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The City Walls. An Old Theme for New Urban Spaces

Abstract:

The walls of the historic cities have always been an occasion to reason about urban open spaces. Suffice it to think at the ancient settlements, where the areas excluded by the fence walls then became indeterminate urban places, object of subsequent filling operations. For a long time, the theme of the conservation of the city walls has prevailed over the issues of dejection and the cycles of ring roads, charactering the XIX century and the first half of the XX century. Yet, this recurring theme often produces conservative actions for their own sake, in which the relics of the ramparts are surrounded by narrow and pointless gardens: a new form of insulation, that - when does not result in intentionally physical seclusion - at least so appears at the conceptual level, especially when the walls have been preserved for partial fragments. Today the necessity to take a step forward is strongly felt, rethinking about the spaces of the walls according to new processing and content, in which the city walls resume to play a proactive role.

Keywords: City Walls; Urban Open Spaces; Urban Edges; Archaeological Urban Project

The theme of the walls has provided an opportunity to reason on urban open spaces, as early as the Eighteenth century: in many cities - even when the fortifications had been demolished - the walls have still influenced indirectly the urban form. In other respects, it is possible to identify several existing cities which are still characterized by the presence of the ancient walls, incorporated into the recent urbanizations.

It is thus becoming increasingly clear that - as claimed by Jacques Le Goff - over time, the city walls have acquired a meaning that goes beyond the defensive function, while they still represent an outstanding factor of identity. This very wide issue flows into the even broader matter of the configuration of open spaces, which mark the transition from compact city to the areas of recent urban expansion. Within this general framework, a particular aspect to be deeply explored concerns the archaeological city walls, which can similarly play a very important role in the configuration of the archaeological sites themselves, with a view to redefining the relations with the city and the territory.

Even in that case, the theme results to be very wide and characterized by profoundly different situations, but it presents some recurring aspects and a few possibilities of intervention, on which it is appropriate to reflect adequately.

In the great archaeological sites, the presence of the walls - where they have been preserved - tends at facilitating the formation of places of relation between the internal and the external, although constituting an element of separation, by virtue of their loss of practical function and gaining of a which is only symbolic.

The antecedents of this system of spaces are definitely the ancient Roman "pomerium", the strip of internal and external open spaces in relation to the city walls - with their both defensive and ritual functions - and the "mille passus" (thousand steps), which "include those buildings that are detached from the walls with immediate contact, defining the paths which start from the gates" (Rossi, 1966, p.84), as described by Aldo Rossi.

In the current situations, the areas of interior-exterior relation, which surround the walls - even in far more articulated conditions than in the past - still represent an important and significant potentiality for various archaeological sites. However, in most situations, it is necessary to deal with a new urban-territorial condition, for at least two orders of reasons:

- since frequently a fence has been overlapped to the walls, as a further artificial limit, often dictated by contingent situations - such as the boundaries of the properties - so arbitrarily determining the inclusion of spaces with a different character within a perimeter, and thus making the establishment of effective relationships between the archaeological city and the contemporary territory very hard to achieve;

- since often several interventions - realized in different times - have imposed a logic of isolation of the archaeological city, which results to be difficult to reverse; frequently the edge street becomes the real fence, running along the perimeter of the walls, so isolating the walls in relation to the space within, and relegating them to the mere role of built border of the internal areas.

In both the cases summarily described above, the city walls tend to become an interposed element between open spaces with diverse natures: the great void of archaeological ruins and a fragmented and heterogeneous system made of further urban spaces differently characterized, still to be precisely identified, interpreted and reconfigured. Despite those contradictions, the statement claimed by Aldo Rossi few decades ago becomes clear: "in the process of transformation, the city walls stand as the most important artifact of the city on which to intervene; even as an element of architectural composition" (Rossi, 1966, 141).

