ARCHITECTURE AS CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE. NEW DESIGN APPROACHES FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE /

Valerio TOLVE - Politecnico di Milano, DAStU (Dipartimento di Architettura e Studi Urbani), Via Bonardi 3, 20133 Milano, Italy

Email: valerio.tolve@polimi.it

Abstract. In contemporary landscapes and cities, archaeological sites have become places of discontinuity where architecture struggles to assert itself. Current operational models, more focused on conservation, are insufficient to overcome this disconnect; indeed, they amplify the sites' isolation.

These considerations prompted the research *Building social value beyond conservation: A wider approach to Historical and Cultural Heritage* (1) of which the workshop *Building Social Value beyond conservation in the Archaeological Parks of Paestum and Velia* was an integral and significant part.

By recognising heritage as a factor of social cohesion (as well as a potential catalyst also for the just transition), the aim is to reactivate latent synergies – overlaid within historical stratification – capable of recomposing the antinomy between context and object. This is achieved by working with the intrinsic tools of architecture and reasserting the role of contemporary design into valorisation processes. This process formed the basis of colonisation in Magna Graecia: establishing mnemonic links between humans and the environment and defining a precise cultural identity through the construction and care of places as an analogue to the motherland; this also led to the development of new languages and forms of expression.

The loss of authority of the 'new' within archaeological contexts stems from the progressive 'lightening' – both conceptually and physically – to which architectural design has been relegated over the years. In the pursuit of reversibility – which is often largely theoretical – it has become accepted that the only mode of intervention in these areas is conservation, disregarding the process of sedimentation of forms over time that has, in fact, defined these very places. Instead, the project seeks to find the right balance of transformation, without mystifying either the old or the new.

This workshop aimed to bring together a small *intellighenzia* who have been working on these themes for many years, in various ways. Milan, Naples, Bucharest, Valencia, and Valladolid: an elective rather than arbitrary selection, a kind of 'genealogy' towards intervention on the antique that reflects differing approaches and gradients. For this reason, from the outset, we did not define precise areas of intervention, allowing each group free interpretation of the common theme in relation to their personal reading of the context. More than the comparison of final outcomes, we believed that the best result of this work would be the comparison of methodologies, because this experience is, in effect, a scientific and research endeavour and as such, operates on a dual level of in-depth study: hic et nunc, but above all, more generally, as a discipline.

Genius Loci Paestum. Historically, the Sele River represented the geographic boundary of the Sele plain: a subtle line of physical and symbolic demarcation *"between Greeks and non-Greeks... between the civilized Greek city of Poseidonia and the world of the indigenous Oenotrians, and to the north, the Etruscans of Pontecagnano"*. (Stefanile, 2017)

Today, the Archaeological Park, as formally and administratively defined, occupies only a limited portion of the ancient settlement consolidated during the Greek colonial phase and further developed in the Roman era. The Roman reorganization introduced a significant urban reform – also implemented through additions – which also superimposed a different orientation on the minute and widespread fabric of the domus, not immediately perceptible in situ if only because of the poor volumetric consistency of the remains in elevation, with the exception of the temples, confirmed and converted to the cult of Romanism.

This discrepancy corresponds to approximately 6° North and is mainly attributable to the Romans' ability to read and interpret the topography and soil conditions in relation to the needs of water management, demonstrating the efficiency of their engineering. The adaptation to the course of the waterways that crossed the Sele Plain – used for irrigation as well as for the needs of the town – and the consequent rotation imposed on the urban plan were designed to achieve better drainage, counteracting possible swamping. In addition to this, the use of the cardo-decumanus military grid (different from the orientation pursued by the Greek colonists in relation to topographical or celestial landmarks) and the desire to respect the pre-existing complexes, perhaps the walls and certainly the religious buildings, all preserved and perfectly integrated into the new urban plan, probably also influenced the definition of this rotation. This slight rotation allowed the Forum and its related structures – such as the *Curia* and the *Comitium* – to be placed in a different position with respect to the Agorà, rationalizing the urban space between the Doric temples to the benefit of the residential fabric. In short, this rotation reflects Roman pragmatic construction, a delicate combination of urban planning, the application of engineering solutions, and a vision ahead of its time of the concept of sustainability (which today is exclusively biased towards technological contributions), which also includes an early and rational sensitivity towards the existing environment.

