarding morphology, social and natural or built environment, financial budget and use. In developing the project idea, some of these constraints can be modified, but they are established *ex-ante*, and orientate the project choices, being some of them the "reason" of the transformation. The role of economic valuation in the design process is quite different when the question to be faced, the need to satisfy, is the re-use of an ancient building, especially if in historic context. In fact, the incentive to intervention is represented by the social and cultural demand not to let degrade a piece of our cultural heritage. But, most of the time, its use is not evident. (Lichfield 1996)¹⁵. The architect has more freedom, in a certain way, because from the economic point of view he can manage both demand and supply. He can concentrate his efforts on the characteristics to be enhanced, facing with which use could be destined to only during the designing process.

The risk is that, once the planning idea has been defined, the economic aspects are neglected, and the choice of the use ends up by being stereotyped. The vast spaces, that cannot be easily partitioned coherently with the historic and architectural elements preservation, suggest public or semi-public uses (i.e., exhibition halls, meeting rooms, etc.) already widely satisfied, and not remunerative, so far as not to cover maintenance and running costs.

Therefore, the challenge for the planning team is not only to enhance and enrich the architectural and spatial potential of the cultural heritage in question, but also to identify new uses that can arise from the composition choices of the project. (Greffé 2002)¹⁶. In the same way in which new technological solutions can derive from the need to reduce costs, so new uses can come from a more up-to-date vision of architecture, because architecture has always reflected society and therefore its economics and hidden potential. (Augé 2014)¹⁷. In the case of Monteoliveto cloister, the themes of the crossing and the "piazza" are at the bottom of the original choices that take into account a, public/private mixed use capable of auto-financing the activities and places dedicated to public fruition, satisfying also neighbouring needs. In some cases, underground car parks were the income source to allow a mostly public use of the above spaces. Other times, common spaces mingled with private spaces were preferred, implemented in this way the notion of piazza as the place of (market, social and cultural) exchange, and avoiding a commercial enclave doomed to failure. From the urban economics point of view, the projects that match tourism with the knowledge of the urban and regional space are the most interesting: an "invitation" to visit the Archeological Museum by means of a sampling of its collection, music or performing theatre, or (more foregone) the show of the food typical products of the region. In conclusion, to satisfy or even create a demand, based on social, economic and cultural exchange can promote project solutions, through an iterative process, with numerous feedbacks, that tries to match creative project with economic feasibility.

CONCLUSIONS

The study of the cloister of Monteoliveto gave evidence to the ways of formation and transformation of the city. Its identity is embodied in these invariants that are strongly tied to history and reality, expressing the permanence of its essential aspects that act as fixed elements in the evolution of architecture (Cundari 1999)¹⁸. All the contributors to the research pointed out different aspects of the issue, bringing to light a necessary and useful comparison among different levels of investigation and intervention: Fabio Mangone, who framed the issue of the urban palimpsest; the critical reading by András Pálffy, who suggested the issues that have animated the entire process of reflection; the story of Ugo Carughi who testified the quality of architecture with his volume, the extraordinary accomplishment of the construction of the Regie Poste e Telegrafi building in Naples; the scrupulous and careful intervention by Ferruccio Izzo that made it clear that the aspects that link the old and new determine the extent of each intervention; the view that this process it is also an economic process, which defines the strategies and structures the program, expressed in the constant work of Francesca Ferretti. Building such a body of knowledge is therefore a collective and cumulative process, involves different subjects, endorses an open exchange of expression of thought that belongs to the concept that a study must be systematic and public, to be considered scientifically valid. This journey, that expresses the value of the architectural project as research and analysis, would not have been possible without the committed support of the students from the Urban Design Course held by Professor Giovanni Multari.