Right as elements of the urban composition, the city walls can become a key reference for the construction of new urban spaces, which demonstrate to be able to give meaning and force to the presence of the "archaeological city" within the contemporary territory, to interconnect fragments, to generate new relationships, probably in the traces of the ancient ones. For years, the limits of the solutions of the "rings" and bypass roads have been already recognized, proving their mere role of technical solutions, which have interrupted the major continuities between the ancient and the contemporary city, while generating significant urban spaces in some cases. It is rather even more difficult to overcome the idea of archaeological fence - as an enclosed reality - subjected to wide fluxes of tourists, but unable to enter into territorial and urban dynamics.

The walls and the fence: Pompeii and Paestum as two emblematic cases

In different ways, the archaeological sites of Pompeii and Paestum lie in this situation of closure, as two archaeological areas of major importance, in which perhaps the time has come to open a new reflection, starting from the ancient walls received some way up to us and from their interpretation of elements of the urban composition.

In Pompeii - among the several aspects to be explored in relation to the theme of the city walls - a node of particular importance, at multiple levels and various scales, concerns the loss of the relations between the historic gates of the ancient city and the contemporary settlements. In fact, the ancient walls and the path that runs along them constitute an essential archaeological and urban element, not adequately

experienced and valued.

That condition also occurs since the walls have been superimposed with a fence for the excavations, which anyway still does not guarantee safety conditions: the walls are internal to the enclosure, so decisively increasing the distance from the contemporary city. Inside the fence - defining the limit of the state-owned - seven original doors of the ancient city walls can be identified, now named with conventional modern definitions (Herculaneum, Vesuvius, Nola, Sarno and Nocera, Stabia, and Marina Gates); the existence of an eighth door - Capua Gate - has been only hypothesized.

The mere enumeration of the names of the doors allows to highlight the complex and intricate network of territorial relations of ancient Pompeii, now fragmented and interrupted by a series of fences, related to the different size of the state property, which tends - in contrast to the walls - to isolate the archaeological site.

Currently, the fence is opened by three entrances for the public (Marina Gate, Esedra Square, and Amphitheater Square) and by some passages of service, mainly concentrated in the southern part of ancient Pompeii, so causing significant problems related to the consistency of tourist flows and limiting a proper and broad experience of the archaeological city.

In Pompeii, the failed condition of urban accessibility is even flanked by the difficult and unresolved situation of the current system of the entrances to the excavations - meant as a whole - which is definitely not only inaccessible, but also hardly usable.

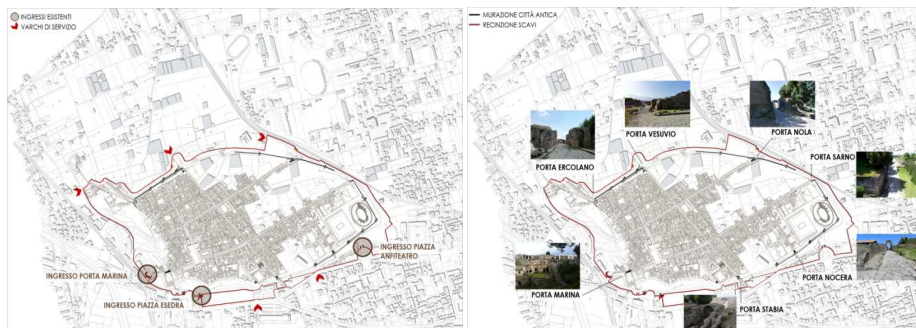


FIG.1 The City Walls of Pompeii

Then, the theme of the reconfiguration of the excavations surroundings gains a considerable importance, as an issue of exceptional fascination, which has been already frequently faced and discussed. In 1998, a walk "along the walls of Pompeii" was proposed, as a path developed for about 3000 meters from Herculaneum Gate westwards, up to Nocera Gate. At that time, the proposal was focused on a circuit

that "essentially runs along the Bourbon heaps facing the wall, so as regaining the ancient decking at the level of the entrance doors and associated road axes, as well as the necropolis originally arranged along them. Its development which mostly takes place on a raised level allows to watch the ancient city from above and at the same time to gain a wide perspective on the entire surrounding territory" (Ciarallo and De Carolis, 1998, p.73).