Despite some gaps, the perimeter wall(2) is still perfectly recognizable today in its characteristic pentagonal shape: a precise 'resistant urban form' which, nevertheless, has lost its original function as a threshold between the town, enclosed within the fortified area, and the countryside, dotted with buildings used to control agricultural land, as well as necropolises(3) and shrines.(4)

Unlike Pompeii and Herculaneum, which were destroyed by the catastrophic eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD, the decline of Paestum was essentially due to a series of interrelated anthropogenic factors, all linked to changes in the settlement patterns of its population. At the dawn of the ancient world, a slow and progressive decline began, leading to the definitive abandonment of the town in the VIII-IX-centuries AD: *"When the Romans disappeared, these delights disappeared, and these buildings remained in the hands of time, thus consigned to oblivion so that they could be ruined or buried"* (Celano, 1856). It was precisely the economic and political crisis of the

Roman Empire, combined with the increasingly frequent threats of Saracen raids, that led the inhabitants to retreat within the walls in search of greater security. The fertile irrigated countryside was therefore abandoned and production, which for centuries since the founding of *Poseidonia* had been the city's main source of sustenance, closely linked to its landscape, was drastically reduced. This also led to the inexorable end of the control of the water systems, skilfully established by the Romans in the early stages of their colonization: the swamping of the plain by debris carried by the Salso River (today's Capodifiume, which laps the walls along the south side, near *Porta Giustizia*) led to the spread of malaria, and the inhabitants were forced to move to the nearby hills, in a dominant position above the coast and the fields, founding the village of Capaccio. Little by little, the ancient city was reclaimed by nature and in the XI-century it was also plundered by the Normans, who nevertheless spared the temples.

It was the XVIII-century scholars with their Grand Tours who restored value to the *"austere times on a sea of ruins"* (Stefanile, 2017). Thus, was born the myth of Paestum, which was powered by representations that portrayed an isolated place, far from time and civilization, a snapshot of classical culture. Today, that romantic dimension is effectively outdated, just as the physical limits of the walls that still stand have been ideally overcome, rising to become a shining testimony to the value of an urban form defined entirely in relation to the determining characteristics of its own landscape – the natural layout of the land and the design of the vast irrigation system of the plain – in an intimate relationship between object and context that is difficult to understand today. The peculiar pentagonal shape of the walls has been emphasized by the modern road network: only Via Borbonica5 has dared to penetrate the walls without a precise relationship with the urban layout contained within them, obliterating part of the ruins themselves – such as the Roman amphitheatre, for example – and fatally dividing the archaeological substratum into two distinct portions: the Park on one side and the Museum on the other.

"The approach is more important than specific techniques". Text placed under a different principal heading should follow all the formatting and stylistic conventions outlined above, including those related to text structure, citations, tables, figures, and equations. Maintain consistency in layout and ensure that all elements adhere to the established manuscript preparation rules.

In the introduction to his book *Archaeology from the Earth*, Sir Mortimer Wheeler poses a profoundly existential question for understanding his field of study, at a time of critical reflection and real renewal and redefinition of the operational models pursued for archaeological excavation and study.

> *"What is Archaeology, in fact?* [...] *I do not even know whether Archaeology is to be described as an art or as a science.* [...] *But it is at least abundantly clear that Archaeology is increasingly dependent on a multitude of sciences and is itself increasingly adopting the methodology of a natural science.* [...] *It draws today upon physics, chemistry, geology, biology, economics, political science, sociology, climatology, botany, and I know not what else. As a science, it is pre-eminently a synthetic process; and if we prefer to regard it as an art, or even as a philosophy, we must still affirm that it is an integration of scientifically observed and described phenomena relating to man; it is still a synthesis. These are not definitions, they are merely descriptions, and incomplete at that. It will not help us forward to our main objective, the study of human cultures, to spend time and ingenuity upon the academic niceties of definition."*

This is the Platonic question that Wheeler poses in the introduction, and which underpins the entire theoretical framework of his book. Among the many disciplines – arts or sciences, to follow his reasoning – Wheeler does not mention architecture, a subject that has always preserved the operational and methodological tools of surveying and drawing and, therefore, of the mediated representation of reality, certainly for cognitive and discovery purposes, but even more so for the imaginative reworking of the polymorphic heritage of tradition. Precisely because of this aptitude, architecture has always gone hand in hand with archaeology, even in its earliest and most pioneering forms, which were certainly based on empirical practice rather than on truly scientific foundations, which only with time have progressed into a theory of continuous refinement and sophistication.