SELECTED PROJECTS FROM THE URBAN DESIGN COURSE
MAPA Degree Course. Academic year 2013-14 / II semester - Held by Giovanni Multari.
Fig.13-23

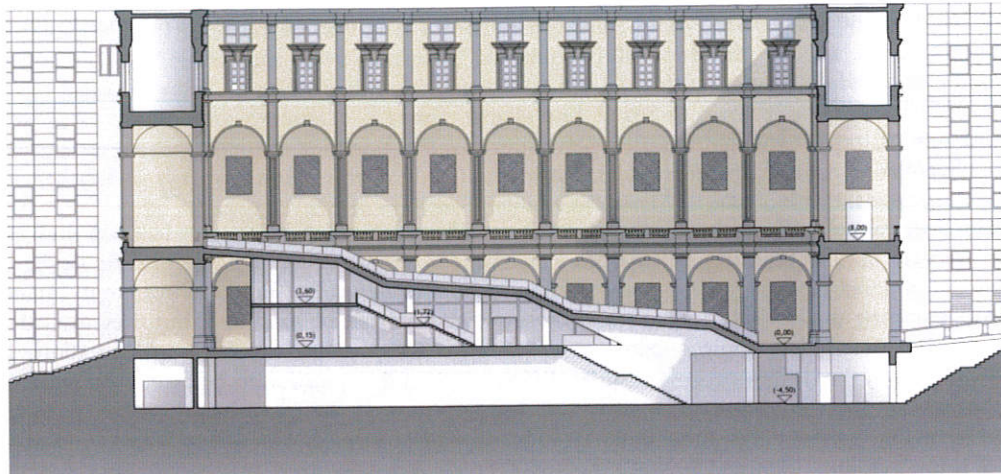


Fig.13

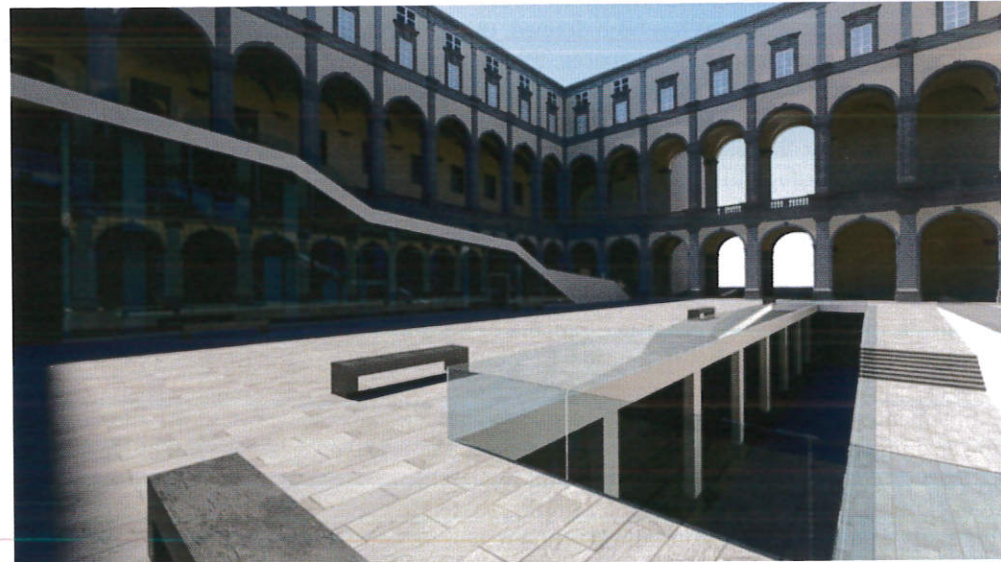