Contrariwise, in Paestum there is no defined fence so as a different discourse can be developed about the city walls, while noticing however the predominance of the second issue previously described, namely a condition of isolation determined by the presence of a street which flaks the ancient walls circuit. That situation has occurred despite no other settlements had sprung up along the edge of the walls.

The walls of Paestum thus configure another theme of great interest, which requires considerable deepening: the study and the chronological history of the fortifications of Paestum is still in progress. It is obvious that the walls currently visible is the result of transformations - including changes of paths - restorations and additions (Greco and Longo, 2001, p.31).



FIG.2 The City Walls of Paestum

In Paestum - as well as in Pompeii - actually the walls represent a great opportunity for the contemporary project, if working on the idea of the walls system as an element of contamination between inside and outside, as part of the construction of a new ratio between upper and lower levels, overcoming in advance the idea of the fence itself, intended as a closure and separation of the excavations from the territory.

Even in Paestum, the main design concept stands is the redevelopment of the entire band surrounding the walls, which can be reinterpreted as a strip of interaction between the inside and the outside, and not simply as a loop driveway anymore, nor as a potential enclosure.

With the elimination of the edge roads system, the issue of the reconfiguring the elements belonging to the strip (the walls and their appurtenances) plays a central role in an area where the presence of significant archaeological resources - even outside the walls - is one of the clearest indicators of the strong linkage of the archaeological site of the city of Paestum with its surroundings and with the landscape, marked in the east by Mount Soprano and in the west by the sea, once the main access to the site.

In both cases - Pompeii and Paestum - albeit with great difficulties and constraints, there are thus the conditions for starting a new reasoning on the open space, right on from the specific theme of the ancient walls, which can be divided by sub-themes, from whose deepening some compositional issues of great importance may emerge: from the establishment of new relations between the elements arranged at different levels in elevation, to the reinterpretation of the idea of boundary / border / margin, up to the networking of fragments at a variable distance.

Fragmented edges that reconfigure themselves from one project to another

In Pompeii, in the current situation it appears possible to extend and articulate the idea of a walk, by thinking at a solution able to involve a set of relational spaces between the archaeological area and the landscapes of contemporary Pompeii: a changing and diversified whole on which it is necessary to reason properly.

It comes to carry out a deepening work on the margins of ancient Pompeii, meant as a reading of the Pompeian territory in its current condition, through which even some areas which are far from the ancient city - but closely connected by point of view of the landscape and historical permanences - can be "repositioned" in proximity of the excavations.

A few years ago Yannis Tsiomis - discussing about the archaeological site of the Agora of Athens - expressed a very clear position on that aspect: "the archaeological space archeology is not - and should not be - an aseptic zone for tourist consumption, but it must belong to the city. The archaeological space surely has a certain specificity and requires a type of treatment that binds to archaeological research. However, the real problem that the architect has to deal with is the joint between city space and archaeological space" (Tsiomis, 2002, p.173).

In Pompeii, a circuit of diverse "thicknesses" emerges along the edge of the ancient city, including within itself the urban fragments arranged along Via Plinio, the areas of the consolidated city near Porta Nocera, the spaces of the religious city, with some large caring buildings - almost unused - and especially, northwards, the "historic countryside" still recognizable in some parts, which juts out towards Vesuvius, so as defining a real landscape unit precisely identifiable .

In these thicknesses, even many spaces of relation can be identified between the inside and the outside of the excavations, and not only mere surroundings places caused by physical contiguity. Through these spaces, it is possible to improve significantly the "visitability" of the archaeological area, which gains a fundamental importance in the case of Pompeii. At the same time, these spaces may play significant roles and functions in a unitary and intertwined logics, despite the individuality of the different landscape contexts.