At the time of the publication of Wheeler's essay, however, the fatal separation that a few decades later would be lucidly described – perhaps for the first time – by Francesco Venezia had already been established, highlighting the conceptual and operational differences between two sectors of thought and cultural production that had traditionally been closely related until then. This initial disciplinary split, and the subsequent affirmation of modernity, gave rise to other forms of emancipation from architecture, of which restoration and conservation are just some of the possible direct derivatives that contributed to the diaspora of knowledge in the classical sense, as a form of synthetic knowledge. This divergence led to the proliferation of a myriad of increasingly specialized sectoral disciplines and contributed to the fragmentation of actions aimed at protection and enhancement, which seem increasingly antithetical and irreconcilable with each other.

Today, archaeological sites are mostly places of discontinuity, where the dramatic synchronic confrontation between profoundly different times and histories, between the ancient and the contemporary, is vehemently manifested. Their otherness with respect to their context, which has contributed to their development over time since the past, is increasingly evident. We are faced with a new *separation* – no longer (only) conceptual, in terms of content and operation – but truly physical, between the asset and its location.

It is therefore necessary to develop a firm and vigorous awareness of certain issues that have become central to the contemporary debate surrounding projects involving ancient sites.

First, we must recognize that ancient sites are an integral part of a complex and layered landscape, without which they would have no dignity or meaning. This applies both to contexts that have been only slightly altered by human activity –where natural forms coexist with the mutilated remains of once perfectly complete architectural forms – and, above all, to the con-

temporary city, where the emptiness of the archaeological site manifests itself as a form of discontinuity in the built fabric – almost a residual and marginal element – sometimes isolated and amorphous (or rather, with a form that struggles to assert its autonomy), almost always monofunctional (or worse, relegated to an exclusively contemplative vision, in accordance with a romantic conception of ruins that still persists today): *"a singular condition of spatial discontinuity and temporal suspension characterizes archaeological sites. Altitude differences, fences, and protective devices accompany and emphasize a separation from the surroundings which, dictated by the need for protection, emerges with evidence in urban areas"*. (Marzo, 2012).

Recognizing, then, how the ancient is paradoxically an invention of modernity, which, from time to time, has been able to attribute and renew meaning and value to traces, signs, clues, interrupted forms, also in relation to changes in sensibility and taste and its oscillations. In this sense, today, it is still a continuous reinvention of contemporaneity, according to a theory of uninterrupted interpretations.

Furthermore, when addressing the most appropriate way to enhance its value, archaeological projects must necessarily consider a multiplicity of themes that transcend geographical and chronological immediacy; in other words, they must reconstruct new visual, but above all physical, relationships, both with the surrounding areas and with the system of relationships on a territorial scale.

Finally, recognize a substantial coincidence – certainly operational and methodological, but also in terms of assumptions and outcomes – between the architectural design and the restoration design, which are essential and by no means irreconcilable acts of the same broader process of transformation and rewriting. Nothing can be defined a priori and, pursuing a *'case-by-case'* approach – not without prior and exhaustive knowledge of the asset and its context – interventions must be balanced according to a delicate compendium: beyond disciplinary barriers, which are only useful (and not even necessary, on closer inspection) within the academic debate – the worn-out aporia between innovators and conservatives must be reconsidered in favour of a more realistic and fruitful dichotomy between project and 'non-project'.

These considerations inevitably lead to profound reflection on the necessity (and, even before that, the possibility) of establishing a new role for architecture, a tool designed to modify a place that is never truly granted in advance, even though it is characterized by its own rules: archaeological sites, although historicized in the collective memory, cannot be considered immutable, lest we interrupt the process of stratification that over time has led to the definition of that very palimpsest. If we definitively overcome the misconception of the intangibility of an archaeological area, we open it up to possible transformation: if anything, we must pause to reflect on how, in what way, it is permissible to intervene, rather than on the advisability of doing so.

