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REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

edited by
Alessandro Bucci, Luigi Mollo

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- The catalogue operation, the classification and the comparison of the formal, geometric and forming features of the buildings, of the sites and of their environing and territorial areas.
 - The definition and the analysis of the technological – building characteristics present in the research area
 - The definition of a practical Manual Abacus which will provide diagnostic research protocols to be used in the condition survey , in the project and in the test of fixed interventions on typical manufactured articles of the Sassi of Matera and of Umm-Qais/ Irbid.
 - Function, shape and transformation of the existing building heritage: technique and prescribing rules procedures
 - Setting up and implementing the GIS in order to monitor and classify the use safety and the accessibility, inside the individuated territorial system.
- The achievement of each result will be seen as an advancement step into the research.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS ³

The results – which have been drawn from this experimentation - can be used in order to define:

- Creating a list of buildings, classification, and comparison of different aspects including forms, geometry, design, materials, constructive techniques and pathologies of the historic sites and buildings, in addition to their natural and cultural settings.
- Creating new standards for the new additions and installations within historic sites and buildings, adopting “the Common Character Scheme” not only for stimulating new designs, but also, as a total, in the evaluation and criticism of proposed schemes and completed projects that could be arisen in the future.

NOTES

1. Associate Professor, Department of Architecture, Planning and Infrastructures for Transport – Faculty of Engineering, University of Basilicata, Viale dell’Ateneo Lucano 10– 85100 Potenza (Italy), antonella.guida@unibas.it or architetto.guida@virgilio.it
2. Assistant Prof. Head of the Department, Hashemite University, Queen Rania’s institute of Tourism and Heritage. Department of conservation science Zarqa – Jordan mkhalili@hu.edu.jo or mohd_khalili@hotmail.com
3. Chapters from 2 to 4 by M. El Khalili; Chapters from 5 to 7 by A. Guida; Chapters 1 and 8 by both the writers A. Guida and M. El Khalili



Fig.1 - Locanda of S.Martino (before the intervention)

A. Guida ¹, F. Fatiguso ², A. Pagliuca ³

**CHANGES IN USE IN THE TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE:
A WAY TO AN APPROPRIATE REHABILITATION.
EXPERIENCES IN THE "SASSI" OF MATERA**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The “process” continuity (i.e. formal, morphological and technological) of the historical building heritage, above all in the case of “traditional” architectural and urban systems, can be ensured by an appropriate approach to the problems of both re-use and continuation of use that, by setting up specific theoretical, technical and technological tools, could allow the overcoming of the widespread practices of methods change, consolidated in the interventions. However, interventions of the building heritage for functional adjustment have been often become, particularly in the historical centers, an “accommodation” of the buildings to the function of accommodation, with transformations and compelled introduction of new elements that have altered the original typological and morphological characteristics. This is true in both attribution of new functions and the simple maintenance of the original ones. Such a criticality is emphasized also by the apparently simple preservation of residential destination, mainly in the historical centers: once, the quality of life allowed spaces and endowments that are no more suitable for today’s quality requirements. Since it is not possible to imagine that a part of a city, with a considerable extension and emblematic value, has a standard of living not suitable to modern requirements (considering also the consequent social, economical and cultural implications), it is obviously necessary to refer to guiding models for performance designing, that could determine solutions able to offer quality standards in line of new buildings ones, respectful of the historical, architectural and morphological characteristics of the existing building heritage.

2.0 FUNCTIONAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMPATIBILITY FOR QUALITY, IN REUSING THE “SASSI DI MATERA”

In his masterpiece “Cristo si è fermato ad Eboli”, Carlo Levi perfectly describe, beyond the drama of the image, the incredible living system that has been created over the centuries, together with the congestion and degeneration of its tissue, typical of the last years. Omitting the complex historical and legislative events of these last fifty years, the object, a small building system, collected around enclosures and along galleries, districts, terraces and streets, and the quantitative dimension of such recovery operation, in part already

laboriously begun, propose the methodological problems connected to the intervention on the existing buildings. Several studies and researches made in more or less recent times, a Code of Practice and a Handbook of Recovery demonstrate, as to the “Sassi” of Matera, the necessity to face the recovery by understanding the urban environment and to define a cultural tendency and a code of practice, that could allow to live in the “Sassi” again, without any alteration of its characteristics. Many other aspects of the complex recovery operations are somehow neglected, as the operating reality and some argued results can demonstrate.