This means the overcoming of the vision of Pompeii considered as an archaeological case of a city that has not survived down to us - intended as a living environment - which implies that it should be isolated in the condition of a dead city. On the other hand, "that territory - dejected by pollution, urbanization and wild illegal constructions - has been metaphorized insomuch not to require further arguments to deduce that today the archaeological site of Pompeii no longer represents the ancient Pompeii" (Guzzo, 2009, p.248).

It is then necessary to definitely assume the archeological city as a major element of the contemporary city, which significantly contributes to its own definition: only this way the archaeological elements will be able to embody the concept of permanence in their entirety, in the positive sense of the catalyst and driving force of urban transformations, regaining the territorial dimension, which is a crucial aspect of the identity of ancient Pompeii.

Of course it comes to a very peculiar permanence, which can be explained through and through right by introducing the antipole of the metamorphosis undergone by Pompeii, that - beyond the physical aspects - "covers several ideal and cultural aspects" (Guzzo, 2009, p.246), if positively reversed. This particular idea of

permanence takes on a definite meaning, if investigated design terms.



FIG.3 Pompeii. A circuit of diverse "thicknesses"

The working on the construction of a network of relational spaces - which can grow over time - means the experimentation of a new cultural approach, by connecting not only different scales of intervention but also the different stakeholders: the inter-municipal, regional and metropolitan level, the Ministry for the Heritage and Cultural Activities, the Bodies for local protection, the City Council, religious Institutions, international entrepreneurs and local actors, citizens and tourists.

Andreina Ricci highlights the interesting dynamics that could result from this collaboration: "the fences that today cordon off some exclusive areas of the past - as the borders which are attempted to be moved more and more ahead with military acts of force in times of war - could become fragmentes boundaries, which reconfigure themselves from one project to another, so resulting marked - as in times of peace - by negotiation, juridical, political, diplomatic relations, and even - especially - by the dialogue with neighbors, by the exchange, by the conversation" (Ricci, 2006, pp.146-147).

In the new system of relational spaces, all the gates of ancient Pompeii can potentially regain the role of the filter and passage element between the inside and outside of the city, although the morphological and logistic conditions results to be different in the various situations, as well as the level of conservation of the doors and the current relation with the walls are diversified.

Another very significant relational element is the system of towers: the circuit of the walls was once characterized by 12 watchtowers placed at regular intervals, added in the last phase of fortification, shortly before the Social War. The numbering of the towers - starting from Stabia Gate counterclockwise - derives from the Oscan inscriptions painted in various parts of the city at the time of the Sullan siege, in order to facilitate the movement of troops for the defense.

The state of conservation and the position of those elements is very different, but - at least in some cases - it is possible to reallocate the towers to the role of vantage points of observation, allowing the viewing of the excavations from the top and the relationship of the digging areas themselves with the territory, the sea, the consolidated city southward.

The same dynamic also involves the case of Paestum, where specific issues can be identified in the proximity of the bands outside the walls near the four doors - each one differently characterized - in the context of a unitary project that identifies and consolidates a further other essential presence in the vague maps of Paestum, which is constituted by the band itself - heir to the "mille passus" off the walls - but also a bearer of absolutely contemporary contents.

Hans Kayser described the situation of Paestum, catching its potentialities: "the walls - 4750 meters long - surrounds a large irregular quadrilateral - cracked here and there - in which the area of the temple occupies only a small space, and that has four gates and several towers. The walls and the doors are constructed with a beautiful travertine tufa stone of the color gray and brown (...). You walk sometimes inside, sometimes outside the walls , where today the lush fields of artichokes reveal the presence of zealous peasant hands" (Kayser, 2008, p.198). Just walking in and out of the walls, the regain of the unity of a territory constitutes a general objective of the project, to be grasped in different situations. At Porta Sirena (Siren Gate) - connected to the station which represents the main access to the area - the design proposed is focused on the creation of a park that reinterprets and extends the ancient moat: the paths follow the circuit of the walls, spreading towards the territory as to encompass some emergent elements or new interchange functions (parkings, infrastructures, etc.), so penetrating to the inside through some raids from the existing openings. Outside Porta Aurea (Golden Gate) the project proposal concerns the redevelopment of the village, which faces the walls from the outside: even here the thickening of the band allows to retrieve further archaeological remains within a park, equally compressed between the profile of the walls and the village. Porta Marina (Marine Gate) is the gateway to the sea, reinterpreted as interchange and branching node of a cycle track. In this context, the theme of ancient the marsh gains great importance.