Traditionally, the enhancement of a heritage site tends to coincide with actions that are eminently conservative of what is still visible, and sometimes even difficult to implement. The adoption of rigid restrictions has not always put a stop to episodes of urban and building degradation, as imagined by the drafters who conceived those same plans. Outside, the focus is mainly on defining limits, perimeters, boundaries, and buffer zones: measures aimed at protection, but which too often exacerbate the discontinuity between the asset and its context. Inside, on the other hand, the focus is on improving accessibility; interpretations are proposed through in situ musealisation; paths, coverings and protection systems are created; or anastylosis reconstructions are arranged, more or less extensive and more or less physical, as the immaterial dimension is gaining increasing strength and autonomy in a context that favours musealisation as the only factor in enhancing a property, misrecognising its social role for the community that inhabits it. In any case, the outcome is too often at odds with the real assumptions, at least in terms of disciplinary consistency, which would favour a concrete inclusion of the site in relation to its context and contemporary dimension.

Within its boundary, the property seems relegated to a parallel existence with respect to its surroundings, isolated in its marginal individuality *"deriving from its territorial denial, from its exclusion from everyday life"*. (Aymonino, 2010).

Dissatisfaction with these approaches – now widely shared, widespread, and generalized – has shifted our attention toward alternative forms of experimentation, seeking not only a relationship of coexistence between different operational and aesthetic modes, but a real genealogical relationship that places architecture as a point of intersection and synthesis between different skills and disciplines. The reference is to that tradition of thought – deeply rooted in Western architectural culture and particularly in Italy – which still understands the forms of landscape, city, and architecture as facts of civilization and fields of interpretation, where even addition (in all its possible meanings) is considered a legitimate form of transformation.

Understanding the limitations of this type of intervention model has led our research and experimentation to new paradigms of intervention where, for example, the establishment of an appropriate physical definition goes beyond narrow administrative data, rediscovering ancient relationships between the structural parts of the landscape, between the ruin and its context, or inventing new relationships of reciprocity already implicitly underlying the potential condition of proximity, granted and therefore fully explorable. In these terms, the 'enclosure' – a remarkable place where all possible relationships between content and container are condensed – and the 'threshold' become real architectural themes characterized by expressive value (*how*) and content (*what*), capable of qualifying and regulating the relationships between interior and exterior, between archaeological site and context. Above all, however, it has renewed the conviction that the new can once again play a role in the ancient. This is because there has been a gradual loss of authority of the 'new' in archaeological contexts, which can perhaps also be associated with the growing 'lightening' – in both a conceptual and strictly physical sense – to which we have relegated architectural design over the years: with a view to pursuing reversibility – often only theoretical, since certain solutions tend to become chronic over time – we have come to admit that the only way to intervene in these areas is through conservation, disregarding the process of sedimentation of forms over time that has instead defined these same places. The project,

on the other hand, consists of rediscovering the right balance of transformation, without mystifying either the old or the new.

Recognizing heritage as a factor of social cohesion, the aim was to reactivate latent synergies – overlaid by historical stratification – capable of reconciling the antinomy between context and object, working with the tools of architecture and reclaiming a role for contemporary design in enhancement processes. This same attitude was, after all, the basis of colonization in *Magna Graecia*: establishing mnemonic links between man and the environment and defining a precise cultural identity through the construction and care of places as an analogical reference to the homeland; this also led to the creation of new languages and forms of expression.

The aim of our proposals is to transcend the mere physicality of the place – *hic et nunc* – towards a broader interpretation that can once again include the property in its context. By applying an integrated approach combining architecture, value creation for the local community, and landscape integrity, we sought to support the redevelopment of open spaces, the provision of services and facilities for visitors, and the design of temporary installations and protective measures to redefine and guide visitor routes, as part of a broader design program.

The "Building social value beyond conservation in the Archaeological Parks of Paestum and Velia" Workshop.These considerations led to the idea for the workshop Building social value beyond conservation in the *Archaeological Park of Paestum and Velia*(6), which sought to explore new ways of promoting the Parco Archeologico di Paestum, starting from a recognition of the meaning and value of the enduring urban form. Reversing the traditional tourist-oriented perspective, the aim was to place the asset and the community that inhabits it back at the centre of the enhancement process, in the belief that enhancement must necessarily begin with the construction of social value.

Only by triggering a process of reactivation of synergies between the asset and its location is it possible to rediscover those mnemonic links between man and asset and to take care of them because they are identified as places in which a community recognizes itself: in Magna Graecia – and Paestum/Poseidonia is no exception – the definition of a cultural identity in the past corresponded to the construction of places as an analogical reference to the motherland, in an attempt that led to the sublimation of new languages and forms of expression.