Research has already faced the aspects connected to the knowledge of the sphere of intervention, to the hygienic improvement of the environment, to the monitoring systems and no-destructive tests for the control of indoor quality, as well as those referring to the problems of introducing technological services [1] [2] [3] [4]. Here, we will focus the attention on the mostly functional topics, underlining as the change of destination of use, although appearing as a “transformative-like” action, could often ensure in reality a more appropriate preservation of the original morphological, typological and technological characteristics.

The recovery and re-functionality of a such a widespread historical center, with articulated historical, formal and architectural characteristics, as the “Sassi” of Matera, have necessarily take into consideration the different functions to be included, as residences, services, etc. There is a focus on clearly complex problems that involve an original interdisciplinary form, based not only on the empirical level of the dialogical-communicative comparison amongst several designer engineers, but also on the ways of action that could consider the interference and superimposition sphere of the different subjects and on the relationship between the knowledge of existing situation and the performance requirements connected to the new use. Therefore, the consequence of the recovery action is much more than a mere moment when to chose the modality of required performances, but it becomes an accurate study of both users’ requirements and possible alternatives, in order to satisfy them in coherence with the architectural characteristics of the existing structure.

By studying the relation amongst building, new destination of use, relative requirements, consequent technological equipment and preservation of the existing values, once defined the “system of values” (i.e. all limits that the architecture sets to the possibility of changing and adjusting to new requirements, without losing its own characteristics) and the “system of uses” (i.e. all the technical and technological choices coming from the individuation of the requirements and of the performance purposes), it is possible to define the system of congruencies amongst them, i.e. the system of relations that link them up in terms of technical and cultural acceptability.

The system of uses, as a whole of technical and technological choices coming from the performance that users require, is made by possible approaches to functional (and relative technical-technological) problems, that is to say from possible way of action in leading a re-use intervention. In comparison with a more general classification, already done [X], newly introduced requirements and performances (and, operatively, characteristics and elements) can be simply “added” to the existing architecture. Such a superimposition can be carried out with a variable accidental degree, going from a controlled process where new