The moat, railway, village, swamp are the elements of a dialogue between the old city and the stratifications of the territory, a dialogue which has been resumed through the project itself, by fully accepting the consideration that "the swamp, buffalos, loneliness will remain constant elements in the image of Paestum, will make a unique body - i would say - with the temples themselves" (Zevi, 1990, p.65).

The image and the symbolic value of the walls continue to be fundamental and indispensable elements in the redefinition of the relations between the interior and exterior of the excavations. At the same time, further aspects play an important role, such as the idea of the wall as a path that allows simultaneous viewing of different spaces, and a fortiori on the flat territory of Paestum; or even the fabric of the paths along the walls, which are arranged in different directions, widening themselves even considerably.

Starting from the study of those issues, in both cases - Pompeii and Paestum - in the context of a programmatic and design unified approach, a unified strategy has been identified, becoming - at the same time - an exemplification of the potentialities of the general idea, but also a possible point of triggering for transformations, also reasoning on the issue of crossing the walls.



FIG.4 Paestum. Towards the regain of a unity of a territory

A door, for example

In Pompeii, in the whole of the spaces of relation, Vesuvius Gate plays a key role, as the hinge element between the rural landscape to the north and the ancient city.

It is certainly not the best-preserved gate of Pompeii. Other doors allow to better understand the architecture and representative characters of these elements in the ancient urban structure. But right as a completely lost element, Vesuvius Gate can be understood as a sort of point of observation and study of the relationship between the archaeological city and the territory, as a point of opening in which the idea of separation and isolation is completely lost.

Specifically to study the situation of Vesuvius Gate therefore meets two objectives: on the one hand, to deeper evaluate an emblematic case within the whole of the

doors of ancient Pompeii, on the other hand, to put forward a definite proposal for the opening of a new entrance to the excavations, in the context of a wider and more complex reasoning about relational spaces, on the visitability, accessibility and usability of urban archaeological excavations.

Vesuvius Gate is primarily a point of confluence of many elements of the ancient city: the well-preserved walls in the section which runs up to Herculaneum Gate, with the Towers, the internal axis of Vesuvius Street - with a fundamental importance in the urban morphology - the necropolis, shaded by a very high pine, the traces of the external road axis, rotated with respect to the internal one, directed towards the volcano.

The idea of creating a new entrance to the excavations from the north, in relation to Vesuvius Gate, with routes for enlarged accessibility, is a strategic choice, which allows to "consolidate" a very precarious place: a sort of middle ground between the ancient walls and the mostly unused countryside, a place that reflects the landscape of the overlaps resulting from lava flows that progressively invaded the area.

Vesuvius Gate can become the element of access towards two systems of paths - upon the walls (from Vesuvius Gate to Herculaneum Gate) and along the walls (from Vesuvius Gate to the Towers X and XI, with the entrance from Mercury Street) - but also a convenient and easy access to the ancient city, a natural prosecution of Vesuvius Street outwards, which constitutes the main internal axis of the connection from the north with the central part of the archaeological city.



FIG.5 Pompeii. Project for Vesuvius Gate

The opening of Vesuvius Gate is fundamental for the protection of the archaeological area: its activation as the entrance from the north of the excavations would allow a significant reduction in tourist flows, nowadays mostly concentrated at Marina Gate, and consequently an improvement of the anthropic usury for the archaeological site, also contributing to a better differentiation of the internal paths of the area itself.