It is therefore a critical attitude, not even too veiled, towards current practices that favor conservation and contribute to the divergence between the asset/inhabitant and place, a premise that is completely opposite to the premises.

This workshop aimed to bring together a small group of experts who have been working on these issues in different ways for many years. The *Scuola AUIC – Politecnico di Milano; Università degli Studi di Napoli "Federico II"; Universitatea de Arhitectură şi Urbanism "Ion Mincu", Bucharest - Facultatea de Arhitectură de Interior; Universitat Politècnica de València – Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura; Universidad de Valladolid* – Laboratory of Architectural Landscape, Patrimonial y Cultural of the University of Valladolid belong to a selection that is certainly (and inevitably) arbitrary but nevertheless reflects the meaning and character of elective affinity, a sort of 'genealogy' united by an attitude of questioning the value content of the ancient, although the results of studies and research naturally produce different outcomes in relation to equally different gradients. (Figure 1)

For this reason, from the outset, we did not define precise areas of intervention, leaving each group free to interpret the common theme according to their personal reading of the context. Rather than comparing the final solutions, we believed that the best outcome of this work would be to compare the methods, because this experience is in fact a scientific and research project and, as such, operates on two levels of analysis: here/now (in Paestum), but above all, in a broader and more general sense, as a discipline.

POLIMI. Systemic and multiscale approach. The proposal takes the urban form of the enclosure as the structuring device for the intervention, overcoming the fragmented interpretation of individual archaeological finds. The project operates on multiple scales: reconnection of the central area with the external polarities (Sanctuary of Hera Argiva, Santa Venera, coastal tower), configuring an integrated territorial network in the Sele plain (territorial scale); restoration of the cardo as an organizing axis; removal of internal breaks and underground connection with the Museum; reactivation of the walls and gates as active interfaces between the ancient city and the contemporary settlement (urban scale). The walls are reinterpreted as a narrative structure divided into three paths (internal, external, panoramic), transforming the defensive boundary into cultural infrastructure. The intervention is configured as a strategy to restore the historical and territorial depth of Paestum, conceived as a relational urban system. (Figure 2)

UNINA. Analogical reconstruction of the public space of the polis. The project focuses on the representative public spaces of the Greek city, using a method based on an analogical process starting from the critical variation of architectural references. Specific interventions (Agorà, Stoa, Heroon, Ekklesiasterion) aim to recompose the symbolic and spatial structure of the polis, emphasizing the identity value of collective spaces. The proposal takes an explicit interpretative position: not simple conservation, but controlled evocation of lost parts to increase the legibility of the ancient urban system, beyond the dominant narrative of temples.(Figure 3)

FAI. Infrastructure reconnection and route thematization. The proposal enhances the gates as historical and urban features, addressing the physical and perceptual discontinuities of the site. The intervention is structured around axes and thematic itineraries: along the east-west axis, the reconstruction of the city-sea connection is proposed, reaffirming the relationship with the coast, from Porta Sirena to Porta Marina; in the north-south direction, through thematic routes such as the route of sacred spaces; the water route (water infrastructure, thermal baths, domus) and the scenic-museum route (Heroon, Amphitheater, Museum). The strategy integrates infrastructure and thematic narration, proposing a progressive reading of the site that recomposes its different historical phases. (Figure 4)

ETSA. Strengthening urban legibility and community integration. The Habitat Paestum project identifies critical issues relating to the weak

integration between the park and the contemporary city and the poor legibility of the ancient complex. The main strategies include the restoration of the historic axes (Via Sacra and Via di Porta Marina); the relocation of the main entrance to the park and the upgrading of visitor facilities; and the continuous walkability of the city walls. The intervention is divided into three operational levels (vegetation, soil treatment, integration with agricultural activity) in accordance with the principles of reversibility and minimal impact. The park is conceived as a space that is inhabited and active throughout the year, integrated with local cultural and productive practices. (Figure 5)

LABPAP. Morphological interpretation and active conservation. The proposal takes the misalignment between the Greek and Roman structures as its organizing principle, interpreting it as an expression of different spatial concepts. The project is based on the systematic analysis of archaeological stratifications and the definition of a new integrated access system with visitor support infrastructure, providing for a new articulation of routes, differentiated by time, age, and ability. The intervention adopts a light architectural language, oriented towards real principles of reversibility. Central to this is the restoration of some Roman domus through operations to reintegrate the domestic dimension into the narrative of the site. The proposal defines conservation as a creative design act, configuring heritage as an active and generative system of cultural experience. (Figure 6)

Conclusions. Common to all proposals is the overcoming of the isolated monumental vision in favour of a conception of Paestum as a complex cultural infrastructure, in which conservation, interpretation, and contemporary design converge in the critical reactivation of archaeological heritage.