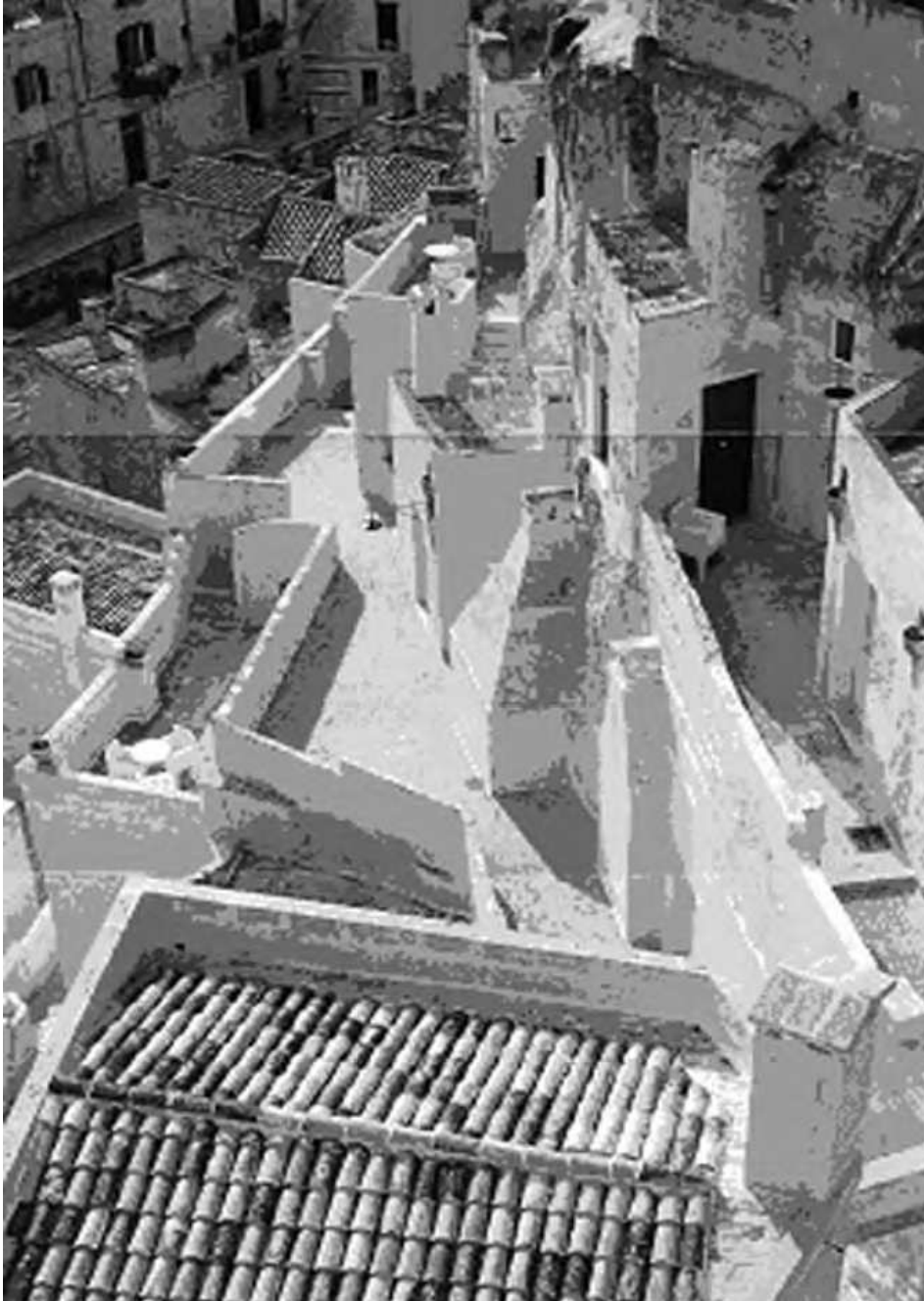


Fig.2 - Locanda of S.Martino (after the intervention)

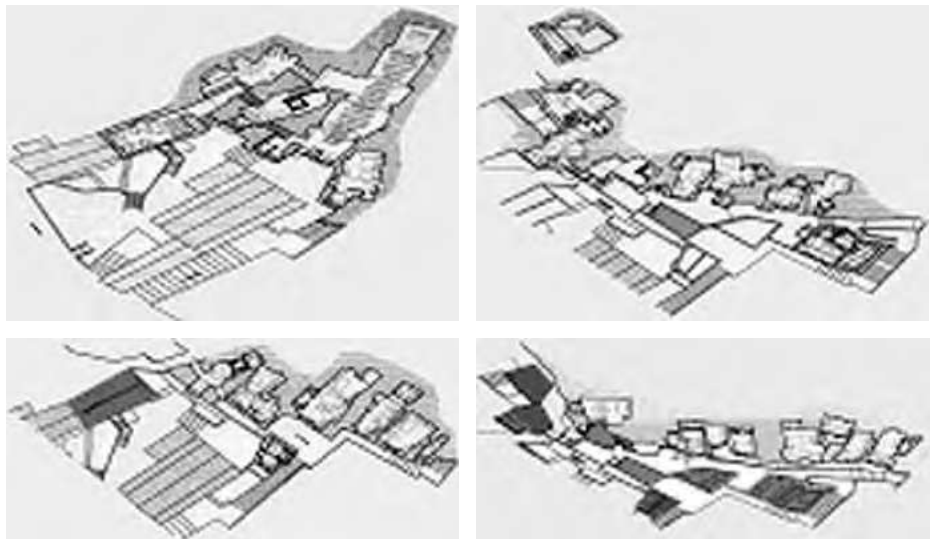


Fig.3 - Functional layout and typological arrangement of the Locanda S. Martino



Table A

performances and elements combine with the building system configuration and gain a formal validity in defining space, to a process without any specific control where they are added to the existing configuration, without establishing any kind of relationship with it and in a complete lack of interest. Another quite spread and formal action procedure consists of a presumed “integration” of performances and elements in the existing architecture, that disguise themselves into structural elements, causing to them a heavy tampering. The determination of compatibilities and congruities system goes through the analysis of different procedures on the basis of the values system of the “Sassi” of Matera.

A “congruent” recovery allows to verify the appropriateness of the choices, becoming a global action – going over the logic of “case by case” – concerning both conservation and necessity of maintaining the historical nature (the historical “accumulation”) – that is to say to make it legible also through its changes (but not identity cancellations) – and necessity of accommodation the existing buildings to several new users’ requirements.