At the same time, the opening Vesuvius Gate can promote the conservation and

enhancement of the area located in the north of the diggings, putting a halt to the abandonment of a territory which has great elements of interest and considerable potentialities. Hence, the theme of relational spaces may be addressed in a complete and comprehensive way.

For the opening of Vesuvius Gate and the reconfiguration of the entrance area, it is necessary to investigate the current situation of the places and to face different issues related to several physical, perceptual and material factors.

The goal is to build a design strategy of reorganization with respect to the current situation, from which a public space newly formed can emerge, capable of including several archaeological elements, from the pomerial street to the places of the necropolis, from Vesuvius Gate to the ancient access road to the city.

Of course, in this work, "we must start from knowledge", as to update it, but also "to develop the collective processes of inquiry and cross-sectoral assessment, which finally mobilize the full creative and survey potentialities of the urban scene and contemporary design", as well underlined Mario Manieri Elia, reasoning about similar problems of ancient Rome (Manieri Elia, 2002, p.18).

The reference elements of the design proposal may ultimately be made by a new access structure, in a strategic position, by a system of gently sloping pathways, which allow to go down to Vesuvius Gate and climb on the walls, and by a new arrangement of the necropolis area.

The new entrance can be intended of as the margin of an archaeological dig, "a sign full of meaning, which delimits the field of investigation and isolate it so as allowing to examine it with care" (Kirk, 2009, p.217), and not as a new fence.



FIG.6 Pompeii. Project for Vesuvius Gate

It comes to design a few elements able to follow the existing orography and to

insinuate partly inside it - and which never configure real volumes - through shelters and folds of the ground, act at tracing a path in perfect continuity with the Vesuvius Street inside the excavation. Further paths - analogously designed- could allow to climb on the top of the little hill arranged in the east of the cemetery, so as creating a large belvedere towards the excavations, with very particular views towards the coast. At this major intervention, further actions could be connected, concerning the reconfiguration of the existing buildings - in particular the block which currently used for the guard - meant as the spaces for hosting the essential services to the construction of the new access, even including new entrance shelters.

In the design development, a specific study should be reserved to the question of reversibility and the transience of interventions. Often this condition is placed at the basis of the design of contemporary architecture in ancient contexts as a slogan, then contradicted in the processes of realization and management of the works. At Vesuvius Gate the issue of reversibility becomes instead a prerequisite, as the new access must assume a complete meaning, a value and utility at a given time, but must be able to be modified or removed with respect to new programs and new orders, that could occur in Pompeii at a later time.

Among the additional interventions to be programmed, considerable significance is held by the discourse of the Towers X and XI (of Mercury), which may become an integral part of the system of access between the pomerial street / path and the archaeological excavations. Through punctual additions - such as a connection platform between the various levels in elevation of the Tower X - it will be possible to put in direct communication the various layers, in particular the path round the walls and the pomerial path, so as concretely facilitating the understanding of the whole complex of the excavations and of the spatial relations.

Justice Gate in Paestum

The same issues have been adequately detailed even in the case of Justice Gate (Porta Giustizia), in Paestum.

In this part of the territory of Paestum, the ancient city walls come into contact with the river that - since ancient times - has been running along them, but also with the archaeological remains of the Sanctuary of Santa Venere Off the Walls and the former Cirio Factory, which has partly overlapped the ancient complex.

Through the retracing of the architectural events of the complex of Santa Venere, it becomes clear that the site has been the object of multiple interventions: the oldest construction - a rectangular hall - dating from the mid-sixth century BC, but also

some additions, alterations and restorations have characterized the life of this real suburban sanctuary.

It comes to an area of coexistence of elements with different characters, in time and space terms:

- the archaeological remains of the complex of Santa Venere, partly unearthed and partly interred;
- the Cirio Factory, now abandoned - with its disused warehouses, ready to be demolished - as the witness of further important phases of the history of the place ;
- the " landscape" of the river, which has partially reabsorbed the preexistences, introducing some factors of unity, at least partially.