Fig.14



Fig.15

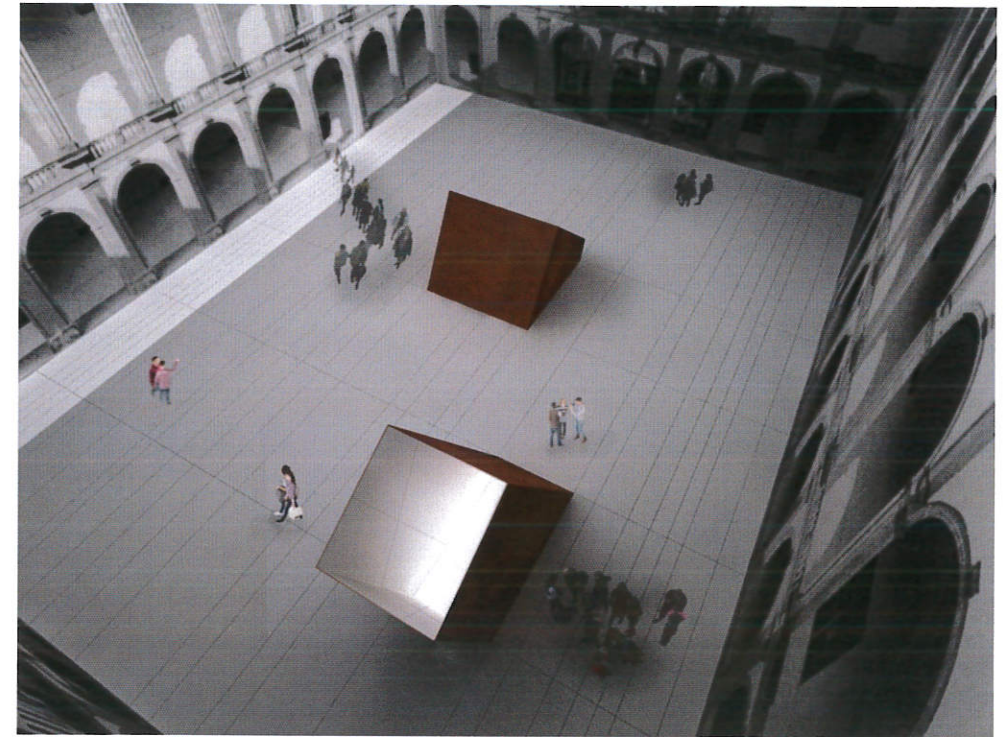


Fig. 16

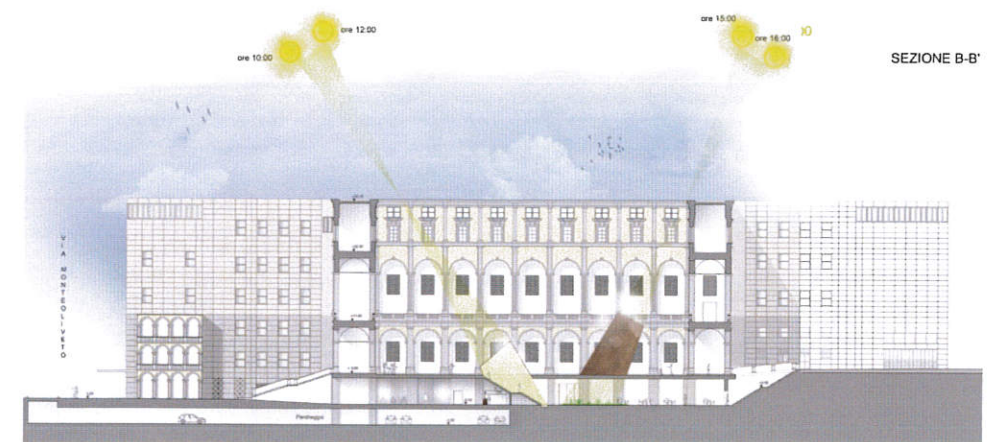