Notes.

1. The research is conducted by the author as part of the activities covered by the Assistant Professor contract *Architectural design in the context of phenomena and processes of globalisation* carried out since 2023 at *Department of Architecture and Urban Studies* – Politecnico di Milano.

2. With a total extension of 4.75 km and a distinctive pentagonal layout, the walls of Paestum are among the best-preserved examples of Magna Graecia. The enceinte – once accompanied by a moat, still partially perceptible in the difference in level between the base of the stone blocks and the surrounding ground – together with the towers (28 in total, displaying articulated planimetric morphologies according to their position, predominantly square in plan, but also pentagonal and circular), the gates (four in number: Porta Aurea to the north, almost entirely destroyed; Porta Giustizia to the south; Porta Marina to the west, facing the sea, once closer to the settlement; and Porta Sirena to the east – named after the bas-relief still visible on the keystone of the arch – facing the hills and, together with Porta Marina, among the best preserved), and the posterns, constitutes a defensive system fully integrated into the geographical landscape of the plain. The circuit of walls was certainly not constructed within a single unified building programme; rather, it is the result of discrete yet coherent interventions carried out over at least three centuries – from the Lucanian period (IV c. b.C.) – through processes of both addition and restoration. Evidence of an earlier defensive system, consisting of an earthwork and wooden palisades, has been identified to the north, near *Porta Giustizia*. Its construction has been dated between the sixth and V c. b.C. and is therefore attributable to the Greek phase, preceding the arrival of the Lucanians.

3. The Necropolis of Santa Venera is located immediately south of Porta Giustizia, within the former Cirio factory, currently undergoing restoration for dissemination and educational purposes associated with the activities of the Archaeological Parks of Paestum and Velia and the National Archaeological Museum of Paestum.

4. The Sanctuary of Hera Argiva at the mouth of the River Sele is situated on the southern bank of the river, approximately 9 km north of the settlement. Erected by the colonists of Sybaris in the early VI c. b.C., it comprised a monumental complex consisting of an octastyle peripteral temple and two altars.

5. *Via Magna Graecia* corresponds to the urban section of the SS18 Tirrenia Inferiore, formerly the *Strada Regia delle Calabrie,* constructed under Bourbon rule and still today one of the longest communication routes in southern Italy. In Roman times, it functioned as a consular road which, in its northern stretch, connected all the municipalities of the Vesuvian district, branching into a dense network. The earliest document depicting this route is the well-known *Tabula Peutingeriana*, a twelfth–thirteenth-century copy of an earlier representation of the extensive road system of the Roman Empire. Buried, like Pompeii, beneath a thick mantle of lava (and possibly still intact below ground), it was reconstructed around the sixteenth century under Bourbon dominion, assuming the name *Strada Regia delle Calabrie,* during a period that significantly stimulated architectural and infrastructural development throughout southern Italy.

6. Workshop promoted and funded by the *DAStU – Politecnico di Milano within the BIP programme-Eramsus+,* in agreement with the *Direzione dei Parchi archeologici di Paestum e Velia* and with the participation of *Scuola AUIC - Politecnico di Milano* (prof. V. Tolve, with A. Kerschbaumer); *Università degli Studi di Napoli "Federico II"* (prof. R. Capozzi, prof. F. Visconti, with C. Angarano, O. Lubrano and V. Defilippis, D. S. Lombardi); *Universitatea de Arhitectură și Urbanism "Ion Mincu", Bucharest - Facultatea de Arhitectură de Interior* (prof. O. Diaconescu, prof. D. N. Armenciu); *Universitat Politècnica de València - Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura* (prof. L. Bosch, prof. M. J. Ballestrer); *Universidad de Valladolid - LAB PAP* (prof. M. Á. De La Iglesia Santamaria, prof. F. Zelli, prof. S. Fernández, prof. C. Rodríguez). The workshop activities were divided into 4 phases: remote lessons (November 2024-January 2025); activities on field (Paestum and Naples; February 2025); definition of proposals (in each School; March-April 2025); final exhibition (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Paestum, Sala Cella May 2025; Milan, March 2026; Valencia, April 2026 and Bucharest, July 2026).