In this panorama of dereliction, the river is the only dynamic element, in a landscape where the ancient city walls are a dominant feature .

The first aim is a rereading of the different elements, their conservation through the grafting of the new, that does not reject its own time and that is hinged on the criteria of recognizability and reversibility: a "new" which is a revelation of the times of the place, capable to infuse the different textural remnants new life and social prominence.

Echoing what was expected from previous studies, both the warehouses of the complex towards the river have been preserved in memory of the industrial structure, reinterpreted and readjusted to the new requirements.

The shed on the east side - to a large extent already the object of intervention for an archaeological campaign - will be fully excavated within, so as restoring its continuity with the archaeological remains that have emerged out of it. The design hence focuses on the preservation of the bearing structure and the roof, reinterpreted as a coverage for the archaeological diggings.

For what concerns the warehouse located in the more internal position - where currently just small parts of the archaeological complex have been brought to light - only the short sides are involved in a complete "opening", so as the abandoned building is reinterpreted as the connective telescope among the internal area within the enclosure of former factory, the new "belvedere" square, and the park, assuming a widening to the walls, but then by "naturally" spreading it in the area of the ancient city. This way, an accessible exhibition space has been defined through a free path, rather than a museum or an exhibition hall meant in classical terms. Conceived as a dynamic space - suitable for changes, leaving open the possibility of new excavations and archaeological surveys - this place may subsequently be transformed, both by integrating further archaeological findings and adding new elements of construction.

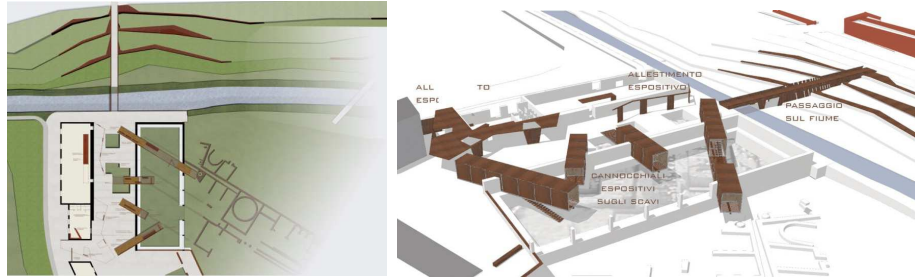


FIG.7 Paestum. Project for the area of Justice Gate

On the other hand, the adjacent building on the westward side has been designed as a more permanent exhibition space and as a storage of archaeological finds, to be endowed with new interior functions, through the addition of new elements in corten steel which - in continuity with the external parts made of the same material - reconfigure the spaces and constitute the furniture.

The exhibition design placed on the platform of the central warehouse has been defined by composition of modular elements, assembled with fully dry technology and removable if necessary. The basic module consists of panels of 3x3 m with internal aluminum structure and covering of corten steel, in form of sheets for the vertical walls and in grating and wood for the horizontal ones. The bearing structure is made of steel with C section profiles that make up a structure of interlocking assembly and a sort of slide rails for some panels of 60 cm width, again covered with corten steel, where it is intended to gain a particular "stacked" effect of light.

Those elements define a sort of "multidirectional telescopes", supported by cantilevered steel trusses, orthogonally placed on the base of the central building. They generate new directionalities with respect to the former structures, but they have been rotated precisely in function of the preexistences themselves: they project cantilevered over the remains brought to light in the warehouse eastwards, frame the diggings and the landscape; the two header "telescopes" have been rotated toward the entrances to the complex of the abandoned warehouse from the park and from the building curtain to the west, while the two central ones constitute display cases. These scopes are completely emptied on the short sides, considered as optical cones, with seats at the ends to the east. The same wood flooring, inside the central warehouse is dematerialized by becoming a transparent grid where it is superimpose on the archaeological remains, allowing a dynamic view of them and at the same time offering the possibility to follow the excavation works and the studies of archaeologists to the level below. They therefore represent a perceptive and physical

connection among the strata, since - in the two outer telescopes - the corten sheets, folded, become the descent to the level of the excavations.