Fig. 17

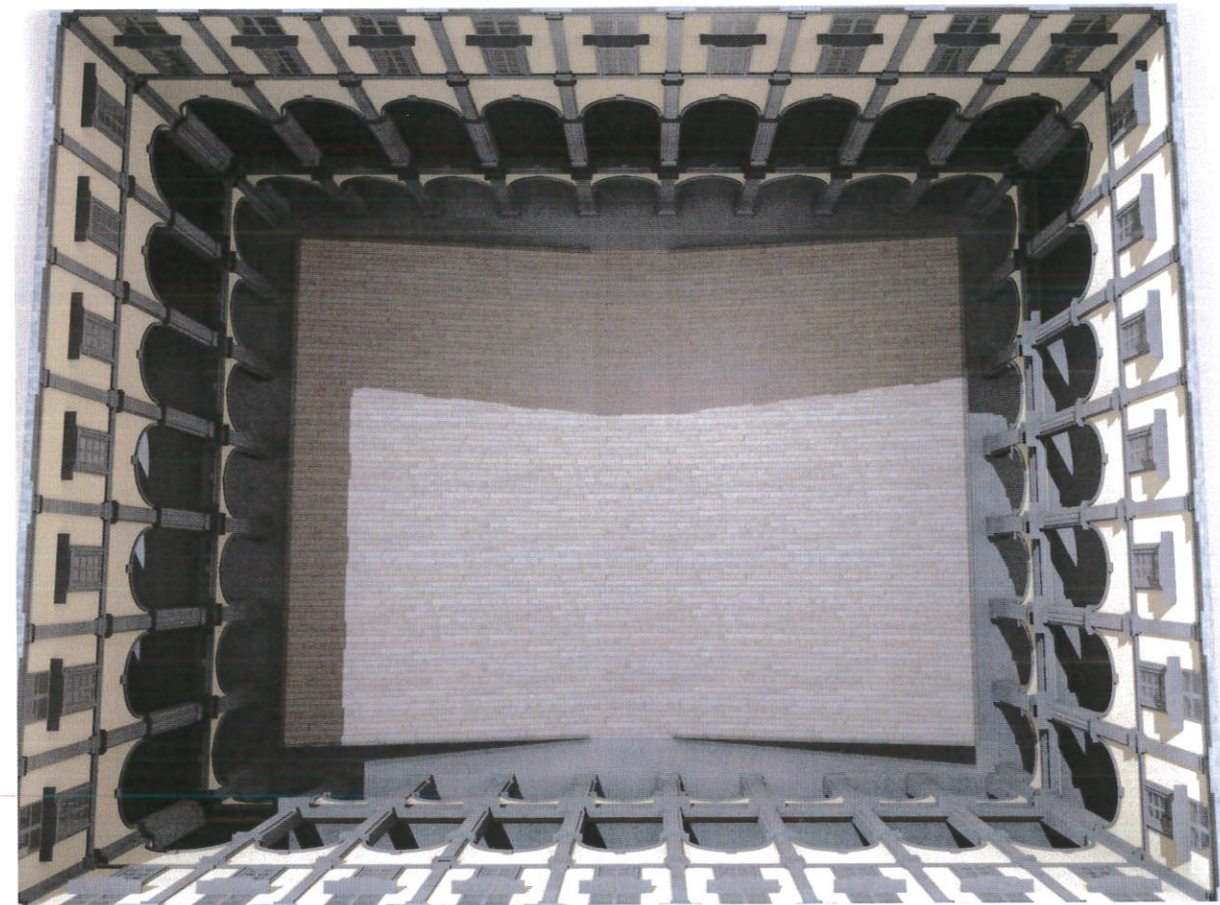


Fig. 18

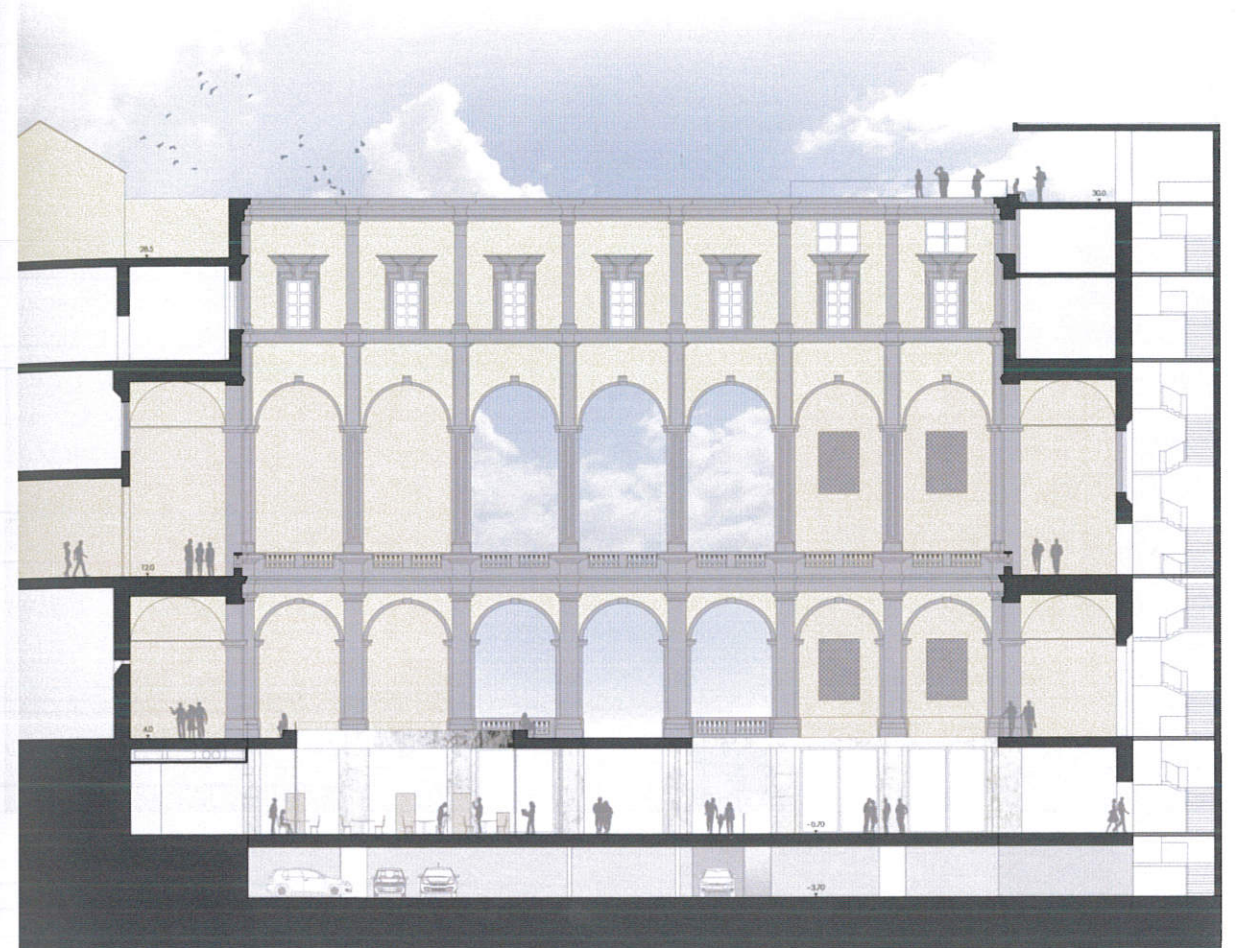


Fig. 19