References.

1. Aurigemma, S., Maiuri, A. e Spinazzola, V. (1986) *I primi scavi di Paestum 1907-1939.* Ente per le Antichità e i Monumenti della Provincia di Salerno.

2. Aymonino, A. (2010) *Recinti versus Esperienza*. in Indrigo, A., Pedersoli, A. (edit by) Archeologia e Contemporaneo. Giornale IUAV, n. 81.

3. Celano, C. (1856) *Notizie del bello, dell'antico e del curioso della città di Napoli,* vol. V. Stamperia Floriana, Napoli.

4. Greco, E., Longo, F. (2002) *Poseidonia Paestum: la visita della città*. In a cura di Cipriani, M. (edit by). Paestum: la città e il museo. Ingegneria per la cultura, Roma.

5. Longo, F. et alii (2020) *Le mura di Paestum: una sintesi alla luce delle recenti ricerche.* Quasar, Roma.

6. Marzo, M. (2012) *Archeologia, Città, Turismo. Un possibile ruolo per il progetto di architettura*. In Coccia, L. (edit by) Architettura e turismo. Franco Angeli editore, Milano.

7. Stefanile, M. (2017) *Andare per le città sepolte*. Il Mulino, Bologna.

8.Tolve, V., Lubrano, O. (2025) *Progettare archeologia V. Interrogare le rovine dell'antica Poseidonia*. Accademia Adrianea edizioni, Roma.

9.Venezia, F. (2011) *Che cos'è l'architettura. Lezioni, conferenze, un intervento.* Electa, Milano.

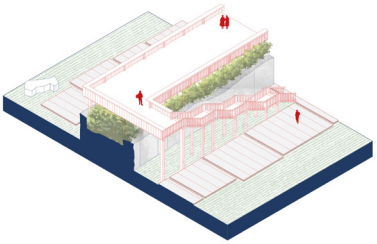
10. Wheeler, E.M. (1954) *Archaeology from the earth.* Clarendon Press, Oxford.

1.

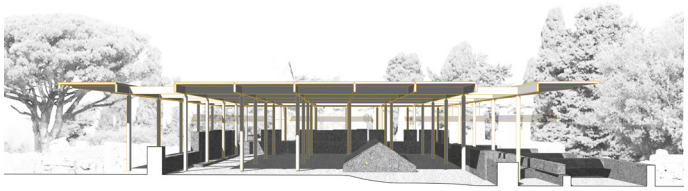


2.

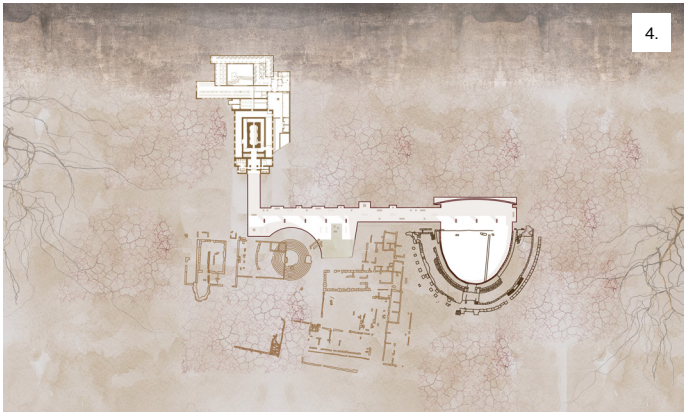




3.



4.

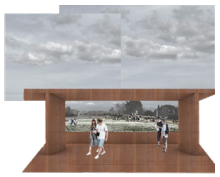


5.



6.









ANATOMY OF EPHEMERALITY: REVISITING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH MUTABLE FORMS/

Cosmina BOUARU, **Maria POPA** - *"Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urbanism, Bucharest*

Email: cosmina.bouaru@gmail.com, mariapopa1106@gmail.com

Abstract. Sustainability today represents more than a pressing requirement in architectural or design practices – over the course of the 21st century, it has evolved into an inherent attitude withing any creative or conceptual endeavour. From a niche concern associated with utopian-driven modernist experiments in the previous century, sustainability has become a pervasive paradigm that calls for holistic, rather than strictly causal, approaches – transcending the spatial and temporal boundaries of the designed object itself.