The design has thus been conceived as a "project of relations between layers placed above or below the field level, able to establish strong relations in the vertical section with layers or sub-layers of the ground" (Bocchi, 2006, p.57).



FIG.8 Paestum. Project for the area of Justice Gate

The elements for the exhibition are thus the devices for the connection between the level of the warehouse with that one of archaeological excavations, physically and perceptually. They configure as educational and exhibition facilities, explaining the archaeological remains but also acting as a kind of telescopes from which to observe the archaeological structure and to overlook at the surrounding environment of the fields and landscape eastward.

The result is a profound reinterpretation of the traditional concept of "archaeological museum." The exhibition design, in fact, is built through a sort of "diffuse museum", meant as "an integrated system of places and paths (...) as a procedure aimed at recalling into question the urban hierarchies to reveal new ones" (Torricelli, 2007, p.28).

The structure that plays the role of shelter access from the side of the building curtain is also made of corten steel with dry mounting technology. Crossing the front of the buildings to the west, that shelter marks the entrance to the central warehouse and the "bevedere" square. The supports of the shelter are made from corten steel sheets which, by a process of folding, become display cases. The exhibition setting is mounted upon the paving of the floor plan of the warehouse - made of smoothed concrete - stacked onto the existing flooring, also in view of further possible transformations of these spaces, according to the changes of needs and of the wideness of the excavations. The same modular panels - arranged in different ways - also constitute the bridges of connection to the park that runs along

the parallel paths of the river and the city walls. Even for those elements, the horizontal surfaces are dematerialized, becoming gratings as they pass over the river, in order to enhance the perception of the water and to mark the crossing. In the area of the park, the balustrades of the two bridges - made of corten steel sheets - becomes the device for designing the park itself, by transversally stretching and shaping itself in various ways, so as to define some elements of sitting and resting places.

The different levels of the city are thus all coexistent, so as a gradual transition can be achieved among the layers: from the "low" level of the excavation reaching the top of the walls. Going through a few meters it is possible to gain the simultaneous viewing of the overlapped strata, putting in connection wide and limited fragments, once completely separated.

Therefore a well defined elements are involved in this work - made of corten steel, wood and steel structure - which are networked into a system, by connecting the resources in place as to form at the same time a new image, autonomous and independent from them.

The walls as urban connections

In both cases, Pompeii and Paestum, the archaeological preexistences themselves - placed in a new system of urban connections - become a place of transition, able to mediate in the delicate relations between urban artifice and natural landscape.

According to this interpretation, a fundamental aspect is precisely constituted by the archaeological studies and reconstructions - preparatory to the completion of the excavations - through which it will be possible to consider the ancient city in its entirety, even in the portion not yet unearthed: this aspect changes in a decisive manner the project proposals and the role of the walls, which become elements of more complex dynamics.

"In this view, the archaeological heritage may be still reused with new roles for those transfigured reality with respect to their origin, but which are also able to recognize and appreciate the variations of their own identity. Then the many fragments are reread for their ability to give rise to something else, in relation to their founding features - over that their character of witness - in the ability to establish never programmed relationships, yet implied in the specific configurations and stratifications" (Vanore, 2010, p.126).

Through the project, the layers that "make up" the places have been highlighted, ie different versions of the site have been identified in some way, as existing and

recognizable in the overlap condition.

Textures now lost can be retrieved, further existing weavings can be reactivated and placed into a new mechanism, which may even involve the introduction of a new fabric.

in that sense, archaeology and landscape are concrete physical realities, key elements of the project, but also the expression of something more that the project means to reveal with its mechanisms.

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