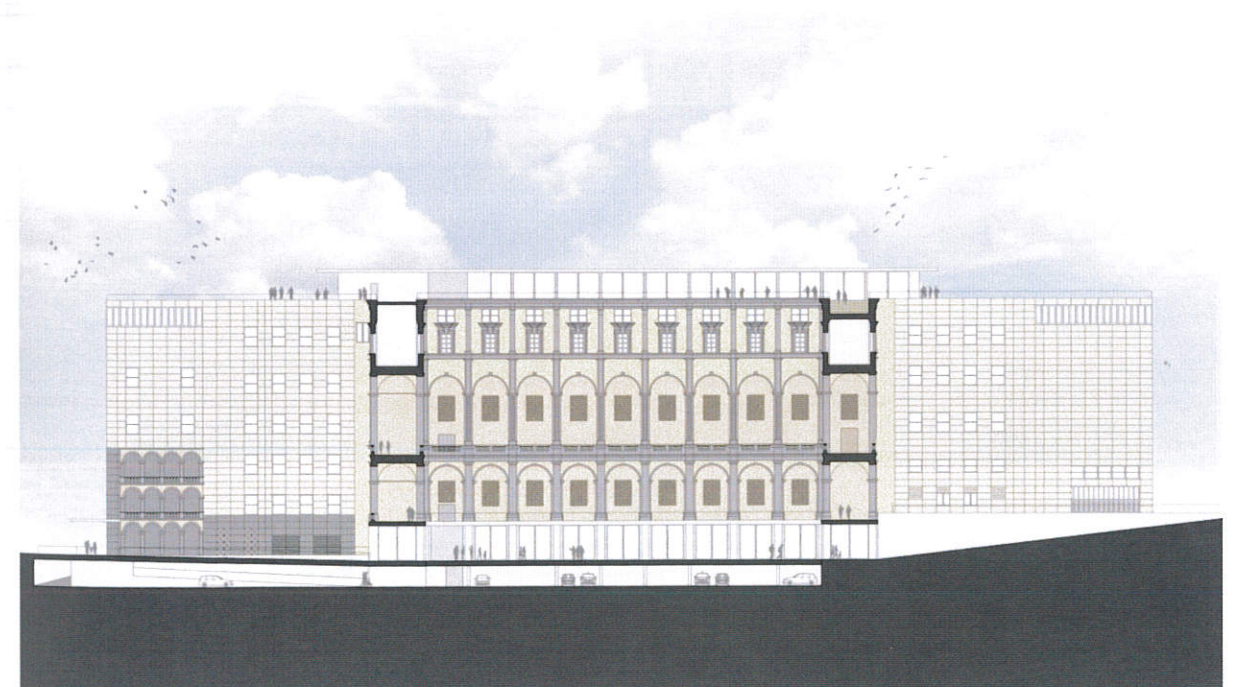


Fig. 20

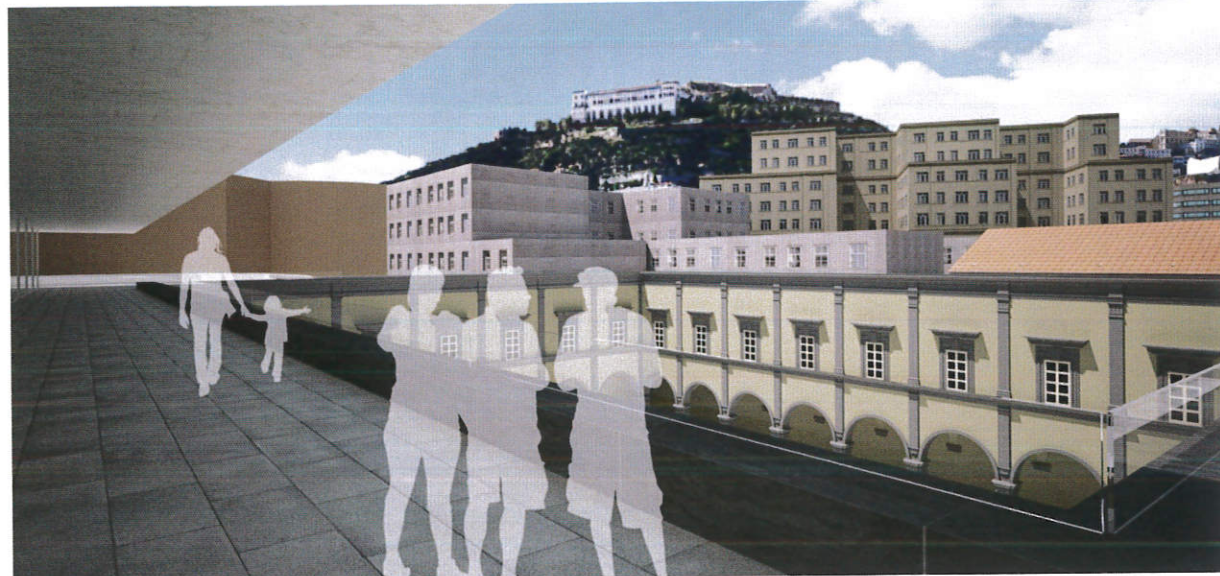


Fig. 21



Fig. 22