This study investigates the evolution of ephemeral architecture from the second half of the 20th century to the present day, focusing on the interplay between temporality, adaptability, and sustainability. Its central aim is to analyse how architectural objects initially conceived as temporary have been redefined over time – either by being stabilized into permanent functions or repurposed in ways which contradict their original intent.

The methodology is grounded in a comparative analysis of both historical and contemporary examples of modular, reusable, or relocatable architectural objects, and is articulated along three main directions: (1) the distortion of adaptability in objects originally designed as ephemeral – such as the emblematic case of the Nakagin Capsule Tower or experimental housing models of the 20th century and their respective utopian/futuristic views and approaches to housing (how they approached technology integration, local identity and, from a phenomenological point of view, the end-user's emotional response), (2) the inversion of the temporary–permanent relationship in recent projects, which increasingly extend beyond residential typologies due to shifting socio-economic variables, and (3) the retrospective reassessments of architectural solutions initially deemed sustainable, drawing on Tony Fry's concepts of "*defuturing*" and "*defamiliarizing the familiar*" as a theoretical frame for critique.

The utopian drive that once animated experimental architecture now calls for a renewed reading – one grounded in realistic, context-aware forms of sustainability. Rather than abandoned, these speculative frameworks can be reactivated as critical tools for questioning and reshaping present-day practices.

Preliminary findings reveal a disjunction between design intent and the socio-economic trajectories which shape the lifecycle of ephemeral architectural objects. Furthermore, they highlight how certain practices once validated as sustainable may become problematic over time, whether in terms of resource use, maintenance, social integration or emotional response.

The paper advances a critical reflection on the current limitations of sustainability discourse, particularly in how it is applied within complex systems that bind technology, architectural adaptability, and evolving societal needs. It argues for an expanded analytical framework capable of addressing design decisions in light of an inevitable and often overlooked ephemerality.

Introduction. Sustainability in the 20th Century. The first steps toward a new critical thinking vis-à-vis sustainability stemmed from early realisations of how finite and fragile Earth's resources are. During these formative years, human well-being to be conceptually bound to the broader metanarrative of planetary well-being.

Resources were depleting, pollution had become a grim reality, and overcrowding was rising - all while consumption and production accelerated at an alarming rate during the second half of the 20th century. Thus, a more holistic approach became necessary to grasp the magnitude of a much larger issue: the containment of the unsustainable.

This challenge could not be solved merely through new legislation or state-imposed regulations. Architects and designers emerged among the frontrunners in rethinking and mending the very system that had fueled hyper-consumption and hyper-production. Yet, sustainability - at least in its modern, applied sense - was still a new and evolving concept. Architecture and product design had often been sustainable only incidentally, as a byproduct of broader aesthetic, social, or economic ideas rather than from an explicit ecological intent.

We believe that the notion of the mutable form represents one of the earliest expressions of applied sustainable thinking, even though it often carried a seemingly contradictory attribute: ephemerality. These two qualities- mutability and ephemerality -might appear at odds within sustainable discourse. Yet their relationship is more nuanced than it first seems, especially in concrete applications such as the evolution of domestic space in the city, whose exploration accelerated through experimental searches for transient dwelling models beginning in the 1960s–1970s.

One of the early pioneers of this approach was Kisho Kurokawa, a leading figure of Japanese Metabolism, a postwar architectural movement that sought to reconcile change, impermanence, and adaptability with the continuity of human and ecological systems in the realm of transient, ephemeral dwelling. Today, however, metabolic principles have expanded far beyond the early association between ephemerality and the organic growth of the city, addressing twenty-first-century challenges ranging from climate change and environmental hazards to rapid urban expansion. Beyond specific reusable solutions, ephemerality itself has become a conceptual framework even for permanent forms of habitation, shaping a broader philosophy of dwelling, society, and sustainability. In this sense, metabolic philosophy and its applications offer a dynamic understanding of the relationship between sustainability and ephemerality, expressed through three key lessons: (1) its original intentions; (2) the present state of its built outcomes and their influence on contemporary architectural thinking; and (3) the gap between theoretical expectations and the actual functioning of ephemerality and mutability.

The Mutable Form – Three Directions.

1. First Lesson – Of Past and Present of Metabolism and Its 'Organic' Capsule. Mutable forms in Metabolist architecture sit at the uneasy intersection of hope and anxiety, shaped as much by the Cold War's tension