In the superimposition procedure, the appropriateness (respectful of the existing building in its material aspect) is associated to the variability of relations between performance and elements, on one side, and existing architecture, on the other (so, as above-mentioned, between the “system of uses” and the “system of values”), that does not ensure the conservation (integral or integrated) of formal and special values in particular. Therefore, it is a not-absolute appropriateness, since it is necessary to verify, as final result, in which way and how intensively the new elements are related to the existing architecture. Therefore, if the superimposition action is coherently and particularly controlled, giving a sense of continuity between the old and new, it cannot affect the typical logic of the architecture of the “Sassi”, in its formal, special and material aspect. Whereas, the superimposition of new functions, performances and elements, without any interest in and connection with the original structure, generates a clear-cut distinction between new uses and the particular architecture of the “Sassi” that, instead of solving and improving the dualism between old and new, it heightens its sense of opposition and extraneousness.

The simplistic traits of the presumed integration action and the consequent and desired inexistent interaction between new and old elements prevent this procedure from any possible congruence. The concealment inside the building structures, a procedure particularly widespread in the residential recovery, if it seems to respect a logic of not distortion of existing formal and spatial values, in the reality it is the less exacting way to develop the architectural-distributive-functional recovery procedure, in a complete autonomy. Therefore, the apparent predominance of the esthetic character hides the incapability to an interdisciplinary approach, that often becomes the consequent cancellation of the existing material characteristic.

The considerations carried on point out that the essence of intervention quality, referable to the functional architectural-formal, material and static-building aspects, is the “quality” of the choices and implemented solutions and the “quality of connection”, concerning the relation that intervention establishes with the old building. These remarks, result of the evolution of the contemporary discussion about the recovery of historical architecture, explain, in the case of the traditional urban spheres, the widespread choice of maintaining the original destination (changed only because of the historical impossibility of mainte-

nance) and of the use of traditional intervention techniques, almost contrasting the introduction of new functions and the use of “modern” materials and technologies, quite often dogmatically adopted and without any sufficient and deep preliminary verification of their effects. Such a series of obviousness do not have to be in any case represent a theoretical preclusion for implementing functional also innovative choices, whose role can be found in the definition of a new balance between space, preserved materials and new functional and technological elements: not a requirement of modernity that is an end in itself, as already said, but a way for preserving and for connecting tradition – when this cannot answer to specific requirements – to the contemporary world. The aim—as synthetically clarified in the table A - is not the transformation of building organism but its preservation, the connection between modern performance requirements and the respect of its authenticity, of its original building language and of the necessity of preserving it in the course of time, through new and more appropriate functions, in order to allow a possible recovery of spaces and structures that could be otherwise reinserted with difficulty in the procession life cycle, unless without avoiding heavy tampering.

3.0 CASE STUDIES: THE “LOCANDA DI S. MARTINO” AND THE “HOTEL S. ANGELO”

The above-mentioned approach has been verified in the two representative case studies, two receptive structures, the “Locanda di S.Martino” and the “Hotel S.Angelo”, different in their function but, at the same time, similar in forms and architectural peculiarities, that can confirm all methodological considerations described in the previous paragraph.

In the case of the “*Locanda di San Martino*”, the aim of the intervention was recover and functionally adapt real estate units, always used as residences, partially built and almost entirely dug in the rock, in order to recreate that “unity of neighborhoods”, typical aggregations of the ancient districts, restored in a revisited hospitality tourist identity: the particular configuration of the spaces inside the “Sassi” allowed to create articulated spaces with several rooms that, maintaining the original configuration made by millennia of human presence, are equipped with all common and complementary facilities and services, offering a good performance quality and indoor comfort.

The morphological organization the identified structure can be particularly adapt for this transformations into aggregation of independent unit, but organically connected, thanks to the natural presence of existing urban connections as road network and natural connectors amid units. If, from one side, the articulation and the extension of the intervention area represent a complexity of the problem concerning urbanizations and technological equipment, on the other side, the spatial distribution and the typological characteristics of the system (essentially the series of the one-room units) simplify the system the service network. In fact the distributive-functional preservation of the original characteristic of the independent unit breaks down the whole of the above-mentioned system rendering it a sum of individuals simple networks.

Pictures 1,2 and 3 are an example of what has been just said.

The same methodological exactness in interventions, characterized by apparently different problems, is evident in a recovery and reversion intervention of another structure located in the “Sasso Caveoso”, for realizing the “*Hotel S.Angelo*”, a second receptive