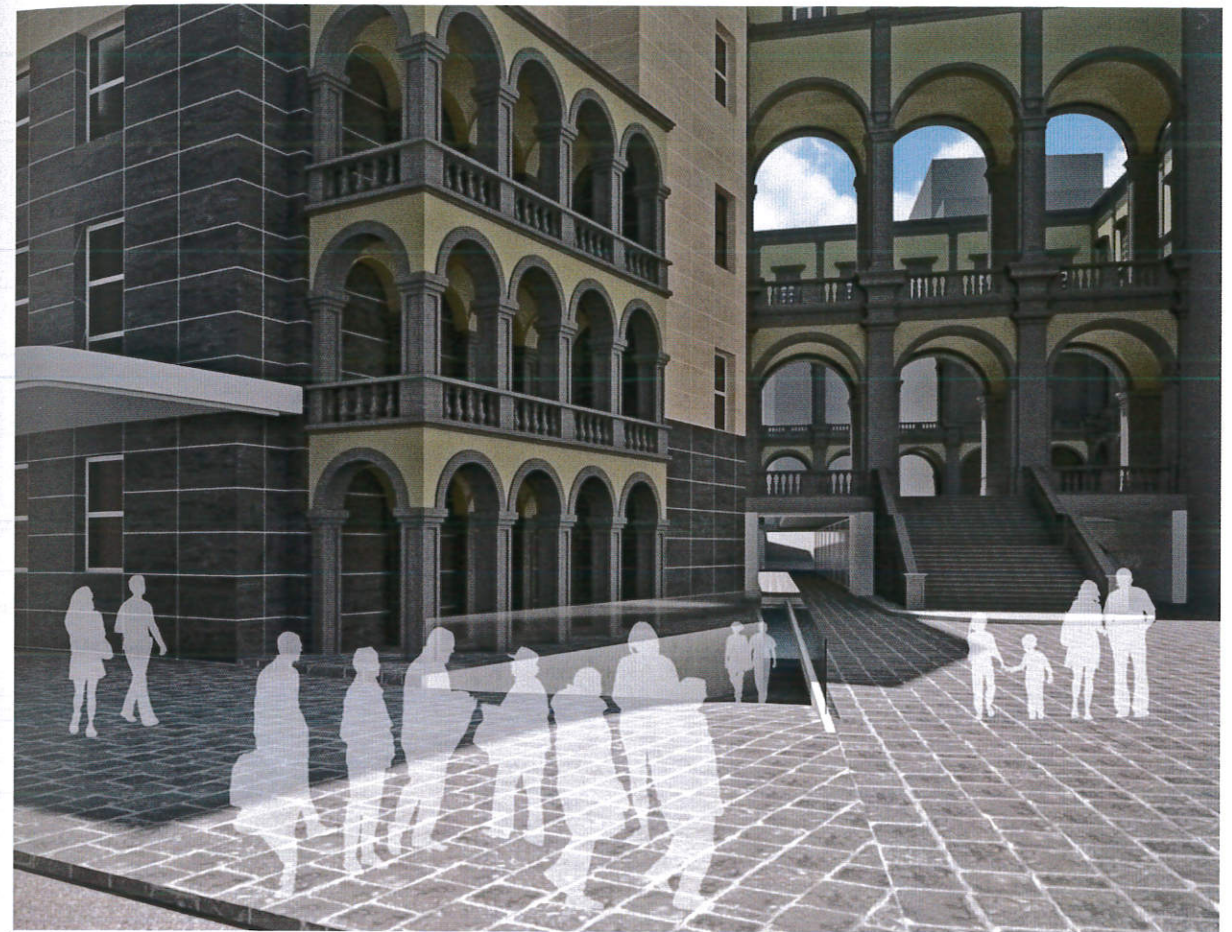


Fig. 23

NOTES

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